



Te Ope Whakaora

**Social Policy &
Parliamentary Unit**

20 years working to eradicate poverty in New Zealand

STATE of the NATION 2025

**Kai, Kāinga,
Whānau**

**The Basics—
Food, a Home,
Family**

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February 2025

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

This is our 18th *State of the Nation* report, and it is therefore timely to remind ourselves of their purpose. These reports focus on the heart of any society—people—he tangata, he tangata, he tangata. When all people have what they require to meet essential needs, fulfil their potential and contribute, we have a society that is healthy. While we frequently hear about consumers price index (CPI), interest rates, gross domestic product (GDP) and other economic measures, there is less coverage about how people are doing. *State of the Nation* redresses this imbalance by researching trends across a range of issues that impact on the wellbeing of individuals and whānau. The Salvation Army sees more than 135,000 vulnerable people through our services every year, and this report is particularly concerned with how those people's needs are being met in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This year our theme focuses on three things we know people need to live well—kai, kainga and whānau. When people have food security and a warm, dry, affordable home, then they have the basis for nurturing a healthy family and positive relationships.

In measuring our progress, we aim to be fair and actively look for evidence of progress. This year, we can find few areas of improvement and, in many cases, indicators have worsened, making it harder for people to have what they need in terms of kai, kainga and whānau. Unemployment is rising, and as of December 2024 we have 400,000 people needing welfare support—the highest since the 1990s. Food insecurity amongst families with children has risen sharply, and half of all Pacific children go without food often or sometimes. While there has been a good increase in the number of social housing units available, that building programme is reducing, and rent for private rentals continues to be unaffordable for many on low incomes. Our prison population has grown, and remains high compared to other more economically developed countries (MEDC), and while crime overall has declined, violent crime is increasing.

The data shows that Māori continue to experience inequities in terms of life outcomes. More than one in four Māori whānau report that their family is doing badly or not well, higher than in 2018. Māori are also twice as likely to be the victim of a violent crime and continue to be over-represented in the prison population, with a 6.8 percent higher rate of imprisonment than non-Māori. Kai, kainga and whānau are getting more difficult for Māori.

Where there are positive signs for Māori, this is often in association with Māori-led initiatives that focus on meeting Māori needs and improving equity of access to services and support. In areas such as reducing the need for children to be in care and improving educational outcomes, Māori-led initiatives show positive results. However, recent survey data shows that Māori are increasingly uncertain about their ability to express and uphold their identify as Māori—possibly in response to the public debates about Te Tiriti and the funding of Māori-specific services.

In the face of these largely negative trends, The Salvation Army asks Aotearoa to do better for people. As a nation we need to consider:

- How do we better tackle child poverty in the short term, recognising that childhood experience is a determinant for later life, and so our children in poverty need help now?
- Given the trend in unemployment and the need for welfare, how do we best work with those on benefits in a way that is mana enhancing?
- How can the community, businesses and government work together to ensure we increase our stock of affordable housing?
- Can we commit to dealing with the underlying causes of crime, and to improving recidivism rates through the right support and interventions?
- Can we uphold Te Tiriti in practical ways, through supporting Māori-led initiatives that work appropriately with Māori whānau and communities?

Given the direction our social measures are taking, we urgently need to draw on experts, research and lived experience about what works to create a society where people flourish. We cannot wish these issues away or wait for the right time in an economic cycle.

As we start another year, let us focus on our people, and work to ensure that we will see progress across kai, kainga and whānau.

Dr Bonnie Robinson

Director—The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

INTRODUCTION

The Salvation Army—Te Ope Whakaora, the Army that brings life— is working every day with communities, whānau and individuals right around the country. In this report, the wellbeing of our nation is assessed by looking at outcomes that impact people and communities. We look at measures across the following areas: Children and Youth, Work and Incomes, Housing, Crime and Punishment and Social Hazards. We also assess all these areas through a specific focus on outcomes for Māori, using He Ara Waiora wellbeing framework.

The aim of this report is to focus on trends and outcomes at a national level to see what they can tell us about the overall state of our nation at the beginning of 2025. The statistics and data are mostly drawn from publicly available sources, and we aim to use the most recently available indicators for the year to 31 December 2024.

The indicators in each section are grouped into themes, and an assessment is made as to whether there is overall improvement (+), no change (NC) or deterioration (–). NA indicates where data is unavailable.

These assessments are intended to promote debate and discussion about our progress towards greater wellbeing.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

There are around 1.2 million children and young people under 18 years old in this country, and our vision for all of them is to grow up free of poverty, safe from harm, with a good education and skills for a fulfilled life. The indicators in this section attempt to capture how well we are doing as a nation towards this goal. Concerningly, in the past year most of the indicators monitored show worsening or unchanged outcomes for children and youth in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Child poverty rates increased in the year to June 2023 (the most recent figures), and the growing number of children in households needing to access main welfare benefits in 2024 means even more children are at risk of living in material hardship and poverty.

Violence against children is increasing. The number of children admitted to hospital with injuries because of assault, abuse or neglect increased sharply in 2024 to the highest number in at least a decade. Violent offending against children also continued to increase and was at levels much higher than five years ago. The number of children who are victims of abuse and neglect rose in 2024, although it is still much lower than five years ago. The number of children going into state care increased for the first time in some years, even as the total number of children in care continued to reduce.

Youth offending is very much in the limelight and a prominent target of current government policy. The youth offending rate decreased slightly in 2024 after an increase in the previous year, and offending is much lower than a decade ago.

Increases in the number of children taking part in early childhood education (ECE) prior to starting school was a positive sign; ECE enrolments are recovering from the large declines resulting from the social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

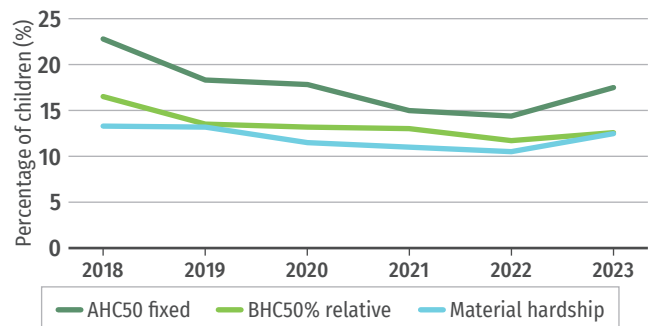
Educational achievement outcomes worsened in 2023, with both an increase in students leaving school with less than NCEA Level 1 qualification and a decrease in higher achievement as fewer young people attained university entrance or higher.

Mental health pressures on young people remained high in 2024, with around one-quarter of young adults experiencing high levels of mental distress.

Child poverty

Child poverty rates increased in the year to June 2023 (most recent data) for the three current primary poverty measures,¹ reversing some progress made in previous years to reduce poverty (Figure 1). The impact of rising rents and mortgage costs impacted material hardship rates and income poverty rates after housing costs. The relative (moving line) poverty measures saw lower-income households' incomes not increasing enough relative to middle-income households, reflecting the increase in income inequality (see [Work and Incomes](#), p.23). The estimated number of children in material hardship was virtually the same in 2023 as in 2018 when the baseline measures began, with only a small reduction of 3900 to 143,700 (13.2% of all children in 2018, and 12.5% in 2023).

Figure 1: Child poverty rate selected indicators—2018–2023²



AHC: household income after housing costs.

BHC: household income before housing costs.

MOVING LINE/RELATIVE (REL): compares incomes with a contemporary equivalised median income.

FIXED: a measure comparing current incomes with a previous (2018) baseline median. Useful during recessions.

The numbers—eg, **AHC50**—refer to the percentage of the equivalised median income considered to be the 'poverty line'. The lower the percentage, the more severe the poverty being measured.

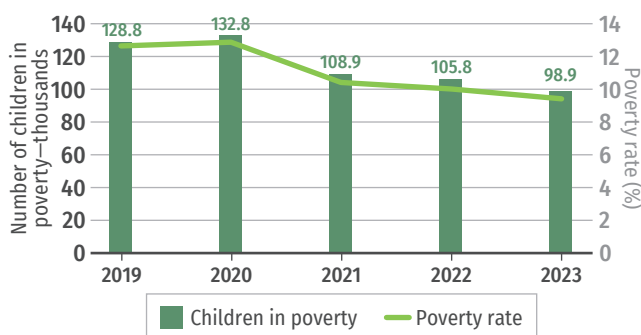
Table 1: Number of children below selected poverty measure—2018–2023³

	AHC50 fixed	BHC50 relative	Material hardship
2018	253,800	183,400	147,600
2022	166,200	134,300	120,300
2023	202,100	146,000	143,700
Change (reduction) 2018–2022	87,600	49,100	27,300
Change (reduction) 2018–2023	51,700	37,400	3900

For the first time, StatsNZ has released initial figures (although not yet official statistics) for persistent child poverty. Persistent child poverty looks at the experience of children over multiple years. If the household the child lives in has been below the poverty line for at least three of four most recent years (a large percentage of their young life), they are defined as being in persistent poverty; the longer a child lives in poverty, the more likely and severe the effects will be on their development and adult life.⁴ The government target announced in December 2024 is to reduce persistent child poverty to 8 percent by June 2027.⁵

The trend in persistent poverty is one of decline in the four years from 2020, reducing by around one-quarter (34,000) from 132,800 (12.9%) in 2020 to 98,900 (9.4%) in the June 2023 year (Figure 2). Because it measures poverty of multiple years, the persistent poverty measure will lag behind annual measures, which explains why it continued to reduce in 2023 while other annual measures detected an increase. The increase in other poverty measures seen in 2023 and the potential for further increases in poverty during 2024 may mean the reducing trend will not be sustained.

Figure 2: Number of children in persistent poverty (thousands) and poverty rate—2019–2023⁶



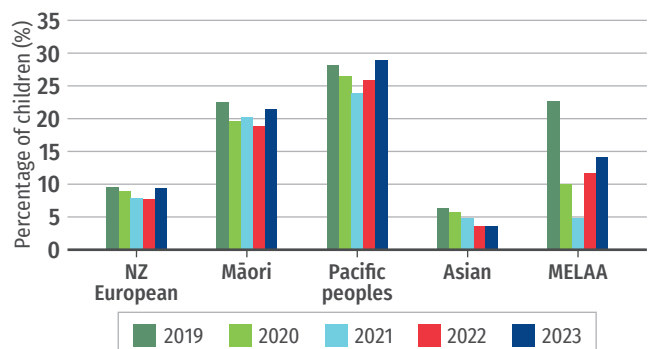
MATERIAL HARDSHIP

Material hardship is a key indicator of wellbeing and has been made a key measure by the Government in the refreshed Child and Youth Strategy⁷ released in late 2024. Material hardship shows the highest disparities between ethnicities and by disability status.

DISPARITIES BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS

Tamariki Māori experience material hardship at more than twice the rate of Asian or European children (Figure 3)—while for Pacific children, it’s at least three times the rate. Pacific children consistently experience the highest rate, with nearly one in three children (28.9%) experiencing material hardship in 2023. The material hardship rate for tamariki Māori was more than one in five (21.5%), more than twice the rate for European children (9.4%), as seen in Figure 3. The fluctuation in the poverty rates for Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (MELAA) children is partly explained by the relatively small sample number of children and a resulting larger margin of error in the statistic. The rate for Asian children is consistently the lowest, and was the only one not to increase between 2022 and 2023 (remaining at 3.7%).

Figure 3: Percentage of children in material hardship by ethnicity—2019–2023⁸



Rising poverty levels between 2022 and 2023 impacted Pacific children the most (in terms of percentage point increases) and there were more Pacific children in material hardship in 2023 than in 2019 (when the first figures became available). The total number of Pacific children in material hardship had increased to 44,600 in 2023, higher than in 2019 by 4900 (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of children in material hardship—2019 and 2023⁹

	2019	2023	Change	All children 2023
European	70,900	69,700	-1200	744,000
Māori	65,700	61,900	-3800	287,400
Pacific	39,700	44,600	+4900	154,200
Asian	11,300	8100	-3200	219,800
MELAA	5100	4200	-900	29,700
Other	3300	1600	-1700	13,100
Total	149,400	143,700	-5700	1,151,400

CHILDREN LIVING WITH DISABILITY

Around one in ten children (118,000) are living with a disability and some 320,000 children live in a household with someone with a disability. In both types of households, material hardship rates in 2023 remain high, with more than one-in-five (22.3% and 21.8%) living in material hardship, around double that of non-disabled children (11.1%) and 2.5 times that of children in non-disabled households (8.5%).

Measured using the persistent income poverty measure, there was real progress in achieving sustained reductions in poverty among households with disabled children, as well as households with children where someone lives with a disability. The persistent poverty rates for both types of households reduced between 2020 and 2023 (Table 3), with the rate for disabled children down by one-half (note that there are reasonably large sample errors so these findings must be seen as tentative).

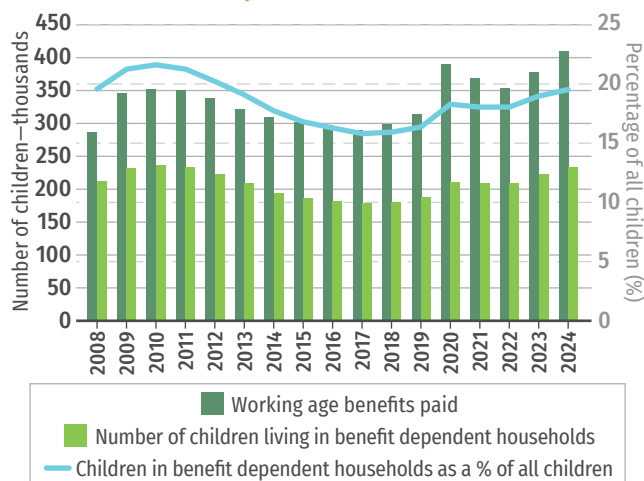
Table 3: Persistent poverty for disabled children—2020 and 2023¹⁰

Persistent poverty	Disabled children (rate)	Children in household with disability (rate)
2020	19.6	18.2
2023	9.6	11.4
Change (percentage point)	-10	-6.8
Change (%)	51%	37%

CHILDREN IN BENEFIT HOUSEHOLDS

During 2024, the number of children living in households that were relying on government welfare benefit support rose to 232,800, an increase of 10,300 as the total number of working age benefits paid reached 409,600 by December, higher than at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 4). This increase is significant because half of all children in material hardship live in benefit households—demonstrating that benefit incomes are not adequate to keep families out of poverty. The level of welfare assistance directly impacts income poverty levels, but also directly affects material hardship through the ability of households to receive special needs grants for costs such as food, clothing or housing. During 2024, access to hardship grants was reducing as Work and Income tightened eligibility for assistance, at the same time as the number of children living in families needing this assistance was increasing (see Work and Incomes, p.23).

Figure 4: Number of children in benefit households—2008–2024 (December years)¹¹



Children at risk

There are around 1.18 million children under 18 years of age in this country, and it is estimated that some 161,000, or 14 percent, of them show ‘early risk factors’—such as having had a report of concern, family group conference or unsupported child benefit, for example¹²—that mean they are at higher risk of harm and poor life outcomes.¹³ How well our society does in identifying and responding to risks and signs of harm is crucial to ensuring fulfilled lives.

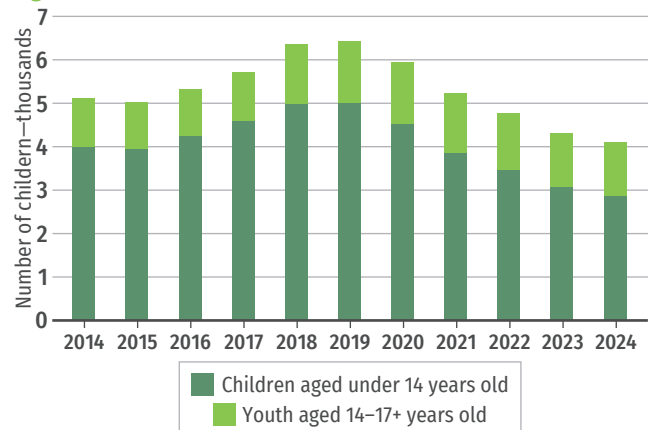
CHILDREN IN STATE CARE

Bringing children under the care and protection of the government agency Oranga Tamariki is supposed to be the proverbial ‘last resort’ to protect children from harm in their family and whānau. But as the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care has shown, over many decades the system has failed in its duty to protect tens of thousands of children. Recognition that taking children into care was being used too often has led to the policy drive to support children in their communities to maintain family/whānau and cultural relationships wherever possible. Seen in this way, the multi-year trend of fewer children being placed in care should be seen as supporting the potential for better outcomes for children and youth.

In 2024, the number of children in state care declined for the fifth year in a row to 4011, just under 5 percent fewer than in 2023 and some 36 percent lower than the 6500 in care five years ago (Figure 5). Seven out of ten of those in care are children under 15 years of age, with the number of young people aged 17 years or older close to 300.

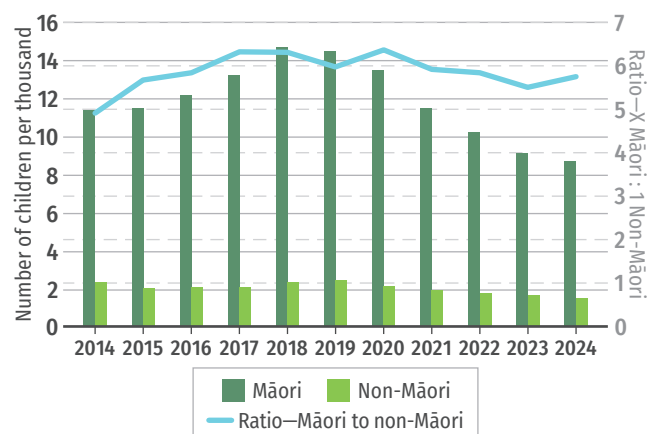
The number of children entering care rose to 1300 in 2024 after having been below 1000 two years ago.¹⁴ While this number is still around half that of the 2016 and 2017 years, it is concerning to see such an increase.

Figure 5: Number of children in state care—2014–2024¹⁵



Despite the large reduction of children in state care, tamariki Māori still make up more than two-thirds of children in care and they are five-to-six times more likely to be in state care than non-Māori, a ratio that has not changed significantly in the past decade (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Children in care per 1000 children under 18 years—2014–2024¹⁶



Over that time, Oranga Tamariki has developed a range of partnership agreements with iwi and kaupapa Māori support services, designed to offer chances for earlier responses to children at risk and more whānau-centred options in crisis situations. This has been helping to bring about a 40 percent reduction in the rate at which tamariki Māori end up in state care, from 14.7 per thousand children in 2018 down to 8.7 per thousand in 2024. There are now ten strategic partnerships with iwi and kaupapa Māori organisations that are aimed at developing the capacity and resources at community level to respond better to at-risk tamariki and their whānau. Overcoming the huge inequities facing tamariki Māori is a generational task.

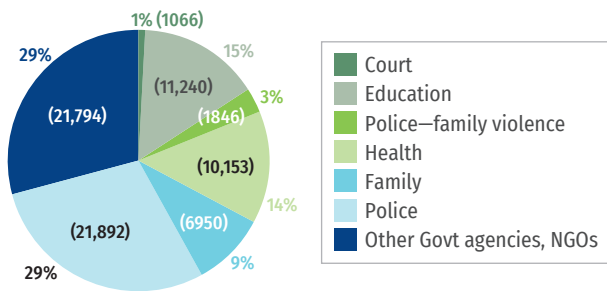
Table 4: Notifications/referrals for possible child abuse or neglect—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁷

Year ending 30 June	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1 Y change	5 Y change
Care and protection reports of concern	87,260	80,928	77,948	66,364	71,616	74,941	4.6%	-14.1%
Reports requiring further action	41,733	41,364	42,245	34,845	31,991	39,379	23.1%	-5.6%
Substantiations of abuse or neglect	15,958	15,682	15,462	12,498	12,743	13,862	8.8%	-13.1%

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reports of concern (ROCs) for possible child abuse or neglect are the record of notifications from individuals and communities, social workers, police, education providers and other agencies of concerns for the safety of a child. ROCs increased in 2024 to just under 75,000, but are still well below the pre-Covid-19 level of around 90,000 (Table 4). Family notifications make up only a small proportion of ROCs (9%), with police (29%) and other government agencies and NGOs (29%) providing the majority of ROCs, along with education (15%) and health services (14%) (Figure 7).

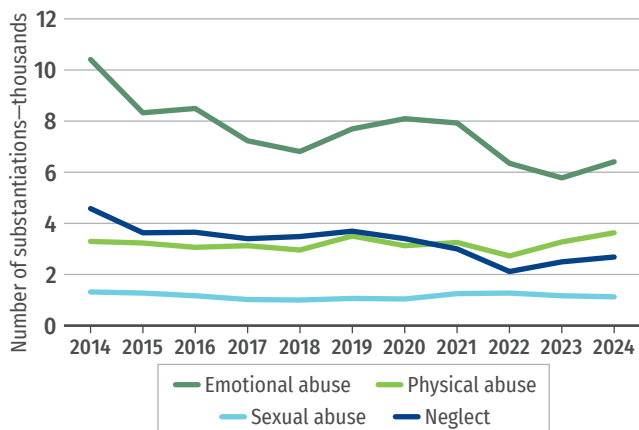
Figure 7: Notifications/referrals for possible child abuse or neglect—2019–2024 by source (June years)¹⁸



Substantiated cases of abuse are instances when social workers investigating ROCs find signs of abuse and neglect that require further action. For the first time in at least five years, the actual number of children affected by substantiated abuse increased by 6.6 percent to 10,958 in 2024. This remains well below the pre-Covid-19 number of 13,000 in 2019 representing just under 1 percent of all children, but the reversal is deeply concerning. The abuse these children suffer is distressing, with emotional abuse making up around one-half of all substantiated abuse, while physical and sexual abuse make up more than one-third of instances of abuse. The striking shift compared with five years ago is that sexual and physical abuse instances are higher, whereas emotional abuse and neglect substantiations are much lower (Table 5 and Figure 8).

Table 5: Substantiations of child abuse or neglect—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁹

Year ending 30 June	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1 Y change	5 Y change
Emotional abuse	7685	8084	7930	6349	5771	6401	10.9%	-16.7
Physical abuse	3507	3133	3261	2737	3286	3639	10.7%	3.8%
Sexual abuse	1066	1053	1267	1275	1177	1129	-4.1%	5.9%
Neglect	3700	3412	3004	2125	2509	2693	7.3%	-27.2%
Total abuse findings	15,958	15,682	15,462	12,498	12,743	13,862	8.8%	-13.1%
Number of individual children as victims	13,018	12,861	12,725	10,426	10,284	10,958	6.6%	-15.8%
Percentage of all children	1.14%	1.12%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.89%		
Estimated children under 18 years (mean June year)	1,138,600	1,150,000	1,155,100	1,156,600	1,161,800	1,183,000		

Figure 8: Substantiations of child abuse or neglect—2014–2024²⁰

Children and violence

Looking at the pattern of police-recorded offences against children provides further information about the risks that children faced during 2024. Between 2023 and 2024, there was a slight decrease in the number of violent offences against children under 15 years, with only serious assaults without injury increasing while the other categories show a decrease. But compared to five years ago, all categories of violence show large increases ([Table 6a](#)).

The actual number of children who were victims of violence shows a similar pattern, with serious assaults without injury increasing in 2024, becoming nearly two-thirds higher (62.7%) than five years ago. In all four categories of victimisation, the number of children affected is more than 20 percent higher than in 2019 ([Table 6b](#) and [Figure 9](#)).

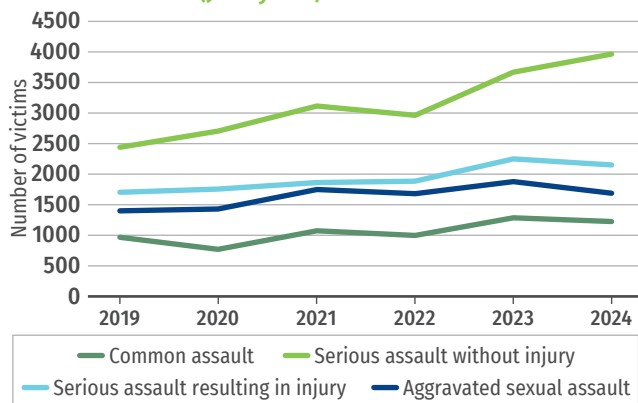
Table 6a: Recorded violent offences against children aged under 15 years old—2019–2024 (June years)²¹

June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y change	5Y change
Common assault	1116	892	1231	1142	1543	1493	-3.2%	33.8%
Serious assault without injury	2690	3087	3559	3410	4366	4651	6.5%	72.9%
Serious assault resulting in injury	1823	1876	2013	2071	2487	2363	-5%	29.6%
Aggravated sexual assault	1497	1515	1877	1804	2013	1833	-8.9%	22.4%

Table 6b: Number of children aged under 15 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2019–2024 (June years)²²

June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y change	5Y change
Common assault	962	771	1069	999	1284	1223	-4.8%	27.1%
Serious assault without injury	2436	2706	3114	2962	3665	3963	8.1%	62.7%
Serious assault resulting in injury	1699	1753	1864	1887	2250	2149	-4.5%	26.5%
Aggravated sexual assault	1397	1428	1748	1678	1876	1683	-10.3%	20.5%
Total victims	6494	6658	7795	7526	9085	9018	-0.6%	38.9%

Figure 9: Number of children aged under 15 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2019–2024 (June years)²³



The pattern of increasing violence carries across into the number of young people aged 15–19 years who were victims of assault. While the number of victims of sexual assault is the lowest it has been in four years (although still higher than in 2019 and 2020), there has been an ongoing trend of increase in other acts intended to cause injury (Figure 9a).

Another indicator of harm against children under 15 years of age is the number who are hospitalised with injuries because of assault, abuse or neglect. The average annual number of hospitalisations was around 250 for the five years to 2019, but three of the past four years have seen more than 300 such hospitalisations and in 2024 the 359 hospitalisations of children was the highest since this recording system was introduced (Figure 10).

Figure 9a: Number of young people aged 15–19 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2019–2024 (June years)²⁴

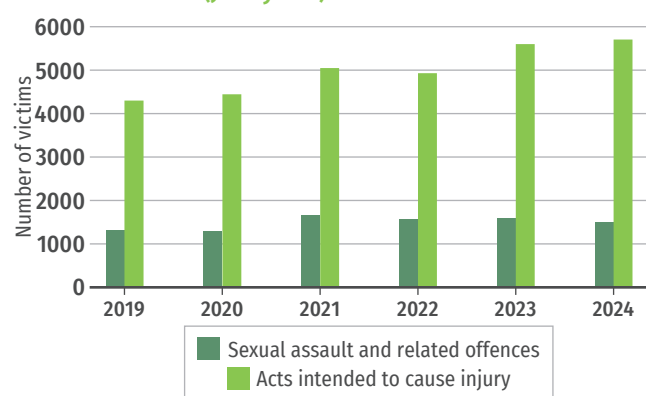


Figure 10: Hospitalisations due to assault, abuse or neglect—2013–2024 (June years)²⁶

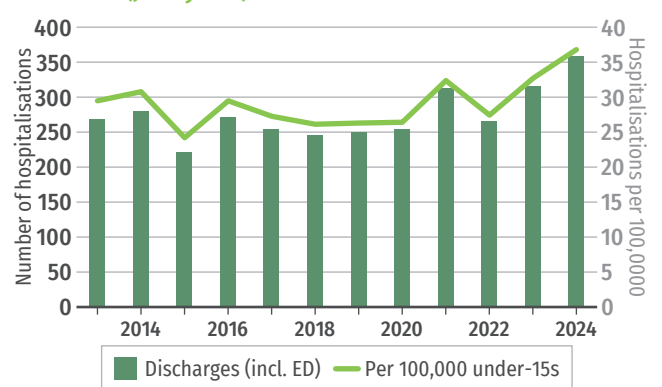


Table 7: Number of young people aged 15–19 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2019–2024 (June years)²⁵

June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Sexual assault and related offences	1311	1275	1661	1573	1588	1492	-6%	13.8%
Acts intended to cause injury	4295	4444	5053	4926	5596	5709	2%	32.9%

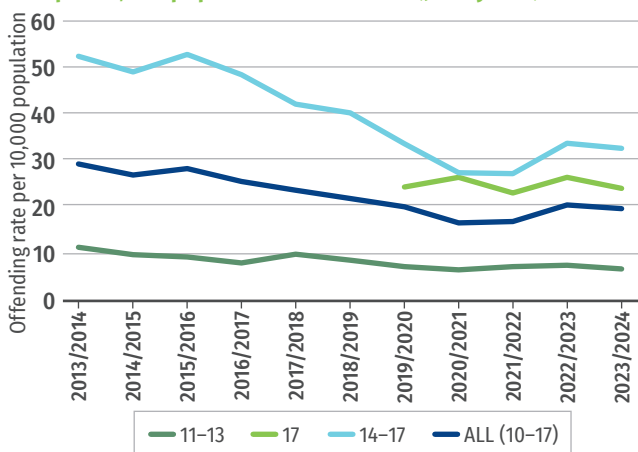
Youth offending

The serious and persistent child and youth offending rate (ages 10–17) dropped slightly in 2024 from 21 to 20 per 10,000 population. This is just over 1000 young people (1073), or just 0.2 percent of the 541,000 children and young people aged 10–17 years.

Children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour are those who have three or more distinct police proceedings within 12 months, where at least one of the offences has a maximum penalty greater than or equal to seven years imprisonment. The most common offences covered by this measure include burglary/unlawful entry, robbery/extortion and theft.²⁷

There are two striking trends to note about youth offending and the government target chosen. First, total youth offending has dropped considerably over the past decade—the overall rate in June 2024 was 31 percent lower than 10 years ago. Second, youth offending was noticeably lower during the 2020–2022 peak Covid-19 pandemic where particularly, in Auckland and northern regions, Covid-19 restrictions reduced opportunity for offending (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Child and youth serious and persistent offending rate per 10,000 population—2013–2024 (June years)²⁸



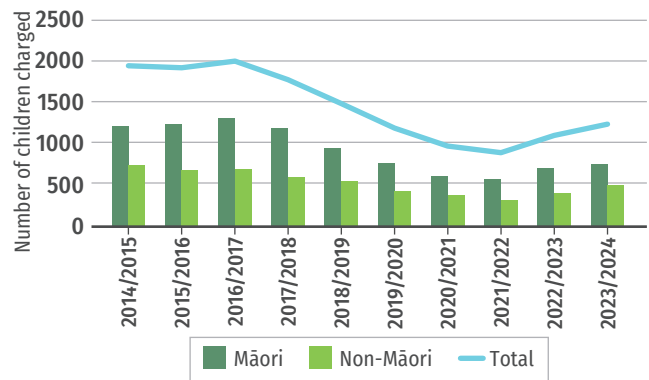
COURT PROCEEDINGS

Most police proceedings against children and young people between the ages of 10–17 years do not end up in the Youth Courts. Other police action includes warnings, alternative action plans (such as community work, curfew, apology and reparation to victims), and Family Group Conferences. In the year to June 2024, police took action against just under 6800 14- to 17-year-olds

and just over 2000 10- to 13-year-olds, about 1.6 percent of all 540,000 10- to 17-year-olds.²⁹

In 2024, around 19 percent of those that police took action against, a total of 1245 young people aged 10–16 years, were charged in any court. This is much higher than the 897 in 2022, but well below the 1494 in 2019, the last year that was not affected the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Number of children and young people aged 10–16 years charged: Māori and non-Māori—2014–2024³⁰

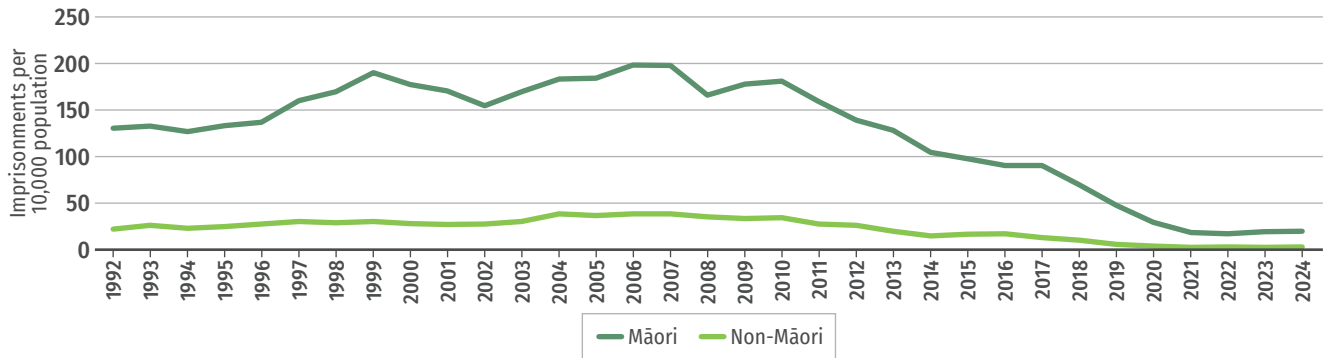


Similar large decreases in offending over the past decade among rangatahi Māori have seen the number reduce by one-half between 2017 (1314) to 579 in 2022, before increasing over the past two years to 750 in 2024. But the huge disparity experienced by rangatahi Māori in the youth justice system remains; they are four times more likely to be charged than non-Māori, partially explained by systemic bias of the police.³¹

The number of teenagers aged 17–19 who were sentenced to imprisonment in the adult courts is now around 140 compared with more than 1200 15 years ago (Figure 13). This has meant far fewer rangitahi Māori ending up in the adult prison system, with the rate per 10,000 in 2024 of 19.8, one-tenth of the rate nearly two decades ago in 2006 of 200 per 10,000.

Youth offending has been in decline for much of the past three decades,³² both in this country and globally. Reasons for this are complex but include societal changes such as young people spending more time online and drinking less alcohol, better security technology (eg, CCTV) reducing opportunity to offend, and changed police practice to divert young people away from courts and prison using Police Youth Aid.³³

Figure 13: Imprisonment sentences for 17- to 19-year-olds—1992–2024³⁴



Early Childhood Education

The extent to which children participate in early childhood education (ECE) prior to starting school has a strong influence on their future educational attainment. Most children in this country do have some level of participation in ECE. In 2023 (most recent data available), there were 192,026 children enrolled with ECE services, an increase of just under 6 percent on 2022, but still well below the almost 199,000 attending in 2019 pre-Covid-19 (Table 8).

