



Te Ope Whakaora

Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

STATE of our COMMUNITIES 2022

**Royal Oak
Westgate
Petone
Blenheim**

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September 2022*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State of Our Communities 2022 (SOOC22) is the fifth report released by the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU) of The Salvation Army (TSA). The background of the SOOC22 project is based on community surveys conducted in the early 1900s, when church members carried out surveys to identify various social and spiritual needs in their communities. Many of our modern social services were created as a result of these surveys. More than 150 years on, our hope remains the same—to care for people, transform lives and reform society through God, in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit’s power. SOOC22 is a snapshot that provides a platform to record and report the stories, challenges, solutions and aspirations of local communities.

Westgate is one of the fastest developing areas in north-west Auckland. Not too long ago, it was rural land. Royal Oak is a small central Auckland suburb nestled in amongst bigger suburbs and contains many of the amenities which these bigger suburbs depend on. Petone is located on the foreshore of the Wellington Harbour and is a coastal community with ingrained heritage and history. Our final community is Blenheim, the largest urban centre in Marlborough wine country. The differences between these communities are vast—from locality to size and economy. The one message consistent for all communities was the hope for each community to be safe, supported and connected. This report does not aim to compare the four communities, rather it is written as individual reports for each location.

SOOC22 conducted face-to-face and online surveys in these communities. There were 496 participants in the public surveys and 15 interviews with key informants across these communities. All the data was collated and analysed to show the key themes.

Housing continues to be the prevailing challenge facing all these communities, but for different reasons. Westgate is an up-and-coming commercial mecca, so the rapid development of town houses and upcoming buildings is inevitable. While all the communities wanted to build more houses, Westgate locals hoped that all the building would stop so the community could recuperate. Down in Blenheim, locals are hoping for the opposite, as the lack of housing stock means that getting into rental properties is a cut-throat process, whereby insufficient financial means leaves people out and perpetuates inequality in the community. Royal Oak and Petone locals also

highlighted housing affordability in light of the current cost-of-living crisis.

All communities discussed housing affordability, access to housing and quality of housing. These create a crux of instability for many, which has resulted in transient communities. Instability for people, particularly children and youth, is detrimental to wellbeing and development. When communities were asked about investments and aspirations, young people were at the forefront. For Petone and Royal Oak, these were in regard to support and facilities for young people that are lacking in the community. While Blenheim and Westgate hope to give young people in their community purpose and direction, they also hope to direct young people away from anti-social behaviours and gangs.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to widen the divide of the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in these communities. In Blenheim, for example, locals talked about being dependent on an industry that pays low wages. In Petone, many of the industries that employed locals are no longer in the community. Westgate’s location means there are limited employment opportunities beyond the immediate commercial retail for locals. However, in light of the challenges these communities are facing, many identified key areas to financially support or specific initiatives to develop; for example, community gardens, hiring and retaining medical staff to serve the community and development of community hubs and green spaces, to name a few.

The different communities also discussed some complex and emerging issues. Petone is a coastal settlement suburb and is at risk of sea level rise; this is concerning for homeowners and particularly for the future of the community. In Marlborough, the wine industry is very much ingrained into its fabric, but the lack of economic diversification, low wages, inequality and alcoholism has locals questioning whether there needs to be a new way forward.

In addition to attributes, challenges and solutions, we asked locals if their communities support their wellbeing—physical, mental and emotional, spiritual and social—as outlined in *Te Whare Tapa Whā*¹ (by Professor Tā Mason Durie). Many of these communities either agreed or strongly agreed that these supports are not always found in professional services, but are in their friendships and community interactions. Notably, locals who have lived in these locations for the longest periods of time were more likely to feel supported in and by their community.

In light of the aspirations expressed in the community surveys, another finding was that communities don't always function in the rigidity of government or local councils. Communities together are able to deliver and serve the needs of their own. In the face of rapid development, intensification and gentrification, people noted that community cohesion and connectedness was integral to the wellbeing of the community and individuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to say thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our surveys, either by stopping to talk to our staff/volunteers or by completing our survey online. We endeavour to ensure that the attributes, challenges, ideas and aspirations of your local communities continue to be heard and platformed.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our community key informants. Your valuable insight into your community has helped us add another dimension to the voices of your communities.

- Tony Coughlan, Principal, Royal Oak Intermediate School
- Pastor Hamish Baxter, Pastoral Leader, Royal Oak Baptist
- Michael Van Brink, Store Manager, PAK'nSAVE Royal Oak
- Jane Sherard, Chair, Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara Board co-governance with Auckland City Council
- Linda Cooper, Councillor, Auckland City Council
- Jenny Marshall, Kaiawhina, Massey High School
- Tolita Noel-Gosche, School Liaison Advisor, Te Whānau O Waipareira
- Senior Constable Patrick Ikuvalu Nofo'akifolau, Pacific Peoples Community Relations Officer, Waitemata District
- Tui Lewis, Deputy Mayor, Hutt City Council
- Pam Hanna, Chair, Petone Community Board
- Kevin Goldsbury, Director, Ignite Sport
- Vita Vaka, Director, Fua Creative
- Mary-Jeanne Lynch, Principal, Marlborough Girls College
- Senior Constable Russ Smith (MNZM), Prevention Group, New Zealand Police
- (One person preferred to remain anonymous)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SALVATION ARMY CENTRES AND CORPS WHO PARTNERED WITH US IN THIS PROJECT:

- Royal Oak Community Ministries
- Westgate Community Ministries
- Petone Corps
- Blenheim Community Ministries.

METHODOLOGY

Every year SPPU releases the State of the Nation which is a macro-level report that tracks the social progress of our nation. 'Navigating the Rapids—Whakatere Ana I Ngā Tere' was the fifteenth State of the Nation report. SOOC22 is a micro-level report that focuses on the realities and social progress of a small sample of local communities.

The key purposes of SOOC22 are:

- 1 to collate and provide a platform for local communities to share their stories, their challenges, solutions and aspirations
- 2 to create opportunities for TSA to engage with the wider communities where we serve
- 3 to identify areas of need in communities that are not being met
- 4 to advocate nationally for the local challenges of these communities.

Our methodology for this project was straightforward and simple: we aimed to collate stories from local communities without making interviews too long or complicated. Local communities were defined as residents, or those who work in Royal Oak, Westgate, Petone and Blenheim.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question that frames SOOC22 is: **'What are the experiences, perceptions, solutions and aspirations of local communities in New Zealand?'**

To answer this question, SOOC22 survey was composed of five key questions.

Experiential: What do you like about your local community?

Perception: What are some of the challenges your community faces?

Reality: Does my community supporting my wellbeing?

*I can find support for my **physical wellbeing** in my community, eg, health, food, housing.*

*I can find support for my **mental and emotional wellbeing** in my community, eg, anxiety, happiness, stress.*

*I can find support for my **spiritual wellbeing** in my community, eg, faith, meditation.*

*I can find support for my **social wellbeing** in my community, eg, friends, family, community.*

Solutions: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in your community, what are three to five areas you would invest it in and why?

Aspirations: In five years' time what changes would you like to see in your community?

SELECTION OF COMMUNITIES

SOOC is based in locations where there are established Salvation Army corps (churches), Family Stores or social services. SOOC22 aimed to provide a platform for local communities to voice their challenges and aspirations. The communities for SOOC22 are Royal Oak, Westgate, Petone and Blenheim. The geographical areas of these communities are defined by Statistical Area 2 in 2022, also shown in **Appendix 1**.

DATA COLLECTION

30 May to 3 July 2022

FACE TO FACE

Surveys were carried out by TSA staff and volunteers.

Royal Oak: The Warehouse, Royal Oak

Westgate: Te Manawa; PAK’nSAVE, Westgate

Petone: Petone Community Library

Blenheim: No face-to-face surveys due to Covid-19 isolation of staff and volunteers.

ONLINE SURVEYS

A link to an online version of the survey (SurveyMonkey) was posted on the SPPU Facebook page. There were four posts created for the four different locations. An advertisement promoting these Facebook posts for the survey was created and promoted from 30 May to 3 July 2022. These advertisements were location targeted; Facebook allows advertisements to be targeted to specific geographic areas of interest.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

These were conducted with individuals who work and live in the targeted communities. These interviews were conducted face to face, over the phone or through video conferencing (Zoom/Microsoft Teams). Key informants were identified through local community networks or recommendations from local Salvation Army staff. The purpose of these interviews was to give key informants an opportunity to discuss at length important issues and ideas for their communities within a longer timeframe than the public face-to-face surveys.

PUBLIC DATA

Public data for SOOC22 was taken from DOT Loves Data and other government public databases.

ANALYSIS

All community surveys and key informant interviews were manually entered into SurveyMonkey. The survey results were exported from SurveyMonkey as a Microsoft Excel file and imported into Atlas.ti. SOOC22 utilised Atlas.ti to colour code and thematically analysed the responses, as shown by Scherman and Smit (2021).² The key themes that emerged for each question were used to summarise and present the experiences, perceptions and aspirations of each local community.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

There were a total of 496 surveys carried out with the public for SOOC22 across all four locations and 15 key informant interviews. The demographics and breakdown of the participants are shown in the figures below (and over page).

Table 1

	Participants	Key Informants
Blenheim	115	3
Royal Oak	123	3
Petone	167	4
Westgate	91	5

Figure 1: Age of survey participants

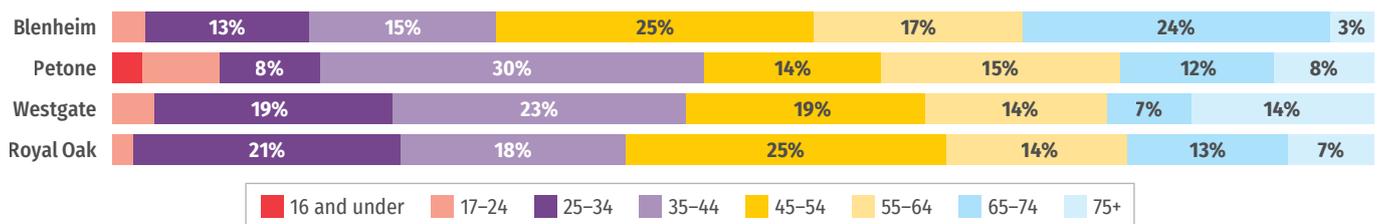


Figure 2: Ethnicity of survey participants

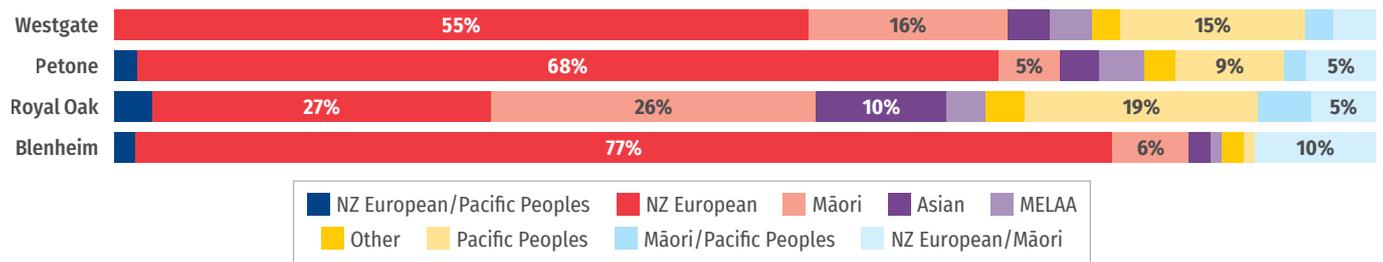
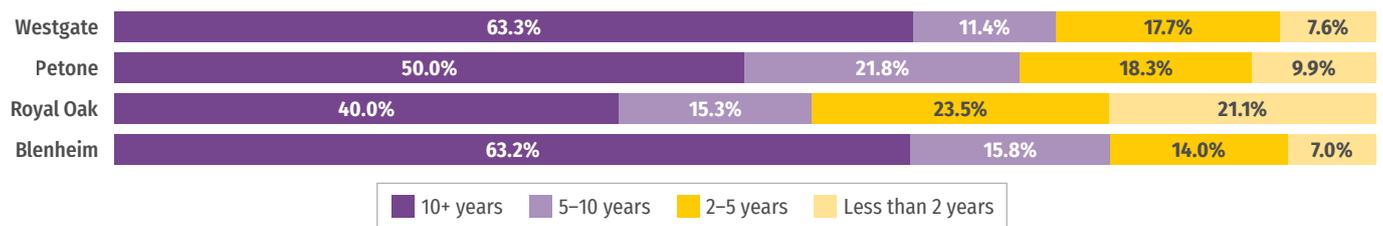


Figure 3: Length of stay in their community



SCOPE OF STATE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

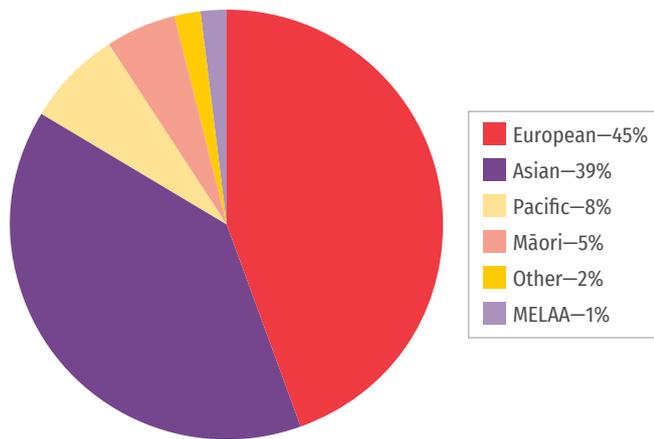
SOOC22 is written as four reports on the four communities, summarising the key themes from the surveys. Each community report follows the format below.

- Brief introduction/background to the community— these are taken from StatsNZ 2018 Place Summaries³
- The Salvation Army in your community— highlighting the local Sallies and the area
- Survey Results—Community attributes and community challenges
 - brief overview of key themes
 - key quotes (key quotes are attributed to respondent through age group, ethnicity, length of residence in community)
 - percentage attributed to topic discussed by community
- Survey results—My community and my wellbeing
- Public data on key areas highlighted in the survey results
- Survey results—Community investment and community aspirations
 - brief overview of key themes
 - key quotes (key quotes are attributed to respondent through age group, ethnicity, length of residency in community)
 - percentage attributed to topic discussed by community
- Summary for community

ROYAL OAK,⁴ AUCKLAND

Royal Oak, located in central Auckland, covers 1.45km² and has an estimated population of 6217. Royal Oak is surrounded by larger suburbs, such as Onehunga, Epsom and Mt Roskill. Although a small suburb, Royal Oak is located at the south entrance of Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill. It has the Royal Oak Mall and has one of only two PAK’nSAVE supermarkets in central Auckland.

Figure 4: Ethnicity and age breakdown for Royal Oak, Auckland



The Royal Oak community is predominantly European (49%) and Asian (43%) ethnicities, as shown in **Figure 4**. According to StatsNZ, over 70 percent of locals have lived in the community for more than five years. The median age for the Royal Oak Community is 33 years old and this has gradually increased over the years. Royal Oak has a high proportion of 20- to 35-year-olds who are potentially young professionals or young families, given the high percentage of children shown in **Figure 4**. Additionally, the proportion of those aged 60 to 85+ years old in Royal Oak is significantly higher in comparison with the general Auckland population as Royal Oak has many aged-care homes.

THE SALVATION ARMY IN ROYAL OAK⁵

Our main focus at Royal Oak Community Ministries is to connect with the community and create a mana-enhancing environment for our whānau to feel welcomed; working together as a team ‘He Waka Eke Noa’ to meet our mission statement of ‘caring for people, transforming lives and

reforming society by God’s power’. Part of our centre plan for implementing this is ‘Tea and Talanoa’, a space for the community to pop in, have a hot drink and chat with staff. We are currently building a Pātaka Kai Cupboard (food pantry) which will provide food for those in the community who need food support. Pātaka Kai in our community will create an aspect of independence and value.

We aim to support those who come through our main doors with the following wraparound services.

Wellbeing Support:

- needs-based assessment to identify the areas in which we can help
- food parcel assistance
- Christmas Appeal (250 clients)
- Family Store grants

Financial Mentors:

The team consists of four trained advisors who offer one-on-one consultations and provide advice/assist with financial advocacy.

Transitional Housing:

The Transitional Housing programme provides safe short-term accommodation for whānau in need for up to 12 weeks, all while being supported with wraparound in-house services.

Social work support:

Our team of registered social workers provide individual assessments and case work as well as advocacy and referrals.

Positive Lifestyle Programme/Life Skills:

A 10-week programme created to help educate our communities and society by teaching our people

key life skills. Also working together to create a safe and supportive environment and grow in areas that have been difficult for people. Childcare services are available to those attending the Positive Lifestyle Programme.

Youth team:

Located in Roskill South a team of professional youth workers who offer a variety of programmes for a large number of youth to develop the skills and confidence to achieve their goals.

—Anita Dadzie, Community Ministries administrator and wellbeing worker

ROYAL OAK’S ATTRIBUTES: What do you like about Royal Oak?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Royal Oak locals—the **people (73%)**. Locals described their community as **supportive (39%)**, generous, **friendly (35%)**, and **diverse (18%)**. **Accessibility (68%)** was also a key attribute, with locals highlighting: access to **businesses (48%)** [local mall, PAK’nSAVE, cafés]; local schools; other areas in Auckland, access to the motorway and other physical attributes, such as Maungakiekie. Locals also highlighted that they felt **safe (27%)** in their community.

