

The cover features a teal background with a large, intricate circular Maori koru pattern. At the top, there is a decorative border with a repeating white and teal scrollwork motif. The title is centered in white text.

Te Rau Tira Wellbeing Outcomes Report 2021

Te Rau Tira Wellbeing Outcomes Report 2021

A report issued by the New Zealand Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission



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The New Zealand Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission was set up in February 2021 and works under the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission Act 2020. Our purpose is to contribute to better and equitable mental health and wellbeing outcomes for people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mhwc.govt.nz.

New Zealand Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (2021). **Te Rau Tira Wellbeing Outcomes Report 2021** – Wellington: New Zealand.

Te Rau Tira is a Te Tai Hauāuru concept and refers to a voyaging party of many different people, setting off on a journey. This publication signifies the Commission embarking on the journey of understanding wellbeing in Aotearoa.



Foreword

I'm proud to present **Te Rau Tira**, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission's first report on the wellbeing of people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

At the Commission, we believe that every community in Aotearoa should feel safe and secure and have the resources it needs to flourish. Communities and the people in them should be valued and have meaningful connections with the people around them, their culture and whakapapa. They should have hope for the future and sufficient tools and resources to overcome challenges and pursue their goals, dreams and aspirations.

However, not everyone has that security, hope, and sense of belonging. Distress is human, and it is normal for communities to experience difficulties from time to time. However, through a combination of history, personal circumstances, upbringing and persistent systems that marginalise and discriminate, many communities experience significantly poorer wellbeing. Since these barriers are part of the country's existing systems, greater wellbeing will not come from doing the same things we already do. We must recognise the causes of poor wellbeing, identify new ways of working in response, and seek to implement them.

He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka- a rough sea can still be navigated.

While we can see there is much work to do, we are hopeful.

In Aotearoa, we pride ourselves on having a strong sense of fair play and helping out one another in times of need. Many aspects of improved wellbeing, whether for mainstream or marginalised people, will arise only from collective action by society as a whole.

We have an opportunity here to show these values and strive for greater wellbeing for all. As the country navigates its way through the COVID-19 pandemic, it has an opportunity to make up for decades of underinvestment in wellbeing and pursue the "new normal" we want for Aotearoa. COVID-19 has shown us what is possible when everyone pulls together, works towards common goals and trusts one another to do what is best for the community.

We are calling on the Government to seize the opportunity presented by COVID-19 to accelerate investment in lifting the wellbeing of our communities. Lifting wellbeing requires more than a good health response. It requires a shift in public policy that reflects what wellbeing really means for communities in Aotearoa. This broader view of wellbeing is the foundation of this report.

On behalf of the Commission's Board, I am pleased to share this report, its findings and its vision to inspire better wellbeing for all.

Hayden Wano

Chair,
Mental Health and
Wellbeing Commission



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We are grateful to all those who participated in the definition phase of the **He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework** that guides this report, including the Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, the Expert Advisory Group (see members on our [website](#)) and the many organisations that provided input and feedback.

We thank the expert agencies that helped select and analyse the indicators for each domain, in particular Shea Pita and Associates, the Technical Advisory Group, Dr Julie Wharewera-Mika, Dr Julia Ioane, Ciaran Fox, Nicholson Consulting, and Kōtātā Insights.

We appreciate the input and views of those who helped turn the framework and data into this report. We are grateful to our expert reviewers Sharon Shea, Pamela Todd (Pamela Todd Tutorials), Marianne Elliot and Jess Berentson-Shaw (The Workshop Collective), our translator Tamahou McGarvey, and Ariki Creative, which designed this report.

We acknowledge tangata whenua, and we acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi, from which we draw our legitimacy, and which we aim to help uphold through this work. We thank Te Kāhui Tūroa, and in particular rangatira Mohi Apou for providing expertise in Te Tai Hauāuru knowledge and for helping us arrive at the name for this report.

Finally, we acknowledge and thank the people of Aotearoa, whose experience this report tries to share – particularly those whose wellbeing is limited by inequitable treatment in society, whose voices are not heard and whose needs are not met. We have drawn on their data and stories, and will use these to advocate for greater wellbeing for all, particularly for Māori, and communities identified in the He Ara Oranga inquiry, including Pacific people, former refugees and migrants, rainbow communities, trans people, people with variations of sex characteristics, disabled people, rural communities, veterans, prisoners, older people, young people, children in state care, children experiencing adverse events, and people with lived experience of mental distress or addiction (or both), and the whānau, families and people who support them.



Summary

Tū tangata mauri ora, flourishing together.

Flourishing together – this is our vision for wellbeing in Aotearoa. We at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission have the role of monitoring and advocating for improved wellbeing for people in Aotearoa, and the **He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework** provides the basis for doing that.

Our framework looks at wellbeing through 12 domains, each of which is supplemented by descriptions of what constitutes good wellbeing, from a Te Ao Māori perspective and also from a shared perspective, for everyone in Aotearoa.

Through data and stories from across the motu, this report highlights where wellbeing is good, and where it is not. The Māori perspective reveals a growing cultural and collective strength that should enable Māori to determine their own future. The shared perspective show that, for many people, Aotearoa is a great place to live, but we see large differences in wellbeing for marginalised populations. Furthermore, we know already that the burden of disease and the wider wellbeing effects of COVID-19 are being felt more heavily by some groups. These effects will become even more apparent over time.

The framework and its indicators are intended to be both enduring and to evolve so they remain relevant and reflect the best possible picture of wellbeing.

Our report relies on two social surveys – the General Social Survey⁽¹⁾ and Te Kupenga⁽²⁾ – for many of its indicators. Both surveys were last updated in 2018 and set our baseline view of wellbeing before **He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into mental health and addiction**⁽³⁾ and the Government's 2019 Wellbeing budget. This data is broken down for some populations and complemented by a range of sources, but it is not a complete picture. Rather, it provides a starting point for our immediate work, and a motivation for developing better information.

We can already see that more needs to be done, and done differently, to improve wellbeing. For these reasons, the report comments not only on baseline data, but also makes various recommendations. In particular, we would like to see, and will support, improvements that:

- cement gains Aotearoa has made through its COVID-19 response by adopting high-trust and collaborative community approaches
- simplify access to support offered by government agencies through a trauma-informed approach to customer service that makes interactions easier for people and brings services together

¹The glossary on page 40 lists definitions of key concepts and kupu Māori (Māori words) used in this report.

²<https://www.mhwc.govt.nz/our-work/assessing-and-monitoring-the-mental-health-and-addiction-sector/>



- co-ordinate cross-government engagement with communities to facilitate an inclusive, holistic approach to consultation that avoids consultation fatigue and is backed up by concrete responses to communities' concerns
- collect and make available quality data more frequently (a change that should also apply to Te Kupenga, a world-leading source of information for monitoring the wellbeing of Māori from a Māori perspective)
- align the **He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework** more closely with other agencies' social wellbeing surveys to improve the consistency of reporting, and of indicators and stewardship of policy.

To improve the wellbeing of all in Aotearoa, we will also:

- advocate for marginalised populations that would benefit most from improvements to mental health, addiction and wellbeing systems, including, as a priority, conducting research into, and offering advice on, the wellbeing of Māori and young people to inform work by government agencies
- advocate for action on the social and systemic factors that improve wellbeing as well as mental health and addiction services for those in need, including partnering with agencies at all levels
- collate, develop and share guidance on the barriers to improved wellbeing and conduct research and provide advice on the factors that can lift wellbeing for marginalised people.

Greater wellbeing for all will require concerted action in each of the framework's domains. It will take time for any investment in wellbeing to flow through to communities, and for this to be reflected in the data. We hope the framework in this report offers useful guidance to those setting and implementing public policy about where to direct investment.



Our role and framework

The establishment of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission was one recommendation to come out of He Ara Oranga, the inquiry into mental health and addiction. The inquiry recommended changes to how Aotearoa looks after people experiencing mental distress or addiction (or both) and advocated for a holistic approach to improving and promoting wellbeing. It also uncovered a widespread desire for major changes to the way mental health and addiction services were provided.

We came into being in February 2021 with a mandate to monitor wellbeing and contribute to better and equitable mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Our work is grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Guiding our work is the **He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework**, which was developed by the Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission in collaboration with communities and with guidance from various mental health, addiction and wellbeing experts. The framework contains 12 wellbeing outcomes, along with descriptions of what good wellbeing looks like and indicators for measuring these outcomes. Six domains are viewed from a Māori perspective and six from a shared perspective. See [page 8](#).

As well as being inspirational, it will be used to help us advocate for improvements to wellbeing. Importantly, it offers a unique view of wellbeing. No other framework incorporates tangata whenua and Tangata Tiriti perspectives. Our analysis shows:

- The indicators in the shared perspective are useful in understanding the wellbeing of people in Aotearoa.
- Shared perspective outcomes are just as important to Māori as non-Māori.
- Māori perspective outcomes are important in fully understanding the wellbeing of Māori.

The framework helps us understand the quality of people's lives. Another framework, He Ara Āwhina – Pathways to Support, will measure how services meet people's mental health and addiction needs. This is currently under development. We hope the frameworks of other agencies will eventually align with ours, particularly if they lack a Māori perspective on wellbeing.



