

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

*Prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited*

**QUALITY OF LIFE IN  
NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES**

***- RESULTS FOR WAITAKERE CITY -***

***Prepared For Waitakere 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 Waitakere city residents.

#### Methodology

All interviewing for Waitakere 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. Waitakere 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 Waitakere residents felt that they had a positive overall quality of life, with 86% giving a rating of either *good* (59%) or *extremely good* (27%). Only 2% thought they had a *poor* quality of life.

## 3. Health

### Overall Health

Most Waitakere residents rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*) (90%). Ten percent of residents described their overall health as *poor* (7%) or *very poor* (3%).

### Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

A quarter of all Waitakere residents (25%) 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 Waitakere residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by over three in five (63%) of this group. One in ten residents (10%) who experienced barriers noted that *the condition got better on its own* while a further 7% stated that the *doctor was too far away, they are too 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, just over a quarter (27%) stated 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 (*unspecified with whom*) (26%);
- taking part in sports or other physical activity, either on their own or with friends (24%);
- family or child focused activities (23%); and/or
- reading (23%).

### Satisfaction With Free Time

Almost four in five Waitakere residents (78%) were either *satisfied* (49%) or *very satisfied* (29%) with their free time. Only 8% were either *dissatisfied* (7%) or *very dissatisfied* (1%).

### Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Over half of Waitakere residents (57%) 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 (46%). Fifteen percent stated that the activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate/participate more often, while the same proportion (15%) mentioned that they have poor health, physically can not participate due to old age or a sports injury.

### Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of Waitakere residents (51%) stated that they participated in physical activity *once or twice a week*, while 34% stated they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 5% stated they did it *once a month*. Seven percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity.

## 5. Wellbeing

### Emotional Wellbeing

Most Waitakere residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively, with 90% giving a *happy* (52%) or *very happy* (38%) rating. Only 1% giving a negative rating (*unhappy*).

### Satisfaction With Life In General

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

### Stress

Fourteen percent of Waitakere residents responded that they had *never* experienced stress that had had a negative effect. Most respondents (85%) stated that they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect, 12% reporting that they experience negative stress *most of the time*, and 3% stating that they experienced this negative stress *always*.

### 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 4% of respondents stating that they *never* have anyone that they can turn to. Fifty percent *always* have someone they can turn to for help or reply on for support.

## 6. Public Transport

### Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

The greatest single proportion of Waitakere residents (51%) stated that they *had not use public transport* in the last 12 month. An additional 21% noted that they had used it less than once a month. Only 10% said they used public transport *every day* or *nearly every day*.

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

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

Three quarters (74%) of Waitakere residents *agreed* (61%) or *strongly agreed* (13%) that public transport was **safe**. Only 7% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement. Just under half of Waitakere residents (49%) either *agreed* (43%) or *strongly agreed* (6%) that public transport was **affordable**, while under half of Waitakere residents (42%) *agreed* (35%) or *strongly agreed* (7%) that public transport was **convenient**.

## 7. Democracy

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

Just less than a half of all Waitakere residents (46%) *agreed* to some extent (*agreed or strongly agreed*) that they understood how Waitakere City Council made decisions.

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

Just less than two thirds of all Waitakere residents expressed a desire to have more of a say in what Waitakere City Council does (63% *agree/strongly agree*). Only 12% of residents 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 Waitakere (54%) *agreed* to some extent that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of the city. Just under one in five (19%) *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 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 (81%). Similarly, over half (53%) of all residents perceived that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making, while only 43% felt that they had the same level of influence on central government-made decisions.

### Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

One third of Waitakere residents (34%) *agreed* (31%) or *strongly agreed* (3%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. A fifth (19%) *disagreed* with this statement to some extent.

## 8. Work-Related Issues

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

Four in five Waitakere 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* (11%) or *strongly disagreed* (3%).

### Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Two thirds of Waitakere residents (67%) were either *satisfied* (46%) or *very satisfied* (21%) with the balance they had between work and other aspects of their life. Eighteen percent were either *dissatisfied* (16%) or *very dissatisfied* (2%).

## 9. Crime/Safety

### Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Waitakere 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 Waitakere residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark**, with 87% stating they felt either *safe* (50%) or *very safe* (37%). Only 5% felt *unsafe/very unsafe* in their homes after dark. Two thirds of Waitakere residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 67% stating they feeling either *safe* (50%) or *very safe* (17%). In contrast, less than half of Waitakere residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in the city centre after dark**, with 44% stating they felt either *safe* (38%) or *very safe* (6%).

