

Police Statistics on Homicide Victims in New Zealand 2007 – 2021

*A Summary of Statistics about Victims of
Murder, Manslaughter, and Infanticide.*

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Introduction

Background

Each month New Zealand Police releases Official Statistics on crime victimisation and offending at www.policedata.nz.

Homicide statistics are not included in the monthly release of statistics on victims because homicide investigations typically take several months to investigate and many months and sometimes years to finalise. Accordingly, data in Police systems on homicides do not stabilise for many months. Homicide data are therefore collated annually and summarised within this report.

Of all crime types, homicide has long been considered as the easiest measure due to its definitional uniformity and difficulties offenders face in adequately disposing/hiding victims¹. These homicide statistics are therefore considered highly reliable and accurate.

This report is updated every year to reflect the current status of the homicide investigations reported from the previous years with the addition of new homicide investigations two years in arrears for this reporting year. Therefore, counts in this report may slightly differ to that of last year reflecting updates in recorded information.

Provisional statistics for homicide offences that occurred in 2022 have been included as an appendix (see Appendix B).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide high-level descriptive statistics pertaining to homicide events. Specifically, the report provides statistics about:

- Victim demographics,
- The relationship between the victim and offender,
- The location type of where the homicide occurred, and
- The type of weapon (if any) that was used.

¹Sherman, L. W., & Langworthy, R. H. (1979). Measuring homicide by police officers. *J. Crim. L. & Criminology*, 70, 546.

The report does not provide a detailed contextual analysis of the event nor does it provide descriptions of the offenders involved². Instead, the report may be used as supplementary information alongside other crime related reports, such as:

- Recorded Crime Victims Statistics,
- Recorded Crime Offenders Statistics,
- The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey, and
- Relevant research publications and government reports.

Definitions of Homicide data

New Zealand Police investigate all suspicious deaths. As stated previously, these investigations require time to complete. Although a death may appear suspicious at first, investigations may conclude that the death was not homicide. Until such a determination is made homicide statistics are considered incomplete. For this reason, the current report only provides statistics on homicides that occurred between 2007 and 2021. Most homicide investigations undertaken during this period will have now been subject to significant investigation and therefore the data can be considered robust, although they may not have been finalised in the sense of an offender identified, proceeded against, and an outcome obtained in Court.

In addition, the report only includes victimisations where a criminal offence for murder, manslaughter or infanticide has been recorded in the Police system³.

The nature of the offence is described using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) classification. Specifically, the report covers offences under ANZSOC Group '0111 – Murder' and '0131 – Manslaughter'. Documentation on the ANZSOC hierarchy are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011).

In legislation⁴,

Murder is defined as unlawfully killing another person where there is one or more of the following:

- the intent to kill;
- the intent to cause grievous bodily harm, with the knowledge that it was probable that death or grievous bodily harm would occur (reckless indifference to life); or
- without intent to kill in the course of committing a crime (felony murder).

² Such information is provided in Recorded Crime Offenders Statistics published on policedata.nz.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2011). Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2011/01>

⁴ Sections 167-171 Crimes Act (1961) <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1961/0043/latest/DLM329320.html>

Manslaughter is defined as the unlawful killing of another person while deprived of the power of self-control by provocation, or under circumstances amounting to diminished responsibility or without intent to kill, as a result of a careless, reckless, negligent, unlawful or dangerous act (other than the act of driving). Manslaughter includes killing an unborn child/infanticide.

Suspicious deaths where a homicide offence has not been established by Police investigators are not included. Future updates to this report may include previously classified suspicious deaths where a homicide offence has been established, hence the numbers reported for historic years may rise, and in some cases might be revised downwards if a Homicide is subsequently determined an explainable death.

Driving causing death offences are currently not included in this report.

Queries Relating to this Report

Questions about this report can be directed to the Data Science Team, Performance and Data, New Zealand Police through the following channel:

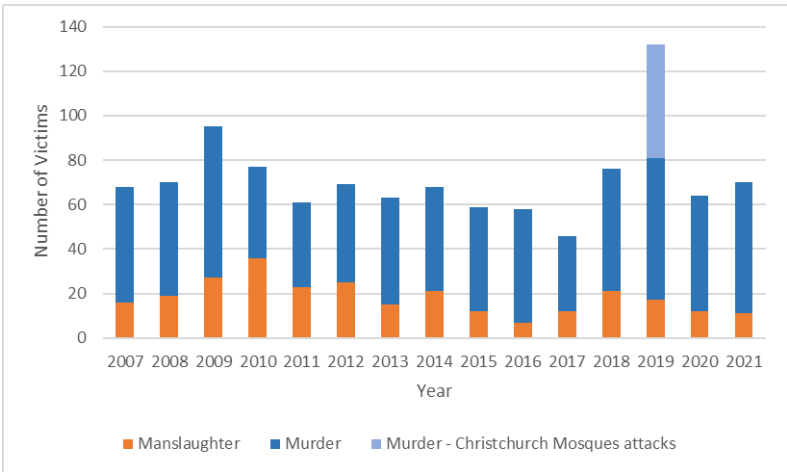
Email: data@police.govt.nz

Descriptive Statistics About Homicide Data

Offence Type and Gender

Between 2007 and 2021, there have been 1,076 homicide victims or an average 72 victims each year. In 2019, there were 132 victims of homicide, 51 of whom were victims of the terrorist attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019. Outside of this event, the overall annual trend remains stable at an average of 68 homicide victims per year.

