

2020

WELCOME TO

# WAIKATO

The beating heart of New Zealand

ECONOMY





# THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH EVERYTHING IS BUILT

**Adequate employment and income determine our ability to access the resources we need – basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing – which are essential to wellbeing.**

Inequality and poverty in our region are a priority, with access to safe, healthy and affordable housing a concern for many. As the fourth largest regional economy in New Zealand, we are doing well, but how can we do better? How can we increase employment and better meet the needs of our most vulnerable?

We want to see growth carefully managed, in a way that maintains a sense of community, attracts new business and minimises negative impacts. We have a wealth of knowledge, skill and can-do attitude – all the essential tools we need to build a thriving and prosperous future for our region.

“A long-term plan is key – we need to have a vision to make people want to be here and thrive.”

– Waitomo workshop participant

## 8.4% GDP

The Waikato Region contributes 8.5% of New Zealand's GDP (2019), up from 8.3% (2016).

When compared to New Zealand, the ratio of the region's per capita contribution declined over the 2014-2018 period.

Source: Waikato Regional Council, 2020; Waikato Vital Signs® Consultancy Report, 2020.

“We have a lot of opportunity here and a lot of potential. The port will be fantastic and Hamilton has a big future in terms of manufacturing and supporting agriculture... the challenge will be making sure everyone is ready to be part of those opportunities and can benefit from them.”

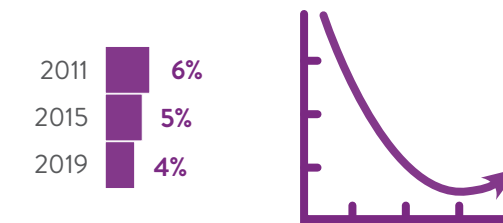
– Hamilton survey respondent

“The future Maniapoto Treaty Settlement will be around \$165 million. This has the potential to transform the Maniapoto rohe and provide a major economic boost for that community.”

– Waitomo workshop participant

## Unemployment

Unemployment in the Waikato Region has fallen in recent years, but is now growing due to the impacts of COVID-19.

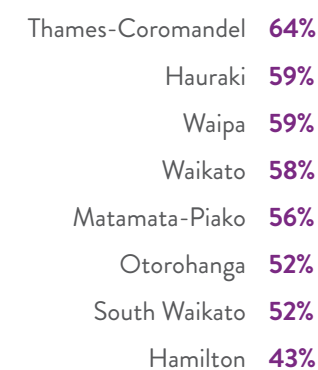


“I think the communities of Waikato and especially Hamilton City and suburbs fear joblessness more than anything. There should be enough job opportunities, investments that will offer more white-collar jobs like IT and building and infrastructure projects.”

– Hamilton survey participant

## Increasing home ownership levels

A home is often a family's greatest financial asset, and home ownership is an important factor for household security and neighbourhood stability. Home ownership\* has increased since 2013.



\* Proportion of the population aged 15 years or more living in owned or partly owned residences in 2018.



52% OF THE  
POPULATION  
AGED 15+ LIVE IN  
HOUSES THEY OWN,  
PARTLY OWN OR  
HOLD IN A FAMILY  
TRUST, SIMILAR  
TO THE NATIONAL  
AVERAGE AND UP  
FROM 50% IN 2013.

57% of Europeans own  
their own home\*

#### COMPARED TO

'Other' ethnic categories	55%
Asian	40%
Māori	29%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	25%
Pasifika	24%

\* Population aged 15+ in 2018.

## Household crowding

Household crowding\* is linked to a number of health conditions and increased risk of childhood injuries. In the Waikato DHB area slightly less people are living in crowded conditions than the New Zealand average.

9% Waikato DHB area

10% New Zealand

\* Proportion of the population (in private occupied dwellings) living in crowded conditions, 2013.

“No child should be hungry or live in houses that  
are cold and damp, substandard.”

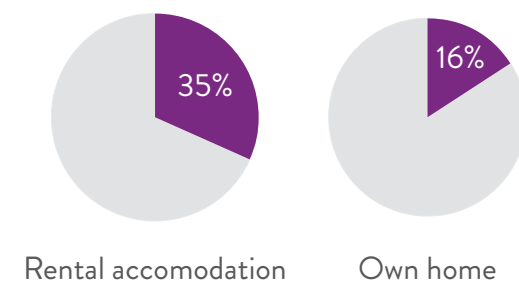
– Hamilton survey respondent

## Housing affordability

Core housing costs (defined as rent or mortgage plus insurance and rates) take up a large part of the household budget and represent the single largest expense for many people.

**22%** of New Zealand households spent more than 30% of their total household income on housing costs in 2018, impacting their ability to cover other basic living costs.

This is true for a higher proportion of people living in rental accommodation.



“Housing is too expensive but it’s not just about affordability. There are not enough houses – people who want to live here can’t find anywhere to live.”

