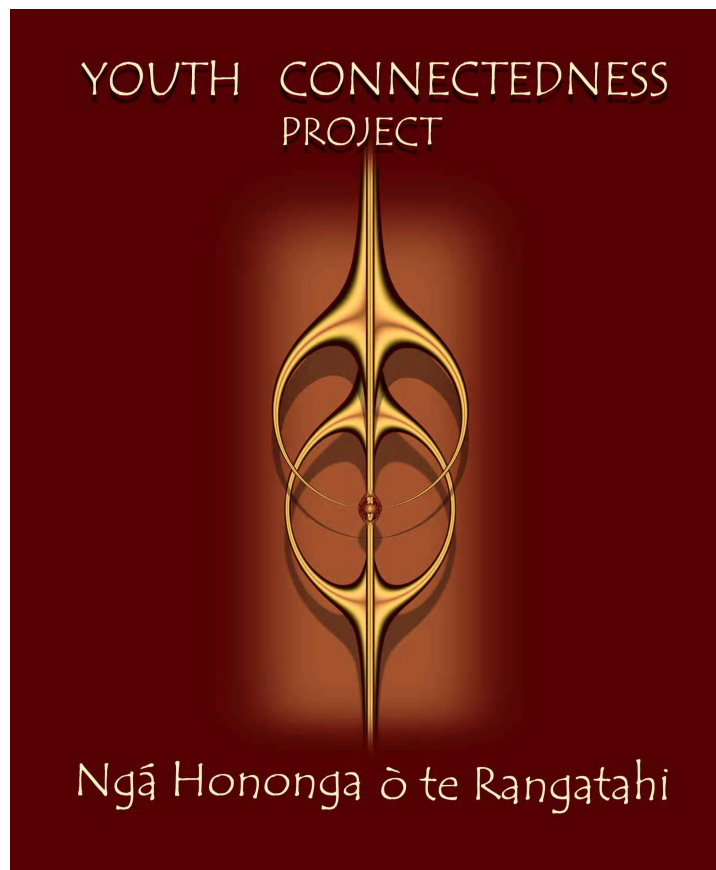


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui*



# Community data –Lower Hutt (2006 Survey)



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**Youth Connectedness Project: Background Information**

The Youth Connectedness Project is a unique New Zealand longitudinal study, following young people/rangatahi beginning in school years 6, 8 and 10, over three years (2006, 2007 and 2008).

The main objectives of the study are to examine how connectedness supports youth in negotiating the challenges of adolescence, and to identify modifiable factors that foster and enhance connectedness. We are focusing on young peoples’ connectedness to: communities and wider society; families and whanau; and schools/kura.

**“Youth Connectedness” in Lower Hutt:**

**Who Are the Participants?**

The Youth Connectedness Project conducted surveys with 2174 young people from New Zealand’s North Island. Of this total, 136 (or 6.3%) came from the Lower Hutt area. Males constituted 47.1% and females 52.9% of the total Lower Hutt sample. In regards to age, 56.6% were aged 10 to 11 and 43.3% were aged 12 to 14. The ethnic composition of the Lower Hutt sample is as follows: 28.7% identified solely as NZ European, 42.6% identified solely or in part as Māori and 28.7% as Other<sup>1</sup>.

The schools involved in the survey were: Avalon Intermediate, Rata Street, Tui Glen, Dyer Street, Randwick School, Petone Central and Hutt Valley High School.

**Community Efforts and Youth Voice**

We asked participants a) if the community tries hard to give young people what they want and b) if young people have a say in what happens in their community.

Table 1 presents the responses of Lower Hutt participants compared to the response rates of the overall sample in the Youth Connectedness Project. The results are very similar for both groups. In relation to youth voice, Lower Hutt participants showed a slightly higher percentage of “Don’t know” answers.

Table 1

*Perceptions of community efforts and youth voice for Wellington and the overall sample.*

	Lower Hutt	Overall
<b>Effort %</b>		
Yes	34.6	32.5
No	11.	14.1
Don’t know	51.5	51.1
<b>Voice %</b>		
Yes	25	24.1
No	19.9	27.5
Don’t know	52.2	46.3

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<sup>1</sup> The “Other” category covers a wide range of ethnic groups.

**Potential Services in Case of Need**

We were interested in knowing which services young people would go to if they had a problem. As found for the overall sample, a high number of Lower Hutt participants would not go to any of the services from the provided list. The highest rated services were family doctor, followed by school services and Youth Line (see Figure 1).

