



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Central North Island

Prepared

January 2007

By

igniteresearch

Key Highlights for Central North Island

In comparison with national results, the following differences are noted for people in Central North Island:¹²

1. People in **Central North Island** – in Taupo and rural areas – have fewer problems overall, though relatively more money or debt problems. They rarely have welfare problems, with housing or land problems also under represented.
2. Consumer related problems and money or debt problems are regarded as much more serious to be resolved.
3. They are also significantly less likely to seek help.
4. Awareness and knowledge of community law centres is relatively weak.
5. In **Taupo** specifically, housing or land issues and family and relationship breakdown problems are more serious than in rural areas. An inability to meet repayments and domestic violence appear to have relatively greater influence on problems happening in the first place.
6. Although few people seek help (the problem is not seen as serious or important enough), those that do mainly just want information to help them sort it out themselves. Very few sources of help are accessed.
7. Nevertheless the impacts are still felt, with stress, loss of confidence and relationship breakdowns occurring.
8. In **rural areas**, death of a family member and irregular income are greater causal factors to problems happening in the first place.
9. More likely to have solved the problem on their own without the help of anyone. A number of people are not currently trying to do anything to solve their problem because they don't know what to do.
10. Lack of trust is a bigger influence on the decision not to seek help.
11. Any help wanted is more likely to include basic support.
12. Greater reliance is placed on friends and family for help and advice.
13. Personal visits are the much preferred means of accessing help.
14. Problems often result in stress related illness.

¹ Note that some base sizes are relatively small and so caution should be exercised when interpreting the results for that area. *denotes small base sizes less than 30.

² No main urban areas were quota sampled, with secondary urban represented by Taupo and the rest of region classified as Rural

Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for Central North Island and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	11	9	10	10
Money or debt	12	10	11	8
Welfare benefits	3	1	2	7
Housing or land	5	4	4	6
Employment	4	5	4	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	6	3	4	5
Immigration	-	-	-	1
Other	6	5	5	6
Nett have a problem	27	27	27	29
Nett do not have a problem	73	73	73	71
Base	176	224	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	Faulty or defective goods and services, difficulties getting refunds or replacements, problems with phone or power companies, banks and insurance companies	24	22	23	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	24	35	30	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	15	7	11	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	5	2	3	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	8	15	12	12
Family/ relationship	Disputes over division of money or property with a former partner, difficulties with custody and access to children, domestic violence, difficulties obtaining child support	19	8	13	15
Immigration	Difficulties obtaining NZ residency or citizenship and sponsoring a partner or other family members	-	-	-	2
Other	Traffic/driving offences and being the victim of a crime	5	11	8	14
Base		48	61	109	2069

Table: Main Cause for Most Serious Problem to Happen in First Place

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	7	7	7	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	8	7	8	9
Faulty goods and appliances	10	11	11	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	-	2	1	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	1	6	4	5
Low income/wages	7	7	7	5
Taking on too much debt	-	1	-	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	19	-	8	4
Illness or poor health	-	-	-	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	3	6	5	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ³	1	3	2	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	-	-	-	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	1	-	1	3
Problems with neighbours	-	-	-	3
Loss or change of job	1	2	2	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	-	4	2	3
Alcohol or drugs	3	1	2	2
Being taken advantage of	-	5	3	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	1	2	1	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	-	-	-	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	1	2	1	2
Death of a family member	-	12	7	2
Suffered an injury or accident	-	1	1	2
Irregular income	3	14	9	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	2	-	1	1
Domestic violence	15	-	7	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	48	61	109	2069

³ This covers a broad range of agencies and departments, including, but not limited to, IRD, WINZ, ACC and the Immigration Service.

Table: How Problem was Resolved

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	13	39	28	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	21	8	14	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	23	1	10	10
The problem sorted itself out	18	11	14	10
After court or tribunal action	5	1	2	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	5	12	9	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	13	4	8	6
Through mediation	3	13	9	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	-	11	7	2
Base: Most serious problem over	23*	33	56	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	19	23	21	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	31	15	22	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	34	13	23	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	-	2	1	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	13	22	18	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	2	9	5	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	-	-	-	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	-	15	8	5
In the process of going through mediation	2	-	1	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	25*	28*	53	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	32	28	30	44
Maybe	2	4	3	4
No	66	68	67	52
Base: Have problem	48	61	109	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	46	26	35	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	5	51	30	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	26	9	17	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	-	-	-	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	26	17	21	18
Base: Seeking help	48	61	109	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	-	2	1	10
Internet site	-	2	1	13
Local council of other public authority	5	16	11	12
Community law centre	2	2	2	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	5	12	9	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	6	11	9	13
Private lawyer	7	23	16	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	-	-	-	5
Legal aid lawyer	-	5	2	10
Insurance company	-	-	-	3
Government agency or department	9	26	19	20⁴
Police	2	2	2	9
Doctor or other health professional	9	7	8	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	18	10	14	7
Member of parliament	3	13	8	6
Ombudsman	3	-	1	2
Friends of other family members	11	54	34	34
Trade Union	2	2	2	3
Court desk	-	-	-	3
Minister of religion	-	2	1	3
Māori organisation	-	-	-	4
Average number of sources used	0.8	1.9	1.4	2.5
Base: Seek help	16*	20*	36	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	41	49	45	42
Telephone	32	26	29	36
Through a web site	6	4	5	7
By letter	3	3	3	3
By email	2	4	3	4
Some other way	9	3	6	2
Don't know/it depends	6	11	9	5
Base	176	224	400	7,200

⁴ Note: Some people are likely to have provided this response when they have received legal aid.

Table: Main Reasons Provided for Not Seeking Help

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	31	23	26	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	10	11	10	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	6	7	7	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	21	3	11	9
Did not think it would make much difference	-	9	5	8
Couldn't be bothered	2	3	2	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	-	-	-	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	-	6	3	4
Thought it would cost too much	11	4	7	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	8	2	5	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	1	2	2	4
Was uncertain of my rights	-	-	-	3
Thought it would take too much time	2	3	2	2
Didn't trust anyone	-	15	8	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	1	-	-	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	-	-	-	2
Too embarrassed/shy	-	-	-	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	-	-	1
Thought that the other party was right	1	-	-	1
Too scared	-	-	-	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	2	1	1
Other	24	28	26	20
Base: All people not seeking help	32	41	73	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	39	41	40	39
Loss of confidence	31	23	27	32
Loss of income	10	15	13	26
Physical ill health	20	12	15	20
Relationship breakdown	28	7	16	16
Loss of employment	3	13	8	14
Had to move home	18	11	14	10
Violence	15	-	7	6
Base	48	61	109	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	42	43	43	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	50	42	45	51
Total awareness	92	85	88	85
Not aware of legal aid	8	15	12	15
Base: All people	176	224	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Taupo %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	11	9	10	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	17	21	19	25
Total awareness	28	30	29	48
Not aware of community law centres	72	70	71	52
Base: All people	176	224	400	7,200