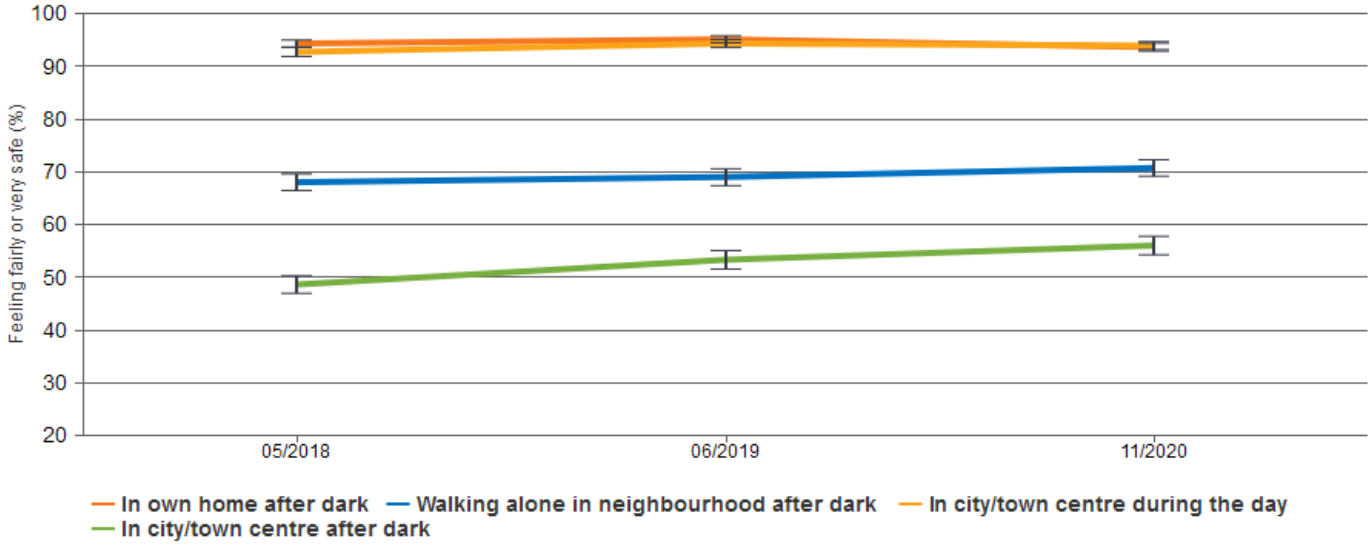
Safety: Perceptions of safety

The wellbeing of individuals may be affected not only as a result of direct experience of harm but also as a result of a fear of harm. Individuals' perceptions of safety involves generalised judgements about the chance of injury or loss [14].

Different circumstances, times of day, and location factors tend to influence individuals' perceptions of safety. Perceptions of safety are particularly sensitive to the physical environment (e.g., one's home vs. public places) because these physical environmental factors are tangible to residents. Fear of crime may cause some people to restrict the choices they make about how to lead their lives, such as avoiding certain areas or avoiding going out at night [14,15]. The fear of crime may have more effect on some residents than actual crime and may have wider impacts on social relations [2].

This indicator presents the proportion of those 18 years and over reporting that they feel fairly or very safe in four different situations: being in their own home after dark, walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, or walking in their city/town centre during the day, and the city/town centre after dark. This question was first included in the Canterbury Wellbeing Survey in 2018.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of those 18 years and over reporting feeling fairly or very safe in four different situations, in greater Christchurch, 2018 - 2020



The figure shows that almost all respondents (over 90%) felt fairly safe or very safe in their own home after dark, and in the town/city centre during the day, in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Approximately 70 percent of respondents indicated that they felt fairly safe or very safe walking alone in their own neighbourhood after dark (2018, 2019, and 2020). The proportion of respondents feeling fairly safe or very safe walking in the city or town centre after dark increased statistically significantly from 48.6 percent in 2018 to 56.0 percent in 2020. The results show that different circumstances and times of day tend to influence individuals' perceptions of safety.

Breakdown by Territorial Authority

Figure 1.2a: Proportion of those 18 years and over reporting feeling fairly or very safe in own home or walking alone in neighbourhood after dark, by Territorial Authority, 2018 - 2020

