Waikato quality of life survey 2024

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Table of Contents

List of tables

List of figures

Executive Summary

This report presents Waikato regional and territorial local authority results from a survey undertaken in parallel with the 2024 Quality of Life Survey (a collaboration between nine New Zealand councils). Results are presented at the overall Waikato regional and territorial local authority (TLA) levels as well as a regional breakdown by age group, gender and ethnic group. Trends for the period 2006 to 2024 are identified at the regional and TLA level for eight key survey indicators reported as part of the Waikato Progress Indicators.

Around 1,300 Waikato region residents aged 18 years and over participated in the survey between April and August 2024, including 527 people (40%) from Hamilton city.[1] Questions were asked in relation to:

- Overall quality of life
- Environment (built and natural)
- Housing
- Public transport
- Health and wellbeing
- Crime, safety and local issues
- Community, culture and economic networks
- Trust
- Climate change
- Employment and economic wellbeing
- Council decision-making processes.

Compared to the 2006 baseline year, Waikato regional survey respondents had slightly higher perceptions of safety but lower perceptions for life satisfaction, perceived health, social connectedness, community pride, physical activity, cultural respect and community engagement.

Indicator	2006	Latest	Trend 2006-latest
Life satisfaction	90%	79%	Decreasing
Community pride	70%	63%	Decreasing
Perceived health*	90%	74%	Decreasing
Physical activity	61%	31%	Decreasing
Perceptions of safety	60%	66%	Increasing
Social connectedness	63%	49%	Decreasing
Community engagement	62%	35%	Decreasing
Cultural respect**	51%	39%	Decreasing

Notes: * Perceived health 2006 result relates to a question about "overall health", whereas the 2024 result is the average of four items relating to "physical health", "mental health", "spiritual health" and "relationship health"; ** Cultural respect figure is from 2022 survey as this question was not asked in 2024.

The results can be accessed, explored, and downloaded from:
www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/

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[1] The Hamilton survey sample was commissioned by Hamilton City Council.

1 Introduction

1.1 Report overview

This report presents Waikato regional results from a survey undertaken in parallel and consistent with the 2024 Quality of Life Survey, including results by age group, gender and ethnic group. Regional trends since 2006 are identified for the eight survey indicators reported in the Waikato Progress Indicators initiative. Results for all Waikato local authority areas have been compiled separately for local councils. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 provides a summary background and context around the Quality of Life Survey, Waikato Progress Indicators initiative and related survey programmes.

- Section 2 presents technical notes to assist with interpretation of the survey results.

- Section 3 provides survey results for the Waikato region; and Waikato Progress Indicators regional survey results by age group, gender and ethnic group.

- Section 4 summarises Waikato Progress Indicators local results for each of the territorial local authority areas in the Waikato region.

- Section 5 compares the latest Waikato regional results with earlier results for the eight indicators included in the Waikato Progress Indicators.

- Section 6 concludes with a summary of findings and outline of next steps.

1.2 Quality of Life Survey

The Quality of Life Project was initiated in 1999 in response to growing pressures on urban communities and the effects of these on community wellbeing. It was initially a collaboration between councils represented in Local Government New Zealand's (LGNZ's) Local Government Metro Sector forum. The first Quality of Life Survey was undertaken in 2003, repeated in 2004 and has since been undertaken every two years with a varying number of participating councils. Hamilton city has participated in every survey round except 2012 and 2014. The Waikato region has previously collected data for the areas outside of Hamilton city in parallel with the 2006, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022 surveys.

The 2024 Quality of Life Survey was a collaboration between nine councils (eight cities and one region):

- Auckland Council
- Waikato Regional Council[2]
- Hamilton City Council
- Tauranga City Council
- Hutt City Council
- Porirua City Council
- Wellington City Council
- Christchurch City Council
- Dunedin City Council.

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[2] For all data analysis and interpretation in this report, the Waikato regional sample includes the Hamilton City Council sample as well as all other districts in the Waikato region.

The 2024 Quality of Life Survey measured perceptions on the following topic areas:

- Overall quality of life
- Environment (built and natural)
- Housing
- Public transport
- Health and wellbeing
- Crime, safety and local issues
- Community, culture and economic networks
- Trust
- Climate change
- Employment and economic wellbeing
- Council decision-making processes.

Results from the survey are used to help inform local government policy and monitor progress towards strategic social, cultural, environmental and economic goals.

1.3 Waikato Progress Indicators

The Waikato Progress Indicators measure the Waikato region's progress by identifying the current situation and trends across each of 32 key economic, environmental, and social aspects. The Waikato Progress Indicators include selected key results from the Quality of Life survey (refer to section 1.4) and a wide range of other data sources.

Together, the 32 Waikato Progress Indicators provide a dashboard picture of the health of the Waikato region and the wellbeing and quality of life of its people and communities. Information was gathered and summarised from 2001 to the latest available data, with a focus on the period since 2006/07. The information is regularly updated and presented online. It is used to support strategic discussions around which aspects the Waikato is doing well in; where the region needs to improve; and how changes in one aspect are linked with or affected by changes in others. The dashboard also assists to gauge progress towards Waikato Regional Council's (WRC's) Strategic Direction, and selected measures relevant to Council's activities are included in WRC's Annual Report. The data and website information are refreshed annually.

1.4 Quality of Life Survey data used by Waikato Progress Indicators

The following eight Quality of Life Survey items are included as indicators in the Waikato Progress Indicators programme:

1. Life satisfaction – Overall quality of life
2. Perceptions of safety – Perceived safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark
3. Perceived health – Perceived overall health
4. Social connectedness – Sense of community experienced
5. Community pride – Pride in look and feel of city/local area
6. Physical activity – Frequency of being physically active
7. Cultural respect – Perception of impact of greater cultural diversity (not asked in 2024)
8. Community engagement – Perception of influence on council decisions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Survey methods

Fieldwork took place from 23 April to 1 August 2024. The target population was respondents aged 18 years and over, living within the areas governed by the participating councils. The 2024 survey was undertaken in two stages:

- Online surveying – In this stage, respondents were recruited from a blend of reputable New Zealand survey research panels and other sources. To supplement the sample, the survey management group provided a recontact list consisting of participants from previous survey waves who had agreed to be contacted for future research.
- Face-to-face intercept surveying – Interviewers were positioned in several high-foot traffic in Hamilton and the rest of the Waikato region and approached people to invite them to participate in the self-complete survey using tablets.

Quotas and sample targets were set across both online and face-to-face intercept methods, with the face-to-face intercept method filling quotas that were not achieved online.

2.2 Sub-regional samples

A total of 1,327 Waikato region residents completed the 2024 survey. The Waikato region in this report comprises:

- Hamilton city
- Hauraki   district
- Matamata-Piako district
- Otorohanga district
- Rotorua district (in part)
- South Waikato district
- Taupo district
- Thames-Coromandel district
- Waikato district
- Waipa district
- Waitomo district

Target sample quotas were set for clusters of Territorial Authority areas within the region (e.g. a minimum of 100 responses for Waitomo and Ōtorohanga combined). At least 50 responses were achieved for each Territorial Authority area in the region except Waitomo (32) and Hauraki (46).

2.3 Data weighting

To compensate for the disproportionate sizes of different sub-samples compared to population size (as illustrated later in this section), and other reasons such as differences in response rates for certain population groups (e.g. females and older people more likely to respond), a weighting procedure was applied by Ipsos, the company that undertook the survey. This process involved aligning the sample with region-specific profiles of age, gender, geographic area and ethnicity.

Of the 1,327 Waikato region residents that completed the 2024 survey, Hamilton's unweighted sample size was 527 (i.e. 40% of the Waikato regional sample size). Within the weighted adjusted sample, Hamilton's sample size is 405 (i.e. 31%).

2.4 'Don't know/not applicable' responses

In a small number of cases, respondents have chosen not to answer specific questions. Wherever percentages are reported, the denominator is the number of respondents and hence the results typically add to 100%. Some but not all questions included a 'don't know/not applicable' response, and some of these received relatively large responses. 'Don't know/not applicable' responses are included in the denominator for calculating percentages.

2.5 Sampling error

All data presented in this report are point estimates (means). Sub-samples with smaller groups (i.e. cross-tabs by age, gender and ethnic group) are less reliable due to higher sampling errors. For further details, refer to the Quality of Life Survey Technical Report. The table below provides a guide to how much sampling error is indicatively associated with different sample sizes (at the 95% confidence level).

Table 1: Sample size vs sample error (indicative)

Sample size	Sample error
6,000	±1.3%
1,300	±2.8%
500	±4.4%
200	±6.9%
100	±9.8%
50	±13.8%

2.6 Rounding

Due to rounding, some percentages do not sum exactly to the aggregated percentage figure. These are indicated throughout the report where relevant.

3. Regional results

3.1 Infographic summary

Waikato Region
Quality of Life
Key highlights 2024

Waikato REGIONAL COUNCIL *Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato*

The 2024 Quality of life survey measures people's perceptions of several aspects related to quality of life.

A random selection of residents were invited to participate either online or via hardcopy questionnaire.
The Waikato Survey was completed by 1,257 people aged 18 years and over between April and August 2024.

Quality of life

79%
Rate their overall quality of life positively

24% Improved
26% Worsened
Say their quality of life has changed compared with 12 months ago

Top 3 reasons for improvement
- Health and wellbeing
- Lifestyle
- Financial wellbeing

Top 3 reasons for decline
- Financial situation
- Health and wellbeing
- Work situation

Built and natural environment

76%
Think their city or local area is a great place to live

63%
Are really happy with how their city/local area looks and feels

Compared to 12 months ago, the city/local area has become
- Better: **18%**
- Worse: **24%**
- Unchanged: **54%**

Housing

Perceptions of housing (% strongly agree or agree)

79% Home suits the need of the household

81% Live in suitable area

36% Home is affordable

Transport

9%
Use public transport weekly (or more often)

Perceptions of public transport in local area (% strongly agree or agree) (of those that have public transport in their area)
- Easy to get to: **59%**
- Affordable: **50%**
- Frequent: **45%**
- Reliable: **41%**
- Safe: **39%**

Health & Wellbeing

74%
Rate their overall health positively

31%
Were physically active on 5 or more days in the past week

25%
Always/most of the time experience stress with a negative effect

Have someone to rely on during a difficult time for
Practical support **88%**
Emotional support **86%**

Top 3 barriers to seeking healthcare
- Long wait time
- Financial concerns
- Appointment time didn't suit

Source: Quality of Life Survey conducted by Ipsos, 2024

#7660 - June 2025

Waikato Region **Quality of Life** Key highlights 2024

Crime & Safety

66%
Feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark

Perceptions of problems in city/local area
(% view as a problem in the last 12 months)

Category	%
Theft and burglary	74%
Dangerous driving	66%
Rubbish/litter	66%
Vandalism	61%
Alcohol or drug problems	60%
People sleeping rough	55%
Traffic congestion	50%
People you feel unsafe around	50%
Noise at night	27%
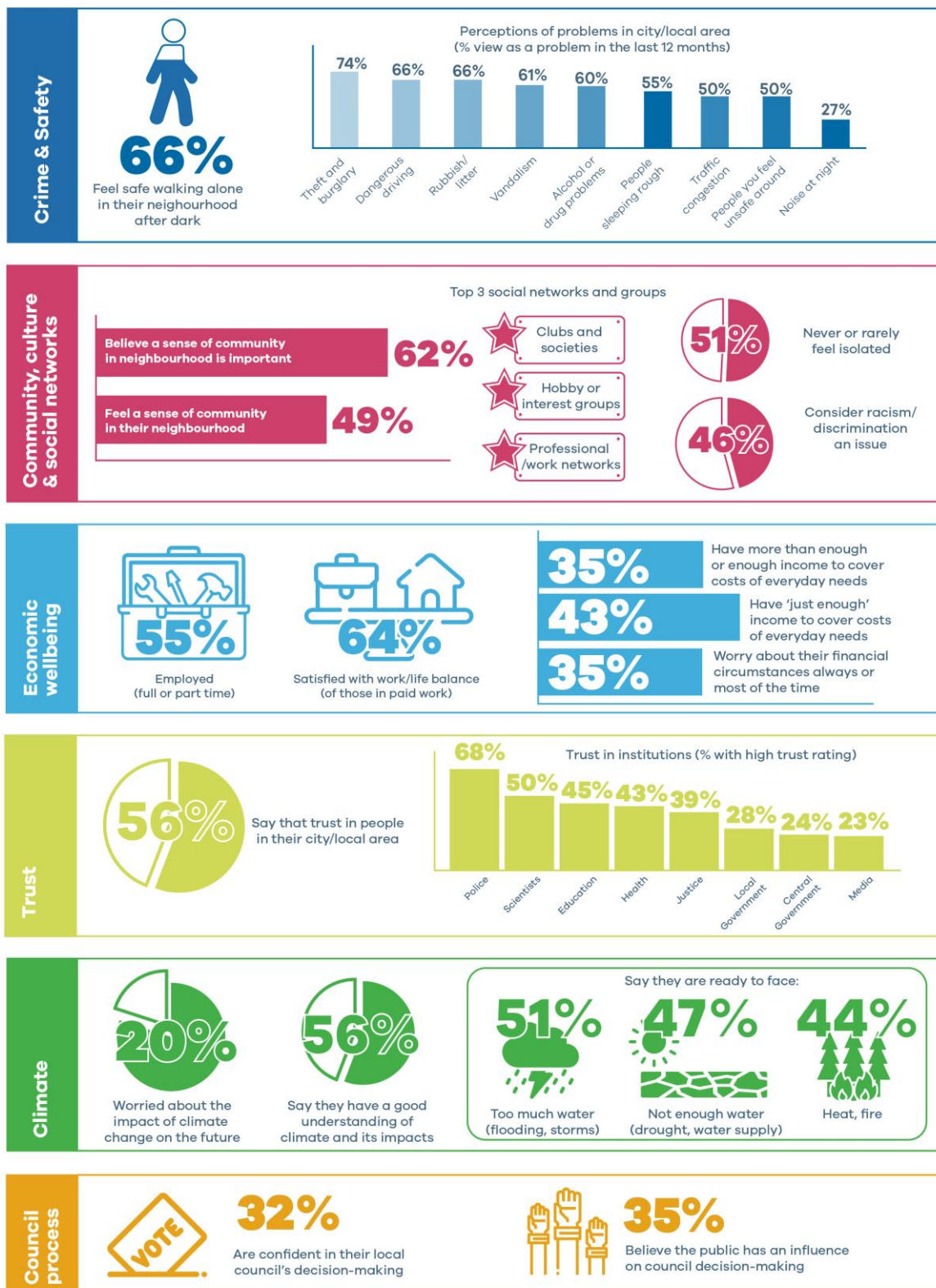
Community, culture & social networks

Believe a sense of community in neighbourhood is important **62%**

Feel a sense of community in their neighbourhood **49%**

Top 3 social networks and groups
- ★ Clubs and societies
- ★ Hobby or interest groups
- ★ Professional /work networks

51% Never or rarely feel isolated

46% Consider racism/ discrimination an issue

Economic wellbeing

55% Employed (full or part time)

64% Satisfied with work/life balance (of those in paid work)

35% Have more than enough or enough income to cover costs of everyday needs

43% Have 'just enough' income to cover costs of everyday needs

35% Worry about their financial circumstances always or most of the time

Trust

56% Say that trust in people in their city/local area

Trust in institutions (% with high trust rating)

Institution	%
Police	68%
Scientists	50%
Education	45%
Health	43%
Justice	39%
Local Government	28%
Central Government	24%
Media	23%

Climate

20% Worried about the impact of climate change on the future

56% Say they have a good understanding of climate and its impacts

Say they are ready to face:

51% Too much water (flooding, storms)

47% Not enough water (drought, water supply)

44% Heat, fire

Council process

32% Are confident in their local council's decision-making
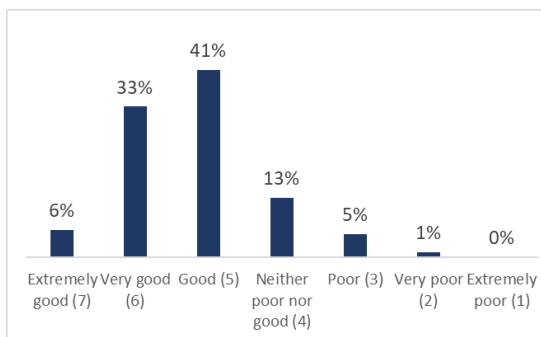
35% Believe the public has an influence on council decision-making

3.2 Waikato regional results

This section presents detailed regional results. Selected results by age group, gender and ethnicity are presented in Section 3.3, and changes and trends over time are summarised in Section 4. A summary of the results is provided in Section 5. All results are based on weighted data to account for sample demographic differences. Indicators that are included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring initiative are **in bold**.

Overall quality of life

Quality of life[3]

Most respondents (79%*) rated their overall quality of life positively, with 41% rating it as 'good', 33% 'very good' and 6% 'extremely good'.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 1: Overall quality of life

Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Quality of life vs 12 months ago

Around one quarter of respondents (24%) felt their quality of life had increased over the past year, while another quarter (26%) felt their quality of life had decreased. Half the respondents (50%) felt their quality of life stayed about the same compared to 12 months ago.

Figure 2: Quality of life compared to 12 months ago

Reasons for improvement/decline

a) Reasons for improvement

Respondents' most common reasons for rating their quality of life as improved compared to 12 months before the survey related to healthcare and wellbeing (32%), lifestyle (21%), financial wellbeing (21%), work-related reasons (20%) and relationships (20%).

Figure 3: Reasons for positive change in quality of life

Notes: See below.

b) Reasons for decline

Most common reasons for those saying their quality of life had declined compared to 12 months ago related to reduced financial wellbeing (49%), reduced healthcare and wellbeing (43%) and to a lesser extent, work related reasons (14%).

Figure 4: Reasons for negative change in quality of life

Base is all respondents. Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents could mention multiple reasons.

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[3] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Built and natural environment

Sense of pride[4]

Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt really happy with the way their area looks and feels, including around one eighth (12%) who 'strongly agree' and half (51%) who 'agree'.

Figure 5: Happy with the way my area looks and feels

12%	51%	23%	12%	2%
Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
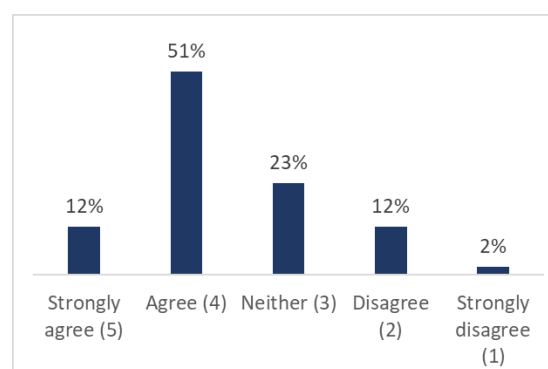
City/local area is a great place to live

Around three quarters (76%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their area was a great place to live, including around one fifth (22%) who 'strongly agree' and over half (54%) who 'agree'.

Figure 6: City/local area is a great place to live

22%	54%	17%	5%	1%
Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
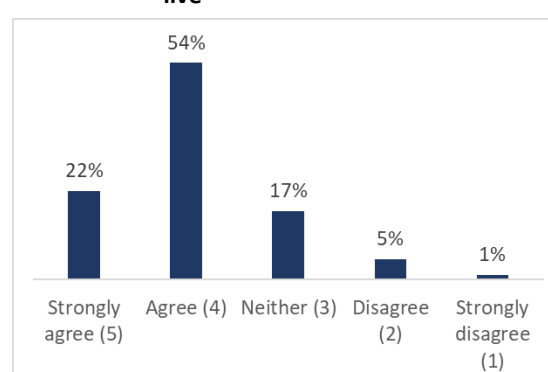
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

City/local area has got better, worse or stayed the same

Around one fifth of respondents (18%*) felt that their local area had improved in the last 12 months, compared to over half (54%) who felt it had stayed the same and one quarter (28%) who felt it had become worse.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 7: City/local area has got better, worse or stayed the same

4%	15%	54%	24%	4%
Much better (5)	Slightly better (4)	Stayed the same (3)	Slightly worse (2)	Much worse (1)
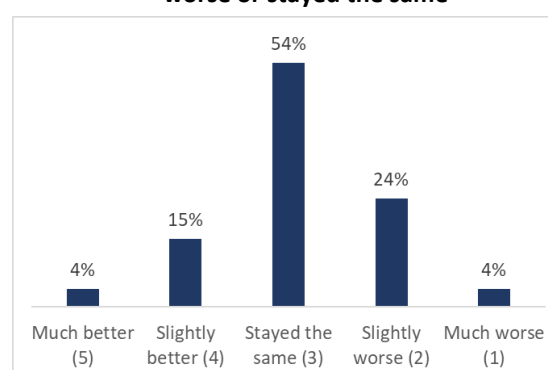
Note: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

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[4] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Why worse or better as a place to live

a) Why better as a place to live

Respondents gave a wide range of reasons for feeling their city or local area had become better in the last 12 months, including improved or new amenities like shops, malls, theatres, libraries, doctor or hospitals (18%), a variety of recreational facilities or lots of things to do (17%) and area looks clean, tidy and well-kept (15%).

Figure 8:   Why better as a place to live
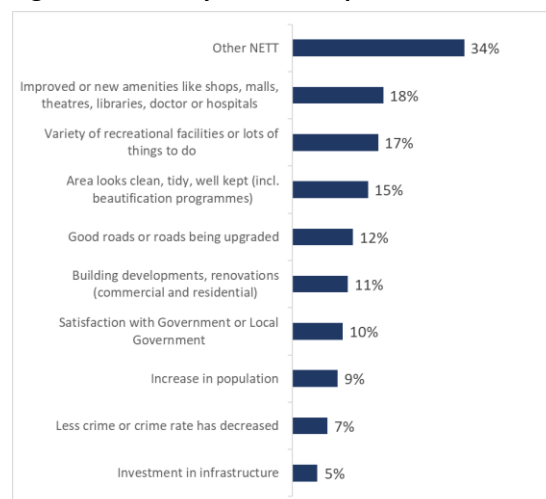
Note: Base is all respondents who said their city/local area has got better. Percentages may add to more than 100% (respondents could have multiple reasons).

b) Why worse as a place to live

Respondents' most common reason for feeling their city or local area had become worse in the last 12 months related to crime/crime rate has increased (48%), followed by a wide range of other issues such as dissatisfaction with Government or local government (19%) and roading developments (18%).

Figure 9:   Why worse as a place to live
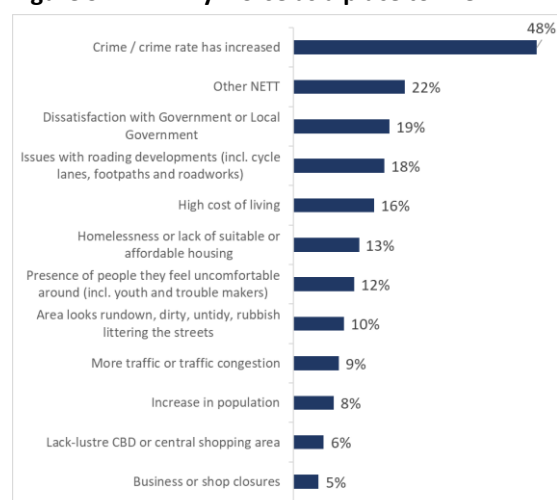
Note: Base is all respondents who said their city/local area has got worse. Percentages may add to more than 100% (respondents could have multiple reasons).

Housing

Affordable

Around one-third of all respondents (36%*) agreed or strongly agreed that their current housing costs were affordable in terms of aspects such as rent or mortgage, rates, house insurance and house maintenance. More than two-fifths (43%*) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their housing costs are affordable.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 10:   Affordability of housing costs
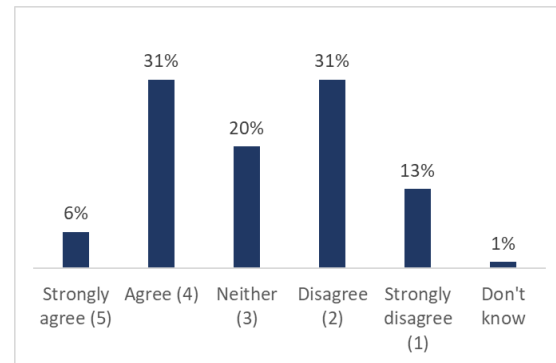
Note: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Home suits need

Four out of five respondents (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that the type of home they lived in suited the needs of everyone in their household.

