The impacts of COVID-19 on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau

Insights from available data

Independent Māori Statutory Board

Acknowledgements

The contributions of Tony Kake (Papakura Marae), Hector Kaiwai and Lance Norman (Te Whānau O Waipareira) are gratefully acknowledged. Assistance was also provided by Beverley Cassidy-MacKenzie (Auckland Business Chamber) and various staff members at Auckland Council and Auckland Unlimited.

Contents

Tables

Figures

Foreword

Kei aku whakatamarahi ki te rangi, kei aku whakateitei ki te whenua, nei rā te matihere o te aroha e rere atu nei ki a koutou.

Me pēwhea e kore ai e mihi ki ngā mate tuatini o te wā koutou te hunga kua wheturangitia haere, haere, haere, whakaoti atu.

Hoki mai ki a tātou te hunga ora, ngā urupā o rātou mā, e kōkiri whakamua ana ahakoa ngā aupiki me ngā auheke o te mate KOWHEORI-19 e pokepoke nei i te motu, tēnā koutou katoa.

This report commissioned by the Independent Māori Statutory Board (the Board) has shown that Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau have been significantly and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

The negative impacts on Māori are evident in a range of areas, including financial hardship, social and cultural disconnection, loss and/or reduction in employment and the increase in receipt of welfare support.

Since COVID-19 was first detected in Aotearoa in early 2020, its impacts have been most intensely felt in Tāmaki Makaurau, which is not only the major gateway for overseas visitors but also home to the highest number of Māori.

That makes this report both important and timely as we transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework, or Traffic Light System, as it is commonly termed.

While the report, by Sapere, was limited by the range and quality of available data and the ongoing and significant impacts of COVID-19, it clearly shows the negative impact it has had, and continues to have on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The lack of appropriate data also supports our ongoing emphasis on the need for more data specifically around the experience of Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau as this will help ensure evidence-based decisions are made in areas which impact Māori.

To best understand the impacts on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau the Board was keen to gain further insight into the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify areas requiring extra focus and support.

Worryingly, while the report provides valuable information about the effect of COVID-19 on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, it also indicates that the full impact is yet to be felt and that the cumulative effects are likely to be more severe over time.

I hope this report will prove useful to decision-making agencies as they consider the types of resources and support needed to help our communities adapt and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Encouragingly, the report notes the success of a 'By Māori For Māori' approach to service delivery and sees this as an opportunity to reshape our future using a Māori worldview, with more emphasis on the environment and the way we treat each other.

It also shows that opportunities exist in the training and education of our young people and in areas of cultural revitalisation, while emphasising the key role Māori play in industries such as manufacturing, construction and retail that will be vital to the nation's recovery and ongoing management of COVID-19.

While everyone has been impacted by COVID-19, history shows that Māori suffer more than most during pandemics such as the one we now face, and while this report reaffirms that fact, it also provides encouragement as we all work towards a brighter future for Tāmaki Makaurau.

Ngā manaakitanga

David Taipari
Chairman
Independent Māori Statutory Board

Executive summary

We scanned available literature and made contact with a number of interested parties to get a sense of the impacts of COVID-19 on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Consistent with past shocks, Māori are significantly and disproportionately impacted by COVID, across a range of areas from financial hardship, social disconnection, employment losses or reductions and welfare receipt.

For most of the impact areas, we are unable to directly assess Tāmaki Makaurau effects, but can infer from other data the likely magnitude.

In some cases the impacts in Tāmaki Makaurau were worse than elsewhere (e.g. as Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau were already negatively represented in benefit receipt, or in industry sectors that felt the impact of COVID more harshly than others), but Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau were not necessarily always the hardest hit (e.g. Pasifika saw the greatest rise in Jobseeker Support numbers in Tāmaki Makaurau).

COVID exacerbated, rather than caused a lot of the problems, so continued interest is needed, especially in the south and west of the region.

While providing a relatively wide array of views into COVID impacts, the analysis was limited by the availability of data. The work emphasised the dearth of Māori-related data focussed on Tāmaki Makaurau, especially for businesses.

The actual extent of COVID impacts is yet to be fully seen, as Tāmaki Makaurau is still in lockdown. It will be another nine months to a year (assuming no further actions such as lockdowns or new outbreaks) before the impacts of the most recent episode can be calculated with any surety.

The impacts of the most recent episode are likely to be more severe than the previous episode/s due to the extended period of the lockdown in Tāmaki Makaurau and the cumulative effects of shocks in reasonably close proximity.

Some opportunities presented themselves from COVID, mainly around the possibility of a reset of economic and social models and a focus on the role of kindness and Te Taiao in the 'new society.' Capitalising on a youthful population and training and employment prospects in the transition to post-COVID, as well as cultural revitalisation are other opportunity areas.

The innovation and agility of a 'for Māori by Māori' approach performed well in Tāmaki Makaurau and could provide a method for service delivery that replaces the monolithic status quo and improves for Māori and the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand.

1 Introduction

COVID-19 (COVID) is a worldwide pandemic, first detected in Aotearoa in early 2020. Tāmaki Makaurau is the largest region (population-wise) in Aotearoa and acts as the major 'gateway city' for overseas visitors.

Tāmaki Makaurau is also home to the highest number of people who identify as Māori. Thus, in the context of a communicable disease, the experience of Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau around COVID is important. As a result the Independent Māori Statutory Board (the Board) commissioned an analysis of COVID-19 impacts on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

This report summarises available data on such impacts, drawing on publicly available sources. This analysis was neither designed, nor purports to, represent a complete or comprehensive picture of COVID impacts. Rather, it provides glimpses of change that contribute to advancing impact understanding.

2 Scope and approach

While the core of the analysis is economic in nature, we took a reasonably broad purview with both market and non-market insights included. The broad intended structure of the work is described below.

Market settings:

- Labour market/employment
- Goods and services provision (i.e. businesses)
- Housing
- Household operation costs (e.g. electricity, food, transport, heating)

Non-market settings:

- Social inclusion and cohesion, including whānau impacts
- Cultural identity and expression, including practice of tikanga
- Leisure possibilities

The availability of data was not uniform across all of the categories above. The amount of data is greatest where government agencies collect data for administrative reasons (e.g. labour and goods markets). On the other hand, there is relatively little data on the practice of tikanga and leisure activities that Māori undertake that have been impacted by COVID.

The general approach is observational rather than determinative. That is, in the main we do not attempt to construct measures of impact through primary research. Instead, we present existing data and information that has been developed elsewhere and provide commentary around the meaning or insights that can be drawn from the observations.

Where data on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau was available, direct observation was used, but for the majority of the interest categories, it was a case of adapting or inferring impacts from other data (e.g. inferring regional impacts in Tāmaki Makaurau from national data and Māori impacts from regional data). Where possible, we compare the COVID experience between Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau with non-Māori and with Māori outside of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Timing issues limit the degree to which we can be definitive. In particular, the so-called 'Delta' variant of COVID is still present in Tāmaki Makaurau. At the time of writing, a form of lockdown remains in place for the top of the North Island, with Tāmaki Makaurau experiencing the most stringent conditions.

This timing issue means that, while there is a reasonable amount of material on impacts from the initial relevant periods of COVID (i.e. March-June 2020, August-October 2020, February-March 2021), we are yet to see the entire impacts of the Delta variant. As a result, there is a dearth of studies to draw on covering the current situation.

Furthermore, the extended nature of the lockdown in Tāmaki Makaurau and the different nature of the government response to Delta makes it difficult to extrapolate prior impacts to the present situation.

[1] *We undertook a literature scan, made contact with key agencies and organisations and some quantitative analysis of administrative data.*

3

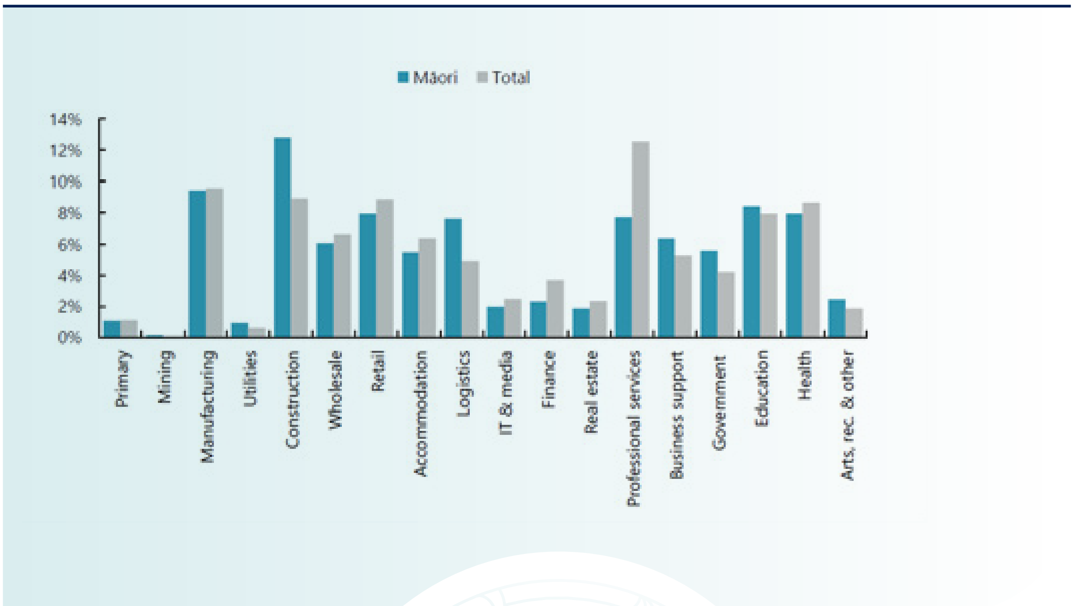
Insights show a reasonably consistent negative impact on Māori

3.1 COVID exacerbated already negative labour market outcomes

3.1.1 Industry composition exposes Māori labour force in Tāmaki to strongly negative impacts

At the national level, Māori are more likely than non-Māori to work in construction, but far less likely than non-Māori to work in professional services (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 | National industry employment share by ethnicity



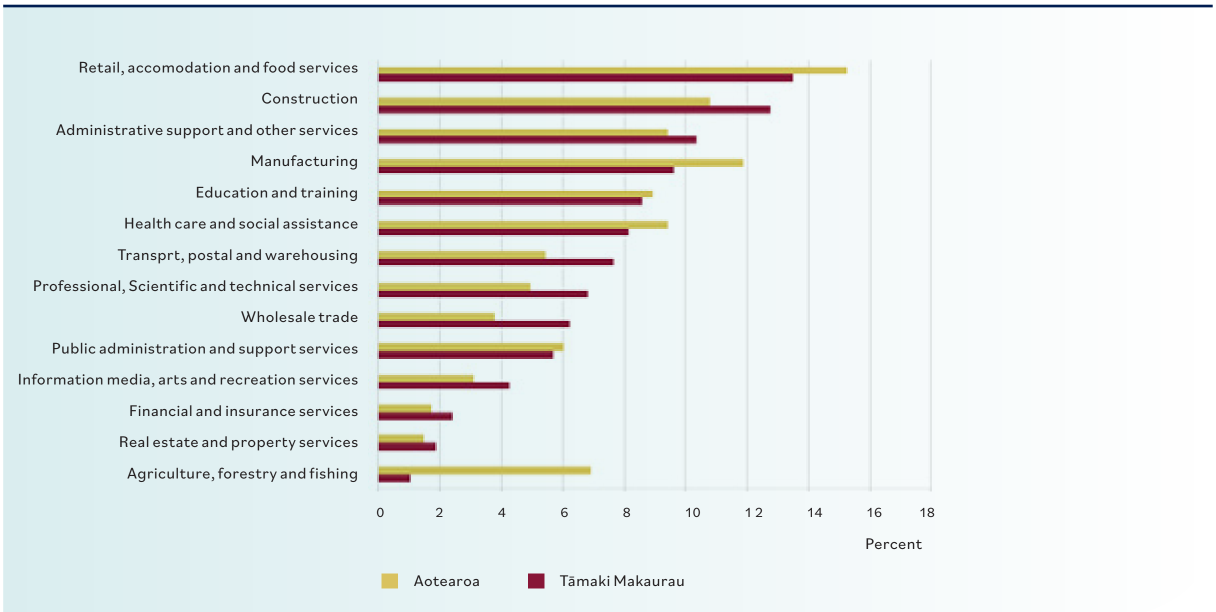
Source: Sense Partners (2021)

[2] *This is commonly known as the 'with and without' approach, which differs from the 'before and after' approach.*

Exposure to manufacturing, retail trade and construction sectors harmful to Māori

Focusing on Māori only, the Māori labour force in Tāmaki Makaurau differs from the Māori labour force in the rest of Aotearoa. The most obvious difference relates to the role of primary industry. For instance, unlike the rest of the country where agriculture makes up a major proportion of Māori employment, in Tāmaki Makaurau, agriculture is responsible for the smallest share of Māori employment (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 | Industry shares of Māori employment, Māori



Source: BERL (2021)

Manufacturing is also an industry where the share of employment in Tāmaki Makaurau is noticeably below the comparable national share of Māori employment. On the other hand, Tāmaki Makaurau has greater Māori employment shares than nationally in high-value service-based industries such as financial, insurance, real estate and property services.

