



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Waikato

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Key Highlights for Waikato

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

1. In **Waikato** there is a strong desire for information and basic support.
2. In **Hamilton**, there is a significantly higher proportion of people with at least one problem, with welfare benefit being a relatively core area.
3. A key factor in these problems happening is the receipt of incorrect or misleading information.
4. Hamilton people are much more likely to seek help or advice and consequently are less likely to solve problems on their own.
5. Internet sites and health professionals are two key sources of help, with telephone access preferred generally over personal visits.
6. Stress related illness afflicts almost half of those with problems (combined with benefit/ACC issues, these are likely to influence the greater use of health professionals).
7. Relatively greater awareness and knowledge of community law centres.
8. **Rural areas** are more likely to have a consumer related or money or debt problem, and these types of problems also much more likely to be considered serious.
9. Low income/wages are more likely to be a trigger for these problems happening. Being overcharged for a good or service and lack of understanding of the implications of credit contracts are other causal factors.
10. Much more likely to have solved any major problems on their own without help.
11. Less likely to seek any help at all, with greater tendency to deal with problems themselves (and greater expectation that the problem will resolve itself).
12. Any help wanted is more likely to be just basic support.
13. Internet usage is much higher, while help from health professionals and friends/family appears less common.
14. Preference for face-to-face visits (and access to help via websites).

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 The main urban is represented by Hamilton. Tokoroa is the secondary urban area that was quota sampled, but the final weighted sample size achieved for Tokoroa (n=12) is too small to provide any meaningful results and has therefore been omitted from this regional summary. All other areas in Waikato have been classified as Rural.

15. More likely to suffer economic and dislocation impacts because of problems, e.g. loss of income and having to move home. Also more likely to have confidence knocked.
16. Much lower awareness and knowledge of Community Law Centres.

Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for Waikato and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	14	12	13	10
Money or debt	13	11	12	8
Welfare benefits	14	4	9	7
Housing or land	10	5	8	6
Employment	10	5	7	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	8	4	6	5
Immigration	1	-	-	1
Other	12	5	0	6
Nett have a problem	40	30	35	29
Nett do not have a problem	60	70	65	71
Base	206	183	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Hamilton %	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	20	27	22	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	17	34	23	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	7	9	9	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	20	6	14	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	11	6	9	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	16	4	11	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	9	14	11	14
Base		81	54	138	2069

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

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	19	2	12	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	9	8	9	9
Faulty goods and appliances	10	2	7	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	5	7	5	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	7	3	6	5
Low income/wages	8	16	11	5
Taking on too much debt	2	5	3	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	2	5	3	4
Illness or poor health	5	-	3	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	1	9	4	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ³	8	5	9	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	8	1	5	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	-	9	3	3
Problems with neighbours	3	1	2	3
Loss or change of job	2	3	2	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	1	-	-	3
Alcohol or drugs	-	-	-	2
Being taken advantage of	-	-	-	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	2	-	1	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	1	-	1	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	-	7	3	2
Death of a family member	-	-	-	2
Suffered an injury or accident	2	4	2	2
Irregular income	-	-	-	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	-	3	1	1
Domestic violence	2	-	1	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	81	54	138	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

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	5	78	35	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	30	15	24	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	5	4	4	10
The problem sorted itself out	13	3	9	10
After court or tribunal action	18	-	10	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	5	-	3	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	14	-	8	6
Through mediation	4	-	3	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	7	-	4	2
Base: Most serious problem over	43	30*	73	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	33	30	31	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	19	8	18	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	25	35	27	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	8	4	6	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	-	4	1	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	3	-	2	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	11	5	8	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	1	9	4	5
In the process of going though mediation	1	5	2	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	38	24*	65	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	52	27	43	44
Maybe	6	4	5	4
No	42	69	52	52
Base: Have problem	81	54	138	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	21	37	25	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	50	49	52	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	29	34	29	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	10	11	10	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	19	28	20	18
Base: Seeking help	47	17*	67	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	14	7	11	10
Internet site	46	23	38	13
Local council of other public authority	14	4	11	12
Community law centre	18	23	19	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	17	16	16	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	15	9	13	13
Private lawyer	11	27	15	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	8	8	8	5
Legal aid lawyer	2	7	3	10
Insurance company	4	3	4	3
Government agency or department	19	28	20	20 ⁴
Police	10	9	9	9
Doctor or other health professional	36	7	27	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	5	7	5	7
Member of parliament	15	-	11	6
Ombudsman	4	2	3	2
Friends of other family members	37	8	29	34
Trade Union	5	-	3	3
Court desk	-	7	2	3
Minister of religion	-	7	2	3
Māori organisation	12	15	12	4
Average number of sources used	2.9	2.2	2.6	2.5
Base: Seek help	47	17*	67	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	35	44	39	42
Telephone	39	30	36	36
Through a web site	13	11	12	7
By letter	2	4	3	3
By email	4	2	3	4
Some other way	3	1	2	2
Don't know/it depends	4	8	6	5
Base	206	183	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

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	12	42	28	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	10	14	12	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	4	32	19	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	-	6	3	9
Did not think it would make much difference	-	1	-	8
Couldn't be bothered	17	5	11	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	10	1	5	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	-	-	-	4
Thought it would cost too much	2	1	1	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	16	-	8	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	12	3	7	4
Was uncertain of my rights	9	-	4	3
Thought it would take too much time	6	1	4	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
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	-	-	1
Thought that the other party was right	4	-	2	1
Too scared	-	-	-	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	-	-	1
Other	17	-	8	20
Base: All people not seeking help	34	38	72	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	46	37	42	39
Loss of confidence	29	37	32	32
Loss of income	22	37	27	26
Physical ill health	21	25	22	20
Relationship breakdown	15	8	12	16
Loss of employment	12	23	16	14
Had to move home	3	27	14	10
Violence	4	5	4	6
Base	81	54	138	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	40	31	36	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	48	59	52	51
Total awareness	88	90	88	85
Not aware of legal aid	12	10	12	15
Base: All people	206	183	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Hamilton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	24	9	17	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	42	30	35	25
Total awareness	66	39	52	48
Not aware of community law centres	34	61	48	52
Base: All people	206	183	400	7,200