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Developing community: Following the Waimahia Inlet affordable housing initiative

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Background

Waimahia Inlet is an affordable housing development located in Weymouth on an estuary of the Manukau Harbour, 23 km south of the Auckland CBD and 5km southwest of Manukau City centre. It was developed by Tāmaki Makaurau Community Housing Limited (TMCHL), an incorporated body comprising the Tāmaki Collective, Te Tumu Kāinga, Community of Refuge Trust (CORT) and the New Zealand Housing Foundation. This consortium of Māori organisations and community housing providers (CHPs) shared a mission to provide affordable, good-quality housing, with a particular focus on meeting the housing needs of Māori and Pasifika families.

Waimahia is an informative case study of affordable housing provision for a number of reasons:

- its 295 dwellings make it Aotearoa’s largest third sector housing development;
- the complementary expertise of the consortium partners enabled an innovative organisational structure to be developed to finance and deliver the development;
- it is a mixed tenure neighbourhood with 70% of homes either assisted home-ownership (shared-equity and rent-to-buy/Home Saver) or retained by the community housing providers as affordable rentals; and
- 50 % of households are Māori and 15% Pasifika.

This report presents the findings of the second phase of a proposed longitudinal case study of the Waimahia Inlet housing development. This phase, funded by the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes Towns and Cities, investigates residents’ experiences and satisfaction with the design of their homes and neighbourhood, the tenure trajectories of households, and the process of community formation as resident numbers have increased. It also investigates the impacts of this medium density development on the lives of residents living in the low density streets of the surrounding suburb of Weymouth.

In Phase 1, the research involved a review of TMCHL documents relating to the formation of the consortium and interviews with consortium partners. This research traced the establishment period of the development at Waimahia Inlet, the factors that cohered to enable TMCHL to form, and for this new entity to develop an affordable housing development. Twelve early residents were also interviewed to record their initial impressions of the development. The key findings of this earlier research are briefly summarised below as they provide a point of departure for the second phase of the research. For a detailed account of Phase 1 findings see Fergusson et al. (2016)¹.

Phase 1 Findings in Brief

The Waimahia Inlet development is located on a 16-hectare coastal site that was previously a farm used by Weymouth Girls’ School for recreational activities. The Weymouth site had been on the

¹ Phase 1 of the research was funded by the MBIE-funded project Resilient Urban Futures <http://sustainablecities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Waimahia-Report-for-Publication.pdf>

radar of the community housing sector as a potential development site for some time, but central government support for the idea had not been forthcoming. The Waimahia Inlet project was enabled by the signing of the 2014 Framework Agreement between the Crown and Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau (the Tāmaki Collective); this agreement guaranteed the Collective the right of first refusal on Crown land intended for sale. The consortium formed after the Waimahia Inlet site was offered to the Tāmaki Collective under the terms of this agreement.

Central government played an instrumental role in enabling the development. It also provided financial input in the form of a \$29 million grant from the Social Housing Unit, part of the Building and Housing Group within the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). This sum paid for purchasing the land from the Crown (\$8.9 million) and provided the consortium with working capital to begin the development.

Emerging reforms in the social housing sector were another enabling factor for the development. The Social Housing Reform Act (2014) had particular salience to the Waimahia development as it introduced a regulated third sector into the legislative framework for the provision of housing. Designed to foster third sector capacity, the Act enabled community housing providers to register with the government's Community Housing Regulatory Authority, thereby accessing the same legislated powers as Housing New Zealand in relation to allocating and reviewing tenancies. More importantly, CHPs also gained access to the income related rent subsidy (IRRS), a policy change that is likely to increase the financial feasibility of CHPs. Under this model CHPs essentially become organisations comprising state, third sector and market elements. The passing of the Social Housing Reform Act (2014) had both symbolic and material significance for the community housing sector and is an important part of the Waimahia project's policy context. Waimahia became the first major third sector development undertaken after the Act passed into law.

Waimahia was also the first Special Housing Area (SHA) designated under the Auckland Housing Accord signed between central government and Auckland Council in September 2013. SHA status was seen to have had positive spin-offs in terms of the TMCHL's relationship with central government and in supportive actions taken by Auckland Council such as purchasing storm-water areas and pocket parks as well as facilitating negotiations with subsidiary organisations.

Based on an analysis of interviews with representatives of TMCHL partner organisations, the report on Phase 1 findings noted:

Consortium partners attributed the success of Waimahia to the structure of the consortium, the complementary organisational and professional strengths of consortium partners, and an alignment of values (Fergusson et al, 2016).

In brief, with respect to the consortium structure, the TMCHL is the general partner of the Waimahia Inlet Neighbourhood Limited Partnership (WINLP), the development entity. The WINLP comprises three limited partners - Te Tumu Kāinga, CORT and the New Zealand Housing Foundation – which are the main beneficiaries of the Crown grant for the development. The innovative structure of the consortium was able to accommodate the charitable and community-sector nature of the

organisations involved, while also retaining transparency, accommodating the tax implications of the development for limited partners and allowing for the addition of limited partners.

As consortium partners, the Tāmaki Collective’s legal and financial expertise complemented the housing sector knowledge of the CHPs and their experience of housing Māori and/or low income households. Notwithstanding the importance of the organisations’ collective expertise, all parties emphasised that people-centred values and shared purpose were fundamental to the consortium’s effectiveness. This strong value alignment rendered decision-making relatively straight forward according to partner representatives.

The TMCHL partners shared a goal of building a strong mixed tenure community at Waimahia and an innovative mechanism was devised to achieve this tenure mix – the ‘offtake’ agreements between TMCHL and the CHPs. These agreements guaranteed that limited partners (CHPs) would purchase up to 70% of the dwellings. This guarantee provided funding certainty to the development, while also enabling CHPs to identify households suited to specific houses with rent-to-buy or shared equity schemes.

TMCHL established and continues to support the Residents Association at Waimahia. Membership is specified on the title of the dwellings, and requires that residents adhere to a suite of bylaws regarding matters such as property maintenance and parking. The Association has an executive drawn from the community, and was initially facilitated by a member of staff from the Housing Foundation. It meets periodically and under its auspices, in collaboration with TMCHL, barbecues and other community gatherings have been arranged. All study participants who were owner-occupiers (including those opting for a rent-to-buy agreement) were aware of the Association, as it was explained to them during the process of signing-up for their dwelling. However CHP tenants did not share this widespread awareness of the Association.

Phase 1 interviews with residents recorded high levels of satisfaction with the dwellings and an emerging sense of community. The relative affordability of living at Waimahia Inlet was a key motivation for moving into the development, irrespective of tenure. For many, Waimahia provided an opportunity to shift out of unstable, unaffordable or otherwise untenable living arrangements and into secure, lower-cost and high-quality housing in an attractive setting. Access to affordable home ownership was “the opportunity of a lifetime” for many on a home ownership trajectory.

Attitudes to tenure diversity were complex. Participants extolled the tenure mix goal for the development but those on a home ownership scheme also liked the idea they were living amongst a cohort, “like us”, on track for home ownership. In the minds of some participants, the notion of Waimahia being a neighbourhood of owner occupiers also set it apart from the surrounding Weymouth area.

At the time of its completion in 2018, the development tenure breakdown was: 55 houses owned by Community Housing Organisations (18.6%); 91 in private ownership (30.8%); 85 in shared-equity home ownership arrangements (28.8%)²; 58 in Home Saver or ‘rent-to-buy’ schemes (19.6%); and six

² Study findings suggest a significant number of these have already transferred to full private ownership

were providing community rental accommodation (2%). The 55 Community Housing Organisation homes are owned by CORT, Accessible, Monte Cecilia, and Habitat for Humanity. Te Tumu Kāinga and the New Zealand Housing Foundation partner with prospective home purchasers and manage the Home Saver and shared equity schemes. The community rentals are also owned by either Te Tumu Kāinga or the New Zealand Housing Foundation and are offered as long-term tenancies with rents fixed at 30% of household incomes. In 2018, with around 50% of new dwellings occupied by Māori households and 15% by Pasifika households, the consortium's goal of providing housing for Māori and Pasifika families has been achieved.

Methods

The second phase of this longitudinal study of the TMCHL housing development at Waimahia Inlet involved interviews with three groups of residents:

- Waimahia Inlet residents who were first interviewed in 2015, as the first wave of new residents, and re-interviewed in 2017 (5 individuals).
- Waimahia residents who had moved into the development since 2015 and were interviewed for the first time in 2017/2018 (33 individuals).
- Weymouth residents living in streets adjacent to the Waimahia Inlet development (12 individuals)

The New Zealand Housing Foundation's Development Sales and Project Manager located on site at Waimahia also provided information on the development's progress from time to time via face to face interviews and email conversations.

Interview schedules were devised by the research team to explore the experiences of incoming Waimahia Inlet residents and residents living in streets adjacent to the development. Questions asked of new resident participants were similar to those asked during Phase 1 of the research, but with some additional areas covered. Topics covered included: how they came to be living at Waimahia; if relevant, financing for home ownership; expectations of the development and whether or not these had been met; experiences of, and satisfaction with, the design of their home and neighbourhood; social interaction and community formation; transport use, and future housing plans. Questions relating to home and neighbourhood also explored whether or not the design supported Māori cultural values. The interviews with repeat participants focused on how their perceptions and experiences of living at Waimahia had evolved, their reflections on the development of community over time, and any changes to their housing situation or future intentions since the first interview. Residents living in streets adjacent to the development, 'neighbouring residents', were asked about their experiences of the construction process, interactions with development residents and whether or not the development had contributed to changes in their daily lives.

Waimahia Inlet interviewees included residents of all tenures: shared equity home ownership, Home Saver/rent-to-buy, CHP rental tenancy, and private ownership via open market sales. A number of recruitment strategies were used to identify and invite participants to take part in the research. These included phoning and emailing those who had been interviewed in Phase 1 and had agreed to be recontacted; referrals from the development's Sales and Project Manager; responses to an

invitation to participate made at Resident’s Association meetings; invitations published on the Residents Association Facebook page, and door knocking. Door knocking was an important additional strategy to ensure heterogeneity in the sample. In total, 38 residents of the development were interviewed, of whom 37 specified their tenure arrangements: 9 were home owners in shared equity arrangements; 4 had initially been in shared equity arrangements but had subsequently refinanced to take over the share held by the CHP; 7 were in rent-to-buy arrangements; 5 were CHP tenants; and 12 had purchased their properties as open market sales.

Neighbouring residents were identified by door knocking. Streets proximate to the Inlet development on three sides were identified: Leaver Place; Becker Drive; Kaimoana Street (beyond the development) (see Figure 1).



The houses closest to the development in each location were enumerated and door knocking took place until 10 interviews, 3 - 4 per street were completed. Eight interviews were conducted face to face and appointment times for telephone interviews were negotiated with the remaining two. The two key informants were suggested by the development’s Sales and Project Manager, recruited by telephone and interviewed face-to-face.

All interviewees were provided with information about the project and consent forms which were signed before an interview was initiated. Interviews were all audio recorded and transcribed. The research team independently read through a sample of the transcripts and then in collaboration

developed separate coding frames for the Waimahia residents and the neighbouring resident samples. These coding frames were used to structure the thematic analysis and Nvivo³ was used to manage the data.

Other methods of data collection used in this research included: site visits, including looking through the interior of houses of different types and sizes; observation of the establishment of a Neighbourhood Support group in one area of the development; and attendance at Residents Association meetings. Researcher field notes and photographs provided the data for analysing the findings from these methods.

The three interview datasets were analysed separately: new Waimahia residents; the longitudinal sample of Waimahia residents; neighbouring residents. The responses from the longitudinal sample were analysed in relation to the transcripts of the original interviews in order to identify any significant changes in participants' perceptions of the development.

The findings are reported thematically, with Waimahia resident experiences appearing in the first two sections (new participants, then the longitudinal sample) followed by those of Weymouth residents living in neighbouring streets.

³ Nvivo 11, QSR International. (2015). *NVivo qualitative data analysis Software* (Ver. 11 ed.) QSR International Pty Ltd.

Findings

New Residents

Motivations for Moving to Waimahia

In keeping with Phase 1 findings, affordability – of rents or home ownership – was the number one factor drawing residents to Waimahia.

'I think the biggest interest or the biggest push for us was it was a foot in the door ... getting our own house, you know, like owning, owning property in a market that seemed quite out of reach' (Sam).

Other desirable characteristics of the development were sometimes noted, such as the newness of the houses, the location and aspects of the natural environment, but these were always secondary to the affordability of housing. Some later arrivals had visited friends and family living at Waimahia and heard about community events and activities. This became an added attraction of the development for these households.

