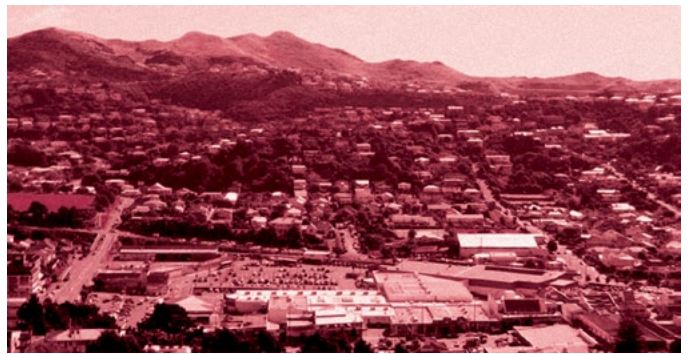


THE STATE OF OUR COMMUNITIES



Rotorua | Johnsonville | Queenstown

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September 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is our third *State of Our Communities* (SOOC) project. The heart of the SOOC project has always been to hear and document the real experiences and aspirations of people in their local communities and neighbourhoods. SOOC 2020, which looks at the vibrant local communities of Rotorua, Johnsonville and Queenstown, is directly and uniquely impacted by two major elements: Covid-19 and the election in October 2020. It became very clear during the lockdown just how important communities are in supporting others, especially the vulnerable.

Structure of report

This report has numerous moving pieces that try to capture the true impact, particularly of Covid-19, in these local communities. The report begins with a broad sweep of the social impacts of this pandemic on our nation. This section is based on the five Covid-19 Social Impact Dashboards we have released since April, to monitor and assess the impact of Covid-19 on food security, financial hardship, housing, addictions and income support and employment. After this macro view, the report focusses on the three communities. In each of these sections, there is a brief statistical breakdown and snapshot of some specific social progress measurements for the areas. These snapshots aim to provide some context around the findings from the SOOC 2020 online and face-to-face interviews. Following this, we present the findings from the interviews. Overall, we conducted 564 face-to-face or online interviews, and conducted 14 interviews with key community leaders from across these communities over July and August 2020. We then focus on unpacking the responses to some key survey questions, particularly how they were impacted by Covid-19, what their priorities are for the upcoming election, and what their hopes are for the future of their community.

Key overarching themes

Across all three of these communities, there were consistent themes that emerged. In summary, these were:

- **Mental health** All three of these communities raised some major concerns around access to mental health services. Locals consistently made reports of increased stress, anxiety and hardship that affected people's mental health. They also connected this to the job losses, social isolation,

lack of income and other social challenges that came with the lockdowns. Locals in the three areas also pointed to specific mental health issues for children and youth emerging from Covid-19.

- **Housing** Overall, the existing housing problems in each community were magnified during and even since the lockdowns began. Responses from locals ranged from stories of homelessness in Rotorua, through to unaffordable rental or private housing, especially in Queenstown.
- **Income/Employment** The primary and most direct impacts for many locals in our surveys of Covid-19 were job losses, income problems and downturns in the local economies. For example, for Rotorua and Queenstown, who are heavily reliant on tourism, this economic impact was substantial and appears to be long-lasting. Again, these financial stresses contributed to the heightened mental health stress and anxiety during this pandemic.
- **Recovery** While acknowledging the huge impacts of Covid-19, many locals across the three areas, especially the community leaders or key informants we interviewed, also wanted to focus and discuss what recovery from this much-talked-about recession looked like moving forward. Locals put forward ideas including revitalising the local mall to spark the local economy (Johnsonville), through to diversifying away from tourism in Queenstown. In our view, any talk of recovery at a national level must properly account for recovery at these unique local community levels.
- **Election 2020** When asked for their priorities for Election 2020, the locals responded with a variety of answers. But, generally, their election priorities were linked to the current social issues they were facing before, or because of, Covid-19.

Local Communities

One of the aims of our SOOC project is to conduct these surveys in a diverse range of communities. These three areas were chosen as they were all quite unique: Rotorua has a significant Māori population; Johnsonville is a small and diverse community; Queenstown is a tourism mecca with a large migrant worker population. At the same time, these communities shared many characteristics, concerns, aspirations and priorities. The Salvation Army is active and integrated in all of these communities,

especially during the original lockdowns. Our services in each area are consistent, with each of our local centres providing church services, foodbanks and some social work and counselling. But there are unique ministries or services too. For instance, in Rotorua, we provide transitional housing, Johnsonville has a growing community meals programme, and the Queenstown Salvation Army has a strong support programme to migrant workers. Some of the key unique themes that emerged in these areas include:

- **Rotorua** Concerns around housing, particularly homelessness, dominated many of the responses in Rotorua. This was strong in the statistical background and interviews with the public and key informants. Other issues, often connected to housing problems, included gangs, addictions, access to mental health and unemployment. Another specific element of the Rotorua surveys was the significance of the local iwi Te Arawa and Māori-led initiatives. With nearly 40 percent of the Rotorua population identifying as Māori, the importance of Māori-led solutions to complex issues—like housing, homelessness and employment—cannot be underestimated. Recovery from this much-talked-about recession from a Māori perspective in Rotorua could help model what recovery should look like in other communities, especially those with large Māori populations.
- **Johnsonville** Johnsonville is a relatively small community that is rapidly changing and very diverse. These led us to questions around how small communities like this can handle, adjust to and push through major national changes like Covid-19 and a recession. Locals here discussed mental health issues, inequities between locals, challenges for the local refugee and migrant populations, and a series of housing-related issues. Locals pointed to pockets of poverty in their local community within the relative financial stability for many households. All these rapid changes mean that social service provision for the local Salvation Army and other community groups must be agile and adapt to an ever-changing community.
- **Queenstown** Overall, three consistent themes emerged from these interviews. Firstly, the plight of migrant workers was vitally important to most locals interviewed. There was a lot of discussion about the hardships these locals face, the important role they play in the local economy, and

the concerns associated with potentially losing this source of labour. Secondly, access to mental health and other social supports was highlighted. As mentioned above, these reports of increased stress and anxiety were directly related to the economic and financial hardships many locals have with this pandemic. Finally, there was both a strong concern and focus on recovery. This centred on diversifying the local economy so that there was less reliance on international tourism in the future.

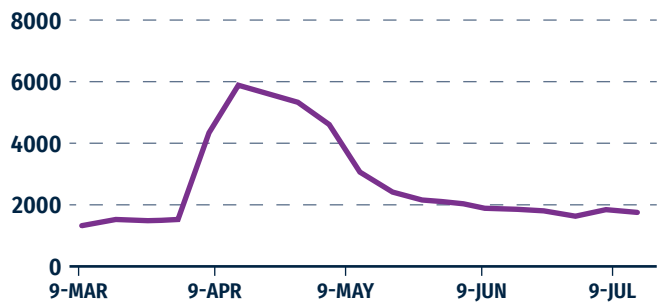
Thank you

This is a brief summary of the interviews and analysis undertaken in these three local communities. SOOC is a snapshot of these communities at a 'point in time' over July and August 2020. But, ideally, this snapshot captures some fascinating information and raw responses of how people see their communities, the challenges and hopes within their communities, and the extraordinary impacts of Covid-19 in their areas in an election year. The Salvation Army thanks all those locals that participated in these surveys, as well as The Salvation Army church members, staff and volunteers who conducted the interviews. God bless our nation.

THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON OUR NATION

The true long-term impacts of Covid-19 on our nation will take some time to be completely revealed and fully understood. Treasury has provided a useful series of weekly and monthly updates with real-time data designed to aid independent analysis and give businesses a sense of the activity across different parts of the economy.¹ Treasury’s updates have a specific focus: the impact of Covid-19 on our national economy. The Salvation Army released our own Covid-19 Social Impact Dashboard series, beginning in 6 April 2020, to measure, monitor and assess the *social impact* of this pandemic in our communities. These Dashboards tracked five key social progress areas throughout the country—food security, financial hardship, addictions, housing, and income support and unemployment.² Our hope was to provide simple data to indicate to families, communities, organisations and the Government some of the key social progress trends emerging since these lockdowns began.

Figure 1: Salvation Army Food Parcel Distribution Mar–Jun 2020



Food Security

Nationally, one of the most significant social impacts of Covid-19 was (and still is) the numbers of families seeking food parcels and assistance. The massive

surge and then spike in our food parcel provision in early to mid-April shows clearly the immediate hardship families continue to face. Overall, our food parcel distribution, as indicated in **Figure 1**, has declined nationally since May 2020. But these figures have still not returned to pre-Covid-19 levels for us, which indicates the stubborn food insecurity people are facing. Also, some of our regions are reporting consistent and higher than normal demand for food assistance, particularly in Northland. Additionally, during the second series of lockdowns in late August 2020, food parcel numbers jumped again, with reports of a 150 percent increase, and over 100 food parcels distributed per day in Auckland specifically.³ Our Dashboards also monitored the Special Needs Grant (SNG) for food from Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the trends were similar to our own food parcel provision. **Figure 2** shows the expected spike during levels 3 and 4 lockdowns and shows there has been an increase in SNG for food between June and July 2020.

Financial Hardship

The financial hardship indicators we monitored were call numbers to the MoneyTalks helpline, variations to loans data, and KiwiSaver hardship statistics. These all basically followed a similar trend over the last several months of increasing steadily and then spiking in March and April, and then settling over the more recent months. Coupled with income support, employment and food challenges, financial hardship has increased for Kiwis over 2020. Recently released Inland Revenue data⁴ in **Figure 3** shows some of this increase, showing that 2120 members have withdrawn their savings due to financial hardship, up from 1710 in July 2019.

Figure 2: Total SNG given across NZ—July 2019–July 2020

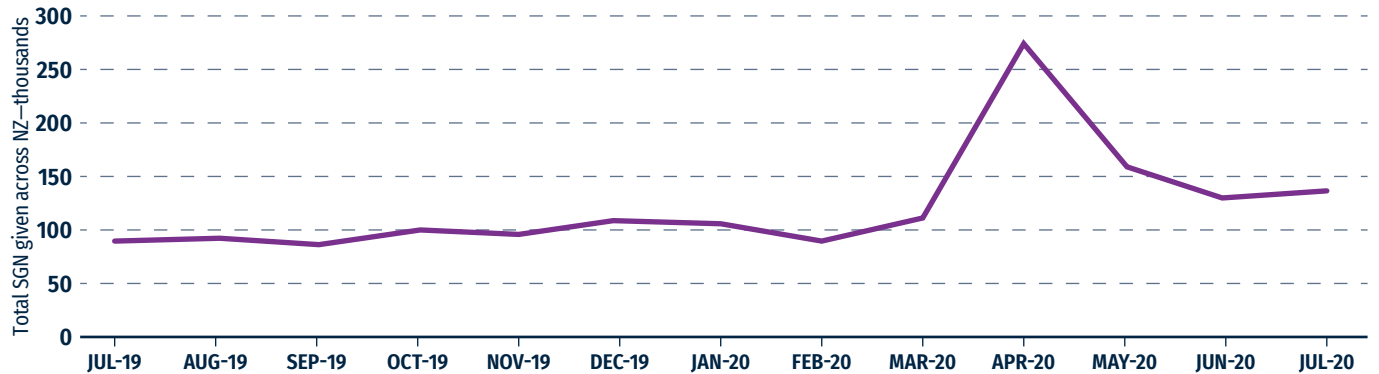
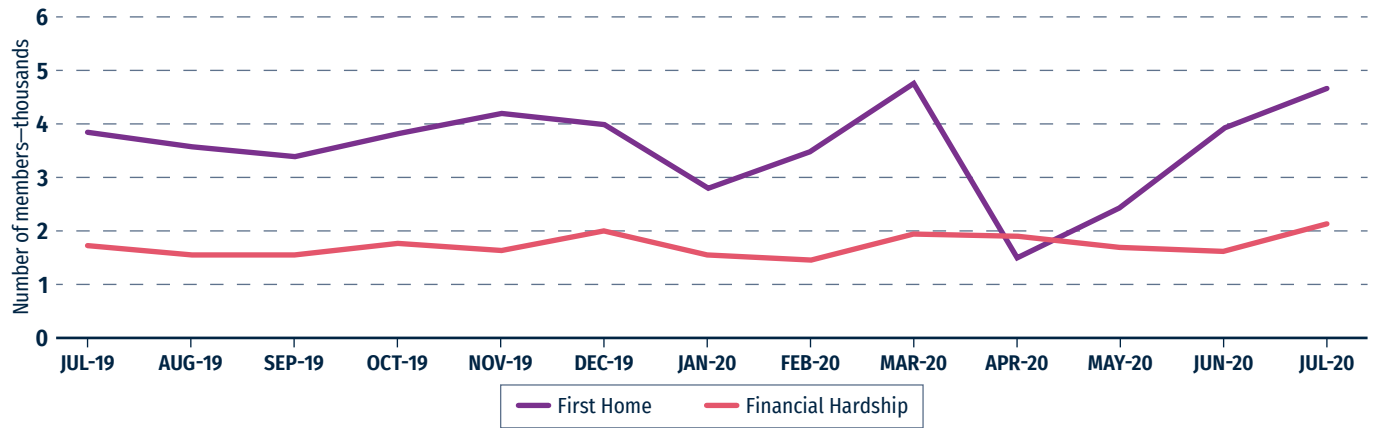


Figure 3: Number of KiwiSaver fund withdrawals—July 2019–July 2020



Addictions

In this section, we monitored the impact of Covid-19 on our alcohol, other drugs and gambling harm services throughout the country. Overall, levels 3 and 4 lockdowns obviously made it harder for people to access both the addictive substances and habits they used, as well as treatment and support services provided in the community. As we moved to lower levels of lockdown, we identified increases in the numbers of existing and new clients coming to our services. At the same time, the lockdown alert level changes also led to increased opportunities for people to gamble and access alcohol and other drugs. We also referenced in our Dashboards two surveys from the Health Promotion Agency on alcohol, tobacco, gambling and mental wellbeing behaviours.⁵ The surveys were undertaken in level 4 and then in level 1. Some of their key findings in the second survey included that two-thirds of adults are drinking at their usual (pre-lockdown) levels; of those surveyed, 22 percent report drinking less than usual (down from 34% during level 4) while 14 percent report drinking more than usual (down from 19%

during level 4); a higher proportion of Māori (32%) and Pasifika (44%) respondents continue to drink less than usual, compared with pre-lockdown levels; young people, and those who have experienced a change in personal income due to Covid-19, are most likely to be experiencing moderate to severe symptoms of depression and anxiety in level 1.⁶

Housing

The indicators we monitored in our Dashboards were the Social Housing Register (**Figure 4**), numbers in Transitional Housing, the impacts on Māori and housing, and the use of emergency housing during and after levels 3 and 4 lockdowns. There was a major financial commitment to housing in Budget 2020, and we hope there continues to be innovative and effective solutions to these challenging housing questions. For a country this small and this (relatively) wealthy, the housing challenges seem to grow faster than the policy responses can be implemented.

