



**NAPIER**  
CITY COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihera o Ahuriri*

Napier Civic Building  
231 Hastings Street  
t +64 6 835 7579  
e info@napier.govt.nz  
[www.napier.govt.nz](http://www.napier.govt.nz)

# NGĀ MĀNUKANUKA O TE IWI (MĀORI COMMITTEE)

## Open Attachments (Under separate cover 1)

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Meeting Date: Wednesday 1 April 2026

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Time: 10:00 AM

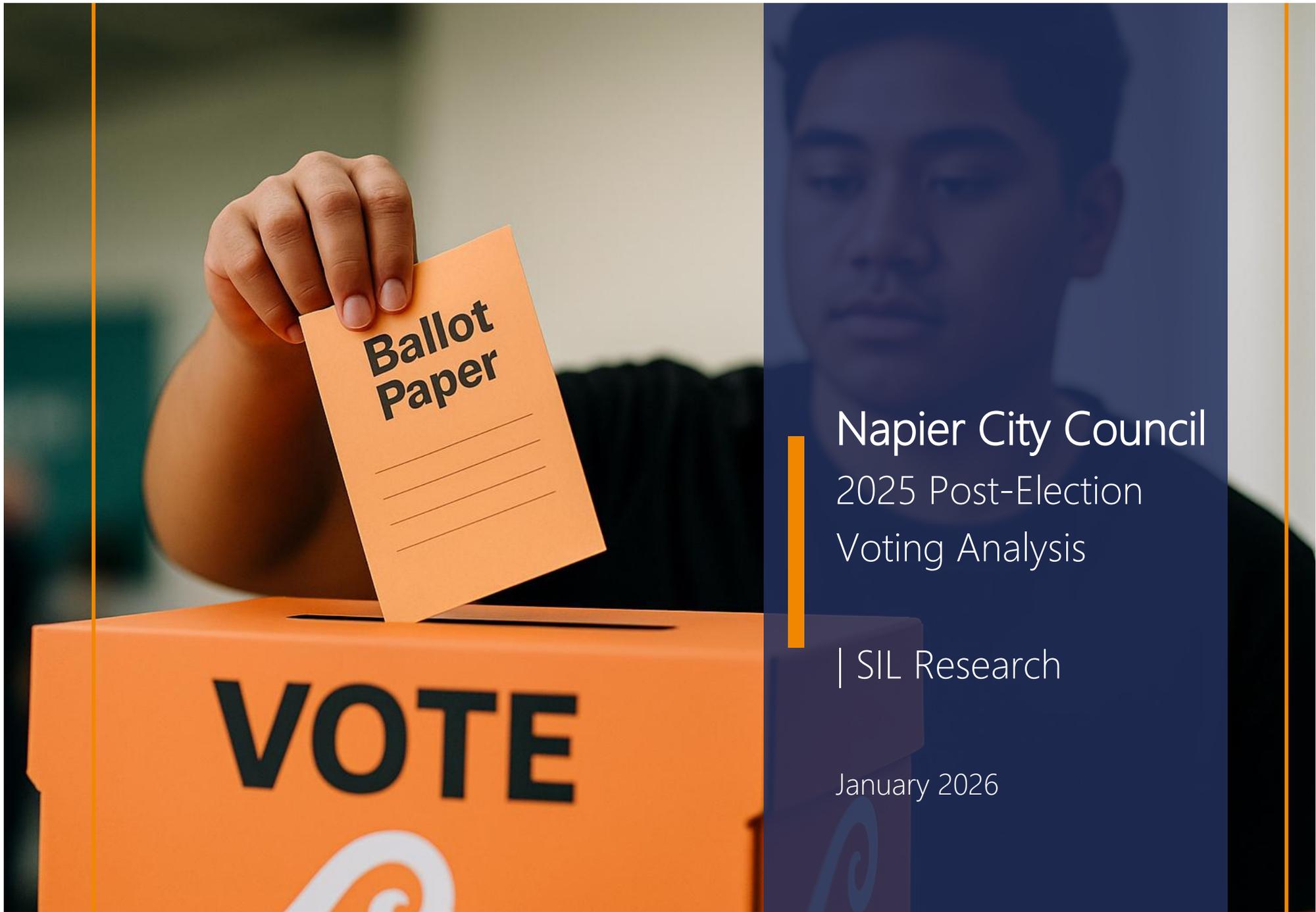
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Venue: Small Exhibition Hall  
War Memorial Centre  
Marine Parade  
Napier

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# Napier City Council 2025 Post-Election Voting Analysis

| SIL Research

January 2026

Contact: Dr Virgil Troy 06 834 1996 or [virgiltroy@silresearch.co.nz](mailto:virgiltroy@silresearch.co.nz)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to analyse Napier City Council (NCC) post-election voter turnout data for 2025 local body elections, assess the success of Council-led interventions to increase voter turnout, and identify ongoing barriers to voter participation. This project formed the final stage of a research programme commissioned by NCC to better understand and encourage voter behaviour in order to test and measure effectiveness of outreach interventions - particularly for residents who are unenrolled, less likely to vote, or otherwise under-represented or disengaged with civic election processes.

This stage of the programme followed and built on the first stage: a community-wide survey to gather insights into community perceptions of voting (April 2025). In light of previous research and election strategies, NCC conducted a wide range of interventions and initiatives throughout 2025 aimed at increasing voter turnout (see Methodology section for more details). In addition, 2025 saw a number of other significant changes to Napier's local body elections: in particular, redefining of Napier's general wards, introduction of the Te Whanga Māori ward, and the central government-initiated binding poll on the Māori ward.

Analysis of 2025 voter turnout was conducted on an anonymised database of 2022 and 2025 Napier City electors provided to SIL Research from the Electoral Commission. Electoral and voting data was complete and correct up to the date it was provided (28 October 2025), excluding special vote data for the 2025 election (albeit this represented a very small proportion of all voting returns, so does not notably affect overall results, patterns or conclusions). Comparisons of 2022 and 2025 voting status were used to calculate changes in voter turnout, and differences between all available elector segments were analysed.

### Key Headlines

- The 2025 election saw broad-based turnout growth across Napier City - with particularly strong relative gains among historically under-engaged groups.
- Māori overall, Māori roll voters, young people and residents in lower turnout areas all recorded proportionally higher increases than traditionally high participation community segments.
- Structural changes, such as the introduction of the Māori ward, combined with targeted engagement initiatives, appear to have been especially effective in lifting participation where historic barriers have been greatest.
- Substantial and pervasive barriers to engagement remain, including gaps in awareness of candidates and council roles, lingering perceptions of weak representation, and lower trust and confidence among younger voters and some Māori communities.
- While turnout gaps remain in absolute terms, results demonstrate measurable progress towards a more inclusive and representative local democratic process.

## Voter Turnout Findings

- **Overall improvement in turnout from 2022 to 2025:** According to available Electoral Commission data, voter turnout increased from 35.1% in 2022 to 45.5% in 2025, representing a +10.3 percentage point increase overall. The increase was driven by a higher proportion of voters gained in 2025 than voters who lapsed since 2022, indicating a net improvement in participation rather than simple voter churn. Turnout gains were evident across all ward areas and demographic segments, suggesting city-wide impact of engagement interventions.
- **Māori Roll Engagement Lifted Sharply, Narrowing Historic Gaps:** General roll turnout increased by approximately 9 to 10 percentage points between 2022 and 2025, reflecting overall population results. However, Māori roll turnout increased substantially more, rising from 14% in 2022 to 30.5% in 2025, a +16.5 percentage point increase. This reduced the turnout gap between General and Māori roll electors from a 24% difference in 2022 to 17% difference in 2025. The introduction of the Te Whanga Māori ward in 2025 – providing direct representation for the Māori community - likely contributed to this improvement alongside targeted engagement activity. The binding poll on continuation of the Māori ward, together with related communications and signage throughout the community, likely also mobilised voters to turn out.
- **All Ward Areas Improved, Including Traditionally Lower Turnout Areas:** When 2025 electors were recoded into 2022 ward boundaries (to allow historic comparisons), measured turnout rates increased consistently by around 10 percentage points across all four ward areas. Ahuriri and Taradale continued to record higher turnout, maintaining historic patterns. Importantly, however, the lower turnout areas of Onekawa-Tamatea and Nelson Park still experienced comparable proportional increases, indicating effectiveness of interventions even in traditionally less-engaged communities.
- **Māori Roll Voters Showed Consistent Gains City-wide:** Māori roll voters recorded larger increases in turnout across all areas than General roll counterparts, with the strongest gain in Ahuriri at +20 percentage points. Variation in turnout between areas was less pronounced for Māori roll voters than for General roll voters, suggesting more consistent participation across the city for Māori in 2025 (albeit still at lower levels of engagement overall).
- **Māori Participation Increased More Than For Non-Māori:** Reinforcing the electoral roll results, turnout also remained higher for non-Māori (49%) than Māori (32%) overall in 2025. However, Māori voters experienced a larger overall increase (+14 percentage points) compared with non-Māori (+9 percentage points). In addition, Māori on the Māori roll showed the strongest improvement (+17 percentage points), compared with Māori on the General roll (+11 percentage points). As a result, turnout for Māori on the two rolls converged in 2025, reinforcing the particularly positive impact for Māori roll voters.
- **Youth Turnout Rose the Most Across All Age Groups:** Turnout increased across all age groups, with the strongest gains among younger voters. The largest increase was among 18-24 year olds, rising from 10% in 2022 to 25% in 2025 (+15 percentage points). Older voters remained the

most engaged but showed smaller increases, particularly those aged 65 plus (+4 percentage points). This indicates a narrowing of age related participation gaps, driven by improved youth engagement.

- **Younger Māori Engagement Approached Parity With Non-Māori Peers:** Māori experienced greater turnout increases than non-Māori across younger age groups. Māori aged 18-24 recorded an +18 percentage point increase, compared with +14 percentage points for non-Māori of the same age. As a result, turnout for younger Māori in 2025 was broadly comparable with younger non-Māori, a significant shift from previous elections. The gap between youngest and oldest Māori voters narrowed considerably between 2022 and 2025, while remaining wider among non-Māori.
- **Turnout Gains Were Consistent Across Genders:** Turnout increases were similar for males (+10 percentage points) and females (+11 percentage points), closely reflecting overall city trends. There were no significant gender based disparities in turnout change. However, electors with unidentified gender continued to have relatively high turnout, although their increase was more modest (+5 percentage points).

## Intervention Effectiveness

Based on the election turnout results presented above, the relative impact of structural changes and efficacy of targeted interventions can be assessed in terms of their effectiveness in encouraging increased voter engagement. Specific details of interventions are provided in the Methodology section.

### Overall assessment:

- Interventions that reduced practical barriers and increased visibility, particularly orange voting bins and localised access, delivered the strongest overall and most equity-focused impacts.
- Structural change through the Māori ward, and binding poll on continuation of the ward, amplified engagement outcomes for Māori specifically.
- Relationship-based and youth-focused initiatives contributed meaningfully to lifting participation among historically under-engaged groups.
- The combined, multi-channel approach was critical, with no single intervention alone explaining the scale and breadth of turnout gains observed in 2025.

Key findings and impact assessments for each of the principal interventions are provided below.

- **Expansion of orange voting bins > high impact, city-wide and equity enhancing:**
  - The number of orange voting bins increased from 9 in 2022 to 21 in 2025, with bins becoming the primary return method for voting papers. Voting forms returned via bins increased four-fold, accounting for approximately three-quarters of all votes in 2025. New and

repeat bin locations in suburban and historically lower-turnout areas generated particularly strong increases in usage. Bins located near EIT venues and in areas with higher Māori and youth populations showed some of the largest proportional increases.

- This intervention is assessed as the single most effective driver of overall turnout growth and a key contributor to improved participation among historically under-engaged communities.
- **Introduction of the Māori ward > high impact for Māori engagement:**
  - The introduction of the Te Whanga Māori ward represented a major structural change in 2025. This change coincided with a large increase in turnout among Māori roll voters, significantly narrowing historic participation gaps. The Māori ward provided clearer representation and relevance for Māori voters, reinforcing engagement alongside other initiatives. The government-initiated binding poll on the future of the Māori ward likely also encouraged greater interest within the Māori community in particular.
  - This was a critical enabling factor for increased Māori participation.
- **Early and sustained engagement with Māori partners > moderate to high impact, relationship building:**
  - Council engaged early with Ngā mānukanuka o te iwi (NMOTI) and Māori community organisations to share election information and support participation. Hui, senior leadership engagement and collaboration with community organisations supported information flow and trust. While uptake of some initiatives was limited, sharing information through trusted networks and hosting voting bins proved effective.
  - This approach supported higher turnout among Māori, particularly when combined with structural changes and visible voting options.
- **Targeted youth engagement initiatives > moderate impact, strong effect for youngest voters:**
  - Youth specific interventions included high school outreach, EIT events, Orientation week engagement and youth focused social media activity. These initiatives aligned with the largest turnout increases being recorded among 18-24 year olds. Māori youth, in particular, showed stronger relative gains than non-Māori youth.
  - Youth engagement activity is assessed as effective for lifting participation among the lowest voting age groups, though continued investment is required to sustain gains.
- **Strategic placement of bins and outreach in lower turnout areas > moderate impact, spatial equity:**
  - New bin locations and outreach efforts were deliberately focused in suburban areas with historically lower turnout. These areas experienced turnout increases comparable to higher voting areas, indicating successful reach beyond traditional civic participants.

- This supports the effectiveness of place-based, repeat-exposure interventions.
- **Research led and adaptive approach > enabling impact:**
  - Previous and concurrent research both locally and nationally - coupled with consideration of known contextual factors - informed intervention design, particularly for Māori and youth engagement. Feedback loops, including internal measurement and assessment, post-hui insights and enrolment analysis, allowed Council to adapt and refine approaches.
  - While not a direct driver of turnout, this evidence-based approach underpinned the effectiveness of other initiatives.

### Existing Barriers To Voter Engagement

Results from this post-election analysis provide strong support for the effectiveness of strategic targeted interventions and structural changes to positively lift voter engagement and participation – as evidenced by the increased voter turnout in the 2025 Napier election. Nevertheless, voter turnout remains low in absolute terms, with large proportions (over half) of electors (potential voters) still not voting in 2025. This reality highlights the strong and pervasive influence of multiple barriers that limit citizen participation across the community. Sustained and evolving efforts at community, city-wide and national levels will be needed to maintain and grow engagement further – likely requiring increased investment financially and in terms of organisational resourcing, community coordination, communications support and people time. In this regard, the 2025 election research programme highlighted the following prevailing issues and major barriers impacting on voter engagement:

- **Overarching themes:**
  - Many barriers to voting in Napier City are avoidable rather than attitudinal, particularly those related to information, visibility and process clarity.
  - Under-engaged groups are not unaffected by or disengaged from local issues, but often lack relevant, trusted and accessible pathways to participate.
  - Addressing turnout gaps requires targeted, age and culturally relevant, community led approaches that build trust, strengthen representation and make voting easier, more visible and more meaningful.
- **Primary barriers:**
  - **Limited visibility of local democracy:** Lower visibility of councillors, election processes and decision making reduces salience and urgency to vote.
  - **Information gaps about candidates/issues:** Lack of information about candidates and their policies reduces confidence to vote. Many voters feel unclear about what candidates stand for or how council decisions affect their daily lives.

- **Perceived lack of representation and relevance:** A significant proportion of non-voters feel unrepresented by candidates (39 percent), weakening motivation to participate. Local elections are often seen as less impactful than central government elections.
- **Practical and administrative barriers:** Missing voting papers, not knowing how to vote, or missing deadlines are common and avoidable barriers. As a result, enrolment does not consistently translate into voting, particularly for infrequent or first time voters.
- **Mismatch between communication channels and voter preferences:** Traditional communication channels do not reach all groups effectively, especially younger voters.
- **Additional barriers for Māori:**
  - **Lower sense of representation and trust:** Māori are more likely to feel disconnected from candidates and local government decision making. Historic under representation contributes to lower perceived value of participation.
  - **Information barriers and lower awareness of key electoral developments:** Māori non-Māori-voters are more likely to report confusion about voting processes and candidate information. Awareness of the election-related developments (e.g. Māori ward poll) and voting processes is lower among younger Māori in particular.
  - **Importance of whanau and community influence:** Without engagement through trusted iwi, marae and community networks, information does not always reach Māori voters effectively.
  - **Compounding barriers of age and ethnicity:** Māori youth experience the combined effects of lower trust, weaker representation, lower awareness and process confusion. While many Māori youth report being enrolled, far fewer translate this into voting behaviour. Engagement is strongly influenced by whānau, peers and visible Māori leadership, which has not always been sufficiently activated.
- **Additional barriers for younger voters:**
  - **Low understanding of Council's role and impact & process-related confusion:** Many young voters lack clarity about what Napier City Council does and how local decisions affect them. In addition, enrolment, voting methods and deadlines are not always well understood by new voters.
  - **Low trust and political efficacy & limited peer/social activation:** Young people often feel their vote does not make a difference, contributing to apathy and disengagement. Voting is more likely when reinforced by peers, social norms or shared experiences, which are often absent.
  - **Poor alignment with preferred communication styles:** Young voters strongly prefer digital, short form, authentic content via social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, which has historically been under-utilised.

In conclusion, Napier City Council's 2025 Voter Engagement programme was highly effective, delivering a substantial increase in voter turnout across the city and particularly strong gains among historically under-engaged groups such as Māori and young people. Interventions that reduced practical barriers and increased the visibility and accessibility of voting, most notably the expansion of orange voting bins and the introduction of the Māori ward, were central to this success. Targeted engagement with Māori partners and youth further supported these outcomes. However, key barriers to engagement remain, including gaps in awareness of candidates and council roles, lingering perceptions of weak representation, and lower trust and confidence among younger voters and some Māori communities. While many practical barriers were successfully addressed in 2025, informational and relational challenges continue to limit full and sustained participation.

Building on these findings, future efforts to lift voter turnout should focus on embedding and scaling the most effective interventions, particularly:

- maintaining widespread and localised voting access
- formalising youth engagement through schools, tertiary institutions and related spaces
- deepening partnerships with Māori and community organisations. This will become increasingly necessary given the binding poll decision to remove the Māori ward for the 2028 and 2031 elections, given the positive effect this ward appears to have had on encouraging Māori engagement in particular.

Greater emphasis should be placed on:

- improving candidate visibility
- providing clear and relevant information
- using age- and culturally-appropriate communication channels to strengthen relevance and trust.

Continued investment in research-led, adaptive engagement will be critical to understanding emerging barriers, measuring intervention effectiveness, and refining approaches over time.

The 2025 Voter Turnout Research programme has demonstrated clear value in guiding effective, equity-focused interventions, providing a strong evidence base and a positive platform for achieving even more inclusive and representative participation in future local elections.

# METHODOLOGY

## BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Transforming from low voter turnout into a thriving, participative democracy is a driving force behind local government election planning. Voter turnout in New Zealand's local elections has historically been low, with some community segments participating even less – patterns also observed locally in Napier City. How to engage and mobilise voters is a local government sector-wide issue under consideration.

In this context, Napier City Council (NCC) sought research support ahead of the 2025 local body elections (in October 2025) to better understand and encourage voter behaviour in order to test and measure effectiveness of outreach interventions - particularly for residents who are unenrolled, less likely to vote, or otherwise under-represented or disengaged with civic election processes. Insight in this regard was particularly relevant given the introduction in 2025 of a Māori ward and councillors for Napier City, and the central government-instigated binding poll on retention of Māori wards beyond 2025.

NCC contracted SIL Research to assist in delivering a research programme for the Council's election planning, voter engagement strategies and measurement of effectiveness (in terms of impacts on voter turnout). This report represents the final stage in this programme: providing an analysis of voter turnout numbers and patterns, and assessment of the success of related community interventions and initiatives.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This final stage of the research programme follows and builds on the first stage: a community-wide survey to gather insights into community perceptions of voting ('Napier City Council Community Perceptions of

Voting: Support for Local Elections Report', SIL Research, April 2025). The survey assessed local voting intentions, past participation, and perceived barriers to voting, with a particular focus on Māori electors and young voters. In addition, a qualitative focus group was conducted with diverse voter segments, including Māori, first-time voters, and non-voters. This research highlighted a number of key conclusions that directly contributed to NCC's subsequent planning of enrolment and voter participation initiatives:

- Civic engagement in Napier is largely shaped by age, ethnicity, and access to information, in addition to personal values such as civic duty and concern for local issues
- Those not currently enrolled or who haven't voted before face more significant barriers rooted in information gaps, disengagement, and perceived lack of representation
- Younger and Māori residents are less likely to vote or feel represented, and also report lower awareness of key democratic developments
- More specific age-relevant approaches are required to facilitate greater civic awareness, understanding and engagement among young people
- For Māori and young people in particular, whanau and community (marae / iwi) influence is critical to share relevant information and encourage voter participation
- Enhanced engagement can be influenced by Council and community-led initiatives to some degree: increasing the visibility, clarity, and relevance of local election content, and building relationships between Council and community representatives, is essential.

## COUNCIL INTERVENTIONS & INITIATIVES

In light of previous research and election strategies, NCC planned a wide range of interventions and initiatives throughout 2025, aimed at increasing voter turnout, including:

- Updating the 2022 regional communications campaign, 'Enrol, Stand, Vote', with research insights
- Enhancing services, such as special voting availability, community engagement (in particular empowering community organisations to inspire their members to participate), and increased placement of orange voting bins across the city.
- Supporting candidates with profile videos and information sessions.
- Gathering post-election data from the Electoral Commission to inform future planning.

### Communications campaigns

A regional communications campaign was developed using collateral from Local Government NZ. In addition, a pilot of a youth-focused social media campaign called YeahNahHB was used via Instagram and TikTok.

### Māori partnership

Given the highlighted need to enhance engagement with local Māori representatives, Council sought early involvement from Ngā mānukanuka o te iwi (NMOTI) and key stakeholders - by sharing clear, practical information about election processes, rules and key dates. Engagement activities included multiple hui to inform election planning, direct outreach by senior leadership and officers, and collaboration with Māori organisations to support enrolment and election communications.

## Encouraging enrolments

With limited resourcing, Council officers partnered with the local Electoral representative to trial and assess enrolment activities with the greatest impact, focusing on events, targeted stakeholder engagement and empowering community organisations to mobilise their own networks. Outreach included local events and pop ups delivered alongside neighbouring councils and iwi representatives, direct engagement with mana whenua and community groups, and pilot initiatives with businesses and high schools. High school outreach proved the most effective, generating the highest enrolment numbers and highlighting a strong opportunity to address low enrolment among young people through a formalised annual programme. Empowering community organisations with enrolment information was also highly effective, enabling trusted local leaders to extend reach well beyond what Council resourcing alone could achieve.

### Orange voting bins

The orange voting bins initiative aimed to make voting more visible, convenient and top of mind by placing secure voting bins in high traffic, frequently visited locations across Napier. The approach was informed by election survey findings that showed some voters completed their papers but forgot to post them, and that visible voting activity could prompt others to participate. Clear guidelines were developed to ensure security, neutrality, coverage and regular collection, with most proposed locations willing to host a bin during business hours. Compared with 2022, bin placement and usage increased substantially, supported by contracted collection services, additional staff resourcing close to election day, and an 'adopt a bin' approach that assigned sworn electoral staff to oversee final clearance and removal, demonstrating the effectiveness of the initiative in increasing the return of completed voting papers.

## Special voting

To increase access to special voting, Council expanded the visibility and availability of special voting sites across the city, targeting high traffic locations to reach groups less likely to vote, including youth, Māori and residents in higher deprivation areas. In consultation with the Electoral Officer, special voting was offered at Council Customer Services, Taradale Library and via a mobile service at locations such as shopping centres, EIT and the Sunday Market, while ensuring neutrality and avoiding perceived political activity. Although community organisations showed initial interest in hosting mobile voting, uptake was limited. The expanded approach resulted in a significant increase in special votes, with 809 issued in 2025 compared with 274 in 2022, representing 3.8% of all votes. This increase required substantially higher resourcing, including temporary staff, with most special votes processed in the final three weeks of voting, highlighting both the effectiveness and operational intensity of expanded special voting provision.

## DATA SOURCE

The primary source of analysis of 2025 voting outcomes was a database of 2022 and 2025 Napier City electors provided to SIL Research, representing enrolment records from the Electoral Commission matched to NCC final roll and voting records. Council followed a precise process to match records, primarily using name and address details (and also occupation where necessary) before appending voting information (more specific detail about this process is provided at the end of the Methodology section).

The final dataset included a total of N=46,333 records of those registered as Napier City electors in 2022 and/or 2025. The data provided to SIL Research was fully anonymised (no names or identifying details were included) for analysis purposes but otherwise included a range of data fields representing the information provided by electors when registering

for the electoral roll. In this regard, the relevant fields of information included:

- City / location
- Suburb
- Electoral roll membership (General or Māori)
- Ward ID (based on 2025 NCC ward categories)
- Gender
- Māori Descent Indicator (indicating either Māori Descent or Non-Māori)
- Date of birth – broadly represented by five-year ranges
- 2022 Voting status – whether Voted (Y) or Not voted (N)
- 2025 Voting status – whether Voted (Y) or Not voted (N)

Actual voting selections or preferences (i.e. candidates voted for) were not included, as the current research was focused purely on voter participation rather than candidate choices.

Electoral and voting data was complete and correct up to the date it was provided (28 October 2025). However, this excluded special vote data for the 2025 election; as a result, special votes have not been included in the analysis. Despite this, the known number of special votes issued in 2025 (809) represents a very small proportion (3.8%) of all votes returned in 2025, so are unlikely to affect the analysis results, patterns or conclusions otherwise presented.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In light of the available data, the main elector segments analysed in this report were: electoral roll, ward, ethnicity (Māori or non-Māori), age, and gender. Comparisons of 2022 and 2025 voting status were used to calculate changes in voter turnout. As the electoral database represents the total population of all Napier City electors (essentially a city-wide census), statistical confidence levels and margins of error do not apply – all results

provided represent the true and actual results from this population, and all differences between subgroups are actual and 'significant' differences.

In preparing the database for analysis, some additional recoding of available data was necessary, requiring some degree of special consideration or application of assumptions. These considerations are noted below. Other specific notes related to analysis are provided within the report where relevant.

### Ward Analysis

In 2025, Napier's ward structure and boundaries were changed from the definitions used in 2022 and prior elections: with the previous four general wards (Ahuriri, Nelson Park, Onekawa – Tamatea, Taradale) rearranged into three general wards (Ahuriri, Napier Central, Taradale), and a new city-wide Māori ward (Te Whanga) introduced. Historical electoral data for 2022 and earlier elections had therefore been categorised by the previous four general wards. In order to provide comparative historical analysis by ward, the 2025 electoral data was recoded to match (as closely as possible) the four previous ward categories. This was achieved by matching available suburb-level categories to the original ward definitions.

Suburbs are a broad measure of residential location, less precise than other categorisations such as area census units (which were not provided in the available electoral data). Therefore, matching is approximate only, with likely overlap for certain suburbs and associated wards (where suburbs cross over more than one ward). Where suburbs were known to overlap, all electoral data cases from a given suburb were allocated to the ward that the majority of that suburb's properties are located in.

Using this method, a close match in ward distribution was nevertheless achieved between the designated 2022 wards in the electoral data compared to the actual population proportions in each ward based on 2023 Census data (for the adult 18+ year old population) (see table below):

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an almost exact match for both Ahuriri (0% difference) and Onekawa-Tamatea (1% difference), and within a 3% margin for Taradale (2% difference) and Nelson Park (3% difference) – indicating that most cases were assigned correctly. On this basis, the above ward coding scheme was considered a fairly accurate (if still approximate) method of comparing 2025 data with previous electoral ward results. As such, this analysis provides a robust insight into voting patterns across the city, while maintaining the ability to compare differences over time.

*Table 1 Comparison of ward distribution: assigned 2025 electoral data ward areas vs. 2023 Census population data*

Ward area (2022 definitions)	2025 Electoral data Count	2023 Census 18+ pop'n Count	2025 Electoral data %	2023 Census 18+ pop'n %	Difference %
Ahuriri	7906	8535	17.1%	17.0%	0.0%
Nelson Park	11485	13971	24.8%	27.9%	-3.1%
Onekawa	8092	8241	17.5%	16.5%	1.0%
Taradale	18850	19350	40.7%	38.6%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46333</b>	<b>50097</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-</b>

For the purposes of this report, the recoded ward allocations for 2025 data are referred to as 'ward areas' rather than wards per se, to acknowledge that these were not the actual 'ward' categories used in the 2025 election; and that Māori roll electors across the city were voting in the single city-wide Te Whanga Māori ward regardless of their 'area' location.

### Derivation of Voter Age Demographics from Age Ranges

The electoral database did not provide exact dates of birth. Instead, each elector record contained an age eligibility range defined by two dates, representing the earliest and latest possible birth dates consistent with voter eligibility at the time of data extraction. As a result, each voter could fall anywhere within a bounded age range rather than having a single known age.

To assign voters to standard age demographics, a midpoint estimation approach was applied. For each voter, the earliest and latest possible ages implied by the provided date range were calculated. The arithmetic mean of these two values was then used as an estimated age for classification purposes. For example, where a voter's possible age range was between 16 and 21 years, the midpoint age was calculated as 18.5 years.

This estimated age was subsequently used to allocate the voter to a predefined age band. In the example above, the voter was assigned to the 18–24 year age demographic. This approach ensures consistency across records and enables aggregation into meaningful demographic groups while avoiding systematic bias toward either the lower or upper bound of the age range.

The midpoint estimation method assumes a uniform probability of age distribution within each individual range, which is a standard and accepted practice in market research when only bounded data are available. While this method does not capture exact ages, it provides a statistically neutral and transparent basis for demographic classification that is appropriate for high-level analysis and population profiling.

All results derived using this method should be interpreted as indicative rather than precise. However, given the constraints of the available data, this approach represents the most robust and defensible method for allocating voters to age demographics without introducing arbitrary assumptions or distortions.

## OTHER NOTES ON REPORTING

For readability, percentage (%) results quoted in this report have typically been rounded to whole numbers without decimal places. However, calculations derived from the raw results (e.g. differences between percentage results) are based on the original (not rounded) statistical

numeric results and are therefore accurate, even where these calculations are also rounded.

## ADDITIONAL DETAIL ABOUT NCC DATA MATCHING PROCESS

NCC's process for matching electoral enrolment data to voting data required multiple steps. The first step involved matching Electoral Commission records to the records in the final roll held by NCC, and the special vote register for those that voted this way. As the Electoral Commission do not provide a unique identifier that matches the identifier provided in the final roll data, matching was achieved by combining name and address details – most records were matched in this way. Occupation was used as an additional matching variable if two people at the same address shared the same name.

If a match still couldn't be made, additional matching based on name only was required; particularly for 2022 roll data where records had changed address and/or occupation. This step assumed that two records with the same name were the same person, in the absence of other identifying information. In addition, records with both surname and address change between 2022 and 2025 were unable to be linked as the same person.

Once the enrolment matching process was completed, enrolment data was then linked to NCC voting data for records flagged as having returned a vote.

## NAPIER CITY 2025 ENROLMENT FIGURES

Based on the Enrolment Commission data provided for analysis, the following table outlines the number of Napier residents enrolled on the General and Māori rolls (as of 28 October 2025), and the overall enrolment rates by age groups (based on current Statistics NZ estimated eligible population figures). These enrolment counts provide context for the voter turnout results provided throughout this report.

Table 2: Napier City enrolment counts & rates – by age group classification

Age	Estimated Eligible Population*	General Roll#	Maori Roll#	Total Enrolled#	Difference (unenrolled)	% Enrolled
18-24	4,829	2588	702	3290	1,539	68%
25-34	8,309	5669	1186	6855	1,454	83%
35-44	8,261	5852	983	6835	1,426	83%
45-54	8,534	6733	871	7604	930	89%
55-64	8,753	7409	682	8091	662	92%
65+	14,471	13121	537	13658	813	94%
Total	53,157	41372	4961	46333	6,824	87%

\* Source: Statistics NZ, <https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/places/TA/napier-city>

# Source: Elections.nz enrolment data.



# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

- Voter turnout in New Zealand’s local government elections has experienced a long term decline over three decades since the late 1980s, reflecting broader democratic participation challenges. Total turnout nationwide has fallen by around 14 percentage points since 1989, despite stabilising just above 40% since 2007 (Figure 1). Most recently in 2022, national average voter turnout was 40.9%. These results remain substantially lower than parliamentary election turnout: over the same period, parliamentary turnout has declined more modestly, widening the gap between local and national elections to around 36 percentage points. This growing disparity highlights the comparatively weaker engagement New Zealanders have with local government, even though local authorities play a significant and more localised role in shaping community outcomes.
- In an international context, New Zealand’s local election turnout sits midway between comparable countries but aligns closely with other Anglophone systems such as Australia and British nations (Figure 2). Countries with Scandinavian models of local government consistently achieve higher turnout, largely due to stronger local autonomy, broader service responsibilities and more robust funding powers. New Zealand’s comparatively centralised system and large scale councils contribute to lower engagement, a trend mirrored across many OECD countries where local government participation is declining. These historic and structural factors together frame low voter turnout as a persistent national issue rather than a short term or election specific problem.
- In this context, there are pronounced structural and demographic patterns underlying low turnout in New Zealand. Participation varies widely between councils, with rural and smaller councils consistently achieving higher turnout than large metropolitan authorities (Figure 3). This reflects a well-established relationship between council size and engagement, where larger populations and geographically expansive councils increase the perceived distance between voters and elected representatives. Demographically, local election voters are more likely to be older, female, long term residents and Pākehā, with lower participation among Māori, Pasifika and Asian communities. While participation among those aged under 45 years has been gradually increasing, these patterns collectively reinforce concerns about representativeness and equity in local democratic decision making.

Source: Local Government New Zealand’s Electoral Reform Working Group (July 2025). Refreshing our grassroots democracy: Final positions and recommendations.

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Figure 1: New Zealand voter turnout in national & local elections (1989 - 2023)

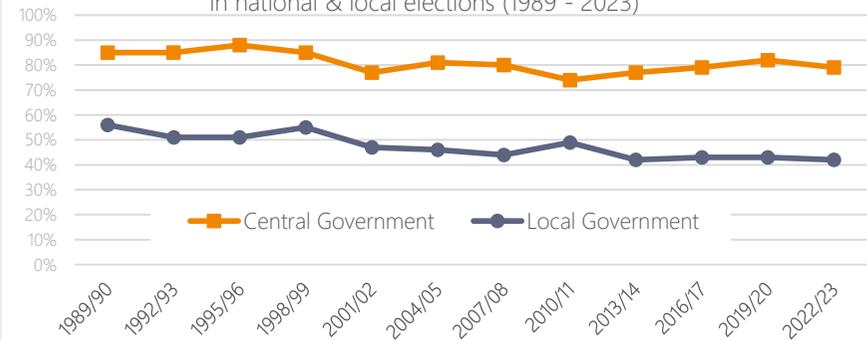


Figure 2: Local government turnout - international comparison

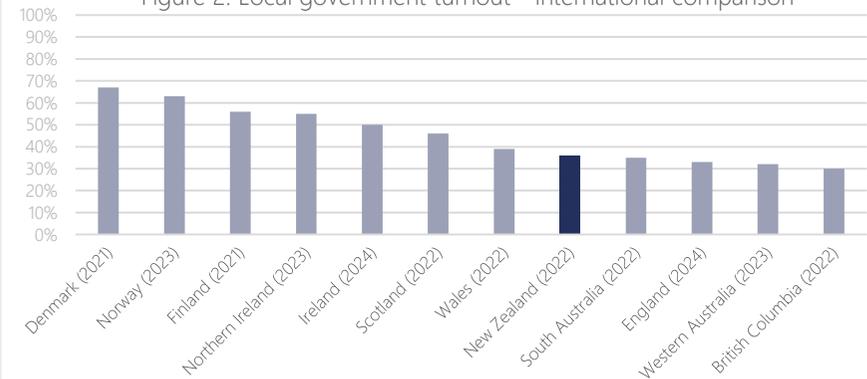
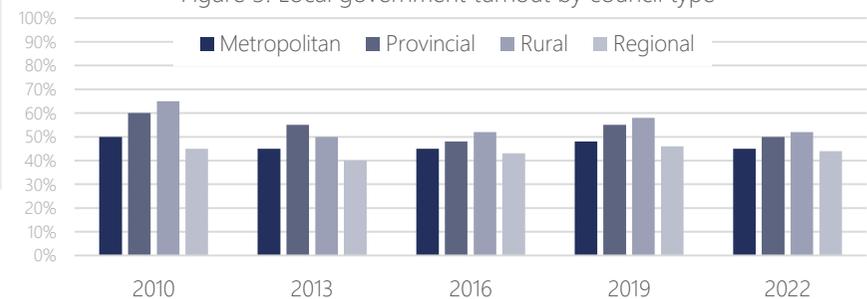


Figure 3: Local government turnout by council type

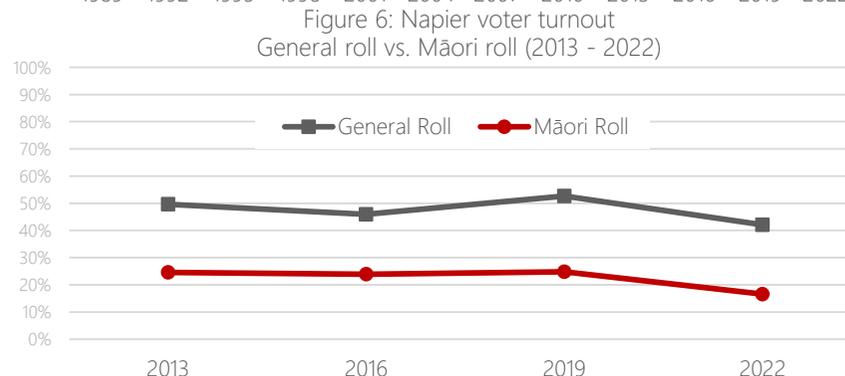
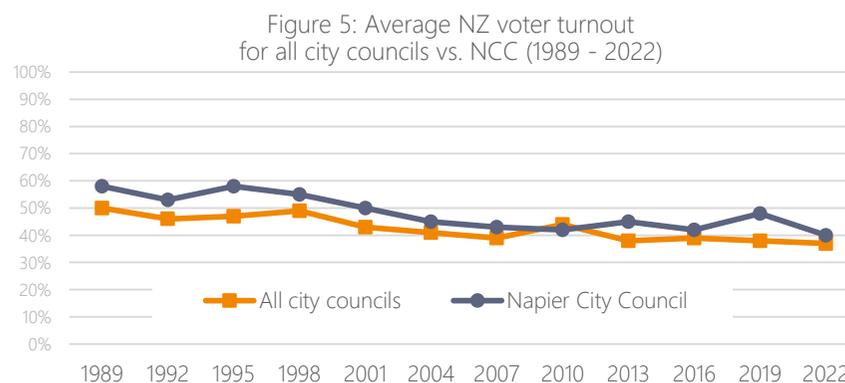
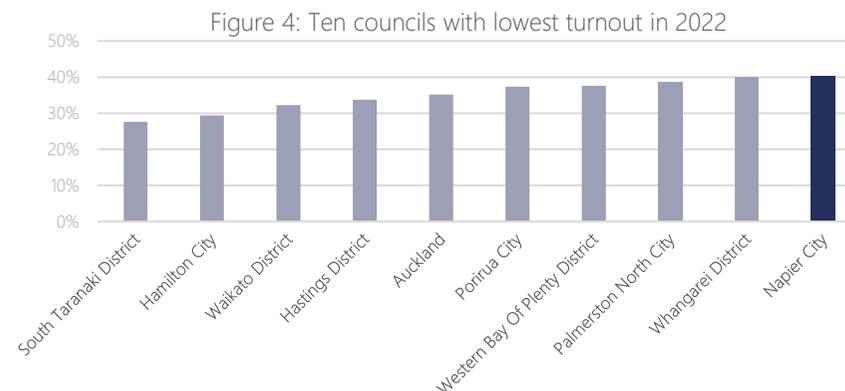




## LOCAL CONTEXT

- Consistent with national patterns, voter turnout for Napier City Council (NCC) elections has also trended down over several decades. This is despite a relatively high enrolment rate (88% in 2025) on par with the national average (87.7%). In fact, in 2022, Napier City was among the ten councils with the lowest turnout (albeit at the higher end of this segment, with 40% turnout) (Figure 4) – above the lowest ranked councils (South Taranaki District and Hamilton City, below 30% turnout), but notably below the highest ranked councils (particularly Kaikoura District, the best performing council in 2022 with 64% turnout).
- When compared against city councils specifically (which typically have lower turnout than provincial or rural councils, as noted above), Napier has performed relatively well historically: on par with or slightly above the combined city average since 1989. However, city councils taken together have seen decline across the board in this period, with Napier no exception. Note that, in 2022 at least, Hastings District Council also saw low turnout similar to NCC (with both councils in the bottom ten nationally), suggesting pervasive issues in voter outcomes across Hawke’s Bay’s larger population centres. In comparison, the region’s smaller councils of Central Hawke’s Bay District (44%) and especially Wairoa District (52%, a top 15 result) saw somewhat higher turnout in 2022 – reflecting the typical differences seen nationally between larger and smaller local authorities.
- As seen across New Zealand generally, Napier also experiences lower voter turnout among Māori relative to non-Māori. Since 2013, the Māori roll has consistently represented about 10% of enrolled electors in Napier, but typically just 5% of all vote returns. As such, the turnout rate for Māori roll voters (around 25%) has historically been about half that of General roll voters (around 50%) (Figure 6). In 2022, turnout was notably lower across both electoral rolls but substantially lower for the Māori roll (17%) compared to the General roll (42%).
- Disparities in voter turnout have also been consistently measured across the city, with lower turnout in certain wards – Nelson Park and Onekawa-Tamatea - reflecting ethnic and age-related differences in suburban composition to some degree. In 2022, turnout was notably lower in Nelson Park (27%) and Onekawa-Tamatea (36%) wards compared to Ahuriri (46%) and Taradale wards (47%) overall (see Figures 7-10 over page). Such differences are even more pronounced among Māori voters, with the lowest turnout in 2022 among Māori roll voters in Nelson Park ward (14%) – despite this ward representing the largest proportion (53%) of enrolled electors on the Māori roll.

