

PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE AUCKLAND CBD

*A discussion of some of the results of the Auckland
City District Police customer satisfaction survey*

by

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Abstract

Earlier this year, the Institute of Public Policy at AUT University carried out a customer satisfaction survey for the Auckland City District Police. One of the aims of the survey was to examine perceptions of public safety in the Auckland city's central business district (CBD). In particular the survey investigated (1) public use of the CBD; (2) people's perceptions of public safety within the CBD; and (3) whether people's views on safety within that area had changed over the last five years.

In this article, Casey and Crothers firstly review the research which has been undertaken on behalf of Auckland City and which has addressed the issue of public safety in the CBD. They also examine the strategies council has developed which may have a bearing on the issue of CBD safety.

The authors then discuss the findings of the Auckland City District Police customer satisfaction survey 2005 which canvassed the usage and perceptions of safety in the Auckland CBD among three discrete population samples:- 820 random householders; 209 senior college students and 117 international tertiary students.

Finally, the authors discuss the implications of the survey results for the various joint police/council initiatives to improve CBD safety and make a number of suggestions for actions which might impact positively on future perceptions of safety in the Auckland CBD.

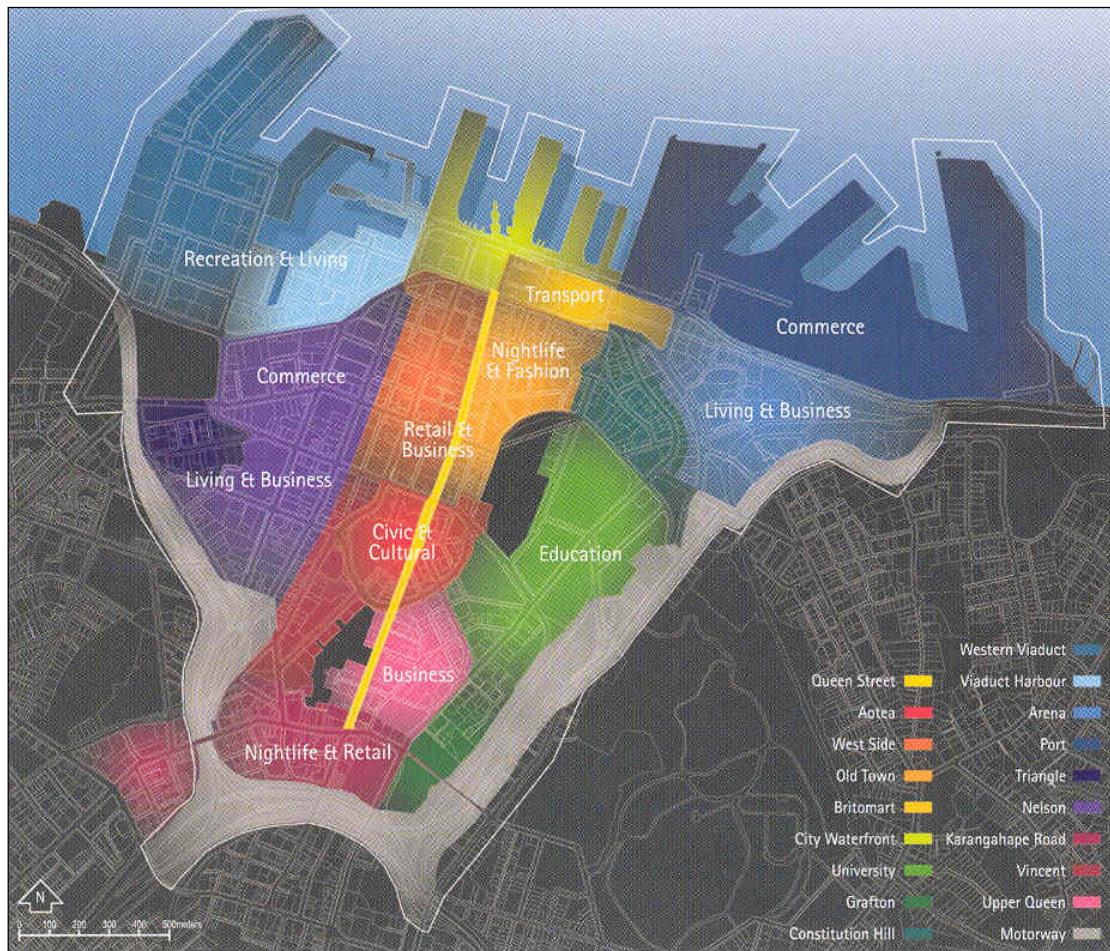
A : AUCKLAND CBD – SAFETY, STRATEGIES AND RESEARCH

Auckland City CBD

Auckland's CBD has evolved over nearly 200 years of European settlement. It covers an area of 433 hectares, similar to the size of Sydney's CBD and twice the area of Wellington's. It is geographically defined by the Waitemata harbour on one side and the region's motorway system on the other.



Auckland City has identified that different areas of the CBD tend to be used in different ways and has developed distinct areas (or quarters) each with its own characteristics and uses.



It is New Zealand's principal business centre and is the primary employment, education, entertainment and tourism centre of the Auckland region. It is the workplace for 6,500 people. In addition, 16,000 people currently live in the CBD. The CBD is therefore a key element in the Auckland city economy.

Auckland's CBD: Into the Future Strategy, published in July, 2004, is a City Council plan for reshaping and revitalising Auckland's central business area. It is funded through a targeted rate which will raise \$10.3 million over ten years. The plan notes that approximately 270,000 people travel into or through the CBD daily and that 95 per cent of them are likely to come from the Auckland region. It notes that most people come into the CBD for work (31 per cent); others come for recreation and leisure (31 per cent) shopping (21 per cent) or education (9 per cent) and that there are important differences in the times different areas of the CBD are used. Activities and users can differ between day and night, with more business during the day and more recreation at night.

In consulting with stakeholders as part of the *Auckland's CBD: Into the Future Strategy*, Auckland City found that safety was a significant issue. Many stakeholders commented that the inner city felt "unsafe" in many aspects and that the council needed a comprehensive strategy to address perceived shortfalls. Auckland City identified that need within the strategy:

"People are entitled to feel safe when using Auckland's CBD. Therefore, the CBD will be planned, designed and maintained in ways that enhance personal safety." (p.21)

Responsibility to develop a strategy to respond to these safety concerns was delegated to Safer Auckland City, Auckland's Safer Community Council.

Safer Auckland City

Safer Auckland City (SAC) was established in 1995 to deal with crime prevention and community safety in Auckland city. SAC has partnerships with four major stakeholders: Auckland City Council, Ngati Whatua O Orakei, the Auckland City District Police and the Government's Crime Prevention Unit. The emphasis of SAC is on community safety and crime reduction. By co-ordinating the views of its four stakeholders, it aims for an integrated approach to addressing Auckland city's safety issues. The partnership agreement supports the Auckland City District Police in their role in the reduction in crime within the Auckland City CBD.

In response, to the concerns of CBD stakeholders, in 2003, SAC developed an *Inner City Safety Strategy*. This identifies the key safety issues and initiatives for Auckland City Council in the CBD. Its aim is:

"To make Auckland City's CBD safe for workers, residents and visitors, and contributing to the CBD becoming a place that is liveable, vibrant and safe." (p.2)

Its objectives are:

- To promote responsible and safe alcohol use and management
- To create a safe physical environment
- To work in partnership with Maori and Pacific peoples to address the issues of Maori and Pacific Island crime and victimisation
- To address the crime and safety issues relating to youth
- To increase the perceptions of safety for residents, workers and visitors

The strategy acknowledges the contribution made to inner city safety by a variety of organisations including Auckland City Council, Safer Auckland City, Auckland City District Police, the Maori Wardens and Ngati Whatua O Orakei.









