22 December 2023

Research and Evaluation Unit



Auckland Air Quality Report

Monthly update – December

Introduction

Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) collects air quality data to ensure compliance with national standards and inform policy development and evaluation. The data we collect provides a better understanding of ambient air quality in the region, including spatial and temporal variations.

This monthly update is prepared using validated data that is available about one month after raw data collection. This report covers data up to 30 November 2023. This regular update on air quality aims to promote awareness and encourage actions to improve air quality in the region.

This update is divided into four sections, with sections A and B featuring tables and graphics that illustrate air quality status in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland, and is based on data collected from continuous monitoring sites across the region.

For this edition, section C focuses on one monitoring site – Takapuna. Section D provides monthly averages for 2023 and the past two to five years of pollutant concentrations (when data is available).

Summary

- No breach of national air quality standards occurred in November 2023.
- The Khyber Pass Road and Customs Street sites recorded the highest levels of NO₂ and SO₂ concentrations respectively in November.
- As in previous years, from January to November, city centre sites recorded the highest levels of particulate matter, likely due to traffic and construction activities.

It is important to note that air quality at a monitoring site can vary from year to year due to weather and other influences (See <u>Auckland air quality report, October 2021</u>). For a brief analysis of short-term concentration changes of key pollutants, please see Table 2.

Where to view our data

Data can be viewed on the council's <u>environmental data portal</u>, the LAWA website <u>LAWA</u> or requested from <u>environmentaldata@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz</u>

Full state and trends analyses and reports are prepared every few years (the most recent report is <u>Trends in Auckland's air quality 2006-2018</u>).

The <u>2022 Annual data report</u> is available on the Knowledge Auckland website.

See also, the <u>frequently asked questions</u> about the Auckland air quality monitoring programme.

Glossary of terms

Term	Meaning
Aerodynamic diameter	Used to describe the behaviour of a particle as it moves around in the air; it compares the behaviour with that of a spherical particle of unit density.
Air pollutant/contaminant	Any substance in the air that could harm humans, animals, vegetation, or other parts of the environment when present in high enough concentrations.
Air pollution	The presence of one or more air pollutants in high enough concentrations to cause harm.
Air quality	Is the degree to which air is suitable or clean enough for humans, animals, or plants to remain healthy.
Ambient air	The external air environment (does not include the air environment inside buildings or structures)
Black carbon (BC)	Is an air pollutant made up of tiny soot-like particles discharged into the atmosphere from combustion processes.
СО	Carbon monoxide, a type of air pollutant.
Exceedance	An exceedance defines a period of time during which the concentration of a pollutant is greater than the appropriate air quality criteria.
Ground-level ozone (O ₃)	At ground level, ozone is considered an air pollutant that can seriously affect the human respiratory system. It is a major component of photochemical smog.
Monitoring site	A facility for measuring the concentration of one or more pollutants in the ambient air; also referred to as 'monitoring station'
NESAQ	National Environmental Standard for Air Quality.
NO ₂	Nitrogen dioxide, a type of air pollutant
PM	Particulate matter is made up of a mixture of various sizes of solid and liquid particles suspended in air.
PM ₁₀	Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometres or less; a type of air pollutant.
PM _{2.5}	Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less; a type of air pollutant.
SO ₂	Sulphur dioxide, a type of air pollutant
μg/m³	Microgram of pollutant (1 millionth of a gram) per cubic metre of air, referenced to temperature of 0°C (273.15 K) and absolute pressure of 101.325 kilopascals (kPa)
n/a	Not applicable

V	/hat we monitor	Why we monitor							
	Particulate matter (PM) – PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$	Tiny particles (particulate matter) from polluting sources such as vehicles and smoke get into the air. Breathing them may cause health problems.							
Air	Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Vehicles are the main source of NO ₂ in Auckland. It can irritate the lungs, increasing susceptibility to asthma and lowering resistance to respiratory infections.							
	Other pollutants	Air pollutants ozone, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, black carbon and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like benzene cause adverse health effects at elevated concentrations.							
Greenhouse gas emissions	Carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF ₆) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF ₃)	The climate is warming due to increased greenhouse gas (GHG) levels in the atmosphere caused by human activities. Reducing GHG emissions will limit temperature rise.							