Source: Local Government New Zealand (2025). Local elections: Quick facts 2022-25.





# LOCAL CONTEXT: TURNOUT BY WARD

Figure 7: Nelson Park ward voter turnout  
General roll vs. Māori roll (2013 - 2022)

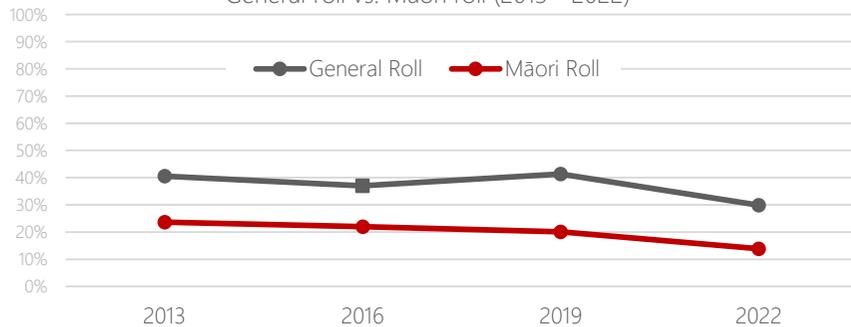


Figure 8: Onekawa-Tamatea ward voter turnout  
General roll vs. Māori roll (2013 - 2022)

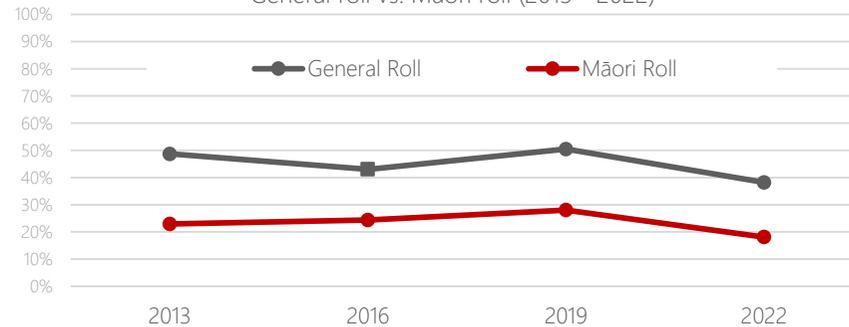


Figure 9: Ahuriri ward voter turnout  
General roll vs. Māori roll (2013 - 2022)

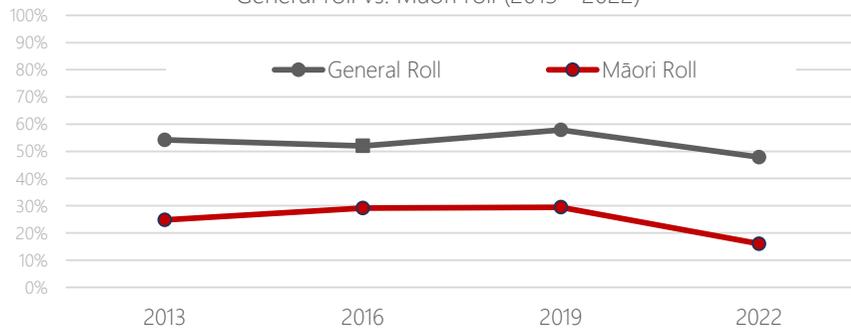
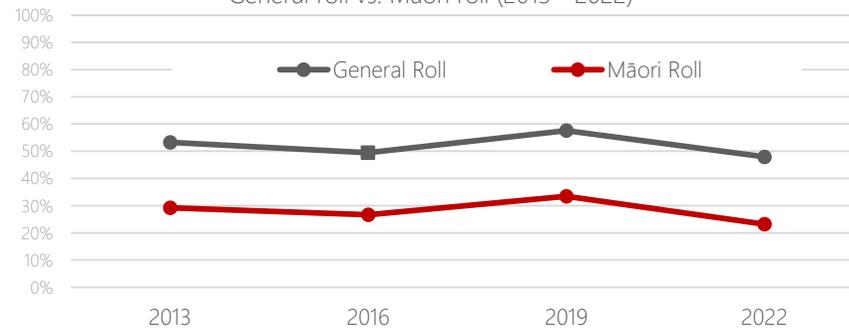
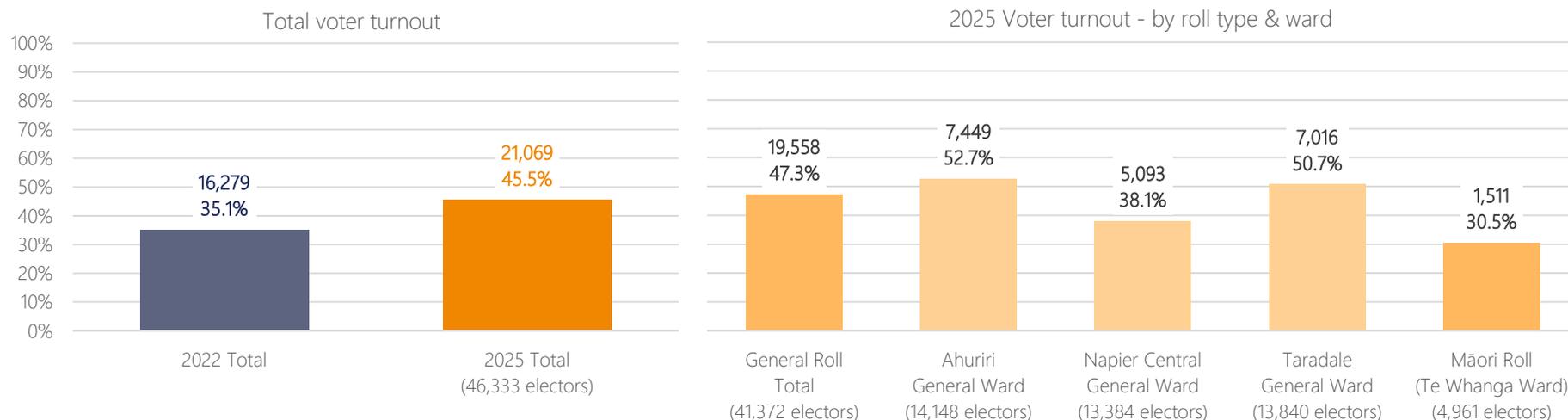


Figure 10: Taradale ward voter turnout  
General roll vs. Māori roll (2013 - 2022)





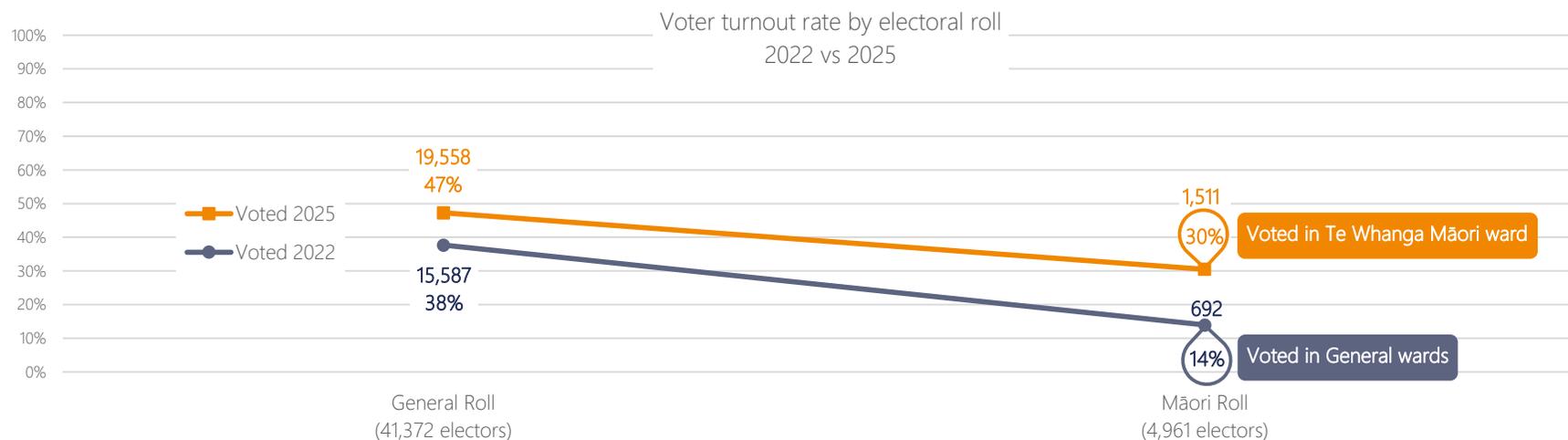
# NAPIER VOTER TURNOUT 2025: OVERALL



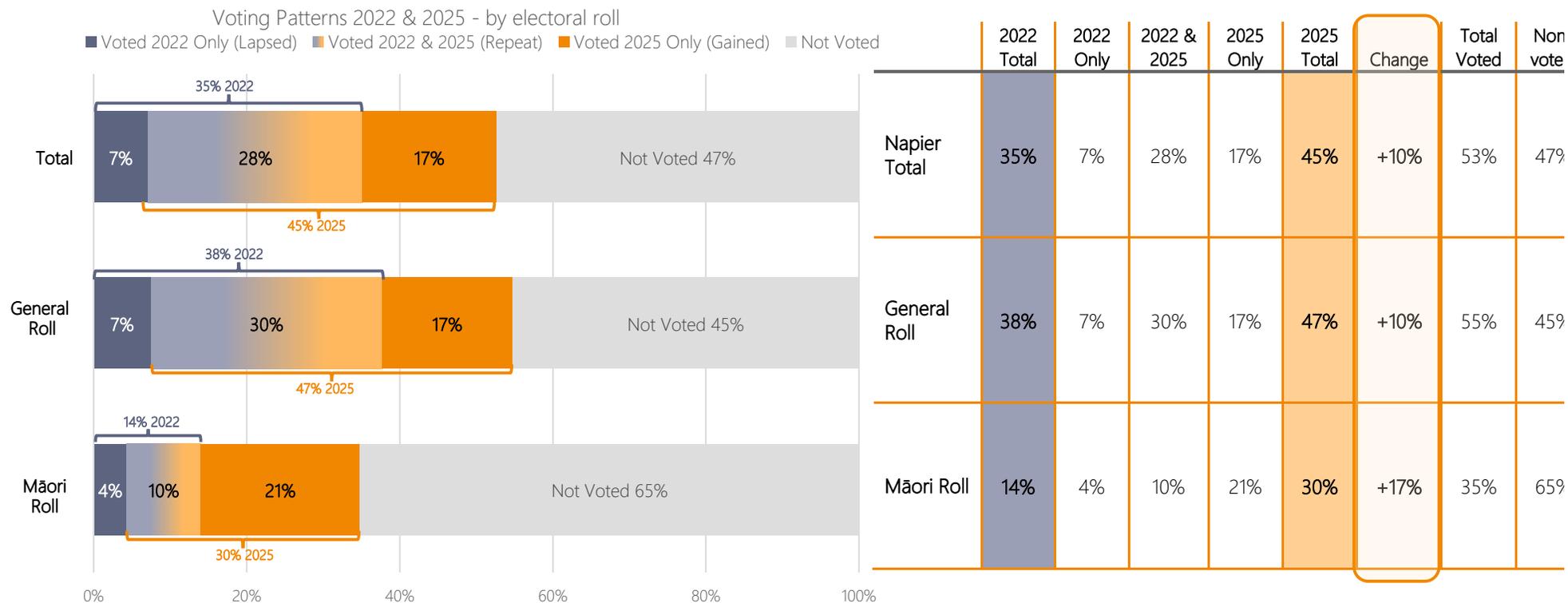
- According to Electoral Commission data, N=21,069 Napier City electors overall voted in 2025. This represents a voter return rate of 45.5% for 2025 (from the total elector dataset of N=46,333).
- From this data, N=16,279 electors voted in 2022, representing a turnout of 35.1%. Therefore, the 2025 turnout represents a +10.3 percentage point increase from 2022.
- As in previous elections, voting participation in 2025 differed by roll type and ward.
- Overall, the General roll turnout rate was 47.3% (combined across the three General wards defined in 2025), compared to the Māori roll turnout of 30.5% (all voting in the newly introduced Te Whanga ward).
- Voter turnout also varied across the General wards, with a higher turnout in the Ahuriri (52.7%) and Taradale (50.7%) wards compared to the Napier Central General ward (38.1%).
- Comparisons between 2022 and 2025 turnout rates based on specific elector segments (electoral rolls, wards, ethnicity, age and gender) are provided in subsequent sections of this report.



## VOTING TURNOUT 2022 & 2025: ELECTORAL ROLL



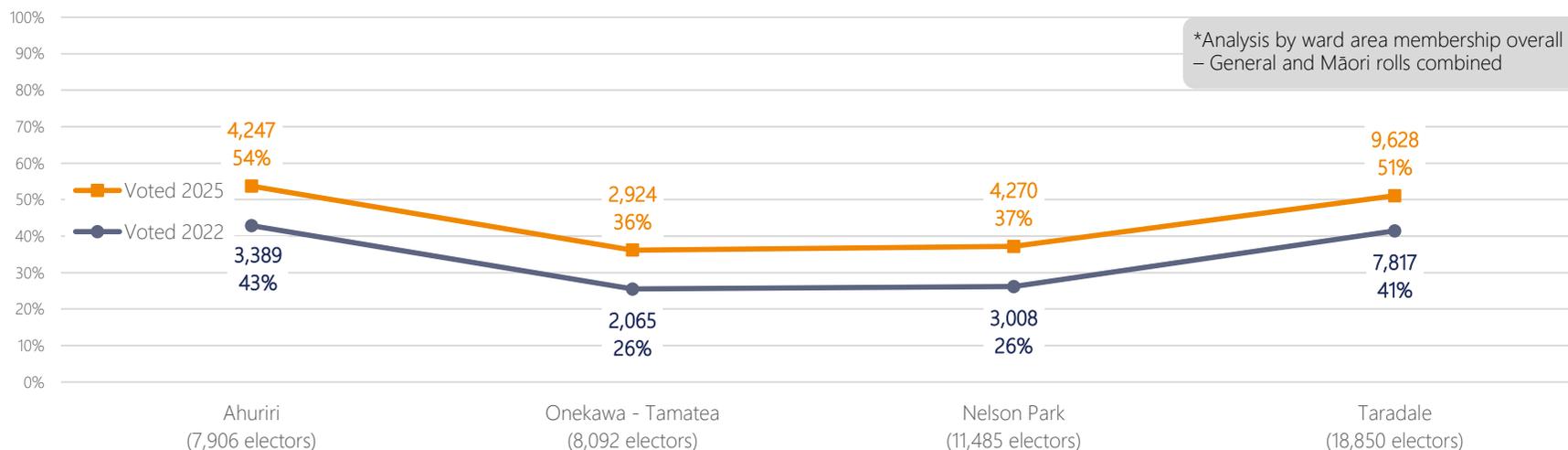
- Compared to 2022, voter turnout increased in 2025 for both General roll and Māori roll electors, despite remaining higher among General roll electors overall.
- Across the General wards, turnout increased from 38% in 2022 to 47% in 2025 – a 9.6 percentage point increase.
- However, an even greater increase in turnout was measured for Māori roll electors: from 14% in 2022 to 30% in 2025 – representing a 16.5 percentage point increase. This effectively narrowed the gap in turnout between General roll and Māori roll electors, from a 23% difference in 2022 to a 17% difference in 2025.
- A notable change for Māori roll electors was the introduction of the new Māori ward (Te Whanga) in 2025. In 2022 (and previous elections), Māori roll electors voted in the same general wards as voters enrolled on the General roll.
- This change likely played a role in increasing voter turnout among Māori, in addition to other interventions undertaken by NCC.
- The chart and table on the following page provide a more detailed breakdown of voting patterns in 2022 and 2025 between electoral rolls, based on the provided Elections.nz data. In particular, this analysis compares the proportions of electors who voted:
  - in 2022 only, but not in 2025; i.e. lapsed voters
  - in both 2022 and 2025; i.e. repeat or retained voters
  - in 2025 only, but not in 2022; i.e. gained voters
  - the net total voters across both elections (i.e. all those voting in 2025 + those only voting in 2022), and non-voters.
- Overall, the proportion of voters ‘gained’ in 2025 is greater than the proportion of those ‘lapsed’ from 2022 – producing the positive increase measured from 2022 to 2025.





# VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: WARD AREAS

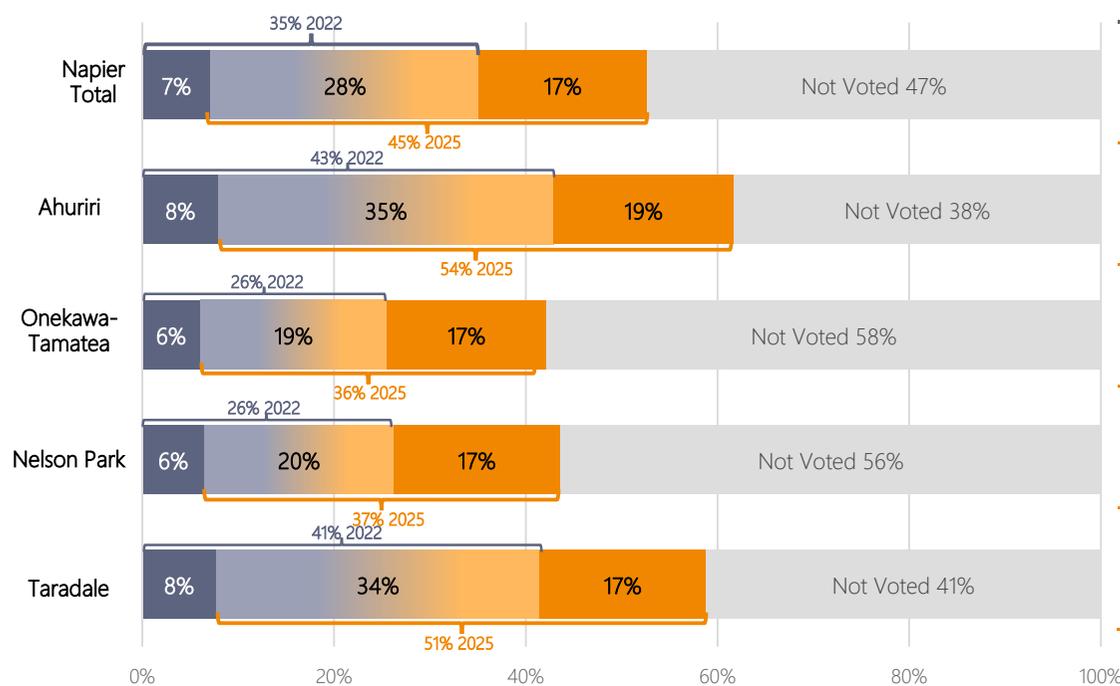
Voter turnout rate by ward area\* (pre-2025 boundaries)  
2022 vs 2025



\*Analysis by ward area membership overall – General and Māori rolls combined

- Given the change to Napier’s ward definitions and boundaries in 2025, comparisons to previous election data for wards was conducted by recoding 2025 electors into the previous (2022 and earlier) ward area categories (see Methodology for further details).
- This analysis revealed that voter turnout increased across the city between 2022 and 2025 – to a consistent degree (about 10% overall) between all four ward areas (regardless of electoral roll membership).
- As a result, the same pattern of differences remained in 2025 as in previous elections: with a higher voter turnout rate in the Ahuriri (54%) and Taradale (51%) areas compared to Onekawa-Tamatea (36%) and Nelson Park (37%).
- Nevertheless, the increases from 2022 to 2025 demonstrated that interventions to encourage greater voter participation were effective across the city, including in areas with higher proportions of traditionally lower-voting population segments.
- Subsequent sections of this report provide analysis of voter turnout by ward area for General roll and Māori roll electors specifically.

Voting Patterns 2022 & 2025 - by ward (pre-2025 boundaries)  
 ■ Voted 2022 Only (Lapsed) ■ Voted 2022 & 2025 (Repeat) ■ Voted 2025 Only (Gained) ■ Not Voted



	2022 Total	2022 Only	2022 & 2025	2025 Only	2025 Total	Change	Total Voted	Non voted
Napier Total	35%	7%	28%	17%	45%	+10%	53%	47%
Ahuriri	43%	8%	35%	19%	54%	+11%	62%	38%
Onekawa - Tamatea	26%	6%	19%	17%	36%	+11%	42%	58%
Nelson Park	26%	6%	20%	17%	37%	+11%	44%	56%
Taradale	41%	8%	34%	17%	51%	+10%	59%	41%

### INTERVENTION FOCUS: CITY-WIDE VOTING BINS

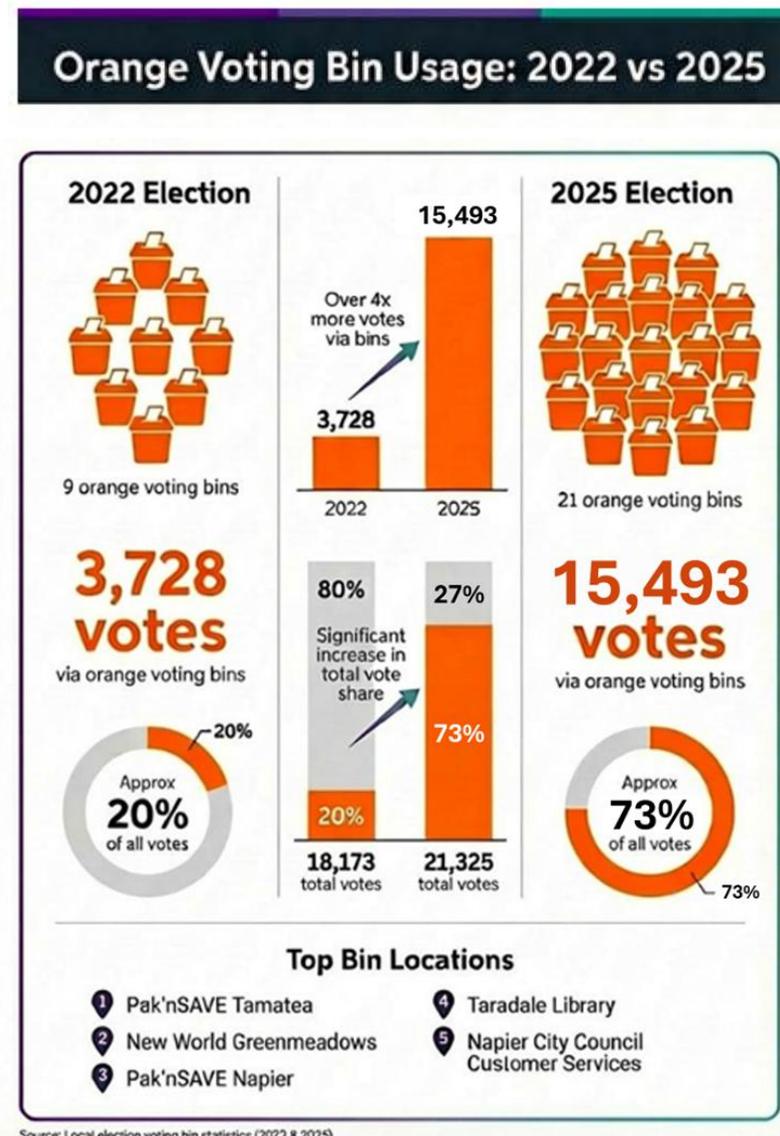
- Napier City Council introduced a range of interventions in 2025 to improve reach into and voter engagement across the Napier community (see Methodology for more details). One significant change was the increase in voting bin distribution around the city. Not only did the number of voting bins increase (more than doubling from 9 in 2022 to 21 in 2025), but also the number of voting forms deposited in bins: from approximately 3,728 in 2022 to 15,493 in 2025 – four-times more than 2022 (see graphic on following page). As a share of all votes received, voting bins also saw an increase from approximately 20% of all votes in 2022 to around 73% of all votes in 2025. Effectively, voting bins became the primary point of voting form returns in 2025.
- Given increased physical presence and marketing support, repeat bin locations (with the exception of the NCC Customer Services bin\*) saw increased usage in 2025 - around 4.2 times more votes received than in 2022 – with many of these remaining among the most popular locations in 2025. However, some other (less central) repeat locations saw even greater increases in usage – particularly EIT Maraenui (around seven-times more votes received) and EIT Taradale campus (eleven-times more usage). These outcomes indicate effective voter engagement in terms of both suburban reach and participation of younger (e.g. student age) demographics.
- In addition, new bin locations introduced in 2025 (62% of all bins in 2025) made a significant contribution to total voting forms received – a total of around 7500 votes, representing almost half (48%) of all bin returns and 1-in-3 (35%) of all votes. The range of new locations indicates an increased spread across the city, particularly into less central suburban areas (e.g. Greenmeadows, Marewa, Onekawa, Ahuriri, Napier South, Pirimai) – including many areas with historically lower turnout (see table on following page).
- Given this activity, the observed increases in turnout across the city in 2025 – particularly in areas with greater Māori and younger adult presence, which also saw relatively greater 2025 turnout – can, at least in part, be attributed to increased voter bin distribution, promotion and usage.
- Subsequent sections of the report examine the changes in voter turnout based on both ethnicity and age more specifically.
- Additional details of voter turnout by specific suburbs is provided in the next section.

\* Note: although usage of the NCC Customer Services voting bin decreased in 2025, this is offset and accounted for by increased usage of more localised (convenient) bin locations across the city in 2025. The NCC Customer Services bin still received 1-in-10 of all votes received from voting bins in 2025, remaining within the top five locations.

Table 3: Voting bin locations - 2022 & 2025 (ranked most-to-least used 2025)\*

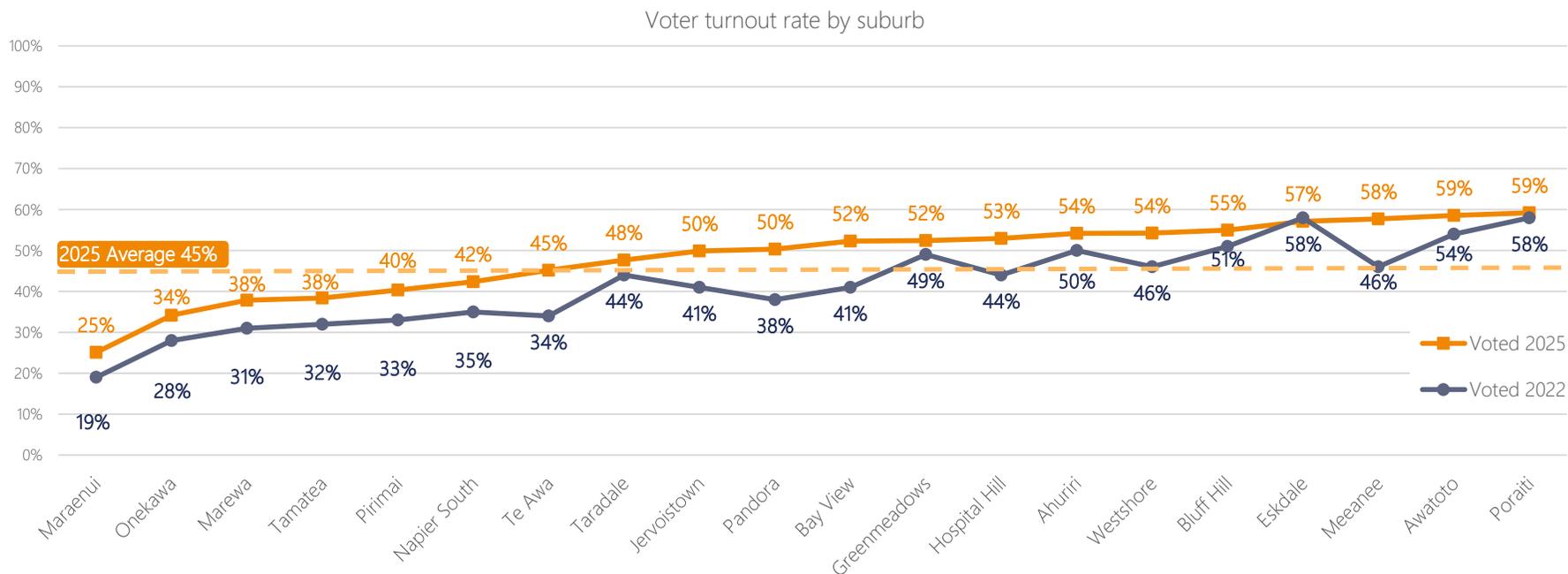
Location		2022	2025	Change (repeat bins)	Relative change
Pak n Save Tamatea	Repeat	644	2,246	+1,602	+3.5
New World Greenmeadows	New		1,914		
Pak n Save Napier	Repeat	349	1,569	+1,220	+4.5
Napier City Customer Services	Repeat	1,969	1,512	-457	-0.2
Taradale Library	Repeat	437	1,404	+967	+3.8
Woolworths on Carlyle	New		721		
Taradale 4 Square	New		634		
KMART	New		624		
New World Onekawa	New		605		
Mitre 10	Repeat	173	593	+420	+3.4
NZ Post Marewa	New		555		
Woolworths Napier	New		521		
Beattie and Forbes Ahuriri	New		473		
HBRC	New		461		
Warehouse	New		387		
Napier Library	Repeat	101	314	+213	+3.1
EIT Taradale Campus	Repeat	26	286	+260	+11.0
Napier Aquatic Centre	New		231		
Pirimai Supermarket	New		204		
EIT Maraenui	Repeat	23	160	+137	+7.0
Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui ā Orutu	New		127		
Te Kupenga Hauora Ahuriri	Discontinued	6	-		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,728</b>	<b>15,493</b>	<b>+11,813</b>	<b>+4.2</b>

\*Source: Elections.nz. Includes available data from collections up to 11 October 2025 (final day of election period).





# VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: SUBURB

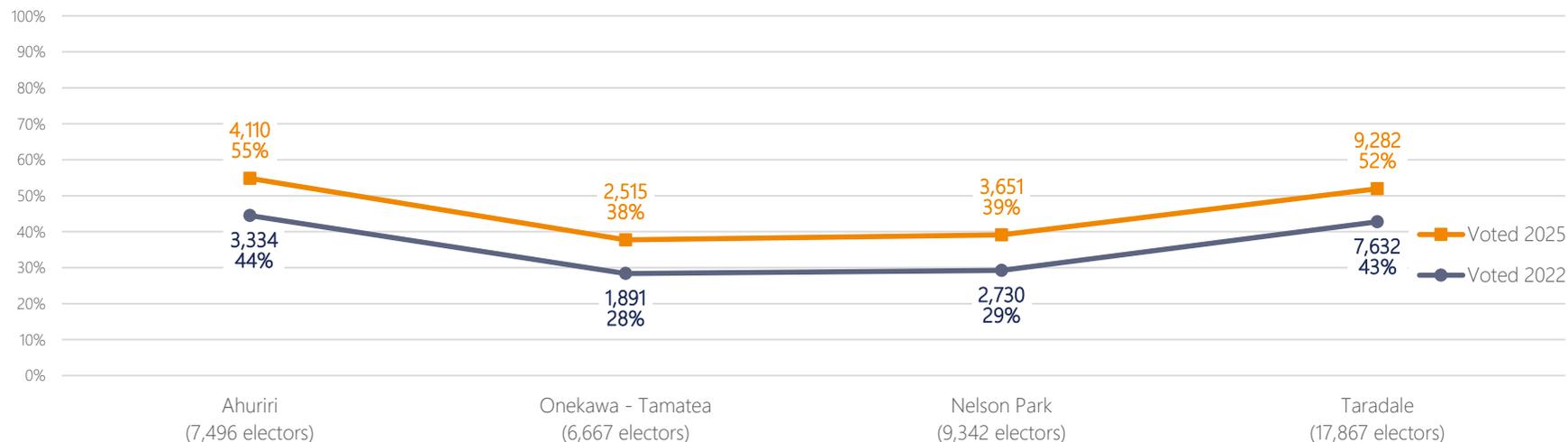


- Voter turnout varies widely across suburbs and reflects broader ward area patterns in participation, while showing clear and consistent uplift compared to 2022. Suburbs within Ahuriri and Taradale generally recorded the highest turnout rates in both elections, with many reaching the high 50 percent range in 2025. By contrast, suburbs in Napier Central continued to have lower overall turnout (40% or below), particularly in Maraenui, Onekawa, Marewa, Tamatea and Pirimai. This reinforces the established pattern that turnout remains higher in more affluent or stable suburbs and lower in areas with higher deprivation and younger populations. However, the 2025 results also demonstrate that lower turnout suburbs are not static, and meaningful gains are possible when barriers are addressed.
- Across almost all suburbs, turnout increased markedly between 2022 and 2025. Notably, some of the largest proportional increases occurred in suburbs that had previously recorded the lowest turnout. For example, suburbs within the Napier Central area show consistent relative growth, even though their absolute turnout levels remain below the city average. In higher turnout suburbs such as Greenmeadows, Ahuriri, Bluff Hill, Awatoto and Poraiti, increases were also evident but tended to be more modest in relative terms, reflecting a ceiling effect where participation was already comparatively high. This pattern indicates that the 2025 election did not simply mobilise already engaged voters, but succeeded in activating additional participation in historically under-engaged neighbourhoods.

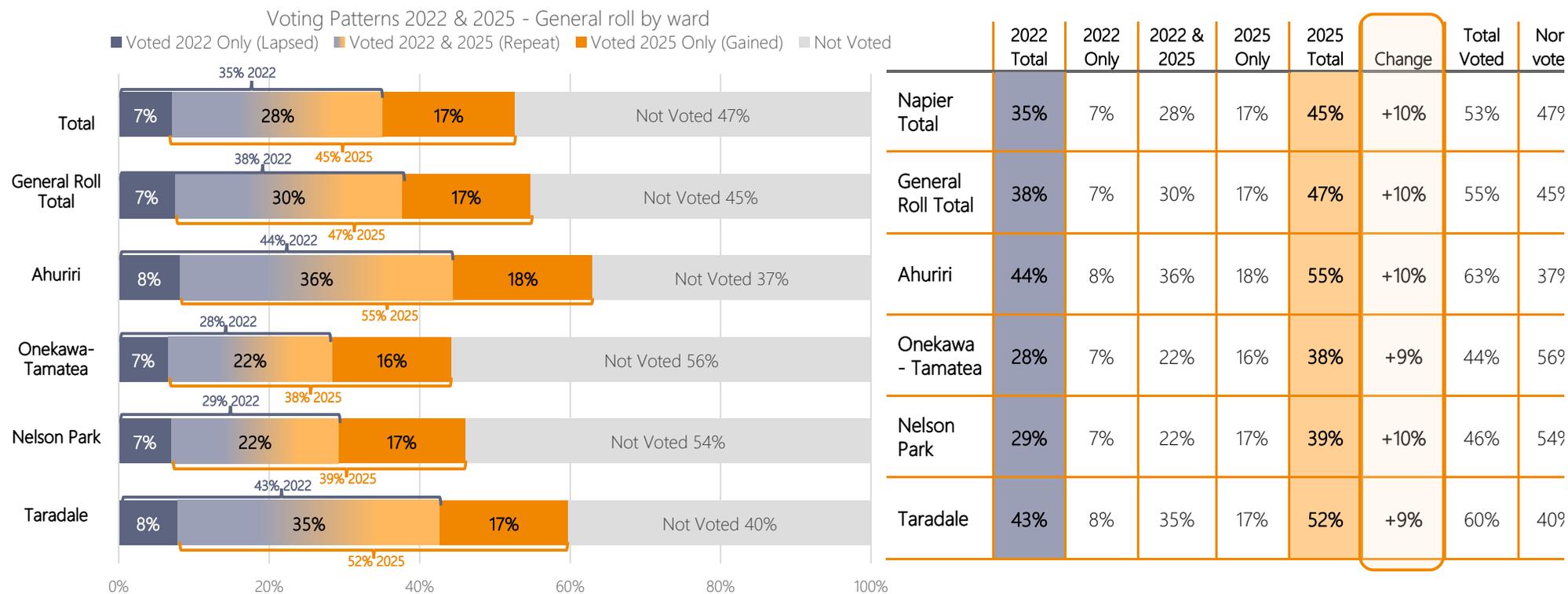


# VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: GENERAL ROLL x WARD

Voter turnout rate by General roll ward  
2022 vs 2025



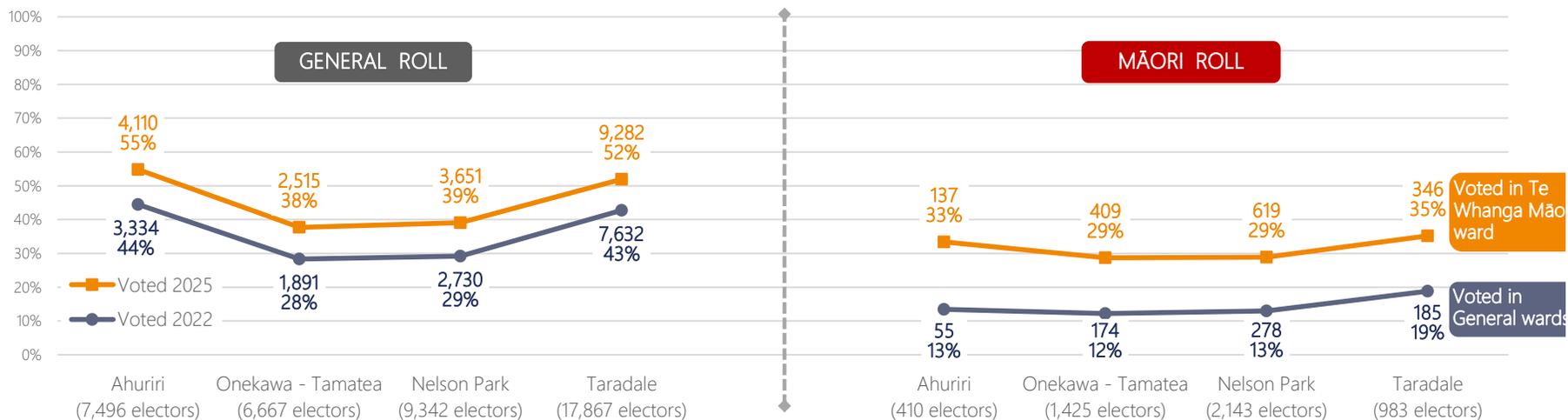
- The increase in voter turnout across ward areas for General roll electors closely matched Napier’s overall results – given that the vast majority (89%) of Napier electors are registered on the General roll.
- As such, similar increases in turnout (around 10%) were measured across all four ward areas for General roll electors in 2025.
- As shown on the following page, each ward area had a similar proportional increase in General roll voters gained in 2025 relative to those lapsed from 2022 – accounting for the overall increases in turnout.



