

Pacific housing:
People, place, and wellbeing
in Aotearoa New Zealand



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Citation

Stats NZ (2023). *Pacific housing: People, place, and wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Retrieved from www.stats.govt.nz.

ISBN 978-1-99-104922-3 (online)

Published in January 2023 by

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Ko te kāinga te ngā'i putuputu'anga, 'ē te rotopū nō te 'ātuitui'anga ō te iti-tangata Patipika.

Na vale e vanua ni bose vata kei na veitalanoa kei ira na wekada na Pasifika.

Ko e loto kaina ko e apiaga mo e matūtakiaga he tau tagata Pasifika.

O le aiga o le ogatotonu-galemu lea o feso'ota'iga mo tagata Pasefika.

Ko te kāinga te wāhi hui, te pūtahi whakawhanaunga hoki mō ngā iwi o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Ko loto o te kāiga ko te koga ma te lototonuga ia e maopoopo ki ei, ma maua ai he hokotaga a kāiga Pahefika.

Ki he kāinga 'o e Pasifikí, ko 'api 'a e feitu'u 'okú ne fakatahataha'i kitautolú.

Home is the gathering place and centre for connection for Pacific peoples.

Purpose

Pacific housing: People, place, and wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand provides data and insights about housing and wellbeing for Pacific peoples living in New Zealand. It supplements the information in [Housing in Aotearoa 2020](#).

Adequate housing that is warm, dry, secure, and suitable can provide a space for families and cultures to thrive.

The report covers three main themes in relation to housing:

- [People](#) looks at Pacific peoples' demography, culture, language, families, households, and intergenerational living.
- [Place](#) is about the adequacy and accessibility of the homes Pacific people live in, covering tenure security, affordability, habitability, suitability, and homelessness.
- [Wellbeing](#) looks at housing in relation to key pillars of wellbeing, including physical and mental health, income, and family, and how housing outcomes intersect with different measures of subjective wellbeing.

[Data sources and limitations](#) has more information about the data, which is primarily from the 2018 Census and the 2018 and 2021 General Social Surveys. Much of the information in the report is about the wider population of Pacific peoples. However, we acknowledge the level of diversity within this population, and provide data about ethnicities within the Pacific ethnic group where possible. Census allows for exploration of detailed ethnicity data (for example, Samoan or Niuean), but the size limitations of our sample surveys mean we can only provide information for the broader Pacific peoples ethnic group.

[Ariā classifications](#) show how Stats NZ categorises Pacific ethnicities.

Summary of key points

Data in this summary is from 2018, unless noted differently.

People – demographic diversity and culture

Understanding how age, family, and household structures differ for Pacific peoples when compared with Aotearoa New Zealand's total population helps address housing needs.

- Almost 400,000 people living in New Zealand identified with a Pacific ethnicity; two-thirds were New Zealand born.
- Around 4 out of 10 Pacific peoples identified with more than one ethnicity.
- The median age for Pacific peoples was 23 years compared with 37 for the total New Zealand population.
- The population of Pacific peoples will be an increasing part of New Zealand's population and its future.
- 275,000 Pacific peoples lived in a family with around one-third (89,500) living in an extended family.
- Pacific peoples are more likely to live in large households. Over half of Pacific peoples lived in a household with five or more people compared with almost one-fifth of the total population.
- Intergenerational living can be important for language. Children were more likely to speak a Pacific language if they lived with family members who also spoke it.
- In 2021, Pacific peoples rated the wellbeing of their family highly, giving an average rating of 8.1 out of 10 compared with 7.7 out of 10 for the total population.

Place – home ownership, affordability, and living conditions

Comparing home ownership rates, tenure security, housing affordability, housing habitability, and housing suitability between Pacific peoples and the total population shows the inadequacy of housing for Pacific peoples in New Zealand.

- In the past three decades, home ownership rates have fallen for Pacific peoples as well as for all Aotearoa New Zealand households.
- Around half of Pacific peoples lived in an owner-occupied dwelling in 1986, but by 2018 this had fallen to just over one-third.
- Pacific people who owned the house they lived in tend to live there longer than those who rent.
- On average, Pacific peoples rated the affordability of their homes lower than the total population and were more likely to say their house or flat was very unaffordable.
- Pacific peoples were more likely than the total population to live in large urban areas such as Auckland, where housing is expensive both to rent and own.
- Over half of Pacific peoples lived in homes with at least one housing problem (for example, cold, mould, dampness) compared with 32 percent of the total population.
- Pacific peoples were less likely to be living in housing with all basic amenities, at 86 percent compared with 93 percent of the total population.
- Pacific peoples were less likely than the total population to rate their house and its location as very suitable.

- In the current housing market, supply of large dwellings is limited, particularly for rented dwellings. Pacific peoples are more likely to rent than the total population. Just 4 percent of rented (non-owner-occupied) dwellings had five or more bedrooms.
- Pacific peoples experience severe housing deprivation at a greater rate than the total population. The homelessness prevalence rate for Pacific peoples was 578 people per 10,000 compared with 217 people per 10,000 people for the total population.

Wellbeing – interactions with housing outcomes

As a place where culture, language, and community are strengthened, housing is of key importance to the health and wellbeing of Pacific peoples.

- Home ownership is associated with important aspects of wellbeing, such as life satisfaction. Pacific peoples who lived in a non-owner-occupied dwelling were more likely to experience lower life satisfaction than those who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling.
- In 2021, living in an owner-occupied dwelling and remaining in the same neighbourhood for longer were both associated with a greater sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood, for the population in general.
- Pacific peoples who rated their housing as very unaffordable (0 to 4 out of 10) scored a lower WHO-5 mental wellbeing rating on average than those who said their housing was very affordable (8 to 10 out of 10).
- Pacific peoples living in larger households had lower rates of loneliness than those living in one-person households.
- For Pacific peoples who lived in dwellings with at least one major problem (cold, mould, damp, or a need for repairs):
 - 22 percent gave a low rating for physical health, compared with 12 percent for people without any housing problems
 - 29 percent had poor overall mental wellbeing, compared with 13 percent of people without housing problems
 - 31 percent gave a low rating for life-satisfaction, compared with 12 percent of people without housing problems.
- Major housing problems disproportionately affect Pacific peoples who do not have enough, or have only just enough, money to meet their everyday needs, compared to the total population who do not have enough, or only just enough money.
- Having an unsuitable, or very unsuitable home for Pacific peoples is associated with lower life satisfaction compared to Pacific peoples who lived in a suitable, or very suitable home.

Conclusion

Pacific peoples make up a diverse and vital part of Aotearoa New Zealand's population. Housing in New Zealand often does not meet their cultural needs, resulting in inequitable access to adequate housing. However, despite the difficulties identified below, Pacific peoples are resilient and often have strong social networks and high family wellbeing.

Home ownership helps provide security but while in the 1980s around half of Pacific peoples lived in an owner-occupied home, this had fallen to just over a third in 2018.

Too often Pacific peoples' housing is too small for their families and of poor quality or they can't even access a home to live in. Housing inequity places a burden on Pacific peoples, and negatively affects wellbeing.

In a consultation document, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2022) identified the structural housing issues faced by Pacific peoples:

Māori and Pacific populations currently have a population structure similar to that which New Zealand Europeans had in the 1950s–1970s. However, the housing system does not currently invest in housing for young families in the way that it did from the 1950s until the housing reforms in the 1990s. This has resulted in lower housing-related intergenerational benefits for Māori and Pacific peoples and has contributed to poorer housing outcomes and disparities between our New Zealand European, Pacific and Māori populations.

Part of the differences identified in the quote above are driven by lower rates of home ownership and affordable housing with appropriate facilities.

Owner-occupied dwellings tend to have fewer problems (such as damp and mould) than rented dwellings, but in the 21st Century Pacific peoples are under-represented in home ownership and are often forced to rely on the rental market. Pacific peoples are more likely to rate their dwelling as unsuitable.

Housing problems (such as damp and mould) are associated with poorer physical and mental health outcomes.

One of the most common reasons Pacific peoples are in urgent need of public housing is that their current accommodation is unsuitable or inadequate. Having a home that meets needs can provide an important base for the wellbeing of Pacific peoples.

New Zealand has a range of research into design solutions for Pacific peoples. For instance, work by Housing New Zealand (2002) looked at the different space requirements of Pacific peoples. These included the importance of flexible spaces to suit extended families, and a formal space for tangi with a separate entrance.

Research is currently underway to provide different models of housing that focus on cultural needs. For example, the MĀPIHI Māori and Pacific Housing Research Centre at Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland is researching ways to improve housing quality and supply for Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand.

During consultation for this report several themes emerged around:

- the challenges of housing for Pacific peoples
- the importance of home ownership
- the relationship between home and a sense of belonging in the Pacific and in New Zealand.

We also heard the need to acknowledge the diversity of the Pacific population. Above all we heard about the need to have better housing, housing that is warm and dry but also allows for the expression and maintenance of culture.

One of the challenges in this report has been that the sample size of the General Social Survey limits the ability to model wellbeing and housing for Pacific people alone. The challenge of small sample size limited the analysis we could carry out at times. It also highlighted the significant role of census data. Through the census we explore information for different Pacific peoples rather than just for grouped Pacific peoples.

Acknowledgements

We thank the people who generously gave their time when we were scoping this report.

We wanted to understand what information was needed and what issues Pacific people saw as important to address.

Where possible, we have tried to incorporate these viewpoints within the report.

However, due to time and space constraints, there is much that we could not include, including more detail on individual Pacific groups, and so we highlight the need for further study in this area.

[Data sources and limitations](#) for more information on what the data covers.

People – demographic diversity and culture

This section provides demographic context to help understand housing needs for Pacific peoples, including information on families, extended families, and households. The information is about the wider Pacific grouping but also acknowledges some of the diversity within the Pacific population.

Because of the size limitations of our sample surveys, we could only look at some of the diverse groups if the Census of Population and Dwellings and administrative data allowed for greater exploration.

Ethnic and demographic diversity

Pacific peoples have a long history of residence in Aotearoa New Zealand but have only been present in large numbers since the 1960s (Mallon et al, 2012).

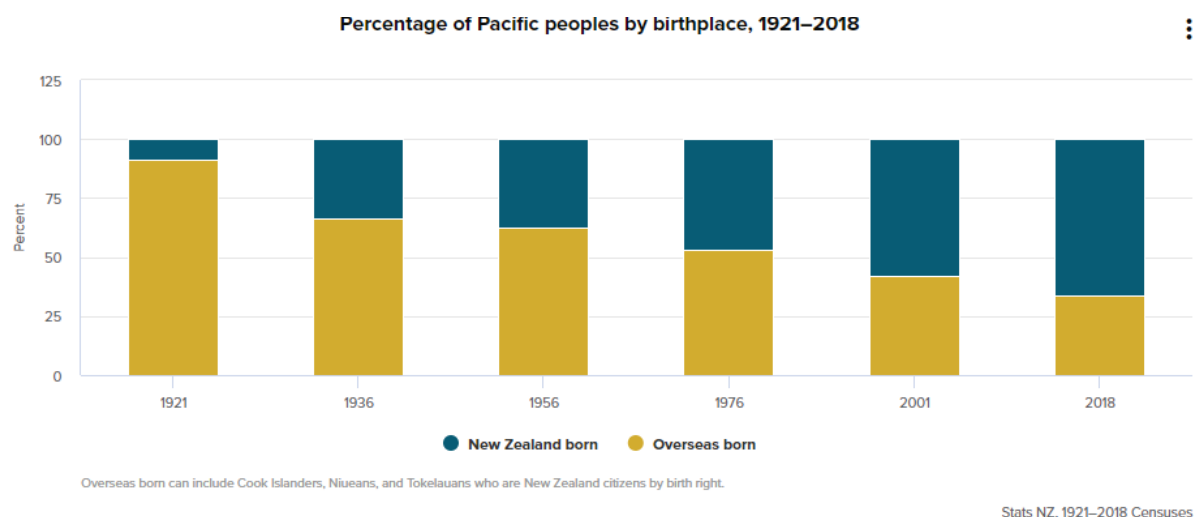
The 1956 Census of Population and Dwellings recorded 9,416 people with one or more Pacific ethnicity.

The 1976 Census recorded 72,806 people of Pacific ethnicities living in New Zealand, of whom 53 percent were born overseas.

The 2018 Census recorded 381,642 people with one or more ethnicity within the Pacific grouping of ethnicities, of whom 66 percent were born in New Zealand. This diverse population made up 8.1 percent of the total usually resident population.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of Pacific peoples who were born in New Zealand or overseas through the last century. In 1921, the census recorded 8.6 percent of Pacific peoples were born in New Zealand. By 2018, 66 percent of Pacific peoples were born in New Zealand.

Figure 1



Among people of Pacific ethnicities, in the 2018 Census:

- 154,782 people (41 percent) identified with more than one ethnicity
- of these more than 1 in 8 (20,223) people were of only Pacific ethnicities.

This shows that even within the 'Pacific Only' category there was considerable ethnic diversity.

New Zealand's Pacific populations are diverse and have different patterns of settlement and distribution within the country.

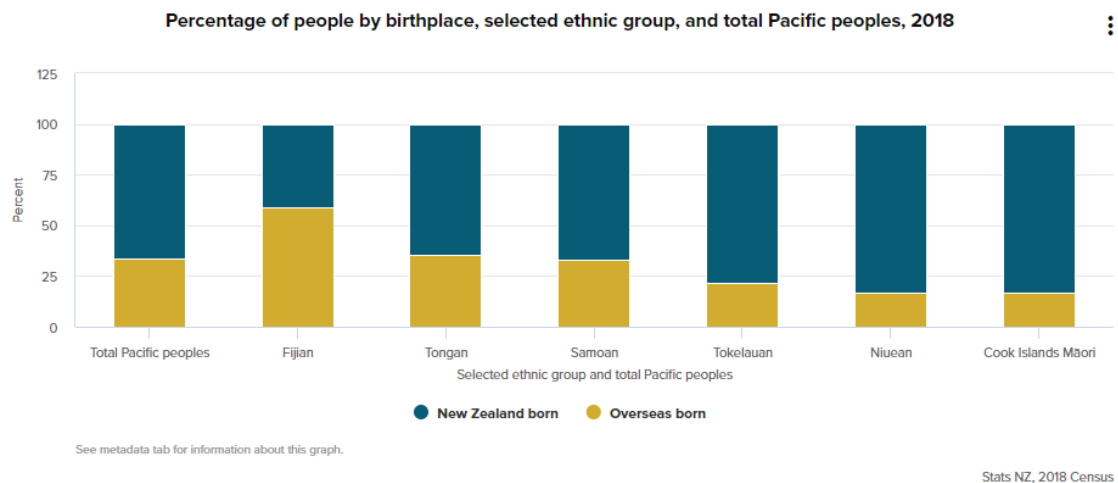
The complexities of the diverse communities within the Pacific grouping are frequently overlooked. Pacific peoples are not a homogenous group and there are many differences between cultures, and people of different generations and birthplaces.

People from the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau hold New Zealand citizenship and therefore have unrestricted right of entry and settlement in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010).

People from other Pacific nations, particularly Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji, entered New Zealand through temporary permits, quota schemes, and family reunification policies, which enabled entry and potential settlement in New Zealand. Demand for labour post war contributed to this increase in migration, and migrating Pacific peoples continue to contribute significantly to New Zealand's economy.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of people of selected Pacific ethnicities, New Zealand born versus overseas born (when birthplace stated).

Figure 2



Most Pacific peoples live in Auckland

In 2018, most Pacific peoples lived in main urban areas. The majority of Pacific peoples lived in Auckland, with around three-quarters of people with Tongan and Niuean ethnicity living there, and almost two-thirds of people with Samoan ethnicity. However, almost half of people with Tokelauan ethnicity lived in the Wellington region.

[Pacific peoples population by SA2, 2018](#) is an interactive map showing the distribution of Pacific peoples throughout New Zealand by the 2018 statistical area 2.

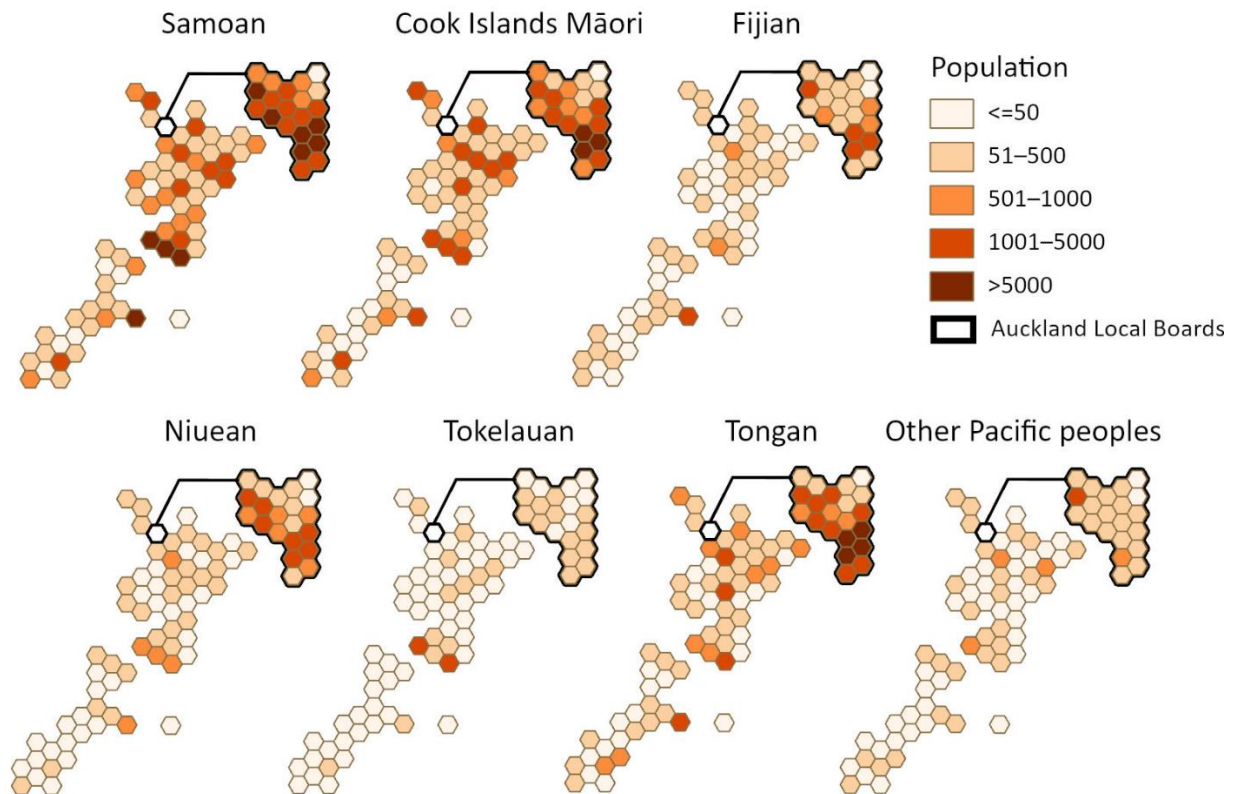
The areas with the highest counts of Pacific peoples were all in Auckland:

- 3,501 people lived in Ferguson
- 3,354 people lived in Mangere West
- 3,300 people lived in Clover Park North.