Many interviewees had experienced great difficulty securing stable and healthy housing for themselves and their families. It was not uncommon for households to have moved many times from rental property to rental property and for them Waimahia offered *'...the security of not having to be kicked out of our house ...'* (Fay). Oliver mentioned moving between rental properties four times before their daughter turned two – predominantly due to rent increases. Similarly, Carol stated how she was *'sick'* of having to move house when landlords raised the rent.

Others talked about their children experiencing poor health due to living in cold and damp environments and living in cramped conditions with their extended family, either because it was all they could afford at the time or so that they could save for a deposit on a home. Conditions were sometimes grim *'freezing cold, industrial carpet...it was all we could afford at the time'* (Dolly). Django had been living in a garage with his family before being offered a social rental house at Waimahia.

Several participants attributed their unsatisfactory housing situation to finding themselves in a persistent cycle of children getting sick and requiring medical treatment, missing work to care for children and being unable to afford to move to healthier accommodation. By contrast, being at Waimahia meant a *'dry home and double glazing windows and a healthier home'* and children who were sick less often, and – *'at the end of the day, I own my house and it is good for the kid's health'* (Hayden).

For those hoping to own a home, Waimahia was seen as offering cheaper house prices for new houses than other parts of Auckland. Many felt they *'didn't really... [have] any chance to buy a house anywhere else'* so as Naina said, *'this was it really'*. The Weymouth and South Auckland location of

the development was attractive to participants who knew the area, had family nearby, or had lived there in the past.

'Probably the fact that it was still in the Weymouth area, my wife and I were dead set keen on raising our kids in this area, having lived here ourselves and gone to the local schools, you know we still believe it's a good area ...' (Carol).

But, as Dolly notes, while being in a familiar location was 'a bonus', the chance to own their own home was paramount:

'Really we liked living in Manurewa, so we wanted to sort of stay in that area, but ultimately the goal was to be able to have our first home, no matter where it was but being able to be in our community, was even a bonus...' (Dolly).

The desire for home ownership overrode any hesitation participants had about moving to an unfamiliar area often at considerable distance from workplace destinations and existing support networks. Naomi describes their rationale:

'So, we bought the house, we found the cheapest new-to-build in East or South Auckland and that was this subdivision ... But yeah, we did not want to live here, but that is the reality of our situation and we kind of still don't want to live here – [but] this is our first home and look at it, it's a dream home' (Naomi).

The location involved complicated and time consuming transport arrangements for some households who had moved from distant parts of Auckland, especially if their children stayed at their old schools and their workplaces were a considerable distance from Waimahia.

Although affordability was the primary motivation for participants moving to Waimahia, as noted earlier, community aspects played a secondary role in attracting some residents to the development. Furthermore, some of those who moved purely for financial reasons talked about having subsequently become enthusiastic supporters of community aspects of the development. For example, Olive stated:

'Actually, I didn't know there was a community here, I just didn't know. In my mind I just need a house, until we came here and then they added us on the group, on the Facebook group, and then we were overwhelmed. We didn't expect it so it has really exceeded our expectations' (Olive).

Engagement with the community has in turn engendered a commitment and an expressed desire by some participants to live in the development long-term. A commonly expressed sentiment was that, compared to previous residential arrangements, the community gave Waimahia a feeling of security and stability.

While seldom top of mind, the natural environment was also an attractive feature of the development for some interviewees. For Ata, who had not known Waimahia would be the location

of her rental home when first exploring housing options with a CHP, the natural attributes of the place were very appealing:

'The houses would be new which was really exciting and just the scenery around here. Seeing the areas for the walkway and the beach and close proximity to a lot of things' (Ata).

For others the whole package – new houses, the community, the environment, neighbourhood design – just felt right. Janine and her family had been 'scouting' around locations to buy a home and came across the development by accident. They were immediately attracted to the environment and purchased on the open market:

'We came across this place by accident ... and then when we entered the gates from the entrance, we drove all the way up here and then I fell in love with the community, the neighbourhood and ... at the time I saw that there were beautiful houses in here and new houses as well and I saw people were nice here as well' (Janine).

Dolly spoke of the development giving her 'hope' for the future, identifying a range of factors as she portrayed a future for her children that resonated with memories of her own childhood:

'[It] was a number of things, it offered us some hope, which was the biggest thing, you know, that we were going to be able to give our children a home ... and I loved that community vibe, I grew up in the 80s, I'm an 80s child so you know I got it, I was just like, man, this is a place trying to create that same sort of safety ... for our children' (Dolly).

A new development also offers opportunity to live in a new house – this opportunity was something several participants mentioned as a factor in their desire to live in Waimahia:

'We actually looked at a couple of existing ones first, but then I kind of, I don't know much about the maintenance of a house or how to renovate, so I kind of didn't want to get into that ... we wanted something brand new' (Chris).

The feeling that new houses are lower maintenance was brought up by several participants. In addition to lower maintenance, Vinnie was attracted by a new house as it was perceived to have more guarantees:

'I guess a new home is pretty good because it comes with warranties and guarantees and you don't have to worry about any maintenance as such and obviously it is tidier and much more user-friendly ... This is my first house so I am really proud of it' (Vinnie).

Affordability was a consistent factor drawing residents to Waimahia and the experience of moving in was often associated with strong sentiments of optimism and gratitude. Clearly, the development was offering fresh and affordable opportunities.

Negotiating Housing Tenure and Mortgage Financing

Getting *'behind the curve'* of Auckland's property price inflation had meant that, even with considerable efforts at saving, homeownership seemed unattainable for a number of participants. Changing deposit requirements when a more stringent loan-to-value ratio was introduced for bank lending, and, for some, bad credit ratings, had made securing and affording a mortgage very challenging for many incoming residents.

Residents who had managed to get onto either the rent-to-buy or shared equity/ownership schemes expressed the feeling that they were *'at least'* on a track, that there was *'light at the end of the tunnel'* and they had a *'pathway'* (Olive) to owning their own home. For households with some savings the shared equity tenure model opened the opportunity to secure a mortgage without needing to fulfil the 20% deposit requirement. Shared equity was seen as a model that enabled households to pay a mortgage affordably, while also *'chipping away'* (5% per time minimum) at owning the rest of the house. It was noted that at least one CHP required *'lump sum'* repayments, which can be difficult to payback at one time. However, Kate mentioned that she had come to an arrangement with her CHP to pay in weekly instalments – suggesting a level of flexibility within the scheme.

Consistent with Phase 1 participants' comments, interviewees had high praise for the CHP staff who talked them through the various options available for living, and potentially purchasing a home at Waimahia. This helped them to identify which option was best suited to their household's circumstance. For example, Sally described how she was initially not in a financial position to access one of the ownership schemes, but was helped by a CHP into temporarily renting at Waimahia so that she could start to settle as she tried to become *'financially able to get ... on the rent to own or home ownership'* tenure schemes.

For those embarking on shared equity, beyond providing the opportunity to enter into home ownership at an affordable level, householders indicated they were given considerable support through the complex and potentially frustrating legal and financial processes of buying a house. While the housing trusts do not directly take part in arranging the finance, they recommend clients use lawyers that they have dealt with in the past, which can help make the financing process smoother and less costly for each client. One of the participants described the benefits of using a lawyer recommended by a CHP as follows: *'As far as racking up the bills ... they charge hourly [and] these people know the contracts, they have read them inside out before, so all they are really doing is skimming over it...'* (Sam).

Furthermore, Sam recalled:

'[T]hey suggest ... you use [particular banks] ... you can use other banks, but they say go with these because [they] deal with these contracts all the time, they understand it' (Sam).⁴

⁴ Kiwibank and ASB are currently the only banks that will lend for NZHF shared equity arrangements (TMCHL).

The experiences recounted by participants suggest the New Zealand Housing Foundation and Te Tumu Kainga have developed relationships with particular banks and financiers, familiarising them with their work at Waimahia and making the financing process easier for all parties. As a consequence, Sam said they had found that:

'It was really easy ... we were expecting it to be harder ... [but] we had a good bank manager that looked after us with Kiwibank' (Sam).

A lot of this communication was through email rather than face-to-face meetings, as Maui stated:

'I ... call it the email house, because a lot of it was done online, a lot of discussion was through email, sending through documents all that kind of stuff ... which was quite different, but it was an easy process to follow' (Maui).

The Trust also recommended lawyers familiar with the process, so that while participants were free to choose a lawyer, there were benefits in using those familiar with the particular scheme. For Sam the process *'works really well'* and in his view the Trust were *'just trying to help the applicant out as much as possible ... it was great'*. Reflecting on their experience with the New Zealand Housing Foundation, another interviewee commented that he did not think he and his partner would have been able to secure a mortgage without their help.

However, the rise in house prices at Waimahia since participants had entered rent-to-buy and shared equity schemes was seen to have undermined the viability of home ownership for some of those we spoke to. The implications differ for those on rent-to-buy and shared equity schemes. Residents who were able to attain the shared ownership scheme will potentially benefit from the increases in price, as they partially own the property. However it has become harder for them to purchase the remaining share of their home. Finding themselves in this situation a number of households had taken on more debt to buy out the CHP earlier than planned. For those on rent-to-buy schemes the increase in house prices was seen to have shifted the 'goal post' and saving an adequate deposit so that they could secure a mortgage kept moving further way.

Doubts over whether or not they would eventually be able to own their home was concerning and stressful for some participants, particularly if they had built strong social connections within the neighbourhood. As one participant noted, they had put *'heart and soul'* into settling their family into their house and the neighbourhood yet their ability to eventually afford the home was moving further away. She explained:

...this is going to be our house and we are going to buy this house but because ... like it is ridiculous. When we moved in it was like \$462,000 and now it is like nearly \$700,000 – so do we actually want to buy it? (Olive).⁵

⁵ The developers have informed the research team that rent-to-buy residents who wish to purchase are 'gifted' 25% of the increase in value, which makes the prospect significantly more realistic. It appears this is not currently well-understood by all affected residents.

Another resident on a rent-to-buy scheme said she will *'persevere'* and hopes to eventually buy her home, however she worries that *'there are going to be families in some of those houses that the dream is lost for them'*. Consequently, those households who managed to just have the *'bare minimum ... for the shared equity'* scheme, rather than rent-to-buy, have found that after a few years they are much better positioned than if they had not made the minimum deposit.

The community aspects of the development have helped some households to make small weekly savings. Examples include being able to share and borrow tools through the Facebook page and other examples of neighbourhood reciprocity such as sharing surplus food and giving away items, or selling them cheaply. These everyday acts of generosity are broadly practiced by residents. As well as being, at times, of economic benefit, they were also presented as significant in the development of a sense of community within the neighbourhood.

Finally, a number of residents discussed the actions of several people working for the developer, the Trust and other CHPs, who they felt had personally been particularly helpful during the process of settling in Waimahia. These individuals seemed to have had a significant impact on the settling process for these residents during a number of difficulties.

Expectations of Living at Waimahia Inlet

Questioned about their expectations of Waimahia before they moved to the development, the residents recalled a range of expectations, both positive and negative. Initially, expectations tended to be wholly focused on the home they would live in and, where relevant, their pathway to home ownership within the development. It was common for participants to have few expectations of the wider neighbourhood and community, but if wider neighbourhood expectations were mentioned, they often related to possible implications of living at higher density.

Density

The density of the development was higher than most interviewees had experienced before and a number anticipated this would be the downside of the development. The purposeful design to minimise property fencing led some residents to worry about a lack of privacy, and the close proximity of neighbours raised concerns about noise. However, these concerns were mostly allayed once living in the development:

'We thought we'd be living in each other's pockets, being that close, but it's not like that' (Blair).

The design and materials used to build the houses have also seemingly reduced the impact of neighbour noise that several participants expected they might experience:

'You don't hear too much noise which is really interesting. You don't actually hear any noise outside so it is quite insulated and you would think with the neighbours being really close you would hear them ... but I don't have much problem with noise' (Ngahuia).

'So, we thought that with so many houses close together there would be a lot of noise. But it is the opposite, it's quiet' (Serena).

Nevertheless, some residents felt exposed by a lack of visual privacy, illustrated by comments such as: *'We are literally looking at my neighbour's house, so [we'd like] maybe a little bit more space' (Ata).*

It was also suggested that the level of community communication and cohesion was a useful buffer against conflicts that could arise through living in close proximity to neighbours:

'It could really be a disaster because people are living so close together ... [but] I think ... how we have set the community up with the neighbourhood support and the committees and with the Facebook page and a solid communication network – has been really crucial (Olive).

Having few expectations beyond the house they were to live in meant many interviewees were surprised by some of their experiences living in Waimahia. When reflecting on these experiences comments such as, *'It has surpassed our expectation' (Serena)* were not uncommon.