Section A – Data tables

Table 1. Summary information about Auckland air quality monitoring programme 1 January to 30 November 2023

Number of exceedances of NESAQ in 2023	1 (PM ₁₀ exceedance at Queen Street site on 27 July)								
Number of exceedances of Auckland ambient air quality targets in 2023	0								
Maximum PM ₁₀ 24-hours mean (January to November 2023)	53.5 μg/m ³ (107.0% of NESAQ)	Recorded at Queen Street on 27 July 2023							
Maximum $PM_{2.5}$ 24-hour mean (January to November 2023)	18.0 μg/m³ (72.0% of Auckland target)	Recorded at Penrose on 29 July 2023							
Maximum NO ₂ 1-hour mean (January to November 2023)	200.4 µg/m ³ (100.2% of NESAQ)	Recorded at Queen Street on 10 August 2023							
Maximum SO ₂ 1-hour mean (January to November 2023)	24.0 μg/m³ (6.8% of NESAQ)	Recorded at Customs Street on 27 April 2023							
Maximum O₃ 1-hour mean (January to November 2023)	74.0 μg/m³ (49.3% of NESAQ)	Recorded at Patumahoe on 26 July 2023							
Maximum CO running 8-hour mean (January to November 2023)	1.1 mg/m ³ (11.0% of NESAQ)	Recorded at Khyber Pass Rd on 17 May 2023							
Number of continuous monitoring sites	10								
Location of monitoring sites	Queen Street, Customs Street, Khyber Pass Road, Penrose, Henderson, Takapuna, Glen Eden, Pakuranga, Papatoetoe, and Patumahoe								

-												0										
	PM ₁₀			PM ₁₀ PM _{2.5}				NO ₂ Black carbon			on	Ozone			со			SO ₂				
c ''	Last 35	Last 47	Last 59								Last 47			Last 47					Last 35			C ¹
Site	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	Site
Customs Street*	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	N	n/a	↓ ↓	$\mathbf{\Psi}$	n/a	7	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a	Customs Street*
Glen Eden*	7	2	2	•	↓	•	7	7	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Glen Eden*
Henderson	7	7	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	2	2	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Henderson
Khyber Pass Road	1	1	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	•	↓	•	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	4	•	n/a	n/a	n/a	Road
Pakuranga*	1	1	7	7	7	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Pakuranga*
Papatoetoe	•	7	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Papatoetoe
Patumahoe	2	• ↓	•	1	1	7	7	1	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	2	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Patumahoe
Penrose	7	7	2	•	•	•	2	2	•	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	Penrose
Queen Street*	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	¥	¥	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Queen Street*
Takapuna*	1	1	7	1	1	7	7	7	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Takapuna*
	PM ₁₀				PM _{2.5}			NO ₂		I	Black carb	on		Ozone			СО			SO ₂		

↗ increase but not significant

decrease but not significant

Table 2. General changes in concentration of key contaminants monitored for the last 35, 47 and 59 months.

 \checkmark indicates a decrease

<u>Notes</u>

↑ indicates an increase

Change significance was determined using the Theil-Sen method (deseasonalised): \uparrow and \checkmark mean change is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, 95% confidence intervals.

Effective dates: 35 months (1 January 2021 to 30 November 2023), 47 months (1 January 2020 to 30 November 2023), and 59 months (1 January 2019 to 30 November 2023)

PM₁₀ is monitored at Glen Eden, Henderson, Khyber Pass Rd, Pakuranga, Papatoetoe, Patumahoe, Penrose, Takapuna, and Queen St.

PM_{2.5} is monitored at Customs St, Glen Eden, Pakuranga, Patumahoe, Penrose, Takapuna, and Queen St.

