



Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā
taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Voices of children and young people from Tāmaki Makaurau

To inform the three-year review of I Am Auckland

June 2023



Voices of children and young people from Tāmaki Makaurau

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

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- Youthline.

You do incredible work with children and young people.

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Introduction

This report presents findings from recent engagement with children and young people in Tāmaki Makaurau that was undertaken as part of a review of I Am Auckland.

I Am Auckland is Auckland Council’s strategic action plan for children and young people.

The plan was adopted in 2013 and was designed to reflect council’s commitments to create a city that supports the wellbeing of Auckland’s children and young people. Ten years on the strategy is now under review to assess how well we are doing and if the strategy is still fit-for-purpose.

Hearing the views of children and young people is an important part of this review to help us understand if the strategy is addressing the things that matter most to them.

We asked for children and young people’s views to inform the review of I Am Auckland

Between August and December 2022, Auckland Council asked children and young people what it’s like to grow up in Tāmaki Makaurau. We wanted to know what they loved about Auckland, what they thought could be improved, and their hopes and dreams for the future.

Children and young people were supported to share their views in ways that made sense to them. We did this by co-designing the engagement approach with young people and working with young graphic designers on the engagement material.

Our approach included a range of engagement methods, designed to allow for both breadth and depth of response. Our light touch methods allowed for all children and young people to participate, and our deep dive methods provided more in-depth responses from children and young people from targeted communities, such as rangatahi Māori and transgender young people.



We heard from over 400 children and young people

We heard from 114 children and young people through workshops, 240 at stalls, 48 through storybooks and 7 through empathy interviews. These responses came from children and young people that reflect the diversity of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Across all methods, 456 responses included gender identity. Of these, 269 identified as female, 181 identified as male and 7 identified as non-binary.

We received responses from all local board areas except Waiheke and Aotea / Great Barrier Island. The Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Albert-Eden Local Board areas were slightly overrepresented.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Most ethnic groups were well-represented. Children and young people in the NZ European/Pākehā, Pacific Peoples, and Asian ethnic groupings each represented around 25% of the responses. Māori and young people were slightly underrepresented, making up 12% of the responses compared to being 17% of the population.

A demographic breakdown of the children and young people who participated is provided in Appendix 2.

About this report

This report summarises what we heard from children and young people through this engagement. The key points are supported by quotes and drawings. For most of these we have included the age, gender, ethnicity and local board of the participant. Where the participant noted three or more ethnicities, we have written 'multiple ethnicities' to protect the privacy of the participant.

Sometimes demographic information was not available, either because the child or young person chose not to share it, or because the workshop format meant the quotes could not be attributed. Where this is the case, we have noted which method the participants took part in below the quote.

The findings in this report will contribute to the review of I Am Auckland.

Methodology

We used several methods to hear from children and young people, given the diversity of the population. You can find more information about the methodology at Appendix 1.

Workshops

We held 14 workshops with children and young people aged 8-24 years. Most workshops used spoken word poetry, which enabled children and young people to creatively express their feelings about growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau. The spoken word poetry workshops were facilitated by Action Education. Three organisations opted for a more traditional workshop format, and these were facilitated by council staff.

Stalls

We set up stalls at 10 locations around Tāmaki Makaurau. Children and young people aged 3-24 years could take a postcard and write their response to three questions. The responses were pinned to a cork board with the consent of participants. Most stalls were set up in public spaces, such as museums and night markets.

Storybooks

Children aged 3-5 years and 6-9 years were supported to share their views through storybooks. Children could share by drawing or writing. Where the child opted to draw, we asked parents to help children describe their drawing. The storybooks were distributed and collected through libraries.

Empathy interviews

Through empathy interviews we wanted to better understand how intersectionality impacts young people. As there is less data available about young people with disabilities and rainbow people, we prioritised hearing from these two groups. The interviews were up to one hour in length and were either held in-person or online depending on the preference of the young person.

Instagram

We explored hearing from young people through Instagram. However, two trials of the approach showed it was unlikely to be successful. Upon reflection, the accounts selected may have had a greater following from youth organisations than from young people. However, we suspect that after two years of organisations talking to young people through social media during lockdowns, they no longer wanted to engage with organisations in this way.

Across these methods, we asked four questions

We wanted to understand what it was like for children and young people to grow up in Tāmaki Makaurau to meet their needs and aspirations for the region. The questions were:

- What are your favourite things about where you live in Auckland?
- What are three things that you would change or add to Auckland?
- What issues or challenges are most important to you right now?
- What are some of your hopes and dreams for the future?

These questions were framed differently across the methodologies and were tailored for the age and stage of the children and young people we were working with.

Key findings

This section summarises the key things we heard from children and young people about living in Tāmaki Makaurau under five key theme headings.

1. We love growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau

Children and young people told us that they love Tāmaki Makaurau, particularly the parks, playgrounds, beaches, cultural events, and festivals. They talked about the diversity of the city in relation to people, food, landscape and opportunity. They also told us that they love how much life and energy there is in Tāmaki Makaurau.

“They (Auckland) have lots of places to have fun like the playground.”

– 9-year-old, female, Asian, Upper Harbour Board

2. Life in Tāmaki Makaurau could be improved

Children and young people are frustrated by the traffic and public transport in Tāmaki Makaurau. They talked about crime and not always feeling safe. They are also concerned for the environment.

“I’m very reliant on public transport but it’s not very reliable.”

– 18-year-old, non-binary, Pākehā, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

3. Life is hard for some of us

Some of the children and young people we talked to were in very challenging circumstances. They experienced poverty, racism, bullying or lived with a mental health condition. Some felt judged before people even got to know them. Many children and young people feel that life is unfair.

“I am broken. I am from a family of drugs and gangs.”

– 16-year-old, male, Māori, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

4. Strong relationships are important

Most of the children and young people we spoke to told us about how much they love and care for their family and friends. The children and young people that were struggling told us about strong relationships that were helping them navigate the challenges they faced. Some of these people were friends, teachers and youth workers.

“I am from a family that teaches me to be me.”

– 13-year-old, multiple ethnicities, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

5. We want a safe and inclusive future where everyone belongs

Children and young people had beautiful dreams for their futures. A lot of these were centred around family and hoping that they would be safe and happy. They also wanted to get a good education and job, own a house and be part of a Tāmaki Makaurau where everyone belongs. They hope for a healthy and safe planet.

“I hope my sister becomes a good lawyer.”

– 14-year-old, female, Pacific peoples

What we heard from children and young people

This section sets out in more detail what children and young people told us about growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau organised under the five key theme headings. It includes quotes and extracts from storybooks and poems.

1. We love growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau

There are lots of opportunities in Tāmaki Makaurau

It was easy for children and young people to tell us their favourite things about Tāmaki Makaurau. They told us that it's a region with lots of life and energy. They love the diversity and talked about this in relation to people, food, landscape and opportunities. They also told us that there is so much to do in Tāmaki Makaurau, including cultural events, festivals, markets, light shows, sculpture trails and sports. Some told us they love the Sky Tower, Harbour Bridge and Rainbows End.

“Everything is awesome in Tāmaki Makaurau! Everything at your fingertips! <3”

– 16-year-old, Pākehā, Māori, Manurewa Local Board

“The proximity to both suburban and urban life. I’m right in the heart of being close to the city but simultaneously being close to the quieter suburbs. Auckland has options for the perfect balance!”

– 19-year-old, female, Pākehā, Asian, Waitematā Local Board

“Art spaces in Avondale – Whau arts space, Crescendo, New Lynn Community Hall has art workshops and music workshops, graffiti park. I see lots of 14-year-olds starting young, making their own definitions of art with the support of the community.”

– workshop participant

We love the parks and playgrounds

One of the most common comments from children and young people was about the parks and playgrounds. Children love being able to go to the playground and like having lots of options for play. While most of this play was on playgrounds, they also mentioned toys, adventures and exploring. Young people told us that parks are an important place for them to meet up with friends.

“They have lots of places to have fun like the playground.”

– 9-year-old, female, Asian, Upper Harbour Local Board

“... Albert Park... you know you can loiter around. You can spend time there.”

– 23-year-old, female, Asian, Ōrākei Local Board

**What is life in Auckland like?
Can you tell us your favourite things about living there?**

Help our space crew by drawing or writing your favourite things about living in Auckland

Library

Library

Swing

Seesaw

Sand pit

Swimming pool

School

play ground library pool
and school because they are
fun can play with cards.

- 9-year-old, female, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African, Storybook response

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Auckland's environment is a taonga

As well as the parks, children and young people told us that they love Tāmaki Makaurau's beaches, regional parks and maunga. Some children and young people felt connected to the environment and lots of children and young people expressed a desire to protect it.

"I like all the nature and animals, the wildlife, the weather, the beaches."

– 13-year-old, female, Pākehā, Waitākere Ranges Local Board

"Everything is green, water and beaches."

– 10-year-old, female, Pākehā, Upper Harbour Local Board

"I love taking care of the natural life around me and the animals and the trees and everything. And when you do that, you can really see growth in a physical way. I find it really beautiful."

– 19-year-old, male, Pākehā, Kaipātiki Local Board

We love the swimming pools, libraries and museums

Children and young people see swimming pools, libraries and museums as places to have fun, learn and explore. For many, these spaces were their favourite things about living in Tāmaki Makaurau.

"Go swimming, big slide, Mt Albert pool."

