Social vulnerability indicators 2023

This report presents the latest social vulnerability indicators for Aotearoa New Zealand, using 2023 Census data. These indicators show population groups who may be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate-related hazards, natural hazards, and other emergencies (such as pandemics). This information is valuable for informing disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation at the national and local levels.

Key facts

- From 2018 to 2023, there were:
  - **increases** in: population size, older adult population, older adults living alone, ethnic diversity, people who do not speak English, people living in crowded households, people experiencing psychological distress, and children experiencing household food insecurity[1].
  - **decreases** in: households with no motor vehicle, households with no access to the internet, households with no access to a mobile phone, damp dwellings, mouldy dwellings, voting participation.
- There were **major disparities** for some social vulnerability indicators. For example, Māori and Pacific peoples were disproportionately affected by vulnerability indicators relating to financial resources, housing quality, and household food security.
- Some geographic areas have higher levels of vulnerability for certain indicators. Data for geographic areas around New Zealand are available on the EHINZ website.

What is social vulnerability?

Not everyone will be equally affected by the negative impacts of climate-related hazards, natural hazards, and other emergencies (such as pandemics).

Social vulnerability indicators identify populations and geographic areas that are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and natural hazards. Vulnerable population groups may be more sensitive to the impacts of hazards, and/or less able to prepare for, cope with, recover from or adapt to a hazard. These hazards include: extreme weather events, floods, heatwaves, wildfires, earthquakes and tsunami, as well as other hazards and emergencies such as pandemics.

Social vulnerability covers the following key dimensions:

- **Population context**: population size, ethnic groups, people living in rural areas, occupation
- **Susceptibility**: children, older adults, people with existing chronic health and/or mental health conditions, people with disabilities, pregnant women
- **Lack of resilience (capacity to prepare, cope, and recover)**: having enough money to cope with crises and losses; social connectedness; awareness and skills to face hazards; safe, secure and healthy housing; enough food and water to cope with shortage; decision-making and participation.

This surveillance report presents social vulnerability indicators that cover these dimensions over time.

[1] 2019/20 to 2023/24

Introduction

This report provides an overview of social vulnerability in New Zealand, using indicators mainly from the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings.

Vulnerability does not mean a person will definitely experience harm after a hazard event, or that they lack resilience. However, people with one or more vulnerabilities have a higher risk of experiencing negative impacts during and after a hazard event. Understanding vulnerabilities of the population can help identify community needs and can support resilience planning. Reducing vulnerability is also a key part of climate change adaptation.

The indicator results (including local-level data) can inform disaster risk reduction, emergency management, climate change adaptation, public health actions, and disaster recovery efforts.

This is the first release of the report and will be updated as more data become available. Further results and data (including at the local level) are available at: www.ehinz.ac.nz/social-vulnerability.

The New Zealand population continues to grow

The size of the population, and where people live, is vitally important for understanding their exposure to climate-related hazards and natural hazards, and the number of people potentially exposed to a hazard. Geographic locations with larger populations will have potentially more people exposed during a hazard event.

- **The New Zealand population continues to grow in size**. In 2023, the population was almost 5 million people, up from 4.7 million in 2018.
- In 2023, there were **1.78 million households** in New Zealand. About 540,000 (30%) of these households were in Auckland.

Increasing ethnic diversity

New Zealand is becoming increasingly multicultural. Ethnic groups can bring many strengths, capacities and resilience to climate-related hazards and natural hazards, particularly through strong social connections and cultural values. Understanding the ethnic diversity and the cultural groups in local communities, and working in partnership with these groups, is important during planning and response to hazards.

- **The New Zealand population is becoming more ethnically diverse**, with population increases since 2018 across almost all ethnic groups, including Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, and Middle Eastern / Latin American / African (MELAA).
- In 2023, 17.8% of the population were Māori (887,500 people), 17.3% were Asian, 8.9% were Pacific peoples, 1.9% were MELAA, and 67.8% were European (total response ethnic groups[1]), according to the 2023 Census.
- In 2023, the main Pacific ethnicities in New Zealand were Samoan (4.3% of the population), Tongan

[1] Total response ethnic groups have been used, where people are counted in every ethnic group they report. This means that percentages will add to more than 100%.

(2.0%), Cook Island (1.9%), Niuean (0.7%), Fijian (0.5%) and Tokelauan (0.2%).

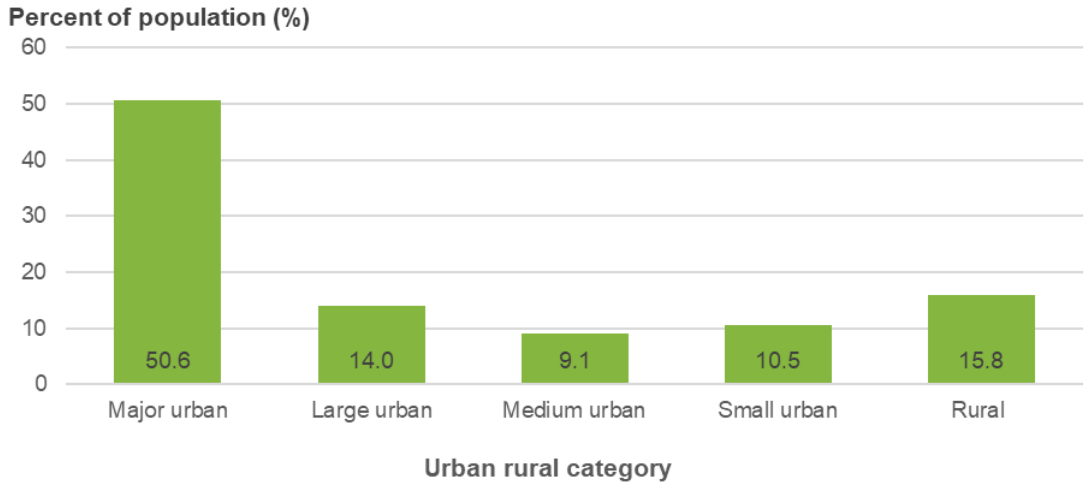
- In 2023, the main Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand were Indian (5.8%), Chinese (5.6%), Filipino (2.2%) and Korean (0.8%).
- Other ethnic groups included Latin American (0.8%), Middle Eastern (0.7%) and African (0.4%) in 2023, as well as New Zealand European (62.1%), British and Irish (2.5%) and Other European (2.6%).

