# Waitaha Canterbury 2025

## An Overview


Sustainable development with shared prosperity, resilient communities and proud identity.

# Introduction

The first regional overview was prepared for members of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum following local body elections in October 2019, and this is the second update, following an update in 2022. It presents high-level information on current state and trends to inform Mayoral Forum priorities, engagement with central government and potential development of a Mayoral Forum regional strategy for the 2025–28 local government term.

## The overview is structured around:

- the environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes that local authorities promote, taking a sustainable development approach.
- the 'four capitals' of the NZ Treasury's Living Standards Framework[1]. While the framework was significantly revised in 2021, the four capitals remain relevant.

Where data permits this, the report includes regional indicators presented on the Treasury's Living Standards Dashboard[2].

The data and information in this overview are current as at 30 June 2025. Due to changes in data collection accross a number of agencies some data remains the same as that provided in 2022.

The document will be reviewed and updated during each local government term to capture any significant new information, data or trends.

# Contents

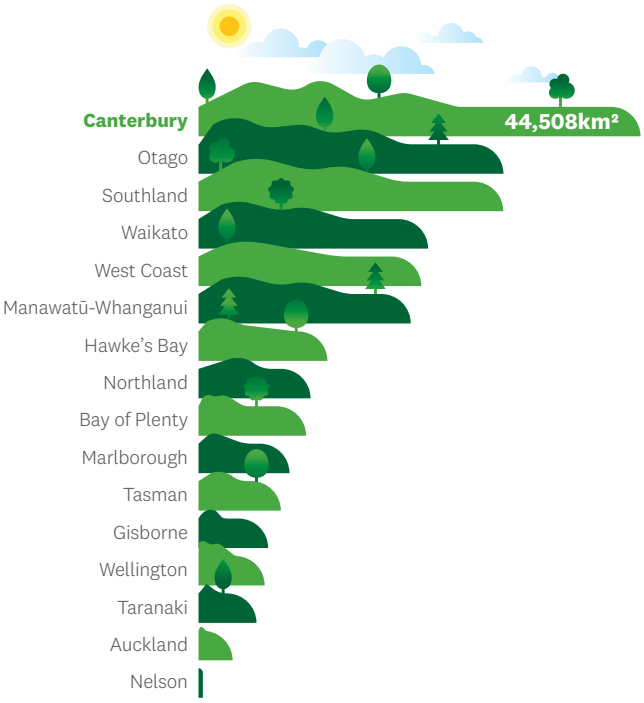
# Land

- Canterbury is New Zealand's largest region by land area (44,508km$^2$), spanning the territory of 10 local authorities and 10 Ngāi Tahu papatipu rūnanga.
- North to south, the region extends from Kekerengu Point, north of the Clarence River, to the Waitaki River catchment. West to east, the region extends from the Southern Alps to the coast and 12 nautical miles seaward to the limit of New Zealand's territorial waters.
- Canterbury has diverse landscapes, abundant water and large areas of flat land suitable for agriculture, with 21% of New Zealand's highest quality soils[3]. Almost 2.6 million hectares of land in Canterbury was used for farming in 2024 – 19% of the total area farmed in New Zealand[4].
- Canterbury's 800 km of coastline and 11,620 km$^2$ of coastal marine area includes a considerable range of land and seascapes and several coastal settlements, including Kaikōura, Christchurch City and Timaru[5].

## Key indicators

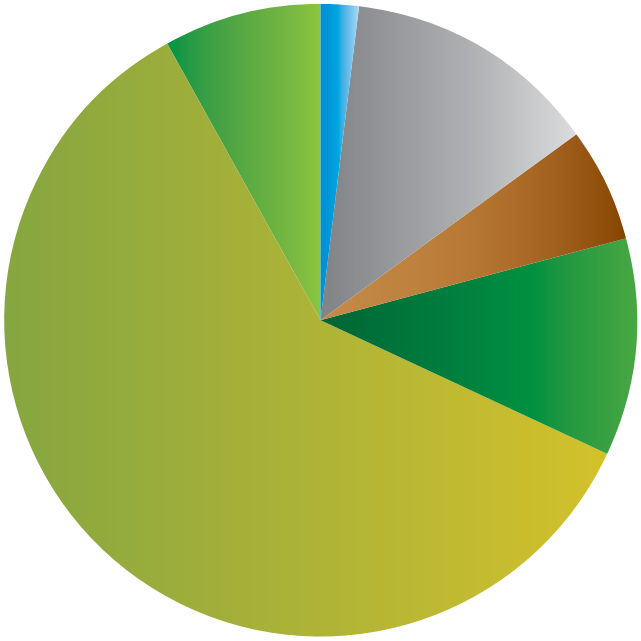
- In 2024, 63% of New Zealand's total irrigated land area was in Canterbury (488,000 hectares), an increase from 2022 (479,000 hectares). However, overall between 2002 and 2022, the total irrigated land in Canterbury increased by 99%[6]. This covers a large part of the Canterbury plains. Irrigation is used to support intensive land use. Farming intensification improves productivity and increases pressures on the environment (increased demand for water and land use impacts on water quality and biodiversity).
- The area of urban land in New Zealand increased by 15% between 1996 and 2018 to approximately 237,000 hectares. The largest expansion was in Auckland (up 7,259 hectares), followed by Canterbury (up 5,730 hectares) and Waikato (up 4,845 hectares)[7].
- Between 2002 and 2019, highly productive land that was unavailable or restricted from use as farmland (given urban and residential use) increased 54% in New Zealand. Highly productive (versatile) land is important for food production. Looking at rural residential expansion, the largest areas of highly productive land restricted from use as farmland was Waikato (8,323 hectares) following by Auckland (5,854 hectares), Manawatū-Whanganui (5,442 hectares), and Canterbury (5,375 hectares)[8].

Land area by region (km²)



## Canterbury land cover as a percentage of region

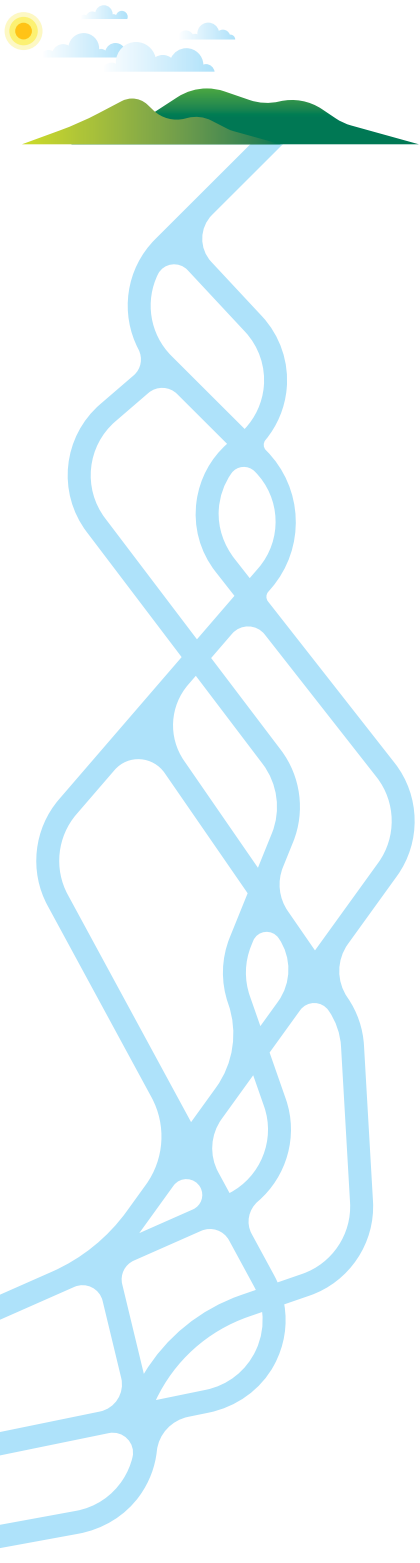
- Scrub/shrubland
- Grassland/other herbaceous vegetation
- Forest
- Cropland
- Urban/bare/lightly-vegetated surfaces
- Water bodies



| Land Cover Class (broad)<br>Land Cover class (medium) | Hectares | as % of Canterbury region land area |
|---|---|---|
| Urban/bare/lightly-vegetated surfaces | 584383 | 13% |
| Artificial bare surfaces | 1527 | <1% |
| Natural bare/lightly-vegetated surfaces | 547155 | 12% |
| Urban area | 35701 | 1% |
| Cropland | 252523 | 6% |
| Cropping/horticulture | 252523 | 6% |
| Forest | 494065 | 11% |
| Exotic forest | 157360 | 3% |
| Indigenous forest | 336705 | 7% |
| Grassland/other herbaceous vegetation | 2713136 | 60% |
| Exotic grassland | 2033226 | 45% |
| Other herbaceous vegetation | 11107 | <1% |
| Tussock grassland | 668803 | 15% |
| Scrub/shrubland | 378859 | 8% |
| Exotic scrub/shrubland | 70090 | 2% |
| Indigenous scrub/shrubland | 308769 | 7% |
| Water bodies | 99678 | 2% |
| Water bodies | 99678 | 2% |

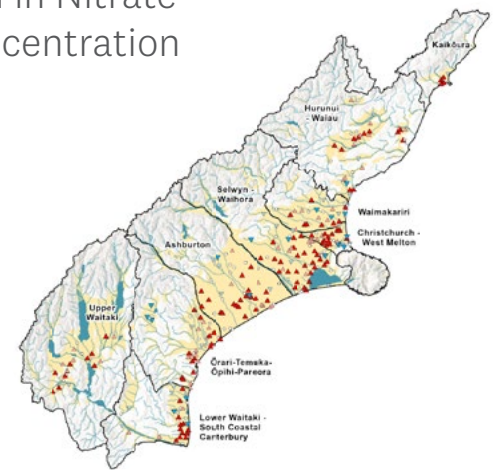
# Water

- Canterbury has more than 4,700 lakes and tarns, and over 78,000 km of rivers and streams[9].
- Our braided, alpine rivers are an iconic natural feature and internationally rare. They support many species, including rare and threatened species not found anywhere else. 64% of New Zealand's braided rivers are in Canterbury, including the Waimakariri, Rakaia, Rangitata and Waitaki rivers, characterised by their multiple, shifting shingle channels and varying flows[10].
- On average, we receive around 74 billion $m^3$/annum of fresh water from rain and snow, much of it falling in the Southern Alps. 62 billion $m^3$ /annum is runoff to sea[11]. Canterbury receives 11% of New Zealand's precipitation input (2020 data)[12].
- About 70% of New Zealand's groundwater (519 billion $m^3$ in 2014) is located in Canterbury[13].
- Across the region, 61.6 billion $m^3$ of freshwater is taken each year – 4.9 billion $m^3$ for irrigation, 245 million $m^3$ for stock-water, 20 million $m^3$ for industrial use, 225 million $m^3$ for town supply and 491 million $m^3$ for other use. 55.7 billion $m^3$/year is consented for hydroelectricity[1] and makes up 90% of the total water volume consented in Canterbury[14].
- Land clearance and farming over many years, particularly land-use intensification since the 1970s, has increased pressure on rivers and groundwater aquifers. Lowland streams fed by groundwater springs are under stress. Urban streams and rivers typically have worse water quality because of changes to land cover and human activity in our cities and towns.