A higher level of contact and interaction with other residents than was anticipated has generally been a positive experience and a pleasant surprise. As Lucie described:

'Actually, I didn't know there was a community here, I just didn't know. In my mind I just need a house. Until we came here and then they added us on the group, on the Facebook group, and then we were overwhelmed' (Lucie).

With regard to having expectations of a greater sense of community within the development, another participant stated:

'I don't think so. For us ... it might have ... gone in one ear and out the other ... it was about having a home that was brand new. The thought of having a brand-new home ... no one else has lived in it' (Moana).

Around two thirds of participants had moved to Waimahia from other parts of South Auckland. The previous homes of the other third were scattered across the Auckland region. A desire for housing security and/or a pathway to home ownership overshadowed most other concerns, including loss of attachment to a prior neighbourhood for most interviewees. However, for several households leaving a neighbourhood they had invested in socially and emotionally, and had strong attachment to, had made the transition difficult. Their children continued to attend schools in the previous neighbourhood:

'I guess the aspirations of the area were clouded by the fact that we were getting a new home so that was the big thing to us, that was what we were looking forward to, we weren't looking forward to leaving our community because we loved it but we were looking forward to a new home' (Sam).

While the new house has met their expectations, the local area felt unfamiliar and somewhat undesirable – particularly in terms of a lack of personal safety – so they were reluctant to loosen ties with their previous community.

Alison and her family had to move from her rental house in East Auckland where they had lived for several years, and had felt socially connected. However, the level of community activity at Waimahia was an unexpected but welcomed surprise:

'Well we're really grateful and we feel really blessed to be in our home, to get on the ladder, we like that there is a community feel, that we are all connected on the Facebook page, especially when moving to South Auckland and away from a lot of people that we knew – it was really nice that we're all connected ... but it has been a bit of a culture shock ... we're not ungrateful, because we wouldn't change living here at all, we're so happy about it' (Alison).

The delight and gratitude to be in their own home at Waimahia that is manifest in this quote was also apparent in many other interviews. While the new location was unfamiliar, the level of social interaction within the Waimahia development, particularly through the Facebook group, exceeded expectations and had seemingly allayed some of the apprehension initially felt about living in South Auckland.

'Absolutely, I'm extremely happy, and ... I don't know what our expectations were, but we're happy here, we can see ourselves here long term' (Ruth).

'It totally exceeded my expectations because I didn't even expect this level of support in terms of community support' (Ata).

'It exceeded our expectations. When we looked at it we are coming here solely as this is affordable – where we could buy our house. We thought we were compromising on a lot of outdoor space and privacy for our children. But once we moved in we were pleasantly surprised that it is actually a lot better than we expected. I suppose ... we are quite happy living here and see ourselves staying a bit longer than we initial thought' (Serena).

Not only have the residents come from across the Auckland region but they also have diverse cultural backgrounds and several participants stated that they had found the actions of some other residents intimidating, particularly the behaviour of some children:

'Coming here, I wasn't expecting much to be honest, I was just keen to get my own home – It's definitely different from what I'm used to – the kids here are a lot more vocal – feel a bit intimidated by some of the families' (Kate).

Similarly, Naina recounted that the behaviour of some of the other residents had taken some getting used to, but accepted that *'you can't expect everyone to be like you and have the same expectations...'*

The higher level of contact and interaction fostered within the development perhaps exposes residents to both the more and less agreeable behaviours of fellow residents.

Neighbourhood crime

Talk and accounts of crimes in the development were a feature of almost all interviews. The level of crime perceived or experienced was unexpected to some, but expected by others. Clendon, the suburb to the north of the development, was said by several participants to have a reputation as a high-crime area – a reputation shared by other parts of South Auckland. While feeling the level of crime was high, Olive was very familiar with the area and felt that it was to be expected:

'I guess at the end of the day the reality is that we still live in South Auckland – and we live smack bang in it. Unless you have grown up here ... it is quite hard ... it is a wonderful community but yeah, there is crime' (Olive).

I feel ... I have to admit, even I get wary walking down the water view path by myself, just things that have happened, and I guess we live in Clendon, at the end of the day we can call it Weymouth, but it's Clendon' (Ruth).

Several participants suggested the development was not as safe as they had expected. These participants originally believed that Waimahia would be quite separate from the surrounding neighbourhoods and did not expect the level of crime they were hearing about. Consequently, one participant suggested he was considering moving out: *'No [I'm] not happy with my decision, and there's a couple of reasons ... I know that I will have to move out' (Albert).*

Similarly, Chris stated that they did not anticipate the level of crime reported within the neighbourhood:

'...like every day you hear a car was broken into, all sorts of things happening, throwing things, rubbish everywhere, I've lived in Flatbush, it's another development, but there's no drama like this' (Chris).

This expectation of crime and a heightened perception of potential criminal activity has had negative consequences on feelings of inclusion and acceptance for some Waimahia residents. Three separate incidents were described where residents had been wrongly identified and mistakenly accused or accosted for being *'suspicious'* in the neighbourhood. The potential for racism to be a driver in these occurrences was quite clear to some interviewees:

'I am Samoan/Pakeha, my partner is Samoan, I have had a huge altercation with my neighbour ... [who] was filming my brother ... because she thought that she had seen him burgling her car the night before. She said to me, "but he looks like the guy that was stealing my car" ... She would sit at the door ... she was perpetually frightened. So, I said, "if you are perpetually frightened of brown people and particularly brown men – then don't live here because there are a lot of them and this is their home"' (Naomi).

A mother described another incident that involved her son being singled out and accused of a crime by residents. As a consequence he was reluctant to be out and about in the neighbourhood:

'Mine don't like to go out into the community, my twelve-year-old has anxiety and has been confronted by some [residents], mistakenly for a young youth who was trying to break into cars, and it has affected him so he doesn't go out into the community' (Sally).

Youth were commonly stigmatised and maligned as perpetrators of crimes. While these incidents have led to residents being suspected as perpetrators of local crimes, it was more common for participants to suspect people from outside the area:

'No, not from here, I think they came in from outside. I don't think anybody from here, from inside would do that because they are like ... I just don't think they are from within' (Janine).

'Clendon is pretty rough ... unfortunately – we feel safe with everyone in the community but the outskirts...' (Oliver).

There was a belief that people from outside the development are attracted to Waimahia because of a perception that the residents are wealthier than those in the surrounding suburbs.

Experiences of crime and perceptions of who is responsible for criminal activity have also led to a feeling of 'us versus them' between residents living in Waimahia and those living in surrounding areas. This point is revisited when we report on interviews with neighbouring residents. Perceptions of crime is also revisited, including a suggestion that these have been inflated due to rapid information sharing on incidents through the use of Facebook for neighbourhood surveillance.

Despite the amount of talk about crime, many participants stated that they felt quite safe within the neighbourhood, with several commenting that they felt the level of crime was no higher than elsewhere in Auckland. Some of these residents found that their initial expectations of crime in the area had been exaggerated:

'It's actually better ... I thought it would feel ... maybe a bit unsafe ... at night ... but being here during the day and seeing the people who live around us, I feel the complete opposite, I feel super safe here' (Carol).

'I mean, I lived in Avondale and other areas and I don't see the Waimahia community being more unsafe than others as such – but that was my perception before I moved in. I thankfully have had no issues so far' (Vinnie).

There was some suggestion that crime may have been higher during the construction phase and was now becoming less frequent. Whether due to altered perceptions of criminality or actual reductions in levels of crime, concerns over criminal activity appeared to have lessened over time. The developers reported to the research team that the builders observed less crime than might be

expected on a large construction site. This was attributed to limited entry and exit points prior to the construction of the roundabout at the intersection of Weymouth Road and Kaimoana Street.

Housing: Attributes, Quality, Trade-offs, Affordability and Personalising Space

This section reports on residents' views about the material attributes of their homes and their general experiences of the housing within the development. It touches on particular attributes of the housing such as its suitability for different age groups and its perceived quality, as well as affordability trade-offs and residents' ability and actions to personalise their home space. There was a range of both positive and negative experiences regarding the housing in Waimahia and this most often related to fit between the design of the house and each participant's household composition and individual needs.

Accommodating guests

Participants were asked how the design of their house impacted upon their ability to accommodate visiting whānau/family or friends, including those with mobility impairments. The open plan living space was widely praised for day-to-day living, but also for accommodating larger groups. Ngahuia compared the ease of having family occasions at Waimahia to experiences in previous rental dwellings and really appreciated having the extra space for such events:

'[It's] really good because ... I have the space to have everyone here. The open plan situation keeps us together when we are having kai, when we are sitting down, when we are talking, even for a family hui and all that – so it has a nice easy flow indoors and outdoors as well. I think that is what I like about this house, we can fit a lot more people in here and I don't have to worry about where I am going to sit them or anything like that because they can sit on the floor ... So yeah, it suits me and my family' (Ngahuia).

The small step at the front door of houses was brought up a few times as a small difficulty for mobility impaired guests:

'Yeah we've had friends over who have mobility issues, and we just say you know there's a bathroom downstairs, and there's a little step up through the front door but once you're in it's all flat, and yeah ... everyone's happy with that ... we're really glad that we had that put in, or else it would be like sorry you have to go up the stairs' (April).

The location of bathrooms was commonly noted. The participants whose homes had a downstairs bathroom commented on how valuable that option was to them. As April mentioned above, their decision to have a layout that included a downstairs bathroom was very useful when they had friends with mobility issues visiting them. Below, Ruth comments on how the downstairs bathroom has allowed her to have her grandfather visit, who would not be able to make it up the stairs.

'Yeah absolutely ours is, we've got the bathroom downstairs so ... when my grandfather came to see our house, he was not able to get up the stairs ... because

the stairs are too steep and he could not get up there, I do feel sorry for the people with three bedrooms who don't have the bathroom downstairs at all' (Ruth).

The relatively narrow width and steep gradient of the steps – a likely trade-off to increase internal space and lower construction costs – had also caused difficulty accommodating some guests. Kate felt that the lack of downstairs bed and bathroom facilities prevented her from having her dad stay:

'I would say no, my dad is not old but he certainly has, well he's got a sore hip and he certainly wobbles, so for him to come stay would not really be an option for us' (Kate).

Equally, Ata was concerned when moving in that her parents would struggle to stay with them:

'That was the only concern I had was if my mum comes – she is in community services now and she has a sore knee but she has the rails. She just laughs and goes, I am going to crawl up. But that was the only initial concern I had when my elderly parents came to visit that going upstairs might be hard for them' (Ata).

Young families and children

In households with younger children the location of bathrooms can be an important part of getting on with everyday activities. Several interviewees reported that the lack of a downstairs toilet facility was not ideal. For example, Alison stated:

'...the only thing is there's no downstairs bathroom in the small [houses], but we just use little potties, they're never going to make it up the stairs, that's our only thing and we can work around it, so it's fine' (Alison).

As Albert describes below, when children get older, the requirements for more bathroom space can also increase:

'...with the 20 year old who always has a tendency [to] take a lot more time, you know, to groom, so it's a little bit frustrating ... and you've got to wait' (Albert).

However, the trade-off for increased living space downstairs was also welcomed by larger households, especially with extended family visiting regularly.

Green spaces: public and private

The private front and back yards of dwellings vary somewhat in size but are generally small compared to traditional suburban housing. By contrast public outdoor spaces – parks, playgrounds, walkways and an adjacent coastal estuary – are attractive and generous.

A characteristic of the development is that front yards (facing the road) are mostly unfenced. The boundary between private yards and public and private spaces at the front of the house can be difficult to discern – sometimes leading to conflicting expectations and discomfort for some residents. Also, as Alison mentioned, without fencing, the front yard is seen by some parents as too

dangerous to use as a play space for young children: *'The front of the house just being on the road we don't use it ... We prefer a backyard because it's safer with small children, yeah so we would not use a front yard at this stage' (Alison).*

However, the small size of the private garden spaces was generally accepted by interviewees. The backyards were used and enjoyed, often for children to play in or to grow vegetables, but so too were the development's shared green spaces:

'Do I have a garden, no, I guess, yeah, just for the kids to play in the backyard, but I guess ... it's quite a small area, but we're really grateful we've got the big reserve just across the road, which is a big adventure park for our kids to go and play around in and explore' (Maui).

Similar comments were made by other households with young children, who mostly found the trade-off between private and public/shared green space acceptable and appreciated the environment that local parks and reserves provided. Several participants were very active in their backyard, gardening and growing fruit and vegetables for consumption.

