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Understanding the Role and Function of the Balmoral Shops

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Ethnic Precincts in Auckland:

Understanding the Role and Function of the Balmoral Shops

Carina Meares, Trudie Cain, Hadyn Hitchins, Jesse Allpress and Susan Fairgray
Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU)
Auckland Council

Jessica Terruhn
University of Auckland

Amanda Gilbertson
University of Melbourne

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Executive summary

Ethnic precincts are a relatively new addition to Auckland's retail landscape and there has to date been little research devoted to better understanding their function and role. Increased knowledge about these new centres will improve Auckland Council's understanding and support of the business owners who work in them and the communities they serve.

This report describes the results of a research project that investigated a specific ethnic precinct in Auckland – the Balmoral shops, located halfway down Dominion Road. The purpose of the research was to better understand the social, spatial and economic role of the precinct and we achieved these objectives using four different but interconnected methodologies: an intercept survey with 297 participants; in-depth interviews with 30 shoppers; an analysis of shopper spend using electronic transactions data (Eftpos, credit and debit cards) and in-depth interviews with 31 business owners in the area. Key findings from the research are described below.

Intercept surveys, shopper interviews and shopper spend analysis

An analysis of 2013 shopper spend in the Balmoral shops shows that approximately 1945 transactions occur per day, generating a total spend of \$22.2 million. Spending patterns varied over the course of the week with an increased concentration of food hospitality-related activity between Friday and Sunday. The centre's takeaway food and hospitality sector catchment is similar in size to much larger sub-regional centres such as Albany, Newmarket and Takapuna. Similarly, the centre's catchment for takeaway food and hospitality is much larger than for other retail categories, and is accessed predominantly by people under the age of 30. This indicates that the precinct is a destination shopping area for takeaway food and hospitality, especially for younger people.

Results from the intercept surveys, the shopper interviews and the shopper spend analysis suggest that the Balmoral shops play a dual role. During the day, particularly before noon, the precinct acts as a local service centre, meeting the needs of a broad range of customers from the surrounding community. During this time, 80 per cent of the total spend originates from households located within seven kilometres of the precinct. Daytime spending patterns are evenly spread over a range of retail categories, with only a third of the overall spend going on food hospitality. These patterns suggest that the Balmoral shops function as a local centre during the day, broadly consistent with the role and function of other Auckland centres of a similar size and structure. During the evening, however, the centre emerges as a destination food hospitality precinct. The night-time trade is highly concentrated (74%) in this sector, with people travelling from across Auckland to dine in the precinct's Asian restaurants, many of which are Chinese. The average distance travelled to access the centre increases into the evening, with 80 per cent of the 8pm-midnight spend originating from households located within 15 kilometres of the precinct.

When asked to describe the Balmoral shops, non-Chinese shoppers described the precinct and the people there as mostly Asian, particularly Chinese; the notion of Auckland's Chinatown was also frequently mentioned. Non-Chinese shoppers said they liked that the shops in the centre provided them with variety and difference; an affordable and good value meal; a bustling, busy vibe; and an authentic dining and cultural experience. They also talked about how multicultural and cosmopolitan the area is, but noted too that it was quite grubby and run-down. Chinese interviewees' comments were dominated by descriptions of Chinese restaurants and food styles; at the Balmoral shops, they explained, they could find their 'hometown' food and talk to staff and other customers in a familiar language. While non-Chinese participants appreciated the diversity of food on offer, Chinese shoppers appreciated the specific (provincial) taste of home and the feeling of familiarity that came with being in a place that met their cultural, linguistic and consumption needs.

Most participants rated the precinct fairly well, especially those who were there to eat out. When asked what they thought could be improved in the centre, participants most commonly identified transport as an area in need of change. While some respondents wanted better access for private vehicles, however, others felt that the area should be made more pedestrian and public-transport friendly. Further areas in need of attention included: the restoration and maintenance of the centre's buildings; the provision of a wider variety of businesses; an improvement in general cleanliness and tidiness; and better personal safety and business security.

With regard to branding and marketing the retail space, Chinese shoppers were almost exclusively opposed to the idea of branding the retail space as Chinatown and felt such branding would problematically mark Chinese people as different. Instead, Chinese shoppers were more likely to support the idea of a Food Hub or Food Street that was culturally inclusive and better accommodated the many ethnic restaurants that currently operate in the area. This was a sentiment that was also shared by some non-Chinese shoppers. In a related issue, there was not a clear consensus regarding the presence of Chinese signage in the area. While some Chinese shoppers appreciated the familiarity of the signage and felt it welcomed them to the retail space, others were concerned that it was not inclusive. The response from non-Chinese shoppers was also mixed; some thought it contributed to the character of the area while others felt it was divisive.

Overall, shoppers experience a variety of interactions in the precinct. Some claimed that they do not interact at all with business owners, staff, or other customers while others describe an exchange of greetings or the sharing of information, particularly about food. Although interviewees noted that some of these encounters are with people from their own particular communities, shoppers also talked about a rich array of interactions across ethnic, linguistic and cultural lines, evidence, perhaps, of emerging relationships between new and old Aucklanders. In particular, those who worked in the area often described frequent and positive interactions with people from many different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Most of the non-Chinese shoppers thought that the precinct was a good place for ethnic groups to mix, while the Chinese respondents were much less certain. Those who were quite sure that the centre was a good place for different ethnic groups to mix talked about the positive aspects of ethnic diversity more broadly; the fact that the precinct was a good place for mixing compared with other places; and that people from different groups generally got on well there. Although 80 per cent of the non-Chinese interviewees felt that the precinct was a good place for different ethnic groups to mix, many were less definite about it in their follow up responses. Chinese interviewees were also unsure; their explanations focused on whether integration was really a matter of eating different foods together in a shared restaurant space; uncertainty about whether Kiwis really like Chinese people; and the perception that the centre itself does not contain enough 'Kiwi stuff'. Those Chinese shoppers who did feel that the precinct was a good place for mixing often connected this to an *absence* of particular attributes: complaints about the origin of Chinese products; police presence and drunkenness; or negative experiences.

With regard to a sense of belonging in the retail space, non-Chinese participants often reported that the area lacked a 'real' sense of community compared with other neighbourhoods; that it does not have a hub; and that the precinct needs a greater variety of businesses to encourage people to linger there rather than eat and leave. Non-Chinese also reported that the precinct is a place for Asian or Chinese people rather than the community more broadly. Some respondents view this in a positive sense, while others experience it as alienating or uninviting. Overall, however, most shoppers said that the centre contributes to their sense of belonging in the community, although the reasons for this were quite different. Non-Chinese participants attributed their sense of belonging to the length of time they had lived in the area; to the familiarity that comes with recognising people and developing relationships with them; and to a feeling of being 'at home'. In contrast, for Chinese participants, the sense of belonging they feel is predominantly connected to a sense of pride in the Chinese character of the precinct and the contributions it makes to the community.

Business owner interviews

Twenty-eight of the 31 business owners we interviewed were born outside New Zealand and described complex and diverse migration stories. They chose New Zealand, they explained, because they felt it would be a better place for their families and because it offered them a better lifestyle. Participants received a wide range of support (practical, emotional and financial) both before and after they arrived in New Zealand. Family and friends typically offered the greatest level and range of support although Chinese participants also talked extensively about the help they received from professional immigration agencies. These migrant pathways are an important context for understanding business owners' experiences in the area.

Interviewees established a business in the precinct for a range of reasons, including difficulty finding paid employment that matched their skill set and qualifications. This was especially the case for those participants who identified as Chinese, although their stories of business start-ups also reflect a broader commitment to improved financial and social outcomes for their families. A

sense of freedom and autonomy was also a strong motivator for both Chinese and non-Chinese business owners. The pathway into business was not always straightforward for our participants and many found the regulatory process overly bureaucratic and complex. Several business owners, irrespective of their ethnicity, received help from financial advisors such as bank managers and accountants. Although non-Chinese business owners were able to find the information they needed, those who identified as Chinese faced greater difficulties and often relied on friends and family to support them in this regard.

Non-Chinese and Chinese participants had different ways of talking about their business success; while non-Chinese talked about the utility of business networks and mentors, Chinese participants talked about the role and influence of numerous relationships with friends and family, customers and other business owners in the area. For Chinese restaurateurs, the kind of food they sold and their engagement with customers were also important contributors to their business success. This was also reflected in the comments of Chinese shoppers who appreciated the specific tastes and flavours of home.

Most participants had made changes to their business in the past year in order to remain viable. Changes included diversifying the services offered; changing the pricing structure of the business; renovating and expanding the business; and increasing business promotion. For Chinese participants, advertising and promotion was mostly directed at other Chinese people and was local in scale. In contrast, non-Chinese tended to advertise more broadly using larger scale promotional activities. Looking forward, fewer participants were prepared to invest in their business in the future although many recognised that they would need to make some modifications in order to remain relevant and financially viable.

Business associations are designed to support businesses to flourish yet, at the time of the interviews, surprisingly few participants belonged to an association or reported that they were prepared to join one in the future. Most people explained they were too busy, could not identify the benefits of membership, or they were not aware of a suitable association. Chinese participants were also concerned about not being able to speak English well and some non-Chinese were concerned about the English language proficiency of Chinese business owners who might attend. Despite this lack of interest, however, the Chinese business community recently established the Balmoral Chinese Business Association. The association was created specifically to meet the needs of local Chinese entrepreneurs and membership levels are growing.

Participants were asked about their plans for future business growth and how Auckland Council and the Albert-Eden Local Board could support them in their endeavours. With regard to council, the answers were broad and included changes to local infrastructure, transport, promotional activities and signage. However, the three most common suggestions were improving parking, making the precinct safer and more attractive, and hosting more cultural events. The prospect that Auckland Council might brand and market the area also arose. The responses were closely aligned with the shoppers' comments noted earlier. Overall, non-Chinese participants were in favour of a branded Chinatown and thought the addition of cultural markers such as dragons and

red pagodas would add a degree of authenticity and improve the area's economic function. In contrast, Chinese business owners were largely opposed to the idea of branding the precinct as Chinatown and preferred instead the possibility that it be marketed as a Food Street or Food Hub. Again, and similar to the shoppers discussed earlier, this was seen as more inclusive, a better reflection of the restaurants and shops currently operating in the area, and less likely to reduce those who lived and worked there to a marginalised cultural stereotype.

Thriving town centres and a growing local economy is one of six intended outcomes noted in the Albert-Eden Local Board plan. However, most Chinese participants reported that they had not heard of their local board and, of those who had, most did not fully understand its function. That said, they were often enthusiastic about their local board once the interviewer explained its purpose. Non-Chinese participants were more likely to have heard of their local board but some were also uncertain of its function or what it could do to support them. Since completing this research, the Albert-Eden Local Board has been working more closely with the business community.

When asked to describe this section of Dominion Road, participants often spoke of the area's convenience including its location and close proximity to motorways, the city and public transport; the diversity of businesses in the area; and the excellent Chinese food available. These characteristics were often cited as reasons for establishing a business there in the first instance. Other reasons included excellent foot traffic and cheap rent. Overall, Chinese interviewees were more favourable in their comments about the street while non-Chinese participants were more likely to mention the precinct's appearance and condition, its reputation for low-cost and low-quality product and concerns around safety in the area.

As mentioned earlier, relationships were important to the Chinese business owners we spoke with. This is reflected in the fact that Chinese participants were much more likely to employ family members than non-Chinese. They were also more likely to employ recent migrants and provide practical and emotional support to them as they settled. Scholarly literature shows that newly arrived migrants are likely to employ co-ethnic staff, a tendency that is reflected in this research. The same co-ethnic distinctions are not revealed, however, when considering the clientele of participants; most reported an ethnic mix of customers. Chinese participants described friendly relationships with their customers, with many reporting that these friendships extended into their personal lives. A shared language was an important feature of these interactions. In contrast, very few non-Chinese participants reported having these kinds of relationships; most described very functional interactions with their customers.

The business owners who participated in our research described both cordial and practical relationships with other business owners in the precinct; they often exchanged a friendly greeting or put each other's rubbish out, for example. However, some also described tensions, especially when they did not have a shared language. Overall, Chinese business owners spoke more favourably and were more open to inter-ethnic relationships with other business owners. In contrast, non-Chinese business owners were less willing to engage with their Chinese neighbours

and were often critical of Chinese business owners' business practices and poor English language skills.

Very few Chinese participants reported having experienced or witnessed discrimination in the area, and yet, when given an opportunity to respond in greater detail, examples of discrimination were commonly reported as they described their experiences. That said, discriminatory experiences were typically minimised with interviewees' comments implying that their experiences were irrelevant, of no serious consequence, or less discriminatory than what might be experienced overseas. Alternatively, participants (especially those who identified as Chinese) blamed themselves for causing others to treat them badly.

Implications and next steps

These results help to illuminate the social, spatial and economic role of the Balmoral shops. Many of the key themes described are closely aligned with a range of Auckland Council directions, initiatives, strategies and plans outlined in key documents such as the Auckland Plan; the Economic Development Strategy; and the Thriving Communities Action Plan. Economically-orientated initiatives to support a diverse ethnic economy are especially relevant. However, it should be noted that these initiatives often take an international focus and stress large-scale entrepreneurship. Although global connectivity is important for Auckland, such an emphasis fails to adequately account for the important localised role performed by migrant (retail and food hospitality) entrepreneurs. Acknowledging and responding to the localised relationships shared by smaller-scale entrepreneurs is vital for further promoting economic growth in the area. The Albert-Eden Local Board performs an important role in improving business-zoned areas such as the Balmoral shops and recognises that there is an opportunity to strengthen local business networks and contribute to economic growth.

Initiatives designed to foster social cohesion in culturally and ethnically diverse settings are equally relevant. Recognising and acknowledging cultural difference and creating connected, inclusive and resilient communities that account for a multiplicity of voices and experiences is vital and a key goal for Auckland Council. In practice, this means: fostering community-based events that reflect the area's cultural diversity; supporting people to retain their languages and other forms of cultural expression; supporting community-led development and working with communities to develop leadership, skills and capacity; and promoting inclusion, reducing discrimination and removing barriers to opportunity. Working alongside communities and recognising and valuing the capacity of the community itself creates unique opportunities to engage differently and to leverage community members' multiple skills. Underpinning many of these goals is the principle of an inclusive, equitable and just society where all community members participate.

A number of council initiatives (for example, the Civic Ethnic Engagement Forum and a monthly ethnic diversity newsletter distributed to Community Development staff) have recently been introduced to directly or indirectly support the ethnic community across Auckland. Although these initiatives do not focus solely on the Balmoral shops, they are expected to positively impact this

precinct and others like it. The Albert-Eden Local Board has also been working closely with the Balmoral business community and has offered financial and other support to formalised business organisations. These alignments bode well for future engagement between Auckland Council and the local resident and business community.

The business community in Balmoral is also supported by non-council organisations. For example, Immigration New Zealand provides a range of print and online services to migrant business owners outlining what new arrivals can expect when living and working in New Zealand. Resources are also available to those who do not speak English as a first language and Immigration New Zealand is committed to extending the breadth of these materials. Other organisations (for example, the Citizen's Advice Bureau) provide recently arrived migrants with practical support such as information on social and professional communication; preparing for the labour market; and health and welfare issues.

There are many opportunities for improved engagement and participation between Auckland Council and the Balmoral business community. New pathways for engagement should identify ways of reaching the business community; provide multiple ways for people to participate; invest in community capacity building to enable participation; use plain language; make the process of engagement inclusive and accessible; and consider how to meet other community needs with respect to language, accessibility and cultural expectations. The newly formed Balmoral Chinese Business Association is likely to be an important mechanism for creating new forms of engagement with the Chinese business community and is an excellent example of community-led place-making. There are also opportunities for embracing (and indeed leveraging) cultural diversity in the area and improving business growth.

Executive summary in Chinese

内容摘要

民族商业区是近些年在奥克兰市零售商业版图上的一个新亮点。目前，对它的功能和作用的研究才刚刚起步。加强对这些新兴的商业中心的了解，将能促进市政府对在当地经营的商家和周边受惠社区的理解和支持。

本文报告了对奥克兰市一个民族商业区— **Balmoral** 商业区一所进行的调查研究的结果。该商业区坐落在 **Dominion** 路的中段。该项研究的目的是为了更好地了解该民族商业区在社区的社会、空间和经济发展的作用。为此，我们采取了四种不同但相互关联的研究方法：有297人参与的路人随机调查；对30位消费者的深度采访；对商店电子转账营业额的分析（如电子收银机、信用卡和借记卡），以及对该地区31位店主的深度采访。该项研究的主要结果如下。

路人随机调查、采访消费者以及消费者消费分析

据对2013年 **Balmoral** 地区的商店营业状况的分析，该地区每天大约有1945笔的电子转账，约合2,220万纽币。其消费方式在一周内显著的差异。从周五至周日，与餐饮业有关的消费明显增多。该商业中心的快餐店和餐饮业的规模可与奥克兰市更大规模商业区，如 **Albany**，**Newmarket** 和 **Takapuna** 区内同行业的规模相媲美。同时，该地区内快餐店和餐饮业的服务范围远比区内其他零售业的大很多，主要吸引30岁以下的年轻人。这表明 **Balmoral** 商业区是快餐店和餐饮业的聚集区特别受年轻人的青睐。

对路人的随机调查、消费者的深度采访和对消费方式的分析结果显示该商业区承担着双重角色。在白天，特别是上午，该商业区承担着地区服务中心的角色，满足来自周边地区不同顾客的广泛需求。在这段时间，百分之八十的顾客来自周边七公里内的社区。白天的消费均匀地涵盖了不同的零售业，仅有占总数三分之一的消费是与餐饮相关。这表明，在白天，**Balmoral** 地区的商店起着区域购物中心的作用，这与奥克兰市其他地区同等规模和结构的购物中心的功能基本相同。但是，到了晚上，该商业区就变成了餐饮聚集地。顾客从奥克兰市的四面八方聚到这里的亚洲餐馆，其中大部分是华人餐馆，这使得该区的夜间营业额高度集中在餐饮业（74%）。在晚上，顾客来自更远的地方，从晚八点至深夜的营业额中，百分之八十来自该商业中心周边15公里内的顾客。

当受访者被问及他们如何描述 **Balmoral** 商业中心时，非华裔的消费者表示，该中心主要是亚裔商业区，甚至称其为华人商业区，常常有受访者提及这里是奥克兰市唐人街。非华裔顾客表示他们喜欢该中心商业的多样性、物美价廉的食物、繁华忙碌的气氛以及地道的饮食和文化体验。他们在谈到该中心的多元文化和国际化发展的同时，也指出该地区肮脏和破败的现状。受访的华人消费者主要是描述该中心的餐馆和食品特色。他们说可以在 **Balmoral** 的餐馆吃到地道的家乡食物，可以用他们自己熟悉的语言和餐馆员工以及其他顾客聊天。当非华裔消费者在该中心品尝着品种多样的食

物时，华人顾客则享受着地道的家乡味以及熟悉的文化、相通的语言和习惯的消费方式带给他们的思乡的满足感。

大多数受访者，特别是那些来这里的食客们都对该商业中心有相当好的评价。当被问到他们认为该中心有哪些方面需要改进时，受访者普遍认为交通状况需要改进。一些人认为需要为开私家车的人提供更多的便利，而另一些人则认为应该开辟更多的步行区和更加便捷的公共交通。其他需要关注的领域包括：该中心区内建筑物的修复和保养；经营门类更为丰富的商业；区域内卫生和清洁状况的改善，以及更好的个人和商店安全保障。

关于如何更好地给这个中心命名和市场定位，华人顾客几乎一致反对将该中心命名为“唐人街”。他们认为这样的命名会不恰当地将华人与其他人群区别开。许多华人顾客反而更喜欢称这一商业区为“食品中心”或“食品街”，因为这样才可以更好地体现文化包容性和更好地反映不同民族的餐馆在此经营的现状。一些非华裔顾客也有同感。与此相关的，对在此地的中文标识问题则没有明确的共识。部分华人顾客表示，他们喜欢商店的中文标识，觉得那会带给他们亲切感，感到受到欢迎；但部分华人顾客则担心中文标识没有包容性。非华裔顾客的观点也不统一。一些人认为中文标识可以彰显当地的特点，而另一些人则认为有被隔离在外的感觉。

总的来讲，顾客在该中心都能体验到不同程度的交流。一些人宣称他们与店主、员工或其他顾客完全没有交流，另一些人则表示他们和其他人互致问候，分享信息，特别是关于食物的信息。虽然受访者提到他们的互动多数是限于在自己的族群中，但是也有些顾客谈到他们有很多交流是在不同民族、语言和文化群体之间进行，或许这是新老奥克兰人之间开始建立关系的明证。特别是该中心工作人员，他们讲述他们经常积极主动地与许多不同民族、语言和文化背景的人交流的情景。

大多数非华裔的顾客认为该商业中心是不同民族人们交流的好地方，然而华人顾客却少有同感。那些持肯定观点的顾客认为：一般来说，民族多样性具有积极意义；与其它地方相比，该中心确实是一个不同民族人们融合的好地方；不同民族的人们能在该商业中心相处得很好。虽然80%的非华裔受访者说该商业中心是一个不同民族人们交流的好地方，但当请他们详细说明时，他们中的不少人又对他们的回答难以确定。华人受访者也不确定民族融合是否指在同一个餐馆享用不同食品；不确定新西兰人（Kiwi）是否真的喜欢华人；觉得该中心没有足够体现本地特点（Kiwi stuff）。那些认为该中心是个民族融合的好地方的华人顾客，没有谈到中国产品不好、警察上门和街头醉汉以及其它的负面经历。

当谈及在这个零售业地区是否有归属感的问题，非华裔受访者认为与别的地区相比该地区缺乏“真正”的社区感；该地区没有活动中心；该地区还需要有更多样的商业活动以吸引人们多逗留，而不是仅仅吃饭，吃完就走。非华裔顾客还反映该商业中心只是亚裔或华人的商业中心，并不是一个具有广泛意义的社区。有些受访者以正面态度看待这个现象，也有些人感觉被疏远和不受欢迎。虽然原因各异，但总的来讲，大多数的顾客还是说这个商业中心给了他们在社区里的归属感。非华裔受访者的社区归属感主要关乎他们在此地居住时间的长短；和当地居民相互认识和熟悉的程度；

以及那种在“老家”的感觉。相反，华人受访者的归属感主要来自一种自豪感。他们为这个中心所具有的华人特色，以及对当地社区所做出的贡献而感到自豪。

对商店雇主的采访

在31位受访的雇主中有28位是在新西兰以外地区出生，他们的移民之路各不相同但都充满艰辛。他们之所以选择移民到新西兰，是觉得这里可以给家人一个理想的居住环境和好的生活方式。受访者在移民到新西兰前后都曾得到过不同类型的帮助（实际生活方面、精神上和经济上）。虽然许多华人受访者多次提到曾得到过专业移民公司的帮助，但全方位、多方面的帮助和支持仍是来自于家庭和朋友。这些受访者的移民之路为了解当地其他雇主的经历提供了重要的背景资料。

受访雇主在该商业区建立生意有多种原因，其中之一就是很难找到与他们的技能和学历相符合的工作。华人受访者中因为这个原因而来此经商的人较多。当然，他们建立自己生意的初衷也包括对改善家庭经济和社会生活等多方面的承诺。无论是华人还是非华裔的雇主，寻求自由和自主都是他们要建立自己的生意的强大动力。对受访者来说，经商之路并不容易。他们中的许多人认为政府的管理程序太过官僚和复杂。不同种族的多位雇主都提到他们得到过财务方面的建议，比如来自银行经理和会计的帮助。非华裔雇主一般能够自己找到他们需要的信息，然而许多华人雇主面临较大的困难，通常他们都需要依赖朋友和家人的帮助去获得所需要的信息。

说到商业经营成功的原因，非华裔和华人雇主的回答大相径庭。非华裔雇主谈的较多的因素是他们如何利用商业协会或商业顾问；而华人雇主则多谈及来自朋友、家人、顾客和其他店主的帮助，以及与这些人之间建立的关系对成功的影响。对于华人餐馆，所经营的菜的品种以及和客户之间的纽带关系也成了他们商业成功与否的重要因素。这一点在采访华人顾客时也有反映，他们就特别青睐那些可以吃到特殊家乡风味的餐馆。

为了能持续经营，大多数受访雇主都谈到他们在过去一年对生意进行了调整。调整的方面包括增加服务项目、调整价格、重新装修和扩大生意，以及加强宣传推广。对于华人商家，他们的广告和宣传主要针对华人和附近的居民。相反，非华裔商家则倾向于做更大范围的广告宣传。展望未来，虽然有许多雇主承认为了能继续生存下去他们需要对现有生意进行调整，但是只有少数商家有意在现有的生意上做进一步投资。

众所周知，商业协会的成立是为了更好地帮助商家发展生意，但在采访中却惊奇地发现鲜有华人商家参加任何商业协会或准备在未来去参加。大部分人都说他们太忙了，看不到参加协会有什么好处，或者根本就不知道有适合的协会可以参加。华人老板担心自己的英文不够好，同时一些非华裔老板也担心参加协会的华人老板的英文不够流利。虽然缺乏兴趣，但是最近华人商界还是成立了 **Balmoral** 华人商业协会。这个协会创建的目的就是为满足当地华人创业者的需要，而且参与协会的成员人数也在不断地增加。

受访者被问及他们对自己生意今后的发展规划和奥克兰市政府以及 **Albert-Eden** 地方委员会可以为他们的努力提供怎样的帮助。关于对市政府的要求答案是多方面的，包括改进地方基础设施、改善交通、大力推广宣传活动和树立标牌。然而，三个较一致的建议是改善停车条件，使该地区更加安全更加具有吸引力，以及举办更多文化活动。希望市政府给这个商业区命名和确立其市场定位的意见也被提及。雇主的回答和前面受访顾客的回答几乎一样。总之，非华裔的受访者倾向以唐人街命名，同时加建一些具有文化特色的标志，如龙雕塑和红色宝塔，进一步体现该地区的特色及增强该地区的经济竞争力。相反，华人雇主基本反对将该地区命名为唐人街，他们更愿意将其命名为餐饮中心或食品街。再一次，他们的观点和前面谈及的顾客的观点类似。这样的命名更具有包容性，能更好地反映在此营业的餐馆和商店的现状，同时也减少把在该地区生活和工作的人边缘化的可能性。

振兴地方商业中心和发展地方经济是 **Albert-Eden** 委员会计划要取得的六项结果之一。可是，绝大部分的华人雇主反映他们没有听说过该地方委员会，就是听过的人也并不十分了解该地方委员会的运作。尽管如此，当采访人向他们解释了地方委员会的作用后，他们都表现出对该委员会的高度热情。较多非华裔的受访者知道地方委员会，但其中一些受访者也不清楚其作用以及可以为他们提供什么样的支持。自从开展本研究，**Albert-Eden** 地方委员会已经与当地的商业界加强了合作。

当受访者描述对这段 **Dominion** 路的印象时，他们常提到该地区很方便，包括地理位置和靠近高速公路、市区和公共交通；该地区商业的多样化；有非常美味的中国食品。这些特点也常被提及是最初在此地建立生意的原因。其他因素还包括大的客流量和便宜的租金。总之，受访的华人雇主普遍给予这条街较正面的描述，而非华裔雇主则较多地提及这个商业区的外观和条件，它的商品价格低质量差的形象，也担心这个地区的治安状况。

如前所述，受访的华人雇主认为人际关系对他们来说很重要。这也反映在华人雇主比非华裔雇主更喜欢雇佣自己的家庭成员，也更愿意雇佣新移民，并给这些人提供在定居过程中所需的实际的帮助和精神上的支持。学术文献调研发现新移民更喜欢雇用相同民族的员工，本研究结果也体现了这一点。然而，这种同族性并没有在顾客群中体现出来，他们的客人来自不同的民族。受访华人雇主表示他们和顾客建立了良好的关系，许多人甚至还将他们的关系发展成了个人生活中的朋友。语言相通是这种关系的一个重要特点。与之相反，只有极少数受访的非华裔雇主表示他们也和客户建立了类似的关系，大多数受访者描述他们和客户的关系只是生意上的。

参与研究的大部分雇主都表示他们与在该商业区的其他商家有着友好和合作的关系，比如，见面时互致问候，互相帮忙将垃圾桶推出去或收回来。当然，也有些受访者谈到和其他商家之间的紧张关系，特别是当他们的语言不通时。总的来看，华人商家更愿意也更开放地与其他商家交往。相反，非华裔雇主则较少愿意去与他们的华人邻居打交道，他们经常批评华人商家的经商方式以及差劲的英语水平。

只有极少数的受访华人雇主提到在该商业区曾经历了或看到了遭受歧视的情况，但当请谈详细情况时，他们一般都是讲述自己的经历。尽管如此，受访者常常将遭受歧视的经历淡化，这意味着

他们这些经历与歧视无关，或没有造成严重的后果，或比在其它国家可能经历的歧视更少些。另外，有些受访者（特别是华人）自我检讨，认为可能是自身的一些原因导致其他人对他们不友好。

研究结果的应用和下一步行动

本研究结果说明了 **Balmoral** 商业区在社会、空间和经济发展中的作用。研究成果显示的多项主题思想与奥克兰市现有的发展方向、举措、方针政策和实施计划都高度融合。奥克兰市的发展规划在许多重要的文件，如《奥克兰规划》、《经济发展策略》和《振兴社区行动计划》中都有详细描述。该研究的成果与以经济发展为导向的、支持多元民族经济的举措更密切相关。不过，值得注意的是，这些举措往往关注国际市场，看重大规模创业。尽管全球化对于奥克兰市非常重要，但是这种强调没有适当的体现移民（零售和餐饮业）创业者在地方经济发展中所起的重要作用。为了进一步促进该地区的经济发展，认清并回应小规模创业者在当地建立的关系至关重要。**Albert-Eden** 地区委员会在改善商业区，如 **Balmoral** 商业中心，的行动中扮演着重要的角色，也认识到有机会强化地方商业网络并使其为地方经济的发展做出贡献。

在多元文化和多民族区域促进社会凝聚力的措施是重要的。认识到并承认文化差异，建立相互沟通、包容和具有自我修复能力的社区，这样的社区能够倾听不同的声音和接纳不同的经历，这是奥克兰市政府要实现的一个重要目标。在实践中就是要举办以社区为基础反映该地区不同文化特色的活动；支持人们保留自己的语言以及其它文化特征；支持由社区引导的发展和协助社区发展自身的领导能力、技能和能力；促进社会的包容性，减少歧视，扫清发展中的障碍。与社区一起工作，承认并珍惜社区自身的能力，这样政府就有机会强化与不同社区的纽带关系，充分发挥社区成员的技能。所有这些目标的基本原则就是建立一个包容的、平等的和公正的社会，以及所有社区成员都能参与的社会。

近期奥克兰市政府已出台一些新的措施来直接或间接地支持全市各少数民族社区的发展，（例如：公民参与民族论坛，发给每位社区发展员工的“民族多样性月报”）。尽管这些措施不是专为 **Balmoral** 商业区，但可以预期这些措施一定会对该地区以及其它类似地区的发展带来积极的影响。**Albert-Eden** 地方委员会也与 **Balmoral** 商家展开密切合作，对已建立的商业协会提供经费和其他支持。以上这些行动预示着奥克兰市政府在与各地居民和商家建立良好纽带关系和进行密切合作方面有着光明的前景。

位于 **Balmoral** 的商业区也得到了奥克兰市政府以外的机构的帮助。例如，新西兰移民局就提供了一系列针对移民商家的印刷品和网络在线服务。这些服务为新来的移民提供在新西兰生活和工作所需的资讯。新西兰移民局致力于要让母语为非英语的新移民也能够利用这些资讯并且要增加资讯的内容。其他服务机构（例如公民咨询局）也为新移民提供实际的帮助，例如提供社交和专业交流、当地就业准备，以及健康和社会福利等方面的资讯。

奥克兰市政府与 **Balmoral** 地区的商界加强联系和合作的机会众多。新的合作之路应具有以下特点：要真正与商界人士建立关系；要为他们提供多种合作参与方式；要投资于社区能力的建设使他

们有能力参与；要使用通俗易懂的语言；要使联系和合作的过程具有广泛性和可及性；同时也要考虑如何满足社区在语言、可及性和文化诉求等多方面的需要。新成立的 **Balmoral** 华人商业协会很可能就是与华人商界建立联系的一个新的重要机制，也是由社区领导实施地方决策的一个典范。在 **Balmoral** 民族商业区，这里有许多机会去发挥（和深度利用）该地区的民族文化多样性并促进该地区的商业发展。

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1.0 Introduction

The immigration policy reforms of the late 1980s have led to a significant rise in the number and ethnic diversity of migrants settling in Auckland. New arrivals have had an important impact on many aspects of life in New Zealand's largest city; the development of ethnic precincts is one example of these changes and the focus of this report. Defined as clusters of businesses that are owned by members of the same ethnic minority or immigrant group (Cain, Meares, Spoonley, & Peace, 2011), ethnic precincts are new in Auckland's cityscapes and there is much that we do not yet understand about them. The Ethnic Precincts in Auckland project, funded by the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) at Auckland Council, was developed to enhance our understanding of this relatively recent development in Auckland's retail landscape.

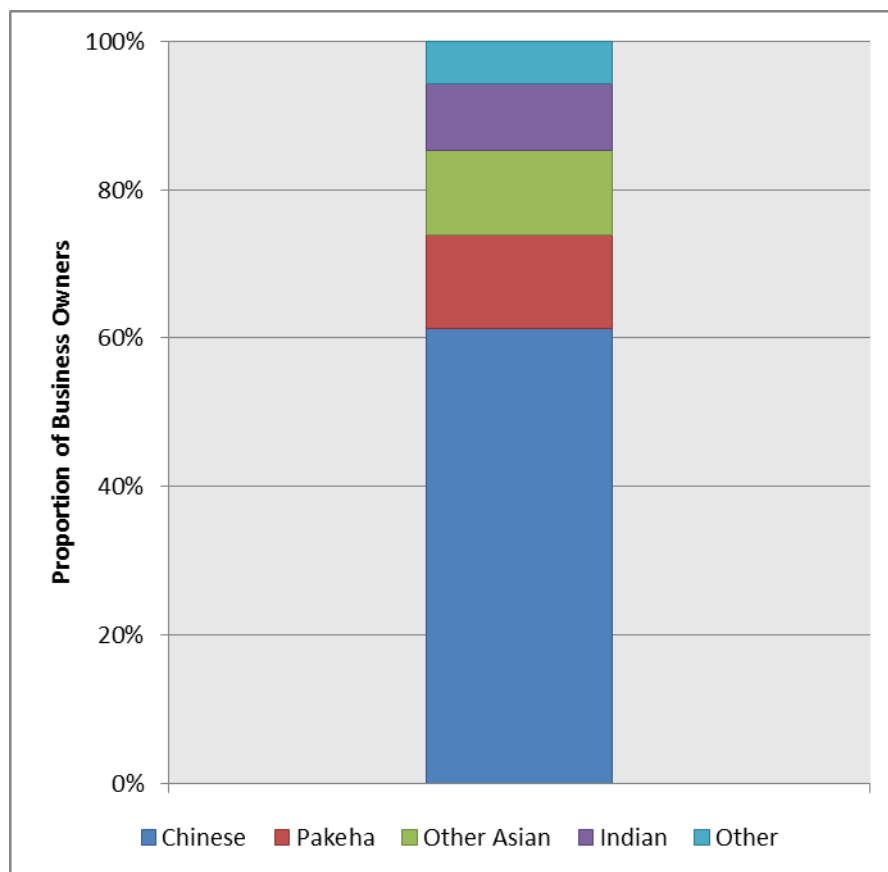
Specifically, the project focuses on the Balmoral shopping centre¹ located between Balmoral Road and Tennyson Street/Kensington Avenue in the Albert-Eden Local Board area, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The Balmoral shops



¹ Hereafter, the Balmoral shops.

Figure 2 Ethnicity of business owners/operators in the Balmoral shops



This precinct is largely Chinese in character, with respect to the kinds of products and services available there; the languages used in spoken and written form; as well as the ethnicity of business owners. As illustrated in Figure 2, the precinct comprises 61 per cent Chinese owned or operated businesses; 13 per cent Pākehā, 11 per cent other Asian, 9 per cent Indian and 6 per cent other ethnicity. The research focuses on these business owners and the shoppers who use the centre and addresses the following key questions:

- What social and spatial role/s does the Balmoral precinct play in the community?
- What economic role/s does the Balmoral precinct play in the community?
- What enables or constrains the development of businesses located there?
- What opportunities are there for social and economic development?

A better understanding of these issues will assist Auckland Council in a number of ways. Firstly, it will inform the development of policies and programmes that support a diverse ethnic economy, one of the four cross cutting themes in the city's Economic Development Strategy.² Secondly, it will provide a foundation for collaborative initiatives under the newly developed Regional Partnership Agreement with Immigration New Zealand and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED). The main objective of this agreement is to support migrant attraction,

² <http://eds.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>.

retention and settlement, key components of which are to enable migrant business development and utilise the international networks of Auckland's newcomers.

In addition, answers to these questions will facilitate the development of positive relationships with this group of business owners; enable informed decisions about the nature and level of assistance required to support this manifestation of a diverse ethnic economy; assist economic development officers to make good plans for local centres by helping them to understand the communities and areas they serve; assist council officers in the planning of social infrastructure; and foster a sense of belonging and inclusion within ethnic precincts and in local communities more broadly.

1.1 Structure of the report

The report begins with a review of local and international literature on immigrant entrepreneurship and ethnic precincts (Section 2). This section traverses a range of empirical and theoretical work that considers the nature of immigrant entrepreneurship, including contributors and obstacles to business success, and the economic and social functions of ethnic precincts. This review is followed by a Methodology section (Section 3) that outlines the scope of the project, the development of the integrated programme of research and the discrete methods employed. Section 4 serves two functions; it offers a brief history of the area and a demographic profile of the community surrounding the Balmoral shops. Together, these initial chapters provide the context for the following three sections, the first two of which focus on the research results.

Section 5 brings together the results of three discrete but complementary studies that focus on the people who visit the Balmoral precinct while Section 6 presents the results of in-depth interviews with business owners in the area. The final section (Section 7) aims to do five things: provide an overview of some of the key findings of the project; briefly consider the contribution the research makes to ethnic precincts scholarship; locate the research in the current strategy and policy space by considering key council documents, agreements and partnerships that take account of an ethnic economy; outline the support that is currently available to migrants when settling and establishing a business in New Zealand; and consider how central and local government might better work alongside communities to enhance their social, cultural and economic well-being.

2.0 Literature review

In this section, we review the two main areas of scholarship on ethnic precincts: a large body of literature focusing on ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship; and research concerned with the spatial clustering of ethnic businesses more specifically. We begin by examining contemporary definitions of ethnic entrepreneurship and then outline a number of theoretical explanations for immigrants' disproportionate involvement in entrepreneurial activity. Most ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship focuses on the factors that support or constrain the establishment and development of immigrant businesses. We discuss, in turn, research that looks at the impact of policies and regulations; the role of social embeddedness; location factors; and research on the role of transnational networks. We then turn to the literature on ethnic precincts, looking first at definitions and functions before examining the social role they play in local communities. We conclude by discussing the role of ethnic precincts in discourses of urban regeneration and the commodification of ethnic precincts as tourist destinations.

2.1 Immigrant entrepreneurship

2.1.1 Definition

Ethnicity has historically been a central feature of definitions of immigrant economies, as exemplified by the fact that 'immigrant economy' and 'ethnic economy' are often used interchangeably. Broadly speaking, the immigrant economy is said to comprise businesses that are 'ethnic-controlled' or 'ethnic-owned' (Light & Gold, 2000). More recent definitions of immigrant economies, however, are more nuanced and account for the ways in which migration has become increasingly complex in terms of migrant socio-economic status, age, gender, migration history, generation, legal status, language, ethnicity and religion.³ Antoine Pécoud (2010, p. 70, emphasis added), for example, criticises the centrality of ethnicity as a defining feature of immigrant economies and argues that "ethnicity and ethnic resources [...] are a *possible* characteristic of immigrant economies rather than their *inherent* feature." Similarly, Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2013) criticise the fact that businesses are often regarded as ethnic even when they use standard supply chains and sell 'generic' goods, thereby singling out migrant entrepreneurs as different from native-born business owners. Like Pécoud, Glick Schiller and Çağlar argue that ethnicity may play a role in the decisions that immigrant entrepreneurs make but that this should not be taken for granted.

2.1.2 Explaining immigrant self-employment

Many attempts have been made to explain why immigrants exhibit higher rates of self-employment than native-born people. Entrepreneurship has been theorised as a strategy for countering disadvantage such as "discrimination, lack of qualifications, industrial restructuring, unemployment, welfare retrenchment and labour market deregulation" (Pécoud, 2010, p. 59). Other theories emphasise ethnic resources as assets and as pull-factors for self-employment. These theories

³ This complexity is expressed in Vertovec's (2007) notion of 'super-diversity'.

cannot satisfactorily explain, however, why immigrants take up self-employment. Ethnic resources, for example, may also be used in salaried employment and, at times, may function as burdens rather than assets.

A study of New Zealand companies undertaken by Watts, Trlin, White and North (2007, p. 737) suggests that “the cultural capital of immigrants, including their linguistic and cultural competencies, overseas qualifications and work experience, and contacts and networks in other countries, are at best overlooked, and at worst regarded as a handicap [by employers].” After noting that this makes self-employment an attractive alternative, the interviews they undertook with 26 immigrant entrepreneurs did not conclusively support the disadvantage hypothesis (Watts et al., 2007).

Pio’s (2007) small-scale qualitative study of female Indian entrepreneurs in New Zealand, however, provides some evidence for the disadvantage hypothesis. Her participants experienced disadvantage in the labour market because of a lack of local experience and a lack of recognition of their overseas qualifications. The study also showed that her female Indian university-educated participants made use of co-ethnic niche markets and ethnic resources in their New Zealand enterprises.

In an analysis of data from 60 different ethnic groups in the United States, Fairlie and Meyer (1996) found that more advantaged (based on earnings) immigrant groups had higher self-employment rates than disadvantaged groups. Thus, disadvantage may push some individuals into self-employment but cannot explain significant variations between ethnic groups. Ethnic resources may depend on context and differ between places and ethnic groups not because of differences between the groups themselves but because of differences in the ways that these groups are perceived in their respective host societies. Self-employment is often the result of a combination of push and pull factors. In North and Trlin’s (2004) study of self-employed migrants in New Zealand, for example, the authors note that migrants had many different motivations for going into business.

Moving beyond these cultural and structural theories, some scholars call for greater attention to the role of individual agency. Kontos (2003, p. 188), for example, urges researchers to look beyond cultural theories to “the biographical embeddedness of entrepreneurial activity.” Brettell and Alstatt (2007) specifically argue for moving beyond the disadvantage hypothesis in their biographical research with immigrant entrepreneurs. They concluded that there was little evidence for the view that immigrants become self-employed due to a lack of opportunities. Like Kontos, they stress individual agency, maintaining that “above all else it was the desire to ‘be one’s own boss’ that moved these individuals, at one moment in their life course, toward self-employment” (Brettell & Alstatt, 2007, p. 395). These sentiments are also visible in Auckland-based research with Chinese business owners who, despite having experienced some hardship post-migration, stressed self-employment as a personal choice (Spoonley & Meares, 2009).

Other models have emphasised the interplay of endogenous (class and ethnic resources) and exogenous factors (local market conditions and institutional practices such as regulations). The

mixed embeddedness model, for example, posits that immigrant entrepreneurs are embedded in both social networks *and* in the host country's institutional environment (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999). The mixed embeddedness approach has become a dominant paradigm in research on immigrant entrepreneurship. Kloosterman (2010, p. 28) argues that it helps us to explain "patterns of variation in migrant entrepreneurship – between groups, sectors, between place and between countries."

2.1.3 Supports and constraints of ethnic businesses

2.1.3.1 Policies and regulations

In New Zealand, the neo-liberal emphasis on market forces and individual choice has also impacted immigration and settlement policies (Spoonley & Meares, 2011).⁴ The state invests in the recruitment of human capital overseas while the settlement of migrants is largely left to their own agency and the opportunities – and barriers – of the marketplace. Although this can encourage self-employment, there is very little structural support for potential immigrant entrepreneurs (Cain & Spoonley, 2013; Meares, Cain, & Spoonley, 2011). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the following have been cited as the biggest obstacles by many local ethnic entrepreneurs: lack of knowledge about the host country's business sector; where to obtain legal, financial, or regulatory advice; visa issues for themselves or their employees; lack of credit history; and perceived language barriers (North & Trlin, 2004; Watts et al., 2007).

