

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 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.

Methodology

Field work was undertaken by both Gravitas Research and Strategy and 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. In addition, Christchurch City Council commissioned an additional 300 interviews with Maori, Pacific and Asian residents. This gave a total sample size for the twelve cities/districts of 6300. (*Note: This sample is referred to as "Total Twelve Cities" in the report*). An additional 1500 interviews were conducted with those living outside the twelve cities/districts. *Note: This sample is referred to as "Rest of New Zealand" in the report*. This resulted in a total (national) sample size of 7,800. Interviews were conducted to pre-determined quotas by gender, age, ethnicity and ward/region to ensure that the sample was representative of the New Zealand population as a whole. However, while pre-set interviewing quotas were used to ensure that the final samples for each city were representative of the distribution of the population as a whole, in order to ensure an exact match, the data set was weighted once interviewing was complete (a full description of the weightings used has been provided in Section Two in the main report).

2. Quality Of Life

Most New Zealand residents described their quality of life positively, with 88% rating it as either *good* (60%) or *extremely good* (28%). Only 2% of residents rated their quality of life negatively. Twelve Cities' residents (88% *good/extremely good*) and those living elsewhere in New Zealand (88%) rated their quality of life similarly.

3. Health

Overall Health

Most New Zealand residents (88%) rated their overall health positively (*good, very good or excellent*), one in five (20%) describing their health as *excellent*. Two percent of residents rated their overall health negatively. There were no notable differences in perception of overall health among residents of the Twelve Cities (88% rating their health positively, 21% describing their health as *excellent*) and those living elsewhere (87% rating their health positively, 20% giving a rating of *excellent*).

Experience Of Barriers To Usage Of General Practitioners

Over a fifth of all 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. Experiences of barriers to visiting a GP were similar among Twelve Cities residents (22%) and those living elsewhere (21%).

Cost was the most dominant reason identified by residents who had not visited their GP when they wanted to, this barrier being cited by three in five (61%) of this group. One in ten residents (11%) who experienced barriers stated that they had been too busy to go to the doctor/couldn't take time off work, while a further one in ten (10%) noted that the condition got better on its own. Cost was the predominant barrier faced by both Twelve Cities residents (62%) and those living elsewhere (59%). Twelve Cities' residents were slightly more like to mention time constraints as a barrier (13%, compared with 9% of those living elsewhere) while non Twelve Cities residents were more likely to cite access difficulties (10%, compared with 6% of Twelve Cities' residents) and the fact that the condition got better on its own (12%, compared with 8% of Twelve Cities' residents).

4. Free Time

Activities Undertaken In Free Time

When asked what three main things they did in their free time, two out of five (39%) stated that they took part in sports or other physical activity (either on their own or with friends), while 27% stated that they socialised with friends in cafes and bars, visited friends and/or ate out.

Other commonly mentioned past-times included gardening and lawn mowing (24%), reading (22%), family and child focused activities (21%) and taking part in sports or other physical activity with an organised club (20%). Those living outside the Twelve Cities were notably more likely to participate in gardening/lawn mowing (29%) than their Twelve Cities counterparts (19%).

Satisfaction With Free Time

Four in five New Zealand residents (80%) were either *satisfied* (51%) or *very satisfied* (29%) with their free time. Eight percent reporting being either *dissatisfied* (7%) or *very dissatisfied* (1%). There was no notable difference in the level of satisfaction with free time between residents of the Twelve Cities (79%) and those living elsewhere (80%). However, those living outside the Twelve Cities were slightly more likely to report being *very satisfied* with their free time (31%) than their Twelve Cities' counterparts (28%).

Experience Of Barriers To Leisure Activity

Over half of New Zealand residents (55%) had not experienced any barriers that made it difficult to take part in free time activities that were important to them. There were no notable differences in the experience of barriers between residents of the Twelve Cities (44%) and those living in the rest of the New Zealand (45%).

The most commonly mentioned barrier to important free time activities was being too busy, having family commitments and/or not having time (52%). Sixteen 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 15% stated that the activity cost too much and/or they couldn't afford to participate/participate more often. Residents living outside the Twelve Cities were more likely to cite time constraints (55%) and poor physical health/sports injury/old age (19%) than their Twelve Cities' counterparts (49% and 14% respectively).

Frequency Of Doing Physical Activity

The greatest single share of New Zealand residents (88%) stated that they participated in physical activity *at least once a week*, 41% stating that they did some form of physical activity *daily*. An additional 5% stated they did some form of physical activity *once a month*. Five percent stated that they *did not ever* do any form of exercise or physical activity. While not significantly different, residents living outside the Twelve Cities were more likely to participate in physical activity *at least once a week* (90%) than Twelve Cities' residents (87%).

5. Wellbeing

Emotional Wellbeing

Most New Zealand residents rated their emotional wellbeing positively, 53% describing themselves as *happy* and 34% as *very happy*. Two percent gave a negative rating (*unhappy or very unhappy*). The difference in share of positive ratings for emotional wellbeing between Twelve Cities' residents (86%) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (88%) is not significant.

Satisfaction With Life In General

The greatest share of residents reported being *satisfied* (53%) or *very satisfied* (32%) with life in general. Three percent of residents expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. There were no significant differences in levels of satisfaction with life in general between Twelve Cities' residents (84% *satisfied/very satisfied*) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (86% *satisfied/very satisfied*).