Figure 11:   Home suits needs
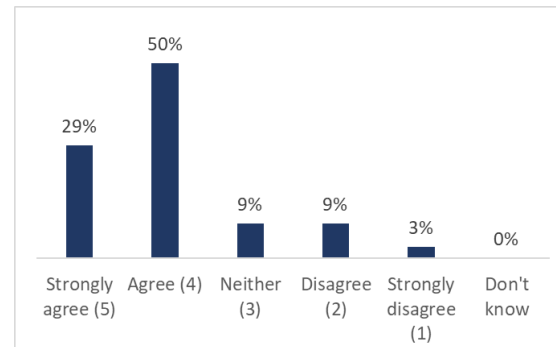
Area/neighbourhood suits needs

Four out of five respondents (81%) agreed or strongly agreed the general area or neighbourhood their home is in suits the needs of everyone in their household.

Figure 12:   Area/neighbourhood suits needs
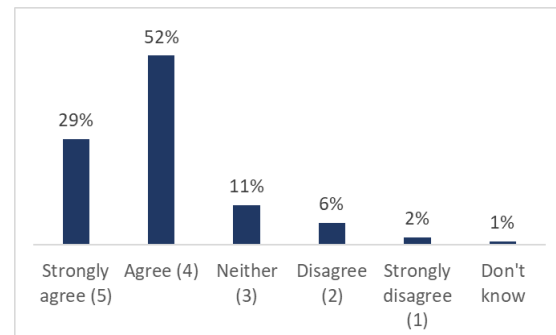
Note: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Public transport

Frequency of use of public transport

Around 9% of respondents said they had used public transport at least weekly during the previous 12 months.

Almost half (48%) had not used public transport in the last 12 months and a further quarter (23%) said this question was not applicable as no public transport was available in their area.

Figure 13: **Frequency of use of public transport**
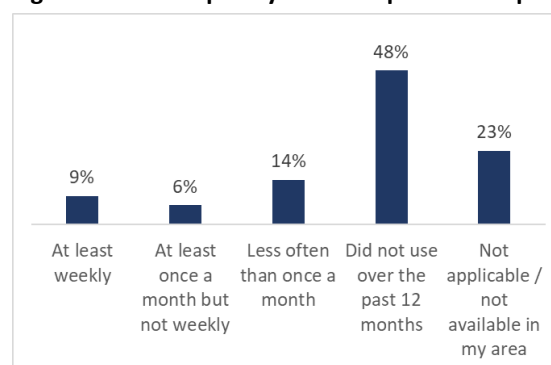
Perceptions of public transport

Excluding the approximately one-quarter of respondents who said they have no public transport in their area, all other respondents were asked about their perceptions of public transport with respect to affordability, safety, ease of access, frequency and reliability.

Affordable

Half (50%) of respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was affordable, while 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 21% said they did not know.

Figure 14: **Affordability of public transport**
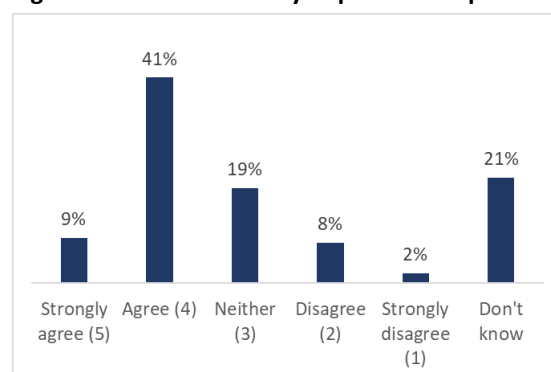
Notes: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport.

Safe from crime or harassment

Around two fifths (39%*) of respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was safe from crime or harassment, while 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 15: **Safety of public transport from crime and harassment**
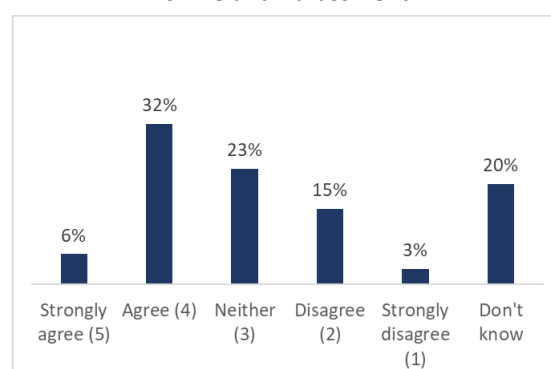
Notes: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport. Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Safe from catching COVID-19 and other illnesses

Around one quarter (28%) of respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was safe from catching COVID-19 and other illnesses, while 23%* disagreed or strongly disagreed and 18% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 16: Safety of public transport from catching COVID-19 and other illnesses

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know
5%	23%	30%	19%	5%	18%
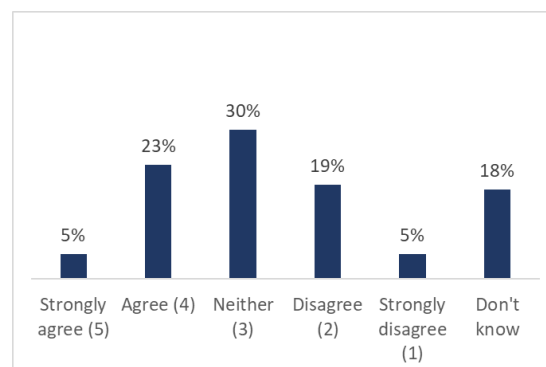
Notes: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport.

Easy to get to

Around three fifths (59%*) of respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was easy to get to, while 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 17: Ease of access to public transport
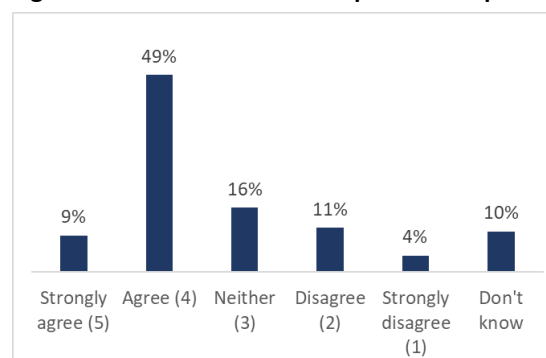
Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know
9%	49%	16%	11%	4%	10%

Notes: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport. Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Frequent (comes often)

Almost half (45%) of all respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was frequent (comes often), while 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 18% said they did not know.

Figure 18: Frequency of public transport

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know
7%	38%	19%	13%	5%	18%
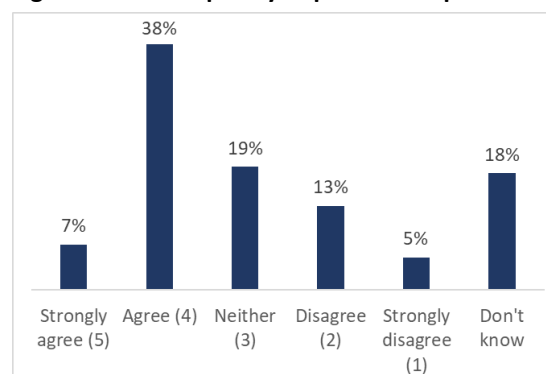
Note: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport.

Reliable (comes on time)

Around two fifths (41%) of respondents with access to public transport agreed or strongly agreed it was reliable (i.e. comes when it says it will), while 12%* disagreed or strongly disagreed and 25% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 19: Reliability of public transport

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know
7%	34%	22%	9%	4%	25%
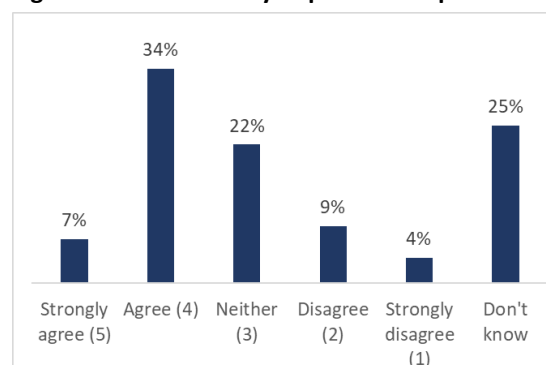
Note: Denominator is all respondents who had access to public transport. Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Ease of transport without a private vehicle

The 2024 survey asked all respondents about their perceptions of alternatives to private vehicles.

Easy to get around without a private vehicle

Around one third (34%) of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed it was easy for them to get to the places they need to go without the use of a private vehicle (e.g. car, ute, van, motorbike, etc), while 45%* disagreed or strongly disagreed and 7% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 20:   Easy to get around without a private vehicle
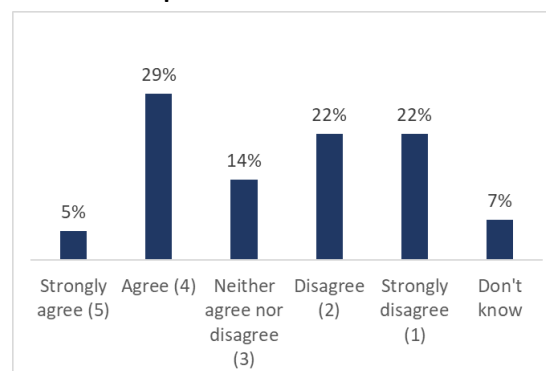
Notes: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Public transport is a practical alternative to driving

Around one quarter (26%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that public transport is a practical alternative to driving for the trips they usually need to make, while half (50%*) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 8% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 21:   Public transport is a practical alternative to driving
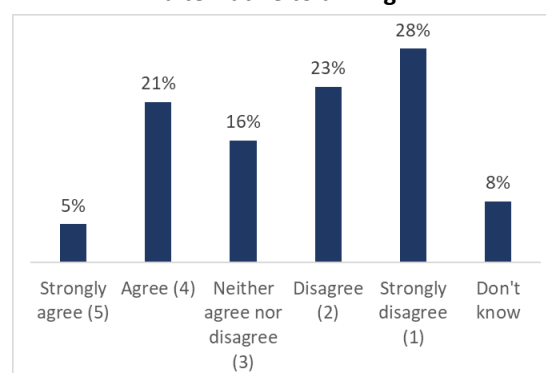
Notes: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Bike network is safe

More than one third (37%*) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the bike network in their city or local area is safe (e.g. separated cycle lanes, shared walking and cycling paths, painted cycle lanes), while around one quarter (28%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 13% said they did not know.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 22:   Bike network is safe
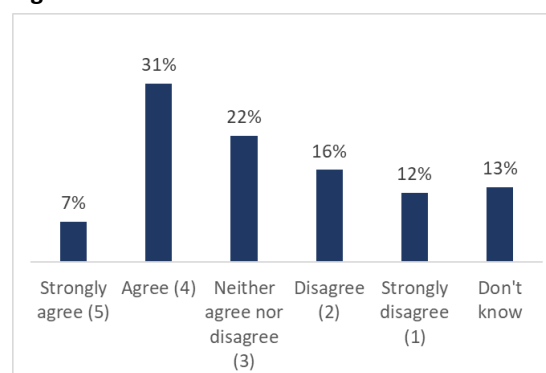
Notes: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Health and wellbeing

Overall health and wellbeing[5]

Prior survey waves included a question about "overall health". The 2024 WPI indicator is an average of four items relating to "physical health", "mental health", "spiritual health" and "relationship health".

Across the Waikato region, around three quarters of respondents (74%*) rated their overall health and wellbeing positively. This included 33% who rated their overall health and wellbeing as 'good', 25% 'very good' and 15% 'excellent'.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 23:   Overall   health   and   wellbeing (average of four items)

Bar chart: Excellent (5) 15%, Very good (4) 25%, Good (3) 33%, Fair (2) 18%, Poor (1) 7%, Prefer not to say 2%
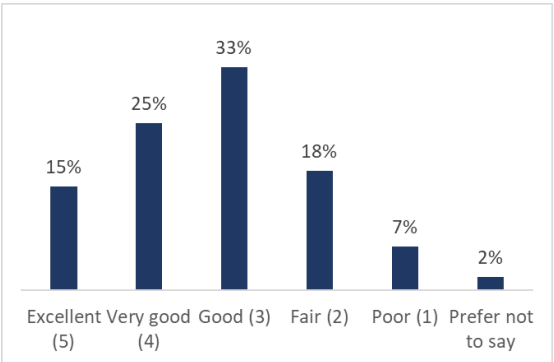
Physical health and wellbeing

Across the Waikato region, two thirds (67%) of respondents rated their physical health and wellbeing positively. This included 35% who rated their physical health and wellbeing as 'good', 25% 'very good' and 7% 'excellent'.

Figure 24:   Physical health and wellbeing

Bar chart: Excellent (5) 7%, Very good (4) 25%, Good (3) 35%, Fair (2) 24%, Poor (1) 8%, Prefer not to say 0%
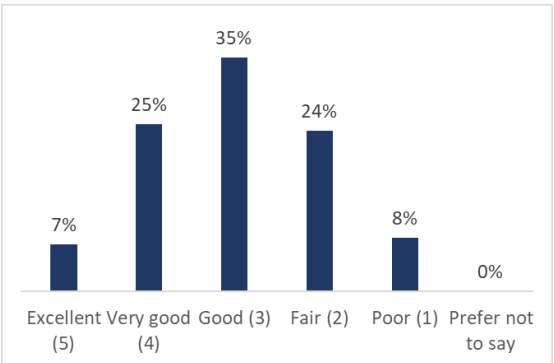
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Mental health and wellbeing

Across the Waikato region, almost three quarters (71%) of respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing positively. This included 32% who rated their mental health and wellbeing as 'good', 24% 'very good' and 15% 'excellent'.

Figure 25:   Mental health and wellbeing

Bar chart: Excellent (5) 15%, Very good (4) 24%, Good (3) 32%, Fair (2) 21%, Poor (1) 8%, Prefer not to say 0%

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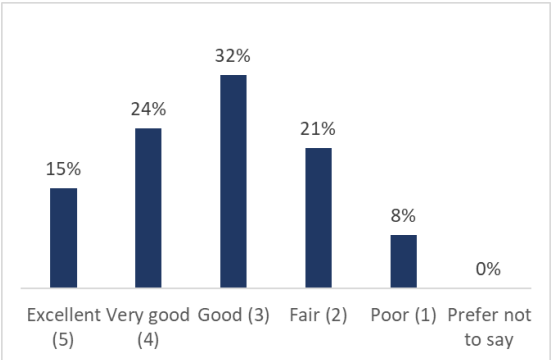
[5] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Spiritual health and wellbeing

Across the Waikato region, almost three quarter (72%) of respondents rated their spiritual health and wellbeing positively. This included 36% who rated their spiritual health and wellbeing as 'good', 21% 'very good' and 15% 'excellent'.

Figure 26:   Spiritual health and wellbeing
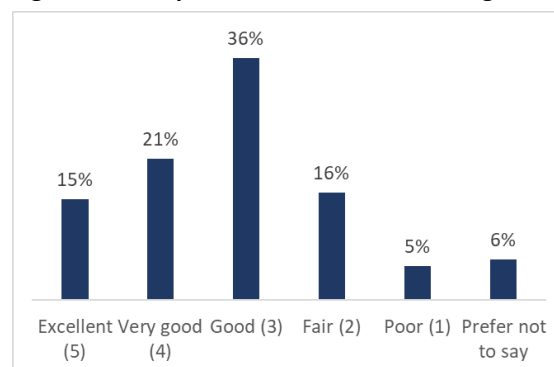
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Relationship health and wellbeing

Across the Waikato region, more than four fifths (85%) of respondents rated their relationship health and wellbeing positively (e.g. with family/whanau and friends). This included 31% who rated their relationship health and wellbeing as 'good', 29% 'very good' and 25% 'excellent'.

Figure 27:   Relationship health and wellbeing
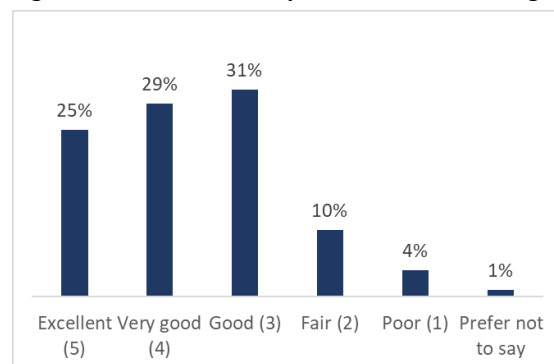
Frequency of doing physical activity[6] [7]

When respondents were asked how many of the previous seven days they had been physically active, around one third (31%) said they had been active five or more days. Almost two fifths (17%) said they had not been active on any days in the previous week.

Figure 28:   Frequency of doing physical activity

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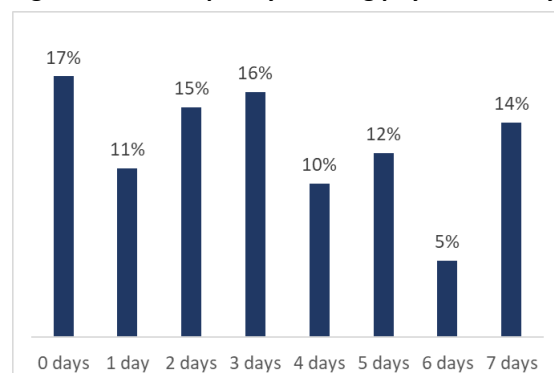
[6] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*
[7] *In the survey questionnaire, 'active' days were defined as those involving 30 minutes or more of physical activity that raised the respondent's breathing rate.*

Experienced stress

One quarter of respondents (25%*) said they always or most of the time experienced stress that had a negative impact on them, while a similar number (29%) rarely or never experienced stress and around half (46%) said they experienced stress 'sometimes'.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 29:   Experienced stress
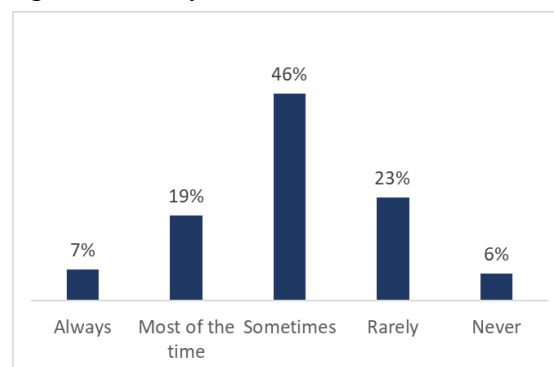
Note: Sums to more than 100% due to rounding.

Availability of practical support

When respondents were asked about whether they felt they had availability of practical support should they need it, almost nine in ten (88%*) said they 'definitely' or 'probably' had practical support (e.g. shopping, meals, transport), 8% said no and 4% were not sure.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 30:   Availability of practical support
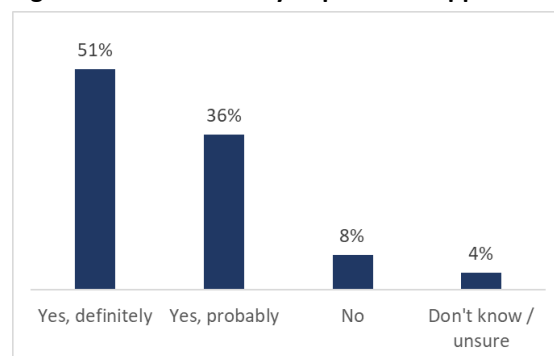
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Availability of emotional support

When respondents were asked about whether they felt they had availability of emotional support should they need it, 86% said they 'definitely' or 'probably' had emotional support (e.g. listening to you, giving advice), 10% said no and 4% were not sure.

Figure 31:   Availability of emotional support
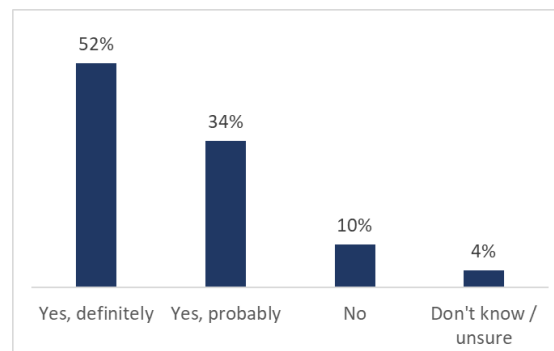
Barriers to healthcare

The 2024 survey asked all respondents whether in the last 12 months they or anyone in their household, had faced any barriers to seeking health-related treatment or advice, and what these barriers were.

Faced barriers to seeking healthcare

Around one quarter (26%) of all respondents agreed that they had faced barriers to seeking health related treatment or advice, while 71% said they had not faced any and 3% said they did not know.

Figure 32: Faced barriers to seeking healthcare
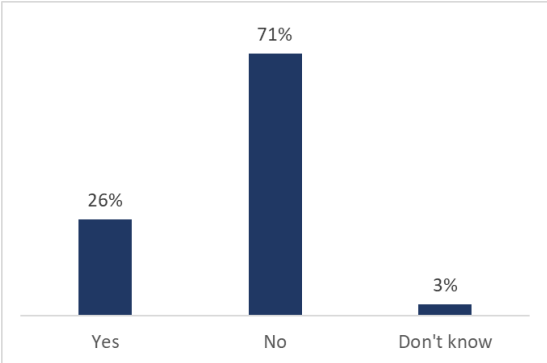
Barriers to healthcare

Of the approximately 350 people in the Waikato region sample who said they faced barriers to healthcare, the most commonly cited barriers were that the wait time for an appointment was too long (74%), that they were concerned about the financial cost (47%) and/or that they couldn't get an appointment at a time that suited them (due to work or family needs) (37%).

Figure 33: Barriers to healthcare
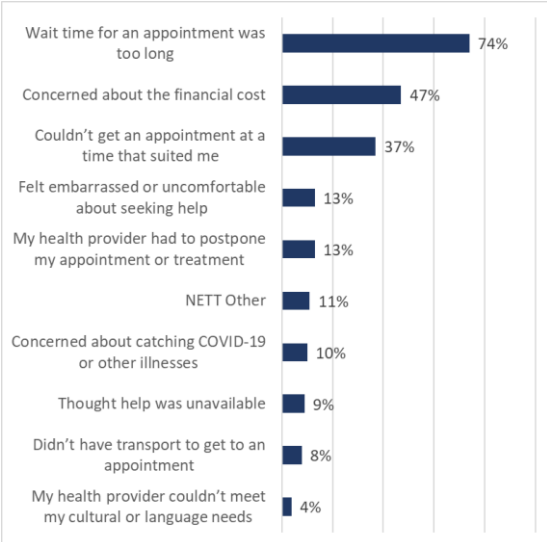
Notes: Base is respondents who said they faced barriers to healthcare. Percentages may add to more than 100% as respondents could mention multiple reasons.

Crime, safety and local issues

Perceived safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark[8]

Around two thirds of respondents (66%) felt fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark while 31% felt a bit or very unsafe.

Figure 34: **Perceived safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark**
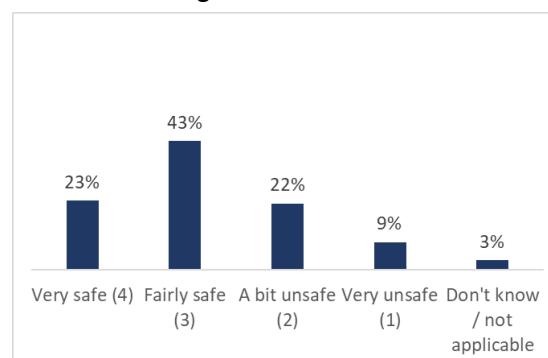
Perceived safety in city centre during the day

Almost nine in ten respondents (86%*) felt fairly or very safe in their city centre during the day.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 35: **Perceived safety in city centre during day**
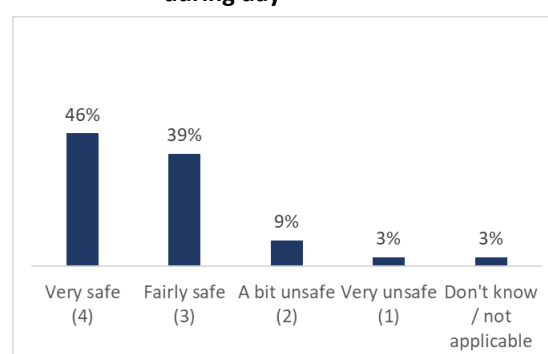
Perceived safety in city centre after dark

Less than half of respondents (44%) felt fairly or very safe in their city centre after dark, while around half (49%) felt a bit or very unsafe.

