

April 2024

Quarterly Update

The State of the City

The State of the City report is the first of its kind for a New Zealand city. It's a comprehensive, annual international benchmarking report initiated by Committee for Auckland in partnership with Deloitte and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited with support from the Auckland Policy Office and the Koi Tū think tank.

This second update provides a short account of how Auckland is tracking, information on the progress underway and insights on future action needed.

The State of the City 2024 report will be released later this year.



A Quarterly indicators:¹

● Positive trend ● Neutral trend ● Negative trend

Opportunity & Prosperity

- **Auckland remains in the top third of cities in the world with the highest cost of living**, although this has fallen from among the top 30. Consumer prices increased at 5% on average last year,² whereas the average increase in global cities was 7.4%.³
- **Auckland ranks 80th out of 100 global cities in prosperity**, impacted by its educational attainment levels, labour force participation, and lower relative numbers of start-ups, among other factors.⁴

Knowledge

- **The University of Auckland rose 19 places in a ranking study of 1,500 universities** and is in the top 25 universities in the Asia and Oceania regions. It has been awarded a five star plus or excellent rating in research, employability, teaching and internationalisation, among other areas.⁵

Place & Connectivity

- **Auckland is ranked 9th in the world for its outdoor activities, ranking above its peer cities.** Auckland is acknowledged for its easy to access outdoor locations, numerous green spaces, and natural features, including dormant volcanoes and twin harbours.⁶
- **Auckland is ranked 31st out of 196 global cities, and in the top half of peer cities on the performance of its fixed broadband.** 98% of the Auckland population has access to the extensive broadband network.⁷

Experience

- **Auckland ranks 46th out of 100 cities on the strength of its city brand**, which measures business investment attraction, liveability, and other factors. Auckland is mid-ranked compared to peer cities, behind Vancouver, Copenhagen, and Dublin.⁸
- **Although behind pre COVID-19 levels, Auckland's international visitor numbers increased by 83.9%** to 2.08m in the year to January 2024. Booked accommodation nights in the city rose by 5.2% over the same period.⁹



¹ These data points are drawn from recently published global indexes, that are routinely monitored by The Business of Cities as part of their benchmarking database. Information has been supplemented by intelligence monitored by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. Updates are provided here on seven of the ten pillars measured. All ten pillars will be updated later this year.

² New Zealand-wide CPI was 4.7% in 2023.

³ [Economist Intelligence Unit Worldwide Cost of Living 2023](#)

⁴ [Resonance 2024 World's Best Cities](#)

⁵ [QS World University Rankings 2024: Top global universities](#)

⁶ [Resonance 2024 World's Best Cities](#)

⁷ [Speedtest Global Index: Median city speeds 2024](#)

⁸ [Brand Finance City Index 2023](#)

⁹ [Tātaki Auckland Unlimited: Tamaki Makaurau Auckland Destination Overview](#)

Resilience

- **Auckland is ranked third for the cleanest air quality out of 120 cities measured.**¹⁰ The city has very low recorded levels of the dust, smoke, and other matter (called PM2.5 concentrations) that can cause health issues.¹¹
- **Auckland is the 72nd happiest city out of 250 cities measured** and is second lowest among peer cities measured. Although Auckland's social inclusion and the ability for citizens to participate and contribute positively, Auckland's transport system and productivity levels contribute negatively.¹²

¹⁰ Ranking as at 5 April 2024. Data is live and updated regularly.

¹¹ [World Air Quality Report 2023](#)

¹² [Happy City Index 2024](#)

B Signature projects and other insights

A series of private, public, and not-for-profit-led projects are underway that advance The State of the City 2023 report's findings. Highlights are included below, and further examples will be provided in future updates. Contact [The State of the City Steering Group](#) if you have projects to add.

Boosting Auckland's knowledge opportunities

- The University of Auckland's Innovation Precinct at its Newmarket campus is establishing a strong network of people and facilities in a wider health, education, and infrastructure-focused hub. It is already home to around 20 co-locating companies across multiple technology sectors. These companies interact with researchers and an array of research capabilities and facilities, including a wind tunnel, flumes, additive manufacturing and roading laboratories, through to musculoskeletal, cardiac and stroke rehabilitation facilities. The campus also hosts Australasia's largest seismic testing facility. Recent additions are a leading group in artificial intelligence and a co-creation space focussed on aged care research. Development of the precinct will help address Auckland's knowledge weaknesses outlined in The State of the City 2023 report.

Supporting innovation and high growth tech clusters

- New initiatives are helping to further stimulate Auckland's innovation economy, the lowest assessed area in The State of the City 2023. Auckland's economic and cultural development agency, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited – as part of Tech Tāmaki Makaurau, a three-year strategy to grow Auckland as a tech city – is prioritising the development of high value, high tech clusters such as MedTech, CleanTech and aerospace to drive economic growth and create high-skilled jobs. The agency has partnered with Medtech-iQ Aotearoa, a national innovation hub for MedTech and health innovation, to grow a high-value Auckland export industry and tackle major health challenges affecting communities.
- Auckland Business Chamber's [Tech City Aotearoa plan](#) is championing growth in creative tech, FinTech and HealthTech, powered by investment into broadband services, cloud computing, and leveraging Auckland's talent diversity.



