



**Ngā Tai Ora**  
PUBLIC HEALTH NORTHLAND  
Promote Protect Prevent

# **Kāinga Kore - Homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau: An Overview**

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**Te Tai Mahere  
Ngā Tai Ora**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Introduction**

Office of the Minister of Housing, et.al. (2019), have considered that:

A home is essential to wellbeing. A stable and affordable home provides a crucial platform for recovery, employment, education and wider community engagement and participation. (p. 1)

However, in 2019 more than 41,000 people were estimated to be homeless in Aotearoa NZ. A cross-party inquiry into homelessness by the Labour Party, Green Party and Māori Party (2016) noted that New Zealand has had a homelessness problem for several decades. However, this has been exacerbated in recent years with lack of affordable housing, skyrocketing house and rental prices, increasing poverty and so on. The report noted further that “Homelessness is no longer dominated by the stereotypical rough sleeper with mental health issues and is now more often a working family with young children”, with Māori and Pasifika groups, along with new migrants and those with disabilities, having disproportionate rates of homelessness (Labour Party et al., 2016, p. 2; Amore, 2016).

Hatch (2016) noted that the 1984 rate of poverty stood at 9% and by 2016, this had increased to 14%, with 622,000 people living in poverty, including 230,000 children. Housing costs have risen from 14% in the late 1980s to 20% in 2015. For those in the bottom quintile, costs are elevated to between 29-54% (Hatch, 2016). StatsNZ (2015) defines homelessness as “a living situation where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are:

- Without shelter
- In temporary accommodation
- Sharing accommodation with a household
- Living in uninhabitable housing”. (cited in Hatch, 2016, p. 7)

Amore (2016) defines ‘severe housing deprivation’ as “people living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing” (p. 4). The concept of the ‘hidden homeless’ has become popular in recent years, denoting the widening of the definition of homelessness beyond just those who are sleeping rough, to include those who are ‘couch surfing’, living in overcrowded homes and so on (Rigby, 2017).

Many New Zealanders are living in sub-standard housing. The Labour government passed two laws that seek to ameliorate the physical and mental health impacts of substandard housing with the *Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019*, and the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2020*. The former sought to ensure rental property owners provided at least a minimum standard of housing provision that was health-promoting rather than disease-inducing, while the latter put in place further safeguards for the rights of tenants.

## **Methodology**

Considering the broad definition of homelessness includes people in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, and living in uninhabitable housing (see above), we gathered data from a variety of key services and organisations in order to produce a coherent understanding of homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau/Northland. As yet there is no single repository of data relating to homelessness, making our task more difficult. However, sufficient information was gathered to enable a wider understanding of the issues relating to factors impelling and maintaining homelessness in Northland. However, it is not possible to identify homelessness in terms of the frequency in which people experience homelessness or how long people experience homelessness for. Hence the majority of the sources of information are based on samples of the population and there

is no way of identifying the true extent of homelessness without a census of a population with that population being all people who have experienced homelessness in a given time period.

A review of the number of Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs) provided by the Ministry of Social Development showed those with the highest number of grants per population were those aged between 15 and 29 years. Māori, however, received around eight times more grants than Pākehā New Zealanders, given their respective population sizes. This highlights the inequitable impact of homelessness and associated issues on Māori, which was acknowledged by then Housing Minister, Hon. Phil Twyford, in 2018 (cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Equb, 2012). Solutions to homelessness must therefore address the inequitable impact for Māori with sustainable and culturally-relevant initiatives.

A literature search was also undertaken via the internet for supporting literature. This included search terms such as 'homelessness', 'homelessness in Tai Tokerau', 'sub-standard housing', 'housing crisis NZ' and 'hidden homeless'. Included in the results were recent local and national newspaper articles which give more of a people-focused perspective on the associated issues in Northland. Supporting literature was drawn from local, national, and international sources.

## **Results**

### **Homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau**

In 2018, the Labour government pledged to commit part of the funding from the annual Budget to ameliorate homelessness. The press release on 11 May touched on the vulnerability of people who are homeless, pledging that “No one should be left out in the cold this winter” (cited in NZ Government, 2018). The government also recognised that Te Tai Tokerau/Northland has one of the most severe experiences of homelessness – this is certainly supported by the data introduced in this section.

Information from *CitySafe* indicates that there were 293 people recorded as homeless in the Whangārei City area in 2020. People who are included in these figures are permanent vehicle dwellers, occasional vehicle dwellers, permanent bridge dwellers, and permanent toilet dwellers. The sudden increase in homeless persons in 2019 is believed to be due to the opening of *155 Open Arms* in November 2018 – a day centre which provides space to rest, wash and access support through their team. Since then there has been a general increase in the number of homeless over time in Whangārei, with a linear increase of approximately three people every four months since November 2018, although a linear trend does not seem to fit well. Given that the number of homeless (as defined by *CitySafe* above) in Whangārei alone stood at 293 in 2020, and those needing transitional housing probably fit the wider definition of homelessness, it is unlikely there is sufficient transitional housing in Northland to meet the need.

### **Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs)**

Currently Northland can house 602 people in transitional housing places for non-classified transitional housing places. The number provided is an estimate only and the true occupancy rate is unknown. Kaitia had a relatively large number of transitional housing places compared with other towns or suburbs and generally transitional housing is located in high deprivation neighbourhoods. Radio NZ (2021) note that nationally demand for emergency accommodation has intensified, with almost 10,000 people receiving EHGs between July and September in 2020. Between September 2017 and July 2020, people on the public housing register increased more than threefold from 5,844 to 19,438

(Dreaver, 2020). More than 70 motels have been contracted by government to house individuals and families, and as of November 30 2020, 1200 individuals were housed in motels.

While this solution 'puts a roof over their heads', the emotional impact of living in a motel has not been taken into account (RNZ, 2021). Motels are designed for transient populations, not as permanent dwellings and are usually small and therefore often overcrowded, with little space for anyone to call their own. Taone O'Regan, operations manager for the Downtown Community Ministry (DCM) in Wellington, stated that such accommodation was particularly unsuitable for those with addictions and mental health issues – "It's like putting everybody into an acute mental health ward without any nurses, doctors or treatment available". While a housing need may be temporarily addressed, other needs and crises are created: "It's really at a high crisis point now, these emotional, health and social impacts that we're seeing because of what's going on. People are just existing. They're not thriving or living well." (Lynda Ryan; cited in RNZ, 2021).

In the Northland situation, however, one of the most significant factors with regard to emergency housing and emergency housing grants is that across all age groups, Māori make up a significantly higher proportion of those receiving EHG's (see Tables 4 & 5; pp. 21-22). In the 15-29 year age group, Māori were 87.1% of recipients, 83.3% of the 30-44 age group, and 79% of the 45-59 age group. While this goes down to 52.5% for those in the 60+ age group, this is still more than half the recipients in that age range. Northland currently has a population percentage of 33.9% for Māori, more than twice that of the national population percentage of 15.7% (MOH, 2019).

### **Housing, Households & Amenities:**

An analysis of households in Te Tai Tokerau paints a dismal picture for some of lack of access to basic amenities and a high proportion of substandard housing, particularly in relation to damp and mould. While this occurs primarily in rural areas, the urban suburb of Ōtangarei features some of the worst statistics, an area with a very high population of Māori (70 percent), reinforcing the notion of an inequitable impact of homelessness for Māori. This demonstrates also that factors creating and maintaining homelessness are systemic and complex, hence the need for a widened definition, and therefore a need for innovative and sustainable solutions from multiple services which centres and values people in situations impelled by poverty and other issues, and which can result in fundamental insecurity on several levels.

There is a steady increase in the number of occupied private dwellings in Northland with the fastest growth occurring in the Kaipara District (33% increase since 2001; 12% since 2013) although the Whangārei District had the highest increase in housing numbers (7362 since 2001; 2970 since 2013). The largest percent increase for the Whangārei District occurred between 2013 and 2018; for the Kaipara District and Far North District, the largest percent increase was between 2006 and 2013. The highest occupancy rate in 2018 is for the Far North District (2.83 people per household), followed by the Whangārei District (2.76) and Kaipara District (2.59). The relationship between occupancy rate does not change over time although there was more variation between the TA's in 2018 compared to other years.

The area of Oruru-Parapara had the highest proportion of households without any of the listed amenities (8.3%) followed by Waima and surrounding areas (6.3%), Ohaeawai (4.8%), Puketona and Waitangi (4.2%), and Maungaturoto (3.6%), which are all rural or small urban areas primarily in the Far North District. A total of 78.4% of all Statistical Area 2 (SA2) areas in Northland had at least one amenity in each house.

The most prevalent amenity that was *not* available was access to safe for drinking tap water (3.9% of households). In terms of the households which had the highest percentage without access to tap

water that is safe to drink (see Figure 20) was Port-Limeburners (14.3%; although this is subject to significant rounding error), areas within and around Mataraua (14.0%), North Cape (10.1%), areas in Omahuta Forest - Horeke (10.0%), and the area surrounding Kaikohe (9.9%).

Lack of access to safe drinking water was followed by lack of refrigerator (2.9% of households), electricity supply (1.8%), bath or shower (1.3%), toilet (1.3%), cooking facilities (1.1%), and a kitchen sink (1.1%). Areas within and around Mataraua had the highest percentage of households with no cooking facilities (4.7%) followed by areas surrounding Kaikohe (3.6%), Hokianga South (3.4%), Tarewa (3.0%), and Kiripaka (2.9%). The area with the highest percentage of households without a working refrigerator was Ōtangarei (8.5%), followed by Hokianga South (6.9%), Kaikohe (6.4%), areas in Waipoua Forest (6.2%), and Peria (6.1%).

For SA2 areas from the Census 2018 per the results of whether a household is sometimes or always damp, or mouldy (over A4 sheet of paper), a large proportion of households in Northland are affected by dampness (27.7%) and/or mould (22.5%). For dampness (58.5%) of households reported dampness in Moerewa, followed by Hokianga North (53.7%), Ōtangarei (52.2%), areas within and around Waima (50.7%), and areas within and around Mataraua (50%). The highest proportion of households in areas reporting significant mould include: Moerewa (54.3%), Hokianga North (40.7%), Kaikohe (40.5%), Ōtangarei (40.4%), and Kawakawa (39.2%).

Too many NZers live in homes that are substandard and with conditions such as damp and mould, which in turn often cause health issues for those living in such accommodation. In July 2019, the government introduced 'healthy standards' for rental properties, which introduced specific and minimum standards in relation to heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture, and draught stopping. The law was enacted because of recognition that too many of the nearly 600,000 rental accommodations in New Zealand are of poorer quality than those that are owner-occupied, with damp, cold and mouldy homes creating and/or exacerbating medical conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular disease (MBIE, 2019; NZ Parliamentary Counsel Office (NZPCO), 2019). The healthy standards therefore advantage tenants, New Zealand medical and health services, as well as accommodation owners through lifting the standards of their investment.

Palacios, et.al., (2020) note that "Understanding the causes of health deprivation, and providing solutions toward prevention, present an increasingly critical challenge for academia, private market participants, and policymakers." (p. 1). In the current context, homelessness is about more than people not having homes – also of relevance are the kind of homes that people have, and the kind of communities they live in. While Daalder's (2019) article was sited under the title of 'Māori Issues', these are society-wide issues that nevertheless reflect social inequities through Māori being most likely to be homeless and/or live in sub-standard housing conditions.

## ***Discussion***

### **The Widening Gap:**

The Hon. Phil Twyford, then Housing Minister, stated that:

We must acknowledge the harsh effects the housing crisis has had on Māori. They have borne the brunt of rapidly rising house prices and skyrocketing rents. A crucial part of Government policy must help more Māori move into their own homes, and there are great opportunities to partner with Māori organisations to do this. (cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Eqaub, 2018, p. 2)

Ōtangarei has been noted as an area of Te Tai Tokerau with significant negative social and economic indices, including an unemployment rate of 29.1 percent (2013 census), more than four times the



national rate of unemployment. Forty eight percent live in state housing, with between 60 and 70 percent of these unemployed, and 48 percent are single parent households. Those who do work are mainly labourers, with 20 percent as social workers – reflecting the needs within the community. Only 5.5 percent earn more than \$50,000 per annum, with less than four percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, in comparison with 13.9 percent in Whangārei and 20 percent nationwide. Of the local population, 70 percent are of Māori descent, compared with 26.2 in Whangārei, and a national total of 14.9 percent in 2013 (Daalder, 2019). Ōtangarei has a population of 1,639 people, with 54.17 percent living in rental accommodation, in comparison with 29.82 percent in rental accommodation across Northland (Real Estate Investar, a, 2021).

The situation in Ōtangarei is reflected in other Northland communities to various degrees, particularly communities with high numbers of Māori in their population. However, the current situation has seen opportunity for some. According to Ali (2020), the Northland housing market is 'ripe for the picking'. In the year to end September 2020, first home buyers were taking advantage of low interest rates to invest in the property market; they made up 37.2 per cent of the total mortgage registrations in Northland - the national figure is 35 per cent. House prices in the small rural community of Karetu rose 170 percent, although other places saw a fall of -35 per cent. Nevertheless, a residential sales person in Whangārei noted that "This oversupply of buyers, along with a shortage of properties for sale, has put huge pressure on the market, resulting in a significant rise in sale prices across Whangārei in all price ranges." (cited in Ali, 2020). With a total value of \$1.6 billion, 2720 residential properties were sold in Northland in that year, with Kerikeri holding the highest value sales at \$167.6million.

In the same article (Ali, 2019), recent home buyer, Tony George, stated that "People need to be focused and have a goal when it comes to home ownership." However, for many people in Northland, most of whom are Māori, home ownership remains an elusive goal that on-going economic hardship continues to hold out of reach. Although low interest rates also mean opportunity for investors, supply cannot keep up with demand, meaning that rental costs have increased greatly as well (Berry et.al., 2017). The median house rents are \$440 per week in the Far North district, \$480 per week in Whangārei district, and \$470 per week in Kaipara (Real Estate Investar, b, a, c, 2021). According to Edmunds (2018), *Trade Me* data shows Northland's advertised rent rose by 43 per cent from 2013 to 2018. While still below rental prices in urban areas such as Auckland, the relatively high rents in the Far North and other parts of Northland definitely contribute to issues of homelessness and overcrowding. Further, "The high cost of housing keeps families in a cycle of poverty" (Habitat for Humanity, 2021).

Nana et.al's (2019) analysis showed that those with 'no fixed abode' incurred significantly higher public hospital costs, 60 percent more than the average across all groups. It is likely they visit the doctor less, and only do so in acute situations with co-morbidities, contributing to the increased costs. Individuals with 'no access to telecommunications' were seen to access primary healthcare less than those with access. Only 54 percent of this group went to a GP at least once per year, compared with 60 percent for the rest of the Māori population in Northland. Hospital costs therefore averaged \$1,185 per individual in comparison with costs of \$1,030 for those with access to at least one form of telecommunications. The lack of access to telecommunications or the factors which lead to the lack of access to telecommunications may therefore result in worse health outcomes. Nana et.al's, (2019) report demonstrates that being a house 'owner' provides a hearty advantage in terms of life course outcomes. While there are many variables that can impact on health in terms of physical and mental health, including economic stability, owning a home and experiencing a probable higher sense of housing security is an important factor.

### **Housing Solutions:**

A brief overview of housing solutions was included in this report, although it is limited – a recommendation of this report is that a separate report on housing solutions is developed. However, for this report, a preliminary analysis of the efforts of Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) (2015a, 2016) was undertaken, which shows that TPK provides funding for housing repairs to Māori homes through its *Māori Housing Network Fund* (MHNF), begun in 2015. This fund enables Māori whānau and organisations to build affordable homes or make necessary repairs to existing homes. Te Puni Kōkiri manages the fund and essentially provides advice and support to whānau to help them navigate through the processes. While connected to other government initiatives around housing, the MHNF is focused solely on improving Māori housing (TPK, 2015b).

Completed housing repairs funded by the MHNF were spread throughout Northland; however most of the housing repairs were completed in rural areas. A substantial number of repairs occurred in Kaeo (31), Moerewa (31), Whangaruru (23), the Kaipara Coastal areas (20), Rangitāne-Purerua (18), and Whakarara (18). Figure are also shown of all people who have applied for housing repairs through TPK, which are approved and are currently on the waiting list. The area of Kaeo had a total of 88 homes on the waiting list followed by Whangaruru (15), Kaikohe (12), and Moerewa (9).

It seems very likely that further schemes such as the MHNF are necessary to ensure enduring solutions to homelessness in New Zealand, for Māori and other groups experiencing severe outcomes due to homelessness. Ground-breaking solutions that take into consideration the realities within which at least 1% of New Zealand's population is living, is required to ensure an equitable response to homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Recommendations**

Because the reasons for homelessness are complex and varied, innovation beyond the standard provision of homes is required by this and successive governments. Homelessness exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and life challenges for individuals and families.

In light of the information put forth in this report, the following recommendations are made.

#### **Central repository for gathering homelessness data:**

We note in this report the hindrance encountered in trying to access local data on our population of homeless peoples. Hatch (2016) suggests that collecting base-line data from a wide range of service providers “may make it possible to distinguish between those people in a transitional state of homelessness and those with a chronic and episodic problem” (p. 3). A recommendation from this report, therefore, is that a single entity is tasked with creating and maintaining a central repository for data relating to homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau, into which multi-service data is recorded. Aggregated data could then be shared amongst the various agencies, potentially enabling a wider coverage of service for those in need.

#### **Further research:**

Richards (2008) notes that more research is required into the drivers of homelessness, and therefore more preventative measures can be developed, with a coordinated and unified funding framework and delivery of services. As with the dearth of research from the perspective of Māori renters, so too is there little research with Māori voices at the centre in Te Tai Tokerau. Further investigation into cultural relevant housing solutions is required to ensure sustainable and inter-generational outcomes. Homelessness, and the plethora of associated issues, is a fertile ground for future research.

### **Separate report on Housing Solutions:**

While a brief section on housing solutions was included in this report, more work is required to identify current strategies, gaps that may exist in those strategies, as well as point to possible future solutions that could be undertaken. It is clear that homelessness is not an issue that is going to be solved in the near future. An in-depth analysis of strategies and gaps can identify innovative future solutions.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

Schulze and Green (2017) offer some hope in terms of achieving equity for Māori, noting that:

Correcting the inequalities will be beneficial for not only Māori, but Aotearoa as a whole. Removing the inequalities will require significant changes to the status quo, the education system needs to be rewired for Māori success, providing Māori with the skills to adapt to the ever-changing labour market. (p. 1)

While this report is concerned primarily with homelessness, it can be seen that homelessness is part of a complex of socio-economic issues faced by the most vulnerable in our society. Definitions of the homeless as only those sleeping rough under bridges or in cars with moderate to severe mental health issues are outdated. The homeless now include those living in overcrowded and substandard housing due to societal changes in recent years that have driven house and rental costs up too high, too fast; i.e., those who are transitionally homeless, nevertheless with the risk of becoming chronically homeless (Hatch, 2016).

As noted, a very high proportion of this population is Māori, reinforcing and extending existing inequities. Addressing homelessness effectively requires a multi-level and inter-sectoral approach through social and other services that continue to value people in such circumstances. There can only be a positive impact from working towards ensuring all New Zealanders have healthy homes in which to live, and thrive, rather than just survive.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Office of the Minister of Housing, et.al. (2019), have considered that:

A home is essential to wellbeing. A stable and affordable home provides a crucial platform for recovery, employment, education and wider community engagement and participation. (p. 1)

However, in 2019 more than 41,000 people were estimated to be homeless in Aotearoa NZ. A cross-party inquiry into homelessness by the Labour Party, Green Party and Māori Party (2016) noted that New Zealand has had a homelessness problem for several decades. However, this has been exacerbated in recent years with lack of affordable housing, skyrocketing house and rental prices, increasing poverty and so on. The report noted further that “Homelessness is no longer dominated by the stereotypical rough sleeper with mental health issues and is now more often a working family with young children”, with Māori and Pasifika groups, along with new migrants and those with disabilities, having disproportionate rates of homelessness (Labour Party et al., 2016, p. 2).

Hatch (2016) also noted that “New Zealand has a long-standing history of housing shortages and inadequate housing provision” (p. 5). In recent years, substantial economic and structural change by various governments has resulted in massive increases in poverty rates; for example, the 1984 rate of poverty stood at 9% and by 2016, this had increased to 14%, with 622,000 people living in poverty, including 230,000 children. An additional issue is that housing costs have risen from 14% in the late 1980s to 20% in 2015. For those in the bottom quintile, costs are elevated to between 29-54% (Hatch, 2016).

Hatch (2016) cites the StatsNZ (2015) definition of homelessness as “a living situation where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are:

- Without shelter
- In temporary accommodation
- Sharing accommodation with a household
- Living in uninhabitable housing”. (p. 7)

Homelessness means exclusion from the basic human right of adequate shelter (Richards, 2008). While some have considered homelessness to be a ‘personal lifestyle choice’, research shows that homeless people have experienced a multitude of disadvantages that have impelled their living situation, including poverty, poor physical and/or mental health, unemployment or low income rates, addiction, and disconnection from cultural institutions. The latter is particularly true for Māori – Richards (2008) states that poverty and homelessness can further “inhibit their ability to reintegrate with whānau, hapū and/or Iwi” (p. 3).

