YWCA

Young Waikato Women's
Wellbeing Baseline Report

A community baseline measurement for Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People in the Waikato

November 2024

Prepared by

HUBER SOCIAL

Melde

Mā te whakarongo, ka mōhio, mā te mōhio, ka mārama, mā te mārama, ka matau, mā te matau, ka ora.

Through listening, comes knowledge, through knowledge, comes understanding, through understanding, comes wisdom, through wisdom, comes wellbeing.

....

Data used in this report was collected from across the Waikato region, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Te Awanui Tauranga and Ōtautahi Christchurch in Aotearoa New Zealand with an approach and ethical considerations aligned to the principles and requirements of both the New Zealand National Ethical Standards and Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics.

With the majority of the Huber Social team residing in Australia, Huber Social continue to acknowledge, wherever their work takes them, the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia. They acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. They pay their respects to the people, the cultures, and the elders past, present and future. This report was prepared and written by Huber Social on the lands of the Dharawal people and Cammeraygal people of the Eora Nation, and the Whadjuk people from the Noongar Nation.

Contents

Disclaimer

Executive Summary

This report presents a Community Wellbeing Baseline for Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People in the Waikato. As an organisation dedicated to championing the empowerment, leadership, and rights of this community, YWCA Hamilton partnered with Huber Social to measure their holistic needs and lived experiences to develop this baseline. Findings and insights from this report will guide YWCA's service strategies and be shared with the broader community to empower decision-makers across organisations and at all levels of government to effectively support this community.

Key Findings

1. Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People of the Waikato reported **lower wellbeing compared to national average**.

2. **Sleep**, **safe and stable environments** and **holistic wellness** identified as top priority needs.

3. Respondents scored highest in feelings of **self-acceptance of sex/gender identity.**

4. Those aged 16-24 generally scored **lower than those aged 25-35**, with unique areas of focus around **health services** and **access to transport**.

5. Sex/Gender Diverse responses were generally **lowest out of subgroups**, indicating that focussed support is required.

Report Limitations

The findings of any research are limited to the data collected. By conducting further rounds of surveying in future, longitudinal data can be gained to understand changes over time, and the dataset can be increased to better represent sex/gender diverse communities as well as communities living outside of Hamilton/in rural areas.

Leveraging Data to Create Change

Based on these results, Huber Social makes the following recommendations:

1. Immediate actions to support young women and sex/gender diverse people

- Create safe and stable environments, including explicit acceptance of gender diverse people.
- Skills training on financial literacy, and vocational skills, as well as fostering employment networks.
- Support to access and navigate services around mental health, women's health, and financial services.

2. Sowing the seeds of change needed to address wider systemic issues caused by patriarchal and sex/gender-normative constructs

- Education to challenge inequities and raise awareness.
- Advocacy on safety in public and representation in media to shift the dial at the policy level.
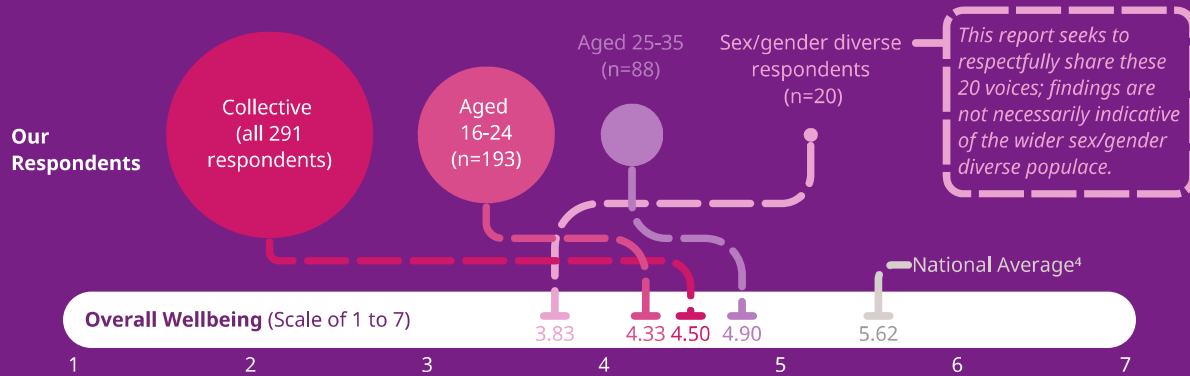- Partnering with organisations supporting men to be better allies for women.

Intended Impact

The knock-on effects of the above will all play a part in uplifting the capabilities and opportunities of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, improving their wellbeing so that they are in positions to live a life they value and fulfil their potential.

Waikato Community Wellbeing Baseline for Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People

Our Respondents

Collective (all 291 respondents)

Aged 16-24 (n=193)

Aged 25-35 (n=88)

Sex/gender diverse respondents (n=20)

This report seeks to respectfully share these 20 voices; findings are not necessarily indicative of the wider sex/gender diverse populace.

National Average[4]

Overall Wellbeing (Scale of 1 to 7)

3.83 4.33 4.50 4.90 5.62

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

What Matters Most

Enjoying Life

Hope for the Future

Self-Identity

Employment Networks

Sense of Purpose

Areas requiring the Most Support

Enough Sleep

Connection to Place

Time for Oneself

Autonomy

Financial Literacy

Through the sex/gender lens

85% Felt proud of how they identified

Only 1 in 2 respondents
• Felt they had the same opportunities
• Felt comfortable talking to men
• Felt safe alone in public at daytime

Only 1 in 3 respondents
• Felt safe alone in public at night
• Felt they were accurately represented in traditional or social media

Areas of Focus Specific to Those Aged 16-24

Physical Health

Access to Transport

Health Services

Areas of Focus Specific to Those Aged 25-35

Job Pathways

Stable Income

Financial Literacy

Areas of Focus Specific to Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

Financial Literacy

Self-Acceptance

Job Pathways

Recommendations to drive change

Immediate Actions

☐ **Create safe and stable environments**, including explicit acceptance of gender diverse people

☐ **Skills training** on financial literacy, and vocational skills, + fostering employment networks

☐ **Support to access and navigate services** - mental health, women's health, financial services

Sowing seeds for wider change

☐ **Education** to challenge inequities and raise awareness

☐ **Advocacy** on safety in public and representation to shift the dial at policy level

☐ **Partnering** with organisations supporting men to be better allies for women

Key Findings

1. **Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People of the Waikato reported lower wellbeing compared to national average.**

   Collective respondents had an average overall wellbeing score of 4.50 (on a scale of 1 to 7), 20% lower than the national average of 5.62. While the subgroup aged 25-35 was only 13% lower than the national average, those aged 16-24 reported a wellbeing score of 23% lower, and sex/gender diverse respondent wellbeing was 32% lower than the national average. This pattern of disparity is repeated throughout the report across most findings.

2. **Sleep, safe and stable environments and holistic wellness identified as top priority needs.**

   Sleep was identified as the top priority need for the collective and for both those aged 16-24 and those aged 25-35. Less than half of respondents agreed they were getting enough sleep and feeling well rested on most days. Other top priority needs revolved around feeling like an equal, feeling respected, feeling free to be themselves around others, and liking who they are.

3. **Respondents scored highest in feelings of self-acceptance of sex/gender identity.**

   In the face of the challenges present in the lives of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, the highest scoring factor for the collective was self-acceptance of one's sex/gender identity, with 85% feeling proud of how they identified. Positively, despite the lower scores compared to other groups, a majority (68%) of sex/gender diverse respondents still felt proud of their identity.

4. **Those aged 16-24 generally scored lower than those aged 25-35, with unique areas of focus around health services and access to transport.**

   Compared to older respondents, those aged 16-24 generally scored lower for most questions, likely due to being in different developmental stages. Positively, this age group most felt they had the same opportunities as others and faced fewer obstacles.

5. **Sex/Gender Diverse responses were generally lowest out of subgroups, indicating that focussed support is required.**

   Compared to the collective and to other subgroups, sex/gender diverse respondents typically scored lower across most questions. One positive exception is that sex/gender diverse respondents scored highest out of collective and other subgroups in feelings of happiness.

Key Terms

Wellbeing	How a person is doing overall in their life; A person achieves wellbeing when they are in the best position to fulfil their potential and live a life they value. Huber Social measures wellbeing using a globally recognised satisfaction with life scale.[1]
Capabilities & Opportunities	A person's capabilities and access to opportunities influence their overall wellbeing. E.g., 'Holistic Wellness', 'Access to Services and Structures'. The capabilities and opportunities measured are laid out in the Social Impact Model (page 12).
Factor	Underlying elements that make up each capability and opportunity. E.g., the capability 'Holistic Wellness' includes factors such as sense of purpose, self-acceptance, and feelings of happiness. Huber Social uses survey questions to measure each factor in the Social Impact Model (page 12).
Predictor of Wellbeing - What Matters Most	A factor that has a significant, predictive relationship with people's overall wellbeing (identified through statistical analysis). A positive change in a predictor of wellbeing is more likely to lead to an increase in overall wellbeing.
Priority Need - Areas of Focus	A factor that is both a predictor of wellbeing and low-scoring. As this area is underserved, focusing on it would more likely improve wellbeing among the community.
Strength	A factor that scored highest on average from respondents, indicating feelings of confidence in these areas.
Challenge	A factor that scored lowest on average from respondents, indicating opportunities for improvement in these areas.
Statistical significance	Refers to how sure we can be that a finding is not due to chance. Throughout this report we aimed for 95% confidence ($p < 0.05$), meaning we are confident that 95% of the time an observed difference in these factors is true.
Collective	All respondents to the 2024 Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People of Waikato Wellbeing Baseline Survey.
Sex/Gender Diverse Person	Anyone who identified as non-binary, transgender, intersex, takatāpui, MVPFAFF+ or another way that was not typically defined as male or female.

Supporting Young Waikato Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People

A Note from YWCA Hamilton

The YWCA of Hamilton has been supporting young women in the Waikato for over 80 years. We believe that when women thrive, their families thrive and when families thrive, the whole of society thrives. In recent years the lack of region specific, gender informed data has remained a challenge. This data helps us figure out what young women in Waikato need to thrive.

Well over a year ago, I had conversations regarding this lack of data with the Waikato Wellbeing Project, Melde and Huber Social. They shared my belief, along with Trust Waikato and WEL Energy Trust, that research into how young women and sex/gender diverse people are doing today was both needed and important.

From the beginning I believed that it would be important to hear the voices of young women themselves. Firstly, I want to thank the young women and sex/gender diverse people who participated in this research, for placing their trust in us. Thank you also to those who helped in the early stages of the project; their input was crucial in ensuring the questions we asked were relevant to the communities we wanted to reach.

Thank you also to the many people, organisations and schools across Waikato who helped us spread the word of the online survey and supported this kaupapa. I also want to thank our YWCA staff and board members who gave their time and effort to make the project the success it is.

Finally, we could not have carried out this work without generous support from Trust Waikato, WEL Energy Trust and the Waikato Wellbeing Project. Thank you!

Now that the results are here, the hard work begins. The purpose of this project has been to gather information that we can act upon. The Y will decide what is the best course of action for us to take to support the wellbeing of young women in the years to come. But we know that we can't do this alone. We will ensure that these findings are distributed widely, so that others can act, too. We will collaborate with others to achieve as big an impact as possible on the wellbeing of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato. I invite you all along for the journey.

Riikka Anderson

General Manager, YWCA Hamilton

Elevating the Voices of the Community

Across the Waikato, there are organisations dedicated to championing the empowerment, leadership, and rights of young women and sex/gender diverse people. To work together most effectively, it is crucial for these groups to develop a shared understanding of what is most important to those they serve.

As a leader in the movement toward a gender-equitable future, YWCA Hamilton has facilitated this measurement project to amplify the voices of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato. This initiative aims to foster collaboration among organisations, ensuring that communities have the support they need to thrive.

While Aotearoa New Zealand is currently placed fourth highest in the world in global gender equality measures,[2] there is still much progress needed to close the gender gap. Women continue to advocate for equal pay, shared responsibilities in unpaid domestic work, greater representation in leadership positions, and decreased rates of gender-based family violence.[3] A 2023 national study found that women report lower mental wellbeing than men, while overall life satisfaction among the LGBT+ community, including sex/gender diverse people, is significantly lower (6.9 out of 10) than that of the general population (7.7 out of 10).[4] With anxiety and depression on the rise among New Zealanders aged 15-24, it is important to note that female and sex/gender diverse young people are more likely to experience mental health issues than their male counterparts.[5]

While young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato have unique strengths and face particular challenges, there have been substantial knowledge gaps regarding their wellbeing. The limited availability of gender-specific data has made it challenging for

organisations to address the specific needs of these populations and implement a comprehensive and collaborative approach to policies and programmes.

YWCA has partnered with Huber Social to measure the holistic needs and lived experience of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, to establish a community wellbeing baseline. YWCA believes that the insights from this data will equip decision-makers with a deeper understanding of what is influencing and driving the wellbeing of this community. These insights will not only guide YWCA's service strategies, but will be shared with the broader community to empower decision-makers across organisations and at all levels of government to effectively support those they serve.

This report presents the findings of the 2024 community wellbeing baseline measurement, offering opportunities for effective collaboration, shared learnings, and improved outcomes for young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato. Importantly, it enables their voices to be heard, highlighting what matters most to them and their wellbeing.

Why Measure Subjective Wellbeing?