Most of the population live in urban areas

Urban and rural populations may be exposed to different types of hazards. For example, urban areas have larger populations and may experience increased air pollution, as well as impacts of hot weather (due to the urban heat island effect). Rural communities are often at greater risk of being isolated during and after a hazard event (such as an extreme weather event).

- **Most of the New Zealand population live in urban areas**. About half of the population (50.6%) lived in the major urban areas of Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, Tauranga, Dunedin and Lower Hutt in 2023 (Figure 1).
- About 15.8% of the population lived in **rural areas** in 2023, and 10.5% lived in small urban areas (ie towns of less than 10,000 people).
- **A higher percentage of the Māori population lived in rural areas** (18.0%) and small urban areas (14.7%) than the national rates in 2018 (16.3% and 10.0% respectively)[1].

Figure 1: Percentage of population living in urban and rural areas, 2023



Notes: This graph uses the Urban Rural Indicator (IUR) categories of major urban area (100,000+ residents), large urban area (30,000–99,999 residents), medium urban area (10,000–29,999 residents), small urban area (1,000–9,999 residents), and rural (includes 'rural settlements' with 200–999 residents or at least 40 dwellings, other rural areas, and water).
Source: Stats NZ subnational population estimates (urban rural), at 30 June 2023

[1] Results for 2023 will be released when data are available.

Almost a third of all households have a child

Children (particularly young children) are more sensitive to the impacts of hazards. They rely on adults to protect them during a hazard event (such as flood). Children are also more susceptible to health impacts of hazards, as their bodies are still developing and growing.

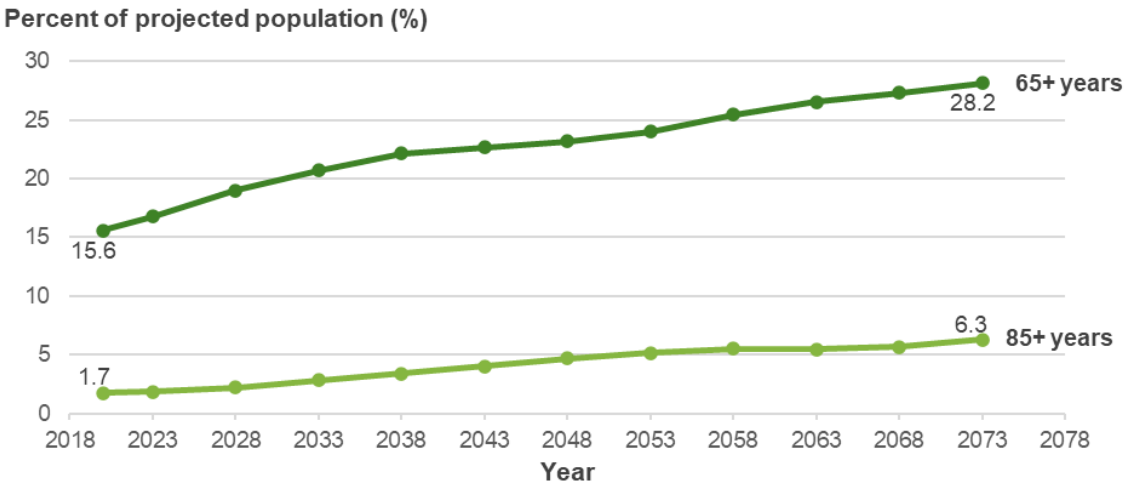
- **Children** aged 0–14 years made up almost one-fifth of the population (18.7%) in 2023. This was a slight decrease from 2018 (19.6%).
- In 2018, almost **one-third of households** (29.5%) had at least one child aged 0–14 years.[1]

New Zealand has an ageing population

Older adults are more sensitive to climate-related hazards and other hazards. Older adults tend to have higher prevalence of chronic health conditions and disability, which makes them more susceptible to the potential health impacts of hazards (such as heatwaves and floods). Older adults living alone may be particularly vulnerable to hazards.

- **Older adults** aged 65+ years made up 16.6% of the population in 2023.
- In 2023, over one in ten households (11.3%) comprised **an older adult (65+ years) living alone**. This percentage had increased since 2018 (10.7%).
- The percentage of older adults (65+ years) in the population is **projected to almost double** from 16.6% in 2023, to about 28.2% of the population by 2073 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Projected older adult population, as a percentage of projected total population in New Zealand, 2020–2073



Source: Stats NZ population projections, by age and sex (50th percentile projections, 2020(base)–2073)

[1] Results for 2023 will be released when data are available.

Chronic health conditions are common, particularly in older people

People with chronic health conditions are more sensitive to hazards. For example, people with **ischaemic heart disease** are at higher risk of a heart attack after a flood, due to stress and excess activity from evacuation and clean-up activities. They may also be more susceptible to health impacts during heatwaves, and due to poor air quality. People with **respiratory conditions (such as asthma)** are more susceptible to the impacts of heatwaves, floods, and wildfires, as well as poor air quality. People with **chronic pain** may have issues with mobility. **People who require essential medications and/or health services** are also more vulnerable, due to potential disruptions to people's access to their medications.

- In 2023/24, about 4.5% of adults (an estimated 195,000 adults) had ischaemic heart disease, while 6.4% had diabetes, and 12.4% had medicated asthma, according to the New Zealand Health Survey (Table 1).
- Over half of all adults aged 75+ years had at least one chronic health condition and/or required essential medication (such as blood pressure medication) (Table 1).

Table 1: Prevalence of selected health conditions, among adults aged 15+ years and older adults aged 75+ years, 2023/24 (unadjusted prevalence)

Health condition	Adults 15+ years		Older adults 75+ years	
	Prevalence (%) (95% CI)	Estimated number of adults (95% CI)	Prevalence (%) (95% CI)	Estimated number of adults (95% CI)
Ischaemic heart disease	4.5% (4.0–5.0)	195,000 (175,000–216,000)	17.6% (15.0–20.3)	68,000 (58,000–78,000)
Asthma (medicated)	12.4% (11.5–13.2)	536,000 (500,000–571,000)	12.4% (9.8–15.4)	48,000 (38,000–59,000)
Diabetes	6.4% (5.8–7.1)	278,000 (251,000–304,000)	11.0% (8.8–13.4)	42,000 (34,000–51,000)
Chronic pain	19.7% (18.8–20.8)	856,000 (814,000–898,000)	34.4% (30.9–38.1)	133,000 (120,000–147,000)
High blood pressure (diagnosed and currently taking medication)	17.7% (16.8–18.7)	768,000 (729,000–807,000)	54.3% (49.9–58.6)	210,000 (194,000–227,000)

Notes: 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) are provided, to show the uncertainty due to taking a sample of the population.
Source: 2023/24 New Zealand Health Survey, Ministry of Health (2024a)

Increasing prevalence of psychological distress

Poor mental health can increase vulnerability. People with pre-existing mental health issues are more susceptible to the impacts of a hazard event (such as floods and heatwaves).

