



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Taranaki

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Key Highlights for Taranaki

In comparison with national results, the following differences are noted for people in Taranaki¹:

1. Overall, people in **Taranaki** have fewer problems than people nationally, particularly in the money or debt, and housing or land categories.
2. Problems are more likely to be resolved without the help of anyone, though friends and family also have a greater influence than nationally.
3. Taranaki people are more likely to seek help or advice, with a greater desire for someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side).
4. Relatively few sources are accessed, including free and state funded legal services, local authorities, government departments, and health professionals. In contrast, private lawyers appear a group fairly well utilised.
5. Those few not seeking help are more likely to have had their problem sorted before they had got around to seeking help.
6. Personal visits are preferred much more over telephone as a method of access to help or advice.
7. Awareness and knowledge of community law centres is lower than average, particularly among people in Hawera and in rural areas.
8. **New Plymouth** people have a higher incidence of consumer related and family/relationship breakdown problems. Both problem categories are also much more likely to be regarded as serious. Conflicts with family members and alcohol/drugs appear greater contributing factors.
9. Hawera is noted for a very low incidence of problems overall.

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 Taranaki and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	12	4	7	8	10
Money or debt	3	3	6	4	8
Welfare benefits	8	4	7	7	7
Housing or land	3	2	2	3	6
Employment	2	4	5	4	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	9	-	5	6	5
Immigration	-	-	-	-	1
Other	4	4	3	4	6
Nett have a problem	29	13	24	24	29
Nett do not have a problem	71	87	76	76	71
Base	156	62	182	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	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	32	3	12	20	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	9	37	19	16	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	7	9	4	6	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	2	-	18	9	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	2	22	17	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	35	4	28	29	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	13	25	3	9	14
Base		45	8**	44	98	2069

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

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	-	8	5	3	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	4	-	3	3	9
Faulty goods and appliances	12	3	-	6	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	6	-	9	7	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	8	-	-	4	5
Low income/wages	6	20	-	5	5
Taking on too much debt	-	8	14	7	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	3	-	-	2	4
Illness or poor health	4	-	-	2	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	-	-	-	-	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ²	-	-	5	3	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	4	9	4	4	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	-	25	-	2	3
Problems with neighbours	7	-	-	3	3
Loss or change of job	5	8	2	4	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	12	-	16	12	3
Alcohol or drugs	12	-	-	6	2
Being taken advantage of	-	-	18	8	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	6	-	7	6	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	-	-	-	-	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	-	-	5	2	2
Death of a family member	-	-	-	-	2
Suffered an injury or accident	-	-	-	-	2
Irregular income	-	-	-	-	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	-	-	-	-	1
Domestic violence	-	-	-	-	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	45	8**	44	98	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

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	37	41	25	33	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	13	-	17	13	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	7	22	19	13	10
The problem sorted itself out	14	18	7	12	10
After court or tribunal action	4	-	-	3	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	21	-	8	14	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	-	-	10	4	6
Through mediation	2	14	8	6	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	-	-	4	2	2
Base: Most serious problem over	26*	5**	20*	51	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	27	22	24	25	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	30	-	3	14	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	2	24	21	14	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	11	-	5	7	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	11	55	12	14	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	4	-	29	17	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	10	-	6	7	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	-	-	-	-	5
In the process of going though mediation	4	-	-	-	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	19*	3**	25*	46	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	52	38	49	49	44
Maybe	7	8	11	9	4
No	41	54	40	42	52
Base: Have problem	45	8**	44	98	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	34	43	20	28	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	22	49	19	23	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	54	39	76	63	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	15	24	10	13	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	23	19	16	20	18
Base: Seeking help	27*	4**	27*	57	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	7	37	-	6	10
Internet site	11	37	3	9	13
Local council of other public authority	2	36	-	4	12
Community law centre	17	19	-	9	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	15	19	-	8	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	-	-	2	2	13
Private lawyer	27	56	32	31	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	-	-	7	3	5
Legal aid lawyer	9	-	-	3	10
Insurance company	-	19	-	2	3
Government agency or department	6	18	8	8	20 ³
Police	16	38	5	13	9
Doctor or other health professional	22	20	8	15	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	-	36	6	5	7
Member of parliament	-	19	3	3	6
Ombudsman	-	-	7	3	2
Friends of other family members	29	39	17	24	34
Trade Union	-	17	-	1	3
Court desk	6	19	-	4	3
Minister of religion	3	-	-	2	3
Māori organisation	-	-	4	2	4
Average number of sources used	1.7	4.3	1.0	1.6	2.5
Base: Seek help	27*	4**	27*	57	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	47	63	45	49	42
Telephone	32	37	44	38	36
Through a web site	6	-	5	5	7
By letter	5	-	-	2	3
By email	3	-	-	1	4
Some other way	-	-	2	1	2
Don't know/it depends	7	-	3	4	5
Base	156	62	182	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

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	8	47	8	12	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	29	-	29	26	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	7	15	4	7	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	17	-	13	13	9
Did not think it would make much difference	-	-	-	-	8
Couldn't be bothered	8	-	9	7	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	-	-	9	4	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	-	-	-	-	4
Thought it would cost too much	-	-	11	5	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	14	-	10	11	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	4	-	12	7	4
Was uncertain of my rights	-	-	12	5	3
Thought it would take too much time	-	-	-	-	2
Didn't trust anyone	-	-	5	2	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	-	-	12	5	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	-	-	8	4	2
Too embarrassed/shy	-	-	-	-	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	-	5	3	1
Thought that the other party was right	-	38	5	7	1
Too scared	-	-	-	-	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	-	7	3	1
Other	11	-	26	16	20
Base: All people not seeking help	19*	4**	18*	40	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	32	63	34	35	39
Loss of confidence	34	45	30	33	32
Loss of income	11	28	22	18	26
Physical ill health	17	17	32	24	20
Relationship breakdown	20	17	34	26	16
Loss of employment	5	16	8	7	14
Had to move home	2	8	8	5	10
Violence	3	17	8	6	6
Base	45	8**	44	98	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	42	22	39	38	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	47	54	46	47	51
Total awareness	89	76	85	85	85
Not aware of legal aid	11	24	15	15	15
Base: All people	156	62	182	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	New Plymouth %	Hawera %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	19	26	18	19	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	27	11	23	23	25
Total awareness	46	37	41	42	48
Not aware of community law centres	54	63	59	58	52
Base: All people	156	62	182	400	7,200