The strategy outlines 15 projects aimed at promoting CBD safety including: Auckland City Liquor Ban; Auckland City Gambling Accord; Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); CCTV Upgrade and Evaluation; Maori Wardens Project; Ambassador Programme etc. (See Appendix One for the full list and a description of each project). Since Auckland City approved the *Inner Safety Strategy* all 15 initiatives have been implemented.

Children and Safety in the CBD

During 2004, Auckland City consulted with over 600 children in developing *Growing up together*, its draft child and family policy. Among the 28 questions in the children's questionnaire, there were three questions about safety in the CBD:

- Is the central city a safe place for you to go?
- Why?
- What would make it safer?

Most of the 600 children who participated (67 per cent) thought that the central city was a safe place to go. The children had clear ideas about what would make it safer (although the report's author recognises that it may have been a slightly leading question). These included:

-  If it was cleaner
-  If there was less traffic
-  If there was more police
-  Less crime
-  More traffic lights
-  No alcohol
-  Less crazy, and bad people
-  Less people

One young respondent had a very clear idea about what should be done:

“I don’t go into the central city a lot because I might get lost. Maybe a sign could be made with “lost” on it and then children who were lost could go there.”

Perceptions of CBD Public Safety – Research

In 2002, Auckland City carried out a survey of perceptions of residents, workers and visitors to the central city in relation to personal safety.¹ Response rates were low: of the 629 questionnaires returned, the business response rate was 33 per cent and the residential response rate 18 per cent. Face to face street interviews during the day made up 52 per cent of the total responses.

Approximately 50 per cent of respondents felt that it was not safe to be alone in the city after dark, with women feeling more unsafe than men at night (64 per cent compared with 42 per cent). The majority of respondents thought offensive and threatening behaviour and isolated back streets make the city

¹ Auckland City; *Behaviour and Attitudes and Perceptions of Residents, Workers and Visitors to the Central City*, Report prepared by Central Area Planning – City Planning, February 2003.

an unsafe place at night. Other concerns at night included poor street lighting and lack of police/surveillance. When asked for suggestions for improving safety in the city centre, respondents identified that the most important improvement would be to provide more police; second, more lighting and third, more closed circuit television cameras.

Two more recent research reports commissioned by Auckland City have made comment on the perceptions of safety in the CBD from the perspective of international students in one case and Asian people in another.

In December 2003, Auckland consultants Infometrics produced "*International Students – Their Impact on Auckland City*". According to the authors its objective was to:

"... ascertain the contribution that export education makes to the Auckland economy, discuss the prospects for the industry, identify the risks to the industry and how they are being managed, and consider the infrastructural needs of the industry – transport, accommodation and so forth." (p.1)

The authors collected the information by analysing available quantitative information e.g. Ministry of Education and Statistics NZ and interviewing industry players.

"The report notes that safety is a crucial component of the New Zealand educational experience and a section deals with *Social and Security* issues. It notes that clustering of international students in the CBD increases the probability of students being exposed to intimidation and possibly extortion and that certain CBD venues are "*well known to the Auckland Police as 'hot spots'.*" (p.32)

The report also notes that international students can arrive with preconceived ideas about public safety in the Auckland CBD and the role of the police, which may impact on their experience in Auckland:

“To some extent, students come to New Zealand in the expectation that it is a safe place and so are less wary than they might be in their home country. Thus they are more likely to be victims of crime which, together with a distrust of the police among certain ethnic groups, raises both the level of crime and the difficulty of dealing with it ... The police budget has not kept pace with the rapid growth in the number of fee-paying students.” (p.32)

A recent research project commissioned by Auckland City reviewed the literature relating to Asian people in the Auckland CBD. Megan Fidler Research (February 2005) examined perceptions of safety identified in the literature noting that the CBD is currently perceived to be unsafe by Asian people and that public safety and monitoring of crime is a major concern to the Asian community.

“The perceived lack of safety was surprising to people who have moved to Auckland recently, as they formerly perceived Auckland and New Zealand generally, to be safe. Many of the suggestions about how to make the CBD safer focused on prevention and included such things as a greater police presence, lighting and safe public transport. It was suggested that increasing the understanding between police and different Asian communities would create dialogue between communities and the police and so make the CBD a safer place for Asian people.” (p. 6)

Megan Fidler Research quotes from Mandela Research’s 2003 work for Auckland City which noted that Asian people are shocked by the lack of size and power of the police and that they are surprised by police attitudes regarding burglary and theft complaints.

“They are told to claim on their insurance, told to join the local neighbourhood watch group, and one complainant was allegedly told to stay at home. This perceived lack of action erodes their faith in the police to catch criminals.” (p.22)

Mandela Research also noted a reluctance by Asian people to report violent crime because they do not believe the police will deal with the case promptly thus allowing the perpetrators and witnesses to leave New Zealand. They also found that Asian people may have limited trust in the Auckland City District Police because of corruption in their own country's police.

Finally Mandela Research noted that Asians identified the Auckland Sky City Casino as the focus for some criminal offending at that time because:

“It is one of the only socialising venues open late into the night.”
(p.22)

A number of the suggestions made to Mandela Research for improving perceptions of safety in the CBD for Asian people specifically related to policing:

- Improved police/community education programmes
- Increase in the number of police ethnic community liaison officers
- More communication about the police role
- Addressing racism (real or perceived) within the police
- More user-friendly police communications strategy.

B: SAFETY IN THE AUCKLAND CBD – SURVEY AND NUMBERS

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Auckland City District Police requested Dr Cathy Casey of the Institute of Public Policy at AUT University to design and administer a customer satisfaction survey as part of IPP's commitment under their Memorandum of Understanding.

A number of meetings were held with senior staff of Auckland City District Police to discuss the survey's content. It was decided that the questions would focus on three areas:

1. Satisfaction with service received from Auckland City District Police
2. Perceptions of NZ Police generally
3. Usage of, and perceptions of personal safety in, the Auckland CBD

The AUT University Ethics Committee approved the methodology for the Auckland City District Police Customer Satisfaction Survey at its meeting in January 2005 and the survey was then trialled and the questions refined.

It was decided that the survey would be administered between February and March 2005 and the views of three separate populations would be canvassed:

- (i) A random sample of households across Auckland
- (ii) A sample of students aged 16-18 years from an inner city college
- (iii) A sample of international students studying at tertiary level

(i) Randomised telephoned sample

2,000 households within the Auckland City District Police area were canvassed by telephone over the period 1st to the 10th of February 2005 using a team of six student canvassers, trained and supervised by Dr Casey. The students used a telephone bank set up at the Institute of Public Policy. Telecom supplied numbers chosen at random from across the Auckland City District Police service area.² Calls were made between 5.30pm and 9.30pm Monday to Friday and noon-5pm on Saturdays and Sundays. 820 surveys were completed (41 per cent). A prize of a \$150 dinner at the Orbit Restaurant was offered to every person who completed the survey and a winner was drawn at random.³

² Telephone numbers for Waiheke Island were mistakenly not supplied by Telecom

³ 457 respondents (56 per cent) took part in the draw.

(ii) Domestic students sample

The survey was administered to senior co-educational school students aged 16-18 years at a city college between 21st and 25th February 2005. 209 students returned completed surveys.

(iii) International students sample

With the help of the CAB International Students Centre, 117 international students filled in the survey with assistance from their ESL tutors between 4th and 21st March 2005. The students who completed the survey came from all over the Auckland region (i.e. beyond the Auckland City boundary) therefore comments made about service provision cannot be deemed to be specifically about Auckland City District Police.

