

2004 Survey Highlights

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the February 2004 Residents' Satisfaction Survey and the Council's activities related to the survey's topics.

The survey results are once again positive and reflect well on the Creative Wellington - Innovation Capital vision. The Council will be using these results to ensure our activities continue to benefit the community.

The following sections summarise the main findings of each part of the survey.

Context for Interpreting Results

During with the period over which this research was conducted (February and March 2004), three things occurred which may have had an impact on the results from this survey.

1. Unseasonably bad weather was experienced, which led to widespread flooding and damage in the lower North Island
2. The International Arts Festival took place
3. There was media coverage of race issues, some related to events in Christchurch, some related to the Treaty of Waitangi (foreshore ownership) and Maori race relations issues (National Party policy).

The Residents' Satisfaction Survey is an independent telephone survey carried out by AC Nielsen every quarter to determine how satisfied Wellingtonians are with aspects of their city. The latest survey was conducted in two parts and canvassed 1500 people from a representative sample of the Wellington population (determined through a quota based on the 2001 Census). Interviews were conducted between 19 February and 28 March. The margin of error with a sample group of 750 people is $\pm 3.58\%$.¹

City-Wide Overview/City Economy

The fact that Wellington is small, compact, and easy to get around remains the main reason given by residents for Wellington being a good place to live (36%).

Work and economic reasons are the most commonly cited reasons for choosing to live in Wellington, with proximity to family and friends, and having always lived here being cited by about one-in-five residents.

Quality of Life is Considered Good

Nine out of ten Wellington residents indicated that they consider the overall quality of life as extremely good (41%) or good (54%).

Transport Main Challenge Facing Wellington

As in 2003, transport related issues are seen as the biggest challenge facing Wellington over the next 3 years. While traffic congestion is the most commonly cited challenge, other transport issues such as improving public transport, developing the western corridor/improving motorway access to the city, and roading/footpath improvements are commonly cited challenges.

Built Environment

Residents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about various aspects of the built environment.

- Different suburbs and communities in Wellington means there is a good variety of places to live in (96% agree)
- Wellington is a great place to live (95% agree)
- There is a good variety of leisure activities and opportunities to socialise in Wellington (94% agree)
- Historic buildings contribute to the unique character of Wellington (90%)
- The design and layout of Wellington is in keeping with the character of the harbour and the hills (86% agree)
- There are a variety of opportunities and places to work in Wellington in your occupation, or for someone with your experience and qualifications (80% agree).

While there is strong agreement that Wellington is a great place to live, with a good variety of places to live, and a good variety of leisure activities, residents are less positive about the variety of work opportunities.

Attractiveness of City Centre versus Suburban Centres

While almost nine out of ten residents agree the city centre is lively and attractive, they are less likely to agree (six out of ten) their local suburban centre is attractive.

Frequency of Visiting the Waterfront

A total of 96% of residents have visited the waterfront in the last 12 months. On average, 70% of residents visit the waterfront at least once a month.

These results are similar to February 2003.

Lambton residents appear to be more frequent visitors, with 49% indicating they visit the waterfront at least once a week, compared with 31% on average.

Older residents (60 or more years of age) are less frequent visitors (11% not having visited the waterfront at all in the last 12 months (compared with 4% on average).

Wellington an Attractive Place to Visit

As was the case last year almost eight out of ten (78%) of all New Zealanders agree that Wellington is an attractive place to visit. However, Aucklanders are less likely to agree this is the case (71%).

Arts and Culture

A large majority of Wellingtonians see their city as a cultural centre, and the the gap between how they view the cultural richness of their city, and how all New Zealanders see it, is steadily closing.

Arts Capital of New Zealand

Eight out of ten Wellington residents (78%), and almost two thirds (64%) of all New Zealanders, agree Wellington is the Arts Capital of New Zealand.

While the proportion of Wellington residents who agree Wellington is the Arts Capital of New Zealand remains similar, the proportion of all New Zealanders who agree with this statement has increased significantly in 2004 compared with earlier years (54% in February 2003 and 56% in February 2002).

Wellington Arts Scene

Nine out of ten (91%) residents, and just over three quarters (77%) of all New Zealanders agree Wellington has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene.

While the proportion of Wellington residents who agree that Wellington has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene remains similar, the proportion of all New Zealanders who agree has increased significantly in 2004 compared to earlier years (71% in February 2003 and 73% in February 2002).

Increased Involvement with Arts Related Events

The most common arts-related activity that residents have been involved in as either a spectator or performer remains movies, with 86% having watched one in the last year. More than half have been involved with music (61%) and visual arts (56%), while just less than half (48%) have been involved with drama.

