

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

*Prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited*

# QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

***- RESULTS FOR AUCKLAND CITY -***

*Prepared For Auckland City Council*

*15 April 2005*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

## 1. Introduction And Methodology

### Introduction

Ensuring quality of life among its residents is a critical part of all Councils' role. In response to growing pressures on urban communities, and concern about the impacts of urbanisation and the effects of this on the wellbeing of citizens, in 1999 a National Indicators project was initiated. The aim of this project was to measure the quality of life and change in social conditions in large urban areas in New Zealand through the development and use of a series of key indicators.

Residents' perceptions of their quality of life have been assessed through a series of survey questions, conducted via telephone, with a random sample of those living in New Zealand's twelve largest urban areas.

The results for all Twelve Cities and the "rest of New Zealand" have been presented in a separate document ("Quality Of Life In New Zealand's Largest Cities: Residents' Survey" – Gravitas Research and Strategy 2005). This report presents the results from Auckland city residents.

### Methodology

All interviewing for Auckland city was conducted by Gravitas Research and Strategy, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Live interviewing began on August 9 and was completed on December 13, with interviewing postponed for a month in November due to school and tertiary exams. The average interview length was 19 minutes. The final response rate was 22%.

Five hundred interviews were conducted in each of the twelve cities/districts (the maximum margin of error on a sample size of 500 is  $\pm 4.4\%$  at the 95% confidence interval). The margin of error on the sample size of  $n=500$  is  $\pm 4.4\%$  at the 95% confidence interval.

In order to ensure an exact match with the population distribution, the data set was weighted once interviewing was complete. Auckland city's data set has been weighted so that the distribution of the sample by gender, age, ethnicity and ward exactly matches that of the city's population aged 15 years or over.

## 2. Quality Of Life

Most Auckland residents felt that they had a positive overall quality of life, with 88% giving a rating of either *good* (64%) or *extremely good* (24%). Only 1% thought they had a *poor* quality of life.

## 3. Health

### Overall Health

Most Auckland residents rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*) (87%).

Thirteen percent of residents described their overall health as *poor* (10%) or *very poor* (3%).

### Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

A fifth of all Auckland residents (20%) reported that, in the preceding 12 months, there had been at least once instance when they had wanted to visit a doctor but had not done so. Cost was the most dominant reason identified by Auckland residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by over half (56%) of this group. Seventeen percent of residents who experienced barriers stated that they had been too busy to go to the doctor/couldn't take time off work while a further 9% noted that the condition got better on its own.

## 4. Free Time

### Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, a third (34%) said that they spent their free time socialising with friends in cafes and bars, visiting friends and/or eating out. Other commonly mentioned past-times included:

- taking part in sports or other physical activity, either on their own or with friends (28%);
- watching TV, videos and/or DVDs (24%); and
- reading (23%).

### Satisfaction With Free Time

Three quarters of Auckland residents (76%) were either *satisfied* (52%) or *very satisfied* (24%) with their free time. Only 10% expressed some level of dissatisfaction.

### Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Just under half of Auckland residents (46%) reported experiencing barriers that made it difficult to take part in free time activities that were important to them.

The most commonly mentioned barrier to participation in free time activities was being too busy, having family commitments and/or not having time (51% of those experiencing a barrier). Sixteen percent stated that the activity was too far away, that they didn't have transport and/or that they can't get to it easily, while 12% stated that the activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate or participate more often.

### Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of Auckland residents (52%) stated that they participated in physical activity *at least once a week*, while 34% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 6% stated they participated *once a month*. Six percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

## 5. Wellbeing

### Emotional Wellbeing

Most Auckland residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively (82% *happy or very happy*) with only 4% giving a negative rating (*unhappy/very unhappy*).

### Satisfaction With Life In General

The greatest share of Auckland residents were found to be satisfied to some extent (*satisfied or very satisfied*) with life in general (83%).

### Stress

One in ten Auckland residents (10%) responded that they had *never* experienced stress that had had a negative effect. Nine out of ten respondents (89%) stated that they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect, 12% stated that they experienced this type of stress *most of the time* and 2% stating that they *always* experienced this negative stress.

### Availability Of Support

Most residents (93%) have someone that they can turn to for help or rely on for support (*rarely, some of the time, most of the time or always*), 46% *always* having someone they can turn to. Six percent of respondents stated that they *never* have anyone that they can turn to.

## 6. Public Transport

### Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

The greatest single proportion of Auckland residents (35%) stated that they *had not used public transport* in the last 12 months. An additional 27% stated that they used public transport *less than once a month* in the past 12 months, while 1% noted that public transport was not available where they live. Twenty-seven percent of Auckland residents reported using public transport at least once a week.

