



**2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs  
and Access to Services**

**Summary Results for the West Coast Region**

**Prepared**

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**By**

**ignite**research

## Key Highlights for the West Coast Region

In comparison with national results, the following differences are noted for people in the West Coast region:<sup>1</sup>

1. People in the **West Coast** are less likely to have consumer related or money/debt problems, but more likely to have welfare benefit problems.
2. Across the region, people still trying to resolve their main problem are more likely to be trying to do it on their own without the help of anyone else.
3. Nevertheless, the proportion of people seeking or planning to seek help is greater than the national average. Leaflets and other publications, the internet, police and friends or family are key sources of help.
4. Among those not seeking help, cost appears a more significant barrier.
5. Awareness and knowledge of legal aid is high, but West Coasters are less likely to know where community law centres are.
6. In **Greymouth**, specifically, consumer related problems and housing/land problems are regarded as much less serious.
7. Among those with employment problems, non income issues such as bullying and overwork are key triggers.
8. Personal visits are much more preferred as a means of accessing help.
9. Stress related illnesses and loss of confidence are more prevalent negative impacts for people who experience problems in Greymouth.
10. In contrast, welfare benefit problems are more serious for **rural people** than people in Greymouth. Pregnancy or birth of a child is a key problem trigger. And despite their lower incidence, consumer related problems are also more serious.
11. Rural people are less likely to have problems overall.
12. Telephone access to help has relatively greater preference in rural parts of the West Coast.
13. Rural people seeking help are less likely to want information only. Some basic support and someone else to help also desired.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for West Coast and New Zealand**

<b>Nature of Problem or Dispute</b>	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Consumer related	6	8	7	<b>10</b>
Money or debt	6	5	5	<b>8</b>
Welfare benefits	10	10	10	<b>7</b>
Housing or land	2	6	4	<b>6</b>
Employment	5	3	4	<b>5</b>
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	6	2	4	<b>5</b>
Immigration	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Other	11	4	8	<b>6</b>
Nett have a problem	30	26	28	<b>29</b>
Nett do not have a problem	70	74	72	<b>71</b>
<b>Base</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>7,200</b>

**Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious**

<b>Problem type</b>	<b>Main issues</b>	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Consumer related	Faulty or defective goods and services, difficulties getting refunds or replacements, problems with phone or power companies, banks and insurance companies	9	25	15	<b>18</b>
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	19	7	14	<b>17</b>
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	2	19	9	<b>11</b>
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	16	27	20	<b>12</b>
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	16	5	11	<b>12</b>
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	14	8	12	<b>15</b>
Immigration	Difficulties obtaining NZ residency or citizenship and sponsoring a partner or other family members	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Other	Traffic/driving offences and being the victim of a crime	25	8	18	<b>14</b>
<b>Base</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2069</b>

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

	Greymouth %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	4	5	4	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	21	6	15	9
Faulty goods and appliances	11	8	10	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	7	4	5	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	-	1	1	5
Low income/wages	9	-	5	5
Taking on too much debt	4	-	3	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	7	2	5	4
Illness or poor health	4	-	3	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	2	8	5	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department <sup>2</sup>	9	9	9	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	-	6	3	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	5	-	3	3
Problems with neighbours	-	-	-	3
Loss or change of job	1	5	3	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	2	-	2	3
Alcohol or drugs	2	2	2	2
Being taken advantage of	-	6	3	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	1	2	2	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	-	-	-	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	1	-	1	2
Birth of child/pregnancy	-	14	6	2
Suffered an injury or accident	1	-	1	2
Irregular income	-	3	2	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	1	8	4	1
Domestic violence	-	2	1	1
<b>Base: All people with most serious problem</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2069</b>

<sup>2</sup> 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**

	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	11	33	24	<b>28</b>
Agreement was reached with the other party	33	30	32	<b>24</b>
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	8	15	12	<b>10</b>
The problem sorted itself out	5	8	7	<b>10</b>
After court or tribunal action	-	-	-	<b>9</b>
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	6	5	5	<b>7</b>
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	29	4	15	<b>6</b>
Through mediation	5	3	4	<b>4</b>
Did nothing to resolve the problem	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
<b>Base: Most serious problem over</b>	<b>18*</b>	<b>25*</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1016</b>