Figure 4: Social housing register—2015–2020

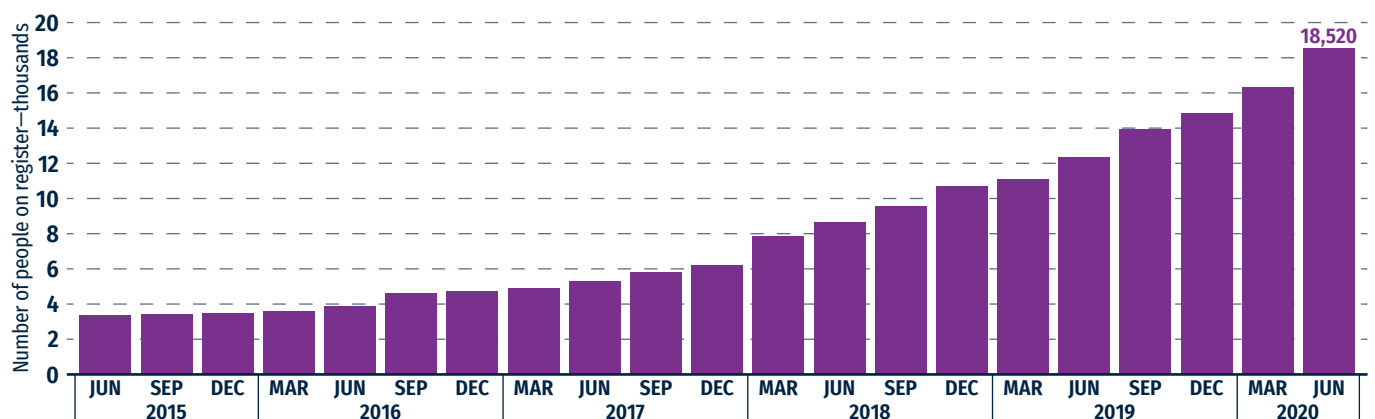
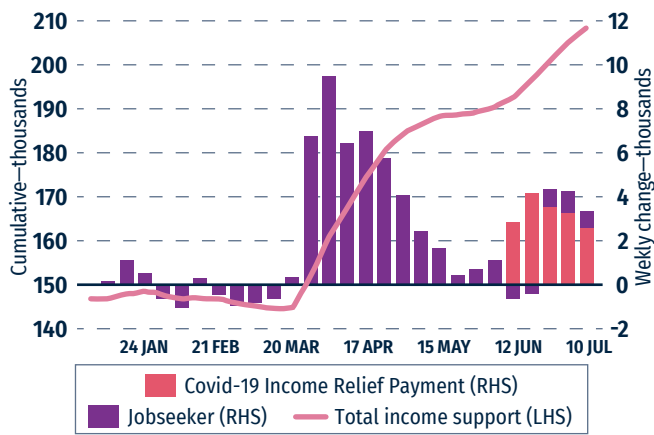


Figure 5: Number of Jobseeker and Income support recipients Jan 2020–Jul 2020



Source: Ministry of Social Development

Income support and employment

Our fifth Dashboard in July stated plainly that the worst impacts of the Covid-19 recession are indeed concentrated among those who were already under pressure before the crisis. We also noted that the income support package from the Government, including the original Wage Subsidy, the subsequent Wage Subsidy extensions into the new series of lockdowns, and the new Covid Income Relief Payment (CIRP), have helped greatly to minimise the harmful impacts of this economic recession. For instance, between June and July 2020, 10,378 extra people received the CIRP of which 32 percent were aged 29 and under. The numbers of those receiving the main benefits (Jobseeker, Sole Parent Support, etc) have generally increased over the last year, and especially since the beginning of 2020. **Figure 5** shows the surge of Jobseeker (Work Ready) numbers in March and April 2020, as well as the impact of the CIRP. At the end of July 2020, 355,648 people were receiving one of the main benefits.

ROTORUA

Snapshot

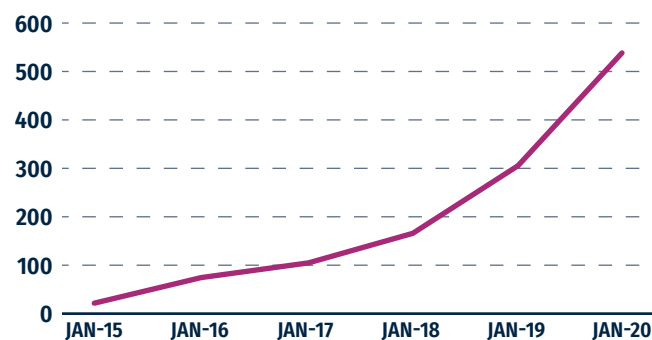
The name Rotorua conjures stunning images of bubbling mud pools, geysers, beautiful natural sights, and a strong love and use of Māori culture. It is a famous part of New Zealand. This section provides a brief statistical breakdown and snapshot of some specific social progress measurements for the Rotorua District. These snapshots aim to provide some context around the findings from the SOOC 2020 online and face-to-face interviews.

The 2018 Census recorded 71,877 people living in the Rotorua district, an increase of 10 percent since 2013 (65,280 residents). Just under 29,000 people identified as Māori. In fact, the Māori population in Rotorua rose by 28 percent between 2013 (22,410) and 2018 (28,839). Māori now make up over 40 percent of the total Rotorua population, sitting much higher than the national figure (16.5% of New Zealand population).

Housing stress for many Rotorua families

In 2018, over half of the people in Rotorua lived in a house they own or partly own. About 38 percent of residents lived in a home that they do not own. Housing figures in Rotorua are very similar to the national numbers for tenure of households. In January 2020, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) identified Rotorua as one of the six national hotspots where homelessness was a serious and increasing issue.⁷ The most current Social Housing Register statistics highlight housing stress as a significant issue in Rotorua. As of June 2020, there were 540 applicants on the register from the Rotorua District, compared with 23 applicants in June 2015. This trend is illustrated in **Figure 6**. Of the 540 applicants, 514 were classed as Priority A, households with the most pressing housing needs. In July 2020, MHUD published their *Severe Housing Deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand 2018* report.⁸ This was a 'point in time' snapshot, and the report concluded that at least 41,600 people were experiencing severe housing deprivation around the country on 6 March 2018. Of this, 924 were from Rotorua. In fact, Rotorua had one of the highest rates of severe housing deprivation in New Zealand, with 128.6 people per 10,000 living with this severe housing stress.⁹ Most of the Rotorua locals in this 2018 report were sharing accommodation, indicating the ongoing problems with overcrowding.¹⁰

Figure 6: Social Housing Register Applicants—Rotorua District—June 2015–2020



The Salvation Army provides Transitional Housing services in Rotorua. In the year ending June 2020, we had 18 transitional housing clients using our 11 units. In that same period, over 3100 nights of accommodation were provided in these units, with the biggest increase coming in the March and June 2020 quarters. These challenging social and transitional housing figures, particularly in the last 6 to 12 months are likely due to impacts of Covid-19, and the housing stress that existed before the series of lockdowns began being magnified by Covid-19.

In terms of renting, about one-third of locals live in rental accommodation. In 2018, the median weekly rent paid by locals was \$270. The median weekly rent in Rotorua is still much less than the national median of \$340 per week. Comparatively, the median weekly rent in the Taupō District was \$280, and for the Opotiki District, it was \$200.

In the Dot Loves Data (DOT) Housing Dashboard series,¹¹ there are some interesting figures about the 25,000 Rotorua households summarised in **Table 1**, and all these figures highlight significant housing challenges for Rotorua families.

Table 1: Summary of housing challenges in Rotorua (Source: DOT)

Households in Rotorua	25,000
Households in emergency housing	3% (national average 4.2%)
Accommodation-related grants to Rotorua (quarter ending June 2020)	1706, equating to \$1.4m in these grants
Households living in significant dampness and mould	4.4% (national average 3.3%)
Home break-ins	19.44 per 10,000 people per month (national average 11.6)

Taking a closer look at the numbers for some Census Area Units (CAU) in Rotorua, the housing situation is even more challenging. In Kuirau, there are 490 households in this CAU. According to DOT, 75 percent of these households do not own the home they live in, nearly 16 percent of households do not have heating in the home, 4 percent have no cooking facilities, 6.5 percent report no active electricity supply, and 8 percent of households say they do not have any working tap drinking water. All these figures place Kuirau as one of the worst CAU in terms of housing deprivation in the entire country.

In neighbouring CAU, such as Fenton and Victoria, the housing stress and challenges are very similar. In this context, the Rotorua Lakes Council released in June 2020 their *Housing and Thriving Communities Strategic Framework* to address these complex local housing issues.¹² There have been early reports of 62 completed Kainga Ora homes, and 40 transitional homes for the District in partnership with Te Arawa and iwi groups.¹³ The Housing First programme in

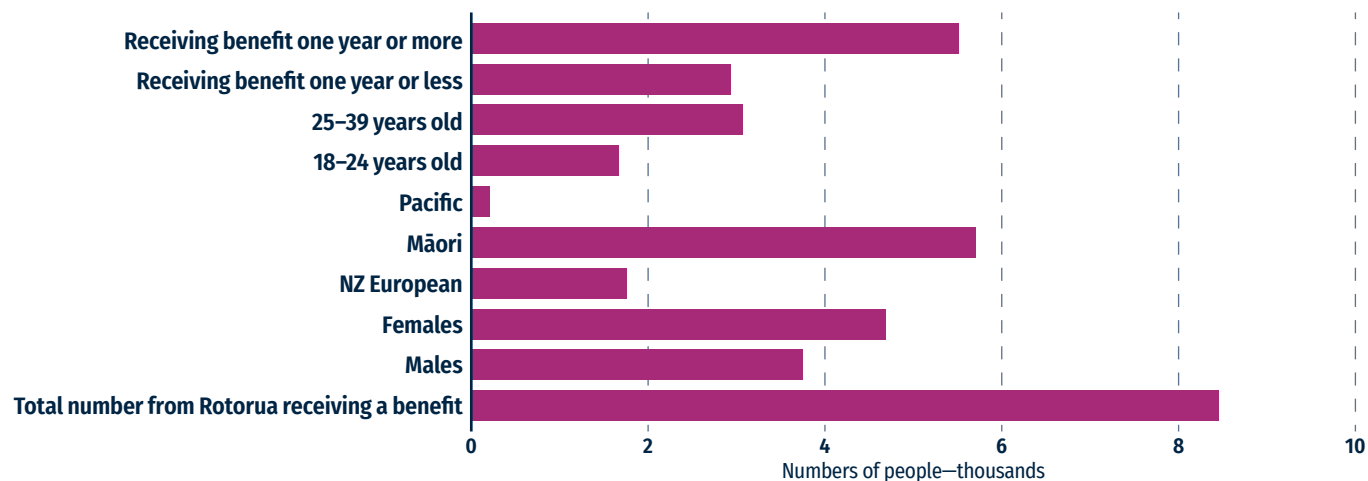
Rotorua, led by Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake (Mangatakitahi) continues to progress and work with those facing homelessness. Time will tell if these government, iwi and community strategies and programmes will address the housing problems facing many households in Rotorua.

Economic challenges

With the significant tourism industry in the region, Rotorua is one of the worst affected areas from Covid-19 and the national lockdowns. In April 2020, in a report commissioned by the Rotorua Lakes Council to try and quantify the impact of the lockdowns, it was forecasted that the Rotorua economy would contract by 7.8 percent over the year to March 2021.¹⁴ This report added, ‘employment is expected to decline 10.5%, or just over 3,700 jobs in the year to March 2021. This compares to an economy-wide decline in employment of 9.8%. Rotorua’s unemployment rate could rise to 10.7% resulting in lost earnings totalling \$186m in the year to March 2021’.¹⁵

Infometrics, a data collection and analysis firm, noted a 16 percent decrease in tourism spending in Rotorua, from \$853 million in June 2019, to \$717 million in June 2020.¹⁶ Naturally, this would result in a steady decline in consumer spending in the region. In the 2018 Census, nearly 64 percent of the Rotorua District were in full-time or part-time employment, with 6.1 percent of the region being unemployed. As of June 2020, there were 8451 Rotorua locals receiving a benefit from MSD. Over half of this number are on the Jobseeker Support payment. This June 2020 figure is a 22 percent increase since June 2019 (6903) in the number of locals receiving a government income support welfare payment. **Figure 7** shows that in June

Figure 7: Characteristics of working-age recipients of main benefits for Rotorua District—June 2020

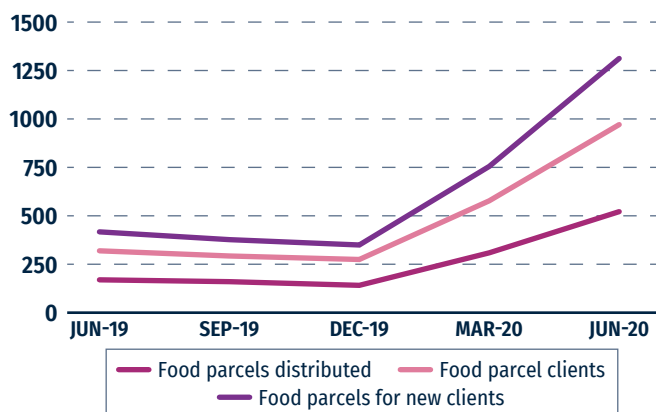


2020, Māori, women and younger people are facing real unemployment challenges. Furthermore, 3000 locals in June 2020 had received a benefit for one year or less, likely indicating the influx of people applying for benefits as a result of Covid-19 and subsequent economic challenges.

Recent data from MSD also strongly points to these growing economic challenges.¹⁷ In June 2020, 297 people received the CIRP from the Rotorua District. By July 2020, there were 552 people receiving the CIRP. This is an 86 percent increase (255 additional people) in CIRP recipients in one month for Rotorua. MSD figures also show that between March (2987) and July (3739) 2020, the numbers from Rotorua receiving the Jobseeker Support (Work Ready) benefit payment has increased by 25 percent in these five months when the lockdowns were most restrictive.

The Salvation Army’s own foodbank statistics help illustrate the major economic challenges in Rotorua. **Figure 8** clearly shows that in all these measurements—food parcels distributed, number of clients (existing), and food parcels distributed to these new clients—that the numbers have been steadily increasing since December 2019. For example, between March and June 2020, the food parcels distributed to new clients increased by about 191 percent in just one quarter. But then with the impact of Covid-19 in March 2020, these numbers spiked in the Rotorua District area, especially the number of food parcels given to new Salvation Army Foodbank clients. These numbers are in line with the hardship indicated by the MSD data for the region.