The top employing industry for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau is retail, accommodation and food services. Construction is the next largest. These two sectors felt the impacts of COVID lockdowns heavily, given the inability to effectively work from home. Manufacturing is also a major employer of Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau and faced substantial constraints from COVID, according to analysis conducted following the first outbreak during March – June 2020.

Figure 3 shows that the negative impact on employment in key sectors for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau was more pronounced than was the case for Māori nationally, especially in the accommodation and food services sector (Te Puni Kokiri, 2020a). Reflecting the composition of Māori employment in Tāmaki Makaurau, the opposite is the case for the primary sector, which was important to Māori nationally, but much less so in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Figure 3 | Five most impacted industries by lost jobs - Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau (left hand column) versus Māori nationally (right-hand column)

Source: Te Puni Kokiri (2020a)

The authors of that paper note the issue of timing, suggesting that while they use the information from June 2020 as the 'peak' month for analysis, in practice the peak could actually be two to three months later, depending on industry resilience, amongst other things.

Māori usually take longer to rebound from labour market shocks

Further, the authors note that Māori historically suffer and are subject to worse outcomes from major economic disruptions, and they subsequently face a number of challenges reengaging in the labour market after those shocks. In particular:

- previous economic shocks show that unemployment takes three to six quarters longer to return to 'baseline' for Māori than non-Māori (due to a greater proportion of lower skilled and temporary workers and less attachment to the labour market)
- construction and retail might see noticeable negative impacts in the short-term, but in the medium-term, government initiatives around 'shovel-ready' projects for construction and domestic consumption in retail at least partially making-up for lost tourism expenditure
- impacts from shocks are both immediate in the form of lower income, but also in future due to wage penalties as a result of separation from the labour market.

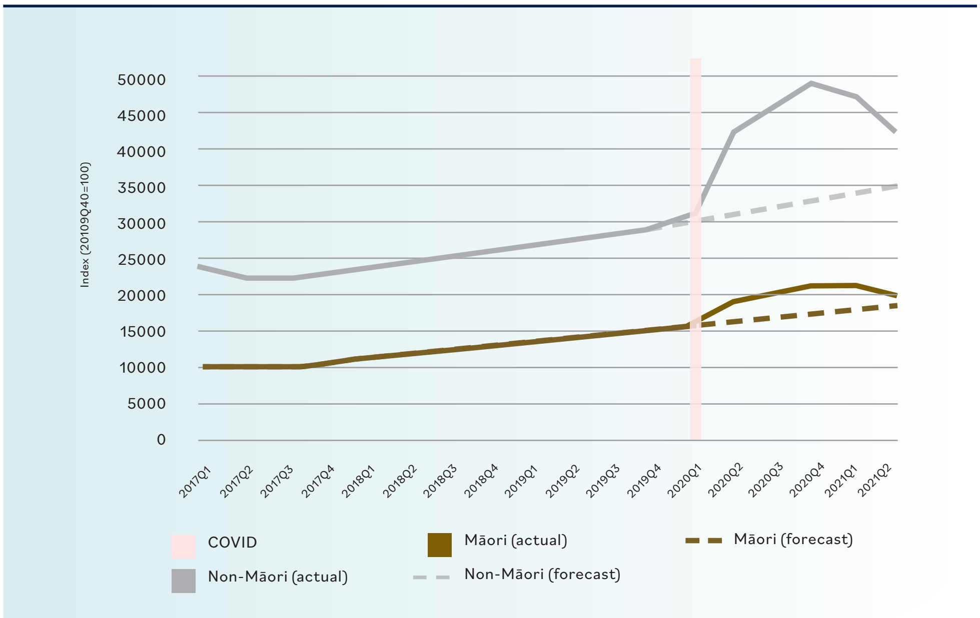
3.1.2 Jobseeker Support data indicate Māori not necessarily most badly impacted…

Jobseeker Support (JS) data is often used to provide insights on unemployment, which New Zealand and international evidence shows is strongly related to wellbeing. We use data supplied by the Ministry of Social Development on benefit receipt and other published views to glean relevant insights.

We start by comparing changes in the number of Māori JS recipients in Tāmaki Makaurau with the number of non-Māori JS recipients in Tāmaki Makaurau before and after COVID. Our measure of change is the difference between actual JS recipient numbers and 'expected' JS recipient numbers in a no-COVID world.

Figure 4 shows the proportional impact on Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau was less than for non-Māori. From the start of COVID in the first quarter for 2020 to the peak in the fourth quarter of 2020, the number of Māori JS recipients in Tāmaki Makaurau support increased by 38 per cent, compared to a non-Māori increase of 54 per cent. A possible explanation for this is the large proportion of Māori (relative to the total number of Māori) already on JS support.

Figure 4 | Māori and Non-Māori Jobseeker Support recipients in Auckland



Source: Ministry of Social Development (2021), Sapere analysis

Precise explanations for lower relative impacts are beyond the scope of this paper, but the lower proportional impact observation is curious given that Māori have traditionally fared worse than others in previous recessions (Te Puni Kokiri, 2009). The basic finding of our analysis was similar to two other examinations, who both provided possible reasons for the lower growth in the number of recipients of JS for Māori than non-Māori.

One explanation was that Māori are overrepresented in industries that have previously been hit hardest by economic shocks/recessions, but that such industries have rebounded well from the initial bouts of COVID (ANZ, 2021). The second possible explanation is the overrepresentation of Māori in benefit receipt numbers. Despite their lower growth in grants, Māori received 30 per cent of the grants during the COVID-19 period, but they only represent 14 percent of the working-age population (Ministry of Social Development , 2021).

[3] *Expected JS receipt is estimated using a simple linear trend.*

3.1.3 ...but from a population perspective the greater relative impact on Māori is clear

Another view of the impacts can be taken from a population perspective. Consistent with the observation above, there was a smaller impact in absolute terms on Māori relative to non-Māori. However, observing the proportion of the total ethnic population figures, Māori experience greater increases across all periods. This observation suggests that although Māori, relative to their non-Māori counterparts, have a lower absolute increase in JS receipt during COVID, they are still disproportionately affected by COVID.

Table 1 | The deviation from forecasted rates of Jobseeker Support recipients for Māori and non-Māori

	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1	2021 Q2
Māori	204	2,389	3,455	4,042	3,156	1,276
Non-Māori	951	10,501	13,019	14,881	12,799	7,746
Māori (as a proportion of all Māori)	0.1%	1.2%	1.8%	2.1%	1.6%	0.6%
Non-Māori (as a proportion of all Non-Māori)	0.1%	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%

Source: Ministry of Social Development (2021), Sapere analysis

3.1.4 More disaggregated data highlights areas of interest in South and West Auckland, though Māori JS receipt in those areas is not major driver of growth.

To get a finer-grained view of impacts, we examine data on benefit receipt at the local board level. We start with a simple match between local boards with the highest Māori-population proportions, and local boards with the highest proportion of people receiving the JS benefit.

Table 2 shows that there is significant overlap between those local boards that have a high Māori population share and boards with high JS benefit receipt (those local boards in bold are common to both lists).

The overlap aligns with the common view that South and West Auckland are key areas of focus for actions to address problems and overcome inequalities. Franklin is the only board with a high Māori population share but not a corresponding large JS receipt share), while Great Barrier/Aotea, Waiheke and Whau has a large JS receipt share but not a large Māori share of population.

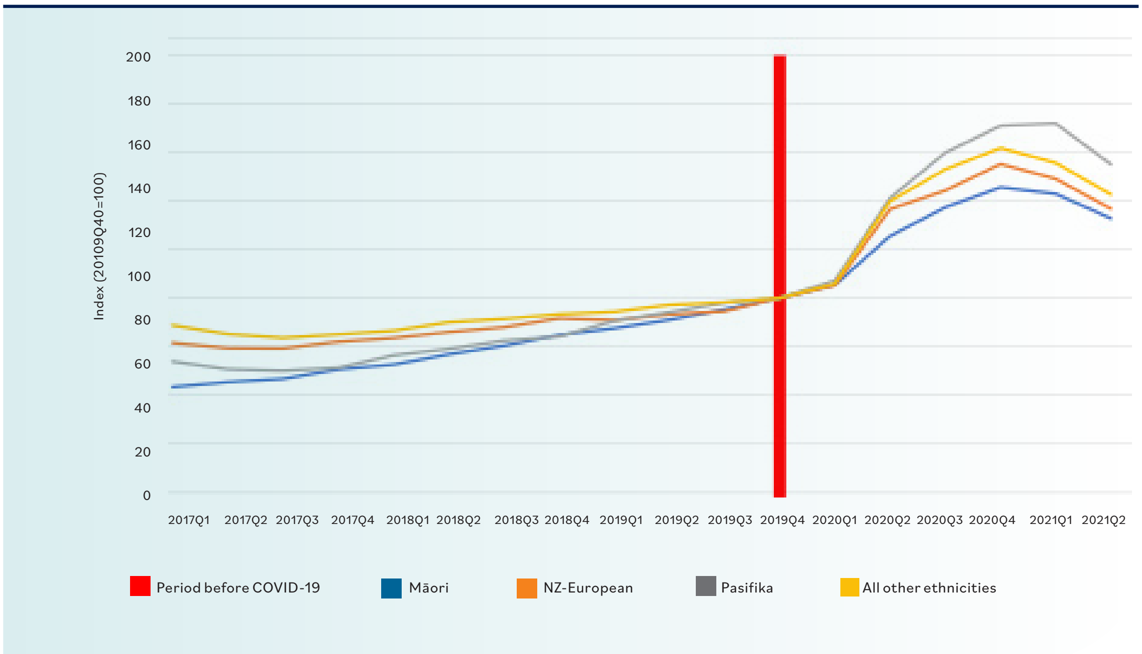
Table 2 | Local boards with highest Māori population and Jobseeker Support receipt shares (highest to lowest)

Boards with highest Māori population share	Boards with highest JS receipt
Manurewa	Manurewa
Henderson - Massey	Māngere - Ōtahuhu
Papakura	Papakura
Ōtara - Papatoetoe	Henderson - Massey
Māngere - Ōtahuhu	Ōtara - Papatoetoe
Franklin	Maungakiekie - Tamaki
Maungakiekie - Tamaki	Great Barrier/Aotea, Waiheke and Whau

Source: Ministry of Social Development (2021), Sapere analysis

Figure 5 shows the aggregate number of JS recipients across all 21 local boards, split by ethnicity for all those who indicated an ethnicity. The data is indexed to the last quarter of 2019 (2019 Q4), which was the most recent period prior to COVID. Pasifika had the greatest increase post-2019 Q4. Māori had the smallest increase since 2019 Q4, however it is still significant at around a 40 per cent increase at the peak.