## 10 year Trend in Nitrate-Nitrogen Concentration 2014-2023

- Very likely decreasing
- Likely decreasing
- No trend
- Likely increasing
- Very likely increasing
- Areas of potential groundwater use
- CWMS zones




Esri, USGS, Environment Canterbury

[1] water taken for hydroelectricity is not consumed as a result of this use, and is often returned to the same catchment from which it is taken

## Key indicators

### *Surface waters*[15]

- The ecological health of streams in Canterbury has been in decline over the last 20 years at 54% of sites. In contrast, there are 22% of sites that are relatively stable and 24% are improving. It is notable that many sites with improving trends are those in a worse state close to the coast on the Canterbury Plains, while inland areas previously in good health have a relatively high number of deteriorating sites. The worse state of lowland areas tends to be because of the greater intensity of land use in the warmer, flat low country and the accumulation of contaminants in groundwater, which re-emerge in lowland streams.
- Surface water quality trends for nitrate-nitrite nitrogen are similar to those for groundwater quality trends. This is due to groundwater being the dominant source of nitrate-nitrite nitrogen in our rivers.
- Long term dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) trends indicate that concentrations have improved at 55% of sites over the 22-year period examined. Turbidity has shown a shift and has improved over the last nine years at 71% of river sites. These parameters could be used as early indicators of improvements in water quality due to actions such as fencing and stock exclusion.
- Trend analysis of high-country lakes data 2007-2022 (24 lakes) showed that chlorophyll a, an indicator of water quality and ecosystem health, is increasing in most lakes (>80%).

### *Groundwater*[16]

- Nitrate in groundwater can affect its quality for drinking-water supply and the quality of streams fed by groundwater. Areas in Canterbury around and downstream of intensive agricultural land use tend to have higher nitrate concentrations in the groundwater than other areas. Nitrate concentrations are highest in groundwater near the water table and decrease with depth.
- In 2023 samples were collected from 349 sites across Canterbury, 90% of the 349 groundwater sites across Canterbury met the current drinking water guidelines for nitrate-nitrogen, which is lower than the previous year where 13% of sampled wells had nitrate-nitrogen concentrations above health-based maximum acceptable levels. Analysis of 30 years of data shows that the rate of change is slow and nonlinear, but the overall direction of change is generally an increase in nitrate-nitrogen concentrations (59% (40% very likely, 19% likely) of wells with enough data to analyse trends over the past 10 years. The time lag between land use change and the start of resulting effects on groundwater nitrate concentrations is in the order of five to ten years. Shorter lags exist where receiving environments are close to land sources. The full effects of changes may still take decades to come through, particularly for large catchments.

### *Drinking water*

- On the Taumata Arowai Public Register of Drinking Water Supplies there are 121 council-owned and operated networked drinking water supplies in Canterbury[17].

### *Recreation*

- In the 2023/2024 summer season, in total, 104 river, lake and coastal sites were monitored, with 85% of coastal sites and 72% of freshwater sites graded generally suitable for swimming. Out of the freshwater sites, 85% of lake sites were graded as suitable for contact recreation and 65% of rivers. Over half the sites within Lyttleton / Whakaraupō (63%) remain unchanged from earlier monitoring and are sill considered unsuitable for swimming[18].

### *Perceptions*

- 85% of survey respondents in Canterbury thought New Zealand had a problem with the state of rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and aquatic life compared to 80% nationally. 60% of respondents in Canterbury (50% in NZ) thought farming activities were the main reason there was a problem, followed by 15% for sewage and stormwater discharges[19].

# Air

- Air pollution can be an issue in Canterbury towns and cities, mainly during the coldest months, from the burning of wood and coal for heating. Rural areas are periodically affected by burn-offs and other rural practices. Vehicle emissions play a relatively minor role in air quality in our region.
- Monitoring of air quality by Environment Canterbury focuses on eight airsheds: Christchurch, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Ashburton, Washdyke, Timaru, Geraldine and Waimate[20].
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) released updated air quality guidelines in 2021 which include new air quality thresholds required to safeguard public health worldwide.

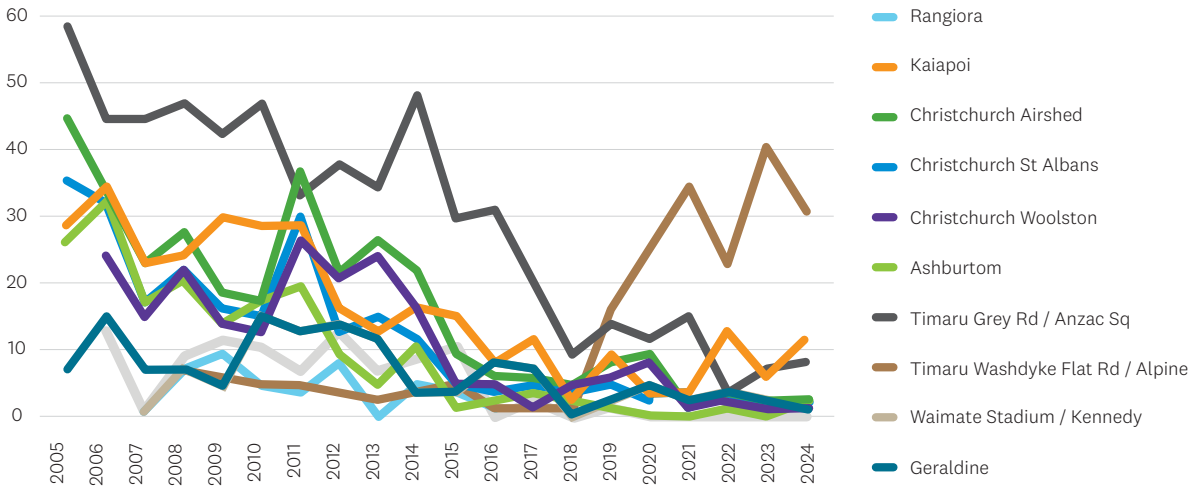
## Key indicators

- Air quality is improving in the cities and towns Environment Canterbury monitors, but pollution levels still sometimes exceed national and international health-based environmental standards. Based on WHO guidelines, the annual average[ii] for $PM_{10}$ in Timaru was at 100% of the WHO guideline levels and exceeded the annual average for $PM_{2.5}$ [21].

### *Perceptions*

- 56% of survey respondents in Canterbury thought New Zealand had a problem with air pollution, compared to 49% nationally. The top reason respondents thought air pollution was a problem was motor vehicles, followed by industrial activities[22].

## Number of high pollution nights[23] 2005 – 2024




ii Trends in the annual average are reported for the last ten years

# Biodiversity[24]

- Biodiversity (biological diversity) includes ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Biodiversity is a major issue nationally and globally. More than 4,000 native plants and animals are at risk of extinction in New Zealand.
- The Canterbury high country has iconic landscapes including tall tussock grasslands, native shrublands and largely unmodified alpine environments with extensive screes, bare rock, permanent icefields and glaciers.
- Canterbury has large areas of mountain beech forest, including in the catchments of the Ahuriri, Dobson/Hopkins, Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers, Craigieburn Forest Park and Arthur's Pass National Park.
- Naturally rare limestone areas occur in North and South Canterbury, which provide 'habitat islands' that support specialised plant communities.
- Canterbury has a number of culturally and ecologically significant river mouths, estuaries and coastal lagoons. The coastlines of Kaikōura, Banks Peninsula and coastal reef system off Timaru provide important habitat for marine life. Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary was New Zealand's first marine mammal sanctuary, to protect the nationally endangered Hector's dolphin/upokohue.
- Freshwater habitats in Canterbury support a diverse range of indigenous freshwater fish, including the endemic endangered Canterbury mudfish/kōwaro, and in the northern-most parts of the region, the threatened northern galaxias, dwarf galaxias, and shortjawed kokopu, which do not occur in other parts of the region.
- Braided rivers provide a habitat for a diversity of bird species including several threatened species (e.g. wrybill/ngutu parore, banded dotterel, black-fronted tern, Caspian tern, black billed gulls, black stilt/kaki).
- Wetlands provide habitat for a diverse range of plants and animals and once covered large areas of lowland Canterbury. Wetlands are now some of our rarest and most-at-risk ecosystems, with over 90% of Canterbury's lowland wetlands lost in the last 150 years. Examples that remain include:
  - estuaries; for example, the Heathcote/Ōpāwaho and Avon Rivers/Ihutai, and the Ashley River/Rakahuri mouth
  - coastal lagoons such as Wainono Lagoon and Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere
  - freshwater swamps such as Travis Wetland in Christchurch City
  - margins of the Ashburton lakes, and ephemeral kettlehole tarns in the glacial moraines of the high country.
- Some of the world's rarest bird species are found in the Canterbury region, including Hutton's shearwater, orange-fronted parakeet/kakariki, black stilt/kaki, white-flippered penguin/kororā, yellowhead/mohua and great spotted kiwi/roroa.
- The loss of biodiversity, especially taonga species, can negatively affect our wellbeing through changes or loss of culture, traditional practices, and language.
- Like the rest of New Zealand, there have been significant losses in indigenous biodiversity in Canterbury. This has primarily occurred through loss and modification of habitat because of deforestation, burning, drainage, settlement and development, and the introduction of invasive pests. The most significant losses in indigenous habitat and biodiversity have occurred in lowland and coastal environments (<400m), where development has been, and continues to be, most intensive. A key challenge is the ongoing loss of habitats that support indigenous flora and fauna, especially in lowland and montane parts of the region.

