

Social Wellbeing

Social wellbeing encompasses health, education, community safety, housing, community spirit and many other related areas that contribute to people achieving satisfaction and quality of life. Social wellbeing is also dependent on the other wellbeings with economic prosperity, a healthy environment and cultural wellbeing fulfilling enabling roles. Based on the prioritising of the Community Outcomes identified in 2005, social wellbeing was rated as the highest priority by the community. This reflects the view of a majority of residents who named the people of the District as its greatest strength.

Ruapehu District largely follows the trends of other similar regions in terms of social progress. Relative to the national average, we fare poorly on several of the social indicators but are showing steady improvements. Particular areas that remain of concern are income levels and housing indicators, while progress is showing in education, health and safety.

“The achievement of a safe and healthy community with strong community networks”

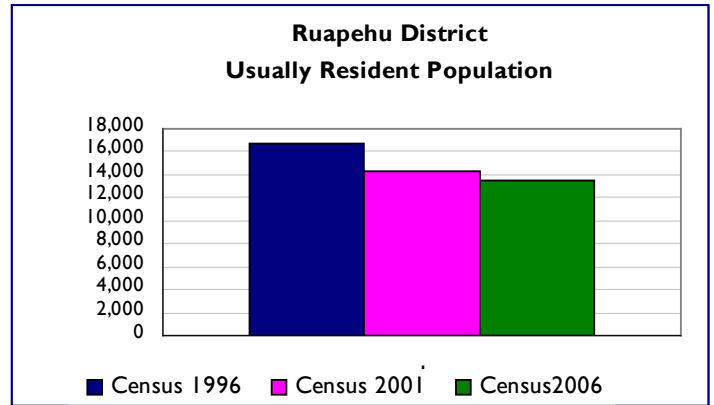


Indicator	State	Trend
Population Changes	☹	↓

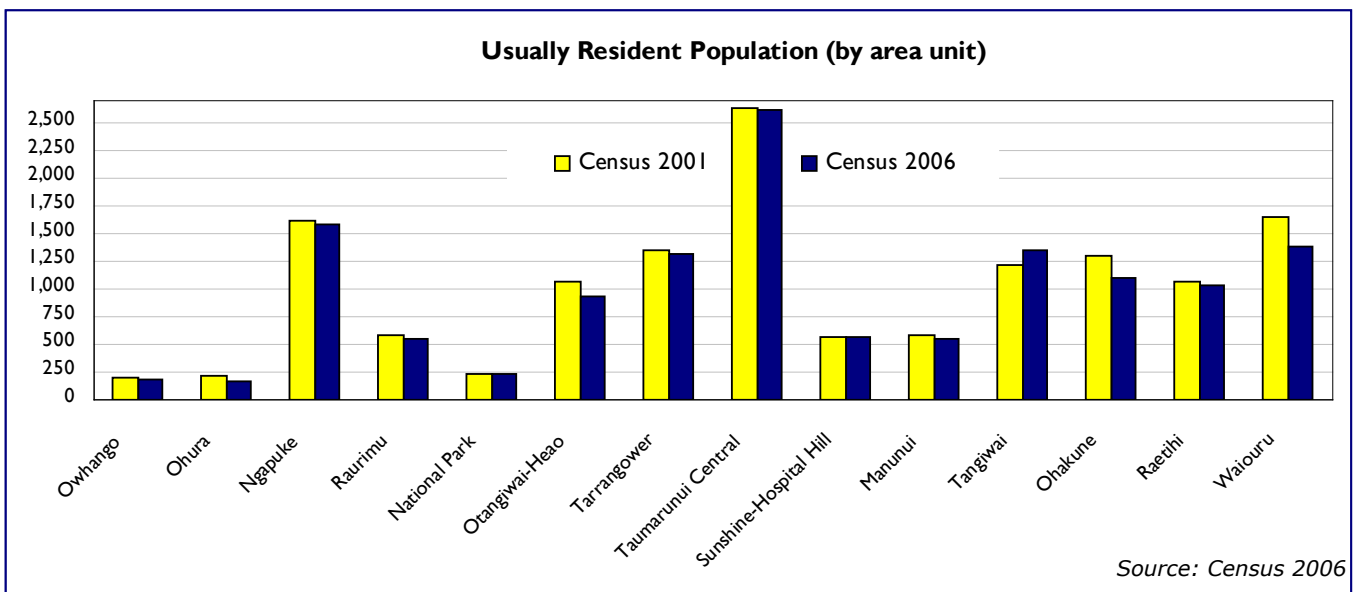
Ruapehu District currently has a more youthful and larger Maori population compared to the national averages, with 25% under 15 and 36.5% Maori. Although the District population continues to decline, the decrease from 2001 to 2006 Census results (5%) was only approximately a third of the more severe decrease during the 1996-2001 Census period (14.6%). During the winter months, and increasingly in summer too, thousands of visitors come to the District and during the busiest periods the population can increase temporarily by as much as 69%.