Huber Social has been engaged to conduct a wellbeing baseline measurement to better understand the holistic needs and wellbeing priorities of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato. The aim is for YWCA and organisations across the Waikato to harness this knowledge to maximise the wellbeing of the people they seek to support.

1. Measure

To measure the needs of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, Huber Social measures the holistic factors in the lives of these communities and how they may influence and drive overall wellbeing.

Measurement provides a data-driven approach to capture the priority needs and predictors of wellbeing for these groups, empowering YWCA and organisations across the Waikato with data-driven insights to better understand the needs of the people they work with.

Why Wellbeing?

Measures overall progress and supports the systematic solving of social issues

Ultimately, the goal of all social impact is to put people in the best position to fulfil their potential and achieve wellbeing. It is therefore important to measure wellbeing to understand a community and to ensure that overall, programmes are having a positive impact.

Taking a wellbeing approach also provides a whole-of-life understanding of a person's needs. Instead of starting with the issue at hand, which tends to focus on the crisis end of a problem and place artificial limitations on the needs of people, strengthening wellbeing helps build a person's capability and opportunity to fulfil their potential, working to systematically address social issues.

2. Maximise

Beyond a focus on outcomes, Huber Social's approach considers the holistic needs of a person to be in the best position to fulfil their potential. This approach identifies opportunities for YWCA, other organisations and decision-makers supporting young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato to strategically allocate their resources to best improve the overall wellbeing of this community.

YWCA Hamilton
Wellbeing Baseline Model

The YWCA Wellbeing Baseline Model outlines how the wellbeing and outcomes of the population will be measured, using a data-driven approach to understand and demonstrate needs and priorities.

Wellbeing Statement	Metric
The young women and sex/gender diverse people of the Waikato are in the best position to fulfil their potential and live a life they value.	Subjective Wellbeing

Capabilities & Opportunities	Factors	
Holistic Wellness Knowledge and skills to improve and maintain one's physical, mental and emotional health.	• Sense of Purpose • Self-identity • Self-acceptance • Enjoyment • Having Hope for Themselves	• Autonomy • Fear • Feelings of Anxiety, Stress, Happiness and Anger • Emotional Intelligence
Daily Life Skills Knowledge and skills to be able to look after oneself independently	• Physical Health • Health Management Knowledge	• Health Management - Services • Sleep • Financial Literacy
Social Skills Knowledge and skills to forge mutually respectful relationships	• Trust in Others	
Learning Ready Students are able to actively participate in education	• Passions and Interests • Goal Setting • New Experiences	• Time for Oneself • Access to Education
Work Ready Knowledge and skills to apply for and keep a job.	• Access to Employment Pathways	• Access to Employment Networks
Safe and Stable Environment Access to safe spaces for learning and growth	• Access to Environments that Promote Respect	• Access to Environments that Promote Self-expression
Community and Connection Access to community and personal relationships	• Community Connection • Sense of Equality • Safe Community • Safe Schools	• Safe Homes • Family Connection • Access to Positive Role Models • Access to Culture
Connection to Land	• Connection to Place	• Climate Change Empathy
Resources and Structures Access to resources and structures required for daily needs	• Access to Support for Navigating Systems • Access to Community Services that are Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate • Access to Support for Family Violence	• Access to Health Services • Access to Mental Health Supports • Stable Income • Access to Financial Support • Access to Public Transport Services
Gender Identity Understanding the experience of being a woman or sex/gender diverse person	• Self-acceptance – Gender Identity • Opportunities – Gender Identity • Feeling Secure Around Males • Feeling Secure in Public	• Respect – Gender Identity • Representation In Media – Gender Identity • Respect in Media – Gender Identity • Gender Identity – Attitudes

Measurement Approach

Huber Social and YWCA worked together to conduct an opportunity assessment to better understand the holistic needs and priorities of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato (aged 16-35). A co-design approach with YWCA and community was used to determine the scope of measurement and relevant capabilities and opportunities to include in the study.

Once data was collected, analysis was undertaken to understand differences between subgroups. Groups **16-24 year olds, 24-35 year olds,** and **sex/gender diverse people** had findings unique to them. Each has received a section in this report outlining the further investigation.

Respondents
Respondents included anyone who lived, worked or played in the Waikato region, who identified as a woman or sex/gender diverse person between the ages of 16-35. An open feedback section of the survey was also provided to those who fell outside of this scope but supported this community (e.g., older age or male teachers, community organisation representatives, or parents).

Resource Development and Ethics Approval
A survey tool was developed based on the agreed scope of measurement in the Social Impact Model (page 12) as based upon Huber Social's Wellbeing Framework.[6]Based on feedback from community workshops and desktop research, potential wellbeing influences were determined and corresponding questions were drawn from the Huber Social question database. Where no questions currently existed, Huber Social, in collaboration with subject-matter experts, developed questions based on research in the particular area. Huber Social would like to thank Dr. Sterling and Rainbow Hub Waikato for their support on sex/gender lens questions.

The pilot study was submitted to the Huber Social Ethical Review Board for ethical assessment (Committee No. EC0047773). It was granted approval on 16th August 2024. To ensure the survey questions were culturally, linguistically and ethically appropriate, and that all survey questions were understood by respondents, surveys were tested and validated by YWCA with representatives from the community.

Data Collection and Response Rate
Data collection occurred for the month of September 2024, with YWCA promoting the survey and engaging community to respond throughout the month. The online survey was open to the whole community via social media, flyers, and through events, and the use of twenty $25 vouchers as incentives for survey response drove high response rates. Even after removing incomplete or duplicate responses (which is to some extent inevitable when offering an incentive), the survey received 291 responses, well over the sample size required for data analysis for the collective.

Limitations
As with any sample size survey, there are limits to how the findings for those surveyed can be extrapolated to an entire population. While the survey was publicly available and efforts were taken to bring the survey to the entire community, it was inevitably more accessible to some groups than others.

Further, care must be taken not to impose the responses of smaller sample size subgroups as the responses for all who belong to the subgroup. This is particularly important when considering groups who have been subject to poor representation historically (such as sex/gender diverse people). As future surveys are conducted, more data will be added to the dataset, allowing for more representative findings across all subgroups.

Meet our
Respondents

The following pages provide an overview of the demographics of the respondents to the 2024 Community Wellbeing Baseline for Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People in the Waikato.

Respondent Demographics:
Age, Sex/Gender and Ethnicity

There were a total of 291 survey responses. Within the collective group, respondents included 194 in the 16-24 age group, 88 in the 24-35 age group, and 20 who identified as non-binary. The ethnic origin with the highest representation was New Zealand European heritage (45% of respondents).

Age

The majority of survey respondents were in the 16-24 year age group, with 50% of respondents being born between the years of 2006 and 2008.

All responses, by age
(n=284)

25-35 years
31%

16-24 years
69%

All responses, by year of birth
(n=284)

Year of Birth

% of Total Respondents
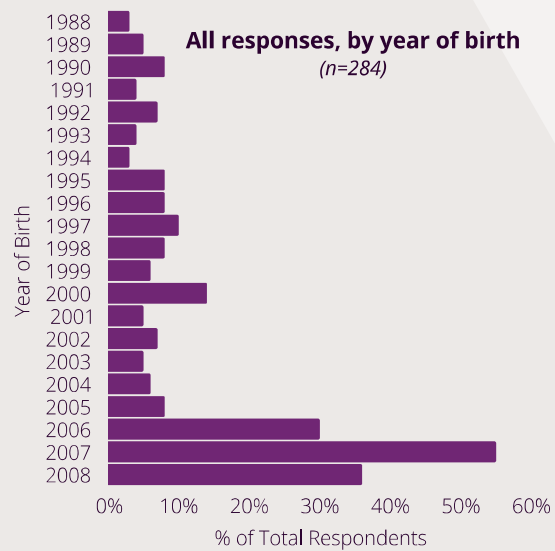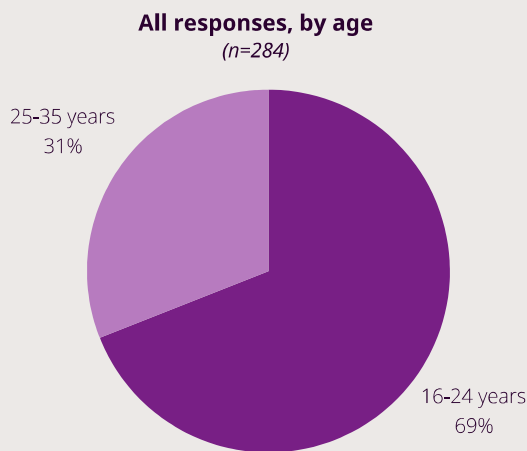
Sex/Gender

Respondents could select more than one option as to how they identified.
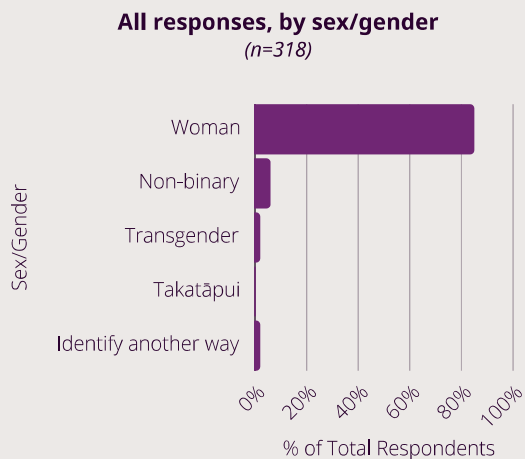
Ethnic Origin

13% of respondents identified as New Zealand Māori. Analysis for this dataset did not find any statistically significant differences in wellbeing for this cohort. Respondents could select more than one option.

All responses, by sex/gender
(n=318)

Sex/Gender

Woman
Non-binary
Transgender
Takatāpui
Identify another way

% of Total Respondents

All responses, by cultural heritage
(n=448)

Cultural heritage groups

New Zealand Māori
New Zealand European
Samoan
Cook Island Māori
Tongan
Niuean
Chinese
Indian
Another ethnicity

% of Total Respondents
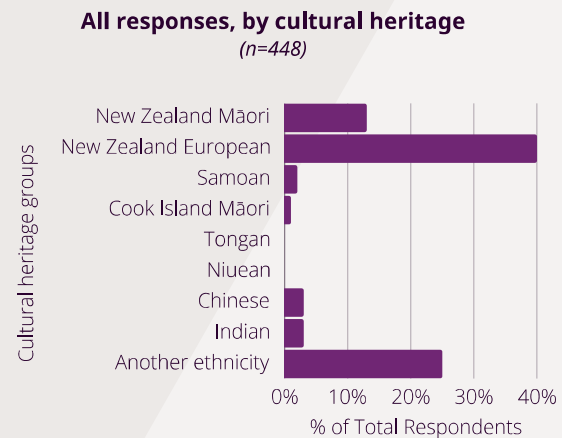
Respondent Demographics:
Education, Employment, and Sexual Orientation

Education and Employment

44% of respondents reported being in school, 15% in tertiary education, and 28% reported being employed. Respondents could select more than one option. The category 'another stage of life' was used rather than 'not in education, employment, or training' to support a strengths-based approach.

All responses, by education and employment
(n=342)
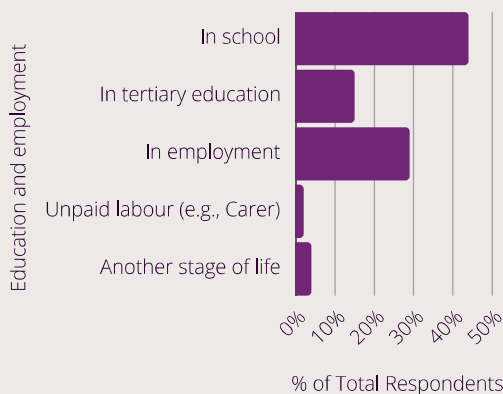
Highest Level of Education

40% of respondents reported that their highest level of completed education was Year 11 Secondary School.

All responses, by highest level of completed education
(n=272)
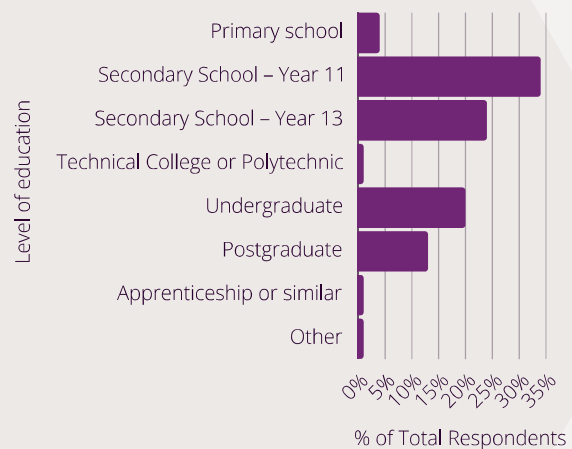
Sexual Orientation

62% of respondents reported that they think of themselves as straight or heterosexual, with 15% identifying as bisexual.

