Papanui Ward

Community Profile

September 2026

Papanui Bush

Christchurch City Council

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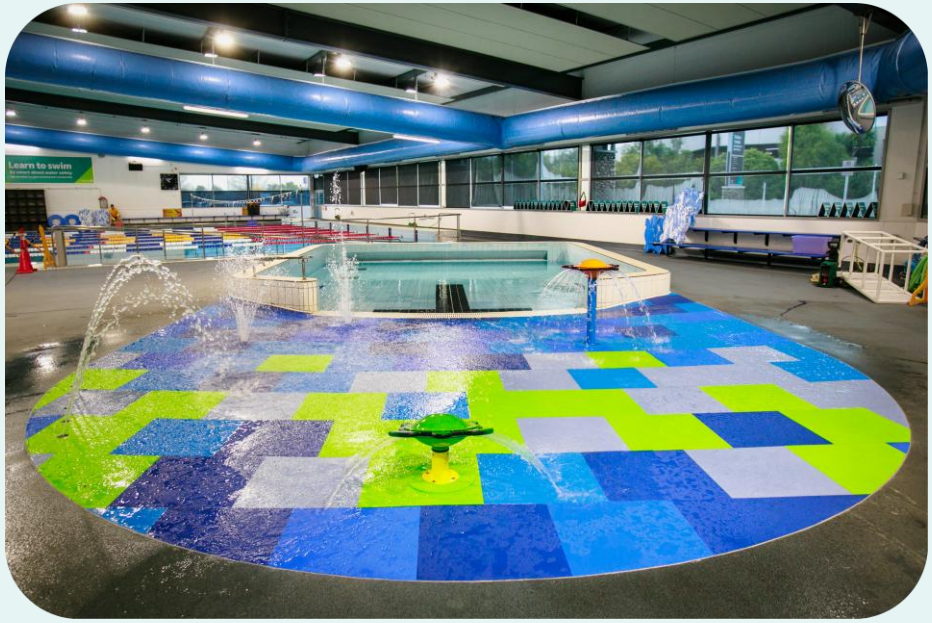


Graham Condon Pool, Papanui

Profiles compiled by the Community Support and Partnerships Unit, Christchurch City Council

***New Zealand Index of Deprivation (NZDep)**

The NZDep is an area-based measure of socioeconomic deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand created by Otago University. It measures the level of deprivation for people in each small area. It is based on nine Census variables. To read more about the variables used and view maps in more detail, visit http://www.ehinz.ac.nz/indicators/population-vulnerability/socioeconomic-deprivation-profile/

Ward Area Overview

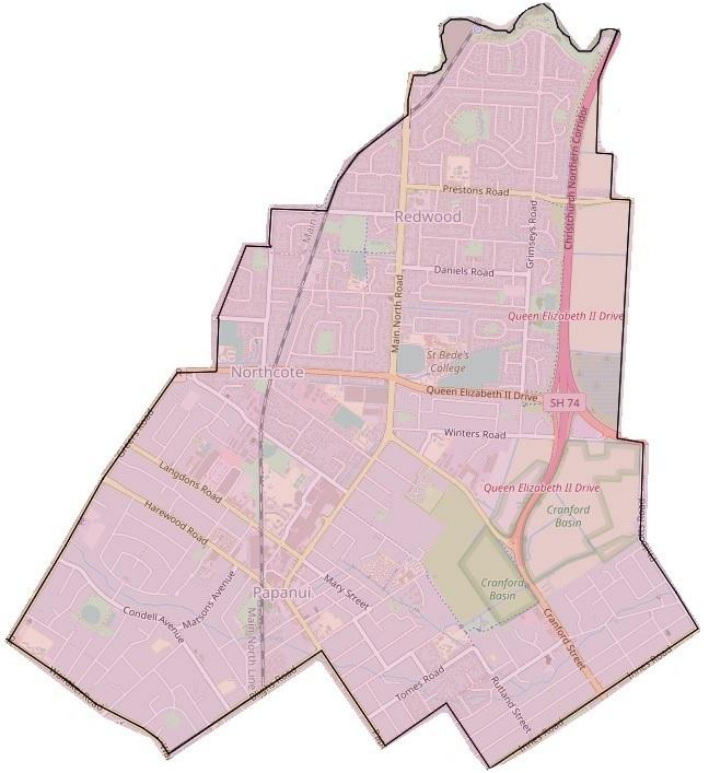
The Papanui Ward includes the suburbs of Papanui, Redwood, Northcote, Sawyers Arms, and shares borders with Bryndwr, Casebrook, Bishopdale, Strowan, Merivale, Mairehau, and Northwood.

