

New Zealand's six largest cities have undergone considerable change over the past few decades. Massive population growth and shifts within New Zealand's ethnic composition have resulted in an increase in the diversity of cultures, languages and religions within the six cities. These changes will have profound effects on the characteristics of our largest cities and, at a neighbourhood and individual level, upon people's sense of belonging to, and participation within, their local community.

Communities are groups of people bound together by something held in common - family or whanau, culture, age, gender, religion, political beliefs or locality. It is acknowledged that 'community' is a difficult concept to directly define or measure, as it can hold different meanings for different people. For the purposes of this project, however, 'community' refers primarily to locality, or neighbourhoods.

This chapter explores the extent to which residents of the six largest cities feel involved and included, at local neighbourhood and city level. A sense of belonging and the ability to participate in the wider community are important factors in the quality of life within cities.

### Why this is important...

People are the fundamental component of any city. Communities exist because of people's social nature and enable residents to participate in like activities, interact with and support one another. Local authorities have a responsibility under Section 37k of the Local Government Act to "recognise that different communities exist and they have their own identities and values" and "deliver appropriate facilities and services to communities, that meet their needs, choices and preferences". The Act also recognises the right of communities to determine and meet their own needs. Councils can act as catalyst, co-ordinator and partner to encourage and support wellbeing initiatives through provision of facilities, programmes, services and events. With the changes in urban centres in New Zealand it is important to be aware of the effects on social cohesion.

### What's in this chapter?

Indicators related to citizens' perceptions and the existence of networks have been included as measures of community cohesion. Perceptions were surveyed in 2000 in each of the six cities (see page 118). Indicators are:

- Resident perception of contact with neighbours
- Resident perception of local community strength and support
- Resident perception of diversity in cities
- Level of unpaid work done

### Impact and relationships in other areas of this report

There will be many factors that impact on residents' sense of community. One important factor may be changes in ownership levels of housing and changes to housing stock. For example, the decline in home ownership levels may have impacts on the length of time that people stay within a particular community or area and the investment they make in developing relationships with neighbours and supporting local groups. Household composition and people's living arrangements will also have an effect on participation at community level. For example, families with children may be more inclined to be involved in local initiatives and groups. Other factors to consider include residents' perceptions of their safety in the neighbourhood, perceptions of the immediate urban environment, as well as ability to access information about community events and facilities.

### Key points

Overall, the indicators suggest that residents of the six largest cities generally feel okay about the community in which they live. Most respondents to a survey undertaken in the six cities had some form of positive contact with their neighbours. Over half agreed that their community works together and that people support each other, and many felt that the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles and from a variety of countries made their city a better place in which to live. Furthermore, over one third of those aged 15 years and over had engaged in unpaid or voluntary work for others.



# Contact with Neighbours

## What this is about...

One vital component of community cohesion is the relationship between neighbours. Positive relationships between neighbours, even at a minimal level, encourage community strength and support.

Respondents to a survey conducted in the six largest cities were asked to rate the type of 'positive contact' they had with their neighbours on a five point scale of 'lots of positive contact' to 'no positive contact'.<sup>172</sup>

## What did we find ?

- Overall, about two thirds of respondents to the survey indicated that they had 'some' or 'lots' of 'positive contact' with their neighbours - in particular, residents of North Shore, Wellington and Waitakere Cities.
- It is interesting to note that in Auckland, while one quarter of residents (27%) felt they had lots of positive contact with their neighbours a further 11% felt that they had no positive contact at all.
- Very few respondents to surveys indicated they had 'no' positive contact at all with their neighbours.

TYPE OF CONTACT WITH NEIGHBOURS, BY CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
<b>Lots of positive contact</b> (socialise with neighbours, part of social network)	27	22	28	20	24	20
<b>Some positive contact</b> (stop and chat, tell them when you are going away, asking small favours)	35	42	42	49	44	45
<b>Limited positive contact</b> (give a nod, sometimes say hello)	25	29	26	26	24	27
<b>No positive contact</b>	11	7	5	4	7	8

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Relationships with neighbours can be affected by factors such as length of time spent in a dwelling, accessibility to neighbours, language barriers or perceptions of each other.

172 Respondents were not asked to indicate levels of 'negative' contact with their neighbours.

# Resident Perception of Local Community Strength and Support

## What this is about...

This indicator reflects on whether people feel there is a sense of community where they live. Healthy local communities that support each other and in which residents feel safe and included are more likely to be cohesive. Respondents to a citizens' survey conducted in the six cities were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the community works together and people support each other, on a five point scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.<sup>173</sup>

## What did we find ?

- Just under one half of respondents to all citizens' surveys indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the community works together and people support each other. In Wellington City 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- Results for Manukau showed that over half (51%) of Manukau City respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In particular, a relatively high proportion strongly agreed (14%).
- About one quarter of respondents to all surveys were neutral on the question and a further quarter strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.
- Overall, higher proportions of females tended to strongly agree or agree with the statement than males.

