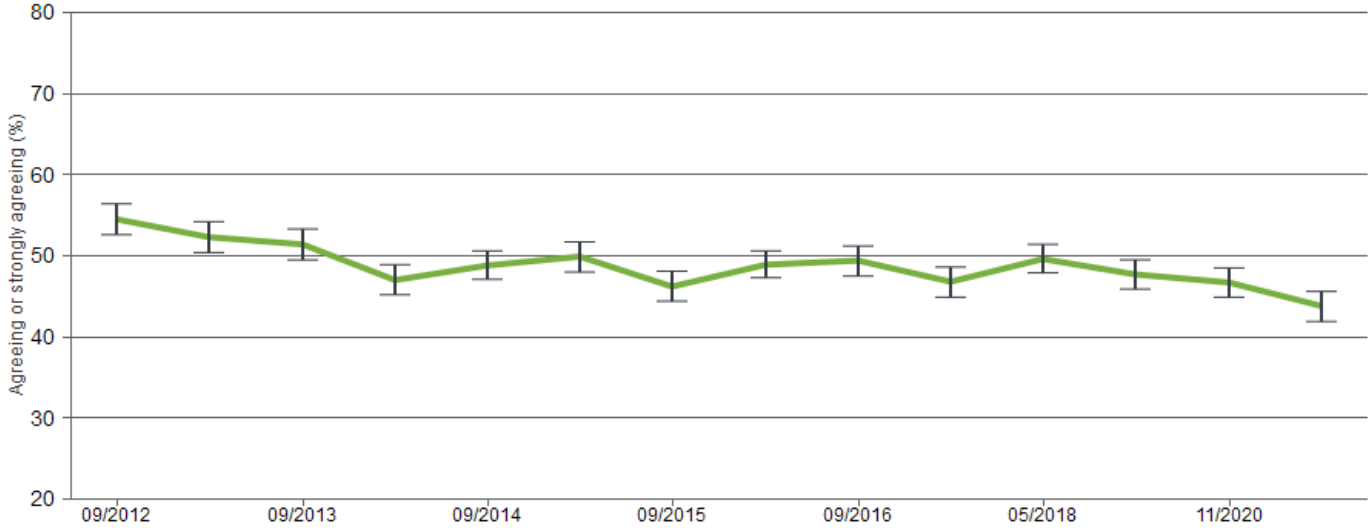
CANTERBURY WELLBEING INDEX

Social Capital: Sense of community

Feeling like one belongs and is accepted in meaningful social groups has been linked to wellbeing and health-related outcomes [7,8]. Sense of community is a desirable outcome, whereby community members feel a sense of belonging and commitment, and a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group [9,10]. In this context, community is mostly concerned with quality and characteristics of human relationships, rather than the geographical location (for example, neighbourhood, town, city) [11]. Sense of community embraces a number of different elements including: community spirit or membership, influence, reinforcement, emotional safety, community boundaries, sense of belonging, trust, shared emotional connections, and quality interactions [9,12]. These elements are considered to act together to strengthen the social fabric and improve community wellbeing and health outcomes [7-9].