Figure 36: **Perceived safety in city centre after dark**

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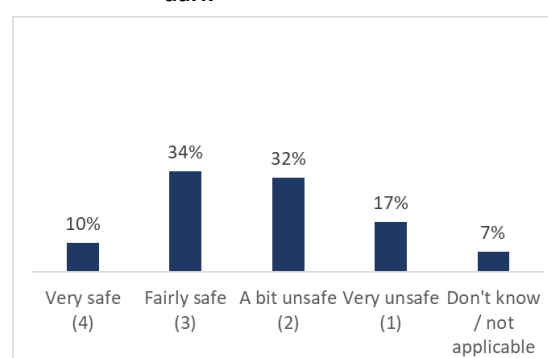
[8] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Problems in city/local area in the last 12 months

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived various possible issues had been a problem in their city or local area in the last 12 months.

Around one quarter (27%) perceived theft and burglary to be a big problem, and half (47%) thought it was a bit of a problem. Other issues that respondents rated as a problem included dangerous driving, rubbish or litter, vandalism, limited parking and traffic congestion.

Near the other end of the scale, around 70% of respondents felt that noise pollution was not a problem.

Figure 37: Problems in city/local area in the last 12 months
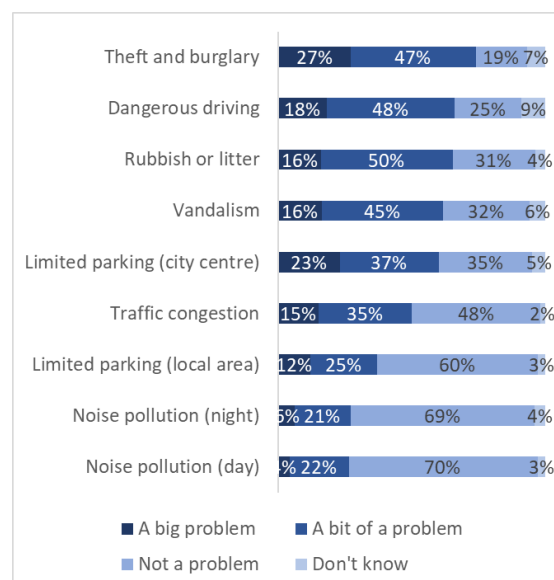
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Social issues in city/local area in the last 12 months

Around one fifth (21%) perceived alcohol or drug problems or anti-social behaviour to be a big issue, and a further two fifths (39%) thought it was a bit of an issue. Other social issues that respondents rated as a problem included people sleeping rough and people begging in public space. A lesser rated issue was people that respondents felt unsafe around because of their behaviour, attitude or appearance.

Figure 38: Social issues in city/local area the last 12 months
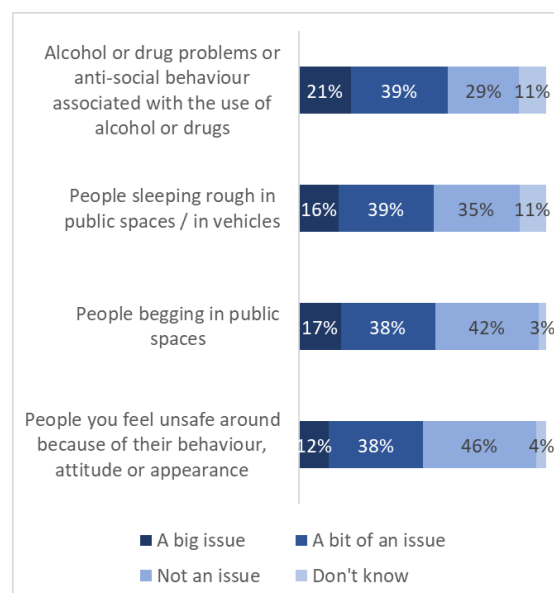
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Community, culture and economic networks

Feel sense of community[9]

Around half (49%) of respondents agreed they experienced a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

Figure 39:   Sense of community experienced
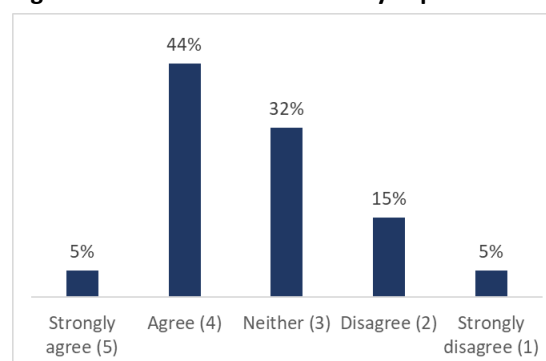
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Importance of sense of community

Over three fifths (62%*) of respondents considered it important to feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 40:   Importance of sense of community
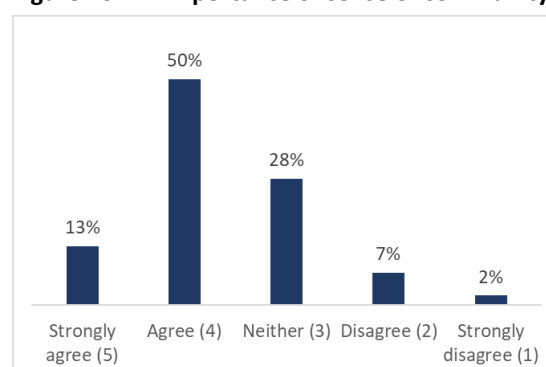
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Social networks belonged to

The most common social networks belonged to were clubs and societies (e.g. sports clubs, Lions Club, RSA, etc) (23%), followed by hobby or interest groups (e.g. book clubs, craft, gaming, online forums, etc) (22%). Almost one third of respondents (30%) said they did not belong to any social networks or groups.

Figure 41:   Participation in social networks and groups
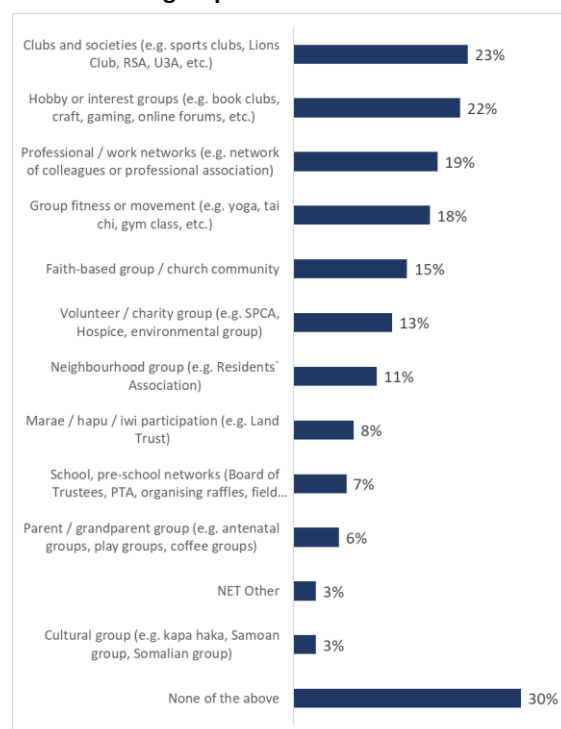
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages sum to more than 100%.

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[9] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Feeling of loneliness and isolation

More than one in ten respondents (13%) said they felt lonely or isolated either always or most of the time in the past 12 months, whereas half (51%) said they had never or rarely felt isolated.

Figure 42: **Frequency of feeling lonely/isolated**
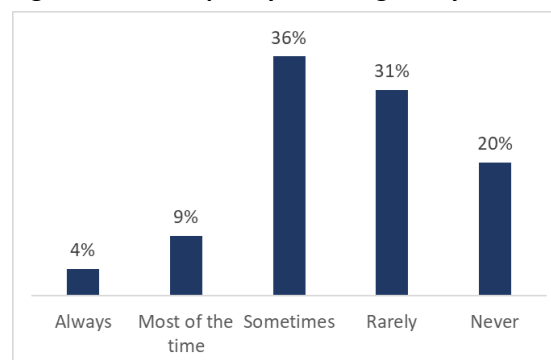
Impact of greater cultural diversity[10]

Previous survey waves asked whether respondents considered that New Zealand becoming home for an increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures from different countries made their city or local area a better place to live.

This question was not asked in the 2024 survey.

Figure 43: **Perception of impact of greater cultural diversity**

Not asked in the 2024 survey

Racism or discrimination

Almost half (46%) of respondents considered racism/ discrimination toward particular groups of people to have been an issue in their area over the last year, while 42% said it was not an issue.

Figure 44: **Perception of racism or discrimination**
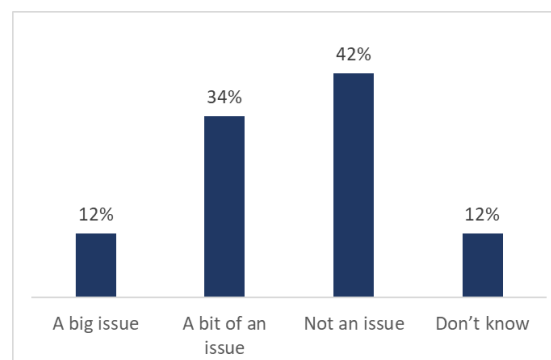
Personal experience of prejudice / intolerance

More than one in ten (15%) respondents said that in the last three months in their city or local area they had personally experienced anger / intolerance or been treated unfairly / excluded because of their ethnicity. Less frequently cited personal experience of prejudice / intolerance related to age (10%), gender (9%) and physical or mental condition (8%). Overall, around one quarter (24%) of respondents said they had experienced at least one type of intolerance.

Figure 45: **Personal experience of prejudice / intolerance**

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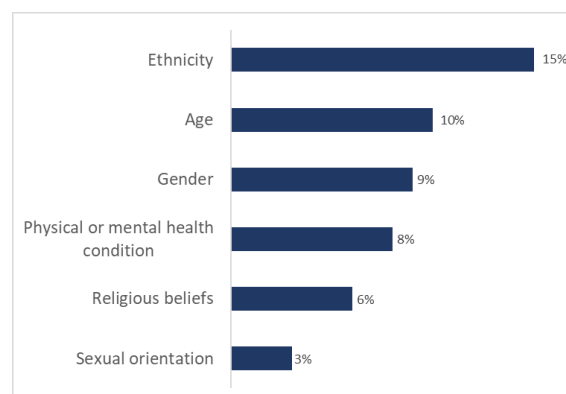
[10] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

Perceived acceptance of identity

Around four fifths (79%*) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable dressing in a way that expresses their identity in public (e.g., sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith).

Around three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can participate, perform or attend activities or groups that align with their culture.

Around two thirds (68%*) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people in their city or local area accept and value them and others of their identity.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 46:   Perceived acceptance of identity
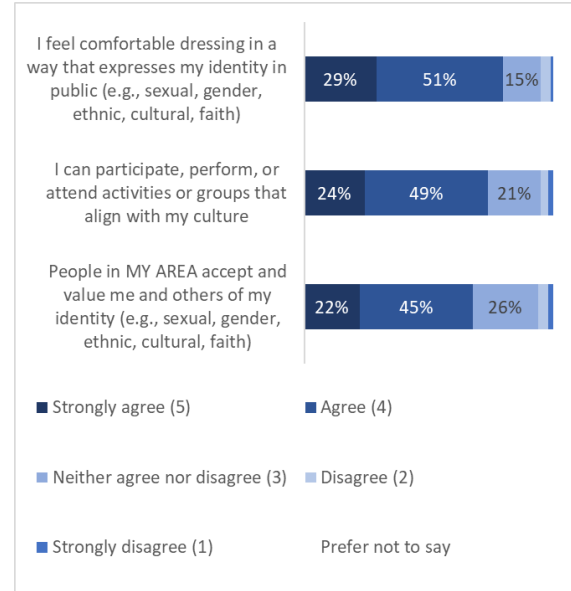
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Trust

Trust in institutions

Around two thirds (68%) of respondents gave the top three scores on a seven-point scale in terms of their level of trust in the Police. Levels of trust were also relatively high for scientists, the public education system and the public health system.

Levels of trust were lower for the justice system, local government and central government, and lowest for media. More than half (55%) of respondents rated the media on the lowest three scores of the seven-point scale.

Figure 47: **Trust in institutions**
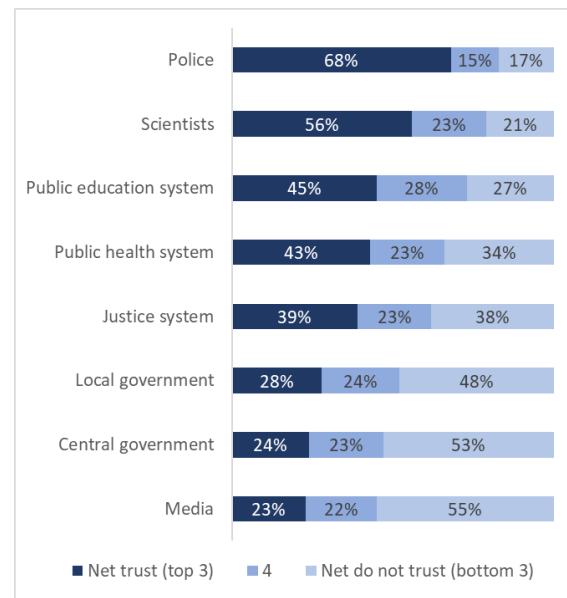
Trust in people in city/local area

More than half (56%) of respondents have trust in the people of their city or local area, while 18% do not.

Figure 48: **Trust in people in city/local area**
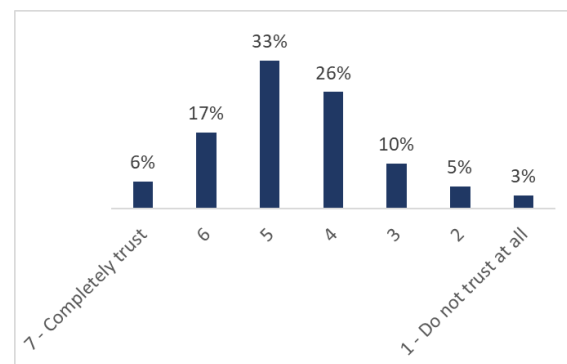
Climate issues

Climate issues in city/local area

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they perceived various environmental issues had been a problem in their city or local area in the last 12 months.

Water pollution was the main concern at 59%, followed by too much water (43%*), coastal erosion, landslips and air pollution (all 35%).

Not having enough water (e.g. drought, water supply issues) was perceived as less of a problem, with less than a third (31%) rating this issue as 'a big problem' or 'a bit of a problem'. Similarly, less than a third (30%) of respondents perceived increased heat and fire risk to be a problem.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 49:   Climate issues in city/local area
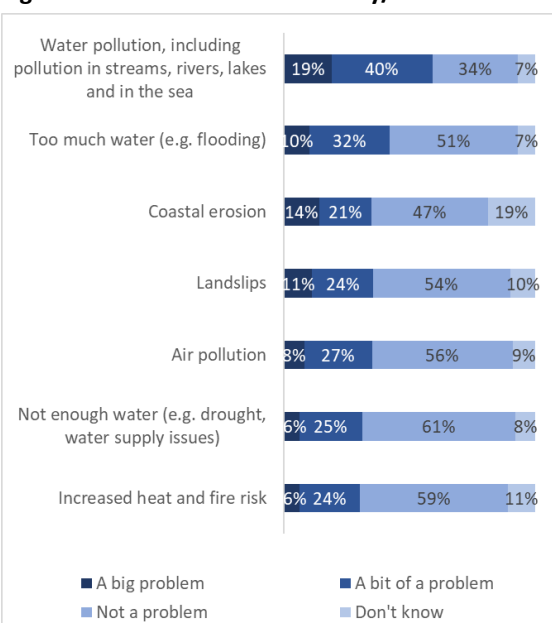
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Readiness for impacts of climate change

The 2024 survey asked about levels of preparedness for certain impacts of climate change. Around half (51%) of respondents felt that they and their household were 'fairly' or 'very' ready if their city or local area was faced with flooding or severe storms. Less than half (47%) felt ready for a drought causing water supply issues and less again (44%) felt ready for increased heat and fire risk.

Figure 50:   Readiness for impacts of climate change
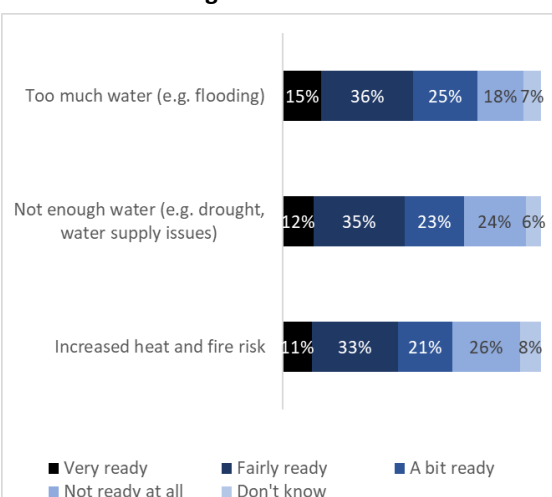
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Understanding of climate change and its impacts

Over half (56%) of respondents think they have a good understanding of climate change and its impacts on their city or local area, while a third (34%) say they don't know the impacts 'well' or 'at all'.

One in ten (10%) respondents said they do not believe that climate change will have any impact on their city or local area in the next five years.

Figure 51: Understanding of climate change and its impacts
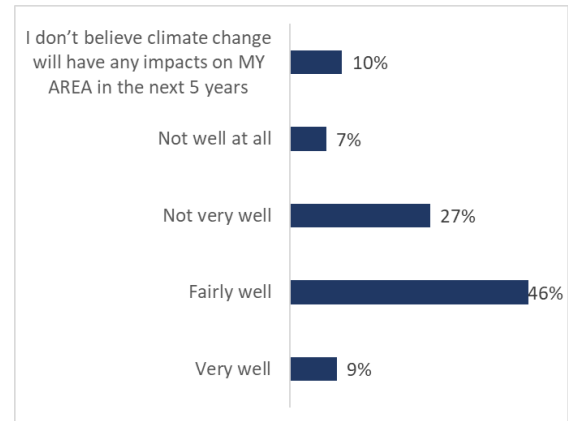
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

Worry about climate change impacts

Two fifths (20%) of respondents agreed they are worried about climate change impacts on their city or local area in the next five years, while almost one third (30%) were 'not at all' worried.

Figure 52: Worry about climate change impacts
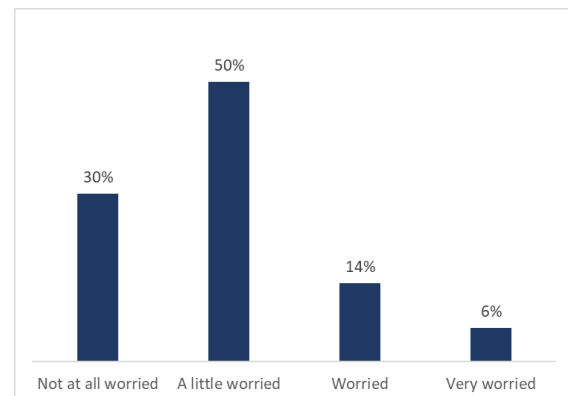
Note: Not all sum to 100% due to rounding.

Employment and economic wellbeing

Employment/Labour force status

More than half of all respondents (55%) were employed in paid work either 30 hours or more per week (43%) or in part-time work (12%). A further 13% said they were not currently in paid employment. Of the total respondents, 21% were retired, 8% caring for children under 18 (unpaid), 5% doing volunteer work and 5% students. Respondents could select multiple options.

Figure 53:   Employment/Labour force status

In paid work 30 hours or more a week	43%
Retired	21%
Not currently in paid employment	13%
In paid work less than 30 hours a week	12%
Caring for children under 18 (unpaid)	8%
Volunteer work	5%
Student	5%
NET Other	4%
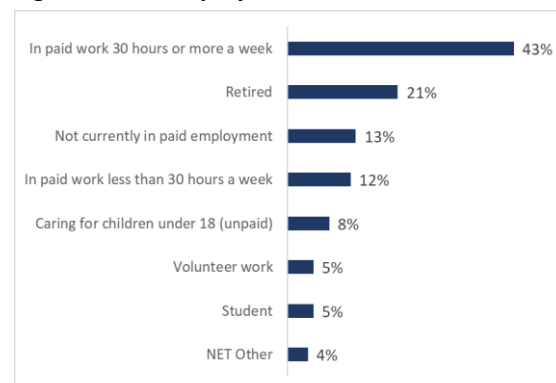
Note: Base for each item is all respondents. Sums to more than 100%. Respondents could select multiple options.

Satisfaction with work-life balance

Almost two thirds (63%*) of respondents in paid employment were satisfied or very satisfied with the balance of work and other aspects of their life, while 20% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 54:   Satisfaction with work-life balance

Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)
18%	46%	16%	17%	3%
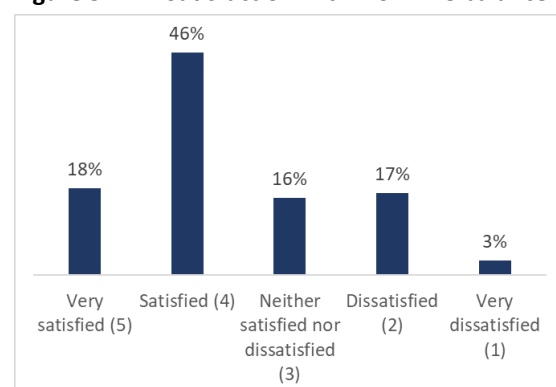
Notes: Base is all respondents in paid employment.

Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with work-life balance

Of the respondents in paid employment who were satisfied with their work-life balance, the main reasons provided were manageable workload and hours (33%), enough time for self or other commitments (29%), and good balance and time management (25%).

Figure 55:   Reasons satisfied with work-life balance

Workload and hours manageable	33%
NETT Other	30%
Enough time for myself or for other commitments	29%
Good balance and time management	25%
Work allows flexibility	19%
Happy with job	17%
Income sufficient	5%
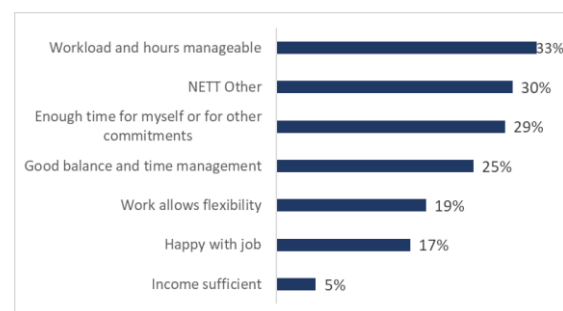
Notes: Base is all respondents in paid employment and satisfied with their work-life balance.

Of the respondents in paid employment who were not satisfied with their work-life balance, the main reasons provided were workload and hours unmanageable (56%), insufficient income (42%) and not enough time for self or other commitments (34%).

Figure 56:   Reasons dissatisfied with work-life balance

Workload and hours unmanageable	56%
Insufficient income	42%
Not enough time for myself or for other commitments	34%
Work lacks flexibility	17%
Stress, fatigue, or poor health	15%
NETT Other	12%
Issues travelling to work	7%
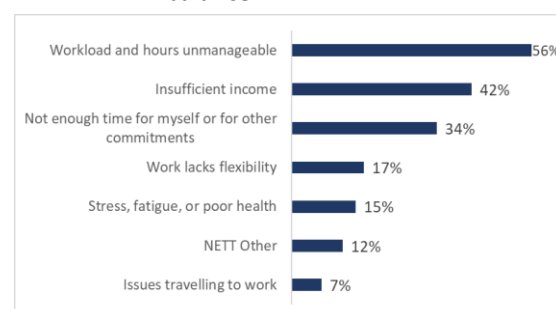
Notes: Base is all respondents in paid employment and not satisfied with their work-life balance.

Ability of income to meet everyday needs

Out of all the respondents, around one third (35%) said they have 'enough' or 'more than enough' income to meet their everyday needs, whereas around one fifth (19%) said that their total income is not enough to cover their everyday needs. More than two fifths (43%) of respondents said they have 'just enough' income to meet their everyday needs.

Figure 57: **Ability of income to meet everyday needs**
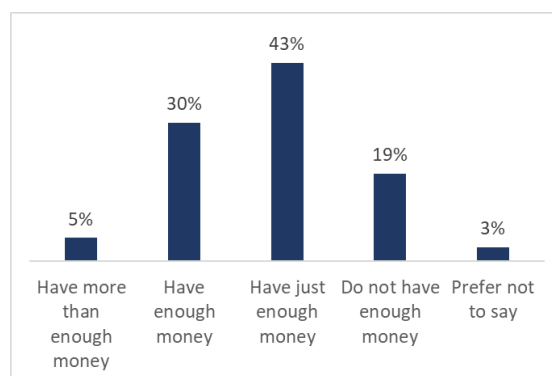
Worry about financial circumstances

In the 2024 survey, all respondents were asked to what extent they worry about their financial circumstances. More than one third (35%) said they worried 'always' or 'most of the time' about their and their family's financial circumstances in the last three months, while almost two fifths (38%) said they 'sometimes' worry about it. Around one quarter (27%) said they 'rarely' or 'never' worry about this.