The name “Papanui” is of Māori origin, meaning “a platform in a tree from which birds are snared,” referring to the region’s early significance for bird hunting.

Historically, the area was densely forested with Totara, Matai, Kahikatea, and Kanuka trees, but by the 1850s, milling had cleared nearly all 30 hectares of bushland.

Over the past 120 years, suburban development expanded beyond the original Papanui township.

Residential housing in Northcote began in the early 1900s, with a significant increase during the 1950s. Redwood saw its first homes built in the 1910s, with the bulk of development occurring in the 1970s.



St James Park

Facts and Figures

Papanui Ward 2023 Census

25,137
Population

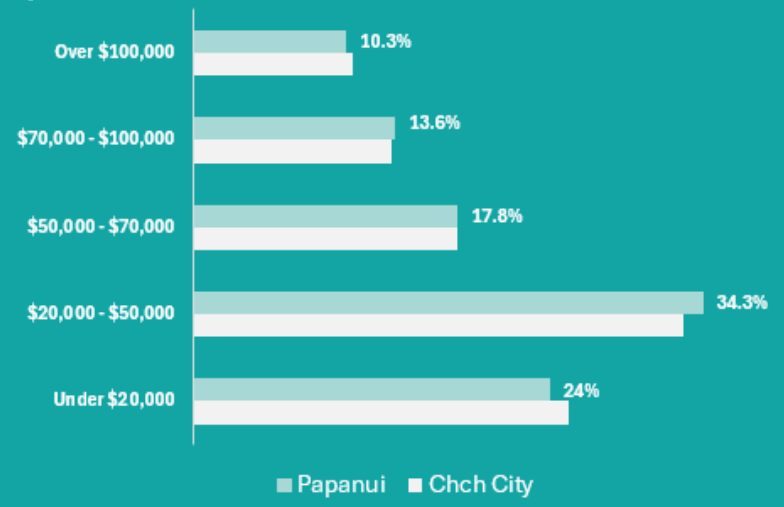
38.6
Median Age

9,810
Dwellings

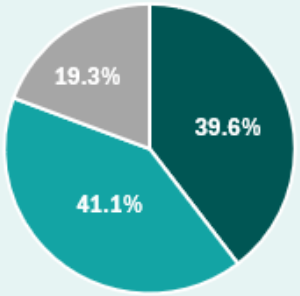
Cultural Diversity

78.9% European
11.3% Māori
3.7% Pacific Peoples
15% Asian
1.7% MELAA

$ Personal Income



Family Type



- Couple without Children
- Couple with Child(ren)
- One Parent with Child(ren)

Businesses

Approximately
2,415 businesses
employing
9,875 people
(Feb 2024)

Community Infrastructure

The Papanui Ward is well supported by a diverse range of community services for older adults, youth, and the wider community. The Christchurch Methodist Mission provides housing support, aged care, and family services, and operates Aratupu Preschool and Whānau Hub, offering early childhood education and whānau support. Age Concern, which serves citywide, is also based in the ward. Freedom Trust also plays a key role in the area, offering programmes that support young people and families, with a focus on building positive connections, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging within the community.

Youth in the area benefit from strong collaboration between active organisations. Papanui Youth Development Trust operates a large youth facility with music recording rooms, a climbing wall, craft and gaming spaces, and a computer suite. Northgate Trust's Zion Dance Studio engages a large number of youth weekly, while Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi supports holistic youth, whānau, and community development.

In late 2024, Papanui Youth Development Trust and Te Ora Hou opened a youth space in Northlands Mall, a welcoming hub with a gaming room, bean bags, homework area, and engaging activities.

