

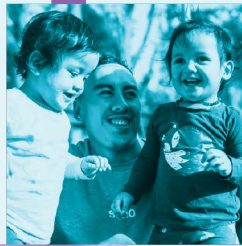


Te Ope Whakaora

## Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

# STATE of the NATION 2024



## The Things We Inherit Ngā Tukunga Iho

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February 2024*

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

*The theme of this year's report is 'Ngā Tukunga Iho'—translated 'The Things We Inherit'.*

Aotearoa New Zealand now looks back on 2023 as a point of transition. With the recent elections now in our rear-view mirror, we need to take a careful look at where we find ourselves—beyond the emotive cries of disaster, overblown pictures of achievements and unrealistic or simplistic promises and solutions for entrenched problems.

We have a new government that cannot take credit for the positive developments outlined in this report or be blamed for the disturbing developments that have taken place over the last one to three years.

For The Salvation Army, our primary focus is on the most marginalised, including the 150,000 people who access our services annually. The report is an indication of what we as a people, along with our government, have inherited to this point. It will also serve as a measure of the new government's performance over the next two to three years. It is about people—beyond the economy, GDP or inflation. It is about how our people are doing.

Among many other things, The Salvation Army asks these questions:

- Will child poverty continue to decline—markers of which have shown good progress over the last few years?
- Will unemployment remain comparatively low as it has to this point in time? Will the unacceptably high level of unemployment among the 15- to 25-year-old age group continue?
- Will we see more of our whānau attain affordable housing, or continue to struggle to pay rents and find housing—as too many still do now?
- Will the victims of crime receive the support they need? Will the real drivers of crime be dealt with? Can the high level of the reoffending of released prisoners be further reduced with the right reintegration support?

Over the last 20 or so years, the economy has been through its up and downs. However, over that time,

the gap between the rich and poor has remained too high. Encouragingly, over the last few years we have seen a reduction in income inequality. Will the new government build on this progress, or will we see renewed increases in inequality?

This report is a marker. Let us work for social progress for our whānau and keep our eyes on how our people are doing.

**Lt-Colonel Ian Hutson**

Director—Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

# INTRODUCTION

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

The aim of this report is to focus on trends and outcomes at a national level to see what they can tell us about the overall state of our nation at the beginning of 2024. The statistics and data are mostly drawn from publicly available sources, and we aim to use the most recently available indicators for the year to 31 December 2023.

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

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

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*Several outcomes for children during 2023 (or the latest year data available) took a turn for the worse compared with previous years, but there were still signs of meaningful improvement in other indicators.*

*Child poverty is a key indicator of child wellbeing and by mid-2022 (most recent data) significant reductions in child poverty have been achieved since 2018. However, disparities in child material hardship rates continue to be high for Pacific children, Māori children and children in households affected by disability. In mid-2022, tamariki Māori made up nearly half of all children in material hardship and there had been no significant reduction in Pacific children's material hardship since 2019. The number of children in benefit households increased during 2023, meaning more children are at risk of living in poverty.*

*The overall level of psychological distress among young people aged 15–24 reduced somewhat in 2023 but is still some three times higher than a decade ago. At the same time, the number of deaths from suspected suicide declined in all age groups under 25 years, with the number among 15- to 19-year-olds the lowest in the past 15 years.*

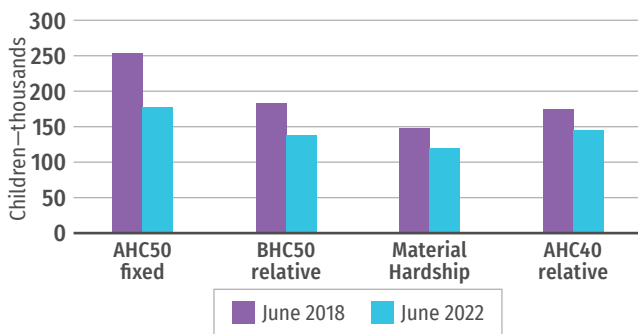
*Education outcomes in 2022 (most recent data) continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as natural disasters, with students in lower-income communities more affected than others. NCEA achievement rates continued to fall, with the proportion of students leaving school with at least NCEA Level 1 the lowest since 2013, while those leaving with University Entrance (UE) also fell. School attendance rates picked up again after record lows in the previous year but remain low compared with earlier years.*

*Youth offending increased for the first time since 2017, although it remains at levels less than half that of a decade ago. Reports of violent offending against children rose again in 2023, sharpening a trend of increasing violence towards children. Reports of concern about potential child abuse rose again after a decrease in the previous year but remained at levels lower than five years ago, and the number of substantiated child abuse cases remained around the same level as 2022. The teenage pregnancy rate increased for the first time in more than a decade, which was accompanied by an increase in the number of abortions in that age group.*

## Child Poverty

Child poverty rates in 2022 (most recent data) for the three primary measures compared with the 2018 baseline showed tens of thousands of children have been lifted out of income poverty and material hardship over that time (Table 1 and Figure 1). This has been helped by increased income transfers to lower-income households through the welfare system, combined with fewer households unemployed and increases in lower wages relative to middle wage earners.

Figure 1: Number of children in poverty selected measures—2018 and 2022 (June)



**AHC:** household income after housing costs.

**BHC:** household income before housing costs.

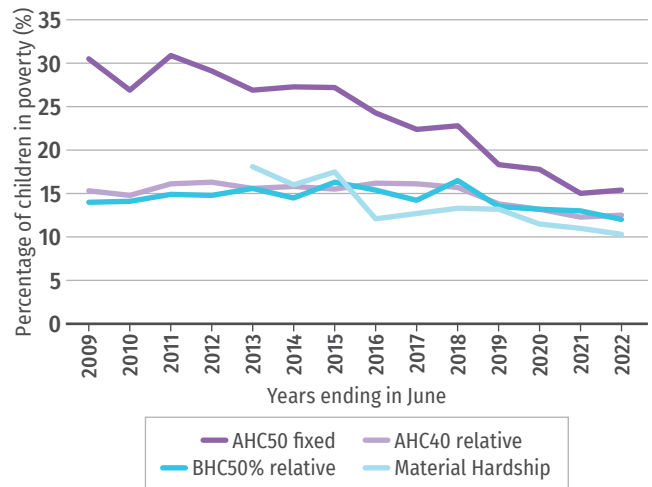
**MOVING LINE:** compares incomes with a contemporary equivalised median income.

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

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

Figure 2 shows poverty levels reducing over time. The most recent official figures are for the June 2022 year, but the Treasury’s May 2023 Budget estimates that (for two primary poverty measures—AHC50 fixed and BHC50 relative) the poverty rate would reduce further in the June 2023 year. Without further policy changes the BHC50 measure is projected to start to increase again in the 2024 year as median incomes are expected to increase relative to increases for lower-income households with children.

Figure 2: Child poverty rate selected indicators—2009–2022



### MATERIAL HARDSHIP

Material hardship is a key wellbeing measure that looks at the children’s lived experience. It is defined as those children in households that have to go without six (or more) of 17 items identified as important for wellbeing, such as putting off doctor’s or dentist’s visits, not paying utility bills, putting up with feeling cold and not replacing/repairing appliances.

### CHILDREN LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

Around 1 in 10 children (108,800) are living with a disability, but more than 1 in 5 (21.5%) of them are living in material hardship and this proportion

Table 1: Number of children in poverty selected measures—2018 and 2022 (June)

|        | AHC50 fixed | BHC50% relative | Material hardship | AHC40 relative |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 2018   | 253,800     | 183,400         | 147,600           | 174,300        |
| 2022   | 176,800     | 137,800         | 118,900           | 144,200        |
| Change | -77,000     | -45,600         | -28,700           | -30,100        |

has not changed significantly in the three years since data has been collected. Children living in a household where someone is disabled also experience higher material hardship, because caregivers with a disability tend to have lower earning potential and lower household incomes.

### MĀORI AND PACIFIC CHILDREN

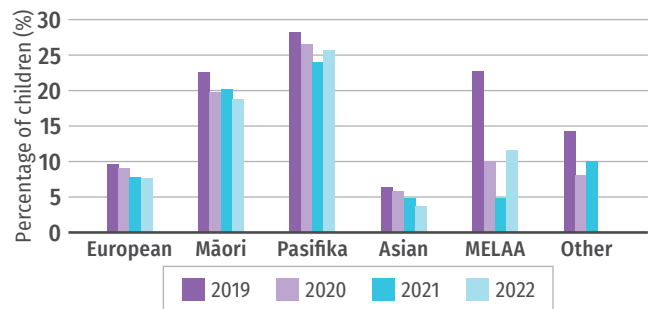
Material hardship statistics by ethnicity are available from 2019 and they show almost half (48%) of the 118,000 children living in material hardship in 2022 were Māori, but only 26 percent of all children identify as Māori (Table 2). Pacific children did not benefit at all from the reduction in material hardship between 2019–2022. Fourteen percent of all children identify as Pacific, but a third of children living in material hardship have a Pacific ethnicity. The number of Pacific children in hardship did not reduce between 2019–2022, even though the total number of children in material hardship reduced by 30,500.

Table 2: Number of children in material hardship—2019 and 2022

|              | 2019           | 2022           | Change         | All children     |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| European     | 70,900         | 57,600         | -13,300        | 754,200          |
| Māori        | 65,700         | 56,600         | -9,100         | 301,800          |
| Pacific      | 39,700         | 39,900         | 200            | 155,900          |
| Asian        | 11,300         | 7600           | -3700          | 204,300          |
| MELAA        | 5100           | 2900           | -2200          | 24,600           |
| Other        | 3300           | NA             | NA             | 17,400           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>149,400</b> | <b>118,900</b> | <b>-30,500</b> | <b>1,149,600</b> |

Figure 3 opposite shows how Pacific children and tamariki Māori experience material hardship at more than twice the level of Asian or European children. Note that the figures for MELAA (Middle East, Latin America and Africa ethnicities) and ‘other’ cover a small number of children (less than 4% of all children) with a resulting high statistical margin of error.

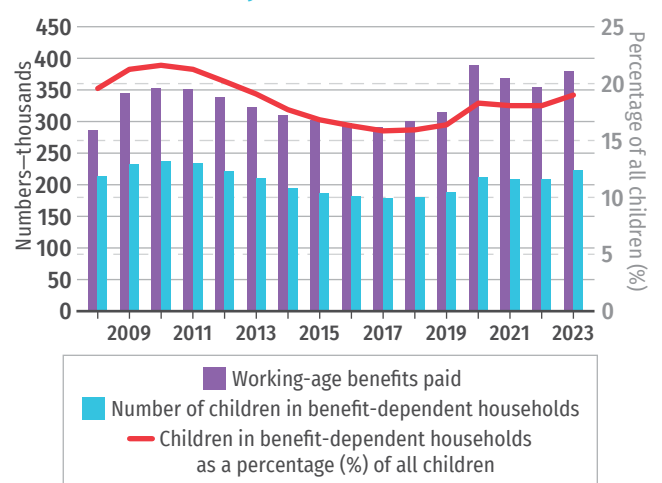
Figure 3: Percentage of children in material hardship by ethnicity—2019–2022<sup>1</sup>



### CHILDREN IN BENEFIT HOUSEHOLDS

The number of children in benefit households increased during 2023, and by December had reached 222,500, the highest number since 2012 (Figure 4). Most of the increase resulted from the increase in the number of people receiving the Sole Parent Support payment and reflects the overall increase in welfare benefit receipt. Overall, nearly one in every five children (19%) are in families/whānau relying on welfare support, which underlines how crucial it is that welfare policy ensures adequate incomes for those households in order to reduce poverty.

Figure 4: Number of children in benefit households—2008–2023 (December years)<sup>2</sup>





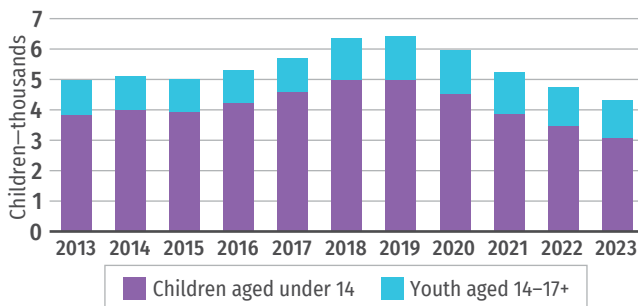
## Children At Risk

Measuring the number of children who are identified as affected by abuse and neglect, as well as recording the reported number of violent offences against children, are ways we attempt to assess the overall safety of children in this country.

### CHILDREN IN STATE CARE

The number of children in state care decreased further this year and, in June 2023, the total had reduced to 4317. This is down by a third from 2019 (6450) and is the lowest number over the past decade. The drop has been driven particularly by reducing the number of younger children (under 14 years) coming into state care (Figure 5). This trend is driven by change in policy over recent years towards seeking other whānau and community-based alternatives to putting children into the care of the state.

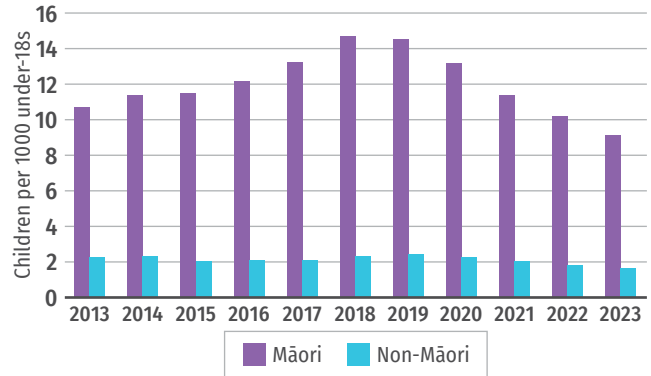
Figure 5: Number of children in state care—2013–2023<sup>3</sup>



The rate of children who end up in care is falling and is the lowest it has been for the past 10 years. Tamariki Māori are still five to six times as likely to be in state care as non-Māori, with nine in every 1000 tamariki Māori in care compared to less than two in every 1000 non-Māori children (Figure 6). The number of tamariki Māori in state care has reduced in recent years, as Oranga Tamariki

has actively pursued partnerships with iwi and community organisations that can offer children who are victims of abuse and neglect alternatives to placement in state care.

Figure 6: Children in care per 1000 children under 18 years—2013–2023<sup>4</sup>



### ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reports of concern (ROCs) for possible child abuse or neglect increased by 7.9 percent to 71,616 in 2023, after the significant decrease in 2022. In contrast, the number of reports found to need further action decreased to 31,991—an 8.2 percent decrease (Table 3). The total of 12,743 cases of substantiated abuse in 2023 was similar to 2022 (12,498). Even with the increased ROCs this year, overall the number of cases is still well below the levels of five and ten years ago.

The actual number of children affected by substantiated abuse is lower than the number of cases, because some children are victims of multiple instances of abuse. In 2023, over 10,000 children experienced one or more instances of abuse or neglect (Table 4). The number is lower than five years ago and is less than one percent of all children under 18 years.

Table 3: Notifications/referrals for possible child abuse or neglect—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>5</sup>

|                                        | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1 Y change | 5 Y change |
|----------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|------------|
| Care and protection reports of concern | 92,250 | 87,260 | 80,928 | 77,948 | 66,364 | 71,616 | 7.9%       | -22.4%     |
| Reports requiring further action       | 41,780 | 41,733 | 41,364 | 42,245 | 34,845 | 31,991 | -8.2%      | -23.4%     |
| Substantiations of abuse or neglect    | 14,263 | 15,958 | 15,682 | 15,462 | 12,498 | 12,743 | 2.0%       | -10.7%     |



**Table 4: Substantiations of child abuse or neglect—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>6</sup>**

|                                                             | 2018      | 2019      | 2020      | 2021      | 2022      | 2023      | 1 Y change | 5 Y change |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Emotional abuse                                             | 6810      | 7685      | 8084      | 7930      | 6349      | 5771      | -9.1%      | -15.3%     |
| Physical abuse                                              | 2953      | 3507      | 3133      | 3261      | 2737      | 3286      | 20.1%      | 11.3%      |
| Sexual abuse                                                | 1010      | 1066      | 1053      | 1267      | 1275      | 1177      | -7.7%      | 16.5%      |
| Neglect                                                     | 3490      | 3700      | 3412      | 3004      | 2125      | 2509      | 18.1%      | -28.1%     |
| Total abuse findings                                        | 14,263    | 15,958    | 15,682    | 15,462    | 12,498    | 12,743    | 2.0%       | -10.7%     |
| Number of individual children as victims                    | 11,622    | 13,018    | 12,861    | 12,725    | 10,426    | 10,284    | -1.4%      | -11.5%     |
| Percentage of all children                                  | 1.03%     | 1.14%     | 1.12%     | 1.10%     | 0.90%     | 0.88%     |            |            |
| Estimated numbers of children under 18 years mean June year | 1,131,300 | 1,138,600 | 1,150,000 | 1,155,100 | 1,156,600 | 1,171,700 |            |            |

## Children and Violence

A contrasting finding was a surge in violent offences recorded against children. In 2023, reported common assaults against children rose by 35 percent, and assaults causing injury by 17.9 percent. Sexual assaults continued the higher trend of recent years to reach almost 2000 (Table 5a).

This rise in the number of recorded offences was reflected in the large increase in the number of children who were victims of violence in the year ending June 2023 (Table 5b). The number of

victims is well above the level of five years ago, and the disturbing trend of increasing violence towards children continues to worsen (Figure 7). This increase in violent offences is part of a wider trend of increased crime in the past year [see [Crime and Punishment](#) p.43], which suggests that an increasing number of vulnerable children and young people are being caught up in a general increase in violent offending.

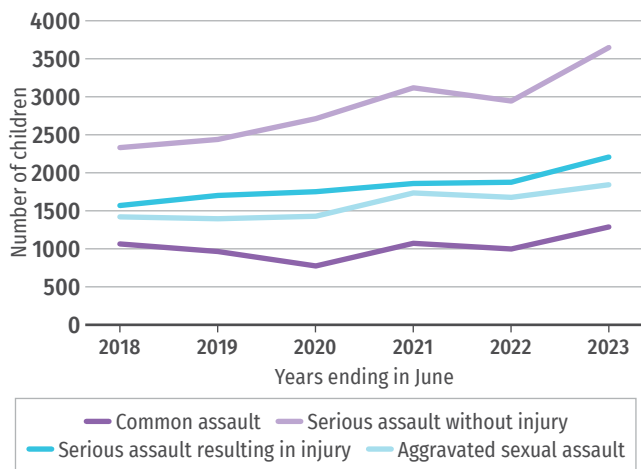
**Table 5a: Recorded violent offences against children aged under 15 years old—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>7</sup>**

|                                     | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 1Y change | 5Y change |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| Common assault                      | 1203 | 1114 | 890  | 1228 | 1141 | 1540 | 35.0%     | 28.0%     |
| Serious assault without injury      | 2580 | 2690 | 3088 | 3556 | 3404 | 4332 | 27.3%     | 67.9%     |
| Serious assault resulting in injury | 1669 | 1820 | 1874 | 1998 | 2067 | 2438 | 17.9%     | 46.1%     |
| Aggravated sexual assault           | 1483 | 1493 | 1509 | 1864 | 1790 | 1969 | 10.0%     | 32.8%     |

**Table 5b: Number of children aged under 15 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2018–2023<sup>8</sup>**

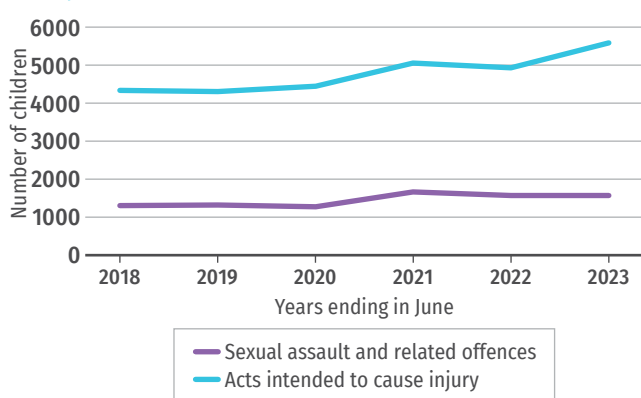
|                                     | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 1Y change | 5Y change |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| Common assault                      | 1061 | 961  | 771  | 1067 | 994  | 1284 | 29.2%     | 21.0%     |
| Serious assault without injury      | 2327 | 2437 | 2710 | 3112 | 2940 | 3647 | 24.0%     | 56.7%     |
| Serious assault resulting in injury | 1567 | 1696 | 1752 | 1854 | 1872 | 2207 | 17.9%     | 40.8%     |
| Aggravated sexual assault           | 1422 | 1392 | 1423 | 1735 | 1678 | 1840 | 9.7%      | 29.4%     |

**Figure 7: Number of children aged under 15 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>9</sup>**



Young people aged 15–19 years also experienced a similar rise in victimisation to violence intended to cause injury, but sexual assault numbers have not increased in the past two years (Figure 7a).

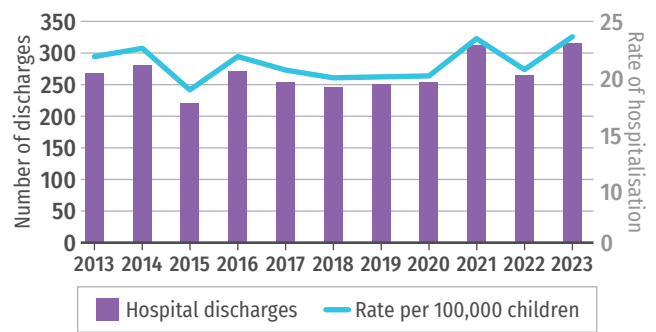
**Figure 7a: Number of children aged 15–19 years who have been reported as being victims of a violent crime—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>10</sup>**



Another indicator of harm against children under 15 years of age is the number who are hospitalised with injuries as a result of assault, abuse or neglect. Te Whatu Ora figures for the past decade show that the number of hospitalisations fluctuates from year to year (Figure 8 purple bars). In the year to June 2023, there were 315 children hospitalised by assault, abuse or neglect, above the average for the past 10 years of 267, and the highest number (and rate) recorded since at least 2013. The rate of hospitalisation per 100,000 children provides another comparison with previous years and shows how the rate has fluctuated between 24–33

hospitalisations per 100,000 children (Figure 8 blue line). For this measure there is not clear evidence of an increase or decrease in harm over time.

**Figure 8: Hospitalisations due to assault, abuse or neglect—2013–2023**



On average, seven children die each year from assault, abuse or neglect. The most recent confirmed figures are from the Child Mortality Review report from the Coroner’s Court that looks at deaths in 2015–2019.<sup>11</sup> In those five years, 35 children died as a result of assault, and the death rate of around one death per 100,000 children has not changed significantly in the past 30 years.<sup>12</sup>

## Youth Offending

Most children and young people have no contact with the youth justice system, with less than two percent of all young people under 18 years of age ending up with recorded offences.

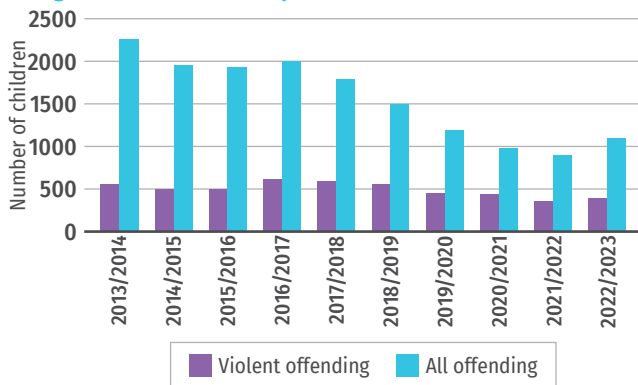
The year to June 2023 saw a pause in the decade-long downward trend in youth offending. Most young people who the police apprehended were dealt with through alternative approaches such as informal warnings or referral to Police Youth Aid for alternative action plans. Youth offending is considerably lower than a decade ago, with a more than 60 percent reduction of overall offending rates over that time period. The number of young people with more serious offending that leads to a family group conference or court action decreased by more than half, and young people remanded in custody decreased by more than a third.<sup>13</sup>

But the year to June 2023 marked the first year since 2017 that saw an increase in youth offending (Figure 9). The number of young people aged 10–16 years who had charges finalised in any court (1104) is less

than half that of ten years ago (2268) but included an increase of 210 compared with the previous year (a 23% increase).

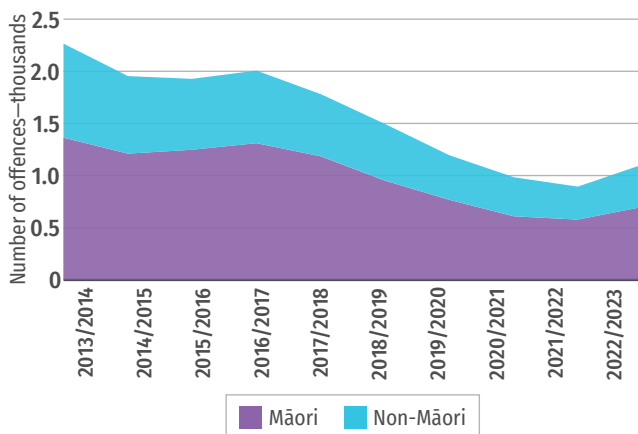
Around half of all those charged with offences such as burglary, break and enter, theft and related offences—a more than 40 percent increase on 2021 and 2022 numbers. These are the categories of offence that would include offences such as ram raiding, as that does not have its own distinct statistical classification.

**Figure 9: Number of children and youth aged 10–16 years charged—2013–2023 (June years)<sup>14</sup>**



Rangatahi Māori have seen similar large decreases in offending over the past decade as non-Māori, but continue to be disproportionately impacted by youth offending (Figure 10). Almost two-thirds of offences finalised in court involved rangatahi Māori, although only around a quarter of young people identify as Māori. For rangatahi Māori, the offending rate in 2022 was 502 per 10,000 young people, compared to 224 per 10,000 for the total population rate. There have also been large reductions in the re-offending rates for non-Māori and Māori.<sup>15</sup>

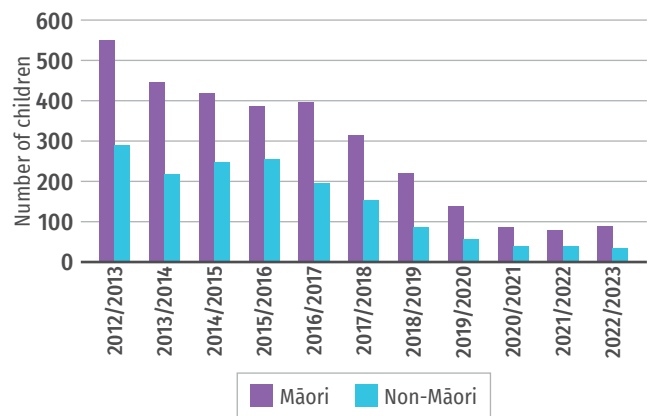
**Figure 10: Number of children and young people charged—Māori and non-Māori<sup>16</sup>**



The number of teenagers aged 17–19 who were sentenced to imprisonment in the adult courts is dramatically lower than 10 years ago. Over the past three years, around 120 young people every year have received prison sentences compared with 841 ten years ago (Figure 11).

This huge change has greatly reduced the number of rangatahi Māori who end up in the prison system. However, the disproportionate impact of sentencing remains, with 88 of the 122 sentenced in the year to June 2023 identified as Māori.

**Figure 11: Imprisonment sentences—17- to 19-year-olds<sup>17</sup>**

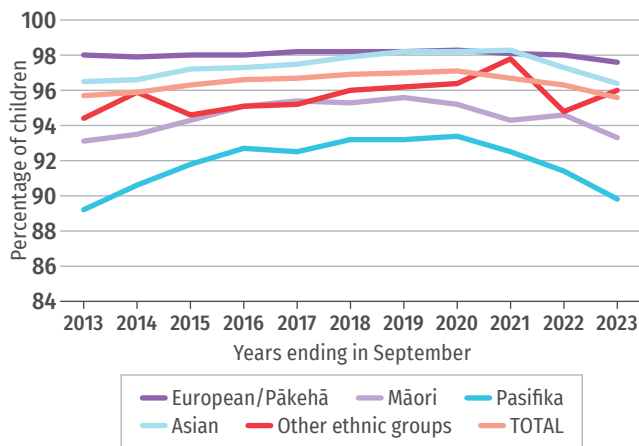


## Early Childhood Education

The extent to which children participate in early childhood education (ECE) prior to starting school has a strong influence on their future educational attainment. Most children in this country have some level of participation in ECE. In the year ended September 2023, just under 60,000 children (59,777) started school. Of that group, a total of 2537 had unknown ECE attendance prior to starting school and a further 2535 did not attend ECE prior to starting school. As a result, the 54,505 children who did attend ECE prior to starting school represent a 95.6 percent known prior participation rate (Figure 12).

