



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Otago

Prepared

February 2007

By

igniteresearch

Key Highlights for Otago

In comparison with national results, the following differences are noted for people in Otago:¹

1. **Otago** people are less likely to have serious money or debt problems than the country as a whole, but more likely to have 'other' problems, such as being the victim of a crime or traffic offences etc.
2. Fewer sources of help or advice are accessed generally, including: leaflets and booklets, internet sites, and local authorities.
3. For many who did not seek help, the problem was more likely to have been resolved before help was needed.
4. Regionally, some differences appear to exist. People in **Dunedin** are more likely to want information and basic support to help them with their problem. Private lawyers and health professionals are key sources of advice. Awareness and knowledge of the community law centre is significantly above average.
5. Although the sample size for **Oamaru** is relatively small, some key issues may exist. The results indicate that the incidence of problems may be very high, driven a lot by money or debt issues and serious family/relationship breakdown problems, conflicts and disputes. Friends and family are a primary source of advice and help. Those not seeking help are more likely to want to keep it in the family/whanau.
6. There appears to be relatively few problems in **rural areas** of Otago, although those of a consumer nature are more likely to be regarded seriously; faulty goods and appliances being a key trigger. Stress related illnesses have more significant impact in rural areas.

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 and ** denotes very small base sizes less than 10.

Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for Otago and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	11	5	8	10	10
Money or debt	6	18	2	6	8
Welfare benefits	8	-	4	6	7
Housing or land	5	4	5	5	6
Employment	6	11	2	6	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	5	21	3	6	5
Immigration	-	-	-	-	1
Other	10	13	5	9	6
Nett have a problem	30	51	20	29	29
Nett do not have a problem	70	49	80	71	71
Base	256	40	104	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	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	18	5	26	17	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	13	13	6	12	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	9	3	12	8	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	12	-	9	9	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	10	17	7	10	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	15	37	14	18	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	24	26	27	25	14
Base		77	20*	20*	117	2069

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

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	10	-	6	8	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	5	12	7	6	9
Faulty goods and appliances	11	-	26	12	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	9	-	9	7	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	3	9	-	3	5
Low income/wages	4	-	-	3	5
Taking on too much debt	4	-	-	3	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	1	4	-	1	4
Illness or poor health	6	-	4	5	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	2	3	-	2	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ²	4	-	2	3	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	2	-	-	1	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	9	17	3	10	3
Problems with neighbours	5	3	3	4	3
Loss or change of job	5	-	-	3	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	3	22	7	6	3
Alcohol or drugs	-	-	2	1	2
Being taken advantage of	1	-	3	1	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	-	-	-	-	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	-	-	-	-	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	-	-	-	-	2
Death of a family member	2	-	-	1	2
Suffered an injury or accident	2	-	-	1	2
Irregular income	3	8	7	4	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	-	-	-	-	1
Domestic violence	2	-	-	1	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	77	20*	20*	117	2069

² 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

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	25	31	19	25	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	23	8	45	25	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	9	18	-	9	10
The problem sorted itself out	9	16	6	10	10
After court or tribunal action	6	-	9	5	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	7	27	15	12	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	4	-	-	3	6
Through mediation	11	-	-	7	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	5	-	-	3	2
Base: Most serious problem over	40	11*	12*	63	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	25	12	17	22	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	27	49	6	27	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	18	-	17	15	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	5	6	-	4	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	10	18	-	10	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	13	-	12	11	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	-	-	31	5	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	2	14	-	4	5
In the process of going through mediation	-	-	17	3	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	37	9**	8**	54	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	45	48	54	47	44
Maybe	5	-	-	3	4
No	50	52	46	50	52
Base: Have problem	77	20	20	117	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	25	31	-	21	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	45	11	42	38	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	34	47	30	36	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	12	54	10	19	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	15	11	33	18	18
Base: Seeking help	38	10**	11*	59	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	7	-	-	5	10
Internet site	2	-	16	5	13
Local council of other public authority	7	9	-	6	12
Community law centre	11	11	16	12	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	14	24	-	14	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	14	20	-	13	13
Private lawyer	34	19	6	26	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	-	22	-	4	5
Legal aid lawyer	5	-	36	10	10
Insurance company	-	-	-	-	3
Government agency or department	8	11	16	10	20 ³
Police	9	19	3	9	9
Doctor or other health professional	36	-	28	29	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	6	-	-	4	7
Member of parliament	4	-	12	5	6
Ombudsman	-	-	-	-	2
Friends of other family members	23	51	20	27	34
Trade Union	-	-	-	-	3
Court desk	-	-	-	-	3
Minister of religion	6	9	-	5	3
Māori organisation	6	9	-	5	4
Average number of sources used	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.9	2.5
Base: Seek help	38	10**	11**	59	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	45	50	46	46	42
Telephone	34	33	49	37	36
Through a web site	9	-	-	6	7
By letter	2	-	-	1	3
By email	5	-	3	4	4
Some other way	2	1	1	1	2
Don't know/it depends	4	15	1	5	5
Base	256	40	104	400	7,200

³ Note: Some people are likely to have provided this response when they have received legal aid.

Table: Main Reasons Provided for Not Seeking Help

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	33	14	9	26	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	22	33	12	22	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	2	-	44	8	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	11	-	10	9	9
Did not think it would make much difference	10	16	6	11	8
Couldn't be bothered	-	-	-	-	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	-	-	6	1	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	2	42	5	10	4
Thought it would cost too much	-	-	-	-	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	-	-	-	-	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	-	-	-	-	4
Was uncertain of my rights	2	-	6	2	3
Thought it would take too much time	-	-	-	-	2
Didn't trust anyone	-	-	-	-	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	-	-	-	-	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	-	-	-	-	2
Too embarrassed/shy	2	-	-	1	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	2	-	-	2	1
Thought that the other party was right	-	-	-	-	1
Too scared	2	-	-	1	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	-	-	-	1
Other	25	-	17	19	20
Base: All people not seeking help	39	10**	11**	58	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	34	17	55	35	39
Loss of confidence	34	11	30	30	32
Loss of income	26	36	32	29	26
Physical ill health	24	5	28	21	20
Relationship breakdown	9	27	9	12	16
Loss of employment	12	-	7	9	14
Had to move home	5	-	11	5	10
Violence	2	5	14	4	6
Base	77	20*	20*	117	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	34	44	38	36	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	50	41	52	50	51
Total awareness	84	85	90	86	85
Not aware of legal aid	16	15	10	14	15
Base: All people	256	40	104	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Dunedin %	Oamaru %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	48	18	27	40	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	31	34	29	30	25
Total awareness	79	52	56	70	48
Not aware of community law centres	21	48	44	30	52
Base: All people	256	40	104	400	7,200