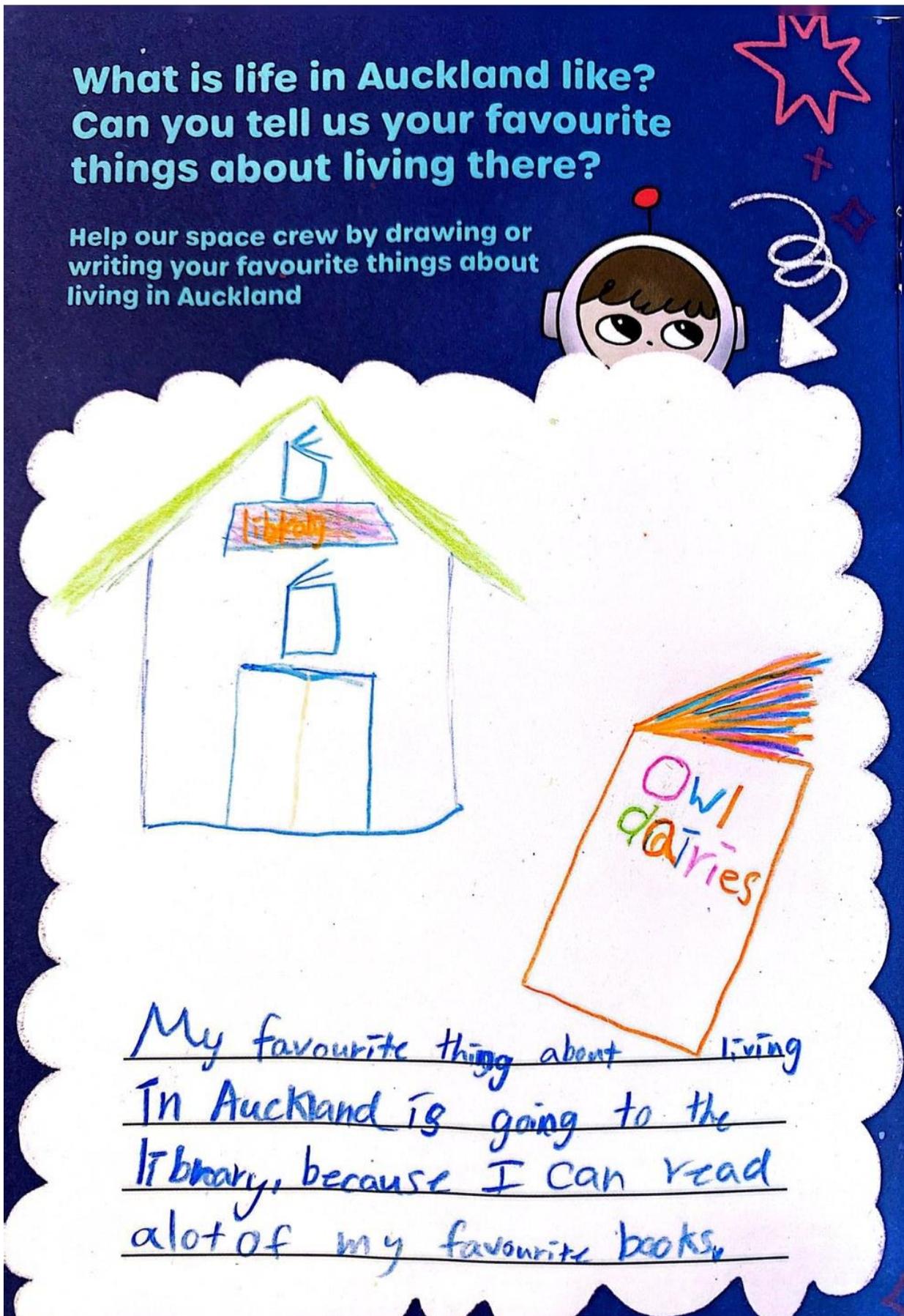
– 5-year-old, female, Pākehā, Albert-Eden Local Board

"Libraries: great place to hang out and be warm, libraries do lots of workshops (te reo, origami), being able to print things, the staff are always super cheerful, they do job cafes (help with CVs), cool centre point for the community."

– workshop participant

"MOTAT, Auckland Museum."

– 5-year-old, male, Asian, Kaipātiki Local Board



- 7-year-old, female, Asian, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board, Storybook response.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

We feel connected to our local community

Lots of children and young people felt deeply connected to places and communities. This was most common for children and young people from South Auckland, West Auckland and Warkworth.

“I like the diversity. I grew up in South Auckland my whole life so it’s always been home to me. I’ve always felt comfortable around my area.”

- workshop participant

“I am the change, I am people of South Auckland, brown, loud, cultural, I am Auckland.”

- workshop participant

“I like living in this community. It’s nothing but a blessing daily waking up here.”

- 18-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Manurewa Local Board

They described Tāmaki Makaurau as a place where they can connect to their own culture and learn about other cultures.

“In a place where I can learn my roots (Tonga) while being away from my homeland of Tonga.”

- 17-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Children and young people also told us that they like the people in Tāmaki Makaurau.

“People are nice and funny.”

- 10-year-old, male, Asian, Albert-Eden Local Board

Some of us like school

It was common for children aged 5-8 to tell us that school was one of their favourite things about life in Tāmaki Makaurau. They love being able to learn and see friends. Some also talked about how much they like their teachers.

“Maybe raising teacher pay ‘cause all teachers are lovely and I think they deserve it.”

- 10-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Spoken word poem

I am happy to be here.

I am glad to see the sunrise, the sunset, the trees, the sky, I like to see things that make me feel alive.

I enjoy spending time with people I like, I love, I appreciate.

I hope to make a difference one day and tell them you are enough.

I try to be better, better than I was yesterday.

I am challenged by me, no one else.

I value values, of everyone and everything.

When I look forward I wanna see a happy me, with a lot of happy faces around me.

Auckland is my home, my whānau, my culture, my nature.

Auckland is where I am from, where I belong, where I will be.

I am happy to be here, a place where I call home.

- 17-year-old, female, Asian, Albert-Eden Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

2. Life in Tāmaki Makaurau could be improved

We need less traffic and better public transport

Traffic and public transport were two of the most discussed topics when we asked children and young people what they would change about Tāmaki Makaurau. Children and young people told us that being stuck in traffic was frustrating.

“Traffic is your enemy.”

– 9-year-old, female, European

Some children and young people felt that Aucklanders were too reliant on cars and wanted to see better use of public transport, walkways and cycleways. Children and young people also told us that they don't like the noise from lots of vehicles, including honking and motorbikes revving. We heard this more from children and young people in South Auckland.

We heard a lot about Auckland's public transport system. While it worked well for some children and young people, the overwhelming feedback was that buses and trains need to be cheaper, more reliable and more frequent. They also wanted more routes, noting it's often easy to get to the CBD, but not to neighbouring suburbs. Young people with disabilities told us that public transport needs to be more accessible.

“I'm very reliant on public transport but it's not very reliable.”

– 18-year-old, non-binary, Pākehā, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

“I value my patience as I wait for yet another bus that was cancelled.”

– 16-year-old, female, Asian, Whau Local Board

“Auckland feels like a bus coming late.”

– workshop participant

We heard that having someone working at the bus and train stops at night would make it feel safer to use public transport.

Children and young people asked for more walkways and cycleways. The quality of these matters, particularly for young people with disabilities who need the footpaths to be clear of debris.

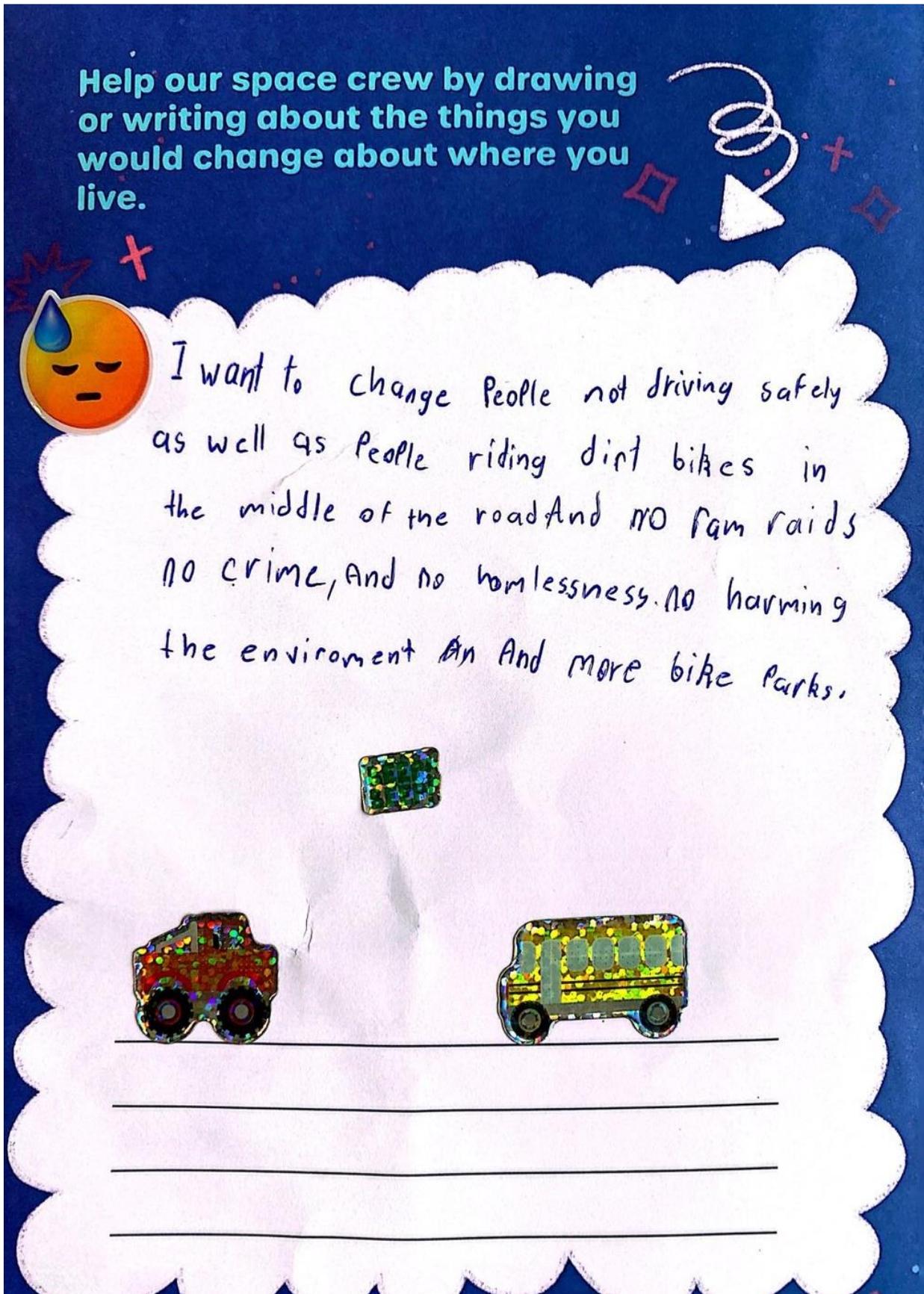
“More dedicated bike paths not on roads.”