All responses, by sexual orientation
(n=271)
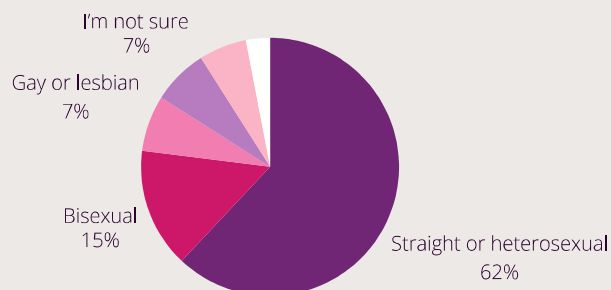
Respondent Demographics:
Geographic Spread

This page details the spread of respondents geographically across and beyond the Waikato region. As YWCA Hamilton is primarily active in Hamilton, a greater concentration of responses were from this area. Further, response rates were often higher in urban areas due to population density. Some respondents completed the survey in Auckland, Tauranga and Christchurch; these individuals may reside in these areas but commute into the Waikato Region for school, university or work.

Responses for initial baseline cluster around Hamilton; Opportunity to focus on areas beyond in future surveys.
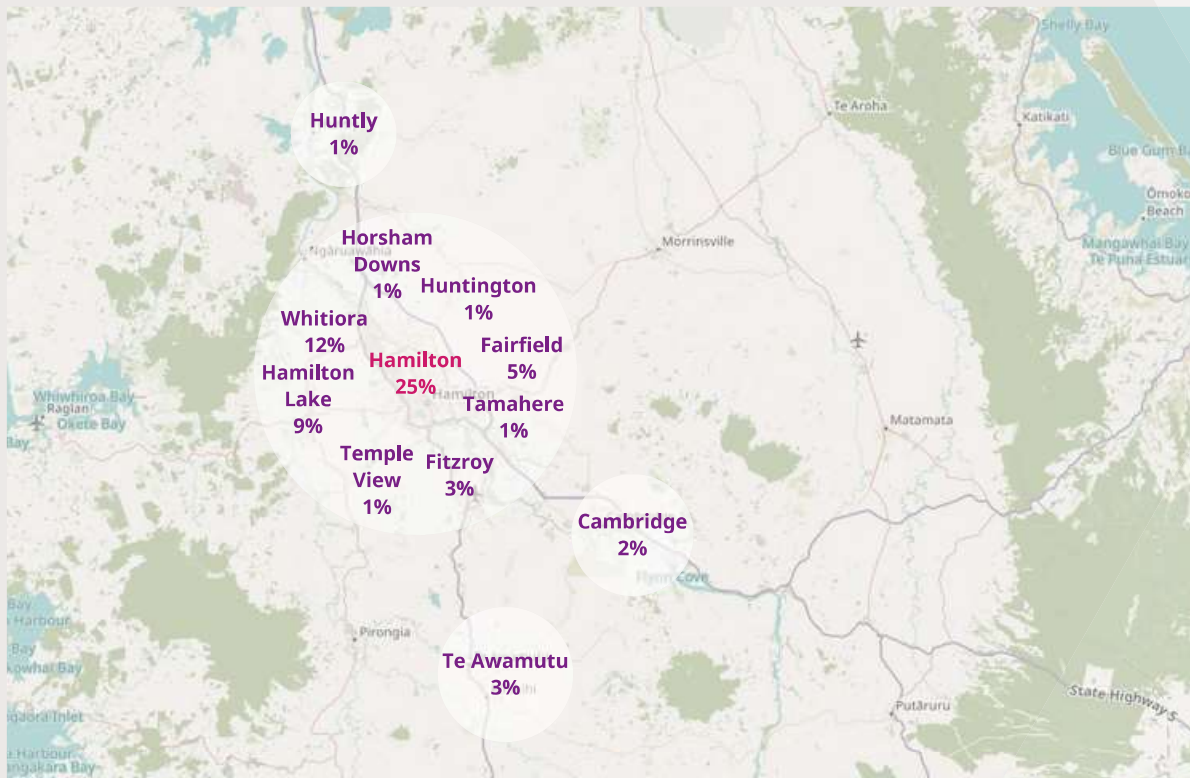
Note: Auckland responses 11%, Tauranga responses 2%, not pictured.   *Map from openstreetmap.org.*

No significant differences were found between those in and out of the city.

Analysis was performed to explore potential differences between responses from those in major urban areas (80%) and those outside of major urban areas (20%). The hypothesis was that respondents in rural areas may have different experiences, requiring tailored support to meet their specific needs. However, no significant differences were found between these two groups in the data collected. This may be due to the spread of data collected still clustering in urban areas. As future surveys add more responses to the dataset, a better understanding of those in rural areas may emerge.

What Matters Most for the Collective

The following section details what is most important to the wellbeing of those surveyed, as well as areas that require the most focus to best support young women and sex/gender diverse people of the Waikato.

Young Women reporting Lower Wellbeing than National Average

Rather than make assumptions or use proxy measures to assess overall wellbeing, Huber Social asks people 'how satisfied are you with your life' to understand their subjective wellbeing.

The young women and sex/gender diverse people of the Waikato who responded to the survey had an **overall average wellbeing of 4.50 on a scale from 1 to 7**. This is lower than the national average of Aotearoa New Zealand[4] at 5.62.* Looking at specific communities within all survey respondents, there were also statistically significant variances between certain groups and the collective.^

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scale of 1 to 7

National Average[4]   5.62

Aged 25-35   4.90

Collective (All Respondents)   4.50

Aged 16-24   4.33

Sex/gender diverse respondents   3.83
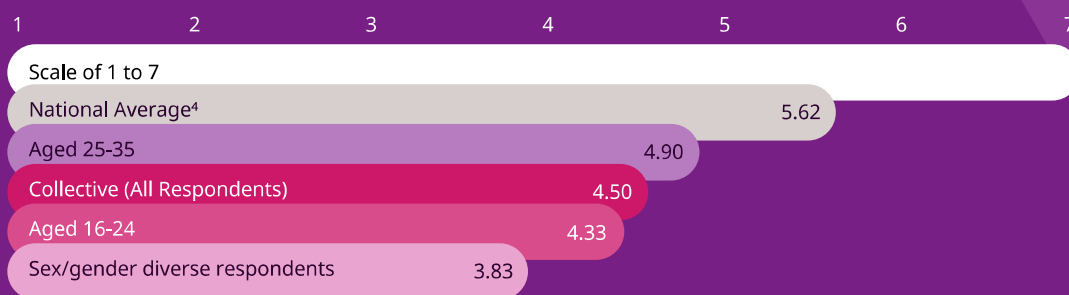
On average, those aged 16-24 had lower wellbeing, with sex/gender diverse respondents reporting the lowest overall wellbeing of all groups. These results align with national data indicating that overall life satisfaction is significantly lower among the LGBT+ community.[4] Lower wellbeing scores for the 16-24 subgroup may be attributed to challenges associated with this developmental stage along with broader issues facing young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, national anxiety and depression rates are rising among those aged 15-24, with female and sex/gender diverse young people more likely to experience mental health issues than males.[5]

While those aged 25-35 reported higher overall wellbeing than the collective, their scores still fell below the national average. This may reflect both the strengths of respondents in this age group and the ongoing challenges facing women and sex/gender diverse people in Aotearoa New Zealand.
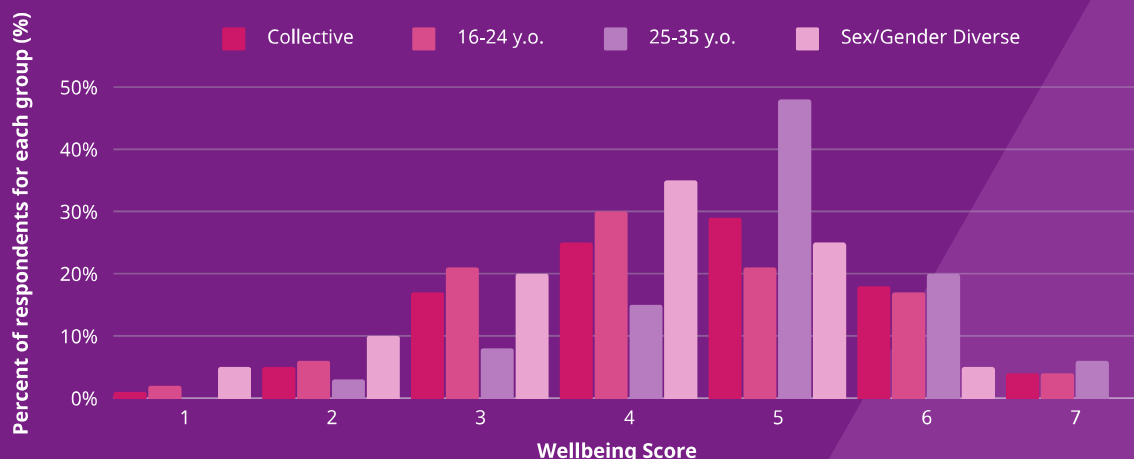
Adjusted to a scale from 1 to 7, from original scale of 0 to 10.
^*Those aged 16-24 (n=193) and 25-35 (n=88) groups statistically significant to p<.001. Sex/gender diverse group (n=20) statistically significant to p=0.019.*

What Matters Most to the Collective: Predictors of Wellbeing

This page shows what matters most to those who responded to our survey, in order of what has the strongest statistical relationship with wellbeing.

Factors on this page are **predictors of wellbeing**, meaning a positive change in these factors, above all other measured factors, is statistically more likely to lead to an increase in overall wellbeing.

We've grouped what matters most into overarching **capabilities and opportunities** that are explored further in this report.

Strongest Relationship with Wellbeing

Relationship with Wellbeing

Enjoying Life

Respectful Environment

Job Pathways

Self-Acceptance

Safe Self-Expression

Autonomy

Hope for the Future

Self-Identity

Sense of Purpose

Family Connection

Enough Sleep

Employment Networks

Goal Setting

Sense of Equality

Financial Literacy

Safe Schools

Community Connection

Positive Role Models

Trust in Others

Connection to Place

Safe Community

Access to Education

Time for Oneself

Feelings of Happiness

Stable Income

Navigating Systems

Passions & Interests

Health Information

Capabilities and Opportunities

| Holistic Wellness | Safe & Stable Environment | Work Ready | Community & Connection | Daily Life Skills | Learning Ready | Social Skills | Connection to Land & Place | Access to Services & Structures |

What Matters Most:
Holistic Wellness integral to Overall Wellbeing of Collective

As demonstrated on the previous page, the majority of factors with the strongest relationship to wellbeing are grouped within 'Holistic Wellness'. The following eight factors are in order of strength of relationship to overall wellbeing.

Enjoying Life

Enjoying life and having fun

Self-Acceptance

Liking who they are

Autonomy

Feeling they have control over their future

Hope for the Future

Believing good things will happen in their future

Self-Identity

Knowing who they are

Sense of Purpose

Feeling their life has purpose

Time for Oneself

Having time left for themselves after attending to family/personal/ work duties

Feelings of Happiness

Feeling happy in the past month

Enduring Predictors of Wellbeing across Baselines

Several predictors of wellbeing identified in this report reflect the findings from the 2022 Waikato Wellbeing Baseline,[7] which surveyed adults of all ages and genders, with a focus on the creative community. Of the sample, 68% were female, and the largest age group represented was those aged 45-64 years.

The consistent predictors of wellbeing across both reports included 'Enjoying Life', 'Self-Acceptance', 'Sense of Purpose', and 'Feelings of Happiness'. This suggests that these factors within Holistic Wellness remain important for wellbeing over time, across different demographic groups in the Waikato.

What Matters Most:
Unpacking Holistic Wellness

Looking at the eight Holistic Wellness predictors of wellbeing, the following page explores common themes and unpacks the underlying detail in each.

The collective want to enjoy life and have fun

The top predictor of wellbeing for the collective was about enjoying life, with another predictor of wellbeing about feeling happy, indicating an appreciation for the joyful and happy moments in life contributing to overall wellbeing for the collective.

Important to the wellbeing of the collective is knowing who they are, and liking who they are

Having a strong sense of self-identity and, just as importantly, self-acceptance, were both key predictors of wellbeing for the collective. These are of particular relevance for young women, who may still be developing their sense of self, as well as sex/gender diverse people, who may face additional barriers to self-acceptance (more information on page 29).

The collective looks to autonomy and hope for the future as part of their wellbeing in the present

Top predictors of wellbeing included autonomy (feeling they had control over their future) and hope (that good things will happen in their future), indicating that current respondent wellbeing is gauged to some extent by how they felt about their future, beyond just past and present.

"I know my identity is important and it's only in certain spaces where it becomes a defining point otherwise I am privileged enough to just be myself. I don't care too much about labels. It's only when I'm put in the position to be those labels that I can be that person."

- Respondent (Sex/Gender Diverse)

Collective Strengths and Challenges

Strengths and challenges represent the highest-scoring and lowest-scoring factors respectively across all the 50 factors measured, on a scale of 1 to 7. These indicate areas where survey respondents are feeling the most confident, or least confident at point of measurement. High-scoring factors were spread across a wide range of different outcomes, highlighting the diversity of strengths amongst respondents, while low-scoring factors clustered around those relating to the sex/gender lens section. Predictors of wellbeing are factors with a significant relationship to wellbeing and therefore likely to be contributing positively to overall wellbeing for the collective.