KEY INFORMANTS

Royal Oak has a friendly, diverse and supportive community. People look after each other. There are some great schools, local parks, recreational areas and the lagoon is close. Location is central which makes it easy for locals to get to places on public transport.

Table 2:

	28%	25%	22%	22%	15%	15%	10%	13%
	Size	Location	Cafés and restaurants	Family	Public transport	Schools	Peaceful	Parks, etc
17-24 YEARS	‘...I feel safe enough, people are nice when out for walks, everything is close to each other—shopping stores, etc.’							
25-34 YEARS	‘Everyone is there to help when you’re in need and they can send you to the right people that can help.’							
35-44 YEARS	‘Easy access to facilities, library and shops with my car—especially the motorway.’							
45-54 YEARS	‘It’s got everything you need to be able to shop local. Walking distance to eateries and the park. It is also central to travel to other parts of Auckland.’							
55-64 YEARS	‘Friendly culture and family orientated.’							
65-74 YEARS	‘Variety [businesses], well-established, safe.’							
75+ YEARS	‘People are down-to-earth.’							

ROYAL OAK’S CHALLENGES: What are some challenges that Royal Oak faces?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Many of the key issues that locals shared were primarily related to the **cost of living (53%)**. Locals highlighted the **cost of food (12%)** and **petrol (10%)** but particularly the **cost of housing (49%)** as challenges they or others in their community were facing. A key issue that locals are facing is in relation to **crime (45%)**—locals highlighted that not only is the frequency of crime increasing but also the nature of crime is becoming more serious. Key issues related to crime that locals highlighted were **gangs (12%)**, **theft (11%)**, **drugs (13%)** and violence. **Traffic (30%)** was also a key issue for many, especially the build-up of traffic around the central Royal Oak roundabout.

KEY INFORMANTS

Increasing levels of crime—the types of crimes being committed are becoming more serious, offenders are likely on drugs, suffering from mental health issues or both. ‘In 2016/2017 we would have two to three shoplifters a week—now we have two to three shoplifters a day.’ The police won’t do anything about it—so shoplifters just get trespassed. The cost of housing is an underlying factor of many of the challenges locals are facing. Flow-on effects of unaffordable housing, price of petrol and the price of food make the overall cost of living unaffordable. There are also many reports of overcrowding, and many children are getting sick as a result. In addition to the physical challenges, isolation in the community continues to increase. Long-time homeowners have left, and the community is becoming more transient. This makes it difficult to establish connections.

Table 3:

	20% Poverty	16% Youth	12% Business	12% Healthcare	12% Homeless	10% Public transport	10% Jobs
<2 YEARS	<i>‘Hard to live considering price of food and living. Feel trapped by the lack of finance. Feeling depressed. Life is hard.’</i>						
2–5 YEARS	<i>‘Homelessness and poverty. I see a distinct difference between those who have enough and those who do not.’</i>						
5–10 YEARS	<i>‘Increase of crime recently and also struggling financially with living cost.’</i> <i>‘House prices are ridiculous. There are a lot of ‘ghost houses’ ... from my house I can see five ghost houses, three of them I know have overseas owners.’</i>						
10+ YEARS	<i>‘Gentrification and the “haves” and “have-nots” split.’</i> <i>‘There is now a funding crisis in aged care that has been years in the making. Sadly, funding for aged care providers like ours is now so inadequate that several facilities across New Zealand are closing their doors—rather than compromise quality standards.’</i>						

Table 4: The Royal Oak community and my wellbeing

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A
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**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY PHYSICAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, HEALTH, FOOD, HOUSING)**

<p>37% <i>'I can, I'm not sure about other people being able to.'</i></p>	<p>42% <i>'I go to a local physiotherapist in Royal Oak and am very pleased. Pak'nSAVE and the Mall is good.'</i></p>	<p>17% <i>'House prices are unaffordable.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There is access to Maungakiekie, the lagoon and other fitness activities in Royal Oak. There is food support for locals who need it. Housing is the issue here: rent is unaffordable, and families are often struggling so there is a growing level of poverty even on a good income. There are many senior settlements in Royal Oak who are also struggling with the cost of living.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, ANXIETY, HAPPINESS, STRESS)**

<p>24% <i>'I'm able to get support at my doctors.'</i></p>	<p>37% <i>'I relieve my stress by getting support from the Sallies.'</i></p>	<p>18% <i>'I do have anxiety—I've never really looked for support for this.'</i></p>	<p>14% <i>'This type of support is hard to access anywhere in my experience.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'Stop lockdowns and restrictions, this impacts wellbeing.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: All support systems are stretched—there are services in Royal Oak but the (mental health) system has been poorly served for a long time so it is trying to catch up with the overwhelming needs of the community. Lockdown and Covid restrictions have also played a role in the mental and emotional wellbeing of the community. Services are not capable with keeping up with the community's needs.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SPIRITUAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FAITH, MEDITATION)**

<p>30% <i>'Church is very important—there are a few churches here.'</i></p>	<p>35% <i>'I have a good church community.'</i></p>	<p>22% <i>'We are non-denominational. We don't belong to a church community locally.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'Don't have any spiritual needs.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There are many faith-based groups in Royal Oak—different churches like Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist and Anglican. Also, churches for various ethnicities. There is also yoga in Cornwall Park. Some locals feel spiritual support when they are in nature, which is good when there is Maungakiekie.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SOCIAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FRIENDS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY)**

<p>29% <i>'Family live here in the community.'</i></p>	<p>38% <i>'I have social supports but not within my community.'</i></p>	<p>23% <i>'Difficult to connect—particularly for seniors.'</i></p>	<p>8% <i>'There's support here for social wellbeing—despite that it's getting more difficult to make connections.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There are activities like Christmas lights and outdoor movie nights to support social wellbeing. Even with neighbours reaching out more, often it's getting harder to connect. The community is transient, and the density of housing makes it harder to foster social connections. Society is becoming more individualistic, this impacts social wellbeing. Local schools engage with local retirement homes, which is good for the social wellbeing of the community.

THE STATE OF ROYAL OAK

Table 5: Cost and quality of housing in Royal Oak⁶

	East		West			East		West	
Home ownership (2018)	25%	▼ 31%	31%	▼ 2.8%	Years to save for a deposit (Jul 2022)	20	▼ 1.8%	23	▼ 3.3%
Median property value (Jul 2022)	1.2M	▼ 1.8	\$1.8M	▼ 3.3%	Purchasing affordability (Jul 2022)	16%	▼ 1.8%	18%	
Median rent (Jun 2022)	\$578	▲ 0.7%	\$696	▲ 8.3%	Rental affordability (Jul 2022)	33%	-	32%	-
Median household income (2022)	\$91K	-	\$114K	-	Overcrowding (2018)	0.659			
Damp homes (2018)	4%		3%		Mouldy homes (2018)	5%		5%	

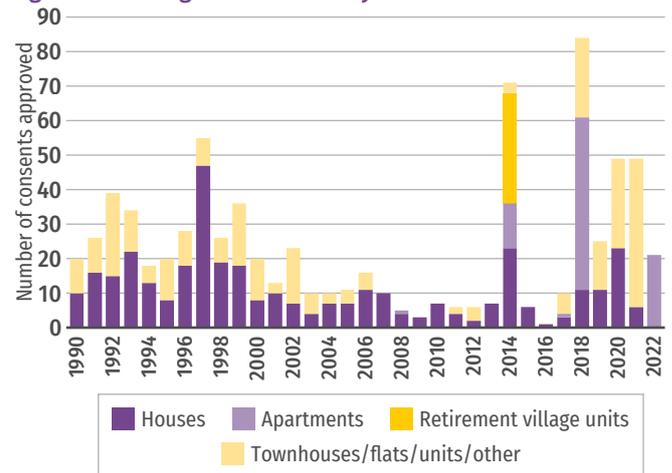
Key | Compare, 2013 Trending up: ▲ Trending down: ▼ Improving Worsening No Change

HOUSING

In 2018, there were 2022 dwellings in Royal Oak—since 2018, there have been 144 consents for new residential construction, as shown in **Figure 5**.⁷ Overall, with a land area of 1.45km², there are 1.5 dwelling every m². The percentage of homeowners in Royal Oak declined in 2018 (**Table 5**); however, the number of rentals in 2022 (as indicated by bond data)⁸ showed bonds have remained relatively unchanged since 2018. The consents for new builds rapidly increased in 2018, with 30 percent of consents for new construction in Royal Oak being issued in the last five years. This suggests home ownership would have increased again compared with 2018. **Table 5** also shows that the level of overcrowding (calculated as equivalised crowding index) in Royal Oak is slightly higher than the national average. Overcrowding can often indicate unaffordable housing and financial hardship and is often associated with poorer health outcomes.

The median household income across the Royal Oak area is between \$91,000 to \$114,000, and despite having a median household income that is higher than the national average, it will still take over two decades for Royal Oak locals to save a deposit to buy in their own community at the current cost of housing.

Figure 5: Building consents for Royal Oak



POVERTY

Table 6⁹ shows the welfare benefit levels in Royal Oak. Royal Oak has a deprivation index of 3—this indicates that socio-economic deprivation levels in the area are low. The benefit rates for locals in Royal Oak are half the national rate. Despite higher incomes and low deprivation index rating, there is still a minority in the community that are beneficiaries.

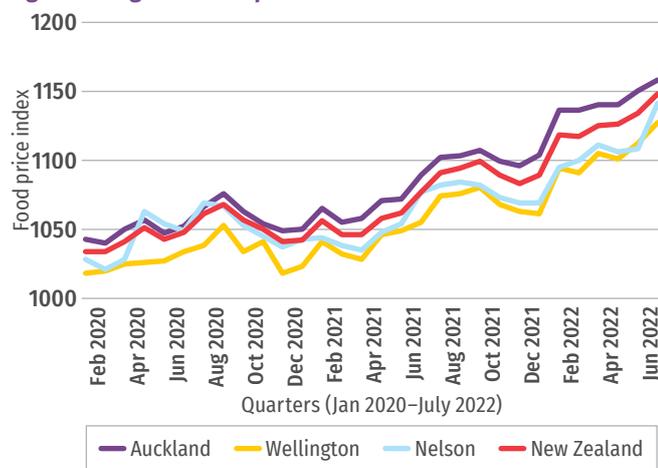
Figure 6¹⁰ looks at the food price index which measures the changes in prices that households pay

for food. Aucklanders are paying 11 percent more for food than they did in January 2020. Aucklanders are also paying more for food in comparison with the rest of the country.

Table 6: Welfare Benefit rate for Royal Oak

	Royal Oak	NZ
Sole Parent Support rate	0.75%	2.29%
Job Seeker Support rate	3.29%	5.63%
Means tested benefit rate	1.49%	3.03%

Figure 6: Regional food price index



CRIME

The crime rate is defined as the average number of victimisations per 10,000 population over the last 12 months. The crime rate (67.82) for Royal Oak has been increasing since 2017 and is higher than the national crime rate (36.90) as shown in **Figure 7**.¹¹ Between August 2019 to June 2022, there were 1961 offences reported to police in Royal Oak. Sixty-five percent of crime in Royal Oak is for burglary, theft, and theft of motor vehicles.

The issues related to traffic for Royal Oak are also shown by looking at Police activity in the area. Police activity is broken down into three primary categories: crime, non-crime, and activity. Police respond to 73.1 percent of ‘non-crime’ in Royal Oak that are traffic-related offences, such as vehicle collisions or persons acting suspiciously. **Figure 8**¹² shows the number of victimisations of people

who have allegedly experienced crime in Royal Oak over the past five years. Since 2017, the number of people victimised has increased by 40 percent. The significant increases have all occurred post-June 2020. The primary reason for victimisation is theft or burglary. Further analysis is needed to identify whether these trends are related to Covid-19.

Figure 7: Crime rate for Royal Oak compared to NZ

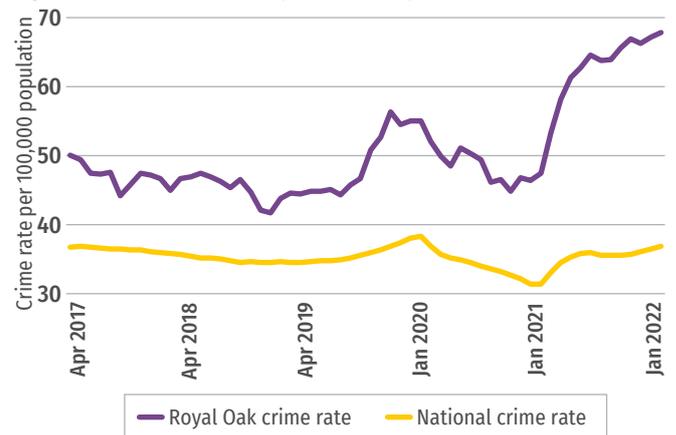


Figure 8: The number of victimisations in Royal Oak

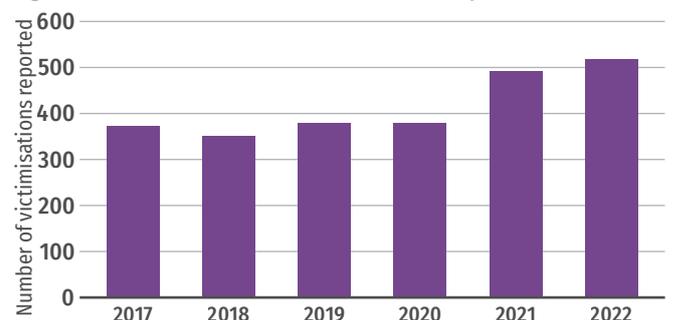
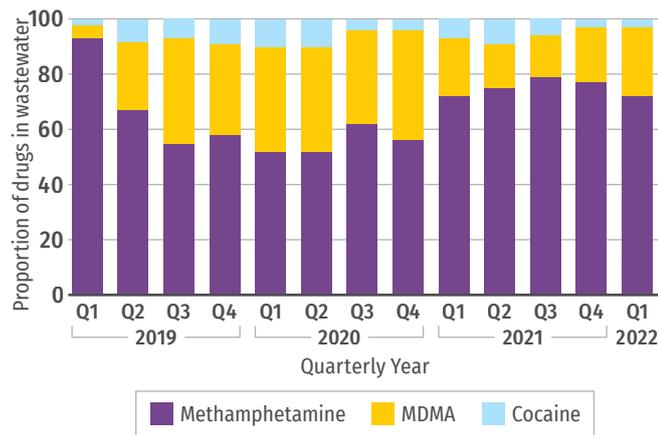


Figure 9¹³ looks at Police’s National Wastewater Testing Programme which measures the proportion of drugs in Auckland Central’s wastewater. Methamphetamine (meth) continues to be the primary drug of use in Auckland Central. According to the latest report (January to March 2022), 15.5kg of meth was consumed per week across New Zealand—almost half (7.22kg) of which was consumed in the Auckland region. The estimated cost of 15.5kgs of meth is \$17.2 million in social harm and \$7.8 million in distribution. Although Royal Oak only constitutes a small fraction of Auckland Central, this figure provides an overview of drug usage in the region.

Figure 9: Police National Wastewater Testing Programme for Central Auckland (2019–2022)



INVESTING IN ROYAL OAK: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in Royal Oak, what are three to five areas you would invest it in and why?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Locals would invest in **housing (42%)**. Locals wanted to ensure social housing was available, as well as addressing the quality and cost of rental properties. Housing is unaffordable for locals. They reported many families living in overcrowded situations and in financial hardship. Locals would invest in making **healthcare (36%)** accessible—physical healthcare

and mental health support, such as counselling and addictions support. Many of the locals would invest in initiatives or supports for children and youth, either through the schools or the development of a community hub. Overall, many of the investments the community hoped to see were around a more connected community.

Table 6:

26% Food	22% Traffic	21% Community	21% Youth and Children	21% Infrastructure
1 'Counselling services for general wellbeing for the community.'			9 'Youth programmes to support young people and ensure they have support during key development stages. Increased availability of mental healthcare for young people. Build a Youth Hub.'	
2 'Get people off drugs. Use money from gangs to rehabilitate and support drug addicts.'			10 'Better roundabout.'	
3 'Social housing: housing that is accessible, healthy and affordable.'			11 'Increase safer cycle and walking paths.'	
4 'Invest in schools, eg, fund a full-time nurse, lunches in schools.'			12 'Invest in a holistic community-based health centre focusing on physical and mental wellbeing.'	
5 'Healthcare and dental care accessible to and affordable for everyone.'			13 'Support services, like Everybody Eats, that focus on salvaging ingredients for creating affordable meals. Create/support community edible gardens, sustainable food networks.'	
6 'Beautify the Royal Oak Mall.'			14 'Invest and equip local aged-care services in the community.'	
7 'Healthy and affordable rental homes—support mum and dad investors to ensure rental properties in Royal Oak are comfortable, warm and dry homes.'			15 'Donate to charities: The Salvation Army, Red Cross, Blind Foundation, KidsCan, City Mission.'	
8 'Community hub to bring community together. Foster connections in the community.'				