Stress

Almost nine out of ten New Zealand residents (88%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had experienced stress which had had a negative effect. Three percent stated that they experienced this negative stress *always* while 11% reporting experiencing negative stress *most of the time*. Results show that Twelve Cities' residents were more likely to experience negative stress *most of the time* or *always* (15%) than those living in the rest of New Zealand (11% *most of the time/always*).

Availability Of Support

Most residents (89%) have someone that they can turn to for help or rely on for support in times of stress at least *sometimes*, 46% stating that they *always* have someone they can rely on for support. There were no significant differences in levels of support between Twelve Cities' residents and those living elsewhere in New Zealand, 89% of both groups having support at least *sometimes*.

6. Public Transport

Frequency Of Use Of Public Transport

The greatest proportion of New Zealand residents (44%) stated that they *had not used public transport* in the last 12 months. An additional 19% stated that they had used public transport *less than once a month*, while 14% stated that it was not an option as public transport was not available where they lived. Fifty-five percent of Twelve Cities' residents had used public transport at least once in the previous 12 months, compared with 24% of those living in the rest of New Zealand.

Perceptions Of Affordability, Safety And Convenience Of Public Transport

Of the three characteristics of public transport measured, New Zealand residents were most likely to *agree/strongly agree* that public transport was safe. Three-quarters (77%) of New Zealand residents *agreed* (62%) or *strongly agreed* (15%) that public transport was **safe**, only 4% *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing* with this claim. There were no significant differences in perceptions of safety between Twelve Cities residents and those living in the rest of New Zealand, 77% of both groups agreeing with the statement to some extent.

Over half of New Zealand residents (59%) either *agreed* (48%) or *strongly agreed* (11%) that public transport was **affordable**. One in ten residents (11%) *disagreed* (9%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%) with this statement. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to *disagree/strongly disagree* that public transport was affordable (13%) than those living in the rest of New Zealand (9%). However, there were no significant differences in the levels of agreement between these groups (60% *agree/strongly agree* among Twelve Cities' residents and 57% among those living elsewhere).

Just over half (56%) of New Zealand residents *agreed* (45%) or *strongly agreed* (11%) that public transport was **convenient**. Twenty-three percent *disagreed* (18%) or *strongly disagreed* (5%) with this statement. While there were no significant differences in the level of agreement with this statement between residents of the Twelve Cities (56% *agree/strongly agree*) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (55%), Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to *disagree/strongly disagree* that public transport was convenient (25%) than those living elsewhere (20%).

7. Democracy

Perception Of Understanding Of Council Decision-Making Process

Just less than half of all New Zealand residents *agreed* (43%) or *strongly agreed* (6%) that they understood how their respective Council made decisions. Just over a quarter of residents *disagreed* (21%) or *strongly disagreed* (5%) that they had an understanding of their Council's decision making process. While the difference in the level of agreement between residents of the Twelve Cities (47%) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (51%) was not statistically significant, Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to *disagree/strongly disagree* that they understood their Council's decision making process (29%, compared with 23% of those living in the rest of New Zealand).

Desire To Have More Of A Say In What Council Does

Over half of all New Zealand residents (54%) expressed a desire to have more of a say in what their council does, 40% *agreeing* and 14% *strongly agreeing* with this statement. There were no notable differences in the share of residents expressing a desire to have more of a say in what Council does between Twelve Cities residents (55% *agree/strongly agree*) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (51%).

Confidence In Council Decision-Making

Half of all residents throughout New Zealand (50%) agreed to some extent that they had confidence that their Council made decisions that were in the best interest of their city or district, 45% *agreeing* with this statement and 5% *strongly agreeing*. Just under a quarter (23%) disagreed with the statement to some extent, 5% *strongly disagreeing*. There were no significant differences in residents' confidence of their Council's decision making between those living in the Twelve Cities (49% *agree/strongly agree*) and those living in the rest of New Zealand (51%).

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

Nine in every ten New Zealand residents (89%) perceived that the public had at least a *small influence* on the decisions that **Councils** made, just over half (54%) perceiving that they had at least *some influence*. Nine percent of residents felt that they had a *large influence* on Council decision making. While Twelve Cities' residents were less likely to perceive that they had at least *some influence* on Council decision making (53%) than those living in the rest of New Zealand (57%), this difference was not statistically significant.

By comparison, just over four in five New Zealand residents (82%) perceived that the public had at least a *small influence* on the decisions that **central government** make, two in five (41%) perceiving that they had at least *some influence*. Five percent of residents felt that they had a *large influence* on central government's decision making. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to perceive that they had at least *some influence* on central government decision making (43%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (38%).

Perceptions Of Corporate Ethics And Responsibility

Just less than two in five New Zealand residents (38%) *agreed* (34%) or *strongly agreed* (4%) that the private business sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner. One in five residents (19%) disagreed with this statement to some extent. Residents living outside of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to *agree/strongly agree* that the private sector makes decisions in an ethical and responsible manner (40%) than Twelve Cities' residents (35%).

8. Work-Related Issues

Using Work Skills, Training and Experience in Current Job

Four in five New Zealand residents (82%) either *agreed* (32%) or *strongly agreed* (50%) that they were using their work skills, training and experience in their current jobs. Eleven percent either *disagreed* (7%) or *strongly disagreed* (4%) that their current job made use of their skills, training and experience. While there were no significant differences in the share agreeing to some extent that they were using their skills, training and experience between Twelve Cities' residents (81%) and those living elsewhere (83%), Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to *strongly agree* with this statement (52%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (47%).

Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

Two thirds of New Zealand residents (66%) were either *satisfied* (45%) or *very satisfied* (21%) with the balance between their work and the other aspects of their life. By contrast, 16% reported being either *dissatisfied* (14%) or *very dissatisfied* (2%) with their work-life balance. While there were no significant differences in the share of Twelve Cities residents (65%) and other residents (67%) *satisfied/very satisfied* with their current work-life balance, Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to express some level of dissatisfaction (18%) than those living elsewhere (15%).

9. Crime/Safety

Sense Of Freedom From Crime

Most New Zealand residents reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their home after dark** with 89% reporting that they felt either *safe* (48%) or *very safe* (41%). Only 4% felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in their homes after dark. While similar shares of Twelve Cities' residents (88%) and those living elsewhere in New Zealand (90%) reported feeling some sense of freedom from crime in their home after dark, those living outside the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to report feeling *very safe* (44%) than Twelve Cities' residents (39%).

Just over two-thirds of Twelve Cities' residents (69%) reported feeling a sense of freedom from crime **in their local neighbourhood after dark**, with 50% stating that they felt *safe* and 19% feeling *very safe*. Fifteen percent felt *unsafe* (13%) or *very unsafe* (2%) in their homes after dark.

Note: Due to difficulties defining the concept of "neighbourhood" in a provincial and rural context, this question was not asked of those living outside the Twelve Cities.

Half of all residents reported a sense of freedom from crime **in their city/town centre after dark** with 50% stating they felt either *safe* (40%) or *very safe* (10%). Twenty three percent felt *unsafe* (19%) or *very unsafe* (4%) in their city centre after dark. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly less likely to report feeling *safe* or *very safe* in their city centre after dark (44%) than residents living elsewhere in New Zealand (56%).

*Note: Residents of the Twelve Cities were asked how safe they feel in their **city** centre after dark, while all other respondents were asked about their sense of safety in their **town** centre.*

Graffiti Problem In Local Area

Just over half of New Zealand residents (52%) stated that graffiti had *not* been an issue in their local area over the last 12 months. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to perceive graffiti to be a problem in their local area (54%) than those living elsewhere (39%).

Vandalism Problem In Local Area

Around two thirds of New Zealand residents (64%) stated that vandalism had *not* been a problem in their local area over the last 12 months while 34% reported that it had been an issue. While residents living outside the Twelve Cities were more likely to state that vandalism had been a problem in the last 12 months (36%) than Twelve Cities residents (33%), this difference is not statistically significant.

Problem Of Theft And Damage To Cars In Local Area

Three in five New Zealand residents (59%) stated that theft and damage to cars had *not* been a problem in their local area over the last 12 months, while 38% stated that it had been an issue. While residents of the Twelve Cities were more likely to perceive a theft/damage problem (39%) than those living elsewhere (36%), this difference is not statistically significant.

Dangerous Driving Problem In Local Area

Three in five New Zealand residents (60%) stated that dangerous driving *had* been a problem in their local area over the last 12 months. While residents of the Twelve Cities were more likely to perceive a dangerous driving problem in their local area (62%) than those living elsewhere (58%), this difference was not statistically significant.

Problem Of Feeling Unsafe Around Some People In Local Area

Just less than three quarters of New Zealand residents (72%) stated that feeling unsafe around some people had *not* been an issue in their local area over the last 12 months. Twenty seven percent reported that it had been an issue. While residents of the Twelve Cities were slightly more likely to perceive a problem of feeling unsafe around some people (28%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (26%), this difference was not statistically significant.

10. Community

Felt Sense Of Community

Around two-thirds of New Zealand residents (66%) felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, with 51% *agreeing* and 15% *strongly agreeing* with this statement. Twelve percent *disagreed* (11%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%) that they felt a sense of community with others. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly less likely to *agree/strongly agree* that they had a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (61%) than those living elsewhere (71%).

Importance Of Sense Of Community

Four in five New Zealand residents felt that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important, with 79% either *agreeing* (55%) or *strongly agreeing* (24%) with this statement. Five percent *disagreed* with the importance of a sense of community. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly less likely to *agree* or *strongly agree* that a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood was important (77%) than those living elsewhere (81%).

When asked why they did not think it was important to have a sense of community, the most commonly mentioned reason was that residents liked to keep to themselves and/or were not interested in community activities (45%). Nineteen percent who did not think it was important to have a sense of community stated that they were too busy and/or that their focus was on their family and job, while 18% 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. Residents living outside the Twelve Cities were more likely to cite a preference for keeping to themselves and/or not being interested in community activities (57%) than Twelve Cities' residents (40%), while those living in the Twelve Cities were more likely to mention being too busy/having a greater focus on family/job (21%) than those living elsewhere (14%).

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

Just over three-quarters of New Zealand residents 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%). Levels of agreement were similar for Twelve Cities residents (76%) and those living elsewhere (77%), although those living outside the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to *strongly agree* that they could have a personal impact (24%, compared with 20% of Twelve Cities residents).

