

Library Marketing Research project 2008

Is Christchurch City Libraries a welcoming place for people of different ethnic & cultural backgrounds?

How it started

Christchurch City Council was approached by two undergraduate marketing students from the University of Canterbury to ascertain interest in being involved with a research project. As part of their course requirements the students were required to undertake a marketing research project within an authentic context. As a result of the review of the library's bicultural plan, Te Ara Hou a project was identified and the students met with library staff to discuss ideas & broaden the stakeholder groupings.

Introduction to the research

Christchurch City Libraries, Ngā Kete Wānanga o Ōtautahi, has many services and policies in place to make the library a welcoming place for all those of differing ethnic backgrounds. The library aim's to ensure a diverse range of library services are delivered city-wide, and that they evolve with changing community needs. The library was interested in discovering whether they are still achieving this. They aim to future-proof facilities and/or services to accommodate not just technological, but also demographic change. The purpose of this research project was to provide Christchurch City Libraries with information that will enable them to ensure that the is a welcoming place for people of different ethnic & cultural backgrounds.

'Strong communities' is one of four strategic directions set by the Christchurch City Council to achieve the Christchurch City's Community Outcomes. Other customer research projects have been completed by the libraries in the past. In their previous planning processes, they have comparatively researched other libraries. However, no formal research has been done in-house on the theme of whether the library is seen as a "welcoming place" before, so Christchurch City Libraries had a need for this information.

The research project sought to gain an insight into Library customers perceptions of Library staff, Library services, physical library spaces and any differences between our network of 19 libraries' and our Mobile library. They hoped to find out what customers perceptions of a library was, and if they considered them to be welcoming places.

Māori, Pacifica and Chinese were the three cultural groupings that were invited to participate in the initial two focus groups to gain thoughts & opinions to feed into a broader questionnaire that would follow.

Projected Ethnic Share of Christchurch Area's Population

	European	Maori	Pasifika	Asian
2001	90%	7%	5%	2%
2006 (1)	88%	7%	7%	2%
2011	87%	7%	8%	2%
2016	86%	8%	9%	3%

In 2006 Christchurch area has 42% of the Southern region's 74,000 Māori residents. The majority (84%) of Christchurch's area Māori live in Christchurch City. Of the 8,000 Māori students in the South Island 83% live in Christchurch.

“Christchurch City Libraries are viewed as an important attribute of our city. Libraries are more than books & buildings; they are hubs for our community and in the future will become places where the community builds a sense of identity and belonging.”

Carolyn Robertson, Christchurch City Libraries Manager.

The full report can be viewed online at

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Bibliofile/2008/CulturalResearch.pdf>