2.1.3.2 Social embeddedness

The social embeddedness of migrant entrepreneurs can be an important tool in countering a lack of structural support (Meares et al., 2011; Spoonley & Meares, 2011). Strong ties with a co-ethnic community can serve as a source of psychological support; a pool of co-ethnic staff; niche market opportunities; and local and transnational ties to secure suppliers and clients. In addition, co-location specifically can help potential entrepreneurs to access support, information, labour and a local market even in the face of structural, cultural and/or language barriers. Research carried out in Auckland (Meares et al., 2011; Spoonley & Meares, 2009) found that while many entrepreneurs make use of paid and/or unpaid family labour, the Chinese entrepreneurs in their study depended heavily on their co-ethnic community as a source of staff, suppliers and clients. Strickland (2013) also argues that social embeddedness is vital to ethnic business success. He examined the cultural factors that impact on the success of ethnic restaurants in Australia and found that co-ethnic ties, marriage and family support played important roles in the everyday running of businesses.

As Meares et al. (2011, p. 264) note, however, reliance on co-ethnic communities is not always the result of barriers or a lack of structural support. For example, many of the Chinese business owners they interviewed chose to employ Mandarin speaking personnel to cater to the growing population of first generation Chinese immigrants. Similarly, Jamal (2005) found that, just like other

⁴This echoes Collins' (2003) findings in the Australian context.

entrepreneurs, ethnic retail business owners use a range of product and promotional strategies. However, they also cater to their largely co-ethnic clientele in quite specific ways. These strategies include, for example, the sale of authentic brands and products from their clients' countries of origin; the provision of cultural products such as magazines, newspapers, tapes and compact discs; and the employment of co-ethnic staff who speak the same language as their customers (Jamal, 2005, p. 8). These examples illustrate the ways in which co-ethnic networks constitute an economic advantage.

Co-location or 'ethnic density' may also facilitate greater levels of trust. In a study of Turkish and Moroccan business owners in the Netherlands, the authors found that "non-western immigrant entrepreneurs tend to rely on family and the ethnic community for support, the so-called 'strong ties' and to a lesser extent on business networks, the so-called 'weak ties'" (el Bouk, Vedder, & te Poel, 2013, p. 772). However, they argue that in order for immigrant businesses to flourish, entrepreneurs must eventually transcend the strong ties provided by kin and the co-ethnic community and, using weak ties, access resources in the general economy. Niche markets, they claim, can be limiting and lead to greater market competition, high failure rates and low profits (el Bouk et al., 2013; see also, Fairlie & Meyer, 1996; Watts et al., 2007).

Both strong and weak ties emerged as important in the start-up phase of the ethnic businesses in el Bouk's study. Weak ties were especially important with respect to financial resources because family and friends are often unable to provide loans. The researchers also found a difference with regards to generation: first generation immigrant entrepreneurs were more likely to rely on support from family and friends than those from the second generation who stressed that autonomy was important to them. During the businesses' growth phase strong ties remained important, especially with regards to the recruitment of staff. In areas of low ethnic density, entrepreneurs specifically sought out their own co-ethnic community for personnel, a strategy they used because of prior experiences of discrimination. Ultimately, el Bouk et al. (2013) found that low levels of trust impeded the use of weak ties and subsequently the accessibility of resources beyond the co-ethnic community.

The desire for greater autonomy expressed by the second generation entrepreneurs in el Bouk's study suggests that strong ties may also have drawbacks for ethnic entrepreneurs. Kontos (2003) argues that ethnic resources such as solidarity and reciprocity can become a burden that turns social capital into social debt. This was exemplified by some of el Bouk's (2013) participants who reported that they found it difficult to sanction negative behaviour by co-ethnics because of feelings of responsibility or dependence on the co-ethnic market. Pécoud (2004) found similar problems with reliance on co-ethnic networks in his research with ethnic entrepreneurs in Berlin. The entrepreneurs he interviewed, for example, resented the fact that their dependence on co-ethnic networks determined what kind of business they were able to operate and in which neighbourhood. Like el Bouk's participants, some of the Turkish entrepreneurs in Berlin reported that co-ethnic ties made it more difficult to fire Turkish personnel because it was regarded as disloyal. Hiring personnel from other ethnic minority backgrounds was often seen as a solution to this problem because they provided a source of cheap labour without causing conflict (Pécoud, 2004).

2.1.3.3 Location factors

Given that the majority of migrants settle in urban spaces, it is unsurprising that most small and medium ethnic enterprises are located in cities (Collins, 2003). In early research on ethnic enclaves, scholars debated the effects of residential and commercial concentration on immigrant integration and mobility, and on the development of immigrant businesses. Kaplan (1998, pp. 494-495) suggested the following possibilities: geographic concentration could work as either an 'incubator' for ethnic businesses with its proximity to co-ethnic support; as a space that enables 'linkages' between clustered businesses; as an 'agglomeration economy' in which the establishment of one ethnic business leads to more demand for similar ethnic businesses; or a 'focus' for co-ethnic residents who may or may not live in close proximity.

A more recent study of the 'Balti Quarter', a cluster of South Asian restaurants in Birmingham, suggests that location is a key factor for business success mainly because it determines market potential (Ram, Jones, Abbas, & Sanghera, 2002). However, as the authors argue, "entry into strategic locations tapping into the richest customer potential depends heavily on the possession of other resources such as capital, information and in some instances management skills" (Ram et al., 2002, p. 38). This might explain why "migrant neighbourhoods are first and foremost start-up locations for their residents and - apart from their low rents, relatively central location and comparatively ample availability of parking space – offer few other advantages for local entrepreneurs" (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014, p. 163).

Beckers and Kloosterman (2014) examined the effect of zoning on ethnic businesses in five pre- and post-war migrant neighbourhoods in Dutch cities. In interviews with business owners they tested the importance of a range of factors for firm success, including ethnic population mix, low-cost business space, market potential and neighbourhood safety. All the factors they tested, except for ethnic population mix and firms' spatial expansion possibilities were perceived as important by both native Dutch and migrant entrepreneurs. Other factors that proved to be important were "perceptions of social interactions and disturbance in the neighbourhood, local policies and relations with local authorities, and the level of local amenities" (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014, p. 164).

The recent decline in small independent retail in developed economies has led to research on the ways that owners of small and medium enterprises adapt to competition from large multinational retailers. The issues are similar for both immigrant and non-immigrant businesses. According to Coca-Stefaniak, Parker and Rees (2010, p. 678), localisation is an "integrated business marketing strategy" for small retailers. Suzanne Hall's (2011, p. 2578) research on a multi-ethnic high street in a deprived part of London identified several strategies used by retailers "to differentiate between shops on the street, as well as to secure the support of a discerning clientele." They provided a combination of specialised retail; ethnically oriented goods; and distinctive combinations of retail (for example, money transfer and wedding garments) while some compartmentalised the space available to them, renting it out within the shop to keep costs down.

Regular customers and a focus on the local community were also critical to the success of these small businesses. A *High Street London* report from 2010 (cited in Hall, 2011, p. 2573) found that “two thirds of Londoners live within 500m of a high street, and that two thirds of the trips to the local street are made to access forms of exchange and interaction other than retail.” Hall argues that small localities such as neighbourhood high streets provide informal meeting places and a sense of regularity as well as familiarity, a factor which was seen by one respondent as the “key to his success.” As Hall (2012, p. 87) states, “the associations with a local place were one aspect of a common social code, where social connections were established not only by a shared sense of the past, but also by day-to-day experiences of the present.”

2.1.3.4 Transnational networks

Increasing flows of goods, capital and people across the globe have led to the emergence of transnationalism as a prominent theme in migration literature. Light (2007) argues that transnationalism can occur from above - facilitated by immigration policies that encourage transnational business migrants with the objective of increasing economic growth – and from below – when “transmigrants” emerge without such support. Transmigrants are considered to be different from immigrants in so far as they have diasporas,⁵ are bicultural and bilingual, and have social capital that transcends international borders. Transmigrants, according to Light (2007), are significantly more likely to become entrepreneurs than immigrants who integrate into the host country. The bicultural skills of Chinese transmigrants, for example, means that they are “more likely to make use of Chinese business contacts, and more likely to target non-Chinese customers” (Light, 2007, p. 7).

Portes et al.’s (2002) empirical analysis of immigrant entrepreneurs’ transnational ties confirms some of Light’s claims. The authors define transnational entrepreneurs as those who travel overseas at least twice a year for business and who responded positively to one of the following two questions: the success of my firm depends on regular contact with foreign countries; and/or the success of my firm depends on regular contact with my country of origin. Portes et al. (2002, p. 285) found that 58 per cent of the self-employed in their study could be categorised as transnational entrepreneurs. Their research also showed that the probability of engagement in both domestic and transnational networks increased with longer residence in the United States, providing some evidence for Light’s (2007) claim that transmigrants remain bicultural. Interestingly, the study also suggests that transnational enterprise “is one that is neither marginal nor associated with poverty or recency of arrival. On the contrary, it is the better qualified, more experienced, and more secure immigrants who are overrepresented in these economic activities” (Portes et al., 2002, p. 290). This finding supports Light’s (2007) assertion that transnational entrepreneurs are part of the business elite who utilise their transnational social capital to advance their business interests.

⁵ Diasporas are scattered populations with a common origin in smaller geographic areas.

Even though Light eschews the vocabulary of integration into the host society in favour of a conception of transnationalism where transmigrants are at home in two places but not fully integrated into either, broader research on transnationalism *is* concerned with the impact of transnationalism on migrant integration (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Collins, 2011; Portes, 2001). Based on their study of transnational entrepreneurs discussed above, Portes et al. (2002) suggest that transnational ties may foster immigrant integration rather than hinder it and call for more research because “the forms of transnationalism can be expected to vary significantly by immigrant nationality and context of reception in ways that are not well understood today” (Portes et al., 2002, p. 294).

Drori, Honig and Wright (2009) draw an analytical distinction between transnational and ethnic entrepreneurs, arguing that transnational entrepreneurs have greater agency. By making use of their international capital in dual fields, and the possibilities of modern technology, communication and travel, transnational entrepreneurs can “modify and create environments, including new and existing structures” (Drori et al., 2009, p. 1004). According to these authors, ethnic entrepreneurship is likely to arise as a result of constraints rather than opportunities. Like Light, the authors argue that transnational entrepreneurs rely on class rather than on ethnic resources. In fact, they illustrate this point by stating that “many of the [transnational entrepreneurs] we have met in the course of our research indicate that they actually avoid close business associations with their co-ethnics, maintaining that such networks constrain their ability to identify additional resources and otherwise provide novelty, innovation, and market excellence” (Drori et al., 2009, p. 1004).

The distinction between immigrant and transnational entrepreneurs has not been emphasised in the local context. Watts et al. (2007, p. 741), for example, argue that the transnational ties of immigrants – defined as “their contacts with the outside world” – represent an advantage to the New Zealand economy. Spoonley and Meares’ (2009) research with Chinese business owners in Auckland suggests that the majority had networks in China; 81 per cent of Asia Pacific born entrepreneurs had contacts in China while the rate for New Zealand born Chinese entrepreneurs was predictably lower at 30 per cent. In addition, 40 per cent of businesses owned by New Zealand born entrepreneurs operated internationally compared to only 27 per cent of those businesses owned by Asia Pacific born entrepreneurs (Spoonley & Meares, 2009, pp. 12-13). Further research in New Zealand would provide insight into the kinds of capital immigrants rely on, the extent of their agency in setting up and running their businesses, and the forms and extent of transnational ties.

2.2 Ethnic precincts

2.2.1 Defining ethnic precincts

Definitions of ethnic precincts build on those associated with the concept of an ethnic economy. They commonly stress the clustering or “co-location of businesses that are owned by members of the same ethnic/immigrant group” (Cain et al., 2011, p. 7). The extant literature on ethnic precincts

suggests that they can vary considerably in size,⁶ while usually comprising a mix of food and retail outlets at street level combined with services on the level above. While ethnic precincts in Auckland such as Meadowlands, Dominion Road and Northcote are relatively small strip or mall developments, a study of New York's Chinatown puts the number of shops at 6737 (Asian American Federation, 2008). Collins and Kuntz (2009, p. 207) additionally emphasise the importance of an "ethnic feel" as a characteristic of ethnic precincts, describing them as "urban or suburban high street agglomerations of ethnic enterprises, clustered together in a space, which formally or informally adopt the symbolism, style and iconography of that ethnic group in public spaces."

The literature on ethnic precincts thus tends to focus on areas that are dominated by one particular ethnic group. Arguably however, neighbourhoods are increasingly characterised by multi-ethnic populations. Hall's (2011) ethnographic research focuses on Walworth Road in the Southwark Borough of London, a comparatively poor, ethnically diverse neighbourhood. In interviews with 93 out of 128 business owners on the road, Hall (2011, p. 2547) recorded "20 different countries of origin [...] with no single country of origin having a numeric dominance." Research undertaken by Place Partners (2011) on the St Albans shopping precinct in Melbourne shows how different waves of immigration have shaped the district. It is currently characterised by Vietnamese restaurants (latest arrivals), Asian grocers, specialty ethnic food stores, and European and Balkan cafés. Neither Walworth Road nor St Albans is defined as an ethnic precinct but ethnic diversity is considered an important analytical component in both places.

Shifts in the spatial distribution of immigrants and the resultant changes in communities challenge those definitions of ethnic precincts that emphasise one ethnicity or the promotion of an explicit, often essentialised ethnic character. Traditional concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged immigrants in inner cities have been superseded by a greater dispersal of more highly educated and affluent migrants across the suburbs of major cities. These 'ethnoburbs' (Li, 2009, 2006) are often ethnically diverse even in cases where one group dominates. Aytar and Rath (2012) argue that local communities are neither stable nor unchanging and recommend comparative studies of old and new ethnic precincts and a long-term perspective on their viability.

2.2.2 Functions of ethnic precincts

International literature on the functions of ethnic precincts has undergone significant change over recent decades. Traditionally, researchers tried to establish whether ethnic enclaves were a source of integration and social mobility or segregation and the intergenerational perpetuation of disadvantage in immigrant communities. The current research landscape is characterised by three main perspectives which we discuss in turn below: literature that examines the role of co-location in the success of ethnic entrepreneurs; studies of interactions between ethnic entrepreneurs, consumers, the local community, and institutional actors such as those involved in urban planning

⁶Both in terms of the area they cover and the number of businesses they contain.

and the promotion of ethnic precincts; and research in urban planning and tourist studies that increasingly emphasises the role of ethnic precincts in urban regeneration projects and tourism.

2.2.2.1 Business owners in ethnic precincts

The debate about the extent to which ethnic precincts enable migrant integration and facilitate social mobility have somewhat subsided as ethnic enclaves – now often described as ‘ethnoburbs’ – have come to be seen in a more positive light. In this spirit, Zhou (2007, p. 282) argues that enclave economies can serve “as an alternative means to social status recognition, nurturing entrepreneurial spirit, providing role modelling that inspires others to follow suit, and strengthening social networks locally and internationally.”

Research also focuses on the role co-location plays in the success of immigrant businesses. A report on the current state of London’s Chinatown suggests that businesses were negatively impacted by their location, especially after increases in rents and rates⁷ and the introduction of a congestion charge (Page Reference Ltd and Partnership Solution, 2004). These challenges have been exacerbated by shifts in migration patterns that have resulted in mini-Chinatowns in other areas of London and in other cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. The latter precincts are attractive because they are more accessible than inner city locations. In a similar vein, a report on New York’s Chinatown (Asian American Federation, 2008) also points to the difficulties associated with traditional inner city locations. In this case, one of the barriers to the continued success of Chinatown is a lack of space necessary for business expansion. In Sydney too, Mak (2003) argues that new suburban precincts offer attractive alternatives to the traditional inner city Chinatown.

More recently, the field of ‘new retail geography’ has begun to investigate the role of ethnicity in consumer behaviour in multicultural urban settings. Wang and Lo (2007) and Lo (2009) argue that shopping practices are not solely determined by economic factors but that ethnic identity plays a large role in shopping preferences. In their study on the supermarket choices of Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians in two Toronto suburbs, they found that immigrants were likely to travel further to go to Chinese supermarkets, foregoing closer ‘mainstream’ premises. This difference in store preference remained after controlling for age, income and other socio-economic factors. Lo (2009) noted that mainstream and Chinese supermarkets have complementary functions for Chinese respondents (the former used for sundry items, the latter predominantly for food items), whereas non-Chinese respondents see them as independent stores.

Although the concentration of Korean residents is low (20%) in Los Angeles’ Koreatown, it is nonetheless a thriving district because it attracts Koreans who live across the city (Zhou, 2007). Similarly, Mura and Lovelock (2009) explain that while the Italian resident community in Sydney’s Little Italy has decreased, the area’s restaurants and shops attract second and third generation Italian Australians who live in suburbs further afield. In an Auckland context, researchers have also noted differences between the way Chinese and non-Chinese consumers use the Dominion Road

⁷ Ninety per cent of businesses were operated in leased premises.

ethnic precinct. The authors suggest that the precinct is part of everyday life for those born in China, while others had a more functional relationship with the area (Cain et al., 2011).

Ethnic precincts attract not only a co-ethnic clientele but are increasingly shaped by and cater to new middle class consumption preferences (Pottie-Sherman, 2013). Ram et al. (2002) note that Birmingham's 'Balti Quarter' attracts mainly middle class customers who come to the area to enjoy the "Balti experience," part of which is to sample the variety of restaurants available. The consumption practices of majority and ethnic minority groups are certainly shaped by globalisation, greater flows of cultural products and multicultural discourses that promote the celebration and consumption of diversity. However, consumption practices are also shaped by entrepreneurs. Jamal (2003) emphasises the role of retailers as cultural intermediaries in his work on the relationship between retailing, ethnic identity and consumption in Bradford. He concludes that ethnic retailers facilitate the institutionalisation of the culture of the ethnic group they are serving while at the same time facilitating the consumption of ethnic products amongst mainstream consumers.

2.2.2.2 Ethnic precincts in local communities

Drawing on findings from the research on immigrant consumption patterns just discussed, it is clear that ethnic precincts also play a wider social role. Wang and Lo (2007, p. 390) suggest that ethnic retailers have three social functions: shopping provides Chinese immigrant families with an opportunity for shared leisure activity and social interactions with family members; familiar signage improves the independence of elderly migrants with few English language skills; and ethnic retailers provide spaces in which ethnic identity can be re-negotiated.

Ethnic precincts can also facilitate community building by acting as a support network for immigrants. Spoonley and Meares (2011, p. 57) argue that this is exemplified in Kit Wong's purpose built Chinese ethnic precinct in Meadowlands, Auckland, where:

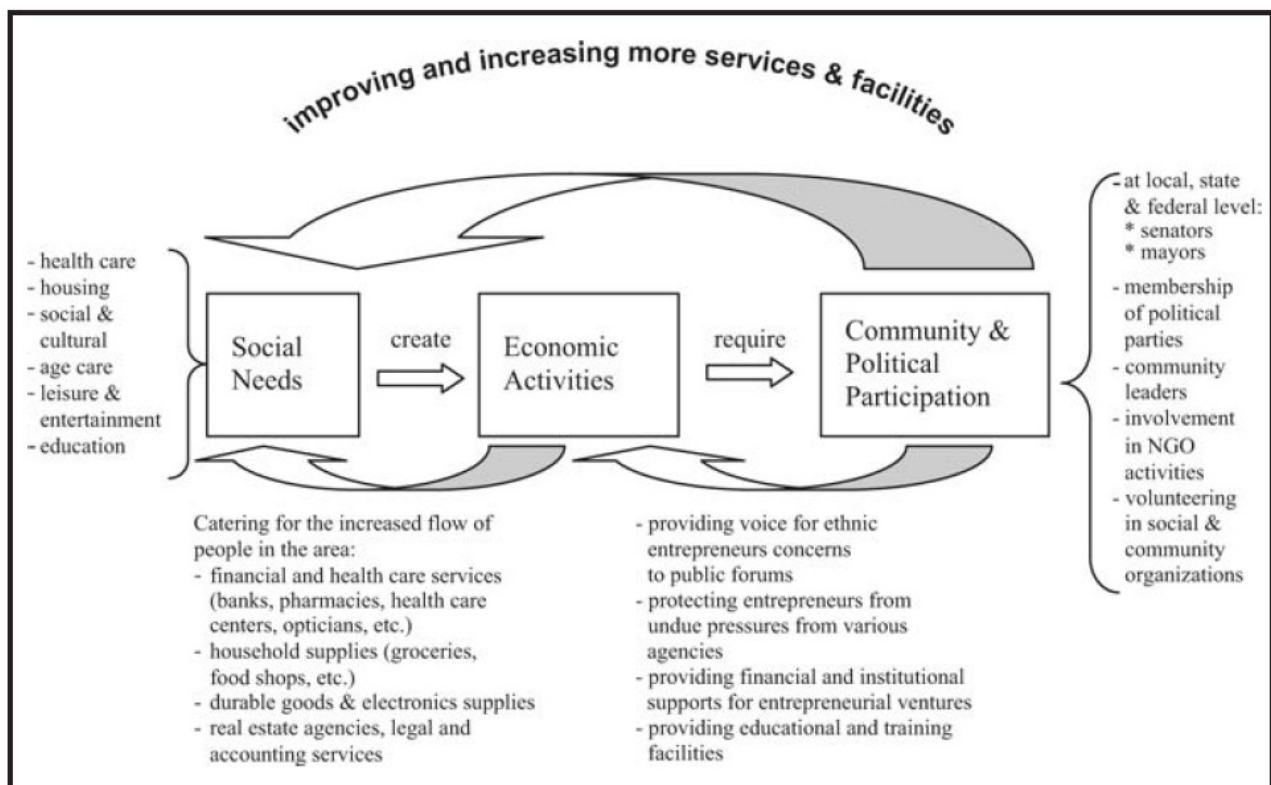
"... [he] placed a lot of emphasis on the social benefits of his development. For example, one of the positive attributes of the site was that it was a short, level walk from neighbouring streets for elderly people who could not drive themselves. The mixture of shops meant that people could do their shopping as well as have somewhere to sit and meet others for something to eat or a chat; and do all of this in their own language."

Zhou's research on Koreatown, Los Angeles, yielded similar findings. The precinct began with retail but then moved into services and community institutions including churches and educational facilities. The precinct plays an important role for the local resident co-ethnic community, for example, by providing education for young Koreans, but also attracts middle class Koreans who live in suburbs further afield. Zhou (2007) argues that enclave entrepreneurs have a particularly high stake in the community where they are located.

Based on in-depth interviews with ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Box Hill, a recently developed ethnic precinct in Melbourne, Selvarajah and Masli (2011) developed a preliminary model (see

Figure 3) to explain the emergence, expansion and maintenance of ethnic precincts. Initially, they claim, the social needs of the co-ethnic resident population led to a greater demand for commercial enterprises which “started with restaurants then extended to grocery shops, pharmacies, optical shops, dentists, household furniture shops, real estate agencies, electronic shops, souvenir shops and so on” (Selvarajah & Masli, 2011, p. 55). So far these observations are congruent with the research cited above. In Boxhill, however, attracting a “mainstream clientele” concluded the economic development of the ethnic precinct. In addition, the researchers also found that ethnic community political participation played a crucial role in facilitating and sustaining community development and constituted a resource for the further economic development of the ethnic precinct.

Figure 3 Social, economic and political interaction in ethnic business clusters



Source: Selvarajah and Masli (2011, p. 56)

Previous research on the community functions of ethnic precincts has focused exclusively on the benefits of ethnic precincts for co-ethnic communities. Given that the local community surrounding an ethnic precinct may not feature a majority of co-ethnic residents, it makes sense to ask how non-co-ethnic residents, i.e. those of the majority culture or other ethnic backgrounds, perceive and interact with ethnic precincts. Zhou (2007), for example, suggested that Los Angeles' Koreatown served a co-ethnic population that constitutes only 20 per cent of the population while the Latino residents who made up the majority of the population were excluded from its benefits due to cultural and language barriers.

Overall, there is a paucity of research on how local residents perceive and interact with ethnic precincts. Although focusing solely on perceptions of authenticity, Mura and Lovelock's (2009)

comparison of international tourists, domestic tourists and local residents' perceptions of Sydney's Italian precinct is the only study that considers the perceptions of local residents. They argue that local residents perceive Leichhardt as less authentic than both domestic and international tourists because they are more familiar with "the cultural realities" of the area: that only a small number of residents and business owners have an Italian background; and that some of the features of the ethnic precinct have only been developed in the recent past. While the availability of restaurants was welcomed by residents, their main reasons for living in the area included accessibility and perceptions of safety (Mura & Lovelock, 2009, p. 46).

2.2.2.3 Corner shop cosmopolitanism?

Recent research on "quotidian intercultural encounters" (Wise & Velayutham, 2009) provides a starting point for studying the relationship between ethnic precincts and the communities in which they are located. Shifts in focus from the national to the local, and from ideology to practices, have gained some prominence in research on interactions between different ethnic groups in global cities. The objective of this work is to empirically study how conviviality and cosmopolitanism emerge in increasingly diverse urban spaces (Hall, 2012; Noble, 2013).

Researchers have yet to examine intercultural practices in ethnic precincts but have focused more broadly on multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom and Australia (Karner & Parker, 2011; Lobo, 2010; Noble, 2009, 2011, 2013; Parker & Karner, 2010; Wessendorf, 2011, 2013; Wise, 2005), streets (Hall, 2012, Hall, 2013; Mavrommatis, 2006; Wise, 2010), public spaces (Peters & de Haan, 2011) and markets (Rhys-Taylor, 2013). Given the increasing complexity of global cities, much of this research is concerned with multi-ethnic settings. Hall (2012, p. 13), for example, describes the object of her ethnographic study in London as a site where "prolific diversity escapes an ethnic branding on the basis of a particular group and associated activity."

The effects of social interactions on people's attitudes towards different ethnic and cultural groups have long been examined and debated. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), that intergroup interactions typically reduce intergroup prejudice, is now generally accepted (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) within specific social and economic conditions. Recent research by the Asia New Zealand Foundation (Gendall, Spoonley, & Butcher, 2013), for example, suggests that New Zealanders have developed increasingly positive attitudes towards Asian migrants, with favourable views climbing from 31 to 55 per cent between 1997 and 2011. The authors argue that the extent of contact with immigrants is the most important predictor of positive attitudes towards immigrants.

A variety of studies suggest that commercial and community spaces encourage regular intercultural exchanges. Hiebert (2000, p. 7), for instance, argues that "many people [...] interact in mono-cultural contexts in certain aspects of their lives (e.g. friendship networks) and cosmopolitan ones in other aspects (e.g. at work)." Ellis, Wright and Parks (2004) also conclude that despite persisting residential segregation in many North American neighbourhoods, workplaces provide an important site of intergroup contact. Shops too are common sites for social interaction within neighbourhoods, acting as "important meeting and gathering places within the neighbourhood,

providing opportunities for proximity to others, passive social contact, and casual interactions” (Francis, Giles-Corti, Wood, & Knuiman, 2012, p. 406).

There is, however, considerable ongoing debate on the effects of contact in these spaces. Although Hannigan (2010, p. 92) describes ethnic precincts as “contact zones” for people from different backgrounds, he contends that “sharing geographical and consumption spaces does not appear to guarantee any meaningful level of shared intercourse, especially among those of different social strata and background.” Noble (2011, p. 838), on the other hand, insists that even banal and short interactions are “forms of ‘urban learning’; strategies for exploring complex spaces shaped by the routine world of strangers in which the accumulation of casual, familiar and intimate forms of knowledge in the establishment of diverse relations with others is central: as customer, patron, resident [...]” In their study of interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds in public spaces in a Dutch town, Peters and de Haan (2011, p. 169) conclude that residents’ appreciation of cultural diversity does not translate into connections “that go beyond small talk in stores.” However, the authors maintain that these first-hand encounters with ‘diversity’ have the potential to transform people’s attitudes and sentiments and “contribute to a more realistic view of multiculturalism.”

According to Skrbis and Woodward (2007), cosmopolitanism can be understood as a set of practices and dispositions that people deploy selectively. In their focus group study of 76 Australians in Brisbane, they noted that participants embraced enjoyable experiences that cultivated their sense of identity but rejected threatening elements of difference (Skrbis & Woodward, 2007, p. 745). Similarly, Skey (2013) proposes focusing on ‘cosmopolitan practices’ as an analytical tool for critical analysis and to examine the temporal, contingent and motivated nature of these practices. Paying attention to whether cosmopolitan practices are fleeting or long-term, in what contexts they occur, who they include or exclude, and whether they are voluntary, strategic or forced actions may help us use cosmopolitanism as a category of critical analysis.

As Noble (2013) rightly stresses, measuring cosmopolitanism empirically is difficult and this shows in some of the studies. They are either too vague in their ethnographic descriptions of contacts or they reify difference as a variable when it is not perceived as significant by the participants. The emphasis on local intercultural encounters is also said to run the risk of deflecting attention away from structural inequalities and group rights. Valentine (2008, p. 334) questions the extent to which everyday encounters are meaningful and urges researchers to merge debates “about prejudice and respect with questions of social-economic inequalities and power.” Collins and Friesen (2011, p. 3073) similarly point out that these approaches focus solely on low level interactions between “customers and shopkeepers, members of bus queues, regulars at cafés and bars, passers-by and neighbours.”

2.2.3 Ethnic precincts and the ‘diversity dividend’

Much of the current literature on ethnic precincts is situated in urban and regional studies or tourism and leisure studies and is concerned with two interrelated issues: ethnic precincts as a vital

component of urban regeneration and branding; and ethnic precincts as tourist destinations. In the next and last section of this literature review we examine each of these interconnected areas.

2.2.3.1 Urban regeneration and tourist attractions

Within the context of a neoliberal policy environment, urban diversity is presented as a 'diversity advantage', as a social, economic and cultural asset (Wood & Landry, 2007). The promotion of branded ethnic spaces is only one aspect of this paradigm, one that sits alongside immigration policies and provisions that attract high-skilled migrants, encouragement of ethnic entrepreneurship in general, attracting the 'creative class,' and transnational business networks (Syrett & Sepulveda, 2011).

Instead of being viewed as problematic signs of a lack of integration, ethnic precincts are now valorised as part of the process of urban renewal (Sassen, 1991). As Hannigan (2010, p. 86) points out, "ethnic precincts ... have become a valued resource in the officially directed project of place promotion and marketing." Ethnicity has thus become an asset to be sold and a source of urban renewal and economic growth. "Once the run-down neighbourhoods of the marginalized, they now flaunt their ethnic diversity and are colourfully described in visitors' guides and on websites to promote tourism and investment" (Aytar & Rath, 2012, pp. 1-2).

The development of Little Italy in Ancoat, a deprived inner city area of Manchester, provides an excellent example of this kind of planned urban change. Despite three waves of Italian immigration and a resident population of approximately 20,000, the Italian community is widely dispersed across the Manchester metropolitan area. While there is little sense of an Italian diaspora community, according to Taylor (2000), the development of Little Italy presents a reclamation of space and is part of the politics of belonging of Italian migrants in Manchester. This is underlined by the fact that the initiative is clearly supported by members of the ethnic community.

Even though the branding of ethnic precincts has successfully revitalised some formerly marginalised neighbourhoods, the notion of 'boosterism' is nonetheless problematic because the causal relationship between diversity and economic development is inconclusive at best (Syrett & Sepulveda, 2011). While small and medium ethnic enterprises make up a significant share of many economies (Fairlie, 2010), Syrett and Sepulveda (2011, p. 489) argue that "the presence of highly skilled workers, open economies, a stable political environment, and technology and innovation" are the most significant factors. While diversity may contribute to economic growth, it is neither a vital nor a causal factor.

There are few market analyses of ethnic precincts in the academic literature. A comprehensive analysis of London's Chinatown (Page Reference Ltd and Partnership Solution, 2004) found that this mixed use precinct ran at nearly full capacity (6% vacant) and drew 60 per cent of its visitors from London. However, the research company was unable to provide any measure of the economic impact of Chinatown on the London economy because of a lack of data "on the Chinatown area in its own right" (Page Reference Ltd and Partnership Solution, 2004, p. 27). Consulting company Place Partners (2011) analysed the St Albans retail precinct in Western

Melbourne. St Albans is not defined as an ethnic precinct but the report stresses the significance of ethnic diversity amongst the precinct's businesses, such as a "strong Vietnamese character" as well as ethnic specialty shops, European and Balkan cafés and "specialty cultural stores". Place Partners mapped the businesses in the precinct, carried out a catchment, competition and market analysis, and interviewed 34 business owners. The authors argue that the precinct mainly serves the local community on a day-to-day basis. Its specialty stores, however, also attracted customers from the Western suburbs of Melbourne, while the celebration of the Lunar New Year attracted 50,000 to 60,000 people from across Melbourne.

The process of marketing and selling ethnicity is often tied up with gentrification (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005; Pottie-Sherman, 2013). Critics of the diversity dividend policy approach have pointed out that it routinely "focuse[s] on the needs of high-skilled professionals and the production of gentrified and sanitised ethno-landscapes attractive to mobile high-skill workers, investors, and tourists" (Syrett & Sepulveda, 2011, p. 499) at the expense of addressing "the economic potential of lower skilled ethnic minority and migrant workers, often resident in low-income neighbourhoods and comprising the vast majority of diverse urban populations" (Syrett & Sepulveda, 2011, p. 498). Shaw et al. (2004) stress that gentrification also means that the function of ethnic precincts shifts from that of serving the often marginalised co-ethnic community to satisfying the demands of "high spending leisure consumers" who are often members of dominant ethnic groups or international tourists.

Ethnic tourism can be seen as a subset of the diversity dividend paradigm and the commodification of ethnicity. Collins and Jordan (2009, p. 79) define 'ethnic tourism' as:

"tourism to destinations that are labeled, marketed, and identified with the cultural diversity of a particular minority ethnic group. Ethnic precincts such as Chinatown, Little Italy, Thaitown, and Koreatown attract customers who are locals, national tourists, or international tourists to experience the "ethnic neighborhoods" of the city. These customers are often attracted by the presence of ethnic businesses—restaurants, shops, services—set up by ethnic entrepreneurs."

The literature on ethnic precincts as tourist destinations is mainly concerned with the processes that are necessary to create and sustain a precinct with an ethnic identity that attracts tourists (Collins, 2007). In addition to the mechanisms of support that have been identified for ethnic businesses in general, Rath (2007, pp. 10-11) suggests that for ethnic precincts to flourish and draw tourists the following conditions must be met:

- Immigrant ethnic communities must "find themselves a space that serves as the nodal point of community life" even if these immigrants do not live in the same area
- An ethnic precinct needs shops to foster public life, to encourage visitors to spend time there, and to give the neighbourhood an ethnic flavour. Ideally, the ethnic precinct should be part of a larger tourist industry

- Ethnic precincts need to be supported and promoted by “critical infrastructure” in order to create sufficient demand and interest in ethnic products
- Lastly, ethnic precincts depend on favourable regulations, such as zoning, cleanliness and safety, accessibility and crime control.

The use of ethnic identity as a point of differentiation often produces a burden of authenticity that requires essentialisation and generalisation, and ultimately an “othering” of ethnic minorities. Several scholars (Collins, 2007; Ip, 2005; Mura & Lovelock, 2009) have argued that ethnic precincts developed by local councils tend to create a homogenous stereotypical identity that has little in common with the ethnic groups they are meant to represent. In a comparative study of two Chinese districts in Brisbane, Ip (2005) criticises the lack of migrant agency in council promoted ethnic precincts compared to those ethnoburbs that emerged organically following a wave of migration triggered by the introduction of a Business Migration Programme. The comparison is instructive. While the council-planned Chinatown relies on productions of an essentialised Chineseness based on Western conceptions and reproduced globally in many major cities, the area of Sunnybank, inhabited by well-educated affluent migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan represents a contemporary cosmopolitan picture that “is increasingly representative of life in contemporary Australian cities” (Ip, 2005, p. 73). Ip concludes that studying naturally emerging ethnoburbs in which migrants play a significant role in place-making may help us better understand what role ethnicity plays in the lives of contemporary migrants.

Other examples point to the tension that exists between the constraints and opportunities presented by institutional support. Barrett and McEvoy’s (2006) study of the transformation of Rusholme from an “ordinary shopping district” into Manchester’s ‘Curry Mile’ is an example of an organically grown ethnic precinct. The authors trace its development to an incidental beginning when two cinemas were rented out to show Bollywood films. This was followed by a cumulative increase in South Asian gastronomic and retail businesses that opened to meet the demand of growing South Asian cinema patronage. Some critics have argued that the precinct’s progress was much slower than that of newly developed more prestigious projects, and hence less likely to attract investment because of a lack of council support. However, the authors argue that Manchester Council has been somewhat supportive (change of use of premises and traffic related changes, for example) and now recognises Rusholme alongside precincts such as Chinatown and the Gay Village as a cultural quarter.

As Rath (2007) notes, it cannot be taken for granted that immigrant communities are interested in promoting ethnic precincts as tourist destinations. In one of the few studies of perceptions of ethnic precincts, Collins and Kuntz (2009) found that some co-ethnic consumers in Sydney’s Chinatown and Vietnammata were unhappy about being “gawked at” by other consumers. This reinforces the criticism that marketing exoticness and authenticity can ‘other’ the co-ethnic community that the precinct may originally have served.

Migrant agency is exemplified in the ‘no Chinatown’ campaign in Auckland where ethnic precincts have not yet been marketed as tourist destinations. In fact, as Spoonley and Meares (2011, p. 58)

note, “outside the Chinese community, few non-Chinese know of their existence.” When research sparked a debate about why the city had no designated Chinatown despite large numbers of Chinese residents, opposition to the possibility of a branded and promoted Chinatown was voiced. As Spoonley and Meares (2011, p. 60) observed:

“... most of [the campaigners] were younger members of the Chinese community, [who] felt that it usurped the Chinese community’s prerogative to claim its own space and future and that local government involvement in the project would simply confirm their minority status and ‘difference’.”

Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureli (2012) have critically examined the potential of cultural tourism as an economic development strategy for ethnic neighbourhoods. The authors conducted interviews with merchants from four lesser-known ethnic neighbourhoods in Los Angeles about their businesses and customer profiles, business promotion efforts, perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of their location, and neighbourhood improvement priorities. The challenges articulated by respondents include a lack of physical infrastructure, a lack of visibility, the danger of stereotyping, and a lack of funding. Their concurrent evaluation of the impact of cultural tourism organisations on neighbourhoods in seven cities in the United States showed that cultural tourism promotion provides opportunities such as the unearthing of the “potential of these neighbourhoods as hubs of cultural production and foci of cross-cultural connections” and the “formation of ongoing partnerships built between local neighbourhood organizations and larger city-wide, regional, or state agencies” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Soureli, 2012, p. 65). However, the authors conclude that cultural tourism should not be seen as “an all-encompassing strategy of neighbourhood revitalization, community empowerment, and regional economic development” but rather as a component of strategies designed to address the challenges faced by ethnic businesses.

3.0 Methodology

The broad objective of this research project was to better understand the social, spatial and economic role performed by the Balmoral shops, an ethnic precinct located between Balmoral Road and Tennyson Street/Kensington Avenue. In order to achieve this objective, we drew on concepts, theoretical frameworks and methodologies used in a number of social science disciplines: sociology; geography; anthropology; psychology; and economics. We also relied on the cultural, linguistic and research skills of several bilingual research assistants and the specialised institutional knowledge of an engaged Steering Group comprising representatives from Economic Development, Local Boards and Community Development Arts and Culture at Auckland Council, as well as the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. In this section, we outline the development of the four parts of the project - the intercept surveys, shopper interviews, shopper spend analysis and interviews with business owners - including the way that data was collected, stored and analysed.

3.1 Scoping phase

Aware of the potential challenges involved in recruiting migrant business owners for in-depth interviews (Meares et al., 2011; Spoonley & Meares, 2009), considerable thought and planning went into the initial scoping phase of the project. Bilingual research assistants went from shop to shop in the precinct documenting the name of the business and its trading name, the ethnicity of the owner and the type of business.⁸ This provided the research team with the information required to undertake the shopper spend analysis and, critically, the opportunity to invite business owners to participate in the in-depth interviews. Potential interviewees were provided with Information Sheets (in either English or Chinese), had their questions answered in the appropriate language and were asked whether they would like to be interviewed.

3.2 Intercept survey

An intercept survey of shoppers was carried out in the area, comprising 12 questions that were designed to be answered in just a few minutes and provide a snapshot of the way people use and perceive the Balmoral shops. The results also provide a complementary source of evidence, alongside the shopper spend analysis and the shopper interviews, of the age, gender and ethnicity of people using the centre and the distances they travel in order to do so.

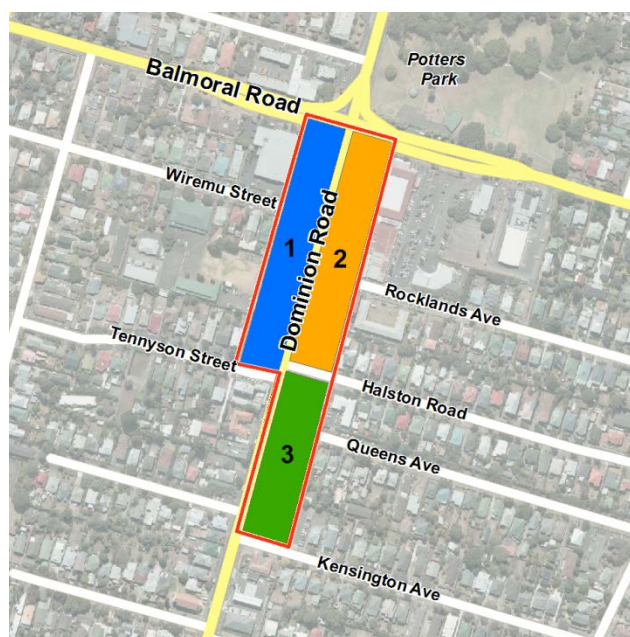
The survey was piloted and the content further developed with two bilingual research assistants, before being translated into Chinese. Building on the methodology used in a previous study of Dominion Road (Cain et al., 2011), the research assistants approached every third adult⁹ they

⁸ We coded businesses according to the Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) system. See <http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats-standards/industrial-classification.aspx>.

⁹ Because of the ethical challenges involved in interviewing children, the research assistants were asked to approach only those who appeared older than 18 years of age.

encountered in the precinct in English, switching to Mandarin if the prospective interviewee felt more comfortable using that language. They conducted the surveys during a total of 54 hours spread over three weeks in February and March 2014. In order to capture the diversity of consumers and consumption practices that take place at different times, the research assistants surveyed participants on different days (weekdays and weekends) and at different times of the day (between 9am and 9pm). They also covered three different locations along this stretch of Dominion Road, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Locations for intercept survey interviews



The intercept survey was also used to recruit shoppers for more in-depth face to face interviews. Despite initial concerns that this approach would not be fruitful, 152 out of a total of 297 respondents (51%) agreed to be contacted for a further interview. Intercept survey data was entered into a database and coded. Responses to open questions were coded according to themes emerging from the data.

3.3 Shopper interviews

The shopper interview schedule was developed collaboratively with the objective of building on and extending the data collected in the intercept survey. It focuses on how people access and use the area, how they perceive the precinct, who they interact with during their visits and what role the precinct plays in fostering a sense of community and belonging. Once the surveys were drafted in English, the questions were discussed with the research assistants to ensure that they were clear and appropriate and then piloted with two interviewees. The final version of the survey was translated into Chinese, along with Information Sheets and Consent Forms, all of which were then independently checked for accuracy.

Drawing from the pool of contacts obtained in the intercept surveys, a sample of 30 participants was developed that included 19 non-Chinese respondents (comprising various ethnic groups as well as New Zealand and overseas-born participants) and 11 Chinese interviewees. All 11 Chinese respondents were overseas-born while almost half of the English speaking sample was also born outside New Zealand. In alignment with the intercept survey sample, we interviewed fewer women than men amongst Chinese (45% women) and non-Chinese (42% women) participants; and more Chinese participants in the 19 to 30 (45%) age group. We decided to include those shoppers who also worked in the precinct; 27 per cent of Chinese participants and 16 per cent of non-Chinese shoppers fall into this category. Interviews took place between February and August 2014 in a range of locations chosen by participants. They lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, were audio recorded with the consent of interviewees and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were analysed thematically.

3.4 Shopper spend analysis

Developing a better understanding of the economic function of the Balmoral shops is a key objective of this research, as noted in the Introduction. An important component of this aspect of the project is the shopper spend analysis, in which we examined electronic spending patterns in the precinct using data sourced from Marketview Ltd. This data captures the electronic component (Eftpos, credit and debit cards) of spending from households¹⁰ and generates a picture of the level and type of activity within the centre through the total sales of goods and services of Balmoral merchants. Marketview provided location-specific, aggregated, depersonalised transaction data¹¹ for the 2013 year including: the number of transactions; the dollar value of transactions; the time of day and day of the week that transactions occurred; as well as the age and gender of the customer and the suburb in which they live.