### PERCEPTIONS THAT THE COMMUNITY WORKS TOGETHER AND PEOPLE SUPPORT EACH OTHER, BY CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
Strongly agree	8	14	11	9	13	7
Agree	37	37	36	38	43	36
Neither agree nor disagree	26	23	24	22	28	26
Disagree	22	15	23	22	11	23
Strongly disagree	5	4	4	4	2	5

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Respondents to the surveys were also asked whether they considered that the social network or group that 'matters most' to them was mainly based around where they live (their local neighbourhood) or was based on other factors such as ethnic grouping, interests or beliefs. Approximately one-quarter of respondents in each survey indicated that the group or network that mattered most to them was based around where they live.<sup>174</sup> There was an exception to this pattern, with only 14% of Wellington residents choosing this option. Approximately one in five respondents felt that they were not part of a community.

173 It is possible that the term 'the community' can mean different things to different respondents. Unfortunately these surveys were not able to explore the meaning of community for respondents.

174 It must be noted however that the terms used in the question were somewhat ambiguous and may have held different meanings for respondents. For example, it is impossible to know where people considered the boundaries of the term "where you live" lay. In addition, Waitakere City's survey specifically asked respondents to exclude work and family when answering the question, which was not specified in any other survey.

**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FELT THE SOCIAL NETWORK OR GROUP THAT MATTERS MOST TO THEM WAS MAINLY BASED AROUND WHERE THEY LIVE (2000)**

	%
Auckland (n=501)	24
Manukau (n=511)	28
North Shore (n=504)	25
Waitakere (n=303)	22
Wellington (n=300)	14
Christchurch (n=755)	28

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Residents' surveys also asked respondents to what extent they had felt lonely or isolated in the previous twelve months.<sup>175</sup> About three quarters of respondents to the surveys indicated that they had 'hardly ever' felt lonely or isolated in the previous twelve months and very few indicated they 'always' felt lonely and isolated.<sup>176</sup>

**FREQUENCY OF FEELING LONELY OR ISOLATED IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, BY CITY (2000)**

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
Hardly ever	78	76	81	Not asked	72	78
Sometimes	18	15	16		23	18
Usually	1	2	2		3	2
Always	1	2	0		2	1

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

It appears that residents of the six largest cities generally feel satisfied about the community in which they live. Perceptions that there is community strength and support, together with low levels of feeling socially isolated, link with previous findings that many residents felt they had 'some' or 'lots' of 'positive contact' with their neighbours.

175 Waitakere City did not include this question in their survey.

176 Respondent bias may have occurred here, as those without a telephone (and who could not participate in the telephone surveys) may feel isolated.

# Perceptions of Diversity

## What this is about...

New Zealand is an increasingly multicultural society. At the 1996 Census there were more than 200 separate ethnic identities represented. Attitudes towards changes in the demographic composition of New Zealand cities are an indicator of overall social cohesion or fragmentation in the city.

This indicator provides a measure of how residents feel about this growth in diversity. Respondents to citizens' surveys undertaken in the six largest cities were asked how they felt the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles and from a variety of countries and cultures impacted on their city.

## What did we find ?

- Overall, most respondents to the surveys felt that the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles and from a variety of countries and cultures made their city a better place to live, or were neutral on the matter. In particular, a high proportion of Wellington City citizens felt that diversity made their city a better place to live in.
- A relatively high proportion of respondents to the Wellington City and Auckland City surveys felt that this made their city a 'much better' place to live in (38% and 33% compared with 16% Waitakere City and 17% for North Shore City).
- Very few respondents felt that the increase in diversity made their city a 'worse place' to live in.

### PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY IN EACH CITY (2000)

	Auckland (n=501) %	Manukau (n=511) %	North Shore (n=504) %	Waitakere (n=303) %	Wellington (n=300) %	Christchurch (n=755) %
A much better place to live	33	17	17	16	38	18
A better place to live	36	36	34	33	42	39
Makes no difference	19	37	39	39	17	32
A worse place to live	9	7	8	7	2	10
A much worse place to live	2	1	0	0	1	0

Data Source: Citizens' Surveys

Of course, many factors will inter-relate with and affect citizens' perceptions of changes within the city in which they live. Many citizens will have lived in the city for a considerable portion of their life and many will be newcomers to the city. Citizen's perceptions may also be affected by their ethnic identity, age, and socio-economic circumstance.

# Unpaid Work

## What this is about...

People's willingness to be involved in unpaid work in the community indicates a desire to 'give something back'. It is a reflection of people's belief that they have something worthwhile to contribute. This involvement contributes to community cohesion and to people's sense of wellbeing.