When considering the population changes by area units, the areas that show increased

populations from 2001 to 2006 were National Park, Sunshine-Hospital Hill and Tangiwai, whilst the most significant decrease was in Waiouru.



Source: Census 2006



Source: Census 2006

Indicator	State	Trend
Participation in Early Childhood Education	☹	↑

This indicator shows the number of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in early childhood centres or home-based education programmes as a percentage of all 3 and 4 year olds. Evidence from New Zealand and international research shows that the early childhood years are vital to a child's development and future ability to learn. Quality early childhood education prepares young children socially, physically and academically for entry into primary school and can help narrow the achievement gap between

children from low-income and more advantaged families.

In Ruapehu District the total number of young children in early education programmes increased by 22% in the five years from 2001 to 2006, compared to a national increase of 4% during this time. Although the number of 3 year olds decreased slightly in the District between 2005 and 2006, the figures for 4 year olds improved significantly during this year.

Yearly Participation Rate %*	Ruapehu District		Manawatu-Wanganui Region	
	3 year	4 year	3 year	4 year
2001	71	78	96	101
2002	79	79	97	96
2003	77	85	102	99
2004	91	92	100	103
2005	97	79	105	104
2006	88	103	105	108

Source: The Social Report 2007

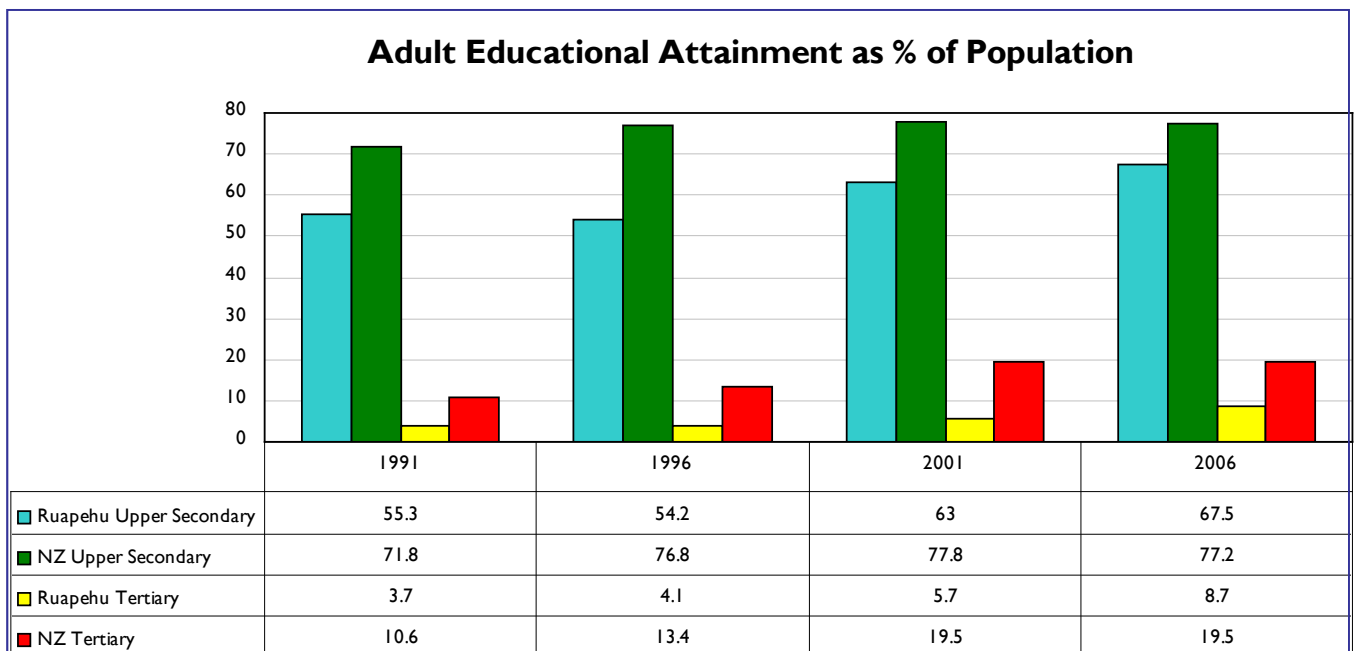
*"Apparent" participation rate, 3 and 4 year olds (numbers can add to more than 100%, where some children participate in more than one programme).

Indicator	State	Trend
Adult Educational Attainment	☹	↑

Educational attainment of the adult population provides a broad picture of New Zealanders' possession of knowledge and skills. It is influenced by factors not measured in other indicators, such as adults gaining new qualifications and new migrants arriving with qualifications.

The highest educational attainment of the adult population is determined by using the percentages of adults who have either at least an upper secondary or tertiary qualification.