The data was also split into five different retail sectors that are predominant in the precinct. These are:

- Takeaway food and hospitality: takeaway shops, bars and restaurants
- Food and liquor retail: supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores, liquor outlets
- General retailing: goods retailing such as antique and curio stores, bookshops, housewares and sport and camping equipment
- Household services: hairdressers, laundries, cinemas, insurance and travel agents
- Medical services: doctors, physiotherapists, medical centres.

¹⁰ These figures do not represent total sales; a share of centre sales will also be to businesses, and there will also be cash spending from households which are excluded from this analysis. For further information on estimating total spending flows, see Fairgray (2013).

¹¹ Data was supplied in aggregated form for the precinct as a whole so that no individual cardholders were identified. Similarly, sales data was provided for the retail category as a whole so that individual merchants could not be identified.

Analysis of this transaction data, together with the intercept and shopper surveys, provides insight into the diverse range of people using the precinct; their preferences and practices; and the interactions they have with one another while they are there.

3.5 Business owner interviews

The business owner interview schedules were developed in consultation with the research team and the project Steering Group. The survey was broad in scope and aimed to better understand entrepreneurial activity in the area. More specifically, it focused on: pathways into business; the factors contributing to business success; relationships with staff, customers, suppliers and other business owners in the area; and future business plans.

Two pilot interviews helped to focus the questions and ensure the survey could be completed within one hour. The survey was developed in English but later translated, along with Information Sheets and Consent Forms, into Chinese. All translations were independently checked for accuracy.

As discussed earlier, participants were recruited during the scoping exercise. Thirty-one business owners and/or managers agreed to be interviewed (10 women and 21 men) out of the 88 shops in the area, a response rate of 35 per cent. Of the 31 business owners, just three were born in New Zealand. The remaining 28 participants arrived from across Asia (26), and Europe (2).

Interviews took place between February and June 2014 and were held in the business owners' premises. They took between 45 and 90 minutes, were audio recorded with the consent of interviewees, transcribed verbatim and subsequently analysed thematically.¹²

3.6 Analysis and reporting

We considered several ways of reporting on the analysis of the intercept survey and the interviews with business owners and shoppers, including looking at patterns of responses by age, origin suburb and gender. Where these similarities and differences are relevant and add to the reader's overall understanding of our findings, we have included these in the sections that follow. However, we found that the most prevalent differences occurred across ethnic lines, between Chinese and non-Chinese participants, and much of the report focuses on these.

¹² Copies of the business owner interview schedule, the intercept survey and the shopper interview schedule are available on request from Carina.Meares@AucklandCouncil.govt.nz.

4.0 History and demography

4.1 A short history of Dominion Road and the Balmoral shops

In the middle of the 19th century, Ngāti Whātua rangatira Apihai Te Kawau gifted 11,000 acres of land in the Auckland region to the Crown. Originally used for farming, the land in Sandringham, Balmoral and Mt Eden was eventually subdivided and developed into residential suburbs; by the beginning of the twentieth century these farms had been almost completely replaced by housing (Cain et al., 2012). Dominion Road itself has a long history as a major transport route. Horse-drawn buses were the first form of public transport, connecting the residents of surrounding suburbs with the city centre from the 1870s onwards. In 1902, the Auckland Electric Tramways Company constructed a tramway along Dominion Road, initially between the city centre and Valley Road but later extending south to Balmoral and Mt Albert Roads. Continued population growth and the increased mobility enabled by the tram system resulted in the development of local business precincts along Dominion Road. Two of the most notable were located at the intersections of Dominion and Valley Road and Dominion and Balmoral Road. The latter precinct, as it was in the 1920s and the 1950s, can be seen in Figure 5 and Figure 6 below.

Figure 5 Looking south down Dominion Road from Balmoral Road corner (1920s)



Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries - 7-A10950

Figure 6 The intersection of Balmoral and Dominion Road (1950s)



Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, photographer Dennis C Hamblin

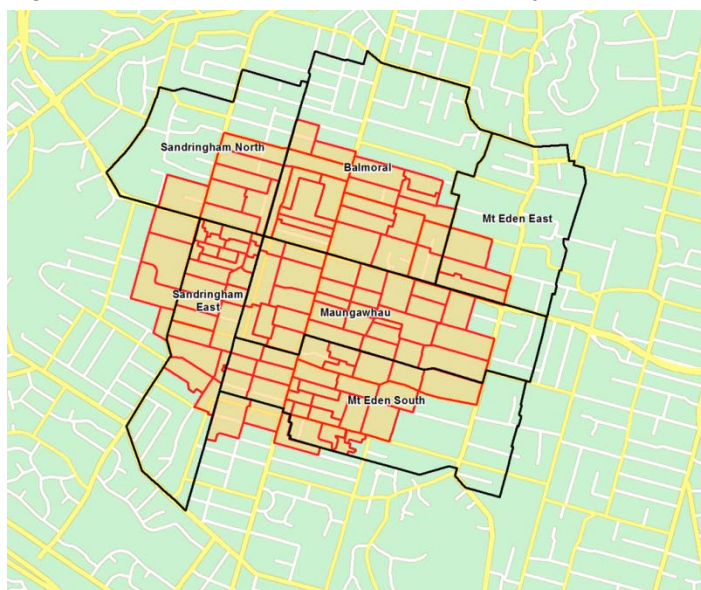
A walk through the Balmoral shops in 2014 reveals much of this history, with many of the century-old original buildings still intact. Although there were several Asian food businesses along Dominion Road in the 1970s, these were a small minority amongst non-Asian owned businesses that offered a mix of more traditional business activities. This began to change in the 1990s when the cost of retail space was relatively low and attractive to new immigrants who were keen to set up their own enterprises. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, these businesses were a prominent feature of the area.

4.2 Demography of the community surrounding the Balmoral shops

In order to provide some context to the findings presented in subsequent sections of the report, this segment uses census data to present a demographic profile of the community surrounding the Balmoral shops. This area, like the rest of Auckland, has grown and changed substantially over the last 20 years; we compare results from the 1991 and 2013 censuses to illustrate these shifts. The 2013 community profile was developed by selecting a series of meshblocks¹³ within a radius of approximately one kilometre of the Balmoral shops. This is shown in Figure 7 in the tan area outlined in red. Because this level of detail is not available for the 1991 census, we used census area units to obtain the closest possible approximation. This is represented as the area enclosed by a black border, also in Figure 7.

¹³ A meshblock is the smallest geographic unit for which statistical data is collected by Statistics New Zealand.

Figure 7 Dominion Road census study areas



4.2.1 2013 community profile

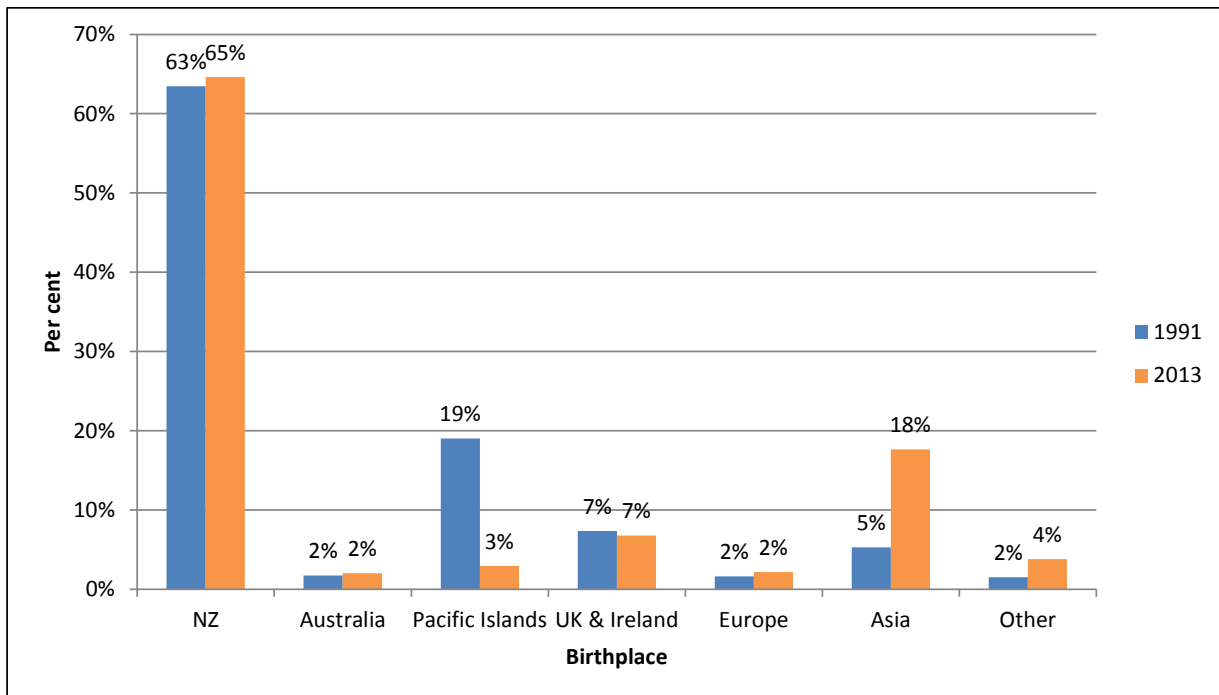
There were 14,322 people usually resident in the defined area in 2013. Although the median age of these residents (34.5 years) is similar to that of Auckland as a whole (35.1 years), the area has a different ethnic composition to the rest of the region. Compared to the city-wide average, the community surrounding the Balmoral shops has greater proportions of residents from European (66% versus 59% for all of Auckland) and Asian (28% versus 23%) ethnicities, and lower proportions of Māori (6% versus 11%) and Pacific Peoples (7% versus 15%).

Residents in the surrounding area are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, or higher, with 42 per cent of people educated to this level, compared to 25 per cent across Auckland. Perhaps relatedly, 45 per cent of households in the area had a total income of \$100,000 or more, compared to 36 per cent of households across Auckland. Households in the area are more likely to be 'other multi-person households' (9% versus 5% for all of Auckland), and are more likely to live in a dwelling they do not own (46% versus 39% across Auckland), indicating that the rate of flatting and renting is higher in the area than in Auckland as a whole.

4.2.2 Changes between 1991 and 2013

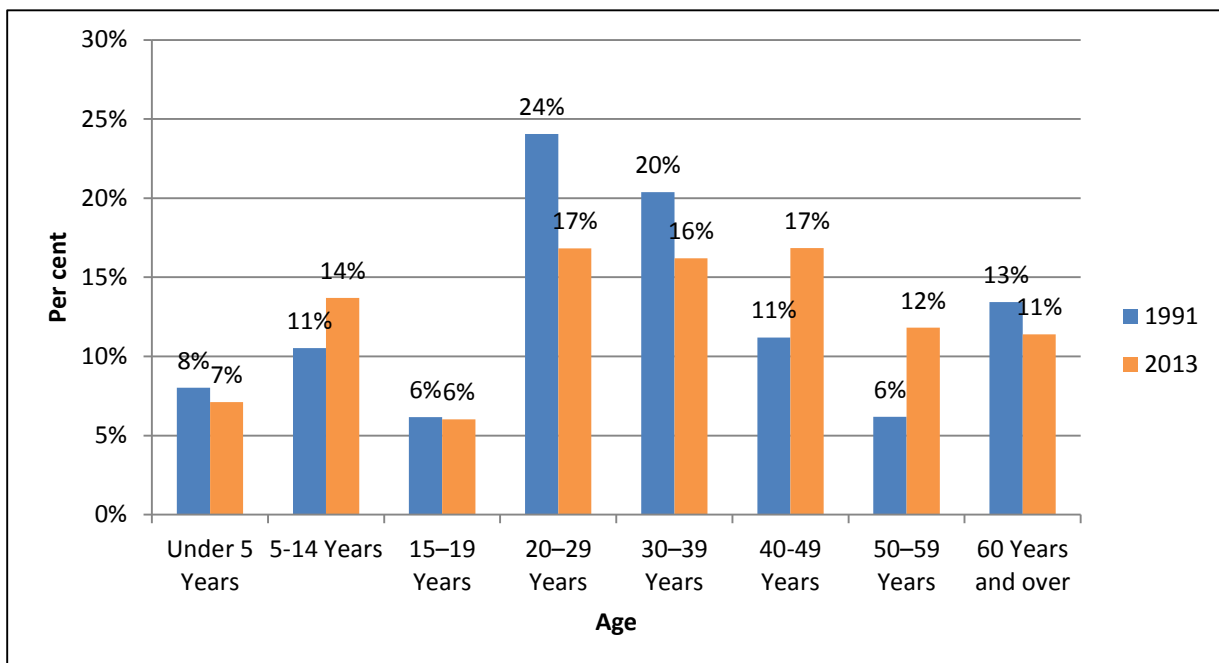
There have been substantial demographic shifts in the area between 1991 and 2013. The most significant change is the increased proportion of people born in Asia, which grew from 5 per cent in 1991 to 18 per cent in 2013 (see Figure 8). In contrast, the percentage of people in the area who were born in the Pacific Islands decreased from 19 per cent to 3 per cent. In general, the proportions of people born in the remaining categories such as New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland have remained relatively stable. This change is mirrored in the ethnicity data, with dramatic increases in Asian and 'other' ethnicities (from 12% to 27% of the population) and decreases in Pacific Peoples (from 10% to 6%). Proportions of both European and Māori residents have decreased slightly, but less dramatically than Pacific Peoples.

Figure 8 Birthplace of Balmoral residents, 1991 and 2013



The second notable change has been the ageing of the area, with a substantially higher proportion of residents aged between 40 and 59 years of age, and a fall in those aged between 20 and 39 years. This change can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Age distribution of Balmoral residents, 1991 and 2013



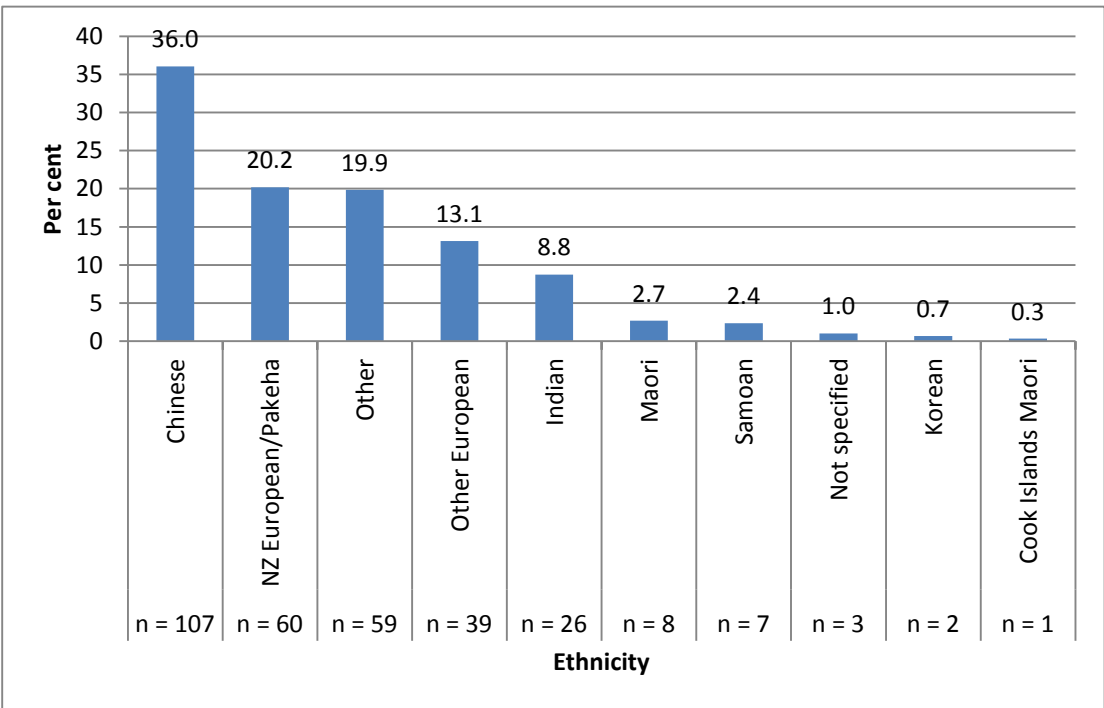
5.0 Shoppers

In this section, we bring together the results of the shopper interviews, the intercept survey and the shopper spend analysis to provide insight into the people using the Balmoral shops; how they get there and how they use the centre; their perceptions of the precinct; and the personal interactions they have while they are there. A synthesis of these findings suggests that the Balmoral shops play a dual role, meeting the needs of a diverse range of local customers during the day and emerging as a destination food hospitality precinct during the evening.

5.1 Who is visiting and what are they buying?

A slightly larger proportion of men than women were interviewed as part of the intercept surveys (59% men and 41% women) and shopper interviews (57% men and 43% women). Similarly, more than half the intercept (63%) and shopper interview (60%) respondents were born overseas, suggesting that the precinct plays an important role in the lives of temporary and/or first generation immigrants to Auckland. This is particularly so for those of Chinese ethnicity, as exemplified by the fact that 33 per cent of respondents chose to complete the intercept survey in Mandarin, and also by the fact that 36 per cent of the same survey participants identified as Chinese when asked about their ethnicity, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10 Ethnicity of intercept survey participants

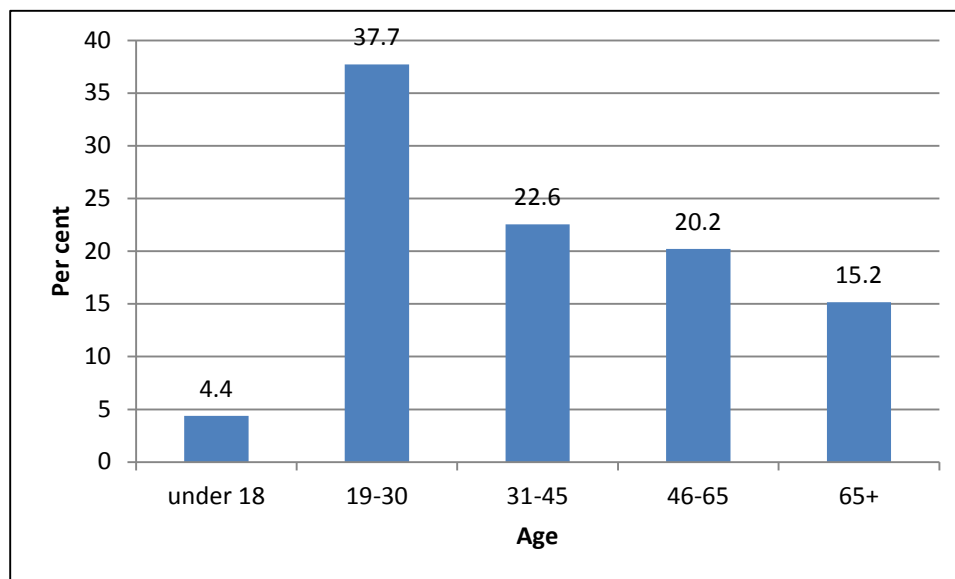


Participants were asked ‘what ethnic group or groups do you identify with?’ The sum of responses to this question is therefore not 100 per cent as interviewees were able to select more than one ethnicity. We coded ‘European’ responses as ‘other European,’ even when interviewees were New Zealand born because we felt it was important to use their own words. There were also some participants who identified as ‘New Zealand European’ while also indicating that they were

overseas born. All 'New Zealander', 'Kiwi', 'white Kiwi', and 'white' responses were coded as 'other'. The multiple responses to this question and the range of ethnicities identified by our respondents are reflective of broader trends towards an increasingly complex array of ethnic identities and the adoption of multiple ethnic identities in New Zealand and elsewhere (Kukutai, 2008).

Users of the precinct tended to be young, with close to four in 10 intercept survey interviewees aged between 19 and 30,¹⁴ as illustrated in Figure 11.

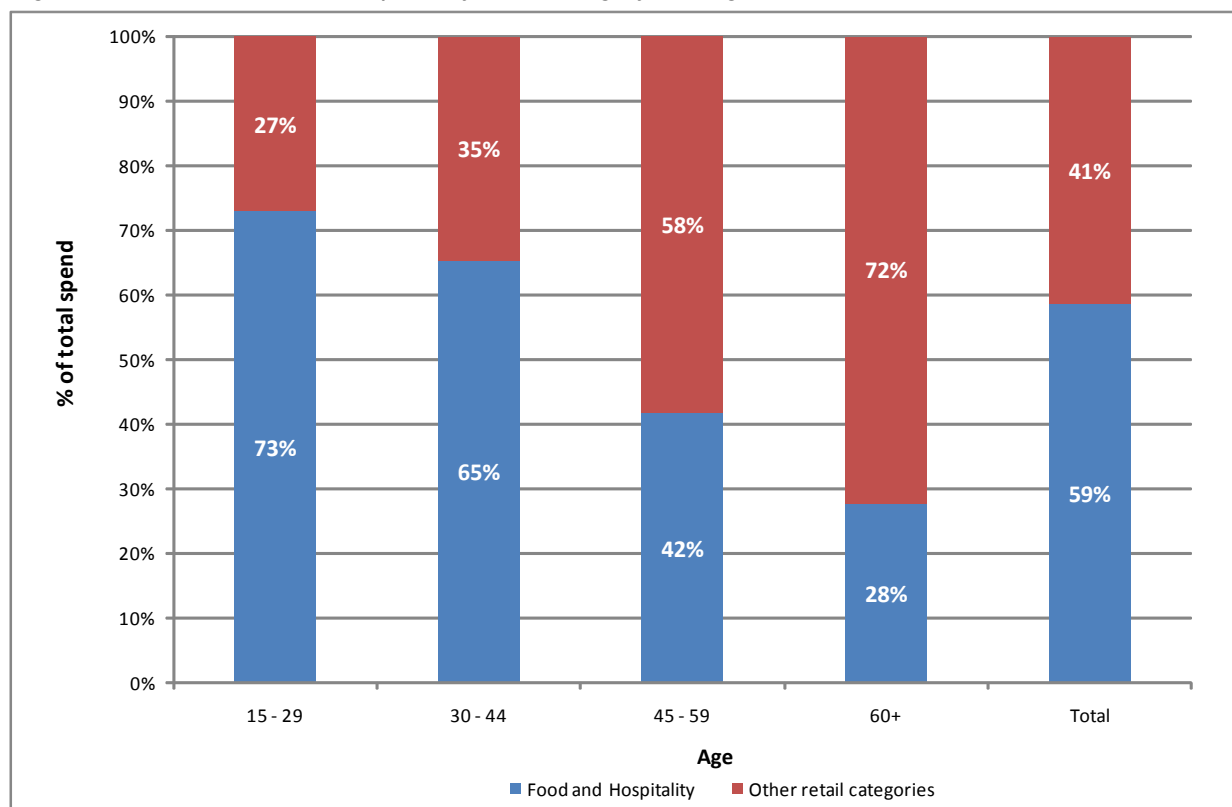
Figure 11 Age groups of intercept survey participants



Results from the shopper spend analysis reinforce this finding: young people aged between 15 and 29 made up 35 per cent of the total spend in the precinct and 45 per cent of the total number of transactions. Over 70 per cent of the total spend of this age group was in the takeaway food and hospitality sector, as shown in Figure 12. People aged 45 and over also visit the Balmoral shops. Although there were fewer consumers in this age group, they had a higher average transaction cost (approximately \$60 compared with \$24.60 for younger shoppers aged 15-29) and spent proportionately more in household services and general retail than those under 30 years of age. Figure 12 illustrates how spending in the centre varies according to the age of consumers.

¹⁴ The 'under 18' category is small because interviewers were instructed to survey only those who looked over 18 years of age, as noted in the Methodology section.

Figure 12 Share of total spend by retail category and age, 2013



The perceptions of shoppers who participated in in-depth face to face interviews about the users of the centre align closely with the predominance of younger people and those of Chinese ethnicity revealed by the intercept and shopper spend analyses. When asked for their views about the types of people who shop and dine in the precinct, most respondents talked about the prevalence of Chinese or Asian people but also mentioned Pākehā, ‘Kiwi’ or ‘Europeans’; younger people; and the diversity of shoppers in the area. The following quotes¹⁵ illustrate the range of participants’ responses.

I would say it is probably a mix of professional, Chinese immigrants, Chinese students, and Pākehā professionals, it is mostly younger people who use the restaurants ... but not exclusively. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

People like to eat here. Predominantly Chinese people ... there are not many other shops. So people just came for food. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

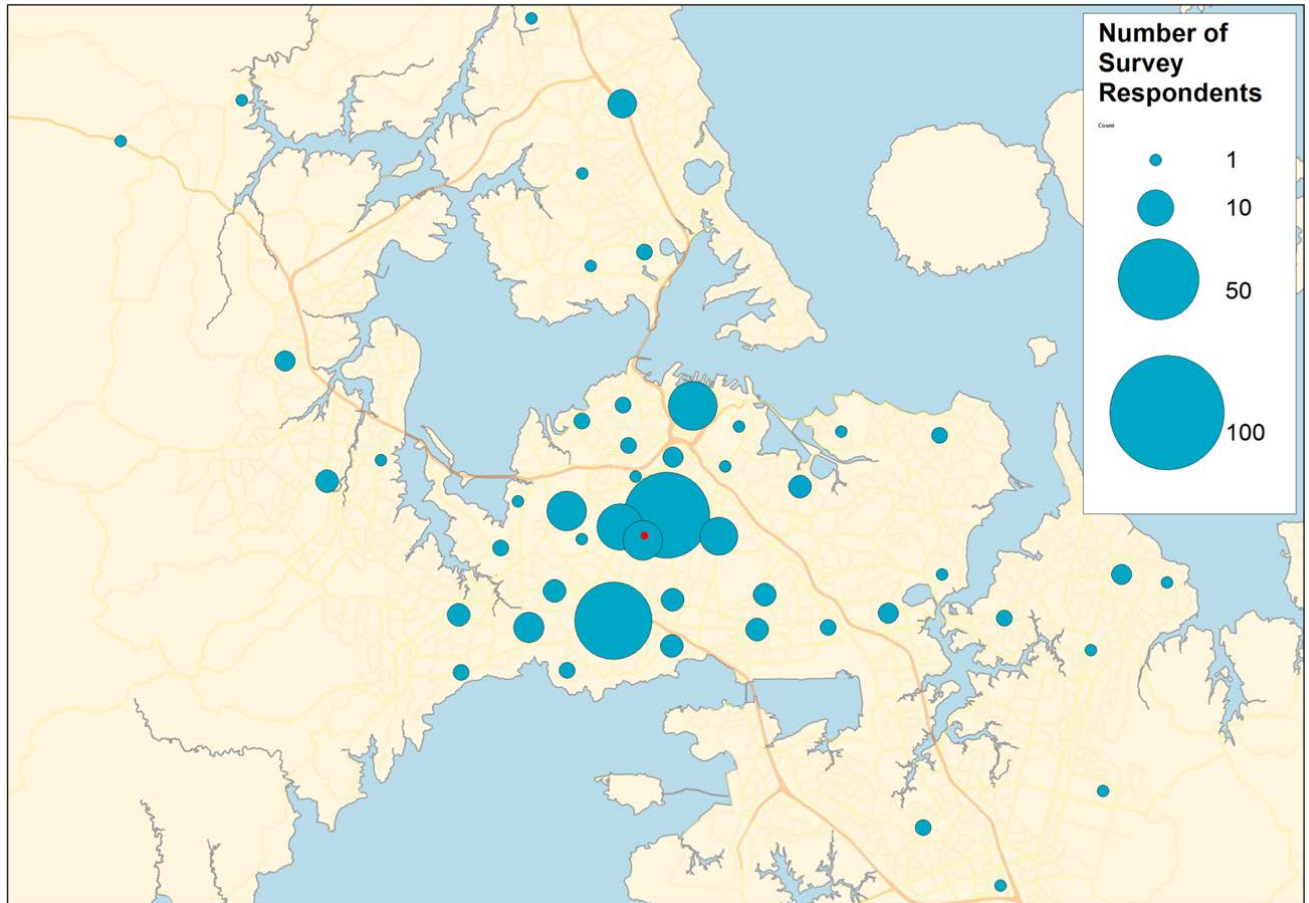
5.2 Visiting the precinct – when, how and from where?

Intercept survey participants were asked which suburb they lived in and how frequently they visited the Balmoral shops. They were also asked how long it had taken them to get to the precinct and

¹⁵ All participants’ quotes in this section are presented verbatim in italics. Missing words or phrases are indicated by ... and where we have inserted our own words to maintain the sense of a quote these are presented in square brackets. Where quotes include the words of the interviewer these are presented in bold. The sex, ethnicity (self-described) and age of the interviewee are presented in brackets after each quote to provide context for the reader.

how they had travelled there on the day of the interview. As illustrated in Figure 13, the majority of visitors came from within the Auckland isthmus but others travelled from as far north as Whangaparaoa, as far west as Kumeu, as far east as Cockle Bay and as far south as Pukekohe.¹⁶

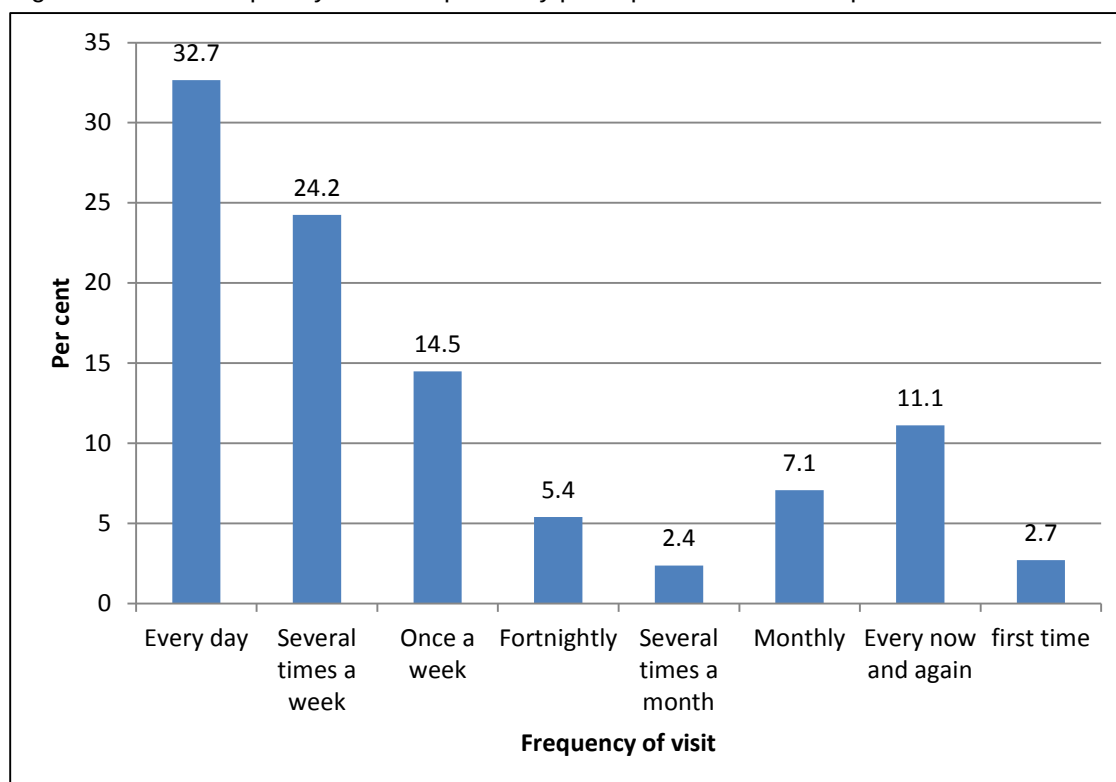
Figure 13 Origin suburbs of intercept survey participants



More than half of the intercept survey participants visited this section of Dominion Road at least once a week, suggesting that for many shoppers the centre is a regular part of their weekly routines, as shown in Figure 14.

¹⁶ This map shows the majority of survey participants; several respondents, however, were resident outside the areas shown on this map.

Figure 14 Frequency of intercept survey participants' visits to the precinct



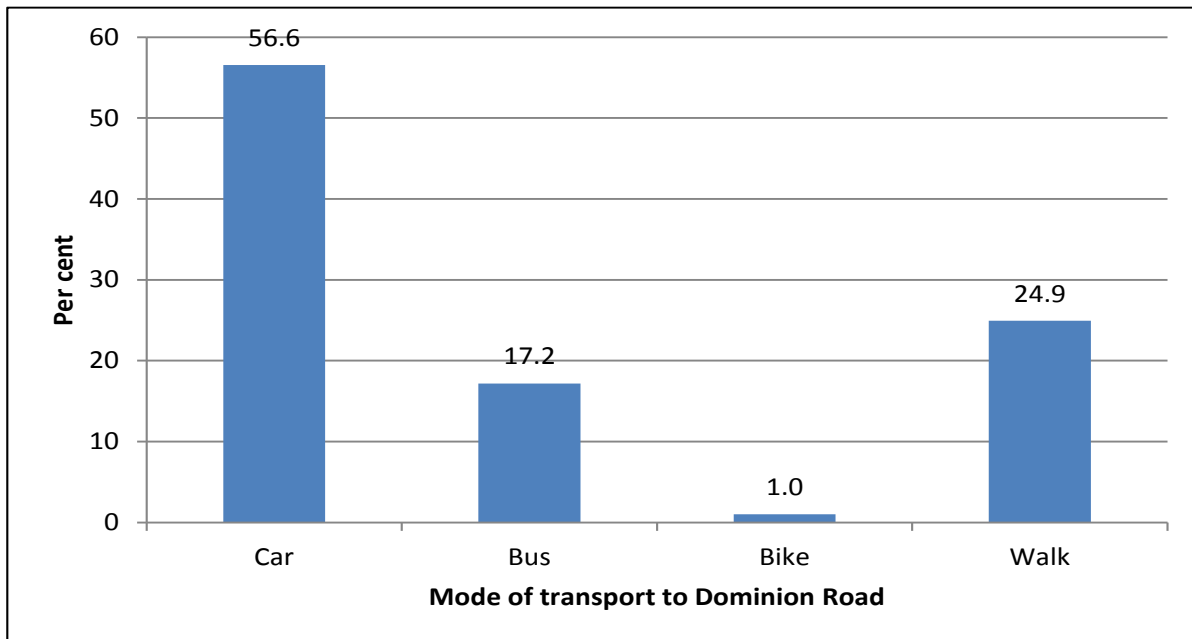
We were also interested in the ways that spending patterns varied over the course of the week. As illustrated in Table 1, total spending is evenly split between Monday to Thursday and Friday to Sunday. However, there is some variation in terms of the types of goods and services that customers are accessing over the course of the week. Spending from Monday to Thursday is concentrated in household services, core retail and medical services. Food hospitality remains the highest category of expenditure across the week, however, between Friday and Sunday the proportion of expenditure in this area increases, with 55 per cent of spending in this category occurring during the weekend.

Table 1 Total expenditure in the Balmoral shops between Monday-Thursday and Friday-Sunday, 2013.

Sector	Expenditure (\$)			% of Expenditure between Monday - Thursday	% of Expenditure between Friday - Sunday
	Monday-Thursday	Friday-Sunday	Total		
Core Retail	1,264,911	824,881	2,089,792	61%	39%
Food and Liquor Retail	1,747,362	1,691,885	3,439,247	51%	49%
Food Hospitality	5,859,592	7,178,516	13,038,108	45%	55%
Household Services	2,105,508	1,307,494	3,413,002	62%	38%
Medical Services	204,938	51,092	256,031	80%	20%
Total	11,182,311	11,053,868	22,236,180	50%	50%

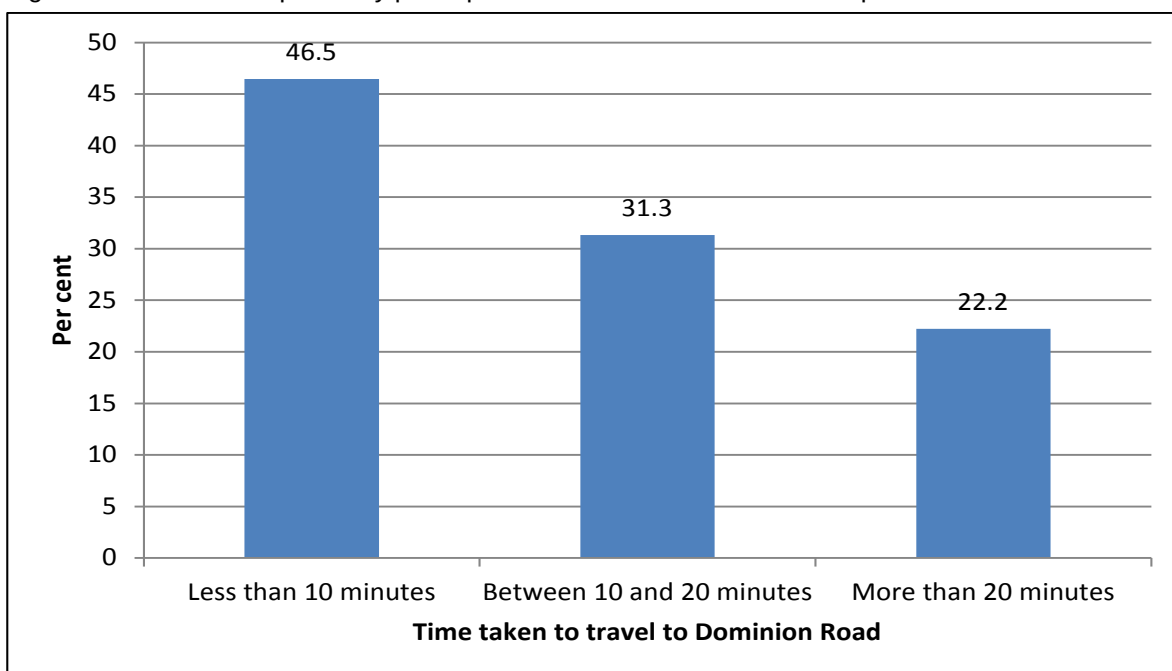
Figure 15 shows that the majority of visitors (56.6%) travelled to the precinct by car, although walking and public transport together made up almost half of all trips.

Figure 15 Intercept survey participants' modes of travel to the precinct



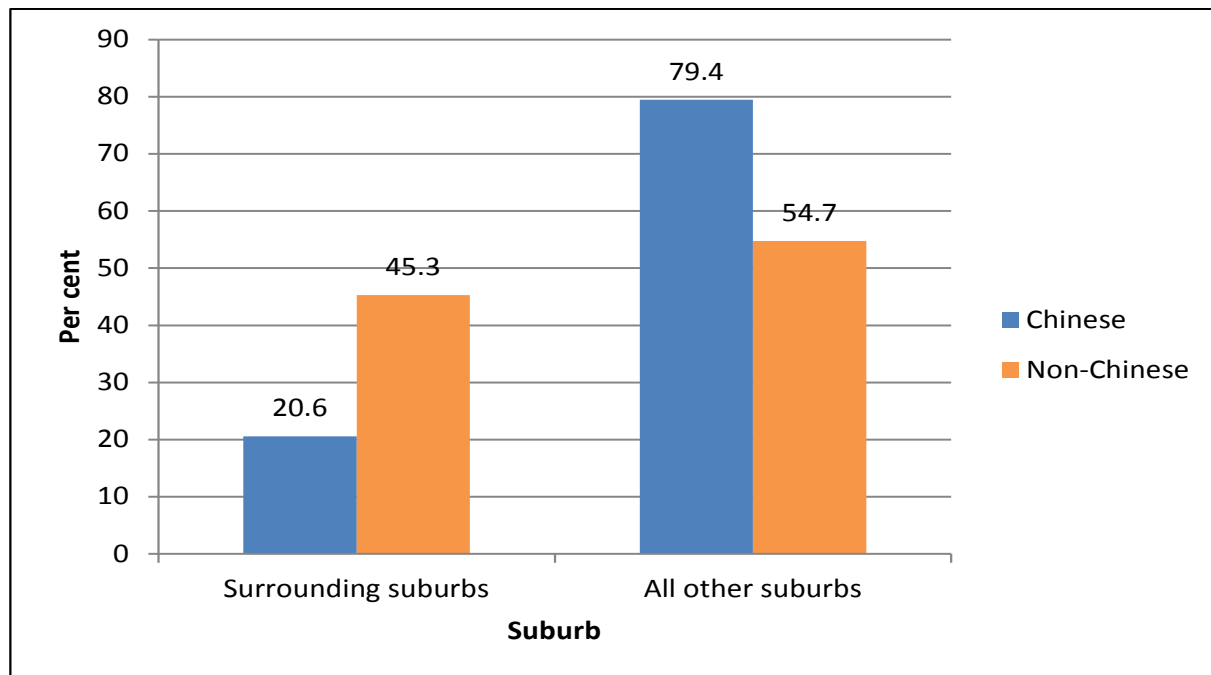
Reflecting the concentration of shoppers living in and around the Balmoral shops (as illustrated in Figure 13), Figure 16 shows that almost half the intercept survey participants took less than 10 minutes to get to the precinct. Conversely, just over one in five consumers travelled for longer than 20 minutes from across Auckland to shop and dine in the precinct.

Figure 16 Intercept survey participants' travel time to Balmoral shops



The emerging field of ‘new retail geography’ focuses on the role of ethnicity in consumer behaviour in multicultural urban settings. In the Canadian context, Wang and Lo (2007) found that immigrants from Toronto were likely to travel further to shop in Chinese supermarkets. Results from the intercept survey suggest that Chinese consumers are also willing to travel from further away to visit the Balmoral shops, as illustrated in Figure 17. Although only one in five Chinese shoppers travelled to the centre from the suburbs of Balmoral, Sandringham and Mt Eden, almost 80 per cent came to the precinct from further afield.

Figure 17 Origin suburbs of Chinese versus non-Chinese shoppers



The results presented in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 set the scene for the next part of the report, in which we argue that the Balmoral shops perform a dual role: meeting the needs of a broad range of local customers during the day and emerging as a destination food hospitality precinct during the evening.

5.3 A local service centre and a destination food precinct

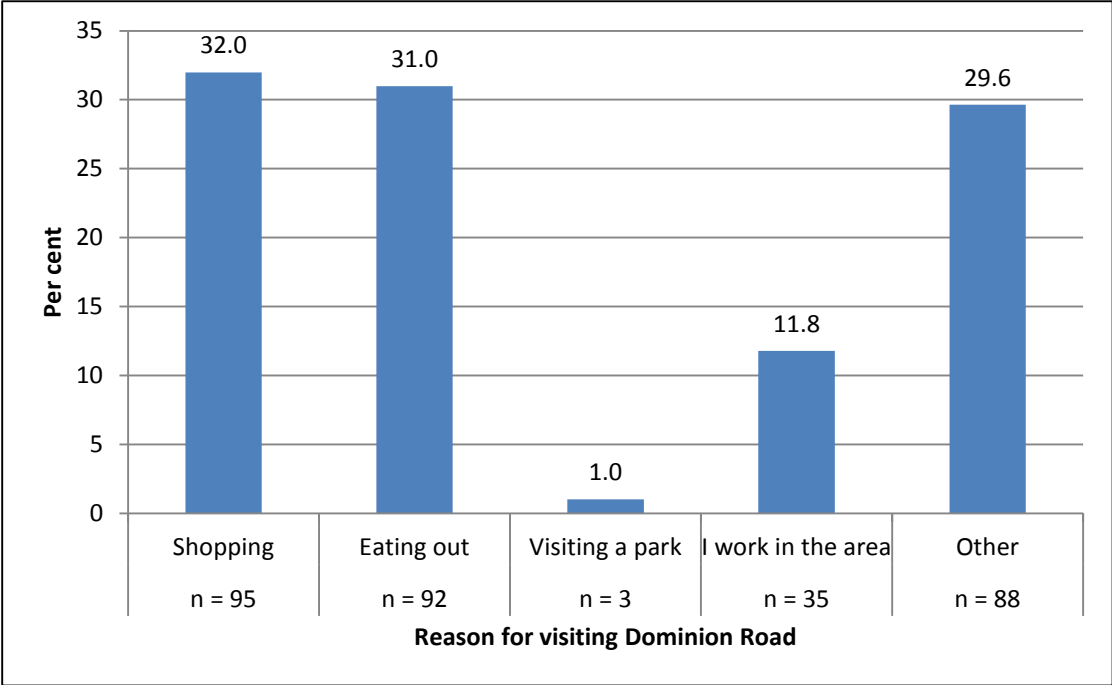
An examination of 2013 electronic spending patterns in the Balmoral shops shows that approximately 1945 transactions occurred per day, generating a total spend of \$22.2 million.¹⁷ The highest proportion of this total was spent in the takeaway food and hospitality sector – at \$13m this constituted 59 per cent of the total spend in the area. The average expenditure was approximately \$30 per transaction.

¹⁷ As noted in the Methodology section, this total excludes cash transactions and sales to other businesses.

