

# Canterbury Wellbeing Index Summary June 2015



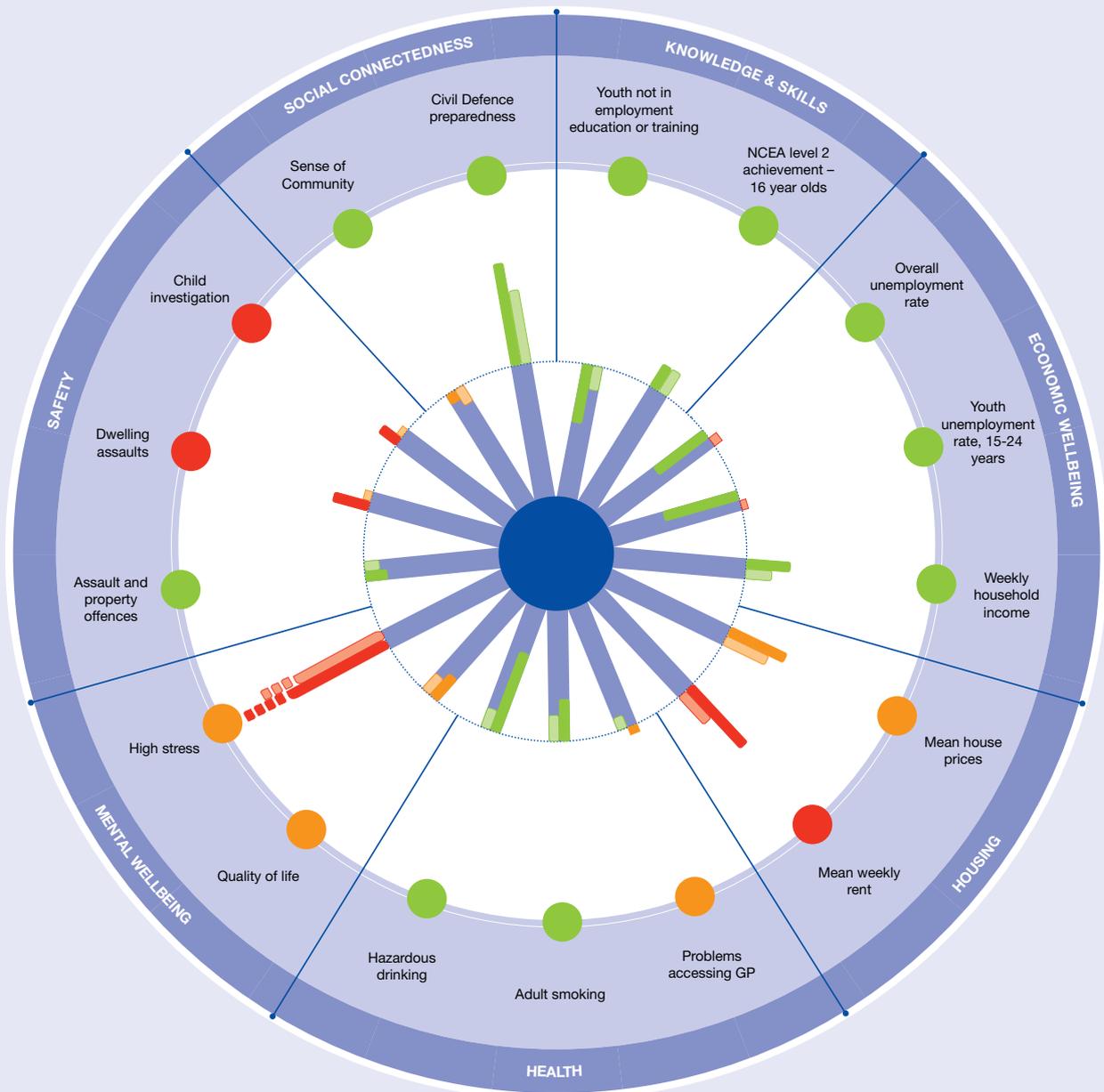
# Changes in social recovery

## Interpreting changes in social recovery 2008-10 to 2014-15

The spider diagram uses 'spokes' to represent changes in each indicator,

- the blue dotted circle represents average data prior to the September 2010 earthquake (where possible using a two year average); and
- the spokes represent post-earthquake data where possible using an average from 2014 to June 2015.