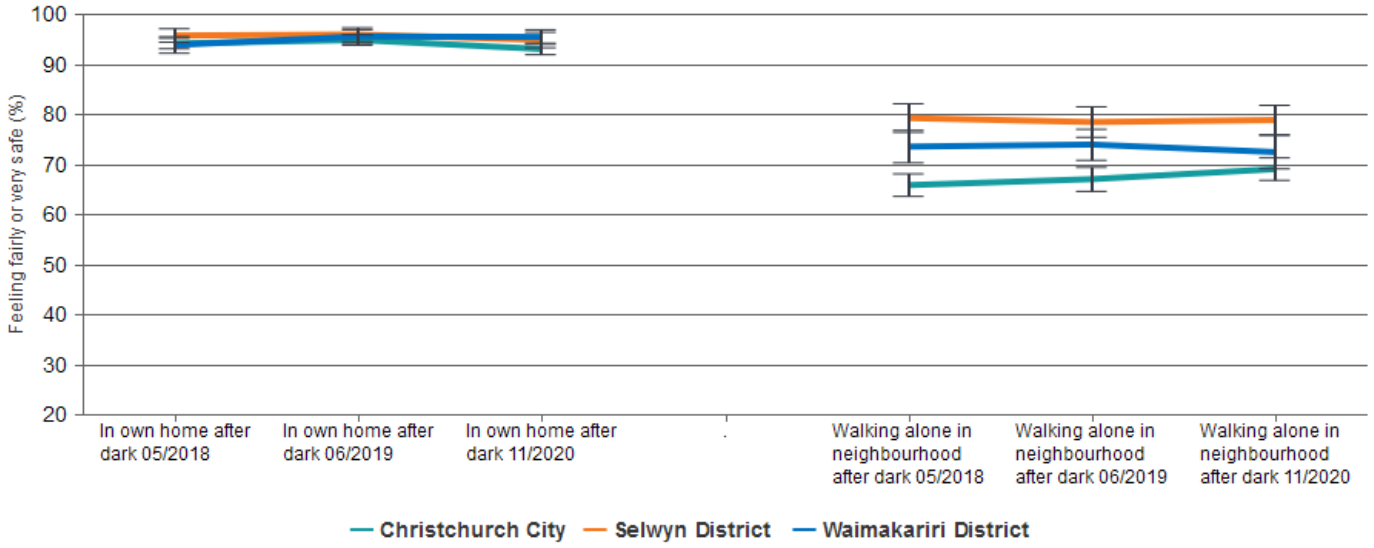
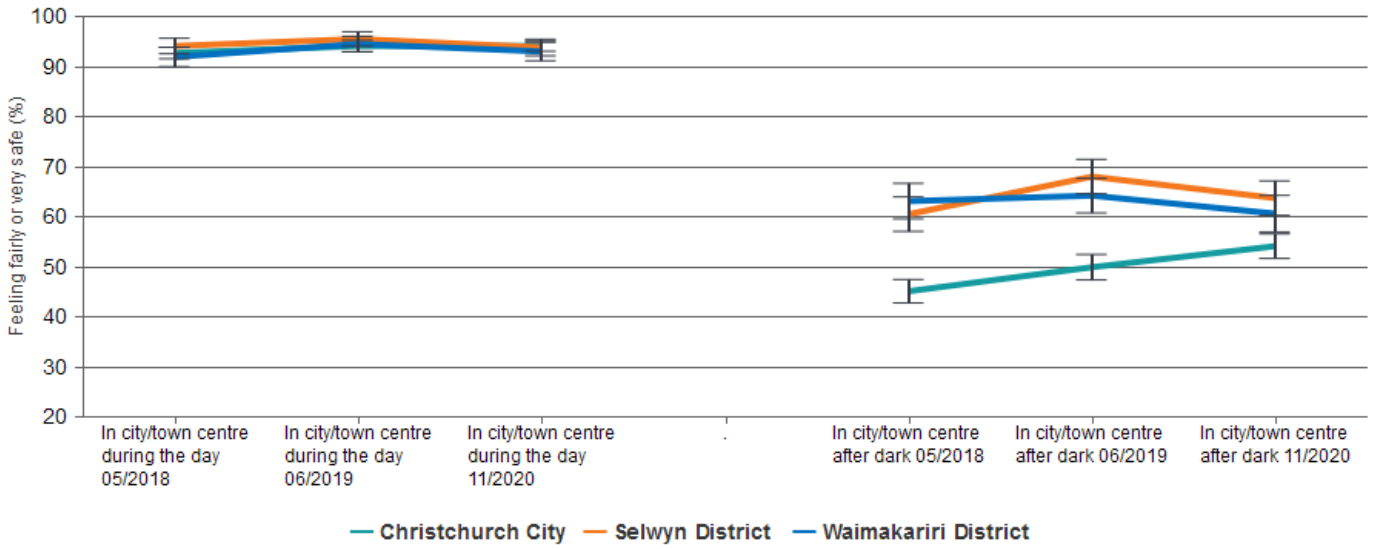