- In 2023/24, 13.0% (95% CI 12.2–13.9) of adults aged 15+ years had experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress in the past four weeks. This represented 564,000 adults.
- In 2023/24, the prevalence of psychological distress was highest in people aged 15–24 years (22.9%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (18.0%).
- The percentage of adults experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress had increased significantly from 6.2% in 2013/14 and 8.3% in 2018/19, to 13.0% in 2023/24 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Prevalence of psychological distress among adults aged 15+ years, 2011/12 – 2023/24 (unadjusted prevalence)

Notes: Psychological distress is defined as experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress (K10 score of at least 12 out of 40) in the past four weeks. 95% confidence intervals have not been shown. Ministry of Health analyses show statistically significant increases ($p<0.01$) in the age-standardised prevalences between (i) 2013/14 and 2023/24, and (ii) 2018/19 and 2023/24 (Ministry of Health 2024a).
Source: 2023/24 New Zealand Health Survey, Ministry of Health (2024a)

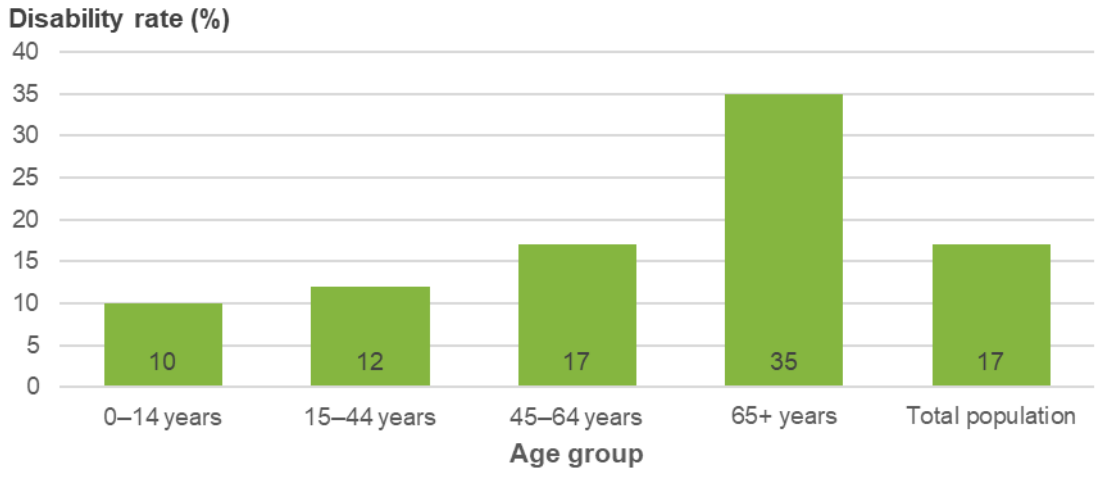
- In 2021–23, about 34.8% of adults aged 15+ years had experienced anxiety/depression symptoms (mild or greater) in the previous two weeks, a significant increase since 2016/17 (25.0%), according to analysis of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 New Zealand Health Surveys (Ministry of Health 2024b).

Almost one in five people had a disability in 2023

People who are restricted in daily activities by a physical, learning or mental disability may be more vulnerable to the impacts of hazards. People with a disability may have difficulty evacuating, moving themselves, understanding hazards and/or instructions and/or taking care of themselves. It is essential that emergency services and responses are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, so that everyone has the support they need during a disaster.

- In 2023, 17% of people living in New Zealand households were disabled, according to the New Zealand Household Disability Survey. This represented 851,000 people (out of about 5 million people).
- Disability rates increased with age (Figure 4). The disability rate for children was 10%, while the disability rate for older adults (65+ years) was 35%.
- Age-adjusted rates of disability were higher among Māori (24%) and Pacific peoples (21%), than among European (17%) and Asian (13%) populations.
- For adults, difficulties with physical functioning were the most common type of disability in 2023. About 7% of adults had difficulty with walking (sufficient to be counted as disabled because of it), and 6% of adults had difficulty with flexibility and/or dexterity. About 4% of adults had difficulties with seeing.

Figure 4: Disability rate, by age group, 2023



Source: 2023 New Zealand Household Disability Survey, Stats NZ (2025)

Pregnant women are also more susceptible

Pregnant women are also more vulnerable to health impacts during hazard events. Their bodies are more sensitive to heat, stress, and infections, which can increase the risk of pregnancy complications. Disasters can also make it harder to access medical care, which can worsen health risks for both mother and baby.

- About 55,000 women give birth each year in New Zealand.

Major disparities in having enough money to cope with crises and losses

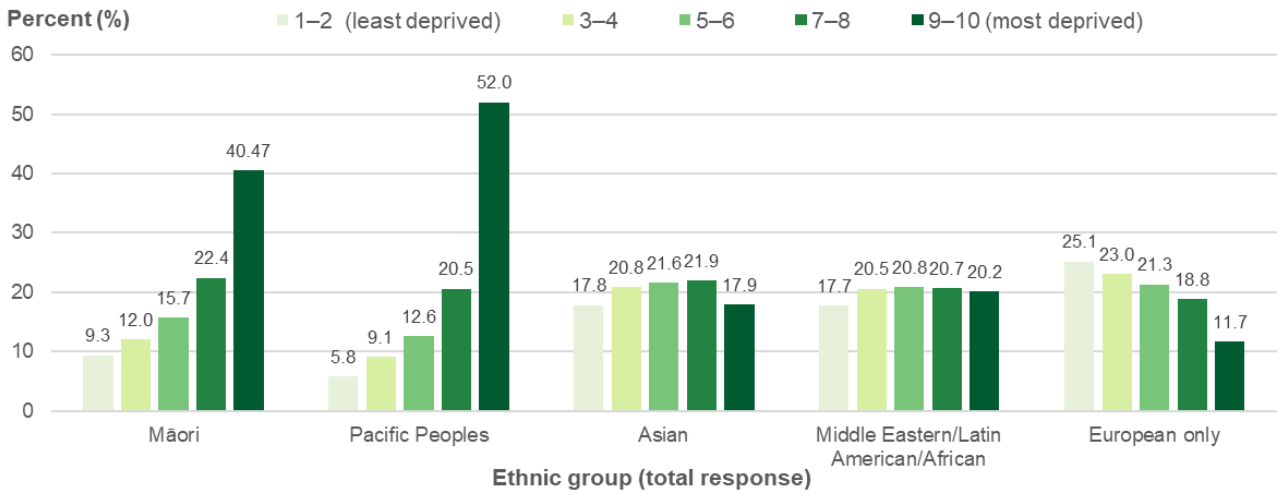
Having the financial resources to cope with crises and losses is an important aspect of resilience – that is, being able to prepare for, cope with and recover from disasters. People without enough money and/or with a low income may find it difficult to prepare for or adapt to hazards (such as through emergency preparedness, and protection works to reduce risks of impacts), or to recover financially from losses after a disaster.