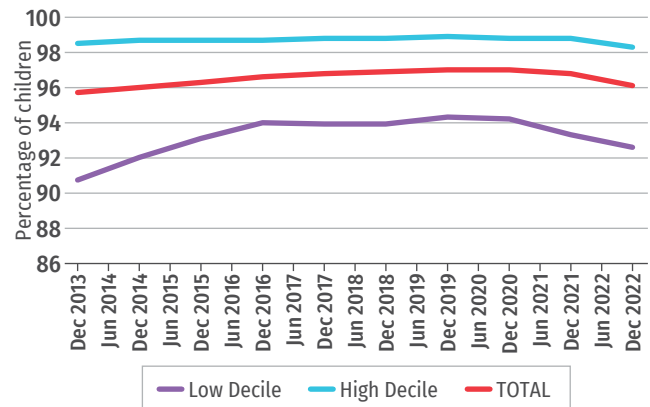
The prior participation rate has declined slightly since 2020 for all ethnicities and is back to the levels of a decade ago in 2013. The largest decline since 2020 has been for Pacific children (3.6 percentage points) and tamariki Māori (1.9 percentage points). In contrast, Pākehā children’s participation has shown a much smaller decline of 0.7 percentage points.

**Figure 12: Participation rate of children under five years in (ECE) prior to starting school—2013–2023 (September year)<sup>18</sup>**



Prior ECE participation in more social and economically deprived areas has declined more than in the lower deprivation areas, meaning the socio-economic divide on ECE participation had increased by the end of 2022 (Table 6 and Figure 13). From 2023, the school decile reporting has been discontinued as part of the move to a different equity funding model.

**Figure 13: Prior participation by school decile—2013–2022 (December)**



**ECE ENROLMENT**

Enrolment data for 2023 was not available before publication, but in 2022 ECE enrolments fell significantly to 181,473, some 6.8 percent lower than in 2021 (Table 7). This reduction affected all children but the reduction in the number of Māori children was slightly larger at 7.2 percent, meaning an increase in the disparity in participation rates between tamariki Māori and other children. As with prior ECE participation rates, it is children in the more economically and socially deprived communities that are most affected.

**Table 6: Prior participation by school decile—2013–2022 (December)<sup>19</sup>**

|                          |                     | Dec 2013   | Dec 2014   | Dec 2015   | Dec 2016   | Dec 2017   | Dec 2018   | Dec 2019   | Dec 2020   | Dec 2021   | Dec 2022   |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Prior participation rate | Low decile          | 90.7       | 92         | 93.1       | 94         | 93.9       | 93.9       | 94.3       | 94.2       | 93.3       | 92.6       |
| Prior participation rate | High decile         | 98.5       | 98.7       | 98.7       | 98.7       | 98.8       | 98.8       | 98.9       | 98.8       | 98.8       | 98.3       |
| Prior participation rate | Total               | 95.7       | 96         | 96.3       | 96.6       | 96.8       | 96.9       | 97         | 97         | 96.8       | 96.1       |
|                          | <b>LOW-HIGH GAP</b> | <b>7.8</b> | <b>6.7</b> | <b>5.6</b> | <b>4.7</b> | <b>4.9</b> | <b>4.9</b> | <b>4.6</b> | <b>4.6</b> | <b>5.5</b> | <b>5.7</b> |

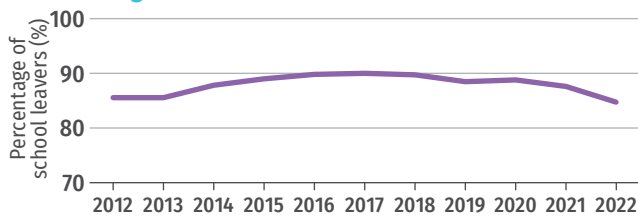
**Table 7: Early childhood education enrolment patterns—2017–2022 (June years)<sup>20</sup>**

|                                                                                       | 2017    | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Early childhood education enrolment patterns</b>                                   |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Total ECE enrolments licensed services                                                | 202,772 | 200,588 | 198,923 | 190,348 | 194,697 | 181,473 |
| ECE enrolment rate—under five years old population                                    | 65.7%   | 64.6%   | 63.8%   | 60.6%   | 62.7%   | 59%     |
| <b>ECE Enrolment rates for Māori and non-Māori children aged under five years old</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Māori                                                                                 | 56.0%   | 56.6%   | 55.9%   | 53.3%   | 54.5%   | 49.9%   |
| Non-Māori                                                                             | 70.5%   | 69.3%   | 68.6%   | 65.7%   | 67.5%   | 63.9%   |

## Educational Achievement

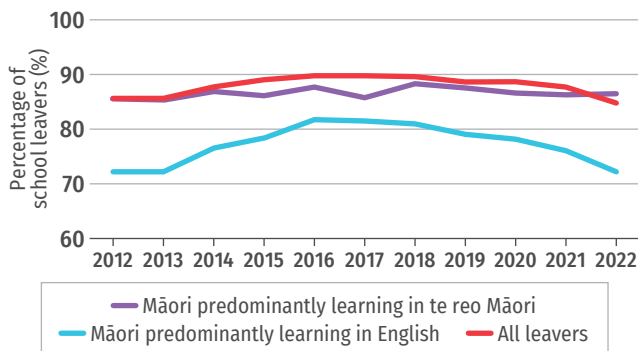
Education outcomes in 2022 (most recent data) continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as natural disasters, with students in lower income communities more affected. Education outcomes as measured by NCEA achievement rates continued to fall in 2022 (most recent data). The proportion of students leaving school with at least NCEA Level 1 was the lowest since 2013 (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Proportion of students leaving school with NCEA Level 1 or higher—2012–2022<sup>21</sup>



Māori students were more impacted with a larger decline in attainment for those Māori students learning in schools where English is the main language of instruction compared to all school leavers (Figure 14 light blue line). The continuing source of hope for greater equity in education is that the five percent of Māori students who are learning at school where the main language of instruction is te reo Māori (Figure 14 purple line) have an achievement attainment at the same rate as other school students.

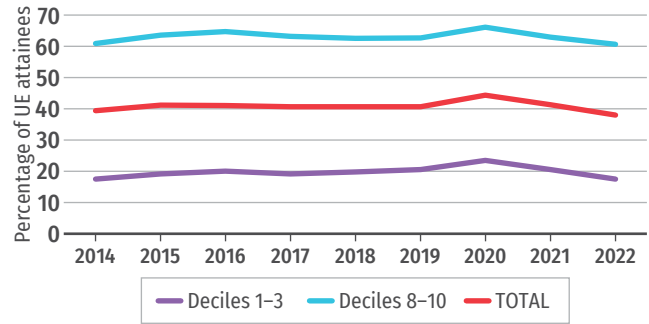
Figure 14a: School leavers with NCEA Level 1 or above, Māori and non-Māori—2012–2022<sup>22</sup>



The number of students overall leaving with UE also decreased, with the proportion falling to 38 percent in 2022, the lowest level since 2014. The decline in achievement impacted both schools in the more deprived areas (lower decile) as well as higher decile schools in the least deprived areas. But the

decline was larger in lower decile schools, with 17.5 percent of students achieving UE compared with 20.5 percent in 2019 pre-Covid-19, meaning a worsening of equity in outcomes on this measure (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Proportion of school leavers with UE by decile—2014–2022<sup>23</sup>

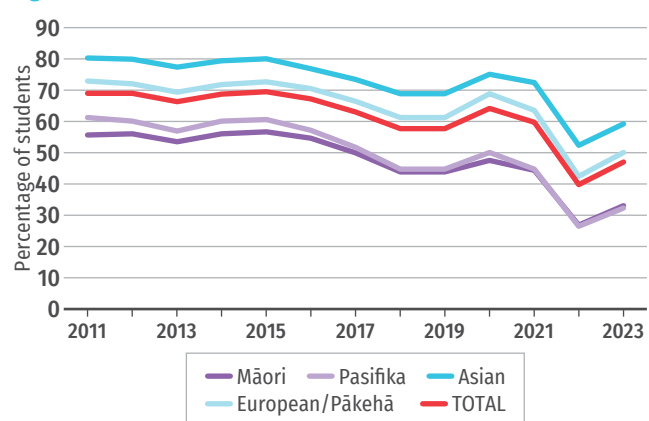


## STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

The second term of 2023 saw a turnaround from the large drop in student attendance in 2022. But attendance levels were still well below the 2021 level and pre-Covid-19 level. The fall in attendance affected all ethnicities, however Māori and Pacific students continue to have much lower rates of attendance than the overall student population (Figure 16).

Winter illness from Covid-19 and other post-Covid-19 respiratory illnesses played a role in the continuing lower attendance, but the figures also demonstrate the lasting impact of the pandemic disruption to the education of school students over the past four years.<sup>24</sup>

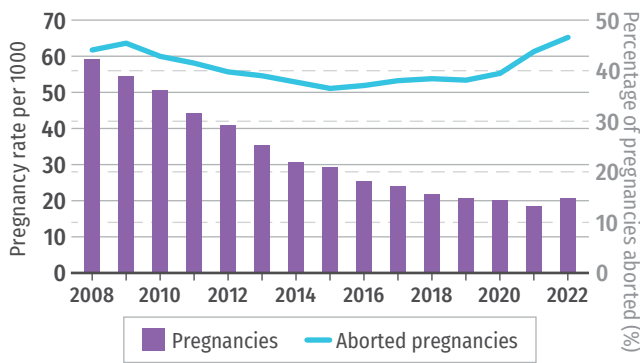
Figure 16: School attendance (above 90% Term 2)—2011–2023<sup>25</sup>



## Teenage Pregnancy

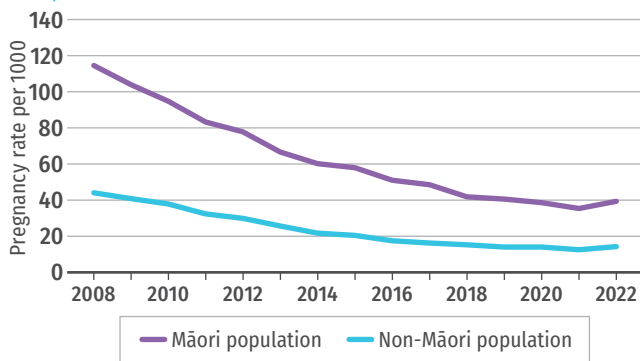
The estimated teenage pregnancy rate for 15- to 19-year-olds increased in the year to December 2022 (most recent data), ending the downward trend of more than 15 years (Figure 17). This was accompanied by a rise in the number of abortions in that age group, with just under half, 46.6 percent of pregnancies, ending in abortion.

Figure 17: Pregnancy and abortion rate, 15- to 19-year-olds—2008–2022<sup>26</sup>



Young Māori women still have a higher pregnancy rate compared to non-Māori. Although rates remain less than half that of 15 years ago, the disparity with non-Māori is not reducing (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Estimated teenage pregnancy rate, 15- to 19-year-olds, Māori and non-Māori—2008–2022<sup>27</sup>

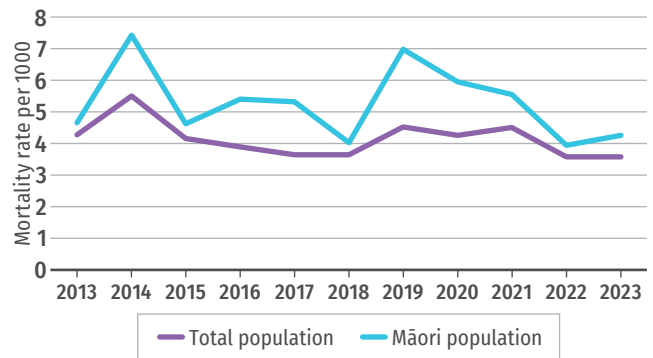


### INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Infant mortality rates in this country are very low by international standards. In the year to September 2023 there were 204 infant deaths in babies less than a year old. This represents an infant mortality rate of 3.6 deaths per 1000 live births. The number of deaths fluctuates from year to year, but the overall trend is downward over the past decade (Figure 19). But in 2023, the rate for Māori rose

slightly in 2023 to 4.3 per 1000, while the rate for the total population was unchanged.

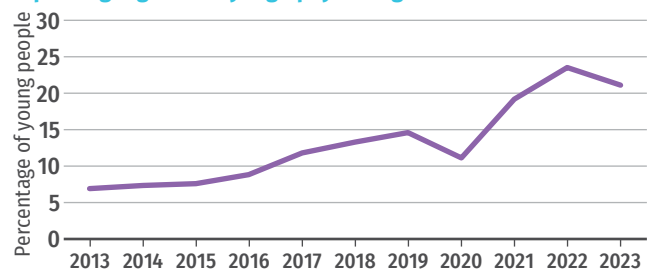
Figure 19: Infant mortality per 1000 live births, Māori and non-Māori—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>28</sup>



## Youth Mental Health

During 2023 just over one in five young people (21.1%) aged 15–24 years reported high levels of psychological distress, lower than in 2022 but still some three times higher the level than a decade ago (Figure 20). The NZ Health Survey results across other age groups showed increases compared with 2022, and the past four years since the Covid-19 pandemic began has seen a significant increase in levels of mental distress.

Figure 20: Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years reporting high or very high psychological distress<sup>29</sup>

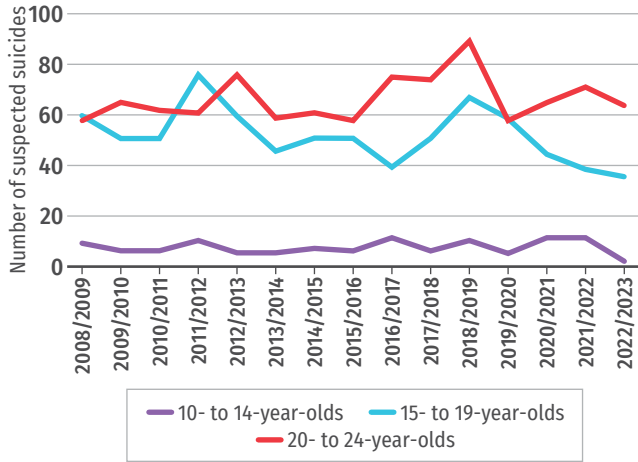


### YOUTH SUICIDE

The number of suicides in the age groups under 25 years declined in the year to June 2023. The number has been falling each year for the past five years in the 15- to 19-year-old age group, and in 2023 was the lowest number in the past 15 years (Figure 21). There were just three suspected suicides among children aged under 15 years, also the lowest number in the past 15 years. The 20- to 24-year-old age group has the highest suicide rate of any age group, and while the number of deaths in this age

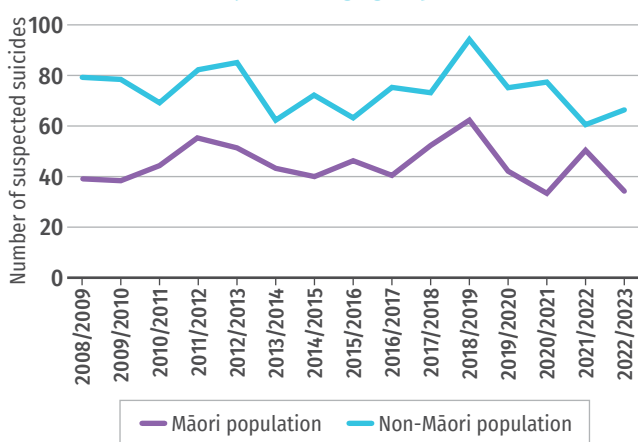
group reduced in 2023, it has continued to fluctuate around a similar level over the past 15 years.

**Figure 21: Number of suspected suicides for 10- to 14-year-olds, 15- to 19-year-olds and 20- to 24-year-olds— 2008–2023<sup>30</sup>**



The number of suspected suicides among rangatahi Māori aged 15–24 years also decreased in 2023 (Figure 22), but the rate per 100,000 population is almost twice that for non-Māori. Suicide was the main cause of death in all those aged 15–19 years in the period 2015–2019, according to the Child and Youth Mortality Review,<sup>31</sup> which serves to underline how important any progress is to reduce the pain and grief experienced by victims and their whānau, friends and community. This year’s reduction offers a sign of hope for a very tragic social issue.

**Figure 22: Number of suicide deaths among Māori and non-Māori in the 15- to 24-year-old age group—2008–2023<sup>32</sup>**





## OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Children and Youth

| CATEGORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | RESULT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p><b>CHILD POVERTY</b> Child poverty rates have declined in the year with June 2022 compared with 2018, but poverty rates remained much higher for Pacific, Māori and children living in households with a disability, with few signs of reductions in these disparities. The number of children in benefit households increased during 2023, meaning more children are at risk of living in poverty.</p>  | +      |
| <p><b>CHILDREN AT RISK</b> The number of children in state care declined again in 2023 and is the lowest number for more than a decade. Tamariki Māori continue to be most impacted by this, as more than two thirds of children in care are Māori. Reports of concern of potential abuse rose again in 2023 after falling in 2022, but the number of substantiated cases did not increase.</p>             | NC     |
| <p><b>CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE</b> Violence against children showed a significant increase in 2023, sharpening the trend of recent years, with the biggest increase in common assault.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | -      |
| <p><b>YOUTH OFFENDING</b> This increased in 2023 for the first time since 2017. However, overall youth offending levels are less than half what they were a decade ago. The ethnic inequalities in offending persist and do not appear to be reducing.</p>                                                                                                                                                  | -      |
| <p><b>EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)</b> The rate of prior participation before starting school has declined slightly in 2023, but at 96 percent is still high. Disparities in prior participation are increasing as Pacific and Māori rates are much lower than for other population groups. ECE enrolments in 2022 declined with fewer than 60 percent of children under five years enrolled in ECE.</p> | -      |
| <p><b>EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT</b> Ongoing Covid-19 as well as natural disasters continue to disrupt the education system in 2022 (most recent data). More young people left school with no NCEA qualification, and UE achievement rates also fell. Attendance rates at school rose slightly in 2023 but were still well below levels of previous years, and ethnic disparities in attendance increased.</p> | -      |
| <p><b>TEENAGE PREGNANCY</b> The pregnancy rate for 15- to 19-year-olds increased slightly in 2023, for the first time in more than a decade, and the proportion of those pregnancies aborted also rose.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | -      |
| <p><b>YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH</b> Young people reporting high levels of mental distress reduced in 2023, but remains three times higher than a decade ago. The youth suicide rate continued to decrease for 15- to 19-year-olds.</p>                                                                                                                                                                            | +      |

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## WORK AND INCOMES

*After an extended period with high levels of employment and workforce participation, 2023 saw signs of deterioration as rates reduced from the record highs of the recent years.*

*A huge surge in net migration during 2023 meant a rapid increase in population and in the number of people to meet demand for workers and fill vacant jobs. Thus, the number of people employed grew, at the same time as unemployment rose during the year, coming off the sustained record low level of the past two years. The impacts of the increase in unemployment did not fall evenly, with Māori and Pacific workers experiencing larger increases than others in their unemployment rates.*

*The economic situation also began to turn during the year, with real annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person reducing in the year to September 2023. GDP per person was still higher in 2023 than prior to Covid-19 in real terms, and the challenge for our society continues to be how fairly these resources are shared.*

*Wages continued to rise roughly in line with inflation, and income inequality had continued a five-year downward trend in 2022. Even as the gender pay gap reduced slightly, inequities in*

*incomes across gender and ethnicity remain persistent—more progress is needed.*

*Income support numbers steadily increased during 2023 after falling in 2022, as the number of people receiving Jobseeker support began to rise with unemployment rates. The number of people receiving hardship grants from government agencies remained around the same as in the previous year.*

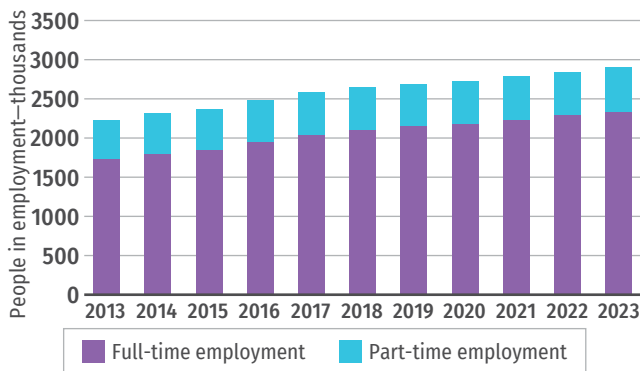
*Inflation remained high although decreasing from the previous year's peak. Household living cost pressures also remained high for people on low incomes, as they faced continuing high food and grocery price increases.*

*The proportion of households with children reporting some level of food insecurity rose sharply in 2023, including 40 percent of Pacific households with children. The volume of food assistance provided by Salvation Army Community Ministries increased by more than 40 percent on the previous year. This shows that progress made to reduce hardship in previous years is not keeping up with additional cost pressures, as the need for food support and other hardship assistance increases.*

## Employment

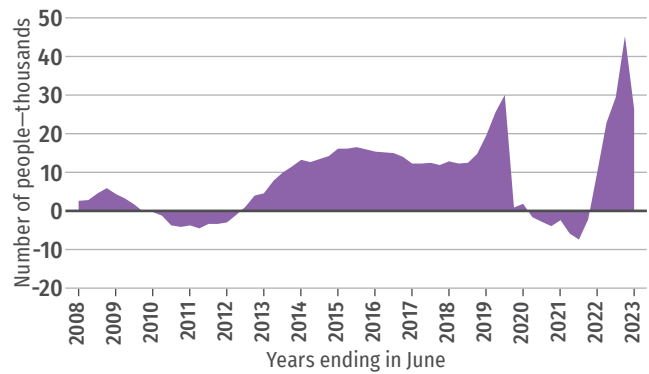
Employment growth continued, with the number of people employed in the year to December 2023 increasing to over 2.9 million. Around a third of the increase was in part-time work, a significant change compared with 2022 that saw growth in full-time work and reduction in part-time employment (Figure 23). This increase in part-time work was also accompanied by an increase in the number of people underutilised, who work part-time and would like more hours or full-time work. After a period of labour shortages, the situation has changed during the year to one where there is less work available and more people who are seeking work.

Figure 23: Total number in employment—2013–2023 (December years)<sup>33</sup>



The number of people entering the country surged during the year to September 2023, with total migrant arrivals reaching 237,000. The net migration figure for the year, after deducting migrant departures, reached almost 119,000. Both figures are the highest on record for an annual period<sup>34</sup> and this surge of migration drove the increase in the working-age population that grew by 108,000 in the September year.<sup>35</sup> Figure 24 records the trends in quarterly migration since 2008 and shows the record-high inflows during 2023 following restriction in migration during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Figure 24: Estimated quarterly migration—2008–2023<sup>36</sup>

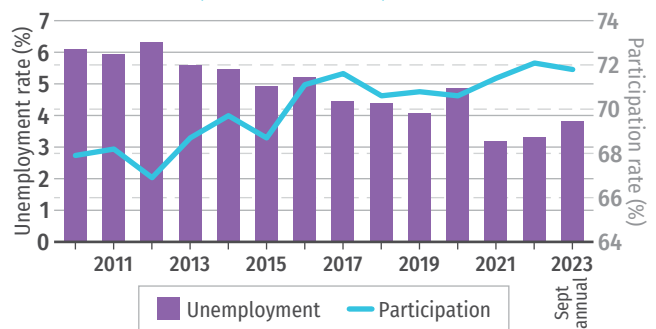


The proportion of people of working age who were either in employment or actively looking for employment is measured by the labour force participation rate. This rate was unchanged in the year to December 2023 but remains high compared with earlier years (Figure 25). Some of the growth in the working-age population was made up of people not in the labour force, but this did not impact the overall participation rate.

## Unemployment

The unemployment rate began to increase again during 2023 after the record low rates of the previous years, reaching 4 percent by December 2023. This remains a very low rate compared with the previous 20 years, and around the pre-Covid-19 level of unemployment in 2019 (Figure 25).

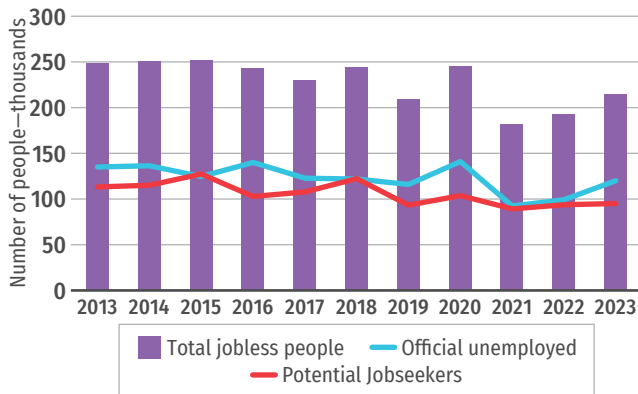
Figure 25: Unemployment and participation rates—2010–2023 (December actual)<sup>37</sup>



Total numbers for those counted as unemployed are measured through the official unemployment figures collected by the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). The number of people who are not counted as officially unemployed but who want a paid job is called the ‘potential labour force’. This group is made up of those available but not actively seeking a job and those not immediately

available but who want a job. This means our figure for the total ‘jobless’, combining the total official unemployed—121,100 (Figure 26 blue line)—with the additional potential labour force—98,500 (Figure 26 red line)—reached total of 219,6000 at the end of December 2023 (Figure 26 purple bars).

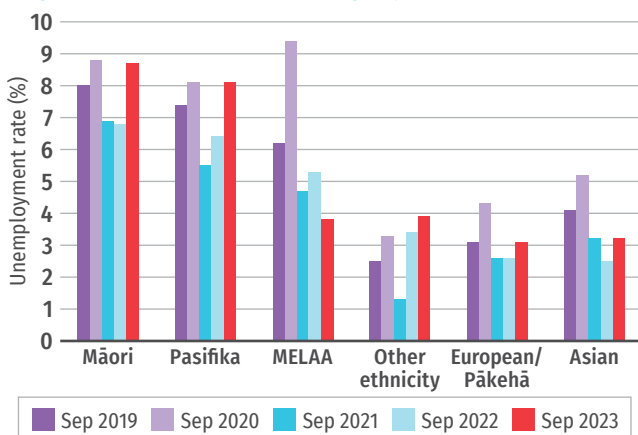
Figure 26: Total jobless, unemployed, potential labour force—2013–2023 (December Quarter)<sup>38</sup>



**PERSISTENT INEQUITIES WORSENE**

Māori and Pacific workers are bearing an unfair share of the impact of the rise in unemployment. During 2023 employment outcomes worsened for most ethnic groups, although the overall unemployment rate continued to be very low at 3.8 percent in September 2023. But unemployment rates in different ethnic groups vary considerably. In September 2023, the unemployment rate for Māori had increased to 8.7 percent (Figure 27), after having fallen in the past two years. Pacific workers also faced a higher unemployment rate at 8.1 percent, much higher than the rate for Asian (3.2%) and European workers (3.1%).

Figure 27: Unemployment rate by ethnicity—2019–2023 (September actual, not seasonally adjusted)<sup>39</sup>



There were 74,000 young people aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) over the year to September 2023 (Figure 28). This was the same number as in the previous year and the rate of 11.4 percent remained largely unchanged. NEET numbers and the NEET rate are back around similar levels to those in 2018 and earlier, but the frustrating lack of progress to further reduce youth unemployment continues.

