

RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by Gravitass Research and Strategy Limited

QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

- RESULTS FOR PORIRUA CITY -

Prepared For Porirua City Council

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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 Porirua City residents.

Methodology

All interviewing for Porirua 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. Porirua 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 Porirua residents felt that they had a positive overall quality of life, with 90% giving a rating of either *good* (63%) or *extremely good* (27%). Only 2% thought they had a *poor/very poor* quality of life.

3. Health

Overall Health

Most Porirua residents rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*) (87%). Thirteen percent rated their health as either *fair* (10%) or *poor* (3%).

Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

Over a fifth of all Porirua residents (23%) 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 Porirua residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by over half (51%) of this group. Just over one in five residents (21%) 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 far away, was difficult to get to and/or that they don't have transport.

4. Free Time

Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, 28% stated that they spent their free time *taking part in sports or other physical activity (not specified with whom)*. Other commonly mentioned past-times included:

- socialising with friends in cafes and bars, visiting friends and/or eat out (25%);
- family or child-focused activities (23%);
- reading (21%).

Satisfaction With Free Time

Four in five Porirua residents (78%) were either *satisfied* (50%) or *very satisfied* (28%) with their free time. Only 9% were either *dissatisfied* (8%) or *very dissatisfied* (1%).

Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Over half of Porirua residents (57%) did not experience any barriers that made it difficult to take part in free time activities that were important to them. Two in five residents (42%) noted that they had experienced barriers to participation. The most commonly mentioned barrier was being too busy, having family commitments and/or not having time (46%). Thirteen percent stated that they could not participate because of poor health, physically cannot participate, sports injury, and/or old age while a further 10% mentioned that the activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate/participate more often. Nine percent of residents mentioned weather and/or daylight hours as a barrier.

Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of Porirua residents (48%) stated that they participated in physical activity *about once a week*, while 39% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 5% stated they participated in physical activity at least *once a month*. Five percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

5. Wellbeing

Emotional Wellbeing

Most Porirua residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively with 86% giving a *happy* (50%) or *very happy* (36%) rating. Only 4% gave a negative rating (*unhappy/very unhappy*).

Satisfaction With Life In General

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

Stress

Eleven percent of Porirua residents responded that they had *never* experienced stress that had had a negative effect. The majority of respondents (88%) stated that they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect, 12% experiencing negative stress at least *most of the time*, 4% stating that they experienced this negative stress *always*.

Availability Of Support

Most Porirua 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 4% of respondents stating that they *never* have anyone that they can turn to. Just more than half (52%) *always* have someone they can rely on in times of stress.

6. Public Transport

Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

Nineteen percent of Porirua residents stated that they use public transport *every day or nearly every day*. An additional 15% stated that they used public transport *at least once a week* while 14% stated that they had used it *at least once a month* in the past 12 months. In contrast, 26% stated they *had not use public transport* in the last 12 months.

Perceptions Of Affordability, Safety And Convenience Of Public Transport

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

Four in five (81%) Porirua residents *agreed* (63%) or *strongly agreed* (18%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 4% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement. Just over three quarters (77%) of Porirua residents *agreed* (60%) or *strongly agreed* (17%) that public transport was **convenient**, while two thirds of Porirua residents (69%) either *agreed* (53%) or *strongly agreed* (16%) that public transport was **affordable**.

7. Democracy

Perception Of Understanding Of Council Decision-Making Process

Just over half of all Porirua residents (53%) agreed to some extent (*agreed or strongly agreed*) that they understood how Porirua City Council made decisions. Twenty-seven percent either *disagreed* (23%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%).

Desire To Have More Of A Say In What Council Does

Half of all Porirua residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what Porirua City Council does (50% *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

Over half of all residents throughout Porirua (52%) agreed to some extent 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 (87%) than on the decisions made by central government (84%). Similarly, over half (55%) of all residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making, while only 46% felt that they had the same level of influence on central government-made decisions.

Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

Almost two in five Porirua residents (38%) *agreed* (34%) or *strongly agreed* (4%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. Almost one in five (19%) *disagreed* with this statement to some extent.

8. Work-Related Issues

Using Work Skills, Training and Experience in Current Job

More than four in five Porirua residents currently in paid employment (88%) either *agreed* (35%) or *strongly agreed* (53%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Eight percent either *disagreed* (4%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%).

Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Almost seven in ten Porirua residents currently in paid employment (68%) were either *satisfied* (46%) or *very satisfied* (22%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Fifteen percent were either *dissatisfied* (13%) or *very dissatisfied* (2%).

9. Crime/Safety

Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Porirua 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 Porirua residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 88% stating they felt either *safe* (49%) or *very safe* (39%). Only 5% felt *unsafe* (3%) or *very unsafe* (2%) in their homes after dark. Seven in ten Porirua residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 71% stating they felt either *safe* (50%) or *very safe* (21%). Eleven percent felt *unsafe* (9%) or *very unsafe* (2%). In contrast, just less than half of Porirua residents reported a **sense of freedom from crime in the city centre after dark**, with 46% stating they felt either *safe* (38%) or *very safe* (8%). Twenty-six percent reported feeling *unsafe* (21%) or *very unsafe* (5%).

Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, Porirua residents were most likely to identify dangerous driving as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (66%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (33%) (Summary Table 1).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Dangerous driving	65
Graffiti	64
Vandalism	41
Theft and damage to cars	39
Feeling unsafe around some people	33

Base: All respondents

10. Community

Felt Sense Of Community

A third of Porirua residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 66% either *agreeing* (49%) or *strongly agreeing* (17%) 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

More than four in five Porirua residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 82% either *agreeing* (58%) or *strongly agreeing* (24%) with this statement. Four percent *disagreed* or *strongly 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 reasons were that residents liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities (36%), and that they were too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or and job (33%). An additional 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

Just over three-quarters of Porirua residents (77%) either *agreed* (54%) or *strongly agreed* (23%) 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 Porirua residents (54%) 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-seven 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 16% stated that *there are no particular groups or networks that they feel part of*.

Neighbourhood Contact

Most Porirua 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 Porirua 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 Porirua 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 Porirua residents (84%) 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. Fifteen percent stated that they had not.

Isolation

Four in five Porirua residents (81%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (60%) or *rarely* (21%) felt lonely or isolated. Sixteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 1% *always* felt this way.

Trust

Almost seven out of ten Porirua residents (67%) stated that people can *usually* (57%) or *almost always* (10%) be trusted. Just less than a quarter (23%) 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, Porirua 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 air pollution (10%) (Summary Table 2).

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
Water pollution	39
Noise pollution	28
Air pollution	10

Base: All respondents

Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Four in five Porirua residents (79%) either *agreed* (48%) or *strongly agreed* (31%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Five percent *disagreed* (3%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%).

Pride In City's Look And Feel

Two thirds of Porirua residents (67%) either *agreed* (48%) or *strongly agreed* (19%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt. Fifteen percent *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement.

The most commonly mentioned reasons related to the infrastructure of the city as well as the attitudes of its people. Sixteen percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because of the good services and facilities. A further thirteen percent said they felt a sense of pride due to the helpful, friendly and welcoming people who lived there. Ten percent of residents indicated that they felt Porirua was a go ahead, progressive, positive place, while 9% mentioned either the greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens or that that their city was clean and tidy and/or had no litter.

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way Porirua 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 of graffiti and/or vandalism, while 11% 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

Over half of Porirua residents (58%) felt that greater cultural diversity made Porirua either *a better* (39%) or *a much better* (19%) place to live. A third (35%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference*. Only 4% percent felt that it made for a *worse* (3%) or *much worse* (1%) place to live.

Residents who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made Porirua 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 it causes racial disharmony and/or racial tension (22%), that migrants lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups (21%), and that there are too many migrants and/or cultures (19%).

Of those who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a better or much better place to live, 65% mentioned that diversity was good as it gave a broader perspective and outlook and/or brought new ideas. Thirty eight percent stated that it helped them learn about other cultures, stop racism and/or taught tolerance. A further 9% indicated that cultural diversity made Porirua a more vibrant and interesting place.

Ease Of Access

Most Porirua residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy* – with the exception of education providers. Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets had the highest ratings for ease of access (97%), while residents were most likely to report difficulties accessing education providers (10% reporting access as at least *difficult*) (Summary Table 3).

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

	Share Rating Access As Easy Or Very Easy (n=500)
Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets	97
Local parks and green spaces	96
Banks or cash machines	93
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 (33%) stated that the facility or service was not available or that there were only a few located in their area, while 32% 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 13% noted that it would be a very long walk to access the service or facility, while 12% said they would have to travel a long distance to reach the service or facility.