

There is considerable variation in Deprivation Index rankings at ward level. The following table notes the wards within the six cities that have the highest proportion of 'high need' areas.

**WARDS WITHIN THE SIX CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF MESHBLOCKS IN DECILES 9 AND 10 (1996)**

	City	% of area in decile 9 and 10
Otara	Manukau	84
Mangere	Manukau	71
Tamaki	Auckland	62
Hagley	Christchurch	56
Hauraki Gulf Islands	Auckland	44
Manurewa	Manukau	38

Data Source: Health Services Research Council

There are large volumes of people affected by social deprivation within New Zealand's largest urban areas. The New Zealand Deprivation Index indicates that across New Zealand's six largest cities, nearly one quarter of a million people are living in high need areas. For example, although North Shore City has only 2% of its population living within the 'most deprived' areas (deciles 9 & 10), this equates to 3,777 people experiencing deprivation.

## Low Income Families with Children

### What this is about...

Research undertaken by the Family Services Centre in Wellington has estimated that around 60% of median income (adjusted for household composition) is necessary for a family to provide the essentials of food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and transport.<sup>17</sup> For the purpose of this project, family income data has been analysed to ascertain how many families (with children) in the six cities earned less than 60% of the median family income.<sup>18</sup>

Financial stress impacts on family relationships and the ability of the family to access a full range of goods, services and opportunities such as leisure, sports, tertiary education, pharmacy prescriptions, and childcare. Children living in families who are financially stressed are likely to have poor outcomes in health and education and are less likely to be able to participate fully in society because of financial constraints. Income inequality is also adversely associated with both mortality and hospitalisation rates.<sup>19</sup>

### What did we find ?

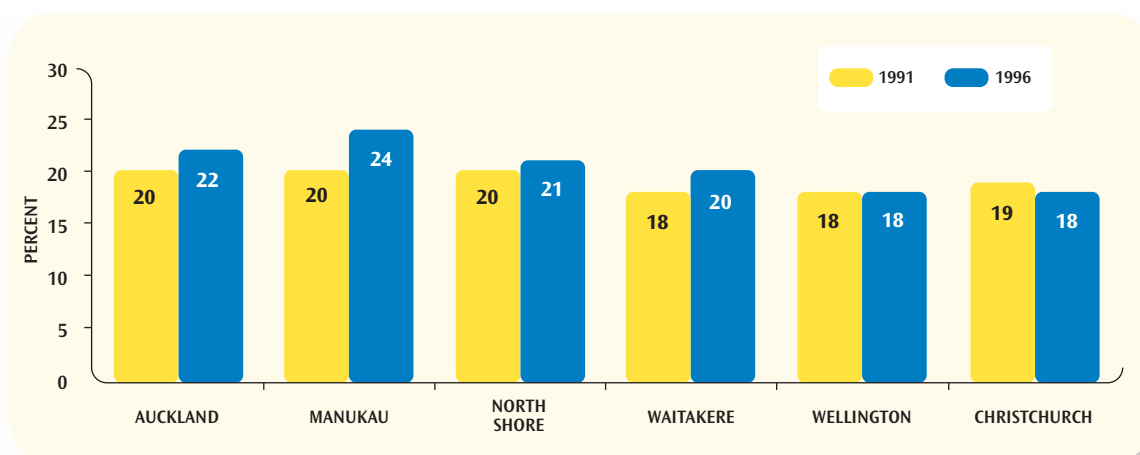
- Around one fifth of children in families in New Zealand's six largest cities could be said to be living 'in poverty'.
- In the four largest cities in the Auckland Region, the number of families with children experiencing poverty increased between 1991 and 1996. The rate stayed the same in Wellington (18%) and dropped slightly in Christchurch from 19% to 18%.

<sup>17</sup> Waldegrave C, Stephens R and Frater P. 1996. New Zealand Poverty Measurement Project.

<sup>18</sup> Within this analysis, income data was segmented into broad income categories in order to estimate the number of families 'in poverty'. For each city, 60% of median family income was calculated. The number of families (with children) in the closest lowest income bracket and below were then assessed. Family income levels have not been equalised, that is, adjusted for household composition, number and age of children. For example, 60% of 1996 median family income in Wellington was \$35,180 – the number of families earning less than \$30,000 (the closest income bracket) was calculated. 'Couple only' families and families with 'non specified' income have been excluded from the data set. In all cases, the data reflects a likely underestimate of families with children experiencing financial hardship.

<sup>19</sup> Howden-Chapman, Blakely, Blaiklock and Kiro. 2000. Closing the Gap. New Zealand Medical Journal.

**PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES (WITH CHILDREN)  
EARNING LESS THAN 60% OF MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME, BY CITY (1991 AND 1996)**



Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

Generally speaking, families with just one child were the most likely to be living in poverty. Nationally, 71% of one parent families received less than \$20,000 each year, compared with 9% of couples with dependent children.<sup>20</sup>

With the exception of Manukau, the majority of families with children living ‘in poverty’ are European, reflecting the predominance of European ethnicities within the six largest cities.<sup>21</sup> However, Maori, Pacific Islands and Asian families with children are over-represented. In 1996, these ethnic groups made up around 29% of the population in the six cities, but comprised 42% of families with children living in hardship.

**PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES (WITH CHILDREN) EARNING LESS  
THAN 60% OF MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME, BY ETHNICITY (1991 & 1996)<sup>22</sup>**

1991	Auckland n=9399 %	Manukau n=8385 %	North Shore n=5346 %	Waitakere n=4539 %	Wellington n=4083 %	Christchurch n=9021 %
European	41	28	58	58	60	82
NZ Maori	20	34	9	21	16	12
Pacific Island	29	32	4	16	12	3
Asian	8	6	5	4	11	2
1996	n=11382 %	n=11322 %	n=6162 %	n=5685 %	n=4332 %	n=8568 %
European	26	18	43	39	55	73
NZ Maori	13	24	9	17	16	13
Pacific Island	19	26	3	11	11	3
Asian	22	14	20	11	15	10

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

Looking at proportions of low-income families with children between 1991 and 1996, the general trend was a reduction in the percentage for Maori and Pacific Islands families. However, the relative proportion of Asian families with children who could be seen to be “in poverty” increased from 6% to 15% in the same period.

20 Statistics New Zealand. 1997. Census 1996: Highlights – Income.

21 Ethnicity of family was calculated using ethnic identities of the adults and data on ethnicity used in this analysis has undergone a system of ‘prioritising’ responses. For example, where one parent identified as Maori and another as European, the family has been categorised as Maori.

22 Figures do not add up to 100% as the ‘Other’ ethnic category has not been listed.