Figure 1. Number of Homicide Victims by year



Of these 1,076 homicide victims, 66 percent were male, and 75 percent were victims of murder. Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.1: Offence Type/Gender below for details.

Figure 2. Offence Breakdown of Homicide Victimisations over the period of 2007-2021

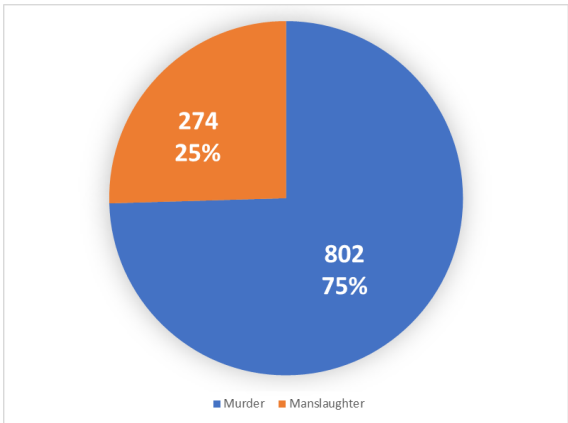
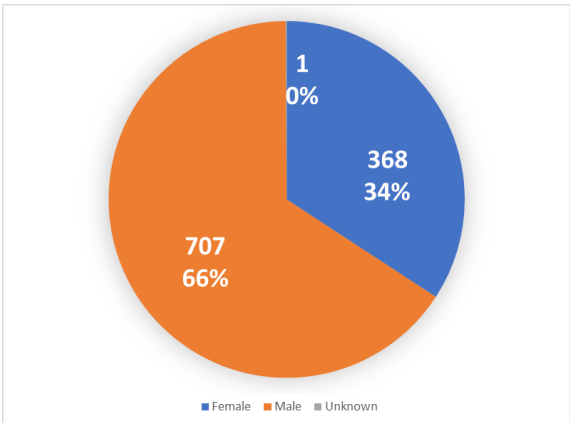