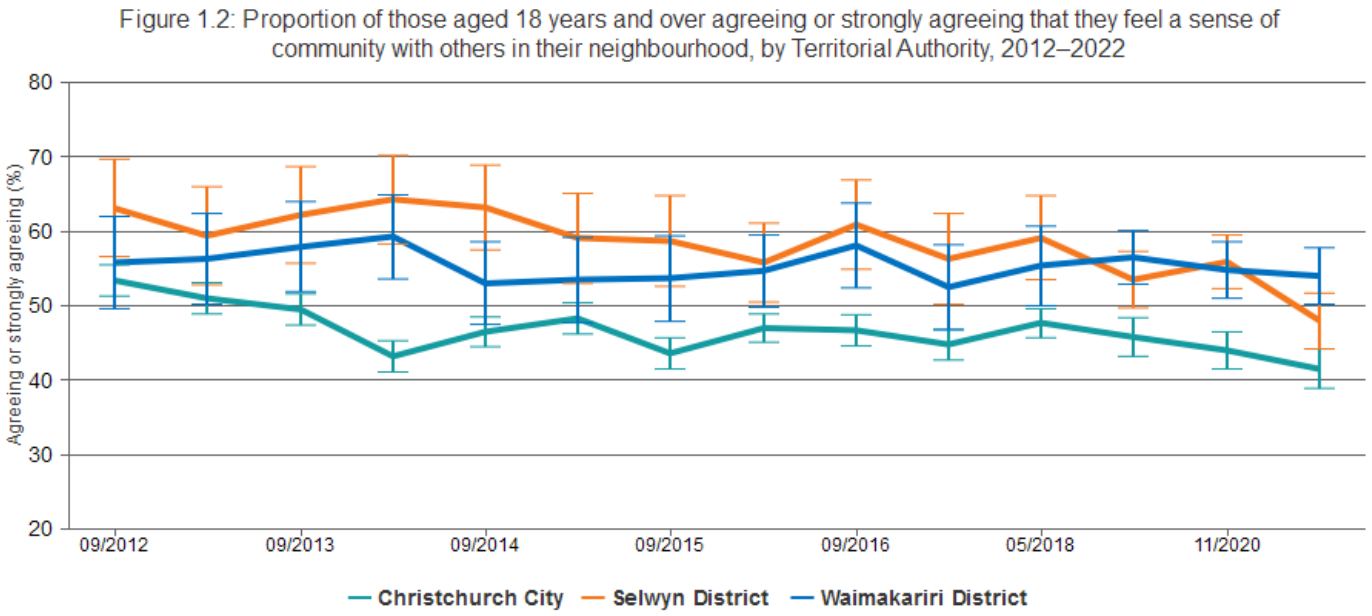
This indicator presents the proportion of those aged 18 years and over agreeing or strongly agreeing they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, as reported in the Canterbury Wellbeing Survey.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of those aged 18 years and over agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, in greater Christchurch, 2012–2022



The figure shows that in the year following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, over half of respondents in greater Christchurch (54.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. A pattern of declining sense of community followed, and the proportion feeling a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (agree or strongly agree) dipped below 50 percent in 2014. The current result (43.8%, 2022) is statistically significantly lower than that for 2012 and the overall downward trend in this proportion is statistically significant. Note that no pre-earthquake data are available to act as a benchmark.

