

TALK OF THE TOWN

An increasing number of Aucklanders and their families opt to call the central city home. **Tom Sadler** talks to some of them about why they chose to move inward, what inner-city life is like for them and what the changes mean for the future. Photos by **Adrian Malloch**.

Frith, resident of the Wynyard Quarter and manager of placemaking at Panuku

Frith: I grew up on the North Shore and have lived in Mt Eden, Mt Albert and Grafton. I moved here in 2011 and I'm one of the 50 per cent of Aucklanders who rent. I remember Wynyard Quarter as a place we visited to get fish, or steel rope for rigging in my old job as a theatre director. The maritime industry is still here, which is important to the identity of the area, but now there are also people living here, and we're in a new Auckland city public space. I love being a part of this change and how we are thinking of the long term.

Auckland Transport worked hard to help us get a 30km/h zone here alongside Silo Park, and it's made the world of difference to the atmosphere.

It's just harder to feel safe when a car is whizzing past you at 50km/h. The fact that people are thinking about this and curating what this place is and what it offers is groovy. I've watched it change over the last 10 or so years, and I'm excited about where it might be after the next 10.

Something central to our placemaking at Panuku is a do ... learn ... do approach. It's an understanding that a city is never finished. If we keep thinking about how our city can continue to regenerate and evolve a little bit more organically, we really can make it into a better place for everyone. What we've tried for – and I think achieved – with this waterfront is to make it a place where humans can be humans, together. We can relax in the playground, grab some food and a drink, watch a movie at the open-air cinema, and truly feel something.

Barbara and Mik, residents of Shortland Street

Barbara: One of the things that happened when I moved in was shifting out of my head the idea that the city is just a commercial and retail space. I began to consider the central city a real neighbourhood. We have favourite cafes, parks we go to, regular waterfront walks and hills we climb. We have a city-centre book club. Our building is a distinct neighbourhood itself. We have a neighbours' day on the rooftop, and in the middle of winter we have a progressive dinner and walk up and down between each other's apartments.

Mik: I'm more connected now with people nearby than I ever was in the suburbs. It's the effect of not getting into the bubble of a vehicle to go everywhere. This is very much a walking community. Ultimately, apartments are small, and the street sort of becomes your living room.

Barbara: I think traditionally people think you might live in an apartment in your 20s, and after your kids leave home. But there are many people here that are outside of that. Our neighbours across the hall have a young son who visits us. There are a lot of spaces where you can easily go and be outdoors – we visit Myers, Victoria, and Albert Parks. It doesn't take long living here to realise there are green spaces if you walk just a few minutes.

Mik: We're very much into the council's access-for-everyone approach. The work done to the lower section of High St, for example, makes it a viable walking street again. There's truth to the idea that if it works for residents, it will work for everyone. First-class cities don't rely on being able to drive through them anymore.

Barbara: Places like Takutai Square in Britomart could be anywhere in the world, and there would be lots of people there thinking it's a lovely place to be. High Street and O'Connell Street and the lanes that run between them have turned into spaces where people want to go and meet. Few people drive through there. They are the destination and not just a road.

1. Frith appreciates the 30km/h zone at Silo Park 2. Shortland Street residents Barbara and Mik in Vulcan Lane







Ethan, Charli and Christian,
residents of Beresford Square

Charli: We moved into the city for the school zone. We wanted Ethan to go to Western Springs, and we were a few blocks out of zone where we were before. At the time, I was working in venues along Karangahape Road and often finishing gigs at three or four in the morning, so being able to walk home was an added benefit. I work out in Penrose now, ironically, but I have so many options for getting there. The train station is convenient, and I imagine it being even more so when the CRL opens.

Christian: My job is in the city. I could walk to work, but I find it easier to grab the CityLink Red bus. It costs me \$5 a week and it's so convenient. I have a car in secure parking across the street that I never touch. I never have to go too far

for anything. The gym, groceries, clothing, music, it's all right here. It changes your flow having that much convenience; not having to plan everything all the time.