Social Networks

Over half of New Zealand residents (53%) stated that the group or social network that mattered to them the most was *mostly made up of people who had the same interests, culture or beliefs as them but who did not necessarily live in their area*. Twenty-four percent stated that their social networks were *mostly made up of people who lived in the same area as them* (that is, their local neighbourhood), while 19% stated that *there were no particular groups or networks that they felt part of*. Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to cite social networks based on similar interests (56%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (49%), while those living elsewhere were more likely to cite social networks based on location as mattering most to them (27%, compared with 22% of Twelve Cities' residents).

Neighbourhood Contact

Most New Zealand residents (89%) 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. There were no notable differences in levels of outright contact between Twelve Cities and other residents, 89% of both groups stating they had not experienced negative contact with outright tension.

Most New Zealand residents (86%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had not experienced **some negative contact** with people in their neighbourhood. Thirteen percent stated that they had experienced negative contact of this nature. Twelve Cities residents were slightly more likely to report having experienced *some negative contact* (14%) than those living elsewhere (12%).

Almost all New Zealand residents (96%) stated that, in the last 12 months they had experienced **some positive contact** with people in their neighbourhood. There were no notable differences in the experience of some positive contact between Twelve Cities residents (96%) and those living elsewhere (97%).

Most New Zealand residents (88%) stated that, in the last 12 months, they had experienced **positive contact** with people in their neighbourhood. Twelve Twelve Cities residents were significantly less likely to report having experienced outright positive contact (84%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (92%).

Isolation

Four in five New Zealand residents (82%) reported that, in the last 12 months, they had either *never* (60%) or *rarely* (22%) felt lonely or isolated. Fifteen percent stated they *sometimes* felt isolated, while 2% *always* felt this way. Levels of loneliness/isolation were the same for both Twelve Cities residents and those living elsewhere (82% *never* or *rarely* lonely or isolated).

Trust

Almost seven out of ten New Zealand residents (69%) stated that people can *almost always* (61%) or *always* (8%) be trusted. Just under a quarter (23%) stated that *you usually can't be too careful*, while 7% stated *you almost always can't be too careful*. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly less likely to *almost always* or *always trust people* (67%) than those living elsewhere (70%).

11. Built Environment

Rubbish/Litter Problem In Local Area

Three in five New Zealand residents (61%) stated that rubbish or litter lying about on the streets had *not* been a problem in their local area over the last 12 months while 39% noted that it had been an issue in their area. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to perceive a rubbish/litter problem in their area (44%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (32%).

Pollution Problems In Local Area

Nearly four out of five New Zealand residents (79%) stated that **air pollution** had *not* been an issue in their local area over the last 12 months while 20% stated that it had. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to report that air pollution had been a problem in their local area in the last 12 months (23%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (16%).

Similarly, the greatest share of New Zealand residents (73%) stated that **noise pollution** had *not* been an issue in their local area over the last 12 months, while just over a quarter of residents (26%) stated that it had.. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to perceive a problem with noise pollution in their local area (31%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (21%).

By comparison, just under three-quarters of New Zealand residents (70%) stated that **water pollution** had *not* been an issue in their local area over the last 12 months, this result the same for both Twelve Cities residents and those living elsewhere.

Culturally Rich And Diverse Arts Scene

Over half of New Zealand residents (63%) either *agreed* (43%) or *strongly agreed* (20%) that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene while 10% *disagreed* (9%) or *strongly disagreed* (1%). Twelve Cities' residents were significantly more likely to *agree* or *strongly agree* that their city had a culturally rich and diverse arts scene (70%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (55%).

Pride In City's Look And Feel

Just under three-quarters of New Zealand residents (70%) either *agreed* (50%) or *strongly agreed* (20%) that they felt a sense of pride in the way their city or town looked and felt while one in ten residents *disagreed* (8%) or *strongly disagreed* (2%) with this statement. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly less likely to *agree/strongly agree* that they had pride in their city's look and feel (67%) than those living elsewhere (74%).

The most frequently mentioned reasons for pride in the city's look and feel related to the physical attractiveness of the city as well as the attitudes of its people. Seventeen percent stated that they felt a sense of pride because of the greenness of the city with its beautiful parks and gardens. Fifteen 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 helpful, friendly and welcoming people who lived there. Twelve Cities residents were more likely to cite the greenness of their city/beautiful parks and gardens/lots of garden (19%) than those living elsewhere (14%) while non Twelve Cities residents were more likely to cite cleanliness (18%) and helpfulness/friendliness of the people (17%) than their Twelve Cities counterparts (13% and 10% respectively).

Among those who stated that they had a lack of pride in the way their city looked and felt most frequently attributed this to the unattractiveness of the look of the city. Fifteen percent stated that they did not feel a sense of pride because their city looked dirty and/or there was rubbish everywhere. Eleven percent stated that it was because their city was drab or dowdy and that it needed sprucing up and/or better maintenance, while 9% said their city lacked planning. There were no notable differences in the reason for a lack of pride cited by Twelve Cities residents and those living elsewhere.

Perception Of Impact On City Of Greater Cultural Diversity

Just under half of New Zealand residents (47%) felt that greater cultural diversity made a city or town either a *better* (36%) or a *much better* (11%) place to live. Two in five residents (42%) felt that greater cultural diversity *made no difference* while 8% felt that it made a place a *worse* (7%) or *much worse* (1%) place to live. Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to state that greater cultural diversity made a city or town a *better/much better* place to live (55%) than those living elsewhere in New Zealand (35%)

The most frequently mentioned reason cited for perceiving that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city a *worse* or *much worse* place to live was that migrants/foreigners lacked integration into New Zealand society and/or they didn't mix with others outside their ethnic groups (20%). Seventeen percent stated that there were too many migrants/foreigners and/or too many different cultures.