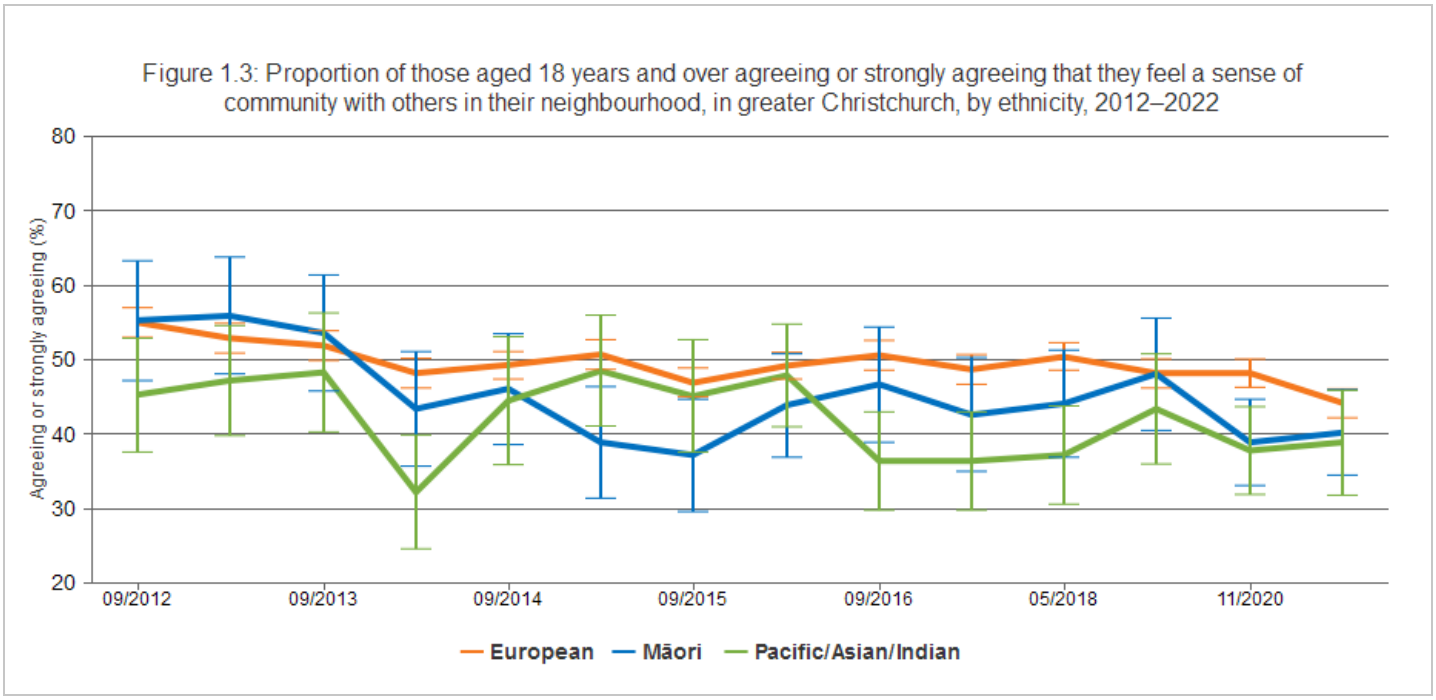
Breakdown by Territorial authority



The figure shows that Selwyn District has generally had the highest proportion of respondents reporting a sense of community (agreeing or strongly agreeing they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) over the time series.

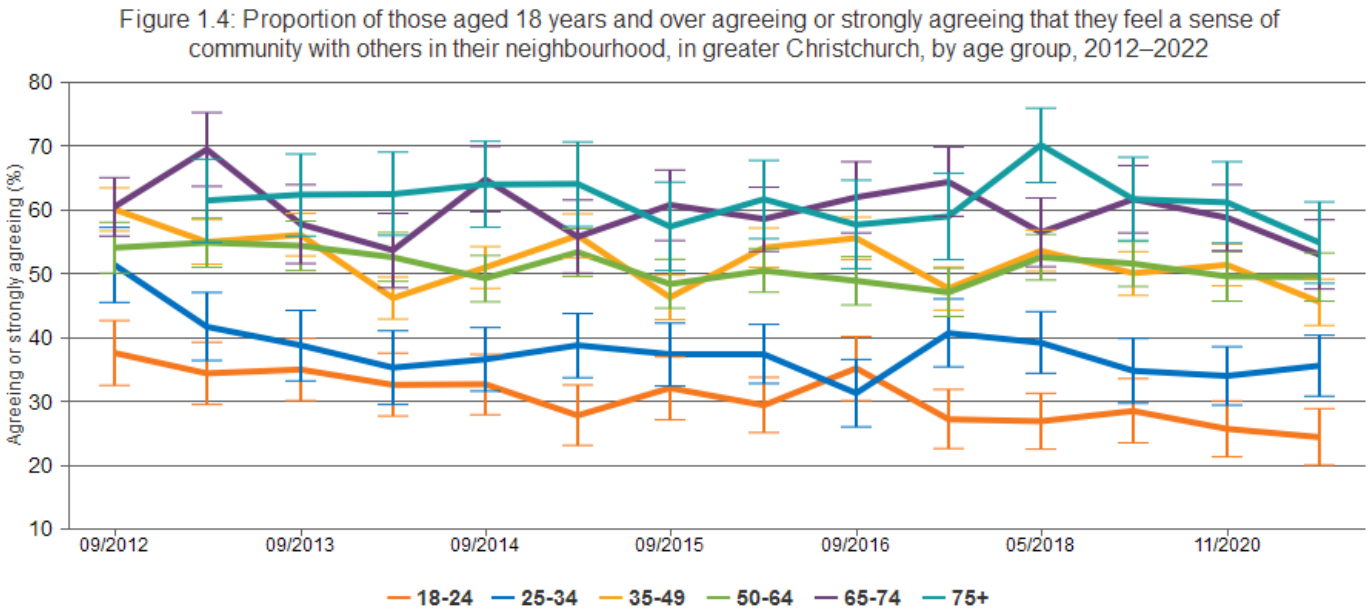
In 2022, Christchurch City (41.5%) continues to have the smallest proportion of respondents reporting a sense of community; lower than Selwyn District (48%) and statistically significantly lower than Waimakariri District (54%). Over the time series, Selwyn District appears to show the greatest decline in sense of community.