Figure 58: **Worry about financial circumstances**
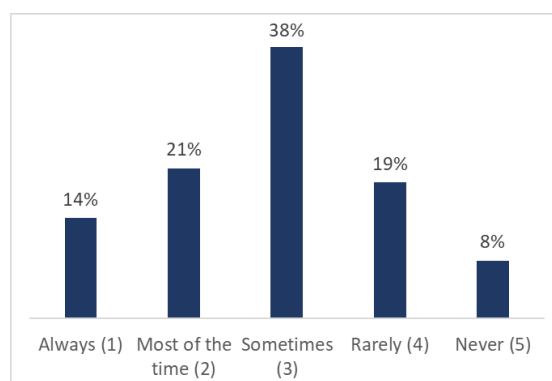
Ability to pay unexpected bill without going into debt

In the 2024 survey, all respondents were also asked whether they had the ability to pay an unexpected bill of $2000 within a week without going into debt. More than half (56%) of respondents said they would be able to pay, while around two fifths (39%) said they would not be able to.

Figure 59: **Ability to pay unexpected bill without going into debt**
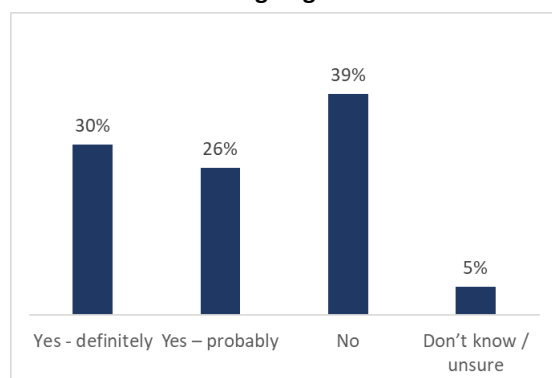
Council decision-making processes

Perception of public's influence on Council decision making[11]

Around one third (35%*) of respondents said the public have some or large influence over the decisions their local Council makes, while around two fifths (38%) perceive the public to have a small influence and one fifth (20%) no influence.

* percentages do not add due to rounding

Figure 60:   Perception of public's influence on Council decision making
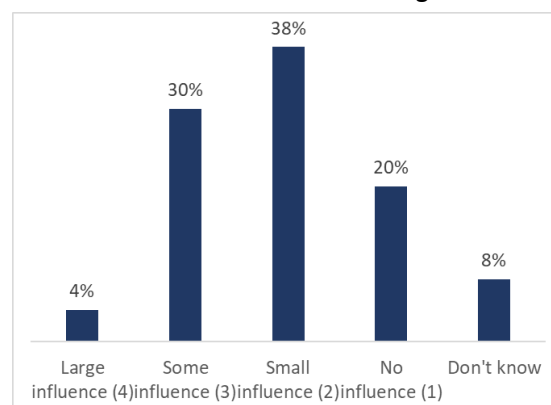
Confidence in Council decision-making

Around one third of respondents (32%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have confidence their local Council makes decisions in the best interests of their area, while 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 32% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% said they did not know.

Figure 61:   Confidence in Council decision-making
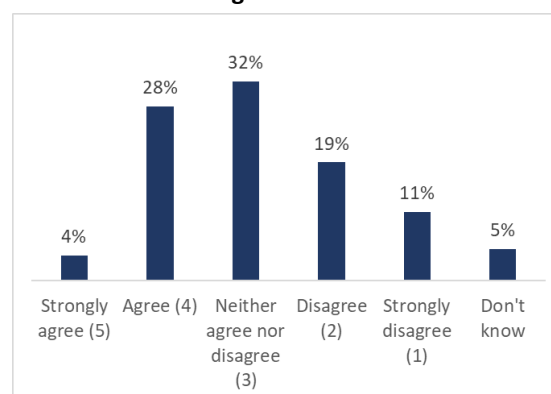
Note: Sums to less than 100% due to rounding.

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[11] *This indicator is included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring programme.*

3.3   Waikato Progress Indicators results by age, gender and ethnicity

This sub-section provides a summary of statistically significant key results by age group, gender and ethnicity at the regional level for the seven 2024 survey items that are included in the Waikato Progress Indicators (Section 1.4).[12] These results have larger sampling errors than the overall regional results for all respondents.

Age group

Respondents **aged under 25 years** (*N* = 144) were:[13]

- Less likely to agree their quality of life was good, very good or extremely good (71% compared to 79% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city or local area looks and feels (53% compared to 63% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (52% compared to 71% for all ages combined); and more likely to rate their mental health as poor or fair (48% compared to 29% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (61% compared to 72% for all ages combined); and more likely to rate their spiritual health as poor or fair (35% compared to 22% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (32% compared to 49% for all ages combined); and more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (27% compared to 19% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes (50% compared to 35% for all ages combined).

Respondents **aged 25 to 34** (*N* = 238) were:

- Less likely to agree their quality of life was good, very good or extremely good (74% compared to 79% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree that their physical health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (62% compared to 67% for all ages combined); and more likely to rate their physical health as poor or fair (38% compared to 32% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (61% compared to 71% for all ages combined); and more likely to rate their mental health as poor or fair (39% compared to 29% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (65% compared to 72% for all ages combined); and more likely to rate their spiritual health as poor or fair (31% compared to 22% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree they had been physically active on five or more of the past seven days (24% compared to 31% for all ages combined).

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[12] The 'cultural respect' question was not asked in the 2024 survey.
[13] Sample sizes *N* shown in brackets for each cross-tab are weighted (demographically adjusted).

- Less likely to agree that they feel very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (58% compared to 66% for all ages combined); and more likely to agree that they feel a bit unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (39% compared to 31% for all ages combined).

- Less likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (42% compared to 49% for all ages combined); and more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (28% compared to 19% for all ages combined).

Respondents **aged 35 to 49** (*N* = 323) were:

- More likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was only poor or fair (19% compared to 14% for all ages combined).

Respondents **aged 50 to 64** (*N* = 321) were:

- Less likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes (24% compared to 35% for all ages combined).

Respondents **aged 65 plus** (*N* = 300) were:

- More likely to agree their quality of life was good, very good or extremely good (86% compared to 79% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city or local area looks and feels (72% compared to 63% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (90% compared to 71% for all ages combined); and less likely to rate their mental health as poor or fair (10% compared to 29% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (81% compared to 72% for all ages combined); less likely to rate their spiritual health as poor or fair (7% compared to 22% for all ages combined); and more likely to respond that they 'prefer not to say' (12% compared to 6% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (95% compared to 85% for all ages combined); and less likely to rate their relationship health as poor or fair (4% compared to 14% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree that they feel very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (73% compared to 66% for all ages combined); and less likely to agree that they feel a bit unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (22% compared to 31% for all ages combined).

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (65% compared to 49% for all ages combined); and less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (7% compared to 19% for all ages combined).

Figure 62:   Waikato Progress Indicators results by age group

Life satisfaction

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Extremely good (7)	6%	6%	5%	9%	4%
Very good (6)	25%	27%	24%	33%	50%
Good (5)	40%	41%	51%	38%	32%

Community pride

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Strongly agree (5)	9%	9%	11%	13%	15%
Agree (4)	44%	50%	56%	47%	57%

Perceptions of safety

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Very safe (4)	25%	18%	21%	23%	28%
Fairly safe (3)	37%	40%	46%	42%	46%

Physical activity

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
7 days	17%	9%	13%	16%	16%
6 days	7%	3%	3%	4%	6%
5 days	13%	12%	13%	11%	12%

Perceived health (average of four items)

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Excellent (5)	15%	10%	11%	19%	21%
Very good (4)	26%	20%	24%	23%	32%
Good (3)	26%	39%	37%	33%	31%

Cultural respect

Not asked in the 2024 survey

Social connectedness

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Strongly agree (5)	1%	2%	5%	7%	8%
Agree (4)	31%	40%	44%	40%	57%

Community engagement

	Under 25 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65+ years
Large influence (4)	5%	5%	6%	4%	2%
Some influence (3)	45%	31%	32%	20%	30%

Gender

Female respondents (*N* = 676) were:

- Less likely to agree that their physical health and wellbeing is good, very good or excellent (62% compared to 67% for all respondents); and more likely to agree that their physical health is fair or poor (38% compared to 32%).

- Less likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing is good, very good or excellent (64% compared to 71% for all respondents); and more likely to agree that their mental health is fair or poor (36% compared to 29%).

- More likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing is fair or poor (28% compared to 22% for all respondents).

- Less likely to agree that they feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (57% compared to 66% for all respondents); and more likely to agree that they feel unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (41% compared to 31%).

Male respondents (*N* = 649) were:

- More likely to agree that their physical health and wellbeing is good, very good or excellent (73% compared to 67% for all respondents); and less likely to agree that their physical health is fair or poor (26% compared to 32%).

- More likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing is good, very good or excellent (78% compared to 71% for all respondents); and less likely to agree that their mental health is fair or poor (22% compared to 29%).

- More likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing is good, very good or excellent (77% compared to 72% for all respondents); and less likely to agree that their spiritual health is fair or poor (15% compared to 22%).

- More likely to agree that they feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (75% compared to 66% for all respondents); and less likely to agree that they feel unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (21% compared to 31%).

Figure 63: **Waikato Progress Indicators results by gender**

Life satisfaction

	Male	Female
Extremely good (7)	7%	5%
Very good (6)	32%	33%
Good (5)	41%	40%

Community pride

	Male	Female
Strongly agree (5)	13%	10%
Agree (4)	54%	49%

Perceptions of safety

	Male	Female
Very safe (4)	30%	16%
Fairly safe (3)	45%	41%

Physical activity

	Male	Female
7 days	17%	12%
6 days	5%	4%
5 days	13%	11%

Perceived health (average of four items)

	Male	Female
Excellent (5)	17%	14%
Very good (4)	28%	22%
Good (3)	33%	34%

Cultural respect

Not asked in the 2024 survey

Social connectedness

	Male	Female
Strongly agree (5)	7%	4%
Agree (4)	46%	42%

Community engagement

	Male	Female
Large influence (4)	6%	3%
Some influence (3)	33%	27%

Ethnic group

Respondents who identified with the **New Zealand European/Other ethnic group** (*N* = 976) were:

• Less likely to agree that the public have some influence or large influence over the decisions that their local Council makes (29% compared to 35% for all respondents).

Respondents who identified with the **Māori ethnic group** (*N* = 309) were:

• Less likely to agree that their quality of life was good, very good or extremely good (74% compared to 79% for all respondents.

• Less likely to agree that their mental health is good, very good or excellent (62% compared to 71% for all respondents); and more likely to agree that their mental health is fair or poor (38% compared to 29%).

• More likely to agree that their spiritual health is fair or poor (28% compared to 22%).

• More likely to agree that the public have some influence or large influence over the decisions that their local Council makes (40% compared to 35% for all respondents).

Respondents who identified with the **Pacific ethnic group** (*N* = 55) were:

• Less likely to agree that their physical health is good, very good or excellent (45% compared to 67% for all respondents); and more likely to agree that their physical health is fair or poor (55% compared to 32%).

• More likely to agree that their spiritual health is fair or poor (35% compared to 22%).

• More likely to agree that the public have some influence or large influence over the decisions that their local Council makes (51% compared to 35% for all respondents).

Respondents who identified with the **Asian/Indian ethnic group** (*N* = 154) were:

• More likely to agree that their physical health is good, very good or excellent (77% compared to 67% for all respondents); and less likely to agree that their physical health is fair or poor (23% compared to 32%).

• More likely to agree that the public have some influence or large influence over the decisions that their local Council makes (51% compared to 35% for all respondents).

Figure 64:   Waikato Progress Indicators results by ethnic group

Life satisfaction

NZ European / Other: Extremely good (7) 5%, Very good (6) 36%, Good (5) 39%
Maori: 9%, 28%, 37%
Pacific: 5%, 20%, 56%
Asian / Indian: 4%, 17%, 56%

■ Extremely good (7) ■ Very good (6) ■ Good (5)

Community pride

NZ European / Other: Strongly agree (5) 11%, Agree (4) 53%
Maori: 12%, 46%
Pacific: 23%, 36%
Asian / Indian: 12%, 51%

■ Strongly agree (5) ■ Agree (4)

Perceptions of safety

NZ European / Other: Very safe (4) 22%, Fairly safe (3) 43%
Maori: 25%, 43%
Pacific: 26%, 42%
Asian / Indian: 23%, 46%

■ Very safe (4) ■ Fairly safe (3)

Physical activity

NZ European / Other: 7 days 13%, 6 days 4%, 5 days 12%
Maori: 16%, 6%, 10%
Pacific: 13%, 11%, 6%
Asian / Indian: 15%, 2%, 17%

■ 7 days ■ 6 days ■ 5 days

Perceived health (average of four items)

NZ European / Other: Excellent (5) 15%, Very good (4) 26%, Good (3) 32%
Maori: 14%, 22%, 35%
Pacific: 10%, 18%, 35%
Asian / Indian: 16%, 23%, 39%

■ Excellent (5) ■ Very good (4) ■ Good (3)

Cultural respect

Not asked in the 2024 survey

Social connectedness

NZ European / Other: Strongly agree (5) 6%, Agree (4) 43%
Maori: 5%, 42%
Pacific: 4%, 46%
Asian / Indian: 2%, 45%

■ Strongly agree (5) ■ Agree (4)

Community engagement

NZ European / Other: Large influence (4) 3%, Some influence (3) 27%
Maori: 6%, 34%
Pacific: 5%, 46%
Asian / Indian: 15%, 36%

■ Large influence (4) ■ Some influence (3)

4. Territorial local authority results

This section provides summary results from selected survey items for territorial local authority (TLA) areas in the Waikato region. All results are based on weighted data to account for sample demographic differences. Further analysis of Hamilton results is available from Hamilton City Council.

The purpose of this supplementary information is to help inform policy and decision-makers, and the community. Due to smaller sample sizes these results have a larger sampling error than the overall results. For territorial local authority areas where the unweighted survey sample size is below 100, the results are indicative only and caution is advised when interpreting the results.

4.1 City vs non-city sample size

Of the 1,327 Waikato regional residents who responded to the 2024 Quality of Life survey, 527 (40%) were from Hamilton and the remainder were from other parts of the Waikato region. After weighting was applied to the data to account for differences in age, gender area and ethnicity, the effective sample comprised 405 respondents from Hamilton (31%). This provided a sufficient sample size and representativeness for both the city and other regional results to enable meaningful population inferences.

The sampling error for the overall Waikato region including Hamilton was ±2.7% (at the 95% confidence interval) and for the city of Hamilton ±4.9%.[14] For other districts, the disaggregated survey results (cross-tabs) are less reliable, with sampling errors ranging from approximately ±7.5% (Waipa District) to ±26% (Waitomo and Otorohanga districts).

Figure 65: Sample size percentages for Hamilton and other Waikato region (vs Census results)
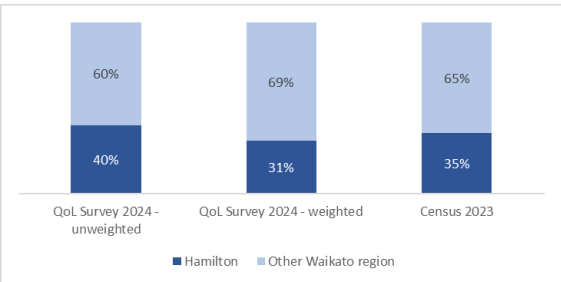
Sources: Quality of Life Survey 2024 (unweighted and weighted) and Statistics New Zealand Census 2023

Table 2: Sample size by Territorial Authority in the Waikato region – weighted

Territorial Authority	Sample No.	Sample %
Hamilton	405	31%
Thames-Coromandel	67	5%
Hauraki	52	4%
Waikato	159	12%
Matamata-Piako	103	8%
Waipa	173	13%
Ōtorohanga	32	2%
South Waikato	98	7%
Waitomo	14	1%
Taupō	86	6%
Rotorua	139	10%
Total Waikato region	**1,327**	**100%**

Note: Denominator based on total of all TAs including Rotorua District sub-sample.

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[14] Refer to https://www.omnicalculator.com/statistics/sampling-error for an online sampling error calculator.

4.2   QoL 2024 survey results by location (graphs)

Graphs below present summary results for many of the items in the 2024 Quality of Life Survey. Not all columns sum to 100% due to rounding differences.

The caveats regarding high sampling errors for some local council areas should be kept in mind when interpreting these graphs. Further analysis of Hamilton results is available from Hamilton City Council.

Where the full scale of results is shown, figures do not always sum to 100% because responses could also include "not applicable/don't know" for some items.

Figure 66:   Quality of life – Waikato region and TLAs
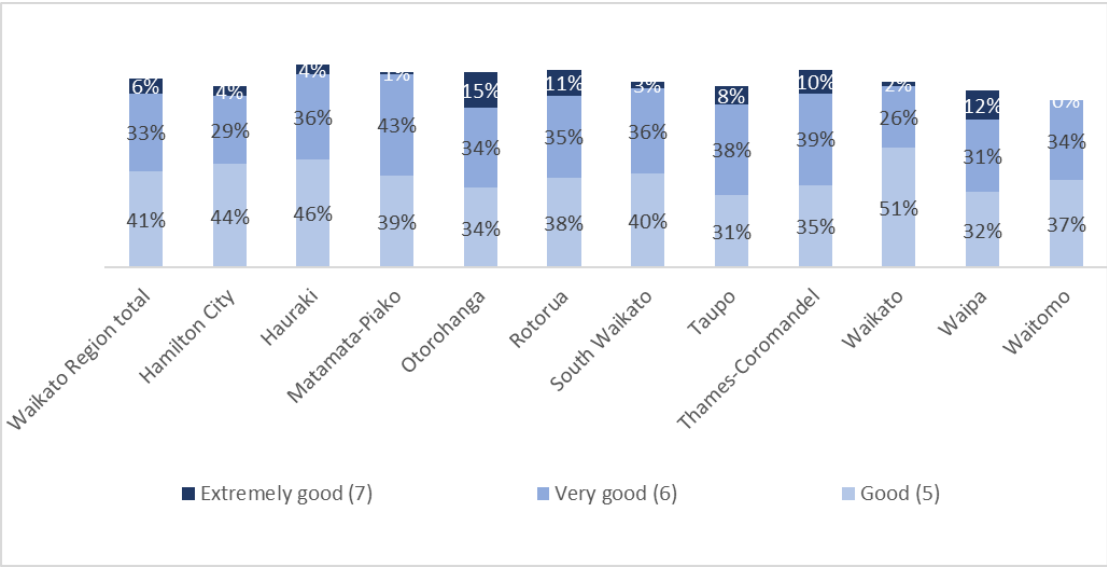
Figure 67:   Quality of life compared to 12 months ago – Waikato region and TLAs
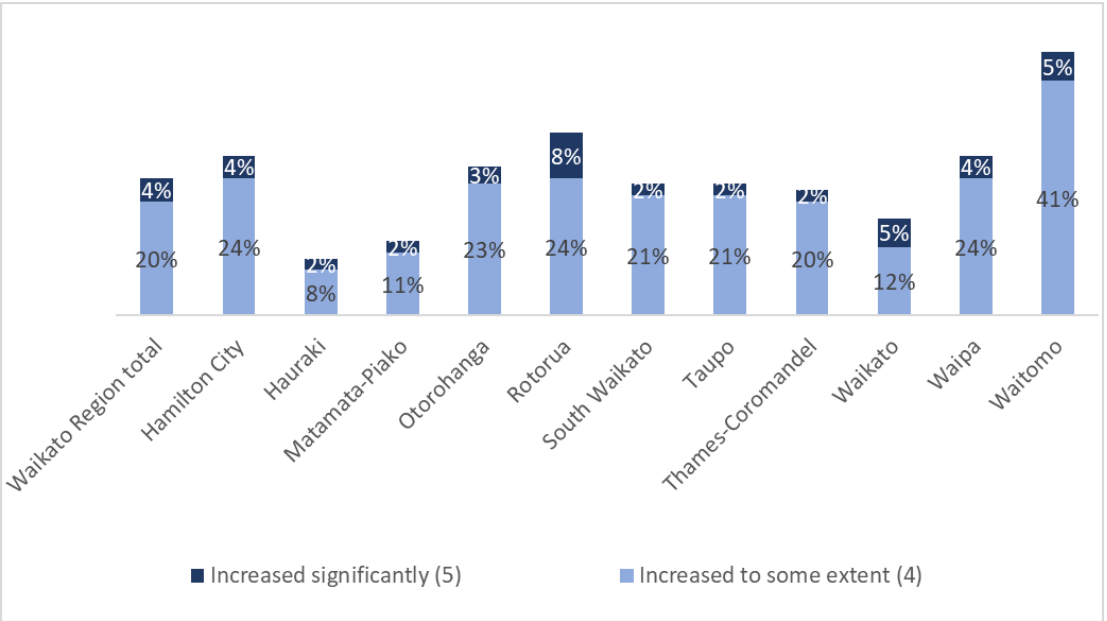
Figure 68:   Sense of pride in city/local area – Waikato region and TLAs

Strongly agree (5): Waikato Region total 12%, Hamilton City 6%, Hauraki 15%, Matamata-Piako 11%, Otorohanga 10%, Rotorua 15%, South Waikato 12%, Taupo 21%, Thames-Coromandel 20%, Waikato 8%, Waipa 17%, Waitomo 6%

Agree (4): Waikato Region total 51%, Hamilton City 44%, Hauraki 55%, Matamata-Piako 70%, Otorohanga 62%, Rotorua 51%, South Waikato 47%, Taupo 49%, Thames-Coromandel 53%, Waikato 55%, Waipa 55%, Waitomo 42%
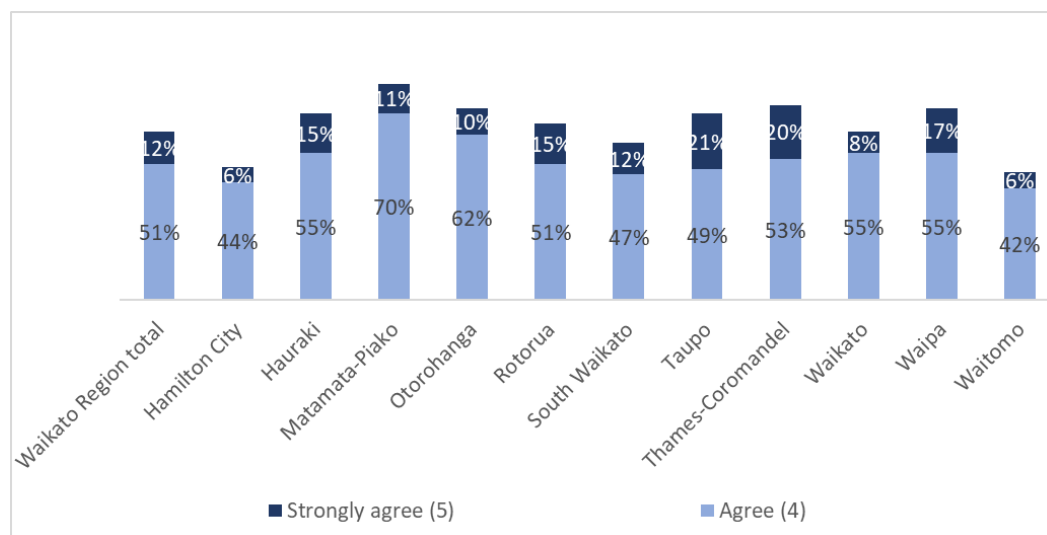
Figure 69:   City/local area is a great place to live – Waikato region and TLAs

Strongly agree (5): Waikato Region total 22%, Hamilton City 14%, Hauraki 24%, Matamata-Piako 17%, Otorohanga 35%, Rotorua 17%, South Waikato 20%, Taupo 37%, Thames-Coromandel 55%, Waikato 14%, Waipa 34%, Waitomo 19%