Twelve Cities residents were more likely to cite a lack of integration of migrants into New Zealand society (23%) than those living elsewhere (13%) while non-Twelve Cities residents were more likely to mention a fear of migrants taking over/taking over shops etc (20%) and perceptions of a loss of New Zealand identity (16%) than their Twelve Cities counterparts (9% and 6% respectively).

The greatest share of those who stated that, overall, greater cultural diversity made their city or town a *better* or *much better* place to live mentioned that diversity was good as it gave a broader perspective and outlook and/or brought new ideas (63%). Forty-four percent stated that it helped them learn about other cultures, stop racism and/or taught tolerance. There were no notable differences in the reasons cited by Twelve Cities' residents and those living elsewhere.

Ease Of Access

Almost all New Zealand residents (96%) felt that **access to local parks or other green spaces** in their local area was *easy* (46%) or *very easy* (50%). There were no notable differences in ease of access to local parks and green spaces between Twelve Cities' residents (95%) and those living elsewhere (97%).

Similarly, almost all New Zealand residents (93%) felt that **access to shopping malls/centres or supermarkets** in their local area was *easy* (54%) or *very easy* (39%). While the share stating it was *easy/very easy* to access shopping malls and supermarkets was similar for Twelve Cities residents (94%) and those living elsewhere (92%), Twelve Cities residents were significantly more likely to rate their access as *very easy* (43%, compared with 35% of those living elsewhere)

Almost all New Zealand residents (90%) felt that **access to a bank or cash machine** in their local area was *easy* (54%) or *very easy* (36%). Nine percent felt it was *difficult* (7%) or *very difficult* (2%). Residents of the Twelve Cities were significantly more likely to describe it as *easy* or *very easy* to access a bank or cash machine (92%) than those living elsewhere (88%).

Four out of five New Zealand residents (82%) felt that **access to education providers** in their local area was *easy* (54%) or *very easy* (28%). By contrast, only 10% rated their access as *difficult* (9%) or *very difficult* (1%). Twelve Cities residents were slightly less likely to describe their access to their preferred education provider as *easy* or *very easy* (80%) than those living elsewhere (83%).

Of the five services/facilities questioned on, New Zealand residents were most likely to report difficulties **accessing public transport facilities** in their local area, only 70% describing access as *easy* (40%) or *very easy* (30%), while 17% described it as *difficult* (12%) or *very difficult* (5%). Twelve Cities residents were significantly more likely to describe their access to public transport facilities as *easy* or *very easy* (83%) than those living elsewhere (55%).

Residents who stated that access to any of the services and facilities above was *difficult* or *very difficult* were asked what access barriers they faced. Over a third of respondents (38%) stated that the services and facilities were not easily accessible by public transport or that public transport was not available. Twenty-one percent stated that they would have to travel a long distance to reach the service or facility, while 19% said the facility or service was not available or that there were only a few located in their area. Residents living outside the Twelve Cities were more likely to mention difficulties accessing public transport (42%) and having a long distance to travel to reach the service/facility (28%) than their Twelve Cities counterparts (33% and 13% respectively).

1. 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 by the Councils of New Zealand's six largest cities – Auckland, Waitakere, North Shore, Manukau, Wellington and Christchurch. 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.

Several indicators were set to measure residents' perceptions of various aspects of living and working in large urban areas. These included:

- health;
- urban/built environment;
- sense of belonging/community cohesion;
- community safety;
- housing;
- education;
- employment and economy;
- democracy/participation in community affairs; and
- demographics.

To measure residents' perceptions of quality of life, a series of survey questions was developed and administered to a random sample of those living in the six largest urban areas. In 2000, each city undertook its own survey. However, the different methodologies, sample sizes and questionnaires used by each city made comparisons of results between cities difficult. Consequently, in 2002, it was decided that the survey should be administered as a single piece of research, incorporating each of the urban areas. This more standardised and cost effective approach proved successful, and was repeated again in 2004.

The Ministry of Social Development released its first Social Report in 2001, a second in 2003, and is now committed to annual updates. The indicators used in the Social Report are closely aligned to outcome areas covered in the Quality Of Life report. As both projects rely on similar data to monitor trends in wellbeing, in 2004, the Ministry became a partner in the Quality Of Life survey.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Methodology

Interviews were conducted via telephone. Key advantages of telephone interviewing for this research included:

- the relative speed of completing the interviews;
- the ability to easily and cost-effectively reach a nation-wide sample of respondents, including those in rural or isolated areas;
- convenience for respondents, allowing interviews to be conducted during the evening or at weekends, to fit around family and work commitments;
- the maximisation of the response rate through robust callback routines (Gravitas and Consumer Link called respondents back up to twelve times over the course of the fieldwork period), thereby minimising non-response bias;
- the physical absence of the interviewer, thereby increasing the willingness of the respondent to answer more personal questions accurately;
- the ability to probe respondents on particular responses and also to allow them to ask questions of the interviewer regarding the interpretation of the questionnaire; and
- the ability to monitor the quality of interviewing, thereby ensuring the appropriateness of the interview process for respondents, and also accuracy of data.

