

This chapter concerns two key areas of safety - crime and personal safety from accident related fatalities and injuries. Both these factors impact on people's personal perception of safety and their view of the level of safety within their living environment, communities and urban areas. The indicators included in this section provide a general overview of crime and safety within the six largest cities.

Why this is important...

Feeling and being safe and secure within our homes, communities and cities is a basic human right. It is key to the overall health of the community as well as individual perception about quality of life. These are important issues for cities because in order to build community cohesion, we need safe social and physical environments where people are able to participate fully and safely in their community, schools and neighbourhoods.

What's in this chapter?

- Burglary
- Notifications to Child, Youth and Family Services
- Road traffic fatalities
- Juvenile offending
- Perceptions of feeling safe
- Unintentional child injuries

Impacts and relationships with other areas in this report

Criminal and social research internationally and in New Zealand has linked social and economic disadvantage to adverse outcomes such as offending. Factors including unemployment, low incomes, low educational achievement, and family instability are indicators that are believed to increase the likelihood of offending.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the cities and areas within cities that experience lower socio-economic status are more at risk of higher crime levels and lower perceptions of safety. For example, parts of Waitakere City and Manukau City have both low socio-economic status and relatively low perceptions of safety. In some areas this is further compounded by the urban environment, with high levels of graffiti, and urban design that fails to take into account features such as lighting, visibility and access.

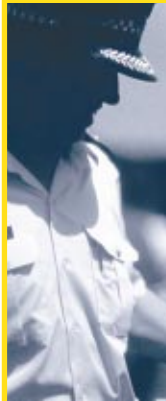
Addressing these issues, combined with building a sense of neighbourhood ownership can help reduce opportunities for crime in public spaces and can impact positively on levels of community cohesion, perception of the look and feel of a city, and use of public transport.¹⁴²

Key points

There are some positive indicators in this section. Burglary and traffic fatalities are going down nationally and to some extent these patterns are being duplicated in the six cities. A reduction in burglaries has been attributed to a range of police strategies, the establishment of Safer Community Councils, and the involvement of communities in the development of local initiatives. A reduction in traffic fatalities is due to ongoing work in the area of education, enforcement and engineering and a multi-agency and community based approach. The role of local authorities in supporting and funding Safer Community Co-ordinators and Road Safety Co-ordinators who work from a community development model, contributes to reductions in these areas.

A recurrent theme in most of these indicators is children and youth. The risks for these groups are high - both for being intentionally or unintentionally harmed or as offenders. Social and economic insecurity is undermining efforts to improve the wellbeing and living conditions of children and youth. Factors that increase the risks for these groups, and that are increasing in our cities, include inadequate living conditions, poor parenting skills, childhood abuse and neglect, racism and other forms of discrimination, difficulties in school and peer pressure.

Media reporting on crime rates and events also has a significant influence on perception of safety. Some groups within cities may be more concerned about safety and security as a result of such reporting, such as the elderly and women living alone. These groups will become larger as a proportion of overall city populations in the future, indicating that demand for secure housing choices, such as apartments and terrace housing (which are features of housing intensification) will continue to grow.



141 Ministry of Justice, cited in Manukau City Council. 1999. Changing Face of Manukau – A report on the social, economic and environmental conditions in Manukau City.

142 Ministry of Justice: 1997: Directory of Criminal Justice Research: Part 2 Cohort Studies.

Burglary

What this is about...

Burglary is an indicator of attitude towards personal property and influences community perceptions of safety.

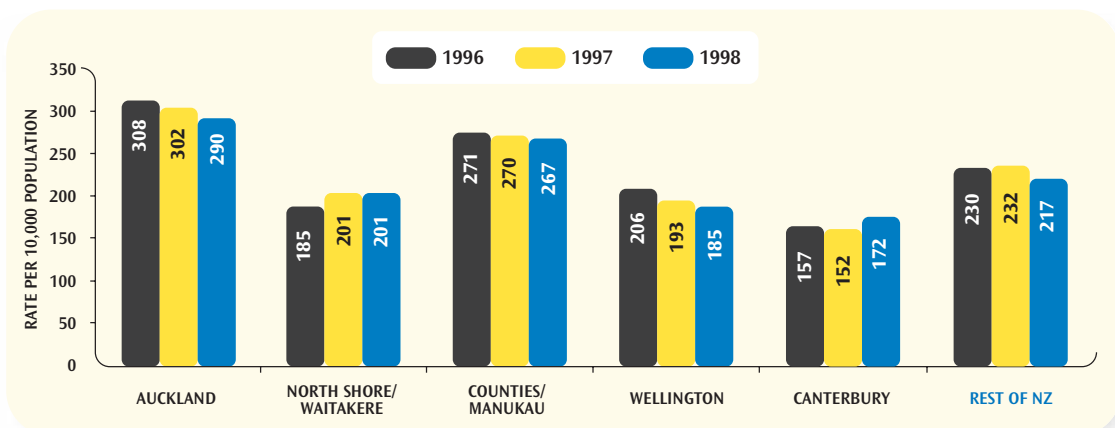
The rate of reported burglary of dwellings and commercial buildings per 10,000 of population is described in this indicator.¹⁴³ Data is based on Police Districts, not city boundaries. Burglary is a useful indicator because:

- It is more likely than some other offences to be reported - victims are perhaps more likely to report a burglary than domestic violence.
- Perpetuators of burglary may go on to commit more serious types of crime, therefore it may indicate future crime patterns.
- It affects a large proportion of the population (i.e. not only victims but also their families and neighbours) and is therefore likely to influence perceptions of safety.

What did we find ?

- The rate of burglary of both dwellings and commercial buildings is highest in Auckland, followed by Counties/Manukau Police District. NZ Police indicate that half of the offenders who are arrested for burglary in Auckland reside outside the city, which highlights that for this indicator, city boundaries are blurred within the regional context.
- Overall, the rate of recorded burglaries within most police districts has generally decreased between 1996 and 1998. This is also reflected in national statistics, which show a drop of 5.1% in total recorded crime for the year ending December 1999, and a 5.5% drop for burglary, representing 4,300 fewer offences.¹⁴⁴ This compared well to the year ending December 1998 when there was 2.7% fewer burglaries. The national decline in burglary has been attributed to police strategies in place around the country, and work by the justice sector and local community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch. In addition, Safer Community Councils have been set up throughout the country through partnerships with the Crime Prevention Unit and local authorities to implement crime prevention programmes. These involve communities taking ownership of solutions to crime and developing local initiatives targeting offenders and potential offenders.

RATE OF RECORDED BURGLARIES PER 10,000 POPULATION, BY POLICE DISTRICT (1996 TO 1998)¹⁴⁵



Data Source: New Zealand Police

143 Victims do not always report burglaries as they may perceive that the Police can not help to retrieve the stolen goods.

144 New Zealand Police. 20 April 2000. Media Release "Continued downward trend in crime".

145 Rate calculated using 1996 Census data.

Juvenile Offending

What this is about...

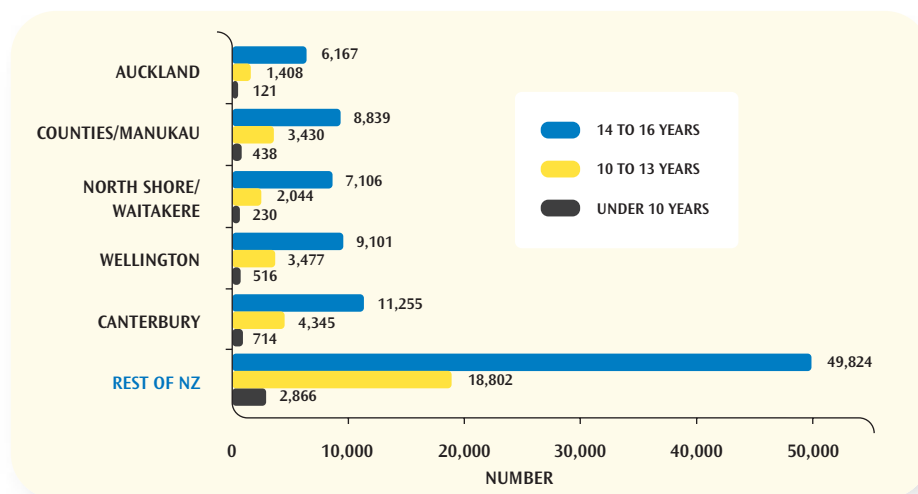
Juvenile offending is an indicator of the present health of the community, reflecting safety of people in their homes and on the streets. It also tells us about the direction the community is heading - young people involved in crime in their youth are more likely to continue to commit offences into adulthood. In addition, they may move from committing dishonesty offences in their youth to more serious offences as they get older¹⁴⁶.