Figure 28: Number of young people (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET)—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>40</sup>

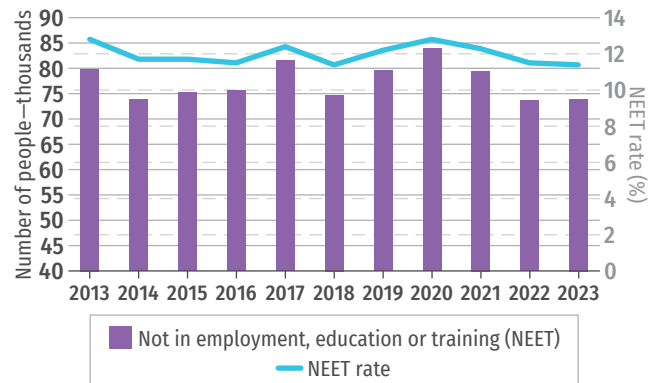
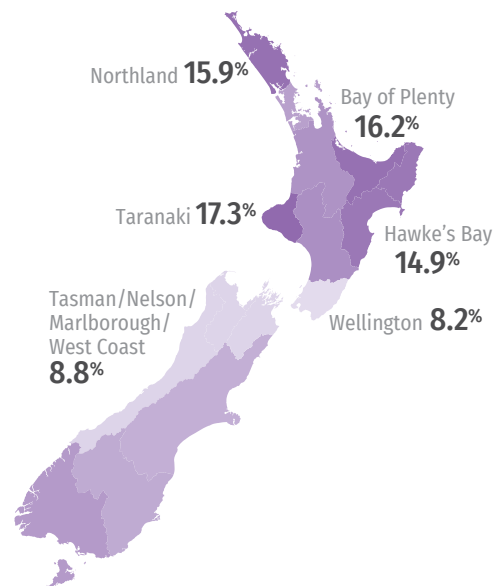


Figure 29: NEET rates regions New Zealand heat map<sup>41</sup>



The large regional variations in the NEET rates continue (Figure 29). For the year to September 2023, Taranaki showed the highest NEET rate at 17.3 percent and largest increase compared with September 2022 (6.5 percentage points). Other regions such as Bay of Plenty (16.2%), Northland (15.9%), and Gisborne/Hawke’s Bay (14.9%) continue to experience very high youth unemployment rates, well above the

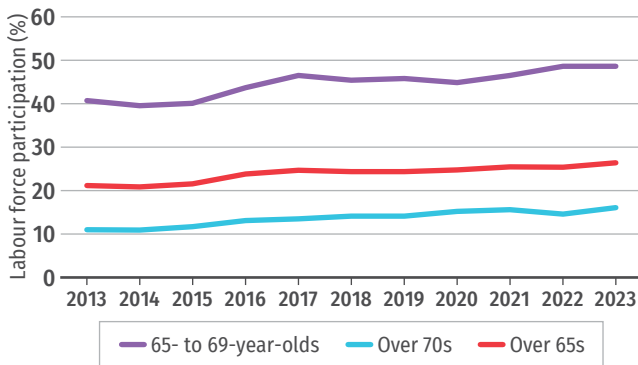


Wellington region which continues to be the region with the lowest NEET rate at 8.2 percent, half the rate in Taranaki. The Auckland region accounts for a third of all NEET, and the NEET rate in that region has not changed significantly in 2023 and at 11 percent is the same as it was 10 years ago.

### MORE OLDER WORKERS IN THE WORKFORCE

Overall, labour market participation for all those aged over 65 increased to 26.4 percent in the September 2023 quarter, driven mostly by a noticeable increase in those over 70 still in the workforce, up to 16.1 percent. This is close to 50 percent higher than it was 10 years ago in 2013 (Figure 30).

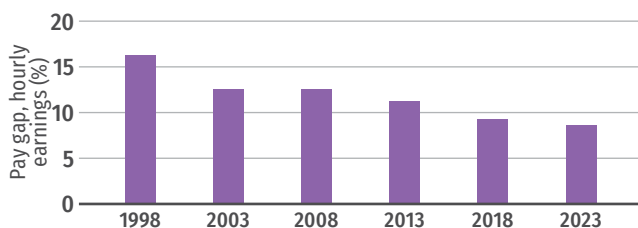
Figure 30: Labour force participation over 65-year-olds—2013–2023 (September quarters)<sup>42</sup>



### GENDER PAY EQUITY

In the year to June 2023, women’s median hourly pay increased by 7.7 percent to \$30.15; men’s median hourly pay increased by 7.0 percent to \$33.00. The past two years have seen the largest overall increases in the median wage since gender pay gap reporting began in 1998. The gender pay gap has decreased over the past decade from 11.2 percent in 2013 to 8.6 percent in 2023 (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Gender pay gap, median hourly earnings—1998–2023<sup>43</sup>



The pay gap for Pacific women compared to European men is far higher, with median earnings at \$28 per hour, a 15.2 percent pay gap and wāhine Māori at \$28.39 per hour, a 14 percent gap.

Some of the differences can be explained by women-dominated roles such as caregiving being lower paid (an issue which pay equity claims under the Equal Pay Act 1972 have been attempting to address). Women are also more likely to work in part-time roles (as they more often than men have familial caregiving duties), and part-time roles tend to pay less. But most of the gender pay gap is driven by ‘unexplained factors’ that are not reflected in recorded data, such as primary family caregivers (predominantly women) requiring job flexibility and sometimes having to sacrifice higher wages to obtain this, as well as employer unconscious bias or discrimination.<sup>44</sup>

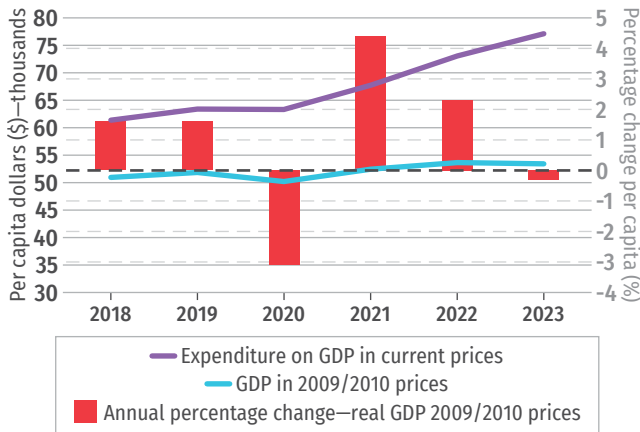
### Incomes

The total size of the New Zealand economy reached \$400 billion in the year to September 2023. That works out to \$77,091 per person in September 2023 dollars, a nominal increase of 5.6 percent over the year to September 2023 (Figure 32 purple line). But after adjusting for inflation, annual growth per capita was negative at -0.3 percent (Figure 32 red bars, right axis). Even with this decrease, four out of the past six years have seen positive annual per capita increases after adjusting for inflation. In September 2023, GDP per capita was 4.9 percent higher in real terms than it was in September 2018 (Figure 32 blue line).

This means the overall size of the economy has grown, despite the decline in the year ended September 2023. There are more resources to share per person today than there were six years ago. The social and political challenge that remains is how this wealth is shared out amongst the 5.2 million people living in this country.

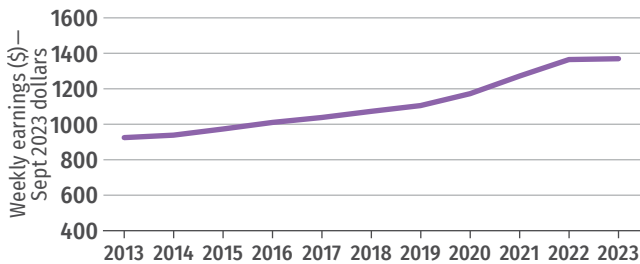


**Figure 32: Real gross disposable national income per capita—2018–2023<sup>45</sup>**



Average weekly earnings for all employees have also increased faster than inflation over the past decade, with earnings rising by 50 percent in that time while inflation rose by 29 percent. But the past year has seen higher inflation eat into wage gains, with wages barely keeping up with inflation, so employees’ earnings remained around the same in real terms in 2023 as they were in 2022 (Figure 32a). It is also important to note that around a third of workers did not receive a wage increase in the year to September 2023.<sup>46</sup>

**Figure 32a: Real average weekly earnings—2013–2023 (September 2023 dollars)<sup>47</sup>**



**WAGE INEQUALITY**

Average hourly earnings have also been increasing ahead of inflation, but looking at the overall average does not tell us how well particular groups of wage earners are doing compared to others. In the following headings we focus on wages for lower-paid workers.

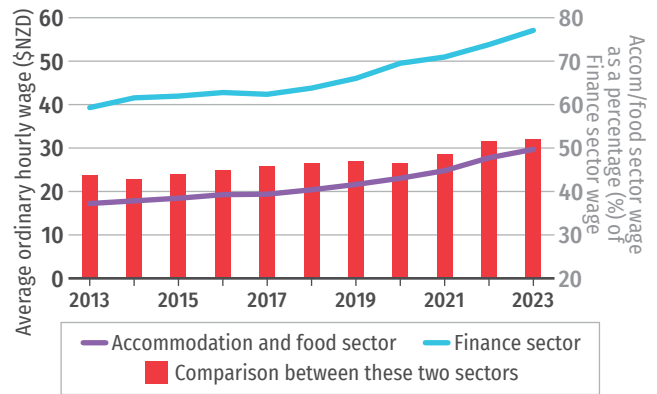
Comparing average hourly wages in the lowest-paid sector (Accommodation and Food Services) with those in the highest-paid sector (Finance and Insurance) provides an insight into the way income inequality affects ordinary workers. There are a

total of around 87,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the lowest-paid sector earning on an hourly basis on average of little more than half that of the highest-paid sector that employs around 138,000 FTEs. The two sectors represented around 12 percent of the 1.9 million FTEs in September.

Average hourly earnings increased by 7.1 percent over the year to \$29.72 in September 2023 (from \$27.75 in September 2022) for the lower-paid sector compared to 6.1 percent for the higher-paid sector to \$57.09 in September 2023 (from \$53.79 in 2022).

Over the past four years there has been a distinct improvement in the lower-paid Accommodation and Food Services sector compared to the highest-paid Finance and Insurance sector. The difference has reduced with the average hourly earnings of the lowest-paid sector up to 52.1 percent of the highest-paid sector in September 2023, compared to 46.6 percent in 2020 (Figure 33).

**Figure 33: Accommodation and Food Service sector average hourly wage as a proportion of Finance and Insurance sector—2013–2023 (September quarter actual)<sup>48</sup>**

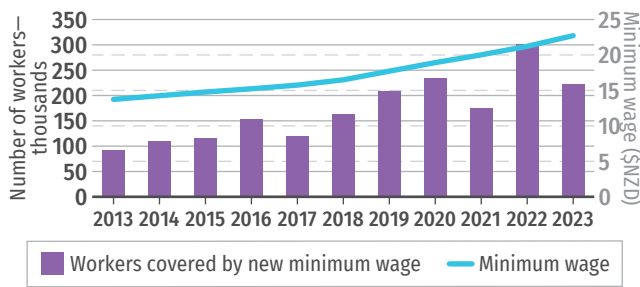


**MINIMUM WAGE**

The minimum wage has increased from \$15.75 in 2017 to \$22.70 in 2023, a 44 percent increase over that time (Figure 34 blue line), well ahead of the 30 percent increase in average hourly earnings over the same period—from \$30.41 June 2017 to \$39.60 June 2023. The larger increases in the minimum wage than the average hourly earnings have meant more lower-paid workers are affected by annual minimum-wage increases than would otherwise be the case, as their wage rates are between the existing minimum wage and the new higher

one (Figure 34 purple bars). The increase in the minimum wage has also contributed to lowering wage inequality, with lower-paid workers' wage rates increasing by more than wage earners around the mid-point of the wage distribution.

Figure 34: Minimum age and number of workers covered by new minimum wage—2013–2023<sup>49</sup>



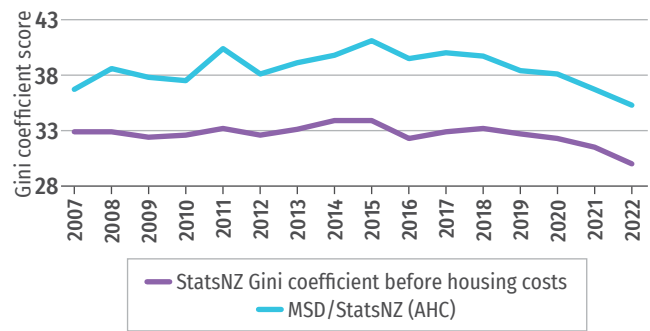
### INCOME INEQUALITY

The Gini Coefficient maps the degree to which income is concentrated with low scores indicating lower inequality and higher scores higher inequality.<sup>50</sup> The five years from 2017 to June 2022 have seen a sustained reduction in inequality, both before and after housing costs measures. On the Gini Coefficient measure, in mid-2022 income inequality was the lowest it has been since 2007 (Figure 35).

At least by mid-2022, policies that have lifted lowest incomes for those on welfare and in the lowest paid jobs appear to have been having the effect of reducing the large inequalities that have plagued our country since the early 1990s. Whether the trend of falling inequality is sustained after 2022 remains unclear. Low unemployment and continued wage growth during 2023 and the full effects of April 2022 benefit increases may mean the June 2023 figures hold this trend. Rising housing costs will also have an impact on after housing costs (AHC) incomes.

With a whole generation of young people growing up in a much more unequal society, it will need a sustained period of lower inequality to undo the social harms, such as poorer physical and mental health and increased levels of violence associated with more unequal societies.

Figure 35: Income inequality (Gini Coefficient)—2007–2022<sup>51</sup>



## Income Support and Welfare

### WELFARE EXPENDITURE

Government spending on welfare support continued to grow in 2023, increasing by 9.2 percent compared with 2022 (Table 8). More than half of that spending is on New Zealand Superannuation and Veterans' pensions, that increased by \$1.75 billion in 2023 to reach \$19.6 billion. This reflects both the increase in the number of people over 65 who are receiving NZ Super, as well as the effect of the annual cost-of-living adjustment that matches inflation or average wage increases, whichever is higher.

Spending on main working-age benefits rose by \$620 million to \$7.7 billion, reflecting the full year impact of benefit increases implemented in April 2022 and the annual adjustment to match inflation in April 2023. In contrast, spending on the housing subsidies (Accommodation Supplement and Income Related Rent Subsidy for public housing) of \$3.67 billion reduced slightly by \$38 million compared with 2022, reflecting reduced spending on the Accommodation Supplement as a result of fewer people received this support. Working for Families (WFF) payments increased to \$2.6 billion in 2023 after changes implement in 2022–23 but spending on WFF is \$139 million lower than in 2019 (the first year to include the full effect of the costs of changes from the 2018 Families Package). This would seem to be because more families are seeing their entitlement to WFF reduced as they exceed entitlement thresholds which have been the same since July 2018 without adjustment to reflect rising inflation, rising minimum wages and rising nominal incomes.

Other benefits and allowances totalled \$4 billion and the increase of \$750 million included one-off

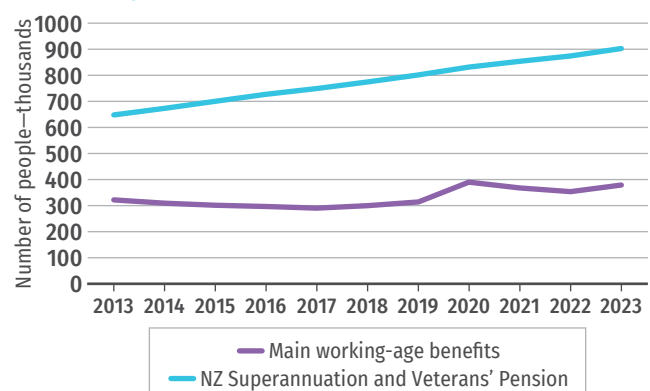
spending of \$600 million for the Cost-of-Living Payment paid between July and October 2023, as well as Covid-19 leave support payments of \$273 million. This area of spending includes the Winter Energy Payment (\$519 million) and Best Start payment for families with children under three (\$321 million), as well as Paid Parental Leave (\$608 million) and hardship and emergency assistance payments (\$673 million).

**Table 8: Government spending on main income support programmes (\$millions)—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>52</sup>**

| Government Spending on main income support programmes (\$ millions) | 2018          | 2019          | 2020           | 2021           | 2022           | 2023           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| NZ Superannuation & Veterans' pensions                              | 13,862        | 14,715        | 15,666         | 16,708         | 17,898         | 19,649         |
| Main working-age benefits                                           | 4355          | 4526          | 5166           | 6505           | 7081           | 7701           |
| Housing subsidies                                                   | 2094          | 2614          | 2994           | 3504           | 3709           | 3671           |
| Working for Families tax credits                                    | 2195          | 2766          | 2830           | 2688           | 2536           | 2627           |
| Other benefits & allowances                                         | 1499          | 2068          | 2557           | 3069           | 3274           | 4024           |
| Total benefit expenses (excluding Wage Subsidy)                     | 24,005        | 26,689        | 29,213         | 32,474         | 34,498         | 37,670         |
| Increase (excluding Wage Subsidy)                                   |               |               | 9.5%           | 11.2%          | 6.2%           | 9.2%           |
| Wage Subsidy Scheme                                                 |               |               | 12,095         | 1,197          | 4689           |                |
| <b>TOTAL BENEFIT EXPENSES</b>                                       | <b>24,005</b> | <b>26,689</b> | <b>41,308</b>  | <b>33,671</b>  | <b>39,187</b>  | <b>37,672</b>  |
| Growth in spending on benefits                                      | 2.9%          | 11.2%         | 54.8%          | -18.5%         | 16.4%          | -3.9%          |
| <b>CORE CROWN EXPENSES</b>                                          | <b>80,576</b> | <b>86,959</b> | <b>108,832</b> | <b>107,764</b> | <b>125,641</b> | <b>128,011</b> |
| Benefits as share of Core Crown Expenditure                         | 29.8%         | 30.7%         | 38.0%          | 31.2%          | 31.2%          | 29.4%          |
| NZ Superannuation as share of Core Crown Expenditure                | 17.2%         | 16.9%         | 14.4%          | 15.5%          | 14.2%          | 15.3%          |

NZ Super costs are the largest single component of total welfare spending and continue to rise as the overall population aged over 65 years rises. By the end of 2023, the number of people receiving New Zealand Superannuation and Veterans' pension had passed 900,000. In December 2023, there were 903,300 NZ Super recipients, an increase of 102,000 (12.7 percent) from the 801,500 four years ago in December 2019. The number of people receiving the main working-age benefits fluctuates each year with seasonal employment impacts, but at 378,700 in December 2023 it was 64,300 higher than the 314,400 in December 2019, a 20.5 percent increase (Figure 36). Over the same period the adult population (18 years and over) grew 6 percent from 4.98 million to 5.24 million.

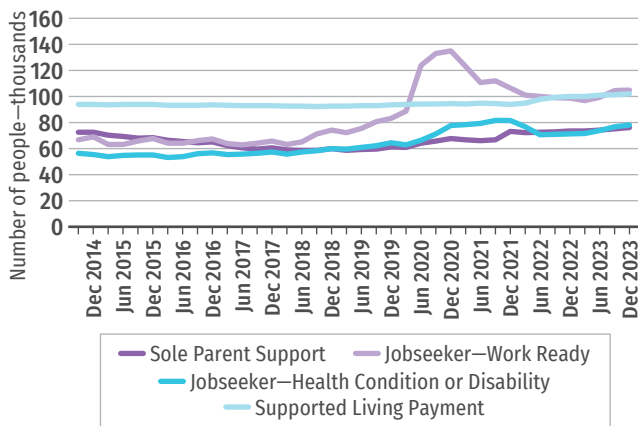
**Figure 36: People receiving working-age benefits and retirement pensions—2013–2023 (December actual)<sup>53</sup>**



A breakdown of the number of people receiving the four main working benefits is shown in **Figure 37** below. The number of people who were receiving the Work and Income Jobseeker (Work Ready) income support benefit increased again during 2023, reaching 109,700 in December (see **Figure 37**). This reflects the worsening employment situation during the year, as it has been harder for people to find employment and exit benefit receipt. The change in the employment market comes on top of the structural issues that make it hard for people to find work, such as mismatches of skills and experience, location and the financial obstacles such as high effective marginal tax rates when incomes reach certain thresholds (exacerbated by a steeper WFF abatement rate introduced in 2022).

Only about a third of those receiving the Jobseeker (Work Ready) welfare benefit are counted as officially unemployed.<sup>54</sup> Reasons why many Jobseeker recipients are not recorded as officially unemployed include having part-time work, being unable to begin employment immediately or not having been actively seeking work in the four weeks prior to be interviewed for the HLFS survey.

**Figure 37: Number of people receiving selected working-age welfare benefits—2014–2023<sup>55</sup>**

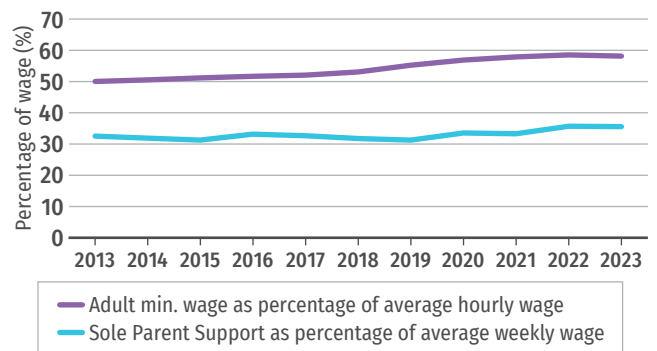


**INCOME ADEQUACY**

Core welfare benefit payments are essential assistance that is provided to help people who need support because they cannot be in paid employment for a number of reasons: there is no work available; they are unwell; are living with a disability; or are caring for children or other family members. The level of the core benefit payments is

crucial to achieving incomes that are adequate for people to live with dignity, and to reduce poverty. Comparing one of the key benefit payments, the Sole Parent Support (SPS), with weekly employment earnings tells us whether the welfare system is doing well at supporting those in need. The SPS has increased from \$329.57 per week in April 2017 to \$472.79 in April 2023, a 43 percent increase (**Figure 38**). This compares to average weekly earnings from employment that increased by 32 percent over the same period. As a result, the gap between average weekly earnings and this benefit rate has closed slightly over the past six years—SPS has increased from 32.7 percent in 2017 to 35.6 percent of the average weekly earnings.

**Figure 38: Minimum wage and Sole Parent Support as a percentage of average wages—2013–2023 (March years)<sup>56</sup>**

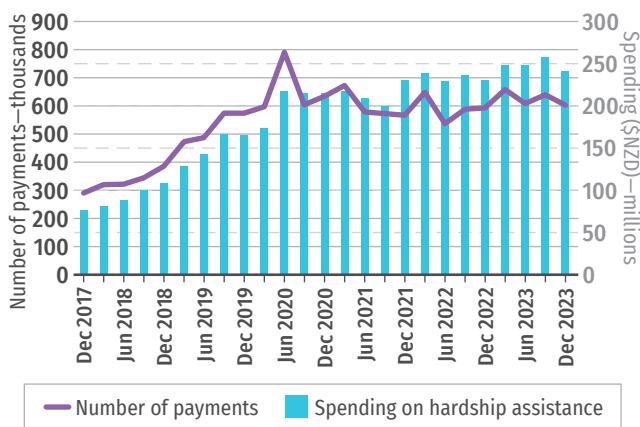


Core benefits make up only part of the weekly income for people relying on our complex welfare system. Actual income received is made up of the core benefits plus a range of other support payments, such Working for Families tax credits, Accommodation Supplement, Temporary Additional Support, disability assistance, special needs grants and other assistance.<sup>57</sup> Analysis from mid-2023 shows that the changes made to the welfare system since 2018 have increased incomes for households needing welfare support significantly, but in 2023 for households relying on welfare benefits, income levels continue to fall significantly short of what is needed for some level of participation in society.<sup>58</sup>

## Hardship and Food Security

The rising cost of living has led to a higher need for hardship support. The total number of hardship payments made by Work and Income to households needing extra support was 6 percent higher in the year to December 2023, compared with the same time in 2022. More than half of the 602,000 grants made each quarter were for food assistance (336,000). In the year to December 2023, a total of just under 1 billion dollars (\$995 million) was paid out in hardship assistance, more than a third of this total (\$341 million) was for emergency housing grants (Figure 39).

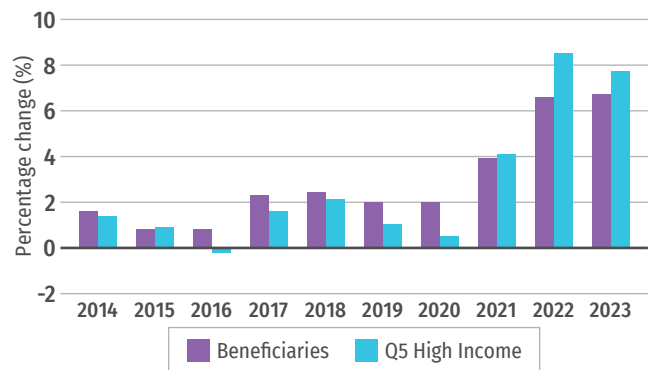
Figure 39: Government spending on additional hardship assistance, quarterly number and \$ value—2017–2023<sup>59</sup>



### HOUSEHOLD LIVING COSTS

The past three years have seen a rapid increase in household living costs as measured by the Household Living Costs Price Index (HLPI). The annual increase peaked in December 2022 and has remained above 7 percent during most of 2023. The HLPI includes mortgage housing interest costs (that are not included in the usual inflation measure Consumer Price Index), so the rapid rise in interest costs for mortgages in the past two years means the higher income (Quintile 5) households have faced slightly larger increases compared to the lowest income households and beneficiaries. This is in stark contrast to the years 2013 to 2020 when beneficiary households faced increases in living costs of 10.7 percent, well above those of the wealthiest households of 6.1 percent (Figure 40).

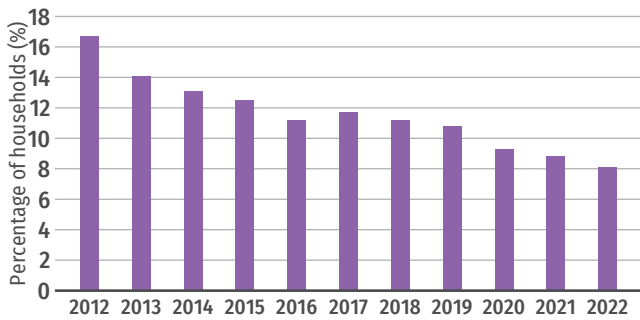
Figure 40: Household Living Costs Price Index increases for beneficiaries and high-income households, annual percent change—2014–2023 (September years)<sup>60</sup>



The impact of continuing high increases in living costs falls harder on lower-income households (who have no financial cushioning), and the relative shift in inflation effects is of little comfort for tight budgets dealing with the highest sustained inflation rates in the past 20 years. In some expense categories where low-income families are needing to spend money there are continuing sharp increases and, indeed, some prices are rising faster this year than last year. In the year to September 2023, grocery food increased by 11 percent and non-alcoholic drinks increased by 8.9 percent.

Despite the increases in household living costs, there has been a consistent decrease over the past decade in the proportion of households reporting that they did not have enough money to meet everyday needs (Figure 41). This reduction in hardship is based on survey data and gives some insight into the actual impact of the range of supports going into households—both through higher employment and wages, as well as welfare assistance and in-kind assistance such as lower public transport costs and free school lunches. Up to mid-2022, real progress had been made to reduce hardship, even as a large group of people remain in hardship or on the margins of falling into hardship.

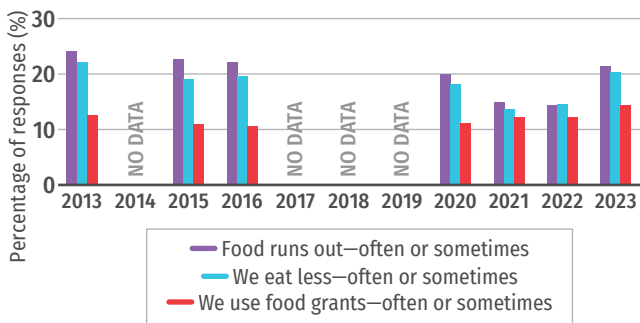
**Figure 41: Income inadequacy to meet everyday need, percentage of all households (all types)—2012–2022 (June years) <sup>61</sup>**



**FOOD SECURITY**

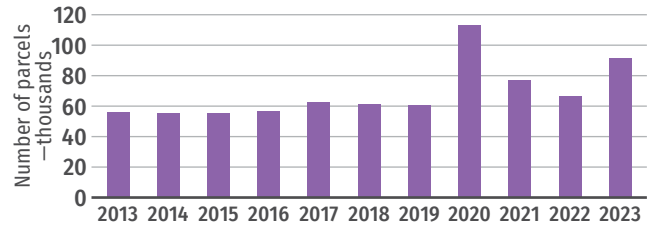
There was a sharp rise in food insecurity during 2023, with rising inflation hitting the lower-income households the hardest. More than one in five (21%) households with children aged under 15 years reported that food runs out often or sometimes, increasing from 14 percent in 2022 (Figure 42). Pacific households with children are most heavily affected, with 40 percent reporting food runs out often or sometimes, as well as 35 percent of households with children living with a disability.

**Figure 42: Food security indicators, households with children aged under 15—2013–2023<sup>62</sup>**



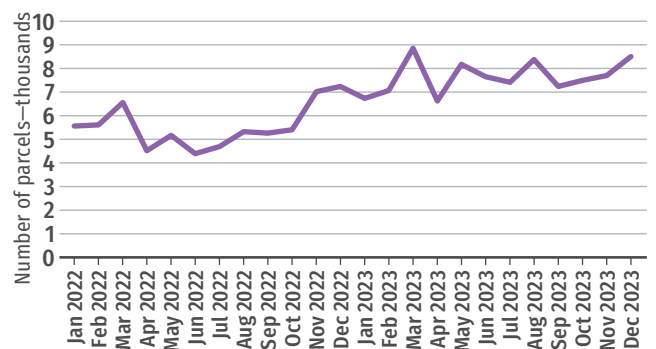
The Salvation Army network of 70 Community Ministries and centres across the country distributed around 92,000 food parcels in the year to December 2023 (Figure 43). This was an almost 40 percent increase on 2022 and reflects the pressures on people’s incomes, as food prices and general living costs were driven higher on the back of rising inflation.

