

Eastern Bridge's

# Migrant Perceptions Survey Report - 2022



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# ABOUT

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## About the Migrant Perceptions Survey

### Introduction

The Migrant Perceptions Survey is an annual nationwide questionnaire for Asian migrants. For the research, New Zealand is broken down into 20 regions / sub-regions, and respondents are asked about various aspects of their lives. In 2022, the survey was available in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai.

### The Rationale

Asian migrants to New Zealand make up approximately 15% of our population. According to statistics NZ, this number is expected to increase to 26% by 2043. There is limited knowledge, particularly at a local level, about these communities. Our survey seeks to build a better understanding of our migrant communities.

### Case study - Hawke's Bay Korean Consulate

Hawke's Bay's rapidly growing Korean population caught the attention of the Korean Embassy, which partnered with Eastern Bridge to establish an honorary consulate office in the region. The office assists local Koreans with consular services and provides a central point of support for the local Korean community.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

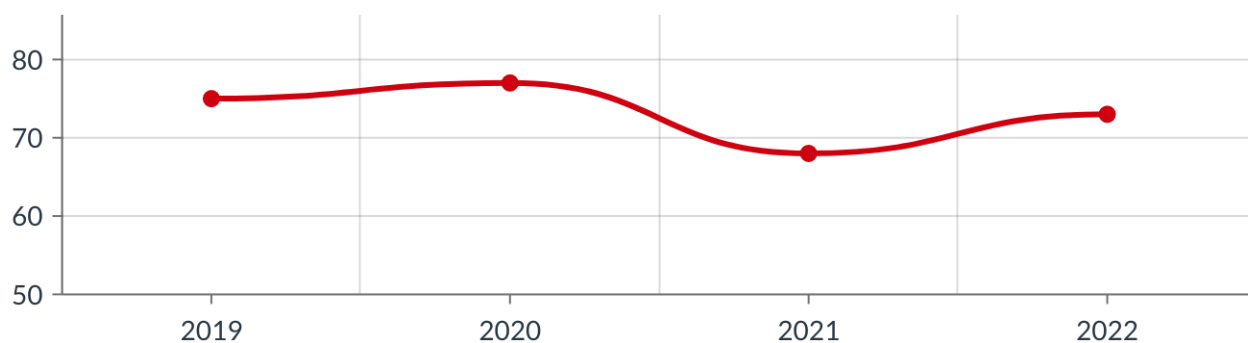
Every year, the Migrant Perceptions Survey provides a score that indicates how welcoming New Zealand is to Asian migrants. The score is based on survey respondents' feedback and considers a range of local and national factors. The higher the score, the more welcomed Asian migrants feel. 2022 saw a slight increase from 2021 in overall approval to 73% (from 68%), however, it is still the second lowest score since the survey began in 2017.

Language and ease of access to information continue to be significant hurdles for migrants. The spike in Asian-focused racism seen in 2020 and 2021 has reduced but is still higher than in previous years. In Auckland, concern around public safety has increased dramatically, while across the country, migrants feel increasingly under pressure due to the cost of living. Concerns around access to services and employment remained steady during previous years. Many Asian migrants continue to think that they are provided less support than other ethnic groups.

There is a feeling that New Zealand is losing ground in the quality of schooling, which affects not only migrants but also international students.

On a positive note, regional New Zealand is becoming more attractive to Asian migrants, with more local governments joining MBIE's Welcoming Communities programme, offering service information in multiple languages and being considered safer and more affordable than the main centres.