Amore (2016) states that people of Pacific, Māori or Asian ethnicity are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, with Pacific peoples ten times more likely to be homeless than those of European descent. Amore (2016) defines ‘severe housing deprivation’ as “people living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing” (p. 4). The concept of the ‘hidden homeless’ has become popular in recent years, denoting the widening of the definition of homelessness beyond just those who are sleeping rough, to include those who are ‘couch surfing’, living in overcrowded homes and so on (Rigby, 2017). Rigby also notes, however, that government agencies often remain attached to the former definitions, which is then reinforced by the media.

Many New Zealanders are living in sub-standard housing, defined by Morena Valley City Council (2020) as:

any condition which exists to an extent that it endangers the life, limb, property, safety or welfare of the occupants or general public....Some examples of substandard housing are:

- inadequate sanitation
- lack of water
- lack of heating
- inappropriate ventilation
- the presence of insects or vermin and
- structural hazards.

The Labour government passed two laws that seek to ameliorate the physical and mental health impacts of substandard housing with the *Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019*, and the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2020*. The former sought to ensure rental property owners provided at least a minimum standard of housing provision that was health-promoting rather than disease-inducing, while the latter put in place further safeguards for the rights of tenants such as limiting rent increases to once every 12 months instead of six months (although rent increases are currently frozen due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

For this report, we gathered data from a variety of key services and organisations in order to produce a coherent understanding of homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau/Northland. As yet there is no single repository of data relating to homelessness, making our task more difficult. However, sufficient information was gathered to enable a wider understanding of the issues relating to factors impelling and maintaining homelessness in Northland.

A review of the number of Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs) provided by the Ministry of Social Development showed those with the highest number of grants per population were those aged between 15 and 29 years. Māori, however, received around eight times more grants than Pākehā New Zealanders, given their respective population sizes. This highlights the inequitable impact of homelessness and associated issues on Māori, which was acknowledged by then Housing Minister, Hon. Phil Twyford, in 2018 (cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Eaquib). Solutions to homelessness must therefore address the inequitable impact for Māori with sustainable and culturally-relevant initiatives.

An analysis of households in Te Tai Tokerau paints a dismal picture for some of lack of access to basic amenities and a high proportion of substandard housing, particularly in relation to damp and mould. While this occurs primarily in rural areas, the urban suburb of Ōtangarei features some of the worst statistics, an area with a very high population of Māori (70 percent), reinforcing the notion of an inequitable impact of homelessness for Māori. This demonstrates also that factors creating and maintaining homelessness are systemic and complex, hence the need for a widened definition, and therefore a need for innovative and sustainable solutions from multiple services which centres and values people in situations impelled by poverty and other issues, and which can result in fundamental insecurity on several levels.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Considering the broad definition of homelessness includes people in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, and living in uninhabitable housing (see below), a broad search of key services and organisations that collect and may report on homelessness was undertaken. There is no single source of data that collects information on the population of people who are homeless, and alternatively many sub-providers or organisations may collect data on several dimensions of homelessness. Given this, it is not possible to identify the extent of homelessness in terms of the frequency in which people experience homelessness or how long people experience homelessness for. Hence the majority of the sources of information are based on samples of the population and there is no way of identifying the true extent of homelessness without a census of a population with that population being all people who have experienced homelessness in a given time period.

Hence to complete this report, several agencies were contacted and asked to provide data on their clientele who experience a type of homelessness described in the definition above. The following agencies or organisations responded to our requests:

- Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ),
- Ministry of Social Development/Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora (MSD),
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Development/Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (MHUD),
- Te Puni Kōkiri/Ministry of Māori Development (TPK), and
- Whangārei District Council (WDC).

Data was requested from other organisations but was not included due to delays in response or non-responses.

Housing NZ was not contacted as tenants in public housing may have sustainable housing available for long periods of time, and therefore cannot be considered homeless.

The information received from the Whangārei District Council included information provided by the *CitySafe* program. *CitySafe* records people who are observed to be homeless in the Whangārei inner city, and were considered by *CitySafe* to be permanent or temporary vehicle dwellers, permanent bridge dwellers, or permanent toilet dwellers. The Ministry of Social Development provided information on emergency housing.

A literature search was also undertaken via the internet for supporting literature. This included search terms such as 'homelessness', 'homelessness in Tai Tokerau', 'sub-standard housing', 'housing crisis NZ' and 'hidden homeless'. Included in the results were recent local and national newspaper articles which give more of a people-focused perspective on the associated issues in Northland. Supporting literature was drawn from local, national, and international sources.

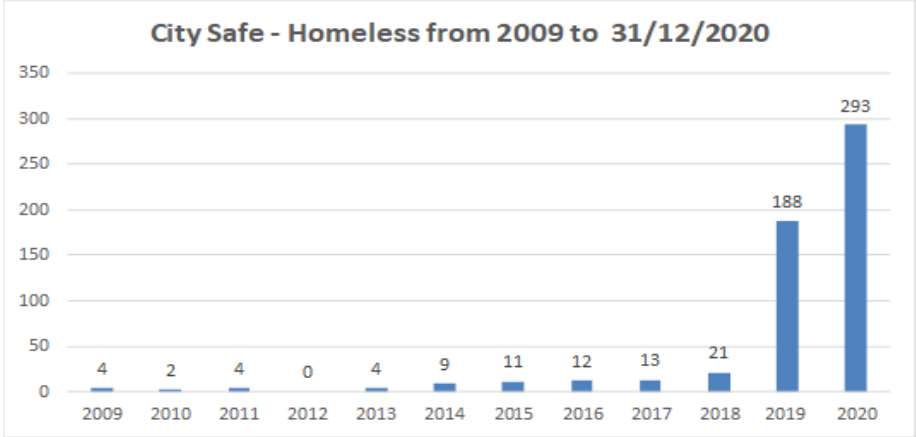
### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau

In 2018, the Labour government pledged to commit part of the funding from the annual Budget to ameliorate homelessness. This would be through their *Housing First* programme, cited as “a proven way to house and support people who have been homeless a long time, or are homeless and face multiple and complex needs,” by then-Housing and Urban Development Minister Phil Twyford (NZ Government, 2018). The press release on 11 May touched on the vulnerability of people who are homeless, pledging that “No one should be left out in the cold this winter” (cited in NZ Government, 2018). The government also recognised that Te Tai Tokerau/Northland has one of the most severe experiences of homelessness – this is certainly supported by the data introduced in this section.

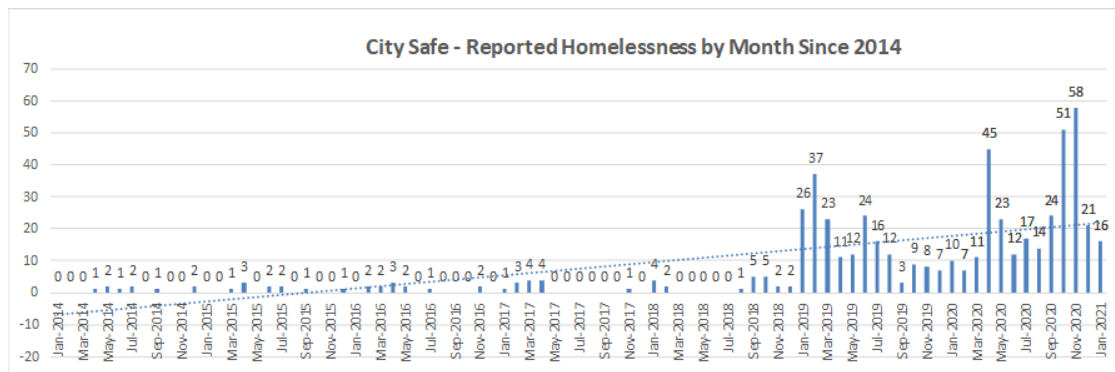
Information from *CitySafe* in Figures 1 to 3 indicates that there were 293 people recorded as homeless in the Whangārei City area in 2020. People who are included in these figures are permanent vehicle dwellers, occasional vehicle dwellers, permanent bridge dwellers, and permanent toilet dwellers. The sudden increase in homeless persons in 2019 (see Figure 1 – a nine-fold increase from 21 in 2018 to 188 in 2019) is believed to be due to the opening of *155 Open Arms* – a day centre which provides space to rest, wash and access support through the *155 Open Arms* team. The support offered by this organisation encouraged homeless persons to access this support, therefore making them more visible. *155 Open Arms* became operational in November 2018, and since then there has been a general increase in the number of homeless over time in Whangārei, with a linear increase of approximately three people every four months since November 2018, although a linear trend does not seem to fit well.

Figure 1: People recorded as homeless by CitySafe by year



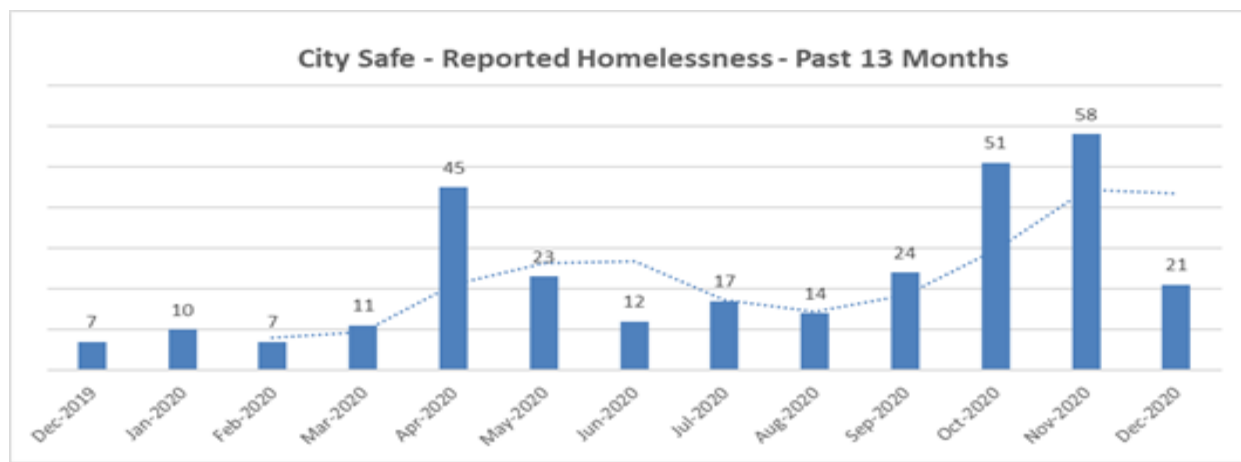
Source: Whangārei District Council, 2021.

Figure 2: People recorded as homeless by CitySafe by month



Source: Whangārei District Council, 2021.

**Figure 3: People recorded as homeless by CitySafe in the past 13 months**



Source: Whangārei District Council, 2021.

### 3.2 Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs):

Table 1 below observes the number of *grants* for emergency housing provided by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), not the number of people in emergency housing. A recipient of a grant will only be included once in a year with their last grant within the year retained. The results in Table 1 suggest that people aged between 15 and 29 years had the highest number of grants per population than any other demographic. Followed closely by this age group were people who identified as Māori, with this group having approximately eight times more recipients than Pākehā New Zealanders/Tauīwi<sup>1</sup> for grants, given their respective population sizes. Males had a higher rate of being recipients of a grant than females. However, it is unclear from the rates whether a larger proportion of population from a particular socio-demographic applied for grants or whether a particular demographic was more likely to be accepted for a grant, or a combination of these factors. Interestingly, the territorial authority (TA) of Whangārei, had a higher rate per 10,000 for being recipient of a grant compared to the Far North, which has higher socioeconomic deprivation.

<sup>1</sup> While the term 'Europeans' is still used in the national Census, the terms Pākehā, Pākehā New Zealanders, or Tauīwi seem more relevant in a Northland context; we will therefore use the terms Pākehā New Zealanders as well as Europeans throughout this report.



**Table 1: Recipients of Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs)<sup>2</sup>**

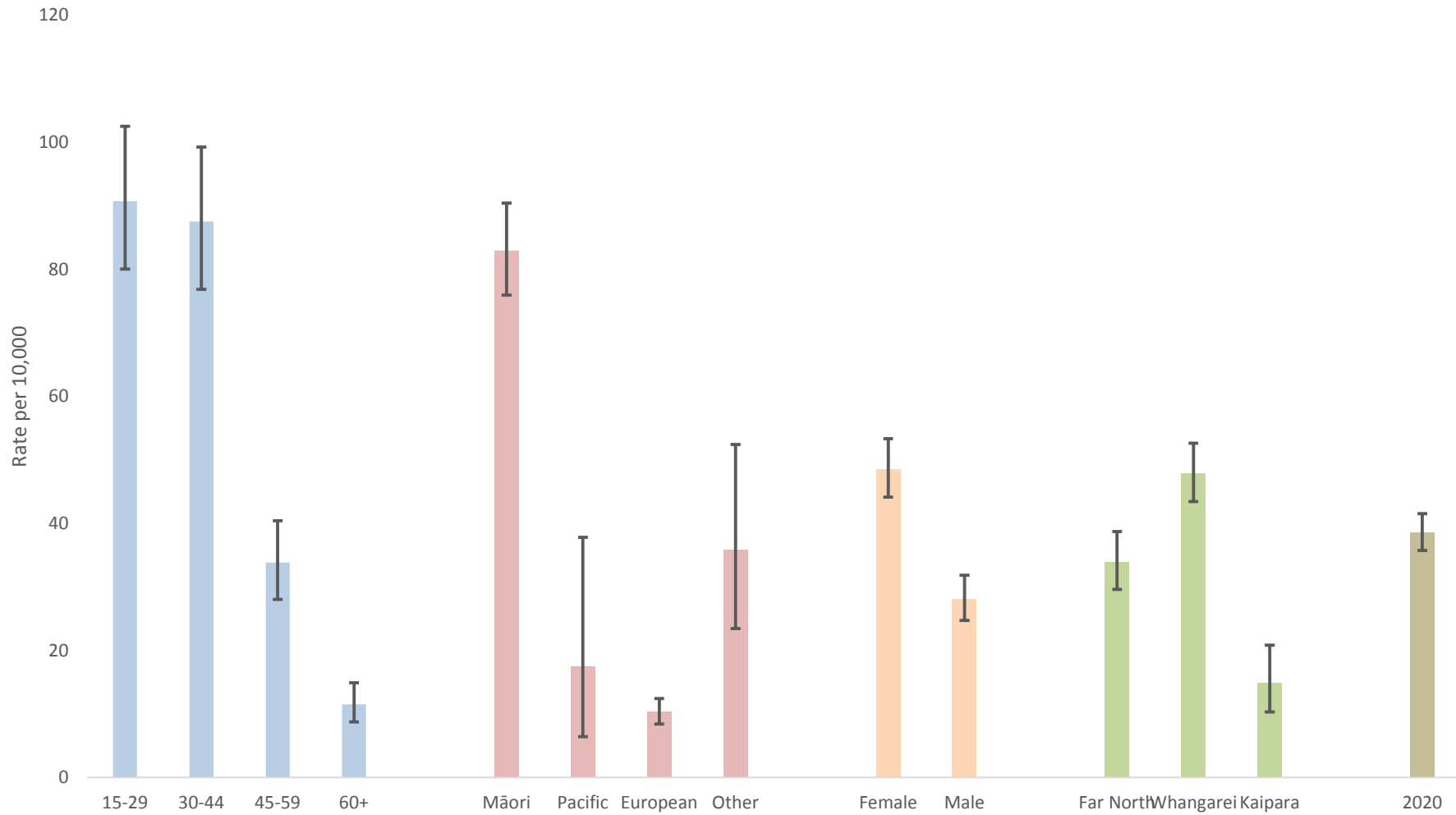
<b>Socio-demographic</b>	<b>EHG</b> <b>(2017-2020)</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>EHG</b> <b>(2020)</b>	<b>Population</b> <b>Size</b>	<b>Rate per</b> <b>10,000</b>	<b>LCI</b>	<b>UCI</b>
<b>Age</b>							
15-29	692	36.3	257	28327	90.7	80.0	102.5
30-44	788	41.4	243	27784	87.5	76.8	99.2
45-59	312	16.4	119	35235	33.8	28.0	40.4
60+	113	5.9	56	48861	11.5	8.7	14.9
<b>Ethnicity</b>							
Māori	1499	78.9	514	61968	82.9	75.9	90.4
Pacific	21	15.2	6	3452	17.4	6.4	37.8
European	289	3.3	108	105205	10.3	8.4	12.4
Other	62	1.1	26	7267	35.8	23.4	52.4
Unspecified	29	1.5	16				
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	1309	66.5	440	90686	48.5	44.1	53.3
Male	660	33.5	245	87206	28.1	24.7	31.8
<b>TA</b>							
Far North	789	40.1	222	65398	33.9	29.6	38.7
Whangārei	98	5.0	429	89703	47.8	43.4	52.6
Kaipara	1082	55.0	34	22791	14.9	10.3	20.8
<b>Year</b>							
2017	400	20.3					
2018	390	19.8					
2019	494	25.1					
2020	685	34.8	685	177892	38.5	35.7	41.5
<b>Total</b>	1969	100.0					

(NB: There may be up to four grants to the same individual in the table column)

Figure 4 below shows the *Rate per 10,000 EHGs* as per the table above.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Social Development (2021) data was aggregated by Year, TA, and demographic. Demographic includes age, gender, and ethnicity. Raw data obtained had censored values less than 6 and these were then assumed to be 0; Year and TLA are therefore based on gender that had no suppression of low numbers. Rate per 10,000 corresponds to the year 2020 only.

Figure 4: Rate per 10,000 of EHG's by socio-demographics



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

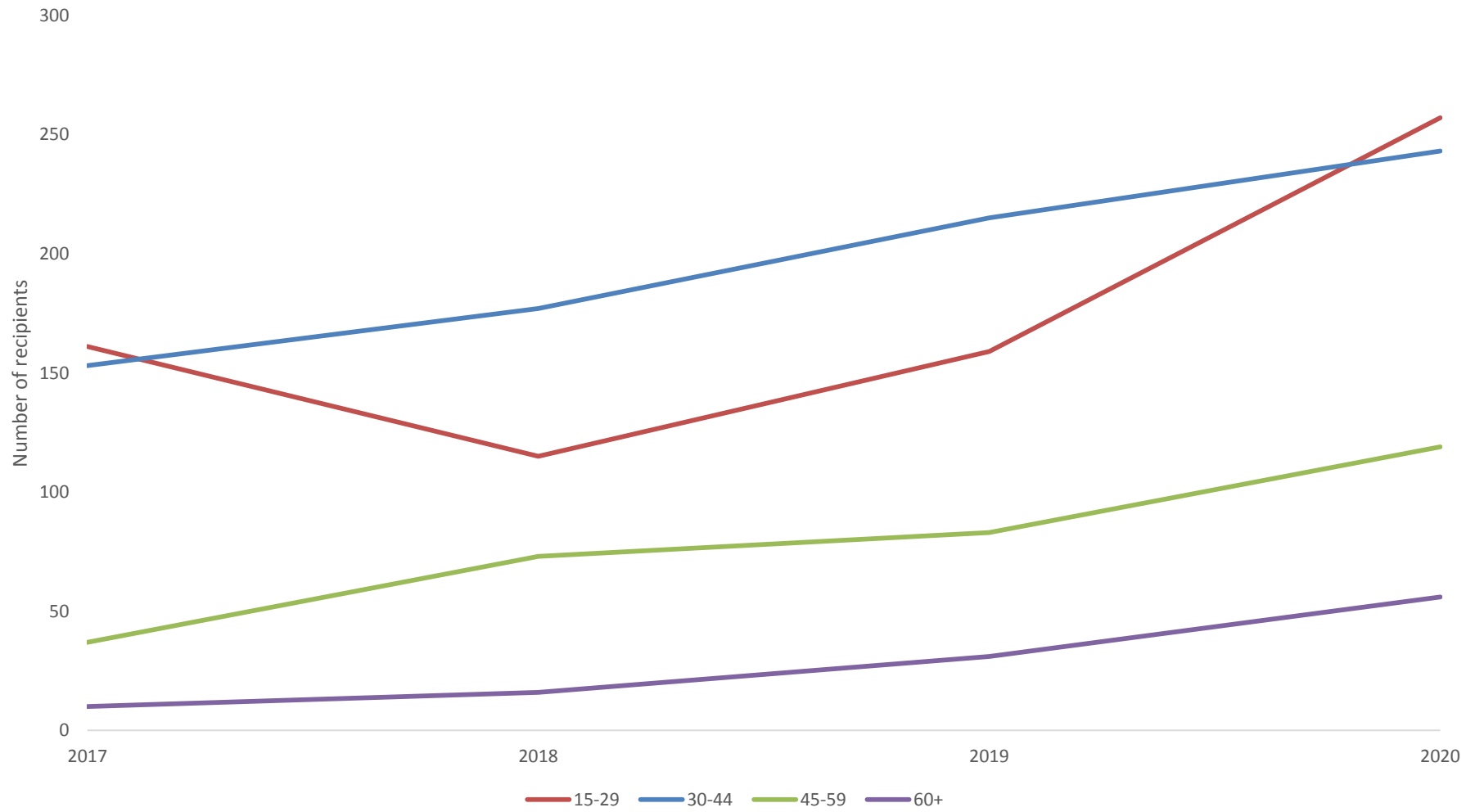
The results in Table 2 below identify the association between the number of grants across various socio-demographics and year of the grant. There was a decrease in the number of recipients of grants in 2018, although this increased substantially in 2019 and 2020. Proportionally, there was a large increase in recipients of grants over time for people aged over 60 (5.6 times as many in 2020 compared with 2017). People who identified as Māori had also increased number of emergency housing grants over time, and in 2020, 76.7% of the recipients of grants were to people who identified as Māori. The proportion of females who were recipients of grants (compared to males) decreased from 71.5% to 64.2% from 2017 to 2020.

