

Age Structure

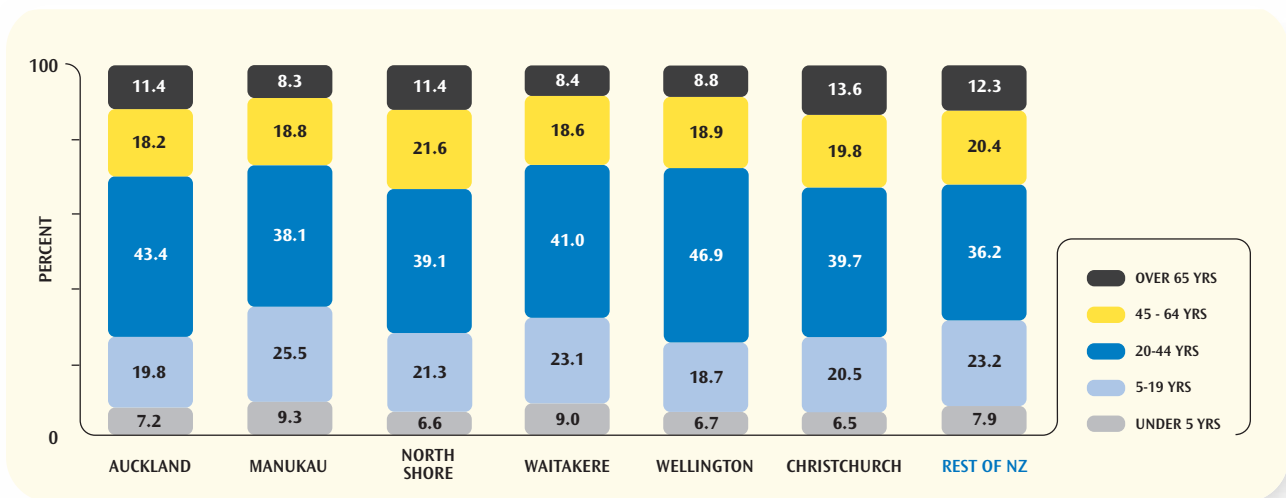
What this is about...

This indicator focuses on the age structure across New Zealand's six largest cities. The age structure of a community is one of its fundamental characteristics and impacts on the range of services, facilities and opportunities that need to be planned for and provided at a local level - that is, different things need to be provided for different age groups.

What did we find ?

- New Zealand has a higher proportion of children than in many other industrialised nations. In 1996, 23% of New Zealand's population was under the age of 15 years.
- In 1996 North Shore, Auckland and Christchurch Cities had the largest proportions of people aged 65 years and over, while Manukau and Waitakere Cities had the largest proportions of those aged under 19 years.
- There are higher proportions of people aged 20 to 44 years living in the six largest cities than in the rest of New Zealand. This is due to work, income and educational opportunities being greater in New Zealand's largest urban areas. Wellington City had the largest proportion of residents aged between 20 and 44 years (nearly half of its population at 46.9%) compared with 38.1% for Manukau City and 39.1% for North Shore City.

AGE STRUCTURE WITHIN NEW ZEALAND'S SIX LARGEST CITIES (1996)



Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

THE AGEING OF THE NEW ZEALAND POPULATION

Like other nations, New Zealand's population is ageing. At the beginning of the century New Zealand had a very youthful population with half of all citizens below the age of 23 years. Transitions in fertility (e.g. trends towards later child bearing age and smaller families) and mortality (longer lives due to factors such as improved medical treatments) provided the necessary ingredients for the demographic process called "population ageing". Nationally, the median age has increased from 29.6 years in 1986 to 33 years in 1996.¹⁰ The ratio of younger people to older people has also halved from 4:1 in 1966 to 2:1 in 1996.