The ward offers excellent recreational facilities including the Graham Condon Recreation and Sport Centre, bowling, cricket, rugby, rugby league, and athletics clubs.

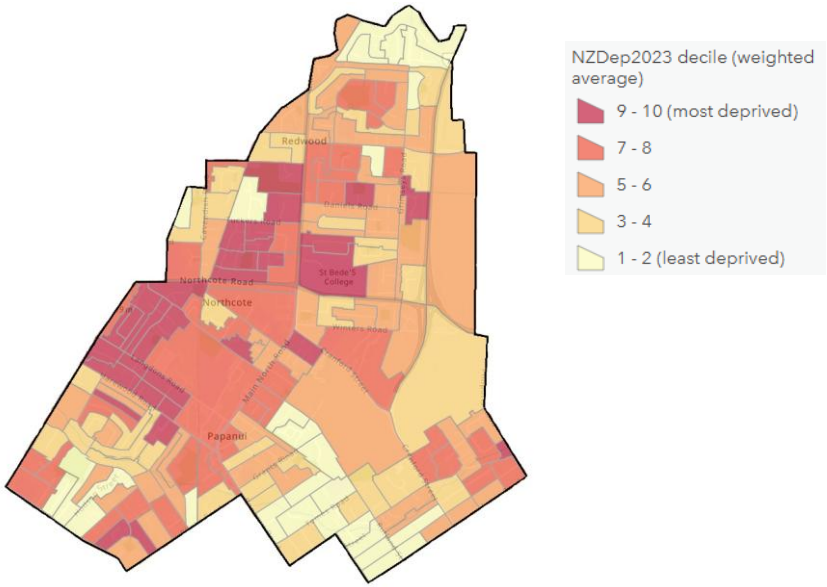
The ward also includes nine operational retirement homes.

5 Community development/support organisations	**60** Sport/recreation groups	**12** Faith-based organisations	**12** Schools
6 Community-owned facilities	**2** Council-owned facilities	**2** Residents' Associations	**2** Council libraries

Facilities and Amenities

- 2 Council Libraries: Papanui and Redwood Library
- 1 Council Service Centre: Papanui
- 5 shopping centres: Northlands Shopping Centre, Papanui Road Businesses, Northlink Shopping Centre (Langdons Road), Cranford Street Business Park, and a retail hub in the suburb of Redwood.
- 12 Schools: 3 Secondary, 6 Primary, 1 Intermediate, 1 Composite Year 1-13, 1 Special.
- Major sport and recreation amenities: Graham Condon Recreation and Sports Centre.
- The ward is also home to a number of Government Departments including Kāinga Ora (previously Housing New Zealand), Work and Income and the Department of Corrections. Non-Government Agencies with a metropolitan wide reach, such as Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, Age Concern and the Methodist Mission are based in the area. The Braintree Trust, a partnership between Multiple Sclerosis Parkinsons Canterbury and Dementia Canterbury, is located in Langdons Road.

Socio-economic Deprivation Index



The scale of deprivation ranges from 1 to 10:

- 1 represents the areas with the least deprived scores.
- 10 represents the areas with the most deprived scores.

Relative to the rest of Christchurch City, Papanui Ward had similar levels of deprivation overall.

In the Papanui Ward, around 17 per cent of the population lived in the 'most deprived' areas (i.e. deciles 9 and 10), compared with 16 per cent of all of Christchurch City's population.

Around 15 per cent of this ward's population lived in the 'least deprived' areas (i.e. deciles 1 and 2), compared with 23 per cent of all of Christchurch City's population.

In respect of employment, 50.4 per cent of residents are employed full time, which is slightly above the Christchurch City figure of 50.15 per cent. 33 per cent are not included within the workforce. 2.6 per cent are unemployed, which is below the Christchurch City figure of 2.7 per cent.

In respect of personal income, 10.3 per cent of Papanui Ward residents have a personal income of over $100,000, while 13.3 per cent have personal income of less than $10,000. The majority of residents (36.1 per cent) have a personal income between $30,000 and $70,000.

Within the Papanui Ward, 39.6 per cent of families consist of couples without children, which is slightly below the Christchurch figure of 43.3 per cent. Families consisting of one parent with child(ren) is 19.3 per cent, which is also above the Christchurch City figure of 16.5 per cent.

