

FOUNDATION

A THRIVING, INCLUSIVE  
& EQUITABLE TARANAKI

# REGIONAL RESEARCH REPORT

## Authorship

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# Table of contents

<b>Key Findings</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Trends and focus areas.....	7
Key demographics .....	8
<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Background to the analysis .....	10
<b>Section 1: Analysis of outcomes</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Civic Engagement and Governance</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Higher general election turnout .....	11
Higher proportion of volunteering in Taranaki .....	12
Higher rate of people looking after children in Taranaki .....	12
<b>Health</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Life expectancy below national average.....	12
Mental health presentation higher in the region.....	13
Smoking rate continues to fall .....	14
Highest rate of avoidable hospitalisations .....	15
Fewer GP visits and access issues in Taranaki .....	16
<b>Housing</b> .....	<b>17</b>
More people in Taranaki own their own home .....	17
Lower individual home ownership for Māori, young people .....	18
Household crowding below the national average .....	20
Affordability has worsened, both in Taranaki and nationally.....	20
Housing needs are rising .....	22
Poorer housing quality in Stratford, South Taranaki .....	23
<b>Income, consumption, jobs, and earnings</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Lower median incomes in Taranaki .....	24
Slightly higher average deprivation in Taranaki.....	25
Benefit dependency slightly higher than average .....	26
NEET rate high, but volatile .....	27
Unemployment rate persistently higher.....	28
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b> .....	<b>29</b>
ECE participation rate slightly above national average .....	29
79% of school leavers have Level 2 or above .....	29
Nearly 6 in 10 school leavers go into tertiary education .....	30
<b>Safety</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Crime rate stable, even as national crime falls.....	31
<b>Social Connections</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Lower internet access rate for Taranaki households .....	32

Taranaki truancy rate of 4.4% below national average .....	33
Around 92% in Taranaki have a driver licence .....	34
<b>Environment</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Support needed to limit waste output .....	35
Emissions increase in Taranaki .....	35
<b>Māori wellbeing outcomes</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Generally lower housing outcomes for Māori .....	36
Higher discrimination for Māori in Taranaki .....	36
High life satisfaction for Taranaki Māori .....	36
Worse mental wellbeing for Māori .....	36
Strong manaakitanga in Taranaki .....	36
Sustainably through kaitiakitanga in Taranaki .....	36
Strong whānau support in Taranaki .....	37
Variety of ways Māori keep informed .....	37
Iwi engagement .....	37
<b>Section 2: Key trends and focus areas</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Continued support needed to support locals into jobs and training .....	38
Strengthening connections important .....	38
Child support may be needed .....	39
Improved health outcomes would deliver better foundations .....	39
Better Māori outcomes needed .....	40
Needs in South Taranaki require greater focus .....	40
<b>Appendix 1: Maps of the areas</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 2: SA2 Deprivation scores</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Local Māori age profile</b> .....	<b>48</b>
Taranaki Region .....	48
New Plymouth District .....	48
Stratford District .....	49
South Taranaki District .....	50

## Key Findings

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- Civic engagement in Taranaki remains high, with strong election turnout, and a higher proportion than the national average volunteering. However, higher rates of unpaid childcare in Taranaki are worth further investigation.
- Health outcomes in Taranaki present challenges for the region, with lower life expectancy, fewer GP visits, and the highest rate of avoidable hospitalisation in New Zealand. Access to healthcare appears to be a challenge.
- Housing outcomes are mixed in Taranaki. Home ownership is higher than the national average, and household crowding are lower. But affordability is worsening, housing needs are rising, and housing quality is of concern.
- Particularly in South Taranaki, there is a need to enable greater levels of housing support, with substantial increases in the Housing Register.
- Average deprivation is higher in Taranaki than across the rest of New Zealand, with a slightly higher level of benefit dependency, a high but volatile NEET rate, and persistent unemployment reinforcing this trend.
- Educational outcomes in Taranaki remain positive, but still with room for improvement. Early childhood education participation is higher in Taranaki, but school leaver educational attainment, and tertiary education progression, could be improved to unlock further talent options for Taranaki.
- Connectivity is lower in Taranaki than other parts of the country, with lower internet access, and a slightly smaller share of the population with a driver licence, which limits social mobility.
- Māori outcomes in Taranaki are also mixed, with poorer housing, connectivity, mental health, and discrimination outcomes for Māori in the region. However, Māori in Taranaki report strong cultural outcomes, with positive rates of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanau support.

## Trends and focus areas

- Continued support is required to assist those in Taranaki into employment, given persistent unemployment and room to improve education outcomes.
- Improved connectivity will be important to enable access to both digital and physical services, reducing access challenges around digital exclusion and educational, employment, and social opportunities.
- Child support is an area for further investigation, with higher levels of unpaid childcare work potentially signalling barriers in this area.
- Improved health outcomes are a key trend to address, given the importance of enabling strong foundations and enhancing child and youth wellbeing, Māori aspiration, and access to opportunities.

- Support delivered by Māori organisations in Taranaki are likely to enable better outcomes, given strong manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanau support.
- South Taranaki requires a greater focus across the board, due to a range of concerning outcomes. An integrated approach to supporting those in South Taranaki will be important to addressing interdependent issues.

## Key demographics

Taranaki’s population is older than the national median. In 2021, the median age in Taranaki Region was 40.0 years old, compared to 37.7 across New Zealand. New Plymouth was key to this older median age, with a median age locally of 40.4 years old.

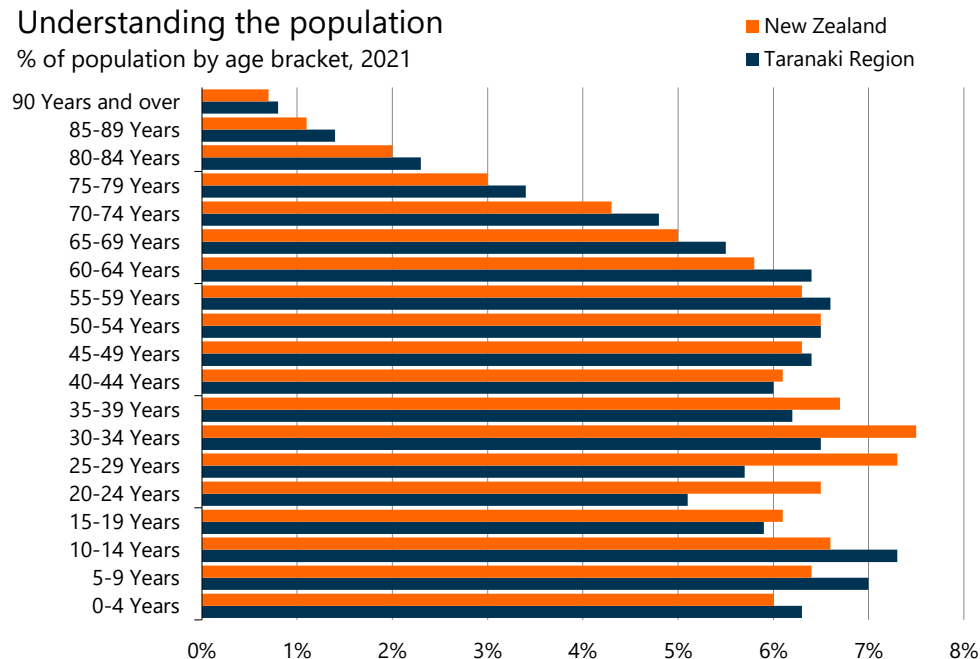
Stratford District had a lower median age, of 39.2 years old, with South Taranaki’s population having the youngest median age in the region, of 38.9 years.

The age distribution in Taranaki shows that the region has a lower proportion of the early-stage working age group, with a hollowing out from age 15 to 39. Taranaki has higher population concentrations at young ages, and ages after 40 years old.

Graph 1

### Understanding the population

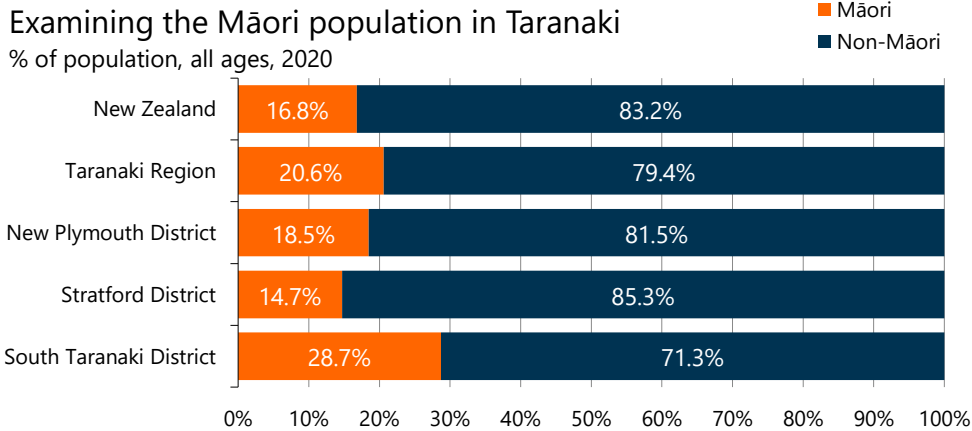
% of population by age bracket, 2021



Taranaki has a larger population concentration of Māori than the national average. In 2020, Infometrics estimates that 20.6% of the Taranaki Region population were Māori, compared with 16.8% of the national population.

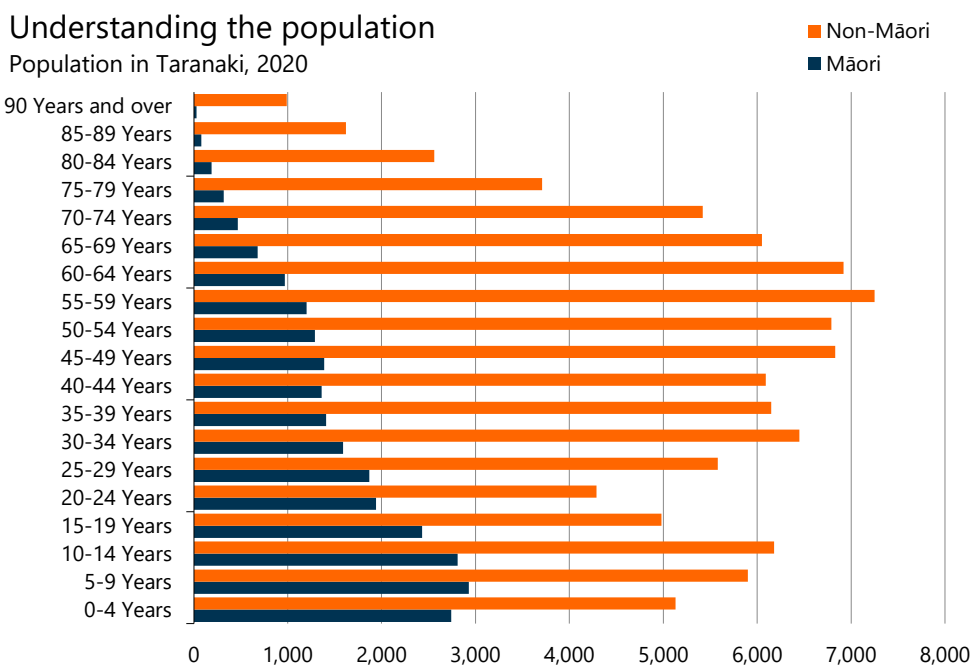
At a local level, the difference in the Māori population was significant. South Taranaki has a considerably larger Māori population concentration, with nearly 3 in 10 people in the district being Māori. New Plymouth and Stratford have lower Māori population proportions, similar to the national average.

Graph 2



The Māori population in Taranaki skews considerably younger than the non-Māori population. Half of all Māori in Taranaki are aged 24 or below, compared to just 27% of the non-Māori population.

Graph 3



Māori make up a smaller population of the older working age group (40-64), with 24% of Māori aged in this group compared to 34% of non-Māori.

Given the considerably younger population of Māori in Taranaki, there is a much smaller group of older Māori compared to the non-Māori population. In 2020, Infometrics estimated that just 7% of the Māori population in the region was aged 65 or above, compared to nearly 21% of the non-Māori.

# Overview

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Infometrics has been commissioned by Toi Foundation (formerly the TSB Community Trust) to help examine and detail the socioeconomic environment in Taranaki, with a view to identifying areas of need and informing community investment decisions.

This analysis includes two key sections.

**Section 1** provides a data- and evidence-driven assessment of the social and economic factors at play in Taranaki and where there are areas of need.

**Section 2** determines key trends emerging from the factors identified in Section 1 and provides an understandable narrative about what these factors are and how improvements in identified areas could support improved outcomes for people.

This analysis is intended to inform investment decisions by Toi Foundation to best support long-term outcomes consistent with the strategic outcome of enabling “a thriving, inclusive and equitable Taranaki”.

Throughout, the data analysed has been guided by availability of insights and the Foundation’s short-term outcomes of

- Enhanced Child and Youth Wellbeing
- Rangatiratanga | Empowering Māori aspiration
- Improved Environment
- Increased Access to Opportunities

The focus of this analysis is to gain a clearer picture of Taranaki and its people and identify where the areas of greatest need are.

## Background to the analysis

This report analyses a range of datasets sourced primary from Statistics New Zealand, including from the Census, specialist surveys, and administrative datasets. Data is also sourced from other government agencies, including the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, NZ Police, and Waka Kotahi NZTA. External datasets have also been utilized, from Infometrics proprietary databases and the University of Otago, for instance.

This analysis builds on the Infometrics Regional Wellbeing Framework, including additional series and excluding some of the framework due to a lack of data or relevance. More information about the Infometrics Regional Wellbeing Framework is contained in the 2019 report *Regional Wellbeing: A broader view of community outcomes around New Zealand*.

In general, data has been collected at a territorial local authority (TLA) or regional level, although other data may be referenced, including by District Health Board area. Local suburb/community level data is defined at a Statistical Area 2 (2018) level.



# Section 1: Analysis of outcomes

This section sets out the evidence from a range of indicators on the social outcomes across Taranaki. Each indicator provided regional and district-level analysis. Additional analysis is included where more detailed data exists, including at a suburb (Statistical Area 2) level or by age, ethnicity or other breakdown.

## Civic Engagement and Governance

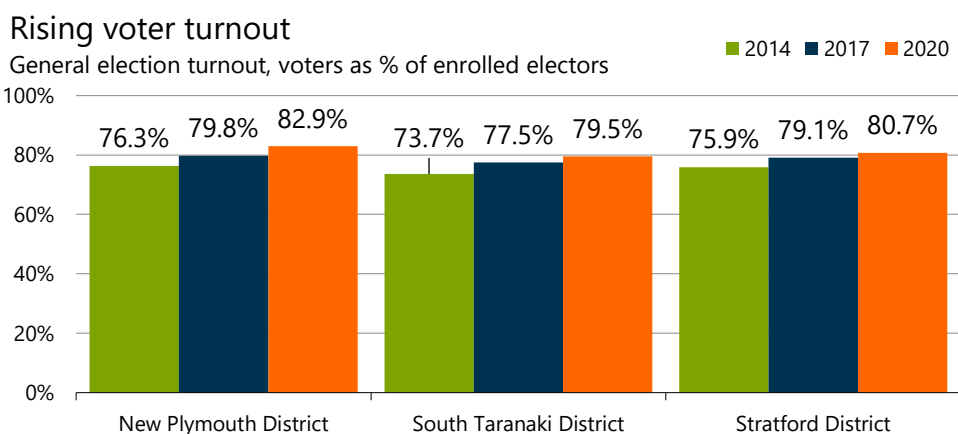
Civic engagement in Taranaki remains high, with both general election turnout and volunteering activity high across the region. Strong civic engagement highlights people's interactions with local decision making, public institutions, and the community. Better wellbeing in this domain is displayed through higher activity by locals, indicating greater participation in civic processes and making choices which will affect their lives and the lives of those around them.