Figure 3 shows the count of people of selected Pacific ethnic groups by where they live in New Zealand. Each hexagon represents a territorial authority or an Auckland local board area. Figure 4 shows the index for each hexagon.

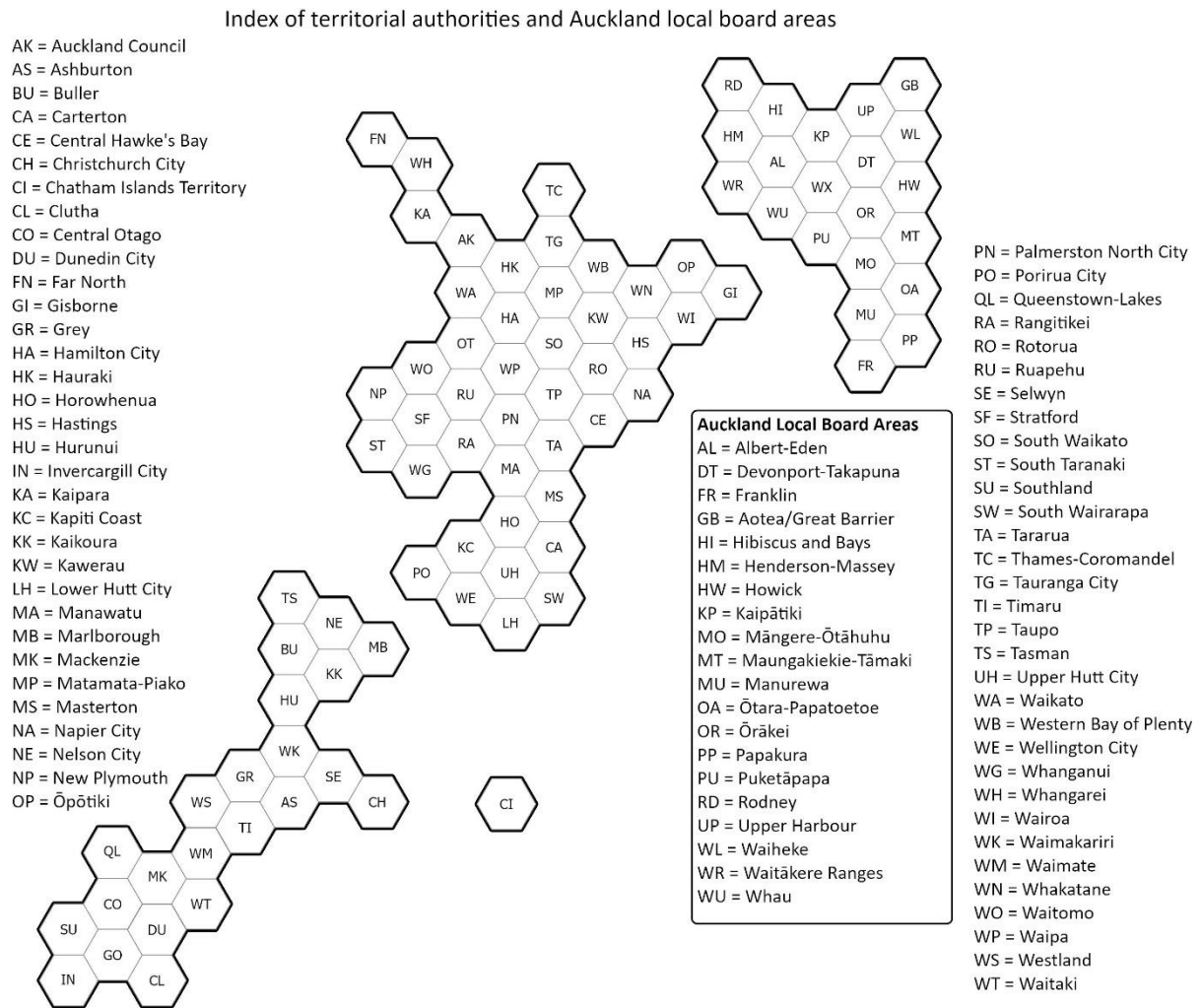
Figure 3

Count of people by selected ethnic group,
by territorial authority and Auckland local board area, 2018



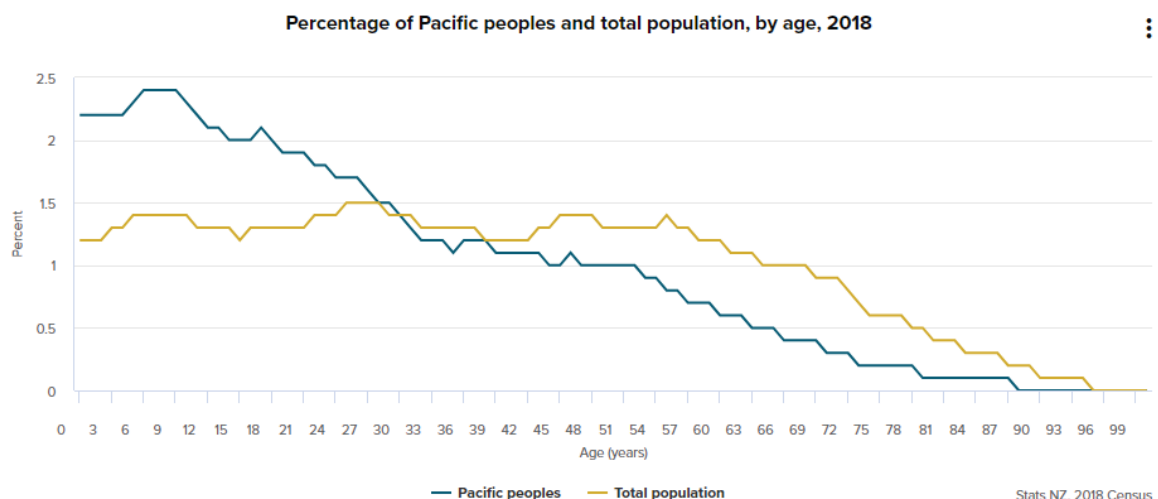
In 2018, there were high counts of people of Samoaan, Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, Tongan, and Fijian ethnicities in the Auckland region. By contrast, a high count of Tokelauan people lived in Porirua city (2,385 people) and Lower Hutt city (1,131 people) in the Wellington region.

People of other Pacific ethnicities were more evenly distributed across the country, except for a high count of people in the Henderson-Massey local board area in Auckland (2,433 people).

Figure 4

Pacific peoples are younger than total population on average

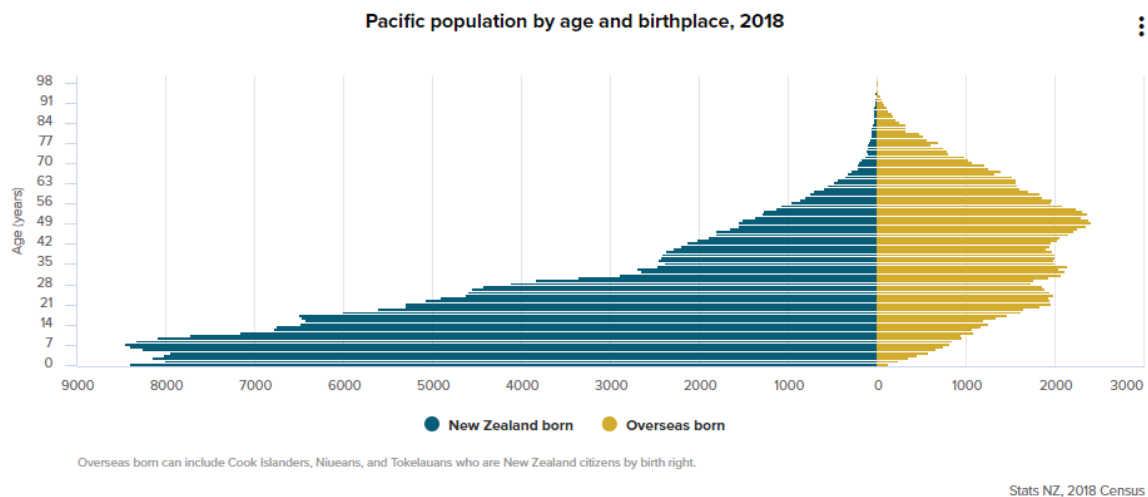
Pacific peoples are a much younger population than the total population. The median age for Pacific peoples in 2018 was 23.4 years compared with 37.4 years for the total population. Northland and Gisborne had the youngest populations at just 18.0 and 18.3 years respectively.

Figure 5

The youthfulness of the Pacific population in New Zealand is important to remember when looking at information around topics such as income, employment, home ownership, and wealth, which tend to increase as people reach the age of 40 or 50 years.

Younger people are also much more likely to be born in New Zealand, compared with people aged 70 years and over, who were more likely to be born overseas.

Figure 6



The Pacific population continues to grow

The Pacific population in New Zealand continued to increase as a proportion of the population from 6.6 percent in 2006 to 8.1 percent in 2018.

Stats NZ ethnic projections show the number of Pacific peoples will continue to grow and is projected to reach 665,000 people in 2043, which represents 11 percent of the projected total population (Stats NZ, 2022).

The Pacific population aged under 15 years is also growing, from 12 percent of the total population in 2006 to 14 percent in 2018. However, the population is aging, with an increase in people aged 65 years and over – from 2.0 percent of the Pacific population in 2006 to 2.8 percent in 2018.

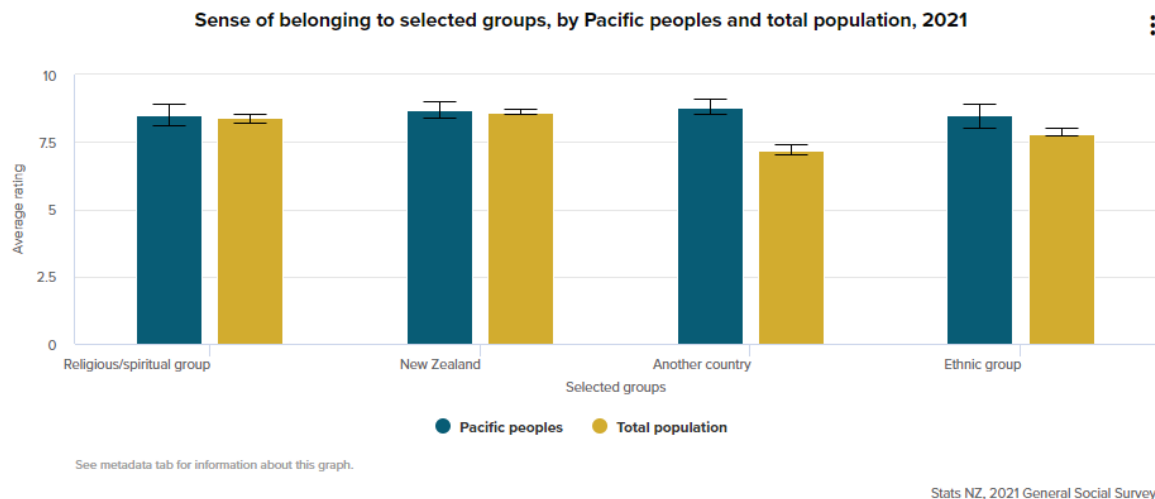
Population aging is expected to increase as more of the larger Pacific cohorts in the younger age groups grow older (Stats NZ, 2020b). Given the preferences among Pacific peoples for multigenerational housing solutions, this will have implications for future housing needs.

Pacific peoples report strong sense of belonging

Pacific peoples had a strong sense of belonging, as shown in the information collected by Stats NZ's General Social Survey. In 2016 and 2021, the survey asked questions around sense of belonging.

Figure 7 shows that in 2021, Pacific peoples had a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand, but also to another country and their ethnic group.

In both 2016 and 2021, around two-thirds of Pacific peoples rated their sense of belonging to another country as at least 9 out of 10 (where 10 is a very strong sense of belonging).

Figure 7

In the 2021 General Social Survey, around half (54 percent) of Pacific peoples had volunteered in the previous four weeks, which was similar to the total population (51 percent).

However, Pacific peoples had much higher rates of volunteering for a religious or spiritual group than the total population. In the 2021 survey, 62 percent of Pacific peoples who had volunteered over the previous four weeks had volunteered for a religious or spiritual group compared with 27 percent of the total population.

Three-quarters of Pacific people are religious

In 2018 Census, over three-quarters (76 percent) of people of Pacific ethnicities reported one or more religious affiliations compared with around half (52 percent) of the New Zealand population.

Religious affiliation among people of Pacific ethnicities varies greatly by both ethnicity and birthplace. Of the people of Pacific ethnicities born in New Zealand, 89 percent stated they had no religion. This ranged from 36 percent for ni-Vanuatu to 93 percent for people of Cook Island Māori ethnicity.

By far the most commonly reported religions were Roman Catholicism, Methodism, Latter Day Saints, combined Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, and the diverse group of Pentecostal religions. These religions together accounted for around 68 percent of the Pacific population in 2018.

The combined Presbyterian and Congregational Churches have large followings across the Cook Island Māori and Niuean communities.

Families, languages, and households

Information in this section about Pacific peoples' families, extended families, languages, and households sets the scene for understanding housing needs.

Benefits of intergenerational living

Intergenerational living, where grandparents, parents, and children live in the same household, can be important for sharing language, culture, and caring responsibilities.

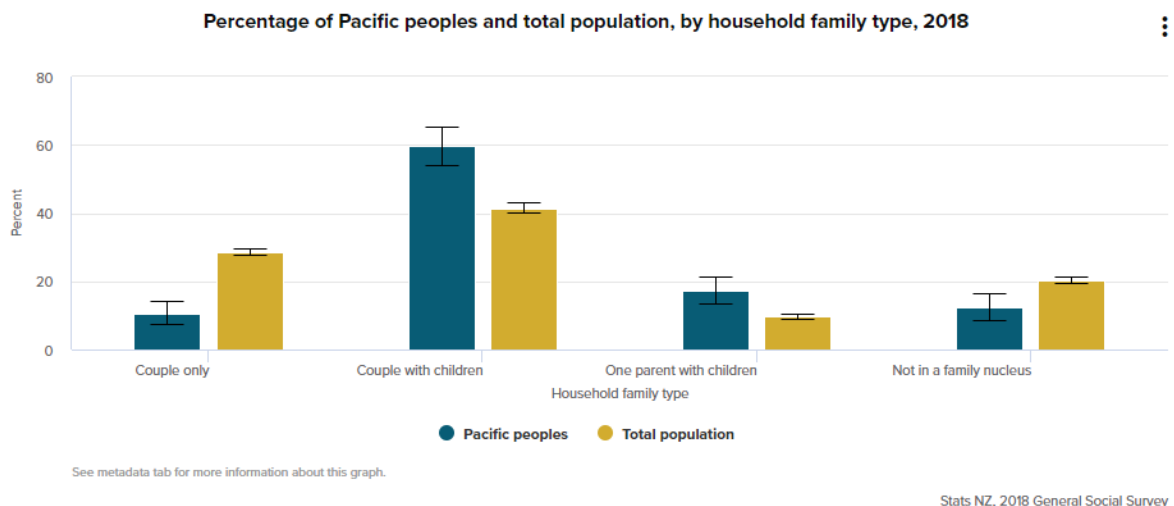
Most Pacific families are large and include children. In 2018, 275,199 Pacific peoples lived in a family, with around one-third (89,508 people) living in an extended family.

The Retirement Commission in conjunction with Ministry for Pacific Peoples (Rohorua et al, 2022) emphasised the importance of intergenerational living for the Pacific matua (elders).

The best way to live for Pacific people is to live intergenerationally. I like to live with my children and grandchildren in future, we do not necessarily have to live in the same house, but at least we live close to each other. (Kiribati Matua).

The 2018 General Social Survey recorded 60 percent of Pacific people lived in a couple-with-children family and another 17 percent lived in a one-parent family.

Figure 8

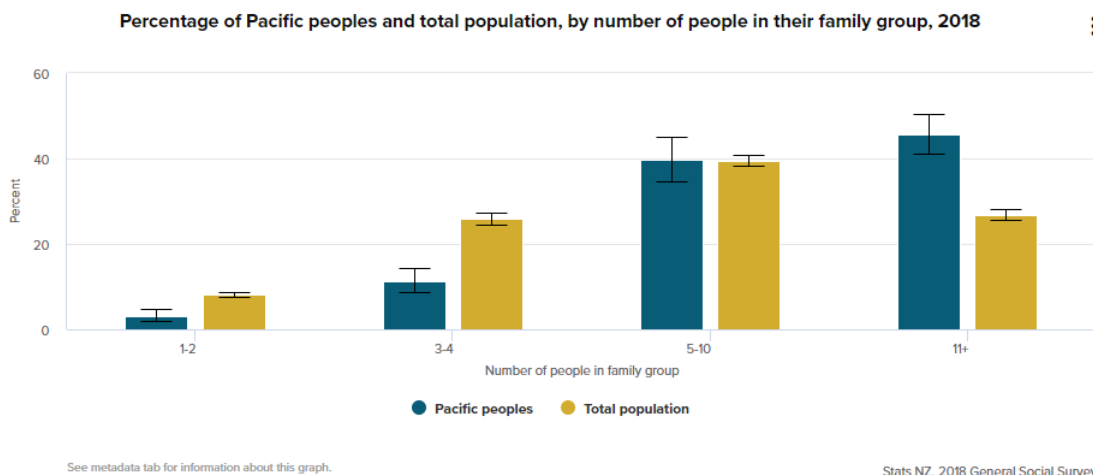


When asked about their family wellbeing, people in the 2018 General Social Survey were asked to include anyone who they considered to be family.

This definition of family is self-defined and broader than the groups shown in figure 8 (see above) which refers to the living situation in a household. Figure 9 (see below) shows the percentage of Pacific peoples and total population, by number of people in their self-defined family group.

Pacific peoples were more likely to say that their family was larger, with almost half (46 percent) saying that they had 11 or more people (not counting themselves) in their family. They were also more likely than the total population to count aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces, and other in-laws as their family (54 percent compared with 27 percent).

Figure 9



Pacific peoples rate their family wellbeing highly

The General Social Survey collects family wellbeing data by asking respondents how their family is doing on a scale from 0 (extremely badly) to 10 (extremely well).