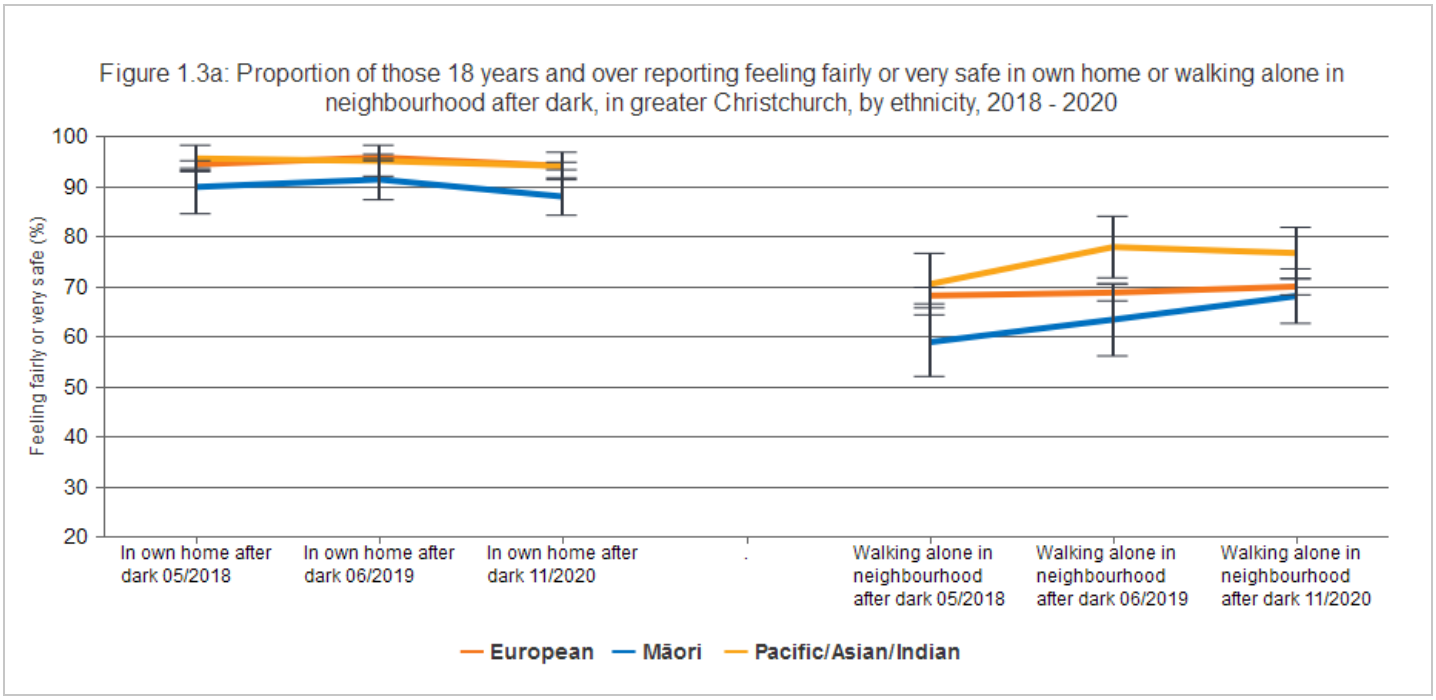