### Higher general election turnout

In the 2020 General Election, 82% of registered voters in Taranaki region voted, slightly above the 81.5% national rate. This turnout rate ranked Taranaki 10<sup>th</sup> out of 16 regions.

By area, New Plymouth had the highest turnout within Taranaki's three local authority areas. In 2020, 82.9% of New Plymouth voters cast their vote and continuing a trend of improved turnout from previous elections. In 2014, 76.3% of New Plymouth voters cast a vote, rising to 79.8% in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

Graph 4



Although slightly lower, both Stratford and South Taranaki voting turnout showed similar trends. Stratford had the second highest turnout rate of Taranaki areas, with 80.7% turnout in 2020. This turnout was up from 75.9% in 2014, and 79.1% in 2017.

<sup>1</sup> Infometrics analysis of Electoral Commission data.

South Taranaki remains below the 80% mark, with a turnout rate of 79.5% in 2020. Turnout rose from 73.7% in 2014 and 77.5% in 2017.

## Higher proportion of volunteering in Taranaki

Volunteering activity shows a similar level of engagement. The 2018 Census shows 16.5% of Taranaki region's population did voluntary work for the community, above the national average of 15.2%.<sup>2</sup>

Looking across the districts, South Taranaki had the highest volunteering rate in the region, of 17.8%. Stratford and New Plymouth were just behind (and still above the national average), with 17% and 16% of the population volunteering respectively.

As discussed later in the analysis of Māori wellbeing outcomes, Māori in Taranaki have high rates of community engagement, reinforcing this analysis.

## Higher rate of people looking after children in Taranaki

Looking at other unpaid work activities shows an interesting trend in Taranaki. In 2018, Taranaki had the second and fifth highest rates of unpaid work to look after a child not in their own household and a child in their household, respectively. Around 29.9% of Taranaki's population looked after a child who was a member of their own house (5<sup>th</sup> highest in New Zealand), and 17.4% looked after a child not from their household.<sup>3</sup>

At a sub-regional level, there was no obvious trend as to what areas had a substantially larger concentration of looking after children. Stratford had the highest rate of the three districts for looking after a child in the same household (30.3%), and New Plymouth had the 8<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the country for looking after a child not from the same household (17.6%).

Looking deeper, four of the 60 SA2s in Taranaki had a rate of over 20% of people looking after a child not in their household:

- Normanby-Tawhiti in South Taranaki (22.3%, or 249 people).
- Oakura in New Plymouth (20.8%, or 216 people).
- Mangaoraka in New Plymouth (20.1%, or 258 people).
- Mount Messenger in New Plymouth (20.0%, or 108 people).

## Health

### Life expectancy below national average

Life expectancy in Taranaki Region is slightly below the national average. For the grouped 2015-17 period, life expectancy in the region was 81.1 years, compared to 81.8 years nationally.

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<sup>2</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Both provincial districts had a life expectancy of below 81 years. South Taranaki District had the lowest life expectancy across the region, with an expectancy of 80.3 years. Stratford's life expectancy was 80.9 years.<sup>4</sup>

New Plymouth's life expectancy was higher, at 81.5 years, but still below the national average. Lower expectancy than the national average indicates that locals in Taranaki will live shorter lives than average New Zealanders.

At a regional level, Māori life expectancy remains considerably lower than the average. Taranaki Māori men and women have a life expectancy of around 5 years less than the Taranaki average.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1**

**Life expectancy at birth**

Taranaki region, 2017-19 cohort, by group

	Total	Māori	Non-Māori
Male	79.3	74.2	80.2
Female	82.9	78	83.7

Although the national average life expectancy is higher than in Taranaki, national average life expectancy for Māori is lower than for Taranaki Māori. This difference means that the national gap between the total population life expectancy average and Māori life expectancy is around 6.4 years. In short, Taranaki Māori live longer than Māori on average nationally. But there is still a considerable gap between Taranaki Māori life expectancy and average life expectancy for everyone in Taranaki.

## Mental health presentation higher in the region

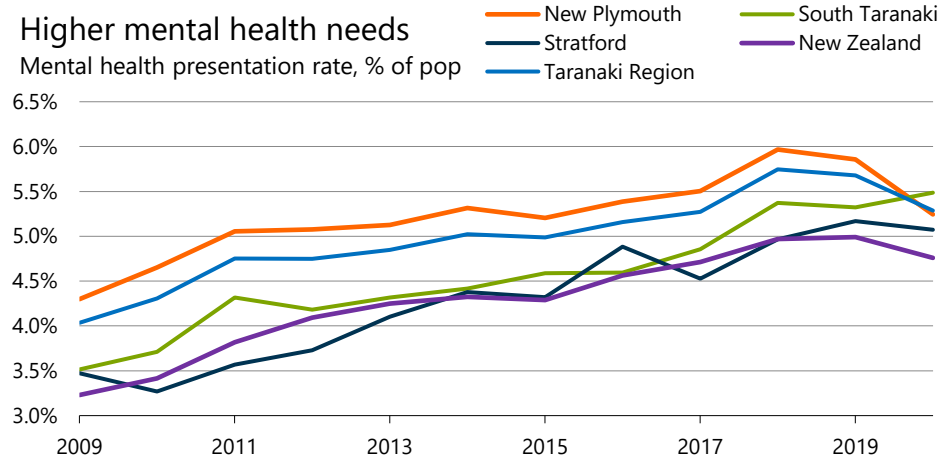
Mental health presentation rates are higher in Taranaki than the national average. In 2020, Infometrics estimates show 5.3% of the local population accessed mental health support. This proportion was above the 4.8% rate recorded nationally, with the region showing the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of mental health need.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Infometrics analysis of customised Stats NZ data.

<sup>5</sup> Local life expectancy by ethnicity is not available publicly, but regional life expectancy by ethnicity is sourced from Stats NZ. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-and-subnational-period-life-tables-2017-2019>

<sup>6</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Health data.

Graph 5



Taranaki’s mental health presentation rate fell slightly in 2020, from around 5.7% in both 2018 and 2019 down to 5.3% in 2020. This trend was reflected nationally, with 5.0% national rates in 2018 and 2019 falling in 2020. Given well documented issues around access to mental health support, there is concern that this fall in mental health presentation could be due to access issues rather than improved outcomes.

New Plymouth District drove the fall in the mental health presentation rate. New Plymouth’s mental health presentation rate fell from 6.0% in 2018, to 5.9% in 2019, and then to 5.2% in 2020. However, trends in the other two districts did not follow in line with New Plymouth. In Stratford, the mental health presentation rate remained in line with previous years, sitting at 5.0% in 2018, 5.2% in 2019, and 5.1% in 2020.

South Taranaki’s mental health presentation rate has shown strong rises in recent years. In 2020, 5.5% of the population accessed mental health services, up from 4.9% in 2017.

Suicide data appears to support this trend. Official suicide data is over five years old (2016 is the latest data official published and remains provisional). However, this data shows Taranaki with a higher suicide rate (per 10,000 people) than the national average in 2015 (1.22 deaths per 10,000 people in Taranaki vs 1.13 nationally, averaged over the preceding 5 years).

## Smoking rate continues to fall

Taranaki’s smoking rate is around the middle of all regions, with the area ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 16 regions. In the 2018 Census, 16% of Taranaki’s population were regular smokers, above the 13% national rate. However, in line with the national smoking rate fall (from 21% in 2006), Taranaki’s rate has fallen from 22% in 2006.<sup>7</sup>

Again, South Taranaki has the worst smoking outcomes across Taranaki’s three local areas. In 2018, 20% of Taranaki’s population were regular smokers, down from 27% in 2006. Stratford’s smoking rate was lower, at 17% (compared to 23% in 2006), while New Plymouth’s rate had dropped further to 14% - close to the national average, and below the 21% recorded in 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data.

Four parts of Taranaki had a regular smoking rate of more than double the national average in 2018:

- Patea in South Taranaki (29.3% or 285 people).
- Marfell in New Plymouth (28.1%, or 339 people).
- Waitara West in New Plymouth (27.3%, or 849 people).
- Eltham in South Taranaki (27.0%, or 408 people).

Considerably higher smoking rates underline concerns around health outcomes for larger groups within the community who smoke.

## Highest rate of avoidable hospitalisations

Infometrics analysis shows that Taranaki has the highest rate of ambulatory sensitive hospitalisations (ASHs) of all New Zealand regions.<sup>8</sup> ASHs are avoidable hospitalisations that could have been prevented with earlier intervention, often through primary care.<sup>9</sup>

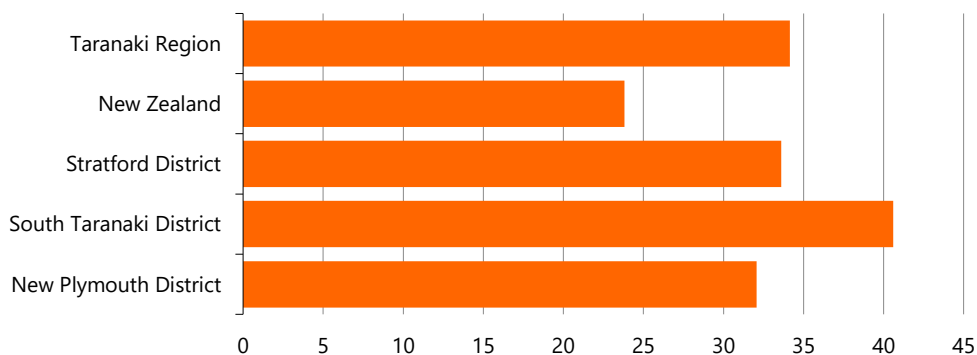
In 2020, Taranaki had 34.2 ASH events per 1,000 people, considerably higher than the 23.8 per 1,000 national rate.

Graph 6

### Looking up, mostly

Ambulatory sensitive (avoidable) hospitalisations (ASH)

2020 ASH rate, per 1,000 people



ASH rates are high across Taranaki region, with all three local areas among the top 12 areas out of 66. South Taranaki had the highest ASH rate, with 40.6 ASH events per 1,000 people in 2020 – the third highest national rate. Stratford had a lower rate of 33.6 per 1,000, the tenth highest nationally, followed by New Plymouth with a rate of 32.1 per 1,000 – the twelfth highest rate.

More detailed information about high ASH levels in Taranaki is not currently available to allow for a more detailed understanding of trends. However, as the next section shows, health indicators in Taranaki indicate lower preventative care.

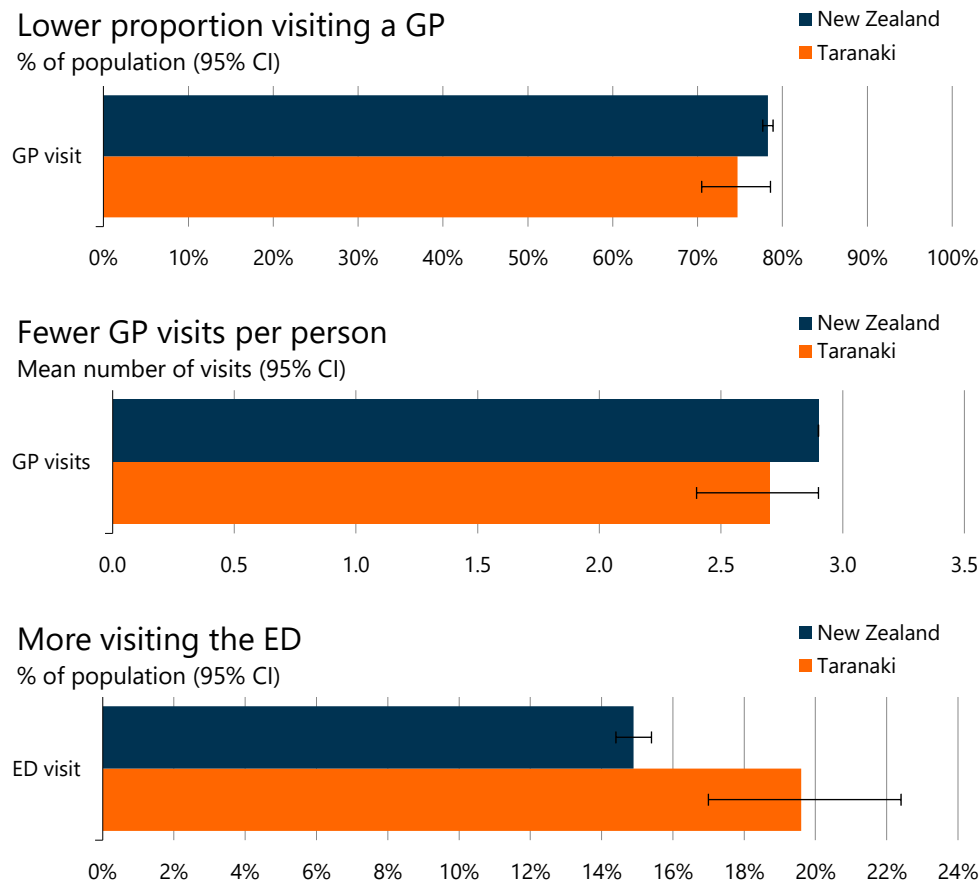
<sup>8</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Health hospitalisations data

<sup>9</sup> For more information about ASHs: <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/projects/atlas-of-healthcare-variation/adult-ambulatory-sensitive-hospitalisations/>

## Fewer GP visits and access issues in Taranaki

Data from the New Zealand Health Survey<sup>10</sup> helps to provide some additional context to health challenges in Taranaki. Pooled data from 2017-20 (the latest available from the Ministry of Health), shows a smaller proportion of Taranaki’s population attending a GP visit compared to the New Zealand average. Over the period, around 74% of Taranaki’s population visited a GP, below the 78% nationally. Taranaki’s number have improved from 72% vs 79% in the 2014-17 period, although a lower proportion of people in Taranaki visit a GP.

Graph 7



However, more people in Taranaki accessed the emergency department than the national average. Over the 2017-20 pooled period, nearly 20% of the region’s population visited the ED, compared to 15% nationally, a statistically significant finding. Taranaki’s ED visit rate in 2017-20 was higher than the 17% recorded in the 2014-17 period, even as the national average remained the same.

