

Resident Perception of Local Community Strength and Support

What this is about...

This indicator reflects on whether people feel there is a sense of community where they live. Healthy local communities that support each other and in which residents feel safe and included are more likely to be cohesive. Respondents to a citizens' survey conducted in the six cities were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the community works together and people support each other, on a five point scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.¹⁷³

What did we find ?

- Just under one half of respondents to all citizens' surveys indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the community works together and people support each other. In Wellington City 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- Results for Manukau showed that over half (51%) of Manukau City respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In particular, a relatively high proportion strongly agreed (14%).
- About one quarter of respondents to all surveys were neutral on the question and a further quarter strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.
- Overall, higher proportions of females tended to strongly agree or agree with the statement than males.

PERCEPTIONS THAT THE COMMUNITY WORKS TOGETHER AND PEOPLE SUPPORT EACH OTHER, BY CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
Strongly agree	8	14	11	9	13	7
Agree	37	37	36	38	43	36
Neither agree nor disagree	26	23	24	22	28	26
Disagree	22	15	23	22	11	23
Strongly disagree	5	4	4	4	2	5

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Respondents to the surveys were also asked whether they considered that the social network or group that 'matters most' to them was mainly based around where they live (their local neighbourhood) or was based on other factors such as ethnic grouping, interests or beliefs. Approximately one-quarter of respondents in each survey indicated that the group or network that mattered most to them was based around where they live.¹⁷⁴ There was an exception to this pattern, with only 14% of Wellington residents choosing this option. Approximately one in five respondents felt that they were not part of a community.

173 It is possible that the term 'the community' can mean different things to different respondents. Unfortunately these surveys were not able to explore the meaning of community for respondents.

174 It must be noted however that the terms used in the question were somewhat ambiguous and may have held different meanings for respondents. For example, it is impossible to know where people considered the boundaries of the term "where you live" lay. In addition, Waitakere City's survey specifically asked respondents to exclude work and family when answering the question, which was not specified in any other survey.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FELT THE SOCIAL NETWORK OR GROUP THAT MATTERS MOST TO THEM WAS MAINLY BASED AROUND WHERE THEY LIVE (2000)

	%
Auckland (n=501)	24
Manukau (n=511)	28
North Shore (n=504)	25
Waitakere (n=303)	22
Wellington (n=300)	14
Christchurch (n=755)	28

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Residents' surveys also asked respondents to what extent they had felt lonely or isolated in the previous twelve months.¹⁷⁵ About three quarters of respondents to the surveys indicated that they had 'hardly ever' felt lonely or isolated in the previous twelve months and very few indicated they 'always' felt lonely and isolated.¹⁷⁶

FREQUENCY OF FEELING LONELY OR ISOLATED IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, BY CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
Hardly ever	78	76	81	Not asked	72	78
Sometimes	18	15	16		23	18
Usually	1	2	2		3	2
Always	1	2	0		2	1

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

It appears that residents of the six largest cities generally feel satisfied about the community in which they live. Perceptions that there is community strength and support, together with low levels of feeling socially isolated, link with previous findings that many residents felt they had 'some' or 'lots' of 'positive contact' with their neighbours.

175 Waitakere City did not include this question in their survey.

176 Respondent bias may have occurred here, as those without a telephone (and who could not participate in the telephone surveys) may feel isolated.