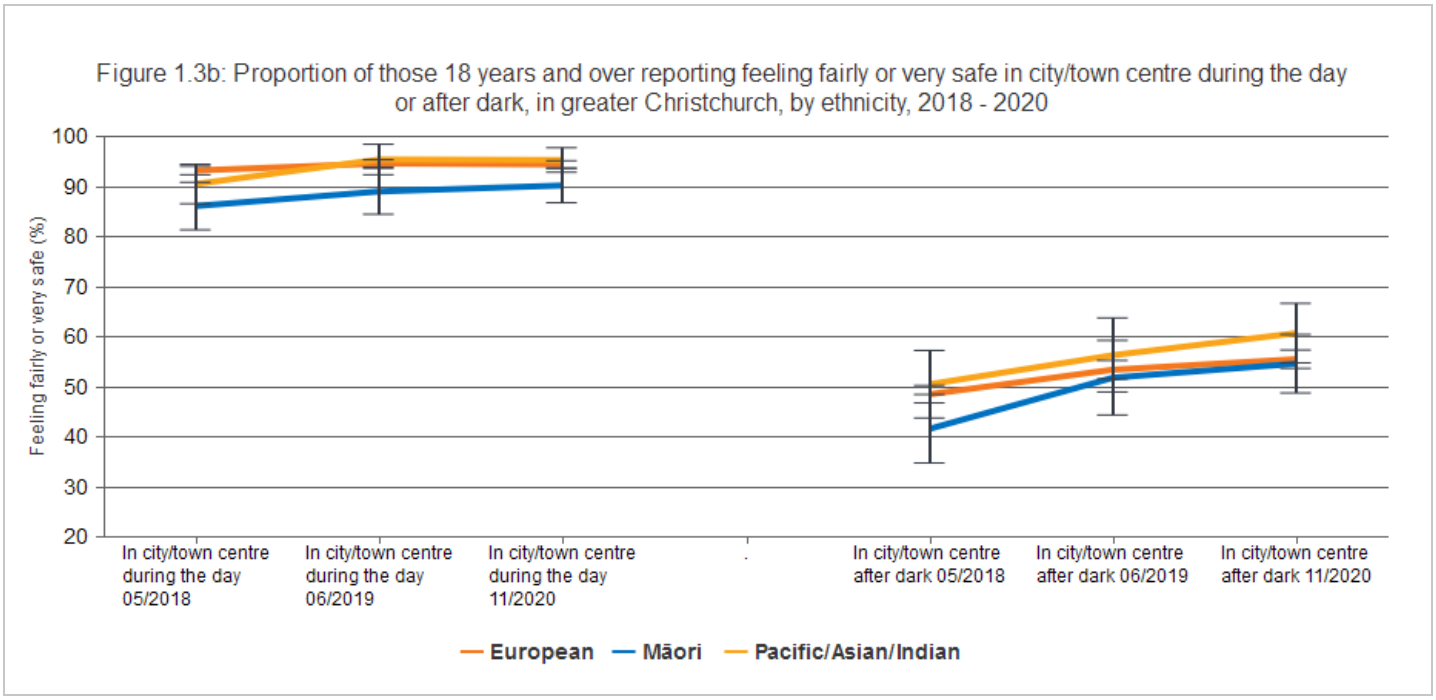
Figure 1.2b: Proportion of those 18 years and over reporting feeling fairly or very safe in city/town centre during the day or after dark, by Territorial Authority, 2018 - 2020



The figures show that a similar proportion of respondents (more than 90%) felt fairly safe or very safe in their own homes after dark (Figure 1.2a) and in the town or city centre during the day (Figure 1.2b), across the three Territorial Authority areas, in 2018, 2019, and 2020. However, statistically significant differences in perceived safety are apparent for the two categories 'walking alone in their own neighbourhood after dark' (Figure 1.2a: Selwyn District, 78.9%; Waimakariri District, 72.5%; Christchurch City, 69.1%; in 2020) and 'walking in the town or city centre after dark' (Figure 1.2b: Selwyn District, 63.7%; Waimakariri District, 60.6%; Christchurch City, 54.1%; in 2020). Overall, perception of safety appears to be highest in Selwyn District and lowest in Christchurch City, particularly in the city centre after dark (although this aspect improved statistically significantly for Christchurch City during the period 2018-2020, from 45.1% to 54.1%).