Longer spokes represent greater change. However, there is no relationship between indicators in magnitude of change. Spokes extending out from the blue circle indicate increases, and spokes extending inwards indicate decreases.



### Pre and Post Earthquake Social Recovery Analysis, greater Christchurch compared with New Zealand

	Changes in Greater Christchurch	Changes in New Zealand	Greater Christchurch in comparison with New Zealand
<b>FAVOURABLE</b> By comparison to pre-quake and where possible national trends			
<b>NEUTRAL</b> Either changes reflect national trends, the average has not changed or changes are otherwise ambiguous			
<b>LESS FAVOURABLE</b> By comparison to pre-quake and where possible national trends			

---

# An overview of greater Christchurch's wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

## Overall

As the greater Christchurch region approaches the fifth anniversaries of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, there are many signs of progress in people's recovery. The rebuild has generated significant employment opportunities and in particular the region's young people are benefitting from this. The majority of residents report a high overall quality of life and this is improving over time. Residents are seeing tangible signs of progress in rebuilt and repaired private dwellings and public spaces and report a stronger sense of personal commitment to the region.

However, for some, multiple stressors and compounding pressures remain. In particular, people with unresolved insurance issues and those living in the more damaged parts of the city are experiencing greater challenges, as are people with pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Housing pressures remain a key stressor with some households living in damaged or temporary accommodation, experiencing difficulties finding affordable rentals, or continuing to negotiate settlement of their insurance claims. Households in these circumstances may have relocated several times with associated disruption to their routines and these layers of stress impact on the stability and wellbeing of the family unit.

Family wellbeing through the recovery can also be challenged by other factors including the quality of family or community support. Those who experience the greatest material losses (for example the loss of their homes) and their social networks (for example through moving to another community) are likely to experience the most psychological distress.

There are signs that people's relationships have become strained with dwelling assaults increasing. Social agencies report that the complexity of people's circumstances has grown immensely which creates more difficulty for these agencies to work with people to progress their recovery.

International evidence suggests that people's recovery can take between five and ten years after a major disaster and as we approach the fifth anniversaries of the earthquakes we can see tangible signs of progress as well as a clear need for ongoing support for a proportion of the population over the next few years.

---

## Knowledge and skills

Against a backdrop of considerable disruption to school and home life, NCEA Level 2 achievement for greater Christchurch 16 year olds increased by 15 per cent between the pre-earthquake period and 2014 to 75 per cent, compared with the New Zealand average achievement rate of 72.5 per cent.

Young people in greater Christchurch have taken advantage of rebuild opportunities. The rate of 15-24 year olds not in education, employment or training decreased by 33 per cent between the pre-earthquake period and March 2015, compared with a 13 per cent decrease nationally. At March 2015 the greater Christchurch rate was 7.3 per cent compared with 12.6 per cent across New Zealand.

---

## Economic wellbeing

Between the pre-earthquake period and March 2015 the unemployment rate dropped by 35 per cent in greater Christchurch (to 3.2 per cent), compared with a 5 per cent increase across New Zealand (to 6.1 per cent). Over the same period the unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 years dropped by 42 per cent, compared with a 2 per cent increase across New Zealand.

Increased employment has generated a 24 per cent increase in median weekly household income between the pre-earthquake period and 2014, compared with a 14 per cent increase across New Zealand.

---

## Housing

The earthquakes significantly damaged housing stock with 167,500 dwelling claims made, including 24,200 claims for serious damage and 8,061 properties classified as residential red zone. The effect of this loss of housing was then compounded by growing demand for housing from migrant workers and temporarily displaced households. As a result, mean house prices increased by 34 per cent between 2009 and 2014, compared with a 25 per cent increase across New Zealand.