In 2021, more than one-quarter (29 percent) rated their family wellbeing as 10 out of 10 on this scale. The mean family wellbeing rating for Pacific peoples was 8.1 out of 10, compared with 7.7 out of 10 for the total population.

Whilst the total population experienced some negative changes in these areas, such as decreased family wellbeing between 2016 to 2021 and decreased rates of contact with family between 2018 and 2021, Pacific peoples remained more resilient in these areas.

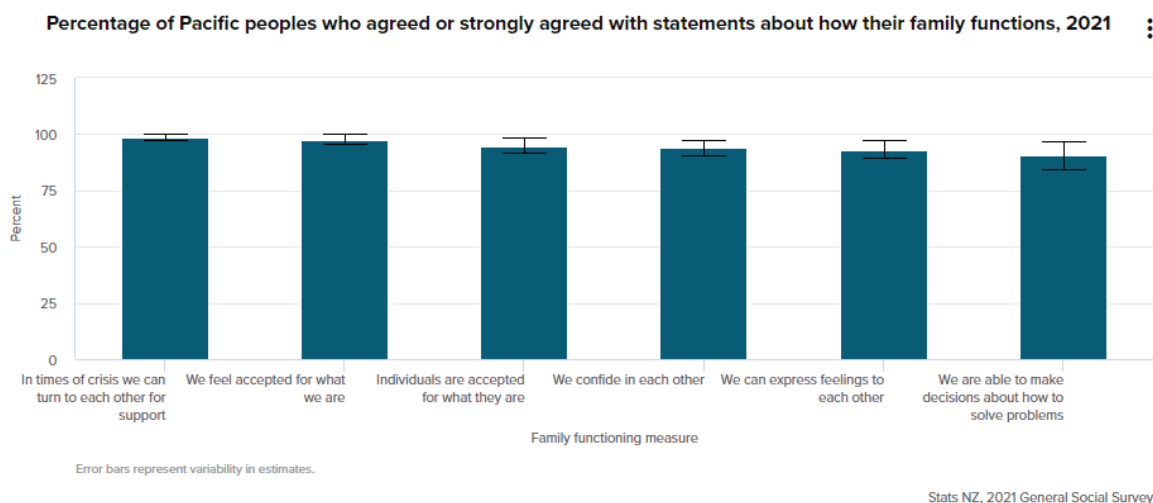
In addition to general family wellbeing, the 2021 General Social Survey collected data on family functioning for the first time.

Family functioning is collected using six questions that give a picture of how families interact and support each other:

- over 90 percent of Pacific people agreed or strongly agreed with all statements relating to family functioning
- 99 percent agreed or strongly agreed that in times of crisis their family could turn to each other for help and support.

These measures can be combined into a general functioning score, giving an indication of how a family is doing overall. On a scale from 1 (worst) to 4 (best), Pacific peoples had a mean score of 3.5, the same as the total population.

Figure 10



Around a quarter of Pacific peoples live in an extended family

In 2018, of the 103,293 Pacific peoples who lived in an extended family, 70,260 were members of a multi-generational extended family, consisting of three or more generations.

The 80–84-year-old Pacific population represented the highest proportion of members living in multi-generation households, indicating older Pacific extended family members tend to live as part of an extended family household. These families typically included children, parents, grandparents, and in many cases, other relatives.

As a result of larger families and intergenerational living, Pacific peoples often need larger homes. Ideally, space is also available for hosting large gatherings.

Young people were also more likely to stay at home longer than other ethnic groups (Stats NZ, 2020b). In 2018, almost one-third of Pacific peoples aged 25–29 years were living as a child in a family nucleus.

Table 1 shows the count of Pacific peoples by their role in their family, and whether they were a member of an extended family in the 2018 Census. See [Download data](#) for all table data.

Table 1

Count of Pacific peoples by role and membership of extended family, 2018		
Role in family	Member of an extended family	Not a member of an extended family
Parent	30,858	59,481
Child	48,768	111,807
Couple only	9,882	14,403
Total people in a family	89,508	185,691
Other people in an extended family but not in a family	13,785	...
Total people in extended families	103,293	...
... not applicable		
<p>Note: A family is a couple, with or without child(ren), or one parent and their child(ren), all of whom have usual residence together in the same household.</p> <p>An extended family is a group of related people and consists of a family nucleus and one or more other related people; or two or more related family nuclei, with or without other related persons, all of whom have usual residence together in the same household.</p>		
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census		

Strong family and social networks aid Pacific parents who work non-standard hours

The 2018 Survey of Working Life showed that Pacific peoples had a slightly higher rate than the total population of working nights (11pm to 5am). In this situation parents in employment often need to use a range of different care options to balance their work and childcare needs.

The [Housing affordability](#) section has more about this aspect.

For parents working at non-standard times, such as nights and weekend work, or those working changing shift patterns, this can be particularly challenging.

Formal childcare options are often not available outside the standard Monday to Friday 7am–6 pm times meaning that informal arrangements are needed. Having multi-generational or multi-family households can be hugely beneficial from this perspective, as can having neighbourhoods and communities with close family and friend ties and relationships.

Working at non-standard times may also be a choice for parents trying to balance work and care, especially where there are two parents working.

While the 2017 Childcare Survey recorded an increase in the proportion of Pacific children attending formal care, 31 percent compared with 18 percent in 2009, informal care arrangements were still a significant form of care for Pacific children.

Thirty-nine percent of Pacific children aged under 14 years had been cared for informally in the previous week, while 25 percent had been cared for by a grandparent, and 13 percent by a family member other than a grandparent or parent who lived elsewhere.

Housing's role in nurturing language and culture

Language is of major importance for the wellbeing of Pacific peoples, so where people live becomes vitally important, as living with community facilitates the transmission of language and culture.

UNESCO (2022) notes that there is a close relationship between language and the physical and spiritual environment, with urbanisation often presenting a challenge.

Table 2 shows the number of people who spoke selected languages by birthplace.

Table 2

Count of speakers of selected languages, by birthplace, total speakers, and non-English speakers, 2018						
	Total speakers			Non-English speakers		
Selected language	New Zealand born	Overseas born	Total	New Zealand born	Overseas born	Total
Samoan	44,991	54,141	101,937	1,761	9,015	11,121
Cook Island Māori	2,034	5,520	7,833	63	447	531
Tongan	14,460	20,418	35,820	690	3,603	4,425
Niuean	1,377	2,661	4,182	39	207	249
Tokelauan	1,038	1,284	2,406	51	147	201
Fijian	777	6,246	7,143	39	360	402
Kiribati	444	1,695	2,199	27	261	297
Nauruan	9	57	69	0	0	0
Rotuman	30	294	330	3	6	9
Tuvaluan	945	1,854	2,898	48	258	312
Vanuatu languages	12	120	135	0	15	18
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census						

Intergenerational living can be very important for language retention. For example, Tokelauan participants in a research project noted the importance of grandparents (Pene, Peita, & Howden-Chapman, 2009). One participant explained:

At home it was mixed. To Granddad it was just Tokelauan. Mum and Dad were English speakers, it was only Granddad that would speak Tokelau, unless a rellie turned up from the islands and didn't know how to speak English, then we would have to speak Tokelau. That was another thing, that's how we picked up the Tokelauan language and that was through Granddad, living with him. (Young woman).

Table 3 shows the proportion of Pacific peoples who spoke only English.

Table 3

Count and percentage of people who spoke only English, by selected ethnic group and total Pacific peoples, 2018			
Selected ethnic group	Speaker of English only	Total ethnic group	Percentage of ethnic group who spoke only English
	Number		Percent
Samoan	76,365	182,721	41.8
Cook Islands Māori	59,787	80,532	74.2
Tongan	39,861	82,389	48.4
Niuean	21,933	30,867	71.1
Tokelauan	4,989	8,676	57.5
Fijian	11,115	19,722	56.4
Kiribati	1,239	3,225	38.4
Nauruan	60	135	44.4
Rotuman	609	981	62.1
Tuvaluan	1,710	4,653	36.8
Pacific peoples total	194,691	381,642	51.0
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census			

Children were more likely to speak a Pacific language if they lived in an extended family and both parents and at least one other person also spoke the language.

Table 4 shows the proportion of New Zealand-born children who spoke selected languages, by who in their extended family spoke that language.

Table 4

Percentage of New Zealand-born children who spoke selected languages, by who in extended family spoke that language, 2018				
Selected language	Both parent and other(s) in extended family speaks	Mother only and other(s) in extended family speaks	Father only and other(s) in extended family speaks	Neither parent but other(s) in extended family speaks
Samoan	73.7	23.5	33.1	5.5
Tongan	64.3	20.0	39.5	18.7
Cook Islands Māori	17.9	8.0	12.5	4.0
Fijian	44.4	10.0	33.3	4.8
Niuean	31.3	18.2	10.0	1.8
Tokelauan	16.7	0.0	22.2	4.8
Source: Stats NZ, 2018 Census				

Pacific peoples' households larger than the national average

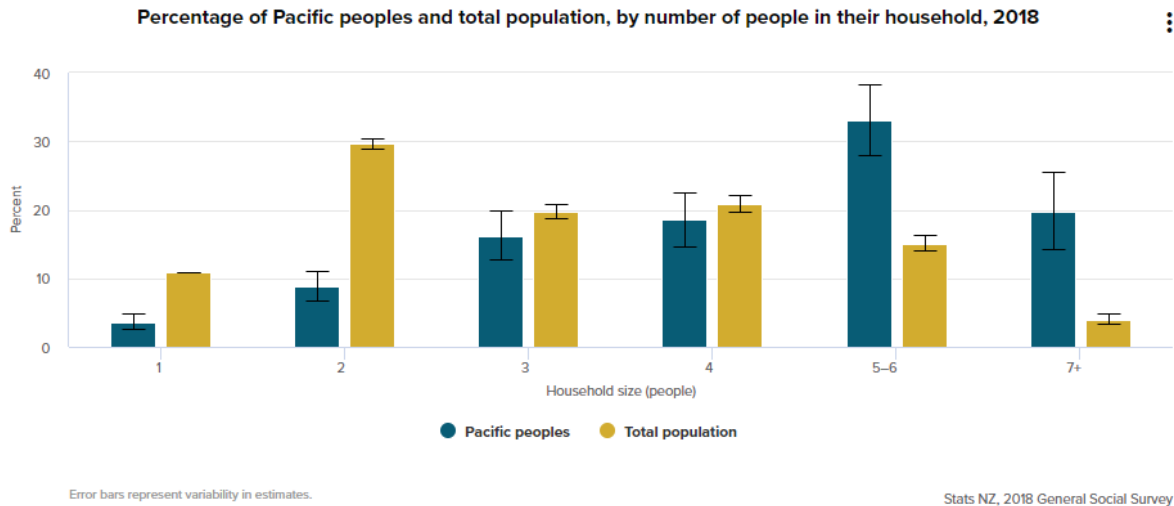
As well as Pacific peoples' families being larger than the New Zealand average, the Pacific peoples' households had more members than the New Zealand average, as recorded in the 2018 General Social Survey.

A household refers to everyone living in the dwelling. For example, more than one family might be living in a household, or additional people such as flatmates might in a household. Understanding the number of people living in a house is important for understanding the size of the dwelling required.

In the 2018 General Social Survey, over half (53 percent) of Pacific peoples lived in a household of five or more people compared with almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the total population.

[Housing suitability](#) has more information on the limited availability of large dwellings, particularly in the rental stock.

Figure 11



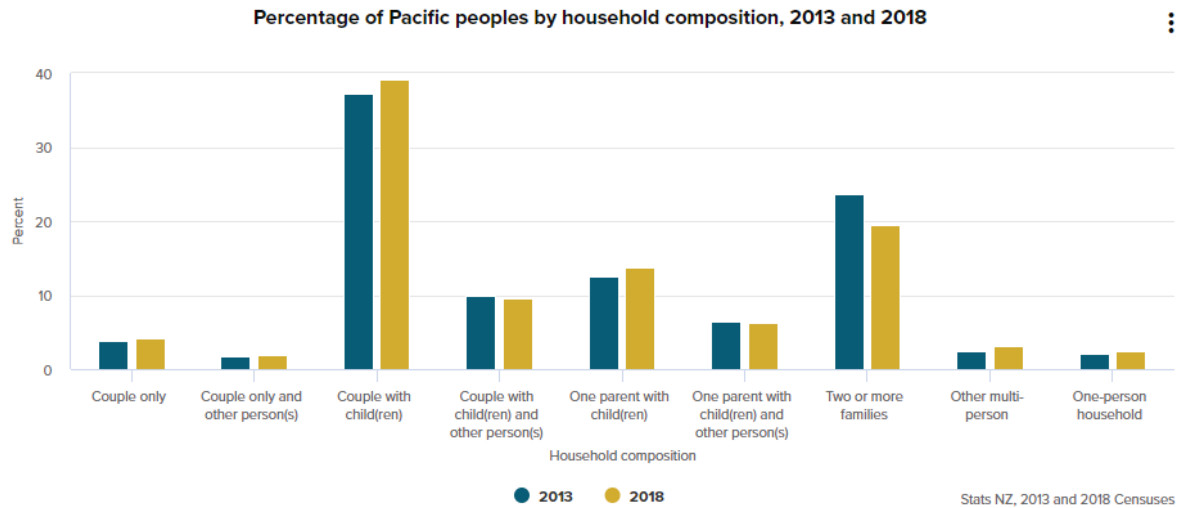
Pacific peoples are most likely to live in couple with children and two or more-family households. Census data gives insights into the type of households that Pacific peoples live in. In the 2018 Census, almost 40 percent of Pacific peoples lived in a household consisting of a couple and children while a further 19 percent lived in a household with two or more families.

Figure 12 shows that this has remained consistent between 2013 and 2018, and a similar pattern can be seen in earlier years.

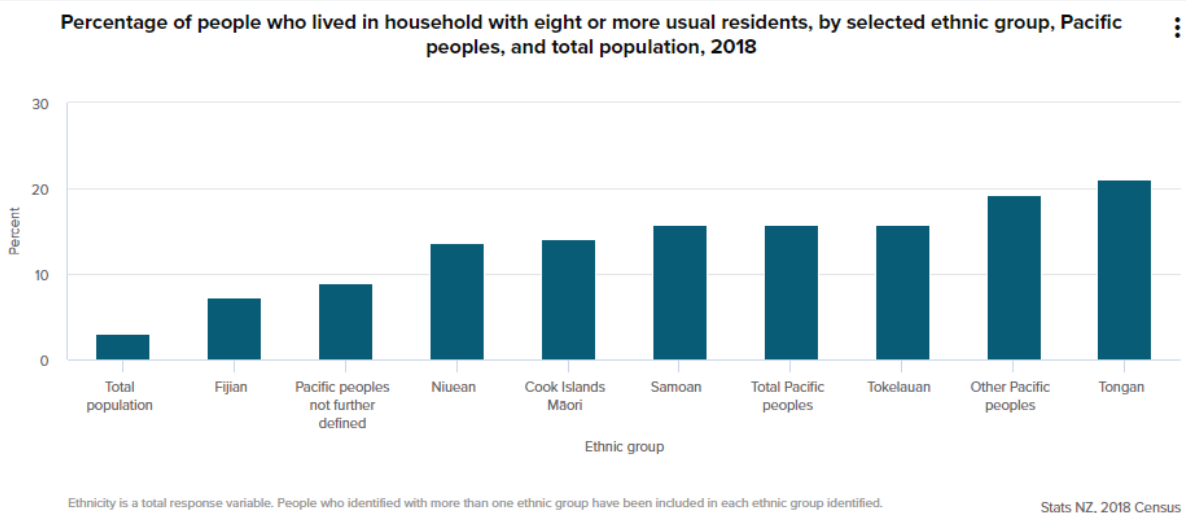
In 2018, 4.2 percent of Pacific peoples lived in a couple-only household and 2.4 percent lived in a one-person household.

In contrast, around one-third of the total population lived in a couple-only or one-person household (23 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

For older age groups, the differences were more striking. Just under one-third of Pacific peoples aged 65 years and over lived in a couple-only or one-person household, compared with just over three-quarters for the total population in the same age group.

Figure 12

Sixteen percent of Pacific peoples lived in a dwelling with eight or more usual residents, compared with 3.1 percent of the total population. People with Tongan ethnicity were most likely to live in large households (21 percent), followed by other Pacific peoples, and people with Tokelauan ethnicity. In contrast, 7.3 percent of people with Fijian ethnicity lived in a dwelling with eight or more usual residents.

Figure 13

Households with two or more families tended to have more people than households with only parent(s) and children.

Place – home ownership, affordability, and living conditions

For a house to be adequate it must have secure tenure, be affordable, be habitable, and be suitable. People also need to be able to access a home.

These key dimensions are the centre of the Housing Statistics Framework (Stats NZ, 2009) and are consistent with the elements identified by the United Nations as crucial for the measurement of housing adequacy (UN Habitat and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009). The housing adequacy framework also recognises the importance of cultural adequacy, such as provision for multi-generational living.

Tenure security – ownership and renting

Security of tenure enables people to establish connections and a sense of belonging. However, renters in Aotearoa New Zealand have often faced insecure tenure.

Tenure security encompasses levels of residential mobility (how often people move house) and other dimensions of security, such as the amount of control a household has over its housing and the degree of certainty about future housing circumstances.

At one extreme, tenure insecurity can result in homelessness, frequent changes of rental accommodation, or use of improvised, makeshift, or mobile dwellings such as caravans, and can reinforce social exclusion and poverty.

At the other extreme, tenure security can provide long-term renters or homeowners with independence, stability, and control over their lives, which provide a basis for community participation. Review of housing statistics report. (Stats NZ, 2009)

Home ownership rates for Pacific peoples and all New Zealand households lower than in the 1980s

Home ownership has fallen for all New Zealanders but has fallen more for Pacific peoples. In 2018, just over one-third (35 percent) of Pacific peoples lived in an owner-occupied dwelling compared with around half (51 percent) in 1986. Nationally, the proportion of households owning their own dwelling peaked at 75 percent in 1991 but had fallen to 64 percent in 2018.