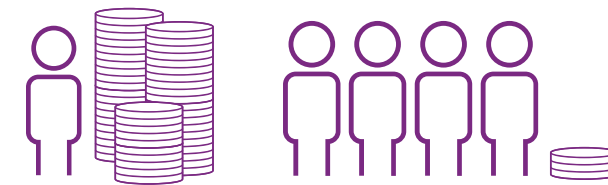
– Waitomo workshop participant



## Inequality is a growing problem

**Many of us are unaware how many people in our community are living in deprivation. To close the gap and reduce poverty we need to protect everyone’s right to equality of opportunity.**

Until the 1980s, New Zealand was one of the most economically equal countries in the world (although that equality didn’t extend to all sections of society). In the two decades that followed, the gap between the rich and the rest increased faster than anywhere else in the developed world.



The wealthiest 10% of households in New Zealand now hold half the wealth, while the bottom 40% of households hold just 3% of the wealth (2017).

Inequality in the Waikato region has increased slightly over the 2007-2017 period.

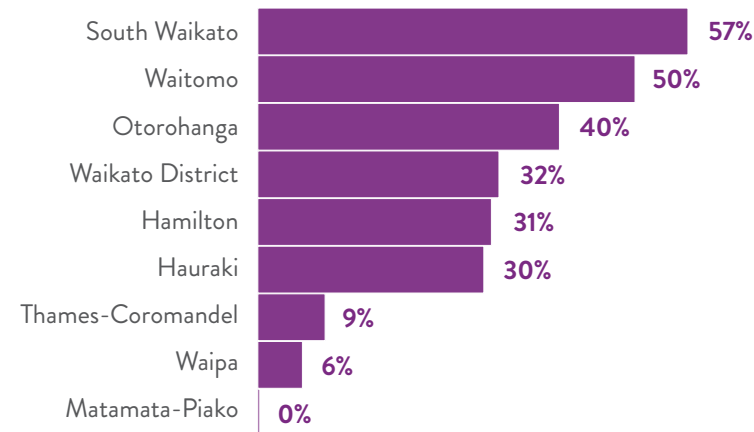
“26% of the Waikato Vital Signs population are poor. This has been a challenge for a long time but it seems to be getting worse. More public housing is needed. We need to find ways to close the gap between the rich and the poor.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

“I see disparity where we have some people who are really thriving... and then people who are struggling to survive and makes ends meet. For me equality is hugely important, as I believe that we are all far better off when we are all in a good position.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

## Where are our areas of high deprivation?\*



\* Proportion of population living in high deprivation areas (NZDep2013).

“Children go to school without shoes, without food, and receive breakfast from their school. Sometimes, children are kept at home because no one is available to care for the younger siblings as the parents work and cannot afford childcare. This living in high deprivation statistic makes me concerned because as the population is set to rise, will this situation follow as well?”

– Waikato District survey respondent

“32 out of 100 living in high deprivation is a major concern. That would be reflective of parts of our local community where you have such extremes living next door to each other. Balancing that must be a key focus going forward.”

– Waikato District survey respondent

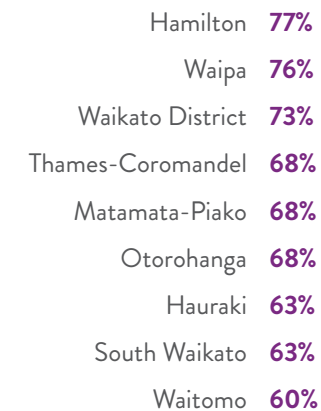
## Digital inclusion

The ability to access and use the internet is essential to social inclusion. It connects us with people, services, education, and employment opportunities, and is increasingly important to send and receive information in a crisis. People who face barriers to digital inclusion are increasingly at a disadvantage across our region.

### INTERNET ACCESS

**73%** of households in the Waikato Region have access to the internet.

**77%** of households in New Zealand have access to the internet.



Source: Census 2013.

“Everyone knew that the gap was there with both hardware (devices) or access to the digital world (internet connection) but it’s only because there is no other choice available than to deal with the situation that we are now seeing action. Why does it take a crisis to close the gap?”

– Hamilton survey respondent



## Waikato Wellbeing Project target



# ‘Here to help u’ in difficult times

Immediate aid to the vulnerable, delivered in a way that builds a stronger society after the COVID-19 crisis, is the focus of an ongoing response coordinated by the Waikato’s lead social and community service providers and supported by Momentum Waikato and other major local funders.

‘Here to help u’ is an online community support tool and network centered around a website, [www.heretohelpu.nz](http://www.heretohelpu.nz). It was initially launched as an emergency response during Level 4 restrictions and will now be a permanent support system.

The assistance the website currently offers includes food parcels, prepared meals, a collection service, general local advice and support, mental health care, and safe social connections. Any member of the public can quietly ask for help, and individuals, families, businesses and organisations can securely and easily target their offers of assistance.

Wise Group and Community Waikato teamed up to coordinate and lead the effort, which involves a range of providers and funders. Initially covering Hamilton, plans are afoot to fully expand the service across the Waikato, and possibly nationwide.

Community Waikato Chief Executive Holly Snape says many local people had to ask for food and other social support for the first time during Level 4.

“The COVID-19 crisis has simply widened the catchment and range of people who find themselves in need through no fault of their own. These are stories we see all the time, there are just suddenly many more of them.

“I hope when we are through the current crisis that there is a wider recognition of this reality and it makes for a more compassionate and understanding society generally. It is time to dispel the stigma around using food banks and other support services, it could be any of us that land up needing them.”





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Momentum Waikato Community Foundation

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### Our partners

