

November 2023

Quarterly Update

The State of the City

The State of the City report report is the first of its kind for a New Zealand city. It's a comprehensive, annual international benchmarking report initiated by Committee for Auckland in partnership with Deloitte and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited with support from the Auckland Policy Office and the Koi Tū think tank.

This first quarterly update provides a short account of how Auckland is tracking, information on just some of the progress underway and insights on future action needed.

Committee
for Auckland

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Auckland
Unlimited



A
AUCKLAND

A Quarterly Indicators:¹

● Positive trend ● Neutral trend ● Negative trend

Opportunity & Prosperity

- Auckland is the first city outside of Europe to **rank in the top 10 in the Work-Life Balance Index, coming in at 5th.**² Auckland is described as having a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, making it a comfortable and enjoyable place to live and work. It is home to a growing and diverse economy, providing ample employment opportunities across a range of sectors. Peer cities Copenhagen ranked 1st and Helsinki was 2nd. Brisbane was 17th and Dublin 19th.
- **Auckland's safety ranking has fallen for the third year in a row,** with the city ranked 124th out of 195 measured and is the bottom third of peer cities.³ It is Auckland's lowest ranking since 2013. Helsinki is 20th, Copenhagen is 29th and Tel Aviv is 30th.

Innovation & Knowledge

- **The performance and potential of Auckland's data centres is publicly rated as being among the bottom five out of 29 APAC markets.**⁴ The OECD has reported that the growing importance of data analytics has added to the value and growth of data centres. The Asia Pacific region is undertaking aggressive expansion in data centre markets with increased operation and construction.
- **Auckland is now back among the top 30 best student-friendly cities globally** for the first time since 2019, partly due to improvement in student satisfaction and experience. Auckland came in at 29th, while peer cities, Vancouver, Brisbane and Copenhagen are 18th, 22nd and 43rd respectively.⁵

Culture & Experience

- **Auckland has been recognised as among the world's top 100 sporting cities.** The city rates 10th in Asia-Pacific for how highly global sporting experts rate the city and how often the global public talks about it in relation to sport.⁶
- **Spending by international visitors in the city centre in July and August was above pre-COVID levels** (i.e., 2019) for the first time since the start of the pandemic.⁷

¹These data points are drawn from recently published global indexes, that are routinely monitored by The Business of Cities as part of their benchmarking database. Information has been supplemented by intelligence monitored by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited.

²Forbes Work Life Balance Index 2023: www.forbes.com/uk/advisor/business/work-life-balance-index

³Numbeo Safety Index: <https://www.numbeo.com/quality-of-life/rankings.jsp?title=2023-mid&displayColumn=2>

⁴Cushman and Wakefield Asia Pacific Data Centre Update: <https://cushwake.cld.bz/apac-dc-h1-2023-update/4/>

⁵QS Best Student Cities 2024: <https://www.topuniversities.com/city-rankings>

⁶BCW Ranking of Sports Cities 2023: https://www.bcw-global.com/assets/BCW-Ranking-Sports-Cities_Report2023.pdf

⁷Marketview: <https://www.marketview.co.nz/>



Place & Connectivity

- **Auckland's traffic performance is 7th out of nine peer cities** and has deteriorated since 2022 - as measured by commute time, dissatisfaction, network inefficiencies and CO2 emissions.⁸
- **Auckland suburb, Ponsonby, is 33rd in the 40 coolest neighbourhoods in the world** in this year's Time Out rankings.⁹ Ponsonby is the only New Zealand neighbourhood in the list, following last year's inclusion of Kingsland.

Resilience & Sustainability

- **Auckland is up one place to 9th among the 30 global cities measured for progress embedding the circular economy.** The city excels in procurement and commitment to reducing construction and demolition waste, as well as progress in shared mobility. In 2018, the Sustainable Business Network said Auckland could be \$8.8 billion a year better off by 2030 if it makes the transition to a circular economy. Peer city Copenhagen is ranked 3rd.¹⁰
- **Auckland is 59th out of 183 cities in terms of overall socio-economic development, and second to last among peer cities.** Household overcrowding and low electric charging stations contribute to this, as well as lower overall technology development.¹¹

● Positive trend ● Neutral trend ● Negative trend



B Signature projects and other insights

A series of private, public, and not-for-profit-led activities are underway that advance the State of the City report's findings. More are needed, and we will track examples of these in future updates. Contact the [State of the City Steering Group](#) if you have projects to add.