Agree (4): Waikato Region total 54%, Hamilton City 55%, Hauraki 65%, Matamata-Piako 66%, Otorohanga 52%, Rotorua 56%, South Waikato 50%, Taupo 43%, Thames-Coromandel 26%, Waikato 58%, Waipa 54%, Waitomo 41%
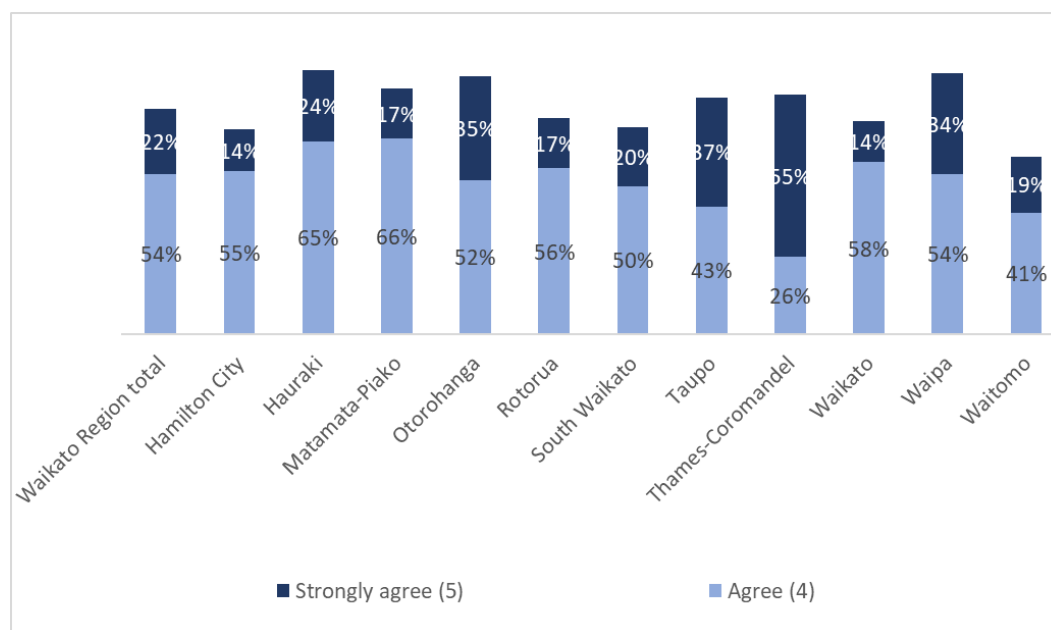
Figure 70:   City/local area has got better, worse or stayed the same – Waikato region and TLAs

NET: Better (4+5): Waikato Region total 18%, Hamilton City 16%, Hauraki 15%, Matamata-Piako 17%, Otorohanga 23%, Rotorua 23%, South Waikato 16%, Taupo 30%, Thames-Coromandel 15%, Waikato 15%, Waipa 21%, Waitomo 13%

Stayed the same (3): Waikato Region total 54%, Hamilton City 43%, Hauraki 67%, Matamata-Piako 69%, Otorohanga 60%, Rotorua 49%, South Waikato 68%, Taupo 48%, Thames-Coromandel 61%, Waikato 61%, Waipa 53%, Waitomo 54%

NET: Worse (1+2): Waikato Region total 28%, Hamilton City 41%, Hauraki 18%, Matamata-Piako 15%, Otorohanga 16%, Rotorua 28%, South Waikato 16%, Taupo 22%, Thames-Coromandel 24%, Waikato 25%, Waipa 26%, Waitomo 33%

Figure 71: **Affordability of housing costs – Waikato region and TLAs**
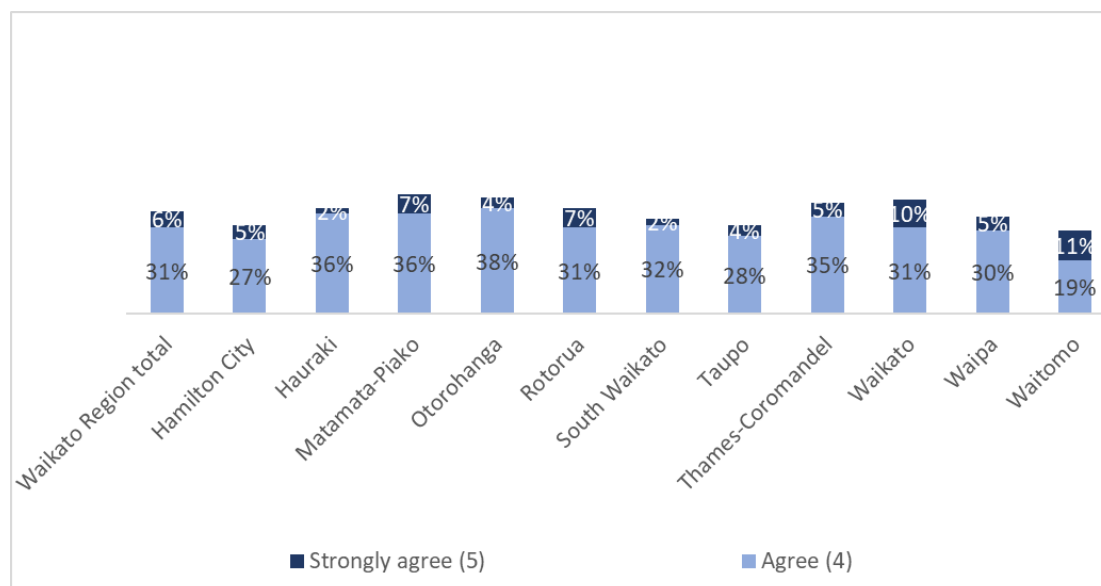
Figure 72: **Home suits needs – Waikato region and TLAs**
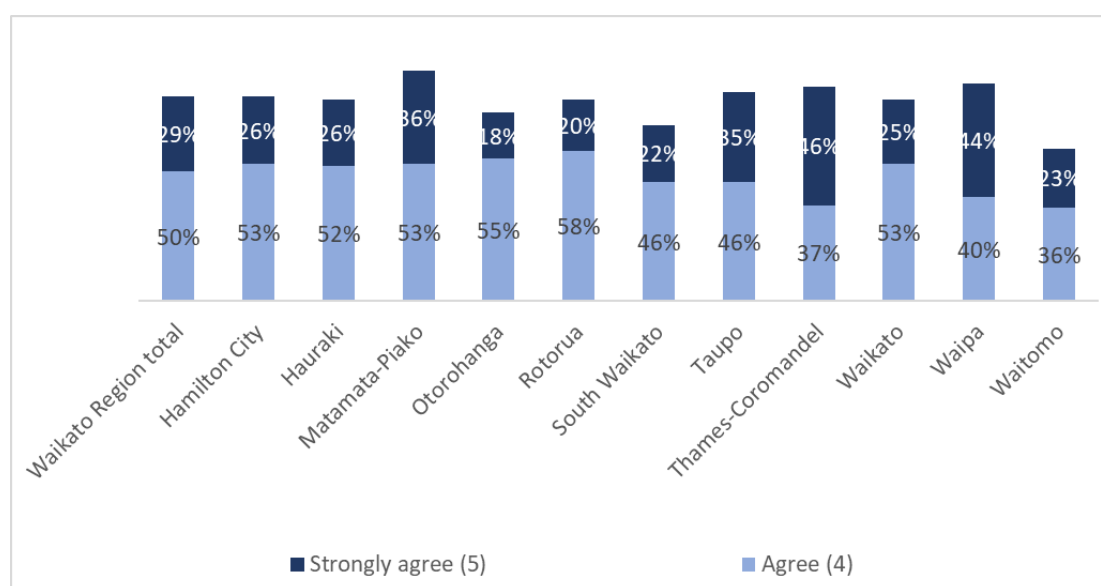
Figure 73: **Area/neighbourhood suits needs – Waikato region and TLAs**
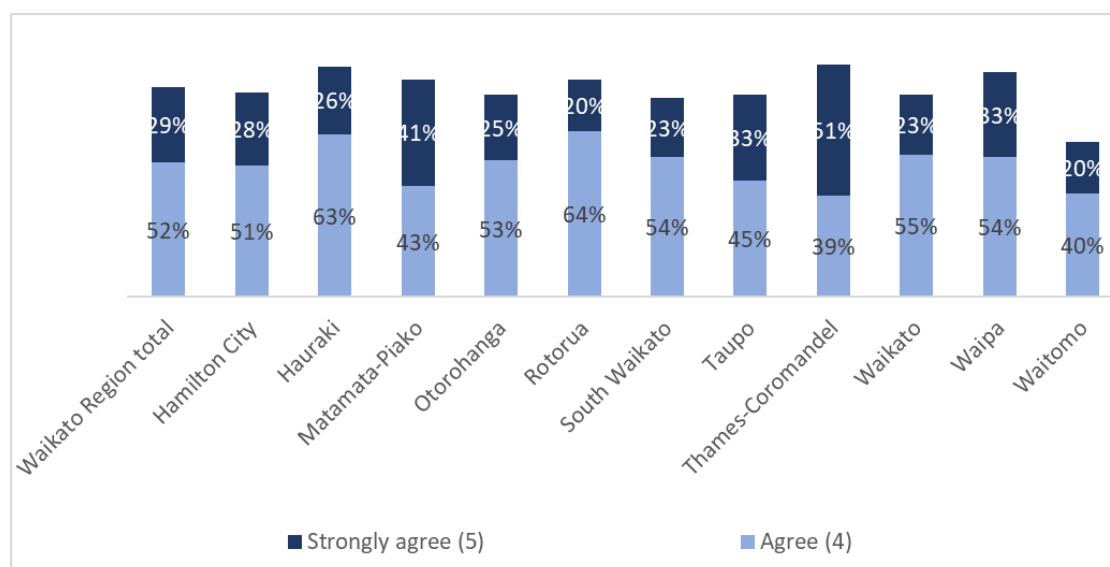
Figure 74:   Frequency of use of public transport – Waikato region and TLAs

Legend:
- ■ At least weekly
- ■ At least once a month but not weekly
- ■ Less often than once a month
- ■ Did not use over the past 12 months
- ■ Not applicable / not available in my area
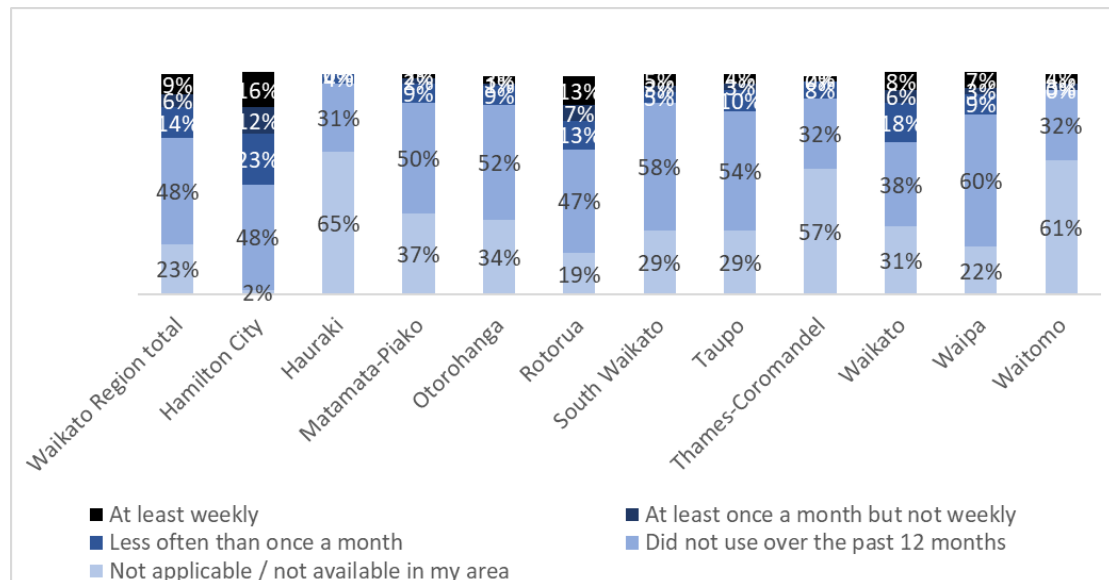
Figure 75:   Agree that public transport is affordable – Waikato region and TLAs

Legend:
- ■ Strongly agree (5)
- ■ Agree (4)
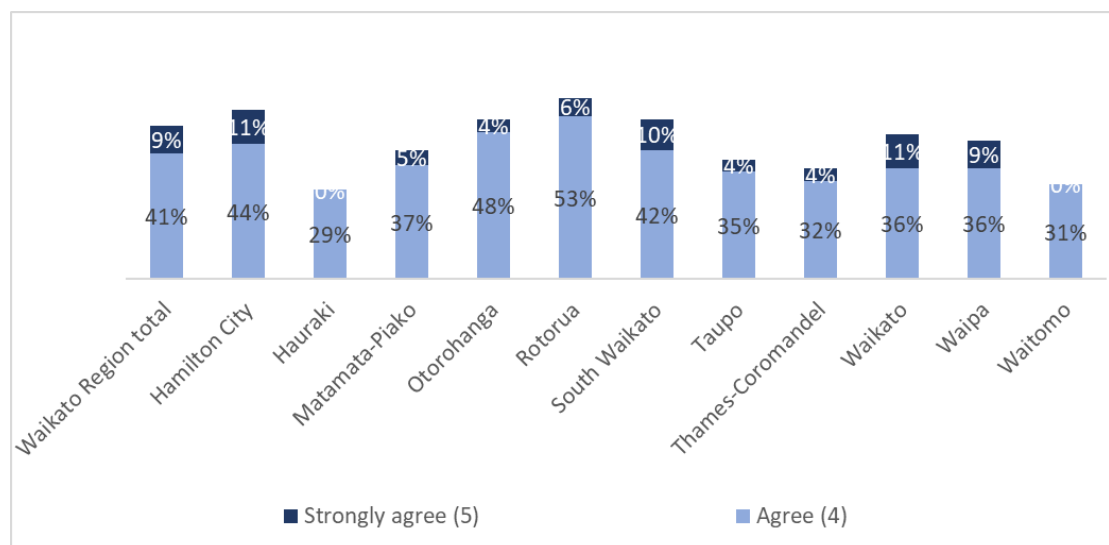
Figure 76:   Agree that public transport is safe from crime or harassment – Waikato region and TLAs

Legend:
- ■ Strongly agree (5)
- ■ Agree (4)
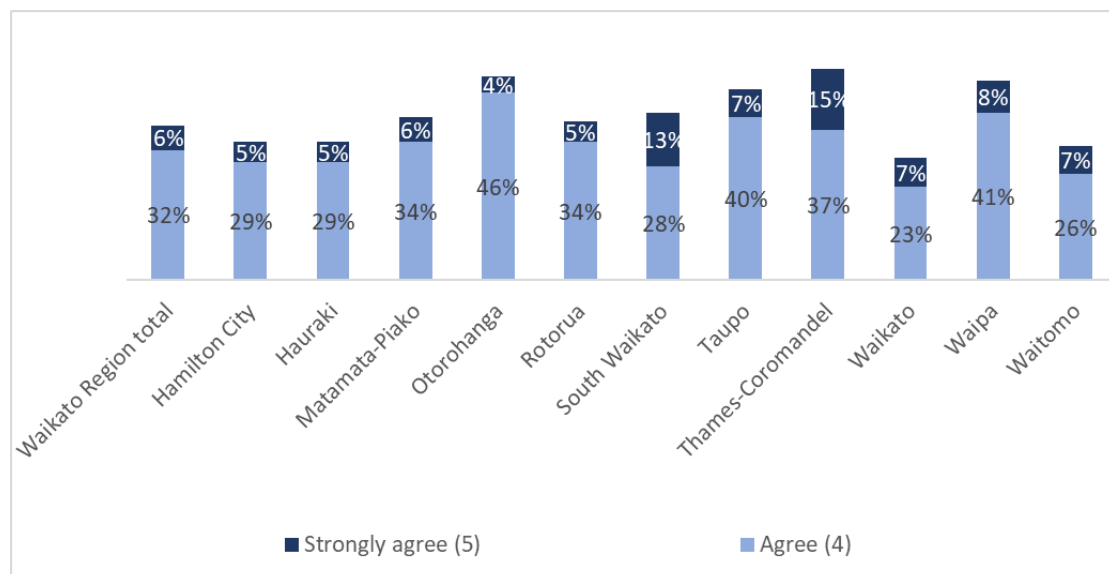
Figure 77: **Agree that public transport is safe from catching COVID etc – Waikato region and TLAs**

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)
Waikato Region total	5%	23%
Hamilton City	6%	24%
Hauraki	0%	6%
Matamata-Piako	8%	16%
Otorohanga	4%	25%
Rotorua	4%	31%
South Waikato	7%	25%
Taupo	8%	23%
Thames-Coromandel	4%	30%
Waikato	5%	22%
Waipa	4%	18%
Waitomo	7%	25%
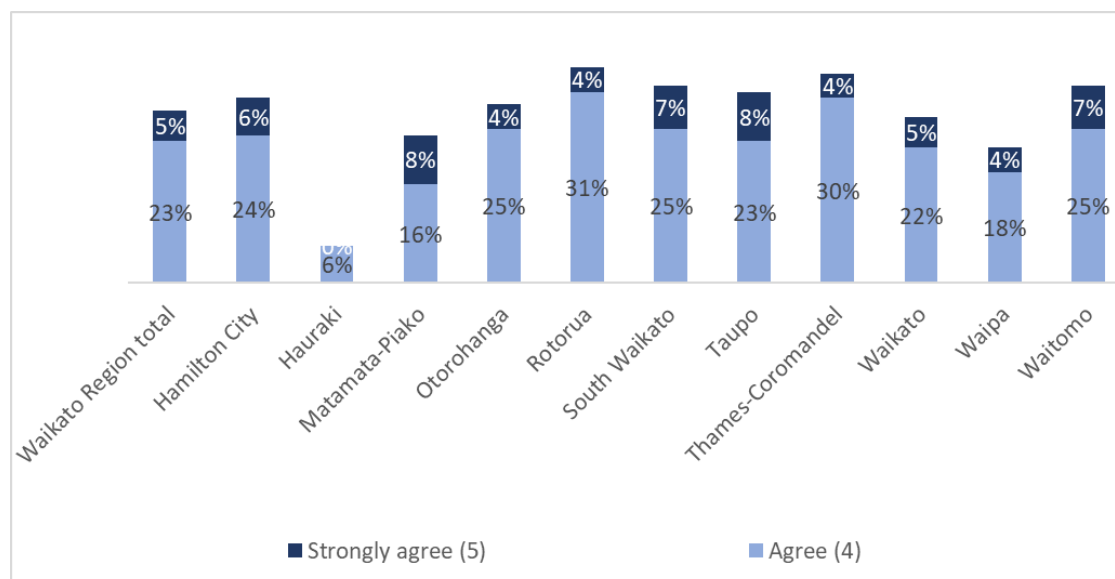
Figure 78: **Agree that public transport is easy to get to – Waikato region and TLAs**

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)
Waikato Region total	9%	49%
Hamilton City	12%	50%
Hauraki	5%	59%
Matamata-Piako	9%	25%
Otorohanga	11%	48%
Rotorua	11%	56%
South Waikato	10%	58%
Taupo	4%	52%
Thames-Coromandel	8%	36%
Waikato	8%	47%
Waipa	5%	53%
Waitomo	11%	30%
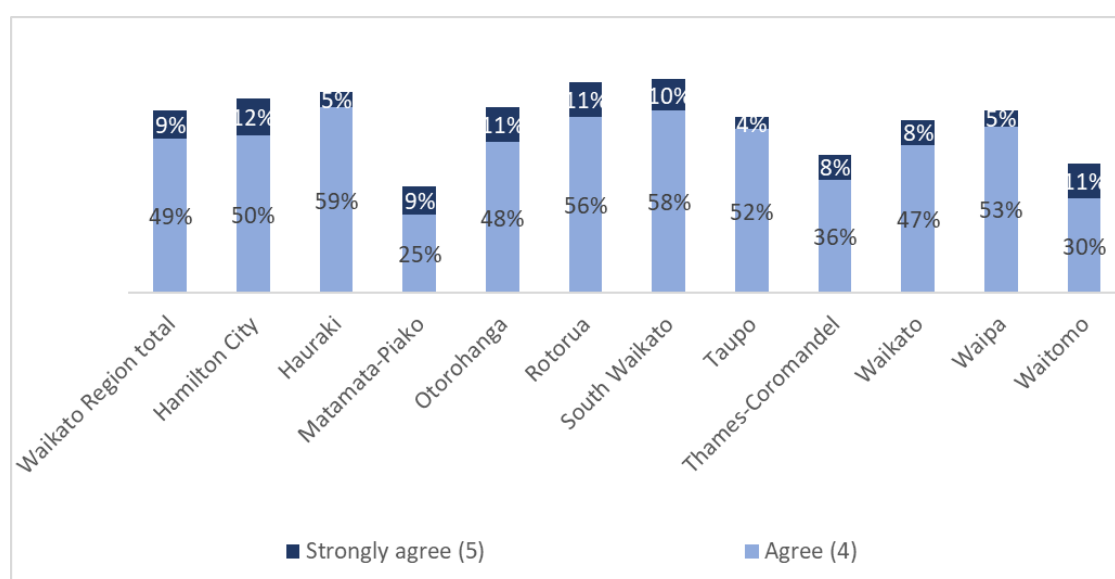
Figure 79: **Agree that public transport is frequent (comes often) – Waikato region and TLAs**

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)
Waikato Region total	7%	38%
Hamilton City	9%	42%
Hauraki	0%	16%
Matamata-Piako	3%	14%
Otorohanga	7%	38%
Rotorua	6%	61%
South Waikato	5%	48%
Taupo	4%	17%
Thames-Coromandel	4%	16%
Waikato	7%	40%
Waipa	8%	30%
Waitomo	11%	7%
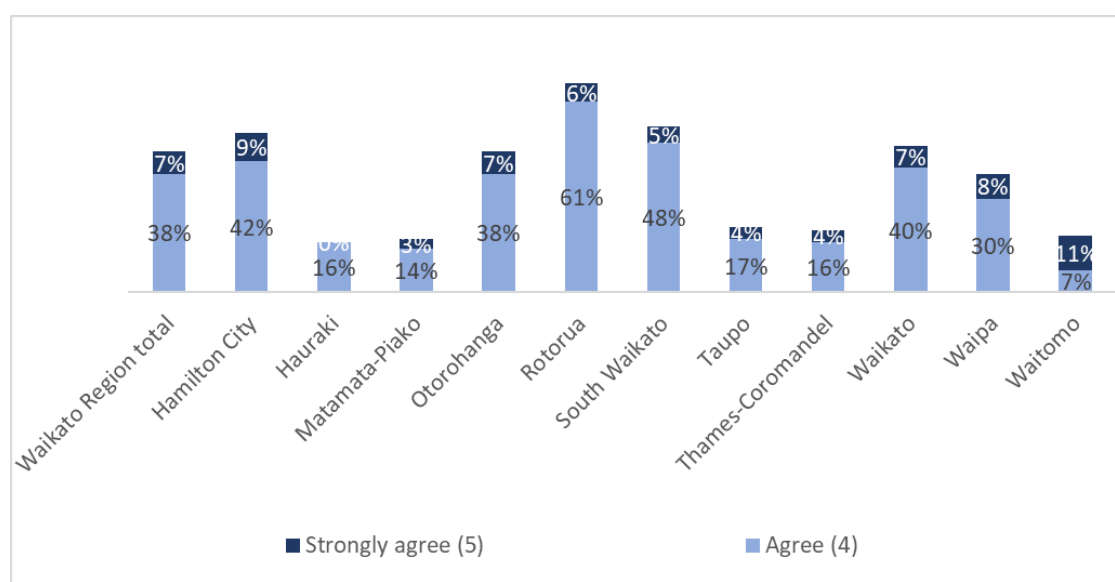
Figure 80: **Agree that public transport is reliable (comes on time) – Waikato region and TLAs**

Chart legend:
Strongly agree (5)   Agree (4)

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 7%, 34%
- Hamilton City: 7%, 37%
- Hauraki: 5%, 23%
- Matamata-Piako: 3%, 15%
- Otorohanga: 10%, 43%
- Rotorua: 5%, 47%
- South Waikato: 10%, 45%
- Taupo: 4%, 23%
- Thames-Coromandel: 4%, 36%
- Waikato: 8%, 34%
- Waipa: 8%, 29%
- Waitomo: 17%, 8%
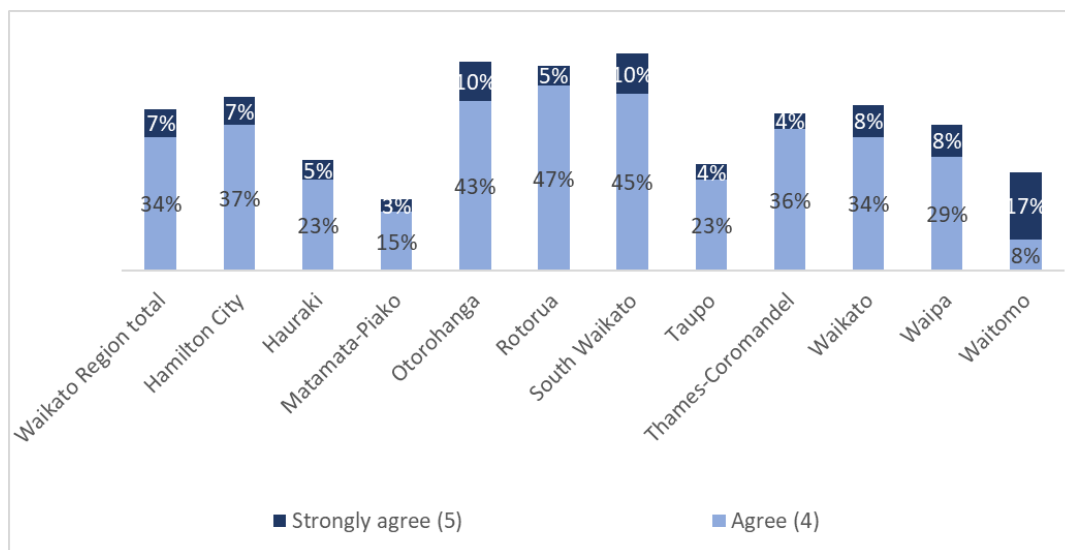
Figure 81: **Physical health and wellbeing – Waikato region and TLAs**

