



Commentary on Highlights From Survey of Residents– February 2005

Wellington City Council

March 2005

Introduction

This written summary is intended to highlight the main findings of the Resident Satisfaction Survey carried out in February 2005.

It supplements the graphical report that illustrates the results for February 2005 and compares in some cases these results to those of earlier measures.

Throughout this written summary, we have commented on some differences in the results when comparing across demographic groups. The comparisons we have included have been limited to those we consider potentially useful and meaningful, rather than pointing out all differences simply because they are statistically significant. If there is a particular area that the reader would like to investigate further, we suggest you look at the detailed tables included in the graphical report.

This report has been structured according to the nine key achievement areas and according to outcome areas within each achievement area.

We have also included commentary at times to encourage the reader to consider what might have influenced the results achieved, particularly those that have changed significantly since February 2004.

Built Environment

Livable City

The majority of Wellington residents believe Wellington is a great place to live (96%). They feel that it offers a variety of places to live (95%), work (79%) and play (94%). This has consistently been the case over the past four years of measurement.

These attitudes are held consistently across all demographic groups, with the following slight variations:

- A slightly less enthusiastic attitude among young Wellingtonians that Wellington offers a good variety of places to live and a good variety of leisure activities
- A slightly higher level of disagreement among people aged 40-59 years (21%), those with pre-school children (24%), and those who describe their occupation as technical or skilled (25%), that there is a variety of opportunities and places to work in Wellington
- As income levels increase, enthusiasm for Wellington in terms of offering a good variety of leisure activities increases.

Network City

Wellington is rated very positively on being a pedestrian-friendly city, with 92% saying it is easy to walk around the city.

While the majority also believe it is at least 'quite easy' to get around the city as a whole (70%), there is a lower level of satisfaction with how the street systems work to help you to drive around the city (65% satisfied). It is noteworthy that there is a significant decline in the proportion who purport to be '**very** satisfied' in this regard. This may be attributable to the considerable level of major roadworks around the city this year.

A slight variation is noted among the following group:

- Getting around the city as a whole is difficult for 24% of those with pre-school children.

Compact City

Nine in ten Wellingtonians agree that the city centre is lively and attractive. This slightly exceeds the target set in the Annual Plan of 85%. Compared with 2004, there has been a significant increase in the proportion who **strongly agree** with this statement, undoubtedly reflecting the large array of events and activities held in recent months.

Attitudes to local suburban centres are not so positive, with just six in ten describing their local suburban area as attractive. This falls below the Annual Plan Target of 75%, but is consistent with 2004.

Residents of Lambton Ward are more positive about the attractiveness of their local area (71%), while Onslow/Western residents are less positive (46%).

Memorable City

Heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects are felt to contribute to the city's unique character by 93% of Wellingtonians, while a slightly lower percentage (86%) feel these landmarks and features contribute to their **local community's** unique character.

Positive sentiments about the contribution to local communities of heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects appear stronger among residents in the Lambton, Southern and Onslow/Western wards.

Lambton Harbour has been visited in the past 12 months by 95% of Wellington residents, with 69% visiting this area at least monthly. These results are close to the Annual Plan Targets set (Visited: 96%; Monthly: 75%).

The groups of Wellingtonians who appear to be using the Waterfront more frequently are those living in the Lambton Ward and young couples without children, while there is slightly less usage among those aged over 60 years.

Across New Zealand, eight in ten people agree that Wellington is an attractive place to visit. This has been consistent over the past three years. While at least three quarters of those in most demographic groups hold this opinion, there is a slightly higher level of disagreement among New Zealanders aged under 35 years (22% disagree) and those in blue-collar occupations (24% disagree).

Beautiful City

The majority of Wellingtonians (84%) believe that the design and layout of Wellington is in keeping with the character of the harbour and the hills.

Community Health and Safety

Feelings of Safety

Wellingtonians generally feel very safe during the day in both the centre and neighbourhoods of our city, and this has been consistent over the past three years.