Why we have two perspectives

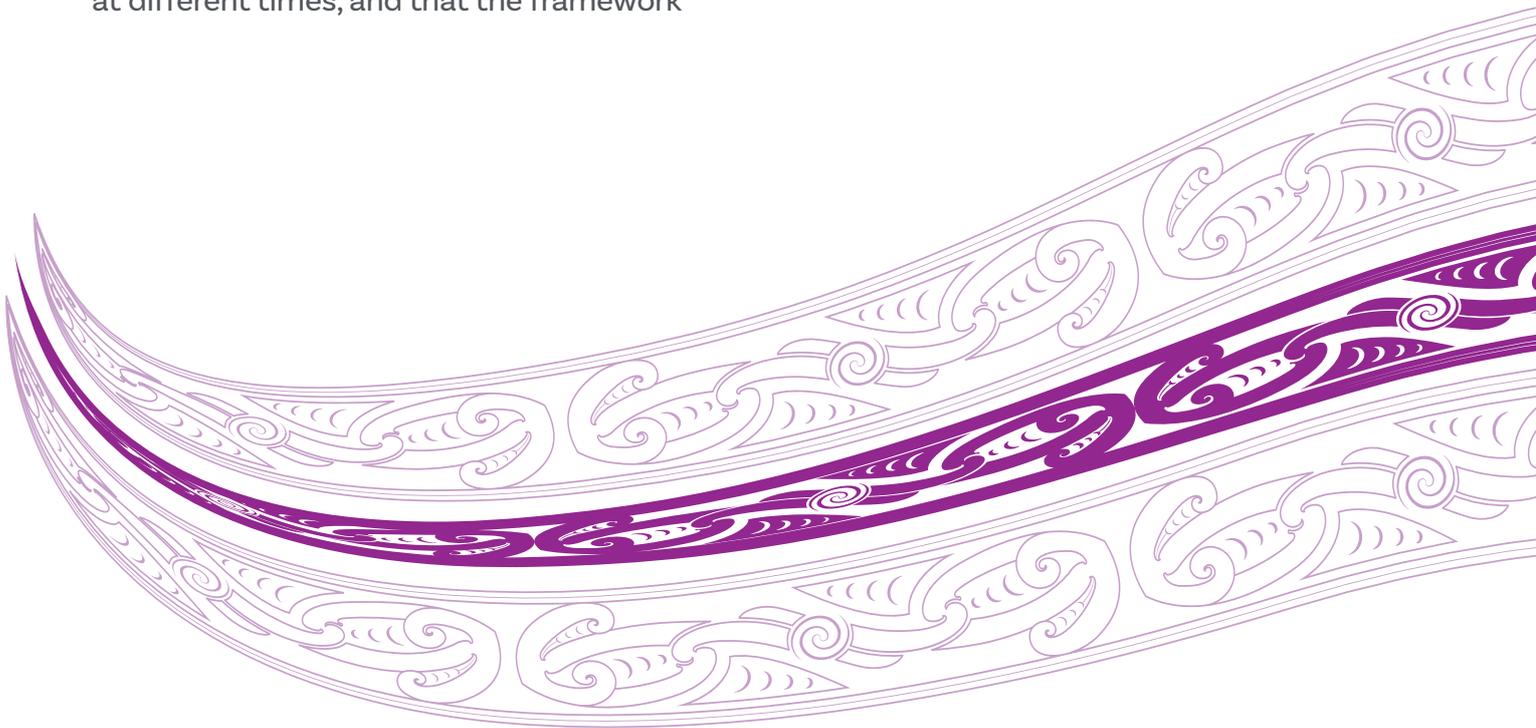
- 1** The Māori perspective acknowledges the unique position of Māori as tangata whenua and partners with the Crown via Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This reflects Māori rights as partners. The two layers reflect the role that tangata whenua and Tangata Tiriti have to play – working together to support improvements in the collective wellbeing of all people.
- 2** The shared perspective takes a whole-of-population view, but it also seeks to address the question of whether the country is improving equitable wellbeing outcomes for all, Māori and non-Māori.
- 3** The approach has wide sector support. It was recommended by our Expert Advisory Group as well as being supported by the many people we engaged with.

The Māori perspective and shared perspective should not be read as direct translations because they represent related concepts of wellbeing from different worldviews. The layers are additive: the shared perspective also applies to Māori, and potentially vice versa.

We recognise that different aspects of wellbeing are important to different people at different times, and that the framework

may miss or under-emphasise elements of wellbeing for some groups. For example, our engagement with Pacific communities suggests some elements of the Māori perspective will be more applicable for many Pacific people.

We will further develop the framework and indicators as we learn more about the elements of wellbeing.



Data sources and indicators

For the population indicators used to show wellbeing in this report, we considered almost 100 data sources and assessed more than 420 potential quantitative indicators against our domains and a suite of criteria developed by our technical advisory groups.⁽⁴⁾ We eventually selected 53 indicators and used 48 in this report.

The indicators are generally subjective (such as self-rated health) rather than objective measures (such as vaccination status) and therefore account for variation in people's experience of wellbeing. This also follows the holistic approach of the framework, which adopts the korowai (cloak) of wellbeing to benefit all people. Where we identified indicators as important for more than one domain, they are included in each domain.

We rely on two large social surveys – the General Social Survey and Te Kupenga – for many of our headline indicators. A summary of the indicators and these sources can be found in the appendix. Where the data included in this report is not from these surveys, the source is identified.

These surveys are run every two and five to 10 years respectively, meaning the headline indicators in this report are largely limited to 2018. In this way, the indicators show wellbeing before the inquiry and 2019 wellbeing budget.

It is worth noting that surveys often do not identify people in marginalised groups, such as rainbow communities and veterans, who can be hidden in standard ways of measuring outcomes. To bring our information more up to date, and to understand differences in wellbeing for different populations, the indicators are complemented by research and by the voices of communities with which we have engaged.

The picture we paint next of wellbeing in Aotearoa is not a complete or exhaustive description of wellbeing. Rather, it provides a starting point for improvement, a baseline for further measurement, a focus for our immediate work, and a motivation for developing better information.



Barriers to better outcomes

The barriers to wellbeing are complex. Although the data and research laid out in this report identify many barriers and the inequities they contribute to, we need time to build relationships with experts, including people with lived experience, to understand the root causes more deeply.

In certain cases, however, the causes of barriers are already clear. We know, for example, that transformation will require

large-scale, concerted effort that must be informed, if not designed, by those people currently most marginalised by existing systems and inequities. People in those communities need to be seen, heard, understood and supported. With that in mind, the final section of this report outlines key first steps we will take to achieve our vision of **tū tangata mauri ora – flourishing together**.



He Ara Oranga

Wellbeing Outcomes Framework

Wellbeing from a te ao Māori perspective



Tino rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake

Legal, human, cultural, and other rights of whānau are protected, privileged, and actioned.

Rights are in line with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori, which includes application of tikanga tuku iho.

Māori exercise authority and make decisions about how to flourish. Tino rangatiratanga is expressed in many self-determined ways.

Upholding whānau¹ rights is recognised as beneficial to Aotearoa.



Whakaora, whakatipu kia manawaroa

Whānau are culturally strong and proud - whānau flourish through the practical expression of ritenga Māori, tikanga Māori, and mātauranga Māori.

Māori express connection through awhi mai, awhi atu and the use of te reo me ōna tikanga every day - starting from infancy.

The beauty of Māori culture is celebrated and shared by all people in Aotearoa and globally.



Whakapuāwaitanga me te pae ora

Thriving whānau and equitable wellbeing are the norm.

Whānau have the resources needed to thrive across the course of their lives - especially mokopuna, who are unique taonga.

Whānau needs are met, and unfair and unjust differences are eliminated.

Whānau live in a state of wai ora, mauri ora, and whānau ora, which enables pae ora.



Whanaungatanga me te arohatanga

Whānau flourish in environments of arohatanga and manaaki.

Kaupapa and whakapapa whānau collectively flourish intergenerationally.

The active expression of strengths-based whakawhanaungatanga supports positive attachment and belonging.

Kotahitanga is realised.



Wairuatanga me te manawaroa

The mauri and wairua of whānau are ever-increasing, intergenerationally.

While whānau are already resilient, whānau skills, capabilities, and strengths continue to grow.

Taonga Māori are revitalised and nurtured - the unique relationship and spiritual connection Māori have to te taiao, whenua, whakapapa, and whānau is actively protected, enhanced, and strengthened.



Tūmanako me te ngākaupai

Whānau are hopeful.

Whānau feel positive about self-defined future goals and aspirations.

Whānau have the resources and capacity needed to determine and action preferred futures.

Figure 1. - He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework

¹ 'Whānau' is used here to include people, families, hapū, iwi, and communities.

Wellbeing from a shared perspective

Being safe and nurtured

People have nurturing relationships that are bound by kindness, respect, and aroha (love and compassion).

People of all ages have a sense of belonging in families and / or social groups. Where people experience disconnection, reconnecting or forming new positive connections is possible.

People feel safe, secure, and are free from harm and trauma.

People live in, learn in, work in, and visit safe and inclusive places.



Having what is needed

People, families, and communities have the resources needed to flourish.

This includes (among other things) enough money, financial security, access to healthy food, healthy and stable homes, safe physical activity, lifelong learning, creative outlets and time for leisure, including play for children.

People have the support and resources needed to maintain their health across their life course, and experience equity of health.

All people live in communities and environments that enable health and wellbeing.



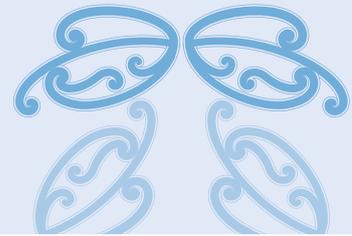
Having one's rights and dignity fully realised

All people have their rights fully realised and are treated with dignity.

People can fully participate in their communities and broader society, and live free from all forms of racism, stigma, and discrimination.

Rights framed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, other New Zealand law, and international commitments are fully met.

The negative impacts of colonisation and historic breaches of rights are recognised and addressed.



Healing, growth, and being resilient

People and families experience emotional wellbeing.

This includes having the skills, resources, and support needed to navigate life transitions, challenges, and distress in ways that sustain wellbeing and resilience.

People and families can experience and manage a range of emotions – celebrating each other's strengths and practising empathy and compassion – personal and collective.

Where adversity or trauma occurs, people experience support and belief in their capacity to heal and grow.



Being connected and valued

All people are valued for who they are and are free to express their unique identities.

People are connected to communities in ways that feel purposeful and respectful. People are meaningfully connected to their culture, language, beliefs, religion and / or spirituality, and can express important cultural values and norms.

People experience connection to the natural world and exercise guardianship of the environment.



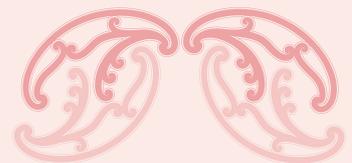
Having hope and purpose

People, families, and communities have a sense of purpose and are hopeful about the future.

There is respect for people's voices, perspectives, and opinions.

People make self-determined decisions about the future and have the resources needed to pursue goals, dreams, and aspirations.

Communities of belonging make their own choices, have resources, and are trusted to develop solutions for themselves.



The 'shared perspective of wellbeing' and 'te ao Māori perspective of wellbeing' should not be read as direct translations. They represent related concepts of wellbeing from different worldviews. The 'shared perspective of wellbeing' may also apply to Māori.



The Māori perspective shows a growing story of cultural and collective strength that can enable Māori to determine their own future.

