

Mapping Trends in the Auckland Region

Income

Commentary

Overview

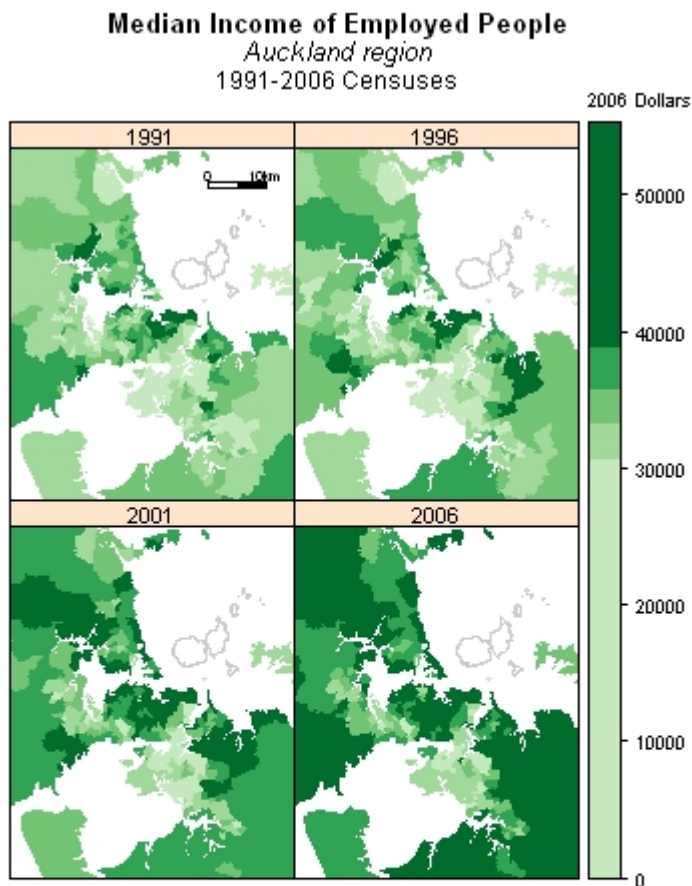
In 1991, high income areas were concentrated mainly in Auckland city, with a few areas in North Shore city and northern parts of Manukau city. By 2006, high income areas had spread further along the coastal parts of North Shore city, as well as to more rural areas of the Auckland region.

Mapping high income and low income areas

Figure 11.1 shows the real median incomes of area units across the Auckland region, indicating areas of high and low income. The median income (half earn more than this, and half earn less) for each area unit is the midpoint of income values. Median income is an approximate indicator of high and low income areas.

The data used is for people aged 15 years and over who stated that they were employed, either full time or part time, and were wage or salary earners. Darker areas of the maps indicate higher income values.

Figure 11.1



Notes: Income is in 2006 dollars. More information about interpreting the maps is in the [Interpreting the maps](#) chapter.



Downloadable version of figure 11.1 (PDF, 3.4MB)

If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, download [Adobe Reader](#) for PDFs to view or print this file.

High and low income areas over time

In 1991, high income areas were found in Auckland city, with a few in North Shore and Manukau cities. The income in the majority of areas increased between 1991 and 2006. In 2006, the highest income areas were still in Auckland city, but also extended to more areas of North Shore city. The spread of high income areas has not had a constant gradient from the centre outwards; there have also been more rural areas with high incomes, particularly in 2006.

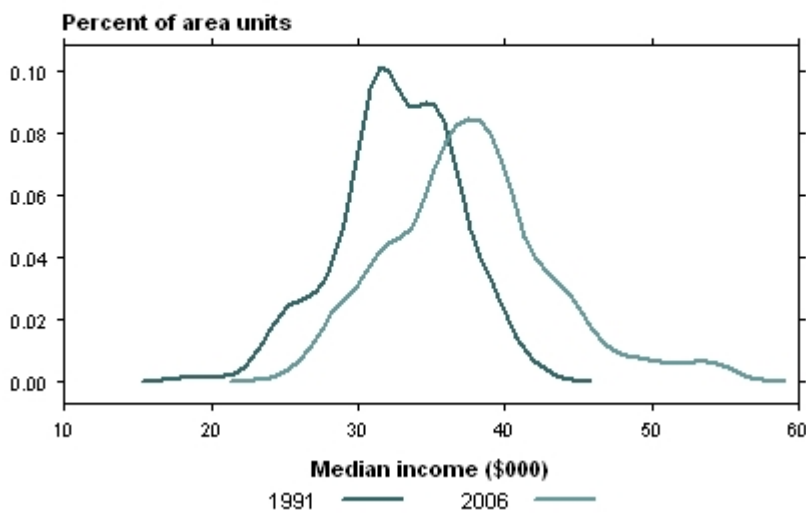
In both 1991 and 2006, the lowest income areas were in Manukau city, and parts of Papakura district.