This is an area of marked improvement in the District since 1991, with the number of adults with upper secondary increasing by 12% compared to 6% nationally. For tertiary qualifications Ruapehu's 5% increase since 1991 is behind the national average of 9% growth. However, figures for both types of qualifications have continued to improve in the District between 2001 and 2006 whilst the corresponding national figures remained static for this period.



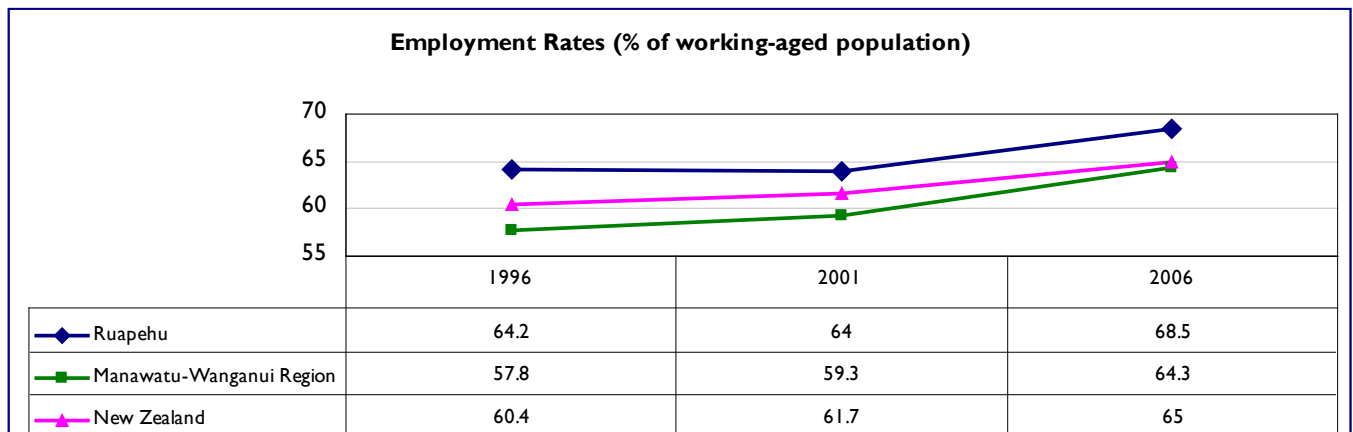
Source: The Social Report 2007

Indicator	State	Trend
Employment Rate	😊	↑

The condition of the local labour market is an important dimension of the social wellbeing, closely connected with the economic prosperity of the District. Employment allows people to actively contribute to the economy and community and to earn the income to enable them and their families to achieve wellbeing. Employment rates are based on the

proportion of the working-aged population (aged 15 years and over) that is employed.

Ruapehu District has mainly followed the national and regional trends for employment rates over the ten-year period from 1996 to 2006. The local employment rate remains higher than the national and regional figures and has improved significantly from 2001 to 2006.

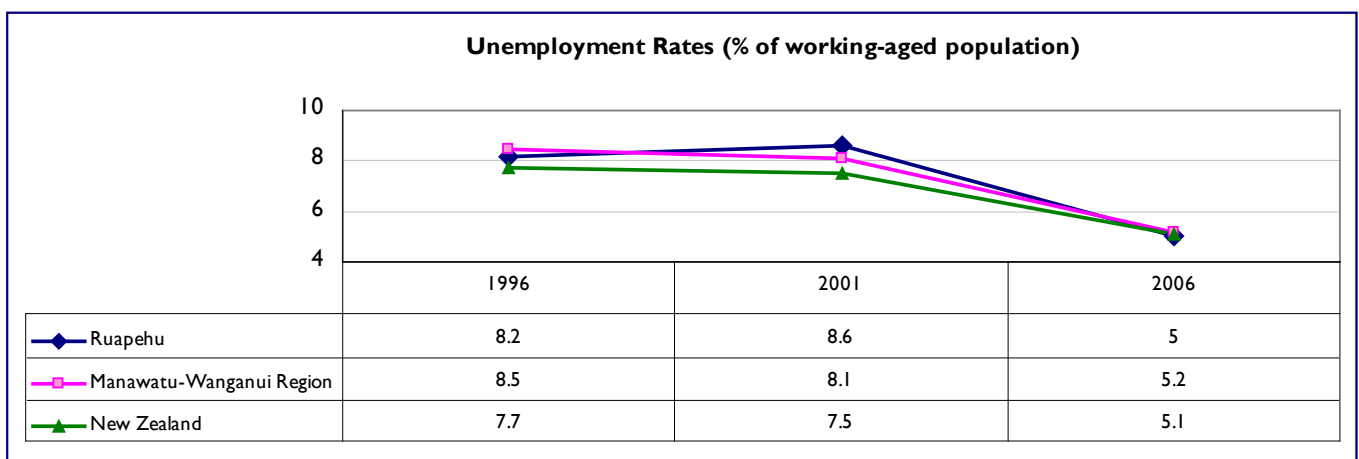


Source: Department of Labour, 2006

Indicator	State	Trend
Unemployment Rate	😊	↑

A further aspect of the labour market to consider is the unemployment rate. This indicator refers to the percentage of working-aged people in the population who are without employment, able to work and actively seeking employment. Unemployment can impact significantly on quality of life outcomes such as health, housing and education.