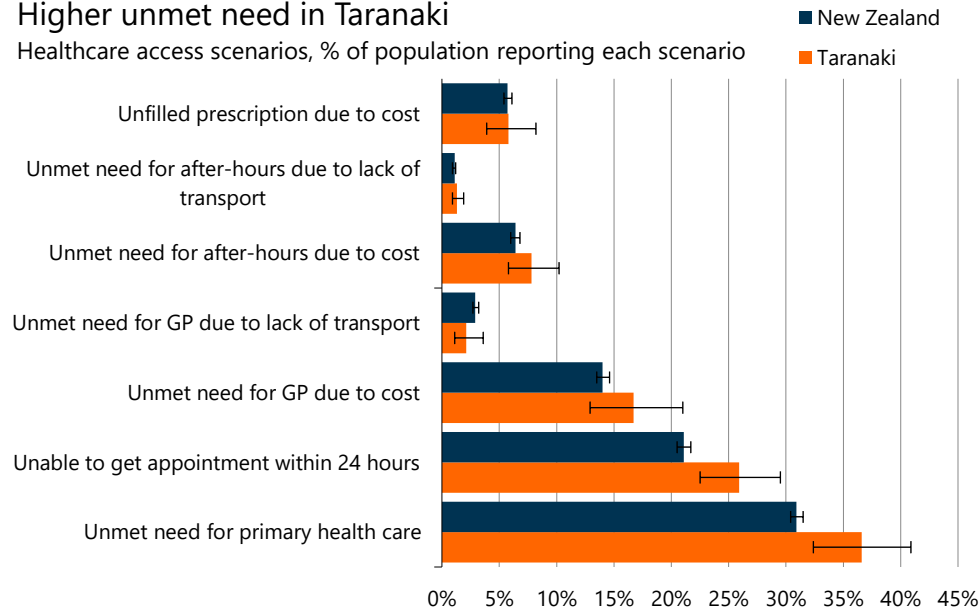
Health Survey analysis also shows that there is a higher level of unmet need for primary healthcare in Taranaki. In the 2014-17 period, 37% of the population in Taranaki had an unmet need, compared to 31% nationally – a statistically significant result.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Health. (2021). Regional Results 2017–2020: New Zealand Health Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/regional-results-2017-2020-new-zealand-health-survey>

Graph 8

Higher unmet need in Taranaki

Healthcare access scenarios, % of population reporting each scenario



Over 1 in 4 people (26%) in Taranaki weren't able to get a GP appointment within 24 hours, above the national average, but cost and transport don't appear to be disproportionate drivers of unmet need.

Data from the Medical Council of New Zealand shows that Taranaki has lower levels of health support. Analysis of results from the *New Zealand Medical Workforce in 2018* survey shows that Taranaki has a lower proportion of GPs than what the population would dictate. The 2019 survey shows the Taranaki DHB area with 2.5% of the nationwide population, but only 2.0% of national GP numbers.

High level workforce analysis confirms this trend. Infometrics employment and population data shows that there are 46.7 healthcare workers in Taranaki region for every 1,000 people, compared to 50.2 per 1,000 nationally. At a local level, New Plymouth's hospital provides a large boost to this metric, with 57.6 healthcare workers per 1,000 people. In Stratford and South Taranaki, there are 22.5 and 22.2 healthcare workers per 1,000 people, respectively.

## Housing

### More people in Taranaki own their own home

Taranaki's home ownership rate shows the region has one of the higher rates of ownership in the country. In 2018, home ownership nationally slipped to 64.5%, from 64.8% in 2013. However, this fall in the homeownership rate was driven by a steep fall in the ownership rate in Auckland, and Canterbury to a lesser extent. All other regions, including Taranaki, saw an increase in the ownership rate.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data.

In 2018, 68.6% of Taranaki households were partially or fully owned by someone in that household (or via a trust). Taranaki's home ownership rate is the fifth highest of all 16 regions and is above the 2013 rate of 68.0% - but below the 69.8% recorded in 2006. In total in 2018, there were 31,080 homes in Taranaki owned by a household member, and 14,226 that were not owned by a household member.

At a district-level, home ownership rates are highest in Stratford District, with 70.4% of households owning their own home. This home ownership rate has risen above 70% for the first time since 2001, after a declining trend between 2001 and 2013. In 2018 Stratford had 1,092 houses not owned by a household member.

New Plymouth also had a home ownership rate above 70%, with 70.2% of households owning their own home. New Plymouth has also seen a boost in home ownership between 2013 and 2018 after a declining trend since 2001, but this boost wasn't as large as in Stratford. In 2018, New Plymouth had 9,234 houses not owned by a household member.

South Taranaki continues to have the lowest home ownership rate in the region. In 2018, just 63.4% of households in the area included someone who owned the home. This rate is below the national average, and although the 2018 rate is slightly higher than in 2013, South Taranaki's homeownership rate has fallen heavily since 2001.

At a SA2 level, ten areas have home ownership rates of at or below 60% - five each in New Plymouth and South Taranaki:

**Table 2**

**Lower home ownership in some areas**

Suburbs with home ownership rates at or below 60% in 2018, Taranaki

<b>New Plymouth</b>	<b>South Taranaki</b>
Waiwhakaiho-Bell Block South (33.3%)	Taungatara (48.0%)
New Plymouth Central (48.0%)	Cape Egmont (50.8%)
Kawaroa (54.7%)	Kaponga-Mangatoki (51.0%)
Marfell (54.8%)	Patea (59.4%)
Waitara West (57.8%)	Manaia-Kapuni (60.3%)

**Lower individual home ownership for Māori, young people**

Household ownership rates don't allow for ethnic or age breakdowns, due to there being multiple people usually living at each dwelling. To understand distributional impacts more, individual homeownership data from the Census has been analysed. Nationally, 52% of all people in New Zealand did not own their own home in 2018. Consistent with household ownership analysis in the earlier section, South Taranaki had the lowest ownership rate in Taranaki, with 61% of individuals in South Taranaki not owning a home. New Plymouth was next with 60%, following by Stratford with 54%.

Māori home ownership nationally remains low, with only 31% of Māori owning a home, compared to the 52% national average. Māori home ownership remains lower than the national average across age groups, with young Māori seeing the greatest divergence. National Māori home ownership rates for 15–29-year-olds was just 6% in 2018 - less than 60% of the national total population average of 10%.



Māori across Taranaki have lower ownership than the total population, ranging from 54.5% in New Plymouth to 36.8% in Stratford (for all ages).

Table 3

### Lower home ownership for Māori and young people

Individual home ownership rate, by age and ethnicity

		New Plymouth District	South Taranaki District	Stratford District	New Zealand
Māori	15-29 years	8.8%	8.1%	9.0%	6.0%
	30-64 years	47.7%	48.7%	54.3%	44.1%
	65 years +	58.5%	59.7%	64.7%	58.1%
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>31.0%</b>
Total	15-29 years	14.7%	12.9%	19.3%	10.3%
	30-64 years	69.1%	62.5%	70.4%	62.3%
	65 years +	77.8%	74.2%	77.6%	74.2%
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>59.8%</b>	<b>54.1%</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>

The gap between Māori and Total home ownership by age appears largest in the 30–64-year age category, which indicates that Māori find it more difficult in middle ages to have the financial resources to buy a home.

Table 4

### Lower home ownership for Māori and young people

Number of people not owning their own home, by age and ethnicity

		New Plymouth District	South Taranaki District	Stratford District	Taranaki Region
Māori	15-29 years	2,508	1,185	243	3,936
	30-64 years	2,142	1,038	159	3,339
	65 years +	285	174	18	477
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>4,935</b>	<b>2,397</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>7,755</b>
Total	15-29 years	10,047	3,459	1,155	14,661
	30-64 years	9,873	3,885	1,086	14,844
	65 years +	2,886	984	324	4,194
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>22,803</b>	<b>8,331</b>	<b>2,571</b>	<b>33,705</b>

At a local community level, similar trends emerge. A number of familiar areas emerge when the number of Māori who don't own their home are ranked (as a proportion of total non-ownership). Waitara (East and West) and Marfell in New Plymouth are among the highest, with Patea, and Ōpunake also above 50% Māori non-ownership (% of total).

Table 5

**Top 20 local areas with highest relative Māori non-ownership**

Number of people not owning their own home, all ages

Rank	TLA	SA2	Māori	Total	Māori (% of total)
1	New Plymouth	Waitara East	459	882	52%
2	South Taranaki	Patea	177	354	50%
3	New Plymouth	Waitara West	615	1317	47%
4	South Taranaki	Opunake	189	417	45%
5	New Plymouth	Marfell	213	519	41%
6	South Taranaki	Manaia-Kapuni	174	492	35%
7	South Taranaki	Ramanui	210	612	34%
8	South Taranaki	Normanby-Tawhiti	159	480	33%
9	South Taranaki	Eltham	171	528	32%
10	South Taranaki	Hawera Central	228	732	31%
11	South Taranaki	Manutahi-Waitotora	183	594	31%
12	South Taranaki	Egmont Showgrounds	117	390	30%
13	South Taranaki	Turuturu	147	504	29%
14	New Plymouth	Spotswood	327	1158	28%
15	South Taranaki	King Edward Park	132	477	28%
16	New Plymouth	Blagdon-Lynmouth	204	804	25%
17	New Plymouth	Tikorangi	111	456	24%
18	South Taranaki	Cape Egmont	186	777	24%
19	New Plymouth	Mount Messenger	42	189	22%
20	New Plymouth	Westown	318	1443	22%

**Household crowding below the national average**

Household crowding rates in Taranaki are below the national average. In 2018, around 5.9% of Taranaki's population was living in crowded conditions, compared to 10.8% nationally. South Taranaki shows the highest rate of crowded living, with 6.9% of the population living in crowded conditions, while New Plymouth (5.8%) and Stratford (4.6%) had lower rates.<sup>12</sup>

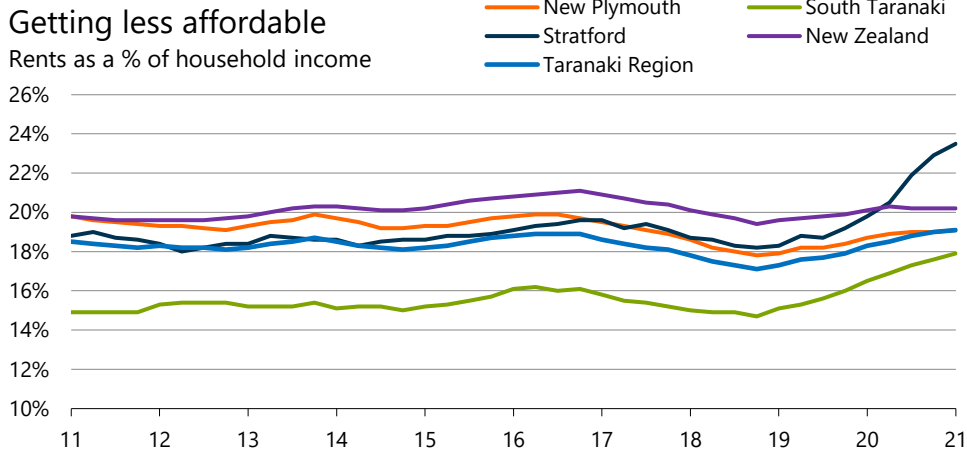
**Affordability has worsened, both in Taranaki and nationally**

Housing affordability across New Zealand has continued to worsen. Infometrics analysis shows that average house prices to average household incomes across New Zealand rose to 7.1 in March 202, having remained above a ratio of 5 since mid-2015. Taranaki's housing affordability remains better than the national average, at 5.1 incomes to an average house price, but this ratio has been steadily rising.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data

<sup>13</sup> Infometrics estimates of average house prices from Core Logic data, and Infometrics estimates of average local household income.

Graph 9

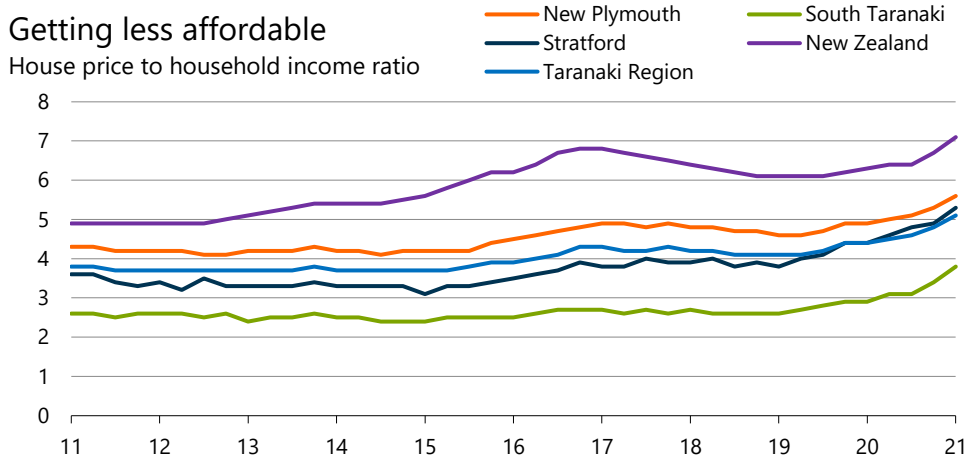


Stratford’s housing affordability has broadly matched the Taranaki average in recent years, and in March 2021 sat at 5.3. New Plymouth affordability is worse than the regional average, with a house price to income ratio of 5.6 in March 2021. South Taranaki has the most affordable houses in the region relative to income, with a house price to income ratio of 3.8.

Increased ratios show housing becoming more unaffordable relative to incomes, both in Taranaki and across the country. Higher price to income ratios imply that it will take longer for a buyer to save a deposit for a house purchase, or will need to save a greater proportion of income to achieve a deposit over the same time period as previously.

Rental affordability has also shown signs of deteriorating in some parts of Taranaki in recent times. In March 2021 rents equated to 19% of household income across the region, compared to 20% nationally. Rental affordability has been more stable over time, with Taranaki’s regional rental affordability proportion ranging between 17.1% and the current high of 19.1%.

Graph 10



New Plymouth rental affordability has remained largely unchanged over time, although affordability has worsened since COVID-19 hit, with rental costs rising to 19.1% of

household incomes in March 2021. However, South Taranaki rental affordability has deteriorated to a larger extent, increasing from a low of 14.7% of household income in late 2018 to 17.9% in 2021. Stratford's rental affordability deterioration has been even more marked. Rental costs have risen from 18.2% of incomes in late 2018 (having broadly tracked New Plymouth rental affordability between 2011 and 2018) to 23.5% of household income now.

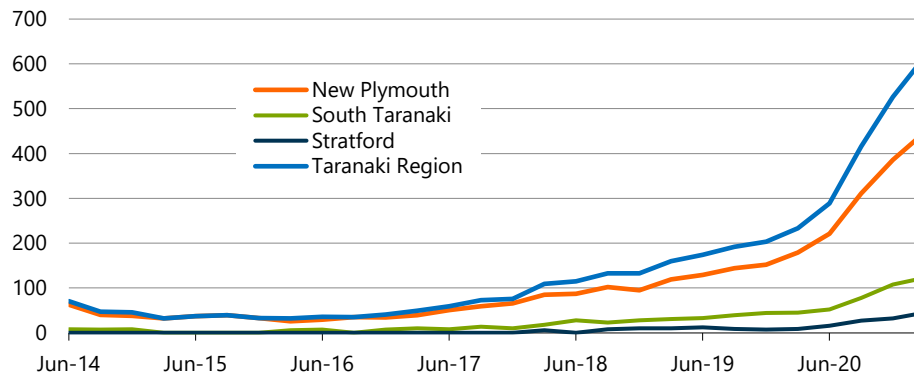
## Housing needs are rising

Data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Ministry of Social Development show a sustained rise in housing needs across New Zealand. Taranaki is no different, with the number of households on the Housing Register in Taranaki rising from 32 in March 2015 to 615 in March 2021. New Plymouth, as the largest population centre, has seen the largest rise in actual applicants, from 32 to 447.<sup>14</sup>

Graph 11

### Increasing need for housing support

Number of applicants on the state housing waitlist



Stratford and South Taranaki districts had very low numbers in 2014-2016, with applicant counts usually suppressed. However, South Taranaki's rise has been considerable over recent years. Since March 2016, South Taranaki has had the largest increase of all territorial authorities, with Housing Register demand up 1,950% (from 6 to 123 applicants).