- In 2023, about one in three adults were either **not in the labour force** (32.4%) or **unemployed** (3.0%).
- In 2023, about 6.3% of households had **no access to a motor vehicle**. Motor vehicles, while not essential, may be helpful when evacuating from floods, and when people need to access services.
- In 2018, about 8.6% of households were **single parent households**[1], which may be more likely to struggle financially to prepare, recover from and adapt to climate-related hazards and natural hazards.

The New Zealand Index of Deprivation (NZDep) is a useful summary measure for showing neighbourhood socioeconomic deprivation, based on nine Census variables. NZDep is measured in deciles, with about 10% of the population in each decile. In higher deprivation areas (deciles 9–10), people may struggle to fully prepare for hazards, recover after an event, or afford any adaptation measures. These financial inequities can also flow through to other aspects of resilience, including housing, and having enough food and water to cope with shortage.

- **There were marked differences in the distribution of socioeconomic deprivation** by ethnic group and region. In 2023, Māori and Pacific peoples were disproportionately represented in higher deprivation areas, with 40.5% and 52.0% respectively living in the most deprived 20% of areas (NZDep2023 deciles 9–10) (Figure 5). Some geographic areas of New Zealand also have a large proportion of the population living in high deprivation areas.

Figure 5: Percentage of the population living in NZDep2023 deciles, by ethnic group, 2023



Notes: Deciles have been combined into quintiles for this graph. Nationally, about 10% of the population lives in each decile, and about 20% live in each quintile. Total response ethnic groups have been presented, except for 'European only', which can be used as a comparator group.
Source: NZDep2023 tables, Stats NZ (2025) and Atkinson et al (2024)

[1] Results for 2023 will be released when data are available.

Social isolation may increase vulnerability

Social connectedness, and having the support of other people in an emergency are important aspects of resilience. People who are socially isolated may be more vulnerable during and after a hazard event. Living alone can increase a person's vulnerability to the impacts of hazards (such as floods and heatwaves), due to not having the support that living with others gives. New immigrants and people who are new to the country may not have many social connections and/or know about hazards or what to do after a hazard event.

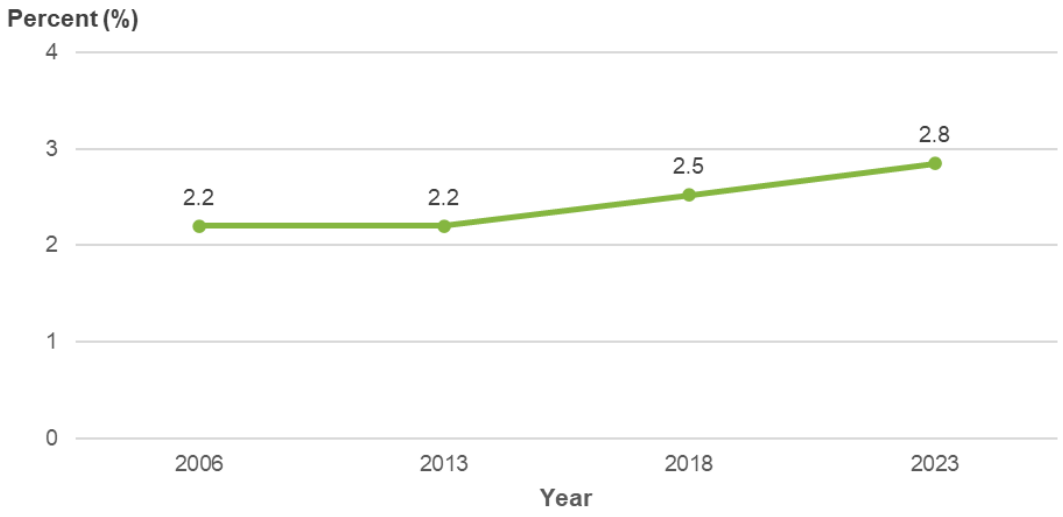
- About one in five households (22.8%) had only **one person living alone** in 2023. About half of these households were **older adults aged 65+ years living alone** (11.3% of all households).
- In 2023, 2.6% of the usually resident population were **recent immigrants** who had arrived in New Zealand in the last 24 months, and 2.2% had arrived in the past 12 months. These percentages have increased since 2013, reflecting migration patterns.

A small but increasing percentage of New Zealand residents do not speak English

Understanding information is important for being able to understand the local hazards, prepare for emergencies, know what to do in the event of a disaster, and be able to access support services after an emergency. People with limited English proficiency may find it difficult to access or understand information about hazards, which may make them more vulnerable. Providing important information in other languages about hazards, emergency preparedness, and information updates during a disaster can help address this vulnerability.