The indicator shows the total number of reported juvenile offences committed by age groups within Police Districts between 1996 and 1998. The data measures the number of offences, not the number of individuals committing offences. Therefore, it does not reflect the possibility that few individuals may commit many offences. Indeed, UK research suggests about 5% of known young offenders commit 50% of all solved crimes.¹⁴⁷

What did we find ?

- The data indicates that most juvenile offences are committed by 14 to 16 year old males.
- Across New Zealand, the type of offence most commonly committed by juvenile age groups is dishonesty, followed by property damage for the under 10, and the 10 to 13 year age groups, and drugs and anti social behaviour for 14 to 16 year olds.
- Auckland and Manukau/Counties police districts tend to have a higher youth population compared to other areas. Therefore, the number of juvenile offences in Auckland and Manukau appear low given those cities' high youth populations.

TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTED JUVENILE OFFENCES WITHIN POLICE DISTRICTS, BY AGE (1996 TO 1998)



Data Source: New Zealand Police

A number of issues may be associated with increased risk for juvenile offending including exposure to truancy and school drop out, leaving school with no qualifications, alcohol and drug misuse and peer pressure.¹⁴⁸ A study undertaken in New Zealand found a link between unemployment and juvenile offending - young people who had been unemployed for six months or longer had higher levels of offending, arrest and conviction than those of young people who had not been unemployed. However, unemployment was also associated with a range of adverse social, family, school and individual factors.¹⁴⁹

146 Personal communication with NZ Police and co-ordinator, Safer Auckland City.

147 West and Farrington. 1977. Cited in Crime Prevention Unit. 2000. Using Population Census Data for Planning Local Community Crime Prevention Action. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

148 Ministry of Justice. 1997. Directory of Criminal Justice Research: Part 2 Cohort Studies.

149 Fergusson, D.M., M.T. Lynskey and L.J. Horwood. "The effects of unemployment on juvenile offending". Submitted to: Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health. Available from authors at Christchurch School of Medicine.

Notifications to Child, Youth and Family Services

What this is about...

The protection and nurture of children is a task shared by families and communities. Society's responsibilities are expressed through macro policies which support families, and through its agents on whom it relies to identify those children who are harmed in their families. Agencies who have a role in identifying children at risk include the health sector, schools, Police, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, the criminal justice system, and community agencies.¹⁵⁰

Determining the amount of abuse and neglect that occurs within New Zealand is difficult because it is often a 'hidden' crime. Thus, surrogate measures, such as rate of notification to Child Youth and Family Services can be used as a general - although potentially inaccurate - barometer of the level and extent of abuse and neglect. Notifications are made to Child Youth and Family Services for a range of problems including abuse, neglect, breakdown in relationships in families and suicide.

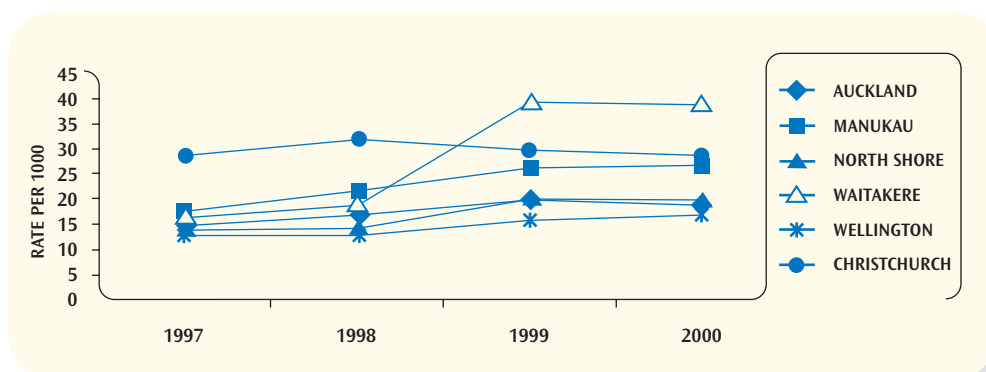
This indicator shows the rate of care and protection notifications to Child Youth and Family Services per 1,000 of population aged 17 years and under.¹⁵¹

What did we find ?