### Perceptions Of Affordability, Safety And Convenience Of Public Transport

Of the three aspects of public transport measured, Auckland residents were most likely to *agree/strongly agree* that public transport was **safe**, followed by **affordable** and **convenient**.

Just over three quarters (78%) of Auckland residents *agreed* (64%) or *strongly agreed* (14%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 5% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement. Over half of Auckland residents (57%) either *agreed* (48%) or *strongly agreed* (9%) that public transport was **affordable**, while under half (44%) of Auckland residents *agreed* (36%) or *strongly agreed* (8%) that public transport was **convenient**.

## 7. Democracy

### Perception Of Understanding Of Council Decision-Making Process

Just less than half of all Auckland residents (45%) agreed to some extent (*agree or strongly agree*) that they understood how Auckland City Council made decisions.

### Desire To Have More Of A Say In What Council Does

Over half of all Auckland residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what Auckland City Council does (56% *agree/strongly agree*). Around one in seven residents (16%) stated that they would not like to have more of a say in what Council does.

### Confidence In Council Decision-Making

Under half of all residents throughout Auckland (41%) agreed that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of the city. Just under a third (28%) disagreed with the statement to some extent.

## Perception Of Public's Influence On Council And Central Government Decision-Making

A comparison of results for perceptions of ability to influence Council and central government decision making reveals that residents were slightly more likely to perceive that they had at least a *small influence* on Council decision making (87%) than on the decisions made by central government (82%). Similarly, half (50%) of all residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making while 48% felt that they had the same level of influence on central government-made decisions.

## Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

One third of Auckland residents (31%) *agreed* (28%) or *strongly agreed* (3%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. A quarter *disagreed* (22%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%) with this statement.

## 8. Work-Related Issues

### Using Work Skills, Training and Experience in Current Job

Four in five Auckland residents currently in paid employment (80%) either *agreed* (30%) or *strongly agreed* (50%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Fourteen percent either *disagreed* (7%) or *strongly disagreed* (7%).

### Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Just under two thirds of Auckland residents (61%) were either *satisfied* (42%) or *very satisfied* (19%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Twenty percent were either *dissatisfied* (16%) or *very dissatisfied* (4%).

## 9. Crime/Safety

### Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Auckland residents reported high levels of perceived safety in their own homes after dark, but were less positive about safety in their local neighbourhood and particularly the city centre.

Most Auckland residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 86% stating they felt either *safe* (50%) or *very safe* (36%). Only 5% felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in their homes after dark. Almost two-thirds of Auckland residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 63% stating they felt either *safe* (49%) or *very safe* (14%). In contrast, only a third of Auckland residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in the city centre after dark**, with 37% stating they felt either *safe* (33%) or *very safe* (4%).

## Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, Auckland residents were most likely to identify graffiti as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (69%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (31%).

**Summary Table 1: Perceptions Of Crime And Safety Issues (%)**

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Graffiti	69
Dangerous driving	60
Theft and damage to cars	49
Vandalism	36
Feeling unsafe around some people	31

Base: All respondents

## 10. Community

### Felt Sense Of Community

Over half of Auckland residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 57% either *agreeing* (45%) or *strongly agreeing* (12%) with this statement. Twenty percent *disagreed* (18%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%) that they felt a sense of community with others.

### Importance Of Sense Of Community

Three quarters of Auckland residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 75% either *agreeing* (52%) or *strongly agreeing* (23%) with this statement. Seven percent *disagreed* with the importance of a sense of community.

When asked why they did not think it was important to have a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, the most commonly mentioned reason was that residents liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities (43%). Nineteen percent stated that they were too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or and job, while 14% stated that their neighbours were not their type of people and/or that they had different interests and lifestyles and/or that they had nothing in common.

## Ability To Have Personal Impact On Making Community A Better Place To Live

Three-quarters of Auckland residents (74%) either *agreed* (56%) or *strongly agreed* (18%) that people like themselves can have an impact on making their community a better place to live. Nine percent of residents *disagreed* (8%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

## Social Networks

Over half of Auckland residents (56%) stated that the group or social network that matters to them the most is mostly made up of people who have the same interests, culture or beliefs as you, but who do not necessarily live in their area. Twenty-three percent stated that their social networks were mostly made up of people who live in the same area as them (that is, their local neighbourhood), while 18% stated that there are no particular groups or networks that they feel part of.