- In 2023, about 2.8% of the New Zealand population (139,000 people) **did not speak English**, an increase from 2018 (2.5%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Percentage of the population who do not speak English, 2006–2023



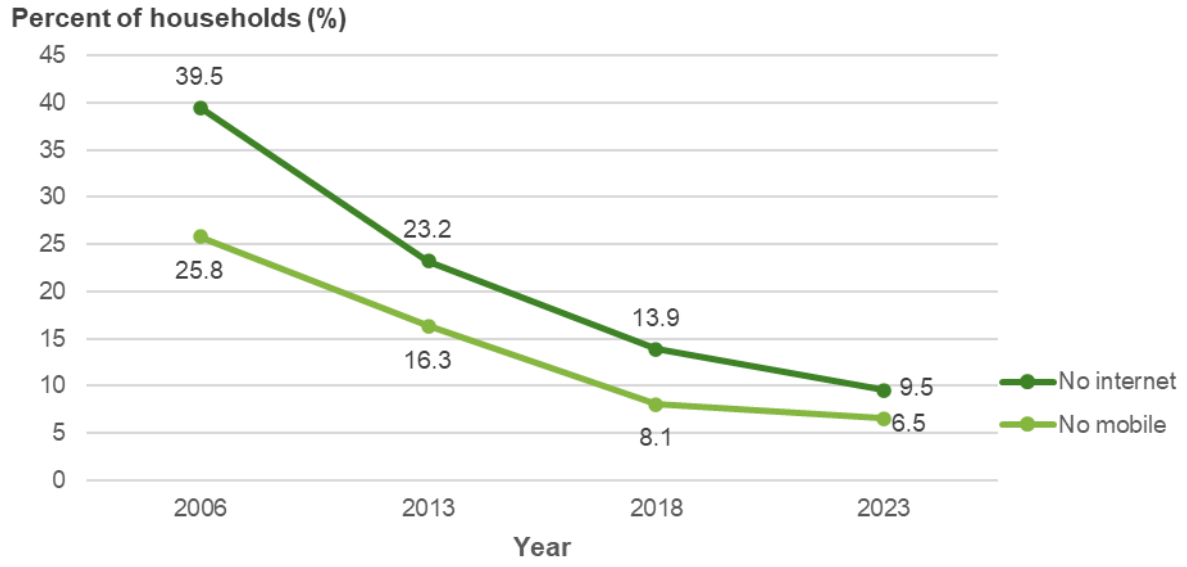
Source: New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings

Some households do not have a mobile phone and/or internet access

Awareness of hazards, and being able to access information about hazards (including about preparedness, adaptation measures, and recovery after a disaster), is important for resilience. Having access to communication devices (such as mobile phone and internet) allows people to access information, and to contact friends, family and others before, during and after a hazard event. Information published only online may not reach all households in an area, as some households do not have internet access.

- **In 2023, most households had access to a mobile phone and internet**. The percentage of households without access to a mobile phone and/or internet had fallen dramatically since 2006 (Figure 7).
- However, **some households still did not have access to a mobile phone or the internet, and may be more vulnerable, as they may not be able to access certain information**. In 2023, 6.5% of households (at least 106,600 households) had no mobile phone, and 9.5% of households (at least 155,600 households) had no internet access. Many of those households without a mobile phone or internet are located in more socioeconomically deprived areas, and are therefore also likely to be experiencing financial difficulties, which itself is a source of vulnerability.

Figure 7: Households with no access to a mobile phone or internet, 2006–2023 (percent)



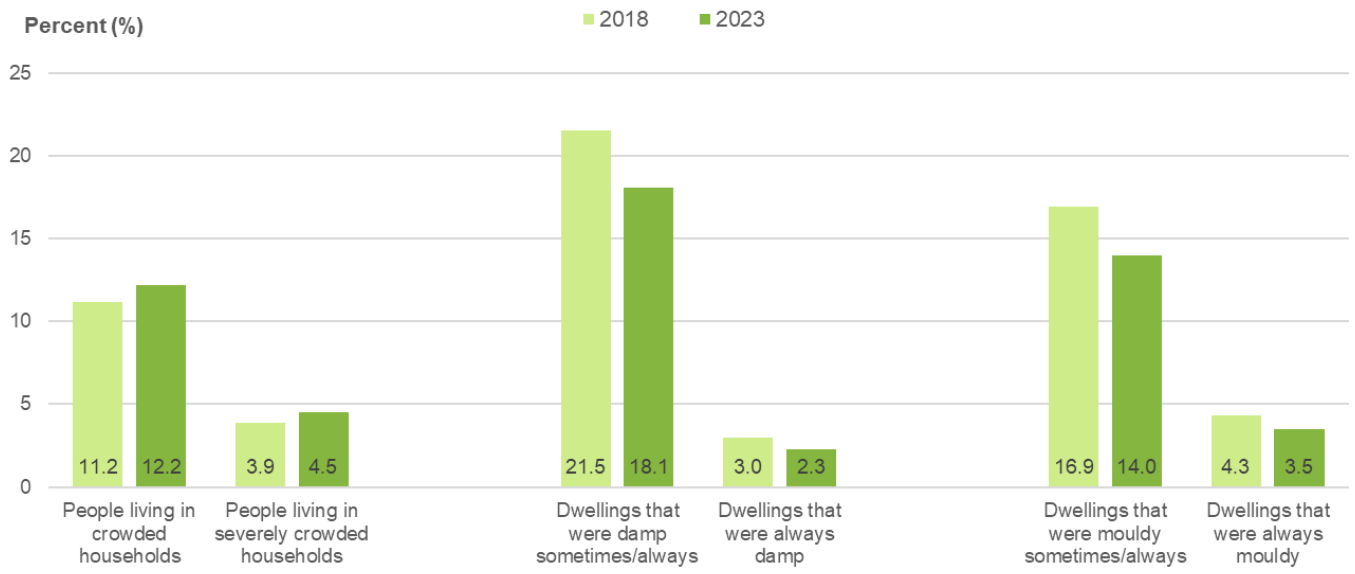
Source: New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings

Many houses are still not safe or healthy

Housing quality and safety can have an important impact on people's resilience and/or vulnerability. Shelter, warmth and security are some of the basic needs for human survival. Housing is also a key social determinant of health and wellbeing, and good quality housing can improve people's health. Rental housing is often of poorer quality than owner-occupied housing, and tenants may have less control over their living situation (including after a disaster). Household crowding increases the risk of infectious diseases. Damp and mouldy housing can affect people's health, and lead to respiratory issues; it can also result from flooding or extreme weather events.

- About one in three households lived in **rented dwellings** (34.0%) in 2023, a slight decrease since 2018 (35.5%).
- In 2023, almost one in eight people (12.2%) lived in **crowded households**. This was an increase from 2018 (11.2%). Household crowding affected Pacific peoples (38.5%), Māori (23.3%) and children aged 0–14 years (18.2%) much more than other population groups in 2023.
- In 2023, almost one in five dwellings (18.1%) were **damp** sometimes or all the time, while 14.0% of dwellings had **mould** (at least A4 paper size) sometimes or all of the time. These were decreases since 2018 (Figure 8). Māori and Pacific peoples were much more likely to be living in damp or mouldy dwellings than other people in 2023.