Table 8: Number of children enrolled in ECE—2019–2023 (June years)³⁵

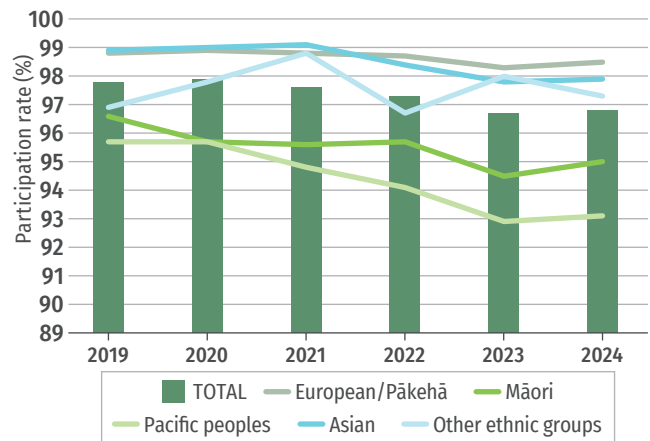
June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total ECE enrolments	198,923	190,348	194,697	181,473	192,026
Percentage change	0.8%	-4.3%	2.3%	-6.8%	5.8%

Prior participation figures for children starting school also give insights into the extent they have participated in ECE before starting school. In the year ended September 2024, around 61,000 children started school. Of that group, just over 1000 had unknown ECE attendance prior to starting school and just under 2000 did not attend ECE prior to starting school. As a result, the 58,051 children who definitely attended ECE prior to starting school represented a 96.8 percent known prior participation rate, similar to the previous year, albeit down slightly from 97.8 in 2019 (Figure 14).

The trend in prior ECE participation rates since 2019 has seen increasing ethnic discrepancies. However, in 2024, Māori rates and Pacific rates increased

slightly more sharply than Pākehā and Asian rates; future years will show whether this is a one-off or a genuine slowing or reversal of inequity.

Figure 14: Participation rate of children in (ECE) prior to starting school—2019–2024 (September years)³⁶



Prior ECE participation is influenced by socio-economic barriers (such as care and protection ROCs, interactions with the justice system, frequent changes of address and welfare benefits as a source of household income), and socio-economic inequities in participation rates have increased since 2019. As with ethnic inequities above, the gap in the prior participation rate increased between 2020 and 2023 and has shown only a small reduction in 2024 (Table 9 and Figure 15 on the next page).

Table 9: Prior participation by socio-economic barriers—2019–2024 (September years)³⁷

June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Prior ECE participation rate—more socio-economic barriers	95.5	95.6	94.7	94.5	92.9	93.4
Prior ECE participation rate—fewer socio-economic barriers	99.3	99.1	99.2	98.9	98.7	98.8
Participation gap	-3.8	-3.5	-4.5	-4.40	-5.8	-5.4

Figure 15: Prior ECE participation by socio-economic barriers—2019–2024³⁸

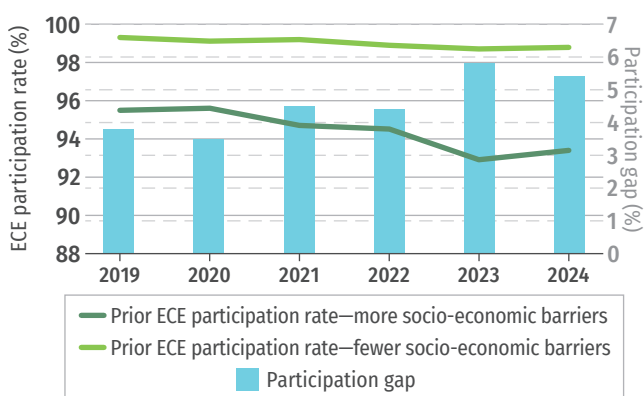


Figure 16: Proportion of students leaving school with less than NCEA Level 1—2013–2023³⁹

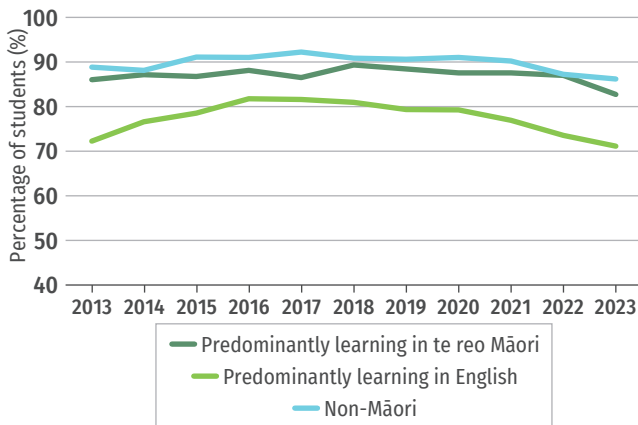


Educational achievement

The proportion of students leaving school without at least NCEA Level 1 was the highest since 2013 (Figure 16). The increases over each of the three years since 2020, following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, are a concerning trend linked with more employment opportunities for young people during 2021–2022, but other factors are also likely to play a role, such as poverty and high levels of mental distress. The rate of school leavers without qualifications increased by over half between 2020 (10.6%) and 2023 (16.2%). For Māori overall, the 2023 rate was 28.3 percent, about double the rate for non-Māori (13.8%). For Māori students predominantly learning in te reo Māori, the rate was 17.3 percent.

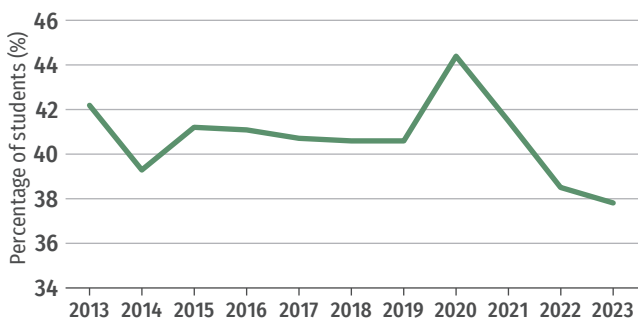
As in previous years, Māori students were more impacted than non-Māori students by the 2023 increase in school leavers without qualifications—the multi-year trend shows that inequity is increasing. The gap between the proportions of Māori and non-Māori students leaving school without NCEA Level 1 or above was 14.5 percentage points, the largest gap since at least 2013. In 2023, the gap was 60 percent wider than it had been in 2016 when inequity on this measure was at its smallest (9 percentage points). Māori predominantly learning in te reo Māori were particularly affected, with the proportion of students leaving without qualifications increasing by one-third (4.3 percentage points), from 13 percent to 17.3 percent, the first time in at least a decade the rate was higher than 14 percent (Figure 16a). Asian students were also greatly affected by the annual trend (more so than were Māori students overall)—the Asian student rate of leaving school without a qualification increased by 2.7 percentage points, or by one-half, from 5.2 percent in 2022 to 7.9 percent in 2023, the first time in at least a decade the rate had been over 6.3 percent.

Figure 16a: Students leaving school with NCEA Level 1 or above, Māori and non- Māori—2013–2023⁴⁰



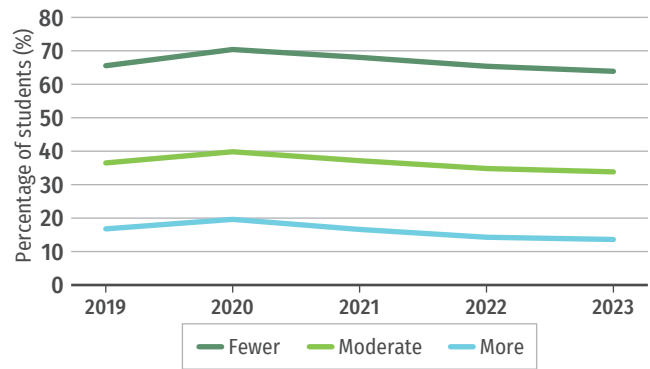
Just under 25,000 students obtained university entrance (UE) or higher in 2023, which is 37.8 percent of all students leaving school, a decrease from 2022, and three percentage points lower than the 2015–2019 average (Figure 17). A change in calculating UE in 2020 due to Covid-19 means 2020 and 2021 are potentially inflated figures, and difficult to compare. However, 2023 was the lowest rate in the past decade.

Figure 17: All school leavers with university entrance—2013–2023⁴¹



There is huge social and economic disparity for the outcomes of the students experiencing more social and economic barriers in their schooling, of whom only about one in seven (13.7%) achieve UE or higher compared to two out of three (63.9%) students experiencing fewer barriers (Figure 18).

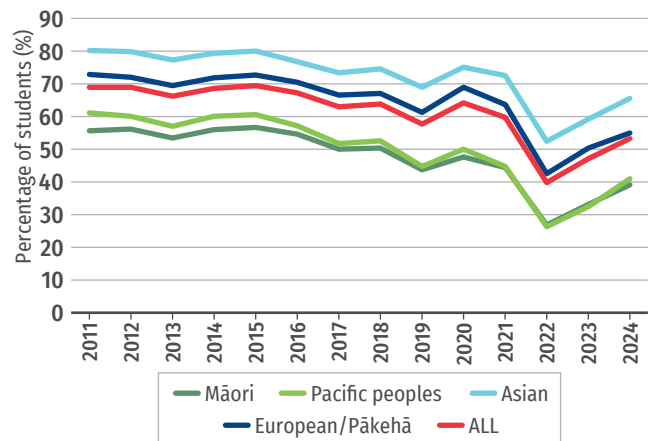
Figure 18: Proportion of school leavers with university entrance by equity index—2019–2023⁴²



STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Attendance rates during the Covid-19 pandemic were very low, bottoming out just below 40 percent in 2022. The second term of 2024 continued the increase in attendance that began in 2023; although attendance levels were still below the 2021 level and pre-Covid-19 level in 2019, the year-on-year trend is encouraging (Figure 19).

Figure 19: School attendance above 90 percent in term 2—2011–2024⁴³

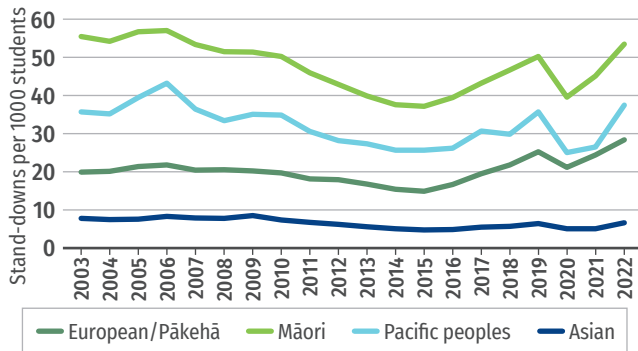


Attendance rates for all ethnicities have increased in the past two years, but the gap between attendance rates across ethnicities did not change significantly. Attendance rates are strongly related to the level of social and economic disadvantage experienced by students attending school. The gap between the attendance rate for the students facing fewer socio-economic barriers (59.1%) compared to students facing high levels of disadvantage (38.6%) is more than 20 percentage points.

STAND-DOWNS

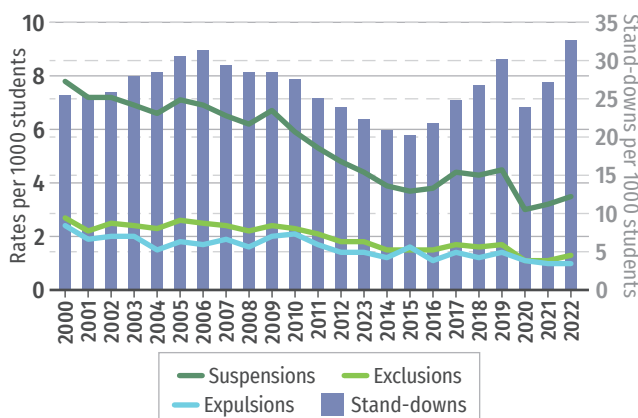
Student stand-downs are a measure of how schools respond to student behaviour, and are not a measure of students' actual behaviour. A stand-down is a removal of a student from a school for a period of up to five days. Stand-downs represent a lower-level school response, while suspensions (formal removal of a student from school or kura by the principal), exclusions and expulsions are much less common escalations in response. Between 2005–2015, the rate of stand-downs was trending down for all ethnicities but has been rising since then, with the most recent figures from 2022 showing European students having a much higher rate than 20 years ago (Figure 20 darkest green line).

Figure 20: Stand-downs per thousand students—2003–2022⁴⁴



The long-term trend is the rates of suspensions, exclusions and expulsions reducing considerably compared with the rates in the early 2000s, as it appears that stand-downs are being used more frequently but not being further escalated (Figure 21).

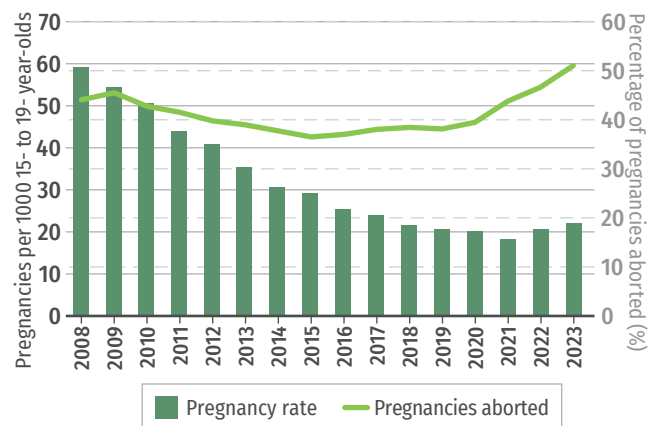
Figure 21: Age-standardised rates per 1000 students—2000–2022⁴⁵



Teenage pregnancy

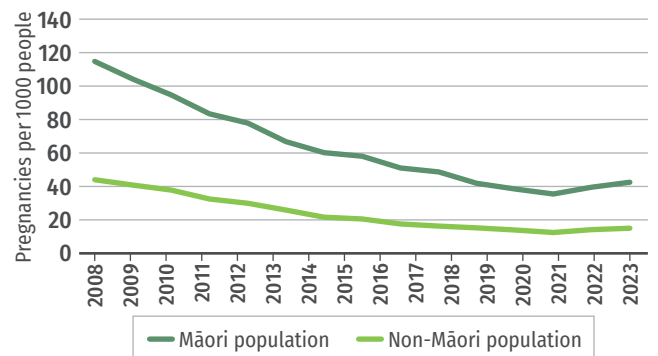
The estimated teenage pregnancy rate for 15- to 19-year-olds increased again in the year to December 2023 (most recent data) to 22 per thousand, the highest since 2017, confirming that the downward trend of more than 15 years is over (Figure 22). This was accompanied by a further rise in the number of abortions in that age group, with half (51%) of pregnancies ending in abortion.

Figure 22: Pregnancy and abortion rate 15- to 19-year-olds—2008–2023⁴⁶



The pregnancy rate for young Māori women also increased in 2022. They have a higher pregnancy rate compared to non-Māori (around 2.8 times higher), and there is no sign of this disparity in rates closing (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Estimated teenage pregnancy rate 15 to 19-year-olds, Māori and non-Māori—2008–2023⁴⁷

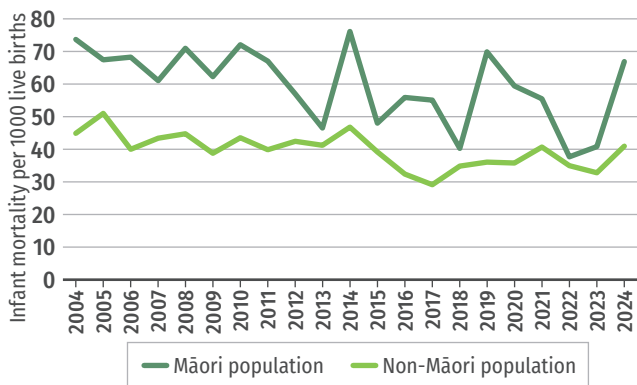


INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Infant mortality rates in this country are overall comparable with those of other wealthy countries: the current rate of around 3.5 deaths per 1000 births is around the same as similar OECD countries such as the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the

Netherlands.⁴⁸ The long-term trend is (slowly) downward and, with the relatively low number of deaths, annual fluctuations and variations occur. The Māori rate has been historically much higher, but over recent decades policies (such as the ‘pēpi-pod’ for infants sharing beds with parents) designed to meet cultural needs and counter the generational effects of colonisation and the socio-economic health status of wāhine Māori have contributed to a reduction in the disparity.⁴⁹ The disparity increased slightly in 2024, but it is unclear whether this is a fluctuation or the beginning of a new trend (Figure 24). Contributing to the increase was the inclusion of infant deaths from previous years in 2024 statistics (see *Māori Wellbeing* p.101).

Figure 24: Infant mortality per 1000 live births, Māori and non-Māori—2004–2024 (June years)⁵⁰



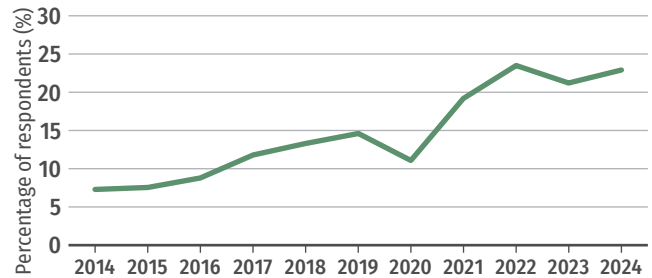
Youth mental health

The surge in high levels of mental distress reported by young people since the Covid-19 pandemic is a leading social and health challenge that, as a country and in our communities, we must find ways to heal. The government has set a series of mental health and addiction targets⁵¹ that are intended to measure progress to increase access to specialist mental health services and better responses in emergency departments. But currently young people face long waiting times to services, a lack of services designed for young people’s needs, and mental health sector workforce shortages.⁵²

In 2024, the proportion of young people aged 15–24 years who reported high levels of psychological distress was 22.9 percent, the second-highest it has been for at least a decade, reversing the brief

decline between 2022 and 2023. This is some three times higher than the level a decade ago (Figure 25).

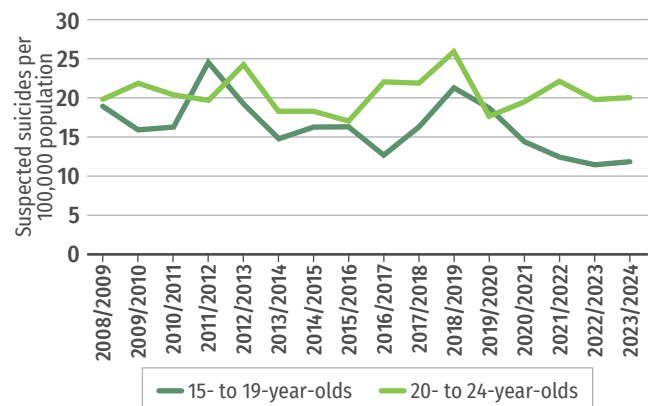
Figure 25: Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years reporting high or very high psychological distress in the past four weeks—2014–2024⁵³



YOUTH SUICIDE

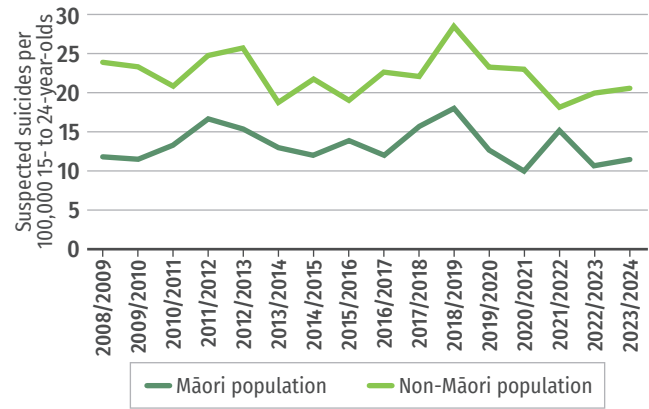
A young person taking their own life is an enormous tragedy, and the anguish experienced by young people that results in their death, as well as the grief and pain experienced by whānau/families and friends is huge. Suicide was the leading cause of death in all those aged 15–19 years in the period of 2015–2019, according to the Child and Youth Mortality Review.⁵⁴ Working to prevent youth suicide must be a high priority of social policy, recognising that Aotearoa New Zealand continues to experience rates relatively high compared to other similar countries in the OECD.⁵⁵ In 2024, the suicide rate per 100,000 population changed very little, and the rate for 15- to 19-year-olds in 2023 and 2024 remains lower than in any other of the previous 15 years (Figure 26). For 20- to 24-year-olds, the rate in 2024 was around the same as it was in 2008/09.

Figure 26: Rate of suspected suicides per 100,000 population, 15- to 19-year-olds and 20- to 24-year-olds—2008–2024 (June years)⁵⁶



Rangatahi Māori aged between 15–24 years experience suicide rates that are higher than those for non-Māori. The number of suspected suicide deaths among rangatahi Māori in 2024 was slightly higher than in 2023, but the years 2021, 2023 and 2024 have seen the lowest number of suicides per year since 2010 (Figure 26a). The discrepancy between Māori and non-Māori rates also seems to be slowly trending down: 2023 (the most recent year for which the rates are available) saw the second-smallest discrepancy between Māori and non-Māori rates in at least 16 years, after 2021.

Figure 26a: Number of suicide deaths among Māori and non-Māori in the 15–24 years age group—2008–2024 (June years)⁵⁷



Overall assessment: Children and Youth

CATEGORY	RESULT
CHILD POVERTY The proportion of children in material hardship and income poverty increased in 2023. During 2024, the number of children in benefit households who are most likely to experience poverty increased.	—
CHILDREN AT RISK The number of children in state care continued to decline, but the number of children entering care increased. The number of cases of substantiated abuse against children also increased in 2024, although still much lower than five years ago.	—
CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE More children were victims of violent offences in 2024 than in 2023 and children are also victims at significantly higher rates than five years ago.	—
YOUTH OFFENDING There was a small decrease in youth offending in 2024, and offending overall remains much lower than 10 years ago.	+
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION The rate of children’s participation in ECE prior to starting school increased in 2024 and the number of enrolments in 2023 increased.	+
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT The number of students leaving school with less than NCEA 1 increased and those achieving UE or higher decreased. Socio-economic disparities in outcomes also increased.	—
TEENAGE PREGNANCY The rates of pregnancy and abortion both increased in 2023, although rates are still well below that of a decade ago.	—
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH The level of high mental health and distress did not change significantly and it remains high compared with five years ago.	NC

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WORK AND INCOMES

A country where everyone can have enough income and the necessities to live with dignity and freedom and able to participate and contribute in their communities is the vision that underpins this section. The goal is kotahitanga (unity), that suggests we are stronger together and, when times are tough, those who have more share from their bounty for the good of all.

The economic downturn that has shaped most of the past two years deepened during 2024, sharpening social impacts which brought more pain to communities. In inflation-adjusted terms, the share per person of the total economy declined, the overall fall in economic growth in the six months to September 2024 saw the largest decline since 1991 (excluding the Covid-19 period). Strong net inward migration counteracted the record level of New Zealand citizens leaving the country.

Paid-employment growth stalled during 2024, and the unemployment rate continued to rise steadily throughout the year. The unequal burden of this increase continues to be on Pacific, Māori and disabled people who face unemployment rates two to three times higher than other population groups. The number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by over 9000 to more than 83,000 in September 2024, close to the Covid-19 high in 2020.

Food insecurity worsened sharply again in 2024, with the proportion of households with children reporting some level of food insecurity reaching the highest level in over a decade. More than one-half of Pacific children face food insecurity. Household living cost increases eased somewhat as the inflation rate decreased, but this was not enough to ease the pressures on families. Salvation Army services continued to see levels of need for food support that are 40 percent higher than pre-Covid-19, distributing more than 84,000 food parcels during 2024.

The number of people receiving income support reached a record high at the same time as the government reduced the spending on hardship

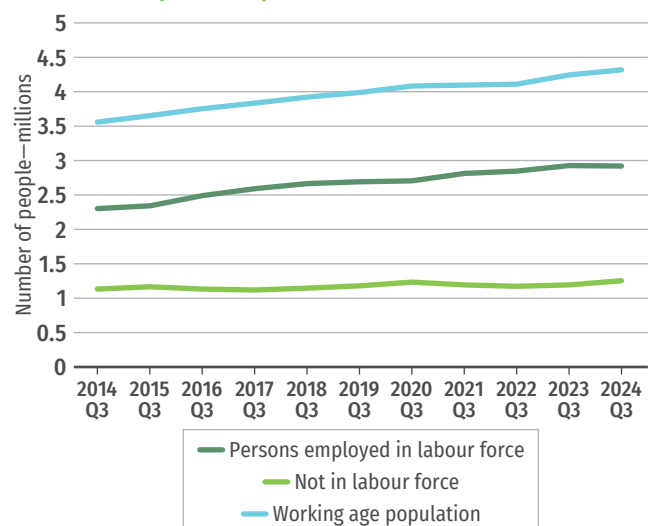
support payments for food and housing, by tightening criteria for accessing that support and an increasing use of sanctions.

Wages continued to rise in 2024, with the average wage just keeping ahead of inflation, although the gender pay gap barely changed. Other indicators of wage inequality worsened in 2024, following the increase in income inequality in the June 2023 year (most recent figures).

Employment

Employment growth stalled during 2024. The 2.918 million people in paid employment in September 2024 was 11,000 (0.4%) fewer than at the same time in 2023 (2.929 million—[Figure 27](#)). The working-age population grew by just under 75,000 (a 1.8% increase) over the same period to reach 4.32 million, but those not in the labour force rose by nearly 58,000 (4.8%), meaning the labour force participation rate reduced from 71.8 percent in 2023 to 71 percent.

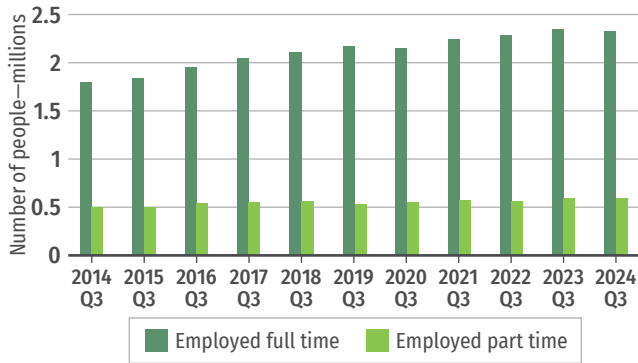
Figure 27: Working-age population and persons employed—2014–2024 (September quarter actual)⁵⁸



Over the past 10 years, full-time paid employment has increased by 29 percent, with part-time roles increasing by 18 percent. Of those in paid employment, just under one-fifth (19%) were working part-time in September 2024, a similar proportion to the previous five years. But during

2024, the trends of change in employment shifted, as the number of people in full-time employment decreased by 17,000 and part-time employment increased by 5900 in September 2024, compared with a year earlier (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Total number in paid employment—2014–2024 (September quarter actual)⁵⁹



Employment and migration patterns are strongly linked. Immigration increases the working-age population and can add skills and productive capacity to grow the economy. But it can also reduce incentives for employers and government to invest in education and training, and put pressure on key infrastructure such as housing.⁶⁰ Migration flows continued to change during 2024 following record net inward migration in 2023. The year to September 2024 saw a record number of New Zealand citizens departing the country,⁶¹ with the annual net migration loss of New Zealand citizens reaching just under 55,000. This was offset by the net migration gain of non-New Zealand citizens that reached almost 100,000, resulting in an overall net migration gain of 44,900, a similar level to pre-Covid-19 annual net migration.

Figure 29 shows the migration changes as quarterly figures that reveal the large swings in migration experienced since mid-2019 (due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic). The continuing high level of inward migration is the driving force of strong population growth since 2022, both increasing the size of the working-age population and increasing the need for housing and other infrastructure (see Housing p.39).

Unemployment

The number of people unemployed increased by more than 30,000 during 2024 with the unemployment rate reaching 5 percent and the number of people officially unemployed passed 150,000 in the December quarter of 2024, back to levels around those at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The Treasury is forecasting that unemployment will rise further during 2025 to peak around 5.5 percent.

The proportion of people of working age who were either in paid employment or actively looking is measured by the labour force participation rate, which also declined during 2024 to 70.5 in September 2024, but is still comparatively high after the record high levels during late 2022 and early 2023 (Figure 30).

Figure 29: Estimated net quarterly migration—2009–2024⁶²

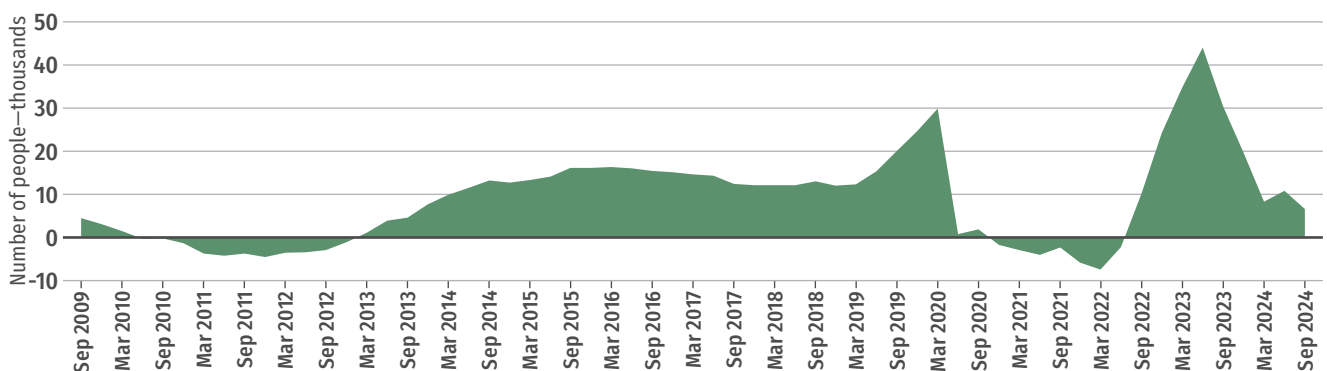
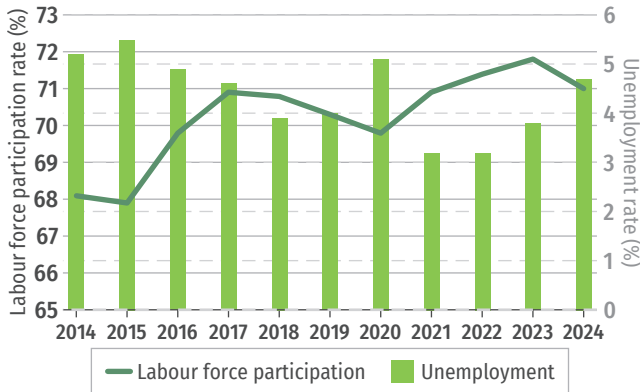


Figure 30: Unemployment and participation rates—2014–2024 (September quarter actual)⁶³

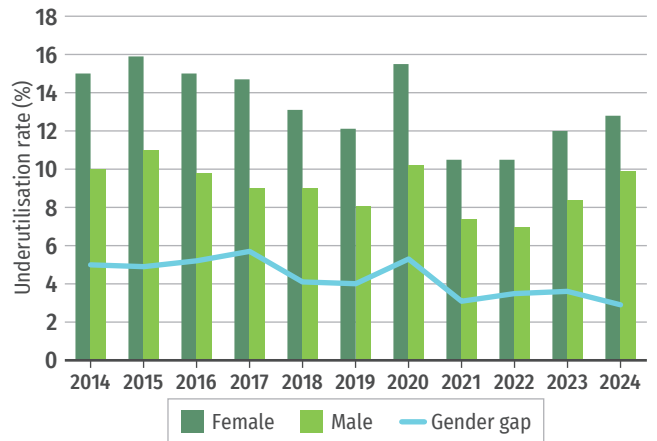


Total numbers for those counted as unemployed are measured through the official unemployment figures collected by the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). The number of people who are not counted as officially unemployed but who want a paid job is called the ‘potential labour force’. This group is made up of those available but not actively seeking a job and those not immediately available but who want a job. Our figure for the total ‘jobless’, combines the total official unemployed (Figure 31 lime green line) with the additional potential labour force (Figure 31 blue line) reached a total of 257,000 at the end of December 2024 (see Figure 31 darkest green area).

WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

Women experience higher unemployment and underemployment than men, but while this gender disparity is persisting, the male underutilisation rate has been increasing more than that for women, resulting in a small reduction in disparity and making the disparity rate 2.9 percentage points, the lowest in at least 11 years (Figure 32). Underutilisation is one way of measuring the spare capacity in the workforce. It captures those workers who are in paid employment but would like to work more hours (to either move from part time to full time or increase part-time hours) as well as those who are available to do paid work but not actively seeking paid employment.

Figure 32: Underutilisation rate by gender (September quarter actual)⁶⁵



The gap in labour force participation rates has closed by a couple of percentage points over the past decade, but the unemployment rate for women has been higher than that for men over the past three years (Figure 33).

Figure 31: Total jobless, unemployed and potential labour force—2014–2024 (December quarter)⁶⁴

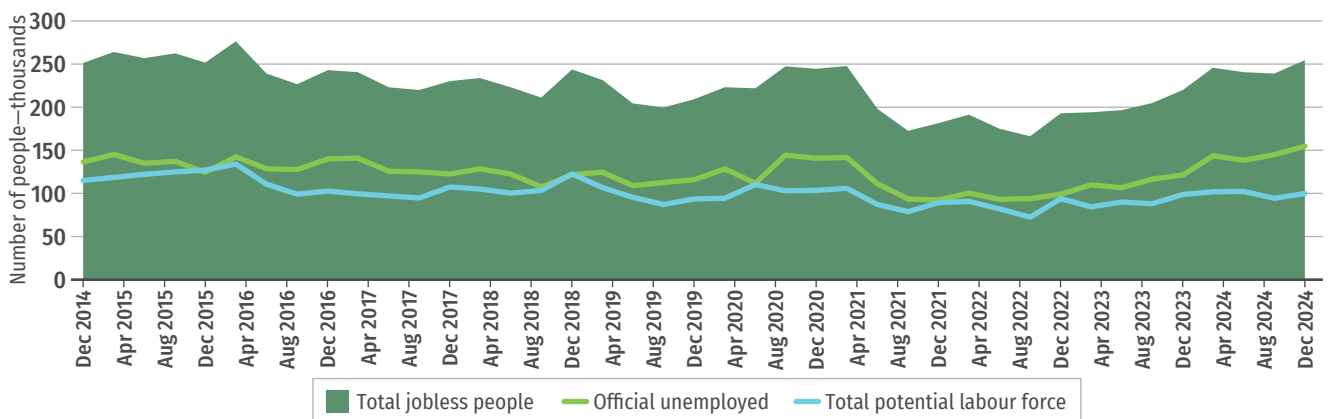
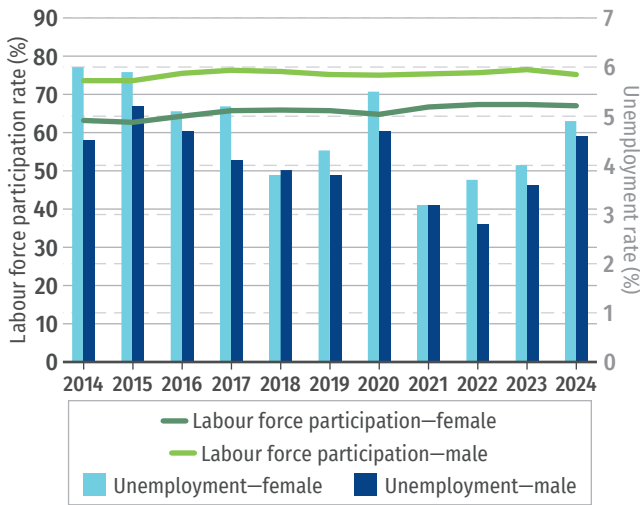


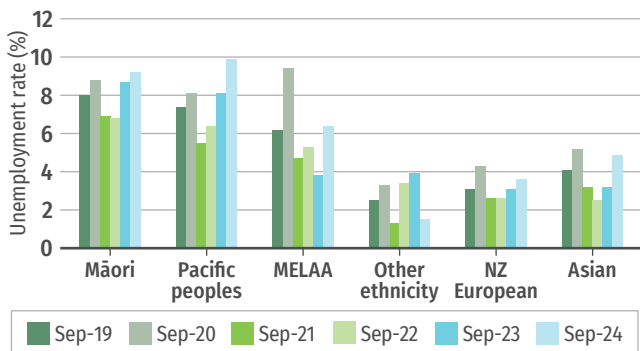
Figure 33: Labour force participation rates by gender—2014–2024 (September quarter actual)



ETHNIC EMPLOYMENT

The abiding ethnic disparities in paid employment deepened with the continuing economic downturn. Māori and Pacific workers are bearing an unfair share of the impact of the rise in unemployment. In 2024, the Pacific workers’ unemployment rate was almost 10 percent, more than double the rate for the whole workforce, and since September 2021 it had risen by 5 percentage points compared to 1 percentage point for European workers (Figure 34). The unemployment rate for Māori workers climbed to 9.2 percent and Middle East, Latin American and African (MELAA) workers are also facing relatively higher unemployment rates.