A detailed analysis of this data suggests that the centre’s takeaway food and hospitality sector catchment¹⁸ is similar in size to much larger sub-regional centres such as Albany, Newmarket and Takapuna. Similarly, the centre’s catchment for takeaway food and hospitality is much larger than for other retail categories, and is accessed predominantly by people under the age of 30. This indicates that the precinct is a destination shopping area for takeaway food and hospitality, especially for younger people.

Results from the intercept survey also emphasise the key role that hospitality plays for shoppers in the precinct, with approximately one in three respondents reporting that they were in the area for this purpose. However, as illustrated in Figure 18, the results also show that almost a third of respondents used the centre for retail purposes and that other reasons, such as meeting friends, walking the dog, going to work or passing through the precinct, were also significant.

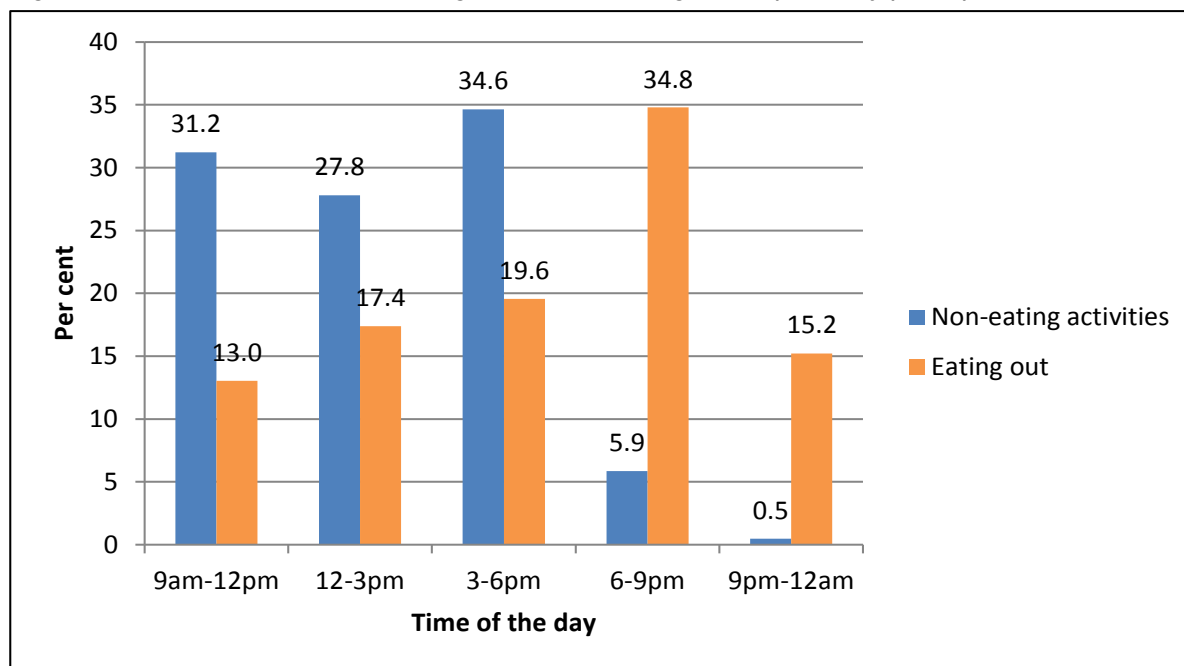
Figure 18 Shoppers’ reasons for visiting the Balmoral shops



A comparison of intercept survey participants who visit the precinct to eat out (92 survey respondents or 31%) versus those who do so for other reasons (205 participants or 69%) provides some insight into these findings as well as further evidence for the centre’s dual function. Non-eating visitors were most likely to use the precinct between 9am and 6pm, as shown in Figure 19. Although those who were visiting the precinct to eat did so throughout the day, they were most likely to do this between 6pm and 9pm.

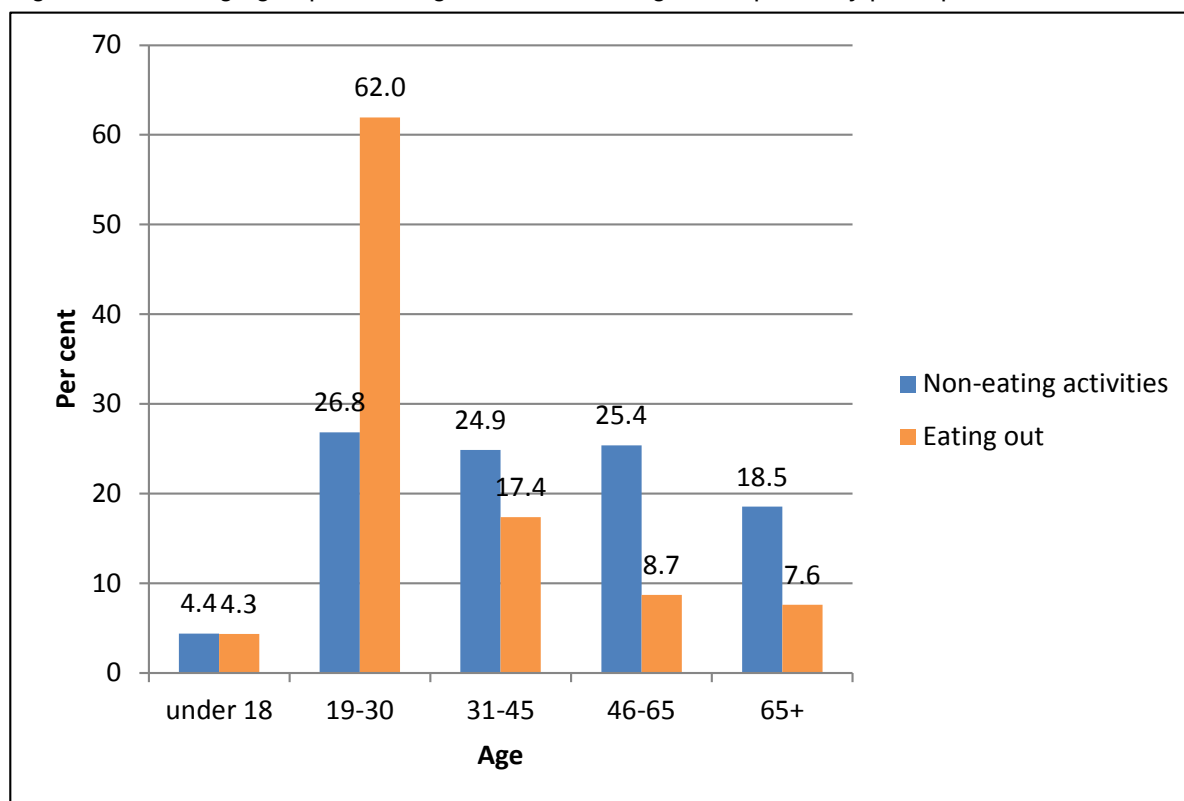
¹⁸ The catchment refers to the area from which the centre draws its takeaway food and hospitality sector customers.

Figure 19 Time frames for eating versus non-eating intercept survey participants



Centre visitors who were there to eat out were much more likely to be young, with the majority aged between 19 and 30 years old. Non-eating visitors were more evenly spread across the age groups, as illustrated in Figure 20.

Figure 20 Age groups of eating versus non-eating intercept survey participants



Those who were there to eat out primarily used a car to get to the precinct, possibly indicating a special-purpose trip. Visitors who were there for non-eating purposes were more likely to have walked or taken the bus, as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21 Transport modes of eating versus non-eating visitors

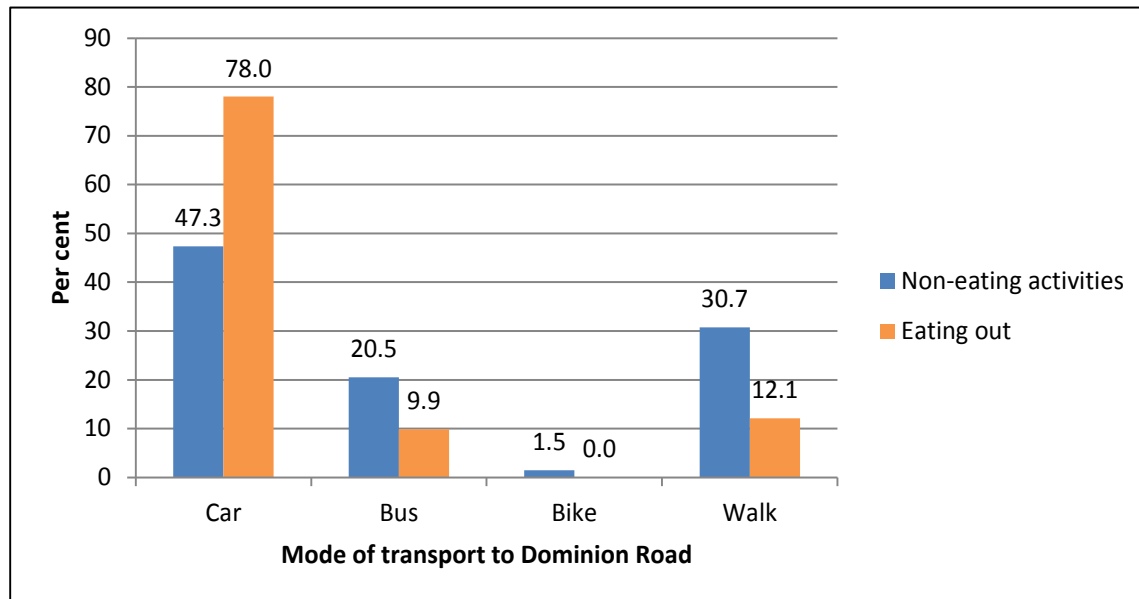
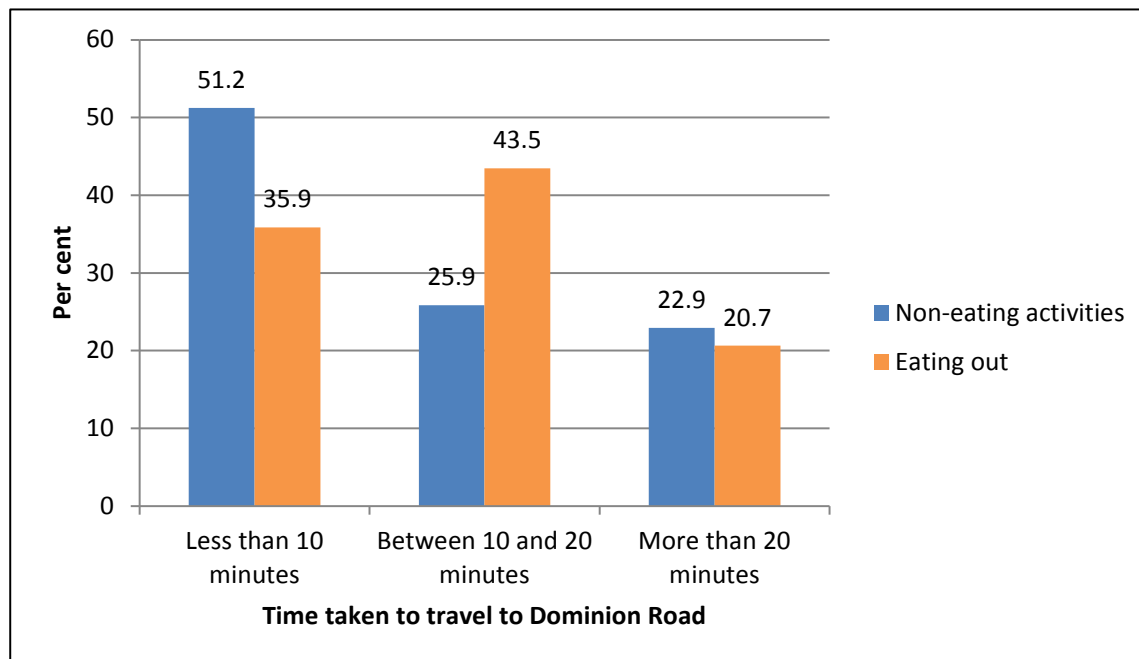
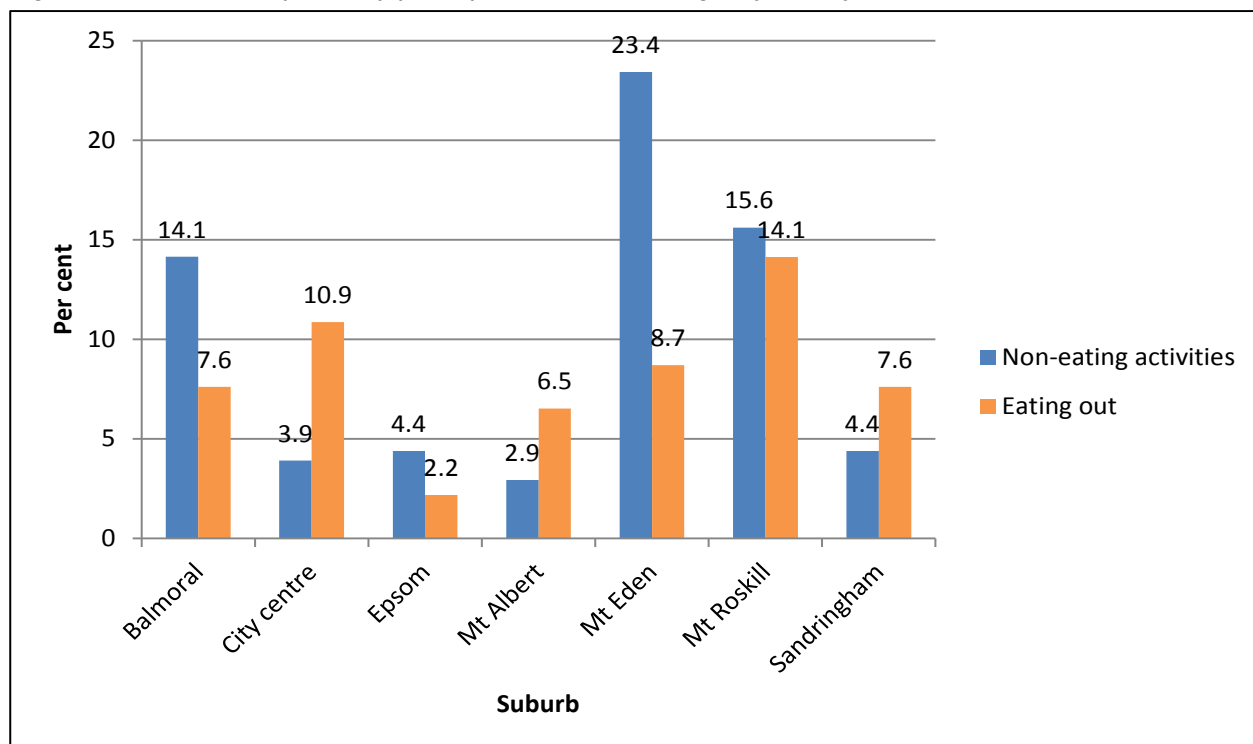


Figure 22 Travel time for eating versus non-eating visitors



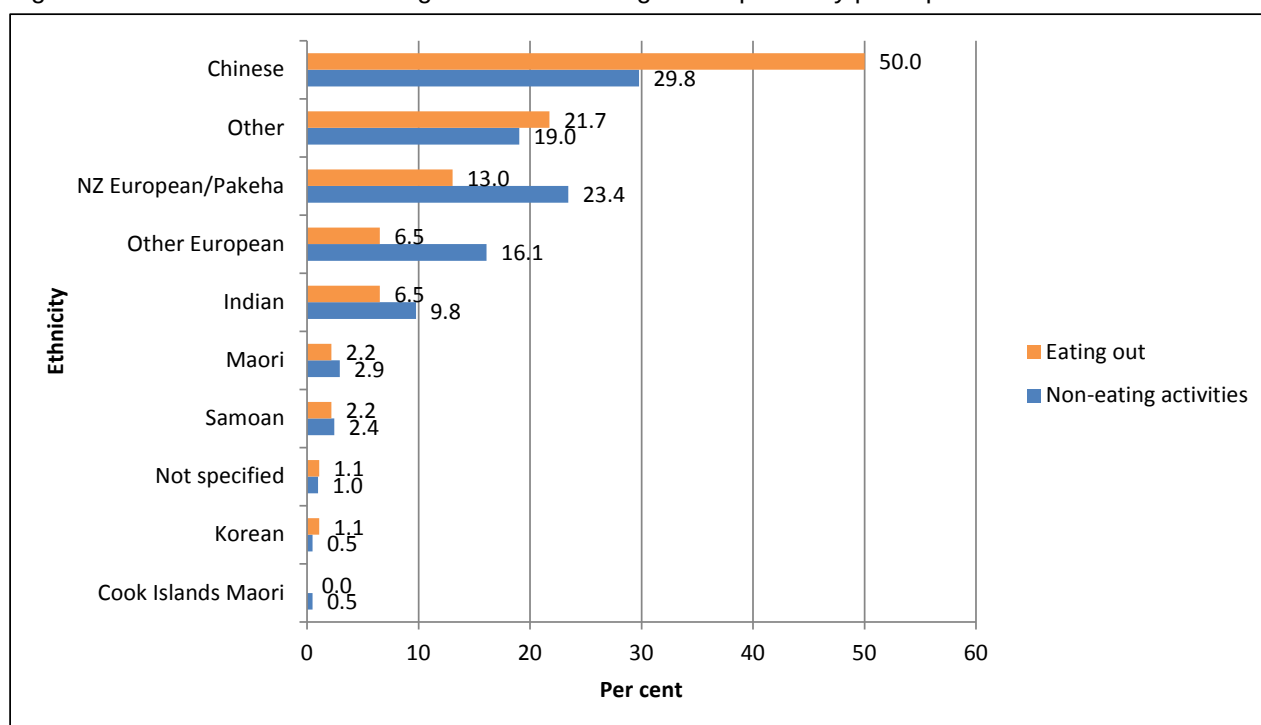
Consistent with the mode of transport and travel time figures shown in Figure 21 and 22 respectively, non-eating visitors are more likely to be from surrounding suburbs (Mt Eden and Balmoral), whereas visitors who are in the precinct to eat out are more likely to visit from further afield (Figure 23).

Figure 23 Intercept survey participants' suburb of origin by activity



Because the shopper spend data does not include information on consumers' ethnicity, we turn to the intercept survey and in-depth interviews with shoppers to provide insight into the ways in which different ethnic groups use the centre. Figure 24 shows that half of all the participants who were in the precinct to eat out were Chinese, while there was a more even spread across the different ethnic groups of those visiting the centre for non-eating activities.

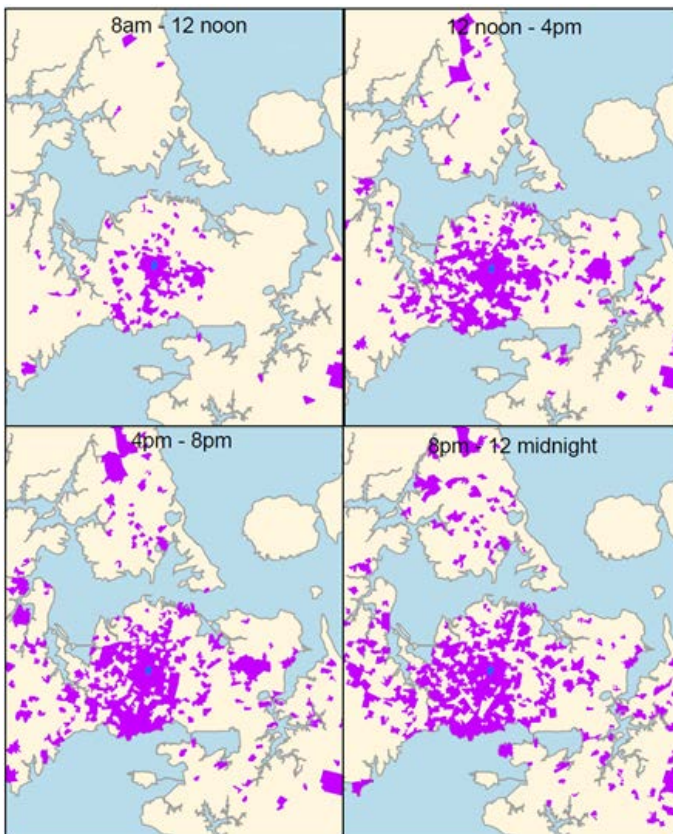
Figure 24 Ethnicities of eating versus non-eating intercept survey participants



Overall, the results of the shopper spend analysis show that the centre performs a dual role. During the day, particularly before noon, the precinct acts as a local service centre, meeting the needs of a broad range of customers from the surrounding community. For example, half of the total spent by those aged 45-59 takes place between 8am and 4pm, a figure that rises to 60 per cent for the 60+ age group. Before noon, 80 per cent of the total spend originates from households located within seven kilometres of the precinct. Daytime spending patterns are evenly spread over a range of retail categories, with only a third of the overall spend going on food hospitality. These patterns suggest that the Balmoral shops function as a local centre during the day, broadly consistent with the role and function of other Auckland centres of a similar size and structure.

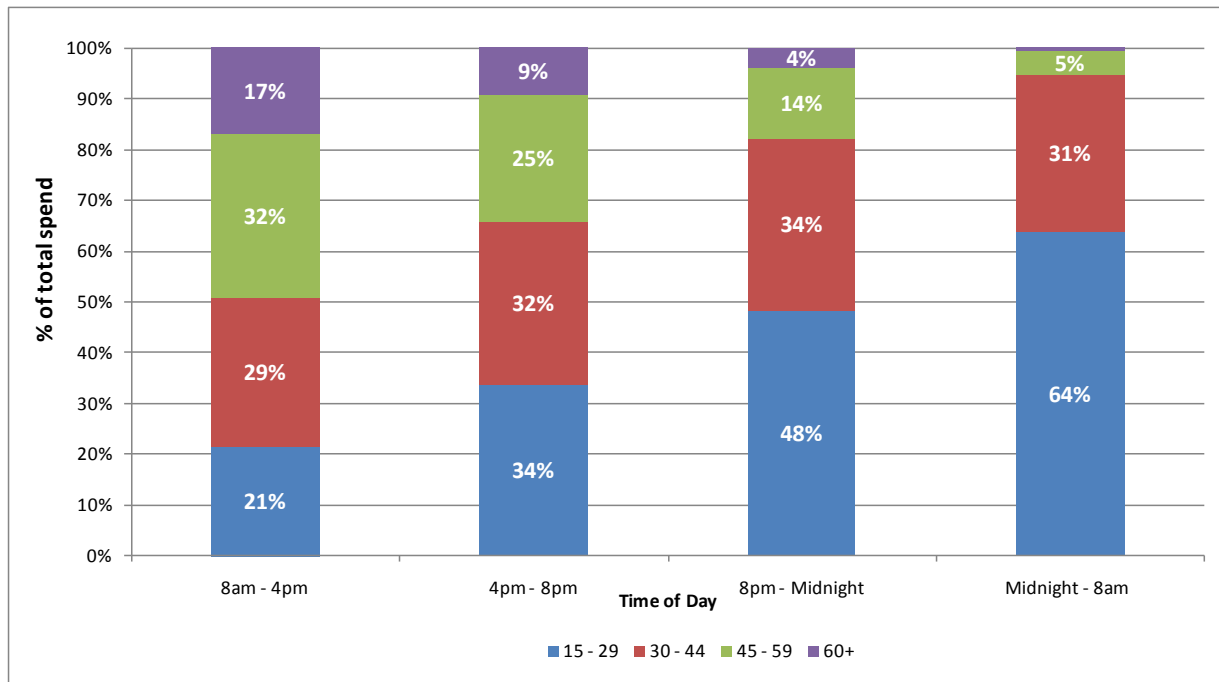
During the evening, however, the centre emerges as a destination food hospitality precinct. The night-time trade is highly concentrated (74%) in this sector, with people travelling from across Auckland to dine in the precinct's restaurants, many of which are Chinese. The average distance travelled to access the centre increases into the evening, with 80 per cent of the 8pm-midnight spend originating from households located within 15 kilometres of the precinct, compared to only seven kilometres before noon. These increases in the centre's catchment area over the course of the day are shown in Figure 25. The purple shaded areas show the origin neighbourhoods of 80 per cent of the precinct's household spend (i.e. customers' home locations). Through time, the purple shaded area becomes more expansive across Auckland, showing the increased distances people are travelling to the precinct during the evening.

Figure 25 Balmoral shops precinct catchment area through time



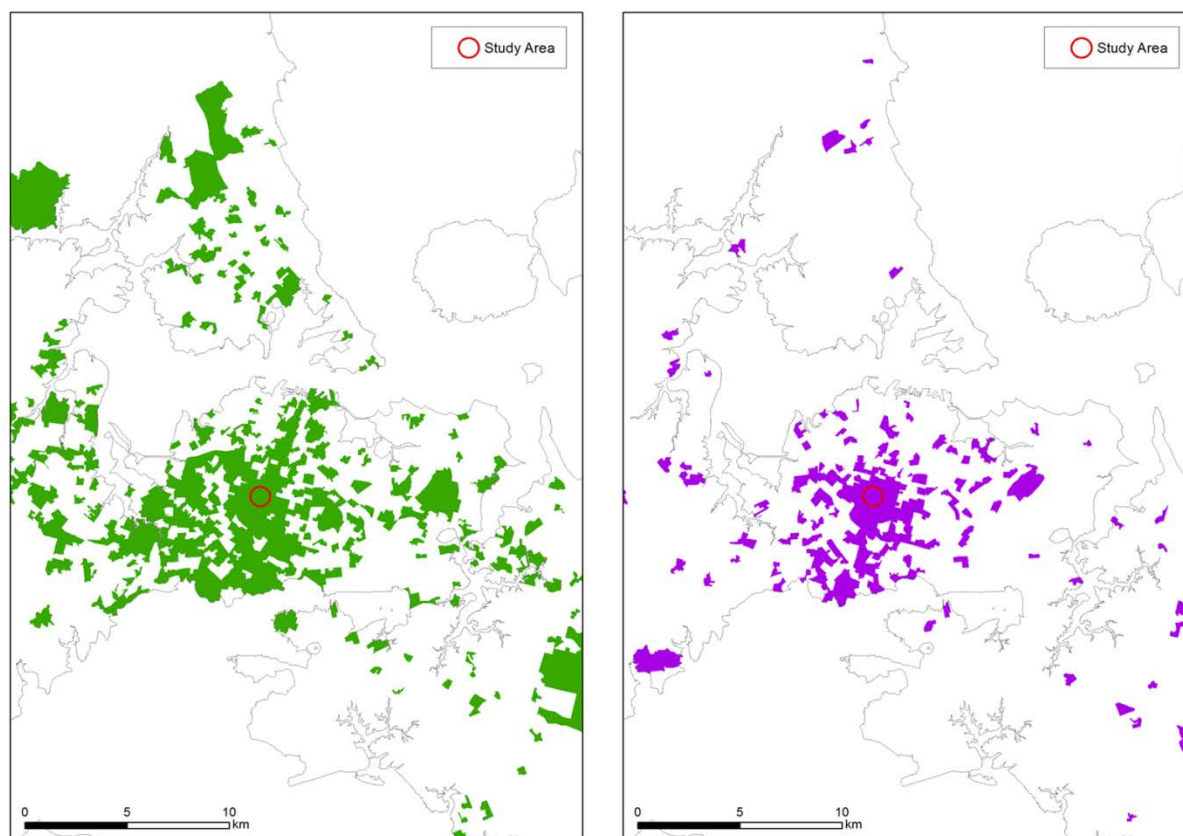
Along with the increase in the precinct's catchment area that occurs over the course of the afternoon and evening, the age profile of centre customers also changes. Figure 26 shows the younger customer profile of the Balmoral shops' night-time trade. Three-quarters of the trade is to people under the age of 45, with over a third of their spending in the centre occurring between 8pm and midnight. This suggests that younger people travel from across Auckland to eat and drink in the precinct during the evening.

Figure 26 Share of total spend by age and time of day, 2013



The difference in travel distances for Balmoral shoppers over and under the age of 45 is illustrated in Figure 27 (under 45 on the left and 45 or over on the right). The shaded areas in both maps show catchments that represent the origins of 80 per cent of the spending in the Balmoral shops. What this tells us is that the spending catchment for 15-44 year olds covers a much wider area compared to the catchment for those aged 45 years and over.

Figure 27 Dominion Road precinct catchment areas by age, 2013



Another way of understanding the main findings of the shopper spend analysis is to consider that for every 100 transactions made in the area:

- 60 are purchases of food, either dine in or takeaway, a third of which will be made by residents who live more than 10km away;
- 60 are made after 4pm;
- 50 are made between Friday and Sunday;
- 45 are made by people under the age of 30; and
- 16 are not food-related purchases. These have an average transaction cost of \$50 compared to an average of \$27 per food-related transaction.

5.4 How do shoppers feel about the Balmoral shops?

In this section we shift our focus to participants' perceptions of, and feelings about, the Balmoral shops. During the intercept survey, respondents were asked to rate the centre and to tell us what they liked about it and what, if anything, they thought could be improved. The face-to-face interviews that followed gave participants the opportunity to provide more detailed responses to these queries but also to consider others, such as what they would like the Balmoral shops to be best known for and what they thought might be a suitable marketing slogan for the area. In order to

provide some context to the data from these in-depth interviews, we begin this section with a brief overview of the characteristics of the shoppers we interviewed.

5.4.1 Who responded to the shopper interviews?

We interviewed 30 shoppers in total for this part of the research, 20 in English and 10 in Mandarin. As outlined in the Methodology section, we considered several ways of reporting on this part of the analysis, including looking at patterns of responses by age, origin suburb and gender. The most prevalent differences and similarities, however, occurred across ethnic lines and much of this section and the one that follows, therefore, focus on the perceptions and experiences of Chinese (11 interviewees) versus non-Chinese participants (19 interviewees).¹⁹

The non-Chinese group included interviewees from all age groups between 19 and 65+ while 45 per cent of those who identified as Chinese were aged between 19 and 30. This reflects trends in the age and ethnicity of the precinct's clientele described in Section 5.1, and is also no doubt related to the fact that almost one third of the Chinese participants were students, 45 per cent were not in the labour market and of those who were, 55 per cent worked in the precinct itself. Forty-two per cent of our non-Chinese interviewees were born outside New Zealand in countries including Great Britain, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Austria and the Philippines while all of the Chinese participants were overseas-born. There was a mix of employment statuses in both groups - participants working full- and part-time, self-employed or unemployed. Similar proportions of each group (21% of the Chinese and 16% of the non-Chinese) were not in the labour force – most of these participants were retired or doing volunteer work. Just over half of non-Chinese participants and 44 per cent of those of Chinese ethnicity lived in and around the precinct.

5.4.2 How did visitors describe the Balmoral shops?

We asked respondents to describe the Balmoral shops to someone who had never been there before. Their answers to this question provide an excellent beginning to this section, revealing the many and varied functions the centre performs for people; the regular and often intimate relationship they have with the area; as well as their feelings about the physical space and the products and services they buy there. Chinese participants' responses were dominated by descriptions of Chinese restaurants and food styles; at the Balmoral shops, they explained, they could find their 'hometown' food, shop for goods and services and talk to staff and other customers in a familiar language. Interviewees also talked about immigrants and multiculturalism and expressed concern about hygiene and how run down the area is. The following quotes provide examples of these main themes:

It is a place with many Chinese restaurants. You must go to Dominion Road to eat out ... because this is a good place [where] I can find my hometown food. There are many choices. For young people, the price is affordable. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

¹⁹ One Chinese participant chose to be interviewed in English.

Dominion Road is a good place to eat varied snacks, such as soybean milk, baozhi, and much more. Sometimes, the shop hygiene and food safety are concerns. We have to carefully choose which restaurant or certain dishes to eat. My friend recommended a restaurant to me, I went there and found the shop is small and the shop hygiene is not good. I didn't go there again. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

There are many Chinese restaurants. You can find the foods that taste like your hometown. There are many other kinds of food, such as Indian, Thai, Vietnamese and Malaysian. I think they have almost all food from Southeast Asia ... There are many different ethnic people who live here and this area has become a multicultural place. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Non-Chinese participants also talked about how multicultural and cosmopolitan the area is, and noted too that it was quite grubby and run-down. They described the shops, and the people who use them, as mostly Asian, particularly Chinese; the notion of Auckland's Chinatown was also mentioned frequently.

It's very Asian so it's like stepping into another country. It's a real Chinatown. Some quite interesting little Asian shops, like Sydney most of the shopping centres are like that. The strip centres. For Auckland I guess it's quite unusual that there's so many Asian shops and restaurants all clustered together. In a way it's like a trip to another country. A bit grubby, a bit down at heel. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

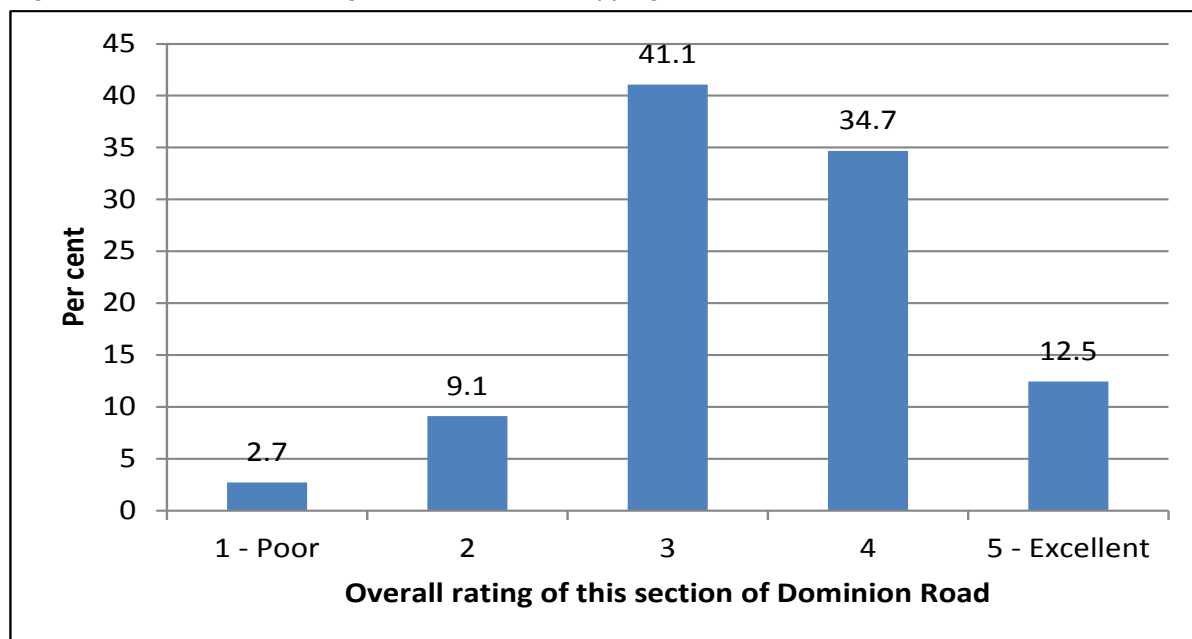
It is Chinatown to put it frank. (Male, Indian, 19-30)

It's quite cosmopolitan in a way, mainly restaurants I suppose but there is other things too ... it is not real flash I would say mainly Chinese [restaurants] and other Chinese services like health, doctors ... It would be mainly Asian people probably, you would see more of them than anything else ... there are sort of older shops, they aren't really done up. If ... you got dropped in there sometimes, you would think you weren't in New Zealand you would think you were in Asia because of all the writing on the shops are in Chinese or that sort of thing. (Male, Pākehā, 46-65)

5.4.3 Rating the precinct

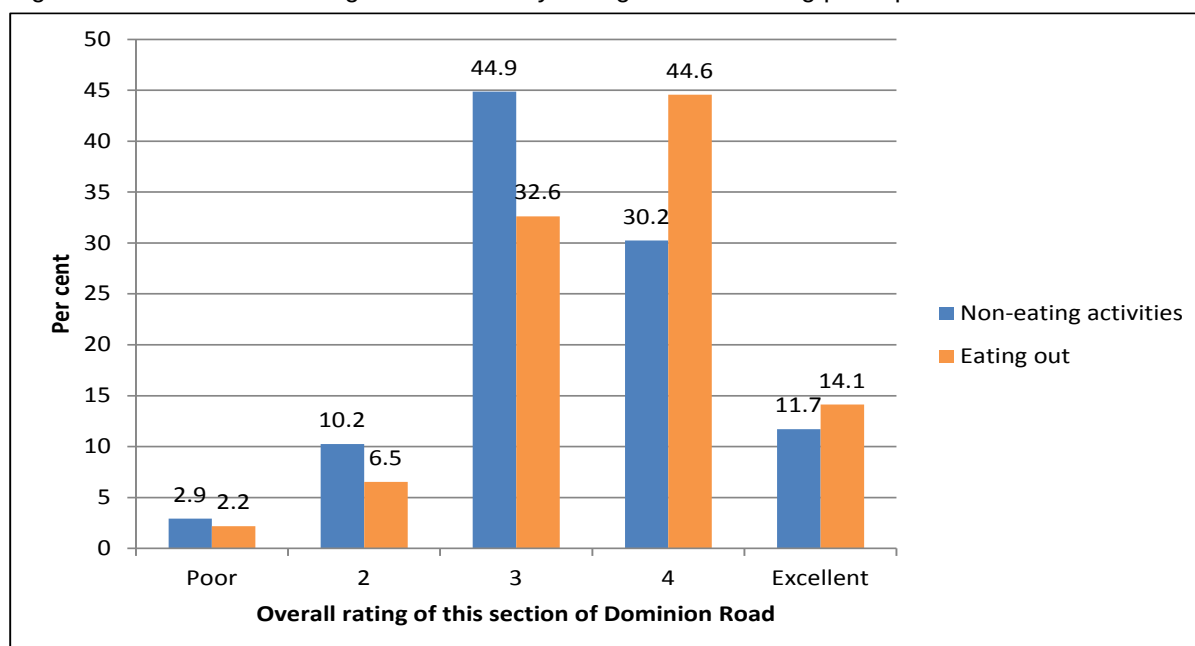
We turn now to participants' perceptions of the precinct, looking first at results from the intercept survey question that asked respondents to rate the centre from one to five, where one is poor and five is excellent. As shown in Figure 28 only a small proportion rated the centre poorly, with most selecting neutral or positive responses.

Figure 28 Overall rating of the Balmoral shopping centre



When we divide participants into those who were at the centre for eating versus non-eating activities, as we did previously, we find that those who were eating out were more likely to give the precinct a higher rating than those who were there for other reasons, as shown in Figure 29.

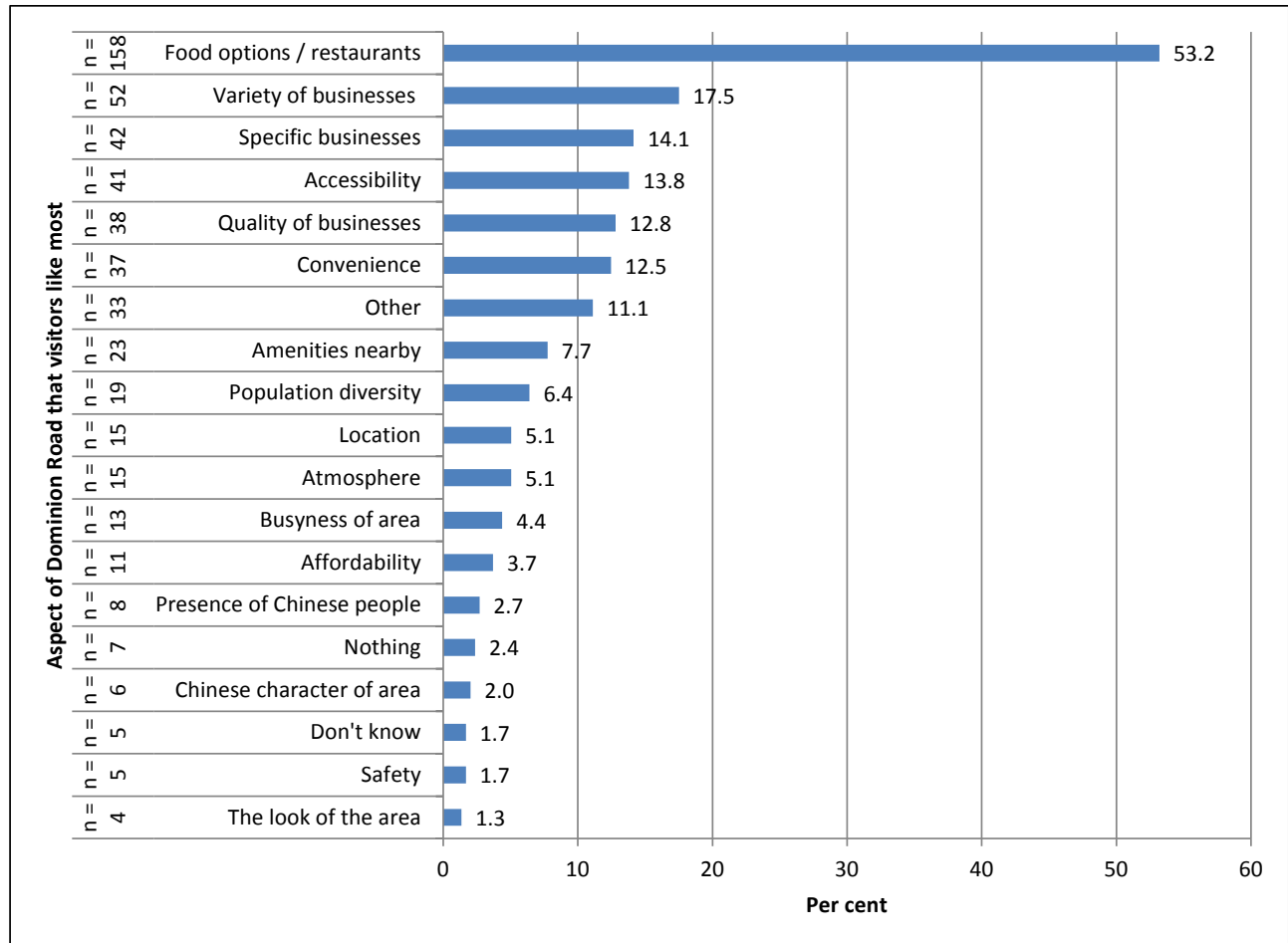
Figure 29 Overall rating of the centre by eating and non-eating participants



5.4.4 What do visitors like about the Balmoral shops?

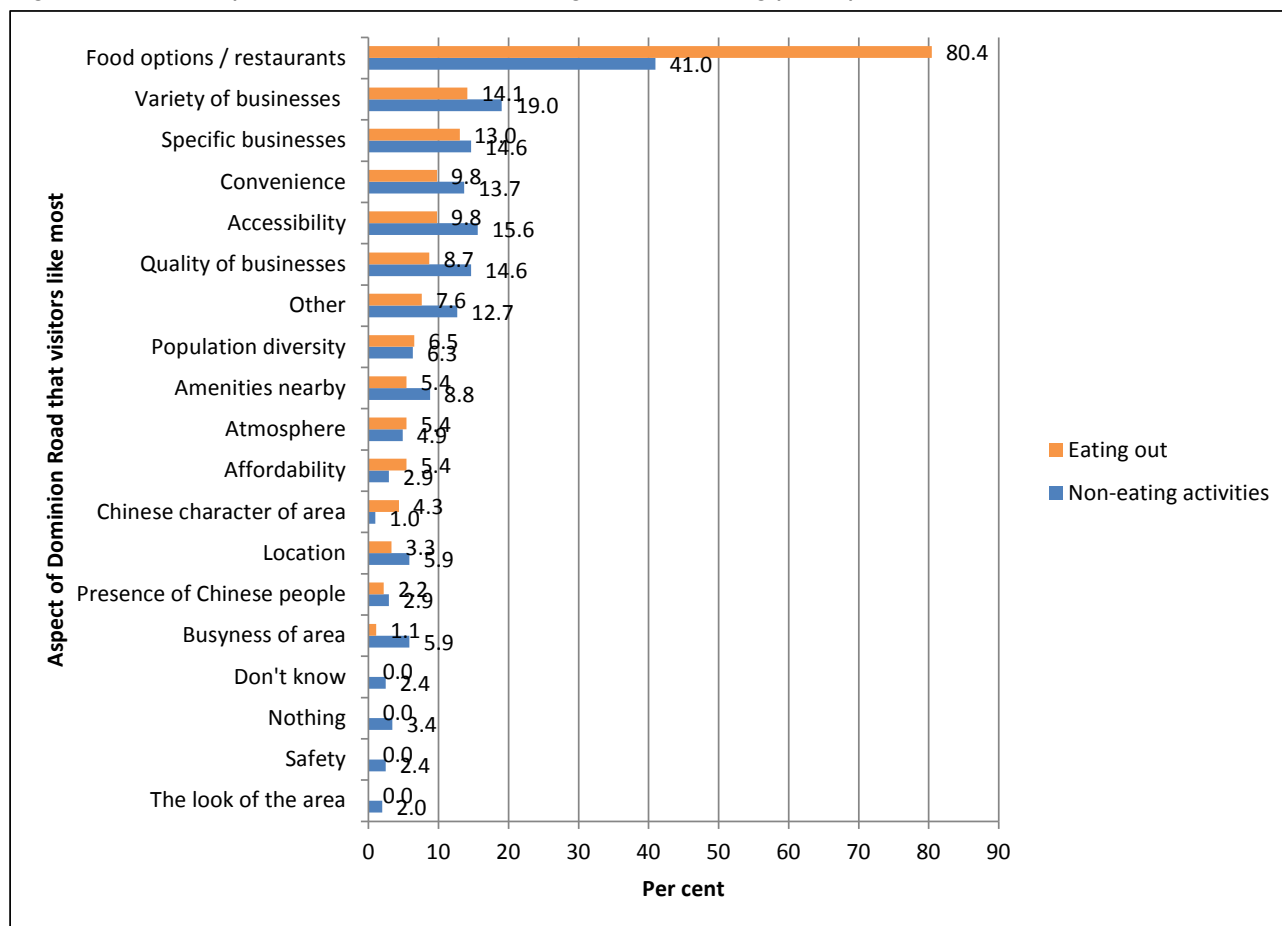
When asked what they liked most about the centre, just over half of the intercept survey respondents selected the area's food options and/or restaurants, as illustrated in Figure 30.

