

TEN YEAR IMPACT DATA REPORT

A decade of Skinny Jump

How affordable connectivity reached
almost 100,000 households across
Aotearoa between 2016 and 2026.



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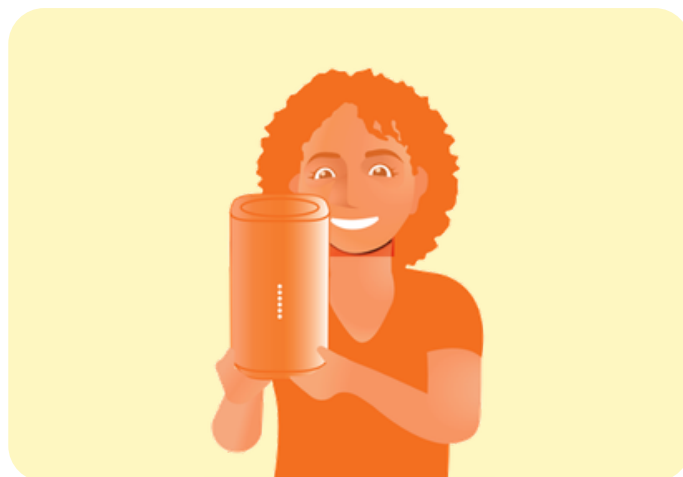
Executive summary

WHAT IS SKINNY JUMP?

Launched in 2016, Skinny Jump was built on a simple belief: no family should miss out because they cannot afford to get online.

As a subsidised broadband programme, Jump helps households overcome one of the most significant barriers to digital participation: the cost of getting and staying connected. Through a nationwide network of trusted community providers, eligible households can access affordable prepaid broadband, a free modem, no contracts, no credit checks, and free monthly data, alongside practical, locally delivered support to help them sign up, get connected, and confidently get online.

Skinny Jump is intentionally designed to support people who are at greater risk of digital exclusion. This includes families with children in low socioeconomic communities, job seekers, seniors, people with disabilities, people living in social housing, migrant and refugee communities, Māori and Pasifika communities, and others who face barriers to participation. By reducing affordability barriers and providing a flexible pathway to connectivity, Jump helps ensure more New Zealanders can participate in a society where education, employment, healthcare, government services, and everyday communication increasingly depend on being online.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

To mark Skinny Jump's tenth anniversary, this report reflects on a decade of delivery and impact. Drawing on programme data and national research, it explores Jump's growth, the communities it reaches, and how this aligns with the populations most affected by digital exclusion. It also considers what ten years of experience tells us about the continuing role of affordable connectivity to support participation in a digital world.



A decade of impact — at a glance

Almost 100,000 households have accessed Skinny Jump over the past decade, helping households across Aotearoa stay connected to learning, work, services, and community life. Yet the need for affordable connectivity remains significant. The 2023 Census estimated that around 170,000 households were still without internet access, a reminder that while substantial progress has been made, many households in Aotearoa continue to face barriers to getting and staying connected.¹

Viewed together, these figures point to a broader reality: while internet access has become an essential part of everyday life, affordability continues to shape who can participate fully in an increasingly digital society. More than 39,000 households remain connected through Skinny Jump today, and households currently connected have been with Jump for an average of 2.5 years, reflecting the ongoing importance of connectivity to everyday participation.

Supported by a nationwide network of 277 trusted community providers, Skinny Jump is designed to help households get online and stay connected. The combination of affordable connectivity and trusted local support has supported more people to participate in learning, work, services, and community life in a world where digital access has become increasingly important.



100,000*

households signed up since 2016



39,000+

households currently connected as of August 31, 2026



277

trusted active community providers across Aotearoa New Zealand



2.5 years**

Average connection length for households currently connected to Skinny Jump

*Based on Skinny Jump modem sign up data from 2016 to 31 August 2026. Household estimates assume one household per modem sign up.

**Average tenure of the active customer base as at 31 Aug 2026.

What ten years of Skinny Jump tells us

Reflecting on a decade of delivery, the Skinny Jump team has identified five key learnings about what it takes to help households get online and stay connected.

Skinny Jump was built on a simple belief: no family should miss out because they cannot afford to get online. Ten years on, the evidence confirms that this challenge remains, while also showing how the nature of digital exclusion in Aotearoa has changed over time. Each learning is presented below alongside supporting evidence drawn from across the report.

01



Affordability remains one of the biggest barriers to digital participation

Across the past decade, the programme's data suggests that for many households the barrier to getting online is not whether a connection is available, but whether it can be sustained alongside other essential costs. In Auckland, 56% of sign ups come from a small number of local board areas with well established network coverage. Almost one in three connected households rely solely on free data: 32% of actively connected Skinny Jump households use only the free 15GB monthly allowance, highlighting the ongoing pressure affordability can place on staying connected. Together, these findings indicate that improving network infrastructure alone is unlikely to close the digital divide in communities where household budgets are already under pressure.

32% of actively connected households rely on the free allowance alone

02



Community-led delivery works and is a critical enabler of reach and impact

The growing role of community partners is one of the clearest trends in the programme's history. In 2020, when online sign up was introduced in response to COVID lockdowns, community partners facilitated 43% of sign ups. By 2026, this had risen to 96%. As the programme has grown, households have increasingly connected through organisations they already know and trust. National evidence similarly highlights that barriers relating to access, skills, motivation and trust are closely linked.³ With 277 providers now operating across 293 sites, the strength of this network has become central to the programme's reach.