**Table 2: Demographics of EHG for recipients by year<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Socio-demographic</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>
<b>Age</b>												
15-29	161	44.6	23.3	115	30.2	16.6	159	32.6	23.0	257	38.1	37.1
30-44	153	42.4	19.4	177	46.5	22.5	215	44.1	27.3	243	36.0	30.8
45-59	37	10.2	11.9	73	19.2	23.4	83	17.0	26.6	119	17.6	38.1
60+	10	2.8	8.8	16	4.2	14.2	31	6.4	27.4	56	8.3	49.6
<b>Ethnicity</b>												
Māori	315	84.5	21.0	289	76.9	19.3	381	79.2	25.4	514	76.7	34.3
Pacific	0	0.0	0.0	8	2.1	38.1	7	1.5	33.3	6	0.9	28.6
European	52	13.9	18.0	61	16.2	21.1	68	14.1	23.5	108	16.1	37.4
Other	6	1.6	9.7	12	3.2	19.4	18	3.7	29.0	26	3.9	41.9
Unspecified	0	0.0	0.0	6	1.6	20.7	7	1.5	24.1	16	2.4	55.2
<b>Gender</b>												
Female	286	71.5	21.8	257	65.9	19.6	326	66.0	24.9	440	64.2	33.6
Male	114	28.5	17.3	133	34.1	20.2	168	34.0	25.5	245	35.8	37.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>34.8</b>

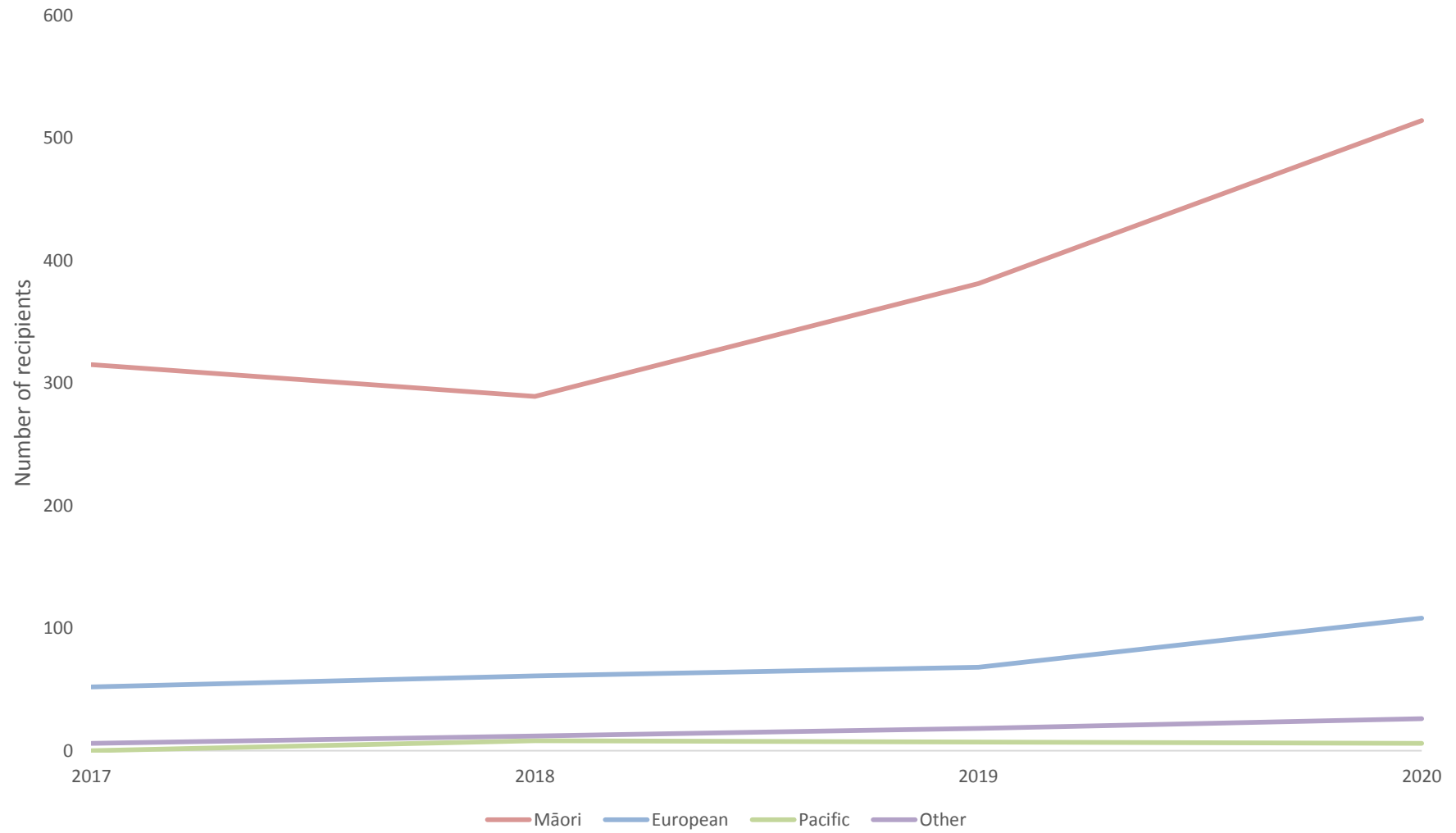
<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Social Development (2021): Data was aggregated by Year, TA, and demographic. Demographic includes age gender and ethnicity. Raw data obtained had censored values less than 6 and these were then assumed to be 0; Year and TLA are therefore based on gender that had no suppression of low numbers.

Figure 5: EHG for recipients by age over time



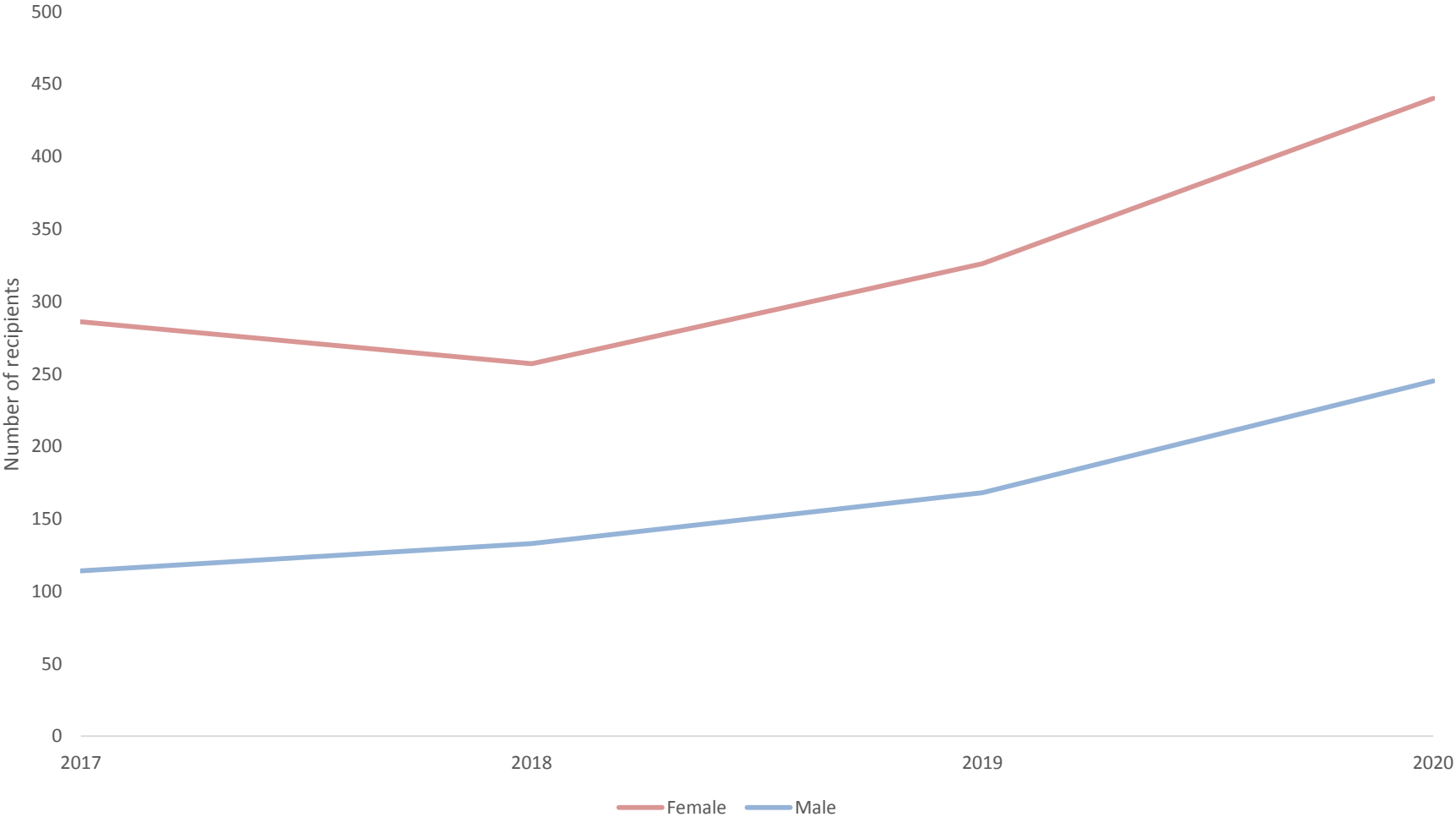
Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

Figure 6: EHG for recipients by ethnicity over time



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

Figure 7: EHG for recipients by gender over time



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

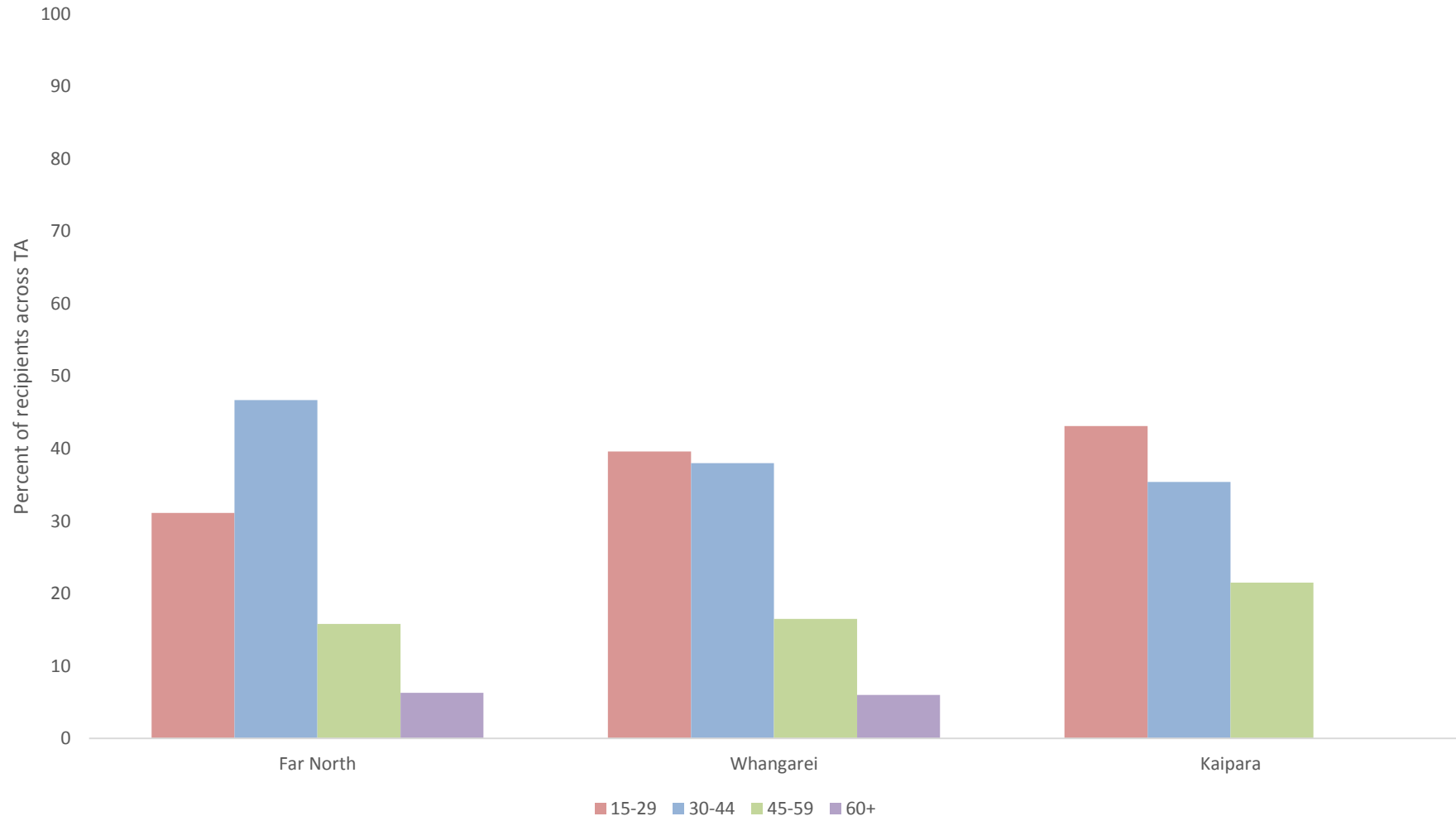
Table 3 below identifies the distribution of age, ethnicity and gender by Territorial Authority. There are a higher proportion of people who identify as Māori in the Far North compared to other areas. However, the increase of people who identify as Māori in the Far North may only reflect the greater population size of Māori in the Far North. Of people who reside in the Kaipara District, compared to other districts, there were a higher proportion of people aged between 15 and 29 who were recipients of emergency housing grants. The highest proportion of females who were recipients of emergency housing grants was for people residing in the Whangārei District.

**Table 3: Demographics of EHG recipients by Territorial Authority<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Socio-demographic</b>	<b>Far North</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>Whangārei</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>Kaipara</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>
<b>Age</b>									
15-29	236	31.1	34.1	428	39.6	61.8	28	43.1	4.0
30-44	354	46.7	44.9	411	38.0	52.2	23	35.4	2.9
45-59	120	15.8	38.5	178	16.5	57.1	14	21.5	4.5
60+	48	6.3	42.5	65	6.0	57.5	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Māori	626	81.1	41.8	822	78.1	54.8	51	67.1	3.4
Pacific	15	1.9	71.4	6	0.6	28.6	0	0.0	0.0
European	95	12.3	32.9	169	16.1	58.5	25	32.9	8.7
Other	23	3.0	37.1	39	3.7	62.9	0	0.0	0.0
Unspecified	13	1.7	44.8	16	1.5	55.2	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Gender</b>									
Female	502	63.6	38.3	741	68.5	56.6	66	67.3	5.0
Male	287	36.4	43.5	341	31.5	51.7	32	32.7	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>1082</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Social Development (2021): Data was aggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, and year. Raw data obtained had censored values less than 6 and these were then assumed to be 0; Year and TLA are therefore based on gender that had no suppression of low numbers. Rates correspond to the year 2020 only; This table contains unique clients of MSD only and not the number of grants.

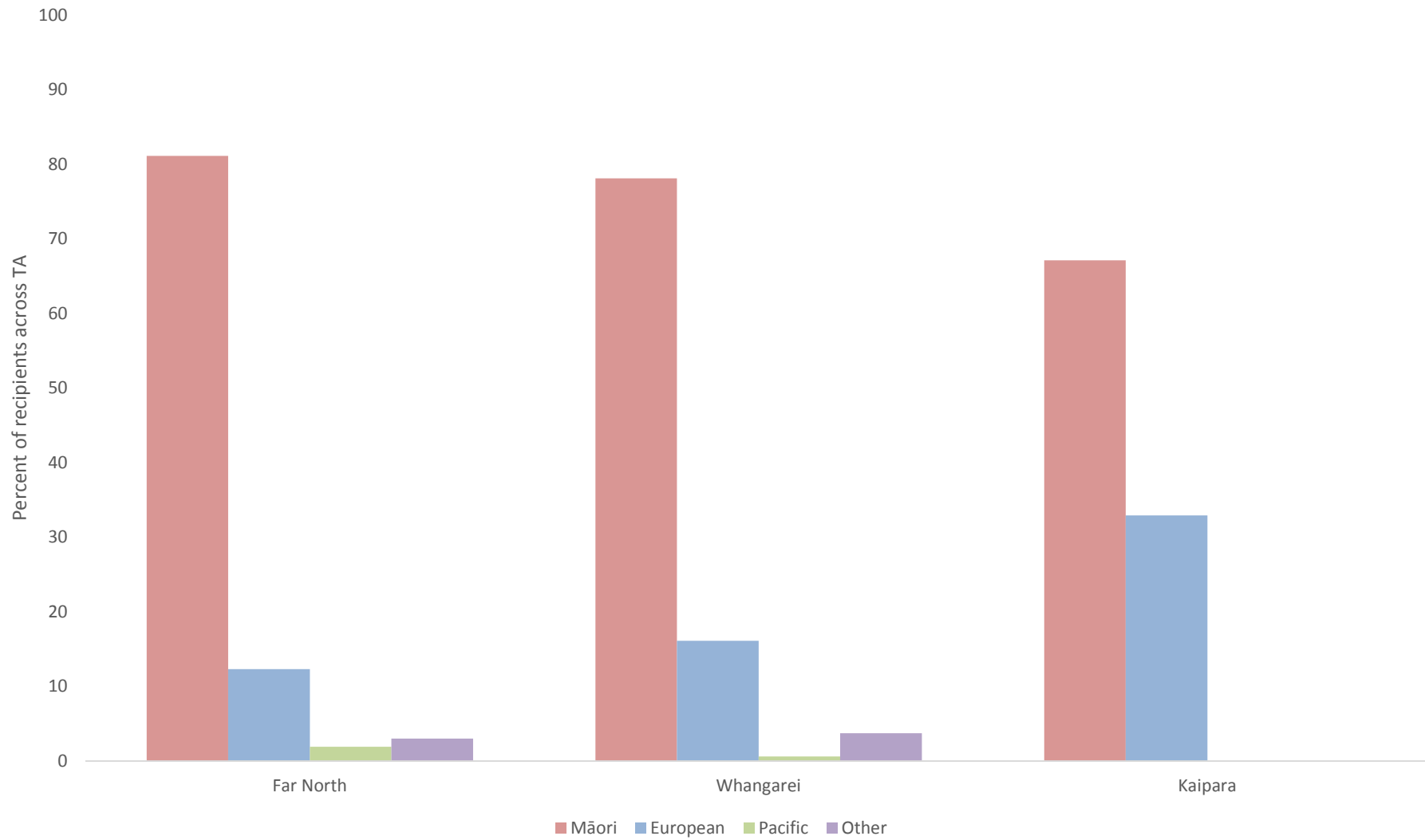
Figure 8: EHG for recipients by age and Territorial Authority, 2020



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

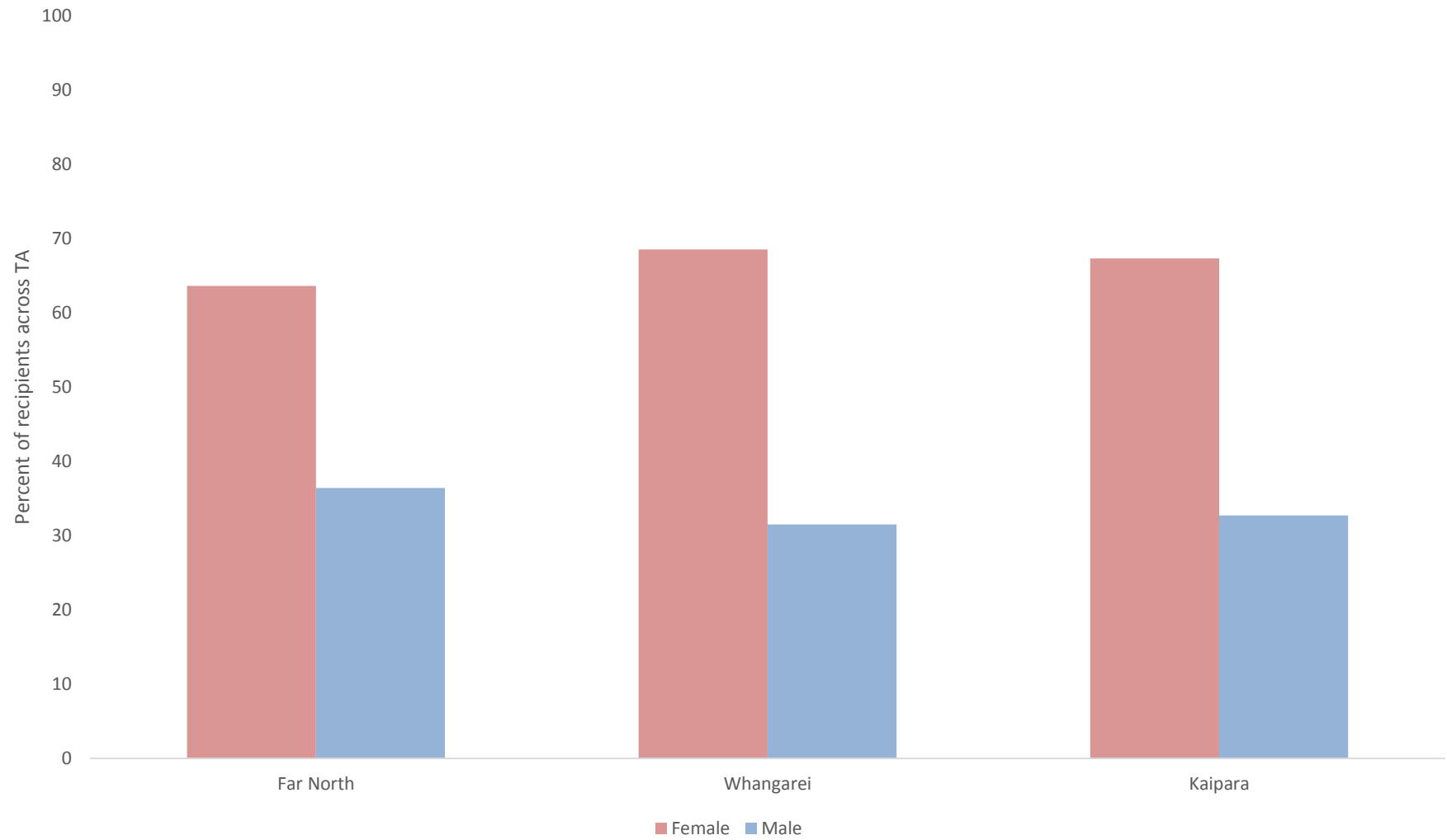


Figure 9: EHG for recipients by ethnicity and TA, 2020



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

**Figure 10: EHG's for recipients by gender and TA, 2020**



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

In keeping with Table 3, Table 4 is a cross-tabulation of age and ethnicity against gender for people who were recipients of emergency housing grants. Males tended to be in a younger cohort than females and identify as Māori. Furthermore, there were a higher proportion of males who identified with a European ethnicity than females. Approximately, 41.1% of females are in the 15-29 year age group compared with 25.6% of males. As seen in the table below, 83.7% of females and 80% of males accessing EHG are of Māori ethnicity. There were a higher proportion of males (17.4%) who identified with a Pākehā New Zealander ethnicity than females (13.3%). The majority of females (82.2%) are aged from 15-29 years or 30-44 years (41.1% respectively), while males are primarily in the 30-44 years age group (41.1%), with males aged 15-29 years at 25.6%, and those aged 45-59 years at 24.7%. Females have a much lower percentage of those aged 60+ (2.7%), in comparison with 8.8% for males.