Figure 34: Unemployment rate by ethnicity—2019–2024 (September actual, not seasonally adjusted)⁶⁶

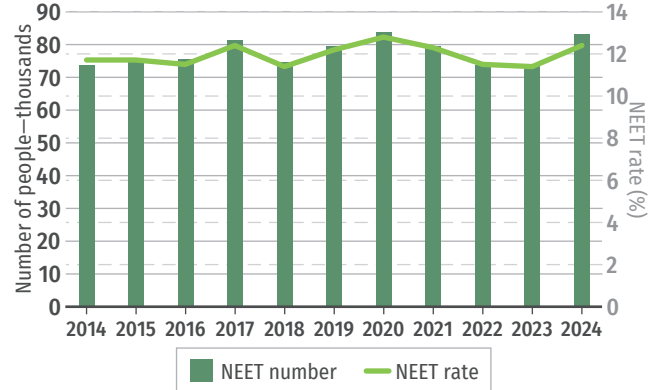


YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are once again among those most impacted by rising unemployment. The number of young people aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in

September 2024 increased to 83,200, some 9200 more than in 2023 (74,000) and close to the high seen in September 2020 during the Covid-19 crisis (Figure 35).

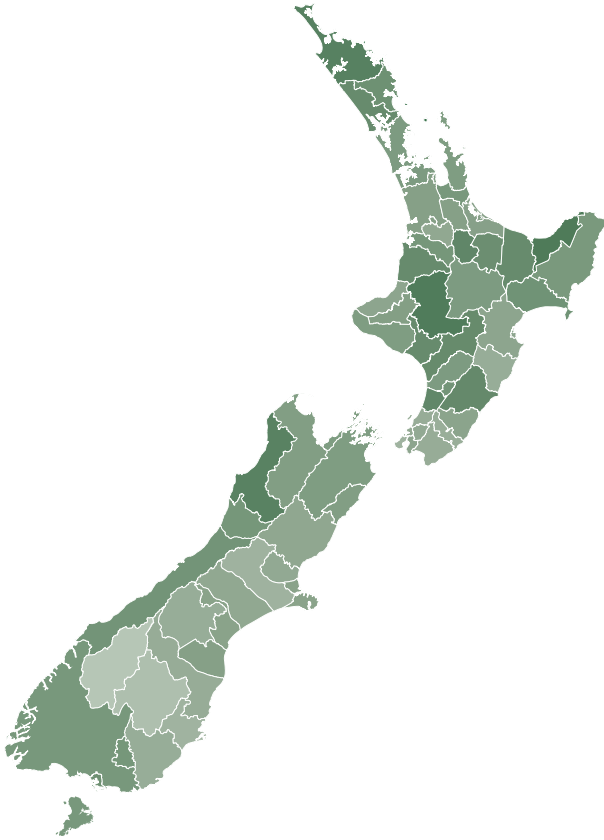
Figure 35: Number of young people (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET)—2014–2024



(September years)⁶⁷

The youth NEET rate also increased from 11.4 percent to 12.4 percent, although there continues to be wide variation in NEET rates around the country. Northland (18.3%) and Manawatu (15.3%) were the regions with the highest rates. The NEET rates in the Wellington region at 9.3 percent and in Otago at 10 percent continue to be among the lowest in the country (Figure 36). The largest decreases in NEET rates were in Taranaki (down 5.3 percentage points) and Gisborne/Hawke’s Bay (down 4.5 percentage points). In Auckland, the increase, of 5200 in the number of young people who are NEET, accounted for more than one-half of the total increase in NEET numbers nationally.

Figure 36: NEET rates regions New Zealand heat map⁶⁸



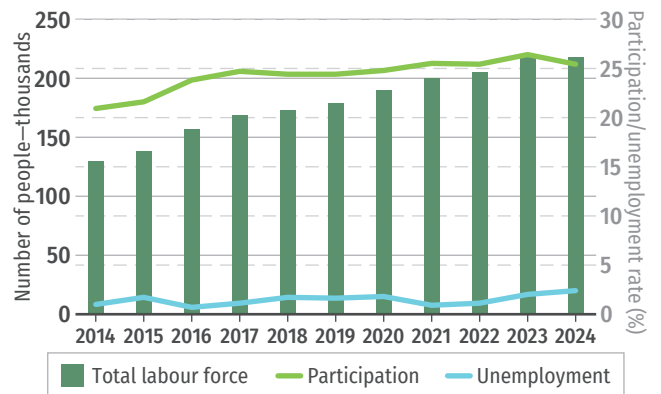
Region	NEET rate % Sep 2024 annual	2023	Change
Northland	18.3	15.9	2.4
Manawatu-Whanganui	15.8	12.7	3.1
Bay of Plenty	14.9	16.2	-1.3
Waikato	13.3	12.1	1.2
Auckland	13.1	11	2.1
Southland	12.8	11.5	1.3
Taranaki	12	17.3	-5.3
Canterbury	11	10	1
Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	11	8.8	2.2
Gisborne/Hawke's Bay	10.4	14.9	-4.5
Wellington	10	8.2	1.8
Otago	9.3	10.5	-1.2
North Island	13	11.8	1.2
South Island	10.7	10.1	0.6
Total all regional councils	12.4	11.1	1.3

PAID WORKFORCE OVER 65

The long-term trend of an ageing population means that the paid work of older people aged over 65 is becoming more important with each passing year. The total population aged over 65 was nearing 900,000 in 2024 and around one-quarter of over 65s are active in the paid labour force. In September 2024, there were 217,000 people aged over 65 in paid employment or actively looking for such compared with 129,000 ten years ago, a 68 percent increase (Figure 37). Over the same period, the total population aged over 65 increased by 38 percent. Almost one-half (48%) of people aged 65–69 are in the labour force compared with just under 40 percent a decade ago. Over the same period the number of over 70-year-olds in the labour force has nearly doubled from 44,000 to 87,000, with around one in seven (15%) in paid work or looking for such.

The unemployment rate is low for over-65-year-olds at 2.4 percent, but it is noticeable that the number has more than doubled over the past two years to 5000 in September 2024. It would seem that several thousand more of those over 65 need paid work and are actively seeking employment.

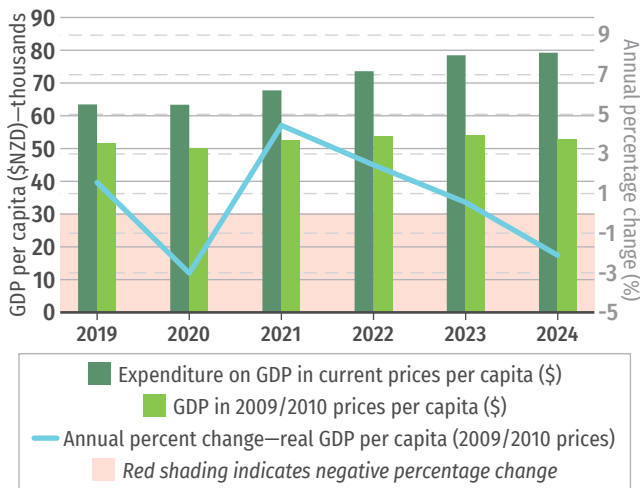
Figure 37: Labour force participation over 65-year-olds—2014–2024 (September quarter)⁶⁹



Incomes

There have been nearly two years of economic recession in this country when measured on a per person basis and adjusted for inflation. Economic growth has not been keeping up with inflation and population growth. The share of the total economic ‘pie’ per person (GDP per capita) after adjusting for inflation has either declined or saw no change in each quarter since September 2022. In the year to September 2024, GDP per capita adjusted for inflation declined by 2.7 percent (Figure 38). The overall fall in economic growth in the six months to September 2024 was a larger decrease than during the global financial crisis 15 years ago and, aside from the Covid-19 period in 2020, the worst since 1991.⁷⁰

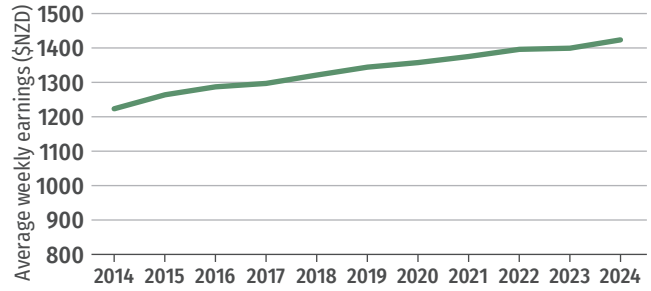
Figure 38: GDP per capita—2019–2024 (September years)⁷¹



WAGE EARNINGS

The rapid fall in inflation during 2024, combined with continued growth in wage rates and average weekly earnings, resulted in modest real wage earnings growth of 1.8 percent after adjusting for inflation in the year to September 2024 (Figure 38a). Over the past decade, average real weekly earnings have risen by 16.8 percent, meaning that most people in employment have been seeing some improvement. But the benefits of real wage growth are not evenly distributed. Each year around one-third of employees do not receive a pay increase, with 37 percent missing out in the year to September 2024.⁷²

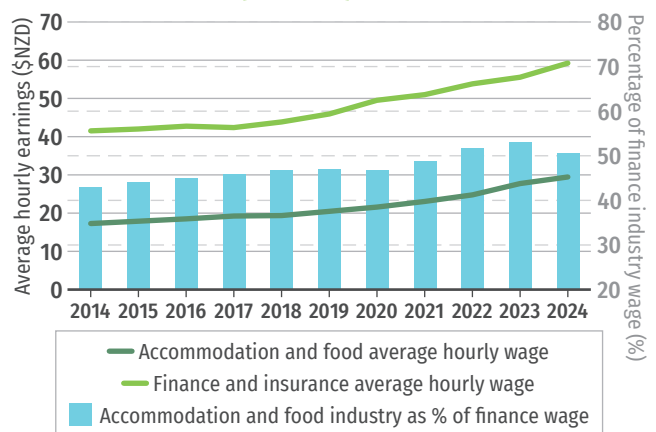
Figure 38a: Real average weekly earnings—2014–2024 (September 2024 dollars)⁷³



WAGE INEQUALITY

Despite wages on average keeping ahead of inflation, not all workers benefitted equally. The gap widened between average hourly wages in the lowest-paid sector (accommodation and food services) compared to those in the highest-paid sector (finance and insurance) during 2024. This ended the trend of the three previous years that had seen the gap closing somewhat. The average hourly earnings for the workers in accommodation and food services increased by just 1.2 percent and their earnings are just over one-half of those who work in finance and insurance whose hourly earnings increased by 3.8 percent (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Accommodation and food service sector average hourly wage as a proportion of finance and insurance sector—2014–2024 (September quarter actual)⁷⁴

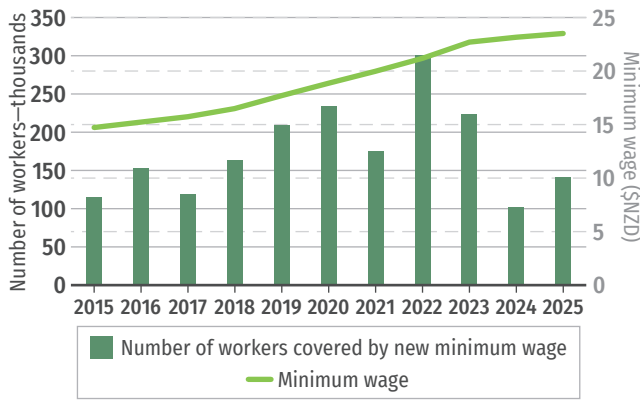


MINIMUM WAGE

The real earnings of people receiving the lowest wages (earners receiving the minimum wage) declined in 2024, directly affecting around 128,000 people. Every year the government is required to make the decision about the level of the minimum pay rate. This is a crucial decision for low-paid workers. In 2023, around 440,000 or 15 percent of

all those in the paid workforce were being paid wages ranging from the 2023 minimum wage of \$22.70 to the Living Wage of \$26.⁷⁵

Figure 40: Minimum wage and additional number of workers covered by new minimum wage—2015–2025⁷⁶



The 2025 minimum wage rate will be \$23.50 per hour, as announced in December 2024,⁷⁷ impacting the hourly wages of an estimated 141,900 workers currently earning below that from April 2025 (Figure 40). The increase of just 35 cents per hour or 1.5 percent was the lowest increase in the minimum wage since 2013, and well below the annual inflation rate of 2.2 percent in September 2024. This was the second year of a minimum wage increase below the inflation rate, meaning a wage cut in real terms for the lowest-paid workers. This is estimated to leave workers around \$1206 per year worse off in real terms.⁷⁸

This decision reflects the current government’s goal to lower inflation by reducing production costs to employers and reduce demand through lower purchasing power of wage earners. However, the Minimum Wage Review 2024 notes that the impact of increases of the minimum wage on inflation are considered ‘negligible’. The social costs, such as increased food insecurity and material hardship of below-inflation minimum wage increases for low-income workers are very real.

Disabled workers are among those who have been denied the opportunity to access the minimum wage, with the decision this year not to implement a wage supplement scheme that would have ensured around 900 workers received it.⁷⁹

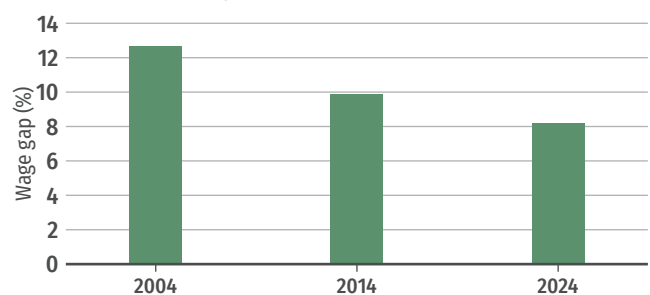
The Living Wage review undertaken by independent researchers at the Family Centre saw the Living Wage increase in September 2024 to \$27.80 per hour, an increase based on the increase in the average wage to December 2023.⁸⁰ Thus, the gap between the current minimum wage and a liveable wage that is enough to enable workers to live with dignity grew from \$2.85 to \$4.30 per hour.

GENDER PAY EQUITY

In 2024, the gender pay gap decreased ever so slightly to 8.2 percent compared with 8.6 percent in 2023, a decrease so small it is within the margin of error. It is little changed from the 9.9 percent gap a decade ago (Figure 41). Every year the progress (or lack thereof) towards equality in median hourly earnings is reported, documenting the enduring inequity experienced by women in paid employment. It is now more than 50 years since the Equal Pay Act 1972 came into law⁸¹ and the question remains why, half a century later, women still on average earn almost 10 percent less than men? At the current rate it will take nearly another 50 years to close the pay gap.⁸²

There are complex reasons for the persistent pay gap, but most recent research suggests that most of the gap is driven by so-called ‘unexplained factors’ that cannot be so easily measured, such as conscious and unconscious employer bias. These factors have a much bigger impact than others, such as levels of education, types of occupations and industries where women and men tend to work and the fact that a higher proportion of women work part time.⁸³

Figure 41: Gender pay gap, median hourly earnings—2004, 2014 and 2024 (June years)⁸⁴



Pacific women face a much larger pay gap than others, with their median earnings at \$29 per hour some 22 percent less than those of European men (\$35.48 per hour); wāhine Māori face a similarly large gap, with median earnings at \$29.88 per hour. In contrast, the pay gap between European women (\$33.56 per hour) and men is only 5.5 percent.

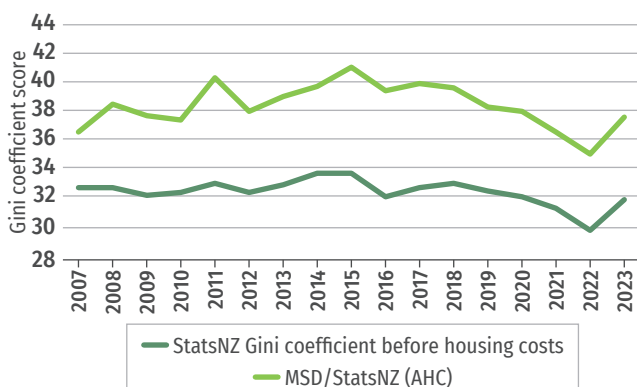
The overall trend for women in the past 15 years has been a higher proportion of women seeking paid employment (labour force participation rates) and generally lower unemployment rates. But low unemployment and relatively strong economic growth in recent years has not helped make significant inroads into earning disparities. The government has this year launched a pay gap calculator tool to support organisations in calculating their pay gap and to measure progress in achieving equity in earnings for women.⁸⁵

INCOME INEQUALITY

Income inequality increased in 2023 on both before- and after-housing costs measures, ending the downward trend of the years from 2018–2022. **Figure 42** below shows the Gini Coefficient, which maps the degree to which income is concentrated in pockets or diffused across a population, with low scores indicating lower inequality and higher scores indicating higher inequality.⁸⁶

The impact of policies that have lifted lowest incomes for those on welfare and in the lowest paid jobs diminished in 2023, as rising housing costs affected lower-income earners more, wage increases eased and unemployment rose. Based on the trends in wage and gender equity discussed previously, it seems likely that this trend of growing income inequality continued into 2024.

Figure 42: Income inequality (Gini Coefficient)—2007–2023⁸⁷



Income support and welfare

WELFARE EXPENDITURE

Total government spending on welfare support increased by just under \$2.6 billion (7.2%) in the year to June 2024 (**Table 10**). NZ Super and veterans' pensions accounted for 80 percent of the overall increase in welfare spending, rising by \$2 billion as the number of people receiving NZ Super increased to almost 933,000 in December 2024. Pension payments make up more than one-half of all welfare spending (54%) and have increased by nearly one-half (47.5%) over the past five years.

Spending on main working-age benefits rose by \$988 million or 12.8 percent, reflecting the increasing number of people receiving welfare support, as well as cost of living adjustments to the benefit rates. Largely offsetting this was the decrease of \$703 million in spending on other benefits such as the one-off Cost of Living payments (\$600 million in 2023) and the Covid-19 leave support payments which came to an end.

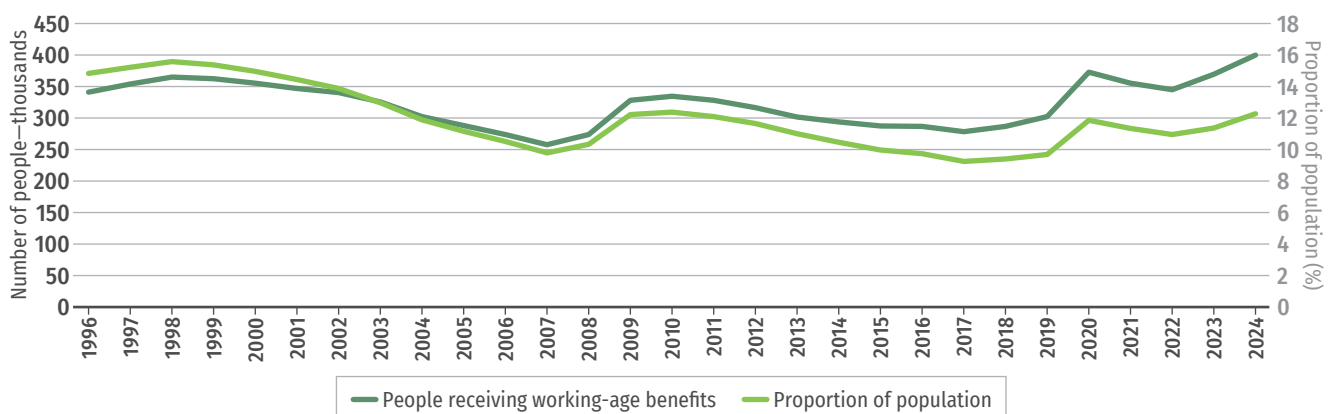
Table 10: Government spending on main income support programmes (\$millions)—2019–2024 (June years)⁸⁸

Government spending on main income support programmes (\$ millions)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
NZ Superannuation and veterans' pensions	14,715	15,666	16,708	17,898	19,649	21,706
Main working-age benefits	4526	5166	6505	7081	7701	8689
Housing subsidies	2614	2994	3504	3709	3671	3928
Working for Families tax credits	2766	2830	2688	2536	2627	2745
Other benefits and allowances	2068	2557	3069	3274	3928	3225
Total benefit expenses (excluding Wage Subsidy)	26,689	29,213	32,474	34,498	37,576	40,293
Increase excluding Wage Subsidy		9.5%	11.2%	6.2%	8.9%	7.2%
Wage Subsidy scheme		12,095	1197	4689		1
Total benefit expenses	26,689	41,308	33,671	39,187	37,576	40,294
Growth in spending on benefits	11.2%	54.8%	-18.5%	16.4%	-4.1%	7.2%
Core Crown Expenditure	86,959	108,832	107,764	125,641	127,574	138,998
Benefits as share of Core Crown Expenditure	30.7%	38%	31.2%	31.2%	29.5%	29%
NZ Superannuation as share of Core Crown Expenditure	16.9%	14.4%	15.5%	14.2%	15.4%	15.6%

WORKING-AGE BENEFITS

The total number of people receiving welfare support reached a record high, reaching 409,600 by December 2024, the number having grown by 58,000 since mid-2023. This represents 12 percent of the working-age population, the same as at the peak during the Covid-19 crisis in 2021, but still well below the peak rate of welfare receipt of just under 16 percent in 1998. A similar rate to 1998 at the end of 2024 would have been around 500,000 in receipt of welfare support (Figure 43).

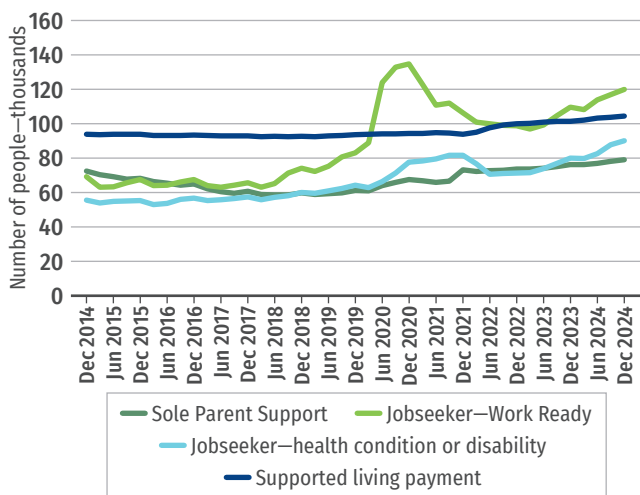
The numbers of those receiving the four main working benefits have all increased over the past year (Figure 44). Total Jobseeker numbers reached 213,300 by December 2024, an increase of 23,500. The number of people who were receiving the Jobseeker (Work Ready) income support benefit increased by 17,000 reaching 120,400 (Figure 44, lime green line) during the year and the number of people receiving the Jobseeker health condition or disability payment also increased by 12,800.

Figure 43: Working-age benefits—1996–2024 (annual actual)⁸⁹

This increase is related to the growth in unemployment which increased by some 30,000, making it harder for those on a Jobseeker benefit to find employment. In contrast, the number of people receiving sole parent allowance and disability support showed smaller increases. Not all those who are receiving the Jobseeker (Work Ready) welfare benefit are counted as part of the unemployment figure (see p.25). Around one-third of Jobseeker (Work Ready) recipients are not classified in the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) as unemployed, as they may have part-time work, are not able to begin employment immediately or have not been actively seeking work in the four weeks prior to the survey interview.⁹⁰

In addition to increasing unemployment, other structural issues make it hard for people receiving welfare benefits to find employment: mismatches of skills and experience; and location and financial obstacles, such as high effective marginal tax rates when people transition from a benefit into paid employment (eg, their incomes exceed thresholds for welfare assistance such as Working for Families).⁹¹

Figure 44: Number of people receiving selected working-age welfare benefits—2014–2024⁹²



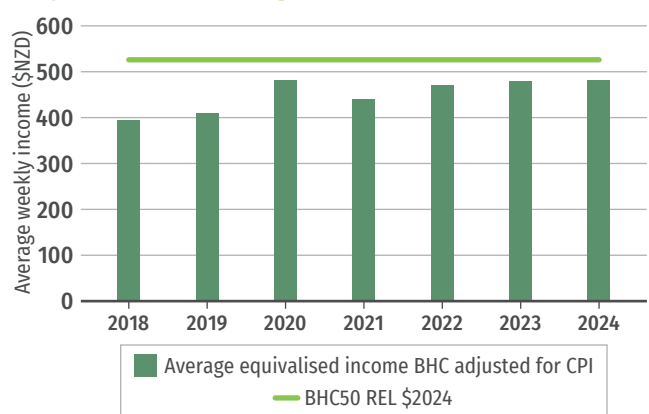
INCOME ADEQUACY

The core welfare benefit payments such as Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment are essential assistance provided to help people who need support because they cannot be in paid employment for a number of reasons: there is no paid work available; they

are unwell; they are living with a disability; they or are caring for children or other family members. The level of the core benefit payments is crucial to achieving incomes that are adequate for people to live with dignity, and to reduce poverty.

Core benefits make up only part of the weekly income for people relying on our complex welfare system. Actual income received is made up of the core benefits plus a range of other support payments, such as a mix of Working for Families tax credits, Accommodation Supplement, temporary additional support, disability assistance, special needs grants and other assistance. Analysis by the Ministry of Social Development⁹³ of the ‘Total Incomes’ of households receiving welfare benefit from mid-2024 shows that the changes made to the welfare system since 2018 have increased incomes for households needing welfare support significantly. But in 2024, after adjusting for inflation, there was no real gain in income for those households compared with 2023. **Figure 45** shows incomes rising since 2018, but in 2024 on average welfare households were still below the poverty line before housing costs.

Figure 45: Average equivalised weekly total income welfare recipients (before housing costs)—2018–2024 (\$2024)⁹⁴



The impact of housing costs on peoples’ incomes can be seen in **Figure 46** and **Table 11**, which shows average total income for those living in public housing covered by the Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS) that sets their rent at 25 percent of household income and compares this to those not in public housing receiving the Accommodation Supplement (AS). The AS payment before housing costs lifts

income on average to close to the poverty line for those families, but housing costs drag them into deeper poverty. In contrast, those living in public housing have on average lower incomes before housing costs compared to AS households (partly because the IRRS subsidy is paid directly to the public housing provider), but higher incomes after housing costs. Average housing costs for AS households at \$294 per week were nearly three times higher than those in public housing (\$104).

Figure 46: Average weekly total equivalised income welfare recipients and housing costs—April 2024⁹⁵

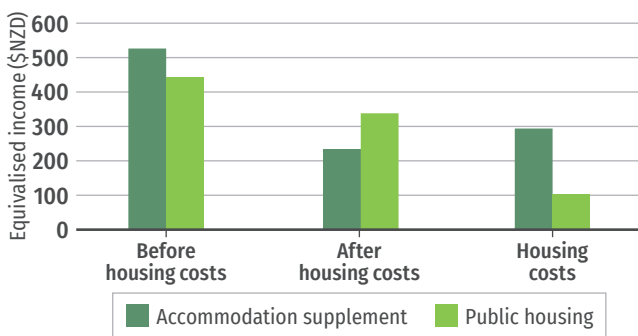


Table 11: Average weekly total equivalised income welfare recipients and housing costs—April 2024

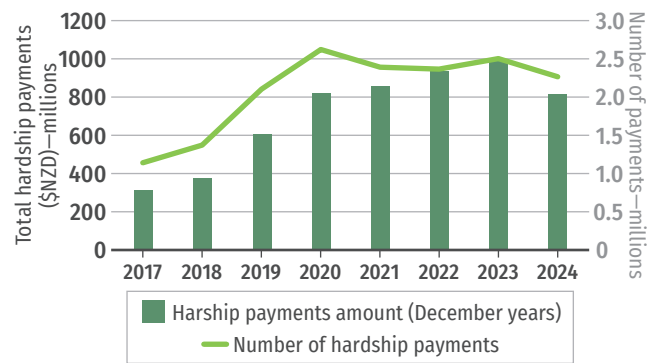
Average equivalised total income	Accommodation Supplement	Public housing
Before housing costs	\$527	\$442
After housing costs	\$233	\$338
Average housing costs	\$294	\$104
Housing costs as a percentage of total income	56%	24%

Hardship and food security

The total value of government hardship support payments declined by around \$180 million during 2024. There was a significant reduction in both the number and total dollar value of hardship payments made by Work and Income to households needing extra support. The number of grants was down by around 11 percent, and the dollar value reduced by 18 percent (Figure 47). The reductions in access to grants followed government decisions to tighten access to special needs grants for housing and food, and does not necessarily reflect a reduction in overall need.⁹⁶

Emergency housing grant costs nearly halved from \$341 million in 2023 to \$189 million; and in the December 2024 quarter just over \$18 million in grants was paid out compared with \$86 million in the December 2023 quarter, as the criteria to access emergency housing were tightened (see Housing p.39).⁹⁷ Other indicators of need point to increasing food hardship at the same time as access to government hardship support is tightened.

Figure 47: Government spending on additional hardship assistance, annual total number and \$ value—2017–2024⁹⁸

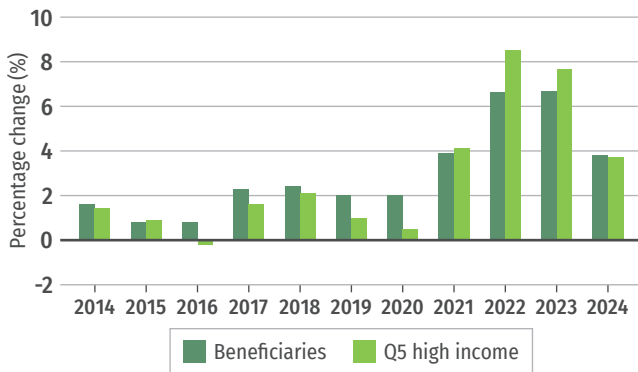


Contributing to further hardship were 45,825 benefit sanctions imposed on people receiving welfare support during 2024, which was close to double the 25,329 sanctions in the year to December 2023. This included 4749 people with dependent children. Sanctions involve reducing benefit payments by up to 50 percent for those with children, while a second sanction for those without children can result in complete suspension of benefit payments. Just under 40 percent of benefit recipients identify as Māori but they made up more than one-half (55%) of those sanctioned. Pacific people also experienced disproportionately more sanctions at 22 percent, while only 12 percent of welfare recipients are of Pacific ethnicities.⁹⁹

HOUSEHOLD LIVING COSTS

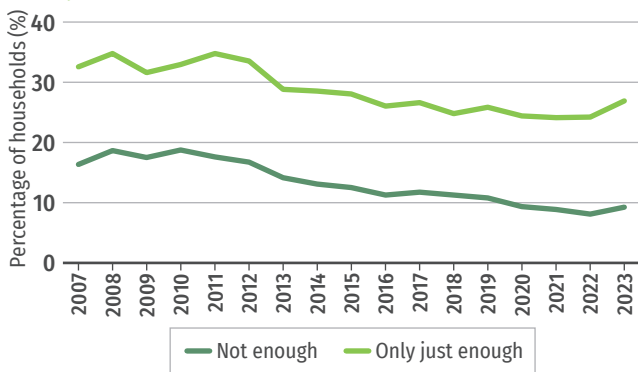
During 2024, the rate of price increases for households declined from the very high levels of the previous two years, as measured by the household living-costs price index (HLPI). The deceleration benefited the wealthiest households slightly more than benefit recipients (after two years of higher acceleration for the wealthiest than for benefit recipients), with reductions in mortgage interest costs reducing their housing costs (Figure 48).

Figure 48: Household living-costs price index increases for beneficiaries and high-income households, annual percent change—2014–2024 (September years)¹⁰⁰



The year to June 2023 (most recent data) saw the first increase since 2017 in the proportion of households reporting that they did not have enough or only just had enough money to meet everyday needs. More than one-third of households (36%) have not enough or only just enough income, including around one in ten (9.2%) households that do not have enough income (Figure 49).

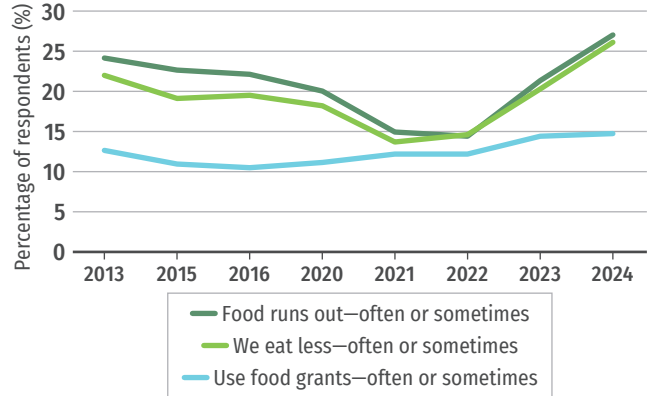
Figure 49: Income inadequacy to meet everyday need, percentage of all households (all types)—2007–2023 (June years)¹⁰¹



FOOD SECURITY

There has been a sharp rise in food insecurity over the past two years, and it reached the highest level for more than a decade in the year to June 2024 (Figure 50). Pacific children are particularly impacted with more than one-half (55%) going without food often or sometimes. At the same time as levels of food insecurity were rising, the government continued its approach of cutting back support for community foodbanks and food distribution (as well as hardship assistance). The level of government funding assistance was around one-half of the previous year and the remaining funding support for foodbanks is scheduled to end by June 2025.¹⁰²

Figure 50: Food security indicators, households with children aged under 15—2013–2024¹⁰³



The Salvation Army Te Kai Mākona food security framework¹⁰⁴ has a vision of communities and a country free of food insecurity, and is transforming the way the network of 60 Community Ministries centres across the country work with people in need of food support. This new strategic approach is creating a diverse range of community-based responses, including initiating an online food co-operative, increasing the number of local fruit and vegetables co-operatives, championing new community gardens and shared cooking groups, and developing ‘choice model’ social supermarkets like the Taranaki’s Te Āhuru Mōwai social supermarket.¹⁰⁵ Through all this, the amount of food assistance provided by The Salvation Army continued to be well above pre-Covid-19 levels (Figure 51). Around 84,500 food parcels were distributed, a 6 percent decrease compared with 2023, but 40 percent higher than in 2019. While demand is higher than ever, insufficient resources including the government’s plan to end foodbank funding has meant that foodbanks have needed to implement appointment systems or reduce the amount of food assistance they provide.