KEY INFORMANTS

- 1 Invest in counselling services, mostly for youth and seniors. The mental health system is stretched, and these supports are often at capacity. Locals need people to walk alongside them, not drop them after a few sessions.
- 2 Housing needs to be made accessible and affordable for the community.
- 3 Invest and support frontline services: police, firefighters and ambulance. If you ring police for help, they will show up hours later, if at all.
- 4 Making sure the community is safe—increasing levels of crime and anti-social behaviours impacts the morale of the community.
- 5 Significant investment in addictions treatment for people. Punitive measures taken against drug dealers and those pushing drugs into our community.
- 6 Make public transport free for everyone.
- 7 Addressing food insecurity in the community that is mana-enhancing.
- 8 Significant investment in healthcare services: doctors, dental and mental health.

ROYAL OAK ASPIRATIONS: In five years' time, what changes would you like to see in your community?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Locals would like to see a healthy, **connected (11%)** and **safer community (23%)**. At the same time, locals highlighted the need for affordable **housing (55%)**. However, the biggest threat to a connected community was the current intensification of housing. Locals hoped this intensification would settle down. Looking to the future, locals were hoping that Royal Oak would be a **community (32%)** that was building up and investing in **future generations (29%)**.

KEY INFORMANTS

The growing density of our housing situation; single houses are disappearing, and multiple story houses are going up in their place. I hope we can find a way to invigorate a sense of community in this place.' Teaching children would go beyond reading and writing to also learn about shares, banks and insurance. This would better equip our children for the future and hopefully be able to break dependency and build resilience. Housing would be more affordable; there would be less inequity and better healthcare services for the community.

Table 7:

	27%	24%	18%	18%	18%	15%	15%	15%
	Parks, etc	Traffic	Public transport	Healthcare	Infrastructure	Schools	Youth	Jobs
25-34 YEARS	<p><i>'More playgrounds, skate park, tree activity for kids to keep them out of gangs and off the street.'</i></p> <p><i>'Learning and socialising with our community. Youth being actively social with community events.'</i></p>							
45-54 YEARS	<p><i>'Everybody getting along with each other—doesn't matter what culture you are from. Pacific peoples.'</i></p> <p><i>'More green spaces and not too many housing developments that ruin the streetscape.'</i></p> <p><i>'Less homelessness. High wages for all. More affordable housing.'</i></p> <p><i>'Holistic healthcare and medical help for homeless and struggling.'</i></p>							
55-64 YEARS	<p><i>'Better living standards and more children achieving education for their future. Our country will be stronger and skilful if we invest in our kids.'</i></p> <p><i>'I would hope that we become a bit more visible. And instead of being just the roundabout that people move through, we become an area that attracts people that bring life and service to people that live here.'</i></p>							

SUMMARY

From a distance, suburbs in central Auckland, such as Royal Oak and its neighbouring suburbs of Epsom and Greenlane, are viewed as affluent. The median household income in Royal Oak is significantly higher than the national median income. Financial income may alleviate some areas of material need, but it does not completely free communities from challenges.

Royal Oak is a small suburb in a great location—close proximity to central Auckland and to the South-Western Auckland Motorway. It is located at the entrance of Maungakiekie and just up the road from the Onehunga Lagoon. Locals like that Royal Oak has ample businesses and various food outlets and eateries.

Some of the key challenges locals raised were safety and security. Royal Oak is a family friendly suburb with many young families. Its locality means that locals have access to some great schools. However, the increasing levels of crime, particularly theft, concerns locals. Locals discussed how increasing

poverty levels often precede increasing levels of crime. Food prices have increased, the cost of housing is unaffordable and many locals discussed the cost of petrol. Also, homelessness and beggars are more visible in the community.

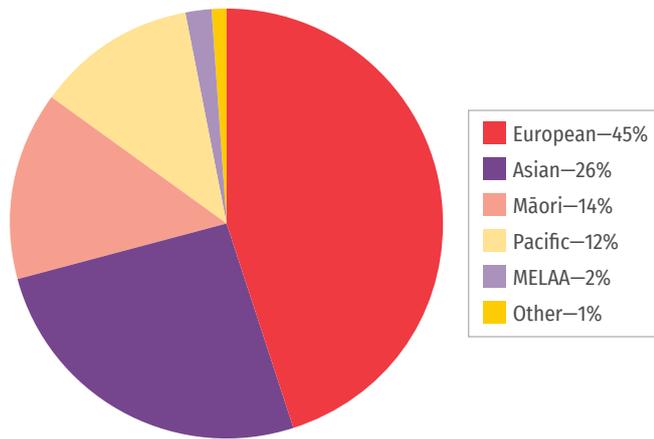
Addressing these levels of poverty was a key focus when locals discussed investment, such as creating a communal garden for the community to address food hardship or building a Pātaka Kai Cupboard. Other solutions the community discussed were investment in senior care, a community hub with activities for young people and investing in local healthcare and mental health services.

In the future, people in Royal Oak just want a community that is connected and supportive of each other. Locals acknowledge this may become more difficult with the intensification of housing, but with more community activities and events, a cohesive and resilient Royal Oak community is achievable.

WESTGATE, AUCKLAND

Westgate is located north-west of Auckland and covers an area of 1.86km². Westgate is nestled along the North-Western Motorway and surrounded by the existing and emergent suburbs of Massey, West Harbour, Hobsonville and Whenuapai. Westgate has more than 400,000 square metres of retail and is the primary service area for the surrounding suburbs.

Figure 10: Ethnicity and age breakdown for Westgate, Auckland



The Westgate community is predominantly European (52%) followed by Asian (31%), as shown in **Figure 10**. The average age for the Westgate community is 37.4 years old.

Originally a rural area, Westgate’s population has increased by 161.4 percent in the past 20 years to a population of 2711.

As more people flood into the surrounding neighbourhoods, we continue to engage and consider how we might contribute to the growing community and together meet evolving needs.

Our current support includes the following services:

Welfare

- Food parcels—on average 45/month since January 2022
- Christmas Hamper project—200 families, December 2022
- Vouchers (Kmart vouchers, Warehouse gift vouchers, Warehouse Stationery)
- Financial mentoring

Other

- Family Store—selling quality pre-loved goods at accessible prices
- Family Store Garage Sale (monthly) provides clothes and other articles at \$1/article
- Koinonia—pay what you can café—Wednesday and Friday mornings
- Tribe, Year 2—Year 8 community children’s programmes.

THE SALVATION ARMY IN WESTGATE¹⁴

The Salvation Army has been a part of the Massey/Westgate community for more than 40 years, beginning our service to the community from a garage in Waimumu Road. In 1996, we opened our centre at 532 Don Buck Road from where we have continued to meet the community’s physical and spiritual needs.

Being a much-loved, recognised and trusted hub of charity in the north-west area, we continue to grow our Community Ministries across the Massey, Westgate, Hobsonville and Kumeū communities as a place to both donate and request assistance.

We love and appreciate the support of local businesses and community groups such as: PAK'nSAVE Westgate, Countdown Westgate, Countdown Northwest, Countdown Hobsonville, New World Kumeū, New World Hobsonville, Resene

NorthWest, Te Manawa Library Auckland City Council, The Fono, Kiddywinks—Christmas Toy Drive, Massey University, Albany Psychological Clinic, Hoop NZ and Herald Island Community.

—Auxiliary Captain Ian Wells

WESTGATE'S ATTRIBUTES: What do you like about Westgate?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Westgate's main attribute is the **people (66%)** of Westgate and the greater area. Locals highlighted that the community was caring, **friendly (21%)** and diverse. Another key theme was the access to so many different **businesses (63%)** and restaurants. Locals enjoyed all the businesses that were in close proximity and the new NorthWest Shopping Centre. One local said, 'Businesses are matching the growth of population growth'. The location of Westgate

along the North-Western Motorway also means it is **accessible (46%)**, which locals also appreciated.

KEY INFORMANTS

Westgate/Massey is a tight-knit community; people are friendly, and the community is supportive. The community is diverse with many cultures: Māori, Dalmatian, Dutch, Pasifika, etc. Despite all the new development and the urban creep, there is still a growing sense of community.

Table 8:

	15% Family friendly	23% Supportive	24% Youth	22% Home	16% Safe	15% Diverse
17-24 YEARS	'Westgate is so friendly and is accepting of different cultures.'					
25-34 YEARS	'Not everyone is well off, but everyone is in the same boat.'					
35-44 YEARS	'Reasonably safe feeling in neighbourhood, diverse community, local facilities.'					
	'Very family friendly and lots of opportunities to connect in with other people.'					
45-54 YEARS	'Childcare is close so we will be able to see growth for individuals and families and the community.'					
55-64 YEARS	'Westgate has everything you could want: supermarkets, food and clothing outlets, coffee shops, library, restaurants, churches...'					
	'It's a friendly area with a sense of belonging, especially amongst those who have been here for many years.'					
65-74 YEARS	'Westgate is a growing community. It is a tight-knit community.'					

WESTGATE'S CHALLENGES: What are some of the challenges that Westgate faces?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

There are three key issues: **housing (80%)**, **traffic (76%)** and **crime (75%)**. Locals were concerned about the **intensification (32%)** of housing in the

area, particularly housing density. Other locals also questioned whether these houses were fit for purpose for the families who will potentially move into them. In addition to the ongoing construction

is the levels of traffic—one local talked about all the dead-end cul-de-sacs, whereas if these streets were opened up it would allow locals a capillary network of streets which would enable them to move off the main **roads (22%)**. Unfortunately, that is not the case in Westgate. Crime was also consistently highlighted by the community, which is interlinked to other challenges the community spoke about. The **cost of living (61%)** is increasing **poverty (22%)** levels. There is a lack of engagement for **young people (20%)** in education and employment. **Gangs (11%)** and drugs are also widespread in Westgate/Massey. Addressing these levels of poverty for Westgate locals posed its own challenges: locals shared the absence of quality employment and the challenges of accessing efficient **public transport (20%)** to get to work in other areas of Auckland.

KEY INFORMANTS

Many of these new houses being built are not fit for purpose. The houses are too small for bigger families,

which will mean overcrowding. Public transport is not helpful for travelling from Westgate; many locals need to have cars to get to work. ‘Living out here in west Auckland means our whānau are dependent on vehicles but there are not enough car parks with these town houses.’ The impact of gangs in the community is concerning—gangs are becoming smarter in how they conduct business. Steering people away from gangs requires jobs with liveable wages to break the hardships of poverty. Many of the local jobs have low wages and, in addition to unaffordable housing, this leads to financial hardship, food insecurity and debt. There are more young people who choose to leave school and work to help their families financially. It has been a struggle for educators to re-engage students and families after Covid-19. Meth continues to be a big challenge particularly for women, ‘many don’t have the tools in their kete to be able to cope with everyday pressures’. This has serious consequences for the education, wellbeing and future of their children.

Table 9:

	18% Gentrification	16% Healthcare	14% Homeless	11% Violence	11% Inequality
<2 YEARS	<p>‘Cost of living, traffic and crime.’</p> <p>‘Poverty—rich move in everywhere and developers expect phenomenal rent.’</p>				
2–5 YEARS	<p>‘Domestic violence ... which impacts the tenant of the unit’s noise with neighbours.’</p> <p>‘No busway to town. No train to town. Too expensive to catch buses to town. No infrastructure for thousands of new houses built, and suburbs can’t cope. No swimming pool.’</p>				
5–10 YEARS	<p>‘Disconnected between those who have and those who don’t; lack of empathy caused by disconnect.’</p> <p>‘The ongoing construction making things inaccessible in Westgate and poor public transport.’</p>				
10+ YEARS	<p>‘Gentrification, particularly the increasing divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’, and the community being shaped by the ‘haves.’</p> <p>‘Food is very expensive, and everything is going up, the cost of living is expensive and rapidly increasing.’</p> <p>‘Adjusting to new high density population, street parking, increase of cars on street. Lack of spaces for youth.’</p> <p>‘Mounting drug use, high costs of living and few job prospects in the area.’</p>				

Table 4: The Westgate community and my wellbeing

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A
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**‘I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY PHYSICAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,’
(EG, HEALTH, FOOD, HOUSING)**

<p>32% <i>‘There are foodbanks, a couple of doctors, doctors closing books because of too many people.’</i></p>	<p>48% <i>‘I think there is no shortage, housing might be a bit stressed. Apart from housing all the other services are unaffected, if you can afford it.’</i></p>	<p>13% <i>‘Yes, to food and health, no to housing.’</i></p>	<p>6% <i>‘Not everyone can afford these supports.’</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Healthcare in Westgate does not meet the capacity of the community. Difficult to get to Waitakere Hospital and North Shore Hospital if locals don’t have transport. There is a GP shortage in Westgate, troubling given the growing population. It is difficult to get housing that is fit for families. Social services that provide food like Waiparera Trust, TSA and Vision West.

**‘I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,’
(EG, ANXIETY, HAPPINESS, STRESS)**

<p>20% <i>‘I can access because I can pay.’</i></p>	<p>36% <i>‘You can get counselling services from GP referrals at Westgate Medical Centre, or Oriel Ave, Royal Heights and Royal Road.’</i> <i>‘Support from the church.’</i></p>	<p>20% <i>‘Though these services are readily available, it is not clear where one can go to access such services.’</i></p>	<p>14% <i>‘Mental health support in West Auckland is not good enough—hard to access, too limited in criteria, etc.’</i></p>	<p>3% <i>‘Unsure as I haven’t had to source this kind of help yet.’</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There is some sort of support for acute mental health and locals who are in imminent risk—often not the greatest level of service. Funding shortages for some services to meet this need. In addition, while there are services available it’s a difficult process for locals to access.

**‘I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SPIRITUAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,’
(EG, FAITH, MEDITATION)**

<p>39% <i>‘Many churches meet on Sunday here.’</i></p>	<p>39% <i>‘There are many local churches here, eg, Salvation Army, Baptists, Presbyterian, Good Shepherd, etc.’</i></p>	<p>10% <i>‘Heaps of places, but if they are promoting wellbeing and community, I have not really seen it advertised.’</i></p>	<p>8% <i>‘I am Jewish so nothing really around these parts.’</i> <i>‘I do not seek spiritual guidance.’</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There are many churches in the community—not many other options other than faith-based support. Inter-faith and secular social services will often come together to support the community.

**‘I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SOCIAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,’
(EG, FRIENDS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY)**

<p>36% <i>‘Grew up here, family and friends are here.’</i></p>	<p>44% <i>‘There is a growing community network—positive sign all round.’</i></p>	<p>13% <i>‘We don’t have a network of friends/family in west Auckland outside of church... The two hours on a Sunday afternoon are the highlight of my week.’</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There are attempts to create activities and events for the community, but the way that Westgate is built is not conducive to building strong social networks, it is more of a ‘thoroughfare than a destination’. There are some organisations that do well in facilitating social wellbeing in the community particularly for seniors.

THE STATE OF WESTGATE

The public data section for Westgate will include Massey Central and Massey Royal Road West. These areas are on the borders of Westgate (see [Appendix 1](#)). The boundaries for Westgate have changed and feedback from locals states that up until the rapid development in the Westgate area, Massey North (Massey Central and Massey Royal Road West) is often viewed as one and the same with Westgate, with the majority of the community living in these areas.

HOUSING

The key theme for the Westgate community is housing, primarily the intensification and types of housing being built. [Figure 11](#)¹⁵ shows that in Westgate for the past 10 years, building consents have increased by 400 percent compared with the 10 years before 2012. In addition, 72 percent of building consents for apartments have been issued in the past 10 years. Not only have consents for new builds increased rapidly, but there is a shift away from houses towards townhouse/flat-type housing. Almost all consents in Westgate and Massey North this year are for townhouse-like housing.