Figure 8: Salvation Army foodbank distribution in Rotorua—June 2019–June 2020



The wider social progress context in Rotorua

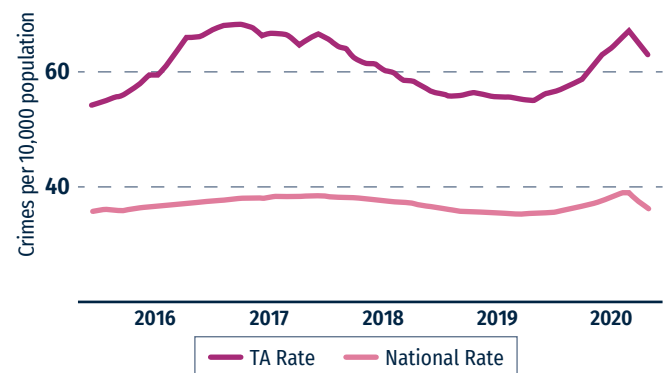
In their Dynamic Deprivation Index (DDI), DOT identifies some other key data for the region. For example, about 29 percent of Rotorua households do not have internet access at home, 5.3 percent of households do not have vehicle access, and the median household income is \$67,655. But as with most regions and communities, there are stark differences with different neighbourhoods or CAU. **Table 2** is a comparison using DOT’s DDI between Lynmore and Ngapuna, two neighbouring CAU in Rotorua to show some key differences between households living near each other.

Table 2: Comparison of DDI indicators between Lynmore and Ngapuna (Rotorua)—June 2020

	Lynmore	Ngapuna
Median household income	\$105,322	\$68,630
% households with no internet access	10.2%	31.7%
% households who are Means Tested Benefits claimants	1.26%	2.74%
% households who do not own the home they live in	18.2%	35.9%
% households with no vehicle access	1.7%	7.6%
% households with damp and mould	1.58%	4.67%
DDI score	1	10

In terms of crime data, the Rotorua District has one of the worst crime rates for any TA in the country, although there has been a decline since March 2020. **Figure 9** shows that the crime rate (crimes per 10,000 people in the TA) for Rotorua has been consistently higher than the national crime rate since 2015. Both the Rotorua District and national rates have

Figure 9: Crime rate in Rotorua TA—2015–2020



steadily declined since March, again showing another important impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns.

In terms of gambling, there are 26 licenced venues in the Rotorua District, which hold 365 electronic gaming machines, or better known as pokie machines. Between April 2019 and March 2020, over \$25 million was lost in gambling in Rotorua. This equates to \$112.59 in gaming machine proceeds (GMP) per capita in Rotorua, placing it as the worst ranked GMP per capita for any TA in the country. Additionally, in 2019 there were 205 venues in Rotorua licenced to sell alcohol, with 24 of these being off-licence bottle stores.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) enrolments of 0- to 4-year-olds have generally been somewhat mixed since 2015. By 2019, 3479, 0- to 4-year-olds were enrolled in the 106 licenced pre-schools in the Rotorua region.¹⁸ The number of children who are Māori and from other ethnicities participating in ECEs has consistently declined since 2017. It is unclear what the reasons are for these changes. In addition, the numbers of ‘reports of concern’ of abuse to Oranga Tamariki from the Rotorua region, for both Māori and non-Māori children, has steadily declined since 2018. For instance, there were 1812 ‘reports of concern’ of abuse for Māori children in 2016, and by 2019 this had dropped to 1438 reports.¹⁹

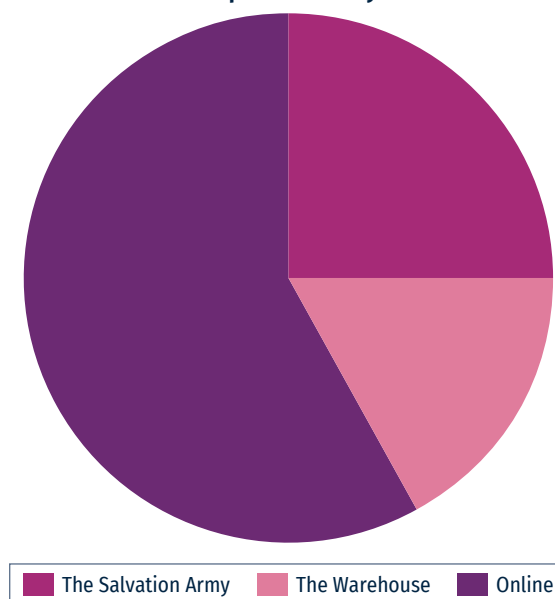
Community Surveys

There was a total of 182 surveys completed by the Rotorua community. The surveys are broken down in **Figure 10**. There were 76 surveys that were completed face-to-face in the community at The Salvation Army (45) and at The Warehouse (31). The remaining 106 surveys were completed online on Survey Monkey via a geo-targeted Facebook promotion.

Key Informants

There were four key informant interviews completed for the Rotorua area (**Table 3**). The interviews were completed via Zoom and phone calls. The key informants have diverse backgrounds that

Figure 10: Rotorua’s completed surveys and locations



include social services in the community, education, local politics, through to governance roles in key organisations in the Rotorua community. Collectively, the key informants have over 80+ years of experience in serving the local Rotorua community.

Demographics

Participants were predominantly female; there were three times more females (76%) who participated in the survey than males (24%). People between the ages of 50 to 59 years old (23.6%) also represented the highest age group to complete the survey, followed by 30- to 39-year-olds (19.8%) [**Figure 11**]. The median age for our survey participants for Rotorua area was 37 years old. Overall, 42 percent of surveys were completed face-to-face at either Salvation Army venues or at The Warehouse.

The ethnic breakdown showed that the majority of survey participants were Pākehā (48%) followed by Māori (43%) and Pasifika (4%). The Māori representation in the survey mirrors the census representation of Māori in the Rotorua region of 41 percent. **Figure 12**

Table 3: Key Informants for the Rotorua Community

	Connection	Duration of service/residency	Local Resident
Key Informant 1	Te Tatau o Te Arawa and Regional Councillor	50+ Years	Local resident
Key Informant 2	Manager of a Community Social Service (NGO)	2+ Years	Non-resident
Key Informant 3	Teacher and Counsellor	30+ Years	Local resident
Key Informant 4	Director of a Community Social Service (NGO)	10+ Years	Local resident

shows that of the 95 percent of participants who had lived in Rotorua for more than 10 years, 41 percent were Māori, 51 percent were Pākehā and Pasifika made up 5 percent. However, participants, particularly for Māori, expressed a strong sense of belonging to

Rotorua. This was a fundamental part of their identity. The other ethnic groups are significantly smaller in comparison with Māori and Pākehā, and have lived in Rotorua for shorter durations, but these figures illustrate the growing ethnic diversity in the region.

Figure 11: Rotorua survey participants by age and gender

	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Total
Female	4	11	28	22	34	23	13	3	138
Male	-	10	8	7	8	6	4	-	43
Undisclosed	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	4	21	36	29	43	29	17	3	182

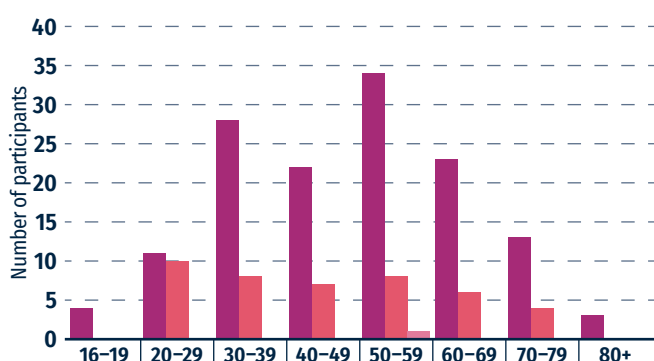
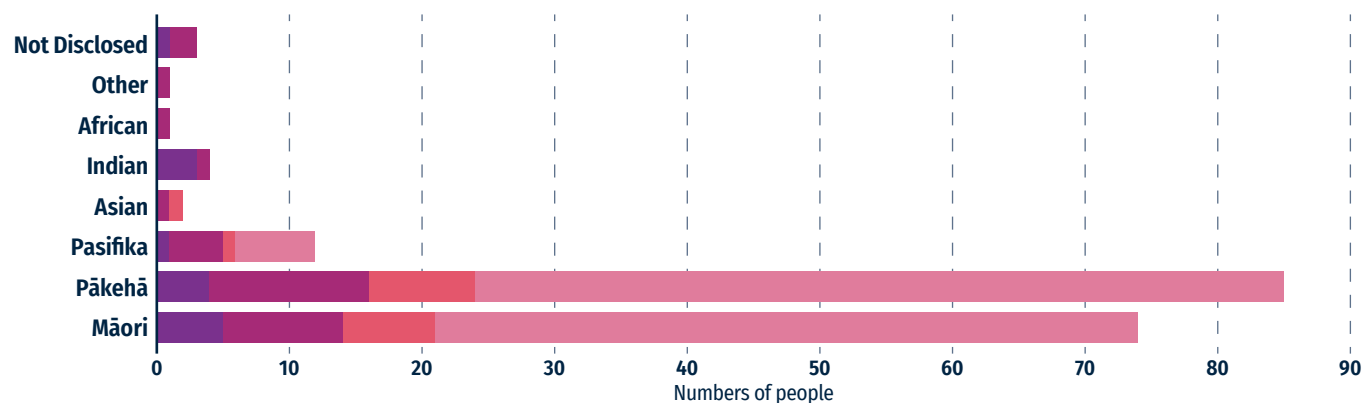


Figure 12: Rotorua survey participants by ethnicity and length of time living in community



	Māori	Pākehā	Pasifika	Asian	Indian	African	Other	Not Disclosed	Total
>2Y	5	4	1	-	3	-	-	1	14
2-5Y	9	12	4	1	1	1	1	2	31
6-10Y	7	8	1	1	-	-	-	-	17
10Y+	53	61	6	-	-	-	-	-	120
TOTAL	74	85	12	2	4	1	1	3	182

Table 4: Summary of Rotorua SOOC 2020 key themes

Like	Concerns	Covid-19	Election 2020	2025 Aspirations
Community	Homelessness	Employment and income	Housing	Housing
Environment	Drugs and addictions	Positive	Employment	Employment
Culture	Gangs	Minimal changes	Homelessness	Homelessness
Accessibility	Crime	Other	Health	Other
Whānau oriented	Housing	Family	Other	Drugs
Size	Poverty	Mental health	Education	Gangs
Activities	Employment and income	Isolated	Referendum	Community
Services	Other	Education	Poverty	Economy
Safe	Children		Children	Children
Home			Drugs	Safer
			Beneficiaries	Environment
				Tourism

Major Themes

All 182 surveys were entered into Survey Monkey and analysed using NVivo 12 software. All responses to the questions were aggregated and analysed to identify the key themes. Any themes that were identified that had less than three references from the surveys were added to other category (**Table 4**).

What do you like about Rotorua?

- Community**—people and community were noted as key factors that participants liked about Rotorua. Locals noted that the Rotorua community are supportive and always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need within their community. Locals talked about how they appreciate the general genuine and caring nature of the people in their communities. Many locals attributed this to the small size of Rotorua. Locals talked about knowing their neighbours and the sense of safety in having a close community. Locals liked the easy going and laid-back nature of the community. Additional to this, locals appreciated their communities not being superficial, being slow paced and not too crowded. Lastly, participants highlighted an appreciation for the openness and inclusiveness of the Rotorua community. Locals

“Our community are always willing to get out there and help even if they’re feeding homeless out of their own pockets.”

Key Informant—Community Service Director

“The Rotorua community’s ability to band together to support each other. There are so many people and social organisations in Rotorua that are all doing their part to better our community.”

Key Informant—Community Service Manager

talked about the racial disparity, particularly in an area like Rotorua where Māori represent a high proportion of the population, and how the Rotorua community embraces culture and diversity.

- Environment**—Locals loved that Rotorua was central to many outdoor attractions—such as the lakes, Whakarewarewa Forest and the Government Gardens. The proximity to these places in Rotorua provided the locals with free outdoor activities. The locals also appreciated that Rotorua put a lot of time and effort into caring for and preserving the natural resources of the region. Many locals appreciated that their town aims to be environmentally friendly and conscious of the impacts on climate change. Locals also enjoy the landscape and the beautiful natural scenery in the Rotorua area.
- Culture**—Many of the locals talked about how they love that Māori culture is embraced and integrated in their communities. Māoritanga and Te Reo Māori is common in their communities and that made many locals proud of their heritage and their community. Locals talked about embracing multi-culturalism, diversity and inclusiveness in

the community. Others talked about the challenges they face because of cultural stereotypes but are grateful for the inclusive nature of their community and not being judged because of their ethnic background.

“Rotorua is made up of 40% Māori with a strong connection to culture.”

Key Informant—Te Arawa representative and Regional Councillor

What concerns or fears do you have for your community?

- **Homelessness**—The number one concern for the locals was homelessness in Rotorua. The locals talked about many different facets of homelessness in the Rotorua area, but the focus was on the rough sleepers in the Rotorua CBD. Some locals talked about the need to address housing and employment issues in order to address homelessness. Other locals talked about the need for more social services to support homeless people. Locals also talked about the need to move away from housing the homeless in motels and shift towards long term and sustainable housing solutions. A few locals complained about the influx of homeless people from outside the region, and the impact on resourcing particularly for locals. Some locals are concerned for the overall safety of the area, particularly in relation to the ongoing anti-social behaviours of some of the homeless population.

“Rotorua is Hollywood for the homeless — many people come to Rotorua to be homeless because they fed, shower facilities and have access to WIFI.”

Key Informant—Community Service Manager

- **Drugs and Gangs**—Many locals complained about the use of drugs, particularly methamphetamine in their communities. Locals talked about the increase in addictions, particularly drug addiction. They also mentioned alcohol and the need for more mental health services to support people dealing with addictions. Locals reported that these drugs were directly linked to gangs, violence and youth. Almost 30 percent of the locals attributed

the saturation of drugs in the region with the growing presence of gangs. The increase in gang numbers within the region has seen more violence and gang fights and leaves locals fearing for their safety. One local highlighted a fear that the gangs will soon take over the town. Locals expressed that many of the youth in the area are being enticed to join these gangs, and it is often the youth or gang prospects who are violent and intimidating to the public. Many of the locals expressed their concerns for the lack of activity to support and empower young people in the region, resulting in youth going astray. Some locals shared that they fear for the safety and future of their children given the limited prospects for young people in the region.