Similarly, mean weekly rent rose 44 per cent between the pre-earthquake period and February 2015, compared with a 20 per cent increase across New Zealand. Low income households were most affected with a 69 per cent reduction in available affordable rental accommodation (<\$300 a week) between the pre-earthquake period and February 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Data presented in the summary highlights key information from both the spider diagram and the indicators.  
Note: unless otherwise stated the 'pre-earthquake period refers to the data collected between 2008 and 2010.

## Health

While hospital admissions have continued their pre-earthquake trend upwards, residents report that their ability to access general practitioners remains relatively similar to before the earthquakes.

Smoking and hazardous drinking rates have dropped significantly compared with the national average. Between 2006/07 and 2013/14 the smoking rate for greater Christchurch dropped by 23 per cent, compared with a drop of 14 per cent across New Zealand. In the same period, hazardous drinking dropped 46 per cent, compared with an 11 per cent drop across the country.

## Mental wellbeing

International evidence indicates that people's psychological and social recovery can take between five and ten years after a major disaster. In greater Christchurch there is evidence that many groups remain impacted by the earthquakes and the multiple stressors that have emerged since.

Overall quality of life in greater Christchurch decreased by 16 per cent between the pre-earthquake period and April 2015 compared with an 11 per cent decrease across New Zealand. However, since September 2013, overall quality of life in greater Christchurch has been slowly increasing, from a low of 73 per cent to 79 per cent in April 2015.

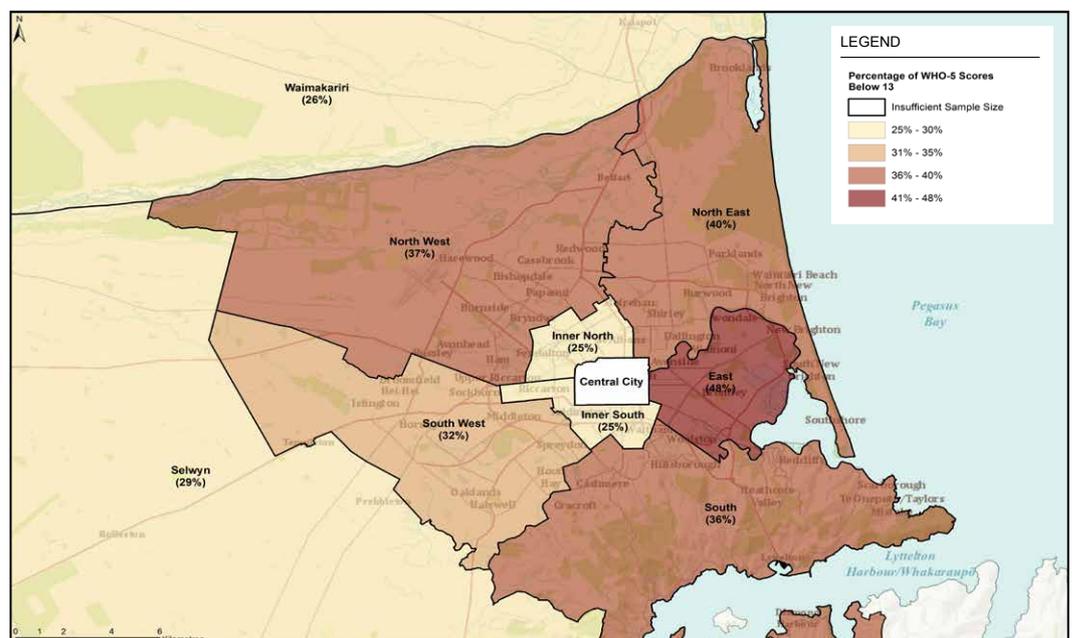
The proportion of people reporting that they feel stressed always or most of the time has increased significantly from 8 per cent in the pre-earthquake period to 19 per cent in April 2015. However, this reflects a similar (but lesser) increase across New Zealand.