96% of sign ups facilitated by community partners in 2026

03



Digital exclusion often overlaps with wider forms of social and economic disadvantage

National research shows that the groups most at risk of digital exclusion are often the same groups experiencing wider social and economic disadvantage.^{3,3} Skinny Jump's customer profile reflects this, with families with children in low socioeconomic communities representing the largest share of recorded disadvantage, followed by unemployment, social housing, and Māori and Pasifika youth. For one in four households, these challenges compound, with more than one form of disadvantage recorded at the same time. The profile also responds to wider economic conditions. Unemployment rose from 14% to 17% of recorded disadvantage between 2023 and 2026, as the national unemployment rate increased from 3.4% to 5.6%.^{5,6}

1 in 4 households experience more than one form of disadvantage

04



Connectivity has become increasingly essential for participation in modern life

As more of everyday life has moved online, from learning and work to healthcare, banking and staying connected with whānau, internet access has become a fundamental part of participating in modern life. This shift became particularly visible during COVID, when new sign ups to Skinny Jump grew 3.4 times between 2019 and 2020. While the pandemic accelerated digital participation, the importance of being online has continued to grow well beyond it. Households currently connected have been with the programme for an average of 2.5 years, reinforcing that for many, connectivity is an ongoing requirement rather than a short term need.

2.5 years average connection length for households currently connected

05 Despite significant progress, the need for affordable connectivity remains substantial

Almost 100,000 households have accessed Skinny Jump since 2016, yet the 2023 Census estimated that around 170,000 households across Aotearoa still did not have internet access.¹ Demand for subsidised connectivity remains consistently high: Despite the acceleration during COVID, between 13,000 and 16,000 new households have continued to sign up to Skinny Jump every year since 2021, showing digital exclusion remains an ongoing challenge rather than a temporary pandemic issue. The past decade shows what affordable connectivity and trusted community delivery can achieve together, and the continued collaboration across communities, industry, government and funders needed to help more New Zealanders participate fully in a digital society.



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A decade of responding to need

The story of Skinny Jump is one of continuous adaptation, responding to the challenges and opportunities shaping digital participation across Aotearoa.

A decade of growth and evolution

Over the past decade, Skinny Jump has evolved from a small pilot supporting families without internet access into a nationwide digital inclusion programme. The programme's evolution reflects a deeper understanding of digital exclusion in New Zealand, with each change driven by a single question: **What would make it easier for people experiencing digital disadvantage to get and stay connected?**



PHASE 1

Page 6

Foundation

2016-2018

Building the foundations of digital inclusion through community partnerships and a low-cost internet model.

1,770 households connected*

MILESTONES

1

2016
Launched with the first community partners

2

2018
First 1,000 households connected

PHASE 2

Page 7

Responding to need

2019-2021

Rapid expansion in response to growing need and COVID-19, supported by new delivery models and digital tools.

28,850 households connected

MILESTONES

3

2019
Referral network passes 200 partners

4

2020
COVID-19 response expansion: 3.4x households connected

PHASE 3

Page 8

Keeping communities connected

2022-2026

Shifting focus from getting people connected to helping households stay connected over the long term.

69,120 households connected

MILESTONES

5

2022
15GB of free monthly data introduced

6

2024 onwards
Jump Mobile pilot launched with Nokia for people without a fixed address

*Skinny Jump connected fewer than 200 households in its first year (2016). As an exact figure was unavailable, we have assumed 199 households.

**2026 sign-ups are based on data available to 31 August 2026. Full year figures have been estimated using the average monthly sign up rate observed during the year to date period.

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Skinny Jump - 10 Year Impact Data Report

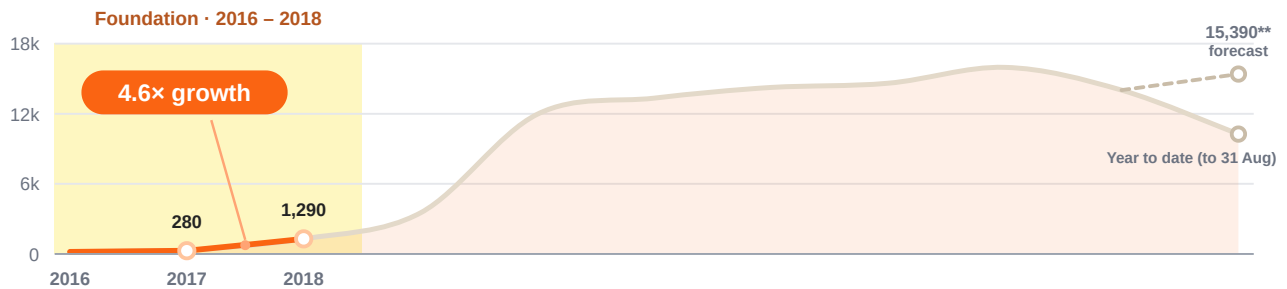
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Building the foundations

Proving that affordable internet could reach households experiencing digital exclusion.

THE DECADE · CONNECTIONS BY YEAR

2016–2018 highlighted



KEY MILESTONES

2016 Programme launch

Skinny Jump, originally launched as Spark Jump, was piloted in early 2016 and formally launched later that year through Spark Foundation and 20/20 Trust (formerly known as the 2020 Communications Trust), with a focus on helping families with children under 18 who did not have internet access at home. Delivered through school-based pilots in communities across Auckland and Christchurch, the programme provided a free modem and affordable prepaid broadband to create a practical pathway for families to get online for the first time. For many households, this meant children could complete homework, access online learning resources, and participate more fully in education from home, rather than relying on public Wi-Fi, school facilities, or other temporary sources of connectivity.

2016 Community partner model established

Early delivery highlighted that affordability was only one of several barriers to getting online. Many families also needed support navigating eligibility requirements, accessing devices, and overcoming the practical challenges of establishing and maintaining a home internet connection. In response, the Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa (DIAA) played a key role in developing and coordinating a nationwide network of community partners. This community-led model became a defining feature of Skinny Jump and laid the foundations for the nationwide partner network that continues to support delivery today.