**Figure 43: Number of food parcels provided by The Salvation Army—2013–2023 (December years)<sup>63</sup>**



The Salvation Army Te Kai Mākona food sovereignty framework was launched during 2023, focusing on hospitality and supporting whānau and communities to take flexible and creative approaches to meeting food need. There are multiple drivers of food hardship, including lack of access to retail outlets and loss of land and resources in communities, as well as inadequate incomes. It will take sustained and coordinated effort over the coming years to achieve greater food sovereignty in communities facing multiple hardships.

**Figure 44: Food parcels provided The Salvation Army centres—monthly total 2022 and 2023<sup>64</sup>**





## OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Work and Incomes

| CATEGORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | RESULT |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>EMPLOYMENT</b> Employment growth has continued in 2023 driven by high migration. Labour force participation was unchanged and remains high compared with earlier years.                                                            | +      |
| <b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b> Unemployment rate was rising during 2023 but still low compared with previous decades.                                                                                                                            | -      |
| <b>INCOMES</b> While real GDP per capita fell in September 2023, wages continued to rise in line with inflation. Inequities in gender earnings and wages improved slightly as lower earners received relatively larger pay increases. | +      |
| <b>INCOME SUPPORT AND WELFARE</b> The number of people requiring welfare support increased steadily during 2023.                                                                                                                      | -      |
| <b>HARDSHIP AND FOOD SECURITY</b> Food insecurity and the need for hardship grants and food assistance rose significantly as households faced continuing high living costs even as inflation began to reduce.                         | -      |



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# HOUSING

*After initial signs of housing stresses easing for people on lower incomes, by late 2023 the surge of inward migration renewed the pressures on supply and affordability of rentals and housing prices.*

*The past five years have seen high levels of house building, but during 2023 the number of consents declined after a record year in 2022.*

*At the same time, in 2023 the population growth was again faster than the growth in house building.*

*House prices have declined from their peak in 2021, but at the end of 2023 the national median price remained around 25 percent higher than pre-Covid-19 numbers in 2019 and there were signs of prices starting to increase again.*

*The number of people waiting for government-subsidised public housing steadily increased during 2023, in contrast to the significant decrease in the previous year up to December 2022.*

*The number of people in emergency and transitional housing is down from the peak levels of two years ago, but the transitional housing numbers did not change significantly during 2023.*

*Active tenancy bonds in the rental market are increasing, but the question is whether this is enough to keep up with rapid population growth in 2023.*

*Rents in lower-income communities have been increasing much faster than CPI (Consumer Price Index) and average wage growth over the past decade. During 2023 there were some signs of increases slowing, but large increases in places such as Kaikohe, New Plymouth and Auckland show new pressures on rental housing.*

*Total debt per household is reducing on average, and this is the case for both housing as well as consumer and credit card debt. But the rapid rise in interest rates over the past two years makes servicing this debt more expensive, especially for lower income households.*

## Housing Availability

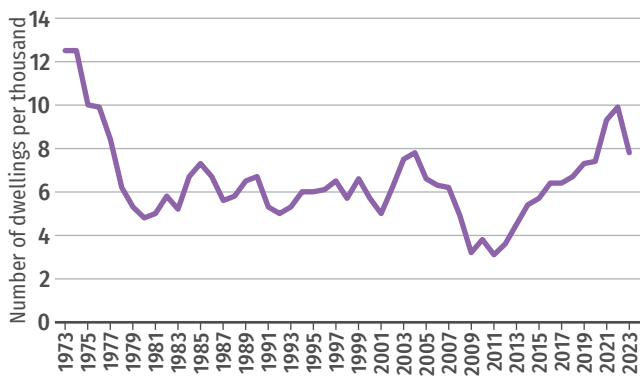
The housing crisis has eased somewhat, but the situation is still incredibly hard for the very large group of people struggling on the margins of the housing market or facing homelessness. A rapid population increase during 2023 and continuing high social housing need put pressure on housing supply, despite continued growth in new builds, social housing units and private rentals.

### CONSENTS FOR NEW DWELLINGS

The number of building consents issued each year indicates the number of houses that are planned to be built in the near future. The past three years have seen record high numbers of building consents, all exceeding the previous record high in 1974 of 37,919—nearly 50 years ago. But in the year to September 2023 the total number nationally declined to 40,408, a decline of 20 percent compared with the record high of 50,732 in 2022.<sup>65</sup>

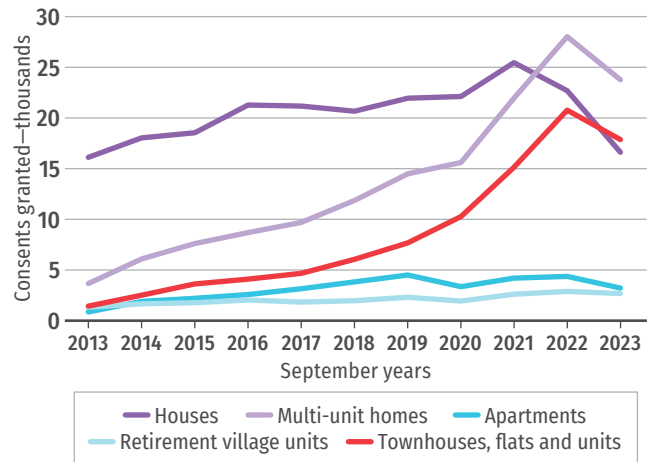
On a population basis, the current rate of 7.8 building consents per thousand population is below the peak years of the early 1970s (12.5), but still higher than any year in the four decades prior to 2021, apart from 2004 (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Dwelling consents per thousand residents—1973–2023 (September years)<sup>66</sup>



The major structural shift in consents for new housing units since 2020 is that multi-unit homes and townhouses now make up the largest proportion of consents. In contrast, consents for stand-alone houses have fallen by more than a third from their peak of 25,463 in 2021 to 16,619 in 2023, the lowest level in the past ten years (Figure 46).

Figure 46: Consents by dwelling-type nationally—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>67</sup>



The number of consents for new builds is the main driver of the increase in the estimated number of dwellings. But while housing supply is increasing, so is demand. While we have an ongoing housing crisis (as demonstrated by public housing waitlists, for example, as discussed below), we also have an increasing population. The past year has seen a dramatic turnaround in population growth compared with the past two years. Record high annual migration figures translated into the highest annual population growth in the past decade of over 119,000 people (Table 9). This huge increase is a reversal of the very low population changes in 2021 and 2022, resulting from entry and travel restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 9: Estimates of population change and new house builds—2013–2023 (June years)

|                                    | 2013      | 2014      | 2015      | 2016      | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      | 2020      | 2021      | 2022      | 2023      |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Mean dwellings for June year       | 1,745,200 | 1,761,600 | 1,781,000 | 1,802,400 | 1,826,500 | 1,852,000 | 1,880,600 | 1,911,700 | 1,945,800 | 1,983,900 | 2,029,400 |
| Resident population at end of year | 4,442,100 | 4,516,500 | 4,609,400 | 4,714,100 | 4,813,600 | 4,900,600 | 4,979,180 | 5,090,180 | 5,111,300 | 5,117,060 | 5,236,300 |
| Annual population growth           | 34,000    | 74,400    | 92,900    | 104,700   | 99,500    | 87,000    | 78,580    | 111,000   | 21,120    | 5760      | 119,240   |
| Number of people per dwelling      | 2.55      | 2.56      | 2.59      | 2.62      | 2.64      | 2.65      | 2.65      | 2.66      | 2.63      | 2.58      | 2.58      |
| Dwellings required for pop growth  | 13,358    | 29,019    | 35,895    | 40,031    | 37,755    | 32,878    | 29,679    | 41,688    | 8040      | 2233      | 46,213    |
| Consents for new dwellings         | 18,783    | 23,316    | 25,154    | 29,097    | 30,453    | 32,860    | 34,804    | 37,614    | 44,331    | 50,736    | 44,529    |
| Surplus/deficit                    | 5425      | -5703     | -10,741   | -10,934   | -7302     | -18       | 5125      | -4074     | 36,291    | 48,503    | -1684     |

Population growth is driven by record high levels of inward migration, especially from people of working age (see [Work and Incomes](#) section p.19). Just at the time our population growth surges, the supply of new housing is showing signs of reducing.

In the year to June 2023, the number of consents issued was not enough to exceed population growth, falling short by nearly 1700 houses. This came after two years in 2021 and 2022 when consents were well ahead of population growth. But in seven of the past ten years population growth has exceeded new supply and in 2023 this was the case once again.

The growing level of new builds in recent years has meant a huge catch-up in new housing compared to population growth in 2021–2022. The turn back into a deficit in new supply in 2023 is a sign of more trouble ahead for a housing sector still in crisis.

### SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPLY

The feature of the past six years has been the rapid rise in the number of public housing units, from around 66,000 in June 2017 to almost 80,000 in September 2023. The government has invested in supporting the community housing sector, while also increasing the supply of state-owned housing

through Kainga Ora, the government social housing organisation. The result of this was that non-government community housing providers added a net 6867 units, around half of the total increase of just under 14,000 housing units ([Table 10](#)).

Less than half of the total increase in public housing, just over 6100 units, came about through new builds (around 12,000) after deducting demolitions and other disposals (5900). The rest of the increase came through the conversion of 4857 existing community housing units (such as council-owned social housing) to public housing, and the purchase or lease of other existing housing. The net effect on the total rental housing supply therefore amounts to about one percent of total rental housing in 2023.

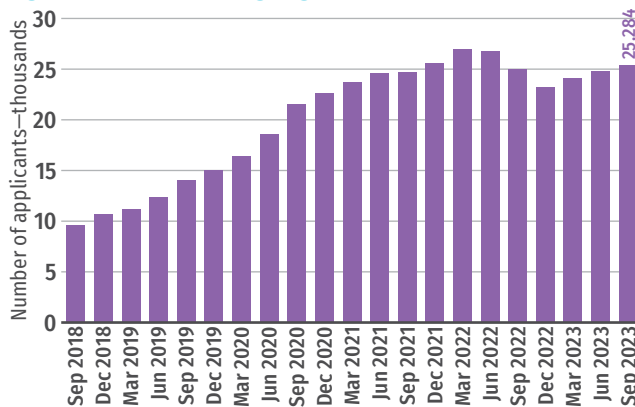
**Table 10: Change in numbers of public homes—2017–2023<sup>68</sup>**

|                             | 2017          | 2023          | Increase      | %          |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Community housing providers | 4720          | 12,535        | 6867          | 145%       |
| Kainga Ora                  | 61,426        | 67,450        | 6993          | 11%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>66,146</b> | <b>79,985</b> | <b>13,860</b> | <b>21%</b> |

At the same time as the supply of public housing has been rising, the number of people identified as needing public housing has risen even further. The number of people on the public Housing Register waiting list has increased from 5300 in June 2017 (when records of demand were likely suppressed) to over 25,200 in September 2023.

The register peaked in April 2022 at 27,200 and fell as low as 23,100 in December 2022, but during 2023 the register has been increasing again, sitting at just over 25,100 in September 2023, meaning progress to reduce the waiting list has stalled.

**Figure 47: Public Housing Register—2018–2023<sup>69</sup>**



It should not be a surprise that there is a critical shortage of affordable housing when the supply of government-subsidised social housing has failed to keep up with population growth since the 1990s. The supply of public or state housing peaked in 1993 at just over 70,000 houses. In the 30 years since, the number of units dropped to just under 60,000 and it took until October 2019 for the number to return to the 1993 level.<sup>70</sup>

However, in 1993, the public housing supply was at a rate of 197 units per 10,000 population. In September 2023, the number of units was just under 80,000, a rate per 10,000 of 153, still well short of

the 1993 level of public housing provision. If the rate in 2023 was the same as in 1993,<sup>71</sup> there would be 103,000 public housing units, enough to house most of the 25,000 people who were waiting for a public housing unit in 2023. New Zealand has a relatively low proportion of social rentals (around 3.8% of the total housing stock) compared to other wealthy countries, with the average for the OECD of around 7 percent.<sup>72</sup>

**REGIONAL SOCIAL HOUSING NEED**

There is considerable variation in housing need around the country. The past six years have seen positive improvements in some communities, while other regions and districts have seen the relative public housing availability worsen.

Calculating the number of people on the Housing Register as a percentage of the total number of public housing units available in an area gives some indication of the supply of public housing relative to need. A lower percentage indicates less need in relation to current supply of public housing.

Table 11 shows that Bay of Plenty is the region with the highest proportion at 72 percent in September 2023. Rotorua is a significant example of housing affordability and housing shortage crisis in that region. While the number of public homes has increased in the last six years from 647 in June 2017 to 1014 in September 2023, the number of applicants on the Housing Register has increased nearly eight-fold from 104 to 894. The number of people waiting for public housing in Rotorua has reduced over the past year from a peak of just over 1000 in 2022, but need for public housing remains acute across most of the Bay of Plenty.

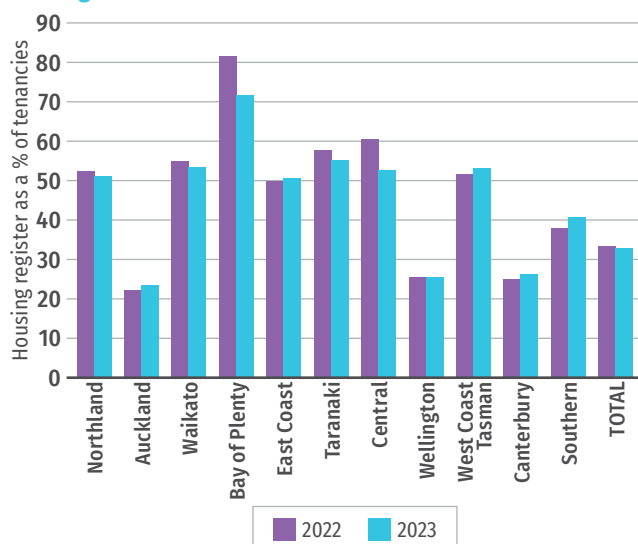


**Table 11: Need for public housing vs public housing stock—September 2023<sup>73</sup>**

| Region                 | Housing Register | Public housing occupied | Demand as a % of tenancies |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Northland              | 1180             | 2296                    | 51.39%                     |
| Auckland               | 8495             | 35,962                  | 23.62%                     |
| Waikato                | 2675             | 5005                    | 53.45%                     |
| Bay of Plenty          | 2431             | 3380                    | 71.92%                     |
| East Coast             | 2141             | 4232                    | 50.59%                     |
| Taranaki               | 676              | 1221                    | 55.36%                     |
| Central (North Island) | 1283             | 2420                    | 53.02%                     |
| Wellington             | 2283             | 8829                    | 25.86%                     |
| West Coast Tasman      | 873              | 1627                    | 53.66%                     |
| Canterbury             | 2431             | 9190                    | 26.45%                     |
| Southern               | 775              | 1880                    | 41.22%                     |
| Other/unknown          | 40               | -                       | -                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>25,283</b>    | <b>76,042</b>           | <b>33.25%</b>              |

Figure 48 shows how the past year has seen modest improvement in some of the higher-need regions like Bay of Plenty, Taranaki and Central (North Island) while other higher need regions like East Coast (where the weather events of 2023 may have played a role) and West Coast Tasman have seen no improvement or a worsening availability.

**Figure 48: Regional social housing need compared to public housing stock—2022 and 2023**



## HOMELESSNESS

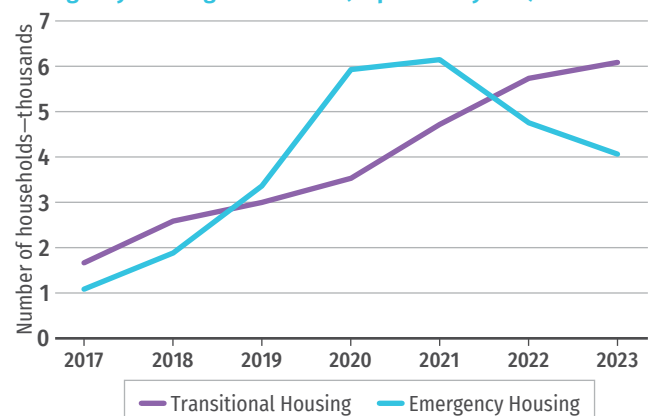
It has been estimated that over 100,000 people are homeless or are experiencing ‘severe housing deprivation’, that includes rough sleepers, people living in temporary accommodation like night shelters or motels, temporary residents in very overcrowded housing (such as couch-surfing) or uninhabitable housing lacking basic amenities such as power and water supply.<sup>74</sup>

Emergency housing and transitional housing are two frontline responses to homelessness that have been developed and expanded over the past six to seven years in response to the ongoing housing crisis facing people on lower incomes.

The number of households in transitional housing reached almost 6000 in December 2022 and has remained around the same level during 2023. This followed a rapid expansion in previous years in this form of housing that is aimed at providing a stable transition out of homelessness and high housing need into long term and affordable housing, such as public housing or affordable private rentals.

Figure 49 shows that here were around 4000 households being supported in emergency housing, such as boarding houses and motels, through to September 2023. This is down by more than a third (35%) compared with the peak of over 6375 in May 2020 but is still well above the total 1671 in June 2017.<sup>75</sup>

**Figure 49: Number of households in transitional housing and emergency housing—2017–2023 (September years)<sup>76</sup>**



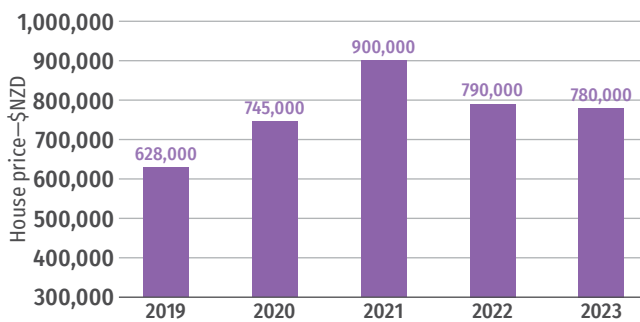


## Housing Affordability

### MEDIAN HOUSE SALE PRICES

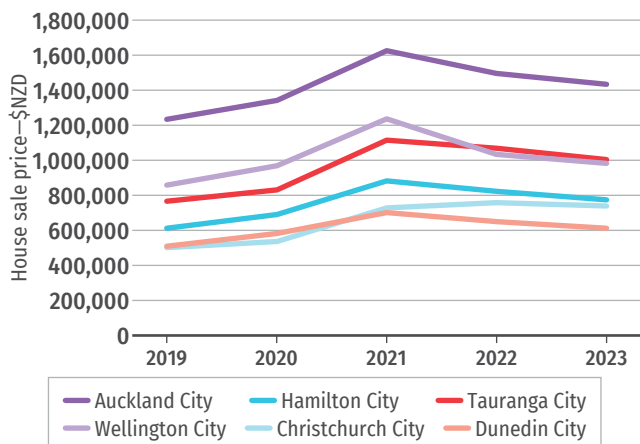
House prices fell during 2023, with the median house price nationally reaching \$767,000 in August 2023, but had risen again by December 2023 to \$780,000—down 13.3 percent from December 2021. This remains well above the pre-Covid-19 median price of \$628,000 in December, a 24.2 percent rise (Figure 50). Most houses would not have been on the market during those years where prices rose rapidly then declined. Each year around 60,000–80,000 houses are sold (about 3–4% of all dwellings)<sup>77</sup> and it is the buyers over the past two to three years who will have felt the impact of both rising interest rates and a peak in house prices.

Figure 50: Median house price—2019–2023 (December years)<sup>78</sup>



The price movements have been reasonably consistent across all the main centres with average house prices rising sharply to 2021 before declining in 2023 (Figure 51).<sup>79</sup>

Figure 51: Average house sale prices for selected areas—2019–2023 (October years)



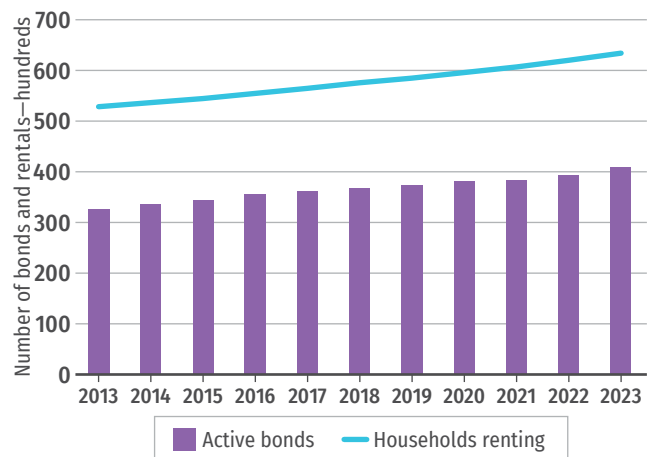
### RENTAL SUPPLY

More than 600,000 households are renters, around a third of all households. Over the past 10 years the proportion of households who are renting (32%) has

not changed, but it is higher than the 25 percent that were renters a generation ago in 1993.<sup>80</sup>

The total number of active tenancy bonds lodged nationally provides an indicator of the volume of private rental properties becoming available. A new bond is lodged at the start of a tenancy, which reflects both new tenancies as well as turnover in existing tenancies. The number of bonds lodged has risen at a faster rate than the growth in rental households over the past 10 years, possibly reflecting greater emphasis on education and regulation around compliance with rental law relating to bonds. In 2023, the number of bonds lodged increased by 16,500 (4%), more than double the average annual increase of around 7000 for the previous 10 years (Figure 52).

Figure 52: Active tenancy bonds—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>81</sup>



### RENTS IN LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES

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

Lower quartile rents, those in the more affordable range of rents nationally, have been increasing faster than inflation and wage increases in the past year and over the past decade, as well as rising more than the national median rent over the same time (Table 12).

Table 12: Lower quartile and median rents—2013–2023<sup>82</sup>

|                     | 2013 | 2018 | 2022 | 2023 | 1-yr change | 5-yr change | 10-yr change |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Lower quartile rent | 260  | 340  | 420  | 465  | 11%         | 37%         | 79%          |
| Median rent         | 340  | 435  | 540  | 580  | 7%          | 33%         | 71%          |

Rental rates vary around the country and within communities, so it is difficult to gain a full picture of affordability. One way is to look at the median market rent for a three-bedroom house in a selection of traditionally lower-income or working-class suburbs around the country. This gives some insight into what is happening for those on lower incomes in this country (Table 13).

Rental affordability has dramatically worsened over the past decade in the lower-income communities we have been following. Looking at rents in September each year, we can see that in six of the communities, rents have doubled, increasing by more than 100 percent: Huntly East, Greerton North in Tauranga, Fordlands in Rotorua, Highbury in Palmerston North, Flaxmere in Hastings and Cannons Creek in Porirua.

In all 26 areas, rents have increased by more than CPI over the past 10 years, and in most areas by more than the increase in average wages over that time.

The past year has seen signs of some easing of these rent increases in some areas, with half of the suburbs showing no change or annual rent increases below inflation and average wage growth. But Kaikohe, Westown in New Plymouth and three of the Auckland suburbs saw annual increases over 15 percent.

Table 13: Median rent for 3-bedroom houses in selected locations—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>83</sup>

| 3 bedroom house median rent       | 2013 | 2018 | 2022 | 2023 | 1-year change (%) | 5-year change (%) | 10-year change (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Kaikohe                           | 220  | 290  | 355  | 415  | 17%               | 43%               | 89%                |
| Auckland—Glenfield Central        | 480  | 560  | 630  | 750  | 19%               | 34%               | 56%                |
| Auckland—Ranui Domain             | 400  | 480  | 595  | 650  | 9%                | 35%               | 63%                |
| Auckland—Mt Roskill Central North | 463  | 580  | 650  | 805  | 24%               | 39%               | 74%                |
| Auckland—Avondale West            | 420  | 553  | 563  | 678  | 20%               | 23%               | 61%                |
| Auckland—Mt Wellington South West | 495  | 550  | 640  | 690  | 8%                | 25%               | 39%                |
| Auckland—Otahuhu East             | 395  | 500  | 640  | 633  | -1%               | 27%               | 60%                |
| Auckland—Manurewa Central         | 380  | 583  | 580  | 620  | 7%                | 6%                | 63%                |
| Auckland—Papakura East            | 390  | 495  | 618  | 660  | 7%                | 33%               | 69%                |
| Huntly East                       | 233  | 380  | 480  | 550  | 15%               | 45%               | 136%               |
| Hamilton—Claudelands              | 335  | 428  | 590  | 595  | 1%                | 39%               | 78%                |
| Tauranga—Greerton North           | 323  | 450  | 620  | 655  | 6%                | 46%               | 103%               |
| Rotorua—Fordlands                 | 230  | 355  | 490  | 500  | 2%                | 41%               | 117%               |
| Hastings—Flaxmere West            | 240  | 340  | 480  | 485  | 1%                | 43%               | 102%               |
| New Plymouth—Westown              | 340  | 388  | 550  | 635  | 15%               | 64%               | 87%                |
| Palmerston North—Highbury         | 270  | 335  | 530  | 550  | 4%                | 64%               | 104%               |
| Porirua—Cannons Creek North       | 265  | 380  | 528  | 530  | 0%                | 39%               | 100%               |
| Upper Hutt—Trentham North         | 350  | 460  | 640  | 650  | 2%                | 41%               | 86%                |
| Lower Hutt—Naenae South           | 350  | 435  | 638  | 650  | 2%                | 49%               | 86%                |
| Wellington—Miramar South          | 500  | 650  | 778  | 750  | -4%               | 15%               | 50%                |
| Nelson—Tahunanui                  | 350  | 410  | 520  | 533  | 3%                | 30%               | 52%                |
| Christchurch—Aranui               | 363  | 360  | 475  | 520  | 9%                | 44%               | 43%                |
| Christchurch—Hornby South         | 398  | 415  | 480  | 530  | 10%               | 28%               | 33%                |
| Christchurch—Woolston East        | 385  | 395  | 503  | 565  | 12%               | 43%               | 47%                |
| Dunedin—St Kilda South            | 305  | 358  | 515  | 525  | 2%                | 47%               | 72%                |
| Invercargill—Richmond             | 260  | 310  | 450  | 475  | 6%                | 53%               | 83%                |

Increasing the supply of affordable rentals that are good quality and provide a secure tenancy is an essential component to transforming our current housing crisis to a place of stability and wellbeing. Other housing models such as various forms of co-housing or the large-scale build-to-

rent developments planned by private sector developers<sup>84</sup> offer alternatives that will help provide a more flexible range of affordable housing options in the future.

## Household Housing Debt

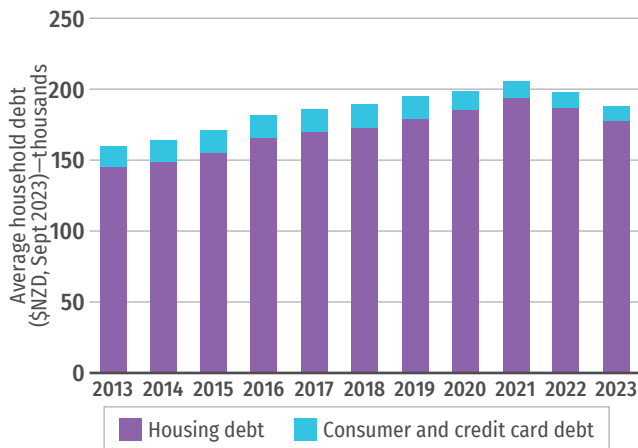
Rising levels of household debt have accompanied the rapid rise in house prices and rents in recent years, and this has a disproportionate impact on lower income households. They have fewer savings and other assets to offset debt and less income with which to meet increasing debt repayment and servicing costs.

Looking at the combination of housing loan debt, consumer finance loan and credit card debt households have accumulated gives some indication of the combined financial pressure on households overall. In **Figure 53**, we combine these totals for all households over the past 10 years, adjusted for inflation. At the peak of the house price increases in 2021 housing debt levels also peaked, but the past two years have seen average housing debt levels decline. Average housing and consumer debt per household is down from just over \$205,000 in 2021 to \$188,000 in 2023, back to around the level in 2018.

But the rapid increase in interest rates over the past two years means that the overall cost of this debt is rising. In September 2018, mortgage interest rates for two-year fixed mortgages were around 4–5 percent, before dropping as low as 2.5 percent in mid-2021. In the space of 18 months, by the end of 2022, these rates more than doubled and they continued to steadily increase throughout 2023, reaching around 7 percent by the end of the year.<sup>86</sup>

Consumer credit and credit card debt has reduced overall over the past two years, both in nominal dollars and after adjusting for inflation. This reduced exposure to very high-cost debt is a positive sign for overall financial wellbeing for people in this country. The fact remains however that lower income households are most vulnerable to this high-cost lending (see **Social Hazards**, p.63).