**Table 4: Demographics of EHG recipients by gender<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Socio-demographic</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>C%</b>	<b>R%</b>
<b>Age</b>						
15-29	479	41.1	77.0	143	25.6	23.0
30-44	479	41.1	67.7	229	41.0	32.3
45-59	177	15.2	56.2	138	24.7	43.8
60+	31	2.7	38.8	49	8.8	61.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Māori	976	83.7	68.6	447	80.0	31.4
Pacific	6	0.5	100.0	0	0.0	0.0
European	155	13.3	61.5	97	17.4	38.5
Other	14	1.2	63.6	8	1.4	36.4
Unspecified	15	1.3	68.2	7	1.3	31.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1166</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32.4</b>

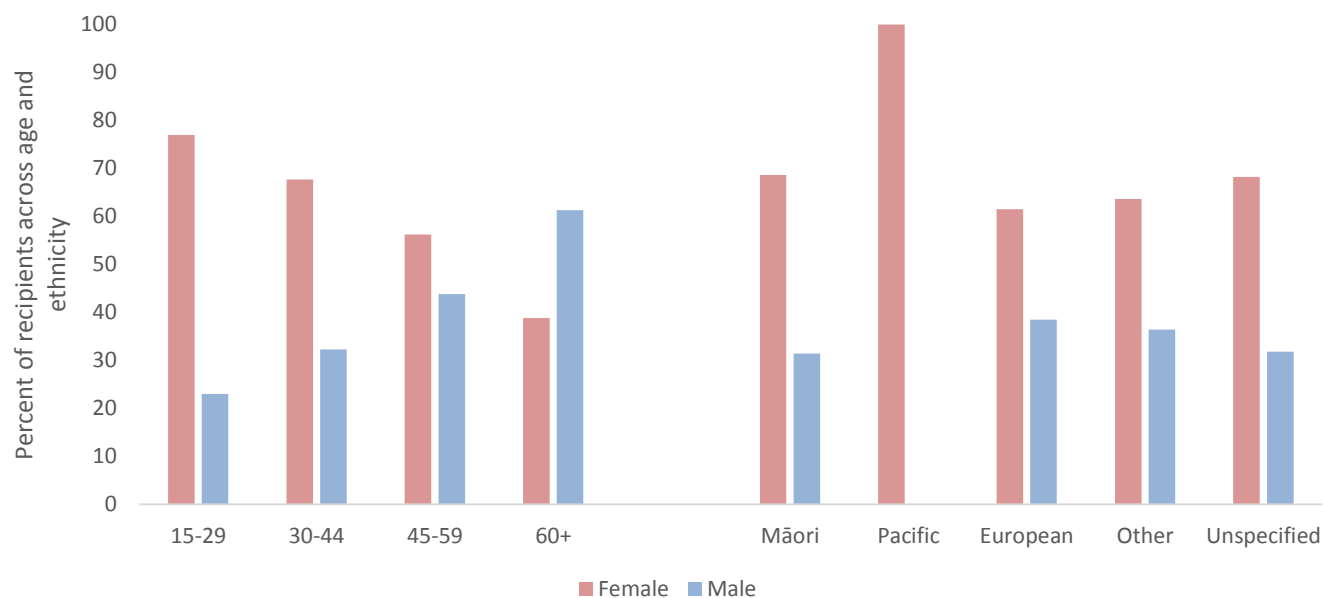
Table 5 continues from Table 4 and compared ethnicity to age for recipients of emergency housing grants. Across all age groups, Māori made up a higher proportion of those receiving EHG, with 87.1% of those in the 15-29 age group, 83.3% in the 30-44 age group, 79% in the 45-59 age group, coming down to 52.5% of those in the 60+ age group. Proportionally, those identifying as European were significantly more prevalent in the 60+ age group at 47.5%, with no 'Pacific', 'Other' or 'Unspecified' receiving EHG in this age group.

<sup>5</sup> Tables 4 & 5 - Ministry of Social Development (2021); Data was aggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, and year; Raw data obtained had censored values less than 6 and these were then assumed to be 0; Year and TLA are there based on gender that had no suppression of low numbers; Rate correspond to the year 2020 only.

**Table 5: Demographics of EHG for recipients by age range**

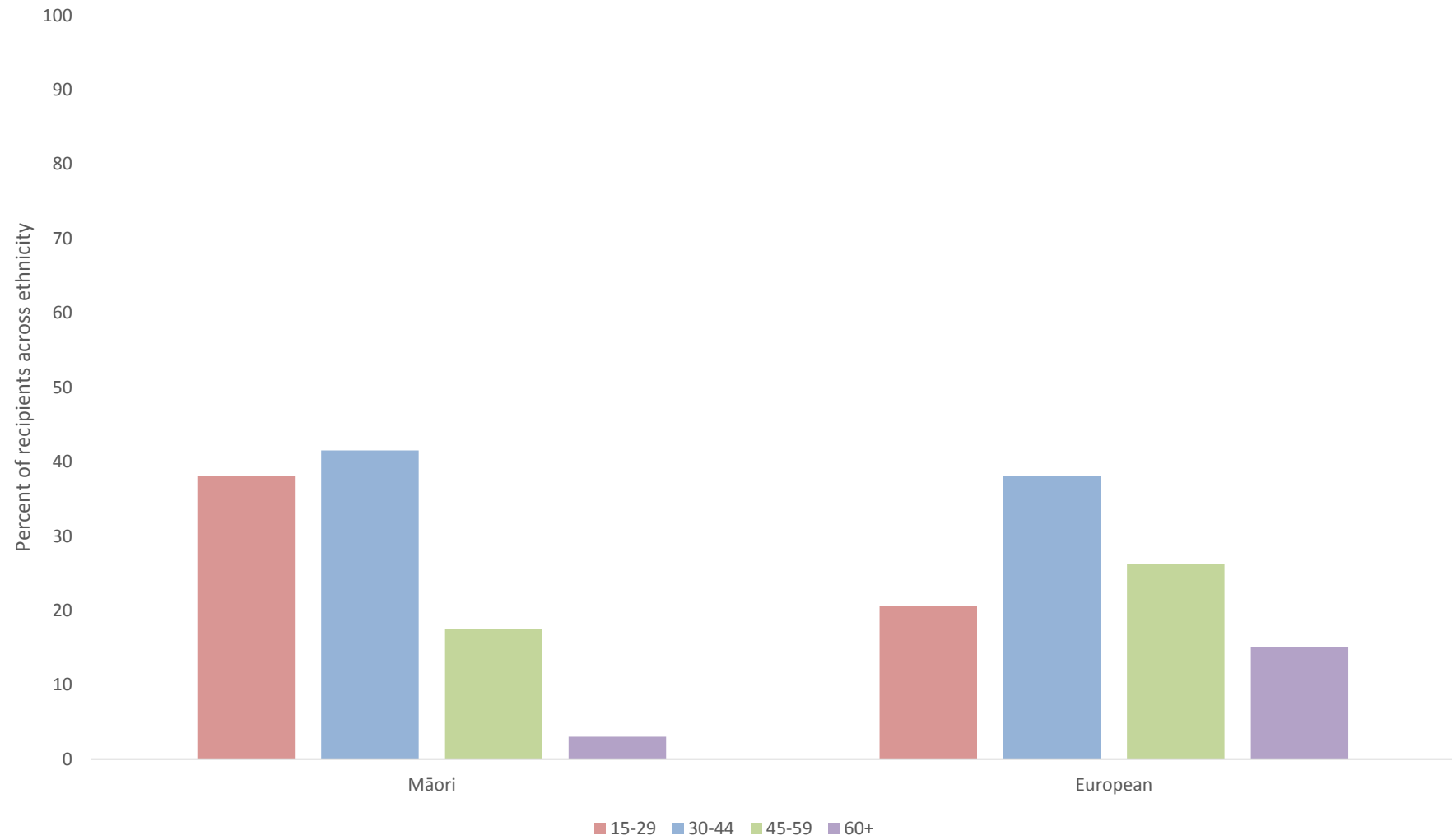
Socio-demographic	15-29	C%	R%	30-44	C%	R%	45-59	C%	R%	60+	C%	R%
<b>Ethnicity</b>												
Māori	542	87.1	38.1	590	83.3	41.5	249	79.0	17.5	42	52.5	3.0
Pacific	6	1.0	100.0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
European	52	8.4	20.6	96	13.6	38.1	66	21.0	26.2	38	47.5	15.1
Other	0	0.0	0.0	22	3.1	100.0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
Unspecified	22	3.5	100.0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>

**Figure 11: EHG for recipients by gender and age, and gender and ethnicity, 2020**



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

Figure 12: EHG for recipients by age and ethnicity, 2020



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

### 3.3 Housing & Households:

Table 6 below reflects an estimate of the number of people who occupy a transitional housing place at any given time. This information is based on occupancy rates for Northland which is applied to specific suburbs that have a maximum number of transitional housing places available. A place does not necessarily represent a house or bedroom, but a unit in which one or more people can be eligible to live in temporarily. Kaitaia had by far the largest number of transitional housing places available compared to other towns or suburbs. Perhaps not surprisingly, most transitional housing places are located in areas of high deprivation. There are no disclosed transitional housing places in Kerikeri, Kaikohe, Hokianga, Dargaville, or anywhere south of Whangārei . The maximum capacity of all transitional housing places in Northland is 602, which means transitional housing in Northland can accommodate 602 people in 2020.

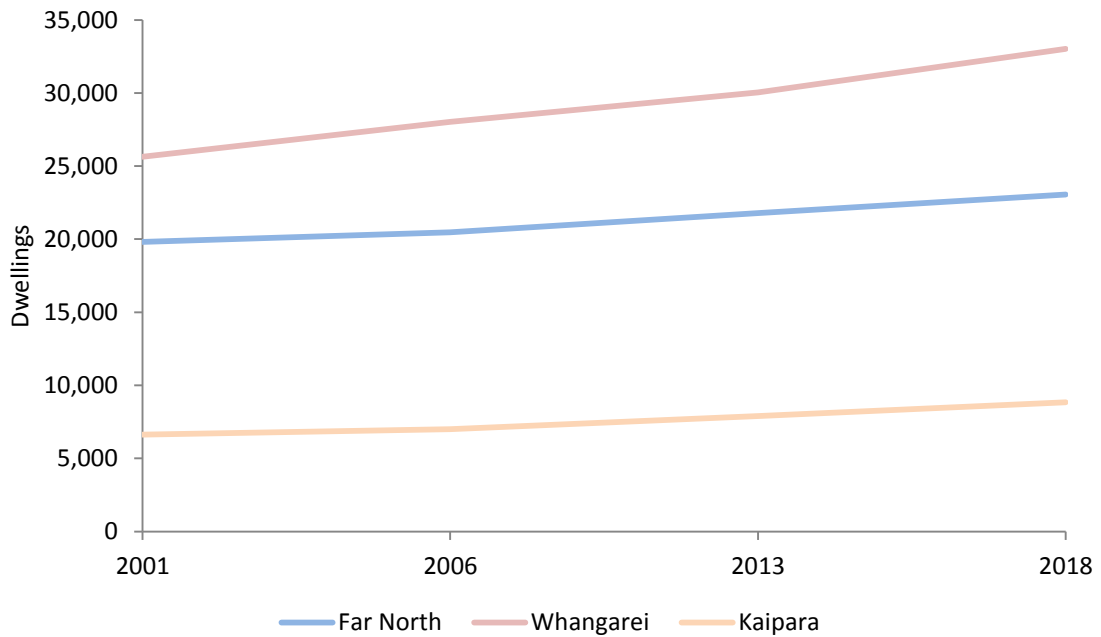
**Table 6: Predicted transitional housing occupancy in Northland<sup>6</sup>**

<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Transitional housing places</b>	<b>Minimum capacity</b>	<b>Maximum capacity</b>	<b>Predicted average occupancy</b>
Kaitaia	61	62	175	151
Ahipara	6	6	18	16
Kaeo	7	9	21	19
Kawakawa	1	3	5	5
Kamo	19	44	82	71
Tikipunga	2	7	12	11
Ōtangarei	5	10	15	13
Regent	5	8	19	17
Woodhill	13	15	45	39
Vinetown	9	14	31	27
Riverside	9	13	29	25
Morningside	6	9	20	18
Raumanga	20	46	86	74
Onerahi	5	13	28	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>518</b>

Figures 13 and 14 below suggest that there is a steady increase in the number of occupied private dwellings in Northland with the fastest growth occurring in the Kaipara District (33% increase since 2001; 12% since 2013) although the Whangārei District had the highest increase in housing numbers (7362 since 2001; 2970 since 2013). The largest percent increase for the Whangārei District occurred between 2013 and 2018; for the Kaipara District and Far North District, the largest percent increase was between 2006 and 2013.

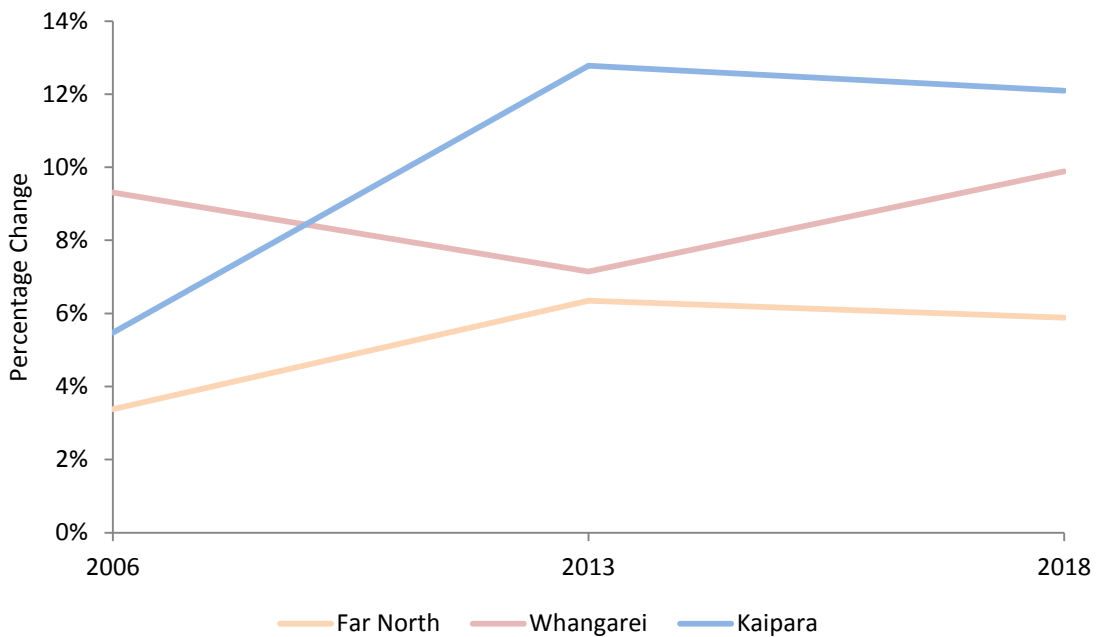
<sup>6</sup> Based on typology of transitional housing places and the Northland average occupancy rate.

**Figure 13: Dwellings in Northland by district between 2001 and 2018**



Sources: Statistics New Zealand, 2019a; Statistics New Zealand, 2001.

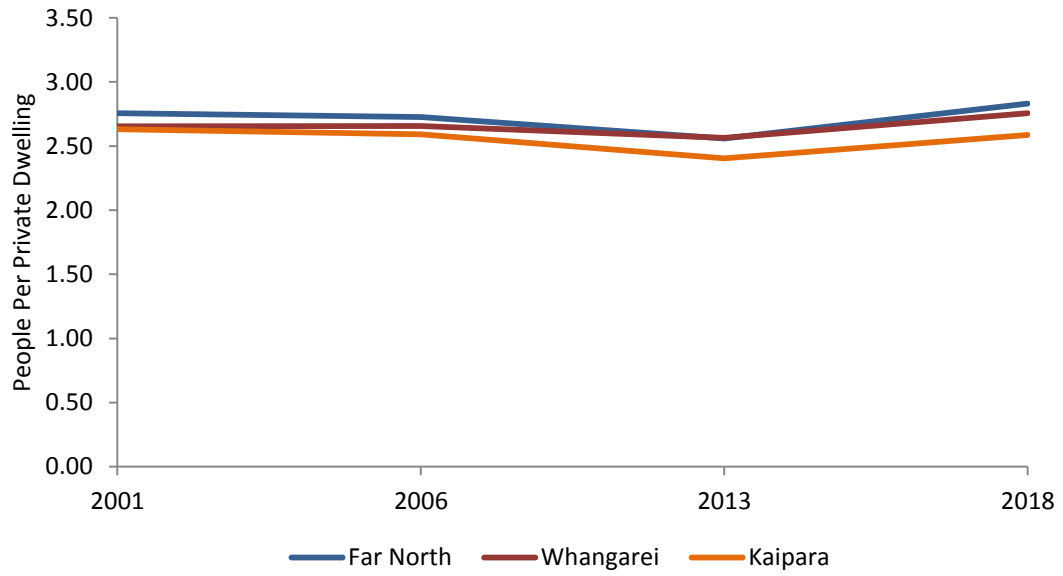
**Figure 14: Change in occupied dwellings by TA**



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019a.

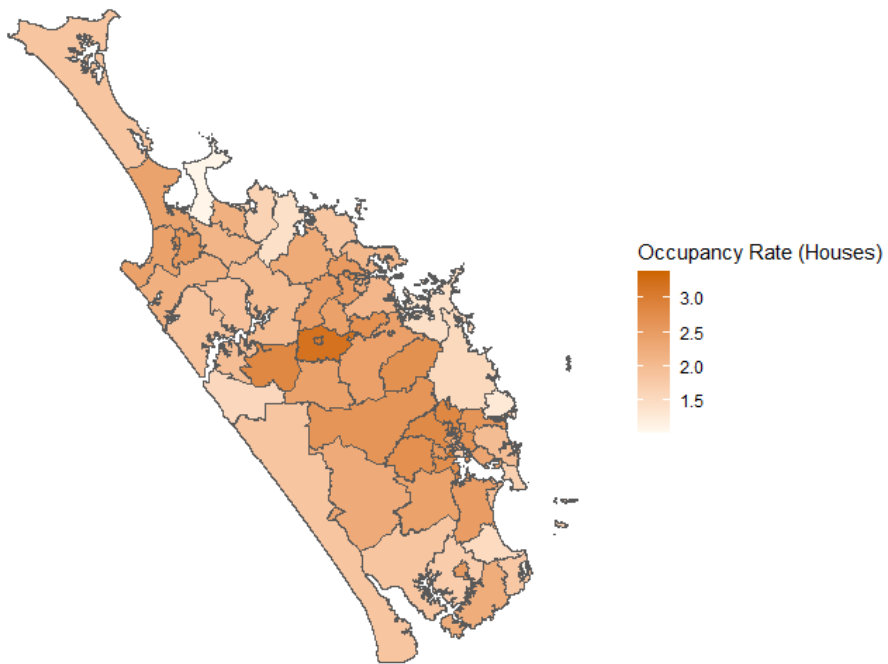
Figure 15 represents the average number of people per household by territorial authority (TA). The highest occupancy rate in 2018 is for the Far North District (2.83 people per household), followed by the Whangārei District (2.76) and Kaipara District (2.59). The relationship between occupancy rate does not change over time although there was more variation between the TA's in 2018 compared to other years.