## Approval score (2019-2022)

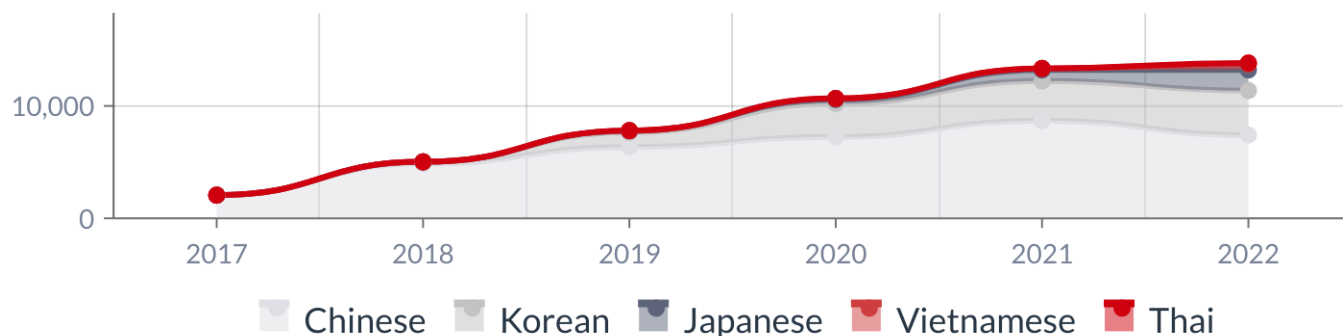


# CHAPTER 1

## The 2022 Respondents

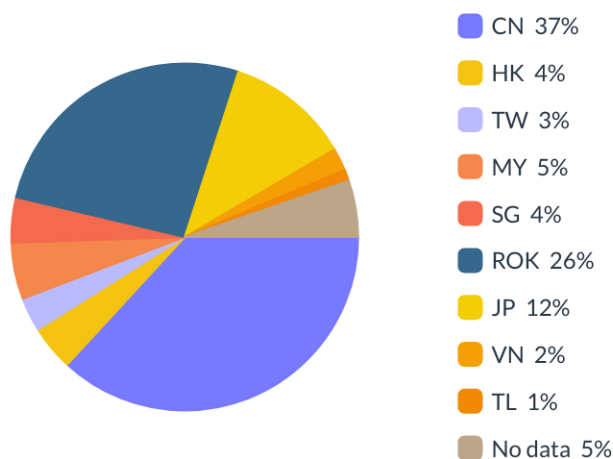
### Growth

Since 2017, the number of respondents has grown steadily, with 15,666 responses in 2022.



### Language

The majority of respondents (47%) were Chinese language speakers, originating from Greater China. There are approximately 220,000 Chinese speakers in New Zealand. Korean language speakers originating from South Korea made up 25.2% of respondents. There are approximately 50,000 Korean speakers in New Zealand. Japanese speakers made up 12% of respondents. There are approximately 35,000 Japanese speakers in New Zealand. The rest of the responses (4%) were from Thai and Vietnamese speakers.



### Gender

46% of respondents were male, 53% female and 1% didn't provide data.



### Vocation

64% of respondents work or are self-employed, 12% are students and 24% stay at home.



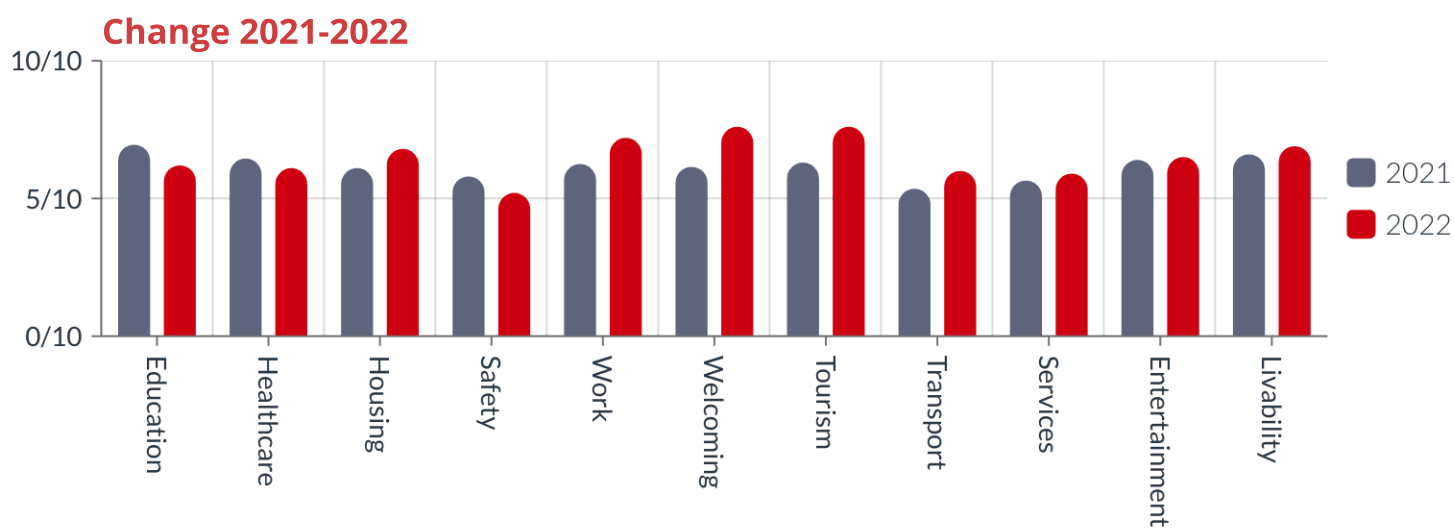
# CHAPTER 2

## The key indicators

In general, Asian migrants feel communities are more welcoming than in 2021, largely thanks to local councils and community organisations becoming more multi-lingual and promoting multi-culturalism.