However, there were a few complaints about the quality of the soil which reduced the rewards of gardening. One couple described the soil as *'really bad, so there have been potholes and it is all cracked and that's because it is really dry. Everyone has the same problem ... it is all clay' (Moana).* The suggestion was that topsoil was removed and not replaced during construction, meaning that the soil is not particularly fertile.

Garage / storage

Garages are rarely used for parking cars at Waimahia. Rather, as a flexible extension of the indoor space they are used variously for storage, as additional living or bedroom space, and as a study. Kate and Tui's accounts of how the garages are used were fairly typical:

'[It's used for] storage, my car barely fits in the garage ... so bikes, washing, things that we don't really use so much anymore, extra table and things like that, yeah, that's all we use it for' (Kate).

'Yes they've got space to study, we use the garage, so we don't use it as our garage, we use it as another living space for the kids at the moment' (Tui).

Two of the participants had converted their garage space into bedrooms for elderly parents. Adding an en suite in this space also resolved bathroom access issues. As April pointed out, this option was recommended by the New Zealand Housing Foundation:

Three bedrooms upstairs, and then just a basic open space, and then my mother lives in the garage, and we had an en-suite put [in] off the garage, and that was actually the Housing Foundation's idea. So the garage is fully insulated, including the door, so it's amazing ... it's actually quite nice having the en-suite down in the garage, because you don't have to go up and down the stairs all day' (April).

Many participants felt that the garage space was too narrow to comfortably park the car, especially when they wanted to store other things like bikes in that space. However, using the garage for other purposes has seemingly caused a greater demand for on-street parking than was allowed for in the street design. Downstream consequences of street parking – a lack of parking spaces, conflicts over parking, and the perceived threat of vandalism and car theft – will be discussed later as complaints residents had about life at Waimahia.

Bad quality, poor finishing

Overall, residents were grateful for the opportunity to live in a new house and praise was mostly high for the design and construction of the houses. However, a number of interviewees reported disappointment over the quality of some of the finishing work. Painting and plastering finishes and interior fittings were of particular note:

'The quality of the house ... a lot of our neighbours are complaining that ... the quality is not too high ... But yeah, you can see that the wall has easily been chipped off. Like for example ... your chair pushes and you bang it on the wall and it chipped it off' (Lucie).

As well as chipping paint and plastering, the fittings within the houses were reportedly breaking:

'We have paint chips, we had our toilet seat and stuff always broke and ... the bracket that our shower head sits on has broken twice in both bathrooms. We have just replaced it ... [and] the carpet was coming away in the stairs' (Moana).

Complaints about the quality of plumbing and leaking pipes were made by three participants. These issues had appeared early as the residents settled in their new home, and caused some distress and apprehension about the quality of the houses they had just moved into on home ownership schemes.

'One thing we had was the plumber didn't crimp some of the pipes properly and we had a big leak, so it leaked all down the wall and through the floor and all that. And it happened over Christmas' (Blair).

A punctured pipe was mentioned by another resident, a situation quickly resolved by calling in the project manager. This participant mentioned that if you were on a shared equity scheme you had the chance to report defects and have them fixed, which alleviated some of the concern regarding these problems with poor quality finishing. They added: *'...we had a defects sheet and then ... I listed as much as I could at that time, they got it all done pretty much' (Chris).*

It is important to note that while residents moving into their new houses found issues with the quality of some aspects of the house – a not uncommon issue with all new housing – there was also an overall feeling, that the houses were good quality and for most, a substantial improvement on their previous dwelling.

Trade-offs and affordability

Trade-offs – dwelling features forgone in order to afford their home – were often mentioned. The size of private indoor and/or outdoor spaces were among the more common examples. In the following excerpt Blair describes how his affordable home is smaller than he would have ideally liked:

[the quality] 'It's pretty up there, it doesn't have all the bells and whistles but ... it has everything we need ... Yeah, we would have liked a bigger house, but it is obviously dependent on our ability to afford a bigger house, which we weren't in a position to do, which is fine' (Blair).

As discussed earlier, easy access to public green spaces around the development has helped to reduce concerns about small private outdoor spaces, but this was a trade-off many interviewees had been unsure about making – particularly households with young children. Reduced space for growing food compared to a previous living situation was a trade-off made by Serena:

'In my old house, I had a really big garden and had dreams of growing all my own food. So that was one of the concerns with having a smaller yard, in that there was not having enough room for the kids to play and for me to have a garden ... But once we moved in we were pleasantly surprised, that it is actually a lot better than we expected' (Serena).

Similarly, Carol stated that for an affordable new house, they were, somewhat reluctantly, willing to trade-off the quality of finishing:

'I think that they've made it affordable, which is good because that's what we wanted ... I am quite fussy though ... so I spot things ... when it hasn't been plastered properly, or sanded properly or something ... but in saying that I'm not fussed about it, because they've made them affordable, if they had of taken the time to be super pedantic like that then I'd hate to think what the price of the house would be' (Carol).

As discussed above, there were quality issues with the houses, particularly related to plastering and painting. However as Carol stated, while they were very aware of these defects, it was something which they could put up with. The affordability of the house was seen to trump the minor building quality issues, because if the quality was higher they expected that the house would then have been too expensive for them to be able to afford anyway.

Personalising space

Moving into a new dwelling often requires a period of adjustment to the new location and neighbourhood; and time to make a new house into a home. An important part of the process is personalising the home space. This section considers different ways residents have personalised their home space.

Customising the garage space to suit their needs for storage or extra living space, as noted earlier, was one way this could be achieved. Carol mentions below how they had the opportunity to add in many of their own choices of fixtures and fittings and make the house feel more personalised:

'Yeah I think that's a bonus for me is that they haven't gone overboard with fixtures and fittings and what not, because you can then sort of personalise it yourself ... I think it's great, love that we got the choice, we're so lucky to be able to buy a house' (Carol).

As stated above, those who entered Waimahia as part of a CHP home ownership scheme were allowed some say on the design of their new house. This input went beyond the fixtures and fittings etc. and also included the internal layout. As Vinnie stated:

'It is basically three bedrooms plus a study with a wardrobe. So when we originally planned to buy I went with the 3-bedroom option and then added the study later on, we had the choice to do that as part of the design' (Vinnie).

Conversely, the exterior design (including colour schemes) of the houses was determined by the developer, with minimal scope for adding personal features. The Residents Association bylaws prohibit alterations to the front yards and facades of the dwellings. The quote below suggests that this was another trade-off, but one that Sam accepted as reasonable to maintain the design integrity of the development:

'It does feel all a little bit the same ... because you weren't allowed to choose anything about the exterior of your house. You got to choose the interior carpets, the lino, the cupboards and all that kind of stuff ... but you had to just go with their plan for the outside ... or else everyone would kind of choose maybe the same thing and they have got a pattern they kind of stick to' (Sam).

As Sam stated, while there was room for choice on the inside, the outside must be kept as determined by the masterplan.

Understanding of Community

As noted earlier some new residents had made prior visits to friends and family in Waimahia, whereas others knew nothing of the development's social characteristics in advance of moving in. As a consequence expectations of the community and neighbourhood on arrival varied and early impressions of 'community' were expressed in terms of what community looks like, feels like and acts like.

The physical appearance of the development was highlighted by some participants as visually indicative of community, with the style of housing and the tidiness of the development remarked upon:

'It feels like a community ... when ... you see all these houses, you're like 'wow this looks like a nice community', and it is that, it's a community' (Tui).

'And the Waimahia inlet ... you know they have those expectations of you, like just to keep everything nice and tidy and looked after' (April).

The expectation of tidiness, of living within a well-kept neighbourhood, was associated with expectations of the community and community-mindedness for some residents. Tidiness signified caring and pride and that residents *'...actually care about where they live, and where they belong and where their kids play' (Maui)*. These expectations were further enacted through community-organised rubbish clearing events, which also have the effect of enhancing social interaction within the community.

The actions of others were also noted by some participants as central to creating a sense of community at Waimahia. Everyday acts of kindness and interactions were often stated as heightening the sense of community. Statements such as *'Everyone's super friendly and, you know, they all look out for each other' (April)* were common. Acts of neighbourliness, such as sharing tools and food were also often reported as important in generating feelings of community.

Waimahia was designed primarily as housing for families and it has attracted many households with children. Identifying points of commonality around which they could relate to others was an important cornerstone of community for some participants and children were often seen as catalysts for meeting and engaging with other residents: *'It feels like we can relate to other people who are here because they are hardworking and they have families too' (Ata)*.

Being able to relate to neighbours who were seen as similar to themselves contributed to the area feeling safer and more secure, which in turn made it a place *'...that we could put our roots down and settle' (Tui)*. Notwithstanding issues with crime within the neighbourhood, a number of participants stated how the development *'feels like a safe community'*.

Interviewees were aware that 'community' is being actively enabled and performed and many indicated that they were a part of this process and valued the social connections it provided. The Residents Association and initiatives of this group such as the Waimahia Inlet Residents' Facebook group and the provision of 'starter packs' for new arrivals with useful information, upcoming events and introductions to other residents, were all frequently mentioned. Ata described several practical and emotional benefits of the Facebook group:

'They have a residents Facebook page where we have been able to learn information and learn who our neighbours are. There is a lot of sharing as well – like food, if they have extra, or things like stuff in their garage ... and it is just a real nice kind of feeling' (Ata).

Facebook – Information Sharing

The Facebook group was regarded as a particularly important facilitator of community engagement and social networking within the development. Highly valued, it is used to announce, promote and plan community activities and to share information.

The page states that it has been set up for the residents of the *'new Waimahia Inlet Development to keep updated on any issues, concerns or events that may affect our community'*. The page is private and only accessible to those Facebook users who have been accepted by the managers of the page. At the time of writing (10/06/18), the page had five new posts that day and 132 in the last 30 days, and 446 members. It is unknown whether all residents within the development are active or members on the page and whether certain residents are excluded or uninterested in joining. However, of the residents interviewed, only three did not explicitly mention the Facebook page – suggesting that the page is a significant part of social interaction within the development. As Serena stated:

'Yes, the Facebook page is really good. In this generation, the Facebook groups are quite good for feeling as though you belong somewhere. So, people post various things ... there is a rubbish collection and a sausage sizzle and ice blocks...' (Serena).

The page has seemingly become closely integrated into the everyday life and interactions within Waimahia, and is, for at least some residents, *'almost a daily connection'* (Kate). The majority of residents who were interviewed emphasised that the page has been *'a huge contributor in terms of how we connect as a community'* (Ngahuaia).

Neighbours can keep in touch and discuss community matters in their own home, and *'even if you don't talk to the people on the other side of the street in person, you know the names and faces'* (April). As April suggests, having a community Facebook page has allowed residents to know and recognise each other without necessarily having to meet in person. It offers an alternative way to interact at times of day that suit individual schedules. For residents with busy lives, who come and go by car and do not bump into others as part of their daily routine, or for those whose lives are housebound, they can still stay abreast of community matters and discuss issues and problems. Mavis stated that she found the page helpful to contact her neighbours and keep informed with what is going on in the community:

'[Through the] Waimahia Facebook page ... we get to contact each other [with] what is happening around the neighbourhood and everything, which is quite good, because ... we don't really go out much but we get to hear what is happening on the other streets' (Mavis).

Local issues can include when neighbours have problems with each other, *'so when there is noise and parties ... we get on the Facebook group and we talk about it...'* (Blair). Or if there are incidents with misbehaving children these are often sorted out online between parents: *'Parents will take responsibility and say sorry, that was my child ... it's good ... it was sorted in no time'* (Heather). The page mostly successfully facilitates the mediation of these types of local neighbourhood issues.

However, there are also disagreements and issues between neighbours that get expressed on the page in rather less constructive ways. Two interviewees suggested that this is a regular occurrence with *'a lot of the things ... deleted because of the language that gets used'* (Albert). The Facebook page can therefore become a place where negative feelings about the behaviour of neighbours are expressed. There is a degree of moderation that occurs by designated moderators:

'...there are downsides, in that some people do use the Facebook forum to complain about things that could probably be sorted face to face ... sometimes people just use it as a tool to vent against other people ... so we do have an administration team who can choose to delete posts, if they think it's appropriate' (Naina).

'...then the [moderator] keeps on saying, 'listen people please use proper language because we can't publish it...' (Albert).

Moderating the content on the Facebook page is a time consuming task undertaken by a members of the Residents Association.

The Facebook group has been effective in facilitating 'online neighbourliness'. For example, offers of free or cheap goods can be easily broadcast:

'There is a lot of sharing ... like food, [or] if they have extra ... things, like stuff in their garage that their kids have grown out of, like bikes ... it is just a real nice kind of feeling' (Ata).