Figure 14

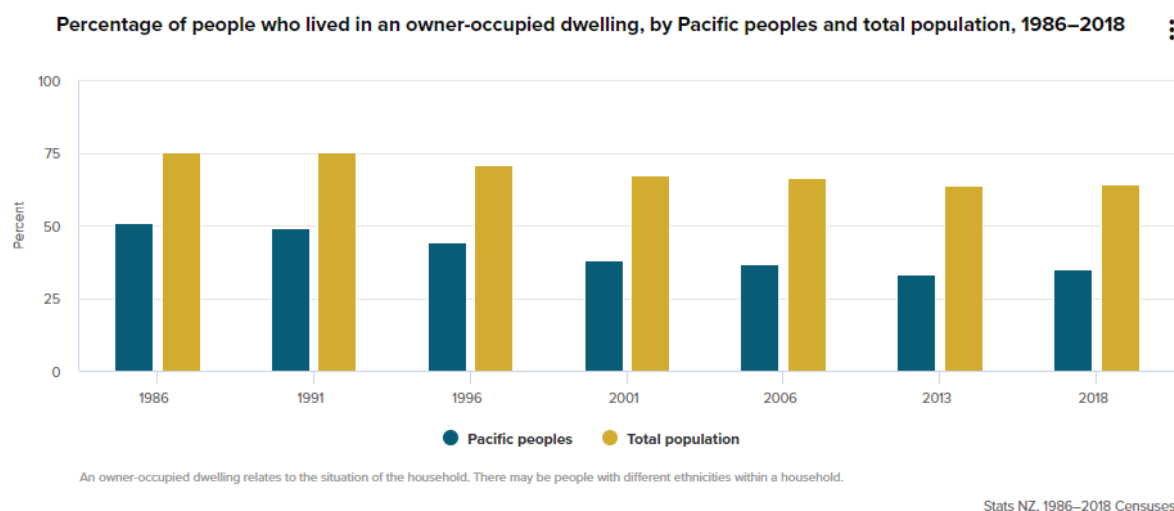
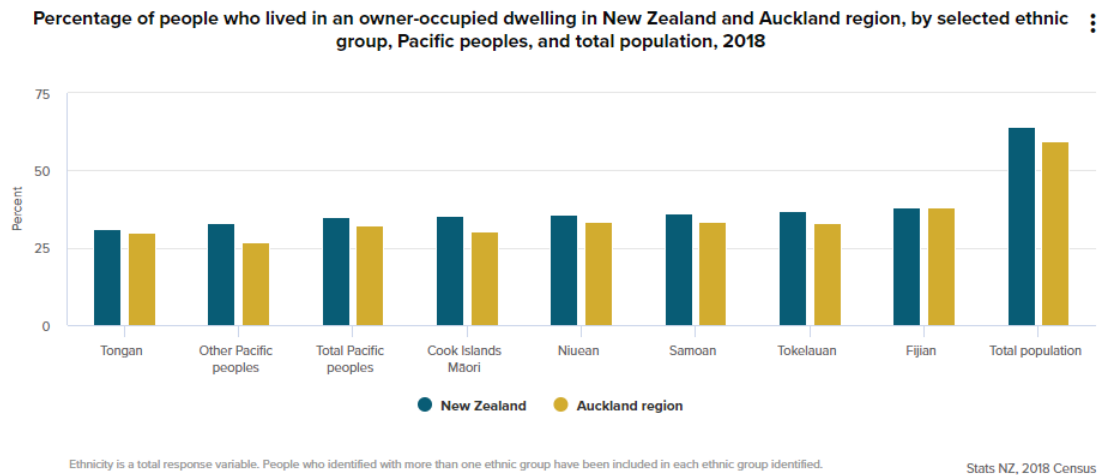


Figure 15 shows the proportion of Pacific peoples living in an owner-occupied dwelling as at March 2018 for Auckland and New Zealand. Home ownership rates were lower for Pacific peoples in Auckland for all groups except for people with Fijian ethnicity.

Figure 15



The census collects household home ownership and on individual ownership.

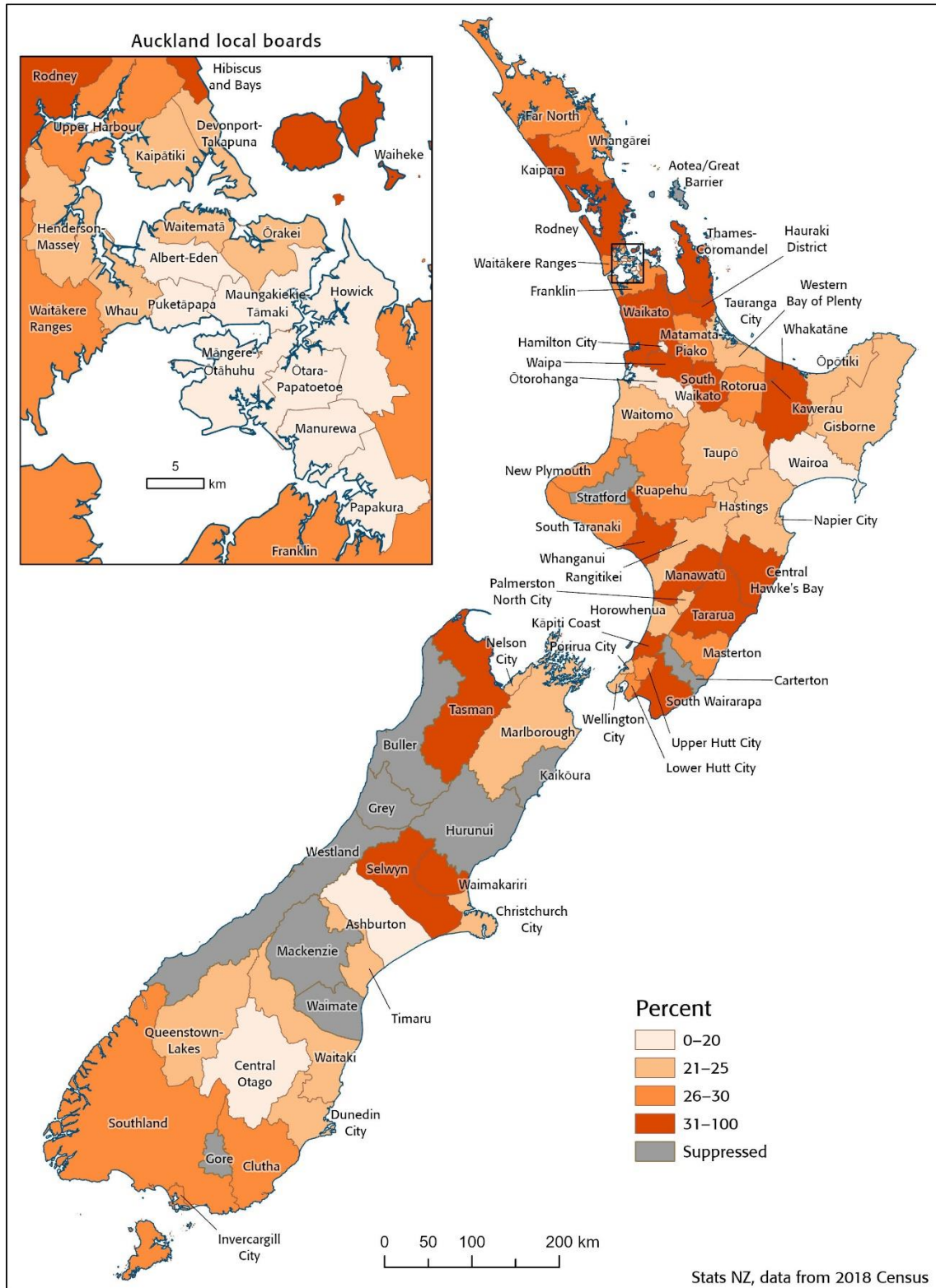
The 'household home ownership' question asks if someone in the household owns the home in which they live. This applies to the household, and people can live in an owner-occupied dwelling but not directly own it – such as a child or a boarder.

The 'individual ownership' question asks if a person owns the home they usually live in. Every New Zealander aged 15 and over is asked this question.

Figure 16 shows the rates of individual home ownership for Pacific peoples by territorial authority (cities and districts) and Auckland local board area. In 2018, home ownership was highest in the Kawerau and South Wairarapa districts (both at 40 percent), and lowest in the Puketāpapa local board area in Auckland (11 percent).

Figure 16

Percentage of Pacific adults who owned the dwelling they lived in,
by territorial authority and Auckland local board area, 2018

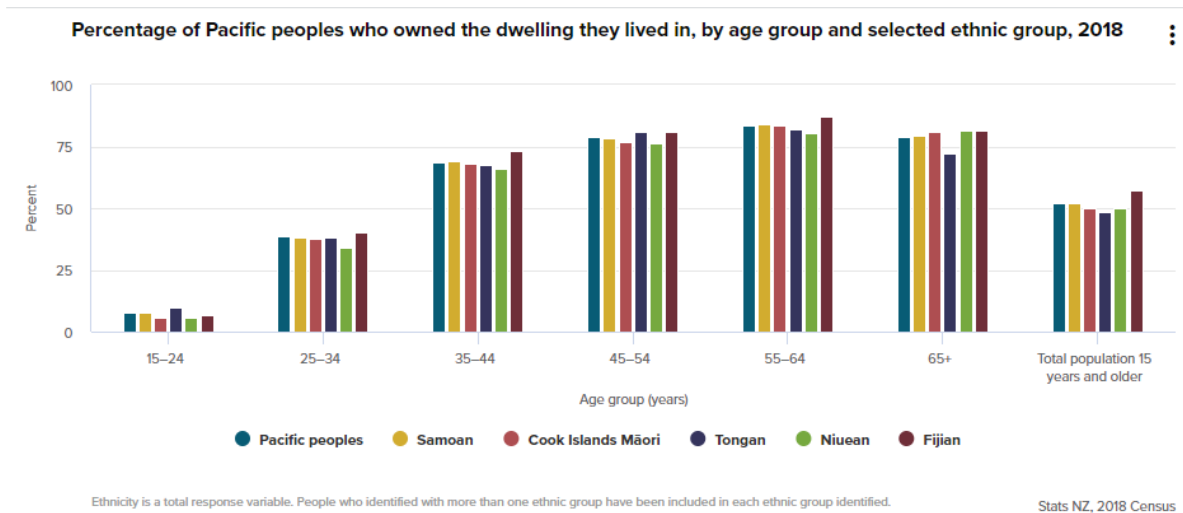


Proportions have been suppressed for areas where the total population of Pacific peoples is less than 100.

The data in figure 17 is for Pacific peoples who were living in an owner-occupied dwelling (household home ownership) and individual home ownership. It shows the percentage of people living in an owner-occupied home who said that they owned it – which refers to the ownership status of the individual.

The figure shows that around half of Pacific peoples living in an owner-occupied dwelling directly owned the home in which they lived. The rate was much higher for people aged 45 and over.

Figure 17



Age structure differences can cause disparities in measures of homeownership

One factor that contributes to disparities in measures of home ownership is the wide difference in the age structure of the groups being compared.

Pacific peoples have a much younger age structure than the total population, which affects comparisons of unadjusted rates for individual home ownership (Stats NZ, 2016).

We can look at these differences by comparing home ownership rates by age group (as in figure 17) and by standardising age.

In 2018, 21 percent of Pacific adults owned the dwelling they usually lived in, contrasting with 52 percent for the total adult population.

By standardising age, we can show what the rates would be if these populations had the same age structure as the total population. The age-adjusted Pacific home ownership rate is 28 percent. This shows the differing age structures of the Pacific population accounts for some, but not all, of the disparity in home ownership rates.

Security of tenure is often greater for homeowners

In Aotearoa New Zealand, home ownership tends to provide great security of tenure.

At the time of the 2018 Census, 1 in 4 (25 percent) Pacific peoples who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling had lived there for 15 or more years, compared with around 1 in 11 who did not live in an owner-occupied dwelling (9.1 percent).

In the 2018 General Social Survey, Pacific peoples who had moved in the last five years were less likely to have moved frequently – that is, five or more times. The proportion of Pacific peoples who had moved five or times in the last five years was 4.1 percent compared with 9.8 percent of all movers in the last five years.

For people living in rented housing, public housing is associated with greater tenure security

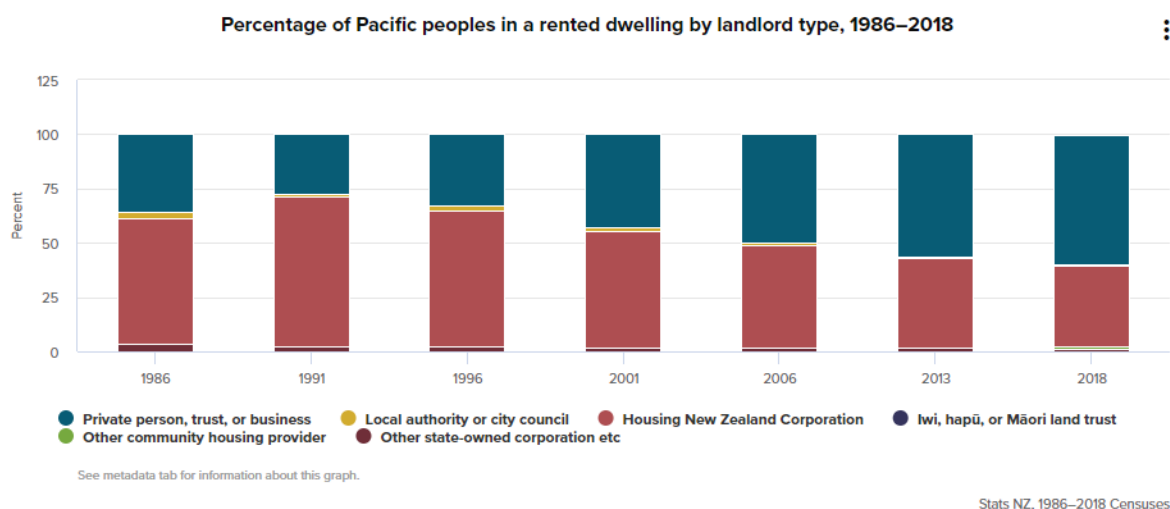
Pacific peoples living in dwellings owned by Housing New Zealand (now part of Kāinga Ora) were the most likely to have lived at their usual residence for a long period.

Around one-third (34 percent) who had rented from Housing New Zealand said they had been in their dwelling for 10 or more years, compared with just 7.9 percent renting from a private person, trust, or business.

Private rentals are becoming more common

Between 1986 and 2018, the proportion of Pacific peoples living in private rentals increased by 69 percent compared with 44 percent for the total population.

Figure 18



Housing affordability

Housing affordability is about the ability of a household to meet their housing costs. Housing affordability depends on house prices, employment, income, housing costs in relation to income, and self-rated housing affordability.

“For some people, all housing is affordable, no matter how expensive it is; for others, no housing is affordable unless it is free” (Stone, 2006).

Rising house prices and rents since the 1980s make housing less affordable for people living in New Zealand

Income adequacy is a key factor affecting the ability to attain home ownership, as it enables saving for a deposit and accessing a loan.

Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly Auckland, has experienced a growth in what is termed the intermediate housing market – that is private renters who are in paid employment but who can’t afford to buy a lower quartile dwelling.

As noted by Mitchell (2015), “The breakdown of the traditional housing pathway in Auckland is likely to result in a growing number of households who will never attain home ownership”.

Auckland has one of the lowest home ownership rates in New Zealand, at 59 percent in 2018.

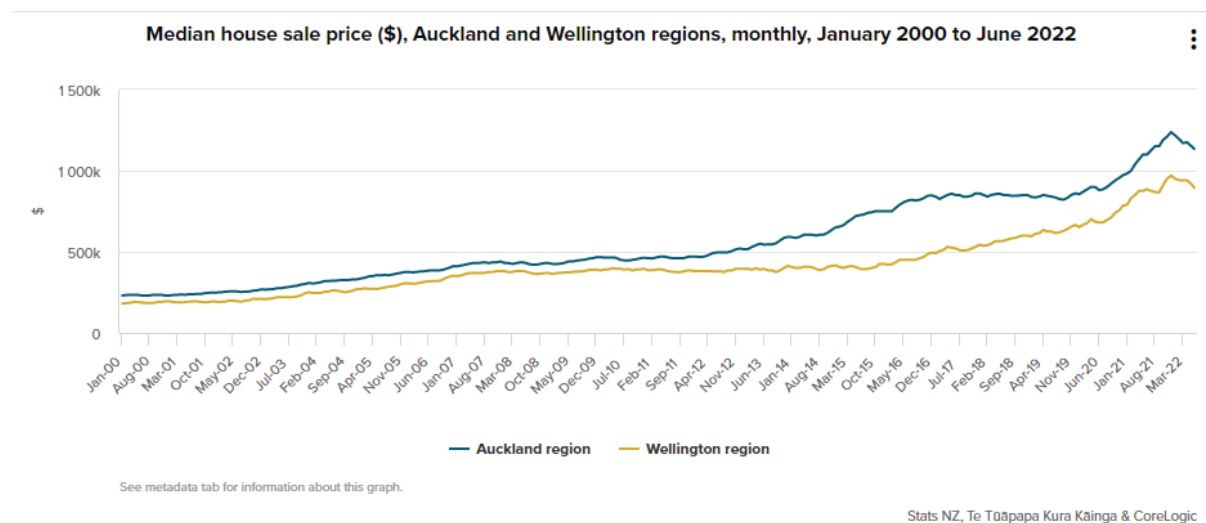
The growing intermediate housing market has consequences for economic and social stability, and the ability of individuals and households to accumulate wealth.

The 2021 Net Worth Survey recorded Pacific peoples as having a mean age-adjusted net worth of \$160,000 compared with \$397,000 for the total population.

The largest individual asset for the total population and for Pacific peoples was owner-occupied dwellings. Home ownership is a significant part of family wealth in New Zealand and provides a means to pass on resources between generations (Stats NZ, 2020b). Therefore, lower home ownership rates have intergenerational impacts on Pacific peoples' wealth.

House prices have risen sharply compared with incomes in recent years, particularly in Auckland and Wellington regions, both of which have high Pacific populations (see figure 19).

Figure 19



Large dwellings are more expensive than small ones to buy and rent. For example, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's market rent tool (as at November 2022) showed the median rent for a one-bedroom rental in Ōtara, Auckland at \$375 per week while the median rent for a four-bedroom house in the same suburb was \$680 per week.

Income and employment closely linked to housing outcomes

Income and employment patterns are important to housing as the ability of a person or a household to access adequate housing depends largely on income.

Information about work and income for this report has been drawn from the both the Household Labour Force Survey and the Survey of Working Life. To allow for more consistent comparisons across the report, the Household Labour Force Survey data used below is the annual average for the year ending in the December 2018 quarter.

As shown in the [Ethnic and demographic diversity section](#), Pacific peoples tended to be younger than the total population, which may be reflected in characteristics where age is a factor, such as occupation and income. The results shown here for income and employment were not age standardised. However, worse labour market outcomes and lower incomes negatively impact access to quality housing regardless of whether age is a key contributing factor.

