

RESPONDING FOR OUR REGION // 2025 RESEARCH UPDATE

The latest Taranaki Regional Research Report (January 2025) highlights trends in housing, incomes, connectivity, unpaid work, and health – providing insight into the region’s wellbeing and future needs.

This update builds on earlier research, tracking economic performance and population wellbeing to inform grant making and investment. Key trends show improvements in home ownership, housing quality, internet access, and smoking rates. However, challenges persist – household crowding has risen, unpaid work has declined, and incomes remain below the national average.

Māori face particular challenges, including higher rates of crowded housing and smoking. In 2023, they were also more likely to engage in unpaid work – whether volunteering, caring for children, or supporting someone with an illness or disability.

Home ownership in Taranaki has risen, but affordability has declined. The house price-to-income ratio climbed from 4.4 in 2018 to 5.6 in 2023, peaking at 6.7 in 2022. Meanwhile, mortgage servicing costs increased from 25% to 39% of household income, adding financial pressure on homeowners.

Household crowding is rising but remains below the national average. Often linked to affordability and lower incomes, it occurs when a home is too small for its occupants. Māori in Taranaki are more than twice as likely to live in crowded housing, reflecting a national trend.

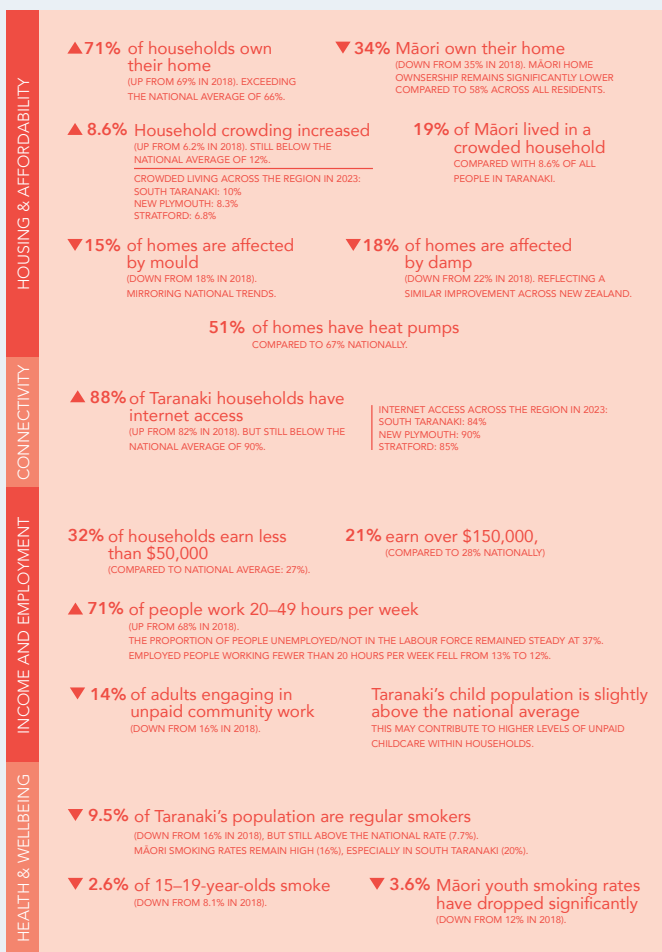
Poor housing conditions contribute to respiratory issues, allergies, and other health problems. The 2019 Healthy Homes Standards set minimum requirements for heating, insulation, and ventilation in rentals. While housing quality is improving, damp and mould remain concerns, and Taranaki still lags behind national heating and insulation levels.

Taranaki’s median household income in 2023 (\$89,903) was below the national average, with all three local authorities reporting lower earnings. Incomes remain skewed towards lower brackets, highlighting economic disparities despite stable employment.

Unpaid work and volunteering are declining, reducing community support. Fewer people are engaged in voluntary work, childcare, or caregiving, reflecting financial pressures, workforce demands, or shifting social dynamics, potentially weakening community resilience.

With services like banking, healthcare, education, and shopping increasingly digital, and more people working from home, **internet connectivity is essential for employment, learning, and social connections.**

Health outcomes are improving but remain uneven. Smoking rates have declined, particularly among youth, yet remain above the national average. Limited healthcare access and preventative services continue to impact wellbeing, with disparities persisting, particularly for Māori and lower-income households.



This research offers valuable insights into Taranaki’s economic and social landscape. Toi Foundation remains committed to data-driven decision-making, fostering a thriving, inclusive, and equitable region by supporting child and youth wellbeing, expanding opportunities, protecting the environment, and empowering Māori aspiration and Rangatiratanga.

Explore the full research update, and previous reports on our website, learn more about ‘How We Fund,’ and read ‘Our Stories’ to see how investing, facilitating, and co-creating opportunities drive positive change for Taranaki and its people.

toifoundation.org.nz

@toifoundationtaranaki

@toifoundation