Through the leadership of Laurence Zwimpfer, Sue Kini and the many DIAA team members who have supported Jump over the years, DIAA has helped build and maintain the nationwide partner network that underpins Skinny Jump's reach and impact.

HOW DELIVERY WORKS



2018 First 1,000 households connected

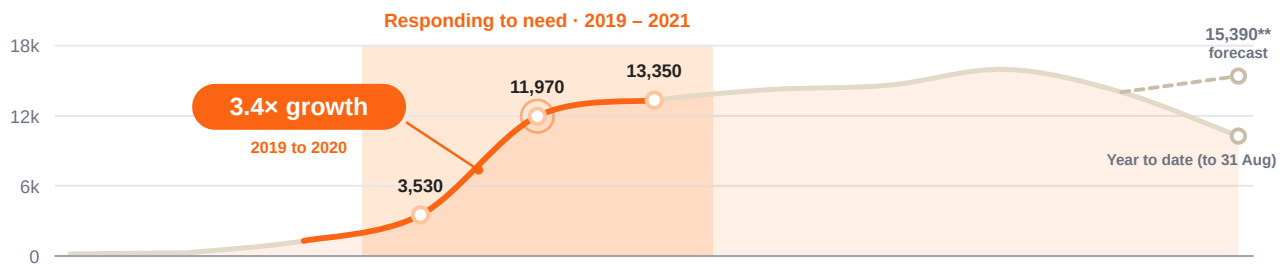
Early delivery showed growing demand for affordable connectivity. Sign-ups grew 4.6 times between 2017 and 2018, during which time the model was tested and settled: prepaid low-cost broadband, a free modem, and a local organisation alongside every household.

Responding to need

COVID-19 accelerated demand and transformed how Jump operated.

NEW HOUSEHOLDS CONNECTED BY YEAR

2019–2021 highlighted



KEY MILESTONES

2019 Eligibility expansion

Spark Foundation and its partners began reshaping the programme to better reflect New Zealand's broader digital inclusion challenges. Guided by the Government's Digital Inclusion Blueprint, planning began to expand support beyond families with school-aged children, recognising that barriers to connectivity were also affecting older people, job seekers, people with disabilities, migrant and refugee communities, and people living in social housing. This marked a significant shift in the programme's direction, laying the foundations for a more inclusive approach to digital participation.

Early 2020 Spark Jump becomes Skinny Jump

These changes were put into practice as Spark Jump relaunched as Skinny Jump. Eligibility was expanded to include a wider range of communities experiencing digital exclusion, making the programme accessible to many households who had previously fallen outside its criteria. The move to the Skinny brand also aligned the programme with the products, and support services through which it was delivered, helping reduce customer confusion and raising awareness of an affordable pathway to getting online.

2020 · THE TURNING POINT

March 2020 COVID-19 transformed demand for digital inclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how essential internet access had become for everyday life. As lockdowns shifted learning, work, healthcare, and social connection into the home, demand for Skinny Jump increased rapidly, with new sign-ups growing by 3.4x from 2019 to 2020. To meet this demand, the programme quickly adapted, introducing an online sign-up process developed in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Hundreds of Spark employees volunteered to support delivery, while an ad hoc working group evolved into Skinny Jump's first dedicated team. The introduction of contact-free delivery and online sign-up processes helped thousands of households get connected during lockdowns, enabling people to maintain connection to vital lifelines when many community facilities and in-person services were unavailable.

3.4x
scale up in new
households connected,
2019 to 2020

2021 Sponsored plans and online sign-up launched for eligible school students and their families

A continued focus on expanding eligibility was reflected in a partnership between Spark and Ciena, which focused on ensuring students are connected. The Ciena Jump for Students Fund delivers eligible student households experiencing digital exclusion with a free modem and a fully sponsored Skinny Jump connection for up to 12 months. By removing the cost of both the modem and monthly prepaid plan costs, the initiative helps to ensure students can access online learning, stay connected with teachers, and complete schoolwork from home without families needing to choose between internet access and other household essentials.

2021 Skinny Jump app launched

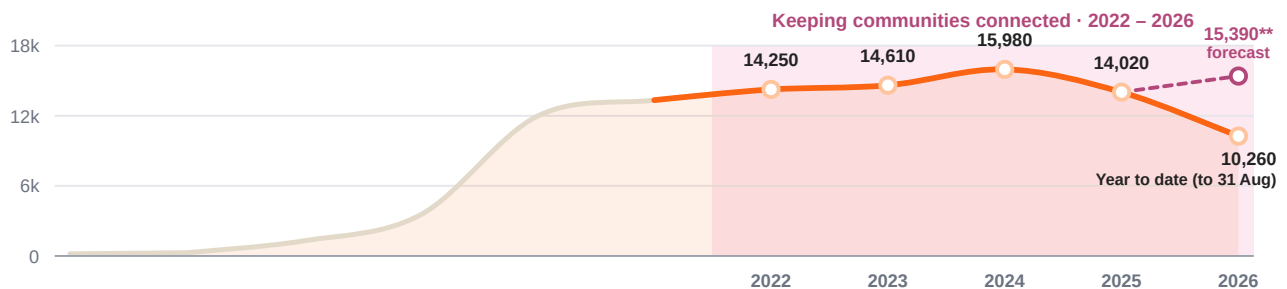
With the customer base now exceeding 10,000 households, the Skinny Jump app was launched to provide customers with a simple self-service channel for managing their connection. Through the app, customers could activate their modem, check their data balance and usage, top up their account, and purchase Jump plans. The introduction of self-service functionality made it easier for customers to manage their connectivity while supporting the programme to scale and serve a growing number of households.