Although the national unemployment rates peaked during the recessionary period of the early 1990's, the local unemployment rate in Ruapehu District peaked in 2001, before following the nationwide trend in reaching historic lows since 2006. The present low unemployment rate in the District compares well to a regional high of over 6% in Wanganui and Horowhenua districts and the regional low of 3.6% in Tararua District.

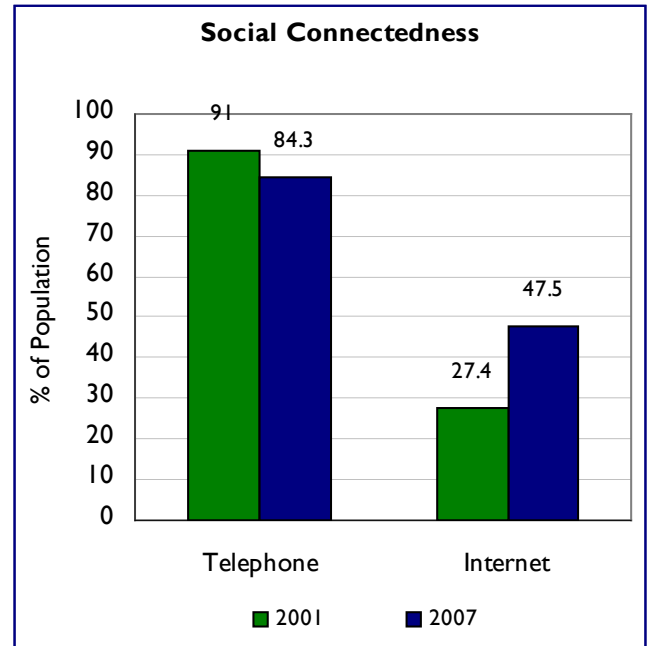


Source: Department of Labour, 2006

Indicator	State	Trend
Social Connectedness	😊	↑

Being able to communicate and interact easily in the absence of frequent face-to-face contact helps maintain social connectedness, particularly in more isolated areas. Access to a telephone and communications via the internet are particularly relevant indicators. The internet also makes it easier to access a significant and growing repository of information and knowledge.

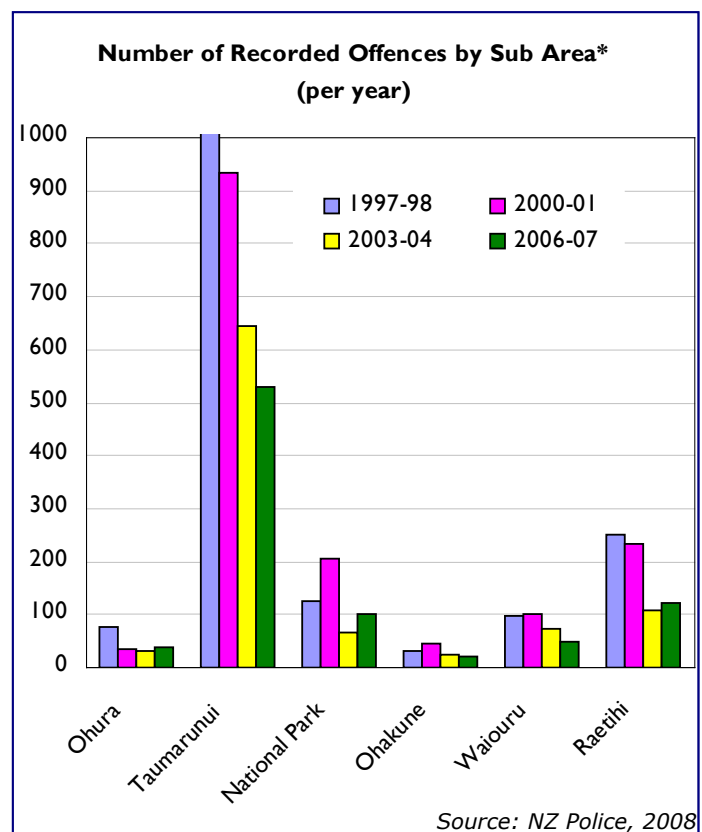
In Ruapehu District the number of people with access to a telephone has decreased slightly from 91% in 2001 to 84% in 2006, while those with internet access has improved significantly from 27% to 47% over.