**Figure 53: Housing, consumer and credit card debt per household—2013–2023<sup>85</sup>**



## OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Housing

| CATEGORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | RESULT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>HOUSING AVAILABILITY</b> By late 2023, the surge of inward migration was renewing the pressures on supply and affordability of rentals and housing prices, and the supply of new built housing had once again fallen behind population growth. More rental housing was becoming available based on new tenancy bonds data. | —      |
| <b>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY</b> House prices have declined from their 2021 peak but were still 25 percent higher than pre-Covid-19. Rents in some lower-income areas have continued to increase well ahead of inflation.                                                                                                         | —      |
| <b>HOUSEHOLD HOUSING DEBT</b> Debt per household is reducing on average in real terms adjusting for inflation. But rising interest rates makes debt servicing harder especially for low-income households.                                                                                                                    | —      |

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- 86** Interest.co.nz, Fixed mortgage rates, <https://www.interest.co.nz/charts/interest-rates/fixed-mortgage-rates> (accessed December 2023).

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

*The Aotearoa criminal justice system aims to maintain community safety while ensuring the wellbeing of victims of crime and holding offenders accountable. However, achieving an effective, fair and just system also requires addressing the factors that have contributed to the offending.*

*In 2023, overall crime has risen, with increases in reported victimisations and victims, as well as an increase in the justice response, as measured by arrests and legal proceedings. This reflects not only heightened police activity but also an increase in community-experienced crime. The past year witnessed a 20 percent surge in estimated offences and a 7 percent increase in violent offences. These widespread increases underscore the significant challenges our nation faces in addressing sustained crime levels. Justice system activity has also increased, with a 14 percent rise in active cases in district courts (particularly youth courts) and a 12 percent increase in convictions.*

*Family violence remains a prominent concern, as police conducted 177,548 Family Harm Investigations (FHI), and the proportion deemed a crime reached 40.6 percent. Charges, people charged, convictions and imprisonments for family violence offences also increased in the past year. Efforts to address family violence have evolved since the introduction of the Family Violence Act 2018 and the implementation of Te Aorerekura: National Strategy to Eliminate Sexual and Family Violence (2019).*

*The number of people in prison was 8893 in September 2023, and has steadily increased every quarter in the past year. Despite this rise, the most common type of sentencing is still community sentences, comprising 45 percent of convictions. The remand population now represents 43.4 percent of the total prison population and is expected to increase in the coming years—this poses challenges in our justice system as the courts deal with backlogs, and activity for those remanded are restricted in prison.*

*Concerns persist about the disparity between Māori and non-Māori in the justice system, as Māori are imprisoned at around seven times the rate of non-Māori, a disparity which slightly increased in the past year. There have been sustained declines in recidivism levels for both Māori and non-Māori over the last five years which have continued in 2023, indicating a decrease in reoffending, although there is still significant room for improvement.*

*The escalating levels of crime, victims, family harm incidents and the prison population—combined with increased court workload—underscore the urgent need for significant improvements in the justice system.*



## Background

The criminal justice sector, depicted in **Figure 54**, encompasses various agencies operating throughout the criminal justice system pipeline. The ‘Crime and Punishment’ section of the *State of the Nation 2024* aims to offer an overview of the processes in this pipeline, outlining how the criminal justice system addresses and prevents criminal activity in Aotearoa. The simplified pipeline involves police handling and preventing crime, followed by courts and Ministry of Justice (MOJ) processing charges, prosecuting and sentencing offenders. Department of Corrections then oversees prisons and individuals sentenced in the community. While this streamlined view highlights the roles within the criminal justice system, it also underscores the intricate interconnections, as changes in one agency affect others.

**Figure 54: The criminal justice pipeline<sup>87</sup>**



Only around a fifth of crime in Aotearoa is reported to police, meaning the processes we track in the criminal justice pipeline offer only a partial view of the actual criminal activity in New Zealand. This chapter compiles data from various sources, including New Zealand Police, MOJ, District Courts, the New Zealand Parole Board and Department of Corrections. The data may have variations due to differences in reporting and collection methods among these agencies. Despite complexities like court lag times, our presentation aims to serve as a proxy for the mechanisms within the criminal justice pipeline.

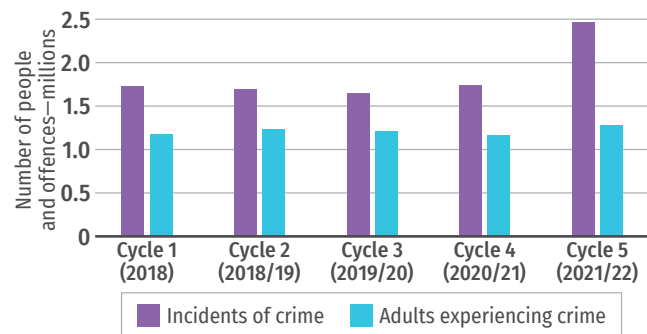
### NEW ZEALAND CRIME AND VICTIM SURVEY (NZCVS)

The NZ Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS)<sup>88</sup> conducted by the Ministry of Justice is the most comprehensive source of data on adult victims

of crime in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2023, the NZCVS published its fifth cycle (surveys conducted Nov 2021–Nov 2022); collectively these five cycles represent almost 36,000 interviews with New Zealanders about their experiences with crime. We continue to draw on the NZCVS as a reliable source of information on actual levels of crime and not just the reported and recorded crime.

The fifth cycle of the NZCVS showed that about a third (1.27 million) of adults in New Zealand have experienced crime in past 12 months, as shown in **Figure 55**. This trend is consistent with previous cycles. However, these adults have experienced more incidents of crime, amounting to 77 offences per 100 adults compared to 61 offences in Cycle 4. The NZCVS showed that the increase in incidents was primarily driven by an increase in the number of fraud and deception offences.

**Figure 55: NZCVS Cycle 1–5 adults experiencing crime and the number of offences<sup>89</sup>**



The NZCVS highlights challenges related to highly victimised adults, constituting 4 percent (163,000) of the adult population, who experienced 56 percent of all offences in the last year—an increase from 47 percent in Cycle 4. This trend is particularly evident in instances of interpersonal violence, which covers sexual assault, other forms of assault, harassment, threatening behaviour, robbery and even includes property damage when the victim is familiar with the offender. While individuals who have experienced multiple incidents of interpersonal violence represent only 2.5 percent of the adult population, they have been involved in 87 percent of all interpersonal violent offences.

Reporting crime incidents to police dropped to 19 percent (25% in Cycle 4), while victims reporting at

least one offence rose to 35 percent (33% in Cycle 4). Household offences had a higher reporting rate (34%) than personal offenses (14%). The decrease in reporting rates was driven by highly victimised individuals (16% in Cycle 5, down from 25% in Cycle 4), with non-highly victimised adults contributing to a slight decrease (22% compared to 24% in Cycle 4) due to the increased offence of fraud and deception incidents which have low reporting rates in Cycle 5.

Notably, the NZCVS identifies factors associated with a higher likelihood of becoming crime victims, encompassing people who identify as LGBTQ+, separated adults and Māori. The NZCVS sheds light on challenges faced by victims who experience crime, underscoring the importance of providing adequate support for victims and their families.

Victims of crime can face lasting physical, social, mental and financial impacts, affecting society overall. A fair and equitable criminal justice system ought to consider offenders while also providing support for victims, acknowledging their crucial role in the administration of justice, particularly when they actively participate in court proceedings and contribute to ensuring the correct dispensation of justice. The NZCVS and police’s recorded crime victims’ statistics (RCVS) provide consistent public datasets on crime victims in Aotearoa. While comprehensive data informs decision-making and policies, there are persistent gaps in reporting on crime victims and their interaction with the justice system. Failure to address these gaps hampers the effectiveness of the criminal justice system for victims.

## Overall Crime

Crime statistics are reported by the police through the RCVS which records how many times police receive reports of crimes that have a victim, and recorded crime offenders statistics (RCOS) which record both court and non-court proceedings by police against alleged offenders.<sup>90</sup>

A summary of police proceedings for offenders and victims reported to police from 2018–2023 is shown in **Figure 56**.

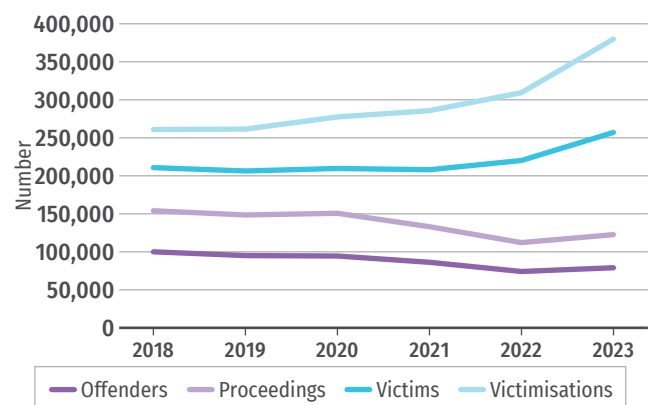
**OFFENDER:** A person or organisation that police apprehend because police allege the person or organisation has perpetrated a criminal incident involving one or more offences (please note these are alleged offenders so may not be formally charged).

**PROCEEDING:** A legal action initiated against an alleged offender for an offence(s). Each proceeding is classified to a principal offence and principal method of proceeding. It does not represent a count of offences.

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

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

**Figure 56: Summary of police proceedings and reports of victimisation—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>91</sup>**



**Figure 56** shows a decline from 2018 to 2023 in the number of offenders arrested (by 20.9%) and police proceedings (by 20.2%). However, this decrease contrasts with an increase in both the number of victims (21.9%) and victimisations (45.6%) over the same period. In the past year however, the number of offenders arrested and proceedings against them have increased—this is the first increase we have seen since 2015 (police data public records only go back to 2015). From 2022 to 2023, arrests increased by approximately 6.4 percent, rising from 74,153 to 78,971, and proceedings increased by 9.3 percent from 112,413 in 2022 to 122,833 in 2023. Proceeding levels more appropriately reflect on police activity and focus, rather than changes in criminal activity trends.

The upward trend in the number of recorded victims persists, with the highest increase since 2015 recorded in the past year at 16.8 percent, translating to approximately an additional 37,000 victims reporting offences to the police. The surge in reported victimisations to police, a 22.8 percent increase equating to over 70,000 additional crime-related experiences compared with 2022, is attributed to various factors. The primary factor is the actual experience of crime, as supported by findings from the NZCVS. Additionally, police cite factors such as population growth, the public's heightened expectation of a crime response, the continuous availability of policing resources, and increased accessibility through new reporting channels. Notably, the implementation of the 105 single non-emergency number is designed to facilitate the reporting of victimisations, making it easier for victims to seek appropriate help, advice and support.<sup>92</sup>

A combination of victimisations and proceedings data from police RCOS and RCVS are used to estimate the levels of reported offences, as shown in [Table 14](#).

The RCOS counting standards for proceedings means that only the principal offence is counted; for example, if an offender committed multiple offences, the RCOS would only count the primary offence as being proceeded against by the police. Therefore, the number of actual offences police are dealing with are underreported by looking at proceedings alone. The RCVS however, counts each criminal incident for each offence type in which they are recorded as being a victim of an offence. In addition, the RCOS uses six categories from ANZOC and RCVS uses all 16 categories of ANZOC, thus we are not able to estimate offences from the RCVS alone. Therefore, we utilise the combination of these datasets to provide a proxy to estimate the recorded offence volumes reported to the police.

**Table 14: Reported offence volumes—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>93</sup>**

|                                                                                    | 2018           | 2019           | 2020           | 2021           | 2022           | 2023           | 1Y change    | 5Y change    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Homicide and related offences                                                      | 182            | 218            | 214            | 178            | 184            | 226            | 22.8%        | 24.2%        |
| *Acts intended to cause injury                                                     | 49,849         | 50,604         | 58,446         | 66,107         | 68,322         | 74,886         | 9.6%         | 50.2%        |
| *Sexual assault and related offences                                               | 6031           | 6257           | 6230           | 7907           | 6955           | 7382           | 6.1%         | 22.4%        |
| Abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person                  | 5411           | 5347           | 5947           | 5516           | 4333           | 4432           | 2.3%         | -18.1%       |
| *Robbery, extortion and related offences                                           | 3761           | 3293           | 3419           | 3276           | 3515           | 5337           | 51.8%        | 41.9%        |
| *Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter                              | 65,315         | 64,639         | 66,481         | 56,686         | 62,898         | 70,846         | 12.6%        | 8.5%         |
| *Theft and related offences                                                        | 135,448        | 136,451        | 142,596        | 151,405        | 167,365        | 220,922        | 32.0%        | 63.1%        |
| Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons                                    | 16,050         | 15,430         | 14,676         | 14,516         | 12,994         | 13,856         | 6.6%         | -13.7%       |
| Fraud, deception and related offences                                              | 3127           | 2976           | 3017           | 2850           | 2309           | 2076           | -10.1%       | -33.6%       |
| Illicit drug offences                                                              | 8867           | 9052           | 10,231         | 8302           | 6123           | 6277           | 2.5%         | -29.2%       |
| Miscellaneous offences                                                             | 659            | 612            | 1257           | 718            | 695            | 782            | 12.5%        | 18.7%        |
| Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations | 15,770         | 16,751         | 22,547         | 15,333         | 11,935         | 12,593         | 5.5%         | -20.1%       |
| Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences                           | 3704           | 3894           | 4442           | 3774           | 3395           | 3948           | 16.3%        | 6.6%         |
| Property damage and environmental pollution                                        | 6162           | 5823           | 5599           | 5165           | 4286           | 4290           | 0.1%         | -30.4%       |
| Public order offences                                                              | 13,954         | 12,823         | 11,129         | 9595           | 6641           | 6538           | -1.6%        | -53.1%       |
| Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences                                            | 29,126         | 27,809         | 25,501         | 25,128         | 22,456         | 26,284         | 17.0%        | -9.8%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                       | <b>363,416</b> | <b>361,979</b> | <b>381,732</b> | <b>376,456</b> | <b>384,406</b> | <b>460,675</b> | <b>19.8%</b> | <b>26.8%</b> |
| Offence per 1000 population                                                        | 74             | 73             | 75             | 74             | 75             | 88             | 17.1%        | 18.6%        |

\*Victimisation data.

**Table 14** shows of the 16 measured offences, all but two—fraud and public order offences increased in the past year. (It is important to note that according to the NZCVS, fraud offences have increased in the past year, however fraud has a low reporting rate.) Overall offence levels have shown a significant increase compared with previous years, amounting to a 20 percent rise. This translates to over 76,000 new offences compared with 2022. This significant increase is attributed to increases in theft-related offences such as robbery and theft. Furthermore, **Table 14** presents the offence rate per 1000 individuals, adjusting for the population growth in New Zealand. Despite a 6.8 percent increase in population since 2018, the number of offences

per 1000 persons rose by 17.1 percent to reach 88 offences per 1000 persons.

Resolving victimisations is a primary task of the justice sector to ensure safer communities. We calculate resolution rates by police as the percentage of victimisations reported (excludes victimisation reports where police deem there is no crime) and where the investigation is finalised as reported in **Table 15** for violent and dishonest offences.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Previous SOTN reports have calculated resolution rates as the proportion of victimisations that are proceeded against by the police. Following advice from Police Data NZ, we have changed the method of reporting resolution rates.

Our analysis defines victimisations resolved as victimisations with an outcome of investigation 180 days after reported to police. The outcomes of investigation are as follows:

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

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

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

**VIOLENT OFFENCES FOR VICTIMISATIONS** These include acts intended to cause injury, sexual assault and related offences and abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person.

**DISHONESTY OFFENCES FOR VICTIMISATIONS** These include robbery, extortion and related offences, unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter and theft and related offences.

**Table 15: Estimated resolution rates of violent and dishonest victimisations—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>9a</sup>**

|                               | 2018         | 2019         | 2020         | 2021         | 2022         | 2023         | 1Y change    | 5Y change     |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Violent offences</b>       | <b>55.2%</b> | <b>54.9%</b> | <b>51.7%</b> | <b>45.2%</b> | <b>42.4%</b> | <b>41.0%</b> | <b>-1.5%</b> | <b>-14.2%</b> |
| Court action                  | 63.0%        | 62.0%        | 54.8%        | 52.6%        | 50.2%        | 50.4%        | 0.2%         | -12.6%        |
| No offender proceeded against | 23.9%        | 23.4%        | 31.1%        | 33.0%        | 39.1%        | 38.7%        | -0.4%        | 14.9%         |
| Non-court action              | 7.8%         | 8.3%         | 8.6%         | 8.9%         | 5.5%         | 6.3%         | 0.8%         | -1.5%         |
| <b>Dishonest offences</b>     | <b>14.9%</b> | <b>15.3%</b> | <b>15.0%</b> | <b>15.1%</b> | <b>12.9%</b> | <b>12.8%</b> | <b>-0.1%</b> | <b>-2.1%</b>  |
| Court action                  | 76.2%        | 75.4%        | 74.7%        | 72.2%        | 74.7%        | 78.6%        | 3.9%         | 2.4%          |
| No offender proceeded against | 13.6%        | 13.8%        | 13.8%        | 14.2%        | 13.1%        | 11.4%        | -1.7%        | -2.3%         |
| Non-court action              | 10.1%        | 10.8%        | 11.5%        | 13.6%        | 12.1%        | 10.0%        | -2.2%        | -0.1%         |

**Table 15** shows that in 2023 only 12.8 percent of victimisation reports for dishonest offences were resolved by police within 180 days. This suggests that 87 percent of dishonest offences continue to be unresolved six months after being reported to police. The resolution of violent offence victimisations has declined by 14.2 percentage points since 2018, with 41.0 percent of victimisation reports being finalised within 180 days of reporting in 2023. Although police may proceed against an offender, the courts may still find the alleged offender not guilty and therefore the resolutions shown in **Table 15** overestimate the number of victimisations that are resolved within the criminal justice system.

In 2023, 75 percent of proceedings by police in **Figure 56** resulted in court action, and 72.3 percent of offenders which police proceeded against resulted in court action. Offenders are prosecuted in the courts by the police, and the courts administer justice and determine outcomes and convictions. All criminal proceedings in New Zealand begin in the District Court. In an average year, there are nearly 120,000 criminal cases that move through the District Court. Cases are introduced and cases are resolved, however the number of cases that remain active as of June has increased, as shown in **Table 16**. According to the District Courts, the number of cases entering the courts has gradually declined, however length of time for cases to be resolved has increased for a myriad of reasons, hence the increase in active cases.

These factors include challenges associated with criminal disclosure, an increase in more serious and complex cases presented to the courts, staffing and retention challenges for the courts and the

introduction of new offences that allow the option for a jury trial—known for consuming more time and judicial resources, to name a few. Moreover, the lingering backlogs and delays caused by Covid-19 continue to impact the District Court’s operations.

**Table 16** illustrates a rise in criminal cases within the District Court over the past year, particularly notable in the Youth Court and jury trials. Since 2018, there has been a substantial 85 percent increase in active cases for a jury trial. These trials were suspended during the initial Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 and 2021, and their numbers during the Covid-19 Protection Framework (Dec 2021–Sep 2022) declined due to restrictions. Additionally, the year ending June 2023 shows the first increase in youth offenders and proceedings resulting in court action for youth [see **Children and Youth** section, p.05]. This may contribute to the increase in active youth court cases over the past year.

The Youth Court cohort often comprises of vulnerable young individuals affected by family violence and unsafe living conditions. The stressors exacerbated by Covid-19 further impact these young people and their families. Notably, the increased disengagement from education [see **Children and Youth** section, p.05], a consequence of Covid-19, intensifies challenges and pushes young people towards associations that contribute to offending in our communities. Although despite these challenges for a small cohort of young people in New Zealand, youth offending is still significantly lower than a decade ago.

Whilst the *State of the Nation 2024* focuses on the District Court, The Salvation Army has services that work in and alongside specialised courts, such as Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua—Alcohol and Other Drug

**Table 16: Active criminal proceedings in the District Court—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>95</sup>**

|                           | 2018          | 2019          | 2020          | 2021          | 2022          | 2023          | 1Y change    | 5Y change    |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Criminal (non-jury)       | 30,982        | 32,809        | 33,434        | 29,048        | 29,945        | 34,011        | 13.6%        | 9.8%         |
| Jury trial                | 2534          | 2897          | 3315          | 3743          | 4138          | 4693          | 13.4%        | 85.2%        |
| Youth court               | 918           | 797           | 892           | 826           | 853           | 1062          | 24.5%        | 15.7%        |
| <b>TOTAL ACTIVE CASES</b> | <b>34,434</b> | <b>36,503</b> | <b>37,641</b> | <b>33,617</b> | <b>34,936</b> | <b>39,766</b> | <b>13.8%</b> | <b>15.5%</b> |



Treatment Court (AODTC)<sup>96</sup> and Te Kooti o Timatanga Hou—New Beginnings Court (NBC).<sup>97</sup> These alternative approaches address the underlying causes of the offending and have shown to have reduced reoffending levels for those involved in these courts—people whose offence is influenced by alcohol and/or drug substance use disorders in the AODTC and those who are homeless in the NBC.

For all ages, there were 13,751 (11.8%) more convictions in 2023 compared with 2022. This is the largest annual increase in convictions noted in

the past 10 years and coincides with a 14.5 percent increase in charges laid in the courts. Overall, since 2018 convictions have declined by 20 percent, which accounts for almost 32,000 fewer convictions, as shown in **Table 17**. A quarter of all convictions are for traffic violations, followed by offences to justice, theft-related offences and acts intended to cause harm. These four offences make up around 65 percent of all convictions in our courts. The greatest increase in convictions were for sexual offences, traffic violations and public order offences.

**Table 17: Convictions by offence category—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>98</sup>**

|                                                                                    | 2018           | 2019           | 2020           | 2021           | 2022           | 2023           | 1Y change    | 5Y change     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Homicide and related offences                                                      | 159            | 155            | 135            | 233            | 149            | 142            | -4.7%        | -10.7%        |
| Acts intended to cause injury                                                      | 15,088         | 14,386         | 14,078         | 14,920         | 12,097         | 12,861         | 6.3%         | -14.8%        |
| Sexual assault and related offences                                                | 2940           | 2549           | 2359           | 2543           | 2620           | 3308           | 26.3%        | 12.5%         |
| Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons                                    | 9718           | 9063           | 8100           | 8445           | 6601           | 7163           | 8.5%         | -26.3%        |
| Abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person                  | 3280           | 3373           | 3471           | 3885           | 3521           | 3874           | 10.0%        | 18.1%         |
| Robbery, extortion and related offences                                            | 857            | 785            | 666            | 594            | 542            | 599            | 10.5%        | -30.1%        |
| Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter                               | 3989           | 3518           | 3539           | 3755           | 2916           | 3207           | 10.0%        | -19.6%        |
| Theft and related offences                                                         | 17,940         | 17,414         | 18,017         | 17,755         | 13,872         | 17,708         | 27.7%        | -1.3%         |
| Fraud, deception and related offences                                              | 9175           | 8213           | 7335           | 7075           | 5136           | 4594           | -10.6%       | -49.9%        |
| Illicit drug offences                                                              | 10,815         | 9950           | 9650           | 9515           | 7688           | 7663           | -0.3%        | -29.1%        |
| Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences                           | 3446           | 3374           | 3626           | 3912           | 3322           | 3769           | 13.5%        | 9.4%          |
| Property damage and environmental pollution                                        | 5880           | 5584           | 5381           | 5551           | 4309           | 4791           | 11.2%        | -18.5%        |
| Public order offences                                                              | 5353           | 4878           | 4354           | 4594           | 3898           | 4489           | 15.2%        | -16.1%        |
| Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences                                            | 37,095         | 35,438         | 31,617         | 34,395         | 27,255         | 32,565         | 19.5%        | -12.2%        |
| Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations | 34,324         | 34,687         | 33,623         | 30,882         | 21,715         | 22,620         | 4.2%         | -34.1%        |
| Miscellaneous offences                                                             | 2209           | 2218           | 1350           | 1414           | 809            | 848            | 4.8%         | -61.6%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                       | <b>162,268</b> | <b>155,585</b> | <b>147,301</b> | <b>149,468</b> | <b>116,450</b> | <b>130,201</b> | <b>11.8%</b> | <b>-19.8%</b> |



## Violent Crime

Violent crime can be aggregated to include homicide and related offences; acts intended to cause injury; sexual assault and related offences; dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons; abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person.

In 2023, violent crime represented 31 percent (38,168) of all proceedings by police and 22 percent (82,761)

of all victimisations reported to police. Overall, the number of proceedings for violent crimes has declined by 19 percent since 2018, however in the past year it has increased by 6.5 percent (although as a proportion of all proceedings there has been a minor increase of 2.5%). The number of victimisations for violent crime has increased by 47 percent since 2018 as shown in **Table 18**.

**Table 18: Summary of police proceedings for violent crime—2018–2023**

|               | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y   | 5Y     |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| Victimisation | 56,285 | 57,293 | 65,128 | 74,458 | 75,672 | 82,768 | 9.4% | 47.1%  |
| Victims       | 50,413 | 50,644 | 55,653 | 63,092 | 62,767 | 67,906 | 8.2% | 34.7%  |
| Proceedings   | 47,059 | 44,956 | 44,000 | 41,853 | 35,838 | 38,173 | 6.5% | -18.9% |
| Offenders     | 40,980 | 38,834 | 37,741 | 36,031 | 30,913 | 32,657 | 5.6% | -20.3% |

A combination of proceedings and victimisations are shown in **Table 19** for violent offences (alleged and proceeded against) since 2018 [see counting standards for **Table 14**.]

Overall, reported violent offences have increased in the last year by over 3200 offences. Over the last year, assaults and dangerous or negligent operation of a vehicle account for more than 80 percent of violent offences. It is important to acknowledge that, despite homicide and related offences constituting a small proportion of violent crimes, the rate has remained consistently high over the past three years. Considering the gravity of these offences, this trend is particularly concerning. In 2023, almost all violent offences have increased, in contrast to the downward trend of the previous five years (but overall numbers are still well below pre-Covid-19 level).

Table 19: Violent offences—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>99</sup>

|                                                                          | 2018          | 2019          | 2020          | 2021          | 2022          | 2023          | 1Y          | 5Y            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Homicide and related offences</b>                                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |             |               |
| Attempted murder                                                         | 19            | 16            | 10            | 17            | 18            | 21            | 16.7%       | 10.5%         |
| Homicide and related offences not further defined                        | 1             | 0             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 4             | 300.0%      | 300.0%        |
| Manslaughter and driving causing death                                   | 120           | 122           | 119           | 100           | 93            | 116           | 24.7%       | -3.3%         |
| Murder                                                                   | 42            | 80            | 84            | 60            | 72            | 85            | 18.1%       | 102.4%        |
| <b>Acts intended to cause injury</b>                                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |             |               |
| *Assault                                                                 | 25,164        | 21,618        | 18,239        | 20,567        | 19,399        | 21,123        | 8.9%        | -16.1%        |
| Other acts intended to cause injury                                      | 29            | 12            | 19            | 39            | 26            | 28            | 7.7%        | -3.4%         |
| <b>Sexual assault and related offences</b>                               |               |               |               |               |               |               |             |               |
| Non-assaultive sexual offences                                           | 154           | 168           | 167           | 240           | 172           | 220           | 27.9%       | 42.9%         |
| *Aggravated sexual assault                                               | 5039          | 5213          | 5267          | 6610          | 5860          | 6289          | 7.3%        | 24.8%         |
| *Non-aggravated sexual assault                                           | 992           | 1044          | 963           | 1297          | 1095          | 1093          | -0.2%       | 10.2%         |
| <b>Abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person</b> |               |               |               |               |               |               |             |               |
| Abduction and kidnapping                                                 | 407           | 436           | 454           | 455           | 393           | 493           | 25.4%       | 21.1%         |
| Deprivation of liberty/false imprisonment                                | 4             | 1             | 1             | 0             | 2             | 1             | -50.0%      | -75.0%        |
| Harassment and threatening behaviour                                     | 5218          | 5128          | 5708          | 5307          | 4177          | 4197          | 0.5%        | -19.6%        |
| <b>Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons</b>                   |               |               |               |               |               |               |             |               |
| Dangerous or negligent operation of a vehicle                            | 15,721        | 15,138        | 14,393        | 14,280        | 12,817        | 13,622        | 6.3%        | -13.4%        |
| Other dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons                    | 329           | 292           | 283           | 236           | 177           | 234           | 32.2%       | -28.9%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                             | <b>53,239</b> | <b>49,268</b> | <b>45,708</b> | <b>49,209</b> | <b>44,302</b> | <b>47,526</b> | <b>7.3%</b> | <b>-10.7%</b> |

\*Victimisation data.

