PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WEST AUCKLAND

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1 Foreword & Acknowledgements

Tēnā koutou,

This report brings together three streams of work, each providing insights and providing context relating to issues of community safety in West Auckland. It is the result of a partnership between Community Waitakere and Unitec and the work has been funded through the Lotteries Community Sector Research Fund.

These streams were: an overview of existing material; five focus groups held with community members across West Auckland and representing particular sectors of our community; and a survey completed by 159 participants. Each of these streams provided a different perspective. It was interesting, and we believe significant, that a number of themes emerged that were consistent across all three.

Community Safety is an issue that often arouses strong reactions at both individual and community levels. How we feel about our neighbourhood, whether we feel comfortable to move about freely, and perhaps even more importantly the extent to which we feel safe in our own homes has very important impacts on our sense of wellbeing and our levels of participation in community life. We hope that this work will make a valuable contribution to approaches that in the longer term will enhance this sense of well-being and safety in those places where we live, work and play.

I would like to acknowledge and thank a number of individuals and organisations that have made valuable contributions to this work. Firstly, Dr Geoff Bridgman from Unitec who as the lead researcher has been a vital part of the project, and without whom the work would not have been possible. In addition to the overseeing Geoff has undertaken a lot of the analysis arising from the survey, and has drawn out significant insights from this material. Matt Grey developed the work bringing together the extensive material that already existed and which was critical in informing our project. Matt undertook this as part of his Masters studies at Unitec. Thank you Matt. WAVES Trust, a community organisation holding the family violence network in West Auckland undertook the analysis of the focus groups and was a key partner in the project. Thanks to Charlotte Moore the analyst from WAVES who undertook this work and skilfully drew out important information and brought it to life directly through the participants' own words.

Special thanks also to the staff of Community Waitakere. Jaclyn Bonnici, Aroha Te Namu and Maj De Poorter have all been closely involved and have always brought positive energy, a practical 'can do' approach and great intelligence to bear at all times.

A particular acknowledgement is due to the community sector in West Auckland. The strong and committed network that exists across West Auckland plays an absolutely vital role in strengthening our communities. This project has drawn on the relationships, the connection and the commitment of this network. Without these this work would have been much poorer and would not have included many of the voices that are represented here.

Lastly, and importantly, special thanks again to the Lotteries Community Sector Research Fund. This project was dependent on this funding, and could not have happened without it.

Nga mihi,

Charlie Moore (Community Waitakere)

2 Introduction

Now that the dust has long settled following a spate of murders in West Auckland in 2014, it is important to take stock and gather together the various responses from local government, experts, community groups and people. This report[1] summarises the key reports and documentation on community safety in West Auckland, draws out the common themes and identifies any gaps. Recommendations from these reports will be analysed in relation to the outcomes from five focus groups and a community survey on the current perceptions of West Auckland communities with respect to safety in their part of the world. This will give us some clarity on the current issues and what we need to do in the future.

Community Waitakere (a community development organisation) is the lead for this project, supported by Unitec's Department of Social Practice. An Advisory Group of West Auckland community organisations were also consulted about the development, implementation and analysis of the project. Together our aim is to inform our community about community safety and enable us to improve this through effective collaboration, and to build the research capacity of Community Waitakere and its constituents through a carefully supervised community research process.
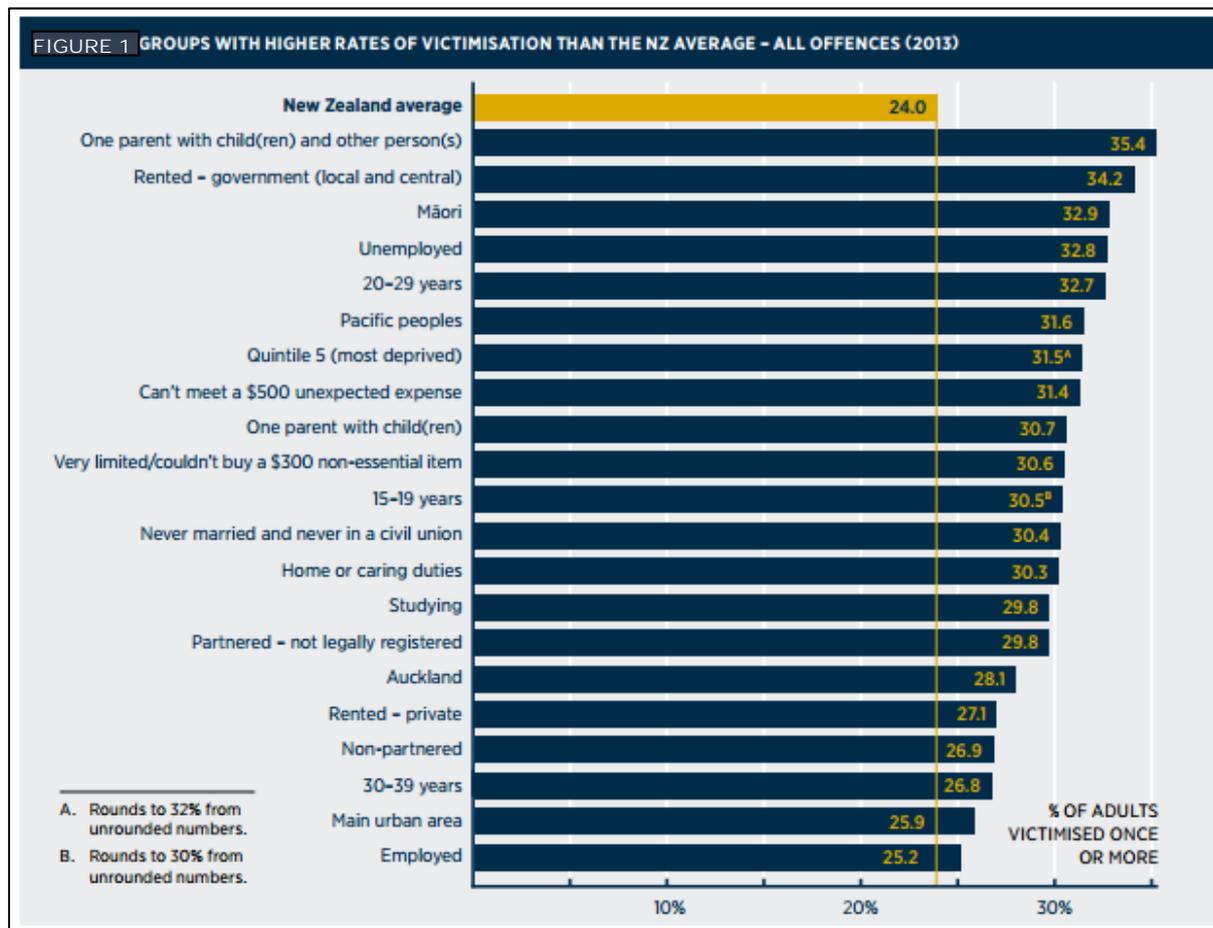
3 Background

Table 1: Snapshot Census Data: West Auckland Local Boards (Auckland Council, 2014)				
	Henderson-Massey	**Waitakere**	**Whau**	**Auckland**
Population	107,685	48,396	72,594	1,415,550
Percent growth 2001-2013	24.0%	13.5%	15.7%	22.2%
Māori	15.9%	11%	9.4%	10.7%
Pacific	19.5%	10.6%	18.4%	14.6%
Asian	21.8%	9.5%	35.4%	23.1%
Median Age	33.5	36.8	34.9	35.1
Median Personal Income	$26 ,800	$33,200	$24,500	$29,600
Median Household Income	$66,900	$79,700	$63,900	$76,500

West Auckland, for the purposes of this research, is made up of the Henderson-Massey, Waitakere Ranges and Whau Local Board areas. The combined population of these at the 2013 census was 228,675. Table 1 above provides a snapshot of relevant characteristics of this large and diverse part of Auckland (Auckland Council, 2014). It is particularly interesting to note that Henderson- Massey, as well as being the largest of the three is also younger, poorer and has higher proportions of Māori and Pacific peoples than Auckland generally. It is also one of the four fastest growing populations in the Auckland region with a 24% growth between 2001 and 2013. The Whau in contrast has a particularly high proportion of Asian people (35.4%) and the lowest household and personal income levels of the three West Auckland Local Boards. Compared to Henderson-Massey and Whau, (and Auckland as a whole), Waitakere Ranges is older, richer, more European, and with much slower growth than Auckland as a whole.

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[1] This report and the project work that is the basis of the report was funded by a Lotteries Community Sector Research Grant

West Auckland is a vulnerable community. Figure 1 below, from the Ministry of Justice (2015), shows how many of the features in table 1 (being Māori or a Pacific person, young and/or poor) make people more likely to be victims of crime. The other features that align with vulnerability (being in crowded housing, a sole parent or unemployed; renting, having money crises) are major parts of West Auckland life, particularly for Whau and Henderson-Massey.

FIGURE 1 GROUPS WITH HIGHER RATES OF VICTIMISATION THAN THE NZ AVERAGE – ALL OFFENCES (2013)

Group	% of adults victimised once or more
New Zealand average	24.0
One parent with child(ren) and other person(s)	35.4
Rented – government (local and central)	34.2
Māori	32.9
Unemployed	32.8
20–29 years	32.7
Pacific peoples	31.6
Quintile 5 (most deprived)	31.5^A
Can't meet a $500 unexpected expense	31.4
One parent with child(ren)	30.7
Very limited/couldn't buy a $300 non-essential item	30.6
15–19 years	30.5^B
Never married and never in a civil union	30.4
Home or caring duties	30.3
Studying	29.8
Partnered – not legally registered	29.8
Auckland	28.1
Rented – private	27.1
Non-partnered	26.9
30–39 years	26.8
Main urban area	25.9
Employed	25.2

A. Rounds to 32% from unrounded numbers.
B. Rounds to 30% from unrounded numbers.

As noted in the introduction, the impetus for this work arose from a series of violent incidents in West Auckland in the first half of 2014. These events were widely reported and gave rise to a heightened level of public consciousness about safety and general concern within the community. This concern reached its climax following the murder of Arun Kumar, a Henderson Dairy owner, on 10 June 2014. The intensity and level of this concern can be gauged from the following from the Indian Newslink, June 15 2014.

> "There is anger and disappointment among the members of the Indian community in Auckland as the past week saw another gruesome murder, bringing the total number of killings to four in as many weeks in the area. Arun Kumar (57) was stabbed by a 13-year old youth in his Railside Dairy located on Great North Road in Henderson on Tuesday, June 10, apparently demanding cigarettes...

> Community reaction has been sharp with tempers running high. Indian Newslink received several phone calls, emails and text messages in each of which members of the public had given vent to their disappointment saying that rising crime levels in the Waitakere region has shattered the confidence of people." (page A1)

In response to these events Auckland Council, Henderson-Massey Local Board, Waitakere Ethnic Board as well as the Police and other community organisations became involved in a number of initiatives. These included a series of community meetings inviting people to share their concerns and to identify possible actions that could be taken. Identified possible actions included the provision of security guards in the Henderson CBD for a limited period; the implementation of additional CCTV cameras with provision for monitoring; an increased Police presence in Henderson centre; support for the establishment of a Business Association to support and strengthen the Henderson business community; and initiatives to provide activities for local youth. However, although Arun Kumar's tragic death sparked this activity we need to go back a bit further in time to understand the context of this event and the inquiry it has provoked.

4 Timeline

This section provides an overview of recent reports (and a number of high profile violent incidents) relating to community safety in West Auckland.

March 2012 – An Auckland Council (2012) report, *Public Perceptions of Safety from Crime in the Auckland Region* was published. The report described people's perception of safety on the area they live in. This Auckland-wide report found that what most makes people feel unsafe are house burglaries and thefts from cars, with physical violence not far behind. The people most affected (least feeling of safety) are 20-29 year olds and Māori, Pacific Island and Asian people.

The report showed that 32% of people from Henderson-Massey generally felt unsafe in their community, worse than anywhere else in greater Auckland. Henderson-Massey and Whau were two of only three local board areas that felt their area was becoming more unsafe, and Henderson-Massey was one of two areas where people felt they were most likely to be a victim of crime. A quarter felt unsafe in their parks during the day and 23% felt unsafe in shopping areas at night. The reason for feeling unsafe was the presence of people with any or many of the following characteristics: being young, aggressive, drunk, drugged, suspicious and/or homeless. Poor lighting, places where people could hide, having no one around and scary media reports all made things worse.

February 2013 – *The Application for Reaccreditation as an International Safe Community* report was produced by Safer West Community Trust (2013), specifically on community safety in West Auckland. This report takes a much broader view on the nature of safety adding traffic safety, home safety, child safety, older adults' safety, workplace safety, suicide prevention and water safety to the picture. The International Safe Community standards are based the World Health Organisation's seven *Indicators for International Safe Communities* 2012 (Karolinska Institute, 2014) and the goal of the Safer West Community Trust is that Auckland adopts these standards across the whole field of safety and works towards their achievement. They take the view that an overarching, intersectional, sustainable, evidence based programme directed towards the most vulnerable members of society across all ages, genders, cultures and environments will produce the best outcomes.