Tourism also saw an improvement with the country coming out of lockdown. The end of lockdowns also saw improvements in attitudes towards work. As house prices stabilise, many non-home-owning Asian migrants hope that they will be able to enter the market, while property owners are relieved the housing market didn't collapse.

The survey paints a bleaker picture of Safety, Education and Healthcare, where widespread discontent exists. A significant number of respondents said they are considering emigrating if these indicators do not improve.



### Case study - Migrant Classroom and Work Readiness

Eastern Bridge, with support from the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Social Development, launched a migrant classroom in Hawke's Bay to help migrants integrate with the community, become work-ready and join the labour force. The classes teach English in addition to employment skills, including industry-specific knowledge and CV/cover letter preparation.



# CHAPTER 3 | Welcoming Regions

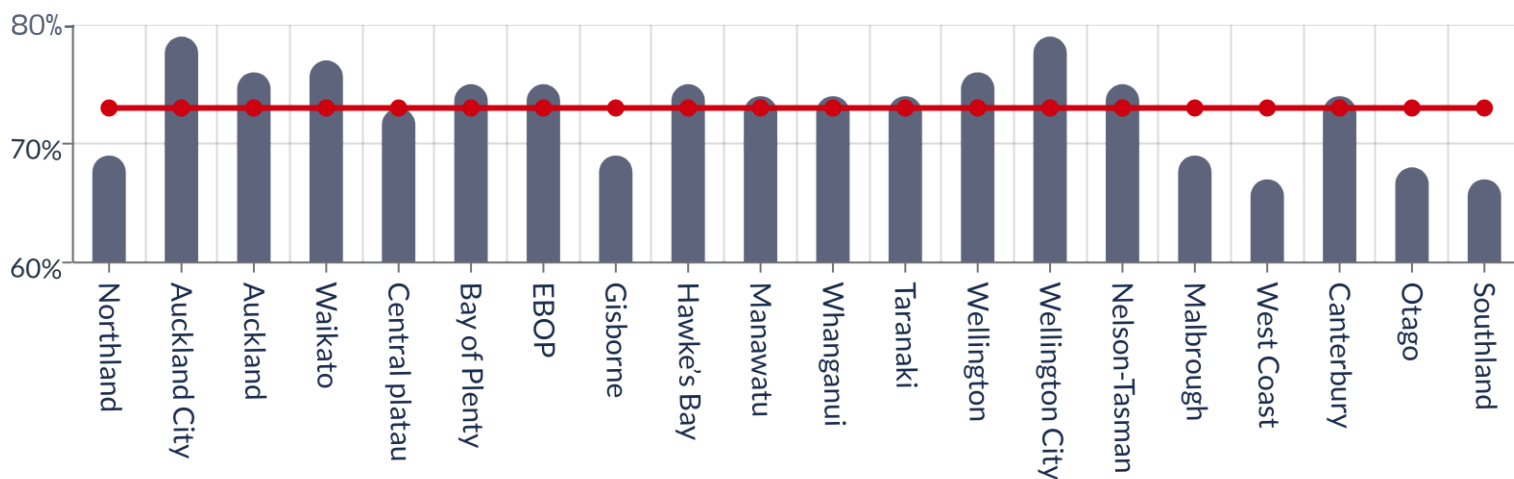
While Auckland and Wellington central cities continue to hold the most appeal for migrants, this has diminished over the past three years. More Asian migrants are relocating to the regions where approval is increasing.

Increasingly, councils are opting into the Welcoming Communities initiative, translating their local information, and running migrant community projects.

The influx of migrants into the regions is also having a snowball effect, with more migrant businesses, such as restaurants, being established, which further enhance the area's appeal.

While many regions are improving their migrant engagement for livability, few areas have considered engaging with migrants for economic development. There is a perception among many migrants that the regions don't offer many employment/business/investment opportunities compared to the main centres.