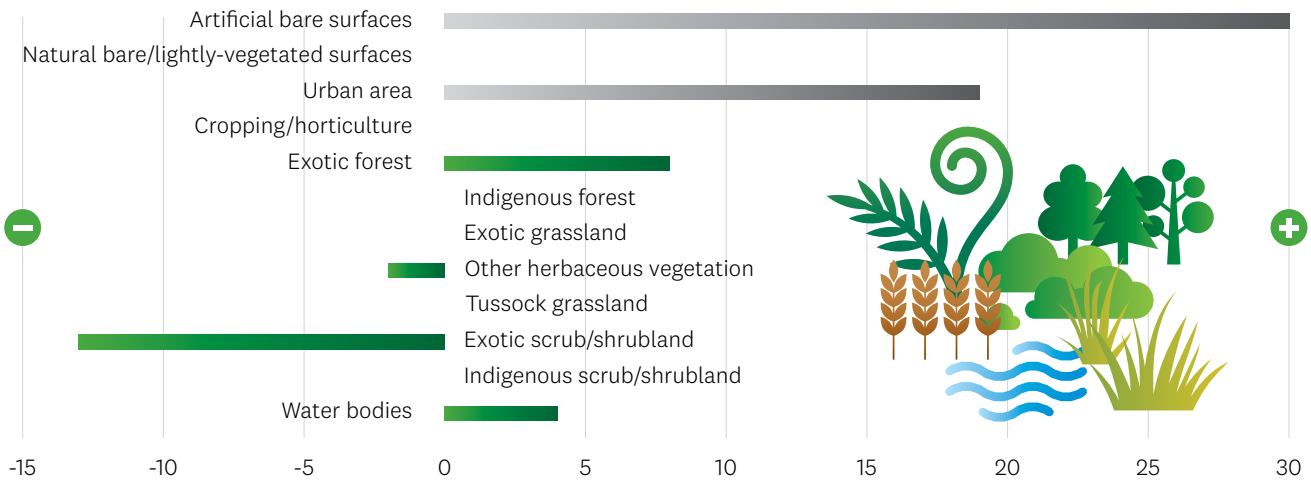
- Invasive species significantly impact on biodiversity. A suite of predators and browsers that have been introduced to New Zealand threaten many indigenous species. Invasive plants and algae can have severe effects on indigenous vegetation and ecosystems in both freshwater and marine environments. For example, wilding conifers present a challenge in high-country pastoral land and on public conservation areas in Canterbury. The conifers can dominate indigenous species, reduce the value of productive land, reduce water availability, affect soil carbon, facilitate the establishment of other alien species, compete with native plants and animals, and alter the natural character of landscapes[24].
- Climate change is already starting to impact on ecosystems and biodiversity. The main potential effects on biodiversity from climate change are gradual change in habitat, changes in species' distribution, increased threats from pests and disease due to changes in disease vector distribution, and habitat loss from sea-level rise, for example, coastal wetlands. Impacts are already starting to be seen, including abnormally high temperatures distributing native species, especially in the marine environment, reduction of the areas where some species can live or impacts from extreme events (e.g. droughts or floods). For example, droughts have been found to dramatically decrease the body size of kōwaro (Canterbury mudfish)[25].

## Key indicators

Nationally:

- 94% of reptiles (of 124 species), 80% of bats (of 5 species), 75% of frogs (of 4 species), 82% of terrestrial birds (of 217 species), 46% of vascular plants (of 2744 species), 19% of hornworts and liverworts (of 760 species), and 14% of lichens (of 2026 species) are threatened or at risk of becoming threatened[26]
- 76% of indigenous freshwater fish species (39 of 51) are threatened with extinction or at risk of becoming threatened[27]
- 90% of seabird species (86 of 96) and 82% of shorebird species (14 of 17) are threatened with extinction or at risk of becoming threatened[28]
- Between 1996 and 2018 216 hectares of freshwater wetlands were lost in Canterbury (4% of the total loss in NZ). Southland recorded the biggest loss of freshwater wetlands over this time, contributing to almost half (46%) of the total loss of freshwater wetlands in New Zealand with a reduction of 2,665 hectares. Between 2012-2018 6.8 hectares of freshwater wetland areas were lost in Canterbury [29]
- Canterbury recorded the biggest reduction in saline wetlands, contributing to over a third (70 hectares or 39%) of the total loss of saline wetlands in New Zealand between 1996 and 2018 [30]
- The expansion of urban land in Canterbury is reflected in changes in land cover between 1996 and 2018. Artificial area increased by 30%, urban area increased by 19% and exotic forest increased by 8%.

Area change (%) in land cover, Canterbury 1996–2018[31]



# Climate

- Canterbury has five main climate zones:
  - the plains, with prevailing winds from the north-east and south-west, low rainfall, and a relatively large annual temperature range by New Zealand standards
  - the eastern foothills and southern Kaikōuras, with cooler and wetter weather, and a high frequency of north-westerlies
  - the high country near the main divide, with prevailing north-west winds, abundant precipitation, winter snow and some glaciers particularly towards the south
  - Banks Peninsula and the coastal strip north of Amberley, with relatively mild winters, and rather high annual rainfall with a winter maximum
  - the inland basins and some sheltered valleys, where rainfall is low with a summer maximum, and diurnal and annual temperature ranges are large.

- In 2022, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum published the Canterbury Climate Change Risk Assessment[33]. This was a technical risk assessment that identified the range of risks to Canterbury from climate change. A summary of climate change projections to 2100 is provided below:
  - the sea level is projected to rise by about 0.8m above present day levels
  - wildfires will become more likely as hotter, drier summers occur. Rural areas will be more highly exposed
  - drought potential is likely to increase across most of Canterbury
  - it is projected that there will be between 20 and 60 more hot days (over 25°C) annually by 2100
  - wind is likely to increase in speed, and winter and spring are likely to be windier. This seasonal change is likely to be more strongly felt in inland areas north and west of Rangiora
  - summer rainfall is projected to increase up to 20% in the inland Canterbury Plains. It is projected to gradually reduce towards coastal areas, with a decrease of 5-15% in the area around Christchurch
  - an increase in winter rainfall of 15-40% is expected in the eastern, western, and southern parts of the region. Winter rainfall has the potential to be more strongly associated with storm events
  - as temperatures rise, there will be fewer snow days across the region
  - it is projected that there will be 20-50 fewer cold days per year, where the temperature is at or below 0°C
  - extreme weather events (e.g. severe storms) are likely to happen more often
  - our annual mean temperature is set to rise by 1.5 -3.5°C. Overall, our maximum daytime temperatures will be up 2-5°C. Canterbury's alpine and subalpine areas could be 5-6° warmer.

- Some of the impacts from climate change are likely to be:
  - increased pressure on water resources due to higher temperatures, less rainfall and greater evapotranspiration, particularly in North Canterbury. Droughts are likely to become more frequent and more extreme
  - sea-level rise and coastal erosion will impact on coastal settlements and some papatipu rūnanga marae. Christchurch is likely to face increased flooding in some areas, particularly around the lower Ōtākaro/Avon River
  - a changing climate will affect ecosystems and biodiversity. There may also be an increased threat to native species from changed distribution of disease vectors
  - extreme weather events, coastal erosion and sea-level rise will impact on coastal defence infrastructure, buildings, transport infrastructure, water infrastructure and flood protection infrastructure
  - warmer temperatures, a longer growing season and fewer frosts could provide opportunities to grow new crops[34].

# Natural hazards

- Flooding is a natural hazard of significant concern in Canterbury, from river flooding, surface flooding from local run-off and coastal over-topping. Climate change is likely to exacerbate this, as extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent.
- In May 2021, an extreme rainfall event occurred in Canterbury, in terms of volume and duration of rainfall. It was the largest 24-hour event on record for most of Canterbury's foothills rain gauges[35]. Impacts included extensive damage to farmland and the structural integrity of the Ashburton (SH1) bridge was compromised. Investment in infrastructure proved invaluable for protecting communities, including Ashburton, one of the hardest hit areas.
- Canterbury sits across the boundary of the Pacific Plate and the Australian Plate. The impacts of the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes and the 2016 North Canterbury earthquake have been well documented.
- The 2016 North Canterbury earthquake sequence triggered up to 20,000 landslides over 10,000km$^2$, uplifted coastal areas up to three metres, exposing the seabed, and triggered the biggest local-source tsunami in New Zealand since 1947 (nearly seven metres at Goose Bay)[36].
- The Alpine Fault has a high probability (estimated at 75%) of rupturing in the next 50 years. The rupture is expected to produce one of the biggest earthquakes since European settlement of New Zealand, and it will have a major impact on the lives of many people[37].
- Past land use (including, for example, closed landfills, former gasworks, fuel service stations, horticulture, timber treatment and sheep dips) has left a legacy of contaminated and potentially contaminated land sites across the region.

## Asset cost and benefit value

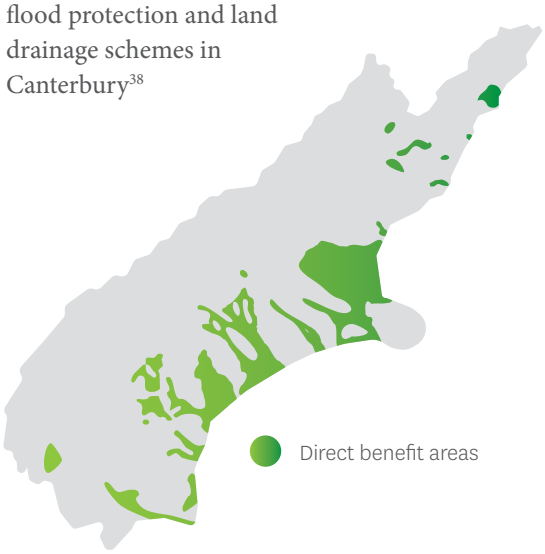
**Asset cost**

$0.7 billion

**Benefit value**

$108 billion

Asset cost (capex and opex) and Net Present Value of river control, flood protection and land drainage schemes in Canterbury[38]



# Infrastructure

- The region is well-connected nationally and internationally and is a gateway to Antarctica. Canterbury has the South Island's major international airport (Christchurch), a regional airport (Timaru), two seaports (Timaru and Lyttelton) and inland ports at Rolleston. In the 2024 year, $9.9b value of cargo was exported from Christchurch airport, Lyttelton and Timaru ports (14% of total NZ cargo exported) and $7.6b value of cargo was imported (10% of total NZ cargo imported)[39].
- Major infrastructure projects that are either proposed, in progress or recently completed include:
  - State highway and regionally significant road and rail projects/improvements, including the SH1 Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass, SH76 Brougham Street upgrade, and the second Ashburton Bridge
  - Pages Road bridge-replacement – a significant resilience project for the east of Christchurch City
  - Greater Christchurch Public Transport Futures programme and Mass Rapid Transit
  - Flood protection and recovery across the region, covering the Waiau, Ashley/Rakahuri, Waimakariri and Rangitata rivers as well as a region-wide planting and berm management project
  - New primary schools in Prebbleton, Lincoln and Halswell, additional classrooms across Christchurch schools, Christchurch Hospital upgrade, upgrades and new builds at the three Christchurch prisons
  - Te Pae (Christchurch Convention and Exhibition Centre), Parakiore Recreation and Sport Centre (metro sports facility), the Christchurch multi-use arena, One NZ Stadium Te Kaha and the newly opened Court Theatre in Christchurch
  - Tāwhaki National Aerospace Centre
  - The 230 hectare, 150 megawatt solar farm, Kōwhai Park at Christchurch International Airport[40]
  - Lauriston Solar Farm, a joint venture partnership between Genesis Energy and FRV Services Australia, located in Lauriston, near Ashburton. The solar farm is located on a 93-hectare site and has a nominal capacity of 47MW. It is expected to generate approximately 100GWh of electricity per year. The solar farm became operational in 2025 and was, at that time, the largest operational solar farm in New Zealand[41]
  - A new 93 megawatt windfarm is to be built at Mt Cass[42], owned by MainPower. It will be the largest windfarm in the South Island, and will generate enough power for 40,000 homes and will potentially offset 100,000 tons of greenhouse $CO^2$ emissions per year.