Figure 8: Social vulnerability indicators relating to housing, 2018 and 2023 (percentages)



Notes: 'Crowded households' are defined as needing 1+ bedrooms, and 'severely crowded households' are defined as needing 2+ bedrooms. 'Mouldy' is defined as visible mould larger than an A4-size piece of paper. Percentages are among total population stated for the crowded household indicators, and among total dwellings stated for the damp and mouldy dwellings indicators.
Source: New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings

Some dwellings do not have basic amenities such as safe running water

Having safe, secure and healthy housing with basic amenities is important for resilience to climate-related hazards and natural hazards. Water is essential for survival, particularly having safe drinking water, as well as for sanitation and hygiene. Having a fridge allows people to keep food at a safe temperature for eating, and to keep medications chilled when necessary. Having electricity allows people to use a range of equipment related to resilience, including fridges, heat pumps, fans, air-conditioners, computers, chargers for electronic devices and mobile phones, and lights.

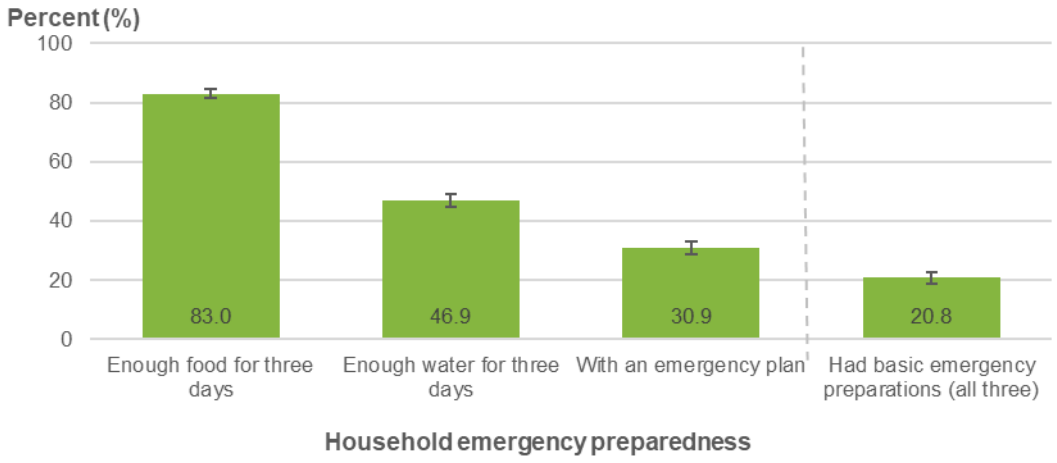
- In 2023, a small percentage of dwellings **did not have basic amenities**, such as **safe running water** (3.5%), a **fridge** (3.0%) or **electricity** (1.9%). This represented at least 57,400 dwellings without safe running water, 49,500 dwellings without a fridge and 30,400 dwellings without electricity in 2023.

Relatively low levels of household emergency preparedness

Having enough food, water and emergency supplies to cope with an emergency, is an important aspect of survival and disaster resilience. Many households are not fully prepared for emergencies in New Zealand.

- In 2021, one in five people (20.8%) lived in households with **basic emergency preparedness** (that is, having enough food for three days, having enough water for three days, and having a household emergency plan).
- About four in five people (83.0%) lived in households with **enough food for three days** in 2021. However, Pacific peoples were much less likely to report having enough food for three days (63.2%), which may reflect food security issues and/or poverty.
- About half of people (46.9%) lived in households with **enough water for three days**.
- Less than a third of people (30.9%) lived in households with a **household emergency plan**.

Figure 9: People living in households with basic emergency preparedness (percentage among population aged 15+ years), 2021



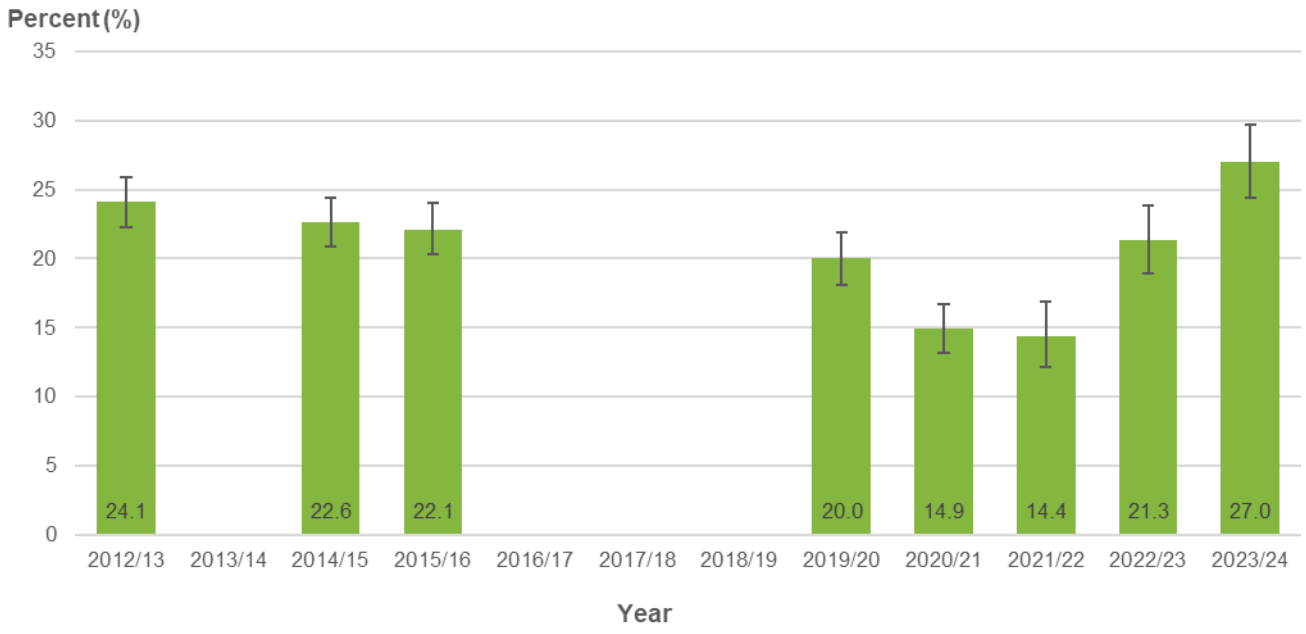
Notes: 95% confidence intervals have been presented as vertical bars.
Source: 2021 General Social Survey, Stats NZ (2022)

Household food security is an issue for many households with children

Having enough food to cope with shortage is an important part of resilience to hazards. However, some households sometimes or often run out of food, due to a lack of sufficient money for food. 'Food security' refers to the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and access to this food. Households that experience food insecurity are likely to find it difficult to cope with food shortages during an emergency, and may need further assistance in a hazard event.