Chart legend:
Excellent (5)   Very good (4)   Good (3)

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 7%, 25%, 35%
- Hamilton City: 5%, 26%, 34%
- Hauraki: 7%, 22%, 39%
- Matamata-Piako: 6%, 23%, 45%
- Otorohanga: 2%, 24%, 33%
- Rotorua: 14%, 23%, 37%
- South Waikato: 5%, 21%, 35%
- Taupo: 10%, 23%, 35%
- Thames-Coromandel: 11%, 37%, 33%
- Waikato: 8%, 21%, 37%
- Waipa: 9%, 27%, 30%
- Waitomo: 6%, 21%, 30%
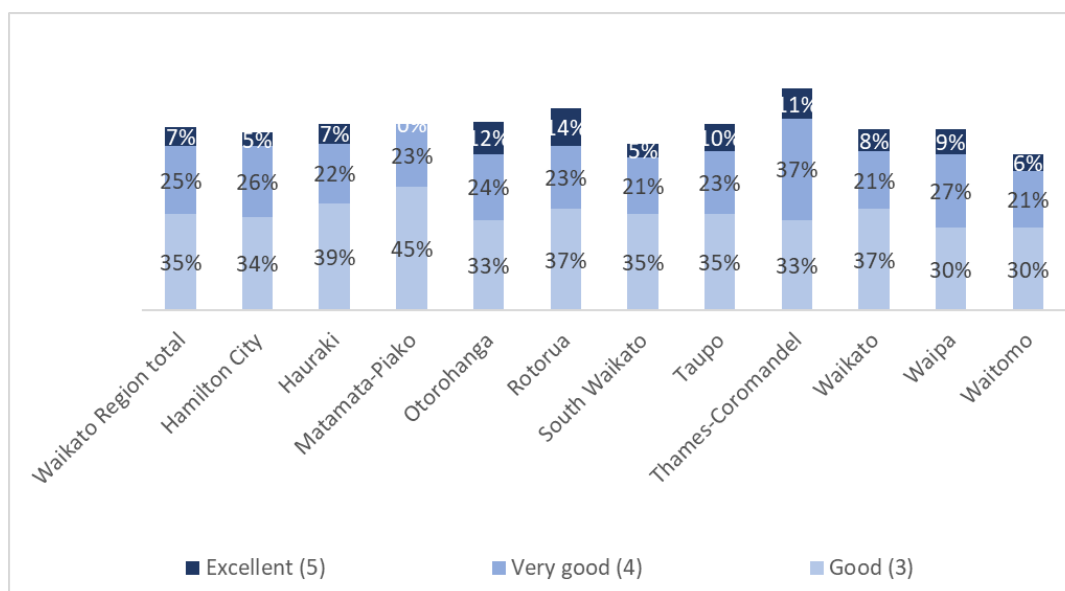
Figure 82: **Mental health and wellbeing – Waikato region and TLAs**

Chart legend:
Excellent (5)   Very good (4)   Good (3)

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 15%, 24%, 32%
- Hamilton City: 13%, 23%, 33%
- Hauraki: 16%, 22%, 36%
- Matamata-Piako: 13%, 26%, 33%
- Otorohanga: 15%, 21%, 36%
- Rotorua: 16%, 22%, 41%
- South Waikato: 13%, 26%, 36%
- Taupo: 13%, 43%, 13%
- Thames-Coromandel: 26%, 33%, 18%
- Waikato: 12%, 19%, 35%
- Waipa: 21%, 19%, 27%
- Waitomo: 14%, 27%, 20%
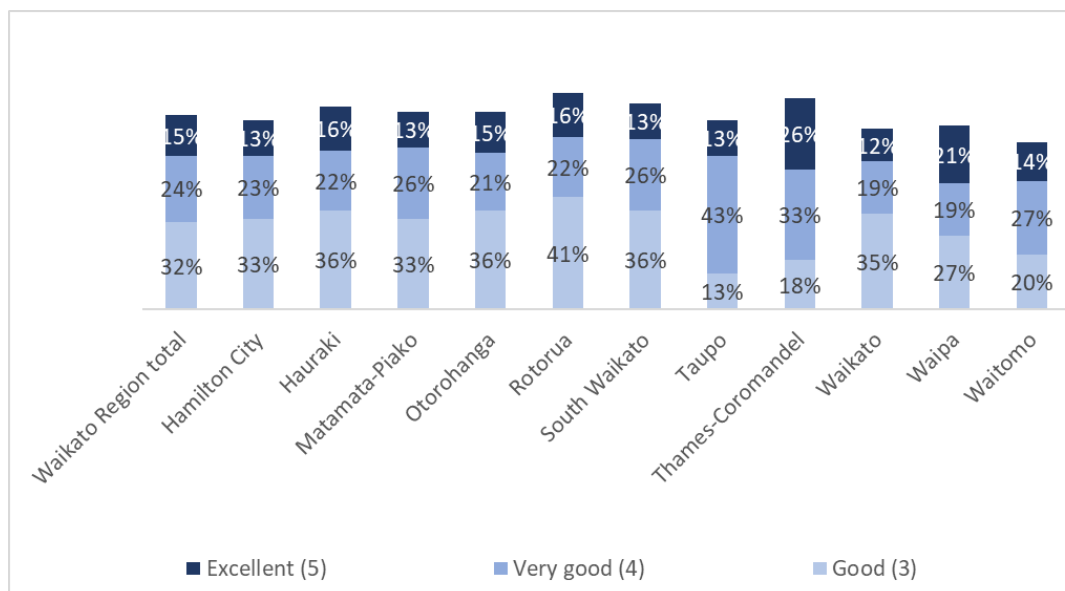
Figure 83: **Spiritual health and wellbeing – Waikato region and TLAs**
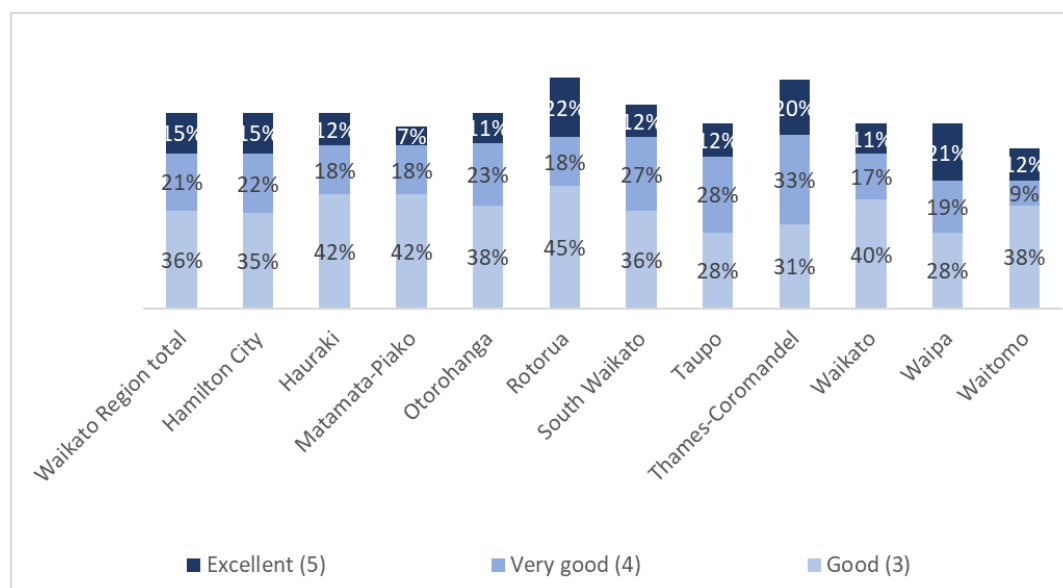
Figure 84: **Relationship health and wellbeing – Waikato region and TLAs**
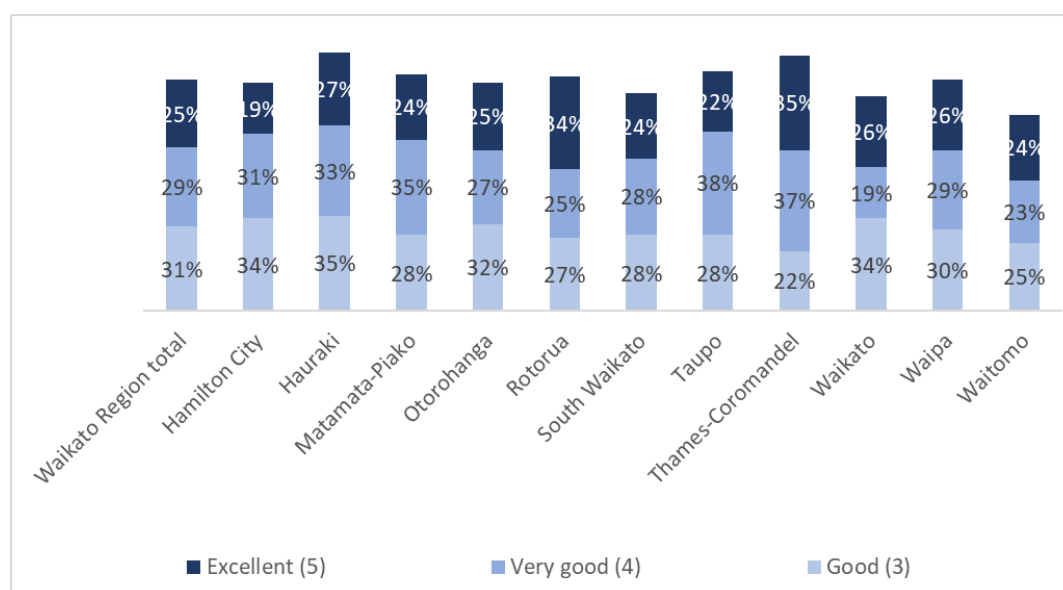
Figure 85: **Perceived health (average of four items) – Waikato region and TLAs**
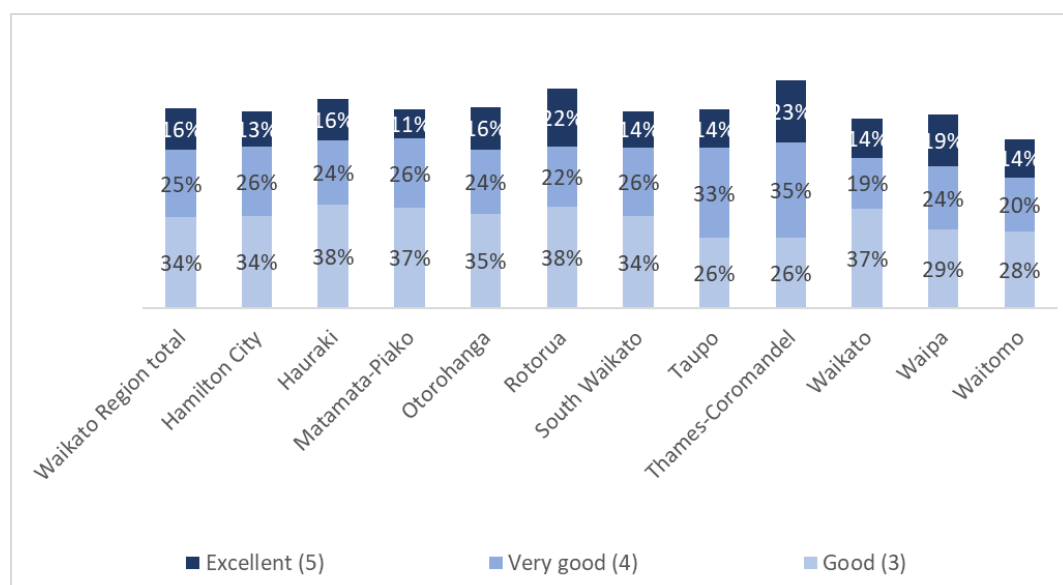
Figure 86:   Frequency of doing physical activity – Waikato region and TLAs
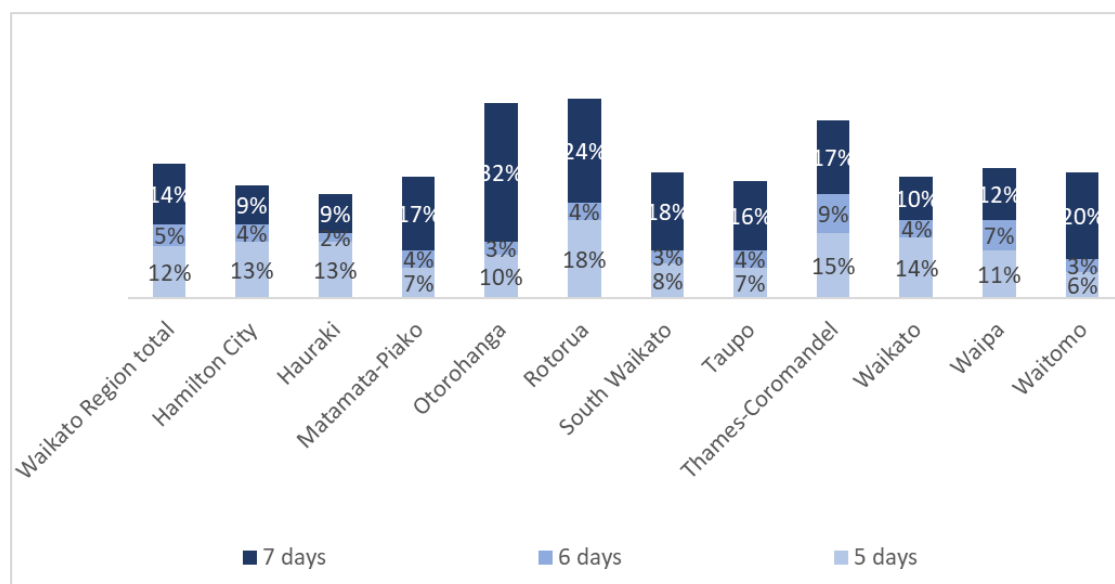
Figure 87:   Experienced stress – Waikato region and TLAs
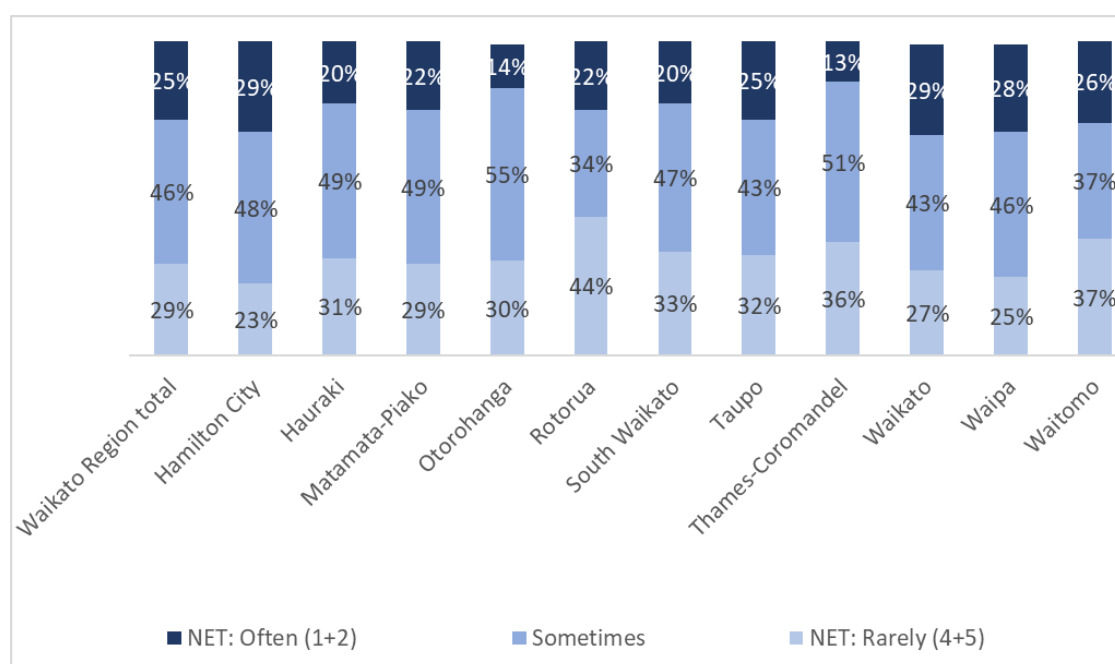
Figure 88:   Availability of practical support – Waikato region and TLAs
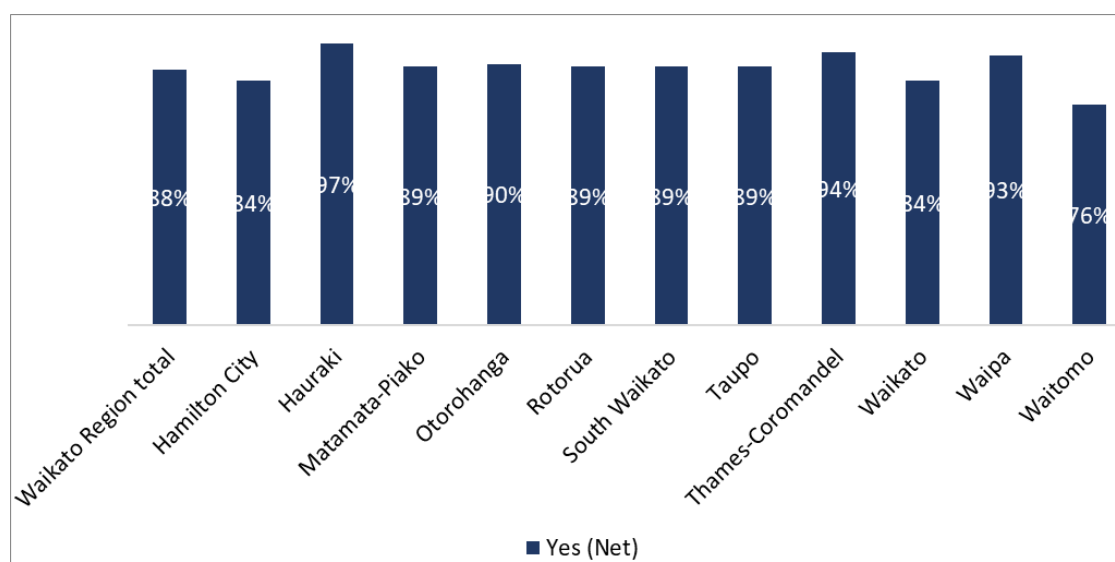
Figure 89:   **Availability of emotional support – Waikato region and TLAs**

Bar chart (Yes (Net)):
- Waikato Region total: 86%
- Hamilton City: 85%
- Hauraki: 94%
- Matamata-Piako: 85%
- Otorohanga: 83%
- Rotorua: 78%
- South Waikato: 84%
- Taupo: 84%
- Thames-Coromandel: 94%
- Waikato: 87%
- Waipa: 90%
- Waitomo: 81%
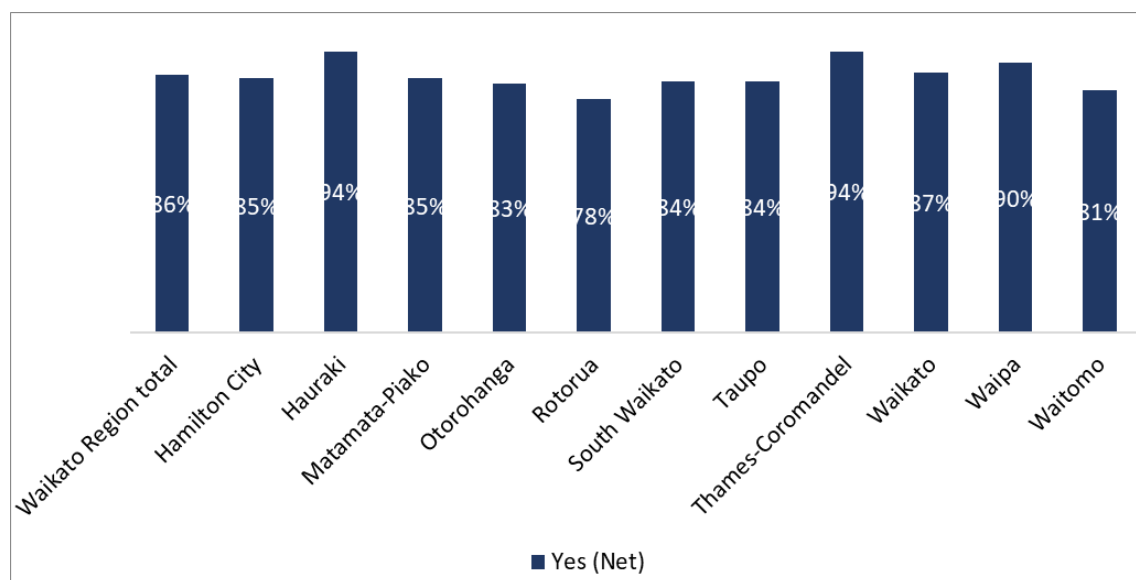
Figure 90:   **Perceived safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark – Waikato region and TLAs**

Stacked bar chart (Very safe (4) / Fairly safe (3)):
- Waikato Region total: 23% / 43%
- Hamilton City: 16% / 40%
- Hauraki: 10% / 54%
- Matamata-Piako: 30% / 52%
- Otorohanga: 35% / 37%
- Rotorua: 27% / 39%
- South Waikato: 11% / 44%
- Taupo: 33% / 34%
- Thames-Coromandel: 50% / 34%
- Waikato: 20% / 45%
- Waipa: 27% / 51%
- Waitomo: 16% / 34%
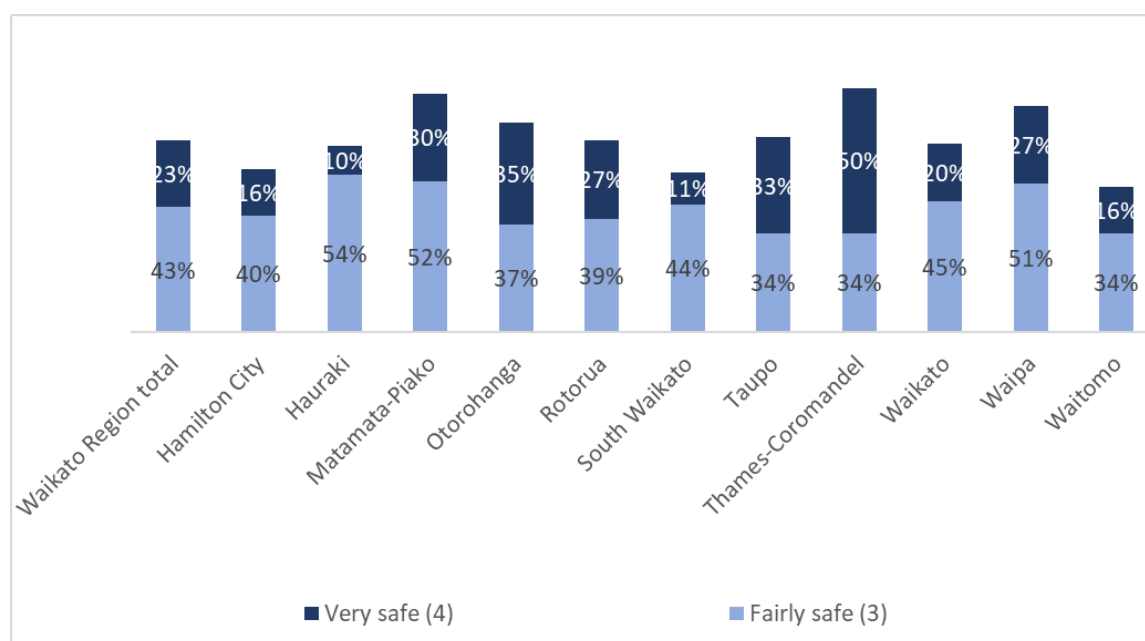
Figure 91:   **Perceived safety in city centre during the day – Waikato region and TLAs**