Current high housing needs are substantial, relative to total housing. South Taranaki's current Housing Register level is higher than the current stock of public houses provided in the area, one of only 6 areas across New Zealand where Housing Register numbers are larger than already-occupied public housing. In March 2021, there were 123 families on the Housing Register waiting for housing, and 121 public housing places already occupied. New Plymouth has a higher total number, but lower relative position. In March 2021, there were 447 household waiting for a public house, with 952 public housing places already in use.

<sup>14</sup> Infometrics analysis of MSD Housing Register data

Both areas are in the top half of New Zealand when it comes to public housing supply and additional public housing need as a proportion of total private dwellings, further reinforcing additional housing needs across Taranaki.

## Poorer housing quality in Stratford, South Taranaki

Census 2018 housing quality data shows Taranaki houses are more likely to be damp and mouldy, compared to the national average. 18% of Taranaki houses were sometimes or always mouldy, compared to 17% of all houses across New Zealand. Dampness was similar in Taranaki and New Zealand, at 21%.<sup>15</sup>

Stratford and South Taranaki Districts have poorer housing quality across the region. In 2018, 26% of Stratford houses, and 25% of South Taranaki houses, were damp. Mouldy home rates were lower but showed the same trend. New Plymouth had 20% of houses counted as sometime or always damp.

A number of areas identified already as areas of additional need in Taranaki are again seen below, with the highest proportion of damp or mouldy homes. The top 10 areas, across both categories, are again concentrated in New Plymouth and South Taranaki.

Table 6

### Top 10 local areas for damp and mouldy houses

% of total dwellings, and count of dwellings

TLA	SA2	% Damp	% Mouldy	# Damp	# Mouldy
New Plymouth	Waiwhakaiho-Bell Block South	38%	38%	9	9
Stratford	Douglas	32%	25%	69	54
South Taranaki	Taungatara	31%	29%	129	120
New Plymouth	Marfell	31%	30%	153	150
New Plymouth	Waitara West	31%	26%	411	351
South Taranaki	Cape Egmont	30%	24%	201	162
New Plymouth	Waitara East	30%	25%	291	240
South Taranaki	Mangawhio	29%	23%	69	54
South Taranaki	Te Roti-Moeroa	29%	18%	75	48
New Plymouth	Tarata	29%	24%	57	48
South Taranaki	Ohangai	27%	26%	51	48
Stratford	Toko	27%	24%	129	114

<sup>15</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data

## Income, consumption, jobs, and earnings

### Lower median incomes in Taranaki

Infometrics analysis of 2018 Census data shows that Taranaki had a lower median household income compared to the New Zealand median. The Taranaki median income in 2018 was \$63,600, around \$12,100 (16%) below the New Zealand median of \$75,700.

Within Taranaki, South Taranaki and Stratford Districts have considerably lower median household incomes. New Plymouth’s higher median income creates a divide on either side of the region-wide median.

Table 7

#### Comparing median incomes

\$, 2018, median household income

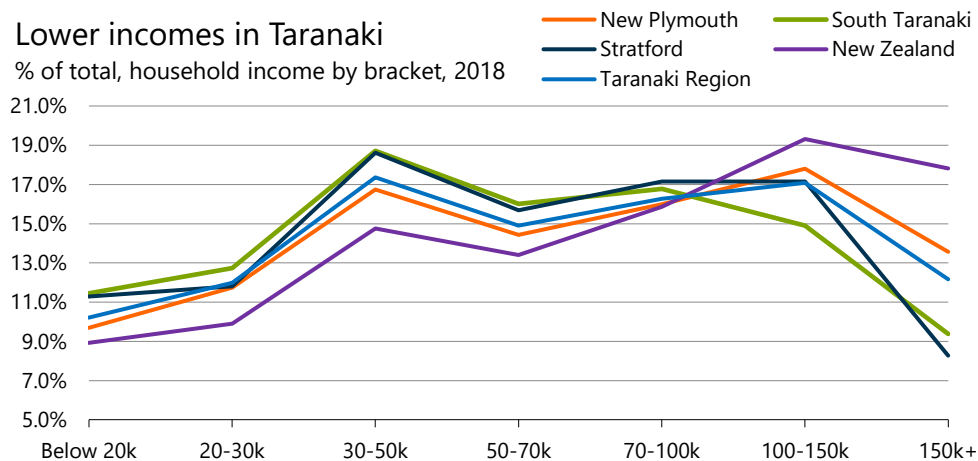
Area	Median
Taranaki Region	\$63,600
New Zealand	\$75,700
New Plymouth District	\$66,100
Stratford District	\$59,900
South Taranaki District	\$58,400

The income differences become clearer when household income is broken into income brackets. In both Stratford and South Taranaki, over 40% of households have an income of below \$50,000, compared to 33% nationally. Despite New Plymouth having a higher median income, the area still has a lower income skew compared to the national average. Taranaki and all of its local areas have a larger proportion of people on lower incomes than the national average.

Graph 12

#### Lower incomes in Taranaki

% of total, household income by bracket, 2018



This lower income skew across Taranaki means that at higher income brackets, the gap widens considerably. In 2018, over a third (37%) of national households were earning

over \$100,000. In Taranaki, only 29% did the same, with fewer than a quarter doing so in South Taranaki.

## Slightly higher average deprivation in Taranaki

Analysis of the New Zealand Index of Deprivation shows Taranaki's average deprivation score is around 1% higher than the national average, with the region sitting in the middle third of all regions (6<sup>th</sup> out of 16 regions).

South Taranaki District has the highest levels of deprivation across the region, with an average deprivation score of 1,052.<sup>16</sup> Stratford District is again in the middle, with a score of 1,025, and New Plymouth has a lower score, of 998.<sup>17</sup>

Deprivation scores provide insights into the outcomes in different areas. Looking across local areas, the most deprived align with other analysis in this report. Of the 20 local areas at a Statistical Area 2 (SA2 level) with the highest deprivation in the region, ten are in South Taranaki, seven in New Plymouth, and three in Stratford.

**Table 8**

### Top 20 highest deprivation local areas

NZ Deprivation Index score, by suburb, highest deprivation

Rank	TLA	SA2	Score
1	South Taranaki	Patea	1209
2	New Plymouth	Marfell	1163
3	New Plymouth	Waitara West	1161
4	South Taranaki	Eltham	1109
5	New Plymouth	Waitara East	1107
6	South Taranaki	Opunake	1102
7	South Taranaki	King Edward Park	1094
8	Stratford	Stratford South	1093
9	South Taranaki	Hawera Central	1087
10	South Taranaki	Manaia-Kapuni	1085
11	Stratford	Whangamomona	1081
12	South Taranaki	Manutahi-Waitotora	1072
13	New Plymouth	Spotswood	1057
14	South Taranaki	Ramanui	1049
15	South Taranaki	Cape Egmont	1047
16	South Taranaki	Kaponga-Mangatoki	1040
17	New Plymouth	Westown (New Plymouth)	1037
18	Stratford	Stratford Central	1036
19	New Plymouth	New Plymouth Central	1035
20	New Plymouth	Blagdon-Lynmouth	1034

<sup>16</sup> More details on the metrics used can be found here: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/otago823833.pdf>

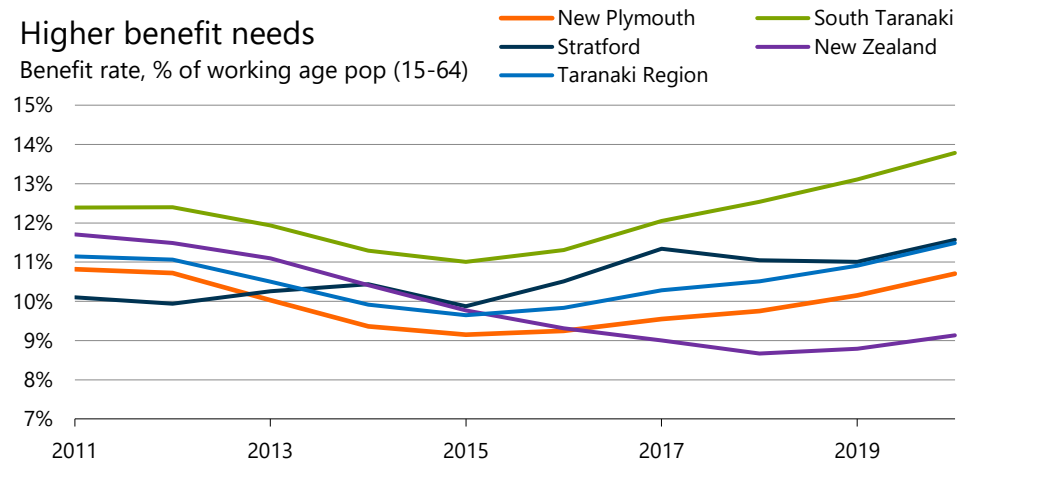
<sup>17</sup> Deprivation scores are population-weighted from SA1 areas in the NZDep18 database. More details about NZDep18 can be found here: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/publichealth/otago830998.html>

## Benefit dependency slightly higher than average

In 2020, Taranaki region had the 6<sup>th</sup> highest benefit dependency rate of all 16 regions across New Zealand, with 11.5% of the working age population being supported by a government benefit. The Taranaki regional rate was above the national rate of 9.1%. This higher benefit dependency rate only captures the initial spike in Jobseeker Support recipients at the start of COVID-19, but the per-population analysis provides insight into the variation in benefit dependency across the country.<sup>18</sup>

Benefit rates in New Plymouth are the lowest across Taranaki, with 10.7% of the local working age population supported by a main benefit in 2020. New Plymouth's rate remains above the national average but has been trending lower before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Graph 13



The rest of the Taranaki region shows a similar profile. Stratford's benefit dependency rate is higher still, at 11.6% of the working age population in 2020.

South Taranaki has the highest benefit dependency rate in the region, with 13.8% of the working age population supported by a main benefit.

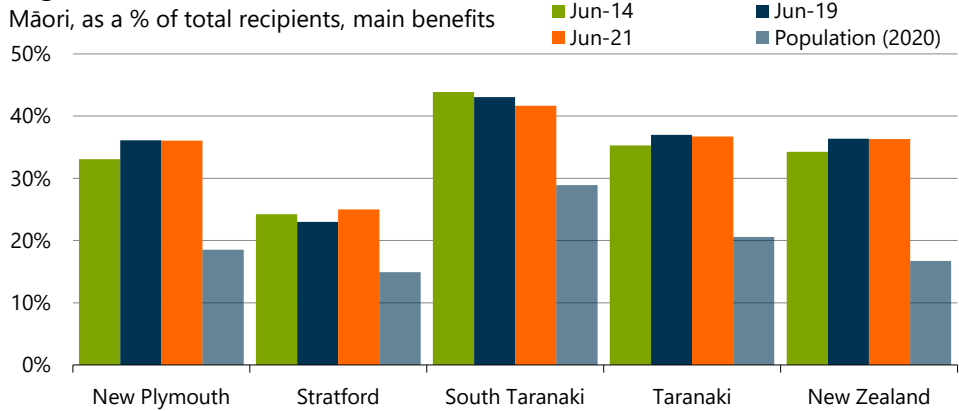
Looking at detailed beneficiary characteristics, Māori remain overrepresented in benefit numbers. In 2020, Māori were estimated to make up 21% of the Taranaki population. But they represent 37% of all main benefit recipients in the region. Māori make up the highest share in South Taranaki – both for total population and beneficiary recipients. In 2020, Māori made up around 29% of South Taranaki's population, but 42% of benefit recipients. New Plymouth was second highest (18% vs 36%), followed by Stratford (15% vs 25%).

<sup>18</sup> Infometrics analysis of MSD benefit counts and Stats NZ population data



Graph 14

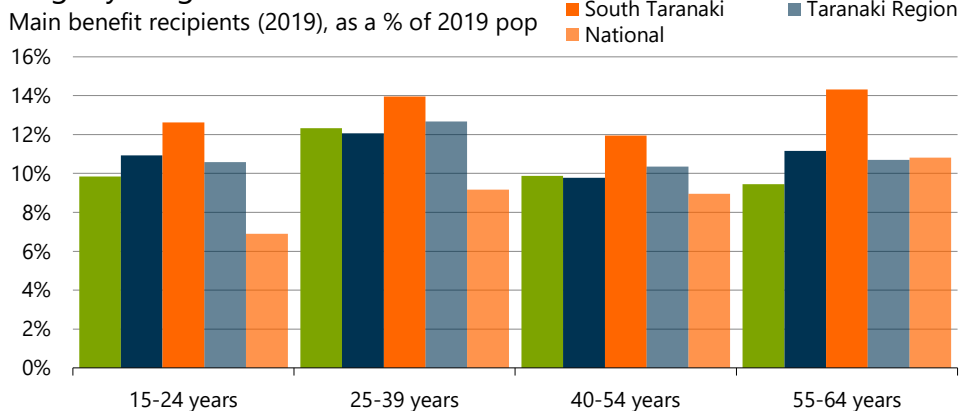
Higher concentration of Māori on a benefit



There are also a higher proportion of young people in Taranaki on a main benefit. Around 11% of young people aged below 24 are on a main benefit in Taranaki region, compared to 7% nationally (pre-pandemic). South Taranaki has the highest level above the national average, with 13% of the local population under 24 on a main benefit.

Graph 15

Larger young concentrations



There is also a wider gap for 25–39-year-olds, with 13% of this age group in Taranaki on a main benefit, compared to 9% of the national population. South Taranaki again has the highest level, with 14% of the population.

NEET rate high, but volatile

In 2020, Taranaki region’s NEET rate (the proportion of young people aged 15-24 not in education, employment, or training) was the second highest across New Zealand regions, with a rate of 17.9%. This rate was above the 11.9% national average rate.<sup>19</sup>

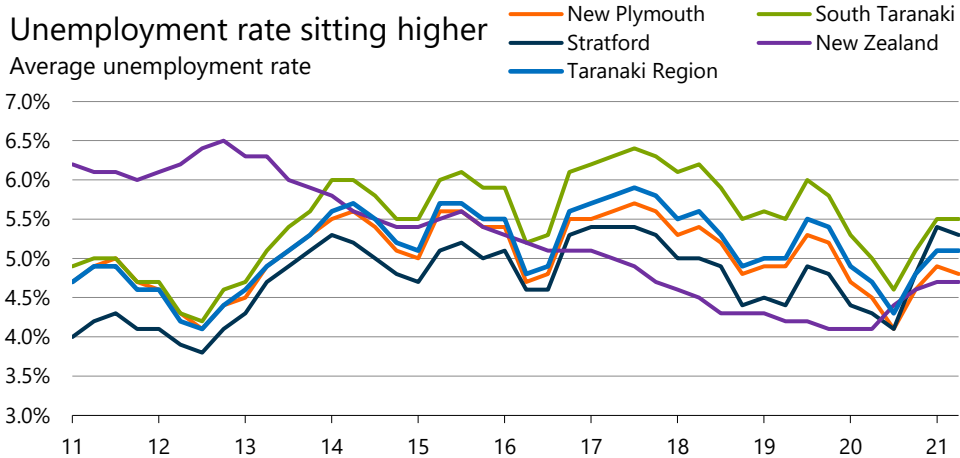
<sup>19</sup> Infometrics estimates (at a local level), Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS, at a regional and national level).