Keeping communities connected

The challenge shifted from access to retention and long-term affordability.

NEW HOUSEHOLDS CONNECTED BY YEAR

2022-2026 highlighted



KEY MILESTONES

2022 15GB of free monthly data introduced

Skinny Jump introduced 15GB of free data each month in response to customer feedback that some households were having to choose between topping up their internet and paying for other essentials. At the same time, the prepaid plan allowance increased from 30GB to 35GB for \$5, with customers able to purchase up to six plans per month. These changes ensured every customer had access to a baseline level of connectivity each month, while also providing more data at the same cost for households with higher usage needs. The free monthly data was designed to reduce the risk of complete disconnection and make internet access more reliable and affordable for households facing financial pressure.

32% FREE DATA ONLY

of actively connected households rely on the free allowance alone

WHO RELIES ON THE FREE 15GB ALLOWANCE?

TOP 5 GROUPS



For some households this may reflect lower data needs, while for others it may reflect the cost of topping up.

Families with children in low socioeconomic communities remain the largest group using the allowance, while seniors and unemployed people are also strongly represented.

2024 onwards Jump Mobile launched

Skinny Jump and Nokia launched Jump Mobile, a pilot designed to support people who could not access Skinny Jump because they lacked a stable or permanent address. Delivered through selected community organisations, including refugee and housing-support providers, the pilot offered a sponsored mobile device, initial prepaid credit, and discounted mobile plans for up to six months. Additional partners and customer cohorts were added throughout 2025 and 2026 as the model continued to evolve. By extending support beyond fixed-address connectivity, Jump Mobile created a new pathway for people in emergency accommodation, transitional housing, and other temporary living situations to access calls, texts, and mobile data. This enabled customers to stay connected with support services, manage appointments, search for housing and employment, and maintain contact with whānau, friends, and wider support networks.

2026 Ten years of Skinny Jump

As internet access became more widespread, the challenge increasingly shifted from helping households get connected to helping them remain connected. Ten years on, the programme contributes to wider efforts to close Aotearoa's digital divide.

Skinny Jump's community-led model

For many households, staying connected is an ongoing need rather than a one-off event.

Staying connected over time often depends on having affordable access, trusted support, and someone to help navigate challenges when they arise. Households currently connected have been with Skinny Jump for an average of 2.5 years, reinforcing that digital inclusion is often an ongoing journey rather than a one-off intervention.

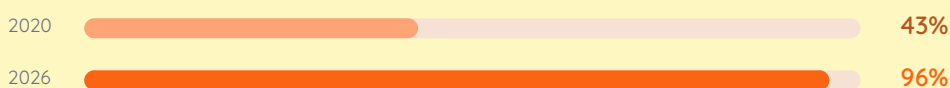
This understanding sits at the heart of Skinny Jump's delivery model. Today, the programme is delivered through a network of 277 community partners operating across 293 locations throughout Aotearoa, creating local access points in communities across the country. These organisations enable the programme to be delivered through trusted, local support that helps households understand the programme, navigate the sign-up process, and access connectivity in ways that feel familiar, accessible, and culturally appropriate.

LOCAL ACCESS POINTS

293

community partner sites across Aotearoa.

SIGN-UPS FACILITATED BY COMMUNITY PARTNERS



The literature suggests that digital exclusion often intersects with other forms of disadvantage. People experiencing financial hardship, language barriers, disability, low confidence, social isolation, or major life transitions frequently require support that goes beyond helping them get connected. The Digital Inclusion Blueprint highlights that barriers relating to access, skills, motivation, and trust are interconnected, meaning that addressing one barrier in isolation is often insufficient.³

Community organisations are particularly important because they are often already supporting people with broader needs. Someone seeking help with housing, settlement, food security, employment, education, health services, or financial wellbeing may be more likely to disclose digital challenges to a trusted community worker than to a telecommunications provider.^{3 4} Trusted community organisations have become critical to reaching households: Community partners facilitated 96% of Skinny Jump sign-ups in 2026, up from 43% in 2020, demonstrating the importance of connecting people through organisations they already know and trust.



A DECADE OF PARTNERSHIP

Over the past decade, community partnerships have become one of Skinny Jump's defining strengths. By combining affordable connectivity with trusted local support, the programme reflects a broader understanding of digital inclusion, one that recognises meaningful participation depends not only on access, but also on having the confidence, capability, and support needed to stay connected over time.