Ethan: I bus to school. I just get to the bus stop, jump on, and I'm there. And there's more stuff to do in the city. When we lived in the suburbs there wasn't much to do outside.

Christian: One thing I've grown to like is the people and different characters on the strip. It adds to the whole experience of living in the city. It can be a mixed bag but, ultimately, I think it's interesting to have that kind of diversity.

Charli: I pretty much spent my formative years on K Road, so I'm sort of living out my teenage dreams being here. Buying from the store owners that have been here for years is so different than buying from a

3. Ethan, Charli and Christian on the steps behind St Kevin's Arcade, on K Road

chain store. You actually see where your money is going. There is a sense of community and support that I've never had anywhere else I've lived.

Christian: As times change and once the street redevelopment and City Rail Link construction is done with, it will bring a new set of characters, people and shops. We're now in a heritage building, so we know it's here to stay. That makes you feel like you've left a mark on a place, that you are part of its history.

Charli: We have access to some great spaces here as well. Western Park is just across the Hopetoun Bridge. And Myers and Albert parks are both a short walk. I'm loving the films in Aotea Square lately as well. Summertime is wonderful in the inner city.

Richard, Jojo, and Madeleine,
city-fringe apartment residents

Richard: We love living in a central location. We've been here a few years now and being a part of that change and seeing the growing interconnectivity is exciting. Any area of Auckland that we want to go to is 10-15 minutes away.

Jojo: We're still close enough to both of our family homes, which is good when you're bringing up a baby like we are.

Richard: We can see our parents in the suburbs easy peasy, but then we're close to urban stuff as well. We eat out a lot more than we did in the suburbs, as there is definitely a much higher density of restaurants. Basically, we have lots of choices here; we can go out to suburban parks and public spaces, or into newer ones like Silo Park. And you do think of more things to do because you want to leave the apartment. We both grew up in the suburbs, but Maddie has only known apartment living. And there's no garden to look after, which is a plus when you're busy!

Jojo: We spend a lot of time outside, searching for places to go and things to do rather than staying indoors. We do a lot of walking, so it's nice being on the city fringe where we've got access to so many kinds of spaces. Playgrounds get a lot of use from us, and from the people that live in the buildings around here.

Richard: I'd say we end up doing more exciting things living here; going to



4

events that are on in the city. We like to look up what's on. Recently we've been to Chinese New Year events, movies and Ice Cream Sundae at Silo Park, and Japan Day. We're more inclined to engage with cultural events like that because we'd rather spend a few hours outside, when maybe we'd have just been in the yard back in the suburbs.

We have a CRL station going in close by, which we're happy about. The bus lines are good here, but we think the rail line will make the area much more accessible and desirable, which should also be a long-term plus in a real estate sense as we own our

4. Jojo, Richard and Madeleine make good use of city playgrounds

apartment. I scooter to work along the bus lanes every day, which is nice and easy. Skips the traffic!

Jojo: Maddie will be a bit older when the CRL is open, and I think it will be even easier to take her places on the train. Our place is a new build as well, so we've got good insulation and double-glazing that keeps it warmer and drier in the winter and cooler in the summer than an older build might be, which is one less thing to worry about when raising a little one.

Right for your lifestyle

As the Kerepeti development has taken shape, it has become the new heart of Hobsonville Point. With generous rooms, quality kitchens and modern design, Kerepeti is leading the way in connected living.

You can feel it's right in your heart.

APARTMENTS

2 BED OR 3 BED from \$695,000*

TERRACE HOMES

3 BED OR 4 BED from \$799,000*

VISIT A SHOW HOME

G06/2 Onekiritea Road, Hobsonville Point

KEREPETI.CO.NZ

0800 299 099

*Terms & Conditions apply



Kerepeti
HOBSONVILLE POINT

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei - For us and our children after us

NGĀI TAHU Property

BY THE NUMBERS

As a place to live, work or visit, Auckland's central city is growing in popularity. And that growth is leading to major changes, such as the City Rail Link construction, the massive transformation of Quay Street as part of the Downtown Programme, new cycleways, pedestrian-friendly streets and more apartments. These numbers tell the story.