### Perceptions Of Crime/Safety Problems In Local Area

Of the five issues assessed, Waitakere residents were most likely to identify dangerous driving as having been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (67%). In contrast, residents were least likely to perceive a problem with feeling unsafe around some people (32%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Dangerous driving	67
Graffiti	62
Theft and damage to cars	34
Vandalism	34
Feeling unsafe around some people	32

Base: All respondents

## 10. Community

### Felt Sense Of Community

More than three in five Waitakere residents felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 65% either *agreeing* (49%) or *strongly agreeing* (16%) with this statement. Seventeen percent *disagreed* (14%) or *strongly disagreed* (3%) that they felt a sense of community with others.

### Importance Of Sense Of Community

Four out of five Waitakere residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 80% either *agreeing* (57%) or *strongly agreeing* (23%) with this statement. Six percent *disagreed/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 they were too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and/or and job (34%), and that residents liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities (26%). An additional 16% 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 Waitakere residents (77%) either *agreed* (55%) or *strongly agreed* (22%) that people like themselves can have an impact on making their community a better place to live. Seven percent of residents *disagreed* (6%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%).

### Social Networks

Over half of Waitakere residents (53%) 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 two 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 an additional 22% stated that *there are no particular groups or networks that they feel part of*.

### Neighbourhood Contact

Most Waitakere residents (86%) 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 13% stated that they had experienced negative contact with outright tension. Most Waitakere 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 Waitakere residents (95%) 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. Five percent of residents stated that they had not experienced any positive contact. Most Waitakere 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 favors, telling them if you are going away etc. - with people in their neighbourhood. Sixteen percent stated that they had not.

### Isolation

Four in five Waitakere residents (81%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (61%) or *rarely* (20%) felt lonely or isolated. Sixteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 2% felt this way *most of the time*.

### Trust

More than three out of five Waitakere residents (63%) stated that people can *usually* (55%) or *almost always* (8%) be trusted. Just over a quarter (28%) stated that *you usually can't be too careful*, while 8% stated *you almost always can't be too careful*.

## 11. Built Environment

### Pollution Problems In Local Area

Of the four environmental issues measured, Waitakere residents were most likely to report a problem with rubbish or litter lying about on the streets, 44% 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 (23%).

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

	Share Perceiving Issue To Be A Problem (n=500)
Rubbish and litter lying about on the streets	44
Noise pollution	36
Water pollution	26
Air pollution	23

Base: All respondents

### Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Three quarters of Waitakere residents (74%) either *agreed* (51%) or *strongly agreed* (23%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene. Six percent *disagreed* (4%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%).

### Pride In City's Look And Feel

Two thirds of Waitakere residents (67%) either *agreed* (52%) or *strongly agreed* (15%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt. Eleven percent either *disagreed* (9%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%) with this statement.

The most commonly mentioned reasons for pride in the way Waitakere looked and felt related to the physical attractiveness of the city as well as the attitudes of its people. Twenty-three percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because of the greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens. Thirteen percent stated that their sense of pride was due to the helpful, friendly and welcoming people who lived there, while other commonly mentioned reasons included that the city was clean and tidy and/or had no litter (11%), and that the city had good facilities and services (11%).

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way Waitakere looked and felt, the most frequently mentioned reason related to the unattractiveness of the look of the city, with 15% stating that they did not feel a sense of pride because of graffiti and vandalism. Other commonly mentioned reasons included poor planning or a lack of forward planning (11%), negative comments about Council (11%), that old buildings had been pulled down, there was infill housing and/or there were unattractive new buildings (10%) and/or that the city was drab or dowdy and that it needs sprucing up and/or better maintenance (10%).

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

Half of Waitakere residents (50%) felt that greater cultural diversity made Waitakere either *a better* (34%) or *a much better* (14%) place to live. A third (37%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference*. Ten percent felt that it made a place a *worse* (8%) or *much worse* (2%) place to live.

Residents who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made Waitakere a *worse* or *much worse* place to live were asked what the one main reason for saying this was. The most frequently mentioned reason was that migrants lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups (25%). Other commonly mentioned reasons included that some migrants don't have the ability to communicate (16%), that migrants are taking over shops (13%), and that migrants have poor driving skills (13%).

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. Thirty-nine percent stated that it helped them learn about other cultures, stop racism and/or taught tolerance. Other frequently mentioned reasons included that it made Waitakere a more vibrant and interesting place (13%) and a perception that cultural diversity meant more interesting food, more choice and/or better restaurants (12%).

### Ease Of Access

Most Waitakere residents rated access to each of the services or facilities as at least *easy*. Shopping malls and/or centers and supermarkets 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=500)
Shopping malls/centres and supermarkets	95
Local parks and green spaces	93
Banks or cash machines	88
Public transport facilities	77
Education provider	71

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, over a third (37%) stated that access was difficult because the services and facilities were not easily accessible by public transport or that public transport was not available. Other commonly mentioned reasons were that the facility or service was not available or that there were only a few located in their area (22%), that it would be a very long walk to access the service or facility (22%) and that that they would have to travel a long distance to reach the service or facility (14%).