NO₂ is monitored at Customs St, Glen Eden, Henderson, Khyber Pass Rd, Patumahoe, Penrose, Takapuna, and Queen St.

Black carbon is monitored at Customs St, and Henderson.

CO is monitored at Khyber Pass Rd.

Ozone is monitored at Patumahoe.

 SO_2 is monitored at Customs St, and Penrose.

*PM_{2.5} data coverage for Glen Eden, Customs Street and Pakuranga is less than 75% due to instrument failure between September 2021 and January 2022. No data for Takapuna in January and February 2023 due to the Auckland floods. Queen St data is up to 22 August due to power outage at the site.

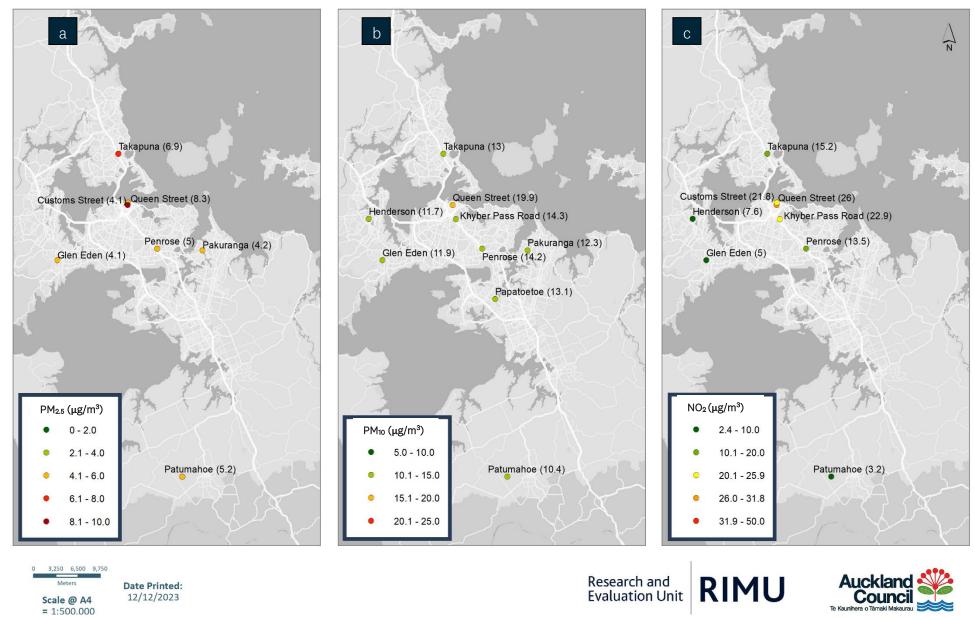
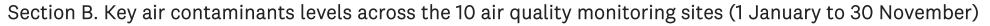


Figure 1. Maps a, b and c show the air quality monitoring sites and their last 12 months (1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023) average PM and NO₂ concentrations in brackets. Auckland city centre monitoring sites recorded the highest PM and NO₂ concentrations.