Figure 11: Building consents for Westgate (1990–2022)

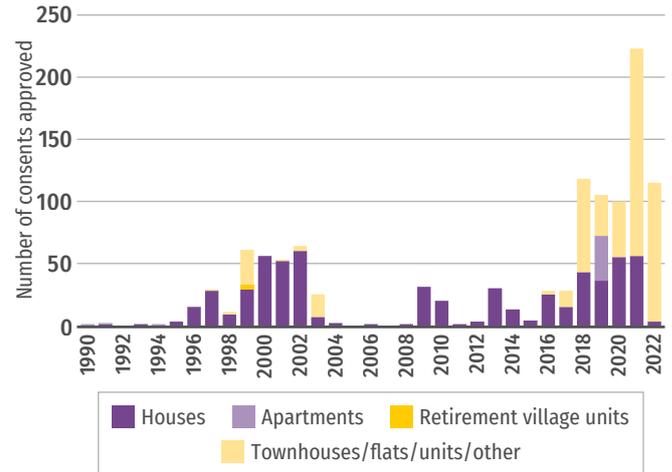


Figure 12: Building consents for Massey North (1990–2022)

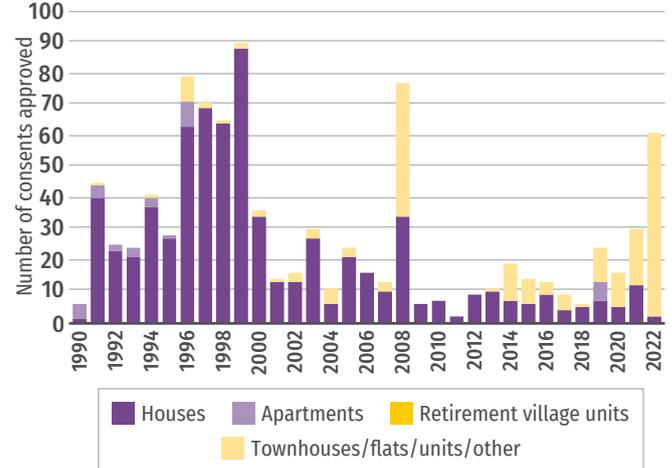


Table 11: Cost and quality of housing in Westgate/Massey¹⁶

	Westgate South	Massey Central	Massey Royal Road West
Household median income (2022)	\$88K	\$99K	\$102K
Home ownership (2018)	35% ▼ 22%	37% ▼ 8.3%	39% ▼ 6.2%
Median property value (Jul 2022)	\$1.2M ▼ 0.3%	\$1M ▼ 0.3%	\$1.1M ▼ 0.9%
Median rent (Jun 2022)	\$659 ▲ 0.5%	\$525 ▼ 2.3%	\$599 ▲ 1.9%
Purchasing affordability (Jul 2022)	16% ▼ 0.3%	12% ▼ 0.3%	13% ▼ 0.9%
Rent affordability (Jul 2022)	39% -	28% -	31% -
Years to save for a deposit (Jul 2022)	23 ▼ 0.3%	15 ▼ 0.6%	16 ▼ 0.6%
Overcrowding (2018)	0.681	0.766	0.713
Damp homes (2018)	4%	6%	5%
Mouldy homes (2018)	5%	9%	7%

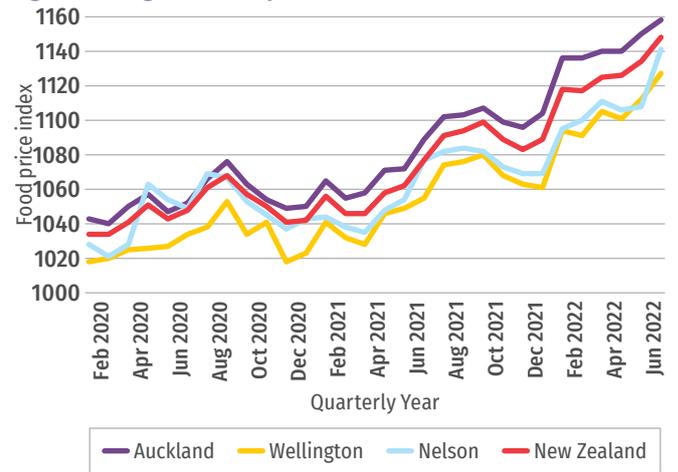
Key | Compare, 2013 | Trending up: ▲ | Trending down: ▼ |
 Improving |
 Worsening |
 No Change

Table 11 looks at the cost and quality of housing for locals in Westgate/Massey. The median household income for the Westgate community is \$88,000 and is similar to the national household income (\$87,000). The median rent in Westgate is \$659 and rent affordability is the percentage of income spent on rent. Ideally rent affordability should be approximately 30 percent of a household’s income. In Westgate, it is 39 percent. Purchasing affordability is the percentage of income spent on a mortgage payment. These figures show that it would be more affordable to pay a mortgage than to rent. However, the time it will take for a local to save a deposit is 23 years.

Table 12¹⁷ shows the proportion of beneficiaries living in Westgate/Massey. The deprivation index for this area is 6 for Westgate and 7 for Massey. These numbers show an indication of the levels of socio-economic deprivation, reflected in the proportion of beneficiaries. While Westgate has similar proportion rates of beneficiaries to the national rate, Massey is significantly higher for Job Seeker Support and Sole Parent Support.

Locals also highlighted the cost of food. **Figure 13¹⁸** looks at the food price index which measures the changes in prices that households pay for food. Aucklanders are paying 11.03 percent more for food than they did in January 2020. Aucklanders are also paying more for food in comparison with the rest of the country.

Figure 13: Regional food price index



CRIME

The crime rate is defined as the average number of victimisations per 10,000 population over the last 12 months. Westgate locals also discussed the levels of crime in the community. **Figure 14¹⁹** shows the crime rate in Westgate, which is 213.81 compared to the national crime rate 36.90.

A review of crime activity that police are responding to in the area is shown in **Figure 15**, which shows that crime has increased 22 percent in the past three years. The key crime types which are driving the crime rate for the Westgate community are theft from retail premises and illegal use of a motor vehicle. Since 2017, the crime rates in Westgate have been increasing, but since Covid-19 these rates have gradually declined.

Table 12: Benefits table for Westgate/Massey North

	NZ	Westgate	Massey Central	Massey Royal Road West
Deprivation index		6	7	7
Population		2711	3711	3202
Sole Parent Support	2.29	2.39	3.38	3.62
Job Seeker Support	5.63	5.17	8.91	8.13
Means tested benefit	3.03	1.98	1.86	2.21

Key Higher than national rate

Figure 14: Crime rate to Westgate compared to NZ

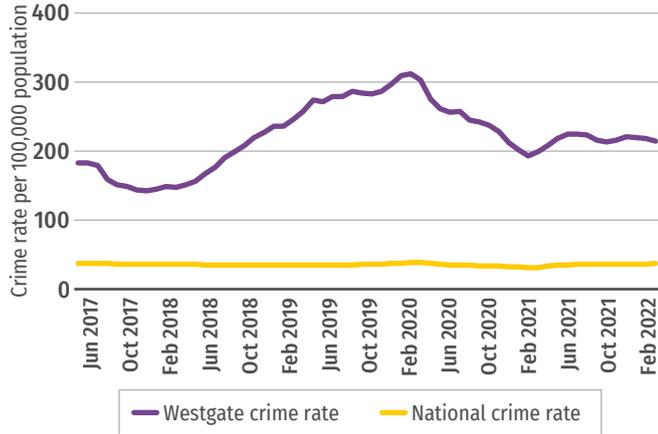
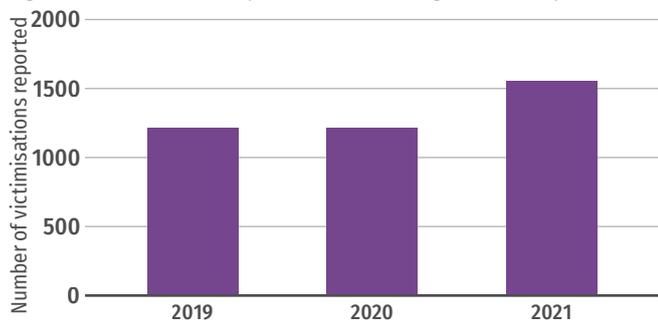


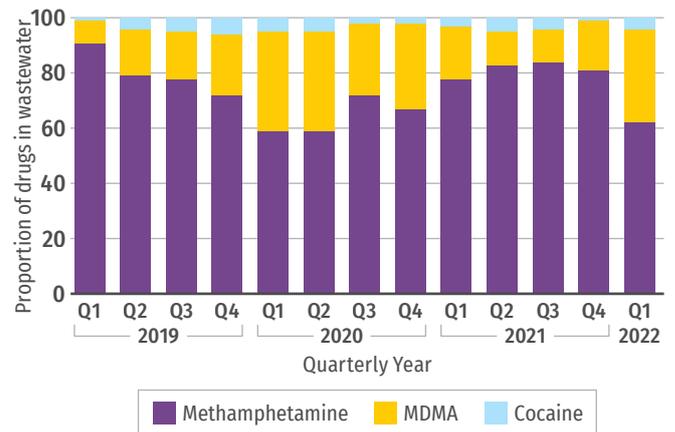
Figure 15: Police activity—crime for Westgate/Massey



DRUGS

Figure 16²⁰ looks at the Police National Wastewater Testing Programme which measures the proportion of drugs in west Auckland wastewater. Despite the drop in meth in the last quarter measured, meth continues to be the primary drug of use in west Auckland. According to the latest report (January to March 2022), 15.5kg of meth was consumed per week—almost half (7.22kg) of that consumed in the Auckland region. The estimated cost of 15.5kg of meth has an estimated cost of \$17.2 million in social harm and \$7.8 million in distribution. Although Westgate/Massey only constitutes a small fraction of west Auckland—this figure provides an overview of drug usage in the greater area.

Figure 16: Police National Wastewater Testing Programme for West Auckland (2019–2022)



INVESTING IN WESTGATE: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in Westgate, what are three to five areas you would invest it in and why?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Housing (52%) to slow down the current developments and ensure houses are of good quality, affordable and purposeful to meet the needs of families in the community. One local said, ‘stop putting people in shoeboxes’. **Healthcare (44%)** was also a key area locals would invest in. Westgate needs more doctors and support for mental wellbeing and addictions. Avenues to address **mental wellbeing (24%)** are not just confined to clinical services, but looking at alternative ways. One local stated

they would invest in the SPCA and look at animal companionship as a method of addressing mental wellbeing. One local would invest in local sports clubs or start **community groups (32%)** for sole parents or senior groups. This local believed that being in community groups improved people’s mental wellbeing. Many areas where locals would invest in are about improving the standard of living for the community, particularly for **children and youth (28%)**. Locals hope for more green space and **parks (25%)**; an **aquatic centre (13%)** was consistently highlighted

by locals; a **community hub (11%)**; and investing in **charities (15%)** that are already supporting the wellbeing of the community. Locals would invest in **public transport (29%)**. There are not enough public transport options for Westgate locals, and the limited options available are not efficient or affordable.

KEY INFORMANTS

- Resource and implement financial literacy programmes in all schools.

- Invest in local community champions who are already working, but doing so without any money.
- Invest in fast, frequent and reliable public transport—train.
- Create meaningful jobs that contribute to the wellbeing of the communities.
- Build the aquatic centre for the community.
- Make mental health services accessible to all, particularly at-risk families.

Table 13:

29% Schools	24% Facilities	22% Infrastructure	22% Food	17% Family	16% Education	15% Events and activities	15% Employment	14% Elderly
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- 1 'Community Hub that provides wraparound support that can support families and engage their kids in education. A lot of parents are keeping kids home for a variety of reasons, eg, mental health, finances, home dynamics such as violence at home.'
- 2 'Large community swimming pool, as the closest is in Henderson. The west has long desired another pool and West Wave doesn't have enough parking.'
- 3 'Something to do with children indoors. Provide a safe space for children to play that's covered, accessible and free.'
- 4 'Accessible and affordable healthcare, eg, GPs, dentist, podiatrist, mental health and addictions services, etc.'
- 5 'Positive life programmes that teach early intervention, education around family planning, positive parenting,

budgeting and household management skills including cooking, cleaning, time management.'

- 6 'Community get togethers, these events would target different age groups and different communities. Free Māori and other language-learning experiences, so people can enrich other cultures.'
- 7 'A massive community wellbeing initiative involving low-cost after-school care/holiday programmes, better youth facilities, a leisure centre with swimming pool and indoor basketball courts, mental health groups.'
- 8 'Housing: several blocks of beautiful apartments as low-cost/social housing, which is fully accessible, well maintained, and integrated into the community so that residents feel supported.'

WESTGATE'S ASPIRATIONS: In five years' time what changes would you like to see in Westgate?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Westgate will have **housing (61%)** that is affordable and fit for purpose. In addition, the **infrastructure (41%)** would meet the needs of all the new builds in the **community (29%)** and any future new housing to come. There would be adequate **public transport (24%)** options for locals. The community would be **connected (17%), safe (28%)** and rid of gangs, drugs and crime. **Young people (19%)** and **children (20%)** will have a place to belong and to thrive for the

future of the community. One local said, 'that all this (housing and commercial) development would settle down and we would have a chance to be a community'.

KEY INFORMANTS

Westgate is in need of better public transport options so people could move easily to and from Westgate; currently locals have to catch multiple buses to get into the city. Support services would wraparound and walk alongside families. There would be job opportunities for locals that are in the community and pay a decent wage. The aquatic centre would be built. Family violence incidences would decrease. The licensing trust would continue to invest back into the community.

Table 14:

	31%	21%	21%	19%	17%	14%	14%	14%
	Parks, etc	Events and activities	Food	Traffic	Healthcare	Family	Church	Community garden
17-24 YEARS	<i>'Less divisiveness, more inclusion and more talking with others in the community they don't know.'</i>							
25-34 YEARS	<i>'Better bus routes and schools. There are none we can walk to from our house without walking along the side of a 80km/h road with no footpath.'</i>							
35-44 YEARS	<i>'More family days in the parks for kids.'</i>							
35-44 YEARS	<i>'A new pool complex with swim fit classes and great parking. Roads/footpaths fixed/widened. More people come to know Jesus and attend churches.'</i>							
45-54 YEARS	<i>'Spaces for teenagers: pools, tracks for bike and skating greenspaces.'</i>							
55-64 YEARS	<i>'Everyone is employed in a job they love, there is no crime, everyone has a home and is safe in it. Everyone can enjoy their down time in safety. Ideal, I know, but let's work towards that goal.'</i>							
65-74 YEARS	<i>'Gang violence to stop; a lot more caring for each other.'</i>							
75+ YEARS	<i>'Settle down and become a connected community.'</i>							

SUMMARY

Within two decades, Westgate has dramatically changed from rural farmland into being one of the fastest growing retail locations in New Zealand. As a significant service suburb, Westgate connects the west Auckland suburbs of Massey and West Harbour, and the north-west suburbs, such as Whenuapai and Kumeū. Locals like that there are so many retail options and businesses on their doorstep. Its location makes it a key intersection in linking west Auckland and the North Shore.

However, Westgate’s location causes challenges in other areas, such as public transport. There are not many bus routes that go through Westgate, making commuting inefficient as locals would have to catch multiple buses to get to other areas. This is particularly challenging, there are not enough quality employment options in the area, so locals need to travel; as a result, many are dependent on vehicles. The current intensification of housing in Westgate leaves minimal space for additional parking. This is also a concern for locals.

Whilst Westgate highlights the challenges around housing affordability, it’s also the only community that hopes new builds will stop, or slow down.

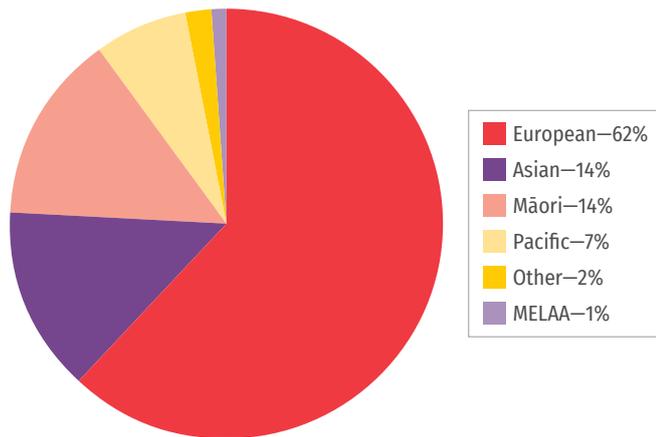
According to locals, Westgate does not have the ability to serve the current community, let alone newcomers. The only aspect of Westgate that is prepared for the influx of people are the retail, entertainment and hospitality sectors.

The Westgate 2050²¹ Plan, by the Auckland Council, hopes to bring greater development and employment to the area—this is promising. Housing prices have increased, food prices have increased and the price of petrol has also increased. According to locals, the current cost-of-living crisis continues to perpetuate poverty and financial hardship levels in Westgate. Locals discussed how areas impacted by poverty are ideal recruiting grounds for gangs, particularly for young people. Gangs can provide opportunities and financial support where community and government have failed. In their aspirations for 2027, much of the focus of the community was around building strong families, supporting children and encouraging young people.

PETONE, LOWER HUTT

The Māori name for Petone—Pito-one—means end of the sand beach, as Petone is located on the foreshore of the Wellington Harbour. Petone has many historic landmarks and buildings, as it was the first European settlement in the Wellington region in 1840. Petone is prone to flooding because it is flat and is nestled between the Hutt River and Wellington Harbour. Despite the flooding, Petone grew to be a thriving working-class community with many large industries in the twentieth century.

Figure 17: Ethnicity and age breakdown for Petone, Lower Hutt



In the last census, Petone’s population had grown by 12.3 percent, and now has an estimated population of 8281 (Sept 2021). Petone is predominantly European (72%), followed by Asian and Māori (16%), as shown in **Figure 17**. The median age for Petone is 34 years old, with people aged between 20 to 39 years old representing a large proportion of the community.

salt and light in Petone: building relationships, journeying with people and partnering with God to see where the kingdom of God is. We strive to listen and work with others to bring positive change to Petone.

On the first Sunday of the month, we run neighbourhood pancakes—a place of connection with good food and quality conversations. Every other Sunday we gather to connect and discuss faith and life. Wednesday is playgroup, a great opportunity for kids and parents to meet, build friendships and receive support. We have partnered with Petone Library to provide a safe, fun and supportive space for young people after school. A key project of The Salvation Army in Petone has been Te Kohanga Manaaki—Petone Playscape, a play area that has been designed for tamariki aged five and under. It was built by the community for the community upon values of being environmentally friendly, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, restorative and creative.

