

1.0 Executive Summary

Introduction

Rodney District Council, like other Councils has a role to play in residents' quality of life. The Quality of Life survey is a multi-agency research project, exploring quality of life issues in New Zealand. It is a partnership between New Zealand's twelve largest City Councils and the Ministry of Social Development.

The aim of the survey is to measure residents' perceptions of overall quality of life. The Quality of Life survey measures New Zealander's perception of:

- health and well-being
- community
- crime and safety
- education and work
- built environment
- culture and identity
- democracy.

This following report presents the results for Rodney District. A nationwide report is also available.

Methodology

Quantitative Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) were conducted with n=7,720 New Zealanders aged 18 years and older. Quotas were set for ethnicity, gender and age.

Randomly chosen households were sourced from the electoral roll, enabling a pre-survey letter to be sent to potential respondents. Individuals were then randomly selected within each household. Fieldwork was conducted between July 17 and November 17, 2006. The average length of interviewing was 20 minutes. The final response rate was 22 percent.

The data in this report has been post-weighted to reflect the population. The weighted sample of n=494 residents from Rodney District, has a maximum margin of error for this sample is +/- 4.4 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

Quality of Life

The majority (93%) of Rodney District residents felt they had a positive overall quality of life, rating it either *extremely good* (34%) or *good* (59%).

Health and Well-being

Overall Health

The majority (90%) of Rodney District residents viewed their health positively, rating it either *excellent* (26%), *very good* (40%), or *good* (25%).

Barriers to Usage of General Practitioners

One-fifth (19%) of residents had experienced at least one instance when they had wanted to visit their GP in the previous 12 months, but had not done so.

Among those who did not visit a GP when they had wanted to, the most frequently mentioned barrier for around half (51%) of Rodney District residents in stopping them from seeing a GP was the expense. One-fifth (21%) who had not seen a doctor, were too busy or could not take time off work.

Frequency of Physical Activity

Approximately three-fifths (63%) of Rodney District residents undertake physical activity five or more days a week. A further one-fifth (20%) exercise every three or four days and under one-tenth (9%) every one or two days. Only seven percent do not undertake any physical activity.

Emotional Well-being

The majority (92%) of Rodney District residents rated their emotional well-being positively, stating they were either *very happy* (37%) or *happy* (55%).

Satisfaction with Life in General

The majority (88%) of Rodney District residents were satisfied with their life in general, rating themselves either *very satisfied* (40%) or *satisfied* (48%).

Stress

Nearly one-tenth (8%) of Rodney District residents indicated they had experienced some form of stress in the previous 12 months that has had a negative effect on them, with one percent stating they were *always* stressed and six percent stating they were stressed *most of the time*.

Four-fifths (79%) of Rodney District residents felt they usually had someone to turn to for support when dealing with stress (50% *always* and 29% *most of the time*).

Crime and Safety

Perceptions of Presence of Crime and Other Undesirable Problems

Many residents perceived crime issues to be present in Rodney District. The most commonly held perception related to the presence of dangerous driving (75%), followed by vandalism (51%), theft or damage to cars (46%) and feeling unsafe around some people (31%).

Sense of Safety

Nearly all Rodney District residents felt safe in their homes (97% during the day, 94% after dark), but less so in their neighbourhood (87% after dark, 71% walking alone after dark) or in the district centre (86% during the day, 56% after dark)¹.

	Very Safe %	Fairly Safe %
At home during the day	82	15
At home after dark	68	27
In your neighbourhood after dark	44	42
Walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark	31	40
In the district centre during the day	61	25
In the district centre after dark	20	36

The most frequently mentioned reason for having a sense of a lack of safety (for all situations where residents felt unsafe) by Rodney District residents was dangerous people (46%). This was followed by the alcohol and drug problems in the area (17%) and poor lighting (15%).

Safety of Children

Three-quarters (75%) of Rodney District residents felt children were safe in their neighbourhood, rating them either *very safe* (28%) or *fairly safe* (47%). The remainder felt children were either *very unsafe* (5%) or *a bit unsafe* (16%) in their neighbourhood.

Among those who did not think children were safe, the most frequently mentioned reason for a sense of a lack of safety for children in the neighbourhood by Rodney District residents was dangerous people (37%). This was followed by children required supervision (35%) and busy traffic/lack of pedestrian crossings (28%).

¹ Note: the percentages in the text may differ slightly to the percentages added together in the tables, this is due to rounding.

Community, Culture and Social Networks

Sense of Community

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Rodney District residents agreed it they felt a sense of community in the local neighbourhood, stating they either *strongly agreed* (26%) or *agreed* (47%). Less than one-tenth (8%) either responded *strongly disagree* (2%) or *disagree* (6%).

Among those who did not feel a sense of community, the most frequently mentioned reason for not feeling a sense of community was a lack of communication and events within the neighbourhood (35%). This was followed by the residents' preference to keep to themselves (22%) and fellow residents' busy lives (17%).

Neighbourhood Contact

Almost all (97%) Rodney District residents indicated they had had *some positive contact* (such as a nod or saying hello) with people in their neighbourhood. Over four-fifths (87%) had had greater positive contact (such as a visit, or asking small favours). One-tenth (10%) residents had had negative contact (where there was outright tension).

