

How's Life in New Zealand?



Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:
www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2016-country-notes-data.xlsx

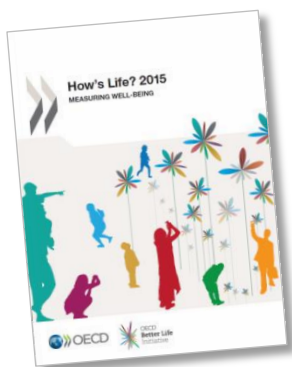
The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's Life?* report. It also includes an interactive web application, the *Better Life Index*, and a number of methodological and research projects to improve the information base towards a better understanding of well-being trends and their drivers.

The OECD Better Life Initiative:

- Helps to inform policy making to improve quality of life.
- Connects policies to people's lives.
- Generates support for needed policy measures.
- Improves civic engagement by encouraging the public to create their own *Better Life Index* and share their preferences about what matters most for well-being.
- Empowers the public by improving their understanding of policy-making.

This brochure presents **selected findings for New Zealand from the OECD Better Life Index 2016** (page 3), **the *How's Life?* report** (pages 4-6) and shows what **New Zealander users of the Better Life Index** are telling us about their **well-being priorities** (page 7). A supporting Excel file with the data underlying the graphs shown in this note and further information is available here: www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2016-country-notes-data.xlsx.

HOW'S LIFE?



How's Life?, published every two years, provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in OECD countries and other major economies by bringing together an internationally comparable set of well-being indicators that the OECD considers as essential to a good life. It looks at people's material conditions and quality of life across the population in eleven dimensions including: income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing; health status; work-life balance; education and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security; and subjective well-being.

The *How's Life? 2015* report includes for the first time a set of indicators to measure the stocks of resources that help to support **well-being over time**. The report also contains three special chapters focusing on **child well-being**, **volunteering** and **regional well-being**.