Source: Census 2006

Indicator	State	Trend
Recorded Crime	😊	↑

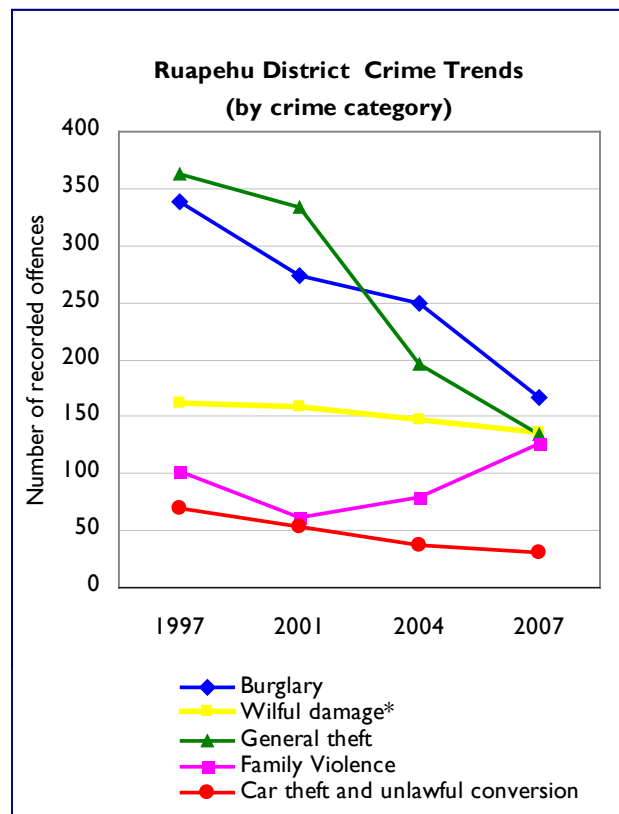
Safety is fundamental to wellbeing: violence and avoidable injury at its most threaten life itself, while other crimes such as burglary and theft reduce quality of life. Crime affects not only individuals but also society as a whole and fear of crime may restrict people's choices about how they live their lives, where they go and what they do. The incidence of recorded crime refers to the number of incidents or offences that are reported to, or discovered by, the NZ Police. This indicator shows trends in total reported crime for the six Police sub-areas of the Ruapehu District since 1997, as well as trends for different types of crime in the District as a whole. There have been significant improvements with decreases in recorded crime in the District since 1997, in both subarea and crime category trends. Particularly positive trends are noticeable in Taumarunui, Ohura, Raetihi and Waiouru sub areas where recorded offences have almost halved since 1997.



Source: NZ Police, 2008

Indicator	State	Trend
Recorded Crime (continued)	☺	↑

An exception is the increase in recorded Family Violence (FV) since 2001. The reporting and resolution of FV has been a major, nationwide focus for Police since 2000. Improved procedures resulting in increased recorded FV crime include more intense supervisory scrutiny, more rigorous prosecution, changes to evidence rules and improved interagency liaison. There is also more willingness in the community to report these offences due to the heightened publicity in recent years. However, the reporting still tends to come from only some parts of society. The increased FV reporting trend is viewed positively because this is traditionally an under-reported area, but unfortunately it is believed these improvements are still only scratching the surface of the problem.



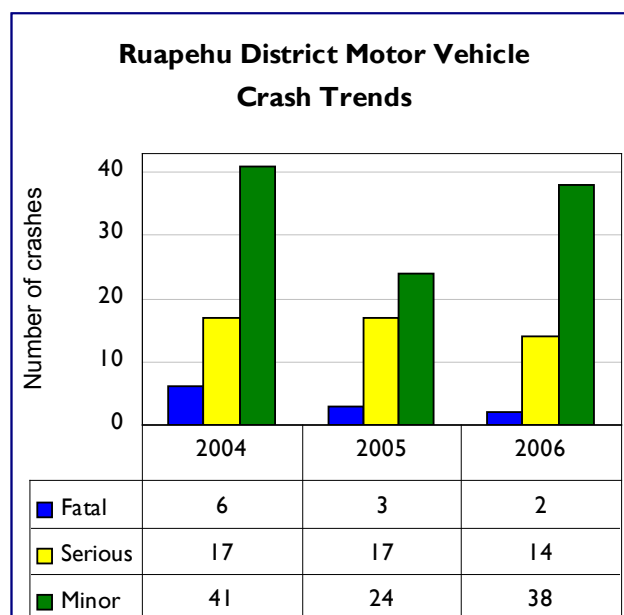
Source: NZ Police, 2008 * Wilful damage includes tagging and graffiti offences

Indicator	State	Trend
Road Safety	☹	↑

Council is responsible for 1,300km of local roads in the District and there are 320km of State Highways maintained by Transit NZ. Motor vehicle crashes are a major cause of fatalities in New Zealand, especially among young adults. Deaths, injuries and disabilities from motor vehicle crashes inflict considerable suffering on families and communities as well as on other road users and public resources such as health and emergency services.