The data shows that the rate of care and protection notifications to Child, Youth and Family Services has been mostly increasing since 1997. This may not reflect increasing levels of child abuse, because increased reporting can be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Awareness of services and support through, for example, the increased role of Community Liaison Social Workers who focus on prevention and early intervention, education and working collaboratively with other agencies (e.g. Barnardos, Iwi social services, etc)
- Response of health professionals (such as GPs and public health nurses) and schools.
- Preventative programmes or interventions that have been implemented in particular areas, such as the pilot Domestic Violence Initiative that was conducted in Waitakere in conjunction with the Police and other agencies.
- Centralisation of services and the establishment of the National Call Centre (which manages notifications from Northland to Hamilton as well as Christchurch City sites) has improved accessibility to services and provides consistent practice to all callers.

NOTIFICATIONS PER 1,000 PEOPLE AGED 17 YEARS AND UNDER, BY CYF DISTRICT (1997 TO 2000)



Data Source: Child Youth and Family Services

150 Office of the Commissioner for Children. 2000. Final Report on the Investigation into the Death of James Whakaruru.

151 The catchment areas for Child Youth and Family Offices are not consistent with city boundaries and reflect rate of notification by office rather than city. Data from the following offices are captured in the graph: Auckland = Grey Lynn and Royal Oak offices; Manukau = Mangere, Otara, Papakura (includes Franklin) offices; North Shore = Takapuna, Rodney offices; Waitakere = Henderson (also includes parts of Rodney); Wellington = Wellington; Christchurch = Christchurch, Papanui, Sydenham offices.

Perceptions of Feeling Safe

What this is about...

Perceptions of safety impact on the health and wellbeing of the individual, family and wider community. If people feel unsafe they are less likely to talk to their neighbours, use public transport, go out in the evening, use public amenities and generally participate in their neighbourhood.

Respondents to citizens' surveys undertaken in the six largest cities were asked to rate their feelings of safety in their home, in their neighbourhood and in the town centre, at both day and night.¹⁵² Respondents were asked to rate their perception of safety on a scale of very safe, safe, unsafe and very unsafe.¹⁵³

What did we find ?

- Residents tended to indicate that they felt safe in their **home**, both during the day and after dark. However, females felt slightly less safe at home after dark than males.
- Proportions of respondents who felt very safe or safe in their **neighbourhood** after dark were considerably smaller than proportions of those who felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day, especially among females and residents of Manukau City. Citizens in Manukau City rated the lowest levels of feeling safe in their neighbourhood and those in Wellington City rated highest levels of feeling safe after dark.
- Similarly, whereas respondents tended to feel very safe or safe in their **local town centres** during the day, proportions dropped after dark, especially among Christchurch citizens.
- A relatively small proportion of respondents to the Christchurch survey indicated they felt safe in town after dark - a smaller proportion than in any other survey.
- Manukau respondents tended to indicate lower levels overall of feeling very safe or safe than any other city.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FELT 'VERY SAFE' OR 'SAFE', OVERALL (2000)

	At home		In neighbourhood		In town	
	Day (%)	Dark (%)	Day (%)	Dark (%)	Day (%)	Dark (%)
Auckland	93	85	95	69	85	69
Manukau	86	71	85	53	89	47
North Shore	95	88	97	74	96	59
Waitakere	86	78	91	65	n/a	n/a
Wellington	95	95	95	84	n/a	n/a
Christchurch	96	90	96	72	87	29

Data Source: Citizens' surveys

Perception of safety is linked to environmental factors such as the look and feel of the city, level of graffiti and perceived safety of public transport. The media and reporting on crime rates and events also has a significant influence on perception of safety. There are some possible links between perception of safety and actual crime levels as reported in other indicators. For example, the high level of juvenile offending in Canterbury may have resulted in the finding that only 29% of Christchurch respondents feel safe in town at night.

Manukau respondents had the lowest perception of safety compared to other cities. Manukau/Counties has the second highest rate of burglary compared to other Police Districts and a high number of juvenile offences which may influence perception of safety. In addition, as shown in other indicators in this report, Manukau has a higher level of social deprivation compared to other cities, which may influence perception of personal and family safety, directly or indirectly through crime levels.

152 No data was available for any indicator that involved perceptions or attitudes of citizens in the six largest cities. As a result, each participating local authority conducted a survey that explored perceptions and attitudes towards issues such as feelings of safety from crime, perceptions of public transport, sense of community spirit etc.