In the Papanui Ward, 68.4 per cent of dwellings are owned or partly owned. This is slightly above the Christchurch City figure of 64.8 per cent.

Of those currently renting their homes, 23.7 per cent pay under $200 a week in rent, 45.1 per cent pay between $300-$499 and 18.7 per cent pay between $500-$799 per week.

The highest levels of deprivation (scores 9-10 and 7-8) are located near the northwest edge of the ward and in some older residential pockets. However, Papanui overall is considered to have lower levels of deprivation compared to more central areas of Christchurch. Social housing is present but at lower concentrations. Across the ward, there are approximately 83 Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust units and 339 Kāinga Ora properties, primarily situated in suburbs such as Papanui, Redwood, and Northcote.

Strengthening Communities Together Strategy

This section of the Community Profile provides a narrative of the ward in relation to the four Pillars of the strategy. You can view the full strategy document on the Council's website by clicking here.

Te Pou Tua Tahi: Te Tāngata

Pillar 1: People

The city actively promotes a culture of equity by valuing diversity and fostering inclusion across communities and generations.

Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi staff outside new whare

The Papanui Ward is home to a wide range of community-driven initiatives that focus on creating a connected, inclusive, and resilient environment for its residents. These efforts aim to enhance social wellbeing, support cultural identity, reduce isolation, and foster community safety across all age groups.

The Papanui Youth Development Trust provides the Northlands Youth Space, offering essential services for local youth, including after-school programmes, recreational activities, and mentorship. These initiatives foster leadership, personal growth, and positive social engagement in a safe, supportive environment. Their work plays a vital role in reducing youth isolation and enhancing community safety by offering positive alternatives for young people.

Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi supports Māori and Pacific youth and families with youth mentoring, whānau support, and cultural programmes such as kapa haka, Pacific drumming, and language classes. These activities help foster cultural pride and strengthen intergenerational connections, building a resilient and inclusive community in the process.

Age Concern Canterbury works to reduce social isolation among older adults by offering social events, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy services. Their programmes ensure older residents feel valued and connected, while also promoting intergenerational understanding and support.

Bridgestone Reserve is a community-led environmental initiative, with native planting and conservation projects that improve local biodiversity and create accessible green spaces for all. This effort, along with local community gardens, food banks, and neighbourhood support networks, encourages a shared sense of responsibility and contributes to a stronger, safer community.

Together, these initiatives embody the resilience of the Papanui Ward, where collaboration and community spirit enable residents to thrive and create a sense of belonging for everyone.

Te Pou Tua Rua: Te Whenua

Pillar 2: Place

We support and help build connections between communities and their places and spaces to foster a sense of local identity, shared experience and stewardship.

Northlands Shopping Centre

The Papanui Ward is located about five kilometres north of the Christchurch Central Business District. It has great access to public transport and major roads, making it easy for people to travel in and out of the area. Its location and services make it a popular and convenient place to live.

The ward is mostly residential and has a mix of older homes, new townhouses, and developments that reflect the city's growing need for housing. People living in Papanui come from all walks of life, including families, retirees, young professionals, and long-time locals. This mix of people adds to the friendly and diverse feel of the community.

Papanui has many parks and green spaces for people to enjoy. St James Park is known for its beautiful gardens and walking paths. Papanui Domain offers sports fields and a playground, while Paddington Park is a favourite for families and dog walkers.

These parks give people places to relax, play, and connect with others in the community.

The area also has strong shopping and commercial areas. Northlands Shopping Centre and Northlink Shopping Centre are two major hubs that offer a wide range of shops, restaurants, and services. Smaller local businesses along Main North Road and Papanui Road add to the variety, including cafes, supermarkets, and health providers.

There is also a strong network of schools, early learning centres, churches, and community groups. A key example is the Christchurch Methodist Mission, which runs Aratupu Preschool & Whānau Hub. It provides early childhood education and support for local families.

Papanui Library and Service Centre

Aratupu Preschool

Te Pou Tua Toru: Te Mahi

Pillar 3: Participation

Residents and groups in the wider community are socially and actively engaged and able to initiate and influence decisions affecting their lives.