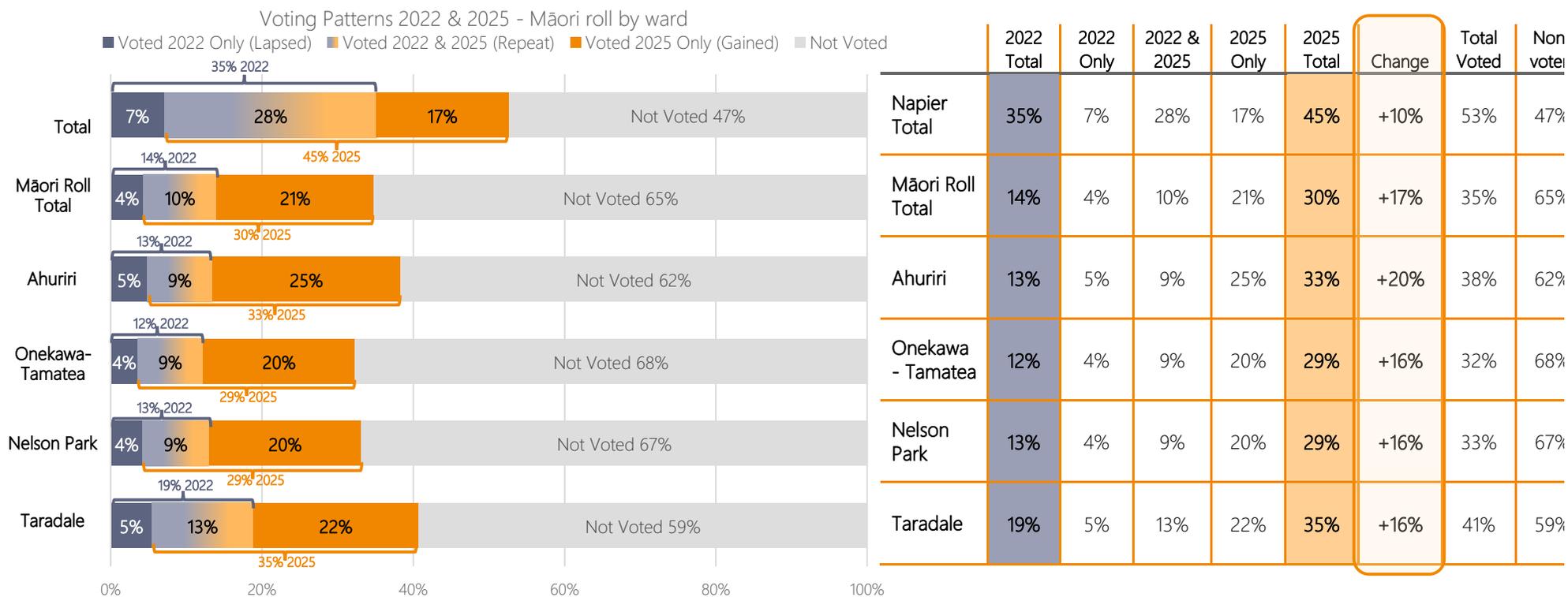


# VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: MĀORI ROLL x WARD

Voter turnout rate by General roll & Maori roll wards  
2022 vs 2025



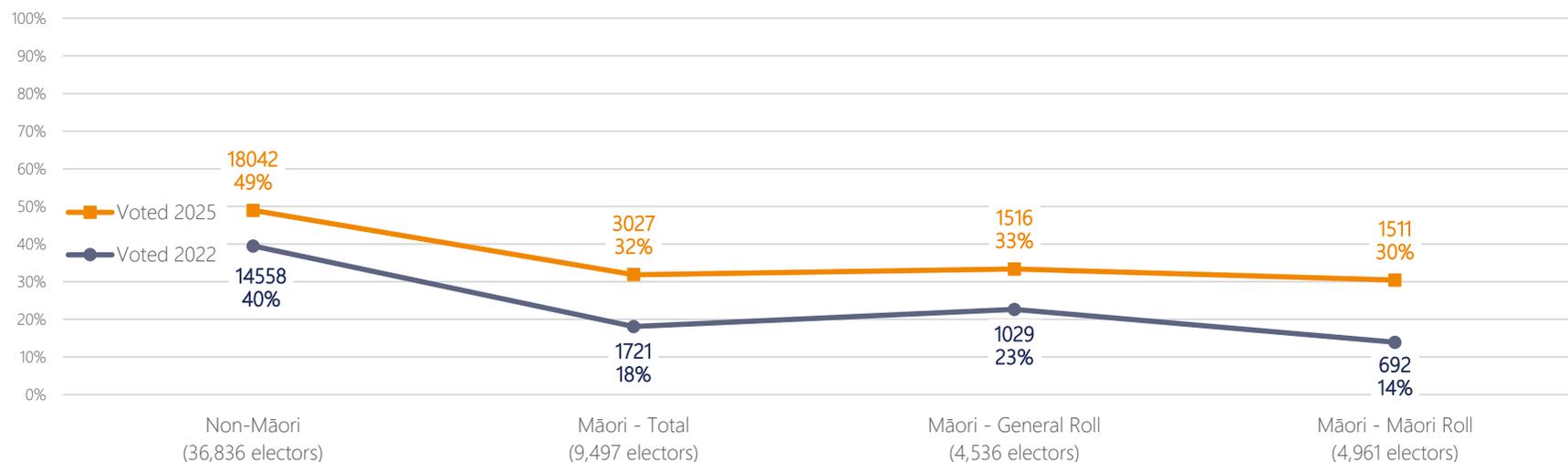
- Compared to General roll electors, electors on the Māori roll exhibited an even greater increase in voter turnout in 2025 (17% overall). This increase was seen across all four areas of the city (although all Māori roll electors in 2025 were voting in the Te Whanga Māori ward, regardless of area location). The greatest increase was measured in Ahuriri: +20 percentage point increase (compared to a +10% increase among General roll voters in Ahuriri).
- A consistent increase in turnout (+16 percentage points) was measured for Māori roll voters across Onekawa-Tamatea, Nelson Park and Taradale areas in 2025.
- The difference in voter turnout across areas was also less pronounced for Māori roll voters than for those on the General roll. For Māori roll voters in 2025, the gap between areas with the lowest and highest turnouts (between 29% in Onekawa-Tamatea and 35% in Taradale) was a 6% difference. In contrast, for General roll voters the gap between areas with the lowest and highest turnouts (between 38% in Onekawa-Tamatea and 55% in Ahuriri) was a 17% difference. This suggests more consistent voting participation across the city for Māori roll voters (although at a lower level overall than for General roll voters).



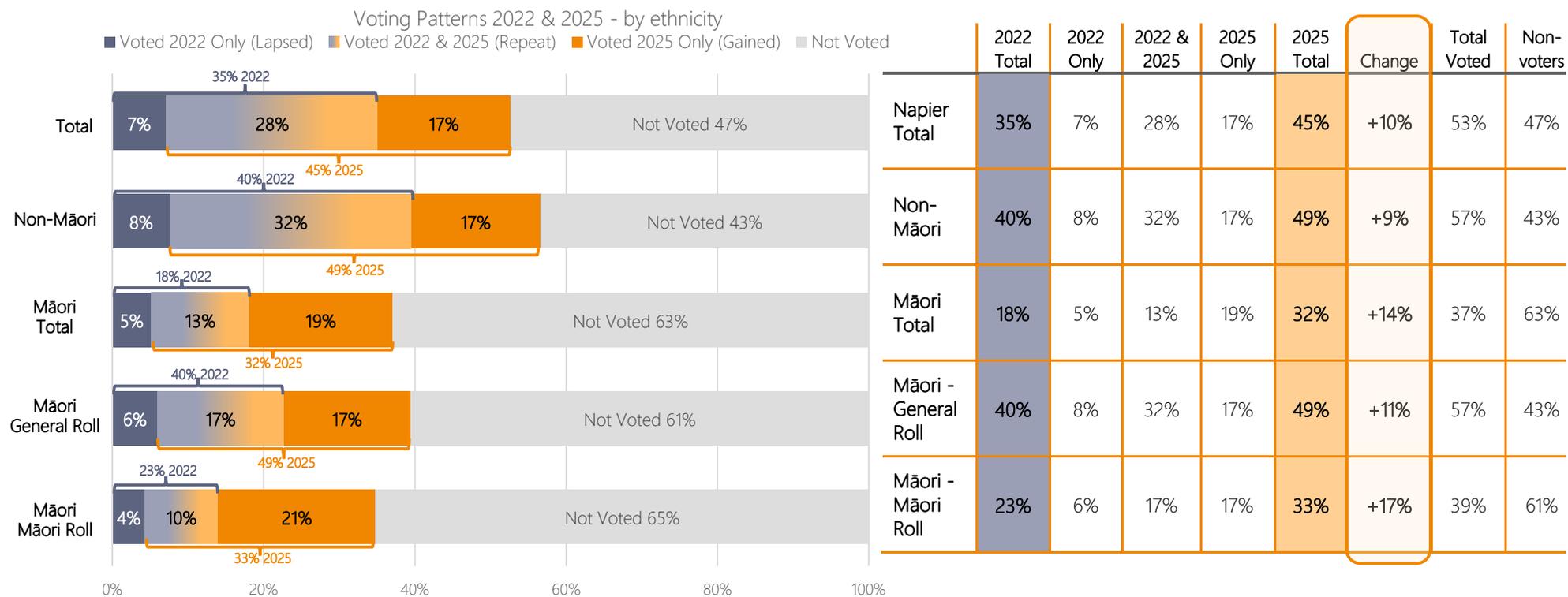


## VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: MAORI & NON-MAORI

Voter turnout rate by ethnicity  
2022 vs 2025



- While similar to the overall analysis by General and Māori rolls, analysis by ethnicity (Māori and non-Māori as defined by the Maori Descent Indicator in Elections.nz data) also allows comparison of voter turnout for Māori on both the General and Māori rolls.
- Overall, voter participation remained higher for non-Māori (49%) than Māori (32%) in 2025. However, a greater increase in turnout was measured for Māori overall (a +14 percentage point increase from 18% in 2022 to 32% in 2025) than for non-Māori (a +9 percentage point increase from 40% in 2022 to 49% in 2025).
- In addition, a notable difference was also found between Māori in particular, based on electoral roll membership – with a greater increase in turnout for those on the Māori roll than the General roll.
- Specifically, for Māori on the General roll, the increase in voter turnout was similar to that for non-Māori (+9%) – with a +11 percentage point increase from 23% in 2022 to 33% in 2025. In contrast, for Māori on the Māori roll, there was a substantially greater +17 percentage point increase from 14% in 2022 to 30% in 2025).
- As a result, the gap previously measured between Māori electors on the two rolls in 2022 was effectively narrowed, with similar turnout rates in 2025 (33% on the General roll, 30% on the Māori roll). This indicates that Council interventions and other changes in 2025 (i.e. introduction of the Te Whanga Māori ward, the binding poll on the Māori ward) had a greater (more positive) influence for Māori on the Māori roll, lifting their participation to a similar level as Māori on the General roll.



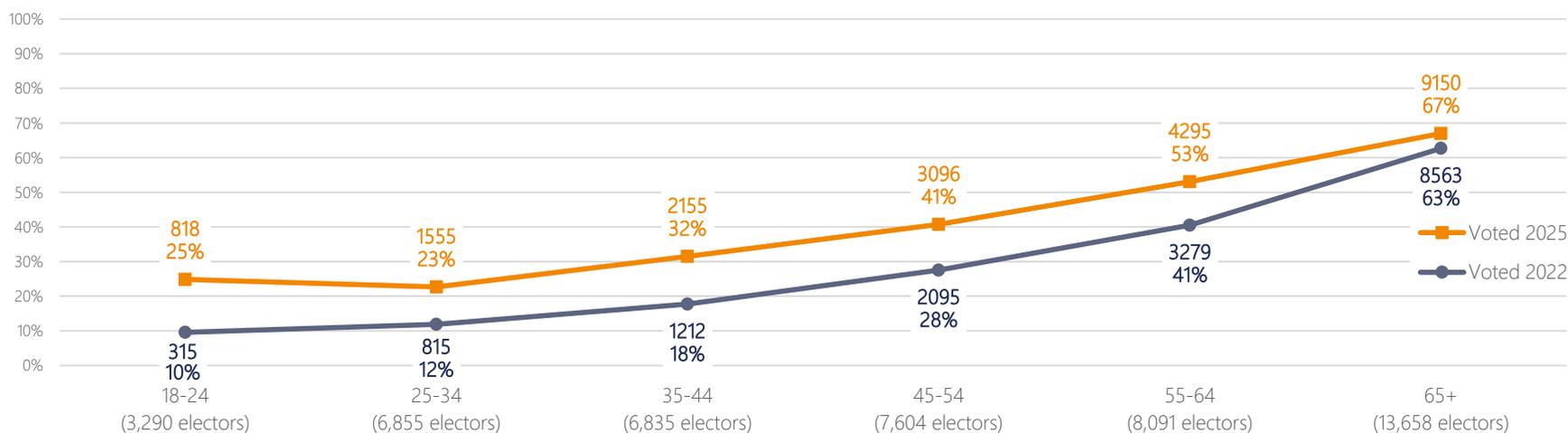
### INTERVENTION FOCUS: ENGAGEMENT WITH MĀORI

- In addition to the introduction of Napier's new Māori ward and the binding poll on the Māori ward, NCC specifically sought to increase voter engagement among Māori in 2025 by leveraging existing relationships and implementing multiple other interventions targeted at Māori involvement specifically.
- The need for specific targeting of Māori was informed to some extent by previous research conducted by SIL Research (April 2025) identifying barriers to voter participation among Māori (especially Māori youth): including lack of information and feeling unrepresented by candidates, as well as avoidable administrative or practical barriers such as missing voting papers, not knowing how to vote, or missing the voting deadline. This research highlighted the need for greater engagement through enhanced communication, fostering whanau and community (marae / iwi) influence, and building relationships between Council and community representatives.
- In this context, Napier City Council sought early engagement with Ngā mānukanuka o te iwi (NMOTI) and Māori community organisations to support increased Māori participation in the 2025 local authority election by sharing clear, practical information about election processes, rules and key dates.
- Engagement activities included multiple hui to inform election planning, direct outreach by senior leadership and officers, and collaboration with Māori organisations to support enrolment and election communications. While some initiatives, such as hosting an orange bin and sharing election information through partner networks, were taken up, others including mobile voting and a dedicated Māori candidate information session were not. Feedback from hui highlighted the need for better understanding of barriers to Māori participation, leading Council to commission additional targeted research through SIL Research to inform future engagement approaches.
- Additional strategies were employed to engage younger Māori in enrolment and voting specifically, including outreach visits with Napier's high schools, events at EIT (including during Orientation) for older students, and communications via youth-relevant social media platforms.
- As noted above, orange voting bins were also placed at repeat and new locations with higher Māori population (e.g. Marewa, Maraenui, Onekawa, Pirimai, Tamatea) to ensure more localised and visible voting opportunities for suburban residents.
- Taken together, these initiatives appear to have contributed to some degree in the successful increase in voter turnout in 2025 – particularly given the relatively higher engagement measured for Māori generally, especially those on the Māori roll, and for Māori youth (see next section for further information on age-related voting outcomes).

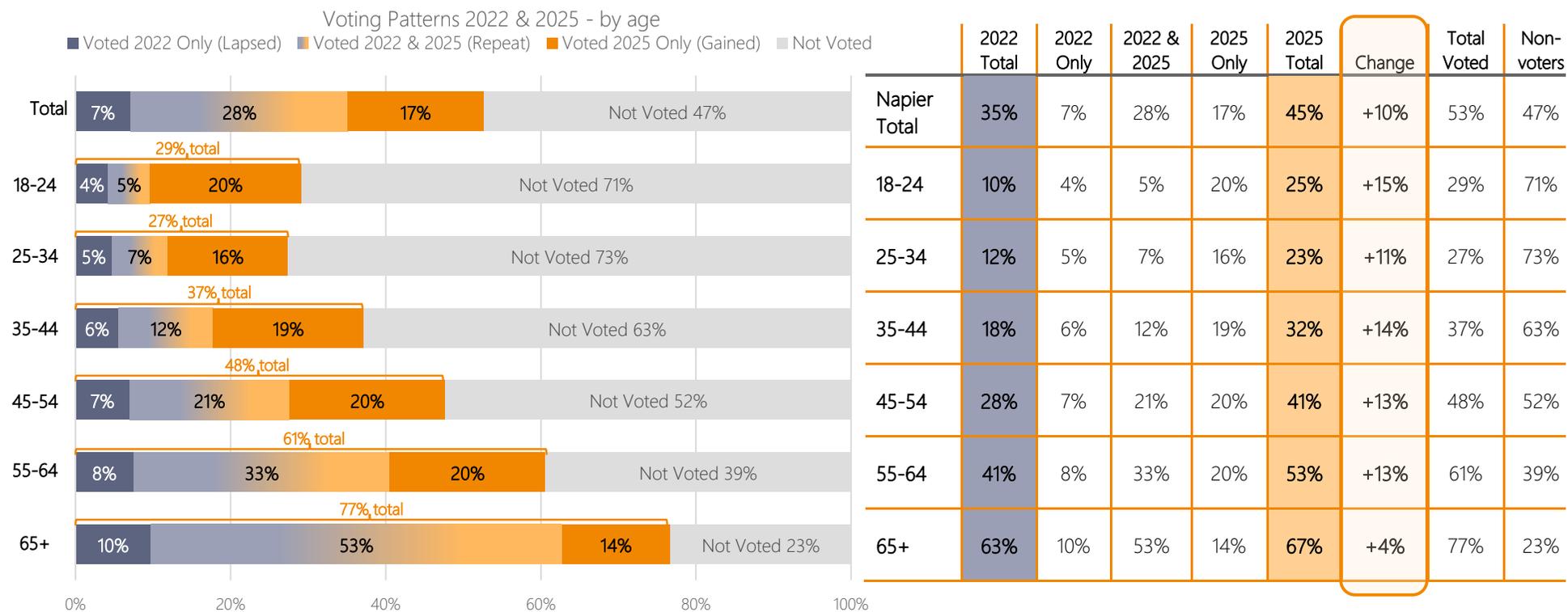


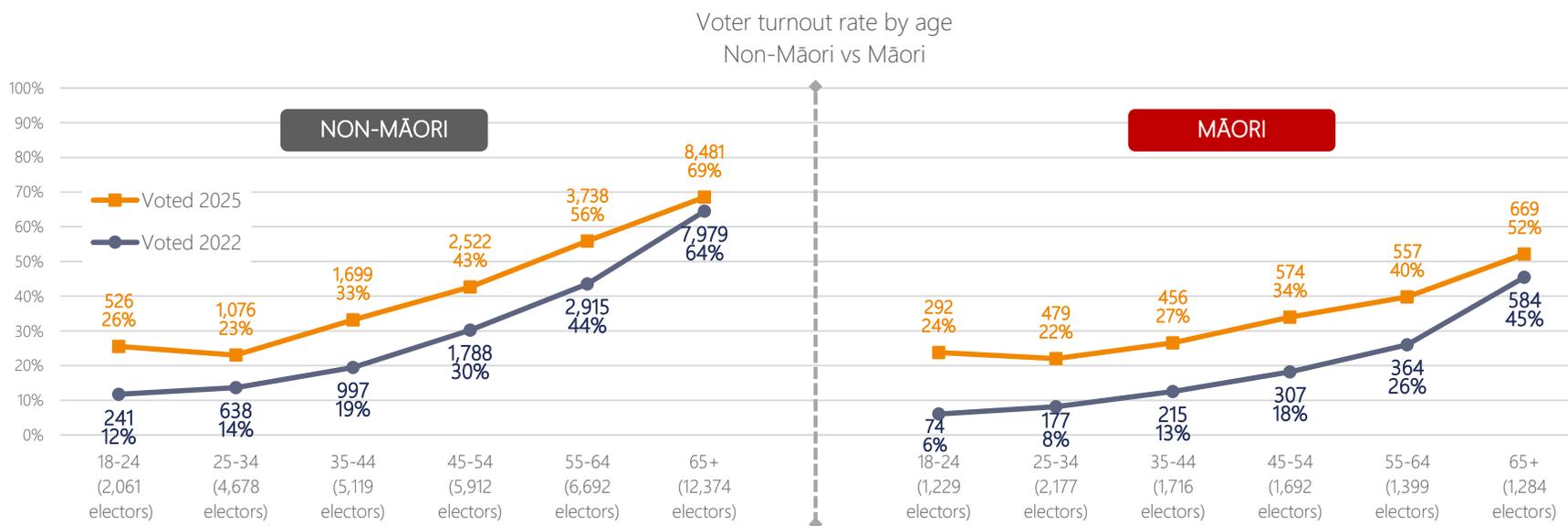
## VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: AGE

Voter turnout rate by age



- Traditionally, there has been a large gap in terms of age for both electoral enrolment and voter participation – with younger adults substantially less likely to engage with local government activity.
- This pattern was clearly reflected in NCC elections in both 2022 and 2025 – with particularly low turnout for those aged under 35 years.
- Despite these typical patterns, there was still a positive increase in turnout from 2022 to 2025 across the age range – with a greater increase for younger (especially 18-24) than older (65+) electors.
- While increased turnout was measured across the age range, the greatest improvement was seen in the youngest 18-24 year old segment: a +15 percentage point increase from 10% in 2022 to 25% in 2025. In fact, this placed turnout for 18-24s slightly ahead of that for the next oldest group of 25-34 year olds (23% in 2025, albeit also an increase from 2022).
- In contrast, relatively little change was measured among the oldest (although still most engaged) electors in the 65+ year group – with a +4 percentage point increase from 63% in 2022 to 67% in 2025.
- Nevertheless, analysis demonstrates that interventions in 2025 clearly had a positive impact on voter participation across the age span.





- Age differences are even more pronounced when comparing Māori and non-Māori. The typical pattern of lower voter turnout among Māori is again present across age groups in both 2022 and 2025. However, greater increases in turnout are apparent for Māori than for non-Māori – particularly among the youngest voters aged 18-24.
- Among non-Māori aged 18-24 there was a positive +14 percentage point increase from 12% in 2022 to 26% in 2025. Among Māori aged 18-24 there was a more positive +18 percentage point increase from the low of 6% in 2022 to 24% in 2025.
- A similar improvement in turnout was also measured for Māori aged 25-34 (+14 percentage points) over non-Māori aged 25-34 (+9 percentage points). As a result, 2025 turnout for younger Māori aged both 18-24 and 25-34 (24% and 22%, respectively) was on par with their non-Māori age group counterparts (26% and 23%, respectively) – unlike the continued ethnic-based disparities seen across older age groups.
- Also, the gap in turnout between youngest and oldest Māori has narrowed considerably – from a 39% gap in 2022 (6% 18-24 to 45% 65+) down to a 28% gap in 2025 (24% 18-24 to 52% 65+). In contrast, a greater gap (of 43%) still remains between youngest and oldest non-Māori in 2025 (26% 18-24 to 69% 65+).
- A clear need remains for further improved voter participation among Māori (relative to non-Māori). However, current interventions in 2025 have proven effective in lifting engagement to a measurable extent among Māori generally, with even greater efficacy among the traditionally least-engaged younger age segments.

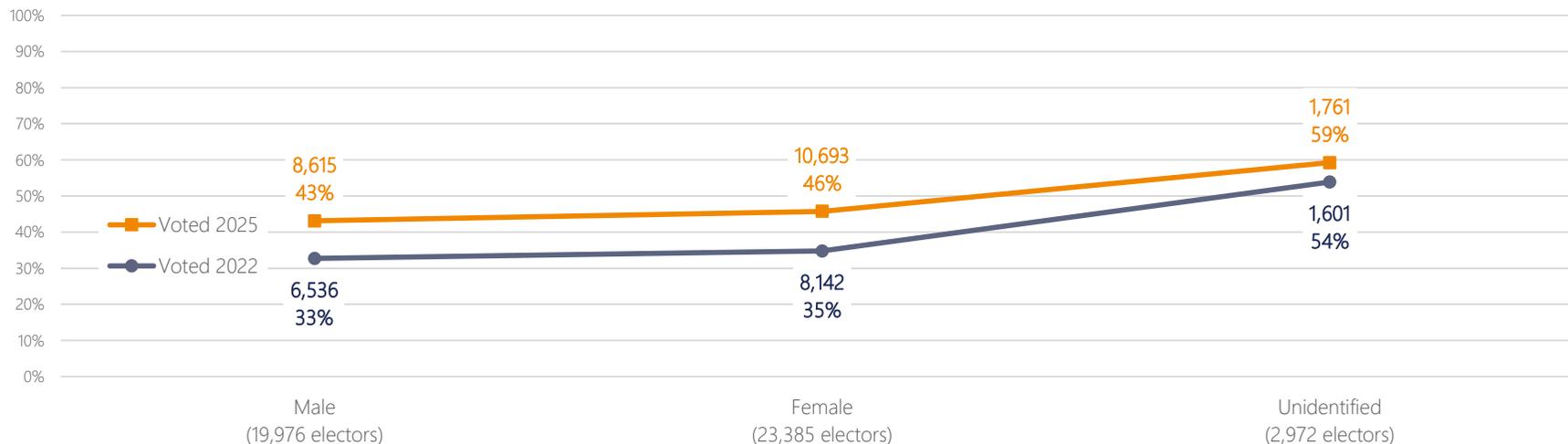
**INTERVENTION FOCUS: ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH**

- As a result of historical enrolment/voting patterns and previous research conducted by SIL Research, NCC sought to increase voter engagement among youth specifically in 2025.
- In addition to the initiatives implemented across the Napier community generally (including targeted orange voting bin placement, enhanced communications and promotion, engagement with Māori stakeholders), additional strategies were employed to engage youth participation in enrolment and voting specifically. These included outreach visits with Napier's high schools, events at EIT (including during Orientation) for older students, and communications via youth-relevant social media platforms. A pilot of a youth-focused social media campaign called YeahNahHB was also used via Instagram and TikTok.
- These initiatives seem to have contributed at least in part to the increase in youth voter turnout measured in 2025 – given the lift in participation among younger residents overall, especially the typically lowest-voting 18-24 year olds; and among Māori youth most notably.

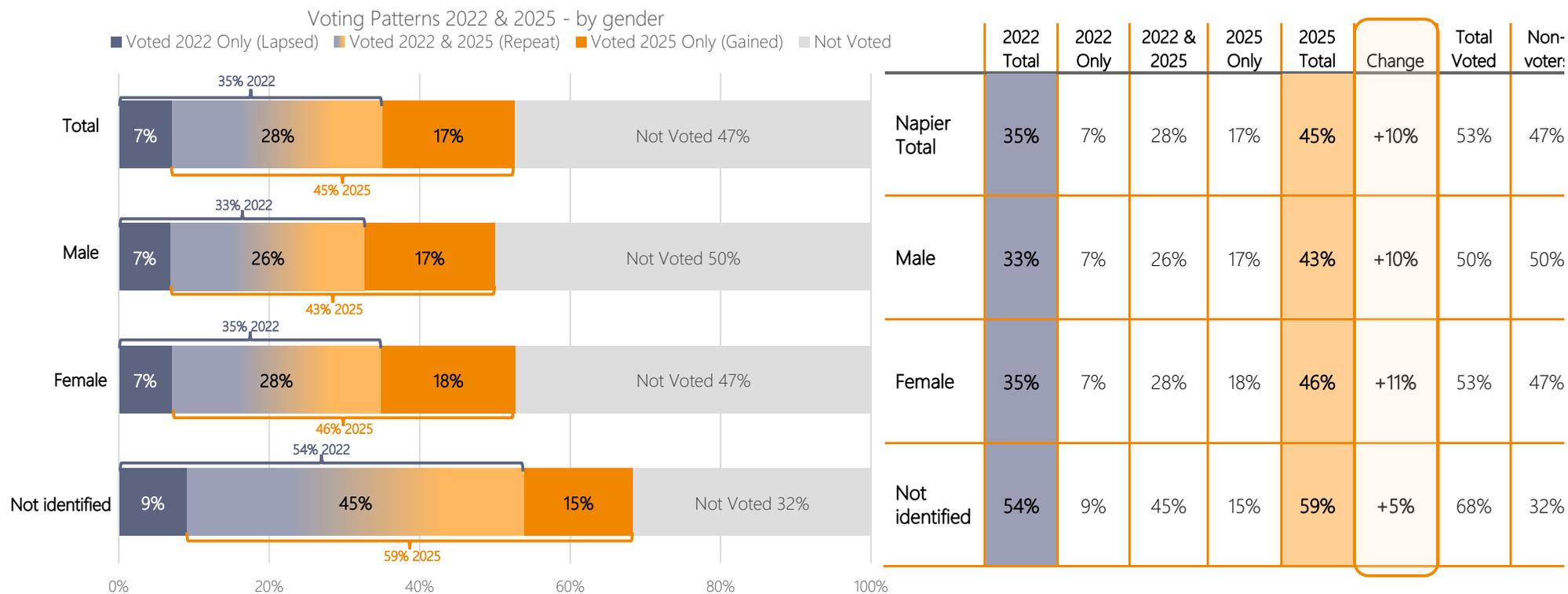


# VOTING PATTERNS 2022 & 2025: GENDER

Voter turnout rate by gender  
2022 vs 2025



- In contrast to other demographic categories, there is very little difference in voter turnout between male and female electors.
- Nevertheless, both genders saw similarly-sized increases in turnout between 2022 and 2025.
- Males exhibited a positive +10 percentage point increase from 33% in 2022 to 43% in 2025. Similarly, females exhibited a positive +11 percentage point increase from 35% in 2022 to 46% in 2025. Results for both genders closely matched the Napier City outcomes for the total population.
- While those with unidentified gender represent a minority of the Napier electorate (N=2972, or 6% of all electors in 2025), voter turnout is notably higher among this segment of the community.
- However, any increase in turnout was more modest for these electors: a +5 percentage point increase from 54% in 2022 to 59% in 2025.





2025 Council Elections

Napier City Candidate  
demographics

| SIL Research

December 2025

Contact: Dr Virgil Troy 06 834 1996 or [virgiltroy@silresearch.co.nz](mailto:virgiltroy@silresearch.co.nz)

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## CORE INSIGHT

*"2025 Napier City Council election results indicate broadly even candidate election success across gender, age and ethnicity, with ward-level differences driven by candidate numbers, a notable absence of candidates under 35, and only modest departures from population representation, particularly for Māori candidates (partly supported by inclusion of the Māori ward)."*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of 2025 Napier City Council election candidates, including comparisons between candidates and the Napier adult population (aged 18 years and older).

The presented results were obtained from candidates' self-reported data. All candidates who stood for election were invited to provide their demographic details, with almost all (20 out of 22 candidates, or 90%) submitting survey responses. The voluntary nature of the survey, together with non-response from two candidates and some missing data (unanswered questions) from responding candidates, means the percentages reported are an estimate of candidate characteristics only. Where possible, missing data has been inferred from available information (e.g. for calculating results based on total elected and unelected candidates), while maintaining respondent anonymity. Nevertheless, the results presented are an accurate, robust and almost-complete record of the entire population of 2025 election candidates.

Based on the available information, the main findings of the 2025 Napier City Council election candidate survey are as follows:

- **A total of 22 candidates stood for election in the 2025 NCC local elections. As such, the 12 elected candidates (the mayor and 11 councillors) represented 55% of all candidates (the 'overall elected' rate).**
- **Election rates differed across each of the city's wards**, given both the number of candidates nominated and the allocated number of councillor seats available: higher in Napier Central (80%) and Taradale (75%) wards, but lower in Ahuriri ward (30%) given the greater number of candidates in this ward.
- In terms of gender, both **the number of candidates and elected members were similar between females and males**. The five elected female candidates represented half (50%) of all 10 female candidates. Similarly, the seven elected male candidates represented just over half (58%) of all 12 male candidates. Compared to Napier's adult population, female candidates and elected females were slightly under-represented, while male candidates and elected males were slightly over-represented. However, candidate and elected rates for both males and females were consistent with trends over the previous five elections, showing increased (and almost equal) representation for females over time.
- In terms of age, **both the number of candidates and elected members were similar between 'younger' (35-54 year old) and 'older' (55 years or older) age groups** (no candidates in 2025 were aged under 35). As such, the five elected 'younger' candidates represented half (50%) of all 10 candidates aged 35-54. Similarly, the seven elected 'older' candidates represented just over half (58%) of all 12 candidates aged 55+. Given the lack of candidates aged 18-34 years, the proportions of both 35-54 and 55+ year old candidates and elected members were slightly over-represented compared to Napier's population of adults in these age categories.

2025 NAPIER CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS CANDIDATE DEMOGRAPHICS - SIL RESEARCH | 4



- In terms of ethnicity (asked on a multiple response basis), **the number of NZ European candidates (N=15) was much greater (twice as many) as for Māori (N=7) and 'other' (N=6) candidates. Nevertheless, the election rates were similar for both NZ European (60%) and Māori (57%) candidates** – just above the overall rate of 55%. However, compared to Napier's ethnic group populations, NZ European candidates and elected members were slightly under-represented, while Māori candidates and elected members were slightly over-represented. These proportions were affected by the low number of Māori candidates and elected members, and some missing respondent data limiting ethnicity classification, so are indicative only.
- Notably, two of the four elected Māori members were voted in through the new Te Whanga Māori ward - established in 2025 but subsequently disestablished for the 2028 and 2031 elections following a binding referendum conducted during 2025 elections.
- Candidate and election rates were also measured based on both country of birth and languages spoken by candidates. However, due to missing and/or unidentifiable information, results based on these characteristics are indicative only and should be treated with caution (see related results sections for more details).

Overall, the results of this analysis show that just over half of all candidates were elected in the 2025 Napier City Council elections, with election rates varying notably by ward due to differences in candidate numbers and available seats. Candidate and election outcomes were broadly balanced by gender and age, with similar success rates for females and males (consistent with recent historical trends), and for candidates aged 35 to 54 and those aged 55 and over - although the absence of candidates aged under 35 highlights an ongoing gap in youth representation. Ethnic representation showed a larger pool of NZ European candidates, but Māori candidates experienced comparable election success rates (due in part to the inclusion of the Māori ward), slightly above the overall average. Relative to Napier's adult population, females and NZ European candidates were slightly under-represented, while males, older age groups and Māori candidates were slightly over-represented - noting that small numbers and some missing data mean these patterns should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.



# METHODOLOGY

## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Gathering information on the characteristics of candidates seeking election is essential to understand how the perspectives, lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of the wider community are reflected in local government. This report provides a summary of demographic information for candidates running for election to Napier City Council (NCC) in 2025, and enables candidates to be compared to the Napier population across multiple characteristics.



SIL Research, together with NCC, developed a Candidate Survey questionnaire, based on surveys previously conducted in earlier local elections.

## DATA COLLECTION AND PROJECT SPECIFICS

All 2025 candidates were sent a survey form with their candidate nomination forms asking for their demographic details. Completion of the survey was voluntary, and 20 responses were received (four surveys were completed anonymously). The questions asked of candidates (and related response options) are shown in the Appendix.

This survey collected information on candidates in terms of the following demographic characteristics:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity (multiple response)
- country of birth, and
- languages spoken (multiple response).

## DATA ANALYSIS

The response from 20 out of 22 candidates represents a response rate of 90%. Due to the 'census' nature of this research (among the population of NCC election candidates), the small pool of candidates in absolute terms, and the high response rate, statistical confidence levels and margins of error are not relevant in this context. As such, the results presented are an accurate, robust and almost-complete record of the entire population of election candidates. Reported differences are 'real' and actual differences given the population-level census nature of the data analysed.

Two comparisons are made for each of the demographic characteristics above:

- The election rate for each subgroup is compared to the overall average election rate for all candidates.
- All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates are compared to the Napier adult population (aged 18 and over).

## NOTES ON REPORTING

As the research was completely voluntary, two candidates did not complete or return the survey questionnaire. Where possible, key missing data has been inferred based on the total pool of known candidates - particularly to identify elected or unelected status of candidates (one non-responding candidate was elected, the other was unelected). This enabled election rates to be calculated on the total number of all candidates, while maintaining anonymity.

Similarly, all responding candidates were free to skip questions or withhold specific details if preferred. As a result, some demographic questions (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, country of birth, languages spoken) contained missing data. Again, where possible, key missing data has been inferred based on other provided details, while maintaining anonymity. Where missing details could not be inferred (particularly ethnicity, country of birth, and languages spoken), respondent information has been categorised and analysed as 'Unknown'. Such results should be treated with caution, but are nevertheless provided for completeness and to provide context for calculations across the total candidate pool.

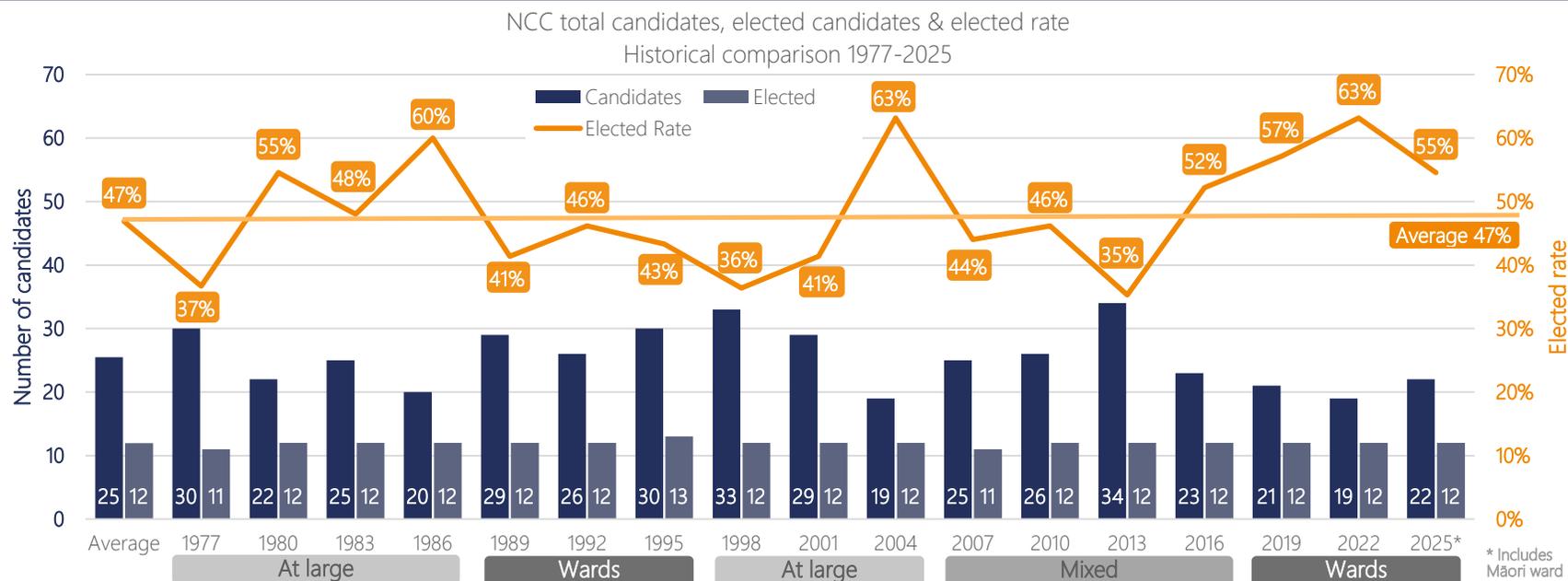
Given the above limitations due to incomplete data, the results presented in this report are accurate only to the extent that respondents were willing to provide requested information. Consequently, the available results for some demographic characteristics may under- or over-estimate the true (total) population numbers or proportions for all 2025 candidates. Notes to this effect are included in the report commentary where this is an identified issue.

Due to the low number of candidates and responses in absolute terms, analysis of some demographic characteristics (e.g. age, ethnicity) has been conducted by aggregating responses into a smaller number of subsamples. This allows for more meaningful analysis and robust comparisons to be made between identified subgroups. Further details and explanations are provided in the results commentary where relevant.

For comparative purposes, population percentages for the Napier City adult population (aged 18 years or older) are based on the latest Statistics NZ 2023 Census data for the census usually resident population.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CANDIDATES & ELECTED RATES

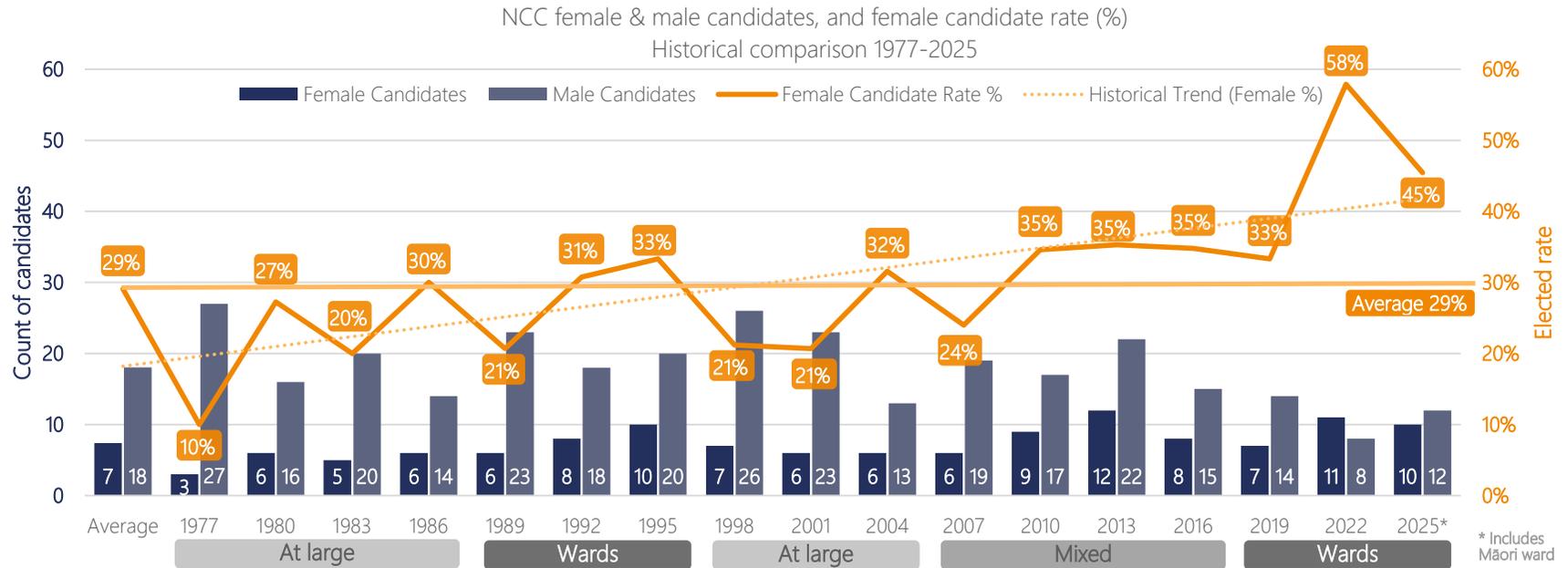
Comparative historical data was available for all NCC elections from 1977 to 2025.