Breakdown by ethnicity



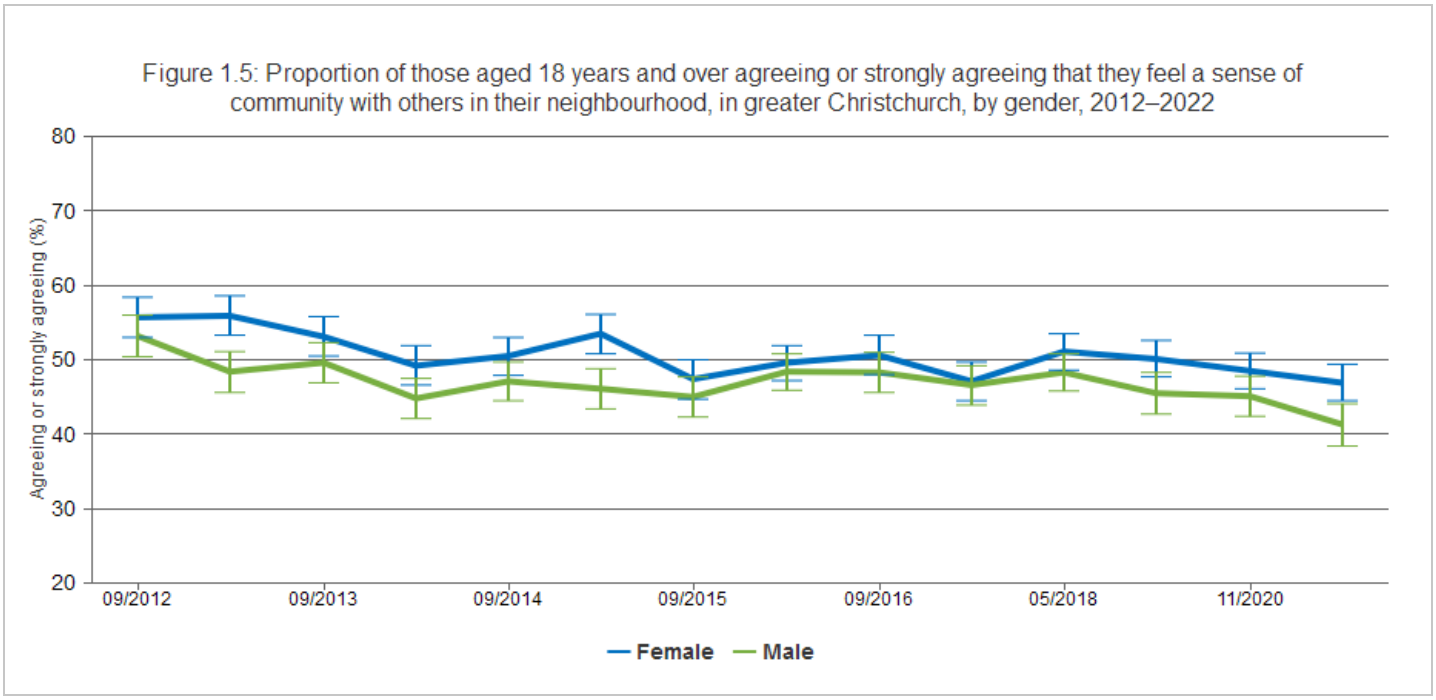
The figure shows that in 2022, the proportion of European respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was 44.2 percent; higher (but not statistically significantly higher) than both Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents (38.9%) and Māori respondents (40.2%). There is noticeable variability in the results for Māori and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents due to smaller absolute numbers in the sample. These smaller numbers contribute to wider confidence intervals and make it difficult to discern differences for Māori and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents.