Figure 5 | Jobseeker Support receipt by ethnicity, all boardsand non-Māori

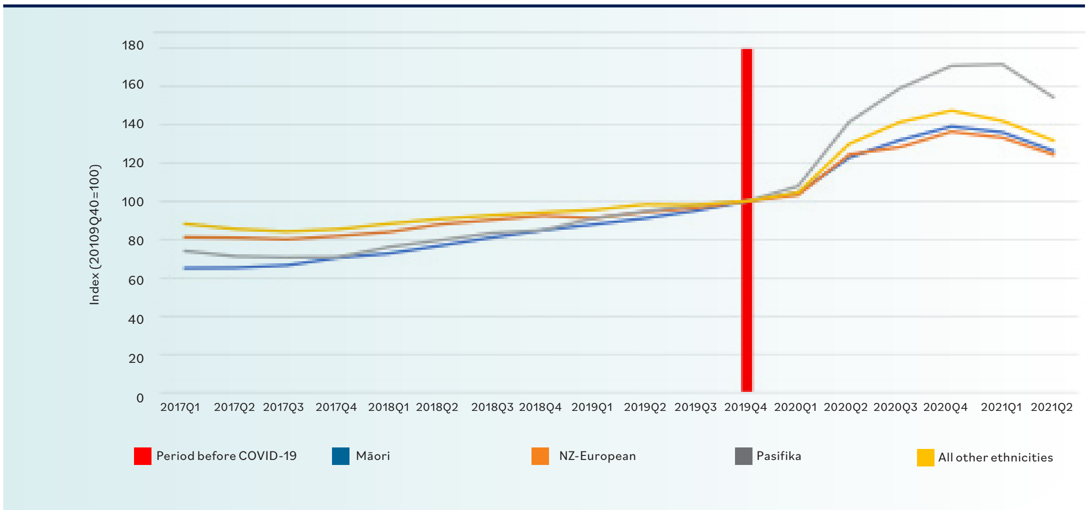


Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis


Renata
PAPAKURA
MARAE
24

Figure 6 shows the same breakdown, but only for those local boards with high Māori population shares. Again, Pasifika saw the greatest change since 2019 Q4. In these the South and West local boards, the change in Māori JS receipt was slightly above that for NZ European, and the rate of growth at the peak was slightly below the Māori change across all boards. The latter suggests that Māori in other boards are driving the rise in JS receipt more than in high-population share boards.

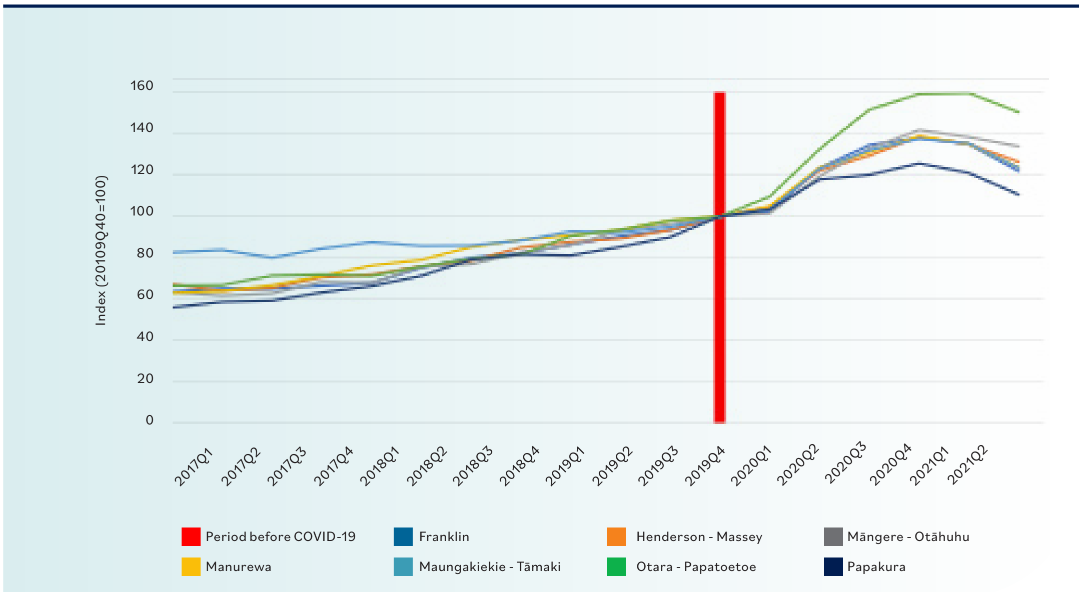
Figure 6 | Jobseeker Support receipt by ethnicity, boards with high Māori population shares



Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

Figure 7 provides a board-level view for Māori only in those boards with a high Māori population share. The big driver is in the Otara – Papatoetoe local board area, which saw an increase in Māori receipt of JS of around 60 per cent at the peak. Papakura is responsible for the lowest change in the COVID period, which was around 25 per cent above pre-COVID levels at the peak and only 10 per cent above pre-COVID levels for the latest data under study (2021 Q4) shares (highest to lowest)

Figure 7 | Jobseeker Support for Māori only, boards with high Māori population shares



Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

3.2 Business impacts less clear, but potentially material

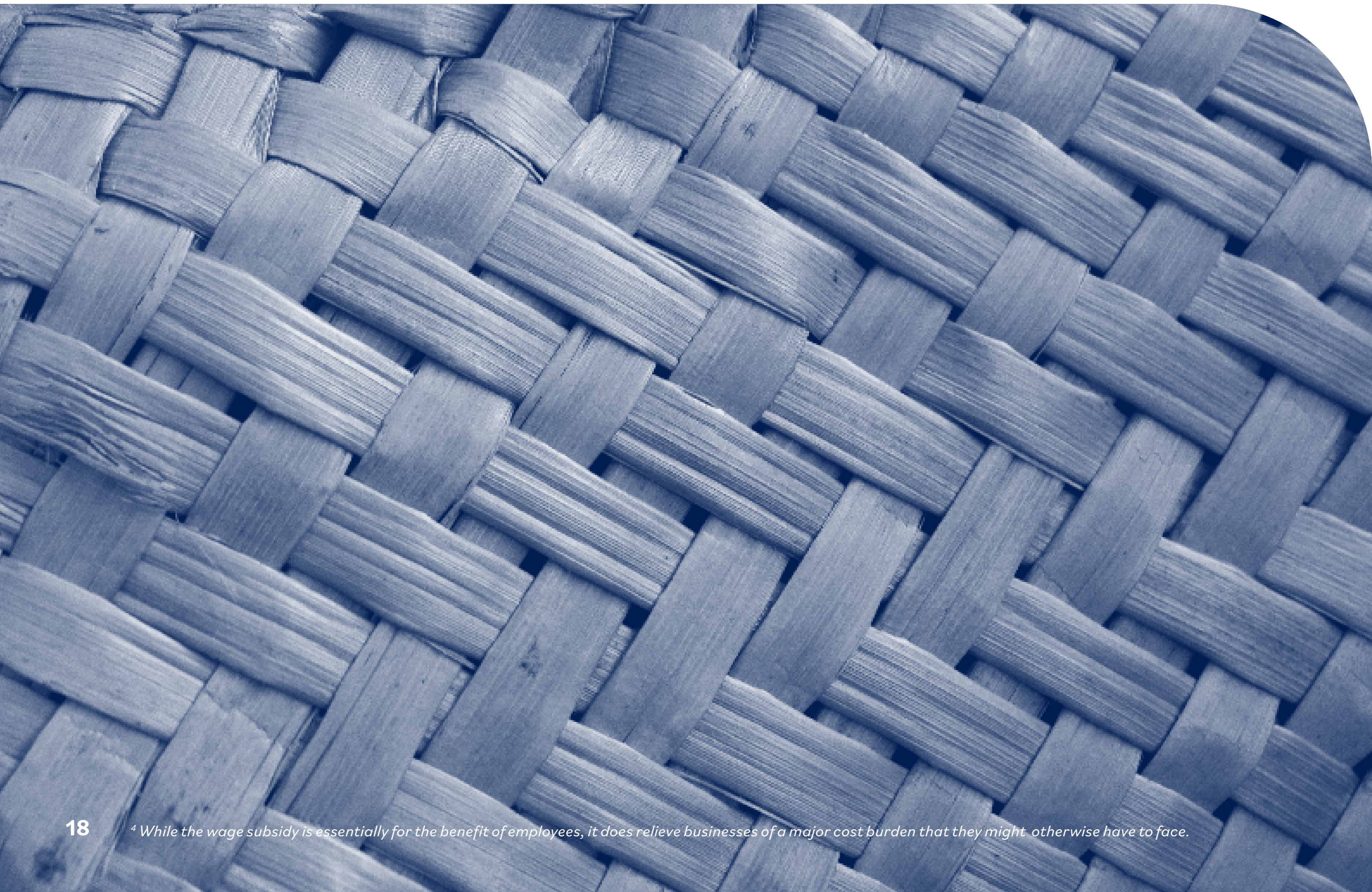
Information on Māori businesses in general is improving, but still relatively sparse. Tāmaki Makaurau-specific business information is even rarer. Thus, we are largely left to indirect observations and inference. We look at business impacts through wage subsidy receipt and business closures/liquidation measures.

3.2.1 Wage subsidy receipt impacts consistent with employment data – Māori firms are over-exposed to highly impacted sectors

Data on wage subsidy receipt is dated and partial, given the purposes of this report. The data relates to May 2020 and is not broken down by region or ethnicity. We use the data in an illustrative sense. Figure 8 shows the industry share for the total number of wage subsidy applications and the total value of wage subsidies provided to businesses.

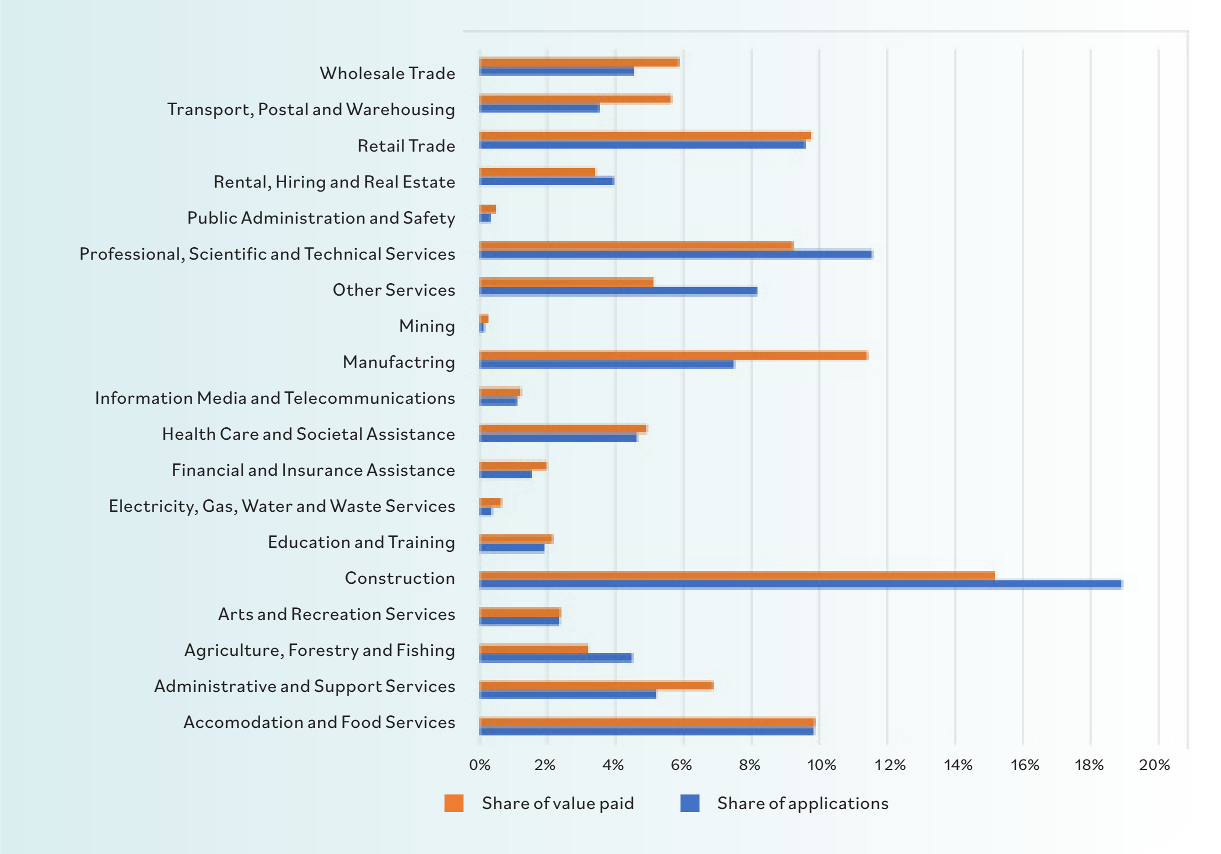
The figure shows that construction, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing were prominent in terms of applications and the value paid out, though there is some difference in the relative size of the ‘average’ support provided. For instance, construction was responsible for a share of application numbers that exceeded its share of the total value of wage subsidies paid. The opposite was true of manufacturing, which could suggest a major difference in the size of businesses (i.e. manufacturing firms have more employees than those in construction).