Figure 30 What respondents liked most about the Balmoral shops



Unsurprisingly, those who were visiting the precinct to eat out identified restaurants and/or food options as the aspect they liked most about the area. A large proportion of non-eating visitors also identified the food options, however, indicating the likelihood that many of these participants also visit the centre to eat at other times. This is illustrated in Figure 31.

Figure 31 Aspects of the centre that eating and non-eating participants liked most



Shoppers who were interviewed were also asked what they liked most about the precinct and their responses provide some depth to the analysis contained in the Figures above. Food options and restaurants featured prominently in the narratives of the Chinese shoppers we interviewed. As these respondents explain, they liked that there are many options for eating out in the precinct, but also that the restaurants are open late at night and that the food is just like the kind of fare they find at home.

There are many restaurants and many choices. I study in the city; I have eaten at almost all the restaurants in town. I am sick of the food and want to change to different flavours. Restaurants in Dominion Road give me a lot of choices. I can't come at lunch time so I only came here during the evening or at the weekend. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

[The Balmoral shops are] very convenient. Particularly it is a good place to go for a meal very late at night. The shops open very long hours. Restaurants don't open such long hours in Newmarket and the city. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

I like the hometown flavoured foods. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Chinese visitors also like that the shops are easily accessible by bus and close to other amenities that they enjoy, such as shopping malls and libraries. For a number of Chinese shoppers it is the

ability to complete many tasks in one place that they appreciate, or, as one respondent put it, “Dominion Road is like a one-stop-shop, I can get most things I need from this shopping centre.” What this quote doesn’t convey, however, is the extent to which the centre is meeting the specific cultural, linguistic and consumption needs of the Chinese shoppers we talked with, all of whom had arrived in New Zealand between 1990 and 2012. The following quotes articulate this clearly.

There are many Chinese restaurants and it is very handy to eat different Chinese foods. And also there are so many Chinese people around, it is easy to ask questions and get answers quickly ... there is a travel agent [where] you can easily find out the price of air tickets and make a booking. Most shops, such as banks, have Chinese staff. It is easy to communicate, to get the information you need in your own language. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

There is [a] strong Chinese culture on Dominion Road. I really like it here since my friend introduced it to me the first time. There are many different shops and it is easy to buy Chinese style stuff, something you won’t be able to buy at a Kiwi supermarket. It is not very far from St Lukes. There are souvenir shops and they are better than the shops in the city. They explain to you about the health products. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Perhaps as a result of a combination of all of these factors, participants describe the centre as generating for them a feeling of family and familiarity, as these interviewees explain:

Restaurants here can provide us with a family environment for young people to get together. We can’t do the same at Western-style restaurants or pubs or cafés. We feel much more relaxed in a Chinese cultural environment. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I like it as I feel it is a familiar place. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Non-Chinese respondents also liked the precinct’s many restaurants and food options and its accessibility by bus.

The thing that I enjoy probably the most are the food places there. (Female, Indian, 31-45)

So Dominion Road I think provides one of the best bus services available to the people. (Male, Māori, 65+)

Unlike the Chinese shoppers, who didn’t mention price as an aspect of the precinct they enjoyed, many of those interviewed in English said that they liked that the shops in the precinct were affordable, cheap or budget; that they could get a meal there without having to spend a lot of money. They also appreciated that it was a casual place where you didn’t need to dress up.

I like that it’s casual, cosmopolitan, you don’t need to dress up ... It’s quite budget. If you like Chinese food apparently it’s quite cheap. I think students also come round here

because of the cheap restaurants, it's the only place they can afford to go out for dinner. My daughter and her friends quite often go for dumplings and things. Restaurants where you can eat for \$10 is a bit of an asset when you're a student or younger person, or really anybody. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

The food and the prices, they are reasonable prices ... you can go out and you can get away with not spending a lot of money. (Male, Samoan/Niuean, 31-45)

Perhaps the biggest difference between Chinese and non-Chinese respondents is that Chinese participants liked the area because it generates feelings of familiarity and being at home, whereas non-Chinese interviewees liked the centre because it provided them with variety and difference; a bustling, busy vibe; and an authentic dining and cultural experience. This reinforces Pottie-Sherman's (2013) finding that ethnic precincts, in addition to attracting a co-ethnic clientele, also cater to the consumption preferences of other groups. Like the customers that visit Birmingham's 'Balti Quarter' in the United Kingdom to sample the variety of restaurants and enjoy the 'Balti experience' (Ram et al., 2002), non-Chinese shoppers in Auckland visit the Balmoral shops to enjoy a different dining experience.

Maybe that it is different, that it isn't like your normal strip street shopping ... it does feel a little bit different, like you are somewhere else sort of thing and it is the exposure to the different variety of cooking which is pretty exciting, which is something that is pretty new to this country, it has only been in the last 20 to 25 years that has changed like that. (Male, Pākehā, 46-65)

By virtue of the restaurant trade there's quite a lot of people coming through, it does feel quite bustling in that regard, so that's good. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

I guess I like the fact that it is a bit hodge podge - it is funny isn't it, part of the things that I think should be improved are also part of the things that make it kind of great ... I don't get the feeling it was planned, I quite like that, I like the fact that there are businesses in there, a combination of which that make it this really interesting place, in terms of culture but also in terms of what they offer as well. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

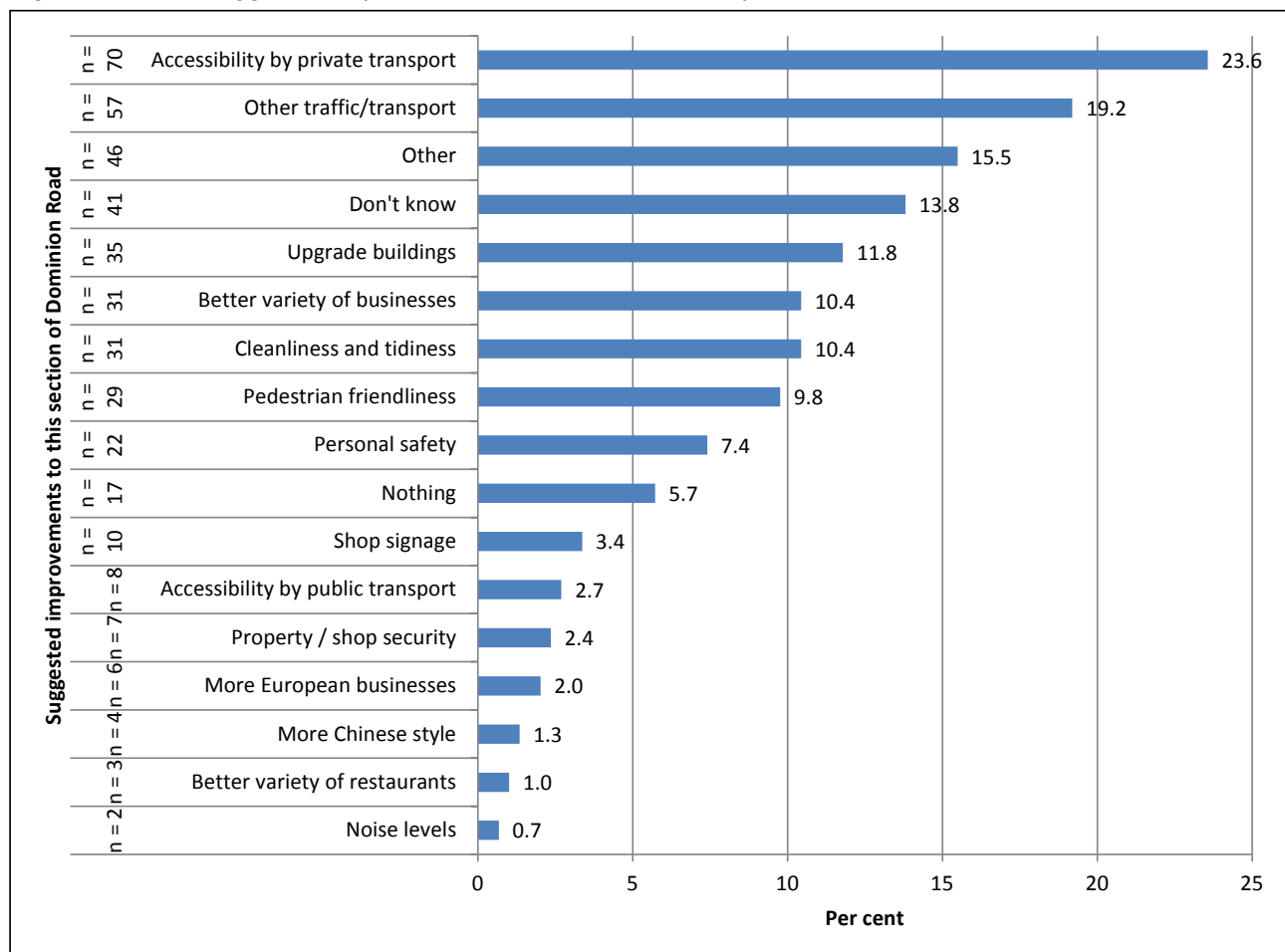
It is important to note, however, that our non-Chinese interviewees, like Aucklanders more broadly, are from a range of ethnicities and countries of origin. For some in this group, there were aspects of the centre that were quite familiar, as this participant explains:

It is just the culture of food, I love rice, different style of cooking that you don't get to taste anywhere else. That is just the main reason me and my friends go there, it is not just me. (Male, Asian, 19-30)

5.4.5 What would they like to change?

When asked what they thought could be improved in the precinct, intercept survey participants most commonly identified transport as an area in need of change, as illustrated in Figure 32. Within this broad issue, however, there was a significant competing subtheme: some respondents wanted better access for private vehicles while others felt that the area should be made more pedestrian and public-transport friendly. Further areas in need of attention included: the restoration and maintenance of the centre's buildings; the provision of a wider variety of businesses; an improvement in general cleanliness and tidiness; and better personal safety and business security.

Figure 32 Suggested improvements to the Balmoral Shops



The competing subtheme of better access for private vehicles versus the need for more pedestrian and public-transport friendly initiatives was a key theme for both Chinese and non-Chinese shopper interviewees. Participants talked about the time wasted in traffic jams; the need for extra lanes, more parking and/or the widening of roads; and the need to remove parking spaces and provide better walking and cycling infrastructure. These sentiments are captured in the following quotes.

[The intersection at Balmoral] is a nightmare, like I would always bypass it ... because it is not worth it ... you would miss the traffic light three times sometimes and no one wants to go through that. (Male, Indian, 19-30)

I think the traffic. There is a traffic jam at the intersection during rush hours. Taking the bus is okay but driving is a problem. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I would like to suggest building a bicycle road or a walk street beside Dominion Road. That may reduce the traffic jam along Dominion Road. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

More parking spaces ... the road can [also] be a little bit bigger. (Male, Samoan/Niuean 31-45)

The centre's infrastructure and environment were also important foci; participants stressed the aesthetic value of the area and felt that the buildings in the precinct were in urgent need of maintenance or repair; that the centre should be cleaner; that some greening of the space was required; and that the area needed better footpaths and seating.

I think the footpaths definitely because you're kind of stumbling over potholes ... The buildings could be painted. It just looks a bit shabby. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

I think it will be good to set up some sitting areas for shoppers to take a short rest. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

I would love to see, as I said before, some greening of the space. It feels very concrete jungle. It doesn't encourage you to kind of meander and linger cause the footpaths are quite narrow, um, you know, and it just looks a bit tired, like it's been cut up a hundred times. I think the façades, you know, I think we could really play to some beautiful buildings along there, and they could have whatever in them but just regenerate that façade would give it a great look. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

Within these main subthemes there were some interesting differences in emphasis between Chinese and non-Chinese respondents. With respect to the buildings, non-Chinese interviewees emphasised the heritage value of the precinct's buildings and the need to maintain these facades while Chinese shoppers talked in more general terms about the need to upgrade the centre's built environment. In relation to cleanliness, Chinese participants talked more about food hygiene, while non-Chinese respondents discussed instead the overall cleanliness of the area.

Looking after the heritage ... without destroying that ... character. (Male, Pākehā, 19-30)

The restaurants need to improve their hygiene. Some shops can get council certificate at only D or E level. I think they should improve their hygiene in order to attract more customers. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

In addition to focusing on the need for greater cleanliness in the precinct, several non-Chinese respondents also talked about the risk of losing some essential element of the area's charm by tidying the area up. The quotes below illustrate this tension.

It does look a bit messy sometimes I admit, but in some ways that is part of the charm of it too. (Male, Pākehā, 46-65)

I guess it is a little run down ... but I mean at the same time it is kind of the charm, I shouldn't really say that because that is going to contradict my answer. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

A desire for more variety in the shops and restaurants in the precinct was also the almost exclusive preserve of non-Chinese participants.

If they were to put in a European food shop that would be a real advantage, like there's nowhere to buy meat or sort of basic [foodstuffs] ... a small supermarket with European food, a butcher so you could buy meat. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

The other thing I think that needs to be improved ... I would like just a bit more variety in the dining. So it's great if I ... want to get great Thai or Chinese or whatever, but I'd love to have a few other options that were maybe, you know, a little bit of Italian, or, you know, some other, just a bit more variety in there would be good. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

On the other hand, the need to improve personal safety and the security of businesses in the area was a suggestion unique to Chinese participants.

Safety is a big problem. If you come to Dominion Road, you will understand why Chinese people call Dominion Road 'unlucky road' (Note: the pronunciation of Dominion in English, 'daomini', sounds like the Chinese word daomei 倒霉, which means 'unlucky'). For me, Dominion Road is a place you have to pray for luck not to be robbed each time you go there ... I think it may not have had that meaning at the beginning but now it does. I think perhaps too many Chinese people are there now and they think Chinese people are not strong enough to fight back. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Sometimes people do nasty things. The safety is a problem. Sometimes car windows get smashed. If the safety issue can be improved, this area will attract more international students. Currently, students are afraid to live here even though the rent is cheaper. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

5.4.6 Chinatown or food hub?

The promotion of branded ethnic spaces such as ethnic precincts, although commonplace in other settler societies such as Canada and Australia, is not a regular practise in New Zealand cities (Spoonley, Meares, & Cain, 2015). In order to construct a nuanced picture of respondents' views of the centre, and to better understand their opinions on how it might be promoted, we asked two questions: what would participants like this stretch of Dominion Road to be best known for and, if they had to invent a slogan to market the area, what would it be? Branding the precinct as a Chinatown was a common suggestion from non-Chinese participants.

I remember a while ago they said they were going to turn it into a little Chinatown. I thought that would be really cool. That would look nice ... because it is predominantly Asian, like you wouldn't want to remove that. Just to have that authentic feel as well would maybe make it seem cooler. (Female, Afghani, 19-30)

Only one Chinese respondent, however, felt that this was a good idea, while many others explicitly argued against this option. Some simply stated their view, like this shopper:

I don't like the idea of Chinatown. No, don't call it that. I don't like it. Don't change the name. Just call it as usual Dominion Road shopping centre. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Others explained why they felt that Chinatown was not a good option for the Balmoral shops.

I haven't been [to the Chinatown in East Auckland] but I heard that it has nearly closed down ... The name of Chinatown didn't bring any benefit to the business. The name of Chinatown has been over used by many countries particularly in America. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

The notion of a food hub, however, was proposed by many shoppers, both Chinese and non-Chinese. A number of participants from the latter group felt that the concentration of food businesses in the area was a real strength that could easily be used as a successful marketing tool.

Probably something to do with restaurants - Unique Taste of Asia? Just a thought you know. You walk through and there is different types of restaurants, they seem to spring up [everywhere], it is good for business. (Male, Samoan/German, 31-45)

Others felt that the idea of a food hub was excellent but that in order to succeed the precinct needed to diversify the kinds of food it sold, as this participant explains.

I think you could play to its strengths as being perhaps like a food hub. Like I don't think it necessarily needs to compete, you know, with boutique clothing stores or whatever. But I think in order to do that it needs a bit more variety and breadth because people want

choice, you know. So you can have, you know, seven different types of Chinese but it would be great if they could have ... some Italian, you know, like some ... so I think it could actually play to its strength as a dining precinct but with more breadth of the type of cuisine that's in there perhaps. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

This was also the view of most of the Chinese shoppers who favoured the food hub option.

Maybe we should call it 'delicious food street' which includes restaurants from other countries, not only Chinese foods. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

There are many restaurants here already. So I think the best choice is to further develop this area as a delicious food street. It is not just to promote Chinese food but to promote it as an Asian food street. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Some Chinese interviewees felt that restaurants in the proposed hub should adjust their menu to suit 'Kiwi' tastes, while others felt that it was important to maintain their authentic 'hometown' flavours. The tension between these two positions on taste is reflective of the broader challenge of migration – to what extent does one hold on to the tastes, sounds and 'feel' of home while making a new way in an adopted land?

I would like to see Dominion Road have restaurants from different countries and became a delicious food street. We should adjust Chinese food to suit Kiwi style to attract more Kiwis to come to Dominion Road. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

'Taste your home flavours' [would be a good slogan] to attract people to go to Dominion Road ... I hope those chefs can cook the food with exactly the same taste as in their hometown ... I come here to have traditional hometown flavour food. I don't like the Sichuan flavour food mixed with Cantonese flavours. That won't bring me any sense of home. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Another facet of the migration experience, migrant businesses and the contribution they make, was the focus of some Chinese shoppers' proposals for the centre. A common thread in these suggested plans, like those for a food hub, was the emphasis on all newcomers rather than just on those from China.

I would like to see Dominion Road become a multicultural show case of successful new immigrant businesses. There are not only Chinese but many other ethnic businesses as well. Such as Candy shop, café shop, book shop, and stationery shop ... Many different ethnic people live together in this area and it has become a multicultural integrated area. That will be great if the council can promote this area as a commercial street not only delicious food but other businesses as well. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

5.4.7 And what about the Chinese signs?

In 2012, Winston Peters claimed that signs in the Balmoral section of Dominion Road were an eyesore and proof that the English language requirements in New Zealand's immigration policy were not working (Trevett, 2012). In order to understand shoppers' perceptions of this issue, we asked them how they felt about non-English shop signage along that section of Dominion Road.

Non-Chinese participants had a range of views: many indicated that it was not a problem for them personally; others liked it and felt that it added to the character of the area; some believed that having the signs in both languages would be better, both from a business and a social inclusiveness point of view; while only one interviewee explicitly expressed disapproval. The following quotes illustrate these diverse views.

That doesn't worry me personally, I mean there is always English there mostly ... it is a multicultural country now. When I first came here that was in 1961 and it is not anything like it is now. (Male, European, 65+)

Adds to the character, love it, I often take photos and then send it to my friend and say what does this mean? (Male, Pākehā, 19-30)

I think if you are wanting to ... build the community that is not so exclusively directed at more the Asian community ... I think the business owners would do well to kind of have the balance, you know, have it both. And then I think you would sort of draw people in a bit more. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

It drives me crazy ... because part of the time you don't know what the shops are, it is not until you go inside and you ask questions that you can figure out what they actually are serving. (Female, South African, 19-30)

Some Chinese shoppers also believed that the signs should appear in both English and Chinese, arguing that New Zealand is an English speaking country and that the signs don't attract 'Kiwi' customers.

I don't like that some shops have only Chinese signage. We are living in an English speaking country. There are not only Chinese people. Chinese signage won't invite Kiwi customers. I think they would be better to write in both Chinese and English. I see many Kiwis look at the signs or the menu but they have no idea what it means. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Many, however, said that they liked the signs because they were familiar and made them feel welcome, and because they were evidence that New Zealand was a tolerant, multicultural society.

For me, I feel warm when I see the Chinese signage and it feels familiar to me. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

I think it is okay to have signs in different languages. That indicates the tolerance of the city to different cultures and indicates the democracy and the freedom of the business environment. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

Several participants also noted that the quality of some of the English translations was quite poor, and that the signs themselves were less than beautiful.

I think some Chinese signs have been translated into English but don't make sense. Kiwis won't understand what they mean. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I think that the signage doesn't look tidy and nice. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

5.5 Interactions in the Balmoral shops

As noted in the Literature Review, a range of studies suggest that commercial spaces like ethnic precincts encourage regular intercultural exchanges (Hiebert, 2000) and act as important sites for social interaction within neighbourhoods (Francis et al., 2012). In this section of the report, we examine the nature of shoppers' interactions in the precinct – with business owners, customers and others – before turning to their views on whether the precinct is a good place for different ethnic groups to mix, and issues of discrimination and belonging. Together with Section 6, these analyses contribute to the ongoing debate about the nature and impact of inter-group contact in commercial spaces generally, and in ethnic precincts more specifically.

5.5.1 Interactions with business owners and staff

Interviewees enjoyed a range of positive interactions with business owners and staff in the precinct. Many listed the shops they visited regularly and talked about the interactions they had there, using words like “nice”, “lovely”, “linger and talk” and “chat”. The most frequently used words, however, were “helpful” and “friendly”.

They're just friendly. Helpful. Friendly and helpful. (Male, Māori, 65+)

The people at [shop x], they're lovely. We don't know each other's names but they recognise us because we're in there a bit and [the] same with the [people] in [shop x], they're both friendly and helpful. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

Yes, we greet each other. Like the [shop] owner and staff next door. They are ... friendly. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Purely transactional interactions and no interactions at all were described by some respondents.

During the week I come on my own and on the weekend I come with my partner ... I don't know anybody on this road. I have no personal relationship with any of the shops here or anything like that. (Male, European, 65+)

I don't have much interaction with them. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

For non-Chinese interviewees, the two main reasons given for this lack of interaction were language barriers and busyness, as these participants explain.

I don't have any interact[ion], I don't become friends with them, they won't know me from a bar of soap. I just go in there ... and buy whatever I want and leave again. I have a chat at the movie house with the people behind the counter but the Chinese people in the other shops, a lot of them don't speak much English anyway. Also they are busy so you don't get any interaction. (Male, European, 65+)

At times when it is not busy you do tend to chat a little bit with specific people, not all of them, but most of the time when we are there they are busy so they just want to take your order real quick and a little bit of a language barrier as well because ... I don't speak Chinese so we just place the order ... point to the menu. (Male, Asian, 19-30)

Participants described two ways of managing the language barrier: taking along a Chinese friend and learning the appropriate greeting as a foundation for a developing relationship.

It is positive generally ... because being with Asian friends they ... speak Chinese ... We had trouble once telling them that we don't eat [beef] so that was a communication problem but otherwise they are really quite nice and they changed the dish. (Female, Indian, 19-30)

I always say hello in their language, if I know how to speak it. And if I don't I go and say how do you say hello in your language? They say 'namaste' and I say cool. I will remember for next time. So next time I come I go 'namaste' you sort of make a new friend. (Male, Samoan/German, 31-45)

Busyness was also a barrier to interactions between Chinese participants and business owners and staff in the precinct.

You know they are very busy and I don't want to bother them. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Sometimes the waiter's attitude is not very friendly if they are busy. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

5.5.2 Interactions with customers

Most of the shoppers we interviewed said that they had few or no interactions with customers in the centre. This was particularly the case for non-Chinese participants.

I would say no, not really, everyone gets on and does their own thing. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

When I'm doing the transactional things I'm sort of quite focused and I don't notice other people there... I haven't ... really engaged, certainly with other customers there. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

As described in the previous section, some participants identified language as a barrier, while for others the lack of interaction was due to not knowing other people in the precinct.

Not really ... I think partly it is because I don't ... speak Korean ... I have a lot of friends in the Chinese community but most of the people on the street I don't know so, and not have very much in common other than eating and dumplings. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

I never meet anybody here that I know. I don't know that many people here in Auckland. I have only been in Auckland [for] seven years. (Male, European, 65+)

Several Chinese participants work in the shopping centre, and their exchanges were quite different from those interviewees who visit the precinct only as customers. They described frequent and positive interactions with people from many different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

My shop has many Kiwi customers and we get along with each other very well ... we also meet and chat with Thai, Korean, Malaysian and Indian people. My shop has many Indian customers. We have many Korean customers as well because the price in Korean [shop type] shops is higher. They are friendly. Sometimes, Korean customers bargain with us, they can't speak English well and we can't speak Korean. We use the calculator to communicate. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Language is perceived as a barrier for Chinese shoppers too.

Yes, I have only talked with Chinese acquaintances, some classmates from English class ... I can't speak English. After saying hello, we don't know what to say. Most restaurant customers are Chinese. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

Not knowing people was also a barrier for Chinese participants. As these interviewees explain, it feels odd to greet people you don't know, even when you are serving them in a shop.

If you're greeting someone you don't know, that person would wonder why you do that. Some Kiwis are okay to say 'hi' but some Chinese people don't respond. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Sometimes I may chat with a customer who brings a child. Not much though. It sounds strange to talk with someone you don't know. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Both Chinese and non-Chinese interviewees described a range of positive interactions with customers in the precinct, both within and between ethnic communities and frequently based around the consumption of food.

Usually when they are looking for certain noodles I always recommend oh this is a better one do you want to try this one because I have already tried them myself and they are sort of like oh okay I will give that a go. (Male, Samoan/German, 31-45)

Yes, sometimes we recommend food to each other. We mainly interact with Chinese people. Not many Kiwis come alone to eat out here. The majority of them come with their Chinese friends. They are still not familiar with Chinese food and need their Chinese friends to introduce and explain. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

For some non-Chinese interviewees, interactions in the precinct were limited to greetings and friendly comments.

Just like hi, bye something like that. (Female, Indian, 19-30)

Maybe the odd, they might say something and I might say something back but not really ... maybe a greeting or like a smile. (Female, Kiwi, 19-30)

5.5.3 Interactions with others on Dominion Road

Most Chinese shoppers had few or no interactions with others in the Balmoral shops.

No, I don't think I've interacted with anyone there. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

No, I think mostly people just mind their own business mostly they don't interact that much. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

Again, Chinese interviewees mentioned language and busyness as barriers to these casual encounters.

No, I don't think I've interacted with anyone [in the street]. Chinese people are not used to chatting with other Kiwis. The main reason is limited English skill because after saying hello they don't know what to say. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

Honestly speaking, I am just passing through and do not greet other people, not like in my neighbourhood where we do greet each other. Dominion Road is a very busy commercial street. There are too many people walking around. People are friendly if I need to ask for

directions [but] it is not realistic to expect people to greet each other on a busy street like Queen Street or Dominion Road. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Some non-Chinese participants talked about exchanging greetings with people in the street.

Just [to] say good morning. How are you? (Male Māori, 65+)

Not really just the general thing you know, you get used to seeing people and I usually wave out and they will wave out or if I am, you know, on the same footpath they will stop and talk, you know. (Male, Pākehā, 46-65)

Others noted the presence of the poor, the homeless and the mentally ill.

There are a few people from I guess half way houses or [with] mental health issues but even then, they are never negative, they are just strange. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

There are a few crazies on the road. There is a couple of homeless people there and then they always make a ruckus. (Female, Caucasian, 19-30)

5.5.4 Are the shops a good place for different ethnic groups to mix?

The results presented in the three previous sections suggest that shoppers experience a variety of interactions in the precinct. Some claimed that they do not interact at all with business owners, staff, customers or others. Explanations for this include busyness, language difficulties, or a sense of unease about the appropriateness of engaging those they do not know. Others describe an exchange of greetings or the sharing of information, particularly about food. Although interviewees noted that some of these encounters are with people from their own particular communities, shoppers also talked about a rich array of interactions across ethnic, language and cultural lines, evidence, perhaps, of emerging relationships between new and old Aucklanders. The following quotes illustrate this well.

I have worked here [for many] years. I have been getting to know other people around my shop and we have become friends. At the beginning, I couldn't speak any English and hardly said hello to anyone. Now, we always say "hello" to each other. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

When I go and buy groceries from the Chinese store I always say 'ni hao' which is hello in Chinese and pretty much because I am a regular customer they ... know what I am going to buy anyway and they [say] 'oh you need this, it is at the back if you want to get some more'. So they know me and I am just a regular. (Male, Samoan/German, 31-45)

In addition to questioning shoppers about their interactions in the precinct, we also asked whether they thought that the Balmoral shops were a good place for different ethnic groups to mix. As illustrated in Figure 33, 79 per cent of the non-Chinese interviewees thought that the precinct was

a good place for ethnic groups to mix, while the Chinese respondents were much less certain: 55 per cent said 'yes', 9 per cent 'no' and 36 per cent said that they were not sure.

Figure 33 Shoppers' views on the Balmoral shops as a good place for mixing



In order to contextualise shoppers' responses to this question, we invited them to elaborate on their answers. Those who were quite sure that the centre was a good place for different ethnic groups to mix talked about the positive aspects of ethnic diversity more broadly; the fact that the precinct was a good place for mixing compared with other places; and that people from different groups generally got on well there.

There are people from different cultures here so that if you do see someone that looks different it is not really going to knock your socks off, it is not going to make you step back. I think Auckland generally is pretty comfortable with people from other cultures but I think in particular this area is so obviously populated by people from all over the place. It is really a good place to come. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

They are mixing at the moment as far as I am concerned, compared with other areas ... I mean the ethnic groups certainly get on well. (Male, Māori, 65+)

Getting along was also a key theme in a 2013 report on social cohesion in Auckland (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013), as was the concern about specific groups 'sticking together', a factor also mentioned by several respondents in this project, including those who felt that the precinct was not a good place for different ethnic groups to interact.

They stick to themselves don't they, in their own groups, eh? (Male, European, 65+)

I think ethnics tend to stick with the group ... the Indians tend to hang around in Sandringham Village, the Chinese hang around ... here. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

Others felt that people who didn't want to mix deliberately avoided the area, as this respondent explains.

I have some friends who just refuse to go down there ... I think they feel more uncomfortable going there because it seems so exclusive of ... European restaurants or anything like that. (Female, Caucasian, 19-30)

It is interesting to note that although 80 per cent of the non-Chinese interviewees felt that the precinct was a good place for different ethnic groups to mix, many were less definite about it in their follow up responses.

I still don't feel like you've got the spaces there that people could ... just sort of sit around and chat, you know, other than sort of clog up half the footpath. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

I think it is a good place for it to happen but I don't think it is happening. (Male, Indian, 19-30)

Chinese interviewees were also unsure about the extent to which the Balmoral shops were a good place for different ethnic groups to mix. Explanations for this focused on whether integration was really a matter of presenting different food together; uncertainty about whether Kiwis really like Chinese people; and the perception that the centre itself does not contain enough 'Kiwi stuff'.

I didn't see any conflict in this area but ... can people become integrated simply because there are different foods together? I am not sure. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I am not sure. I don't know if Kiwis like Chinese people or not. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

No, I am not sure ... I think this area lacks diversity, not enough local Kiwi flavour but too much Chinese stuff. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Those Chinese shoppers who did feel that the precinct was a good place for mixing often connected this to an *absence* of particular attributes: complaints about the origin of Chinese products; police presence and drunkenness; or negative experiences.

I think it is a good place for different people to come together. I haven't heard any comments or challenges because we are Chinese or our stuff is made in China. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Yes, I think it is good ... during the weekend, you will see many police cars in Queen Street because there are many drunk young people in the street. I don't see that in Dominion

Road. I also see many homeless persons in the city but haven't seen many in Dominion Road. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

I think this area is a good place for people to mix. I haven't had any negative experiences yet. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

These varied perceptions of the Balmoral precinct as a meeting place for people of different ethnic groups reflect many current debates in the literature. Hannigan's (2010) notion of 'contact zones' where space is shared without any guarantee of meaningful contact; Noble's (2011) claim that even banal and short interactions are forms of 'urban learning' and Peters and De Haan's (2011) suggestion that first-hand encounters can transform attitudes and sentiments can all be glimpsed in the narratives of Balmoral shoppers. The following quote illustrates quite clearly the tensions in the literature between the fleeting, superficial nature of many encounters and the notion of their value in broadening a collective awareness and appreciation of urban ethnic diversity.

I don't think it facilitates a real sort of intense mixing, it does [however] provide a place where people from other ethnicities [can] be together in the same space ... which is kind of cool, I don't think you could minimise the sort of value of that so yeah I think it is quite good actually when I think about it. (Male, Pākehā, 19-30)

5.5.5 Belonging in Balmoral

Previous research on the community functions of ethnic precincts has focused almost exclusively on their benefits for co-ethnic communities and, as a consequence, we know little about how local residents feel about them. In recognition of this gap in the scholarship, and in acknowledgement of the ethnic diversity of the local area as outlined in Section 4, we interviewed both Chinese and non-Chinese shoppers who live in and around the precinct. We were particularly interested in local residents' sense of belonging, asking residents from Balmoral, Mt Roskill, Mt Eden, Eden Terrace and Sandringham the following two questions: in your opinion, what role does the precinct play in the local community; and in what ways, if any, does the centre contribute to your sense of belonging in the local community?

5.5.5.1 What role does the precinct play in the local community?

In response to the first question, shoppers recognised the key role that dining out and food play in the centre.

I think its main role is the food, I am sure it has other things there too but I can't think of them actually. (Male, Pākehā, 46-65)

[The centre is] probably pretty important. [People] always seem to be going out eating there. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

The street is very convenient for local people. It has become a nice place at night time. Many people came here to eat late at night. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

They also noted other attributes such as how convenient it is; its vibrant night-time economy; and its amenities.

Generally speaking, I think this area is a good place to live, transportation, eating out, and different shops around. It is a convenient living area compared with other places I have lived. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

It used to be dead quiet down there years ago now it has all changed; it all comes alive at night. (Male, European, 65+)

The parks are good for families, kids, in the morning they do Tai Chi, the Chinese people, I usually just hop in and join them and they look at me and like, they don't mind because you are doing their thing so I just join in. (Male, Samoan/German, 31-45)

For non-Chinese participants, there were two additional key themes. The first is that the area lacks a 'real' sense of community compared with other neighbourhoods, that it doesn't have a hub and that the precinct needs a greater variety of businesses to encourage people to linger rather than eat and leave.

There's not a community as such you know what I mean? ... Mt Eden has a little heart ... [Balmoral] doesn't have that same thing ... there's not that sense [of] ... a hub. There's no community sense from the wider group I don't think. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

My sense is ... people come and they eat, but I don't feel kind of encouraged to linger there when I go there, you know, so you go and you eat. But it would be lovely to just have a meander around or a walk or look at the other shops or whatever while I'm there ... you think oh I've had a nice meal, I'll just go sit, you know, in a wee reserve or we'll go down and get an ice cream, do you know what I mean, to make a bit more of an experience of it. I don't think people would necessarily do that. (Female, Pākehā, 31-45)

The second theme centres on the feeling that the precinct is a place for Asian or Chinese people rather than the community more broadly. Some respondents view this in a positive sense, while others experience it as alienating or uninviting.

It's a place for Chinese people to probably feel quite at home. When you go there on Saturday night everyone is buzzing out at dinner. You could be in a little village in China or something. I think that's good ... It's a place they can meet their friends and feel part of Auckland. It must be very difficult not speaking the language for the ones that don't speak English terribly well. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

Because to Asians, just because they would have such a wide variety of their own food, they would want to go there most often, whereas non-Asians we don't understand the signage, we don't understand, you know, much about any of those restaurants ... doesn't seem as inviting. (Female, Afghani, 19-30)

5.5.5.2 How does the centre contribute to a sense of belonging in the community?

In response to the second question, most shoppers felt that the centre contributes positively to their sense of belonging in the community. Although both Chinese and non-Chinese interviewees felt that they belonged in the centre, and that the centre was a positive aspect of their relationship to the area, the reasons for this were quite different. Non-Chinese participants attributed their sense of belonging to the length of time they had lived in the area; to the familiarity that comes with recognising people and developing relationships with them; and to a feeling of being 'at home'.

I just remember that place since I was young so ... I feel like I belong because I have lived there and that is where I go with family and friends and stuff like that. (Male, Indian, 19-30)

Well you develop sort of, not friendships, acquaintanceships with perhaps the shop assistants. You just know each other ... you sort of chat about the kids and what your children are doing ... It's kind of cosy. (Female, Pākehā, 46-65)

I know people here so that is really nice ... I really like knowing a lot of people in this area ... I just feel part of it. (Male, Pākehā, 31-45)

For Chinese participants, on the other hand, the sense of belonging they feel is predominantly connected to a sense of pride in the Chinese character of the precinct and the contributions it makes to the community.

Yeah, I do have a sense of belonging in this area, particularly in this shop. Many customers come to this area and to my shop. I feel proud of our Chinese people. We created an attractive place for people to come. Many Kiwi customers come to my shop as the quality of the stuff ... is good and the price is reasonable. (Female, Chinese, 46-65)

Yes, I feel very good about living in this area. So many Chinese restaurants have opened ... and so many different people like to eat there. I feel proud of being Chinese. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

The following participant, however, felt that what mattered was 'integration' with Kiwis rather than a sense of belonging.

[Having a sense of belonging] is not important to me. What matters to me is that we should integrate with Kiwis. I think that Kiwis don't need to think that this is no longer their homeland. They are still the majority. There are only Chinese restaurants here and they will

like Chinese food gradually ... I think that having a place like Dominion Road is good for Chinese people. (Female, Chinese, 19-30)

The ethnically diverse nature of the precinct affected several non-Chinese respondents' sense of belonging in the local area. Although this was perceived as problematic by a small minority who thought that the centre catered for 'Asians' or 'foreigners', others felt that providing for the needs of newcomers was both necessary and appropriate.

In that area I don't really feel like I belong ...

Interviewer: what makes you say that?

Just the fact that it is mostly Asians... you don't feel like going there as often. (Female, Afghani, 19-30)

You don't feel a part of the area because it is, mainly catering for, well, I think it caters for foreigners. (Female, Caucasian, 19-30)

I feel like this area is definitely predominantly other ethnicities. Run shops here, work here and visit here ... I feel like it is a good thing ... I have lived in another country so I know how important it is to have ... that hub of support when you need some help ... I would like to have an array of foods that would better suit my lifestyle [as] I do have to go quite a way to get things for our lifestyle, like more Kiwi style food. (Female, Kiwi, 19-30)

5.5.6 Discrimination in Balmoral

None of the shoppers reported experiencing or witnessing discriminatory words or actions in the precinct. The following comment, however, reflects the sense of disgruntlement described by several non-Chinese participants in the previous section.

Occasionally you get old mostly Pākehā dudes that say sexist things but I guess that is a generational thing maybe ... I think Balmoral used to be a predominately Pākehā area so I think when they come back here it can be a bit scary ... I can kind of understand the shock of it to a certain extent.

Interviewer: Are there particular things that they tend to pick up on though?

I think it is just, where do you get a decent cup of coffee around here? It is all Chinese restaurants.

6.0 Business owners

In this section, we present the results of in-depth interviews with business owners and/or managers. The section begins by examining the migrant histories of those participants who arrived in New Zealand from elsewhere before turning to the results of all of the research interviews.

6.1 Who responded to the business owner interview?

As outlined in the Methodology section, we interviewed 31 people who described themselves as owners, co-owners or managers of a business in the Balmoral shops (10 women and 21 men). Most of the participants were aged between 31 and 64 (eight were aged between 31 and 45, and 14 were aged between 46 and 64) although a minority were younger (five were aged between 19 and 30) or older (four were aged 65 or older).

Twenty-eight of the 31 participants arrived in New Zealand from overseas: China (17), India (4), Sri Lanka (2), Taiwan (2), Germany (1), Japan (1) and the United Kingdom (1). Nineteen identified as Chinese while others identified as Indian (5), New Zealand/European/Pākehā (3), Other European (2), Japanese and Sri Lankan. Sixteen of the Chinese participants spoke Mandarin as their first language and three spoke another Chinese language. The remaining participants spoke English (5), a non-Hindu Indian language (4), Japanese (1), Singhalese (1) or German (1). Most of the participants spoke more than one language. The high concentration of participants born in China, identifying as Chinese and speaking Mandarin is reflective of the high concentration of Chinese owned and operated businesses in the area, as noted in the Introduction.

6.2 The migration stories of business owners are varied

Many of the 28 overseas-born participants had been living in New Zealand for some time; 16 had been living in New Zealand for 10 years or more while 12 had arrived in the previous 10 years. They arrived in New Zealand under a range of visa categories; seven arrived under the Skilled Migrant category (four as the Principal Applicant and three as Secondary Applicants), six arrived on a Family Visa, and three arrived through the Business Category. The remaining 12 participants cited 'other' visa categories. For the most part, this involved arriving on a Student Visa before applying for Permanent Residence on completion of tertiary studies. This migration pathway was especially common for those migrants arriving from China.

We asked participants why they migrated to New Zealand and although the responses were varied, two key themes dominated. These are outlined below.

6.2.1 The pull of family

Family was a common feature of participants' migration stories and typically took one of two forms. First, some *followed* family members to New Zealand. One interviewee, for example, described following his girlfriend (now his wife) here, while another reported coming with his daughter to be

reunited with his wife. The familial connection was also evident in the visa categories on which some interviewees arrived; six participants were family sponsored (two came to be reunited with their fathers, two came when they married their partner and two were sponsored by close family members).

Participants also described how family members who had lived in or visited New Zealand talked favourably about their experiences which enticed them to make New Zealand their home.

I learned about New Zealand from my uncle. My parents also encouraged me to come here after they visited New Zealand. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)²⁰

Second, and more commonly, participants spoke of migrating for their family in the belief that New Zealand offered something that their country of origin could not. Although the perceived benefits were varied, the most prominent reason included better educational opportunities for dependent children.

We started thinking about going overseas when my son was two years old. My relative informed us that there is a very good education system in New Zealand and it is very good for my son's future if he can receive education here. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

There is a large body of literature that examines the gendered nature of migration (Huang & Yeoh, 2003; Huang, Yeoh, & Lam, 2008; Yeoh, Graham, & Boyle, 2002; Yeoh & Willis, 2005) and, more specifically, the important role of family when deciding to migrate. Gendered patterns of migration are borne out in the present study. Of the nine migrant women who took part, three followed male partners who had secured employment in New Zealand and three spoke explicitly about migrating for their children, as captured in the following quotes.

We decided New Zealand was the best country for families. That was our main concern – which is the best country for raising a family. (Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

[I came] to reunite with my daughter [and] help my daughter and look after my grandchildren. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Although the men who participated in this research also sometimes spoke of migrating to meet the needs of their family, there was a certain vulnerability in the women's narratives that was not evident in the men's. This was especially the case for those women who arrived in New Zealand without a Work Visa and, therefore, the means to ensure financial independence.

²⁰ All participants' quotes in this section are presented verbatim in italics. Missing words or phrases are indicated by ... and where we have inserted our own words to maintain the sense of a quote these are presented in square brackets. Where quotes include the words of the interviewer these are presented in bold. The sex and age of the interviewee are presented in brackets after each quote to provide context for the reader. In order to avoid inadvertently revealing the identity of participants, however, ethnicity is noted only as Chinese or non-Chinese.

6.2.2 The draw of New Zealand's lifestyle

In recent years, there has been increased emphasis in the academic literature on 'lifestyle migrants' who consider migration a pathway to a "better and more fulfilling way of life, especially in contrast to the one left behind" (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009, p.1). Reflecting this development in the literature, New Zealand was perceived by many of the participants to offer a better lifestyle than their homeland. Some interviewees felt that the smaller population here provided more space, less stress and a quieter environment while others appreciated the outdoor activities that are available as well as the beauty of the natural (some asserted pollution-free) environment. The following quotes illustrate some of these responses.