'So, whenever anyone has anything excess it always goes on the Facebook page. So I have managed to get myself a couch from two streets over and ... [it] turned out to be that someone was giving it away and you could have easily sold it for several hundred dollars and it was, man, that is pretty cool ... the first thing they think about is the community' (Blair).

Donations to fellow members of the community can be the result of one-off posts on Facebook for someone to collect an item. Alternatively, as Kate mentioned, they can be regular provisions, such as food grown in home gardens: *'We ... have donated food ... [from] my dad, because he's still on a massive section, so, tomatoes, pumpkins, yeah, and the Facebook page is awesome for that' (Kate).*

These expressions of neighbourliness help to facilitate further community formation, both online and in person. Sam relayed how he initially needed some tools to build a shed:

'When I built the garden shed ... I didn't know I needed a pot rivet gun, so we just put it on the ... page, "hey does anyone have a pot rivet gun I could borrow for the night" and ... yeah, a guy lent me one and ... dropped it back the next morning and we never met him, but we ended up having a huge talk to him about, he has got his kids at the local school...' (Sam).

Examples of neighbourliness and reciprocity instigated offline included residents sharing greetings, food and other forms of exchange:

'We are good neighbours, we share our baking, yeah. And we are Sri Lankan, we cook Sri Lankan and they like Sri Lankan food. And the tools.

Interviewer: 'So they are not Sri Lankan themselves?'

'No, they are Niuean' (Hayden).

Overall the Facebook page was viewed very positively by interviewees. It kept them informed and was tangible evidence that people were connected and interacting with each other:

'The shared tools, the tool sharing is a good idea with the street BBQs and it is all human things that are good about it. It is the people that makes a difference' (Vinnie).

In the following section we report on the second major use of the Waimahia Facebook group – surveillance and alerting others to crime.

Facebook – crime and surveillance

As an active social space where issues of concern are brought to the community's attention, the Facebook page has played an important role in shaping residents' perceptions of crime within the development and their responses to reported criminal activity. Car theft and vandalism have been of particular concern. Incidents are normally posted on the page by residents, as well as the sharing of advice on how to try and avoid being a victim of crime. Sharing information and issues in this way has increased the residents' awareness of crime and instant messaging has enabled rapid surveillance. However, as Naina mentioned, there is the potential for such interactions to increase the perceived threat of crime within the neighbourhood:

'Probably one of the downsides of the Facebook page, is that ... people just talk and talk and talk, my car was broken into, you know, then the next day my car window was smashed ... we need CCTV or we need a gated community ... it just kind of spirals out of control, and you kind of forget that it's because we're all on Facebook' (Naina).

Regular reports of actual or suspected criminal activity – potentially conflated with some interviewees' apprehensions about living in 'South Auckland' – have made some residents nervous. These online conversations initially increased feelings of unease amongst the new community and reactions to the perception of high crime included groups of residents arranging to walk the streets in the evenings to maintain surveillance. Reporting 'suspicious' behaviour and setting up surveillance networks were both facilitated by Facebook:

'When there was a lot of those posts coming up, what comes after is some more interest to [do] the walk-around. So, there will be some people volunteering to go around and say I will just walk around the block at night' (Donna).

The high level of surveillance and perception of threat from crime did develop negative feelings amongst the community. However, it would seem that this has ameliorated as people recognised that the threat was possibly exaggerated through the spreading of information on Facebook. As Moana stated:

'A lot of people think we get hit more often than other neighbourhoods but other neighbourhoods aren't sharing the information, so [then] you don't know what is

happening within your neighbourhood. It is only because we post stuff and we are sharing information' (Moana).

'We looked at [the] Facebook page ... the night before we moved in ... and going through their ... previous posts, there was a lot of posts about cars getting stolen and broken into and even some people's houses were getting broken into. We were reading them in bulk and going "oh my goodness". We came to the realisation that it was posted on that page, so normally you wouldn't hear about your three hundred neighbour's cars getting broken into all the time. It happens everywhere in Auckland' (Serena).

While several participants noted that they were initially apprehensive about the potential level of crime in the neighbourhood due to the amount of Facebook posts on the community page, this has mostly subsided: *'I don't hear as often [about] the thieves and all that on Facebook ... I don't hear that any more so that put me at ease as well' (Mavis).*

The Facebook group has also been used as a site of community mobilisation, not only concerning issues within the neighbourhood, but also those outside. As Ngahuia recounted:

'There was a liquor outlet up here that was renewing their liquor license and they were wanting some conditions changed on how they sold the liquor that would have had an impact on our community ... and so ... I put that onto the Facebook page and wanted to know if anyone in the community was interested in opposing the application and we were overwhelmed by responses' (Ngahuia).

While community mobilisation for or against changes to their neighbourhood is not new, the use of a community Facebook page potentially allows communities to develop more awareness, engagement and coordinate responses more immediately.

Events

The Residents Association runs a number of community events which many interviewees mentioned as being well liked and well attended. The events are partially funded through a \$20 levy paid by each household each year. The developers of Waimahia have recently committed to financially supporting the Waimahia Residents Association by matching the amount of money collected each year in levies. This arrangement will last for 10 years.

The events run by the Residents Association have included: a children's day, Christmas and Easter events, BBQs, a New Year's fireworks display and regular market days. The opening of new parks in the development has also involved organised community events which tend to be organised by a few very active community members.

A few interviewees commented that they were not particularly interested in such events as they didn't come to Waimahia to take part in events, but rather to own a home. A number of others also commented that while they liked the idea of the community events, they were too busy to attend.

Ngahua mentioned that there have been fundraisers to help support fellow residents. For example, *'We have a couple of families in here that have family members that have got cancer and we have come together as a community to help fundraise for them'*. Sally also indicated that they *'support each other by ... fundraisers and events for other neighbours [who] are going through hardship ... [we] come together to help one another'*.

The portacom (a temporary office used by the Sales and Project Manager as a shared community structure) has become a focal point for community events and meetings. One such event is a rubbish collection day that occurs about once every three months and is organised by the Residents Association's environmental committee. Rubbish bags and gloves are distributed and participants head to various parts of the development to collect rubbish. Naina recounted that there are about *'25 people or so ... lots of kids ... and you know they'll come and help us and then we'll put like a pizza on or something ... go back to the portacom and have some pizza or chips ... so that's kind of cool'*. Another event focused on the local environment involved trimming back the mangroves next to the coastal walkways.

Many events run at Waimahia have a focus on children and activities for children (e.g., competitions and colouring activities). Beyond providing children with things to do in their local neighbourhood on the weekend, the activities encourage social networking between residents. As Sania stated:

'They do some nice Christmas colouring for the children to take part in ... and they have the seating around so we just go and meet ... people and the neighbours'
(Sania).

Inclusion and exclusion

The development was commonly seen as having a strongly family-oriented environment. For many interviewees, this offered a feeling of inclusion and connection. To others it underpinned a feeling of safety for themselves and their children:

'The bonus ... with all these schemes happening, is that you're attracting a lot of families ... we wanted to live amongst other families, because we knew that ... it's more of a safe environment ... so we love living here' (Tui).

'I love it, I absolutely love it. I mean like I said, I am a single parent and the first thing you look for is safety ... even if you are by yourself and isolated, you may know your neighbours and say "hi" but it just gives you a little bit of an outlet like, I am not alone, there is someone else there looking out for me too' (Heather).

Parents talked positively of the development as a good place for children; they could roam more freely and safely at Waimahia than in other suburban settings: *'One of the positives is that it is a real open community. My son ... he is just all over the place ... he is really quite free'* (Blair).

Notwithstanding the earlier comments about racism, suspicion and surveillance, the diversity of residents living in Waimahia was often mentioned and usually with positive inflection. An openness to differences and desire to make connections across social groups was often talked about:

'Though we're of different races, our neighbours, but then it's not like we just [keep to our] own. We feel part of their family as well. So, it's like whenever we come out, we know each other well now, so we do say "hi". We do exchange things' (Sania).

'...it is different nationalities in here, different ethnicities and I think that is good and it just gives that feeling of diversity...you might not ever get to meet someone who is from Sri Lanka or the Philippines and I think it is just really nice to have that' (Ata).

References to diversity usually related to ethnic diversity, but some life stage diversity was also noted. Discussion of tenure diversity often focused on diversity of options within a trajectory of home ownership. As noted earlier, home ownership was frequently identified as underpinning a sense of commonality within the development; a phenomenon with implications for the exclusion of those not on this trajectory. Several participants who discussed difficulties with neighbours referred to, or implied, a relationship between tenure status and the behaviour of neighbours. For example, Kate stated:

'We moved in at the same time as these guys next door, they're not the most friendliest ... I don't want to sound rude, but ... they're quite rude and quite to themselves, and from what we've learnt later on ... they're renters actually ... they have been spoken to, but nothing has really changed' (Kate).

Below, Naina expresses the feeling that when moving into Waimahia they had to adhere to a set of rules as part of a home ownership scheme, but that social housing renters in the development do not follow these rules:

'We expressed our concern in the most non-judgemental way that we could, because ... we had to ask ... what is the process into how you select these people to come into a community like this, I mean we come in here with all these rules, but then so do they, but it just seems like they're just signing a piece of paper ... and then they're coming here and just completely ignoring everything' (Naina).

A distinction is drawn here between residents who sign up to the rules of 'a community like this' and comply, and social housing tenants who do not. The comment implies that renters are acceptable as long as they comply with the behavioural norms of the development. It also suggests an underpinning discourse of social housing tenants as interlopers, people who do not share the same trajectory or aspirations as the rest of the community. So while there was a design objective to create Waimahia as a 'tenure blind' mixed-tenure neighbourhood (and in terms of the exterior of the houses, blind tenure has largely been achieved at Waimahia), residents are identified in this example through perceived behaviours – as not belonging.

While not universal, as noted earlier, there was a strong expectation of, as well as desire for, interaction, neighbourliness and community engagement amongst many participants. Identifying neighbours as 'not the most friendliest', as above, suggests that a disposition of not being eager to interact is seen unfavourably and sets people apart. This viewpoint was echoed by Ruth:

'I love it here, I love the community ... it has mainly good points, it does have its bad points ... some people don't want to be a part of it, but ... everyone sort of expects you to be a part of it' (Ruth).

Further, Ruth related this sense of community to an aspiration and ability to achieve home ownership and suggested that those residents without that potential or aspiration are a problem within the development: *'People [here] ... they're trying to get their first home ... everyone is in the same boat. But there are a few that – I don't want to discriminate – but social housing, you know, who sort of spoil it for everybody, but that's every community' (Ruth).*

Several participants mentioned that they were aware that social housing tenants were not taking part in community activities. The following quote is one participant's reflections on why this could be the case:

'I have to think about their point of view and what they think about us, you know they're a minority because they're renting, they can't sit there and go I'm so proud of myself because I'm renting to own my own home you know, they just maybe just think oh this is just another flash in the pan house that we'll be in for a couple of months then we'll be gone again kind of thing, and that's kind of now our attitude is gosh if they're going to come in here and make a lot of noise, then you know we'll just go: "oh they'll be gone in a couple of weeks" ... like the turnover is just so quick because of all the complaints and things like that' (Naina).

Another interviewee mentioned that she had been in contact with CORT about becoming involved in organising a BBQ to help introduce their tenants to the wider community and *'get all of the tenants on board and understand that we are just one community and that there is no judgement ... help promote [it] and ... all just come together' (Olive).*

Some interviewees were aware of which houses were tenanted as social housing; others were not. Ata mentioned difficulties with noise from an adjoining property. She was not aware the residents were CHP tenants until she sought help with the situation from a Resident's Association representative. Ata was assisted to construct an email to the CHP. The response from the CHP was prompt:

'...and then a rep [from the CHP] just came and knocked on the door and asked if everything was okay? She gave me her business card and said I have talked to the tenants and I have reminded them just to be mindful that there are kids here and that their noise needs to come down a bit. They are sorry and it won't happen again, and it was pretty much that. So if you have any more issues, just contact me. So I was happy' (Ata).

Not everyone knew of, or wanted to be included in, the community aspects of living at Waimahia. Django, a social housing tenant, did not know of the Residents Association or neighbourhood support groups, and did not mention the Facebook site or experiences of reciprocity with neighbours. He described his interactions as *'...just normally like every day or every two days just say*

“hi”, “hello” that’s all’ (Django). Similarly, Naomi knew of the community aspects of Waimahia but did not want to be part of it:

‘I belong to different communities – my ethnic community and my family community, my professional community, my activist community ... but I don’t really have a desire to belong to this community and I explained that to one of the organisers and they don’t get it’ (Naomi).

Another participant, who was initially reluctant to become involved in community aspects of the development, described how her position changed over time:

‘When I first moved here I didn’t even want to know anybody, I just wanted my own little piece of heaven and worry about myself and my children. Then I realised, no, I actually need to be out there in the community and get to know the people in my community’ (Sally).