## Family Violence

The following information uses insights from police data and family violence offences from MOJ to try and gauge the trends seen in family violence. Reporting and recording of data across the different sources (police data and MOJ data tables) vary, therefore, these datasets are intended to provide a proxy for family violence and not an exact reflection.

Addressing family violence continues to be the foremost demand activity for frontline police. Policing services are increasingly tasked with handling antisocial problems, notably family violence. Incidents of assault within family

relationships now account for approximately 66 percent of reported serious assaults and calls for service related to family violence are rising at higher rates compared to other categories. **Table 20** shows the family violence instances that are reported to and recorded by police. FHIs are investigations that relate to an episode of family violence that police attend and investigate. This includes all instances, whether police assess that a crime occurred. It indicates that police will collect additional information to support a risk assessment and effective safety planning to prevent further violence.

Table 20: Family harm investigation—2018–2023<sup>100</sup>

|              | 2018           | 2019           | 2020           | 2021           | 2022           | 2023           | 1Y change   | 5Y change    |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Crime        | 38,964         | 39,931         | 54,378         | 61,885         | 67,218         | 72,027         | 7.2%        | 84.9%        |
| Non-crime    | 86,236         | 103,300        | 113,169        | 105,052        | 108,391        | 105,521        | -2.6%       | 22.4%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>125,200</b> | <b>143,231</b> | <b>167,547</b> | <b>166,937</b> | <b>175,609</b> | <b>177,548</b> | <b>1.1%</b> | <b>41.8%</b> |

In 2023, there were 177,548 FHIs recorded by the police. This is a 41.8 percent increase from 2018 but a relatively small increase from 2022. In 2023, there were 105,521 FHIs which assessed the incident as a non-crime, a 22.4 percent increase from 2018 but a decrease since the previous year, whilst incidents assessed as a crime/offence increased by 7.2 percent since 2022 in contrast to non-crime assessments, and by 84.9 percent since 2018.

The NZCVS showed offences by family members in Cycle 5 (1.8%) compared to Cycle 4 (1.7%) have increased, and the number of victims of intimate partner violence rose from 35,000 adults in New Zealand (0.9% of the adult population) to 56,000 (1.4%). The NZCVS also estimates that intimate partners were responsible for almost three-quarters of offences by family members.

Table 21 below shows the victimisations flagged as family harm by police broken down by ethnicity. FH victimisations have been increasing year on year since 2018. There most significant increase was in 2020, which can likely be attributed to Covid-19 but also other factors such as the Family Violence Act 2018 and Te Aorerekura, which created new offences and increased reporting opportunities so that there could be support provided to those victimised. Every year Māori make up more than 40 percent total FH victimisations, followed by European (27.7%) and Pacific (6.9%).

A victimisation counts each occasion of a person being victimised for each given type of offence division. Victimisations are classified according to the most serious offences within an offence division. This is not a count of victims.

Table 21: Family harm flagged reported victimisations by ethnicity—2018–2023<sup>101</sup>

|                | 2018          | 2019          | 2020          | 2021          | 2022          | 2023          | 1Y          | 5Y           |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| African        | 95            | 78            | 89            | 101           | 153           | 140           | -8.5%       | 47.4%        |
| Asian          | 548           | 515           | 634           | 691           | 677           | 735           | 8.6%        | 34.1%        |
| European       | 10,070        | 10,302        | 12,438        | 13,074        | 13,717        | 14,429        | 5.2%        | 43.3%        |
| Indian         | 885           | 796           | 1036          | 1123          | 1004          | 1250          | 24.5%       | 41.2%        |
| Latin/Hispanic | 54            | 71            | 82            | 77            | 64            | 93            | 45.3%       | 72.2%        |
| Māori          | 12,506        | 12,869        | 17,378        | 18,805        | 20,426        | 21,501        | 5.3%        | 71.9%        |
| Middle Eastern | 102           | 122           | 151           | 187           | 196           | 183           | -6.6%       | 79.4%        |
| Pacific Island | 2600          | 2377          | 3015          | 3368          | 3395          | 3604          | 6.2%        | 38.6%        |
| Unknown        | 4133          | 4925          | 5987          | 7584          | 8673          | 10,200        | 17.6%       | 146.8%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>30,993</b> | <b>32,055</b> | <b>40,810</b> | <b>45,010</b> | <b>48,305</b> | <b>52,135</b> | <b>7.9%</b> | <b>68.2%</b> |

In comparison to victimisations, the number of proceedings against offenders are also shown in **Table 22** where the opposite trend is occurring in respect to FH proceedings. The number of proceedings against offenders flagged as FH has declined by 37.4 percent and is 16,223 in 2023. Whilst

the number of proceedings for FH has declined, the proportion of Māori that make up these proceedings has increased from 48 percent in 2018 to 52 percent in 2023, followed by European at 32 percent and Pacific at 9 percent.

**Table 22: Family harm flagged proceedings against offenders by ethnicity—2018–2023<sup>102</sup>**

|                | 2018          | 2019          | 2020          | 2021          | 2022          | 2023          | 1Y           | 5Y            |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| African        | 99            | 88            | 73            | 61            | 68            | 57            | -16.2%       | -42.4%        |
| Asian          | 401           | 352           | 260           | 226           | 187           | 146           | -21.9%       | -63.6%        |
| European       | 8701          | 7968          | 7865          | 6533          | 5348          | 5175          | -3.2%        | -40.5%        |
| Indian         | 627           | 550           | 566           | 443           | 324           | 356           | 9.9%         | -43.2%        |
| Latin/Hispanic | 37            | 33            | 42            | 27            | 21            | 21            | 0.0%         | -43.2%        |
| Māori          | 12,474        | 11,642        | 11,508        | 9942          | 8557          | 8347          | -2.5%        | -33.1%        |
| Middle Eastern | 103           | 129           | 107           | 86            | 67            | 77            | 14.9%        | -25.2%        |
| Pacific Island | 2959          | 2425          | 2167          | 1864          | 1575          | 1452          | -7.8%        | -50.9%        |
| Unknown        | 505           | 413           | 561           | 525           | 453           | 592           | 30.7%        | 17.2%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>25,906</b> | <b>23,600</b> | <b>23,149</b> | <b>19,707</b> | <b>16,600</b> | <b>16,223</b> | <b>-2.3%</b> | <b>-37.4%</b> |

**Table 23** shows a summary of charges finalised in court and people charged for a family violence offence. The number of charges, the number of people charged, the number of convictions and the number of imprisonments for family violence have increased right across the board in the past year. **Table 23** also includes the number of police safety orders (PSO)<sup>103</sup> issued by police, to temporarily

remove a person at risk of offending from the property where their potential victim/s live. An offence does not have to have taken place for a PSO to be issued. PSOs significantly increased in 2019 following the implementation of Family Violence Act 2018. Non-crime FHIs shown in **Table 23** will not translate to a charge or conviction but could result in a PSO.

**Table 23: Family violence trends—2018–2023<sup>104</sup>**

|                                            | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y change | 5Y change |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Charges                                    | 28,648 | 28,598 | 30,129 | 31,629 | 25,708 | 29,039 | 13.0%     | 1.4%      |
| People charged                             | 13,940 | 13,498 | 13,353 | 13,540 | 10,851 | 11,746 | 8.2%      | -15.7%    |
| Convicted                                  | 10,027 | 9555   | 9351   | 9470   | 7474   | 7981   | 6.8%      | -20.4%    |
| Imprisoned                                 | 2562   | 2299   | 2439   | 1984   | 1759   | 1895   | 7.7%      | -26.0%    |
| Police safety orders (PSOs) <sup>105</sup> | 8464   | 20,232 | 24,029 | 23,341 | 23,535 | 23,983 | 1.9%      | 183.4%    |

Police actively encourage reporting of family harm, recognising it as a sign of public trust. With 62 percent of FHIs not resulting in recorded offences, the police acknowledge that the criminal justice system may not always be a suitable pathway to support families<sup>106</sup> so figures in **Table 20** will not translate to **Table 23**. Instead, police have a crucial

role to play in connecting victims to early crisis intervention and prevention support. As a partner in Te Aorerekura, the police supports integrated community-led responses (ICR), building on existing initiatives for comprehensive support.

## Sentencing and Imprisonment

### SENTENCING

Across all categories in **Table 24**, there has been an annual general increase in criminal prosecutions and their respective outcomes. Between 2022 and 2023, prosecutions rose by 12.5 percent, convictions by 11.5 percent, imprisonment by 7.8 percent, and community sentences by 13.7 percent. The proportion of convicted offenders who are imprisoned declined slightly, continuing a trend

observed over the past five years. Currently, only 11 percent of those convicted are imprisoned, with the highest proportion in the past decade recorded at 13.5 percent in 2017. Conversely, there has been a slight rise in the proportion of convictions leading to community sentences, which in 2023 comprised 44.5 percent of all outcomes.

**Table 24: Criminal prosecution trends for adults—2018–2023<sup>107</sup>**

|                                                    | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y change | 5Y change |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Prosecutions                                       | 75,450 | 72,538 | 65,209 | 67,144 | 54,360 | 61,155 | 12.5%     | -18.9%    |
| Convictions                                        | 62,230 | 58,887 | 52,372 | 53,760 | 42,881 | 47,794 | 11.5%     | -23.2%    |
| Convictions as a percentage of persecutions        | 82.5%  | 81.2%  | 80.3%  | 80.1%  | 78.9%  | 78.2%  | -0.7 pp   | -4.3 pp   |
| Imprisonment                                       | 8193   | 7112   | 6959   | 5749   | 4883   | 5263   | 7.8%      | -35.8%    |
| Imprisonment as a percentage of convictions        | 13.2%  | 12.1%  | 13.3%  | 10.7%  | 11.4%  | 11.0%  | -0.4 pp   | -2.2 pp   |
| Community sentences                                | 26,277 | 25,367 | 22,624 | 24,651 | 18,689 | 21,258 | 13.7%     | -19.1%    |
| Community sentences as a percentage of convictions | 42.2%  | 43.1%  | 43.2%  | 45.9%  | 43.6%  | 44.5%  | 0.9 pp    | 2.3 pp    |

**NOTE:** pp = percentage points

**Figure 57** illustrates the proportional distribution of various non-custodial community sentences. The distribution among types of community sentences has remained consistent, with the majority involving supervision or community work, comprising over 60 percent of all community sentences.

Community work and supervision are the least expensive methods of sentencing, with a daily cost of \$13 and \$25, respectively, as detailed in **Table 25**.

**Figure 57: Sentence type shares of community sentences—2018–2023 (June years)<sup>108</sup>**

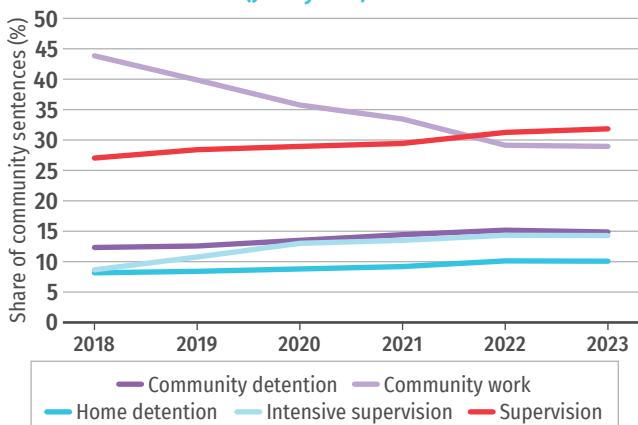


Table 25: Cost of prisoners per day—2023<sup>109</sup>

|                           | Daily cost | Average number of days | Average number of people | Average cost per year  |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Custodial sentence</b> |            |                        |                          |                        |
| Sentenced                 | \$555      | 604                    | 4611                     | \$1,545,699,420        |
| Remand                    | \$452      | 79                     | 3522                     | \$125,763,576          |
| <b>Community sentence</b> |            |                        |                          |                        |
| Home detention            | \$124      | 212                    | 1538                     | \$40,430,944           |
| Community detention       | \$72       | 124                    | 1414                     | \$12,624,192           |
| Supervision               | \$25       | 287                    | 6885                     | \$49,399,875           |
| Community work            | \$13       |                        | 11088                    | —                      |
| Intensive supervision     | \$41       | 447                    | 4576                     | \$83,864,352           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              |            |                        |                          | <b>\$1,857,782,359</b> |

### IMPRISONMENT

MOJ released the ‘Justice Sector Long-Term Insights Briefing’ about imprisonment 1960–2050<sup>110</sup> in December 2022. The long-term briefing showed various factors regarding the change in the composition of those imprisoned in New Zealand.

The prison population has aged significantly over the years. In 1980, 29 percent were under 20, but by 2022, only 1 percent fell into that age group. The average age in prison was 25 in 1980 and has increased to 38 in 2022.

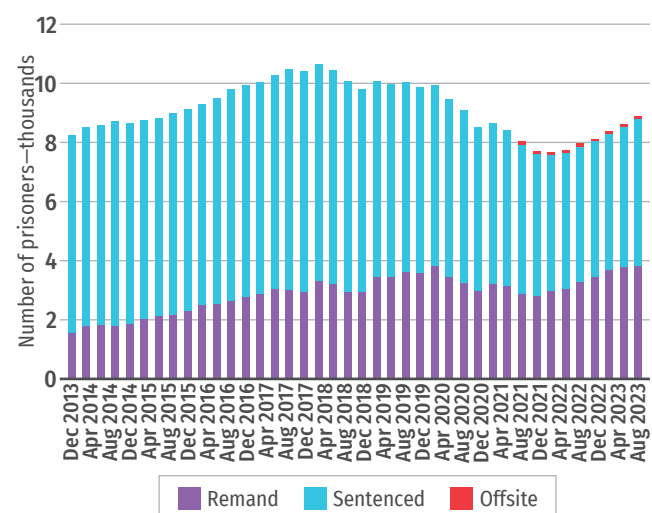
Between 1960 and 1979, Māori prison population rose by 125 percent, compared to a 17 percent increase for non-Māori. From 1985 to recently, Māori consistently make up 50 percent of the total prison population.

The rise in the sentenced population resulted from increased convictions for serious violence, sexual offences and Class A drug dealing, coupled with legislative changes to sentencing and parole.

A survey conducted as part of the briefing showed that almost 80 percent of respondents had little knowledge about how imprisonment works in New Zealand.<sup>111</sup> Only a small percentage of our population will ever interact with the prison system, however it is an essential part of our criminal justice system.

The prison muster in September 2023 was 8893 as shown in Figure 58. This has increased by 11.7 percent compared with the same period in 2022, which had a muster of 7964. The muster is made up of 3817 (42.9%) remand prisoners awaiting trial, 5006 (56.3%) serving sentences and 70 (0.8%) of these prisoners being managed off-site (these off-site prisoners are still accounted as custodial prisoners).

Figure 58: Prisoner population (quarterly)<sup>112</sup>



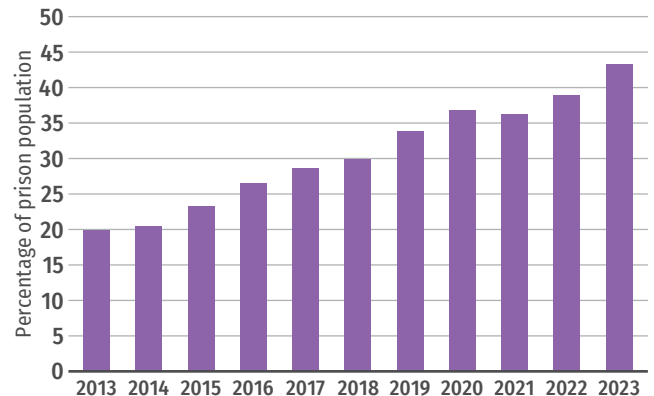


**Figure 59** illustrates the percentage of prisoners currently on remand. Traditionally, prisons were designed for a remand population comprising approximately 15 percent of the total prison population.<sup>113</sup> However, over the past decade, the number of remand inmates has more than doubled, increasing the proportion of the prison population which is on remand from 19.9 percent in 2013 to 43.4 percent in 2023.

MOJ’s ‘Justice Sector Long-Term Insights Briefing’ about imprisonment 1960–2050 indicated a significant increase in cases meeting the threshold for ‘offending on bail’ reverse onus (if accused of a crime while on bail, the individual may need to prove why their bail should not be revoked or result in further consequences). This surge is attributed to technological advances such as electric monitoring and enhanced data capture by the police. The extended court proceedings as highlighted in **Table 26** resulted in prolonged delays, creating more opportunities for defendants on bail to violate conditions and surpass the remand threshold. More than 80 percent of individuals charged with imprisonable offences are released on bail.

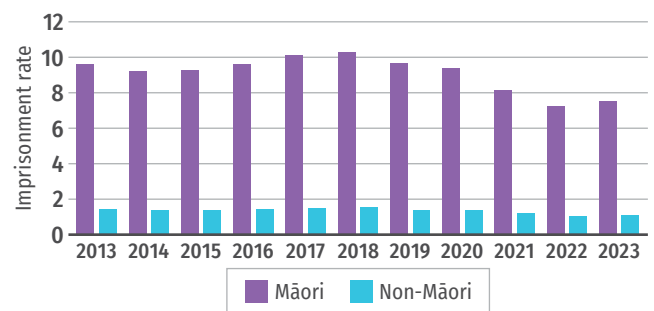
Presently, remand prisoners make up over 43 percent of the total prison population (those remanded in custody represent only 21% of the total number of people held in remand—79% are remanded on bail in the community whilst awaiting court<sup>114</sup>). On average, individuals spend about 79 days in remand, incurring a daily cost of \$452 per prisoner in 2023, as shown in **Table 25**. On average, this amounts to \$125.7 million per year. The ‘Justice Sector Long-Term Insights Briefing’ projections indicate that the remand population will increase to 50 percent and sustain that level from 2030 to 2050.

**Figure 59: Percentage of prison population on remand—2013–2023 (annual)<sup>115</sup>**



In **Figure 60**, the imprisonment rate per 1000 adults (18 years old and over) is shown for non-Māori and Māori populations. Over the past year, the imprisonment rate for Māori has experienced a slight increase, the first in five years, after notable declines. A persistent disparity remains between Māori and non-Māori imprisonment rates. This disparity increased between 2022 and 2023; Māori were 6.8 times as likely to be imprisoned than non-Māori in 2023, up from 6.5 times as likely in 2022.

**Figure 60: Imprisonment rates per 1000 for adult population (18 years old and over)—2013–2023<sup>116</sup>**



All offenders who are serving sentences of two or more years, unless a non-parole period is imposed, are eligible for parole. **Table 26** shows the number of offenders who have been approved for parole from 2018 to 2023. The number of approvals by the New Zealand Parole Board has declined by 21.3 percent since 2018, from 1424 to 1048. The number of requests and approvals both reduced in 2023.

Table 26: Offenders approved for parole—2017–2021 (June years)<sup>17</sup>

|                                | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  | 2022  | 2023  | 1Y     | 5Y     |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Offenders seen                 | 5164  | 5383  | 5131  | 4891  | 4344  | 4062  | -6.5%  | -21.3% |
| Parole approved                | 1424  | 1882  | 1669  | 1652  | 1578  | 1048  | -33.6% | -26.4% |
| Recalls                        | 340   | 458   | 541   | 613   | 533   | 428   | -19.7% | 25.9%  |
| Approved                       | 259   | 339   | 401   | 395   | 377   | 374   | -0.8%  | 44.4%  |
| Percentage of recalls approved | 76.2% | 74.0% | 74.1% | 64.4% | 70.7% | 87.4% | 16.7pp | 11.2pp |

**NOTE:** pp = percentage points

If an offender released on parole breaches their conditions or poses an undue risk to the safety of the community, a probation officer or police officer can apply to the Parole Board to have them recalled to serve their sentence in prison. The number of recalls has declined in the last year (19.7%) but has increased by 25.9 percent since 2018. Overall, for the past year, around 36 percent (more than 1 in 3) of people who were approved for parole have been recalled to prison. The cost for parole services was \$97,876,000 in 2023. This would amount to an average cost of \$24,000 for every offender that was seen by the Parole Board in 2023 and represents 5 percent of Department of Corrections expenditure as shown under the next heading.

## Recidivism

**NOTE:** Corrections methodology to calculate recidivism index was changed in 2019/2020, therefore figures for 2018 and 2019 are not directly comparable.

Recidivism refers to the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend. Over the past five years, recidivism rates have been gradually declining, showing that there are less people reoffending. In 2023, 21.6 percent of individuals released from prison returned within a year, with a higher rate for Māori (23.9%) compared to non-Māori (17.9%), as indicated in [Table 27](#). After two years, the return-to-prison rate increases to 35.2 percent, notably higher for Māori (39.4%) than non-Māori (28.8%). The overall reconviction rate within a year is 32.7 percent, with a greater percentage for Māori (36.2%) than non-Māori (26.9%). This disparity widens after two years, with 59.4 percent of Māori being reconvicted compared to 47.3 percent of non-Māori.

While overall recidivism rates have decreased, the disparity between Māori and non-Māori remains evident, despite a slight annual decline in rate disparity on most measures between 2022 and 2023.

As shown under previous headings, only 11 percent of people convicted are sent to prison and there is an increasing trend in the proportion of those convicted being given community sentences. [Table 28](#) shows the recidivism rates for people who begin a community-based sentence. In 2023, only 5 percent of people who start a community sentence are imprisoned (7% for Māori and 4.5% for non-Māori) after 12 months, and 8.9 percent after 24 months (12.9% for Māori and 7.5% for non-Māori). After a year, 17.5 percent will be reconvicted, and 32.1 percent will be reconvicted after two years. The reconviction rates have been declining gradually over the years; however, the disparity is still prevalent between Māori and non-Māori.

Table 27: Recidivism rates for people released from prison—2018–2022<sup>118</sup>

|                                                 | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y      | 5Y       |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|
| <b>12-month follow-up period—reimprisonment</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |          |
| Māori                                           | 34.90% | 33.60% | 29.20% | 27.50% | 24.80% | 23.90% | -0.90pp | -11.00pp |
| Non-Māori                                       | 29.40% | 25.80% | 21.80% | 20.00% | 17.90% | 17.90% | 0.00pp  | -11.50pp |
| Disparity                                       | 5.50%  | 7.80%  | 7.40%  | 7.50%  | 6.90%  | 6.00%  | -0.90%  | 0.50pp   |
| <b>12-month follow-up period—reconviction</b>   |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |          |
| Māori                                           | 50.40% | 49.80% | 42.60% | 43.10% | 39.30% | 36.20% | -3.10pp | -14.20pp |
| Non-Māori                                       | 43.10% | 40.00% | 33.70% | 33.90% | 30.20% | 26.93% | -3.27pp | -16.17pp |
| Disparity                                       | 7.30%  | 9.80%  | 8.90%  | 9.20%  | 9.10%  | 9.27%  | 0.17pp  | 1.97pp   |
| <b>24-month follow-up period—reimprisonment</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |          |
| Māori                                           | 49.60% | 47.60% | 45.80% | 44.80% | 41.00% | 39.40% | -1.60pp | -10.20pp |
| Non-Māori                                       | 36.70% | 38.80% | 36.30% | 33.70% | 28.90% | 28.80% | -0.10pp | -7.90pp  |
| Disparity                                       | 12.90% | 8.80%  | 9.50%  | 11.10% | 12.10% | 10.60% | -1.50pp | -2.30pp  |
| <b>24-month follow-up period—reconviction</b>   |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |          |
| Māori                                           | 67.70% | 67.70% | 65.80% | 63.90% | 62.40% | 59.40% | -3.00pp | -8.30pp  |
| Non-Māori                                       | 54.00% | 56.20% | 55.50% | 51.50% | 48.20% | 47.30% | -0.90pp | -6.70pp  |
| Disparity                                       | 13.70% | 11.50% | 10.30% | 12.40% | 14.20% | 12.10% | -2.10pp | -1.60pp  |

**NOTE:** pp = percentage points

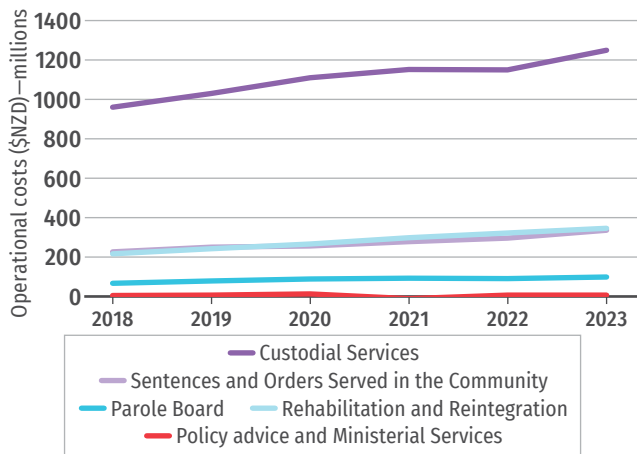
Table 28: Recidivism rates for people starting a community-based sentence—2018–2022<sup>119</sup>

|                                               | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y     | 5Y      |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>12-month follow-up period—imprisonment</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Māori                                         | 7.80%  | 6.70%  | 7.90%  | 8.10%  | 7.20%  | 7.00%  | -0.20% | -0.80%  |
| Non-Māori                                     | 4.80%  | 3.70%  | 4.90%  | 5.30%  | 4.00%  | 4.50%  | 0.50%  | -0.20%  |
| Disparity                                     | 3.00%  | 3.00%  | 3.00%  | 2.80%  | 3.20%  | 2.50%  | -0.70% | -0.60%  |
| <b>12-month follow-up period—reconviction</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Māori                                         | 33.30% | 31.90% | 24.80% | 25.90% | 23.00% | 21.50% | -1.50% | -11.80% |
| Non-Māori                                     | 25.70% | 23.20% | 18.30% | 19.70% | 16.20% | 15.70% | -0.50% | -10.00% |
| Disparity                                     | 7.60%  | 8.70%  | 6.50%  | 6.20%  | 6.80%  | 5.80%  | -1.00% | -1.80%  |
| <b>24-month follow-up period—imprisonment</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Māori                                         | 12.10% | 11.00% | 14.90% | 15.10% | 13.00% | 12.90% | -0.10% | 0.80%   |
| Non-Māori                                     | 8.00%  | 6.70%  | 8.80%  | 9.80%  | 8.30%  | 7.50%  | -0.80% | -0.50%  |
| Disparity                                     | 4.10%  | 4.30%  | 6.10%  | 5.30%  | 4.70%  | 5.40%  | 0.70%  | 1.30%   |
| <b>24-month follow-up period—reconviction</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Māori                                         | 50.00% | 47.90% | 44.00% | 42.70% | 41.50% | 39.50% | -2.00% | -10.50% |
| Non-Māori                                     | 39.80% | 38.30% | 33.50% | 33.20% | 32.80% | 29.90% | -2.90% | -9.90%  |
| Disparity                                     | 10.20% | 9.60%  | 10.50% | 9.50%  | 8.70%  | 9.60%  | 0.90%  | -0.60%  |

Although the recidivism levels for community-based sentences are significantly lower than for those imprisoned, these figures are not comparable, as the level, frequency and severity of offences would differ for those imprisoned and those on community-based sentences. It is important to note that the most serious offence for prisoners is sexual offences<sup>120</sup> whilst for those on community-based sentences it is traffic offences.<sup>121</sup>

In 2023, Department of Corrections dedicated \$346 million to rehabilitation and reintegration—a substantial increase of 60.7 percent since 2018, as depicted in **Figure 61**. This allocation corresponds to \$42,612 per custodial prisoner for rehabilitation and reintegration, or \$8702 per person on average, considering all the community services managed by Department of Corrections. Overall, the recidivism rates shown in **Tables 27** and **28** illustrate the need for rehabilitative and reintegrative approaches that are targeted and long term to address the high recidivism rates amongst different groups, and a follow up at 24 months.

