

*Joint media release from the Councils of North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland, Manukau, Rodney, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Hutt, Porirua, Christchurch and Dunedin.*

## **EMBARGOED UNTIL THE OFFICIAL RELEASE OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT, 1PM, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007**

### **QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT 2007: DUNEDIN MEDIA RELEASE**

Dunedin residents enjoy a high quality of life with strong social connectedness and community resilience, a new report says.

The 2007 Quality of Life report, released by the Metropolitan Sector Group today, provides a comprehensive assessment of the quality of life in 12 New Zealand cities, as part of a multi-council initiative.

The report showed 92% of Dunedin residents rated their quality of life as either good or very good – one of the highest ratings of any city in the country. The average for all 12 cities was 90%.

Dunedin had the highest percentage of residents who rated their satisfaction with life positively, at 91%. In addition, 90% rated themselves as happy or very happy.

Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin said the report showed Dunedin was a great place to live. “Dunedin has a strong contented community. These results prove what people who live here already know: Dunedin offers a fantastic quality of life.”

Highlights from the report for Dunedin included:

- Of the 12 cities, Dunedin had the highest percentage of residents that rated their neighbourhood as safe after dark (87%), while 66% felt the city centre was safe after dark.
- In education, Dunedin had the lowest truancy rate with 2.8% of students absent from school, and saw consistent declines in low attaining school leavers, a decline in the rate of suspensions (4.4%), and the highest attendance level of children attending an early childhood education centre (99%).
- The city had a high degree of community resilience. Residents in Dunedin (88.0%) were less likely to have felt isolated or lonely and were more likely to trust other people (83%). Dunedin residents were more likely to feel they had support from other people available most or all of the time (80%).
- Residents felt positive about increasing lifestyle and cultural diversity (66%).
- Dunedin residents strongly rated their city’s arts scene as culturally rich and diverse (86%).
- Dunedin rated highly on civic pride with 72% of residents expressing a sense of pride in the city.
- City residents were also among the most likely to agree that their council makes decisions in the best interests of their city (55%), more likely to think that the public has influence on council decisions (64%), most likely to

understand how their council makes decisions (46%), and less likely to agree that they wanted more say (41%).

Mr Chin acknowledged that the report identified some challenges with slow population and economic growth for Dunedin, one of the highest rates of serious and fatal road crash injuries, a decline in the number of GPs and housing issues.

“Dunedin has a higher rate of home ownership for low and middle income households and one of the lowest incidences of crowding. However, the average cost of home ownership has increased, the number of rented homes has declined, and we have seen one high median rent increases. We think housing should be made more affordable.”

The Quality of Life project started with six councils in 1999 and has since expanded to 12 territorial local authorities, including: Rodney; North Shore; Waitakere; Auckland; Manukau; Hamilton; Tauranga; Porirua; Hutt; Wellington; Christchurch; and Dunedin.

The project aims to give decision-makers information to help them improve the quality of life in major New Zealand urban areas.

Project sponsor and Dunedin City Council chief executive, Jim Harland, said the report highlighted the need for action to plan for long-term growth, improve access to services and promote economic and environmental sustainability.

For more information, please contact:

Peter Chin, Mayor, Dunedin – Ph (03) 474-3851

Jim Harland, Quality of Life project sponsor (03) 474-3851