In summary, most residents upon arrival warmed to the notion of affiliation with, and involvement in, the evolving Waimahia community. A minority of residents, however, appear to see the Waimahia as primarily, if not exclusively, a residential location.

The Development – Design and Location

This section summarises some of the more common sentiments expressed by participants regarding the design features and location of the Waimahia Inlet development. It covers attributes that generate a sense of community and place followed by features that present frustrations and challenges for residents.

Open spaces

Attractive greenspaces and the absence of front fences were design attributes of the development most often identified as providing spaces for serendipitous interactions with other residents. Blair explained how the neighbourhood design accommodates resident interaction without feeling as though it is forced:

‘... it becomes my choice[to talk to neighbours] but the way the layout is, it becomes easy to make that choice. There are no barriers to try and overcome – if you just want to knock on someone’s door you can and it is easy and people will just open the door’ (Blair).

With no fencing and walls around the front of housing people are visible coming and going from houses. As mentioned earlier, while several interviewees felt somewhat exposed and vulnerable without a front fence, this feature was more commonly seen as something that helps facilitate neighbourly interactions.

Easily accessible parks around the development provide a shared space for outdoor activities and the events held in these spaces were mentioned as particularly expedient in encouraging residents to meet each other:

'But with the parks, everybody is invited – when there is a park opening or some sort of Christmas function everybody is invited so it is your choice then whether you want to engage in that or not' (Heather).

Several residents commented on the importance of the parks and greenspaces for their sense of community and belonging to the neighbourhood. Commenting on the greenspaces, Alison observed that pride in such spaces can help develop a sense of commonality and unity for residents:

'I think it's well designed and it's nice how there are areas, like playgrounds and there is a nice walk that we can do, things like that kind of make it feel a bit more of a neighbourhood, which is nice. As far as sense of belonging, yeah I think everyone has a little bit of pride in the community, which gives you quite a strong sense of community' (Alison).

Community events held at the parks and waterfront clean-ups emphasise the connection between the physical and social space of parks and greenspaces.

Street names

The Waimahia street names are in Te Reo and reference the local setting. They evoked the history of the land for several participants, who commented that the names give a sense of place and belonging. Ata and Moana both stated that they liked the street names as they felt there was a connection between the land and its history:

'I really like the street names ... they are all Māori names. [It] has a feel like it has a connection to the land and to the people who probably did live here and how that ties in with the water as well ... I really like the name of Ipukaria ... 'a cup of blessings' ... it [is] kind of fitting towards our story and how we moved here' (Ata).

Ata identified how the street names connect the land to the history of people who might have lived in the inlet previously, and also connected the names to her own history and being grateful for the opportunity to live in Waimahia. Moana also commented about the history of Waimahia: *'I know the history ... there's a [sense of] belonging. I like the way the streets are named but I know the history of it, so that's okay – it's named after the kaimoana that was collected' (Moana).*

An urban island

Waimahia is distinct from the wider suburb of Weymouth in which it is located in terms of: the street layout and housing design (see Figure 1); the range and mix of housing tenure; the purposeful nurturing of a sense of community; and, as this research has identified, a development-specific identity. Moana provided a statement that articulates the feelings shared by many of the residents

interviewed: *'I think it is distinctively separate ... we are our own like suburb kind of thing, our own ... Waimahia'* (Moana).

The feeling of Waimahia as being distinctive is expanded upon in the statement below from Heather:

'You kind of feel that when you are coming into the inlet that you are having to step away from the rest of the world, it is kind of like – okay I am home. There is this serenity going in and with the whole walkways and parks and that you just feel like, this is home now' (Heather).

In these comments, Heather eloquently describes her experience of entering Waimahia through one of the three roads now connecting to the wider street network and feeling at home. The description emphasises the physical environment of Waimahia, the walkways and parks that generate this sense of place. Other interviewees emphasised the style, newness and cleanliness of the housing as contributing to a Waimahia sense of place and, for Janine, a sense of belonging:

'You can see that they are nice and clean houses and you have parks and you have some playgrounds in here – you get everything. The people, the neighbourhood – that is the thing that makes me feel like I belong here' (Janine).

There is, then, a co-articulation of both the social and physical environment of Waimahia for these residents that, they feel, separates the neighbourhood from its surrounding suburb. The result is the creation of a distinct place. While not necessarily contradicting this view, statements from other residents also highlight the desire of Waimahia resident to be part of the surrounding suburb. When questioned about the place of Waimahia in the wider area of Weymouth, residents typically emphasised that they did not want to be seen as separate:

Participant: Now that the walkway's been joined up with the rest of the walkway, there's definitely people [from outside] walking through.

Interviewer: And is that a good thing in your view?

Participant: I think so yeah ... it's not like it's supposed to be a gated community, it's just another part of the suburb.

Above, April states that residents should expect people to be coming and going through the neighbourhood and that it is a good thing. However, other interviewees suggested that they felt outsiders bring issues such as anti-social behaviour and crime into Waimahia. Several stated they had suggested gating the development to the Residents Association:

'So, yeah if there can be a bit more [security] ... like if they could have security gates like that where you zap your card and then you move in so that the only Inlet people can move in and at least you'll know the people coming in is within the Inlet ... So, I felt like more secured' (Sania).

Establishing this degree of enclosure is not an option for the neighbourhood, as an active member of the Residents association pointed out:

'Many people ... have said to me can we make this a closed community, can we make it a gated community – you have no idea ... people have asked me on numerous times to have it gated and I am like it is not going to happen, it is actually out of our control. Council and AT and all sorts of things – there is no way it is going to happen' (Olive).

In a regulatory sense the area is an extension of Weymouth and is not a private development. The roads, parks and walkways are all public and so gating is not an option. A few interviewees felt that the 'island' mentality that Waimahia residents have developed was unhelpful and potentially disastrous for the neighbourhood:

'Currently it's totally separate, it's totally separate I would actually like it to be part of the whole community as such ... you get the feeling that [Waimahia residents] want to be a little island on their own, and you know from history you can't survive if you want to be a little island on your own' (Albert).

Explaining his position, Albert added that he had noticed a high level of surveillance and suspicion placed on those who are not recognised as belonging to the local community. He had been a victim of such suspicions, even though he is a resident of Waimahia. Naomi's story (on page 16) of her brother being suspected of criminal behaviour by neighbouring residents also attests to this contention. Hence, while a strong Waimahia identity was embraced by most participants, a minority view also cautioned against the development becoming completely isolated from the rest of the Weymouth peninsula.

Neighbourhood design challenges

Parking

Parking was by far the most common source of frustration and negativity with regard to the design of the neighbourhood. Cars line the narrow streets and fill the driveways. Both off-street and on-street parking opportunities were regarded as insufficient. As Heather explained: *'Parking is an issue, I think we have all agreed on that'*. A Residents Association member concurred with this view: *'I have to deal with so much grief around ... the layout of the streets and ... one of the biggest issues has been parking – a massive issue' (Olive).*

While a few residents seemed to understand that there was an objective to reduce the footprint of private cars and encourage public transport use, the majority felt upset and confused by designs that, in their view, seemed to underestimate the number of cars that each household would likely have:

'I think they may not have considered that a four or five bedroom home in South Auckland will usually have about ... three people who drive cars ... We know Council are trying ... put less carparks because we want people to use public transport' (Olive).

A few interviewees accepted that narrow roads had some positive impacts such as more land for houses and slower traffic.

As mentioned earlier, garages are seldom used for cars, which increases the volume of cars on the street. Several residents reported that they had applied to have their driveway re-concreted to increase their off-street parking. A spate of car crimes in the area also meant that certain parking areas were not being used as they were seen a vulnerable due to limited surveillance from surrounding houses.



Parking woes are not unique to Waimahia, but are perhaps heightened by the development's location at distance from workplaces and the limited public transport services available.

Public transport

With only a single local 'connector' bus service to the centres of Manurewa and Manukau running roughly once every 30 minutes, the area has minimal public transport available. This service runs on the adjacent main road (Weymouth Road) and is a 250m to 800m walk from houses in the development. Most residents in Waimahia seem to be dependent on using private motor vehicles, which contributes to the car parking issues noted earlier. However, the design of the development to reduce the footprint of private motor vehicle use (e.g., narrower road widths and reduced on-street and garage parking space) seems to be predicated on better access to alternative transport modes that are not yet available to residents.

A lack of good public transport was noted, although most participants did not mention it directly, as they only used private motor-vehicles. The difficulty of being reliant on public transport was mentioned however: *'...it is really hard to get around. I do see one bus that comes around ... but just on the main street ... It is really hard for people who don't usually drive' (Mavis)*. Several participants said they would be open to using public transport if the available service was more convenient. For example, April mentioned that a bus stop within the development would be helpful:

'I feel like maybe eventually they could get a bus just to sort of go down Kaimoana [street] that would ... do[a] loop through the development ... But I'm also aware that the streets aren't super wide, so it could be a bit of a squeeze, but yeah, if they could get a bus, even just going down Kaimoana ... that would be helpful' (April).

Location

As noted earlier, the location of Waimahia was an attractive aspect of the development for those who had lived in the area or had existing connections to the area. However, for residents whose professional and/or social lives are spread across Auckland, moving to Waimahia presented significant challenges.

Longer daily commutes to work and school were of particular note. One interviewee drove daily to a tertiary education institute on the North Shore and several households had kept children at schools in distant parts of the city, necessitating complicated travel arrangements. However, the trade-off between greater travel and daily commute times and getting a 'first step on the property ladder' was one they were willing to make. The situation was somewhat different for social housing tenants where choice was less likely. Django explained that he had needed to move several times during the four years he and his family have lived in Auckland. Moving from West Auckland to South Auckland and away from familiar people and places was challenging:

'Honestly, the first time we heard about Weymouth, Manukau City, [I] was really unhappy ... because we feel too far, because you know I came to New Zealand more than four years, and the ... last four years I stay in West Auckland and the city ... I always hear ... Manukau City is too far, too far, too far' (Django).

The lack of feasible public transport options reinforced the relative isolation of Waimahia from other parts of Auckland and made household access to a car, or often several cars, essential for commuting to work and maintaining whānau and social relationships beyond Waimahia.

Longitudinal sample

Of the 12 participants interviewed for Phase 1 of the research, five were re-interviewed in 2017/2018. Three of the repeat participants had purchased their houses on the open market, one had purchased through a shared equity scheme, and one was a community rental tenant. All were two parent households with one or more children. Four of the original participants had left Waimahia Inlet during the intervening time and three were unavailable to participate in the second round. The original participants who had moved on from Waimahia were three community rental

and one rent-to-buy tenants, while those who were unavailable were two rent-to-buy and one community rental tenant. The repeat interviews explored how their perceptions of Waimahia had developed, their reflections on their experiences over the time since moving in, and any changes in their housing situation or future plans.

Perceptions of Waimahia: Change and Continuity

In general, the repeat participants expressed similar views about the development to those they shared in the original interviews. Three of the participants, all of whom had purchased their homes as open market sales, had expressed what might be described as a pragmatic attitude towards Waimahia Inlet when we first engaged with them. In the initial interviews these participants described the opportunity to purchase in Waimahia as primarily a financial opportunity – it was a chance to purchase in Auckland at an affordable price. They were less inclined than some other Phase 1 respondents to express particular enthusiasm for the design or quality of the house and development. In the repeat interviews, this position was rearticulated by two of the three.

Reflecting on the uniformity of the design, one participant said: *'That's just what you get for the price I think'* (Rob). Rob noted that he would have liked the opportunity to make changes to the design of his house before it was built, but he also recognised that this would have had cost implications:

'Again, it comes down to cost ... the moment you alter design that has to go to architect, has to change the plan it's all money, it's all cost ... and then the building of the house – it'll take longer, because now you have to go through a whole process' (Rob).

Another participant noted that the location of the development and its relative inaccessibility were inconvenient in terms of getting to work in central Auckland, but that this compromise was worthwhile to be able to afford a larger home:

'For me it's for the children to have [space]. We'd be living in a very small space if I have to come closer to town, so ... I've decided to make that compromise, yeah, for them' (Mike).

Both these participants drew comparisons between Waimahia Inlet and other recent housing developments such as Stonefields, Flat Bush and Hobsonville Point. Rob's comparison was favourable. After identifying the small sites and proximity of the houses to one another as something (for him) less than ideal, he acknowledged that this was not unique to Waimahia:

'[The houses] are densely packed ... [but] if you go to Stonefields which is million dollar suburb, they are like this ... it's not a complaint, no, because if you compare ... a \$500,000 [at Waimahia] to \$1-million house. They are joined [terraced] in Stonefields or you go to Flatbush even Hobsonville Point, they are \$900,000-\$1million plus, and yet they are ...very close ... Making the maximum use out of the land I guess' (Rob).