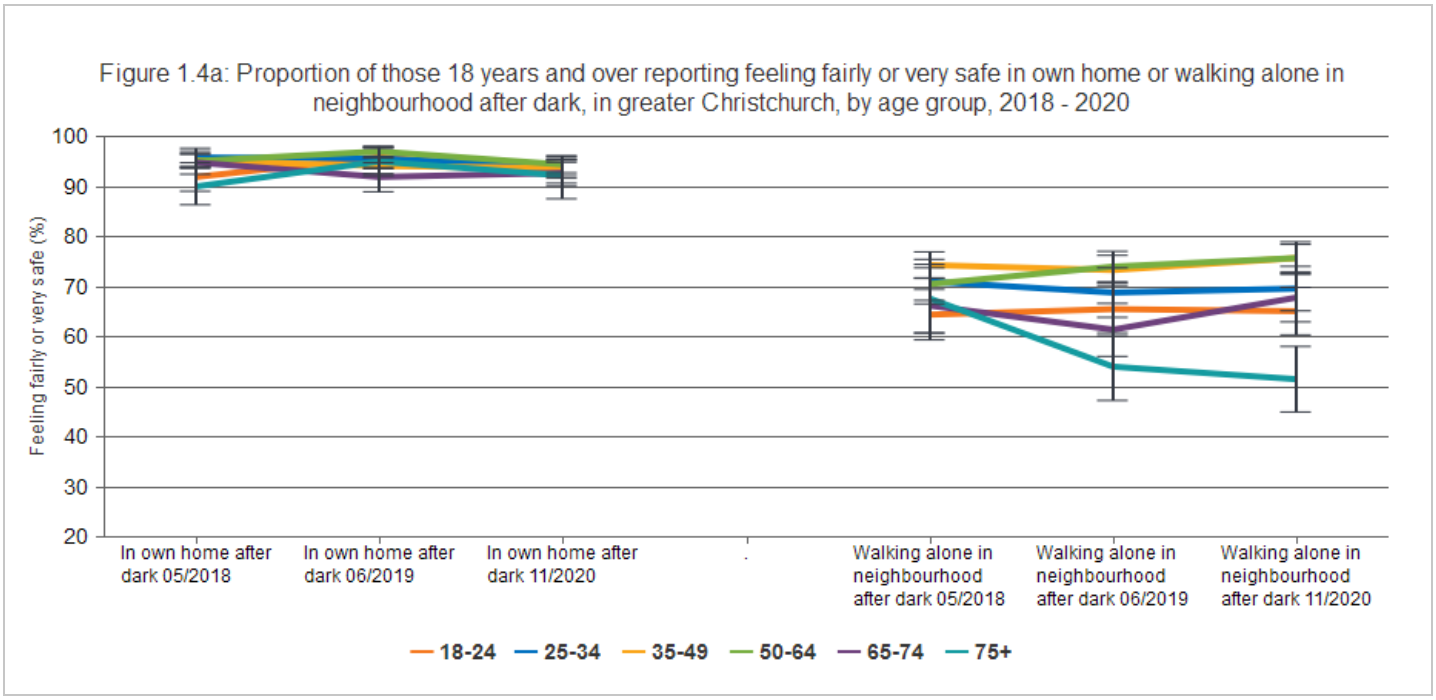
Breakdown by ethnicity

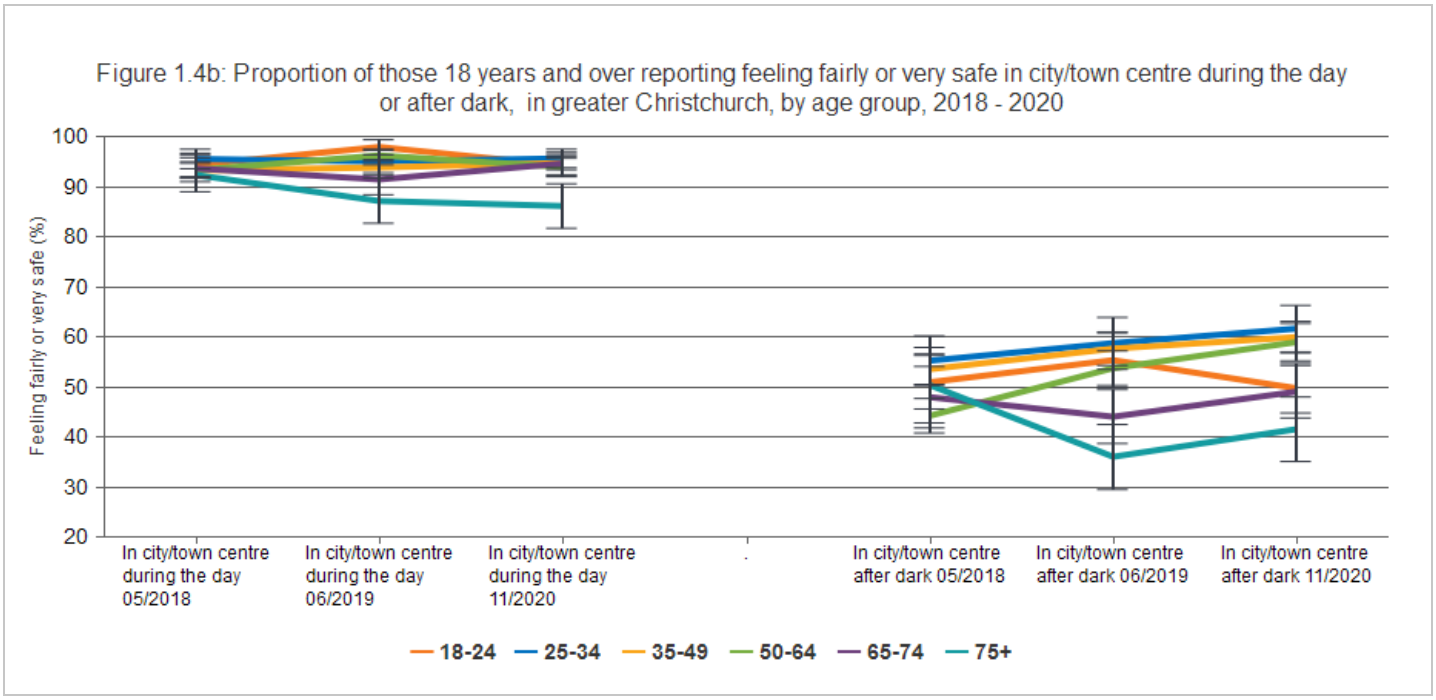




Figures 1.3a and 1.3b show perceptions of safety, by ethnicity, in 2018 and 2019. A similar pattern can be seen across all four situations: Māori respondents generally reported lower levels of perceived safety (proportion feeling fairly or very safe) than European and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents (but the differences are generally not statistically significant). In 2020, a statistically significantly lower proportion of Māori respondents reported feeling fairly or very safe in their own homes after dark than both European respondents and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents (88%, 94.1%, and 94.1%, respectively). There were no other statistically significant differences in perceived safety in different situations between ethnic groups.