10 With the exception of North Shore and Christchurch Cities, the median age in New Zealand's largest cities tends to be slightly younger than the national median.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED MEDIAN AGE WITHIN NEW ZEALAND'S SIX LARGEST CITIES

	1996 (yrs)	2001 (yrs)	2011 (yrs)	2021 (yrs)
Auckland	32.4	33.9	36.8	38.9
Manukau	29.5	31.0	34.1	35.7
North Shore	34.2	35.8	38.9	41.4
Waitakere	31.0	32.5	35.2	36.8
Wellington	31.9	33.3	36.0	37.7
Christchurch	33.6	35.2	38.9	41.6

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

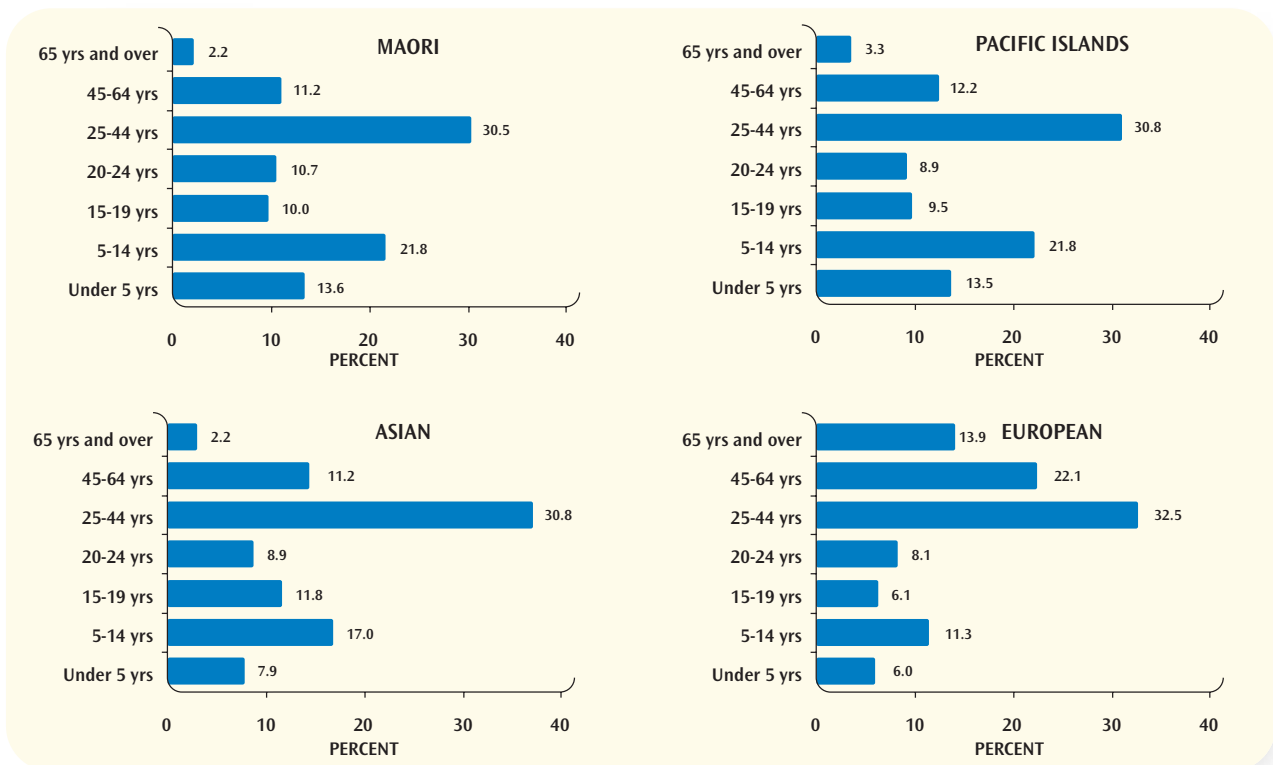
AGE AND ETHNICITY

The ageing population trend is more specific to the New Zealand European population. Maori, Pacific Islands and Asian populations tend to be younger than NZ European. In 1996, the median age for Maori was 21.4 years, well below the New Zealand median of 33 years. Maori now account for one in every four of all New Zealand children under five years and 23.6% of children under 15 years.

The Pacific Islands populations have some of the youngest age structures of any ethnic group within the national population. The median age in 1996 was 20.4 years.

Comparing the age structures for the six largest cities to those for the rest of New Zealand, there is a tendency for those aged 5 to 14 years and 45 years and over, to live outside the six largest cities, especially for European and Maori populations.

AGE STRUCTURE BY ETHNICITY FOR NEW ZEALAND'S SIX LARGEST CITIES (1996)



Data Source: Statistics New Zealand