“We need to really look at the war on drugs here. It is a huge problem if YOU CAN P FASTER THAN YOU CAN PIZZA. Now we’re looking at legalising cannabis; it may be a lower grade drug than P but that doesn’t take away from the fact it is still a gateway drug.”

Key Informant—Teacher/ Counsellor

- **Housing**—Locals identified three key aspects of housing as significant issues: the lack of affordable housing, the shortage of social housing and the poor state of houses. Locals talked about the average income in the area not matching the housing prices. Therefore, finding suitable and affordable housing is a luxury for the average person. Locals shared their struggle to find affordable rental housing whilst employed, expressing concerns around the difficulty for both employed and unemployed individuals and families to secure rental housing. Locals highlighted their frustration around the lack of heating in homes. One local echoed their frustration at the irony of people dying due to a lack of appropriate heating, despite living in the geothermal mecca of the world. Locals expressed the need for more social housing to address current housing challenges, such as housing affordability, homelessness and sustainable and long-term housing options.

How were you impacted by Covid-19 this year?

- **Employment and Income**—Over 35 percent of survey participants had experienced some form of income loss—either they had lost their job, or their partner or spouse had lost their job. Locals who hadn't been impacted financially by Covid-19 expressed their concern for their family members who were at risk of losing employment or income. Almost everybody knew somebody that was financially impacted by Covid-19. Participants who did lose income or employment talked about the support they received from the wage subsidy and other financial support from the Government. Others talked about having to use their savings to survive. Business owners talked about the major losses their businesses had due to Covid-19. One business owner had to work longer hours after lockdown to try and make up for the loss, whilst another business owner boosted other business ventures using government assistance.

“There will be a second wave of Covid-19 impact, and the impacts will be greater the second time round. Most of the job losses have been low-wage jobs and as a result majority of those losing employment are Māori. Job losses meant income loss and that also meant that families were unable to meet the basic costs for food.”

Key Informant—Te Arawa representative and Regional Councillor

- **Mental Health**—More than half of the participants who had lost their jobs or income also talked about the financial stress, isolation from support networks due to lockdown and for many parents the stress of schooling kids at home. Isolation played a big part for locals who talked about mental health declining, especially for single parents and people who lived alone. Some locals expressed that although we are not in lockdown anymore, and life is starting to normalise again, the mental toll it had taken on individuals and families is still impacting people today. One respondent reported that they now are receiving counselling because they didn't cope very well during lockdown.

“There are many mental health challenges in the region. There is one publicly funded psychologist for the Rotorua area. Many people could have gotten support if it was available earlier but when they finally see a psychologist they're put into the too hard basket and completely get missed. Many young people with mental health issues will leave home and choose to be homeless.”

Key Informant—Teacher/Counsellor

- **Positive Impact**—Over 32 percent of survey participants were not impacted by Covid-19 (55%) or had positive (45%) impacts. Locals appreciated the time they had during lockdown to spend time with their whānau and complete home projects. Many locals talked about lockdown giving them the opportunity to rest, to slow down and to reflect on what is important in life. Locals also talked about how after lockdown they developed a deeper appreciation for life, for their whānau and for their community. One person talked about spending time with whānau during lockdown kept them off drugs and made them want to do better for their whānau.

“Having shovel-ready projects that are ready to go particularly with infrastructure and development. As a result, this increases the housing capacity and creates local employment.”

Key Informant—Te Arawa Representative and Regional Councillor

What's the most important social issue for you in Election 2020?

Figure 13 shows the important key social issues for the Rotorua community considering upcoming elections. Over 80 percent of locals talked about multiple social issues, with housing being the most dominant issue. Locals talked about the lack of employment opportunities and fair and adequate wages to meet people's basic living costs. Low wages and high living costs, particularly for those in rental properties, are driving families into poverty and homelessness. Some locals expressed their concern that poverty and lack of engagement are a

Figure 13: Rotorua’s key social issues for Election 2020



driving factor for youth joining gangs. Locals have associated the prevalence of gangs with increase in drug use and violence. Some locals would like more law enforcement in the area to address the ongoing crime. Locals asked for more accessible and affordable healthcare services, particularly specialised services for mental health and addictions.

Other issues that are pertinent for the Rotorua community with respect to Election 2020 include creating an equitable society, immigration, environmental sustainability, elimination of Covid-19 and the two referendums on cannabis legislation and euthanasia.

In 5 years’ time, what changes do you hope to see in this community?

For the Rotorua community, one local summarised many of the hopes locals have: ‘A happy and healthy community that is a safe, united place to live. Quality and balanced candidates for council. A thriving economy with tourists in motel rooms and vulnerable people in actual homes. Funding for youth programmes to build resilience and encourage kindness.’

Feedback from key informants

Many of the key informants discussed the social issues that they are seeing, especially unemployment, poor housing, homelessness, alcohol and drugs. One key informant talked about the lack of funding they receive and that ‘much of the food they distribute is donated from local businesses’. Other key informants identified that food hardship is just a sign of other hardships. Another shared a challenging story of delivering food to a family in need, yet walking past a recycling bin full of alcohol bottles. Helping families prioritise in these difficult financial times is crucial.

Many of the key informants identified funding problems for local social services, especially for emergency housing for the homeless. In July 2020, Te Arawa released a Te Arawa Vision 2050 report.²⁰ Speaking generally about housing issues and hardship, one key informant from Te Arawa talked about ‘issues in the Rotorua area resulting from generations of hardship on the locals and that solutions to address these issues will also require generational solutions’. One of these suggested solutions from Te Arawa is a bank by the iwi for the iwi, which will also provide a gateway for home ownership and increasing financial literacy. Such innovative solutions by Te Arawa are long-term solutions to complex issues; however, the informant also acknowledged that government support is

Figure 14: 5-year changes for Rotorua



essential in addressing the current social needs of the community.

Key informants spoke about the prevalence of stigmatism, judgementalism and whakama (shame) in the community and how this created barriers for families and young people to access help. One informant said, *‘they are too proud to ask for any help ... whakama to ask for help, but we know they need help, but they’re not coming because they are too proud ... there is a stigma about being supported by a westernised concept’*. Some of these challenges are attributed to growing mental health concerns, with one key informant commenting that locals don’t always access mental health services until it is too late. When they do access mental health services, it is limited; *‘there is only one public psychologist in the area’*.

Summary and Moving Forward

There were some major social challenges for the Rotorua community *even before* this pandemic happened, especially in homelessness, housing and gangs. The lockdowns have brought new challenges around employment, incomes and mental health in the region. The Election 2020 priorities and future aspirations for locals closely align to the social and economic issues they see impacting locals. The

feedback from locals and community leaders in our surveys were consistent with identified key themes. Moving forward, these are some key policy ideas and/or questions we have.

- **Māori challenges and solutions**—We have noted the large Māori population in Rotorua and some of the challenges they face. Simultaneously, locals and community leaders have identified real strengths within Te ao Māori that enrich Rotorua as a region. More targeted support for Māori, particularly around homelessness, gang intervention and access to health services is needed. Additionally, the bold plans of Te Arawa, which include more Māori-run local businesses, an iwi-run bank and a Silicon Valley-type innovation incubator, offers a series of exciting local community solutions to these complex social challenges. There is great potential for Rotorua to be a leader in kaupapa-Māori-based innovation and solutions that are integrated with the development and thriving of others in this community. This innovation is even more crucial as the region moves to recover from the impacts of Covid-19.
- **Housing**—Challenges right across the housing continuum featured strongly in our community surveys, especially homelessness. Connection to

the national *Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan*²¹ is important for the Rotorua community. There are strong synergies between this plan and the challenges and solutions in Rotorua. Furthermore, we've already alluded to the *Housing and Thriving Communities Strategic Framework* from the Rotorua Lakes Council. Close monitoring of this strategy, especially around homelessness and social, transitional and emergency housing is important for the local community. The connection between these local strategies and plans, to the national policy settings and plans is vital, so that central government remains updated of the local story.

- **What does local recovery look like in this Covid-19 environment?** We know there are national and local discussions and work currently happening to address this kind of question. However, with such a reliance on tourism and related industries, the economic impact of Covid-19 in Rotorua is massive. The income support, foodbank, financial hardship and mental health evidence clearly shows this. The current national policies, especially the income support payments, are there to reduce the impacts of Covid-19. However, how do local communities bounce back from these hardships? How are local economies boosted to create ripple effects into other social and economic benefits for whānau? It is imperative that in future planning and strategising, the local community voices sampled in this survey are not be lost in the major policy and planning activity happening in Rotorua.

JOHNSONVILLE

Snapshot

Johnsonville is a relatively small suburb approximately 7kms north of Wellington City. It is a community with an interesting history, including being an early site as a timber mill, through to rapid growth of the town in the 1930s. It even became an early location for the building of state houses, with the first built in 1938. Today, Johnsonville is a diverse suburb and is made up of four different CAU.²² In Census 2018, the combined population of these four CAUs totalled at 13,124, which is a 7 percent increase from the 2013 population of 12,249.

Comparing the four Johnsonville CAU

Table 5 is a simple summary of the four CAU based on the 2018 Census, with an average of the four CAU and a comparison with the rest of the Wellington City TA area of which Johnsonville is a part. Whilst the available data may not provide an extensive picture of Johnsonville, it highlights the key social indicators from the 2018 Census.

In 2018, home ownership was generally higher across the four CAU than the rest of Wellington City. Johnsonville Central had the lowest level of home ownership, and the lowest median weekly rent paid, probably indicating the higher level of rental properties and/or social and other forms of housing support in that area. Also, the median rent paid in the western part of the suburb was significantly higher than the other three CAU and higher than the wider Wellington City TA.

In employment, the average across the four Johnsonville CAU was generally in line with the Wellington City figures. The proportion of those unemployed across the four CAU was close to the City average. However, unemployment in Johnsonville Central (6.1%) was clearly higher than the other areas. Following this, Central also had the largest Māori, Pacific, Asian and MELAA populations for all four CAU. Johnsonville is more ethnically diverse than the rest of Wellington City. But the ethnic diversity, particularly in Central, indicates that these minority groups will be more impacted by any changes to

Table 5: Selected Johnsonville statistics (four CAUs and average)—2018 Census

	Johnsonville Central	Johnsonville North	Johnsonville South	Johnsonville West	Average across 4 Johnsonville CAU	Wellington City
Population	2802	3243	1692	3369	13,124 total pop.	202,737 total pop.
Housing—dwelling owned or partly owned	36.6%	58%	51.9%	60.8%	51.8%	47.3%
Housing—dwelling not owned and not held in a family trust	58.2%	34.2%	40.4%	29.2%	40.5%	41.3%
Median weekly rent paid	\$370	\$430	\$400	\$480	\$420	\$440
Employed full-time	54.6%	56.6%	50.9%	55.8%	54.5%	56.8%
Employed part-time	11.9%	14.4%	11.8%	13.9%	10.4%	14.6%
Unemployed	6.1%	4%	4.1%	3.4%	4.4%	4.5%
Ethnic Groups—European	53.1%	67.3%	69%	58.1%	61.8%	74.1%
Māori	13.9%	9.1%	8.9%	7.4%	9.8%	8.6%
Pacific	8.1%	4.8%	5.7%	5.1%	5.9%	5.1%
Asian	32.8%	26.7%	23.4%	18.3%	25.3%	18.3%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA)	2.8%	2.5%	1.1%	2.8%	2.3%	3%

Table 6: Comparison of Johnsonville Central and North (selected indicators)—DOT

	Central	North	National figure/rate
Percent of households who do not own the home they live in	48.5%	34.4%	35.5%
Safety—breaking and entering (break-ins per 10,000 people per month)	9.64	5.15	11.65
Overcrowding (rate of beds required to beds available)	0.678	0.619	0.587
Percent of population in emergency housing	5.77%	1.53%	4.26%
Percent of households with no heating at home	2.03%	1.28%	3.98%
Percent of households living in houses with significant mould and damp	4.17%	3.75%	3.30%
Percent of households with no vehicle access	10.8%	7.7%	6.1%
Median household income	\$97,886	\$105,565	\$80,287
Single parent support rate	1.34%	1.33%	2.08%
Percent of those on a means tested benefit	2.78%	1.76%	3.12%
Percent of households with no internet access	16.4%	8.6%	20.6%

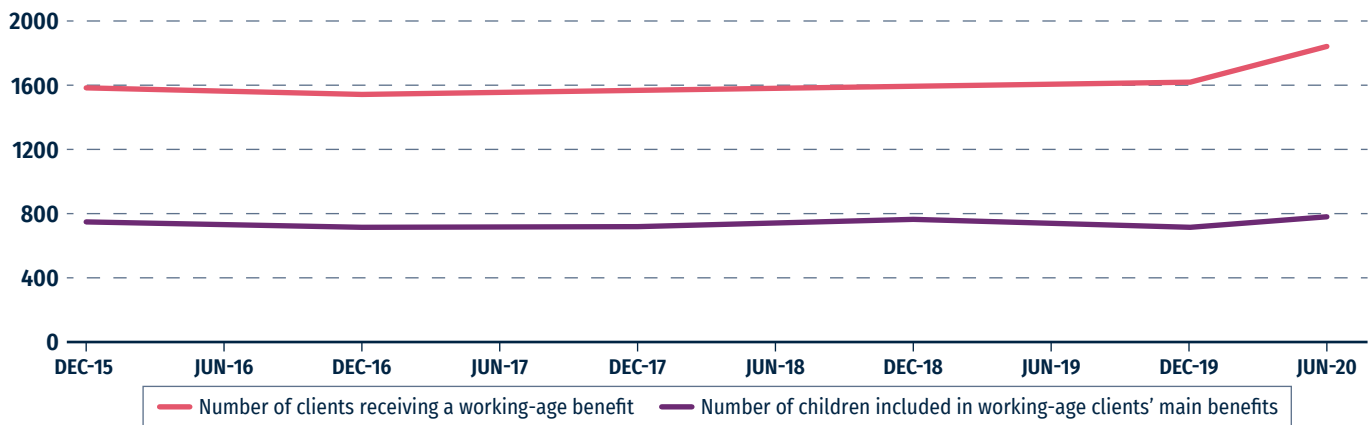
the rental and social housing market and the higher unemployment that exists in the area. North and West had the highest European populations, and West had the smallest Asian population. Central has almost double (32.8%) the amount of Asian people living there than the proportion for the rest of Wellington City (18.3%).

Looking at some more current data, **Table 6** captures some key information from DOT and compares specifically Johnsonville Central and North to give a more detailed picture. Johnsonville Central has more residents living in houses they do not own, more break-ins than North, and more than double the proportion of people who do not have access to the internet at home than North. There are obvious housing challenges for Central, with more people

in emergency housing, living in mouldy and damp homes, living off a benefit, and living in overcrowding situations. However, there is not much difference between the income levels of the two areas, although incomes in Johnsonville are still significantly higher than the national levels.