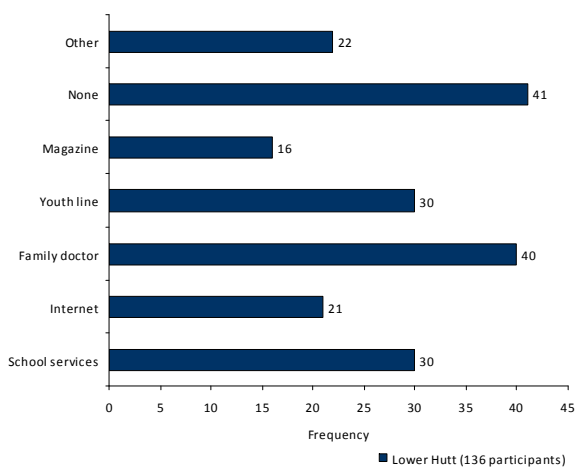


Figure 1. Services participants would use in case of need (Lower Hutt).

**Safety**

In regards to safety, we asked Youth Connectedness participants about which places, from a varied set, they considered unsafe. As indicated in Figure 2, Lower Hutt participants' ratings were not very different to the overall sample's; "Other" answers include "alleyways" (2 answers), "pub" (1 answer) and "streets I don't live in" and "anywhere where people look scary" (1 answer).

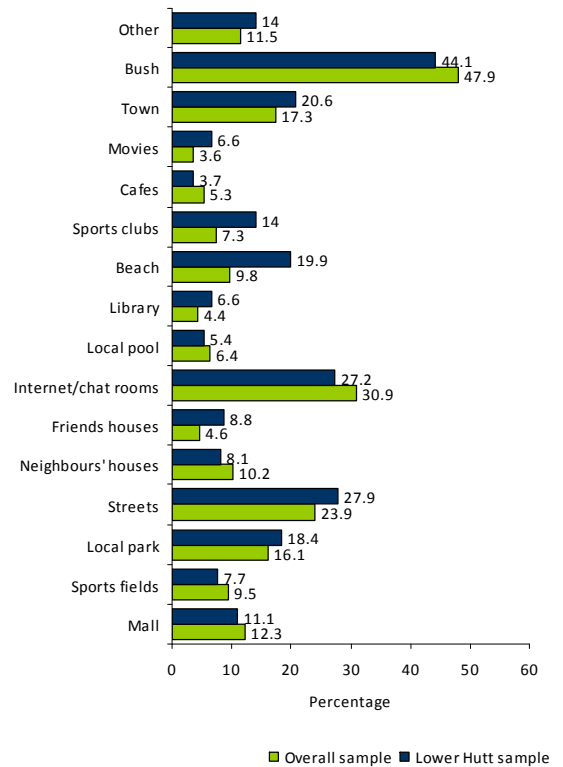


Figure 2. Unsafe places to hang out (Lower Hutt and overall sample).

**Sense of Neighbourhood**

Sense of neighbourhood measures the extent to which young people feel they are growing up in a safe and supportive environment, with neighbours that they and their families know and can count on. Our results show that Lower Hutt in the lowest 1/3 of the 12 North Island districts surveyed.

**Perceived Adults’ Negative Attitudes**

This refers to the extent that young people perceive that adults do not want them around and treat them unfairly because of their age. A comparative analysis showed that Lower Hutt’s results were in the lowest 1/3 of the 12 North Island districts surveyed.

**Community Groups**

The majority of Lower Hutt participants (58.1%) belong to at least one community group. As seen in Figure 3, in Lower Hutt (as in the overall sample) the most common group belonged to is a sports group. The “Other” category comes next and included, along with specific sports, art classes and nature and volunteer groups.

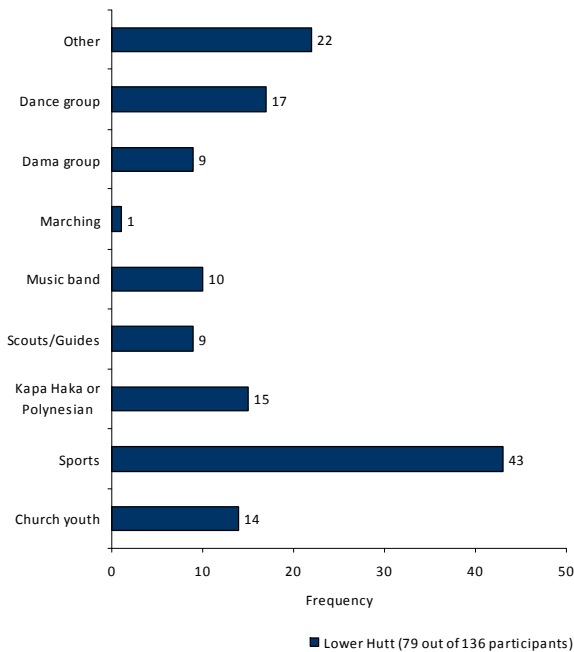


Figure 3. Community group belonging in Lower Hutt (frequencies).