Figure 15: People per occupied private dwelling

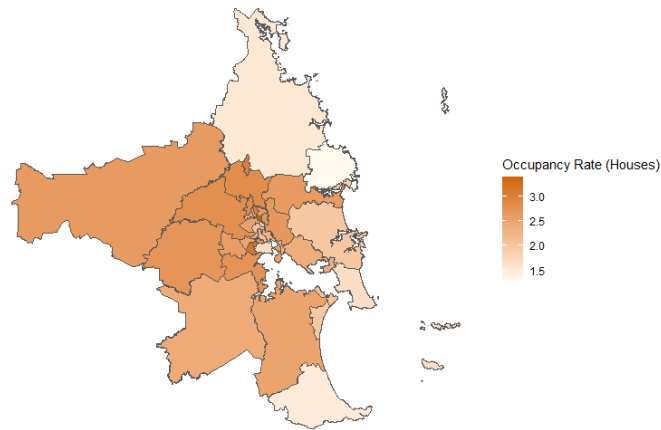


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019a.

Figure 16: Average number of people per household in 2018





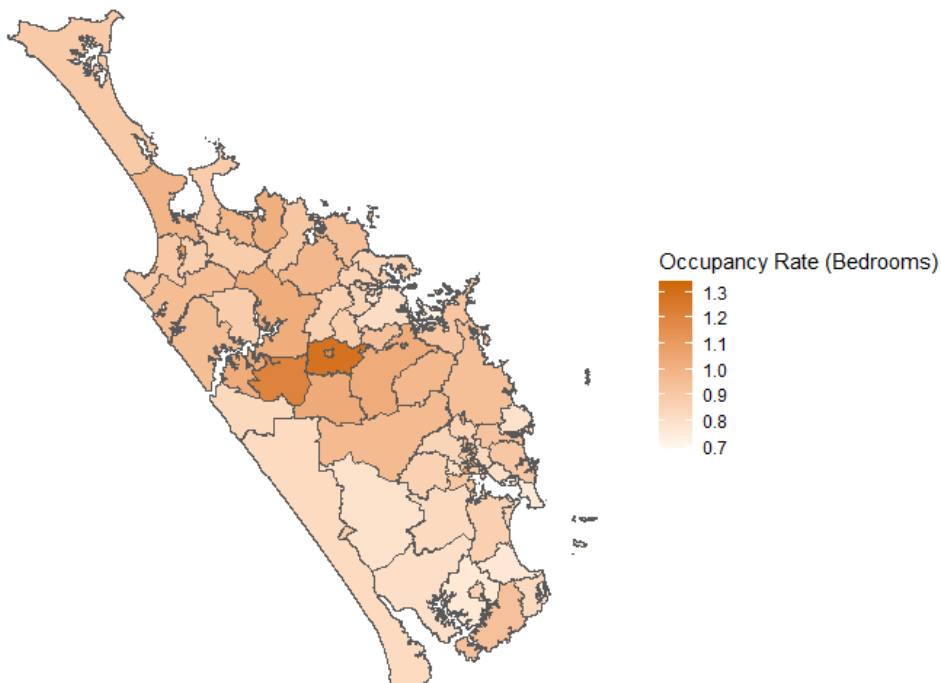


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019<sup>7</sup>.

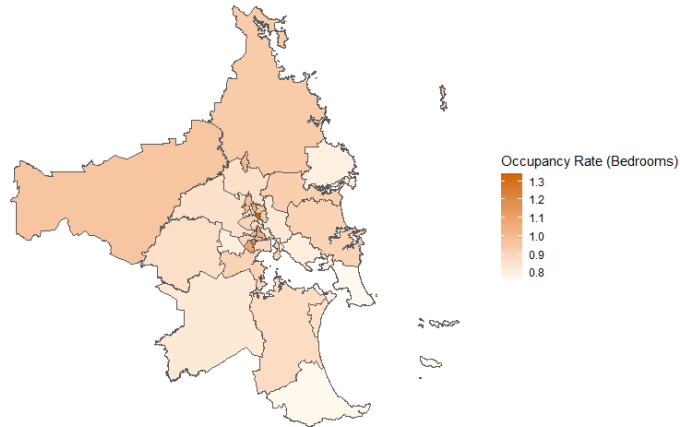
Figure 16 above suggests that the occupancy rate was highest for the surrounding areas of Kaikohe (3.8, people per household), Moerewa (3.8), Ōtangarei (3.6), Kawakawa (3.4) and Waima (3.4, including surrounding areas).

Figure 17 below is similar to Figure 16 except the occupancy rate is based on the number of bedrooms in a dwelling. The highest value for the number of people per bedroom is in Ōtangarei (1.33), followed by the surrounding areas of Kaikohe (1.29), Moerewa (1.22), Waima and surrounding areas (1.21), and Kaikohe (1.18).

**Figure 17: Average number of people per bedroom in 2018**



<sup>7</sup> NB: the smaller maps are of the Whangarei district.

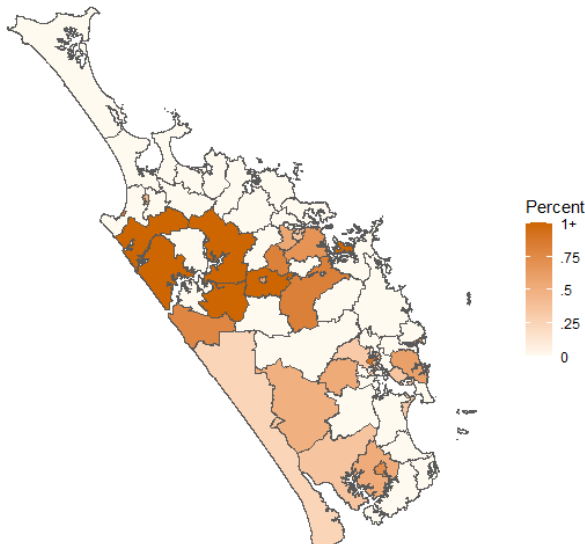


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

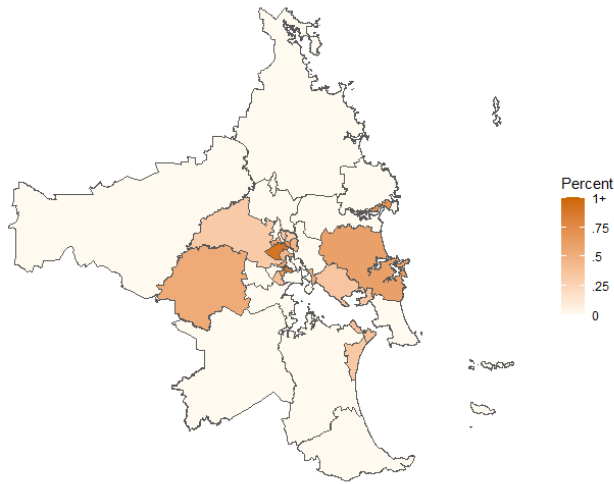
### 3.4 Household Amenities:

Figure 18 below indicates the percentage of houses where there were no available household amenities as listed in the Census 2018. In the Census form the participant was asked specifically not to include an amenity that is disconnected or broken<sup>8</sup>. The areas Oruru-Parapara had the highest proportion of households without any of the listed amenities (8.3%) followed by Waima and surrounding areas (6.3%), Ohaeawai (4.8%), Puketona and Waitangi (4.2%), and Maungaturoto (3.6%), which are all rural areas or small towns primarily in the Far North District. A total of 78.4% of all Statistical Area 2 (SA2) areas in Northland had at least one amenity in each house.

**Figure 18: Households with no cooking amenities, clean tap water, kitchen sink, refrigerator, bath or shower, toilet, or electrical amenities**



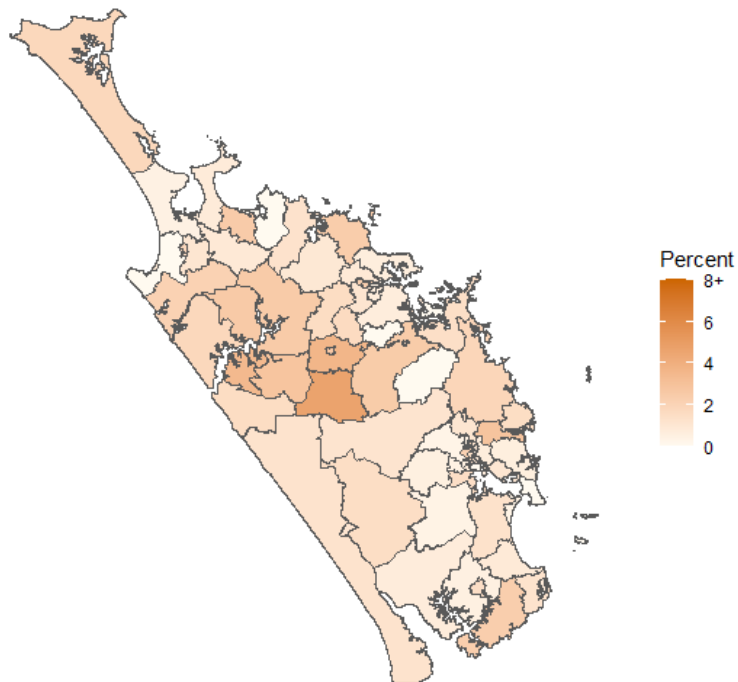
<sup>8</sup> It is unclear whether this includes 'long-drop' or outside toilets.

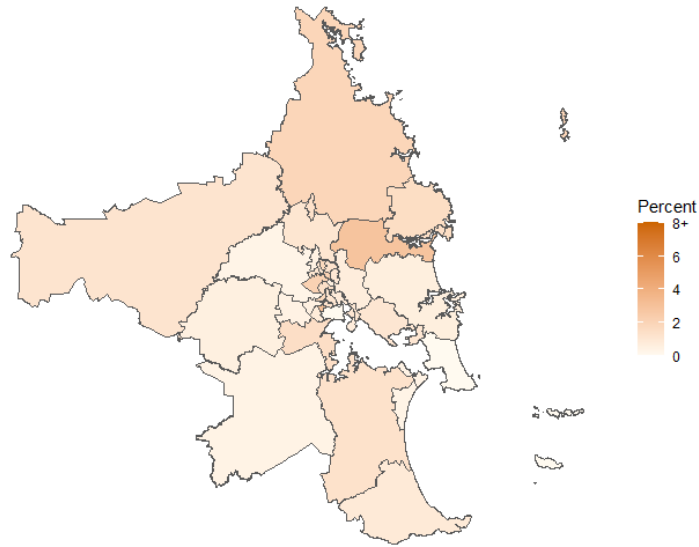


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

The percentages in the maps in Figures 19 to 25 have all been standardised to be between 0 and 8 percent to allow for comparisons between the different household amenities. The most prevalent amenity that was not available was access to safe for drinking tap water (3.9% of households); followed by lack of refrigerator (2.9%), electricity supply (1.8%), bath or shower (1.3%), toilet (1.3%), cooking facilities (1.1%), and a kitchen sink (1.1%). Areas within and around Mataraua had the highest percentage of households with no cooking facilities (4.7%) followed by areas surrounding Kaikohe (3.6%), Hokianga South (3.4%), Tarewa (3.0%), and Kiripaka (2.9%).

**Figure 19: Households with no cooking amenities**

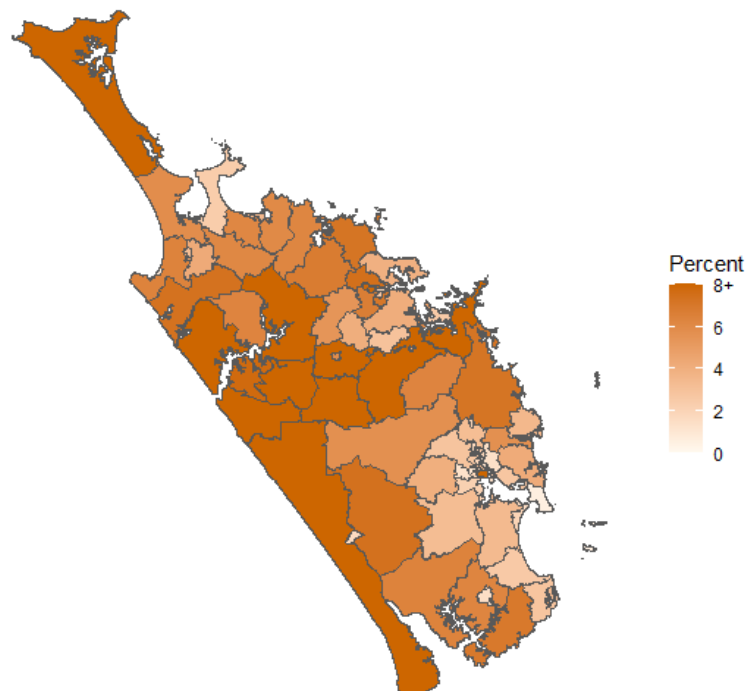


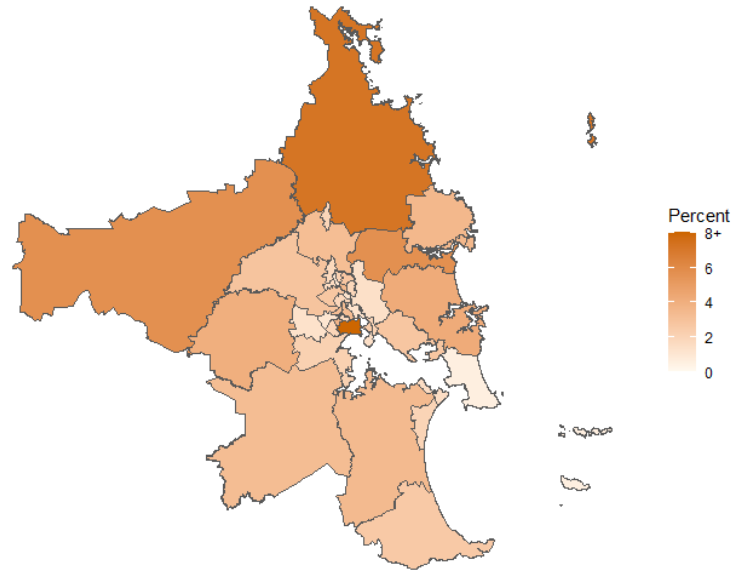


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

In terms of the households which had the highest percentage without access to tap water that is safe to drink (see Figure 20) was Port-Limeburners (14.3%; although this is subject to significant rounding error), areas within and around Mataraua (14.0%), North Cape (10.1%), areas in Omahuta Forest - Horeke (10.0%), and the area surrounding Kaikohe (9.9%).

**Figure 20: Households without safe tap water to drink**

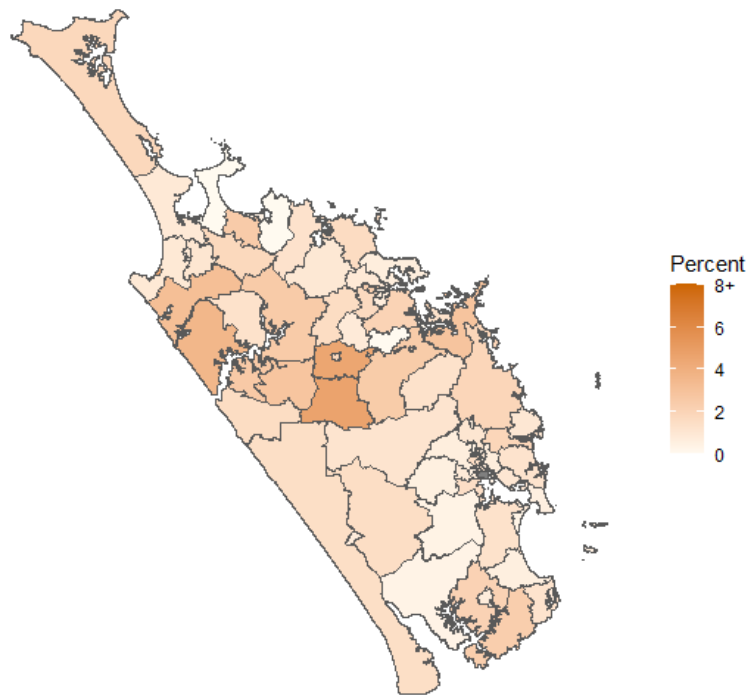


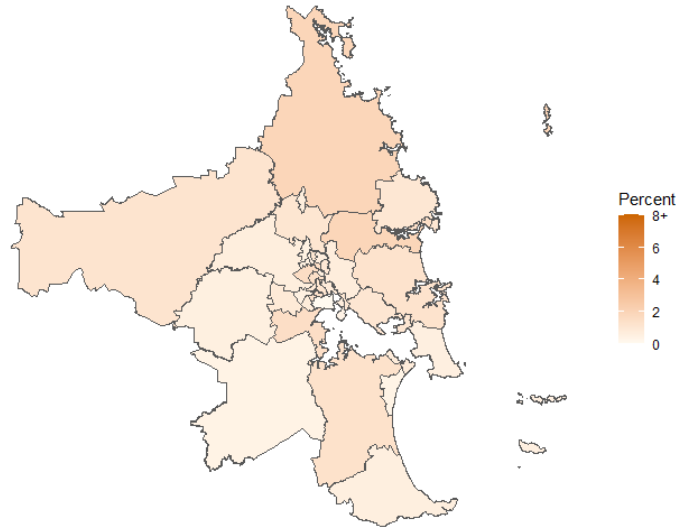


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Areas in which there was the largest proportion of households without a kitchen sink (see Figure 21) includes areas within and around Mataraua (4.7%), the surrounding areas of Kaikohe (4.5%), Ahipara (4.4%), Hokianga North (3.6%), and Herekino-Takahue (3.2%).

**Figure 21: Households with no kitchen sink**

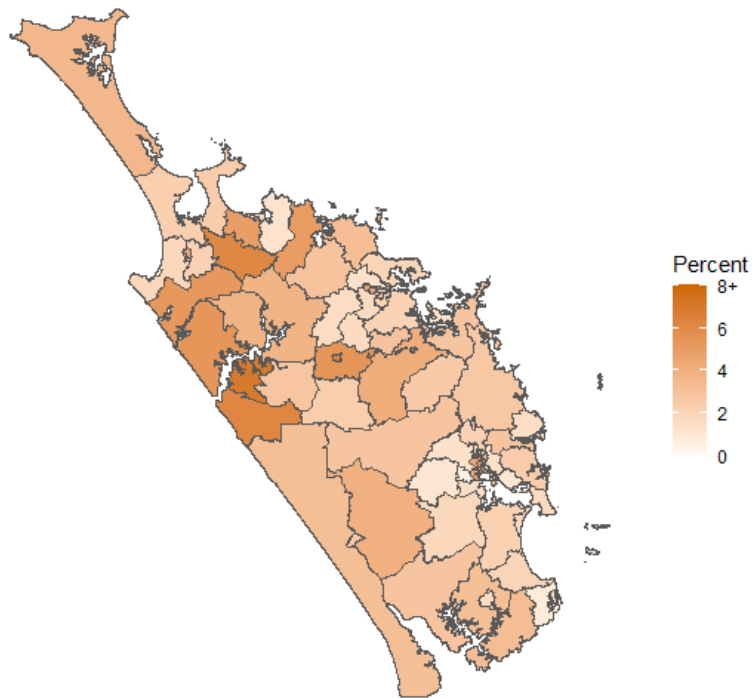


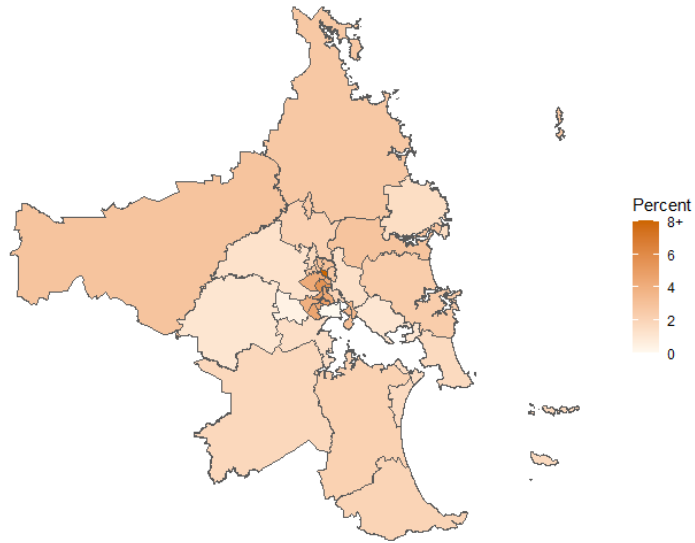


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Figure 22 shows the area with the highest percentage of households without a working refrigerator was Ōtagarei (8.5%), followed by Hokianga South (6.9%), Kaikōhe (6.4%), areas in Waipoua Forest (6.2%), and Peria (6.1%).