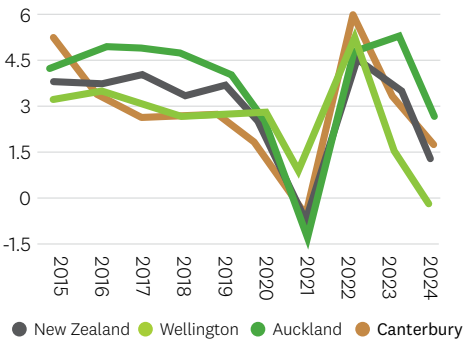
# Regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

- The country faced a high inflation peak post COVID (7.3% in June 2022 quarter), but at the same time, Canterbury's GDP grew 6% in 2022 and 3.3% in 2023 (compared to Auckland (4.8; 5.1), Wellington (5.5;1.5) and New Zealand (4.5; 3.5)[43]
- Canterbury's GDP in the year ended March 2024 (latest available) was $52 billion. This represents 12% of national GDP (compared with 17% of land area and 13% of national population)[44]
- Canterbury's percentage change in GDP 2016-2021 was 24%, the third lowest percentage growth out of the regions, below the national level of 28%. Bay of Plenty had the highest percentage growth of 45% between 2006-2021
- Canterbury's GDP grew by 1.6% in the year to March 2024, putting it in the top five regions and ahead of the national GDP increase of 1.4%. Two regions experienced negative growth (Taranaki and Wellington). In the previous year (to March 2024), Canterbury's GDP increased 3.3%, just below the national GDP increase of 3.5%
- Canterbury's GDP per person (March 2024) was $75,743 just below the national GDP per capita ($79,210) and much lower than GDP per person in Wellington ($100,445) and Auckland ($88,878)
- Over the decade to 2024, however, average annual per cent growth in GDP per person was higher in Canterbury (2.9%) than Wellington (2.5%), but lower than Auckland (3.5%) and New Zealand (3%). All regions experienced a negative growth in GDP per person from 2020 to 2021 (year ended March 2021)[i]
- In the year ended March 2024 (latest available), professional, scientific and technical services contributed 10.6% of Canterbury's GDP (9.6% nationally). Manufacturing contributed 8.6% (down from 2020 when its contribution to regional GDP was 11% (nationally 7.8%)). Primary industries contributed 7.7% (nationally 5.8%)
- The impact of COVID-19 on regional economies has been varied. Canterbury's underlying activity in the manufacturing, construction and agricultural sectors has provided some protection on the regional economy from these impacts

## GDP per person by regions year to March 2024

| | |
|---|---|
| Gisborne | $52,175 |
| Northland | $52,832 |
| Tasman | $57,304 |
| Manawatū-Whanganui | $60,364 |
| Hawke's Bay | $62,199 |
| Bay of Plenty | $64,569 |
| Waikato | $69,373 |
| Nelson | $70,601 |
| Otago | $74,201 |
| **Canterbury** | **$75,743** |
| New Zealand | $79,210 |
| Southland | $81,807 |
| Marlborough | $83,124 |
| Taranaki | $86,415 |
| West Coast | $86,539 |
| Auckland | $88,878 |
| Wellington | $100,445 |

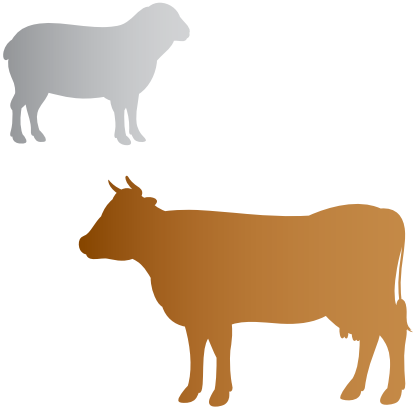
## Annual percentage change in GDP year ended March 2024



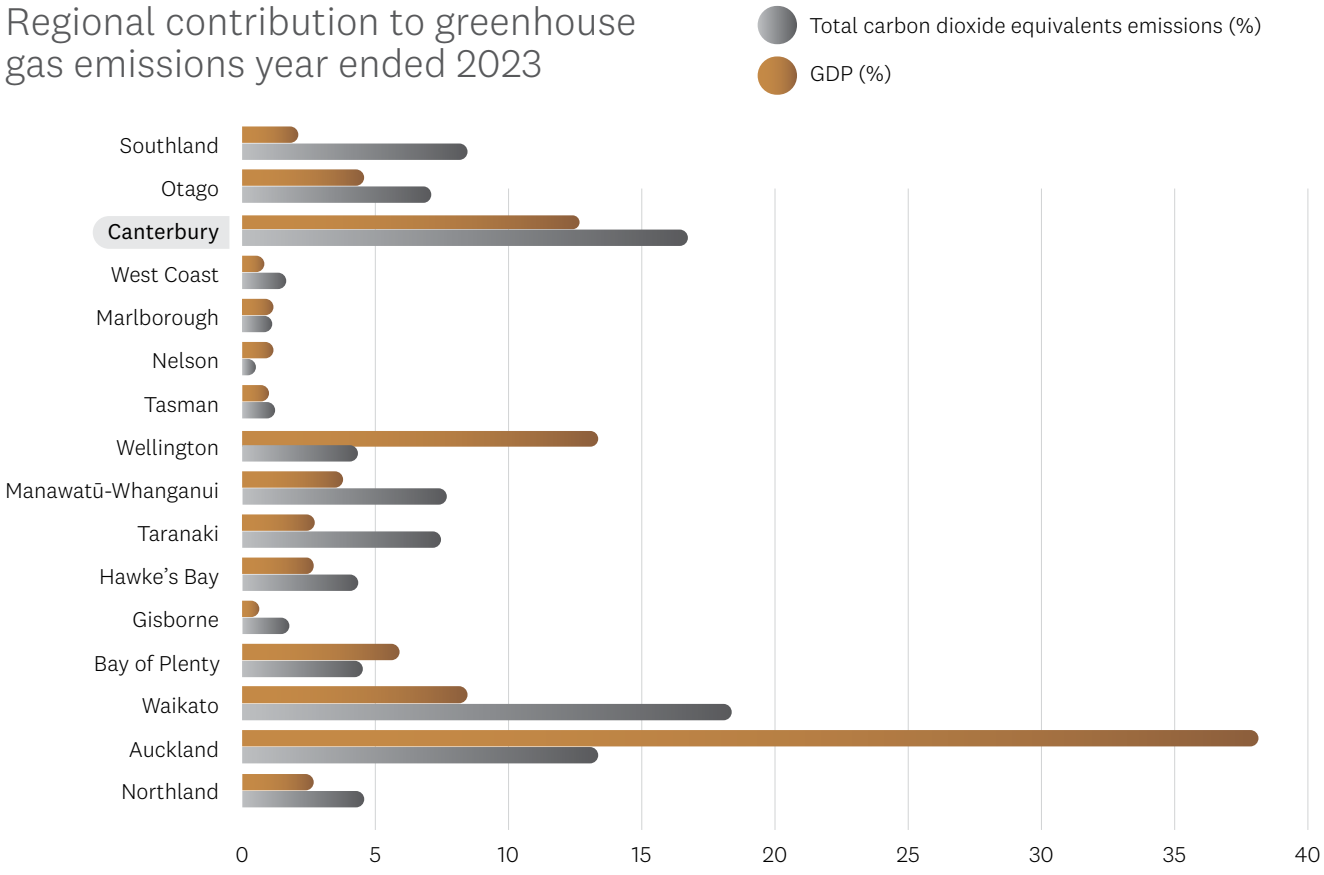

i Tasman and Nelson regions have been combined to maintain data quality standards. Chatham Islands has been combined with Canterbury to maintain data quality standards.

## Regional greenhouse gas emissions

- In 2023 (latest available), Canterbury was the second highest emitter of greenhouse gases, contributing to 16% of all greenhouse gas emissions in New Zealand.
- Waikato contributed the highest at 18% and Auckland contributed 13%.
- The structure of regional economies impact on emissions contribution. Canterbury's emissions are mainly from agriculture (75%) and manufacturing (9%). Wellington, which had a similar economic output in 2024 to Canterbury (contributing 13% to national GDP) contributed 4% to total greenhouse gas emissions. This reflects the higher proportion of service industries in Wellington compared to the higher proportion of primary and goods-producing industries in Canterbury.
- In 2022, Canterbury accounted for 19% of the agriculture industry emissions in New Zealand, similar to Waikato also at 19%. Canterbury had a slight fall from 2021, although an overall increase from 2019 of 1%.[45]



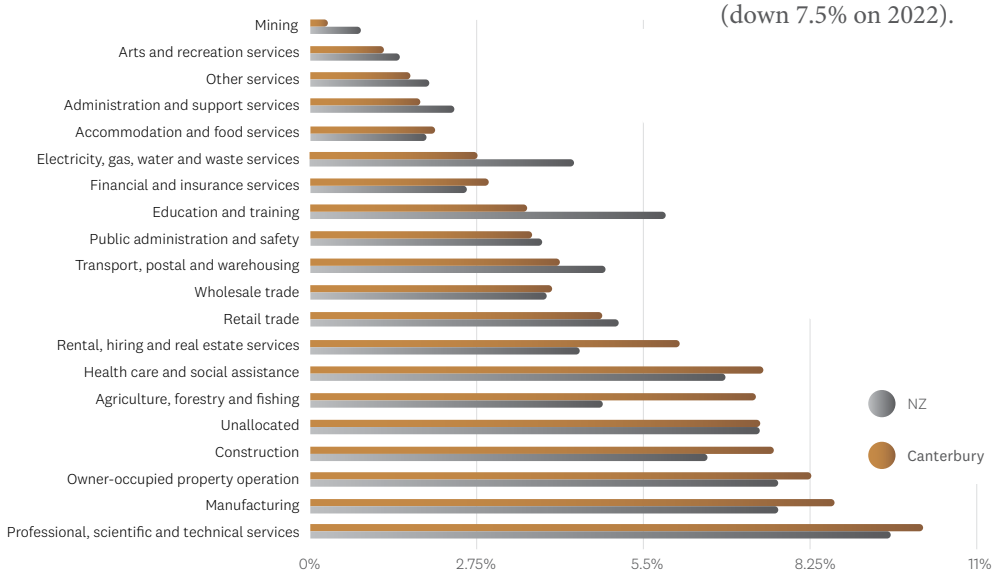
Regional contribution to greenhouse gas emissions year ended 2023