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing

Interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). CATI is recognised as the gold standard in telephone interviewing and offered a number of benefits to the data collection process, including:

- greater consistency, as all interviewers work with the same questionnaire on which routing has been identically programmed (important in ensuring consistency across the two companies conducting the field work);
- minimised error through sophisticated questionnaire design. Computer control of the questionnaire means that the questionnaire design may contain complex routing without placing any additional onus on the interviewer. Also, the computer can be set up to check responses for logic, and flag any 'out of range' responses, or responses which contradict earlier answers, thereby minimising data collection error;
- maximised response rates through telephone number management. Computer control of the telephone numbers sampled means that the interviewer is relieved of the task of organising callbacks or repeating calls to numbers that had no answer. Callback appointments are automatically brought back to the interviewer at the appointed time. 'No answers' are repeatedly called on a random cycle up to twelve times over a number of days to maximise the chance of finding the target respondents at home; and

- strict quality control. Having all interviewing taking place from one central location means that interviewers can be supervised effectively. Interviewers can be monitored by 'listening-in' and 'looking in' from a remote station to ensure that questions are being asked in the right way and responses entered correctly. Also, all interviewing staff can be briefed face-to-face and there is scope to react to any problems or difficulties with interviewing as they take place.

Responsibility For Conducting The Interviews

Given the large number of interviews to be completed, field work was undertaken simultaneously by Gravitas Research and Strategy and Consumer Link. Consumer Link conducted interviews in:

- Rodney District
- North Shore City
- Waitakere City
- Auckland City
- Manukau City
- Hamilton City
- Tauranga City
- Porirua City
- Wellington City
- Lower Hutt City

Gravitas conducted interviews in:

- Christchurch City (including ethnic “booster” sample)
- Dunedin City
- “Rest of New Zealand”

2.2 Sample Size And Selection

In order to ensure a dataset of sufficient size for regional and city analysis by demographic characteristics, 500 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 addition, Christchurch City Council commissioned an additional 300 interviews with Maori, Pacific and Asian residents. This gave a total sample size for the twelve cities/districts of 6300 (the maximum margin of error on a sample size of 6300 is $\pm 1.2\%$ at the 95% confidence interval). *Note: This sample is referred to as “Total Twelve Cities” in the report.*

To meet the needs of the Ministry of Social Development with respect to their Social Report, a further sample of 1,500 interviews were conducted with those living outside the twelve cities/districts (the maximum margin of error on a sample size of 1500 is $\pm 2.5\%$ at the 95% confidence interval). *Note: This sample is referred to as “Rest of New Zealand” in the report.*

This resulted in a total (national) sample size of 7,800 (the maximum margin of error on a sample of 7,800 is $\pm 1.1\%$ at the 95% confidence interval).

Justification For Setting Quotas

While statistically robust individual city samples were required to enable analysis at a city/district level, the results of the whole survey needed to be representative of the population of the Twelve cities/districts and of the New Zealand population as a whole. To achieve this representative sample, quotas were set by gender, age (15-24 years, 25-49 years, 50-64 years, 65 years +), ethnicity (New Zealand European, Maori, Pacific Peoples, Asian/Indian, Other) and ward/local government region within each city/district and within the rest of New Zealand. The setting of these quotas was based on population data from the 2001 Census provided by Statistics New Zealand.

Interviewing in each city/district/rest of New Zealand was deemed complete once all of the quotas were filled. However, in order to complete each of the quotas, the total number of interviews conducted in each city/district slightly exceeded 500. Exact sample sizes by city/district/rest of New Zealand are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Exact Number Of Interviews Completed By City/District/Rest Of New Zealand

	Total Number Of Interviews Completed
Rodney District	524
North Shore City	532
Waitakere City	527
Auckland City	545
Manukau City	535
Hamilton City	516
Tauranga City	519
Porirua City	505
Wellington City	505
Lower Hutt City	501
Christchurch City (<i>including ethnic "booster" sample</i>)	768
Dunedin City	540
Total Twelve Cities	6517
Rest of New Zealand	1554
Total	8071

Rather than deleting interviews where quotas had been exceeded (which raises ethical issues), the data sets have been weighted to reflect the population distribution based on the original sample sizes (500 or 1500). For Christchurch, the results from the ethnic “booster” interviews have been weighted back to reflect the actual ethnic distribution of the Christchurch population 15 years and over.

Obtaining Sample

Sample for the survey was drawn from Telecom New Zealand’s directory of current phone numbers. This process was cost effective in that it ensured only live residential telephone numbers were contacted (as opposed to random digit dialing, or computer-generated numbers where considerable interviewer time can be wasted contacting business or disconnected numbers). Drawing the sample directly from Telecom also ensured that members of the public who had requested to have their telephone numbers kept confidential were not contacted.

Identifying Respondents’ Ward Of Residence

While ward quotas¹ were used to ensure that each city’s sample was distributed in a representative way across the city, previous experience had shown that many respondents were unlikely to be aware of what ward they resided in. To address this, street address information as well as telephone numbers was sourced from Telecom. These addresses were run through a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify which ward they fell into.

2.3 Questionnaire Refinement

Where possible, the questions asked were kept consistent with those asked in previous years. However, a number of refinements were made to the questionnaire used in 2004, including:

- rotating of the order of the sections (health, public transport etc) for each interview to reduce order bias;
- rotating the order in which positive/negative code frames are read out (most positive to most negative; most negative to most positive) to reduce order bias; and
- modifications to questions referring to the concept of “neighbourhood” and “city centre” for those living in provincial/rural areas.