Overall, the proportion of residents involved in one or more arts related activity has continued to grow (from 76% in February 2002 to 82% this year). Increases in the proportion of residents who have been involved as a spectator or performer in; music, visual arts, drama, dance, crafts and language activities have contributed to this result. Attendance at International Arts Festival events may also have contributed..

Attendance of Museums and Galleries

Three quarters (74%) of residents indicated they have attended an arts event or exhibition at Te Papa during the past 12 months. Fewer residents indicated they have attended an arts event or exhibition at other venues asked about, in the last 12 months; City Gallery (39%), Museum of Wellington City and Sea (31%) and the Wellington Convention Centre (26%).

While about one in five residents (18%) indicated they have attended an arts event or exhibition at CapitalE in the last 12 months, one in three (32%) of those with a child less than 14 years of age have visited CapitalE in the last 12 months.

The proportion of residents attending events or exhibitions at Te Papa over the last 12 months has continued to grow, climbing from 54% in February 2002 to 74% this year. The success of the Lord of the Rings exhibition may have contributed to this year's result.

Similarly, the proportion of residents that have been to exhibitions at the Museum of Wellington City and Sea in the last 12 months has grown steadily from 21% in February 2002 to 31% this year.

Attendance of Theatre Productions or Venues

Almost seven out of ten residents (68%) indicated they had attended one or more theatre production or venue in the last 12 months. The St James is the venue most commonly attended (50%), followed by Circa (36%), the Opera House (34%), and Downstage Theatre (28%).

The proportion indicating they have attended these venues in the last 12 months is similar to February 2003.

Art in Public Spaces

Just over nine out of ten residents agree that art in public spaces enriches the built and natural environment of Wellington.

Around six in ten agree that the increased number of Maori-influenced artworks in Wellington makes the city's art more interesting (61%), enhances the city's environment (60%) and builds awareness of the city's cultural heritage (63%).

The proportion of residents who agree that Maori-influenced artworks enhance the city's environment, and the proportion who agree that Maori-influenced artworks build awareness of the city's cultural heritage, have both remained static over the last 3 years. The proportion who agree Maori-influenced artworks in Wellington makes the city's art more interesting has declined from 67% in February 2002 to 61% this year.

Community Health and Safety

Feelings of Safety

Almost all residents feel very safe or reasonably safe in their homes, neighbourhoods and in the central city during the day.

As expected, safety continues to be a more prevalent issue in the central city at night. Just over a quarter of Wellingtonians (25%) feel unsafe in the central city at night, with this feeling being more prevalent among those who are retired (46%), those 60+ years of age (39%), and Asian people (39%).

Compared with February 2003, there has been a small decline in the proportion of Wellingtonians who feel unsafe in the central city at night (from 31% in February 2003 to 25% this year). There has been a decline in the proportion of residents who feel very safe in their neighbourhood at night, from 53% in February 2003 to 43% this year.

The Cuba Street and Manners Mall areas continue to be areas where safety concerns seem heightened. As we found in February 2003, the main reasons for feeling unsafe in key areas of the Central City relate to unpleasant, threatening people, the presence of groups of youths and the presence of intoxicated or drugged people.

When asked if Council safety initiatives such as Walkwise, the home safe taxi voucher scheme and safety audits made them feel more or less safe, six in ten residents (59%) indicated these schemes made them feel a little or much safer. These schemes appear to have an impact on the feelings of youth in particular, with 70% of those 15-24 years of age saying these schemes make them feel a little or much safer.

Community Health

Three quarters of residents (74%) indicated that people with different lifestyles and cultures and from different countries make Wellington a better place to live. There is an indication that these attitudes are slightly less positive than they were two years ago (when 78% indicated people with different lifestyles or cultures make Wellington a better place to live).

As in previous years, seven in ten (73%) agree that the community works together and people support each other.

Three quarters (75%) of residents indicated they have had some or lots of positive contact with people in their neighbourhood, a similar result to previous years.

Those living in Lambton ward appear to have less positive contact with their neighbours than other wards (30% having only "limited" contact with people in their neighbourhood compared with 21% on average), while those living in Western ward appear to have more positive contact with their neighbours than other wards (50% having "some" positive contact compared with 40% on average).

Community Resources

Eight out of ten residents (82%) are satisfied with the current levels of access to community resources and public services in Wellington (e.g. branch libraries, housing, community centres and youth projects). This is a similar result to earlier years.

