



# Baseline Report Summary

Social Cohesion in  
Aotearoa New Zealand 2022

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## Executive summary

The social cohesion measurement framework was developed in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on March 15. The RCOI made a number of recommendations related to improving social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand including recommendation 31, that the Government prioritise the development of appropriate measures and indicators of social cohesion, including social inclusion.

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The following report describes baseline data for indicators included in the social cohesion measurement framework which was developed following a period of consultation with the public, community and government stakeholders. The report uses data available as at April 2022.

In general, the data available suggests that Aotearoa New Zealand has high levels of connectedness and belonging, trust in others, participation, and wellbeing. However, these outcomes are not equally shared across all groups. While many people already feel they are able to enjoy the benefits of full participation in society, as a country we know we still have a long way to go to ensure this is fully realised for all.

The indicators also show there are real opportunities to improve inclusion, accessibility, and representation. Similar themes emerged through the feedback from the social cohesion engagement process. For example, people talked about the various forms of discrimination experienced at all levels including discrimination related to ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic position, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Improving social cohesion for all requires a recognition that everyone has different experiences based on identity, life opportunities, circumstances, and the influence of historical context.

## Introduction

Defining and measuring social cohesion has been an ongoing challenge well described in both academic and policy settings<sup>1</sup>. The challenges reflect the complexity of the concept, the different contexts in which definitions are developed, purposes of measurement, and the availability of consistent, accurate, and continuous data.

Previous exploratory work on social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand emerged in the early 2000s and focused particularly on migration, increasing levels of ethnic diversity and a framework for immigrant and host outcomes was developed. However those involved in the process suggest the framework had limited uptake partly due to the complexity of operationalising it within a policy context<sup>2</sup>. Additionally further thinking calls for a broader view of diversity that encompasses a range of characteristics, not just ethnicity, and the intersectionality of people's identities.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on March 15 (RCOI) reiterated the importance of fostering and strengthening social cohesion and made a number of recommendations to develop a strategic framework, including a measurement framework, based on a shared understanding of social cohesion.

In 2021, Cabinet agreed in principle to all of the RCOI recommendations, including those related to social cohesion. Cabinet endorsed the definition of social cohesion used by the RCOI. This definition, developed by Professor Paul Spoonley, Robin Peace, Andrew Butcher and Damian O'Neill, describes social cohesion as a sense of belonging, participation, recognition, legitimacy and inclusion. The report noted that social cohesion exists where people feel part of society, family and personal relationships are strong, differences among people are respected, and people feel safe and supported by others. Social cohesion was described as an ideal rather than a goal to be achieved and something that must continually be nurtured and grown.

Noted benefits of social cohesion, and its components, have been well described in previous work particularly in the context of the high levels of diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>3</sup>. A socially cohesive society that values diversity, functions better, is resilient, and can recover better in response to shocks and crises.

Measuring social cohesion outcomes, and more importantly, understanding the distribution of these outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand, helps to describe areas of strength that can be built upon, and areas where further investment and work is needed, and for whom. It is also important to consider the grassroots efforts to build as social cohesion at the local and community level which often not always carried out under the label of "social cohesion". Building a shared understanding of social cohesion and a consistent way to measure it will also enable different groups articulate their contribution to social cohesion within their own contexts.

The social cohesion strategic framework was developed building on the RCOI definition, and feedback received through the social cohesion engagement process. The framework describes social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand as a place where people connect and feel a sense of belonging, are able to participate, are recognised for who they are and respect others, are equitably included and trust in others and in institutions. To enable this, the places people live, work, play, and learn must be safe, inclusive, and supportive, and the systems and services that shape society must be fair, responsive, and accountable.

A shared definition and understanding of social cohesion is particularly important for measurement to ensure that the indicators selected are valid, accepted and relevant for people in different contexts to describe social cohesion outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Social cohesion measurement framework**

The social cohesion outcomes included in the strategic framework built upon the RCOI definition of social cohesion, and was developed alongside community stakeholders involved in the social cohesion engagement. By developing definitions for outcomes alongside community, the framework aimed to ensure that indicators were based on definitions that resonated with communities, as well as being informed by literature on the types of indicators known to be valid and reliable for measuring social cohesion outcomes.

There isn't one single measure of social cohesion and a range of proxy indicators have been developed to help to describe social cohesion outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The defined outcomes in the social cohesion strategic framework provided a conceptual foundation inform the development of the measurement framework and key indicators. The approach prioritised identifying the key concepts important to understand social cohesion, rather than being driven by the data available. In this way, indicators were not limited by what data was available, and the measurement framework could also be used to highlight and identify any gaps and limitations.

Indicators were selected iteratively and assessed based on an criteria that included validity, sensitivity, evidence base, disaggregation, consistency, timeliness, and meaningfulness.

## How to read this report

This report intends to provide an overall summary of baseline data for the population level indicators that describe different outcomes of social cohesion.

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**Outcomes:** The outcomes describe the components of social cohesion, that is, what social cohesion looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand which include the following:

People, families, whānau and communities are:

- connected and feel like they belong,
- willing and able to participate,
- economically and socially included through equitable access to the determinants of wellbeing (including housing, education, employment, health),
- recognised for who they are and respect others
- and trust each other and institutions.

We also know that to support these outcomes, the places people live, work, and play need to be safe, inclusive, and supportive and institutions and sectors must be fair, responsive, and accountable.

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**Key indicators:** describe the important concepts that sit under each of the social cohesion outcomes

What we can measure: Outlines the best data available we can currently use to measure the indicators.

The limitations of indicators should be considered when reading this report. The report intends to provide a summary of data sources where available for outcomes that we know are important for social cohesion. It does not measure activities related to social cohesion.

