

Media Release

Housing affordability an issue for one in three city dwellers

Results from the biennial Quality of Life survey highlights that while many residents in New Zealand's big cities are positive about their quality of life and think their city or local area is a great place to live, some residents are struggling with the cost of housing and the ability to cover the cost of every day needs.

This year, 84 per cent of respondents across the eight participating cities rated their overall quality of life as positive; 30 per cent said it had improved over the previous 12 months. A similar proportion (80%) agreed their city (or in the case of Auckland – their local area) was a great place to live.

However, a quarter (25%) felt their city (or local area) had become a worse place to live in the previous 12 months – mostly related to the issue of traffic congestion but also concerns about housing affordability and suitability.

The 2018 Quality of Life survey, undertaken by Nielsen Research on behalf of the participating councils, had a focus on housing, with the addition of questions related to housing quality and heating as well as homelessness and rough sleeping. Over a third (37%) of respondents disagreed their housing costs were affordable, particularly those in younger age groups, people who were renting from private landlords and those with children living at home.

The impacts of increasing housing-related costs and shortage of suitable housing in New Zealand cities show increasing numbers of people sleeping rough on the streets or in vehicles. Just under half (48%) of respondents felt this was a problem in their city or local area in the previous 12 months, and possibly in line with this, 53 per cent considered people begging on the street to have been a problem in their city or local area.

The survey also continues to show some residents are struggling to make ends meet, with 16 per cent of respondents stating they didn't have enough money to

meet their everyday needs, such as accommodation, food, clothing and other necessities. Aside from those struggling, 45 per cent stated they had more than enough or enough income to cover everyday needs.

Other highlights from the 2018 Quality of Life Survey include:

- while 71 per cent agreed feeling a sense of community with those living in their local area was important, 52 per cent said they actually felt a sense of community
- however, if faced with a serious injury or illness, or needing emotional support during a difficult time, 94 per cent of those surveyed felt they had someone to turn to for help
- more than half (58%) considered New Zealand becoming home to an increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures from different countries made their city a better place to live; one in five (20%) felt it made no difference.

A full set of these topline results and more information on the 2018 Quality of Life survey is available online at qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz. More detailed reporting by participating councils will be released in the next few months.

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Editors notes

The 2018 Quality of Life survey is a collaborative local government research project. The primary purpose of the survey is to measure residents' perceptions across a range of measures impacting New Zealanders' quality of life. The survey measured the perceptions of more than 7000 residents in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Hutt City, Porirua, Christchurch and Dunedin, as well as the Greater Wellington area.

The survey asks people about a range of topics including housing, public transport, their feelings of safety, issues related to community and social networks, as well as perceptions of their local council. It is available in both online and hard copy (printed) format.

The 2018 Quality of Life survey was conducted by research company Nielsen and was jointly funded by the participating councils.

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