Connecting Auckland internationally

- Improving Auckland's international connectedness was a priority identified in The State of the City 2023. As part of the NZ CleanTech Mission, twelve local CleanTech startups were supported to enter the US market to engage with investors and multinational corporates in California. CleanTech is an important part of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited's Tech Tāmaki Makaurau programme to grow the region's technology industry and help Auckland meet its climate change commitments. The companies are focused on renewable energy, waste to value, carbon capture, fusion energy, and water treatment. Callaghan Innovation, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, and clean energy company, Ara Ake, are partnering in the initiative.

Taking deliberative action to enhance Auckland's resilience

- Auckland's first citizens' transport forum has been held, where participants engaged with experts and data to shape Auckland's transport future. Operated by Koi Tū, in collaboration with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport, the forum addressed the challenges of the current transport system in meeting population needs and climate impacts. The deliberative forum was followed by an online engagement using the interactive tool, Pol.is, to broaden the conversation and seek additional ideas from the public. Using deliberative democracy principles, the project seeks inclusive, informed decision-making for a sustainable transport system. This can help address The State of the City 2023 finding that although Auckland's resilience ranks well, the city needs to facilitate easier feedback sharing, as well as improve transparency, communication, and public engagement. The project is part of a wider [Complex Conversations](#) research programme.

Action on city centre safety

- Increased police patrols in the Auckland city centre, together with better lighting and camera visibility above City Rail Link work sites and adjacent public corridors, are being implemented by Auckland police to improve personal safety and commercial crime concerns. The greater number of patrols are improving crime prevention and boosting police visibility. The night-time economy in Auckland is also attracting attention to improve collaboration and enhance safety. Police continue to work with other agencies, non-government organisations, businesses, and the community to understand concerns and develop coordinated prevention plans across the city.

Other Auckland projects

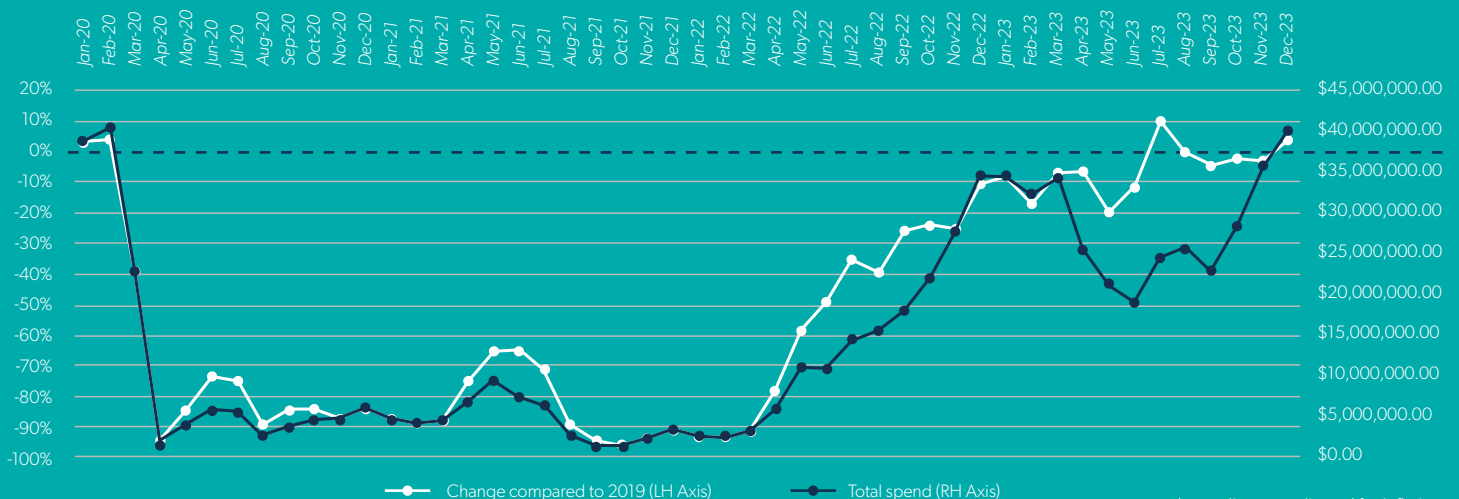
- A wide range of council, government, private and other agency-led [projects](#) are underway around Auckland.