## Agriculture

- Agriculture contributed 7.5% of regional GDP in the year to March 2024, compared with 5.0% nationally. There is a lot of diversity between the industry compositions of Canterbury's sub-regions. Primary industries accounted for the smallest proportion in the whole Canterbury region compared with 25.3% in the region excluding the Greater Christchurch area[46].
- Agriculture plays a significantly more important role in Canterbury's economy than in the economies of Auckland and Wellington regions, contributing $3.9 billion to Canterbury's regional GDP in 2024 (Auckland $425 million, Wellington $362 million).
- Agriculture also generates a significant amount of economic activity from supporting industries including primary manufacturing, other manufacturing, professional, scientific and technical services, owner-occupied property operation; transport and warehousing, and financial and insurance services.
- Dairy cattle farming is by far the largest generator of primary industries GDP in Canterbury in 2019, followed by sheep, beef and grain farming[47].
- There were 6,489 farm holdings in Canterbury, covering a total of 2,511,759 hectares (19% of farmed land in NZ) in 2024[48].
- In June 2024[49], Canterbury with 16.9% of NZ's land area had:
  - 1,256,000 dairy cattle (down 7.7% on 2023) – 22% of NZ's dairy cattle
  - 569,000 beef cattle (up 5% on 2023) – 15% of NZ's beef cattle
  - 4,190,000 sheep (down 7.5% on 2023) – 18% of NZ's sheep
  - 172,000 pigs (up 14.9% on 2023) – 71% of NZ's farmed pigs
  - 236,000 deer (down 5.9% on 2023) – 33% of NZ's farmed deer.
- In Canterbury, in the year to 30 June 2024[50]:
  - 362,900 tonnes of wheat were harvested (up 17.7% on 2023) – 78% of NZ's total wheat harvested
  - 239,900 tonnes of barley were harvested (up 4.9% on 2023) – 67% of NZ's total barley harvested.
- In Canterbury in the year to 31 March 2018[51] (latest available):
  - 2,700 hectares of exotic timber were harvested (down 11.5% on 2017) – 4% of NZ's total hectares harvested
  - 1,275,300 $m^3$ of exotic timber were harvested (down 0.2% on 2017) – 4% of NZ's total $m^3$ harvested.
  - 2,200 hectares of exotic timber were re-planted (up 37.8% on 2017) – 5% of NZ's total hectares replanted.
- In the year to 30 June 2024[52] (latest available), 6,090 hectares of horticultural land[i] in Canterbury was planted in potatoes (up 44% on 2022), 2,170 planted in onions (up 104% on 2022) and 1,230 hectares of wine grapes (down 7.5% on 2022).

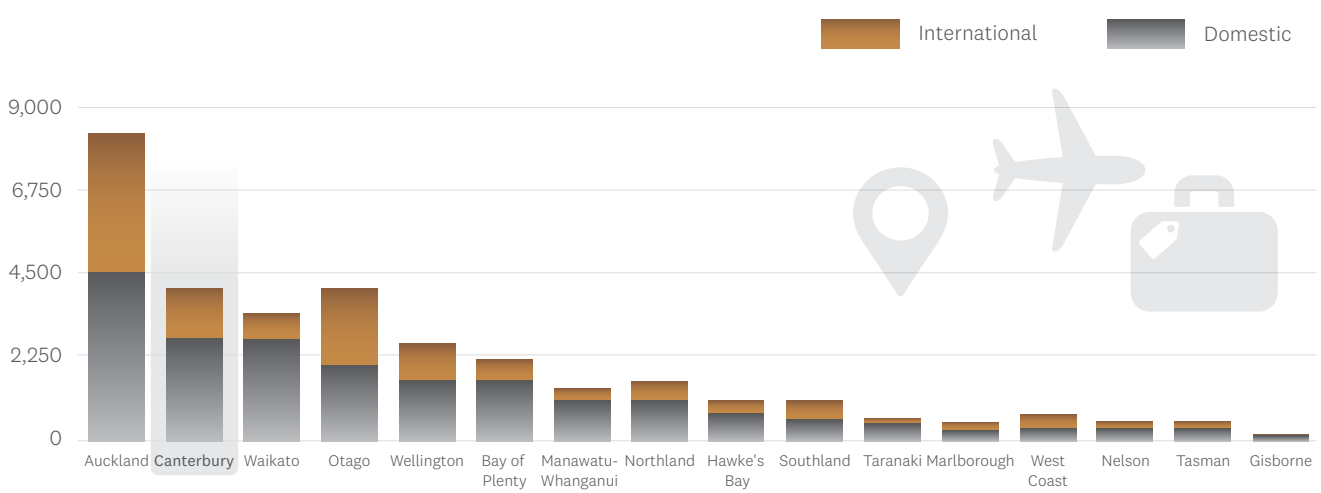
### Sector per cent of Canterbury region and NZ GDP, to March 2024



## International and domestic visitors

- From March 2020, New Zealand imposed international border restrictions in response to COVID-19 which had a significant impact on visitor arrivals to New Zealand. Annual visitor arrivals into New Zealand dropped dramatically from 3.7 million in the year ended March 2020, to 52,690 in 2021 (year ended March). Visitor numbers are now close to pre-Covid levels at 3.3 million in the year ended March 2025[53].
- Prior to border controls to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Zealand's total number of international visitor arrivals increased by 120% over the past 20 years from 1.65 million in 2000 to 3.7 million in 2020 (year ended March). The largest growth in visitor numbers came from China, up from 26,802 in 1999 to 328,145 in the year ending March 2020. The top five visitor numbers in 2015 to New Zealand were Australia (1.4 million), USA (377,000), China (248,000), United Kingdom (184,000) and India (82,000). [54].
- In the year to March 2025, 28% of overseas visitor arrivals into Christchurch airport (441,026), stated their purpose of visit was to visit friends/relatives, 57% for holiday purposes and 5% for business. 47% of those overseas visitors were from Australia. To compare, in the year to March 2022 (immediately post COVID-19 border controls) 31,460 international visitors arrived in New Zealand at Christchurch International Airport. Of these, around 8% came on business, 63% to visit friends and relatives, and 17% on holiday. 85% of those overseas visitors were from Australia[55].
- In the 2024-2025 cruise ship season 147,216 cruise ship passengers visited a Canterbury port, still significantly down 20% from to year to June 2019[56].
- In year ended March 2024, tourism expenditure was 4.3% of regional GDP in Canterbury, compared with 10.7% in Otago and 7.4% in West Coast regions[57].
- Annual domestic spend to March 2025 in Canterbury was $2.7b. Canterbury ranked second with Waikato ($2.66) behind Auckland ($4.6b)[58]. In the year to March 2025, international spend in Canterbury was $1.5b. Spend includes accommodation services, transport services, food and beverage services, cultural, recreation and gambling services and retail sales[59] .
- The tourism sector employed an average of 26,428 people in Canterbury region in 2024. Employment growth in the tourism sector has averaged 0.6% pa between 2000 and 2024, compared with an average of 1.3% (NZ), 1.9% (West Coast) and 2.7% (Otago)[60]. Kaikōura has 31.5% employment in the tourism sector, with Mackenzie's tourism employment 42.5% of total employment[61].

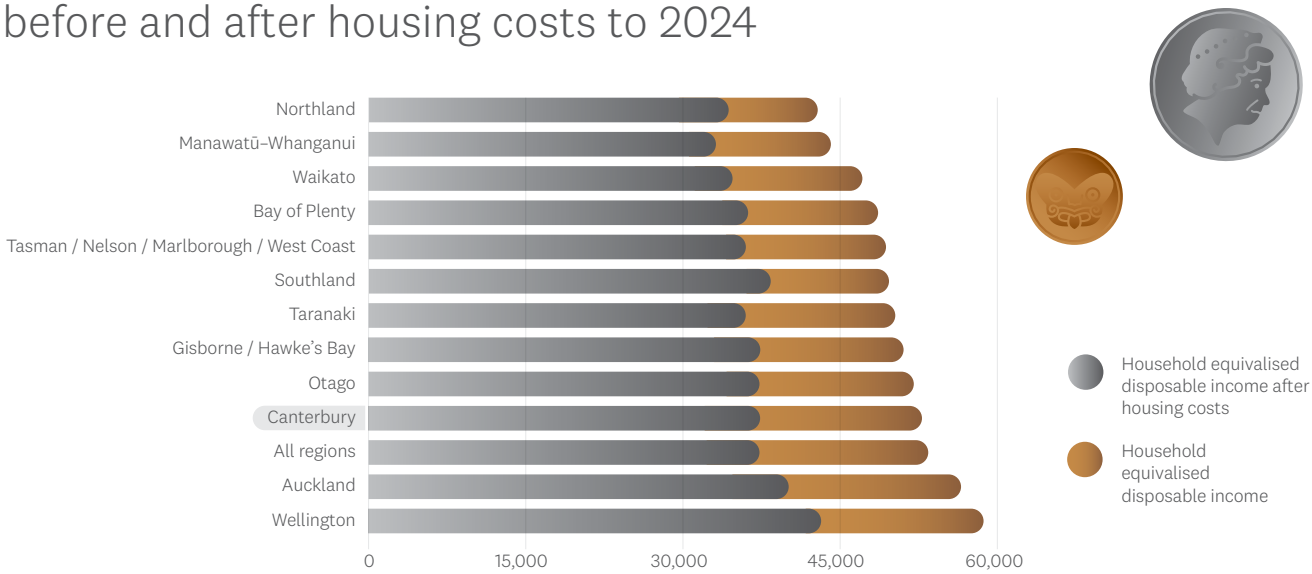
Estimated tourism spend per region, year ended March 2025



# Income

- Median weekly income for individuals in Canterbury was $950 (NZ $959) in 2024. Median household weekly income in 2024 from all sources was $2,200 (NZ $2,349) for the same period[62].
- In Canterbury, median hourly earnings in full-time work in June 2024 were $35.00 (NZ $35.02) and $26.50 in part-time work (NZ $26.50)[63].
- Median annual equivalised disposable income by household was $51,245 before housing costs, and $37,974 after housing costs in the year ended June 2024[64]. Equivalising income removes the effect of different household sizes and compositions on estimates to compare income across households of different sizes and compositions.
- The NZ consumers price index increased 2.4% in the March 2025 quarter compared with the March 2024 quarter. This was within the Reserve Bank of New Zealand's target band of 1 to 3%. Between the June 2021 and June 2024 quarters annual inflation was above the target band, peaking at 7.3% in the June 2022 quarter. This was the largest annual increase since a 7.6% annual increase in the year to the June 1990 quarter [65].
- For the household living costs price index, average household annual living costs increased 3% from the December 2023 quarter to the December 2024 quarter[66].
- The percentage of children in Canterbury living in households in severe material hardship was 3.7% in year ended June 2024, compared to 5.4% nationally[67].
- 36% of respondents in Canterbury to the 2023 General Social Survey reported that they did not have enough money, or only just had enough money to meet everyday needs, an increase from 29% in 2021. In comparison, 39% of total respondents in NZ in 2023 reported they did not have enough money, or only just had enough money to meet everyday needs[68].
- The number of people receiving a Jobseeker Support (Work Ready) benefit in Canterbury decreased from the highest number in eight years of 21,120 December 2020 to 15,540 in March 2023. Since then the number has been increasing steadily and was 19,269 in March 2025. In March 2025 57% had been receiving the benefit continuously for more than a year (NZ 60%)[69].