May – June 2014. Five murders: Farhat Rana Malik and her daughter Sidra Noor Malik were found murdered in their West Auckland (Ranui) home; Josh Roach was shot to death in his driveway in Ranui; a man's body was found in his burning house in Massey, which Police say was related to a domestic incident; Arun Kumar was stabbed to death in front of his wife in their Henderson dairy; West Auckland had a total of 7 murders in 2014, 12.1% of the total murders in New Zealand and about 2.5 times the national average. While this was very disturbing, it was an aberration and the proportion of

West Auckland's[2] homicides and related offences from 2010 to 2015 of the national total (4.8%) matches West Auckland's proportion of the national population (4.7% - Statistics New Zealand, 2016; NZ Police, 2011-2014). In 2015 there were no murders in West Auckland and 55 nationwide.

June - October 2014. The Auckland Council responded to these deaths with Mayor Len Brown meeting with the community including the Henderson business community to hear issues and suggest the implementation of a business association with a future goal of creating a *Business Improvement District*. There was another high profile murder during this period where the gang connected boyfriend of a well-known identity was beaten to death by a rival gang member on Don Buck Road in Massey.

In this time period the Police released an analysis of family violence statistics for the Waitemata district (New Zealand Police, 2015) describing the level of family violence in West Auckland (the Waitakere sub-district). In 2014, there were twice as many family violence investigations in West Auckland per head of population (23/1000), as there were on the North Shore (11/1000), but rates were increasing on the North Shore and nationally and declining in West Auckland such that they were no worse than the national rate. However, 4865 investigations remained a major concern.

Also in this time period, Auckland commissioned Stoks Limited (2014) to provide a report using the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED: Jeffery, 1977) method, focussing on the wider Henderson CBD area and helping to create a community driven safety plan for Henderson. This process takes account of a wide range of factors that influence violence in communities. These include the improvement of the layout, lighting, surveillance (including CCTV), design (including art works and landscaping), tidiness (including graffiti management) and the extended hours and use of physical environments so that people are more comfortable using town centres, parks, public transport and the local streets and amenities close to where they live both during the day and at night.

Part of the Stoks Ltd report was a review of recent Local Board and Auckland Council plans to improve the safety and general usability of Henderson town centre. The first of these was the 2011 Henderson-Massey Local Board Plan which had many CPTED features (community patrols, extended hours of business, improved pedestrian and cycleways and street lighting, art work, landscaping and graffiti management). Alcohol and drugs are also a factor and the local Licencing Trust's control over alcohol sales is considered both a positive and a negative. The negative impact relates to the lack of good social spaces for alcohol consumption and entertainment in central Henderson. Part of the perception of Henderson town centre as an area of low perceived safety in the 2012 Auckland Council public perception study is to do with young people drinking outdoors and becoming a social nuisance. This and other negative perceptions about Henderson town centre highlighted the need to generate a sense of pride in Henderson. The most recent iteration of this is the current "Love Hendo"[3] campaign.

The Stoks Ltd report also reviewed the Henderson Implementation Plan (Henderson-Massey Local Board, 2014), noting four key starting points for the plan (heavy reliance on motor vehicles, disconnection, large social and safety issues in the community, unattractive environment) all of which are part of the discussion of community safety. The plan has goals to "enliven Henderson main street" and "create a vibrant mixed use precinct" as well as "enhancing safety", but, perhaps the most important features of the plan are goals that address some of the drivers of poverty and crime – to "enhance community and economic opportunities" and to create "high quality housing opportunities".

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[2] West Auckland covers the same area as the Waitakere Police sub-district.
[3] See the Love Hendo Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Love.Hendo/

The Stoks Ltd report concludes that one of the major challenges for Henderson is that the Westfield Mall is at the physical heart and the key pro-social environment of Henderson, but it closes at 6pm, effectively shutting Henderson down. Extending this pro-social environment out into Catherine Plaza, Henderson Main Street and to the many attractive amenities close by (Corban Estate, Tui Glen, Falls Park) is the key to revitalisation. However, "perhaps the most important CPTED initiative is working on the adverse perceptions associated with congregations of youth which comes to the forefront in all public safety perception studies" (p.37).

November 2014. This issue of perception was picked up by the Thinkplace *Ideas for a Safer Henderson Town Centre* and *Safer Henderson Town Centre Plan* reports (Thinkplace, 2014a, b) which tried to look at the issues of safety from a number of community perspectives, some of which included the young people and the homeless that often were named as a reason why people felt unsafe. Their homeless person case study was himself a victim of street violence. They describe a 14-year old gang member who thought Henderson was pretty safe, that there is trouble and stuff, but if you are tough you are OK. He thought Henderson is safer than other places: "safer than some kid's homes". Then there was the Indian shopkeeper threatened by boys saying "you don't want to end up like that...dairy owner?"; the 78-year old woman, who, although she has a weekly coffee in the mall, feels that Henderson is very unsafe; and the solo mum with a history of domestic violence who feels as rejected by her community as the beggars she is afraid of. Complex issues require complex solutions which take time to mature. Thinkplace solutions cover similar ground to Stoks Ltd (2014) above but with a greater focus on community building and family support and moving away from the "underlying culture of blame" (Thinkplace 2014a).

These reports presented a number of ideas for improvement such as pop-up events in community spaces, odd-job and upcycling hubs and street games. In the wider community, innovative programmes that supported parents (the walking school bus) and improved parenting skills were needed. We have to find ways of involving old people (adopt a grandparent), making better use of our natural resources, put more resource into building business, developing a whole of community approach where everyone is "legitimate" (even the homeless and "youth") and generally making those who are seen by many as a problem, part of the solution.

January 2015. Almost three years after the Auckland Council (2012) report, a local Henderson-Massey Local Board Area Community Safety Survey from the WAVES Trust (2015) repeated the same message of concern about safety with a focus on Henderson town centre, youth crime and drug and alcohol problems. While there were many positives described about the community, for most this was not a community that they saw themselves living in in 10 years' time, and while there was support for stronger social services, more community events and environmental improvements, there was a stronger push for more security (CCTV), more Police and more wardens.

July 2015. The theme of security is what was taken through into the meeting of the *Waitakere Ethnic Board Crime and Safety Forum* held by the Waitakere Ethnic Board (2015) and attended by the Police and members of the Henderson-Lincoln Metro Business as well as people from the Asian/other communities represented by the Waitakere Ethnic Board. Despite the improvements in community policing, the introduction of CCTV and progress towards the development of the area as a *Business Improvement District*, members of the ethnic and business communities felt that young people were still presenting as a threat to Henderson people and businesses, and that they were insufficiently punished for the crimes they committed. The District Commander of the Police for Waitakere argued that "the Police are is only a small part of the solution. We rely on the community to help us solve the problem".

May 2016. Given that the picture from 2012 to 2015 of safety and crime in West Auckland, generally, and in Henderson town centre, in particular, had been fairly negative, the report from Bridgman and Dyer (2016) on the impact of one of Violence Free Communities' violence prevention initiatives presented a positive alternative perspective. In trying to demonstrate the wider community outcomes of Violence Free Communities' flagship event *Toddler Day Out & Great Parenting Fair (TDO)* which attracted up to 18,000 people each year up to 2015, Bridgman and Dyer linked participation in TDO to the dramatic drop in substantiated child abuse rates over the period of 2010-2015. They argued that West Auckland has made huge progress in this area, now having one of the lowest child abuse rates in New Zealand, and this was, in part, caused by TDO which over a five-year period attracted most of West Auckland's pre-schoolers and their carers.   They also pointed to the falling crime rate in the Waitakere Police district over the period from 2010-2014 – the fourth largest fall in New Zealand – such that it had a lower crime rate than all but two of the 11 Police districts in New Zealand (excluding Waitemata of which it is part).

The Bridgman and Dyer data give weight to the argument that the perceptions we have about the safety of our community and the people who are part of it have more impact than the actual amount of crime that is experienced. These perceptions very much depend on the age, culture and location of the respondent in the surveys, forums and reports that we have covered in this timeline. We know from the Auckland Council 2012 survey that those most at risk of harm are Māori, Pacific people, and Asian ethnic communities, yet it is the voice of those communities and of youth (often seen as the cause of many of the problems relating to crime and safety) that are often missing as distinctive voices from the data. Both problems and solutions can get skewed towards *more Police* and *get tough on crime* solutions, rather than engagement, connection and addressing the heart of the issue as best outlined by the two Thinkplace (2014a, b) reports.

The timeline summary also brings into focus many different dimensions of safety raised by the Safer West Community Trust (2013) and the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* approach (Stoks, 2014) and the enduring issues of poverty and inequality that lead to people being victims of crime (Ministry of Justice, 2015). Thinkplace (2014b) asks for integrated and long-term commitment that shifts action:

From		To:
Reactionary responses	→	Proactive responses
Safety as a focus of intervention	→	Safety as an outcome of interventions
Instant gratification	→	Long term gradual, lasting benefit
Silver bullet solution	→	Alignment of multiple solutions
Single investment approach	→	Co-ordinated approach
Big or small investment	→	Big and small investments
Remedial actions	→	Remedial, transitional and generative actions

5 What we set out to do

The research undertaken by Community Waitakere sought to address some of the issues raised in the section above with relation to hearing the voices of the different communities of West Auckland, to take stock of how we feel about "safety" in the communities in which we live across West Auckland and to seek solutions that align across these communities or that are unique answers for particular places or people. Our data was drawn from a survey of 159 West Auckland residents and five focus groups representing three cultural groups (Māori, Pacific people and Asian/other- "Ethnic"), one socio-economic group (the "Mortgage Belt") and one age group ("Youth").

6 The Survey

6.1 Survey participants

Table 2 gives the demographic breakdown of the 159 people surveyed and while it underrepresents Asian/other groups in West Auckland and men, it gives a good coverage of the age groups, locations and length of time people have lived in their West Auckland communities.

Table 2: Characteristics of the survey participants			
Factor	**Category**	**Number**	**%**
Gender	Women	134	84.3%
	Men	25	15.7%
Culture	Asian/other	11	6.9%
	Māori	17	10.7%
	Pacific People	30	18.9%
	Pākehā/European, European	101	63.5%
Age	16-34 years	36	22.6%
	35-44	34	21.4%
	45-54	41	25.8%
	55-64	33	20.8%
	65 and older	15	9.4%
Location	*Eastern Fringe*: Avondale, Blockhouse Bay, New Lynn, New Windsor, Rosebank	39	24.5%
	In the Bush: Green Bay, Glen Eden, Titirangi, Laingholm, Parau	29	18.2%
	Suburban Henderson: Glendene, Kelston, Sunnyvale, Henderson, Henderson Heights, Te Atatu South	29	18.2%
	Harbour fringe: Te Atatu Penninsula, West Harbour, Hobsonville	21	13.2%
	Massey/ Ranui	30	18.9%
	Bohemian West: Oratia, Swanson, Waitakere, Karekare	11	6.9%
Length of time in community	Less than 12 months	12	7.5%
	1-2.99 years;	20	12.6%
	3-4.99	21	13.2%
	5-9.99	42	26.4%
	10-19.99	36	22.6%
	20 years or more	28	17.6%
Total		159	100.0%

The approach we take with the reporting of the survey is to report the overall results in relation to the questions asked in the survey and then those demographic features that are significantly correlated with those features. For example, there is a statement *I know my neighbour's name* to which the average response is *I tend to agree*, and it is not surprising that the answers to this question are positively correlated ($p > 0.01$) with the length of time that a person has been living in the West

Auckland community – i.e. the longer time in the community, the more likely they are to know their neighbour's name. Some of the other correlations that we present are not so predictable and raise interesting and relevant issues. Only correlations significant at the p<0.05 level are discussed.

Table 3 gives the average level of agreement of the participants to 16 questions connected with safety. It shows that overall people connect with their neighbours, feel safe enough during day in their homes and on the streets of their communities, respect the role of the Police and have some engagement with the range of people and events in their communities. Participants overall felt that ensuring safety was the responsibility of, firstly, the participants themselves and the Police, followed by the Auckland Council and Community organisations.