Characteristics of the samples – gender

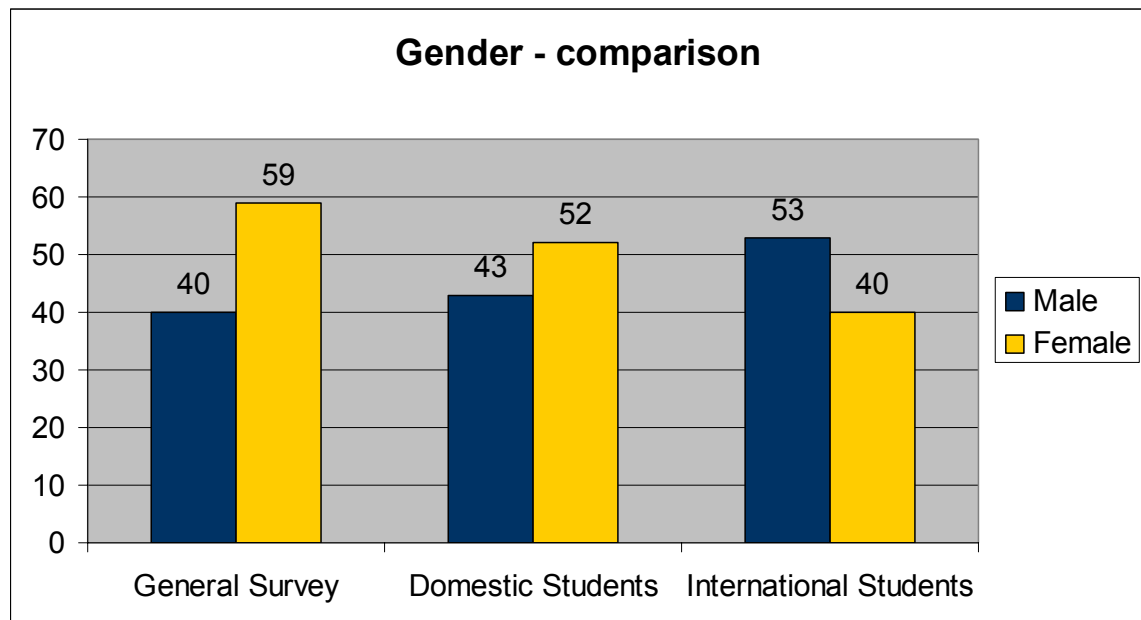
There were more females than males in the randomised telephoned sample (59 per cent female, 40 per cent male) and the domestic student sample (52 per cent female, 43 per cent male). In the international students' sample, there were more males (53 per cent) than females (40 per cent).

In 2001, there were 177,999 men (48 per cent) usually resident in the city of Auckland and 189,735 women (52 per cent). According to *Our People, Our City* gender in Auckland city is relatively even through all age groups. From the age of 70, women start to outnumber men.

Table One: Characteristics of samples – gender

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample | International students sample |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Males | 330 (40%) | 90 (43%) | 62 (53%) |
| Females | 486 (59%) | 108 (52%) | 47 (40%) |
| Missing | 4 (1%) | 11(5%) | 8 (7%) |
| TOTAL | 820 | 209 | 117 |

Figure One: Characteristics of samples – gender



Characteristics of samples – ethnicity

There were more self-identified NZ European in the randomised telephoned sample (68 per cent) than in the domestic student sample (32 per cent). Asian people were the majority in the international student sample (72 per cent) with Asians in the domestic student sample at 21.5 per cent and 13 per cent of the randomised telephoned sample.

People of Pasifika descent made up 10.5 per cent of the domestic student sample and 5 per cent of the randomised telephoned sample. One per cent of the international students claimed a Pasifika background. People of Maori descent were about the same in the domestic student sample (5 per cent) than the randomised telephoned sample (4 per cent).

In 2001, there were people from 181 different ethnic groups living in Auckland city, making it the most ethnically diverse city in New Zealand. In 2001, NZ

Europeans made up 66 per cent of the population of Auckland city, down from 73 per cent in 1991. Maori and Pacific Islands populations remained fairly static, decreasing 1 per cent between 1991 and 2001 to make up 8 per cent and 14 per cent of the population respectively.⁴

In Auckland city, the Asian population experienced the greatest share of growth, up from 25,000 in 1991 to 63,000 (18 per cent) in 2001⁵. This growth is reflected in Auckland's fastest-growing Chinese population, which is now equivalent to the Maori population at 8 per cent.

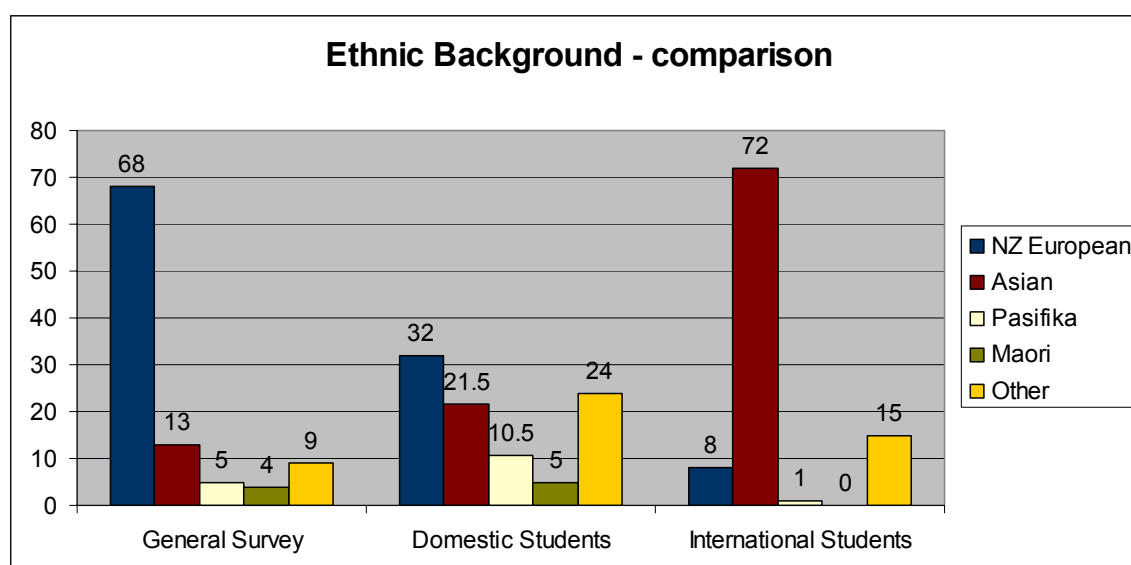
Table Two: Characteristics of samples – ethnicity

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample | International students sample |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| NZ European | 558 (68%) | 67 (32%) | 9 (8%) |
| Asian | 109 (13%) | 45 (21.5%) | 84 (72%) |
| Pasifika | 40 (5%) | 22 (10.5%) | 1 (1%) |
| Maori | 35 (4%) | 11 (5%) | 0 |
| Other | 72 (9%) | 51 (24%) | 18 (15%) |
| Missing | 6 (1%) | 15 (7%) | 5 (4%) |
| TOTAL | 820 | 209 | 117 |

⁴ Auckland City; *Our People, Our City*

⁵ *ibid*

Figure Two: Characteristics of samples - ethnicity



Characteristics of samples – age

The age profile of the telephoned survey was spread across all age ranges, in a similar pattern to the Auckland population as a whole.