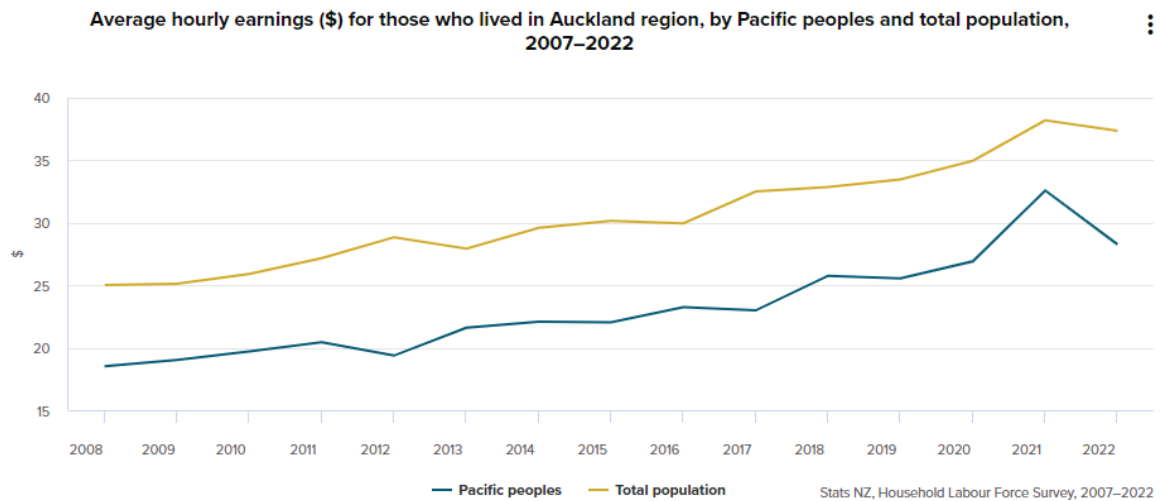
The median weekly income of Pacific peoples in paid employment in the June 2018 quarter of the Household Labour Force Survey was \$866, compared with \$982 for the total population in paid employment. This difference partly reflects the younger age structure of the population.

The median weekly income from all sources collected (income from wages and salaries, self-employment, and government transfers) for Pacific peoples was \$595 in 2018, compared with \$675 for the total population.

Average hourly earnings for Pacific peoples in Auckland, and across Aotearoa New Zealand were lower than for the total population.

Figure 20 shows average hourly earnings for the total population and Pacific peoples since 2007.

Figure 20



Employment rates for Pacific peoples lower than for the total population

The employment rate for Pacific peoples was 61 percent for the year ended December 2018 quarter (annual average):

- 68 percent for Pacific men
- 54 percent for Pacific women.

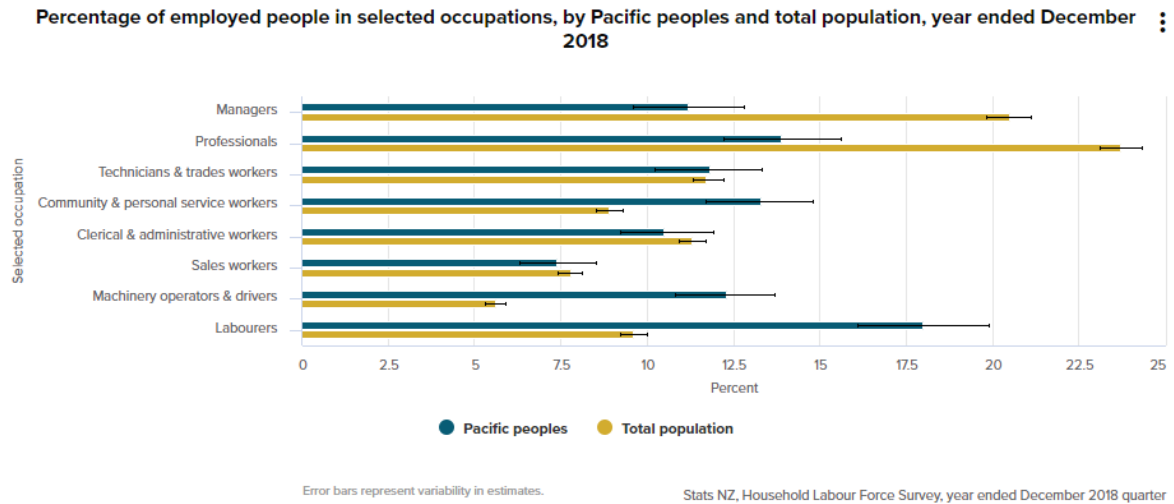
Employment rates were lower for Pacific peoples than for the total adult population.

The unemployment rates for Pacific peoples were also higher than the total population for the year ended December 2018 quarter (annual average):

- 7.9 percent for Pacific people
- 4.3 percent for the total population.

Differences in occupational patterns between Pacific peoples and the total population can affect income.

Figure 21 shows that Pacific peoples were over-represented in labouring roles and under-represented in managerial and professional roles in 2018. Pacific peoples were also more likely than the total population to be in a community or personal service occupation.

Figure 21

Pacific peoples disproportionately worked in occupation groups that often carry a higher health and safety risk and may be less likely to offer flexible work arrangements.

The 2018 Survey of Working Life showed that while 67 percent of managers and 56 percent of professionals had flexible hours available in their main job, only 37 percent of community and personal service workers, 41 percent of machinery operators and drivers, and 45 percent of labourers had flexi time available in their main job.

The 2018 Survey of Working Live also showed that Pacific peoples were more likely to be doing work that was always or often hard physically and/or dangerous when compared with the total population:

- 41 percent of employed Pacific peoples also reported that their job always or often involved hard physical work (see figure 22).
- 25 percent of employed Pacific peoples stated that their job often or always involved working in conditions that were physically dangerous or risky (compared with 15 percent of the total population) (see figure 23)

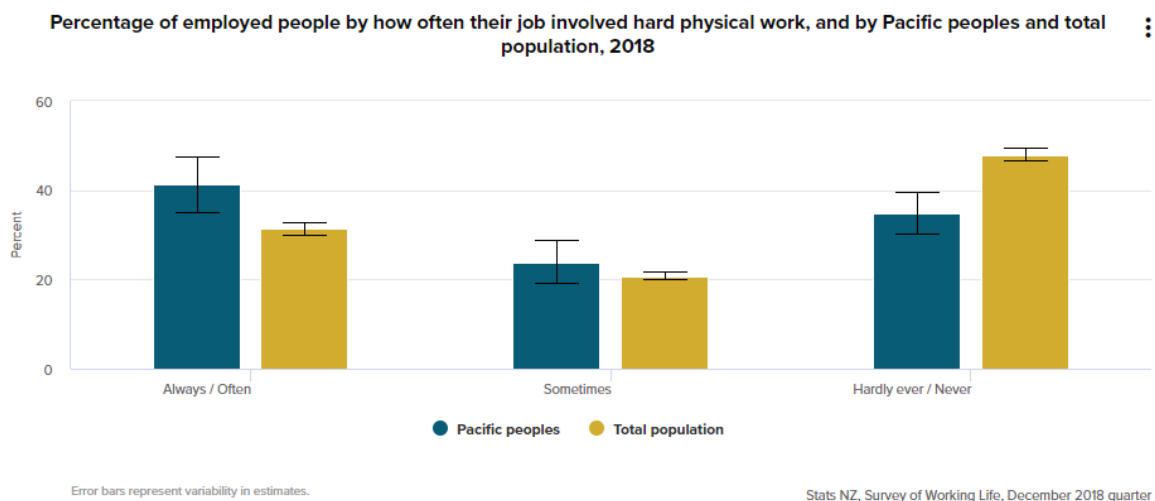
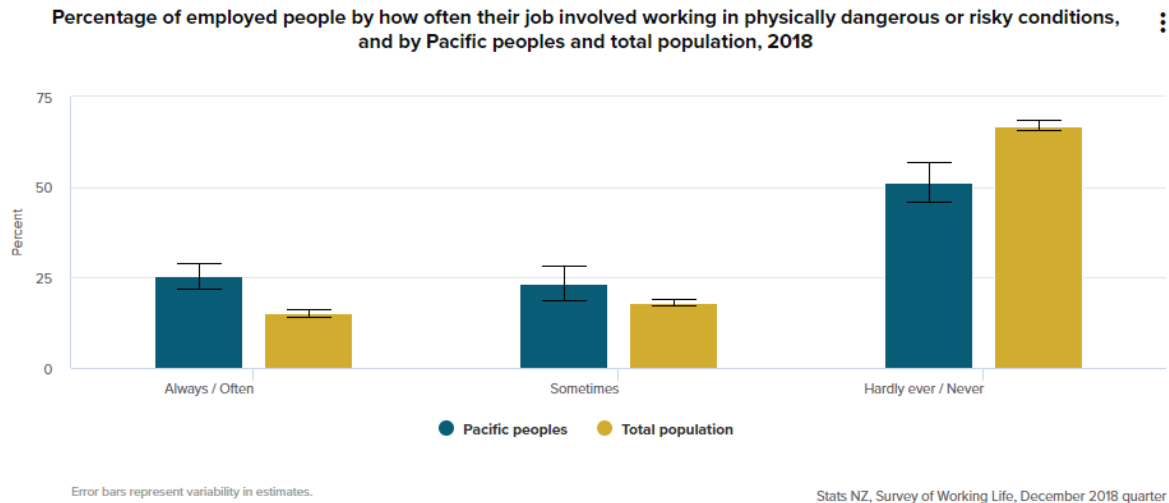
Figure 22

Figure 23

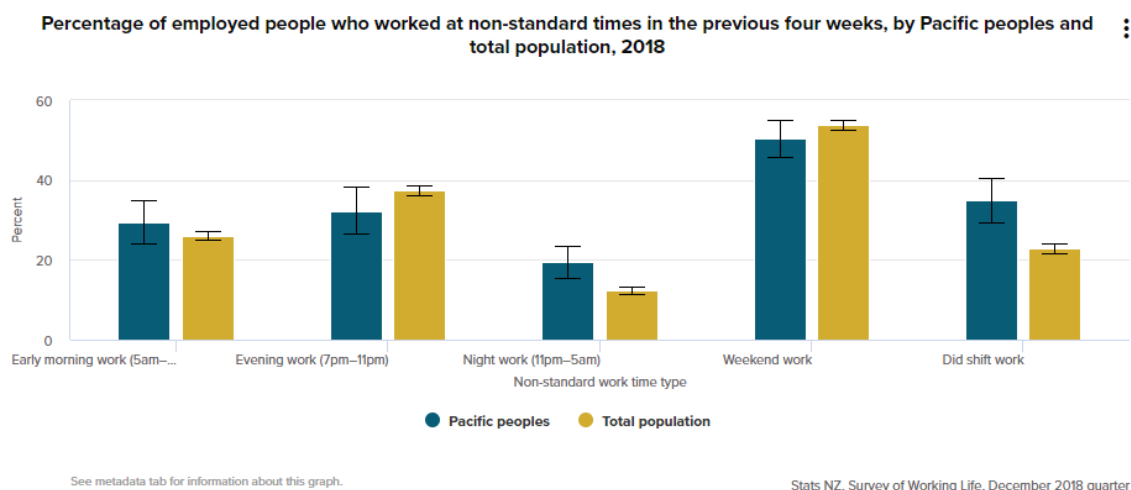
Employed Pacific peoples work more hours and work more often at night

The proportion of employed Pacific peoples in full-time employment was also higher than for the total population (85 percent compared with 79 percent) in 2018. This included a larger proportion who usually work 40 or more hours per week (73 percent of Pacific peoples employed compared with 65 percent for total employed).

Pacific peoples were also more likely to work shifts as part of their main job and to have done some work at night (between 11pm and 5am) in the previous four weeks.

Around one-third of employed Pacific people (32 percent) worked shifts in their main job. This proportion compares with 23 percent for the total population.

The 2018 Survey of Working Life showed that just under one-fifth (19 percent) of all employed Pacific peoples had worked at night compared with 12 percent for the total population. This included 8 percent of employed Pacific peoples having worked at night 6 or more times in the previous four weeks.

Figure 24

Pacific peoples' housing costs and household income

High house prices, combined with lower incomes, makes home ownership less affordable. On average, household incomes for Pacific peoples in 2018 were lower than for the total population.

Figure 25 shows that the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings rises sharply with household income. Fifty-eight percent of Pacific peoples with a household income of \$150,000 or more lived in an owner-occupied dwelling. In contrast, 10 percent of Pacific peoples with a household income of \$15,001 to \$20,000 lived in an owner-occupied dwelling.

As shown in figure 25, a gap in owner-occupied rates exists between Pacific peoples and the total population even for the highest income bracket. Additionally, as this is total income – that is, not adjusted for the number of people in the household – this income also may need to go around more people in larger Pacific households.

Figure 25

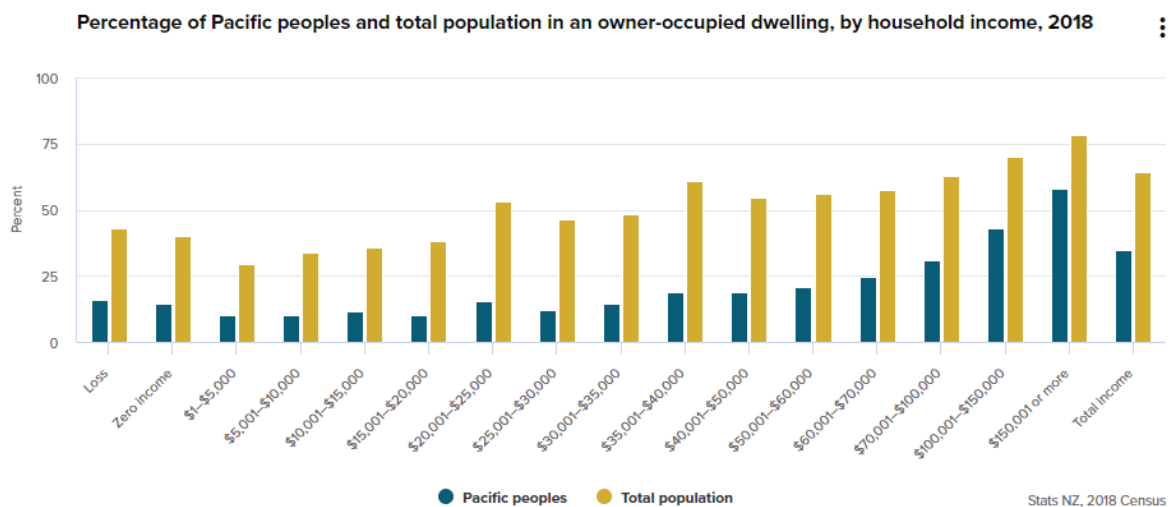
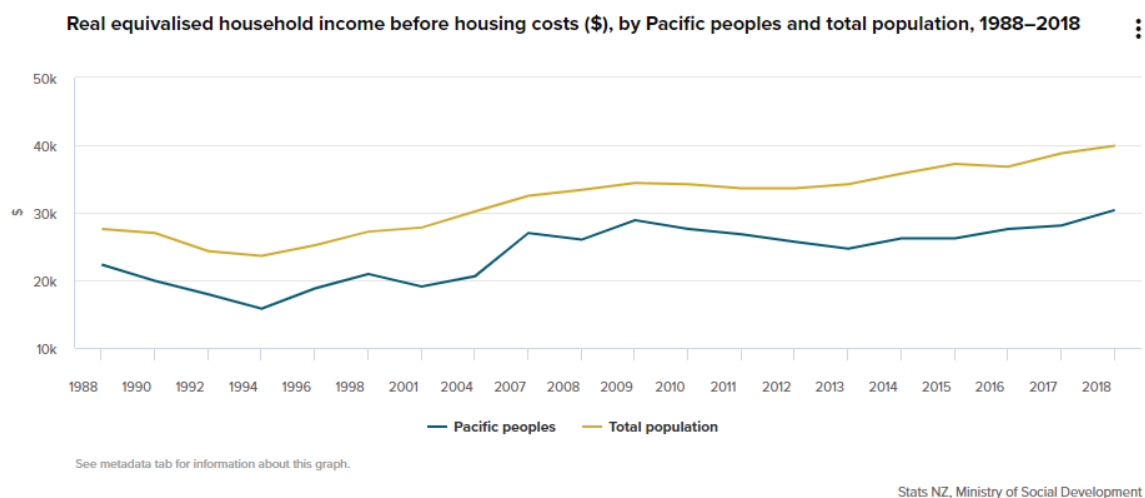


Figure 26 shows that Pacific peoples' household incomes were more negatively affected by the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/2009 than the total population and had only recently recovered by 2018 (Perry, 2019).

Figure 26



Households with Pacific people have less income (after housing costs are deducted) than other households

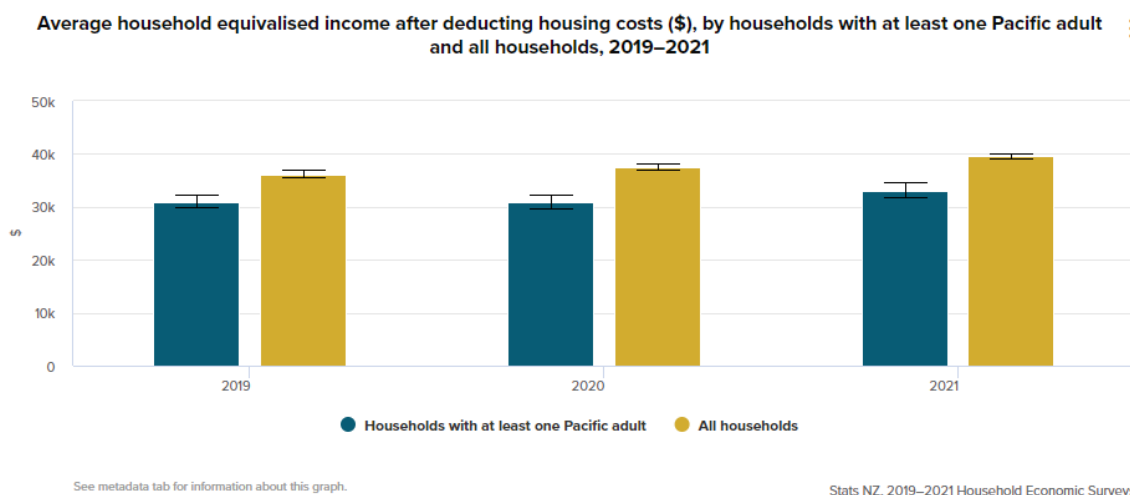
The Household Economic Surveys 2019–2021 showed that households with at least one Pacific person had less available income after housing costs were removed (either rent or mortgage payments), compared with all other households. The Household Economic Survey collects information around housing costs and household income, and is the main source of housing affordability data in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 27 shows the mean amount of household income left after housing costs, adjusted by the number of people in the household (known as equivalised residual income).