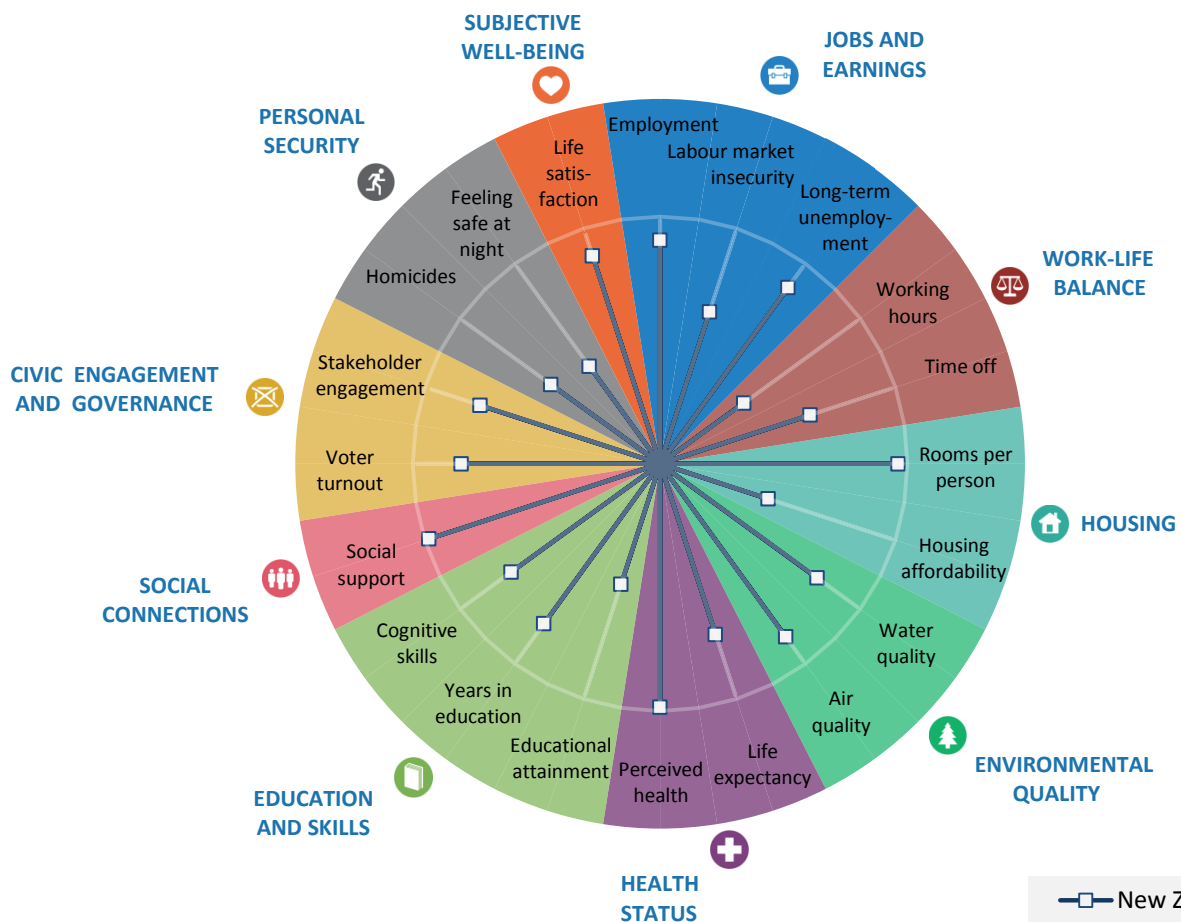


HOW'S LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND IN 2016?

In general, New Zealand performs well across the different well-being indicators and dimensions. New Zealand has higher **employment** and lower **long-term unemployment** than the OECD average. New Zealand has the highest reported **social network support** in the OECD. Furthermore, 89.6% of the adult population **perceive their health** as good or better than good, the largest share in the OECD, and **voter turnout** stands at 77% compared to the OECD average of 68.4%. **Life satisfaction** in New Zealand is higher than the OECD average.

New Zealand does not perform so well with regard to work-life balance: 13.8% of employees in New Zealand routinely **work very long hours** compared to the OECD average of 13%. The average New Zealander has 2.4 **rooms to live**, which is significantly more than the OECD average. However, **housing** in New Zealand is less **affordable** than in the OECD on average.

Current well-being in New Zealand



This chart shows areas of well-being strengths and weaknesses in New Zealand, based on a ranking of all OECD countries. Longer lines show areas of relative strength, while shorter lines show areas of relative weakness. For more details, see www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2016-country-notes-data.xlsx.

Source: OECD calculation based on the OECD Better Life Index 2016 database, <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=BLI>.

Resources for future well-being in New Zealand

Beyond measuring well-being today, *How's Life? 2015* looks at some of the resources (or “capital stocks”) that will shape people’s well-being in the future. These include aspects of **natural capital**, **human capital**, **social capital** and **economic capital**.

For example, **human capital** refers to the skills, competencies and health status of individuals. The **educational attainment of young adults** is one indicator of the skills that are carried forward to the future. The share of New Zealanders aged 25-34 attaining at least an upper secondary education increased from 68.7% in 2000 to 79.5% in 2013. However, this share still lies below the OECD average of 83.6%.

HOW'S LIFE FOR CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND?

Giving children a good start in life is important both for well-being today, and in the future.

New Zealand's performance in child well-being is mixed. Between 2007 and 2011 **child income poverty** in New Zealand increased at a faster rate than in the OECD on average. It now lies slightly above the OECD average level: 14% of children in New Zealand live in a household with a disposable income of less than half of the New Zealand median income.