Figure 51: Number of food parcels provided by The Salvation Army—2014–2024 (December years)¹⁰⁶



Overall assessment: Work and Incomes

CATEGORY	RESULT
EMPLOYMENT Employment growth stalled during 2024, with fewer people in full-time jobs and more in part-time roles in September 2024 compared with the previous year.	—
UNEMPLOYMENT The unemployment rate continued to rise during 2024 reaching 5 percent by year end. The increase has unequal impacts with Pacific, Māori and younger workers more affected.	—
INCOMES Wages increased slightly after adjusting for inflation but inequities in gender pay rates continued, while inequities in wage rates between low and high earners and overall income inequality are increasing.	—
INCOME SUPPORT AND WELFARE The number of people receiving welfare assistance reached record numbers passing 400,000 by year end. Average incomes for those on a welfare benefits did not increase in real terms after adjusting for inflation.	—
HARDSHIP AND FOOD SECURITY Food insecurity for households with children rose sharply and the while the volume of food parcels distributed by The Salvation Army declined in 2024 compared with 2023, need remains well above pre-Covid-19 levels. Access to additional welfare support such as emergency housing and other hardship grants was reduced significantly.	—

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HOUSING

Increasing homelessness during the past year dominated the experience of the communities where The Salvation Army is working. Visible street homelessness is the proverbial ‘tip of the iceberg’ for the much larger issue of severe housing deprivation in this country. Living in a home that is healthy and affordable is fundamental to the dignity and good life outcomes for every person in this country. Progress must be measured against this goal to end homelessness and ensure affordable housing for all.

The number of people in emergency housing declined dramatically by nearly 80 percent during 2024 to its lowest number in at least eight years, as the government tightened criteria for access to this kind of housing support. It is likely that this is a key contributor to rising street homelessness and housing insecurity. While many of those previously in emergency housing were able to be supported into social housing and even private rentals, the housing situation for around one-fifth of those leaving emergency housing in 2024 is unknown.

Housing unaffordability continues to impact Pacific and Māori disproportionately. Pacific peoples in Aotearoa face the highest rental affordability stresses and have the lowest home ownership rates of our country’s large ethnic groups.

The year to September 2024 saw the largest increase in the total supply of public housing provided by community housing and Kainga Ora in many years. This helped to reduce the number of people waiting to be housed on the public Housing Register to the lowest level since 2020. But there are regional variations in the pattern of social housing supply and decreases in the Housing Register that

show that other factors, such as people exiting the register for other reasons than being housed, have also contributed to the reduction.

Rental affordability worsened for those renting in the private rental sector, with rents in lower-income communities continuing to increase faster than consumer price index (CPI) and average wage growth over the past decade. The increase in private rental bonds barely matched the growth in the number of households that are renting.

The construction of housing did not keep pace with continued strong population growth during 2024. The number of building consents declined for the second year in a row following the 50-year high in 2021. But population growth continues to be strong, and there was an estimated shortfall of over 4000 in the number of housing consents required to provide enough housing to meet population growth (let alone reduce the housing shortage).

The median house price in 2024 remained largely around the same level as in 2023, still well above the prices pre-Covid in 2019, meaning little improvement in the affordability of housing to buy for those on low incomes.

Total average debt per household, including housing as well as consumer and credit card debt, remained around the same as in 2023. When adjusted for inflation, average housing debt per household is back down below 2019 levels and consumer credit debt 50 percent lower than five years ago.

Too little progress has been made this year and the crisis of housing unaffordability remains intense for people on lower incomes.

Housing availability

Housing availability looks firstly at the overall availability of all housing to rent or buy by comparing the rate of house building with the rate of growth in population. It then considers the availability of rental housing that is affordable for those on lower incomes, such as social housing.

In 2024, house building was once again below the level that is estimated to be needed to provide housing for the growing population. The number of new building consents declined at the same time as the trend of strong population growth continued in 2024.

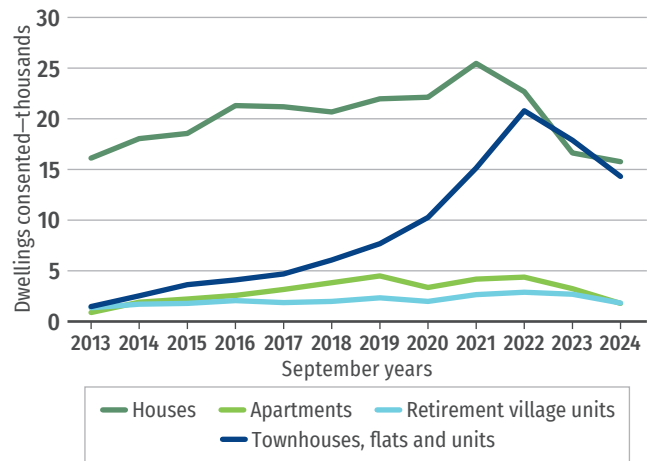
CONSENTS FOR NEW DWELLINGS

The number of building consents issued each year indicates the number of houses that are planned to be built soon. The total number of housing consents in the year to September 2024 was 33,677, a decrease of 17 percent from 2023 (40,408), which was in turn a sharp fall from the 50-year high in 2022 (50,732). After a decade of steady increase in building consents, the past two years show a turnaround and, while the level of consents in 2024 at 6.3 per thousand population was around the average for the years 1984–2007, our country needs to avoid the kind of collapse in house building that occurred during the Global Financial Crisis between 2008–2012 (Figure 52).

The years from 2017 to 2022 saw a major shift in the pattern of new building, with a rapid rise in the proportion of multi-unit homes and townhouses.

They now make up around the same proportion of consents as those for stand-alone houses, which have fallen in raw numbers by more than one-third from their peak of 25,463 in 2021 to 16,619 in 2023, the lowest level in the past 10 years (Figure 53).

Figure 53: Consents by dwelling type nationally—2013–2024 (September 2024)¹⁰⁸



Housing supply is no longer keeping up with population growth, let alone further reducing the housing shortage. While housing supply is increasing, so is the population: aside from the two years affected by the border restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, population growth over the past decade has been high, peaking in 2023 and continuing in 2024. The result is that the number of houses estimated to be needed to meet population growth (just over 37,700) was more than 4000 (12%) higher the almost 33,627 consented in 2024 (Table 12).

Figure 52: Dwellings consents per 1000 residents—1974–2024 (September years)¹⁰⁷

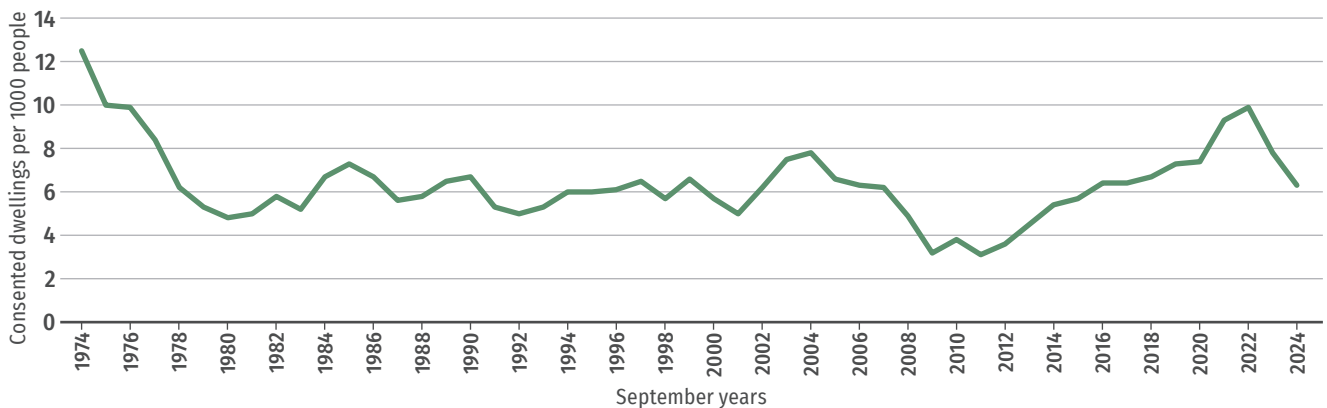
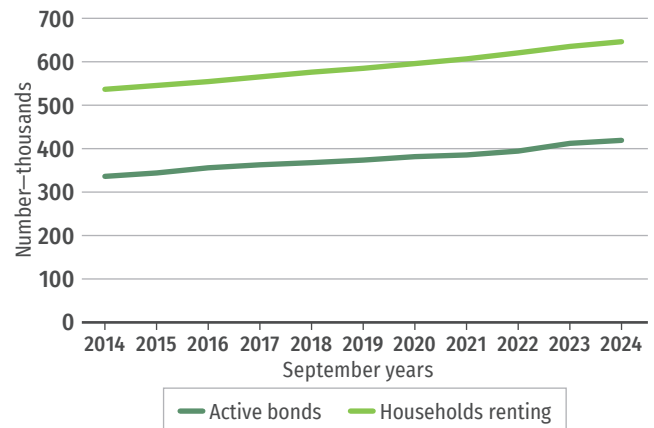


Table 12: Estimates of population change and new house builds—2014–2024 (June years)¹⁰⁹

June year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mean dwellings for June year	1,761,600	1,781,000	1,802,400	1,826,500	1,852,000	1,880,600	1,911,700	1,945,800	1,983,900	2,029,400	2,071,800
Resident population at end year	4,516,500	4,609,400	4,714,100	4,813,600	4,900,600	4,979,180	5,090,180	5,111,300	5,117,060	5,236,300	5,333,400
Annual population growth	74,400	92,900	104,700	99,500	87,000	78,600	111,000	21,100	5,800	119,200	97,100
Number of people per dwelling	2.56	2.59	2.62	2.64	2.65	2.65	2.66	2.63	2.58	2.58	2.57
Dwellings required for population growth	29,019	35,895	40,031	37,755	32,878	29,687	41,688	8032	2249	46,198	37,719
Consents for new dwellings	23,316	25,154	29,097	30,453	32,860	34,804	37,614	44,331	50,736	44,529	33,627
Surplus/deficit	-5703	-10,741	-10,934	-7302	-18	5117	-4074	36,299	48,487	-1669	-4092

RENTAL SUPPLY

Almost 650,000 households are renters, around one-third of all households (32%), and this proportion has not changed over the past 10 years, although it is higher than the 25 percent that were renters a generation ago in 1994.¹¹⁰ The total number of active tenancy bonds lodged nationally provides an indicator of the volume of private rental properties becoming available. In the year to September 2024, the number of bonds rose by 6500 from 412,500 to 419,000, a 1.5 percent increase compared to the estimated increase in rental households of around 7000 or 1.1 percent (Figure 54). This suggests that the total supply of rental housing is barely matching the growth in households at a national level.

Figure 54: Rental households and active tenancy bonds—2014–2024 (September years)¹¹¹

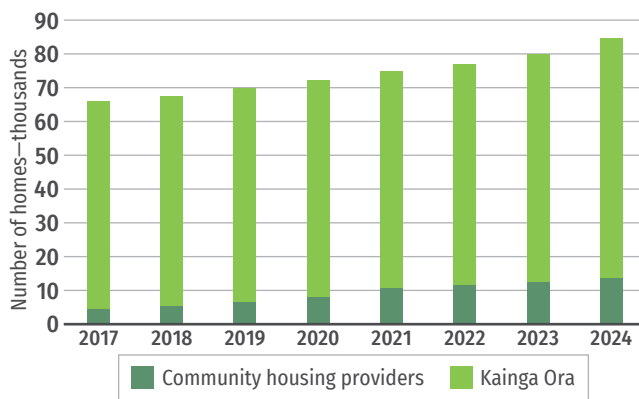
SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPLY

Public housing rentals are more affordable for people on lower incomes, with rents set at around 25 percent of household income through the Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS). The seven years from 2017–2024 saw accelerating growth in the number of public housing units supplied by community housing organisations and crown agency Kainga Ora. That growth hit a peak in 2024 with 4560 units added (Table 13 and Figure 55).

Table 13: Change in the number of public homes—2017–2024¹¹²

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Increase 2017–24	%
Community housing providers	4720	5686	6708	8143	10,614	11,713	12,535	13,733	9013	191%
Kainga Ora	61,426	61,888	63,112	64,192	64,211	65,121	67,450	70,812	9386	15%
Total	66,146	67,574	69,820	72,335	74,825	76,834	79,985	84,545	18,399	28%
Annual change		1428	2246	2515	2490	2009	3151	4560		

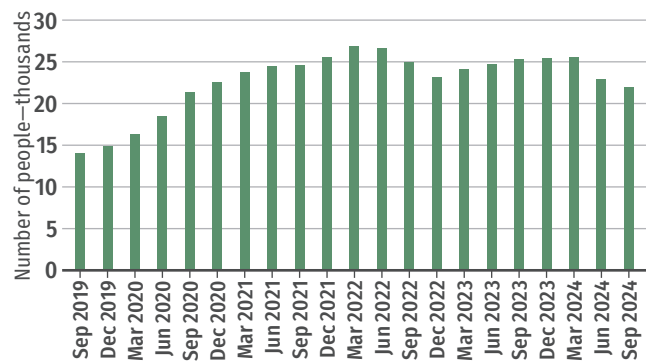
Figure 55: Number of public homes—2017–2024¹¹³



In total, over those seven years, the supply of public housing grew by 28 percent from just over 66,000 to just over 84,500 in September 2024, twice the rate at which the overall number of rental properties grew (14%). This in turn means the share of all rental housing that is in public housing rose to 13 percent, compared with 11 percent in 2017. But following a review initiated by the current government in 2024, Kainga Ora has cancelled more than half of its planned housing developments and only around 2600 homes are now planned over the next two years.¹¹⁴

The large increase in available supply of public housing during 2024 has contributed to a significant decline in the number of people identified as needing public housing. There were just over 3300 fewer people on the public Housing Register in September 2024 than a year earlier, a 13 percent reduction to 21,957, the lowest number since September 2020 four years previous (Figure 56).

Figure 56: Public Housing Register—2019–2024¹¹⁵



Most of the decrease in the Housing Register occurred in the largest urban centres, with Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch accounting for more than half (57%) of the total reduction; unsurprisingly, those cities also saw the largest increases in supply of social housing. This pattern of increased social housing supply corresponding to reduced numbers waiting for public housing is echoed in other centres such as Rotorua, Tauranga, Hastings and to a lesser extent in Dunedin.

But not all centres followed this pattern. Porirua is one of the centres with highest housing need and where low-income renters face unaffordable rentals, but the number of public housing units in 2024 has not increased at all from five years earlier, and even more surprisingly, the number of people on the Housing Register decreased by more than 10 percent. Large transformation of social housing is occurring there through transfer of some public housing units to local iwi Ngāti Toa and redevelopment of existing Kainga Ora housing which is still in progress to replace ageing houses and add new supply.¹¹⁶ Napier shows a similar pattern—no increase in social housing but the number of people on the Housing Register reduced by 24 percent.

Lower Hutt saw an increase in the number people on the Housing Register over the past year despite adding almost 370 public housing units since 2017. Wellington City has added 670 units since 2017, a 32 percent increase, but the number needing public housing remained around the same in 2024 as a year earlier, and some 61 percent higher than in 2017. In the Horowhenua and Tasman districts, there have been significant increases in public housing but no decrease in the number of those waiting for public housing in those regions ([Table 14](#)).

There was a notable increase in the number of people exiting the Housing Register for 'other reasons' than being housed between April–August 2024. Other reasons include people with low priority needs being removed from the list because their priority of need has reduced. In July 2024, 2145 people exited for other reasons compared with 807 in July 2023. The average monthly exits for other reasons for the six months to November 2024 was just over 1600 per month compared with just under 1100 per month in the same period in 2023.¹¹⁷ This would seem to imply a change in approach to assessing need and priority for public housing.

Table 14: Change in public housing and Housing Register, selected regions—2019, 2023 and 2024¹¹⁸

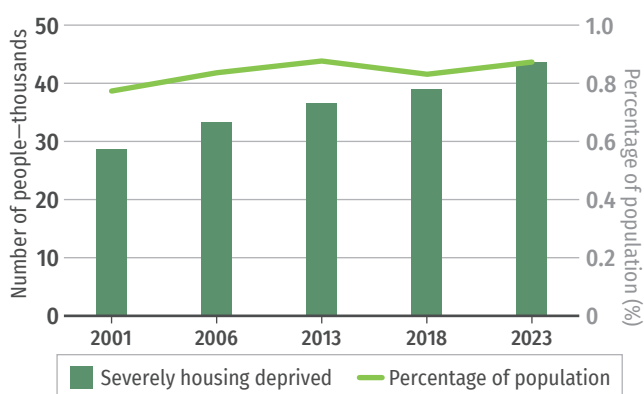
TA	Public Homes								Housing Register by Territorial Authority (TA)— past 5 years							
	Sep-19	Sep-23	Sep-24	1 year change		5 year change		Sep-19	Sep-23	Sep-24	1 year change		5 year change			
				Number change	% change	Number change	% change				Number change	% change	Number change	% change		
Auckland City	32,456	37,514	39,364	1850	5%	6908	21%	5256	8496	7338	-1158	-14%	2082	40%		
Hamilton City	3193	3753	4275	522	14%	1082	34%	867	1698	1263	-435	-26%	396	46%		
Christchurch City	7002	8403	9068	665	8%	2066	30%	894	1944	1611	-333	-17%	717	80%		
Napier City	1546	1582	1595	13	1%	49	3%	453	714	540	-174	-24%	87	19%		
Rotorua District	666	1014	1107	93	9%	441	66%	390	894	759	-135	-15%	369	95%		
Tauranga District/ Tauranga City	1287	1695	1742	47	3%	455	35%	345	771	666	-105	-14%	321	93%		
Gisborne District	1272	1351	1408	57	4%	136	11%	306	603	504	-99	-16%	198	65%		
Hastings District	1210	1412	1506	94	7%	296	24%	459	684	585	-99	-14%	126	27%		
Palmerston North City	1425	1573	1574	1	0%	149	10%	441	621	540	-81	-13%	99	22%		
Whakatāne District	525	561	572	11	2%	47	9%	117	372	291	-81	-22%	174	149%		
Far North District	675	703	762	59	8%	87	13%	165	513	459	-54	-11%	294	178%		
Porirua City	2671	2630	2637	7	0%	-34	-1%	270	372	330	-42	-11%	60	22%		
Whangārei District	1350	1576	1706	130	8%	356	26%	288	591	549	-42	-7%	261	91%		
Whanganui District	581	612	632	20	3%	51	9%	162	318	279	-39	-12%	117	72%		
New Plymouth District	973	977	1033	56	6%	60	6%	144	384	351	-33	-9%	207	144%		
Dunedin City	1401	1463	1534	71	5%	133	9%	162	432	405	-27	-6%	243	150%		
Kawerau District	38	52	51	-1	-2%	13	34%	36	81	60	-21	-26%	24	67%		
Invercargill City	355	397	435	38	10%	80	23%	114	222	204	-18	-8%	90	79%		
Nelson City	590	749	767	18	2%	177	30%	177	306	294	-12	-4%	117	66%		
Masterton District	83	278	292	14	5%	209	252%	57	141	132	-9	-6%	75	132%		
Wellington City	2063	2422	2733	311	13%	670	32%	483	789	780	-9	-1%	297	61%		
Horowhenua District	176	190	248	58	31%	72	41%	108	186	186	0	0%	78	72%		
Queenstown-Lakes District	36	55	60	5	9%	24	67%	12	24	30	6	25%	18	150%		
Tasman District	162	198	224	26	13%	62	38%	99	147	153	6	4%	54	55%		
Tararua District	12	46	45	-1	-2%	33	275%	21	39	48	9	23%	27	129%		
Lower Hutt City	3345	3646	3713	67	2%	368	11%	450	564	606	42	7%	156	35%		
Total	65,093	74,852	79,083	4231	6%	13,990	21%	13,968	25,284	21,957	-3327	-13%	7989	57%		

HOMELESSNESS

Signs of increasing visible homelessness over the past year has been a clear indicator of the much larger issue of severe housing deprivation in this country. Social services reported significant increases during 2024 in the number of people seeking help who were living on the streets or cars, or were experiencing other forms of homelessness.¹¹⁹ In the year to October 2024, DCM in Wellington has seen the number of people experiencing homelessness increase from 330 to 464 and the number of people they are supporting each day has nearly doubled.¹²⁰

The number of people in severe housing deprivation has been steadily increasing over the past two decades. It estimated that around 43,500 people or around 0.9 percent of the population were homeless or experiencing 'severe housing deprivation' at the date of the last Census in March 2023.¹²¹ This includes rough sleepers, people living in temporary accommodation like night shelters or motels, temporary residents in very overcrowded housing (such as couch-surfing) or uninhabitable housing lacking basic amenities such as power and a water supply.¹²² While the total number of people in severe housing deprivation has increased by nearly 7000 since 2013, as a proportion of the population it was around the same (Figure 57).

Figure 57: Severe housing deprivation—2001–2023¹²³



Emergency housing and transitional housing are frontline responses to homelessness that have been developed and expanded over recent years in response to the ongoing housing crisis facing people on lower incomes. Emergency housing is intended to be only a very short-term support to people who

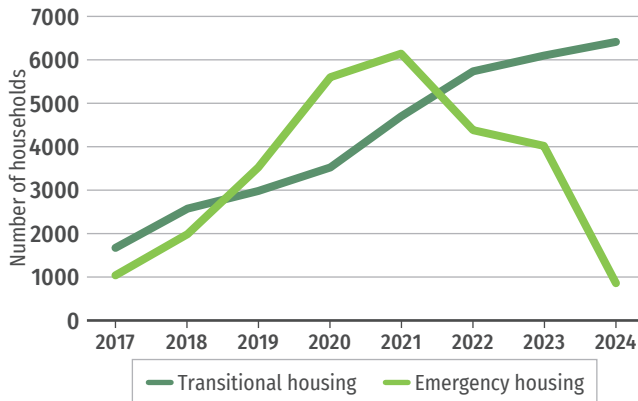
have nowhere to go so they can stay in a motel or other temporary accommodation while seeking longer term housing. It expanded rapidly during the Covid-19 pandemic to help people find temporary shelter. Unlike transitional housing or Housing First programmes, there is no programme of wraparound support associated with emergency housing. With the ongoing shortage of affordable housing options, people have struggled to find other housing and become stranded in unsatisfactory and sometimes dangerous situations, particularly for women and their children.¹²⁴

The number of people in emergency housing declined dramatically during 2024 as the government set reduction targets for the number of people in emergency housing and tightened criteria for access to this kind of housing support. Over the course of the year the 'gateway' to emergency housing support was severely narrowed. In the year to October 2024, the number of emergency housing recipients fell by nearly four-fifths (79%) from 4015 to 858, the lowest number in at least eight years (Figure 58).

It is likely that this is a key contributor to the rising street homelessness and housing insecurity reported.¹²⁵ While many of those previously in emergency housing were able to be supported into social housing and even private rentals, the housing situation for around one-fifth of those leaving emergency housing in 2024 is unknown.¹²⁶

Transitional housing is a programme that includes welfare and social supports alongside subsidised rental housing, with the aim of supporting people into long-term housing. The number of people in transitional housing increased by almost 400 during the year, as this programme proves effective in helping people into either social housing or private rental housing (Figure 58). Housing First¹²⁷ is another approach proven to successfully house people with high and complex needs coming out of chronic homelessness situations, with over 2000 households housed since 2017,¹²⁸ and evaluation results showing much improved housing, health and social outcomes for the people involved.¹²⁹

Figure 58: Number of households in transitional housing and emergency housing—2017–2024 (October years)¹³⁰



Housing affordability

Housing affordability, as experienced by those on lower incomes and on the margins of society, is focused in the first instance on private rental affordability.

RENTS IN LOWER-INCOME COMMUNITIES

Most people on lower incomes live in homes they are renting. How much rent people pay affects all other parts of their lives and the lives of their whānau. Most renters are living in homes owned by private landlords, so both the number of rental properties available and the rent charged are important indicators of how well our country is doing at providing housing for those who need it most.

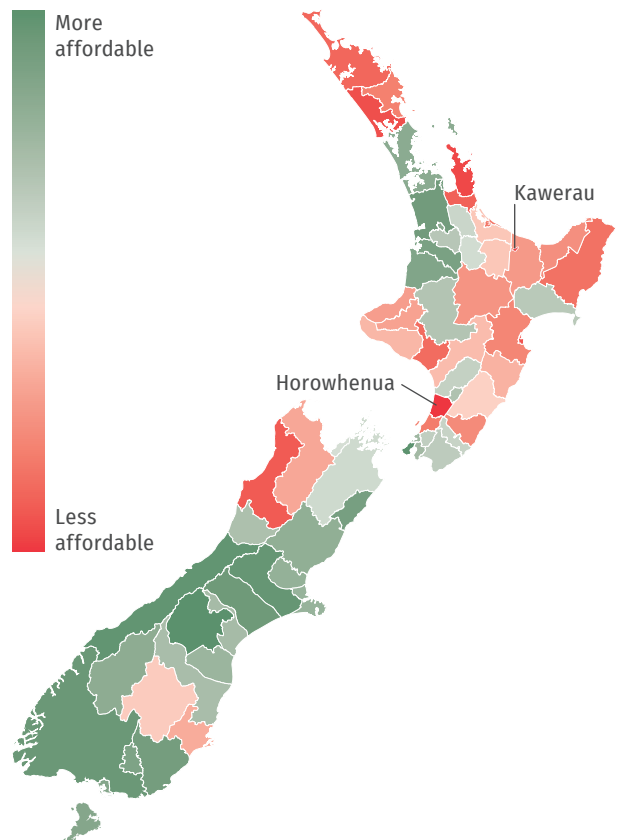
Lower-quartile rents (those in the more affordable range of rents nationally), have increased at well above the rate of increase for inflation and wages (Table 15). In the year to September 2024, the national lower-quartile median rent increased by 7 percent, well above the consumer prices increase of 2.2 percent, the median rent increase of 3 percent and the increase in the median household income of 3.3 percent. Over the past decade, the lower-quartile rent has almost doubled in nominal terms, from \$265 in 2014 to \$490 in September 2024. Consumer prices rose by 31 percent over the same period and the median household income rose by \$69,730 (47%) to \$102,666.

Table 15: Lower quartile and median rents—2014, 2019, 2023 and 2024 (September quarter)¹³¹

	2014	2019	2023	2024	1-yr	5-yr	10-yr
Lower-quartile rent	265	350	460	490	7%	40%	85%
Median rent	350	450	580	600	3%	33%	71%

There is considerable variation in rental affordability between different regions and within urban areas. Figure 59 (red is less affordable, green more affordable) shows the variation in affordability amongst the 66 local authorities and councils, based on an affordable rent assumed to be a maximum of 30 percent of median income in the region. Two of the most unaffordable regions to rent in are Horowhenua and Kawerau, with the median rent at well over 40 percent of median household income in those areas.

Figure 59: Rental affordability by region¹³²



When looking at community level measures, still comparing median income to median rent, more than 800 of 2000 local areas throughout the country had median rents above 30 percent of the median

Table 16: Rental affordability in selected communities (Community Compass)¹³³

	Median weekly gross household income	30% of median household income (a)	Median rent (b)	Affordability gap (b) – (a)	Median rent as % of median income	Median house price
Bathgate Park, Dunedin	\$685	\$206	\$444	\$238	65%	\$409,000
Levin Central	\$713	\$214	\$451	\$237	63%	\$412,000
Wesley East, Auckland	\$1288	\$386	\$798	\$412	62%	\$1,045,556
Otangarei, Whangarei	\$896	\$269	\$502	\$233	56%	\$528,000
Upper Riccarton, Christchurch	\$1257	\$377	\$650	\$273	52%	\$669,000
Ōtara South, Auckland	\$1548	\$464	\$700	\$236	45%	\$722,000
Tarawera Park, Kawerau	\$989	\$297	\$436	\$139	44%	\$337,000
Cannons Creek East, Porirua	\$1453	\$436	\$640	\$204	44%	\$622,000

income, and in some 190 communities the median rent is more than 40 percent of median income. Most of the communities worst affected by highly unaffordable rents are lower-income communities.

Table 16 shows examples of some of the most severely affected communities. In all those places, the gap between an affordable rent (assumed to be a maximum of 30 percent of income) and the current market rent ranges between \$139 to \$412 per week, meaning hundreds of dollars spent on rent that is not available to meet other essential living costs.

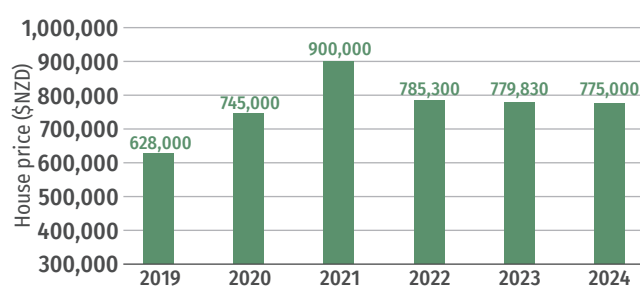
Unequal impacts in housing outcomes continue to impact Pacific and Māori disproportionately. Pacific peoples in Aotearoa face the highest rental affordability stresses and have the lowest home ownership rates of all the larger ethnic groups. The Salvation Army's recent *State of Pacific Peoples 2024* report¹³⁴ highlights the high levels of rental unaffordability in communities with the highest Pacific populations. In **Table 16**, Otara South and Cannons Creek East are two communities where more than two-thirds of the population are Pacific, and both are highly unaffordable places to rent. Renters in communities where the majority of residents are Māori, such as Kawerau or Otangarei in Whangarei, face similar challenges of living in highly unaffordable neighbourhoods.

MEDIAN HOUSE SALE PRICES

Home ownership is no longer a realistic option for most low-income households, but the aspiration to home ownership is still central to social organisation and the prevailing norms of this country. It remains embedded as a central pillar to increasing household wealth.

We follow the median house price as it is the mid-point of the total distribution of house sales and gives a better indication of affordability than average house prices that tend to be skewed upwards by very high-priced sales.

During 2024 the national median house price remained largely unchanged in nominal terms, compared with the previous two years at \$775,000. This is still well ahead of the pre-Covid-19 median in 2019 of \$628,000 (**Figure 60**), and more than seven times the median annual household income in mid-2024 (\$102,000).

Figure 60: Median house price \$NZ—2019–2024 (December years)¹³⁵

The REINZ Property Report¹³⁶ shows that house prices in all regions were higher at the end of 2024 than pre-Covid in 2019, but in some regions median house prices are now well down from the post-Covid-19 peak in 2021. There is little sign of further decline in house prices that might improve the affordability for lower-income households.

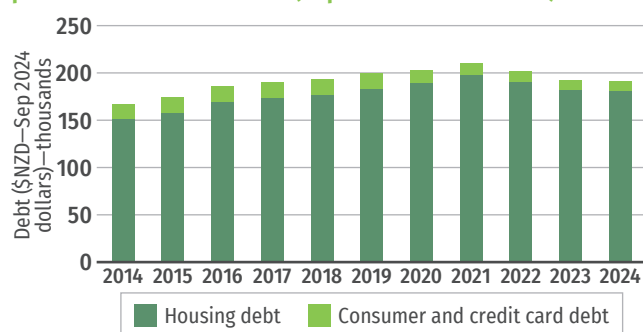
PROGRESSIVE HOME OWNERSHIP

Progressive home ownership is one of the ways to help lower-income households into home ownership via shared equity, rent-to-buy or leasehold models of housing. Several such schemes run by smaller scale NGOs such as Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Foundation have been successfully supporting people into home ownership this way for years. In late 2020, the government launched the \$400 million Progressive Home Ownership Fund programme¹³⁷ that by October 2024 had supported just under 1392 people into homes¹³⁸ through contracted community and iwi-based organisations. This is a valuable but small contribution to overcoming enormous barriers to home ownership for people on low incomes. The future of this programme is unclear, as the current government has been shifting funding away from other ownership support programmes such as First Homes Grants.¹³⁹

Household housing debt

Looking at the combination of housing loan debt, consumer finance debt and credit card debt that households have accumulated gives some indication of the combined financial pressure on households overall. The average level of household indebtedness calculated in 2024 dollars remained largely unchanged in September 2024, compared with the previous year. Debt levels per household have stabilised at a level around the same as in 2018 (Figure 61 and Table 17).

Figure 61: Average housing, consumer and credit card debt per household—2014–2024 (September 2024 dollars)¹⁴⁰



Across all two million households in this country, there is on average just under \$181,000 in housing debt (ie, mortgage lending) and around \$10,300 in personal loans and credit card debt per household. Credit card debt is one-third lower than five years ago, but housing debt is only marginally lower (Table 17).

Table 17: Average housing, consumer and credit card debt per household—2019–2024 (September 2024 dollars)¹⁴¹

September 2024 dollars	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Annual change	5-year change
Housing debt	183,037	189,369	197,812	190,652	181,745	180,821	-0.5%	-1.2%
Consumer and credit card debt	16,141	13,763	12,083	11,140	10,564	10,270	-2.8%	-36.4%
Total average debt per household	199,178	203,132	209,895	201,792	192,309	191,091	-0.6%	-4.1%

Overall assessment: Housing

CATEGORY	RESULT
HOUSING AVAILABILITY A large increase in social housing supply and a modest increase in private rentals contrasted with severe reduction of emergency housing, rising homelessness (in the five years to 2023) and insufficient new house building for the continuing rising population.	NC
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY Rental affordability for people on low incomes worsened, with rents increasing faster than incomes in lower-income communities. The national median house price remained around the same as last year, still well above pre-Covid-19 level and out of reach for lower-income households.	—
HOUSEHOLD HOUSING DEBT The pressure of high interest rates has translated into noticeable stabilisation of overall levels of household housing debt and consumer and credit card debt when adjusting for inflation, which did not increase in 2024.	NC

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The New Zealand criminal justice system involves multiple agencies working together to improve safety and deliver accessible justice. However, only 28 percent of crimes are reported to the police, reflecting an incomplete picture of the criminal landscape. According to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) Cycle 6, 32 percent of adults (1.3 million individuals) experienced at least 1.8 million offences in 2022/23. Police data showed that while reported victimisation levels have plateaued in the past year, the number of victims declined by 7 percent. Since 2015, however, there has been a 15 percent increase in victims and a 50 percent rise in victimisations. Estimated offence volumes have remained relatively unchanged, declining by 1.4 percent to 8564 offences per 100,000 people, down from 8908 in 2023. Theft and related offences account for nearly 50 percent of all estimated offences.

In 2024, new criminal cases brought before the District Courts increased by 2 percent, while the number of cases resolved increased by 8 percent. This is further reflected in a 12.7 percent increase in convictions over the past year, with increases for every offence, except dangerous and negligent acts. Violent crime remains a critical concern, with offences rising by 44.8 percent since 2019, particularly serious assaults. Māori adults are twice as likely as non-Māori to experience violent crime, and younger adults are disproportionately affected. Family violence remains a significant issue, with police attending one family harm investigation every three minutes. In 2024, police recorded 174,876 family harm investigations (FHIs), a 1.5 percent decline from 2023—the largest annual drop in a decade. The NZCVS also shows progress, with adults impacted by family violence falling from 2.2 percent to 1.6 percent in 2023, driven by fewer offences by family members, though intimate partner violence remains prevalent. While declines are modest, they signal a positive shift. Strengthened laws, improved justice responses and victim support have contributed to this progress. Though challenges persist, these changes mark meaningful steps forward.