Figure 3. Gender Breakdown of Homicide Victims over the period of 2007-2021

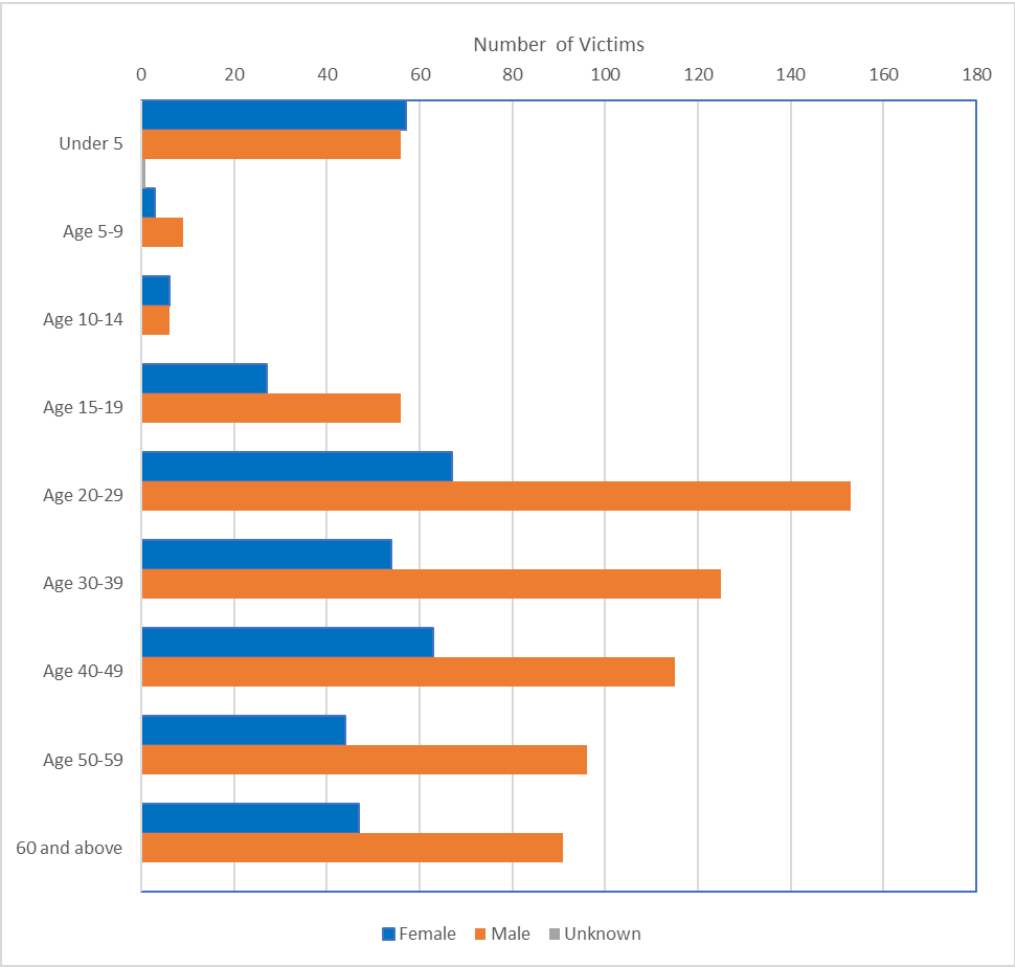


Age of Victims

Homicide victims are distributed across all ages. Most homicides occur in adults aged 20 and above (79 percent). Children and young people aged under 18 years account for 17 percent of homicide victims, of which, 11 percent are children under five years old.

Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.2: Age Group/Gender below for details.

Figure 3. Breakdown of Homicide Victims by age and gender over the period of 2007-2021



Ethnicity of victim

Victims who were identified as Māori or European make up around 67 percent of all homicide victims for the period.

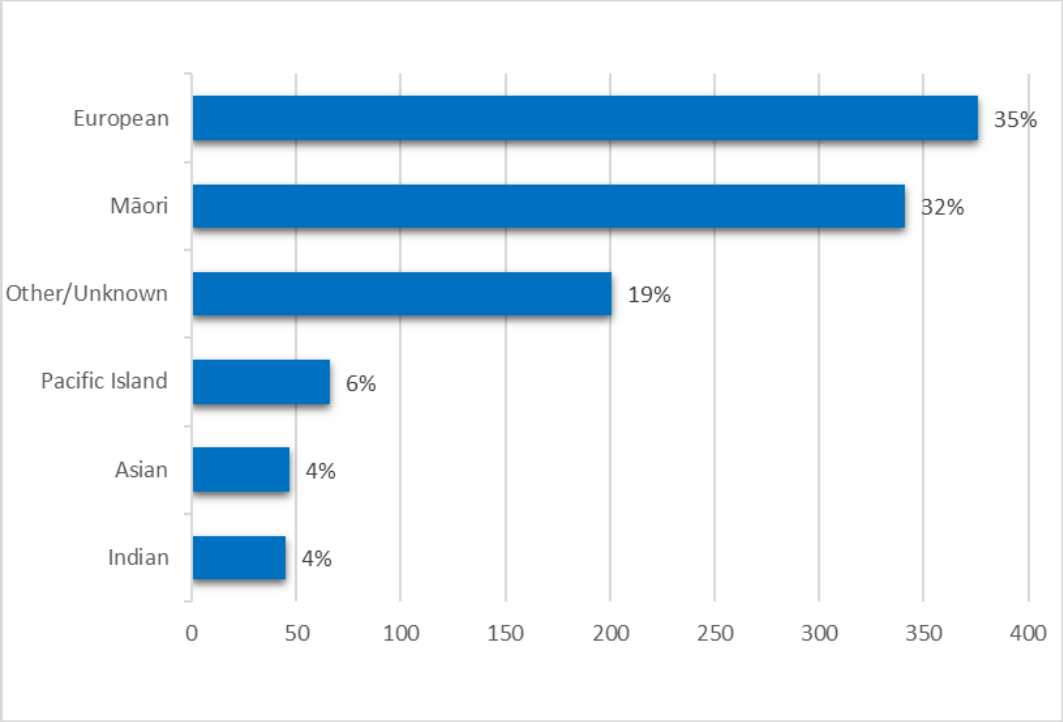
European is the largest ethnic group within New Zealand so, it follows that Europeans are represented by the largest number of homicide victims in these statistics (376, 35 percent).

Māori, however, are over-represented; between 2007 and 2021, 341 of 1,076 (32 percent) homicide victims were Māori despite only seventeen percent of the New Zealand population being estimated to be Māori⁵.

However, New Zealand Police collects Ethnicity data according to a different methods than Statistics New Zealand. Therefore, it is difficult to precisely compare New Zealand's population that makes up each ethnic group and New Zealand Police categories.

Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.3: Ethnicity/Gender below for details.

Figure 4. Ethnicity Breakdown of Homicide Victims over the period of 2007-2021



⁵ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/maori-population-estimates-at-30-june-2023/>