Recall that those industry sectors were important to Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau from an employment perspective and also experienced the largest impact in terms of job losses. Business Demography data also confirms that construction was the dominant industry for Māori-owned businesses in 2019-20, with manufacturing and professional services also significant (Te Puni Kokiri, 2020b) .



[4] While the wage subsidy is essentially for the benefit of employees, it does relieve businesses of a major cost burden that they might otherwise have to face.

Figure 8 | Wage subsidy application and value shares by industry



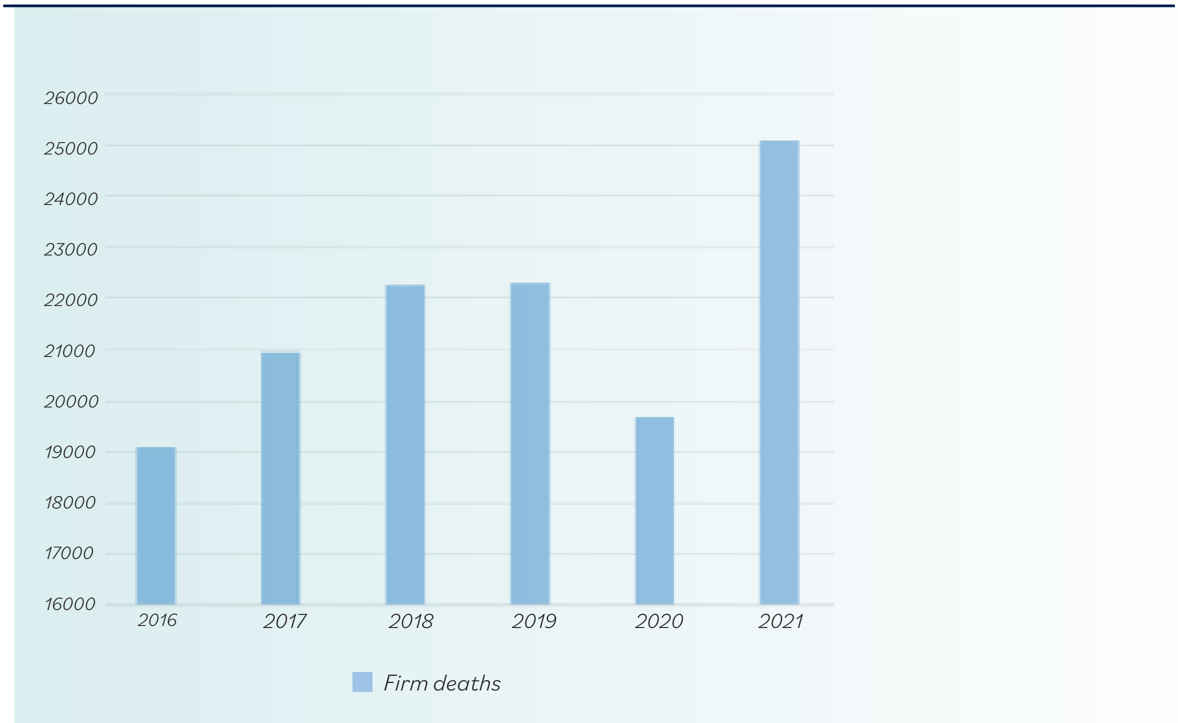
Source: Ministry of Social Development (2020)

3.2.2 Data on business closures/liquidations lacks specificity, but hints at negative impacts

Business closures and/or liquidations give a sense of the extent to which stresses as a result of COVID were such that operations were ceased. No Māori-specific data is available, so again we rely on inference to estimate impacts. While there may be non-COVID reasons for firm closures (e.g. partnership dissolution, relocation of busines out of the region), for tractability reasons, we use data on firm deaths as a proxy for business closures.

Figure 9 shows the number of firm deaths in the Tāmaki Makaurau region between 2016 and 2021. The data is at February for each year, so the 2021 year incorporates only the 2020 (first) phase of COVID. Nevertheless, the large jump in firm deaths for 2021 is noticeable. All else equal, we would expect the rise in firm deaths to continue and be reflected in the 2022 data.

Figure 9 | Firm deaths, Tāmaki Makaurau Region



Source: NZ.Stat, Business Demography Statistics

Data on firm deaths alone provides only a partial picture. It is useful to also look at firm births to get a fuller understanding of firm dynamics and likely COVID-related business impacts. Figure 10 divides firm births by firm deaths from 2016-2021 as a measure of firm dynamics. If the number of births exceeds the number of deaths in a given year, the ratio is above one in value, while the opposite means the ratio is less than one. It follows that the ratio is one when the number of births is the same as the number of deaths.

Figure 10 plots the birth/death ratio for the total of the key sectors important to Māori, as well as for all industries in the region. Overall. The trend is downward-sloping, indicating that firm deaths have risen in the 2016-2021 period relative to firm births. In the case of manufacturing, the number of firm deaths in 2021 exceeded the number of firm births by almost 15 per cent.

The construction industry went from a position where the number of firm births was around 80 per cent higher than deaths in 2016 and 2017, to the situation in 2021 where firm births were around 44 percent above firm deaths.
Despite the retail trade ratio being below one for three of the years under study, in the latest year firm births outweighed firm deaths, pushing the ratio above one. Construction was the other industry that showed a ‘bounce back’ following periods where firm deaths rose relative to firm births. Both retail trade and construction are sectors where pent up demand is possible (i.e. expenditure is deferred rather than forgone completely), which could explain the apparent ‘bounce back.’

Thus, while it is reasonable to infer from the data that Māori firms in Tāmaki Makaurau have faced negative impacts from COVID, the overall picture is somewhat mixed. Again, data for the next year, which encompasses the longer and deeper lockdown endured in Tāmaki Makaurau would be more illuminating, though direct observation would remain elusive.

Figure 10 | Ratio of firm births and deaths, Tāmaki Makaurau

Source: NZ.Stat, Business Demography Statistics, Sapere analysis

Following the global financial crisis (GFC) in 2007-2008, analysis found that there was a large increase in business insolvencies in New Zealand following the onset of the GFC in 2008. The major reason for such a rise in business insolvencies was an increase in costs.

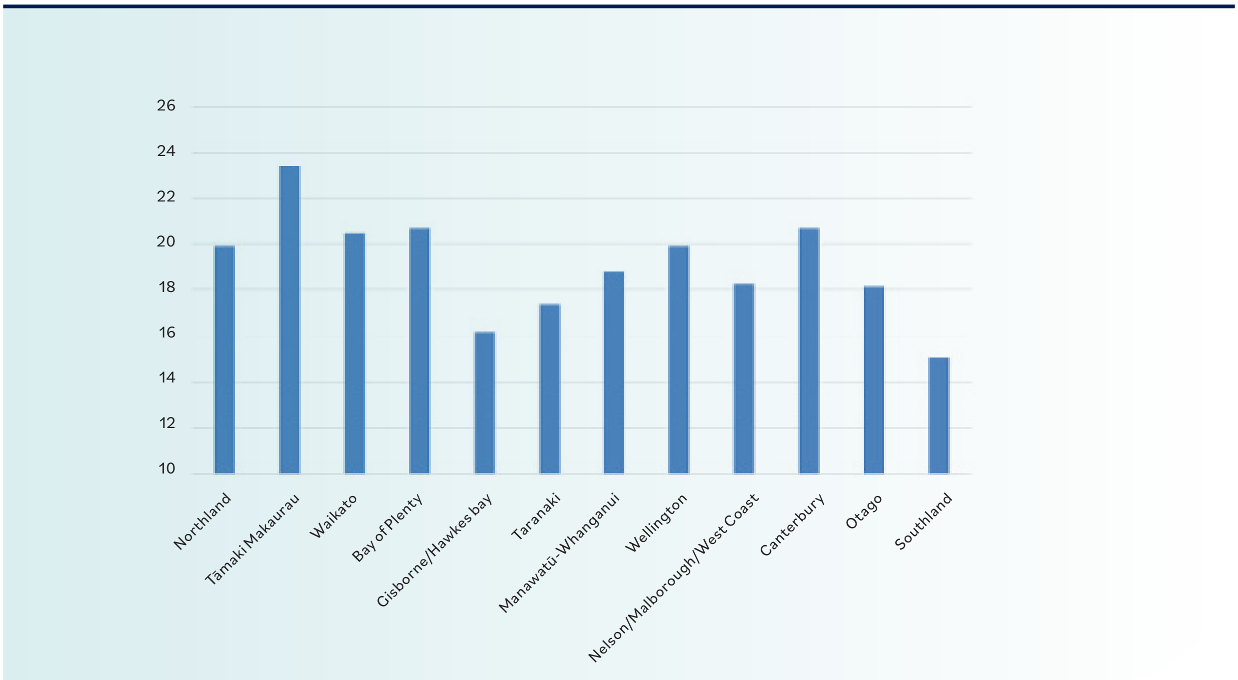
3.3 Housing

We were unable to obtain housing data specific to Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, so have to rely on more general regional data.

Housing in Tāmaki Makaurau already most expensive in country

Figure 11 plots the ratio of housing costs to household disposable income across all regions. The figure shows the significant burden that housing costs are in Tāmaki Makaurau. Households in Tāmaki Makaurau pay a larger share of their disposable income on housing than any other region, even though household disposable income in Tāmaki Makaurau is the highest in the country.

Figure 11 | Ratio of housing costs to household disposable income (Year ended June 2020)



Source: Stats NZ Household Economic Survey

Despite not having data specific to Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, inspecting the take-up of accommodation supplements, which are a form of weekly housing support for people not in public housing who may or may not be receiving a benefit, provides insight on housing difficulties.