**Table: Current Problem Position**

	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	45	49	46	<b>28</b>
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	8	18	11	<b>16</b>
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	9	22	13	<b>15</b>
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	-	6	2	<b>10</b>
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	7	-	5	<b>9</b>
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	21	2	15	<b>7</b>
Court or tribunal action is occurring	9	2	7	<b>5</b>
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	2	-	1	<b>5</b>
In the process of going through mediation	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
<b>Base: Most serious problem still ongoing</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>21*</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1052</b>

**Table: % Intend to or Have Sought Help**

	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Yes	53	68	59	44
Maybe	3	-	2	4
No	44	32	39	52
<b>Base: Have problem</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2069</b>

**Table: % Type of Help Wanted**

<b>Type of help wanted</b>	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	37	15	27	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	37	46	41	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	37	32	35	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	10	23	16	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	6	3	5	18
<b>Base: Seeking help</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>981</b>

**Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help**

<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	17	36	26	10
Internet site	15	32	23	13
Local council of other public authority	3	31	16	12
Community law centre	18	-	10	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	6	3	4	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	7	7	7	13
Private lawyer	11	29	19	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	-	3	1	5
Legal aid lawyer	2	-	1	10
Insurance company	2	9	5	3
Government agency or department	18	11	15	20 <sup>3</sup>
Police	28	14	22	9
Doctor or other health professional	7	29	17	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	3	4	4	7
Member of parliament	1	7	4	6
Ombudsman	-	-	-	2
Friends of other family members	64	45	55	34
Trade Union	-	-	-	3
Court desk	5	-	3	3
Minister of religion	2	-	1	3
Māori organisation	-	6	3	4
Average number of sources used	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.5
<b>Base: Seek help</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>981</b>

**Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)**

	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Personal visit	50	40	46	42
Telephone	33	40	36	36
Through a web site	6	9	7	7
By letter	2	1	2	3
By email	-	5	2	4
Some other way	-	-	-	2
Don't know/it depends	10	5	8	5
<b>Base</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>7,200</b>

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

**Table: Main Reasons Provided for Not Seeking Help**

	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Dealt with it myself	30	25	28	<b>33</b>
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	5	6	5	<b>13</b>
Thought the problem would resolve itself	5	7	6	<b>11</b>
Did not think it was serious or important enough	-	6	2	<b>9</b>
Did not think it would make much difference	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Couldn't be bothered	-	11	4	<b>5</b>
Didn't know what to do or where to go	3	2	3	<b>4</b>
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Thought it would cost too much	11	10	10	<b>4</b>
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	-	3	1	<b>3</b>
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	-	2	1	<b>4</b>
Was uncertain of my rights	3	2	3	<b>3</b>
Thought it would take too much time	-	4	1	<b>2</b>
Didn't trust anyone	3	7	4	<b>2</b>
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	8	-	5	<b>2</b>
Too embarrassed/shy	3	-	2	<b>2</b>
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Thought that the other party was right	4	-	2	<b>1</b>
Too scared	3	-	2	<b>1</b>
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Other	38	39	38	<b>20</b>
<b>Base: All people not seeking help</b>	<b>29*</b>	<b>15*</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1087</b>

**Table: Impacts Reported by People with Problems**

<b>Impacts of problem</b>	<b>Greymouth %</b>	<b>Rural %</b>	<b>Total region %</b>	<b>NZ %</b>
Stress related illness	50	43	47	<b>39</b>
Loss of confidence	51	32	43	<b>32</b>
Loss of income	29	27	28	<b>26</b>
Physical ill health	14	12	13	<b>20</b>
Relationship breakdown	12	23	16	<b>16</b>
Loss of employment	14	8	11	<b>14</b>
Had to move home	10	17	13	<b>10</b>
Violence	5	3	4	<b>6</b>
<b>Base</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2069</b>

**Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid**

	<b>Greymouth</b> %	<b>Rural</b> %	<b>Total region</b> %	<b>NZ</b> %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	46	37	42	<b>34</b>
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	42	49	45	<b>51</b>
<b>Total awareness</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>85</b>
Not aware of legal aid	12	14	13	<b>15</b>
<b>Base: All people</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>7,200</b>

**Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres**

	<b>Greymouth</b> %	<b>Rural</b> %	<b>Total region</b> %	<b>NZ</b> %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	22	18	20	<b>23</b>
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	31	31	31	<b>25</b>
<b>Total awareness</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>48</b>
Not aware of community law centres	47	51	49	<b>52</b>
<b>Base: All people</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>7,200</b>