Very clean and tidy country ... In [home country], there are too many people. Very quiet and peace of mind ... and no noise [in New Zealand]. (Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

I like the living style and environment. Feel relaxed and enjoy the clean air. The environment is comfortable for me. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Participants' perceptions of a relatively crime-free and safe country also contributed to understandings of a better lifestyle in New Zealand. Indeed, safety from crime was a commonly reported reason for migrating. For example, one participant decided to come to New Zealand following "ethnic risings" at home, while another left "everything behind" to come with her husband and two children after riots broke out in her homeland.

There were riots. It was really frustrating ... we were very well settled there ... but we couldn't get satisfied. We heard New Zealand is a developed country, that there is very little crime, that it is beautiful ... we left our house, family, everything behind. We decided to run fast [from there]. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

The relative invisibility of *controlling* for safety from crime in New Zealand was also applauded.

[Friends and family] said the policemen here don't carry guns or pistols or anything. They don't even have a cane ... they said it was a very safe country. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

6.2.3 Who helped with the migration process and how?

We were interested in better understanding the source of people's information and support when migrating to New Zealand. The provision of information typically clustered around two key sources: family and friends; and professional sources, such as immigration consultants.

The information and assistance offered by family and friends was broad in scope and included: informal advice, including advice about the weather; practical support, such as help to complete the required immigration paperwork; and, to a lesser extent, financial assistance. Support often came from a range of sources and, in most cases, was ongoing.

My cousin provided all information and helped me with the application. I learned about New Zealand from my sister. She also helped me with my application. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

At the beginning, [my] school teacher and classmate provided a lot of help ... They introduced me to ... an insurance agent, a real estate agent and a car dealer ... I learned about New Zealand and [what it is like] to study here from an educational agent and my English teacher. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Immigration consultants were also valued for the professional advice they offered when participants were first considering moving to New Zealand. This was especially the case for those interviewees arriving from China, some of whom thought that immigration consultants could expedite the migration process. The advice offered was both formal and informal and included: study and work options; information about the immigration process itself; and information about New Zealand more broadly.

I learned about New Zealand from an immigration and study consultation agent. They helped with my application to come to New Zealand. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

An immigration consultant also provided some information on finding school and settling down here. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

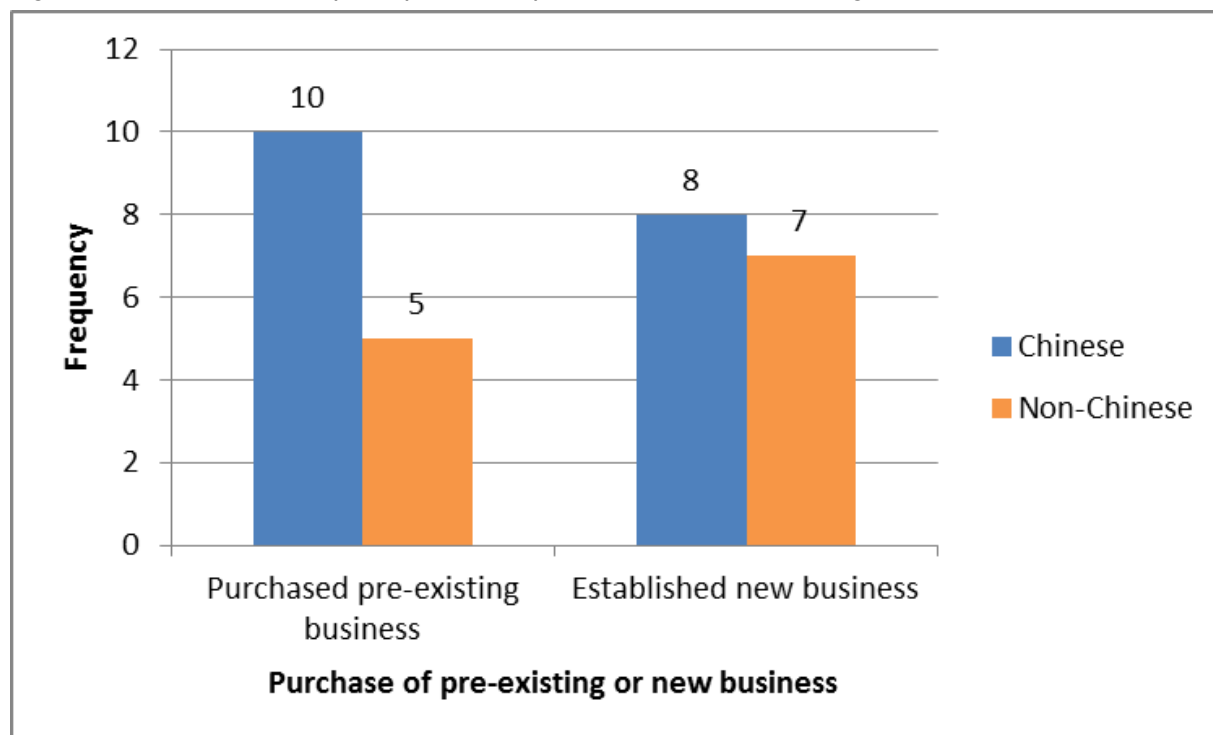
A small number of migrant participants received no advice or assistance from others when migrating to New Zealand.

6.3 Establishing a business in the Balmoral shops

We turn our attention now to participants' (both migrant and non-migrant) experiences of establishing a business in the Balmoral shops, paying particular attention to interviewees' reasons for establishing a business; the difficulties they faced in the start-up phase; and the individuals and/or organisations that provided assistance during this time.

Nearly half of the participants purchased a pre-existing business in the area while half established a new business. Chinese participants were slightly more likely to purchase a pre-existing business than non-Chinese, as illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 34 Number of participants who purchased a new or existing business



Most of the participants' businesses were established fairly recently: 15 were established between 2011 and 2014; seven were established between 2006 and 2010; and eight were established between 2000 and 2005. The remaining business was long-standing and established in the 1980s. Only two of the participants owned other businesses. In both cases, the second business was located outside of the Balmoral area but was in the same industry as the one they owned in Dominion Road.

6.3.1 What were the reasons for establishing a business?

Although interviewees identified a range of reasons for establishing their businesses, those participants who spoke English as a second language often reported starting a business because of difficulties experienced entering the local labour market. Barriers to entry included: the limitations of the labour market at the time they were attempting to find a job; exploitation in the workplace; lack of credential recognition; and difficulties speaking English. Some of these barriers are discussed in further detail below.

It was not uncommon for Chinese participants, in particular, to describe experiences of exploitation in the workplace prior to establishing their business, as illustrated in the following quote.

After being rejected many times ... I paid \$150 for a job agency to take me to a farm outside Auckland ... The farm work was very hard ... I had to work under sunshine and felt dizzy and got headaches ... I worked for six months. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

Another woman explained that, despite working for an employer for five years, she did not once receive a salary increase.

For five years I worked at [name of business] but my salary didn't increase ... I was so busy. I was making a lot of money for them. But they only paid me \$15 per hour and each year the lack of increase would make me very sad. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

For Chinese interviewees, lack of credential recognition in New Zealand was also a motivation for establishing a business.

It was too hard to get a job in this field in New Zealand [as] employers look for people who have local working experience and only recognise local qualifications. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Difficulty finding suitable work due to a lack of English language skills also indirectly led some Chinese participants to start up their own business. The following quote illustrates this difficulty.

I can't speak English and can't speak Cantonese. It was very hard to get a job without those languages ... I tried once ... at a Chinese supermarket. The job was to tidy up vegetables and fruit and refill shelves. I didn't get it because of my language barriers. I didn't try again. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Academic literature points to the ways in which migrant entrepreneurship can be used strategically to respond to migrant disadvantage (Pécoud, 2010) and to the agency of individual migrants in determining their own career pathways (Kontos, 2003). With the latter in mind, a number of migrant participants told us that they specifically *chose* to go into business. For some, this decision was made because they wanted to better support their family financially while others wanted to provide their family with employment opportunities. Chinese participants were most likely to have established their business to support family members in this way.

I realised that my son didn't have a good career in New Zealand ... I wanted to help my son and he can help me in running a restaurant. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

A small number of participants (both migrant and non-migrant but less likely to be Chinese) wanted to follow in their families' footsteps. One businessman, for example, spoke of continuing his mother's long-running business when she became elderly. Another spoke of his father, cousins and aunt having owned the same kind of business when he was younger and, as a result, how familiar and therefore natural it was to start up a business when he reached adulthood.

Family was, however, not the only motivation for establishing a business. Self-employment was also thought to provide greater levels of autonomy and freedom for both Chinese and non-Chinese participants, as the following quotes attest.

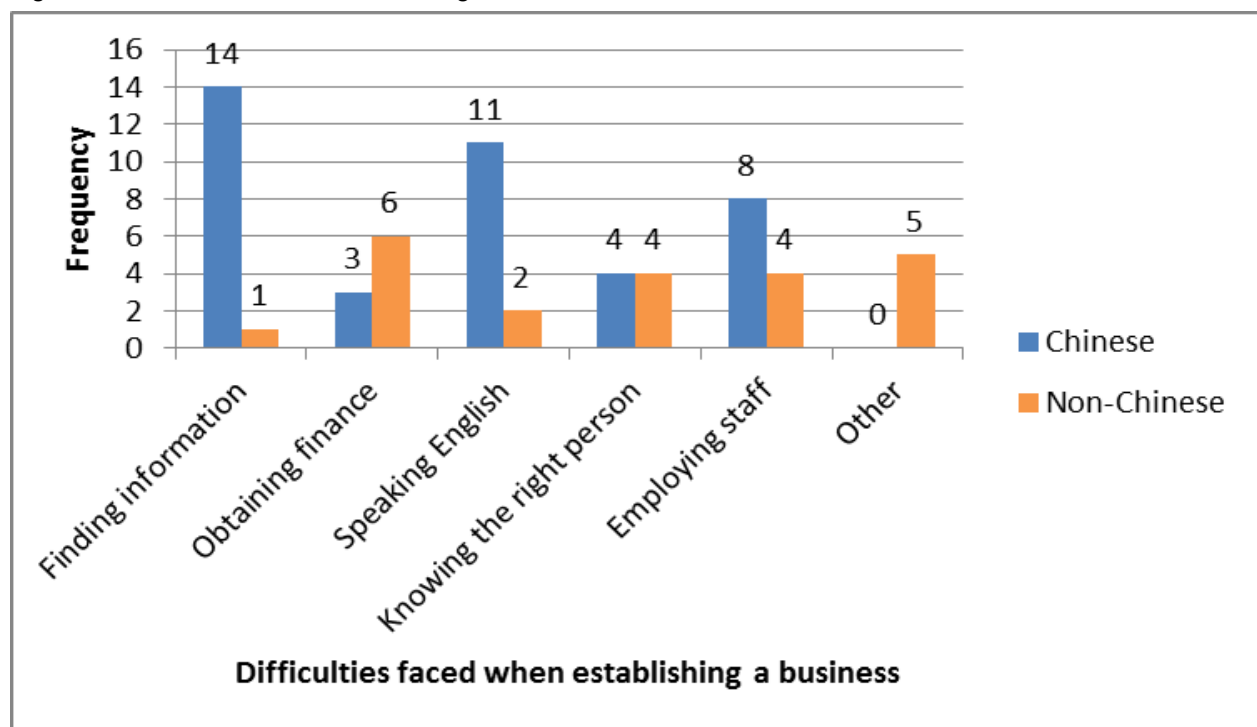
I want to be my own boss and have more freedom in working hours and income. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

I have always wanted to be my own boss and make my own decisions ... I find with other organisations you're sort of pinned down a little bit, you don't have that freedom and here I have the freedom ... when you're in an organisation ... you haven't got that ownership there. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

6.3.2 Difficulties for business owners when establishing their business

Many participants, irrespective of ethnicity or migrant status, faced difficulties when first establishing their business. However, there were clear distinctions along ethnic lines with respect to the *kind* of difficulties faced by participants, as shown in Figure 35. For Chinese participants, finding information (14 participants), speaking English (11) and employing staff (8) were most difficult, while the difficulties for non-Chinese participants were more evenly spread between obtaining finance (6), knowing the right person (4), and employing staff (4). Non-Chinese participants also identified a range of other difficulties including: cash flow; increased regulation and bureaucracy; difficult clients; and burglaries.

Figure 35 Difficulties establishing a business



Participants had the opportunity during their interview to provide additional comments about their answers. With regard to finding information, some Chinese participants were concerned that they did not understand well enough the compliance regulations associated with establishing and maintaining a business in New Zealand. They wanted to run a legal business but were not sure where or who to go to for support and advice. These difficulties are illustrated in the following quotes.

Obedience to the law is very important in New Zealand. We want to know what is lawful and what is illegal in running the business. We had difficulty finding the right person to ask. We don't want to do something illegal. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

The biggest issue for me is to be familiar with the rules and practice in New Zealand. I have to put in a lot of effort to learn. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

A related difficulty reported by Chinese participants was the apparently overly bureaucratic and complex business environment in New Zealand.

The big problem for me is that the council procedure is too complex and is not efficient ... we have waited for a year to get everything approved. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Non-Chinese participants did not typically share the same concerns or face the same difficulties around finding information, as illustrated in the following quote.

We would find information from various sources and I think all the New Zealand websites ... are very user-friendly so it gives a lot more information ... and it is all clear, you get the information that you want and it is so neat and clean. I don't think there have been major problems getting information. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Although knowing the right person did not feature strongly among the difficulties identified by participants, Chinese interviewees described not knowing who to contact numerous times, explaining that this difficulty was mostly negotiated with support and help from family or friends.

My wife can find the right person. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

At the beginning, I had difficulty finding the right person. My classmate, my customers, and my friends all helped me. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

As noted above, Chinese participants did not identify obtaining finance as a particular concern. We note, however, that many of them explained they had funded their businesses personally by using savings, extending personal mortgages, selling investment properties overseas or with the support of family and/or friends.

We had difficulty obtaining finance. We had to invest all our family savings including savings in China into the business. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

I sold my house in China and borrowed money from my friends to invest in my business here. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Interestingly, although Chinese participants were least likely to report difficulties obtaining finance, they were most likely to describe difficult financial situations. We also noted that these financial

commitments sometimes made it difficult to meet everyday costs such as groceries, rent and power bills.

I had to invest my own money to set up my business. The money has to be spent in running the business. I can't use the money to pay for my daily groceries. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Of the non-Chinese interviewees who described financial difficulties, most managed them with apparent ease. Strategies employed included: leasing plant instead of purchasing; borrowing money from friends or family; or using equity to borrow from formal lenders. One person also explained that pre-existing relationships sometimes smoothed the path to financial business support.

No it wasn't [difficult] ... when somebody knows you, trusts you ... I think it makes a big difference. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Although recruiting staff was a concern for many participants, it was of greatest concern for those participants who identified as Chinese and who owned a business in the hospitality industry.

Staff are not stable. They tell you that they want to resign next week. I have to find new staff. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

It is hard to find good chefs and skilled staff in New Zealand. Waitresses are all part-time. Staff turnover rate is too high. We have to train new staff every two or three months. Some people don't have the skills we require so we have to train them or find new staff. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Research suggests that local accents, colloquialisms and the speed of everyday speech can all contribute to difficulties for non-native speakers of English (North, 2007). These difficulties are certainly borne out in the present study where 11 of the 19 Chinese participants reported difficulties speaking English when first establishing their businesses, as illustrated in the following quotes.

At the beginning, I had difficulty understanding the local accent. I can understand much better now. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

I had some difficulties at the beginning. I couldn't understand some words as New Zealanders have a strong accent. But after a while, I found there are certain words they pronounce differently from me. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Once businesses were established, these language difficulties were mitigated by using simple tools to communicate with English speaking people such as gestures and pictures.

My uncle has difficulty speaking English but he has improved and can make conversation with gestures. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

This is a big problem. I show them a picture if the customer speaks English (Male, Chinese, 65+)

In addition, friends, neighbours and family members, especially children, were often relied on to bridge linguistic divides. Although this could undoubtedly put pressure on children (especially those who were young), it appeared to be a common, effective and cost-free strategy for many Chinese interviewees. Reported reliance on family members is captured in the following quotes.

I find it is very difficult to communicate as I don't understand English. We have to rely on my daughter. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

My wife ... is my walking stick [laughs]. My wife is my mouth when we go out, I just follow her. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Others employed English-speaking staff to ensure their customers' needs were met or employed local 'Kiwis' to help with the paperwork involved in their business.

I employed a few workers at the beginning because of my language barriers. Most of them were students. We provided a job [for] about four to five workers. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Overall, some Chinese participants appeared to feel quite overwhelmed by the combination of difficulties they faced, leaving at least one participant 'lost for words'.

We have faced a lot of difficulties in setting up the shop. I don't know how to describe it. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

6.3.3 Who helped business owners to establish their business and how?

We asked participants which individual or organisation helped them to establish their business, inviting participants to select as many options as applied from the following list: friends and/or family, both in New Zealand and overseas; one's own ethnic community; Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ); Inland Revenue Department (IRD); Auckland Regional Migrant Services (ARMS); Immigration New Zealand; Auckland Council; Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB); bank manager/accountant; business association; and 'other'.

In some respects, the results for Chinese and non-Chinese participants were similar; none of the participants received help from ARMS, CAB, Immigration New Zealand, or a business association and fairly equal numbers received help from Auckland Council, and bank managers and/or accountants.

There was a difference, however, with respect to reliance on family and/or friends. Chinese participants reported that they received the most help from locally based friends and family (29),²¹ followed by family and friends who lived overseas (13). Non-Chinese participants also reported high levels of support and assistance from friends and family who lived in New Zealand (8) but international friends and family did not feature at all.

There were also differences with respect to the *kinds* of support offered. Chinese participants most commonly received advice and information; professional advice from trusted business agents and immigration consultants (the latter were especially valued). This was followed by financial assistance received equally from local (6) and international (6) friends and/or family, as these participants explain.

[Auckland Council] come to the shop to give advice on the requirements for food safety, resource consent and preparing documents. That was very helpful. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Finance is not the biggest problem. Family supported me. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

Other forms of support include assistance contacting suppliers and help promoting the business. Overall, however, there appeared to be very little *systematic* engagement by Chinese business owners with available services, professional bodies or central/local government agencies when establishing their business. Instead, their engagement appeared somewhat *ad hoc*, with most advice and information coming from informal networks.

The kind of support received by non-Chinese participants was more evenly distributed between financial support; advice and information; and services. Other forms of support included: help finding staff; advice about suitable suppliers and trades people; assistance with paperwork; and mentoring.

Participants from both groups said that they received very practical support from locally based family and friends, including: help to paint, decorate and renovate the business; assistance with difficult paperwork; help in the business itself; and the provision of advice about suitable retail products and/or ingredients. This range of support is captured in the quotes below.

They help me with physical labour. My family also provided financial support. They also helped me with ideas and advice. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

A friend helped with physical labour, painting, introducing suppliers, telling their friends about the restaurant. That was very helpful. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

²¹ The figures exceed the number of participants because multiple responses could be made.

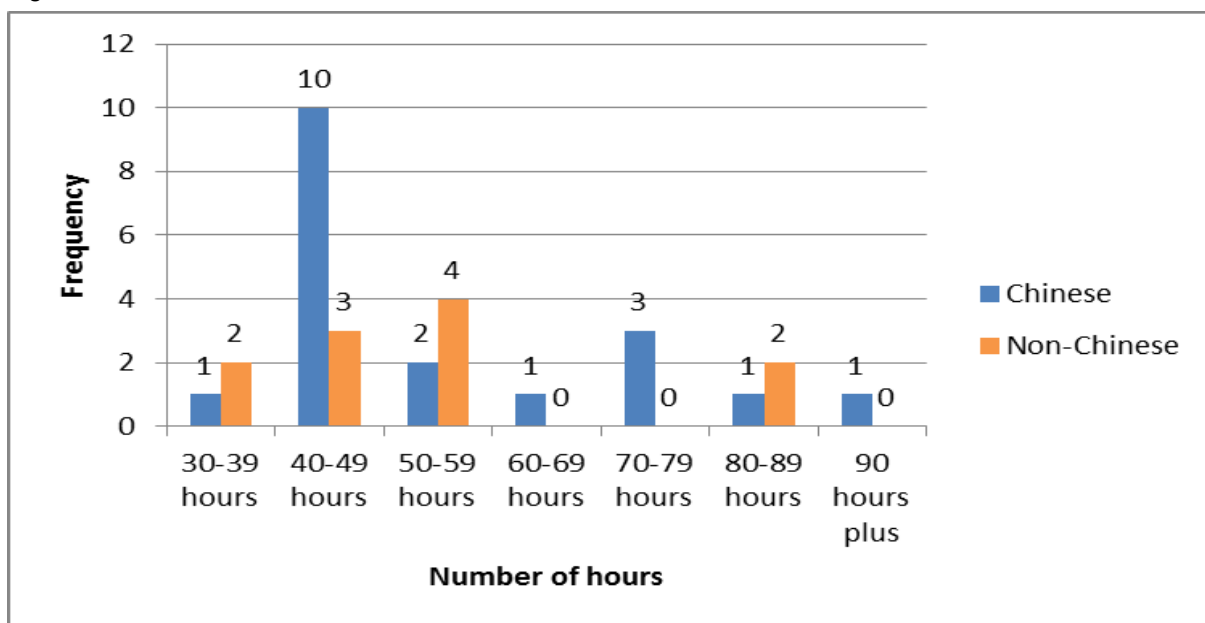
My husband's friend helped with money and worked through the night with my husband to clean and paint the place ready for opening. You should have seen this place before.
(Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

Very few participants, irrespective of ethnicity, claimed to have received no advice or information when establishing their business.

6.4 Business success

We were interested in better understanding what helped to make a business successful in the area, what obstacles participants faced and what opportunities there might be for future business growth. A number of specific questions were raised around these issues and these are unpacked below. However, it should also be noted that most of the business owners worked long hours which undoubtedly impacted on their business success; Chinese participants worked an average 54 hours each week²² while non-Chinese interviewees worked an average 50 hours each week.²³ The number of hours worked is captured below in Figure 36.

Figure 36 Number of hours worked each week



6.4.1 Who or what is responsible for the success of participants' businesses?

There were many similarities between Chinese and non-Chinese participants with respect to business success. A number of interviewees, for example, felt that their success rested on the product or high-quality service they offered and, in the case of restaurateurs, the taste, quantity and quality of food.

²² Five Chinese participants worked in excess of 70 hours each week.

²³ Two non-Chinese interviewees worked in excess of 70 hours each week.

As a company we are very strong on customer service ... we pride ourselves on good customer service. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

To run a successful restaurant, there are four key factors. Firstly, I serve customers in a very friendly way. The second one is that the quality of food must be good. The third reason is that the price should be reasonable. And the fourth, the entire restaurant must be tidy and clean. The four factors are indispensable. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

Other commonly reported reasons include business owners' individual attributes and personal characteristics, such as being a hard worker with good manners; being friendly and professional; and having a skill and passion for the business. Many of these characteristics are reflected in the quotes below.

Sheer hard work, good manners, cleanliness, friendly with customers. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

People like me. I am very friendly with them. I try my best to do a good job ... Customers say this [shop] is like their house. They'll come in a big group and sit and have their lunch. (Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

I can proudly tell you that it is because my skill is very good. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

There were also, however, some key differences. Non-Chinese business owners often attributed their business success to business growth plans that involved: networking; appointing a business mentor; expanding their business into other areas; direct-to-consumer marketing; and tailoring the products on offer to better suit the needs of the local clientele. The following quotes are illustrative.

People knowing you, your networking. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

I would say support from mentors ... [we] talk about problems and how to fix them ... It is like counselling ... connections, yeah. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

Sort of like going out direct marketing [the business] ... because it was just a dying sort of thing ... people weren't coming through the door so ... I have sent letters out to 350 [organisations]. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

A minority of non-Chinese participants also felt that setting themselves apart from the Chinese-oriented businesses in the area contributed to their success.

There is nothing westernised around here either ... we are the only [business of this kind and] it is relaxed, it is not Asian. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

While non-Chinese participants often relied upon the language of business to assess their entrepreneurial success, the majority of Chinese participants reported that relationships were

primarily responsible for their business success. As noted earlier, they often acknowledged various family members and friends who supported their business in a range of ways. The following is one example of this recognition.

The key factors [that contribute to my business success] include customers' support, friends' promotion, and family support. My elder brother is the chef and he has been working in the kitchen for over 10 years. Because of him, we can maintain the high quality of ... food. Having the same chef is a key factor to making the business successful ... My whole family is involved in the business and supports me so we call this a family business. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Customers were also thought to contribute to business success, either through regular custom or, in the case of restaurateurs, providing feedback on the kinds of food they would like to eat.

I think one important factor that has made my business a success is my customers. Some of my customers are really good. They eat three meals a day at my shop. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Customer feedback is very helpful for the business. That helped us to adjust the taste of food to meet the needs of most of the customers. We also try to meet individual customers' needs. We always check with customers before they leave. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

A minority of Chinese participants also attributed some of their business success to neighbouring business owners, previous owners and government officials. The following quotes are illustrative.

I work with my heart ... build good relationships with my neighbouring shop owners ... I think treating others nicely is very important. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

This shop has been running for a few years ... I follow the previous manager's strategies and the current boss taught me as well. I learned from them how to negotiate with suppliers, how to recruit new staff and how to identify which person is the right person to employ. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I think the government officers are friendly and supportive. Each time I called to ask for information, they were very patient and helpful. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

Overall, it seemed that for the Chinese participants, relationships between them and others - customers, family, friends, fellow business owners, government officials and previous owners - were at the heart of their entrepreneurial success.

It should also be noted, however, that a small number of Chinese participants felt that their businesses were not yet successful. Typically, this was measured against their personal income or their businesses' profitability more generally.

It is hard to say that our business is successful ... We are still unable to pay ourselves. The business income is only enough to cover all costs. We have worked for two years without receiving any salary. I don't think our business is a success. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

6.5 What are the opportunities for business growth?

We were interested in better understanding the opportunities for business growth in the Balmoral shops area, from the perspective of the business owners themselves. In this section, we consider participants' plans for investing in the future; training and development; advertising and promoting their business; and what business owners think Auckland Council and the Albert-Eden Local Board can do to support business development in the area.

6.5.1 Investing in the future

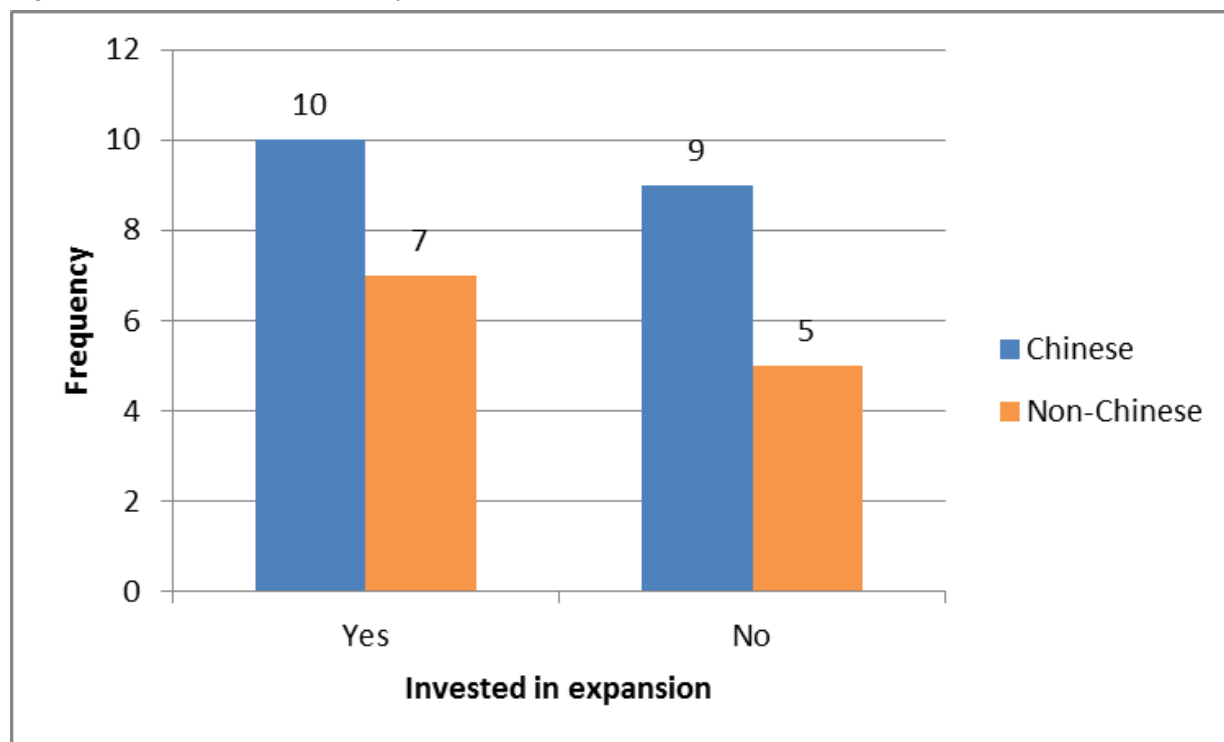
The majority of participants, irrespective of ethnicity, had made changes to their business in the preceding year in order to remain viable; indeed, just one Chinese and three non-Chinese participants had not. The kinds of changes made included: better responding to customers' needs by changing the food on offer and/or diversifying the services offered; changing the pricing structure; increasing promotion; and renovating and expanding. The following quotes are illustrative of some of these changes.

We have also upgraded the quality of food and added new dishes to the menu. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

We renovated the shop. It was ... very dirty and a mess. We added a big exhaust fan and a big freezer in the kitchen. We put in new tables and chairs. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Similar proportions of Chinese and non-Chinese participants reported having invested financial resources into expanding their business in the previous year, with more business owners investing resources than not (Figure 37).

Figure 37 Investment in expansion



Reasons for choosing to invest (or not) were varied. Some Chinese participants felt that they had invested enough money already but were compelled to invest further, while others thought that their businesses were not worth additional financial investment. These two positions are reflected in the quotes below.

I have invested more money to expand my business than I did to start the business. I have to invest money to keep the business running ... The size of the shop hasn't expanded but the business has expanded a lot. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

I don't want to invest in the shop. Sixty per cent of the reason is because of my personal issues. The other 40 per cent is because the business has no bright future. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

Non-Chinese participants were typically less specific about their rationale for investing or not but described a range of things they had invested in, including: upgrading or replacing plant and other equipment, including vans and tools; purchasing a new property; hardware and software for the business; and renovating the business, including renovations carried out in preparation for the business launch. One participant explained that investment in her business was necessarily constant.

Money wise it just goes back into the business ... pretty much goes around in circles. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

On a related topic, participants described a range of *future* business plans they wished to implement. A minority of business owners had large-scale plans which included opening new branches, acquiring more equipment, investing in technology and, for one participant, establishing a new enterprise to support his core business.

[We] are expanding by putting new vans on the road ... new machines, even in the workshop ... technology for vehicles and things ... we would like to continue to grow ... We would like another branch or two and continue to train apprentices so that there are [more] in the future. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

We plan to open four branches ... We have started looking for venues on the North Shore and that will open after the one in Howick. Then we are going to set up a food processing factory and distribution centre ... we will need to employ a couple of managers as it will become a complex business. This goal will be achieved in two to three years. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Most participants, however, had plans that were much smaller in scale. For example, one Chinese participant told us that he wanted to extend his business to capture a different section of the market while another said she wanted to renovate her existing business to maintain an appropriate standard.

I want to change the floor, redo the floor. It has been four years and it doesn't look good now. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

Other changes included updating computer software and moving beyond a cash economy; making changes to the building, including the introduction of new shelving and signage; expanding the products on sale to include “bric-a-brac” in order to “cater to the Chinese people”; and increasing staffing levels.

Although some Chinese participants expressed concern about the viability of their business and reported being very open to any business growth opportunities, others were content with the way things were, reporting that they were simply too old or too tired to grow their business. The following quotes capture these sentiments.

We have been thinking about how to make the business survive. We analysed the advantages and disadvantages of the New Zealand economy ... We would like to find a door which can open to a new way. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

We don't plan to extend the current shop. The reasons are, I am old and I am too tired ... I have no more energy to develop this business. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

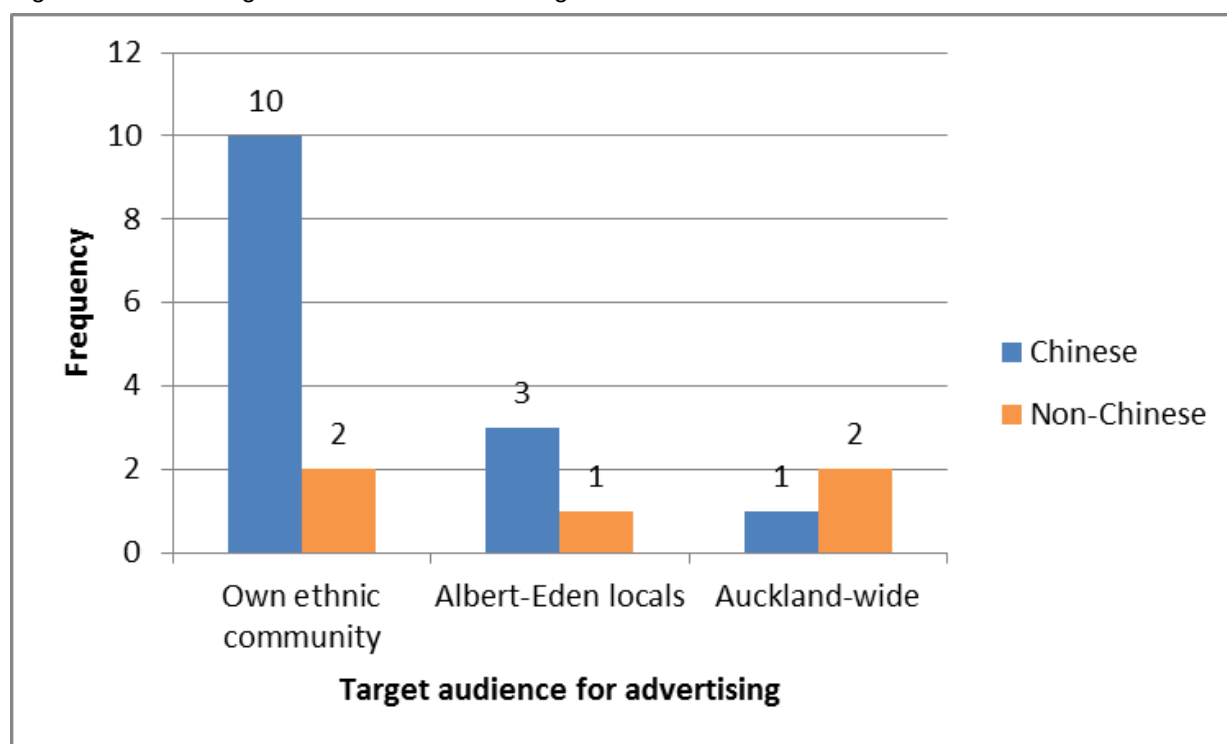
It was not uncommon to hear that participants' business investment took the form of business-related training. Eighteen participants (12 Chinese and 6 non-Chinese) reported that they had

completed business-related training in the year preceding the interviews. The training category appeared to be a function of the kind of business owned by participants with restaurant owners reporting that they had completed training in (mandatory) food health (8), training to acquire a liquor license (4), and cooking-related training (4). Others typically participated in training related to business management such as computer, business or accountancy focused training.

6.5.2 Promoting and growing the business

In addition to financial business investment, we were interested in participants' advertising practices and strategies and, more particularly, how many participants advertised their business and to whom. Fourteen of the 19 Chinese participants and five of the 12 non-Chinese participants advertised their business. Those who identified as Chinese were most likely to report that they advertised to other Chinese (10 of the 14 participants) with a minority reporting that they advertised to locals who lived in the Albert-Eden area (3) (Figure 38).

Figure 38 Target audience for advertising



Reflecting the results of other local studies with respect to reliance on co-ethnic customers (Cain & Spoonley, 2013), the advertising media used by Chinese participants tended to be co-ethnic in focus and included Chinese newspapers, radio, television, and the internet more broadly.

We mainly use Chinese newspapers for advertisements. Our target is the Chinese community. Occasionally, we put an advertisement in an English newspaper in order to reach some of the Kiwis who like to learn about Chinese. We also use Chinese radio, television, and internet for advertisements. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Overall, Chinese business owners described fairly traditional advertising strategies such as print media. By comparison, non-Chinese business owners often described more aggressive and larger scale advertising strategies, often combining online, print and direct-to-market methods.

So Yellow Pages ... the local directory and the on-line presence ... We have got a good standing with Google so that if you look for a [business type] you find us and ... we pay [the contractor] to be optimised²⁴ ... I would say we have got more of an online presence than anything now to be honest. We have decreased Yellow Pages a bit ... online seems to be the way to go. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

[I advertise to] the schools and the community groups, I have done most of the scouts, guides, things like that and then the next one will be the sports teams ... I would rather go to an organisation or to a school and things that are actually going to take value from [the advertising] ... I feel it is more personal if you do something direct (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

Non-Chinese participants were also much more likely to claim that an online presence was crucial to business success, as the following quote illustrates.

We do use the digital media [for example, Grab One] ... any activity now in Auckland has to use a deal site. If they don't, their business will go down ... because it is so competitive in Auckland. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

A minority of non-Chinese participants had also attempted to market their business to other ethnic groups, with limited success.

We decided that we would give the Indian newspaper a go for advertising ... it netted us one sale that we are aware of. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

It is interesting to note that both Chinese and non-Chinese business owners took pride in growing their business through word of mouth, as these participants illustrate.

I think [business growth] is by word of mouth. We didn't get many Kiwi kids in the past. Now, we get many young Kiwi customers. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I think it is because what we have done to it, word of mouth, I mean Metro put it in their top 50. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

²⁴ Search Engine Optimisation increases the number of visitors to a website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results page of a search engine.

6.5.3 What can local business associations do to support business growth?

As noted earlier, none of the participants, irrespective of ethnicity, received support from a business association when first establishing their business. Perhaps relatedly, very few belonged to an association once their business was established; just two Chinese and four non-Chinese participants belonged to an association at the time they were interviewed. Five of them belonged to an industry-specific association while the other (non-Chinese participant) belonged to his local association.

The interviews provided an opportunity for participants to explain why they did or did not belong to an association. Many Chinese interviewees explained that they did not know that a relevant association existed;²⁵ that they were too busy to join; that they could not see the benefits of joining; that they felt their business was too small to benefit from such an organisation; or they expressed concern about not being able to speak English well in what they thought would be a monolingual association. These sentiments are expressed in the quotes below.

There is no such Business Association for Chinese business owners. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

I have no time to join any association. I have to spend all my time in the business. In the past, I worked for seven days plus extra working hours. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

After I bought the shop, a Kiwi person came to my shop and asked me if I would like to join a Business Association. I didn't as my English is not good. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

Non-Chinese participants also expressed concern about the cost of joining an association, both financially and with respect to their time. However, an additional concern was raised about the English language proficiency of other members as well as potential cultural differences. The following quotes are illustrative.

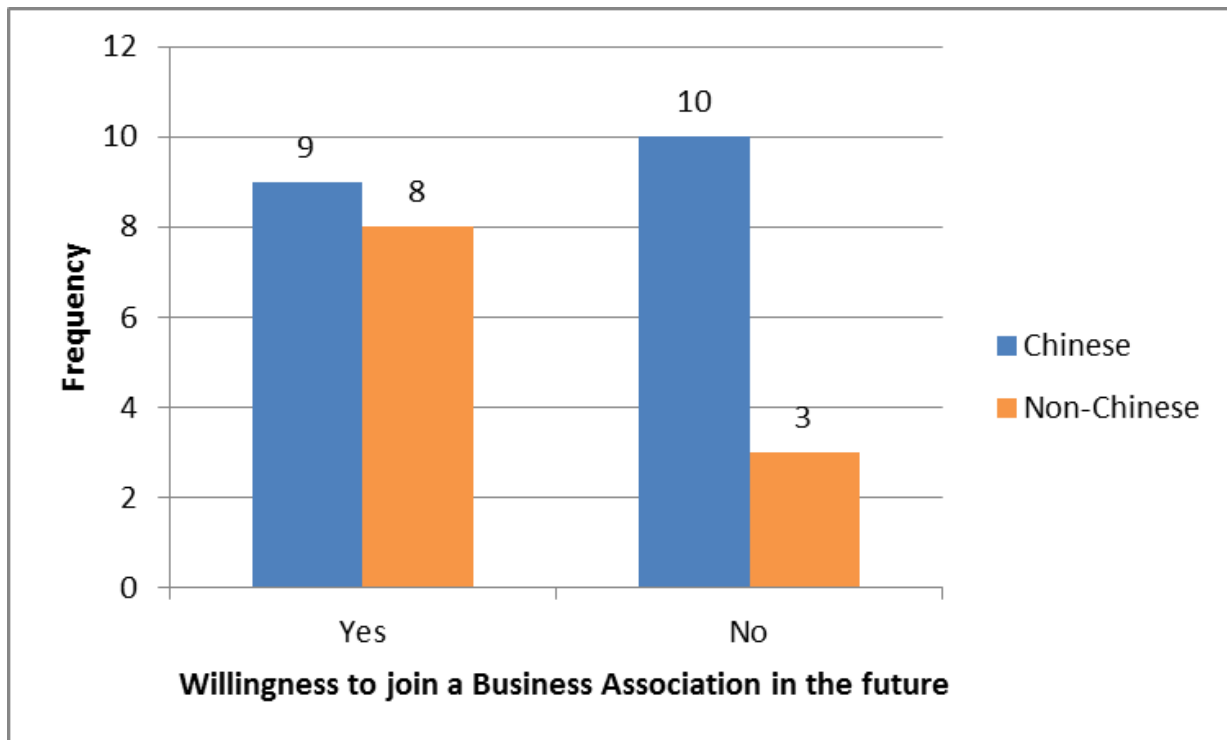
I just don't know how you would work it here when 90 per cent don't speak English you know. How would you run a business association when you are looking at a big percentage of people along this road who don't speak English? (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

The problem is half of them are Chinese and [you] can't even talk to them ... they just want to do a cheap shot like Chinese fish and chips kind of takeaway, and that is all they understand, and unless we can communicate with someone that speaks English it won't change at all. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

²⁵ It should be noted that, since these interviews took place, a business association has been created specifically for the Chinese business community in Balmoral.

Interestingly, nearly half (9) of the Chinese participants and two-thirds (8) of the non-Chinese participants said they would consider joining a business association in the future (Figure 39).

Figure 39 Willingness to join a business association in the future



Non-Chinese participants did not typically explain why they might be interested in joining an association in the future; however, Chinese participants expressed both openness toward joining and reluctance. Concerns included not being able to speak English well and ensuring membership would be beneficial, feeling the decision must be weighed carefully.

I will attend if there is a Chinese Association or the Kiwi Business Association can help me with an interpreter. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

I will join a new association if I know that association is helpful. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

The Mandarin-speaking interviewer spent some time explaining to Chinese participants that a Chinese-specific business association was being developed for the area. Consequently, many Chinese business owners were hopeful that such an association would more directly meet their needs, provide a voice for all business owners and generate unity among them, as captured in the following quotes.

I will attend if the business association can be set up. I think the association can raise our voice and advocate for business owners. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

I hope attending the association can help us meet other business owners and learn from each other. The association may be helpful in dealing with conflict between business owners. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

6.5.4 What can Auckland Council do to support business growth?

As noted in the Introduction, supporting a diverse ethnic economy is one of the four cross-cutting themes in Auckland's Economic Development Strategy. With this in mind, we wanted to know what kind of support business owners needed from Auckland Council. There were many similarities between Chinese and non-Chinese participants' responses with suggestions around safety, parking and the creation of a more attractive and community-oriented space dominating.²⁶ Each of these themes is considered below.

Significant concerns about safety in the area were raised by both Chinese and non-Chinese participants and many had been the victim of crime in the area (typically theft). Concerns were also raised about the capacity for police to respond. These concerns are illustrated in the following quotes.

I lost my handbag last month. There are quite a lot of thieves in this area. I hope council can do something to make this area safer. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

My shop used to be graffiti-ed and twice somebody broke the door to steal our digital camera. We reported it to police but got no response. I asked someone to repair the door and carried on with the business ... We know there are thieves everywhere in New Zealand. Our attitude is to make a big incident smaller and make the small incident nothing. We hardly argue with our customers as we believe that harmony makes business success. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

These experiences caused a number of participants to reflect on the role council could perform with respect to additional security and surveillance in the area, feeling that additional security measures were warranted and that it was council's responsibility to introduce them. This was especially the case for those participants who identified as Chinese.