The Māori perspective within the framework outlines what a strengths-based, whānau-focused sense of wellbeing looks like.

Despite inequities still to be addressed, there is reason to be positive.

Indicators from the shared perspective are just as important for Māori and non-Māori, but many indicators from the Māori

perspective also contribute to the overall life satisfaction of Māori.⁽⁵⁾ Māori who said it was important to them to be involved in Māori culture also reported their whānau doing well, or were able to find support in times of need, and had greater life satisfaction.

The shared perspective shows Aotearoa is a great place to live for many – but not for marginalised populations.

Aotearoa has an enviable position globally. It generally performs well in many measures such as equality, health, income, environment, education and employment participation.⁽⁶⁾ Most people are generally safe and free from oppression.

As the following pages show, people tend to experience good wellbeing. Governments have made significant investment to support improved wellbeing. There is much work to do, however, and there are persistent, large variations in wellbeing for different people and communities.

The Crown is far from meeting its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations. The data shows Māori do not experience the same rights to freedom, wellbeing, safety and prosperity as the rest of the population. On average, Māori report experiencing lower levels of trust in others, poorer financial wellbeing, more racial discrimination and lower levels of mental wellbeing. In the face of that, Māori report average life satisfaction only slightly lower than the general population.

Pacific people, too, report experiencing low levels of financial wellbeing and trust, and high levels of racial discrimination. However, Pacific people report high levels of social

connectedness and are seldom lonely. They also report good levels of general health, consistent with being a relatively young population on average.

People who access mental health and addiction services, disabled people, people who identify as not being heterosexual and people who had been in prison report low levels of life satisfaction. These groups also report experiencing poor mental and financial wellbeing. Disabled people and people who access mental health and addiction services were more likely to experience poor health. Former prisoners and people identifying as LGBTQIA+ were more likely to experience discrimination. LGBTQIA+ communities are also more likely to find it hard to be themselves.

This story is repeated for many marginalised communities, where information is available. Information is sorely lacking about some people, particularly those in rainbow communities, disabled and differently abled people, veterans and those in prison or state care. Without better information, we cannot paint an accurate picture of wellbeing or progress for these communities.



Wellbeing from a Māori perspective shows an increasingly positive story



Tino rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake

Tangata whenua have told us that expression and recognition of their rights to self-determination are necessary for collective wellbeing. We recognise that the history of Aotearoa, including the legacies of colonialism and lack of recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document, mean these rights have not been fully upheld. Greater wellbeing for Māori is seen when:

- Legal, human, cultural and other rights of whānau are protected, privileged and acted on.
- Rights are in line with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Ao Māori, including the application of tikanga tuku iho.
- Māori exercise authority and make decisions about how to flourish. Tino rangatiratanga is expressed in many ways.
- Upholding whānau rights is recognised as beneficial to Aotearoa.

Data indicating the presence of these facets of wellbeing can be found in tribal economic wellbeing, iwi connection and Māori political representation.

The Māori economy has been growing considerably, and Māori political voice, which is a form of collective rangatiratanga, is strong.

47%

of Māori adults
were registered
with their iwi

52%

of those eligible
voted in an iwi
election in the last
three years

60%

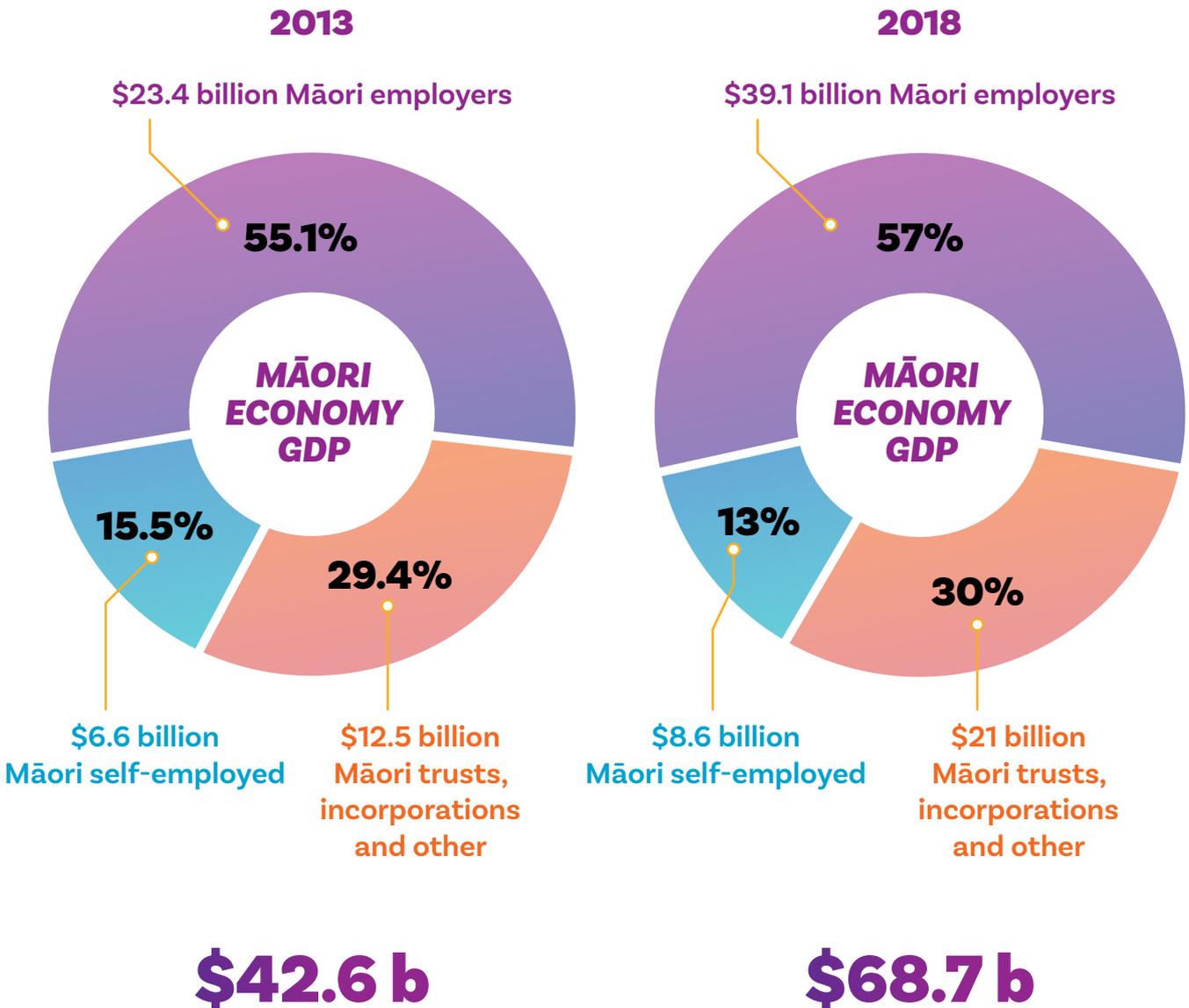
growth in the
Māori economy
between 2013
and 2018



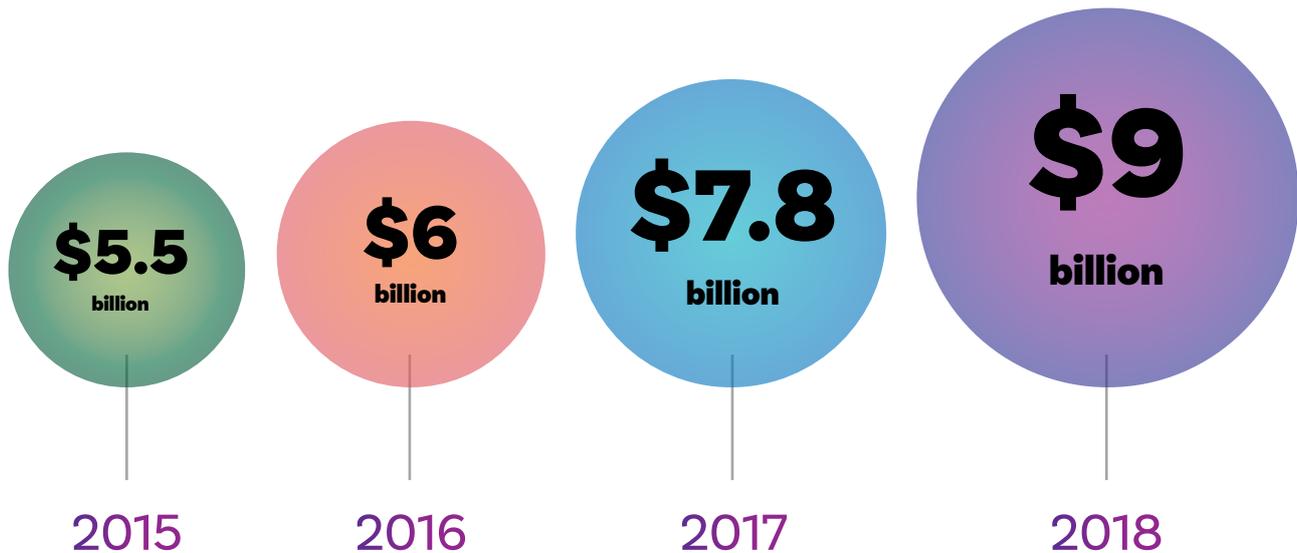
The Māori economy and the power of Māori collectives (such as iwi) have been growing, but there is room for greater engagement between these organisations and their people.

The Māori economy grew about 60% between 2013 and 2018.⁽⁷⁾

The value of settlement assets has increased substantially over the same period.⁽⁸⁾



Iwi post-settlement asset growth



In the face of enduring income and wealth inequality, Māori entities are investing in people and communities. Māori entities employ Māori workers⁽⁹⁾ and provide millions in grants and in-kind support for education, supporting kaumātua, healthcare and tangihanga. Māori entities also provide health, education, social and environmental services to communities, improving wellbeing and outcomes for Māori and non-Māori whānau.⁽⁷⁾

Almost half of Māori adults (47%) were registered with their iwi, and of those registered, 78% were eligible to vote in the last iwi elections. However, only just over half (52%) of those registered and eligible voted in an iwi election in the last three years.⁽²⁾

A high proportion of Māori report voting in recent national and local elections, and generally give a high rating for a sense of control over their lives.