Stacked bar chart (Very safe (4) / Fairly safe (3)):
- Waikato Region total: 46% / 39%
- Hamilton City: 33% / 49%
- Hauraki: 43% / 41%
- Matamata-Piako: 54% / 29%
- Otorohanga: 51% / 28%
- Rotorua: 34% / 48%
- South Waikato: 50% / 42%
- Taupo: 58% / 30%
- Thames-Coromandel: 77% / 15%
- Waikato: 40% / 39%
- Waipa: 55% / 30%
- Waitomo: 32% / 41%
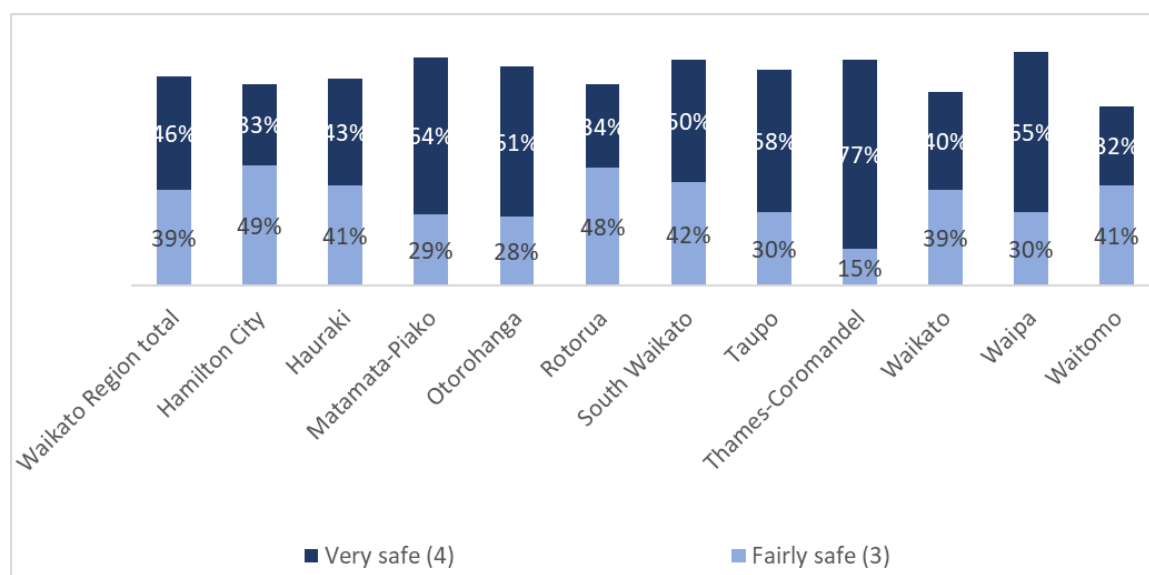
Figure 92: **Perceived safety in city centre after dark – Waikato region and TLAs**
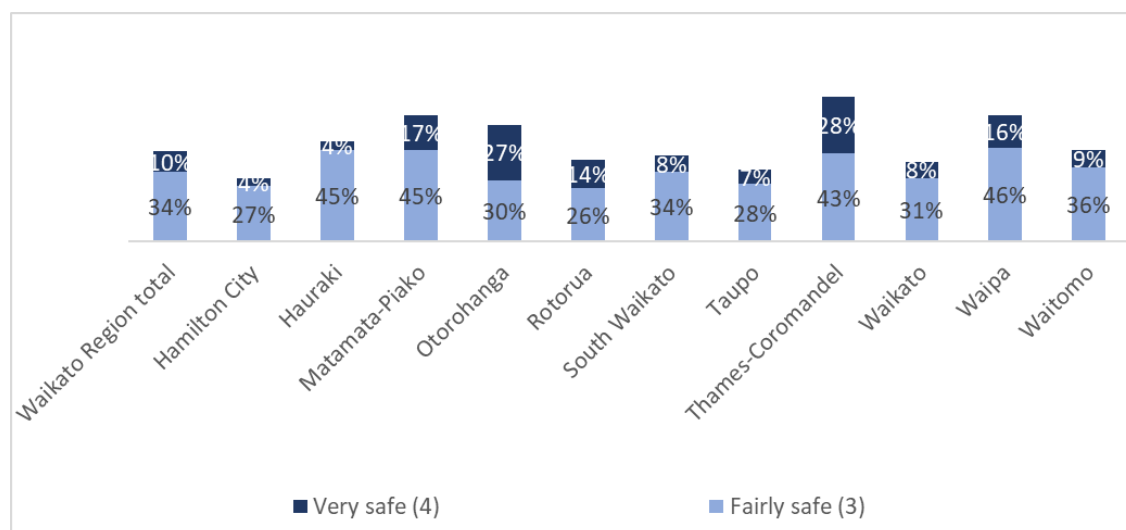
Figure 93: **Importance of sense of community – Waikato region and TLAs**
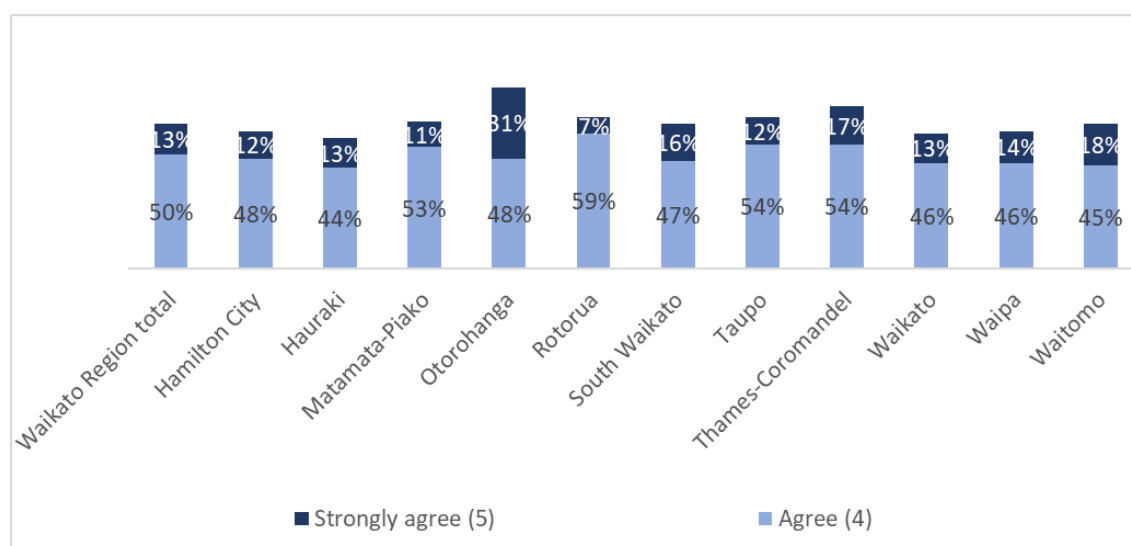
Figure 94: **Feel sense of community – Waikato region and TLAs**
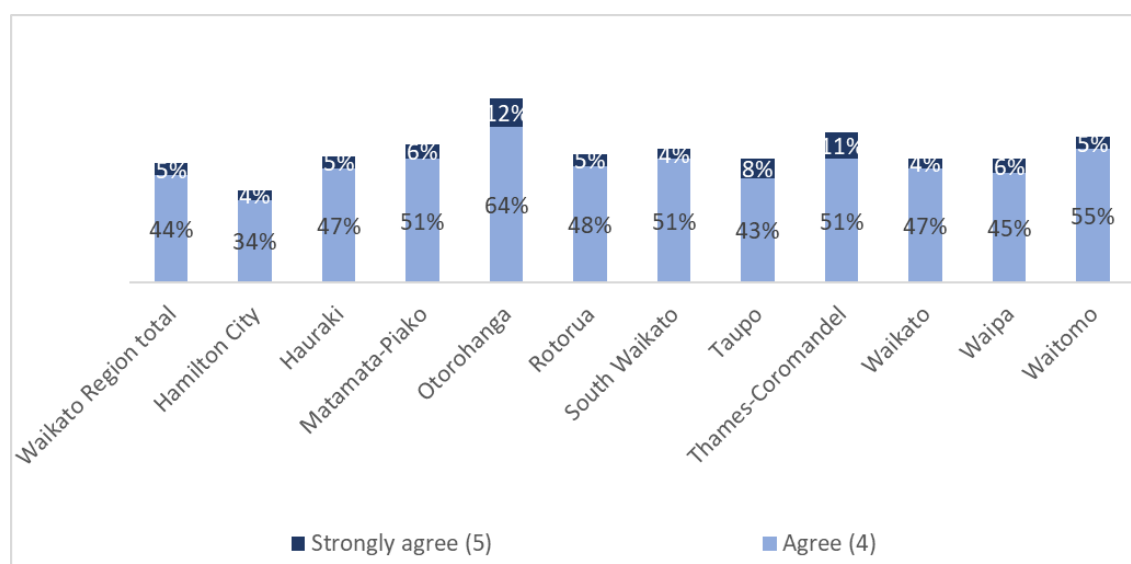
Figure 95: **Feeling of loneliness/isolation – Waikato region and TLAs**

Legend: NET: Rarely (4+5) ■ Sometimes ■ NET: Often (1+2)

	Waikato Region total	Hamilton City	Hauraki	Matamata-Piako	Otorohanga	Rotorua	South Waikato	Taupo	Thames-Coromandel	Waikato	Waipa	Waitomo
NET: Rarely (4+5)	51%	48%	55%	49%	55%	54%	47%	59%	56%	46%	49%	50%
Sometimes	36%	39%	33%	38%	27%	32%	42%	23%	28%	42%	35%	30%
NET: Often (1+2)	13%	13%	12%	12%	8%	13%	11%	18%	6%	12%	16%	10%
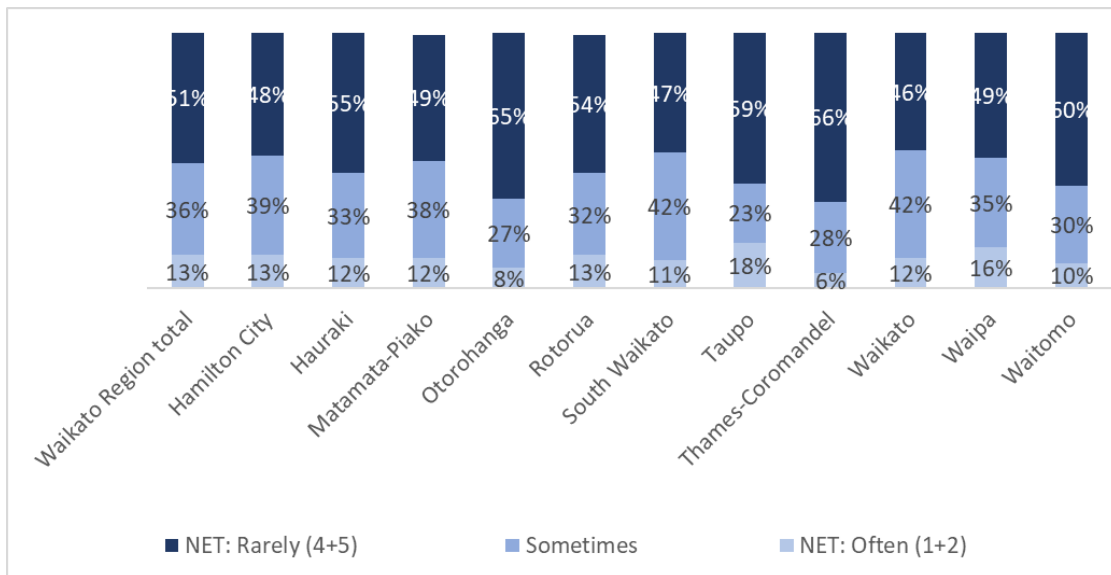
Figure 96: **Impact of greater cultural diversity – Waikato region and TLAs**

Not asked in the 2024 survey

Figure 97: **Extent worried about impact of climate change – Waikato region and TLAs**

Legend: ■ Very worried (4) ■ Worried (3) ■ A little worried (2) ■ Not at all worried (1)

	Waikato Region total	Hamilton City	Hauraki	Matamata-Piako	Otorohanga	Rotorua	South Waikato	Taupo	Thames-Coromandel	Waikato	Waipa	Waitomo
Very worried (4)	6%	5%	4%	3%	8%	11%	3%	3%	11%	6%	7%	11%
Worried (3)	14%	15%	18%	9%	13%	14%	13%	11%	13%	17%	13%	3%
A little worried (2)	50%	53%	47%	61%	44%	44%	48%	51%	45%	50%	47%	56%
Not at all worried (1)	30%	26%	32%	27%	35%	31%	36%	35%	30%	27%	34%	31%

Figure 98: **Satisfaction with work-life balance**

Legend: Very satisfied (5), Satisfied (4)

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 18%, 46%
- Hamilton City: 14%, 47%
- Hauraki: 15%, 56%
- Matamata-Piako: 22%, 44%
- Otorohanga: 18%, 44%
- Rotorua: 13%, 46%
- South Waikato: 32%, 43%
- Taupo: 12%, 37%
- Thames-Coromandel: 19%, 41%
- Waikato: 20%, 43%
- Waipa: 18%, 50%
- Waitomo: 20%, 27%
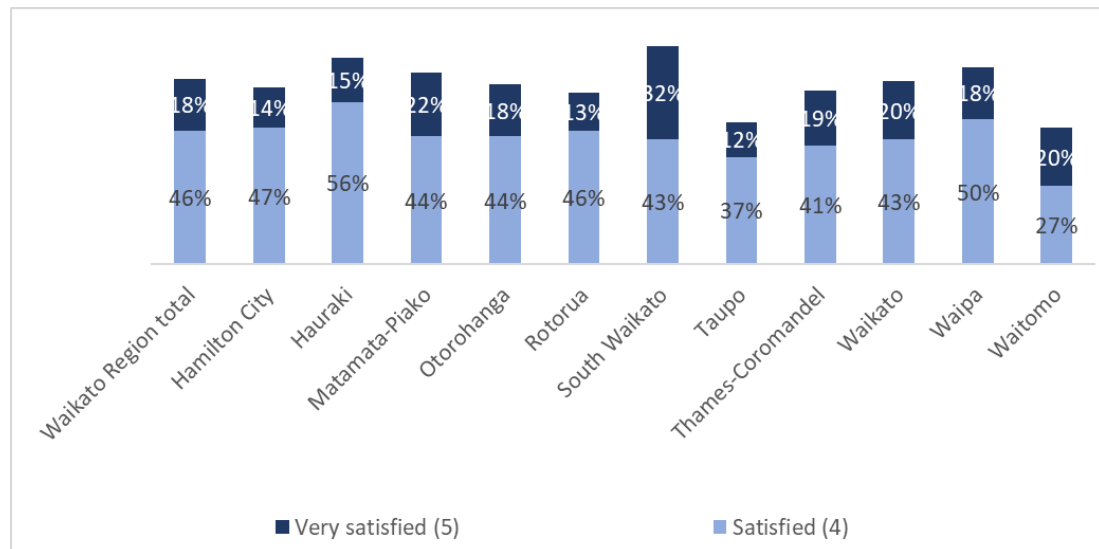
Figure 99: **How well income meets everyday needs – Waikato region and TLAs**

Legend: Prefer not to say, NET: Enough/More than enough (1+2), Have just enough money, Do not have enough money

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 3%, 35%, 43%, 19%
- Hamilton City: 3%, 32%, 46%, 19%
- Hauraki: 0%, 26%, 60%, 14%
- Matamata-Piako: 1%, 40%, 44%, 15%
- Otorohanga: 5%, 38%, 38%, 19%
- Rotorua: 13%, 41%, 32%, 15%
- South Waikato: 32%, 56%, 13%
- Taupo: 1%, 43%, 29%, 27%
- Thames-Coromandel: 0%, 43%, 41%, 16%
- Waikato: 3%, 31%, 43%, 23%
- Waipa: 1%, 35%, 44%, 20%
- Waitomo: 0%, 30%, 50%, 20%
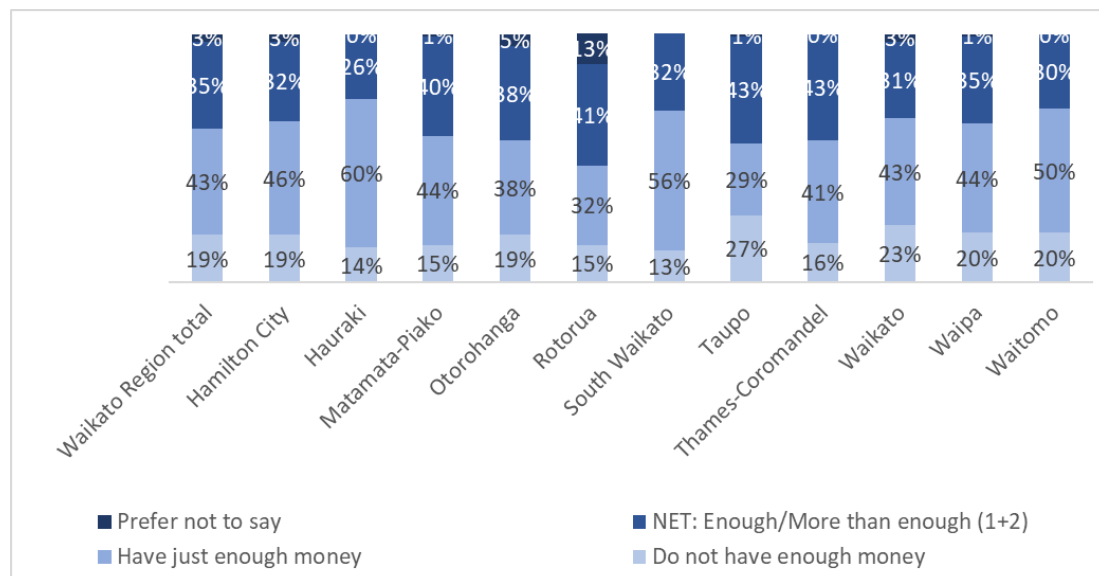
Figure 100: **Confidence in Council decision-making – Waikato region and TLAs**

Legend: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4)

Data by region:
- Waikato Region total: 4%, 28%
- Hamilton City: 4%, 26%
- Hauraki: 0%, 28%
- Matamata-Piako: 1%, 29%
- Otorohanga: 7%, 34%
- Rotorua: 5%, 33%
- South Waikato: 5%, 23%
- Taupo: 4%, 26%
- Thames-Coromandel: 0%, 19%
- Waikato: 4%, 34%
- Waipa: 6%, 34%
- Waitomo: 7%, 8%
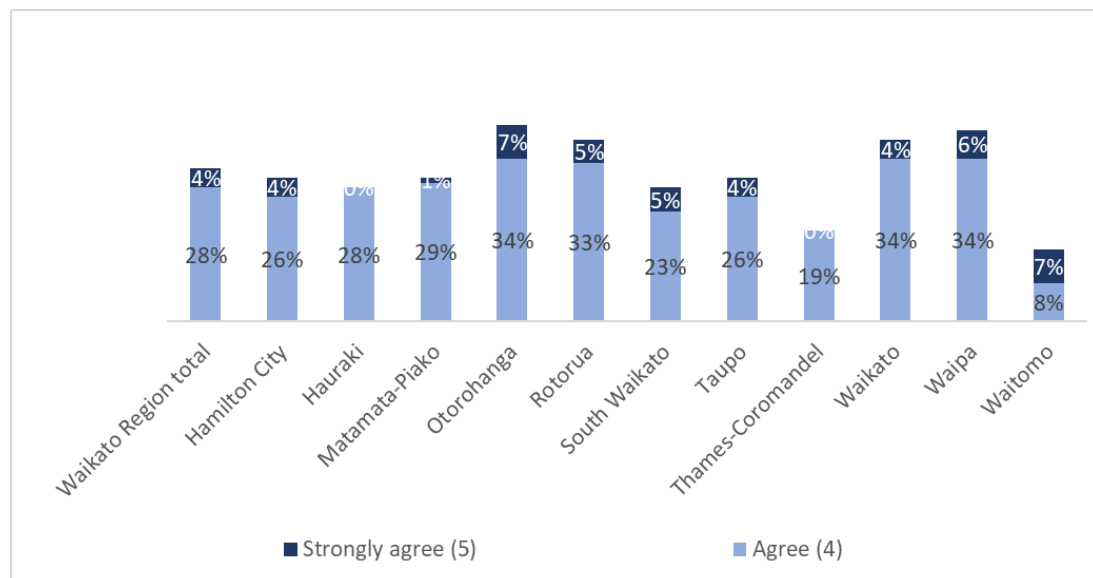
Figure 101:   How much influence public has on Council decisions – Waikato region and TLAs

	Large influence (4)	Some influence (3)
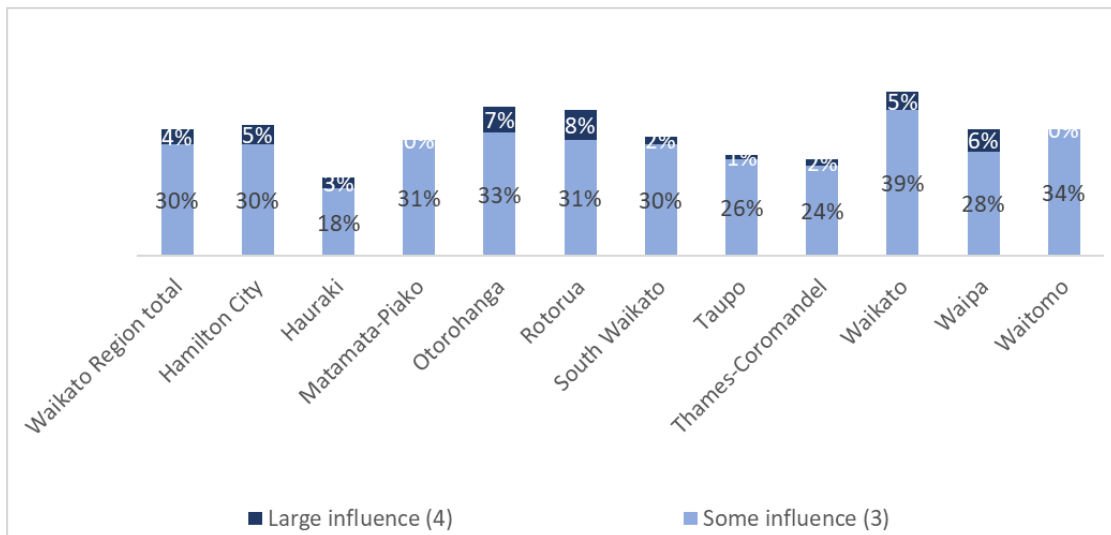
4.3   WPI 2024 survey results by location (tables)

Figures below relate specifically to the eight WPI items in the 2024 Quality of Life Survey.

The caveats regarding high sampling errors for some local council areas should be kept in mind when interpreting these tables. Further analysis of Hamilton results is available from Hamilton City Council.

Table 3:   Waikato Progress Indicators results by location (2024 Territorial Authority Summary)

	Life satisfaction	Perceptions of safety	Perceived health	Social connectedness
	good, very good or extremely good overall quality of life	fairly or very safe walking alone in neighbourhood after dark	good, very good or excellent overall health (average of four items)	agree or strongly agree sense of community experienced
Waikato Region	79%	66%	74%	49%
Hamilton City	77%	56%	73%	38%
Thames-Coromandel District	84%	84%	84%	62%
Hauraki District	86%	63%	77%	52%
Waikato District	80%	65%	70%	51%
Matamata-Piako District	83%	82%	74%	57%
Waipa District	76%	78%	72%	51%
Ōtorohanga District	83%	73%	74%	76%
South Waikato District	79%	55%	73%	56%
Waitomo District	71%	49%	62%	60%
Taupō District	77%	68%	74%	51%
Rotorua District	84%	67%	81%	53%

	Community pride	Physical activity	Cultural respect	Community engagement
	agree or strongly agree feel a sense of pride in look and feel of city/ local area	five or more days of physical activity in the last week	increasing number of people with different lifestyles/ cultures makes my city/ local area a better or much better place to live	public has some or large influence on council decisions
Waikato Region	63%	31%	n/a	35%
Hamilton City	65%	46%	n/a	40%
Thames-Coromandel District	51%	27%	n/a	35%
Hauraki District	73%	42%	n/a	26%
Waikato District	70%	24%	n/a	21%
Matamata-Piako District	63%	28%	n/a	45%
Waipa District	82%	28%	n/a	31%
Ōtorohanga District	72%	30%	n/a	33%
South Waikato District	72%	44%	n/a	40%
Waitomo District	59%	28%	n/a	32%
Taupō District	47%	28%	n/a	34%
Rotorua District	69%	28%	n/a	28%

4.4   WPI 2024 statistically significant results by location

The following differences from the Waikato regional average were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level for the seven 2024 survey items that are included in the Waikato Progress Indicators (Section 1.4).[15]

Hamilton City respondents (*N* = 405) were:

- Less likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels (51% compared to 63% for the region overall); and more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels (21% compared to 14%).