- Historically, the total number of NCC candidates per election has fluctuated within a relatively stable band, generally ranging from around 19 to the low-mid 30s - with an average of 25 candidates from 1977 to 2025. Candidate numbers peaked in 2013 (34) and were also high in the late 1990s, while the lowest points occurred in 2004 and 2022 (19) – indicating that interest in public office has varied markedly over time.
- The elected rate shows a cyclical pattern rather than a clear long-term upward or downward trend. As the number of elected positions remains stable (either 11 or 12), the elected rate by definition reaches higher levels in years with fewer candidates (for example 63% in both 2004 and 2022), and drops in years with larger candidate pools (such as 35% in 2013) – with an average elected rate of 47%.
- Across the period shown, candidate numbers remain broadly stable regardless of electoral system, typically sitting in the low-to-mid 20s, with fluctuations appearing more cyclical than system-driven. The At large system tended to produce moderate-to-high candidate fields (often mid-20s to around 30), while the Ward system shows similar averages but slightly lower totals in the most recent elections. The Mixed system coincided with one of the historical peaks (notably 2013), suggesting it may have modestly broadened participation.
- However, overall there is no strong evidence that any one system consistently generates significantly higher or lower candidate numbers over time.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: FEMALE & MALE CANDIDATES

Comparative historical data was available for all NCC elections from 1977 to 2025.



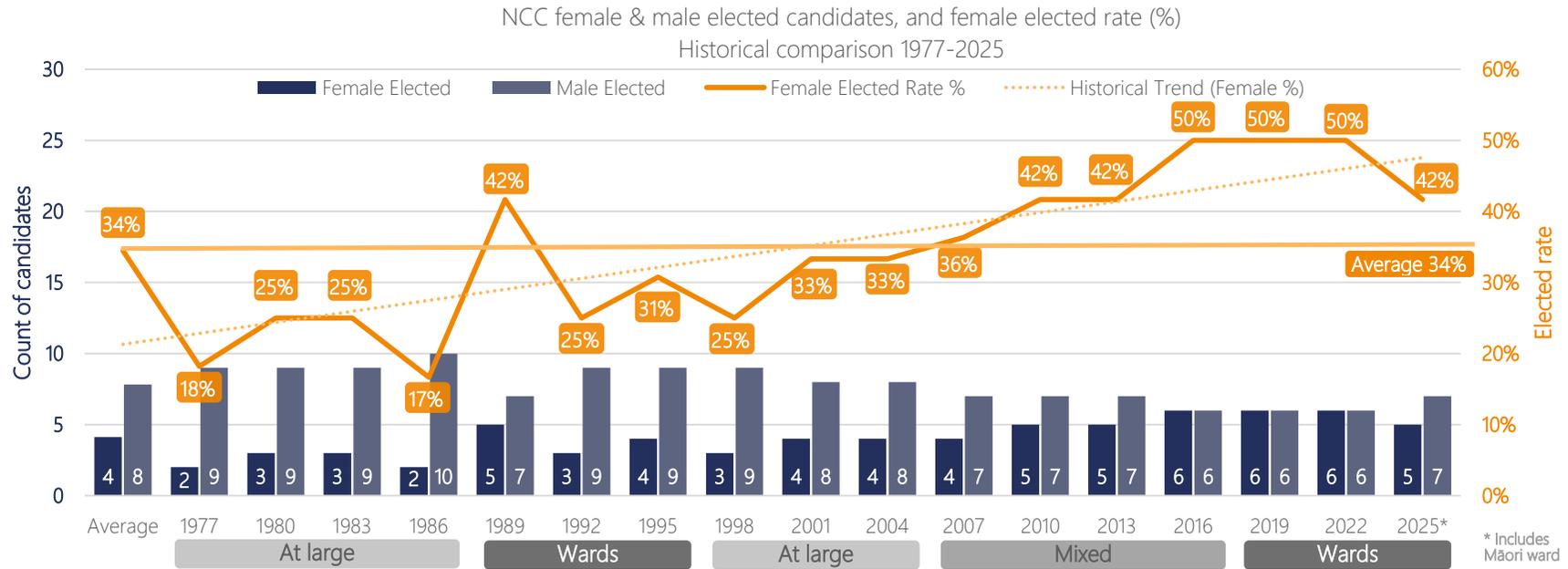
Across the full 1977–2025 period, male candidates have consistently outnumbered female candidates, but the gap has narrowed over time. In earlier elections (late 1970s–1980s), female candidate numbers were generally low (often between 3 and 6), while male candidates commonly ranged from the mid-teens to mid-20s. As a result, the female candidate rate was comparatively low and volatile, dipping as low as 10% in 1977 but generally sitting in the 20–30% range through the 1980s and 1990s. Overall, the long-term average female candidate rate across this period is 29%.

From the 1990s onward, female participation shows a gradual upward trend. Female candidate numbers more consistently reached the high single digits and low teens, and the female candidate rate moved into the low-to-mid 30% range more regularly. This upward shift becomes clearer from 2010 onward, where the rate stabilises around 33–35%, before rising sharply to 58% in 2022 — the first (and only) election to date where women outnumbered men. As such, the two most recent elections have seen almost-equal candidate representation by gender. The dotted historical trend line reinforces this steady long-term increase in female representation among candidates.

While the Ward and Mixed electoral periods coincide with the upward trend from the 1990s, the overall pattern reflects a broader societal shift toward gender balance rather than a specific electoral system effect.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: FEMALE & MALE ELECTED

Comparative historical data was available for all NCC elections from 1977 to 2025.

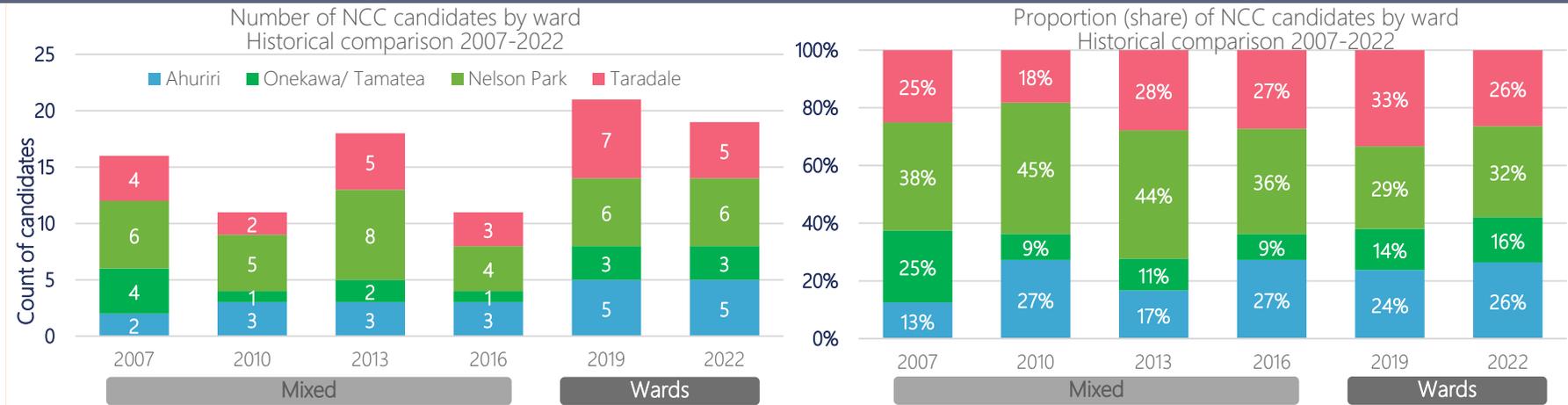


- Across the 1977–2025 period, elected male councillors have consistently outnumbered female councillors, with the gap narrowing steadily over time. In the earlier elections (late 1970s–1980s), female representation was low, typically just 2–3 women elected compared with 8–10 men, producing female elected rates mostly between 17% and 25%. Despite the early peak of 42% in 1989 (Wards), this was not sustained at the time. The average female elected rate across this period is 34%, indicating that roughly one-third of elected members have been women historically.
- From the 1990s onward, female representation shows a gradual upward trajectory. Female elected numbers increasingly reached 4–6 per election, and the female elected rate moved more consistently above 30% (and then above 40%) through the 2000s and early 2010s.

- The most significant shift in representation occurred from 2016 onward, with women achieving parity for the first time (50% in 2016, maintained in 2019 and 2022). The upward-sloping historical trend line reinforces this clear long-term increase in women’s representation among elected members.
- The introduction of Wards in the late 1980s coincided with an initial spike in female representation (1989), though rates fluctuated through the 1990s. The Mixed system period (2007–2013) aligns with more consistent gains into the 40% range, and the most recent Ward period corresponds with sustained parity outcomes. While the overall upward trend appears driven largely by broader societal change toward gender balance, the ward-based structures in recent elections appear to coincide with the strongest and most sustained improvements in female representation.

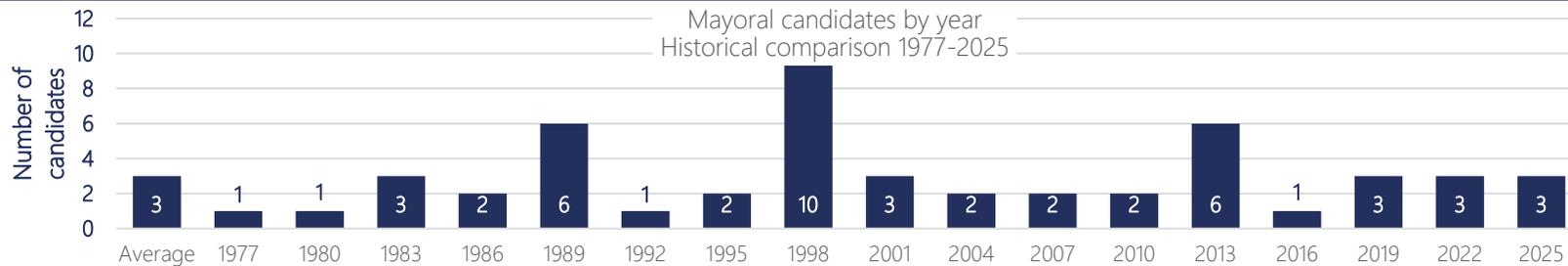
# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CANDIDATES BY WARD

Comparative historical data was available for NCC elections from 2007 to 2022.



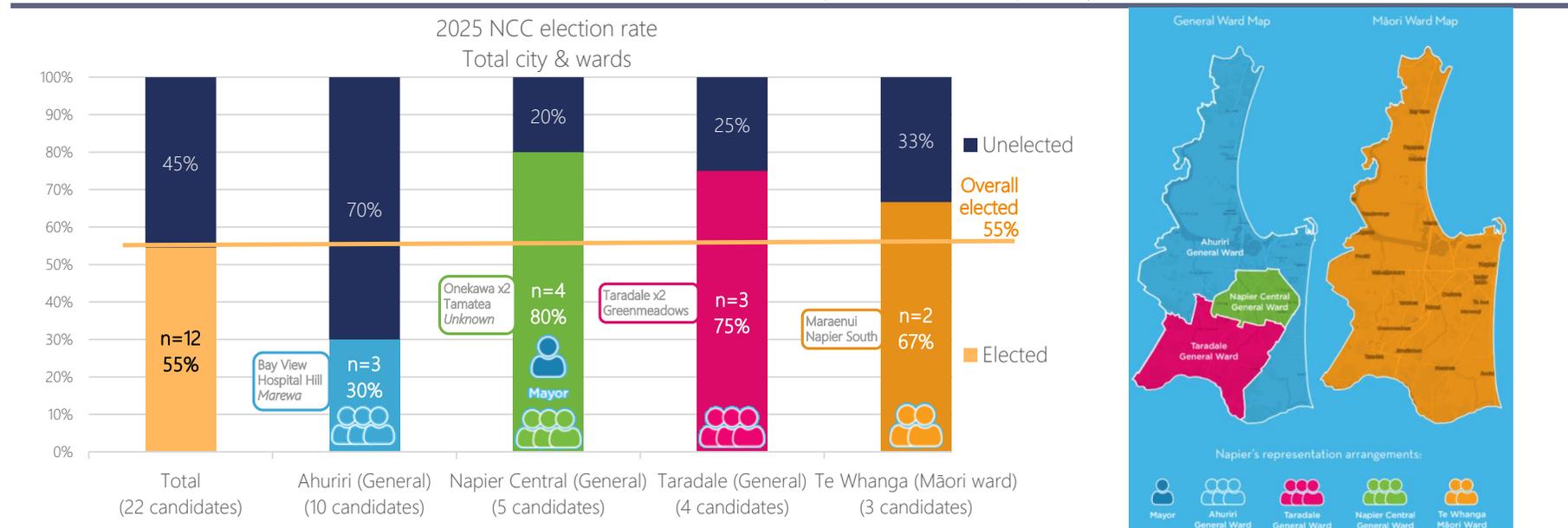
- Between 2007 and 2022, candidate numbers across wards fluctuated moderately. However, the proportional share of candidates shows a clear shift toward a more even distribution over time. Nelson Park dominated early elections (between 2007 and 2013), but its share declined to around 1-in-3 by 2019–2022. In contrast, Taradale’s share increased steadily, peaking at 33% in 2019 before returning to 1-in-4 in 2022. Ahuriri also experienced notable growth, settling around 1-in-4 in the two most recent elections. Overall, the pattern indicates that while Nelson Park initially attracted a disproportionately high share of candidates, recent elections reflect a more balanced spread of candidates across all wards.

- From 1977 to 2025, the number of NCC mayoral candidates has generally remained low, typically ranging between one and three candidates per election, with an overall average of three. There are two clear outliers: a significant spike in 1989 (6 candidates) and a peak in 1998 (10 candidates), followed by another elevated result in 2013 (6 candidates). Outside of these peaks, most elections have attracted only one to three contenders, indicating that mayoral races are usually limited in size, with occasional surges in competition rather than a sustained upward or downward trend over time.



## 2025 ELECTION RATE: OVERALL & BY WARD

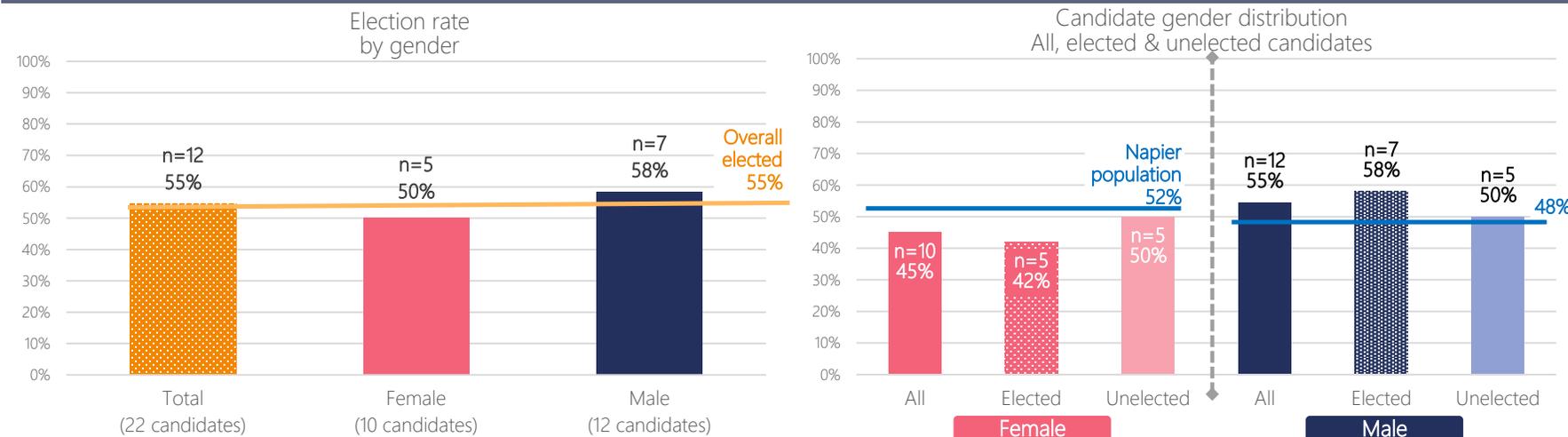
Election rates were calculated on the known numbers of candidates and elected positions across Napier City.



- Overall, 22 candidates stood for election in the 2025 NCC local elections.
- As such, the 12 elected candidates (the mayor and 11 councillors) represented 55% of all candidates – above the historical average (47%) but consistent with the previous three elections since 2016.
- Election rates differed across each of the city’s wards, given both the number of candidates nominated and the allocated number of councillor seats available.
- Ahuriri ward, with the largest pool of candidates (ten in total), had the lowest election rate (30%) given just three candidates were elected.
- In contrast, Napier Central ward had five candidates of whom four were elected, representing an 80% election rate (this includes the incoming mayor, who also stood for election as a councillor in the Napier Central ward although not counted among this ward’s three allocated councillors).
- Both Taradale ward (75%) and Te Whanga Māori ward (67%) had similarly high election rates given the number of elected councillors from their lower candidate pools.
- Candidates typically came from a spread of suburbs; just two self-identified as residing outside their selected ward (an additional two candidates provided no information). In Ahuriri ward in particular, the ten candidates were spread across Bay View, Ahuriri, Hospital Hill (2), Bluff Hill (2), Napier South (2) and Marewa (outside the ward); with no information for one candidate.
- 9 of the 10 identified elected councillors lived in the ward they were elected in (one Ahuriri ward councillor lived in Marewa). The additional unidentified elected councillor (in Napier Central ward) did not provide related information for analysis.

## GENDER: ELECTION RATE & CANDIDATE DISTRIBUTION

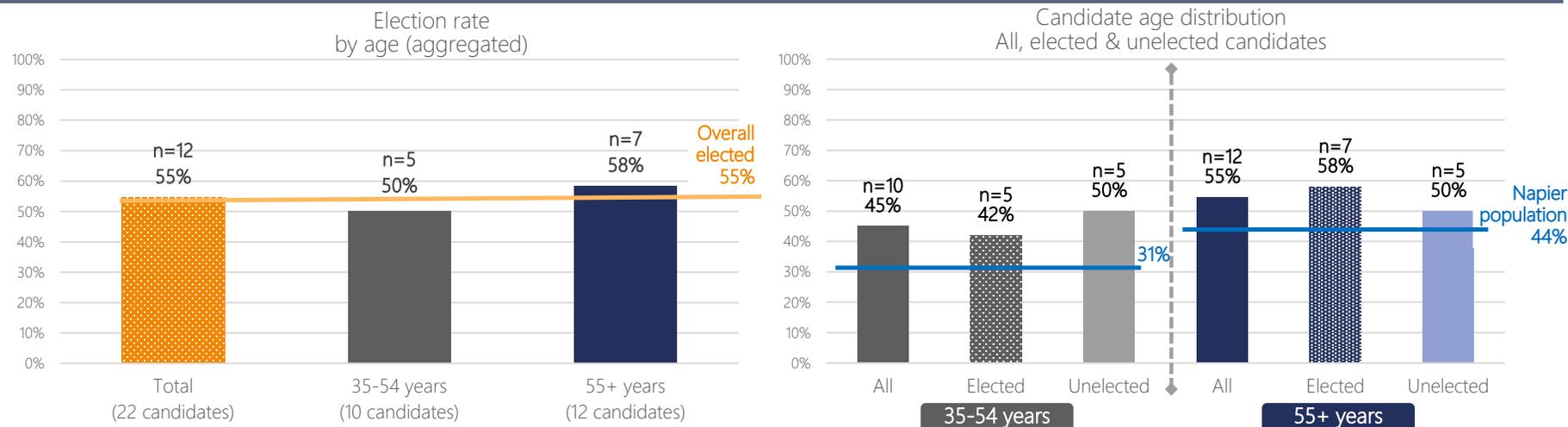
The election rate for each gender was measured by calculating the percentage of candidates within each gender who were elected. Candidate and election rates were also compared to Napier population proportions for females and males aged 18 years or older.



- Both the number of candidates and elected members were similar between females and males.
- Overall, 10 female candidates stood for election in the 2025 NCC local elections, consistent with the increasing trend in recent elections (above the historic average around 7 female candidates). As such, the five elected female candidates represented half (50%) of all female candidates.
- Similarly, 12 male candidates stood for election in 2025. Therefore, the seven elected male candidates represented just over half (58%) of all male candidates.
- Compared to Napier’s population of females aged 18+ (52% overall), female candidates and elected females were slightly under-represented. Females made up 45% of all candidates, and 42% of elected members. However, this female elected rate was above the historic average (34%) and consistent with the increasing trend observed since 2010.
- In contrast, compared to Napier’s population of males aged 18+ (48% overall), male candidates and elected males were slightly over-represented. Males comprised 55% of all candidates, and 58% of elected members - just below the historical average of 66% for elected males, but consistent with rates over the previous five elections.

## AGE: ELECTION RATE & CANDIDATE DISTRIBUTION

The election rate across age groups was measured by calculating the percentage of candidates within each age group who were elected. Candidate and election rates were also compared to Napier population proportions for these age groups.

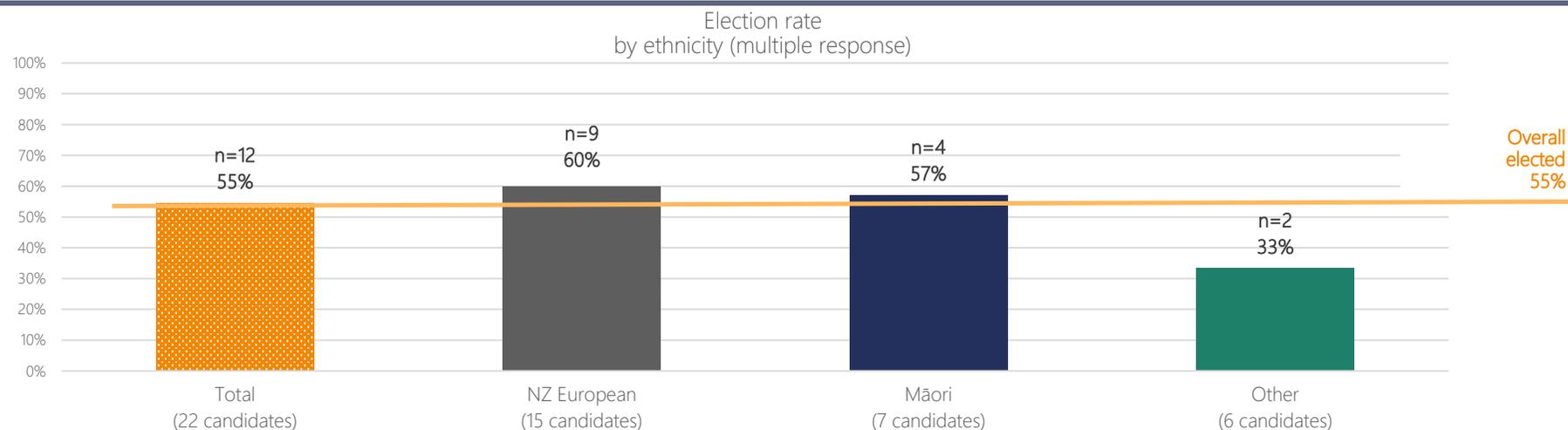


- Given the small pool of Napier candidates for the 2025 election, candidates were divided into two groups to allow analysis by age: 35-54 years and 55 years or older (55+). No candidates in 2025 were aged under 35.
- Both the number of candidates and elected members were similar between the two age groups.
- Overall, 10 candidates aged 35-54 stood for election in the 2025 NCC local election. As such, the five elected candidates represented half (50%) of all candidates aged 35-54.
- Similarly, 12 candidates aged 55+ stood for election in 2025. Therefore, the seven elected candidates represented just over half (58%) of all candidates aged 55+.

- Taken together, Napier’s population of adults aged 35 or older represents 75% of all adults aged 18+; the remaining 25% are 18-34.
- Compared to Napier’s population of adults aged 35-54 specifically (31% overall), candidates and elected members in this age group were slightly over-represented. Adults aged 35-54 made up 45% of all candidates, and 42% of elected members.
- Similarly, compared to Napier’s population of adults aged 55+ (44% overall), candidates and elected members in this older age group were also slightly over-represented. Adults aged 55+ comprised 55% of all candidates, and 58% of elected members.
- By definition, the lack of any candidates or elected members aged 18-34 meant this cohort of younger adults was completely unrepresented on Council in 2025, despite comprising 25% of the Napier population.

## ETHNICITY: ELECTION RATE

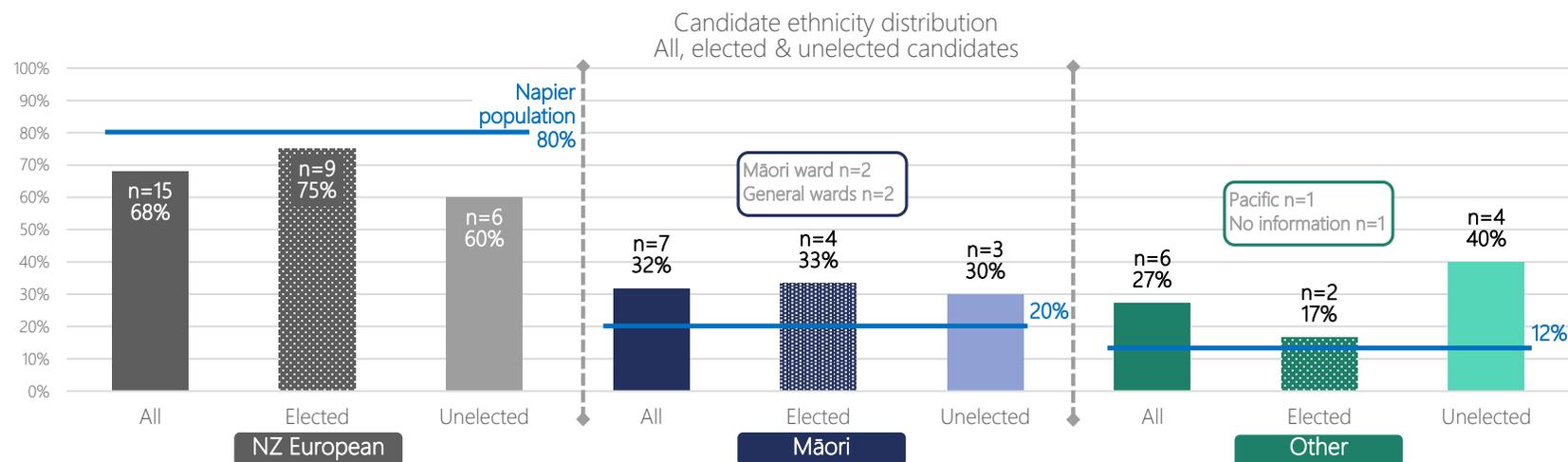
The election rate across ethnic groups was measured by calculating the percentage of candidates within each ethnic group who were elected.



- In total, 20 candidates provided their ethnicity classification (at least one ethnic group identified); two candidates provided no ethnicity information.
- Ethnicity was asked on a multiple response basis, with candidates able to select more than one classification as preferred. Five candidates selected more than one option. As a result, percentages sum to more than 100%.
- Given the small pool of Napier candidates for the 2025 election, candidates were divided into three groups to allow analysis by ethnicity. Given the low number of Pacific (N=1), Asian (N=1), and 'other' candidates (N=2), these were combined into one 'Other' category. This also included the two candidates who provided no ethnicity information.
- The number of NZ European candidates was much greater (twice as many) as for Māori and other candidates. However, the election rates were similar for both NZ European and Māori candidates – just above the overall rate.
- In total, 15 NZ European candidates stood for election in 2025. As such, the nine elected candidates represented 3-in-5 (60%) of all NZ European candidates.
- Fewer candidates identified as Māori (seven in total). Therefore, the four elected candidates represented just over half (57%) of all candidates identifying as Māori. Three of these candidates stood for the Te Whanga Māori ward, with two elected.
- Of the six candidates identifying as an 'other' ethnicity, just two were elected – representing 1-in-3 (33%) of this group. One elected member identified as Pacific specifically; the other provided no ethnicity information.

# ETHNICITY: CANDIDATE DISTRIBUTION

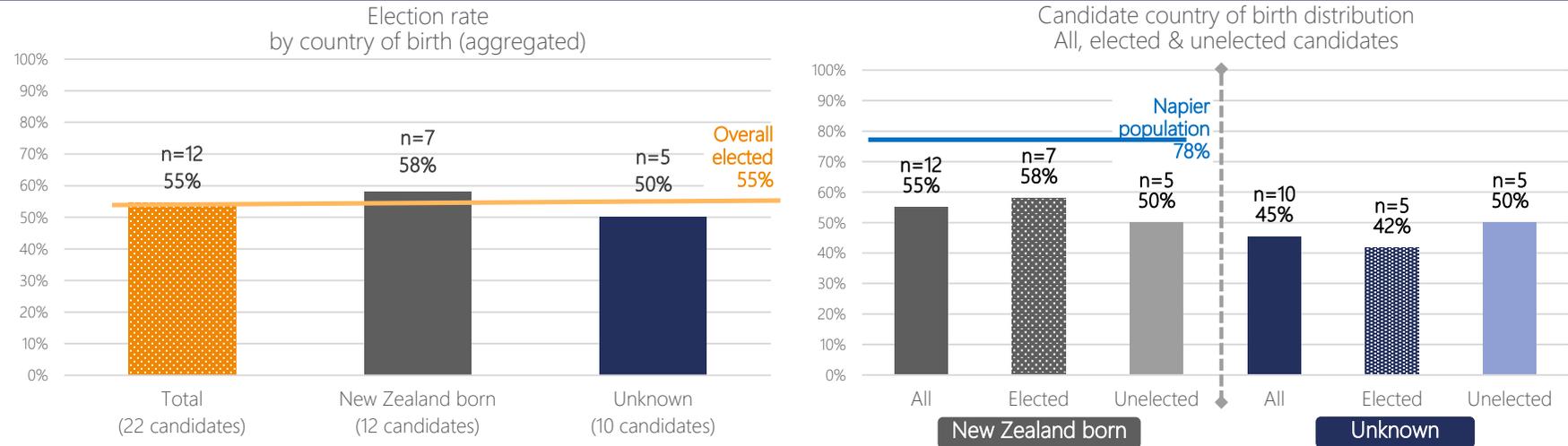
Candidate and election rates were also compared to Napier population proportions for identified ethnic groups.



- The distribution and representation of candidates and elected members differed widely across ethnic groups.
- Compared to Napier’s population of NZ European adults (80% overall), candidates and elected members in this ethnic group were slightly under-represented. NZ Europeans comprised 68% of all candidates, but a slightly higher proportion (75%) of elected members.
- In contrast, compared to Napier’s population of Māori adults (20% overall), Māori candidates and elected members were slightly over-represented. Māori represented 32% of all candidates, and 33% of elected members. However, these proportions were affected by the low number of Māori candidates (n=7) and elected members (n=4) in absolute terms. Also, two elected members were voted in through the new Māori ward - established in 2025 but subsequently disestablished for future elections (in 2028 and 2031) following a binding referendum conducted during the 2025 elections.
- Compared to Napier’s population of adults identifying in ‘other’ ethnic groups (12% overall), candidates and elected members in this category were slightly over-represented. Adults in this ‘other’ group comprised 27% of all candidates, and 17% of elected members. Again, these proportions were affected by the low number of ‘other’ candidates (n=6) and elected members (n=2) in absolute terms. Also, one of these elected candidates provided no ethnicity information, so may in fact identify with either of the other ethnicity classifications (i.e. NZ European or Māori). Consequently, results related to this ‘other’ classification should be treated with caution, but are provided for completeness and to provide context for calculations across the total candidate pool.

# COUNTRY OF BIRTH: ELECTION RATE & CANDIDATE DISTRIBUTION

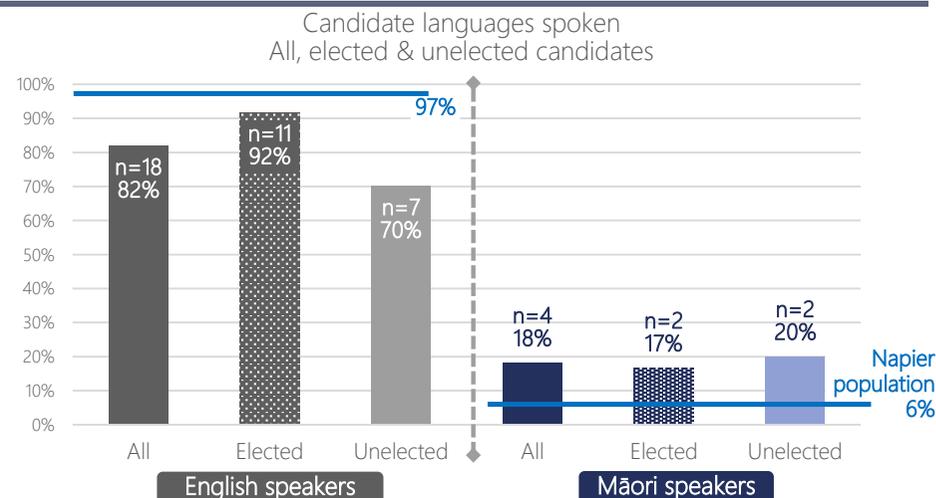
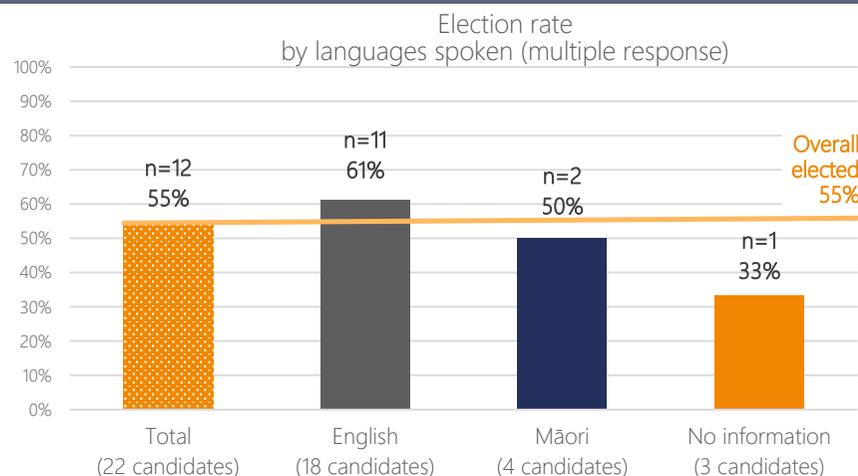
The election rate across country of birth was measured by calculating the percentage of candidates identifying as New Zealand-born who were elected. Candidate and election rates were also compared to Napier population proportions for this group.



- Only 12 Napier candidates provided country of birth information; all 12 were born in New Zealand. The remaining 10 candidates had an unknown country of birth (eight submitted the survey but did not answer this question; the remaining two did not submit a survey).
- Based on the information provided, 12 New Zealand-born candidates stood for election in the 2025 NCC local election. As such, the seven elected candidates represented just over half (58%) of all candidates – similar to the overall elected result. However, given the degree of unknown country of birth data, these figures are likely underestimates.
- Nevertheless, among the 10 candidates with unknown country of birth, the five elected candidates represented half (50%) of all these candidates.
- Compared to Napier’s population of New Zealand-born adults (78% overall), NZ-born candidates and elected members were under-represented. Those identifying as New Zealand born represented 55% of all candidates, and 58% of elected members.
- This suggests that many of the unknown candidates are likely to be NZ-born, and would boost the actual number of NZ-born candidates if their country of birth was identified.

# LANGUAGES SPOKEN: ELECTION RATE & CANDIDATE DISTRIBUTION

Candidates were asked which languages they could comfortably hold an everyday conversation in (multiple responses allowed). The election rate was measured across languages on this basis. Candidate and election rates were also compared to Napier population proportions for languages spoken.



- 19 Napier candidates provided spoken language information. Of the remaining three candidates, one submitted the survey but did not answer this question; the remaining two did not submit a survey.
- Spoken language was asked on a multiple response basis; three candidates selected more than one option (both English and te reo Māori). No candidates indicated they could use New Zealand sign language nor languages other than English or te reo Māori.
- Based on information provided, 18 candidates spoke English. As such, the 11 elected candidates represented 61% of all English-speaking candidates – just above the overall elected result of 55%. However, given the missing spoken language data, these figures are likely underestimates.
- Based on information provided, four candidates spoke te reo Māori. Therefore, of those who provided this information, the two elected candidates represented half (50%) of all te reo-speaking candidates – just below the overall elected result.
- Compared to Napier’s population of English speakers (97% overall), English speaking candidates and elected members were slightly under-represented. Those identifying as English speakers represented 82% of all candidates, and 92% of elected members. This suggests that the candidates *not* providing related information are likely to be English speakers, and would boost the actual number of English speaking candidates if this information was provided.
- Compared to Napier’s population of te reo Māori speakers (6% overall), te reo speaking candidates and elected members were over-represented. Those identifying as te reo speakers represented 18% of all candidates, and 17% of elected members. However, these proportions were affected by the low number of Māori speaking candidates (n=4) and identified elected members (n=2) in absolute terms, so should be treated with caution.

## APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Disclaimer: All reporting of demographic information will be at an aggregate level, no individual level information will be shared or released. This survey is designed to help us better understand who is standing for elected office, and who is elected. The information will help us better support candidates and elected members in the future.

Candidate name:

1. GENDER: What gender do you identify as? *(please select one)*

Male       Female       Gender diverse       Prefer not to state

2. AGE: What is your age? *(please select one)*

18-19 years old	40-44 years old	65-69 years old
20-24 years old	45-49 years old	70-74 years old
25-29 years old	50-54 years old	75-79 years old
30-34 years old	55-59 years old	80-84 years old
35-39 years old	60-64 years old	85 years or older

3. ETHNICITY: Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? *(select all that apply to you)*

New Zealand European  
Māori  
Pacific  
Asian  
Other, please state:

4. COUNTRY OF BIRTH: What country were you born in? *(please select one)*

New Zealand  
 Other, please print the present name of the country:

5. LANGUAGES: In which language(s) could you have a conversation about a lot of everyday things? *(select all that apply to you)*

English       Māori      New Zealand sign language

Other language(s), please state:

6. SUBURB: Which Napier suburb and street do you currently reside in? *(please state)*

SUBURB & STREET:

# WHIRIA AHURIRI

## Napier Multicultural Strategy

### *Background Document*

June 2025



**NAPIER**  
CITY COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihera o Ahuriri*

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## Introduction

In May 2023, we began developing a community-wide Multicultural Strategy for Napier. This was in response to requests and formal submissions from community leaders and data confirming Napier as becoming increasingly diverse, with more people from a wide range of cultures choosing to call Napier home. Since then, we have engaged with Napier residents from a range of cultures, backgrounds, and ethnicities to hear their thoughts and ideas for a multicultural Napier. We have held workshops, delivered presentations, attended community events and run a survey. This report outlines the process we have used to develop the Multicultural Strategy (the strategy) and summarises what we heard from communities and what matters to them.

This is a supporting document to the strategy. Part One outlines the process for development including the background, advisory structure establishment, and how agencies, ethnic and cultural groups and other Napier residents provided input and their ideas into developing the strategy.

Part Two is a summary of feedback received from stakeholders about the challenges faced by cultural communities, their thoughts, and ideas for a more multicultural Napier. This section includes findings of a survey, workshops held with advisory groups and feedback from key stakeholders and cultural communities in Napier. It identifies priority areas for the strategy based on a thematic analysis of feedback received from these stakeholders and cultural communities.

Part Three includes a high-level timeline and lists other local, regional and national strategies and programmes that are linked to this work.

Finally, there are two appendices, including a document review that identifies Councils' Multicultural Strategies and Welcoming Communities Programmes across Aotearoa New Zealand and an ethnic profile with data and information on ethnic communities living in Napier.

# Part One

## Strategy Development Process

### Early Development – How we started

Napier City Council (NCC) received several requests to create a Multicultural Strategy for Napier through formal and informal channels. Previously funded by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), NCC delivered Settlement Support Services for newcomers to Napier. This service was then disestablished by INZ in 2014 and replaced with a regional service focused on attracting and retaining skilled migrants.