Citizen engagement / deliberative democracy work

- Building on the success of a [Watercare citizens' assembly decision-making project](#) "What should be the next source of water for Auckland by 2040?", Auckland University's think tank, Koi Tū is working on enhancing deliberative democracy approaches, trialling new ones, including online tools to support citizens' assemblies and exploring new partner relationships.

Digital Twin Project

- The Committee for Auckland is supporting a [digital twin pilot project](#) which would create a digital representation of the Auckland City Centre to improve decision-making, greatly increase citizen engagement and enhance coordination between planners, agencies and property owners. The investment case for the pilot project is complete and the Committee is actively supporting the establishment of a special purpose vehicle to own and govern the project. The core members will include Auckland Council, University of Auckland, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and the Construction Sector Accord.

⁸ Numbeo Traffic Index: <https://www.numbeo.com/traffic/rankings.jsp>

⁹ Time Out 40 Coolest Neighbourhoods in the World: <https://www.timeout.com/travel/coolest-neighbourhoods-in-the-world>

¹⁰ Bloomberg Circular Cities Barometer: https://sponsored.bloomberg.com/immersive/holcim/circular-cities/barometer?li_did=77551af1-f251-36ef-91c3-b23f9586bc51

¹¹ IESE Cities in Motion Index: <https://media.iese.edu/research/pdfs/ST-0633-E.pdf>

Trans-Tasman innovation network

- Following a Tātaki Auckland Unlimited Australia innovation hub study tour, GridAKL, home to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland’s innovation community, recently signed an agreement with Stone & Chalk, Australia’s largest startup community. It will bolster the trans-Tasman innovation network and address the State of the City report finding that Auckland has “fewer links with top ecosystems”. The partnership provides resources for startups, including access to expertise and investor connectivity.¹²

Waiōrea-Western Springs Taiao Rau

- A series of partners, including Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Koi Tū, are considering how to develop the Western Springs area as a thriving natural, cultural and educational precinct.

Other Auckland projects

- A wide range of council, government, private and other agency-led [projects](#) are underway around Auckland.

Other insights

Office of the Auditor General report on the public sector’s performance in Tāmaki Makaurau

- The recent [Office of the Auditor General’s report](#) on the public sector’s performance in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland found it difficult to get a complete picture of how well public organisations in Auckland perform. It commented that the public needs to know what Aucklanders are getting for the taxes and rates paid, and this is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine from publicly available information.
- It recommended three opportunities for central and local government to better determine that they are focusing their spending on the right areas and to support ongoing efficiencies and performance improvements for the city:
 - i. Provide a clear outline of outcomes central and local government are looking to achieve in Auckland
 - ii. Provide an overview of the key activities, programmes, and investments in Auckland and make it publicly available.
 - iii. Provide more detailed and regular reporting on spending and improve reporting on performance.

Australian placemaking and city deals

- A recent study of placemaking and city deals in New South Wales and Queensland has insights for Auckland.
 - i. Outcomes-focused partnerships such as city deals between local and central government enable aligned investment priorities
 - ii. Sustainable and resilient cities are deliberate in how they integrate with nature
 - iii. A thriving technology sector enhances city prosperity
 - iv. Major events have a catalytic power for cities
 - v. A vibrant 24-hour economy is a key element to enhancing liveability
 - vi. Cities benefit from strong engagement from city leaders and civic-inspired groups collaborating