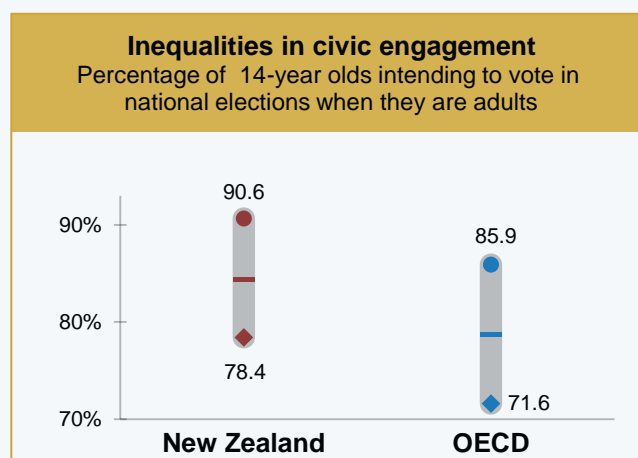
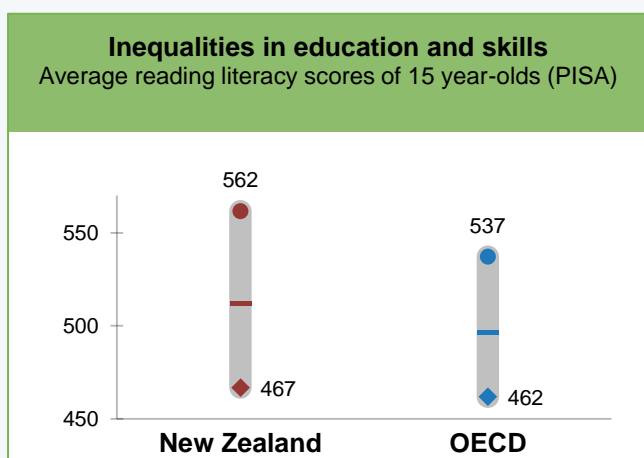
Infant mortality in New Zealand is higher than in the OECD on average. New Zealand has the highest **adolescent suicide rate** in the OECD: on average, 1 in every 6 000 New Zealand adolescents aged 15 to 19 take their own lives every year.

The **reading skills** of New Zealand students lie above the OECD average level. Furthermore, children in New Zealand are more **civically engaged** than the average child in the OECD: 84.4% of New Zealand 14-year olds intend to vote in elections when they are adults compared to the OECD average of 78.7%. In addition, 45.2% of 14-year olds report that they have participated in organisation, groups or clubs in the last 12 months, one of the highest shares in the OECD.

Child well-being in New Zealand		
Ranking of New Zealand compared to other OECD countries		
● top third ● middle third ● bottom third		
Income and Wealth	Disposable income of households with children	●
	Child income poverty	●
Health status	Infant mortality	●
	Low birth weight	●
	Adolescent suicide rate	●
	Teenage birth rate	●
Education and Skills	Reading skills among 15 year olds (PISA)	●
	Youth neither in employment nor education/training	●
	Educational deprivation	●
Civic engagement	Intention to vote	●
	Civic participation	●
Social and family environment	Sense of belonging in school at 15 years old (PISA)	●
Personal security	Child homicide rate	●

Inequalities in child well-being

Across all OECD countries there are **large inequalities in child well-being**. Children from wealthier households enjoy both better material living conditions, and a higher **quality of life**, on average. In New Zealand, on average children from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher reading literacy scores than children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. There are also differences in intentions to vote among 14 year olds.



● High socio-economic status ◆ Low socio-economic status — National average

* For more information (including definitions), see www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2016-country-notes-data.xlsx.