In 2018, 84% of adults of Māori ethnicity or descent surveyed said they had voted in the previous (2017) general election, compared

with a national voter turnout of 79.8%. Of that group, 64% reported voting in a local election in the previous three years. Māori aged 55 and over were more likely to say they had voted in the previous general election (92%) compared with Māori in all other age groups.⁽²⁾

The number of Māori voting in the 2020 general election increased 15% compared with the 2017 general election. Data from the Electoral Commission shows 390,306 Māori voted in 2020 compared with 338,980 in 2017.

A quarter of the current Cabinet is Māori, and we note that the Government is considering whether to change the timing and frequency of the Māori Electoral Option, which could have a positive impact on how Māori express tino rangatiratanga.

At an individual level, Māori adults generally felt in control of their lives. On a scale from 0 to 10 (10 being highest), they reported an average rating of 7.9 for their sense of control over life events.⁽²⁾



Whakaora, whakatipu, kia manawaroa

Whānau flourish in environments where tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori are expressed freely, te reo Māori is adopted widely from infancy, and culture and language are shared and embraced across the generations.

By looking at how Aotearoa, and Māori in particular, view and engage with Māori language and culture, we can begin to understand how these are contributing to wellbeing for Māori.

We can see numerous signs of the expression of Māori culture.

53%

of NZ adults agree or strongly agree that government should encourage and support the use of Māori in everyday situations

45%

of Māori adults think it is very important or quite important to be involved in things to do with Māori culture

49%

of Māori adults think spirituality/taha wairua is very or quite important

81%

of Māori adults think it is important to be involved in things to do with Māori culture

Pride in, and connection to, culture, tikanga and whakapapa are strong, but there is room for greater connection.

About 45% of Māori adults said it was quite important or very important to be involved in things to do with Māori culture, and about 90% said it was at least a little important for them. Wāhine Māori were more likely to say it was very important.⁽²⁾

About 86% of Māori adults said they knew their iwi, the most common aspect of pepeha. Six out of 10 Māori adults had discussed and explored their whakapapa or family history in the previous 12 months. At some stage in their lives, 97% of Māori adults had been to a marae, and over half had done so in the previous year. Two-thirds of Māori adults said they knew their ancestral marae, and almost half said they had visited their ancestral marae in the previous 12 months.

Māori living in rural areas were more likely to have been to their marae tīpuna (if known) in the previous 12 months, compared with Māori in urban areas. A higher proportion of urban Māori who knew their marae tīpuna said they would like to have visited more often, compared with those who lived rurally.⁽²⁾



Despite a drop in te reo Māori speakers, the status of the language is increasing.

Strong cultural identity is related to te reo Māori proficiency and use, and can be a protective factor for Māori health and wellbeing.⁽¹⁰⁾ This can be seen, for example, in better mental health outcomes for rangatahi and protection against alcohol harm.^{(11) (12)}

Most Māori adults agree te reo Māori in daily life is important, and over half of all New Zealanders agree te reo Māori should be taught in primary school.⁽²⁾

The 2018 Census shows that the number of te reo Māori speakers has dropped. However, more than half of all Māori (57%) can understand some te reo Māori, and almost half (48%) can speak some. Wāhine Māori are more likely to express the importance of, and the ability to speak, te reo Māori.

Those learning te reo Māori most commonly picked it up from people around them or were teaching themselves.⁽²⁾

Opportunities to engage with tikanga and te reo Māori are becoming more common.

In July 2020, 294 schools had students enrolled in Māori medium education, where students are taught curriculum subjects in te reo Māori. Of these, 111 had all eligible students in Māori medium, and 143 also offered te reo Māori as a subject. Māori students are learning languages at rates higher than their peers based on OECD data.⁽¹³⁾ Te reo Māori is increasingly celebrated, with over one million people participating in the 2020 and 2021 Māori Language Moments organised by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, the Māori Language Commission.⁽¹⁴⁾

At the same time, there are now about 100 ACC-registered rongoā Māori practitioners. In the year since introducing rongoā support, ACC approved about 1,200 rongoā Māori claims and funded 7,245 sessions. One in four of those clients hadn't previously received other forms of ACC care or treatment before benefitting from rongoā.⁽¹⁵⁾

Mere

is a 25-year-old stay-at-home mum living in Hamilton. Mere recently had a traumatic birth with her second baby. Mere's partner works long hours to support their whānau and Mere's mum, Manaia, is staying with her to help. Mere is struggling with the trauma of the birth and taking care of her new-born and feels like she shouldn't be so tired and struggling. She wants to talk to someone about how she's feeling, but her mum said they were a prominent family in the community, that it would be embarrassing, and that the baby was healthy so she should be fine. Mere knows a friend from her local marae who went through a similar experience when she had her third baby. The two have found comfort in sharing their stories and are planning some activities to do together, like join a poi class that caters to māmā, tamariki and pēpi.





Whakapuāwaitanga me te pae ora

Whakapuāwaitanga me te pae ora is about Māori and their whānau living with good health and wellbeing in an environment that supports them to flourish and thrive as Māori throughout each stage of their life. There are three important aspects of pae ora: Wai Ora (healthy environments), Mauri Ora (healthy individuals) and Whānau Ora (healthy families). These are all interconnected to enable healthy futures and positive wellbeing outcomes for Māori, their whānau and generations to come.

Māori rate their own wellbeing highly across a range of health and wellbeing measures.

77%

of Māori rate their own health as excellent or very good

32%

of Māori secondary school leavers left school with a qualification at NCEA level 2 or above

77%

of Māori children live in households experiencing good material wellbeing

Māori are trying to thrive in the face of structural inequities and legacies of the past.

Māori life expectancy is improving.⁽¹⁶⁾ A greater than average reduction in Māori smoking rates is improving the health and wellbeing of current and future generations. Continuing progress in addressing the factors that increase smoking, hazardous drinking and obesity among Māori will further improve health and wellbeing.⁽¹⁷⁾

Less than a quarter of Māori adults experience poor mental wellbeing,⁽²⁾ but inequities in the economic and societal factors that cause mental distress mean Māori use of mental health and addiction services is higher than the rest of the population. This correlates with deprivation: people living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be seen by mental health and addiction services than people living in the least deprived areas.⁽¹⁸⁾

Most Māori children live in households experiencing good material wellbeing, but child poverty is a serious concern for the 20% of children experiencing material hardship.⁽¹⁹⁾

Rangatahi Māori with a disability or chronic health condition were more likely to report higher rates of mental health concerns than other groups. Only 49% of rangatahi Māori in this group reported good wellbeing, more than half reported symptoms of depression (53%), and almost half (45%) reported serious thoughts of suicide in the last year.⁽²⁰⁾

There has been growth in Māori education attainment rates in recent years, but rangatahi are still leaving school with lower-level qualifications. Lifting levels of educational achievement across all levels may help to reduce inequities and eventually lift wellbeing outcomes. Aspiring to a better education has been shown to contribute to wellbeing among Māori students. The Tertiary Education Commission has recently given institutions 10 years to address persistent disparities in success rates for Māori and Pacific students. The Ministry of Education is fostering the growth of kura Kaupapa.

Despite these recent improvements, the undervaluing of Māori knowledge and culture, discrimination and underinvestment in Māori education mean Māori are underrepresented in higher-income groups, have lower representation in management and higher paid or specialised occupations, and experience higher rates of unemployment.⁽²¹⁾ These outcomes harm wellbeing in the long term.



Whanaungatanga me te arohatanga

The wellbeing of the individual is tied to the wellbeing of whānau.⁽²²⁾ Expressing strengths-based whakawhanaungatanga supports positive attachment and belonging, with whānau flourishing in environments of arohatanga and manaaki. Whānau and community relationships are known to be protective for Māori experiencing mental health challenges,⁽¹¹⁾ and are likely to protect against elements of inequity that affect wellbeing.⁽⁵⁾

The indicators of whānau wellbeing are also important predictors of overall life satisfaction. These are related to whānau as a whole, including whānau wellbeing, whānau getting along with each other, and finding someone to support them in times of need.

Māori report their whānau getting along well, have a high degree of contact with others, and are regularly involved in acts of manaakitanga with others.

85%

of whānau think their whānau get along well together

74%

of Māori think their whānau are doing well

72%

of Māori find it easy to find someone to support them in times of need

65%

of Māori felt they had the right amount of whānau support in times of need

Whānau rate their own wellbeing highly and are getting along well.

Nearly three-quarters of Māori adults rated the wellbeing of their whānau highly in 2018.⁽²⁾ Most Māori adults (85%) said their whānau get along well or very well with one another. Survey data shows Māori were significantly more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction when they thought their whānau were doing well and getting along with one another (86%) compared with those who rated their whānau wellbeing lower (60%). Those who thought their whānau were doing well were also 35% more likely to cope better with life's stresses.⁽¹⁰⁾

Whanaungatanga remains high, and whānau continue to manaaki others and support kaupapa.

Most Māori adults report having recent face-to-face contact (85%) with whānau not living with them, and even more report non-direct contact (95%). Around two-thirds (65%) felt they had about the right amount of contact with whānau who did not live with them.⁽²⁾

Most Māori (61%) find it easy or very easy to find someone to support them in times of need and to find cultural support.⁽⁵⁾ They also said it was easy to find others to help them with everyday tasks, and this became increasingly so for Māori after they reached 55. Almost all (94%) Māori respondents (surveyed in 2015 and 2016) agreed or strongly agreed they could consistently rely on a friend or whānau for support if they needed it.⁽¹⁰⁾

Having strong family relationships, good social support and being able to manaaki others may help protect Māori from social isolation or loneliness.⁽¹⁰⁾ Over a third of Māori adults reported helping others through a school, church, sports club or organisation (40%), looking after tamariki who lived in their household (40%) or another household (35%), helping with cooking, cleaning, gardening, repairs or any other housework for someone who didn't live in the same household (41%).⁽²⁾

Whānau support is recognised as being important by and for tamariki and rangatahi Māori facing challenges in their lives.⁽²³⁾ They emphasise the importance of spending time with their whānau, and needing their whānau to be supported, so their whānau could then support them. Whānau support for rangatahi was evident in the challenges presented to education by the COVID-19 pandemic, with Māori students (56%) more likely to feel that someone in their home had become more interested in their learning following the 2020 lockdown, compared with 44% of Pākehā students.⁽²⁴⁾

Caleb

is eight years old and lives at home on the Kāpiti Coast with his mum, dad and two older sisters. Caleb's dad has chronic asthma and is so sick at times that he has to go to hospital. Caleb worries about his dad a lot.