While the majority (92%) also feel at least 'reasonably safe' in their neighbourhoods at night, there has been a trend downward, evident over the past three measures, in the proportion who claim to feel 'very safe' in this situation (from 53% in 2003 to 44% in 2004 to 39% this year). There are no real variations in this result when looked at by ward; the greatest variation relates to income level where 22% of those with an income of less than \$20,000 indicate they feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods at night.

At the same time, there has also been a decline in the proportion who claim to feel at least reasonably safe in the central city at night, with 69% feeling at least reasonably safe compared with 74% last year.

Just under a third of residents (31%) feel unsafe or somewhat unsafe in this circumstance. Those more likely to feel unsafe are females more so than males (37% of females and 26% of males), those aged sixty years or over (53%) and those on household incomes of less than \$20,000 (53%).

When asked if Council safety initiatives such as Walkwise, the HomeSafe taxi voucher scheme and Safety Audits made them feel more or less safe, half of residents (49%) indicate these schemes make them feel a little or much safer. This is less of an impact on feelings of safety compared with last year, where the corresponding figure was 59%. Council could look at whether these initiatives have the same level of visibility and promotion as last year to help determine whether this decline is attributable to awareness and visibility or to perceived effectiveness. As was the case in 2004, these schemes appear to have a slightly more beneficial impact on the feelings of safety among younger people than older people.

Cultural Diversity

Over three quarters of Wellingtonians believe that the increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures and from different countries makes Wellington a better place to live.

Those living in the Lambton Ward are particularly positive about the influence of cultural diversity.

Participation

Similar to 2004, nearly seven in ten believe the community works together and people support each other. Over three quarters indicate they have at least some positive contact with people in their neighbourhoods.

There is little variation in the responses given to these questions across wards. The main variations occur in relation to:

- **Lifecycle stage:** people living on their own are less likely to think the community works together and are also less likely to have lots of positive contact with people in the neighbourhood. Those with pre-school and school-age children are most likely to say they have lots of positive contact with people in their neighbourhood
- **Age:** Nearly four in ten people under the age of 25 years claim to have no or limited positive contact with people in their neighbourhood. This is understandable, given that our young people are more likely to socialise in the central city. To obtain a picture of whether there is a group of young people feeling isolated in their communities, this result needs to be looked at in the context of feelings of loneliness.

Access to Resources

Eight in ten are satisfied with the current levels of access to community resources and public services in Wellington. A slightly higher level of dissatisfaction exists among those on low household incomes (less than \$20,000), where 13% express dissatisfaction with access.

Safeguarding Communities

This year, the survey was conducted very soon after a strong earthquake was felt in the Wellington region, and after the Tsunami in Asia.

This undoubtedly contributed to a significant increase in the proportion that claims to have an emergency kit where they live, from 45% last year to 56% this year. Encouragingly, this result has been trending upwards since 2002. These kits generally contain at least lighting, food, a first aid kit and a can opener. Six in ten claim to store the recommended amount of 10 litres of bottled water per person. In total, 8% of households have kits that contain all the items recommended, as was the case in 2004.

The group least likely to have an emergency kit are young couples without children (39% have a kit). There is also a relationship between income level and preparedness, with 44% of those with incomes of less than \$20,000 having a kit, rising to 62% of those with incomes of more than \$100,000.

Health and Safety

Over the past four years, there has been a decline in the levels of satisfaction Wellingtonians express with both the availability (51% satisfied) and standard (50% satisfied) of public toilets in Wellington. These results both fall below the Annual Plan Targets.

It is noteworthy that dissatisfaction with availability is not related to a decreasing number of toilets actually being available. Therefore, it is possible that more residents want toilets in areas where there are currently none or not enough. It is also possible that availability relates to hours of opening. In the WCC Quarterly Report October-December 2004, it was noted that there was an increase in complaints in relation to some public toilets not being opened at their scheduled times.