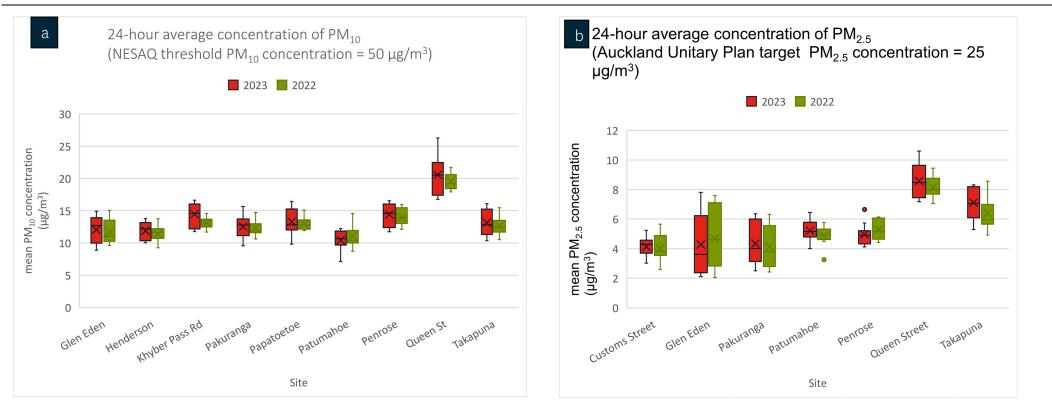


Figure 2. Boxplot of PM hourly mean concentration – 2023 compared to 2022. As in the previous year, the highest concentrations of both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} were recorded at Queen Street site. Plots a and b represent PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, respectively. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} have multiple sources including home heating, motor vehicles, sea salt, marine diesel, and soils (windblown soil, road dust, and dust generated by earthworks, construction, and road works).

Boxes represent 25th (bottom of the box) and 75th (top of box) percentile, central line through the box is the median, bars outside the box (whiskers) represent the 1.5× interquartile range, × markers are the means, and circles are outliers.

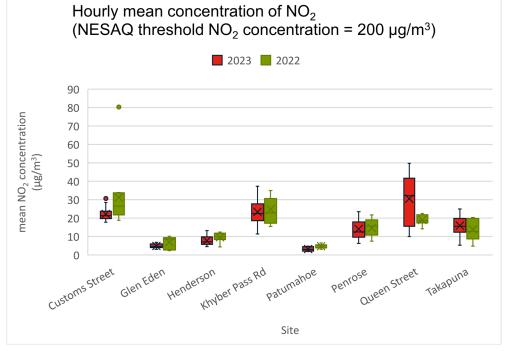
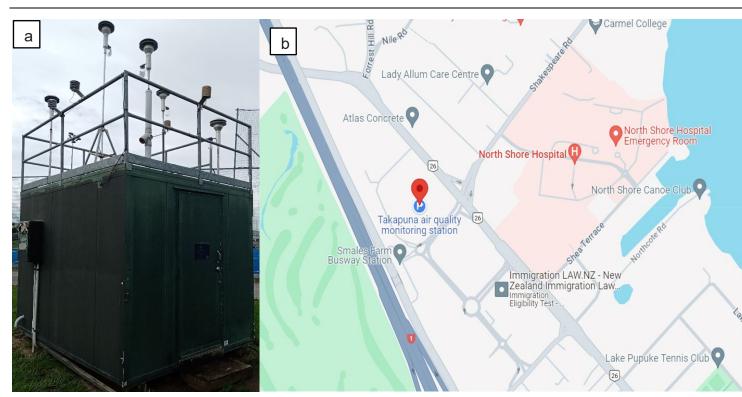


Figure 3. Boxplot of NO₂ hourly mean concentration – 2023 compared to 2022. The highest concentrations were recorded at Queen Street monitoring sites in the city centre. Motor vehicles are the primary source of NO₂. During the first three months of the year, Auckland Transport's data on Traffic volume at the 16 City Centre Screenline intersections indicates a 18% (from 17,482 to 20,549) increase in monthly traffic volume compared to the previous year.



Figure 4. Boxplot of SO₂ hourly mean concentration – 2023 compared to 2022. The highest concentrations were recorded at the Customs Street monitoring site in the city centre. The mean concentration at Penrose site is higher than the previous year. SO₂ is produced from the combustion of fossil fuels that contain sulphur, such as coal and oil (used for home heating, industry, and shipping). Motor vehicles also contribute to SO₂ levels in urban air.

Boxes represent 25th (bottom of the box) and 75th (top of box) percentile, central line through the box is the median, bars outside the box (whiskers) represent the 1.5× interquartile range, × markers are the means, and circles are outliers.



Section C. Focus on a monitoring site: Takapuna

Figure 5. The Takapuna air quality monitoring site is located at Westlake Girls High School (2 Wairau Road). Image a shows the air quality monitoring shed. Image b is an aerial view of the monitoring site and surroundings taken in December 2023 (Source: Google Maps). Air quality monitoring at this site commenced on 31 May 1995. PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO₂, and meteorological parameters are monitored at this site. The main sources of air contaminants are motor vehicles, home heating (during winter) and roadside dust.

