

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited

QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

- RESULTS FOR HUTT CITY -

Prepared For Hutt City Council

8 June 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 Hutt City residents.

Methodology

All interviewing for Hutt city was conducted by Consumer Link, 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. Hutt 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 Hutt City residents felt that they had a positive overall quality of life, with 89% giving a rating of either *good* (62%) or *extremely good* (27%). Only 2% thought they had a *poor* quality of life.

3. Health

Overall Health

Most Hutt City residents (91%) rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*). Nine percent described their health as *fair* (7%) or *poor* (2%).

Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

One fifth of all Hutt City residents (20%) 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 the most dominant reason identified by Hutt City residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by almost three in five (56%) of this group. Just over one in ten residents (14%) 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 doctor was too busy to see me/couldn't fit me in/waiting time too long*.

4. Free Time

Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, a third stated that they *took part in sports or other physical activity either on their own or with friends* (33%). Twenty-seven percent reported that they spent their free time *reading*, while a further 23% indicated 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:

- family or child-focused activities (21%);
- gardening/lawn mowing (20%); and/or
- taking part in sports of other physical activity with an organised club (20%).

Satisfaction With Free Time

Four in five Hutt City residents (78%) were either *satisfied* (52%) or *very satisfied* (26%) with their free time. Only 7% were either *dissatisfied* (6%) or *very dissatisfied* (1%).

Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Over half of Hutt City residents (54%) 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 was being *too busy, having family commitments and/or not having time* (40%). Seventeen percent stated that the *activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate/participate more often*, while 12% mentioned *poor health/physically can't participate/sports injury/old age*.

Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of Hutt City residents (46%) stated that they participated in physical activity *at least once a week*, while 41% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 6% stated they took part in physical activity *once a month*. Five percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

5. Wellbeing

Emotional Wellbeing

Most Hutt City residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively, with 87% giving a *happy* (57%) or *very happy* (30%) rating. Only 2% gave a negative rating (*unhappy/very unhappy*).

Satisfaction With Life In General

The greatest share of Hutt City residents were found to be satisfied to some extent (*satisfied or very satisfied*) with life in general (84%).

Stress

Eleven percent of Hutt City residents reported that they had *never* experienced stress that had had a negative effect. Eighty-nine percent stated that they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect, 14% experiencing negative stress at least *most of the time*, and 4% stating that they *always* experienced this negative stress.

Availability Of Support

Most residents (95%) 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*), with only 5% of respondents stating that they *never* have anyone that they can turn to. Just under half of all residents (46%) report *always* having someone available for support in times of stress.

6. Public Transport

Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

One-fifth of Hutt City residents (19%) stated that they used public transport *every day* or *nearly every day*. An additional 15% stated that they used public transport *at least once a week* while 13% stated that they had used it *at least once a month* in the past 12 months. In contrast, 27% stated they *had not used public transport* in the last 12 months.

Perceptions Of Affordability, Safety And Convenience Of Public Transport

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

Four in five (83%) Hutt City residents *agreed* (67%) or *strongly agreed* (16%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 4% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement. By comparison, three-quarters (75%) of Hutt City residents *agreed* (58%) or *strongly agreed* (17%) that public transport was **convenient**, while just less than seven in ten Hutt City residents (68%) either *agreed* (56%) or *strongly agreed* (12%) that public transport was **affordable**.

7. Democracy

Perception Of Understanding Of Council Decision-Making Process

Just less than half of all Hutt City residents (48%) agreed to some extent (*agreed or strongly agreed*) that they understood how Hutt City Council made decisions.

Desire To Have More Of A Say In What Council Does

Just over half of all Hutt City residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what Hutt City Council does (52% *agree/strongly agree*). Around one in seven residents stated that they would not like to have more of a say in what Council does (16% *disagree or strongly disagree*).

Confidence In Council Decision-Making

Just less than half of all residents throughout Hutt City (48%) agreed to some extent that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of the city. One in five (22%) disagreed with this statement to some extent.

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

A comparison of results reveals that Hutt City residents were more likely to perceive that they have at least a *small influence* on Council decision making (90%) than on decisions made by central government (84%). Similarly, 56% of residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making, while only 43% reported feeling they had at least *some influence* over decisions central government makes.

Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

One-third of Hutt City residents (33%) *agreed* (30%) or *strongly agreed* (3%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. Just under a quarter (23%) disagreed with this statement to some extent.

8. Work-Related Issues

Using Work Skills, Training and Experience in Current Job

Four in five Hutt City residents (79%) currently in paid employment either *agreed* (29%) or *strongly agreed* (50%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Thirteen percent either *disagreed* (9%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%).

Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Two-thirds of Hutt City residents (66%) were either *satisfied* (47%) or *very satisfied* (19%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Sixteen percent were either *dissatisfied* (13%) or *very dissatisfied* (3%).