Following this, the Hawke's Bay Settlement Forum (the Forum) was established in July 2014, coordinated by Napier City Council and which is still operational today. The Forum is a network of government, non-government organisations and key community groups that meet bi-monthly to network, discuss issues affecting newcomers and organise an annual community event to celebrate and showcase the diverse cultures of Napier.

In 2017, INZ launched a pilot of the Welcoming Communities Accreditation Programme, supporting Councils and their communities to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for newcomers, including recent migrants (>5 years), former refugees and international students. In July 2022, NCC was accepted into the Welcoming Communities Programme and is currently at the first accreditation stage of being a 'committed Welcoming Community.'

In May 2023, a desktop review of national and local strategies and programmes with a focus on multiculturalism was initiated. This included reviewing 3 Council multicultural strategies and 4 Welcoming Communities programmes across 7 Councils across New Zealand. Recommendations from the review confirmed the importance of local government leadership in developing a Multicultural Strategy for Napier, partnering with Mana Whenua and the need for ethnic community leaders and groups to play an active role in the delivery of the strategy.

It was recommended that to be effective, the strategy needs to support integration and social cohesion for all cultures as opposed to simply celebrating multiculturalism. Also, an evidence-informed approach be used that includes relevant data and captures community voice. It was suggested that the scope of the strategy go beyond council-focused activities and involve central government agencies, community organisations across sectors, cultural groups, and the wider community. This will improve 'buy in' or ownership and lead to a shared implementation of the strategy. The desktop review report is included as **Appendix 1**.

A detailed ethnic community profile for Napier was completed in October 2023 with data sourced from Census 2018 and Napier Social Monitor 2022.

The ethnic profile presented a picture of multiculturalism in Napier, including reporting ethnicity data, languages spoken, religious affiliation as well as education status, employment, and income information for specific ethnic groups. It also included information about life satisfaction, perception of safety, wellbeing, acceptance and belonging amongst ethnic communities.

The Ethnic Community Profile is included as **Appendix 2**.

*Did you know? 1 in 6 people living in Napier were born overseas and 1 in 10 people identify as Asian, Pacific, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or of other ethnicity.*

Although Napier's ethnic population is noticeably smaller than the national average, more recent Census (2023) data confirms a steady increase in the percentage of people from different ethnicities living in Napier. Table 1 shows the increase in those born overseas and those who identify with ethnicities other than European and Māori.

*Table 1 – Demographic information for Napier City and New Zealand, Census 2013 – 2023*

	Napier City			New Zealand		
	2013	2018	2023	2013	2018	2023
Born Overseas	14.5%	16.5%	18.2%	23.6%	27.4%	28.8%
Identify as European	79.0%	81.2%	79%	70.0%	70.2%	67.8%
Identify as Māori	18.2%	22.2%	24.2%	14.1%	18.5%	17.8%
Identify as Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or other ethnicity*	8.8%	10.2%	13%	20.8%	28.2%	29.2%

*Source: Stats NZ \*This data is from Census level 1 ethnicity data and doesn't include North American, European and some other ethnicities.*

*The 2023 Census shows that nearly 20% of Napier's population identifies with ethnicities other than New Zealand European or Māori*

## Advisory Structure – Who was involved

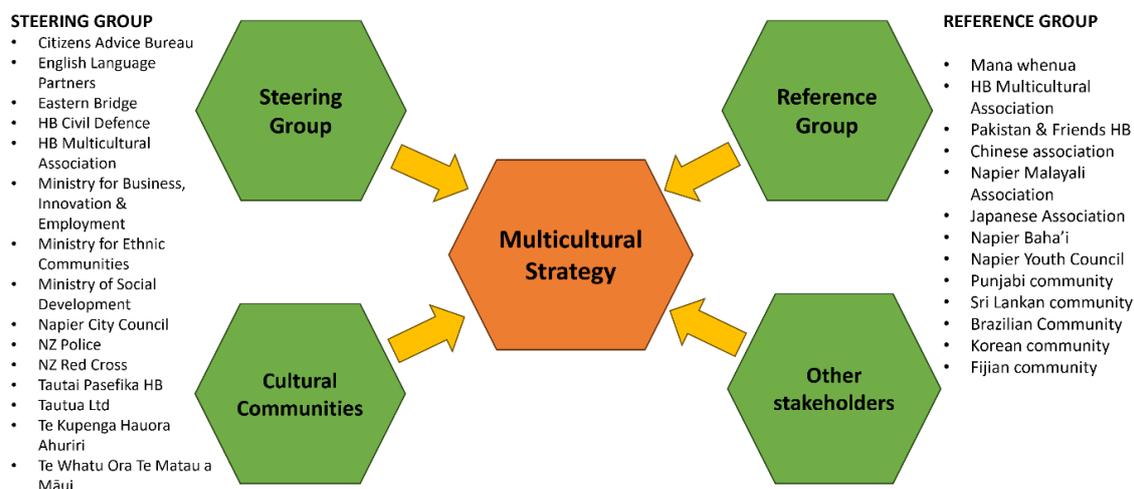
Te Tiriti o Waitangi was identified as the framework for developing the strategy and partnering with Mana Whenua from the outset as critical. Meetings were held with Mana Ahuriri Trust and Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui ā Orotu to share our intention to develop a Multicultural Strategy for Ahuriri-Napier and seek representation as part of the advisory structure.

In November 2023, with support from Te Waka Rangapū, NCC's Māori Partnerships team, we sought input from Ngā Mānukanuka o te Iwi Komiti<sup>1</sup>, where we shared the findings of the desktop review and ethnic profile and signalled the development of the strategy.

Two advisory groups were established, a Steering Group including relevant government and non-government organisations and a Reference Group with community representatives from a wide range of cultural groups across Napier (Figure 1). Mana Whenua representatives from Timikara Marae joined the Reference Group. Both groups provided input and agreed to a set of Terms of Reference which outlined the purpose and principles, membership, and how meetings would run, and decisions be made.

<sup>1</sup> Ngā Manukanuka o Te Iwi is the Māori Partnerships Specialist Committee for Napier City Council, with member representatives from local marae and PSGs.

Figure 1 – Advisory structure for development of Napier’s Multicultural Strategy, 2023



The Steering Group was set up in October 2023 and comprised representatives from agencies and providers who provide services, engage and support cultural communities in Napier. The purpose of this group was to contribute and provide key insights and advice, seek feedback from, share information with their networks and support community engagement during strategy development.

Fifteen members joined the group from the following organisations;

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- English Language Partners
- Eastern Bridge Ltd
- HB Civil Defence Emergency Management
- Multicultural Association HB
- Ministry for Business, Innovation & Employment
- Ministry for Ethnic Communities
- Ministry of Social Development
- Napier City Council
- NZ Police
- NZ Red Cross
- Tautai Pasefika HB
- Tautua Ltd
- Te Kupenga Hauora Ahuriri
- Health NZ, Te Whatu Ora Te Matau a Māui

To assist with establishing the Reference Group, a sub-group of members from the Steering Group was formed. The group were responsible for developing criteria and creating a nomination process for the establishment of the Reference Group. We sought nominations for community representatives from a wide distribution list of all known cultural networks. Applicants with strong connections to specific cultural communities from varied ethnic backgrounds were selected and formed the Reference Group.

The Reference Group was established in April 2024 to provide input into the strategy content, seek feedback from and share information with their networks and assist with wider engagement as the

strategy was developed. All members of the Reference Group volunteered their time to attend workshops and events and assist with the development of the strategy.

Fourteen members joined the Reference Group, including representatives from the following organisations and communities:

- Mana Whenua representatives
- Multicultural Association HB
- Pakistan & Friends Hawke's Bay
- Chinese Association
- Napier Malayali Association
- Japanese Association
- Napier Baha'i Community
- Napier Youth Council
- Punjabi Community
- Sri Lankan Community
- Brazilian Community
- Korean Community
- Fijian Community

Both the Steering and Reference Groups played a crucial part in guiding the development of the strategy by sharing their knowledge, experiences and offering keen participation throughout the process. The workshops and meetings focused on drafting the vision, values and priority areas for the strategy.

A pre-engagement survey was sent to NCC's 'Peoples Panel<sup>2</sup>' and cultural groups living in Napier as a 'pulse check' of the community's perception on multicultural issues. We asked about their views on a multicultural Napier, what would make people of all cultures and ethnicities feel valued, accepted and able to participate in all aspects of community life. The results of this survey were analysed and provided a starting place for both the Steering and Reference Groups as they began to workshop the strategy. Other tools, such as real-life scenarios, were also developed to initiate and engage conversation during the workshops.

Both advisory groups met 6-8 weekly, totalling 6 workshops each over 9 months. Groups explored the meaning of different words associated with Multiculturalism. Words such as ethnic, inclusive, international, newcomer and diversity. This led to a discussion about the name for the strategy, and from this, a sub-group met to consolidate name options for the strategy, which were presented back to the advisory groups. Both groups voted on the preferred name, 'Whiria Ahuriri', as the name for the strategy. 'Whiria', which means 'to weave', relates to the coming together of different strands and cultures to weave together the social fabric of Ahuriri -Napier.

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<sup>2</sup> Peoples Panel is a Napier City Council Panel of Napier residents who provide feedback on developments, projects, ideas and matters at the very early stage of the engagement process. Members self select to be on the panel and although the aim is that the panel reflects the Napier community demographic it is not guaranteed.



*Workshops held with Steering Group and Reference Group*

The workshops provided us with valuable information that shaped the broad structure for the strategy, including the draft vision and values for the strategy and priority focus areas. The advisory groups championed the process of strategy development and also assisted with targeted stakeholder engagement.

The NCC Māori Partnerships Team, Te Waka Rangapū and our Mana Whenua representatives provided both groups with tikanga support, Te Ao Māori worldview and Matauranga Māori knowledge. Councillor Greg Mawson was the elected member championing the strategy with his interest in multiculturalism in Napier and played an active part in the Steering group.

The advisory structure will be reviewed following the adoption of the strategy to oversee monitoring and implementation and support the delivery of the Napier's Welcoming Communities programme.

## Stakeholder and Community Engagement - *What we did*

The next stage of development was to engage with other key stakeholders and seek input on the potential key priority areas with a wider audience. A sub-group of Steering and Reference Group members reviewed key stakeholders, including how stakeholders were grouped and provided their input to fill gaps and confirm the best methods for engagement. An extensive stakeholder database was confirmed by both advisory groups, with more than 200 people and organisations that were clustered into the following stakeholder groupings:

- Mana Whenua
- Government Organisations
- Community (Non Govt) Organisations (eg. Citizens Advice Bureau, Red Cross etc)
- Cultural Community Groups/Organisations (eg. Multicultural Association, Chinese Association, Napier Malayalee group etc.)
- Cultural Interest and Faith Groups (eg. Taekwondo, Dragon boat racing, temples, mosques, churches etc).
- Business/Commercial Entities
- Education Sector
- Health Sector
- Internal Stakeholders
- Other

A range of engagement methods were used, including running workshops and focus groups, delivering presentations, providing access to surveys (hardcopy or online) and opportunities for engagement and feedback at a variety of cultural events.

Table 2 lists the engagement interactions held with Napier's cultural communities and stakeholder groups between October and December 2024 to inform the strategy.

Table 2: Face to face stakeholder engagement for Strategy development

Workshops and Presentations	When	Participants
Presentation to Ngā Mānukanuka o te Iwi Komiti	10 November 2023	16-18
Workshops with Steering Group x 6	Oct 2023 – Oct 2024	8 – 15 each
Workshops with Reference Group x 6	Apr 2024 – Oct 2024	7 – 14 each
Cultural Groups workshop	18 October 2024	5
Youth Council workshop	21 October 2024	12
Tamatea High Students workshop	24 October 2024	15
Napier Businesses Workshop	12 November 2024	5
Presentation to Ngā Mānukanuka o te Iwi Komiti	13 November 2024	8 - 12
Community Network hui - Agency/Provider workshop	20 November 2024	38
Napier City Council workshop	5 December 2024	10
EIT International students' workshop	6 December 2024	14
HB Settlement Forum presentation	12 December 2024	13
<b>EVENTS</b>		
Diwali Community event	27 October 2024	Est 100
Punjabi Language Week event	8 November 2024	Est 30
Multicultural Association Annual General Meeting	23 November 2024	Est 30
Whānau Fest 150	30 November 2024	Est 150

A survey invited a wider participation and input into the development of the strategy. This was circulated amongst cultural communities and relevant organisations through both advisory groups, the database and via entities such as Napier City Business Inc, the Hawke's Bay Multicultural Association, the Ministry of Education, and others. Postcards and flyers with a QR code link were distributed at events, workshops and presentations directing people to the online survey. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at events and shared at workshops and presentations.



Figure 3 – Future state if Napier was the best multicultural city,



Participants emphasised the need for more cultural events, festivals, and community celebrations to make Napier more vibrant and welcoming. Many commented on wanting to be better connected to their own culture and cultural community, other cultural communities and the wider Napier community. This would provide everyone with opportunities to learn more about different cultures and help break down stereotypes.

Participants from different workshop groups also focused on the importance of having authentic cultural food options more available in our city and catering to dietary requirements such as providing halal food. The significance of sharing food to bring people together and learn about other cultures was highlighted as a mechanism for people to feel connected with their culture or home country.

Another theme focused on Napier offering more frequent and affordable cultural events. Participants shared this would allow communities to celebrate and share their culture with others, aiding social cohesion and community-wide understanding about the diverse cultures and people living in Napier. Such cultural events would also provide opportunities for children and young people to remain connected to their roots and cultural identity and of feel a sense of pride in it.

Cultural communities emphasised the importance of having access to safe community spaces for people to come together - a one-stop shop or 'multicultural hub'. Other themes included access to reliable trustworthy information, access to language support, health services, employment opportunities and other social and cultural supports were also highlighted.

A key highlight and recurring theme from young people was their interest in learning more about different cultures and faiths. Young people pointed out that this would make it easier for young people to support each other and enable them to connect with a wider range of people. Young people from



## Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey Findings

The Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey was used to reach wider cultural communities who were not part of a specific cultural network or organisation. As explained earlier, the survey was distributed electronically to the stakeholder database of over 200+ groups and organisations, forwarded through other channels between October and December 2024, and promoted using postcards and flyers with a QR code link at events, presentations, and workshops. Paper copies were also made available as needed.

The survey asked the following questions:

- The biggest challenges for cultural communities in Napier
- If Napier was the best multicultural city for everyone to live, work, play, and belong, what difference would that make for individuals, families, and the community?
- The top 3 to 5 focus areas for the Strategy

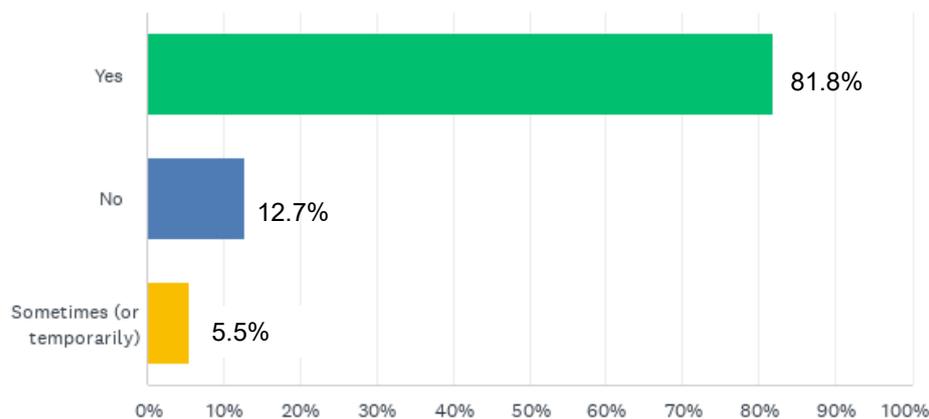
Respondents were also asked some basic details like their ethnicity, age range, and whether they were a resident of Napier and for how long.

### Who responded

A total of 165 people responded to the survey, of which 119 people completed it. This included individuals and 18 representatives of various organisations such as Tautua Limited, Eastern Institute of Technology, Peoples Advocacy Society, Hindu Council Hawke’s Bay, Napier Intermediate School, Faraday Museum of Technology, Fire and Emergency NZ, Te Rito Maioha Teachers community, Stroke Foundation, Mapu Maia and others.

The graph below shows that nearly 82% of respondents currently live in Napier. Those who do not either work in Napier or have familial ties.

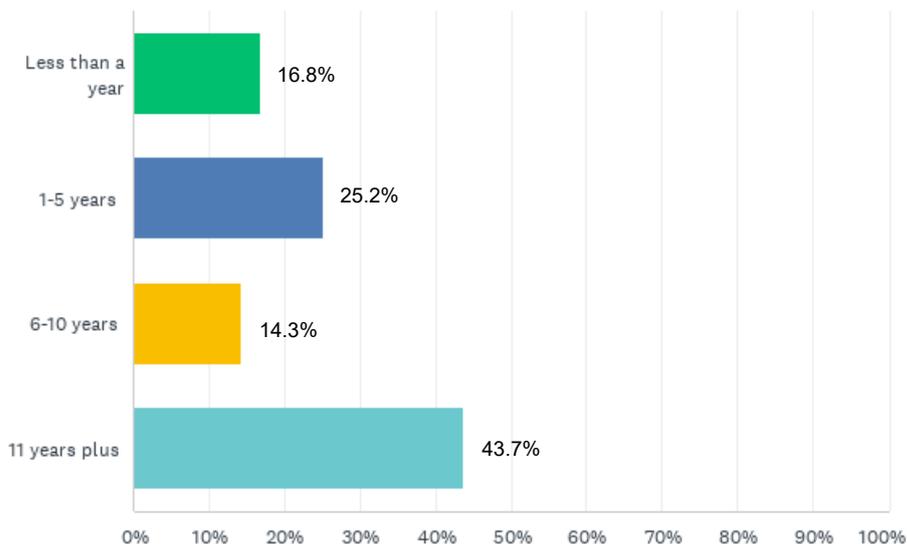
Figure 5 – Respondents that live in Napier,



Source – Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey, 2024

Over 40% of the respondents who completed the survey have lived in Napier for more than 11 years. Below is a graph of respondents by duration that they have lived in Napier.

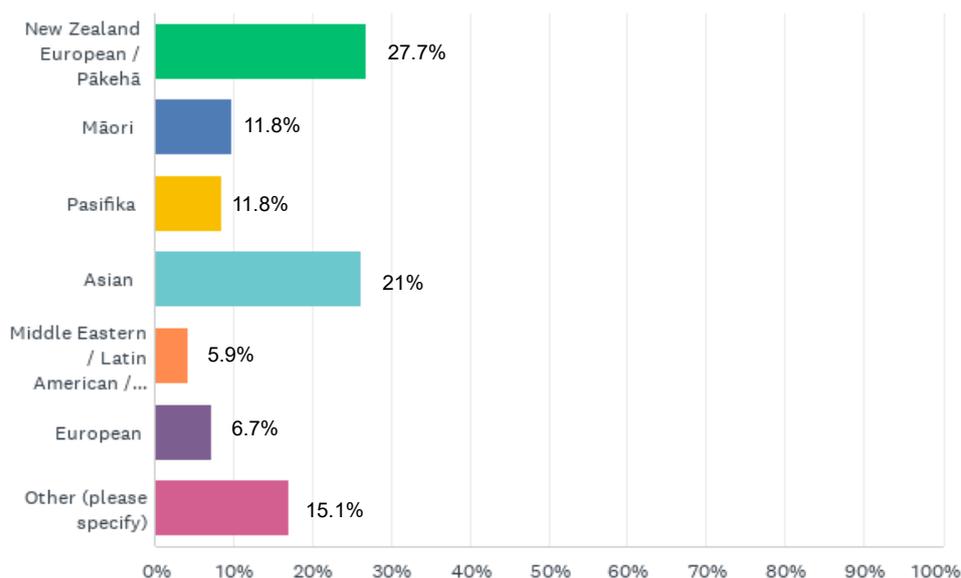
Figure 6 – Respondents duration as a resident living in Napier,



Source – Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey, 2024

The graph below shows a breakdown of the respondents who completed the survey by ethnicity. Those that identified as other mainly comprise the following ethnicities or countries of origin - Indian, South African, Dutch, Fiji, Indian, Sri Lankan, Welsh, Pasifika Māori and North American. Respondents from a wide range of cultures participated in the survey.

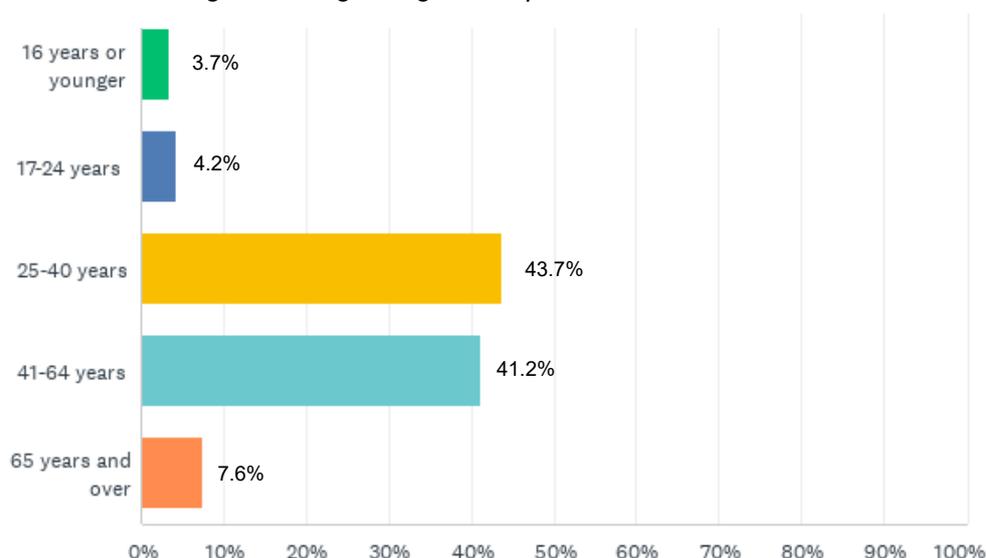
Figure 7 – Ethnicity of respondents, 2024



Source – Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey,

The survey had a good response from respondents in the 25 – 64 years age range (see Figure 8). Whilst there were a few young respondents at events, the majority of engagement with young people was through face-to-face events like workshops held with the Napier Youth Council and Tamatea High School.

Figure 8 – Age range of respondents, 2024



Source – Napier Multicultural Strategy Survey, 2024

The responses received confirmed the challenges and aspirations highlighted in the workshops and face-to-face engagement. Key challenges like racism, language barriers, isolation, finding employment, accessing housing, health services and feeling a lack of acceptance were common themes.

*“We have instances of racial abuse more than once both due to our colour and evident appearance as muslims. A society with a better understanding of different cultures would make a lot of difference.”*

In response to questions about what would be different if Napier was the best multicultural city, respondents highlighted the importance of feeling a sense of belonging, having more multicultural events, and having opportunities for cultural exchange. A vibrant, collaborative, understanding and supportive multicultural community where everyone can belong was the future state that respondents aspire to. Organisations sought enhanced diversity in the workforce where employees can express their cultural identity and have opportunities for cultural exchange were highlighted.

*“It would mean stronger social bonds, reduced discrimination, and a sense of unity despite differences. Local businesses and cultural initiatives would thrive as people from various backgrounds collaborate, bringing innovation and creativity.”*

Education and awareness about diverse groups and cultures, equitable access to services and opportunities, meaningful interaction between cultures through events, festivals and having visible, diverse and inclusive spaces were the top focus areas highlighted through the survey.

*“To truly make Napier a multicultural hub, the city must focus not only on immediate actions but also on creating sustainable, long-term frameworks for inclusivity. This means embedding diversity into every aspect of city life—from education to urban planning—while ensuring that minority voices are consistently part of decision-making processes. Encouraging an open mindset, celebrating differences, and fostering unity will take ongoing commitment from local leaders, organizations, and community members alike.”*

The findings of the survey will inform the strategy and contribute significantly to the development of the implementation plan.

### **Other feedback**

Napier Baha'i community made a submission in response to the pre-engagement survey sent out to community groups in December 2023. The submission is titled 'Celebrating Cultural Diversity and Enhancing Social Cohesion' and sets forth six guiding principles and corresponding actions. They have also identified two goals for consideration. These are:

- Hosting an annual or biannual public forum using a collaborative approach to foster greater social harmony, while acknowledging and celebrating diversity and showing Council's commitment to its multicultural community.
- Encouraging small neighbourhood-based activities to create collective ownership and eliminate prejudice.

This submission will also contribute to informing the implementation plan for the strategy.

## Strategy's draft priority areas – *What we found*

From this series of activities and feedback received, the following five areas emerged as the focus areas for 'the Strategy':

### 1. **Connected and cohesive community**

This includes having connections within communities to help newcomers settle in and thrive. Meaningful inter-cultural relationships where cultural communities feel a sense of belonging and are respected and valued citizens. It includes raising awareness among residents about other cultures, better coordination among service providers and building relationships with Mana Whenua for a better understanding of tikanga and Te Ao Māori.

### 2. **Cultural expression and pride**

People can embrace, express, and have opportunities to celebrate their cultural identity. The diversity of Napier is visible, valued and represented in public places and spaces.

### 3. **Access and support**

Easy and equitable access to reliable and trustworthy information, resources, services, and support. Includes access to language support, health services, immigration advice, employment and education pathways etc.

### 4. **Well-being and safety**

Fostering physical, mental, cultural, emotional and spiritual well-being. Feeling safe to be yourself at home, at work and in your community without feeling discriminated against.

### 5. **Engagement and participation**

Empowered communities are represented and have a voice. People of different cultures have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of community and civic life. All voices are represented, valued and contribute to decision making.

## Part Three

### Timeline

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
2006-2014	Napier City Council provides the Hawke's Bay Settlement Services as part of Immigration NZ (INZ)
2014	Napier City Council established the Hawke's Bay Settlement Forum
2017	Hawke's Bay Settlement Forum provides input to the Welcoming Communities Standard being developed and piloted by INZ
2020	Submission from the Multicultural Association of HB for Napier to create a Multicultural Strategy. NCC supports the development of a strategy as part of the Long-Term Plan 2020/21
July 2022	Napier City Council joins the Welcoming Communities Programme
June 2023	Desktop Review of Multicultural Strategies and Welcoming Plans across Local Government in Aotearoa, New Zealand
Sept 2023	Ethnic Community Profile 2023: Status and well-being of ethnic communities in Napier City
October 2023	Multicultural Strategy Steering Group established including NCC Councillor representative
April 2024	Multicultural Strategy Reference Group established
Oct 2023 - Oct 2024	Workshops with Steering and Reference Groups held 6 - 8 weekly
July - Sept 2024	Stakeholder database and engagement plan developed
Oct - Dec 2024	Stakeholder and Community Engagement carried out -workshops, presentations, events and survey
Feb - March 2025	Collation and analysis of stakeholder and community feedback
April 2025	Draft Multicultural Strategy shared with Steering and Reference Group for comment
2025	Draft Multicultural Strategy to Council

### Linkages

- Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Act 1993
- Ministry of Ethnic Communities Strategy 2022
- Ministry of Pacific Peoples Strategic Intentions 2023 - 2027
- Immigration NZ, Welcoming Communities Programme 2017
- Napier Youth Strategy, Napier City Council 2018
- Safer Napier Strategy 2022 – 2026, Napier City Council
- Napier City Council Strategic Priorities, 2023

## Appendices

Desktop Review Multicultural Strategies and Welcoming Plans  
across Local Government in Aotearoa 2023

Napier's Ethnic Community Profile, October 2023

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# DESKTOP REVIEW

## Multicultural Strategies & Welcoming Plans across Local Government in Aotearoa



**JUNE 2023**

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Prepared for Napier City Council  
Authored by: Tanya Jain

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## Executive Summary

Napier City Council is preparing to develop a Multicultural Strategy to better support its culturally diverse community and make Napier a city where everyone feels welcome and can contribute to all aspects of public life.

Under the Local Government Act, Councils have a responsibility to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities for the present and into the future. This includes ensuring equitable access to Council services and resources, and that individuals and communities experience a sense of belonging and the ability to express their own culture and identity. This report is based on a desktop review of existing Multicultural Strategies and Welcoming Communities Plans developed by Councils and communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Hastings District and Christchurch City are the only two Councils that have developed stand-alone Multicultural Strategies over the last five years. Both strategies acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand and recognise New Zealand as a multicultural society. Both highlight the need for Councils to show leadership and work collaboratively with the community and partner agencies to respond to the diverse needs of the community.

Welcoming Communities is an accreditation programme led by Immigration New Zealand in partnership with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. The initiative comprises eight outcome areas (standards) that are progressed as part of the four stages of accreditation. It brings together Councils, mana whenua, newcomers and communities who develop and implement a Welcoming Plan to make cities and regions more welcoming and inclusive. In this report, four Welcoming Plans were reviewed covering seven Councils, all of which were part of the pilot programme during 2017 – 2019. Of these, Palmerston North City and Tauranga & Western Bay of Plenty Councils have progressed through to Stage 2 accreditation, from being ‘a committed welcoming community’ to being ‘an established welcoming community’ in the last five years. The standards provide a framework for plan development and act as a benchmark to assess progress during implementation. However, INZ does not prescribe a structure for implementation or a timeline for Councils to move through the different stages, resulting in limited accountability or consistency in implementation.

Key themes and recommendations that have emerged from the review, confirm Napier City Council lead the development of a Multicultural Strategy for Napier in collaboration with mana whenua, ethnic community leaders and other stakeholders and community groups. It is recommended that an evidence-informed approach be used that includes relevant data and captures community voice. For the strategy to be effective, it is also recommended that its scope go beyond council-controlled levers and involve the wider community in order to ensure community ownership.

## Background

Historically, Napier City Council (NCC) was contracted to deliver Immigration New Zealand's (INZ) Settlement Support Service for Hawke's Bay. This service was facilitated by a coordinator employed by NCC who worked to connect newcomers, community groups and stakeholders with relevant support agencies. INZ changed the structure and delivery of this service in 2014, establishing regional roles that worked with employers and tertiary education providers shifting the focus to attracting and retaining skilled migrants. At the same time, INZ contracted Citizen's Advice Bureau to offer specialised support to migrants through community events and workshops.

The new structure created a gap as there was no longer a 'go-to person' to coordinate and foster connections between community groups, agencies as well as advocate for newcomers and migrants. This led to the establishment of the Hawke's Bay Settlement Forum in July 2014, coordinated by Napier City Council, which is still operational today. The Forum is a network of government, non-government organisations and key community groups that meet every other month to share projects, discuss issues affecting newcomers, and organise an annual community event to celebrate and showcase the diverse cultures of Napier.

Napier is becoming increasingly diverse with more newcomers choosing to call Napier home, contributing to the local economy, community and vibrancy of the city. Statistics collected during Census 2018, found 1 in 6 people living in Napier were born overseas and 1 in 10 people identified as Asian, Pacific, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or of other ethnicity.

Below is a demographic breakdown for ethnic communities in Napier and New Zealand from the 2013 and 2018 Census. While the percentage of Napier's ethnic population is noticeably smaller than the national average, there is steady growth in Napier's ethnic population when compared to the 2013 Census data.

	Napier		New Zealand	
	2013	2018	2013	2018
Born Overseas	14.5%	16.5%	23.6%	27.4%
Identify as European	79.0%	81.2%	70.0%	70.2%
Identify as Māori	18.2%	22.2%	14.1%	18.5%
Identify as Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or other ethnicity	8.8%	10.2%	20.8%	28.2%

Source: Stats NZ

It is in this context that Napier City Council is preparing to develop a Multicultural Strategy. NCC has also recently been accepted to INZ's Welcoming Communities (WC) Programme and will be developing a Welcoming Plan for the city, as a part of this. The following desktop review will inform the development of both these documents.

The Welcoming Communities Accreditation Programme was launched by INZ in 2017. It aims to put the welcome mat out to newcomers: recent migrants (>5 years), former refugees and international students. The programme is part of an international welcoming network with countries like Australia, Canada and the USA running similar initiatives. INZ supports the programme by providing seed funding, facilitating knowledge sharing among participating Councils, developing the standards and template for a Welcoming Plan and a structure for gaining accreditation.

32 Councils across 15 regions are currently part of the Welcoming Communities Programme. Of these, 13 Councils have recently been accepted into the programme (including Napier City Council) and are in the process of developing a Welcoming Plan.

## Approach

To identify which Multicultural strategies and Welcoming Plans to include in the desktop review, the following criteria were used:

1. Councils with an existing Multicultural Strategy were automatically included
2. Councils with a Welcoming Plan were selected using the following criteria:
  - a. Similar population size to Napier and
  - b. Similar ethnic demographic breakdown to Napier and
  - c. Accredited Welcoming Community for more than 3 years

There are only 18 Councils with current plans that will be compared against the selection criteria for review. However, some Councils like Western Bay of Plenty and Southland have developed joint plans for their region. Whilst Christchurch City Council has developed a Multicultural Strategy, they are not a part of the Welcoming Communities Programme.

Council	Population size similar to Napier	Ethnic demographic similar to Napier	Accredited WC for more than 3 years	Existing Multicultural Strategy
Hamilton City Council	✗	✗	✗	✗
Tauranga City Council*	✗	✗	✓	✗
Western Bay of Plenty District Council*	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hastings District Council	✓	✓	✗	✓
Palmerston North City Council	✓	✓	✓	✗
Whanganui District Council	✓	✓	✓	✗

Council	Population size similar to Napier	Ethnic demographic similar to Napier	Accredited WC for more than 3 years	Existing Multicultural Strategy
Rangitikei District Council	✘	✓	✘	✘
Horowhenua District Council	✘	✓	✘	✘
Masterton District Council	✓	✘	✘	✘
Nelson City Council	✓	✘	✘	✘
Tasman District Council	✓	✓	✘	✘
Ashburton District Council	✘	✓	✓	✘
Christchurch City Council	✘	✘	✘	✓
Selwyn District Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Queenstown Lakes District Council	✘	✘	✘	✘
Central Otago District Council	✘	✓	✘	✘
Gore District Council*	✘	✘	✓	✘
Invercargill City Council*	✓	✓	✓	✘
Southland District Council*	✘	✓	✓	✘

\*These Councils have developed joint plans with other territorial authorities in their region

Based on the criteria and discussion with Napier City Council staff, the following Council documents were agreed to be included in the review:

1. Multicultural Strategy - Hastings District Council
2. Multicultural Strategy - Christchurch City Council
3. Newcomers and Migrants Strategy - Selwyn District Council
4. Welcoming Plan - Invercargill City, Gore District and Southland District Councils
5. Welcoming Plan - Palmerston North City Council
6. Welcoming Plan - Whanganui District Council
7. Welcoming Plan - Western Bay of Plenty & Tauranga City Councils

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## Overview

Christchurch City Council and Hastings District Council are the only two Councils in New Zealand to have developed Multicultural Strategies. Selwyn District Council has a Newcomers and Migrants Strategy that was adopted in 2015. Selwyn District Council was also one of the pilot districts for the Welcoming Communities Programme in 2017 and is accredited as a Stage One Welcoming Community. Similarly, Hastings District Council's Multicultural Strategy was adopted in 2020 and they became a Welcoming Community in 2022. Christchurch has been delivering the 'Our Future Together' Multicultural Strategy since 2017.

Below is an overview of the three multicultural and migrant strategy documents, the Welcoming Communities programme and four Welcoming Plans across seven Councils that were reviewed:

### 1. Christchurch Multicultural Strategy – Te Rautaki Mātāwaka Rau (2017- 2021)

Developed alongside Ngāi Tahu, Te Rautaki Mātāwaka Rau ('the strategy') recognises Council has a leadership role in making Christchurch a city where diversity is celebrated and all people belong. The strategy is underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and has a vision for Christchurch to be an inclusive, multicultural and multilingual city that values the environment and people work together to achieve common goals. It describes the economic and social benefits of a diverse society and acknowledges challenges faced by ethnic communities such as social isolation, stress for children and young people from "living in two worlds", difficulty in accessing information and services as well as racism and discrimination. The Strategy describes the following four goals in detail that contribute to its vision and strategic outcomes:

- The Christchurch City Council is an inclusive and diverse organization that reflects, understands and responds to the diversity of individuals and communities it serves.
- All communities have equitable access to Council services and resources.
- All residents are able to participate in Council decision-making.
- Christchurch is a city of cultural vibrancy, diversity, inclusion and connection.

Furthermore, the strategy includes a list of priority actions for each goal and details that will be implemented in stages. A steering group of Council managers and community champions guide and support implementation. The implementation plan provides details relating to specific outcome areas for each goal, such as workforce development, strategic use of funding, equipping people to engage, supporting settlement and integration.

It states that a Multicultural Advisory Group at governance level be established to advise the Council on issues related to the principles and goals of this strategy. Progress be measured, reported and published in an annual Diversity and Inclusion Report to the Council or one of its committees. Finally, it is intended that the strategy be gradually integrated into Council plans and activities with measures and indicators, along with implementation and budget allocations in line with Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

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## 2. Hastings District Multicultural Strategy – Te Rautaki Kākano Maha O Heretaunga (2020-2025)

The Hastings District Multicultural Strategy vision is for Hastings to be an inclusive welcoming community where everyone belongs. The Council acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all members of the community feel respected and accepted. Developed alongside Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi, the strategy uses a whakatāuki to describe the region Heretaunga and give it context. An element of the whakatāuki “Heretaunga Ararau” Heretaunga of converging pathways) speaks of diversity, discourse, innovation, collision and collusion of ideas, identity and interpretation. The strategy acknowledges multiculturalism as a strength to be celebrated and that a harmonious community requires respect and understanding of all cultures living in the Hastings district. It also highlights the importance of communities leading their own development and that this strategy will require council, community and stakeholders to work together. The strategy includes the following five goals:

- Multiculturalism and diversity are celebrated in the Hastings District
- Hastings District is a welcoming, inclusive and safe place for all
- People of all cultures have equitable access to council services and resources
- All residents feel empowered to participate in council decision-making
- Council to be a role model in terms of cultural diversity in the workforce

The strategy states that a five-year action plan for implementation of the strategy be developed and driven by a Reference group of Council officers and partners. It describes initial actions, such as developing a cultural calendar of Hastings events, promotion and celebration of language weeks, exploring Welcoming Communities accreditation, and developing a database of local cultural group contacts all of which contribute to the strategy goals.

It is intended that the strategy be gradually integrated with relevant Council plans and activities and where possible be implemented using existing budgets. The Multicultural Reference Group will monitor progress to be reported on annually.

## 3. Selwyn District Council Newcomers and Migrants Strategy (adopted 2015)

This strategy has been developed as a part of Selwyn District Council’s Social Wellbeing Strategy which outlines a broad range of wellbeing objectives and initiatives. The vision is that all newcomers and migrants to Selwyn feel welcome, settle in, participate and flourish in the Selwyn community. The strategy acknowledges Ngāi Tahu as mana whenua of Selwyn and emphasises the growing diversity of Selwyn drawing on findings from the Health and Social Wellbeing Strategy to highlight challenges faced by newcomers and migrants. It identifies six key outcomes:

- All newcomers and migrants in Selwyn District know where and how to access information, both online and in person.
- Community groups and agencies collaborate, share information and support each other to deliver initiatives through a coordinated approach across the district.

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- All newcomers and migrants are informed of and have access to social agencies and migrant support, both locally and from Christchurch.
  - Initiatives are developed to celebrate our diverse community. Our community buildings and public artwork better reflect the many cultures within Selwyn.
  - A range of projects and support services are developed to help newcomers and migrants adjust to their new home and feel less isolated.
  - All programmes and projects and initiatives align with principles taken from the five ways to well-being defined by the Mental Health Foundation – Connect, Give, Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice.

The strategy outlines the structure for a collaborative approach for implementation by establishing an Advisory Group, Steering Group and Working parties. The Advisory Group includes key agencies that know the needs of migrants and newcomers. The role of this group is to inform the strategic plan and advise the Steering Group comprised of local agencies as well as those that have an interest in the newcomers and migrant sector. The role of the Steering Group is to develop an implementation plan for each of the outcome areas to be rolled out by the working parties 'on the ground'.

#### 4. Welcoming Communities Programme

Immigration NZ's Welcoming Communities (WC) Programme is a settlement programme that supports local government Councils and their communities to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for newcomers: recent migrants (>5 years), former refugees and international students. It was piloted from 2017 – 2019 across five regions including 10 Councils. One of the key drivers for the programme was a need for regions to attract newcomers to address skill shortages and grow the local economy. The government supported investing in community engagement and relationships, increased social cohesion, promoted inclusion and diversity and improved socio-cultural well-being within communities.

Upon completion of the pilot programme, an independent evaluation report shared many positive outcomes against each of the WC standards - including there being an explicit shift to locals taking on a 'welcoming' role, councils seen as providing strong leadership and engaging in deliberate and appropriate ways with newcomers as well as supporting more programmes and activities that demonstrate cultural diversity. Evidence collected during the evaluation showed the pilot programme had a meaningful impact and newcomers felt more confident to display and be proud of their culture. Since then, the programme has expanded to 32 Councils across New Zealand.