When his dad is in hospital, Caleb is scared he may not get better and may never come home. Thinking about this makes Caleb cry. His sisters sing waiata they learn at kura kaupapa and tell him stories when this happens.

Caleb's sisters have been talking about visiting their Koro, who lives up north. Last time they were there, Koro took Caleb fishing and to his marae, where he told Caleb stories about his tīpuna. Caleb dreams of him and his dad being warriors, like their ancestors.





Wairuatanga me te manawaroa

Wairuatanga or wairua and connection to the environment and caring for it are important aspects of Māori culture, both intrinsically and as a way of connecting to and expressing culture. The data shows that wairua remains important to Māori. It also shows a high interest in caring for the environment among Māori. That said, how Māori practise kaitiakitanga varies. Both of these aspects demonstrate manawaroa or resilience that is culturally guided and defined.

Wairua remains important to Māori.

About 65% of Māori adults considered wairua was very important to somewhat important to their lives.⁽²⁾

Māori value the natural environment, and express kaitiakitanga in a variety of ways.

86%

of Māori report
knowledge of
their own iwi

55%

of Māori report
knowledge of
their own hapū

7%

of Māori are
involved in iwi/
hapū environmental
planning or
decision-making

More than 80% of Māori said looking after the environment was important or very important, while 70% of Māori adults said the health of the natural environment was very important.⁽²⁾ Those aged 45 and over were more likely to rate this as very important.

Nearly all Māori adults (96%) said their households recycled packaging, such as cans, bottles and plastic. This was the most common household environmental practice.⁽²⁾ More than 30% took part in activities to clean up their environment in the last year, such as waterway restoration, tree planting, pest control or beach clean-ups. Almost half of rural Māori reported participating in environmental clean-up activities.⁽²⁾

Only 7% of Māori are involved in environmental planning or decision-making relating to the environment.⁽²⁾ Elders and rural Māori with a connection to the land appear most likely to be involved in such decision-making.

In all, 58% of Māori grew their own food, 41% gathered traditional Māori food and 17% gathered other materials for use in traditional practices. Māori agri-businesses are growing, and their involvement in land and water management practices is increasingly important.⁽²⁾





Tūmanako me te ngākaupai

For whānau to experience wellbeing, they need to be confident that life will continue to improve for them and their mokopuna. Wellbeing will be improved if whānau are hopeful, feel positive about self-defined goals and aspirations, and have the resources and capacity needed to determine and act on their preferred futures.

While the future may be hard to predict, we can try to understand how Māori feel about their whānau now, and whether they are on a path to greater wellbeing in the future.

Māori are mostly positive about their whānau wellbeing, but they are less likely to consider that things are getting better for their whānau.

34%

of Māori adults think things are getting better for their whānau

Nearly three-quarters of Māori adults rated the wellbeing of their whānau highly at 7 or above on a scale from 0 to 10 (10 being highest).⁽²⁾

Research in 2018 shows Māori adults generally felt satisfied with their lives. Māori reported a mean overall life satisfaction rating of 7.8. Similarly, Māori adults generally felt in control of their lives, reporting a mean rating of 7.9 for their sense of control over life events.⁽²⁾

Although 34% of Māori adults considered things were getting better for their whānau, about 10% thought things were getting worse. Most, however, considered things were about the same. Māori adults under 45 were markedly more hopeful than those over 45.⁽²⁾

The economic wellbeing of iwi has increased substantially for iwi that have settled Te Tiriti o Waitangi claims.

As of August 2018, 73 Te Tiriti settlements had been passed into law.⁽²⁵⁾ The total value of all finalised settlements is \$2.24 billion – a relatively small amount in terms of government spending, or the total value of land previously held by Māori.⁽⁸⁾

Furthermore, almost 50% of the total Māori asset base is invested in “climate-sensitive” primary industries, such as forestry, agriculture, fishing and tourism.⁽²⁶⁾

Despite the discrimination they face, rangatahi still often express hope and confidence.

Rangatahi Māori face, on average, greater poverty and ethnic discrimination than non-Māori students, which in turn affects their mental health, sexual health and ability to access services they need. It also contributes to substance abuse.⁽²⁷⁾ Rangatahi Māori also report that these factors affect their relationships with whānau and can limit their hopes for the future.

That said, a majority of tamariki and rangatahi (72%)⁽²⁸⁾ in state care said they expected to have a good life when they got older, and four out of ten said they “definitely” expected to do so.



Wellbeing from a shared perspective shows some New Zealanders have much better wellbeing than others



Being safe and nurtured

Being safe and nurtured is crucial to wellbeing. Relationships and environments in which people feel aroha and are cared for and respected are essential to support health, learning and development, protect from harm and promote wellbeing. Research also tells us that having social support, trust in others and feeling safe help increase life satisfaction.⁽⁵⁾

Most people in Aotearoa have social connections and feel safe and secure.

66%

reported high levels of trust in most other people

59%

feel their quality of life is not affected by worrying about crime

83%

reported feeling lonely none or a little of the time in the last four weeks

68%

of 15-year-olds feel like they belong at school

Trust levels are generally high, but variations reflect the experience of different populations.

Although the overall level of trust in others tells us most people feel safe and secure, Māori and Pacific people report significantly lower levels of trust.⁽¹⁾ Inequities created, in part, by the racism and discrimination in institutions are reflected in the far greater distrust Māori have for Parliament, health and education systems, police, courts and the media compared with other ethnic groups.⁽¹⁾ That said, the outcomes under tino rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake (page 11) highlight some improvements in representation and involvement in institutions.

On the other hand, former refugees and migrants tend to have higher trust in others,⁽¹⁾ which may well be linked to their experiences and expectations before and following immigration. However, the fear of crime is higher for Asian and Pacific people than the rest of the population and increases the longer they are in Aotearoa.⁽¹⁾⁽²⁹⁾



Not all children and young people feel safe and secure, or free from harm and trauma.

Adverse childhood events affect more than half of the children in Aotearoa before they reach school age, with higher rates for Māori.⁽³⁰⁾ The most prevalent adverse event is child abuse, and it is likely such abuse is significantly under-reported.⁽³¹⁾ Some populations, such as disabled children and young people⁽³²⁾ and children in care,⁽³³⁾ experience abuse at far higher rates.

A sense of belonging at school is fundamental for student wellbeing. Most 15-year-old students have positive peer relationships and a sense of belonging at school.⁽³⁴⁾ However, there are serious inequities for Māori, Pacific, Asian, rainbow and disabled young people, who report higher rates of social isolation and bullying at school.⁽²⁷⁾

Loneliness permeates different populations, despite high rates of social connectedness.

Most people report having social connections and not feeling lonely, although experiences of this vary. Disabled people, for example, report lower levels of social connectedness and high loneliness.⁽⁵⁾ Having social connections does not necessarily stop loneliness. People in rainbow communities report high rates of social connection, but also being the loneliest.⁽⁵⁾

COVID-19 has amplified existing strengths, challenges and inequities.

People have generally been resilient during the various COVID-19 alert levels, with reports of a greater sense of community and increased trust in science, politicians and police. However, some people experienced poor wellbeing, and young people in particular reported high levels of psychological distress and more family violence during lockdowns. People with a health condition or disability were less likely to report boosts in community connection.⁽³⁵⁾

Sam

is 13 years old and knows that their body is different somehow. They feel isolated and ashamed – and no one in their family talks about it. Bodies like theirs are not even discussed in science or sex education class. Along with the teasing and bullying, they feel like a freak at school, and that they don't belong at all.

Sam shared these feelings and worries with their Aunty Jo, who they feel comfortable with. Aunty Jo asked lots of questions and asked if they could go see a new doctor. The doctor explained that their body was normal – just a different type of normal. Their body type even has a name. It's one of many intersex variations, or variations in sex characteristics. The doctor told them about online groups where Sam can chat to other people with intersex variations, just like theirs.

Aunty Jo told Sam stories of ancestors who were just like them – and helped them realise that they were part of the community that is special. These stories made Sam feel so much more comfortable to acknowledge “I am who I am”. They realised that though they were different, that there have been people like them since forever. They felt so relieved, and Aunty Jo said they would talk to their mum and dad.





Having what is needed

We know the right level of support and resources is necessary to maintain wellbeing throughout a person's life. The environment in which people and communities thrive must also enable health and wellbeing.

We can measure and monitor people's access to resources that make a difference to their wellbeing throughout their life, and their ability to participate in activities and access services in a way that is equitable and meets their unique needs.

Most people in Aotearoa report good health and a high standard of living.

87%

of adults rate their health status as good, very good or excellent

10%

of people live in a crowded household

81%

of people score 7/10 or higher for life satisfaction

66%

of households felt their income is enough or more than enough for their everyday needs

Although Aotearoa is a comparatively wealthy country, real inequities mean fewer life opportunities for some populations.

Most people report being in good health, most say they have adequate income, and most say they have either "affordable" or "not unaffordable" housing. Former prisoners and Pacific people, though, reported much lower levels of financial wellbeing.⁽¹⁾ Disabled children are twice as likely to live in households in material hardship than non-disabled children (20% compared with 10%).⁽³⁶⁾ Māori and Pacific children are more than twice as likely to experience material hardship (20% and 26% respectively) than children in New Zealand European households (9%).⁽⁶⁷⁾

Education participation rates are an important indicator for future employment and income outcomes during a person's life. Māori participation rates in tertiary education are lower than non-Māori (20,376 compared with 32,797 per 100,000 people).⁽³⁷⁾ As shown under tino rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake (page 10), Māori organisations and communities are investing in better educational and other outcomes for Māori. People with disabilities are more likely to be poorly served by, or have poorer experience of, formal education. This results in lower levels of academic achievement and qualifications, and lower levels of income and employment over a person's lifetime.⁽³⁸⁾



These inequities lead to poorer outcomes for marginalised populations.

People with lower incomes tend to have worse outcomes across a range of domains, with poverty known to affect adult mental health, happiness and life satisfaction.⁽³⁹⁾ Unmet general practitioner care due to cost is a more significant factor for Māori than non-Māori adults (20.5% compared with 13.2%). Unfilled prescriptions due to cost are more than double the rate for Māori compared with non-Māori (12.7% compared with 6%). Unmet need for adult dental care is high for the general population, and even higher for Māori (41.5% for non-Māori and 53.7% for Māori).⁽⁴⁰⁾

Almost four in 10 Pacific people are living in a crowded house.⁽¹⁾⁽⁴¹⁾ Māori and Pacific children were more affected by household crowding than children of other ethnic groups.