– 9-year-old, female, Devonport-Takapuna

“More than anything I want better concrete.”

– female, Pacific peoples, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board

Help our space crew by drawing or writing about the things you would change about where you live.



I want to change people not driving safely as well as people riding dirt bikes in the middle of the road. And NO gun raids NO CRIME, and no homelessness. NO harming the environment. An And more bike parks.

- 9-year-old, male, Asian, Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board, Storybook response

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Housing should meet our needs

Housing was incredibly important to the younger children we spoke to. For some, it was their favourite thing about Tāmaki Makaurau. This makes sense given how much time children spend in their home. Some children told us they wish they could give their family a house.

Children and young people had mixed views on the number of houses in Tāmaki Makaurau. Some felt that we need to prioritise building apartments and let go of the quarter acre dream. Others felt that there are already too many houses and too much construction.

“I think what keeps the community disconnected [...] is infrastructure... in Auckland we’re building more out instead of up... more apartments and more stores and markets nearby those areas.”

– 20-year-old, non-binary, European, Papakura Local Board

“Too many apartments – wherever I look there are new apartments and houses and it’s annoying to see construction everywhere.”

– workshop participant

Some young people feel that lots of Auckland’s houses are built for Western families, who tend to have two to three children and not live in multi-generation homes. Instead, we should be building housing that meets the needs of Auckland’s diverse populations. This would mean building larger homes, with space for more children and extended family. We also heard that there needs to be more accessible housing.

“Specialised homes for larger families. Instead of making a house, they should have made a home. Think about growth of family.”

– workshop participant

“Affordable and accessible housing. It takes forever to find a house that’s accessible.”

– workshop participant

We are concerned about the environment

Lots of children and young people told us that they had concerns about the environment, specifically about the amount of rubbish and pollution they saw around Tāmaki Makaurau. We heard that children and young people want more rubbish bins.

Through spoken word poetry, we heard that Tāmaki Makaurau smells like pollution, smoke and petrol.

“I don’t like how people are not doing anything about rubbish.”

– 13-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board

“I would ban all plastic bags. I would help clean up polluted beaches and oceans. I would plant some more trees.”

– 9-year-old, female, Pākehā, Kaipātiki Local Board

“I would put rubbish bins everywhere so that there was no more rubbish polluting the city on the streets and rivers.”

– 9-year-old, female, Pākehā, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Children and young people were concerned about trees being cut down and wanted more trees to be planted. For some, this related to having more shade, particularly at playgrounds.

While climate change came up less than we expected, it was still an important issue for some children and young people. Surprisingly young people were not more likely to mention climate change than children. However, more females talked about climate change than males.

“What do I think is going to get in the way? Climate change! Yeah, it’s kind of hard to imagine a future, I suppose, like, as an adult because it’s like, who knows what it’s going to be like in five years, maybe the whole sky is going to be filled with smoke clouds.”

- 18-year-old, male, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

Spoken word poem

Auckland looks cloudy, colourful and beat up. It looks green but also like concrete, like a jungle.

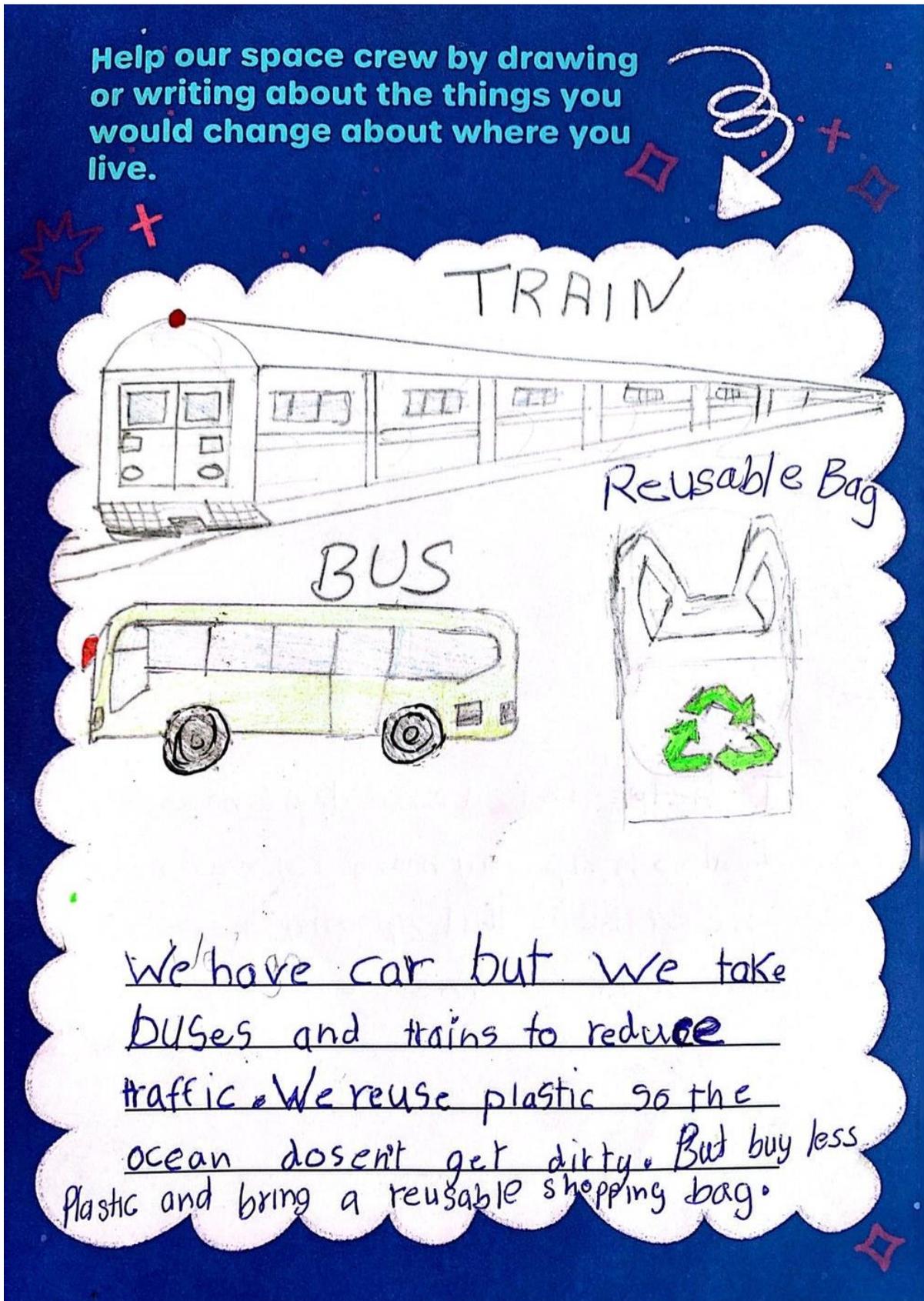
Auckland sounds like cars, like Karens, it sounds like Celine Dion, like horns and sirens and buskers. It sounds like ‘can I have some spare change’

Auckland feels cramped, diverse, rushed and safe

Auckland smells like gas, it smells like fast food restaurants and fresh bread

Auckland tastes like Uber Eats, like the local dairy, like vapes and chlorine water

- Group poem made from a five senses prompt, spoken word poetry workshop



- 7-year-old, female, Asian, Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board, Storybook response.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

There is too much crime

We asked children and young people what they would change about Tāmaki Makaurau. Several children and young people mentioned crime specifically, while others talked more generally about the level of violence.

“I also don’t like when people ram-raid stores.”

– 12-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Ōtara-Papatoetoe

“I wish the things that you can [change] are shootings.”

– 11-year-old, male

Tāmaki Makaurau doesn’t always feel safe

Related to crime, children and young people talked about safety. For some, certain areas did not feel safe, such as intersections where they needed to cross the road. Others told us about the nightlife not feeling safe, with bottles being thrown and drinks being spiked.

“I think probably night-time is still quite a wary time, no matter where you are.”