Auckland city's population is relatively young, with a median age of 33 years compared with 35 for the New Zealand population as a whole. Auckland city has experienced a decline in the number of people who are over 65, despite increasing nationwide. This decline in the older population is balanced by increases in the number of people aged between 45 and 64 years, which has grown steadily since 1991. In 2001, 10% of the population of Auckland city was over 65.⁶

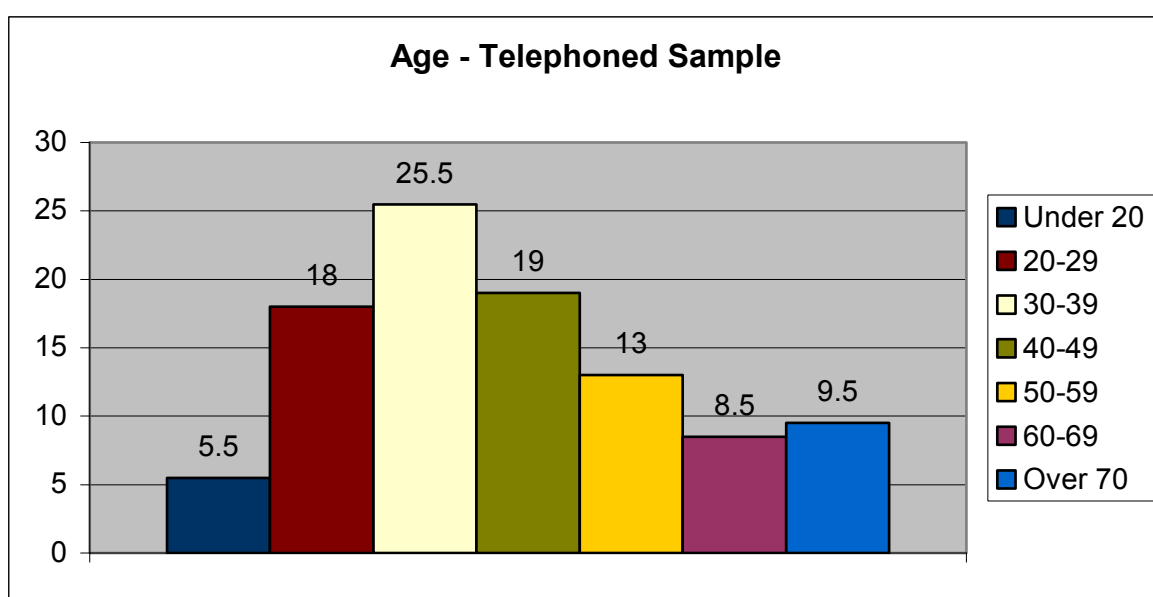
The questionnaire for the domestic students did not require respondents to state age since they were all between 16 and 18 years. It was this questionnaire that was used for the international students, so age data was not gathered.

⁶ Auckland City. *Our People, Our City*

Table Three: Characteristics of samples – age

| | Telephoned sample |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Under 20 | 44 (5.5%) |
| 20-29 | 149 (18%) |
| 30-39 | 208 (25.5%) |
| 40-49 | 158 (19%) |
| 50-59 | 105 (13%) |
| 60-69 | 70 (8.5%) |
| Over 70 | 78 (9.5%) |
| Missing | 8 (1%) |
| TOTAL | 820 |

Figure Three: Age – Telephoned sample



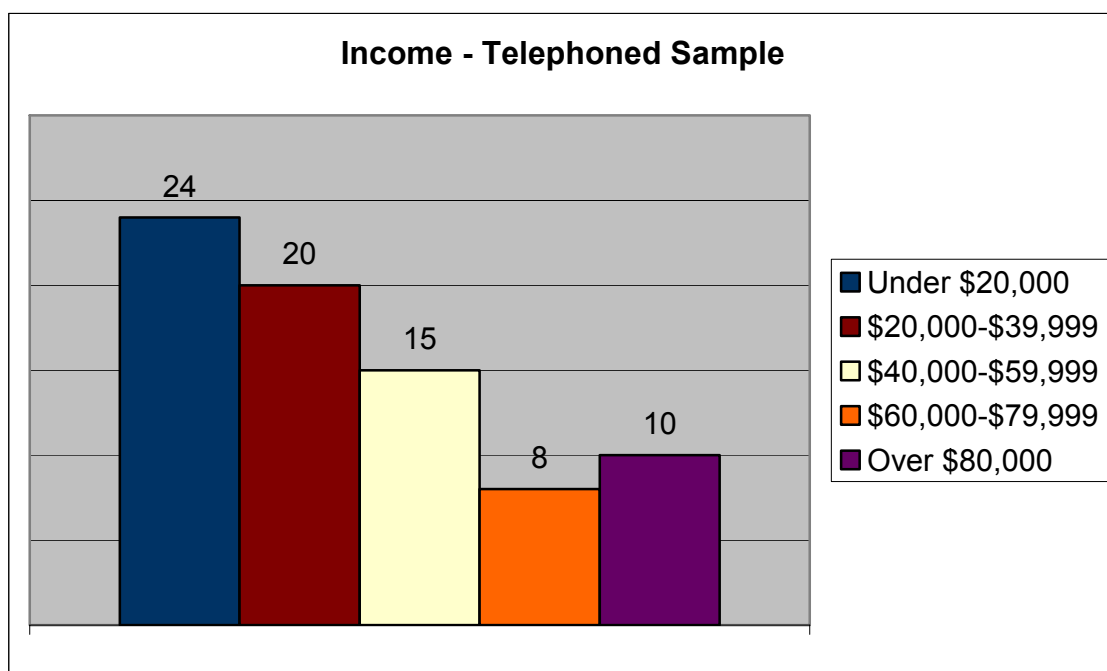
Characteristics of samples – income

The income distribution reported for the randomised telephoned sample was similar to the distribution of income for Auckland city as a whole. In 2001, the median income was \$22,000. 47 per cent of the population of Auckland city have an income of \$20,000 or less and 18 per cent have an income of \$50,000 or more.

Table Four: Telephoned sample – income

| | Telephoned sample |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Under \$20,000 | 194 (24%) |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 166 (20%) |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 125 (15%) |
| \$60,000-\$79,999 | 67 (8%) |
| Over \$80,000 | 81 (10%) |
| Missing | 187 (23%) |
| TOTAL | 820 |

Figure Four: Income – Telephoned Sample



Frequency of visits to the CBD

79.5 per cent of International students said they visited the CBD on a daily basis compared with 26 per cent of the randomised telephoned sample and 5 per cent of domestic students.

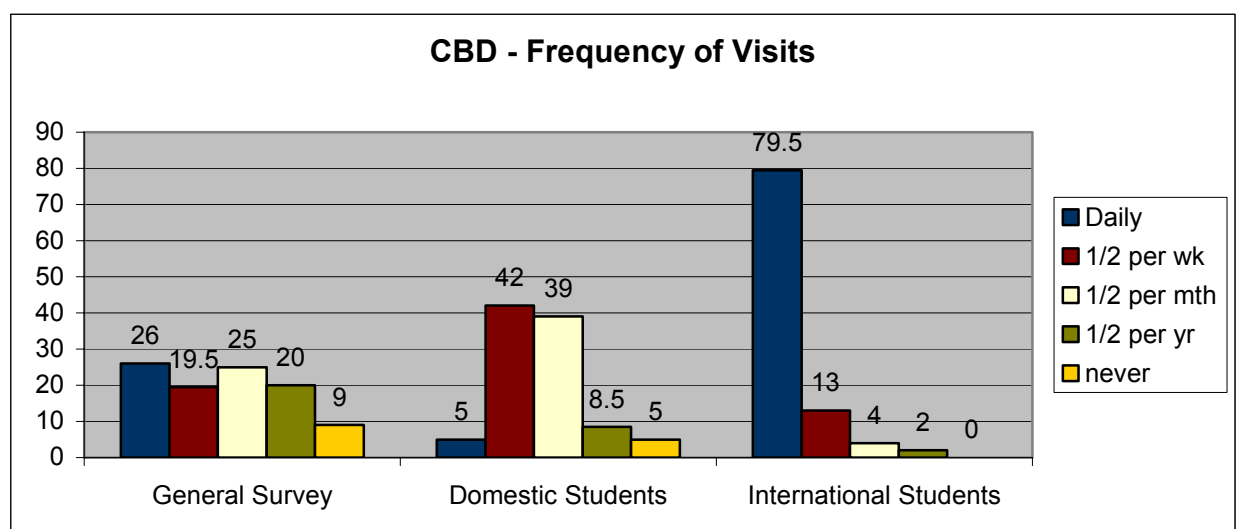
Domestic students tended to visit the CBD once or twice a week (42 per cent) or once or twice a month (39 per cent). Similarly, the randomised telephoned sample visited once or twice a week (19.5 per cent) or once or twice a month (26 per cent).

Nine per cent of the randomised telephoned sample said they never visit the CBD and five per cent of the domestic students. All of the international students said that they visit the CBD.