NEET rates can be notoriously noisy and volatile, with Taranaki’s NEET rate usually around the middle of the regional pack. Although the levels are hard to track, given the volatility in the series, the relative difference between areas does highlight areas with a greater prevalence of NEET need. Across local areas, South Taranaki has the persistently highest NEET rate, with Infometrics estimating a NEET rate of above 20% in 2020.

### Unemployment rate persistently higher

Taranaki’s unemployment rate remains above the national average, with 5.1% of the labour force unemployed in mid-2021. The national average rate over the last year has now stabilised at 4.7%, and will fall as lower quarterly unemployment figures filter through. Even though the unemployment rate has continued on a steady downwards path since 2013, Taranaki’s unemployment rate has remained higher over the period, suggesting less labour market tightness and more support needed to support persistently unemployed people into a new work or educational opportunity.<sup>20</sup>

Graph 16



Stratford consistently has the lowest unemployment rate across the region, although this rate has ticked up in recent times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New Plymouth’s unemployment rate sits in the middle, with an unemployment rate of 4.8% in mid-2021.

Again, South Taranaki’s unemployment rate is the highest across the region. In mid-2021, 5.5% of South Taranaki’s labour force was estimated to be unemployed, with the area showing a consistently higher rate of unemployment since 2013 onwards.

<sup>20</sup> Infometrics estimates (at a local level), Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS, at a regional and national level).

## Knowledge and Skills

### ECE participation rate slightly above national average

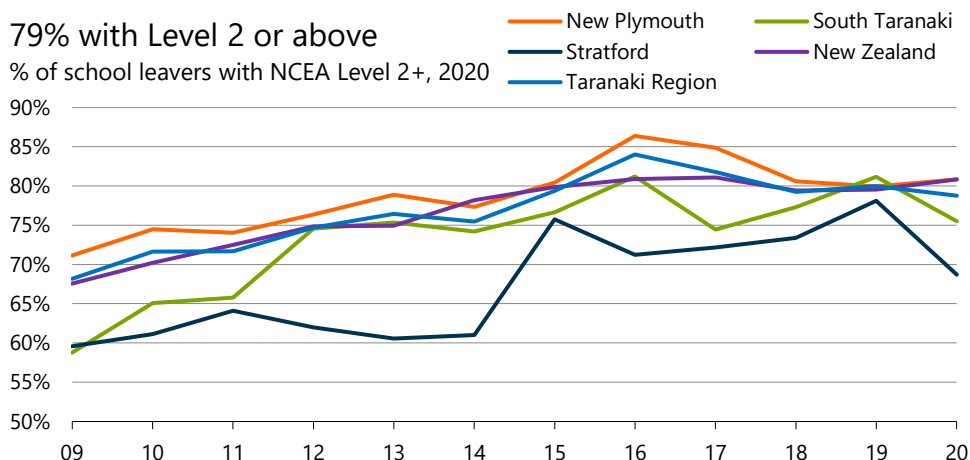
In 2021, 97.2% of young people starting school in Taranaki had participated in early childhood education – slightly above the 97.0% national average.<sup>21</sup>

New Plymouth's participation rate was the highest across Taranaki, with 98.1% prior participation in 2021, and remains above the national average. Stratford's prior participation rate in 2021 stood at 96.6%, a rate slightly below the national average, but in line with many regional areas. South Taranaki's prior participation rate was the lowest in the region, at 94.9%. This rate was the 11<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 66 local areas.

### 79% of school leavers have Level 2 or above

In 2020, 79% of Taranaki school leavers had an NCEA Level 2 qualification or above. This rate is slightly lower than in previous years, underscoring the need for continued focus on strong educational outcomes. Nationally, the achievement rate rose again, with 81% of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above.<sup>22</sup>

Graph 17



New Plymouth equalled the national average, with 81% of school leavers with Level 2 or above in 2020, continuing a stable trend since 2018 (but below the high results found in 2016/17). South Taranaki followed at a slightly lower rate, with 75% of school leavers with Level 2 or above, with South Taranaki maintaining achievement of between 74% and 81% since 2012.

Stratford showed a considerably, and consistently, lower rate of school leaver achievement, with only 69% of school leavers attaining a Level 2 or above qualification. Stratford attainment has been lower throughout the last decade and has only had an attainment rate above 75% twice in the last 12 years.

<sup>21</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Education data

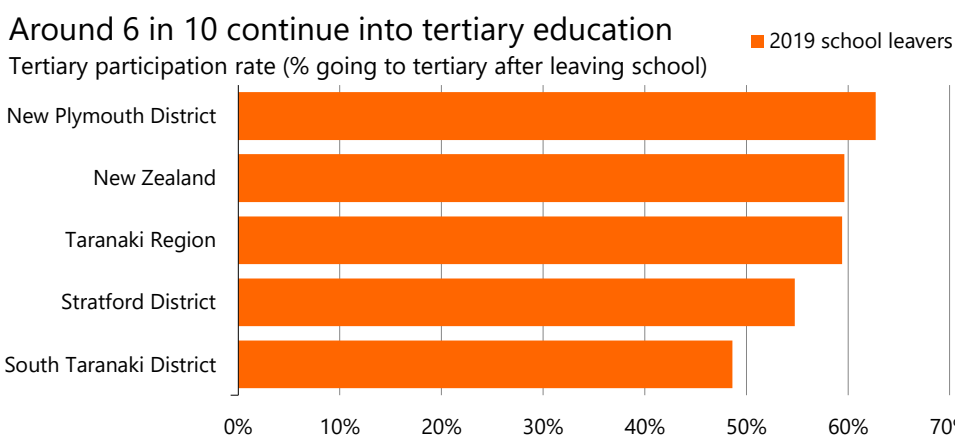
<sup>22</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Education data

## Nearly 6 in 10 school leavers go into tertiary education

In 2020, around 59% of Taranaki school leavers (from 2019) went into tertiary education – broadly in line with the national average of 60%.<sup>23</sup>

New Plymouth school leavers had the highest tertiary participation rate, with 63% entering tertiary education the year after leaving school, a rate putting New Plymouth in the top third of the country according to tertiary participation. Of those leaving school in 2019, 641 students went into tertiary education, and 381 did not.

**Graph 18**



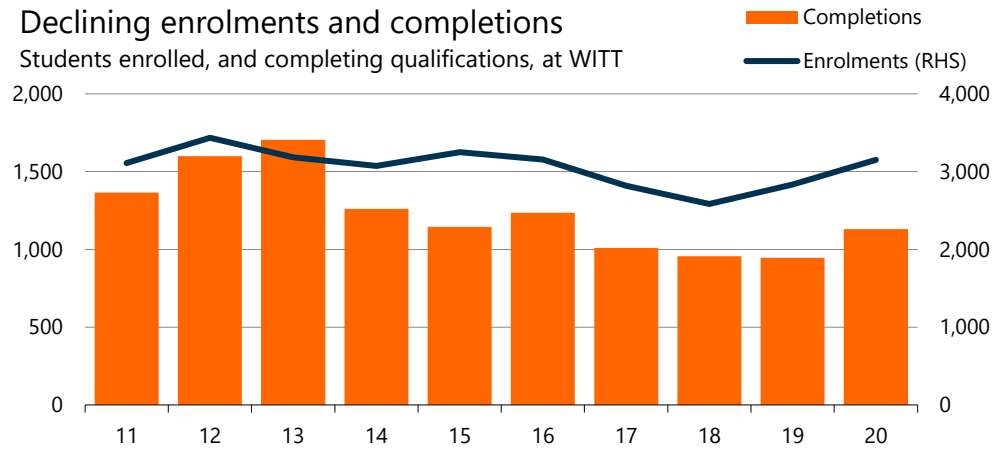
Stratford had a lower rate, with 55% of school leavers entering tertiary education the year after leaving school – putting the area towards the bottom of the middle third of all areas. Of those leaving school in 2019, 75 students went into tertiary education, and 62 did not.

South Taranaki school leaver tertiary participation was below half, with 49% of school leavers entering tertiary education the year after finishing school. Of those leaving school in 2019, 131 students went into tertiary education, and 124 did not.

Qualification completions data is not available by local area, given the number of people who move from tertiary education. However, local education provision can be examined, as a proxy for local activity. Enrolments and completions at the Western Institute of Technology Taranaki (WITT) have declined since 2014. Enrolments peaked at over 3,400 in 2012, and completions peaked the year after in 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Education data

Graph 19



Completions as a proportion of enrolments has fallen from above 40% each year to the mid 30% in recent years. This metric is a crude measure of outcomes but does illustrate that completions have fallen at a greater pace than enrolments.

## Safety

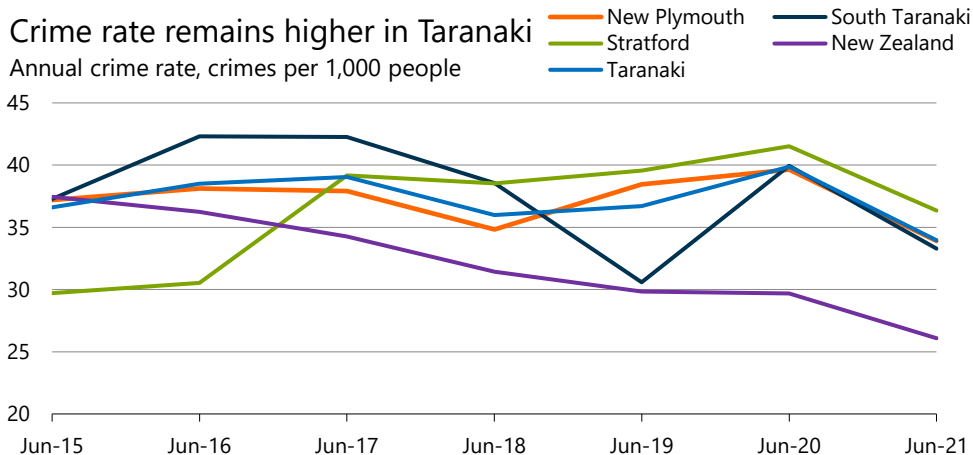
### Crime rate stable, even as national crime falls

Annual criminal proceedings across Taranaki have remained elevated in recent years, even as nationwide criminal proceedings have fallen. Over the year to June 2015, crime rates for New Plymouth, South Taranaki, and Taranaki region were very similar to the national rate. New Plymouth recorded 37.2 crimes per 1,000 people, South Taranaki had 37.3 per 1,000, and Taranaki region in total had 36.6 crimes per 1,000 – compared to 37.4 per 1,000 nationally. Stratford criminal activity was considerably lower, with 29.7 crimes per 1,000.<sup>24</sup>

However, although the crime rate across the region has fallen slightly to 33.9, with New Plymouth falling to 33.9 and South Taranaki falling to 33.3, the nationwide crime rate has fallen considerably further, to 26.1 per 1,000 people in 2021. Meanwhile, Stratford’s crime rate has again bucked the trend, but in the wrong direction, with the crime rate rising to 36.3 per 1,000 people.

<sup>24</sup> Infometrics analysis of Police recorded crime data and Stats NZ population data

Graph 20



Total criminal proceedings across Taranaki have fallen 1.1% from 2015 levels, compared to a 23% national reduction. Both New Plymouth and South Taranaki crimes fell – 1.3% and 8.2% respectively – even as Stratford crimes rose 28%.

A variety of trends show through from an analysis of detailed crime data.

- Although drug proceedings have fallen nationally and in New Plymouth, in Stratford and South Taranaki they have both risen considerably from 2015 levels.
- Stratford's crime rate rise has been driven by considerable increases in acts intended to cause injury or acts which endanger people.
- South Taranaki has seen a 31% drop in thefts, alongside fewer traffic offences.

## Social Connections

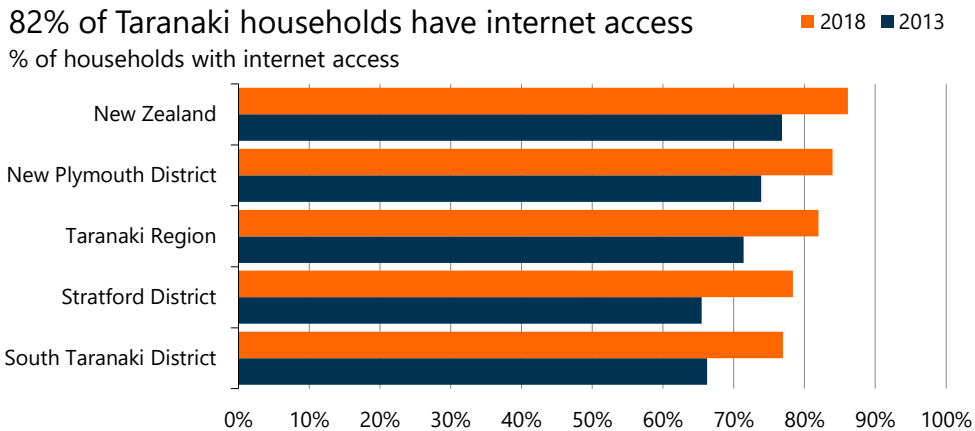
### Lower internet access rate for Taranaki households

In the 2018 Census, 82% of Taranaki households reported that they had access to the internet – slightly lower than the national average of 86%. Since 2001, Taranaki has had an internet access rate below the national average. In an increasingly digital society, internet connectivity is rapidly becoming a necessity for employment, education, and social connection.<sup>25</sup>

New Plymouth has the highest internet access rate in the region, which is unsurprising given it is the major urban centre. In 2018, 84% of households in New Plymouth had internet access – a rate which is still below the national average. On this basis, there were 4,695 households in the area without internet access.

<sup>25</sup> Infometrics analysis of Stats NZ Census 2018 data

Graph 21



Stratford had the second-highest internet access rate in the region, with 78.4% of households connected. Around 744 households in the district did not have internet access. South Taranaki had the lowest regional internet access rate, with 76.9% of households connected. In South Taranaki in 2018, there were 2,214 households without internet access.