The prison population reached 9924 in September 2024, a 12 percent increase in the past year, with remand prisoners comprising 43.4 percent of the total. Rising remand rates have also led to an increase in releases due to time served before sentencing, with 19 percent of prisoners released on this basis in 2024, compared with 8 percent in 2015. Māori remain disproportionately incarcerated, with imprisonment rates 6.8 times higher than non-Māori. Just under 13 percent of convicted individuals were sent to prison in 2024 (a slight annual increase), with the majority receiving community-based sentences. Recidivism levels have increased for both Māori and non-Māori in the past year, with higher rates at the 24-month follow-up. This continues to highlight the challenges with long-term reintegration and rehabilitation into the community. As of September 2024, 30,611 community sentences were being served, primarily for acts intended to cause injury and traffic violations. These sentences are significantly less costly than imprisonment.

The 'Crime and Punishment' chapter presents a mixed picture, with progress in some areas alongside stagnation or worsening trends in others. It underscores the importance of understanding the underlying issues that contribute to crime, such as socio-economic factors, the effects of family violence and systemic inequities, while also addressing challenges within the justice system itself.

Background

The justice sector in New Zealand includes the Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children, Crown Law Office and the Serious Fraud Office, working together to improve safety and deliver accessible justice services for New Zealanders. The 'Crime and Punishment' section focuses on the criminal justice pipeline, illustrated in [Figure 62](#).

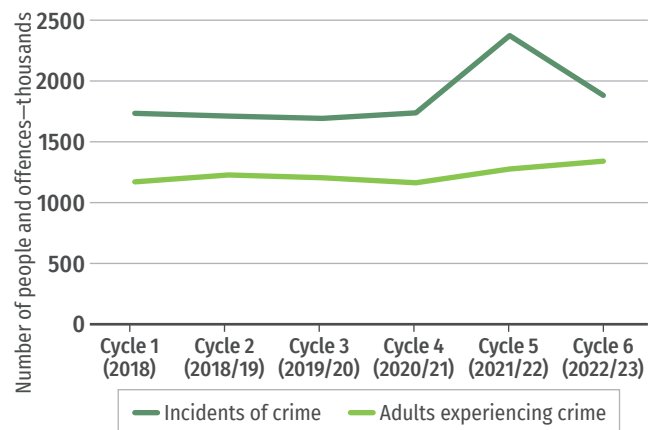
Figure 62: The criminal justice pipeline¹⁴²

Only about 28 percent of crime in Aotearoa is reported to the police,¹⁴³ so the criminal justice system reflects only part of the overall crime in New Zealand. This chapter compiles data from agencies like the New Zealand Police, Ministry of Justice, District Courts, New Zealand Parole Board and Department of Corrections. Despite variations in reporting and data collection methods, and delays in court processing, the information offers an indication of the results of the criminal justice system.

New Zealand Crime and Victim Survey (NZCVS)

The NZ Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS)¹⁴⁴ conducted annually by the Ministry of Justice is the most comprehensive source of data on adult victims of crime in New Zealand. The survey captures incidents whether or not they are reported to the police, offering a more thorough picture of crime than police data alone.

In 2024, the NZCVS published Cycle 6 (surveys conducted Nov 2022–Nov 2023); collectively these six cycles represent 42,200 interviews with New Zealanders about their experiences as victims of crime. **Figure 63** illustrates that Cycle 6 showed that 32 percent of adults (1.3 million individuals) experienced at least one offence in the past 12 months, with an average rate of 60.5 offences per 100 adults, a decrease from 74.7 in Cycle 5. Burglary was the most common household crime and fraud was the most common personal crime experienced. The highest overall volumes were recorded for fraud, affecting 437,000 people with 541,000 incidents recorded.

Figure 63: NCVS Cycles 1–6 shows adults experiencing crime and the number of offences in the past 12 months¹⁴⁵

Different communities have slightly different rates of victimisation. Māori have the highest rate at 33.6 percent, though this has decreased from 36.9 percent. Europeans report 33.3 percent up from 31.4 percent, narrowing the gap with Māori. Asians also increased, rising from 30 percent to 30.4 percent. Pacific peoples have the lowest rate at 26.2 percent. Younger adults aged 15–29 faced the highest victimisation rate (35.7%), which decreased slightly to 33.8 percent for those aged 30–64 and decreased considerably to 21.2 percent for individuals aged 65 and older.

Only 37.5 percent of victims reported an incident to the police—44.1 percent for household offences and 21.7 percent for personal offences. Household crimes were more frequently reported, often for insurance purposes. Common reasons for not reporting included the incident being too trivial (38%), reporting to the bank instead (24%, likely for fraud) and believing the police could not help (18%).

The proportion of New Zealanders who do not feel safe rose from 9 percent in 2018 to 15.1 percent in 2023. Among victims of crime, the rate increased from 16 percent to 21.7 percent, compared to those who have not experienced crime, rising from 6 percent to 12.1 percent. The NZCVS highlighted a broader decline in safety perceptions across various surveys, and this year's cycle particularly noted those feeling unsafe included individuals aged 30 and older, residents of Auckland and Waikato, and Asian communities.

Overall crime

Crime statistics are reported by the police through the recorded crime victims statistics (RCVS) system, which records how many times police receive reports of crimes that have a victim, and the recorded crime offenders statistics (RCOS) system, which record both court and non-court proceedings by police against alleged offenders.¹⁴⁶

OFFENDER: A person or organisation that police arrest because police allege the person or organisation has perpetrated a criminal incident involving one or more offences (please note these are alleged offenders so may not be formally charged).

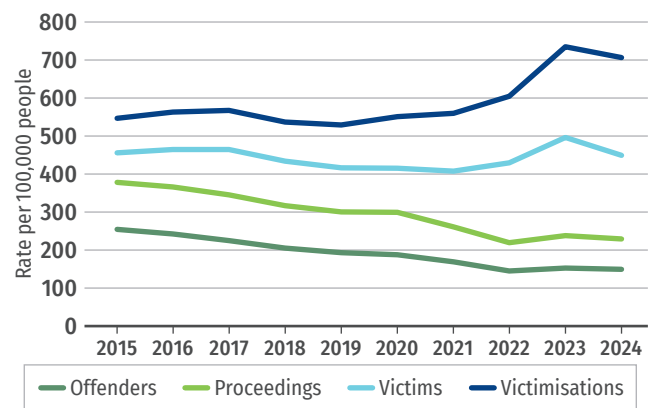
PROCEEDING: A legal action initiated against an alleged offender for an offence. Each proceeding is classified to a principal offence and principal method of proceeding but could involve a number of offences. Therefore, it does not represent a count of offences.

VICTIMISATION: An instance of a person or organisation being victimised for a given type of offence. Our analysis treats victimisation as a proxy to crime levels.

VICTIM: A unique person or organisation recorded as being a victim of a given type of offence.

Over the past year, the police attended over 1.2 million events, including 111 calls, emergency and non-emergency incidents, mental health responses, educational activities, traffic accidents and more.¹⁴⁷ These events reflect the broad scope of police work, which extends far beyond what is covered here. This chapter focuses specifically on offenders, proceedings, victims and victimisations, providing a foundation for understanding reported crime levels as a proxy for trends in offending, victimisation and justice processes over the past decade.

Figure 64: Summary of police proceedings and reports of victimisation per 100,000 people—2015–2024 (June years)¹⁴⁸



To account for population growth, **Figure 64** shows trends over the past decade per 100,000 people, with **Table 18** providing corresponding raw numbers. In the past year, the rate of alleged offenders being charged declined by 2 percent, while proceedings dropped by 3.5 percent. This continues a decade-

Table 18: Summary of police proceedings and reports of victimisation per 100,000 people—2015–2024 (June years)¹⁴⁹

June years	2015	2019	2023	2024	1Y	5Y	10Y
Offenders	116,248	95,242	78,968	79,384	0.5%	-16.7%	-31.7%
Proceedings	172,516	148,482	122,847	121,587	-1%	-18.1%	-29.5%
Victims	207,846	205,967	256,647	238,221	-7.2%	15.7%	14.6%
Victimisations	249,702	261,509	379,732	374,271	-1.4%	43.1%	49.9%
Rate per 100,000 people							
Offenders	255	193	153	150	-2%	-22.3%	-41.2%
Proceedings	378	300	238	229	-3.5%	-23.7%	-39.3%
Victims	455	417	496	449	-9.5%	7.8%	-1.3%
Victimisations	547	529	734	706	-3.9%	33.4%	29.1%

long trend, with arrests and charges decreasing by 41.2 percent (116,248 to 79,384 offenders) and 39.3 percent (172,516 to 121,587 proceedings), respectively, since 2015. These declines reflect significant shifts in police approach, emphasising prevention and diversion to keep low-level offenders out of the formal justice system.

Victimisation rates fell by 3.9 percent—the first decline since 2019—but remain 29 percent higher than in 2015, largely due to increased awareness and improved reporting of underreported crimes like family harm. Police now dedicate 19 percent of their time to family harm events, nearly double the 10 percent recorded in 2013. The number of victims also saw a sharper decline of 9.5 percent in the past year (from 256,647 to 238,221), returning to levels

comparable to 2015 (207,846 victims). Typically, a drop in victimisation aligns with fewer recorded victims, reflecting progress in crime prevention efforts.

ESTIMATED REPORTED OFFENCE VOLUMES

A combination of victimisations and proceedings data from police RCOS and RCVS are used to estimate the levels of reported offences, as shown in [Table 19](#). It is important to note that, according to the NZCVS, only 37 percent of victims report crimes to the police, meaning the data provides only an estimate of offence volumes.

[Table 19](#) presents estimated reported offence volumes from 2015 onwards, highlighting trends over the past year, five years and ten years. In 2015, approximately 70 percent of the estimated offence

Table 19: Estimated reported offence volumes—2015–2024 (June years)¹⁵⁰

ANZSOC division	2015	2019	2023	2024	1Y	5Y	10 Y
Homicide and related offences	191	218	227	197	-13.2%	-9.6%	3.1%
Acts intended to cause injury*	44,943	50,596	74,978	76,199	1.6%	50.6%	69.5%
Sexual assault and related offences*	5256	6259	7477	7267	-2.8%	16.1%	38.3%
Abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person	7062	5350	4440	4696	5.8%	-12.2%	-33.5%
Robbery, extortion and related offences*	3069	3291	5344	5138	-3.9%	56.1%	67.4%
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter*	58,364	64,638	70,809	60,968	-13.9%	-5.7%	4.5%
Theft and related offences*	137,740	136,289	220,622	224,274	1.7%	64.6%	62.8%
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	13,611	15,429	13,860	12,805	-7.6%	-17.0%	-5.9%
Fraud, deception and related offences	3007	2976	2082	2142	2.9%	-28.0%	-28.8%
Illicit drug offences	8997	9052	6289	6144	-2.3%	-32.1%	-31.7%
Miscellaneous offences	869	612	779	908	16.6%	48.4%	4.5%
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	13,553	16,751	12,590	12,248	-2.7%	-26.9%	-9.6%
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	3763	3893	3949	3783	-4.2%	-2.8%	0.5%
Property damage and environmental pollution	8644	5821	4292	4188	-2.4%	-28.1%	-51.6%
Public order offences	19,149	12,806	6526	6581	0.8%	-48.6%	-65.6%
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	34,305	27,807	26,284	26,476	0.7%	-4.8%	-22.8%
Total	362,523	361,788	460,548	454,014	-1.4%	25.5%	25.2%
Offence per 100,000 population	7942	7321	8908	8564	-3.9%	17.0%	7.8%

* = Victimisation data

volumes were based on victimisation data, while 30 percent came from proceedings. By 2024, this balance had shifted significantly, with victimisation figures accounting for 82 percent of the estimated offence volumes and proceedings contributing just 18 percent. This trend is further illustrated in [Figure 64](#), which shows a marked decline in proceedings over time, accompanied by an increase in victimisation data.

The use of both datasets is essential, because neither can independently provide a complete estimate of offence volumes. RCOS counting standards for proceedings only record the principal offence for each case, meaning incidents involving multiple offences are undercounted. In contrast, RCVS records all incidents and counts every offence type for which an individual is recorded as a victim. However, RCOS data includes all 16 Australia and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) categories, while RCVS only covers six, making it impossible to rely solely on either dataset. Therefore, these two sources are combined as a proxy for estimating reported offence volumes, though we acknowledge the limitations of this approach.

Over the past year, estimated reported offence volumes have declined slightly in raw numbers by 1.4 percent, while the reported crime rate has declined by 3.9 percent, from 8908 offences in 2023 to 8,564 offences per 100,000 population in 2024. Over the past five years, estimated offence volumes have increased both in five years and ten years by similar levels—25.5 percent and 25.2 percent, respectively. However, when you take into account the population, the rate for estimated offence volumes increased by 17 percent since 2019, and 7.8 percent over the past 10 years.

When we look at the offence categories it shows significant shifts in crime patterns. Theft and related offences, which account for nearly 50 percent of all estimated offences, have increased by 64.6 percent over the past five years and 62.8 percent over the decade, with the increase largely driven by a sharp rise in 2023. Acts intended to cause injury, which represent 16.8 percent of estimated offences, has been increasing year on year since 2019. Robbery, extortion and related offences show a similar rise, growing by 56.1 percent

in five years and 67.4 percent over the decade. In many categories, the sharp increases seen in 2023 have remained relatively unchanged, making 2024 an improvement in the past year. However, due to the significant jump in 2023, offence levels remain worse overall compared with five and ten years ago.

OFFENCE RESOLUTION

The continued high victimisation levels pose significant concerns for the safety and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Addressing crime is crucial, not only to protect people from harm, but also to foster trust in the justice system and build safer communities. Resolving offences must remain a primary focus of the justice sector, as it directly impacts public confidence and community safety.

To measure progress in this area, we calculate resolution rates, defined as the percentage of reported victimisations (excluding reports deemed non-criminal by police and investigations that are pending or continuing) that result in concluded investigations with outcomes. Our analysis defines resolved victimisations as victimisations with an outcome of investigation 180 days after the victimisation was reported to police. It is worth noting that police resolutions do not always equate to justice system outcomes, as not all alleged offenders are found guilty in court. This limitation means that the resolution rates shown here overestimate the actual resolution of victimisations within the criminal justice system.

The outcomes of investigation are as follows:

COURT ACTION Police action against a person to facilitate their court appearance to answer charges, including instances where diversion is subsequently offered.

NON-COURT ACTION Police action to finalise (conclude) an investigation that does not involve a court appearance, including instances where a person is given a formal caution or formal warning.

NO OFFENDER PROCEEDED AGAINST An investigation that has been finalised, but no offender has been formally proceeded against. Includes instances where a person is given an informal caution or informal warning, and instances where there is no proceeding.

Definition of violent and dishonest offences:

VIOLENT OFFENCES include homicide and related offences, acts intended to cause injury, sexual assault and related offences, dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons, and abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person.

DISHONESTY OFFENCES include robbery and extortion, burglary, theft and fraud.

In the past year, approximately 19.2 percent of all reported victimisations were resolved by the police or had an outcome after 180 days of being reported.

Table 20 provides resolution rates for violent and dishonesty offences.

Over the past five years, the resolution rate for violent offences has dropped from 53.3 percent in 2019 to 38.7 percent in 2024, as rising demand and limited resources have forced police to prioritise the most harmful events, leaving fewer resources for investigations.¹⁵² In contrast, the resolution rate for dishonest offences has remained relatively unchanged, declining only slightly by 2.5 percent over five years, with a small improvement in the past year.

Table 20 highlights a significant disparity in resolution rates: violent offences have a much higher resolution rate at 38.7 percent, compared to 13.5 percent for dishonesty offences. The NZCVS

suggests that a large proportion of dishonesty offences are reported to the police for insurance purposes, contributing to their prevalence in victimisation reports, which account for 77.5 percent of all reports. Theft-related offences alone make up 60 percent of these reports. Furthermore, 10.9 percent of resolutions for dishonesty offences in 2024 involved court actions, compared to 20.8 percent for violent offences. These differences highlight varying investigative and prosecutorial approaches between offence types.

COURTS

In 2024, 73 percent of alleged offenders were prosecuted through court action. Over 115,000 new criminal cases were filed (as shown in **Table 21**), which was 12.8 percent lower than in 2019, despite a 2 percent rise compared with 2023. This five-year decline is largely attributed to a 14.8 percent decrease in non-jury cases, which account for 93 percent of all criminal cases. In contrast, cases requiring a jury trial increased by 11.3 percent. Youth Court cases also saw a 34.1 percent increase since 2019. Despite these changes, jury trials and Youth Court cases remain a small proportion of the total, at 3.2 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively. There were more than 79,000 resolved cases, which have been increasing gradually since 2022. Active cases across all categories have increased by 7.6 percent over the past five years, with jury trial cases rising sharply by 42.2 percent and Youth Court cases by 18.9 percent.

Table 20: Estimated resolution rates of violent and dishonesty offences within 180 days—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁵¹

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Violent offences	53.3%	50.3%	43.8%	41.2%	39.8%	38.7%	-1.1%	-14.6%
Court action	35.2%	29.2%	24.4%	21.8%	21%	20.8%	-0.2%	-14.4%
No offender proceeded against	13.3%	16.5%	15.3%	17%	16.2%	15.6%	-0.6%	2.3%
Non-court action	4.7%	4.6%	4.1%	2.4%	2.6%	2.3%	-0.3%	-2.4%
Dishonesty offences	16%	15.7%	15.7%	13.3%	13.1%	13.5%	0.4%	-2.5%
Court action	12.1%	11.7%	11.3%	9.9%	10.3%	10.9%	0.6%	-1.2%
No offender proceeded against	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	-0.1%	-0.8%
Non-court action	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%	1.6%	1.3%	1.2%	-0.1%	-0.5%

While the number of new cases entering the courts has declined over recent years, the time required to resolve these cases continues to grow.¹⁵³ Several factors are contributing to the delays in resolving criminal cases. The proportion of serious Category 3 offences,¹⁵⁴ such as burglary and drug-related crimes, has increased, requiring more court events and extended timelines. Disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and extreme weather events have reduced court capacity. Furthermore, resource constraints—such as limited courtroom availability and judicial staffing challenges—have exacerbated the delays.

CONVICTIONS

In 2024, 49,721 people were convicted on 146,468 charges, reflecting a 12.7 percent increase in convictions compared with 2023. However, overall convictions were 6 percent lower in 2024 than in 2019. Traffic offences continued to be the most common type of conviction, representing 18.4 percent of the total, with an increase of 3.6 percent

in the past year. Convictions rose across all offence categories between 2023 and 2024, except for dangerous or negligent acts endangering a person, which slightly declined. Convictions for serious offences such as homicide increased significantly by 37 percent in 2024, correlating with a rise in resolved jury trial cases.

The percentage of all charges that resulted in a conviction was 67.5 percent, the same level as the previous year but a drop from 73 percent in 2019, as shown in the brackets in [Table 22](#). The brackets show the proportion of charges that result in convictions. Almost all offences, except for robbery and homicide and related offences, saw a decline in the rate of convictions per charge since 2019. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of charges that are either ‘other proved’ or ‘not proved’, accounting for 31 percent of charges compared with 26 percent in 2019.

Table 21: Active criminal proceedings in the District Court—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁵⁵

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Criminal (non-jury)								
New business	125,169	116,793	109,128	90,695	104,511	106,674	2.1%	-14.8%
Disposed cases	88,945	77,449	77,847	58,574	66,615	71,358	7.1%	-19.8%
Active cases	31,210	31,795	27,125	28,036	30,694	31,822	3.7%	2.0%
Criminal (jury trial)								
New business	3767	3765	4246	3671	4113	4193	1.9%	11.3%
Disposed cases	4171	4284	5015	4453	5062	5971	18.0%	43.2%
Active cases	4841	5665	6059	6605	7276	6882	-5.4%	42.2%
Youth Court								
New business	3220	3387	3017	3315	4298	4319	0.5%	34.1%
Disposed cases	1780	1742	1562	1377	1628	1942	19.3%	9.1%
Active cases	797	896	826	850	1061	948	-10.7%	18.9%
Total								
New business	132,156	123,945	116,391	97,681	112,922	115,186	2.0%	-12.8%
Disposed cases	94,896	83,475	84,424	64,404	73,305	79,271	8.1%	-16.5%
Active cases	36,848	38,356	34,010	35,491	39,031	39,652	1.6%	7.6%

Table 22: Convictions by offence category (proportion of charges resulting in conviction)—2019–2024

ANZSOC division	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Homicide and related offences	155 (67%)	133 (64%)	232 (69%)	149 (61%)	140 (62%)	192 (70%)	37.1%	23.9%
Acts intended to cause injury	14,386 (61%)	14,100 (60%)	14,917 (58%)	12,113 (59%)	12,833 (57%)	13,941 (57%)	8.6%	-3.1%
Sexual assault and related offences	2557 (50%)	2378 (49%)	2528 (43%)	2618 (46%)	3289 (48%)	3566 (48%)	8.4%	39.5%
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	9063 (76%)	8100 (75%)	8441 (76%)	6600 (75%)	7151 (72%)	6995 (70%)	-2.2%	-22.8%
Abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person	3373 (62%)	3472 (61%)	3880 (60%)	3524 (60%)	3869 (60%)	4503 (61%)	16.4%	33.5%
Robbery, extortion and related offences	785 (45%)	666 (48%)	594 (45%)	542 (47%)	595 (47%)	773 (47%)	29.9%	-1.5%
Unlawful entry with intent/ burglary, break and enter	3518 (59%)	3538 (58%)	3754 (64%)	2918 (58%)	3200 (56%)	4226 (58%)	32.1%	20.1%
Theft and related offences	17,415 (72%)	18,017 (73%)	17,743 (71%)	13,852 (68%)	17,694 (68%)	23,155 (68%)	30.9%	33.0%
Fraud, deception and related offences	8213 (66%)	7322 (68%)	7075 (62%)	5136 (60%)	4590 (57%)	4677 (60%)	1.9%	-43.1%
Illicit drug offences	9952 (68%)	9653 (64%)	9510 (65%)	7682 (64%)	7657 (60%)	7691 (59%)	0.4%	-22.7%
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	3374 (62%)	3626 (62%)	3911 (59%)	3324 (60%)	3763 (58%)	4370 (60%)	16.1%	29.5%
Property damage and environmental pollution	5584 (67%)	5381 (66%)	5549 (66%)	4312 (68%)	4786 (64%)	5117 (64%)	6.9%	-8.4%
Public order offences	4878 (69%)	4354 (67%)	4593 (66%)	3901 (66%)	4487 (64%)	5373 (65%)	19.7%	10.1%
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	35,435 (90%)	31,611 (89%)	34,389 (88%)	27,254 (87%)	32,525 (85%)	33,693 (83%)	3.6%	-4.9%
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	34,687 (79%)	33,621 (79%)	30,882 (76%)	21,709 (75%)	22,598 (71%)	27,000 (72%)	19.5%	-22.2%
Miscellaneous offences	2218 (68%)	1350 (51%)	1411 (59%)	748 (44%)	839 (48%)	1196 (53%)	42.6%	-46.1%
Total	155,593 (73%)	147,322 (72%)	149,409 (70%)	116,382 (69%)	130,016 (67%)	146,468 (68%)	12.7%	-5.9%

Men account for over 80 percent of convictions, and this has remained stable over at least the past five years. Of those who were charged, 79.2 percent of Māori were convicted, compared to 77.5 percent of Europeans and 72 percent of Pacific people. Age distribution shows that nearly half of all convictions involve individuals aged 20 to 35.

However, within this range, there have been notable shifts: convictions among 20- to 24-year-olds have steadily declined, and those aged 25 to 29 have also gradually declined. In contrast, convictions among the 30- to 34-year-old group have been increasing.¹⁵⁶

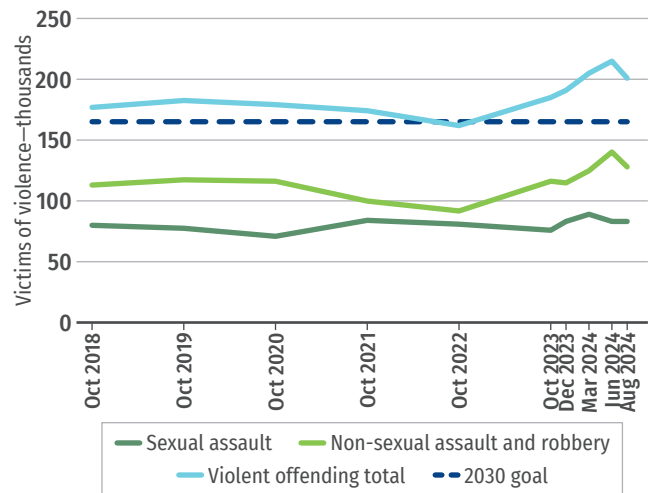
Violent crime

Violent crime has become a significant concern in New Zealand over the past few years, increasingly dominating public and political discourse (Table 23).¹⁵⁷ The NZCVS (November 2022–October 2023) highlighted that many people felt less safe in 2023 than in previous years, reflecting a growing unease about crime in communities. Violent crime includes offences that involve harm or the threat of harm to individuals. This category encompasses offences outlined in Table 24.

As part of monitoring government targets,¹⁵⁸ the NZCVS now provides more regular estimates on the number of victims of violence. The latest release in August 2024 estimated 201,000 victims of all violent crime in the 12 months to August 2024, a 6 percent decrease from June 2024 but still 9.2 percent higher than in October 2023, as shown in Figure 65. The number of sexual assault victims remained steady between June and August 2024, but the August level was 9.2 percent higher than in October 2023. Non-sexual assault and robbery victims decreased by 8.6 percent between June and August 2024, but the August 2024 level was 10.3 percent higher than in October 2023. Despite recent decreases, the number of victims of violent offences remains significantly above the government target of 165,000, having increased sharply since 2022. This highlights the considerable challenge in reducing violent crime.

The NZCVS shows disparities in the impact of violent offences across demographic groups. Māori adults (9.3%) are twice as likely to be victims of a violent offence compared to the general population (4.7%). Younger adults aged 15 to 29 (9.5%) are also disproportionately affected. Regionally, adults in

Figure 65: Estimated victims of violent offences—2018–2024 (note: annual Oct 2018–Oct 2023, then every quarter from December 2023)¹⁵⁹



Canterbury (6.7%) are most likely to experience violent offences, followed by those in Wellington (5.6%) and Bay of Plenty (5.2%).

According to police data, in 2024, 87,093 violent victimisations were reported to the police by 71,853 victims. This marks no significant change in reported violent victimisations over the past year, but is a 45 percent increase over five years. Similarly, the number of victims with reported victimisations remained steady between 2023 and 2024, but increased by 35 percent since 2019. The increase in victimisations was more rapid than the increase in victims, suggesting that some victims are targeted and victimised more often.

Proceedings against alleged violent offenders also remained relatively unchanged between 2023 and 2024, but were 17 percent lower in 2024 than in 2019 (after some fluctuation). Offender numbers follow a similar fluctuating trend and were 18 percent lower in 2024 than in 2019 as shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Summary of police proceedings for violent crime—2019–2024¹⁶⁰

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Victimisation	60,143	68,092	77,227	78,551	86,384	87,093	0.8%	44.8%
Victims	53,219	58,306	65,558	65,353	71,039	71,853	1.1%	35%
Proceedings	25,568	24,619	23,022	19,782	21,425	21,185	-1.1%	-17.1%
Offenders	22,328	21,712	20,031	17,297	18,517	18,363	-0.8%	-17.8%

A combination of proceedings and victimisations is shown in [Table 24](#) for ANZSOC groups of violent offences¹⁶¹ (alleged/reported and proceeded against) since 2019. Victimisation data highlights that common assault, while showing a slight 1.7 percent increase, remains the most prevalent offence, reflecting its persistent nature in violent crime. The increase in serious assaults with and without injury, particularly over the 5-year mark, potentially indicates the changes in reporting or offender behaviour. Sexual offences present a mixed picture: aggravated sexual assault decreased by 4.1 percent in 2024 but remains significantly higher than five years ago, possibly pointing to long-term societal or reporting influences. Non-aggravated sexual assault, however, rose by 5.7 percent, continuing an upward trend. Robbery offences, particularly aggravated robbery, saw a 7.4 percent decline, which may signal improved preventive measures or shifts in criminal activity.

Police proceedings for violent offences show mixed trends. Proceedings for murder and attempted murder have declined. While these offences make up a small proportion of violent offences, they are among the most serious crimes, with devastating impacts on individuals, families and communities. On the other hand, proceedings for child pornography offences and non-assaultive sexual offences against children have seen sharp increases, with non-assaultive offences against children surging by 183.3 percent in the past year alone. In 2024, Netsafe reported a total of 1645 child sexual abuse material (CSAM) reports received in 2024. Of these, 553 reports of suspected CSAM were reported directly by the public. Additionally, Netsafe processed 1092 'I see Child Abuse Material' (ICCAM)¹⁶² reports of CSAM, which were passed to the appropriate law enforcement or regulatory agencies in New Zealand.¹⁶³

Table 24: Estimated reported violent offences—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁶⁴

ANZSOC division	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Murder	80	83	60	72	85	79	-7.1%	-1.3%
Attempted murder	16	10	17	18	21	6	-71.4%	-62.5%
Manslaughter	22	31	22	22	35	29	-17.1%	31.8%
Common assault*	21,629	18,239	20,567	19,410	21,134	21,492	1.7%	-0.6%
Serious assault not resulting in Injury*	13,195	19,646	23,488	26,137	29,034	30,145	3.8%	128.5%
Serious assault resulting in Injury*	15,787	20,558	22,045	22,762	24,815	24,571	-1%	55.6%
Other acts intended to cause injury	12	19	39	26	29	20	-31.0%	66.7%
Aggravated sexual assault*	5216	5269	6624	5885	6369	6110	-4.1%	17.1%
Non-aggravated sexual assault*	1044	963	1299	1094	1103	1166	5.7%	11.7%
Child pornography offences	75	60	129	83	107	127	18.7%	69.3%
Non-assaultive sexual offences against a child	9	10	14	8	6	17	183.3%	88.9%
Non-assaultive sexual offences	82	93	91	79	106	116	9.4%	41.5%
Abduction and kidnapping*	436	454	452	395	497	425	-14.5%	-2.5%
Deprivation of liberty/false imprisonment	1	1	0	2	1	1	0%	0%
Aggravated robbery* ¹⁶⁵	2628	2738	2508	2644	3117	2887	-7.4%	9.9%
Non-aggravated robbery*	208	225	244	224	315	297	-5.7%	42.8%
Total	60,440	68,399	77,599	78,861	86,774	87,488	0.8%	44.8%

* = Victimisation data

Table 25: Convictions and charges for violent offences—2019–2024 (June years)¹⁶⁶

Violent offences	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y change	5Y change
Charges	30,810	30,122	33,415	27,749	30,942	33,858	9.4%	9.9%
People charged	17,131	16,125	17,064	13,904	15,287	16,254	6.3%	-5.1%
People convicted as a percentage of people charged	65.2%	64.2%	63.7%	63%	62.2%	62.4%	0.3%	-4.4%
People imprisoned as a percentage of people convicted	28%	30.4%	24.8%	27.8%	28.1%	30.2%	7.3%	7.6%

The number of charges laid in court for violent offences increased by 9.4 percent since 2023 and 9.9 percent since 2019, with 33,858 charges recorded in 2024, as shown in [Table 25](#). However, the number of people charged increased by 6.3 percent in the past year but remained lower than in 2019, indicating more charges laid per person charged. Conviction rates for those charged with violent offences stayed relatively the same over the past year, with 62 percent of people charged being convicted. Of those convicted, 30 percent were imprisoned in 2024, a slight increase compared with the previous year.

Men consistently account for the vast majority of violent offence convictions, making up over 85 percent annually, while women represent 13–14 percent. Māori were disproportionately represented, comprising 57.1 percent of those convicted in 2024, compared to Europeans (30%), Pacific peoples (12.4%) and Asians (2.6%). The majority of convictions occurred among individuals aged 20–39, who consistently make up almost 70 percent of the total across the years of 2019–2024.

Family violence

The Family Violence Act 2018 defines family violence as including physical, sexual and psychological abuse by someone in a family relationship. It recognises that family violence often involves patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour or cumulative harm over time. Family violence remains a significant issue in New Zealand, which has some of the highest reported rates of domestic and family violence in the OECD.¹⁶⁷

Addressing family violence continues to be the foremost demand on frontline police, with officers attending a family harm investigation (FHI) approximately every three minutes. [Table 26](#) highlights that in 2024, police recorded 174,876 FHIs, representing a 22.1 percent increase from 2019 but a 1.5 percent decrease from 2023—the largest annual decline in a decade. Of these, 102,630 FHIs were assessed as non-crimes, a 2.7 percent annual decline, while incidents assessed as crimes remained relatively unchanged. While the overall decline in FHIs is modest, it marks a meaningful shift in addressing family harm, demonstrating progress in tackling this critical issue.

FHIs classified as offences now make up 41.3 percent (27.9% in 2019), reflecting a shift influenced by the Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018 and Crimes Amendment Act 2018, which took effect in 2019. These reforms expanded the definition of family violence, introduced offences like strangulation and coercion, and strengthened victim protections. By broadening what defines family violence and enhancing justice responses, they likely contributed to this increase.

Table 26: Family harm investigations—2019–2024¹⁶⁸

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Crime	39,932	54,384	61,899	67,304	72,095	72,246	0.2%	80.9%
Non-crime	103,301	113,171	105,050	108,366	105,483	102,630	-2.7%	-0.6%
Total	143,233	167,555	166,949	175,670	177,578	174,876	-1.5%	22.1%

Table 27: Ethnicity of victims in family harm investigations—2019–2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Asian	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	4.5%	-11.3%
European	35.1%	33.6%	32.7%	31.4%	30.7%	29.8%	-2.6%	-15.1%
Indian	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	4%	-5.6%
Māori	44.2%	45.1%	44.4%	45.2%	44.3%	43.5%	-1.9%	-1.7%
Pacific	7.8%	7.5%	7.3%	7.3%	7%	7.1%	1.7%	-8.3%
Other	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	-4.4%	-11%
Unknown	7.2%	8.6%	10.3%	11.2%	12.9%	14.4%	11.2%	99.3%
Total	145,107	168,810	165,704	173,962	179,284	176,988	-1.3%	22%

The total number of FHI victims has declined by a small but significant 1.3 percent in the past year, marking a positive shift after years of increasing victimisations, as shown in [Table 27](#). While the number of victims remains high, this decline is a good shift and the first since 2021, which was likely influenced by the after effects of Covid-19, such as lockdowns and reduced reporting opportunities. [Table 27](#) also shows the ethnicity of FHI victims, with Māori every year consistently making up over 40 percent of victims (43.5% in 2024), followed by Europeans (29.8%) and Pacific peoples (7.1%). Notably, the proportions of Asian (4.5%) and Indian (4%) victims have increased over the past year, suggesting either rising victimisation and/or improved reporting within these communities.