Below is an overview of the three key components of the programme:

**a. Welcoming Standards**

At the heart of the Welcoming Communities programme are 8 Welcoming Standards that are vital to building a welcoming community. These standards, described below, guide plan development and also serve as a benchmark to assess progress against each standard:

<p><b>Inclusive Leadership</b> Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.</p>	<p><b>Economic Development, Business and Employment</b> Communities maximise and harness the economic development opportunities that newcomers can offer. Council works with business associations to promote the contribution that newcomer business owners and skilled migrants make to the region's economy.</p>
<p><b>Welcoming Communication</b> People of all cultures and backgrounds feel included, listened to and well informed through a range of ways that take into account their different communication needs.</p>	<p><b>Civic Engagement and Participation</b> Newcomers feel welcome to fully participate in the community. Newcomers are active in all forms of civic participation.</p>
<p><b>Equitable Access</b> Opportunities to access services and activities and to participate in the community are available to all, including newcomers.</p>	<p><b>Welcoming Public Spaces</b> Newcomers and receiving communities feel welcome in and comfortable using public spaces.</p>
<p><b>Connected and Inclusive Communities</b> People feel safe in their identity and that they are connected with and belong in the community. There are high levels of trust and understanding between members of the receiving community and newcomers.</p>	<p><b>Culture and Identity</b> There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by other members of the community. There are opportunities to learn about each other's culture.</p>

*Source - Welcoming Communities Action Plan — Western Bay of Plenty (immigration.govt.nz)*

The standards form the template for the Welcoming Plans developed by the participating Councils, allowing for a basic level of consistency in terms of focus areas and activities planned by councils to make their community more welcoming for newcomers.



## b. Accreditation

Councils can apply for formal accreditation as a Welcoming Community and choose how quickly they move through the stages. The table below describes the four stages of accreditation, how they are assessed and the benefits and recognition for each stage:

Stage	Description	Assessment	Benefits & Recognition	Application Fee
<b>Stage 1</b> <b>A Committed Welcoming Community</b>	The Mayor, the Council, its CEO and other community partners have signed up to the Welcoming Communities programme	The following are in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council resolution</li> <li>➤ MBIE funding agreement</li> <li>➤ Welcoming Communities Coordinator</li> <li>➤ Statement of Commitment</li> <li>➤ Public notification of commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Seed funding - \$50,000 per annum per Council or group of Councils for the first 3 years</li> <li>➤ Access to national and international resources, support and advice</li> <li>➤ Promoted on INZ's website</li> <li>➤ Access to national Welcoming Communities workshops</li> <li>➤ Regular newsletters and networking opportunities</li> <li>➤ Announcement and certification</li> </ul>	No fee
<b>Stage 2</b> <b>An Established Welcoming Community</b>	The Council and community are clear about what they want to achieve, have a Welcoming Plan and have started implementing activities	Self – assessment  Review of self–assessment by the External Accreditation Assessment Panel (the Panel)  Report	All non–financial benefits and recognition detailed above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A contribution to Welcoming Communities activities (\$9,500)</li> <li>➤ eligible to apply for national awards</li> </ul>	\$1000
<b>Stage 3</b> <b>An Advanced Welcoming Community</b>	The Council and community are moving towards fully implementing their Welcoming Plan. They are confident about how to deliver successful welcoming activities that make a difference and are trialling innovative activities.	Self – assessment  Review of self–assessment by the Panel  Site visit by the Panel  Report	All non–financial benefits and recognition detailed above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a contribution to professional development (\$2000)</li> <li>➤ case studies are featured in INZ publications internationally</li> <li>➤ INZ media release</li> </ul>	\$1500
<b>Stage 4</b> <b>An Excelling Welcoming Community</b>	The Council and community have implemented most of their Welcoming Plan. They are reflecting on their successes and sharing their knowledge and experience with other Councils and communities in the welcoming network.	Self – assessment  Review of self–assessment by the Panel  Site visit by the Panel  Report	All non–financial benefits and recognition detailed above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a contribution to professional development (\$2000)</li> <li>➤ support from INZ to leverage off status nationally and globally</li> </ul>	\$1500

Source: [Welcoming Communities Accreditation Overview \(immigration.govt.nz\)](https://www.immigration.govt.nz/welcoming-communities)

### c. Welcoming Plans

As mentioned previously, there were four Welcoming Plans across seven Councils reviewed as part of this report. The most up-to-date plans available on the Council or Immigration NZ website were selected, including:

- Welcoming Communities Advisory Group Plan - Palmerston North City Council (2020 – 2023)
- Welcoming Communities Plan -Whanganui District Council (2018 – 2019)
- Welcoming Communities Action Plan – Western Bay of Plenty & Tauranga City Councils (2018 – 2023)
- Southland Murihiku Welcoming Plan – Invercargill City, Gore District and Southland District Councils (2019)

All four Welcoming Plans reviewed are similar in structure as they follow the template of the WC Standards and have listed several actions in detail for each of the standards - Inclusive Leadership, Welcoming Communications, Equitable Access, Connected and Inclusive Communities, Economic Development, Business & Employment, Civic Engagement & Participation, Welcoming Public Spaces and Culture & Identity.

Of the four Welcoming Plans reviewed, Whanganui and Southland regions were identified as a 'Committed Welcoming Community' whereas Palmerston North City and Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty were accredited with the status of "Established Welcoming Community" in 2020.

## Key Themes

The key themes that emerged from the **Multicultural Strategies** are as follows:

### 1. Partnering with mana whenua

Both Christchurch and Hastings Councils have worked alongside mana whenua in their region to develop their strategies. Both acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand and the foundation of a partnership between Māori and Pakeha. Given the bi-cultural historical discourse of New Zealand, it is important to note that both Ngāi Tahu (of Christchurch) and Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi (of Hastings) appear to have a crucial role in giving context and acknowledgement to the multiculturalism in the communities.

### 2. Leadership role of Councils

Christchurch and Hastings Councils recognise their role is to lead the way and be role models in order to achieve their vision of being safe vibrant and diverse places. While a collaborative approach to implementation is expected, most strategic goals in their strategies focus on levers that council controls – like equitable access to council services and resources, ability to participate in council decision-making and being an inclusive organization that reflects a diverse workforce.

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### 3. Strategic linkages at national level

All three strategies are aligned with a number of national strategies, priorities, and programmes. Some of these are:

- New Zealand Human Rights Commission – Statutory responsibilities of the Commission include encouraging the development and maintenance of harmonious relations between individuals and among diverse groups in society and promoting racial equality and cultural diversity.
- Ministry of Ethnic Communities (MEC) – Established as a ministry earlier this year, the MEC is the chief advisor to the government on ethnic diversity and inclusion of ethnic communities in wider society. Their strategic priorities include promoting the value of diversity, ensuring equitable access to government services to ethnic communities as well as connecting and empowering ethnic people across New Zealand.
- Welcoming Communities (WC) – The WC programme by INZ is part of an international 'welcoming' movement that shares best practices to involve residents and local communities to make cities and districts more welcoming for newcomers. Similar initiatives operate in Australia, Canada, Europe and the USA. Furthermore, the strategies align well with the Welcoming Community Standard that looks at areas like Inclusive Leadership, Welcoming Communications, Equitable Access, Welcoming Public Spaces etc.

In addition to these, there are also strong linkages with local community outcomes and goals in each of the regions.

### 4. Supporting integration versus celebrating multiculturalism

A subtle difference in approach was noted between Hastings and Christchurch Multicultural Strategies and the Newcomers and Migrants Strategy of Selwyn District Council. The latter focuses more on integration of newcomers, supporting them to assimilate easily by accessing information and enabling them to flourish rather than making the district a welcoming, inclusive and safe space for all. Furthermore, while it enlists a number of focus areas and challenges like social isolation, access to information etc, it doesn't acknowledge racism or discrimination in any way. On the other hand, both Christchurch and Hastings' strategy principles state that there is no place for racism or discrimination in their city/district. While the goals of all three strategies are similar, the Newcomers and Migrants Strategy seems to be narrower in scope.

### 5. Mandate for Welcoming Communities

One of the priority actions in the Hastings Multicultural Strategy is to explore participation in the Welcoming Communities accreditation programme offered by INZ. Selwyn District Council's Welcoming Plan describes their strategy as the 'cornerstone for newcomer and migrant programmes in Selwyn' and states that the Welcoming Plan should be read alongside the strategy document.

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Given that the WC Programme targets newcomers, former refugees and international students, it seems appropriate to have an overarching strategy that mandates Council's participation in the programme.

It was also noted that while Christchurch adopted a Multicultural Strategy in 2017, they are not a participating Council for the WC programme and there is no mention of the initiative in their strategy implementation plan.

## 6. Synergy in strategic principles and goals

The two Multicultural Strategies reviewed have similar strategic principles and goals as they aspire to make their city/district a welcoming, vibrant, inclusive place where everyone belongs and feels accepted and respected. There is synergy in the leadership role of the Council, a treaty-based approach, and a more holistic view of diversity in the community.

The following themes emerged from a review of the **Welcoming Plans**:

## 7. Accreditation & Accountability

All four Welcoming Plans reviewed were a part of the pilot carried out by INZ and thus started the process around the same time in 2017. More than five years later, only two of the four have achieved stage 2 accreditation, namely Palmerston North City and Western Bay of Plenty & Tauranga City Councils. While Councils must have the flexibility around moving through the stages, there doesn't seem to be any further accountability required by INZ to ensure that participating Councils continue to be engaged in the initiative.

Furthermore, INZ commits seed funding for three years once a Council is accepted into the Welcoming Communities Programme. Whilst there are opportunities to access more funding support from INZ as a Council moves through the stages of accreditation, Councils will have to consider if and how this work will be funded if they don't move to the next stage of accreditation within the three-year timeframe.

## 8. Regional approach versus local approach

The Southland plan includes Invercargill City, Gore District, Southland District as well as the regional Council. It seems like a collaborative approach across Councils could be beneficial for having consistency across the region, however, the risk is a lack of local flavour. The Southland plan seems to be mainly driven by the Councils with minimal engagement with the community and lists mainly generic actions. While an Advisory Group was established to develop this plan, there is no mention of organisations represented by members. In addition, the needs of an urban city such as Invercargill amongst more thinly spread and rural districts is not reflected in the Southland Welcoming Plan.

In contrast, the Palmerston North Welcoming Plan is clearly and succinctly laid out with updates about where they are now, where they want to be with details of existing initiatives being implemented and new ones being initiated. The Plan mentions local academic research that has been commissioned on topics of belonging and civic engagement among migrants and former refugees, which will further inform their

activities and practices. Their plan captures the varied demographic and rich local vibrancy of Palmerston North.

## 9. Structure & Implementation

INZ doesn't prescribe a structure for plan development or implementation of the Welcoming Plan and Councils can set up their own structures for implementation. While Whanganui and Southland regions have an Advisory Group to drive the programme, their plans don't provide additional information about the organisations represented.

Palmerston North also has an Advisory Group that includes representatives from relevant wide-ranging government, business, not-for-profit and community organisations that meets bimonthly to guide and coordinate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities programme. They also refer to a wider group of stakeholders and individuals who have contributed to their initiatives.

Conversely, Western Bay of Plenty has a Welcoming Communities Tactical Group as well as a Welcoming Communities Coalition that works with the Community Development Advisor and MBIE to implement the Welcoming Plan. The Tactical Group reports to a Joint Governance Committee.

## Recommendations

### 1. Development of a Multicultural Strategy

A Multicultural Strategy recognises and celebrates diversity in a community and sets the direction for Council and the wider community to make a city an inclusive safe place for all. It also mandates Council's participation in initiatives like Welcoming Communities and shows commitment to the well-being of its ethnic communities. With the growing diversity in New Zealand and Napier, it is recommended that Napier City Council develop a Multicultural Strategy that sits alongside the Welcoming Communities programme it has already committed to.

While the Welcoming Communities Programme aims to involve the whole community in welcoming newcomers, it is targeting newcomers who have been in the country for less than 5 years. However, there are several migrants and people of ethnic communities who have been in New Zealand for longer periods who also face several challenges or may feel socially and culturally isolated. A Multicultural Strategy would give Council scope to consider a wide range of initiatives that support all ethnic communities as well as newcomers.

### 2. Collaboration with mana whenua

Both Christchurch and Hastings Multicultural strategies and the Welcoming Communities Standard 'Inclusive Leadership' highlight the role of mana whenua in welcoming newcomers and acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand. Working in partnership with mana whenua is crucial when laying the foundation and recognising and celebrating multiculturalism in our communities. It is

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recommended that Ahuriri/Napier mana whenua be meaningfully engaged in the process of developing Napier's Multicultural Strategy and Welcoming Community Plan from the outset.

### 3. Data and evidence-informed approach

Developing a community data profile for Napier including demographic information, employment and income, languages spoken, religious affiliations as well as attitudinal information would lay the groundwork for developing and monitoring the strategy. Similar to Palmerston North, it may also be useful to commission local academic research and focus groups to learn more about specific challenges of ethnic communities in Napier.

An approach informed by data and evidence would allow the strategy, and the following implementation plan to develop relevant and effective initiatives that have a meaningful impact on the community.

### 4. Scope

Given the scope of the Welcoming Communities Programme which seeks to involve local residents as the receiving community in laying out the welcoming mat for newcomers, it is recommended that the scope of the Multicultural strategy be community-wide and go beyond Council-controlled levers. While Council is best positioned to lead the way, other stakeholders and ethnic communities must play their part in the development and implementation of this strategy to create a sense of local ownership.

Similar to Napier City Council's Positive Ageing Strategy, the multicultural strategy would be most effective if it is owned and implemented by various stakeholder organisations and community groups. Being a community-wide strategy would also create opportunities for ethnic people to take on leadership and coordination roles (with support from Council). This would further their integration into the local community and help grow ethnic community leaders in Napier.

### 5. Governance & Structure

It is recommended that a strategic group of mana whenua, ethnic community leaders and stakeholder organisations led by Council drive the development of the multicultural strategy and a reference group of ethnic, migrant and newcomer community members and/or their association representatives be established to support with community engagement and feed into the strategy development process.

This would help ensure that a wide range of thoughts, ideas and voices are heard and incorporated into the strategy development process.

### 6. Role of Council

The leadership role of Council in making their city or district more welcoming, where all cultures thrive and are celebrated is a common thread among all three strategies as well as the Welcoming Plans. It is recommended that Napier City Council also take on the role of a leader and facilitator to collaborate with the community and stakeholders, to bring together the different threads and weave the welcome mat for

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newcomers to Napier. It is also important that Council be a role model and commit to improving cultural diversity in the workforce.

Furthermore, in the absence of explicit requirements by Immigration NZ for progressing from one stage of accreditation to the next of the WC programme, the onus will be on Council to make a commitment and set goals and timeframes for itself to progress to the next stage of the Programme.

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## Appendix

### Research and documents reviewed

Welcoming Communities Programme

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/welcoming-communities>

Evaluation Report - Welcoming Communities Pilot

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/welcoming-communities/resources-welcoming-communities/welcoming-communities-evaluation-final-report-2019-1.pdf>

Welcoming Communities NZ – Intervention Logic 2021

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/welcoming-communities/resources-welcoming-communities/welcoming-communities-intervention-logic-july-2021.pdf>

Place Summary, Census 2018

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/napier-city>

Hastings District Multicultural Strategy

<https://www.hastingsdc.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Strategies/The-Hastings-District-Multicultural-Strategy/The-Hastings-District-Multicultural-Strategy.PDF>

Christchurch Multicultural Strategy

<https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/The-Council/Plans-Strategies-Policies-Bylaws/Strategies/Multicultural-Strategy.pdf>

Selwyn Newcomers and Migrant Strategy

[https://www.selwyn.govt.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/203282/Newcomers-and-Migrant-Strategy.pdf](https://www.selwyn.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/203282/Newcomers-and-Migrant-Strategy.pdf)

Palmerston North City Welcoming Communities Advisory Group Plan 2020 -2023

<https://www.pncc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/documents/Council/plans/welcoming-communities-advisory-group-plan-2020-23.pdf>

Whanganui Welcoming Communities Plan 2018 - 2019

[https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/files/assets/public/guides-and-information/04564\\_wdc-whanganui-welcoming-communities-plan\\_lr.pdf](https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/files/assets/public/guides-and-information/04564_wdc-whanganui-welcoming-communities-plan_lr.pdf)

Western Bay of Plenty Welcoming Communities Action Plan 2018 - 2020

[https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/Portals/0/data/community/welcoming\\_communities/files/welcoming\\_plan\\_2018\\_2023.pdf](https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/Portals/0/data/community/welcoming_communities/files/welcoming_plan_2018_2023.pdf)

Southland Murihiku Welcoming Plan

<https://greatsouth.nz/storage/app/media/Publications/Southland%20-%20Welcome%20Plan%202019.pdf>

# ETHNIC COMMUNITY PROFILE 2023

## Status and wellbeing of ethnic communities in Napier City



**OCTOBER 2023**

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**Prepared for Napier City Council**

**Authored by: Tanya Jain**

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## 1. Introduction

### What is a Community Profile?

A community profile provides information and data to understand the demographic and social characteristics of a group of people in a specific place. They can be used to understand changes in the composition of the population group over time. A community profile can also provide information to assess needs, allocate resources, develop plans and assist with designing and delivering community engagement.

This community profile provides information about the status and wellbeing of migrant and ethnic communities in Napier City, including

- Demographic data for various ethnic communities with comparisons to New Zealand and Napier averages, as appropriate.
- Employment and income related data for ethnic communities including details about occupation and industry participation.
- Perceptions of ethnic communities about safety, their sense of belonging and wellbeing, and other qualitative information about living in Napier

### Who can use this Community Profile?

The profile can be used by individuals, community groups and organisations with an interest in Napier's ethnic communities. It is intended to inform and assist with decision making and planning of community initiatives and projects.

The profile can also be used by members of ethnic communities to assist with providing the big picture about the status and wellbeing of their community and how it compares with the wider Napier population.

### Data Sources

Information used in this report has been collated from the following sources:

- Census 2018 data by Statistics New Zealand<sup>1</sup>
- Data Dashboard by Ministry for Ethnic Communities (MEC) based on 2018 Census
- Napier City Council's Social Monitor Survey 2019 - 2022

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand provides an assessment of the quality of 2018 Census data here: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/2018-census/data-quality-for-2018-census>

## About Ethnicity Data

Ethnicity related data is collected by Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) through the Census. This is an official count of the people and dwellings in New Zealand held every five years, to inform how as a country we are changing over time.

Statistics NZ defines ethnicity as an ethnic group or groups a person identifies with or has a sense of belonging to. It is a measure of cultural affiliation (in contrast to race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship). Ethnicity is self-identified and a person can belong to more than one ethnic group. An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all of the following characteristics:

- a common proper name
- one or more elements of common culture that need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language
- a unique community of interests, feelings, and actions
- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry
- a common geographic origin

A person may belong to more than one ethnic group. In this instance, Stats NZ counts them once in each identified ethnic group. Therefore, the number of total responses will be greater than the number of respondents. More information about how Stats NZ records ethnicity data is in Appendix 1.

Information in this ethnic profile includes responses from all those who identified with an ethnicity other than NZ European or Māori. However, people who would have selected NZ European or Māori as one of their ethnicities will also be represented in the results.

Diversity data from the Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey (2022) was used to gain insights into the social wellbeing of the ethnic community in Napier by comparing responses of those categorised as 'Other' ethnicity with overall responses of the general population. A total of 81 of 528 responses, or 15% of the total responses collected in the survey indicated an ethnicity other than NZ European or Māori. Whilst the percentage of responses by 'other' ethnicity is proportional to their population in Napier, the numbers are too small to draw significant conclusions or recommendations. This should be only seen as a starting point to identify gaps and opportunities for further targeted research.

## 2. Demographic Information

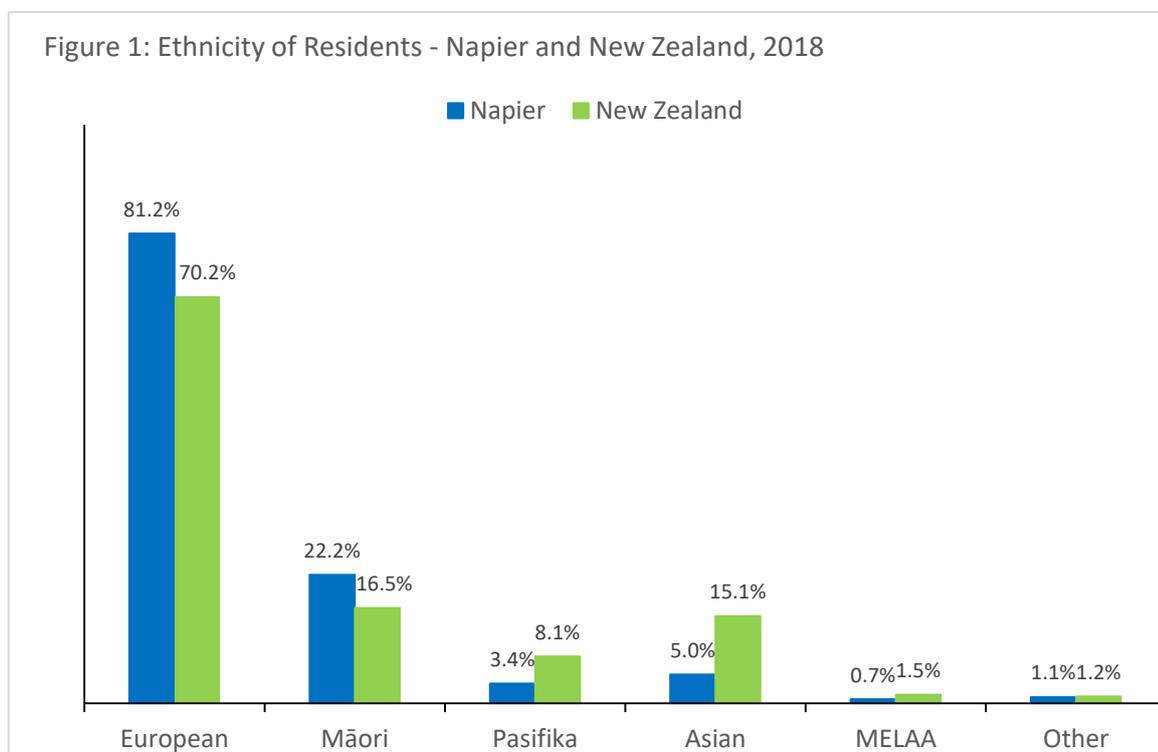
Napier is becoming increasingly diverse with more newcomers choosing to call Napier home, contributing to the local economy, community and vibrancy of the city. According to Census 2018, 6,435 people living in Napier have an ethnicity other than NZ European or Māori i.e. 1 in 10 people in Napier identify as Asian, Pacific, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) or of other ethnicity. Additionally, Napier has a higher proportion of European and Māori than the national average (Figure 1).

The ethnic community in Napier has a slightly larger percentage of males than females, which is the opposite of the overall Napier population (Table 1).

Table 1: Sex Ratio of Residents – Ethnic population, 2018

	Male	Female
Ethnic Community	51%	49%
Napier	48%	52%

Source: Customised Report by Stats NZ

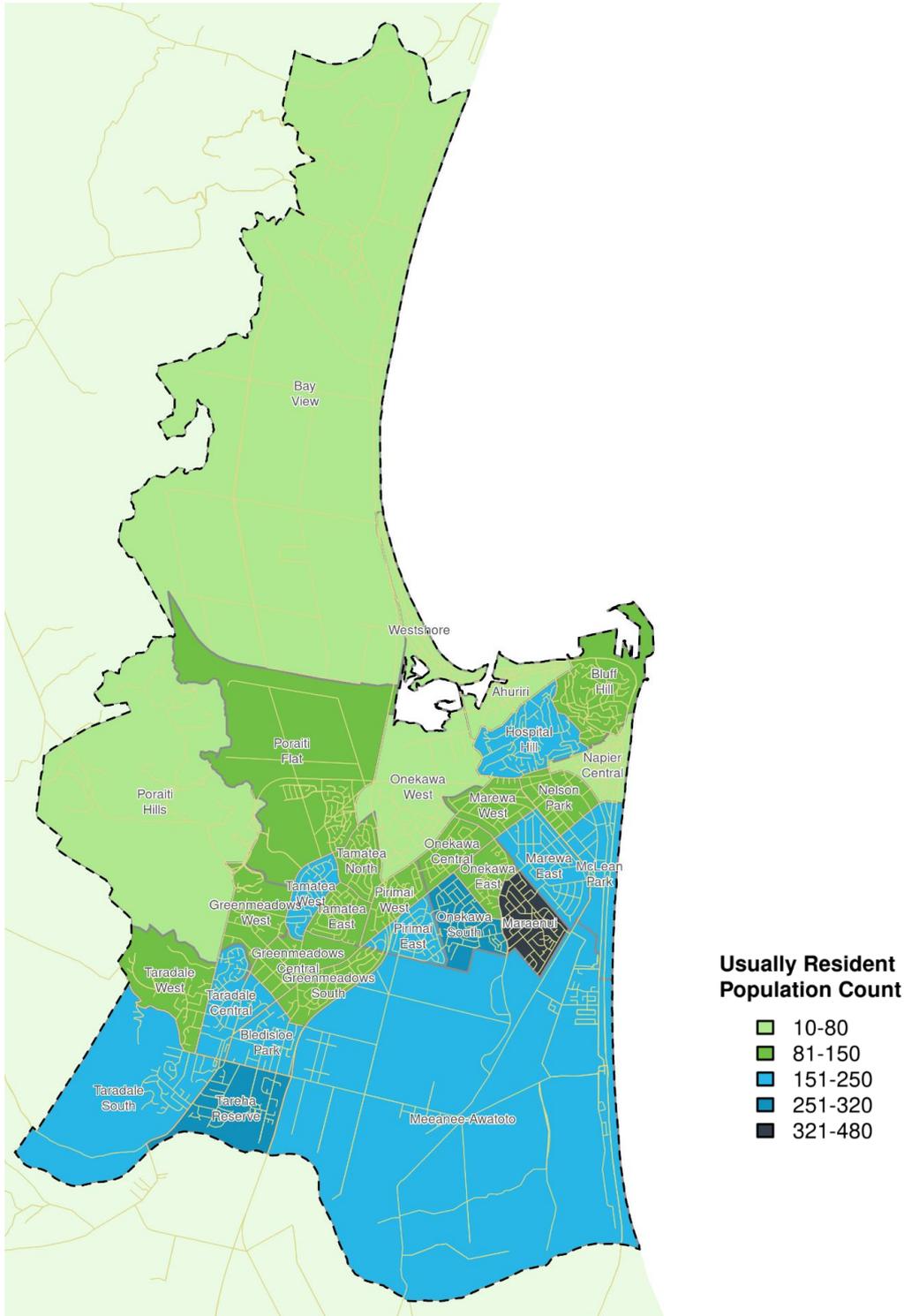


Source: Census 2018, Stats NZ



In terms of geographical distribution, Maraenui, Onekawa South and Tareha Reserve area in Taradale appear to have the highest density of ethnic population. Overall, there is higher concentration of ethnic population in the southern suburbs of Napier (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Map showing ethnic population distribution by suburb in Napier, 2018



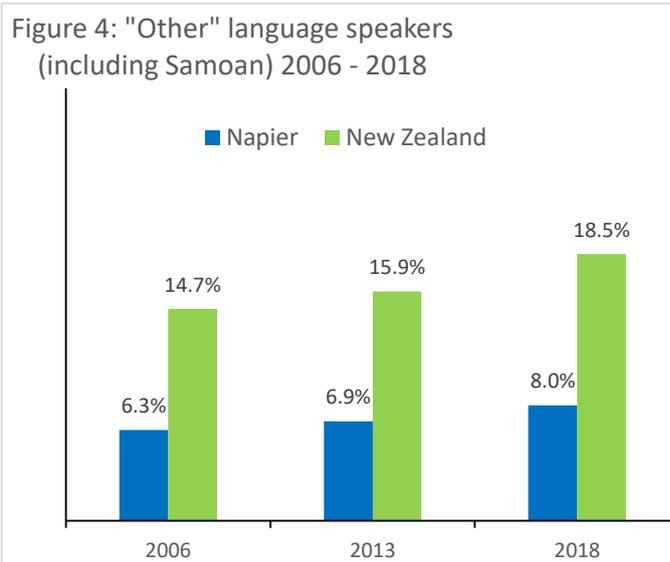
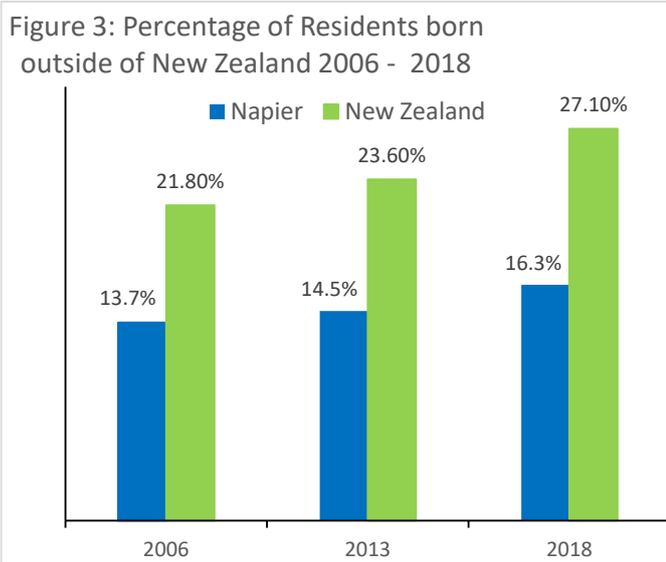
Source: Customised Report by Stats NZ



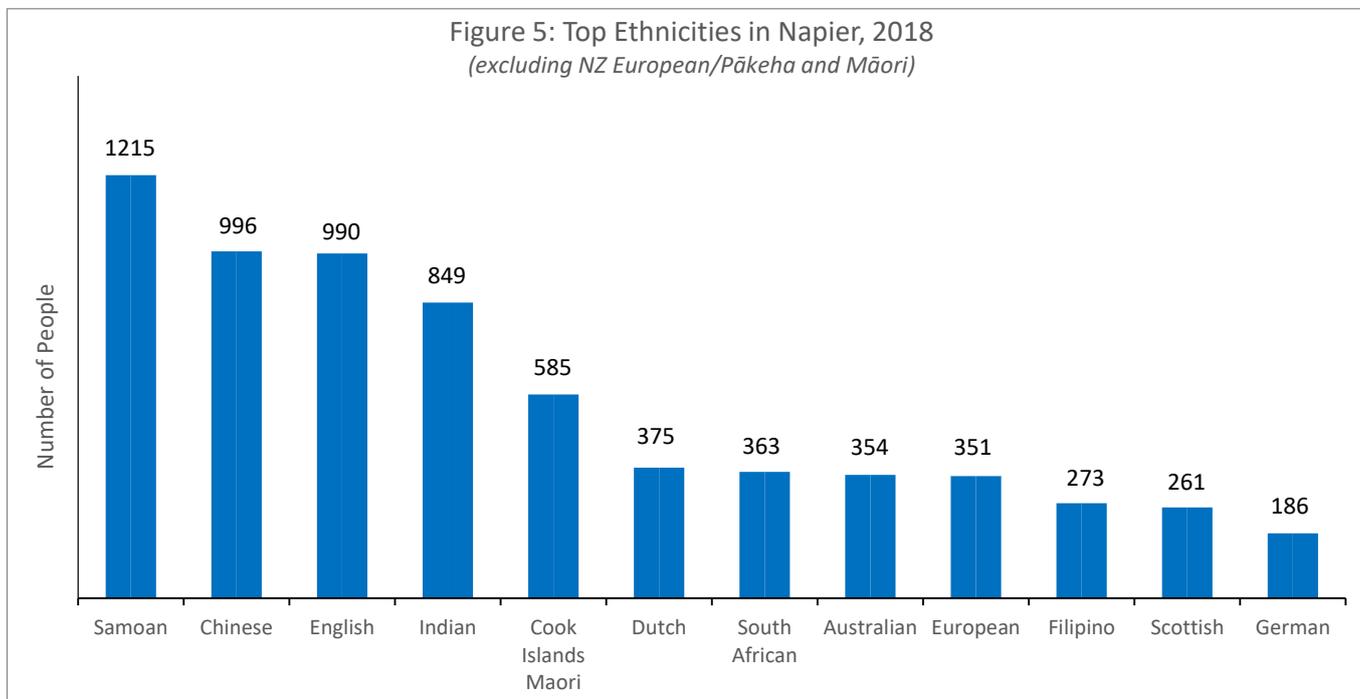
### 2.1 Cultural Diversity

While Napier city’s ethnic community is growing at a slower pace than the New Zealand average (Figure 3), Napier residents still represent more than 70 countries and ethnic groups from across the world. There is also an increase in the number of people who speak ‘other’ languages i.e. languages other than English, Te Re Māori and NZ Sign Language (Figure 4).

There is a wide range of ethnicities and languages spoken in Napier (Figure 5 & 6).

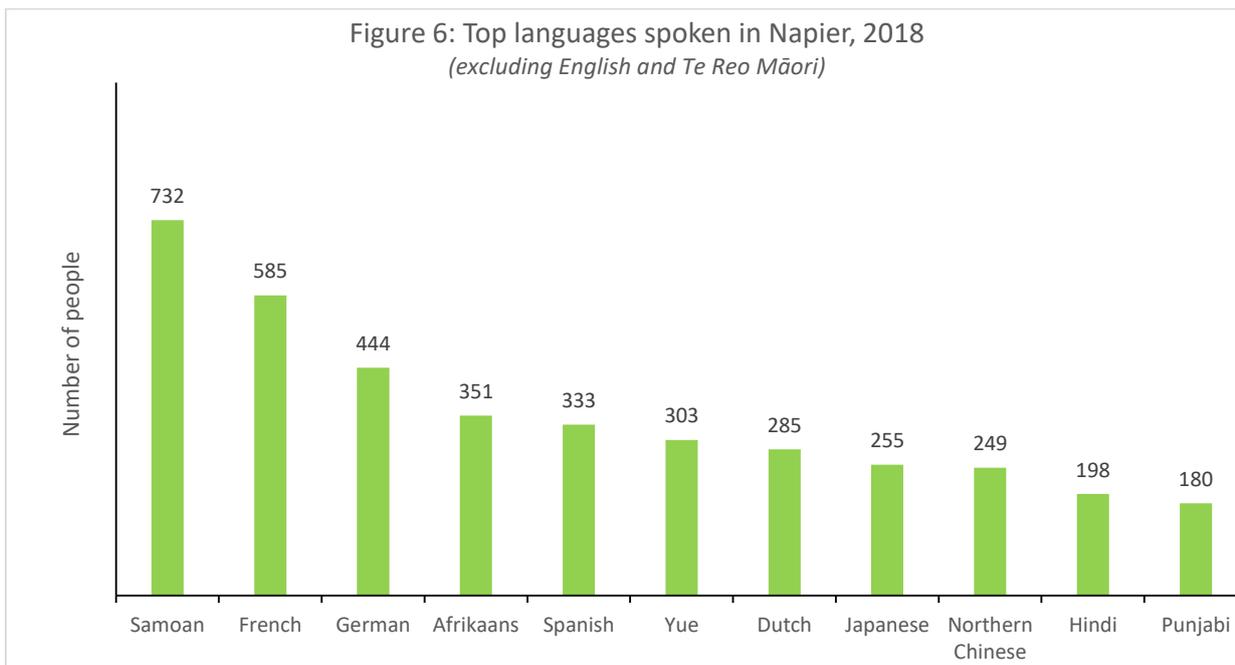


Source: Census 2006, 2013 and 2018, Stats NZ



Source: Customised report by Stats NZ

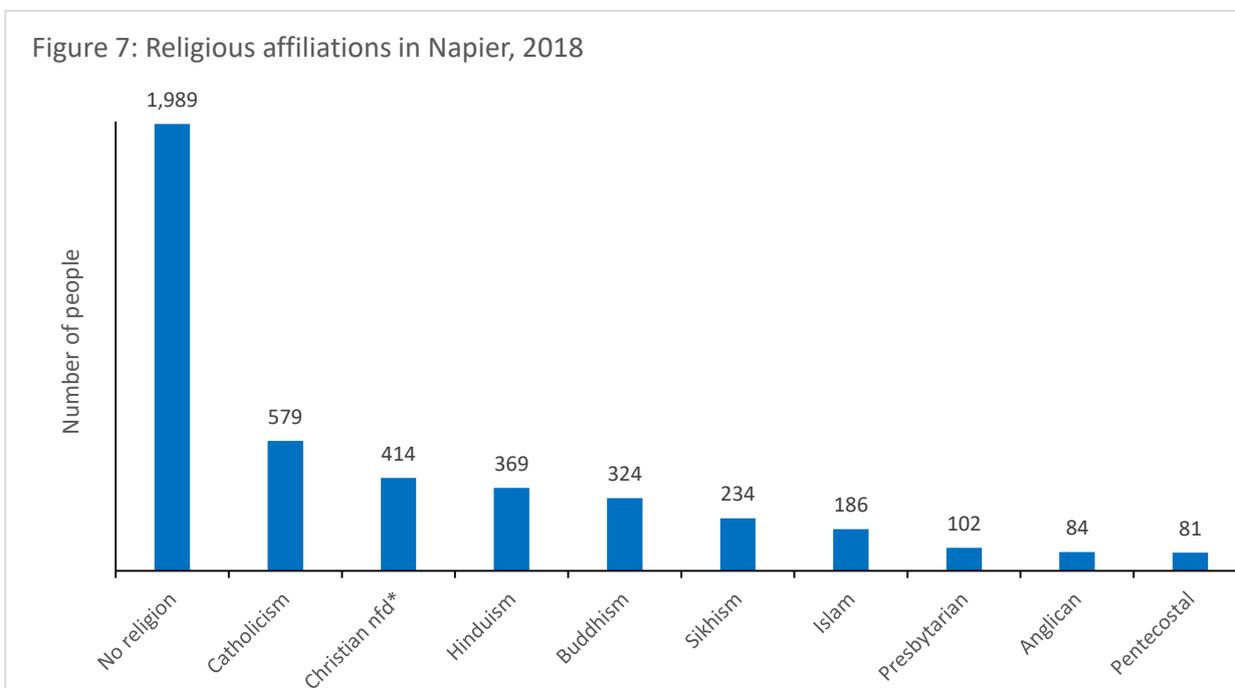




Source: Customised report by Stats NZ

## 2.2 Religious Affiliation

The majority of ethnic communities (55%) in Napier affiliate to a religion, which is significantly higher than for the general population (41%). Nearly 45% of ethnic communities don't identify with any religion. The main religions that ethnic populations affiliate with, are depicted in Figure 7.



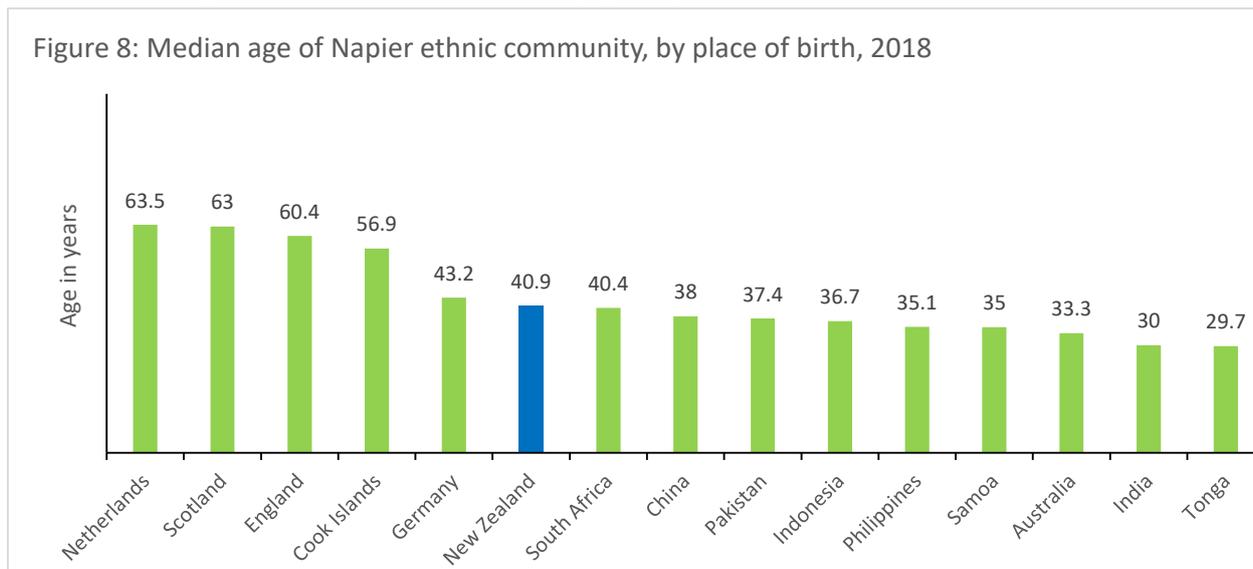
Christian nfd\* - Christian but with no denomination specified

Source: Ministry of Ethnic Communities (MEC) Data Dashboard, based on 2018 Census



### 2.3 Age Structure

The median age of some the most populous ethnic groups in Napier – Samoan, Chinese and Indian is lower than the median age of those born in New Zealand (Figure 8).