Figure 15 looks at the benefit levels from MSD for the main working-age benefits based on the Johnsonville Work and Income NZ (WINZ) service centre location.²³ Both the number of clients and the numbers of children of these clients have remained steady since 2015. There is a clear increase in the number of clients since December 2019, again pointing to the far-reaching impacts of Covid-19. MSD figures also note that the number of recipients of the CIRP spiked between June and July 2020 for the Wellington City TA.

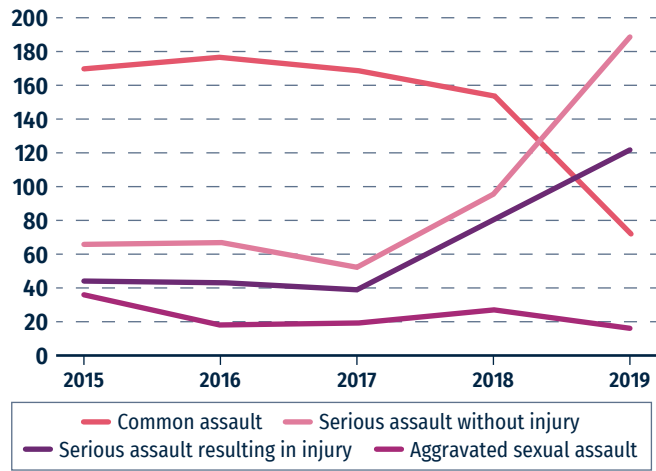
Figure 15: Benefit levels for Johnsonville Service Centre—Dec 2015–June 2020



In June, 373 people received these payments. A month later, 822 people from this TA received the CIRP.²⁴

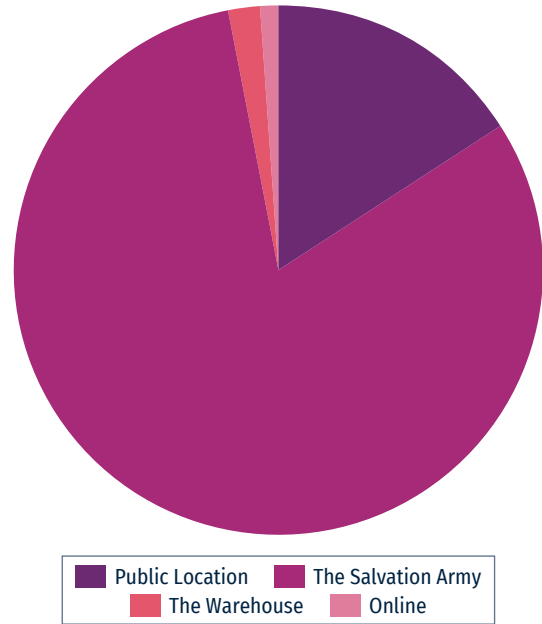
Figure 16 gives a simple breakdown of crime data over the last 5 years in the Johnsonville area.²⁵ Johnsonville is a safe part of Wellington. Since 2018, there has been a rapid decline in common assault. But there should be some concern around the increase in crimes since 2017 involving assault in terms of violent crimes against children; the numbers are small, but there has been a significant increase in crimes involving assault against children aged 10 to 19 years old between 2016 and 2017.²⁶

Figure 16: Crimes committed in Johnsonville area—June years



The Salvation Army is also active in the Johnsonville community. Between July 2019 and June 2020, 268 food parcels were distributed in the area. In that same period, nearly 600 community meals were provided to locals, although the lockdowns greatly affected this. With Covid-19, The Salvation Army in Johnsonville has seen increases in new clients in their social work, counselling and especially addictions services. The number of addictions assessments completed, and existing and new clients, has especially spiked between March and June 2020, again signifying the harm people were facing during Covid-19. At May 2019, Johnsonville had 14 businesses operating with a

Figure 17: Johnsonville’s completed surveys and locations



liquor licence, including two bottle stores. According to DOT, the Johnsonville Club, which operates 18 pokie machines, had about \$1.3m in GMP between April 2019 and March 2020. The TAB Johnsonville, which operates 9 pokie machines, had over \$682,000 GMP in that same period.

Community Surveys

There was a total of 141 surveys completed by the Johnsonville community, 72 percent of these surveys were completed face-to-face and 28 percent of these surveys were completed online. Face-to-face surveys were completed by volunteers with members of the public at The Salvation Army (60%), public locations (11%) and at The Warehouse (1%). The completed surveys are summarised in **Figure 17**.

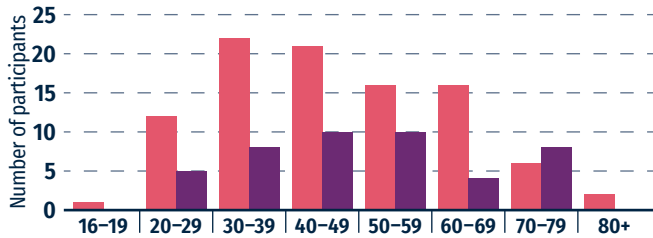
There were four key informants that took part in SOOC 2020 for the Johnsonville area (**Table 7**). The key informants either live in the Johnsonville area or are currently working in the Johnsonville area.

Table 7: Key Informants for the Johnsonville Community

	Connection	Duration of service/residency	Local Resident
Key Informant 1	New Zealand Police	3 Years	Non-resident
Key Informant 2	Principal	2+ Years	Non-resident
Key Informant 3	Businessman and Local Philanthropist	50+ Years	Non-resident
Key Informant 4	Founder social service	35+ Years	Local resident

Figure 18: Johnsonville survey participants by age and gender

	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Total
Female	1	12	22	21	16	16	6	2	96
Male	-	5	8	10	10	4	8	-	45
TOTAL	1	17	30	31	26	20	14	2	141

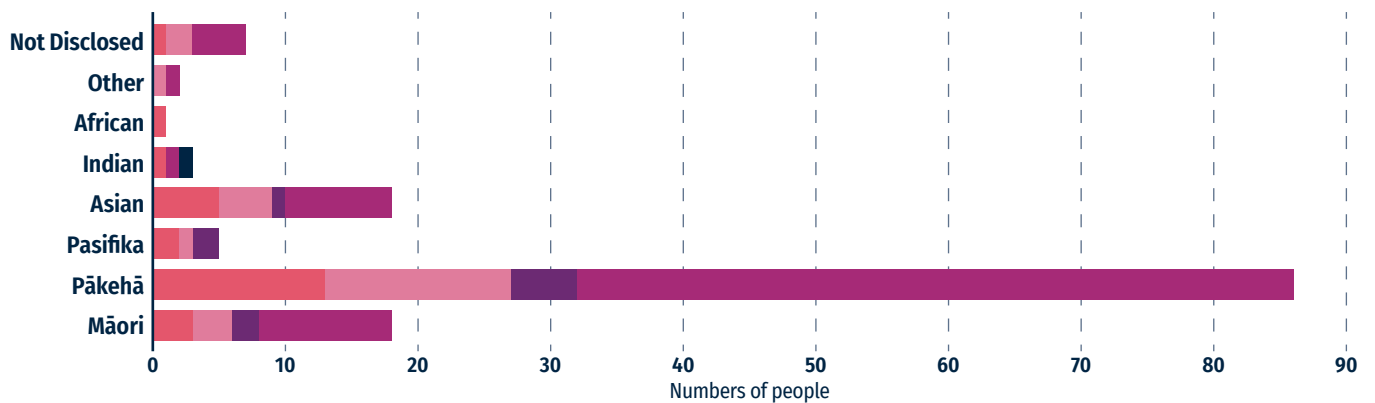


Demographics

There were more than double the females (68%) than males (32%) who completed the survey. People between the ages of 40 to 49 years old (22%) represented the highest age group to complete the survey, followed by 30- to 39-year-olds (21.3%) and 50- to 59-year-olds (18.4%). The median age of participants for the Johnsonville area was 37 years old (Figure 18).

Figure 19 shows the ethnic breakdown of the survey participants in the Johnsonville area and the duration of residency in the Johnsonville area. Pākehā are significantly represented at 60 percent compared with other ethnic groups; Māori (13%), Asian (13%), Pasifika (3%) and Indian (3%). In Census 2018, Pākehā made up 61.9 percent of the Johnsonville population. However, the Census 2018 also shows that the Asian population in Johnsonville is 29.6 percent, which is

Figure 19: Johnsonville survey participants by ethnicity and length of time living in community



	Māori	Pākehā	Pasifika	Asian	Indian	African	Other	Not Disclosed	Total
>2Y	3	13	2	5	1	1	-	1	26
2-5Y	3	14	1	4	-	-	1	2	25
6-10Y	2	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	10
10Y+	10	54	-	8	2	-	1	4	79
Not Disclosed	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	18	86	5	10	4	1	2	7	141

Table 8: Summary of Johnsonville SOOC 2020 key themes

Like	Concerns	Covid-19	Elections 2020	5-year Aspirations
Community	The mall	Employment	Housing	The mall
Amenities and activities	Housing	Family	Poverty	Housing
Location and accessibility	Community	Home	Employment and income	Development and infrastructure
Family oriented	Infrastructure and development	Children	Covid-19	Employment
Safe	Crime	Positive	Community	Community
Quiet and peaceful	Environment	Mental health	Education	Poverty
Education	Homelessness	Education	Healthcare	Traffic
Environment	Drugs	Financial hardship	Homelessness	Business
Size	Elderly		Environment	Family
Housing	Financial hardship		Inequality	Youth
			Mental health	Local economy

not represented in the survey participants. Over half (56%) of the survey participants have lived in the Johnsonville area for more than 10 years. **Figure 19** highlights which ethnic groups have resided in Johnsonville for more than a decade, illustrating the growing ethnic diversity in the area.

Major Themes

All 141 surveys were entered into Survey Monkey and analysed using NVivo 12 software. All responses to the questions were aggregated and analysed to identify the key themes. Any themes that were identified that had less than three references from the surveys were added to the *Other* category (**Table 8**).

What do you like about Johnsonville?

- Local Community**—Locals generally shared an appreciation of the friendly nature and diversity within the Johnsonville community. Many locals described Johnsonville’s community as having a *village atmosphere* and being family-like with a strong sense of community. Locals talked about the diverse nature of their community ethnically and demographically.

“Johnsonville is located with an excellent train service into Wellington. People who are working for government often choose to live here because of the accessibility to Wellington City. It is a vibrant community.”

Key Informant—Businessman and local Philanthropist

- Location and convenience**—Over 38 percent of the locals addressed the location, accessibility and the ease of travel from Johnsonville to the Wellington CBD, particularly through the public transport system. Locals talked about Johnsonville being close enough and accessible enough to commute to work in the city, yet being far enough that it was quiet, less crowded with a strong sense of community.
- Amenities**—Over a third of the locals talked about the amenities, activities and accessibility, particularly participants with children. Almost 20 percent of the locals talked about Johnsonville as an ideal place to raise families because of the schools and facilities available in the area. Many locals talked about availability of community facilities, such as the library, the swimming pool, the community centre, parks and gyms. Locals also like the range of shops and restaurants. A highlight for locals, however, is the proximity and accessibility of these services for their community, and the absence of parking meters in Johnsonville was a bonus for many locals.

What concerns or fears do you have for your community?

- Johnsonville Shopping Centre (mall)**—The primary concern among Johnsonville locals was the mall; an upgraded Johnsonville mall is viewed as a beacon of hope for many of the locals, for varying reasons. Some locals talked about the mall as an opportunity for creating employment, business opportunities and stimulating the local economy. Others viewed the mall as a safe space for the

community, particularly young people to utilise as there are not enough activities for young people in the community. Locals seemed frustrated with the lack of improvements to the mall, particularly how slow developments are in relation to a rapidly growing community. They reported that businesses are closing, and the mall is gradually deteriorating. Locals fear that the mall will soon be empty and that would be detrimental to the local economy, particularly considering the local The Warehouse is permanently closed. The increase in the Johnsonville population places pressure on their current services and losing the mall will exacerbate the strain on services.

“There is nowhere to go for our young people—there is no safe space for youth to assemble and the shops in the mall are disappearing one by one.”

Key Informant—Social Service Founding Director

- **Housing**—Many locals identified housing as a major concern for their community. There were a variety of housing concerns, with the most common including housing affordability, housing shortages and overcrowding. Locals talked about the challenges of affordability of homes for first home buyers when *the average house price is \$650K and the average salary is only \$50K*. Many locals identified that with cheap social housing, such as box flats, overcrowding could become more of an issue. The high housing density in the area was noted as a concern in the Johnsonville community. Locals talked about the lack of planning for the development of housing in the area, and how the surrounding infrastructure does not accommodate for these developments.

“Population density—they need to build houses further afield. The housing is expensive, and the community is reluctant to allow developments of four storey building around their own home. We need to assist people into home ownership ensure people are moving away from further dependence.”

Key Informant—Businessman and local Philanthropist

Locals are concerned that homes are just being built anywhere that there is available land, with no consideration for green space or the surroundings and this poses many issues for the Johnsonville community. One local explained that *‘the influx of houses leads to influx of people, the influx of people without increase of services such as schools in the area puts a strain on the current school’s resources and teachers’*. The locals also emphasised that infrastructure and housing development need to go together to ensure the housing fits the needs of the community.

“Social housing such as the Heath Street flats there are a mixture of tenants from young males to elderly with differing social perspectives. We do our best to try and make people feel safe.”

Key Informant—Police Officer

How were you impacted by Covid-19 this year?

“Covid-19 highlighted the inequality that is prevalent in our community. Some students didn’t have internet access or comfortable spaces to study. Many young people that had financial pressures in their families disconnected from education and this increased their levels of anxiety.”

Key Informant—Principal

About one-third were not impacted, whilst 13 percent continued working from home with no major changes. Over a third had their employment and income impacted. Of these locals, 38 percent of them or their partner had lost their job, or had lost a significant portion of their income. Many of these locals talked about financial hardship this has caused and the difficulties of having to adjust their lives and look for work. Many of the parents talked about the difficulty of losing employment and income and trying to support their children. One local talked about feeling like a failure because they were unable to meet basic living costs such as food for their children. One local talked about their partner losing employment and being unable to get government assistance or

navigate the welfare system. Locals talked about the many stresses that come with losing employment and income, the isolation from family and support networks during lockdown and the toll that it is taking on their mental wellbeing.