**Figure 22: Households with no refrigerator**

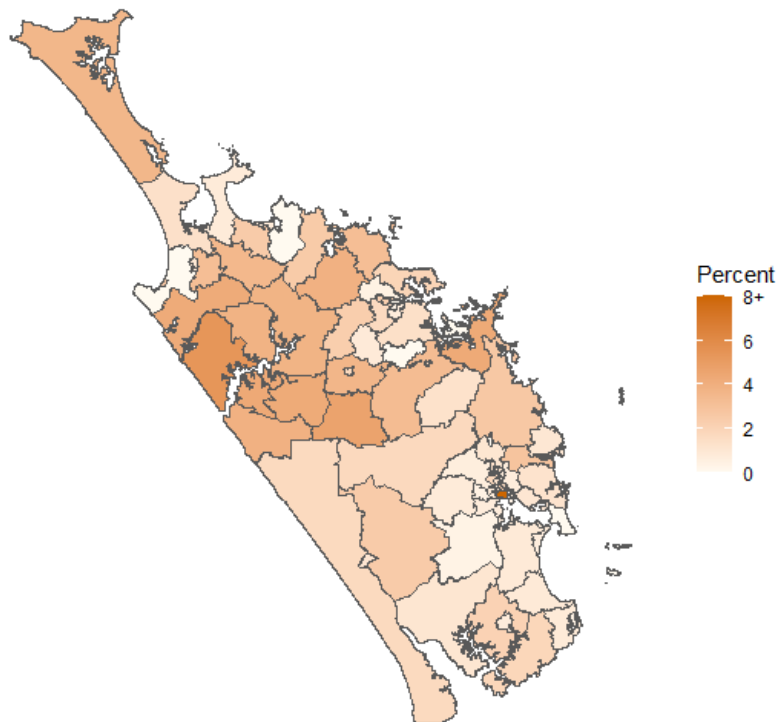


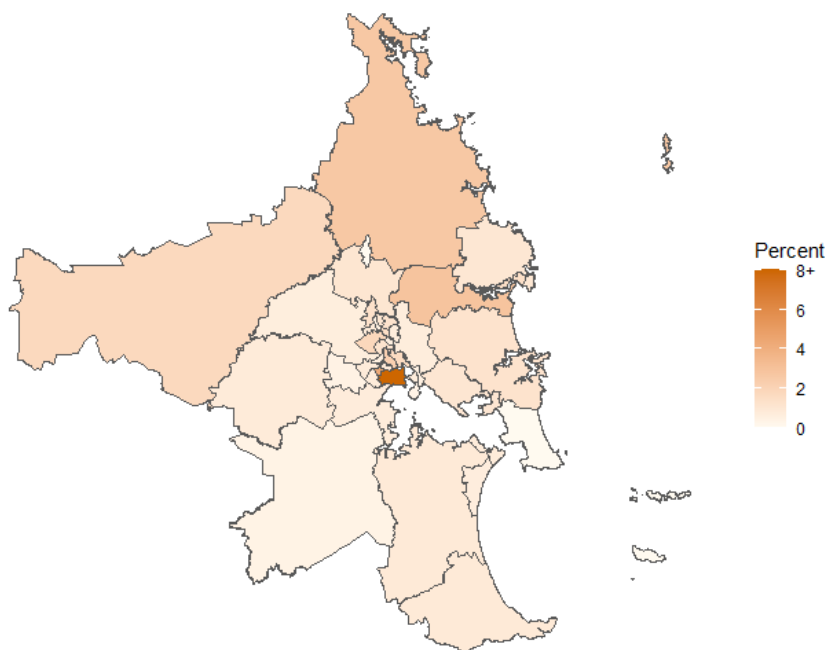


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Figure 23 shows SA2 areas from the Census 2018 that had the largest percentages without access to a bath or shower are: Port-Limeburners (14.3%; although this is subject to significant rounding error), Hokianga North (5.4%), areas within and around Mataraua (4.7%), Hokianga South (4.3%), and areas in Russell Forest-Rawhiti (4.3%).

**Figure 23: Households with no bath or shower**

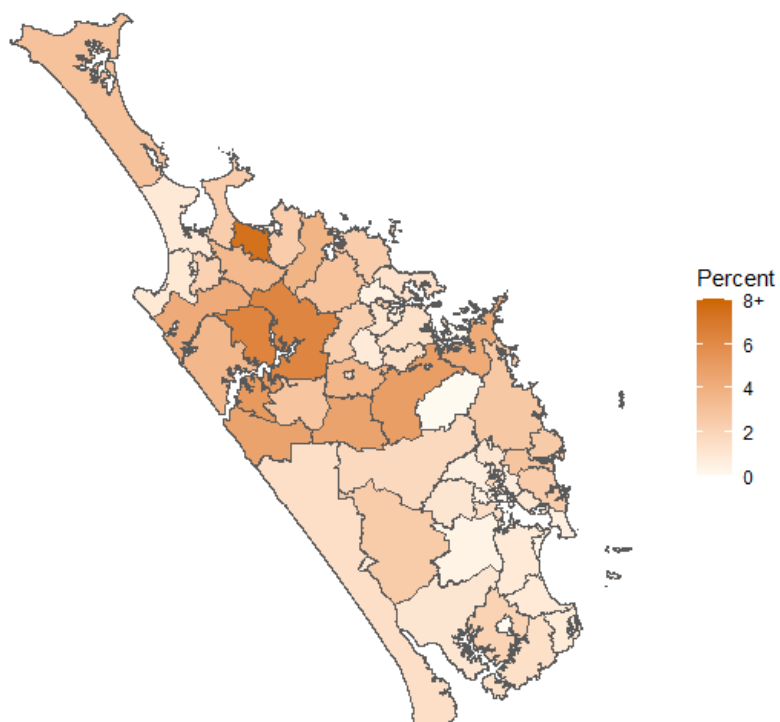




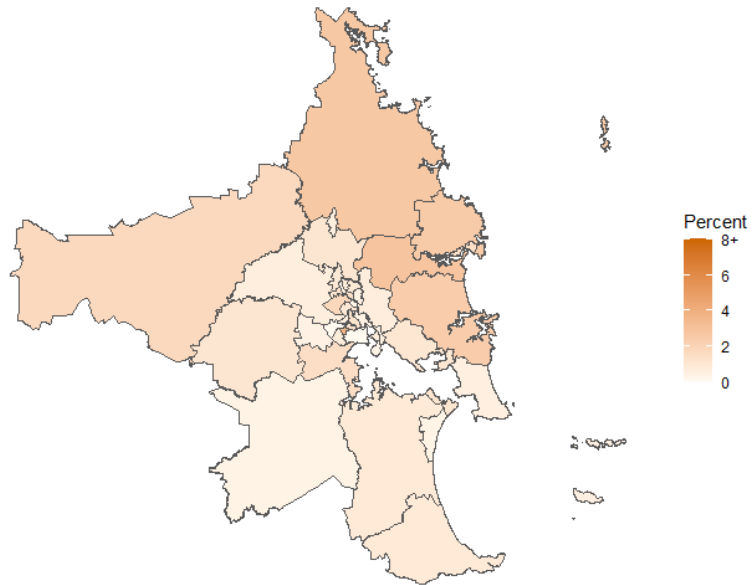
Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Areas in which had the highest proportion of houses there was no toilet amenities (see Figure 24) were: Oruru-Parapara (7.4%), Kohukohu-Broadwood (6.3%), areas in Omahuta Forest–Horeke (6.3%), Hokianga South (5.2%), and Matawaia-Taumarere (4.9%).

**Figure 24: Households with no toilet amenities**



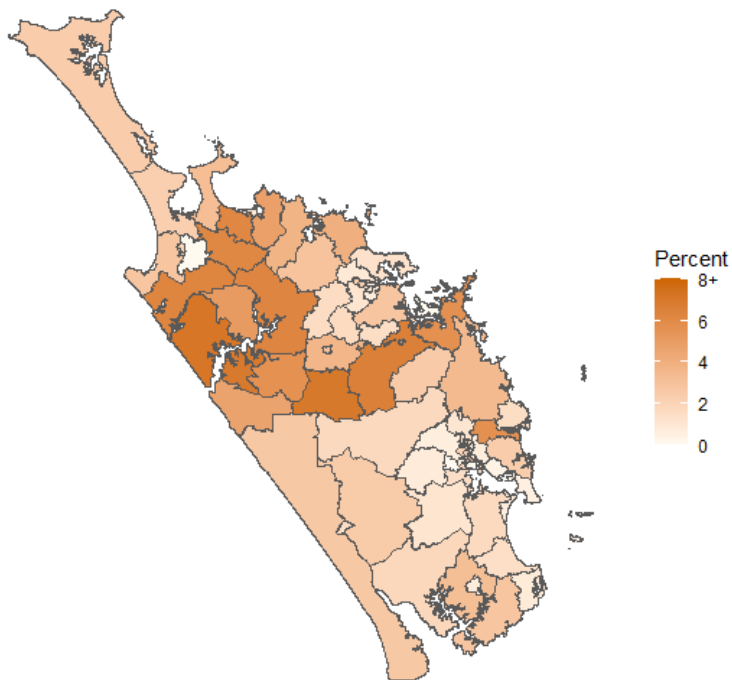


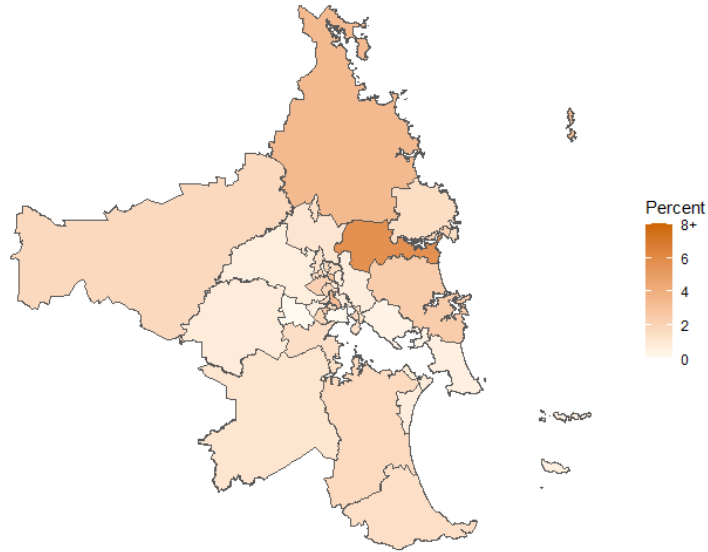


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Households which had the highest proportion of broken, disconnected or no electricity supply (see Figure 25) in Northland from the Census 2018 were: Hokianga North (7.1%), areas within and around Mataraua (7.0%), Hokianga South (6.9%), Matawaia–Taumarere (6.6%), and Herekino–Takahue (6.3%).

**Figure 25: Households with no electricity supply**

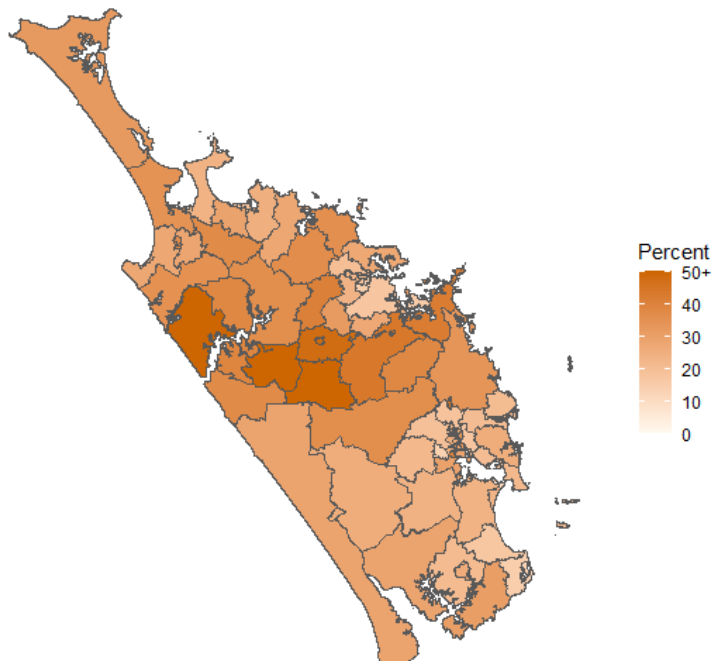


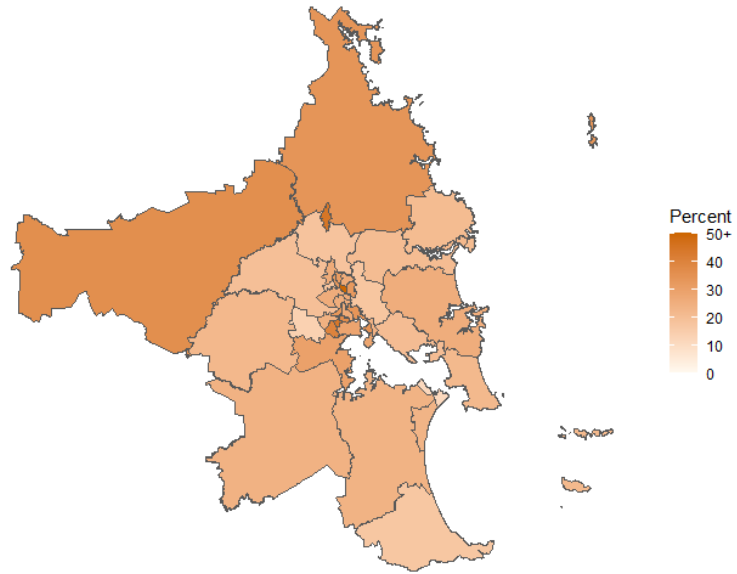


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

Figures 26 and 27 shows the results of whether a household is sometimes or always damp, or mouldy (over A4 sheet of paper), for SA2 areas from the Census 2018. There are a large proportion of households that are affected by dampness (27.7%) and/or mould (22.5%) in Northland. For dampness (58.5%) of households reported dampness in Moerewa, followed by Hokianga North (53.7%), Ōtangarei (52.2%), areas within and around Waima (50.7%), and areas within and around Mataraua (50%).

**Figure 26: Households which are always or sometimes damp**

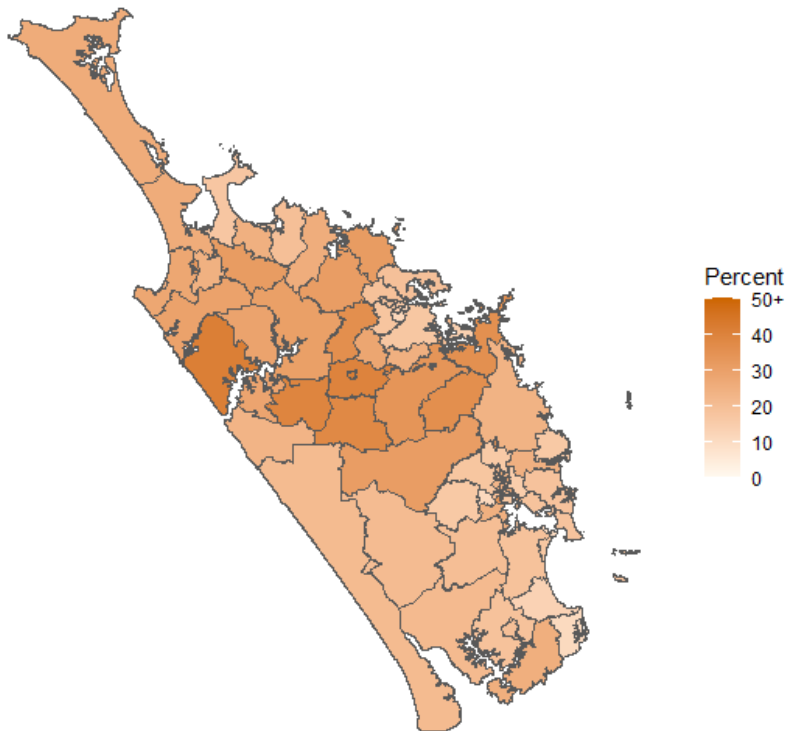


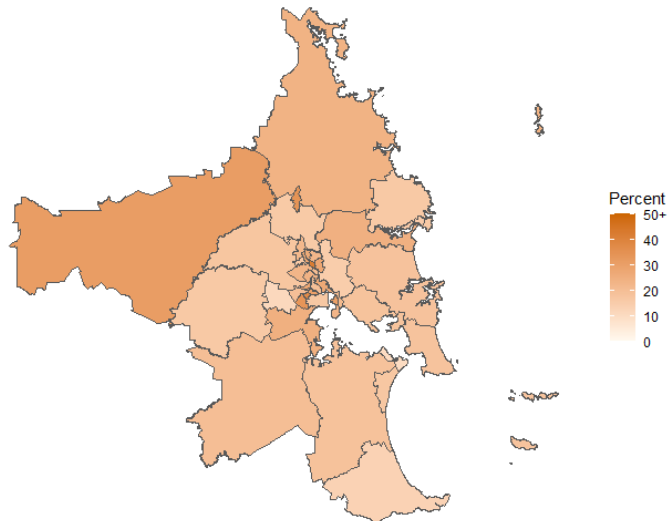


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

The highest proportion of households in areas reporting significant mould (Figure 27) include: Moerewa (54.3%), Hokianga North (40.7%), Kaikohe (40.5%), Ōtangarei (40.4%), and Kawakawa (39.2%).

**Figure 27: Households which are sometimes or always mouldy**



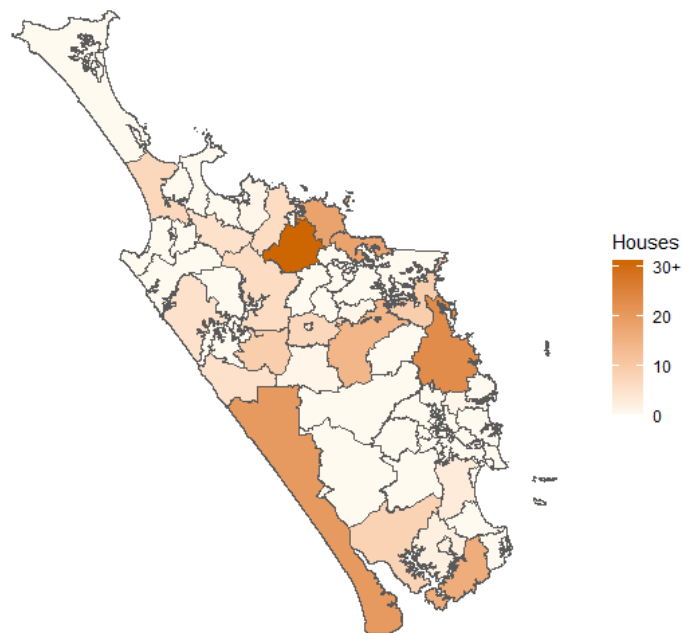


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2019.

### 3.5 Housing Solutions:

Te Puni Kōkiri (2015a, 2016) provides funding for housing repairs to Māori homes through its *Māori Housing Network Fund* (MHNF), begun in 2015. This fund enables Māori whānau and organisations to build affordable homes or make necessary repairs to existing homes. Te Puni Kōkiri manages the fund and essentially provides advice and support to whānau to help them navigate through the processes. While connected to other government initiatives around housing, the MHNF is focused solely on improving Māori housing (TPK, 2015b).

**Figure 28: Maori Housing Network Fund - Completed housing repairs**



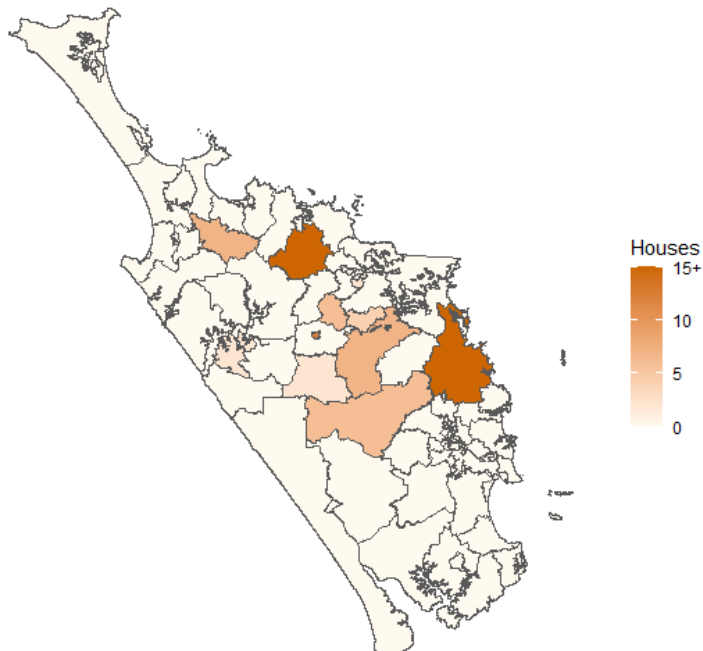


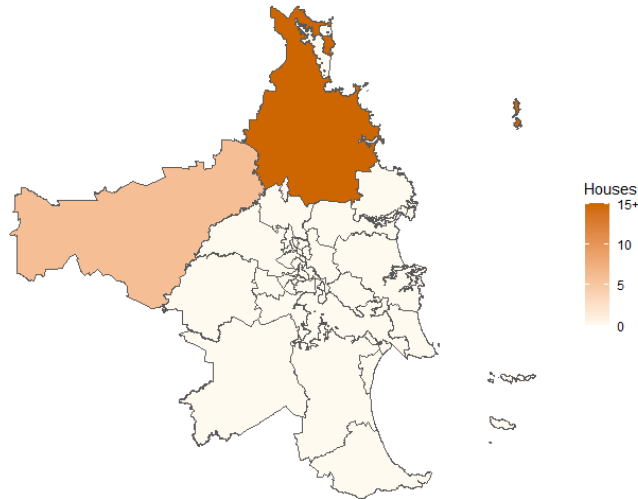
Source: Te Puni Kōkiri, 2021.