Averages under 3.0 suggest around half of the participants disagree, suggesting there are some major concerns about safety after dark and child safety without an accompanying adult carer on the streets, going to school and in parks.

| Table 3. Please rate the following statements on this scale 1 = definitely disagree, 2 = tend to disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree or don't know; 4 = tend to agree, 5 = definitely agree	
Statement	**Average level of agreement**
I greet my neighbours when I see them	4.45
I feel safe when interacting with the NZ Police	4.28
I feel safe walking the street alone where I live during the day	4.21
I know my neighbours by name	3.92
I feel good/happy/confident answering my front door during the day	3.80
I feel that it's my responsibility to make my community a safer place	3.80
I feel that it's NZ Police's responsibility to make my community a safer place	3.79
I am involved in local community activities/events/groups	3.74
My neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on together	3.73
I feel that it's Auckland Council's responsibility to make my community a safer place	3.58
I feel that it's community groups' responsibility to make my community a safer place	3.26
I feel good/happy/confident when my kids walk - without adults - to school	2.81
I feel good/happy/confident when my kids walk - without adults - to the local dairy	2.74
I feel good/happy/confident answering my front door after dark	2.69
I feel safe walking the street alone where I live after dark	2.64
I feel good/happy/confident when my kids walk - without adults - to the local park	2.47

Correlations show the following significant relationships (p<0.05) between levels of agreement and demographic features. Women overall feel unsafe while men overall feel safe when answering the front door (2.55 vs men[4] = 3.40), walking in the street after dark (2.46 vs men = 3.60) and with their children going on their own to the local park (2.34 vs men = 3.16). Pākehā/European feel less safe at night walking alone than do other cultures (2.47 vs all other cultures = 2.93). Pacific Island people are less likely to know their neighbour's name (3.43 vs all other cultures = 4.03) and Asian/other people feel more strongly that the community should take responsibility for safety (4.18 vs all other culture = 3.20)

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[4] The gender questions had an option of "other" which was not used.

Older people are more likely than younger to know their neighbour's name (>44 years = 4.23 vs <45 years = 3.25) as are people who have lived in the community for longer (less than 12 months = 2.67 vs 12 months and greater = 4.03) and older people feel that people from different backgrounds get along in their neighbourhood (>44 years = 4.40 vs <45 years = 3.42). They are also more comfortable interacting with Police than young people (>44 years = 4.60 vs <45 years = 3.78).

Suburban Henderson is the least comfortable with the Police and their role in making the community safer (3.90 vs all other districts = 4.37). *Massey/Ranui* worry most about their kids being without adults on the streets and in parks (2.04 vs all other districts = 2.58), and the *In the Bush* suburbs are the least involved in community events (3.21 vs all other districts = 3.76) and most likely to feel the different groups in their neighbourhood don't get on (3.28 vs all other districts = 3.80).

6.2 Defining being safe or unsafe

Figure 1: Being safe is feeling ...
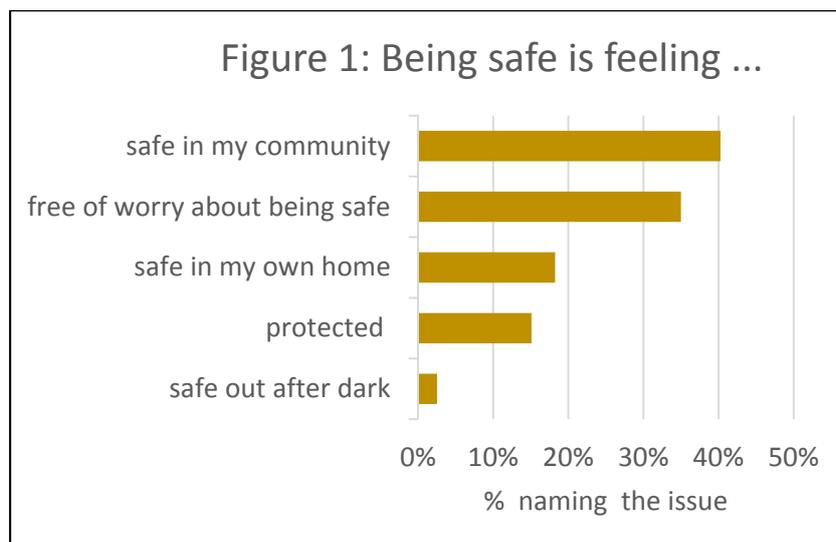
Participants were asked to describe what being safe or unsafe "felt like". Figure 1 shows a summary of what being safe felt like. For 40% this was about being *safe in my community*. This included "knowing your neighbours", "knowing your community and where to go for help", "being relaxed and comfortable...in the community", enjoying "the parks and local walkways" and "being able to let ...[the] kids play outside". "Low crime" and people "supporting each other...and being involved in local community activities" helped to create this feeling.

For 35% of participants being *free of worry about being safe was important.* Feeling safe was seen as a "state of mind, the condition of a happy life". Some had "decided not to let fear rule their life". For others it was important not to have to "think about" being unsafe or, being worried about their "surroundings", wanting that feeling of being "secure and unthreatened" and having that "peace of mind". This perspective was most strongly held by Asian/other participants (64% and a significant positive correlation) and most weakly held by Pacific Island Participants (17% and a significant negative correlation).

Being *safe in my own home* – not having to lock your doors and windows when you are at home, feeling comfortable answering the door "day or night" and not having one's privacy "disturbed". Eighteen percent identified this concern while 15% wanted *protection* through technology and better policing in order to feel safe. More CCTV surveillance cameras, "mounted police" and more patrols, keeping young people away from trouble spots and tougher penalties were suggested. Better street lighting and "less shrubbery around train stations" were two environmental changes wanted. The 3% who felt safety after dark was a key to feeling safe also wanted better street lighting.
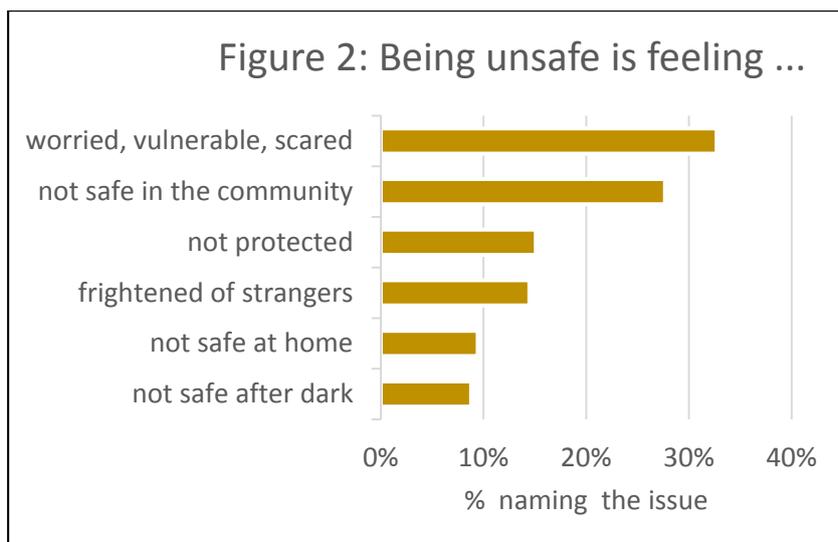
Figure 2: Being unsafe is feeling ...

Figure 2 above, shows a summary of what being unsafe felt like. For a third this was about feeling *worried, vulnerable or scared*. This included "feeling vulnerable, feeling uncomfortable or fearing that I am likely to be harmed", "feeling at risk of attack", "feeling too uncomfortable to do the things I'd like" and "feeling worried about yourself or your kid's safety". This issue was significantly negatively correlated with age with 53% of young people aged between 16 and 34 raising this concern, much higher than any other age group.

Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed did not feel generally safe in their community or neighbourhood or able to do "things that in everyday life...should feel safe". They felt "[un]able to walk around the neighbourhood or shopping centres", "threatened or uncomfortable while going about doing [their] own business in my community" or felt "hassled" just "walking up the road" or "around the local park". Fear of "the high crime rate of my neighbourhood" was cited as the reason for "being afraid to go out".

For 15% being unsafe was a sense of not being protected. For example, "hearing about a lot of crimes on news and in the newspapers" was disturbing and having "high fences all around and people not interacting with each other" made some participants feel "[in]visible to other people". Consequently, there was little "faith in...[the] public security system" and a lack of confidence that one's personal "environment...is...secure" and that people "can protect what is precious to...[them]" and thus ending up "having to keep all...[their] doors locked 24/7 and being suspicious of everyone".

This feeling of being unprotected and unsafe *at home* was held by 9% of the participants. It could be as little as worrying that one's house might "have been burgled during the day", to feeling "[un]able to leave windows open at night" and *"*not wanting to be at home alone". There was a significant negative correlation of this issue with the length of time people had in their current house. Newbies (less than one year in their current home) were significantly more likely to raise this concern (25%) than people who had lived there for five years or more (6%).

For 14% there was a general unease with or fear of strangers. This unease draws from a lack of community connection where people don't "know...[their] neighbours properly" and didn't feel "confident...[about getting] to know the people in the neighbourhood". So some felt that they didn't know "what to expect from the people...[they] come in contact with". "Seeing cars driving up and down...[the] street slowly in the afternoon and looking at the houses" added to this unease.

Nightfall made 9% feel unsafe, particularly in "poorly lit streets" and "seeing youth roaming". These concerns were seeded by the ideas "that lots of aggressive people tend to come out after dark" and that "woman [were] not...able to walk alone at night".

6.3 A time when participants felt very safe or very unsafe

Figure 3: A time in the past two years where people have felt very safe in their community
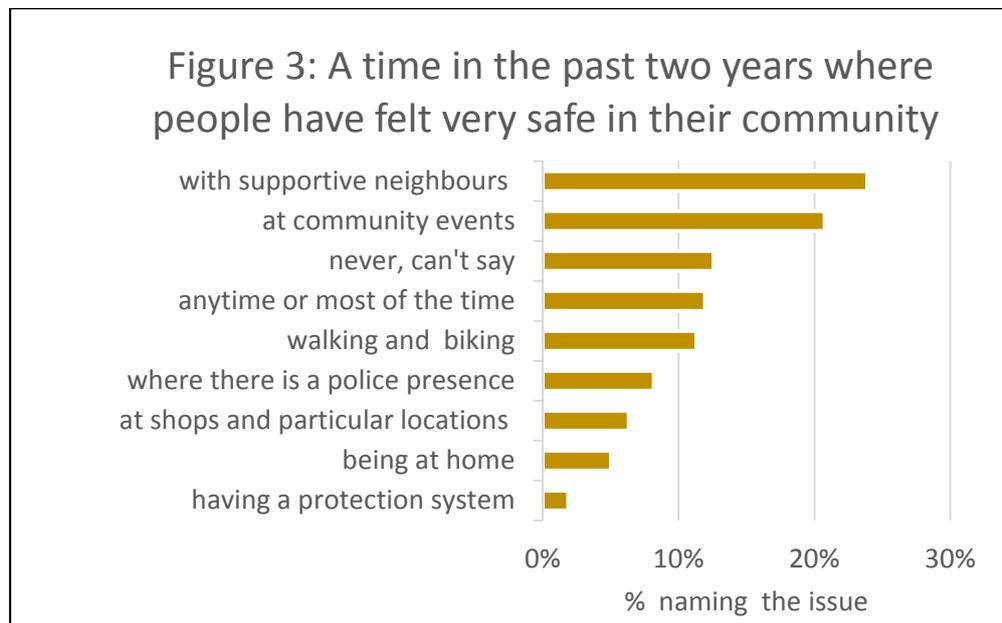
Participants were asked to describe a time in the past two years where they had felt safe in their community. Figure 3 summarizes the findings. Twenty-four percent identified having supportive neighbours made them feel safe. Support for some means being in a protective environment: "neighbours watching out for each other", letting you "know...they [had] seen something suspicious" and, "rushing over immediately to see if they could help when...the house alarm went off". For others support means being friendly and having "conversations on the street and greet[ing] other neighbours as they pass by".

Community events were seen as safe places by 24% of the participants. These could be an event at "the local playgroup", the weekly "night markets in New Lynn where there is a lovely sense of community and people are friendly and welcoming" or annual "street...BBQs". Larger "council run community...children's sports activities" and "local community arts festivals...[were places where people] felt a really good, local buzz - people were getting on, getting to know each other and there was a feeling of trust and community spirit".

Eleven percent referred to pleasant times walking or biking in Waikumete cemetery, other parks and, beaches or in local streets ("walking my dog"). Often there were conditions attached – "walking with others", "when there are lights on at night when walking home", and not having to cycle in "fast heavy traffic". The condition of having a Police presence was identified by 8% of the participants. These people felt safe seeing "a local constable coming to local events", "Police patrols [in] my neighbourhood regularly" or a quick Police response "to an altercation on our street".

Apart from parks, beaches and local streets, other safe places that 6% of participants identified were shopping centres, the Hōani Waititi marae and a local dairy where "friendly young people congregate". Home was another safe place identified by 5% of participants noting times when they have "left the front door" or "garage door" open and property unprotected for several hours, that

"nothing was touched, moved or taken". Having a home protection system made 2% of participants feel safe in the community.