THE VALUE OF GIVING: VOLUNTEERING AND WELL-BEING

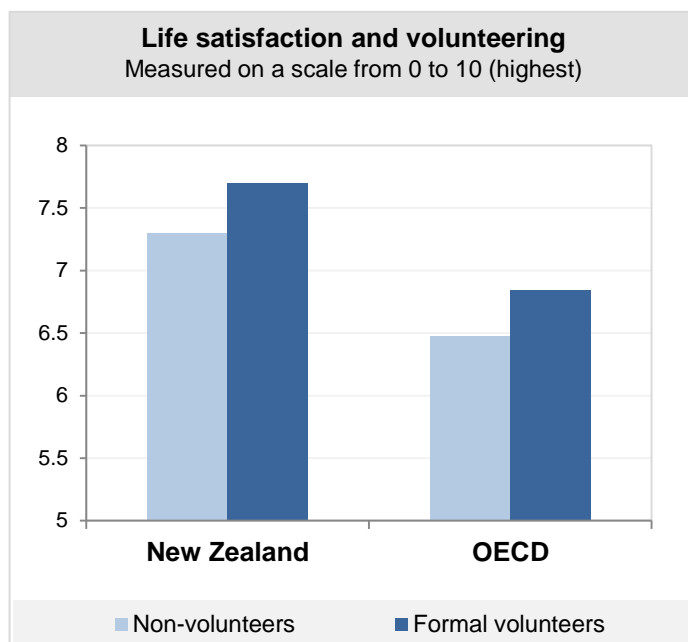
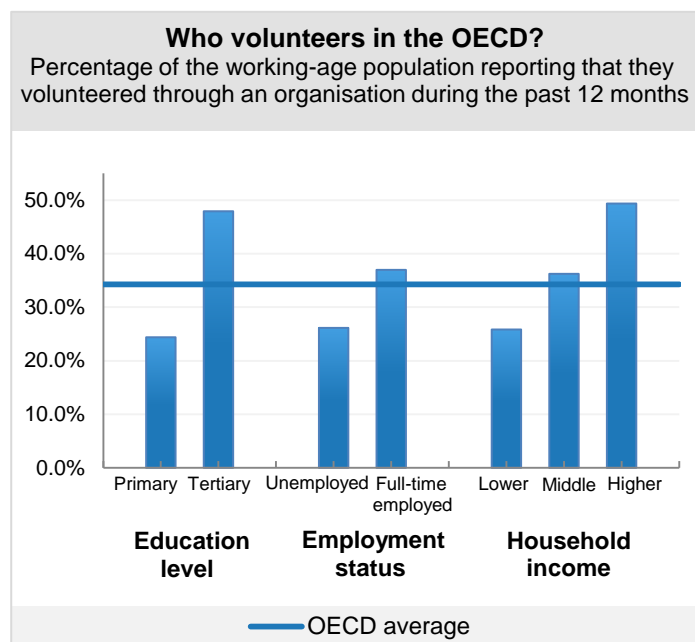
Volunteering makes an important “hidden contribution” to well-being, producing goods and services that are not captured by conventional economic statistics. When you add up the value of the time people spend on volunteering in OECD countries, it amounts to roughly 2% of GDP per year.

Volunteering in New Zealand and the OECD

Compared to other OECD countries, the New Zealand working-age population spends a lot of time on volunteering through an organisation (termed “**formal volunteering**”). The average New Zealander aged 15-64 spends 13 minutes per day on formal volunteering which is more than the OECD average of 4 minutes per day.

On the days when people in New Zealand do volunteer formally, they spend on average 147 minutes doing so. This is a longer period of time than the OECD average – which is 133 minutes per day.

Who volunteers? Across the OECD area, people with a university degree are more likely to participate in formal volunteering than those with lower levels of education. Similarly, people who are in employment are more likely to volunteer than those who are unemployed. Participation in formal volunteering also increases with people’s level of household income.