153 There were several differences in wording of questions between surveys: For example, Manukau City's survey provided the option of "neither safe nor unsafe", which was not offered by any other survey and Waitakere City's survey did not ask respondents about their feelings of safety in the town centre during any particular time period (ie: by day or at night). Manukau City survey asked respondents to identify their local town centre and then asked them to rate how safe they felt at that place, while other surveys did not ask respondents to consider a particular local town centre. In addition, both Wellington and Christchurch residents were asked to rate how safe they felt in the main City Centre, with no specific time limits.

Road Traffic Fatalities

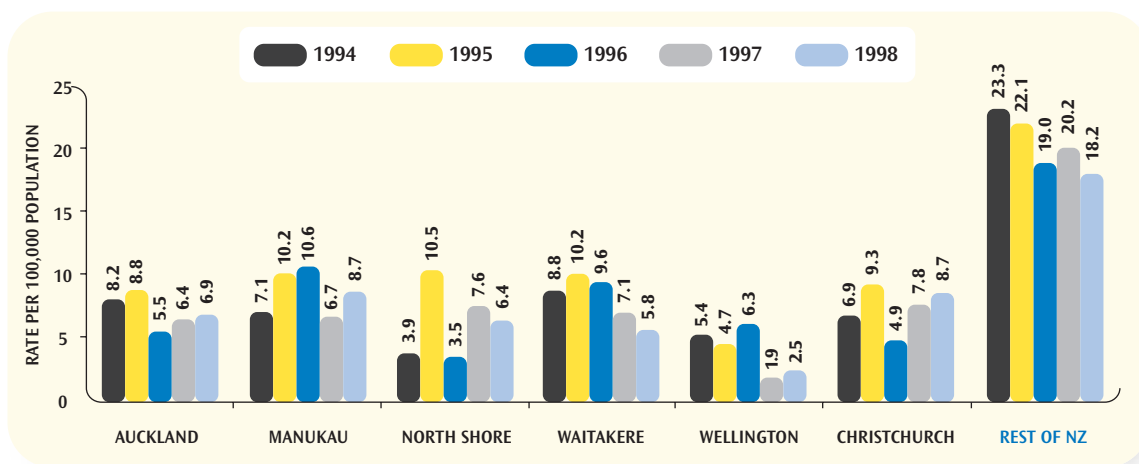
What this is about...

The increasing numbers of cars on city roads brings greater risk of injury and fatality from motor vehicle incidents. The six largest cities in New Zealand are designed around motor vehicles, increasing the risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Measuring road traffic fatalities per 100,000 population helps assess this risk for occupants of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

What did we find ?

- Nationally, traffic fatalities are falling - 508 people died on New Zealand roads in 1999 compared to 729 in 1990.
- The graph indicates that the rate of road fatalities within the six cities is variable between 1994 and 1998. The highest number of road fatalities within nearly all the cities occurred in 1995.

RATE OF TRAFFIC FATALITIES PER 100,000 POPULATION, BY CITY (1994 TO 1998)¹⁵⁴



Data Source: Land Transport and Safety Authority

Rates may be higher in the rest of New Zealand due to the higher incidence of fatalities on open roads and motorways compared to urban roads.

Overall, more males than females are involved in traffic fatalities. A total of 342 males were involved in traffic fatalities between 1994 and 1998 in the six largest cities compared to 138 females. Of the total number of males fatalities, 142 (42%) were aged between 15 to 24 compared to 40 (29%) females fatalities.

Nationally, young drivers are over-represented in minor, serious and fatal crashes. Figures from driver licence statistics and crash reports indicate that 15 to 19 year old drivers make up 6% of the licensed population, yet between 1996 and 1998 this group accounted for 15% of drivers involved in minor and serious crashes, and 12% of those involved in fatal crashes. The majority of these drivers are male. In 1998, it was estimated that the social cost of crashes where 15 to 24 year old drivers were at fault was about \$650 million (about a quarter of the social cost associated with all injury crashes).¹⁵⁵

In 1998 it was reported that speeding was the major contributing factor to road crashes, and it contributed to 140 fatalities, 394 serious injury crashes and 1034 minor injury crashes.¹⁵⁶ Other key contributors to fatalities are drinking and driving, and not wearing seat belts. Additional factors include poor observation, failing to give way, poor handling, vehicle factors, weather conditions and fatigue.

154 Rate calculated using 1991 Census data for 1994 to 1995, and 1996 data for 1996 to 1998.

155 Land Transport Safety Authority. Young driver statistics. www.ltsa.govt.nz

156 Land Transport Safety Authority. National Speed statistics. www.ltsa.govt.nz

Unintentional Child Injuries

What this is about...