These indicators come from a range of data sources and surveys, collected between 2016 and 2021. Data included in this baseline report includes data available up until April 2022. In addition, many of the indicators included were not collected, or had been updated at the time of writing to include results from the pandemic period and the recovery. Where updated indicators were not available, the analysis is supplemented by other data sources and research.

There are a number of upcoming data sources that have not been included due to availability including the whataboutme? Survey, the 2023 Disability survey, the 2021 General Social survey. An update on the indicators is due in 2024 which aims to include updated data and a review of indicators to ensure they are fit for purpose.

The current measurement framework is heavily reliant on regularly collected national surveys such as the General Social Survey. While these data sources are useful for providing an overall picture of key outcomes related to social cohesion, they do not always have the granularity to form meaningful conclusions, particularly for smaller subgroups. As a result current available indicators do not fully capture the experience of many people who encounter systemic forms of disadvantage. Nor do they capture how intersecting identities may interact to provide a source of strength.

Quantitative data sources should be supplemented with qualitative sources that provide the rich context and experience of different communities. We know that community-led approaches provide an opportunity to fill some of the gaps in data sources.

**Many New Zealanders are connected to their social networks and feel a strong sense of belonging. However levels of loneliness appear to be increasing, and is more common among some groups**

People's social networks provide an important source of connectedness. Social networks can be made up of connections with different groups such as families, whānau, friends, neighbourhoods, faith groups, clubs, sports teams, community groups or employee networks. Positive social connections are known to contribute to individual and collective wellbeing and access to networks also can provide source of support in times of need or crisis.

Social connectedness is commonly considered an important component of social cohesion and a lack of connectedness can indicate feelings of exclusion and disengagement from society. Understanding the levels of connection people have with others contributes to our understanding of social cohesion more generally.

While there is no single accepted definition of social connectedness, it often described as having three important components<sup>1</sup>:

1. Socialising: Frequent and quality contact with others
2. Social support: Ease of access to instrumental and emotional support
3. Sense of belonging: Perception of being part of a social group

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<sup>1</sup> Frieling, M., Peach, E. K., & Cording, J. (2018). The Measurement of social connectedness and its relationship to wellbeing. Ministry of Social Development.



A sense of belonging is also considered to be an important aspect of social cohesion and was particularly highlighted through the social cohesion engagement process. Looking at belonging across different levels, national, neighbourhood, familial, is important as different people may relate to different aspects of belonging. Stakeholders involved in engagement noted that people who did not feel like they belong, or a sense of community, or feeling that they were cared for, may act in ways that undermined social cohesion.

A strong sense of belonging to New Zealand as a whole may indicate the existence of a more inclusive national identity that also allows for people's individuality and sense of self. Research suggests that inclusive group identification helps to build trust, encourages cooperation, empathy and individual sacrifices for wider collective wellbeing and a strong national identity shapes people's attitudes to and willingness to embrace diversity (social inclusion review reference).

While strong relationships and connections can also act as a protective factor against loneliness and social isolation, people can still feel lonely and isolated even when they have frequent contact with others. Therefore, it is also important to measure levels of loneliness and isolation.

### **The amount of face-to-face contact people have had with family and friends has been slightly decreasing since 2016 and is likely to have been further impacted by the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic**

In 2018, 60.2 percent of people reported having weekly face-to-face contact with their family members which dropped from 64.7 percent in 2016. Weekly contact with friends dropped to 73.7 percent in 2018 from 76.8 percent in 2016. Māori reported high levels of recent contact with their whānau, both face-to-face and non-direct contact.

### **Levels of social support available appear to be relatively high**

In 2018, 76.1 percent of New Zealand adults reported that it would be easy or above easy to get help if they were going through a difficult time. Findings from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values survey suggest that during the initial pandemic response in 2020 levels of social support did not change – despite people reporting that they were experiencing greater conflict and lower satisfaction in personal relationships<sup>2</sup>. However data is not yet available for the later stages of the pandemic and the ongoing recovery.

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2 Social, psychosocial and employment impacts of COVID-19 in New Zealand: Insights from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study 2020/202. Retrieved from: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/impacts-of-covid-19-insights-from-the-nz-attitudes-and-values-study/nzavs-report-on-covid-19-outcomes.pdf>

## **Loneliness appears to be increasing and some experience higher levels of loneliness**

In 2018, 39 percent of adults in New Zealand said they felt lonely at least a little of the time, a proportion that has been increasing since 2014. In March 2021, 42 percent of New Zealanders reported they had felt lonely at least a little of the time in the previous four weeks<sup>3</sup>. 61 percent of recent migrants, 57 percent of people aged 18-24, and 51 percent of Asian people reported experiencing loneliness<sup>4</sup>. Reasons for greater reports of loneliness may be linked to differential expectations of family support, experienced racism, differential health status and socioeconomic circumstances.

## **Many people report a strong sense of belonging to their families and Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole**

In 2016 people reported their average sense of belonging to their families as 9.1 out of 10 (with 0 indicating no sense of belonging and 10 indicating a strong sense of belonging). The average sense of belonging to New Zealand was reported as 8.6 out of 10.

## **There are high levels of participation in social, community, and civic activities**

Many definitions of social cohesion internationally include solidarity or reciprocity among and between social groups and individuals. Solidarity can exist at local levels (neighbourhoods or community groups) as well as larger scale (nationally) and can be indicated by individuals willingness to help others, sacrifice or generally contribute towards a collective good.

This is often measured in terms of levels of solidarity among different groups (concern for others) and intent (willingness to help others). Feelings of solidarity and reciprocity can build trust between people and can often be a source of support and resilience throughout times of crisis.

While there is a scarcity of nationally collected, representative measures of solidarity and reciprocity, some attitudes and behaviours can provide an indicator of these values such as the importance of community and volunteering. In addition levels of engagement and investment in community are often measured by engagement in civic participation such as in local and central government elections.