Public Toilets

About six in ten residents are satisfied with the availability of public toilets in Wellington (59%) and with the standard of public toilets (58%). While the proportion satisfied with availability has remained steady over the last 3 years, the proportion satisfied with the standard has declined steadily from 67% satisfied in February 2002.

Emergency Preparation

Almost all residents (95%) are aware that an earthquake could happen in Wellington. Other types of emergency situations are less well known, with 37% thinking a flood could occur, 27% a severe storm, 21% a tsunami and 19% a fire.

The unseasonably bad weather experienced during February/March has undoubtedly had an impact on perceptions of the types of emergencies that could occur. Compared with February 2003, there have been significant increases in the proportions of residents thinking flooding (from 14% to 37%), severe storms (from 13% to 27%) and landslides (from 3% to 10%) could occur in Wellington. Awareness of other types of emergencies is unchanged compared with last year.

The proportion of residents indicating they have an emergency kit where they live continues to increase, having risen steadily from 40% in February 2002 to 45% this year.

When asked which, if any, of 13 different things they had in their emergency kit, eight out of ten or more indicated they had; an emergency light (86%), canned food (85%), a first aid kit (84%) and a can opener (80%).

In earlier years, residents were asked if they had bottled water in their emergency kit. In February 2003, 83% indicated this was so. This year they were asked if they had 10 litres of bottled water per person in the emergency kit, 58% indicated they did.

While almost all residents indicated they know what to do in an earthquake (97%) and in a fire (96%), fewer indicated they know what to do in a flood (64%), a tsunami (54%) or a chemical spill (41%). Youth in particular appear less confident they know what to do in a flood (52%) or a tsunami (32%).

Residents were asked which, if any, of seven things they had done in preparation for an emergency. Almost nine out of ten (87%) indicated they had done one or more of these things.

- 59% indicated they have completed a first aid course – youth (15-24 years of age) and older residents (60+ years of age) are less likely than average to indicate they have done this (48% and 47% respectively)
- 48% indicated they have discussed ways to get in touch with other family members when an emergency occurs - those 25-39 years of age are less likely than average to indicate they have done this (40%)
- 40% indicated they know where their nearest Civil Defence Centre is – youth (29%), residents of Western ward (29%) and young couple with no children (25%) are less likely than average to indicate they know this

- 32% indicated they have made plans for reuniting family members when an emergency occurs – 54% of those with a child 5-13 years of age indicated they have done this
- 27% indicated they have established a meeting place in the event their house becomes unusable or if family members are separated when an emergency occurs – residents of Northern ward (40%) and those with children 5-13 years of age (43%) are more likely than average to indicate they have done this
- 44% of those with children in their household indicated they have arranged for authorised people to collect children from school, and provided the school with a list of these people for when an emergency occurs.

Awareness and Satisfaction with Council Role in Emergency Planning

Seven in ten (72%) indicated they were aware that there is a Wellington City Council department responsible for emergency management. This is a similar result to previous years.

About half (49%) are satisfied with the job Wellington City Council is doing concerning preparation for disasters, compared with only 11% dissatisfied. Older residents (60 or more years of age) are more likely than average to be satisfied (60%), while those 25-39 years of age are less likely than average to be satisfied (40%).

Recreation and Leisure

A Reduced Amount of Recreation or Bad Weather?

Overall, a number of recreational facilities were used by a slightly reduced proportion of Wellingtonians in the past year compared with February 2003, including:

- The Zoo (from 48% to 44%)
- The Botanic Gardens (from 81% to 74%)
- Children's playgrounds (from 88% of those with children under 13 years to 79% this year)
- Community centres and halls (from 26% to 18%)
- Council skating areas (from 10% to 5%).

The poor weather over the summer period will certainly have contributed to, if not caused, these declines in usage.

Also likely to have been caused to an extent by the weather, fewer Wellingtonians indicated this year that they exercised for at least 2.5 hours per week (70% compared with 80% last year).

Recreational opportunities rated positively

As with previous measures, all recreational facilities provided by Council were rated as 'good' or 'very good' by the great majority of users. Wellington was seen to offer a wide range of recreational activities.

Swimming Pools

Over half of Wellington residents (54%) have used a Council pool in the past 12 months. Usage is higher among females and among those with children under 14 years, and is lower among residents aged 60 years or over, just 29% of who have used a pool in the past 12 months.

The barriers to using the pools among those who do not use them are not barriers under the direct influence of Council. They include a lack of interest in pool activities, a lack of time and an inability or lack of desire to swim, as opposed to issues such as cost or accessibility.

The swimming pools in Wellington are rated highly by those who use them.