## Median equivalised disposable income before and after housing costs to 2024



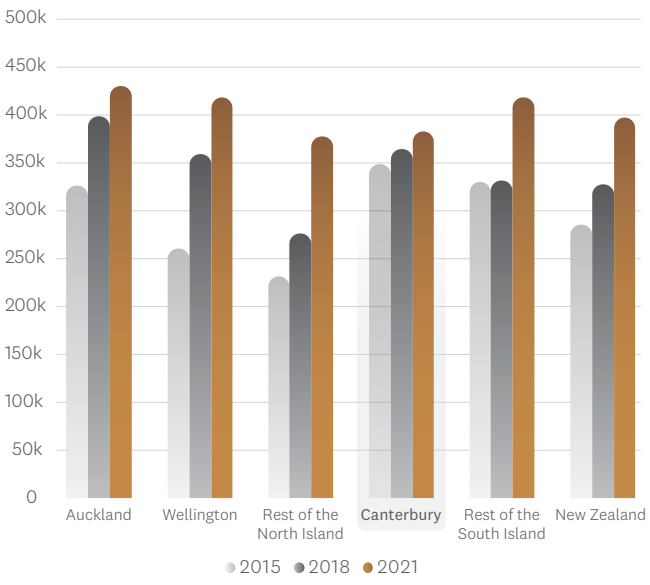
# Housing

- In Census 2023, 70% of total Canterbury households stated that they lived in a dwelling they owned or partly owned (NZ 66%, Auckland 60%, Wellington 66%). Home ownership rates have dropped from 71% in Canterbury in 2001 (NZ 68%, Auckland 64%, Wellington 67%)[70].
- According to the latest available REINZ report (May 2025) Canterbury's median house price was $680,000, no change from May 2024, and 89% of the national median house price (NZ $763,000)[71]
- Long-term property value growth in Canterbury has increased according to the latest REINZ house price index – Canterbury had the third strongest annual performance of all regions over the past year in HPI with a 2% increase[72].
- In the last two decades average house value growth (annual change, year to March) in Canterbury reached a maximum of 27% in 2022, and minimum of 8.2% in 2009[73].
- Massey Home Affordability Report December 2024[74] noted overall housing affordability had improved, due to a decrease in mortgage interest rates and median house prices, and increase in weekly earnings. Canterbury had a 20.3% improvement in home affordability in the last twelve months (to December 2023) compared with 19% improvement across all regions. Compared to other regions, Canterbury's regional affordability as a percentage of the national average is 102%. Auckland is the highest at 120% and West Coast the lowest at 55%.
- In Canterbury, the average house value was 6.1 times the average household income (NZ 6.5 times). 37% of the average household income in Canterbury would be needed to service a 20 year mortgage on the average house value, with a 20% deposit at average 2 year fixed interest rate in 2025[75]).
- Median household net worth in Canterbury grew from $364,000 in 2018 to $383,000 in 2021. This is less than median net worth for the country as a whole ($397,000 in 2021), but lower than median net worth in both Auckland and Wellington. Canterbury has had a significantly lower growth rate. Growth rate has slowed for Auckland and Wellington between 2018-2021, compared to 2015-2018, albeit at a higher rate, whereas the rest of the South Island and North Island had a significantly high growth rate between 2018-2021, compared to 2015-2018[76].
- Canterbury has lower residential rents compared to Wellington and Auckland. Average weekly residential rent was $513 in Canterbury compared to $589 in Wellington and $633 in Auckland iyear to March 2025. This was an increase of 2.6% in Canterbury compared to the same period in 2024. This follows from increases of 9.6% and 8.8% in the previous two years (2023-2024 and 2022-2023)[77].
- The number of people on the accommodation supplement (MSD) has increased from 26,485 in May 2019 to 32,556 in May 2022, with a peak of 35,373 in January 2021[78].

Perception

- 23.8% of respondents to the General Social Survey 2023 in Canterbury reported their house or flat as mouldy, compared to 35% in NZ[79] This is down from 33% in 2021

## Median household net worth



# Regional confidence

- Regional confidence reports are compiled from surveys and other relevant information at the time of report compilation. Carried out on a quarterly basis they fluctuate from quarter to quarter, especially in uncertain economic conditions. The below surveys were the latest available at the time of writing.
- According to the Westpac-McDermott Miller Regional Economic Confidence survey (March 2025 quarter)[80], Canterbury has been one of the most resilient parts of the country, but conditions are mixed across industries. With a strong rural sector, the lift in commodity prices has been a welcome boost for farmers and associated businesses. Businesses reliant on households' discretionary spending (retail and wholesale) have reported low demand but Canterbury's construction sector has held up better than other parts of the country, though some operators have faced challenging conditions.
- There has been an increase in the number and quality of applicants for those businesses looking for staff, but filling highly specialised roles is still challenging.
- The ASB Regional Economic Scorecard (June 2025 Q1 2025)[81] ranked Canterbury first of the 16 regions, up from 2nd in the previous quarter and from its 7th position in Q1 2024, back to first place which it held for seven consecutive quarters in 2021-2022.
- The region is noted for surging consumer confidence, sizeable population growth and continued improvements in the housing market. Strong commodity prices are supporting rural New Zealand and the robust increase in dairy and meat prices will support the agriculture sector in Canterbury. As a significant hub for renewable energy in New Zealand, ongoing projects such as the Kowhai Park Solar Farm and the Lauriston Solar Farm are expected to drive the region's development.

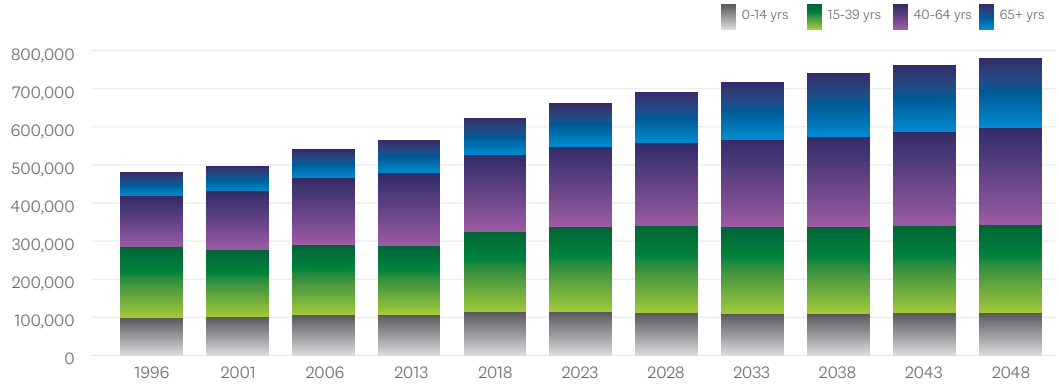
# Canterbury's population

- Canterbury is New Zealand's second-largest region by population after Auckland, with an estimated resident population (June 2024) of 687, 100[82].
- Population density in Canterbury is 15.4 people per km² (New Zealand 18.7)[vi].
- 55% per cent of the South Island's population lives in Canterbury. Canterbury's population is unevenly distributed across the region, with 60% in Christchurch City and 77% in Greater Christchurch (Christchurch City, Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts)[83].

## Key indicators

- On the medium projection, Canterbury's population is expected to grow from 622,800 in 2018 to 780,500 in 2048 – an average annual growth rate of 1%, in line with New Zealand's overall population growth rate[84]. The high rate projection would see a Canterbury population of 900,000 in 2048.
- Canterbury's population is structurally ageing. The median age was 39 years in 2024 (NZ 38 years)[85], and is projected to increase to 45 years in 2048 (NZ 44 years). By 2048, the proportion of the population aged 15–64 years in Canterbury is projected to be 62%, lower than the proportion in Auckland (66%) but similar to Wellington, Otago and New Zealand proportions. By 2048, the number of deaths in Canterbury is projected to increase as the population ages, becoming close to equally the projected number of births.
- Population growth in Canterbury in the year to June 2024 was 1.6%, just below the national population growth rate was 1.7%. Most of the population growth in Canterbury was from net migration: 51% (5,400 people) was from net international migration, 31% (3,200 people) from net internal migration and 18% (1,900 people) from natural increase. Population growth in Canterbury region averaged 1.7% over the 5 years to 2024[86].
- International travel restrictions due to COVID-19 had a significant impact on net migration and therefore population growth in the June 2021 year. In the year to June 2021, there was a natural increase of 2,900 people, and net migration of 2,800 people to Canterbury, resulting in a population growth of 5,700 people (1%). In the previous year (June 2020), Canterbury's population growth was 2.2% (or 13,600 people) with 82% of Canterbury's population growth from net migration. Net migration contributed to 75% of national population growth.
- International travel restrictions due to COVID-19 had a significant impact on net migration and therefore population growth in the June 2021 year. In the year to June 2023, population growth in Canterbury exceeded pre-COVID levels with a population growth of 2.8% (total population 18,300 people)[87].