There is an improving trend with the overall number of crashes reducing from 64 in 2004 to 54 in 2006, including both local roads and State Highways. Fatal and serious injury crashes in the District have reduced during 2006 whilst minor accidents have increased significantly. All three types of crashes have decreased in comparison to 2004 but there tends to be fluctuations in annual crash statistics in the District, particularly for minor crashes. This is

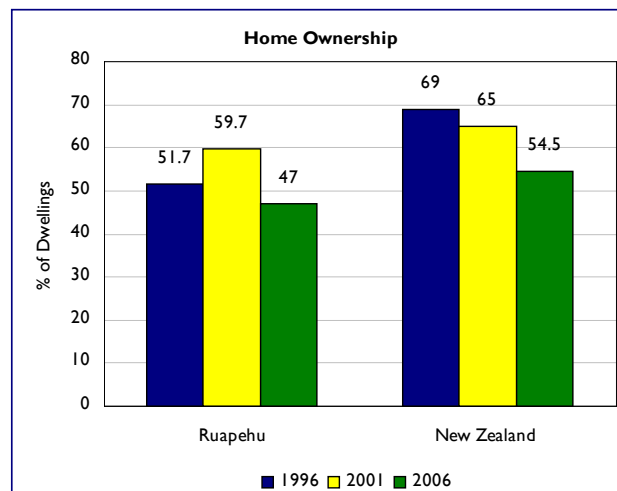
partly related to the severity of winter weather, while the small numbers can occasionally provide a distorted picture overall.



Source: Land Transport NZ Road Safety Issues Report: Ruapehu District 2007

Indicator	State	Trend
Home Ownership	☹️	↓

High levels of occupier home ownership promote more stable, permanent and healthy populations and communities. Transient populations can have negative impacts on community dynamics and affect young families and children in particular, who are deprived of stability and a sense of belonging. The national trend since 1996 has been for a steady decrease in home ownership rates. However, for Ruapehu there was an increase from 1996 to 2001 before it fell to 47% in 2006.



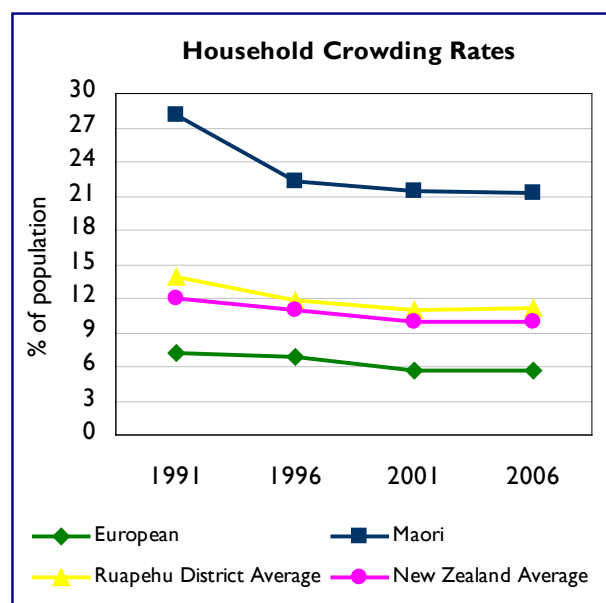
Source: Census 1996, 2001 and 2006

Indicator	State	Trend
Household Crowding	☹️	↓

Housing space adequate to the needs and desires of a family is a core component of quality of life. This indicator shows the proportion of the population living in crowded housing, requiring one or more additional bedrooms, as defined by the Canadian Crowding Index. There is a clear relationship between levels of income and household crowding. There is no definite evidence that crowding leads to negative social outcomes. However, there are clear associations between crowded households and the prevalence of negative outcomes such as poorer health and educational attainment. Household crowding can also contribute to psychological stress in households.

In Ruapehu District household crowding has reduced since 1991 but it remains slightly higher in 2006 at 11% compared to the national average of 10%. Of more concern is the significant differences noted between household crowding rates for the Maori and European populations. Household crowding is more likely

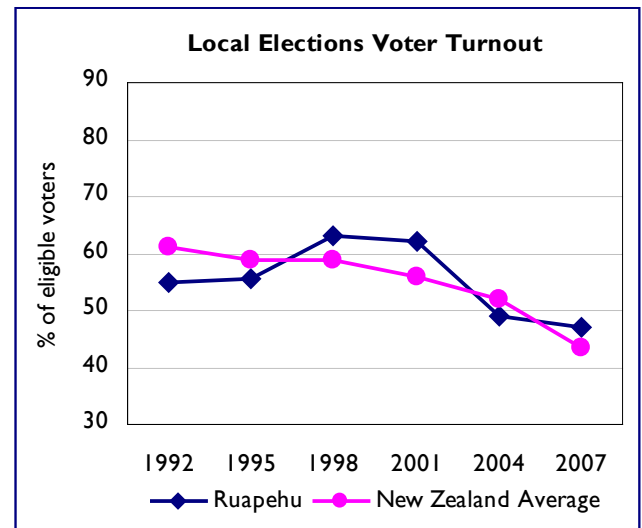
to be experienced by young people and those unemployed than older people and those in full-time employment. There are large variations across the country, with the highest crowding rates around 14% and all of the South Island having below average crowding rates.



