

# Complaints about Noise

## What this is about...

Loud noise can affect the way people feel about the area in which they live and can have a negative impact on their overall wellbeing. Higher population and higher density living tend to highlight the issue of noise.

The six city councils record the number of complaints received about noise and all provide a noise control service to residents. It must be noted however, that local authorities do not have a uniform approach to recording numbers of complaints. Complaints are recorded about excessive noise and the local authorities' response to complaints. There can be more than one complaint per site.

The number of noise complaints can be affected by factors such as:

- citizen behaviour and sensitivity to noise
- proximity to other people or causes of noise and protection from noise
- how easy the procedure is for residents to lodge a complaint
- how much residents believe that the problem can be remedied by contacting Council.

## What did we find ?

- For some cities the number of complaints has increased as the service to customers has improved, for example with the introduction of a call centre.
- With more in-fill housing, it would be expected that the number of noise complaints would increase.
- The majority of complaints about noise are about stereos, parties or events such as rock bands.<sup>164</sup>
- It is possible that complaints are not made because of a perception that the local authority can do nothing about it.

### COMPLAINTS ABOUT NOISE, PER LOCAL AUTHORITY (1998 TO 1999)

|                     | Time period            | Noise complaints received  |
|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Auckland</b>     | 1999 calendar year     | 13,608 noise complaints received outside of Council working hours. |
| <b>Manukau</b>      | 1998/99 financial year | 7,900 total noise complaints                                       |
| <b>North Shore</b>  | 1999 calendar year     | 4,623 attendances to noise complaints                              |
| <b>Waitakere</b>    | 1998/99 financial year | 6,434 total noise complaints                                       |
| <b>Wellington</b>   | No data was supplied   | -  |
| <b>Christchurch</b> | 1999 calendar year     | 9,133 total noise complaints                                       |

Data Source: Data supplied by each Council

Noise complaints can affect people's satisfaction with the way the city looks and feels, and their housing situation. Correspondingly, other indicators such as high density living in urban areas, increasing population, and high use of cars can affect noise complaints.

164 For example, in Manukau City 89% of the complaints received in 1997/98 related to stereos/parties/live bands, 4% related to alarm systems, 1% related to vehicles, and 6% related to other causes.