PoW   *Predictor of Wellbeing*

Collective Strengths include Self-Acceptance, Connection, and Interests

Self-Acceptance - Gender Identity
5.99
Being proud of how they identify (as a woman or sex/gender diverse person)
More details on page 29

Health Management Knowledge
5.72
Understanding how lifestyle (sleep, hygiene, diet, exercise) affects health
More details on page 24

Passions and Interests
PoW
5.65
Having things they are passionate about

Access to Positive Role Models
PoW
5.59
Having someone in their life to look up to and respect

Family Connection
PoW
5.58
Feeling part of a family/whānau

Challenges include Safety, Representation, Financial Support and Sleep

Feeling Secure in Public at Night
3.37
Feeling safe when alone in public at night
More details on page 34

Representation in Media
3.94
Feeling that women/ sex/gender diverse people are accurately represented on the news, TV, books and magazines
More details on page 32

Access to Financial Support
4.04
Knowing how to access financial support services

Representation in Social Media
4.04
Feeling that women/ sex/gender diverse people are accurately represented online and on social media
More details on page 32

Sleep
PoW
4.15
Getting enough sleep and feeling well rested on most days
More details on page 24

Priority Needs for the Collective:
Sleep

The following are key areas of focus for those supporting young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato. **As priority needs, these are factors with a statistical relationship to wellbeing that are also low-scoring.** By focusing on improving these priority needs, there is an opportunity to maximise the wellbeing of the collective (all respondents).

Sleep was identified as the number one priority need for the collective, with a disconnect between understanding its importance and getting enough rest.

agreed they understood how lifestyle, including sleep, hygiene, diet and exercise, affected their health.

agreed they were getting enough sleep and feeling well rested on most days. (Waikato QoL question: agreed they woke up feeling fresh and rested at least half of the time.[8])

Only
42%

agreed they were getting enough sleep and feeling well rested on most days.

Collective (getting enough sleep)

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

| Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse | Waikato (2022 Quality of Life Survey)[8] |
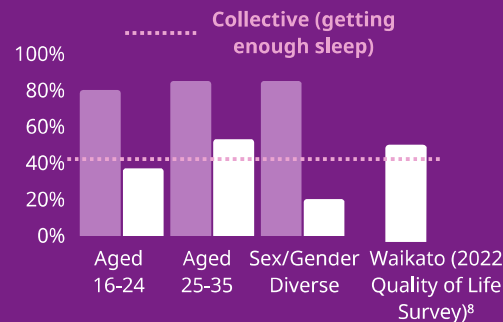
Not enough time in the day: Only one in two respondents reported having time left for themselves

One possible explanation of the above disparity is lack of time. Only 50% of respondents agreed they had time left for themselves after attending to other duties. Continuing to close the gap between the disproportionate amount of domestic labour performed by women, and ensuring high quality free time, may address these priority needs.[9] [10]

50% had time left for themselves after attending to their family/personal/work duties.

"Time is so precious and there is so much vying for my attention and my free time. With all the expectations of modern life, I am often too tired to commit to events outside if my regular routine unless they are in my own space."

- Respondent (Aged 25-35)

Collective n=283, 16-24 n=187, 25-35 n=87, sex/gender diverse n=20.

Priority Needs for the Collective continued:
Respectful and Safe Environments

Only about half of those surveyed felt a sense of equality in their community, and that they had access to environments that promoted respect, self-expression, and self-acceptance.

Collective

55% Felt like an equal within their community.

100%
50%
0%
Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse

58% Felt free to be themselves around others.

100%
50%
0%
Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse

59% Felt their opinions were heard and respected by others.

100%
50%
0%
Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse

60% Liked who they are.

100%
50%
0%
Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse
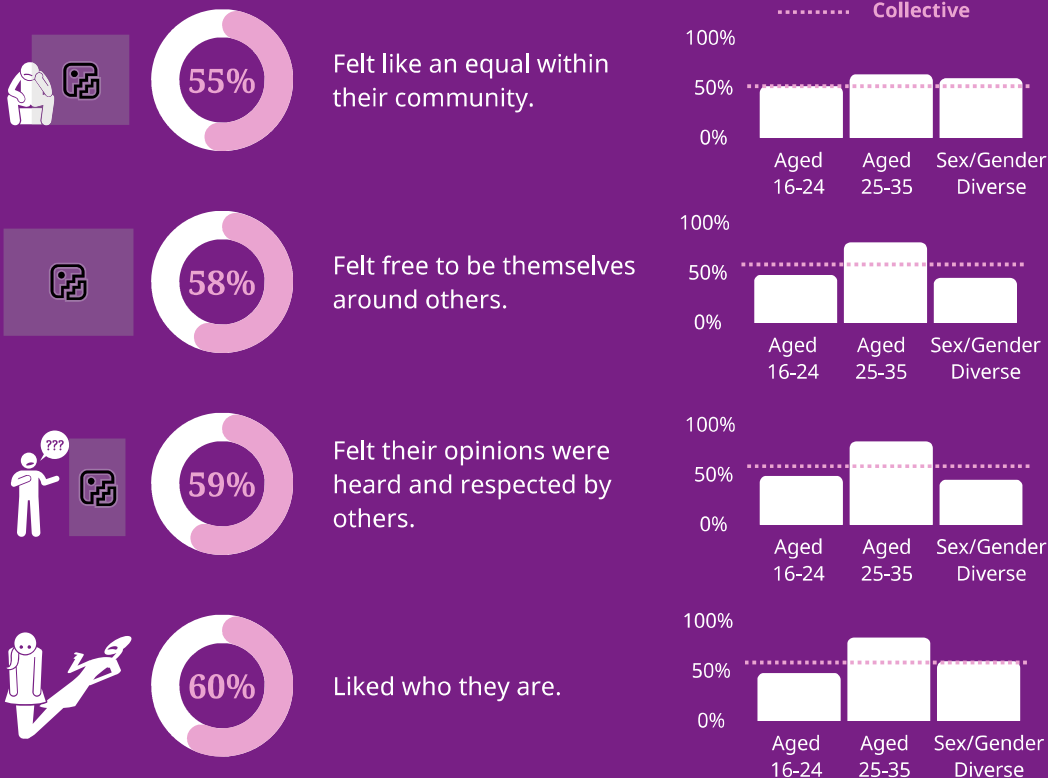
Looking at subgroups, those aged 25-35 reported highest levels of agreement, while those aged 16-24 and sex/gender diverse respondents generally reported lower levels than the collective. This indicates a sharper need and focus on these subgroups to best enhance wellbeing for the collective.

There is an opportunity for YWCA Hamilton and other supporting community organisations to further create safe and stable environments that promote equality, respect and self-expression, especially for women aged 16-24 and sex/gender diverse people.

Collective n=281, 16-24 n=188, 25-35 n=84, sex/gender diverse n=20.

Priority Needs for the Collective continued:
Diverse Needs

The following priority needs span a number of different capabilities and opportunities found to have a relationship with overall wellbeing. These varied needs reflect the multi-faceted lives of the women and sex/gender diverse people surveyed, indicating shared and enduring opportunities for focus. Barely half (or fewer) respondents agreed with the statements related to the below priority needs, meaning almost half of respondents did not feel confident in these factors important to their wellbeing. This large group presents an opportunity to support a large proportion of people through initiatives focusing on connection to place, autonomy, employment pathways and financial literacy.

Connection to Place

43% agreed they felt connected to their land and/or place.

Autonomy

54% felt they had control over their future.

Access to employment pathways

60% agreed they had the opportunity to get a job they were interested in.

Financial literacy

49% agreed they could understand and manage their financial situation.

Predictors of wellbeing reflect the diversity of the group surveyed, as expected for a community wellbeing baseline

Interestingly, predictors of wellbeing across the collective and virtually all subgroups had a moderate relationship with wellbeing ($0.4 < r < 0.7$). When there are a lot of moderate predictors, this often indicates the diversity of the group and how no one factor predicts wellbeing, but rather that there are multiple contributing layers. This reflects the wide group of people surveyed across the region. The power of longitudinal measurement lies in understanding whether these predictors of wellbeing are consistent over time and at different points in the future; additional surveys over time can help determine enduring factors and factors relevant to a point in time.

Emotional Wellbeing:
Happiness and Stress

This page outlines how the young women and gender diverse people of the Waikato who responded to our survey are feeling. It's worth noting that it is natural to feel a little anger, stress or anxiety, especially over the course of a month, so the data has been split to show respondents who 'strongly agreed' with the below statements in light pink below.

Agree to Some Extent   **Strongly Agree**   PoW   *Predictor of Wellbeing*

PoW

72%

Felt happiness in the last month.

.... **Collective**
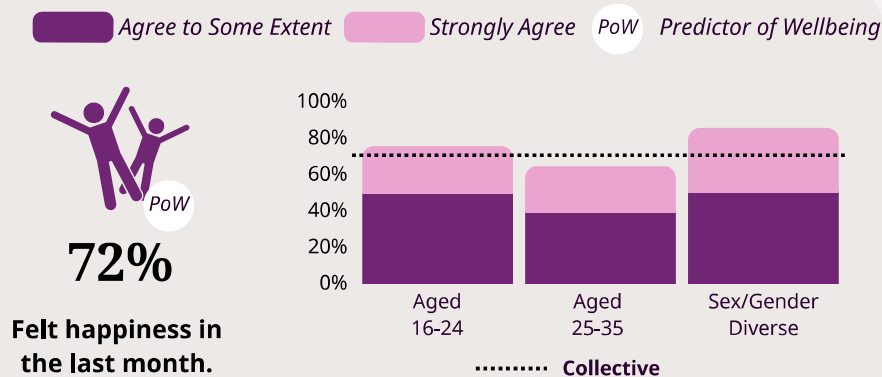
Sex/gender diverse respondents lead in feelings of happiness in last month

Positively, the majority of survey respondents felt happiness in the last month, with sex/gender diverse people having the highest majority of general agreement and strong agreement. This factor is the main predictor of wellbeing out of all the emotion statements. It is a testament to the young women and sex/gender diverse people of Waikato that their wellbeing is buoyed by positive emotions, without necessarily being impacted by negative emotions.

77%

Felt stressed or overwhelmed in the last month.
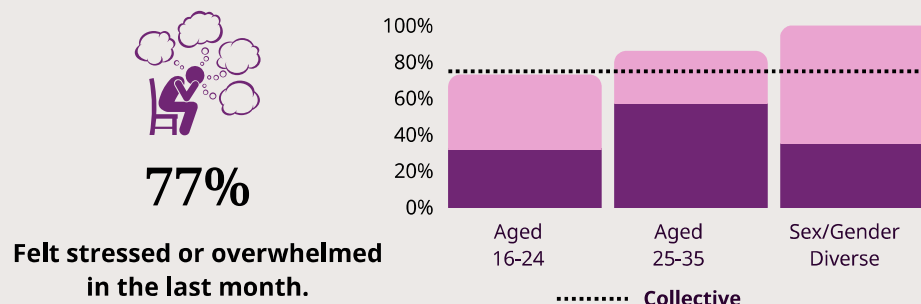
.... **Collective**

However, sex/gender diverse respondents also lead in feelings of stress and overwhelm in last month

On the other hand, the highest majority of the collective agreed that they felt stressed or overwhelmed in the last month, with 100% of sex/gender diverse respondents agreeing. Among those who agreed, more than half strongly agreed for those aged 16-24 and sex/gender diverse respondents, indicating potentially unhealthy or unsustainable levels of stress and overwhelm. Further, sex/gender diverse respondents reported the highest levels of anxiety, fear, and anger compared to other subgroups, highlighting the potential benefit of strategies to help sex/gender diverse individuals manage their emotions more effectively (see further discussion on page 43).

Collective n=279, 16-24 n=184, 25-35 n=85, sex/gender diverse n=19.

Through the
Sex and
Gender Lens

Women and sex/gender diverse people span a wide group of individuals with unique lives and aspirations beyond just their sex/gender identity. However, there are certain societal constructs that result in different lived experiences for different sexes/genders. As a wellbeing baseline survey focussed on the young women and sex/gender diverse people of Waikato, a section was dedicated to exploring their experiences through a sex and gender lens.

The following pages examine how respondents answered questions about their sex/gender identity experience, both collectively and within subgroups. Each question was presented as a statement, for example, 'I feel I have the same opportunities as others'. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement from their perspective as a woman or a sex/gender diverse person. They were also asked to share any comments in their own words regarding two of these questions which related to media representation.
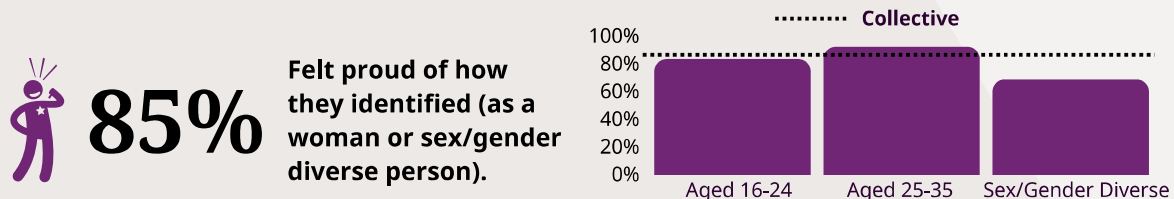
Additionally, respondents were invited to answer the below open feedback questions in their own words:

- 'Reflecting on what you've been asked, is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience as a young woman or sex/gender diverse person in the Waikato?'

- 'Do you have any feedback or general comments you'd like to share?'

Self-Acceptance through the Sex and Gender Lens

Self-acceptance of sex/gender identity the top-scoring factor for the collective

85% Felt proud of how they identified (as a woman or sex/gender diverse person).