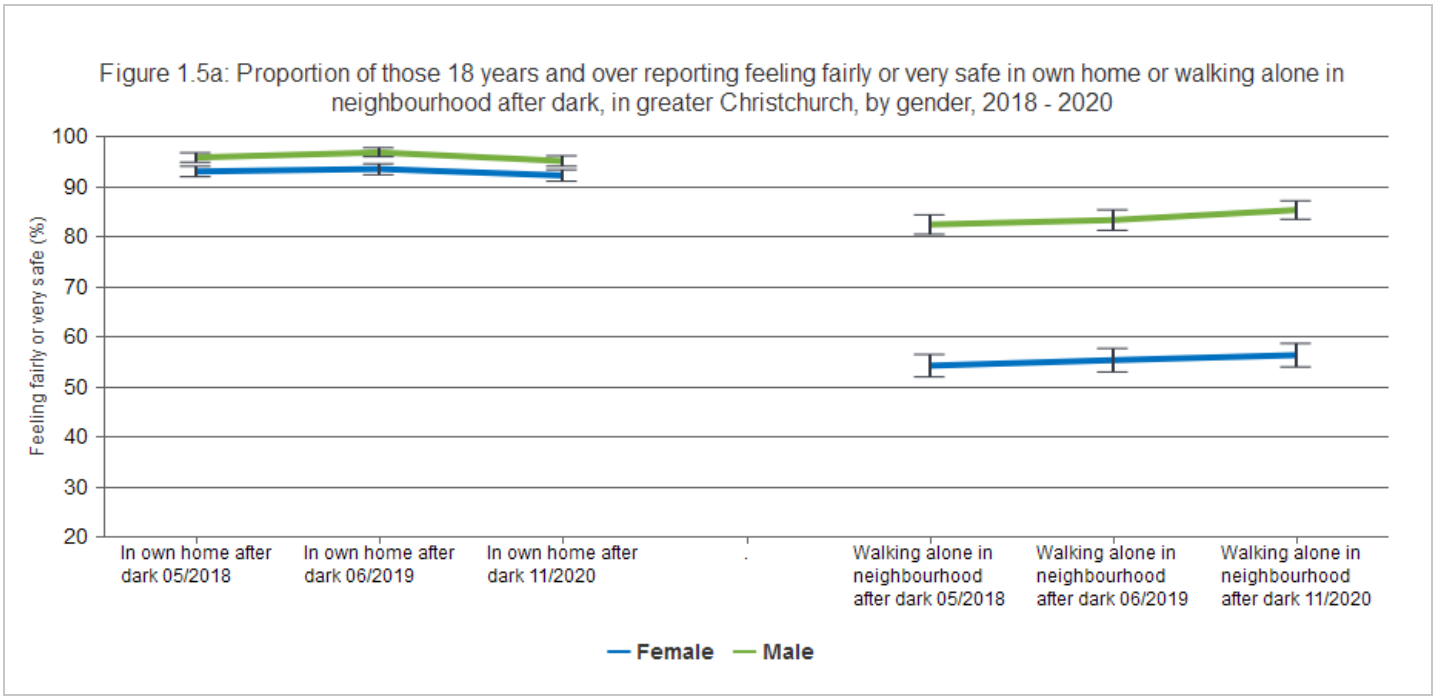
Breakdown by age

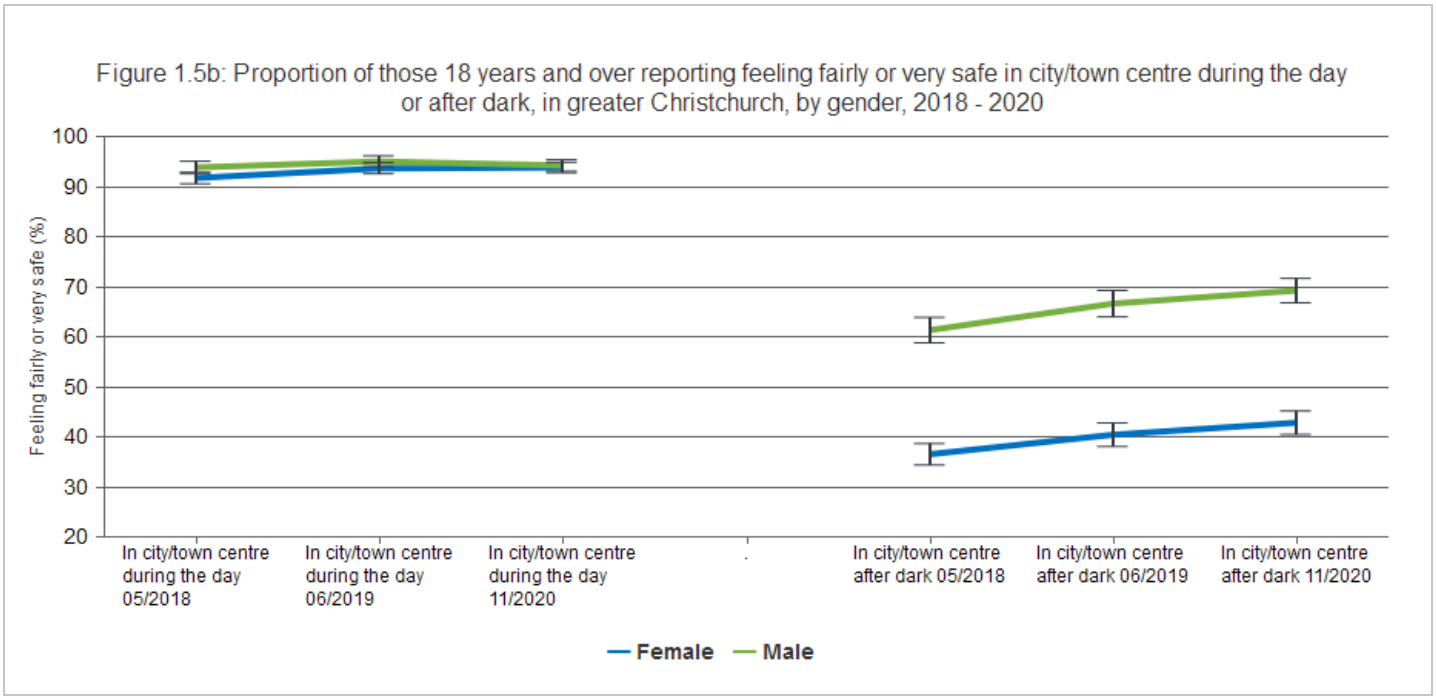




Figures 1.4a and 1.4b show perceptions of safety, by age group, in 2018-2020. Most respondents reported feeling fairly or very safe in their own home, and there are no statistically significant differences between age groups in 2018, 2019, or 2020. The figures show a pattern of generally similar perceptions of safety for respondents aged 18 to 74 years. However, respondents aged 75 years and over were less likely to report feeling fairly or very safe in the other situations compared to other age groups. In 2020, respondents aged 75 years and over were statistically significantly less likely to report feeling fairly or very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, or in the city/town centre during the day, compared to all other age groups, and in the city/town centre during the day compared to those in the 25-34 years, 35-49 years, and 50-64 years age groups.