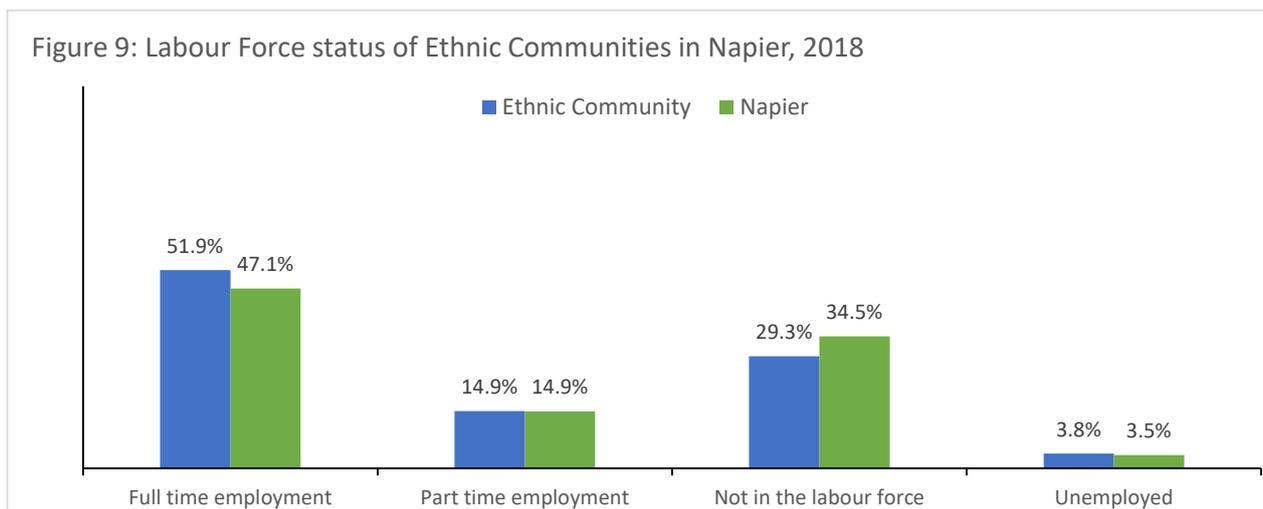


Source: Customised report by Stats NZ

## 3. Employment & Income

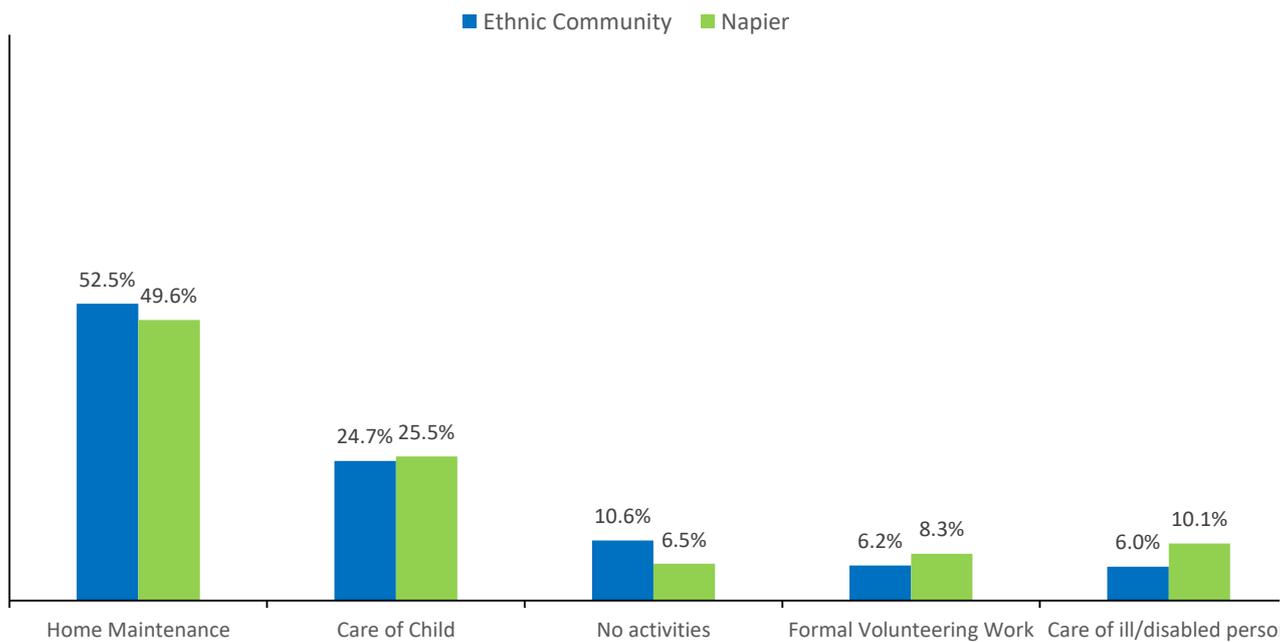
### 3.1 Labour Force Status

Rates of employment among ethnic communities is similar to the wider Napier population, with two thirds of the population in the labour force and more than half in full time employment (Figure 9). In terms of unpaid work, 9 out of 10 people in Napier’s ethnic communities are involved with maintaining a home, caring for child/ren or disabled/ill person, or volunteering (Figure 10).



Source: MEC Data Dashboard and Census 2018

Figure 10: Unpaid Work Status of Ethnic Communities, 2018

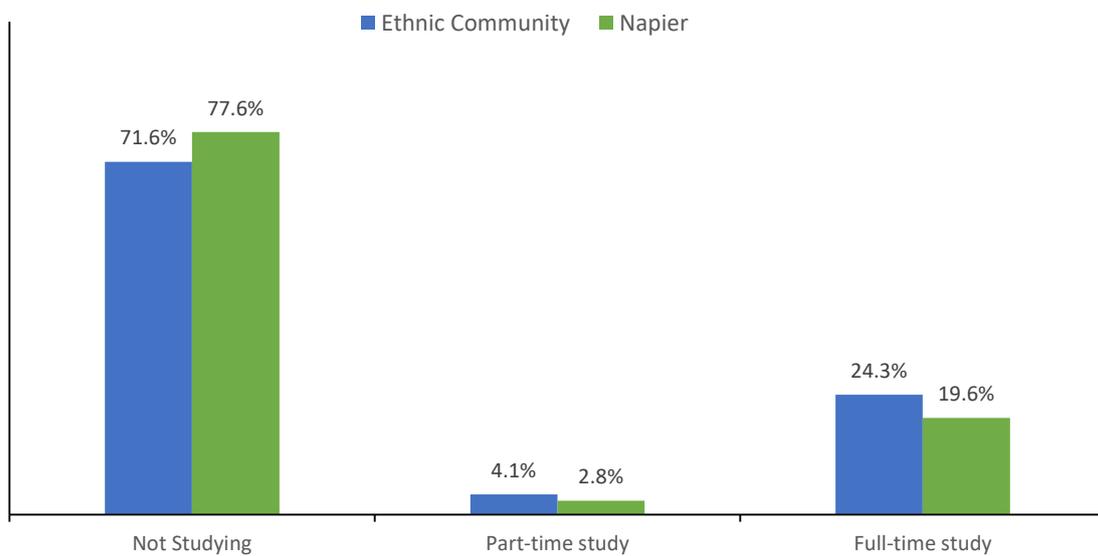


Source: MEC Data Dashboard and Census 2018

### 3.2 Education Status

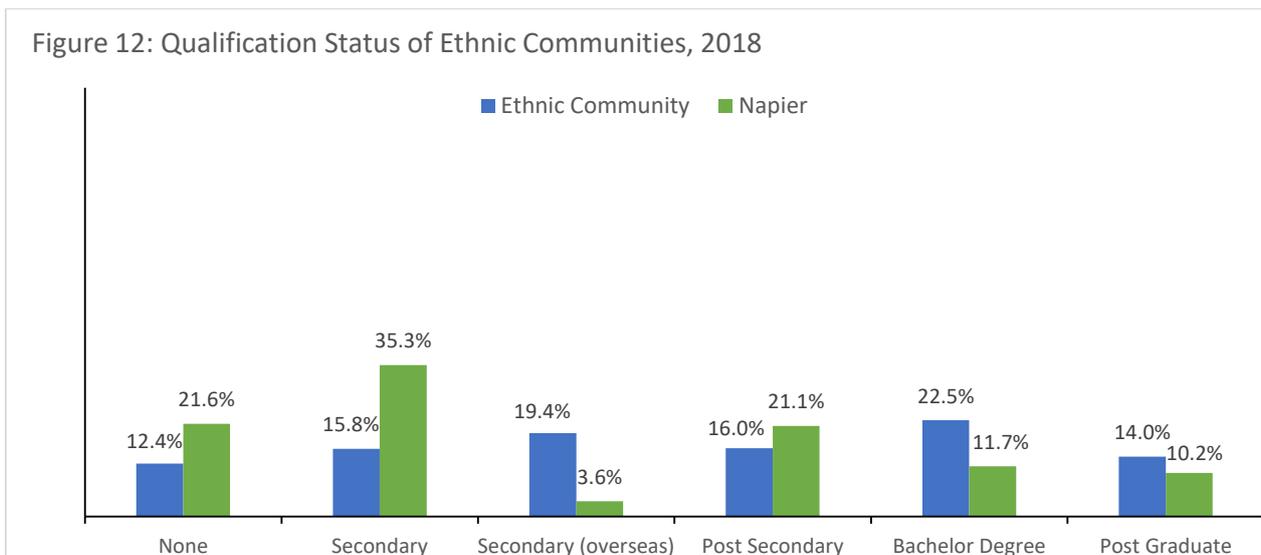
More people of ethnic communities are in full time or part time study compared to all of Napier. Over half of ethnic communities have a qualification higher than secondary school, with one-third holding graduate and postgraduate degrees. This is significantly higher than the average for Napier as a whole (Figure 11 & 12).

Figure 11: Study Status of Ethnic Communities, 2018



Source: MEC Data Dashboard and Census 2018



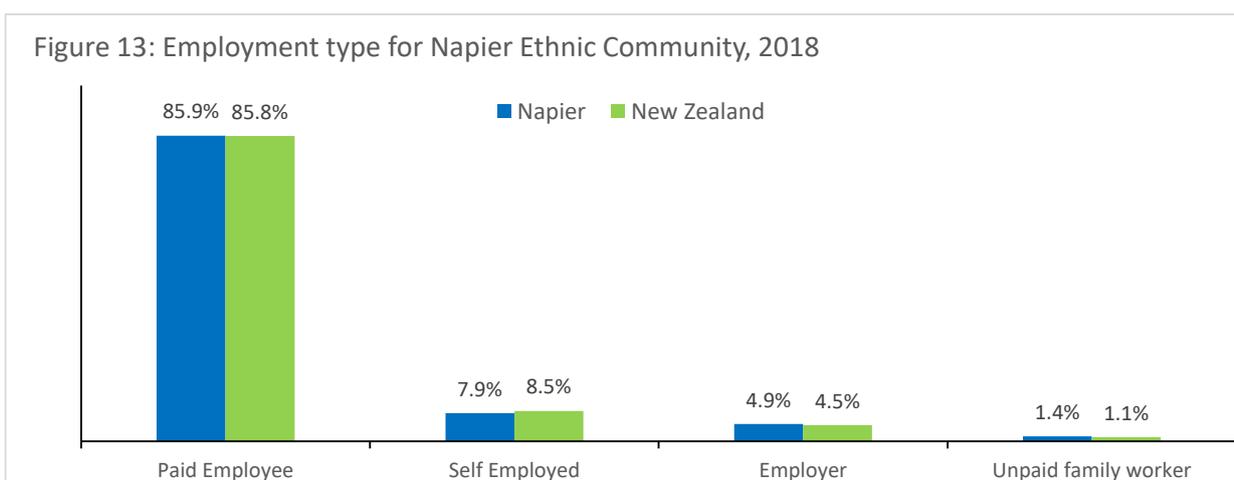


Source: MEC Data Dashboard and Census 2018

### 3.3 Employment and Occupations

Ethnic communities in Napier are largely in paid employment and this is at the same level as the New Zealand average (Figure 13). A large proportion (20%) of the Napier ethnic community in paid employment, work in Accommodation and Food Services, compared with only 6.5% of the New Zealand population. Other industries where the ethnic community are more likely to be working include manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade (Figure 14).

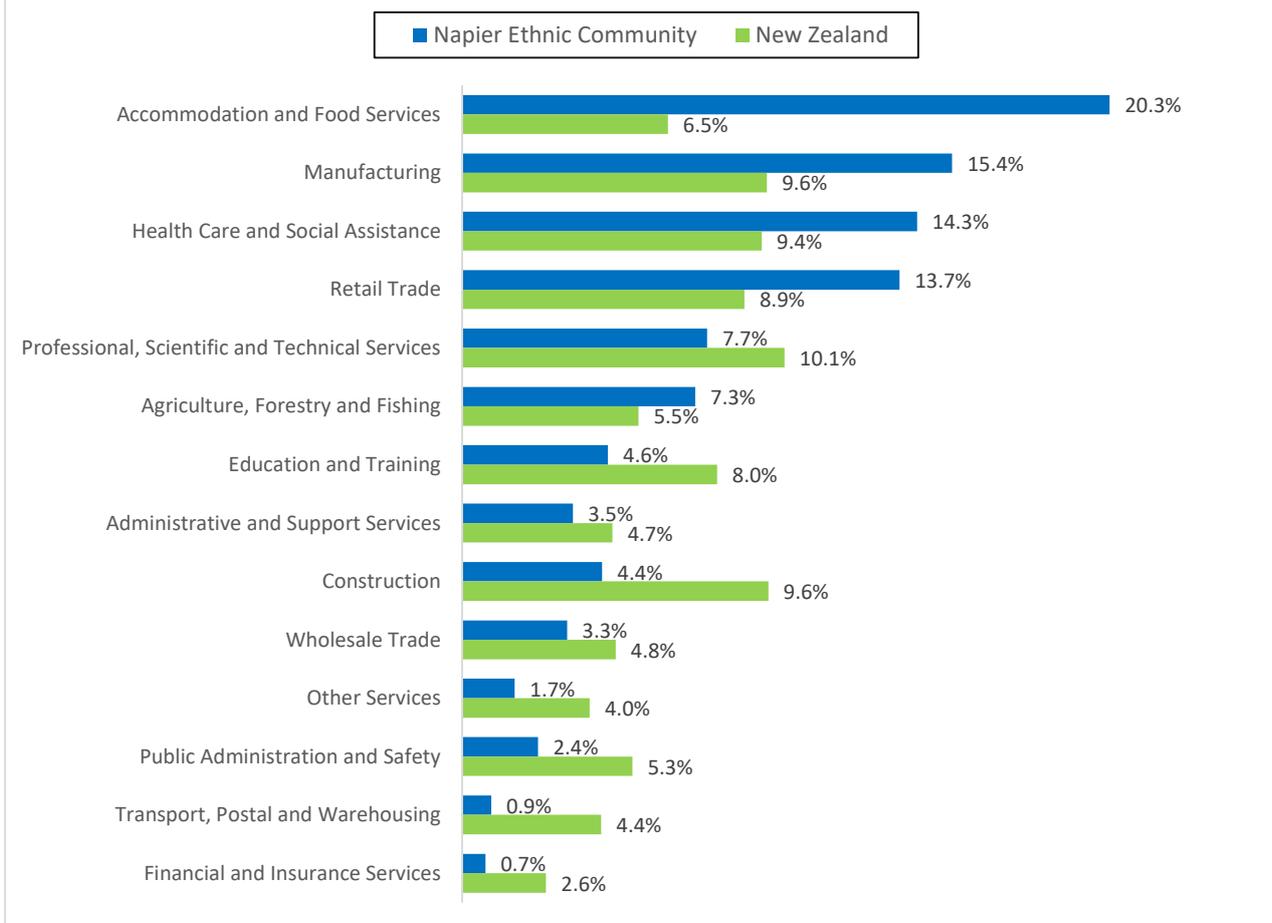
A large portion of the ethnic community work as Professionals and Managers. While there are more ethnic people who work as Professionals compared to the Napier as a whole, there are proportionally fewer ethnic people working in Management roles (Figure 15).



Source: MEC Data Dashboard, based on 2018 Census

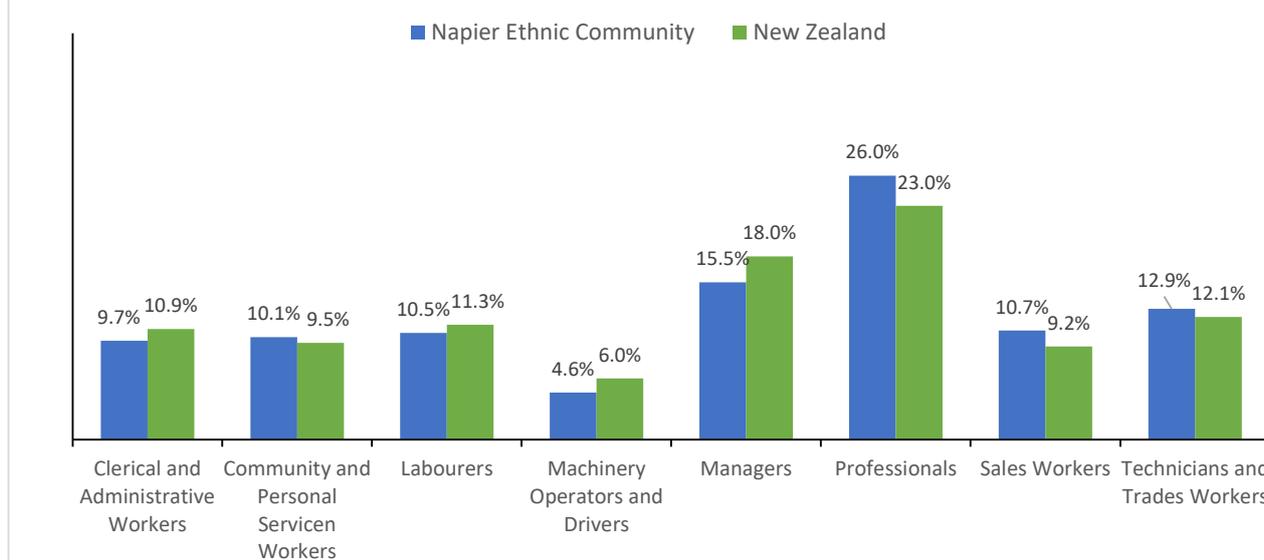


Figure 14: Industry participation for Napier Ethnic Community, 2018



Source: MEC Data Dashboard, based on 2018 Census

Figure 15: Occupations for Napier Ethnic Community, 2018

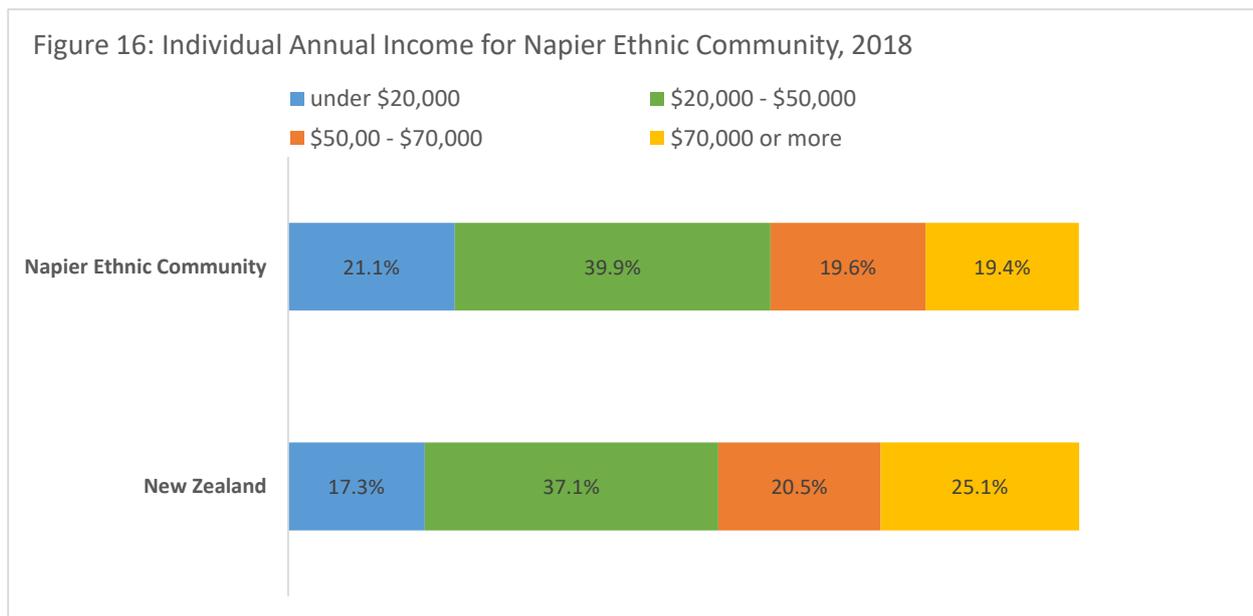


Source: MEC Data Dashboard, based on 2018 Census



### 3.4 Income

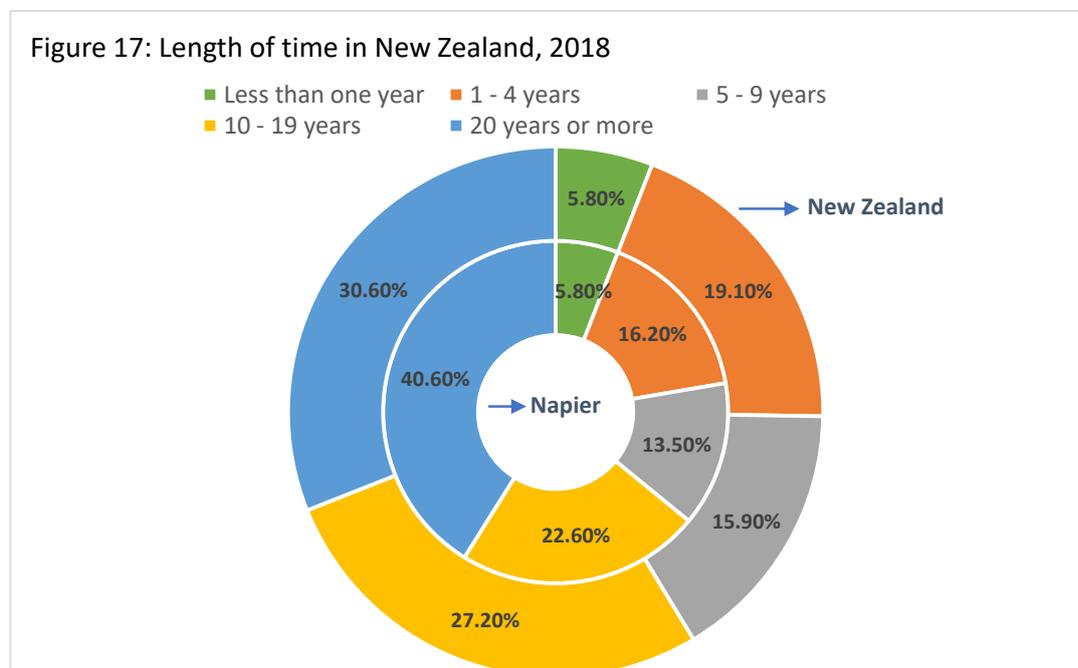
A lower proportion of the ethnic community in Napier earn a personal income of over \$50,000 per annum, compared to the New Zealand population (Figure 16).



Source: MEC Data Dashboard, based on 2018 Census

### 4. Life in Napier

Compared to the national average (30.6%), a large proportion of overseas born population in Napier (40.6%) have lived in New Zealand for more than 20 years (Figure17).



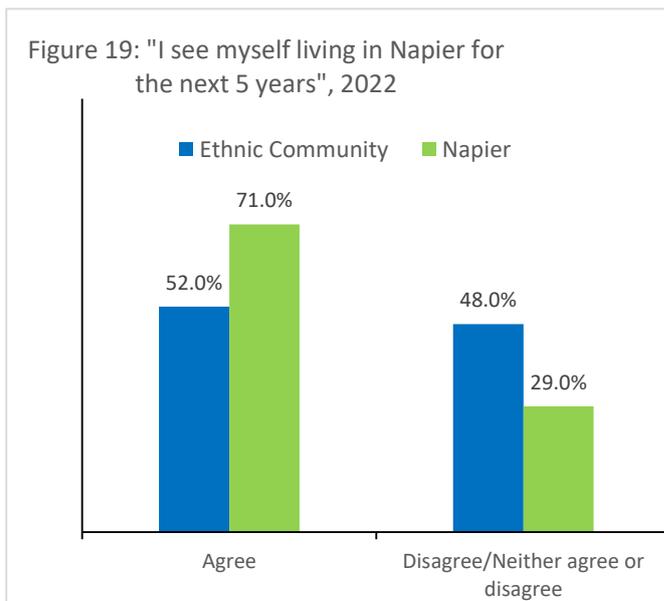
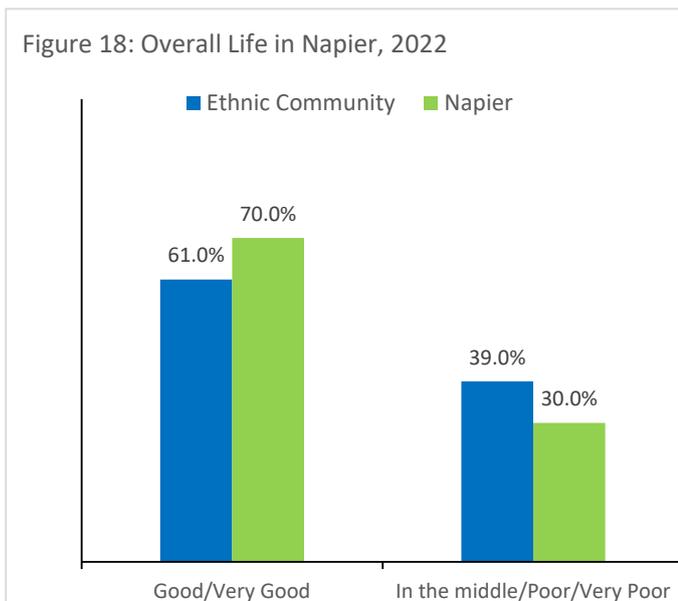
Source: Census 2018, Stats NZ



### 4.1 Overall Life Satisfaction

The annual Napier Social Monitor Survey asks residents about their overall life and whether they intend to remain living in Napier for the next five years. In 2022, fewer people from ethnic communities were satisfied with their life compared to the Napier population as a whole. (Figure 18)

The number of people from ethnic communities who see themselves living in Napier for the next five years is significantly lower than the Napier population as a whole. (Figure 19)

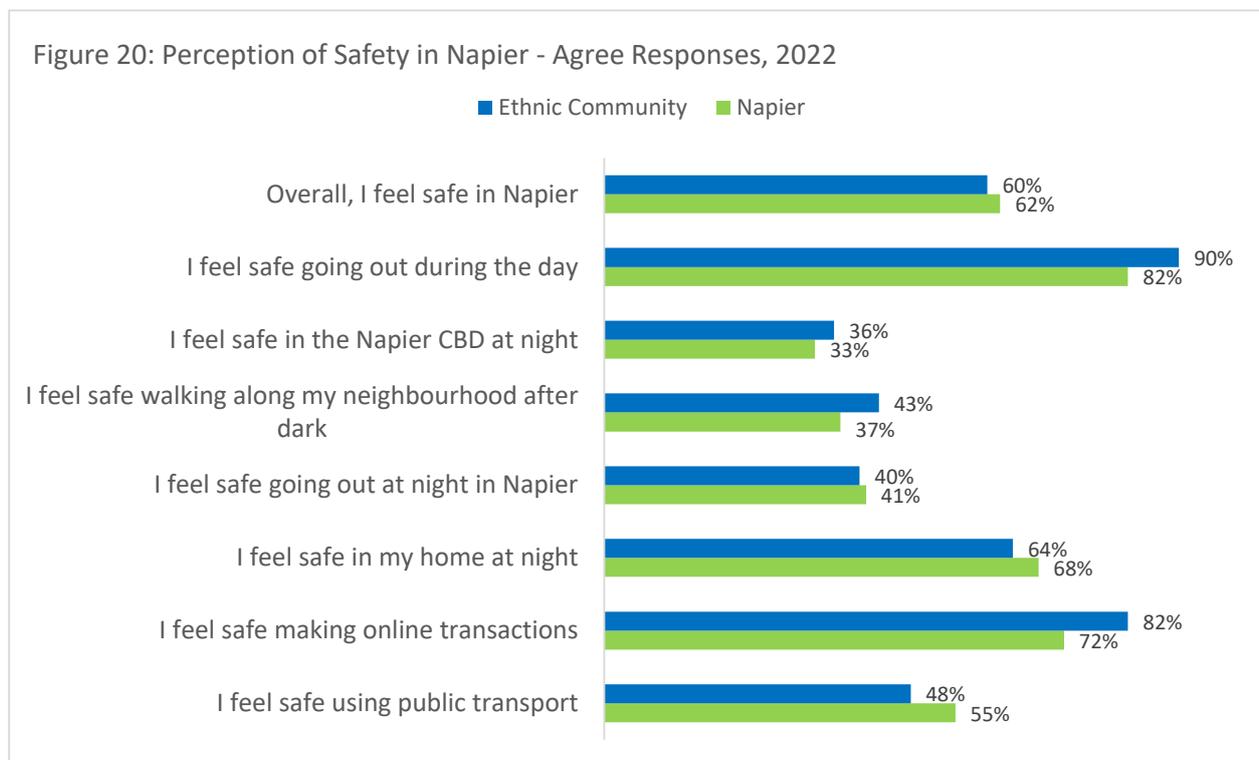


Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022



### 4.2 Perceptions of Safety

Perceptions of safety of ethnic communities are similar to the general population of Napier. More people from ethnic communities feel safe going out during the day, making online transactions and walking alone in their neighbourhood (Figure 20).



Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022

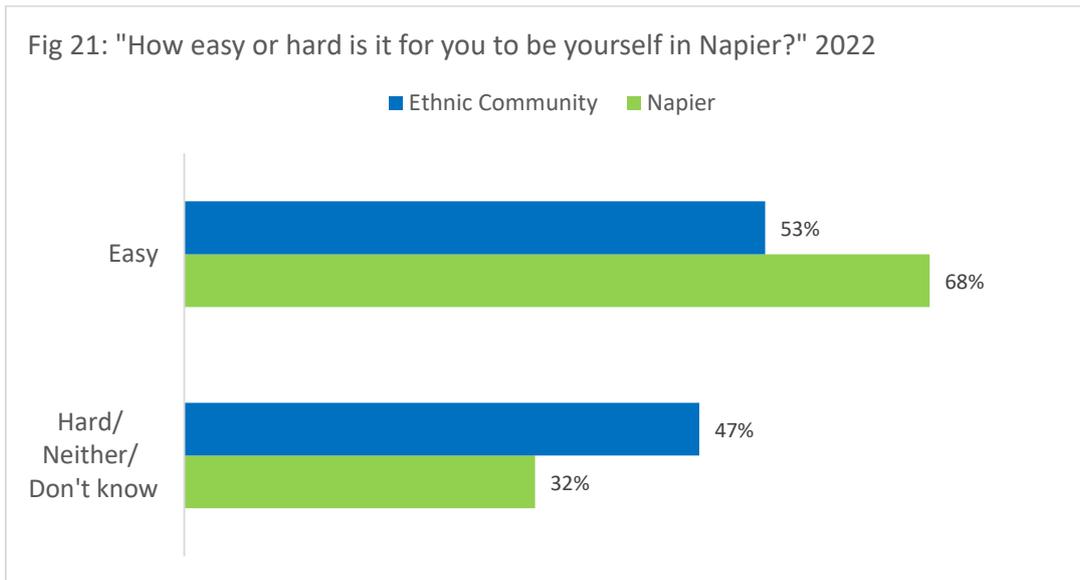
### 4.3 Acceptance and Belonging

People of ethnic communities in Napier find it harder to be themselves (53%), compared to 68% of the wider Napier population (Figure 21). Two in five ethnic community residents (41%) commented that race and ethnicity were the factors that came to mind when considering if they can be themselves in Napier. This was followed by dress/appearance, age and skin colour. Other mentioned associations were gender, religion, and lower income.

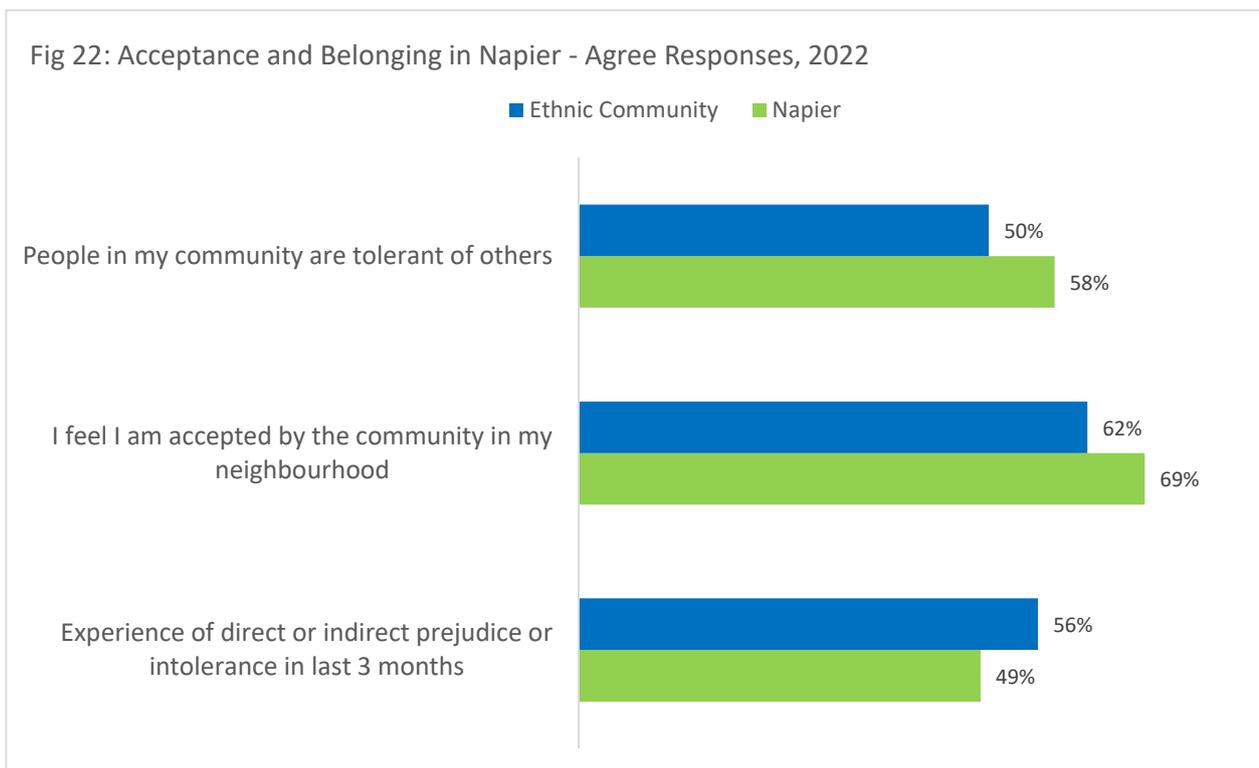
Fewer people of ethnic communities felt they are accepted by the community in their neighbourhood. More than half of the respondents of ethnic communities stated to have experienced or seen someone else experience prejudice or intolerance or been unfairly treated or excluded in the last three months (Figure 22). The most cited reason identified for intolerance was ethnicity (60%).

Nearly half of Napier respondents believed that having more people from different cultures, countries and lifestyles makes Napier no different or worse as a place to live (Figure 23).



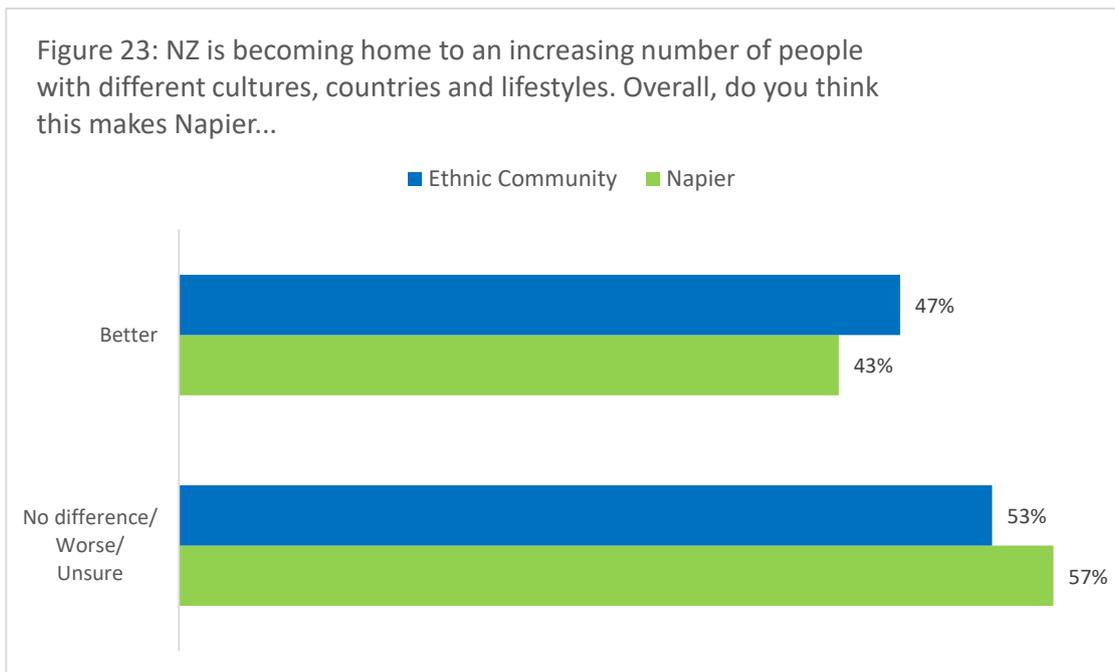


Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022



Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022





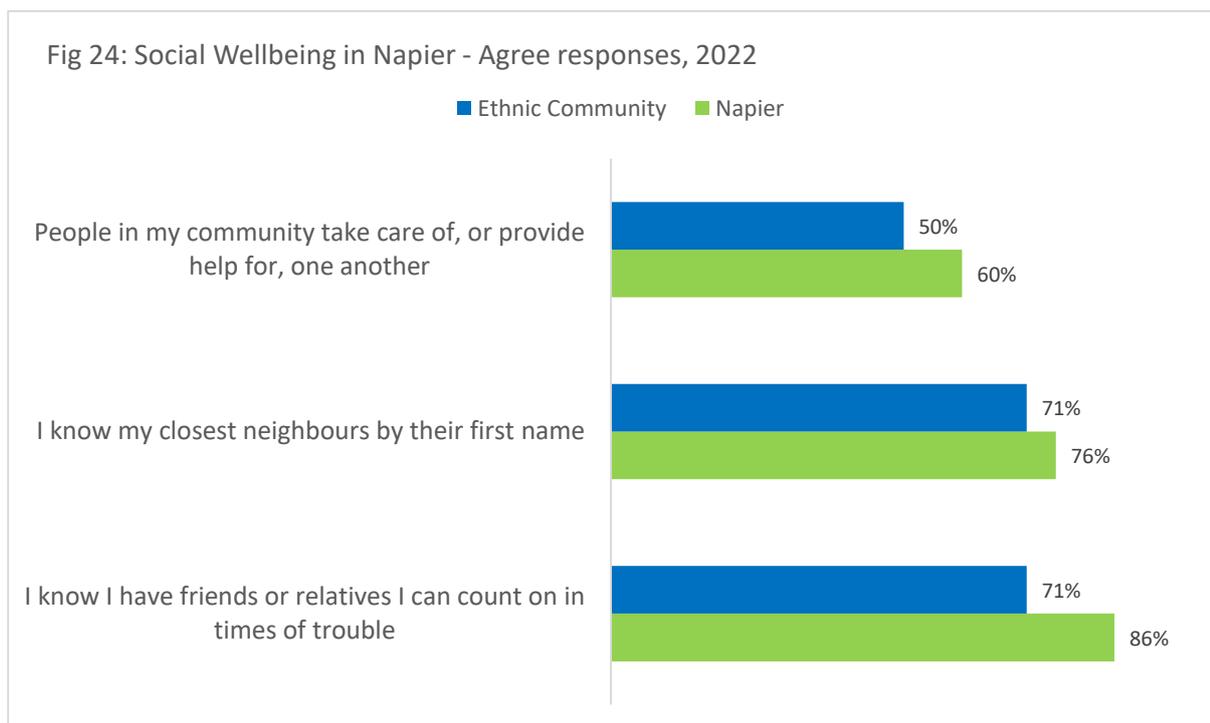
Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022

## 5. Wellbeing

The Napier Social Monitor Survey asks respondents a number of questions to measure social and mental wellbeing. Both these areas are particularly significant for ethnic communities who may grapple with social and/or cultural isolation.