In the year ended June 2021, the mean equivalised household income after housing costs were paid was \$33,103 for households with at least one Pacific adult, compared with \$39,583 for all households. The difference in the median was smaller but still significant in 2021, at \$30,281 for households with at least one Pacific adult compared with \$33,090 for all households.

[How we measure child poverty](#) has more information about equivalising household incomes.

Figure 27



Although housing costs to household after tax income were similar for both Pacific peoples and the total population, Pacific peoples' self-rated affordability was lower. Research shows that Pacific families may also share income and contribute to extended family costs (Koloto & Katoanga, 2007).

In the 2018 General Social Survey, Pacific peoples rated their housing as less affordable than the total population, both when renting and owning a house.

Pacific peoples who did not own the house they lived in rated the affordability of their housing as 5.6 out of 10 on average, compared with 6.1 for the total population.

Pacific peoples who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling rated their housing affordability at 5.9 out of 10 on average, compared with 6.7 for the total population.

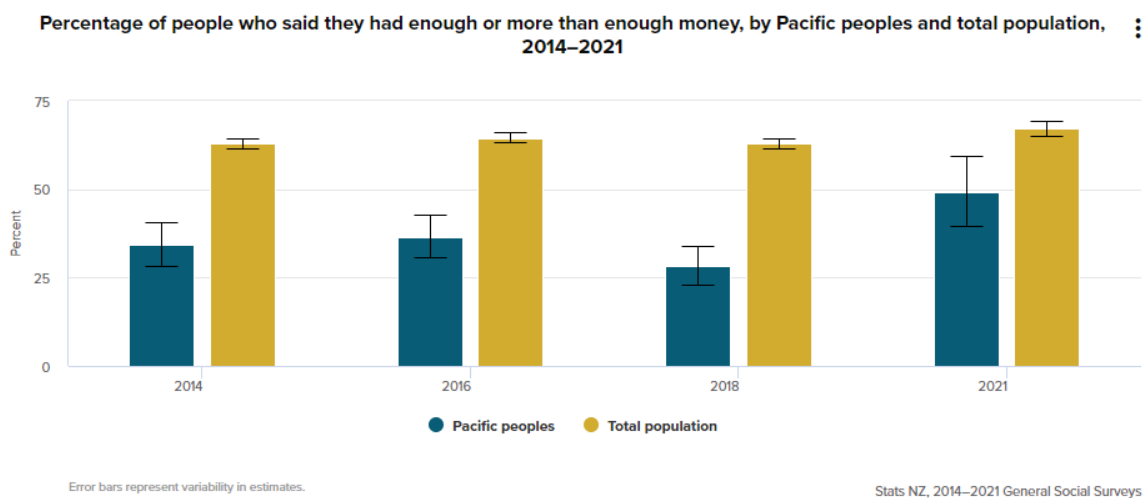
One in seven Pacific peoples said that their house or flat was very unaffordable (15 percent). However, this may be partly because the majority (81 percent) of Pacific peoples lived in major urban areas, compared with 54 percent of the total population. Major urban areas are consistently rated as less affordable than rural areas (at 6.2 out of 10 compared with 6.9 respectively).

Pacific peoples were less likely to have enough money for everyday needs. Housing affordability is closely related to income adequacy. Based on data from the General Social Survey, Pacific peoples were less likely than the total population to have enough or more than enough money to meet everyday needs, but this has improved between 2018 and 2021.

In 2018, the proportion of Pacific peoples with enough or more than enough money was less than half that of the total population (28 percent compared with 63 percent respectively). This proportion increased significantly for Pacific peoples since 2018, to 49 percent in 2021, but remained lower than the total population (67 percent).

The difference in income adequacy between the Pacific population and the total population is significant across all age groups, therefore is not just a result of different age structures.

Figure 28



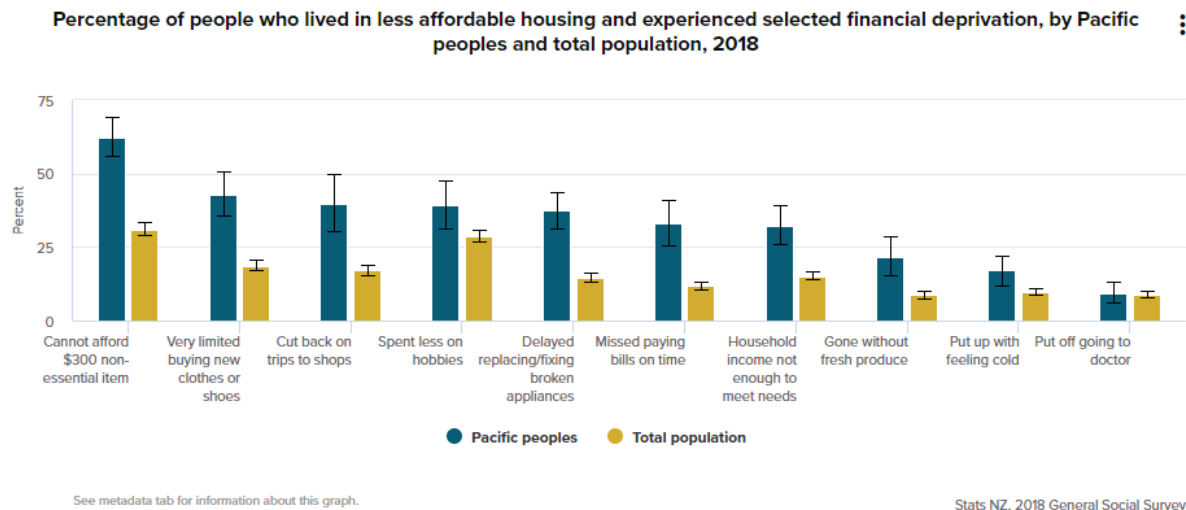
People who rated their housing as unaffordable were less likely to say that they had adequate income to meet their everyday needs.

Sixteen percent of Pacific peoples who rated housing affordability between 0 to 4 out of 10 said they had enough or more than enough income, compared with 34 percent of those who rated the affordability of their dwelling between 8 to 10.

People who rated their accommodation as less affordable were likely to cut down on necessities.

In the 2018 General Social Survey, Pacific peoples who rated their accommodation as less affordable (scoring it 0–6 out of 10) said they cut down on some key essentials to keep costs down.

Around half of Pacific peoples who rated their housing as less affordable said that they cut down on fresh fruit and vegetables at least a little, put up with feeling cold to keep costs down a little, and struggled to pay utility bills on time at least once. Figure 29 shows the most extreme aspects of this situation.

Figure 29

This pattern also emerged in the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2021, where over a third of Pacific young people said that they or their family worried about not having enough money at least sometimes to buy food, pay for power, housing costs, or for transport (Ministry of Social Development, 2021).

Housing habitability

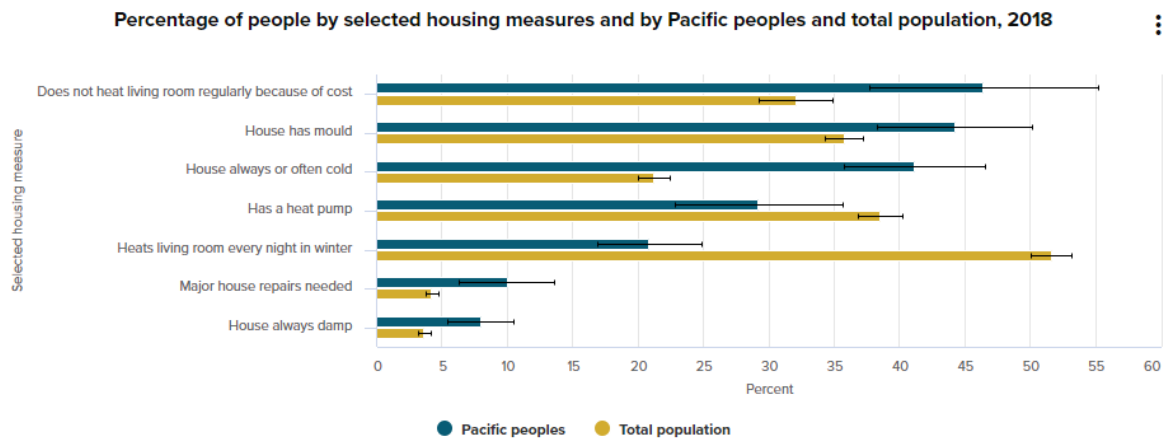
Pacific peoples were more likely to live in less habitable houses than the total population.

Housing habitability is the degree to which housing and its location provide a physically safe, physically secure, and physically healthy environment. It relates to the design, construction, materials, and service provision of a house and to how well it has been built and maintained. Habitability covers the primary function of housing as providing shelter, focusing on the condition of the house's physical structure and the facilities within it. (Stats NZ, 2019)

Extensive research shows the effects of poor housing quality on physical and mental health. For example, the strong link between damp housing conditions and poor respiratory health is evidenced in numerous New Zealand and international studies (Stats NZ, 2014).

But the burden of poor housing is not spread equally – research has shown that Pacific peoples are at greater risk of hospitalisation and death from preventable housing related disease (Howden-Chapman et al, 2021).

Figure 30 shows that for many of the housing measures collected in the 2018 General Social Survey, Pacific peoples experienced worse outcomes with houses more likely to be damp, cold, and mouldy. Much of this was likely to be related to higher rates of renting as evidence shows that rented houses tend to experience greater quality problems than owner-occupied dwellings (Stats NZ, 2020b).

Figure 30

Note that a higher proportion of Pacific peoples lived in Auckland than the total population. Since Auckland is warmer than many other regions of New Zealand, this may partially explain the difference between Pacific peoples and the total population in rates of heating living rooms every night in winter.

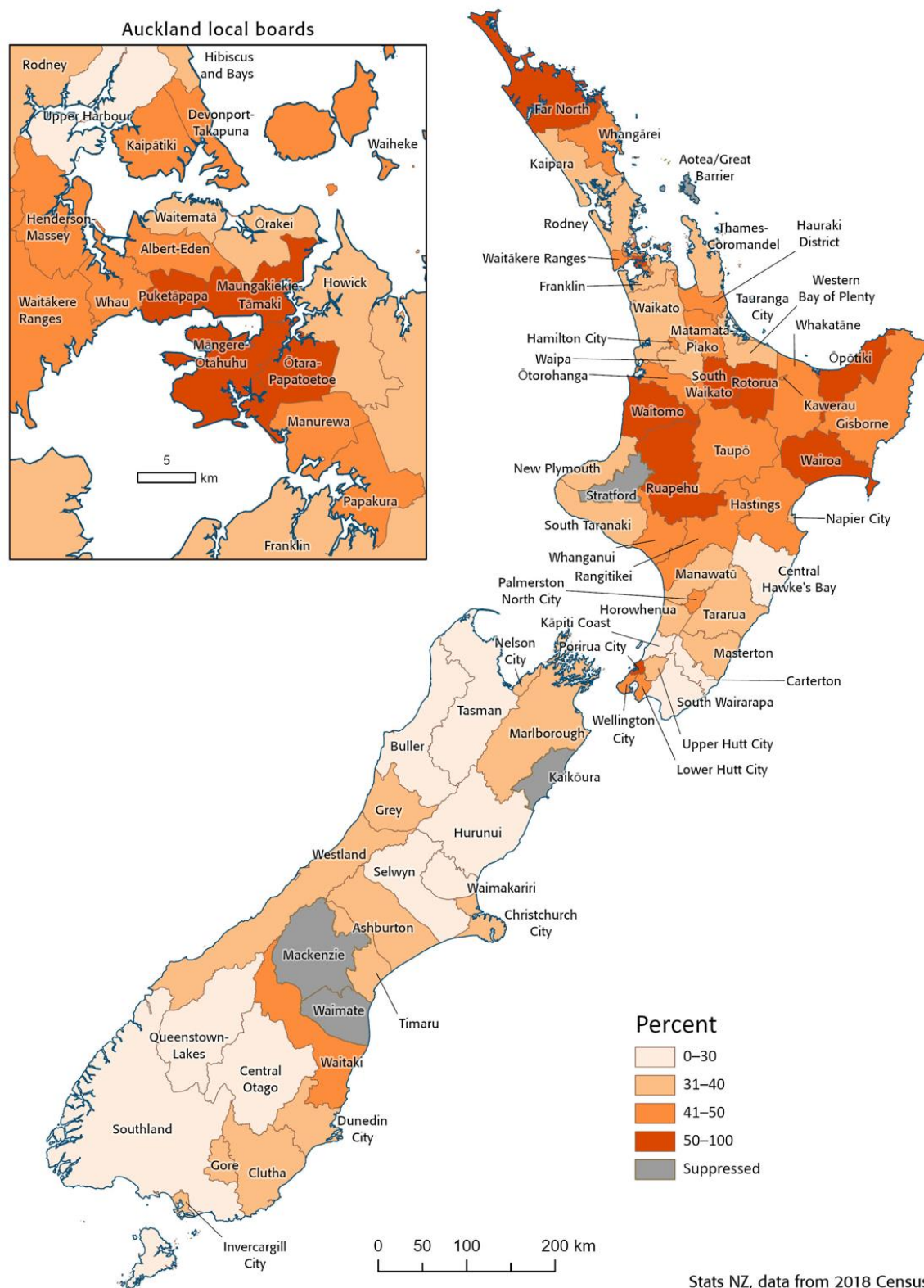
The Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) carried out detailed physical housing inspections and found that dwellings that were not owner-occupied “were more likely to be missing basic amenities, to be cold, damp, and mouldy and to be in need of repair” (Stats NZ, 2020b).

Over half (56 percent) of Pacific peoples lived in housing with at least one problem (for example, cold, mould, dampness), compared with 32 percent for the total population.

Figure 31 shows the proportion of Pacific peoples who lived in a damp dwelling in 2018, by territorial authority (cities and districts) and Auckland local board area. More than half of Pacific peoples in the Far North (57 percent) and Wairoa (57 percent) lived in a damp dwelling, while just 7.1 percent of Pacific peoples in Central Otago lived in a damp dwelling.

Figure 31

Percentage of Pacific peoples who lived in a damp dwelling,
by territorial authority and Auckland local board area, 2018



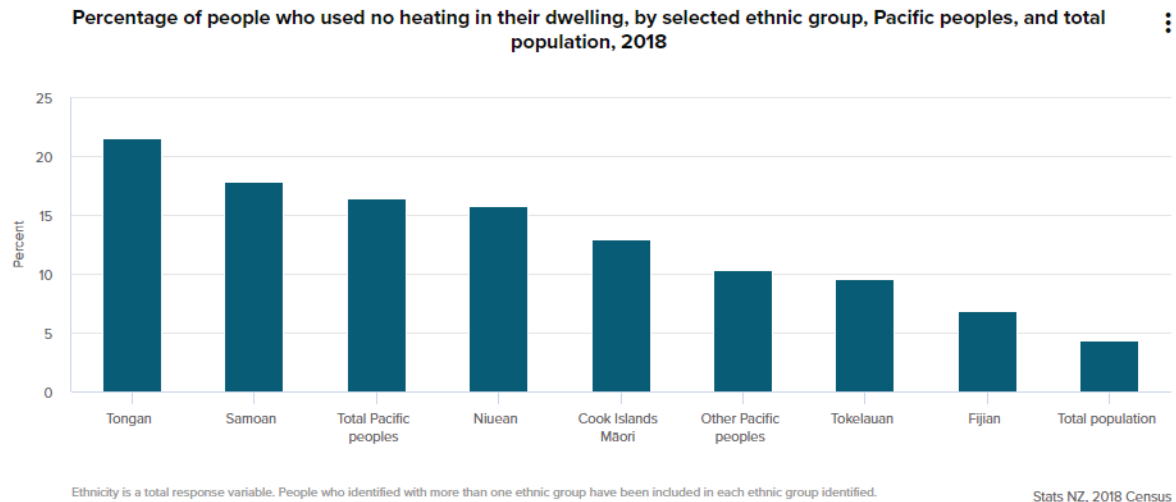
Proportions have been suppressed for areas where the total population of Pacific peoples is less than 100.

2018 Census data also showed higher rates of living in a home with dampness and mould for Pacific peoples (Stats NZ, 2020b). The 2018 General Social Survey data also showed that a higher proportion of Pacific peoples said their homes was always or often cold, but rates of heating were lower.

In 2018, 13 percent of Pacific peoples said their living room was never heated in winter compared with 5.1 percent of the total population. Almost half (46 percent) said it was because it cost too much, compared with the reason given by 32 percent of the total population.

The census also asked about heating type and found that Pacific peoples were more likely to say they did not use heating and were less likely than the total population to have access to efficient forms of heating such as heat pumps and wood burners.

Figure 32



The 2018 Census asked people about their access to seven basic amenities including:

- tap water that is safe to drink
- electricity
- a fridge
- cooking facilities
- a kitchen sink
- a bath or shower
- a toilet.

Pacific peoples were less likely to be living in housing with all basic amenities, at 86 percent compared with 93 percent of the total population. Ninety-three percent of Pacific peoples had water that was safe to drink, and 93 percent had a refrigerator. Ninety-four percent had an electricity supply. All amenities had to be in working order to be counted.

Pacific peoples who had been overseas a year earlier had lower rates of access to basic amenities compared with those who had been elsewhere in New Zealand (Viggers et al, 2021, p 27).

Housing suitability

Pacific peoples were less likely than the total population to rate their house and its location as very suitable.

Housing suitability is “the ability of households to meet their housing needs – to access housing, public services and amenities, and local opportunities such as employment or schooling that is appropriate to their needs; cultural expectations; and their aspirations and preferences. People with different lifestyles and those at certain stages of their life require different types of housing. A commonly used concept of suitability relates to space, particularly in relation to identifying homes that are crowded or where there is underutilisation of space”. (Stats NZ, 2009)

In 2018, 7.9 percent of Pacific peoples considered their housing unsuitable or very unsuitable for their needs, compared with 4.2 percent of the total population.

However, Pacific peoples living in an owner-occupied dwelling were more likely to rate it as very suitable (46 percent compared with only 23 percent of renters). They were also more likely to rate the location as very suitable (53 percent compared with 33 percent of renters).