Bridgestone Reserve volunteers

Community, sporting and recreational organisations and groups within the Papanui Ward are heavily supported by volunteers, not only does this volunteer commitment support the work done by organisations but also provides a pathway for those who might be socially isolated to join and contribute.

These groups foster community connection, promote local initiatives, and encourage inclusive engagement.

The Waipapa Papanui-Innes-Central Community Board plays a key role in strengthening local belonging by advocating for the interests of the Papanui community and maintaining oversight of Council services. The Board actively supports grassroots participation through its Discretionary Response Fund and Youth Development Fund, both open year-round, as well as the annual Strengthening Communities Fund, which supports projects that enhance wellbeing, inclusion, and local identity.

Council staff work alongside local organisations and residents to build trust, encourage engagement, and support inclusive participation in decision making. Public Forums and Deputations at Board meetings offer residents a voice, while regular liaison meetings ensure community perspectives are heard and valued.

Volunteers play an essential role in community life in Papanui, supporting local services, helping run events, and creating opportunities for people to connect. Their contributions help build resilience and provide meaningful ways for people to participate and feel a sense of belonging.

Census 2023 data shows that 2,215 residents, or 11.2 per cent of the Papanui population (aged over 15 years), are involved in voluntary work. This reflects a strong and enduring culture of contribution, connection, and community spirit.

Youth Space at Northlands Mall

Te Pou Tua Rua: Te Whenua

Pillar 4: Preparedness

People feel safe in their communities and neighbourhoods and work together to understand, adapt and thrive in the context of change and disruption.

Climate Change Resilience

Climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. It is already affecting our weather, health and wellbeing, natural environment, taonga species, mahinga kai, food production, biosecurity, infrastructure, and the economy.

The Christchurch City Council is responding to climate change in Ōtautahi Christchurch by working towards targets for reducing emissions, and by helping our communities prepare for and adapt to our changing climate. Key risks identified include hot weather and drought, strong winds, wildfires, heavy rain and flooding, and rising sea level, coastal and ocean changes.

Inland communities of Christchurch faces key risks from increasing temperatures, drought, and more intense rainfall, which threaten terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, while flash flooding from extreme rainfall and river flooding impacts built assets and infrastructure.

Staff are working with Te Ora Hou in the Papanui Ward on their Emergency Response Plan. The understanding is that strong, connected communities are better prepared to respond to and recover from disasters. In the event of a major emergency, official responders will prioritise the most urgent issues, so it is likely that for the first few days, people will need to help each other within the local community.

Te Ora Hou has been working to develop a Papanui specific plan to ensure the community can respond effectively in an emergency. The team from Christchurch Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) has provided advice and guidance throughout the development of this plan. CDEM has also participated in various local events to promote the importance of preparedness and community planning.

The Plan is being developed by the community to help community groups and organisations and the general public to keep safe, prevent further harm and access available local resources.

Key Community Issues

Issue	Actions being taken
Social isolation, food insecurity, income stress	The Community Board supports key groups like Potters Kitchen and Freedom Trust with funding to help them run drop-in hubs and connect with isolated residents. This work is strengthened by strong collaboration through the NorthWest Collective. Going forward, there is a need to grow volunteer networks and improve outreach to those most at risk of social isolation.
Traffic congestion in the Langdons, Greers, Northcote and Northlink areas	Traffic lights have been installed, along with other upgrades, at the Greers/Langdons intersection to make it safer and improve traffic flow along the Langdons Road corridor between Northlands Mall and the Northlink Centre. Pedestrian refuges have been installed on Langdons Road to improve the safety for pedestrians on that corridor. The upgrades to the Langdons, Harewood, and Sawyers Arms roads railway crossings have also been installed with new signalised pedestrian/cyclist crossings to improve safety along with Northern Line Major Cycleway. The new systems – including lights, bells and gates at each location is now completed
Northcote Road Corridor Safety Improvements Investigation	Advocate for and support the investigation and delivery of safety improvements along Northcote Road, with a focus on enhancing pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. This aligns with the Waipapa Papanui-Innes-Central Community Board's commitment to creating a connected and accessible transport network that prioritises community safety, promotes active transport options such as walking, cycling, and public transport, and ensures safe streets and speeds for all residents.
Grassmere	The Grassmere Papanui redevelopment is a significant project aimed at developing approximately 528 residential dwellings in the Cranford Basin area of Christchurch. The project involves the subdivision and land development to create specified residential sites, with upgrades to transport and three-waters infrastructure as part of an Infrastructure Acceleration Fund Agreement. The development is expected to commence in mid-2026 at the earliest, aligning with the fast-track process to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery.