### 5.1 Social Wellbeing

Fewer respondents of ethnic communities (71%) felt they have friends or relatives they can count on in times of trouble compared to the wider Napier population (86%). Half of respondents from ethnic communities believe that people in their community take care of and help one another, compared to 60% for Napier as a whole (Figure 24).



Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022



## 5.2 Community Mental Wellbeing

Ethnic Communities in Napier have a higher score on the community mental wellbeing index compared to the general population. Higher scores suggest greater distress, reflecting a higher percentage of people in ethnic communities worrying about everyday problems, reporting feeling lonely at least some of the time, having little interest or pleasure in doing things, and feeling down or depressed.

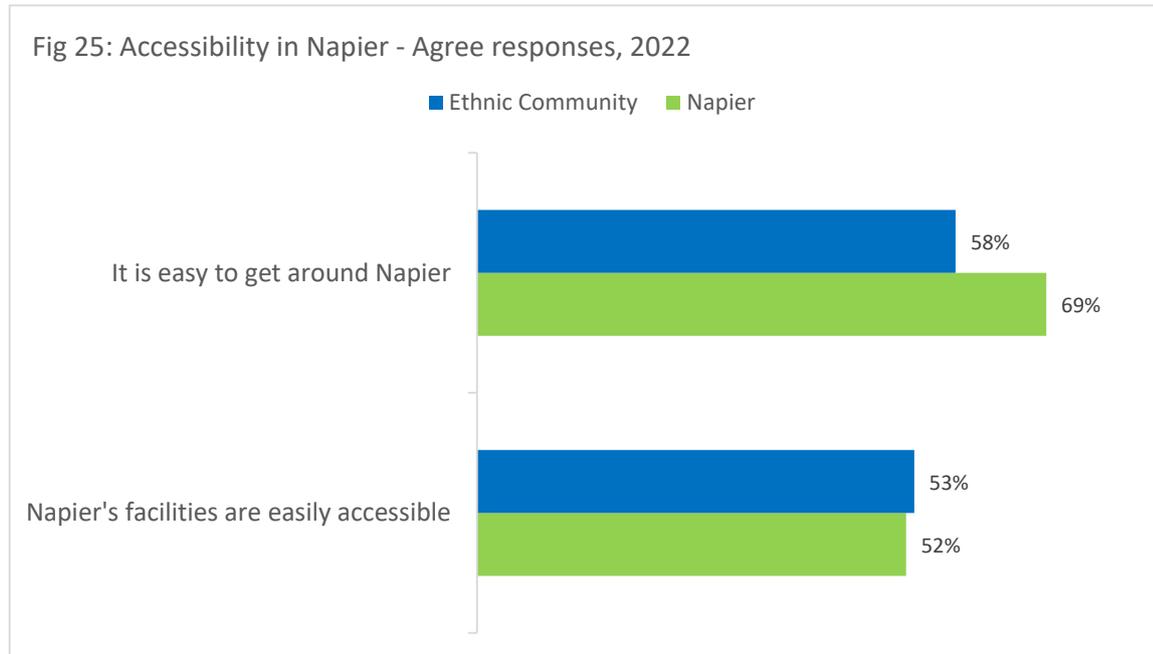
Table 2: Community Mental Wellbeing in Napier, 2022

	Ethnic Community	Napier
<b>Community Mental Wellbeing Index Score</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>10.5</b>

Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022

## 6. Accessibility

Perceptions about accessibility of Napier’s facilities are similar for ethnic communities and the wider Napier population, with just over half the respondents in agreement about ease of access. In terms of ease of getting around Napier, fewer people in the ethnic communities held the same views as the general population (Figure 25).



Source: Napier City Council Social Monitor Survey 2022



## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Description of ethnicity for Census purposes, 2018

For Census purposes, Ethnicity is a hierarchical classification with four levels. Detailed ethnic group information is collected so that responses can be coded to specific ethnic group categories at the most detailed level of the classification, level four. Where this is not possible, information is coded to level two or to level three. Level one is used solely for output and contains six categories and one residual category:

- European
- Māori
- Pacific Peoples
- Asian
- MELAA (Middle Eastern / Latin American / African)
- Other ethnicity
- Not elsewhere included

For the census population count, 'not elsewhere included' contains the residual categories of 'response unidentifiable', 'response outside of scope', 'don't know' and 'refused to answer', alongside 'not stated'.

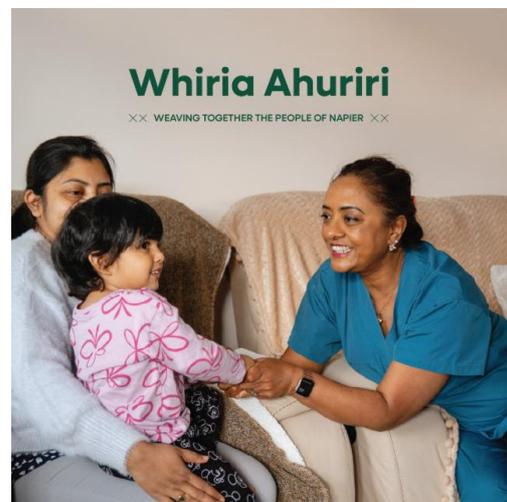
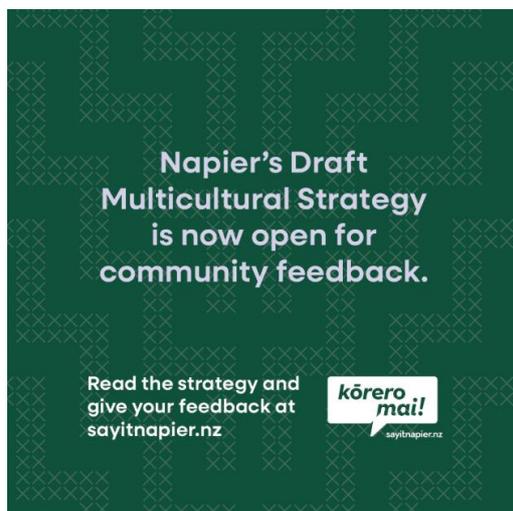
In ethnic group (grouped total responses) a person belonging to more than one ethnic group is counted once in each group. Therefore, the number of total responses will be greater than the number of respondents. For example, at level one of this classification, a person of Samoan, Tongan, and German ethnicity would be counted once in the category of Pacific Peoples and once as European.

## Whiria Ahuriri Napier's Multicultural Strategy – Summary of Feedback February 2026

### Feedback approach

Feedback on Whiria Ahuriri, Napier's Draft Multicultural Strategy was sought by Napier City Council (NCC) between 20<sup>th</sup> October and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The draft Strategy document was made available in the following formats:

- Online – on [www.sayitnapier.nz](http://www.sayitnapier.nz)
- Paper copy – available at Napier and Taradale Libraries, Customer Services, and on request.



A background document and feedback form were also available online and in paper copy. NCC's Customer Services were provided with a briefing document and FAQs to assist staff with any questions from the community.

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted through the following channels during the consultation period:

- Email invitation to 207 people who expressed an interest during the engagement phase
- Media release including media advisory
- Bay Buzz article
- Facebook / Instagram Posts
- Neighbourhood e-newsletter feature article
- Drop in 'information session' at Taradale Library
- Copies at libraries
- Copies at NCC's Customer Services
- Email to Community e-Network
- Email to Advisory Group members who participated in the development of the draft Strategy
- Email to Safer Napier Strategic Group
- Email to Age-Friendly Napier Steering Group (previously Positive Ageing Strategic Advisory Group)

- Presentation to Napier Youth Council
- Email to Multicultural Association Hawke's Bay
- Multicultural Association HB Facebook post to members
- Napier City Business Inc e-newsletter promotion
- Lunchtime webinar online presentation - recorded for viewing on [www.sayitnapier.nz](http://www.sayitnapier.nz).

### Feedback received and submitter details

A total of 51 submissions were received.

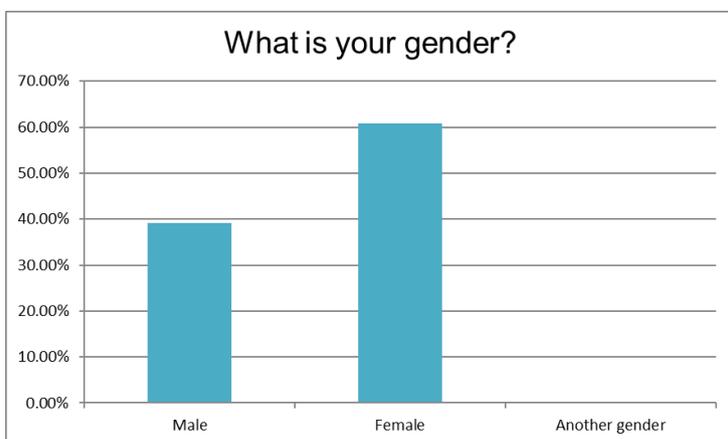
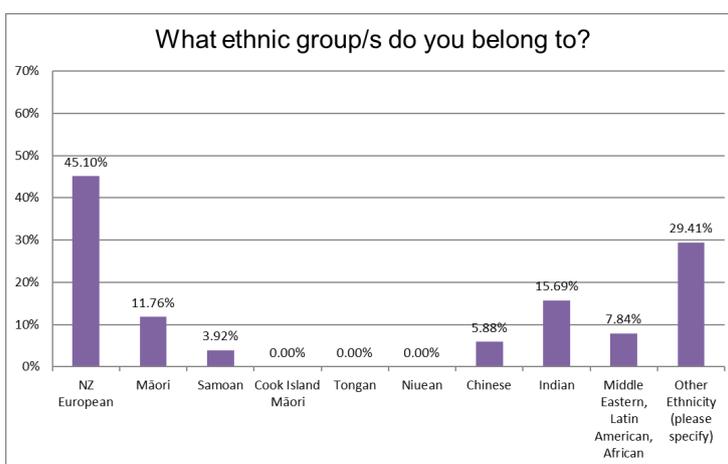
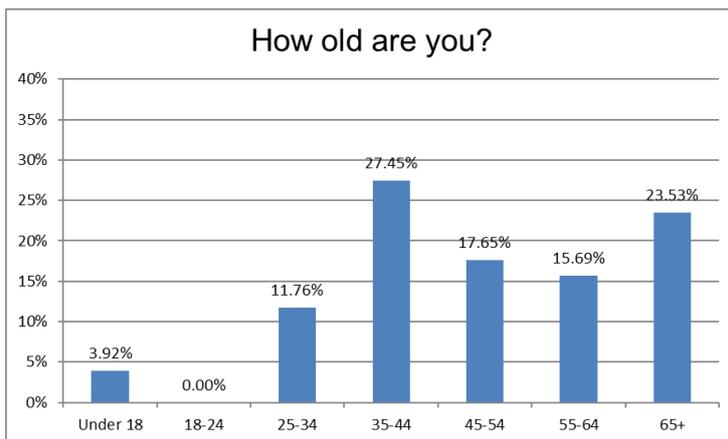
- 41 were from individuals, 10 from groups including Hindu Council of Hawke's Bay, Safer Napier Strategic Group, Tautua Ltd, Napier Youth Council, Singh Sports and Cultural Club & Akaal Riders NZ, Brazilian Community, English Language Partners Hawke's Bay, and Napier's Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 46 were received via the online feedback form; 5 using the paper feedback form.

Submitters had the following demographic characteristics:

- 97% Napier residents
- 61% female
- 39% male
- 24% 65+
- 16% 55-64
- 17% 45-54
- 27% 35-44
- 12% 25-34
- 0% 18-24
- 4% Under 18
- 45% NZ European
- 12% Māori
- 4% Samoan
- 8% Chinese
- 16% Indian
- 8% Middle Eastern, Latin American, African
- 29% Other<sup>1</sup> including: Filipino, German, Sri Lankan, NZ Chinese, Norwegian, English, South African, Punjabi, Jewish, New Zealander.

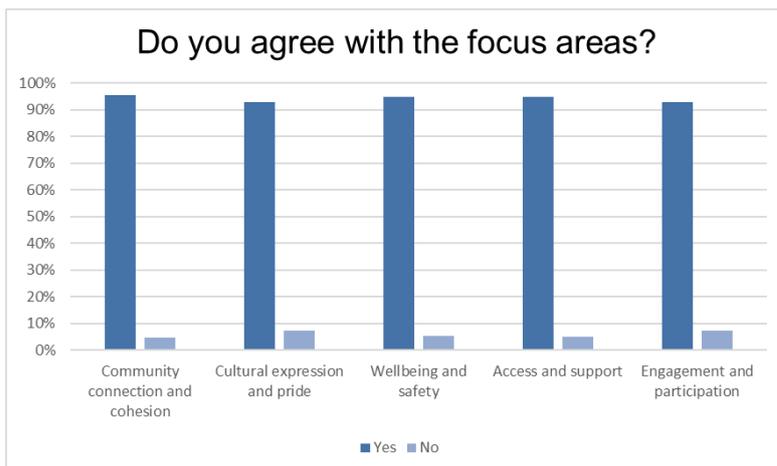
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<sup>1</sup> People could select more than one ethnic group so total adds up to more than 100%.



**Summary of feedback**

Feedback on the Strategy was positive overall. A large portion of submitters (94%) agreed with the Strategy’s vision, and the large majority (between 93% and 95%) agreed with each of the five proposed focus areas.



The majority of feedback involved submitters providing ideas that aligned with the five focus areas. These have been noted for consideration during development of the action plan.

The remainder of the substantive feedback is summarised in the following table with officers’ responses also noted (including relevant changes made to the final version of the Strategy).

Key themes arising from the substantive feedback are:

- Implementation and monitoring - requests for an action plan that identifies outcome measures to track progress
- Scope of focus areas - requests for specific topics and issues to be considered as part of action planning
- Capacity building - requests to support the capacity and capability of cultural leaders and communities
- Quality information, resources, and support - requests for improved access to reliable information and guidance, particularly for migrants and business owners
- Partnerships - suggestions for collaboration and co-design with a wide range of cultural groups
- Priority groups - reminders about particular priority groups
- Funding - queries about how actions will be funded.

Suggestion	Response
<b>Implementation &amp; Monitoring</b>	
See this vision implemented (Submitter #49)	An action plan will be developed for the Strategy, led by new Advisory Group including organisations, cultural leaders and community members.
Publish an action plan including delivery partners and indicators to track progress (Submitter #43)	The action plan will be published on Council’s website. Measures listed on p.24 include data that is readily available for Napier. The Advisory Group will have a role in monitoring.
How the vision and focus areas will be met (Submitter # 38)	As above.

Suggestion	Response
<b>Scope of focus areas</b>	
Like to see economic growth added to the focus areas (Submitter #49)	Noted. Employment, education pathways, access and support are covered in Focus Area 4 - Access and support, these are elements that support economic growth.
Scope of focus area such as 'Access and Support' and 'Wellbeing and Safety' (Submitter #43)	Noted. The focus areas establish the areas for attention, however the range of topics, communities or issues addressed will be developed as part of implementation.
<b>Capacity building</b>	
Training and capacity building for community leaders (Submitter #16)	Noted. Capacity building fits within Focus Area 5 - Engagement and participation.
Practical support for volunteers (Submitter #16)	Noted. Practical support for volunteers is available through the Volunteering Hawke's Bay service.
Create a pathway for establishing recognised cultural hubs including access to spaces and governance support (Submitter #15)	The new civic precinct <i>Te Kete</i> will have community spaces for cultural groups and others to book and utilise. Governance training is part of capacity building and may be identified during implementation.
<b>Quality information, resources, and support</b>	
Support for business owners regarding employment rights, immigration, and exploitation (Submitter #17)	Noted. MBIE is responsible for migrant employment support and will be invited to participate in the Advisory Group.
Dedicated settlement support for new migrants including navigating support services (Submitter #15)	Council is part of the Welcoming Communities Programme (led by Immigration NZ) which focuses on creating inclusive environments for newcomers (such as migrants, refugees, and international students). Responsibility for delivery sits with the Community Resilience team.
Improved access to reliable and trustworthy information, resources, services, and support, could be addressed by improving access to Library Services (Submitter #3)	The new library hub in the civic precinct will provide information and resources, and will be a place for connection, education, culture, and creativity.
<b>Partnerships</b>	
Dedicated South African Community Hub in partnership with Council (Submitter #15)	Council encourages groups to take a lead role in establishing community hubs. These may be supported by council grants and partnerships.
Co-design to include cultural communities in shaping, designing, and evaluating ongoing actions (Submitter #15)	The Advisory Group will include cultural leaders and community members. They will contribute to inform actions.
Recognise existing cultural community leaders and connectors (Submitter #15)	Council will actively seek out cultural leaders to participate in the Advisory Group.

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Response</b>
Council providing opportunities for cultural communities to meet (Submitter #43)	Actions identified under Focus Area 1 - Community connection and cohesion, will provide tangible opportunities for cultural communities to connect.
Future involvement from Israeli groups (Submitter #44)	Nominations will be sought from community representatives and cultural groups to ensure diverse cultural representation on the Advisory Group.
<b>Priority groups</b>	
Prioritise supporting young people in schools e.g. anti-racism education, culturally responsive mental health support (Submitter # 17)	Noted. Advisory Group will seek youth representation.
Increased practical, accessible and clearly resourced support for migrants especially those on working visas (Submitter #15)	Migrant support is noted as a focus for implementation.
<b>Funding</b>	
What resources will be provided to make the Strategy come to life? (Submitter #20)	Partnerships including working across organisations will be key to successful implementation. Council distributes community funding and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities Development funds projects for building social cohesion.
Funding and practical support is missing (Submitter #29)	Noted. Actions will be funded through a combination of organisations' existing budgets and new or external funding sources, on a project-by-project basis.
<b>Other</b>	
Spelling error on page 26 - Multicultural Association HB (#48)	Amended in final Strategy.
For cultural communities already living in Napier, the strategy could be clearer that it includes them too (Submitter #34)	Noted. The background document which will be available on Council's website, provides detail on how all cultural groups were engaged with and informed the Strategy.
Focus areas align closely with Safer Napier's goal of reducing harm, supporting wellbeing, and building strong, connected neighbourhoods where everyone feels welcome (Submitter #47)	Noted.

# Whiria Ahuriri

XX WEAVING TOGETHER THE PEOPLE OF NAPIER XX

**Napier's  
Multicultural  
Strategy  
2026-2031**



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## Message from the Mayor

Napier has always been about looking after people. We welcome visitors, new faces, and those coming back home through kindness and connection, learning about each other and standing together. These are the basics that underpin the Multicultural Strategy we now present to you: *Whiria Ahuriri, Weaving Together The People Of Napier.*

Napier's got more diversity than it used to. Different cultures, languages and ways of doing things are part of the mix now. That's why we've put together this Multicultural Strategy.

It came from the community. People came along to workshops, had conversations, put in their time and ideas, and helped build something solid. A big thanks to everyone who got involved.

The different backgrounds and experiences people bring make our city, our community and our council stronger.

This Multicultural Strategy is about making Napier a place where everyone's welcome and respected, no matter where they're from. A place where people can get ahead and where connecting with each other is part of how we do things.

The goal is straightforward: create chances to learn from each other, understand each other better, show respect and keep making Napier a great community to be part of.

**Richard McGrath**  
MAYOR OF NAPIER

## Mihi

Ko Maungaharuru te Maunga  
Ko Tangitu te Moana  
Ko Te Ngarue te Awa  
Ko Te Whanganui-a-Orotu te Waiū  
Ko Tangoio taku Tūrangawaewae  
Ko Evelyn Ratima taku ingoa.

I whiwhi au i te tohu QSM 2019 me te Tohu Tiaki Taone o Ahuriri Meritorious Civic Award 2025.

He kaitiaki taketake au o tā mātou PSGE Mana Ahuriri anō hoki, ko taku whakapapa e hono ana ki ngā takiwā tokowhito o Ahuriri.

Ko taku hōnore tēnei ki te mihi ki a koutou katoa mō tā tātou kaupapa e pā ana ki te hui tahi o ngā Ahurea maha, i raro i te karanga kia whakakotahi ai ā tātou tikanga mō nga Mātā Waka. Kia haere tahi tātou Kanohi ki te Kanohi, Pakahiwi ki te Pakahiwi, Mā tātou e ārahi.

Nō reira, Tuia Te Muka Tangata!

"He aha te mea nui o te Ao; He Tangata, He Tangata, He Tangata!"

Nāku noa iti, Evelyn Ratima QSM

Maungaharuru is my ancestral mountain

Tangitu is my ancestral foreshore

Te Ngarue is my ancestral river

Te Whanganui-a-Orotu is my life sustaining ocean waters

Tangoio is my home and place of genealogical connection

My name is Evelyn Ratima.

In 2019 I was awarded the QSM medal and in 2025 I was announced recipient of the Meritorious Civic Award for contributions to the Napier community.

I am also an original Trustee of our Mana Ahuriri Post Settlement Governance Entity, my lineage connects me to the seven sub-tribes of Ahuriri.

I am very honoured to pay homage to the Napier City Council Multicultural strategy acknowledging and bringing together all the different cultures who come to live in Napier. Let's move forward as one people, face to face, shoulder to shoulder, let's journey and guide one another together.

Therefore, intertwine the fibres and threads of people!

"What is the most important thing in this world? 'Tis people, 'tis people, 'tis people!"

**Evelyn Ratima**  
QSM







# Whakataukī

**Tuia te muka tangata  
Connect the threads  
of people**

Tuia means 'to sew' or 'to connect'.  
Te muka refers to 'the threads' or 'the  
strands'. Tangata means 'people'.

This whakataukī Tuia te muka  
tangata encourages us to  
weave together the connections  
between people, fostering a  
sense of community and shared  
purpose. It's a call to action to  
strengthen relationships and work  
collaboratively.

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## Message from our Advisory Groups

We are proud to contribute to  
Napier's Multicultural Strategy -  
a milestone in our city's journey  
towards becoming a more inclusive,  
connected, and vibrant community.

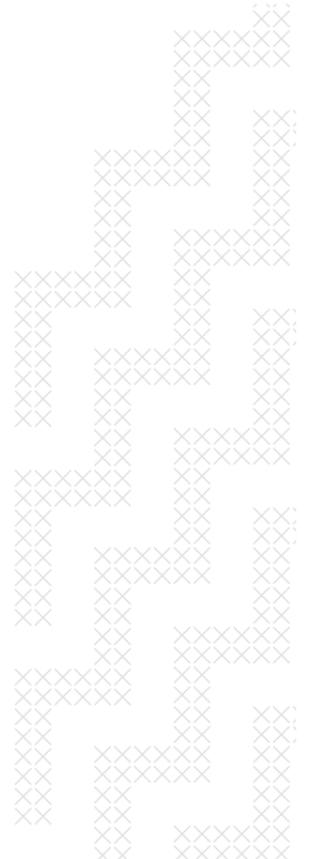
As members of the Advisory Group, we  
brought together voices from across our  
diverse cultural communities to ensure this  
strategy reflects the aspirations, challenges,  
and strengths of the people who call Napier  
home.

This strategy is more than words on paper, it is  
a shared commitment to celebrating diversity,  
promoting equity, and fostering opportunities  
for everyone to belong and thrive.

Our hope is that this strategy leads to actions  
that enrich our city with diverse perspectives  
and decision-making, and ensures fair access  
to education, health, and services for all.

Most importantly, it is about creating a Napier  
where people from every culture feel they  
belong and are valued for their contribution  
and the whole community benefits.

We thank Napier City Council for partnering  
with our communities on this important  
initiative and look forward to working together  
to bring this strategy to life.







## Background Hitori

Napier is becoming increasingly diverse, with nearly one in five people born overseas and one in ten people identifying as Asian, Pasifika, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or of another ethnicity<sup>1</sup>.

Members of our cultural communities in Napier are highly skilled, qualified and contribute significantly to the local economy. However, many experience challenges to secure meaningful work and are more likely to earn less than the rest of the population, leading to poorer social, health and economic outcomes.

As we developed the strategy many members of our Napier cultural communities shared the struggles they face in being themselves and expressing their cultural identity.

This was especially evident among young people from different cultural communities, who spoke of an inner conflict between staying true to their roots and trying to fit into the wider community.

Many people from our cultural communities face daily experiences of intolerance, prejudice and racism that affect their sense of safety and wellbeing. These experiences can restrict their ability to fully participate and flourish as part of our community.

Others highlighted barriers including access to reliable and trustworthy information, resources, and support services. All these factors prevent cultural communities from fully taking part in community life.

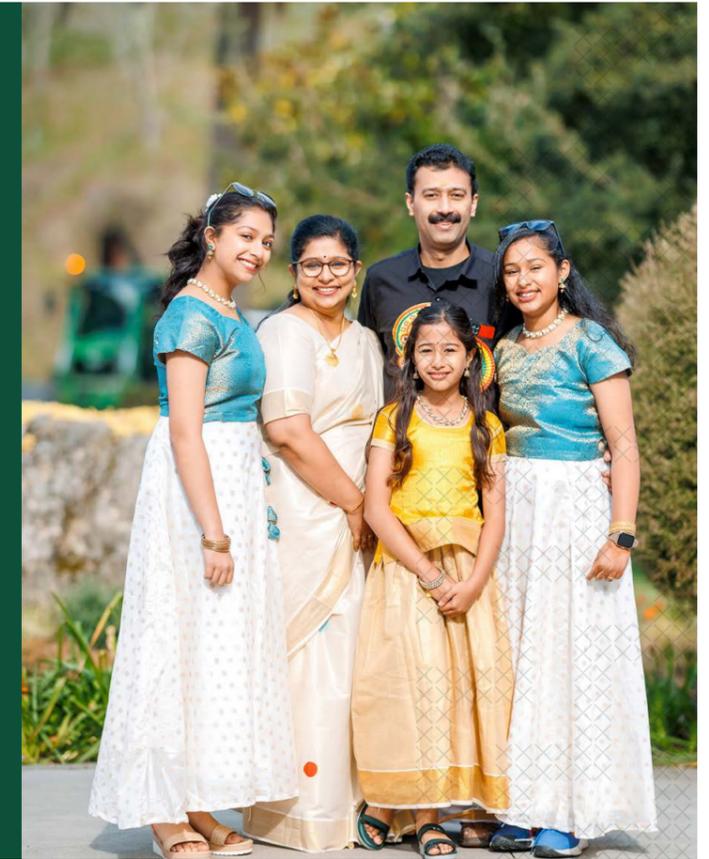
The strategy provides the framework and approach for building a city where people from all cultures truly belong and thrive.

It's been shaped by the voices of Napier's cultural communities and agencies, along with local data and insights that inform the vision, values, and key priorities<sup>2</sup>.

The strategy goes beyond just celebrating multiculturalism or focusing on council-led activities. It is a community-wide approach that reaches across sectors, different settings, and a range of cultural communities. We want all cultural communities in Napier to feel respected, valued, and proud of their culture and heritage, and to know that their contributions are recognised and celebrated. Achieving the vision will take strong collaboration, advocacy, and leadership from Council and other agencies and groups. The strategy will serve as a roadmap for the years 2026 to 2031.

<sup>1</sup>According to the latest available data, from the 2023 Census.

<sup>2</sup>Detailed information about the strategy's development is contained in the background document, Whiria Ahuriri Napier Multicultural Strategy Background Document, 2025.





# Our City: Napier's Cultural Communities

## Tō Mātou Tāone: Ngā Hapori Kanorau o Ahuriri

Our Population  
**64,695**

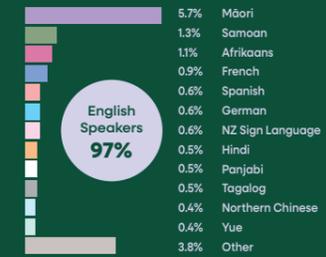
### Our Ethnicities

Nearly 1 in 5 people in Napier identify with an ethnicity other than NZ European and Māori.

NZ European	73.8%
Māori	24.2%
Other European	6.5%
Asian	4.4%
Pasifika	4.2%
Indian	2.2%
Middle Eastern, African Latin American,	1%
Other	1.3%

Note: People can identify with more than one ethnic group and are counted in each group. As a result, the total of all categories may be more than 100 percent.

### Languages we speak



69% of people in Napier feel accepted by the community\*

45% of people living in Napier believe diversity makes Napier a better place to live\*

### Our Ethnicities Over Time

	2013	2018	2023
European	83.2 %	81.2 %	79 %
Māori	19.2 %	22.2 %	24.2 %
Pacific Peoples	3.1 %	3.4 %	4.2 %
Asian (incl Indian)	3.5 %	5 %	6.5 %
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	0.5 %	0.7 %	1 %
Other Ethnicity	2.1 %	1.1 %	1.3 %

### Religious Affiliations



### Places of Birth

NZ  
**81.8%**

OVERSEAS  
**18.2%**

NEARLY  
**1 in 5**

Napier people are born overseas



**Top places of birth overseas:** United Kingdom, Ireland, Asia, Middle East & Africa  
**Other places include:** Australia, Pacific Islands, Europe, North America

Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, Stats NZ 2023 \*Source: Napier Social Monitor Report 2024





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## Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi Te Whakamana i Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The strategy places Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty) and Tangata Whenua at its core, recognising the Treaty as the foundation agreement for Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi to live together.

This provides a framework for all cultural communities to experience a sense of belonging, while highlighting the importance of honouring Tangata Whenua as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Developing the strategy involved early engagement with Mana Whenua and regular updates as the strategy evolved.

Local Marae representatives and Napier City Council's Māori Partnerships team (Te Waka Rangapū) were active members of our Advisory

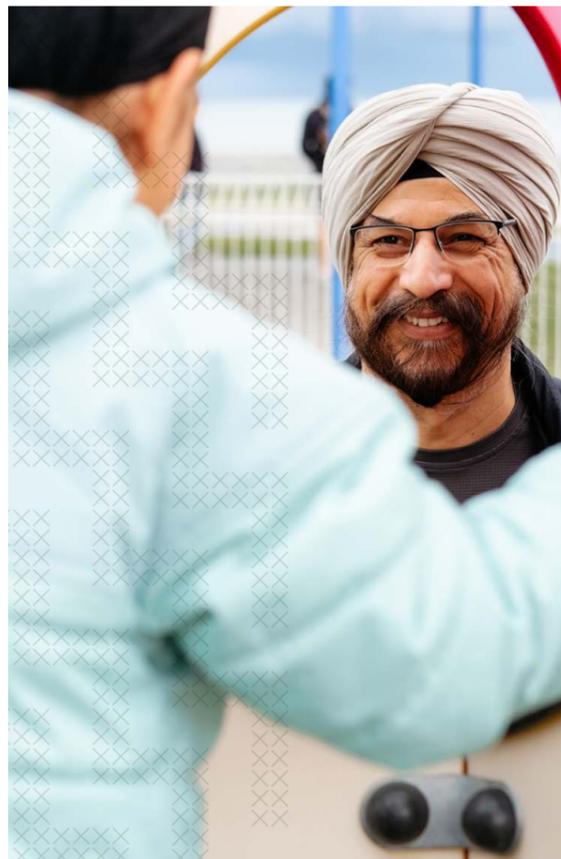
Group and offered invaluable guidance around tikanga (customs) and kawa (protocols).

Applying a Treaty framework will play a central role in putting the strategy into action. This will involve continuing to foster partnerships and collaboration with Mana Whenua and to grow cultural communities' understanding of the Treaty and Te Ao Māori (the Māori world).

The Treaty offers a shared sense of home "It gives people from somewhere else a chance to make a home in this land." - Moana Jackson, Kāinga Tahī, Kāinga Rua Māori Housing Realities and Inspirations 2022.

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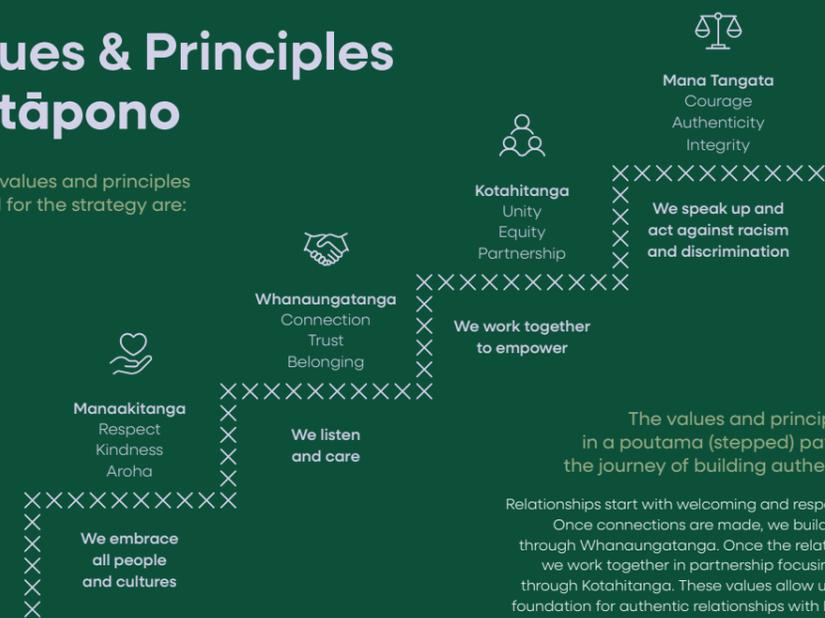
## Vision Moemoeā

The strategy's vision is 'Together We Thrive - Napier is a city where people from all cultures can belong and thrive'.

The vision is underpinned by the name "Whiria Ahuriri" which speaks to the weaving together of different strands (cultures) that form the social fabric of Napier Ahuriri.

## Values & Principles Mātāpono

The core values and principles identified for the strategy are:



The values and principles are arranged in a poutama (stepped) pattern that depicts the journey of building authentic relationships.

Relationships start with welcoming and respect, or Manaakitanga. Once connections are made, we build trust and connection through Whanaungatanga. Once the relationship is established, we work together in partnership focusing on equity and unity through Kotahitanga. These values allow us to establish a strong foundation for authentic relationships with Mana Tangata, where we can have courageous conversations about challenges that face us and work together towards positive change.



## Focus Areas Kaupapa Aronui

Five priority areas have been identified for the strategy, reflecting the voices and insights shared during engagement with our governance groups and the wider community.

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### Focus Area 1

## Community connection and cohesion

Everyone feels a sense of belonging and is respected and valued by the community. Meaningful connections flourish within and across communities.

People have opportunities to learn about and appreciate diverse cultures. Cultural communities are supported to deepen their understanding of tikanga (customs), kawa (protocols) and Te Ao Māori (the Māori world).

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Focus Area 2

**Cultural expression and pride**

People are free to embrace, express and celebrate their culture and cultural identity. Cultural diversity is visible, valued and reflected in our public spaces and places.

Diverse languages, cultural and religious festivals are recognised and celebrated in partnership with communities.

Focus Area 3

**Wellbeing and safety**

Napier is a truly inclusive community where people can participate fully without fear of discrimination, racism, or bias. People of all cultures feel safe to be themselves, at home, at work and in their community.

Physical, mental, cultural, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing are fostered. People are empowered to speak up against racism, discrimination, or any situations where they feel unsafe.







#### Focus Area 4

### Access and support

Cultural communities have easy and equitable access to reliable and trustworthy information, resources, services, and support.

People have an awareness of and access to language support, health services, immigration advice, employment, and education pathways. Service providers are well-coordinated and offer culturally appropriate support to people from a wide range of backgrounds.

#### Focus Area 5

### Engagement and participation

All communities are represented, valued, and have the power to influence change. Communities are empowered and have a strong voice. People from different cultures have opportunities to participate fully in all aspects of community and civic life.







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## Strategic Links Hononga Rautaki

The strategy links to a number of national and local plans and strategies, that promote cultural diversity, celebrate multiculturalism and improve social cohesion across cultures.

The strategy aligns with Council's strategic priorities, which guide decision making and inform Council's annual and long-term plans.

This includes, ensuring spaces and places for all, nurturing authentic relationships with our community partners, and a resilient city - the ability to thrive and withstand impacts, knocks and shocks. The strategy acts as an umbrella for Immigration New Zealand's

Welcoming Communities programme that Council has committed to implementing. The programme aims to bring together local councils and communities to make places more welcoming for newcomers, migrants, and international students. This internationally recognised community development programme builds strong connections between the receiving community (local residents) and newcomers.

Other strategic links include:

Safer Napier Strategy, 2022-2026 | Ministry for Ethnic Communities, Strategy 2022-2025  
Ministry of Pacific Peoples Strategic Intentions 2023-2027 | Human Rights Act 1993  
New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 | Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations)

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## Implementation Whakatutukitanga

An action plan will be developed for the strategy. This will be led by a Multicultural Strategy Advisory Group made up of organisational representatives, cultural community leaders and members with diverse cultural backgrounds.

**The purpose of the Advisory Group will be to:**

- Develop a detailed plan with prioritised actions
- Provide leadership, guidance and support for implementation of the strategy
- Proactively share resources, information and experience to achieve the vision of the strategy
- Lead the delivery of agreed key projects or activities
- Keep the community updated and involved
- Monitor progress towards implementing the strategy.

The plan will be implemented in stages with a set of actions under each of the five priority areas. These actions will be prioritised and phased over the five-year period of the strategy to ensure they are manageable and achievable.

The Advisory Group will be supported by Napier City Council. It will have a terms of reference, which will be reviewed annually. Actions will be funded through a combination of organisations' existing budgets and new or external funding sources, on a project-by-project basis.

Successful implementation will require collective action across organisations and groups. Working in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including community organisations, service providers, local government, private businesses, and the community.

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# Monitoring and Review Arotake

As this is the first version of the strategy, it will undergo an interim review after two years and a full review at five years.

There will be regular monitoring of progress using key population and performance measures, as well as other relevant indicators.

This will form the outcomes framework. These are the areas we expect to see positive changes over time and can be measured to monitor progress.

The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to current priorities and any emerging issues. This will keep the plan dynamic and aligned with changing needs.

Where appropriate, projects will include a review or evaluation process that reflects their size, cost, nature, and duration. A range of methods may be used to support this, including participant surveys, feedback forms, focus or discussion groups.

## Outcomes Framework

<b>Community Diversity</b>
% of people who feel accepted by the community (Social Monitor Survey)
% of people in my community that are tolerant of others (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>Being yourself in Napier</b>
% of people who find it easy or hard to be themselves (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>Intolerance perceptions</b>
% of people who have experienced prejudice or intolerance or been treated unfairly or excluded (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>Different lifestyles and culture</b>
% of people who believe more people with different lifestyles and cultures makes Napier a better or worse place to live (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>A fair shot at a good life</b>
% of people who believe everyone in Napier has a fair shot at a good life regardless of ethnicity or race (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>Safety</b>
% of people who feel safe in Napier - ethnic groups (Social Monitor Survey)
<b>Advisory Group</b>
% of Advisory Group members satisfied with their involvement (Member Survey)





## Acknowledgements

### Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals, community groups and organisations who supported the development of the strategy.

A special thank you to Tanya Jain, Community Development Practitioner and Consultant for her tireless work alongside the Napier City Council Community Strategies Team. Tanya played a lead role in planning and facilitating workshops with both advisory groups, engaging with stakeholders, and contributing to the development of both the background document and the strategy.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Napier City Council's Māori Partnership Manager, Jackie Ham who provided extensive cultural support and guidance throughout strategy development.

### Steering Group Members

Councillor Greg Mawson	Enatha Musabe Ministry of Ethnic Communities
Jenny Pearce Citizens Advice Bureau	Cheryl Nicholls Ministry of Social Development
Simon Appleton Eastern Bridge	Bill Roberts NCC Economic Development
John Tangaere Eastern Districts Police	David Negrette NZ Red Cross
Pehi Potaka Eastern Districts Police	Denise Goodhue NZ Red Cross
Maureen Gillies English Language Partners	Faleniu Lagaia Tautai Pasefika HB
Tammy Arendse HB Civil Defence Emergency Management	Sue Sauia Tautai Pasefika HB
Rizwaana Latiff Multicultural Association HB	Mabel Fatialofa Tautua Ltd
Heather Brown Multicultural Association HB	Nathan Harrington Te Kupenga Hauora Ahuriri
Ali Leota Health NZ Te Whatu Ora	Colette Hall Welcoming Communities
Joanne Lawrence Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment	

### Reference Group Members

Maia Kaukau Timi Kara Marae	Jenny Too NZ Chinese Association (Hawke's Bay)
Memory Kaukau Timi Kara Marae	Syed Khurram Iqbal Pakistan and Friends Hawke's Bay
Emma Uriarau Timi Kara Marae	Gurmeet Singh Sekhon Punjabi Community
Luciana Evangelista Brazilian Community	Chanika Lokuge Sri Lankan Community
Alistair Young Citizens Advice Bureau	
Mereani Paodi Fijian Community	
Yao Hongze Multicultural Association HB	
Izumi Edmonds Japan Society of Hawke's Bay	
Hannah Seok Korean Community	
Karen Pratt Napier Baha'i Community	
Tintu Joseph Napier Malayali Association	
Misbah Abdulla Napier Youth Council	





# Whiria Ahuriri

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