

Perceptions of Diversity

What this is about...

New Zealand is an increasingly multicultural society. At the 1996 Census there were more than 200 separate ethnic identities represented. Attitudes towards changes in the demographic composition of New Zealand cities are an indicator of overall social cohesion or fragmentation in the city.

This indicator provides a measure of how residents feel about this growth in diversity. Respondents to citizens' surveys undertaken in the six largest cities were asked how they felt the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles and from a variety of countries and cultures impacted on their city.

What did we find ?

- Overall, most respondents to the surveys felt that the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles and from a variety of countries and cultures made their city a better place to live, or were neutral on the matter. In particular, a high proportion of Wellington City citizens felt that diversity made their city a better place to live in.
- A relatively high proportion of respondents to the Wellington City and Auckland City surveys felt that this made their city a 'much better' place to live in (38% and 33% compared with 16% Waitakere City and 17% for North Shore City).
- Very few respondents felt that the increase in diversity made their city a 'worse place' to live in.

PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY IN EACH CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
A much better place to live	33	17	17	16	38	18
A better place to live	36	36	34	33	42	39
Makes no difference	19	37	39	39	17	32
A worse place to live	9	7	8	7	2	10
A much worse place to live	2	1	0	0	1	0

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Of course, many factors will inter-relate with and affect citizens' perceptions of changes within the city in which they live. Many citizens will have lived in the city for a considerable portion of their life and many will be newcomers to the city. Citizen's perceptions may also be affected by their ethnic identity, age, and socio-economic circumstance.