Source: The Social Report 2007

Indicator	State	Trend
Voter Turnout	☹️	↓

Voter turnout rates are an indication of the extent to which citizens participate in the political process and democratic decision-making, the confidence the population has in political institutions and the importance they attach to these institutions. Across New Zealand the restructuring of local government in 1989 initially led to an increase in voter turnout, peaking at 61% in 1992 before a steady decline since then. The national decline from 2001 to 2004 was felt most by District councils, as reflected by the significant fall in Ruapehu District's turnout over this period. For the remainder of this 15-year period, the District experienced a peak in turnout in 1998 with 63%, followed by a fall to 47% turnout in the 2007 local elections.

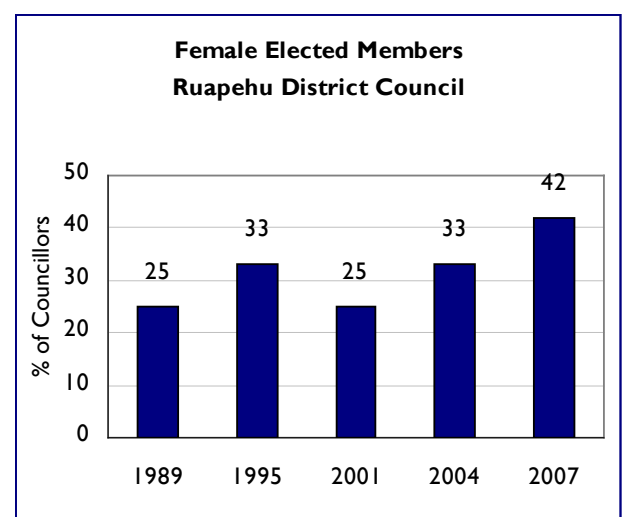


Source: The Social Report 2007 and Elections NZ

Indicator	State	Trend
Female Representation	😊	↑

The representation of women in government can be seen as an indicator of political representation more generally. Representative political institutions engage a wide range of communities, drawing on the capabilities, skills and knowledge of a broader group of people and providing checks and balances for the use of political power.

In 2004, women represented 30% of elected members in local government in New Zealand, up from 25% in 1989. Ruapehu District follows this trend with female representatives increasing from 25% in 2001 to reach a new peak of 42% in the last local body elections in 2007.

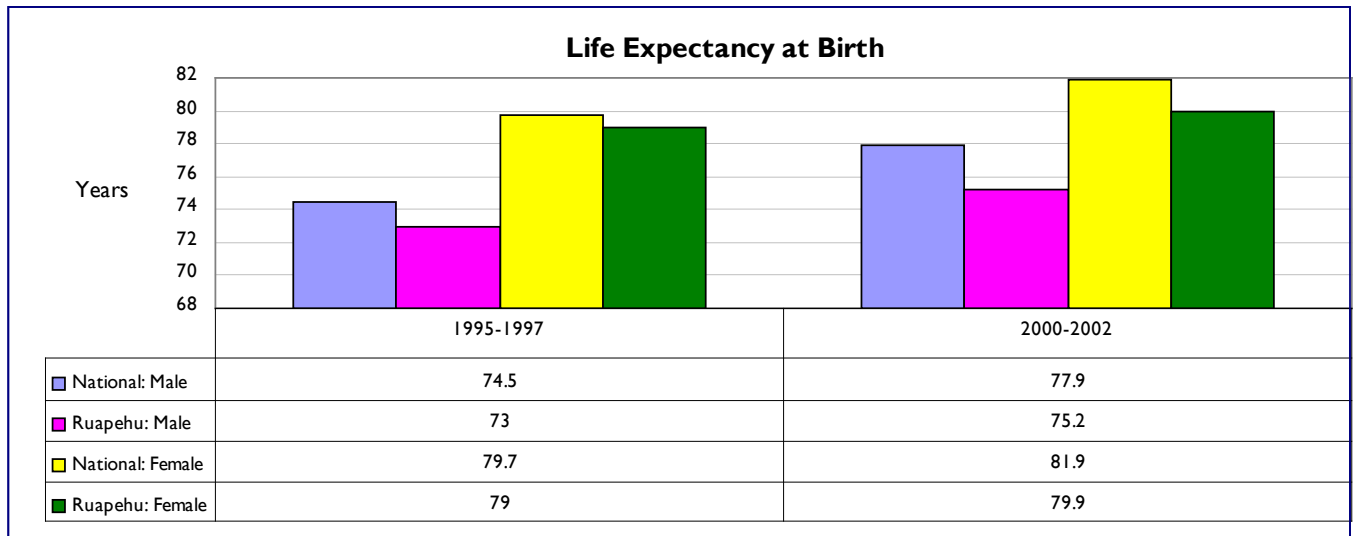


Source: The Social Report 2007 and Ruapehu District Council

Indicator	State	Trend
Life Expectancy at Birth	☺	↑

Life expectancy at birth indicates the total number of years a person can expect to live based on the mortality rates of the population at a given age in each year or period. It is a key indicator for health outcomes. Ruapehu District has a relatively lower life expectancy

than the national average for New Zealand at 75.2 for males and 79.9 for females. This is steadily improving and, since the 1980's, the gains in longevity have been greater for males than females, so the gap between the genders is also closing.