The majority of participants who belonged to these groups agreed that it improved their confidence, that it was a good way to make friends, that group members would look out for each other and that being part of a group made them feel they were giving something good to the community.

Analysis of our wider dataset tells us that belonging to groups outside schools is associated with several positive outcomes, including higher well-being, life satisfaction, stronger ethnic identity (for both NZ European and Maori participants), and more positive body image.

**What Youth Want More Of**

We generated a list of things young people might want more of (see Figure 4) and asked our participants to indicate what they would desire (they could tick as many as applied). Of central note is that a higher percentage of Lower Hutt participants, compared to the overall sample, stated they would want more school and after school activities and better and cheaper transports. Also, Lower Hutt participants showed slightly higher percentages of desire for more time and attention from caregivers. These results should also be interpreted recalling that Lower Hutt sample had a lower age mean than the total sample.

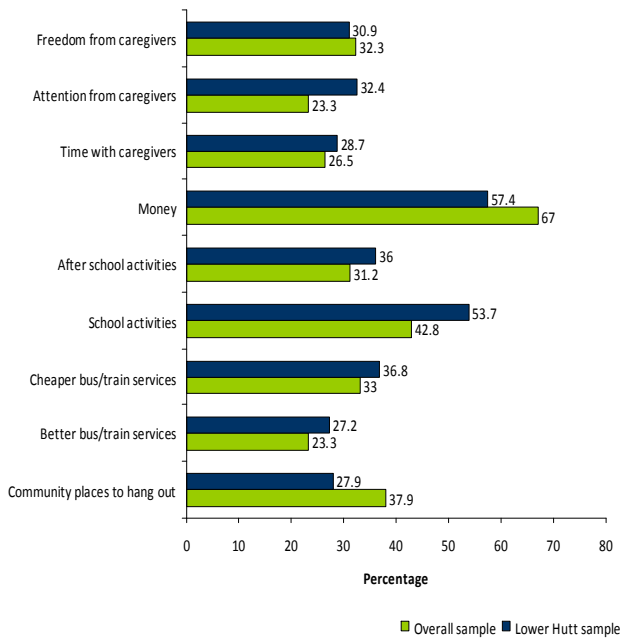


Figure 4. What participants would "like more of" in Lower Hutt and overall sample.

Table 3 shows the percentages of internet and cell phone use by age by age group and gender. As they grow older, young people tend to increase their internet and cell phone use. Comparatively, girls showed a higher percentage of cell phone use and boys showed a higher percentage of internet use.

Table 3  
Percentages of internet and cell phone use by age group and gender in Lower Hutt.

	Internet %	Cell %
<b>Age Group</b>		
10 to 11	61	54.5
12 to 14	67.2	84.5
<b>Gender</b>		
Girls	61.1	75
Boys	67.2	59.4

### Technology Use

As seen in Table 2, a lower percentage of participants in Wellington use the internet in their leisure time and the cell phone compared to the overall sample.

Table 2  
Internet and cell phone use for Wellington and the overall sample.

	Internet	Cell
Overall Sample %	71.6	74.4
Lower Hutt %	64	67.6

### **Summary of Key Findings**

☐ Young people in Lower Hutt, as in the overall sample, tend to show some lack of awareness about community attempts to address their needs and engage them. Lower Hutt participants, compared to the overall sample, showed very similar perceptions of community's efforts to address young people's needs and youth voice.

☐ The majority of young people stated they would not look for any of the community services we listed. Peer-support based services, as suggested by some of our youth focus groups participants, could be a possible avenue to (or continue to) explore. Family doctors, school services and Youth Line are the two most highly utilised services and are likely to hold rich knowledge about common concerns held by young people.

☐ Lower Hutt youth could benefit from actions/measures addressing sense of neighbourhood and adult negative attitudes towards young people.

☐ While the majority of Lower Hutt youth is already engaged in community groups, there is still a sizeable percentage that is not. Given the positive benefits for wellbeing of community group engagement, it could be worthwhile to address non-engaged young people and their families and identify the major reasons underlying this fact.

☐ Of special note for Lower Hutt is the youth desire for more school and after school activities and for cheaper and better transports. Also, joint family, children/parents activities could be a way to address Lower Hutt young people's desire for more time and attention with and from caregivers.

☐ Lower Hutt participants, compared to the overall sample, are relatively less connected to the Internet. Nevertheless this difference may be due to the fact that the average age for Lower Hutt participants is lower than the overall sample's. Internet and cell phone use are strongly embedded in young people's lives and this increases as they get older.