– 23-year-old, female, Asian, Ōrākei

Young people told us they feel safer when they can see people who look like them. For example, most of the rainbow young people we talked to feel safe in the CBD, because they notice others who are part of their community. They also told us that busy places feel safer, because it feels like there is someone who would help if things go wrong. They told us that they look for signs that a place is safe, such as the rainbow flag or tino rangatiratanga flag.

“Wherever I go like Central or K Road I do feel that I can see myself everywhere.”

– 20-year-old, non-binary, European, Papakura Local Board

“out West... we can’t really hold hands or will get called out names in the street.”

– 18-year-old, male, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

The rainbow young people we talked to responded to the lack of safety in two ways; 1) by masking part of their identity when the situation or place didn’t feel safe and 2) by changing how they move around (for example avoiding certain places or going home earlier).

“If I’m on my own, it would just be like, trust no one, trust nothing. Because who knows what someone else is going to do... always keeping an eye out. Which can be kind of exhausting to be honest.”

– 18-year-old, male, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

“And I think particularly in the evening some of the bus shelters... can feel a bit unsafe sometimes if there’s nobody else there, or it’s just you and another guy and there’s barely anyone around... it actually impacts how you move around...”

– 23-year-old, female, Asian, Ōrākei

Safety was also connected with accessibility. For example, we talked to some young people who use wheelchairs. These young people told us that a lack of accessibility impacts their ability to get around the region and to feel safe in it (for example, the bus stop being up a steep hill or the pathway not being clear enough to use).

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Some of the young people we spoke to told us that they don't feel safe around the police. Their experience was that police racially profile some young people, and that some areas of Auckland have a greater police presence.

“We have a lot of over policing in the Papakura area... especially if you're not Pākehā, if your Islander or Māori communities, being in a big group of people, they're definitely going to be pulled over... it just ruins the mood... I think it disconnects the youth.”

– 20-year-old, non-binary, European, Papakura Local Board

“There's a lot of police out West and I don't like the police... I know the police are supposed to be helpful, but no not really.”

– 18-year-old, male, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

We don't like excessive use of alcohol, smoking and drugs

Children and young people told us that they don't like to see people drinking lots of alcohol, smoking or doing drugs. Some young people said that there are too many liquor stores in their area and that people end up drinking in the public spaces, like parks.

“I think it's pretty bad to be honest. Because kids are using it as an escape to deal with whatever they're going through. Sad because you see some ones as well like 16-17. And you wonder how they got the liquor. It's just unfortunate to see in our community.”

– workshop participant

We also heard from some rainbow young people that alcohol and partying is a large part of the rainbow community at the moment and that they'd like to see that change.

“... when people turn 18 and they're finally allowed in clubs. First thing they do, let's go clubbing, let's go clubbing, let's go clubbing, let's destroy our liver as fast as possible tonight, etc. But yeah, I do feel like that's definitely an issue with our [rainbow] community.”

– 20-year-old, non-binary, European, Papakura Local Board

We want more and cleaner public toilets

Some children and young people told us that they wanted cleaner public toilets, more of them and for them to be open more often.

“The public toilets need to be more open.”

– 11-year-old, male, Whau Local Board

“I don't like all the unclean bathrooms in the public area.”

– 12-year-old, female, Pacific peoples

Children and young people often talked about public toilets at parks and playgrounds.

Some young people with disabilities told us that they want public toilets to be more accessible. For the young people we spoke to, this meant bigger cubicles, longer timeframes before the doors automatically open and lower mirrors.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

3. Life is hard for some of us

Some of our families are struggling to get by

Lots of the children and young people we spoke to were worried about how much things cost in Tāmaki Makaurau. They talked about housing, fuel, water, and food.

“I come from a home with an empty fridge.”

– workshop participant

“Inflation, that’s another thing that’s gonna get in the way. That one’s quite scary to think about. Because if I think about the career that I really want to go into, because I just really want to be able to help other people. But I know that I’m not going to get paid a lot to do that. And that means I might potentially not be able to actually support myself and support those around me. Which is a scary thought.”

– 18-year-old, male, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

Through the storybooks, we asked children what they would give to help their family if they had a magic wand. Some children told us they would give their family more money or basic necessities, such as clothes, food, and toothpaste. Others said they would like Chromebooks so they can do homework and learn online.

Children and young people were particularly concerned about the cost of housing. Children as young as seven were aware that their parents were struggling to meet housing costs and told us they were worried about it.

“My future in Auckland – will my family be able to stay in Auckland with the rising costs.”

– 9-year-old, female, Pākehā, Pacific peoples, Puketāpapa Local Board

“Yesterday my parents got annoyed that they can’t pay the mortgage.”

– workshop participant

Children and young people were very aware of the significant challenges that some Aucklanders face. They told us that they care about poverty and inequality and want something to be done about it.

“Bad that there are too many poor people in Ōtara.”

– 13-year-old, female, Māori, Ōtara-Papatoetoe

“I hate it when people can’t afford groceries and can’t put food on the table – it’s too expensive.”

– workshop participant

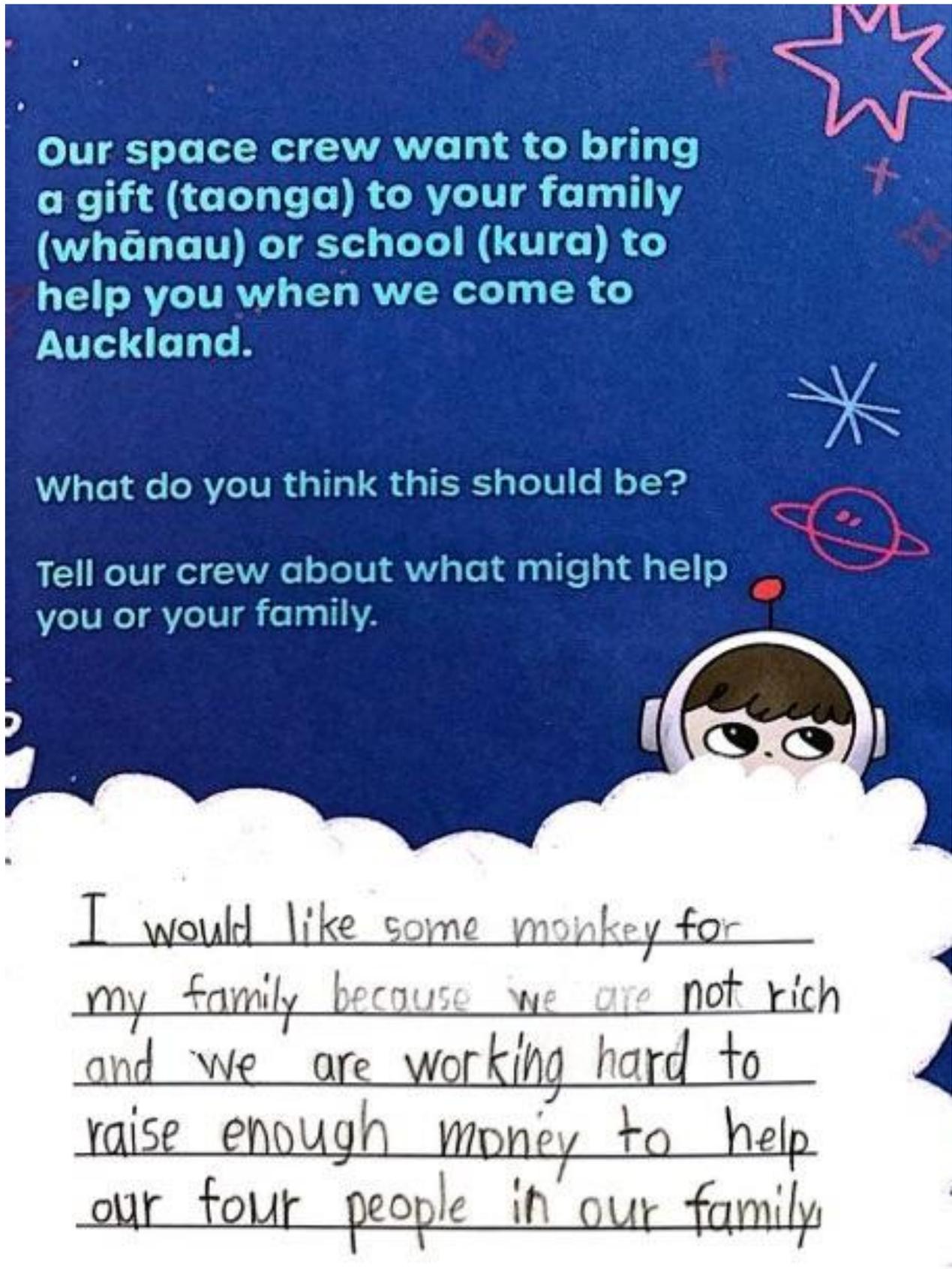
They also told us that they want to see more being done to help homeless people, including shelters and food.

“Homeless people get some food.”

– 7-year-old, female, Pākehā, Kaipātiki Local Board

“More homeless shelters.”

– 13-year-old, male



Our space crew want to bring a gift (taonga) to your family (whānau) or school (kura) to help you when we come to Auckland.

What do you think this should be?

Tell our crew about what might help you or your family.

I would like some monkey for my family because we are not rich and we are working hard to raise enough money to help our four people in our family.

- 8-year-old, male, Asian, Kaipātiki Local Board, Storybook response.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Some of us are growing up in really difficult circumstances

We heard from some young people who are growing up in situations where crime feels hard to avoid. One young person told us “*it almost feels like I am guaranteed a spot in a cell*”.