Thirteen percent felt that they could not remember feeling safe in the community, either because they were relatively new in the current community or because they couldn't remember the last time they had felt totally safe in the community. In contrast 12% felt safe most of the time. Their comments included "Today is a beautiful sunny day and I have all my doors and windows open wide" and "I always feel safe". This perspective was significantly correlated with being male (28% identify this state) rather than female (9%).

Figure 4: A time in the past two years where people have felt very unsafe in their community
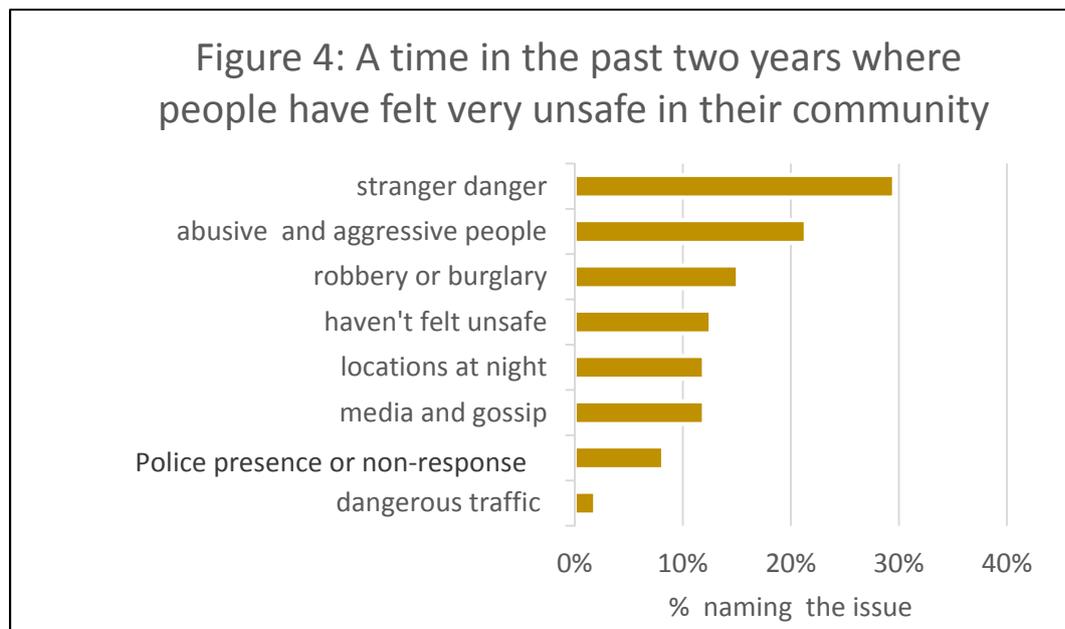
Participants were also asked to describe a time in the past two years where they had felt very unsafe in their community. Figure 4 summarises the findings. Thirty percent recalled a time when they had worried about 'stranger danger'. The *strangers* that participants were afraid of fall into three categories all of whom are mainly male. They are "youth" or "young men" "hanging around at the local shops, asking for money", "loitering around watching you" or being "a large swaggering group of unsmiling bored young men with sullen faces". "Being rather drunk and loud" adds to the unease as does having a "drunken mob...[going] down the road damaging post boxes". Next there are the gangs (as neighbours or "on the streets late at night"), the drug dealers ("neighbours...using and dealing drugs"), the fighters ("drunken arguments", "street-fighters", "fighting on Fri/Sat nights"), the robbers ("cars have been broken into" or "stolen") and the sex offenders ("a child sex offender...[moving into] our neighbourhood"). Finally, there are the beggars ("people working as a group, begging...tracking people, in particular, young women"), people suffering from mental illness ("people with mental health problems scare me") and the homeless (the "squatters...under buildings" and "the overpass at Sunnyvale train station where...[the] homeless are loitering"). The negative labelling used above for out groups (loitering, swaggering, drunken mob, street-fighters, gangs, beggars, squatters) was mostly from Pākehā/ European participants.

Actual encounters with abusive and aggressive people rather than concerns about the possibility of such events were identified by 21% of participants as times when they felt unsafe. Beggars who "become very abusive if they don't get what they want" saying such things as "I'm going to f... you, b...", "mentally unstable people roaming the streets yelling abuse", having "two big Rottweilers barking and growling at me" or seeing "young rowdy men walking down the street with weapons and

bats" are examples of the threats experienced. There are also accounts of physical attacks on people ranging from having a car window punched at traffic lights, a "road rage incident where...a car...tried to run us off the road" and someone "throwing a rock through my front door window" through to "a neighbour's daughter...[getting] raped in the house opposite". This issue (actual encounters with abusive or aggressive people) was significantly correlated with Māori participants (47% identified this issue compared with 18% for all other groups).

More specifically 15% recalled incidents where they had a local encounter with burglary or robbery. Some of these incidents relate to a "neighbour being robbed", a past event like "an historic mass burglary of all houses in our street" or "intercepting a burglary at the neighbours". Others refer to a more direct encounter "my car was broken into on my front lawn", "the bathroom window [was] smashed and wide open" and one participant referred to a "recent home invasion".

Specific locations, especially after dark, felt unsafe to 12% of those interviewed. Two shopping centres felt unsafe. "Glen Eden shopping district at night [walking] to my car" and "Henderson Mall [is] sometimes...[unsafe] because of some of the rough people hanging out". Other unsafe places were "alleyways at night", and "at night walking home from the train station".

Another 12% identified a murder or crime reported in the media as a cause of their insecurity. Some described the media as "making you feel unsafe" and that "any increase in crime or high profile cases make one more vigilant generally". Participants referred specifically to a number of high profile murders reported extensively in the media – the "Arun Kumar murder in Henderson", "the [recent] horrid home invasion murder", "the recent murder of the lady in the Te Atatu Peninsula", the time "when Connor Morris was murdered" and "when the Indian wife and her daughter got killed by the husband in Ranui". These event and their media coverages left people "shocked at how much had changed mainly for the worse". Perennial stories about "lots of theft going around" added to the insecurity. The Harbour Fringe have a significant positive correlation with this issue, with 29% identifying it compared with 9% for all other suburbs.

Participants have a high chance of being influenced by social media as 84% say they participate in or follow a community social media page such as Neighbourly, Facebook page/s, etc. However, social access is significantly positively correlated with being Pākehā/European (89% connected to social media vs 69% for all other groups) and negatively correlated with being of a Pacific Island culture (60% connected vs 79% for all other groups).

Eight percent of those surveyed identified that either a Police presence or non-response made them feel unsafe. "Sirens or the Police helicopter" or "seeing Police vehicles, especially more than one, parked near or around where...[people] live [make them] feel scared". A slow Police response ("[they] didn't arrive for 45 mins after...[the] call") or no Police response ("the Police did nothing") can be very distressing: "[they were] dismissive, it was horrible to know that the Police react that way". Another 2% identified dangerous traffic incidents as events that made them feel unsafe. These included reports of "speeding cars on our residential streets" and being "hit on the sidewalk a number of times when walking!".

Finally, 13% of those surveyed claim they have "never felt unsafe" or can't identify an incident which has made then feel unsafe "even when all those deaths were occurring". This feeling could be confined "to the particular community...I lived in". For one "nothing compares to [the more unsafe] overseas experience". This feeling was significantly correlated with gender. This was true of 28% of men but only 10% of women.

6.4 Perceptions of crime

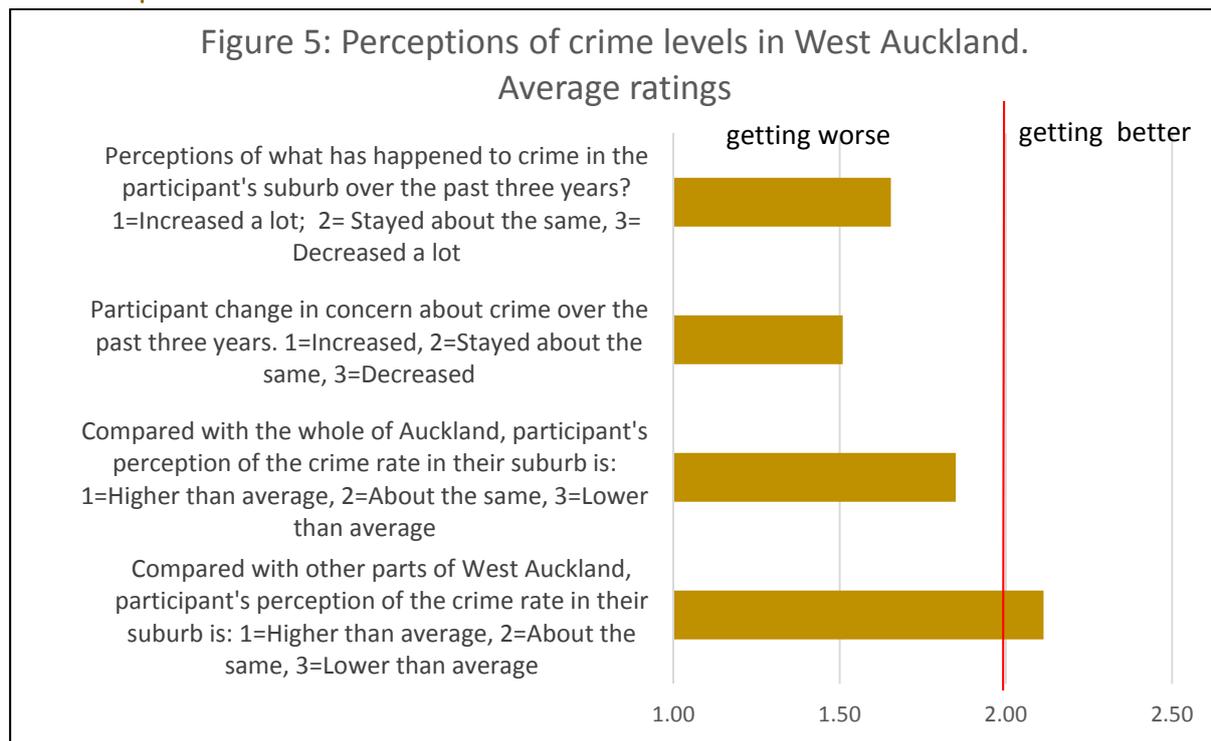Figure 5: Perceptions of crime levels in West Auckland. Average ratings

Figure 5 shows the results from four questions about participant perception of the change in crime levels generally and in their suburb in particular. The graph shows that participants on average believe crime has increased a bit (is getting worse); that the level of concern about crime is also increasing; and that West Auckland's crime rate is slightly higher than the rest of Auckland. However, Asian/other participants and people from the *Bohemian West* had significant positive correlations and positive ratings (both 2.36 vs 1.81 for all other cultures and for all other suburbs) when comparing their suburb with rest of Auckland, the only cultural or suburban groups to do so. Pākehā/European had significant negative correlations and ratings (1.74 vs 2.03 for all other cultures) for this question. Participants overall had a positive perception that their own suburb has a lower crime rate that the rest of West Auckland, but, Massey/Ranui, the subject of media attention from two relatively recent murders, had a significant negative correlation and the most negative rating (1.83 vs 2.14 for all other suburbs) on this question

6.5 One thing that would make neighbourhoods safer

Finally, participants were asked to identify one thing that they felt would make them feel safer in the community. Their responses (see figure 6) fell into three major categories – one around protection and enforcement (red bars); one around community engagement (gold bars), and one (much smaller) around environmental changes (green bars). Protection was mainly about wanting greater Police visibility (identified by 31% of participants). This would increase safety by having more patrols, wardens, night security patrols, and community constables. "Having the Police station open more frequently". "Wardens on the trains", "more pacific island wardens", and "mounted police" were suggested, as was neighbourhood police getting involved with "the little kids...interacting with them ...[showing] they are their friends and they are there to help". "Giving the Police the resources to monitor...criminal activity...helps prevent...crime". Also wanted was "better communication from Waitemata Police about [crime in the community]". This solution of greater Police visibility was significantly correlated with being Pākehā/European and with age - 39% of Pākehā/European supported this compared with 14% for all other cultural groups and over 40% of the three older age

groups (45 years and older) supported this compared with under 20% for the two groups under 45 years.