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<sup>3</sup> As the General Social Survey was postponed due to the pandemic, the Household Labourforce survey wellbeing supplement was used to continue measuring wellbeing over this time.



Membership of clubs and groups provides opportunities for people to have their voice heard, allows for diverse groups to interact positively building trust, wider cooperation, solidarity and access to resources and mutual benefits.

Club membership also plays a key role in social integration into a community.

Participation in arts and cultural activities can provide enjoyment and entertainment, allows people to express themselves and connect with their identity, learn new skills and meet others, as well as providing an opportunity to allow others to celebrate in diverse identities. Importantly, in terms of social cohesion, participation in cultural activities is reported to contribute to social capital and community belonging and wellbeing.

**There are relatively high levels of volunteering and participation in clubs, sports and cultural activities.**

In 2016, half of New Zealanders aged 18 and over volunteered formally (for an organisation) or informally (direct help for people they don't live with). Women and older people reported higher rates of volunteering<sup>5</sup>. Note there are some concerns about the ambiguity of the current available measures of volunteering and they may be underestimations.

Overall people's sense of connection to their neighbourhood is low, with a mean rating of 5.6 recorded in 2018 (A score of 0-4 indicates no sense of connection and 10 indicates a very strong sense of connection).

In 2016 over half of New Zealanders 15 years and older belonged to, or were a member of at least one group, club or organisation. Sport groups were most popular, with over 31 percent of New Zealanders saying they belonged to a sports or recreational group, followed by religious or spiritual groups (18 percent), and arts or cultural groups (10 percent). In 2016 just over 94 percent of New Zealanders aged 18 and over said they had participated (actively or passively) in at least one cultural or recreational activity in the last four weeks<sup>6</sup>.

## **Participation in employment is improving but participation in education and training is likely to have been affected by impacts of the pandemic, particularly for young people aged 20–24 years**

Paid work has an important role in social connection. It provides people with incomes to meet their basic needs and it gives them options for how they live their lives. Paid work also provides social contact and sense of self-worth.

In the March 2022 quarter, the seasonally adjusted number of employed people remained steady over the quarter, rising by 2,000 people to 2,826,000. Despite this, the employment rate declined from 68.8 percent to 68.6 percent between the December 2021 and March 2022. The seasonally adjusted number of filled jobs, rose by 5,900 (0.3 percent) to 2,091,700 in the March 2022 quarter<sup>7</sup>. Filled jobs increased by 84,500 (4.2 percent) annually, while the number of people employed from the HLFs has increased 79,000 (2.9 percent). In the March 2022 quarter, the seasonally adjusted proportion of people aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, education, or training (NEET) rose to 11.5 percent, up from 10.9 percent in December 2020.

## **Participation in central government elections is relatively high, however voter turnout is low among young people, Māori and participation in local council elections is low and has been declining over time**

Political participation is a basic right of all people in New Zealand and is essential for a healthy democratic society. High levels of political participation are closely linked to institutional trust and indicate that people have opportunities to, and believe they have a say in ensuring that political structures are representative of society, can influence living conditions and shape their community's future<sup>8</sup>.

89.9 percent of the eligible estimated population enrolled to vote in the 2020 New Zealand general election. Only 67.63 percent of the 18–24 age group enrolled to vote which was the lowest of all other age groups.

81.5 percent of enrolled electors voted in the New Zealand general election.

83.1 percent of enrolled electors who are of non-Māori descent and 72.9 percent enrolled electors of Māori descent voted in the New Zealand general election in 2020.

41 percent of enrolled electors voted in Local Council elections, which has been declining since 1989. Almost half of Māori adults (47 percent) were registered with their iwi and, of those registered, 78 percent were eligible to vote in the last iwi elections. Just over half (52 percent) of those eligible voted in an iwi election in the last three years.

## Many New Zealanders experience high levels of wellbeing, however these outcomes are not equally shared across all groups

Internationally there is no general agreement on how social and economic inclusion is defined and measured. It can be used to describe the process of increasing participation by improving access to opportunities and resources but also can refer to the outcomes of inclusion and participation itself. The relationship between social cohesion and inclusion also varies in the literature, some describe it as a critical component of social cohesion whereas others exclude it, noting that while economic and social inclusion are important for wellbeing it is not an essential component in and of itself.

While there are many factors and influences that contribute to wellbeing, there is some evidence that higher levels of social cohesion (through increased social supports, trust in others and feeling safe) increases people's life satisfaction<sup>9</sup>. Additionally inequitable access and disparities in outcomes can have direct and indirect consequences for outcomes such as connectedness and belonging, participation, recognition and respect, and trust. Lack of inclusion risks increasing alienation and isolation both of which counter social cohesion outcomes.

Therefore inclusion and equity have been included within the social cohesion framework and measurement to recognise how it resonated with communities and the important role it plays in relation to other outcomes. However we also recognise it adds complexity to interpreting indicators, given there are a range of broader factors that feed into economic and social inclusion indicators.

With that in mind, in the context of the social cohesion strategic framework, understanding levels of inclusion and disparities between groups across general, health and financial wellbeing should be considered as important context when describing social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In New Zealand wellbeing is measured across a number of domains: life satisfaction, general health status, family wellbeing, mental health wellbeing and financial wellbeing. Measures of income distribution are often used internationally using measures such as the Gini coefficient and other income distribution measures.