I hope the council can improve the safety of this area. They can add police or security guys to patrol in this area day and night or install some camera surveillance along Dominion Road. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I think [video surveillance] is a good suggestion. Put a sign up that indicates that this area has video monitors. It may scare someone [and stop them from] smashing a car window or breaking into a shop at night. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

²⁶ We also noted that some participants remained unconvinced that Auckland Council would take any action to improve the district, as the following quote illustrates: I think the council has talked a lot about improving the environment but I haven't seen any action. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Non-Chinese participants also raised concerns about safety in the area although these concerns were sometimes articulated in quite different ways. For example, although the causative link between an Asian presence and crime in the quote below is perplexing and problematic, the content is illustrative of concerns about safety from crime in the area.

At night it is busting [with people] you know ... It should be better lit ... Somebody got bashed last night and robbed just in the next street so all these side streets should be lit a bit more ... we do have people lurking around sometimes ... because the Asians ... carry quite a bit of cash and they have nice cell phones and [thieves] break into their cars because they have valuable stuff in it. So more lighting and maybe cameras. (Male, Non-Chinese, 65+)

In Section 5, we discussed shoppers' desire to reduce traffic congestion in the Balmoral shops. Although traffic congestion was not a common feature among the business owners' narratives, there was a strong and related emphasis on parking; participants felt that council could support their businesses by improving the area's parking options. Although the issue was raised by Chinese and non-Chinese participants, it appeared to be of greatest concern for those of Chinese ethnicity.

The parking space in front of my shop is only for 15 minutes. That time is not even enough to pick up takeaways. I always ask my customers to move their car to park somewhere else so they can have peace of mind while enjoying their food. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

I hope the council can improve the parking situation. Some customers are worried about receiving a ticket so they have to move their cars in the middle of having a meal. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Given that many of the Chinese participants owned restaurants, this concern is likely to be a function of business type and a reliance on a relatively fast turnaround of customers, particularly at night. It appears that parking remains a key concern for these business owners and many attribute slow business growth to the lack of parking. Although non-Chinese business owners were less concerned about parking, some agreed with the sentiments expressed above.

Because that is a bus lane ... four to six pm nobody can come into the restaurant. But before ... [it was] no bus lane and [there were] more customers ... that's when you finish a job and everybody ... likes food so they stopped here and I get the food. But now, maybe [people] like it but there's no parking and that is why they're gone maybe. That is bad. (Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

The third suggestion for Auckland Council was around beautifying the area and, more importantly, creating a sense of community. Both Chinese and non-Chinese participants felt that council could support their business by beautifying the area because it was currently "a bit aged" and "worn

looking". This, they argued, could stop prospective customers from visiting the area which would negatively impact business growth. This sentiment was also expressed by shoppers using the area, as noted in Section 5. Overall, non-Chinese participants were most enthusiastic about Auckland Council investing in making the area more attractive.

New Lynn was an older area and they modernised it so much, it is quite nice to look at now you know. And you have got nice plants and nice little wooden areas where you can stop and sit if you want to ... if they are going to enhance the area, I guess that is going to make it more eye-appealing to people that come. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

A related suggestion from both Chinese and non-Chinese participants was that Auckland Council could introduce more community-based events. Participants felt that these events could provide a pathway for economic growth at the same time as providing the area with a shared sense of community and belonging. Such events provide opportunities to share food and conversation and become better acquainted with one's neighbours – they are an opportunity to get to know one another. However, there were slight distinctions between the way these suggestions were considered and articulated. Chinese participants tended to emphasise (ethnically-oriented) cultural events and festivals, while suggestions from non-Chinese participants were more ethnically generic, including music festivals and markets.

I hope the council can organise more cultural events to promote this area such as cultural festivals. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

A Saturday morning market ... because it is mostly food and stuff, that sort of thing would be quite good for getting the community spirit ... It is all networking at the same time too or getting to know people in your own area or letting them know that you are around ... and maybe that is the way you meet your business neighbours. Eat the food and talk to them and understand who they are, you know. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

It is interesting to note, however, that the author of the latter comment also believed that such an event was unlikely to proceed because the Balmoral shops was "not that sort of area ... because we don't know the people".

In addition to these (relative) similarities, there were also key differences between Chinese and non-Chinese participants. A key difference was that Chinese interviewees tended to think smaller in scale when asked what council could do to support their business. Their suggestions were often very closely connected with their own business and included: advertising the area directly to the Chinese community; promotion of the non-food aspects of the area; the publication of a business directory or information pamphlets; and improved signage. In contrast, non-Chinese participants often made larger-scale suggestions that would impact the area more broadly (rather than their own business) including: the development of a trade centre or large retail centre; bulldozing one side of Dominion Road to widen the road (and potentially allow for the return of trams); and speed up work on the road, drainage and lighting that was taking place in the street.

6.5.4.1 Branding and marketing the area

Both Chinese and non-Chinese participants discussed the need for improved signage in the Balmoral shops area but there was little consensus with respect to what this might look like in practice. Chinese participants made a number of suggestions including neon signs, standardised signage along the street, and “better signs so Dominion Road doesn’t look like a slum area.” Non-Chinese participants also had a number of ideas including introducing “Asian looking signage” as well as language-specific information signs so that Chinese people knew how long they could stay in a car park. It is interesting to note that, compared with the shoppers’ comments discussed in Section 5, the business owners’ comments are somewhat instrumental; the comments focus on the function of the signs rather than any emotional connection with what they represent.

In addition to these broader suggestions about signage, the prospect of Auckland Council branding and subsequently marketing the Balmoral shops area was also raised by both Chinese and non-Chinese business owners. Not all participants, however, agreed on what kind of branding and marketing would be suitable. Just as was found among shoppers in the area, two dominant approaches emerged: developing the area as a formal Chinatown; and developing the area as a Food Street or Hub. We discuss each of these possibilities below, beginning with Chinatown.

Non-Chinese participants expressed considerable support for the formalised development of the Balmoral shops area as a Chinatown. There was often a sense of inevitability that this would happen; many participants described the area as Chinatown throughout the interview and felt that the general public already knew it in this way. When asked what it would mean to develop the area like this, descriptions drew heavily on stereotyped representations of Chinese culture and Chinatowns overseas, with little consideration as to whether local Chinese people might appreciate such a model. The following quote is illustrative.

Some red pagodas and some lanterns and embrace the fact that it is Auckland's urban Chinatown ... I think it would be a good idea ... red pagodas, a few dragons, lanterns, the Chinese might not like it but I think it is a grand idea. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

The participant’s presumption that Chinese people would not look favourably on such a development appears to be correct; only a minority of Chinese participants thought developing the area as Chinatown would create a more attractive and successful business district for consumers.

To build a Chinatown here could be a good way to attract more people to this area ... Generally speaking, building a Chinatown can give this area a unique character and attract more different people to come. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

More commonly, Chinese participants were unenthusiastic about the prospect of a Chinatown. Although non-Chinese participants often felt that branding would authenticate the retail space, most Chinese participants felt that it would detract from the area. They raised concerns about the

over-use of the brand 'Chinatown' internationally and were equally troubled that a Chinatown would reduce a complex experience of living and working in the area to culturally contrived shorthand.

Instead, and much like the Chinese shoppers discussed in Section 5, Chinese business owners spoke more favourably about developing, branding and marketing the area as a Food Hub or Food Street. They pointed out that this would better capture and reflect the ethnic diversity that already existed in the area and, as a consequence, the precinct would be more inclusive.

The good thing about this part of Dominion Road is the diversity of restaurants. It has combined different styles of food and it is available in a choice of flavours. I don't like the idea to develop a Chinatown in Dominion Road. I would like to see a Food Street where there are different styles of food from different countries. Chinese is still the minority of the society. I wish Chinese people would adopt a humble way of thinking. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Food Street is better than Chinatown because Food Street is inclusive [it] better reflects the nature of Dominion Road ... as a restaurant owner, I would like to see Dominion Road as a Food street (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

6.5.5 What can the local board do to support business growth?

Local boards are an important location-specific feature of Auckland Council. The council website describes local boards as having a "significant and wide-ranging role; they make decisions on local matters, provide local leadership and build strong local communities".²⁷ Clearly, representing the local community is a key part of the board's function.

We asked participants what they felt their local board could do to help them grow their business. Overwhelmingly, Chinese business owners had not heard of their local board and did not appear to understand its function. Others had *heard* of their local board but did not always understand its function or what it could do for them.

I don't know what the board can do to help. (Female, Chinese, 31-45)

Only three Chinese participants had heard of their local board and demonstrated that they understood its function. One felt that the board was well positioned to support local businesses but also raised concerns about ineffective communication between the board and business owners.

I think the local board can do much more than council for this area. They should come to listen to us and make it easy for us to access them when we have questions or need help

²⁷ see:

http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/Aboutcouncil/HOWCOUNCILWORKS/Auckland_Council_Explained/Pages/Roleoflocalboards.aspx

to sort out conflict among shops. It is too formal for local people with local issues to ask for help from the council. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Another participant also raised concerns about ineffective communication and noted the specific vulnerabilities associated with English language difficulties.

[The local board] need to let us know they exist. Due to language barriers, the Chinese are always the vulnerable group. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

When the interviewer discovered that some participants did not know or understand the role of their local board, she spent time explaining its function. Participants sometimes viewed the board more favourably afterwards.

I hope the local board can work together with the council to create a better business environment in this area. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Although non-Chinese participants were equally uncertain about the function of their local board, most had at least heard of it and some had a few thoughts about what it could do for the area, including bringing more people to the area and tidying it up, as illustrated in the following.

The renovation of The Warehouse and what they decide on the planning application ... That [redevelopment] could be quite a key sort of thing, bringing the people to the area ... and just having a bit more of a proactive approach on looking after the area I suppose. Just keeping it clean and tidy. That is what I love about New Zealand, it is a clean place. I just find this area is actually quite run down and dirty for such a busy area ... around here there is lots of rubbish just chucked out all the time and needs to be just a bit more controlled. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

Like some of the Chinese participants, however, concerns were raised about the quality and regularity of local board communication.

Local board, it probably could [help] if you knew who they were you know. I think they just do the basics but they probably just don't know about the everyday shit. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Maybe we need to learn who they are so that we can learn what they can offer. Or they could make their presence felt ... we have to know what they do. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

It would seem that many opportunities exist for creating further engagement between local businesses, the local board and Auckland Council.

6.6 What kinds of relationships do business owners have?

As noted in the Literature Review, a range of studies suggest that ethnic precincts can be a site of intercultural interaction and community building (Hiebert, 2000; Francis et al., 2012). We also discussed in that earlier chapter, the extent to which migrant entrepreneurs are relationally embedded within co-ethnic networks (Kloosterman, Van Der Luen, & Rath, 1999). At their foundation, these scholarly works are about relationships. In this section, we consider the business relationships that participants have, focusing specifically on their relationships with staff, customers, suppliers and other business owners in the area. We begin, however, by discussing the participants' relationships with the street itself.

6.6.1 Relationship with Dominion Road

Very few of the business owners we interviewed lived in or around the Balmoral shops; four lived in Mt Eden while three interviewees lived above their respective shops in Dominion Road. Many more, however, lived in surrounding areas: Mt Roskill/Hillsborough (8); St Lukes/Mt Albert (3); or further afield in West Auckland (5).

We asked participants how they would describe Dominion Road to someone who had never been there before. They talked about the convenience of the location and its close proximity to motorways, the city and public transport; the diversity of businesses in the area; and the excellent food available. The following quotes capture some of these sentiments.

It's in central Auckland. It's easy to come here from all parts of Auckland. It's convenient, close to the mall, the temple and the park ... This is a business area. It's very busy. There is every kind of business available. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

It is easy to find Dominion Road. It is located close to the city. It only takes 20 minutes to go there by bus and five minutes by car. The food is delicious and cheap there. It is easy to access the motorway from Dominion Road. It is close to the St Lukes shopping centre. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

Both Chinese and non-Chinese participants described the road specifically as a (Chinese) "Restaurant Street" or "Chinatown" and felt that this helped to set the area apart from other retail areas across Auckland. Chinese participants also stressed the benefits of having different provincial varieties of Chinese food available.

There are many Chinese restaurants and many different types of delicious Chinese food ... I would tell them to come to Dominion Road for delicious Chinese food. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

For people who want to have Chinese food, I would introduce Dominion Road to them. There are so many Chinese restaurants which provide different Chinese local-flavour food along Dominion Road. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Although both Chinese and non-Chinese participants made favourable comments about the area, Chinese participants tended to be more generous in their praise. One participant, for example, described the area as a “mature food street” because of the many well-established restaurants while others described it as “well-developed”, “thriving”, an “exciting area” and the “best area in Auckland”.

Non-Chinese participants were more likely to discuss the appearance and condition of the Balmoral shops. They described them, for example, as “smelly”, an “old untidy mess”, “run-down” and “dirty”. They also talked about the precinct having a reputation for low-cost and low-quality product and expressed concerns around safety in the area. Interestingly, some non-Chinese participants were a little ambivalent – describing, on the one hand, the dirtiness of the area and, on the other, the “nice vibe” of the area. The following quotes illustrate some of these attitudes.

The business district has a low reputation for this [is a] cheap shop area ... [the area] has a name [for itself] of chopping meat in the car park. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

There are many Chinese restaurants. They are smelly and attract flies. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

The banter is quite good ... but it is very dirty ... during the day time, you see it in its true colours and you know the smells and that sort of stuff ... It has got that nice vibe but just the dirty current underneath it. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

In a related question, we asked participants why they had established their business in this particular section of Dominion Road. For a small number of participants, the area was not their first option but shared some of the same qualities as their preferred location. Others simply could not afford their first choice of venue.

Initially we wanted to set up a branch in Sandringham ... because we were looking at cheap options; going into a place where the rents would be lower ... then we said ‘what is the closest to this place?’ and we looked at Dominion Road. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

I didn’t have enough money to get space in St Lukes. (Female, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

For those who chose Dominion Road in the first instance, the reasons were broad and included: convenience; its reputation as a restaurant area; and cost. These reasons are discussed in further detail below.

Many participants, irrespective of ethnicity, considered the location convenient due to its close proximity to the city, the motorway and other retail spaces.

We wanted to be closer to town ... a good percentage of our clients are in the city and appreciate the fact that we are now just off the end of the Dominion Road bit. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

The location is good [with] easy access by public transportation and private cars. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Chinese participants, in particular, appreciated the area's existing reputation for good food and the fact that it is renowned for its restaurants. A related reason for establishing a business in the area was the foot traffic of ethnically Chinese people. These sentiments are captured in the following quotes.

I asked people where the most blooming area in Auckland is. They told me that it is Dominion Road ... They are right. My restaurant ... is always full of customers. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

The street has become a mature business zone. It has been known as a restaurant street for many years. No matter Chinese or Kiwi, they know where to go if they want to have Chinese meals. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

The shop location suits me ... [because of] the flow of Chinese people ... It is booming like many shoots growing up after the rain in the spring season. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

We are Chinese so we want to set up a shop in the area where there are many Chinese people. There is a good traffic flow ... There are many Chinese restaurants here. People all know to come here for different flavoured Chinese foods. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

Finally, and again irrespective of ethnicity, the relatively cheap rents in the area made it more accessible and cost-effective when establishing a new business.

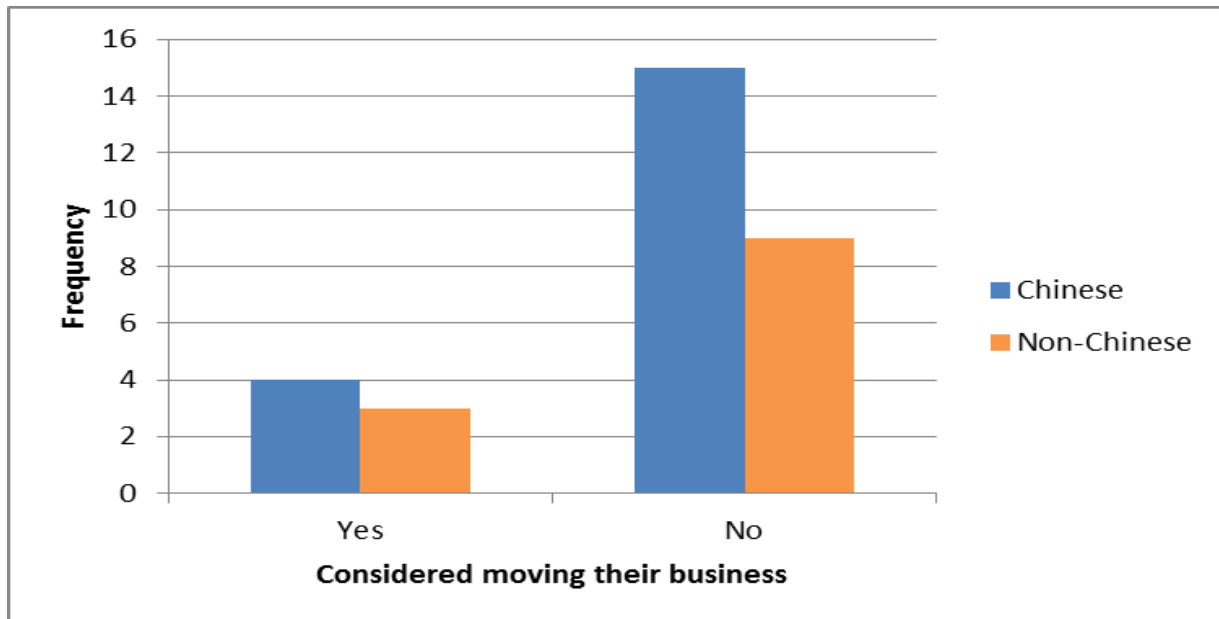
Rent on Dominion Road is cheap so we decided to set up our shop here. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

I like it here. It is quite cheap and easy to get into ... cheap rent and high foot traffic. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

Given these positive reasons for establishing a business in the area, it is unsurprising that few participants had considered moving their business elsewhere; just four Chinese and three non-

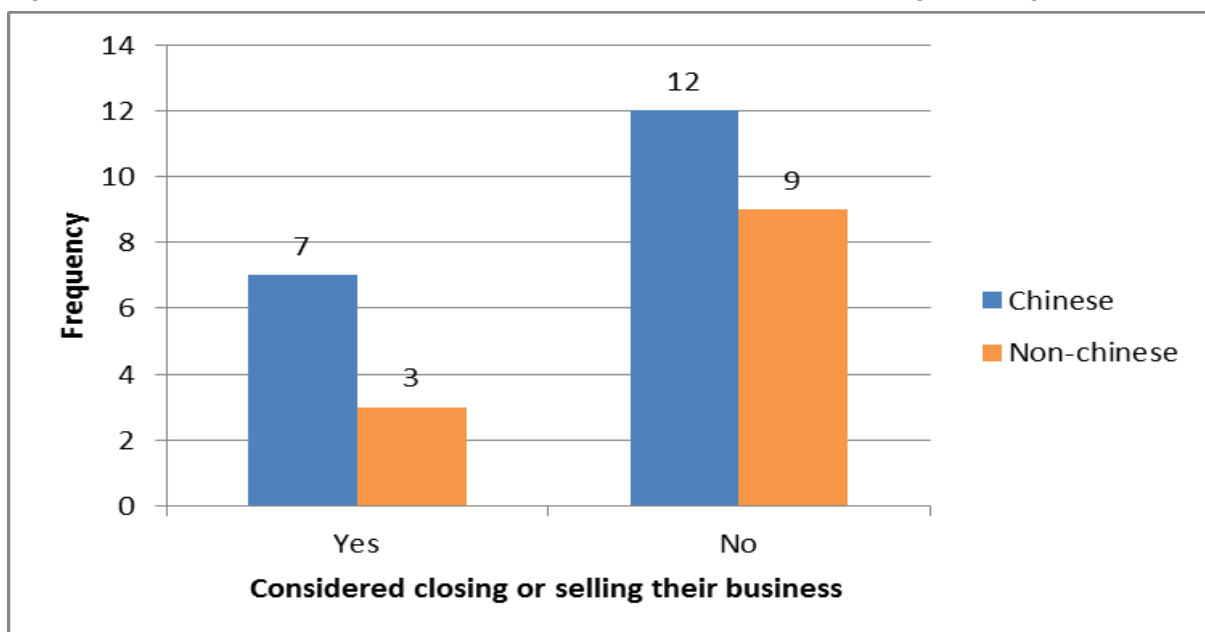
Chinese participants had considered moving (Figure 40). All of them were considering moving their business in order to be closer to their residential home.

Figure 40 Participants who have considered moving their business



Seven Chinese and three non-Chinese business owners had considered closing down or selling their business (Figure 41). These business owners were not typically the same as those who would consider moving; just two participants would consider either moving, closing down or selling. The first was prepared to move due to cash flow concerns, high rents and operating expenses while the other was considering moving back to his birth country in order to care for his elderly parents.

Figure 41 The number of business owners who have considered closing or selling



Participants considered selling for a mix of personal and business reasons. The quotes below capture these, as well as the personal burden of owning a business.

Yes, we want to sell the business. I am getting old. I find my body gets tired easily now. I don't have enough energy to carry on this business ... We feel tired. We have run the restaurant for four years. The children have grown up and we need more time to be with them. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

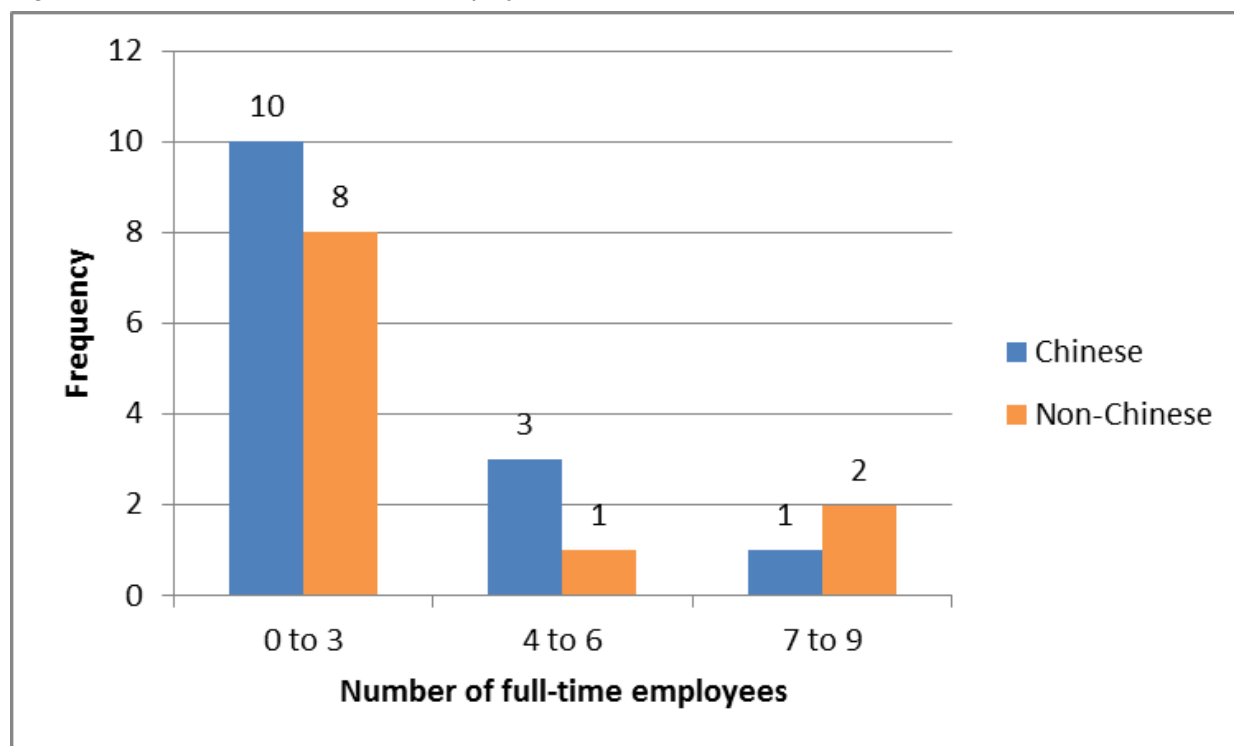
Yes, if a person wanted to buy the shop, I would sell it immediately. The burden is too heavy – rates, power, the water cost is too high. My hard work gets too little reward. I would rather work for others. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

6.6.2 Relationships with staff

One of the most important relationships for any business owner is the one they share with their staff. In this section, we present the results from those questions in the survey that focused on participants' employment of others.

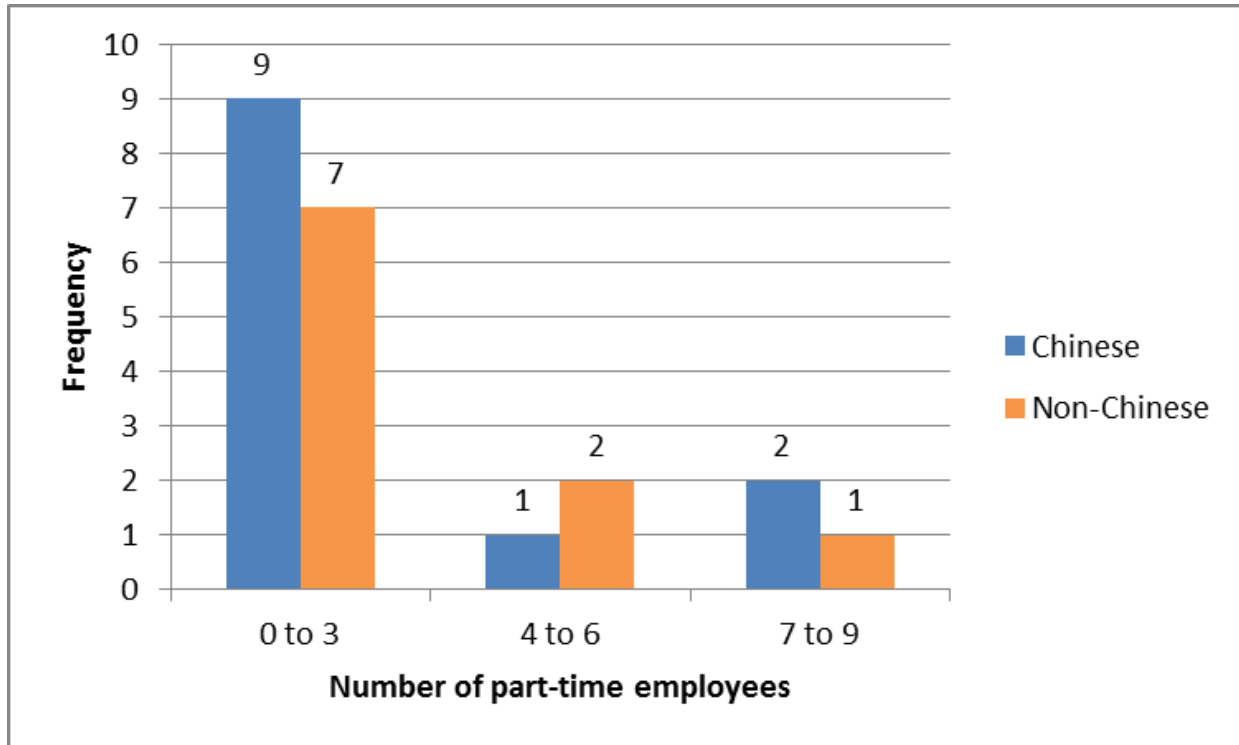
Thirteen of the 19 Chinese participants and 10 of the 12 non-Chinese participants employed paid staff. Employees were typically a mix of full- and part-time staff. With respect to full-time staff, most (18) had three or fewer, as shown in Figure 42. Only three participants employed seven or more staff full time.

Figure 42 Number of full-time employees



Similar patterns are revealed when considering the number of part-time staff with most (16) employing three or fewer (Figure 43). Again, just three participants employed seven part-time staff or more.

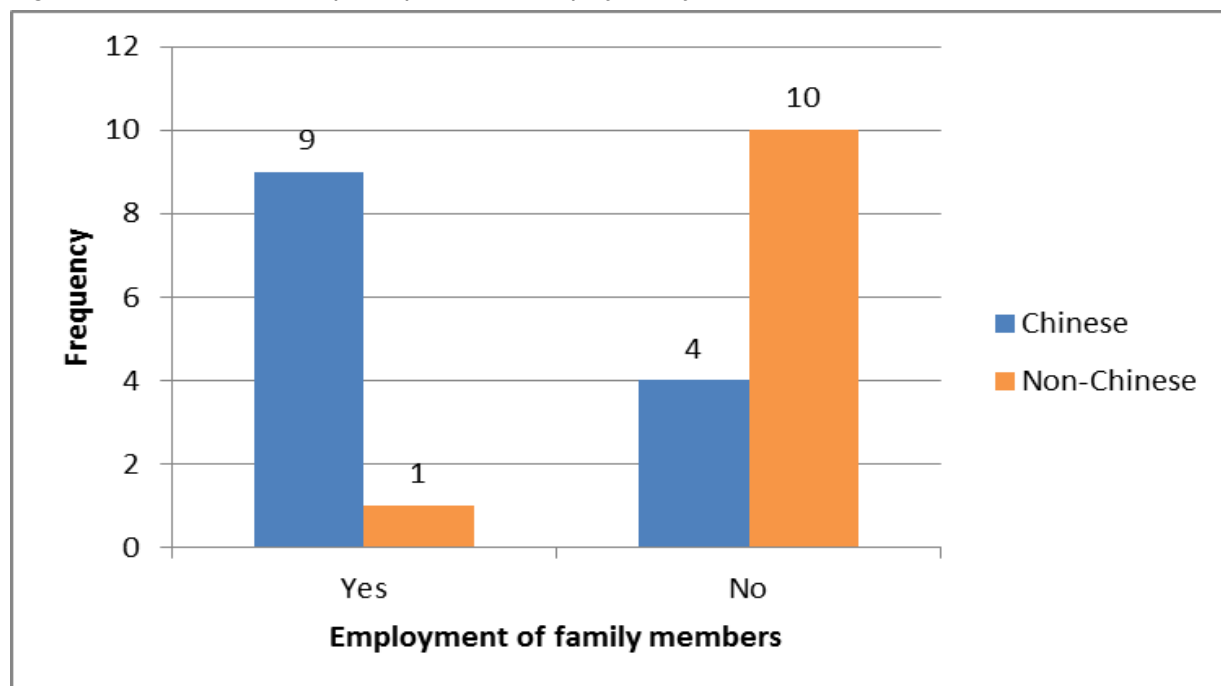
Figure 43 Number of part-time employees



As noted in the Literature Review, a range of studies point to the reliance of migrant entrepreneurs on co-ethnic staff, in many cases, family members (Kloosterman, Van Der Luen, & Rath, 1999; Cain & Spoonley, 2013). This tendency is borne out in the present study with Chinese participants more likely than non-Chinese to employ family members (9 Chinese participants employed family members compared with just one non-Chinese participant) (Figure 44).²⁸ The majority of Chinese business owners employed just one family member, most commonly a spouse (6) or child (5).

²⁸ One non-Chinese business owner employed his wife.

Figure 44 Number of participants who employ family members



We also asked participants if they employed recent migrants. Again, Chinese interviewees were more likely to do so than non-Chinese with eight Chinese participants employing recent migrants (compared to four non-Chinese). Most of the Chinese interviewees said that they offered these staff additional practical and emotional support. The practical support offered was broad and included: helping the family to settle; providing help to buy a car; and providing help and information with regard to finding suitable accommodation, among other things. The following quotes are illustrative of the practical support offered.

Yes, I helped them with opening a bank account, buying a car and finding accommodation.
(Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Yes ... I have helped them with buying a car, renting a house and other practical things such as dropping them back home if it is raining. I am very good at looking after staff.
(Male, Chinese, 65+)

The Chinese participants appreciated the difficulty of migrating to another country and described the less tangible, but equally important, emotional support they offered to their newly arrived staff members, as the following quotes attest.

Yes, we help them ... Those newcomers really need help to settle down. We want them to do a good job and we should look after them as well. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I have tried my best to help her whenever she has some issues or needs my support. She is my employee and we have to build up a mutually supportive relationship. She will support my business if I treat her fairly and kindly. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

The above quotes also capture the reciprocity that underpins a relationship that is grounded in mutual support. In contrast, the following quote captures the practicalities and burden of supporting someone who has newly arrived in New Zealand.

Yes, I helped them with all kinds of things. That is a key reason why I don't want to employ staff now. I am a kind person. There were too many things I had to do for them. (Female, Chinese, 65+)

Non-Chinese participants did not report offering the same kinds of practical or emotional support to newly-arrived migrant staff. Indeed, one person pointed out that the provision of a job was, in itself, support. Instead, they often described support that would equally benefit their own businesses, such as sponsoring a migrant so they could acquire a Work Visa.

A number of the interviewees employed migrant staff more generally (not just those who had recently arrived). It was interesting to note that almost all of the participants (in particular, those who identified as Chinese, Indian or those who were born in either New Zealand or Europe) almost exclusively employed co-ethnic staff. In other words, employers in the Balmoral shops area typically employed people who shared the same ethnic background as themselves. Chinese participants often wanted Chinese staff who could communicate effectively with their Chinese customers. Non-Chinese participants' reasons for employing co-ethnic staff was more mixed; one explained that he specifically did not want to employ people who spoke English as a second language while others appreciated the benefits of an ethnically diverse staff.

They are all foreign and their English is pretty bad. (Male, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Most of them are just white New Zealand but then we have got Samoan Pacific Islanders, we have got Indian, Asian so we have got a pretty good balance in there

Interviewer: *So that is quite a mix*

Yeah I think that is key. I wouldn't not have it like that. Everyone has got different ways ... it is right to have a good balance. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

We asked participants what language they spoke with their staff. Given the strength of the co-ethnic recruitment practices, it is unsurprising that all of the Chinese interviewees spoke a Chinese language (Mandarin 18; other Chinese language 3) with their staff (three also spoke English). Indian participants spoke a mix of English and Hindi/other Indian language and the non-Asian participants spoke English exclusively.

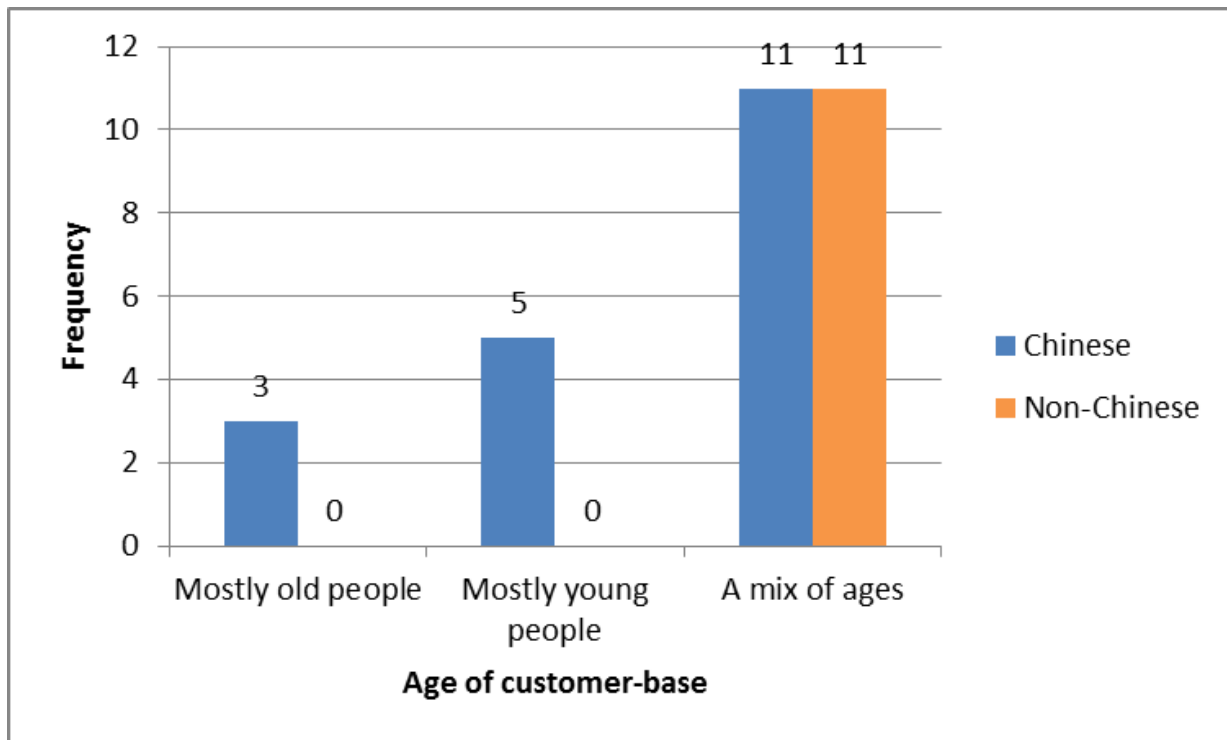
Given some of the language difficulties that were identified by non-native English speakers during the course of our interviews, the strong reliance on a shared language is unsurprising. These results also support both international and local evidence around the reliance of migrant business owners on co-ethnic networks (Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Strickland, 2013).

6.6.3 Relationships with customers

The same co-ethnic distinctions were not revealed in participants' clientele. Instead, most reported a mix of customers with just five Chinese interviewees reporting that their customers were *only* Chinese.

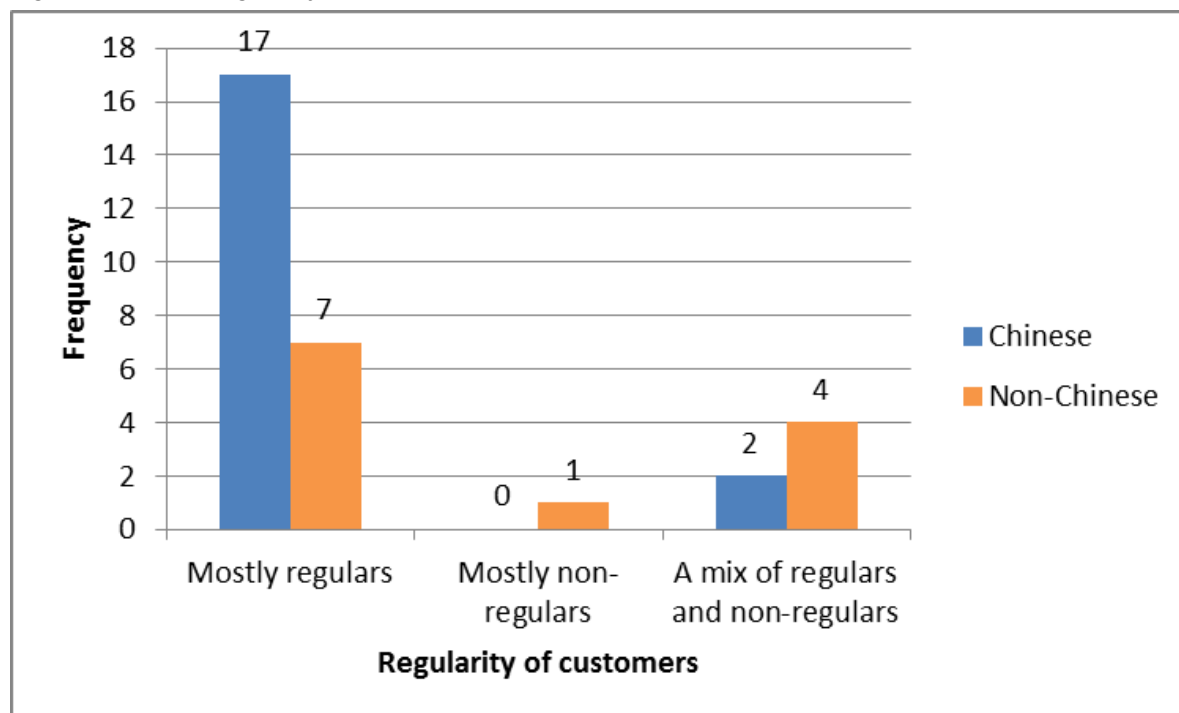
The age of the participants' customer base was also mostly mixed, with a few exceptions among Chinese participants, as illustrated in Figure 45.

Figure 45 Age of customer-base



Seventeen of the 19 Chinese participants thought that their customers were mostly regulars with just two reporting a mix of regulars and non-regulars. Non-Chinese interviewees' responses were more mixed; seven thought their customers were mostly regulars and four thought they had a mix of regulars and non-regulars, as illustrated in Figure 46.

Figure 46 Regularity of customers



The information provided above reflects some of the closed questions asked throughout the interviews with business owners. In the following, we turn to some of the open-ended questions which sought to capture the nature of the relationships that interviewees shared with their customers.

We asked participants to describe their relationship with their customers. Most of the Chinese participants had fairly close relationships, especially with their Chinese customers, and many described the relationship as a friendship that extended outside of business hours. A shared language and culture, they claimed, was a distinct advantage in developing these kinds of relationships.

Our relationship is friendly. We chat with each other. I can call most regulars by name. Many of my friends are my customers. We meet outside the shop to socialise. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

We are like friends and sometimes I socialise with them. We have become friends and go together for dinner. They are all Chinese. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Most of them are Chinese. It is easy for me to be close to Chinese as we speak the same language and share the same culture. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Others described sharing a familiarity and friendliness with their co-ethnic customers but stressed that, despite this, the relationship did not extend outside business hours. A number of Chinese interviewees reported that they did not know their customers' names but they did know their routine

and their favourite foods. In many cases, friendships were not pursued because the owners were simply too busy in their business to socialise. The following quotes illustrate these sentiments well.

I know my customers but don't know their names. I know what they like. They don't need to order. They are Kiwi customers. Sometimes we chat but we have no contact outside the business. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

I don't know their names [but] I can remember them by their characteristics. For instance, someone always comes in holding a basketball. I know who is coming and what their favourite food is [but] I don't have contact with my customers outside the business. I have no time to socialise. I'd rather go home to sleep after work. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

Very few non-Chinese participants reported having close relationships with their customers. Indeed, where relationships were described at all they appeared to be fairly functional and grounded in a business development agenda; they did not share the same kind of intimacy or familiarity described by Chinese participants. The following quotes illustrate the kinds of business relationships that were described. The first reflects a service-focused orientation while the second reveals that relationships were sometimes developed in order to protect the business' reputation.

We have strong interpersonal relationships [with our customers] ... customer service is a prime thing for us ... give them the service that they require [and] people do come back to us ... because they know they are going to get the expertise and somebody that actually knows what they are talking about. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Not being big headed or boasting [but] we get very few complaints and, if we do, it is that they don't know a good thing when they have seen it type thing. I think we have a good relationship with customers. I wouldn't have it any other way to be honest. I mean there are sites where they can leave reviews and stuff like that, reviews and comments. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

It was uncommon for participants to report on inter-ethnic relationships with their customers, with two exceptions. The first was a Chinese participant who spoke in detail about a fond relationship with a non-Chinese client. In the following, the interviewee describes the development of the relationship and also captures the possibilities that such an exchange can provide.

I have a Kiwi customer ... he likes Chinese culture and likes to learn Chinese ... I have been deeply moved by him so I always give him ... gifts. Last year, I invited a famous [] to my [] show. I invited this Kiwi customer. The Chinese [] gave the Kiwi customer a [gift]. He was very happy ... You are not only selling [] but also working on cultural exchange. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

The second example of inter-ethnic relationships between business owners and their customers was from a non-Chinese participant who described a close relationship with his customers as a result of owning his business for a long period of time.

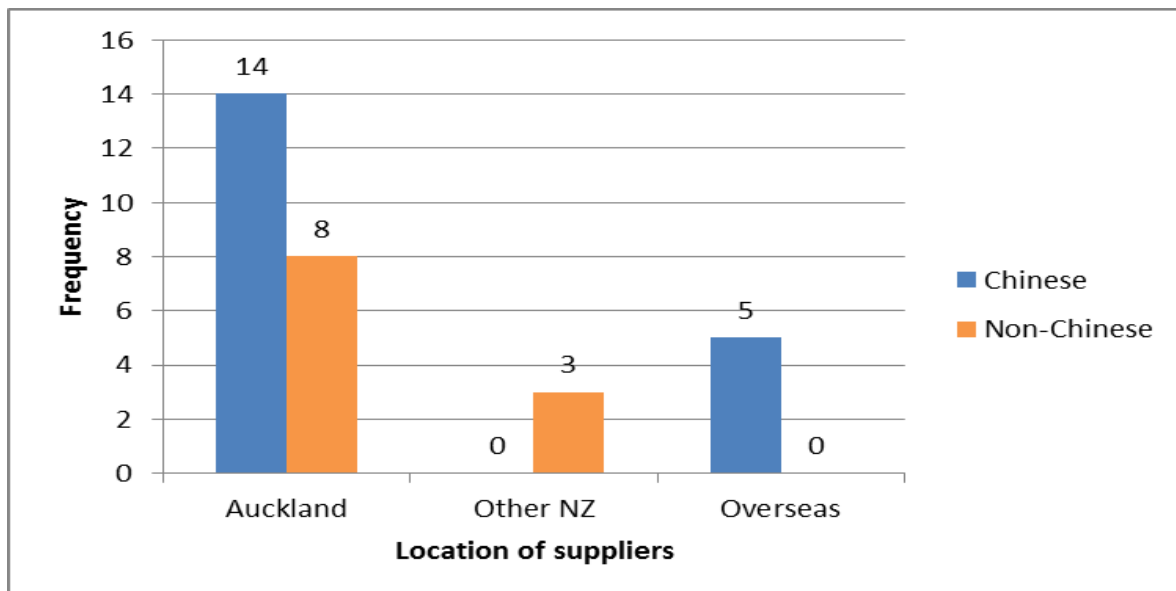
Because I have been here [many] years I can remember all of them ... Their mums used to bring them on their push bike and then they became teenagers, they went to school with my children ... so we know them quite personally, my children know them, they know my children ... they come and have a cup of tea with me, they invite me when they have a birthday party and so on ... we don't go away from a relationship ... because we value relationships. (Male, Non-Chinese, 65+)

6.6.4 Relationships with suppliers

Local and international literature on ethnic entrepreneurs suggests that migrants draw heavily on co-ethnic suppliers to support their business (Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Strickland, 2013). With this in mind, we asked participants about their relationships with their suppliers and, more specifically, where those suppliers were located.