- Less likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (56% compared to 66% for the region overall); and more likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (41% compared to 31%).

- Less likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (38% compared to 49% for the region overall); and more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (32% compared to 19%).

Thames-Coromandel district respondents (*N* = 67) were:

- More likely to agree that their physical health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (81% compared to 67% for the region overall); and less likely to rate their physical health as poor or fair (19% compared to 32%).

- More likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (84% compared to 72% for the region overall); and less likely to rate their spiritual health as poor or fair (11% compared to 22%).

- More likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (94% compared to 85% for the region overall).

- More likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (84% compared to 66% for the region overall); and less likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (14% compared to 31%).

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (62% compared to 49% for the region overall); and less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (8% compared to 19%).

Hauraki district respondents (*N* = 52) were:

- Less likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes (21% compared to 35% for the region overall).

Waikato district respondents (*N* = 159) were:

- More likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes (45% compared to 35% for the region overall).

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[15] Sample sizes *N* shown in brackets for each council area are weighted (demographically adjusted).

Matamata-Piako district respondents (*N* = 103) were:

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels (82% compared to 63% for the region overall); and less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels (3% compared to 14%).

- More likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (82% compared to 66% for the region overall); and less likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (15% compared to 31%).

- Less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (8% compared to 19%).

Waipa district respondents (*N* = 173) were:

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels (72% compared to 63% for the region overall).

- More likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (78% compared to 66% for the region overall); and less likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (21% compared to 31%).

Ōtorohanga district respondents (*N* = 32) were:

- More likely to agree they had been physically active on five or more of the past seven days (44% compared to 31% for the region overall).

- More likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (76% compared to 49% for the region overall); and less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (4% compared to 19%).

South Waikato district respondents (*N* = 98) were:

- Less likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (55% compared to 66% for the region overall); and more likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (41% compared to 31%).

Waitomo district respondents (*N* = 14) were:

- Less likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (71% compared to 85% for the region overall); and more likely to rate their relationship health as poor or fair (29% compared to 14%).

- More likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (49% compared to 66% for the region overall).

Taupō district respondents (*N* = 86) were:

- Not statistically significantly different from the regional average on any of the survey items.

Rotorua district respondents (*N* = 139) were:

- More likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (79% compared to 71% for the region overall); and less likely to rate their mental health as poor or fair (21% compared to 29%).

- More likely to agree that their spiritual health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good (84% compared to 72% for the region overall); and less likely to rate their spiritual health as poor or fair (13% compared to 22%).

- More likely to agree they had been physically active on five or more of the past seven days (46% compared to 31% for the region overall).

4.5. WPI 2006-2024 time series by location (tables)

The caveats regarding high sampling errors for some local council areas should be kept in mind when interpreting these tables. Further analysis of [Hamilton results](#) is available from Hamilton City Council.

Table 4: Quality of life positive

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	90%	84%	87%	88%	86%	79%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	84%	95%	95%	91%	84%
Hauraki District	-	71%	81%	92%	80%	86%
Waikato District	-	84%	83%	91%	89%	80%
Matamata-Piako District	-	78%	89%	84%	89%	83%
Waipa District	-	89%	92%	93%	89%	76%
Otorohanga District	-	-	87%	88%	84%	83%
South Waikato District	-	93%	84%	82%	85%	79%
Waitomo District	-	-	91%	81%	76%	71%
Taupo District	-	91%	91%	93%	89%	77%
Rotorua District	-	-	95%	93%	93%	84%
West ward	-	-	85%	84%	83%	-
East ward	-	-	84%	86%	85%	-
Hamilton city	91%	82%	84%	85%	84%	77%

Table 5: Perceived safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark - Fairly or very safe

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	60%	65%	64%	62%	63%	66%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	78%	81%	78%	76%	84%
Hauraki District	-	66%	73%	53%	61%	63%
Waikato District	-	71%	57%	68%	59%	65%
Matamata-Piako District	-	60%	64%	59%	57%	82%
Waipa District	-	75%	80%	76%	65%	78%
Otorohanga District	-	-	77%	68%	66%	73%
South Waikato District	-	51%	61%	40%	52%	55%
Waitomo District	-	-	62%	61%	67%	49%
Taupo District	-	75%	74%	60%	69%	68%
Rotorua District	-	-	73%	57%	57%	67%
West ward	-	-	52%	51%	-	-
East ward	-	-	57%	63%	-	-
Hamilton city	58%	58%	55%	57%	-	56%

Table 6: **Overall health - Good, very good or excellent**

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	90%	84%	79%	79%	80%	74%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	75%	81%	90%	89%	84%
Hauraki District	-	74%	69%	74%	73%	77%
Waikato District	-	79%	74%	80%	79%	70%
Matamata-Piako District	-	86%	80%	76%	78%	74%
Waipa District	-	86%	82%	87%	81%	72%
Otorohanga District	-	-	85%	84%	75%	74%
South Waikato District	-	86%	80%	66%	82%	73%
Waitomo District	-	-	91%	80%	88%	62%
Taupo District	-	96%	81%	82%	82%	74%
Rotorua District	-	-	87%	86%	78%	81%
West ward	-	-	81%	72%	78%	-
East ward	-	-	77%	79%	78%	-
Hamilton city	89%	82%	79%	76%	78%	73%

Table 7: **Sense of community experienced - Agree or strongly agree**

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	63%	65%	62%	56%	57%	49%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	70%	83%	67%	73%	62%
Hauraki District	-	63%	67%	63%	69%	52%
Waikato District	-	68%	64%	66%	63%	51%
Matamata-Piako District	-	68%	74%	47%	64%	57%
Waipa District	-	71%	68%	62%	57%	51%
Otorohanga District	-	-	74%	75%	71%	76%
South Waikato District	-	77%	64%	59%	66%	56%
Waitomo District	-	-	71%	76%	58%	60%
Taupo District	-	72%	67%	54%	52%	51%
Rotorua District	-	-	71%	66%	73%	53%
West ward	-	-	45%	45%	47%	-
East ward	-	-	51%	49%	47%	-
Hamilton city	50%	56%	48%	47%	47%	38%

Table 8: **Pride in look and feel of city/local area - Agree or strongly agree**

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	70%	68%	62%	67%	64%	63%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	72%	75%	64%	68%	73%
Hauraki District	-	61%	58%	68%	64%	70%
Waikato District	-	65%	51%	63%	65%	63%
Matamata-Piako District	-	70%	77%	69%	67%	82%
Waipa District	-	87%	83%	84%	78%	72%
Otorohanga District	-	-	84%	76%	74%	72%
South Waikato District	-	67%	47%	48%	69%	59%
Waitomo District	-	-	60%	65%	56%	47%
Taupo District	-	84%	77%	76%	76%	69%
Rotorua District	-	-	70%	62%	64%	65%
West ward	-	-	50%	61%	52%	-
East ward	-	-	55%	67%	55%	-
Hamilton city	69%	60%	52%	64%	53%	51%

Table 9:   Frequency of doing physical activity in past week - Five or more days

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	61%	47%	40%	35%	41%	31%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	49%	50%	33%	46%	42%
Hauraki District	-	57%	41%	47%	51%	24%
Waikato District	-	44%	35%	28%	39%	28%
Matamata-Piako District	-	45%	39%	33%	42%	28%
Waipa District	-	48%	49%	38%	43%	30%
Otorohanga District	-	-	43%	36%	35%	44%
South Waikato District	-	58%	39%	41%	48%	28%
Waitomo District	-	-	31%	48%	64%	28%
Taupo District	-	49%	44%	48%	47%	28%
Rotorua District	-	-	53%	43%	40%	46%
West ward	-	-	37%	31%	36%	-
East ward	-	-	37%	34%	33%	-
Hamilton city	58%	45%	37%	32%	34%	27%

Table 10:   Impact of greater cultural diversity - Better/much better place to live

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	51%	43%	41%	47%	39%	n/a
Thames-Coromandel District	-	31%	33%	47%	37%	n/a
Hauraki District	-	16%	39%	42%	28%	n/a
Waikato District	-	36%	35%	44%	36%	n/a
Matamata-Piako District	-	29%	28%	41%	45%	n/a
Waipa District	-	40%	46%	42%	44%	n/a
Otorohanga District	-	-	28%	49%	41%	n/a
South Waikato District	-	38%	38%	41%	43%	n/a
Waitomo District	-	-	32%	33%	43%	n/a
Taupo District	-	44%	40%	36%	32%	n/a
Rotorua District	-	-	27%	35%	38%	n/a
West ward	-	-	47%	53%	-	n/a
East ward	-	-	51%	62%	-	n/a
Hamilton city	56%	55%	49%	58%	-	n/a

Table 11:   Perception of public's influence on Council decision making - Some or large influence

	2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Waikato Region	62%	46%	36%	37%	31%	35%
Thames-Coromandel District	-	45%	37%	40%	23%	26%
Hauraki District	-	52%	27%	43%	21%	21%
Waikato District	-	40%	39%	28%	30%	45%
Matamata-Piako District	-	49%	37%	39%	39%	31%
Waipa District	-	52%	46%	40%	25%	33%
Otorohanga District	-	-	40%	59%	26%	40%
South Waikato District	-	44%	36%	23%	36%	32%
Waitomo District	-	-	43%	37%	32%	34%
Taupo District	-	56%	41%	30%	25%	28%
Rotorua District	-	-	30%	25%	23%	40%
West ward	-	-	27%	44%	38%	-
East ward	-	-	32%	35%	34%	-
Hamilton city	67%	45%	30%	39%	36%	35%

5. Regional results over time – 2006 to 2024

The Waikato region participated previously in the 2006 Quality of Life Survey through a regional booster sample, and subsequently in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024.[16] So long as the 2006 and later results are comparable, this enables regional trends to be identified for the eight indicators included in the Waikato Progress Indicators regional wellbeing monitoring initiative.

A comparison of survey items over time is included in [Waikato Regional Council Technical Report 2017/11](#) (March 2017). This concluded that overall, there should be a relatively high level of validity in comparing 2006 and later Waikato regional results for the Waikato Progress Indicators items.

5.1 Changes to the quality of life measure

There have been two key changes in the overall quality of life item used as a proxy for life satisfaction in the Waikato Progress Indicators monitoring programme.

From 2018, results for this item relate to a 7-point satisfaction scale rather than a 5-point scale. Analysis by Nielsen Research indicates comparability with prior results.

From 2020, Waikato Progress Indicators results for this item relate to a question asked at the beginning of the survey questionnaire, in contrast to prior results based on a question near the end of the survey which may have been influenced by responses to other questions. Comparative analysis from the 2018 survey suggests this gives a slightly higher measure from 2020 compared to prior Waikato Progress Indicators life satisfaction results.

5.1 Changes to the perceived health measure

The 2006-2022 results relate to a question about "overall health" which has now been discontinued from the survey questionnaire. From 2024, the result for this WPI indicator is calculated as the average of four items relating to "physical health", "mental health", "spiritual health" and "relationship health". It is not possible to ascertain the level of accordance between these two different measures.

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[16] Although the Waikato regional survey data were collected in 2006, they were not incorporated into the 2006 Quality of Life Report. Rather, the booster sample was commissioned by Waikato Regional Council for comparison with a regional Perception Survey undertaken jointly with territorial local authorities in the region.

5.2 Sample demographics 2006 to 2024

The table below shows that each survey wave has had sufficient sample size and demographic representation to make strong inferences. Other methodology aspects were also similar as described in the earlier survey reports. The sample sizes shown are unweighted.

Table 12:   Comparison of 2006, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 Waikato regional samples

	2006		2016		2018		2020		2022		2024	
Sample size	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Hamilton	237	34%	457	36%	572	40%	500	41%	546	36%	527	40%
Other Waikato Region	455	66%	823	64%	844	60%	706	59%	956	64%	800	60%
Total Waikato Region	692	100%	1280	100%	1416	100%	1206	100%	1,502	100%	1327	100%
Age groups	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
18 to 24	64	9%	188	15%	189	13%	147	12%	124	8%	159	12%
25 to 49	343	50%	393	31%	578	41%	485	40%	535	36%	574	43%
50 to 64	172	25%	329	26%	348	25%	322	27%	382	25%	321	24%
65 plus	113	16%	370	29%	300	21%	252	21%	461	31%	273	21%
Total age groups	692	100%	1280	100%	1415	100%	1206	100%	1,502	100%	1327	100%
Ethnic groups	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
NZ European / Other	499	72%	1131	88%	1176	83%	961	80%	1,242	83%	1,038	69%
Māori	147	21%	179	14%	314	22%	330	27%	400	27%	271	18%
Pacific	26	4%	24	2%	28	2%	29	2%	36	2%	55	4%
Asian / Indian	19	3%	39	3%	82	6%	75	6%	73	5%	138	9%

Notes: All figures are unweighted. * Denominator for ethnic groups is total respondents (i.e. can add to more than 100% due to people identifying with more than one ethnic group).

5.3 WPI regional trends 2006 to latest

Table 13:   Summary of WPI regional trends 2006 to 2024

Indicator	2006	2024	Trend 2006-latest
Life satisfaction	90%	79%	Decreasing
Perceptions of safety	60%	66%	Increasing
Perceived health*	90%	74%	Decreasing
Social connectedness	63%	49%	Decreasing
Community pride	70%	63%	Decreasing
Physical activity	61%	31%	Decreasing
Cultural respect**	51%	39%	Decreasing
Community engagement	62%	35%	Decreasing

Notes: * Perceived health 2006 result relates to a question about "overall health", whereas the 2024 result is average of four items relating to "physical health", "mental health", "spiritual health" and "relationship health"; ** Cultural respect figure is from 2022 survey as this question was not asked in 2024.

Figure 102:   Waikato Progress Indicators results – Waikato region 2006 to latest

Life satisfaction

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
90%	84%	87%	88%	86%	79%

Community pride

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
70%	68%	62%	67%	64%	63%

Perceptions of safety

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
60%	65%	64%	62%	63%	66%

Physical activity

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
61%	47%	40%	35%	41%	31%

Perceived health

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
90%	84%	79%	79%	80%	74%

Cultural respect

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022
51%	43%	41%	47%	39%

Social connectedness

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
63%	65%	62%	56%	57%	49%

Community engagement

2006	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
62%	46%	36%	37%	31%	35%

6.   Key survey findings for the Waikato region

Quality of life

- Most respondents rated their overall quality of life positively.
- Around one quarter felt their quality of life had improved over the past year, while another quarter felt their quality of life had decreased.
- For people who considered their quality of life had improved, the most common reasons related to healthcare and wellbeing, lifestyle, financial wellbeing, work-related reasons and relationships.
- For people who considered their quality of life had declined, the most common reasons related to reduced financial wellbeing, reduced healthcare and wellbeing and to a lesser extent, work related reasons.

Built and natural environment

- Almost two thirds of respondents agreed they felt really happy with the way their local area looks and feels.
- Around three quarters agreed their local area is a great place to live.
- Around one fifth agreed their local area improved in the last 12 months, and one quarter felt it had become worse.
- The most common reasons for feeling that their local area had improved in the last 12 months related to improved or new amenities, a variety of recreational facilities or lots of things to do, and the area looks clean, tidy and well-kept.
- The most common reasons for feeling that their local area became worse in the last 12 months related to crime/crime rate has increased, dissatisfaction with Government or local government and issues with roading developments.

Housing

- Around one third of respondents agreed that their current housing costs were affordable, while more than two-fifths disagreed.
- Four out of five agreed that the type of home they lived in suited their needs and the needs of others in their household.
- Four out of five agreed that the general area or neighbourhood suited their needs and the needs of others in their household.

Public transport

- Around 9% of all respondents had used public transport weekly or more often over the previous 12 months. Almost half had not used public transport in the last 12 months and a further quarter did not have public transport available.
  - Half of those who had access to public transport agreed that public transport was affordable.
  - Around two fifths agreed that public transport was safe from crime or harassment.
  - Around one quarter agreed that public transport was safe from catching COVID-19 and other illnesses.
  - Around three-fifths agreed that public transport was easy to get to.
  - Almost half agreed that public transport is frequent (comes often).
  - Around two fifths agreed that public transport was reliable (comes on time).
- Around one third of all respondents agreed that it was easy for them to get to the places they need to go without the use of a private vehicle.

- Around one quarter agreed that public transport is a practical alternative to driving for the trips they usually need to make.
- More than one third agreed that the bike network in their city or local area is safe.

Health and wellbeing

- Around three quarters of respondents rated their overall health positively (based on average of four items).

  o Two thirds rated their physical health and wellbeing positively.
  o Almost three quarters rated their mental health and wellbeing positively.
  o Almost three quarter rated their spiritual health and wellbeing positively.
  o More than four fifths rated their relationship health and wellbeing positively.

- When asked how many days in the previous seven days they had been physically active, around one third said they had been active five or more days.
- While one quarter of respondents said they had regularly experienced stress, a similar number said they rarely or never experienced stress.
- Almost nine in ten feel they have someone to rely on for practical support during a difficult time, and a similar proportion feel have someone to rely on for emotional support.
- Around one quarter agreed that they had faced barriers to seeking health related treatment or advice in the last 12 months.
- Of those who said they faced barriers to healthcare, the most commonly cited barriers were the wait time for an appointment, concerns about the financial cost and/or that they couldn't get an appointment at a time that suited them.

Crime, safety and local issues

- Around two thirds of respondents felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.
- Almost nine in ten felt safe in their city centre during the day.
- Less than half felt safe in their city centre after dark.
- Around one quarter perceived theft and burglary to be a big problem in the last 12 months, and half thought it was a bit of a problem. Other issues that respondents rated as a problem included dangerous driving, rubbish or litter, vandalism, limited parking and traffic congestion.
- Around one fifth perceived alcohol or drug problems or anti-social behaviour to be a big issue, and a further two fifths thought it was a bit of an issue. Other social issues that respondents rated as a problem included people sleeping rough and people begging in public space.

Community

- Around half of all respondents agreed they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.
- Over three fifths considered it important to feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood.
- The most common social networks belonged to were clubs and societies, followed by hobby or interest groups.
- More than one in ten said they felt lonely or isolated either always or most of the time in the past 12 months.

- Almost half considered racism/ discrimination toward particular groups of people to have been an issue in their area over the last year.
- More than one in ten said that in the last three months in their city or local area they had personally experienced anger / intolerance or been treated unfairly / excluded because of their ethnicity.
- Around four fifths agreed that they feel comfortable dressing in a way that expresses their identity in public (e.g., sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith).
- Around three quarters agreed that they can participate, perform or attend activities or groups that align with their culture.
- Around two thirds agreed that people in their city or local area accept and value them and others of their identity.
- Around two thirds gave the top three scores on a seven-point scale in terms of their level of trust in the Police. Levels of trust were also relatively high for scientists, the public education system and the public health system.
- More than half have trust in the people of their city or local area.

Climate issues

- Respondents were asked about the extent to which they perceived various environmental issues had been a problem in their city or local area in the last 12 months. Water pollution was the main concern, followed by too much water (e.g. flooding), coastal erosion, landslips and air pollution.
- Around half of respondents felt that they were ready if their city or local area was faced with flooding or severe storms. Less than half felt ready for a drought causing water supply issues and less again felt ready for increased heat and fire risk.
- Over half think they have a good understanding of climate change and its impacts on their city or local area, while a third say they don't know the impacts.
- Two fifths agreed they are worried about climate change impacts on their city or local area in the next five years.

Employment and economic wellbeing

- More than half of all respondents were employed in either full-time or part-time work.

  o Almost two thirds of the employed respondents said they were satisfied with the balance of work and other aspects of their life.
  o Of the respondents who were satisfied with their work-life balance, the main reasons were manageable workload and hours, enough time for self or other commitments and good balance and time management.
  o Of the respondents who were not satisfied with their work-life balance, the main reasons were workload and hours unmanageable, insufficient income and not enough time for self or other commitments.

- Around one third of all respondents felt they have enough or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs for things. Around one fifth felt they did not have enough money.
- More than one third said they worried 'always' or 'most of the time' about their and their family's financial circumstances in the last three months, while almost two fifths said they 'sometimes' worry about it.
- More than half of respondents said they would be able to pay an unexpected bill of $2000 within a week without going into debt, while around two fifths said they would not be able to.

Council decision-making processes

- Around one third of all respondents perceive the public have some or large influence over the decisions their local Council makes.

- Around one third have confidence that their local Council makes decisions in the best interests of their area.

Waikato Progress Indicators results by age group

- Respondents aged under 25 years were statistically significantly less likely to rate their quality of life positively; less likely to agree that they feel really happy with the way their city or local area looks and feels; less likely to rate their mental and spiritual health and wellbeing positively; less likely to agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood; and more likely to agree that the public has influence over the decisions their local Council makes.

- Respondents aged 25 to 34 were statistically significantly less likely to rate their quality of life positively; less likely to rate their physical, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing positively; less likely to agree they had been physically active on five or more of the past seven days; less likely to agree that they feel very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark; and less likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

- Respondents aged 35 to 49 were statistically significantly more likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was only poor or fair.

- Respondents aged 50 to 64 were statistically significantly less likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes.

- Respondents aged 65 plus were statistically significantly more likely to agree their rate their quality of life positively; more likely to agree that they feel really happy with the way their city or local area looks and feels; more likely to rate their mental, spiritual and relationship health and wellbeing positively; more likely to agree that they feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark; and more likely to agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

Waikato Progress Indicators results by gender

- Females were statistically significantly less likely to rate their physical and mental health and wellbeing positively; and less likely to agree that they feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

- Males were statistically significantly more likely to rate their physical, mental health and spiritual health and wellbeing positively; and more likely to agree that they feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

Waikato Progress Indicators results by ethnic group

- Respondents who identified with the New Zealand European ethnic group were statistically significantly less likely to agree that the public have some influence or large influence over the decisions that their local Council makes.

- Respondents who identified with the Māori ethnic group were statistically significantly less likely to rate their overall quality of life positively; less likely to rate their mental and spiritual health and wellbeing positively; and more likely to agree that the public influence decisions that their local Council makes.

- Respondents who identified with the Pacific ethnic group were statistically significantly less likely to rate their physical health positively; and more likely to agree that the public influence decisions that their local Council makes.

- Respondents who identified with the Asian/Indian ethnic group were statistically significantly more likely to rate their physical health positively; and more likely to agree that the public influence decisions that their local Council makes.

Waikato Progress Indicators results by location

There was considerable diversity in responses to some items between locations. Statistically significant differences from the Waikato regional average include the following general selection, amongst many others, in no particular order:

- Hamilton respondents were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels.

- Thames-Coromandel respondents were more likely to report their overall health and wellbeing was good, very good or excellent.

- Hauraki district respondents were less likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes.

- Waikato district respondents were more likely to agree that the public has some influence or a large influence over the decisions their local Council makes.

- Matamata-Piako district respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel really happy with the way their city/local area looks and feels

- Waipa district respondents were more likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

- Ōtorohanga district survey results were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

- South Waikato district respondents were more likely to report feeling a bit or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

- Waitomo district respondents were less likely to agree that their relationship health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good.

- Taupō district results were not statistically significantly different from the regional average on any of the survey items.

- Rotorua respondents were more likely to agree that their mental health and wellbeing was good, very good or extremely good.

Waikato region 2006 to 2024 trends

Compared to 2006, Waikato regional survey respondents in 2024 had higher perceptions of safety but lower perceptions for life satisfaction, health, social connectedness, community pride, physical activity and community engagement. Also, cultural respect reduced between 2006 and 2022 (this question was not asked in 2024).

7.   Next steps

The 2024 Quality of Life survey results give valuable information on public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. These results will help inform regional and local government policy and support monitoring towards strategic social, economic, environmental and cultural goals. It also provides useful information to the communities.

The latest Waikato regional survey results reported here have been incorporated into the Waikato Progress Indicators 2025 update (refer [Waikato Progress Indicators](#)).