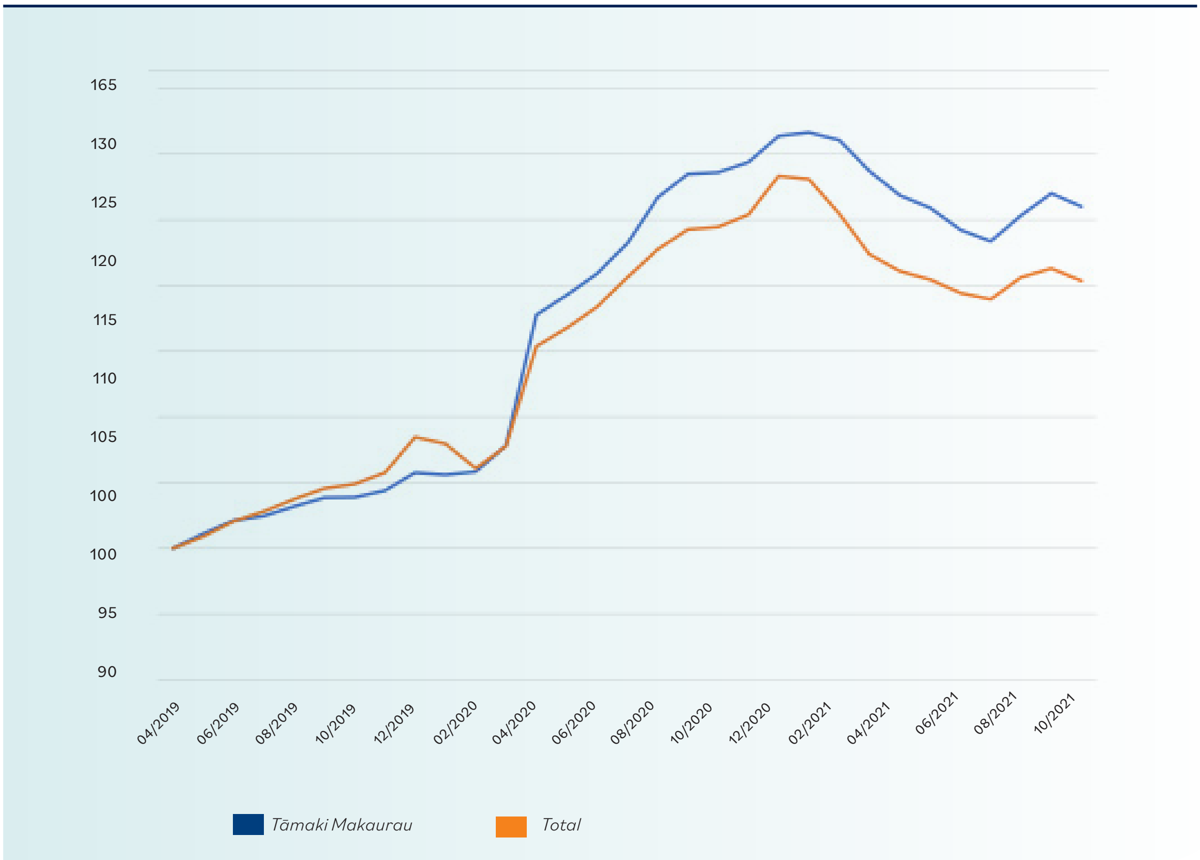
Payment of accommodation supplements in Tāmaki Makaurau grew faster than elsewhere

Figure 11 plots the change in the numbers of accommodation supplements paid, in the Tāmaki Makaurau region and for the rest of Aotearoa. The values are indexed to April 2019 (i.e. the monthly value in 2019 equals 100, with percentage changes from that time shown relative to the start point of 100).

It is clear from the chart that something of a structural break occurred around March-April 2020, which coincided with the first COVID outbreak. That is, the periods following March 2020 differs markedly from the preceding periods. The upward trend that started in March-April 2020 continued until early 2021, at which time growth turned negative, until August 2021 (the time of the Delta outbreak). Clearly, additional housing support was required following the onset of COVID and that need has largely continued.

Also of note is that the growth in Tāmaki Makaurau was below that for elsewhere up until the structural break, and from then on has been continually above the changes in the rest of the country. The gap between the series appears to be widening.

Figure 12 | Accommodation Supplement take up growth



Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

Local board areas

Data at a local level for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNG) provides a different lens through which to view housing impacts from COVID. The most readily available data is for the quarter ended 30 June 2021.

Table 3 lists the five local boards with the highest number of EH-SNG approvals and associated dollar value, as well as an indication of whether the measures have risen (ʌ) or gone down (v) relative to the March 2021 quarter. The five boards with highest application numbers/dollar values are the familiar South and West local boards discussed earlier. Of the five boards listed, three registered greater numbers than in the March 2021 quarter.

The five boards contained in the table also have the highest number of applicants on the housing register (those who are not currently in public housing who have been assessed as eligible, and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property). They also have the highest number of public housing tenancies across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Table 3 | Local boards ranked by EH SNG, top five, for June 2021 quarter

Board	Number of approvals	Value ($)
Māngere - Ōtahuhu	1,625 (ʌ)	$3.88m
Ōtara - Papatoetoe	1,508 (V)	$3.35m
Manurewa	1,011 (V)	$1.89m
Waitematā	722 (ʌ)	$1.22m
Papakura	617 (ʌ)	$1.28m

Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

By way of contrast, the local boards with the lowest recorded number of applications and associated dollar values have not been discussed previously. In addition, all but one of the boards recorded a drop in application numbers since the March 2021 quarter.

Table 4 | Local boards ranked by EH SNG, bottom five, for June 2021 quarter

Board	Number of approvals	Value ($)
Waiheke	Nil	Nil
Waitakere Ranges	45 (V)	$0.11m
Rodney	85 (Λ)	$0.12m
Kaipatiki	119 (V)	$0.18m
Whau	127 (V)	$1.28m

Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

Low Māori home ownership rates contribute to lower wellbeing

A September 2021 COVID update from the Salvation Army raised the following concerns in respect of housing impacts in Tāmaki Makaurau:

- Increased contact with whānau across the spectrum, from homeless/rough sleeping to homeowners
- Continued overcrowding and the need for bigger (4-5 bedroom) homes
- Lack of ability to house the homeless in the current lockdown, compared to the previous (2020) lockdown.

A further issue for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau is the clear association between housing tenure and wellbeing. This is particularly relevant given the relatively low Māori home ownership rates in Tāmaki Makaurau.

In 2018, the Māori home ownership rate in Tāmaki Makaurau is 42 per cent, which is not only below the average Aotearoa Māori rate but the lowest Māori home ownership rate seen across all rohe. For non-Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, the home ownership rate is 62 percent.

Not only does this low rate of ownership harm mental health/wellbeing (Whitehead & Walker, 2021), but also raises the prospect of whānau having to relocate away from Tāmaki Makaurau, with corresponding reduction in opportunities and choices.

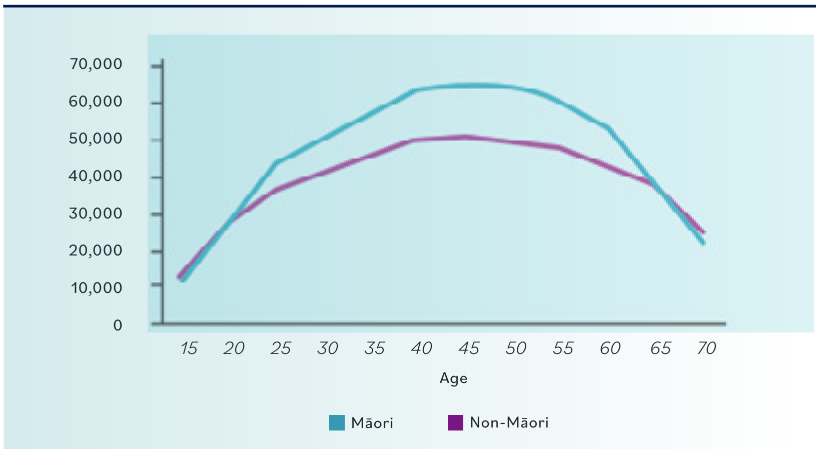
3.4 Household costs

A major part of a household's ability to meet rising costs is its income. Most costs rise uniformly (i.e. every household faces the same unit cost) but incomes do not. Ability to meet bills exacerbated by lower Māori incomes and higher regional costs.

3.4.1 Māori incomes lag non-Māori, Māori more reliant on welfare payments

There is a well-established and long-standing income gap between Māori and non-Māori in the crucial working age period, between late teens and retirement (see Figure 12).

Figure 13 | Income gap between Māori and non-Māori



Source | IStatistics NZ

Total Māori household income in Tāmaki Makaurau of $7.9 billion was largely due to $4.3 billion of wages and $2.2 billion in social security transfers. Social security and assistance benefits account for 28 per cent of total income for Māori, compared to only eight per cent for non-Māori.

Social security transfers have been increasing over the last few years for Māori as a result of working Māori receiving additional government support. This concept of 'the working poor' is highly relevant in COVID times, placing increasing pressure not just on beneficiaries, but also those Māori in vulnerable employment situations. The text box below, detailing experiences of a marae and a Māori service provider confirm the impact of COVID has fallen on 'in-work households' as well.

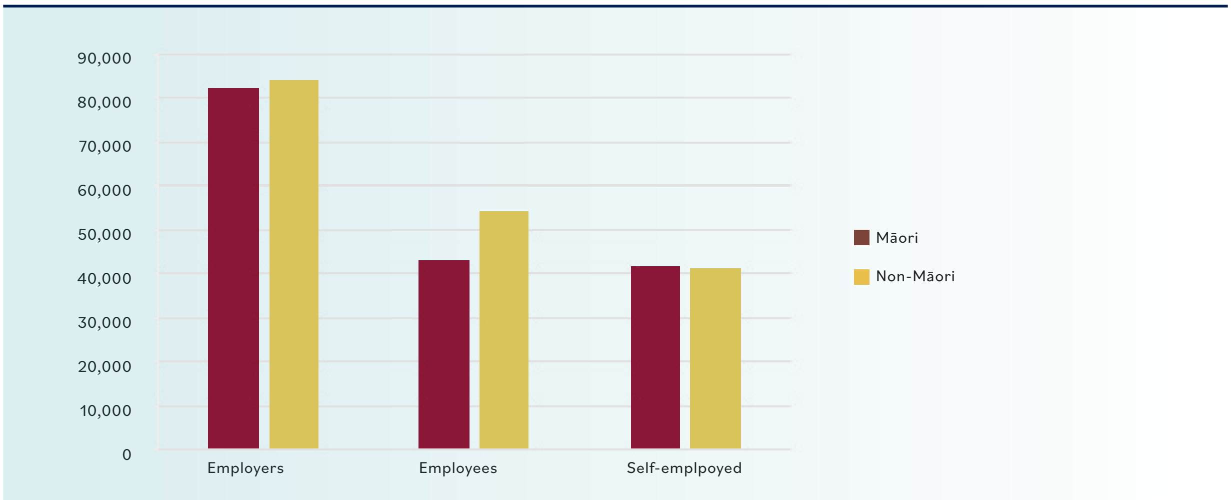
Māori need higher earnings or to reduce consumption

Total consumer expenditure in 2018 was $8.8 billion for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, while total Māori household income was $7.8 billion. The $1 billion shortfall effectively means Māori are earning too little, given that consumer expenditure includes day-to-day spending on food, clothes and other human needs. In contrast, non-Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau earn approximately $22 billion more than their consumer expenditure (BERL, 2021).

Māori employers in Tāmaki Makaurau on even footing with non-Māori, but employees are well behind

In terms of income by employment status, the biggest disparity occurs for employees (see Figure 14). The difference between Māori and non-Māori employees is substantial, with Māori earning $43K and non-Māori earning $54K.The younger Māori population is partially accountable for this income disparity, but not completely. The mean incomes for Māori employees in Tāmaki Makaurau is slightly less than for Wellington and slightly more than the South Island.

Figure 14| Tāmaki Makaurau Māori mean income by employment status, 2018



Source: BERL

Māori employers in Tāmaki Makaurau earn more than Māori employers in anywhere else in Aotearoa. Māori earn just below the non-Māori mean income in Tāmaki Makaurau ($84K). This is significantly higher than the second highest rohe, in terms of Māori employer income, with Waitaha Māori employers earning a whole $15K less. It highlights Tāmaki Makaurau Māori employers being ahead of the curve, in more high-value industries and with higher skill levels (BERL, 2021).