Young people told us they felt a strong sense of injustice around their circumstances growing up. They feel like the odds are stacked against them and they feel judged for their identity, culture and by the colour of their skin. Some young people we talked to were dealing with intergenerational trauma related to colonisation.

Spoken word poem

I am broken.

I am from a family of drugs and gangs.

I see a future of hard work.

I wish for self-improvement.

I'm challenged by my own mind for that self-improvement.

I find strength in myself.

I look forward to a healed heart and family.

Auckland is home.

- 16-year-old, male, Māori, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Spoken word poem

I am judged by the enrichment of my people.

It almost feels like I am guaranteed a spot in a cell.

My blood runs brown with stories that I can't begin to fathom, stories that deliver me on a plate.

Yet my skin is transparent.

I hope the constant plague of injustice is seized.

I am challenged by others defiance to understand US!

I live for the past to be able to live through me.

The bottom of Auckland situates with the highest rank of power.

- workshop participant

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

We experience discrimination

Children and young people told us that they experience discrimination in lots of different ways. This included racism, queerphobia and ableism. They also talked about discrimination in relation to their age, where they live and in school.

“I’m tired of seeing discrimination because of people not accepting people for who they are.”

– workshop participant

However, racism was the most mentioned form of discrimination. Children and young people told us that people make fun of their culture. They feel judged before people even get to know them.

“I see racist science teachers with high tempers.”

– 17-year-old, female, Māori, Pacific peoples, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board

“I see my culture getting stripped of their rights, losing our land and losing our language but we still come together strong.”

– workshop participant

“Embarrassed to express a culture that was mine.”

– 15-year-old, non-binary, Pacific peoples, Ōtara-Papatoetoe

“I don’t like that South Auckland is always portrayed as dirty and poor.”

– 16-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African, Ōtara-Papatoetoe

We also heard examples from young people with disabilities. For example, they were discriminated against when transitioning to university, applying for jobs and when learning to drive. One young person described the fear and lack of control they felt when people move their wheelchair without asking.

“... if someone takes control of my wheelchair and pushes me around without asking... I get upset by that.”

– 23-year-old, female, Pākehā, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“... as soon as I disclose that I have a disability they’re like, nope, can’t do it, take away the forms... it’s happened to me a few times... in talking to future employers now... I’m so careful with what I’m saying.”

– workshop participant

Rainbow young people also faced discrimination. They talked about being yelled at in the street and feeling unsafe on public transport or in Ubers. Most of the rainbow young people we spoke to described school as a safe or neutral space for them.

“It’s two-layered – if I’m in a wheelchair sometimes people don’t know how to interact with that and it can be uncomfortable. And also, if I’m going somewhere with my girlfriend, people don’t know how to interact with that. And that can be uncomfortable.”

– 23-year-old, female, Pākehā, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“I suppose I just want people to know that I’m just chilling, I’m not doing anything, you don’t need to yell at me.”

– 18-year-old, Pākehā, Māori, Henderson-Massey Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

For rainbow young people, a lack of acceptance meant it was harder to discover and be confident in their identity. Telling people about their identity sometimes meant that they lost important relationships.

“When I came out I felt some pressure of hiding my true self be relieved.”

– 18-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board

“I wish I knew what trans was ‘cause I would have transitioned like yesterday.”

– 20-year-old, female, Māori, Manurewa Local Board

Some young people also told us that they experienced discrimination based on their age.

“Make it 16 as I work and I’m not able to vote on where my taxes go.”

– 16-year-old, female, Pākehā, Albert-Eden Local Board

“Because I’m young 20 years old to be exact, I’m always up to no good or don’t know what I’m talking about.”

– 20-year-old, female, Māori, Manurewa

We need support for our mental health

Some of the children and young people we spoke to were struggling with their mental health. In particular, we heard about anxiety and depression. Young people told us the threshold for getting help feels too high. They want more services and shorter wait times. They also want more support from parents, friends and school.

“I struggle with drug addiction, self-harm, mental health, and abusive relationships. Help please.”

– 17-year old, female, Pākehā, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

“I wish I could escape from shame, guilt and depression. I am challenged by social anxiety, nervous breakdowns and judgement.”

– 16-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, European, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“Be the person you needed yesterday.”

– workshop participant

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Spoken word poem

I am here, breathing and alive.

I am from a shore that pushes and pulls, sand gone from my feet.

I see rain pittering beneath my feet, a distant face that screams for help.

I wish to be strong, to push through and help, to ignore the rain and hold out my hand to help.

I am challenged by that constant noise in my head, the screaming, the crying, the yelling and the noise.

I find strength in hope, on the couch of my friend's house, the quiet in the back of the car, the soft purr of the outside.

I look forward to that space of silent and loud, that person, that place, a city who looks and cares for birds.

Auckland is my home, land of stolen promises, of rage and desire the start of the beginning and end.

I am here, alive and breathing more knowledgeable from where I began.

- 15-year-old, female, Māori, European, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

The 'system' is against us

Several children and young people told us that they feel some of the 'systems' in Tāmaki Makaurau are unfair. Comments were made about the social welfare system, the justice system, the education system, low voter turnout and immigration. Some young people told us that they are frustrated with the attitude "this is the way it has always been" and want to see change.

Importantly, children and young people told us that they want to be involved in decisions that impact them.

"... it shouldn't be about us without us. I think something people in power currently fail to realise is they're making all these decisions based off their own morals and their own hopes and dreams, failing to recognise that the decisions they're making are going to impact the rest of our lives. Not their lives... the rest of our lives, the rangatahi, the people that are to come. They're building a country for us to come into and at the moment they're building upon a broken system."

– 19-year-old, male, Pākehā, Kaipātiki Local Board

"I hope that younger people's voices are not just heard by adults (adults like to pat themselves on the back), but they implement the change that is needed. The people making decisions are using frameworks that aren't from a youth perspective – for lots of young people it can be discouraging. We advocate for something, but nothing really happens."

– workshop participant

Some children and young people also told us about the education system. While our 5-8 year-olds love school, at about 8 years-old, children started telling us about bullying. This seemed to correlate with a drop off in children telling us that they like school. We also heard from children and young people who said they experience racism and ableism at school.

"I don't like cyberbullying online even offline and I also don't like when kids at school go home crying."

– 11-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Howick Local Board

We heard that school is not always a comfortable or safe place and that the NCEA framework feels like "a goldfish climbing a tree". Some found school stressful, while others found it limiting. For many, school felt disconnected from the reality of working, noting there are more career options than they had realised. They wish they knew more about the options available and that their parents had this information too.

"I am challenged by school as the stress piles on me."

– 13-year-old, male, multiple ethnicities, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

4. Strong relationships are important

Children and young people told us how much they value their family and friends. When we asked children what their favourite thing is about Auckland, lots of them told us about their family.

“Playing with Daddy.”

– 5-year-old, male, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“Superhero adventure with Mum.”

– 3-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Kaipātiki Local Board

They told us about how much love and care there is in their families and how much they value their families’ support. They wanted to give this love and care back to their families and to others.

“I come from a loving and caring family.”

– 16-year-old, female, Māori, Pacific peoples, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“I am from a family that teaches me to be me.”

– 13-year-old, multiple ethnicities, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Pets were an important part of family life for some children.

“I enjoy being around... my cat Zoey.”

– 10-year-old, female

“I’m happy I have my pets.”

– workshop participant

Lots of children and young people told us about the strength of their friendships. Some young people were no longer connected with their family and described their friends as chosen family.

“Playing with friends.”

– 8-year-old, male, Asian, Whau Local Board

“I find strength in my friends. I look forward to becoming the best version of myself and watching my friends do the same.”

– 16-year-old, female, multiple ethnicities, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

“...my friends, who are my family...”

– 18-year-old, female, Pacific peoples, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board

Some children and young people also described strong relationships with teachers, youth workers and God. These trusted relationships can support children and young people growing up in difficult family environments.

“I find strength in God.”

– 14-year-old, female, multiple ethnicities, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Help Star and Pēpi by drawing a picture of your favourite things about where you live.



Parent/guardian/caregiver: help us understand what your child has drawn by asking them to describe their picture and provide a caption below.

Being able to spend quality
time with my family

- 4-year-old, female, Pākehā, Howick Local Board, Storybook response.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

5. We want a safe and inclusive future where everyone belongs

Children and young people had beautiful dreams for their futures. A lot of these were centred around family and hoping that they would be safe and happy.

“I hope my sister becomes a good lawyer.”

– 14-year-old, female, Pacific peoples

Children and young people told us that they want to get a good education, have a good job and own their own house in the future.

“I’d really like to have a nice house and a bit of land with a dog.”

– 19-year-old, male, Pākehā, Kaipātiki Local Board

They also had a lot of hopes and dreams for Tāmaki Makaurau. They hope it becomes a safer place, that it’s accessible to everyone, that everyone has equal rights and that the environment is healthier. Some young people told us it’s hard to imagine what their future will look like because of climate change, demonstrating that environmental safety will likely play a big role in the wellbeing of children and young people both now and in the future.

“I hope for a better place and more environment.”

– 10-year-old, female, Rodney Local Board

“I hope Puhinui will become a safer community and that every person unique or different will have the same rights.”

– 11-year-old, female, Rodney Local Board

Some want the strength of their community to be more widely understood and appreciated. They dream of a region where people can connect with others and belong.

“I look forward to South Auckland being shown to the world.”