**Figure 61: Department of Correction's total operation costs—2018-2023<sup>122</sup>**



## OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Crime and Punishment

| CATEGORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | RESULT |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p><b>OVERALL CRIME</b> In the last year, all the factors we monitor to understand overall crime have increased. For the first time since 2015, there's a notable rise in the number of people arrested and proceedings against them. The number of victims and victimisations have also gone up, with this year's increases being even higher compared with previous years. These trends reflect not just more police activity but also an increase in actual crime experienced in Aotearoa New Zealand (as shown by the NZ Crime and Victims Survey [NZCVS]).</p> | —      |
| <p><b>VIOLENT CRIME</b> In the last year, both victimisations and proceedings for violent offences have increased. Nearly every type of violent offence we monitor has experienced an increase. Notably, assault and dangerous operation of a vehicle, two of the most frequent violent offences, have gone up by 8 percent in the past year.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | —      |
| <p><b>FAMILY VIOLENCE</b> Family harm investigations by the police have remained relatively unchanged, however there continues to be a shift towards more incidents being deemed crimes. In addition, the Family Violence Act 2018 and Te Aorerekura National Strategy also contribute to raising awareness and reporting on family violence. There has also been an increase in charges, people charged, convictions and imprisonments for family violence offences.</p>                                                                                           | —      |
| <p><b>SENTENCING AND IMPRISONMENT</b> Over the past year, the prison population has consistently grown each quarter. Furthermore, the number of individuals remanded in custody is on the rise, now making up 43 percent of the total prison population. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of people convicted and subsequently imprisoned in the past year.</p>                                                                                                                                                                               | —      |
| <p><b>RECIDIVISM</b> There has been a slight decrease in these rates in 2023, continuing the encouraging trend over the last few years. The gap between Māori and non-Māori narrowed over the last year, especially in the follow-up for those reimprisoned and reconvicted after a year, but is still extremely high.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | +      |

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## SOCIAL HAZARDS

*There are four areas that we monitor in the ‘Social Hazards’ section: alcohol use, illicit drug convictions and use, gambling and problem debt. Most of the actions associated with these areas are legal, but heavily regulated. Some are illegal. But all these activities (drinking alcohol, taking illicit drugs and gambling) have an addictive element that can create serious harm for the person engaging with it, as well as for their whānau and other people around them. Problem debt can also create serious harm for the person directly affected and their wider whānau. These four areas are also hazards for which The Salvation Army provides various social and Christian spiritual support services across the country.*

*As with previous years, the ‘Social Hazards’ section often paints a myriad of pictures in relation to the changes seen in addictions or problem debt. Whilst some areas have seen improvement, such as alcohol availability, hazardous drinking and meth use, there remains significant concerns around the availability and accessibility of spirit-based alcohol drinks, the social harm caused by illicit drugs and the increase in gambling expenditure, among other things.*

*Hazardous drinking is declining across all groups, but disparities for Māori, Pacific and poorer communities continue to persist. Regarding illicit drugs, the number of charges and convictions have increased in the past year, particularly for those who possess and use illicit drugs which make up 60 percent of charges. The police’s ongoing emphasis on addressing methamphetamine is evident, as 52 percent of illicit drug charges are related to meth. Conversely, wastewater monitoring*

*by the police indicates a reduction in nationwide weekly meth use to 13 kilograms. Despite this decline being viewed as a positive trend, the corresponding social harm remains significant, amounting to \$14.4 million each week.*

*The cost of living continues to be at the forefront of everyone’s mind—the amount of consumer lending has remained relatively unchanged this past year but more of this type of lending has moved towards non-banking institutions. The Salvation Army provides financial mentors, and this trend poses concerns for vulnerable borrowers who often access third-tier lending because of the lack of affordability assessments and rigorous checks to ensure consumers can afford lending. In addition, the number of people withdrawing KiwiSaver for financial hardship reasons has also increased 42 percent in the past year. This highlights the struggles and challenges that families are facing to make ends meet; they must make difficult decisions between long-term benefits, such a first home and retirement savings, and alleviating the financial pressures today.*

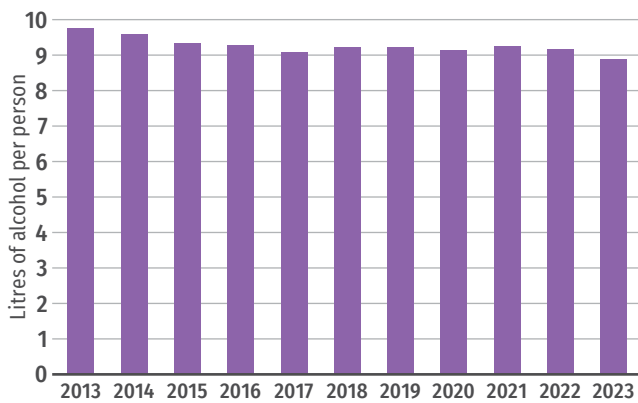
*There are significant challenges to be addressed in this space. The wider cost of living and inflation pressures shape these results. The Salvation Army remains convinced that political courage and urgent changes are needed in many of these areas, particularly around alcohol law reform, greater support around illicit drug abuse and stronger regulation around gambling-related harm, given the quickly rising gambling figures.*

## Alcohol

### ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY

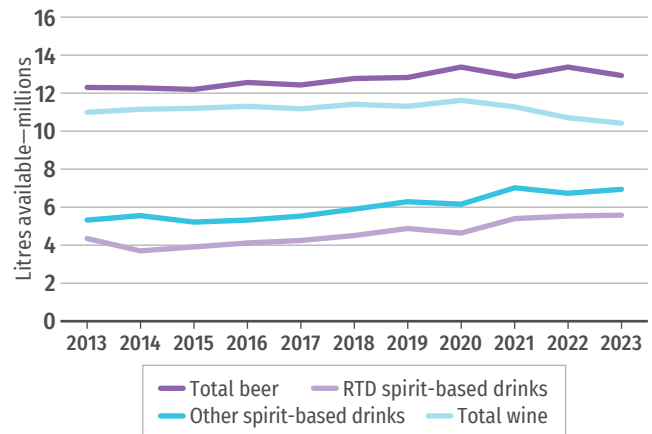
We have monitored the yearly volume of pure alcohol accessible for consumption, serving as an indicator for the alcohol intake of New Zealanders. As depicted in **Figure 62**, alcohol availability per capita has fluctuated over the past decade and in 2023, the figure stands at 8.9 litres of alcohol per adult, marking the lowest point in the past 10 years, and an 8.7 percent decline since 2013.

**Figure 62: Per-capita availability of alcohol, litres of pure alcohol for every person over 18 years—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>123</sup>**



Beer and wine are the primary types of alcohol available for consumption by volume, illustrated in **Figure 63**. Beer has remained relatively unchanged; however, wine has been gradually declining since 2020. Spirit-based alcohol, particularly ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages, has experienced a significant increase in the last five years, with a 23.7 percent increase for RTDs and a 17.7 percent rise for other spirit-based drinks since 2018. In previous years we have highlighted our concerns regarding RTDs as they are most often marketed to, and consumed by, young people.<sup>124</sup>

**Figure 63: Alcohol available consumption by type of alcohol—2013–2023 (September years)<sup>125</sup>**



### HAZARDOUS DRINKING

Hazardous drinkers are individuals with established drinking patterns, posing a high risk of future damage to physical or mental health.<sup>126</sup> **Table 29** presents national levels of hazardous drinking. Encouragingly, there is an overall decline in hazardous drinking. The sole increases observed in the past year occurred among Decile 4 neighbourhoods (second poorest 20% of areas), and although there appears to be a slight increase for ages 15–17, the 2022 results have a significant margin of error that renders it inconclusive.

Persistent trends in hazardous drinking continue, as observed in previous years. Those most affected are predominantly men, those aged 18–24, and Māori and Pasifika.

Table 29: Proportion of population estimated to be hazardous drinkers—2018–2023<sup>127</sup>

|                    | 2018         | 2019         | 2020         | 2021         | 2022         | 2023         | 1Y      | 5Y      |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| Total population   | 20.0%        | 20.4%        | 21.3%        | 19.9%        | 18.7%        | 16.0%        | -2.7 pp | -4.0 pp |
| Men                | <b>27.5%</b> | <b>28.0%</b> | <b>29.0%</b> | <b>26.9%</b> | <b>25.3%</b> | <b>21.7%</b> | -3.6 pp | -5.8 pp |
| Women              | 12.8%        | 13.1%        | 13.8%        | 13.2%        | 12.3%        | 10.3%        | -2.0 pp | -2.5 pp |
| 15–17              | 7.6%         | 6.7%         | 11.8%        | 10.2%        | 5.9%         | 6.3%         | 0.4 pp  | -1.3 pp |
| 18–24              | <b>32.1%</b> | <b>35.8%</b> | <b>32.6%</b> | <b>34.9%</b> | <b>30.9%</b> | <b>23.8%</b> | -7.1 pp | -8.3 pp |
| 15–24              | <b>24.7%</b> | <b>26.6%</b> | <b>26.9%</b> | <b>27.4%</b> | <b>23.7%</b> | <b>18.2%</b> | -5.5 pp | -6.5 pp |
| 25–34              | <b>25.6%</b> | <b>25.4%</b> | <b>24.4%</b> | <b>23.9%</b> | <b>22.2%</b> | <b>21.6%</b> | -0.6 pp | -4.0 pp |
| 35–44              | <b>22.3%</b> | <b>22.6%</b> | <b>21.9%</b> | 19.8%        | <b>23.2%</b> | <b>16.8%</b> | -6.4 pp | -5.5 pp |
| 45–54              | <b>22.4%</b> | <b>22.4%</b> | <b>28.0%</b> | <b>23.8%</b> | <b>19.2%</b> | <b>17.5%</b> | -1.7 pp | -4.9 pp |
| 55–64              | 16.2%        | 18.0%        | 18.2%        | 18.5%        | 17.5%        | 15.6%        | -1.9 pp | -0.6 pp |
| 65–74              | 12.6%        | 11.8%        | 12.7%        | 11.1%        | 11.4%        | 10.9%        | -0.5 pp | -1.7 pp |
| 75+                | 5.1%         | 4.1%         | 5.8%         | 4.1%         | 5.0%         | 3.6%         | -1.4 pp | -1.5 pp |
| Māori              | <b>31.8%</b> | <b>33.0%</b> | <b>36.4%</b> | <b>33.2%</b> | <b>33.4%</b> | <b>25.1%</b> | -8.3 pp | -6.7 pp |
| Pacific            | <b>19.3%</b> | <b>23.3%</b> | <b>24.5%</b> | <b>26.5%</b> | <b>21.5%</b> | <b>21.5%</b> | 0.0 pp  | 2.2 pp  |
| Asian              | 6.5%         | 6.3%         | 5.5%         | 5.7%         | 6.2%         | 4.9%         | -1.3 pp | -1.6 pp |
| European/other     | <b>21.4%</b> | <b>21.6%</b> | <b>22.6%</b> | <b>21.1%</b> | <b>20.0%</b> | <b>16.9%</b> | -3.1 pp | -4.5 pp |
| Decile 1 (richest) | 16.3%        | 19.2%        | 19.9%        | 17.3%        | 16.9%        | 15.2%        | -1.7 pp | -1.1 pp |
| Decile 2           | 19.6%        | 18.5%        | 19.3%        | 16.6%        | 20.9%        | 12.0%        | -8.9 pp | -7.6 pp |
| Decile 3           | <b>21.6%</b> | 19.8%        | <b>22.1%</b> | 19.8%        | 19.0%        | 14.0%        | -5.0 pp | -7.6 pp |
| Decile 4           | <b>20.8%</b> | 20.1%        | <b>21.4%</b> | <b>21.1%</b> | 18.4%        | <b>21.4%</b> | 3.0 pp  | 0.6 pp  |
| Decile 5 (poorest) | <b>22.0%</b> | <b>24.8%</b> | <b>23.9%</b> | <b>24.9%</b> | 18.4%        | <b>17.3%</b> | -1.1 pp | -4.7 pp |

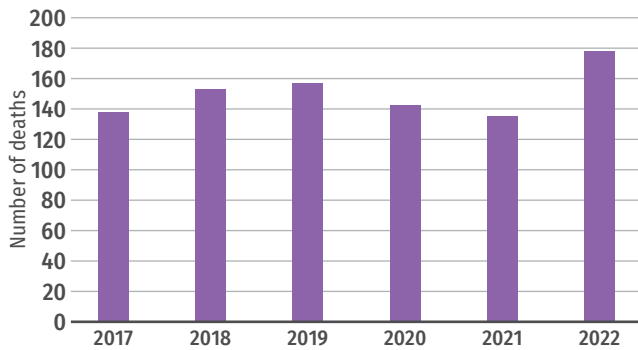
**NOTE:** pp = percentage points. **Bold figures** = worse than the national rate.

Alcohol is ranked as the most harmful drug in New Zealand society in 2023<sup>128</sup> with alcohol-related harms costing New Zealanders \$7 billion dollars every year.<sup>129</sup> Almost 80 percent of New Zealanders consume alcohol, and 16 percent are regarded as drinking hazardously (Table 29). Alcohol impacts the individual consuming alcohol, but also goes beyond that to affect those around them— family, friends and the wider community—in different ways.

One component of alcohol or drug harm is vehicle crashes leading to injury or death caused by driving under the influence. Although the number of fatal crashes associated with alcohol or drug influence has notably declined over the past three decades,

there was a resurgence in 2022, with 163 fatal crashes, 144 incidents causing serious injuries and 776 leading to minor injuries, all attributed to drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs.<sup>130</sup> Within these incidents, there was a 32 percent increase in fatalities from 2021 to 2022, with 178 individuals losing their lives, 245 people sustaining serious injuries and 1081 individuals experiencing minor injuries. This is the highest vehicle death toll related to alcohol and drugs in 27 years—in 1995 where there were 200 deaths. Figure 64 shows the number of deaths from crashes involving a driver with alcohol or drugs in their system, from 2017 to 2022.

**Figure 64: Deaths in crashes involving driver alcohol/drugs—2017–2022<sup>131</sup>**



**Table 30** illustrates the number of individuals facing charges and convictions for driving under the influence. Over the last year, there has been a rise in both charges and convictions, but these fluctuations are within the range of the past five years. Additionally, it is noteworthy that over 25 percent of individuals charged with driving under the influence have been convicted two or more times for the same offence. This proportion of repeat offenders has shown little variation over the past five years and is predominantly young Māori and European men.

The Salvation Army is a national treatment provider for alcohol and other drug addictions through our Bridge services, so addressing alcohol harm is a key part of our kaupapa. We continue to advocate for greater support for people and their whānau who are impacted by alcohol harm. Restrictions and regulations that address alcohol affordability, availability, accessibility and advertising directly minimise harm created by alcohol. There have been changes in the past year, such as the introduction of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Community Participation) Amendment Act 2023, which enables communities to have a greater voice in the alcohol licensing process, indicating shifts in alcohol harm reduction. However, there is still a considerable

journey ahead for New Zealand to effectively tackle the enduring and irreversible harm caused by alcohol in our society.

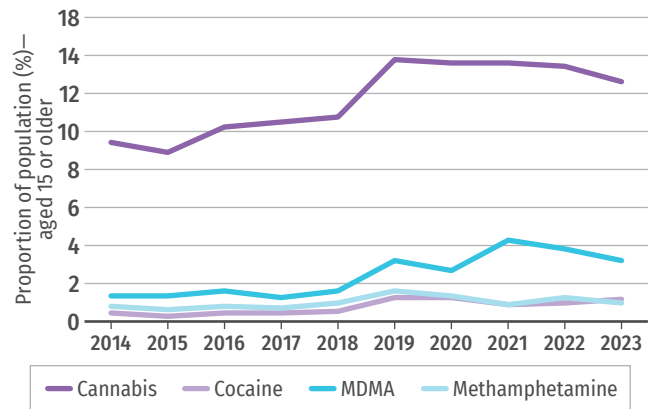
## Illicit Drugs

### ILLICIT DRUG USE

A relatively small proportion of New Zealanders use illicit drugs, however the damage to the individual using illicit drugs and to society overall is significant.

**Figure 65** shows that the most used illicit drug is cannabis with an estimated 597,000 adults using it in the past 12 months and approximately 199,000 adults using it on a weekly basis.

**Figure 65: National use of illicit drugs—2014–2023<sup>133</sup>**



Another measure of the national use of illicit drugs is through the Wastewater Drug Testing Programme by the New Zealand Police, which tests for indicators of consumption of methamphetamine, MDMA, cocaine, heroin and fentanyl. The three commodities routinely detected in sufficient quantities to accurately report on are methamphetamine, MDMA and cocaine. A summary of the results is shown in **Figure 66**; in the quarter ending June 2023, the average use of methamphetamine nationally was 13kgs per week, which has increased slightly compared with the

**Table 30: Number of people with charges for driving under the influence offences—2018–2023<sup>132</sup>**

|                         | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   | 1Y      | 5Y     |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Charged                 | 16,909 | 17,384 | 15,249 | 16,295 | 13,941 | 16,806 | 20.6%   | -0.6%  |
| Convicted               | 16,324 | 16,662 | 14,503 | 15,388 | 13,062 | 15,513 | 18.8%   | -5.0%  |
| 2+ Previous convictions | 25.2%  | 25.2%  | 27.1%  | 26.1%  | 26.2%  | 25.8%  | -0.4 pp | 0.6 pp |

**NOTE:** pp = percentage points.

previous quarter but declined compared with the previous period in 2022. The use of MDMA has slightly declined to 5.9kgs per week and cocaine use to 1.7kgs. Whilst cocaine use is still relatively low, it is at the highest level in at least 4.5 years.

**Figure 66: Estimates of average total weekly consumption of selected illicit drugs (kgs)—2018–2023<sup>134</sup>**

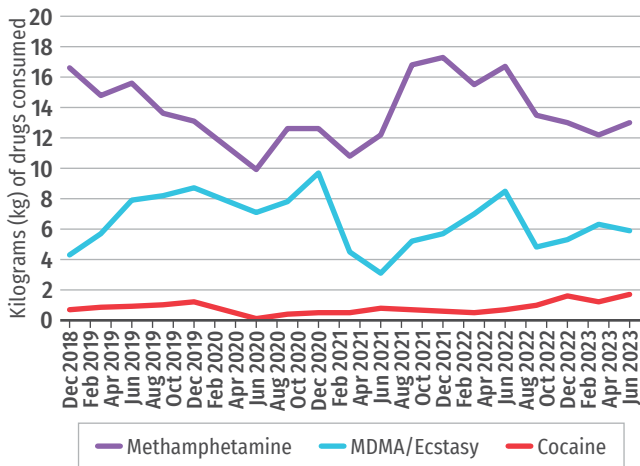
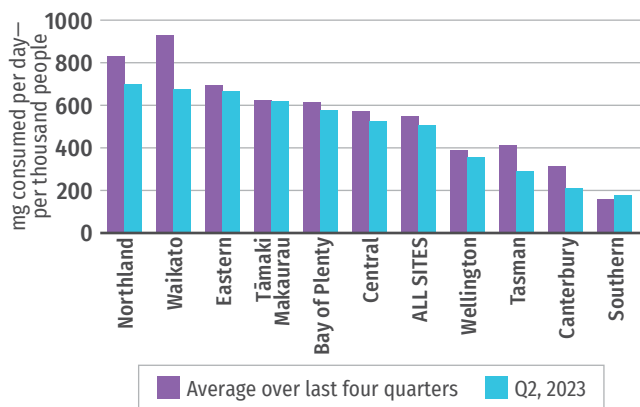


Figure 67 shows that Northland has had the highest average consumption of meth per capita on average for the last four quarters (as it has had since the start of the wastewater monitoring programme in 2019), followed by Waikato and Eastern Districts. Compared with Quarter 2 in 2023, the level of meth use per capita has declined across all regions except Southern.

**Figure 67: Per capita methamphetamine consumption by district—Quarter 2—2023<sup>135</sup>**



The New Zealand Illicit Drug Harm Index 2020 estimates the social harm costs of illicit drugs on society.<sup>136</sup> Table 31 shows a summary of the costs per kilogram of drugs to the person and their

community. Taking the wastewater estimates of drug use, we can estimate the weekly social harm costs caused by illicit drugs.<sup>137</sup> Looking at the four primary drugs of methamphetamine, MDMA, cocaine and cannabis the total social harm caused to society every year is almost \$1.8 billion.

More than 60 percent of the harm caused by illicit drugs is to the community. Community harm is comprised of three domains: the harm caused to family and friends, crime, and the loss of tax revenue. Per quantity methamphetamine use creates the highest social harm cost (as shown in Table 31), however because the volume of cannabis use is significantly higher than that of methamphetamine (due to prevalence of use as shown in previous section) cannabis use makes up half of the social harm costs, and costs society over \$910 million every year. The estimate for cannabis annual use is from 2018—given that the proportion of cannabis users has increased according to Figure 65, this is most likely to be an underestimate.

Table 31 also includes the estimated proportion of New Zealanders who have used illicit drugs in the past 12 months. Although relatively small compared to the greater population that use illicit drugs, the impact to society is great. In addition, the geographic distribution of these social harms will vary as noted in Figure 67. For methamphetamine, the consumption per capita varies in the police districts and therefore some districts are carrying a heavier social harm cost burden than others.



Table 31: Cost of social harm of illicit drugs nationally, 2023—(June year)<sup>138</sup>

| Drug                                       | Amount used (kgs)     | Personal               | Community                | Social Harm Cost         | Proportion of users (2023) <sup>139</sup> |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Meth                                       | 1                     | \$544,451.68           | \$563,910.03             | \$1,108,361.71           |                                           |
| MDMA                                       | 1                     | \$125,917.23           | \$173,755.03             | \$299,672.26             |                                           |
| Cocaine                                    | 1                     | \$62,283.36            | \$76,455.46              | \$138,738.82             |                                           |
| Cannabis                                   | 1                     | \$4847.90              | \$10,876.13              | \$15,724.03              |                                           |
| <b>Estimated social harm cost per year</b> |                       |                        |                          |                          |                                           |
| Meth                                       | 677.8 <sup>140</sup>  | \$369,040,237.7        | \$382,229,496.5          | \$751,269,734.3          | 1.1%                                      |
| MDMA                                       | 307.6 <sup>141</sup>  | \$38,735,413.8         | \$53,451,564.9           | \$92,186,978.7           | 3.6%                                      |
| Cocaine                                    | 88.6 <sup>142</sup>   | \$5,520,672.5          | \$6,776,859.1            | \$12,297,531.5           | 1.3%                                      |
| Cannabis                                   | 58,000 <sup>143</sup> | \$281,178,200.0        | \$630,815,540.0          | \$911,993,740.0          | 15.1%                                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               |                       | <b>\$694,474,524.0</b> | <b>\$1,073,273,460.5</b> | <b>\$1,767,747,984.5</b> |                                           |

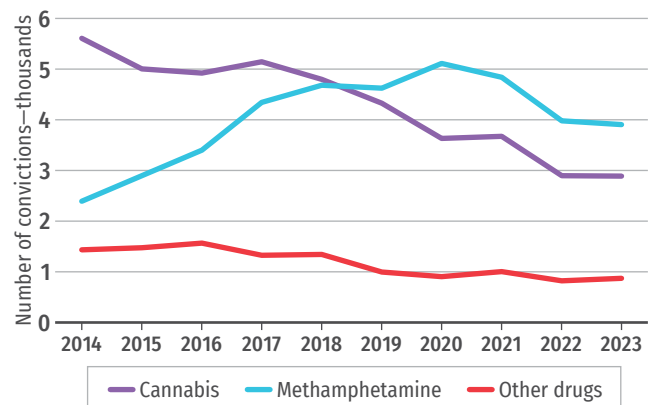
### ILLICIT DRUG CONVICTIONS

In the year ending June 2023, 73.1 percent of people charged with drug offences were convicted. The primary offence type for drug offences was possession and/or use of illicit drugs (including utensils) which represent 60 percent of all drug offence charges. Figure 68 shows the illicit drug convictions for the past 10 years and shows convictions for cannabis, methamphetamine and other illicit drug offences. Over the past year, there has been minimal to no change in convictions for illicit drug charges. However, since 2014, cannabis convictions have experienced a substantial decline of nearly 50 percent, while convictions for methamphetamine have increased by 63 percent.

Convictions for other drugs, constituting a minor portion of total drug charges, have declined by 40 percent. In 2023, of the individuals facing drug charges, 81 percent were male, 47 percent were Māori and 43 percent identified as European. The majority of those charged fell within the age range of 25 to 34.

When we compare Figure 68 with the prevalence of use in Figure 65 it is clear that this is a change in the justice system’s approach and not an indication of change in illicit drug use behaviour. In fact, the prevalence of cannabis use has increased relative to the period of cannabis convictions declining.

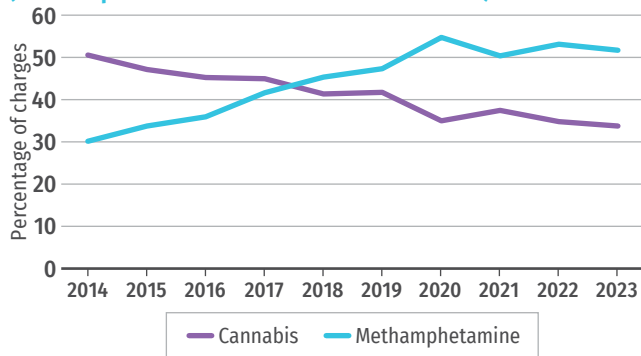
Figure 68: Illicit drug convictions—2014–2023 (June years)<sup>144</sup>



### PROPORTION OF DRUG CHARGES: CANNABIS AND METHAMPHETAMINE

Drug charges continue to be dominated by cannabis and methamphetamine offences. In the last year, 52 percent of all drug offence charges were related to methamphetamine, which is an increase in the share of all drug charges of over 18 percentage points in the past 10 years. Cannabis charges make up 34 percent of all illicit drug charges, as shown in Figure 69. As a raw number, charges for cannabis over the past decade have declined by 63 percent. The total raw number of drug charges have dropped by over 37 percent in the past 10 years.

Figure 69: Percentage of total illicit drug charges (methamphetamine and all cannabis offences)—2014–2023<sup>145</sup>



## Gambling Harm

### GAMBLING EXPENDITURE

In the year ending 2022, gambling through the TAB and NZ Lotteries Commission has remained relatively unchanged with minimal declines. However, gambling expenditure at pokie machines and casinos has increased significantly in the past year, with pokie machines (electronic gaming machines [EGM]) making \$987,000,000 (\$185 million more compared with the previous year) and casinos earning an additional \$55 million amounting to \$559 million casino gambling expenditure. The total gambling expenditure has steadily increased over the last decade, reaching a new high in 2021/22 of over \$2.58 billion across these four modes of gambling—that is a 29 percent increase on gambling expenditure over this decade. This would mean that there is \$493 spent on gambling per capita nationally. This is the highest it has been in the past decade, which is detailed in **Table 32**.

**Figure 70** is a graphical representation of gambling expenditure. There was an increase in spending on EGMs in 2022, following a dip in 2021 that can

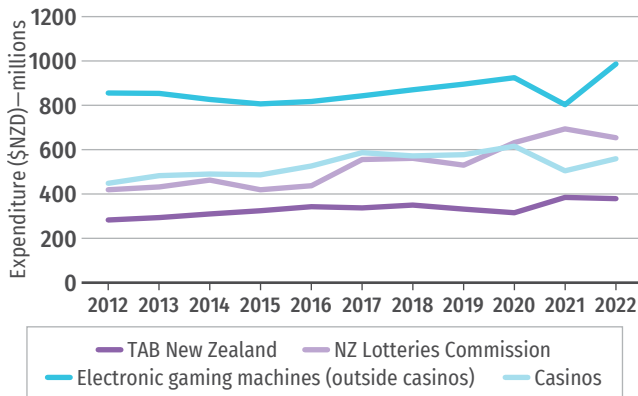
be attributed to Covid-19-related impacts such as lockdowns and the Covid-19 Protection Framework. This is particularly troubling as EGMs has been proven to be the most detrimental form of gambling in our country.<sup>147</sup> The latest Department of Internal Affairs dataset for all gambling expenditure is for 2022, however the expenditure for pokie machines for 2023 is available later in the chapter. Expenditure for pokie machines in 2023 was \$1.07 billion. The contrast between the increase in gambling expenditure and the backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis underscores the concerning impact of gambling on individual’s and family’s financial wellbeing.