Self-employed Māori are on par with non-Māori self-employed in Tāmaki Makaurau, but they still earn half of what employers earn. Previous analysis showed that employers earn much higher incomes than self-employed across all ethnicities across Aotearoa. It is a reflection of the industries, skills and difficulties faced in building from a self-employed enterprise into one that offers employment to others (BERL, 2021).

3.4.2 Financial hardship

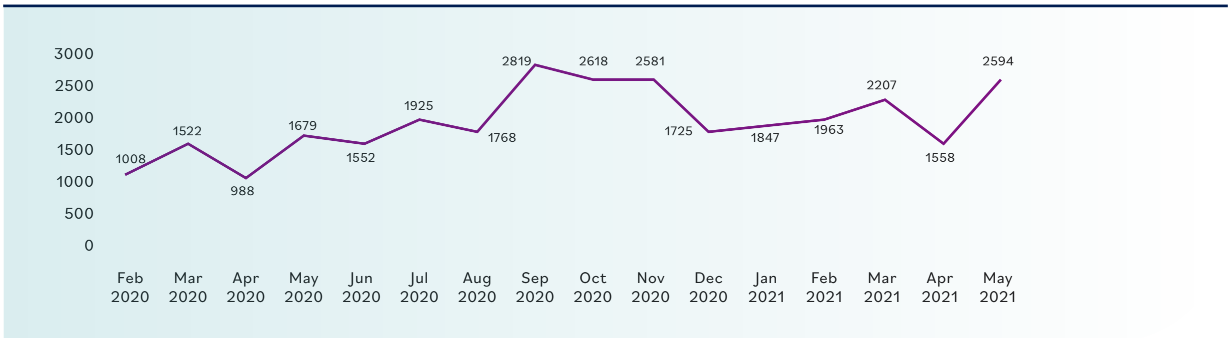
The number of contacts that people were making to different communications channels (phone, email, text) on the Money Talks helpline has been tracked by the Salvation Army since early 2020. This indicator helped illustrate the hardship people were facing as they sought free budgeting advice and were connected to a budgeting or financial mentoring service in their area, or other social supports they might need (Salvation Army, 2021b).

Contacts with money matters helpline surged in first COVID period...

The surge during the most restrictive lockdown period from March to May 2020 is clear. Contacts spiked significantly in September and decreased during the summer period. However, the most recent data in May 2021 indicates a return to the September to November 2020 levels.

The Money Talks team reported that in May 2021, the three biggest reasons for contacting their services were people seeking budgeting advice/support (34%), issues with a debt or debtor (19%) and people being concerned for the welfare of others (19%). These numbers seem to signal significant increases in those seeking assistance post-Covid-19 lockdowns that have remained steady and consistently higher than pre- Covid-19 (February 2020) numbers (Salvation Army, 2021b).

Figure 15 | Total monthly contacts to Money Talks



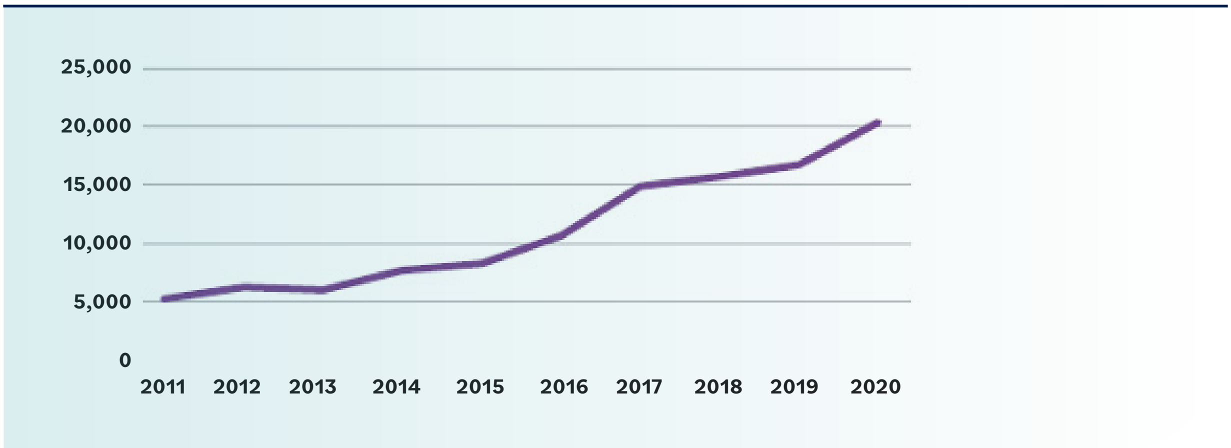
Source: Salvation Army (2021b)

...and Kiwisaver withdrawals continued, with an uptick in the 2020 year

Figure 16 shows the number of withdrawals from Kiwisaver due to hardship. According to the Inland Revenue Department, the standard for significant financial hardship includes people who cannot meet minimum living expenses; cannot pay the mortgage on the home they live in, and their mortgage provider is seeking to enforce the mortgage; need to modify their home to meet special needs or those of a dependent family member; need to pay for medical treatment for themselves or a dependent family member; have a serious illness; or, need to pay funeral costs of a dependent family member.

The chart shows that hardship has been growing in the last decade. The number of fund withdrawals has increased by 290 per cent between 2011 and 2020. Between June 2019 and June 2020, the number of withdrawals for financial hardship increased by 22 per cent, indicating some of the impacts of Covid-19 in that one-year period.

Figure 16 | Kiwisaver hardship fund withdrawals



Source: Salvation Army (2021b)

3.5 Non-market household impacts show widening disparities

COVID appears to have widened some existing disparities. The Salvation Army collects specific outcomes and measures, particularly for Māori wellbeing, to highlight results that best show improved social wellbeing outcomes and a reduction in the disparity between outcomes for Māori and non-Māori.

The Covid-19 pandemic's disruption has affected outcomes to varying degrees, though not all indicators include data covering the 2020 COVID timeframe. Outcomes were worse in some areas, deepening existing disparities, but there are also some positive signs. The extent to which the 2021 COVID timeframe impacts on outcomes is not yet known, but it is highly likely to be more negative (Salvation Army, 2021a).

Disparities worsened in areas such as housing need, hazardous drinking, illicit drug offending, prison sentencing and imprisonment rates. Housing is important as it is a major factor in turning around some other disparities and the level of housing need is growing, but the impact on Māori has increased faster, making up half of those on the public housing waiting list register in September 2020.

Nevertheless, there were slight (relative) improvements between 2019 and 2020 around student achievement, youth unemployment and student engagement, though significant disparities still persist and it is difficult to conceive of COVID-related explanations for the changes.

Table 5| Māori-non-Māori inequality indicators collected by the Salvation Army

Indicator	Measure	Outcome 2015 Māaori	Outcome 2015 Non-Māaori	Outcome 2019 Māaori	Outcome 2019 Non-Māaori	Outcome 2020 Māaori	Outcome 2020 Non-Māaori	Ratio 2015	Ratio 2019	Ratio 2020
Teenage pregnancies	Pregnancies of 15 to 19 year olds per 1000	58	21	41	14	38	14	2.8	2.9	2.8
Infant mortality	Infant deaths (<1 year old) for every 10,000 live births	48	38	70	36	59	36	1.2	1.9	1.7
Children in state care	Children in state care per 1000 children	10.1	2.5	12.5	3.2	11.3	2.9	4.0	4.0	3.9
Early childhood education enrolment	Proportion of under-5 year olds enrolled in ECE	54.7%	68.9%	56.7%	68.2%	N/A	N/A	0.8	0.8	N/A
Student engagement	Stand downs per 1000 students	35.7	15	44	18	49	21	2.4	2.5	2.4
Student achievement	Proportion of school leavers leaving with less than Level 1 NCEA (2014-2019)	22.4%	7.9%	19.2%	7.8%	21.7%	9.0%	2.8	2.5	2.4
Youth offending	Overall offending rate by 12-to-16-year olds per 1000	16.0	3.3	11.6	2.4	9.0	1.9	4.9	4.9	4.8
Welfare support	Adults receiving a benefit as a % of population aged 18-64	23.4%	7.8%	23.0%	7.3%	26.4%	8.5%	3.0	3.2	3.1
Unemployment	Official unemployment rate	11.7%	4.4%	8.1%	3.5%	8.3%	4.0%	2.6	2.4	2.0
Youth unemployment	Proportion of 15-to-24-year olds NEET	20.8%	8.9%	18.6%	9.7%	19.4%	11.0%	2.3	1.9	1.8
Personal incomes	Average weekly personal income for those employed	$889	$1,050	$1,010	$1,218	$1,077	$1,211	0.8	0.8	0.9
Income distribution (2014-2019)	Proportion of adults in lowest three income deciles	35.8%	29.3%	34.8%	29.3%	35.1%	28.3%	1.2	1.2	1.2
Prison sentancing rates	Proportion of convicted 17-19 years who are imprisoned	12.4%	5.9%	9.9%	2.9%	8.8%	2.4%	2.1	3.5	3.6
Imprisonment rate	Number of people imprisoned- per 100,000 population	566	111	606	116	576	108	5.1	5.2	5.3
Recividism	Reimprisoned within 24 months of release	36.5%	31.6%	47.6%	38.8%	45.8%	36.3%	1.2	1.2	1.3
Hazardous drinking	Proportion of adult population as hazardous drinkers (2016-2020)	31.1%	19.1%	33.2%	17.8%	33.2%	18.9%	1.6	1.9	1.8
Illicit drug offending	People convicted of illicit drug offences per 1000 people	2.2	0.6	1.9	0.4	1.5	0.3	3.8	4.7	4.6
Demand for social housing	People on public housing register waiting list per 1000 population (Sep quarter)	1.8	0.5	7.9	1.8	12.5	2.6	3.4	4.5	4.9

Source: Salvation Army (2021a)

A note on the use of ratios: The indicators are assessed using ratios that aim to measure the extent to which Māori experience diverges from non-Māori on this indicator. A ratio of 1.0 means that Māori outcome is the same as for non-Māori. Ratios greater or less than 1.0 indicate the degree of disparity either positively or negatively depending on the type of indicator.

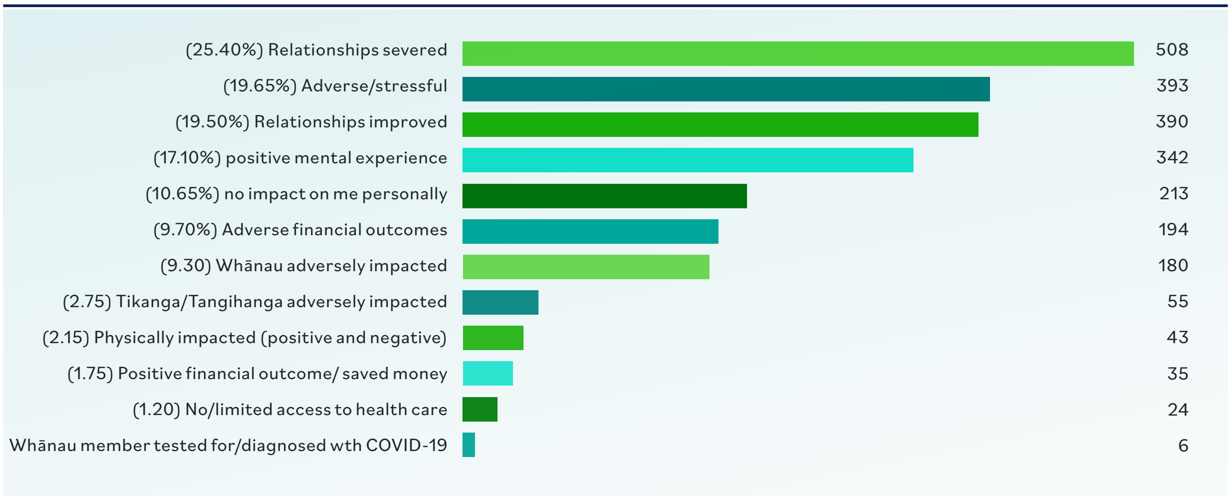
Strong negative wellbeing impacts expressed by survey respondents, with relationships suffering, adverse financial outcomes and inability to practice tikanga

A survey of 2,000 Māori people found that almost half the respondents indicated that COVID had put their relationships under stress or forced a severance of the relationship (see Figure 17). While some also indicated that their relationship had improved, overall the feeling was negative for Māori. The ability to practice tikanga or attend tangihanga and adverse financial outcomes were also reported (Houkamau, et al., 2021).