## **In Aotearoa New Zealand many people experience positive aspects of wellbeing, but inequities persist for many demographic groups and mental wellbeing has decreased since the pandemic**

In 2018 most New Zealanders reported higher levels of life satisfaction (81.1 percent) 82 percent of people rated their family wellbeing as high and 62.8 percent of people reported that they had enough or more than enough money to meet everyday needs. Results from the 2020/2021 New Zealand Health Survey show that 88 percent of people in New Zealand aged 15 years and over reported having good, very good, or excellent health<sup>4</sup>. In 2018 78 percent of people report positive mental wellbeing

However, inequities persist across aspects of wellbeing. Disabled people and adults who identify as bisexual reported some of the lowest life satisfaction. In 2018, family wellbeing for Māori was marginally lower than other ethnicities. Disabled people and rainbow communities reported low levels of positive mental wellbeing.

## **Overall, many people find it easy to express themselves in New Zealand but this is not equally spread and discrimination is a key barrier to social cohesion**

A sense of self and people's ability to be themselves is important for individual wellbeing, by contributing to a sense of belonging, sense of security and can facilitate building social networks and social support that in turn builds interpersonal trust.

Identity refers to the aspects of an individual that make them different from others which can include but are not limited to culture and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, faith, geographic region or common interests. People can also identify with multiple characteristics and may identify with a particular part of their identity more in some circumstances when compared to others.

In 2018, 83.9 percent of New Zealanders aged 18 and over reported that they found it easy to be themselves, which has remained relatively stable since 2014. However, there were some groups who were less likely to find it very easy/easy to express their identity including recent migrants (67.7 percent), long-term migrants (78.1 percent), Asian people (62.3 percent), disabled people (75.6 percent), people who identified as bisexual (70 percent) and other sexual identities (70 percent).<sup>5</sup>

In 2018, while only 17.7 percent of the overall population reported experiences of (interpersonal) discrimination in the previous year, higher rates of discrimination were reported for gay and lesbian people (34.1 percent), bisexual people (39.3 percent), Asian people (25.8 percent), and Māori (24.4 percent).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-update-key-results-2020-21-new-zealand-health-survey>

<sup>5</sup> Other sexual identities reported in the survey include, takatāpui, asexual, and pansexual among others.

Other evidence also shows that those who identify with multiple marginalised groups often experience even higher rates of discrimination. The Counting Ourselves Survey which explores health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand found that among trans and non-binary people, Asian and disabled people are more likely to be discriminated against than non-Asian, non-disabled people<sup>10</sup>.

Half (51 percent) of respondents across the eight cities included in the Quality of Life survey consider racism or discrimination towards particular groups of people to have been a problem in their city/local area over the past 12 months, while 33 percent do not believe it has been a problem.

### **In general people appear to be more accepting of some aspects of diversity over others**

Indicators that show acceptance and value for diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand suggest there is greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for diverse groups. If people don't feel accepted, their access to education, healthcare and employment as well as participation in their communities and feelings of belonging can be impacted.

In 2018, people were more accepting of different religions, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and of disability than mental illness. Overall high levels of comfort were reported about having a neighbour with a different religion (87.3 percent), sexual orientation (84.6 percent), ethnicity (88.5 percent), different language spoken (83.5 percent) or a disability (82.7 percent). However only 54.8 percent of the total population felt comfortable/very comfortable about having a neighbour who had a mental illness.

Evidence about acceptance of migrants shows that while on the whole New Zealand is relatively more accepting of migrants compared to other countries, this appears to depend on where migrants come from. A recent study on perceptions of migrants and immigration showed New Zealanders are most positive about migrants from the United Kingdom (61 percent) and Australia (57 percent) and less positive about refugees and migrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands<sup>11</sup>. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values survey also shows that New Zealanders overall consistently rate European New Zealanders more favourably than a range of other ethnic groups<sup>12</sup>.

## Overall, reported levels of trust in others and institutions are relatively high

Trust is regarded as a key indicator of a socially cohesive society. This includes trust between people, or horizontal trust, which provides an important indicator of how people feel about others in their community. High levels of trust in others support more cooperation and developing positive relationships.

In 2018, 66 percent of people report high levels of trust in most other people. There were some significant differences when trust was disaggregated by ethnicity. 48.7 percent of Māori and 45.7 percent of Pacific peoples reported high levels of trust in others. Disabled people also had lower proportions of high trust in others compared to non disabled people.

### Trust in specific institutions is relatively high however differences by demographic subgroup mirror overall levels of trust in public institutions

Trust between people and institutions is sometimes referred to as vertical trust. Trust in public services is known to be dependent on responsiveness of services, general levels of trust, reliability and access, integrity, consistency and knowledge and awareness of the institutions themselves.

The Te Kawa Mataaho Kiwis Count survey of public trust and confidence shows that there has been a long term increase in public trust since 2007<sup>13</sup>. Internationally comparable measures of trust and confidence in government show that New Zealand has relatively high levels of trust in government which have been trending upwards, which is not seen among other OECD countries. In 2020, 63.5 percent of New Zealanders were reported to trust their national government, well above the average 51 percent of OECD citizens more generally<sup>14</sup>.

Average reported trust in parliament increased slightly from 5.4 to 5.7 out of 10 between 2016 and 2018. In 2018, the average score for trust in the health system was 6.9 out of 10, the average trust in the police was 7.9, trust in the education system was 7.0, and trust in the courts had an average rating of 6.9 out of 10. Trust in the media was consistently rated lower than other institutions with a mean rating of 4.9 in 2018.

Most fluctuations in trust ratings measured using the Household Labour Force Survey Wellbeing supplement during 2020–2021 returned to levels similar to those reported in the 2018 General Social Survey at the end of 2020.



## Many people have pride in their neighbourhoods but safety, accessibility and inclusiveness of the places people live, work, play and learn could be improved

While the outcomes of social cohesion discussed earlier focused on perceptions, attitudes and behaviours, the settings in which we live our lives play an important role in supporting positive social cohesion outcomes. These environments include the places we live (e.g housing, neighbourhoods, local areas and regions), work (e.g workplaces), play (e.g recreational areas, parks), and learn (e.g schools, tertiary institutes, polytechnics, kura kaupapa).