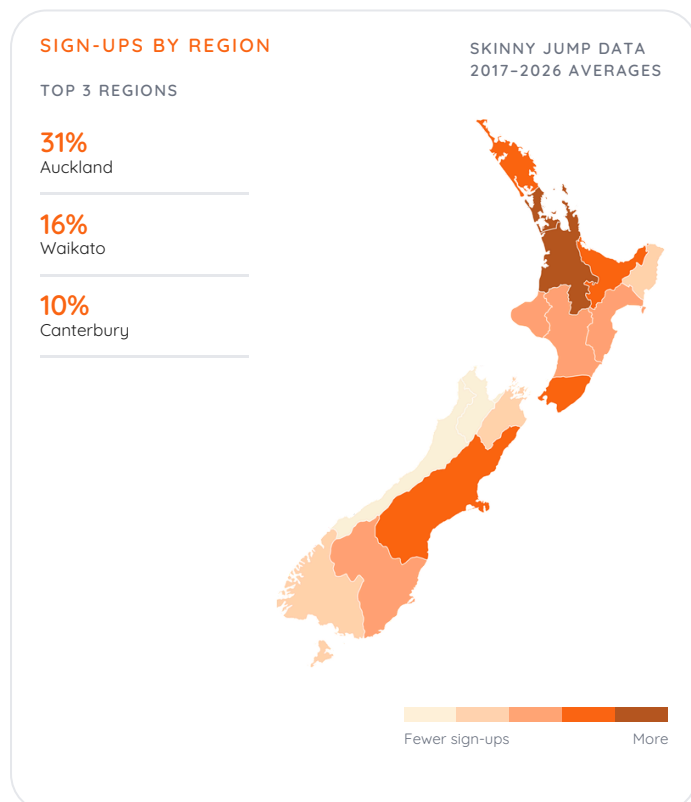


Understanding the communities being reached

Over the past decade, Skinny Jump has connected almost 100,000 households. The data highlights who is being reached, where demand is concentrated, and what this tells us about digital exclusion in Aotearoa.

Reaching households facing digital exclusion

Almost 100,000 households have signed up to Skinny Jump since 2016, with approximately 39,000 households currently connected through the programme.

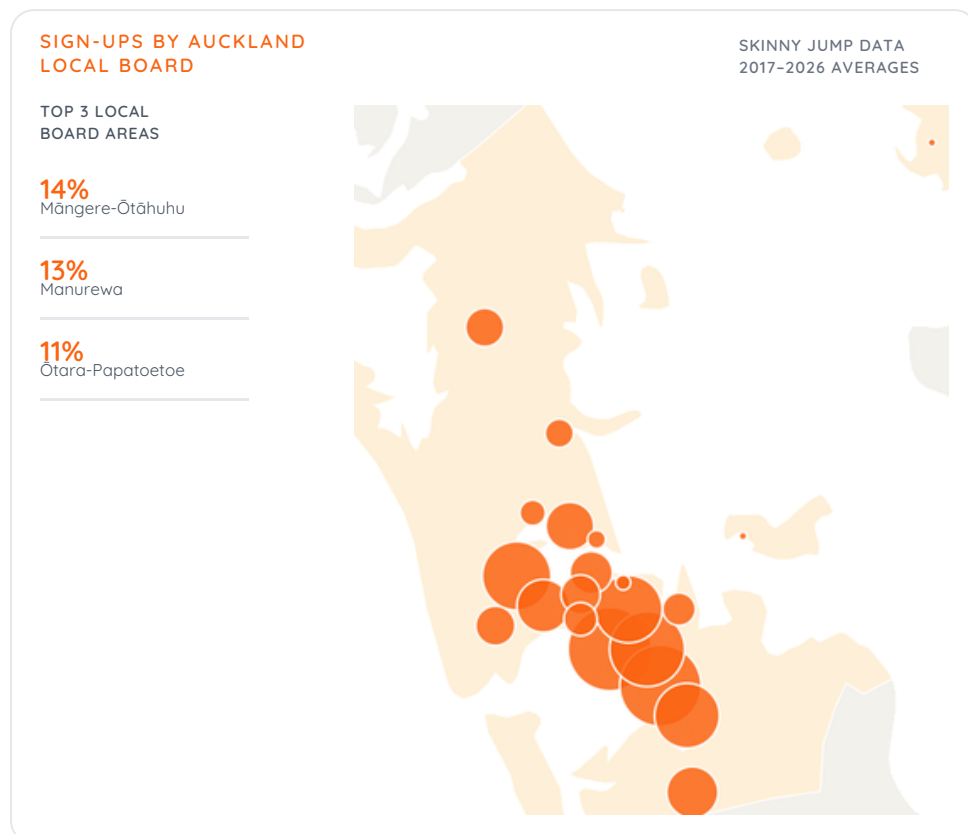


Digital exclusion looks different across Aotearoa

The geography of Skinny Jump sign-ups reveals both national reach and concentrated demand. Households from all across Aotearoa have accessed the programme over the past decade, highlighting that barriers to getting and staying connected are not confined to a single place or region. At the same time, demand is concentrated in a relatively small number of communities.

Auckland, Waikato, and Canterbury account for 56% of all sign-ups, broadly in line with their share of the population. Waikato stands out, accounting for 16% of sign-ups compared with around 10% of the population.¹² This may indicate stronger programme reach in regions where digital exclusion is more prevalent or where community referral networks are particularly strong.

This pattern reflects what national research tells us about digital exclusion. The barriers preventing people from getting and staying connected are not the same everywhere. In some communities, affordability remains the primary barrier to connectivity, while in others these challenges can be compounded by factors such as geographic isolation, limited service options, connectivity constraints, or reduced access to support.³ While the barriers may differ, the consequences are often similar: reduced access to education, employment, services, information, and opportunities to participate in community life.^{2,3}



Connectivity is about more than availability

Having broadband infrastructure available doesn't necessarily mean households can afford to connect: Auckland accounts for almost a third of all Skinny Jump sign-ups, with 56% concentrated in a small number of local board areas despite internet services being widely available, reinforcing that affordability, not just network availability, remains a major part of the digital divide.

*Sign-up data was available from 2017 to August 31, 2026. Unless otherwise stated, averages and trend analysis presented throughout this report are based on data from this period.

The communities reached by Skinny Jump

Digital exclusion is concentrated among communities already experiencing broader social and economic disadvantage.