—Envoy Stewart Irwin

THE SALVATION ARMY IN PETONE²²

The Petone Salvation Army is an eclectic community of people discovering how to follow Jesus Christ today. We aim to be a place to ask the hard questions, bring doubts and the messiness of life, and together wrestle with what it means to love God and people. We believe church should be multi-cultural and multi-generational and that all can contribute. We like it this way, because those who are different to us, help us grow and be more Christ-like.

We are in the community, for the community, bringing out God’s favour and colours. We will be

PETONE’S ATTRIBUTES: What do you like about Petone?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The **environment (85%)**—almost every local talked about the beach; many referred to the natural environment of Petone that it is close to walking tracks and local parks. Many highlighted the fact that Petone is flat, so it is easy to get around as a pedestrian. **Accessibility (84%)** was also a key highlight for locals. Petone has everything locals need, and its location makes it easy to access other areas of Wellington; Petone was described as convenient and compact. Many of the locals highlighted that although Petone is small, it has all the services, **facilities, and amenities (79%)** locals would need. The main commercial street—**Jackson Street (75%)**—and other businesses were a key highlight with many commenting on the array of

local restaurants and cafes. Locals described their **community (74%)** as diverse, laid back, **safe (19%)** and friendly with many describing the close-knit nature of the community as a ‘village vibe’. Locals also like that Petone is **family friendly (33%)** and a great place to raise children.

KEY INFORMANTS

There is a genuine pride for people living in Petone. Petone has a rich heritage. Families have lived here for generations and have continued to sow into the community. Petone has a supportive, friendly and diverse community, and its small size gives it a village feel. Petone has a lot of shopping opportunities and a thriving café and restaurant culture.

Table 15:

17-24 YEARS	<i>‘The ocean is close, and shops are within walking distance.’ ‘It feels small but has everything you need.’</i>
25-34 YEARS	<i>‘Lots of people out and about walking. People are generally friendly.’</i>
35-44 YEARS	<i>‘Plenty of activities for stay-at-home parents and children.’ ‘It is family-oriented friendly and kind; they care about each other and their suburb.’</i>
45-54 YEARS	<i>‘The people are friendly, it’s easy to get around, there is a sense of community and support amongst neighbours and of course the great coffee at playscape!’</i>
55-64 YEARS	<i>‘Locality: so close to lots of places, parks, riverbank walks, beach walks. Nature so close. Friendly community residents.’</i>
65-74 YEARS	<i>‘Everything at our doorstep. Great beach, rec and walking tracks nearby, lovely artesian water, eating out places, second-hand shops ... could go on...’</i>
75+ YEARS	<i>‘The village feel, the walkability, the people and being involved.’</i>

PETONE’S CHALLENGES: What are some challenges that Petone faces?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The most common challenge that Petone locals highlighted was **traffic (67%)**, particularly traffic congestion due to commuters, weekend congestion on Jackson Street and Kmart traffic. Locals commented that the increase of traffic often makes

it unsafe for families and children. Locals also highlighted that these traffic issues are due to a lack of planning and inadequacies in local **infrastructure (27%)**. The cost of affordable **housing (61%)** and the high **cost of living (51%)** makes it financially difficult for families who can no longer afford to live in their

community. A lack of **parking (23%)** was consistently highlighted by locals. The streets are too narrow to be able to safely park vehicles and so they often get damaged. Another key theme that was pressing for locals is **climate change (36%)**; locals talked about flooding, sea level rises and tsunami risks. Mitigating the impacts of climate change, particularly for homeowners, is a priority for locals in Petone.

KEY INFORMANTS

One of the biggest challenges key informants highlighted was around housing, particularly rental properties. Petone historically was an industrial area therefore, many of those in the community were blue-collar working families. These families are now being priced out of a community they have been a part of for many years and Petone is rapidly becoming gentrified. Key informants also highlighted the intensification of houses that are not fit for the community. Climate change is also a big challenge with the rising sea levels and the threat this imposes on Petone.

Table 16:

	42% Crime	22% Poverty	21% Food	14% Healthcare	21% Intensification
<2 YEARS	<i>'Flooding, narrow streets off Jackson St, poverty, food prices rising.'</i>				
2-5 YEARS	<i>'Traffic, no cycle pathway to town without going on motorway. Hard to get an appointment with a doctor when needed. Climate change and rising sea levels.'</i> <i>'Climate change can make the longevity of living here not an option, affecting communities and families.'</i>				
5-10 YEARS	<i>'High cost of living and being able to cater for small families; rent is very high and young families are moving out as they can't afford rent prices.'</i> <i>'Traffic! Both on Esplanade and Jackson Street at pretty much all times. Petone is used as a thoroughfare, and it ruins the small quiet community feel it had when we moved here.'</i>				
10+ YEARS	<i>'Economic hardship and methamphetamine.'</i> <i>'Gap between the rich and the poor widening, rising cost of living, ridiculous house prices.'</i> <i>'Having a free indoor space that's not the library where kids can hang out safely. Crime is also on the rise which is a concern as it seems to be more brazen and closer to home. Of course, the tsunami risk and rising sea levels.'</i>				

Table 17: The Petone community and my wellbeing

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A
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**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY PHYSICAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, HEALTH, FOOD, HOUSING)**

<p>30% <i>'Lots of flat areas to walk/ run or take the kids out for fresh air.'</i></p>	<p>53% <i>'We are long established here so are okay. If we were new to the community, it could be difficult to find an affordable rental or a GP.'</i> <i>'We are fortunate to have supermarkets, GPs, dentist, parks, playgrounds and the beach, all within walking distance.'</i></p>	<p>9% <i>'Cost of healthcare is a barrier.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'Would like to register with local doctor but fully booked. Currently boarding as rental too expensive for single person.'</i> <i>'Everything is too expensive.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Housing is unaffordable, homelessness and rough sleepers are more visible—sometimes these living conditions are due to complex issues such as addictions. Emergency housing creates transient environments for children, which affects children as they can't maintain friendships and are continually adjusting to new environments. Regarding healthcare, there is a great need for more GPs as the Community Health Centre is inundated with patients. However, regarding food, Petone has a vast network who support the community with food: Baptist church, The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, ANXIETY, HAPPINESS, STRESS)**

<p>14% <i>'If I'm feeling down, I can pop into a cafe, ... or see close friends in one of the bars.'</i> <i>'Through my faith community.'</i></p>	<p>55% <i>'...formal health services are a concern.'</i> <i>'The harbour provides for relaxing and reflection, I feel happy spending time close to home with my family.'</i></p>	<p>16% <i>'Haven't looked but walking is helpful?'</i></p>	<p>7% <i>'A lot of general services available, but sometimes people need specific help. Also, when you do find someone that suits it's often weeks before you can access them.'</i></p>	<p>3% <i>'Services are lacking with long wait lists.'</i></p>	<p>5% <i>'I'm sure doctor would help here if needed.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Petone does not have sufficient services to support mental and emotional wellbeing. The services that are available, like counsellors at the medical centre, do not have the capacity to address the growing needs of the community, particularly young people aged 11 to 14 years old and seniors. The insufficiency of this support means that community groups like churches and sports clubs will fill the gap.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SPIRITUAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FAITH, MEDITATION)**

<p>21% <i>'Lots of churches.'</i></p>	<p>49% <i>'Lots of places to gather and worship.'</i></p>	<p>20% <i>'This isn't a big part of my life but I know there are many faith communities here and I know which church I would visit if I decided I wanted to connect in this way.'</i></p>	<p>4% <i>'There is so much of everything in all areas that sometimes it difficult to get the right help you need.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'No idea what spiritual means.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: There is sufficient support for Petone's spiritual wellbeing. All key informants talked about the various Christian churches, Ratana and other religious groups in Petone. Another key informant also talked about the spiritual effect of living close to the water.

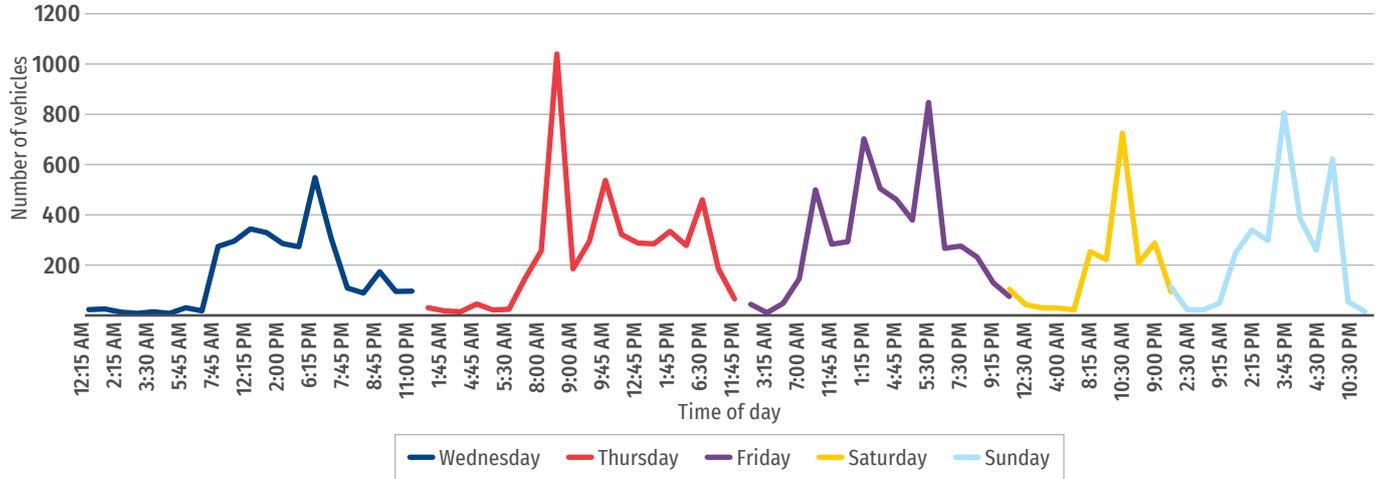
**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SOCIAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FRIENDS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY)**

<p>34% <i>'We are privileged as many of our friends and whānau live locally.'</i></p>	<p>55% <i>'I have enjoyed increasing my friendships and local connections, especially since my children started school. It is great for them to have friends who live nearby.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'Different since Covid-19.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Social support in Petone can often be in family, friends, sports clubs, social groups or schools. Another key informant highlighted that Petone is a transient community, and as the cohort that makes up the community changes, so will the types of social support Petone needs.

THE STATE OF PETONE

Figure 18: Monitoring traffic on State Highway 2 (SH2) for Petone

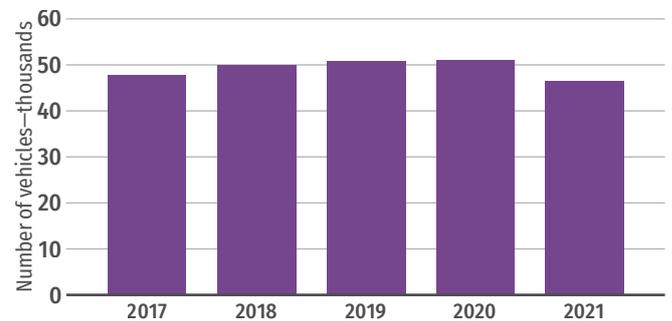


TRAFFIC

The key issue locals in Petone addressed was traffic. **Figure 18²³** shows the monitoring of the Petone on/off ramp to SH2 and the Petone Interchange at certain 15-minute intervals. On a Thursday morning, these points within a 15-minute period can see 1000+ cars move either into Petone or away from Petone. The spike in traffic is still prevalent on the weekends. Furthermore, **Figure 19²⁴** shows annual average traffic count for vehicles moving on or off SH2 via Petone. These on/off ramps to SH2 indicate that these vehicles will be moving through Petone. On average in the past year, there was over 46,000 vehicles moving in and out of Petone a day. In 2020,

this number was over 51,000. Locals noted that finding alternative options such as public transport or cycling to move safely in and out of Petone eases traffic congestion.

Figure 19: Annual average daily traffic



HOUSING

Housing was another key concern locals in Petone highlighted. There were issues related to affordability of both home ownership and renting. **Table 18** on the next page shows the cost of housing across the Petone area. The median property value in Petone is \$1.1 million. The purchasing affordability or the percentage of household income that will go towards repaying the mortgage varies across the

three areas comprising Petone, but is highest in Petone East due to having lower household income. Although paying a mortgage takes less income than rent, saving for a deposit in the current financial conditions will take over a decade. Rent in Petone is relatively similar across the three areas, despite the significant differences in median household income.

Table 18: Cost and quality of housing in Petone²⁵

Petone	Central	East	Esplanade
Household median income (2022)	\$117K	\$89K	\$107K
Home ownership (2018)	37% ▲ 3.7%	40% ▼ 12%	35% ▼ 14%
Median property value (Jul 2022)	\$1.1M ▼ 2.4%	\$1.1M ▼ 2.4%	\$1.1M ▼ 1.9%
Median rent (Jun 2022)	\$489 ▲ 1.2%	\$461 ▲ 2.1%	\$495 ▲ 2.7%
Purchasing affordability (Jul 2022)	10% ▼ 2.4%	14% ▼ 2.4%	11% ▼ 1.9%
Rent affordability (Jul 2022)	22% -	27% -	24% -
Years to save for a deposit (Jul 2022)	12 ▼ 2.4%	16 ▼ 2.4%	13 ▼ 1.9%
Damp homes (2018)	3%	2%	3%
Mouldy homes (2018)	5%	4%	5%
Overcrowding (2018)	0.709	0.689	0.678

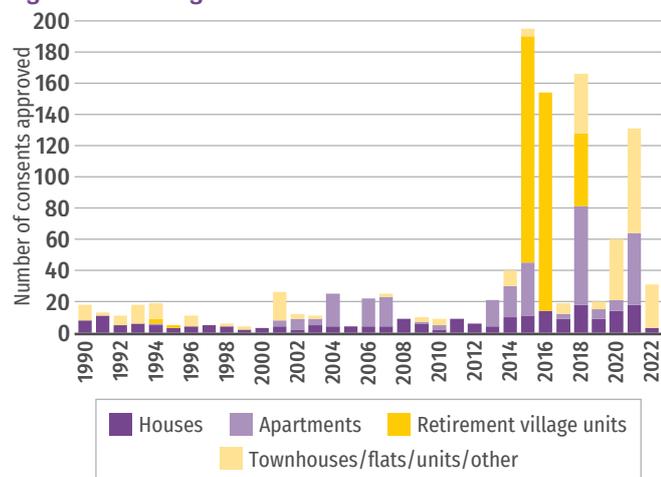
Key Compare, 2013 Trending up: ▲ Trending down: ▼ Improving Worsening No Change

Table 19: Benefits table for Petone

	NZ	Petone Central	Petone East	Petone Esplanade
Deprivation index		4	5	6
Population		1114	4266	2901
Sole Parent Support	2.29	1.6	0.83	1.15
Job Seeker Support	5.63	3.87	5.81	6.65
Means tested benefit	3.03	1.93	2.6	2.78

Key Higher than national rate

Figure 20: Building consents for Petone



In addition to the cost of housing, locals highlighted issues around intensification and ‘shoebox’ houses. **Figure 20²⁶** shows the number of consents approved for new residential constructions for Petone. In the past 32 years, there has been 1118 consents for new builds in Petone, 837 (75%) of these consents have only been granted in the past decade. The lack of new builds in Petone pre-2012 is probably how Petone has retained many of its villa-type houses that locals like. Also, it is important to highlight is that of the 1118 consents, only 20 percent (225) of these consents are for houses.

Petone has a medium deprivation index, as shown in **Table 19**.²⁷ The deprivation index indicates levels of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of locals receiving Sole Parent Support is half that of the national proportion rate. The proportion of locals in Petone East and Esplanade have similar proportion rates of those on Job Seeker Support benefit compared to the national rate. Locals also highlighted issues in regard to food costs. The cost of food in the Wellington region has increased by 10 percent since Jan 2020 (refer to **Figure 13**).

CRIME

Crime is a concerning issue among locals. **Figure 22**²⁸ shows the number of recorded crime activities that police respond to in Petone, which they have deemed as a crime. The annual average has increased by 6 percent in the past two years—these figures only include recorded activity that police have deemed a crime, not reported activity. The key offences that have been driving Petone’s crime levels are theft and burglary. **Figure 21**²⁹ looks at victimisation levels in Petone. Petone’s victimisation levels have been declining since 2018, however, from 2021 to 2022 there has been an almost 30 percent increase in people experiencing crime (victimisation). A closer look at these numbers show the rapid increase is due to theft from retail premises. In addition, the time frame for these increases in theft coincide with Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Since then levels of theft continue to remain high in Petone.