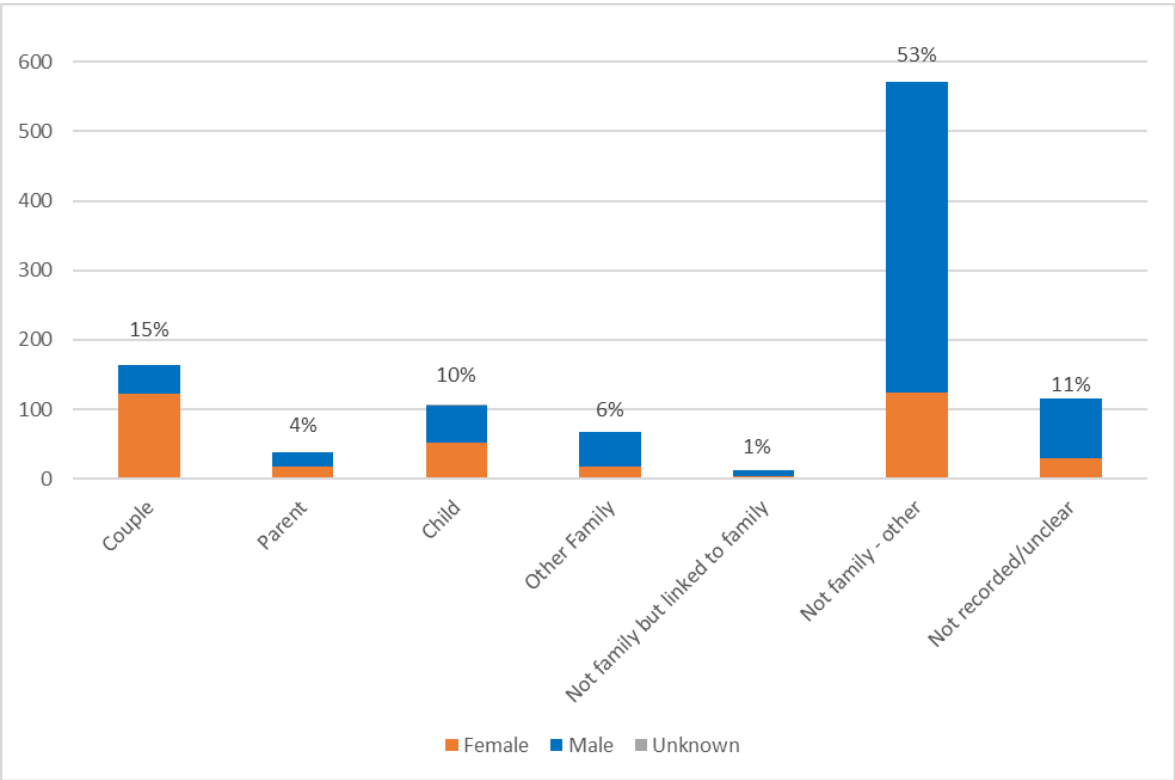
Relationship of victim to offender⁶

The majority of homicide victims were killed by non-family members where it is known. The offender is not always identified by police, and the victim's relationship to the offender is not always clear or recorded. In instances where the relationship between victim and offender is not recorded, this is likely to be because they are not closely related.

Between 2007 and 2021, approximately 15 percent (164) of homicide victims were in a couple relationship, 10 percent (107) were children killed by a parent, and 4 percent (39) were a parent killed by their child who are mostly adults. About 74 percent of victims killed by their partner were female.

Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.4: Relationship of Victim to Offender/Gender below for details.

Figure 5. Relationship of Victim to Offender by Victim Gender Breakdown over the period of 2007-2021



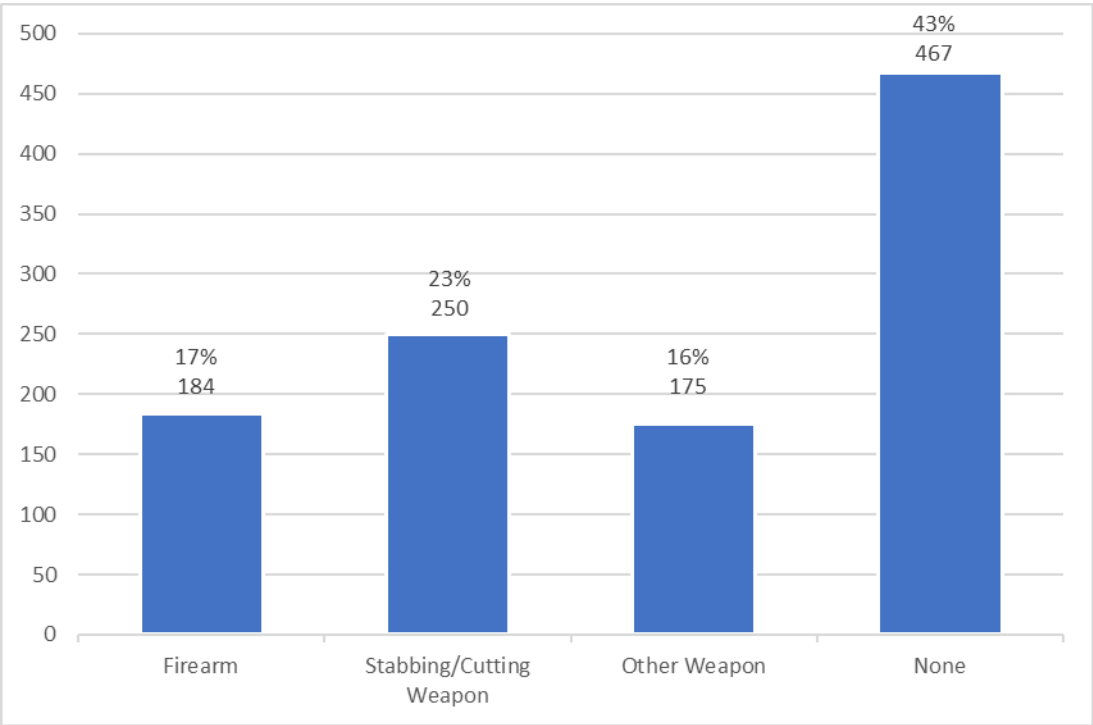
⁶ Refer to Appendix C for the relationship definitions.