Collective

| 100% | 80% | 60% | 40% | 20% | 0% |

Aged 16-24   Aged 25-35   Sex/Gender Diverse

Self-acceptance of gender identity emerged as the **top-scoring of all 50 factors measured** for the collective. Amidst the challenges faced by women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, this confidence in their gender identity is a strength worth celebrating. Insights into this study sample, who appear to be doing particularly well in this aspect of self-acceptance, present opportunities to learn to maximise wellbeing for all young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato.

Those aged 25-35 have highest levels of self-acceptance

While age-specific research on self-acceptance is limited, this pattern aligns with the general trajectory of self-esteem, which typically declines during adolescence - especially for girls - before gradually increasing into adulthood.[11] This trend may reflect changes in the social environment across age groups and developmental shifts as young women mature.[11]

Self-acceptance a predictor of wellbeing for sex/gender diverse people

Those who identify as sex/gender diverse reported the lowest levels of self-acceptance of gender identity among subgroups. This aligns with research indicating that sex/gender diverse youth and young adults often have lower levels of self-acceptance compared to their cisgender peers, with many facing challenges due to unsupportive familial and social environments.[12] Importantly, research shows that confidence in one's gender identity has been positively associated with subjective wellbeing.[13] The results of this study support these findings, with self-acceptance identified as a predictor of wellbeing for sex/gender diverse respondents. **This highlights an opportunity to continue to cultivate self-acceptance to improve wellbeing within this group.**

Despite the lower scores compared to other groups, a majority (68%) of sex/gender diverse respondents still felt proud of their identity. In qualitative feedback, several respondents noted the support from organisations that help sex/gender diverse individuals to embrace their identities.

"I've found so much comfort and community at Rainbow Hub Waikato. They have easy access to plenty of gender affirming resources and...provide a safe and welcoming environment for people of all genders and ages."

-Survey respondent who identifies as sex/gender diverse

Collective n=277, 16-24 n=182, 25-35 n=86, sex/gender diverse n=19.

Opportunity and Obstacles through the Sex and Gender Lens

Following on from the high levels of self-acceptance of gender identity on the previous page, other questions asked through the sex/gender lens were less positive, revealing that respondents felt they had fewer opportunities and more obstacles than others, with these feelings of inequity increasing for those aged 25-35, and further for sex/gender diverse people.

Women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato feel they have fewer opportunities and more unseen obstacles than others.

56%

Felt they had the same opportunities as others.

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

| Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse |

·········· Collective

61%

Felt others denied that women and/or sex/gender diverse people faced extra obstacles.

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

| Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse |

·········· Collective
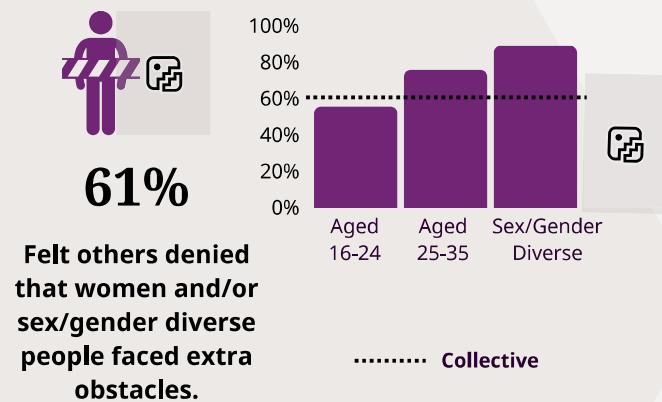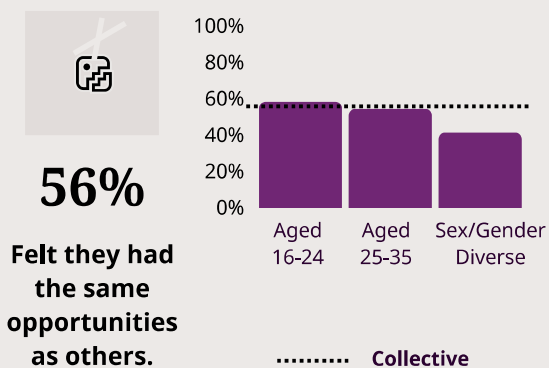
Respondents identifying as sex/gender diverse had the strongest feelings of inequity.

36%

Have personally experienced recent prejudice or intolerance, or been treated unfairly or excluded.

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

61%

| Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse |

·········· Collective

51%

Felt comfortable talking to men freely and confidently.

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

22%

| Aged 16-24 | Aged 25-35 | Sex/Gender Diverse |

·········· Collective
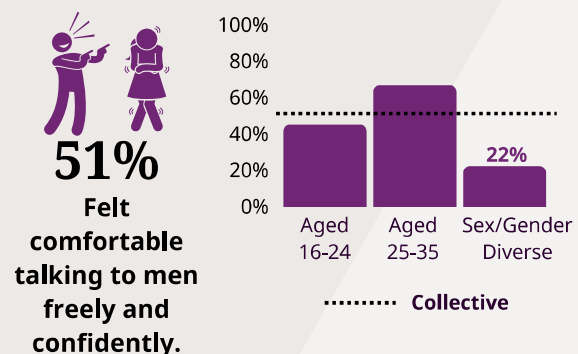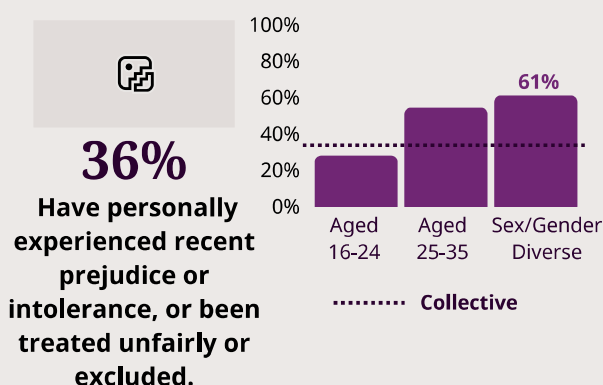
Overall, sex/gender diverse individuals reported the highest levels of perceived inequity across the sex/gender lens questions compared to other subgroups. These findings suggest a **need for targeted support to promote equity and inclusion for sex/gender diverse communities.**

Collective n=264, 16-24 n=172, 25-35 n=81, sex/gender diverse n=17.

In Their Own Words: Progress Needed to Improve Equity

Respondents were invited to describe in their own words their experience as a young woman or sex/gender diverse person in the Waikato. While some progress was acknowledged, many respondents reported that they still felt looked down upon and treated differently to men, especially in the workplace. They also emphasised a need for greater representation and acceptance of diversity to foster a safe environment for all identities.

> *It's a lot easier than it is in other parts of the world. Although I still find when I'm in male dominant environments I get underestimated and belittled. Women have to work harder to prove themselves.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 16-24*

> *I feel that where I work I am often overlooked and treated differently to other staff.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 16-24*

> *...growing up in the Waikato, I didn't know or accept that I was queer until I was well into my 20's because it was not something I had seen and I knew my family would find it hard to accept... It seems as though we have made a lot of progress, but it is still really hard for many people to come out or express themselves freely. I don't find the Waikato particularly progressive with accepting people's differences.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 25-35*

> *...there is still not a lot of representation. It feels safer to be out and proud in places like Tāmaki/Auckland as opposed to in Kirikiriroa/Hamilton. Our area still has a long way to go and there is still a huge influence of white cisgender heterosexual men.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, sex/gender diverse*

> *We're getting better as a society but we still have a way to go on equality & equity.*
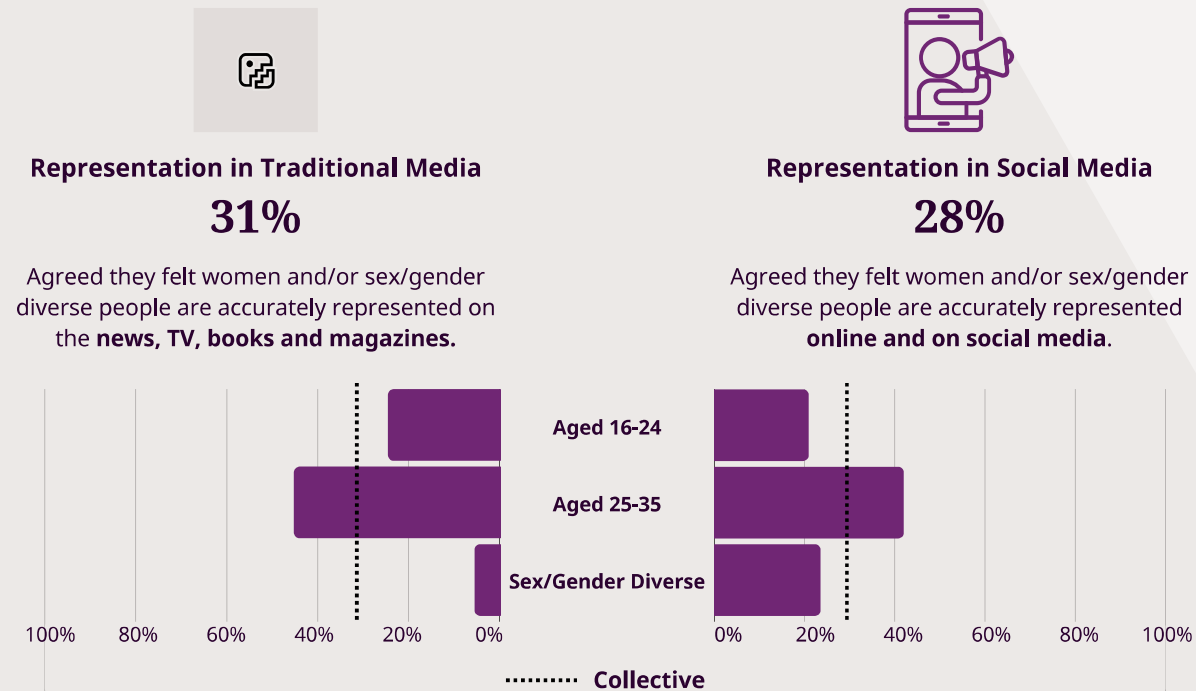>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 25-35*

Media through the Sex and Gender Lens

The majority of women and sex/gender diverse people responding to the survey did not feel accurately represented in media, with the minority agreeing to the below statements.

Representation in Traditional Media

31%

Agreed they felt women and/or sex/gender diverse people are accurately represented on the **news, TV, books and magazines.**

Representation in Social Media

28%

Agreed they felt women and/or sex/gender diverse people are accurately represented **online and on social media**.

Aged 16-24

Aged 25-35

Sex/Gender Diverse

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0%   0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

·········· **Collective**

In qualitative results, respondents felt they are not only underrepresented in mainstream media but also frequently **depicted through gender stereotypes**. This was particularly evident among the 16-24 and sex/gender diverse groups, while those aged 25-35 felt that while representation is limited, it has improved somewhat in recent years. Gender stereotyping in media perpetuates harmful societal norms and can negatively affect women's career ambition and mental health,[14] while exposure to counterstereotypical roles in media enhances self-perception and leadership aspirations.[15]

Qualitative responses also highlighted that unrealistic portrayals in social media create **unattainable body image standards** for young women. Research shows that these platforms can negatively affect mental health and self-esteem due to constant exposure to idealised images and social comparison, especially among youth and young adults at a crucial stage of identity development.[16]

Respondents also noted the **discrimination faced by sex/gender diverse people** in the media, with perpetuation of stigma, prejudice and fear. Greater representation can not only assist individuals in their self-identification journey, but also foster empathy and acceptance among families and communities.[17] On a positive note, sex/gender diverse respondents reported more diversity within social media compared to traditional media, with some finding community in online spaces.

These findings highlight an **opportunity for YWCA and other organisations to enhance media literacy** to support women and sex/gender diverse people to develop critical perspectives on media, as well as empowering them to **create structural change by advocating for equitable and authentic portrayals of gender** and promoting diverse and inclusive representation.[16]

Collective n=267, 16-24 n=175, 25-35 n=81, sex/gender diverse n=17.

In Their Own Words: More Accurate Media Representation Needed

Respondents were invited to share open feedback about representation for women and/or sex/gender diverse people in both traditional and social media.