Many of the remaining key themes identified in Covid-19 can be merged. Locals talked about having to stay home with family members and looking after elderly or vulnerable family members. Locals who had positive experiences with lockdown enjoyed the extra time that they were able to spend with their family members. Parents, however, although expressing their gratitude for family time, talked about the difficulties of trying to home-school their children, particularly if they were working from home.

What’s the most important social issue for you in Election 2020?

Figure 20 summarises key social issues identified by the Johnsonville community. One in five locals noted housing as a key social issue for Election 2020. Locals wanted more affordable housing both in the rental market and home ownership, others wanted more housing to address the homelessness issue in the area, whilst others wanted better quality homes. Another identified key issue was poverty, specifically child poverty and minority populations such as Māori, and Pasifika. Many locals associated poverty with inequality and urgently called for more opportunities, particularly for Māori. Locals stressed that social

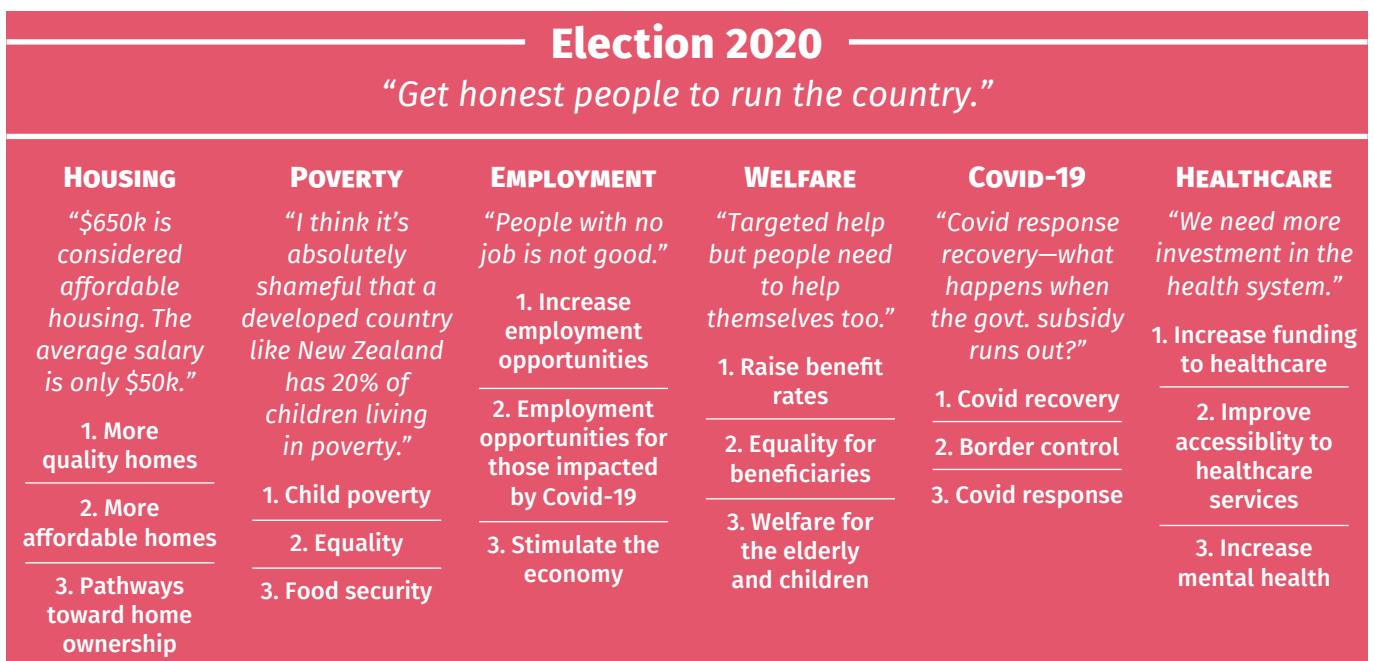
“Employment and Income. There will be high levels of unemployment for the next 2 years particularly for high income workers losing their jobs e.g. Air NZ. The local Warehouse is closing, and this will impact the dignity for low income workers. Retail is losing a lot of jobs and people are deprived or have modest incomes this means it will impact paying their mortgage or feeding their children. We need a strong focus on building up business.”

Key Informant—Businessman and local Philanthropist

policies must take a holistic view of the whānau because a child in poverty is a whānau in poverty. Many locals identified recovering from Covid-19 as a key social issue. Others stressed generating more jobs particularly for those who have lost income or employment as a result of the pandemic. Over 38 percent of the survey participants had lost income or employment in their household.

Other social issues that locals find important when considering who they are voting for are welfare for beneficiaries, supports for the community, higher education standards and better wages for teachers, increased funding and accessibility to the healthcare system, particularly mental health services, and others which include allocation of tax money and climate change.

Figure 20: Key social issues for Election 2020 for Johnsonville



In 5 years' time, what changes do you hope to see in this community?

Figure 21 summarises the Johnsonville community's key aspirations.

Feedback from key informants

Despite the diversity in the roles of these informants, the key themes were consistent. The primary themes were housing and the lack of investment in infrastructure. However, key informants identified that the mix of different people in social housing can cause issues. Key informants talked about the issues with affordability of rental property in the area. They also noted that the loss of jobs and changes in income; some of the pre-Covid-19 issues, such as the pockets of poverty in the community particularly for refugee families and minorities, seemed to be magnified. Unaffordable and poor-quality housing had health repercussions for families who did not have the means to access healthcare services. Furthermore, there were reports of families, as a result of financial and housing hardships, who have had to move out of the area creating displacement and instability for young people regarding their schooling.

One of the key concerns identified by key informants was that Covid-19 heightened stress and anxiety

levels for young people, with many disengaging from school and their community. Education is a social leveller, but some young people missed out of education because of lack of access to computers and the internet. Covid-19 had also increased the levels of distress for many young people and locals and there is, according to locals, not enough accessible services to meet these increased needs. Key informants identified solutions such as engaging young people and the wider community which could include community-run events that would enhance the community spirit.

The Johnsonville mall has been a key theme for both the key informants and the community. The mall signified different things for different key informants. One key informant spoke about the impacts of Covid-19 on the economy and the decrease of shops in the mall, illustrating the struggle of small businesses and the local economy. Another two key informants who shared the struggles that youth are facing in the community and the difference a safe and familiar place to go to would be. When asked where Johnsonville would be in 2025, another key informant said that the *'state and future of the Johnsonville mall will be indicative of where Johnsonville will be in 5 years' time'*.

Figure 21: 5-year changes for Johnsonville

<p>POVERTY</p> <p><i>"Less poverty and better equality."</i></p> <p><i>"Poverty improvement through a universal basic income."</i></p> <p><i>"More local support services for vulnerable people."</i></p>	<p>HOUSING</p> <p><i>"More affordable housing. Houses too high for first time buyers."</i></p> <p><i>"Housing prices to have come down majorly. They are completely overinflated and its unsustainable."</i></p> <p><i>"Cheap accommodation if the Government can allow."</i></p>	<p>COMMUNITY</p> <p><i>"A stronger more connected community and greater cultural vibe. It's a very practical area to live but there is not a great deal of community activity."</i></p> <p><i>"Economic and community stability. Bringing communities together. Instilling confidence in people."</i></p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT & INCOME</p> <p><i>"More jobs for New Zealanders and government assistance for small businesses. Bring back manufacturing to New Zealand."</i></p> <p><i>"Make it easier for people to get jobs."</i></p> <p><i>"The mall development started therefore providing employment, services, and money back into the community."</i></p>	<p>JOHNSONVILLE MALL</p> <p><i>"Mall redevelopment a least started."</i></p> <p><i>"More/better quality options for food outlets."</i></p> <p><i>"The mall thriving again..."</i></p> <p><i>"The mall development started therefore providing employment, services, and money back into the community."</i></p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p><i>"More infrastructure to support community growth."</i></p> <p><i>"Pedestrian crossing and cycling lane improvements."</i></p> <p><i>"Better traffic management particularly around schools and children."</i></p>

Summary and Moving Forward

Johnsonville is a diverse and vibrant community. In developing this report on the state of Johnsonville, some key questions emerged for The Salvation Army.

- What are the new issues that were created by Covid-19?** Existing housing challenges in Johnsonville, which were highlighted with Covid-19, have shed more light on the pockets of poverty in the community. Covid-19 has clearly impacted jobs and incomes for locals. Key informants had talked about the disparity of wealth prevalent in the area pre-Covid-19, and the loss of income for many will only amplify this disparity. Locals acknowledged that residents from a refugee or migrant background faced a variety of challenges before Covid-19. Many reported increased stress levels because of these lockdowns. Children under the age of 15 years old represent over 20 percent of the Johnsonville population, warranting a need to address youth issues. Covid-19 pointed out the gaps in mental health services for families and young people in the area—the demand for these services will continue to increase as Johnsonville recovers from the pandemic.
- What does recovery from Covid-19 look like for the Johnsonville community?** According to locals, recovery from these trying times requires more jobs, a strong local economy, better housing and access to mental health services. From June 2020 to July 2020 the number of locals receiving the CIRP more than doubled, from 373 to 822 people. The local The Warehouse and Michael Hill Jewellery also closed, and this has significant impacts on the community. The development of the mall will play a significant role in the recovery of Johnsonville from Covid-19, through employment and local economic stimulation.

The mall also presents a familiar and safe space for young people to congregate, but also possibilities for young people to engage in their community, which has positive mental health and wellbeing benefits. The message from locals was clear that Johnsonville needs more mental health services, particularly targeting children and young people.

- How does a small community adjust to big change?** The Johnsonville population continues to grow and is forecasted to carry that trajectory for the next 20 years.²⁷ What does it look like for a small community like Johnsonville to continually adapt and adjust to growth? Locals and key informants strongly highlighted that they enjoyed the close-knit nature of their small community. How does Johnsonville maintain that sense of community with a growing population? Does growth result in sacrificing the community spirit? The growth in Johnsonville also indicates the need for more housing, echoed by many locals and key informants. What implications will the stress on infrastructure and social services create? The significant diversity in this small community can be a strength, particularly if there is more collaboration and connection between the different residents. If this happens, addressing both the big changes coming to the community, and the social issues they face, becomes more possible.

QUEENSTOWN

Snapshot

Queenstown has been, and continues to be, massively impacted during this pandemic. In Census 2018, the Queenstown Lakes District had a population of 39,153, which included just over 2000 Māori. The population is young, reflecting the local economy. About 84 percent of the Queenstown population in Census 2018 were European, with the proportion of Māori (5.3%), Pacific (1%) and Asian (9.9%) massively below the national proportions. Interestingly, 4.7 percent of the local population identify as Middle Eastern, Latin American or African. This is significantly higher than the national average (1.5%), probably pointing to the high number of overseas workers and tourists in the area.

Comparing CAU in Queenstown

Long considered one of the most expensive parts of the country, the housing picture in the district is very complex. In 2018, 39.1 percent of residents lived in houses they owned, or partly owned. Also, 23.6 percent of Queenstown houses were held in a family trust, which is almost double the national average of 13.3 percent. The median weekly rent was \$530, which was a major increase from 2013 (\$350). The general picture, when looking at DOT's Housing Index Dashboard, is that the Queenstown area is faring very well around housing. The results for breaking

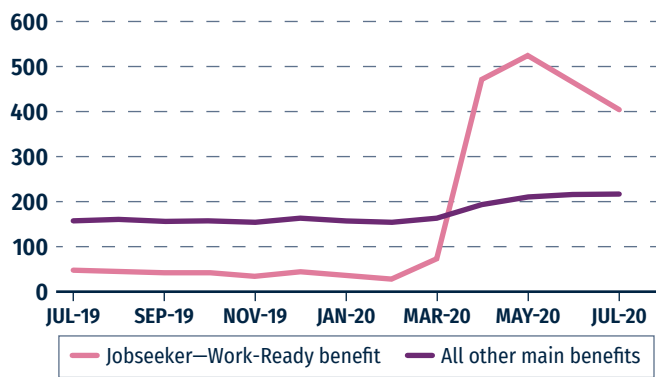
and entering, access to heating, drinking water and cooking facilities in the house, and the impact of dampness and mould is pointedly lower than the national figures. The proportion of those staying in emergency housing is very small (0.48%) compared with the national proportion of 4.26 percent. However, Queenstown ranks bottom or second to bottom in terms of affordability for house sales and renting for all TAs in the country, demonstrating how expensive house prices and rent are in comparison with other parts of the region and country.

Table 9 gives further insight into these local communities via a comparison of two CAU or neighbourhoods—Queenstown Bay and Queenstown Hill. These CAU are relatively small and close together near the urban part of Queenstown. The home ownership levels are markedly different between the three neighbourhoods. But the standards of housing between these three areas are very good according to the DDI. Also, it is evident that the numbers receiving a means-tested benefit or Single Parent Support are so small that they are effectively left blank in case they identify who these people are. All three areas have their median household income above the national average, but Lake Hayes South has median income levels over \$35,000 higher than the national median.

Table 9: Comparison of three Queenstown CAU using DOT DDI—June 2020

	Queenstown Bay	Queenstown Hill	Lake Hayes South	National figure/rate
Population	2438	4326	5523	
Percent of households who do not own the home they live in	77.6%	58.2%	32.7%	35.5%
Means tested benefit claimants	Number too small to record	0.35%	Number too small to record	3.12%
Unemployment rate	0.39%	0.98%	1.47%	6.19%
Percent of households living in houses with significant mould and damp	3.77%	3.22%	0.12%	3.3%
Percent of households with no vehicle access	9.6%	4.7%	0.5%	6.1%
Median household income	\$80,942	\$92,644	\$115,439	\$80,267
Single parent support rate	Number too small to record	Number too small to record	Number too small to record	2.08%
Percent of households with no internet access	20.7%	15.4%	8.9%	20.6%

Figure 22: Jobseeker (Workready) and Other main benefits—Queenstown District—July 2019–July 2020

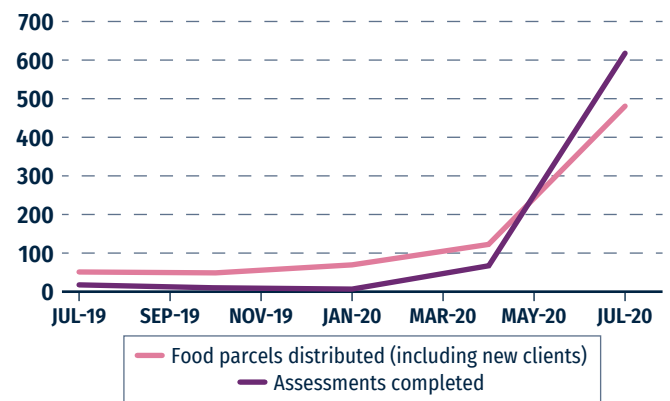


Nonetheless, the biggest impact of Covid-19 has been on the economic situation in the region. In our Covid-19 Social Impact Dashboard series²⁸ between April and July 2020, we highlighted the impact of the economic impacts of Covid-19 on foreign nationals in the Queenstown area. The Salvation Army joined others in advocating for the thousands of foreign nationals employed as seasonal workers or on the Recognised Seasonal Employer programme who were stranded with no employment and no access to government income support. One of the outcomes was the Visitor Care Manaaki Manuhiri initiative that is supporting these people with in-kind vouchers and other support. As at 31 August, there were over 6000 applicants to the programme, with \$1.9 million worth of food vouchers distributed to this group.²⁹ From 1 July to 2 September specifically, there were over 1100 applicants from the Otago area that includes Queenstown.³⁰

Recipients of the CIRP have increased by 84 percent between June and July 2020, with 508 payments made in July. **Figure 22** illustrates information about some of the main benefit provisions for this district. The surge in Jobseeker (Work Ready) benefits in the Queenstown region is very evident, but there has been some decline over the last few months. This is likely because of people applying for the CIRP as well as accessing other income supports that are available. MSD figures also show that Accommodation Supplement benefit numbers for the Queenstown area have increased steadily since Covid-19 began and have followed a similar trend to the Jobseeker numbers since March 2020.