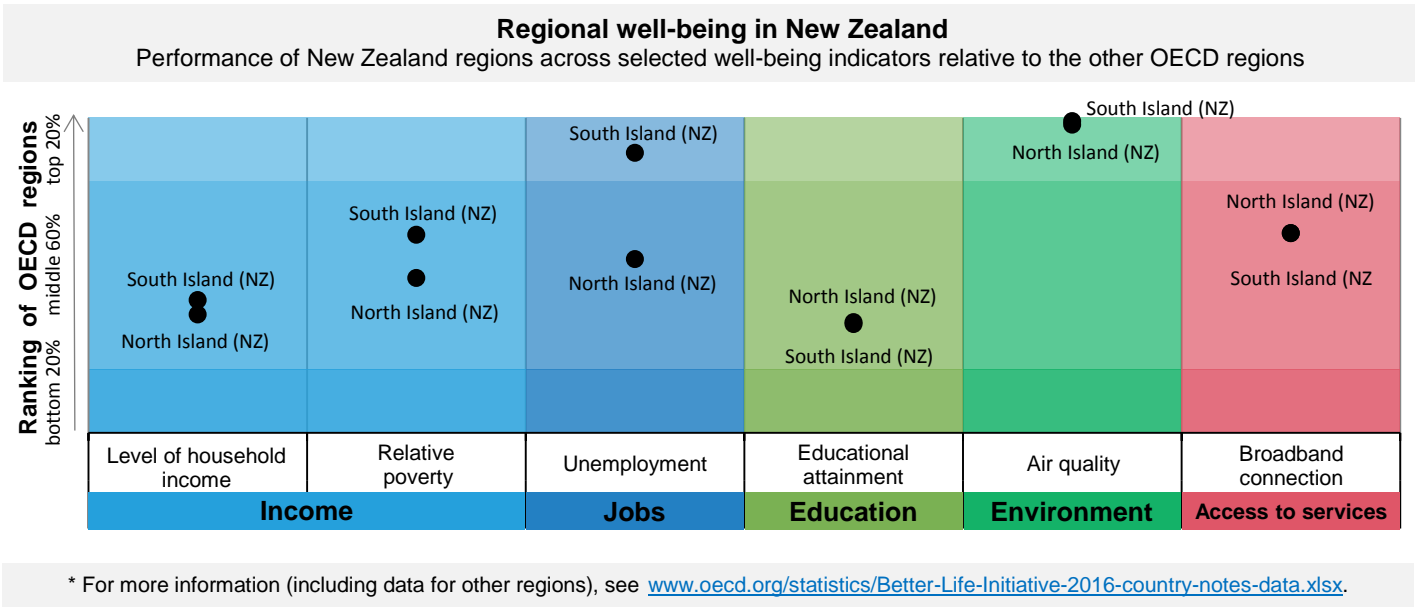


Volunteering brings benefits for volunteers themselves, as well as for the people and communities they help. For example, people who engage in volunteering are more likely to have higher literacy, numeracy and problem-solving **skills** and receive **higher wages**, on average, relative to non-volunteers.

In OECD countries, older people who volunteer formally are more likely to report a better **health status** than non-volunteers. Furthermore, formal volunteers in the OECD, on average, also report higher **life satisfaction** than non-volunteers.

GOING LOCAL: MEASURING WELL-BEING IN REGIONS

Where people live has an important impact on their opportunities to live well. There can be large differences in average levels of well-being in different regions within the same country. *How's Life in your Region?* and the *OECD regional well-being web-tool* assess performance across 9 dimensions of well-being in the 362 OECD large regions – 2 of which are in New Zealand. Drawing on this work, *How's Life? 2015* includes a special focus on measuring well-being in regions.



Regional gaps in material living conditions

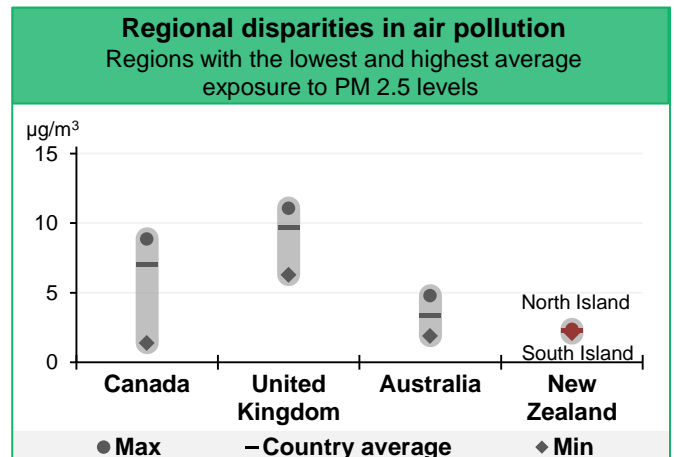
Compared to other OECD countries regional inequalities in income and jobs are small in New Zealand. **Average household adjusted disposable income** is 7% higher in the South Island than in the North Island. Regarding **relative income poverty**, while 10.1% of people in the South Island have an income of less than half of the New Zealand median income, the share is 12.2% in the North Island. **Unemployment rates** range from 3.7% in the South Island to 6.4% in the North Island. This gap (2.7 percentage points) is smaller than the regional differences observed in Australia and many other OECD countries.