However, inter-generational families living in the same household present some benefits of shared knowledge and experience, childcare, warmth and culture. The combined effect of low income and crowded housing may have a greater negative effect on wellbeing than crowded housing alone.⁽⁴²⁾

COVID-19 impacts are worse for those who are already marginalised.

During the 2020 lockdown, employment rates fell most for those on lower annual incomes, with people earning under \$30,000 most likely to lose their jobs.⁽⁴³⁾ Pacific and Asian people were far more likely to become unemployed during lockdown than New Zealand Europeans, who were least likely to lose their jobs.⁽⁴³⁾ Unemployment among disabled people aged between 15 and 64 increased from 8% in June 2020 to 11% in December 2020.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Non-Māori ethnic minority groups experienced poorer outcomes relating to job satisfaction and sense of value in their organisation at alert levels 2 and 3 compared to before the pandemic. Women and those with a health condition, disability or mental health diagnosis reported poorer employment and financial outcomes.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Engaging with the arts is important to wellbeing for many populations and often involves people connecting with their culture.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Māori, Pacific people, disabled people and Asians all report high levels of participation in the arts and cultural activities. They also report such participation as being beneficial to their wellbeing and reducing isolation even during COVID-19 lockdowns.⁽⁴⁷⁾ People with disabilities increased their use of online arts and leisure activities and maintained their sense of connectedness.⁽⁴⁸⁾





Having one's rights and dignity fully realised

Wellbeing under this domain means being able to fully participate in communities and broader society and live free from all forms of racism, stigma and discrimination. The opposite of this is experiencing discrimination or racism, with one's rights inhibited by the actions and attitudes of others.

Most people do not report experiencing discrimination or racism, but many marginalised groups do.

17%

of people reported experiencing discrimination in the last year

8%

of people reported experiencing racism in the last year

Racism and discrimination run deep through the history of Aotearoa and are still highly prevalent today.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The drivers of racism and discrimination are broad and deeply embedded in institutions, society and individual thinking, and cause many inequities, as well as systemic disadvantage and trauma, for individuals, whānau and communities throughout the generations.

Most marginalised groups our data describes reported experiencing discrimination, particularly former prisoners and people in rainbow communities.⁽⁵⁾

Discrimination is widespread and comes in different forms.

Over 200 different ethnic minorities are represented in Aotearoa,⁽⁵⁰⁾ but the views of some communities are often dismissed. About a third (32%) of new migrants said they felt they had been treated unfairly since arriving in Aotearoa because they had come from overseas.⁽⁵¹⁾ The experiences of minority ethnicities in seeking employment or housing and feeling safe are more likely to be negative than for Pākehā.

A recent study showed New Zealanders are most positive about migrants from the United Kingdom (61%) and Australia (57%) and less positive about refugees and migrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands.⁽⁵²⁾

Despite being tangata whenua, most Māori (93%) felt racism had an impact on them daily and almost all (96%) said that racism was a problem for their wider whānau.⁽⁵³⁾

Research shows that racism and unconscious bias in schools contributes to inequality, along with living in lower socio-economic households and communities. UNICEF ranked Aotearoa 33rd out of 38 wealthy countries in terms of educational equality. Aotearoa has higher rates of bullying at school than the average in comparative countries.⁽³⁴⁾

Online hate speech is increasing and is experienced more among Māori, Pacific people, Asian people, rainbow communities and disabled people than the general population.⁽⁵⁴⁾



Discrimination tends to be worse for people who identify with several marginalised communities.

Older Māori experience 2.5 times higher rates of coercion (being forced to do things they don't want to do) than non-Māori older people, and higher rates of elder abuse in all categories.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Among trans and non-binary people, Asian and disabled people are more likely to be discriminated against.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Better understanding, visibility and access to supporting environments can lessen the impact of discrimination.

Significant influences for change include increased critical awareness and responsiveness to racism among young people, increasing recognition of diversity in Aotearoa, inter-ethnic relationships, growing awareness about former refugee and migrants' skills and contributions to workforce shortages, and a growing recognition of the importance of te reo Māori.⁽⁵²⁾

Fen

is a 65-year-old Chinese female living in Nelson. Fen came to New Zealand to care for her two grandchildren five years ago. Fen loves taking care of her grandchildren but cannot speak English and is struggling to be understood and make friends. It is hard for Fen to ask English-speaking people questions, like the price of something in a store or directions when she wants to go somewhere. This frustrates Fen, who is tired of people speaking loudly in her face or laughing at Fen and her grandchildren. Fen has been feeling sick lately and must take her son or daughter-in-law to the doctor with her, so they can interpret what she says. This embarrasses Fen, so she has stopped seeing the doctor and won't ask for help. Fen is feeling lonely and homesick, so has been telling her grandchildren stories about their home back in China and teaching them Mandarin.



Healing, growth and being resilient

Wellbeing requires having the right skills and resources to navigate life's transitions and manage challenges and distress in positive ways. Strengthening resilience is identified as a priority for the World Health Organisation Health 2020, European policy framework for health and wellbeing, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.⁽⁵⁸⁾ They note that resilience must be strengthened at the individual, community and system level.

Having the right supports available to whānau, families and communities to navigate their way out of adversity or trauma is vital. Such supports allow rebuilding and growth to happen. Understanding the circumstances of others and exercising compassion and empathy towards those experiencing trauma help to build a stronger, caring community response. We have seen the importance of this in the country's response to the Christchurch and Kaikōura earthquakes and more recently the mosque attacks in Christchurch.



Most people in Aotearoa report positive mental and family wellbeing and access to personal support when needed.

78%

of people report high positive mental wellbeing

69%

say it would be easy or very easy to talk to someone if they felt down or a bit depressed

21%

of people have their drinking identified as hazardous

82%

of people rate their family wellbeing highly

Some populations experience far worse mental wellbeing outcomes and greater challenges as a result of inequities in our society.

Most people in Aotearoa experience positive mental wellbeing.⁽¹⁾ Former refugees and migrants, older Māori and Māori in rural communities reported above average levels of positive mental wellbeing. However, mental health service users, disabled people and rainbow communities reported low levels of positive mental wellbeing.

People in prison experience high rates of mental distress and substance use (91% had a lifetime diagnosis), as well as high rates of undetected or under-treated comorbidity.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Prisoners experience high rates of recent diagnosis for a range of disorders, with post-traumatic stress disorder four times higher than in the general population.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Young people in youth justice facilities face similar challenges, with most having experienced at least two traumatic events already in their lives.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Australian evidence shows that young people in youth detention centres are about 10 times more likely to have a psychiatric disorder than youth in general.⁽⁶⁰⁾

People belonging to several marginalised populations can face extra challenges.⁽²⁰⁾ Young people with a disability or chronic health condition report less positive family, school and community contexts than those without a disability or chronic health condition. Those who are also Māori, Pacific or part of rainbow communities generally face a greater total number of inequities and higher levels of challenge. Less than half of rangatahi Māori with a disability or chronic health condition and barely a quarter of rainbow young people with a disability or chronic health condition reported good wellbeing.⁽²⁰⁾



Services and appropriate support can be hard to access for many communities that need help most.

There has been a rapid rise in youth psychological distress and suicide rates over the last decade, with poor mental health for youth persistently inequitable and worsening.⁽⁶¹⁾ About a fifth of students (19%) report difficulty getting help for feeling bad or having a hard time in the previous year.⁽²⁷⁾ Most young people felt they received the support they needed when facing a difficult time (68%), but nearly a third did not (32%), and Māori and Pacific youth were less likely to have a support network.⁽⁶²⁾

Research shows almost everyone living rurally experiences stress or anxiety from time to time (93%) but they are much less likely to consider talking to a health professional if they experience stress or anxiety. Half find it difficult to talk about it with others.⁽⁶³⁾

Some people's levels of stress and anxiety have risen since COVID-19.

Psychological distress and poor wellbeing were reported at higher levels during lockdown than usual, particularly for young people.⁽³⁵⁾ Following lockdowns, students and whānau had a heightened anxiety about health and safety on returning to school, and this affected school attendance and enjoyment of learning. Senior students studying NCEA reported higher levels of stress and anxiety after lockdowns in 2020, with research indicating this may well increase in 2021 and schools may need to plan ahead to promote student wellbeing.⁽²⁴⁾

Advocacy groups have reported that older people have higher rates of anxiety and fear of leaving their homes, and also have higher rates of alcoholism, addiction, isolation and suicide.





Being connected and valued

Being connected and valued means people can find a sense of wellbeing in doing what is important to them. Having a strong, positive sense of identity, being connected to a community, and having a sense of “place, purpose and belonging” can have a powerful effect on wellbeing.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Being connected and valued enables people to know and accept who they are and may well act as a protective factor against other elements that challenge their wellbeing.

An indication of connection to culture and community can be seen in the proportion of people who can speak the first language of their ethnic group. Being valued and free to express their unique identities can be seen in data reporting how easy people find it to be themselves.

Most people find it easy or very easy to be themselves, particularly Māori.

18%

of Māori are te reo speakers

84%

of all people think it is easy to be themselves

The proportion of people who find it easy to be themselves is the same for Māori as for non-Māori (84%), but Māori are more likely to find it very easy to do so. Almost a fifth of Māori consider themselves te reo Māori speakers, and almost three-quarters of Māori adults say their use of te reo Māori in daily life is of some importance.

People’s wellbeing improves when they see, live and share their identities within their own communities and with others.

For some, the level of ease to be themselves is at odds with the level of acceptance generally reported. Of the populations we looked at, people who are gay or bisexual find it hardest to be themselves, despite the general population reporting a high level of acceptance of diverse sexual orientations. Conversely, people who access mental health services find it relatively easy to be themselves, despite the wider population reporting low levels of acceptance of mental distress and diagnosed illness.⁽¹⁾



Prioritising a majority way of doing things makes it harder for those outside the majority to feel connected and valued.

Young people from minority populations can feel caught between their traditional culture and their new culture, and find it hard to feel connected and valued. For former refugee youth, a lack of knowledge about refugee issues in the community, along with racial stereotypes, adds to their sense of disconnection.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The dominance of the English language in Aotearoa has contributed to changing language use in Pacific communities and a decline in bilingualism, particularly among New Zealand-born Pacific people.⁽⁶⁶⁾ However, Asian, Pacific and Māori students are more multilingual and learn languages at rates higher than their peers – qualities associated with higher global competence.⁽¹³⁾

People's wellbeing improves when they see, live and share their identities within their own communities and with others.