> **The filters! They're out of control...It's so brutal the level of perfection that women and young people are exposed to and consequently must absorb even if subconsciously.**
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 25-35*

> *Lots of books and magazines sexualise women and give them fragile representations, which isn't accurate to everyday women and also undervalues women's abilities.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 16-24*

> **It might be the feminist in me but it makes me so mad to see women represented as either dumb or a housewife.**
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 16-24*

> *There is too much fakeness. Too many "perfect people" "perfect bodies"*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 16-24*

> **...queer / trans / non binary people are still under represented, characters are not written by writers of those demographics, and can be stigmatising or marginalising in their depiction.**
>
> *- Survey respondent, sex/gender diverse*

> *I feel I see far better representation in the circles I'm in on social media than I do on generic/mainstream shows.*
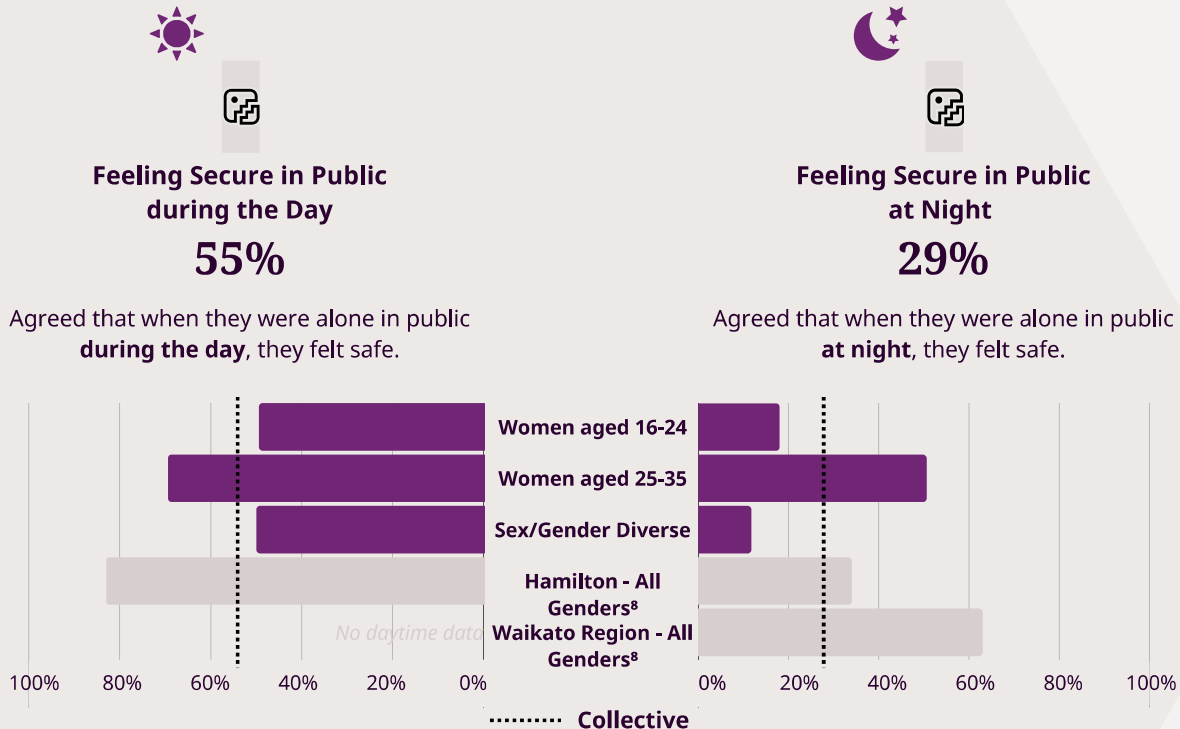>
> *- Survey respondent, sex/gender diverse*

> **I think things have improved a lot since I was a teenager, but we still have heaps of progress to make. Especially for gender/sex diversity.**
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 25-35*

33

Perceptions of Safety through the Sex and Gender Lens

Feeling secure in public is an area of focus in the biennial Quality of Life survey, which measures New Zealanders' perceptions across various domains related to quality of life.[8] Cross-referencing survey results with Quality of Life survey data provides a comparison of how each subgroup perceives safety in public during the day and at night, compared to averages across Hamilton and the Waikato region.

Feeling Secure in Public during the Day

55%

Agreed that when they were alone in public **during the day**, they felt safe.

Feeling Secure in Public at Night

29%

Agreed that when they were alone in public **at night**, they felt safe.

Women aged 16-24
Women aged 25-35
Sex/Gender Diverse
Hamilton - All Genders[8]
Waikato Region - All Genders[8]

No daytime data

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0%   0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

·········· Collective

Feeling Safe at Night the Greatest Challenge

Feeling secure in public at night was the **lowest-scoring factor among the collective and across all subgroups**. Sex/gender diverse people felt the least safe, with **only one in 10 feeling secure in public at night.**

Safety concerns emerged strongly in qualitative results, with respondents sharing experiences of harassment, catcalling, fear of walking alone, and feeling unsafe on public transport due to unwanted male attention.

Perception of safety were lower than the averages for Hamilton and the Waikato region, except for those aged 25-35, whose scores exceeded the Hamilton average. This may reflect comparatively greater confidence within this age group, while underscoring the need for addressing common safety concerns among the Hamilton population.

Collective n=272, 16-24 n=172, 25-35 n=83, sex/gender diverse n=17.

Feeling Safe at School a Priority Need

61%

Of **respondents aged 16-24** agreed they felt safe at school.

46%

Of **sex/gender diverse respondents** agreed they felt safe at school.

Feeling safe at school was a priority need for both those aged 16-24 and sex/gender diverse subgroups. These findings are concerning and warrant further investigation.

Snapshot 1:
Those Aged 16-24

(n=194)

The following pages detail findings specific to the subgroup of respondents aged 16-24. As the largest subgroup comprising the collective, results mirror those of the collective; however, a number of factors are unique to this subgroup.

As Majority, Results for Those Aged 16-24 Mirror Collective

As the majority of survey respondents were aged 16-24 years of age when completing the survey (n=194), it is unsurprising that **what matters most to this age group was reflected in what matters most to the collective** (page 20). Priority needs, strengths and challenges for this age group are also reflected in collective results (pages 23-26).

Nonetheless, there were some predictors of wellbeing and priority needs specific to this age group, particularly around physical and mental health. These predictors of wellbeing unique to those aged 16-24 are explored below.

In addition to the Collective Predictors of Wellbeing on page 20, health, public transport, and equal opportunity are unique predictors for those aged 16-24

Physical Health

Transport

Health Services

Equal Opportunity

Relationship with Wellbeing

Daily Life Skills

Access to Services & Structures

Sex/Gender Identity

More details on page 37

More details on page 30
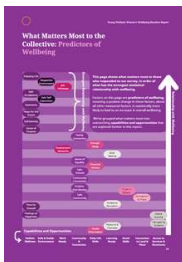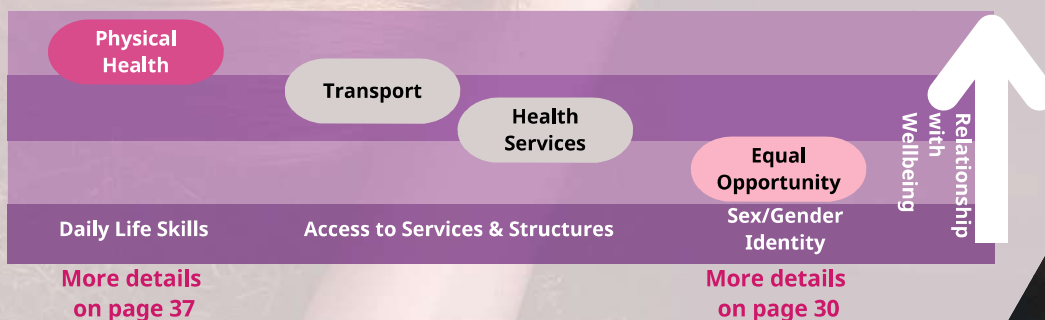
For top **Predictors of Wellbeing** for the Collective, please see page 20

Beyond Collective Priority Needs, Health and Transport Unique Areas of Focus for Those Aged 16-24

In addition to the priority needs outlined for the collective on pages 24-26, **physical health** and **health services** were identified as priority needs unique to respondents aged 16-24. Only...

57% agreed that, in general, their physical health is good.

66% agreed they know where to get reliable information about physical and mental health issues.

These priority needs relating to health were specific to those aged 16-24, indicating that they require a targeted focus for this group. **These needs present an opportunity to support those aged 16-24 to improve their physical health and to facilitate access to reliable health information in order to strengthen their overall wellbeing.**

Those aged 16-24 had less access to transport compared to other subgroups

Respondents aged 16-24 were the only subgroup where access to transport was a priority need, with only 66% agreeing that they had easy access to transport that got them where they needed to go. With other studies reporting 47% of those in Hamilton have not used public transport in the last 12 months, and 79% for the wider Waikato region (who have not used public transport or do not have it in their area), this finding further reinforces reliance on private transport over public transport.[8][18] As younger individuals have had less time to get a driving licence, or may have fewer funds to buy their own vehicle, lack of public transport disproportionately affects youth, and can have knock-on effects to accessing education and employment opportunities.[19] **There is an opportunity to further investigate the extent of these impacts, especially as the dataset grows to include rural responses.**

Image courtesy of busit.co.nz.

Snapshot 2:
Those Aged 25-35

(n=88)

The following pages looks at the specific findings of the subgroup of respondents aged 25-35. Comprising roughly one-third of the collective, there are several unique findings for this subgroup across predictors of wellbeing, strengths and challenges.

What Matters Most to Those Aged 25-35: Access to Work and Income

While there were numerous overlaps with what matters most for the collective (on page 20), predictors of wellbeing for those aged 25-35 (n=88) diverged in order and clustered around financial stability, meaningful work, and having autonomy around one's future.

Being work ready, access to stable income, and financial literacy stood out for those aged 25-35:

Job Pathways	Autonomy		Stable Income		Financial Literacy	
	Enjoying Life					
Employment Networks	Self-Acceptance					
Work Ready	Holistic Wellness	Access to Services & Structures		Daily Life Skills		Relationship with Wellbeing ↑

Understandably, opportunities around being work ready emerged as top predictors of wellbeing for those aged 25-35.

Being work ready for this age group is naturally important as this is often a stage of life where people are looking to establish or advance their careers. Access to stable employment is crucial for achieving financial independence and stability, especially as individuals may be taking on significant financial responsibilities during this stage.

The priority needs for those aged 25-35 years reflected those found for the collective (pages 24-26). Findings tell the most positive story for this age group.

Respondents aged 25-35 were found to have the highest wellbeing out of all subgroups, as well as highest scoring capabilities and opportunities across the board. A possible reason for this may be that those aged 25-35 have had more life experience and opportunities to develop life skills, and are likely more established in their identities than those in the 16-24 subgroup.[20] Additionally, this age group typically has greater stability in their social networks,[21] which could be another potential factor contributing to higher wellbeing scores.
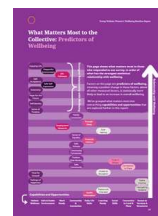
For top Predictors of Wellbeing for the Collective, please see page 20

Unique Strengths and Challenges for
Those Aged 25-35

Many of the strengths for the 25-35 measurement group are consistent with strengths of the entire collective (on a scale of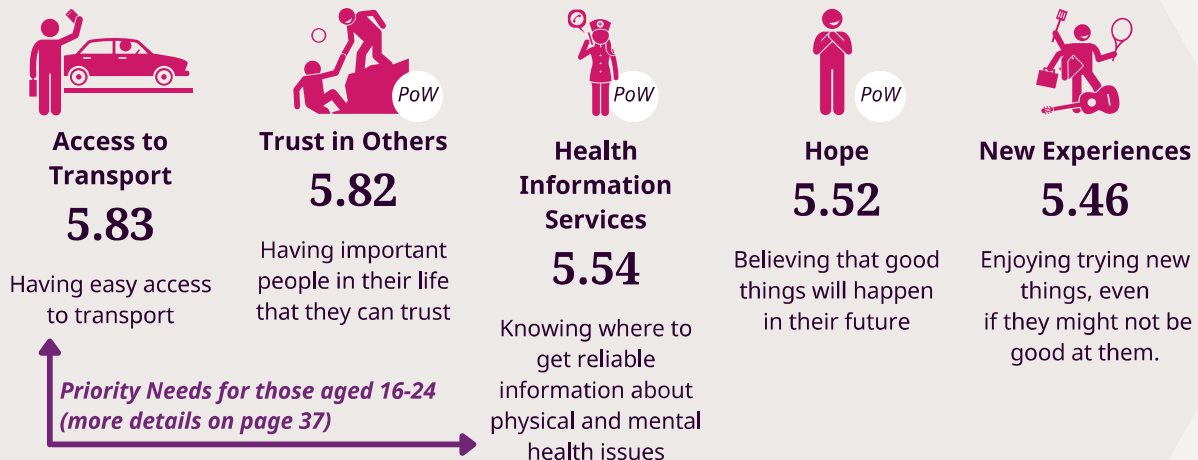 1 to 7). In addition to the strengths listed on page 23, strengths unique to this group include access to transport, and access to health information services, both of which are priority needs for those aged 16-24. Three of the strengths are predictors of wellbeing and therefore likely to be contributing positively to overall wellbeing for those aged 25-35.

PoW   *Predictor of Wellbeing*

Unique Strengths include Transport, Trust, & Health Information

Access to Transport

5.83

Having easy access to transport

Trust in Others

PoW

5.82

Having important people in their life that they can trust

Priority Needs for those aged 16-24 (more details on page 37)

Health Information Services

PoW

5.54

Knowing where to get reliable information about physical and mental health issues

Hope

PoW

5.52

Believing that good things will happen in their future

New Experiences

5.46

Enjoying trying new things, even if they might not be good at them.

Unique Challenges: Time for Oneself, Mental Health Support, and Connecting to Place

Time for Oneself

PoW

4.64

Having time left for themselves after attending to family/personal/work duties.