Figure 21: Victimisation level in Petone

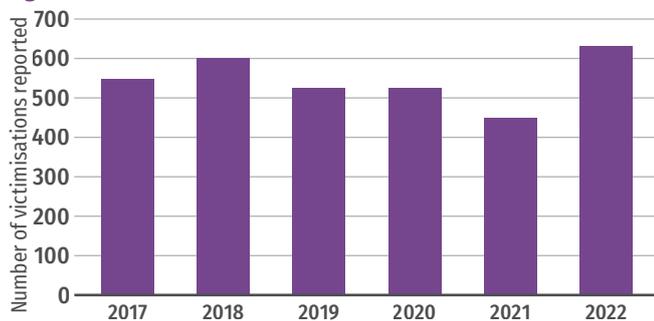
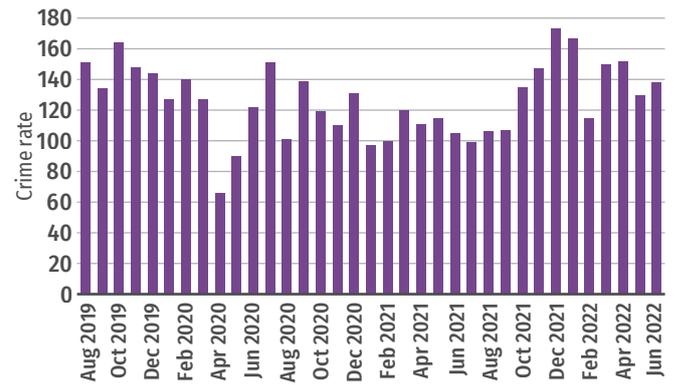


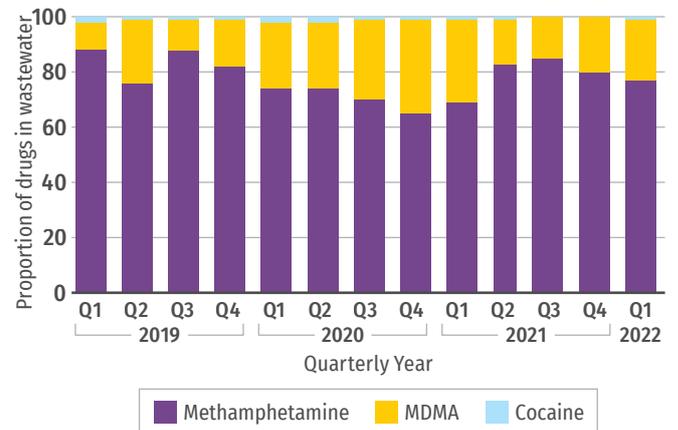
Figure 22: Police crime activity recorded in Petone



DRUGS

Figure 23³⁰ looks at the Police National Wastewater Testing Programme, which measures the proportion of drugs in the Hutt. Meth continues to be the primary drug of use. According to the latest report (January to March 2022) 15.5kg of meth was consumed per week—1.4kg of that was consumed in the Wellington region. Although Petone only constitutes a small fraction of the Hutt region, this figure provides an overview of drug usage in the greater area.

Figure 23: Police National Wastewater Testing Programme for Seaview (2019–2022)



INVESTING IN PETONE: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in Petone, what are the three to five areas you would invest it in and why?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The first thing locals would invest in is **housing (85%)**. Locals were very specific on what types of housing they would invest in—it would be quality houses, not ‘tiny boxes’. Locals would support affordable rentals for families, housing for homeless people and apartment-style housing for seniors. In regard to home ownership, locals would develop rent-to-buy schemes for locals on low income. The next investment would be towards **healthcare (63%)**. One local wanted a health and mental health system that got ‘...rid of tick-the-box attitudes and procedures and actually provided care!’ Other locals shared that there is a lack of doctors/ lack of specialised mental health services, lack of maternity care and overall concerns with the Hutt City Hospital (located 5km away in Lower Hutt). Investment in **infrastructure (37%)** was often noted in relation to both **traffic (34%)** issues and climate change mitigation. Locals

would invest in removing traffic from Jackson Street and building more cycleways. Also, **climate change (24%)** mitigation investments and development of the seawall, the wharf and revamping the drainage infrastructure in Petone to address future flooding was noted by one in four respondents.

KEY INFORMANTS

- Affordable early childhood education for parents.
- Quality and affordable housing for locals.
- Community insurance—to provide financial security for the threats of climate change.
- Build a secondary school in Petone.
- Public spaces—create parks and playgrounds and clean current spaces.
- Community communal gardens.
- Resourcing schools—social workers, youth workers and nurses.

Table 20:

34%	30%	34%	30%	29%	28%	27%	
Parks, etc	Children	Services	Schools	Youth	Facilities	Family	
1 ‘Community gardens, to teach people to grow their own affordable fruit and veggies and to share kai, build community through kai.’	2 ‘Definitely a safe space for older kids to go that isn’t the library, either basketball hoops and a covered/ sheltered area ... for them to go and hang out and be safe. Somewhere casual where maybe there’s community police or youth workers to give the kids some guidance.’	3 ‘More support for mental health, early access and speed.’	4 ‘Fix the wharf so ferries could operate again and then commuters would have a third alternative...’	5 ‘There used to be a group called Babies in Arms run by a midwife... When I had my baby, it was a literal lifeline.	6 ‘Investigating options for climate change/sea level rise protection or planning for managed retreat, if this is going to be required.’	7 ‘The protection and refurbishment of any possible heritage aspects of Petone.’	8 ‘Charity-type supermarket.’

PETONE’S ASPIRATIONS: In five years’ time, what changes would you like to see in Petone?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

A community with affordable, warm and quality **housing (54%)** and ‘...no more ugly mass townhouses!’ Locals said it would be easier to access basic **healthcare (38%)**, such as seeing the doctor at a bigger medical centre that has an array of medical services for the community. Locals also hoped that there would be more **parks (32%)**, more green spaces, better usage of the Petone waterfront so that there are more spaces for **children (20%)**, youth, families and the **community (24%)**. **Traffic (32%)** and **infrastructure (17%)** are also key issues locals hoped would be addressed in the future—locals hoped there would be a double-lane for the Esplanade. There will be more **public transport (33%)** options, that the ferry would be up and running, and that

there would be wide and safe cycling ways that are safe for cyclists.

KEY INFORMANTS

Hopefully the wharf is refurbished. The library is upgraded. There is long-term housing and forever homes for locals. There are positive steps forward between locals and council to develop alternative public transport. More families would establish themselves here so that it’s not a transient community. Greater support for children at risk and their families. The impacts of the Covid-19 lockdowns are still reeling for some locals with low school attendance—hopeful that children and families will actively engage in schooling again. Medical Centre would have more doctors and counsellors to support the community.

Table 21:

	20% Children	13% Safe	13% Schools	12% Family	12% Community Garden	11% Services	11% Events and Activities	11% Crime
17–24 YEARS	<p>‘More stable public transport, communication with the city.’</p> <p>‘I would hope to see people actually connecting with each other, not just living parallel lives. Neighbours that actually know each other’s names and kids playing together, that sort of stuff.’</p>							
25–34 YEARS	<p>‘Maybe more groups like how to cook or bake along those lines, things are getting very expensive especially when you have a large family so stuff to help with educating them to live more substantially.’</p> <p>‘Foreshore sea level rise mitigation insurance safety seawall.’</p>							
35–44 YEARS	<p>‘More space is opened up for community events for families at getting to know people.’</p> <p>‘Improved sustainable businesses in Jackson Street...’</p> <p>‘More low-income families able to afford to buy a home, especially those with children.’</p>							
45–54 YEARS	<p>‘Improvement in traffic. More support for the disabled.’</p> <p>‘Long-time renters able to stay in the community.’</p>							
55–64 YEARS	<p>‘Better infrastructure, more community events (really only one per year with street event in February).’</p>							
65–74 YEARS	<p>‘The earthquake-prone buildings to be upgraded and made safe.’</p> <p>‘To keep the historic aspect of Petone ongoing and make it a unique place to visit.’</p>							
75+ YEARS	<p>‘Footpaths all wide enough and smooth enough for the older generation to use mobility scooters on.’</p> <p>‘Genuine community involvement in sea level rise possible adaptations.’</p>							

SUMMARY

Petone is a beautiful coastal suburb that marries the commodities of urban living, like retail shopping, restaurant and cafés with the pristine beauty of nature. Its size, locality and history means that Petone benefits from small town village vibes in the big city. However, Petone is undergoing shifting dynamics not only in the social aspect of the community but the physical environment too.

The environment that surrounds Petone is one of its key attributes, according to locals. But when there is over 40,000 vehicles that are moving through Petone on any given day, enjoying that environment might not be the safest option. Petone's infrastructure is not favourable to cars as locals highlight parking and narrow roads. Petone's infrastructure is also not conducive to safe cycling due to the large volume of thoroughfare traffic. The issues around traffic and infrastructure is ongoing. The Lower Hutt City Council's Pito-one 2040 project plan will hopefully address the infrastructure, traffic and spatial planning of Petone.

Locals addressed the challenges around housing and its role in increasing transience in the community. Whilst ideally locals want families to establish themselves in Petone, the types of housing being

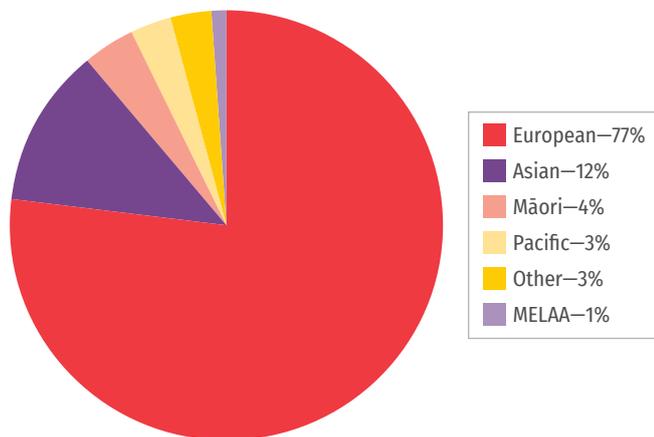
built called 'shoebox houses' were not fitting for families. Housing, particularly rentals, were unaffordable according to locals, and social housing options are limited. Housing that is unaffordable and unfit means that people don't stick around. When the community aspires for connection and cohesion, transience caused by housing is not helpful. The loss of its industrial identity and current reverse migration of city people seeking the quiet of suburbia means that Petone—a historically blue-collar community—is changing.

In addition to housing, locals hoped that there would be significant investment in healthcare. They shared the difficulty of getting into a doctor and the challenges with finding mental health services. The big question many locals are asking: 'How do you adapt to climate change?' Many locals addressed the imminent risk of climate change and global warming; this is very real for Petone as a suburb on the coast. Locals discussed options, such as a managed retreat plan, seawall, fixing the wharf, develop community insurance, electric cars or living sustainably through communal gardens and zero wastage. Overall, Petone locals want a community that has longevity, that is established and is working together.

BLenheim

Blenheim is the largest centre in Marlborough, located on the Wairau Plains, north-east of the South Island. Blenheim has one the sunniest climates in the country and this makes it prime for farming and viticulture. Marlborough wine region produces three-quarters of the country's wine production.

Figure 24: Ethnicity and age breakdown of Blenheim



Blenheim³¹ has a population of 36,113 (Sept 2021). The majority of Blenheim locals are European (86.5%) followed by Asian at 13.4 percent, as shown in **Figure 24**. The median age for the Blenheim area is 42.5 years old.

THE SALVATION ARMY IN BLENHEIM³²

The focus of Blenheim Community Ministries is journeying with people through the Positive Lifestyle Programme (PLP), giving people tools they can use in day to day and helping them identify the strengths and skills they already have. Our social worker and case worker meet with clients over several weeks to work through the eight modules of the programme: self-awareness, anger, depression and loneliness, stress, grief and loss, assertiveness, self-esteem and future directions. Through the programme clients develop their self-worth, learn how to apply their strengths and skills to present and future situations, become more aware of their feelings and behaviours, build confidence and assertiveness, and look forward to the future through goal setting and planning. It's a privilege

for us to be a part of their journey and see transformation happening in their lives as they put their discoveries into practice.

We also operate a 'drop in' on Wednesday to Friday mornings. This is a space where people can come to have a hot drink and a chat and is also an opportunity for individuals or whānau to discuss their immediate needs (such as food or other welfare) with one of our team. We can meet food needs through the support of our local Marlborough Community Foodbank and some other welfare needs through our Blenheim Family Store. Our team members can also connect people in with other services in the community to ensure their whole wellbeing is being supported.

For whānau in our community, we operate a Toy Library which allows families to join and hire toys. We have a large range of toys to choose from—from smaller items like dolls to larger items like play houses, lego, ride-ons and slides. This includes a sensory toy section. Many families find this a helpful service as children outgrow toys quickly and larger items can be expensive. We don't want any child in our community to miss out on the joy of play!

We have also recognised the cost for families in going out together, especially in cooler months as most indoor options have a cost attached to them. In response we have established a monthly Whānau Movie Night, where caregivers can come

with children to a koha-entry event. Each month, we provide this space and connect with families through these nights.

—Captain Emma Howan

BLenheim’S ATTRIBUTES: What do you like about Blenheim?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The **people (70%)**—locals like the people that make up their community. They described their community as **friendly (61%), supportive (43%),** easy going and **diverse (25%).** Locals liked that Blenheim was **small (38%)** and compact because it meant it was easy to **access (61%)** town and school and get around the area **safely (18%).** Despite the size of Blenheim, there are many **facilities (21%), services (16%)** and **businesses (26%),** including many locally owned businesses. Many locals boasted about Blenheim’s

weather (24%), terrain (30%) and local produce. Locals shared that Blenheim has a great outdoor space for activities and **walks (26%).**

KEY INFORMANTS

Blenheim is small, and people know each other, this makes it easier to find help. Locals are committed to supporting each other. There are pockets of wealth here who give back to positive things in the community. Locals also keep the township clean and tidy.

Table 22:

17–24 YEARS	<i>‘I like how it takes (with no traffic) about five minutes to get the other side of town.’</i>
	<i>‘There are plenty of community services to support locals and a large portion of our community gets involved through volunteering.’</i>
25–34 YEARS	<i>‘Everyone knows everyone or someone that knows you. Trusting relationships. Small businesses still locally owned. Great schools and early childhood centres with diversity. Everything needed is close with access for those that know how and have the mean.’</i>
	<i>‘The potential for positive change. People and businesses that are innovative and willing to try new ideas.’</i>
35–44 YEARS	<i>‘Becoming more culturally diverse and celebrating different cultural events.’</i>
	<i>‘Small town vibes.’</i>
45–54 YEARS	<i>‘Beautiful scenery, some great restaurants, no traffic.’</i>
	<i>‘Small enough to feel rural and easy to get out into the outdoors, but large enough to have a full range of services.’</i>
	<i>‘The climate supports the ability to grow a wide range of produce locally.’</i>
55–64 YEARS	<i>‘Compact, connected to the environment with nice outdoor spaces in and around town.’</i>
65–74 YEARS	<i>‘Flat land, ease of walking to town centre. Fairly good community spirit. Very good weather compared with much of NZ.’</i>
75+ YEARS	<i>‘Friendly people and good weather.’</i>

BLenheim'S CHALLENGES: What are some challenges Blenheim faces?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The main challenge locals in Blenheim highlighted was **housing (45%)**. Right across the spectrum locals talked about the challenges around social housing, the price of rental property, homelessness, the struggle to get into home ownership. One local said '...a housing shortage makes it hard for renters like me to move when necessary. I can see how easy it is to become homeless would like to buy our first home in a couple of years but we pay a moderately high rent for our humble bungalow and will need to save in earnest despite being two well-qualified young professionals because the competition to buy a home means multiple bidders driving the prices up... And if all that's hard for us it must be much harder for low-income families.' These sentiments regarding housing, renting and homelessness were echoed across the community's responses.

Locals talked about the wine industry and the role it plays in driving socio-economic inequality and disparity in the community. The lack of economic diversification in the area meant that many locals were 'working poor' who were confined to employment with **low wages (8%)** because there were no other options. Locals highlighted the rising **cost of living (37%)**, unaffordable housing and low wages are driving **poverty (18%)** levels in Blenheim. Locals also talked about **gangs (26%), drugs (13%)**, particularly meth, and **crime (40%)** in their community. 'Blenheim is growing economically and developing lots of stuff, but I fear there are groups that are not that well catered for and are being left behind. That includes young people, I don't think there are good supports for vulnerable youth once they leave school.' A challenge for locals in Blenheim is the limited activities and training opportunities for **young people (45%)**, and that many young people have no direction. Locals also highlighted challenges for Blenheim's **ageing population (9%)**, particularly in light of a **healthcare (16%)** system, which locals believe is inadequate to address the needs of the community.

KEY INFORMANTS

There are significant challenges around housing, often underpinned by financial income. There is a big divide between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', many are doing it really tough, many of the jobs here have low wages. Youth offending continues to increase, there are a lot of young people who come from broken families or unstable homes. The not-for-profit organisations on the ground are struggling for funding to meet the needs of these young people. Meth is an issue here; violence and sexual assaults are increasing. The presence of gangs is also increasing. The normalisation of alcohol here contributes to underage drinking and alcohol harm.