Importantly these cover natural, built, and online environments. When environments are safe, inclusive and supportive they enable people, whānau and communities to connect with others and feel a sense of belonging, participate, feel recognised. They also facilitate opportunities for interactions, access to opportunities and resources that allow people to be socially and economically included, and can build trust between people.

In 2020, 62 percent of respondents to the Quality of Life Survey reported a sense of pride in their area and 83 percent of respondents agreed that their city was a great place to live<sup>6</sup>.

There are disparities in feelings of safety and victimisation and perceived concerns about online safety appear to be increasing.

In 2018, 61.9 percent of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over felt safe or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark. Women report feeling less safe than men, with only 45.6 percent of women reporting feeling safe in their neighbourhood compared to 77.7 percent of men<sup>7</sup>. Disabled people report lower levels of safety in their neighbourhoods, with only 53.6 percent of disabled people reporting feeling safe or very safe in their neighbourhoods, compared to 62.5 percent of non-disabled people. The Crime and Victims Survey similarly found that females and disabled people were significantly more likely to feel unsafe in general and when with family or whanau<sup>15</sup>.

In 2020, 29 percent of New Zealanders reported they were victimised once or more in the previous 12 months. Māori, young adults aged 15–29 and people who identified as bisexual had a higher likelihood of victimisation.

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6 Note that the 2020 Quality of Life Survey 2020 survey covered 8 major cities: Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Hutt, Porirua, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin. Further development is needed to identify a nationwide indicator.

7 This indicator of neighbourhood safety from the General Social Survey 2018 could not be broken down by those who identify as gender diverse or non-binary.

The Youth19 Survey found that in 2019, while nearly 90 percent of secondary students reported that they feel safe at school all or most of the time, feelings of safety at school were lower among rainbow students<sup>8</sup>, as well as students with disabilities or chronic conditions. Youth19 findings also show that transgender and diverse gender high school students experience very concerning levels of social and school isolation and unsafe environments when compared to cisgender students<sup>16</sup>.

In 2020, New Zealanders had increased levels of 'extreme' concern about a number of aspects of the Internet compared to previous years including cyber bullying (35 percent), online crime (29 percent), that it is a forum for extremist material and hate speech (31 percent), that information is misleading or wrong (22 percent)<sup>17</sup>.

### **There are also disparities in levels of accessibility and inclusion at work for some**

Disabled people were less likely than non-disabled people to find it easy or very easy to access key public facilities. These included their nearest doctor or medical centre (78.7 percent vs 88 percent), nearest supermarket or dairy (84.9 percent vs 92.8 percent), a public park or green space (89.6 percent vs 96.5percent) and using public transport (58.3 percent vs 67.9 percent)<sup>18</sup>.

Te Taunaki, the Public Sector Census, found that most (82 percent) public servants feel they can be themselves at work and most people (78 percent) felt that their agency supports inclusion at work. Almost all public servants (96 percent) reported feeling comfortable working with people from backgrounds other than their own. However those from rainbow communities, those who reported a mental health condition or disability, and those from smaller ethnic groups felt less able to be themselves at work<sup>19</sup>.

The 2018 census estimates that around 86 percent of New Zealand households have access to the internet, but one person households, single parent and low-income households are less likely to have internet access, all of which are groups with higher reported loneliness<sup>20</sup>.

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8 Defined in the survey as those who are same or both sex attracted and those who are transgender or gender diverse

## **The public service and local councils are becoming increasingly diverse, but representation in leadership roles could be improved**

Institutions and sectors, defined as those public agencies and organisations who develop policies and provide services, including both at the central and local level, have a critical role in supporting social cohesion and wellbeing. Legitimacy, an element of the social cohesion definition included in the RCOI report describes how people need confidence that public institutions will act to protect rights and interests, mediate conflict, and are responsive to the needs of people and communities.

The way that policy, services, and practices are designed and implemented can have an important influence on belonging and connectedness, participation, trust, social and economic inclusion, and recognition and respect. However, the relationship between institutions and sectors and social cohesion outcomes at the individual, whānau, and community are interrelated and can be complex to describe.

Equity of access can be undermined by mechanisms such as structural and institutional discrimination, which can have direct and indirect impacts on social and economic inclusion. Further, perceptions of equity and access have implications for how different parts of a society perceive each other and how individuals and groups treat and interact with one another.

Institutions and sectors that are representative and reflect the diverse makeup of the communities that they serve can signal equity of opportunity, but also can indicate acceptance of diversity, recognition and respect. Seeing people in positions of power that look, act, speak, think them is likely to contribute to people's sense of belonging, willingness to participate and levels of trust in those institutions. At a more direct level, diversity at decision-making levels signals that people have opportunities to feel heard, and that they can make a difference.

While it's important to note that there are many drivers that shape the institutions and sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand, understanding on some level whether they are supporting or acting as a barrier to social cohesion is critical to understanding individual and community outcomes. Current indicators rely on survey and administrative data, but further work needed to develop a set of indicators that fully capture the fairness, responsiveness and accountability required to support social cohesion at an institutional level.

As at June 2021, the 16.4 percent of the Public Service workforce are Māori, 10.2 percent are Pacific and 12.5 percent are Asian. Representation of these ethnic groups has increased compared to 2020 and Māori and Pacific representation in the public sector workforce remains higher than compared to the overall New Zealand working age population.