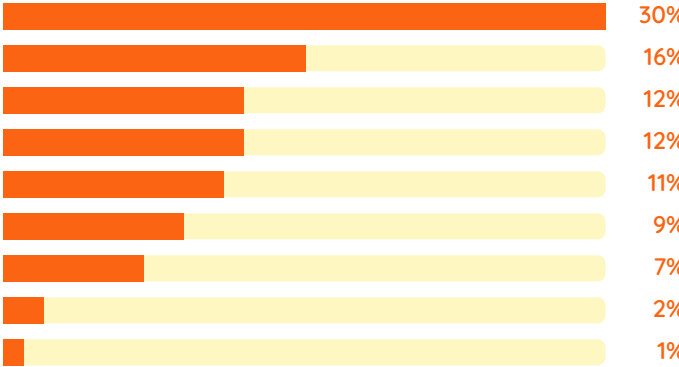
Groups identified by New Zealand evidence as being at greater risk of digital exclusion include low income households, Māori and Pasifika youth, people with disabilities, unemployed people, social housing tenants, migrants and refugees, and some rural communities.^{2,3}

The profile of Skinny Jump customers closely aligns with these findings. Since demographic data collection began in 2020, families with children in low socioeconomic communities have consistently represented the largest group accessing Skinny Jump, while other groups identified in the literature as being at greater risk of digital exclusion have also remained a significant share of customers. Although the relative prominence of some indicators of disadvantage has shifted over time, the overall customer profile has remained broadly consistent, suggesting that the programme continues to reach the communities most affected by digital exclusion.^{2,3}

RECORDED DISADVANTAGE AMONG SKINNY JUMP CUSTOMERS*

- Families with children in low socio-economic communities
- Unemployed
- People living in social housing
- Māori and Pasifika youth
- People living in rural communities
- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Offenders and ex-offenders
- Migrants and refugees with English as a second language

Recorded disadvantage indicators (2020-2026 Average)



A SHIFT IN EMPLOYMENT

One notable change in Skinny Jump's data has been the rise of unemployment as a recorded disadvantage, with this rate steadily increasing year on year from 2023 to 2026 (14% to 17%). Over the same period, New Zealand's unemployment rate increased from 3.4% to 5.6%, reflecting a period of wider economic pressure in which maintaining access to essential services, including internet connectivity, has become increasingly challenging for many households.^{5,6}

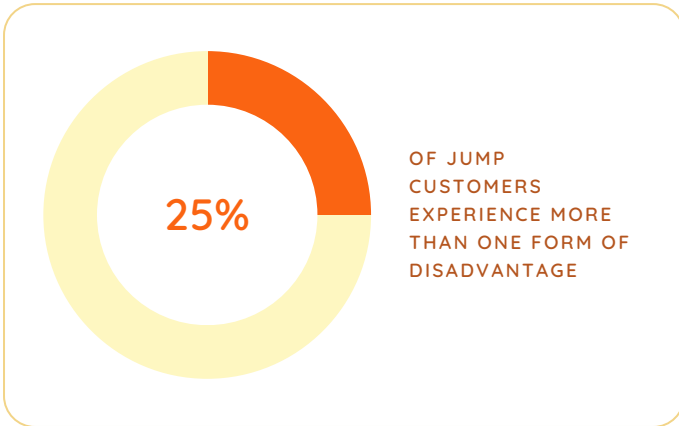
CONNECTIVITY IN MĀORI AND PACIFIC COMMUNITIES

National research has consistently shown that digital exclusion is not experienced evenly across the population, with Māori and Pacific communities more likely to face barriers to affordable connectivity and digital participation.^{2,3} This broader pattern is reflected in Jump's data, where **around 57% of families in low socioeconomic communities identified as Māori and 8% identified as Pacific**. While households may identify with more than one ethnic group, these figures indicate that the programme is reaching communities where the need for affordable connectivity is often greatest.

Many households experience multiple barriers to participation

Digital exclusion is rarely driven by a single challenge. Research suggests that the communities most at risk of digital exclusion are often the same communities experiencing broader forms of disadvantage. Barriers relating to affordability, digital skills, trust, access to devices, housing insecurity, disability, unemployment, and geographic isolation can compound one another, making participation in the digital world more difficult.^{2,3}

Digital exclusion often comes alongside other challenges: **One in four Skinny Jump households experience more than one form of disadvantage, with unemployment, social housing, rural isolation and disability among the barriers recorded across the customer base.**



*Customers may be recorded against more than one disadvantage category. Percentages are based on the total number of recorded disadvantage indicators and show the relative distribution of recorded disadvantage across the customer base.

Deep-dive: Families in low socioeconomic communities

Families with children in low socioeconomic communities have consistently represented the largest group accessing Skinny Jump since 2020.

“Internet is no longer a nice to have. It’s how children learn, people find work, access healthcare and stay connected with their communities.”

Laurence Zwimpfer, Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa

WHEN FAMILIES ARE DOING IT TOUGH, CONNECTIVITY COMPETES WITH OTHER ESSENTIALS

When COVID-19 moved more of daily life online, the consequences of being disconnected became far more visible. For many families, internet access shifted from being useful to being essential. As connectivity became increasingly important for participating in everyday life, affordability became a key factor in whether households could stay connected at all.^{2,3}

Families already managing financial pressure were often also navigating the challenge of staying connected while juggling competing household priorities. For some, the cost of connectivity sat alongside rent, food, power, and transport as another expense that needed to be found within an already stretched budget. This meant that digital exclusion was often not driven by a lack of interest or need, but by the reality of having to make difficult financial choices. By reducing the cost of getting online, Skinny Jump helps remove one of those trade offs, making it easier for families to stay connected without sacrificing other essentials.

Interviewee from the 2021 Digital Inclusion User Insights Pacific Peoples Report¹⁰

“Choosing between topping up a phone for \$20 or dinner on the table is not a difficult choice.”

Why staying digitally connected matters for families

The stories behind the data reinforce this point. For many customers, connectivity is about far more than accessing information. It helps families stay connected to the people who matter most, maintain relationships across distance, support learning and create opportunities to participate more fully in everyday life.