Family violence offenders are overwhelmingly repeat offenders, with approximately 66 percent of callouts in the year involving individuals with prior incidents, underscoring the persistent and cyclical nature of family violence in New Zealand.¹⁶⁹ As with the trends for victims, [Table 28](#) shows a decline in FHI offenders, with a 15.2 percent drop since 2019 and a 3.5 percent decline in the past year. Māori are consistently making up the largest proportion of FHI offenders at 48.5 percent in 2024, despite a slight decline (2%) in the past year. European and Pacific offenders also decreased (1.8% and 0.5%, respectively), continuing a longer-term downward trend. In contrast, Asian and Indian offenders saw recent increases (1.8% and 6.4%), aligning with trends in [Table 27](#).

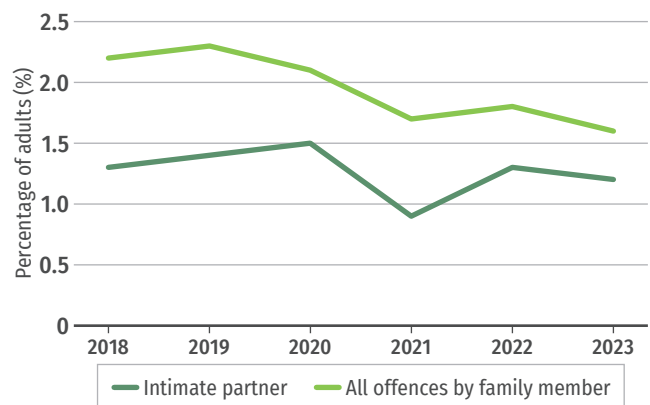
Table 28: Ethnicity of offenders/predominant aggressors in family harm investigations—2019–2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Asian	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.8%	-17.7%
European	33.7%	32.8%	32.3%	31.1%	30.3%	29.7%	-1.8%	-11.9%
Indian	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	6.4%	-1%
Māori	47.8%	48.7%	48.5%	49.5%	49.5%	48.5%	-2%	1.5%
Pacific	10%	9.5%	9.3%	9.3%	9.2%	9.2%	-0.5%	-8.6%
Other	1.6%	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%	14%	0.8%
Unknown	2.6%	3.5%	4.4%	4.9%	5.8%	7%	20.3%	169.1%
Total	125,060	126,492	113,272	111,545	109,968	106,106	-3.5%	-15.2%

The NZCVS (November 2022–October 2023) highlights that many victims of family violence face barriers to reporting, such as fear of retaliation or concerns about family reputation. Distrust and fear of offenders mean the majority of incidents go unreported, so the police data shown to the right, whilst significant, captures only a fraction of the reality.¹⁷⁰ This makes the NZCVS a critical source for understanding family violence trends. Although the NZCVS and police data (year ending June 2024) cover overlapping but not identical periods, they show consistent trends.

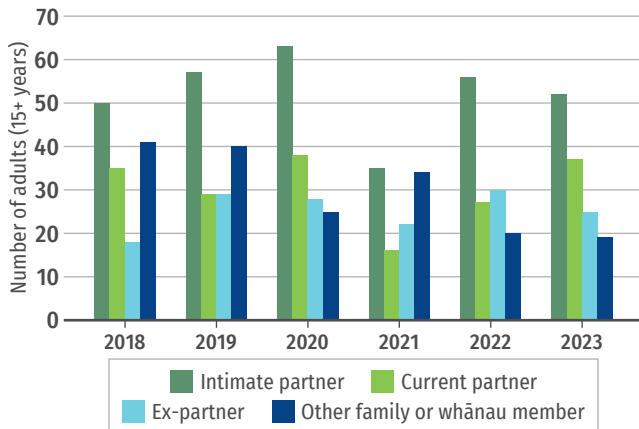
The NZCVS showed that in 2023, an estimated 1.6 percent of adults (70,000 people) experienced family violence—the lowest rate in at least six NZCVS cycles. Intimate partner violence accounted for 1.2 percent (52,000 individuals), while 0.5 percent involved other family members as shown in [Figure 66](#). This marks a sustained decline, with victimisation rates dropping from 2.3 percent in 2019 to 1.6 percent in 2023, highlighting progress in reducing family violence.

Figure 66: NZCVS—percentage of adults experiencing at least one family violence offence—2018–2023



Intimate partner violence reached its highest level in 2020 before declining by 2023. Current partner violence saw a sharp drop in 2021 but rebounded by 2023, while ex-partner violence remained relatively stable, peaking in 2022 before easing. Violence by other family members has steadily decreased since 2018. Overall, family violence victim numbers have fallen significantly since 2019, reflecting shifting dynamics, with intimate and current partner violence remaining a key focus, while offences involving other family members have become less prominent.

Figure 67: NZCVS—number of adults experiencing one or more family offence—2018–2023¹⁷¹



The NZCVS identifies key demographic disparities in family violence victimisation. Those with high psychological distress face the highest rates (11.5%), significantly above the national average (1.6%). Vulnerable groups include separated individuals (9.6%), bisexual individuals (8.2%), single-parent households (8%) and larger families (6.5%). Financial hardship, life dissatisfaction, low safety perceptions, and living in government-rented housing also correlate with higher victimisation. In contrast, men (1%), individuals aged 60+ (1%), married couples (1%), high-income earners (1.1%), and those with high life satisfaction (1.2%) are least affected. Geographically, Otago and Tasman (1.1%) report the lowest rates, while Asian ethnic groups, particularly Chinese (0.4%), show notably low victimisation. These factors are associations, not causations, but highlight critical patterns in family violence vulnerability.

Table 29 highlights key trends in family violence outcomes, showing significant increases in charges, convictions and imprisonments in 2024,

with imprisonments seeing the sharpest rise. The number of people charged and the use of police safety orders (PSOs) also grew, reflecting a broader shift toward addressing family violence. PSOs, introduced under the Family Violence Act 2018, have risen steadily since 2019, increasing by 22 percent over five years. These orders allow police to temporarily remove potential offenders from a property to protect at-risk individuals, even without an offence occurring. Unlike court-issued protection orders, which provide long-term safety, PSOs offer immediate, short-term intervention, underscoring their growing role as a preventive tool in combating family violence.

Although the recent declines in family violence are not major for such an entrenched issue, they represent a turn in the right direction. Police and NZCVS data, alongside increased judicial responses, highlight progress, reflecting the impact of the family violence law changes. These changes strengthened victim protections, expanded the definition of family violence and introduced tougher penalties. Improved justice system responses, victim support and Te Aorerekura—The National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence (2021) have reinforced prevention efforts and inter-agency collaboration. While challenges remain, these changes have laid the groundwork for meaningful progress in reducing family violence in New Zealand.

Table 29: Trends in judicial system responses to family violence—2019–2024¹⁷²

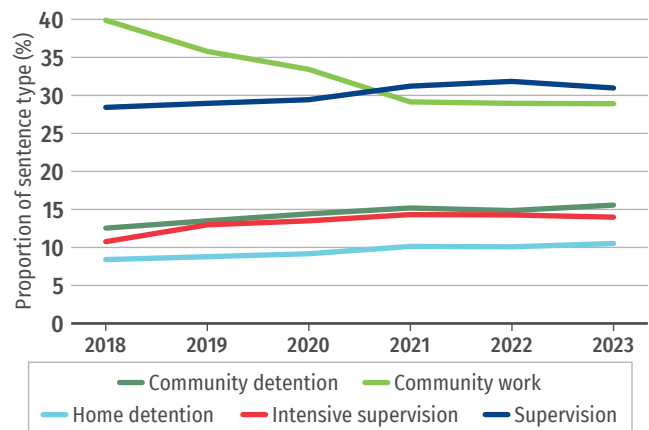
Offence type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Charges	28,605	30,171	31,637	25,723	29,059	31,209	7.4%	9.1%
People charged	13,499	13,354	13,541	10,860	11,761	12,422	5.6%	-8%
Convicted	9556	9353	9466	7480	7978	8588	7.6%	-10.1%
Imprisoned	2300	2441	1983	1774	1959	2267	15.7%	-1.4%
Police safety orders (PSOs)	20,232	24,029	23,341	23,535	23,983	24,673	2.9%	22%

Sentencing and imprisonment

Table 30 shows sentencing trends for criminal prosecutions for all offence types from 2019 to 2024. Prosecutions and convictions increased in the past year by 5.8 percent and 4 percent, respectively; though the conviction rate has continued to decline, reaching 76.7 percent in 2024. Imprisonments saw a 15.2 percent increase, with 12.7 percent of those convicted receiving imprisonment—this is an increase in the imprisonment rate from the previous three years although it’s still lower than the 2020 rate. Community sentences also increased by 5.9 percent to over 22,200 in 2024, accounting for 44.8 percent of those convicted.

Figure 68 shows the shifts in non-custodial sentencing trends from 2018 to 2023. Community detention increased from 12.5 percent to 15.6 percent of non-custodial sentencing within those five years. Similarly, home detention rose from 8.4 percent to 10.5 percent. People serving community detention sentences have electronically monitored curfews imposed by the court; whilst people serving home detention, who are also electronically monitored, must remain at an approved residence. Supervision, which is a rehabilitative, community-based sentence, is one of the most frequently used sentences and also grew slightly from 28.4 percent to 31 percent. Conversely, community work significantly declined, dropping from 39.9 percent to 28.9 percent, and intensive supervision increased from 10.8 percent to a peak of 14.3 percent in 2022 and remains relatively unchanged.

Figure 68: Sentence type shares of community sentences—2018–2023 (June years)¹⁷⁴



Community work and supervision are the least expensive methods of sentencing, as shown in **Table 31**. The daily and annual costs associated with various sentences and detention types show the cost of community sentences compared to custodial options. Sentences involving imprisonment have the highest daily cost at \$562 per convicted person and the highest annual overall cost of \$1.82 billion, reflecting the significant financial burden of custodial sentences. In contrast, community-based sentences such as community detention (\$70 daily per person) and supervision (\$27 daily per person) are far less costly, with annual costs of \$14.1 million and \$57.9 million respectively, for a larger number of offenders.

Community work is an economical alternative, with a daily cost of just \$13 per person. Home detention (\$119 daily) offers a middle ground, providing structured supervision at a fraction of the cost of imprisonment. The lower costs of these community

Table 30: Trends in judicial system response to adult offenders—2019–2024¹⁷³

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y change	5Y change
Prosecutions	72,534	65,203	67,138	54,363	61,174	64,744	5.8%	-10.7%
Convictions	58,883	52,365	53,748	42,879	47,755	49,674	4%	-15.6%
Conviction rate	81.2%	80.3%	80.1%	78.9%	78.1%	76.7%	-1.4pp	-4.5pp
Imprisonment	7113	6967	5770	4928	5454	6285	15.2%	-11.6%
Rate for those convicted	12.1%	13.3%	10.7%	11.5%	11.4%	12.7%	1.3pp	0.6pp
Community sentences	25,364	22,603	24,611	18,616	20,997	22,233	5.9%	-12.3%
Rate for those convicted	43.1%	43.2%	45.8%	43.4%	44%	44.8%	0.8pp	1.7pp

sentences make them a critical alternative for managing lower-risk offenders while reducing the overall financial burden on the justice system. These trends underscore the importance of prioritising community-based approaches, as shown in [Table 31](#), for suitable offenders, balancing expenses with public safety and rehabilitation goals.

[Figure 69](#) shows an overview of New Zealand’s prison population, with a breakdown of remand accused, remand convicted (a new categorisation for Corrections) and sentenced prisoners over time. The total prison population has fluctuated over the past decade, and after a decline from 2018 to 2022, the raw numbers have increased again for

the past two years, reaching 9924 in September 2024. The number of remand accused prisoners is consistently higher than remand convicted prisoners, reflecting the high volume of individuals awaiting court. After a four-year decline from 2017 to 2021, and then a year spent flatlining around 4600 in 2022, sentenced prisoner numbers increased by 1000 (22%) in the 18 months to September 2024. These trends indicate ongoing reliance on remand for managing accused individuals and an increase in sentenced populations, reflecting broader trends in the criminal justice system’s handling of offenders (such as increasing numbers of custodial sentences in 2023 and 2024).

Table 31: Cost of prisoners by sentence type (2024)¹⁷⁵

	Daily cost	Average number of days	Average number of people	Average cost per year
Custodial sentence				
Sentences	\$562	636	5092	\$1,820,043,744
Remand	\$437	89	4000	\$155,572,000
Community sentence				
Home detention	\$119	212	1804	\$45,511,312
Community detention	\$70	123	1638	\$14,103,180
Supervision	\$27	287	7471	\$57,892,779
Community work	\$13		8526	
Intensive supervision	\$43	444	4760	\$90,877,920
Extended supervision	\$126	1790	183	\$41,273,820
Returning offenders orders	\$76	430	183	\$5,980,440
Parole	\$62	482	1947	\$58,184,148
Post- detention conditions	\$42	207	1402	\$12,188,988
Post-release conditions	\$29	347	2058	\$20,709,654

Figure 69: Prisoner population—2015–2024 (quarterly)¹⁷⁶

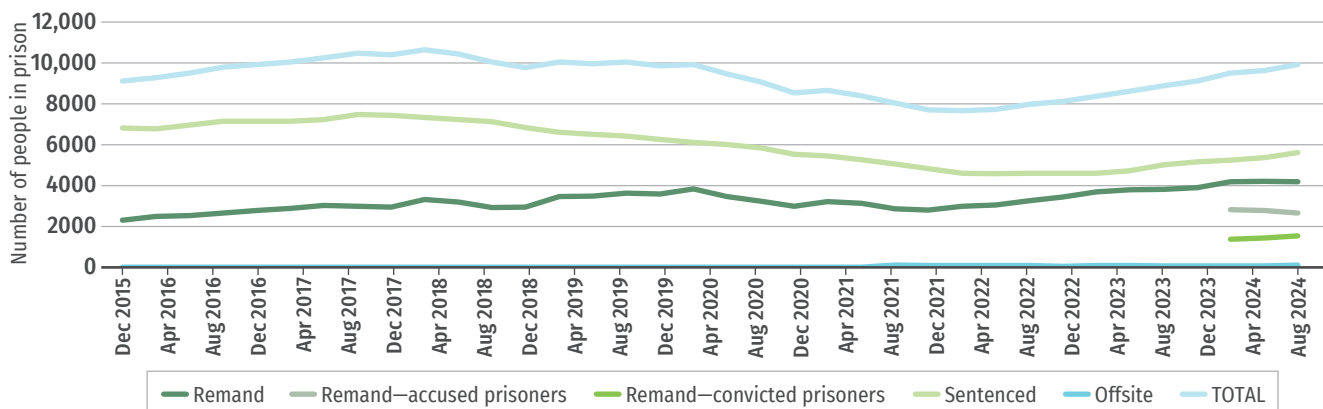
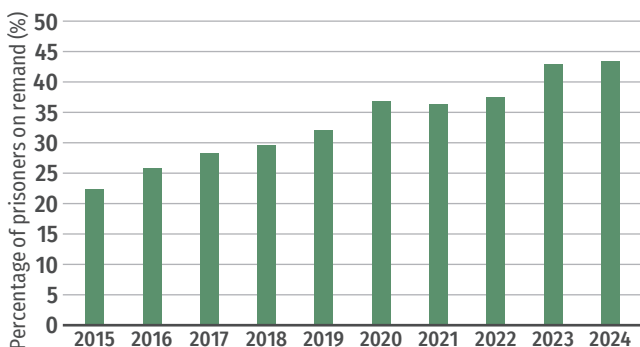


Figure 70 illustrates the percentage of prisoners currently on remand. Traditionally, prisons were designed for a remand population comprising approximately 15 percent of the total prison population. However, over the past decade, the number of remand inmates has increased by more than 80 percent. From 2015 onwards, the proportion of prisoners on remand has shown a significant and consistent increase year-on-year, reaching 36.9 percent in 2020. Despite a slight dip to 36.3 percent in 2021, the upward trend resumed, with the proportion rising to 43.4 percent in 2024.

The increase in the remand population can be attributed to various factors. MOJ released the *Justice Sector Long-Term Insights Briefing* about imprisonment 1960–2050, which showed a significant increase in cases meeting the threshold for ‘offending on bail’ reverse onus (if accused of a crime while on bail, the individual may need to prove why their bail should not be revoked or result in further consequences). This surge is attributed to technological advances such as electric monitoring and enhanced data capture by the police. The extended court proceedings have also resulted in prolonged delays, creating more opportunities for defendants on bail to violate conditions and surpass the remand threshold. More than 80 percent of individuals charged with imprisonable offences are released on bail. This trend raises concerns about the balance between ensuring public safety and the significant pressures this place on the remand system and people awaiting trial. Remand can impact people’s employment and housing, as well as having an impact on social and family connections.¹⁷⁷

Figure 70: Percentage of prison population on remand—2015–2024¹⁷⁸



As a result of increasing remand rates, **Figure 71** illustrates the growing proportion of people who have been released from custody on the basis of time served and total number of individuals released from custody on the basis of time served. When someone is released on time served, it means they have already spent enough time in custody before sentencing, and that time is credited toward their sentence, allowing for immediate release. From 2015 to 2020, the proportion of such releases steadily rose from 8 percent in 2015 to 18 percent in 2020; it has stayed within one percentage point of 18 percent since then (19% in 2024). The total number of individuals released followed a similar trend, peaking at 1286 in 2020 and reaching 1213 in 2024.

This rise in time-served sentences reflects how the growing remand population directly influences sentencing outcomes, with courts increasingly opting to credit time already spent in custody. Individuals receiving time-served sentences may have spent significant periods in custody without a confirmed sentence, limiting their access to rehabilitation programmes and support services. This raises critical questions about equity, the availability of rehabilitation opportunities and the long-term impacts of extended remand detention on successful reintegration into society.

Figure 71: People released on time served—2015–2024¹⁷⁹

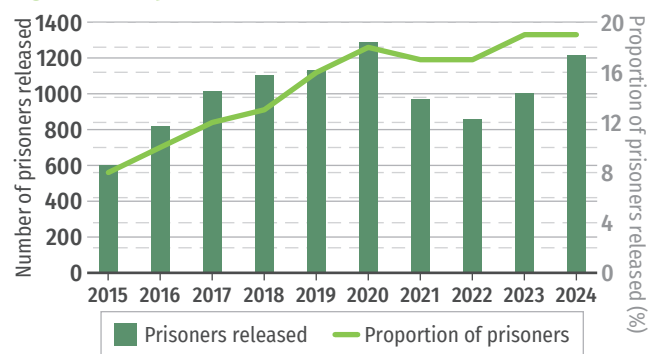
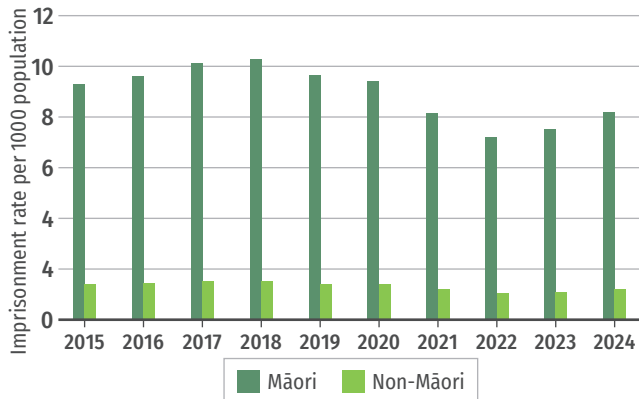


Figure 72 illustrates the imprisonment rates per 1000 adults (18 years and older) for Māori and non-Māori populations, highlighting a significant and persistent disparity between the two groups. Māori incarceration rates have consistently been substantially higher. While there was a notable decline from a rate of 10.3 in 2018 to the lowest rate

of 7.2 in 2022, it began to rise again, reaching 8.2 in 2024. In contrast, non-Māori incarceration rates remained consistently low, ranging between 1.5 and 1.1 over the same period. This disparity means Māori are 6.6 to 6.8 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Māori (6.8 times in 2024).

Figure 72: Imprisonment rates per 1000 for adult population (18 years old and over)—2015–2024¹⁸⁰



Offenders serving sentences of two or more years are eligible for parole unless a non-parole period is imposed. **Table 32** shows a drop of 25 percent for the number of offenders reviewed for parole over the four years to 2023, before a 4.2 percent increase in cases reviewed in 2024. The parole approval rate declined from 35 percent in 2019 to 25.7 percent in 2024. This rate has remained relatively stable over the past year.

When an offender struggles on parole, violates special conditions, commits further crimes or poses an undue risk to community safety, a probation or police officer may apply to the Parole Board for their recall to prison. The Parole Board quickly

reviews these applications, issuing an interim recall and arrest warrant, if necessary, with a full hearing held within a month to finalise the recall.¹⁸² Over the past year, the number of recall requests declined by 12.4 percent. This may be because there are fewer parole approvals, raising the threshold for those getting approved, which is reflected in the lower number of recalls. The approval rate for recall applications has increased from 74 percent in 2019 to 87.7 percent in 2024.

Recidivism

Recidivism refers to the percentage of individuals who are reimprisoned or resentenced within 12 and 24 months of release from prison or of the start of a community-based sentence. **Table 33** shows the recidivism rates, measured by reimprisonment and reconviction over 12 and 24 months. In the past year, recidivism rates have increased for both Māori and non-Māori,¹⁸³ except for the 24-month reconviction rate for non-Māori. However, the recidivism rates are still lower than in 2019. After 12 months of being released, about 30 percent of Māori and about 21 percent of non-Māori return to prison. This has increased for both groups, more for Māori at 25 percent compared to non-Māori at 15.1 percent. Additionally, Māori are 1.5 times more likely to be reimprisoned, increasing from 1.4 in 2019. The same trend is seen in reconviction after 12 months, which had also been trending downward for both groups since 2020.

When we look at the recidivism rates at the 24-month period, it is clear that these disparities have always been quite high, with 29.3 percent of

Table 32: Offenders approved for parole—2019–2024¹⁸¹

June years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Offenders seen	5383	5131	4891	4344	4062	4234	4.2%	-21.3%
Parole approved	1882	1669	1652	1578	1048	1088	3.8%	-42.2%
Percentage of parole approved	35%	32.5%	33.8%	36.3%	25.8%	25.7%	-0.1%	-9.3%
Recalls requested	458	541	613	533	428	375	-12.4%	-18.1%
Approved	339	401	395	377	374	329	-12%	-2.9%
Percentage of recalls approved	74%	74.1%	64.4%	70.7%	87.4%	87.7%	0.4%	13.7%

non-Māori reimprisoned after two years, while almost 42 percent of Māori are reimprisoned. Significantly higher reconviction levels show non-Māori have declined by 6 percent in the past year to 44.5 percent, while Māori increased by 2.4 percent to 60.8 percent reconvicted after 24 months, widening the disparity. Māori are 1.4 times more likely to be reimprisoned and reconvicted after 24 months which has increased since 2019. The disparities particularly at the 24-month mark continues to raise concerns regarding the long-term support and rehabilitation for Māori, to help them reintegrate well into the community and prevent reoffending.

Nearly half of those in prison are incarcerated for offences such as sexual assault, acts intended to cause injury and unlawful entry with intent or burglary. There has been a consistent shift in the justice system towards prioritising more serious offences, meaning that prisons are increasingly concentrated with individuals convicted of serious crimes.

Only around 13 percent of convicted individuals are sent to prison, with the majority receiving community sentences. As of September 2024, 30,611 orders and sentences are being carried out in the community. More than one-third of those on community service are aged 30–39, 45 percent are Māori, 29 percent are European and 9.5 percent are Pacific. Nearly half of all community service orders are for acts intended to cause injury and traffic offences.¹⁸⁵

Table 34 shows the community service recidivism rates. In the past year, Māori are 1.7 times more likely to be imprisoned a year after a community sentence, with a rate of 7.8 percent compared to 4.5 percent for non-Māori. These rates have increased for both groups since 2019. The reconviction rates are higher, with 24 percent of Māori being reconvicted after a community sentence compared to 17 percent of non-Māori. Although these rates have increased in the past year, they are still lower than in 2019.

Table 33: Recidivism rates for people released from prison—2019–2024¹⁸⁴

12 month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Reimprisonment								
Māori	33.6%	29.2%	27.5%	24.8%	23.9%	29.9%	25.1%	-11%
Non-Māori	24.2%	20%	19.3%	17.9%	17.9%	20.6%	15.1%	-15%
Rate	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.5	8.7%	4.7%
Reconviction								
Māori	49.8%	42.6%	43.1%	39.3%	36.2%	42.3%	16.9%	-15.1%
Non-Māori	37.9%	31.4%	32.9%	30.2%	26.9%	31.2%	15.9%	-17.6%
Rate	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	0.8%	3.1%
24 month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
Reimprisonment								
Māori	47.6%	45.8%	44.8%	41%	39.4%	41.6%	5.6%	-12.6%
Non-Māori	36.6%	34.3%	32%	28.9%	28.8%	29.3%	1.4%	-20.2%
Rate	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	4.1%	9.5%
Reconviction								
Māori	67.7%	65.8%	63.9%	62.4%	59.4%	60.8%	2.4%	-10.2%
Non-Māori	54.5%	53.3%	49.3%	48.2%	47.3%	44.5%	-6%	-18.3%
Rate	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	8.9%	9.9%

After two years, Māori are 1.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Māori after serving a community sentence. This rate has increased for both Māori and non-Māori and is higher than in 2019. Although the levels of imprisonment are significantly lower for those completing community sentences compared to those imprisoned, the percentage of those imprisoned following community sentences has been increasing since 2019 for both Māori and non-Māori. While reconviction rates have declined since 2019, the disparity between Māori and non-Māori has increased.

In 2024, Department of Corrections dedicated \$376 million to rehabilitation and reintegration—a substantial increase of 54.7 percent since 2019, as shown in **Figure 73**. This allocation corresponds to \$41,366 per custodial prisoner for rehabilitation and reintegration. Overall, the recidivism rates shown in **Table 33** and **Table 34** illustrate the need

for rehabilitative and reintegrative approaches that are targeted and long term to address the high recidivism rates amongst different groups, and a follow up at 24 months.

Figure 73: Department of Correction’s total operation costs—2019–2024¹⁸⁷

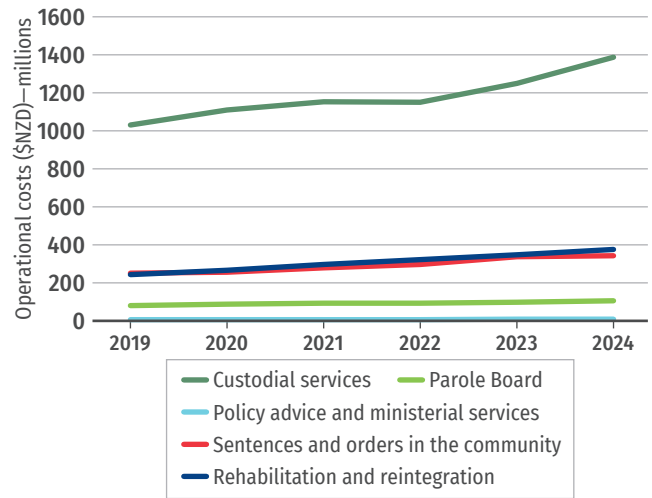


Table 34: Recidivism rates for people completing a community-based sentence—2019–2024¹⁸⁶

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	5Y
12-month imprisonment								
Māori	6.7%	7.9%	8.1%	7.2%	7%	7.8%	11.4%	16.4%
Non-Māori	3.8%	5%	5.4%	4%	4.7%	4.5%	-2.8%	20.2%
Rate	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.7	14.7%	-3.2%
Reconviction								
Māori	31.9%	24.8%	25.9%	23%	21.5%	24%	11.6%	-24.8%
Non-Māori	24%	18.8%	20.1%	16.6%	16.3%	17.1%	5.1%	-28.7%
Rate	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	6.2%	5.5%
24-month imprisonment								
Māori	11%	14.9%	15.1%	13%	12.9%	14%	8.5%	27.3%
Non-Māori	6.8%	9.1%	10%	8.4%	7.6%	8.2%	8.7%	21%
Rate	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.7	-0.2%	5.2%
Reconviction								
Māori	47.9%	44%	42.7%	41.5%	39.5%	40.2%	1.8%	-16.1%
Non-Māori	38.7%	34.3%	34%	33.5%	30.3%	30.6%	0.9%	-21.1%
Rate	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	0.9%	6.3%

Overall assessment: Crime and Punishment

CATEGORY	RESULT
<p>OVERALL CRIME Over the past year, the NZCVS reported a decline in the number of incidents, despite a slight increase in the adult population being victimised. Both the number of victims and victimisations saw marginal decreases, while estimated offence volumes remained relatively stable. Similarly, the number of proceedings against offenders and the offender numbers themselves showed little change, indicating a plateau in overall crime trends.</p>	NC
<p>VIOLENT CRIME The trends in violent crime present a mixed picture. Over the past year, reported violent crime has remained relatively unchanged, relative to 2023 which increased by 10 percent. However, NZCVS data indicates an 8.6 percent increase in violent offences (whether reported) from October 2023 to August 2024. While the overall stabilisation may signal progress, the recent rise underscores the complexities of addressing violent crime.</p>	—
<p>FAMILY VIOLENCE Family harm investigations by police have seen a slight decline, marking the most notable drop since 2021. The number of victims and offenders has also decreased, though Māori continue to account for over 40 percent of both groups. The NZCVS shows family violence offences and victims have declined to the lowest levels in six cycles, while judicial responses—charges, convictions, imprisonments and police safety orders—have all increased, reflecting stronger efforts to address victim safety. Although these changes are modest, they represent a shift in the right direction for such a pervasive issue in New Zealand. While family violence remains prevalent, the progress seen over the past year is a meaningful improvement and should be acknowledged.</p>	+
<p>SENTENCING AND IMPRISONMENT The prison population has increased by 6 percent over the past year, with gradual growth recorded each quarter. The proportion of prisoners on remand has also risen, alongside a 15 percent increase in convicted individuals receiving custodial sentences. As a result, the proportion of prisoners released on time served has climbed to 19 percent in 2024, a significant rise compared to 8 percent a decade ago.</p>	—
<p>RECIDIVISM For those imprisoned, recidivism levels increased in the past year for both Māori and non-Māori across all measurements, except for 24-month convictions, which remained unchanged for Māori. However, disparities have widened, with marginal increases for non-Māori and a significant rise for Māori.</p>	—

ENDNOTES: Crime and Punishment

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SOCIAL HAZARDS

The 'Social Hazards' section monitors four critical areas: alcohol use, illicit drug use and convictions, gambling and problem debt. While most actions associated with these areas are legal, they are heavily regulated; others, like illicit drug use, remain illegal. All four areas have the potential to create significant harm. Alcohol, drugs and gambling have addictive elements that can profoundly impact individuals, their whānau and wider communities. Similarly, problem debt can cause financial and emotional strain, exacerbating family stress and hardship. The Salvation Army offers comprehensive support services to address the immediate and long-term impacts of these hazards, providing practical assistance and Christian spiritual care across New Zealand.

Research from the University of Otago showed that alcohol is the most harmful drug in New Zealand¹⁸⁸ and is estimated to cause \$9 billion in social harm.¹⁸⁹ In the past year, the availability of alcohol (a proxy for alcohol intake) has declined to the lowest levels in the past decade. This trend reflects shifting consumption patterns, with a survey showing that a quarter of survey participants are reducing their alcohol intake for health reasons in the six months to March 2024.¹⁹⁰ Despite these positive shifts, hazardous drinking remains a significant issue, affecting 16.6 percent of adults in 2024 (a slight increase from 2023), with Māori and poorer communities disproportionately impacted. For the first time in at least six years, disabled people had a higher rate of hazardous drinking (17.9%) than non-disabled people (16.5%).

The increase of illicit drug use in 2024 is concerning—particularly methamphetamine. Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug, used by 15.6 percent of adults—a slight increase in recent years. Methamphetamine, though used by only 1.3 percent of the population, is identified as the most harmful illicit drug due to its devastating social and economic consequences, with social harm costs exceeding \$1 billion annually. Methamphetamine consumption more than doubled in quarter three (Q3) of 2024, to 32.6kg per week,

according to police wastewater analysis, driven at least in part by declining prices and increased availability. The total social harm from illicit drugs—including cannabis, cocaine, MDMA and methamphetamine—is estimated at \$2.1 billion per year, with methamphetamine alone accounting for half of this figure.

Gambling loss in 2023 reached a record \$2.76 billion, reflecting a steep 22.5 percent increase from the previous year and a 35 percent rise over the past decade. Pokie machines accounted for 39 percent of this loss, with total losses amounting to \$1.07 billion. Although the number of pokie machines has decreased by 5.5 percent over five years, dropping to 14,046 in 2024, their profitability has continued to rise, with each machine generating an average of \$18,732 annually. These machines remain heavily concentrated in areas of high deprivation, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities and exacerbating social and economic inequalities.

Problem debt and financial hardship have increased in the past year, highlighting the financial strain many households face. Household debt servicing costs (the amount required to meet both principal and interest payments) surged to 10.3 percent of disposable income in 2024, more than double the rate of 5 percent in 2021, reflecting the growing burden of rising interest rates and inflation. There were 461,000 consumers in arrears, with the arrears rate peaking at 13.09 percent in 2024—the highest on record. KiwiSaver hardship withdrawals, a key indicator of acute financial distress increasing the risk of poverty in later life, also rose sharply, reaching 32,480 in 2024, with the average withdrawal amount increasing to \$9252.

The Social Hazards section highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to address social hazards and their widespread impacts. There are many moving pieces in this space, including regulation such as the government's upcoming Online Gambling Bill and council-led Local Alcohol Policy revisions, and law enforcement efforts by customs and police to combat the illicit drug trade.

In the financial sector, the transition of consumer credit oversight to the Financial Markets Authority reflects broader efforts to protect vulnerable consumers and address systemic debt issues. This chapter offers only a snapshot of these complex areas.

Alcohol

ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY

We monitor the yearly volume of alcohol accessible for consumption, serving as an indicator for the alcohol intake of New Zealanders. The availability of alcohol in New Zealand, as shown in [Figure 74](#), has fluctuated over the past decade, reaching its lowest point in at least a decade in 2024 at 8.06 litres per adult—a dramatic 12.2 percent decline from the previous year and a 15.3 percent reduction over ten years. It is unclear what exactly has caused such a steep annual decline. The Southern Cross Healthy Futures Report 2024¹⁹¹ highlights shifting alcohol consumption patterns, with more people embracing low- or no-alcohol options: one-quarter of people reduced their previous intake for health reasons in the six months to March 2024; four in ten abstain, and average consumption remains below Ministry of Health guidelines.