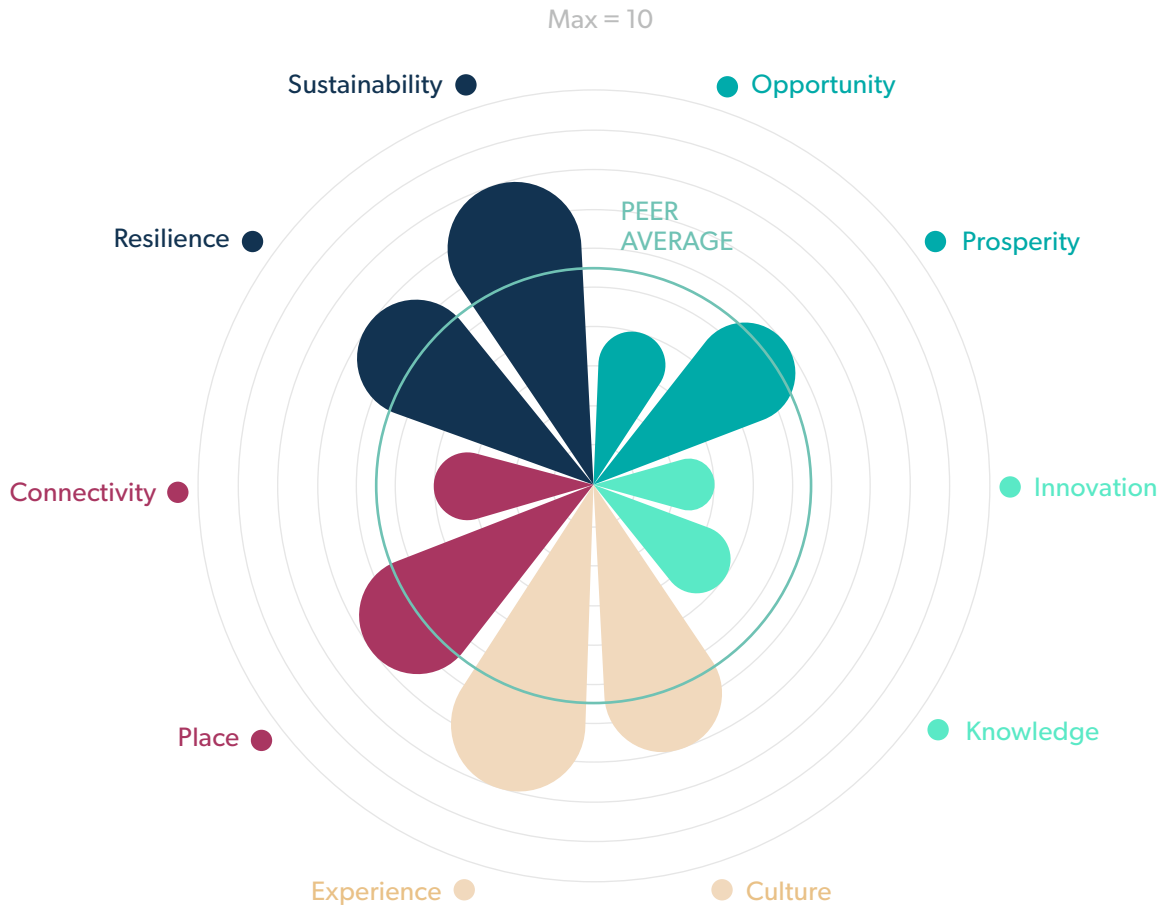
¹² Auckland Unlimited: New partnership between GridAKL and Stone & Chalk bolsters trans-Tasman innovation network: <https://aucklandunlimited.com/news/new-partnership-between-gridakl-and-stone-and-chalk-bolsters-trans-tasman-innovation-network>



State of the City – Benchmarking Tāmaki Makaurau’s international performance

The first benchmarking report found **Auckland is ahead of the majority of its peer cities in 6 out of the 10 categories** as shown in the spidergram.

Where Auckland sits compared to its ‘peer cities’*



*This chart shows Auckland’s position among a group of 10 peer cities assessed in this report: Auckland, Austin, Brisbane, Copenhagen, Dublin, Fukuoka, Helsinki, Portland, Tel Aviv, Vancouver. For example, with Sustainability Auckland is overall 3rd out of 10 cities, giving it a score of 8/10. Auckland’s position is calculated using an Elo algorithm that takes into account multiple metrics.

Experience and Sustainability remain areas of comparative advantage that reflect Auckland’s setting, landscapes, atmosphere and lifestyle – and some of the planning and policy it has put in place.

Auckland’s biggest gap is in Innovation – reflecting skills, commercialisation and innovation system weaknesses. This also has knock-on effects on Opportunity and Knowledge.

Connectivity, reflecting Auckland’s lack of an efficient transport system, is also low. These lower areas tend to rely on consistent investment, effectively competing to attract international opportunity and high levels of policy.



For more information contact:

Committee for Auckland
committeeforauckland.co.nz

admin@committeeforauckland.co.nz



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