Cultural identity and connection are important for many groups, including Māori,⁽¹⁰⁾ Pacific people⁽⁶⁸⁾ and former refugee and migrant young people and their parents.⁽⁶⁵⁾⁽⁶⁹⁾ Migrant youth report appreciating and finding comfort in the diversity of cultures, beliefs and people in Aotearoa. They also report that familial activities are important to their emotional wellbeing.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Although our data shows people who identify as LGBTQIA+ often find it hard to be themselves, most members of the trans and non-binary community report feeling proud to be trans or non-binary, and more than half provide a lot of support for, and feel connected to, other trans or non-binary people.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Rainbow secondary school students support their communities to a greater extent than other students.⁽⁵⁷⁾⁽⁷⁰⁾

Carla

is 60 years old, living in Gisborne, with her 28-year-old son, Ben. Ben is disabled and has high and complex needs, so Carla looks after him at home. Carla and Ben are eligible for some respite support through the disability support services funding, but what they can access near their home is limited. Carla has a friend in Palmerston North who can access a lot of disability support services, and Carla doesn't know why they can't do the same in Gisborne. Carla has noticed she's finding it harder to lift Ben from his wheelchair into his bed and is worried about what will happen to Ben as she gets older. Carla is exhausted, depressed and knows she needs more support. Carla can't afford specialist care, so has reached out to a group of parents and carers online to share her experience and find some understanding. Carla has found this group helpful, and she's been making new friends who know what she is going through. The group is planning an advocacy campaign for more whānau and family support, and Carla is feeling empowered as she learns how to make her voice heard.





Having hope and purpose

Wellbeing is improved by a sense of having a voice, perspective and opinions that are heard and respected; wellbeing means having goals, a sense of purpose and being hopeful about the future.

Empirical studies overseas have shown a strong sense of life purpose leads to improvements in people's quality of life, including better mental health and a reduction in the causes of early death.^{(71) (72)}

Social surveys capture some information about hope and purpose, such as self-reported sense of purpose and life satisfaction.⁽⁷³⁾

Most people rate their life satisfaction highly and have a sense of purpose, but most marginalised groups do not.

82%

of people score 7/10 or higher for life being worthwhile

81%

of people score 7/10 or higher for life satisfaction

Former refugees and migrants rate their life as having a sense of hope and purpose in line with the national average, and 87% of Asian people are satisfied with their life.⁽⁷⁴⁾ We see older people contribute at greater levels to unpaid work⁽⁷⁵⁾ and gain a sense of wellbeing and purpose from doing so.⁽⁷⁶⁾ However, other groups

- people with disabilities, former prisoners and rainbow communities - report lower levels of hope and sense of purpose with their lives. This may relate to levels of support available and how those communities experience transitions in life.

Supporting people to take control over changes in their life can be beneficial. For example, both trans women and trans men were more likely to report that their quality of life had improved since identifying as trans.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Conversely, a lack of support during change results in poorer wellbeing. Former prisoners report limited support when making the transition into the community and are at higher risk of reoffending. Former prisoners with pre-existing mental health challenges are at higher risk of suicide.

Veterans, too, report a strong need to redefine their identity, establish new social connections and goals as part of a successful transition out of military life and to create hope for the future. Faith and the role of family were often cited as critical factors in finding a sense of purpose outside of the camaraderie of military life.



Other elements of wellbeing affect a sense of hope and purpose.

Economic wellbeing has a material impact on our sense of hope for the future. Having what is needed to flourish and participate fully in society underpins feelings of life being worthwhile when looking to the future.

Surveys carried out in 2016 and 2018 showed average family wellbeing remained stable at 7.7 out of 10. Māori family wellbeing is marginally lower than other ethnicities. Pacific family wellbeing decreased over the same timeframe from 8.1 to 7.8 out of 10.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Hope for the future, and continuing economic prosperity, will be connected to climate change and mitigation of its effects.⁽²⁶⁾ Equity must be at the centre of our response to climate change because it has contributed to a 50% rise in heat-related mortality for people over 65 and contributes to soil depletion and a decline in potential for global crop yields, affecting food security. The effects of climate change fall disproportionately on communities that have contributed least to the problem.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Danielle

is a 23-year-old Pākehā female living in Invercargill. She has a learning disability and lives at home with her mum, dad and 17-year-old sister. Danielle wants to live with people her age in a flat, like some of her friends from her weekly dance class. Danielle knows that to live out of the family home, she will need money and a job and to learn how to cook and do her laundry. Danielle left school when she was 21 and used to get a lot of support, but now that she is older, she wants to be independent. Her parents know how excited she is about having more independence and freedom, so are looking into some activities she could join while they search for suitable living options. Danielle would like to take a sewing class, so she can make things for a flat she might live in one day. She has also asked about volunteering at a local community centre to get some work experience.



We can build a future where everyone enjoys true wellbeing in a way that is important to them

People tend to experience good wellbeing most of the time. However, they may experience negative things even when their overall wellbeing is good. We know different parts of the population experience poorer wellbeing in different domains for a variety of reasons.

The data in this report identifies many of the complex barriers to wellbeing and the inequities they contribute to, but we need time to build relationships with experts, including people with lived experience, to understand the causes of these barriers and the solutions that will make the biggest difference to people's lives.

We know that improving wellbeing will require working together to find and fix the root causes of poor wellbeing, rather than treating its symptoms. This will require large-scale, concerted effort, guided by an understanding of what wellbeing means to people.

Improvements to the wellbeing for all must be informed by, and designed with, those currently most marginalised by existing systems and inequities. Those in marginalised communities need to be seen in data, heard in consultation, understood in service design, and supported to determine their own future.

We should not let scarcity of information prevent us from acting, which is why we have identified areas in need of immediate attention:

We want to see Kia Manawanui Aotearoa implemented in a way that reflects the needs of all communities.

Long-term improvements will require resources and planning. The Government's mental health pathway, Kia Manawanui Aotearoa, is an important step in transforming the mental health and addiction system and gives us a benchmark from which we can monitor progress.

The pathway will require a plan to bring together all relevant government agencies and to involve the private sector and communities. As well as a well-resourced plan, the pathway will require trust, a common vision and the involvement of people with lived experience.

We will use our framework to monitor the delivery of Kia Manawanui and advocate for progress.



We want to see new ways of working with communities and providers.

Improving wellbeing will require action by individuals, whānau and communities. The Government should support and enable this. Improving wellbeing for all will require bringing together government agencies, councils, communities and service providers. Doing so effectively will require improvements to the way everyone works.

Communities have told us what works well, and what doesn't. We would like to see, and would support, improvements that:

- cement gains the country has made through its COVID-19 response by adopting high-trust and collaborative community approaches, in particular through high-trust, low-compliance funding options to scale up or spread successful community models
- simplify access to support offered by government agencies through a trauma-informed approach to customer service that makes interactions easier for people and brings services together
- co-ordinate cross-government engagement with communities to facilitate an inclusive, holistic approach to consultation that avoids consultation fatigue and is backed up by concrete responses to communities' concerns.

We want to see better data on wellbeing, its determinants and its distribution.

This report has shown what the “old normal” has meant for people's wellbeing and has offered some insights into different parts of the population. This report doesn't, of course, tell the whole story. As we've seen in this report, the available data has limitations in its availability, timeliness and quality.

We will continue to advocate strongly for improved data, particularly to monitor the Māori domains of our framework and the wellbeing of our priority population groups. An initial priority should be to improve the timeliness of Te Kupenga as a world-leading survey and a key source of information on the wellbeing of whānau.

We will work for better alignment between the **He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework** and other main agencies' social surveys to create a more comprehensive picture of wellbeing. Wellbeing outcomes should determine the collection of data, rather than data determining the outcomes we monitor.



We will advocate for those groups that experience disadvantage and would benefit most from improvements to the mental health and wellbeing system.

We know some communities experience poorer wellbeing, and in the immediate term, we will conduct research and offer advice on the wellbeing of Māori and young people to inform work among government agencies.

We know already the burden of disease from COVID-19 is being felt more heavily by some of our priority groups, and that there are added COVID-19 health risks for people with serious mental health challenges or addictions. These wellbeing effects will become more apparent over time. Through our framework, and He Ara Āwhina, we will monitor how the country's recovery supports wellbeing. We will stand up for our priority groups, which, as current and past experience already show us, are at greater risk of poorer wellbeing from shocks like COVID-19.

We will advocate for action on the social and systemic determinants that improve wellbeing for all, as well as mental health and addiction services for those in need.

Improvement will require a mental health and addiction system that has people and whānau at its centre. It will also require improvements in the societal and systemic determinants that affect wellbeing. To make meaningful change, we will advocate for the use of the framework to guide investment decisions.

From our baseline, we will start looking at the economic, social, environmental and commercial determinants of wellbeing (such as alcohol licenses and gambling density) to find the things that bring about changes within and between domains. We know there is research on what matters for wellbeing, particularly the underlying drivers. We will build our understanding of this research and the knowledge of people with lived experience, and build relationships with experts and communities so we can provide our view of what needs to change.