There is very little variation by ward in terms of the proportions expressing dissatisfaction with the availability of public toilets. There is also relatively little variation across demographic groups, with perhaps slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction among those under 40 years.

There is clearly a trend in satisfaction decreasing with the standard of public toilets in Wellington, from 67% satisfied in 2002 down to 50% this year.

Further investigation maybe required to fully understand the reasons for this trend. The terms “standard” and “availability” are subjective and will be interpreted in slightly different ways by respondents.

Our view would be that “standard of public toilet” includes aspects such as:

- Cleanliness
- Safety
- Facilities provided
- Ventilation (odours)

Also that “availability of public toilet” includes aspects such as:

- Number
- Location
- Opening hours
- Working versus not working

Again, there is little variation in results across wards, but there are higher levels of dissatisfaction expressed by females than males, by residents aged less than 25 years and by Maori residents.

Culture and Arts

Arts and Cultural Capital

Three quarters of Wellington residents (76%), and 59% of all New Zealanders, agree Wellington is the arts capital of New Zealand.

Although still high, there is an indication of a slight downward trend in the proportion of Wellington residents agreeing that Wellington is the arts capital, from 84% in 2002 to 76% this year.

Among the New Zealand population, the proportion considering that Wellington is the arts capital has also declined slightly from 64% to 59%. However, considering that the New Zealand International Arts Festival was held last year, this decline is not as high as might be expected.

Art in Public Spaces

The majority of Wellingtonians (87%) concur that art in public spaces enriches the built and natural environment of our city.

Maori Art

While residents are still generally positive about the positive influence of Maori-influenced artworks in our city, the level is lower than that for art in public spaces overall. The proportion of residents agreeing that the increased number of Maori-influenced artworks in Wellington makes the city's art more interesting (59%), enhances the city's environment (56%) and builds awareness of the city's cultural heritage (60%) is consistent with previous years, although perhaps showing a slight downward movement.

Among Maori residents, there is a higher level of agreement that Maori-influenced artworks contribute positively in each of these three ways.

Diversity of Arts

Nine out of ten residents, and 81% of all New Zealanders, agree Wellington has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene.

The proportion of all New Zealanders who agree with this statement has increased consistently from 71% in 2002 to 81% this year. This result indicates that an association between Wellington and the arts is continuing to gain traction nationally.

Quality of Life

Over three quarters (77%) of residents have been involved in two or more arts pursuits in the past 12 months. This is a slight decline from 82% in last year's survey, although at the time of last year's survey the premier of Return of the King was happening, as was the Arts Festival. The most popular pursuits remain movies, music and visual arts.

Over eight in ten residents (82%) attended an arts event or exhibition at one or more of a range of venues in Wellington during the past 12 months.

There has been a slight but consistent trend increase in the proportion that has visited the Museum of City and Sea, from 21% in 2002 to 32% this year. This particular venue appears to be attracting an older clientele (46% of those aged 60 years and over have visited).

The New Zealand Cricket Museum, included in the survey for the first time, was visited by 4% of residents.

Two thirds (67%) of residents had attended a Taki Rua, Downstage, Bats, Circa, Soundings Theatre, St James or Opera House production or a New Zealand Symphony Orchestra performance in Wellington in the past 12 months. This is slightly lower than the Annual Plan Target of 75%, but similar to the levels obtained in previous measures.

A New Zealand Symphony Orchestra performance in Wellington, included in the survey for the first time this year, was attended by 20% of residents, increasing in popularity among those over 40 years of age.

City Economy Premier Centre

This year, there has been a slight decline in the proportion that indicates free weekend parking makes it more likely they will come into the central city for reasons other than work, from 64% to 56%. This result meets the target set for this year.

Supportive Population

As was the case in 2004, a third of Wellington residents claim that the main reason they choose to live in Wellington relates to the economy or job market here. As would be expected, this increases among the working age population and among those on higher incomes in professional and managerial occupations.

