

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

*Prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited*

# QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

***- RESULTS FOR NORTH SHORE CITY -***

*Prepared For North Shore City Council*

*6 May 2005*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### 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 has 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 National Indicators closely align with those used by the Ministry of Social Development in their annual Social Report. As both projects rely on similar data to monitor trends in wellbeing, for 2004, the Ministry became partners on the Quality Of Life survey, and an additional sample of 1500 residents living outside the twelve urban areas was included in the research.

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 North Shore city residents.

#### Methodology

All interviewing for North Shore 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. North Shore 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 North Shore residents felt that they had a positive overall quality of life, with 90% giving a rating of either *good* (62%) or *extremely good* (28%). Only 2% thought they had a *poor* or *extremely poor* quality of life.

## 3. Health

### Overall Health

Most North Shore residents rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*) (90%). Ten percent of residents described their overall health as *fair* (8%) or *poor* (2%).

### Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

A fifth of all North Shore 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 North Shore residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by over two-thirds (68%) of this group. Other commonly cited barriers related to time factors, with 13% indicating that they had been too busy themselves (*too busy to go to the doctor/couldn't take time off work*) and 9% indicating that the doctor was too busy (*couldn't fit me in/waiting times too long*).

## 4. Free Time

### Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, a third (33%) stated that they *took part in sports or other physical activity, either on their own or with friends*. Other commonly mentioned past-times included:

- socialising with friends in cafes and bars, visiting friends and/or eating out (28%);
- taking part in sports or other physical activities (not specified with whom) (25%); and
- family or child focused activities (21%).

### Satisfaction With Free Time

Four in five North Shore residents (78%) were either *satisfied* (51%) or *very satisfied* (27%) with their free time. Only 10% were either *dissatisfied* (8%) or *very dissatisfied* (2%).

### Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Just over two in five North Shore residents (41%) had experienced 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* (45%). Seventeen 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 16% stated that the *activity was too far away, they didn't have transport or couldn't get to it easily*.

### Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of North Shore residents (52%) stated that they participated in physical activity *at least once a week*, while 37% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 6% stated they participated in physical activity *once a month*. Three percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

## 5. Wellbeing

### Emotional Wellbeing

Most North Shore residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively (88% *happy or unhappy*), with only 3% giving a negative rating (*unhappy or very unhappy*).

### Satisfaction With Life In General

The greatest share of North Shore residents were found to be satisfied to some extent (*satisfied or very satisfied*) with life in general (85%).

### Stress

Ten percent of North Shore residents responded that they had *never* experienced stress that had had a negative effect. Of the 90% of residents who stated that they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect, 14% stated that they experienced this negative stress *most of the time*, and 3% *always* experienced negative stress.

### Availability Of Support

Most residents (96%) 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 3% of respondents stating that they *never* have anyone that they can turn to.

## 6. Public Transport

### Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

The greatest single proportion of North Shore residents (44%) stated that they *had not used public transport* in the last 12 months. An additional 20% stated that they used public transport *less than once a month* in the past 12 months. Thirteen percent reported using public transport *daily*.

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

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

Four in five (82%) North Shore residents *agreed* (65%) or *strongly agreed* (17%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 3% *disagreed* with this statement. By comparison, just over half of North Shore residents (53%) either *agreed* (46%) or *strongly agreed* (7%) that public transport was **affordable**, 19% *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing* with this statement. In contrast, less than half of North Shore residents (44%) *agreed* (36%) or *strongly agreed* (8%) that public transport was **convenient**. A third (34%) *disagreed* (25%) or *strongly disagreed* (9%) with this statement.

## 7. Democracy

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

Half of all North Shore residents (50%) agreed to some extent (*agreed or strongly agreed*) that they understood how North Shore City Council made decisions.

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

Over half of all North Shore residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what North Shore City Council does (56% *agree/strongly agree*). One in seven residents (14%) stated that they would not like to have more of a say in what Council does.

### Confidence In Council Decision-Making

Just over half of all residents throughout North Shore City (51%) agreed that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of the city. Just over one in five (22%) 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 (88%) than on the decisions made by central government (86%). Similarly, just over half (51%) of all residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making, while only 44% felt that they had the same level of influence on central government-made decisions.

## Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

Just over one third of North Shore residents (35%) *agreed* (31%) or *strongly agreed* (4%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. Twenty-two percent disagreed with this statement to some extent.

## 8. Work-Related Issues

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

Four in five North Shore residents currently in paid employment (81%) either *agreed* (27%) or *strongly agreed* (54%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Twelve percent either *disagreed* (7%) or *strongly disagreed* (5%).

### Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Approximately two thirds of North Shore residents (64%) were either *satisfied* (44%) or *very satisfied* (20%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Twenty percent were either *dissatisfied* (18%) or *very dissatisfied* (2%).