Key findings:

- Overall, Takapuna site average PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and NO₂ concentrations are approximately similar to Auckland's average, but higher than the Patumahoe site (rural site).
- This monitoring site is classified as residential 'peak' for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and NO₂ exposure. Therefore, it is anticipated that the average concentrations will be close to Auckland's average but higher than the rural background site.
- Deseasonalised long-term trend analysis results at the Takapuna site show that there is a downward trend in PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, and NO₂ average concentrations.

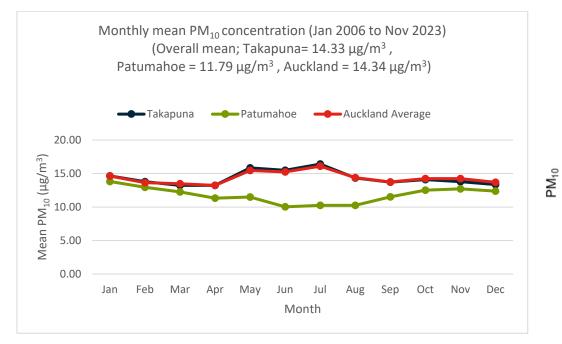


Figure 6. Temporal variation in monthly PM₁₀ concentrations – Takapuna site compared to Patumahoe (rural site) and Auckland average. Takapuna site average PM₁₀ concentration is approximately the same as Auckland's average and 21.5% more than the Patumahoe site. The Takapuna site is located at an urban residential peak exposure to PM₁₀. Therefore, PM₁₀ average concentration is expected to be close to the Auckland's average and above the rural/background site.

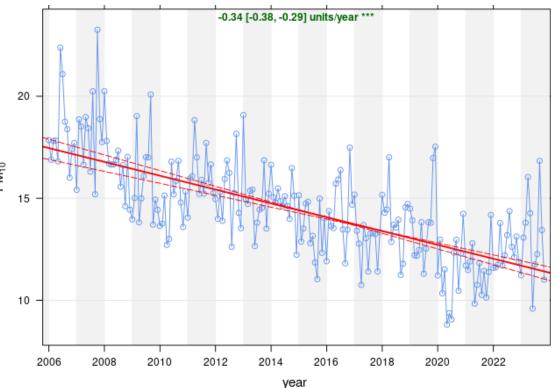


Figure 7. Trends in PM₁₀ at Takapuna site – January 2006 to November 2023. The plot shows the deseasonalised monthly mean concentrations of PM₁₀. The solid red line shows the trend estimate and the dashed red lines show the 95% confidence intervals for the trend based on resampling methods. The overall trend is shown at the top-left as – 0.34 (μ g/m³) per year and the 95% confidence intervals in the slope from -0.38 - (-0.29) μ g/m³/year. The '***' show that the trend is significant to the 0.001 level.

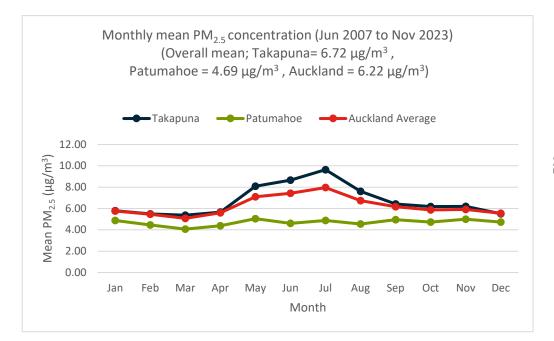


Figure 8. Temporal variation in monthly PM_{2.5} concentrations – Takapuna site compared to Patumahoe (rural site) and Auckland average. Overall, Takapuna site average PM_{2.5} concentration is slightly higher than Auckland's average, but 43.3% more than Patumahoe site.