Figure 28 above shows that completed housing repairs funded by the MHNH were spread throughout Northland; however most of the housing repairs were completed in rural areas. A substantial number of repairs occurred in Kaeo (31), Moerewa (31), Whangaruru (23), the Kaipara Coastal areas (20), Rangitāne-Purerua (18), and Whakarara (18).

Figure 29 below represents all people who have applied for housing repairs through Te Puni Kōkiri, which are approved and are currently on the waiting list. The area of Kaeo had a total of 88 homes on the waiting list followed by Whangaruru (15), Kaikohe (12), and Moerewa (9).

**Figure 29: Housing repairs on the MHNH waiting list**





Source: Te Puni Kōkiri, 2021.

However, a 2020 report by Te Runanga a Iwi o Ngāpuhi on the MHN in Utakura showed that:

a significant number of houses...did not meet the criteria for essential repairs because of building consent issues, the makeshift nature of the dwellings and/or that the houses were in such a state of disrepair that it was assessed to be more economical to demolish them. They also found that whānau living in these conditions typically received very low incomes and some of the whānau were also experiencing considerable health and other issues. Consequently many whānau within Utakura and surrounding districts are living in extremely poor substandard housing that is unsafe and cold, worsening existing health and other issues they may have, with limited means to address this. (Maynard, 2020, p. 1)

As noted by Te Matapihi (2016), “Māori are well used to inadequate and culturally insensitive housing solutions.” But even those solutions that are funnelled through Māori organisations such as TPK can fall short. The Utakura report gives the example of one kaumatua whose home didn’t meet the criteria due to its extremely poor state. However, demolishing his home leaves him literally homeless and is no solution to the issues facing him.

Te Puni Kōkiri has approved funding of more than \$100million to date for home repairs, new house developments, and building capability to respond to Māori housing aspirations. However, their website notes that for 2020/21:

demand across the rohe has far exceeded the amount of funding Te Puni Kōkiri has available. Alongside this, the impact of COVID-19 has required us to refine our priorities for immediate investments. This has meant Te Puni Kōkiri cannot fund every proposal that has been submitted, as much as we would like to. (TPK, 2021)

It seems very likely that further schemes such as the MHNF are necessary to ensure enduring solutions to homelessness in New Zealand, for Māori and other groups experiencing severe outcomes due to homelessness, and that these need to be adequately resourced. More work is required to identify current strategies and gaps that may exist in those strategies, as well as point to possible innovative future solutions that could be undertaken. It is clear that homelessness is not an issue that is going to be solved in the near future.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau

The results provide a summary of various sources of information to obtain an overview of issues specific and peripheral to homelessness. This report applied the definition provided in the introduction by Hatch (2016) to consider information to be included in the report. The content of the results includes individuals identified as homeless by *CitySafe*; MSD through emergency housing grants, transitional housing, information on dwellings and occupancy rates; housing repairs which were completed or are currently on the waiting list (TPK); household amenities and substandard housing.

*CitySafe* provided information on the number of people who are homeless in Whangārei and there are no other results that have this content throughout the report. In 2020 it was identified that 293 people were homeless in the city of Whangārei who were either permanent or temporary vehicle dwellers, permanent bridge dwellers or toilet dwellers. A rapid increase occurred after 2018 in the identification of homeless which is associated in time with the establishment of *155 Open Arms*. There has been a general increase in the years following up to 2019 and post-2019, with a current approximate increase in 2020 of three additional people identified as homeless every four months since 2019.

Given that the number of homeless (defined by *CitySafe* as “permanent vehicle dwellers, occasional vehicle dwellers, permanent bridge dwellers, and permanent toilet dwellers”) in Whangārei alone stood at 293 in 2020 (see Figure 1), and those needing transitional housing probably fit the wider definition of homelessness (see Introduction), it is likely there is insufficient transitional housing in Northland to meet the need.

In 2019 it was noted that Northland people were living in trees, car ports and old cars, as well as decrepit housing (Radio New Zealand, 2019). Some participants at the *Northland Housing Forum Hui* held in Whangārei in November 2019, expressed frustration at gaining support from existing services, with one participant stating that “Sometimes I feel like I’m just one social worker on the end of the phone with many others trying to get through a gateway that’s impossible. And when I say gateway, I’m talking Housing New Zealand, MSD. There seems to be no empathy” (cited in RNZ, 2019).

Whale (2017) states that in recognition of the severe housing crisis in Northland, local churches created the *Tai Tokerau Emergency Housing Charitable Trust* (TTEHCT) in 2006. While the Trust had been able to operate housing for up to 56 people by 2016, “the goal posts have changed” (p. 49), and applications have increased from “a manageable trickle” to an “overwhelming flood”, with now an annual count of 289 applications. This represents 730 people, including 326 children, amounting to around 1% of the Whangārei population (Whale, 2017, p. 49).

In 2019, *Stuff* (Piper, 2019) reported the hope of some homeless moving out of the bush and into real homes. They give the example of Chris who has ‘lived rough’ most of the past 20 years. He felt fortunate to be able to access the services of the *155 Open Arms* day care centre for homeless people, which not only provides meals seven days a week, but also offers “a sense of community for the area’s rough sleepers” (Piper, 2019).

In 2016, a project on homelessness was commissioned by the Tauranga City Council (TCC) and the Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) on behalf of the Tauranga Homelessness Steering Group. The project was undertaken by social work student Rachel Hatch, who was on placement with TCC and BOPDHB at the time. The objectives of the project were to assess the:

- size and extent of the homelessness problem in Tauranga,
- total number and demographics of rough sleepers and hidden homeless,

- living environments of the homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, and
- identify issues associated with being homeless. (Hatch, 2016)

While homelessness has been a chronic issue in New Zealand for over a century, Chamberlain and McKenzie (2003, cited in Hatch, 2016) argued that “What seems to distinguish homelessness today from that of the past, is that the crisis or transition points that can trigger pathways into chronic and long-term homelessness have increased” (p. 5). The main drivers of homelessness today appear to be poverty and accumulated debt; family breakdown, often through situations of family violence; and the normalising of homelessness in moving from childhood to adult homelessness (Hatch, 2016).

Hatch (2016) notes that homeless people in a transitional state and those with chronic or episodic problems of homelessness require different approaches. The former group require ‘support in housing’, while the latter require ‘supported housing’. That is, those in a transitional state need support to *get back* into secure housing, while those in a chronic state require on-going support across a range of social services even while in housing (Hatch, 2016). Further, without sufficient support, those in a transitional state of homelessness are at high risk of becoming chronic or experience on-going episodic homelessness.

Hatch (2016) states that “The vast majority of homeless people in Tauranga are hidden - with the visible ‘rough sleepers’ making up a small part of the wider issue” (p. 7). The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (2020) concur, noting that most people think of the homeless as just those who are ‘sleeping rough’ but they are only a fraction of the estimated 40,000+ people homeless or transitioning between homes in 2013 (1% of the population, according to the 2013 census; Amore, 2016b). Amore (2016b) considers further that:

If the homeless population were a hundred people, 70 are staying with extended family or friends in severely crowded houses, 20 are in a motel, boarding house or camping ground, and 10 are living on the street, in cars, or in other improvised dwellings. They all urgently need affordable housing.

In November to December 2020, the *Northern Advocate* released a series of articles about Northland’s ‘hidden homeless’. Ling (2020a) noted the example of Rachel who had been working in Auckland but lost her job; rather than imposing on her children and whānau, Rachel initially lived in a tent on family land. When winter came and conditions proved too difficult to stay in the tent, Rachel started ‘visiting’ various whānau members, and staying short periods so no one would suspect anything. However, Rachel eventually became ashamed of the lying to her whānau and admitted her situation. Ling (2020a) notes that Rachel is merely one of many elderly Māori living rough in Tai Tokerau.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December (Ling, 2020b), Kerikeri doctor, Simon Bristow also noted the huge problem of homelessness in the North, stating that it is not just those living on the street, but includes those living in overcrowded situations and so on – the hidden homeless. Northland had by then been identified as one of six ‘hot spots’ by the government, with the highest rates of severe housing deprivation in New Zealand. The article notes that United Nations expert, Leilani Farha, said of New Zealand’s housing situation that:

When one in every hundred people is homeless, half of whom are under 25 years; when thousands are living in vehicles or housed in motels provided by the State; when houses are in such disrepair that they cause otherwise preventable illness and disease; and when middle-income earners are finding it difficult to afford an accessible and decent home, the result is not just a housing crisis, it is a human rights crisis of significant proportions. (cited in Ling, 2020b).



## 4.2 Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs):

The previous data showed that emergency housing grants, which sits under the Ministry of Social Development, was particularly high for people aged 15-29, 30-44, and Māori, given their population sizes. Males also had a higher rate per 10,000 of being recipients of grants along with people in the Whangārei District. The number of grants increased in 2019 and 2020, particularly for ages 60 and above. Kaipara has a younger cohort of people who are recipients of emergency housing grants compared to other territorial authorities. Furthermore, males and people who identify as Māori that were recipients of emergency housing grants are of a younger cohort.

Currently Northland can house 602 people in transitional housing places for non-classified transitional housing places. The number provided is an estimate only and the true occupancy rate is unknown. Kaitaia had a relatively large number of transitional housing places compared with other towns or suburbs and generally transitional housing is located in high deprivation neighbourhoods.

Radio NZ (2021) note that nationally demand for emergency accommodation has intensified, with almost 10,000 people receiving EHGs between July and September in 2020. Between September 2017 and July 2020, people on the public housing register increased more than threefold from 5,844 to 19,438 (Dreaver, 2020). More than 70 motels have been contracted by government to house individuals and families, and as of November 30 2020, 1200 individuals were housed in motels. While this solution 'puts a roof over their heads', the emotional impact of living in a motel has not been taken into account (RNZ, 2021). Motels are designed for transient populations, not as permanent dwellings and are usually small and therefore often overcrowded, with little space for anyone to call their own. Taone O'Regan, operations manager for the Downtown Community Ministry (DCM) in Wellington, stated that such accommodation was particularly unsuitable for those with addictions and mental health issues – "It's like putting everybody into an acute mental health ward without any nurses, doctors or treatment available". While a housing need may be temporarily addressed, other needs and crises are created: "It's really at a high crisis point now, these emotional, health and social impacts that we're seeing because of what's going on. People are just existing. They're not thriving or living well." (Lynda Ryan; cited in RNZ, 2021). While current and past governments try to shift the blame for the longevity and on-going nature of the housing crisis, as noted by Monte Cecilia Housing Trust chief executive, Bernie Smith, "those that are homeless don't care what government it is, they need a home" (cited in Dreaver, 2020).

In the Northland situation, however, one of the most significant factors with regard to emergency housing and emergency housing grants is that across all age groups, Māori make up a significantly higher proportion of those receiving EHGs (see Tables 4 & 5; pp. 21-22). In the 15-29 year age group, Māori were 87.1% of recipients, 83.3% of the 30-44 age group, and 79% of the 45-59 age group. While this goes down to 52.5% for those in the 60+ age group, this is still more than half the recipients in that age range. Northland currently has a population percentage of 33.9% for Māori, more than twice that of the national population percentage of 15.7% (MOH, 2019). A closer look at this glaring set of inequities will be discussed further below.

## 4.3 Housing, Households, & Household Amenities

Occupancy rates looks at the average number of people per house or bedroom by looking at the total population size and the number of houses or rooms in occupied private dwellings in a geographical area. The average number of people per bedroom in an occupied private dwelling is the better measure of overcrowding although it is not a direct measure of overcrowding. In Northland, the areas most affected by a high occupancy rate for this measure are Kaikohe, Moerewa, Kawakawa and Waima - areas known for high Māori populations. Ōtangarei, however, has the highest occupancy rate per bedroom, followed by the areas mentioned previously.

Too many New Zealanders live in homes that are substandard and with conditions such as damp and mould, which in turn often cause health issues for those living in such accommodation. In July 2019, the government introduced 'healthy standards' for rental properties, which introduced specific and minimum standards in relation to heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture, and draught stopping. The law was enacted because of recognition that too many of the nearly 600,000 rental accommodations in New Zealand are of poorer quality than those that are owner-occupied, with damp, cold and mouldy homes creating and/or exacerbating medical conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular disease (MBIE, 2019; NZ Parliamentary Counsel Office (NZPCO), 2019). The healthy standards therefore advantage tenants, New Zealand medical and health services, as well as accommodation owners through lifting the standards of their investment.

StatsNZ provided a definition of homelessness that included "Living in uninhabitable housing" (cited in Hatch, 2016, p. 7). The tables and graphs in section three (pp. 6-37) paint a picture of housing in Northland that is troubling. At the highest, 8.3% of homes in the Oruru-Parapara area had none of the amenities listed. Port-Limeburners had the highest percentage of households without safe drinking water; Mataraua, Northcape, Omahuta Forest-Horeke, and around Kaikohe had 14, 10.1, 10, and 9.9 percent respectively, of households without safe drinking water. More than 4 percent of households in Mataraua, Kaikohe and Ahipara had no kitchen sink. Ōtangarei had the highest percentage of households without a refrigerator (8.5%). Port-Limeburners had 14.3 percent of households without a bath or shower, with Hokianga North and South, Mataraua, and some of the Russell Forest-Rawhiti area with percentages between 4 and 5 percent. For households in Oruru-Parapara, 7.4 percent were without toilet amenities, while Kohukohu-Broadwood, parts of Omahuta Forest-Horeke, Hokianga South, and Matawaia-Taumarere respectively had 6.3, 6.3, 5.2, and 4.9 percent of households without toilet amenities. Those households with the highest levels of broken, disconnected or no electricity were Hokianga North (7.1%), Mataraua (7.0%), Hokianga South (6.9%), Matawaia-Taumarere (6.6%), and Herekino-Takahue (6.3%).

Damp and mould are significant issues in Northland homes, with 27 percent affected by damp across Northland, and 22.5 percent of homes are affected by mould. Dampness was more than twice as prevalent for households in Moerewa (58.5%), Hokianga North (53.7%), Ōtangarei (52.2%), Waima (50.7%), and Mataraua (50%) (Figure 26). Moerewa had the highest prevalence of houses with significant mould at 54.3 percent, with Hokianga North at 40.7 percent, Kaikohe at 40.5 percent, Ōtangarei at 40.4 percent, and Kawakawa at 39.2 percent (Figure 27). The correlation between cold, damp and mouldy homes is well researched and documented today (see, for example, Howden-Chapman et.al., 2012; Ingham et.al., 2019; Palacios et.al., 2020); other scholars have drawn the connection between poor housing conditions and poor mental health (see, for example, Pevalin et.al., 2017; Suglia et.al., 2011). This has been recognised by past and current governments and various strategies have been employed to ameliorate the housing crisis in New Zealand, not least for the impact poor housing has on physical and mental health.

Palacios, et.al., (2020) note that "Understanding the causes of health deprivation, and providing solutions toward prevention, present an increasingly critical challenge for academia, private market participants, and policymakers." (p. 1). In the current context, homelessness is about more than people not having homes – also of relevance are the kind of homes that people have, and the kind of communities they live in. While Daalder's (2019) article was sited under the title of 'Māori Issues', these are society-wide issues that nevertheless reflect social inequities through Māori being most likely to be homeless and/or live in sub-standard housing conditions.

## 4.4 Housing Inequities

### 4.4.1 *The Widening Gap:*

The Hon. Phil Twyford, then Housing Minister, stated that:

We must acknowledge the harsh effects the housing crisis has had on Māori. They have borne the brunt of rapidly rising house prices and skyrocketing rents. A crucial part of Government policy must help more Māori move into their own homes, and there are great opportunities to partner with Māori organisations to do this. (cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Eaquad, 2018, p. 2)

Ōtāngarei has been noted as an area of Te Tai Tokerau with significant negative social and economic indices, including an unemployment rate of 29.1 percent (2013 census), more than four times the national rate of unemployment. Forty eight percent live in state housing, with between 60 and 70 percent of these unemployed, and 48 percent are single parent households. Those who do work are mainly labourers, with 20 percent as social workers – reflecting the needs within the community. Only 5.5 percent earn more than \$50,000 per annum, with less than four percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, in comparison with 13.9 percent in Whangārei and 20 percent nationwide. Of the local population, 70 percent are of Māori descent, compared with 26.2 in Whangārei, and a national total of 14.9 percent in 2013 (Daalder, 2019). Ōtāngarei has a population of 1,639 people, with 54.17 percent living in rental accommodation, in comparison with 29.82 percent in rental accommodation across Northland (Real Estate Investar, a, 2021).

The situation in Ōtāngarei is reflected in other Northland communities to various degrees, particularly communities with high numbers of Māori in their population. However, the current situation has seen opportunity for some. According to Ali (2020), the Northland housing market is 'ripe for the picking'. In the year to end September 2020, first home buyers were taking advantage of low interest rates to invest in the property market; they made up 37.2 per cent of the total mortgage registrations in Northland - the national figure is 35 per cent. House prices in the small rural community of Karetu rose 170 percent, although other places saw a fall of -35 per cent. Nevertheless, a residential sales person in Whangārei noted that "This oversupply of buyers, along with a shortage of properties for sale, has put huge pressure on the market, resulting in a significant rise in sale prices across Whangārei in all price ranges." (cited in Ali, 2020). With a total value of \$1.6 billion, 2720 residential properties were sold in Northland in that year, with Kerikeri holding the highest value sales at \$167.6million.

In the same article (Ali, 2019), recent home buyer, Tony George, stated that "People need to be focused and have a goal when it comes to home ownership." However, for many people in Northland, most of whom are Māori, home ownership remains an elusive goal that on-going economic hardship continues to hold out of reach. Although low interest rates also mean opportunity for investors, supply cannot keep up with demand, meaning that rental costs have increased greatly as well (Berry et.al., 2017). The median house rents are \$440 per week in the Far North district, \$480 per week in Whangārei district, and \$470 per week in Kaipara (Real Estate Investar, b, a, c, 2021). According to Edmunds (2018), Trade Me data shows Northland's advertised rent rose by 43 per cent from 2013 to 2018. While still below rental prices in urban areas such as Auckland, the relatively high rents in the Far North and other parts of Northland definitely contribute to issues of homelessness and overcrowding. Further, "The high cost of housing keeps families in a cycle of poverty" (Habitat for Humanity, 2021).

#### 4.4.2 Inequity and Housing in Te Tai Tokerau:

Te Puni Kōkiri (2015b) maintains that:

Poor housing outcomes impact negatively upon other social outcomes (e.g. health, education, employment). This can lead to intergenerational cycles of deprivation. Working to realise the housing aspirations of whānau will in turn have intergenerational benefits for whānau and society as a whole. (p. 6)

As shown in Table 4 (p. 18), Māori received 83.7 percent of Emergency Housing Grants in Northland in 2020. Figure 9 (p. 16) shows the percentage of EHG's received by Māori across the three Northland districts. This concurs with Twyford's statement above, that Māori "have borne the brunt of rapidly rising house prices and skyrocketing rents" (cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Equb, 2018, p. 2).

Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Social Development and Housing New Zealand commissioned five reports designed to assess the housing needs of Māori in Te Tai Tokerau (Jackson, 2019a, Jackson, 2019b; James & Saville-Smith, 2019; Nana et.al., 2019; Saville-Smith, Bransdon & White, 2019). Nana et.al., were commissioned to examine "which health, economic and social outcomes are associated with the different housing circumstances of Māori living in Te Tai Tokerau" (p. 1). Based on 2013 Census figures, they identified seven housing groups amongst the Māori population in Northland:

- Owner = Individuals living in owner-occupied private dwellings
- Renter = Individuals living in rented private dwellings
- No heating = Individuals living in private dwellings which use no fuel for heating
- No telecom = Individuals living in private dwellings which have no access to telecommunications
- Overcrowded = Individuals living in private dwellings which are overcrowded and in need of an extra bedroom to cater for all occupants
- Severely overcrowded = Individuals living in private dwellings which are severely overcrowded and in need of at least two extra bedrooms to cater to all occupants
- No fixed abode = Individuals living in mobile dwellings, improvised dwellings or sleeping rough.

Table 7 below illustrates the costs associated with each of these groups.

**Table 7: Summary of average per person annual tax and service costs (\$)**

	<b>Tax Paid</b>	<b>Welfare</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Corrections</b>	<b>Net Fiscal</b>
<b>Owner</b>	4,860	2,050	1,030	230	1,560
<b>Renter</b>	3,480	5,160	1,050	530	-3,260
<b>No heating</b>	3,800	6,730	1,110	720	-4,760
<b>No telecom</b>	2,720	6,480	1,190	760	-5,700
<b>Overcrowded</b>	3,800	6,790	950	690	-4,630

<b>Severely overcrowded</b>	3,220	7,410	900	970	-6,060
<b>No fixed abode</b>	2,890	4,550	1,630	1,570	-4,860

Source: Nana et.al., 2019, p. 3.