As in 2004, almost all Wellingtonians (96%) consider their overall quality of life is extremely good (35%) or good (61%), although this year there is a slight decline in the proportion rating it as extremely good (from 41% to 35%).

There is a positive relationship between perceptions of quality of life and household income, with low income households (less than \$20,000 per annum) being less likely to indicate their quality of life is extremely good (18%) and nearly half (48%) of those in high income households (more than \$100,000 per annum) rating their quality of life in this manner.

Natural Environment

Open Space Recreation

Nearly three quarters of Wellingtonians agree that our open spaces are clean and free from litter, similar to previous years.

More than nine in ten residents have used Wellington's open spaces in the past 12 months, and four in ten have used these open spaces at least once a week. Weekly use is less common among Northern residents (26%).

While 77% have visited the Botanic Gardens in the past 12 months, this falls slightly below the target of 85%. In particular, those aged 60 years and over are less likely to have visited (67%), while use is greatest among those with pre-school children and those in the Onslow/Western and Lambton wards.

Asked for the first time in 2004, just over half (51%) of residents have used Wellington's wharves, jetties or boat ramps in the past 12 months, with greater usage indicated among those aged 15-24 years, those in the Lambton Ward and those in the highest income bracket.

Landscape and Natural Heritage

A high proportion of residents (88%) feel our natural environment is well-maintained.

Resources and Waste Reducing Waste

All residents claim to be carrying out activities to reduce the amount of waste from their homes. Activities most commonly identified in this context are donations to second hand shops, using the green kerbside recycling bins, reusing plastic containers and buying refills.

In total, nine in ten residents use Council kerbside recycling services, a very slight decrease from 2004 (94%). The majority of users (83%) put out a bin or bag every week. As would be expected, single person households put out recycling less often.

While the majority continue to use the green recycling bins, this year there has been an increase in the use of bags for putting out recycling.

The proportion of residents who take recycling to recycling stations has remained consistent over the past three years, measured at 47% this year, despite less of these stations being available. This behaviour is most prevalent in the Northern ward (54%).

Sustainable Disposal

All residents also claim to behave in certain ways to reduce the amount of pollution entering the stormwater system. The most common behaviours include putting litter in bins rather than dropping it on the street, pouring liquid waste down an inside sink and disposing of sweepings with household rubbish.

Satisfaction with the stormwater collection service has remained consistent with 2004 at 56% satisfied. However, prior to 2004, satisfaction was at the higher level of 68%. Satisfaction is slightly lower in the Eastern ward at 49%.

Recreation and Leisure

Recreation Opportunities

Overall, comparing the results from the 2005 survey with those of 2004, there appears to have been increases in many of the measures related to this key achievement area. However, it would appear that the 2004 measures were affected by bad weather and resulted in lower reported levels of use of recreational opportunities. Therefore, in many cases, increases between the 2004 and 2005 measures have simply seen results return to 2003 levels.

This year, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of residents who have used a Council Recreation Centre in the past 12 months (from 16% to 21%). Usage is higher among those with children under 14 years (37% have used).

There has also been a significant increase in use of Council skating areas, from 5% to 10%, with usage higher among young residents and among those in the Southern and Eastern wards.

Use of Council swimming pools (56%) and the mountain bike park in Karori (9%) has remained consistent with 2004.

The elderly and, related to this, those on low incomes of \$20,000, are less likely to have used any of these recreation facilities (59% and 54% respectively have not used any of these facilities compared with 38% of residents overall).

The majority of Wellingtonians (92%), including the groups less likely to be using these facilities, nevertheless agree that Wellington offers a wide range of recreational facilities.

Use of Council playgrounds by those with children under 14 in the household has significantly increased from the low level of 79% recorded in 2004, back to the level recorded in previous years of 87% used in past 12 months.

Library usage remains at a high level of 82% of residents having used a library in the past 12 months. More than 8 in 10 library users have used the Central Library, with Kilbirnie (18%) and Johnsonville (14%) being the next most commonly used libraries. This year, the survey indicates there may have been a slight increase in use of Newtown, Mervyn Kemp (Tawa) and Island Bay libraries.