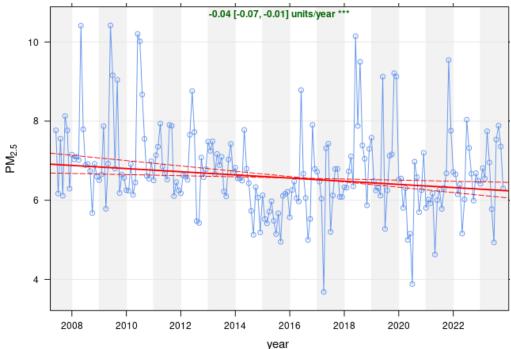


Figure 9. Trends in $PM_{2.5}$ at Takapuna site – June 2007 to November 2023. The plot shows the deseasonalised monthly mean concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$. The solid red line shows the trend estimate and the dashed red lines show the 95% confidence intervals for the trend based on resampling methods. The overall trend is shown at the top-left as – 0.04 (μ g/m³) per year and the 95% confidence intervals in the slope from -0.07 - (-0.01) μ g/m³/year. The '***' show that the trend is significant to the 0.001 level.

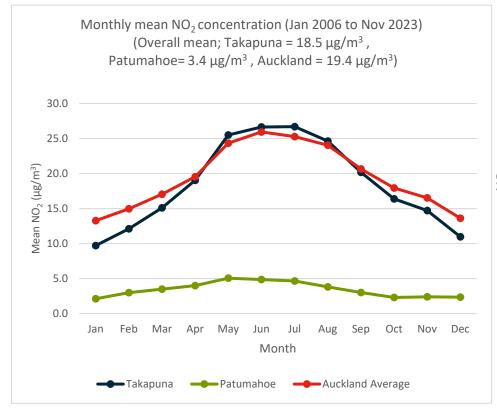


Figure 10. Temporal variation in monthly NO₂ concentrations – Takapuna site compared to Patumahoe (rural site) and Auckland average. Overall, Takapuna site average NO₂ concentration is approximately the same as Auckland's average, but five times higher than the Patumahoe site.

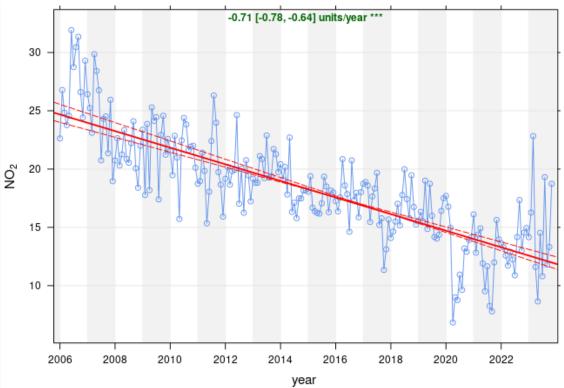


Figure 11. Trends in NO₂ at Takapuna site – January 2006 to November 2023. The plot shows the deseasonalised monthly mean concentrations of NO₂. The solid red line shows the trend estimate and the dashed red lines show the 95% confidence intervals for the trend based on resampling methods. The overall trend is shown at the top-left as -0.71 (μ g/m³) per year and the 95% confidence intervals in the slope from -0.78 - (-0.64) μ g/m³/year. The '***' show that the trend is significant to the 0.001 level.

Section D. Table 3. Monthly averages: 2023 and past two to five years (when data is available)