CASE STUDY: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH CONNECTION

Before accessing the Ciena Jump for Students Fund, Elizabeth’s daughter Katalina could only get online at school or during visits to the local library. With a newborn at home, travelling elsewhere to access the internet was often difficult, creating additional barriers to learning and participation. Access to a free modem and 210GB of data provided a reliable connection at home and made it easier for Katalina to engage with schoolwork, explore educational resources, and pursue interests such as creative writing, origami, and sport.

The impact extended beyond education. Elizabeth described feeling more confident supporting her daughter’s learning, using the internet to find project ideas and educational resources. The connection also enabled the family to explore shared interests and, importantly, maintain relationships with whānau living overseas. Katalina used the internet to stay in touch with family in Tonga, the United States, and Australia, leading her to reflect:

“When I think about the internet, I think of connection.”

Deep dive: Supporting families also means supporting children

Beyond the adults in the household, digital exclusion can also be felt sharply by the children.

Within these families are children growing up in a world where education, communication, and access to information are increasingly shaped by digital participation. This means that when a household is connected, the benefits are often shared across the family, reaching the children who live within it.

More than 25,800 households with children have accessed Skinny Jump since 2020*. While the programme does not collect information on the number of children within each household, the number of children benefiting is likely to be substantially higher than this 25,800 figure.

25,800+

households with children have accessed Skinny Jump over the past decade, with the number of children benefiting likely to be substantially higher.

Learning increasingly extends beyond the classroom

For today's children, learning and education is increasingly mediated through a digital world. Access to learning resources, school communications, homework, research, assessments, and online learning platforms increasingly relies on being connected both at school and at home.

The role of connectivity in education became particularly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, when learning shifted into the home for many students. What emerged was a clearer understanding of how closely educational participation had become linked to digital access. Research reviewing the education response to COVID-19 found that the pandemic exposed and amplified existing inequalities, while the Ministry of Education identified between 60,000 and 80,000 unconnected households where school-aged children were living.^{7,8}

For children growing up in households experiencing financial pressure, access to a reliable internet connection can therefore influence more than their ability to complete schoolwork. It can affect how easily they stay connected to teachers, access learning materials, participate in school activities, and engage with the same opportunities as their peers. While these impacts are often discussed in terms of statistics, stories from the communities supported by Skinny Jump help illustrate what this can look like in practice.



“

One story that has stayed with us is a grandmother who regularly drove her grandchildren to a McDonald's car park so they could use the free Wi-Fi to complete their homework because internet at home simply wasn't affordable. No child should have to do their homework from a car park.”

Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa

*Demographic data collection commenced in 2020, therefore trend analysis reflects the period from 2020 to August 31 2026.

Deep-dive: Older people as a case study

Older people have represented around 9% of Skinny Jump customers since 2020 and are the second-largest group using only the programme’s free monthly data allowance.

Staying Connected in Later Life

Growing older today means navigating a world that looks very different from the one many people grew up in. Increasingly, services, information, appointments, banking, and everyday communication are delivered through digital channels. At the same time, many older people are adapting to changing family and social circumstances, often with fewer opportunities for the day to day support that was once more readily available.

Research suggests that digital participation is becoming an increasingly important part of maintaining independence and wellbeing in later life. Access to online information, communication tools, and services can help older people stay connected to whānau, access support when needed, and continue participating in their communities.⁴ The prominence of seniors among those using only the free data allowance suggests that, for some older people, even a modest amount of affordable connectivity can help them remain connected to the people, information, and services that matter most.

11%

Seniors are the second-largest group relying solely on the free monthly allowance.

WHO RELIES ON THE FREE 15GB ALLOWANCE?



When Barriers to Participation Remain

While many older New Zealanders participate confidently in the digital world, others continue to face barriers relating to affordability, confidence, trust, skills, and access to support.^{1,3} Rapidly changing technology, concerns about scams, and low confidence can discourage digital participation even when internet access is available. Digital exclusion also becomes more common with age. A recent report found that around 33% of people aged 60 to 69 lacked essential digital skills, increasing to 50% among those aged 70 to 79 and 79% among those aged 80 and over.⁹

Digital Skills Training Matters as Much as Access

Evidence suggests that trusted, personalised support plays an important role in helping older people build confidence, develop practical digital skills, and use technology in ways that are relevant to their everyday lives. Opportunities to learn alongside someone who can answer questions, provide reassurance, and offer ongoing support can be particularly valuable for those navigating concerns about online safety, scams, or unfamiliar technology.^{4,9} This aligns with a growing body of evidence that digital inclusion initiatives are most effective when affordable connectivity is paired with opportunities to build skills, confidence, trust, and ongoing support.^{3,9}





Where to next?

To close this report, the Skinny Jump team reflects on a decade of impact and shares its perspective on the opportunities, challenges, and priorities that lie ahead.

Reflecting on a decade of impact

As Skinny Jump marks ten years of impact, the team reflects on the people, partnerships, and experiences that have shaped the programme's story so far.

LOOKING BACK ● 2016 – 2026

PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SKINNY JUMP TEAM

Ten years ago, Skinny Jump was created to address a simple but important challenge: ensuring that the cost of connectivity did not prevent people from participating in an increasingly digital world. Since then, technology has evolved, digital services have become embedded in everyday life, and the internet has become essential for accessing education, employment, healthcare, government services, and staying connected with family and community. Yet one thing has remained constant: for many households, affordability continues to be a barrier.

The experience of the past decade has reinforced an important lesson. Digital equity is not achieved through connectivity alone. It requires affordable services, trusted local support, and strong partnerships between communities, government, industry, and funders. Skinny Jump's success has been built on these foundations, and they will remain just as important in the years ahead.