Library usage peaks among those with children younger than 14 (90% usage). While numbers are small, there is an indication that usage is lower among Maori and Pacific Island residents.

Usage of community centres and community halls has significantly increased in the past 12 months, with 35% having used at least one of these facilities.

Usage of community halls is higher among those with primary school age children and Pacific Island people, while community centres are used more by those aged 40 years and over, those with pre-school children and those on lower incomes.

This year, nine in ten residents had used at least one of the Council's recreation or community facilities in the previous 12 months. The groups making less use of these facilities are residents aged over 60 years (15% haven't used any of these facilities) and Maori residents (20% haven't used any).

To gain some understanding of the barriers that exist to residents carrying out leisure or recreational activities, this year respondents were asked to identify whether there was anything making it difficult for them to take part in these activities and, if so, what it was that made it difficult and what specific activities were impacted.

Just over one in three residents (38%) perceive barriers, particularly those aged 25-39 years (46%), those with pre-school children (53%), those in professional occupations (48%) and retired people (45%). Predictably, the main barriers for those with young children relate to family commitments and lack of childcare facilities, while for professionals a lack of time is also an issue. For the elderly, health issues often came into play.

Overall, the most commonly mentioned barrier is an issue with transport, either a lack of parking or a lack of transport (mentioned by 27% of those who perceive barriers). This barrier appears to be more of an issue to those living in the Onslow/Western ward, Maori residents and homemakers.

Following transport issues, time and health constraints were the next most commonly mentioned.

For 69% of those experiencing barriers, sports and/or physical activities were the activities negatively impacted.

Participation and Health

Eight in ten residents claim to be undertaking more than 2.5 hours of physical activity per week. This is a significant increase from 2004, where the corresponding figure was 70%. This result is reasonably consistent across most demographic groups, although the groups less likely to be carrying out this recommended level of activity are female rather than male (25% versus 16%), and living in single person households (31%).

Transport

Transport Effectiveness

Overall, the measures taken to assess transport effectiveness indicate that residents are satisfied in this regard, the exception being that the minority who use the city's on-road cycleways do not rate these cycleways very positively in terms of maintenance and, especially, safety.

While over three quarters (78%) of residents agree that the city's transport system allows easy access from the suburbs to the city, there has been a decline in strength of agreement this year (fewer *strongly* agreeing and more just agreeing). It would appear that Southern and Lambton residents are slightly less positive in this respect than residents of other wards.

There is a high level of agreement (89%) that the city's network of footpaths and walkways allows easy, safe and comfortable movement on foot. This is well above the target set for the first time this year, of 75% agreement.

Among the one in five who have used an on-road cycleway in the past 12 months, just under half express satisfaction with the safety of these cycleways and six in ten express satisfaction with how well these cycleways are maintained. While base numbers are small, indications are that more residents in the Onslow/Western and Northern wards express dissatisfaction with safety. Residents in these areas also appear less satisfied with how well cycleways are maintained.

Over eight in ten residents (82%) rate the street cleaning in Central Wellington positively. Residents of the Lambton ward provide a similar positive rating to residents as a whole (78%).

However, rating of how well Council maintains the streets overall is lower, with two-thirds providing a positive rating. There has been no significant change in this measure compared with 2004.

Transport Accessibility

As in previous measures, around six in ten residents travel into central city most weekdays. Just under half of these people drive a car into the city, with this method of transport being more prevalent among Northern and Onslow/Western residents.

Nearly a third (31%) take the bus and there appears to have been a slight increase over time in the proportion of residents opting for this method. Taking the bus is more prevalent among young residents aged under 25 years (48%) and residents of the Eastern and Southern Wards (44% and 43% respectively).

While just 6% take the train, this increases to 20% of residents from the Northern ward.

As was the case last year, just under one quarter indicate that they are travelling into the central city most days using a method of transport they would prefer not to be using. This is more common among young residents and those living in the Southern or Northern wards.