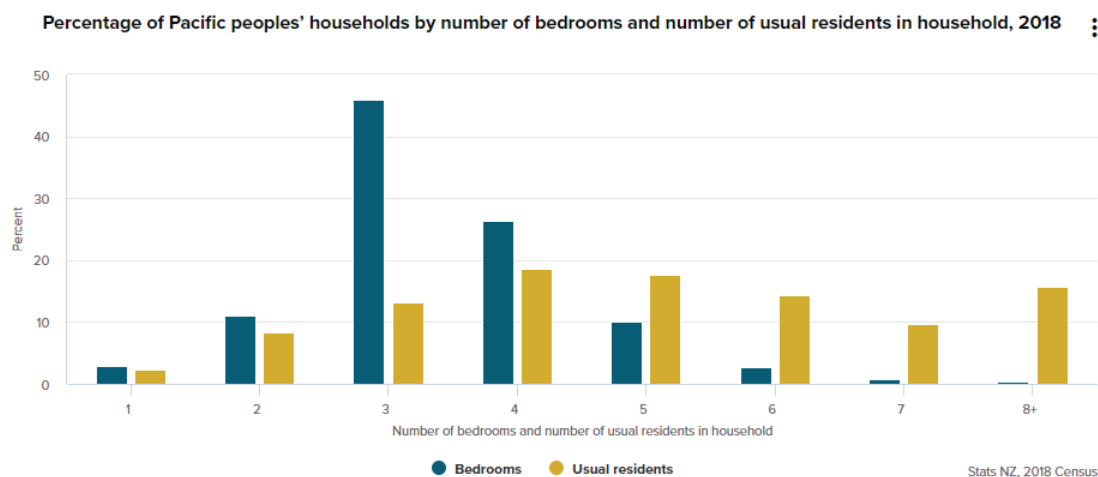
House size tends to be unsuitable for many Pacific families

Almost half of Pacific peoples (46 percent) lived in a house with three bedrooms, which is slightly more than the total population (43 percent).

However, Pacific peoples typically live in large households, with around a quarter living in a house with seven or more usual residents (see figure 33), and are more likely to live in rented properties, where the supply of larger dwellings is limited.

In 2018, just 4.4 percent of non-owner-occupied dwellings in Aotearoa New Zealand had five or more bedrooms. The proportion was slightly higher in Auckland at 5.5 percent, but lower in Porirua and Upper Hutt cities at 3.3 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively.

Figure 33



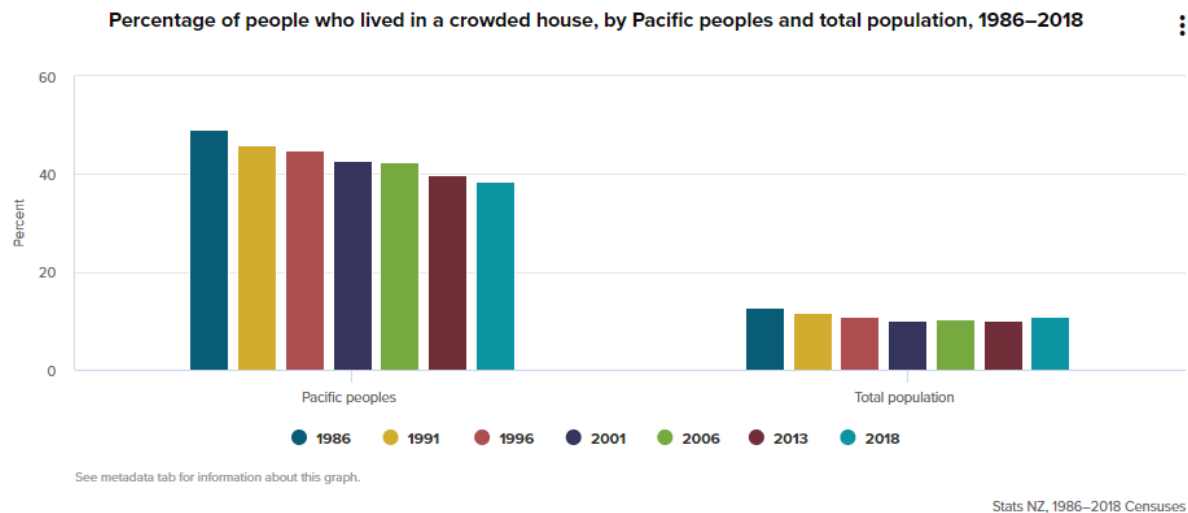
As a result of difficulty accessing suitable housing, Pacific peoples had less space than the total population, which may have been an issue in COVID-19 lockdowns. The lack of larger dwellings and more flexible space is also likely to be an issue in the future.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2022) noted the need for housing that is more suited to intergenerational living:

An ageing and increasingly diverse population will need an increasingly diverse housing stock, but the housing stock remains dominated by dwellings with three bedrooms.

Larger families and smaller dwellings result in Pacific peoples being more likely to live in a crowded house. In 2018, almost 4 in 10 Pacific peoples were living in a dwelling without enough bedrooms for the people living there.

A crowded house is one where the dwelling is too small to accommodate the number of people who live in it. There are a number of different measures of household crowding, but the measure used by Stats NZ is the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (nd) (CNOS), which calculates the number of bedrooms needed based on the demographic composition of the household.

Figure 34

In a study by Pene, Peita, & Howden-Chapman (2009), young people were interviewed about their experience of living in an extended family, their experience of housing, and the experiences of young people in one family who moved into a large purpose built HNZN dwellings.

Participants in the study emphasised the importance for them of living with extended family, but that the lack of space could be a real problem at times.

Crowded houses without enough ventilation could become damp and mouldy, affecting people's health and wellbeing. There was sometimes a lack of space to all sit together at a table, to study or practice handcrafts, and there were practical difficulties of many people and only one bathroom.

After moving into their new purpose-built dwelling, the participants in the study were overwhelmingly positive about the availability of space to study but also to come together as a family.

We can now have more family gatherings in the lounge, which we could not do very often in our old house because it was too small. (Pene, Peita, Howden-Chapman, Viggers, & Gray, 2009)

Homelessness for Pacific peoples

Difficulties in accessing homes means Pacific families can struggle to find adequate housing.

Housing affordability (and evidence of discrimination in the rental market) are issues for Pacific families when accessing adequate housing.

A research study in the mid-2000s (Saville-Smith & Fraser, 2004) found that landlords most preferred professional or retired couples as tenants. Landlords explicitly named their least preferred tenants as large families, followed by students.

The effects of discrimination on housing for Pacific peoples was identified as early as the late 1980s (Milne & Kearns, 1999).

In a report on Pacific housing experiences (Koloto and Associates Ltd et al, 2007) people recounted experiences of racism when people were attempting to rent or buy housing:

When I tried to find a flat to rent I ring them up and they say, “Yes, you can come around.” But when you arrive at the gate or at the door they look you up and down and say, “I am so sorry, it has been taken.” But you just rang them about half an hour or an hour that you are coming. That’s really telling you that it is discrimination because when you turn up you have different coloured skin. They assume that we are all the same as well that people are not responsible.

Having European ethnicity was associated with fewer moves and predicted ease of accessing rental housing (Witten et al, 2017).

Housing is often inadequate in size for Pacific peoples. A recent thesis (Bremer, 2020) highlighted the mismatch between housing stock and the needs of Pacific families, with experience of discrimination also meaning that people struggled to obtain good quality housing:

Fundamental spatial issues mean that many homes can’t cope with the pressures of an extended family unit and with the current housing market in Auckland it means the only attainable options for many families are small, cold and damp, introducing additional issues like crowding. With a culture that so highly values family and community, a housing typology that instead promotes individualism severely inhibits the ability of Pacific people to practice and maintain their cultural identity.

At its most extreme, discrimination and inability to access housing can result in homelessness.

Homelessness has become of increasing concern in recent years to researchers and policymakers. University of Otago researchers (Amore et al, 2013) developed a methodology to estimate homelessness that has highlighted inequalities in access to housing.

Aotearoa New Zealand’s best information on homelessness (otherwise referred to as severe housing deprivation) comes from the work of these researchers from the University of Otago (see Stats NZ, 2020b for more information).

Using both the 2018 Census and some administrative data they estimated that around 2 in 100 New Zealanders experienced severe housing deprivation in 2018. Largely because of the higher proportion of Pacific peoples living in uninhabitable housing (defined as lacking at least one of six basic amenities) and sharing accommodation, Pacific peoples had the highest rates of severe housing deprivation as at March 2018.

Table 5 shows the number and prevalence rate of people who were severely housing deprived by housing deprivation type, for Pacific peoples and the total population.

Table 5

Severe housing deprivation in New Zealand, 2018				
Severe housing deprivation category	Pacific peoples		Total New Zealand	
	Number of people	Prevalence rate per 10,000	Number of people	Prevalence rate per 10,000
Without shelter	222	5.8	3,624	7.7
Temporary accommodation	521	13.7	7,929	16.9
Sharing accommodation	8,625	226.0	30,171	64.2
Uninhabitable housing	12,690	332.5	60,399	128.5
Total	22,058	578.0	102,123	217.3
Source: Data from 2018 Census and admin sources, published by the University of Otago and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.				

We don't have more recent information on severe housing deprivation as this work needs to be updated after the 2023 Census. However, we do know that due to a combination of factors, such as housing supply and affordability constraints, the waitlist for social housing has grown substantially since 2017.

The Ministry of Social Development (nd) notes that when people in New Zealand are assessed as requiring public housing, their needs are recorded on the social housing register, which is comprised of a housing register (for people yet to be housed) and a transfer register (for people in public housing who are eligible to move to another property).

As at 31 March 2018:

- 9,696 primary applicants were on the waitlist, known as the social housing register.

By the end of 2021:

- 30,750 primary applicants and 32,484 children were on the register.

Figure 35 shows the number of applicants who identified with a Pacific ethnicity and the number of Pacific children on the social housing register. Pacific children are defined by the ethnicity of the primary applicant.

As of 31 December 2021, there were 5,235 applicants who identified with a Pacific ethnicity on the waiting list and 8,811 children.

Figure 35

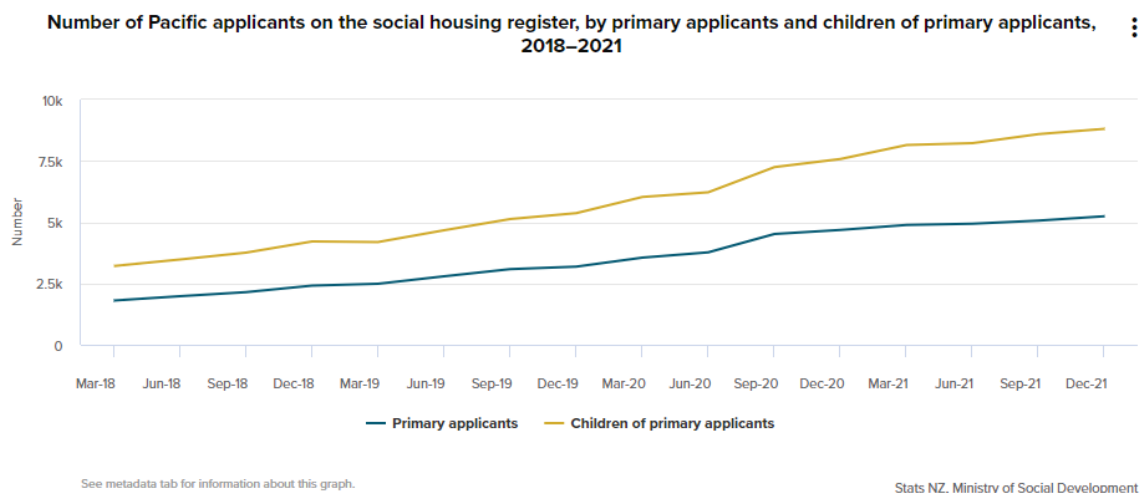
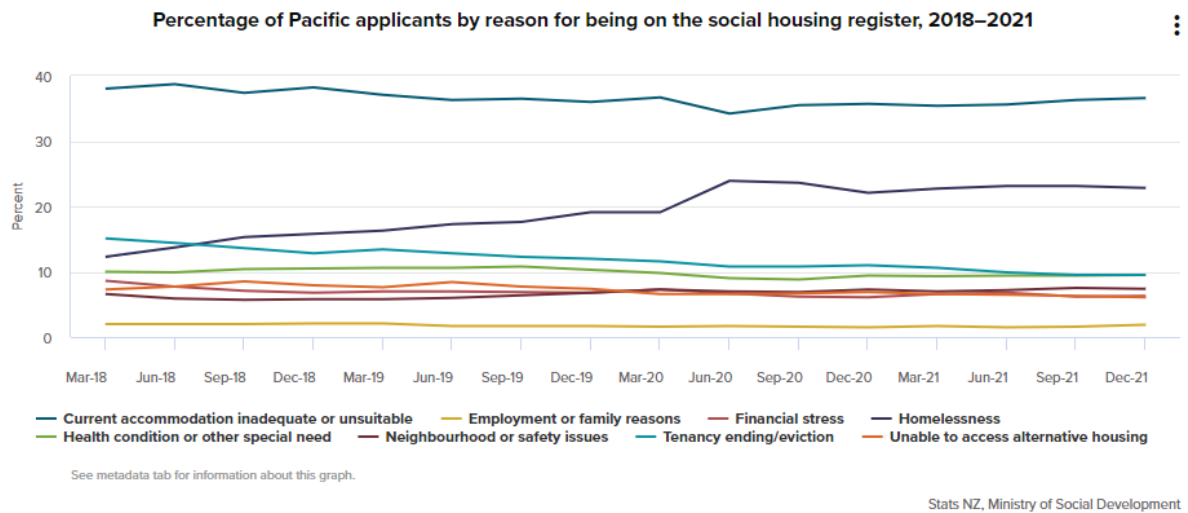


Figure 36 shows reasons for Pacific peoples being on the social housing register between March 2018 and December 2021.

The most common reason for being on the register was because current accommodation was inadequate or unsuitable (at around 37 percent) and has remained largely unchanged since March 2018. However, homelessness as a reason for being on the register almost doubled, increasing from 12 to 23 percent, overtaking tenancy ending/eviction as the second most common reason.

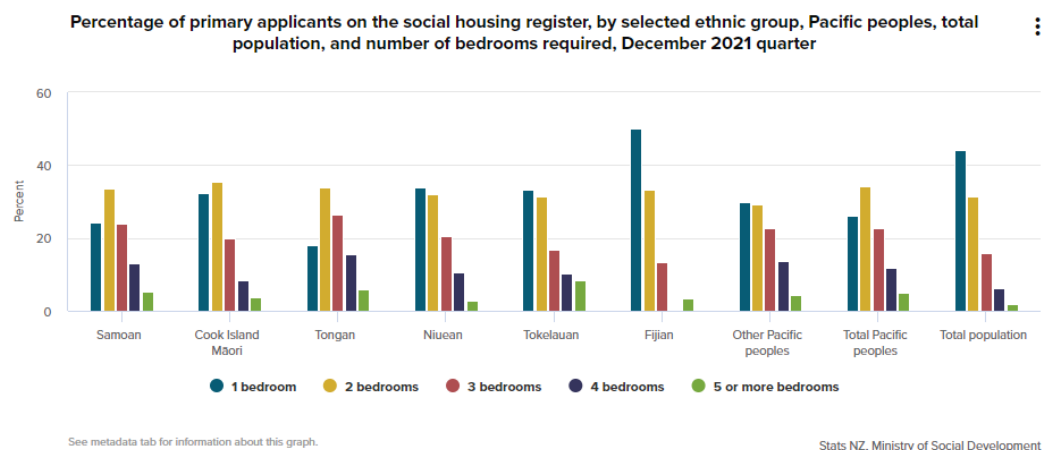
Figure 36

Of the Pacific groups, reasons for being on the register varied. For example, people with Tongan ethnicity were most likely to be on the register because their housing was inadequate or unsuitable (41 percent), which was higher than the other Pacific groups, and much higher than the national total of 27 percent.

Current accommodation for Pacific peoples on the housing register in December 2021 also varied, with:

- 20 percent living in social housing
- 21 percent living in private rentals
- 26 percent living in emergency housing
- 16 percent living in boarding houses
- 8 percent temporarily sharing with friends and family.

Pacific peoples were more likely to require larger dwellings, with 17 percent requiring four or more bedrooms compared with 8 percent nationally.

Figure 37

Wellbeing – interactions with housing outcomes

Measuring wellbeing

Wellbeing is a complex, non-standardised concept, which can make measuring it difficult. However, it is widely agreed that it is multidimensional and made up of both subjective factors, such as whether a person is “happy”, and objective factors, such as material wellbeing.

When measuring subjective wellbeing, it is common to focus on three main aspects (OECD, 2013):

- Evaluation: how satisfied are you with life?
- Eudemonia: do you have meaning and purpose in your life?
- Experience: how are you feeling right now?

The 2021 General Social Survey recorded:

- Overall life satisfaction (evaluation) for Pacific peoples averaged 7.4 out of 10.
- Most Pacific peoples said the things they do in life are worthwhile (eudemonia), with an average rating of 7.9 out of 10.
- The average mental wellbeing (experience) for Pacific peoples was 59 out of 100, on the WHO-5 index.

Many factors contribute to a person’s wellbeing

Whilst measures of subjective wellbeing provide an indication of how people are feeling about their lives overall, they do not give a deep understanding of the factors that are driving these feelings. Such factors may include health, income and wealth, housing, social connections and family, civic engagement, and culture.

To understand the different factors affecting wellbeing, government agencies and experts have developed several wellbeing frameworks. These frameworks differ in their target populations and focus.

Frameworks that are relevant to Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand include:

- The Treasury’s Living Standards Framework – a widely used framework that aims to capture the wellbeing of all New Zealanders (Treasury, 2021).
- The Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001) – a health-focused framework that incorporates the values and beliefs of Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tongans, Niueans, Tokelauans, and Fijians. It is based on the metaphor of a Samoan house, or fale, made up of the foundation (family), roof (culture), and four pillars (spiritual, physical, mental, and other), encircled by environment, time, and context (see also Ponton, 2018).
- The Fonua model – a health-focused framework based on Tongan values. It is made up of five dimensions (physical, mental, spiritual, community, and environmental) and four phases for maintaining and improving health (Action Point, nd).

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples has also recently developed a strategy and wellbeing framework that aims to improve the wellbeing of Pacific peoples. Their goals include growing prosperous Pacific communities and resilient and healthy Pacific peoples. These goals acknowledge that wellbeing depends on many interwoven strands and intersect with the wellbeing frameworks outlined above.

Although wellbeing looks different for different cultures and populations, some common themes emerge, both within international research, and the frameworks and strategies employed locally.

One theme in particular is the importance of the following dimensions for wellbeing:

- physical and mental health
- family and community
- housing
- cultural identity and belonging
- adequacy of income for everyday needs.

The following sections explore how housing outcomes interact with these dimensions of wellbeing, as well as overall measures of subjective wellbeing such as life satisfaction, for Pacific peoples. Data from the 2018 General Social Survey is used, unless otherwise specified, as it contains extra questions regarding housing and health and has a larger sample size than the most recent 2021 iteration, making it more appropriate for this analysis.