**100,000***
households signed up since 2016

**39,000+**
households currently connected as of August 31, 2026

**277**
trusted active community providers across Aotearoa New Zealand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM THE SKINNY JUMP TEAM



As we reflect on 10 years of impact, we extend our sincere thanks to DIAA, our community partners, and the many individuals who have contributed to Skinny Jump. We also acknowledge the support of partners such as Ciena, Nokia, InternetNZ, and others who have helped extend the reach of Skinny Jump through initiatives including the Ciena Jump for Students Fund, Āwhi Matihiko and Jump Mobile. The progress made over the past decade is a testament to what can be achieved through partnership, and we look forward to continuing this work together in the years ahead.



*Based on Skinny Jump modem sign up data from 2016 to 31 August 2026. Household estimates assume one household per modem sign up. The reported figure of almost 100,000 households reflects a total of 99,740 sign ups.

The next chapter for Skinny Jump

The Skinny Jump team shares its perspective on the opportunities, challenges, and priorities that may shape the future of digital inclusion in Aotearoa.

TODAY ● —————>

Skinny Jump will remain focused on the same goal that inspired its creation: ensuring everyone in Aotearoa has the opportunity to participate fully in a digital society.

The Skinny Jump team notes that this means continuing to listen to customers and community partners, learning from what works, and adapting the programme as needs change. Regular reviews of data, allowances, programme settings, and customer experiences will help ensure Skinny Jump continues to provide practical support that reflects how people live, learn, work, and connect.

Looking ahead, the Skinny Jump team is also exploring opportunities to expand the reach of Jump Mobile to provide a more flexible connectivity option for people living in temporary or transitional housing. The team believes that by remaining responsive, testing new approaches, and continuing to work alongside communities, Skinny Jump can help reduce barriers to participation and support more New Zealanders to access the opportunities that connectivity enables.

FROM THE SKINNY JUMP TEAM: KEY FUTURE PRIORITIES

01

Continue closing the digital equity gap

Provide affordable and accessible connectivity for people who need it most.

02

Expand reach through Jump Mobile

Support people in temporary or transitional housing with more flexible connectivity options.

03

Learn and adapt

Use evidence and community insight to ensure Skinny Jump continues to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.



FROM THE SKINNY JUMP TEAM: A SHARED COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The past ten years have shown what is possible when communities, government, industry and funders come together around a shared goal. While the challenge of digital equity remains, so too does the opportunity to make a difference. As we look to the decade ahead, we invite our partners, supporters and communities to continue this journey with us, helping ensure every person in Aotearoa can connect, participate and thrive in an increasingly digital world.



Appendix

Data sources, limitations, and key references

How this report was built

Approach

This report was produced by ImpactLab as an independent analytics partner to Skinny Jump. A scoping workshop was held with the Skinny Jump team, Spark Foundation, and Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa to identify key areas of focus for the report. ImpactLab then analysed data supplied by members of the Skinny Jump team alongside research and national data on digital exclusion.

Artificial intelligence tools were used in a supporting capacity during the preparation of this report to assist with visualisation of anonymised, aggregated, and securely stored data. The core analysis and all final outputs were led, reviewed, and validated by the authors.

The report takes an explicitly evidence-led approach, and opportunities to improve data or impact identified during analysis have been supplied as an internal output to the Skinny Jump team.

For clarity and readability, figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number in section headings and, where appropriate, throughout the report.

Limitations

- Data was supplied by Skinny Jump at an aggregate level and reviewed by ImpactLab for consistency but not audited at an individual level.
- A range of data and impact improvement opportunities were identified over the course of this analysis. Insights on these have been provided to the Skinny Jump team.
- Data presented is correlational not causal.

With thanks to

River Burich (Digital Equity Lead Partner - Skinny Jump), Mel Manuelli (Digital and Operations Partner - Skinny Jump), Sareen Meredith (Digital Equity Partner - Skinny Jump), Laurence Zwimpfer (Operations Director and Trustee at Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa), and Robyn Bissett (Digital Equity Partner, Community & Partnerships at Spark Foundation).

Overview of Skinny Jump data sources

Skinny Jump Modem Sign Ups (2017 to 2026)

- Records of all Skinny Jump modem sign ups from 2017 through to 31 August 2026.
- Signup data is reported from 2017 onwards. As the programme was previously delivered by 20/20 Communications Trust 20/20 Trust (formerly known as the 2020 Communications Trust), GCSN, Web Access Waikato and DIGITS in 2016, the data was unavailable for this exercise. As a proxy, the figure is reported as 'less than 200' households.
- We assume that each modem sign up represents one household. Household level measures, including the number of households connected and reached, are therefore derived from modem sign up data rather than independently verified household counts.

Jump Demographics and Annual Trends (to 31 August 2026)

- Demographic data collection commenced in 2020, therefore trend analysis reflects the period from 2020 to August 31 2026.
- Estimated households with children are based on the 'Families with Children in Low Socioeconomic Communities' category. As household composition is not collected, we have assumed at least one school-aged child per household. While this is considered the most reliable proxy available, it may not capture all households with school aged children, as some may be represented in other customer groups.

Data Only Customer Dataset (August 2026)

- Customer level demographic data for customers accessing only the 15GB monthly allocation, used to assess the profile of customers categorised as "data only".

Active Customers by Sign Up Year -Regional Counts

- Breakdown of currently active customers according to the year they first joined the Skinny Jump programme and segmented by region.

Key references

In addition to the sources cited here, a wider range of research and sector publications was reviewed during the preparation of this report. These materials informed our understanding of digital inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand and helped provide context for the findings presented.

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