– 18-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Manurewa Local Board

“Would love to have more community events to bring people together and share cultures.”

– 23-year-old, female, Asian, Kaipātiki Local Board

“I think that’s the dream, of it all being incorporated... and everyone’s out there traversing the space and being more at one with the natural environment.”

– 23-year-old, female, Asian, Ōrākei Local Board

Children and young people see themselves playing a role in creating a safer and more inclusive Tāmaki Makaurau. Some told us that they want to be role models or representatives for their community.

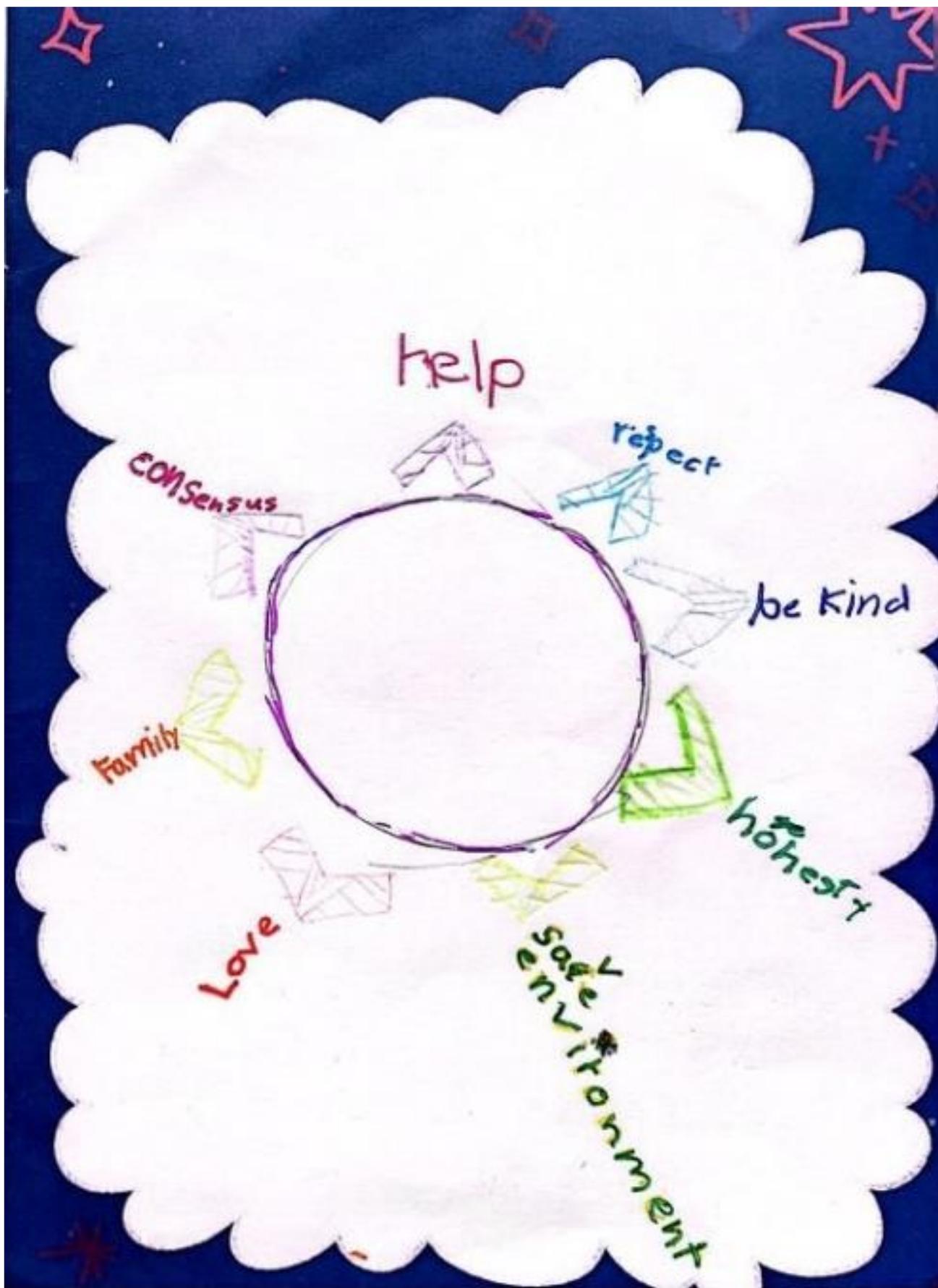
“In the future I will stop pollution.”

– 9-year-old, male, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African, Rodney Local Board

“But I also wish to be a great example for our upcoming brown people, for we lack soulful role models growing up...”

– 18-year-old, male, Pacific peoples, Manurewa Local Board

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau



- 7-year-old, female, Asian, Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board, Storybook response.

Key insights for council

Feedback from children and young people has led to four key insights about what council can do to improve the lives of children and young people, in ways that matter to them. These insights will inform the full review of I Am Auckland and recommendations arising from that.

Community spaces are critical to children and young people’s wellbeing

Children and young people talked a lot about how they interact with public spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, beaches, museums, and libraries. Children and young people told us that they want to be able to spend time in these public spaces, playing, meeting up with friends and connecting with their culture through activities and events. We heard this across all the different age groups and communities.

Public spaces and the way they are used by community can help to build a sense of belonging. However, it can also cause disconnection when they are unsafe, particularly when children and young people are trying to mask parts of their identities to lessen threats in public spaces. It can also cause disconnection when there is a lot of rubbish or when not everyone feels welcome.

Council plays a key role in the design and management of public spaces so there are opportunities to do that in ways that meet children and young people’s needs. This will contribute to creating a region where all children and young people feel safe and valued.

Children and young people need safe and reliable transport options

Children and young people consistently told us that they want safer, more reliable, and more frequent public transport. They want to get around easily and access all the opportunities this region has to offer. Better lighting and more staff at bus and train stations would help. Some told us they thought public transport should be free.

Children and young people want more dedicated bike paths and walkways, and for these to be clean and accessible. Children and young people shared that their worlds become smaller when they do not have good options for getting around.

Council can help children and young people to get around Auckland through providing safe, accessible and reliable transport options.

Children and young people need loving and accepting relationships and communities

Children and young people talked about the loving and caring relationships they have with others. These relationships are so important to all children and young people, but particularly for those who are going through challenging times. In these relationships, children and young people want their whole self to be recognised and accepted. Relationships give them a sense of belonging and the opportunity for them to explore their identities.

We heard that children and young people value having time and space to build connection with people like them. This included people from the same community or background or people with shared interests. They also wanted to connect with people from diverse backgrounds to learn more about other cultures and viewpoints. Some children and young people told us about the importance of good role models.

Council can support children and young people to build these relationships and connections by creating opportunities in our community spaces and by supporting events and programmes.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

We need to involve children and young people in the big decisions about the region

Many of the young people we spoke to wanted to have a greater say in the issues that affect them. Young people take on a lot of responsibility, through volunteering, translating for their family, being leaders in their community and caring for younger siblings or older family members. They want adults to recognise their ability to contribute and create opportunities for them to do so. Children and young people told us they see themselves playing a role in the change they want to see in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The ability of children and young people to contribute meaningfully was demonstrated through their participation in this engagement process. They were thoughtful and insightful about the region and whether it's meeting their needs and aspirations. We found that most children could tell us what they like and do not like about living in Auckland. We consistently received high quality responses from children aged 6 and over. Very few responses were coded as 'out of scope'. This shows that centring children and young people's needs enables meaningful participation.

This diverse engagement approach allowed us to learn things that we would not have otherwise known, such as the importance of clean and accessible public toilets. We also heard from young people that they value the environment, inclusion and belonging and want work in these areas to be prioritised.

Children and young people have big dreams for the future of Tāmaki Makaurau. This work demonstrated the importance of engaging children and young people in the decisions that impact them.

Appendix one: detailed methodology

This section describes the methodology in more detail.

Key partners

Our engagement with children and young people would not have happened without the support of the following organisations, who helped guide and facilitate our workshops with young Aucklanders:

- Blue Light
- New Settlers Family and Community Trust
- South Seas Healthcare
- The Hibiscus Coast Youth Centre
- The Manukau Urban Māori Authority
- The Village Collective
- The Y
- YES Disability
- Youthline.

Co-design

It was important to centre children and young people's needs in the engagement. To do this, we co-designed the engagement approach with seven young people. Young people were asked to be part of the co-design process by council staff.

The group met four times over eight weeks. Each meeting was two hours long. At the end of the process, the group recommended reaching young people through spoken word poetry workshops, on Instagram and through stalls.

In addition, the group designed the engagement questions based on the topic areas provided by council. The questions were reworded slightly following a test workshop with a different group of young people.

Workshops

The workshops were designed to target children and young people who may have faced barriers participating in the methods designed for the general population.

We particularly wanted to hear from rangatahi Māori, Pacific young people, young people with disabilities, rainbow young people and young former refugees and migrants. We also made sure to hear from young people who were not in education, employment or training.

We reached out to approximately 25 youth organisations to invite the rangatahi they worked with to take part in a workshop. We also invited rangatahi from Tāmaki Makaurau's 19 iwi. On reflection it would have been helpful to start building these relationships sooner, particularly with mana whenua.

We ran 14 workshops. Four of these were with children aged 8-12 and were run through after school programmes. The workshops were 1.5 hours in length and run by Action Education.

The remaining workshops were for young people aged 13-24 years. The workshops were two hours long and most were run by Action Education. Three workshops were run by council staff, where the organisation did not feel that spoken word poetry was the right option for their young people.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

The workshops explored children and young people’s feelings about living in Tāmaki Makaurau (including what they like and don’t like), what they would change about Tāmaki Makaurau, the challenges they face and their hopes and dreams for the future.