Population groups experiencing higher levels of stress include those with pre-existing vulnerabilities such as people with health conditions or a disability and low income households, but also include new groups such as those with unresolved insurance claims, people in temporary accommodation and those living in the more damaged eastern parts of Christchurch city.

Map 1 shows that there are geographic differences in wellbeing across greater Christchurch. The WHO-5 index is a self-identified rating of emotional wellbeing with a score of less than 13 indicating lower wellbeing.

Almost half the respondents in the more damaged East of the city are more likely to have a WHO-5 score of less than 13 compared with others in greater Christchurch. Forty per cent of people in the North East and similar proportions in the North West and South also had low wellbeing scores. In contrast, just 25 per cent of people in the Inner North and Inner South had low scores.

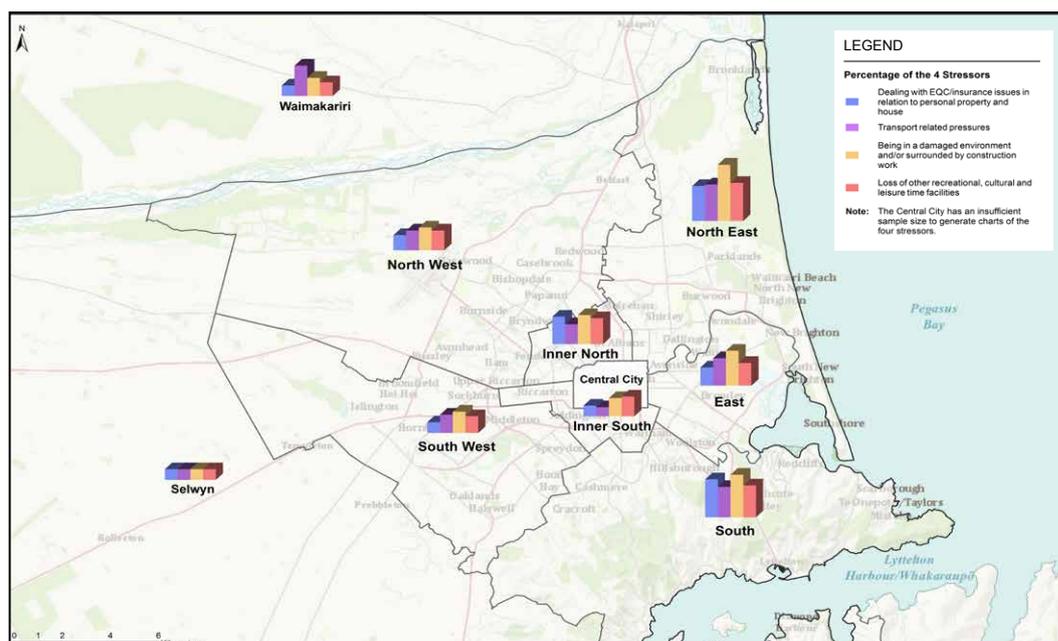
Map 1: Percentage of the population with a WHO-5 score less than 13 by geographic area, April 2015



Map 2 indicates that there are also large geographic differences between the impacts of secondary stressors on people living in different parts of greater Christchurch.

People living in the North East, South, East and Inner North have generally experienced higher levels of the top four stressors. These stressors relate to living in a damaged environment with associated loss of social infrastructure and problems with transport. They are also more likely to still be negatively impacted by dealing with EQC and insurance issues. Waimakariri district respondents have also recorded higher levels of stress around transport related pressures.

Map 2: Impact of most common negative issues by geographic area, April 2015



The number of people entering mental health services increased by 37 per cent between 2010 and 2014. The bulk of this increase occurred from mid-2012 suggesting that post-earthquake stressors such as managing repairs and rebuilds, living in a damaged environment and the loss of facilities and services may have impacted on wellbeing.

Since 2011 people in Canterbury assessed within outpatient mental health services have shown higher and more severe levels of symptoms, distress and dysfunction than those in other district health boards. This data indicates that as we approach the fifth anniversary of the earthquakes that there are still ongoing mental health impacts.