Table Five: Frequency of visits to the CBD

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample | International students sample |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Every working day | 212 (26%) | 10 (5%) | 93 (79.5%) |
| Once or twice a week | 159 (19.5%) | 87 (42%) | 15 (13%) |
| Once or twice a month | 208 (25%) | 82 (39%) | 5 (4%) |
| Once or twice a year | 164 (20%) | 18 (8.5%) | 2 (2%) |
| Never | 73 (9%) | 11 (5%) | nil |
| Missing | 4 (0.5%) | 1 (0.5%) | 2 (1.5%) |
| TOTAL | 820 | 209 | 117 |

Figure Five: Frequency of visits to the CBD



Reasons for visiting the CBD

The reasons that the telephoned sample gave for visiting the CBD were grouped into seven main headings: recreation/leisure/dining (29 per cent), work/business (27 per cent) and shopping (22 per cent).⁷ For the domestic students, recreation/leisure/dining (46 per cent) and shopping (38 per cent) were the main attractions. The international students said education was their main reason for visiting the CBD (73 per cent) with shopping as the other attraction (13 per cent).

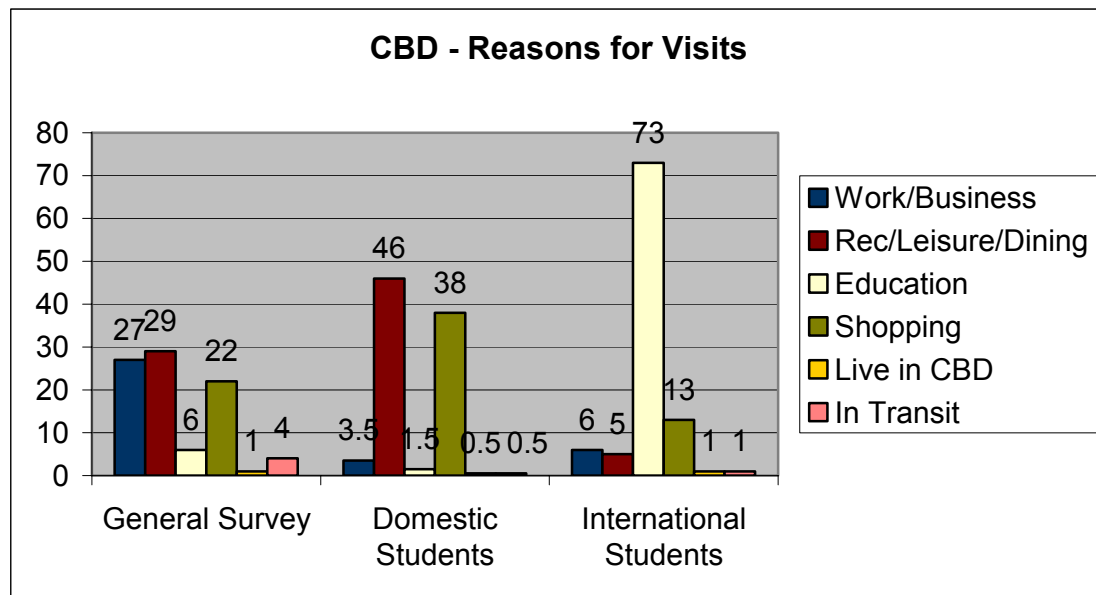
Table Six: Reasons for visiting the CBD

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample | International students sample |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Work/Business | 220 (27%) | 7 (3.5%) | 7 (6%) |
| Recreation/Leisure/dining | 238 (29%) | 91 (46%) | 6 (5%) |
| Education | 49 (6%) | 3 (1.5%) | 85 (73%) |
| Shopping | 182 (22%) | 76 (38%) | 15 (13%) |
| Live in CBD | 8 (1%) | 1 (0.5%) | 2 (1%) |
| In transit | 34 (4%) | 1 (0.5%) | 1 (1%) |
| Missing | 89 (11%) | 20 (10%) | 1 (1%) |
| TOTAL | 820 | 199* | 117 |

*Some domestic students gave more than one reason for visiting the CBD. For the randomised telephoned sample and the international students, the main reason for visiting was given.

⁷ These figures are similar to Auckland City's own analysis of reasons for CBD usage (see page four of this report).

Figure Six: Reasons for visiting the CBD



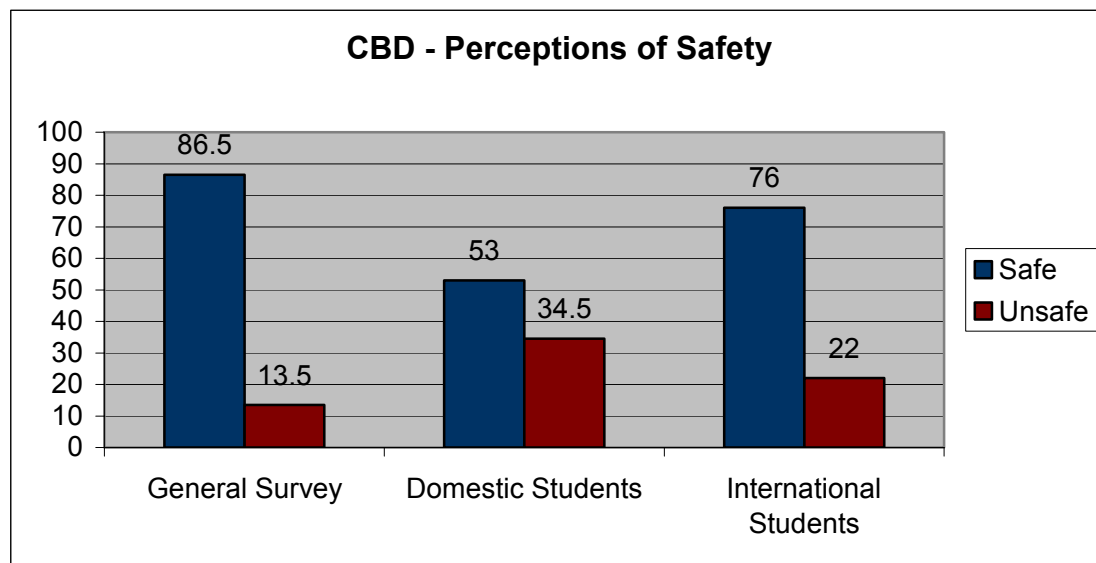
Perceptions of safety in the CBD

The majority of respondents in each of the three samples felt that the CBD was safe. 710 of the telephoned respondents (86.5 per cent) said they felt that the CBD was “safe” and 110 (13.5 per cent) thought it was “unsafe”. 111 of the domestic students (53 per cent) said they felt that the CBD was “safe” and 72 said it was “unsafe” (34.5 per cent). 89 of the international students sample (76%) said the CBD felt safe and 26 (22%) felt it was unsafe.

Table Seven : Perceptions of CBD safety

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample | International students sample |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Safe | 710 (86.5%) | 111 (53%) | 89 (76%) |
| Unsafe | 110 (13.5%) | 72 (34.5%) | 26 (22%) |
| No response | nil | 26 (12.5%) | 2 (1%) |
| TOTAL | 820 | 209 | 117 |

Figure Seven: Perceptions of CBD Safety



Respondents' views on safety in the CBD were cross-tabulated by: frequency of visits; gender; age; income and ethnic background. It was found that frequency of visits and gender were statistically significant⁸ i.e. respondents who visit the CBD less frequently were more likely to consider the CBD to be unsafe and women were more likely than men to consider the CBD unsafe. Cross tabulations for age, income and ethnic background of respondent were not found to be statistically significant with regard to respondents' perceptions of CBD safety. In other words, people's age, income and ethnicity did not influence their perceptions of safety in the CBD.

Change in perception of CBD safety in last five years

556 people in the randomised telephoned sample (68 per cent) said their perception of safety in the CBD had changed over the last five years. Of those, 71 per cent of those said it was either safer or about the same and 29 per cent said it was less safe.