INNER-CITY POPULATION

Auckland's inner city had a **population of more than 33,000** recorded in the 2018 census, up 12% on the 2013 figure

The city centre has **nearly 18,000 private dwellings**

The inner-city population is young, with a **median age of 29.1** years, compared to the median of 34.7 for the wider Auckland region

ECONOMY

The Auckland city centre accounted for **7.1% of New Zealand's GDP** in 2018-19

Total employment in the city centre averaged **138,708** in 2018-19

Financial and insurance services provided 27% of jobs in the inner city. The next largest sector was professional, scientific and technical services (17.5%)



WORD ON THE STREET: OPINIONS ON AUCKLAND'S CHANGING CENTRAL CITY

Pratik, Queen St



I commute daily from Onehunga into the city centre, where I've worked for about 12 years. Public transport – buses specifically – are my main mode of transport. I'd like it if the frequency of buses from out my way was a little higher, but they are still the best option I have available to me. I would say the central city has become more crowded in recent years, but I think there is some good work being done on infrastructure in that area. Is it happening at the rate it needs to be? Perhaps not. But I think that the effort and the will to improve it is there, which is what's important to me.

Tom, Freyberg Square



I live in Ōrākei and work in Shortland Street. I carpool, and occasionally take the bus back. With the CRL speeding things up, the train could be an option. I grew up on Waiheke Island, and the ferry is only going to get busier, so it's great that they're doing all the work on the ferry terminal and Quay Street now. I often come to Freyberg Place or Takutai Square in Britomart to eat my lunch. It's really important to have big public spaces. It feels like you're part of something bigger. I enjoy walking up High Street and Fort Street more than Queen Street, so it's good to see them widening the footpaths.

Iris and Reinhard, visitors from Germany, Quay St



We've noticed there are lots of cars, people and tall buildings. We have more space for walking in Germany, more cycleways and not as much traffic inside the town. We have made cars go slower when people are around and some places have banned cars from the city. Auckland has lots of water and islands. It's a very special location. We hope the construction on the waterfront will make it better to walk around. We think there should be more parks and more space to walk. When you do that, you will see more people eating, sitting and talking in those places, like you do in Europe.

Mele, Queens Wharf



I work in Mt Wellington, but I drove in from South Auckland today and parked up the road. It would be good if there were more free parks, but I guess walking is good exercise. It feels like the Quay Street works have been going on for ages. When it's finished, it will be good for the people who walk around this area. I probably come in to the city once a month and I enjoy the energy and excitement. We go to Spark Arena for concerts and I like hanging out with my friends near the lookout at Teal Park, near the Parnell Baths. The CRL is great. It will feel like a proper big city when you have an underground train.

TRANSPORT

THE CITY RAIL LINK (CRL)

The city centre sees an estimated **500,000** walking trips every day

Public transport, walking, and cycling accounted for a **52%** share of commuting trips in 2016 and are projected to top **73%** by 2046

All growth in commuting into the city centre over the past 15 years has been in public transport

When completed in 2024, the CRL will **double the number** of Aucklanders **living within 30 minutes** of the central city

The CRL will **cut travel times** for all rail commuters to Midtown. Those on the Eastern, Southern, and Onehunga lines will save about 10 minutes and those on the Western Line about 20 minutes

The CRL will at least double the rail network's capacity. It will be capable of carrying **54,000 people an hour** at peak times



nztrio

VIOLIN: Amalia Hall
CELLO: Ashley Brown
PIANO: Somi Kim

Photography: Garth Badger



expect
to be
affected

Origins
Sun 5 Apr | Tues 7 Apr

InterFusions
Sun 5 July | Tues 7 July

Constellations
Sun 18 Oct | Tues 20 Oct

NZTrio 2020 concert series now on sale
Adult \$50 / Student \$25 / Series \$135 Booking fees apply
Purchase a series subscription and be in to win a \$200 WORLD voucher

nztrio.com

Loft at Q Theatre | 305 Queen St | Auckland | 09 309 9771

SUSTAINING PARTNER

FUNDERS