Population age structure, Canterbury regional council area medium projection, 1996–2048 (2018-base)



# Employment

## Key indicators

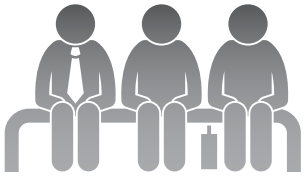
- Canterbury's employment rate in the March quarter 2025 was 69% (NZ 67.6%, Auckland 68.9% Wellington 71.3%), down from 70.1% in the March 2024 quarter[88].
- Canterbury's unemployment rate in the March 2025 quarter was 4.6% (NZ 4.9%, Auckland 5.4%, Wellington 4.6%), up from 3.7% in March 2024. Overall, unemployment rates have been consistently lower than the New Zealand average and have tracked down over the long-term except for temporary trends following the earthquake rebuild passing its peak and COVID-19 impacts. However unemployment rates have been trending upward since 2023.
- In the year to March 2025, the labour market under-utilisation rate in Canterbury was 12.0%, the same as the national rate and down from 10.3% in the year to March 2024.
- In 2025 (end March) 10.9% of Canterbury's 15–24 year-olds were estimated to be not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to NZ 12.8%, Auckland 13.9%, Wellington 9.6%. This was up from a low of 8.2% in 2016 but, similar to the unemployment rate, Canterbury has been consistently lower than NZ over last 20 years.

Canterbury's employment rate in the year to March 2025

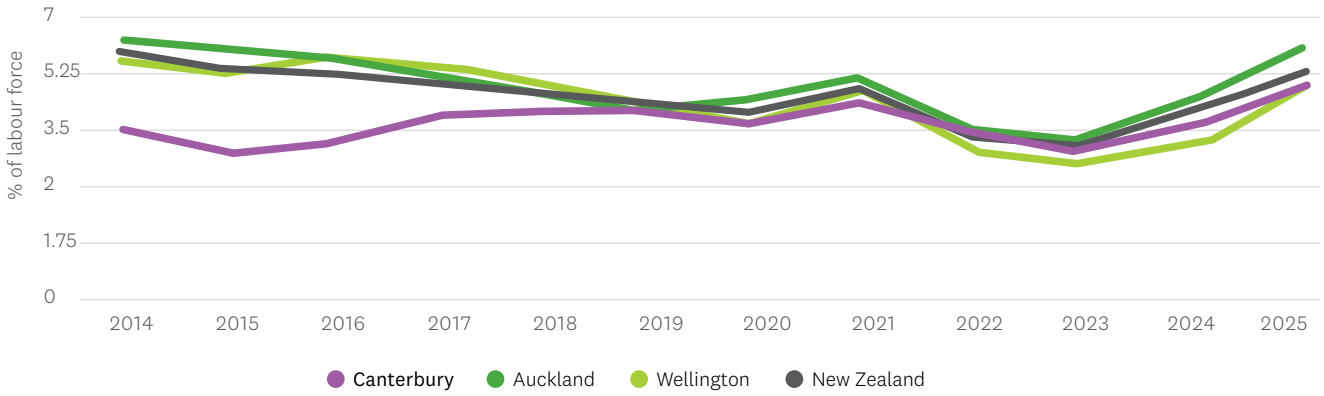
69%

down from 70% in March 2024.

| | |
|---|---|
| New Zealand | 67.6% |
| Auckland | 70.1% |
| Wellington | 71.3% |



Unemployment rate 2014-2025



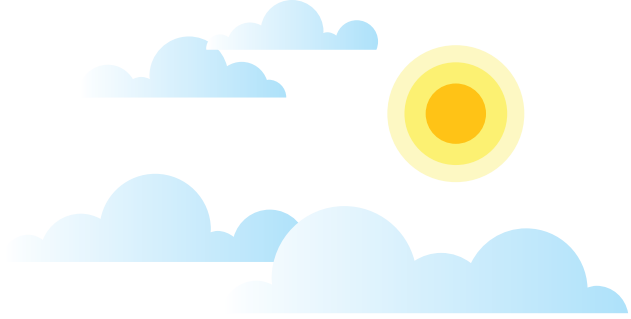
15–24 year-olds in Canterbury estimated to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) in (the year to March) 2025

# 10.9%

up from a low of 8.2% in 2016

| | |
|---|---|
| New Zealand | 12.8% |
| Auckland | 13.9% |
| Wellington | 9.6% |

- Compared to the national average, Canterbury has a higher proportion of jobs in manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade and construction. Employment in Christchurch City is heavily concentrated on healthcare, retail, manufacturing, construction, professional services and education. Selwyn and Waimakariri have traditionally been agriculturally focused, while construction and retail have begun to form an increasingly prominent role. Employment in the rest of Canterbury is heavily focused on agriculture and food processing. Accommodation and food services employment is also higher than the Canterbury average, primarily because of tourism activity in Kaikōura, Hurunui, and Mackenzie.
- Self-employment rates are highest in the construction, professional scientific and technical services, agriculture, forestry and fishing and rental, heiring and real estate services [89].
- Between 2023 and 2024 accommodation and food services (1891 jobs), followed by health care and social assistance (1092 jobs) made the largest contribution to employment growth in Canterbury. The construction sector had the largest decline (13 jobs) for the same period[90].
- In the year ended March 2024, the percentage of employed in each occupation (ANZSCO major groups) in Canterbury was, in order: professionals (23.8%), managers (17.9%), technicians and trades workers (13.1%), labourers (11.2%), clerical and administrative workers (10.3%), community and personal service workers (9.4%), sales workers (8.8%) and machinery operators and drivers (5.4%). This largely matches the national average; although Canterbury has slightly fewer 'professionals' and slightly more 'technicians and trades workers' and 'labourers' than the national average[91].



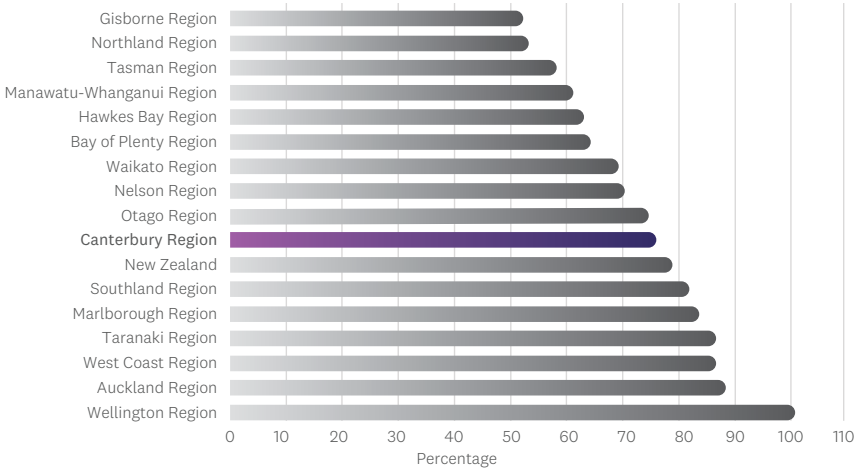
# Education

- Canterbury has three universities (the University of Canterbury, Lincoln University and the University of Otago Medical School), a regional polytechnic the Ara Institute of Canterbury and the largest public library in the South Island (Tūranga).

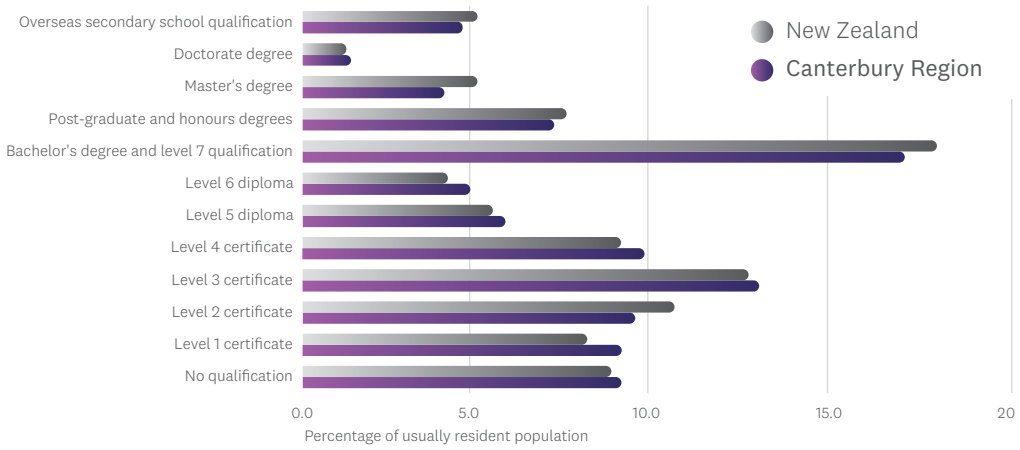
## Key indicators

- In Census 2023, 20% of Canterbury population were in full-time study (21% NZ)[92].
- In 2023 (latest figures available), 80% of school leavers in Canterbury stayed at school until at least their 17th birthday, similar to the national average. In the same period, 76% of school leavers in Canterbury had attained NCEA Level 2 or above (NZ 74.4%)[93]. These figures are slightly lower than 2020.
- 33% of Canterbury school leavers in 2022 were undertaking a bachelor's degree in their first year, 24.7% were in a certificate or diploma programme and 39.7% were not enrolled in tertiary education[94]. Again these figures are slightly lower than 2019.
- In 2024 Canterbury employment was highest in the highly skilled occupation category (typically require a bachelor degree or higher), accounting for 37.4% of total employment, which was lower than Christchurch City (38.0%), Selwyn District (38.1%) and New Zealand (38.5%).
- The next largest broad skill category in Canterbury was low skilled (typically require NZ Register Level 3 qualification or lower), accounting for 35.8%, which was higher than Christchurch City (34.7%), New Zealand (34.7%) and Selwyn District (35.5%)[95].