9. Crime/Safety

Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Hutt City 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 Hutt City residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 87% stating they felt either *safe* (51%) or *very safe* (36%). Only 6% felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in their homes after dark. Almost seven in ten Hutt City residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 68% stating they feeling either *safe* (48%) or *very safe* (20%). In contrast, just over half of Hutt City residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in the city centre after dark**, with 51% stating they felt either *safe* (43%) or *very safe* (8%). Nineteen percent reported feeling *unsafe* (16%) or *very unsafe* (3%).

Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, Hutt city residents were most likely to identify dangerous driving as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (64%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (29%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Dangerous driving	64
Graffiti	59
Theft and damage to cars	39
Vandalism	38
Feeling unsafe around some people	29

Base: All respondents

10. Community

Felt Sense Of Community

Sixty-five percent of Hutt City residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 49% *agreeing* and 16% *strongly agreeing* with this statement. Twelve percent *disagreed* (11%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%) that they felt a sense of community with others.

Importance Of Sense Of Community

Four in five Hutt City residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 78% either *agreeing* (55%) or *strongly agreeing* (23%) with this statement. Seven percent *disagreed* (6%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%) 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 frequently mentioned reasons were that residents *liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities* (45%), they were *too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or job* (23%), and 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* (20%).

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

Just over three-quarters of Hutt City residents (77%) either *agreed* (57%) or *strongly agreed* (20%) that people like themselves can have an impact on making their community a better place to live. Eight percent of residents *disagreed* (7%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

Social Networks

Over half of Hutt City 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 Hutt City residents (88%) 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 11% stated that they had experienced *negative contact* with outright tension. Most Hutt City residents (84%) 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). Fifteen percent stated that they had *experienced negative contact* of this nature.

Almost all Hutt City residents (97%) 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. Three percent of residents stated that they had not experienced any positive contact. Most Hutt City residents (85%) also stated that, in the last 12 months, they had 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.

Isolation

Four in five Hutt City residents (81%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (62%) or *rarely* (19%) felt lonely or isolated. Fifteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 4% felt this way *most of the time* (3%) or *always* (1%).

Trust

Seven out of ten Hutt City residents (72%) stated that people can *usually* (64%) or *almost always* (8%) be trusted. Two-fifths (21%) 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, Hutt City residents were most likely to report a problem with rubbish or litter lying about on the streets, 41% 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 air pollution (14%).

Summary Table 2: Perceptions Of Environmental Issues (%)

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Rubbish and litter lying about on the streets	41
Noise pollution	26
Water pollution	26
Air pollution	14

Base: All respondents

Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Three in five Hutt City residents (60%) either *agreed* (45%) or *strongly agreed* (15%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Nine percent *disagreed* (7%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%).

Pride In City's Look And Feel

Just over half of Hutt City residents (55%) either *agreed* (45%) or *strongly agreed* (10%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt. Sixteen percent *disagreed* (13%) or *strongly disagreed* (3%) with this statement.

The most commonly mentioned reasons for pride in the way Hutt City looked and felt related to the physical attractiveness of the city and its facilities. One-fifth (20%) 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 13% said they felt a sense of pride due to the *good facilities and services*.

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way Hutt City looked and felt, the most frequently mentioned reasons related to the unattractiveness of the look of the city, with 14% stating that it was because their city was *drab or dowdy and that it needs sprucing up and/or better maintenance*. A further 12% indicated that they had a lack of pride because of *poor planning and/or lack of forward planning*, while 8% mentioned that it was because of *old buildings being pulled down and/or in-fill and/or unattractive new buildings*.

Perception Of Impact On City Of Greater Cultural Diversity

Just over half of Hutt City residents (56%) felt that greater cultural diversity made Hutt City either *a better* (42%) or *a much better* (14%) place to live. A third (35%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference*, while six percent felt that it made a place *worse* (5%) or *much worse* (1%) place to live.

Residents who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made Hutt City 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 greater cultural diversity leads to *increases in crime and/or gangs* (22%), that it *causes racial disharmony/racial tension* (21%) and that migrants *lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups* (21%).

Of those who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a *better* or *much better* place to live, two-thirds (66%) mentioned that diversity was *good as it gave a broader perspective and outlook and/or brought new ideas*. Thirty-three percent 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* (13%) and that it made Hutt City a *more vibrant and interesting place* (10%).

Ease Of Access

Most Hutt City residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy*. Local parks and green spaces had the highest ratings for ease of access (96% *easy* or *very easy*), while residents were most likely to report difficulties accessing education providers (79%).

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	96
Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets	94
Banks or cash machines	92
Public transport facilities	91
Education provider	79

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, one-third (32%) stated that the facility or service was *not easily accessible by public transport or that public transport was not available*. A further 27% stated that the service or facility was *not available or that there were only a few located in their area*, while 16% stated that it would be a *very long walk* to access the service or facility.