Source: The Social Report 2007

Indicator	State	Trend
Access to Health Services	☹	↑

Ruapehu District's geographical size and isolation means that some of our communities experience difficulty with access to primary health care, especially those in rural areas. In the 2005 Community Outcomes survey the community rated good health services as one of its top priorities. However, the number of General Practitioners (GPs) working in the District has fluctuated since 2000 and drawing new doctors to the District remains an on-going challenge. This indicator uses the ratio of the population

served by each GP in the District to give us an idea of the availability of primary health care. The data refers to individual, registered and active GPs as per the New Zealand Medical Council records. The decline in GPs in the District around 2003, where there was one GP for every 4,753 people in the District, followed a downward national trend, which has only recently started to improve again. The table below shows that Ruapehu District has significantly fewer GPs than the national average.

Ruapehu District - Ratio of GPs to population

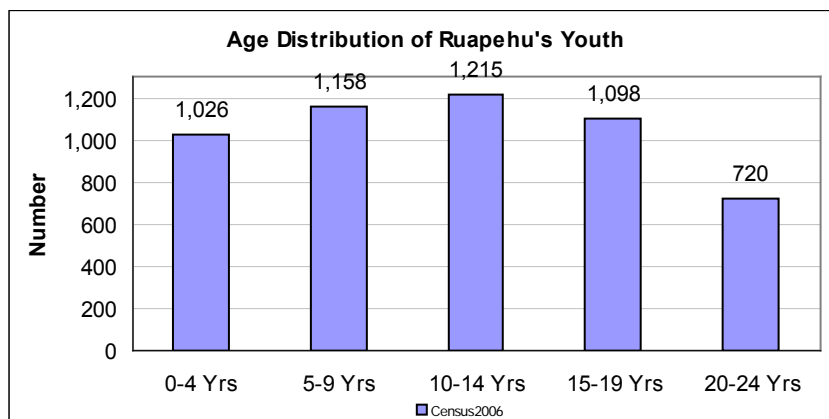
Year	Number of GPs	Population	Ratio*	NZ Ratio
2000	8	16,743	1: 2,093	1: 1,210
2003	3	14,259	1: 4,753	1: 1,333
2006	5	13,572	1: 2,714	1: 1,333

Source: New Zealand Medical Council, Medical Workforce Survey 2000, 2003, 2006

*Total District population divided by the number of GPs working in the District.

Indicator	State	Trend
Youth Profile	☺	?

Ruapehu District has a very youthful population, with over 38% being under 24 in 2006. A more in-depth look at the current composition and condition of our youth in areas such as education, work, crime and health helps to identify key issues impacting on them. Closer examination of youth aged 0-24 years shows that 25% of this group is aged 0-14, while only 5.3% is between 20-24.



Employment

- In 2007, 71.8% of youth (15-24 year olds) in the working-aged population were employed, while 8% of this group was classed as being unemployed (not in employment but able to work and actively searching for work).

Families

- In the 2006 Census there were 3,306 families living in private dwellings recorded in the District.
- Of these, 42% families consisted of couples with children and 20% were households with a single parent and children.

Education

- In 2007 there were 25 schools in the District with 2,550 students enrolled.
- The total number of students leaving secondary school in 2006 was 173 (91 male and 82 female).
- 12.3% of the 2006 school leavers had gained university entrance standard, an increase of 11% from 2005, while 19.1% had little or no formal attainment in 2006, 2% more than in 2005.

Benefits

- From 1998 to 2004 the number of youth (aged 15-24) in receipt of unemployment-related benefits reduced by more than two thirds, while all youth benefit numbers more than halved.
- In 2004, 56.5% of all youth beneficiaries in Ruapehu District had no formal school qualifications.

Health

- Mortality for 1-24 year olds is higher than for other areas*, especially for the 'Other' ethnic group, and is higher than the national average.
- Highest birth-related and infant mortality rates of the studied areas*.
- Suicides and motor vehicles crashes pushed the potentially avoidable mortality rate for young adults well above the national average.
- Evident pattern of younger childbearing, with high birth rates to teen mothers.

**Taken from Waikato District Health Board 'Top Ten' report on child and youth health indicators. The study covered the Auckland and Waikato regions, and the northern wards of Ruapehu District were part of the 'Rural Waikato' study area.*