



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Wairarapa

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Key Highlights for Wairarapa

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

1. People in **Wairarapa** have problems that are broadly similar in nature and extent to the national average, although consumer related are regarded less seriously.
2. They are less likely to solve the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends).
3. Overall, key reasons for not seeking help are that they are more likely to deal with problems themselves, or do not think that help or advice will make that much difference.
4. Those seeking help or advice, however, want more than just information and basic support. Relative to the national population, Wairarapa people are more likely to want someone to help them deal with the problem, sort it out for them, or represent them before a court or tribunal.
5. Government agencies or departments are key sources of help, and there is a strong desire for personal contact.
6. Loss of income is a relatively greater impact for people in the Wairarapa with problems.
7. Positively, the community law centre has a higher profile in the Wairarapa, with awareness and knowledge relatively stronger.
8. Within the region there are some notable differences. **Masterton** has a higher incidence of problems overall, with the most serious categories being money and debt, and employment (non income factors such as bullying and overwork being cited as problem triggers).
9. Masterton people are more likely to seek help or advice, with community law centres, citizens advice bureaux, legal aid lawyers and mediation services more likely to be mentioned as sources used.
10. In **rural areas**, employment issues are less common. In contrast, the welfare benefit category is more problematic and serious. Receiving incorrect information and low income/wages are key problem triggers.
11. Rural people are less likely to seek help, often dealing with the problem and solving it themselves.

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 Masterton and the rest of the region classified as Rural

Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for Wairarapa and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	8	10	9	10
Money or debt	9	8	9	8
Welfare benefits	5	8	7	7
Housing or land	6	4	5	6
Employment	9	2	5	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	6	4	5	5
Immigration	-	-	-	1
Other	7	5	6	6
Nett have a problem	35	29	31	29
Nett do not have a problem	65	71	69	71
Base	139	261	400	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Masterton %	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	9	11	10	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	21	16	18	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	13	10	11	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	8	29	21	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	22	6	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	17	15	16	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	11	12	12	14
Base		49	75	123	2069

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

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	4	14	10	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	16	6	9	9
Faulty goods and appliances	-	1	1	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	3	1	2	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	-	8	5	5
Low income/wages	6	15	11	5
Taking on too much debt	7	-	3	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	5	4	4	4
Illness or poor health	1	2	2	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	5	3	4	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ³	-	3	2	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	-	5	3	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	8	9	8	3
Problems with neighbours	10	4	6	3
Loss or change of job	-	-	-	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	-	2	1	3
Alcohol or drugs	-	-	-	2
Being taken advantage of	1	3	2	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	-	-	-	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	4	5	4	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	-	1	1	2
Death of a family member	-	-	-	2
Suffered an injury or accident	8	-	3	2
Irregular income	4	4	4	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	1	7	5	1
Domestic violence	-	2	1	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	49	75	123	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

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	3	31	23	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	29	3	11	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	9	4	5	10
The problem sorted itself out	18	11	13	10
After court or tribunal action	19	16	17	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	-	17	12	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	14	12	12	6
Through mediation	8	6	6	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	-	1	1	2
Base: Most serious problem over	20*	48	68	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	25	10	18	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	22	13	17	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	3	8	5	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	9	11	10	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	20	14	17	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	2	21	11	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	-	9	4	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	2	-	1	5
In the process of going though mediation	18	15	17	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	29*	27*	56	1052

Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	55	40	46	44
Maybe	2	-	1	4
No	43	60	53	52
Base: Have problem	49	75	123	2069

Table: % Type of Help Wanted

Type of help wanted	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	36	37	36	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	29	16	22	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	42	38	40	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	40	34	37	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	53	19	35	18
Base: Seeking help	28*	30*	58	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	11	17	14	10
Internet site	16	6	11	13
Local council of other public authority	-	7	4	12
Community law centre	20	-	10	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	25	-	13	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	11	9	10	13
Private lawyer	19	20	19	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	6	2	4	5
Legal aid lawyer	29	3	15	10
Insurance company	-	3	1	3
Government agency or department	36	30	33	20⁴
Police	-	15	8	9
Doctor or other health professional	32	19	25	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	25	2	13	7
Member of parliament	-	-	-	6
Ombudsman	-	-	-	2
Friends of other family members	34	29	32	34
Trade Union	-	-	-	3
Court desk	3	-	1	3
Minister of religion	-	12	6	3
Māori organisation	-	-	-	4
Average number of sources used	2.7	1.7	2.2	2.5
Base: Seek help	28*	30*	58	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	47	48	48	42
Telephone	44	36	39	36
Through a web site	6	5	5	7
By letter	-	7	5	3
By email	-	1	1	4
Some other way	2	1	2	2
Don't know/it depends	1	2	1	5
Base	139	261	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

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	46	61	56	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	-	10	7	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	26	7	13	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	14	7	9	9
Did not think it would make much difference	20	23	22	8
Couldn't be bothered	14	16	16	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	9	1	4	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	9	-	3	4
Thought it would cost too much	-	7	5	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	9	2	4	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	3	1	1	4
Was uncertain of my rights	9	15	13	3
Thought it would take too much time	10	2	4	2
Didn't trust anyone	9	6	7	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	9	6	7	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	-	8	5	2
Too embarrassed/shy	9	-	3	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	9	6	7	1
Thought that the other party was right	18	-	6	1
Too scared	9	-	3	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	17	-	6	1
Other	26	2	10	20
Base: All people not seeking help	21*	45	66	1087

Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	40	47	44	39
Loss of confidence	36	31	33	32
Loss of income	35	37	36	26
Physical ill health	16	11	13	20
Relationship breakdown	19	16	17	16
Loss of employment	24	23	23	14
Had to move home	18	8	12	10
Violence	-	4	2	6
Base	49	75	123	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	29	32	31	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	55	55	55	51
Total awareness	84	87	86	85
Not aware of legal aid	16	13	14	15
Base: All people	139	261	400	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Masterton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	37	33	34	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	28	23	25	25
Total awareness	65	56	59	48
Not aware of community law centres	35	44	41	52
Base: All people	139	261	400	7,200