Other insights

Auckland city centre international spending rose above pre-COVID-19 levels* in December 2023

Monthly spending in city centre by international card holders

Total spend and change compared to same month in 2019



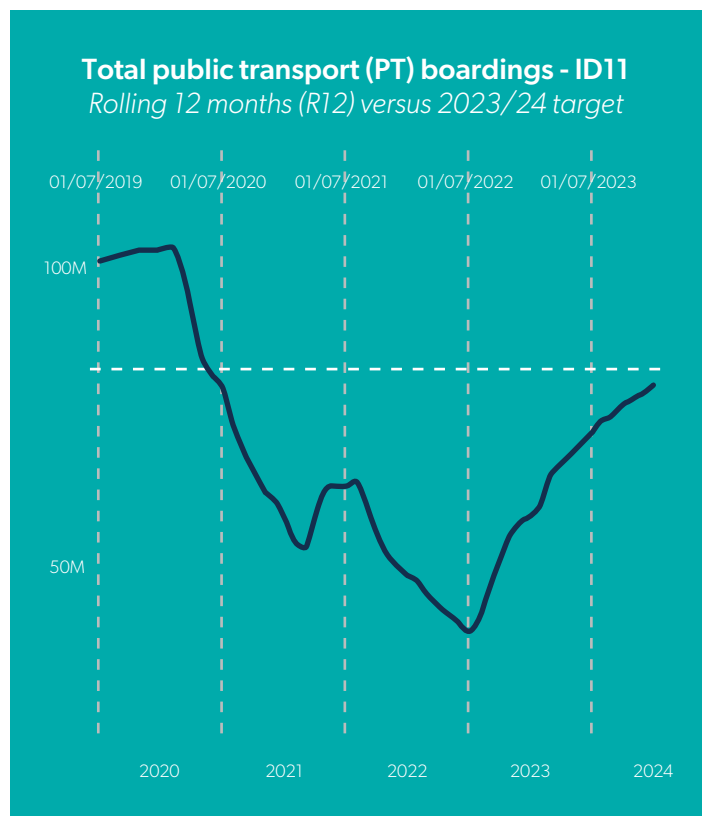
*spending not adjusted for inflation
Source: MarketView

Reported crime across Auckland fell in the three months to the end of February 2024 compared to the same period in 2023

Crime type	Previous	Selected	
Assault	2,358	1,809	↓
Sexual assault	188	124	↓
Abduction	24	12	↓
Robbery	442	277	↓
Burglary	5,977	3,432	↓
Theft	18,955	14,819	↓
Total	27,944	20,473	↓

Source: [Police Crime Snapshot](#)

Auckland public transport usage levels have been climbing, but remain 15% behind pre-Covid-19 volumes



Source: [Auckland Transport performance measures](#)



State of the City – Benchmarking Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland’s international performance

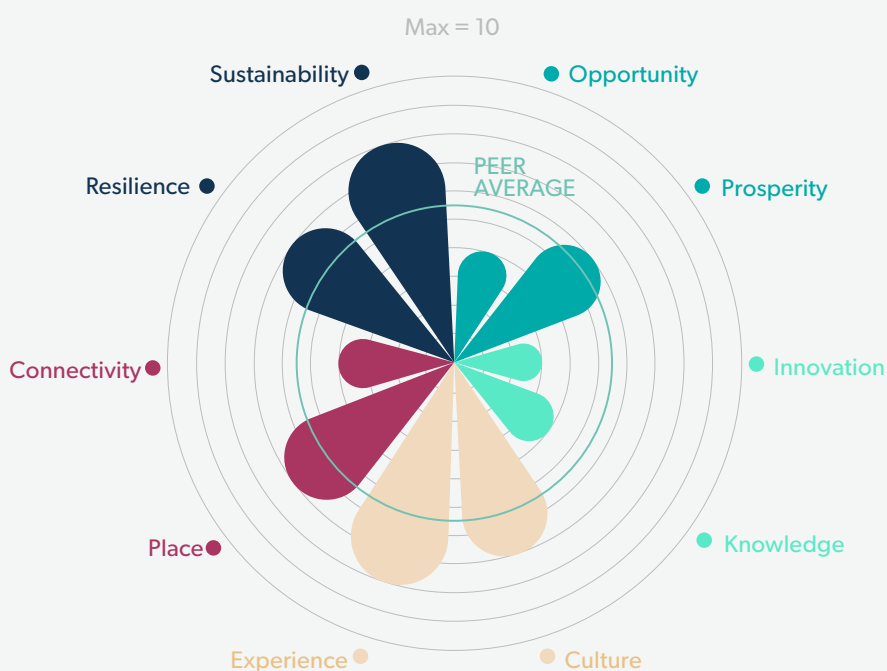
The first benchmarking report found **Auckland is ahead of the majority of its peer cities in 6 out of the 10 categories** as shown in the spidergram.

Experience and Sustainability remain areas of comparative advantage that reflect Auckland’s setting, landscapes, atmosphere, and lifestyle, and some of the planning and policy it has put in place.

Auckland’s biggest gap is in Innovation, reflecting skills, commercialisation, and innovation system weaknesses. This in turn, has knock-on effects on Opportunity and Knowledge.

Connectivity, reflecting Auckland’s lack of an efficient transport system, is also low. These lower areas tend to rely on consistent investment, effectively competing to attract international opportunity and high levels of policy.

Where Auckland sits compared to its ‘peer cities’*



*This chart shows Auckland’s position among a group of 10 peer cities assessed in this report: Auckland, Austin, Brisbane, Copenhagen, Dublin, Fukuoka, Helsinki, Portland, Tel Aviv, Vancouver. For example, with Sustainability Auckland is overall 3rd out of 10 cities, giving it a score of 8/10. Auckland’s position is calculated using an Elo algorithm that takes into account multiple metrics.

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Deloitte.