## Neighbourhood Contact

Most Auckland residents (87%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had had no **negative contact where there is outright tension or disagreements** with people in their neighbourhood. Only 12% stated that they had experienced negative contact with outright tension. Most Auckland residents (83%) also stated that, in the last 12 months, they had not experienced **some negative contact** with people in their neighbourhood (for example not getting on with them). Sixteen percent stated that they had experienced negative contact of this nature.

In contrast, almost all Auckland residents (96%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had had **some positive contact** - such as a nod or saying hello - with people in their neighbourhood. Four percent of residents stated that they had not experienced any positive contact. Most Auckland residents (85%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had also experienced **positive contact** - such as a visit, a chat, asking each other for small favours, telling them if you are going away etc. - with people in their neighbourhood. Fifteen percent stated that they had not.

## Isolation

Four in five Auckland residents (83%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (62%) or *rarely* (21%) felt lonely or isolated. Fifteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 1% *always* felt this way.

## Trust

Two thirds of Auckland residents (64%) stated that people can *usually* (58%) or *almost always* (6%) be trusted. A quarter (25%) stated that *you usually can't be too careful*, while 9% stated you *almost always can't be too careful*.

## 11. Built Environment

### Pollution Problems In Local Area

Of the four environmental issues measured, Auckland residents were most likely to report a problem with rubbish or litter lying about on the streets, 45% of residents noting that this had been an issue in their local area in the last 12 months. In contrast, residents were least likely to report a problem with water pollution (25%).

**Summary Table 2: Perceptions Of Environmental Issues (%)**

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Rubbish and litter lying about on the streets	45
Noise pollution	31
Air pollution	26
Water pollution	25

Base: All respondents

### Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

More than three quarters of Auckland residents (78%) either *agreed* (55%) or *strongly agreed* (23%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Six percent *disagreed*.

### Pride In City's Look And Feel

Three out of five Auckland residents (60%) either *agreed* (49%) or *strongly agreed* (11%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt. Fourteen *disagreed/strongly disagreed* with this statement.

The most commonly mentioned reasons for pride in the way Auckland looked and felt related to the physical attractiveness of the city as well as the activities it has to offer and the attitudes of its people. Thirteen percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because of the greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens. Twelve percent stated that their sense of pride was derived from the city's beaches and harbours, while 9% said that their sense of pride was due to the helpful, friendly and welcoming people who lived there and because of the cities attractions, activities, events and things to do.

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way Auckland looked and felt, the most frequently mentioned reason related to the unattractiveness of the look of the city, with 16% stating that they did not feel a sense of pride because their city looked dirty and/or there is rubbish everywhere. An additional 14% stated that it was because there was not enough planning and/or a lack of forward planning, while 12% said it was because their city has unattractive new buildings, infill housing etc.

## Perception Of Impact On City Of Greater Cultural Diversity

Just over three in five Auckland residents (62%) felt that greater cultural diversity made Auckland either *a better* (44%) or *a much better* (18%) place to live. One in five (23%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference*. Thirteen percent felt that it made for a place a *worse* (11%) or *much worse* (2%) place to live.

Residents who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made Auckland a *worse* or *much worse* place to live were asked what the one main reason for saying this was. The most frequently mentioned reasons were that migrants lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups (29%), that there are too many migrants and/or different cultures (24%), that there is overcrowding, not enough facilities to cope and/or too much traffic (12%), and that migrants lack the ability to communicate (12%).

Of those who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a *better* or *much better* place to live, 63% mentioned that diversity was good as it gave a broader perspective and outlook and/or brought new ideas. An additional 43% stated that it helped them learn about other cultures, stopped racism and/or taught tolerance. Other frequently mentioned reasons included a perception that cultural diversity meant more interesting food, more choice and/or better restaurants (18%) and that it made Auckland a more vibrant and interesting place (14%).

## Ease Of Access

Most Auckland residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy*. Local parks and other green open spaces had the highest ratings for ease of access (95% *easy* or *very easy*), while residents were most likely to report difficulties accessing education providers (82% *easy* or *very easy*).

**Summary Table 3: Ease Of Access To Services And Facilities (%)**

	Share Rating Access As Easy Or Very Easy (n=500)
Local parks and green spaces	95
Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets	94
Banks or cash machines	92
Public transport facilities	85
Education provider	82

Base: All respondents

Residents who stated that access to any of the services and facilities above was *difficult* or *very difficult* were asked why access was so poor. In response, a third (34%) stated that the reason access was difficult was that the services and facilities were not easily accessible by public transport or that public transport was not available, while 17% said it would be a very long walk to access the service or facility. An additional 14% stated that the facility or service was not available or that there were only a few located in their area.