Figure 6: One thing would make participants feel safer in their neighbourhood
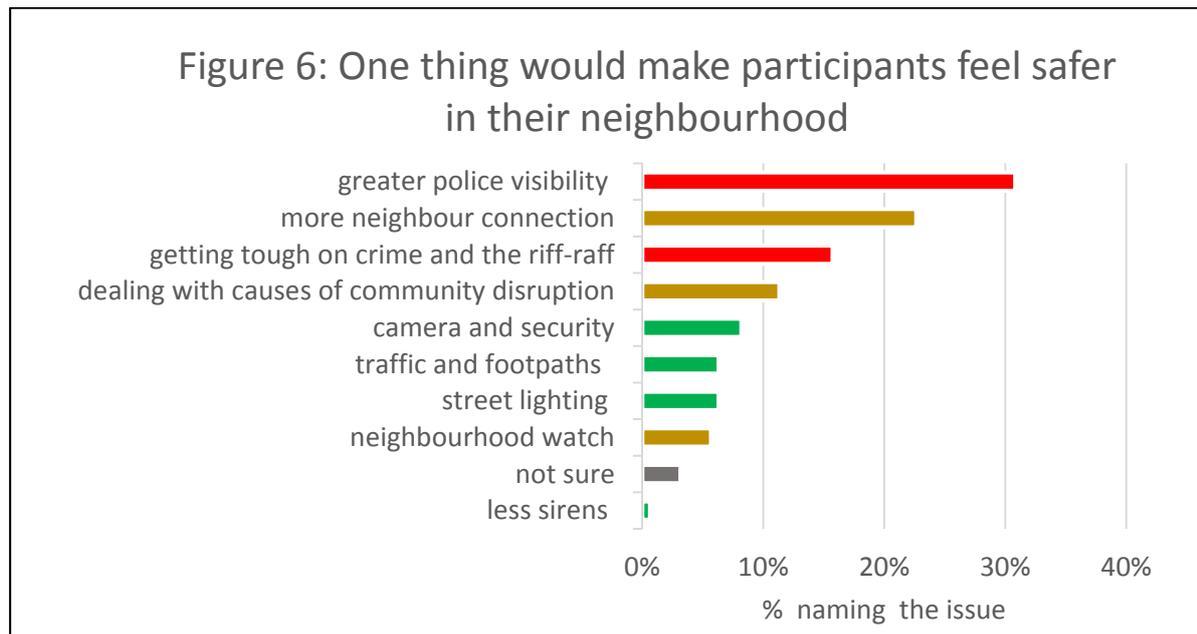
On the enforcement side, 16% believe that getting tough on crime would make a difference. Many comments refer to getting rid of people considered undesirable - "the beggars & so-called homeless people", "[the] scumbags...prowling around my neighbourhood", "[the] big trouble makers", "[the] street type kids", "youth", "the convicted criminals" and "negative neighbours". These participants want more resources put into catching the people doing the "burglaries, stolen cars, constant graffiti-ing", "[the] neighbours...dropping so much rubbish", "[the] marijuana places" and the out of control dogs. "The Justice System needs to be harder on convicted criminals" including closer monitoring of "sex offenders and violent offenders". One participant supported "the right to bear arms" as a solution. The *getting tough on crime* solution was significantly positively correlated with being Pākehā/European, 22% of whom supported this solution. Only one non-Pākehā/European response (2%) was in this category – the concern about the "marijuana places".

In contrast to the focus on protection and enforcement, there was also a strong push for solutions that involved greater community engagement. Twenty-three percent believe that having more neighbour connections and community events would make a difference. "People saying hello and watching out for each other" is where this process starts. "Monthly BBQs [are a great idea] for our neighbourhood...to share together, have fun together and...[to get] to know other families and neighbours". Having more "community activities helps us to meet more people and that in turn gives us [more] confidence of knowing those around us in the same community", this would "break down some barriers on trust and encourage tolerance and responsibility in the communities we are in". Such activities create "more talking across ethnic groups" and help to "create a community where everybody gets a say...[and has] a strong sense of inclusiveness" The solution of community connection was significantly negatively correlated with being Pākehā - only 13% identified this option compared with 36% for all other cultures, with the Pacific Island participants having significant positive correlation with this solution (40% vs 23% for all other groups).

Another positive approach to safety suggested by 11% of participants is to deal with the causes of community disruption. Firstly, we have to address "the social causes of crime, being poverty and disconnection". We could "feel safer if there wasn't so much inequality". Government action and a

"massive overhaul" of society is needed. This starts with more education for "young boys...in ways to manage anger without violence" and "educational and parental support for families at risk" and moves through to funded holiday programmes for school children, programmes that "give the teens somewhere to go", "[a] local community drop in resource and therapy centre for people with mental health [issues or] homelessness", "meals for the hungry" and "extensive arts facilities for everyone". We need to "create positive community...role models" and "stop reading the Te Atatu Peninsula Facebook page!" and the Neighbourly reports on "the number of car thefts/burglaries" which "give the perception that crime is increasing". While there were no significant correlations for this solution, Pākehā/European participants were most in favour - 13% vs 9% for the other cultures.

Neighbourhood watch programmes are a solution supported by 6% of participants. These involve "teaching...children and parents how to stay safe in our neighbourhood so that we can all look after each other the way we look after ourselves" and "[e]veryone looking out for each other, because that's how we can help cut crimes committed in our neighbourhood". This solution is significantly negatively correlated with being Pākehā/European - only 1% supported this compared with 14% for the other cultural groups. The Neighbourhood Watch approach was significantly positively correlated with the *Eastern fringe* suburbs - 13% support compared with 3% support from all other districts).

Looking at the environmental solutions 8% thought they would have more security through CCTV, "better lighting", more "alarms, locks...and screen doors" and "monitoring of ex-offenders". One other solution was having "shops open late [and a] commercial and residential mix, [which] makes for more [and safer] activity in streets". Six percent nominated better traffic management and footpaths as a way of improving safety. "Improving footpaths...[would] prevent trips and fall, speed bumps...[would] slow traffic, and "[the] boy racers" and traffic lights where children are coming out of education facilities. Improving street lighting would make 6% of participants feel safer, especially "street lighting between railway station and shops", and one person wants to hear less Police sirens in the area, as "its making...[them] feel anxious". Finally, 3% were unsure what could make a difference.

7 Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with the following groups:

- Māori – in partnership with Hōani Waititi Marae
- Pacific – in partnership with West Fono Health Trust
- Youth – with a number of youth groups
- 'Other Ethnic' Groups – Asian, African
- 'Mortgage Belt' – a group containing two income households managing busy lives, children, mortgages

These focus groups were all undertaken within the ethics agreement for this project as agreed with the Unitec Ethics committee. Material has been kept confidential as required, identity of participants protected and support made available to support any individual who may have required this. The focus groups were all recorded and these recordings were then transcribed to assist with the analysis of the discussions.

The focus groups discussions were facilitated around three broad areas with prompts developed for each.

1. Feeling of safety
   - Describe feeling safe/connected/secure across a broad range of areas of safety.
   - Describe feeling unsafe/disconnected/threatened
   - Describe where you will go/like to go and (if applicable) where your kids go/like to go in your neighbourhood and surrounding neighbourhoods
   - Describe where you won't go/are reluctant to go and (if applicable) where you won't let your kids go/or worry about them going in your neighbourhood and surrounding neighbourhoods

2. Perception of community safety
   - What do you think informs your perceptions of community safety? How do you find out about the safety of your community?
   - Do you feel safer in your own neighbourhood than other neighbourhoods in West Auckland? How? Why?
   - What in particular helps you feel safer? How? Why?
   - What in particular helps you feel less safe? How? Why?

3. What can be implemented to build a safer community?
   - What can be done to make your community safer?
   - What are you doing to build safe/r communities?
   - Who else is involved/responsible for making communities safe/r?
   - Where are the gaps/what are communities struggling to solve?
   - Who/what is making a difference?

8 Focus Groups: what we heard

What we heard from survey participants in this research was that many felt that safety in their communities had decreased. These concerns were also reflected in focus groups discussions:

> "In that respect society, especially in West Auckland has changed over many years. I'd think nothing 30 years ago as a young one wandering around, people all over the place, not a problem. Now I tend to be going ok, is that person going to be a problem or is that situation going to be a problem? I'm just looking all the time for the negative rather than the positive." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

We have grouped the factors that influence people's feelings of safety into two broad categories: environmental and social.

8.1 Environmental factors negatively influencing perceptions of safety

Environmental factors identified through the focus groups that negatively influenced people's feeling of safety included:
- Lack of safe pedestrian crossings for children travelling to and from school and the impact of speeding cars
- Street lighting (or lack of)
- Areas of low visibility including walkways

A number of participants from different focus groups identified Westfield Mall in Henderson and the surrounding Henderson main street as being places that they felt unsafe.

"In West Auckland if there was anywhere I wouldn't want to go, straight up, I'd probably avoid Westfield." [Young Person Focus Group]

"Probably the same thing, when I go to Henderson Mall I usually put on a couple of layers, puff my chest out, put my headphones in, don't make eye contact, just get what I need, do what I have to do and go..." [Young Person Focus Group]

"I was thinking that the Henderson shops, there's been a lot of, well, a while ago when that shopkeeper was killed there was a lot of negative feedback around Henderson. I have eaten at an Indian restaurant in Henderson that I like, and I've also been shopping at the mall, but walking the main streets of Henderson I don't find that appealing." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

One participant who lives in Te Atatu commented that although they generally felt safe out in the community and were happy to use public spaces including walkways, at home was a different story:

"Generally people are friendly [although] in the town you might find a few miscreants. But when I walk around outside like the natural beauty and you just see so many walkers and all that, I feel very safe in that space. But in my house you won't believe – my gates are closed, my windows, doors, everything shut. I still have everything locked." [Ethnic Focus Group]

Other areas identified by participants as being unsafe included West Auckland train stations, Catherine Plaza (entrance to Westfield Mall, Henderson), and Glen Mall (in Glen Eden). The suburb of Ranui, particularly at night, was another area identified.

8.2 Social factors negatively influencing perceptions of safety

Social factors identified through the survey and focus groups that negatively impacted people's feelings of safety included:

- Issues involving youth
- Racism/discrimination
- Poverty and unemployment
- Not having good relationships/disconnected communities
- Family violence

8.2.1 Issues involving youth

Responses from the focus groups indicated that young people and groups of youth in particular were seen as being problematic for many participants. It was felt that young people were threatening, often asking for money on the streets and acting aggressively.

"A lot of kids asking for money and sometimes if you don't give it to them they abuse you and they abuse the elderly people." [Pasifika Focus Group]

"You don't feel like you can walk around the streets without company, without somebody else to be with you, especially at night. During the day it's not so bad but I've noticed a huge increase in those young types of people." [Pasifika Focus Group]

Some participants in the focus groups commented that youth lacked opportunities including employment to keep them busy and off the streets. It was also noted that parents who were in work were often not home and that as a result youth lacked adequate adult supervision.

When discussing the role of young people in many of the negative events that were happening in the community one participant from the Ethnic Focus Group commented on the intergenerational impacts of poverty and substance abuse:

"I think most of [these youth] come from abused families. They come from a long culture where families have been drug takers or long term unemployed and it just carries on from one generation to the next. They don't get any government assistance. They don't get any help from local communities as well. The local communities are not doing anything about it or they can't do anything about it because they don't have the funds or the capacity to deal with it. Maybe there are too many of these families." [Ethnic Focus Group]

On the other hand, participants in the Young Person Focus Group were very aware of the negative perceptions that adults held about them and reported feeling judged and stereotyped.

"Just because you made some bad decisions doesn't mean you are a bad person." [Young Person Focus Group]

Young people felt that they were viewed negatively by business owners because they were young.

"A lot of the times I've been followed in the supermarket [which] is annoying because literally, if anyone knows me, they know I would never steal anything but it's just, I get followed around in supermarkets." [Young Person Focus Group]

"We talked to some of the local businesses and we asked them, you know, do you feel safe, what are your opinions of our young people kind of thing and no one in the businesses said anything nice about our young people...Some of them were horrible, absolutely horrible and they basically said just get them away from our area." [Young Person Focus Group]

Young people also reported feeling threatened by other young people and that they were left with no option but to defend themselves or respond to the aggression. The term being 'stepped out' described the way in which young people were challenged to engage or fight with others.

"[being stepped out is] oh just being told, 'do you want to fight'? And they'll carry on until you are going to fight them. They won't stop, and when I say 'they' it's the people who stepped it out. I've been stepped out heaps of times, like they will not stop, they'll keep egging it on...Until you either do something or you say you don't want to do something and they'll do it. They're just waiting for you to pull the first move...it's like you can't get away when you're stepped out, [that] sort of thing." [Young Person Focus Group]

For some young people, feeling safe was something that was not part of their everyday experience.

"I've had to find a home for myself within myself so that I don't have to be away from it. Every day I'll have to fight to be safe but it's alright because I know that it's within me, it's not so far away. I've had to develop the idea that my home is me so that I don't feel unsafe because of everything that's out there and a lot of the stuff I can't control, because a lot of the time safety for me is when I can actually control things." [Young Person Focus Group]

8.2.2 Racism and discrimination

Experiences of discrimination and racism impacted strongly on feelings of safety, particularly for participants in the Ethnic group.