Weapon

Between 2007 and 2021, more than 40 percent of all homicides committed did not include the use of weapons. About 23 percent involved the use of a stabbing or cutting weapon, and 17 percent involved the use of a firearm⁷.

Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.5: Weapon Used/Offence Type below for details.

Figure 6. Breakdown of Weapon Type Used in Homicide Victimisations over the period of 2007-2021



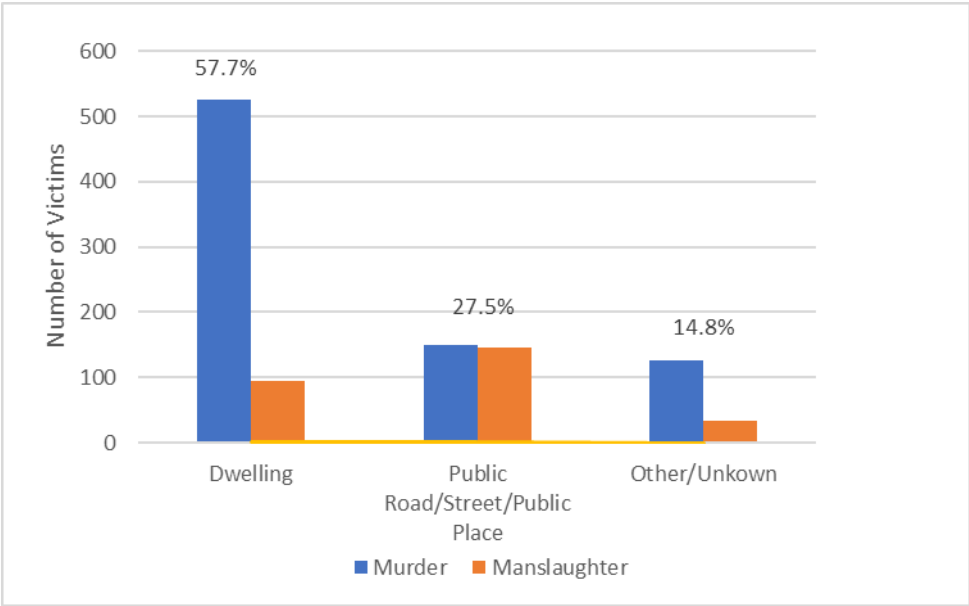
⁷ 13 percent if adjusted to reflect victims outside the terrorist attack on Christchurch Mosques.

Location

Between 2007 and 2021, 621 (about 58 percent) homicides occurred in dwellings and 296 (about 28%) in outdoor public places⁸.

Please refer to Appendix A: Table A.6: Location Type/Offence Type below for details.

Figure 7. Breakdown of Homicide Victimization Location over the period of 2007-2021



⁸ These proportions increase slightly to 60 percent in dwellings and 30 percent in outdoor public places if reflecting only events outside the terrorist attack on Christchurch Mosques.

Appendix A / Details by Year

Table A.1: Offence Type/Gender

		Murder	Manslaughter	Total
2007	Male	29	9	38
	Female	23	7	30
	Total	52	16	68
2008	Male	29	13	42
	Female	22	6	28
	Total	51	19	70
2009	Male	43	21	64
	Female	25	6	31
	Total	68	27	95
2010	Male	20	24	44
	Female	20	12	32
	Unknown	1	0	1
	Total	41	36	77
2011	Male	24	16	40
	Female	14	7	21
	Total	38	23	61
2012	Male	20	16	36
	Female	24	9	33
	Total	44	25	69
2013	Male	36	13	49
	Female	12	2	14
	Total	48	15	63
2014	Male	33	11	44
	Female	14	10	24
	Total	47	21	68
2015	Male	31	8	39
	Female	16	4	20
	Total	47	12	59
2016	Male	29	3	32
	Female	22	4	26
	Total	51	7	58
2017	Male	22	8	30
	Female	12	4	16
	Total	34	12	46
2018	Male	36	14	50
	Female	19	7	26
	Total	55	21	76
2019	Male	86	12	98
	Female	29	5	34
	Total	115	17	132
2020	Male	38	9	47
	Female	14	3	17
	Total	52	12	64
2021	Male	43	11	54
	Female	16	0	16
	Total	59	11	70