- In 2022/23, about **one in four (27.0%) children** aged 0–14 years lived in **households that run out of food sometimes or often** due to a lack of money. This was a significant increase from 2022/23 (21.3%) (Figure 10).
- In 2023/24, the percentages for this were much higher among Pacific children (54.8%) and Māori children (34.3%). These households will struggle to have basic household emergency preparedness.

Figure 10: Children living in household where food runs out often or sometimes in the last 12 months, by year (unadjusted prevalence), 2012/13–2023/24



Notes: 95% confidence intervals have been presented as vertical bars. Household food security data were only collected for specific years of the New Zealand Health Survey. The 2021/22 and 2022/23 New Zealand Health Surveys were impacted by disruptions due to COVID-19 and Cyclone Gabrielle, resulting in smaller sample sizes and lower response rates (Ministry of Health 2024c), so should be interpreted with caution.
Source: New Zealand Health Survey 2023/24, Ministry of Health (2024a)

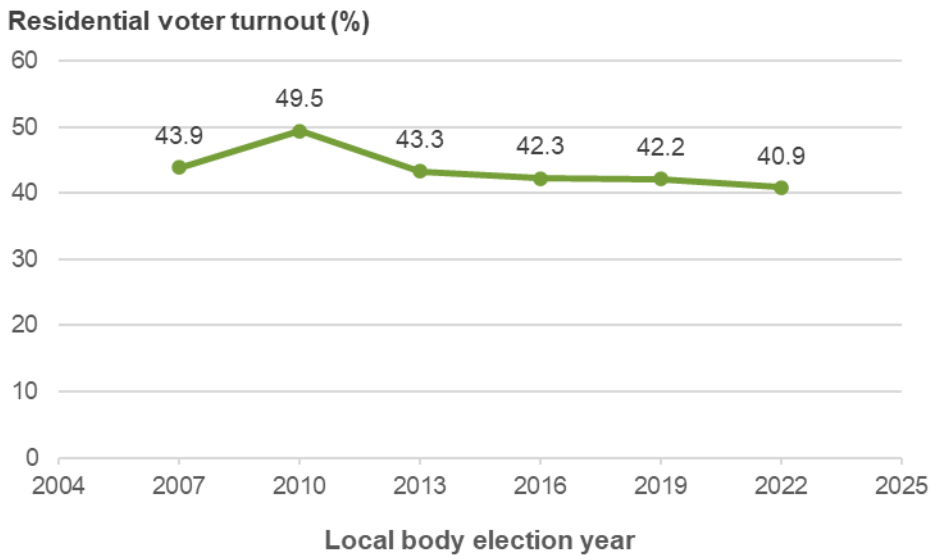
- In 2023/24, about one in seven (14.7%) children lived in **households that use food banks or food grants** sometimes or often due to lack of money, a similar prevalence to previous years.
- Similar to the results above, Pacific children (28.7%) and Māori children (24.9%) had higher rates of living in households that use food banks or food grants, in 2023/24.

Low levels of participation in local body elections

Good decision-making, and active participation in the process, is important for resilience. Good leadership, inclusive planning and decision-making that includes vulnerable groups, and participation by the local community, is important to ensure that people's needs are met. While this dimension of resilience is difficult to measure with quantitative statistics, voting participation can be one measure of local participation in decision-making.

- In 2022, **residential voter turnout** (the percentage of residents who voted in the local body council elections, among eligible residential voters) was 40.9%. This is relatively low compared with previous local body elections (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Residential voter turnout at the local body elections (percentage of voters), 2007–2022



Source: Department of Internal Affairs

About 5% of employed adults work in the primary industries

People's occupation can influence their exposure to hazards and risk of losses. People working in primary industries are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate-related hazards (such as extreme weather events, floods and droughts), as they work outdoors and their livelihoods depend on natural resources.

- In 2023, 3.3% of the population aged 15+ years were working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, a decrease from 4.3% in 2006. In 2023, this represented 5.1% of employed people aged 15+ years.

People who work in healthcare and social assistance may be more exposed during a hazard event, if they need to work during a disaster.

- About 6.2% of the population aged 15+ years worked in healthcare and social assistance in 2023, an increase from 5.1% in 2006. In 2023, this represented 9.5% of employed people aged 15+ years.

Social vulnerability indicators are available for local areas across New Zealand

Social vulnerability indicator data from the 2023 Census are available for a range of geographic levels, including:

- Regional councils
- Territorial authorities
- Auckland local board areas
- Health regions and health districts (formerly district health boards)
- Statistical Area 3 (SA3s)
- Statistical Area 2 (SA2s)
- Urban areas
- Wards.

Data are available on the EHINZ website www.ehinz.ac.nz/social-vulnerability

Further indicator data will be released when available. An online mapping dashboard for exploring the data will be published in mid-2025.

Area-specific summaries, similar to this national report, are available on request from EHINZ.

Indicators at a glance

Table 2 provides a summary of social vulnerability indicators for New Zealand from 2006 to 2023.