## Safety

Between 2008-09 and 2014 total assaults and property offences decreased by 12 per cent in greater Christchurch, compared with an 8 per cent drop across New Zealand.

However, the rate of dwelling offences (a category that primarily includes incidents of family violence) has increased by 20 per cent over this period, compared with a 4 per cent increase across New Zealand. Similarly, when comparing the pre-earthquake period to the 12 months to June 2014, child investigations (notifications requiring further action which are generated by concerns about child abuse, or the behaviour of a child or young person) increased by 11 per cent, compared with a 3 per cent increase across New Zealand. However, importantly, child investigations have shown a decreasing trend since 2013 in Canterbury and across New Zealand.

## Social connectedness

People's connections to their communities are important, particularly in recovery after disaster. However, levels of connectedness have been slowly decreasing in New Zealand cities. Despite significant population movement as a result of the earthquakes, people in greater Christchurch reported that levels of connectedness in their neighbourhoods decreased less between the pre-earthquake period and April 2015 (a 5 per cent decrease) than across other New Zealand cities (a 10 per cent decrease).

Emergency preparedness is a strong indicator of resilience. Between the pre-earthquake period and 2014 there was a 56 per cent increase in the preparedness of residents compared with a 40 per cent increase across New Zealand.

---

# About the Canterbury Wellbeing Index

---

## Why do we need the Canterbury Wellbeing Index?

The Canterbury Wellbeing Index was developed by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) with the support of multiple agencies to track the progress of the social recovery in greater Christchurch. Indicators are used to identify emerging social trends and issues to enable agencies to respond in a timely way. The Canterbury Wellbeing Index is also prepared to provide the greater Christchurch community with accurate and comprehensive information about the social recovery.

The Canterbury Wellbeing Index has been published annually since June 2013. Results can be accessed in full at [www.cera.govt.nz/cwi](http://www.cera.govt.nz/cwi)

---

## How was the Canterbury Wellbeing Index developed?

In late 2011 CERA convened a series of meetings with representatives of 28 agencies to identify the social indicators that should be tracked through the recovery. Expert advice was received through the literature review of international best practice "Designing indicators for measuring recovery from disasters", undertaken by Canterbury District Health Board.

CERA requests and receives administrative and survey data from multiple agencies regularly to form the basis of the indicators in the Canterbury Wellbeing Index. Where possible, indicators are tailored to the greater Christchurch boundaries comprised of Christchurch city, and the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts.

The six-monthly CERA Wellbeing Survey was developed to provide additional recovery-focused data on the wellbeing of the residents of greater Christchurch. It forms a significant part of the Canterbury Wellbeing Index. CERA Wellbeing Survey data are also published in full on the CERA website.

Draft indicators are subjected to peer review and quality assurance processes, and agencies responsible for the indicators review the content prior to public release.

The Canterbury Wellbeing Index is a collaborative project across many government agencies:

Action on Smoking and Health, Canterbury District Health Board, Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service, Canterbury Public Health, Child, Youth and Family, Christchurch City Council, Creative New Zealand, Department of Corrections, Department of Internal Affairs, Department of Labour, Earthquake Commission, Electoral Commission, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, Environment Canterbury, Housing New Zealand, Corporation, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Ministry of Social Development, Natural Hazards Research Platform, New Zealand Police, Partnership Health, Selwyn District Council, Sports Canterbury, Sports New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand, Te Pou, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Waimakariri District Council.

---

## What happens in response to the trends identified in the Canterbury Wellbeing Index?

Emerging trends and issues identified through the Canterbury Wellbeing Index are used to inform decision-making by CERA and other social sector agencies working towards social recovery. Examples of initiatives and decisions that were informed by data collected through the Canterbury Wellbeing Index include the establishment of the Residential Advisory Service to help property owners progress their home repairs or rebuild; as well as the Government's Budget 2014 decision to allocate on-going funding for the provision of psychosocial services. In addition Canterbury Wellbeing Index data is used across agencies to plan the delivery of the psychosocial services under the Community in Mind psychosocial strategy for greater Christchurch.

---

**New Zealand Government**