## School leavers with NCEA L2+




## Highest qualification (Census 2023)



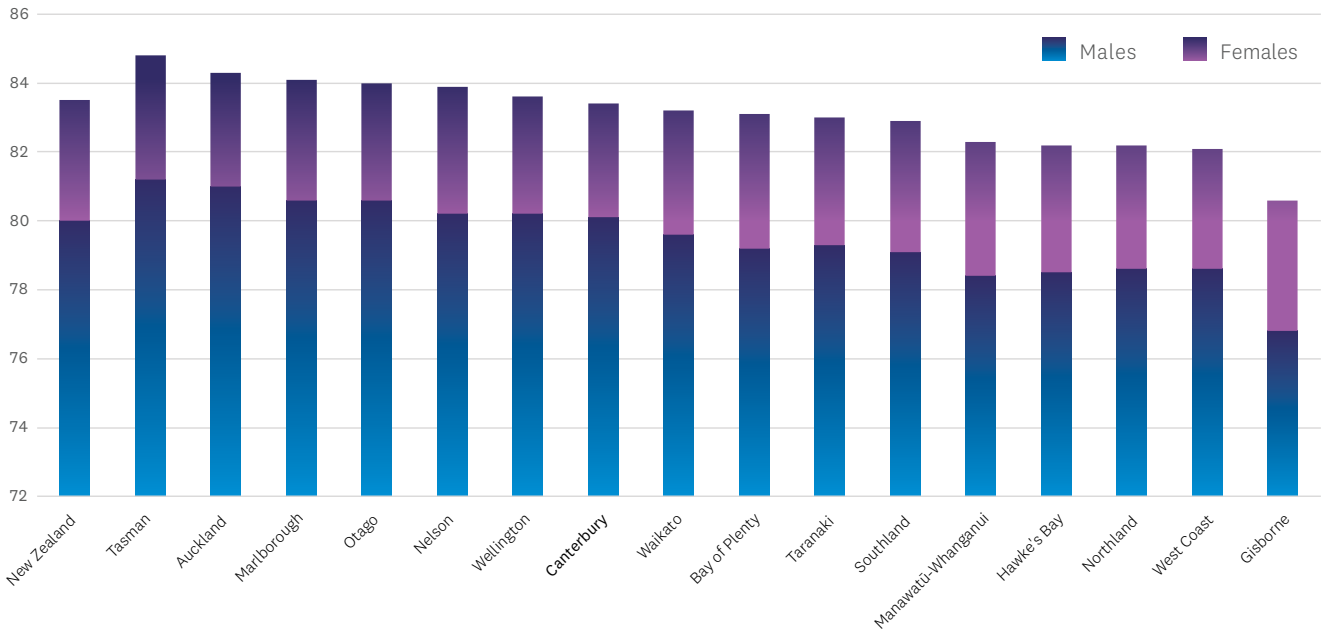
# Health

- Canterbury has the largest tertiary, research and teaching hospital in the South Island.
- The Canterbury earthquakes of 2010–11 resulted in a significant increase in demand for mental health services for adults, children and adolescents. The Ministry of Health 2017-2020 Health Survey noted higher prevalence of mental health disorders in Canterbury region than the New Zealand average. Prevalence of other health conditions tended to be lower than total New Zealand prevalence[96].
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated demand for mental health services in Canterbury[97], and has had ongoing mental health and wellbeing impacts across the nation.

## Key indicators

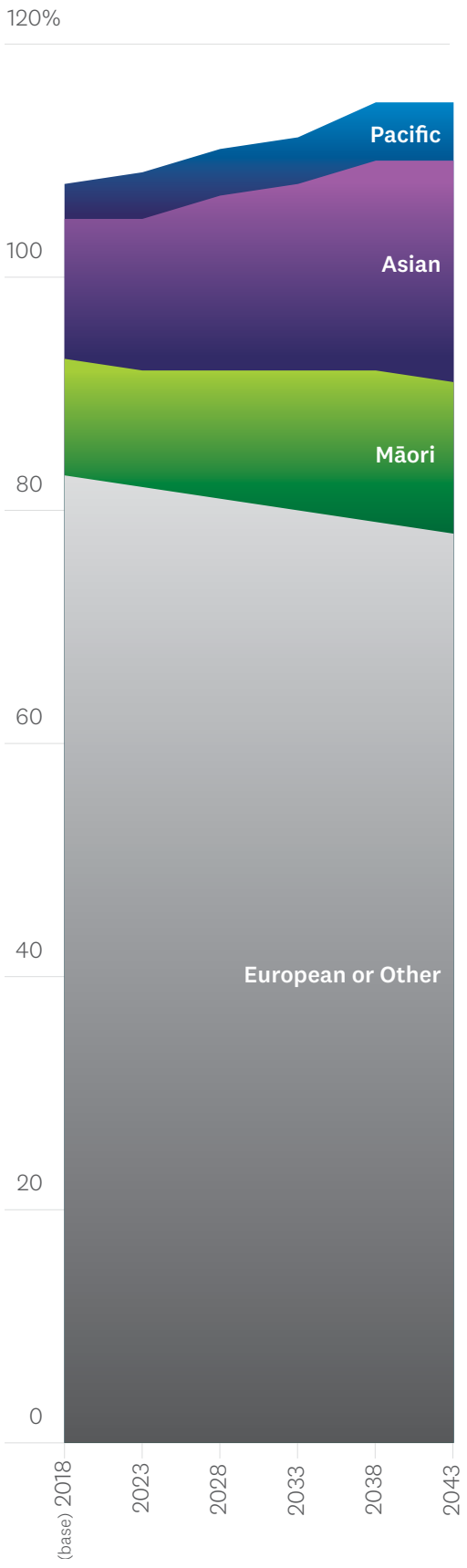
- Based on death rates in New Zealand in 2017-2019 (latest available), the life expectancy at birth is marginally higher in Canterbury (83.8 female, 80.1 males) than New Zealand's total population (83.5 female, 80.0 male), but lower than the life expectancy in Auckland. The life expectancy at birth is considerably higher in Canterbury's Māori population (81.0 female, 77.3 male) than New Zealand's total Māori population (77.2 female, 73.5 male)[98].
- In 2023, 48% of Canterbury wellbeing survey respondents rated their health excellent or very good (NZ 47%). Responses to subjective questions on mental wellbeing were very similar to total NZ responses[99].
- The annual suicide rate in Canterbury was 1.22 per 10,000 people in the year to December 2019, higher than in Auckland region (0.92) and New Zealand (1.19), up from, 1.19 in the previous 12 months. Over the ten years to December 2019, the annual average suicide rate in Canterbury was 1.20 per 10,000 people.[100]

Median life expectancy at birth by region (2017-2019)



# Culture and identity

- Canterbury has a higher percentage of people who identify as European than New Zealand as a whole, and smaller percentages of people who identify as Māori, Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern, or Latin American and African[101].
- The proportion of the population that identifies as European or Other (including 'New Zealander') is projected to decline in Canterbury, from 83% in 2018 to 78% in 2043, while the proportions of the population that identify as Māori, Asian and/or Pacific are projected to increase.
- Māori and Pacific populations in Canterbury have a markedly younger age structure than the total population, due to higher birth rates; people who identify as Asian or as Middle Eastern, Latin American or African also have a younger age structure than those who identify as European, but without the high proportions of children aged 5–14 years.
- Christchurch City has the most ethnically diverse population in Canterbury, but the proportion of Christchurch's population that identifies as European (76% in Census 2023) is still significantly higher than in New Zealand as a whole (68%)[102].
- Kaikōura district has the highest percentage of people who identify as Māori (19%).
- Ashburton district has the highest percentage of people who identify as Pacific (6%).
- Christchurch City has the highest percentage of people who identify as Asian (17%) and Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (2%).
- 79,647 people living in Canterbury stated an iwi affiliation in Census 2023, 11.6% of the total population, 24,507 are affiliated with Ngāi Tahu[103].
- 70,200 people are registered with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and 27% of those (18,700 whānau members) are in Waitaha[104].
- The proportion of people in Canterbury who state 'no religion' has increased from 30% in 2001, to 55% in 2023. Of those who stated a religious affiliation in Census 2023, 32.2% of people in Canterbury stated that they are Christian, only marginally lower than in New Zealand's total population (32.3%). The proportion of people in Canterbury who state that they are Christian has declined, however, from 62% in 2001, to 32.2% in 2023[105].



- Of people usually resident in Canterbury at the time of the 2023 Census, 96.3% indicated that they speak English (NZ 95.1%), 2.1% Māori (NZ 4.3%) and 0.6% indicated that they can communicate in New Zealand Sign Language (NZ 0.5%). 84% indicated they spoke one language in Canterbury and 14% more than one language. The most commonly spoken languages in Canterbury other than English are: Māori (2.1%), Northern Chinese (1.5%), Tagalog (1.5%), French (1.1%), Samoan (1%)[106].
- In the General Social Survey 5% of Canterbury people stated in that they could hold a conversation about a lot of everyday things in Te reo Māori, up from 1.7% in 2006 and 2013 – compared to NZ 6.2%, Wellington 5% and Auckland 4.5%.
- Census 2018 indicated that 24.7% of people in Canterbury were born overseas (NZ 28.8%). The most common birthplace for people living in Canterbury but born overseas was Asia (37%), followed by the UK and Ireland (28%), and Australia (17%).
- Just under half (48%) of overseas-born people in Canterbury had been living in New Zealand for less than ten years. Half of these were born in Asia. 27% of overseas-born people in Canterbury have been living in New Zealand for 20 or more years at the time of the 2018 Census. The majority of these were born in the UK and Ireland.

## Key indicators

- In the General Social Survey 2023[107] 80% of Canterbury respondents rated their overall life satisfaction between 7–10 on a scale where 0 = completely dissatisfied and 10 = completely satisfied, comparable to national responses (Wellington 82%, NZ 79%, Auckland 77%). Responses rated family wellbeing slightly lower, with 77% of Canterbury respondents rating family wellbeing between 7-10, compared to 78% in NZ (on a scale 0 = doing extremely badly – 10 = doing extremely well).
- In the 2023 General Social Survey:
  - 78% of survey respondents in Canterbury reported that it was easy or very easy to express their identity (NZ 75%)
  - 21% of survey respondents in Canterbury reported being subjected to some form of discrimination (NZ 21%)
  - 14% of survey respondents in Canterbury felt lonely at least some of the time in the last four weeks in 2023 compared with 14% nationally. This was a slight decrease from 16% in 2019, and a further decrease from 20% in 2016.
  - 58% of survey respondents in Canterbury felt safe or very safe when walking alone in their neighborhood after dark, compared with 55% nationally, a drop from 67% in 2019.
  - 30% of survey respondents in Canterbury reported high levels of trust in Parliament. This has decreased from 41% in 2019, and from 44% in 2018. Trust in police was 90% (NZ 90%).
- The risk of experiencing personal offences was similar across the country, but household offences were more common in some regions than others. Canterbury households experiencing offences in the previous 12 months was 16%. The New Zealand average was 16%. All other regions were lower except for Wellington (20%), Auckland (18%), and Southland (18%)[108].
- Average voter turnout across Canterbury councils in local body elections is higher than in New Zealand as a whole. In 2019, voter turnout for Canterbury Regional Council was 45% (close to the NZ average for regional councils). Canterbury councils representing smaller populations had the highest turnout rates in 2022 (64%), whereas Selwyn District had the lowest voter turnout (43%) in Canterbury[109]. In comparison, for the 2020 General Election, 78% of enrolled electors turned out across New Zealand[110].
- In Census 2018, close to 13% of usually resident population in Canterbury (total people stated) helped or volunteered through an organisation, group and marae, similar to the national proportion. 17% of those volunteering in the Canterbury region were in the 15-29 year old age group, 58% in the 30-64 age group and 25% were 65 years or older[111]

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