We found that, contrary to other studies, Chinese participants were most likely to source their supplies locally (14 sourced their supplies from Auckland) while a minority also sourced supplies from China (4) or Taiwan (1) (Figure 47). China-based suppliers were typically used for larger items such as purchasing plant and materials for the business. Non-Chinese participants were also more likely to use local suppliers (8 sourced their supplies from Auckland) although three also used other New Zealand-based suppliers. None, however, relied on international suppliers.²⁹

Figure 47 Location of suppliers

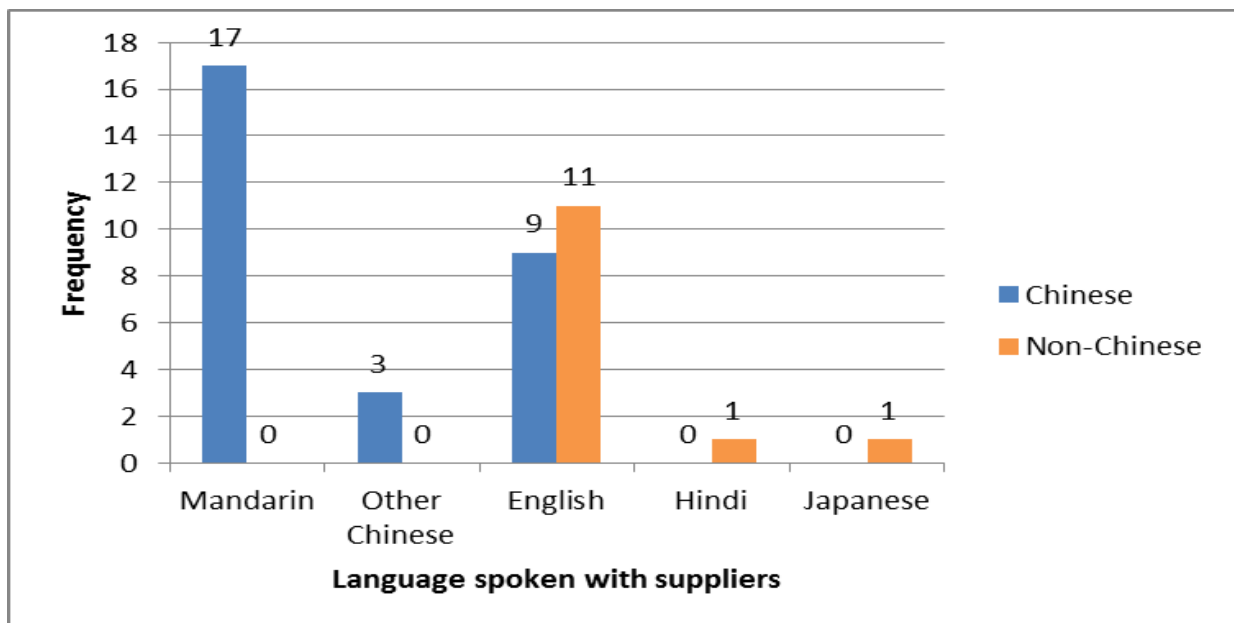


²⁹ These overall results probably reflect the number of restaurateurs in the study who undoubtedly rely upon local produce.

Most of the Chinese participants used ethnically Chinese suppliers (12) with a smaller number using a mix of suppliers (5). The reasons for using co-ethnic suppliers included: ease of communication; greater variety of products from co-ethnic suppliers; and cheaper products (although some acknowledged that the quality might not be as high). These results support local and international literature on ethnic entrepreneurs' heavier reliance on co-ethnic suppliers. Responses from non-Chinese participants were less ethnicity-specific with most using a mix of suppliers.

Although most of the Chinese participants spoke a Chinese language with their suppliers (Mandarin, 17; other Chinese language, 3), eight reported that they also spoke English. Just one Chinese participant told us that he only spoke English with his suppliers. Non-Chinese participants typically spoke only English with their suppliers although two participants also spoke a second language (Hindi and Japanese) (Figure 48).

Figure 48 Language spoken with suppliers



6.6.5 Relationships with other business owners

In addition to business owners' relationships with their staff, customers and suppliers, we were also interested in the relationships they shared with other business owners in the street. None of the participants, irrespective of ethnicity, reported having particularly close relationships but both Chinese and non-Chinese interviewees often enjoyed cordial relationships with their neighbours. These relationships materialised as acknowledging each other in the street and having casual conversations. Interestingly, Chinese interviewees were less likely to share business advice when engaged in casual conversation, while non-Chinese interviewees often shared the "odd bit of business". The following quotes capture these differences.

We greet each other when we meet. Sometimes we chat but we don't talk about business.
(Female, Chinese, 65+)

[I] know my neighbouring shop owners and we chat when we meet. We have not made friends. Sometimes we give each other business advice but it is rare. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

We know each other and we give each other feedback and the odd bit of business ... we try to look after each other. Try to look after people in your local area. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Chinese interviewees also described very practical relationships with their neighbours where they helped each other with the rubbish, borrowed items from each other or delivered food to each other. The quote below captures some of these elements and also illustrates the reciprocity that is embedded in these informal relationships.

We have a good relationship. We know each other and help each other. For example, the neighbouring shop opens only in the evening. We help them with pushing back the rubbish bin after it has been emptied. Sometimes, we both borrow stuff from each other. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

In the Literature Review, we introduced the possibility that ethnic precincts provide an opportunity for people of different cultures to come into contact with each other, creating moments of urban learning that can promote social cohesion (Noble, 2011; Hannigan, 2010). However, the moments of contact referred to above only account for co-ethnic relationships. To what extent do business owners build relationships with other business owners who *do not* share their ethnic background?

Although some Chinese interviewees explained that they did not have any contact with non-Chinese business owners in the area, others appeared quite open to inter-ethnic relationships. Some of the relationships described could be read as somewhat superficial while others pointed to a desire to promote harmony and mitigate any explicit conflict. The following quotes capture these sentiments.

Some of them [relationships] are just saying 'hello', some of them support each other, and some of them have no contact. There is no difference in the way we interact with different ethnic people. We have contact with Thai, Indian and Korean owners. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

I find the owner of [the neighbouring] shop is not friendly. He likes to complain [but] I never complain to him. I don't want to make the conflict big and create a new problem. (Male, Chinese, 65+)

Non-Chinese interviewees did not describe the relationships they shared with fellow business owners who were Chinese. In fact, three participants were somewhat antagonistic and resistant towards building a relationship, either because they felt Chinese people were too "untidy", had low

standards and did not care about the business area more broadly, or could not speak English well, which they felt negatively impacted the development of a cohesive community. The following quotes illustrate these themes.

A lot of the time is me just having a go at them [Chinese neighbours] for being untidy ... That is what really annoys me around here ... how messy it is. And it just frustrates me that no one looks after their sort of street ... the bins are just always overflowing and it blows into my doors and ... I don't know, they just don't seem to care ... no one seems to want to take responsibility or do anything around here and it is always a bit of a mess which is quite annoying ... it is not as if there is a good relationship ... the fire alarm will go off and [they] don't do anything, they just stare ... there is no sort of thanks afterwards [after he has fixed it] ... I just think you should take a bit more pride in what you are doing. (Male, Non-Chinese, 19-30)

Chinese business owners around here are cheap ... So they are kind of happy with low quality standards. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

There is a language barrier to it ... I don't really like having neighbours that can't speak English, nothing against them personally, fine, but it is a bad situation. We have restaurants here with purely Chinese sign writing and this non-English speaking stuff. I mean, as a starter some can speak broken English and that is not okay. No good.

Interviewer: *How does it impact on your relationship?*

It is like as important as communicating with your wife, if you can't talk with your wife well ... you can be on good terms but you can't really ... form a relationship.

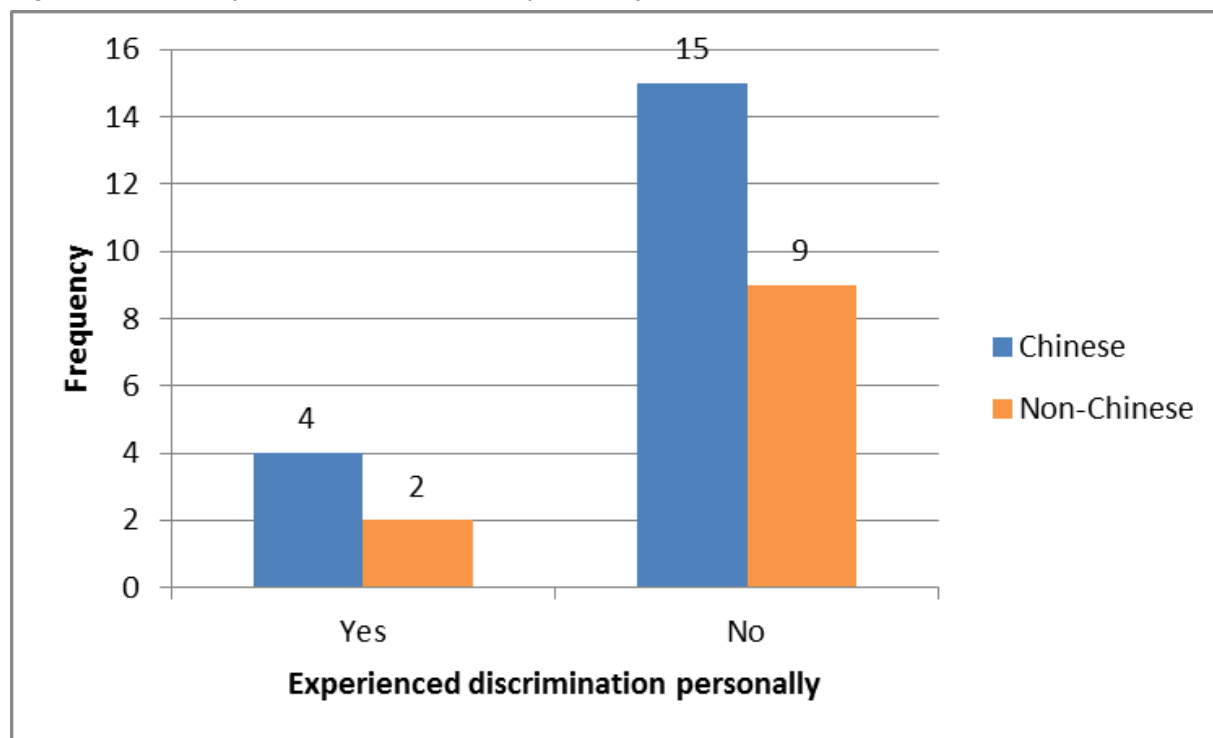
Interviewer: *Do you think it affects your business or I don't know just your community?*
It affects a sense of community in the general wellbeing. (Male, Non-Chinese, 31-45)

6.7 Is discrimination in the Balmoral shops an issue?

We noted earlier that shoppers who visited the Balmoral shops area did not identify incidents of discrimination. We also asked the business owners a series of questions about discrimination, both on Dominion Road and in New Zealand more broadly, with mixed results. Beginning with discrimination in New Zealand, the results were evenly divided with half of the participants believing that immigrants face discrimination and half believing they do not (Chinese participants were slightly more likely overall to think immigrants *do not* face discrimination).

Relatively few participants, irrespective of their ethnicity, reported personal experiences of discrimination (four Chinese and two non-Chinese participants) (Figure 49).

Figure 49 Experienced discrimination personally



At first glance, these results closely reflect the results from shoppers in the area with few reports of discrimination. However, when given an opportunity to respond in greater detail, more complex understandings of discrimination were revealed – especially by those who identified as Chinese.

Descriptions of discriminatory experiences were sometimes reframed in such a way that they no longer appeared discriminatory. For example, participants sometimes justified or minimised the discriminatory aspects of their experience, implying that they were of no serious consequence. Alternatively, participants sometimes compared discriminatory acts experienced in New Zealand with discriminatory acts experienced elsewhere, making New Zealand look more favourable.

Yes [there is discrimination in New Zealand] but only a little. I think discrimination is not strong in New Zealand. (Male, Chinese, 31-45)

Generally speaking, I think there is less discrimination in New Zealand than in Australia. New Zealand Kiwis are very friendly. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

A small number of Chinese participants blamed themselves for causing people to treat them in a discriminatory way.

I think discrimination exists in the society but as new migrants we should review our own behaviours. (Female, Chinese, 46-64)

We need to look at our own behaviours. We shouldn't be too radical ... I think new immigrants should learn from and merge with the local culture. I know that will take time

and maybe hundreds of years. To reduce the discrimination we should start with our selves. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

I have sometimes heard Chinese people speak too loudly in public. I can understand if Kiwis look down on those people because they didn't behave well. (Male, Chinese, 46-64)

An equally small number of participants, both Chinese and non-Chinese, reported that some discrimination was inevitable, as illustrated by the following quote.

I [would] like to say 'no' ... but unfortunately there is obviously an element of [discrimination]. But I think it is everywhere. It is not just New Zealand, is it? You are always going to have the people that say they should go home or learn to speak their own language ... it is human nature really. (Female, Non-Chinese, 46-64)

Four of the Chinese participants reported that they had experienced discrimination in Dominion Road itself while none of the non-Chinese participants had. In fact, relatively few people had even witnessed discriminatory behaviour in the area (five Chinese participants and two non-Chinese participants had witnessed discrimination on Dominion Road).

When invited to expand on their response, some Chinese participants pointed out that customers sometimes created difficulties in-store. Although the quotes included below might not be examples of discrimination *per se*, they are included here because the participants considered or experienced them as discriminatory. The first example also highlights the speaker's perception that the police are not available to fully support him.

Sometimes Kiwi customers complain and make small issues a big problem. For example, if we serve slowly, they easily become very angry and refuse to pay. There was an incident in the past and I had to call the police. They left before the police came. The police are always one step behind. (Male, Chinese, 19-30)

Some people came to my shop and asked me some questions. Before I fully understood their questions they just left. They thought my English is not good so they didn't want to talk to me ... they had no patience to talk to me. (Male, Chinese, 46-65)

Overall, we noted that there was a discrepancy between reports of discrimination and the stories people tell of discriminatory experiences.

7.0 Discussion and concluding comments

This report has presented the results of a programme of research designed to reveal the social, spatial and economic roles of the Balmoral shops located along Dominion Road. In this section, we do five things. First, we review the high level findings of the research in relation to these roles and second, we examine the contribution this research makes to ethnic precincts scholarship. Third, we consider the relevance of several strategic Auckland Council documents, policies and initiatives to the research. Fourth, we outline a range of support that is currently available to migrants when settling and establishing a business in New Zealand. Finally, we identify opportunities for engagement that might be leveraged by Auckland Council and others to produce positive social and economic outcomes for those who live and work in the area.

7.1 Overview of the key findings

7.1.1 Social role of the Balmoral shops

One of the key objectives of this research was to identify the social role of the Balmoral shops. We noted in the Introduction that ethnic precincts can be a site of intercultural exchange (Hiebert, 2000) and social interaction (Francis et al., 2012) and our study of shoppers and business owners in the area lends some weight to these claims. Participants often appreciated the multicultural and cosmopolitan vibe in the precinct and non-Chinese shoppers, in particular, thought the area was an inclusive space. Indeed, many participants, both shoppers and business owners, described friendly inter-ethnic everyday encounters with others. However, these encounters were often fairly routine and generally failed to extend beyond daily greetings.

Non-Chinese shoppers often reported that the Balmoral shops did not function as a social hub and that the area did not have a strong sense of community. They also felt that the precinct needed a greater variety of businesses to encourage people to linger in the area instead of eating and leaving. Some also described a sense of alienation, feeling as though the retail space was created for Asian people rather than the wider community. Somewhat paradoxically, however, non-Chinese participants were most likely to think that the precinct was a good place for people of different ethnicities to mix.

Both shoppers and business owners alike often described the emergence of friendships in the Balmoral shops. This was especially the case for Chinese business owners. Importantly, the research also showed that Chinese shoppers appreciated the sense of familiarity they experienced while visiting the precinct; Chinese food and written and spoken Chinese language worked together to create a sense of the familiar and a taste of home. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. Scholarly literature points out the importance of a sense of belonging and identification for migrants and the extent to which retail spaces can offer opportunities for the negotiation and renegotiation of ethnic (and migrant) identities (Wang & Lo, 2007). It is clear that the Balmoral shops have an important role to perform in this regard.

One of the key tensions or difficulties around creating a socially cohesive community in the Balmoral shops centred on speaking English. On the one hand, many non-Chinese participants expressed concern that others could not speak English well. On the other hand, many Chinese participants were equally concerned about their ability to speak English. Overall, however, Chinese respondents expressed greater willingness than non-Chinese to move beyond their linguistic comfort zone and engage with others of differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Many participants, irrespective of ethnicity, felt that social and cultural events in the area could bring people together, foster greater social cohesion and overcome some of these tensions.

7.1.2 Spatial role of the Balmoral shops

We turn now to the spatial role performed by the Balmoral shops. Most shoppers appreciated the convenience of the precinct; its proximity to motorways, other shopping centres and public transport routes. These factors were also important reasons why business owners established their businesses there in the first instance. That said, shoppers and business owners raised concerns about public transport, traffic jams in peak times and access to suitable on-street parking. Given the fact that most shoppers used private cars to access the precinct, parking was a key concern and although Auckland Transport has a significant upgrade planned for the area, this did little to assuage concerns.³⁰ Similarly, those who used public transport were concerned about its frequency and reliability.³¹

Overseas ethnic precincts have become destinations in their own right, welcoming both local residents and tourists (Collins, 2007). Although it seems that few tourists visit the Balmoral shops, the precinct does welcome people from a wide geographic area across Auckland. The centre serves different purposes across the day and night. It operates as an important local service centre during the day, especially for local residents, and is transformed at night into a destination food precinct that draws patrons from much further afield. The good quality and value (mostly Chinese) food available in the area is a primary draw card.

Many interviewees (Chinese and non-Chinese, shoppers and business owners) were concerned about the overall appearance of the Balmoral shops. Although some felt its shabbiness was charming, others felt it was run-down and unclean. Rejuvenating the area was thought to be an important step towards improving economic development, creating a sense of community, developing a welcoming and inviting space, and fostering greater social cohesion.

7.1.3 Economic role of the Balmoral shops

A primary purpose of this research was to better understand the economic role of the precinct. With respect to promoting the area by branding and marketing the Balmoral shops, there were

³⁰ Concerns were raised by business owners that the planned upgrade would further erode the number of car parks available and that this would negatively impact on the economic performance of their businesses.

³¹ Dominion Road currently carries about 2.2 million bus passengers each year (3% of Auckland's public transport trips) and a 67 per cent increase is predicted by 2021. Auckland Transport's 2017 Dominion Road upgrade is expected to improve bus travel time reliability.

fairly clear distinctions between Chinese and non-Chinese participants (both shoppers and business owners). Many non-Chinese shoppers and business owners thought it was a good idea to brand and subsequently market the area as Chinatown. These interviewees often felt that it would leverage the area's reputation as a restaurant destination and would help to enliven the local economy. In contrast, Chinese shoppers and business owners mostly eschewed a formalised Chinatown brand. Instead, these participants thought a Food Hub or Food Street was more inclusive and more accurately represented the current ethnic mix of those who worked and shopped in the precinct and the kinds of businesses located there.

For those who own a business in the precinct, the Balmoral shops have an important economic function. Many non-Chinese participants told us that they grew their business through conventional business methods such as utilising business networks or employing business mentors. These entrepreneurs appeared to operate within a conventional economically-driven business model, drawing heavily on the language of business and entrepreneurial activity. In contrast, many Chinese participants explained that their relationships with staff, customers, friends and family, and other business owners in the area were the key to their business success and growth. These entrepreneurs appeared to operate within a relational business model where connectedness with others was a significant feature of their entrepreneurial activity. Local and international literature stresses the importance of co-ethnic networks for Chinese migrants (Cain & Spoonley, 2013; Meares, Cain, & Spoonley, 2011; Light, Bhachu, & Karageorgis, 2004) and our research adds further weight to this scholarship. However, the results also challenge understandings of 'networks'; the language of networks, we believe, fails to account for the value placed on relationships by Chinese entrepreneurs.

7.2 Contribution to scholarship on ethnic precincts

As noted at the beginning of this report, ethnic precincts are relatively new in Auckland's retail landscape and there has, to date, been little research undertaken on their role and function. Our research contributes to this nascent field in a number of ways. First, it adds to our understanding of the roles the precinct plays for shoppers and business owners, as outlined in the previous section. The research strengthens and extends international work on ethnic precincts by focusing on a local precinct that developed organically and has never been formally branded and promoted. In doing so, the research identifies points of both convergence and divergence with other scholarly work.

Second, the research extends the methodological tools used in the study of ethnic precincts, both nationally and internationally, through the use of shopper spend data to understand the centre's catchments. Analysing shopper spend data permitted in-depth socio-economic analysis that has been absent in most studies of ethnic precincts.

Third, a key strength of the research was the employment of a combination of research methods which provides a holistic understanding of the precinct's functions. These integrated research methods provide two key benefits. First, they capture the vantage points of shoppers and business owners; locals and those travelling to use the precinct from various parts of Auckland; and Chinese

and non-Chinese shoppers and business owners. These multiple vantage points permit an analysis both within and across these various groups. Second, the combination of research methods permits economic, social and cultural analyses, as well as their interaction.

7.3 Alignment with Auckland Council priorities

In the following section, we reflect on the relevance of these findings to a range of Auckland Council directives, priorities, strategies and initiatives that are described in council documents, policies and plans. In particular, we consider the Auckland Plan; the Economic Development Strategy; the Thriving Communities Action Plan; and Auckland Transport's 2017 Dominion Road upgrade as they relate to two main themes: supporting a diverse ethnic economy and creating a sense of community and belonging.

7.3.1 Supporting a diverse ethnic economy

The first area of connection is around the theme of supporting a diverse ethnic economy. The Auckland Plan states that Auckland's economic growth will be "inclusive and equitable" so that "all Aucklanders participate in growing the economy and can enjoy its benefits" (Auckland Council, 2012a, p. 151). The tenor of council's aspiration is closely aligned with scholarly work that preaches the economic benefits of an equitable economy (Hahnel, 2005). Undoubtedly, recognising and supporting diversity is a crucial aspect of the council's strategic direction.

Supporting a diverse ethnic economy is also a feature of Auckland's Economic Development Strategy (Auckland Council, 2012b). The strategy document acknowledges Auckland's ethnic diversity and highlights the opportunities available to council to leverage migrants' international connections as well as their access to leading-edge ideas and technologies and knowledge more broadly. It is appropriate that supporting a diverse ethnic economy is one of the four cross-cutting themes of the Economic Development Strategy. However, it should also be noted that the strategy stresses large-scale entrepreneurship and fails to adequately account for the important localised role performed by migrant (retail and food hospitality) entrepreneurs. Undoubtedly, global connectivity is vital for Auckland, however, our research has shown that for business owners in the Balmoral shops, it is local rather than international connections that are most important and most valued. Acknowledging localised relationships shared by smaller-scale entrepreneurs is important for the continued promotion of economic growth in the area.

The Economic Development Strategy document also notes that Auckland Council needs to work more effectively with Auckland's diverse population to design systems and processes that better meet their needs, and promote a readily available and skilled workforce. Comments received from business owners participating in this research reinforce the appropriateness and necessity of such a directive.

As discussed throughout this report, participants were frustrated with inefficient or unreliable public transport and poor parking options in the area. These issues could deter shoppers from visiting the precinct which could negatively impact economic growth. The Auckland Transport Dominion Road

upgrade is designed to improve public transport links to the area and rejuvenate the area more broadly, making the Balmoral shops “more attractive, easier to use and safer for pedestrians”.³² Although the proposal does not specifically identify an ethnic economy, the proposed changes are expected to positively impact on local businesses in the precinct.

The Albert-Eden Local Board plan also outlines a number of strategies that are aligned, albeit indirectly, with supporting the diverse ethnic economy of the Balmoral shops. “Thriving town centres and a growing local economy” is one of six intended outcomes of the Albert-Eden Local Board (Auckland Council, 2014a, p. 24). Underpinning this intended outcome is the hope that centres throughout the area are “well supported by local people and are attractive destinations for visitors [and] our business areas play a key role in growing the local economy” (ibid, p. 8). Although the articulated outcome is not ethnicity-specific, the local board clearly recognises the opportunity to support local business in the area; the board recently allocated funding grants to a local business association to directly support economic development in the area. Better understanding the ways in which (migrant) ethnic diversity intersects with entrepreneurial activity in the precinct will help the local board in these endeavours.

7.3.2 Creating a sense of community and belonging

The second area of connection is around creating a sense of community and belonging. Chapter Three of the Auckland Plan (titled Auckland’s Arts and Culture) states that “Auckland has become increasingly ethnically and socially diverse” and that “migrants bring with them their own cultural heritage” (Auckland Council, 2012a, p. 115). The Chapter also states that

... our arts and culture connect and strengthen us as communities. They provide enjoyment and they challenge us to see the world through the eyes of others: to connect across cultural divides, to celebrate our differences, and to explore new ideas and diverse ways of living. (Auckland Council, 2012a, p. 115)

In these words, the council demonstrates a commitment to the multiplicity of voices and experiences within and across Auckland communities and identifies the important role of the arts in strengthening communities and fostering social cohesion.

The Auckland Plan also identifies key priorities including to “value and foster Auckland’s cultural diversity” (Auckland Council, 2012a, p. 117). Two specific directives are noted, the first of which is to encourage and support a range of community events and cultural festivals that reflect Auckland’s cultural diversity. The importance of this directive is reflected in participants’ comments reported on throughout this report; both Chinese and non-Chinese participants thought that cultural festivals would enhance the Balmoral shops, contribute to a sense of community and foster a better understanding of others’ cultures.

³² See: <https://at.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/dominion-road-upgrade/>

The second directive is to support people to retain and cultivate their languages and other forms of cultural expression. In this respect, there is a close alignment with the sentiments of Chinese business owners and shoppers, for whom speaking in their native language was important for everyday communication and, more specifically, the creation of a sense of home and belonging.

The Auckland Plan is also supported by other council documents that acknowledge the importance of supporting a diverse community in order to achieve a greater sense of community, inclusion and social cohesion. An excellent example is the Thriving Communities Action Plan which is a strategic document focusing on “people’s happiness, well-being and connectedness with each other” (Auckland Council, 2014b, p. 7). The plan outlines an intention to create connected, resilient and inclusive communities and

... work together with Auckland's diverse communities in new and more sustainable ways. It describes how we are going to help citizens and communities to flourish and fulfil their potential through community-led development, deepening democracy and supporting social change. (Auckland Council, 2014b)³³

The strategy builds on three Auckland Plan directives, two of which are particularly relevant here.

- Support community-led development and work with communities to develop leadership, skills and capacity; and
- Promote inclusion, reduce discrimination and remove barriers to opportunity and partnership, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Community-led development is an important feature of the Thriving Communities Action Plan and emphasises working together with communities to “find the best ways to create opportunities and transformational change”, enable communities to “better access resources and produce their own resources” and remove barriers to activities, services and information, “making it easier for communities to engage with [council]” (Auckland Council, 2014b, p. 11).³⁴ Delivered effectively, responses to these intentions would ameliorate some of the difficulties articulated by Chinese entrepreneurs in this study, such as finding important information and limited engagement with council. Although it would appear that some resources are available, this research has shown that there is little knowledge or uptake of the support available, especially by Chinese business owners.

³³ See Thriving Communities Action Plan overview:

<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/Councilstrategies/Pages/thrivingcommunities.aspx> [retrieved: 16 February 2015].

³⁴ This direction is also supported by Auckland Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy which acknowledges Auckland’s increasing diversity and outlines a pathway to effectively engage with “groups and communities who have often been less involved in council decisions” (Auckland Council, 2014c, p. 5). The policy outlines the key strategies for engaging with communities, including a range of on-line, print and face-to-face channels. It should be noted, however, that many participants’ comments suggest that council is not yet meeting its obligations or intentions with respect to community engagement; while many communication channels are available, knowledge and uptake of them is often poor.

There are clear opportunities to engage and communicate with business owners differently as well as to enable local entrepreneurs to produce their own culturally-specific materials and resources.

A related principle in the Thriving Communities Action Plan is developing community-based relationships that are grounded in trust:

...relationships are key to effective collaborations. Trust is necessary for cooperation and our social and economic prosperity depends on it. (Auckland Council, 2014b, p. 11)

In practice, this involves working together with communities and recognising the “abilities, networks, creativity, knowledge and expertise” of the community itself (Auckland Council, 2014b, p. 11). While this entails a ‘letting go’ for council, it also creates unique opportunities to engage differently with communities and to leverage the vast skill sets they contain. This dovetails well with the second directive of promoting inclusion, reducing discrimination and removing barriers to opportunity and partnership. Underpinning this directive is the principle of an inclusive, equitable and just society where all community members participate.

Participation and community-led place-making are also goals outlined in the Albert-Eden Local Board plan (Auckland Council, 2014a). One of the board’s desired outcomes is to create “proud, connected and secure communities” in which diverse communities can “celebrate their cultures with exciting and innovative events that contribute to our vibrant area” (Auckland Council, 2014a, p. 6). Again, the importance of cultural events that can potentially bridge cultural and linguistic divides is emphasised at the same time as fostering inclusion and participation from all members of the community. The Albert-Eden Local Board is well positioned to organise, facilitate and support locally-focused events and, indeed, the plan assigns financial support for cultural festivals and local art programmes that reflect and celebrate the area’s cultural diversity.

Although, as noted, there are important synergies between various strategic council documents and the thoughts and perceptions of the shoppers and business owners who participated in this research, the local board plan makes little reference to the Balmoral shops themselves (the greatest emphasis is placed on a proposed redevelopment of the Mt Albert shops). There are also few references to the role of local businesses working together with Auckland Council/ Albert-Eden Local Board to stimulate the local economy. That said, there is overall alignment between council (including the Local Board) directives and work programmes and the views of residents, shoppers and business owners in the area.

Auckland Council has also implemented a number of intra-council initiatives designed to directly or indirectly support the ethnic community across Auckland. For example, the Civic Ethnic Engagement Forum is co-led by council’s Community Development and Safety, and Research and Consultation units and is attended by council staff who engage either directly or indirectly with ethnic communities. The forum meets every two months to discuss current engagement and consider opportunities for further development. To ensure best practice around community engagement, outcomes from this forum are fed into Auckland Council’s Engagement Guidelines.

Another within-council initiative is the monthly ethnic diversity newsletter that is emailed to all Community Development staff as a way of raising awareness of ethnic programmes and initiatives. Although neither of these initiatives focuses solely on the Balmoral shops, the outcome of these meetings and exchanges could positively impact on the retail precinct.

7.4 Current support available to the migrant business community

One of the key findings from this research was that Chinese business owners knew little about the full range of formalised support available to them during their initial settlement period in New Zealand and in the establishment and subsequent maintenance of their business. For a business to thrive, it is vital that accurate and timely information is available and central government has an important role to perform in this regard. In this section, we outline a number of initiatives, mostly implemented and managed by central government, that inform migrants about working and living in New Zealand.

The Immigration New Zealand-sponsored *New Zealand Now* is a website that provides a guide to what new migrants can expect when living and working in New Zealand. It also includes a dedicated page for those who are establishing a business and provides high level information and a range of resources such as downloadable booklets, articles and videos as well as links to supporting departments. The information is primarily available in English.

Also supported by Immigration New Zealand, Work Talk³⁵ is a website designed to aid communication between New Zealand employers/managers and new migrant employees. It is a highly practical application from the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP), a study investigating interactions in New Zealand workplaces (Victoria University's School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and Immigration New Zealand). Work Talk is an excellent example of the possibilities created when resources are shared to reach a common outcome. The website also includes active links to other websites that offer support to migrants who might be experiencing difficulty speaking English.³⁶

Immigration New Zealand also produces the LINKS magazine which is posted to all migrants for a period of two years after their arrival. Each edition provides information about living and working in New Zealand as well as a regional feature. Although not every edition includes extensive information about establishing a business, many include generic information that is potentially valuable to all migrants. Additional communication pathways implemented by Immigration New Zealand include a Facebook page (moderated by Immigration New Zealand) and trade-specific pamphlets that provide guidelines to both migrant employees and employers. The pamphlets are also available in other languages on request.

³⁵ See: <http://worktalk.immigration.govt.nz/>.

³⁶ See: <https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/living-in-nz/english-language/help-in-your-language>.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) offers new arrivals a series of workshops on social and professional communication; preparing for the labour market, including preparing to find employment, how to work effectively in New Zealand, and employment rights; and health and welfare issues. In addition to English, the CAB offers information and support in 24 other languages. Although none of the migrant participants reported having received help or support from the CAB when establishing their business, it should be noted that these services have only recently been introduced.

Additional (non-government) community-based services are provided by the following organisations (among others):

- Auckland Regional Migrant Services;
- Chinese New Settlers Services Trust; and
- Newcomers Network.

7.5 Where to next? Future opportunities

In this section we turn our attention to the link between Auckland Council and the business community and what council might do to better engage with business owners in the future. We begin by considering the broad issue of communication before exploring possibilities for embracing cultural diversity and enhancing business opportunities.

7.5.1 Communicating with the wider community

In 2013, the Research and Evaluation Unit at Auckland Council published the results of a study investigating social cohesion in three Auckland suburbs – Albany, Papatoetoe and New Lynn (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013). A key finding from this research was residents' desire for a different kind of relationship with the council. Participants emphasised the following:

Listening well to the needs and aspirations of communities; clearly communicating important messages about council activities, particularly in relation to planned changes in the built environment; and working collaboratively as partners. (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013, p. 78-79)

The present research also identified clear gaps in communication between council and the (business) community and there appears to be considerable potential to develop more collaborative and open ways of working alongside the community. Auckland Council's Significance and Engagement Policy acknowledges Auckland's increasing diversity and outlines a pathway for effective engagement with "groups and communities who have often been less involved in council decisions" (Auckland Council, 2014c, p. 5). Importantly, the policy is also forward thinking, stressing that:

When making a decision, a local authority should take account of the diversity of the community, and the community's interests; and the interests of future as well as current

communities; and the likely impact of any decision on them. (Auckland Council, 2014c, p.10)

To meet this principle, the policy states that council will identify ways of reaching out to affected communities; provide multiple ways for people to participate; invest in community capacity building to enable participation; use plain language; make the process of engagement inclusive and accessible; and consider how to meet other community needs in respect of language, accessibility and cultural expectations.

The creation of the Balmoral Chinese Business Association (BCBA - focused on the Balmoral shops) provides an important pathway for improving communication with the Chinese business community in that area. The BCBA was established by local Chinese entrepreneurs during the interview phase of this research.³⁷ The association has since applied for, and secured, funding from the Albert-Eden Economic Development Grants to support local Chinese business owners to join.³⁸ The association is an excellent example of community-led place-making with local (business) communities determining their own needs with the support of council. Although in its infancy, the association could be a vehicle for disseminating important information to the local Chinese community. Similarly, now mobilised, the BCBA could inform the Albert-Eden Local Board, other local business associations and the wider community more broadly, of the needs of the Chinese business community. The task for Auckland Council and the Albert-Eden Local Board is to establish how best to support the association (beyond the initial financial investment) and take advantage of the opportunity presented to build a collaborative and engaged partnership.

With respect to the present research and the dissemination of key results, the research team take seriously the need to appropriately engage the wider community. Consequently, in addition to the publication of this report, the research has, to date, been presented to the Albert-Eden Local Board; Immigration New Zealand, ATEED and Auckland Council at an event created under the auspices of the Auckland Regional Partnership Agreement; and to academic audiences at national and international conferences. Written summaries on aspects of the research have also appeared in the Monitoring Research Quarterly,³⁹ and the most recent Auckland-focused publication of the LINKZ magazine. Perhaps most importantly, however, an Auckland Council/Immigration New Zealand-sponsored workshop will be held with the Balmoral Chinese Business Association and other Mandarin-speaking members of the community. The purpose of the workshop is threefold: to share the research results with the wider community; to hear what the Chinese community think about the research results; and to provide additional information from Auckland Council and Immigration New Zealand that could support the (migrant) business community. More than this, however, the event is about engaging differently with the community by creating a space for the

³⁷ The Mandarin-speaking interviewer performed an important role in disseminating information about the association's possible creation.

³⁸ It is interesting to note that Chinese business owners indicated they were not interested in joining an association and yet, to date, 19 have joined the newly formed association.

³⁹ See:

<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/reports/technicalpublications/Documents/monitoringresearchquarterly201412.pdf>

expertise and experiential knowledge of attendees to flourish. Given Chinese participants' concerns about events being held solely in English, and the value placed on trust and relationships, a crucial component of this event is the delivery of content in Mandarin, with the help of Wenli Zhang who also conducted the Chinese interviews, as well as English.

The following summarises the possibilities raised with respect to communication with the wider community:

- Continue working alongside the newly formed Balmoral Chinese Business Association to better understand the needs of the (Chinese) migrant business community;
- Engage a translator for communicating items of significance;
- Create opportunities for the business community to work alongside each other;
- Work alongside Immigration New Zealand to ensure that its increased focus on tailored support for SME-sized enterprises is appropriate for the local business community; and
- Work alongside Immigration New Zealand in the development of language-specific information resources.

7.5.2 Increasing social cohesion

Better communication, we believe, will contribute to an increased sense of belonging and inclusion in Auckland's ethnically diverse neighbourhoods and business precincts. In addition to better communication, however, the research findings reveal an appetite for more local cultural events that provide opportunities for ethnically diverse communities to come together. Certainly, the Albert-Eden Local Board already supports, organises and funds a number of community-based events such as the annual Neighbours Day,⁴⁰ the Family Park Jam,⁴¹ and the Me and My Teddy picnic.⁴² Not only do these events play an important communication function, they also contribute to the creation of more connected communities. Introducing additional events that celebrate and respond to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area could, we think, further enhance social cohesion. The local (migrant and non-migrant) business community have an important role to play in this regard. Involving the business community in the creation of such events and utilising the breadth of skills they bring could be a powerful way to engage with the wider community in a different way. An excellent example of leveraging the business community's skills is the Auckland Theatre Company's production of *Walk, Eat, Talk*⁴³ which innovatively introduced people to the area's history, side streets, restaurants, culture and people as Dominion Road itself became the stage. In addition, the renowned Sandringham Food and Spice Tour is understood to be considering a similar tour to the Balmoral shops area. Dominion Road Stories was another innovative project that contributed to increased understanding of diversity issues in this particular location. Sponsored by Auckland Libraries, the project involved capturing the stories of people who

⁴⁰ Neighbour's day is designed to bring people together and build closer, safer and more caring communities.

⁴¹ The Family Park Jam is a free arts and culture event showcasing dance, music, basketball, and visual arts.

⁴² Held in Potter's park, the picnic was held to bring the community together gather and gather public feedback on how residents would like to develop the park.

⁴³ See: <http://www.atc.co.nz/participate/event-detail?event=7029>

live and work in Dominion Road more widely, complementing oral history interviews with photographic documentary and community generated anecdotes.

Increased social cohesion, however, does not only arise from culturally-oriented events and projects. Perceptions of safety also contribute to a socially cohesive community (Chinchilla, 2011) and a perceived lack of safety was identified as a key issue by many participants, irrespective of their ethnicity or status as a business owner or shopper in the area. While Auckland Transport's 2017 rejuvenation of the Balmoral shops is intended to make the precinct "more attractive, easier to use and safer for pedestrians" this does not address other issues around safety. Community engagement (with shoppers, residents and business owners) about perceptions of safety in the area (during the day and at night) is important. Arguably, if perceptions of safety increase, levels of trust and engagement across the community will also increase. This, in turn, could contribute to greater social cohesion.

The following summarises the possibilities raised with respect to social cohesion:

- Work with the wider community when planning community-based events to ensure ethnic and linguistic diversity is appropriately considered (this might involve the services of a skilled translator or alternatively the employment of staff with those linguistic and cultural skills);
- Safety is a key concern of shoppers and business owners. Engage with the community to find out what they think would help to improve safety in the area; and
- Work with the business community when planning events in order to leverage the expertise of local business owners and to ensure local business owners are active participants.

7.5.3 Business engagement

An important recent development is the creation of a three-year Auckland Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA) between Immigration New Zealand, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) and Auckland Council. The focus of the partnership is to successfully attract and retain skilled migrants to Auckland with the understanding that this is "necessary to sustain and stimulate economic growth." The initiative outlines a plan to work collaboratively on shared priorities, sharing research and information as well as knowledge of best practice across regional, national and international settings. The establishment of such a partnership is indicative of the important role of migrants and their economic contribution. From Mayor Len Brown:

Skilled migrants have a critical role to play in Auckland's economy [and] strong relationships between the Auckland Council Group and government agencies are immensely important to making Auckland the economic powerhouse New Zealand needs us to be, and this agreement is a great example of that.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See:

<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/newseventsulture/OurAuckland/mediareleases/Pages/focusonmigrantscontributiontoaucklandeconomy.aspx>

The partnership signals an important step between ATEED and central and local government, and their capacity to “work together with businesses and social agencies, to support better economic and settlement outcomes for new migrants in Auckland” (ibid.). Although the primary focus of the RPA is the settlement and retention of migrants, migrant entrepreneurs could have an important role to perform in this partnership. Again, ongoing engagement with the local business community is important in order to better understand first, how to create opportunities for new migrants, and second, how to create opportunities for business owners who might benefit from a skilled and multilingual workforce.

Undoubtedly, this section of Dominion Road is known for its Chinese restaurants and many shoppers (Chinese and non-Chinese) visit the precinct because of the kind of food available there. This is an important point of difference that sets the area apart from other shopping centres across Auckland. Although this research revealed little consensus around the future branding and marketing of the area, its point of difference is certainly something that could be leveraged. To do so, however, requires sustained engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including residents, shoppers, business owners and land owners. Although these conversations are not on the immediate horizon, the precinct is currently acknowledging its place as a key location for celebrating Chinese New Year and the Chinese community with the installation of Chinese lanterns. The lanterns were requested by the Balmoral Chinese Business Association and were funded by the Albert-Eden Local Board through an Economic Development Grant.

This research has reported some tensions among business owners in the area, especially where there was not a shared language or their business practices differed. In some cases, this tension materialised as an unwillingness to join a business association. The creation of the recently formed Chinese association, however, is significant and potentially an important step toward greater understanding among business owners in the precinct and the possibility of working together toward common goals. The Albert-Eden Local Board could play an important function in this regard, supporting opportunities for engagement.

The following summarises the possibilities raised with respect to business engagement:

- Work together with local business associations to identify common goals and action plans;
- Create opportunities for local associations to work together, share their business experiences and identify common goals;
- Engage with the wider community about possible branding of the precinct in order to leverage the precinct’s distinct business advantage.

8.0 Conclusion

A number of dualisms emerged during the course of this research including, for example, the precinct's function as a shopping centre during the day and a food destination precinct at night; the precinct's capacity to provide non-Chinese patrons with good, 'authentic' Chinese food and Chinese patrons with a 'taste of home'; as well as the different business practices that emerged between the Chinese and non-Chinese business community. This is not to say, however, that the Balmoral shops is a retail centre whose business owners and customers can be divided into a range of oppositional categories. Indeed, the research overall gives us some insight into the complexities of the social, economic and spatial processes that occur within the Balmoral shops area of Dominion Road.

Collectively, this research tells us that in order to support local community and economic development, we need to first understand the communities who live, work and shop there, take the time to get to know them, communicate with them in ways they understand and develop trusting, reciprocal relationships. To do so involves putting into practice various principles, directives and initiatives from Auckland Council strategic documents and plans in order to create a space in which collaborative partnerships and active community participation are enabled to flourish. Community-led development and place-making can only occur with the active participation of all stakeholders, including Auckland Council and the local board, local business associations, the wider business community and local residents.

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