Breakdown by age



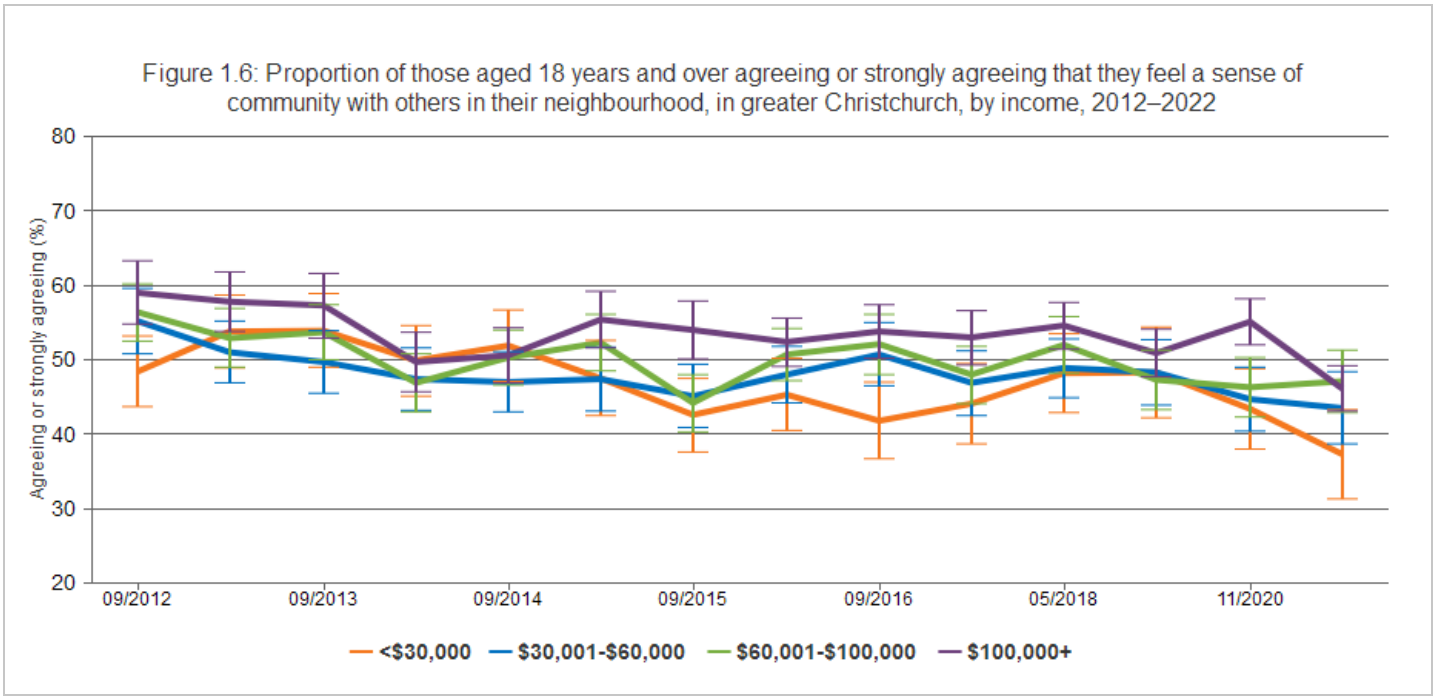
Across the time series, younger respondents' sense of community is notably different from older respondents' sense of community (that is, lower, and in sharper decline). In 2022, 54.9 percent of respondents from the 75+ years age group indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, compared with only one quarter (24.4%) of 18 to 24-year-old respondents. Across most of the time series, younger respondents' (those in the 18-24 and 25-34-year-old age groups) sense of community is statistically significantly lower than all other age groups. This may reflect actual relational differences within neighbourhoods by different age groups, for example, as young people may be more transient and less likely to have neighbourhood attachments, such as owning a home or having children attend a local school. It may also reflect different understandings of the question (for example, younger respondents may have different understandings of 'community' and 'neighbourhood'), or a combination of these and other aspects.