Changes in the geographical distribution of income

Has the gap between high income and low income areas changed over time? Figure 11.2 compares the distribution of area units by median income of employed people between 1991 and 2006.

Figure 11.2

Distribution of Area Units by Median Income of Employed People
Auckland region
1991 and 2006 Censuses



Note: Income is in 2006 dollars.

On average, the income of employed people in the Auckland region has increased, as shown by the shift to the right. The distribution has also become wider, showing that the gap between high income and low income areas has grown over time.

In 1991, the income of the wealthiest areas was just above 30 percent more than at the centre of the distribution. In 2006, this gap had risen to almost 50 percent. This is reflected in the longer right-hand tail of the 2006 line, which shows there were a small number of area units with very high incomes.

More information about interpreting this graph is in the [Notes and sources](#) section.

Implications

There are a number of implications of rising median income:

- The real median income for employed people has been increasing over time, and is likely to continue rising.
- More investigation is needed into the median incomes of different subgroups (eg breakdown by age, ethnicity, sex). In particular, how has the increase in median income been distributed among these different groups?
- The Auckland Regional Growth Forum identified 'addressing disadvantage' as one of the five sustainability challenges for the Auckland region (Regional Growth Forum, 2007). One of the strategic responses planned is to 'address inequality through targeted interventions in low income neighbourhoods and communities'.

Related chapters

- [Commuting](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Labour force](#)

Further information

This page is part of [Mapping Trends in the Auckland Region](#), available on www.stats.govt.nz.

Notes and sources

Definitions

Median income measures the centre of the income distribution. It is calculated by taking the midpoint of income values (half earn more than this, and half earn less). The data used is total personal income for adults (people aged 15 years and over) who stated that they were employed, either full time or part time, and were wage or salary earners. The data are based on the census usually resident population count from the 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006 Censuses.

Using the subset of people who were employed accounts for the disparities in areas where there may be a large difference between income and wealth, for example areas with a high proportion of retirees.

Data sources

The maps display data at area unit level. Area units are non-administrative areas that are in between meshblocks and territorial authorities in size. They generally coincide with suburbs (in urban areas) and rural neighbourhoods. The Auckland region is made up of 399 area units, while there are 1,927 area units throughout New Zealand. Digital boundary files used for constructing the maps can be downloaded from Digital Boundaries, available on www.stats.govt.nz.

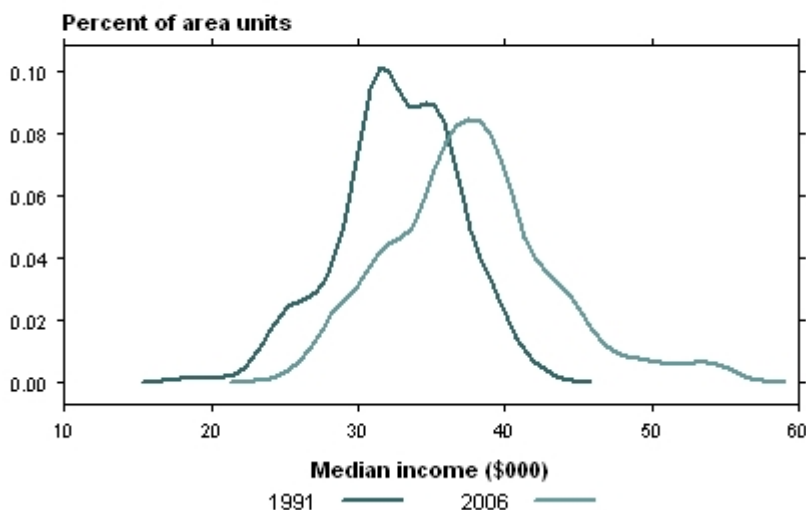
The Auckland region is one of 16 regions, which are aggregations of area units governed by regional councils. More information about the geographical hierarchy of areas and the maps is in the Interpreting the maps chapter.

The Consumers Price Index (June 2006 base) was used to adjust the median income data for 1991, 1996, and 2001, in order to make meaningful comparisons with the 2006 data. More information about the consumers price index can be found on the Consumers price index page, available on www.stats.govt.nz.

Figure 11.2 (reproduced below) is a density plot, and shows the distribution of area units by median income of employed people. The area under each curve adds up to 100 percent.

Figure 11.2 (reproduced)

Distribution of Area Units by Median Income of Employed People
Auckland region
1991 and 2006 Censuses



Note: Income is in 2006 dollars.

References

Regional Growth Forum (2007). Auckland Sustainability Framework, Auckland Regional Council.