## Approval score by Region/Sub Region



### Case study - South Waikato Workshops on Migrant Communities

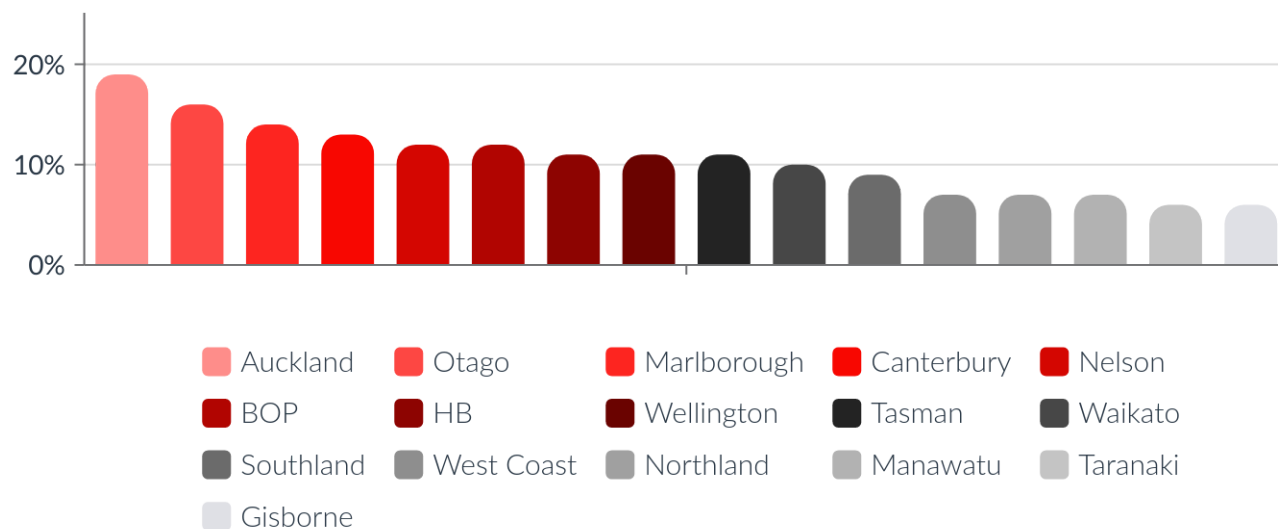
South Waikato recognised the importance of migrant communities to their local tourism sector. In 2022, they ran workshops to introduce the economic benefits of being migrant-friendly to local businesses and provided straightforward action plans to assist businesses in leveraging the potential of migrant communities.



# CHAPTER 4 | Migrants and the Economy

Migrants play a critical role in our economy, filling both skilled and unskilled jobs. Migrants are also more likely than locals to have advanced qualifications. Asian migrants are strongly represented in almost all aspects of the economy.

## Visa holders as a percentage of regional population



## Common issues faced by migrant workers

Migrant workers are concerned about the cost of living compared to their earning ability. On average, migrants earn slightly less than locals for the same positions.

Many Asian migrants also struggle with language barriers. Language barriers can lead to isolation in employment or missing opportunities for promotions.

Cultural differences can also lead to tension between Kiwi employers and migrant workers. For example, failure to acknowledge religious holidays and cultural events can cause discomfort.

The greatest source of anxiety for migrant workers in 2022 is immigration. Slow visa processing, poor communication and a lack of transparency all contribute to this concern.

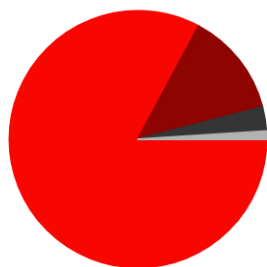
There is an opportunity for employers to encourage their employees to attend ESOL training. By attending classes, migrant employees will improve their English while also connecting to other migrants in their area.



## CHAPTER 4 | Migrants and the Economy

Migrant business plays an important role in New Zealand. Of the respondents to the survey, 1,958 class themselves as business owners or entrepreneurs.

### Migrant business owners



- Start a new business 82%
- Purchased an existing business 13%
- Inherited a business 3%
- Other 1%

### Biggest concerns for migrant business owners

In 2022 Migrant business owners' concerns sit in line with most Kiwi businesses, including cash flow, recruiting new staff, and business profitability.

Migrant businesses are also highly concerned about changes in government policy (especially immigration) and requirements from local councils.

Local governments are beginning to translate more community information. However, this trend isn't replicated by councils' economic development, planning or permitting departments.

There are also concerns among migrant business owners that they are targeted disproportionately by criminals.

There is a desire from migrants to find opportunities in regional New Zealand, but the lack of business/investment-ready opportunities prevent this from happening.

### Case study - Bay of Plenty - Jiangxi Relationship

Covid-19 has halted sister-city activities for many councils, while others have looked for innovative ways to foster exchanges. The Bay of Plenty-Jiangxi sister-province relationship has used online exchanges to sustain and grow its community participation. Civic, school and community group exchanges took place in 2020-2022 via Zoom. Exchange topics included environmental protection, waterway restoration, language, culture and art.