Figure 74: Per-capita availability of alcohol, litres of pure alcohol for 18+ years—2015–2024 (June years)¹⁹²



HAZARDOUS DRINKING

Hazardous drinkers are individuals who score 8 or more on the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The AUDIT assesses drinking frequency, quantity and behaviours such as binge drinking, neglecting responsibilities, blackouts and feelings of guilt after drinking. A score of 8 or higher indicates risky alcohol consumption patterns and an increased risk of physical and mental harm. [Table 35](#) highlights a significant 18.6 percent decline in national hazardous drinking levels since 2019, despite a 3.8 percent increase in the past year. While men consistently report higher rates than women, both have seen decreases of 20.7 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively, over five years. Younger age groups, such as 18- to 24-year-olds, have shown significant declines in hazardous drinking, dropping by 36.9 percent since 2019, although they continue to represent the highest proportion of hazardous drinkers across all age groups. Interestingly, the 45–54 age group has now become the second highest for hazardous drinking, with a notable increase of 26.3 percent in the past year. The last time this age group ranked this high relative to others was in 2020. While the reasons for this increase remain unclear, it may reflect midlife stressors such as financial pressures, health challenges or generational norms, which could be driving greater alcohol use as a coping mechanism. In addition, hazardous drinking rates among disabled individuals rose sharply by 29.7 percent in 2024, deviating from the broader downward trend. For the first time in at least six years, rates of hazardous drinking among the disabled population (17.9%) are higher than among the non-disabled population (16.5%).

Table 35: Proportion of population estimated to be hazardous drinkers—2019–2024¹⁹³

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Annual % change	5 year % change
Total	20.4	21.3	19.9	18.7	16	16.6	3.8%	-18.6%
Gender								
Men	28*	29*	26.9*	25.3*	21.7*	22.2*	2.3%	-20.7%
Women	13.1	13.8	13.2	12.3	10.3	11.2	8.7%	-14.5%
Age group (years)								
15–17	6.7	11.8	10.2	5.9	6.4	5.9	-7.8%	-11.9%
18–24	35.8*	32.6*	34.9*	30.9*	23.8*	22.6*	-5.0%	-36.9%
25–34	25.4*	24.4*	23.9*	22.2*	21.6*	21.1*	-2.3%	-16.9%
35–44	22.6*	21.9*	19.8	23.2*	16.8*	18.3*	8.9%	-19.0%
45–54	22.4*	28*	23.8*	19.2*	17.5*	22.1*	26.3%	-1.3%
55–64	18	18.2	18.5	17.5	15.6	15.1	-3.2%	-16.1%
65–74	11.8	12.7	11.1	11.4	10.9	10.9	0.0%	-7.6%
75+	4.1	5.8	4.1	5	3.6	3.8	5.6%	-7.3%
Ethnicity								
Māori	33*	36.4*	33.2*	33.4*	25.1*	29.6*	17.9%	-10.3%
Pacific	23.3*	24.5*	26.5*	21.5*	21.5*	16.2	-24.7%	-30.5%
Asian	6.3	5.5	5.7	6.2	4.9	5.7	16.3%	-9.5%
European/other	21.6*	22.6*	21.1*	20*	16.9*	17.9*	5.9%	-17.1%
Disability status								
Total disabled	17.8	17.6	17.9	17.5	13.8	17.9*	29.7%	0.6%
Total non-disabled	20.6*	21.6*	20.1*	18.8*	16.2*	16.5	1.9%	-19.9%
Neighbourhood deprivation								
Quintile 1 (least deprived)	19.2	19.9	17.3	16.9	15.2	13.8	-9.2%	-28.1%
Quintile 2	18.5	19.3	16.6	20.9	12	14.9	24.2%	-19.5%
Quintile 3	19.8	22.1	19.8	19	14	16.7	19.3%	-15.7%
Quintile 4	20.1	21.4*	21.1*	18.4	21.4*	18.5*	-13.6%	-8.0%
Quintile 5 (most deprived)	24.8*	23.9*	24.9*	18.4	17.3*	19.1*	10.4%	-23.0%

* = Worse than the national rate

There are significant disparities in hazardous drinking rates when ethnicity and socio-economic factors are considered. Almost 30 percent of Māori drink hazardously, a 17.9 percent increase in 2024 following earlier declines, while 16.2 percent of Pacific people drink hazardously, which is the sharpest decline for Pacific people—30.5 percent—

since 2019, bringing their rates below the national average. It is unclear as to the cause in the drop for Pacific people's hazardous drinking levels. Socio-economic disparities persist, with hazardous drinking rates remaining higher in more deprived areas. Key factors influencing these trends include alcohol accessibility, affordability and availability.¹⁹⁴

Communities in higher deprivation areas typically have a greater concentration of off-licences, which account for an estimated 75 percent of alcohol sales, increasing the risk of hazardous drinking in these communities.

These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions addressing accessibility and socio-economic disparities to reduce hazardous drinking effectively. For example, in Auckland, the Local Alcohol Policy, which was implemented on 16 September 2024 after being tied up in court for a decade, introduces a temporary freeze on issuing new off-licences in specific high-deprivation areas. This prevents any new licences from being granted during the first 24 months of the policy. After the freeze ends, a presumption against issuing new off-licences will apply, meaning applications for new licences will generally be declined unless exceptional circumstances demonstrate they are necessary and appropriate. The policy applies to areas identified in the Priority Overlay, such as Māngere, Ōtāhuhu, Henderson and Papakura, aiming to reduce alcohol outlet density and mitigate alcohol-related harm in vulnerable communities.¹⁹⁵

Despite shifting drinking patterns and declining consumption levels, alcohol remains the most harmful drug in New Zealand.¹⁹⁶ The annual cost of alcohol harm is estimated at \$9.1 billion, encompassing healthcare expenses, justice system costs, productivity losses and the widespread impacts on families and communities.¹⁹⁷ Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen in the International Agency for Research on Cancer monographs programme. It increases cancer risk even at low consumption and contributes to cardiovascular diseases and mental health disorders. It is a leading factor in family violence and child maltreatment, imposing significant social and economic burdens. Non-disordered drinking alone accounts for most of this harm, highlighting the prevalent societal impact beyond individual hazardous drinking. These realities underscore the urgent need to address hazardous drinking and the harmful effects of drinking overall, as well as its contribution to ongoing public health and social challenges.¹⁹⁸

One component of alcohol and drug harm is vehicle crashes leading to injury or death caused by driving under the influence. **Figure 75** shows that over the past decade (2013–23), there were 1282 fatal crashes involving driving under alcohol or drugs as a contributing factor, which resulted in the death of 1437 people. In the year 2023, there were 138 fatal crashes where 155 people lost their lives, this has declined compared to 2022. In 2023, there were 293 serious injury crashes with 413 people seriously injured; this has increased compared with 2022.

Figure 75: Crashes and casualties in crashes involving driver alcohol/drugs as a contributing factor—2013–2023¹⁹⁹

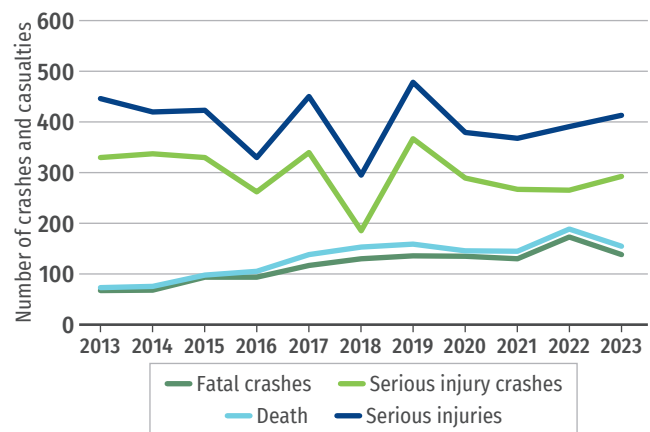


Table 36 highlights the number of individuals charged and convicted for driving under the influence (DUI)—this is only a proxy for changes in drink-driving over time, as it is also affected by police activity (eg, changes—if any—in numbers and locations of breath testing are unknown). In 2024, the total number of charges showed little change from the previous year, while convictions decreased by 8 percent over the past five years. Particularly, 27.2 percent of those charged in 2024 had two or more previous DUI convictions, a proportion that has remained stable over the same five-year period. Repeat offenders are predominantly young men, particularly Māori and European, with the 20–34 age group consistently accounting for the highest number of charges. These trends highlight that despite fluctuations, repeat offending remains a persistent issue within specific demographics.

Table 36: Number of people with charges for driving under the influence offences—2019–2024²⁰⁰

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y change	5Y change
Charged	17,382	15,245	16,292	13,940	16,788	17,163	2.2%	-1.3%
Convicted	16,660	14,499	15,385	13,061	15,489	15,332	-1.0%	-8.0%
2+ Previous convictions	25.2%	27.1%	26.1%	26.2%	25.8%	27.2%	1.3%	2.0%

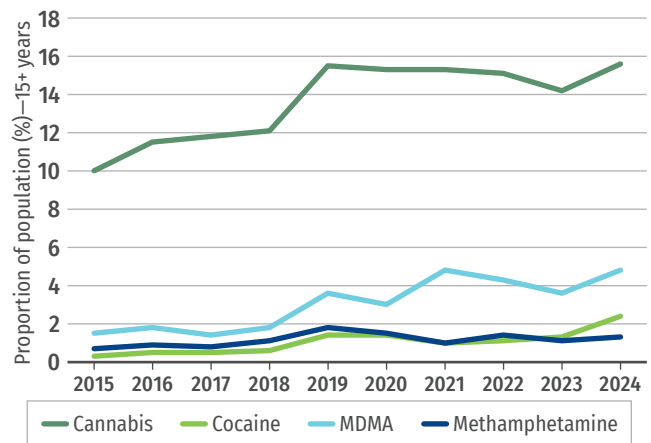
Illicit drugs

ILLICIT DRUG USE

Figure 76 shows the proportion of New Zealand adults using illicit drugs over the past decade. In the past year, illicit drug use in New Zealand has increased, with cannabis being the most used drug at 15.6 percent—a 9.9 percent change in the past year and a 56 percent change since 2015. Between 2023 and 2024, cocaine users grew from 1.3 percent to its highest level in at least a decade of 2.4 percent, while MDMA use rose to 4.8 percent in 2024, matching 2021 population proportions. Methamphetamine use remains the lowest at 1.3 percent, but it causes the highest social harm of the illicit drugs (discussed later). While illicit drug users represent a small portion of society, the impacts and costs are significant and far-reaching to these individuals and their communities.²⁰¹

The New Zealand Drug Trends Survey (NZDTS) conducted by the SHORE and Whāriki Research Centre, provides an annual snapshot of drug market trends in New Zealand through an anonymous online survey.²⁰⁴ The 2024 NZDTS highlights variations in the availability of illicit drugs. Cannabis remains the most accessible, with 85 percent of users describing it as ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’ to obtain. Cocaine availability, though historically limited due to New Zealand’s isolation from coca-

Figure 76: Proportion of the population who use of illicit drugs—2015–2024²⁰³



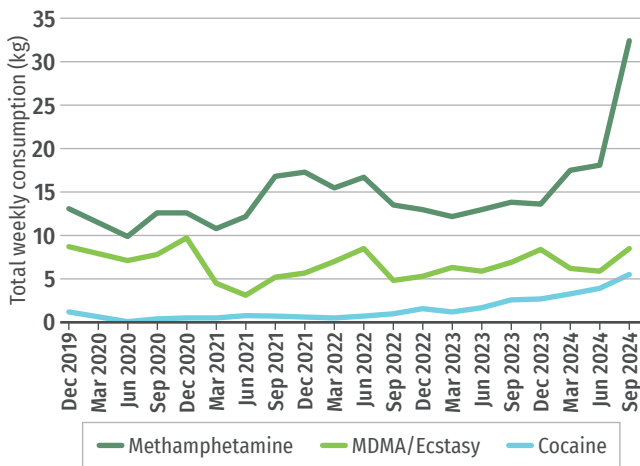
growing regions, has become more accessible; 34 percent of respondents in 2017 reported increasing difficulty accessing it, compared with just 11 percent in 2024, while those reporting easier access rose from 6 percent in 2017/18 to 24 percent in 2024. MDMA availability is stabilising, with 55 percent reporting steady access in 2024, up from 43 percent in 2022/23. Methamphetamine availability shows similar trends, with over half of users reporting regular access in 2024, compared with 38 percent in 2017. The availability of these substances, as detailed in the NZDTS, may play a role in the proportion of the population using these drugs. Additionally, pricing may also influence shifts in the use of certain drugs, which will be discussed later.

Table 37: Proportion of the population who use of illicit drugs—2015–2024²⁰²

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	1Y	10Y
Cannabis	10%	11.5%	11.8%	12.1%	15.5%	15.3%	15.3%	15.1%	14.2%	15.6%	9.9%	56%
Cocaine	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1%	1.1%	1.3%	2.4%	84.6%	700%
MDMA	1.5%	1.8%	1.4%	1.8%	3.6%	3%	4.8%	4.3%	3.6%	4.8%	33.3%	220%
Methamphetamine	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	1.1%	1.8%	1.5%	1%	1.4%	1.1%	1.3%	18.2%	85.7%

The New Zealand Police’s National Drugs in Wastewater Testing Programme provides a measure of national illicit drug consumption by detecting methamphetamine, MDMA and cocaine in wastewater. As shown in **Figure 77**, testing for the quarter ending in September 2024 revealed significant annual increases in all three substances, and a particularly dramatic quarterly increase for methamphetamine. Methamphetamine consumption surged to 32.4 kilograms per week, more than doubling (108% above) the previous four-quarter average and incurring a weekly social harm cost of \$34 million per week. MDMA use rose to 8.5 kilograms per week (22% above the previous four-quarter average) with a harm cost of \$1.8 million per week, while cocaine consumption increased to 5.5 kilograms per week (86% above the previous four-quarter average) with a harm cost of \$2.1 million per week. Methamphetamine remains the most widely consumed and socially harmful drug measured by the police wastewater programme, but use of MDMA and cocaine appears to be increasing, suggesting illicit drug use will be having a growing impact on New Zealand.^{205 206}

Figure 77: Estimates of average total weekly consumption of selected illicit drugs (kgs)—2019–2024²⁰⁷



The NZDTS highlights factors that may influence the surge in methamphetamine consumption. Declining retail prices, fuelled by increased international supply from North and Central America, have made methamphetamine more accessible. Mexican cartels, offering methamphetamine at less than one-third of the price of Asian suppliers, have driven prices down in New Zealand while maintaining stable

availability, resulting in a saturated market.²⁰⁸ **Figure 78** shows this decline for meth, with the estimated average price of a gram dropping 36 percent, from \$563 in 2017/18 to \$360 in 2024, and the price of a point falling 23 percent, from \$101 to \$78. Although they do not explain all of the consumption increases, these reduced prices, reflecting increased supply and market saturation, are likely to have contributed to the rise in consumption observed in recent wastewater testing.

Figure 78: Estimated average price of meth, cannabis and MDMA (NZDTS)—2017–2024²⁰⁹

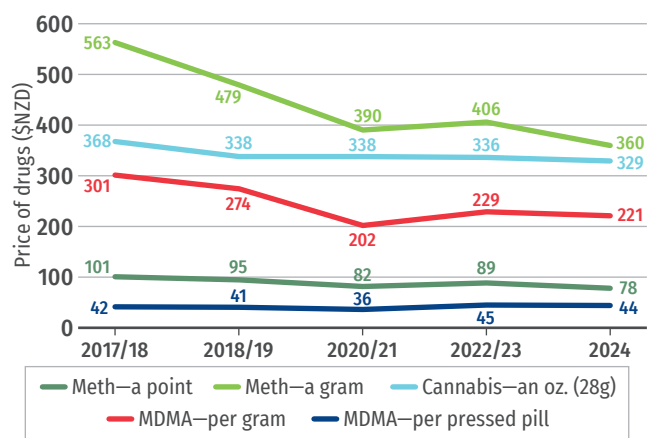
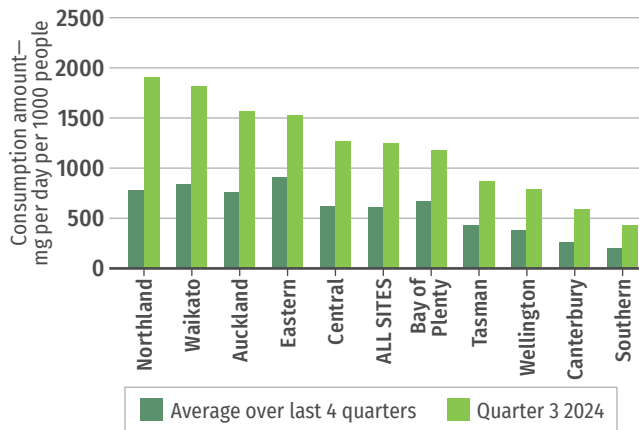


Figure 79 shows regional variations in per capita methamphetamine consumption across New Zealand for Q3 2024, for the police wastewater testing programme. Northland and Waikato have the highest consumption, followed closely by Auckland and the Eastern districts. The Bay of Plenty saw a sharp increase compared with its average over the past year. Moderate consumption levels are observed in Central, Tasman and Wellington, while Canterbury and Southern districts report the lowest levels. These disparities highlight notable regional patterns in methamphetamine use. Across all regions, Q3 use was far higher than the previous four-quarter average.

Several factors may explain why some regions exhibit higher consumption per capita than others. Pricing plays a significant role, with Auckland reporting the lowest gram prices for methamphetamine, followed by the Bay of Plenty and Waikato, all of which are among the regions with high consumption rates. Availability

also appears to be a key driver. Regions such as Northland, Auckland, Manawātū-Whanganui, Gisborne/Hawke’s Bay and Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough reported the highest methamphetamine availability in 2024. The combination of low prices and high availability in these regions likely contributes to their elevated consumption. In contrast, regions like Canterbury and the Southern districts, which report lower availability and presumably higher prices, show the lowest per-capita consumption.

Figure 79: Per capita methamphetamine consumption by district (quarter 3)—2024²¹⁰



The New Zealand Illicit Drug Harm Index (DHI) provides a comprehensive assessment of the societal impact of illicit drug use, encompassing a wide range of personal and community harms. Personal harms include premature death, reduced quality of life, mental and physical health issues, and adverse effects on relationships, employment and finances. Community harms include the emotional toll on families, fear of violence, acquisitive crime, reinvestment of drug profits into organised crime and lost government tax revenue.²¹¹

Table 38 summarises the estimated personal and community harms, as total harm per kilogram and annual social harm costs for methamphetamine,

cocaine, MDMA and cannabis in New Zealand, based on the 2023 DHI. Combining DHI and police wastewater data, the total social harm from these four drugs in the past year is estimated at \$2.1 billion, comprising \$908 million in personal harm and \$1.2 billion in community harm, amounting to \$5.8 million per day.

Despite a relatively low estimated user base of 56,000, methamphetamine is the most harmful illicit drug, with total harm of \$1,048,211 per kilogram and annual costs of \$1.026 billion. Its impacts include premature deaths, addiction-related hospitalisations and crime to fund use; while community harm, at \$491 million, highlights the effects on families and organised crime. Methamphetamine’s harm per person is the highest at \$18,329, over 190 percent greater than its estimated street value.

Cocaine causes \$373,581 in harm per kilogram and \$69 million annually, with most harm driven by organised crime and economic impacts. Its personal harm is lower, reflecting fewer deaths and hospitalisations. With 105,000 users, cocaine’s per-person harm of \$658 is lower than methamphetamine but still notable. MDMA causes \$209,425 in harm per kilogram and \$73 million annually, split between personal harm and community harm, largely linked to hospitalisations from recreational use.

Cannabis, though causing the lowest harm per kilogram (\$15,880), contributes \$952 million of harm annually due to its widespread use by 675,000 people. Personal harm arises from dependency and quality of life issues, while community harm is driven by organised crime and lost tax revenue. With harm per person estimated at \$1410, cannabis’ societal impact is primarily due to its high prevalence rather than individual severity.

Table 38: Cost of social harm of illicit drugs nationally—2024²¹²

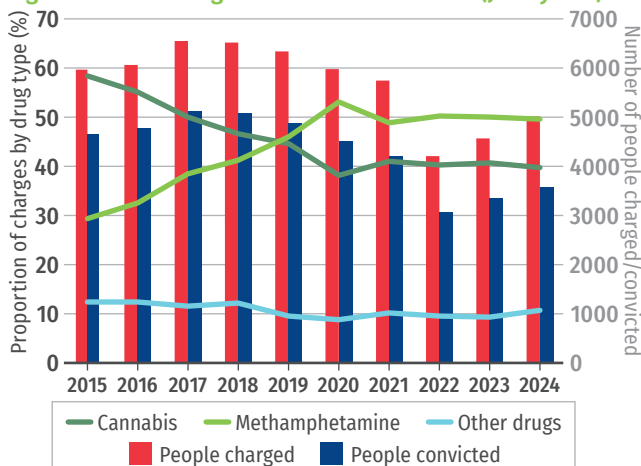
Drug type	NZ DHI: Summary of social harms (\$) per kilogram by drug type			NZ Police wastewater estimated use (kgs) ²¹³	Personal harm (2024) \$ million	Community harm (2024) \$ million	Total harm (2024) \$ million
	Personal harm per kg	Community harm per kg	Total harm per kg				
Meth	\$546,321.04	\$501,890.02	\$1,048,211.06	979.2	\$535.0	\$491.5	\$1026.4
Cocaine	\$88,434.00	\$285,147.44	\$373,581.44	184.8	\$16.3	\$52.7	\$69.0
MDMA	\$91,828.77	\$117,596.15	\$209,424.92	348	\$32.0	\$40.9	\$72.9
Cannabis	\$5,425.47	\$10,454.61	\$15,880.08	59921 ²¹⁴	\$325.1	\$626.5	\$951.6
Total					\$908.4	\$1211.5	\$2119.9

	Proportion of adult population who use (2024) ²¹⁵	NZHS Estimated adults	Estimated street costs ²¹⁶	Estimated cost per person in 2024	Personal harm per person in 2024	Community harm per person in 2024	Total harm per person in 2024
Meth	1.3	56,000	\$352,512,000	\$6295	\$9552.81	\$8775.91	\$18,328.72
Cocaine	2.4	105,000	\$64,680,000	\$616	\$155.64	\$501.86	\$657.50
MDMA	4.8	210,000	\$76,908,000	\$366	\$152.17	\$194.87	\$347.05
Cannabis	15.6	675,000	\$704,071,750	\$1043	\$481.63	\$928.08	\$1409.70

ILLICIT DRUG CONVICTIONS

In the year ending June 2024, 71 percent of people charged with drug offences were convicted. Figure 80 shows significant shifts in drug charges and convictions in New Zealand in the past decade, reflecting changing enforcement and judicial priorities. In 2015, cannabis-related charges represented 58.4 percent of drug related charges, but this declined until 2020 and has plateaued since, remaining between 38 percent and 41 percent in the past five years.

Figure 80: Illicit drug convictions—2015–2024 (June years)²¹⁷



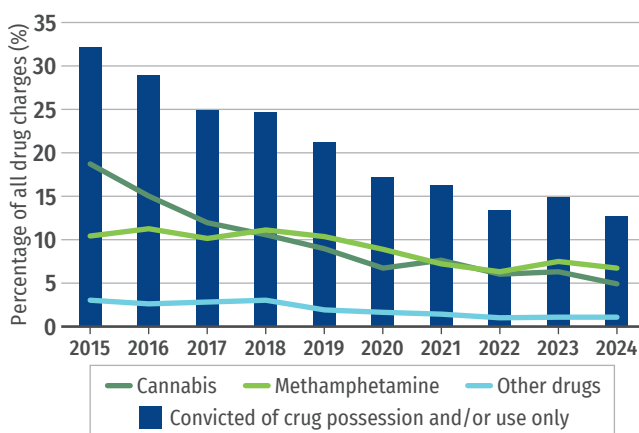
The proportion of all drug charges which are due to methamphetamine increased relative to cannabis, from 29.3 percent in 2015 to a peak of 53.1 percent in 2020 (related to the reduction in cannabis charges), before plateauing in 2021 to remain between 49–50 percent over the next five years. Note that this does not necessarily mean that the raw number of methamphetamine charges increased, only that the proportion of all drug charges related to methamphetamine increased—while drugs charges overall decreased. This focus by the justice system reflects meth’s high social harm, as highlighted in the DHI. Other drug charges have increased slightly by 2 percent in the past year.

Over the past decade, the total number of people charged has dropped by 15.9 percent, with convictions falling by 23.4 percent. This decline reflects a shift towards alternative resolutions, such as diversion programmes. However, in 2024, there was a 9.9 percent increase in drug charges overall and a 6.7 percent increase in convictions, compared with 2023.

Figure 81 illustrates the total number of instances where individuals were convicted for drug possession and/or use offences alone. In 2024, only 12.7 percent of drug convictions were for possession and/or use only, a significant reduction from 32.2 percent a decade ago. This trend shows that nearly 90 percent of drug convictions now involve drug possession/use combined with another offence.

The data also highlights a substantial decrease in convictions for cannabis-only offences. A decade ago, cannabis-only convictions accounted for 18.8 percent of all drug convictions, but in 2024, this figure has dropped to just 4.9 percent. This decline reflects a shift in the justice system’s approach to cannabis. Similarly, convictions for methamphetamine-only offences have also decreased over the decade, albeit more marginally, now representing 6.7 percent of all drug convictions.

Figure 81: Convictions of drug possession and/or use only as a percentage of all drug charges—2015–2024 (June years)²¹⁸



Gambling harm

GAMBLING LOSS

New Zealand’s gambling loss reached \$2.76 billion in the year ending June 2023, as shown in Table 39. This represents a significant 22.5 percent increase on the previous year, marking the most significant year-on-year increase in the past decade. Over the past decade, total loss has grown by 35 percent. While TAB gambling, accounting for 14 percent of total loss, saw a slight 1.2 percent drop in dollars spent in 2023, other forms of gambling experienced notable increases. Casino spending surged by 56.2 percent (from \$387M to \$604M), representing 22 percent of the total gambling spend, while NZ Lotteries Commission (Lotto NZ) loss rose by 22.5 percent (to \$710M), accounting for 26 percent of total loss. Electronic gaming machines (EGMs) continued to be the highest form of gambling loss, with loss increasing by 28.4 percent to reach \$1.07 billion, representing 39 percent of the total loss. The annual increases observed in 2023 for casino and EGM spending are the highest recorded in the past 10 years.

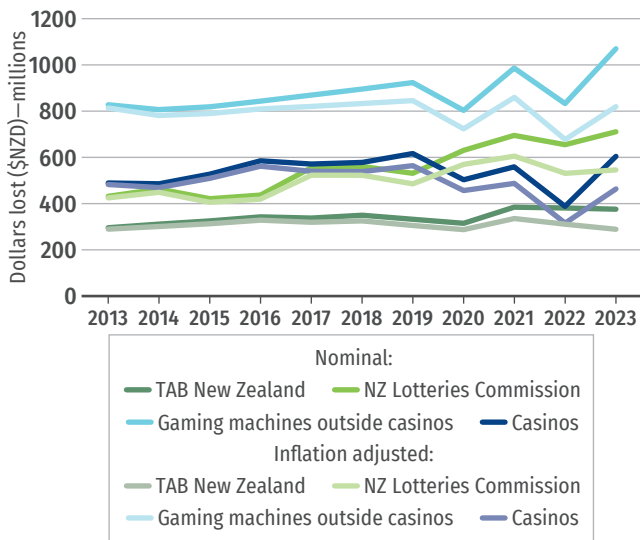
Figure 82 highlights the impact of inflation on gambling loss in New Zealand over the past decade. While nominal loss increased by 35.2 percent to \$2.7 billion over the 10 years to 2023, inflation-adjusted figures show a 9 percent decrease in real terms over the decade, revealing an overall decline in economic value.

Table 39: Gambling losses (\$ millions)—2013–2023²¹⁹

Gambling activity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	1Y change	10Y change
TAB New Zealand	294	310	325	342	338	350	332	315	385	380	376	-1.2%	27.6%
NZ Lotteries Commission	432	463	420	437	555	561	530	631	694	654	710	8.7%	64.5%
Electronic gaming machines (outside casinos)	827	806	818	843	870	895	924	802	987	833	1070	28.4%	29.5%
Casinos	490	486	527	586	572	578	616	504	559	387	604	56.2%	23.5%
Total	2042	2065	2091	2209	2334	2383	2402	2252	2625	2254	2761	22.5%	35.2%

From 2013–2023, TAB New Zealand showed nominal growth of 27.6 percent, yet its real value declined slightly by 0.5 percent. In contrast, Lotto NZ outperformed inflation, with nominal growth of 64.5 percent and real growth of 28.2 percent. This increase can largely be attributed to its shift towards digital products.²²⁰ Digital sales grew from \$430.6 million in 2020 to \$788 million in 2024, representing 46 percent of total sales²²¹ (not shown in the graph below). This digital transition has enabled Lotto NZ total sales of \$1.71 billion in 2024 (not shown in the graph below). Please note that Lotto NZ sales reflect total revenue from games like Lotto NZ, while Lotto NZ’s loss (\$710M) represents the money lost by Lotto NZ players after deducting prizes.

Figure 82: Gambling loss by gambling type (nominal and inflation adjusted) (\$ millions)—2013–2023²²²



Online gambling in New Zealand is currently limited to two legal forms: Lotto NZ and TAB. In November 2024, the government announced the introduction of an Online Gambling Bill, aiming to create a safer and more regulated online gambling environment in New Zealand.²²³ It seeks to address the challenges posed by offshore operators while ensuring that only trusted and compliant entities can offer online gambling services. While we acknowledge the government’s efforts to address these issues through the Online Gambling Bill, significant concerns remain about the inherent risks of online gambling, widely regarded as the most dangerous form of gambling due to its accessibility,

secrecy, aggressive marketing and potential for rapid financial harm. These risks disproportionately affect targeted communities, particularly Māori, Pacific peoples and those in financial hardship. Strong harm minimisation measures, such as strict advertising limits, robust safeguards and clear harm reduction strategies, must take priority over industry profits to protect public health and community wellbeing.²²⁴

ELECTRONIC GAMING MACHINES

Electronic gaming machines (EGMs) make up the largest loss in gambling in New Zealand: \$1.07 billion, similar in real terms to what it was a decade ago. The number of EGMs across the country continues to decline, reflecting the effects of sinking lid policies designed to reduce machine numbers and gambling venues over time. **Figure 83** shows the number of EGMs and loss per EGM, which shows by September 2024, the total number of EGMs had decreased to 14,046, a reduction of 180 machines compared with 2023 and a 5.5 percent decrease over the past five years.

Despite this consistent reduction in machine numbers and venues, the gross machine proceeds (GMP)—the total amount lost by players on EGMs—remains significant. In 2024, the player loss per EGM reached \$18,732, a relatively small increase of 1.8 percent from 2023. However, when adjusted for inflation, the 2024 GMP per machine was \$14,255, indicating only a 0.1 percent rise. This means there is no change from the previous year, but a 6.4 percent real-term decline over the past five years. These trends suggest that while fewer machines are operational, the average spend per machine remains high, although nominal losses are diminished by inflationary pressures.

The number of venues has dropped to 980, a reduction of 23 venues in the past year and 9.3 percent (100 venues) over the past five years, as shown in **Figure 84**. However, the challenge lies in the unequal distribution of these venues, as illustrated in **Figure 85**, which means the burden of harm is not evenly shared across communities.

Figure 83: Number of electronic gaming machines in New Zealand and GMP per machine—2019–2024 (September years)²²⁵

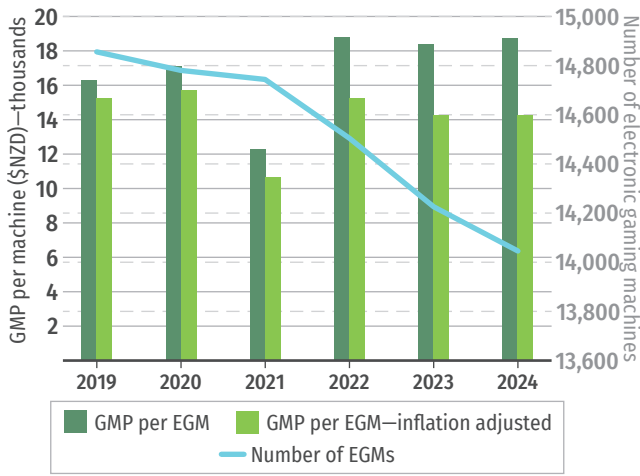


Figure 84: Number of EGMs in New Zealand—2019–2024 (September years)²²⁶

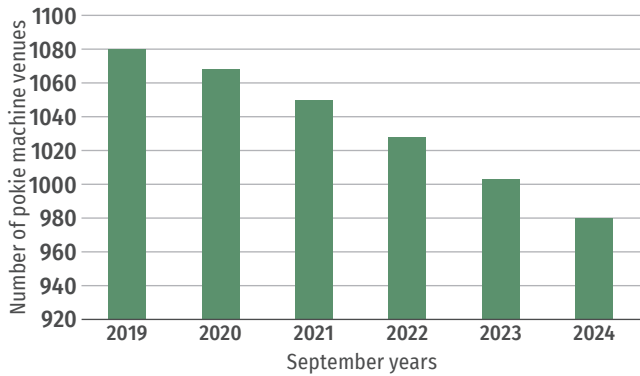
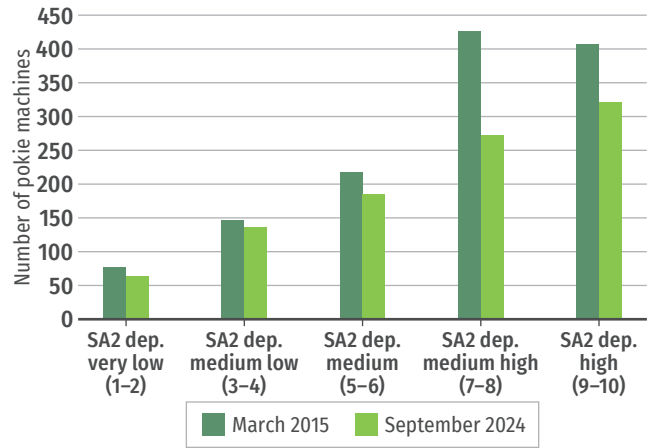


Figure 85 shows the number of pokie machine venues across socio-economic areas between March 2015 and September 2024. Venue numbers decreased across all deprivation levels, with moderate reductions in very low and medium-low deprivation areas, falling by 16.9 percent (77 to 64) and 7.5 percent (147 to 136), respectively. Medium deprivation areas experienced a 14.7 percent decrease (218 to 186). The most significant declines were observed in medium-high and high deprivation areas, with reductions of 36.3 percent (427 to 272) and 21.1 percent (408 to 322), respectively, reflecting a greater impact in more deprived areas. It is encouraging to see these declines in areas with significant deprivation that often have a high density of EGM venues.

Figure 85: Location and number of EGM venues by deprivation rating—2015 and 2024²²⁷



Despite reductions, over 60 percent of venues remain in high deprivation areas (SA2 Dep 7–10), with each EGM causing an average annual loss of \$18,732 (average across all areas, not just high deprivation areas). Medium-high deprivation areas saw the largest proportional decline. However, the persistent concentration of venues in highly deprived areas highlights the ongoing challenge of addressing gambling-related harm in vulnerable communities, underscoring the need for sustained efforts to reduce access to EGMs in these areas.

