

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited

QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

- RESULTS FOR CHRISTCHURCH CITY -

Prepared For Christchurch City Council

18 March 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 Christchurch city residents.

Methodology

All interviewing for Christchurch 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). In order to better understand the issues faced by Maori, Pacific and Asian/Indian residents in the city, Christchurch City Council commissioned an additional 300 interviews with Maori (n=100), Pacific Peoples (n=100) and Asian/Indian residents (n=100). The margin of error on the sample size of n=800 is $\pm 3.5\%$ 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. Christchurch city's data set has been weighted so that the distribution of the sample by gender, age, ethnicity¹ and ward exactly matches that of the city's population aged 15 years or over. It should be noted that, with the exception of analysis by ethnicity, the ethnic "booster" sample has been weighted back to reflect the actual ethnic distribution of the city's 15 years + population. However, results presented in this report by ethnicity are based on the actual number of interviews obtained with each ethnic group. These results have been weighted by gender, age and ward but NOT by ethnicity.

2. Quality Of Life

Most Christchurch residents felt that they had a positive quality of life overall, with 88% giving a rating of either *good* (62%) or *extremely good* (26%). Only 2% described their quality of life negatively.

3. Health

Overall Health

Most Christchurch residents rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*) (86%), one in five (21%) describing their health as *excellent*. Thirteen percent of residents described their overall health as *poor or very poor*.

Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

Over a fifth of all Christchurch residents (21%) reported that, in the preceding 12 months, there had been at least one instance when they had wanted to visit a doctor but had not done so. *Cost* was cited as the most dominant reason residents had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by over three in five (64%) of this group. One in ten residents (10%) who experienced barriers noted that *the condition got better on its own* while a further one in ten (9%) stated that they had been *too busy to go to the doctor/couldn't take time off work*.

¹ For the purpose of the survey, respondents were able to nominate multiple ethnic groups with which they associated. The results presented in this report by ethnicity are based on these multiple responses. Weightings by ethnicity have been derived using a priority rating consistent with the 2001 Census (and the 2002 Quality of Life survey).

4. Free Time

Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, over half of Christchurch residents (53%) stated that they took part in sports or other physical activity, either on their own or with friends. Other commonly mentioned past-times included:

- gardening and lawn mowing (27%);
- taking part in sports or other physical activity with an organised club (25%);
- reading (24%);
- socialising with friends in cafes and bars, visiting friends and/or eat out (22%); and/or
- family and child focused activities (21%).

Satisfaction With Free Time

Four in five Christchurch residents (82%) were either *satisfied* (54%) or *very satisfied* (28%) with their free time. Only 7% expressed some level of dissatisfaction.

Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Over half of Christchurch residents (56%) did not experience any barriers that made it difficult to take part in free time activities that were important to them.

The most commonly mentioned barrier to important free time activities was being too busy, having family commitments and/or not having time (53% of those experiencing a barrier). Eighteen percent stated that they had poor health, physically could not participate, had a sports injury and/or could not participate because of old age, while 17% stated that the activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate/participate more often.

Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of Christchurch residents (47%) stated that they participated in physical activity *once a week*, while 41% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. Six percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

5. Wellbeing

Emotional Wellbeing

Most Christchurch residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively, 87% describing them as *happy* or *unhappy*, with only 2% giving a negative rating (*unhappy*).

Satisfaction With Life In General

The greatest share of Christchurch residents were found to be satisfied to some extent (*satisfied* or *very satisfied*) with life in general (86%).

Stress

Nine out of ten respondents (91%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect on them. Forty-eight percent reported experiencing this stress *some of the time*, while 16% reported experiencing negative stress *most of the time* (13%) or *always* (3%).

Availability Of Support

Just under half of all residents (47%) reported that they *always* have someone they can turn to for help or rely on for support, while a further 30% reported having support available *most of the time*. Eight percent of Christchurch residents reported *rarely* having support available, while 2% stated that they *never* have someone they can turn to for help or rely on for support.

6. Public Transport

Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

The greatest single proportion of Christchurch residents (42%) stated that they *had not use public transport* in the last 12 months. An additional 26% stated that they used public transport *less than once a month* in the past 12 months, while 2% noted that public transport was not available where they live. In total, 30% of Christchurch residents reported using public transport at least once a month.

Perceptions Of Affordability, Safety And Convenience Of Public Transport

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

Just over three quarters (78%) of Christchurch residents *agreed* (60%) or *strongly agreed* (18%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 5% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement. Three quarters (76%) of Christchurch residents *agreed* (57%) or *strongly agreed* (19%) that public transport was **convenient**, while three quarters of residents (75%) either *agreed* (54%) or *strongly agreed* (21%) that public transport was **affordable**.

7. Democracy

Perception Of Understanding Of Council Decision-Making Process

Just less than a half of all Christchurch residents (46%) agreed to some extent (*agree or strongly agree*) that they understood how Christchurch City Council made decisions. A quarter of residents *disagreed* (21%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%) that they had an understanding of their Council's decision making process.

Desire To Have More Of A Say In What Council Does

Half of all Christchurch residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what Christchurch City Council does (50% *agree/strongly agree*). Around one in seven residents (15%) stated that they would not like to have more of a say in what Council does.

Confidence In Council Decision-Making

Over half of all residents throughout Christchurch (57%) agreed that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of the city. Just under a one in five (17%) 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 significantly more likely to perceive that they had at least a *small influence* on Council decision making (90%) than on the decisions made by central government (81%). Similarly, just over half (55%) of all residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making while only 39% felt that they had the same level of influence on central government-made decisions

Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

One third of Christchurch residents (33%) *agreed* (30%) or *strongly agreed* (3%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. One in five (21%) disagreed with this statement.