Pollutant	Site	Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Glen Eden	2023	8.9	10.9	10.0	13.0	14.5	11.1	14.9	13.9	12.7	13.4	9.6	-
	Gien Luen	Past 5 years	11.6	11.1	9.6	11.1	12.9	15.4	15.6	13.8	11.5	10.2	11.9	12.9
	Henderson	2023	10.1	12.2	10.6	12.5	13.8	10.4	13.5	11.4	13.1	13.2	10.0	-
	Khyber Pass	Past 5 years 2023	12.0 12.2	11.5 14.6	11.0 14.0	11.7 16.0	12.5 16.6	12.9 11.8	13.1 16.0	12.1 14.3	11.1 16.2	10.5 15.5	12.5 12.2	12.8
	Road	Past 4 years	11.8	11.4	10.8	11.4	10.0	11.0	11.9	14.5	11.2	11.0	12.2	13.8
		2023	9.6	11.1	11.4	13.0	14.9	12.1	15.7	13.7	13.6	12.8	10.0	-
	Pakuranga	Past 5 years	12.1	11.5	10.0	10.7	12.4	13.3	14.2	13.0	11.4	10.9	12.6	12.7
PM ₁₀	Deveterter	2023	9.8	12.0	12.8	12.6	14.1	10.9	16.4	14.5	15.6	15.3	12.4	-
(µg/m³)	Papatoetoe	Past 5 years	14.2	13.6	12.4	13.1	14.0	14.0	15.6	14.3	13.5	13.0	14.5	14.7
(µg/11)	Patumahoe	2023	8.9	10.7	12.0	11.0	9.7	7.1	12.3	9.8	11.8	11.5	9.9	-
	i acamanoc	Past 5 years	14.9	14.3	12.5	12.2	11.8	9.9	10.5	10.8	11.4	11.1	13.3	14.9
	Penrose	2023	12.4	14.2	14.6	16.5	16.0	12.2	16.0	14.2	15.8	14.9	11.7	-
		Past 5 years	15.6	14.9	14.1	14.3	15.5	14.2	14.9	13.9	13.5	12.9	15.0	15.9
	Queen Street	2023	16.8	19.5	19.2	21.7	22.7	16.8	26.3	21.6	ND	ND 17.0	ND	-
		Past 5 years	17.5 11.5	16.7 ND	16.0 12.6	16.5 15.0	16.9 15.9	16.7 10.9	18.4 14.0	18.2 12.4	17.8 16.1	17.9 13.0	19.1 10.4	19.4
	Takapuna	2023 Past 5 years	11.5	12.3	12.6	15.0	15.9	10.9	14.0	12.4	16.1	13.0	10.4	- 13.4
	Customs	2023	3.7	3.8	3.1	4.5	5.2	3.7	4.6	4.4	5.1	4.3	3.0	
	Street	Past 3 years	4.4	3.7	3.3	3.9	4.0	4.7	4.0	5.6	5.5	3.8	3.8	3.7
		2023	2.1	2.7	2.2	3.3	6.2	5.6	6.8	7.8	4.4	3.6	2.4	-
	Glen Eden	Past 4 years	2.7	2.5	2.0	3.1	5.7	9.8	9.7	7.7	5.0	3.2	3.5	3.2
	Delawara	2023	2.9	3.2	3.1	4.0	6.0	5.8	6.4	6.3	4.1	3.5	2.5	-
	Pakuranga	Past 4 years	3.0	2.9	2.5	3.5	5.3	6.3	9.3	5.7	4.4	3.2	3.9	3.5
PM _{2.5}	Patumahoe	2023	4.9	6.4	4.8	5.2	4.8	4.0	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.8	4.5	-
(µg/m³)	Patumanoe	Past 5 years	5.4	4.5	4.3	5.0	5.4	5.1	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.4	5.2	5.3
(100/111/	Penrose	2023	4.2	4.7	4.6	5.1	5.1	5.2	6.7	5.7	4.1	4.9	4.3	-
		Past 5 years	6.8	5.3	5.0	5.6	6.5	7.3	7.3	6.3	5.8	5.8	6.5	5.9
	Queen Street	2023	7.2	8.0	7.5	9.0	9.8	7.4	10.6	9.1	ND	ND	ND	-
		Past 5 years	7.1	6.5	6.0	6.7	7.2	7.4	8.0	7.7	7.3	7.3	7.7	7.9
	Takapuna	2023	ND	ND	5.3	7.1	8.3	6.7	8.1	8.3	7.7	7.0	5.5	-
		Past 5 years	5.9	5.4	4.9	5.7	6.8	8.2	8.8	7.7	6.6	6.1	6.7	6.3