Rob's comments emphasise his perception that purchasing at Waimahia was 'good buying'. He felt that relative to other large-scale developments the developers of Waimahia had done well in balancing amenity and purchase price.

Mike expressed disappointment that, compared with Hobsonville Point, he felt the public spaces (including streets) were poorly maintained at Waimahia:

'I've been to Hobsonville before, and you go in there and you feel like everything is very tidy, because I'm not sure how they look after, I'm assuming they have people who look after the outside of the streets and how tidy things are ... you know, for us it's we I think the community does a lot, we do even clean ups ourselves, I'm not sure if Hobsonville does that kind of stuff, they probably pay someone to look after [the public spaces]' (Mike).

This dissatisfaction with the maintenance of public spaces was echoed by the other open market purchaser, Emily. She liked the inclusion of parks in the development, but found that they only felt safe 'when they're maintained'. She was particularly concerned about the foreshore reserve:

'[I] wouldn't really go there, or wouldn't let the kids go there cause it's overgrown, it's not maintained so it's quite, like I used to run kind of along that path, kind of you know after say seven but I wouldn't go there now, a little bit, not scary but I'd be wary, yeah especially in kind of winter it's just not maintained – but that's Council – [it's] kind of way overgrown' (Emily).

Emily had expressed a pragmatic appreciation of Waimahia in the first round of interviews. For her, as for the others, the main attraction of the development was the opportunity to purchase at an affordable price. Her attitude in the second interview differed in some important ways from the other open market participants, however. This difference appeared to be influenced by two key factors. First, unlike the other two open market pragmatists, Emily had lived in Weymouth for a long time prior to the establishment of Waimahia Inlet. She articulated a strong connection to the area: 'My kids have been born at Weymouth ... and so I can't imagine living anywhere else'. The other two open market participants were both new to Weymouth, and new to South Auckland generally, when they moved to Waimahia. The opportunity to purchase an affordable house had driven their choice of location.

The remaining participants, one who had purchased through a shared equity arrangement and one in a community rental, had both been extremely positive about Waimahia Inlet in the first round of interviews. This positivity persisted and had in fact strengthened in the second round. Alice, a community renter, was very appreciative of her home and could not think of anything she would like altered about her living situation:

'I don't have any concerns, I am just happy to be here ... I don't really have much to say because when we came in I felt that this was home when we first came in. So this is what I am looking for' (Alice).

Alice commented that her family found the community housing provider they rented through to be extremely supportive and helpful, echoing comments from several community housing tenants in the first round of interviews; the development of strong relationships between tenants and CHPs was a key finding in Phase 1. She noted that the tenancy manager had been very accommodating when her parents had visited from overseas, allowing them to stay in the unit with her family for an extended period. The tenancy manager kept the family *'on their toes'* in terms of inspections and so forth, but in a positive manner.

June, a shared equity purchaser, had indicated in her initial interview that the ability to purchase was the primary motivation for moving to Waimahia, with a return to an Arcadian (idealised) suburban past a further attraction. In her second interview she again emphasised both the opportunity to become a home owner and her approval of TMCHL's community-building agenda:

'Of course, I loved the opportunity to get my own home, but I loved what they were trying to achieve with families and I think there are always the families that have moved in, they have sold to make the penny and have gone. I don't think you can stop that, so I think it is unrealistic to think that that is not going to happen, but I think that from my personal side they have done alright. I think with that whole community sense – we have all got kids and the roads are always busy with children. Whilst that is a danger at times – I love it. It just reminds me of when I was growing up and how we always would go out after school and come out to the streets and just play' (June).

Her comment that the Waimahia residents *'have all got kids'* led to further reflection on the demographic diversity of the development. June described it as *'a diverse community for sure'*, but went on to qualify this:

'Diverse, just in ethnic backgrounds but I still feel that we are on a similar plane as first homes, families and trying to get that notch in the ladder so to speak ... There are not many of your two-working people with no children, I don't know of a family actually that don't have children in the community. Not to say that there isn't, but I just don't know them' (June).

This tension between the desire for and appreciation of diversity and a sense of the importance of shared experiences, demographic and socioeconomic similarities, was also evident during Phase 1 of the research. It will be interesting when the 2018 census data become available to explore whether June's perception about the homogeneity of household type is accurate.

Mike, who had moved in only two weeks prior to his initial interview, was feeling settled at Waimahia by the time of the second interview: *'There's been some challenges but I think we're good yeah, [we're in] a better place'*. Mike commented that the *'challenges'* were a combination of ones specific to his family and to the *'community as a whole'*, but he felt they were things that had been overcome or were being addressed. When prompted to expand on these challenges, he described the personal challenges as relating to distance from work and developing relationships with other residents:

'I think getting used to you know living – specific probably for my family because I work in town – the driving distance that was something to get used to, the distance and also getting used to the community, getting to know the people' (Mike).

Across the community, there had been *'more challenges than [he] initially expected'* in relation to crime in the development. As with the new participants, Mike expressed a conviction that the crimes that had been committed were carried out by people from outside the development:

'I think the people living there they're mostly good people you know, but because [of] the area that we're in I think initially we had some challenges with you know people breaking into houses, into cars' (Mike).

His perception was that the relative socioeconomic disadvantage of the neighbouring streets was the cause of the crime experienced by some Waimahia residents. He felt that the risk of crime had been reduced by the installation of CCTV cameras and the development of community networks for information-sharing:

'it's much better now that we're aware of [potential/actual crime in the development], there's CCTV, now we are more aware if something happens ... there's a number we can call you know and if something's wrong in the community ... we know if someone's broken in here there's a number we can call, so we have all the information and all kind of processes in place now, so yeah much better' (Mike).

This view was supported by the other repeat participants. The role of the Facebook page in information-sharing was noted as positive, albeit with the qualification that it may inflate people's perception of the risk of crime. Two of the repeat participants had been actively involved in the Residents Association and Neighbourhood Support groups at the time of the first interviews, but no longer engaged much with these networks. The Facebook page was seen by these participants as a replacement for these groups, diminishing their relevance.

Changing Circumstances, Future Plans

Two of the repeat participants had made changes to their housing situation since the initial interviews: one had sold and bought elsewhere in the development, and the other had transitioned from shared-equity to full ownership. In both situations the rapid increase in property values was a driving force.

A long-term commitment to Waimahia was clear when future housing plans were discussed with these residents. Having secured her *'jewel in the crown'*, Emily was now more committed to remaining at Waimahia in the long term than she had been during her initial interview. Until her children were launched and she and her partner were ready to *'downsize'*, she thought it was unlikely they would move from their new home. She reiterated her earlier observation that her partner would like a bigger section, but noted that that was not likely to happen if they remained in Auckland:

'I'm more of a realist so you know it's close to school, it's good for the traffic, it's close to the motorway so I can't see where else in Auckland, where would I want to move [to]? Like there isn't really anywhere else' (Emily).

The sole community renter in this sample hoped to stay at Waimahia permanently: *'This is home for me ... Yeah, nothing is going to move me out' (Alice).*

Mike also planned to stay in his Waimahia home until they were ready to downsize or move out of Auckland. While their equity had increased significantly, he noted that *'everywhere else has increased as well'*, and so purchasing elsewhere in Auckland would negate the benefit that had accrued through the increase in value.

June, too, intended to stay at Waimahia for the foreseeable future, despite having indicated in her initial interview that they might move on within five years. Her changed attitude was explicitly linked to the development of connections within the community. While she also hoped one day to have a property with a larger section, she had developed a strong attachment to Waimahia:

'To be fair, what would be hard for me to leave here is the community feel and the connections that my children are making. And because on a personal level, I have two families that are so close together. And then I have other families that we have connections through our children, say with kohanga and my son's school. For me that is important' (June).

For Rob, the possibility of relocating to Wellington in the longer term was discussed in both rounds of interviews; they had lived in the city previously and felt at home there. By the time of the second interview, however, the increase in property values had led him to conclude that it would be sensible to hold on to their Waimahia house if possible, particularly in case they decided to return to Auckland.

Neighbouring residents' experiences of the Waimahia Inlet Development

For neighbouring residents the Waimahia development meant a significant change to their local landscape. To understand its impacts on these households, 10 interviews were conducted with residents living in the houses immediately adjacent to the new housing development, and two with key informants living and working in the wider Weymouth area.

Most of the interviewees were long-term residents of the area. Seven had lived in Weymouth for more than 10 years and three for over 20 years. Only one had lived in a neighbouring street for less than three years. Of the neighbouring residents interviewed, four were men and six were women. The findings will be discussed under several headings: initial reactions to the development; impacts of the construction process and the arrival of new residents on longer-term residents; impacts of the development on local amenities and infrastructure; and sense of community between old and new residents.

Initial Reactions

Neighbouring residents first heard about the development in a variety of ways. A Housing New Zealand tenant had been informed by the agency. Others heard by word of mouth or through news reports. Some did not know about the development until they were interviewed by a television news team.

'It wasn't until the news channel asked. They did a big story about it, about how people feel about the new development coming up. That's how I found out about it' (Aroha).

The key informants both learned about the proposed development via the TMCHL Sales and Project Manager who made contact with their respective organisations:

'Yeah so he came down to tell us how it all worked, he wanted to make sure the school knew about it and how it was going to impact on us and yeah so he formed a partnership right in the early stages' (Key Informant 2).

Neighbouring residents' reactions to the development were mixed. Almost all recognised there was a shortage of good housing in Auckland and that the development was helping to address this shortfall. At a personal level they had concerns about negative impacts on their households. The residents interviewed had bought and/or lived in properties located in quiet cul-de-sacs that had backed onto open paddocks. The following comments sum up the general view of most participants:

'At first, I thought oh good because it will give people homes and affordable homes and so on and so forth but then it was just all the traffic, all the traffic that was going up and down, up and down, it wasn't safe for the kids to play out there and things like that' (Kristen).

'Well my initial reaction was oh damn there goes my view ... Because we were the very last house on ... [the] street ... to our left-hand side it was just paddocks and we had a view of the estuary' (Sheryl).

The Weymouth Residents and Ratepayers Association opposed the development, positing that a loss of open space would spoil the area and the density of the development would crowd too many people into a small space. Several interviewees incorrectly thought Housing New Zealand was involved in the development and viewed this negatively.

Impacts of the New Development on Neighbouring Households

The most profound impacts of the development on neighbouring residents were a consequence of their quiet cul-de-sacs being opened up as through roads between the new development and Weymouth Road. The residents were unaccustomed to the volume of vehicles and people that started passing by after the thoroughfares opened up. During the construction phase large trucks rumbling past became a regular occurrence and this required vigilance on the part of the residents to watch their children (and pets) who were used to playing on what had been neighbours' cars only zones:

'...especially like the trucks were coming in and out all day and then usually I was outside keeping an eye on my dog because sometimes he used to be going out in front of the cars' (Peter).

'Just the noise of the trucks and the kids used to play outside and sort of say, "Be careful of the trucks that go past" ... But they did warn us beforehand that they were gonna start construction over there and there'll be big trucks going past' (Lisa).

As this resident notes, they had been forewarned about truck traffic and it was also noted that the truck flow eased off as different areas in the Inlet were developed and other roads opened up. However, the streets as play spaces for children has been permanently lost.

Vehicle noise also increased. In one street, residents spoke about an increase in loud motorbikes as well as trucks. As Aroha explained, there are judder bars on the roads in the Inlet development so that cars and motorbikes slow down. As soon as the traffic hits her once dead-end-street where there are no judder bars, the traffic speeds up:

'...we get the adults and the teenagers going up and down on their motorbikes speeding, they've got no helmet, no safety gear on. Their cars are coming up. I don't know why they come here but I suppose because there's no judder bars ... And I tell you what, when they get over the last one down here, shit, you see the cars speeding. And the kids are on the road' (Aroha).

The residents of Aroha's street were particularly worried about the speed of the traffic and their children, as she elaborates below:

'You get all your souped up cars and they're all coming from down that end and they don't care. Even when the children are playing out on the road. Even if they're on this footpath they still go past fast, and they're going about 45-50km [per hour]. That's quite a fast speed for a little place like this. Everybody goes out and starts yelling. Some of them swear. Well, I swear at them especially when my grandkids are outside, I swear at them' (Aroha).

Traffic speed and volume were a flash point for the neighbouring residents and there was some discussion about asking the Council to intervene. Alan noted prior communication with Council officers over traffic speed:

'We did talk to the council before they opened the road here and they were quite good to us. They said, "Look, if it becomes a problem" 'cause there were young kids playing in the street all the time, "just let us know and we'll put speed humps in the street. We won't have a problem with it. Just let us know"' (Alan).