More details on page 24

Access to Mental Health Supports

PoW

4.65

Having access to timely mental health services if needed

Connection to Place

PoW

4.80

Feeling connected to their land and/or place

More details on page 26

Snapshot 3: Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

(n=20)

This report seeks to share the experiences and voices of sex/gender diverse respondents (n=20), without imposing findings on all who identify as such, nor continuing a historical trend of erasure.[22] The following pages should be read with the understanding that although sex/gender diverse respondents comprised 7% of the survey (higher than the national percentage of 0.4%),[23] these findings are that of a small 20-person sample size and should not necessarily be taken as applicable to every sex/gender diverse person.
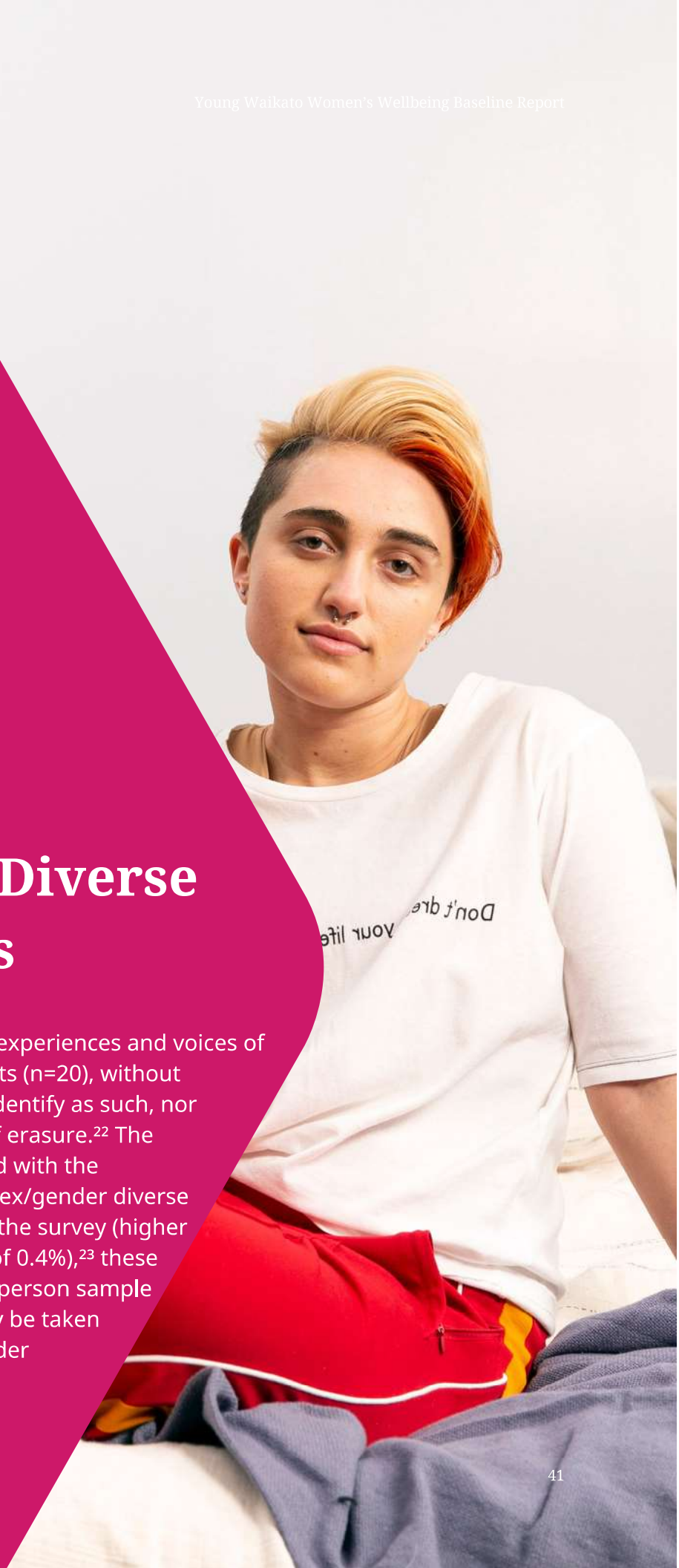
What Matters Most to Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

There were numerous overlaps in what matters most to sex/gender diverse respondents (n=20) compared to the overall collective. However, some predictors of wellbeing took precedence over others, and some were found to be unique for this group. These unique predictors of wellbeing for this group of respondents are marked below with a ✳.
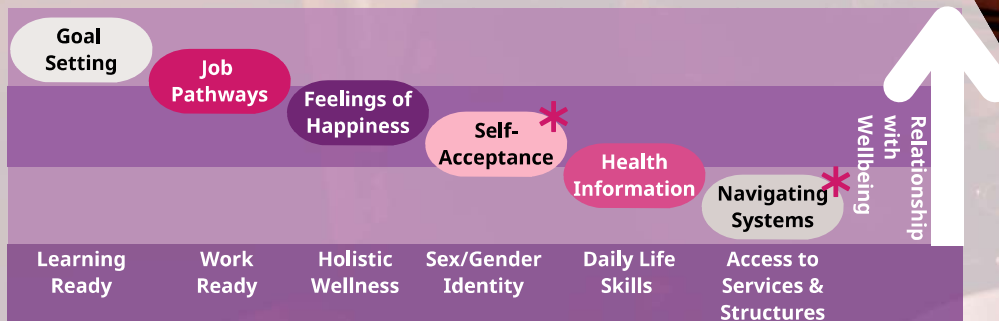
Self-acceptance of sex/gender identity and access to support for navigating systems unique predictors of wellbeing for sex/gender diverse people

Goal Setting						Relationship with Wellbeing
Job Pathways						
		Feelings of Happiness				
			Self-Acceptance ✳			
				Health Information	Navigating Systems ✳	
Learning Ready	Work Ready	Holistic Wellness	Sex/Gender Identity	Daily Life Skills	Access to Services & Structures	

More details on page 27   More details on page 29   More details on page 40

✳ Predictors of Wellbeing unique to sex/gender diverse respondents.

Setting goals, having access to job pathways, and feelings of happiness emerged as the top three predictors of wellbeing for sex/gender diverse respondents

These were also predictors of wellbeing for the collective, albeit only 13th, 3rd and 24th top predictors respectively for all respondents. Goal setting for sex/gender diverse respondents had the strongest relationship to wellbeing across all predictors. These findings point to sex/gender diverse respondents having higher wellbeing when they are motivated to set goals and work towards them, perhaps with direction feeling more satisfied with their lives.
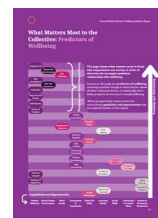
Priority Needs for
Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

Access to employment networks, **skills to process emotions**, **and stable income** were particularly high priority needs for sex/gender diverse respondents, in addition to those outlined for the **overall** group on pages 24-26 (specifically financial literacy, self-acceptance and job pathways). Only...

55% agreed they were supported by people in positions that can help them get where they want to go (e.g., mentors, navigators, supporters).

65% agreed they had the strategies and skills to help them process their emotions.

49% agreed they had enough income to cover the costs of everyday needs.

Managing one's financial situation, access to job opportunities, and access to income were all in the top six priority needs for sex/gender diverse respondents. Access to job pathways was also the second-strongest predictor of wellbeing for the subgroup, highlighting the importance of being work ready for this sample. This was also a priority need in the 2022 Waikato Wellbeing Baseline,[7] indicating this may be an enduring priority need across years and across different groups in the Waikato. **This presents an opportunity to enhance wellbeing by facilitating access to connections who can support this subgroup and the wider collective toward their employment goals.**

As noted on page 27, sex/gender diverse people reported the highest levels of both the positive emotion of happiness and negative emotions including anxiety, anger, stress, and fear, compared to other subgroups. **Supporting them with skills to process their emotions is likely to improve their overall wellbeing.**

Unique Strengths and Challenges for Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

Five of the six top strengths and five of the six bottom challenges of sex/gender diverse respondents surveyed matched those of the collective (page 23). Unique to this measurement group was happiness and confidence relating to new experiences, **with 80% of sex/gender diverse respondents** agreeing that they enjoy trying new things, even if they might not be good at them. Additional challenges unique to this group included low scores in feeling safe around males, and access to mental health supports, which was reinforced by qualitative feedback.

PoW   *Predictor of Wellbeing*

Unique Strengths include Trust, Happiness and New experiences

Strength shared with those aged 25-35

PoW

Trust in Others

5.82

Having important people in their life that they can trust

PoW

Happiness

5.70

Feelings of happiness over the past month

More details on page 27

New Experiences

5.60

Enjoying trying new things, even if they might not be good at them

Unique Challenges: Connecting to place, Feeling secure around males, and Mental health supports

PoW

Connection to Place

3.25

Feeling connected to their land and/or place

Feeling Secure Around Males

3.39

Feeling comfortable talking to men freely and confidently

Access to Mental Health Supports

3.70

Having access to timely mental health services if needed

Access to Culture

3.85

Having the opportunity to connect with their culture and heritage

Physical Health

3.90

Feeling that their general physical health is good

"Better and clearer access to mental/medical health support would be very useful."

-Survey respondent who identifies as sex/gender diverse

What's **Next**

In Their Own Words: "How can Organisations Serve Us Better?"

Respondents were invited to share their suggestions about how the YWCA and other organisations could serve them better as young women or sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato.

Education and Inclusivity

Respondents recommended education in various settings for challenging inequities and raising awareness about gender issues, as well as fostering inclusivity for sex/gender diverse people.

> **EDUCATION!... educate people properly about women and sex/gender diverse people and EDUCATE the educators...educate people before social media does.**
> - Survey respondent, aged 16-24

I feel like connecting more with schools, teaching through schools and programmes. Making support more readily available and talking to young boys and men as well.
- Survey respondent, aged 16-24

Helping create spaces that are explicitly gender diverse friendly. I see so so many things still nowadays that are targeted for women only and it's disheartening...I'd feel much safer if places actively tried being more open in expressing that they'd be welcoming of gender diverse people.
- Survey respondent, aged 16-24

Be more active in the workplace environment. For me, moving from uni to the work place was where I noted the most sexism.
- Survey respondent, aged 25-35

...doing more to support us when we face prejudice and raising more awareness about what it's like to be non-binary in a heavily binary-gendered world.
- Survey respondent, sex/gender diverse

I think there's still a widespread education that needs to be done to educate males around the issues that women face.
- Survey respondent, aged 25-35

In Their Own Words: "How can Organisations Serve Us Better?"

Skills Training and Support to Access Services

Respondents also felt they would benefit from empowerment through skills training and educational programmes and events, as well as support with accessing services including mental health, women's health and financial services.

> *Develop programs specifically designed for young women and sex/gender diverse individuals, addressing their unique needs and interests. This could include workshops on self-empowerment, career development, and mental health.*
>
> *- Survey respondent, aged 25-35*

Work with large organisations to host informational evenings and corporate panels.

- Survey respondent, aged 16-24

It would be useful to have clearer access for mental health and medical support at affordable cost. E.g. info as to what medical professionals are queer friendly, where to access these services, funding support.

- Survey respondent, sex/gender diverse

Would love help with accessing financial support and education.

- Survey respondent, aged 25-35

Suggestions from those who Support Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People

Many of those who answered the survey as people who support young women and sex/gender diverse communities gave suggestions which aligned with respondents' own words. Responses largely centred around creating safe and inclusive spaces, advocating for diversity, and providing training and education programmes.

...provide vocational skills training to help them improve their employment competitiveness; hold mental health lectures... provide coping strategies and psychological counseling. At the same time, carry out education on gender equality and diversity to increase society's awareness and respect for them.

Provide a safe and inclusive environment. Establish a cultural atmosphere and formulate clear anti-discrimination policies.

- Survey respondents, people who supports young women or sex/gender diverse people

Leveraging data to Create Change: Reflections and Recommendations

This report highlights the very real challenges that are faced by young women and sex/gender diverse people of the Waikato, but also seeks to celebrate the strengths of these individuals finding and appreciating the joy and happiness in their lives, and their pride in who they are. While findings are based on a sample size, the hope is that action is taken to help uplift Waikato to be better for all people facing these issues.

1. Immediate actions to support young women and sex/gender diverse people

   a. Continuing to **create a safe and stable environment** for this community, including the **explicit acceptance of gender diverse people**, is integral; only about half of those surveyed said they had access to places that promoted respect, self-expression, and self-acceptance.

   b. **Skills training** and practical educational programmes around **financial literacy** and **job skills**, as well as **fostering employment networks** specifically for women (or partnering with those providing these services).

   c. **Support to access and navigate services** including **mental health**, **women's health** and **financial services**. The need for mental health supports was emphasised in sex/gender diverse open feedback, with several applauding the work of Rainbow Hub.

2. Sowing the seeds of change needed to address wider systemic issues caused by patriarchal and sex/gender-normative constructs

It is not possible to improve the lives of young women and sex/gender diverse people without addressing that they are in environments that discriminate against them. **Feelings of safety**, **representation in media** and **equal opportunity** all require larger societal changes.

   a. **Education** in various settings can **challenge inequities**, **raise awareness** about gender issues and **foster inclusivity for sex/gender diverse people**.

   b. **Advocacy**, especially around safety in public (during the day, at night, and at schools), and diverse and inclusive representation in media to shift the dial at the policy level.

   c. **Partnering** with organisations supporting men to be better allies to women and sex/gender diverse people.

The findings of any research are limited to the data collected. By conducting further rounds of surveying in future, longitudinal data can be gained to understand changes over time, and the dataset can be increased to better represent sex/gender diverse communities as well as communities living outside of Hamilton/in rural areas.

The knock-on effects of the above will all play a part in uplifting the capabilities and opportunities of young women and sex/gender diverse people in the Waikato, improving their wellbeing so that they are in positions to live a life they value and fulfil their potential.

Get in Touch

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Melde

Melde offers, in partnership, tools and frameworks to support the effective, and safe, elevation of people's voice and and measurement of their lived experience. Melde believes that the further inclusion, and weight given to, lived experience in strategic decision making will benefit us all.