	Customs	2023	18.7	17.8	20.1 39.1	21.3	23.8	28.5	21.8	30.6	22.2	19.8	19.9	-
	Street	Past 3 years 2023	34.8 6.0	36.9 5.0	4.0	30.8 4.1	37.1 5.8	52.4 6.6	37.4 4.6	35.6 6.8	30.8 4.0	29.1 3.4	24.1 3.1	23.9
	Glen Eden													-
		Past 5 years	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.6	7.4	8.2	7.9	6.1	4.7	4.6	3.8	2.9
	Henderson	2023	4.5	5.1	7.0	7.6	9.8	13.2	6.6	10.3	8.1	5.7	7.2	-
	Khyber Pass	Past 5 years 2023	3.9 11.4	7.3 18.7	8.4 26.0	8.7 11.2	12.0 23.5	12.8 31.1	11.7 27.7	9.2 37.4	7.5	6.5 19.6	6.1 21.3	4.7
NO ₂	Road	Past 4 years	21.5	19.5	20.0	23.8	32.8	33.8	35.1	30.8	30.2	24.9	30.0	20.1
(µg/m ³)		2023	2.1	2.5	3.2	4.6	4.8	4.6	3.0	4.3	2.1	1.8	2.4	-
(1~0/ /	Patumahoe	Past 5 years	1.4	2.0	2.9	2.8	3.8	4.2	4.3	3.4	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.1
	Penrose	2023	6.3	9.2	15.4	11.7	14.1	23.5	17.9	23.3	12.5	9.7	11.2	-
	Felliose	Past 5 years	9.0	10.8	13.4	16.9	22.3	22.8	22.8	18.7	16.6	12.6	12.9	8.5
	Queen Street	2023	10.8	10.0	30.1	29.7	34.3	35.6	43.7	49.8	ND	ND	ND	-
		Past 5 years	28.2	28.8	30.8	31.0	37.4	39.5	43.2	42.1	37.7	36.4	32.2	28.0
	Takapuna	2023 Past 5 years	5.3 6.5	ND 8.4	19.0 10.7	12.6 14.6	20.2	22.3 21.1	19.0 22.1	25.0 18.5	13.4 15.2	11.7 12.7	15.1 11.8	7.9
	Customs	2023	2.3	8.4 2.4	2.5	3.2	20.2	21.1	22.1	3.2	3.3	2.2	3.2	-
SO ₂	Street	Past 3 years	1.6	1.6	2.3	1.5	1.7	4.4	2.6	2.8	2.2	2.2	1.6	1.5
		2023	1.0	1.6	1.7	0.9	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.5	0.9	1.2	1.8	-
(µg/m³)	Penrose	Past 5 years	0.5	0.8	1.1	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.5
														0.5
O ₃	Patumahoe	2023	26.1	25.8	26.3	40.1	26.3	42.3	52.6	45.6	51.7	45.9	ND	-
(µg/m ³)		Past 5 years	26.6	29.3	33.4	38.9	41.2	43.1	46.8	52.6	51.4	46.9	41.0	31.4
CO	Khyber Pass	2023	0.105	0.159	0.220	0.160	0.053	0.143	0.162	0.209	0.037	0.010	0.007	-
(mg/m ³)	Road	Past 4 years	0.206	0.180	0.192	0.216	0.268	0.258	0.297	0.220	0.204	0.178	0.183	0.164
Black	Customs	2023	1095	1286	1735	1429	1735	1767	1245	1953	1309	1180	1435	-
carbon	Street	Past 3 years	1447	1535	1316	1094	1356	3363	1350	1326	1034	1016	1127	1047
(ng/m ³)	Henderson	2023	247	316	510	455	510	824	473	725	382	221	257	-
,		Past 5 years	265	458	566	540	995	1204	1113	879	542	412	381	301 _
	ND = No	data measured d	lue to Auck	land flood	I, Queen St	August d	ata is up	to 22 Aug	gust (due	e to powe	r outage	at the site)	

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