At a detailed level, there were 10 areas with less than 75% of households with internet access:

Table 9

**Lower internet access in some areas**

Suburbs with internet access rates of below 75% in 2018, Taranaki

New Plymouth	Stratford	South Taranaki
Marfell (73.8%, 135 without)	Stratford Central (74.9%, 207 without)	Manaia-Kapuni (73.2%, 144 without)
Waitara West (70.0%, 420 without)	Whangamomona (40.0%, 27 without) – an isolated community	Hawera Central (73.1%, 261 without)
		Eltham (72.3%, 201 without)
		Manutahi-Waitotora (69.6%, 219 without)
		Opunake (68.6%, 165 without)
		Patea (62.1%, 165 without)

**Taranaki truancy rate of 4.4% below national average**

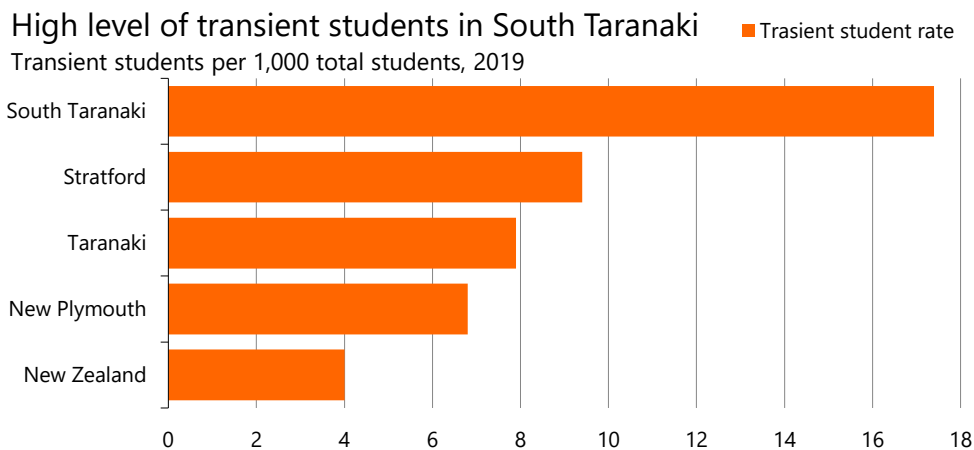
The proportion of young people truant from school in Taranaki remains lower than the national average – a trend that has remained since 2012. However, both the regional and national rate have been increasing over time, from 3.0% in 2011 in Taranaki to 4.4% in 2020, and from 3.2% in 2011 nationally to 4.6%.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Infometrics analysis of Ministry of Education data

Both New Plymouth and Stratford contribute to this lower-than-national-average result, with truancy rates of 3.9% and 4.1% respectively in 2020. However, South Taranaki's truancy rate has climbed substantially, from close to the national average in 2011 (3.4%) to 6.4% in 2020 – the 14<sup>th</sup> highest rate nationally.

Higher truancy in South Taranaki aligns with a higher rate of transient students in South Taranaki. Ministry of Education data to 2019 shows the area has the 17<sup>th</sup> highest rate (of 66 local areas) for transient students, with 17.4 transient students per 1,000 students.

Graph 22



The Taranaki regional average was 7.9, with New Plymouth sitting at 6.8 and Stratford at 9.4 per 1,000 students. Nationally, the transient student rate was 4.0 in 2019.

## Around 92% in Taranaki have a driver licence

Infometrics analysis of the Motor Vehicle Register suggests that in 2018 (the latest period for which information has been released), 92% of Taranaki's population aged 15+ had a driver licence. This rate is slightly above the national average of 91%.<sup>27</sup>

Both New Plymouth and Stratford Districts have higher driver licence levels, with 93% of both populations estimated to have a driver licence in 2018 – the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> highest levels across New Zealand, respectively.

However, South Taranaki had a lower rate, with just 89% of South Taranaki's population aged 15+ estimated to have a driver licence – the 39<sup>th</sup> highest rate of 67 local areas.

Lower driver licencing rates might indicate less ability to move around and to access services and educational and job opportunities. More analysis would be needed to better understand this lower rate of driver licencing, including talking to those without licences to understand their motivations and barriers.

<sup>27</sup> Infometrics analysis of Waka Kotahi NZTA data



## Environment

### Support needed to limit waste output

Infometrics analysis of annual plans and waste management plans across New Zealand in 2017 showed Taranaki areas with a lower waste diversion rate than the national average. New Plymouth District recorded the highest waste diversion rate, with around 46% of generated waste being recycled. South Taranaki reported 34% of waste was diverted from landfill, with only 24% of Stratford waste recycled.

Nationally, Infometrics estimated the waste diversion rate to be around 40%. New Plymouth's higher diversion rate, compared to South Taranaki and Stratford, likely reflects the more urbanised area in New Plymouth. All results show the ability to increase waste diversion further.

### Emissions increase in Taranaki

Stats NZ regional greenhouse gas emissions estimates<sup>28</sup> show Taranaki was the second most emissions intensive region in 2019, behind Southland Region. Although energy generation is part of Taranaki's carbon story, Stats NZ data shows that primary industries and manufacturing contributed 72% of the region's carbon emissions in 2019.

In Taranaki, manufacturing emissions are critical. Over the last decade, total Taranaki emissions have risen 6.6%, even as manufacturing emissions more than doubled (+142%) over the same period. Manufacturing emissions in Taranaki have increased from 10% of regional emissions a decade ago to 22% in 2019. Infometrics analysis of manufacturing activity in manufacturing suggests that the increase has been driven by growth in basic organic and inorganic chemical manufacturing.

Regional emissions profiles are substantially determined by production and economic structures in an area. Taranaki's larger carbon-intensive manufacturing sector, and still-large primary sector, have contributed to the high regional emissions profile. Substantial changes to energy use and industrial production methods, alongside adjustments in the primary sector, will be needed to reduce this carbon emissions profile.

## Māori wellbeing outcomes

Insights into Māori outcomes are discussed above in relevant sections where data is available for this analysis. Data is not always available or collected with an ethnicity classification, making it harder to understand Māori wellbeing outcomes.

**This section discussed a range of outcomes examined from Stats NZ's *Te Kupenga* survey of Māori wellbeing, completed in 2018. Due to the survey nature of this data, only region-level analysis is available.**<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Stats NZ. (2021). Greenhouse gas emissions by region (industry and household): Year ended 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-region-industry-and-household-year-ended-2019>

<sup>29</sup> Stats NZ. (2020). Te Kupenga: 2018 (final) – English. Retrieved from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/te-kupenga-2018-final-english>

## Generally lower housing outcomes for Māori

Housing outcomes are discussed at length in the housing section, including insights on Māori home ownership. *Te Kupenga* confirms this analysis, with higher levels of Māori home ownership in Taranaki compared to the national Māori ownership rate. However, as noted earlier, Māori ownership is still lower than total population ownership.

Māori internet access is assessed to be worse in Taranaki compared to the national Māori average, according to the survey. In 2018, 89% of Māori across New Zealand had access to the internet, compared to 86% of Māori in Taranaki. Possibly offsetting this deficit, more Māori in Taranaki had access to a cell phone or mobile phone: 97% compared to 95% for Māori nationally.

Taranaki Māori also have worse housing quality issues than Māori nationally. In 2018, 36% of Māori homes in Taranaki were damp, compared to 34% for all Māori across New Zealand. Mould showed a similar trend, with 32% of Māori homes in Taranaki affected by mould, compared to 28% nationally.

## Higher discrimination for Māori in Taranaki

Taranaki Māori reported a higher proportion of discrimination than Māori nationwide in *Te Kupenga*. In 2018, 34% of Māori in Taranaki said they had experienced discrimination in the last 12 months, with 72% experiencing discrimination over their lifetime. Nationally, 29% of Māori reported experiencing discrimination in the last year, and 66% had over their lifetime.

## High life satisfaction for Taranaki Māori

Māori in Taranaki recorded an average overall life satisfaction rating of 8.0 in 2018 (0-10 scale), higher than the 7.8 national Māori ranking, and second equal highest with Bay of Plenty, after Otago/Southland.

## Worse mental wellbeing for Māori

The *Te Kupenga* survey reports Taranaki Māori have the worst mental wellbeing outcomes across Māori in New Zealand. The Māori overall wellbeing score in Taranaki was 27.1, above the nationwide average score of 23.2 on the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index.

These results build on the analysis earlier in this report about higher levels of mental health access in Taranaki generally.

## Strong manaakitanga in Taranaki

Results from *Te Kupenga* confirm the high levels of civic engagement in Taranaki. In 2018, 45% of Māori in Taranaki reported manaakitanga through helping for or through a school, church, sports club or other group – the highest rate regionally, and above the 40% national rate.

## Sustainably through kaitiakitanga in Taranaki

Māori in Taranaki are more likely to grow their own food than the national Māori average. In 2018, 62% of Māori in Taranaki reported growing their own fruit or

vegetables, higher than the national average of 58%. Māori in Taranaki were also more likely to gather traditional Māori food, with 45% in Taranaki compared to 41% nationally.

## Strong whānau support in Taranaki

*Te Kupenga* survey results show strong whanau connection and support in Taranaki. In 2018, Māori in Taranaki had the highest average whanau wellbeing rating, of 7.6 on a scale of 1-10, compared to a national average of 7.4. Importantly, 18% of Māori in Taranaki rated their whanau wellbeing 10 out of 10 – the highest 10/10 share across New Zealand.

Strong whanau connections mean that Māori in Taranaki report higher levels of general support from whanau than the national average. In 2018, 74% of Māori in Taranaki said it was easy or very easy to get general support from their whanau, compared to 72% nationally. In times of need, 80% of Taranaki Māori reported it was easy or very easy to get support from whanau, compared to 76% nationally.

## Variety of ways Māori keep informed

Māori in Taranaki reported higher-than-national-average levels of engagement in 16 out of 21 different cultural practices in 2018. Of the 21 practices (including Māori communication, connection, activities, and custom), Māori in Taranaki had the largest participation relative to the national average in Māori communication engagement. 71% of Māori in Taranaki reported watching a Māori TV show, compared to 65% nationally, and 38% listened to a Māori radio station (compared to 28% nationally).

## Iwi engagement

Although civic engagement across Taranaki is high, and Māori engagement in the community is high too, participation with iwi isn't as high as might be expected. In 2018, 54% of Māori in Taranaki reported being registered with their iwi, compared to 47% nationally, and 81% were eligible to vote in iwi elections, compared to 78% nationally. However, only 47% had voted in an iwi election in the last three years, compared to 52% nationally.

## Section 2: Key trends and focus areas

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This section determines key trends emerging from the factors identified in the previous section. These key trends are provided in an understandable narrative about what these factors are and how improvements in identified areas could support improved outcomes for people.

The focus of this analysis is to gain a clearer picture of Taranaki and its people and identify where the areas of greatest need are.

### Continued support needed to support locals into jobs and training

Analysis of outcomes in Taranaki have unveiled persistent levels of higher-than-average unemployment among Taranaki residents. Poorer employment outcomes are reinforced by the higher proportion of Taranaki's population depending on a main benefit over the last five years.

Employment is a critical component to allowing people to determine their own lives, with greater choice, financial security, and mental health outcomes from secure, well-paid employment.

Enhancing and focusing support to enable Taranaki residents to get into a sustainable, well-paid job will be important to securing better outcomes in Taranaki, particularly through recognising the increased access to opportunities that having a job provides. This increased access is a key outcome for Toi Foundation.

Creating jobs, and importantly, integrating people into sustained employment, is no easy task. But this analysis shows that general and tertiary education outcomes in Taranaki are lower than the New Zealand average -although not by a lot – which provides scope to create an improved pathway for young people in Taranaki to move through the education system and then into employment.

Collaboration with schools and other educational providers is likely to be an area of focus, to best understand barriers and issues facing school leavers in Taranaki to gaining better educational outcomes. Importantly, career development and support, through linking potential employees into supported pathways with an employer waiting, could also enhance outcomes.

### Strengthening connections important

Taranaki has lower rates of connectivity than the New Zealand average, making it harder to remain linked into processes and change. Connection is important to enable people to participate in society, throughout their community, in work, education, culturally, and socially.

With lower levels of internet connectivity in Taranaki, there is a risk that people in the area have more limited access to opportunities, cannot access the same levels of support, and cannot remain integrated with their support networks to the same degree.

Digital isolation is of concern, given the rapid digitalisation of people's lives, with a greater proportion of daily activities now requiring online access. Government services, employment, learning, and social networks are all increasingly focused on online provision, meaning those that do not have a digital connection can be marginalised.

More analysis is needed to deeply understand the barriers facing those in Taranaki without digital connection, with potential barriers being physical unavailability of digital network connections, cost, or digital understanding and literacy, among others.

Enhanced digital connection will better enable people across Taranaki to remain engaged, connected, up to date, and included in accessing opportunities across the region.

Physical connection is also important, with lower driver licence access potentially indicating difficulty for some in Taranaki to easily and readily access services they might need. Barrier to access can limit outcomes broadly for people, with an inability to drive around potentially limiting access to everything from groceries and other necessities, to school, employment, social and cultural pursuits, and other obligations.

Again, further analysis is needed to determine the barriers to physical connection and driver licencing, including cost barriers, vehicle access, training options, and testing operations.

## Child support may be needed

Taranaki shows a higher level of unpaid childcare work undertaken. Although this child support doesn't immediately signal a concern, it does raise questions about whether current family support systems are providing the best outcomes in Taranaki.

Higher levels of childcare support might indicate that a larger proportion of family members are involved in raising children, but the higher rate in Taranaki could also signal a persistent barrier that could include employment outcomes as well.

If barriers to childcare are understood, further support could be examined for families in Taranaki to enable families to access childcare, and free up time for family members to undertake other pursuits in employment, or elsewhere in the community.

Understanding higher levels of childcare support would provide stronger consideration of current child and youth wellbeing in Taranaki. This information could either support better outcomes, or confirm expectations of enhanced wellbeing, depending on the outcome of further analysis.

## Improved health outcomes would deliver better foundations

Taranaki experiences a number of poorer health outcomes than the national average, including higher avoidable hospitalisations and a substantial mental health burden. Both issues will be detracting from child and youth wellbeing, limiting Māori aspiration, and limiting access to opportunities.

Worse health outcomes mean that the foundations of a person's life is weaker, which can limit the ability for people to fully participate and engage in work, school, social and cultural activities, and family connection.

Barriers to health services appear to be limiting interaction in Taranaki, with not only poorer health outcomes, but more difficulty reported in accessing services. Cost and transport issues don't appear to be key causes of this difficulty accessing health services, but instead, general limitations on the health sector in Taranaki might be a greater challenge.

Analysis shows that Taranaki has a lower proportion of GPs, and a lower rate of healthcare workers in the population compared to elsewhere in New Zealand. With those in Taranaki reporting that being unable to get an appointment within 24 hours is a key barrier, resourcing appears to be an area to investigate support for.

Other issues already identified, including connectivity (both physically and digitally) may limit innovative solutions to providing better access to health facilities, with digital health support unable to be delivered to the quarter of households without internet, for example. A joined-up approach is needed to address connection issues alongside enhancing health access in Taranaki.

## Better Māori outcomes needed

Māori in Taranaki currently have some poorer wellbeing outcomes than elsewhere in Taranaki or across the country. Higher welfare support rates are likely to be compounding poorer housing outcomes, where Taranaki Māori have lower home ownership, live in poorer quality housing, and have less digital connection.

Financial and housing challenges are likely contributing to poorer outcomes for Māori mental health. However, strong Māori support in the community is also evident, with positive rates of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanau support made clear.

These stronger cultural outcomes signal that support delivered by Māori organisations in Taranaki, which already have strong and enduring connections, are likely to enable better Māori outcomes.