Impact of Greater Cultural Diversity

Almost half (47%) of Rodney District residents felt positively towards increased cultural diversity, stating the impact of cultural diversity made Rodney District either *a much better place* (10%) or *a better place* (37%). Less than one-tenth (8%) felt Rodney District was either *a much worse place* (2%) or *a worse place* (6%) to live.

Among those who felt positively, the most frequently mentioned reason for feeling a positive impact of greater cultural diversity was the introduction of new ideas and a broader perspective (66%) followed by cultural education would teach tolerance (58%).

Among those who felt negatively, the most frequently mentioned reason for feeling a negative impact of greater cultural diversity was the lack of integration (28%). This was followed by the introduction of too many foreigners/cultures (25%).

Social Networks

The most common social networks that Rodney District residents belonged to included a *family network* (64%) and a *network of people from school or work* (48%). Approximately one-third also belonged to a *hobby or interest group* (37%), a *sports club* (37%) or a *community or voluntary group* (31%).

Around half (55%) of Rodney District residents saw their main social networks as being *a mix of groups within the area and those based on shared interests or beliefs*. Nearly one-third (29%) were based on just *the local area in which residents lived*, while eleven percent were based just on *shared interests*.

Feeling of Isolation

The majority (86%) of Rodney District residents rarely felt isolated or lonely (if at all) in the preceding 12 months, stating they were either *never* (61%) or *rarely* (26%) felt isolated or lonely.

Feeling of Trust

The majority (79%) of Rodney District residents felt people could be trusted, stating *people can almost always be trusted* (15%) or *people can usually be trusted* (64%).

Culturally Rich and Diverse Arts Scene

Over half (56%) of Rodney District residents perceived Rodney District as having a culturally rich and diverse arts scene, stating they either *strongly agreed* (19%) or *agreed* (36%).

Council Processes

Almost half (47%) of Rodney District residents believed the public has at least some influence on the decisions the Council makes, stating the public either has a *large influence* (4%) or *some influence* (43%).

Residents were most likely to have agreed (*strongly agree* or *agree*) they desire a greater say in what the Council does (57%), followed by they understood the Council decision making process (33%) and they have confidence the Council makes decisions in the best interests of the district (24%).

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
Desires a greater say in what the Council does	25	32
Confidence in Council decisions made in district's interest	5	19
Understand Council decision making process	7	26

Built Environment

Sense of Pride in District

Half (53%) of Rodney District residents agreed they had a sense of pride in their district, responding with a rating of either *strongly agree* (13%) or *agree* (40%). Thirteen percent disagreed (4% *strongly disagree* and 9% *disagree*).

Among those who felt a sense of pride, the most frequently mentioned reason for feeling a positive sense of pride was *nice green district or lots of parks* (34%). This was followed at a distance by the *beaches and harbour* (18%).

Among those who did not feel a sense of pride, the most frequently mentioned reasons for not feeling a positive sense of pride were related to *poor planning* (24%) and the *Council was not proactive* (14%).

Ease of Access to Local Park

The majority (85%) of Rodney District residents believed it was easy to access a local park or other green space, stating this was either *very easy* (55%) or *easy* (30%).

Perceptions of Presence of Rubbish and Pollution

Many residents perceived rubbish and pollution to be present in Rodney District. The most commonly held perception related to the presence of graffiti (60%), followed by water pollution (35%), rubbish (32%), noise pollution (29%) and air pollution (10%).

Public Transport

Frequency of Use of Public Transport

Approximately one-tenth (9%) of Rodney District residents were regular users of public transport (*2 or more times a week*), while a similar proportion (14%) were more irregular users (less than once a month). Half (52%) did not use public transport, while one-fifth (21%) indicated they had no public transport available.

Ease of Access to Public Transport

One-third (36%) of Rodney District residents believed it was easy to access a public transport facility (e.g. bus stop or train station); stating this was either *very easy* (20%) or *easy* (16%). Half (50%) of residents believed it was either *very difficult* (38%) or *difficult* (13%) to access public transport.

Among those who indicated access was difficult, the most frequently mentioned reasons for difficult access to a public transport facility was no service was provided in the area (81%).

Perceptions of Public Transport

Among those who have public transport in their area, over two-thirds agreed (either *strongly agreed* or *agreed*) that public transport was safe (67%), while about one-third agreed it was affordable (35%) and convenient (30%).

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
Safe	22	46
Convenient	7	23
Affordable	11	25



Lifestyle – Work and Study

Work Status

Around half (48%) of Rodney District residents were employed full time (for 30 hours or more per week). Almost one-quarter were in part time work (24%) or not in paid employment/not looking for work (23%).

Study Status

Less than one-fifth (14%) of Rodney District residents were studying either full-time (6%, *20 or more hours per week*) or part-time (8%, *less than 20 hours per week*).

Balance Between Work and Other Aspects of Life

The majority (78%) of Rodney District residents felt positively toward their work-life balance, rating themselves either *very satisfied* (35%) or *satisfied* (43%).

Satisfaction with Leisure Time

Around four-fifths (79%) of Rodney District residents were satisfied with their leisure time, rating themselves either *very satisfied* (33%) or *satisfied* (46%).

Ability to Cover Costs of Everyday Needs

Nearly all (88%) Rodney District residents said they had enough money to cover the costs of their everyday needs, saying they either *have more than enough* (14%), *enough* (39%) or *just enough* (35%) money.