Breakdown by gender



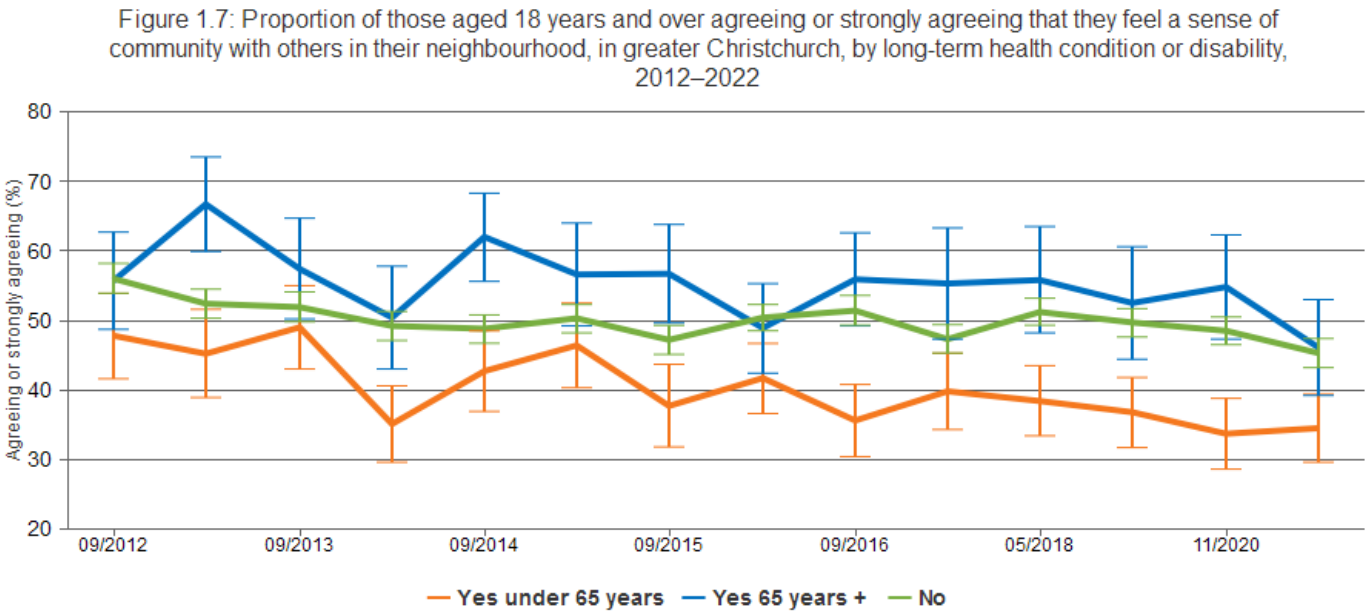
The figure shows a pattern of generally similar levels of sense of community (proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) for female respondents and male respondents in greater Christchurch, over the period 2012 to 2022.

Breakdown by income



The figure shows a pattern of generally similar levels of sense of community (proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) across the four annual household income groups shown, in greater Christchurch, over the period 2012 to 2022.

Breakdown by disability



The figure shows that the level of sense of community (proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood) for older respondents with a long-term health condition or disability (aged 65 years and over) was not significantly different from the proportion for those without, at the majority of timepoints presented (46.1%, and 45.3% in 2022, respectively). However, the proportion for younger respondents (those aged under 65 years) with a long-term health condition or disability was statistically significantly lower than the other two groups at several timepoints but not statistically significantly different in 2022 (34.5%).

Data Sources

Source: Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury - formerly the Canterbury District Health Board.
Survey/data set: Canterbury Wellbeing Survey to 2022. Access publicly available data from Te Mana Ora | Community and Public Health website www.cph.co.nz/your-health/wellbeing-survey/
Source data frequency: Annually.

Metadata for this indicator is available at https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data

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