8. Work-Related Issues

Using Work Skills, Training and Experience in Current Job

Four in five Christchurch residents currently in paid employment (82%) either *agreed* (29%) or *strongly agreed* (53%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Eleven percent either *disagreed* (8%) or *strongly disagreed* (3%).

Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Two thirds of Christchurch residents currently in paid employment (66%) were either *satisfied* (50%) or *very satisfied* (16%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Eighteen percent were either *dissatisfied* (17%) or *very dissatisfied* (1%).

9. Crime/Safety

Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Christchurch 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 Christchurch residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 91% stating they felt either *safe* (51%) or *very safe* (40%). Only 2% felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in their homes after dark. Two-thirds of Christchurch residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 67% stating they feeling either *safe* (49%) or *very safe* (18%). In contrast, only three in ten Christchurch residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in the city centre after dark**, with 29% stating they felt either *safe* (25%) or *very safe* (4%). Thirty five percent reported feeling *unsafe* (26%) or *very unsafe* (9%).

Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, Christchurch residents were most likely to identify dangerous driving as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (60%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (23%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=800)
Dangerous driving	60
Graffiti	47
Theft and damage to cars	35
Vandalism	33
Feeling unsafe around some people	23

Base: All respondents

10. Community

Felt Sense Of Community

Over half of Christchurch residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 57% either *agreeing* (45%) or *strongly agreeing* (12%) with this statement. Nineteen percent *disagreed* (16%) or *strongly disagreed* (3%) that they felt a sense of community with others.

Importance Of Sense Of Community

Three quarters of Christchurch residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 74% either *agreeing* (54%) or *strongly agreeing* (20%) with this statement. Six 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 (60% of those feeling a sense of community was not important). Sixteen percent stated that they were too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or and job, while the same share 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

Just over three-quarters of Christchurch residents (76%) either *agreed* (58%) or *strongly agreed* (18%) that people like themselves can have an impact on making their community a better place to live. Eight percent of residents *disagreed* (6%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%).

Social Networks

Over half of Christchurch residents (59%) 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*. Eighteen 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 19% stated that *there are no particular groups or networks that they feel part of*.

Neighbourhood Contact

Most Christchurch residents (92%) 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 8% stated that they had experienced negative contact with outright tension. Most Christchurch residents (86%) 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). Fourteen percent stated that they had experienced negative contact of this nature.

In contrast, almost all Christchurch 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 Christchurch residents (83%) 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. Seventeen percent stated that they had not.

Isolation

Four in five Christchurch residents (83%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (61%) or *rarely* (22%) felt lonely or isolated. Thirteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 1% *always* felt this way.

Trust

Two-thirds of Christchurch residents (67%) stated that people can *usually* (61%) or *almost always* (6%) be trusted. Just under a quarter (26%) stated that *you usually can't be too careful*, while 6% stated you *almost always can't be too careful*.

11. Built Environment

Pollution Problems In Local Area

Of the four environmental issues measured, Christchurch 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 (21%).

Summary Table 2: Perceptions Of Environmental Issues (%)

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=800)
Rubbish and litter lying about on the streets	45
Air pollution	40
Noise pollution	32
Water pollution	21

Base: All respondents

Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Three quarters of Christchurch residents (76%) either *agreed* (51%) or *strongly agreed* (25%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Four percent *disagreed* (3%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

Pride In City's Look And Feel

Four out of five Christchurch residents (80%) either *agreed* (54%) or *strongly agreed* (26%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way Christchurch looked and felt. Only 4% *disagreed* with this statement.

The most commonly mentioned reasons for pride in the way Christchurch looked and felt related to the physical attractiveness of the city as well as the attitudes of its people. Thirty-eight percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because of the greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens. Sixteen percent stated that their sense of pride was derived from the fact that their city was clean and tidy and/or had no litter, while 8% said they felt a sense of pride due to the helpful, friendly and welcoming people who lived there.

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way Christchurch looked and felt, the most frequently mentioned reason related to the unattractiveness of the look of the city, with 30% stating that they did not feel a sense of pride because their city looked dirty and/or there is rubbish everywhere. An additional 13% stated that it was because there was not enough development, improvements and/or promotion and/or that the city was not fulfilling its potential, while 10% said it was because their city was drab or dowdy and that it needs sprucing up and/or better maintenance.

Perception Of Impact On City Of Greater Cultural Diversity

Just over half of Christchurch residents (52%) felt that greater cultural diversity made Christchurch either *a better* (38%) or *a much better* (14%) place to live. A third (33%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference*. Twelve percent felt that it made a place *worse* (11%) or *much worse* (1%) place to live.

Residents who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made Christchurch 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 there are too many Asian immigrants (18%), a perception that diversity leads to increases in crime and/or gangs (17%), and that migrants lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups (16%).

Of those who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a *better* or *much better* place to live, 70% 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, stop 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 (20%) and that it made Christchurch a more vibrant and interesting place (19%).

Ease Of Access

Most Christchurch residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy*. Shopping malls or centres, supermarkets and local parks and other green open spaces had the highest ratings for ease of access, while residents were most likely to report difficulties accessing education providers.

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

	Share Rating Access As Easy Or Very Easy (n=800)
Local parks and green spaces	98
Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets	98
Banks or cash machines	94
Public transport facilities	91
Education provider	85

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 quarter (25%) stated that the facility or service was not available or that there were only a few located in their area, while 21% 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. An additional 20% noted that they would have to travel a long distance to reach the service or facility, while 20% said it would be a very long walk to access the service or facility.