Unintentional injuries are also referred to as ‘accidents’. Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries, followed by motor vehicle and road injuries, and poisoning from drugs and medicines. Injuries are related to children’s age and development stage and significantly more males than females suffer from unintentional injuries. Most unintentional injuries are predictable and therefore preventable.

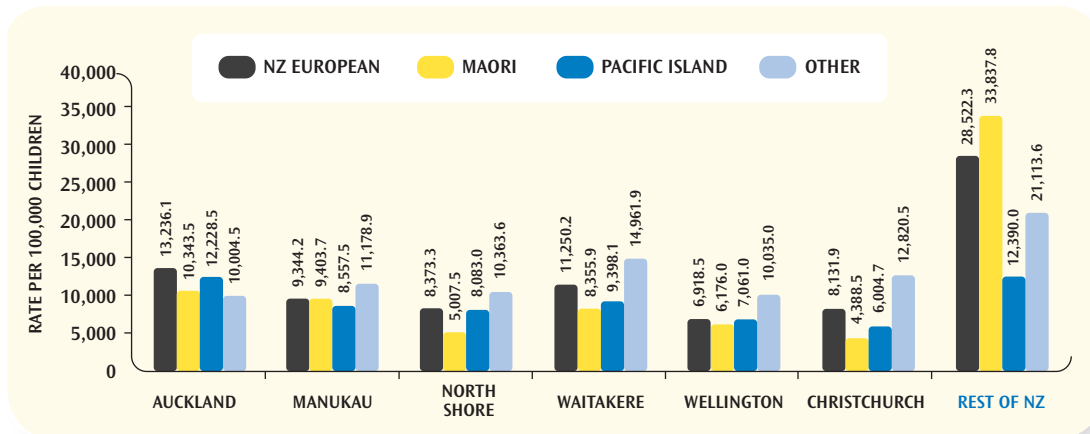
Safekids notes that New Zealand’s rates for child and adolescent injury or death are higher than in most developed countries. Hospital admissions for injury are a major contribution to health costs, and the average cost of an injury admission is 10% greater than that of a non-injury admission.

This indicator measures the rate of unintentional child injuries per 100,000 children aged 14 years and under between 1994 and 1998.¹⁵⁷

What did we find ?

- For all specified injury types between 1994 and 1998, Auckland had the highest overall rate of unintentional child injury among children aged 14 years and under (12,017), followed by Waitakere (10,663) and Manukau (9,320) cities.
- Nationally the rate of unintentional injury among Maori children is higher than other ethnic groups. However, within the six cities the highest rates tend to be among ‘Other’ and European. In fact, the rate of unintentional injury among ‘Other’ ethnic groups is the highest in all cities except Auckland.

TOTAL RATE OF UNINTENTIONAL INJURY PER 100,000 CHILDREN AGED 14 YEARS AND UNDER, BY ETHNICITY (1994 TO 1998 COMBINED)¹⁵⁸



Data Source: Safekids

There is a strong association between the increasing risk of injury of child pedestrians and increasing traffic volumes.¹⁵⁹ In addition, high density of curb parking has also been associated with greater risk of injury. As a result, risk of pedestrian child injuries increases with greater numbers of parents taking children to school.

157 Data measures number of admissions to hospital and not numbers of children. It only reflects injuries that result in admission to hospitals and does not include presentation to Accident and Emergency clinics, GPs, or private hospitals. Therefore, the data only reflects the ‘tip of the iceberg’ with regard to childhood injury.

158 Rate calculated using 1996 Census data.

159 Roberts, I., Norton, R., Jackson, R., Dunn, R. and Hassall, I. 1995. Effect of Environmental Factors on Risk of Injury of Child Pedestrians by Motor Vehicles: A Case Control Study. British Medical Journal.

The rate of unintentional injuries reflects a complex link between socio-economic status, education, effectiveness of injury prevention campaigns and other factors. For example, research shows that children pedestrians are more at risk if they belong to a lower socio-economic group, a single parent family, or a family with limited access to vehicles.¹⁶⁰ Thus cities with indicators of lower socio-economic status are perhaps more vulnerable to unintentional child injuries.

160 Injury Prevention Research Centre (1995). Dangers to Child Pedestrians. Fact Sheet number 2. Department of Community Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, The University of Auckland.