

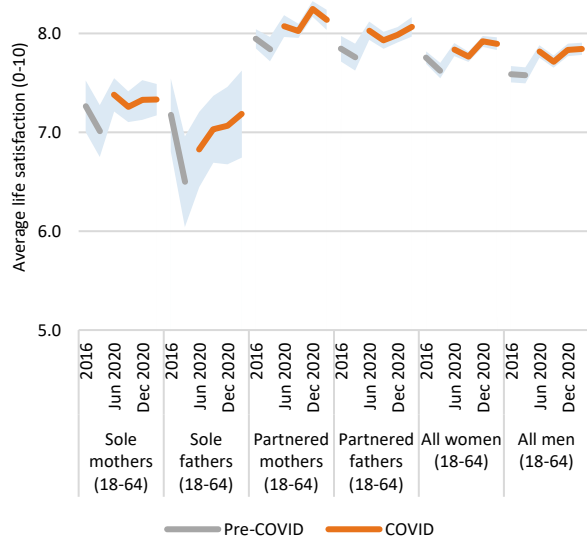
Life satisfaction during the first year of COVID-19

The emergence of COVID-19 almost immediately resulted in fundamental changes to the way New Zealanders lived their lives. This page summarises results of our research focused on how *life satisfaction* (as one measure of wellbeing) in New Zealand changed over the first year of COVID-19, from May 2020 until March 2021. The full report *Wellbeing during the first year of COVID-19* is available at swa.govt.nz.

Life satisfaction was slightly higher in the first year of COVID-19

We compared *life satisfaction* for 32 groups between 2018 and 2020. Out of the 32 groups, 24 reported statistically significant increases during the June 2020 quarter, reversing the declining trend that most groups (in particular, parents, older people, and Pacific people) were experiencing between 2016 and 2018.

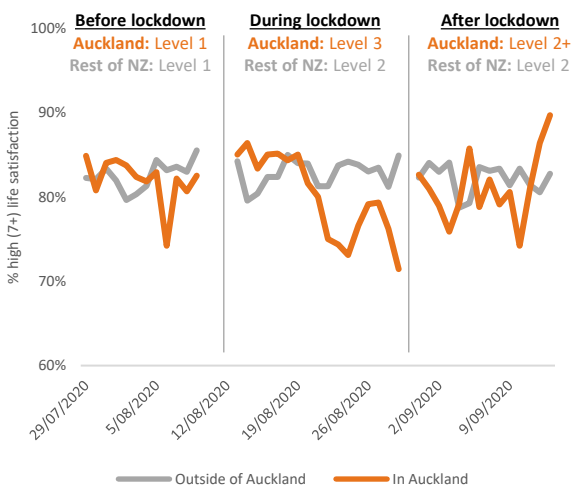
In contrast, countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom reported decreases in life satisfaction over the same period.



Life satisfaction was lower during periods of lockdown

We tracked how reported life satisfaction differed between people interviewed during periods of lockdown compared to people interviewed just before or just after.

The largest changes in life satisfaction during lockdown were for Pacific people and for sole mothers. In contrast, the differences were not statistically significant for partnered mothers and fathers, Pākehā people, and people aged 65 or older.



Life satisfaction was driven by changes in health and loneliness

A number of people reported changes in life satisfaction from June 2020 to March 2021. We created a statistical model to identify factors associated with these changes.

Life satisfaction over the first year of COVID-19 was heavily affected by health and loneliness. Various economic aspects, including income and employment, were also moderately important.

These statistical models also confirmed that life satisfaction (as well as family wellbeing and trust in other people) were lower when the respondent was in lockdown compared to other times in the first year of COVID-19.

We also found evidence that the increase in the Winter Energy Payment improved people's income adequacy (likely causing indirect improvements to various aspects of wellbeing, including life satisfaction) and family wellbeing during 2020.