The majority of these people indicate a preference for public transport (32% bus, 16% train, 5% public transport not specified). On the other hand, just 24% of those who are using one method but who would prefer to use another, indicate a preference for using a car. Barriers to using buses relate primarily to infrequency and overcrowding, while barriers to using the train relate to unreliability. Those who would like to use a car identify parking problems and cost as barriers.

When asked specifically to rate Wellington's public transport system on reliability and frequency, 77% indicated some level of satisfaction with frequency and 69% with reliability. Among those who use public transport as their main method of travelling into the central city most days, ratings are slightly more positive, with 69% rating public transport as reliable and 84% as frequent enough.

Council have set a target of 85% expressing satisfaction with public transport on both reliability and frequency. This year, results fell below this target, with 62% achieved.

Transport Efficiency

Among those who travel through central Wellington during weekday peak traffic on the roads, 56% indicate that they think peak traffic volumes are acceptable. This is well below the Annual Plan Target of 80%.

Those in the Northern ward in particular are less likely to find peak traffic volumes acceptable (45%).

Transport Sustainability

In this outcome area, Wellington residents rate the city positively. Some 82% are satisfied with the way traffic signals work to let pedestrians cross streets, and 85% are satisfied with the standard to which road markings and signs are maintained. These results are very close to the targets set.

**Governance
and Citizen
Information**

City Governance and Decision-Making

In both measures relating to this outcome area, there has been a significant decline in resident satisfaction.

Just over half (52%) feel that the Council consults them sufficiently, down from 61% over the past two years.

In addition, only around a third (35%) express satisfaction with the way the Council involves people in decision-making.

The groups most likely to feel Council does not consult them enough appear to be younger residents aged under 40 years and Maori residents.

The residents dissatisfied with the way the Council involves people in decision-making are more likely to live in the Southern ward.

Liquor Ban Awareness and Knowledge

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of residents aware of the liquor ban by-law; this year, eight in ten residents are aware of this by-law. This high level of awareness is generally consistent across all groups, with the possible exception of Asian residents and those with young children.

Almost four in ten of those aware of the ban think that it applies everyday, while just two in ten correctly state that it applies on Fridays and Saturdays. A quarter of those aware are unable to state the days it might apply.

There is less certainty about the hours the liquor ban applies, with four in ten unaware of the hours and a further 31% thinking that it applies all hours. Only around one in five are aware that the hours the liquor ban applies vary during the year.

There is a higher level of knowledge about the areas around Wellington that the ban applies to, although just 31% correctly identify the exact area. The specific area best known to be included in the liquor ban is the waterfront area, although nearly two-thirds of those aware of the ban think it also applies to Oriental Bay. The area least associated with the ban is the Terrace area, with 48% of those aware of the ban associating it with this area.

Attitude to the Liquor Ban

The majority of residents support the by-law prohibiting drinking in public places in Central Wellington on Friday and Saturday nights.

This year, 85% of residents expressed support for the liquor ban. This percentage has increased incrementally from 80% in November 2003 and 83% in November 2004.

While there is support among the majority of all demographic groups, it is slightly lower among young people under 25 years (77% support), and those living in the Lambton or Southern wards (78% support).

Interestingly, despite this level of support, and despite the fact that many residents thought the liquor ban was already 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, when asked whether they supported extending the liquor ban to cover all hours of the week, opinion was divided. Half do not support extending the liquor ban to all hours, while 44% express support. Among those who already thought the liquor ban applied 24/7, 59% support extending it in this way and 34% are opposed.

Despite the liquor ban, over six in ten people (62%) state they have noticed people drinking in public places in Central Wellington on Friday or Saturday nights over the past 12 months. This is significantly higher than when the same question was asked in May 2004 (37%), although some of this difference may be accounted for by seasonal factors (more people out in warmer weather). As would be expected, younger residents are more likely to have noticed people drinking in public places.