"I think certainly the perception I have is if you're in a minority you're more likely a target, and there's not, to me there's not enough policing. There's no Police presence, hardly any I would say." [Ethnic Focus Group]

"They watch us, if there is anything happening they start yelling or they start laughing or just showing fingers, calling us black, he is calling us something. We've no reason really, we haven't

done anything to these people. We haven't insulted them, they just don't like us." [Ethnic Focus Group]

However, some participants in this group also made comments about other ethnic groups that reflected some bias. When questioned about areas in West Auckland where participants felt safer, one person commented that:

"I think it depends on the makeup of where you live, if you get a lot of, I don't know, maybe we do get a lot of Pacific people around, and I don't know why [but] that attracts a lot more crime. So I think if you go to a more affluent part of West Auckland like Te Atatu Peninsula or [where there are] more white people, I think you feel much safer. I think you get less crime. That's just the reality of it." [Ethnic Focus Group]

Young people also reported being aware of the impacts of culture and ethnicity, with some commenting that they felt less safe when around people who were not like them, and labelled by others due to their skin colour.

"But I feel more unsafe when I'm with, like, a whole bunch of people who aren't brown. I just feel really unsafe because of the difference of culture but I'll totally want to understand where they're coming from. It's like that whole, because if you haven't met it yet, you feel a bit unsafe." [Young Person Focus Group]

"One time someone thought I was in this band that played in Hamilton and I was like 'oh, I'll take it', but you know there is some stuff that you don't want, like, especially depending on your culture. Since I'm brown automatically [the perception from others is that] I'm violent, I'm poor, I'm you know...and then it's those things you have to go through your life with." [Young Person Focus Group]

8.2.3 Poverty, unemployment and the role of government

Unemployment, housing pressures and financial stress and poverty were strongly identified as impacting on West Auckland communities. Participants felt that these issues had become more prevalent in recent years and that the government was doing very little to alleviate pressures.

"That's why I don't feel safe, no support from Government." [Pasifika Focus Group]

"I wasn't surprised because of the way that we go into WINZ and advocate for our families and the reaction that we receive from these people: No. The no is always there, no you can't have this, go back to the budget and work it out." [Pasifika Focus Group]

"I obviously can't expect the government to fix it all and they do a lot of stuff, but like, if you asked what they did to help West Auckland – I couldn't tell you anything." [Young Person Focus Group]

Participants in the Pasifika Focus Group commented that they felt there was a marked gap between rich and poor neighbourhoods, and that they were often living precarious lives due to a lack of resources. This was impacting access to quality foods including fruit and vegetables as well as access to health services and medications.

Participants in the Ethnic Focus Group also identified unemployment as a significant causal factor of crime.

"I will say...the people that are causing these kind of troubles are unemployed people, because... if you go to Henderson you will find that most of the people are doing that are people who don't

work. These are people with no activities that can keep them busy or something." [Ethnic Focus Group]

8.2.4 Disconnected communities and poor relationships with neighbours

Participants in the focus groups reported that feeling disconnected from their communities or having poor relationships with neighbours was a significant factor in decreasing feelings of safety. Discussions within the focus groups also reflected the importance of relationships, with some participants commenting that their own relationships and connections to neighbours were not strong.

"My neighbours, we only [communicate] by smiling, we never know names, like never know what their job is, what their church is..." [Pasifika Focus Group]

The ability to build and maintain successful communities is also somewhat constrained by the increased transience that some participants noted.

"I mean, it's the way society has changed, where it's no longer the case that you move into a neighbourhood and you stay in that neighbourhood because everything you need is there. Your needs change because of external influences and you have to shift. I'm thinking of job security, that sort of thing. Back in the days...you started a job, there's a good chance you're going to retire in that job and it paid the bills so you didn't worry about it. Now it's I'll start in this job, six months from now I'll change to that job because I can get a promotion and a pay rise. Unfortunately it means I have to shift my family to the other side of Auckland." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

"If you live in [an] area and you know your neighbour, you feel safe, you know, but if you know like, new people move in, drugs, alcohol, then you start to feel unsafe because you hear them fighting, swearing..."[Pasifika Focus Group]

8.2.5 Family Violence

Participants in the Māori Focus Group identified family violence as an issue that was of particular concern in their communities.

"...especially at Christmas time there was a lot of violence, family violence. We have two of us, yeah and we start to listen in to a lot of fighting...Sometimes when you listen in to other people fighting you say 'ah...' but when you start hearing children..." [Māori Focus Group]

Participants commented that intervening in violent situations in their communities was difficult.

"the few times I feel unsafe is when there's violence on the street and you know there's that knowledge that when you try and intervene, generally the other male is going to take it as a personal attack and it's going to turn from him wanting to dong his Mrs to him wanting to dong you. And it's hard to actually break up a fight." [Māori Focus Group]

However, participants also felt a strong sense of responsibility to take action where they could.

"We heard a fight across the road and it was this house that always had fights and we sort of ignored it. And then we found out the next day it was actually one of our girls from school, her getting a hiding from her boyfriend. And it broke my heart...so we all went over and visited him the next day, not to beat him up but to tell him, oh there's three uncles across the road now listening to you." [Māori Focus Group]

8.3 Some groups feel less safe than others

Information collected from the focus groups highlighted that perceptions of safety are not uniform across different groups within West Auckland. In particular, participants in the Ethnic Focus Group reported feeling quite unsafe in their communities, and many commented that they felt targeted and vulnerable as migrants or minorities.

"It's really unsafe, we feel really unsafe. Night time, day time, whenever - because we don't know." [Ethnic Focus Group]

"I don't go out alone in the dark; I don't walk in the dark. I work night shifts, I'll keep my car windows all up and locked, even if anybody flags me down I don't stop. That's because I feel, never take the risk." [Ethnic Focus Group]

These feelings of unsafe-ness were influenced both by their own direct experiences of crime including violent crime, intimidation and discrimination, but also by what they are seeing in the news and media. A number of people commented about the murder of Henderson dairy owner Arun Kumar in 2014 as being particularly concerning. As a result, participants reported being very vigilant about their safety both at home and while out in community spaces.

"I mean I'm cautious because if I hear in the news what's happening, I read my papers every day and I'll be aware." [Ethnic Focus Group]

"I think certainly for me you have to be aware all the time, just to be cautious all the time because anything can happen, that's my perception. You hear all these stories." [Ethnic Focus Group]

On the other hand, participants in the Māori Focus Group were less concerned about their own safety and reported feeling more worried about other groups in their community including youth. Some voiced concerns that youth had less opportunities to help them to feel connected and to gain skills, with some commenting that the government had reduced access to apprenticeships and other courses that enabled young people to connect to their communities.

8.4 What is the impact of feeling unsafe on people?

It was clear from both the survey responses and information gathered from the focus groups that people's perceptions about safety in their communities had an impact on their decision making with regards to how they went about their daily lives. Impacts included feelings of vulnerability and fear, being hyper vigilant when in situations where they felt a lack of safety, locking the doors when they were at home and choosing not to carry out 'routine' or everyday activities such as going for a walk.

These sentiments were reflected in comments from participants in some of the focus groups.

"My boy goes to Kaurilands [school] and I just live 300 metres from that. There's no roads to cross, he could just walk, he's nearly eight, he could walk with his mate home but I don't let him for two reasons. There's that, I won't even let him come and sit out at the gate and wait for me, I park the car, it's a big hassle to go in, because...I don't want to risk anything happening to him...I don't trust the traffic not to knock him over. They're always pulling into driveways and turning and I'm always 'come back, stop'." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

"...but another thing, when they have these notices that go home about 'watch out for these people, there's someone creeping around', I don't even let [my son] play with his mates in the front yard, they go to the back yard. Because if they're in the front yard who knows who might come? It would be the same as if they're playing in the street. Who knows who might come and

say, 'hey you guys', you know, 'do you want this toy?' or something..." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

8.5 Impact of media and social media on perceptions of safety

Participants commented on a number of social media platforms including community Facebook Pages and community website Neighbourly as well as more traditional news media as strongly influencing perceptions of safety in their communities.

On the one hand such sites were seen as tools to increase community safety by enabling residents to get to know each other.

"Well, that's why I'm involved in Neighbourly. I'm trying to get the community to be more safe by people knowing people, getting back to the old stranger danger exercise. It's nice to know the faces in your neighbourhood and then you can pick one that's a stranger." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

On the other hand, some participants also commented that social media served to increase anxiety levels.

"Yeah with the Facebook thing and feeling safe and unsafe, I was really into this because I am really into community and think that community definitely does make me feel safer. But with this Titirangi Facebook page...there was just so much stuff going on. Every person who knocked on a door that wanted to cut a tree down or offer a service [it became] 'look out for this person, there's a group of them, look out for this car' – so much that I actually just got so upset and I just found that most of my day I was really worried about everything. I quit the page and gradually became more confident and back to my old self." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

Another participant added:

"I just found that it just made me feel so anxious. I feel, you could say ignorance is bliss but I guess that's how I'm handling it. Knowing all that stuff...Because quite often [it] wasn't a case of 'this has happened, this has happened', it was 'this might happen, this might happen' ". [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

8.6 Feeling Safe

Feeling like they were part of connected neighbourhoods and communities and that these were supported by good infrastructure and services was critical to people's perceptions of safety, however the environment was also noted as being an important factor in influencing how people felt.

8.6.1 Environmental factors influencing perceptions of safety

A number of participants identified the outdoors and areas of nature where there were less people including beaches, walkways and the Waitakere Ranges as being places where they could relax and felt safe.

"It's like, it's all beautiful nature and all of a sudden, those awful things are put to the back of your mind aren't they, whereas if you're walking some streets and it's [got] alcohol shops or something like that, you might be just as safe but you don't feel it because it's all urban..." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

Being in nature or areas away from people enabled young people to be able to drop any pretence that they put on and to be themselves.

"Definitely in the [Waitakere] Ranges, anywhere in the beach, pretty much anywhere you're probably going to be alone or away from everybody else sort of thing. Where you are at one with whatever's out there, yeah, it's just peaceful out there." [Young Person Focus Group]

"I like to walk around and see the city lights and look at the stars, sit in the middle of a field...or something because no-one's there and it's nice and cool and you don't have to pretend to be someone..." [Young Person Focus Group]

Areas that were clean and well maintained also made people feel safe.

"I think the point [raised] about an area being clean, that is important because when you were talking about the area in New Lynn where you felt safe, it was clean and tidy and I think that's a key thing, as far as I'm concerned." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

"If there is broken bottles and spray paint everywhere you kind of think, oh, nobody cares about this area." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

Participants in the mortgage belt group commented that adequate lighting and clear visibility were important factors in feeling safe if they were out. Notions of what was safe clearly influenced their decision making.

"And also there is a walkway through to my street that I wouldn't use at night. I would go the longer way, just because it's better lit, so it's a lighting issue. And it's sort of being more precautionary rather than something might actually happen." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

Some participants expressed a strong sense of connection to West Auckland generally.

"Because I've been born and raised in West Auckland, you know, whenever I've been overseas or in a different part of the country, I'm always like, oh I can't wait to go back home. West Auckland is just sort of... it's just, oh West Auckland. Yep." [Young Person Focus Group]

Others mentioned specific areas where they felt safe, including libraries, marae, local schools or other educational institutions.

"I find that Unitec is my second home...I never face any discrimination or any kind of abuse – I have never been attacked at Unitec...I feel it is a safe place because the people are really friendly." [Ethnic Focus Group]

8.6.2 Social Factors influencing perceptions of safety

Social factors identified through the focus groups that positively influenced people's feeling of safety included:

- The quality of relationships that they had with others in their neighbourhoods and communities
- Having a sense of belonging (particularly for young people)

Neighbourhood relationships and connected communities

Having positive relationships with neighbours, and feeling part of connected communities was a significant theme in responses from the focus groups. Quite a few discussions centred on how knowing your neighbours increased feelings of safety.

"...when I see members of my neighbourhood and people I know from my community out and about, that certainly makes me feel safe. If I'm out in a public place and it's oh hi, how are you?

It makes me feel like the whole area that I'm in is a safe place to be..." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

"I think another area to help you feel safe is building those relationships with neighbours, those positive relationships with neighbours and connection points so it's not intrusive. That's why I think neighbourhood support is so great." [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]

Having a sense of belonging

Being safe for young people was closely tied to having a sense of belonging, particularly for participants in the Young Person Focus Group.

"Hanging with a group and knowing that you can just totally be yourself and you're not being judged or everyone is on the same level of understanding. They appreciate what traits you have, what characteristics and they don't mind, they don't try to deter that or take it away from you... Feeling loved and taken care of, I don't know, having friends or just people you just hang with..." [Young Person Focus Group]

This feeling of safety was connected to a feeling of being 'home', however home was not necessarily identified as being the house that you live in, and family may include friends rather than just blood relations.

