



**Social Policy &
Parliamentary Unit**

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

Te Ope Whakaora

STATE of our COMMUNITIES 2022

**SUMMARY
DOCUMENT**

Blenheim

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We welcome your feedback

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BLenheim

SOOC22 is a snapshot that provides a platform to record and report the stories, challenges, solutions and aspirations of local communities. There were 115 surveys carried out with locals in Blenheim and three key informant interviews.

Blenheim's attributes: What do you like about Blenheim?

'Compact, connected to the environment with nice outdoor spaces in and around town.'

The **people (70%)** are **friendly (61%)**, **supportive (43%)**, easy going and **diverse (25%)**. Blenheim is **small (38%)** and compact—easy to **access (61%)** town, school and get around **safely (18%)**. Despite the size, there are many **facilities (21%)**, **services (16%)** and **businesses (26%)**. Many locals enjoyed the **weather (24%)**, **terrain (30%)** and local produce.

Blenheim's challenges: What are some challenges Blenheim faces?

'Working poor. Lots of alcoholism that goes unnoticed or viewed as the norm being a wine region.'

Housing (45%) challenges around social housing, the price of rental property, homelessness, the struggle to get into home ownership. The lack of economic diversification in the area means that many locals are 'working poor' who are confined to employment with **low wages (8%)**. Locals highlighted the rising **cost of living (37%)**, unaffordable housing and low wages are driving **poverty (18%)** levels. Locals also talked about **gangs (26%)**, **drugs (13%)** particularly meth and **crime (40%)**. Limited activities and training opportunities for **young people (45%)**, and many young people have no direction. Blenheim's **ageing population (9%)**, particularly in light of a **healthcare (16%)** system that is inadequate.

Blenheim's community investment: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in Blenheim what are three to five areas you would invest in and why?

'I would build a youth facility centred around a specific recreational pursuit...'

Affordable **housing (80%)**. **Healthcare (51%)** bring doctors and nurses into Blenheim; retaining them in quality employment to support the physical wellbeing of the community. Invest in activities, **events (16%)**, **facilities (21%)** and programmes for the community but particularly for **youth (27%)**, ensure there are options for young people when formal education doesn't work out for them.

Blenheim's aspiration: In five years' time, what changes would you like to see in Blenheim?

'Affordable housing. Wider training opportunities for our youth so they don't have to leave the area to study anything that's not a trade.'

A community where everybody is in a warm affordable and quality **home (75%)** and no one is homeless. Adequate **healthcare (41%)** services for the community, particularly for mental health support and for doctors. **Young people (19%)** specific initiatives, services, and facilities to set young people up to succeed.

The Blenheim community and my wellbeing: I can find support for my wellbeing in my community.

PHYSICAL	17%	47%	21%	10%	5%
MENTAL	13%	33%	22%	20%	9%
SPIRITUAL	21%	41%	17%	7%	12%
SOCIAL	24%	41%	24%	6%	
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A

Physical support in respect to food and fitness, however, healthcare and housing is poor. Mental and emotional support are also lacking in Blenheim; locals highlighted the challenges around wait times for accessing these supports. There are many churches that support spiritual wellbeing in the community. Family and friends are the key social supports, while other people highlighted challenges for newcomers to connect socially.