Issue	Actions being taken
Need for diverse and affordable housing	The Community Board supports a mix of housing in growth areas like the Cranford Basin and the Oakbridge subdivision development, including public and affordable housing. Ongoing collaboration with housing agencies is essential to ensure new developments are well-integrated and accessible for all residents.
Lack of youth space in Papanui	The Community Board has received feedback highlighting a lack of youth-friendly spaces and activities in Papanui. In response, a new after-school youth hangout space has been established at Northlands Mall, through a partnership between Te Ora Hou and the Papanui Youth Development Trust. This initiative provides a safe, welcoming environment where young people can connect and feel a sense of belonging. There is a recognised need for more youth-focused activities in Papanui, including creative programmes, social events, and informal sports. To support planning, the Canterbury Youth Work Collective is conducting a Youth Audit. This process engages young people to assess local spaces on safety, accessibility, and youth-friendliness. The findings will help identify gaps, generate ideas for additional youth spaces, and inform future youth initiatives in the area.
The reduction of tree canopy and green space	The Community Board supports community planting efforts, including volunteer-led initiatives at Bridgestone Reserve and the potential introduction of fruit trees at Craighead Reserve. Proposed next steps include expanding tree planting strategies, protecting mature trees, engaging the public in consultation on the future use of green spaces, and supporting a community and volunteer-driven mural for beautification at Bridgestone Reserve.
Localised surface Flooding	The Community Board heard concerns from residents about surface flooding in parts of the ward following heavy rain events, particularly in 2022. With the increasing impact of climate change, these events are expected to become more frequent. Residents want reassurance that the stormwater network is being properly maintained and is performing as well as possible during and after major weather events. Though the Surface Flooding Reduction Programme created through the last Long Term Plan sits at a Council level for prioritisation across the whole city, the Board will continue to advocate for consideration of flood mitigation in the wards, focusing on solutions that offer good value for money and protect community safety and wellbeing. While some surface flooding may be unavoidable in severe weather, and surface flooding on roads in these events would be predicted and manageable, the goal is to reduce its impact through smart planning and infrastructure investment.

Issue	Actions being taken
Cranford Street traffic volumes The Christchurch Northern Corridor (CNC) opened in December 2020 accompanied by impact concerns from local residents. A Notice of Requirement lays out the Council's legal obligations to address traffic impacts resulting from the opening of the CNC for the Commissioning Period (nominally ten years following the CNC's opening in December 2020). Where traffic increases by more than 30% as a result of the opening of the CNC in the affected area identified by an independent traffic engineer, measures to mitigate the impacts must be considered.	The Community Board continues to liaise with affected communities regarding increased traffic flows from recent corridor changes. The Special Purpose bus priority lanes on Cranford Street trailed from February 2021, prioritising buses at peak traffic times, was made permanent by Council in December 2024.
Community Resilience	Community resilience to climate change, El Niño, and the cost-of-living crisis is about ensuring that people, businesses, and local organisations can adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of increasing environmental, social, and economic challenges. More frequent extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, storms, and heatwaves will place pressure on infrastructure, food production, water supplies, and household budgets. At the same time, rising living costs can reduce people's ability to prepare for and respond to these impacts, particularly for vulnerable households. To strengthen resilience, Council is adapting and resourcing climate infrastructure, educating communities in emergency preparedness, supporting local food and water security, and working with community organisations in continuing to build strong community networks. Collaboration between communities, iwi, local government, businesses, and social service providers is essential to ensure that resources, knowledge, and support are available when needed, creating communities that are better prepared and more connected.