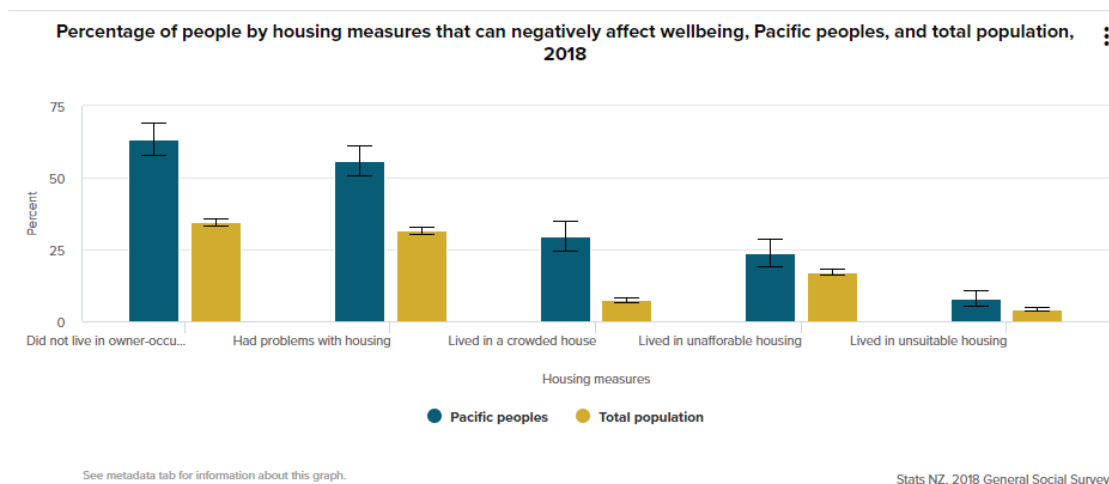
Wellbeing and housing

Pacific peoples over-represented in poor housing

As discussed in previous sections, various sources of data suggest that Pacific peoples are over-represented in measures of poor housing, including affordability, tenure, crowding, suitability, and housing condition. These disparities can be summarised using data from the 2018 General Social Survey:

- 63 percent of Pacific peoples lived in a non-owner-occupied house, compared with 34 percent of the total population.
- 56 percent of Pacific peoples lived in a house with at least one major housing problem, compared with 32 percent of the total population.
- 29 percent of Pacific peoples lived in a crowded house, compared with 7.4 percent of the total population.
- 24 percent of Pacific peoples rated their housing very unaffordable (0 to 4 out of 10), compared with 17 percent of the total population.
- 7.9 percent of Pacific peoples deemed their housing unsuitable or very unsuitable, compared with 4.2 percent of the total population.

Figure 38



The proportions above may differ slightly from those presented in previous sections, due to being from different sources (2018 Census and General Social Survey), however the disparities between Pacific peoples and the total population are consistent.

Home ownership is associated with important aspects of wellbeing

Living in a non-owner-occupied dwelling is associated with lower life satisfaction, for both the total population and Pacific peoples. Pacific peoples who lived in a non-owner-occupied dwelling in 2018 rated their life satisfaction on average at 7.3 out of 10, compared with 7.8 for Pacific peoples who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling.

Home ownership is also associated with other important aspects of wellbeing, such as income adequacy. Pacific peoples who did not own the dwelling they lived in were less likely to have enough or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs than those who owned the dwelling they lived in, at 23 percent compared with 38 percent respectively.

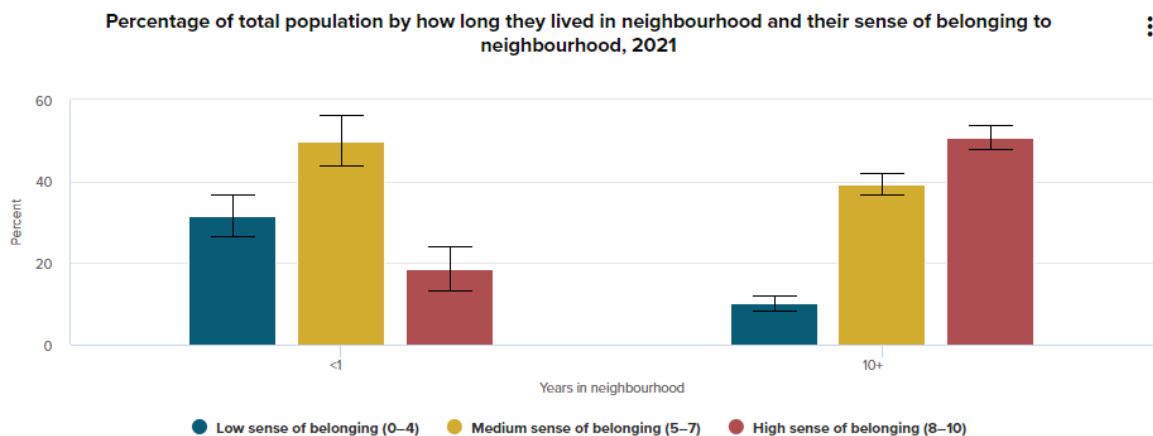
Owner-occupiers have a greater sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods. Being able to stay in a dwelling for longer allows people time to put down roots and build relationships.

In both the 2016 and 2021 General Social Survey, owner-occupiers had a higher mean rating for sense of belonging to neighbourhood. In 2021, the mean rating for people living in an owner-occupied dwelling was 6.7 out of 10 compared with 6.3 out of 10 for non-owner-occupiers (total population).

However, despite lower home ownership rates, Pacific peoples' sense of belonging to a neighbourhood was similar to the total population at 6.5 out of 10 compared with 6.6 out of 10 for the total population.

Nationally, only 19 percent of people who had lived in a neighbourhood for less than a year gave a high rating (8 to 10 out of 10) for sense of belonging, compared with 51 percent of people who had lived in the neighbourhood for 10 or more years. The same pattern emerged when looking at Pacific peoples, but because of the small sample size the differences were not significant.

Figure 39



See metadata tab for information about this graph.

Stats NZ, 2021 General Social Survey

Housing problems are associated with poorer overall wellbeing and health

Extensive studies have shown a link between poor housing and poor health outcomes (Stats NZ, 2020b).

The World Health Organization (2018) noted that “poor housing conditions are one of the mechanisms through which social and environmental inequality translates into health inequality, which further affects quality of life and wellbeing”.

This relationship between housing and wellbeing is reflected in data from the 2018 General Social Survey, which shows that poor housing quality may affect the physical and mental health of Pacific peoples.

The 2018 General Social Survey also showed that housing problems such as cold, mould, dampness, and the need for repairs are associated with poorer life satisfaction and mental and physical health outcomes for Pacific peoples:

- Those living in houses with at least one major problem rated their satisfaction with life as a whole as 7.2 out of 10 on average, significantly lower than the 7.9 score averaged by those in housing without any major problems. Additionally, 31 percent gave a low rating for life-satisfaction compared with 12 percent of people without housing problems.
- Mental wellbeing scores on the WHO-5 wellbeing index averaged 61 out of 100 for those in houses with major problems, and 67 out of 100 for those in houses without. 29 percent had poor overall mental wellbeing (a score of 51 less out of 100), compared with 13 percent of people without housing problems.

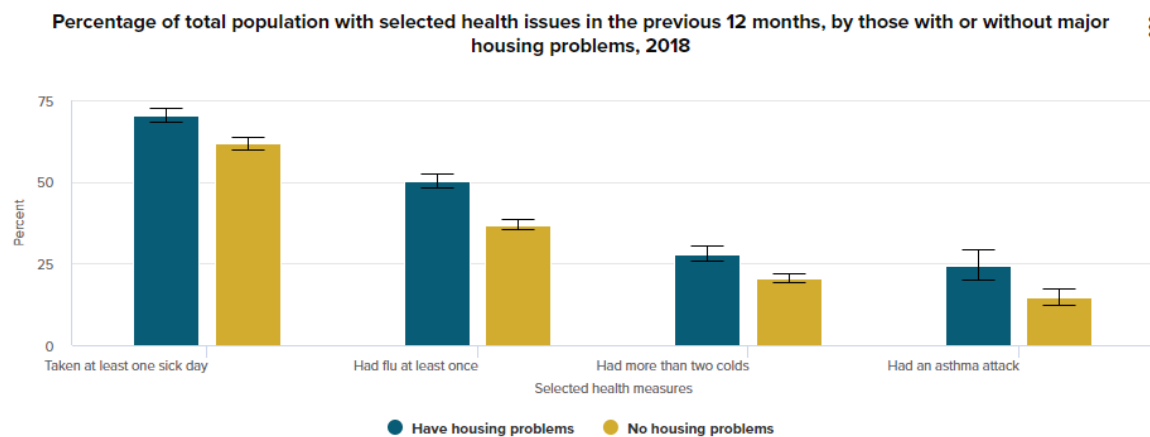
A possible reason for poorer wellbeing outcomes among those living in houses with major problems may be the association between housing problems and health.

The 2018 General Social Survey showed that Pacific peoples living in houses with at least one major problem were almost twice as likely to have fair or poor physical health (opposed to good, very good, or excellent health) compared with those who lived in houses without problems (22 percent and 12 percent respectively).

For the total population, people living in houses with problems were more likely to experience several health issues:

- 24 percent of asthmatics living in a house with problems had an asthma attack in the previous 12 months, compared with 15 percent of asthmatics living in a house without problems.
- 28 percent of people living in a house with problems had more than two common colds in the previous 12 months, compared with 20 percent of people living in a house without problems.
- 50 percent of people living in a house with problems had the flu at least once in the previous 12 months, compared with 37 percent of people living in a house without problems.

Potentially due to these poorer health outcomes, people living in a house with problems were more likely to have taken at least one day of sick leave from work in the previous 12 months compared with those living in a house without problems (70 percent and 62 percent respectively).

Figure 40

See metadata tab for information about this graph.

Stats NZ, 2018 General Social Survey

Major housing problems disproportionately affect those with not enough money for everyday needs

In 2018, 62 percent of Pacific peoples who did not have enough, or had only just enough, income to meet their everyday needs lived in a house with at least one major problem. By comparison, 39 percent of Pacific peoples with enough or more than enough income lived in a house with at least one major problem.

Pacific peoples living in houses with problems also rated their housing less affordable on average, compared to those living in houses without problems (5.4 out of 10 compared with 6.1 respectively).

Household crowding associated with poor housing conditions, but not necessarily poor overall wellbeing

Whilst crowded dwellings are more likely to have other problems such as dampness and mould than non-crowded dwellings (54 percent compared with 30 percent respectively), living in a crowded house is not always associated with poorer wellbeing outcomes, such as lower life satisfaction, life worthwhile, or mental wellbeing scores.

In fact, the 2018 General Social Survey showed that Pacific peoples in general record lower rates of loneliness than the population as a whole (69 percent of Pacific peoples never felt lonely, compared with 61 percent for the total population).

Pacific peoples living in a crowded house or larger household experienced especially low rates of loneliness:

- 81 percent of Pacific peoples who lived in a crowded house never felt lonely, compared with 64 percent of Pacific peoples living in non-crowded houses.
- 77 percent of Pacific peoples living in a household with six or more people never felt lonely compared with 46 percent of Pacific peoples who lived in a one-person household.

Pacific peoples living in unaffordable housing suffer from poorer mental health

Data from the 2018 General Social Survey showed that living in less affordable housing was associated with poorer mental wellbeing. Pacific peoples who rated affordability between 0 to 4 out of 10, scored on average 58 out of 100 on the WHO-5 mental wellbeing index, compared with 68 out of 100 for those that rated affordability between 8 and 10.

Unsuitable dwellings are associated with poorer wellbeing outcomes

Most Pacific peoples (85 percent) considered the dwelling in which they lived in 2018 to be suitable for their needs.

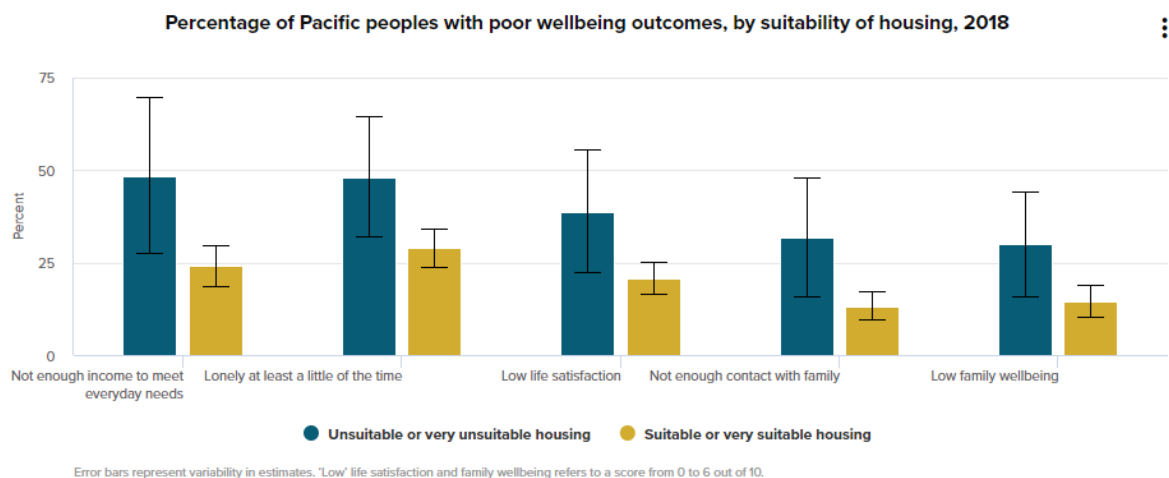
However, 7.9 percent considered their dwelling unsuitable or very unsuitable, significantly more than for the total population. For Pacific peoples, living in unsuitable or very unsuitable housing is associated with poorer outcomes in several dimensions of wellbeing, particularly for measures relating to family.

In terms of overall wellbeing measures, 39 percent of Pacific peoples who lived in unsuitable or very unsuitable housing rated their life satisfaction between 0 and 6 out of 10, compared with 21 percent of Pacific peoples living in suitable or very suitable housing. This corresponded to average ratings of 6.7 and 7.6 out of 10, respectively.

In the context of family, for Pacific peoples who lived in unsuitable or very unsuitable housing:

- almost one-third (30 percent) rated their family wellbeing poorly (between 0 and 6 out of 10) compared with 14 percent of those living in suitable or very suitable housing
- average family wellbeing ratings were lower than for those in suitable or very suitable housing, at 7.1 and 8.0 out of 10, respectively
- almost one-third (32 percent) did not have enough contact with family, compared with 13 percent of those living in suitable or very suitable housing
- around half (48 percent) were lonely at least a little of the time, compared with 29 percent of those in suitable or very suitable housing.

Figure 41



COVID-19 pandemic impacts on Pacific peoples

The full effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Pacific peoples are still to be measured. The experiences of the global pandemic of COVID-19 from 2020 onwards along with associated lockdowns has highlighted the importance of housing internationally, particularly around inequality of housing. This impacted populations who already experienced housing quality issues.

Recent research around the effects of COVID-19 on populations (Ayala et al, 2022) found that:

When most European countries decided that the whole population – except those working in essential jobs – had to stay at home for a long time, a form of inequality linked to differences in housing conditions was immediately activated and gave more relative importance to adequate housing as a fundamental right. ... Overcrowding may amplify infectious and respiratory diseases, damp or mould increase respiratory disease, eczema, asthma, rhinitis, while indoor pollutants may produce asthma, and low temperature is related to respiratory infection, hypothermia, bronchospasm, heart disease. ... Therefore, housing deprivation makes COVID-19 magnify well-being losses.

As well as having access to warm, safe, and dry housing, access to technology, location, and access to outdoor space were also important in lockdown situations (Ayala et al, 2022).

Census data from 2018 showed that Pacific peoples who lived in a dwelling that was not owner-occupied had lower rates of access to the internet (at 79 percent, compared with 85 percent of the total population living in a non-owner-occupied dwelling). Data from the 2018 General Social Survey showed that they were also less likely than the total population to have access to a garden (69 percent compared with 84 percent of the total population).

COVID-19 lockdowns disrupted the normal surveying process for Stats NZ, and the 2020 General Social Survey was postponed. Stats NZ did collect some wellbeing data in the COVID-19 context.

As a result of the General Social Surveys postponement, Stats NZ included some wellbeing questions in a supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey. The wellbeing supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey ran for four quarters (June, September, and December 2020, and March 2021). The 2021 General Social Survey went into the field from 1 April 2021 but was suspended due to the Delta lockdown in August 2021. Therefore, Stats NZ collected this wellbeing data before the Delta variant in August 2021 and the Omicron outbreaks in 2022.

Auckland, where the majority of Pacific peoples live, experienced the longest lockdown of any region.

The wellbeing data in the supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey: March 2021 quarter recorded:

- 16 percent of Pacific peoples said that they received help from an organisation like a church or food bank at least once, which was higher than the total population at 5.3 percent.

This proportion was not significantly different from the previous three quarters surveyed.

As the supplement was not repeated, we do not have information around food bank-use after March 2021.

Data sources and limitations

The main information sources for this report were the Census of Population and Dwellings (Census), and New Zealand's General Social Survey.

We included information from the 2016, 2018, and 2021 General Social Surveys, but have mainly used the 2018 General Social Survey as this included a supplement on housing and the physical environment. In 2021, COVID-19 lockdowns impacted data collection for the survey and the resulting smaller sample size of just under 3,500 people for the 2021 survey limits analysis for Pacific peoples.

Other data sources included the 2018 Household Labour Force Survey and its supplementary surveys, the 2018 Survey of Working Life and Childcare Survey, and the 2019–2021 Household Economic Survey and Net Worth surveys. Additionally, we used administrative data from Ministry of Social Development on the social housing register.

All sources have some limitations. In our sample surveys, we cannot look at individual Pacific populations, due to the relatively small size of the populations, and some estimates may have large sampling errors. In the 2018 Census in particular, issues with data collection resulted in a lower proportion of Pacific peoples completing the census. While administrative data was used to supplement the information from census forms, for some variables such as individual home ownership, there was no other source, which reduces the data quality of these variables (Stats NZ, 2020a).

Pacific peoples were also under-represented in the census household data (Stats NZ, 2020a). People missing from data effect the accuracy of measures because people who are more likely to be missed may also have higher levels of disadvantage. The outcome is that measures may appear better than they are in reality (see Stats NZ, 2020a for more information).

Information about work for this report has been drawn from the both the Household Labour Force Survey, the Survey of Working Life, and the childcare supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey. To allow for more consistent comparisons across the report, the Household Labour Force Survey data uses the annual average for the year ending in the December 2018 quarter, while Survey of Working Life was attached to the Household Labour Force Survey during the December 2018 quarter alone.

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