Stalls

At the stalls we asked children and young people three questions:

- What are your favourite things about where you live in Auckland?
- What are three things that you would change or add to Auckland?
- What issues or challenges are most important to you right now?

The post-cards also asked children for their age, ethnicity, gender and which suburb they lived in.



Age: _____ **Gender:** _____

Ethnicity: _____

What Suburb do you live in?

I consent to my response being used by Auckland Council



Write your answer here...

Children could respond to as many questions as they liked. We found that children aged 3-8 were more likely to respond to the first question, while those aged 16-24 were more likely to respond to the third question.

The stalls were mostly set up in public spaces, such as museums and night markets. We also went to the Transition Expo, the South Seas holiday programme and one of Auckland Live’s Pick n Mix events.

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Storybooks

Council staff wrote two storybooks, to give younger children the opportunity to share their views. The storybooks were illustrated by Katie Jones who at the time was a student at the Media Design School.

The books were distributed and collected through all of Auckland Council's libraries. We encouraged parents and caregivers to support their child when filling out the storybook. We also asked parents and caregivers to make notes of what their child had drawn.

Under the sea

This storybook was for children aged 3-5. This story was about Star the starfish, Pēpi the crab and their life under the sea. The child was asked to share their views with Star and Pēpi.

This is the framing we used to support children to share their views:

- Help Star and Pēpi by drawing a picture of your favourite things about where you live.
- Sometimes, life under the sea can be hard. Star and Pēpi want to help their sea family (whānau) by giving them a gift (taonga). Can you help Star and Pēpi decide what to give? Draw Star and Pēpi a picture of what you would give to help your family.

Out of this world

This storybook was for children aged 6-9. It took children through the story of Captain Astro and his space crew, who were travelling to Auckland and needed the child's help to understand what life is like in this part of planet earth.

This is the framing we used to support children to share their views:

- What is life in Auckland like? Can you tell us your favourite things about living there? Help our space crew by drawing or writing your favourite things about living in Auckland.
- If you had a magic wand and could change some things about Auckland, what would these be?
- Our space crew want to bring a gift (taonga) to your family (whānau) or school (kura) to help you when we come to Auckland. What do you think this should be? Tell our crew about what might help you or your family.

Empathy interviews

An earlier piece of research as part of the review of I Am Auckland noted data gaps for children and young people with disabilities and rainbow children and young people. We wanted to interview young people at the intersection of these two groups to better understand their experience of growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau. Some of the young people interviewed did not have a disability but were part of a marginalised ethnic group.

We conducted seven interviews with young people aged 16-24. Participants were selected by a council staff member who knew young people through a council programme. Two council staff members conducted the interviews. The interviews were conducted in-person or online, depending on the participants preference. The interviews were semi-structured.

We asked young people the following questions:

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

- Can you tell us about a place or places in Tāmaki Makaurau that you spend a lot of time?
- What do you wish more people knew about your community?
- Can you tell us about places that feel safe in Tāmaki?
- When you are moving around Tāmaki in your everyday life, do you feel like you can be your authentic self?
- Is there anything you would change about Tāmaki Makaurau?

Ethics process

For each of the engagement methods, we created a robust consent and recording process. These were reviewed by Auckland Council's Research Ethics Advisory Group.

For workshops, we provided an information sheet and consent form. Where participants were under 16 years, we also sought parental consent. Before the workshop began, we talked through how we would use any information collected and how we would record it. We captured the conversation by collecting all written material at the end of the workshop and by audio recording key parts of the discussion.

At the stalls, we provided information about the project and how we would use the responses from children and young people. Before participants filled out the postcards, we asked if they were okay to share their thoughts with us. There was a section on the postcard for participants to confirm their consent. All responses were pinned to a cork board, but they could be pinned with the answer facing inwards if the participant did not want members of the public to read their response.

The storybooks included a consent page for parents or caregivers to complete. Parents or caregivers were encouraged to complete the storybook with their child. There was space for children to share their name, gender, age, and ethnicity.

For each engagement method, we wanted to ensure children and young people were thanked for sharing their views. For the storybook, we drew 10 winners, who received a West Wave voucher for their family. For the workshops, we provided food and gave participants a \$30 prezzy card. At the stalls, we either provided food, drink (for example juice pouches, chocolate bars) or a small gift (for example bubbles, toy dinosaurs, notebooks).

Thematic analysis

Council staff familiarised themselves with the responses when typing them up/transcribing audio recordings and by doing a second read through of all responses. Themes were determined inductively in a workshop with staff who had been present during most of the engagements.

Two council staff did the coding. Once the responses were coded, staff reviewed and re-coded as necessary. Staff used coding to determine which topics were most important to children and young people.

Appendix 2: Demographics of engagement participants

We heard from diverse, young Aucklanders

The data we collected shows that a diverse range of children and young people shared their views. However, there are some important data collection limitations to note.

At the stalls, children and young people could answer as many questions as they liked, and their age, gender, ethnicity and local board area was recorded for each response. There were approximately 240 children and young people present at the stalls in total. However, we received 300 demographic responses, meaning about 60 participants answered more than one question.

It was also easier for children and young people to tell us their age and gender, than to tell us their ethnicity and which suburb they lived in. We found that children and young people did not have a good understanding of ethnicity, and this did not appear to increase with age. In the future we would provide options, rather than inviting participants to write their response with no prompt.

The ethnicity data we collected was re-categorised into seven ethnic groups; NZ European/Pākehā, Māori, Pacific peoples, European¹, Asian, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African and Other. This was done to protect the anonymity of participants.

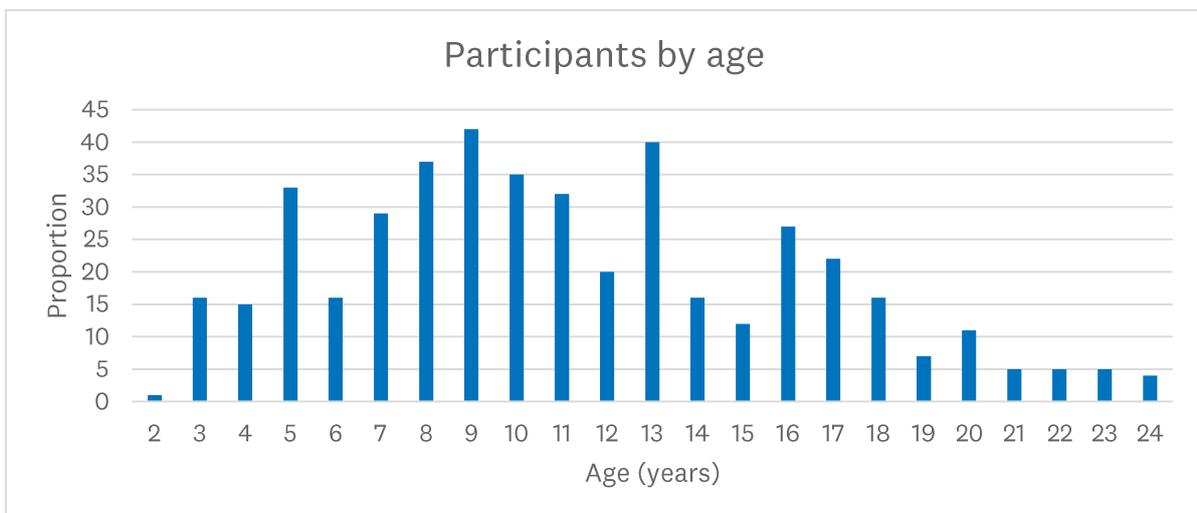
The suburb data was used to determine which local board area participants lived in.

We heard from children and young people aged 2-24 years

Across the methodologies used, 450 responses included the participant’s ages. Four responses were out of scope because the participants were older than 24.

Eight and nine-year-olds were given the most opportunities to participate and this is reflected in the data (they could participate through storybooks, at stalls and through spoken word poetry workshops).

Participation is lowest for those aged 21-24 years indicating that this group requires better targeting in the future.



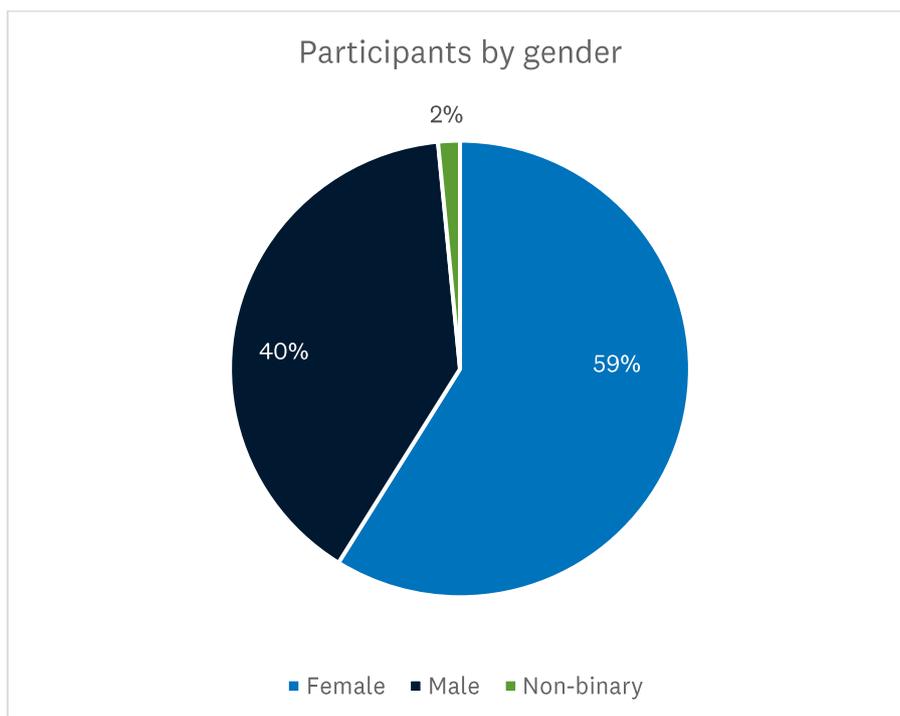
¹ This category identifies children and young people who wrote that they were born in Europe, as opposed to NZ European which identifies children and young people born in New Zealand who are of European origin.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

More females took part than males and non-binary young people

Across all methods, 456 responses included gender identity. Of these, 269 identified as female, 181 identified as male and 7 identified as non-binary. Participants could write more than one response.