⁸ Frequency of visits p=0.001; Gender p=0.011

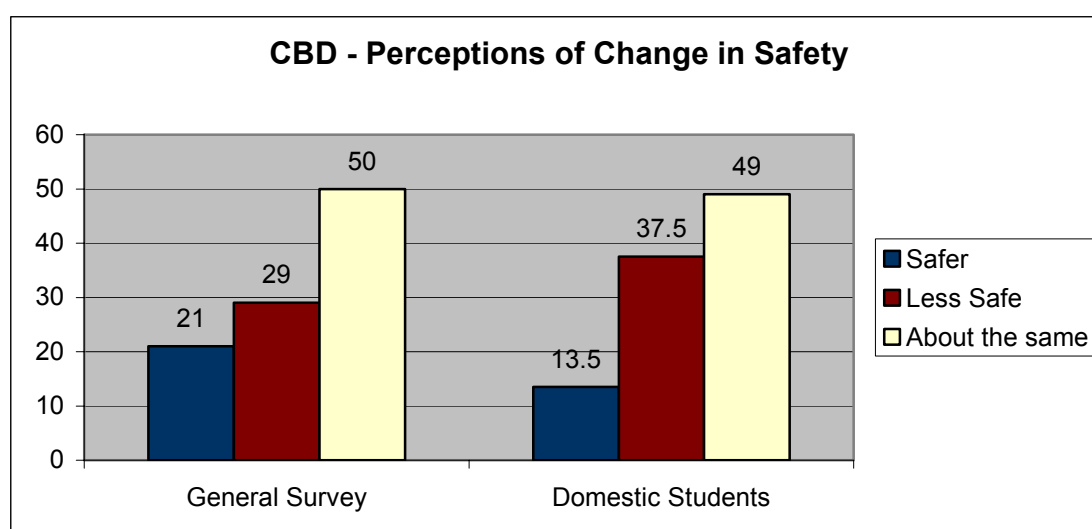
126 of the domestic students' sample (60 per cent) gave an opinion about the change in safety level over the last five years. For 62.5 per cent it was either safer or about the same as it was five years ago. For 37.5 per cent it was less safe. Given that the students were all aged 16-18 and therefore would have been 11-13 five years ago and less independently mobile, this information is of limited value.

Few of the international students would have been in Auckland five years ago so the question was not applicable to that group.

Table Eight : Perceptions of Change in CBD Safety

| | Telephoned sample | Domestic students sample |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Safer | 115 (21%) | 17 (13.5%) |
| Less safe | 161 (29%) | 47 (37.5%) |
| About the same | 280 (50%) | 62 (49%) |
| Missing | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 556 | 126 |

Figure Eight : Perceptions of Change in CBD Safety



C: SAFETY IN THE AUCKLAND CBD – WHAT PEOPLE SAID

Throughout this section, it needs to be borne in mind that the majority of respondents questioned felt “safe” in the Auckland CBD:

- ☞ 86.5 per cent of the telephoned respondents felt safe
- ☞ 53 per cent of the domestic students felt safe
- ☞ 76 per cent of the international students felt safe

It is however, worthwhile to review the reasons that people gave for feeling safe (and unsafe) to see whether any of the strategies and actions taken by Auckland City and the Auckland City District Police have had impact on perceptions of people’s safety.

Telephoned sample: reasons for feeling “safe” in the CBD

Of the 710 people in the randomised telephoned sample who said they felt safe, when asked “What makes you say that?” one in three did not know or could not answer. It is worthwhile analysing the 66 per cent who did give a reason for feeling safe, despite the fact that the majority of people found it difficult to articulate any cues in the environment that gave them a sense of safety.

19.5 per cent of those who felt safe said they it was because either they had “never had a bad experience, threat or problem there” or else just did not feel threatened in the CBD. Nine per cent of people said it was “just a general feeling” they had:

“I’ve never seen any trouble.”⁹

“I’ve never had any problems.”

“I haven’t heard of anything that would make me think it was unsafe.”

⁹ Each quoted comment is from a different respondent.

One interesting feature is that while 109 people said that they felt safe in the CBD during the day, around half of those qualified their statement with a remark that at night they felt it was less safe.

“It’s safe during the day, but I’m more cautious at night.”

“Daytime is safe, but at night some places are safe and some are not.”

“I don’t like going out at night, but daytime is safe.”

“It’s safe during the day but unsafe at night, there’s people hanging around.”

“It’s safe during the day but unsafe at night.”

Any future survey should seek specific opinion of people on safety in the CBD during the day and at night.

The presence of a lot of people on the street in the CBD was mentioned by 4 per cent of people in the telephoned sample as making them feel safe. Three per cent specifically mentioned that the presence of police in the CBD contributed to their feeling that the CBD was safe:

“The police are always around.”

“Lots of police around.”

“The police station is quite close and they are always around. I’ve never felt unsafe.”

“I’ve never felt unsafe. The police always seem to be around.”

“There’s a police presence in the city often as well as security guards. It seems more unsafe in the suburbs.”

“It’s safe during the day. I know in the back of my mind that the police are never that far away.”

Two per cent of people said it was safer in the Auckland CBD compared with other places they had been (London, South Africa, Fiji). For example, one commented:

“Compared to other cities in the world, it is very safe.”

There were few mentions of the various council initiatives which have been carried out in the CBD:

- ☞ Good lighting (11 mentions)
- ☞ Video cameras operating (7 mentions)
- ☞ Alcohol ban in place (3 mentions)
- ☞ Security guards around (3 mentions)

Despite the fact that they indicated that they felt safe, one per cent of respondents were concerned by the number of homeless people in the CBD:

“Dirty, homeless people are intimidating and more police are needed in the area.”

“I don’t go there on a Friday or Saturday night. There’s too much drinking early in the morning and homeless people.”

“It’s safe on the main streets, but unsafe on side streets where the homeless people are.”

“It’s unsafe at St Matthews Church next to the City Mission.”

Telephoned Sample: reasons for feeling “unsafe” in the CBD

All of the 110 people (13 per cent of the sample) who said they felt “unsafe” in the CBD gave their reasons.

Respondents found it hard to articulate reasons for their views. 42 people (38 per cent) of those who felt unsafe stated that they simply felt unsafe at night in the CBD. 26 of those (24 per cent) qualified their statement:

- ☞ “Unsafe at night – too much crime”
- ☞ “Unsafe at night – not enough police around”
- ☞ “Unsafe at night – very unsafe for the elderly at night”
- ☞ “Unsafe at night – lots of crime, bad people around”

The most frequent reason cited for feeling unsafe in the CBD mentioned by 47 people (43 per cent) was that there were people who loitered in the CBD at night. These included:

- ☞ Bad / dodgy / creepy people loitering (16 mentions)
- ☞ Homeless people (15 mentions)
- ☞ Drunks and intoxicated persons (15 mentions)
- ☞ Street kids/young people (14 mentions)
- ☞ Criminals (5 mentions)
- ☞ Boy racers (5 mentions)

Another reason cited by 16 people (14.5 per cent) feeling unsafe was their perception that there was more crime in the CBD.

“The CBD is the largest area of crime.”

“There’s a lot of crime.”

“It’s unsafe at night – too much crime.”

When types of criminal offending in the CBD were identified, those mentioned most frequently as contributing to feelings that the CBD was not a safe place included:

- ☞ *Drunk and disorderly* (14 mentions)
- ☞ *Violence and fighting* (6 mentions)
- ☞ *Theft of and from cars* (5 mentions)
- ☞ *Vandalism/graffiti* (2 mentions)

Just as people felt safe because they had never had a bad experience in the CBD, so too did people mention that hearing about other people being victimised in the CBD made them feel unsafe.

“I feel threatened at night. My husband was mugged at Britomart.”

“My mate got beaten up.”

“I’ve heard from others about incidents that have happened like assaults.”

12 people (11 per cent) specifically mentioned that crimes reported through the media had influenced their view that the CBD was not safe.