Table A.2: Age Group/Gender

		Less than 5	Age 5-9	Age 10-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	60 and above	Total
2007	Male	1	0	0	2	15	9	6	3	2	38
	Female	8	0	1	2	6	3	2	3	5	30
	Total	9	0	1	4	21	12	8	6	7	68
2008	Male	3	1	1	4	9	9	6	3	6	42
	Female	1	0	0	3	8	5	4	3	4	28
	Total	4	1	1	7	17	14	10	6	10	70
2009	Male	6	1	1	11	12	15	12	3	3	64
	Female	7	0	0	4	5	6	8	0	1	31
	Total	13	1	1	15	17	21	20	3	4	95
2010	Male	2	0	0	4	11	6	8	7	6	44
	Female	3	1	0	2	7	3	5	5	6	32
	Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	6	1	0	6	18	9	13	12	12	77
2011	Male	5	0	1	4	5	4	9	9	3	40
	Female	3	0	3	3	4	0	5	1	2	21
	Total	8	0	4	7	9	4	14	10	5	61
2012	Male	2	1	0	3	10	6	1	4	9	36
	Female	7	0	0	1	6	8	5	3	3	33
	Total	9	1	0	4	16	14	6	7	12	69
2013	Male	4	0	0	6	11	5	12	7	4	49
	Female	0	0	0	0	2	6	3	0	3	14
	Total	4	0	0	6	13	11	15	7	7	63
2014	Male	5	2	0	5	9	9	5	6	3	44
	Female	4	1	1	3	2	1	3	7	2	24
	Total	9	3	1	8	11	10	8	13	5	68
2015	Male	8	1	1	1	8	6	5	4	5	39
	Female	6	0	0	0	5	1	3	3	2	20
	Total	14	1	1	1	13	7	8	7	7	59
2016	Male	1	0	0	1	7	6	8	3	6	32
	Female	4	0	0	2	4	4	4	5	3	26
	Total	5	0	0	3	11	10	12	8	9	58
2017	Male	3	0	0	2	6	4	7	5	3	30
	Female	0	0	0	1	3	2	3	4	3	16
	Total	3	0	0	3	9	6	10	9	6	46
2018	Male	1	0	0	3	14	4	10	12	6	50
	Female	4	0	0	5	5	6	2	2	2	26
	Total	5	0	0	8	19	10	12	14	8	76
2019	Male	6	2	1	3	19	22	15	13	17	98
	Female	4	0	1	0	6	5	9	3	6	34
	Total	10	2	2	3	25	27	24	16	23	132
2020	Male	4	1	0	2	9	10	6	10	5	47
	Female	2	0	0	0	1	4	5	3	2	17
	Total	6	1	0	2	10	14	11	13	7	64
2021	Male	5	0	1	5	8	10	5	7	13	54
	Female	4	1	0	1	3	0	2	2	3	16
	Total	9	1	1	6	11	10	7	9	16	70

Table A.3: Ethnicity/Gender

		Asian	European	Indian	Māori	Pacific Island	Other / Unknown	Total
2007	Male	0	21	0	12	1	4	38
	Female	5	9	3	9	0	4	30
	Total	5	30	3	21	1	8	68
2008	Male	2	18	2	9	4	7	42
	Female	3	10	0	8	2	5	28
	Total	5	28	2	17	6	12	70
2009	Male	3	24	3	26	4	4	64
	Female	1	8	1	14	1	6	31
	Total	4	32	4	40	5	10	95
2010	Male	1	16	1	16	3	7	44
	Female	1	16	2	8	1	4	32
	Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	2	32	3	24	4	12	77
2011	Male	4	16	1	13	4	2	40
	Female	0	9	2	6	1	3	21
	Total	4	25	3	19	5	5	61
2012	Male	1	18	0	13	1	3	36
	Female	1	16	1	3	2	10	33
	Total	2	34	1	16	3	13	69
2013	Male	1	19	4	18	3	4	49
	Female	1	6	1	6	0	0	14
	Total	2	25	5	24	3	4	63
2014	Male	0	21	2	13	2	6	44
	Female	2	7	3	4	2	6	24
	Total	2	28	5	17	4	12	68
2015	Male	0	15	0	19	2	3	39
	Female	2	7	2	2	1	6	20
	Total	2	22	2	21	3	9	59
2016	Male	1	11	1	17	2	0	32
	Female	2	11	1	8	1	3	26
	Total	3	22	2	25	3	3	58
2017	Male	2	13	3	6	3	3	30
	Female	0	8	0	4	0	4	16
	Total	2	21	3	10	3	7	46
2018	Male	0	20	0	18	6	6	50
	Female	1	5	0	8	1	11	26
	Total	1	25	0	26	7	17	76
2019	Male	5	11	7	21	8	46	98
	Female	2	9	1	10	1	11	34
	Total	7	20	8	31	9	57	132
2020	Male	2	15	0	21	1	8	47
	Female	1	2	1	10	1	2	17
	Total	3	17	1	31	2	10	64
2021	Male	2	13	3	15	7	14	54
	Female	1	2	0	4	1	8	16
	Total	3	15	3	19	8	22	70