Toi Foundation's outcome focus on Rangatiratanga, or empowering Māori aspiration, provides an opportunity to support Māori-centric approaches to housing access and models, alongside support for greater levels of Māori employment to reduce benefit needs. This focus on Māori aspiration could also enable a greater focus on entrepreneurial and social enterprise pursuits among Taranaki Māori, given stronger Māori cultural outcomes.

## Needs in South Taranaki require greater focus

Throughout the analysis South Taranaki invariably appears as the area with poorer wellbeing outcomes. This finding underscores a need to direct more dedicated support and resources into South Taranaki, with coordination of support required to address not just one issue at a time, but create a roadmap to iteratively address the range of challenges faced by people in South Taranaki, and reinforce support as changes are made.

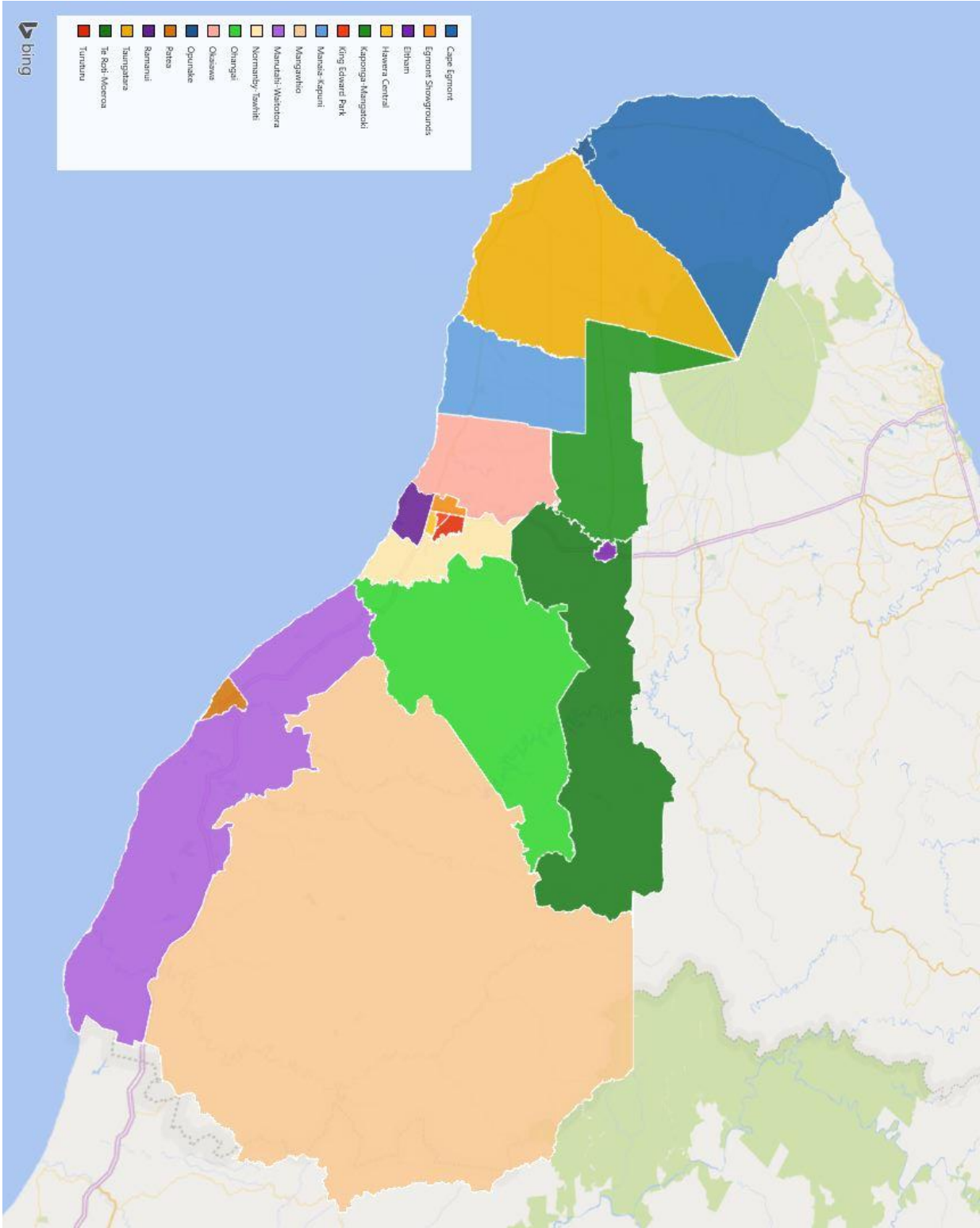
Housing outcomes in South Taranaki are particularly of concern. Although affordability on average is better than many other parts of New Zealand, the area has had a substantial rise in housing needs, with a rapid increase in the Housing Register. Rents are also increasing in South Taranaki, putting pressure on household budgets. The rise in these key housing indicators signals a distributional impact, with lower income households and more vulnerable households increasingly struggling to access and maintain positive housing outcomes.

Supporting better housing outcomes, particularly for Māori and young people across Taranaki, and specifically in South Taranaki, will provide a stronger foundation from which Taranaki people and their whanau can base their lives. Stable housing outcomes are likely to have positive benefits for educational and employment outcomes as well.

South Taranaki's position as a community with higher average deprivation, and a higher unemployment rate, also underscore the need for greater support in the area. A lower average life expectancy, and poorer connection rates, further reinforce the need for change in South Taranaki.