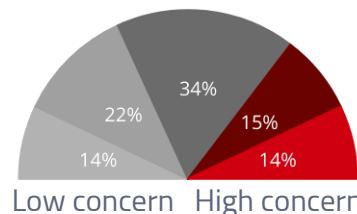


# CHAPTER 5 | Migrant's main concerns

As seen in previous years, many of the challenges faced by Asian migrants relate to accessibility of information in their native language. Poor access to information leaves a void for misinformation and fake news to flourish, and contributes to the social isolation of migrants.

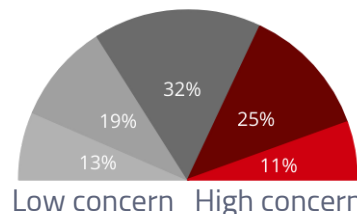
## Accessing information

Accessing information in the migrant's native language continues to be the main challenge, with 14% saying they have little or no comprehension of English language and 29% struggling on a daily basis.



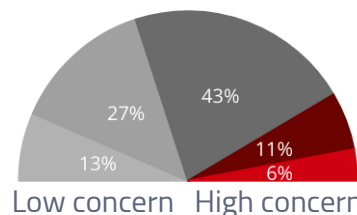
## Safety, crime, racism

Many migrants feel New Zealand is becoming less safe. There is low confidence in the police and justice system.



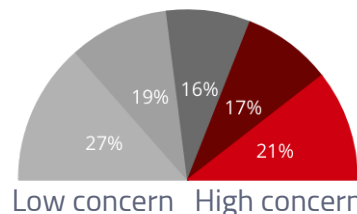
## Mis-information

There are still significant quantities of fake and misleading information spread across migrant social media. Misinformation covers a range of topics, including news, promoting business interests, politics as well as scams.



## Isolation

Poor community engagement, cultural and language barriers create a sense of isolation, often leading to anxiety and depression.



## CHAPTER 6 | Recommendations to communities

These are high-level recommendations based on the responses to this survey. More in-depth information, advice and suggested actions are available to clients of Eastern Bridge Limited. Eastern Bridge is a consulting company specialising in Asia-focused international relations and migrant community engagement.



### Information & Communication:

- Prioritise the translation of information relevant to living, studying, working and doing business in the community.
- Promote the benefits of translation to community organisations, schools and businesses.



### Community:

- Support organisations that provide ESOL and acculturation training for migrants.
- Promote people-to-people exchanges and cultural connectivity within the community and internationally.
- Leverage sister-city relationships to raise awareness of Asia's importance within the community.
- Keep migrant associations informed of funding opportunities and encourage them to run programmes that raise their profiles within the wider community.

### Case study - Hawke's Bay Migrant Radio

In partnership with the Hongi News and Information Foundation, Radio Hawke's Bay launched three new radio programmes this year: Chinese and Korean radio shows, for their respective local communities, and an English-language programme that raises awareness of the challenges migrants face and their contributions to the region.



## CHAPTER 6

Recommendations  
to communities**Economic Prosperity:**

- Understand that being migrant-friendly raises the international profile of New Zealand. Promote the economic benefits of being migrant-friendly to local businesses.
- Facilitate Asia-readiness training opportunities for your business community
- Promote the benefits to businesses from marketing in multiple languages.
- Produce and distribute translated business-relevant information and, where possible, clearly state the business opportunities within the community.
- Encourage migrants to become involved in sister-city relationships and leverage their connections to support economic opportunities in tourism, education, trade, investment, and attracting skilled labour.

**Case study - Whanganui  
joins Hongi**

The Whanganui region is the most recent addition to the Hongi website (hongico.nz). Hongi is a not-for-profit service, established in 2021, that provides news and information about life in New Zealand for migrants, international students, and visitors. The service is available in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and English, with more languages planned in 2023. With a rapidly growing user base, Hongi will provide the Whanganui District Council, their economic development agency (Whanganui and Partners) and community organisations with an inexpensive and reliable way to engage with their migrant communities and international partners. The Hongi website is run by the Hongi News and Information Foundation.



# In conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2022 Migrant Perceptions Report. I hope you found the information presented insightful. If you want to learn more, we can visit you to present our findings and run workshops.

The Migrant Perceptions Survey has been 100% funded by Eastern Bridge since 2017. If you found the information presented helpful, we would welcome sponsorship which would allow us to continue running these surveys into the future.

If you would like to discuss how Eastern Bridge can assist you with international and migrant engagement, we provide a range of services for local government, business and education providers. Please get in touch with me to arrange a free consultation.

## Contact details

**Simon Appleton | Lead Consultant**

[www.easternbridge.co.nz](http://www.easternbridge.co.nz)

[simon@easternbridge.co.nz](mailto:simon@easternbridge.co.nz)

49 Tennyson Street, Napier, NZ