



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Southland

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Key Highlights for Southland

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

1. In **Southland** people have relatively fewer problems, especially in rural areas and Gore. In particular, these types of problems are much less prevalent:
 - a. Consumer related
 - b. Money or debt
 - c. Welfare benefit
2. The most serious problems for Southland people are family and relationship breakdown problems, triggered by loss of communication and separation or divorce.
3. People in **Invercargill** are more likely to seek help or advice for their main problems, although relatively fewer sources are accessed. Leaflets and other publications, internet sites, legal aid lawyers, government agencies or departments and health professionals are all used to a lesser extent than nationally.
4. In contrast, there appears a greater disposition to access mediation services, although this does not figure strongly in final resolution.
5. Personal visits are much more preferred over telephone access for help.
6. Awareness of legal aid and of how to access it is high across the region, while in Invercargill there is a much greater level of awareness and knowledge of the community law centre.

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 Southland and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	8	7	3	7	10
Money or debt	4	2	3	4	8
Welfare benefits	4	-	6	4	7
Housing or land	4	2	3	4	6
Employment	5	5	3	4	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	7	1	4	6	5
Immigration	-	-	-	-	1
Other	7	5	4	6	6
Nett have a problem	24	17	19	23	29
Nett do not have a problem	76	83	81	77	71
Base	291	28	81	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Invercargill %	Gore %	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	14	n/a	10	15	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	11	n/a	14	12	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	15	n/a	15	14	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	7	n/a	6	6	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	8	n/a	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	28	n/a	32	27	15
Immigration	Difficulties obtaining NZ residency or citizenship and sponsoring a partner or other family members	-	n/a	-	-	2
Other	Traffic/driving offences and being the victim of a crime	17	n/a	12	17	14
Base		71	5	16	91	2069

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

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	3	n/a	21	6	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	8	n/a	4	7	9
Faulty goods and appliances	9	n/a	2	8	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	16	n/a	5	14	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	6	n/a	22	8	5
Low income/wages	2	n/a	8	3	5
Taking on too much debt	1	n/a	-	1	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	-	n/a	-	1	4
Illness or poor health	5	n/a	4	4	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	-	n/a	9	1	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ²	1	n/a	6	2	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	13	n/a	-	10	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	6	n/a	-	4	3
Problems with neighbours	5	n/a	-	4	3
Loss or change of job	5	n/a	-	4	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	1	n/a	-	1	3
Alcohol or drugs	4	n/a	-	3	2
Being taken advantage of	-	n/a	-	-	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	3	n/a	-	2	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	1	n/a	-	1	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	-	n/a	-	-	2
Death of a family member	3	n/a	-	2	2
Suffered an injury or accident	3	n/a	-	3	2
Irregular income	-	n/a	7	1	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	-	n/a	-	1	1
Domestic violence	-	n/a	11	2	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	71	5**	16*	91	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

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	29	n/a	n/a	24	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	15	n/a	n/a	16	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	10	n/a	n/a	16	10
The problem sorted itself out	11	n/a	n/a	12	10
After court or tribunal action	12	n/a	n/a	10	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	6	n/a	n/a	5	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	15	n/a	n/a	12	6
Through mediation	2	n/a	n/a	2	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	-	n/a	n/a	3	2
Base: Most serious problem over	37	3**	5**	45	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	20	n/a	11	17	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	9	n/a	2	7	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	23	n/a	13	20	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	10	n/a	42	17	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	18	n/a	22	18	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	3	n/a	-	2	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	9	n/a	-	10	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	4	n/a	10	5	5
In the process of going though mediation	5	n/a	-	4	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	34	2**	11**	47	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	49	n/a	26	44	44
Maybe	4	n/a	9	6	4
No	47	n/a	65	50	52
Base: Have problem	71	5**	16	91	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	42	n/a	n/a	44	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	35	n/a	n/a	34	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	25	n/a	n/a	28	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	20	n/a	n/a	21	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	13	n/a	n/a	17	18
Base: Seeking help	38	2**	5**	45	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	3	n/a	n/a	7	10
Internet site	7	n/a	n/a	8	13
Local council of other public authority	11	n/a	n/a	9	12
Community law centre	13	n/a	n/a	11	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	9	n/a	n/a	9	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	11	n/a	n/a	10	13
Private lawyer	18	n/a	n/a	24	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	5	n/a	n/a	6	5
Legal aid lawyer	3	n/a	n/a	3	10
Insurance company	5	n/a	n/a	4	3
Government agency or department	10	n/a	n/a	11	20 ³
Police	5	n/a	n/a	6	9
Doctor or other health professional	7	n/a	n/a	6	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	21	n/a	n/a	20	7
Member of parliament	2	n/a	n/a	2	6
Ombudsman	-	n/a	n/a	-	2
Friends of other family members	36	n/a	n/a	36	34
Trade Union	4	n/a	n/a	5	3
Court desk	-	n/a	n/a	-	3
Minister of religion	-	n/a	n/a	-	3
Māori organisation	-	n/a	n/a	-	4
Average number of sources used	1.7	n/a	n/a	1.8	2.5
Base: Seek help	38	2**	5**	45	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	55	44	46	52	42
Telephone	28	52	39	32	36
Through a web site	6	1	6	6	7
By letter	1	-	5	2	3
By email	3	3	1	2	4
Some other way	3	-	2	3	2
Don't know/it depends	4	-	1	3	5
Base	291	28	81	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

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	31	n/a	15	30	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	-	n/a	-	-	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	4	n/a	14	7	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	12	n/a	23	16	9
Did not think it would make much difference	8	n/a	-	5	8
Couldn't be bothered	3	n/a	-	2	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	2	n/a	2	2	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	2	n/a	8	3	4
Thought it would cost too much	-	n/a	9	3	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	4	n/a	20	7	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	5	n/a	-	4	4
Was uncertain of my rights	4	n/a	-	3	3
Thought it would take too much time	-	n/a	14	3	2
Didn't trust anyone	-	n/a	-	-	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	-	n/a	14	3	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	5	n/a	14	7	2
Too embarrassed/shy	-	n/a	14	3	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	n/a	9	2	1
Thought that the other party was right	-	n/a	-	-	1
Too scared	-	n/a	14	3	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	n/a	-	-	1
Other	25	n/a	22	23	20
Base: All people not seeking help	33	3**	10**	46	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	41	n/a	62	42	39
Loss of confidence	37	n/a	29	34	32
Loss of income	7	n/a	19	9	26
Physical ill health	28	n/a	20	26	20
Relationship breakdown	13	n/a	17	14	16
Loss of employment	1	n/a	7	2	14
Had to move home	8	n/a	8	9	10
Violence	4	n/a	-	3	6
Base	71	5**	16*	91	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	41	46	42	42	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	51	52	43	49	51
Total awareness	92	98	85	91	85
Not aware of legal aid	8	2	15	9	15
Base: All people	291	28	81	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Invercargill %	Gore %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	56	24	28	48	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	23	25	20	22	25
Total awareness	79	49	48	70	48
Not aware of community law centres	21	51	52	30	52
Base: All people	291	28	81	400	7,200