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Huber Social

Huber Social is an independent third party and expert in social impact measurement. Recognising the goal of all social impact is the wellbeing of people, Huber Social has developed a universally applicable framework that measures not only overall wellbeing but also the driving factors to maximise it.

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Report Appendices

1. Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework
2. Data Transparency Page
3. Predictors of Wellbeing
4. Significance Tables
5. Reference List

1. Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework

To be able to fulfil their potential and achieve wellbeing, each individual needs to have the capability and the opportunity to do so. Everyone has different needs within these categories depending on their context.

When it comes to measuring the social impact of a service, Huber Social measures the 'shift' the service creates in terms of wellbeing and the specific program outcomes achieved to create this. Results are then consolidated at a sector, community and global level.

Longitudinal measurement monitors effectiveness of programs to meet these needs; ensuring resources are directed to have the greatest impact. The vision is a wellbeing measurement system that delivers us the whole picture, to put each of us in the best position to achieve wellbeing and leave no one behind.

The goal for each of us is the same; wellbeing. The part that differs are our individual needs.

The Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework

IMPACT

Wellbeing

To be in the best position to fulfil your potential and live a life of value. The overall goal for all services working with people.

OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES

Through building
Capability

Resilience
Life skills
Wellness - mental,
physical and spiritual

and providing
Opportunity

Resources
Self development
Societal structures
Relationships

2. **Data Transparency** Page

To ensure the integrity of findings always, Huber Social includes a Transparency Page for every project. This ensures both the rigour of evidence and rigour of analysis is clear for each project, across every stage of the data lifecycle.

DATA LIFECYCLE → 1. Design → 2. Data Collection → 3. Cleaning → 4. Analysis → 5. Reporting

Phase		Questions on the Treatment of the Data	Points Allocated	Yes or No
Design	BASELINE	Baseline inferred from time in program (e.g. 1 vs. 3 years)	1	
		OR Baseline measured pre-intervention	2	Y
	CONTROL	Control group was measured (independent of the intervention)	1	Y
	ACCESSIBILITY	Elements of the project (tools, methods, etc.) have been designed and tested to be accessible for all eligible study participants in the given population	1	Y
	INCLUSION	Details of people specifically included (or excluded) in the measurement: *Survey only open to those in Waikato 16 years or older.*	N/A	N/A
Data Collection	SURVEY DISTRIBUTION	Online surveys		Y
		OR hard copy surveys		
		Data collection supervised by Huber Social consultant	1	
		Translations or guidance provided	1	Y
		Details on translation or guidance if provided: *Ethical data collection guide created and shared with survey facilitators and YWCA Hamilton.*	N/A	N/A
	SAMPLE	Sample size has achieved 80% statistical power with a medium effect size of Cohen's d = 0.5 (t-test) *or* d = 0.25 (ANOVA)	1	N/A
Data Cleaning	CLEANING	Invalid responses removed or no invalid responses	1	Y
		Details of any responses removed: *Responses removed if survey responses missing 50% or more of outcomes data were excluded.*	N/A	N/A
Analysis	TEST APPLIED	Basic analysis	1	Y
		Statistical Correlation Test	2	Y
		Details on statistical analysis: *Statistical Correlation Test*	N/A	N/A
	STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE	Statistical significance cut off at p<0.1 for all findings presented	1	
		OR Statistical significance cut off at p<0.05 for all findings presented	2	Y
Reporting	REFERENCING	Understanding findings in the context of prior research/literature (either HS or external)	1	Y
		Details on external sources referenced: *See References page 58*	N/A	N/A
	DEVIATIONS	Details on any deviations from the original measurement approach, and their potential effect on data and findings: *Limited responses across geographies and across sex/gender diverse. Findings can only be attributed to those who responded.*	N/A	N/A
	REPORTING	Client commits to sharing findings internal to the organisation	1	
		OR Client commits to sharing findings internally and with stakeholders external to the organisation	2	
		OR Client commits to sharing findings internally, with stakeholders and the general public	3	Y
RIGOUR SCORE: LOW (1-9); MED (10-14); HIGH (15-18)			15	HIGH

3. Predictors of Wellbeing

To inform organisations on how to best address the actual needs of their beneficiaries, correlation analysis is used to identify which factors measured have a significant relationship with peoples' overall wellbeing; these are known as predictors of wellbeing.

The predictors of wellbeing can be found listed in the following table in order of statistical strength. The stronger the relationship between an outcome and overall wellbeing, the more confidence there is that a change in the outcome will correspond with a change in wellbeing.

Relationship strength is based on both the statistical significance (p-value) and beta coefficient value (r). All predictors listed are statistically significant to $p < 0.001$ (unless otherwise noted), meaning there is 99% confidence that the relationship identified between the predictive outcome and wellbeing is true, rather than produced due to sampling error or chance. The beta coefficient (r) describes how closely each outcome and wellbeing are likely to move together in relation to each other.

For the purposes of this study, a strong relationship between an outcome and overall wellbeing is defined as any outcome with a beta coefficient value greater than 0.7; a moderate relationship is between 0.699 and 0.4; a weak relationship less than 0.4. Even though a relationship may be weak, there is still a significant association between the outcome and overall wellbeing.

The following page presents all predictors of wellbeing that have a significant relationship with overall wellbeing for the populations included in measurement.

4. Significance Tables

Table 1. All Predictors of Wellbeing - Collective (all moderate positive strength)

Indicator	Outcome	R	Score
I enjoy life and have fun.	Enjoyment	0.661	5.03
My opinions are heard and respected by others.	Access to environments that promote respect	0.61	4.69
I have the opportunity to get a job I am interested in.	Access to employment pathways	0.609	4.74
I like who I am.	Self-acceptance	0.599	4.68
I feel free to be myself around others.	Access to environments that promote self-expression	0.596	4.73
I feel I have control over my future.	Autonomy	0.591	4.56
I believe good things will happen in my future.	Having hope for themselves	0.565	5.15
I know who I am.	Self-identity	0.555	4.99
My life has purpose.	Sense of purpose	0.548	4.92
I feel part of a family/whānau.	Family connection	0.534	5.58
On most days I get enough sleep and feel well rested.	Sleep	0.529	4.15
I am supported by people in positions that can help me get where I want to go (e.g., mentors, navigators, supporters).	Access to employment networks	0.526	4.81
I set goals that I work towards.	Goal setting	0.513	4.99
I feel like an equal within my community.	Sense of equality	0.507	4.69
I can understand and manage my financial situation.	Financial Literacy	0.489	4.61
I feel safe at school.	Safe Schools	0.489	4.94
I feel part of a community. *A community is a group (online or in real life) who you share interests or attitudes with. For example, friends, cultural groups, religious groups, sport clubs, or neighbourhood groups.*	Community connection	0.485	5.01
There is someone in my life who I look up to and respect.	Access to positive role models	0.48	5.59
There are important people in my life that I can trust.	Trust in others	0.473	5.53
I feel safe in my community.	Safe community	0.468	5.14
I feel connected to my land and/or place.	Connection To Place	0.451	4.25
I have access to education I am interested in.	Access to education	0.45	5.28
I have time left for myself after attending to my family/personal/work duties.	Time for Oneself	0.447	4.48
In the past month, I have felt happy.	Feelings of happiness	0.437	5.35
I have enough income to cover the costs of my everyday needs.	Stable Income	0.41	4.89
If needed, there is someone I can go to who will support my rights.	Access To Support For Navigating Systems	0.404	5.05
I have things that I am passionate about.	Passions and interests	0.403	5.65
I know where to get reliable information about physical and mental health issues.	Health management knowledge – Health services	0.402	5.05

4. Significance Tables

Table 2. All Predictors of Wellbeing - Those aged 16-24 (all moderate positive strength)

Indicator	Outcome	R	Score
I enjoy life and have fun.	Enjoyment	0.675	5.03
My opinions are heard and respected by others.	Access to environments that promote respect	0.671	4.69
I feel free to be myself around others.	Access to environments that promote self-expression	0.616	4.73
I feel part of a family/whānau.	Family connection	0.591	5.58
I like who I am.	Self-acceptance	0.586	4.68
I feel like an equal within my community.	Sense of equality	0.579	4.69
I believe good things will happen in my future.	Having hope for themselves	0.574	5.15
I have the opportunity to get a job I am interested in.	Access to employment pathways	0.571	4.74
My life has purpose.	Sense of purpose	0.563	4.92
I know who I am.	Self-identity	0.559	4.99
I feel I have control over my future.	Autonomy	0.556	4.56
There is someone in my life who I look up to and respect.	Access to positive role models	0.551	5.59
I feel safe in my community.	Safe community	0.544	5.14
I set goals that I work towards.	Goal setting	0.536	4.99
I am supported by people in positions that can help me get where I want to go (e.g., mentors, navigators, supporters).	Access to employment networks	0.534	4.81
On most days I get enough sleep and feel well rested.	Sleep	0.531	4.15
I have access to education I am interested in.	Access to education	0.53	5.28
There are important people in my life that I can trust.	Trust in others	0.526	5.53
I feel safe at school.	Safe Schools	0.516	4.94
In the past month, I have felt happy.	Feelings of happiness	0.514	5.35
I feel part of a community. *A community is a group (online or in real life) who you share interests or attitudes with. For example, friends, cultural groups, religious groups, sport clubs, or neighbourhood groups.*	Community connection	0.507	5.01
I have time left for myself after attending to my family/personal/work duties.	Time management	0.495	4.48
If needed, there is someone I can go to who will support my rights.	Access To Support For Navigating Systems	0.458	5.05
I can understand and manage my financial situation.	Financial Literacy	0.454	4.61
I have things that I am passionate about.	Passions and interests	0.432	5.65
I feel connected to my land and/or place.	Connection To Place	0.43	4.25
In general, my physical health is good.	Physical health	0.423	4.76
I have easy access to transport that gets me where I need to go.	Access to public transport services	0.416	5.42
I know where to get reliable information about physical and mental health issues.	Health management knowledge – Health services	0.415	5.05
I have access to affordable medical or healthcare services if my family or I need it.	Access to health services	0.412	5.15
I feel I have the same opportunities as others.	Opportunities – Gender Identity	0.4	4.86

4. Significance Tables

Table 3. All Predictors of Wellbeing - Those aged 25-35 (all moderate positive strength)

Indicator	Outcome	R	Score
I have the opportunity to get a job I am interested in.	Access to employment pathways	0.698	4.74
I feel I have control over my future.	Autonomy	0.646	4.56
I have enough income to cover the costs of my everyday needs.	Stable Income	0.616	4.89
I can understand and manage my financial situation.	Financial Literacy	0.609	4.61
I enjoy life and have fun.	Enjoyment	0.596	5.03
I like who I am.	Self-acceptance	0.575	4.68
I am supported by people in positions that can help me get where I want to go (e.g., mentors, navigators, supporters).	Access to employment networks	0.555	4.81
On most days I get enough sleep and feel well rested.	Sleep	0.547	4.15
I feel free to be myself around others.	Access to environments that promote self-expression	0.479	4.73
I believe good things will happen in my future.	Having hope for themselves	0.468	5.15
I know who I am.	Self-identity	0.448	4.99
I have things that I am passionate about.	Passions and interests	0.433	5.65
I set goals that I work towards.	Goal setting	0.432	4.99
I have the strategies and skills to help me manage my emotions.	Skills to identify and process emotions effectively	0.43	4.85
I feel connected to my land and/or place.	Connection To Place	0.407	4.25
My opinions are heard and respected by others.	Access to environments that promote respect	0.404	4.69
My life has purpose.	Sense of purpose	0.402	4.92

4. Significance Tables

Table 4. All Predictors of Wellbeing - Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

Indicator	Outcome	R	Strength	Score
I set goals that I work towards.	Goal setting	0.749	Strong Positive	4.99
I have the opportunity to get a job I am interested in.	Access to employment pathways	0.598	Moderate Positive	4.74
In the past month, I have felt happy.	Feelings of happiness	0.545	Moderate Positive	5.35
I am proud of how I identify (as a woman or sex/gender diverse person).	Self-Acceptance – Gender Identity	0.542	Moderate Positive	5.99
I know where to get reliable information about physical and mental health issues.	Health management knowledge – Health services	0.519	Moderate Positive	5.05
I feel safe at school.	Safe Schools	0.514	Moderate Positive	4.94
If needed, there is someone I can go to who will support my rights.	Access To Support For Navigating Systems	0.509	Moderate Positive	5.05
I like who I am.	Self-acceptance	0.506	Moderate Positive	4.68
I feel part of a community. *A community is a group (online or in real life) who you share interests or attitudes with. For example, friends, cultural groups, religious groups, sport clubs, or neighbourhood groups.*	Community connection	0.482	Moderate Positive	5.01
I have enough income to cover the costs of my everyday needs.	Stable Income	0.462	Moderate Positive	4.89
I can understand and manage my financial situation.	Financial Literacy	0.453	Moderate Positive	4.61
I am supported by people in positions that can help me get where I want to go (e.g., mentors, navigators, supporters).	Access to employment networks	0.443	Moderate Positive	4.81
I understand how my lifestyle, including sleep, hygiene, diet and exercise, affects my health.	Health Management Knowledge	0.435	Moderate Positive	5.72
I have the strategies and skills to help me manage my emotions.	Skills to identify and manage emotions effectively (emotional intelligence)	0.417	Moderate Positive	4.85

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