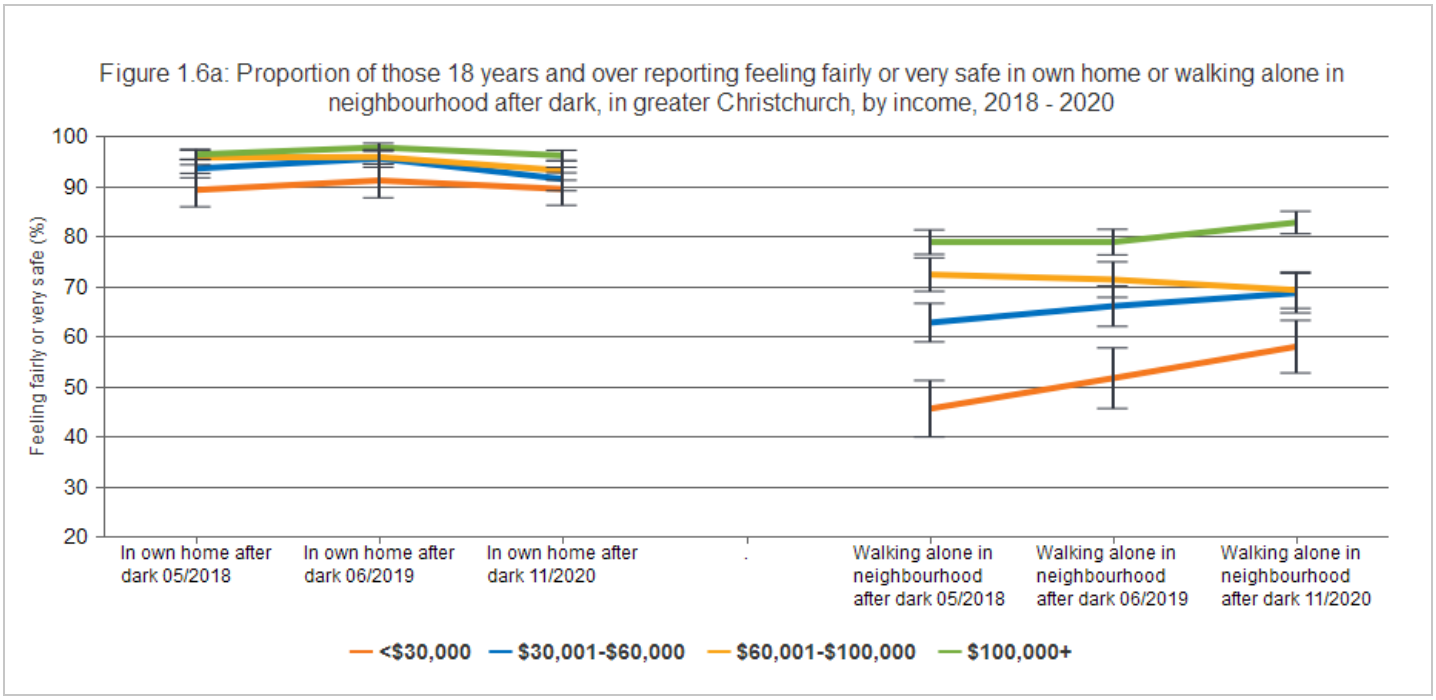
Breakdown by gender

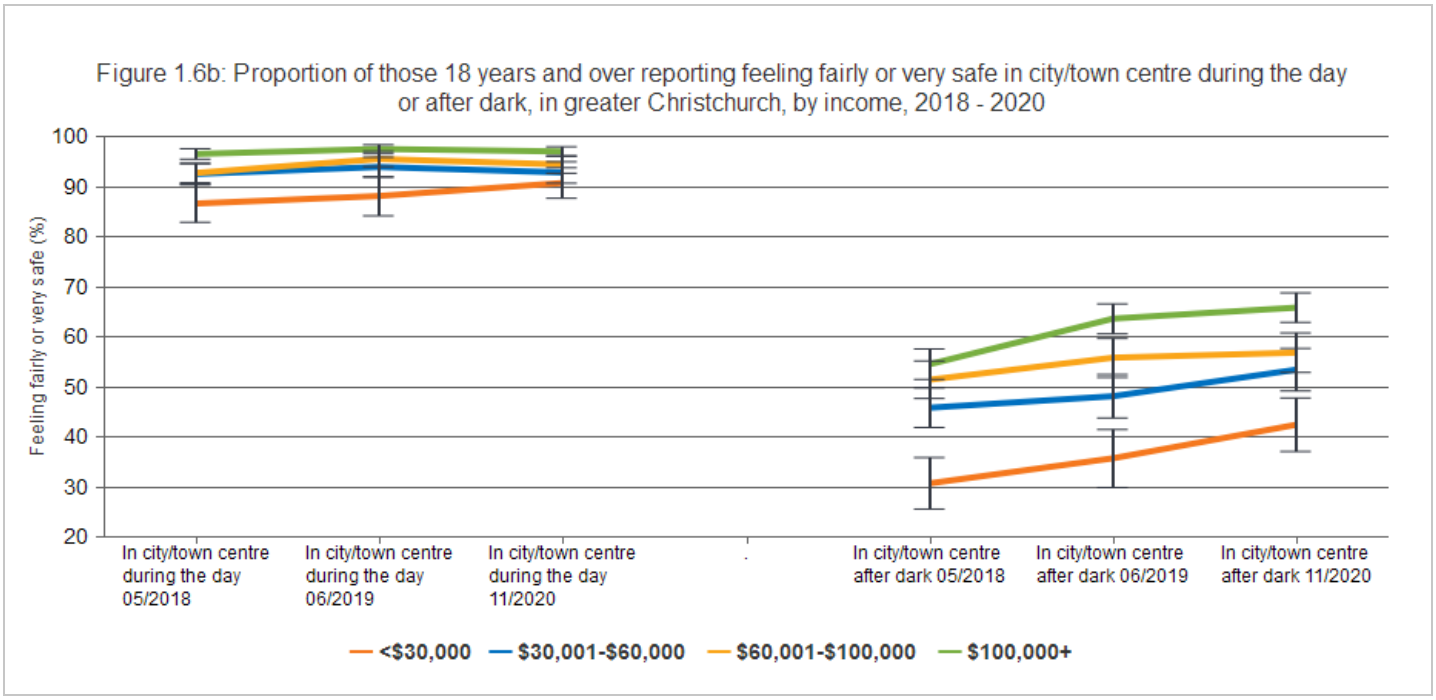




Figures 1.5a and 1.5b show that some aspects of the context differentially influence men and women's perceptions of safety. The results highlight women's statistically significantly lower perception of safety in outdoor environments after dark (for example, in 2020, only 42.8% of female respondents indicated feeling fairly or very safe walking in the city/town centre after dark, compared to 69.2% of males).