A revised version of the questionnaire was submitted to the Quality of Life team for feedback and approval prior to any live interviewing taking place. A copy of the final questionnaire can be found in Appendix Two.

¹ For the “rest of New Zealand” sample, geographic quotas were based on local government regions

2.4 Interview Pilot Process

In order to ensure that the questionnaire met the objectives of the research, was understandable, relevant and safe for respondents, and could be administered efficiently, a comprehensive pilot of the survey process was undertaken by the Gravitas' interviewing team.

Once revisions to the questionnaire had been approved by the Quality Of Life team, a pilot of 40 interviews was undertaken (this took two evenings to complete). The aim of the pilot was to check:

- the appropriateness of the contact process;
- concerns of potential respondents in taking part in the interview process;
- the questionnaire's ability to yield meaningful data;
- accuracy of programming and comprehensiveness of code frames; and
- the questionnaire length (in line with budget).

With respondents' consent, the pilot interviews were listened into by the Project Director, Field Manager and members of the Quality of Life team to identify commonly misunderstood questions, questions yielding too little meaningful information (that is, a high proportion of don't know responses), and questions where the code-frame was too limited or inappropriate. Recommendations for changes to the pilot questionnaire were made to the Quality Of Life team. No live interviewing took place until the post-pilot questionnaire had been approved.

2.5 Interviewing Process

Households were telephoned at random from the telephone numbers provided. To ensure a random selection of respondents in the household, interviewers asked to speak to the person in the household 15 years or over with the next birthday. If that person was not available, a suitable time was made to re-contact. Each household was contacted up to a maximum of 12 times over the course of the fieldwork period in an attempt to find the selected person available. Only after the 12th unsuccessful call was the household replaced with another. No substitution or re-selection was made within the household. Only one interview was conducted per household.

A strict record was kept of the number of refusals and the reason for each refusal (too busy, concerned about confidentiality, not interested in topic etc). Records were also kept of other reasons as to why interviews could not be completed (language difficulties, hard of hearing etc.). A full field report is provided in Appendix Five.

Live interviewing began on August 9. By November, all interview quotas had been filled with the exception of those aged 15-24 years. Interviewing was suspended from November 8 to December 5 as it was very difficult to get young residents to participate in the survey due to study/examination commitments. Interviewing re-commenced on December 6 and was completed on December 13. All telephone interviewing was completed during each company's standard interviewing hours².

The average interview length was 19 minutes.

Quality Control Measures

Quality control measures applied to the field work are discussed in detail in Appendix Four.

2.6 Response Rate

A range of strategies were used to maximise the response rate. These included:

- use of a multi-cultural interviewing team, allowing interviewers to build rapport with respondents from a range of ethnic groups. Where possible, respondents were able to request to be interviewed by a interviewer from their own ethnic group if they preferred;
- focus in the pilot on assessing the persuasiveness of the introduction in encouraging participation, and the ability of the introduction to adequately address respondent concerns;
- use of a toll-free number for the research agency to enable prospective respondents to check the legitimacy of the survey and/or receive clarification on any issue in relation to the survey prior to taking part;
- having interviewers encourage respondents to make appointments to be re-contacted at a more convenient time;
- ensuring interviewers had adequate knowledge of the background, aims and objectives of the survey so that they could answer respondent questions clearly and concisely as part of the introduction; and
- allowing respondents who had started an interview to "suspend" it and complete it at another time (nominated by the respondent) if they tired or a need arose in the household (e.g. children requiring attention, someone at the door).

As Appendix Five illustrates, the final response rate was 22.4%

This response rate suggests that the data set may be subject to some element of non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs where the characteristics of the non-responding group and/or the responses they would have given are different to those given by respondents who did participate. The extent of non-response bias is dependent on two variables - the level of non-response (as indicated by the response rate) and the difference in characteristics between those who did respond and those who did not respond.

² *Consumer Link - 5.30 to 9 pm Monday to Friday, 11.30 am to 3 pm on Saturdays and 4.30 to 8 pm on Sundays*
Gravitas - 5 to 9 pm Monday to Friday, 4 to 8 pm on Sundays

The difficulty in measuring the extent on non-response bias is that it is not possible to measure how different the non-respondents' responses would have been from those who did participate.

In order to gain some understanding of the nature of the non-response bias evident in a survey data, a comparison was done between the survey sample obtained and 2001 Census data on key demographic variables (see Appendix Six). This comparative analysis suggests that the Quality of Life survey sample may:

- under-represent those living alone, and slightly over-represent those living in a household with four or more people;
- under-represent those who are renting the home they are living in, and consequently over-represent those who own the home they are living in; and
- under-represent those from the lowest income households and with lowest levels of personal income (\$30,000 or less) and over-represent those earning/with a household income of \$70,000 or more.

As noted above, it is not possible to measure the actual extent to which these under- and over-representations have impacted on the validity of the data. However, this possible bias should be kept in mind when using the data set.

2.7 Data Preparation

Backcoding

Once interviewing was complete, all open-ended responses, as well as those entered into "Other" categories were "backcoded". This involved fitting responses into existing categories, and where necessary, creating new categories so that all results had a numeric code (and therefore could be included in the SAS database). The backcoding code-frame was provided to the Quality Of Life team for feedback to ensure that the level of detail of the codes was appropriate.