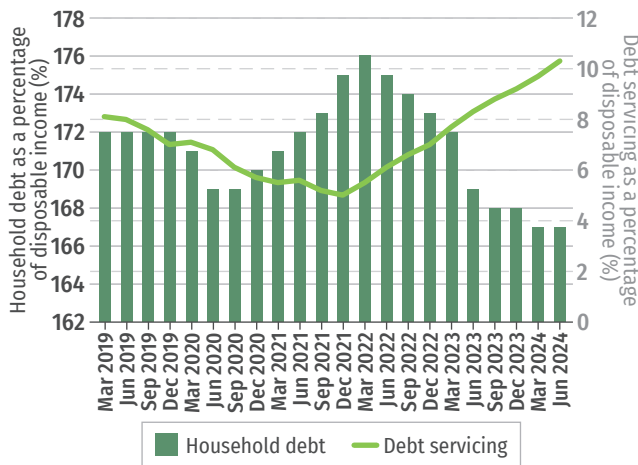
Problem debt and financial hardship

HOUSEHOLD DEBT

Household debt is the financial liabilities of households, comprising mortgage loans, consumer loans (such as credit cards) and student loans. Figure 86 shows household debt levels and debt servicing from 2019 to 2024. Household debt (as a percentage of disposable income) peaked at 176 percent in early 2022 before declining to 167 percent by mid-2024. The initial stability was driven by strong housing market growth and low interest rates, with borrowing encouraged during the pandemic due to the Reserve Bank’s low official cash rate (OCR). From 2022 onwards, debt levels fell as regulatory changes were implemented around affordability checks, stricter loan-to-value ratio (LVR) restrictions, cooling property prices and rising interest rates reduced new borrowing and encouraged repayment.

In contrast, debt servicing costs (as a percentage of disposable income) steadily declined from 8.1 percent in early 2019 to a low of 5 percent by late 2021 but then surged to 10.3 percent by mid-2024. This sharp increase occurred despite falling debt levels and was primarily driven by rapidly rising interest rates as the Reserve Bank increased the OCR to combat inflation. At the same time, inflation and rising living costs reduced the purchasing power of disposable incomes, further amplifying the proportion of income spent on debt servicing. Together, these trends highlight the impact of monetary policy and economic conditions on household debt levels.

Figure 86: Household debt and servicing as a percentage of disposable income—2019–2024²²⁸



Trends in consumer arrears, as reported by Centrix for all active credit population from 2019 to 2024 and shown in Figure 87, mirror the shifts in household debt and servicing costs, but reflect a more direct impact on household financial hardship. Between 2020 and 2021, arrears rates declined, largely due to supportive government policies and pandemic-related relief measures, such as wage subsidies and mortgage deferrals, which helped households stay afloat.

From 2022 onwards, arrears began rising steadily and peaked sharply in 2024, reaching 13.09 percent in January and remaining the highest on record for every month of 2024 compared with previous years. This increase was driven by several factors, including job losses, welfare restrictions and the rapid rise in interest rates. Additionally, persistent inflation pushed up the cost of food, fuel and utilities,

significantly impacting the purchasing power of disposable incomes. Housing costs remained a burden despite some cooling in property prices, as high borrowing costs made homeownership unaffordable for many, while mortgage rates increased for those who were already homeowners (on paper). Together, these pressures created a challenging environment for households, leaving many unable to meet debt obligations.

Figure 87: Centrix, consumer arrears—2019–2024²²⁹

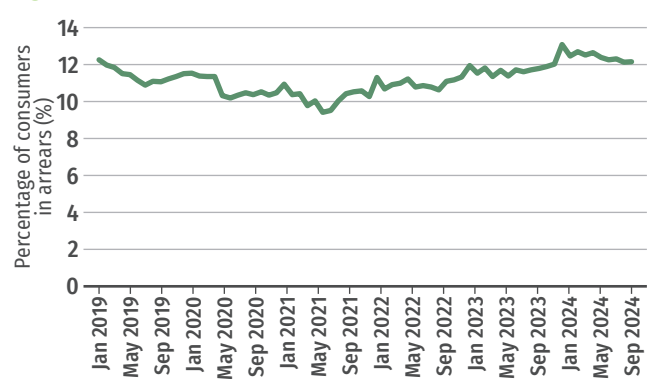
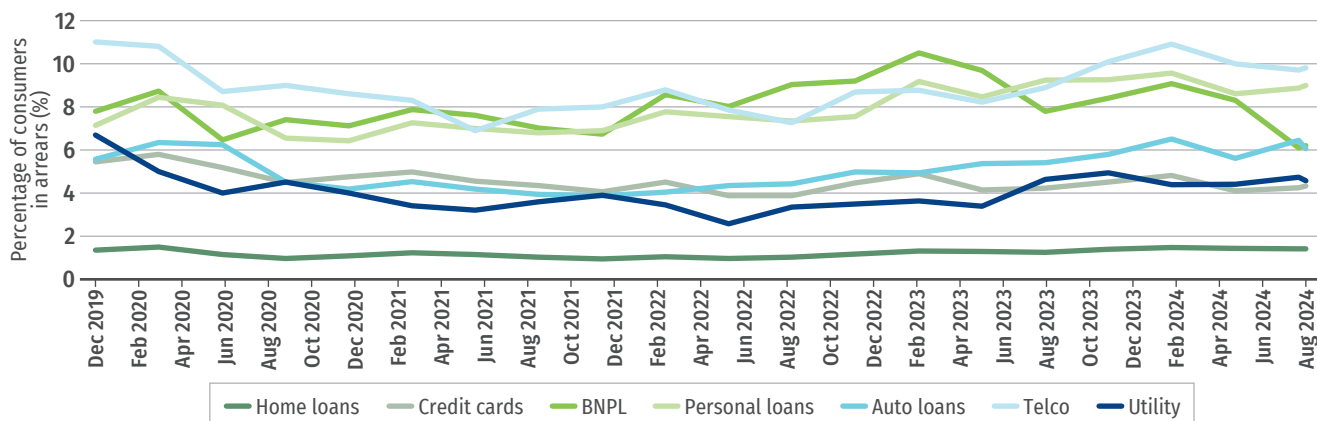


Figure 88 shows consumer arrears by product from 2019 to 2024. Secured debts like home loans maintained lower arrears rates, with home loans rising only slightly from 1.4 percent in December 2019 to 1.48 percent in 2024, as borrowers prioritised these essential obligations. Unsecured products, however, experienced higher arrears, particularly ‘buy now, pay later’ (BNPL), which peaked at 10.5 percent in March 2023 due to lenient lending criteria and financial strain on users. Credit card arrears have remained stable only moving between 4.1–5.8 percent, which was the highest. Telecommunications debt—already high—peaked at 11 percent in 2024, as these smaller bills were deprioritised in favour of more critical payments like housing. These patterns highlight the financial vulnerabilities of households, particularly in the face of rising costs and tightened budgets.

Figure 88: Centrix, consumer arrears by product—2019–2024²³⁰

High arrears in utilities and telecommunications reflect the broader issues of energy and connectivity poverty in New Zealand. Low-income households face disproportionately high energy costs due to reliance on prepay meters and inefficient heating systems, which can lead to rationing and unhealthy living conditions.²³¹ Simultaneously, the cost of reliable internet access increasingly isolates many families as essential services, education, healthcare and job opportunities become digitised. Without internet access, individuals are unable to engage with services that are moving online, deepening existing inequities and creating barriers to social and economic participation.²³² These challenges highlight the urgent need for targeted subsidies and reforms to ensure all households can access basic utilities and digital connectivity in an increasingly digital world.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

In the week ending 23 November 2024, there were 13,407 accounts flagged for financial hardship, and the number of accounts flagged as such has increased year-on-year monthly since mid-2023. **Figure 89** shows the number of accounts flagged as being in financial hardship from March 2019 to September 2024, broken down by banks, non-bank lenders and telecommunications/utility providers. Banks account for the majority of these cases, with their share rising from 55 percent in March 2019 to a peak of 79.4 percent in June 2021 before declining slightly to 69.5 percent in September 2024. Banks

account for the majority of financial hardship cases due to significant lending volume, particularly for secured loans like mortgages, which are sensitive to rising interest rates and economic pressures. This could also be because banks may have more robust systems for identifying and flagging accounts in financial hardship more efficiently than non-bank lenders.

Non-bank lenders, while representing a smaller share of total lending, saw their proportion of hardship cases fluctuate, declining to 20.6 percent in mid-2021 before rising to over 30 percent in recent years. In addition, the raw numbers of hardship cases have also nearly doubled, reflecting the growing reliance on high-cost, short-term credit products like BNPL schemes by financially vulnerable households.

Telecommunications and utility providers consistently account for less than 1.5 percent of hardship cases. Regarding utility bills, companies like Mercury and Genesis Energy have implemented support initiatives to address hidden hardship among their customers. These include payment plans, hardship funds and targeted assistance to help households struggling to meet rising energy costs. Such measures aim to provide relief for low-income families while addressing the broader issue of energy poverty, which disproportionately impacts those already facing financial challenges.²³³

Figure 89: Centrix, quarterly weekly average accounts flagged for financial hardship—2019–2024²³⁴

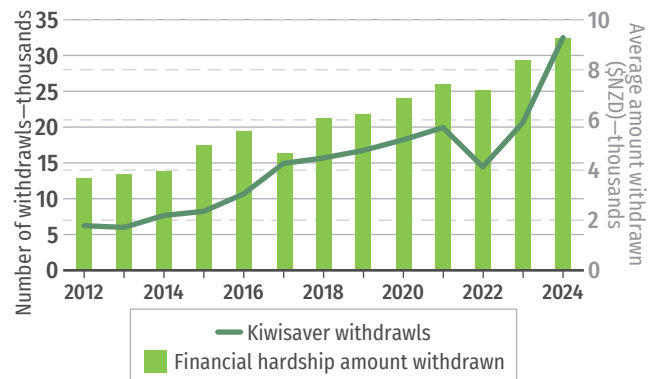


Figure 90 shows KiwiSaver financial hardship withdrawals over the past 10 years, highlighting a consistent upward trend in both the number of withdrawals and the average amount taken out, reflecting increasing financial pressures on some New Zealand households. The number of withdrawals rose more than fivefold in the past 11 years, from 6010 in 2013 to 32,480 in 2024. The 2024 level also represents a steep 58 percent annual increase from 20,600 in 2023.

While KiwiSaver hardship withdrawals account for only 0.01 percent of KiwiSaver members, they provide a valuable indicator of financial hardship at its most acute level. These increases align with periods of economic strain, made up of such factors as rising living costs, inflation and interest rate hikes, which have placed additional pressure on household budgets.

The average hardship withdrawal amount also rose significantly, from \$3847 in 2013 to \$9252 in 2024, indicating that individuals facing hardship require increasingly larger sums to meet their financial needs. This highlights not only the growing prevalence of financial distress but also its deepening severity. The consistent rise in both withdrawal volume and size underscores the concerning reliance on KiwiSaver as an emergency financial lifeline. While this provides short-term relief, it also diminishes retirement savings and first home deposits, raising concerns about the long-term financial wellbeing of individuals who exhaust their funds during periods of hardship.

Figure 90: KiwiSaver withdrawals (\$ amounts per withdrawals and numbers of withdrawals) by reason—2012–2024²³⁵



Overall assessment: Social Hazards

CATEGORY	RESULT
<p>ALCOHOL Alcohol consumption in New Zealand continues to decline and is now at its lowest level in the past decade. However hazardous drinking has increased slightly in the past year, with patterns of hazardous drinking persisting among men, and increasing for Māori and for disabled people.</p>	<p>NC</p>
<p>ILLICIT DRUGS Illicit drug users have continued to increase in the past year nominally, and per capita and illicit drug use is estimated to have create \$2.1 billion in social harm in 2024. Police wastewater tracking showed that meth consumption surged to 32.4 kilograms per week in Q3 2024, more than doubling the average of the previous four quarters and incurring a weekly social harm cost of \$34 million per week. Charges and convictions for illicit drugs have continued to plateau.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>GAMBLING HARM Gambling loss reached a total of \$2.76 billion in 2023, with an annual increase in loss on all forms except TAB. However, when you account for inflation, gambling loss has remained relatively unchanged over the past decade. Player losses on electronic gambling machines (EGMs) surpassed \$1 billion. This is highly concerning given that 60 percent of EGMs are in high-deprivation communities. The number of EGMs and venues has decreased but their profitability continues to rise, with each gaming machine making an average of almost \$19,000 annually.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>PROBLEM DEBT AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP While household debt as a percentage of income has declined, the cost of servicing debt has risen. In 2024, arrears rates increased to their highest point in at least five years, with the most affected accounts being BNPL, personal loans and telecommunications. KiwiSaver withdrawals for financial hardship rose 58 percent to 32,480 in 2024, reflecting significant financial strain and reliance on long-term savings to meet immediate needs.</p>	<p>—</p>

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MĀORI WELLBEING—KAI, KĀINGA, WHĀNAU

Te Tiriti o Waitangi has been prominent across social and political debates during the past year. What is most puzzling about much of the discourse are the claims that Māori are somehow given unfair advantage or ‘privileges’ simply by identifying as Māori.

Even a cursory glance at the social and economic situation of Māori should be enough to show that this is a complete misrepresentation of the experience of Māori in this land today and throughout the history of this country since the start of colonisation. Ongoing colonisation, including systemic racism and monocultural institutional assumptions (often invisible to Pākehā perceptions), contribute to inequities of key outcomes, such as life expectancy.

Māori leadership and Māori-led initiatives prevent inequities from being worse than they are, and increase equity when they are not prevented from doing so. For example, the significant reduction in Māori children in care coincided with hapū, iwi and other Māori strategic partnerships with Oranga Tamariki under section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act,²³⁶ and students at kura kaupapa have educational attainment parity on some measures.

The experience of growing food hardship, increasing homelessness, housing unaffordability and the pressures on whānau highlights the stresses on fundamental elements of wellbeing for Māori.

When asked to rate how well their family is doing overall, more than one in four whānau (27.8%) report that their family is doing badly or not well, higher than in 2018 (25%). Māori report a reduction in the proportion of those able to speak te reo Māori at least fairly well or better. Alongside this is the large decline in the proportion of Māori who feel it is easy to express their identity from 84 percent in 2019 to 75 percent in 2023. These indicators combine to show the huge pressure on wellbeing that relates to mana tuku iho or a sense of identity and belonging.

Improving outcomes were few. Average weekly personal incomes rose by 5.5 percent, keeping marginally ahead of inflation. As more social housing became available during the year, the number of Māori waiting for social housing declined significantly. Fewer tamariki Māori were in state care, as Māori-led work to find iwi and community-based alternatives continued to gain momentum.

Meaningful signs of reduction in the often huge disparities experienced by Māori are largely absent this year. Early childhood education and illicit drug offending showed both modest improvement in outcomes and improved equity. But in other cases, improving equity reflected worsening outcomes that were slightly worse for Māori in comparison.

Progress made in previous years is being eroded in several outcome areas. Underlining the financial and economic pressures were the increases in unemployment and youth unemployment in 2024, as well as more Māori receiving welfare support (an indicator of rising poverty). The imprisonment rate is rising again, which affects Māori disproportionately. This is likely related to the reimprisonment rate, which is increasing again after several years of reductions. The hazardous drinking rate has been trending down but rose in 2024.

The set of wellbeing outcome measures covered in this report cannot fully represent all aspects of the wellbeing aspired to by whānau, hapū and iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, what is presented is a stark reminder of the extent of disadvantage experienced, and that positive progress is still too limited and, in many places, too vulnerable to being undermined by political and economic decision-making. Upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi by enabling Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga is key to improving outcomes and quality of life, not only for Māori but for everybody in Aotearoa New Zealand.

He Ara Waiora

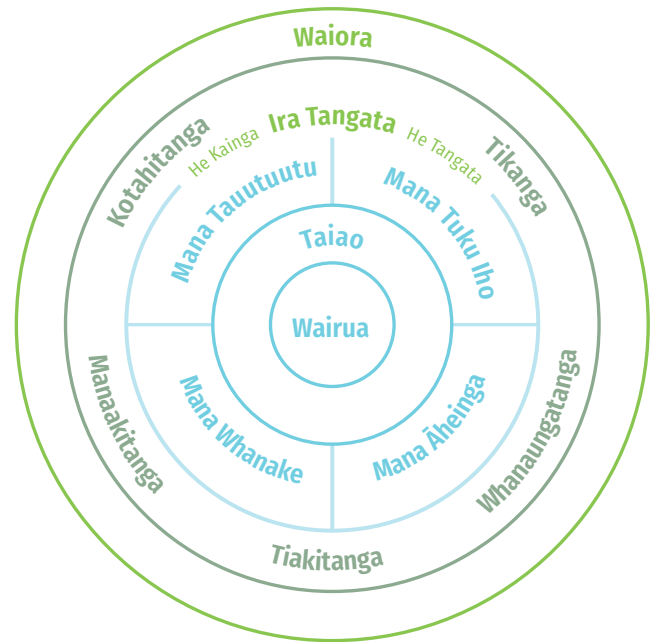
This commentary uses He Ara Waiora wellbeing framework to group outcome measures from across the five areas covered in the *State of the Nation 2025* report into four domains of wellbeing. The New Zealand Treasury uses He Ara Waiora as the framework to measure progress in Māori wellbeing in an approach drawn from mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge).²³⁷

The framework places wairua (spirit) at the centre, recognising that our values and beliefs are the core of wellbeing. Around this is the realm of the natural world—te taiao—and the realm of human activities and relationships—te ira tangata.

In *State of The Nation 2025*, we focus on indicators in the four domains of mana within te ira tangata: **mana āheinga** (capability, resources and skills), **mana tauutuutu** (reciprocity and social cohesion), **mana tuku iho** (sense of identity and belonging) and **mana whanake** (growth and intergenerational prosperity). These four domains express aspects of wellbeing that in te ao Māori are viewed as essential to fulfilled lives.

The indicators available from our *State of the Nation* work do not easily fit within one specific set of outcomes, but for the purpose of analysis each measure is allocated to one of the He Ara Waiora domains. The analysis uses five-year comparisons to give a sense of change over time, as well as looking at the annual changes for the most recent year (see Table 40, p.102 for details of each indicator).

The wellbeing analysis considers two aspects of change in wellbeing—whether the indicators are improving or not, and whether outcomes for Māori are improving relative to non-Māori (reducing inequity and inequality).



MANA TUKU IHO (sense of identity and belonging)

Encompasses both a sense of identity and a sense of belonging to a community.

There is limited data available to provide indicators for this domain but language, cultural identity

and passing on knowledge are components that contribute to wellbeing and belonging.

INDICATOR	MEASURE	OUTCOME	EQUITY
TE REO MĀORI (able to speak te reo Māori fairly well, well or very well) ²³⁸	<p>OUTCOME: The proportion of Māori reporting they are able to speak te reo Māori at least fairly well declined to 26.6 percent in the 2023/24 General Social Survey (released September 2024). This is lower than in 2021 (33.9%) and 2018 (29.4%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The proportion of the whole population (6.2%) also fell compared with 2021 (7.9%) and is back to around the same as in 2018. So, equity declined when understood as measuring whether relatively more Māori are gaining access to a key cultural taonga.</p>	-	-
EXPRESS IDENTITY (proportion who report it is easy or very easy to express their identity) ²³⁹	<p>OUTCOME: Just over seven out of ten (71.8%) Māori find that it is easy or very easy to express their identity. This is lower than in 2021 and 2018 and is a concerning social trend.</p> <p>EQUITY: The proportion of the total population also declined in 2023 to 75.5 percent from 80.2 percent in 2021 and 83.4 percent in 2018. The Māori and total population rates were equal in 2018, so the change represents a decline in equity on a crucial social indicator over five years, but similar equity from 2021 to 2023.</p>	-	NC
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (proportion of school leavers with less than NCEA Level 1) ²⁴⁰	<p>OUTCOME: The proportion of Māori students who leave school with no formal qualification (at least NCEA Level 1) has been growing in recent years from 18.7 percent in 2018 to 28.3 percent in 2023.</p> <p>EQUITY: The rate is worsening for non-Māori students also (from 7.9% in 2018 to 12% in 2023), but Māori students are more than twice as likely to leave school without NCEA Level 1 and the gap has not changed.</p>	-	NC

MANA ĀHEINGA (capability, resources and skills)

Individuals, whānau and communities having the capability to achieve aspirations that they have identified for themselves. This requires the necessary resources and skills, which include good health and education.

This domain looks at some aspects of the capability and opportunity for Māori to achieve wellbeing. Incomes, employment and education are ways to

build capability in this domain, while imprisonment and alcohol and drug addictions reduce capability and function.

INDICATOR	MEASURE	OUTCOME	EQUITY
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PARTICIPATION (proportion of five-year-olds starting school with prior participation in ECE) ²⁴¹	<p>OUTCOME: Prior participation in ECE for children starting school is a strong contributor to their overall education achievement. The tamariki Māori rate of prior ECE participation has increased slightly in the past two years by half a percent to 94.9 percent, still lower than the pre-Covid-19 rate of 96.5 percent.</p> <p>EQUITY: Non-Māori children have a consistently higher participation rate. The current 97.5 percent is only slightly lower than the pre-Covid-19 figure of 98.3 percent. The gap in participation rates is larger than pre-Covid-19, but reduced slightly in 2024.</p>	+	+
STUDENT ATTENDANCE (percentage of students attending more than 90% of Term 2) ²⁴²	<p>OUTCOME: The proportion of Māori students attending 90 percent of Term 2 increased by nearly 6 percentage points to 39 percent in 2024, strongly continuing the post-Covid-19 climb back, but not yet back to the 2010s average of over 50 percent.</p> <p>EQUITY: Attendance for non-Māori students overall also increased, from 51.8 percent to 57.9 percent, meaning the disparity has not changed significantly.</p>	+	NC
UNEMPLOYMENT (official unemployment rate, September annual) ²⁴³	<p>OUTCOME: The Māori unemployment rate rose in 2024 to 8.8 percent and is now above the pre-Covid-19 rate of 8.1 percent in 2019.</p> <p>EQUITY: Māori continue to experience unemployment at more than twice the rate for non-Māori, but as non-Māori unemployment also rose, the ratio has reduced slightly from 2.7 in 2023 to 2.4 in 2024.</p>	-	+
PERSONAL INCOMES (average weekly personal incomes for those employed) ²⁴⁴	<p>OUTCOME: Māori average weekly incomes rose by 5.5 percent in the year to June 2024, continuing the strong growth of recent years.</p> <p>EQUITY: Incomes for non-Māori grew by slightly more at 6 percent, meaning that earnings gap is still very similar at just under 10 percent.</p>	+	NC
IMPRISONMENT RATE (number of people imprisoned per 100,000; population over 18 years) ²⁴⁵	<p>OUTCOME: The imprisonment rate for Māori increased again in 2024 to 820 per 10,000 population, well above the low of 720 in 2022, although still lower than 966 in 2019.</p> <p>EQUITY: The non-Māori imprisonment rate also increased by about 10 percent, so there was almost no improvement in the enormous inequity that sees Māori as 6.5 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Māori. The police have acknowledged their structural bias which increases the likelihood of Māori being prosecuted by 11 percent compared to NZ Europeans when all other variables remain constant.²⁴⁶ This structural bias is likely shared by the courts and justice agencies, with compounding effect.</p>	-	NC

Continued on next page

INDICATOR	MEASURE	OUTCOME	EQUITY
HAZARDOUS DRINKING (proportion of adult population as hazardous drinkers) ²⁴⁷	<p>OUTCOME: Just under 30 percent of Māori drank alcohol hazardously in 2024, an increase compared with 2023 (25%) although still lower than in 2019 (33%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The rate for non-Māori was unchanged in 2024 at 14.3 percent so the disparity in rates worsened, with the rate for Māori more than twice that of non-Māori.</p>	-	-
ILLICIT DRUG CONVICTIONS (people convicted of illicit drug offences per 1000 people, June year) ²⁴⁸	<p>OUTCOME: The rate of illicit drug offending convictions for Māori is lower in 2024 than in 2023, and much lower than five years ago in 2019.</p> <p>EQUITY: The rate has not reduced as much for non-Māori, so the disparity in convictions has improved slightly, although Māori are still more than four times more likely to be convicted of such offences.</p>	+	+

MANA TAUUTUUTU (reciprocity and social cohesion)

Relates to the rights and responsibilities of individuals and collectives to each other, communities and places.

This domain looks at the capability and capacity to give and receive support in relationships of mutual benefit is essential to wellbeing. Overall whānau wellbeing, sufficient income and affordable housing contribute to greater wellbeing, while need for

welfare support is an indicator of poverty which reduces wellbeing. Children ending up in state care is an indicator of whānau distress and can itself reduce wellbeing.

INDICATOR	MEASURE	OUTCOME	EQUITY
CHILDREN IN STATE CARE (children in state care per 1000 children) ²⁴⁹	<p>OUTCOME: The rate of Tamariki Māori in state care reduced by nearly forty percent between 2019 and 2024, (including dropping by around 10% between 2023 and 2024) as the state has taken action to address the huge disparity in rates of state care.</p> <p>EQUITY: The number of non-Māori children in state care has also fallen by a similar proportion, meaning the huge disparity still exists. Tamariki Māori are almost six times more likely than non-Māori children to be in state care.</p>	+	NC
WELFARE SUPPORT (adults receiving a benefit as proportion of population aged between 18 and 64 years) ²⁵⁰	<p>OUTCOME: The proportion of Māori relying on income support rose to the highest it has been for more than a decade (27.4%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The proportion of non-Māori receiving welfare is also increasing, as the economic recession continues and deepens. As a result, the disparity that has the rate for Māori three times higher than non-Māori is not changing.</p>	-	NC
INCOME DISTRIBUTION 2018-2023 (proportion of adults in lowest two income quintiles) ²⁵¹	<p>OUTCOME: Nearly half (48.3%) of Māori have an annual income in the lowest two income quartiles. This did not increase in 2023 (most recent data) but is still significantly higher than five years ago (44.2%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The gap between Māori and non-Māori in the lower income quintiles did not increase in 2024 but is still much higher than five years ago, having risen from five to ten percentage points in the four years to 2023.</p>	NC	NC
DEMAND FOR SOCIAL HOUSING (number of households on public Housing Register per 1000 population) ²⁵²	<p>OUTCOME: The number of Māori on the waiting list for public housing reduced more than 1200 during 2024 and was the lowest since September 2020. The rate also reduced.</p> <p>EQUITY: The number of non-Māori on the register also reduced substantially, so the rate of disparity reduced, though only slightly. Just under half of those on the Housing Register identify as Māori and the rate per 1000 population is 4.4 times that for non-Māori.</p>	+	+
WHĀNAU WELLBEING (percentage of whānau Māori who reported their whānau is doing badly or not well) ²⁵³	<p>OUTCOME: General Social Survey family wellbeing results show 27.8 percent of whānau Māori not doing well or doing badly in 2023/24, a slight drop from 2021 (29%) but higher than 2019 (25%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The proportion of non-Māori families with low wellbeing ratings has increased in both 2021 (17.3%) and 2023 (20.9%), compared with 2019 (15.6%) meaning reduced disparity in the most recent year.</p>	-	+

MANA WHANAKE (growth and intergenerational prosperity)

People having the skills and resources to generate sustainable and intergenerational prosperity

Low infant mortality and low rates of teenage pregnancy help indicate and/or promote wellbeing for children and young people, while

missing out on education, training or employment, or being imprisoned and reimprisoned directly reduces wellbeing.

INDICATOR	MEASURE	OUTCOME	EQUITY
TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (pregnancies per 1000; 15- to 19-year-olds) ²⁵⁴	<p>OUTCOME: The teenage pregnancy rate for 15- to 19-year-old Māori increased from 40 to 42 per 1000 in the year to December 2023 (most recent figures), the same as it was in 2018.</p> <p>EQUITY: The pregnancy rate for non-Māori also increased, so the rate for Māori teenagers remained 2.8 times that for non-Māori.</p>	-	NC
INFANT MORTALITY (infant deaths under one year for every 10,000 live births) ²⁵⁵	<p>OUTCOME: The low number of infant deaths each year means that annual figures can fluctuate sharply, and StatsNZ²⁵⁶ notes that around 30 deaths, about 10 percent of all infant deaths recorded in 2024, were actually from earlier years and the adjusted rate for June 2024 period would be closer to previous year's figures. The Māori infant mortality rate of 67 per 10,000 live births in 2024 is therefore likely to be overstated.</p> <p>EQUITY: The non-Māori rate increased to 41 per 10,000 births, but the overall disparity between Māori and non-Māori increased in 2024, interrupting the overall long-term trend of reduced disparity.</p>	-	-
YOUTH CHARGED WITH OFFENDING (rate of 12- to 16-year-olds per 1000 population, June year) ²⁵⁷	<p>OUTCOME: The youth offending rate for rangatahi Māori rose slightly between 2023 and 2024 from 5.4 to 5.8 per thousand. This is still well below the 2019 rate of 8.2.</p> <p>EQUITY: The non-Māori rate rose also in 2024, and as a result the considerable disparity in rates reduced. But the rate for rangatahi Māori is still more than four times that for non-Māori.</p>	-	+
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT (proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds NEET [not in employment, education or training]) ²⁵⁸	<p>OUTCOME: Youth unemployment increased in 2024 and the rate for rangatahi Māori of 19.5 percent in September 2024 was higher than in 2023 (18.8%) and slightly higher than in September 2019 (19.3%).</p> <p>EQUITY: The non-Māori rate also increased in 2024 to 10.2 percent (from 9% in 2023). The disparity dropped slightly, but the non-Māori rate remains around half the rate experienced by rangatahi Māori.</p>	-	NC
PRISON SENTENCING RATES FOR YOUTH (proportion of convicted 17- to 19-year-olds who are imprisoned) ²⁵⁹	<p>OUTCOME: More Māori 17- to 19-year-olds were being sentenced to prison in 2024 with 99 sentenced, the highest number since 2020, although less than half of the 220 in 2019. This represented 11 percent of convicted Māori 17- to 19-year-olds (up from 9.7% in 2023).</p> <p>EQUITY: The number of non-Māori sentenced to prison also rose slightly to 40 (2.4% of convicted non-Māori 17- to 19-year-olds) in 2024 from 34 (2%) the previous year. This means the huge disparity is largely unchanged, with the Māori rate 4.6 times the non-Māori rate.</p>	-	NC
RECIDIVISM (reimprisoned within 24 months of release) ²⁶⁰	<p>OUTCOME: The Māori reimprisonment rate increased in 2024 to 41.6 percent compared with 39.4 percent in 2023, but much lower than 47.6 percent in 2019.</p> <p>EQUITY: The non-Māori rate also increased slightly from 28.8 percent in 2023 to 29.3 percent in 2024, so Māori remain 1.4 times more likely to be reimprisoned than non-Māori—a larger disparity than in 2019.</p>	-	NC

Table 40: Māori wellbeing indicators—2019–2024

INDICATOR	MEASURE	He Ara Wāiora						Outcome 2024 Non-Māori	Ratio 2019	Ratio 2023	Ratio 2024	Outcome Improving	Equity improving
		Domain	2019 Māori	Outcome Non-Māori	2019	2023 Māori	Outcome Non-Māori						
Early childhood education (ECE)	Prior participation in ECE, gap Māori/non-Māori	M Ah	96.5	98.3	94.4	97.5	94.9	97.5	1.8	3.1	2.6	+	+
Student attendance	Students attending more than 90% Term 2	M Ah	43.8	62.1	33.2	51.8	39.1	57.9	0.7	0.6	0.7	+	NC
Unemployment	Official unemployment rate (September annual)	M Ah	8.1%	3.5%	7.6%	2.9%	8.8%	3.7%	2.3	2.7	2.4	-	+
Personal incomes	Average weekly personal income for those employed	M Ah	\$1017	\$1221	\$1333	\$1455	\$1406	\$1542	83%	92%	91%	+	NC
Imprisonment rate	Number of people imprisoned, per 100,000 18+ years population	M Ah	966	147	750	112	820	126	6.6	6.7	6.5	-	NC
Hazardous drinking	Proportion of adult population as hazardous drinkers	M Ah	33	18.3	25.1	14.4	29.6	14.3	1.8	1.7	2.1	-	-
Illicit drug offending	People convicted of illicit drug offences per 1000 people	M Ah	1.9	0.4	1.2	0.2	1.1	0.2	4.7	4.9	4.4	+	+
Children in state care	Children in state care, per 1000 children	M Ta	14.5	2.4	9.2	1.6	8.7	1.5	6	5.6	5.8	+	NC
Welfare support	Adults receiving a benefit as % of population aged 18 to 64	M Ta	23%	7.3%	25.9%	8.4%	27.4%	8.9%	3.2	3.1	3.1	-	NC
Income distribution	Proportion of adults in lowest two income quintiles (2018–2023)	M Ta	44.2%	39.4%	48.5%	38.2%	48.3%	38.3%	1.1	1.3	1.3	NC	NC
Demand for social housing	Number on social housing waiting list per 1000 population (Sep quarter)	M Ta	7.9	1.8	14	2.9	11.4	2.6	4.5	4.8	4.4	+	+
Whānau wellbeing	(GSS 2018, 2021, & 2023) Percentage reporting family/whānau doing badly or not well (0–6 out of 10 self-rated)	M Ta	25.1	15.6	27.3	18.6	27.8	20.9	1.6	1.5	1.3	-	+
Educational attainment	Proportion of school leavers leaving with less than Level 1 NCEA (2018–2023)	M Tu	18.7%	7.6%	26.8%	11.2%	28.3%	12%	2.4	2.4	2.3	-	NC
Te reo Māori	(GSS 2018, 2021, 2023) Te reo Māori able to speak fairly well, well or very well	M Tu	29.4	6.1	33.9%	7.9%	25.6%	6.2%	4.8	4.3	4.1	-	-
Expressing identity	(GSS 2018, 2021, 2023) Percent who say easy or very easy to express identity	M Tu	84%	83.8%	76.7%	80.2%	71.8%	75.5%	100%	96%	95%	-	NC
Teenage pregnancies	Pregnancies to 15- to 19-year-olds per 1000 15- to 19-year-old women (2018–2023)	M Wh	42	15	40	14	42	15	2.7	2.8	2.8	-	NC
Infant mortality	Infant deaths (<1-year-old) for every 10,000 live births	M Wh	70	36	41	33	67	41	1.9	1.2	1.6	-	-
Youth offending	Overall offending rate by 10- to 16-year-olds, per 1000 population	M Wh	8.2	1.7	5.4	1.2	5.8	1.4	4.9	4.6	4.2	-	+
Youth unemployment	Proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds NEET	M Wh	19.3%	10.1%	18.8%	9%	19.5%	10.2%	1.9	2.1	1.9	-	NC
Prison sentencing rates	Proportion of convicted 17- to 19-year-olds who are imprisoned	M Wh	9.8%	2.9%	9.7%	2%	11%	2.4%	3.4	4.8	4.6	-	NC
Recidivism	Reimprisoned within 24 months of release	M Wh	47.6%	38.8%	39.4%	28.8%	41.6%	29.3%	1.2	1.4	1.4	-	NC

Note: Population estimates from StatsNZ were revised based on 2018 Census results so ratios were recalculated to reflect revised population estimates 2015–2024. NA = data not available at publication.

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