## 9. Crime/Safety

### Sense Of Freedom From Crime

North Shore 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 North Shore residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 90% stating they felt either *safe* (48%) or *very safe* (42%). Only 3% felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in their homes after dark. Three-quarters of North Shore residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 76% stating they feeling either *safe* (54%) or *very safe* (22%). In contrast, 62% of North Shore residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in the city centre after dark**, with 51% stating they felt *safe* and 11% *very safe*. Sixteen percent reported feeling *unsafe* (13%) or *very unsafe* (3%).

## Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, North Shore residents were most likely to identify dangerous driving as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (61%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (25%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Dangerous driving	61
Graffiti	47
Vandalism	33
Theft and damage to cars	29
Feeling unsafe around some people	25

Base: All respondents

## 10. Community

### Felt Sense Of Community

Over half of North Shore residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 63% either *agreeing* (49%) or *strongly agreeing* (14%) with this statement. Fourteen percent *disagreed* (13%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

### Importance Of Sense Of Community

Four in five North Shore residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 78% either *agreeing* (54%) or *strongly agreeing* (24%) with this statement.

Those who stated that they did not think it was important to have a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood were asked why they felt this way. The most commonly mentioned reason was that residents *liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities* (33%). Twenty-eight percent stated that they were *too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or job*, while 11% indicated that they *did not know* their neighbours.

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

Just over three-quarters of North Shore residents (76%) either *agreed* (57%) or *strongly agreed* (19%) 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 North Shore 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 19% stated that *there are no particular groups or networks that they feel part of*.

## Neighbourhood Contact

Most North Shore residents (90%) 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 10% stated that they had experienced negative contact with outright tension. Only a small proportion of North Shore residents (13%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had experienced **some negative contact** with people in their neighbourhood (for example not getting on with them).

In contrast, almost all North Shore residents (94%) 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. Similarly, most North Shore residents (86%) 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 North Shore residents (84%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (66%) or *rarely* (18%) felt lonely or isolated. Thirteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 3% felt this way *most of the time*.

## Trust

Approximately seven out of ten North Shore residents (73%) stated that people can *usually* (63%) or *almost always* (10%) be trusted. One-fifth (20%) stated that *you usually can't be too careful*, while 7% stated you *almost always can't be too careful*.

# 11. Built Environment

## Pollution Problems In Local Area

Of the four environmental issues measured, North Shore residents were most likely to report problems with rubbish or litter lying about on the streets (43%) and water pollution (43%). In contrast, residents were least likely to report a problem with air pollution (19%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Rubbish and litter lying about on the streets	43
Water pollution	43
Noise pollution	30
Air pollution	19

Base: All respondents

### Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Three in five North Shore residents (62%) either *agreed* (45%) or *strongly agreed* (17%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Eleven percent *disagreed* (9%) or *strongly disagreed* with this statement (2%).

### Pride In City's Look And Feel

Three-quarters of North Shore residents (74%) either *agreed* (56%) or *strongly agreed* (18%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt. Nine percent *disagreed* (8%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

The most commonly mentioned reasons for feeling a sense of pride in North Shore's look and feel related to the physical attractiveness of the city as well as the attitudes of its people. Twenty-two percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because their *city was clean and tidy and/or had no litter*. Eighteen percent indicated that their sense of pride was derived from their *beaches/harbour* (either being beautiful or having good access to these), while 13% stated that their pride was derived from the *greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens*.

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way North Shore looked and felt, the most frequently mentioned reason related to the unattractiveness of the look of the city, with 20% stating that they did not feel a sense of pride because of *old buildings pulled down, in-fill, or unattractive new buildings*. An additional 18% stated that it was because North Shore *looked dirty and/or there is rubbish everywhere*. Nine percent of residents mentioned either *negative comments regarding the council* or a *loss of green areas/trees/need more trees/parks*.

### Perception Of Impact On City Of Greater Cultural Diversity

Half of North Shore residents (50%) felt that greater cultural diversity made North Shore either *a better* (37%) or *a much better* (13%) place to live. Twelve percent felt that greater cultural diversity made the city a *worse* (11%) or *much worse* (1%) place to live.

Residents who stated that overall, greater cultural diversity made North Shore 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 migrants or too many different cultures* (19%), *too many Asian immigrants* (17%), and that *migrants lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups* (17%).

Residents who stated that overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a *better* or *much better* place to live were also asked their reasons for saying this was. Sixty-nine percent mentioned that diversity *was good as it gave a broader perspective and outlook and/or brought new ideas*. Thirty-nine 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* (17%) and that it made North Shore a *more vibrant and interesting place* (13%).

### Ease Of Access

Most North Shore residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy*. Local parks and other green open spaces and shopping malls/supermarkets had the highest ratings for ease of access (96% and 95% *easy/very easy*). In contrast, residents were most likely to report difficulties accessing education providers (82%).

**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	95
Banks or cash machines	94
Public transport facilities	83
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, 35% percent stated that the facility or service was *not easily accessible by public transport/no public transport*, while 23% stated that it would be a *very long walk* to access the service or facility. An additional 12% noted either that *heavy traffic makes it difficult to reach the destination*, that there were *none or few available in the area*, or that they would *have to travel a long way to reach the service or facility*.