Data Cleaning

Only minimal 'cleaning' of the data set was required once interviewing is complete. The need for extensive cleaning was minimised through:

- comprehensive pilot testing to ensure that there were no errors in the programming of the questionnaire (for example, incorrect skips/jumps between questions, multiple response questions only allowing for a single response to be entered, insufficient instructions to interviewer regarding probing/providing more information etc.);
- the use of SurveyCraft software for programming the questionnaire. One of the key strengths of SurveyCraft is that interviewers are unable to "skip" questions. The programme will not allow the interviewer to move to a new question without entering a response to the current question. This ensured that there were no missing values in the final data set;
- SurveyCraft software stores all terminated interviews (that is, those which were started but not completed by the respondent) in a file separate from the completed interviews. This ensured that there were no incomplete records in the final data set.

- inclusion of logic checks throughout the survey to ensure that respondent answers made sense in the context of previous answers given. Where an illogical response was entered by the interviewer, the interviewer was alerted and was required to re-check the responses to each of the associated questions with the respondent before continuing; and
- regular “listening in” and “looking in” by the supervisory team. This process identified any errors in interviewers’ data entry of responses and allowed for them to be corrected prior to the compilation of the database.

The data cleaning process conducted once interviewing was complete involved:

- removing all respondent identifiers from the database (telephone numbers etc.);
- manual checking of the dataset to ensure each record was complete;
- sense-checking of the dataset to ensure base sizes for each question were correct; and
- checking of data for each question to ensure responses given were valid (that is, are contained within the options provided).

Weighting

While pre-set interviewing quotas were used to ensure that the final samples for each city were representative of the distribution of the population as a whole, in order to ensure an exact match, the data set was weighted once interviewing was complete. The following weightings have been applied to each data set.

City/District/Rest Of New Zealand Level

Each city/district/rest of New Zealand data set has been weighted so that the distribution of the sample by gender, age, ethnicity³ and ward⁴ exactly matches that of the city/district/rest of New Zealand’s population aged 15 years or over. Note that for Christchurch, the ethnic “booster” sample has been weighted back to reflect the actual ethnic distribution of the city’s 15 years + population.

Twelve Cities Level

The Twelve Cities total data set has been weighted so that the distribution of the sample by gender, age and ethnicity exactly matches that of the combined population of the twelve cities/districts. The distribution of the sample by city has been weighted to reflect the relative population size for each city. For example, with a population of 307,266 aged 15 years +, Auckland city comprises 19% of the population of the twelve cities/districts combined – and therefore comprises 19% of the Twelve Cities total.

³ 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 Region for the “Rest of New Zealand”

By contrast, Porirua city comprises only 2% of the combined population of the twelve cities/districts and therefore comprises only 2% of the Twelve Cities' total. It should be noted that the "rest of New Zealand" sample is NOT included in the Twelve Cities total.

Total New Zealand/National Level

The Total New Zealand data set combined the Twelve Cities data set with the data set for the "rest of New Zealand". However, rather than simply adding these two data sets together, the two have been weighted to reflect the relative shares each comprise of the total New Zealand population aged 15 years or over. So, as the twelve cities/districts account for 54% of the total New Zealand population aged 15 years or over, the Twelve Cities' dataset comprises 54% of the Total New Zealand/national data set.

2.8 Reporting

For each question asked of respondents in the survey, results have been presented by:

- location (city/district/rest of New Zealand, total Twelve Cities, total New Zealand);
- age (15-24 years, 25-49 years, 50-64 years and 65 years +);
- ethnicity (New Zealand European, Maori, Pacific Peoples, Asian/Indian)⁵;
- gender; and
- household income (\$20,000 or less, \$20,001-\$30,000, \$30,001-\$50,000, \$50,001-\$70,000; \$70,001-\$100,000, \$100,001-\$150,000, \$150,001+).

Table 2.2 gives the sample sizes for each demographic group at both the national and Twelve Cities' level. Unless otherwise stated, it should be assumed that these are the sample sizes for each question.

⁵ Respondents identifying other ethnicities have been excluded from this analysis as sample sizes are too small to be statistically reliable (National n=47; Twelve Cities n=58)

Table 2.2: Survey Sample Sizes (n)

	Sample Size	
Location		
Rodney District	500	
North Shore City	500	
Waitakere City	500	
Auckland City	500	
Manukau City	500	
Hamilton City	500	
Tauranga City	500	
Porirua City	500	
Wellington City	500	
Lower Hutt City	500	
Christchurch City	800	
Dunedin City	500	
Rest of New Zealand	1500	
	National (n=7800)	Twelve Cities (n=6300)
Age		
15-24 years	1366	1218
25-49 years	3659	3032
50-64 years	1559	1169
65 years +	1216	881
Ethnicity		
New Zealand European	6404	4810
Maori	919	573
Pacific Peoples	382	485
Asian/Indian	483	621
Gender		
Male	3744	2992
Female	4056	3308

	National <i>(n=7800)</i>	Twelve Cities <i>(n=6300)</i>
Annual Household Income		
\$20,000 or less	1006	678
\$20,001-\$30,000	756	534
\$30,001-\$50,000	1360	1013
\$50,001-\$70,000	1258	965
\$70,001-\$100,000	1116	950
\$100,001-\$150,000	717	690
\$150,001 +	449	453