Table A.4: Relationship of Victim to Offender/Gender

		Couple	Parent	Child	Other Family	Not family but linked to family	Not family - other	Not recorded / unclear	Total
2007	Male	4	2	0	2	3	24	3	38
	Female	8	1	5	5	0	11	0	30
	Total	12	3	5	7	3	35	3	68
2008	Male	1	1	3	3	1	32	1	42
	Female	6	0	2	1	0	17	2	28
	Total	7	1	5	4	1	49	3	70
2009	Male	4	1	8	7	1	41	2	64
	Female	14	0	6	1	0	9	1	31
	Total	18	1	14	8	1	50	3	95
2010	Male	4	2	1	6	1	29	1	44
	Female	10	1	3	0	0	17	1	32
	Unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	14	3	5	6	1	46	2	77
2011	Male	2	1	6	2	0	23	6	40
	Female	9	0	2	2	2	6	0	21
	Total	11	1	8	4	2	29	6	61
2012	Male	3	2	3	1	1	17	9	36
	Female	14	0	6	0	1	7	5	33
	Total	17	2	9	1	2	24	14	69
2013	Male	4	2	0	2	0	29	12	49
	Female	8	2	0	1	0	1	2	14
	Total	12	4	0	3	0	30	14	63
2014	Male	2	0	6	1	0	27	8	44
	Female	5	1	5	0	0	9	4	24
	Total	7	1	11	1	0	36	12	68
2015	Male	1	2	7	5	0	22	2	39
	Female	5	5	3	0	0	5	2	20
	Total	6	7	10	5	0	27	4	59
2016	Male	3	0	1	3	0	19	6	32
	Female	6	2	4	2	0	10	2	26
	Total	9	2	5	5	0	29	8	58
2017	Male	2	1	3	1	1	14	8	30
	Female	5	0	0	1	0	7	3	16
	Total	7	1	3	2	1	21	11	46
2018	Male	6	3	1	1	0	28	11	50
	Female	10	1	4	2	0	8	1	26
	Total	16	4	5	3	0	36	12	76
2019	Male	3	0	5	8	0	77	5	98
	Female	11	2	4	1	1	11	4	34
	Total	14	2	9	9	1	88	9	132
2020	Male	3	1	5	2	0	33	3	47
	Female	7	0	1	2	0	5	2	17
	Total	10	1	6	4	0	38	5	64
2021	Male	0	4	5	5	0	31	9	54
	Female	4	2	7	0	0	2	1	16
	Total	4	6	12	5	0	33	10	70

Table A.5: Weapon Used/Offence Type

		Firearm	Stabbing / Cutting Weapon	Other Weapon	None	Total
2007	Murder	6	16	11	19	52
	Manslaughter	0	0	1	15	16
	Total	6	16	12	34	68
2008	Murder	7	14	12	18	51
	Manslaughter	0	1	0	18	19
	Total	7	15	12	36	70
2009	Murder	11	17	13	27	68
	Manslaughter	1	0	1	25	27
	Total	12	17	14	52	95
2010	Murder	7	17	7	10	41
	Manslaughter	1	1	4	30	36
	Total	8	18	11	40	77
2011	Murder	4	16	5	13	38
	Manslaughter	0	0	0	23	23
	Total	4	16	5	36	61
2012	Murder	3	13	11	17	44
	Manslaughter	1	0	0	24	25
	Total	4	13	11	41	69
2013	Murder	8	21	5	14	48
	Manslaughter	2	0	0	13	15
	Total	10	21	5	27	63
2014	Murder	6	16	6	19	47
	Manslaughter	0	0	0	21	21
	Total	6	16	6	40	68
2015	Murder	7	15	12	13	47
	Manslaughter	1	0	0	11	12
	Total	8	15	12	24	59
2016	Murder	8	16	15	12	51
	Manslaughter	1	0	3	3	7
	Total	9	16	18	15	58
2017	Murder	11	6	8	9	34
	Manslaughter	0	0	10	2	12
	Total	11	6	18	11	46
2018	Murder	12	20	4	19	55
	Manslaughter	0	0	8	13	21
	Total	12	20	12	32	76
2019	Murder	61	22	20	12	115
	Manslaughter	0	1	0	16	17
	Total	61	23	20	28	132
2020	Murder	15	15	11	11	52
	Manslaughter	1	0	5	6	12
	Total	16	15	16	17	64
2021	Murder	10	23	3	23	59
	Manslaughter	0	0	0	11	11
	Total	10	23	3	34	70