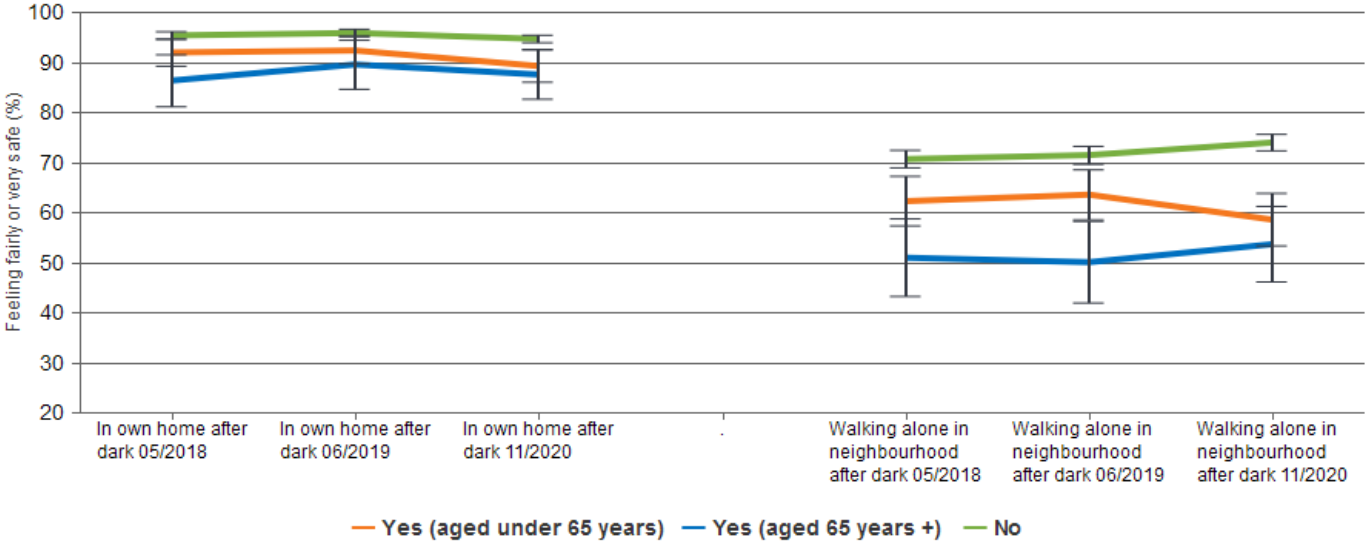
Breakdown by income

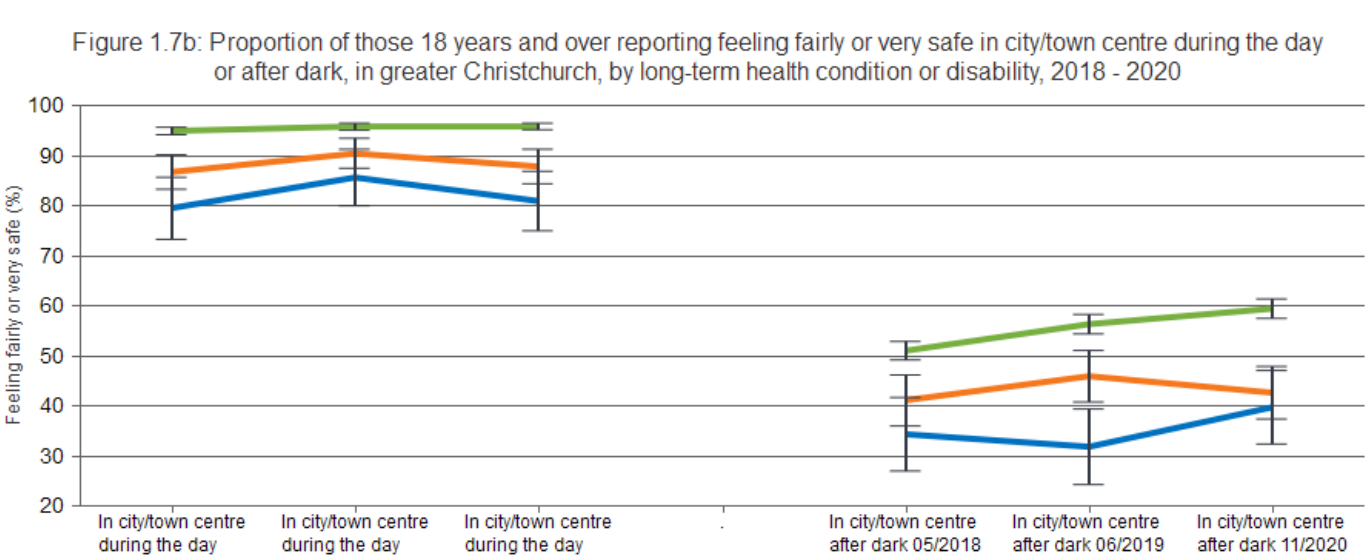




Figures 1.6a and 1.6b show a clear positive relationship between annual household income and respondents' perceptions of safety. The proportion of respondents feeling fairly safe or very safe in each of the four situations shown tends to increase with increasing income. In all four situations (home after dark, neighbourhood after dark, town/city centre after dark, and town/city centre during the day) respondents from the lowest income group (<$30,000) had statistically significantly lower levels of perceived safety compared with respondents from the highest income group ($100,000+). In 2020, the income gradient is most pronounced for the two situations 'in city/town centre after dark' and 'walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark'.

Breakdown by disability





The figures show that in all three situations outside of the home respondents with a long-term health condition or disability (irrespective of age group) had statistically significantly lower levels of perceived safety, compared with respondents without a long-term health condition or disability.

Data Sources

Source: Canterbury District Health Board.
Survey/data set: Canterbury Wellbeing Survey to 2020. Access publicly available data from the Community and Public Health (Canterbury DHB) 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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