Grouping	European	Māori	Pacific	Asian
Public Service leaders	89.2%	16.2%	2.7%	2.7%
Tiers 1-3	80.1%	13.5%	4.3%	2.9%
All of Public Service	66.1%	16.4%	10.2%	12.5%
NZ working-age (HLFS Jun 21 year)	69.3%	14.5%	6.8%	15.4%
NZ labour force (HLFS Jun 21 year)	69.5%	14.1%	6.4%	16.4%
NZ population (Census 2018)	70.2%	16.5%	8.1%	15.1%

Source: Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission workforce data

80.1 percent of public sector senior leaders<sup>9</sup> are NZ European, 13.5 percent Māori, 4.3 percent Pacific and 2.9 percent Asian. Māori representation in senior leadership appears to reflect proportion of Māori in the public sector and the NZ population. The representation of Pacific and Asian people in leadership positions continue to increase slowly, but they are still under-represented compared to the demographic make up of the working age population in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The representation of women in local authority elections<sup>10</sup> is improving. In 2019 the 36 percent of candidates and 39 percent of elected members were women, the highest percentage in the last 31 years<sup>21</sup>. As of December 2020, women make up 50.9 percent of public sector boards and committees, the highest proportion to date<sup>22</sup>.

61.8 percent of the Public Service workforce identify as women and 37.9 percent as men. 0.5 percent identify with another gender or multiple genders, a proportion which appears to be increasing since the collection of more inclusive gender data in 2018<sup>11</sup>. The number of women in leadership continues to rise (53.5 percent) but remains below the overall proportion of women in the Public Service (61.8 percent).

9 Senior leaders are defined as the top three tiers of managers in the public sector, with tier one representing Chief Executives

10 Local authority elections includes mayoralties, councils, community boards, trusts and DHBs

11 Gender information collected about the public sector was binary (male/female) until 2018.

### **New Zealand ranks highly compared to international indicators of corruption but these indexes may only measure a narrow view of transparency**

New Zealand ranks highly compared internationally in indicators of corruption perception. The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries by how corrupt their public services are perceived to be. In 2021, New Zealand ranked 1st equal with a score of 88/100. In the most recent index more than two-thirds of countries rank below 50, with an average score of just 43<sup>23</sup>. However more localised measures of corruption may be needed to fully understand this within our context.

### **Dispute resolution mechanisms exist and in general, complaints and disputes in the human rights and disability spaces are being resolved within timeframes and people are satisfied with the processes.**

The Human Rights Commission received 5915 new human rights enquiries and complaints in 2019–2020. Of these, 1445 were complaints of alleged unlawful discrimination and the five main prohibited grounds cited were ‘race-related’ complaints (383), disability (249), sex (110), age (93), and sexual harassment (69). These five grounds have been consistently the most cited over recent years.

In 2019/20, 94 percent of enquiries and complaints about unlawful discrimination were closed within 12 months. There was a 77 percent satisfaction rate from mediation which has remained stable since 2018<sup>24</sup>.

In 2021 the Health and Disability Commission received 5396 complaints, with a 14 percent increase in complaints, with a general trend of a 23 percent increase over the last five years.

90 percent of consumers and 94 percent of providers who responded to Health and disability commission surveys were satisfied or very satisfied with the Advocacy Service’s complaints management process<sup>25</sup>.

# Social cohesion baseline indicators 2022

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>People, families, whānau and communities are CONNECTED and feel like they BELONG</b>			
<b>Social contact</b>	Proportion of people who have weekly face-to face contact with family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family – 60.2% (2018)</li> <li>• Friends – 73.7% (2018)</li> </ul>	General Social Survey (core content)
	Mean rating - connection with people in neighbourhood	5.6 (2018)	General Social Survey (2018 supplement - Due to be updated in 2024)
<b>Access to support systems</b>	Proportion of people reporting it would be easy or above easy to get help if they were going through a difficult time	76.1% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Isolation and loneliness</b>	Proportion of people who felt isolated and lonely at least a little of the time	39% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content)
<b>Positive meaningful social connections</b>	Proportion of people reporting the amount of contact with family and friends is about the right amount of contact	N/A	General Social Survey (core content)
	Proportion of young people who feel they get enough time to spend with their friends	N/A	Whataboutme? survey



Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>Sense of belonging to community</b>	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their family	63.9% (2018)	General Social Survey (2016 supplement – to be updated in 2021 survey)
	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their marae	N/A	
	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their religion	43.5% (2018)	
	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their place of employment	27.6% (2018)	
<b>Sense of belonging to place</b>	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood	11.3% (2018)	General Social Survey (2016 supplement – to be updated in 2021)
	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to their region	21.9% (2018)	General Social Survey (2016 supplement – to be updated in 2021)
	Proportion of people who feel a sense of belonging to New Zealand as a whole	43.9% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
	Proportion of Māori who feel very strongly or strongly connected to their tūrangawaewae	73.5% consider mārae tipuna as tūrangawaewae, of those 41% feel very strongly connected (2018)	Te Kupenga

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>People, families, whānau and communities are willing and able to PARTICIPATE</b>			
<b>Solidarity/ reciprocity</b>	Proportion of people who consider that it is important to them to feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood	70% (2020)	Quality of life Survey
<b>Unpaid contributions/ volunteering</b>	Proportion of people who volunteered formally (for an organisation) or informally (direct help for people who don't live with them)	49.8% (2016)	General Social Survey (core content)
<b>Club/association membership</b>	Proportion of people who belong to a group, club or organisation	58% (2016)	General Social Survey 2016
	Proportion of young people who are part of groups, clubs, and teams	N/A	Whataboutme? survey
<b>Sports/cultural participation</b>	Proportion of people who participate in sports and recreational activities	79% (2016)	General Social Survey (core content)
	Proportion of people who participate in cultural activities	78% (2016)	General Social Survey (core content)
<b>Employment</b>	Labour Force Participation Rate (number of persons who are employed and unemployed but looking for a job divided by the total working-age population)	70.9% (2022)	Household Labour Force Survey
	Proportion of people aged 15-24 years who are not in employment, education, or training	12% (2022)	Household Labour Force Survey
<b>Civic participation - local</b>	Proportion of enrolled voters who voted in a local government election	42% (2019)	Voter turnout - Local Authority election administrative data