From an overall population of (qualifying) Māori in Te Tai Tokerau in 2013 of 40,500, the 'renter' group were the largest proportion with around 23,500 individuals. The 'owner' group contained 17,000 individuals. Those of no fixed abode were 850 individuals with 3,000 who had 'no heating' and 'no telecommunications' capability<sup>9</sup>.

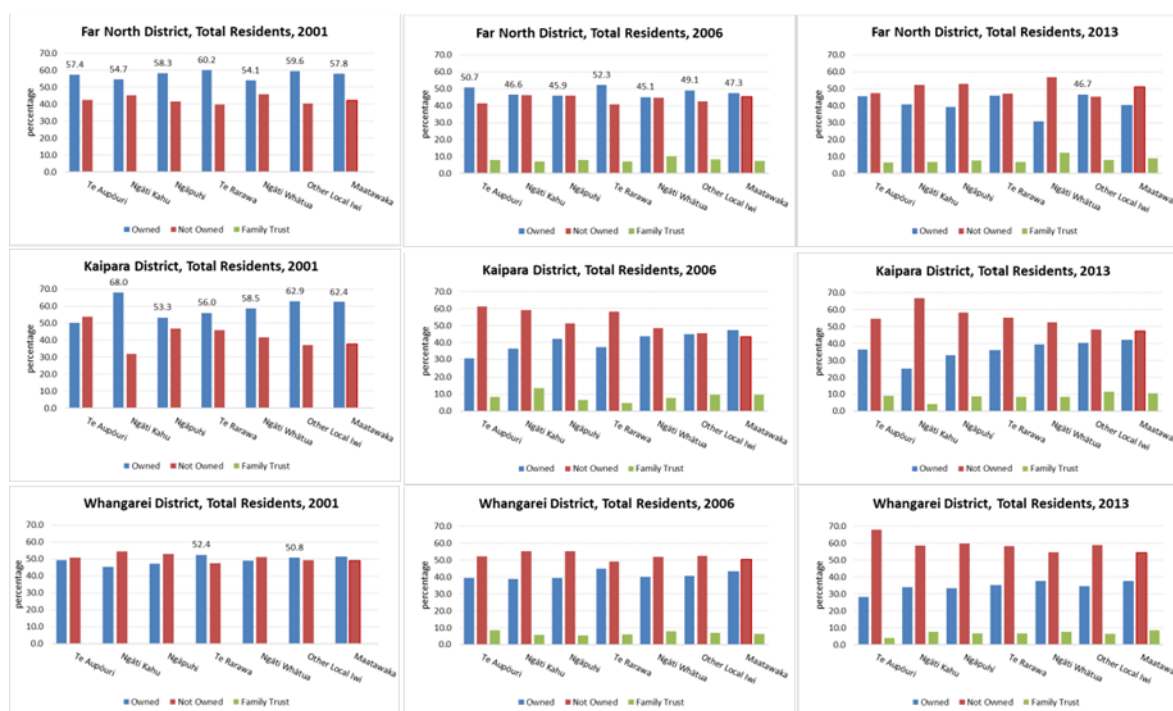
Nana et.al., (2019) make the following analyses of the seven housing groups examined:

- Only individuals living in owner-occupied houses had a net fiscal benefit.
- Individuals in severely overcrowded housing had the largest net fiscal cost of \$6,060, with those having no telecommunications having a net fiscal cost of \$5,700.
- After the owner-occupied group, individuals with no heating and in an overcrowded living situation paid the most tax as they had the highest incomes.
- Welfare payments were highest for those living in severely overcrowded situations, and with no heating, with \$7,410 and \$6,730 respectively, and had very high rates of unemployment.
- Those with no fixed abode had the highest annual average public hospital cost of \$1,630 per individual.
- Those in severely crowded dwellings had the lowest average hospitalisation costs of the seven groups, costing just \$900 per year for hospitalisations.
- Regarding criminal convictions, those with no fixed abode had annual average sentence costs of \$1,570 per individual with owners having the lowest cost of \$230 per individual.
- The security of home ownership correlates with earning higher incomes, and therefore paying higher taxes, receiving less social welfare payments and lower convictions costs.
- In comparison, those with no fixed abode pay relatively little tax given their low incomes, but incur noticeably higher health and higher sentence (convictions) costs. However, this group received relatively less in terms of social welfare payments; the authors posited this was due to difficulty in qualifying for payments, for example, because of not having a residential address. (pp. 3-4)

Figure 30 and Table 8 below show the changes in home ownership across iwi in Te Tai Tokerau in the years 2001, 2006 and 2013. House ownership was experienced by about half of the populations in 2001, with 68 percent of Ngāti Kahu living in the Kaipara district owning their own home, with the lowest home ownership in the year being 45 percent of Ngāti Kahu living in the Whangārei district. By 2006, the positions were starting to reverse, with home ownership decreasing across almost all iwi groups in all districts. Te Rarawa in the Far North District had the highest rate of home ownership with 52.3 percent, while only 30.6 percent of Te Aupouri living in the Kaipara district owned their homes. In 2006, the category of homes owned by Family Trusts was introduced, although the proportions were very low in all cases (e.g. 4.7 percent for Te Rarawa living in the Kaipara to a high of 13.6 percent for Ngāti Kahu living in the Kaipara). By 2013, home ownership rates had dropped even lower, with only 25 percent of Ngāti Kahu living in the Kaipara owning their home.

<sup>9</sup> An individual could be part of more than one group; e.g. be in a rented dwelling with no telecommunications.

Figure 30: Te Tai Tokerau iwi populations (total residents) by TA of residence in 2001, 20016, and 2013, and percentage in each housing tenure



Source: Jackson, 2019a, Figure 4.1, p. 30.

Table 8: Te Tai Tokerau iwi populations (total residents) by Territorial Authority (TA) of residence in 2001, 2006, and 2013, and percentage in each housing tenure

	2001			2006			2013		
	Owned	Not owned	Trust	Owned	Not owned	Trust	Owned	Not owned	Trust
<b>Far North District</b>									
<i>Te Aupouri</i>	57.4	42.6	...	50.7	41.3	8.0	45.8	47.6	6.6
<i>Ngāti Kahu</i>	54.7	45.3	...	46.6	46.3	7.1	40.7	52.4	6.9
<i>Ngāpuhi</i>	58.3	41.7	...	45.9	45.9	8.1	39.2	53.0	7.8
<i>Te Rarawa</i>	60.2	39.8	...	52.3	40.7	7.0	45.9	47.2	6.9
<i>Ngāti Whātua</i>	54.1	45.9	...	45.1	44.6	10.3	30.7	56.9	12.4
<i>Other local iwi</i>	59.6	40.4	...	49.1	42.5	8.4	46.7	45.3	8.0
<i>Maatawaka</i>	57.8	42.2	...	47.3	45.4	7.3	40.1	51.1	8.8
<b>Kaipara District</b>									
<i>Te Aupouri</i>	50.0	53.8	...	30.6	61.1	8.3	36.4	54.5	9.1
<i>Ngāti Kahu</i>	68.0	32.0	...	36.4	59.1	13.6	25.0	66.7	4.2
<i>Ngāpuhi</i>	53.3	46.7	...	42.2	51.3	6.5	33.1	58.3	8.6
<i>Te Rarawa</i>	56.0	46.0	...	37.2	58.1	4.7	36.2	55.3	8.5
<i>Ngāti Whātua</i>	58.5	41.5	...	43.8	48.4	7.8	39.3	52.4	8.3
<i>Other local iwi</i>	62.9	37.1	...	44.8	45.4	9.8	40.4	48.2	11.4
<i>Maatawaka</i>	62.4	37.6	...	46.9	43.3	9.8	42.0	47.4	10.6
<b>Whangārei District</b>									

<b>Te Aupouri</b>	49.2	50.8	...	39.4	52.3	8.4	28.2	67.9	3.8
<b>Ngāti Kahu</b>	45.5	54.5	...	38.8	55.3	5.9	33.9	58.6	7.5
<b>Ngāpuhi</b>	47.1	52.9	...	39.4	55.1	5.5	33.3	59.9	6.8
<b>Te Rarawa</b>	52.4	47.6	...	44.9	49.1	6.0	35.1	58.1	6.7
<b>Ngāti Whātua</b>	49.0	51.0	...	40.0	52.0	7.9	37.7	54.7	7.6
<b>Other local iwi</b>	50.8	49.2	...	40.6	52.4	7.0	34.6	59.0	6.4
<b>Maatawaka</b>	51.0	49.0	...	43.1	50.5	6.4	37.2	54.2	8.6

Source: Jackson, 2019a, Table 4.1, p. 30.

NB: These percentages are based on the summed total of those who stated housing tenure, with the exception of Te Aupouri, Ngāti Kahu, and Te Rarawa living in Kaipara District, for whom raw stated totals are used

Nana et.al's (2019) report demonstrates that being a house 'owner' provides a hearty advantage in terms of life course outcomes. While there are many variables that can impact on health in terms of physical and mental health, including economic stability, owning a home and experiencing a probable higher sense of housing security is an important factor. Those with 'no fixed abode' incurred significantly higher public hospital costs, 60 percent more than the average across all groups. It is likely they visit the doctor less, and only do so in acute situations with co-morbidities, contributing to the increased costs.

Individuals with 'no access to telecommunications' were seen to access primary healthcare less than those with access. Only 54 percent of this group went to a GP at least once per year, compared with 60 percent for the rest of the Māori population in Northland. Hospital costs therefore averaged \$1,185 per individual in comparison with costs of \$1,030 for those with access to at least one form of telecommunications. The lack of access to telecommunications or the factors which lead to the lack of access to telecommunications may therefore result in worse health outcomes (Nana et.al., 2019).

In February 2019, Te Puni Kōkiri set up the *Marae Digital Connectivity* initiative with a \$20million fund that expanded the \$80million Rural Broadband Initiative phase 2 and the Mobile Blackspot Fund (TPK, 2020a). Several marae in Te Tai Tokerau have taken up the opportunity, including Te Kapotai at Waikare. Marae Digital Connectivity offers new ways to access health, and social services; connect to whānau and hapū across the country and the world; create new opportunities for economic participation; and provide new forms of educational opportunity in a wide range of sectors. The MDC package includes 5 years free internet, security cameras, an AV trolley bundle, as well as internet access.

## 4.5 Housing Solutions

George, et.al., (2017) offer 'tūrangawaewae' as a concept through which to understand New Zealand's housing crisis. The Māori Anglican Diocese considered tūrangawaewae "as the foundation for whānau life" (cited in George, et.al., p. 46). Given the current threats of child poverty, homelessness and so on, tūrangawaewae "creates accountability for ensuring resilience and living sustainably in balance with the world and others" (p. 46). The authors note further the intergenerational nature of poverty and disconnection through the on-going effects of colonisation.

To date, the government, NGOs and other community organisations have offered some solutions to ameliorating the housing crisis that has contributed to rising rates of homelessness. A *1 News* (2020, 12 May) article noted that alternative ways of housing the homeless was required during Covid-19 lockdown, which had exacerbated homelessness for many in Aotearoa. Sixty-four caravans were sent to Northland in an iwi-initiative funded by the government; the caravans were usually situated on iwi land, with families allowed to stay up to three months, with the hope that additional and better housing would be found for them after that.

Another solution was offered initially by the *Solomon Group*, a Māori Private Training Establishment (PTE) situated in Kaikohe as well as Auckland. This became a joint effort between *Whakamanamai Whānau Trust*, *The Hits Northland*, and *Solomon Group*, with the *Northern Advocate* supporting their efforts through media articles (Ling, 2020c). What began as a humble goal of outfitting 10 portable cabins for the homeless became an outstanding success with overwhelming support from people locally as well as far away as Seattle. The huge influx of furniture has enabled the organisations to outfit homes for 50-100 families. Up to 20 portacomms have been delivered to recipients around Kaikohe and elsewhere, providing shelter – and hope – for those who occupy them. Those fortunate enough to receive the portacomms pay what they can afford weekly, with some having the goal of renting to buy the \$25,000 buildings (Ling, 2020c).

Berry, et.al., (2017) stated that “There is a paucity of research into the experiences of Māori renters.” (p. 1). Their research into Māori experiences of renting in the Wellington region identified key issues such as affordability and poor quality of housing (including damp and mouldy accommodation), housing security (i.e. their ability to remain in a home), lack of autonomy in decision making, lack of information regarding their rights as tenants, and fear that taking action would result in termination of their tenancy. Another point made was the unsuitability of housing for the collective needs of Māori, including a desire to live in close proximity to whānau. They state further that while new legislation will support the upgrade of existing accommodation, new homes could be built in a way that is “culturally competent and accessible to Māori needs” (p. 63). The notion of ‘papakāinga’ offers a solution with “the potential to “create an inter-generational asset” (p. 63).

In 2016, Barker and Associates, Far North District Council, Kaipara District Council, Northland Regional Council and Whangārei District Council co-produced the *Te Tai Tokerau Papakāinga Toolkit*, designed to support whānau, hapū and iwi in Northland to develop their own papakāinga. They define papakāinga as literally meaning “a nurturing place to return to”, although in the current context it meant “development of a communal nature on ancestral land owned by Māori” (p. 5). Steps included identifying your vision, gathering relevant information, discussion on issues such as what kind of trust to establish, and the kind of technical advice whānau will need. The document won a commendation at The Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) inaugural awards, announced at the Planning Africa Conference in Cape Town on October 2016 (Collins, 2018).

In 2017, as a supporting document for the Māori Housing Network Fund, Te Puni Kōkiri released *A guide to papakāinga housing*, which provided advice for establishing a papakāinga on Māori or general lands. Outlined was a three-stage, six-step process that included details on idea generation through to build implementation with the final step of on-going management of the asset, along with case studies to illustrate the process. Also noted was the timelines for each stage and step, informing whānau that this kind of activity required patience and long-term vision.

*Hokia ki ngā maunga, kia purea nei koe e ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea - Return to the mountains to be refreshed by the winds of Tāwhirimātea.* This whakatauki (proverb) advocates for Māori to (re)connect to their cultural roots to be rejuvenated by ngā taonga tuku iho (ancestral treasures). Many Māori are now returning to their ancestral lands in order to do so. Initiatives such as papakāinga offer culturally-relevant concept design for housing for Māori whānau and communities, while encouraging and enabling such people to return home. However, much of this is currently done in an ad hoc manner with little or no support from government agencies, reiterating the need for cogent and comprehensive schemes such as Te Puni Kōkiri’s *Māori Housing Network Fund*. Fund sources such as *Oranga Marae* (see TPK, 2020b), the Department of Internal Affairs, *Mātauranga Māori Marae Ora* (Community Matters, 2020), and the *Provincial Growth Fund* (Provincial Development Unit, 2020), while not focused directly on housing provision, enable Māori whānau, hapū and community development that is more likely to enable sustainable housing provision into the future.

Ameliorating homelessness requires more than providing homes for those without. As noted previously, homelessness is part of complex of systems that break down for individuals and families



and impel circumstances leading to homelessness. This in turn creates further burden on New Zealand's health and social services that are already over-burdened. Lasting solutions to this issue requires vision beyond individual circumstances to how we can encourage a health-in-all-policies approach to ensure all New Zealanders can have a warm and healthy home. As noted by Martin Kaipo, CEO of Te Hau Awhiowhio o Ōtāngarei Trust:

We were a community that were quite withdrawn because people felt like they couldn't express their frustration or anger....Some of [the] strategies [we employ] are as simple as you can get...but it's just about empowering people. Once that groundwork is laid, resource provision becomes many times more effective.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the reasons for homelessness are complex and varied, innovation beyond the standard provision of homes is required by this and successive governments. Homelessness exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and life challenges for individuals and families. Far North District councillor, Kelly Stratford, offered one solution as to “unlock the potential of land” (Ling, 2020b). Ground-breaking solutions that take into consideration the realities within which at least 1% of New Zealand’s population is living, is required to ensure an equitable response to homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In light of the information put forth in this report, the following recommendations are made.

### **Central repository for gathering homelessness data:**

Hatch (2016) remarked on the difficulties associated with her “impossible task”, “largely due to a chronic lack of reliable and consistent local data” (p. 3). We note in this report also, the hindrance encountered in trying to access local data on our population of homeless peoples. Hatch suggests that collecting base-line data from a wide range of service providers “may make it possible to distinguish between those people in a transitional state of homelessness and those with a chronic and episodic problem” (p. 3). A recommendation from this report, therefore, is that a single entity is tasked with creating and maintaining a central repository for data relating to homelessness in Te Tai Tokerau, into which multi-service data is recorded. Aggregated data could then be shared amongst the various agencies, potentially enabling a wider coverage of service for those in need.

### **Further research:**

Richards (2008) notes that more research is required into the drivers of homelessness, and therefore more preventative measures can be developed, with a coordinated and unified funding framework and delivery of services. As with the dearth of research from the perspective of Māori renters, so too is there little research with Māori voices at the centre in Te Tai Tokerau. Further investigation into cultural relevant housing solutions is required to ensure sustainable and inter-generational outcomes. Homelessness, and the plethora of associated issues, is a fertile ground for future research.

### **Separate report on Housing Solutions:**

While a brief section on housing solutions was included in this report, more work is required to identify current strategies, gaps that may exist in those strategies, as well as point to possible future solutions that could be undertaken. It is clear that homelessness is not an issue that is going to be solved in the near future. An in-depth analysis of strategies and gaps can identify innovative future solutions. It is therefore recommended that a separate report on housing solutions is developed as Part B of this report.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

For Māori in Northland, the sobering statistics and stories presented in this report mean that they are more likely to be one of the more than 22,000 New Zealanders on the social housing waitlist. Māori are more likely to be homeless in Northland. Māori are more likely to live in damp, mouldy homes and/or have little access to safe drinking water. Māori are more likely to suffer from the health issues associated with damp and mouldy homes such as COPD, asthma and skin diseases.

Māori are *less* likely to own their own home in Northland; less likely to achieve good health outcomes; less likely to do well in school, have a well-paying job, get into tertiary education; less likely to have a retirement nest egg to ensure their years as the kaumatua and kuia of our marae are comfortable ones.

In her speech to the Housing New Zealand Māori Housing Network in 2019, the Honourable Nanaia Mahuta noted the whakatauki, “Ka mate kāinga tahi, ka ora kāinga rua” – stating that this whakatauki highlights the resilience of Māori in traditional times and the need for a good home so that wellbeing can be maintained. She said “It speaks to the importance to whānau of a home, not just as bricks and mortar, but home as a pillar of whānau development and community wellbeing – he kāinga ora.”

Unfortunately, for too many Māori and others in Northland, he kāinga ora is an unreachable dream.

Schulze and Green (2017) offer some hope in terms of achieving equity for Māori, noting that:

Correcting the inequalities will be beneficial for not only Māori, but Aotearoa as a whole. Removing the inequalities will require significant changes to the status quo, the education system needs to be rewired for Māori success, providing Māori with the skills to adapt to the ever-changing labour market. (p. 1)

Shulze and Green (2017) chart the impact of equity achievement:

**Table 9: The potential of equity achievement for Māori and Aotearoa**

<b>Current situation:</b>	<b>BAU to 2040:</b>	<b>Equity achieved:</b>
Currently, one third of the working age Māori population have no qualifications	More Māori of working age, and therefore more with few or no qualifications	55,000 Māori will move from no qualification to having a qualification
Over half of the working Māori population have lower skilled jobs	Almost half of the current Māori labour force are at a high risk of being replaced by automation	22,500 currently in low skilled jobs will move to high skilled jobs
Current income gap for Māori is \$2.6 billion per year	The income gap will increase to \$4.3 billion per year	An additional \$2.6 billion+ per year into Māori households

Source: Adapted from Schulze & Green, 2017, p. 2.

Equity they define as “fairness”, noting that equality is about sameness – that is, Māori receiving at least the same as everyone else (Schulze & Green, 2017, p. 6). However, given that Māori too often inhabit the lower end of the so-called ‘level playing field’, equality in itself reinforces inequity. Fairness in opportunity and outcome enables the achievement of long-term wellbeing. Income is a significant factor in inequality of outcome (Shulze & Green, 2017).

While this report is concerned primarily with homelessness, it can be seen that homelessness is part of a complex of socio-economic issues faced by the most vulnerable in our society. Beaton and Greenaway (2017) state that ‘human-centred design’ recognises and utilises the expertise of end users – in this instance, those who had lived experience of homelessness. Values developed during

those experiences are carried into new experiences of being homed, which could be overwhelming for many. Beaton and Greenaway (2017) state that the Housing First programme was “about fundamentally shifting or disrupting the way multiple service systems operate to put people (who have been poorly served in the past) at the centre” (p. 36).

Definitions of the homeless as only those sleeping rough under bridges or in cars with moderate to severe mental health issues are outdated. The homeless now include those living in overcrowded and substandard housing due to societal changes in recent years that have driven house and rental costs up too high, too fast; i.e., those who are transitionally homeless, nevertheless with the risk of becoming chronically homeless (Hatch, 2016). Now at least one percent of our population cannot achieve the basic right to “a secure and healthy home...[as a] foundation which allows us all to build happy and successful lives” (Twyford, cited in Johnson, Howden-Chapman & Equb, 2018, p. 2). As noted, a very high proportion of this population is Māori, reinforcing and extending existing inequities. Addressing homelessness effectively requires a multi-level and inter-sectoral approach through social and other services that continue to value people in such circumstances. There can only be a positive impact from working towards ensuring all New Zealanders have healthy homes in which to live, and thrive, rather than just survive.

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