Kaumatua felt isolated and missed seeing mokopuna

Respondents reported feelings of sadness, social isolation, and frustration due to the fact they were cut off from their whānau, could not travel to visit them, and could not do their normal day-to-day activities with whānau they usually have close contact with. Some of the more poignant references were from kaumātua who could not see their mokopuna (Houkamau, et al., 2021).

Figure 17 | Survey responses to the question "How has the COVID pandemic impacted you and your whānau?"



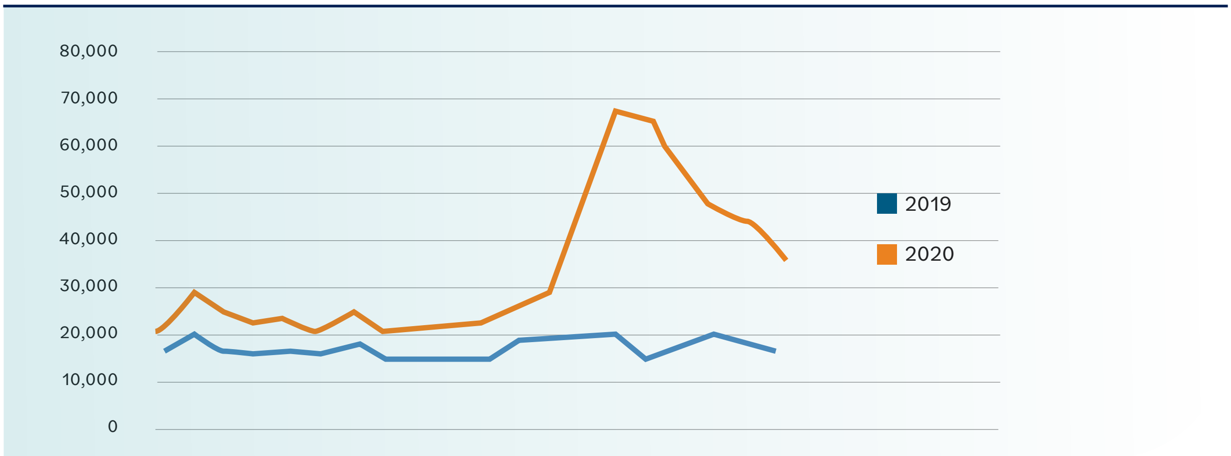
Source: Houkamau et al (2021)you and your whānau?"

Covid-19 has exacerbated already-high levels of food insecurity in Aotearoa

Research released in 2019 by the Auckland City Mission estimated that 10 percent of New Zealand's population was food insecure, a burden borne disproportionately by women, Māori and Pasifika. With such baseline levels of food insecurity prior to the pandemic, it is hardly surprising that this crisis has exacerbated challenges of access to food. The Auckland City Mission estimates that this food insecurity figure has now doubled to 20 per cent, or one million New Zealanders (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020).

Demand for emergency food assistance since the beginning of the Covid-19 lockdown skyrocketed, demonstrating the difficulties that many more households are facing in meeting their basic needs. Heightened food insecurity at this time was also evident in the spike in demand for emergency food grants from Work and Income. During lockdown in the three weeks from March 27th to April 17th, 2020, the number of Special Needs Grants issued for food by MSD more than doubled from roughly 30,000 to over 67,000 (see Figure 18). This demand is almost five times what it was this time last year (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020).

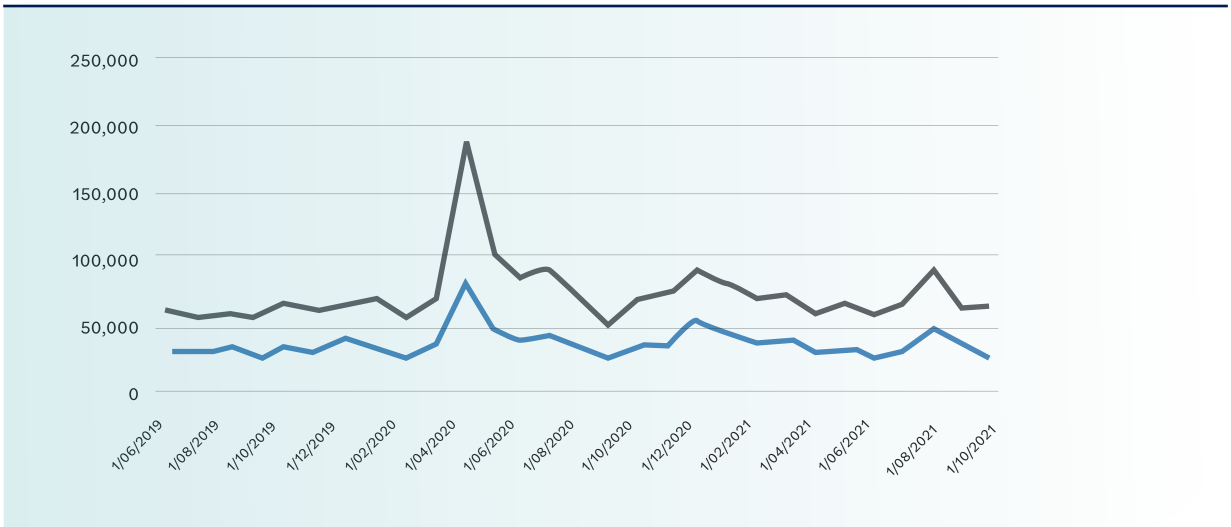
Figure 18 | Special needs grants for food, year-on-year comparison



Source: Child Poverty Action Group (2020)

The experience in Tāmaki Makaurau matched that nationally with similar sharp jumps March/April 2020 and August 2021 (see Figure 19). Over time we would expect the Tāmaki Makaurau impact to be more pronounced, given the extended lockdown period it is enduring.

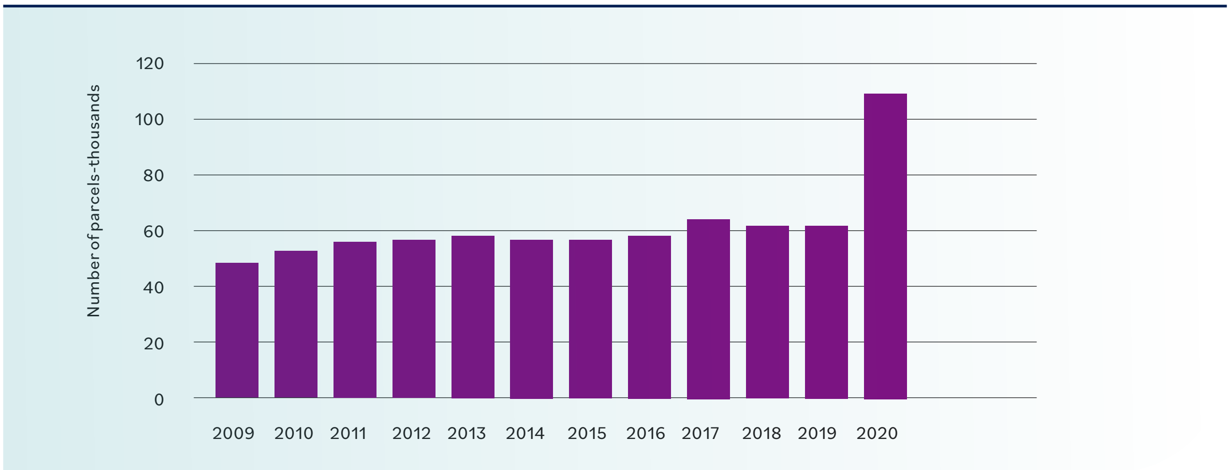
Figure 19 | Number of special needs grants for food, Tāmaki Makaurau versus national



Source: Stats NZ Covid-19 data portal, Sapere analysis

The number of food parcels delivered by the Salvation Army spiked significantly in 2020 after reasonably consistent demand in the preceding decade (see Figure 20).

Figure 20 | Food parcels delivered by the Salvation Army, 2009-2020

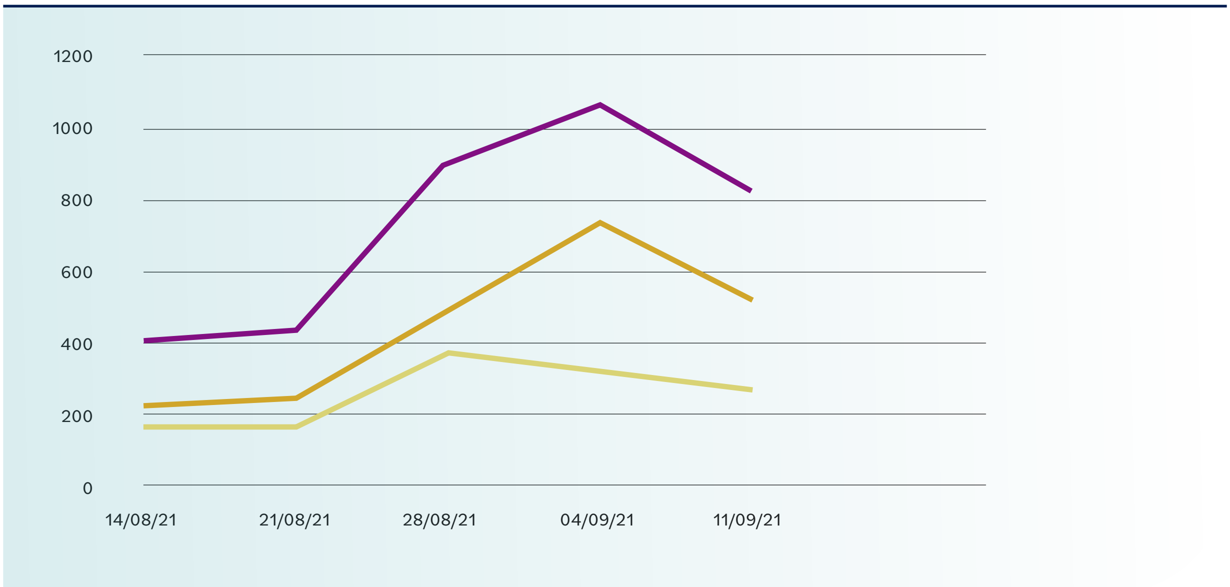


Source: Salvation Army 2021a

More recent data over a short period in the initial stages of the second lockdown shows the growth in food parcels being delivered in Tāmaki Makaurau. Figure 21 shows the Tāmaki Makaurau region total (the top dark line) as well as the regional total excluding South Auckland foodbanks (the middle, yellow line), and the South Auckland foodbanks (the bottom lighter shaded line) indicates a sudden surge in demand almost immediately following the August lockdown announcement (Salvation Army, 2021c). While a reduction occurred around two weeks later, the levels are still well above the first weeks of August.

The reduction in need from South Auckland after the week ending 28 August could be explained by the rapid response of marae and other Māori organisations in terms of support, including food. The text box that follows expands on that possibility.

Figure 21 | Food parcels delivered by the Salvation Army in Tāmaki Makaurau



Source: Salvation Army (2021c)

Those at the frontline report substantial impacts on need for assistance and support, from existing and new clientele, with innovative approaches to deliver

To follow is a summary of interviews with three personnel from Te Whānau O Waipareira and Papakura Marae on their experiences of dealing with COVID.

COVID impacts at 'the frontline': the experience of two providers identifies substantial impact, but COVID exacerbates existing need rather than fully creating new need.