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
	Proportion of Māori who are registered with their iwi, are eligible to vote in the last iwi elections and voted in an iwi election in the last three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered with iwi: 47% (2018)</li> <li>Of those registered, eligible to vote: 78% (2018)</li> <li>Of those eligible, proportion who voted in iwi election in the last 3 years: 52% (2018)</li> </ul>	Te Kupenga
<b>Civic participation - central</b>	Proportion of people who voted in the last general election	81.5% (2020)	Electoral Commission administrative data
<b>People, families, whānau and communities are included and experience EQUITY</b>			
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	Distribution of self-rated life satisfaction scores across demographic groups	Overall: 81.1% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Sense of purpose</b>	Distribution of self-rated life worthwhile scores across demographic groups	Overall: 86% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Hope for future (Sense of satisfaction in 5 years time) and sense of control now core content</b>	Distribution of self-rated future life satisfaction scores across demographic groups	N/A	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Family and whānau wellbeing</b>	Distribution of self-rated family wellbeing scores across demographic groups	Overall: 82.6% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Financial wellbeing</b>	Distribution of self-rated financial wellbeing scores across demographic groups	Overall: 62.8% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>General health</b>	Distribution of self-rated general health scores across demographic groups	Overall: 55.3% (2018)	General Social Survey (core content) Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Mental wellbeing</b>	Distribution of poor self-rated mental wellbeing scores across demographic groups	Overall: 22% (2018)	
<b>People, families, whānau and communities are RECOGNISED for who they are and RESPECT others</b>			
<b>Connection to identity</b>	Proportion of young people who have someone they can ask about their culture, whakapapa or ethnic group	N/A	Whataboutme? survey
	Proportion of young people who can have a conversation in the language of their ethnic or cultural group	N/A	Whataboutme? survey
	Proportion of Māori who have discussed and explored their whakapapa or family history in the previous 12 months	60% (2018)	Te Kupenga
	Proportion of Māori adults who have been to a marae in the previous year and know their ancestral marae	52% (2018)	Te Kupenga
	Proportion of Māori adults who can speak, understand, read or write Te reo Māori fairly well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking – 17.9%</li> <li>• Understanding – 30.4%</li> <li>• Reading – 26.7%</li> <li>• Writing – 19.1%</li> </ul>	Te Kupenga
	Proportion of Māori who engaged in cultural practice in the previous 12 months	N/A	Te Kupenga

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>Ability to express identity</b>	Proportion of people who felt it was easy or very easy to express their identity in New Zealand	84% (2018)	General Social Survey Whataboutme? Survey
<b>Experience of discrimination</b>	Proportion of people who experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	17% (2018)	General Social Survey
<b>Perception of discrimination as an issue</b>	Proportion of people who consider racism or discrimination towards particular groups of people has been a problem in their city/local area over the past 12 months	51% (2020)	Quality of Life Survey
<b>Acceptance of diversity</b>	Proportion of people who are accepting of others based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or language spoken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnicity – 88.5%</li> <li>• Religion – 87.5%</li> <li>• Sexual orientation – 84.6%</li> <li>• Disability – 82.7%</li> <li>• Language spoken – 83.5%</li> </ul> (2018)	General Social Survey
<b>Value of diversity</b>	Proportion of people who felt that Māori culture and cultural practices were important characteristics when defining New Zealand	73.6% (2016)	General Social Survey 2016
	Proportion of people who felt that multiculturalism and ethnic diversity were important characteristics when defining New Zealand	73.8% (2016)	General Social Survey 2016
<b>Willingness to engage with others</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Perception that people can disagree respectfully</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>People, families, whānau and communities TRUST each other and institutions</b>			
<b>Trust in others</b>	Mean rating - trust held for others	6.8 (2018)	General Social Survey
<b>Perception of representation</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Perception that voice is heard</b>	Proportion of people who feel the public has influence on the decisions their Council makes	31% (2020)	Quality of Life Survey
<b>Trust in institutions</b>	Mean trust rating in Parliament	5.7 (2018)	General Social Survey
	Mean trust rating for police, the education system, courts, and the health system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police – 7.9</li> <li>• Education system – 7.0</li> <li>• Courts – 6.9</li> <li>• Health system – 6.9 (2018)</li> </ul>	General Social Survey
	Mean trust rating for the media	4.9	General Social Survey
	Proportion of people who trust in the private sector brand	49%	KiwisCount survey
	Average corruption perception index score	88/100	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index
<b>Perception of fair treatment</b>	Current gap identified		



Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>The places people live, work, play and learn are safe, inclusive and supportive</b>			
<b>Perceived safety (where people live)</b>	Proportion of people who feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night/if home alone at night/if using or waiting for public transport at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood – 61.9% (2018)</li> <li>• Home alone – 86.7% (2018)</li> <li>• Public transport – 52.9% (2018)</li> </ul>	General Social Survey
<b>Physical safety (where people work)</b>	<p>Current gap – perceived safety at work</p> <p>Proportion of young people who feel safe at work</p>	N/A	Whataboutme? survey
<b>Physical safety (where people play)</b>	Current gap – perceived safety in places we play	N/A	
	Proportion of people who are extremely concerned about the following aspects of the internet cyberbullying, online crime, forums for extremist material and hate speech, misleading or wrong information and conspiracy theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyberbullying: 35%</li> <li>• Online crime: 29%</li> <li>• Forums for extremist material and hate speech: 31%</li> <li>• Misleading or wrong information: 22%</li> <li>• Conspiracy theories: 20%</li> </ul>	<p>Internet perceptions survey</p> <p>General Social Survey 2022</p>
<b>Physical safety (where people learn)</b>	Proportion of young people who feel safe at school	N/A	Whataboutme? survey
<b>Victimisation</b>	Percentage of New Zealanders aged 15 years and older who said they had a crime committed against them in the last 12 months.	29% (2018)	Crime and Victims survey
<b>Cultural safety</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Spiritual safety</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>Inclusion and accessibility (where people live)</b>	Proportion of people who find it easy or very easy to access key public facilities (including nearest doctor or medical centre, nearest supermarket or dairy, and public transport)	92.1% (2018)	General Social Survey 2018 (due to be repeated in 2024)
	Proportion of people who were unable to visit the GP due to cost in the past 12 months	10.2%	NZ Health Survey
	Proportion of people who experienced discrimination at any stage during school, trying to get a job, at work, trying to get housing or a mortgage, dealing with the police or courts, trying to get medical care, trying to get service in a shop or restaurant, on the street or in a public place	N/A	General Social Survey
<b>Inclusion and accessibility (where people work)</b>	Proportion of public servants who feel their agency supports and promotes an inclusive workplace	78%	Te Taunaki – Public Service Census
<b>Inclusion and accessibility (where people play)</b>	Proportion of people who have access to telecommunication systems, such as a cellphone or mobile phone, a landline telephone, or the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the Internet: 86.1%</li> <li>• Access to cellphone/mobile phone: 91.9%</li> </ul> (2018)	Census 2018
<b>Inclusion and accessibility (where people learn)</b>	Current gap – inclusive learning	N/A	
<b>Supportive environments (where people live)</b>	Proportion of people reporting a sense of pride in their area	63% (2020)	Quality of Life Survey
	People’s perception of city as a great place to live	83% (2020)	Quality of Life Survey

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
Supportive environments (where people work)	Current gap identified	N/A	
Supportive environments (where people play)	Current gap identified	N/A	
Supportive environments (where people learn)	Current gap identified		

**Institutions and sectors are FAIR, RESPONSIVE and ACCOUNTABLE**

<b>Representation</b>	Demographic breakdown of elected government members (local and general elections) compared to demographic make-up of New Zealand.	<p><b>Local government</b></p> <p>Women candidates (36%) and elected members (39 %) out of the total group of candidates and elected members</p> <p><b>Elected MPs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Women elected: 48.3%</li> <li>• Ethnicity</li> <li>• Māori: 20.8%</li> <li>• Pacific Peoples: 9.2%</li> <li>• Asian: 6.7%</li> <li>• MELAA: 1.6%</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Median age: 48 years</li> <li>• MPs who identify with the LGBTQIA+ community: 10.8%</li> </ul>	Electoral Commission Local Authority election administrative data
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Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
	Demographic make-up of the public sector workforce (ethnicity, gender, disability, age and religion) compared to the overall New Zealand population	<p>June 2021 data</p> <p><b>Ethnicity:</b></p> <p>Public service workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZ European: (89.2 percent),</li> <li>• Māori (16.4 percent),</li> <li>• Pacific (10.2 percent)</li> <li>• and Asian (12.5 percent) (June 2021)</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender:</b></p> <p>Public service workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women (61.8%),</li> <li>• Men (37.9%),</li> <li>• Another gender or multiple genders (0.5%) (Public service census)</li> </ul> <p><b>Age:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15-24 (5.3%),</li> <li>• 25-24 (24.9%)</li> <li>• 35-44 (22.5%)</li> <li>• 45-54 (23.8%)</li> <li>• 55-64 (19.1%)</li> <li>• 65+ (4.4%)</li> </ul> <p><b>Disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Indicative Disability): 5.5%</li> <li>• Indicative Mental health condition: 17.9%</li> <li>• Affiliated with a religion (46.7%)</li> </ul>	<p>Te Taunaki - Public Service Census</p> <p>Public Service Workforce Data</p>

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
	Diversity in public sector senior leadership positions (Tier 1-3)	Representation in the top three tiers of senior management  <b>Ethnic group representation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZ European (80.1%)</li> <li>• Māori (13.5%)</li> <li>• Pacific (4.3%)</li> <li>• Asian (2.9%)</li> </ul> <b>Gender representation</b> Women (53.5%), Men (46.3%) (June 2021)	Public Service Workforce Data
<b>Accessibility and effectiveness</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Meaningful consultation</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Inclusive data collection practices</b>	Current gap identified	N/A	
<b>Transparency</b>	Average corruption index score	88/100 (2021)	Transparency International Corruption Perceptions index

Key indicators	What we can measure	Baseline result (year)	Data source
<b>Accountability</b>	Number of complaints to the Human Rights Commission, including the nature of complaints and proportion resolved	5915 new human rights enquiries and complaints in 2019/20. Of these, 1445 were complaints of alleged unlawful discrimination and the five main prohibited grounds cited were 'race-related' complaints (383), disability (249), sex (110), age (93), and sexual harassment (69). In 2019/20, 94 percent of enquiries and complaints about unlawful discrimination were closed within 12 months. There was a 77 percent satisfaction rate from mediation	Human Rights Commission Annual Report  Human Rights Commission Annual Report
	Proportion of people who are satisfied with the human rights complaint mediation process		
	Number of complaints to the Health and Disability Commission, including the nature of complaints and proportion resolved	5396 complaints	Health and Disability Commission Annual Report
	Proportion of people who are satisfied with the HDC advocacy service complaint mediation process	90 percent of consumers and 94 percent of providers who responded to Health and disability commission surveys were satisfied or very satisfied with the Advocacy Service's complaints management process	Health and Disability Commission Annual Report



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