Regional differences in people's quality of life

Regarding **educational attainment**, 73.4% of the labour force has at least a secondary education in the North Island, while this share is 72.8% in the South Island. This gap (0.6 percentage points) is the smallest regional difference in educational attainment in the OECD area.

Equally, the regional variation of **air quality** in New Zealand is among the lowest in the OECD.

The share of households with a **broadband connection** is 75% in the North as well as the South Island.



BETTER LIFE INDEX

The **Better Life Index** is an interactive web application that invites citizens to compare well-being across OECD countries and beyond on the basis of the set of well-being indicators explored in *How's Life?*. Users chose what weight to give to each of the eleven dimensions shown below and then see how countries' perform, based on their own personal priorities in life.

11 topics to define well-being

Housing	Community	Health
Income	Education	Life Satisfaction
Jobs	Environment	Safety
	Civic Engagement	Work-Life Balance

Each flower represents a country and each petal represents a topic

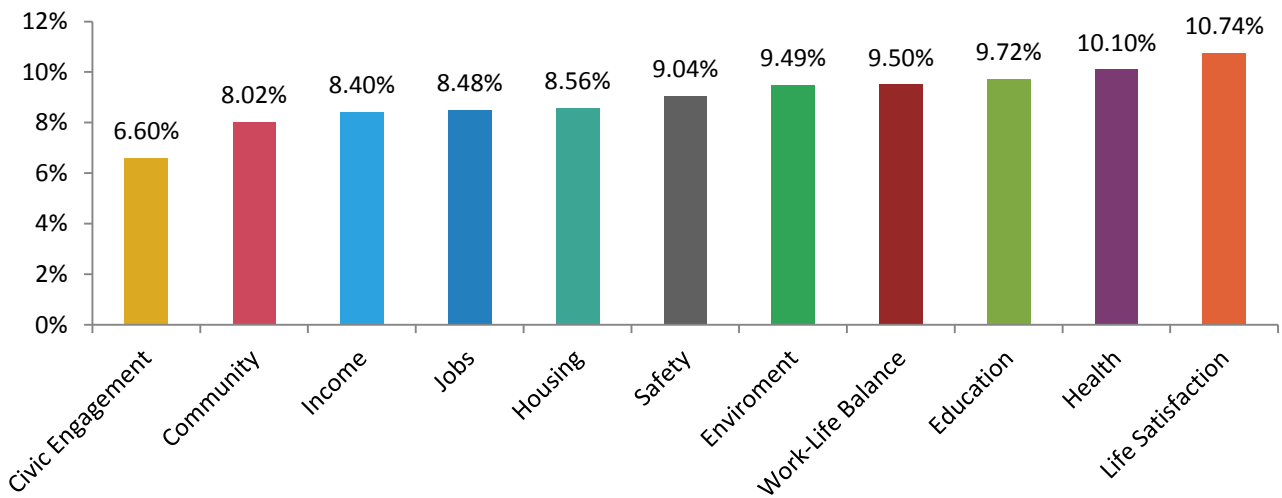
Rate the topics according to their importance to you

Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, on how these preferences differ across countries, and on the demographic characteristics of users.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND?

Since its launch in May 2011, the Better Life Index has attracted **over eight million visits from just about every country on the planet** and has received over **17 million page views**. To date, over 84,400 people in New Zealand have visited the website making New Zealand the 23rd country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Auckland (49% of visits), Wellington, Christchurch, Hamilton and Dunedin.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared by 735 website visitors in New Zealand. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For New Zealander users of the Better Life Index, life satisfaction, health, and education are the three most important topics** (shown below).¹ Up to date information, including a breakdown of participants in each country by gender and age can be found here: www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#NZL.



¹ User information for New Zealand is based on shared indexes submitted between May 2011 and May 2016.

For media requests contact:
news.contact@oecd.org or +33 1 45 24 97 00

For more information contact:
BLI@oecd.org