Table A.6: Location Type/Offence Type

		Dwelling	Public Road / Street / Public Place	Other / Unknown	Total
2007	Murder	28	16	8	52
	Manslaughter	6	8	2	16
	Total	34	24	10	68
2008	Murder	28	18	5	51
	Manslaughter	3	14	2	19
	Total	31	32	7	70
2009	Murder	56	9	3	68
	Manslaughter	6	19	2	27
	Total	62	28	5	95
2010	Murder	30	7	4	41
	Manslaughter	10	24	2	36
	Total	40	31	6	77
2011	Murder	29	7	2	38
	Manslaughter	8	14	1	23
	Total	37	21	3	61
2012	Murder	28	12	4	44
	Manslaughter	11	9	5	25
	Total	39	21	9	69
2013	Murder	33	13	2	48
	Manslaughter	6	5	4	15
	Total	39	18	6	63
2014	Murder	33	5	9	47
	Manslaughter	5	11	5	21
	Total	38	16	14	68
2015	Murder	35	8	4	47
	Manslaughter	8	3	1	12
	Total	43	11	5	59
2016	Murder	36	10	5	51
	Manslaughter	4	3	0	7
	Total	40	13	5	58
2017	Murder	26	5	3	34
	Manslaughter	5	6	1	12
	Total	31	11	4	46
2018	Murder	35	15	5	55
	Manslaughter	6	11	4	21
	Total	41	26	9	76
2019	Murder	47	10	58	115
	Manslaughter	4	10	3	17
	Total	51	20	61	132
2020	Murder	42	5	5	52
	Manslaughter	7	4	1	12
	Total	49	9	6	64
2021	Murder	40	10	9	59
	Manslaughter	6	5	0	11
	Total	46	15	9	70

Appendix B / Provisional figures for 2022 Calendar Year

The following tables provide provisional statistics for homicide victims in the 2022? calendar year. These figures provide a snapshot of data as at 30 June 2023. While Police investigations continue, the figures for the 2022 year will undergo change. Caution is therefore advised, when comparing figures for the 2022 year with figures in the main body of the report.

Updated figures for 2022 will be included in the main body of future editions of this report.

Table B.1 – Offence Type/Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Murder	46	29	75
Manslaughter	12	6	18
Total	58	35	93

Table B.2 – Age Group/Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Under 5	2	5	7
Age 5-9	0	0	0
Age 10-14	2	1	3
Age 15-19	2	2	4
Age 20-29	14	6	20
Age 30-39	11	6	17
Age 40-49	8	6	14
Age 50-59	14	3	17
60 and above	5	6	11
Total	58	35	93

Table B.3 – Ethnicity/Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Asian	1	4	5
European	19	8	27
Indian	2	0	2
Māori	20	11	31
Pacific Island	3	5	8
Other/Unknown	13	7	20
Total	58	35	93

Table B.4 – Relationship of Victim to Offender/Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Couple	3	13	16
Parent	0	2	2
Child	3	5	8
Other Family	2	2	4
Not family but linked to family	0	0	0
Not family - other	30	9	39
Not recorded/unclear	20	4	24
Total	58	35	93

Table B.5 – Weapon Used/Offence Type

	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Firearm	12	1	13
Stabbing/Cutting Weapon	29	0	29
Other Weapon	26	12	38
None	8	5	13
Total	75	18	93

Table B.6 – Location Type/Offence Type/Gender

	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Dwelling	43	2	45
Public Road/Street/Public Place	16	14	30
Other/Unknown	16	2	18
Total	75	18	93

Appendix C: Relationship Definitions

Couple

'Couple' is defined as being where the victim and offender are or have been recognised by society or their associates, as a couple. It includes married, de facto, civil union, separated, divorced and boyfriend/girlfriend not living together relationships. This definition does not take into account age, gender or sexual relationship. It would include, for example young adolescents whose school classmates consider them to be boyfriend/girlfriend. It would exclude people who are not a couple, but have had sexual intercourse, such as in prostitution, a one-off sexual encounter, or one or more illicit sexual encounters.

Parent

'Parent' is defined as being where the victim was a biological, adoptive or foster parent of the offender. It also includes the de facto partner of the offender's biological parent, provided the victim and offender live together, or have lived together when the offender was a child. It does not include the boyfriend/girlfriend of the offender's mother/father where the boyfriend/girlfriend does not live with the mother/father and offender.

Child

'Child' is defined as being where the victim was a biological, adopted or foster child of the offender. It also includes the biological child of the de facto partner of the offender, provided the victim and offender live together, or have lived together when the victim was a child. It does not include the child of the boyfriend/girlfriend of the victim's mother/father where the boyfriend/girlfriend does not live with the mother/father and victim. 'Child' in this table, refers to the relationship, not the age of the victim. It therefore includes adults.

Family

'Family' is defined as it would be colloquially understood internationally. It includes siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins. It excludes friends of the victim/offender's parents who may be referred to as uncle/aunt.

Other Family

'Other family' excludes victims who have been counted in the categories of 'Couple', 'Parent', and 'Child'. Note: Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, although counted in this report as 'Couple', may not necessarily be 'Family'. So, it is not possible from this report to determine how many victims were in the same 'Family' as their offender(s).

Not family but linked to family

'Not family but linked to family' is defined as the victim and offender not being 'Family', but each having one of the above four relationships to a third person. For example, this would include a victim who is killed by her spouse's ex-spouse. It would also include a victim who is the new boyfriend/girlfriend of the offender's mother/father.

Not family - other

'Not family – other' includes both victims who know their killer and those to whom the killer is a stranger.