While the available data provides glimpses into COVID-related impacts, there are obvious limitations. To get a sense of the practical impacts in close to real time we spoke with staff from Te Whānau O Waipareira and Papakura Marae to get their perspectives.

Both organisations provide a variety of services, including health, housing, social justice and education. COVID affects all of those core services and has resulted in some 'ancillary' services also being required.

The major impact on the organisations themselves has three dimensions:

Scale

the volume of services and support provided

Scope

the range of services and support provided, and to whom

System

the ways in which services and support are provided

The providers reported substantial increases in demand. One estimate was that direct whānau applications for assistance had increased by 150 per cent when compared to pre-COVID levels, with a more pronounced bump in the Delta stage. In the case of food parcels demand has tripled, relative to business-as-usual.

The growth in service volumes was driven by the introduction of new clients as well as a rise in the amount of support needed by existing whānau. In the case of new recipients, both providers reported coming into contact with whānau that have not needed assistance previously, broadly characterised as the 'working poor'.

That is, heightened need exists not just for those who receive benefits, but also those who experienced unemployment or a reduction in hours worked through COVID and struggled to make ends meet as a result.

Underpinning the volume growth has been an extension to the type of support provided. For instance, items such as petrol, nappies and other baby supplies, and automotive 'jumper leads' have been provided in the COVID period, which would not normally be the case outside COVID times. There was also an increased demand for financial and budgeting advice.

Unlike the initial outbreak periods, vaccinations were available in the delta stage, which also added to the scope and scale of services offered (e.g. setting up vaccination centres). To generalise, there is a three-pronged approach that is at the forefront of activities: testing, kai and vaccinations. Thus, health concerns have assumed top priority during COVID delta stage.

Provider representatives hastened to add that, in general, COVID did not necessarily cause the issues, but exacerbated them (e.g. food insecurity, overcrowding, health status). Where food parcels were received, whānau were able to release pressure by directing spending to other areas, but overall the need pre-dated COVID.

Different ways of providing services have also been applied. In particular, greater outreach has been activated, where rather than waiting to be approached by people, the providers take their offerings to potential clients in a mobile and proactive manner.

This approach required the use of personal protective equipment, hand sanitiser and a focus on safety, where these aspects were not previously a major part of the services offered. Nevertheless, the core values, objectives and missions of the organisations remained intact.

In addition, capacity was stretched and as a result resources were redeployed and activity reoriented towards the 'frontline' of the COVID battle. For instance, staff previously involved in research, policy or management are now involved in the vaccination, testing and provision of household needs. Staff with specialist (medical) skills have been employed in one organisation, but there are still opportunity costs associated with the emphasis on COVID-related activities.

Other points may include:

- **Immediacy and effectiveness was brought about through a 'do now, worry later' attitude (e.g. processes that usually took weeks or months were, at times, were completed beneficially in days)**
- **Frustrating to work in a 'top-down' system that is not fit-for-purpose or considered in its approach to Māori**
- **There is a sameness in respect of hotspots - whānau in South and West Auckland still have most need**
- **Other requests for support include electronic devices, kitchen appliances, heating/appliances, shoes, clothing and connectivity**
- **Not all impacts are negative; there was an immense sense of pride in the flexibility, agility, willingness and commitment to excellent service from entire organisation staff.**

4

A reset of economic and social models post-COVID provide opportunities relevant to Māori

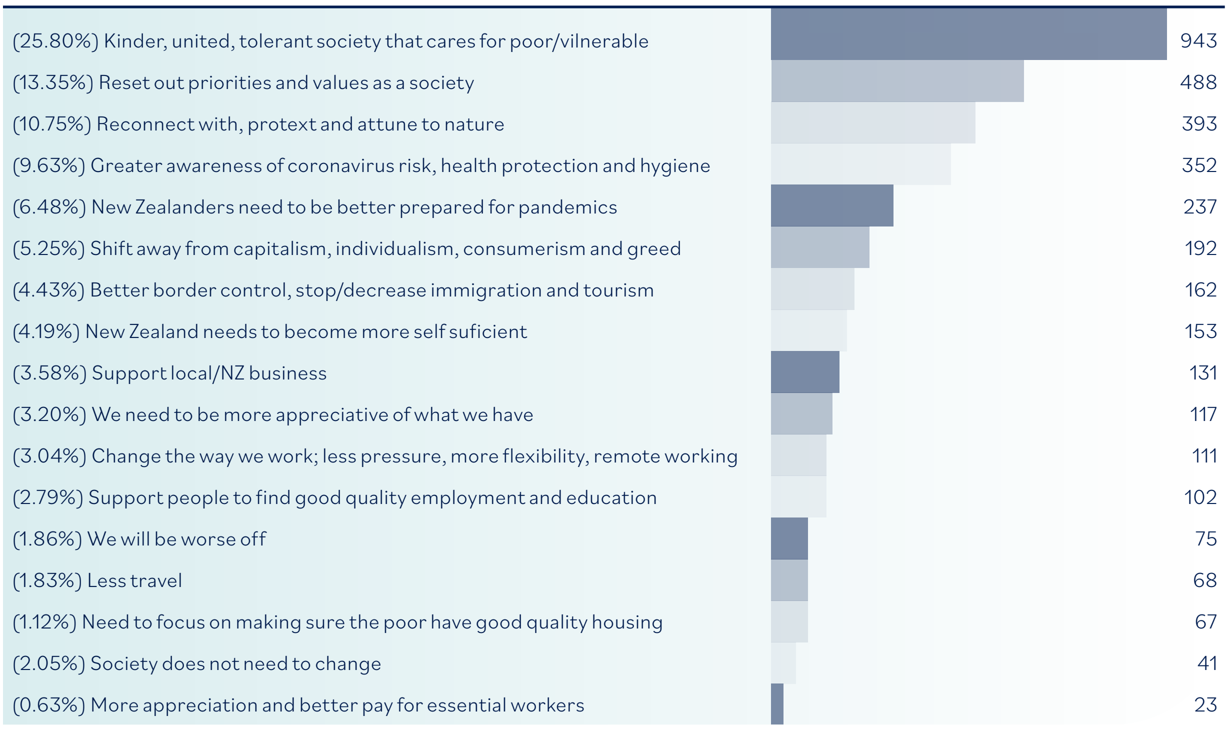
When asked, “What support do you think Māori families will need once the level 4 lockdown requirements have been lifted?” the responses focused on employment, housing, financial and budgeting services – as well better access to quality education and health-care.

In many respects, these factors are likely to be pivotal in enhanced opportunities from COVID. It is not necessarily that COVID has unearthed issues that were not thought about previously, but rather that COVID has put a spotlight on the issues and underlined the need for action.

As they recover from the initial short-term impacts of COVID-19, survey data suggests that many Māori feel it is time for a social and economic reset in Aotearoa. One salient theme related to a desire for society to care more for the environment (people and planet) and practice more tolerance, kindness and patience with each other.

Lockdown permitted many to spend time cultivating family relationships, and thinking about how they could support others – although many were naturally worried about their own families, this concern was extended to those less fortunate in their communities (Houkamau, et al., 2021).

Figure 22 | Survey responses to the question “How do you think the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic should change us as a society?”



Survey participants called for a country which adopts a different economic mind-set, focusing on producing what we need to live, rather than focusing on consumerism, short term profits and economic growth. For many, the pandemic lockdown provided an opportunity for slowing down, thinking and living differently – it was a time of consuming less, and spending quality time with whānau, and reflecting on what really matters. Many indicated a desire to retain this experience post COVID and not return to the way they were before (Houkamau, et al., 2021).

Cultural revitalisation around kaumatua and future skills/employment possibilities provide further prospects

Such findings are consistent with those resulting from analysis using the Māori world view He Ara Waiora, especially in relation to an economic reset and the opportunity to put Te Taiao at the forefront of policy thinking. In addition, expanding the policy realm to include cultural revitalisation is suggested as a potential opportunity, given the way iwi and Māori organisations dealt with COVID impacts on kaumatua. Furthermore iwi and organisation mobilisation provided the possibility of moving away from so-called 'one size fits all' approaches to more tailored and fit-for-purpose models. 'By Māori for Māori' methods stood up well through both periods of COVID and trust in that method of working by government could provide opportunities that benefit both the providers of such services, Māori as a whole and Aotearoa New Zealand more generally.

Māori are generally a younger population that non-Māori. This relative youth has meant some negative impacts during COVID, but also could provide opportunities post-COVID. The workforce will be key to COVID recovery, and as mentioned earlier Māori are over-represented in sectors that provide rapid recovery from shocks (e.g. construction, manufacturing, retail trade). Capitalising on such 'bounce backs' could be rewarding form Māori. The government made major investments in Māori skills and employment in Budget 2020. A focus on the design and evaluation of programmes around training and employment will be vital to ensure they build wellbeing outcomes (Treasury, 2020).

A Māori wellbeing perspective found Māori response to negative impacts was rapid and assisted by previous experiences (of past shocks and colonisation more generally)

An analysis of COVID-related impacts using a Māori world view (He Ara Waiora) was undertaken following the first outbreak period (Treasury, 2020). The analysis found that iwi and Māori organisations moved quickly to shield and support vulnerable whānau in their communities, and particularly their kaumātua, whose health and wellbeing are a priority for whānau, hapū and iwi. The historical memory of previous pandemics, and their role in the experience of colonisation, remains strong.

Some Māori businesses and iwi portfolios have been hit hard, particularly through the downturn in tourism and the drop in lobster exports early in the pandemic. However, many strengths remain. Many iwi and asset-owning whānau operate their businesses with a view to sustainability and broader social outcomes. With assets largely concentrated in primary industries, Māori land-owning enterprises may be well placed to help lead an export-driven recovery.

He Ara Waiora also offers principles, derived from mātauranga Māori, to guide the process of policy development to support intergenerational wellbeing for Māori and all New Zealanders. These principles emphasise: co-ordination and alignment; partnership; collective and strengths-based actions; protecting and building mana; and stewardship.

5 Comments and reflections

We make the following comments and reflections in relation to this work:

- Consistent with past shocks, Māori are significantly and disproportionately impacted by COVID, across arrange of areas from financial hardship, social disconnection, employment losses or reductions and welfare receipt.
- For most of the impact areas, we are unable to directly assess Tāmaki Makaurau effects, but can infer from other data the likely magnitude.
- In some cases the impacts in Tāmaki Makaurau were worse than elsewhere (e.g. as Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau were already negatively represented in benefit receipt, or in industry sectors that felt the impact of COVID more harshly than others), but Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau were not necessarily always the hardest hit (e.g. Pasifika saw the greatest rise in Jobseeker Support numbers in Tāmaki Makaurau).
- COVID exacerbated, rather than caused a lot of the problems, so continued interest is needed, especially in the south and west of the region.
- While providing a relatively wide array of views into COVID impacts, the analysis was limited by the availability of data. The work emphasised the dearth of Māori-related data focussed on Tāmaki Makaurau, especially for businesses.
- The actual extent of COVID impacts is yet to be fully seen, as Tāmaki Makaurau is still in lockdown. It will be another nine months to a year (assuming no further actions such as lockdowns or new outbreaks) before the impacts of the most recent episode can be calculated with any surety.
- The impacts of the most recent episode are likely to be more severe than the previous episode/s due to the extended period of the lockdown in Tāmaki Makaurau and the cumulative effects of shocks in reasonably close proximity.
- Some opportunities presented themselves from COVID, mainly around the possibility of a reset of economic and social models and a focus on the role of kindness and Te Taiao in the 'new society.' Capitalising on a youthful population and training and employment prospects in the transition to post-COVID, as well as cultural revitalisation are other opportunity areas.
- The innovation and agility of a 'for Māori by Māori' approach performed well in Tāmaki Makaurau and could provide a method for service delivery that replaces the monolithic status quo and improves for Māori and the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand.

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