This indicator outlines the percentage of residents aged over fifteen who engaged in one or more of a range of unpaid activities (in a different household than their own) in the week preceding the 1996 Census.<sup>177</sup> It indicates levels of community involvement within each city.

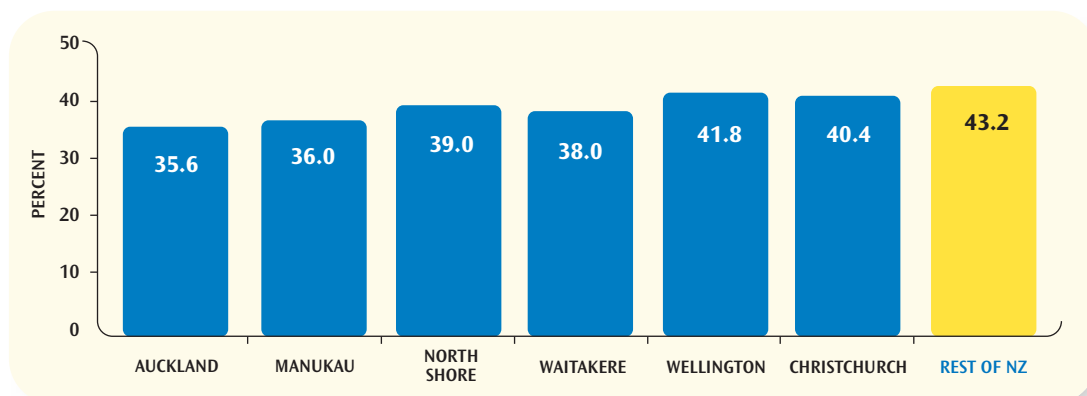
The categories of unpaid activity were:

- caring for children not living in the same household as the caregiver
- household work such as cooking, repairs, gardening, or caring for the elderly
- training and coaching
- attending meetings, such as for a group, church or marae
- fundraising.

## What did we find ?

- Over a third of the population aged 15 years and over within the six largest cities had engaged in unpaid work, ranging from 35.6% in Auckland City to 41.8% in Wellington City. However, levels of volunteerism across the six cities tend to be below the level for the rest of New Zealand (43.2%).
- The proportion of residents who had engaged in voluntary work was slightly lower within the four Auckland cities compared to Wellington City, Christchurch City and the rest of New Zealand.

PERCENT OF POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER INVOLVED IN UNPAID ACTIVITY, BY CITY (1996)



Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

Very similar patterns emerged across the six cities with regard to the type of unpaid work people had engaged in. With the exception of those living in Waitakere City, over one third of those who had engaged in unpaid work had attended a meeting (from 36.8% in North Shore City to 42.6% in Wellington). The proportion of residents in the six cities who had done this was lower, however, than the proportion for the rest of New Zealand, at 44.5%

Over a third of residents who had engaged in unpaid work had cared for children not living in the same household (this was the most common type of unpaid work among Waitakere City residents (39.1%)).

177 People could indicate more than one activity in which they had engaged.

### TYPE OF UNPAID WORK DONE, BY CITY (1996)

	Cared for children not living in same household %	Household work or cared for elderly, ill or disabled person %	Training, coaching, teaching %	Attended committee meeting for group, church or marae %	Fundraising, selling for group, church or marae %	Other unpaid work %
<b>Auckland</b>	34.8	34.8	30.0	37.6	14.3	13.1
<b>Manukau</b>	37.5	35.3	26.7	37.8	17.2	12.7
<b>North Shore</b>	35.6	31.9	30.8	36.8	15.6	12.2
<b>Waitakere</b>	39.1	34.7	29.0	35.3	15.0	12.7
<b>Wellington</b>	32.6	32.6	32.7	42.6	16.2	13.5
<b>Christchurch</b>	36.1	33.6	29.3	38.9	14.6	12.8
<b>Rest of NZ</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>13.8</b>

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

Percentages do not add up to 100% as residents could have engaged in more than one activity.

In all six cities, the highest proportion of those involved in unpaid work were women - from 55.0% in Wellington to 56.1% for North Shore and Manukau. Approximately 44% of those who had engaged in unpaid work were men, in all cities and for the rest of New Zealand. This may be reflective of women's employment levels and of social expectations of women. In addition, a clear pattern emerged of a difference in the types of activities in which men and women had engaged. For example, across all cities, higher proportions of women were involved in childcare and fundraising activities, while higher proportions of men were involved in household work, cooking and repairs category.

People's willingness to give time for voluntary activity ties in with other indicators of community cohesion such as social networks and neighbourhood interaction. It is one factor that is likely to increase a sense of belonging within a community. Higher levels of involvement with other people also have links to increased health and wellbeing.