Glossary

Arohatanga: the process of offering love, concern, compassion, sympathy and empathy

Baseline report: our first report on the state of wellbeing for Aotearoa's population using an agreed set of indicators that show how well the country is doing

Determinants: the social, economic, commercial and wider factors that affect wellbeing

Domains: the 12 domains used in this report that describe areas important for wellbeing

Framework: the underlying structure of He Ara Oranga and how we want to improve wellbeing for everyone in Aotearoa

Hauora: health

Holistic health: an approach to life that addresses different aspects of wellness and encourages a view of all the physical, mental, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual needs of a person

Indicators: agreed standard measures of health and wellbeing against which we can report people's progress in achieving wellbeing outcomes

Kaitiakitanga: guardianship, stewardship and trust

Kotahitanga: unity, togetherness solidarity and collective action

Mana Motuhake: authority

Manaakitanga: the process of showing respect, care, hospitality and generosity towards others

Manawaroa: resilience

Marginalised populations: groups of people who experience disadvantage and have poorer wellbeing outcomes

Mātauranga: education, knowledge, wisdom and understanding

Mauri: life force or vital essence that can be found in a physical object, an individual, an ecosystem or a social group

Nurture: supportive environmental influences that help shape individuals, whānau or community

Pae ora: healthy futures

Pepeha: a way of introducing who we are, where we are from and where we belong

Rainbow communities/LGBTQIA+: people with diverse sexual and gender identities and orientations, including those who are intersex, non-binary and trans

Rangatahi: young people

Resilience: the capacity to bounce back from difficult experiences or circumstances

Ritenga Māori: ritual or customary practice, the normal way of doing things



Rongoā Māori: traditional Māori healing that encompasses herbal remedies, physical therapies and spiritual healing

Social determinants of health: the broad social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions that influence the health, wellbeing and quality of life for people and communities

Tangata Tiriti: the people of the Treaty, that is, non-indigenous New Zealanders who are in the country by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi

Tangata whenua: local people, hosts or indigenous people of a particular area of the country or of the whole country

Taonga Māori: treasures, gifts or anything considered to be of value, including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques

Te taiao: natural environment

Thrive: to flourish and grow

Tikanga tuku iho: customary law or tradition

Tino rangatiratanga: self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy and self-government

Veterans: civilians who have previously served in the military (in uniform)

Wairuatanga: spirituality

Whakapapa: genealogy, lineage or descent, and important in all Māori institutions and in Māori society more generally in matters of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status

Whakawhanaungatanga: the process of establishing relationships and giving people a sense of belonging

Whānau ora: family health



Notes on data sources and indicators

New Zealand General Social Survey

The New Zealand General Social Survey contains information on the wellbeing of New Zealanders aged 15 and over. It covers a wide range of social and economic outcomes and shows how people are faring.

The survey provides a view of how wellbeing outcomes are distributed across different population groups.

Te Kupenga

Te Kupenga is Stats NZ's survey of Māori wellbeing from a Māori perspective. It surveys almost 8,500 adults (aged 15 and over) of Māori ethnicity and/or descent to give an overall picture of the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Māori.

New Zealand Health Survey

The New Zealand Health Survey contains information about the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Over 13,000 adults and the parents or primary caregivers of over 4,000 children take part in the survey each year. The survey measures self-reported physical and mental health status, risk and protective behaviours, as well as the use of healthcare services.

Domain	Outcome concept	Indicator	Measure All Māori	Source
Being safe and nurtured	People feel safe and secure, and are free from harm and trauma.	The proportion of people who report high levels of trust in most other people	66% 48%	General Social Survey 2018
		The proportion of people who feel their quality of life is not affected by worrying about crime	59% 55%	General Social Survey 2018
	People live in, learn in, work in and visit safe and inclusive places.	The number of work-related injury claims per 1,000 full-time equivalent employees	99 88	Accident Compensation Corporation 2019
	People enjoy nurturing relationships.	The proportion of people who report feeling lonely a little or none of the time in the last four weeks	83% 81%	General Social Survey 2018
	People of all ages have a sense of belonging in families and/or social groups. If people experience disconnection, they can reconnect or form positive new connections.	The proportion of adults who had face to face contact with friends who do not live with them at least some of the time	77% 71%	General Social Survey 2018
		A sense of belonging (index measure)	68%	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Domain	Outcome concept	Indicator	Measure All Māori	Source
Having what is needed	People enjoy access to healthy food.	The proportion of people who have gone without fresh fruit and vegetables a little or a lot in last year to keep costs down	23% 38%	General Social Survey 2018
	People enjoy support and resources needed to maintain health throughout their life and experience equitable health outcomes.	The proportion of adults who rated their health status as good, very good or excellent	87% 77%	New Zealand Health Survey 2019
		The proportion of adults who experience one or more types of unmet need for primary health care	30% 41%	New Zealand Health Survey 2019
	People live in healthy and homes.	The proportion of people who live in a crowded household	10% 23%	General Social Survey 2018
	People take part in lifelong learning.	The proportion of adults who are enrolled in any study, whether formal or informal	10% 10%	Household Labour Force Survey 2018
	People enjoy safe physical activity.	The proportion of people who undertake 2.5 hours or more of physical activity a week	52% 52%	New Zealand Health Survey 2019
	People have time for leisure.	The proportion of people who feel they have enough leisure time	-	The indicator is still yet to be developed
	People have creative outlets.	The proportion of people who participate in the arts.	52% 39%	New Zealanders and the arts survey 2020.
	People live in communities and environments that enable health and wellbeing.	The density of alcohol licences	-	Not available
		The density of gambling machines	-	Not available
		The proportion of people who have safe drinking water	76%	Ministry of Health, Drinking Water 2018
		The proportion of people who say it is very easy to get to their nearest park or green space	66% 62%	General Social Survey 2018
	People have enough money and financial security.	The proportion of households that feel their income is enough or more than enough to meet their everyday needs	66%	Household Economic Survey 2018
	People, families, and communities have the resources needed to flourish.	The proportion of people who score seven out of 10 for life satisfaction	81%	General Social Survey 2018

Domain	Outcome concept	Indicator	Measure All Māori	Source
Having one's rights and dignity fully realised	People participate fully in communities and society generally and live free from all forms of racism, stigma and discrimination.	The proportion of people who report experiencing discrimination in the last year	17% 24%	General Social Survey 2018
		The proportion of people who report experience of racism in the last year	8%	General Social Survey 2014-2018
Healing, growth and being resilient	People enjoy emotional wellbeing.	The proportion of people who report high positive mental wellbeing	78% 74%	General Social Survey 2018
	People have the skills, resources and support to deal with the stresses, challenges and transitions of life.	The proportion of people who say it would be easy or very easy to talk to someone if they felt down or a bit depressed	69% 63%	General Social Survey 2018
		The proportion of hazardous drinkers	21% 36%	New Zealand Health Survey 2019
	People experience and manage a range of emotions, and families celebrate each other's strengths.	The proportion of people who rate their family wellbeing highly	82% 75%	General Social Survey 2018
Being connected and valued	People feel connected to their culture, language, beliefs, religion and/or spirituality.	The proportion of Māori who are te reo Māori speakers	18%	Census 2018
	People are valued for who they are and free to express their unique identities.	The proportion of people who think it is easy to be themselves in Aotearoa	84% 84%	General Social Survey 2018
Having hope and purpose	People have a sense of purpose and are hopeful about the future.	The proportion of people who report life is worthwhile	82% 76%	General Social Survey 2018
		The proportion of people who report having high life satisfaction	81%	General Social Survey 2018
	People feel their opinions are heard and respected, and they make self-determined decisions about the future and have the resources to pursue their goals.	The proportion of people who feel they have control over their lives	-	The indicator is still yet to be developed
Tino rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake	Māori exercise authority and make decisions about how to flourish, and tino rangatiratanga is expressed in many ways.	The proportion of Māori adults who are registered with their iwi	47%	Te Kupenga 2018
		The proportion of those eligible Māori who voted in an iwi election in the last three years	52%	Te Kupenga 2018
		Growth in the Māori economy between 2013 and 2018	60%	Te Ōhanga Māori 2018



Domain	Outcome concept	Indicator	Measure All Māori	Source	
Whakaora, whakatipu, kia manawaroa	The beauty of Māori culture is celebrated and shared by all people in Aotearoa and globally.	The proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that the government should encourage and support the use of te reo Māori in everyday life	53%	General Social Survey 2018	
		The proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that all people in Aotearoa should understand te reo Māori and English	39%	General Social Survey 2018	
		The proportion of Māori who think it is very important or quite important to be involved in things to do with Māori culture	45%	Te Kupenga 2018	
		The proportion of Māori who think spirituality/taha wairua is very important or quite important	49%	Te Kupenga 2018	
	Māori express connection through awahi mai, awahi atu and the use of te reo me ōna tikanga, every day, starting from infancy.	The proportion of all Māori students who are enrolled in kura kaupapa Māori and kura teina	10%	Māori Language in Schooling 2018, Education Counts	
		The proportion of Māori who can speak te reo Māori well	8%	Te Kupenga 2018	
		The proportion of Māori who can understand te reo Māori well	13%	Te Kupenga 2018	
	Māori feel culturally strong and flourish through the practical expression of ritenga Māori, tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori.	The proportion of Māori who think it is important to be involved in things to do with Māori culture	81%	Health and Lifestyles Survey 2018	
	Whakapuāwaitanga me te pae ora	Whānau needs are met, and unfair and unjust differences are eliminated.	The proportion of Māori secondary school students who leave with a qualification at NCEA level 2 or above	32%	Census 2018
		Whānau live in a state of wai ora, mauri ora and whānau ora, which enables pae ora.	The proportion of Māori who rate their own health as excellent or very good	77%	New Zealand Health Survey 2019
Whānau – but especially mokopuna, who are unique taonga – have the resources needed to thrive throughout their lives.		The proportion of Māori children who are living in households experiencing good material wellbeing	77%	Household Economic Survey 2018	



Domain	Outcome concept	Indicator	Measure All Māori	Source
Whanaungatanga me te arohatanga	Active expression of strengths-based whakawhanaungatanga supports positive attachment and belonging.	The proportion of Māori who think their whānau get along well together	85%	Te Kupenga 2018
	Māori flourish in environments of arohatanga (care, love and compassion) and manaaki (protection, respect, generosity).	The proportion of Māori who find it very easy to find someone to support them in times of need	72%	Te Kupenga 2018
	Kaupapa and whakapapa whānau collectively flourish intergenerationally.	The proportion of Māori who feel they have the right amount of whānau support in times of need	65%	Te Kupenga 2018
	Māori flourish in environments of arohatanga (care, love and compassion) and manaaki (protection, respect, generosity).	The proportion of Māori who think their whānau are doing well	74%	Te Kupenga 2018
	Māori realise kotahitanga (unity, collective action and solidarity).	The proportion of Māori adults who are registered with an iwi	47%	Te Kupenga 2018
Wairuatanga me te manawaroa	Taonga Māori are revitalised and nurtured, and the unique relationship and spiritual connection Māori have to te taiao, whenua, whakapapa and whānau is actively protected and enhanced.	The proportion of Māori who report knowledge of own iwi	86%	Te Kupenga 2018
		The proportion of Māori who report knowledge of own hapū	55%	Te Kupenga 2018
		The proportion of Māori who are involved in iwi/hapū environmental planning or decision-making	7%	Te Kupenga 2018
Tūmanako me te ngākaupai	Whānau are hopeful.	The proportion of Māori who think things are getting better for their whānau	34%	Te Kupenga 2018



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