Table 23:

	17% Inadequate services	12% Food hardship	11% Homelessness	10% Unemployment	10% Petrol	9% Doctor	9% Theft
<2 YEARS	<p><i>'Shortage of doctors is a major concern.'</i></p> <p><i>'Being of smaller size, funding is less.'</i></p>						
2-5 YEARS	<p><i>'Access to services, both paid and community services, such as therapy, speech and language services, etc.'</i></p> <p><i>'Very cliquy small community that has a large socio-economic divide. There are a lot of transient people in this town and there is a huge meth and gang problem.'</i></p> <p><i>'Excess drinking culture.'</i></p> <p><i>'Try getting a doctor's appointment within a week, unless you've chopped an arm off or something.'</i></p>						
5-10 YEARS	<p><i>'The same as all over Aotearoa. Not enough houses for poor people, not enough income for low-wage earners, a lack of respect for essential workers.'</i></p> <p><i>'Homeless and lack of housing and increasing food costs.'</i></p> <p><i>'I can see how easy it is to become homeless. If our landlord was to sell the place, we would be up against many, many other applicants for a new rental.'</i></p>						
10+ YEARS	<p><i>'Youth who appear to have no direction.'</i></p> <p><i>'Escalating violence and drug, loss of hope and moral values.'</i></p> <p><i>'Working poor'. Lots of alcoholism that goes unnoticed or viewed as the norm being a wine region.'</i></p> <p><i>'The rich (wine growers) keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer. Low wages and not enough affordable housing.'</i></p>						

Table 24: The Blenheim community and my wellbeing

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A
'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY PHYSICAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,' (EG, HEALTH, FOOD, HOUSING)					
<p>17%</p> <p><i>'Many great local doctors (if you can get in), great local food; we can grow lots of things here to help with costs.'</i></p> <p><i>'I can find it, but I'm educated and have access to it.'</i></p>	<p>47%</p> <p><i>'You can find information easily, however, getting something done about it is completely different.'</i></p> <p><i>'I can, but others can't.'</i></p> <p><i>'Sometimes we need to travel some distance, especially for health.'</i></p>	<p>21%</p> <p><i>'There are well established foodbanks and social supports, but the housing is terrible, and accessing GPs, for example, can be hard as most of them have their books closed most of the time.'</i></p>	<p>10%</p> <p><i>'Health support is very poor. Lack of doctors and funding.'</i></p> <p><i>'Rentals and housing in Marlborough are difficult for people to access.'</i></p>	<p>5%</p> <p><i>'It took over a year after I moved here to be able to get into a doctor. For those in a lower income bracket there is a housing problem with little to no affordable housing available. The foodbank, while they do a good job do not have enough variety for people.'</i></p>	

KEY INFORMANTS: Blenheim has a range of physical activities, such as gyms, bootcamps and walking tracks. There is a strong network of not-for-profit organisations that provide food. Areas that are lacking are healthcare and housing. Healthcare services are under resourced and do not have the capacity to support the community. It is also very difficult to find a rental property that is affordable, of good quality and size, particularly for big families.

Table 24: The Blenheim community and my wellbeing (continued)

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A
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**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, ANXIETY, HAPPINESS, STRESS)**

<p>13% <i>'One of the things that greatly helps is access to green space, and Blenheim is largely good for this.'</i></p>	<p>33% <i>'...you have to wait too long for this type of support while things keep getting worse for the individual.'</i></p>	<p>22% <i>'Not sure. There's always lots of talk of support and lots of advertising, this doesn't necessarily help the people who are feeling low/in the pit.'</i></p>	<p>20% <i>'My partner has struggled to get mental health support; when he does contact the public mental health system, they are slow to respond and don't offer much help. We also tried the private system but it's expensive and hard to find a psychologist he connects with.'</i></p>	<p>9% <i>'Too hard to access adult mental health services and the wait list is too long.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Support is through youth support or wellbeing programmes as there are not enough counsellors or psychologists. The key barrier to accessing services was finances: those who can afford the support will get help and those who can't continue to struggle. The mental health system is also set up in a way that only those who are at imminent risk of harm would receive help and there is no intervention until people reach a tipping point.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SPIRITUAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FAITH, MEDITATION)**

<p>21% <i>'Spiritual support is easy to find as new people to the district will seek out their chosen belief system or ethnicity support.'</i></p>	<p>41% <i>'Yoga classes.' 'We are fortunate to have many faith-based groups in Blenheim that I believe pick up the slack where the mental health system fails.'</i></p>	<p>17% <i>'A lot of churches but nothing for Māori tohunga (spiritual experts)'</i></p>	<p>7% <i>'Do not believe in faith.'</i></p>	<p>12% <i>'I'm atheist but it's nice to know that there are multiple faith communities if I choose to return to religion.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: Faith-based groups, particularly Christian churches, have a strong presence in Blenheim. Faith-based groups often work alongside different social services in supporting the community. There are varying religious groups. Some groups highlighted were Marae Omaka, which support Māori and the role of Pasifika churches for the wellbeing of Pasifika youth.

**'I CAN FIND SUPPORT FOR MY SOCIAL WELLBEING IN MY COMMUNITY,'
(EG, FRIENDS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY)**

<p>24% <i>'I have my family.'</i></p>	<p>41% <i>'Prefer family and friends to socialise with.'</i></p>	<p>24% <i>'Some people have told me they struggle to make friends here and called it "cliquey", but I think if you join the right clubs you'll find the right people. There are heaps of clubs and interest groups here.' 'Hard to make friends here if you have no family connections or no way to engage in community activities.' 'I can find it, but it is not so easy for new people moving into the district. And often they then find it difficult to be accepted into the group which is too often based on income levels.'</i></p>	<p>6% <i>'The Blenheim community is very closed off and finding friends is very hard.'</i></p>
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KEY INFORMANTS: It may be challenging initially to connect in Blenheim if people are not already established here, but there are support programmes to help, particularly youth and families. Social supports can often be found in sports groups or hobby groups. There are many opportunities to socially engage in Blenheim and locals can find these on Neighbourly or Marketplace, etc. but it's just a matter of finding these and getting along to them.

THE STATE OF BLENHEIM

HOUSING

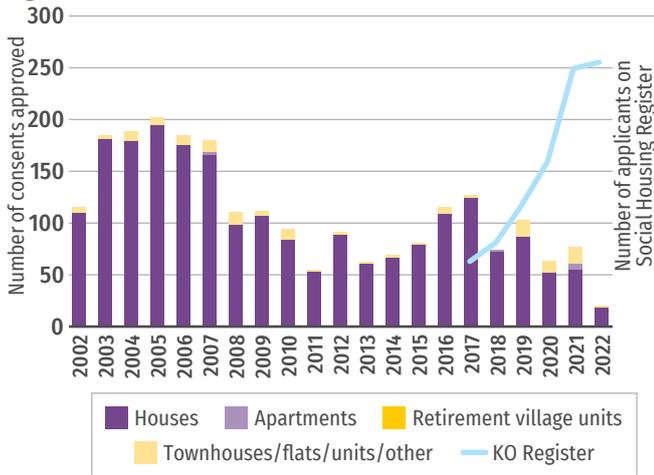
The key issue Blenheim locals highlighted is in regard to housing. **Table 25** and **Figure 25** aims to highlight the challenges locals have with affordable housing.

Table 25 is an overview of the cost and quality of housing for the Blenheim urban area. Across all these areas Blenheim has a homeownership rate that is lower than the national rate of 64.5 percent.

Table 25: The cost and quality of housing in the Blenheim area³³

	Home ownership (2018)	Household median income (2022)	Median property value (Jul 2022)	Median rent (Jun 2022)	Purchasing affordability (Jul 2022)	Rent affordability (Jul 2022)	Years to save for a deposit (Jul 2022)	Damp homes (2018)	Mouldy homes (2018)
Blenheim	38%	\$62,000	\$570,000	\$ 465	11%	39%	15	2.0%	3.0%
	▼ 9.8%	-	▲ 3.5%	▲ 2%	▲ 3.5%	-	▲ 3.5%		
Mayfield	46%	\$66,000	\$571,000	\$425	10%	34%	13	2.0%	3.0%
	▼ 13%	-	▲ 1.6	▼ 4.6%	▲ 1.6%	-	▲ 1.6%		
Redwoodtown East	54%	\$64,000	\$656,000	\$ 453	12%	37%	16	1.0%	1.0%
	▼ 8.7%	-	▲ 1.5%	▲ 2.6%	▲ 1.5%	-	▲ 1.5%		
Redwoodtown West	48%	\$60,000	\$621,000	\$ 466	12	40%	17	0.9%	1.0%
	▼ 10%	-	▲ 1.6%	▲ 1.7%	▲ 1.6%	-	▲ 1.6%		
Springlands	48%	\$80,000	\$792,000	\$462	11%	30%	14	1.0%	1.0%
	▼ 21%	-	▲ 2.7	▼ 0.4	▲ 2.7%	-	▲ 2.7%		
Witherlea East	56%	\$81,000	\$728,000	\$504	10%	32%	13	0.6%	2.0%
	▼ 19%	-	▲ 2.1%	▲ 2.4%	▲ 2.1%	-	▲ 2.1%		
Witherlea West	58%	\$86,000	\$910,000	\$481	12%	29%	15	0.3%	0.9%
	▼ 17%	-	▲ 2.1%	▼ 1.9%	▲ 2.1%	-	▲ 2.1%		
Whitney East	46%	\$62,000	\$657,000	\$461	12%	39%	17	1.0%	1.0%
	▼ 18%	-	▲ 2.9%	▲ 2.4%	▲ 2.9%	-	▲ 2.9%		
Whitney West	49%	\$72,000	\$661,000	\$474	10%	34%	14	2.0%	2.0%
	▼ 14%	-	▲ 2.5%	▼ 0.2%	▲ 2.5%	-	▲ 2.5%		
Key	Compare, 2013	Trending up: ▲	Trending down: ▼	Improving	Worsening	No Change			

Figure 25: Consents for new builds in Blenheim



While the average household income is \$87,000 in New Zealand, all areas of Blenheim have lower household income levels. However, **Table 26** shows that the rates (measured as the proportion of the locals claiming a benefit) for those on benefits are lower than the national benefit rates (other than Blenheim Central and Mayfield suburbs). This could reflect the ‘working poor’ which locals highlighted. Between the highest income levels (Witherlea West) and the lowest (Redwoodtown West) there is a \$26,000 difference in income levels, however, the median rent in these areas are all within a similar range. Residents in Redwoodtown West have the lowest median household income and pay one of the highest amounts in rent in Blenheim.

An ideal rental affordability level identifies that 30 percent or less of household income is spent on rent. All suburbs in Blenheim have a rent affordability higher than 30 percent (except for Springlands and Witherlea). The differences in income and household value across the community may suggest levels of inequality in Blenheim. Purchasing affordability is the percentage of household income that will be spent on mortgage repayments. These figures show that renters would be paying significantly less on mortgage repayments than if renting. However, as shown in **Table 25**, the number of years it would take to save for a deposit, range between 13 to 17 years and has been increasing across all suburbs.

The last point to highlight in regard to housing in Blenheim is that consents for construction of new builds have been continuing to decline since 2007, as shown in **Figure 25**³⁴. Consents granted in the past 10 years have declined by 44 percent compared with the 2002 to 2012 decade. In addition, **Figure 25** shows the number of people on the Housing Register³⁵ (blue line) in Marlborough (n= 255). When overlaid with the number of building consents, there is not enough housing being built in Blenheim to address locals on the public Housing Register. These figures reiterate what the Blenheim locals have highlighted: housing is unaffordable and housing is unavailable.

Table 26: Benefits table for the Blenheim urban area

	NZ	Blenheim Central	Springlands	Mayfield	Whitney	Redwoodtown	Witherlea
Deprivation Index		8	4	8	6	6	3
Population		3191	4726	3372	5132	6023	6069
Overcrowding	0.632	0.622	0.58	0.62	0.586	0.584	0.507
Sole Parent Support	2.29	2.31	2.29	3.43	2.09	2.59	1.52
Job Seeker Support	5.63	5.91	3.45	6.82	4.58	4.97	3.18
Means tested benefit	3.03	3.35	1.8	3.3	3.77	3.65	1.89

Key Higher than national rate

Table 27³⁶ shows the beneficiary proportion rates and deprivation index of areas in Blenheim. The rates for people on Job Seeker Support,³⁷ Sole Parent Support and those who are receiving a means-tested benefit are relatively similar to the national rate. Mayfield and Blenheim Central are the only two areas that have a higher proportion than the national proportion. This would coincide with the deprivation level of these areas both being 8 (ie, high economic deprivation).

CRIME

Figure 26: Police National Wastewater Testing Programme for Blenheim (2019-2022)

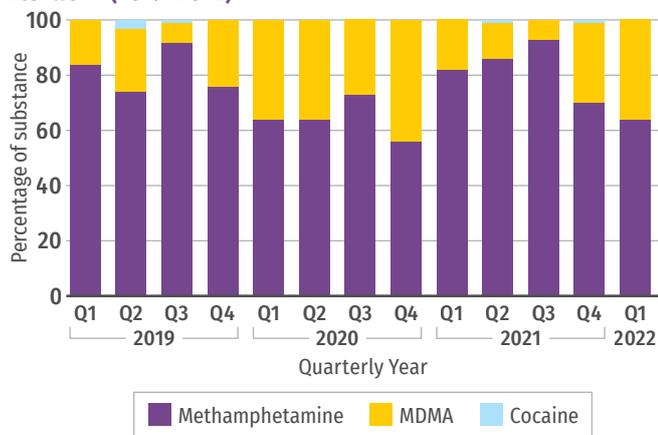


Figure 26³⁸ looks at the Police National Wastewater Testing Programme, which measures the proportion of drugs in Blenheim’s wastewater. Meth continues to be the primary drug used in Blenheim, despite the proportion of meth decreasing in the last two measurement quarters. On average 292g of meth is consumed in a week for the Tasman area, including Blenheim.

Figure 27: Victimisations in Blenheim 2017-2022

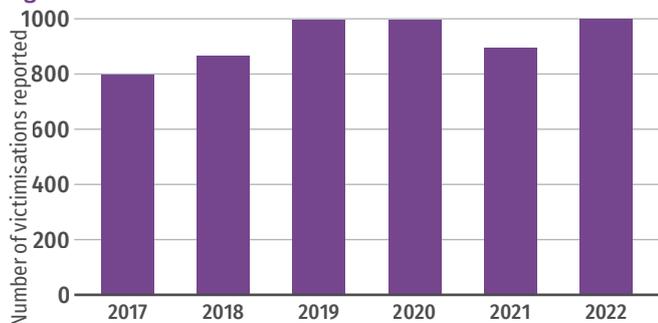
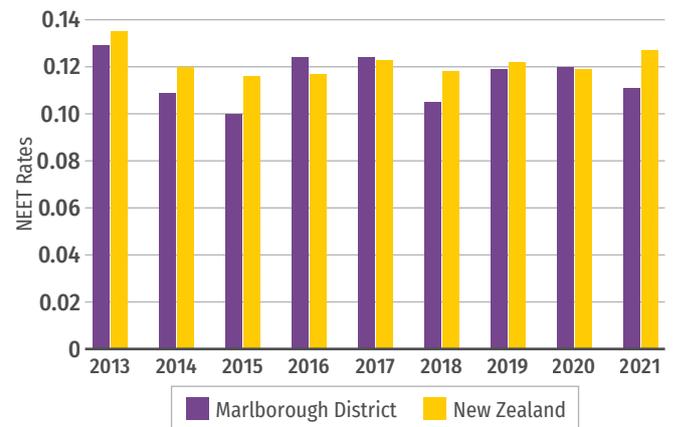


Figure 27³⁹ shows the number of people who have experienced a crime (to themselves or their property) in Blenheim, and reported it to the police. The number of people in Blenheim who has experienced and reported an alleged crime has been gradually increasing over the past five years, and has increased by 25 percent since 2017. These figures reflect the community’s concern with regards to crime, safety and drugs in Blenheim.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Many locals are concerned by the lack of opportunities for young people in Blenheim. School leaver destinations in Marlborough show almost half of school leavers do not carry on into further training or study. **Figure 28⁴⁰** also shows the NEET (not in education, employment, or training) rates for Marlborough and New Zealand. Relative to the national rates, Marlborough NEET rates are lower.

Figure 28: NEET rates for Marlborough and New Zealand (2013-2021)



BLenheim’S COMMUNITY INVESTMENT: If you were given a billion dollars to invest in Blenheim, what are three to five areas you would invest it in and why?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

‘Housing, housing, housing!’ Almost **80%** of locals said they would invest somewhere along the housing spectrum, whether it was in homelessness, renting, social housing or home ownership. Many of the challenges that the community faces are often rooted in some shape or form in the issues related to housing. Affordable safe houses would give the community a greater platform to be able to address the other issues such as poverty, cost of living and crime. **Healthcare (51%)** was also an area locals would invest in by bringing doctors and nurses into Blenheim, retaining them in quality employment, to support the physical wellbeing of the community. Locals would invest in other healthcare avenues, such as Māori support for Māori people, and support for senior health. Locals would also invest in activities, **events (16%), facilities (21%)** and

programmes for the community, but particularly for **youth (27%)**, ensuring that there are options for young people when formal education doesn’t work out for them.

KEY INFORMANTS

- 1 Funding low-level mental health services, like counselling; everyone who needs assistance will have access to such support when needed.
- 2 Healthcare services—people are not waiting 8 to 10 hours in the emergency department.
- 3 Youth Programmes—provide training opportunities that build resilience and confidence in young people.
- 4 Rid Blenheim of meth.
- 5 Schools—resourced well, and have healthcare and wellbeing staff employed to support students.