Involving Council on this matter had been raised again between neighbours and Aroha commented:

'I think that's the only way it's gonna solve it ... and then it'll stop all of us and my neighbours and all that running out and yelling. I know one day somebody's gonna grab a rock and throw it at them' (Aroha).

Non-traffic related impacts of the new development on neighbouring residents included: dust generated by on-site earthworks, the presence of more unknown young people 'in hoodies' in the neighbourhood, a perception that the number of burglaries had increased, and sewerage overflow into the estuary.

Construction-related dust and noise became a tiresome aspect of living adjacent to a building site, as illustrated by Sheryl's comment:

'...the exterior was covered in dust ... and when it rained, it all sort of ran down the one direction and when it came to the gutters it had actually blocked up the gutters with dirt ... you couldn't put laundry out and things like that' (Sheryl).

Another aspect of the development mentioned by some residents was the increased presence of groups of new young people wandering through their neighbourhood. Some mentioned the young people playing loud music as they walked through.

'Younger people, I shouldn't be as prejudiced as what I am, but there's that element walking up and down the street all the bloody time, the hoodies and the glue bags hanging out the front of the face that I never used to see' (Alan).

The neighbouring residents also relayed word-of-mouth accounts of burglaries within the Waimahia development and several residents attributed an increase in burglaries in their streets to opening up the roads and the new residents.

Despite the above concerns, as noted earlier, residents recognised that more homes are needed in Auckland and that the new development gave first home buyers an opportunity to purchase a home:

'On the positive side, I see that it's good, it's housing a lot of people that's in need of you know housing, yeah so that's a positive thing to me, you know there are a lot of people up there, families up there who need to be housed' (Ruby).

'I'm happy that there's more housing for people, so that outweighs the bad things I think about' (Cara).

Commenting on her own situation, Lisa added: *'It's good they're making more houses and wish I could afford a house too. They're lucky they can afford houses there'*. Surprisingly few of the interviewees had ventured into the development on foot, but the two that had were appreciative of the new walkways with their views over the estuary.

Weymouth Services and Amenities: Impacts of the New Development

Participants were asked whether they thought having the extra households in the area had placed pressure on local services. Observations varied by service. The local shops were seen as thriving as a result of the extra custom and the primary school was needing to scale back the number of out-of-zone children to accommodate increasing numbers of local children. Areas of concern were traffic volumes on Weymouth Road and sewerage overflow into the estuary. The latter was presented as a pressing concern:

'One issue I'm really, really concerned of is the design of the outlet for the sewerage in the area ... When they passed that resource consent, Auckland Council must have been aware that nearly 300 houses ... there would be a lot of sewerage and that sort of stuff. But the design has been so much that with heavy rains the sewerage overflows and goes down the estuary' (Key Informant 1).

Additionally, the households in the Inlet also contributed to increased traffic, which was a concern in Weymouth where there is a single road in and out of the area.

Sense of Community

Notwithstanding the length of residency of those interviewed, several participants said they had the impression that there was quite high turnover of people in their street. It was common for participants to say they knew their neighbours and recognised other people enough to greet them in the street, but did not know many well. A Neighbourhood Watch/Support group had been active in the past but seemed less so at the time of interview. Ruby was of the opinion that *'everybody minds their own business'*. When participants were asked about local places where they were more likely to see or talk to others from the Weymouth area, people mentioned the Clendon shopping centre and in particular, the supermarket.

Participants commented on the 'us and them' scenario that seemed to have developed between the residents in the new development in Waimahia Inlet and the residents of Weymouth. While some participants were aware of some of the events in the Inlet, others were not and not everyone felt they would be welcome.

'I don't think you're welcome when that's for the new subdivision. That's not for ours. Yeah, they get the letter, not us' (Saba).

Saba said that if she did get a newsletter she would go and see what was happening. Sheryl commented that it felt like they were not considered part of the community events being held in the Inlet, yet her street ran into the Inlet:

'And to me, really they are part of our community because I mean it's existing residents that were here first ... you know when they drive down there and they have got like a market day and just, and it just says the Waimahia Inlet and I am like wow okay ... Yeah, well they have segregated themselves from the older neighbourhood I guess' (Sheryl).

Not all of the neighbouring residents were aware of community events taking place within the development, but said they would like to know more about what was happening in the Inlet and to receive newsletters and invites in their letterboxes about community events. Comments suggest neighbouring residents' children have been more forthright than their parents, venturing into the new subdivision on foot or skateboard. For residents of the older streets, openness to engaging with those in the new development is intimated in the following quote:

'I guess the people on the outside who aren't a part of that little community over there, they still don't make an effort to just go look around, see what's down there. So there's not really much new relationships or anything forming that I've noticed' (Cara).

At the time of the interviews there did not appear to be much interaction between the older and newer residents, but a few of the older residents expressed a desire to be included in community building activities.

Discussion

The data collected during this phase of interviewing reinforced many of our observations from Phase 1 of the research, as reported earlier (Fergusson et al, 2016). However it also provided new insights about the development of community at Waimahia, the residents' perceptions of the design of the homes and neighbourhood, the effect of ongoing house-price inflation in Auckland and the impact of the development on the adjacent residential areas.

Residents of Waimahia were overwhelmingly positive in their perceptions of the development, the housing, and the community that is emerging. For many, Waimahia had offered a life-changing opportunity to 'get onto the property ladder' and into a new home that was warm and dry. For those in community rentals, it had provided much-needed security and support (through relationships with the CHP staff). Initial apprehension about living in a higher-density environment and with more limited private outdoor space had not played out as expected for most residents. The noise of neighbours was seldom intrusive and the shared outdoor spaces were appreciated aesthetically and enjoyed as play settings for children and as sites for engaging with other residents. On the whole, living and/or owning at Waimahia exceeded residents' expectations and any housing or neighbourhood design aspirations that had not been met were accepted as reasonable trade-offs; the benefits far outweighing any residual unmet expectations. The opportunity to fulfil a dream of home ownership was paramount for many on this trajectory and the realisation that they were living within a supportive community was an added bonus.

The strength of community that is clearly forming at Waimahia and experiences of neighbourliness were prominent in residents' narratives. These developments were often discussed with reference to the Facebook page as a key facilitator of information sharing, reciprocity and social interaction. The role that Residents Association members played in welcoming new households and fostering community interaction was acknowledged and appreciated. The developer's role in supporting community formation through establishing the Residents Association, maintaining an on-site presence during construction and co-funding social events was also recognised with gratitude. The assistance that the Sales and Project Manager offered individuals was often noted and it is significant that the portacom, his office, was identified as a rallying point for collective activities. An alternative venue for the community to convene will be needed when he departs. CHP staff who advised and assisted household to assess housing options and to access mortgage brokers, and another who intervened when friction arose involving rental tenants, were also praised.

Two issues were prevalent in terms of negative perceptions: parking and crime. Residents' dissatisfaction with the amount of parking available in the development was pronounced. This was an issue that people suggested TMCHL should approach differently in future developments. Residents noted that the small garages were only practical for those with very small vehicles, which were uncommon among families in the development. Moreover, the fact that the garages were fully insulated was interpreted by some as an indicator that they were intended to be used as living space or storage rather than for car-parking. As we found in Phase 1, some residents felt there was inadequate storage provided in the dwellings, and they had responded to this by using the garage for storage or establishing garden sheds. Even where the garages were used for car-parking, most

households had multiple vehicles and, thus, additional parking was required. There was some recognition that limiting spaces for cars was consistent with reducing the environmental footprint of the development, but alternative transport options were seldom considered. Aucklanders' long-standing car-dependence, but also the relative inaccessibility of Waimahia Inlet by public transport and its location on the urban periphery are likely contributing factors. Disputes over car parks had occurred in some places, some of which had resulted in vandalism.

Burglaries and thefts from cars were of concern to residents, although the institution of the community Facebook page had allowed for greater communication about anti-social behaviour and incidents of crime. The installation of CCTV cameras had also provided some with a greater sense of security. A number of residents noted that the extent of 'monitoring' through the Facebook page had both positive and negative impacts. The volume of information circulating about the local neighbourhood and community seemed to be an unprecedented experience for most – if not all – of the participating Waimahia residents. While this information has made residents feel welcomed and part of an active and supportive network of residents, it has also exposed them to the disagreements that can occur between neighbours, as well as heightening their awareness of crime. It is unclear whether there is, or was, an elevated level of crime occurring in the development. However the amount of criminal activity reported was certainly surprising to many residents. The page also facilitated residents' response to the perceived high level of crime with walking groups organised to patrol the streets at night to defend their neighbourhood. During the next phase of the research, comparison of crime data for the neighbourhood over the period since construction began with the surrounding areas may reveal whether the Facebook page is inflating the sense of vulnerability among residents.

Fear of crime generated tension between inlet development residents and people living on neighbouring streets. Interestingly, residents of Waimahia and our participants from the neighbouring streets tended to attribute the perceived high crime rate to the other group. Residents in neighbouring streets that had been quite cul-de-sacs before the development were unsettled by the increase in foot and vehicle traffic. Young people walking past were viewed suspiciously and the increased traffic was seen as a threat to the safety of children and pets. This view was symptomatic of a more general sense of disconnection between the communities. Residents of the development felt a strong sense of identity with Waimahia and described relatively little interaction with people from the wider Weymouth area, except where those relationships were pre-existing. Neighbouring residents expressed a sense of exclusion from the activities that took place in the development. The social distance evident between the adjacent neighbourhoods mirrors the visual distinctions apparent in the aerial photograph of Waimahia (Figure 1). The development has characteristics of an urban island connected to, but also disconnected from, its suburban surroundings. In future developments of this nature, consideration of ways to mitigate these fringe effects would be desirable. The blurring of boundaries through design features and more active promotion of interaction with neighbouring residents may help in this regard. An extension of traffic calming devices common in the development into neighbouring streets would be one such measure. While neighbouring residents did not appear well informed about the development prior to construction beginning, the key informants noted considerable consultation had occurred between the developer and their organisations.

Building a strong mixed-tenure community at Waimahia was a shared goal amongst TMCHL partners. This goal was achieved through innovative ‘offtake’ agreements between TMCHL and several CHPs, allowing a variety of housing tenure schemes to be made available at the site. An additional design goal of also making the development ‘tenure blind’ has been less successful, if defined as residents being unaware of the tenure status of neighbours. The tenure blind goal was partly undermined through the success of another developer goal – to foster social interaction and a strong community. The closeness of the community and of social interactions led to household tenures being reasonably well known amongst neighbours. Indeed, requests for advice from the community regarding tenure-related situations were reportedly being made by residents on the Facebook group. Another way that residents distinguished household tenures was through behaviour – with several ownership tenure track participants commenting on the perceived behaviours of renters and that they did not participate in community activities.

Further investigation of some issues is warranted in the next phase of the research. One of these issues is the effect of house-price inflation in the region on residents on different tenures schemes, and on the CHPs with rentals in the development. As noted above, for those who purchased on the open market (particularly during the early stages of development), the rapid increase in value of properties at Waimahia has been a financial boon. The increase in their equity has provided a greater sense of financial security and given them a wider range of opportunities in relation to their future housing. For those in shared equity arrangements, the increase in value has made the process of buying out the CHP more difficult. For some residents this situation has prompted them to accelerate the process, but further work is required to fully understand the extent of this response. For rent-to-buy residents the impact is more pronounced, as they have not secured a share of the equity at the original value of the house; again, the impact of this needs further exploration. During this phase of the research we did not investigate the perceptions of CHPs regarding the value uplift, but this is also significant. The increase in the value of dwellings owned or partly owned by CHPs will be contributing to their balance sheets and, hence, their capacity to potentially expand their operations. On the other hand, it could also complicate their social goal of assisted home ownership.

Our interviews sought to understand the extent to which the design of the houses and the development overall supported Māori cultural values. This aspect of the interviews did not elicit much data, and the approach to exploring this question will need to be revisited for future interviews. Even residents who expressed a strong connection to Te Ao Māori tended to frame their responses to these questions around practicality and aesthetics without specific reference to cultural concerns. It may be that using visual prompts in future interviews will allow for more detailed discussion of this. The interviews were carried out by Pākehā interviewers and this may also have had an impact; involving Māori researchers in the interviewing may yield better results.

Finally, statistical analysis of Waimahia’s demography in comparison with national and regional populations will be possible once data from the 2018 census are released. This will provide insights into the extent to which the aspirations of TMCHL to provide housing for Māori and Pasifika families and to foster a diverse community have been achieved.