The Salvation Army services in Queenstown have seen a surge since Covid-19 began, particularly with foreign nationals stranded in the region. **Figure 23** summarises some key Salvation Army numbers from Queenstown. In the quarter ending June 2020, nearly half of the food parcels went to new clients to The Salvation Army.

Figure 23: Queenstown Salvation Army service provision—July 2019–June 2020



Community Surveys

A huge response to the community surveys by the Queenstown community with the completion of 241 surveys. The face-to-face surveys (50.6%) were carried out by volunteers at The Salvation Army (34%), a public location (9.1%), Countdown (7.5%) and online (49.4%) through Survey Monkey via a geo-targeted Facebook advertisement.

Key Informants

There were eight key informants in the Queenstown area that were invited to partake in the survey and six key informant interviews were completed (**Table 10**). The key informants from the Queenstown area have diverse backgrounds—from managing community social services, church leader, business owners, governance roles and local council. All the key informants are residents of Queenstown.

Figure 24: Queenstown surveys completed by location

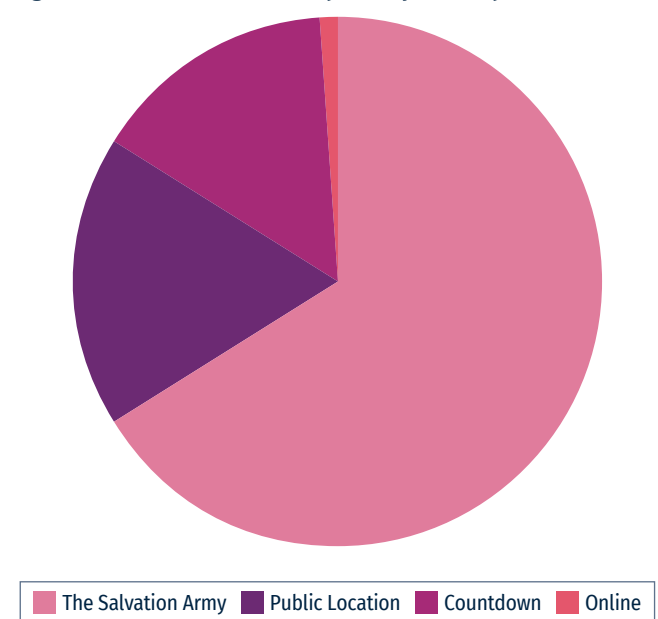


Table 10: Key Informants for the Queenstown Community

	Connection	Duration of service/residency	Local Resident
Key Informant 1	Director and Ngai Tahu representative	30+ Years	Local Resident
Key Informant 2	Local Councillor	30+ Years	Local Resident
Key Informant 3	Director	10 Years	Local Resident
Key Informant 4	Manager community social service	11 Years	Local Resident
Key Informant 5	Manager community centre	4 Years	Local Resident
Key Informant 6	Church Leader	4 Years	Local Resident

Demographics

Figure 25 summarises the population, whilst females represent 49 percent. The median age of participants was 34.4 years old and the highest proportion of participants were aged from 30 to 39 years old (29%) followed by 20- to 29-year-olds (20.7%) and 50- to 59-year-olds (17.4%). The spread of ages across the survey participants is reflective of the younger population in the Queenstown community.

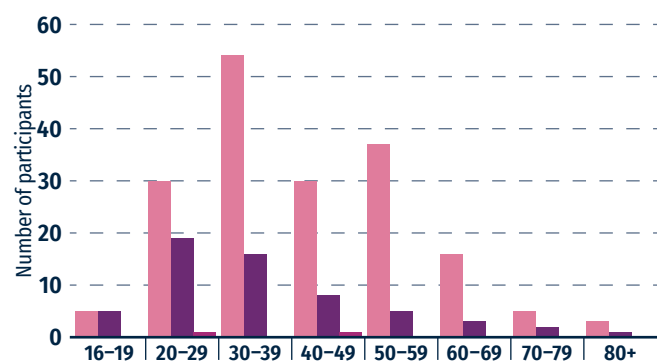
Figure 26 shows the ethnic breakdown by the duration of time that they have lived in the community. Pākehā (49%) have the highest representation followed by Other (26%) and Māori and Asian (8%). Important to note about the Queenstown community is that 94 percent of the ‘other’ category are migrants. Other communities had less than five participants who

were neither New Zealand permanent residents or citizens and therefore not worth mentioning. However, 30 percent of participants from Queenstown were migrants who were predominantly here in New Zealand on working visas. This is reflective as the length of residency for the ‘other’ category is predominantly less than 2 years (49%) and 2–5 years (29%). The significance of the high representation in the less than 2 years (24.9%) and 2–5 years (24.1%) illustrate the high transitory nature of the Queenstown community, particularly with migrants who are moving to Queenstown for work.

Major Themes

All 241 surveys were entered into Survey Monkey and analysed using NVivo 12 software. All responses to the questions were aggregated and analysed to identify the key themes. Any themes that were identified that had less than three references from the surveys were added to ‘other’. **Table 11** is a summary of the themes identified for the Queenstown community.

Figure 25: Queenstown survey participants by age and gender

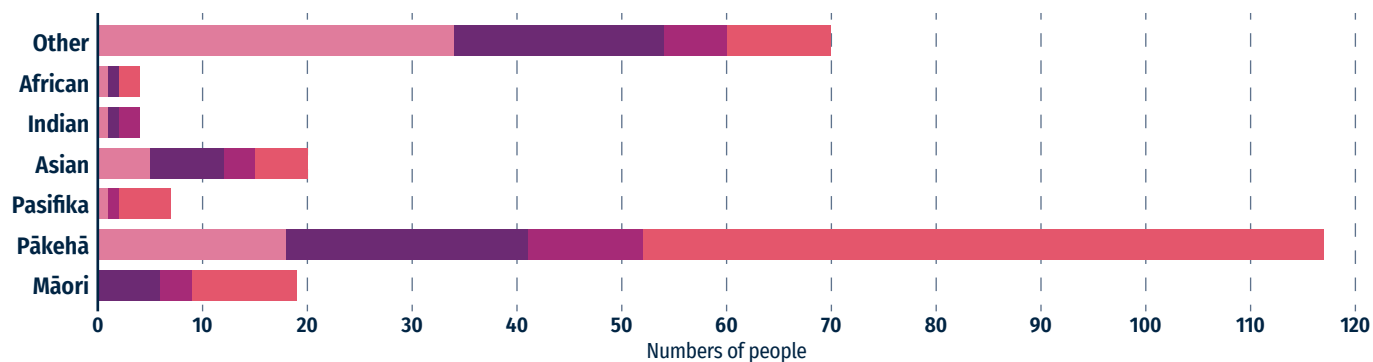


	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Total
Female	5	30	54	30	37	16	5	3	180
Male	5	19	16	8	5	3	2	1	59
Undisclosed	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL	10	50	70	39	42	19	7	4	241

What do you like about Queenstown?

- Local community**—Almost 62 percent of the locals identified their local community as the primary reason they like and enjoy the Queenstown area. The key characteristics that locals used to describe their community was resilient, caring, friendly, diverse, supportive, generous, kind and welcoming.

Figure 26: Queenstown survey participants by ethnicity and length of time living in community



	Māori	Pākehā	Pasifika	Asian	Indian	African	Other	Total
>2Y	0	18	1	5	1	1	34	60
2-5Y	6	23	0	7	1	1	20	58
6-10Y	3	11	1	3	2	0	6	26
10Y+	10	65	5	5	0	2	10	97
TOTAL	19	117	7	20	4	4	70	241

Many locals attributed the connectedness of their community to its small size. Many locals appreciated the cohesiveness of the community irrespective of the diverse backgrounds within the community. Some locals talked about the sense of acceptance and the ability to learn from each other.

- **Environment**—Locals also liked the Queenstown environment where the natural habitat of Queenstown offers beautiful landscapes, scenery and many outdoor activities. Locals that had children talked about raising families in amongst the free outdoor activities and within a safe community. Other locals talked about the availability of many activities in the area such as snowboarding, mountain biking and skiing.

“The size of Queenstown means that our community area a lot close-knit and that we problem solve and work together to make sure we are not duplicating work.”

Key Informant—Social Service Manager

What concerns or fears do you have your community?

- **Employment and income**—Over 30 percent of locals identified their major concern and fear for their community was employment and income. Many locals talked about the lack of tourism

Table 11: Queenstown SOOC 2020 key themes

Like	Concern	Covid-19	Elections 2020	2025 Aspirations
Community	Employment and income	Employment and income	Employment and Income	Community
Environment	Tourism	Positive experience	Healthcare services—mental health	Tourism
Activities	Immigration and migrants	Mental Health	Covid-19	Housing
Safety	Housing	Financial Hardship	Economy	Infrastructure
Size	Covid-19	Housing	Migrants	Employment and income
Utilities	Growth	Isolation	Equality	Healthcare services
Quiet	Mental health	Immigration	Housing	Migrants
Accessibility	Infrastructure		Poverty	Covid-19
Lifestyle	Living costs			Economy

and the lack of employment in the area. Locals expressed worries about the ongoing government support and the loss of the migrant workers because of these ongoing job losses. Many locals talked about the Covid-19 impact lasting longer in Queenstown than in other areas of the country and the implications on their community. Some locals talked about neighbours, family members or friends having to move out of the region because there are no employment prospects. Locals talked about the toll of loss of employment and the inability to match living costs in the region. This included a mass exodus out of the region and its impact on the communities.

“Tourism; everyone wants tourism to come back but it’s a low-wage industry. Why would we want tourism to come?”

Key Informant—Director and Ngai Tahu Representative

- **Migrant workers**—Locals raised many issues for migrant workers—bringing attention to the inequality in the treatment of migrant workers and New Zealanders. Many locals talked about the hardships facing migrants that extend beyond loss of employment and income. Migrants have made vast contributions to the tourism sector and the Queenstown community and their mistreatment during this pandemic illustrates either the disregard for their contribution or the New Zealand public’s ignorance of the role migrants play. Furthermore, locals talked about low-waged jobs in the community that migrants will accept but New Zealanders will not. The employment issues facing migrants is further compounded by the many issues they face with the complicated visa processes with immigration, the inability to go home, the isolation from their support networks and the limited support they receive in New Zealand.

“The migrant community was hit hard; they were out of a job with no money and couldn’t get help. They had to rely on handouts from the council and TSA. Many migrants have left, and we may not see them coming back. These migrants are a key part of our community.”

Key Informant—Church Leader

- **Mental health**—Locals raised many concerns regarding the mental wellbeing of their community and whether Queenstown would have the resources or capacity to deal with the decline in mental health. Locals talked about the multi-faceted factors that contribute to the decline in mental health for the community. One of the key concerns was the stigmatism that surrounds distress and depression and how this could pose as a barrier for people to reach out and ask for help. Locals talked about the domino effect of job and income loss and insecurity, coupled with the high living costs, and the correlation to a decline in mental health. Other concerns identified by the Queenstown community were the poor infrastructure with too many cars and not enough roads, crime, domestic violence and drugs.

“Since we’ve come out of lockdown there’s been suicides and where is the mental health support for the whānau that is impacted by that? Where is their support?”

Key Informant—Director and Ngai Tahu representative

How were you impacted by Covid-19 this year?

The primary impact of Covid-19 on the Queenstown community was employment and income. Almost 53 percent of locals who participated in the survey had experienced income loss, for themselves or their partner or spouse had lost their job. Many of the locals talked about losing their jobs and the struggles they now face trying to find employment with no employment prospects. One local shared that their ‘entire family had lost their jobs and as a result have had to move elsewhere due to the lack of job prospects’. Other locals talked about the anxiety and stress they are facing because they are unable to make ends meet for their family. Others said they are receiving support from the Government, but they are unable to cover their living costs even with changes to their lifestyles. *The support from the Government is not adequate to cover the cost of living in Queenstown*, says one local. Some talked about the support they received from their landlords with decreases in their rent. Some locals had lost their job and their tenants had left their property also due to job losses, so they were left without

employment and having to pay for their mortgage. Other locals had lost both their employment and their home. Furthermore, there were many locals who talked about job insecurity and the stress that this is causing for them and their family, not knowing whether their income is guaranteed.

“Exposed all our vulnerabilities and vulnerable whanau those were just managing and not surviving. There were three families that are living in houses with no power. Covid-19 exposed the lack of support. Covid-19 exposed that we’re not resilient and we are too far away from our support networks.”

Key Informant—Director and Ngai Tahu representative

Despite the job and income losses, and associated stress and anxiety, many of the locals have chosen to be positive about their situations. Many of the locals who had lost hours or income talk about the difficulties loss of income entails, but are grateful to still be working. Many of the migrant community talk about their loss of income or jobs coupled with the inability to return home or see family, however, many focussed on the positive aspects of their lives here in New Zealand.

Many of the other Covid-19 impacts that Queenstown locals talked about centred on issues related to employment and income. Issues such as stress, anxiety and a decline in mental health, financial hardship, inability to afford housing costs. Other impacts were border restrictions that meant migrants were unable to return home and were isolated from their support networks and other locals were isolated from family members and friends. Isolation contributed to the decrease in mental health for many locals.

“Massive uncertainty around employment. We’re expecting at least 8000 jobs loss by March next year and that’s a huge chunk of the population 18–19% which is twice the rate for NZ. Starting to see mental health issues due to lack of security around employment.”

Key Informant—Director

What’s the most important social issue for you in Election 2020?