This year, there appears to be a decline in use of the Regional Aquatic Centre and a corresponding increase in use of other pools, Karori in particular. From the base of swimming pool users, 48% had visited the Aquatic Centre in the past 12 months (compared with 58% in 2003). Use of Karori had increased from 14% of the base of swimming pool users in 2003 to 27% this year.

This result could be considered a positive one, given the pressure on the Aquatic Centre from competitive sports, and given also the refurbishing of the Karori Pool.

Recreation Centres

Use of Council recreational centres is similar to 2003, with 16% having used one in the past 12 months. Usage is particularly high in the Onslow ward (23%) and is also higher among those with children under 16 years (31%). Usage is particularly low in the Lambton and Southern wards (8%).

While base numbers are small, it would appear that, while Kilbirnie Recreation Centre remains the most used centre, there has been a slight decline in the use of this centre compared with 2003, while Nairnville and Karori have both seen slight increases in use.

Users of these centres are happy with quality and with the range of opportunities the centres offer.

Community Halls and Centres

This year, there has been a slight decline in use of community halls or centres. Johnsonville in particular is the most popular centre, used in the past 12 months by nearly four in ten of the base of community centre users. Usage is higher among the older population and among those with pre-school children.

Open Spaces

Four in ten residents claim to use Wellington's open spaces (parks, coastline, harbour, Town Belt and Outer Green Belt) at least once a week and three-quarters of residents claim to use these spaces once a month or more often. Frequent users are more common among Southern and Western residents, while infrequent use is more common among the elderly and those living in Northern ward.

There is general agreement that our open spaces are well-maintained (87% agree) and are clean and free of litter (77%).

Resources and Waste

Stormwater

This year, not surprisingly given the storms that hit Wellington prior to and during this research, there is less satisfaction expressed with the stormwater collection service; from 68% satisfied in 2003 to 56% satisfied in 2004. Satisfaction was lowest in the Onslow ward (45%).

Waste Reduction

This year has seen the introduction of the plastic recycling bags for kerbside recycling. Residents were asked if they had "used plastic recycling bags" to try and reduce the amount of waste from their homes.

A quarter of residents surveyed indicated that they had used "plastic recycling bags", with use being higher among both younger and older residents (35% of 15-24 year olds had used these bags and 31% of those 60+ years of age). Use is also higher in the Onslow ward (33%). However, a total of 5000 Council-provided recycling bags have actually been sold in the CBD, according to council data. Rubbish collectors report that they have picked up a couple of dozen recycling bags in the suburbs, but several thousand in the CBD.

Our interpretation of this result is that some participants in this survey may have been thinking about re-using/re-cycling plastic bags in general when responding (for example by re-using supermarket plastic carry bags). For the next survey, we recommend providing a tighter definition of these bags to ensure people are answering on the basis of their use of the Council-provided bags for kerbside recycling.

There has also been an increase in the use of green kerbside recycling bins, indicating almost universal usage (nine in every 10 households).

The great majority of those using recycling bins or bags indicated they put these out every week. These findings confirm the fact that kerbside recycling is a behaviour that is entrenched in most Wellington homes.

Transport and Traffic

As reported earlier, transport-related issues spring spontaneously to the minds of many Wellingtonians when asked to identify the challenges facing our city.

Responses to specific questions about transport and traffic illustrate the emergence of some positive trends:

- The proportion rating Wellington positively as a city that is easy to walk around has increased to be 95%
- Use of buses for travelling into the city weekdays appears to be slowly increasing, from 18% in 1999 to 27% in 2004.

At the same time, the proportion describing it as easy to get around the city as a whole has decreased slightly to be 69% (from 76% last year). Also decreased slightly is the 65% expressing satisfaction with the way the street systems work to help people drive around the city, down from 69% in 2003. From responses to other traffic-related questions, it would appear that perceptions of peak traffic volumes may be contributing to this, with over a third of residents indicating that peak traffic volumes were unacceptable. It is likely that contributing also to this result were the significant road works taking place in central Wellington in recent months.

Parking

The transport and traffic issue that generated most negative response is parking. Residents are polarised as to whether or not inner city parking is adequate for shopping or carrying out business, with 39% believing it to be adequate and 46% believing it to be inadequate. A perception that it was inadequate is more commonly held by female residents (51%).

Democratic process

There has been a slight reduction in the proportion of residents who say they are dissatisfied with the way Council involves people in decision-making (20% dissatisfied this year, compared with 26% last year).

However, as in past measures there is a sizable minority (37%) would still like to see Council consult them more.