"I think the key thing is that home, home is not necessarily a house where you live, it's a sense of safety, that family vibe, there is something special about this being your home." [Young Person Focus Group]

8.7 Whose responsibility is safety?

Following on from the reflection about the circumstances in which people felt relatively safe we considered issues related to whose responsibility it is to maximise the chances for those circumstances to exist. It is from these insights that we have considered possible ways forward.

8.7.1 Government-led solutions to increase perceptions of safety

It was suggested that schools needed to do more to provide young people with life skills including politics and self-care.

"If there were three subjects that I could honestly put into school...[it would be] something to do with politics, something to do with self-care and something to do with society, because I didn't need calculus..." [Young Person Focus Group]

On the other hand, the Government was seen as a distant and largely absent institution that did little to effect change in the day to day lives of young people.

"I obviously can't expect the government to fix it all and they do do a lot of stuff, but like, if you ask what they did to help West Auckland I couldn't tell you anything." [Young Person Focus Group]

8.7.2 Community-led solutions to increase perceptions of safety

Feeling connected to neighbours and communities was a common theme throughout the focus groups responses.

Participants in the Young Person Focus Group were clear that the wider community had an important role to play in preventing events like the murder of Arun Kumar. One participant commented that

where kids were from unsafe homes, it was up to the community to fill the gap, and that the 13 year old boy responsible for Kumar's death was not solely to blame.

> *"It's the whole community's fault that that happened to a kid, because if, like, say you have an unsafe home, majority of the time you won't go home because it's unsafe right? So you are left with the community, you're left with how people treat you outside the home. And if the people outside the home treat you the same way you were treated inside the home, obviously you are just going to act how you are treated...that's totally not his fault because if he's never known love and never known happiness you can't blame, because...no one ever learns from [only] one person." [Young Person Focus Group]*

> *"There are so many people to learn from so you might as well play a part in what happens to everyone. If we all feel unsafe it's everyone's job in a community to fix that, it's not just the one person or the one family." [Young Person Focus Group]*

Solutions that were based around specific communities including marae and schools were also discussed. One focus group participant suggested that bringing young people back into the marae was one way in which to help them to develop connection and sense of identity that was perhaps missing from some young people's lives.

> *"But in terms of kids in Henderson, what we need to do is bring them back down here to the marae, like we used to do. And we'll take those ratbags [off] the streets, bring them back to the marae and they can be our powhiri crew. We can take them for the reo, mau rakau and kapa haka like we used to, and it worked. We've had these schemes before." [Māori Focus Group]*

8.7.3 Individual initiatives and personal responsibility

Some participants felt that the responsibility for safety and for building connections within communities was up to individuals living in those communities, rather than government or Council.

> *"I think the good community thing can't be legislated, it happens, it's up to the individual isn't it?" [Mortgage Belt Focus Group]*

Others felt that individuals had a duty to step in when they witnessed people in trouble.

> *"Like me, if I see someone maybe attacked by somebody, like one of the neighbours was watching while we were being beaten by those people, but they didn't do anything. But if someone is attacked like that, why should I not intervene and just try to help that person? So it's not only the Police but my responsibility to look, to give that safety for anybody. But everyone has to do the same thing." [Ethnic Focus Group]*

9 Summary of the causes and nature of being unsafe in West Auckland

This study confirms what the Auckland Council Report in 2012 demonstrated - the reasons for feeling unsafe (fear of the "young, aggressive, drunk, drugged, suspicious and/or homeless" in the environments of poor visibility and/or physical isolation) remain fundamentally the same in 2016 and places in Henderson/Massey remain common areas of concern. The murders that occurred in Massey/Ranui in 2014 are all recalled in the responses to the survey and the focus groups. Of the other safety issues that are part of the *Indicators for International Safe Communities* (Karolinska Institute, 2014), issues relating to traffic safety are the only ones additional to the list above that are noted. Family violence does get a mention from Māori Focus Group participants, but is largely ignored by other groups despite the high number of family investigations each year (4865 in 2014 – New Zealand Police 2015). The focus on young people as a major cause of public insecurity, identified in 2015 by the Waitakere Ethnic Board, is echoed by many of the participants in this research.

Young people, themselves, have a different perspective as pointed out by the Thinkplace reports (2014a,b), and also evidenced in our focus groups and survey. Our survey showed that the youngest group (16-34 years) were clearly the most *worried, vulnerable or scared*, that they were more disconnected than older groups who knew their neighbours and could relate to the different groups within their communities. The youngest were least likely to feel that a greater Police presence was a way of making communities safer. The Young Persons Focus Group described the challenges they face – being considered dangerous or a "bad person" by older people and shop owners, territorial challenges ("avoiding eye contact", being "stepped out" - provoked into fighting) and being homeless because homes are unsafe. In contrast, the older groups and particularly the oldest group (over 65) felt better acquainted with their neighbours and their communities, as did participants who had lived in communities longest. However, a quarter of new residents (less than 12 months) felt unsafe in their own homes compared with 8% for the rest.

One area not covered in our timeline review, but well understood in the literature is that "gender is the most stable predictor of fear of crime [and] women fear crime at much higher levels than men" (Cossman & Rader, 2011, p143). The survey data confirms this with women feeling less confident about answering their front door, walking alone in the street after nightfall, letting their children walk without an adult to the local park, and traffic safety. Women are less likely to remember a time when they felt safe in their community.

The 2012 Auckland Council report identifies Māori, Pacific Island and Asian people as being the most vulnerable groups and both the survey and focus groups partly support this perspective. Māori were the most concerned about abusive and aggressive behaviour and the poor Police response when people are concerned about their own or others' safety and all the comments about family violence were from Māori Focus Group participants. Pacific Island participants were more isolated from other people in their communities, being least likely to know their neighbour's name or to be on social media. Pacific Island Focus Group participants noticed the increasing divide between rich and poor communities. In the survey the Asian/other participants tended to have a positive view of safety in West Auckland, and communitarian beliefs about solutions, emphasising a responsibility to not be over-anxious about safety. In the focus groups the *Ethnic* participants did "feel really unsafe" and were aware of racism directed towards minority cultures, and although one named Pacific Island people in a pejorative way ("attracting more crime"), generally they were supportive of those vulnerable through poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity. They emphasised the responsibility of ordinary people to intervene when others are under threat of harm.

Pākehā/European participants can also be vulnerable (feeling unsafe walking the street alone after dark and feeling that the crime rate in their suburb is higher than in Auckland generally). They are the highest users of social media and in the Mortgage Belt Focus Group the feeling of "looking all the time for the negative rather than the positive" was expressed. Some have children at schools which send out messages like "watch out for these people, there's someone creeping around" and they won't allow their children to play in their own front yards. Others are promoting "stranger danger exercises" through Neighbourly or spending "most of their day...[being] really worried about everything" because of Facebook. The Harbour Fringe district (86% Pākehā/European) and 'Mortgage Belt Focus Group' (Pākehā/European) were the groups most likely to identify social media as a cause of their insecurity.

One thing that stands out in the analysis is that there are very few significant differences from the correlations between geographical locations and the 60 measures used in the survey. Only 4.4% of the 360 correlations were significant, suggesting that community safety issues were consistently present across the very different communities of wealth and cultural mix.

There are, however, more cultural differences (7.9% of all comparisons) and one area where these stand out is in the solution question of the survey. There is a strong contrast between Pākehā/European solutions and those of other cultures. Thirty-nine percent of Pākehā/European participants want greater Police presence vs 19% for all other cultures, and 22% want to get tough on crime vs 3% for all other cultures. In contrast, when it comes to community engagement solutions, only 1% of Pākehā/European want more neighbourhood watch activities compared with 14% for all other cultures and only 13% of Pākehā/European participants want more neighbourhood connection compared to 39% of all other cultures. The prejudicial labels that came up in the verbatim comments for this issue "the so-called homeless people", "scumbags", "[the] big trouble makers", "street type kids", "convicted criminals" and "negative neighbours" are all used by Pākehā/European.

Many studies have shown the relationship between minority cultural stereotypes and white anxieties about crime (Quillian & Pager 2001; Drakulich 2012; Pickett, Chiricos, Golden, & Gertz 2012; Kuhn & Lane 2013) and in particular that white perceptions of risk far exceed levels of risk that actually exist in communities with substantial minority populations. This is a micro instance of the macro phenomenon that perceptions of the level of crime generally far exceed the actual levels of crime (Hale 1996; Vanderveen 2006). Bridgman and Dyer (2016) have pointed to dramatically declining crime rates in West Auckland over recent years, but the overall perception of the participants in this study is that crime has increased over the last three years. Many attribute this difference to the media (Callahan, 2012), particularly, TV, video and the internet where crime in drama, reality and news is increasingly featured. The major addition of this study to the information presented in the timeline is, then, the identification of the role that Pākehā/European prejudice, fuelled by social media and big media, plays in exacerbating the impressions that our communities are unsafe.

Finally, in this section we need to consider just how unsafe people feel. Table 4 compares responses to almost identical questions from the Auckland Report (2012) and the current survey and shows that there has been little change in people's feeling of safety during the day in their communities. This suggests that the concerns raised in the Auckland Council Report about the higher levels of insecurity felt in the Henderson-Massey Local Board, and to a lesser extent the Whau Local Board areas, around safety in Parks and after dark are still relevant; and that the data in Table 3, which show that around half of the West Auckland participants (including the Waitakere Ranges Local Board participants) are afraid to be in their streets or answer their front door after dark, are also valid and worrying. Against these concerns, we need to remind ourselves that we are talking about perceptions and that, as Gray, Jackson & Farrall (2008) have pointed out, questions that ask overarching questions about safety (e.g.

"how worried are you about…") generate large over-estimates of concern when compared with questions relating to how often people have felt afraid in specific contexts of time period, place, direct experience, and such.

Table 4: Percent of participants feeling unsafe walking in their neighbourhood during the day*		
	2012 Auckland Council Report	2016 (this survey)
Henderson-Massey Local Board (Suburban Henderson, Harbour Fringe, Massey/Ranui)	10%	10%
Whau Local Board (Eastern Fringe)	8%	10%
Waitakere Ranges Local Board (In the Bush, Bohemian West)	5%	3%
* The Auckland Council Report asked participants "how safe they felt walking around their neighbourhood on their own during the day" (p49) and this survey asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the statement "I feel safe walking the street alone where I live during the day". These groupings are approximations to Local Board areas, with *Eastern Fringe*, in particular, being a less affluent part of the Whau Local Board.		

Most of our questions have specific contexts and we might ask with only 9% overall, saying that they are afraid to walk in their local streets during the day, is it a major problem? If we ask the same question about after dark, then the percent rises to 52% which means that substantial proportion of the population (particularly women) would not use public transport after dark, which is a major problem. Similarly, it is a major problem when well over half of the parents in this survey feel reluctant to let their children go unaccompanied to the local dairy, school or local park. The result is that children are transported everywhere (including to "safe" schools with low non-Pākehā/European enrolments), connections between neighbours become weak, and access to community resources becomes restricted and those resources become degraded because of lack of use or vandalism.
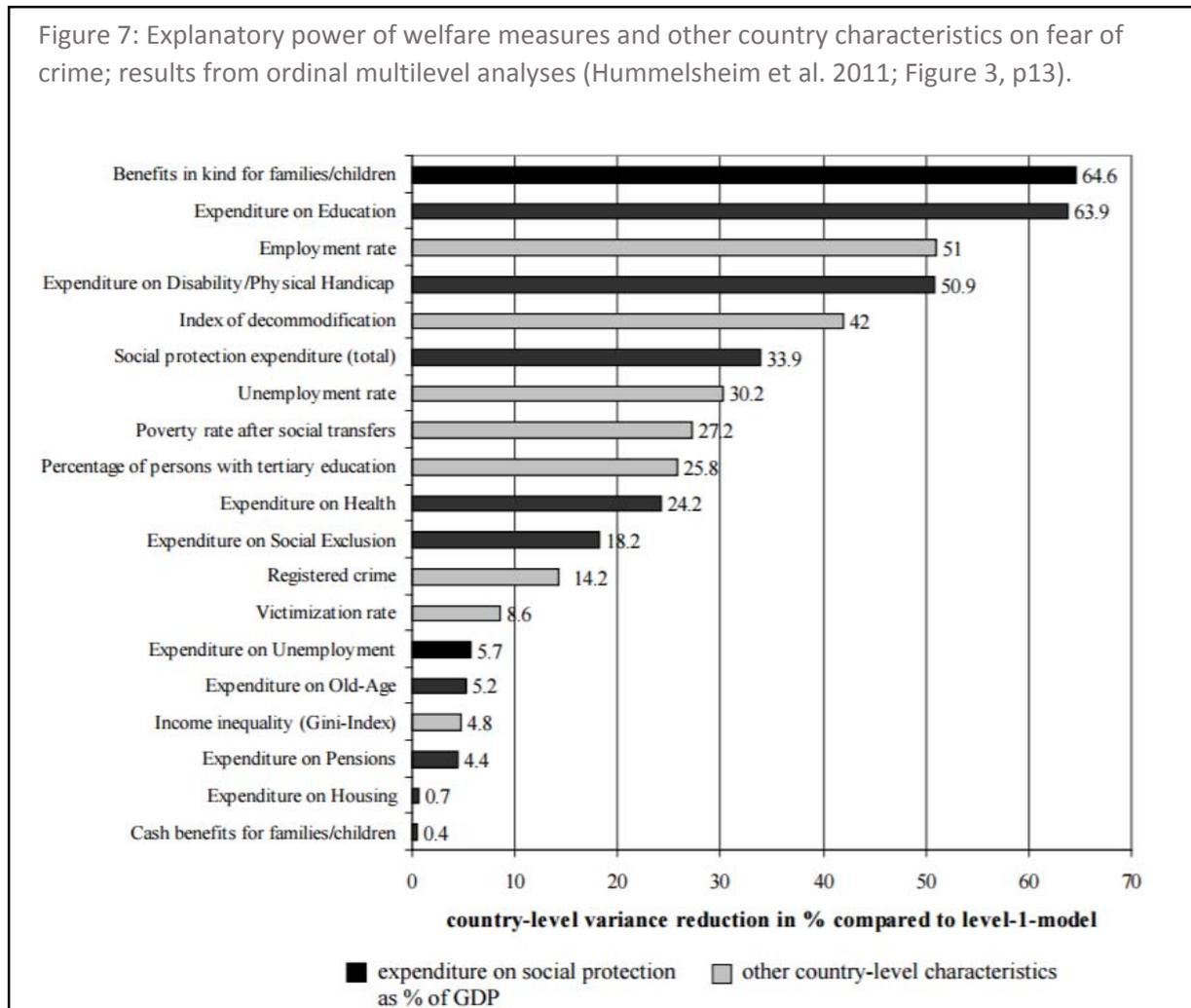
10 Where to from here?