The key social issues that the Queenstown community identified when considering who to vote for in the upcoming elections is summarised in **Figure 27**. The primary social issue for locals was the creation of employment. Many locals talked about the impact of the pandemic on tourism and the high loss of jobs in the area. Locals emphasised the importance of getting people employed again, ensuring that those who have lost their jobs do not remain unemployed for long periods of time due to the impact financially and mentally. Due to the demographic makeup of Queenstown, locals also wanted to see increases in job creation for the migrant population in the area. In hindsight, many of the locals talked about how Queenstown had focused solely on tourism and probably needed to diversify the economy more into other areas like forestry. One of the key themes locals will be looking towards is the diversification of the economy in Queenstown and how this can create sustainable employment for the area.

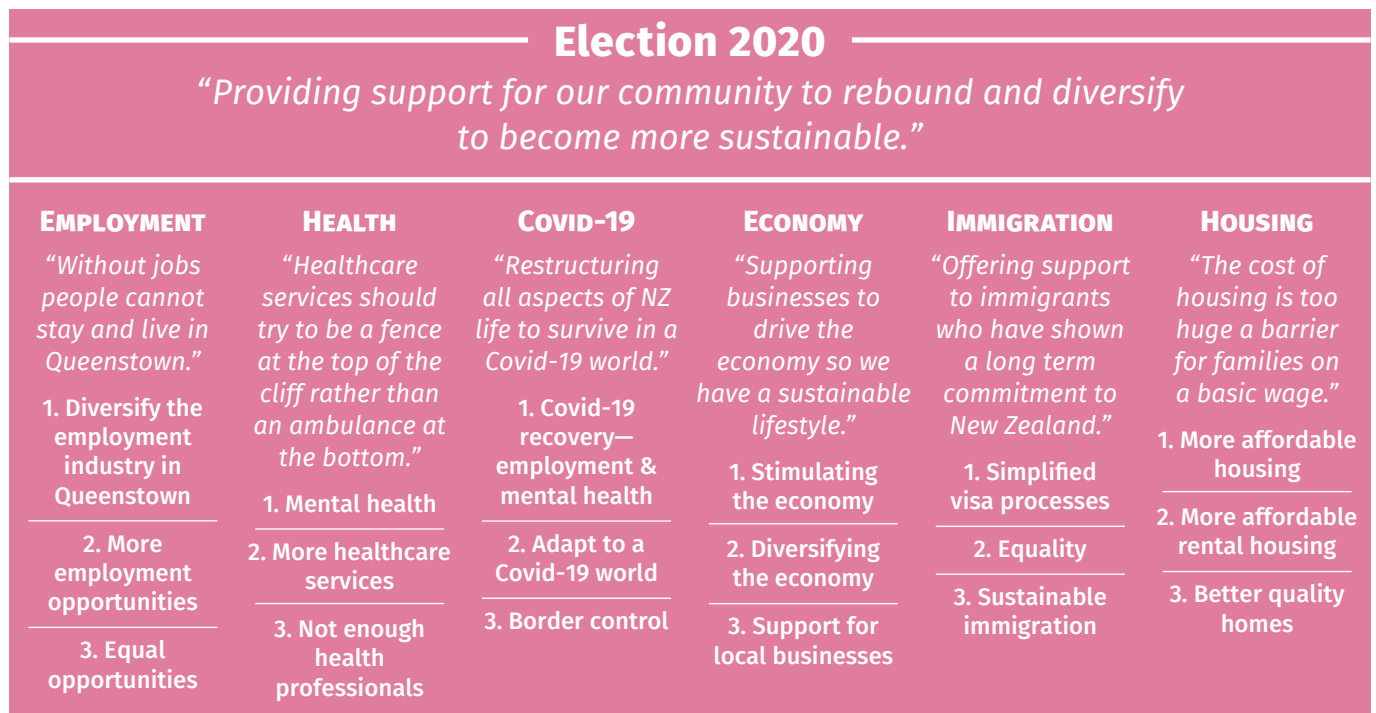
“The most important issue is mental health. We have very limited resources to support people’s mental health being promised years and years we still don’t have people on the ground we rely on NGOs. If you reach out for help and you might be in a crisis you probably won’t get to see somebody for 3–5 days. That’s on a social level if you have insecurity and feeling powerless and we don’t have a good support network.”

Key Informant—Director

Locals would also like to see more healthcare resources in the area, particularly mental health services. Many of the locals talked about the impacts of Covid-19 and the high need for mental health services. This was made apparent following lockdown where locals stated that Queenstown did not have the mental health service capacity to address the rising mental health needs of the community.

Another key theme that emerged was immigration and support for migrants in the area. Migrants would like to see the processes of immigration simplified, as a means of supporting migrants. These concerns

Figure 27: Queenstown’s key social issues for Election 2020



were not only raised by migrants but by New Zealand locals. Locals emphasised that migrants play a pivotal role in the Queenstown community and therefore it is essential to provide adequate support for migrants.

In 5 years’ time, what changes do you hope to see in this community?

Figure 28 summarises the key aspirations for the people of Queenstown. The 2025 aspirations of the Queenstown community are summed up in this quote from a local: *‘We have a more sustainable lifestyle and the necessary public health services available for our people in need. That we have approached support for families easily accessible—whether it is good housing options, affordable rentals, social services in schools to help at-risk families and support teachers, people able to enjoy living here without the stress of just surviving.’*

Feedback from key informants

The key themes from the community were mirrored by the key informants. However, it is important to emphasise that whilst the community shared about their personal experiences, the key informants took a societal and somewhat strategic perspective. The focuses for the key informants were: What do we do now to help our community? What lessons have we learnt? How do we move forward?

There is a strong sense of partnership and cohesion in Queenstown, not only amongst the community, but also amongst social services in the area. One key informant talked about social services partnering for funding applications to ensure that funding was distributed adequately between services and therefore into the community: *‘You get more bang for your buck’*. A key informant commented that *‘we are not well resourced for social services. One social service for family harm, sexual harm, one service for mental health ... ourselves, for youth’*. The limitations of social services in the area show that in order to provide the adequate services to support their community they have had to work together.

The lack of Government support in the region has been particularly evident for the community. One of the key issues key informants spoke about was the difficulty locals had navigating the work and income support system. One key informant said: *‘The assessment process through MSD and WINZ has been very difficult for people that have lost their jobs through Covid-19 because their assessments also look at their assets’*. Some locals described the process as traumatic and stressful. Another key informant talked about the Government’s allocation of funding but the convoluted processes of the ‘middle man’ means that funding does not reach the local community.

Figure 28: 5-year changes for Queenstown

<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p><i>“Less manic development of housing estates. Improved infrastructure. Roads and car parking improved.”</i></p> <p><i>“More connections. Public transport to other cities like Wanaka, Cromwell. Almost impossible to get to without a car.”</i></p> <p><i>“Better infrastructure to meet the needs of locals. Services like schools and hospitals in place to meet the sheer population numbers.”</i></p>	<p>COMMUNITY</p> <p><i>“A better and stronger community standing through the test of time after this pandemic.”</i></p> <p><i>“A more even-keeled focus on the community as a whole, not just those community groups yelling the loudest getting the most, but a considered approach to Queenstown and a vision for the future.”</i></p> <p><i>“Community resilience, sustainable business practices and a diversified economy.”</i></p>	<p>COVID-19</p> <p><i>“Not to talk about Covid-19 again, get back on track.”</i></p> <p><i>“I hope Covid-19 has made us realise that we do not need to sell our souls to the tourist money, we need to better control the volume and type of tourist we want here.”</i></p> <p><i>“Life back to normal pre-Covid-19 with less development and more focus on preserving the environment.”</i></p>	<p>TOURISM</p> <p><i>“To keep tourism in manageable level, not too much and not too less.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not solely financially dependent on international tourism ... More local tourism.”</i></p> <p><i>“A focus on less numbers of tourists, but get more out of those visiting, longer stays. High-quality tourism instead of mass.”</i></p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <p><i>“Diversity of employment, support for the whole community.”</i></p> <p><i>“A restart for Queenstown. Redo and rethink everything like more job opportunities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Wages should be more balanced. Food, rent and power too expensive.”</i></p>	<p>HOUSING</p> <p><i>“Rent is too expensive, would like to see it come down.”</i></p> <p><i>“Better quality housing, and more of it. Opportunities for people to get on the housing ladder through a variety of schemes.”</i></p>	<p>IMMIGRATION</p> <p><i>“Better visa and job conditions for migrants.”</i></p> <p><i>“The processing of visas is quite unfair and needs to be worked on.”</i></p> <p><i>“Zero racism towards migrants and foreign workers on Working Holiday Visas.”</i></p>	<p>HEALTH</p> <p><i>“A stronger mental health and wellbeing network.”</i></p> <p><i>“A HUGELY improved health and hospital service.”</i></p> <p><i>“More aged care. Better support for those living in their own homes. More mental health services and better obstetrics services.”</i></p>

Every key informant emphasised the growing mental health issues in their community. The most pressing and immediate need for Queenstown is mental health services. However, it is important to note that the main attributing factors to the decline in mental health for the region are employment and housing. Addressing mental health without creating employment and adequate, affordable and available housing will likely perpetuate the mental health struggles in the Queenstown community.

The closure of the border and the international tourism market disappearing sent shockwaves through Queenstown. As a result, projections include around 7900 job losses by March 2021.³¹ One key informant talked about a ‘mass exodus not only of migrants but also New Zealanders from the region’. One key informant said: ‘Many migrants have left, and we may

not see them coming back. These migrants are a key part of our community.’ The key informants talked about the financial hardship this creates for families relying on boarders or tenants to make mortgage payments. Other key informants talked about the losses to the community, such as coaches, teachers, colleagues or friends. Many of the key informants talked about family dynamics particularly for parents who had to work multiple jobs or work long hours to be able to meet the living costs in Queenstown.

Summary and Moving Forward

Covid-19 is having a major impact socially, mentally and economically in the region. Drawing from what the community have shared and the insight from the key informants these are a few of the questions we have moving forward.

- **How does Queenstown redevelop and diversify an economy that is not dependent on tourism?** What are the other options for a sustainable economy in Queenstown? The *Social Sector Capacity Report*, from the Queenstown Lakes District Council,³² showed that tourism was the main driver for many other industries in the region such as construction, which is the second largest industry in the region. Of the top 10 industries in Queenstown, all have and will continue to experience loss because of Covid-19 in the future. The key informants talked about shovel-ready infrastructure projects and jobs related to the natural environment like forestry that are supported by the Government as an avenue for employment. Key informants and the community also talked about moving away from low-waged jobs into secure employment with higher wages, such as IT and technology. *'Covid-19 exposed all our vulnerabilities ... exposed the lack of support and the we're not that resilient'*. Whilst many are holding out for the reopening of borders and return of tourism, the hope is that lessons will be learnt and changes made to ensure the resilience of the Queenstown economy.
- **Mental health**—The Queenstown Lakes District Council *Quality of Life Report 2019*³³ showed that there was a strong correlation between low income and the likelihood of accessing mental health services. The 2018 Quality of Life Report showed that the highest demand for services required in the region was mental health, at 62 percent.³⁴ Again, locals were very clear about the need for more access and availability of mental health services. This gap must be addressed as the region moves forward in recovering from this pandemic.

The mass exodus of migrants from Queenstown has posed many challenges, with one key informant stating, *'Queenstown pre-Covid-19 and when Covid-19 is over is dependent on migrant workers'*. What happens if the number of migrant workers drops for the region? How will Queenstown cope and what impact will this have on the community? The plight of the migrant population echoed throughout the surveys; the complex visa processes, the lack of support and the inequality. Despite the hardships and challenges the migrant population are facing, many shared their admiration and appreciation for the Queenstown community. The migrant population is an integral part of the diversity and vibrance of Queenstown but, moving towards recovery, we must consider what will happen if this source of cheaper labour runs out.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-and-commentary/weekly-economic-updates>
- 2 <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/social-policy-parliamentary-unit/reports>
- 3 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/424063/auckland-lockdown-starting-to-hit-hard-for-some-families>
- 4 <https://www.ird.govt.nz/about-us/tax-statistics/kiwisaver>
- 5 <https://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications/the-impact-of-lockdown-on-health-risk-behaviours>
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12304239
- 8 <https://www.hud.govt.nz/news-and-resources/statistics-and-research/2018-severe-housing-deprivation-estimate>
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 From this point forward, references to DOT data will be based on the various Dashboards that DOT has developed. The Salvation Army has a 12-month licence with DOT to access and use some of their Dashboards. More information is available at <https://dotlovesdata.com>
- 12 <https://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-council/agendas-and-minutes/livestream/Documents/2020/Strategy,%20Policy%20and%20Finance%20Committee/A1%20housing%20framework%20final%20V4.pdf>
- 13 <https://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-council/news/Pages/default.aspx?newsItem=8633>
- 14 <https://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-council/council-publications/surveysandReports/Documents/Infometrics-impact-Covid-19-Rotorua-Economy-Report--Early-estimates-April-2020.pdf>
- 15 Ibid, page 5.
- 16 <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/rotorua%2bDistrict/QuarterlyEconomicMonitor>
- 17 <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/index.html>
- 18 <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education/participation>
- 19 This data was obtained through an Official Information Act request by The Salvation Army to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children responded on 05/08/2020 with the requested data about local service centres.
- 20 https://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503437&objectid=12349709
- 21 <https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/Support-for-people-in-need/Homelessness-Action-Plan/271a3c7d79/Homelessness-Action-Plan.pdf>
- 22 More information on the geographic boundaries of these CAU is available here: <http://statsnz.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6f49867abe464f86ac7526552fe19787>
- 23 This data was obtained through an Official Information Act request by The Salvation Army to MSD. MSD responded on 03/08/2020 with the requested data about local service centres.
- 24 <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/index.html>
- 25 <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/statistics-and-publications/data-and-statistics/unique-offenders-police-stations>
- 26 <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/statistics-and-publications/data-and-statistics/victimisations-police-stations>
- 27 <https://forecast.idnz.co.nz/wellington/population-summary>
- 28 <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/social-policy-parliamentary-unit/reports>
- 29 <https://www.redcross.org.nz/stories/new-zealand/visitor-care-manaaki-manuhiri/#:~:text=What%20is%20Visitor%20Care%20Manaaki,such%20as%20food%20and%20accommodation>
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on the Queenstown-Lakes Economy—Early Estimates Queenstown-Lakes District Council—May 2020 accessed <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/recovery/data-reports>
- 32 <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/recovery/data-reports>
- 33 <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/yugjny3u/quality-of-life-report-2019-final-report.pdf>
- 34 https://www.queenstownchamber.org.nz/media/49925976/qldc_quality-of-life-2018-report.pdf

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