It is also important note in respect to problem gambling that whilst we cover EGMs and other gambling methods briefly in this report, online gambling is just as, if not more, dangerous for people and whānau than EGMs and other forms of gambling, because of the ease of access and the private, hidden and isolated nature of this form of gambling.<sup>148</sup> Online gambling is one of the fastest growing areas in the sector—in 2019, a quarter of Lotto sales were from digital sales, however in 2023 almost half (44%) of Lotto’s sales were online.<sup>149</sup>

Table 32: Gambling expenditures (\$million)—2012–2022<sup>146</sup>

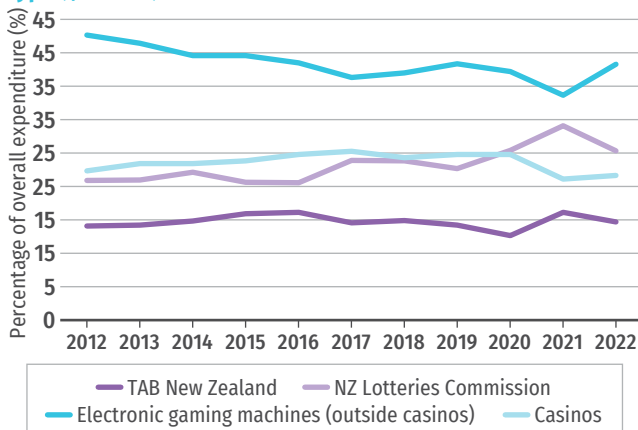
| Gambling activity          | 2012        | 2013        | 2014        | 2015        | 2016        | 2017        | 2018        | 2019        | 2020        | 2021        | 2022        | 1Y          | 10Y          |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| TAB New Zealand            | 283         | 294         | 310         | 325         | 342         | 338         | 350         | 332         | 315         | 385         | 380         | -1.3%       | 34.3%        |
| NZ Lotteries Commission    | 419         | 432         | 463         | 420         | 437         | 555         | 561         | 530         | 631         | 694         | 654         | -5.8%       | 56.1%        |
| Electronic gaming machines | 856         | 854         | 827         | 806         | 818         | 843         | 870         | 895         | 924         | 802         | 987         | 23.1%       | 15.3%        |
| Casinos                    | 448         | 483         | 490         | 486         | 527         | 586         | 572         | 578         | 616         | 504         | 559         | 10.9%       | 24.8%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>2006</b> | <b>2063</b> | <b>2090</b> | <b>2037</b> | <b>2124</b> | <b>2322</b> | <b>2353</b> | <b>2335</b> | <b>2486</b> | <b>2385</b> | <b>2580</b> | <b>8.2%</b> | <b>28.6%</b> |

**Figure 70: Gambling expenditures by gambling type (\$million)—2012–2022<sup>150</sup>**



Regarding the distribution of gambling expenditures, **Figure 71** highlights that pokie machines continue to command the largest share, increasing their lead back to pre-Covid-19 levels at 38 percent. While NZ Lotteries Commission spending continues to exceed casino spending, a notable shift has occurred with decreasing NZ Lotteries spending and an increase in casino spending. However, online gambling (including a portion of NZ Lotteries Commission and TAB NZ spends) is still at higher levels than pre-Covid-19, which is concerning as online gambling is currently unregulated in New Zealand.

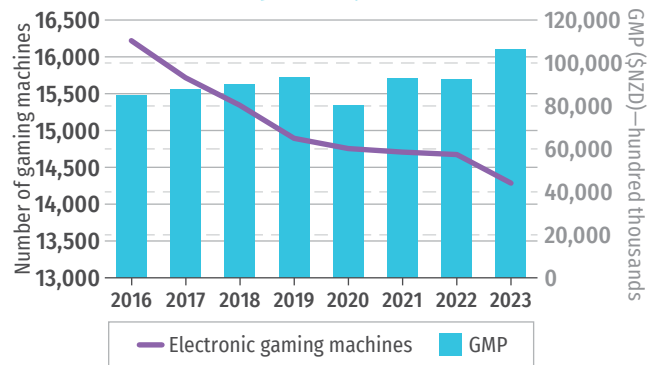
**Figure 71: Proportion of gambling expenditures by gambling type (\$million)—2012–2022**



**ELECTRONIC GAMING MACHINES**

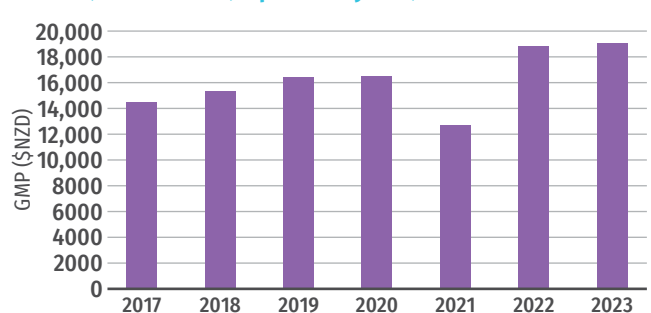
**Figure 72** shows the continuing trend of declining numbers of electronic gaming machines across the country, particularly since the introduction of a general sinking lids policy that works to decrease the number of machines and licences over time. By September 2023, there were 14,284 machines operating. This was a significant decrease of 388 machines since 2022. The number of venues where these EGMs operate has also slowly declined, with 1008 venues in September 2023, down from 1038 venues in 2022. Gross machine proceeds (GMP), which is the amount of money lost by players on EGMs, continues to increase. **Figure 73** also shows the GMP on electronic gaming machines for the same time. In 2023, over a billion dollars was lost to EGMs—this is the highest-level recorded of GMP in the past decade.

**Figure 72: Number of electronic gaming machines in New Zealand—2016–2023 (September years)<sup>151</sup>**



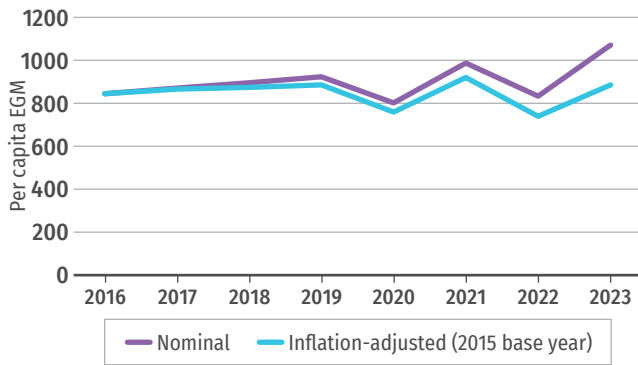
**Figure 73** shows that GMP per electronic gaming machine had a minor increase with every EGM on average making an extra \$230, which now amounts to \$19,061 spent on average at every operating EGM in 2023—this is the highest level it has been in the past five years.

**Figure 73: GMP per electronic gaming machine (outside casinos)—2017–2023 (September years)<sup>152</sup>**



When we adjust the GMP for inflation, as shown in **Figure 74**, GMP has returned to pre-Covid-19 levels. A nominal increase in 2023 for GMP was 28.4 percent, however when it is inflation-adjusted it has increased by 19.8 percent. It is important to factor in the impacts of Covid-19 lockdowns and GMP, which are clearly seen in **Figure 74** with declines in 2020 and 2022 due to national and regional lockdowns. However, since 2018, nominal GMP has increased by 19.6 percent, whereas inflation adjusted GMP has not changed much (1.3).

**Figure 74: Per capita GMP (outside casino) losses inflation adjusted—2016–2023 (September years)<sup>153</sup>**

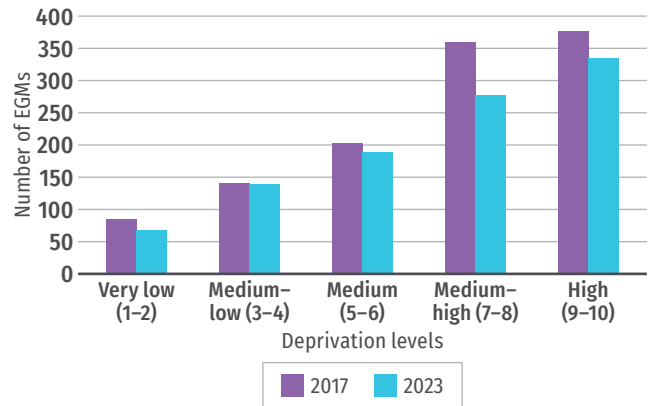


**Figure 75** shows the concentration of EGMs in 2017 and 2023 by deprivation levels, which shows the strong concentration of EGM venues in regions characterised by high levels of deprivation on a national scale. As of September 2023, more than 33 percent of these machines were situated in areas designated as having ‘very high’ social deprivation, contrasting with the mere 6.7 percent found in areas with ‘very low’ social deprivation. Māori, Pacific and young people are in the group that are most likely to be at risk of gambling addiction problems. This disparity prompts a critical examination of whether the current model, which involves returning a portion of electronic gaming machine profits to the community, is truly beneficial. A collaborative white paper called ‘Ending Community Sector Dependence on Pokie Funding’ by PGF Group, Hāpai Te Hauora and The Salvation Army Oasis address this issue and urges a reform of the grants system.<sup>154</sup>

The dominant pattern of an overwhelming majority of EGMs located in socially deprived areas, coupled with the escalating GMP per machine in these disadvantaged communities, raises doubts

about the genuine community benefits derived from this gambling through the GMP. A deeper analysis comparing GMP to class four grants for the community reveals that, on average, only about 30 percent of GMP finds its way back to communities through these grants.<sup>155</sup>

**Figure 75: Location and number of electronic gaming machine venues by deprivation rating—2017 and 2023<sup>156</sup>**



## Problem Debt and Financial Hardship

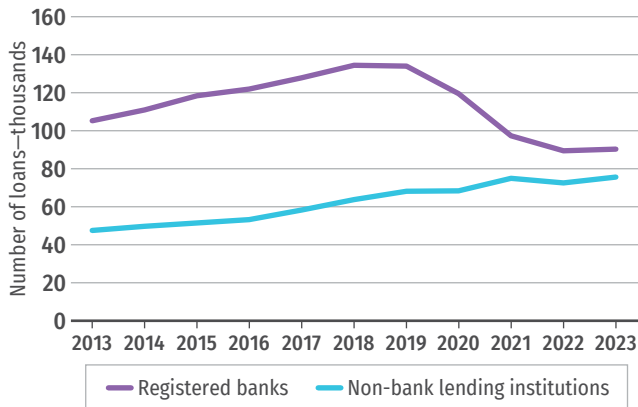
### CONSUMER LENDING

**Figure 76** examines personal consumer lending from both banks and non-banking lending institutions, shedding light on the financial challenges faced by New Zealanders. After peaking in 2018 and 2019 (June years), the number of new personal loans provided by banks is now 14 percent lower than what it was a decade ago. Historically, banks accounted for nearly 70 percent of personal consumer lending. However, in 2023, banks contributed 54.5 percent, while non-banking lending institutions provided 45.5 percent—a notable increase from their 31 percent share a decade ago, and a similar but slightly larger share from the previous year.

Although there has been a slight overall increase in consumer lending in the past year, concerns arise. Banks are required to carry out rigorous affordability checks and to behave with some responsibility, which reduces risks for themselves and their customers but makes them inaccessible for many people facing financial challenges. In

contrast, non-banking registered lenders may lack sufficient affordability checks, impose high-interest rates and extend loans that consumers may find unaffordable to maintain.

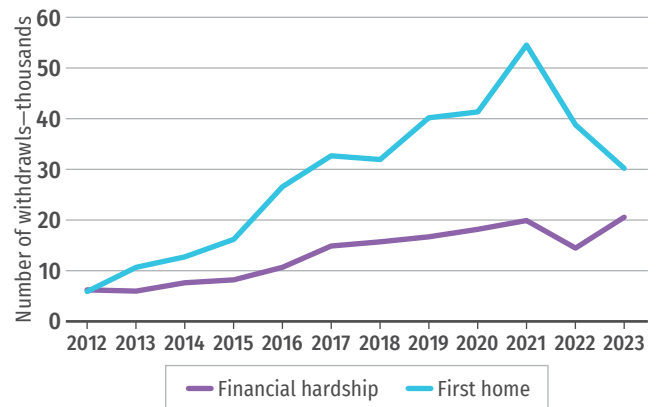
**Figure 76: Number of personal consumer loans with registered banks and non-bank lenders—2013–2023 (June years)<sup>157</sup>**



In addition to consumer lending, **Figure 77** illustrates the KiwiSaver withdrawal statistics and reasons for withdrawal. Withdrawals for first home buyers have seen a 22 percent decline in the past year (44.6% decline since 2021). Despite a (related) dip in the property market, the challenges posed by high mortgage interest rates and overall cost of living make it difficult for individuals to enter the housing market for the first time. Simultaneously, KiwiSaver withdrawals for hardship reasons have surged by 42.4 percent, reaching the highest level ever.

These withdrawals underscore the financial challenges individuals are grappling with, as they are forced to make decisions about using KiwiSaver to address immediate hardships. This dilemma raises concerns about the potential lack of financial support from KiwiSaver for long-term investments such as purchasing a first home or planning for retirement. However, it is important to note that relative to the number of KiwiSaver members, which is about 3.25 million, the number of withdrawals only represents a significantly small proportion.

**Figure 77: KiwiSaver withdrawals by reason—2012–2023<sup>158</sup>**



## OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Social Hazards

| CATEGORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | RESULT |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p><b>ALCOHOL</b> The availability of alcohol in New Zealand has slightly decreased, aligning with a reduction in hazardous drinking. Although patterns of hazardous drinking persist among young adults, men, and Māori and Pacific populations, there has been a decline in hazardous drinking within these groups over the past year.</p>                                                                                                                                               | +      |
| <p><b>ILLCIT DRUGS</b> Methamphetamine use has declined in the past year; however, it continues to remain prevalent in charges and convictions for illicit drugs. Cannabis users have also declined; however, cannabis is the primary illicit drug of choice and creates the majority of social harm. Despite gradual declines in use of illicit drugs over the past year, illicit drug use which represents a small proportion of society causes \$1.7 billion in social harm a year.</p> | +      |
| <p><b>GAMBLING HARM</b> Gambling expenditures have reached a total of \$2.58 billion in 2022, with increased spending on electronic gaming machines and casino activities. For the first time in 10 years, GMP has exceeded \$1 billion dollars in 2023. The number of electronic gaming machines has decreased but their profitability has risen, with each gaming machine making an average of over \$19,000 annually.</p>                                                               | -      |
| <p><b>PROBLEM DEBT AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP</b> While personal consumer lending has stayed relatively unchanged from last year, there has been a small increase in lending from non-bank institutions. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the number of people withdrawing from their KiwiSaver accounts for financial hardship reasons—the highest level ever recorded.</p>                                                                                             | -      |



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# MĀORI WELLBEING

*There were fewer signs of improvement in outcomes for Māori during 2023, or of significant progress in reducing inequity than in 2022. On a number of indicators, longer-term positive trends in outcomes for Māori have halted in the latest annual data. These include unemployment, imprisonment, drug convictions, teenage pregnancies and youth charges, although it remains to be seen whether these are temporary changes or signs of sustained reversal.*

*On a more positive note, improving outcomes and reduced disparity can be seen in personal incomes, where average weekly incomes are rising and rose by more for Māori than non-Māori, reducing the disparity in earnings to less than 10 percent in 2023. The rates of hazardous drinking reduced in 2023 and fell significantly for Māori (who experience much higher rates of hazardous drinking) contributing to reduced disparity on this measure.*

*Imprisonment rates for Māori halted their long-term decline, and Māori are still nearly seven times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Māori. Greater progress has been made with reimprisonment rates however, which are down below 40 percent after 24 months, reducing the disparity with non-Māori.*

*There were fewer tamariki Māori in state care in 2023, but two-thirds of all children in care are Māori.*

*Education outcomes for the most recent data from 2022 continued to be heavily impacted by Covid-19 disruptions, as well as natural disasters in some regions. While the number of Māori students achieving at least NCEA fell, as did those achieving UE, the five percent of Māori students attending schools teaching predominantly in te reo Māori achieved outcomes showing no disparity when compared with all school students.*

*Youth offending rates rose for rangatahi Māori in 2023, but the disparity in offending rates reduced due to a proportionately higher increase in offending rates for non-Māori.*

*Housing outcomes impact Māori more than non-Māori overall because Māori make up half of those waiting for social housing, but during 2023 there were fewer Māori households waiting for social housing compared to 2022. Rising unemployment also had a bigger impact on Māori who already experience rates more than twice that of other ethnicities. There was also a small increase in the proportion of whānau/families reporting that they are doing badly or not well.*

## He Ara Waiora

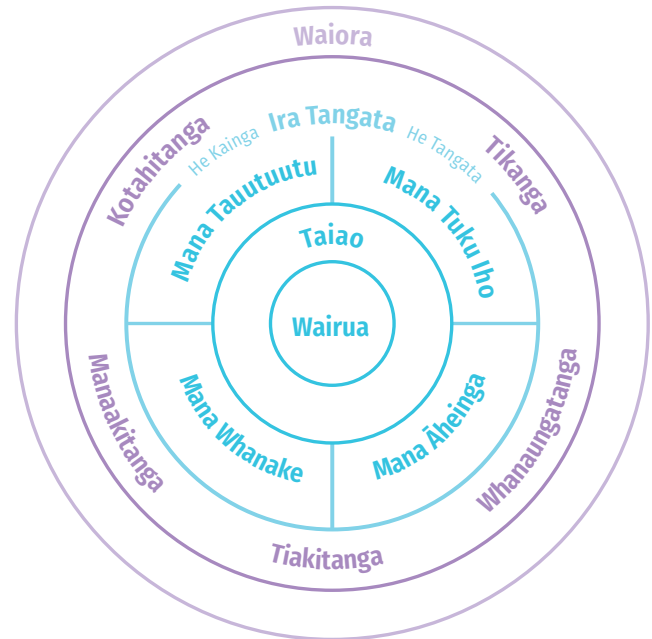
This commentary uses He Ara Waiora wellbeing framework to group outcome measures from across the five areas covered in the *State of the Nation 2024* report into four domains of wellbeing. The New Zealand Treasury uses He Ara Waiora as the framework to measure progress in Māori wellbeing in an approach drawn from mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge).<sup>159</sup>

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

In *State of The Nation 2024*, we focus on indicators in the four domains of mana within te ira tangata: **mana āheinga** (capability, resources and skills), **mana tauutuutu** (reciprocity and social cohesion), **mana tuku iho** (sense of identity and belonging) and **mana whanake** (growth and intergenerational prosperity). These four domains express aspects of wellbeing that Māori view as essential to fulfilled lives.

Updated data was not available for key aspects of mana tuku iho—a sense of cultural identity and belonging—including the ease of expressing identity and the ability to use te reo Māori.

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



### MANA ĀHEINGA (CAPABILITY, RESOURCES AND SKILLS)

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

This domain looks at some aspects of the capability and opportunity for Māori to achieve wellbeing. Incomes, employment and education are ways to build capability in this domain, while imprisonment, and alcohol and drug addictions reduce capability and function.

| INDICATOR                                                                                                               | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) ENROLMENT</b><br>(proportion of under five-year-olds enrolled in ECE) <sup>160</sup> | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> Enrolment data for 2022 (most recent available) shows ECE enrolments for tamariki Māori were down to 49.9% from 54.5% in the previous year.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> The Māori ECE enrolment rate is around 80% of the non-Māori rate (ie, tamariki Māori are 20% less likely to be enrolled in ECE than non-Māori). This disparity has been consistent in recent years. | -       | NC     |

| INDICATOR                                                                                                                | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b><br>(stand downs per 1000 students) <sup>161</sup>                                              | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> New data is not available<br><b>EQUITY:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | NA      | NA     |
| <b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b><br>(official unemployment rate; September annual) <sup>162</sup>                                     | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> For the first time in a decade, in September 2023 the annual Māori unemployment rate increased significantly to 7.6% from 6.4% in September 2022 (an increase of almost one fifth or 1.2 percentage points). However, it is still the second-lowest Māori unemployment rate (after 2022) for at least the last ten years.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> Māori workers are bearing an unfair share of the impact of rising unemployment. The unemployment rate for Māori increased by 19%, but the rate for non-Māori only increased by 7% meaning a widening of disparity. In 2023, Māori were 2.65 times as likely as non-Māori to be unemployed (on the official measure) which was an increase from 2022, when Māori were 2.35 times as likely to be unemployed (the smallest disparity in recent years was in 2020, at 2.14 times). | -       | -      |
| <b>PERSONAL INCOMES</b><br>(average weekly personal incomes for those employed) <sup>163</sup>                           | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> Average weekly income for Māori in paid work increased by 11% to June 2023, from \$1203 to \$1332.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> Average weekly income for non-Māori in paid work increased by 4.5% (to \$1453), less than the increase for Māori, meaning income disparity reduced in 2023. The annual disparity fluctuates but over time is generally decreasing; the average weekly income for Māori in 2023 was 91.7% of that of non-Māori, the first time it had been over 90% (in at least 15 years).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | +       | +      |
| <b>IMPRISONMENT RATE</b> (number of people imprisoned per 100,000; population over 18 years) <sup>164</sup>              | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> The Māori imprisonment rate increased slightly by 4%, from 721 per 100,000 in 2022 to 750 in 2023, but it remains well below the years before 2022.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> Equity did not change significantly as there was a similar small increase in the non-Māori imprisonment rate (by 2%).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | NC      | NC     |
| <b>HAZARDOUS DRINKING</b><br>(proportion of adult population as hazardous drinkers) <sup>165</sup>                       | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> The rate of hazardous drinking reduced considerably for Māori in 2023, from 33.1% to 25.1%.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> Hazardous drinking also decreased in 2023 for non-Māori, but the decrease was greater for Māori so the large disparity in rates was reduced. We estimate the Māori rate reduced from 2.0–2.1 of the non-Māori rate to 1.7–1.8.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | +       | +      |
| <b>ILLICIT DRUG CONVICTIONS</b><br>(people convicted of illicit drug offences per 1000 people; June year) <sup>166</sup> | <b>OUTCOMES:</b> In 2023, the number of Māori convicted for drug offences rose for the first time since 2010, by 11% (from 612 to 679), and the rate of such convictions increased for the first time since 2010 also. However, the 2023 rate is still the second-lowest Māori drug-offence conviction rate (after 2022) since at least 2009.<br><b>EQUITY:</b> While the rate of drug convictions for Māori went up, the number and rate of non-Māori convictions went down. The annual disparity fluctuates, but the 2023 disparity was the worst since at least 2009. In 2023, police convicted Māori at a rate nearly five times that of non-Māori, and 45% of all those convicted were Māori.                                                                                                                                           | -       | -      |

## MANA TAUTUUTU (RECIPROCITY AND SOCIAL COHESION)

*The rights and responsibilities of individuals and collectives to each other, communities and places.*

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

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

| INDICATOR                                                                                                                      | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>CHILDREN IN STATE CARE</b><br>(children in state care per 1000 children) <sup>167</sup>                                     | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The rate and number of tamariki Māori in state care has been declining since 2018 and continued to decline in 2023 to a rate of 9.2 per 1000 children or 2936 tamariki. This is the first time since at least 2009 that the rate has been under 10 and that the number of tamariki Māori in state care has been under 3000.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Overall equity did not change as the number of non-Māori in care also reduced significantly; tamariki Māori are still 5.6 times as likely as non-Māori children to be in care.</p>                                       | +       | NC     |
| <b>WELFARE SUPPORT</b><br>(adults receiving a benefit as proportion of population aged between 18 and 64 years) <sup>168</sup> | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The number of Māori needing and receiving welfare income support increased by 4% during 2023.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Overall, the number of people receiving welfare increased, so the disparity did not worsen but remains large—the Māori rate of needing and receiving welfare is just over three times the non-Māori rate.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -       | NC     |
| <b>INCOME DISTRIBUTION</b><br>(proportion of adults in lowest two income quintiles) <sup>169</sup>                             | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The proportion of Māori adults in the 40% of lowest income recipients reduced in 2022 from 50.5% to 48.5%, but the proportion is still higher than 44.5% five years ago in 2017.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> The reduction means a small decrease in inequitable income distribution, but it is still worse than 2017. A significantly larger proportion of Māori (48.5%) have annual incomes below \$54,700 than non-Māori (38.2%).</p>                                                                                                                                         | +       | NC     |
| <b>DEMAND FOR SOCIAL HOUSING</b><br>(number of households on Housing Register per 1000 population) <sup>170</sup>              | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> After a brief dip, the number and rate of Māori households on the Housing Register was again roughly the same in September 2023 as in September 2022.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> The disparity remains the same. Māori are nearly five times as likely as non-Māori to need social housing without having access to it, and they make up half of all those on the wait list.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                | NC      | NC     |
| <b>WHĀNAU WELLBEING</b><br>(percentage of whānau Māori who reported their whānau is doing badly or not well) <sup>171</sup>    | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The 2023 NZ Health Survey indicated a possible small annual increase in families who identify as Māori reporting they are not doing well from 20.9% in 2022 to 22% in 2023 (within the margin of error). Data from another similar survey (Stats NZ General Social Survey) suggests this is a lower proportion than five years ago (25.1%).</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> More Māori families report they are not doing well compared to non-Māori (15.1%) and the difference increased between 2022 and 2023 with fewer non-Māori families reporting they are not doing well.</p> | -       | -      |



## MANA TUKU IHO (SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING)

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

There is limited data available to provide indicators for this domain, but language, cultural identity and passing on knowledge are components that contribute to wellbeing and belonging.

| INDICATOR                                                                                                           | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b><br>(proportion of school leavers with less than NCEA Level 1) <sup>172</sup>          | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> More Māori students left school without at least NCEA Level 1 in 2022 (most recent data) than in the previous year. The Māori rate increased from 24.2% in 2021 to 27% in 2022.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Attainment declined for non-Māori students on this measure slightly more than it did for Māori students, so the disparity reduced from Māori being 2.8 times as likely as non-Māori to leave school without an NCEA qualification in 2021 to being 2.4 times as likely in 2022. Māori students learning in schools where te reo Māori is the main language of teaching had the same achievement rate as the total for other students.</p> | -       | +      |
| <b>TE REO MĀORI</b><br>(can speak more than just a few phrases of te reo Māori) <sup>173</sup>                      | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> New data is not available</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | NA      | NA     |
| <b>EXPRESS IDENTITY</b><br>(proportion who report it is easy or very easy to express their identity) <sup>174</sup> | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> New data is not available</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | NA      | NA     |

## MANA WHANAKE (GROWTH AND INTERGENERATIONAL PROSPERITY)

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

Low infant mortality and low rates of teenage pregnancy help indicate and/or promote wellbeing for children and young people, while missing out on education, training or employment, and being imprisoned or reimprisoned directly reduces wellbeing.

| INDICATOR                                                                                             | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>TEENAGE PREGNANCIES</b><br>(pregnancies per 1000; 15- to 19-year-olds) <sup>175</sup>              | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> In 2022 (the latest year available), the Māori teenage pregnancy rate increased from 35 per 1000 to 39 per 1000. This was the first time it increased since 2008, although the 2022 rate was still less than the 2019 rate and less than half of the rate from 15 years ago.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> No real significant change in the disparity that sees the Māori rate at nearly three (2.8) times that of non-Māori.</p> | -       | NC     |
| <b>INFANT MORTALITY</b><br>(infant deaths under one year for every 10,000 live births) <sup>176</sup> | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The Māori infant mortality rate did not change significantly in 2023 and remains low at 41 per 10,000 births.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Disparity is low, with the Māori rate fluctuating over time but close to the non-Māori rate (35 per 10,000 births in 2023) in the past two years.</p>                                                                                                                                  | NC      | NC     |

| INDICATOR                                                                                                                    | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | OUTCOME | EQUITY |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| <b>YOUTH CHARGED WITH OFFENDING</b> (rate of 12- to 16-year-olds per 1000 population; June year) <sup>177</sup>              | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The rate of Māori youth charges increased for the first time since 2017, from 6.4 per 1000 in 2022 to 7.6 in 2023 (still lower than at least the eight years prior to 2021).</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Increases for both Māori and non-Māori rates meant no change in the disproportionate impact that has two-thirds of offences finalised in court involving rangatahi Māori.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -       | NC     |
| <b>YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT</b> (proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds NEET [not in employment, education or training]) <sup>178</sup> | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> The Māori NEET rate reduced slightly in 2023 to 18.8% compared to 19.5% in 2022.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> The non-Māori rate remained unchanged at 9% so there was a very small reduction in disparity, but the non-Māori rate is still half that for rangatahi Māori.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | NC      | NC     |
| <b>PRISON SENTENCING RATES FOR YOUTH</b> (proportion of convicted 17- to 19-year-olds who are imprisoned) <sup>179</sup>     | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Imprisonment sentences as a proportion of total sentences for 17–19-year-olds are lower than five years ago. But the rate for rangatahi Māori increased slightly from 8.8% in 2022 to 9.3% in 2023.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> Disparity increased, just one in fifty (2%) of non-Māori teenage-convicted offenders received a prison sentence, and convicted Māori rangatahi were 4.6 times more likely to receive a prison sentence than non-Māori in 2023. Of the 122 17- to 19-year-olds sentenced to prison, more than seven in ten (88) were rangatahi Māori. In contrast, Māori made up only 36% of all sentenced 17- to 19-year-olds.</p> | -       | -      |
| <b>RECIDIVISM</b> (reimprisoned within 24 months of release) <sup>180</sup>                                                  | <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Māori reimprisonment rates declined again in 2023 (June year) for the fifth year in a row, to 39.4%, and are a fifth lower than they were in 2018.</p> <p><b>EQUITY:</b> The non-Māori rate improved by only 0.1 percentage point so the disparity in recidivism rates reduced slightly; the Māori rate hovers around 1.4 times the rate of non-Māori.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | +       | +      |

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