This section looks at the possible 'solutions' or positive responses identified by respondents in relation to the solutions suggested in the timeline review and in the literature generally. Solutions operate at national, local body and community levels, and the cross-national survey data is very clear about the major causes of, and solutions to, reducing fear of crime.

Hummelsheim, Hirtenlehner, Jackson, & Oberwittler (2011) argue that macro factors that increase individual and family experience of being in control of their lives, such as a strong family and child support funding, comprehensive education services, access to employment and support for people with a disability, have a much greater impact on fear of crime (i.e. explain a much higher percent of the variance related to it) than other factors such as crime rates, expenditure on unemployment or even income inequality (see Figure 7 below). Subsequent research by Vieno, Roccato, & Russo (2013) and Visser, Scholte & Scheepers (2013) has supported these conclusions.

The strong response of the Pākehā/European group for more Police protection and for the justice system to get tougher on crime is an echo of the call reverberating presently through all the mainstream political parties for more to be spent on fighting crime with the result that the government intends provide 1800 extra prison beds at a cost of $1 billion (Sachdeva & Kirk, 2016) and $500 million for extra policing (Kirk, 2017). The tragedy is that this massive expenditure will have very

little impact at all on fear of crime (Hummelsheim et al. 2011). The most vulnerable cultural communities, the ones whose members are most likely to end up in prison, the Māori and Pacific Island communities (Depart of Corrections and Statistics New Zealand, 2012) want solutions that emphasise community engagement and connection.

Figure 7: Explanatory power of welfare measures and other country characteristics on fear of crime; results from ordinal multilevel analyses (Hummelsheim et al. 2011; Figure 3, p13).

Category	Value
Benefits in kind for families/children	64.6
Expenditure on Education	63.9
Employment rate	51
Expenditure on Disability/Physical Handicap	50.9
Index of decommodification	42
Social protection expenditure (total)	33.9
Unemployment rate	30.2
Poverty rate after social transfers	27.2
Percentage of persons with tertiary education	25.8
Expenditure on Health	24.2
Expenditure on Social Exclusion	18.2
Registered crime	14.2
Victimization rate	8.6
Expenditure on Unemployment	5.7
Expenditure on Old-Age	5.2
Income inequality (Gini-Index)	4.8
Expenditure on Pensions	4.4
Expenditure on Housing	0.7
Cash benefits for families/children	0.4

country-level variance reduction in % compared to level-1-model

■ expenditure on social protection as % of GDP   □ other country-level characteristics

The general principle of those most vulnerable being able to increase the control they have over their lives is one that can be adapted to local body and community settings and well as to national government policies. Greater Police visibility and getting tough on crime may not increase the feeling of control of the most vulnerable, although greater Police responsiveness to events like family violence may do so. Possibly because the survey asked for ONE thing that would make people feel safer, those who wanted more Police protection and enforcement gave almost no support for neighbourhood support, community connection or measures like after-school and teen-age activity programmes (including bringing them onto the marae), more support for the homeless and the mentally unwell, greater focus on good news rather than crime stories and more income, educational and parental support for families at risk. The influence of the Stoks Limited (2014) report's focus on environmental design can be seen in suggestions for CCTV cameras, better street lighting and visibility, clean spaces (no graffiti), good footpaths and more speed bumps. The emphasis here is still on control, but the benefits may be widely shared (safer streets for children to play it, safer access to busses and trains). The focus groups added that although government intervention was needed, the government can't

"fix it all" (Youth Focus Group) and that it's up to the individual (Mortgage Belt Focus Group) to "intervene and just try to help" (Ethnic Focus Group).

It is the neighbourhood measures (saying hello to your neighbours, breaking down the cultural barriers, having community events and community BBQs, having a say in neighbourhood developments, keeping an eye out for each other and the children of the community) which do increase people's sense of control and engagement. This reflects the Thinkplace (2014b) "whole of community" approach which engages the vulnerable groups as designers of the solution. It is this approach which will address what Stoks Limited (2014) has as "the most important...initiative is working on the adverse perceptions associated with congregations of youth which comes to the forefront in all public safety perception studies" (p.37). This is where community enablers and Pākehā/Europeans will have to consider issues of prejudice and discrimination and where there is the possibility of what Robin DiAngelo (2011) describes as a "white fragility" reaction - "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (p54).

DiAngelo gives situations of *white fragility* some of which seem relevant here. Many Pākehā/Europeans will be under economic stress, and many will be bussing their children out of their residential area to schools with high Pākehā/European rolls. Firstly, there is the "white" sensitivity to "people of colour talking directly about their racial perspectives" (p57) with the consequence that these perspectives are supressed and "people of colour [are] not...willing to tell their stories [about the experience of discrimination]" (p57). So we have the pejorative language in the surveys from Pākehā/European participants, but not from other cultures, although the Young Persons and the Ethnic Focus Groups did describe some impacts of discrimination. Secondly, there is possibly some "white" unwillingness to "acknowledge that access is unequal between racial groups" (p57). In the focus groups only the Ethnic and Pasifika Focus Groups talk about the impact of poverty and unemployment, however, 13% of Pākehā/Europeans do talk about poverty, unemployment, inequality, education, mental health and family support and "more talking across ethnic groups" in the survey. Thirdly, there is the "white" protective process of "being presented with [stereotypical roles] about other racial groups [through the media]" (p57) with Pākehā/European participants most likely to be informed through Facebook and Neighbourly about crime and possible crime on the streets of West Auckland, which tend to reinforce negative stereotypes of non-Pākehā/European groups. Finally, there is the sense that whites expect "fellow whites...[to be in] agreement with one's interpretations [around discrimination]" (p57). The use of pejorative phrases like "scumbags", "big trouble makers" and "so-called homeless" by Pākehā/European participants suggests a confidence in the acceptability of such language when referring to predominantly non-Pākehā/European groups. DiAngelo suggests that these are conditions where "receiving feedback that one's behaviour had a racist impact" (p57) would not be welcome.

Why is it that the least vulnerable group seems the most frightened? At both the government and the community level the more Police, more prisons response is defensive – it does not seek to address the race-based issues of inequality and prejudice that we are facing, merely to contain them or shift them elsewhere. DiAngelo argues that white fragility is a reaction to attacks on *white privilege* (McIntosh, 1988 quoted in DiAngelo). White privilege is based on such ideas as cultural separation, an individualised world view where Western/European modes of thinking are treated as universals, a sense of entitlement to superior conditions of comfort and safety and "constant messages that...[whites] are more valuable" (DiAngelo, 2011, p64) that are part of our media, education, justice and political systems. Unless we address these issues of privilege and fragility, distrust and insecurity will continue to erode the quality of life in our communities.

11 Conclusion and summary of recommendations

When the findings of the different elements of this research (the overview of existing literature and reports, the focus groups and the survey) are considered together a number of themes emerge. It is possible to identify areas where it will be useful to focus attention; to both support and strengthen existing initiatives, or to invest in new approaches that respond to community concerns and priorities.

There are a number of contextual issues that it is important to factor in as we consider these findings. This research is about **perceptions** of safety which, as we have shown, is different from an objective measure of changing crime rates, or of actual levels of risk. This is not to minimise the importance of the issue. It is our perception of safety, or lack of it, that will significantly influence the way we behave in the community, the view we hold of other community members, and the restrictions we may place on children or other family members.

West Auckland communities are experiencing, and will continue to experience, a strong growth in intensification, and also high levels of transience and insecurity in relation to housing. It is apparent that people who are well settled in the community where they live are more likely to know their neighbours and to feel safer and more secure. An implication of this is that the rapid growth of population as well as the pressure on housing will contribute to increased feelings of insecurity and may point to the value of investing in 'placemaking' activities seeking to build social capital.

In considering the feedback through the focus groups and the survey it is apparent that there is a high level of consciousness of the presence of young people and that this does impact on perceptions of safety in public places. It is also very apparent that young people themselves often feel unsafe in community settings and report a variety of responses to this. The idea of inter-generational connection may have an important role to play in growing social capital.

It is also clear that there is not a single, nor a simple response that will be effective in increasing perceptions of safety. Responses that are identified are not mutually exclusive. The issues that lead to our perceptions of community safety are complex and initiatives that seek to positively move them will need to be multi-faceted and long term. The approaches identified in the Thinkplace report (2014b) capture this well:

From	To
Reactionary responses	→ Proactive responses
Safety as a focus of intervention	→ Safety as an outcome of interventions
Instant gratification	→ Long term gradual, lasting benefit
Silver bullet solution	→ Alignment of multiple solutions
Single investment approach	→ Co-ordinated approach
Big or small investment	→ Big and small investments
Remedial actions	→ Remedial, transitional and generative actions

Finally, and underpinning more specific recommendations or approaches, it is important to recognise that there are community wide issues of poverty, homelessness, privilege and inequality, particularly impacting families and children. The stress and insecurity that results from these is a critical factor reducing the sense of safety and wellbeing that people experience. Local actions that seek to address

these issues of community safety need to be backed up by national initiatives. It is reasonable to expect, however, that families that feel well connected to and supported by their local community and that have some control over aspects of their life will also have a level of resilience that may not otherwise be there.

Specific approaches that arise from this work and that would have positive impacts on perceptions of community safety include:

- Community engagement or placemaking initiatives that increase connections between individuals and families at a local level.
- Work that intentionally and positively connects people across cultural groups and that helps people feel less threatened or challenged by the relatively rapid growth in diversity, the arrival of new groups and increasing inequality.
- A discussion in all our community spaces about the contribution of media and social media to making us feel unsafe in our communities and what individuals and organisations can do to create a more positive vision of the communities that we live in.
- Investment in initiatives that allow people to increase feelings of control over their lives. This could include, for example, processes of participatory planning and budgeting that establishes priorities for spending at a local level.
- Continued investment in environmental work that provides attractive, well-lit, well-resourced and accessible public/community centres, streets, parks, footpaths and cycleways and other spaces that local people and visitors feel comfortable using.

This piece of work provides a useful overview of people's perceptions of community safety across West Auckland. It incorporates material from across a number of years and the consistency of the findings that emerge gives some confidence that it is an accurate reflection of the attitudes and behaviours of West Auckland communities.

In many respects this research offers a bleak conclusion – our communities feel less safe and the causes may include a desire to protect the privilege of the majority culture. However, both the survey and the focus groups show that many people across all cultures, including the most vulnerable, connect with their neighbours, feel safe in their homes and on the streets of their communities, respect the role of the Police and have engagement with the wide range of people and events in their communities. Participants want initiatives for change from the Police, the Auckland Council and community organisations, but they also want to take responsibility for community safety themselves – to be offered opportunities for their visions and energies to have impact.

This research provides useful and clear insights into the avenues that could and should be pursued to increase feelings of wellbeing and safety at local levels, and that, over time, could reduce the gap between perceived levels of safety and what may more accurately reflect levels of actual risk of harm.

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