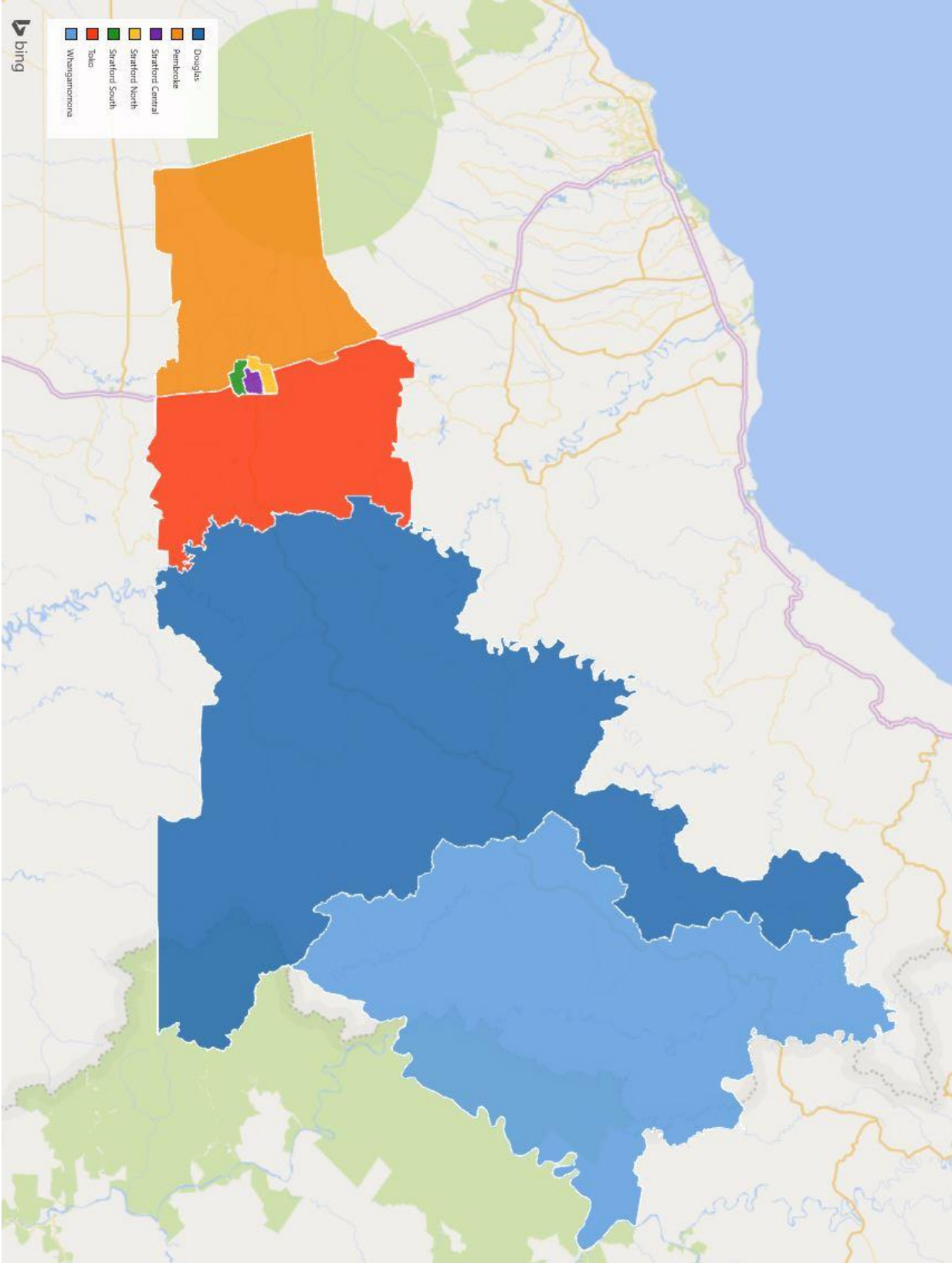
# Appendix 1: Maps of the areas

South Taranaki District, by SA2

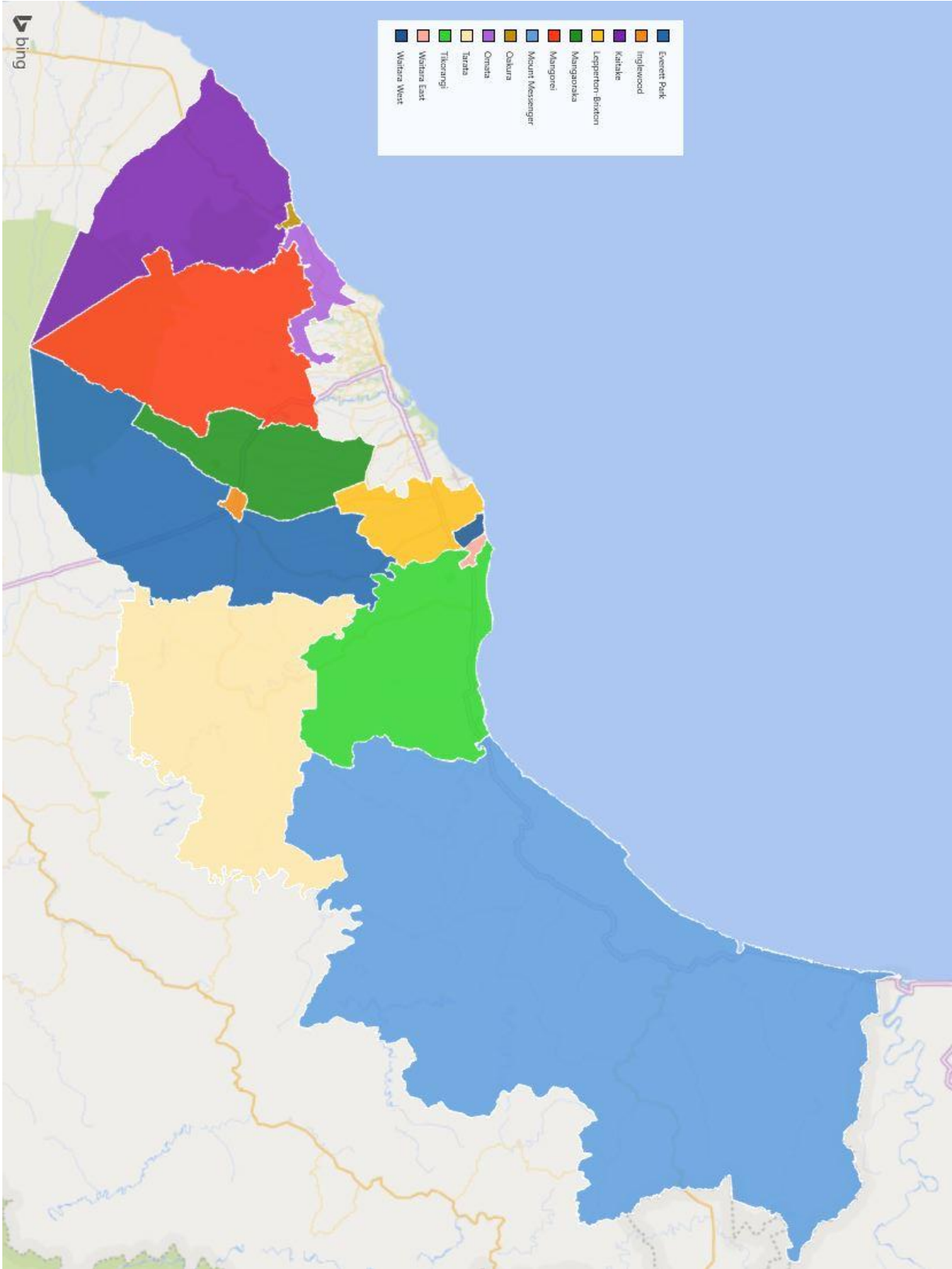




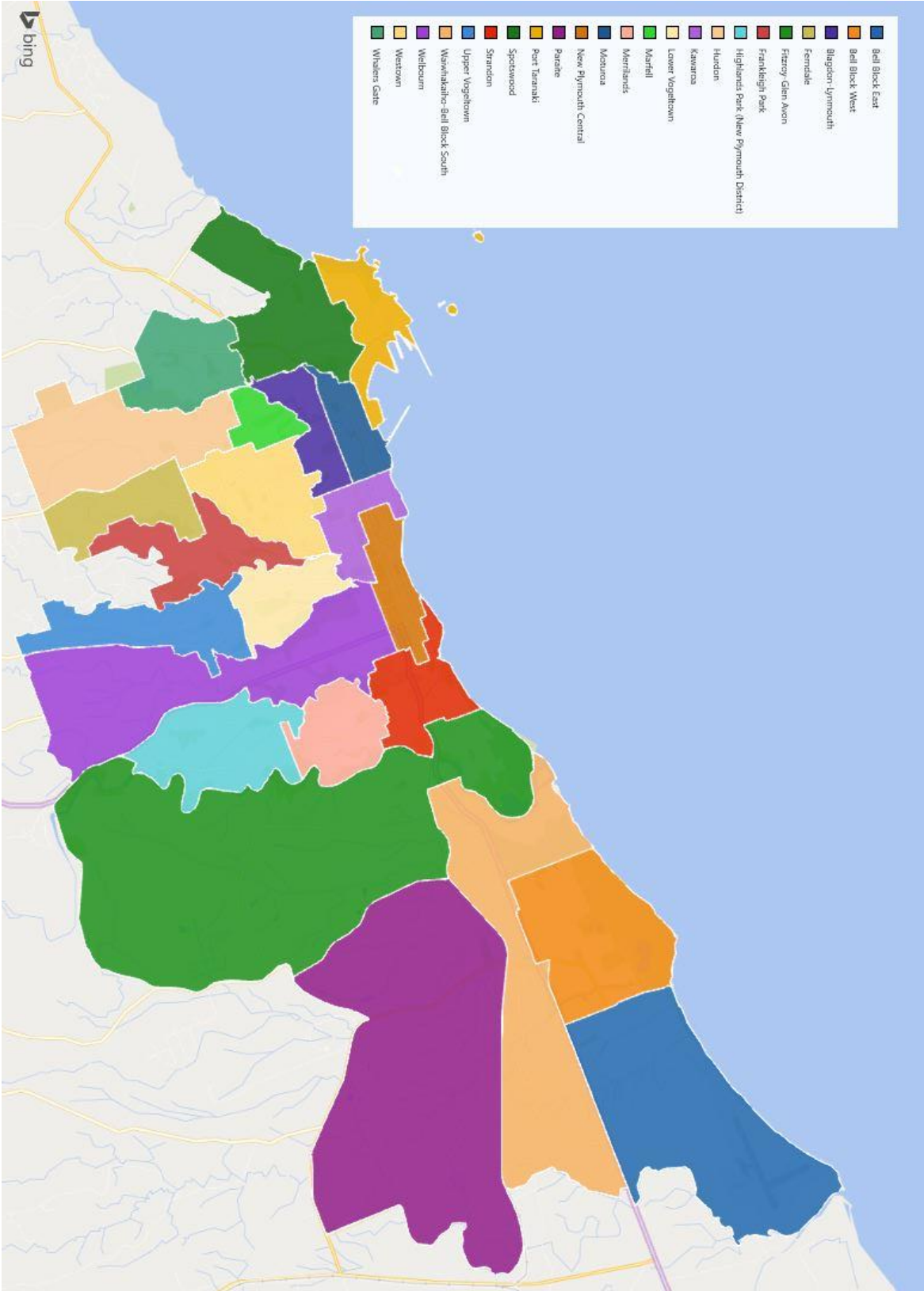
Stratford District, by SA2



New Plymouth District, by SA2 – outer areas



New Plymouth District, by SA2 – inner areas



## Appendix 2: SA2 Deprivation scores

Table 10

Rank	Area	TLA	Score
1	Patea	South Taranaki District	1,209
2	Marfell	New Plymouth District	1,163
3	Waitara West	New Plymouth District	1,161
4	Eltham	South Taranaki District	1,109
5	Waitara East	New Plymouth District	1,107
6	Opunake	South Taranaki District	1,102
7	King Edward Park	South Taranaki District	1,094
8	Stratford South	Stratford District	1,093
9	Hawera Central	South Taranaki District	1,087
10	Manaia-Kapuni	South Taranaki District	1,085
11	Whangamomona	Stratford District	1,081
12	Manutahi-Waitotora	South Taranaki District	1,072
13	Spotswood	New Plymouth District	1,057
14	Ramanui	South Taranaki District	1,049
15	Cape Egmont	South Taranaki District	1,047
16	Kaponga-Mangatoki	South Taranaki District	1,040
17	Westown (New Plymouth)	New Plymouth District	1,037
18	Stratford Central	Stratford District	1,036
19	New Plymouth Central	New Plymouth District	1,035
20	Blagdon-Lynmouth	New Plymouth District	1,034
21	Turuturu	South Taranaki District	1,025
22	Waiwhakaiho-Bell Block South	New Plymouth District	1,025
23	Lower Vogeltown	New Plymouth District	1,021
24	Stratford North	Stratford District	1,020
25	Mount Messenger	New Plymouth District	1,017
26	Douglas	Stratford District	1,015
27	Moturoa	New Plymouth District	1,011
28	Kawaroa	New Plymouth District	1,011
29	Merrilands	New Plymouth District	1,007
30	Welbourn	New Plymouth District	1,006
31	Normanby-Tawhiti	South Taranaki District	1,002
32	Taungatara	South Taranaki District	1,001
33	Mangawhio	South Taranaki District	998
34	Inglewood	New Plymouth District	994
35	Bell Block West	New Plymouth District	994
36	Okaiawa	South Taranaki District	993
37	Tarata	New Plymouth District	985
38	Frankleigh Park	New Plymouth District	980

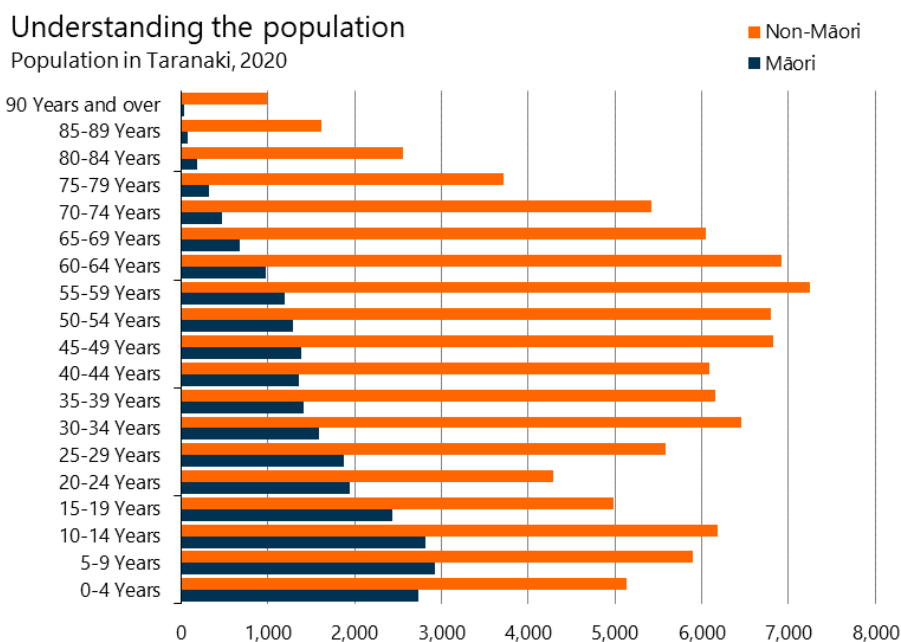
39	Toko	Stratford District	977
40	Ohangai	South Taranaki District	977
41	Te Roti-Moeroa	South Taranaki District	975
42	Pembroke	Stratford District	974
43	Upper Vogeltown	New Plymouth District	973
44	Fitzroy-Glen Avon	New Plymouth District	969
45	Tikorangi	New Plymouth District	960
46	Kaitake	New Plymouth District	959
47	Egmont Showgrounds	South Taranaki District	959
48	Lepperton-Brixton	New Plymouth District	959
49	Strandon	New Plymouth District	956
50	Bell Block East	New Plymouth District	955
51	Hurdon	New Plymouth District	953
52	Everett Park	New Plymouth District	952
53	Whalers Gate	New Plymouth District	935
54	Mangorei	New Plymouth District	925
55	Mangaoraka	New Plymouth District	924
56	Oakura (New Plymouth District)	New Plymouth District	916
57	Omata	New Plymouth District	914
58	Paraite	New Plymouth District	912
59	Highlands Park (New Plymouth)	New Plymouth District	908
60	Ferndale	New Plymouth District	907

# Appendix 3: Local Māori age profile

## Taranaki Region

Māori make up 20.6% of the population in Taranaki Region. The Māori population in Taranaki is a young one, with 50% of Māori being aged 24 and below.

Graph 23



Māori also compose a large amount of all young people in the overall population. Of the total population in the region, for those who are:

- aged 24 and below, 32.7% are Māori
- aged 25-49, 19.7% are Māori
- aged 60+, 9.1% are Māori

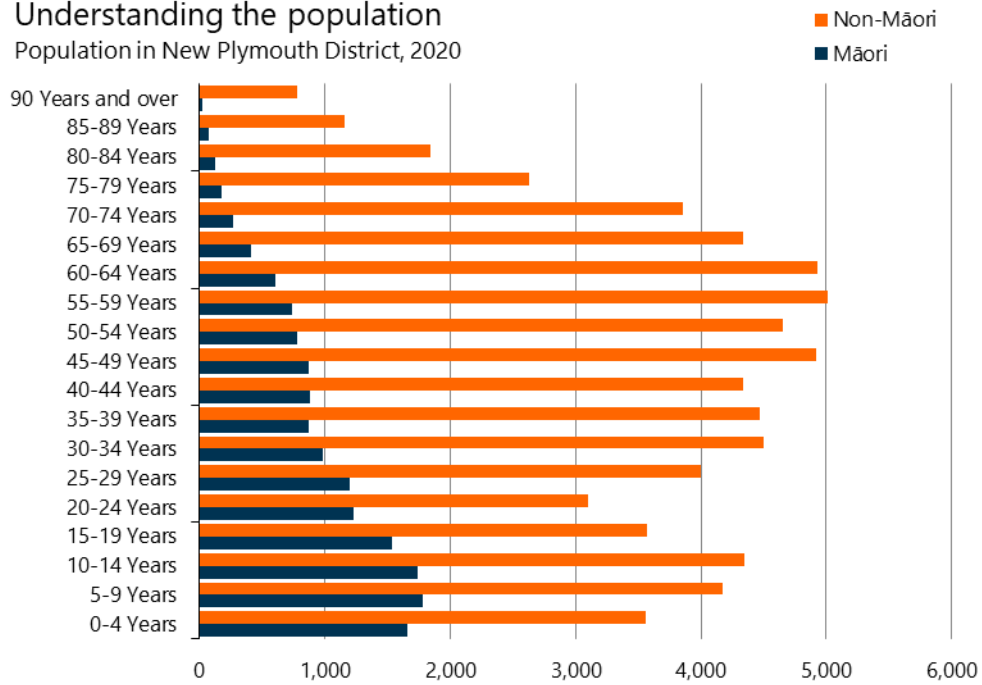
## New Plymouth District

Māori make up 18.5% of the population in New Plymouth District. The Māori population in New Plymouth is also young, with 49.5% of Māori being aged 24 and below.

Graph 24

### Understanding the population

Population in New Plymouth District, 2020



Māori still compose a large amount of all young people in the overall population. Of the total population in the district, for those who are:

- aged 24 and below, 29.7% are Māori
- aged 25-49, 17.8% are Māori
- aged 60+, 7.9% are Māori

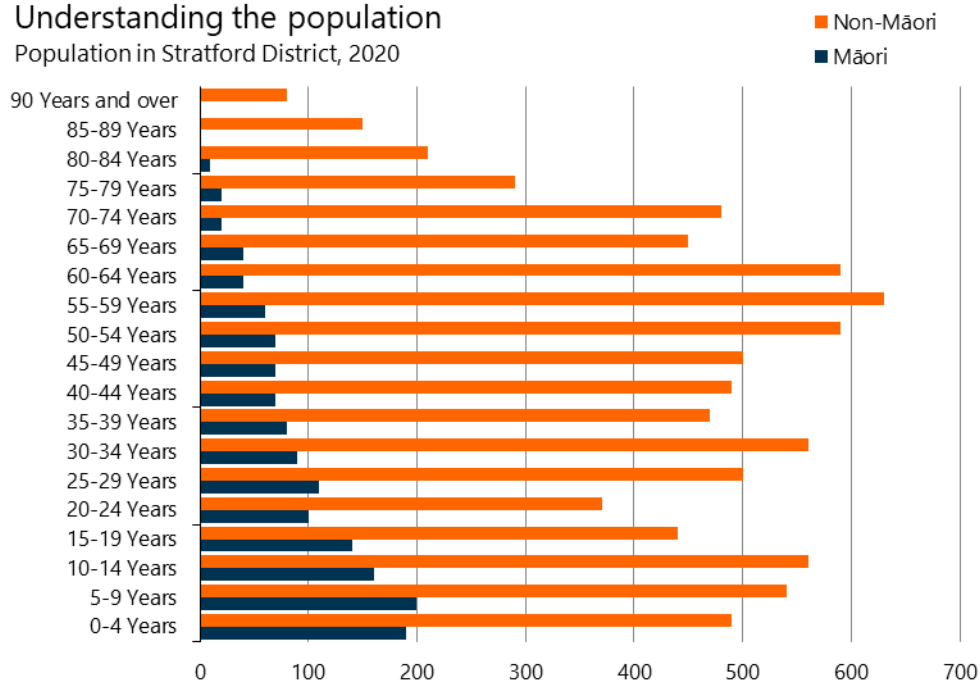
## Stratford District

Māori make up 14.9% of the population in Stratford District. Stratford’s Māori population again skews younger, with 53.7% of Māori being aged 24 and below.

Graph 25

### Understanding the population

Population in Stratford District, 2020



- Māori make up a smaller proportion of all age groups in Stratford. Of the total population in the district, for those who are:
  - aged 24 and below, 22.8% are Māori
  - aged 25-49, 12.7% are Māori
  - aged 60+, 5.1% are Māori

## South Taranaki District

Māori make up a sizeable 28.9% of the population in South Taranaki District. The Māori population is representative of the overall age composition for Māori in the region:

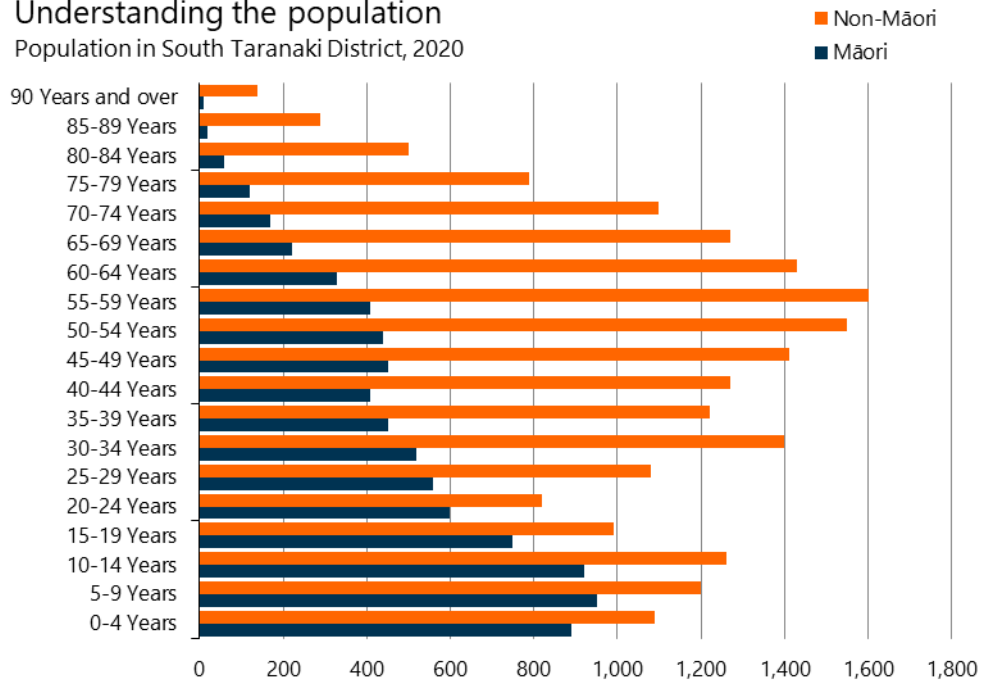
- 49.7% of Māori are aged 24 and below
- 28.9% of Māori are aged 25-49
- 7.2% of Māori are 65+



Graph 26

Understanding the population

Population in South Taranaki District, 2020



- Māori also compose much larger proportions of the young and old in South Taranaki District. Of the total population in the district, for those who are:
  - aged 24 and below, 43.4% are Māori
  - aged 25-49, 27.3% are Māori
  - aged 60+, 14.4% are Māori