The engagement methods were largely designed by females in the policy team and co-design group. There were also only females at some engagements, such as the stalls. This could be one explanation for why there was an over-representation of females. In addition, females tend to have higher research participation than males.



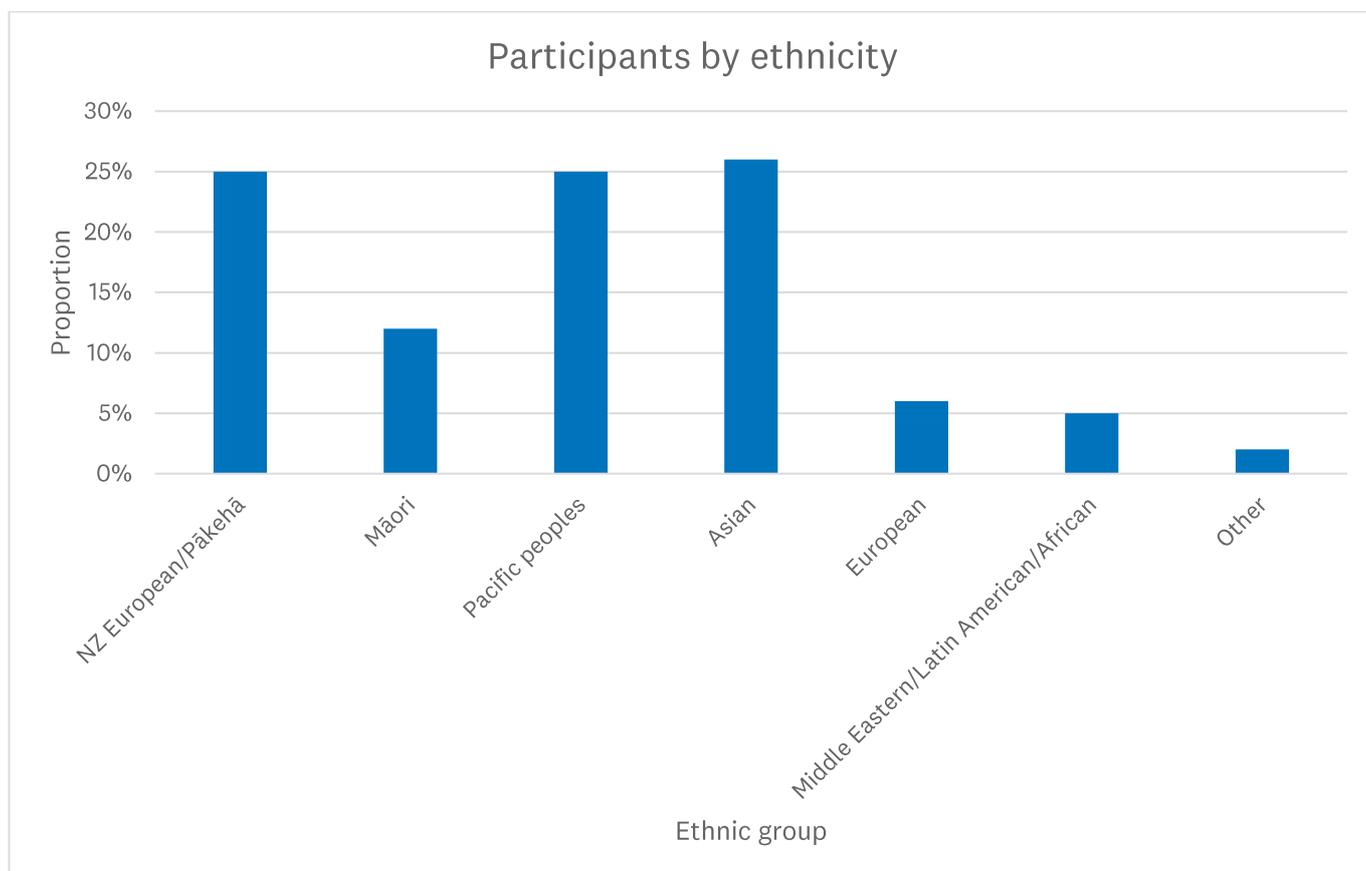
Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

Most ethnic groups were well-represented

Children and young people could write down as many ethnicities as applied to them. Eleven per cent wrote down two or more ethnicities.²

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori were under-represented across the engagement methods. In 2018, tamariki and rangatahi Māori made up 17 per cent of the population³, but only made up 12 per cent of participants in this engagement.

However, tamariki and rangatahi Māori were over-represented in workshops, with Māori making up 25 per cent of participants. This demonstrates that methods targeting the general child and youth population, such as stalls and storybooks, did not work as well for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.



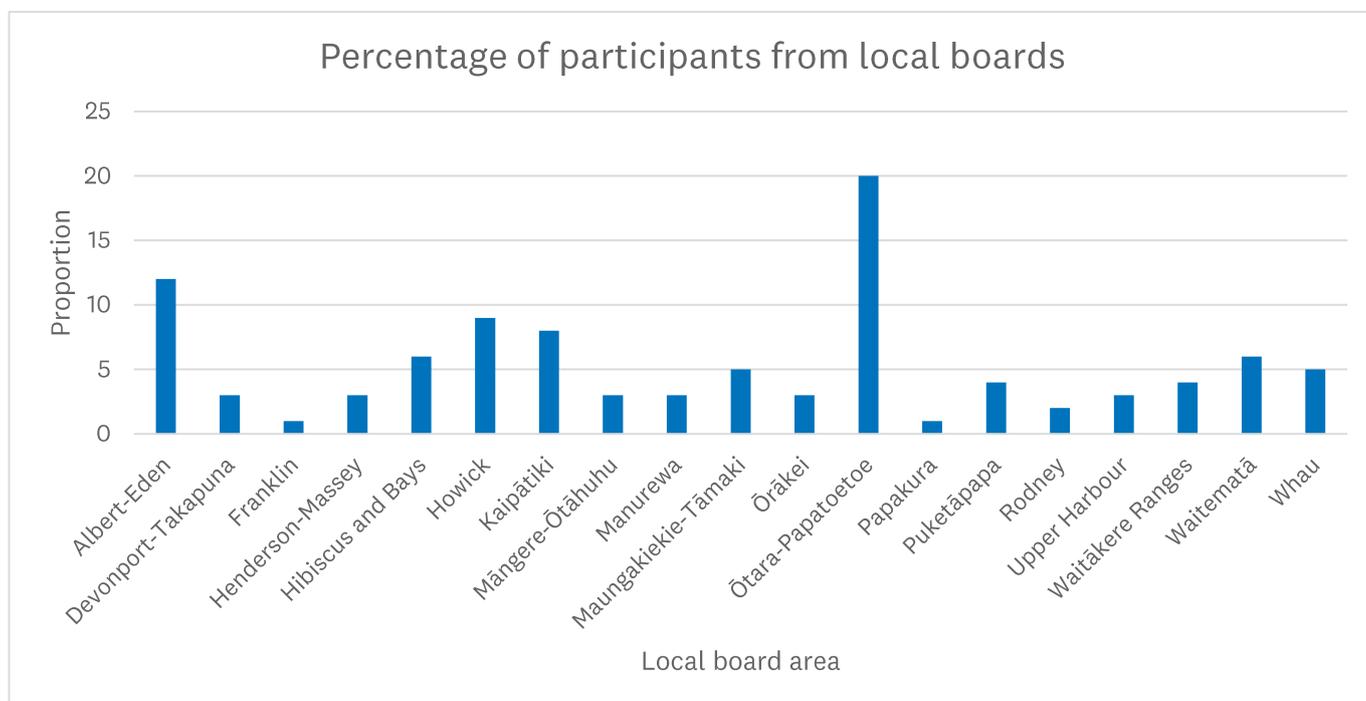
² Note that this was calculated after the data was re-categorised in the seven ethnic groupings. This number would be higher if it was calculated prior (for example participants who wrote that they were Samoan and Tongan are counted as one Pacific peoples identity). This was done to protect the anonymity of participants.

³ Census 2018.

Ngā reo o ngā tamariki me ngā taiohi o Tāmaki Makaurau

We spoke to children and young people from across the region

We spoke to children and young people from all local boards, except Waiheke and Aotea/Great Barrier. Ōtara-Papatoetoe was significantly over-represented, and Albert-Eden was over-represented when compared to 2018 Census data.⁴



⁴ Participant data was compared to the number of children and young people living in each local board area as at the 2018 Census.

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