



A youth voice on the Christchurch rebuild

What do young people want for their city?

*A report of the voices of over 4,000
of Christchurch's youth regarding
what they want in the rebuilding of
their city and communities.*



Survey conducted by 24-7 YouthWork & The Collaborative for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development Trust, with thanks to the Todd Foundation.

The rationale behind doing the survey

The earthquakes since September 2010 have impacted on the lives of Cantabrians. With these earthquakes, many changes have followed. 24-7 YouthWork decided to survey intermediate and high school students on what they want in the rebuilding of their city. Thanks to the Todd Foundation, and in conjunction with The Collaborative Trust, an online survey was designed to find out what is important to our youth and to give them a voice.

We were interested in hearing about their thoughts and what they want for this city as a young person. Just over 4,000 young people (around 10% of students of Intermediate and High School age) were surveyed. We hope this initiative will add the voice of youth to the debate on what to do in Christchurch's rebuild.

A brief overview of the survey structure

The survey's questions were devised based on other youth forums around Canterbury, and in consultation with young people, youth workers and researchers. The questions were piloted first, using a sample of young people, the feedback analysed and the final survey was launched. Youth workers in schools encouraged young people to take part, and schools which they are not in were all invited to take part as well.

Some surveys were incomplete, so for the purpose of interpreting this data, all percentages are out of the total who responded to the question.

Descriptive Statistics

Of the 4159 students who were surveyed, ages ranged from nine to 20 years old, with an average age of 14. Students were sampled from Years 7 to 13, and came from 43 schools in Canterbury.

Forty four percent were male, and 54% female.

Students identified with the following ethnicities (they could select more than one):

- NZ European 71%
- Maori 13%
- Asian 11%
- Pacific Islander 6%
- Other 16%

Results

Students were asked *"How much have the Earthquakes affected your life?"* and asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 where one was 'not at all' and 7 was 'massively'.

- The most common response was '3', accounting for 26% of responses.
- Six percent of students responded with '7 – massively'; and 25% responded with either a '5', '6' or '7'.
- Nine percent responded '1 – not at all'.

For many of the questions, young people were asked to rate items on a scale from 1 to 7 to measure how important they are to them, where 1 is equal to 'not important at all' and 7 equal to 'extremely important'. For the purpose of the following analyses, percentage ratings of 5 or above (ie. 5,6 and 7 combined) are reported, as this communicated that something was important to young people. These items were split into groups:

The City and its Layout; Transport; Communities; and Recreation & Entertainment.

The City and its Layout - what is important to young people.

"Imagine the layout of Christchurch city that you want, how important are these things to you?"

	n	%
Free wireless internet in the central city	2849	73
Village squares in suburbs with shops, entertainment, cafes, & bars	2378	61
More enclosed malls	2299	59
More green spaces	2181	56
Christchurch's traditional architecture (like the Museum/Arts Centre/Cathedral)	2162	56
Arts and Entertainment in the Central City	2006	52
Interesting architecture - instead of tilt-slab	1905	49
Living in the central city (apartments/housing)	1304	34
No cars in the Central City	970	25

What stood out as really important to young people regarding the **city and its layout**: free wireless internet in the central city; village squares in suburbs with entertainment, cafes and bars; more enclosed malls; more green spaces; Christchurch's traditional architecture, and arts and entertainment in the central city. Free wireless internet got the highest ratings of any item in the survey, with 73% of students rating this as important to them.

Transport - what is important to young people.

"How important are these transport items to you?"

	n	%
More Orbiter-like buses, connecting the suburbs	2205	57
Safer cycling lanes	2097	54
A bus exchange in the centre of town	2060	53
Eco-friendly public transport	1887	49
Free hire of bikes	1622	42

We asked: *"Would you be more likely to cycle if there were safer cycling lanes in Christchurch?"*

	n	%
Yes	1901	49
Unsure	1263	32
No	731	19

Regarding [transport](#), what was most important to young people was: more Orbiter-like buses; safer cycling lanes; and a bus exchange in the centre of town. Forty nine percent of young people reported that they would be more likely to cycle if there were safer cycling lanes in Christchurch.

School

Many young people have had their school schedules changed due to the earthquakes, we thought it would be interesting to find out which class schedules young people preferred. We asked: *"If you could choose, which school hours would you prefer?"*

	n	%
8am – 1pm	1845	48
9am – 3pm	1568	40
1pm – 5pm	731	19

The largest number of students stated that they would prefer class in the morning (8am-1pm).

Communities - what is important to young people.

"How important are these community items to you?"

	n	%
A feeling of community in my neighbourhood	1935	50
Specific events for youth in your neighbourhood	1631	42
More community gardens	1508	39
Youth specific community health service	1442	37
Localised 'gap fillers' where vacant land is used for community events/purposes	1138	29

In relation to [communities](#), 'a feeling of community in my neighbourhood' stood out as being very important to young people.

Recreation & Entertainment - what is important to young people.

"How important are these recreation and entertainment items to you?"

	n	%
Swimming Pools	2431	62
Youth-friendly cafes and restaurants	2303	59
Fun parks (eg. Rollercoaster)	2263	58
Markets (eg. Riccarton, Lyttelton)	2180	56
Gaming venues (like Timezone)	2126	55
Youth centre where you can: hang out, skate, play sport, play arcade games, shop. Gold coin donation for entry]	1850	47
Weekday out-of-school hours organised activities for youth	1845	47
Local village-type shopping centres (eg. Opawa shops/Aranui shops/Fendalton village)	1826	47
Local specialty shops (non chain stores)	1738	45
A youth centre in the bus exchange	1334	34
Youth Specific Music events like under 18 raves/School band gigs	1101	28

*those items rated below this level are not reported here

Recreation and Entertainment is an important area to young people. What stood out as being most important to young people was: swimming pools; youth-friendly cafes and restaurants; fun parks (eg. rollercoaster); markets; and gaming venues.

Location of Services

We asked young people to:

"think about the ideas we have asked you about. We want to know WHERE you would like these to be"

	In my local suburb	In the central city	Both
Recreation (eg. swimming pools, ice skating, skate parks, gardens, green spaces)	29%	11%	59%
Entertainment (eg. cinemas, cafes, music events, youth centres to hang out in)	18%	22%	60%
Youth Services (eg. health, social welfare, sexual health, mental health, job services)	22%	26%	52%

This shows that predominantly young people would like services to be in both their local suburb and in the central city.

Themes

We asked young people to rate the top three issues in Christchurch which were most important to them in the rebuild. These were:

1. Entertainment and Recreation
2. Transport
3. The Central City

Conclusions

This survey represents the views of Canterbury's youth and what is important to them in the rebuild of Christchurch. This report illustrates what is most important to our young people, the adults of tomorrow – who this city is being rebuilt for. We hope this will be of use and taken on board as we rebuild our beautiful city and communities.

It has been an interesting and extremely valuable endeavour and we would like to thank everyone involved. In particular, the Todd Foundation, 24-7 YouthWork and their excellent youth workers, all of the schools, principals, teachers, and most importantly the young people who gave us their time and enthusiasm in sharing their voices about what they want for their city.

Thank you!