“There’s lots of crime on TV etc.”

“I watch crimes on TV in the city.”

“There’s too much crime shown in the media.”

Domestic Students Sample: Reasons for feeling “safe” in the CBD

One in four of the 111 domestic students who said they felt safe in the CBD could not explain why that was so, it was just a feeling they had. A further 34 per cent said they felt safe because they had never had a bad experience in the CBD.

Having “lots of people around” was the reason given by 16 per cent of the domestic students:

“There’s too many people around for anything serious to happen.”

“There will always be people around when you need help.”

“There are heaps of people around and so I feel comfortable, even at night.”

Seven per cent indicated that while it felt safe during the day, at night it was unsafe.

Only three CBD initiatives were identified by the domestic students:

📹 Video cameras operating (7 mentions)

👮 Police presence (5 mentions)

👮 Security guards around (3 mentions)

“Cameras see almost anything that happens and there are so many people around, not much can happen unless you are in an alleyway or a park.”

“There are many security cameras installed around the city.”

People loitering in the CBD was mentioned by 4.5 per cent of the domestic students who said they felt safe in the CBD. Of concern were: “bad guys”, “drunk people” and “weird people”.

No domestic students mentioned crime as a factor affecting their feelings of safety in the CBD.

Domestic students sample: reasons for feeling “unsafe” in the CBD

The most frequent reason cited by just over half (51 per cent) of the 72 college students who felt unsafe in the CBD was that there were unsavoury people who loitered in the CBD.

These included:

- Bad / dodgy / creepy people loitering (13 mentions)
- Homeless people (13 mentions)
- Drunks and intoxicated persons (12 mentions)
- Street kids/young people (10 mentions)
- Criminals (4 mentions)
- Boy racers (3 mentions)

“There are many drunk and homeless people around and I’m always scared that they will snatch my purse.”

“I’ve sometimes seen the homeless people disturbing the surrounding people.”

“Lots of drunken teenagers are there and they want to start fights.”

Eleven per cent of the domestic students mentioned that there were too few police on the streets and there was concern that they did not have the resources to respond properly:

“The police don’t do their job properly. They only concentrate on less important things. My friend got mugged and they didn’t do anything.”

“There’s a lack of police presence.”

“There are too many dodgy people around and not enough cops.”

“If something goes wrong and I ring the police they might send a taxi instead.”

International students sample: reasons for feeling “safe” in the CBD

Over half of the 89 international students (53 per cent) who reported feeling safe in the CBD gave reasons to explain why they felt that way. Twenty one per cent of these however, could only say that it was “a feeling” they had or that they “had not personally experienced any problems in the CBD” and therefore had no reason to feel unsafe.

Seven per cent of the international students who felt safe said that having lots of people around contributed to their feelings of safety.

“Heaps of people around makes me not afraid.”

“There are heaps of people around so kidnappers can’t kidnap me and there are some Korean stores there and I can talk to them.”

The presence of the police in the CBD was also highlighted by seven per cent of the international students, but they did not identify any of the other CBD initiatives, such as CCTV.

Traffic offending in the CBD was the main type of crime identified by the international students:

“There are too many cars and they drive very fast.”

“The traffic is very bad and in the evening it is even more unsafe.”

“Auckland have more car.”

International students sample: reasons for feeling “unsafe” in the CBD

10 of the 26 international students (38 per cent) questioned after they said the CBD was unsafe said that traffic in the CBD was their biggest problem.

“Too many cars. Their driving is dangerous.”

“After midnight there are some drivers that shout to people and some say very bad words.”

“After midnight, it is very dangerous and sometimes when we cross the road, the cars drive very fast – scary! There are lots of cars so there can be lots of accidents.”

“People drink driving.”

People loitering in the CBD was mentioned by seven per cent of the international students who felt unsafe:

“Lots of energy during the day but at night some people are very dangerous, more so than Korea.”

“Some bad people always stay outside clubs and bars and they always make trouble.”

Police inaction was mentioned by one international student as a negative influence on his perception of CBD safety.

“I caught the man who scratch my car, but the police said not enough evidence.”

D: SAFETY IN THE AUCKLAND CBD – DISCUSSION

CBD usage

The CBD figures large in the daily life of Auckland’s international students. 79.5 per cent visited the CBD on a daily basis compared with 26 per cent of the randomised telephoned sample and 5 per cent of domestic students in the sample.




42 per cent of the sample of 16-18 year olds visit the CBD once or twice a week and around one fifth of the randomised telephoned sample. Presumably the only time these respondents are free, due to work and school commitments, is the weekend. This obviously would give any visitor on the weekend the impression that the CBD is a place where teenagers congregate.

Future surveys should ask what days of the week people visit the CBD as well as whether the visit is during the day or at night.

Nine per cent of the telephoned population and five per cent of the domestic students said they never visit the CBD.

Feeling safe in the Auckland CBD

It is important to note once again at the outset of this discussion that in all three sample populations, the respondents felt safe in the Auckland CBD:

-  86.5 per cent of the telephoned respondents felt safe
-  53 per cent of the domestic students felt safe
-  76 per cent of the international students felt safe

It is however, worthwhile to review the reasons that people gave for feeling safe (and unsafe) to see whether any of the strategies and actions taken by Auckland City and the Auckland City District Police have had impact on perceptions of people's safety.

Reasons for feeling safe

It was found that men felt safer in the CBD than women and that people who visited the CBD more frequently felt safer than those who did not visit the CBD regularly. If there is a positive relationship between frequency of CBD use and feeling safe then Auckland City might consider developing an events strategy for attracting more people to the CBD – especially women.

The majority of respondents in all three groups found it difficult to articulate any cues in the environment that gave them a sense of safety. This may suggest that anecdotal evidence and media reports regarding crime may have considerable influence. How many people's views of safety in the CBD would be adversely affected by headlines reporting a negative incident in the CBD?

That teenagers had no real fear of crime within the CBD is interesting and may reflect their lack of access to local print media carrying crime and court news or their sense of invulnerability.

While people across all age groups said they felt safe in the CBD during the day, many respondents qualified it with concern about safety at night.

Increased police presence

The presence of a lot of people on the street in the CBD makes people feel more secure, as does the physical presence of the police. International students particularly mentioned that they felt safe with more police around.



At the same time, some respondents – particularly the domestic students – expressed concern at the lack of police in the CBD and a fear by some that the police did not have enough resources to adequately respond to callouts.

Auckland City District Police may wish to examine international research on 'reassurance policing' strategies which have been found to be effective overseas. Increased use of foot patrols and Maori wardens in the CBD or regular patrol car sweeps in and around the CBD may be a quick way of offering the public the reassurance they need.

Safety initiatives

International students did not mention any of the 15 Auckland City initiatives implemented under the *Inner City Safety Strategy*.

Only two were mentioned by more than three respondents in the randomised telephoned sample and the domestic students' sample:

-  Improved lighting
-  CCTV cameras.

This means that Auckland City needs to better communicate information to the public at large about each of their successful safety initiatives operating in the CBD. This could be communicated through a regular newsletter or email.

At present there are signs in place advising people of the bylaw that permits CCTV cameras, but they are wordy and do not stand out. More innovative ways could be found to enhance existing signs and let visitors to the CBD know that a range of initiatives are in place e.g. signs saying “you are on camera” or “you are entering an alcohol-free zone”. It could simply mean spending more money on better lighting of pedestrian areas around Queen Street.

People loitering in the CBD

A variety of people at large in the CBD late at night was mentioned by some respondents with concern. These people – of which homeless people and intoxicated people were named groups - do pose a threat to some visitors at night in the CBD. This may not be based on any actual exchange but just a fear of someone who is at large, unknown and therefore whose behaviour and mental state is unpredictable.

Since 2004, the Auckland City Council has been addressing the issue of homelessness in Auckland, in particular people sleeping rough in the CBD.