Table 27:

27%	22%	28%	25%	24%	23%	22%	16%	16%	22%
Services	Parks, etc	Community	Infrastructure	Schools	Mental health	Family	Food	Seniors	Education
1 ‘Activities young people can participate in: go carts, trampolining, etc.’									
2 ‘Diversifying the agriculture into less of a monoculture.’									
3 ‘Providing affordable, pleasant, accommodation.’									
4 ‘Identifying local “starting out” job roles for youth leaving school.’									
5 ‘Reducing the impact of drugs and alcohol.’									
6 ‘Medical: access to healthcare from doctors to specialists to hospital care.’									
7 ‘Create a fund to assist non-govt funded groups in their work in our community.’									
8 ‘I would absolutely build affordable housing no question; accessible rentals with an income tested rent and designed in a community-centric way with shared green spaces and rooms for groups and services to meet.’									
9 ‘I would build a youth facility centred around a specific recreational pursuit. Something like rock climbing or VR gaming but with spaces to socialise, a cafe, discounts for people aged under 21 or 25.’									
					10 ‘I would invest in housing, medical centres and education that focuses on Māori people, as Māori patients typically receive inequitable access to interventions and quality of care.’				
					11 ‘Housing/housing/housing/housing/housing. Having warm, dry housing is the basis of good health and wellbeing. If a person is not decently housed then so many health, education, and welfare problems follow on. While affordability is also a major part of housing, improvement can be achieved by the local authority not setting rules about the type/size of housing that can be built, such as stipulating that housing in a particular area can only be three bedroom and above!’				
					12 ‘Focus on keeping teenagers in school or in courses that lead to work for those teenagers who are not academically inclined.’				
					13 ‘More activities for children under the age of 10 that are low cost so families can afford to keep costs low.’				
					14 ‘A bypass to get rid of the ferry traffic and trucks that clog up Grove Road several times a day.’				

BLenheim'S ASPIRATION: In five years' time, what changes would you like to see in Blenheim?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Locals aspire to have a community where everybody is in a warm, affordable, quality **home (75%)** and no one is homeless. Locals also continue to highlight the hope that there would be adequate **healthcare (41%)** services for the community, particularly for mental health support, and for doctors. Blenheim locals reiterated both the challenges that **young people (19%)** face and the need for specific initiatives, services and facilities to set young people up to succeed. Locals also hoped for greater inclusivity and diversity in their **community (27%)**.

KEY INFORMANTS

Mental health and healthcare services would be adequately funded so that doctors and nurses are not burnt out. Mental health services would be creative and think outside the box to provide innovative and alternative solutions that engage with the arts. NGOs would be funded adequately to continue their work without having to make do with a shoestring budget. Blenheim would be a safe place of opportunities that is free of judgement for young people. The community would be more connected and working together to support each other.

Table 28:

	19%	28%	20%	20%	18%	19%	21%	18%	24%	26%
	Facilities	Traffic	Family	Children	Schools	Events and activities	Parks, etc	Climate change	Services	Infrastructure
17-24 YEARS	'More things for youth to do.'									
25-34 YEARS	'Definitely housing. Better pay for the RSE vineyard workers.'									
	'People are invested in and heard.'									
35-44 YEARS	'I hope there will be less housing issues and more support for low-income families and young people.'									
	'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.'									
45-54 YEARS	'Equal healthcare for everyone. No gangs. No underbelly of drugs. Safer streets. More community projects.'									
	'I would like to see more people helping one another. More doctors. Less crime and less mental health issues.'									
55-64 YEARS	'No homelessness or families living in cars. Nobody feeling that their only option is suicide.'									
	'In a perfect world, the gangs and meth would be gone! There would be more affordable housing and better support for those in need, especially people with mental health issues.'									
65-74 YEARS	'Education hub linking learners to permanent well paid local employment. We have to solve this problem to keep our kids in Blenheim and solve the skill shortage.'									
	'More affordable housing both for rent and purchase, better education facilities and training for young people, social worker in every school and Tamariki nurse contact and monitoring with all children aged 0-4 weekly.'									
75+ YEARS	'The homeless housed. Everyone having nutritious food and knowing how to grow it. Everyone having a living wage.'									
	'Flourishing multicultural society that spans all age groups.'									
75+ YEARS	'Everyone in a suitable home. Employment for all people.'									

SUMMARY

Blenheim boasts many qualities that small New Zealand has: great weather, scenic and beautiful, compact, quiet, and a strong community where people know each other. But it also carries many of the challenges of small New Zealand towns, such as limited opportunities for young people, a shortage in healthcare staff to address the needs of the population and the availability of affordable housing.

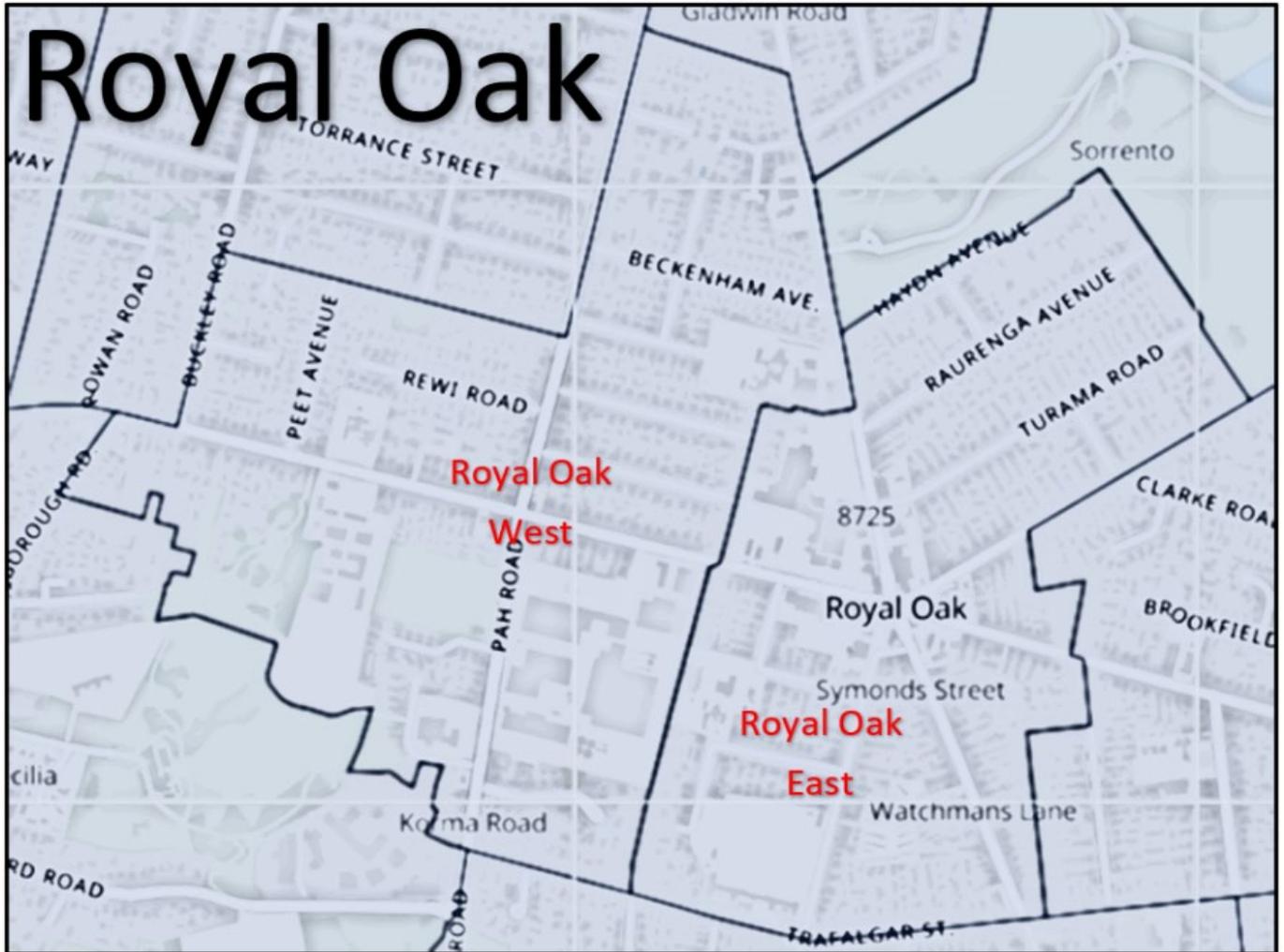
The demand for housing in Blenheim continues to grow as the population increases. However, the supply or potential supply of housing is non-existent. The lack of housing rental stock creates a competitive market, which makes it difficult for locals looking for a home to rent. As a result, the price of rental properties will continue to go up, thus increasing the unaffordability of housing. For Blenheim locals, unaffordable housing is further perpetuated by low wages. The industries that have created the most jobs in Blenheim since 2011 are agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing⁴¹ all of which have relatively low wages. To add further to these challenges, the current cost-of-living crisis is creating significant financial hardship for some locals. Seeking support from a counsellor for mental health service is also not an option, as mental health services and healthcare services are often at full capacity.

Despite all these challenges, locals highlighted solutions, such as diversifying the economy to lift wages and significant investment across all areas of housing—home ownership, rental properties, social housing and homelessness support. The majority of investment that locals hoped to make was around opportunities for young people. The consensus of many locals highlight throughout the survey is that the lack of opportunities would result in young people leaving town. The lack of engagement also means that young people are at risk of falling in amongst the wrong crowd. Locals highlighted the increasing presence of gangs and drugs, particularly meth, in Blenheim.

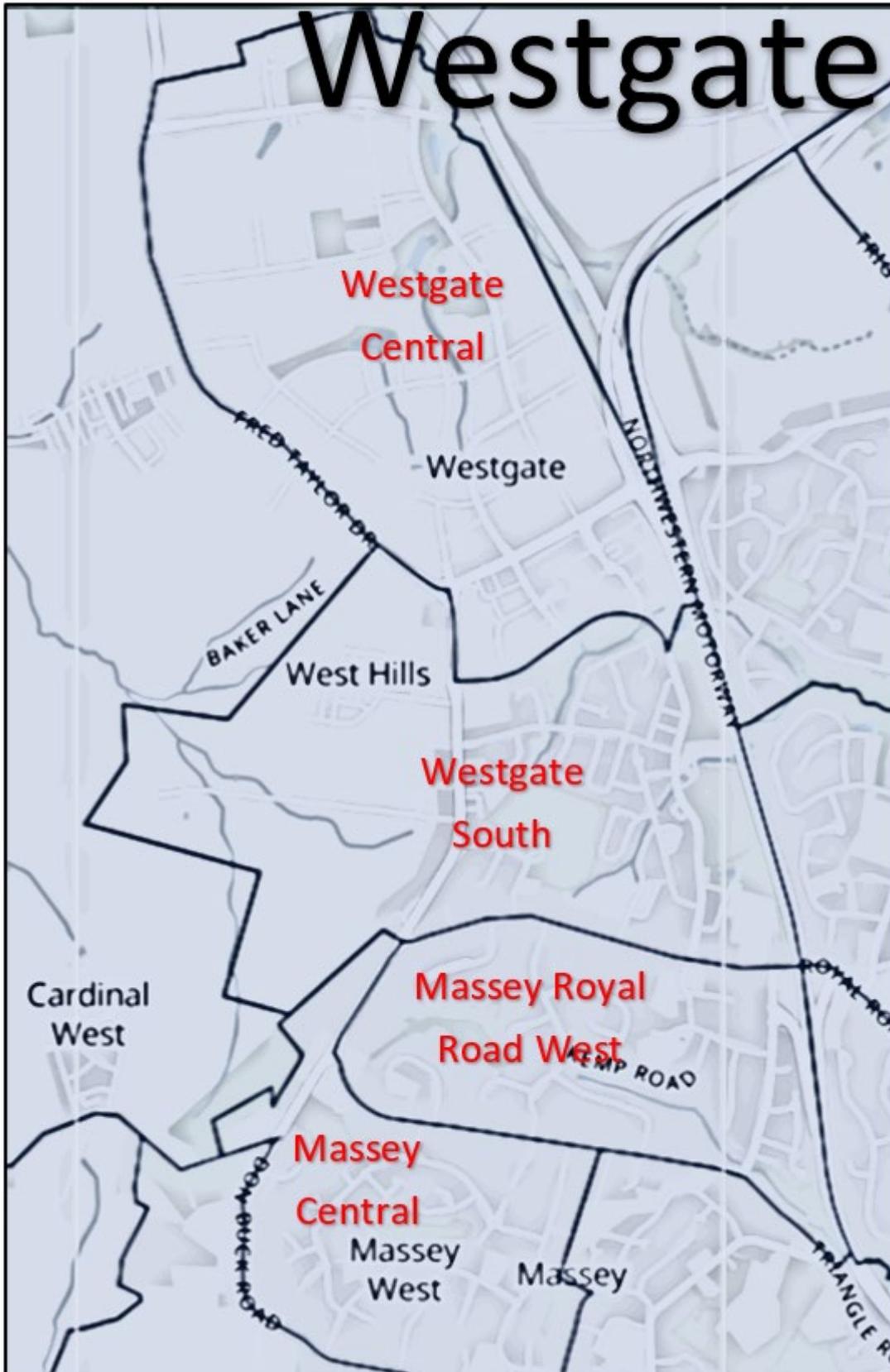
Forging a way forward for locals in Blenheim is through adequate housing and opportunities for young people. One local stated, 'while Blenheim as a town thrives economically, there are many who are being left out'. Ensuring inclusion, empathy and support to gird the community ensures that locals do not take a detrimental path.

APPENDIX—MAPS OF EACH COMMUNITY⁴²

Royal Oak



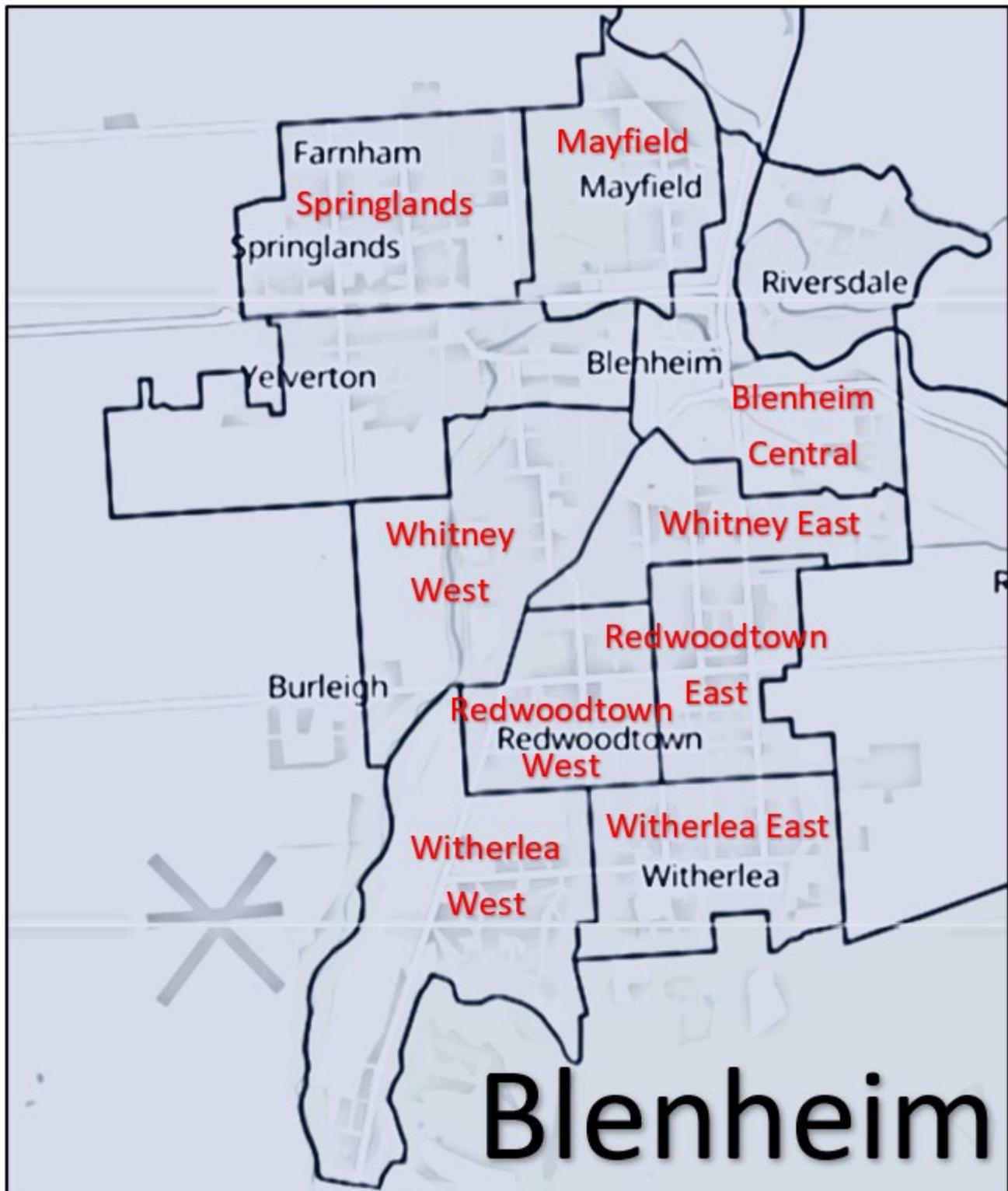
Westgate



Petone



Blenheim



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