Table 2: Key statistics from the social vulnerability indicators at the national level, for 2006, 2013, 2018 and 2023

Dimension	Indicator	Percentage (%)				Change from 2018 to 2023
		2006	2013	2018	2023	
Ethnic group (total response)	Māori (among total population)	14.6	14.9	16.5	**17.8**	↑
	Pacific peoples (among total population)	6.9	7.4	8.1	**8.9**	↑
	Asian (among total population)	9.2	11.8	15.1	**17.3**	↑
	Middle Eastern/ Latin American / African (MELAA) (among total population)	0.9	1.2	1.5	**1.9**	↑
	European/Other (among total population)	67.6	74.0	70.2	**67.8**	↓
Children	Children aged 0–14 years (among total population)	21.5	20.4	19.6	**18.7**	↓
	Children aged 0–4 years (among total population)	6.8	6.9	6.3	**5.8**	↓
	Households with at least one child aged 0–14 years (among total households)		29.4	29.5	*	
	Households with at least one child aged 0–4 years (among total households)		13.6	12.8	*	
Older adults	Older adults aged 65+ years (among total population)	12.3	14.3	15.2	**16.6**	↑
	Older adults aged 75+ years (among total population)	5.7	6.2	6.4	**7.3**	↑
	Older adults aged 85+ years (among total population)	1.4	1.7	1.8	**1.8**	
	Households with an older adult (65+ years) living alone (among total households stated)	9.6	10.4	10.7	**11.3**	↑
Enough money to cope with crises and losses	Unemployed people (among 15+ years)	3.5	4.8	4.0	**3.0**	↓
	People not in labour force (among 15+ years)	31.5	32.9	31.3	**32.4**	↑
	Single parent households (among total households)			8.6	*	
	Households with no motor vehicle (among total households stated)	8.1	7.9	6.6	**6.3**	↓
Social connectedness	One-person household (among total households stated)	23.0	23.5	22.7	**22.8**	↑
	Immigrants arrived in past year (among total population stated)	1.5	1.2	1.6	**2.2**	↑
	Immigrants arrived in past 0-1 years (among total population stated)	2.7	2.2	3.2	**2.6**	↓
Awareness, knowledge and skills to cope with hazards and emergencies	Households with no access to a mobile phone (among total households stated)	25.8	16.3	8.1	**6.5**	↓
	Households with no access to the internet (among total households stated)	39.5	23.2	13.9	**9.5**	↓
	People who don't speak English (among total population stated)	2.2	2.2	2.5	**2.8**	↑
Safe, secure and healthy housing	Households in rental housing (among total households stated)	33.1	35.2	35.5	**34.0**	↓
	People living in crowded households (among total population stated)	10.4	10.1	11.2	**12.2**	↑
	People living in severely crowded households (needing 2+ bedrooms) (among total population stated)		3.3	3.9	**4.5**	↑
	Crowded households (among total households stated)	5.2	5.0	5.7	**6.2**	↑
	Severely crowded households (needing 2+ bedrooms) (among total households stated)		1.3	1.6	**1.8**	↑
	People living in a damp dwelling (damp always or sometimes) (among total population stated)	–	–	24.1	**20.6**	↓

Dimension	Indicator	Percentage (%)				Change from 2018 to 2023
		2006	2013	2018	2023	
	People living in a severely damp dwelling (always damp) (among total population stated)	–	–	3.5	**2.8**	↓
	People living in a mouldy dwelling (mouldy always or sometimes) (among total population stated)	–	–	19.6	**16.5**	↓
	People living in a severely mouldy dwelling (always mouldy) (among total population stated)	–	–	5.2	**4.3**	↓
	Dwelling is damp always or sometimes (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	21.5	**18.1**	↓
	Dwelling is damp always (ie severe damp) (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	3.0	**2.3**	↓
	Dwelling is mouldy always or sometimes (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	16.9	**14.0**	↓
	Dwelling is always mouldy (ie severe mould) (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	4.3	**3.5**	↓
Enough food and water to cope with shortage	Dwellings with no access to safe running water (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	3.2	**3.5**	↑
	Dwellings with no access to a fridge (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	3.2	**3.0**	↓
	Dwellings with no access to electricity (among total dwellings stated)	–	–	1.7	**1.9**	↑
Decision-making	Voting participation in local body elections (2007, 2013, 2019, 2022) (among eligible residential voters in contested wards)	43.9	43.3	42.2	**40.9**	↓
Occupational exposure/ vulnerability	Primary industry workers (among population aged 15+ years)	4.3	3.9	3.8	**3.3**	↓
	Primary industry workers (among employed population aged 15+ years)	6.8	6.7	5.9	**5.1**	↓
	Healthcare and social assistance workers (among population aged 15+ years)	5.1	5.8	6.1	**6.2**	↑
	Healthcare and social assistance workers (among employed population aged 15+ years)	8.1	10.0	9.5	**9.5**	–

* Some indicators do not yet have 2023 data available, and will be updated in mid-2025 or when data becomes available.
Notes: Some indicators have missing data, so percentages are presented among total stated, and may have some uncertainty.
Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (tables with 2013, 2018 and 2023 data), and 2018 Census of Population and Dwellings (2006 data).

Data for these indicators

This surveillance report presents information from the social vulnerability indicators (SVIs) for 2023, developed and implemented by Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand (EHINZ).

The indicators were first developed for social vulnerability to flooding, by EHINZ in 2019 (Mason et al 2021). This project tested the indicators using a case study of Porirua, Wellington. Since then, EHINZ has updated the indicators with 2018 and 2023 Census data, and have published a report on social vulnerability to climate-related hazards for the Climate Change Commission (EHINZ 2024).

The 2023 SVI indicator datasets have data for 2013, 2018 and 2023, to allow comparisons over time. Indicator data are available for small areas (SA2s), territorial authorities, districts (formerly district health boards), Auckland local board areas, and regional councils, as well as other geographies (SA3, urban areas, wards) for selected indicators. These indicators provide valuable information for action for the health sector, local authorities, local communities, Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) groups, and government agencies.

Additional information has also been included in this report, to supplement the main Census indicators and give a fuller picture of social vulnerability at the national level. Published data have been used from the following sources:

- New Zealand Health Survey information on chronic health conditions, psychological distress,

anxiety/depression symptoms, and household food security, published by the Ministry of Health (2024a, 2024b)
- New Zealand Disability Survey, published by Stats NZ (2025)
- New Zealand General Social Survey (household emergency preparedness), published by Stats NZ (2022)
- Local body voting statistics, published by the Department of Internal Affairs
- Population projections, published by Stats NZ
- Maternity statistics, published by Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora.

For additional information about the SVIs and to download indicator datasets, see the EHINZ website, www.ehinz.ac.nz/social-vulnerability.

For metadata about the indicators, see the metadata sheet.

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Explore geographic data:

Regional heatmaps

SVI interactive map and dashboard (coming soon)

Previous reports:

Social vulnerability to climate-related hazards

Journal article on the social vulnerability indicators

Other related topics include:

Climate change environmental health indicators

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Climate and health

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Author

The author of this report is Kylie Mason, ehinz@massey.ac.nz

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