A census taken of rough sleepers in Auckland city taken by the Auckland Rough Sleepers initiative on 5 May 2004, found 63 people sleeping rough within 3 kilometres of the Sky Tower. There were also 33 people in police cells or temporary shelter within the area, bringing the total to 96. This census has just been retaken (May 2005) and the number of people sleeping rough was found to be 81 with a further 27 people in police custody or temporary shelter, a total of 108.

Several research projects on homelessness in the CBD have been commissioned by Auckland City and have recently been reported. In June 2004, No Doubt Research produced an initial scoping paper *The Homeless and Auckland's CBD*. The research team interviewed nine key informants working with homeless people. According to the report, homelessness in the

CBD is perceived by the informants to be increasing and becoming a more visible problem which is

“... at odds with the regeneration of the CBD and its role as a magnet for leisure, shopping, employment and tourist activities” (p.19)

A number of safety concerns in the CBD were raised by interviewees including:

- A perception that begging has increased in recent years
- That visitors to the CBD often perceive homeless people to be a threat
- That there are concerns expressed about anti-social behaviour that may result from the consumption of alcohol or drugs

The research also notes that homeless people themselves are often in unsafe situations and can feel harassed by police and other security organisations.

Auckland City is currently preparing a policy on homelessness and an action plan which will address these issues.

Other undesirable elements may well be dissuaded from loitering through the presence of police foot patrols.

Crime in the CBD

Despite the fact that reported crime in the CBD has gone down¹⁰, some respondents perceived that there was generally more crime in the CBD which may affect their perception of CBD safety and make them more reluctant to visit. It was public order offences – especially drunkenness - in the CBD which were of most concern to the randomised telephoned sample and domestic students. This related in large part to the people perceived to be loitering with intent in the CBD. Traffic offences were of more concern to the international students.

¹⁰ NZ Police Crime Statistics

If crime is down in the CBD, there must be very public ways that this can be transmitted to the Auckland public at large and the public visiting the CBD. It may be time for the Auckland City District Police to look at new ways of communicating that information – a Queen Street shop front display? A regular newsletter or email to customers?

Summary

The three populations surveyed perceived Auckland CBD as being a safe place. Concerns were expressed about safety at night and undesirable people loitering. These fears could be allayed by greater police presence and better lighting. There was little recognition of any CBD safety initiatives currently operating which means that these strategies have not been communicated well to either the public at large or the visitors to the CBD. If views on safety are affected by crime reports in the media, the police in partnership with Auckland City may need to be more proactive and personal in communicating good news and information about positive initiatives to the communities they serve.

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Appendix One

Auckland City: Inner City Safety Strategy

Objective: To promote responsible and safe alcohol and gambling use and management

| Project-2003/04, primary responsibility (<i>in italics</i>) and budget | Outline and completion date (<i>in italics</i>) | Outcome | Organisations involved |
|---|---|---|--|
| Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) <i>Safer Auckland City</i> \$20,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion of CPTED principles into the District Plan - completion of the safety guidelines 2004/05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all sections of the District Plan identified for the inclusion of CPTED - Isthmus Plan to proceed for notification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council - Safer Auckland City - Police - Developers |
| CCTV Upgrade <i>Auckland City, Police, Heart of the City</i> Traffic and Roding Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - upgrade CCTV in the CBD - monitor effective use of CCTV camera upgrade Year ending 2003/04 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improvements completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council - Lighting Specialist |
| CPTED evaluation <i>Safer Auckland City</i> To be budgeted from \$20,000 above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complete CPTED evaluations for major new developments in the CBD <i>Ongoing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all concept and design plans for new development CPTED compliant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council - Safer Auckland |
| CPTED involvement with the Britomart development <i>Safer Auckland City</i> To be advised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that CPTED evaluations are completed for the Blue Water phase of the development <i>Ongoing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - safe use of the area by residents, visitors and workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council Safer Auckland City |
| Car Park Safety Accreditation <i>Safer Auckland City</i> \$20,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to reduce the incidence of car theft in Auckland city car park buildings - to make the car park buildings safe for users 2004/05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - car park safety accreditation approved some for inner city car parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAC - Auckland City - Telarc - Auckland City District Police |

Objective: To work in partnership with Maori and Pacific peoples to address the issues of Maori and Pacific Island crime and victimisation

| Project-2003/04, primary responsibility (in italics) and budget | Outline and completion date (in italics) | Outcome | Organisations involved |
|--|--|--|--|
| Te Matapihi Tirohanga Project (Maori Wardens) <i>Police</i> Police | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a protocol between the Police, Safer Auckland City and the Maori Wardens - a safe environment is created for youth and wardens within the CBD - a profile of the Te Matapihi Tirohanga Project is in place - <i>Ongoing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drunkenness and disorderly behaviour identified - a safe environment is created for Youth and Wardens within the CBD - a profile of this project is in place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City - Police - Maori Wardens - Safer Auckland City - Heart of the City |
| A Pacific Island Warden Project <i>Safer Auckland City</i> Police | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify and develop a plan to establish a Pacific Island support group within the CBD <i>To be advised</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan in place and ready to implement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safer Auckland City - Police - Pacific Island Community |

Objective: To address the crime and safety issues relating to youth

| Project-2003/04, primary responsibility (in italics) and budget | Outline and completion date (in italics) | Outcome | Organisations involved |
|--|--|--|---|
| Illegal Street Racing Management Strategy <i>Police</i> Not applicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor the issue with the Police - implementation of Road Safety Education campaign discouraging illegal street car modification 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working relationship is strengthened with Police - street racing management strategy in place - safety campaign in operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council Police - Maori Wardens - Safer Auckland City |
| Quaystone project (Youth Facility) <i>Auckland City</i> \$10,000 - Safer Auckland City | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide support for the Auckland City Youth Council to progress a research report for this project. <i>Ongoing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research document completed - Youthline now advancing this work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council - Crime Prevention Unit - Safer Auckland City |
| Graffiti Management <i>Auckland City</i> \$725,000 - ACC, City wide budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - graffiti removal and prevention continued - regional co-operation on the Zero Tolerance programme complete - stage one-graffiti eradication - stage two-graffiti prevention - <i>Ongoing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduction in graffiti | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auckland City Council - Police |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Asian Youth Project \$8000 | - to assist in a campaign to reduce car accidents within the CBD 2006 | - reduction of accidents identified - education packs given to recipients | - as above - Asian Community - Asian Link Ltd |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|

Objective: To increase the perceptions of safety for residents, workers and visitors

| Project-2003/04, primary responsibility (<i>in italics</i>) and budget | Outline and completion date (<i>in italics</i>) | Outcome | Organisations involved |
|--|---|---|--|
| Safety Promotion <i>Safer Auckland City</i> \$20000 - Safer Auckland City | - to brand the CBD as a safe place for residents and visitors. 2003/04 | - promotion of safety initiatives are identified in the CBD | - Auckland City Council - Safer Auckland City |
| Ambassador Programme <i>Auckland City Council</i> Staff time | - ambassadors utilised to improve and promote safety in the city and to be a friendly face - ambassadors and Parking Wardens to introduce a (theft ex car) awareness programme <i>Ongoing</i> | - residents, workers and those who come into the city for entertainment feel safe in the CBD | - Auckland City Council |
| Interagency Group <i>Safer Auckland City</i> Staff time | - maintain monitor and develop the ICSS stakeholder group within the CBD <i>Ongoing</i> | - stakeholder group meeting held every 3 months to discuss crime prevention initiatives | - Auckland City Council - Police - Ngati Whatua - Heart of the City - The Community |
| Responding to issues around the homeless <i>Safer Auckland City</i> Staff time | - in partnership with relevant agencies establish a strategy to ensure the homeless population in the CBD operates in a non threatening manner <i>Ongoing</i> | - strategies will be coordinated by stakeholders to ensure that the homeless population is non-threatening to the visitors, workers and residents of the inner city | - Safer Auckland City - Auckland City District Police - Auckland City Mission - Methodist Mission - Baptist Action - Taylor Centre - James Liston Hostel - Pathways |