

What Waitakere City Businesses told us

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***Business Connection 2002***  
*Survey of businesses*

**Introduction and Summary**

Prepared by Service Development, Consultancy Services  
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# **BUSINESS CONNECTION 2002**

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## **Introduction**

This report is the result of a Council commitment to keep in touch with business and a willingness of businesses to take the time to reply. This report is considered by Council, the Senior Management Group, and staff and managers. It will also be available for businesses and others interested on Council's web site, [www.waitakere.govt.nz](http://www.waitakere.govt.nz).

The variety of information is considerable, the result of a range of Council and business interests. We recommend looking through carefully to find what is most useful for you, and hope this introduction encourages you to do that.

## **Background and Objectives**

Business Connection is Waitakere City Council's regular consultation with businesses in the City. Promoting sustainable business development is a key objective of Waitakere City Council.

Because Business Connection is a consultation aimed to reach every business in the City, it is an opportunity for businesses to say what they think about business in Waitakere City and the services that Waitakere City Council provides and supports.

"Getting Down to Business", the 2002/3 Business Consultation, is the fifth, developed from a pilot 1996 Business Consultation and the 1997, 1998 and 2000 Consultations. Business Connection provides a simple way for business to contact the Council. It provides feedback from key business sectors, targets issues identified as important to business and Council and quantifies issues identified previously.

## **Analyses**

Business sector analyses are generally undertaken for:

- All Businesses
- 7 Business Type categories:
  - Manufacturing
  - Construction
  - Wholesale and Retail Trade
  - Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants
  - Property, Business and Financial Services (e.g. real estate agencies, lawyers, computer companies, management & engineering consultants, accountants, financial consultants)
  - Health, Community, Social and Personal Services (for example, medical groups, dentists, counsellors, churches, hairdressers, laundromats)
  - Other (which includes Cultural and Recreational services, Government Administration and Defence, Transport and Storage, Education and Agriculture)
- Business size (as expressed by equivalent full time employees)
- Location within Waitakere City

## **Uses for the information**

Waitakere City Council uses the information to:

- Develop policy and strategy to support sustainable business
- Identify service improvements
- Provide businesses with a chance to contact Council and get information or action
- Help establish planning and budgeting priorities for following years
- Monitor performance and report results in Council's Annual Report

## **Information requirements provided**

Information requirements provided for Council by this study are:

- Assessing what Waitakere City is like to have a business in, to do business in and to live in.
- Assessing investment and employment intentions.
- Gauging attitudes to current locations for conducting business and assessing factors affecting the conduct of business in the various locations, particularly those Council can influence.
- Investigating business use of the internet.
- The level of awareness and support for Eco City goals.
- Investigating the extent of linkages between the businesses, their suppliers and their markets within Waitakere City and external to it.
- Assessing the level of support Council is perceived to give to business in the City.
- For those having had direct contact with Council, their assessment of the performance of those services used.
- Assessing the level of participation in environmentally sustainable business practices.
- Assessing awareness of Enterprise Waitakere and its activities and, for those having used their services, their rating of usefulness.

## **Method and Sample**

This mail survey, using a self-completion questionnaire (see Appendix C) was sent to businesses in early November 2002. The survey was delivered to all 6,024 postal addresses in Waitakere City identified by New Zealand Post as business addresses. Replies were accepted to mid January 2002. 407 surveys were returned by businesses (four via the internet).

New Zealand Post's distribution was based on a single delivery to all business mailing addresses. Statistics New Zealand 2002 figures for Business Locations, indicate 10,962 ESE's (Economically Significant Enterprises, >\$30,000 GST expenses or sales or in a GST exempt industry). This is nearly twice the number of businesses in known commercial databases. The difference may be partly due to single addresses associated with owners of multiple G.S.T. registered companies.

Businesses surveyed in the business survey are trading companies, all size ranges and all sectors of the economy, and non-profit organizations such as schools and churches.

Data entry was performed by an independent company, Complete Data Services New Zealand Limited. The data was independently checked in-house using analysis software that detects discrepancies from expected ranges of values and format. Service Development then undertook analysis and commentary.

When looking at the results bear in mind that:

- Results are generally based on those who answered a question thus the base number will vary.
- In some cases columns will not add up to 100% due to rounding discrepancies.
- Trend data has been provided where questions have been repeated from previous surveys.
- Results this time have been weighted by business type whereas comparison data is unweighted.
- When looking at cross tabulations care must be taken if the base numbers are low (i.e. less than 30).

## Summary

Promoting sustainable business development is one of the key objectives of Waitakere City Council. Business Connection is Waitakere City Council's two yearly consultation with its business sector. It is an opportunity to learn what businesses think about Waitakere City, conducting business in the City and the services the Council provides and supports.

The 2002 Business Consultation is the fifth. The consultation provides an easy opportunity for businesses to contact Council.

Key results of the 2002 Business Connection survey follow.

### **The Businesses**

#### ***Types of business***

- As in previous years, the replies came from a broad spread of types of Waitakere businesses. Compared to businesses as a whole wholesale/retail businesses were over represented and construction under represented. For this report, data was statistically weighted by business type to remove any bias this might give.

#### ***Employment***

- When looking at the number working in the businesses (full time equivalents), almost two-thirds of businesses have five or less people working in them. This is similar to previous years. Just over half have between 1 and 5 part time employees. Slightly more than a third have no part time employees.
- For a majority of businesses (61%) between 75% and 100% of their workers live in Waitakere City, similar to 2000 (58%) but down from 1998 (71%) and 1997 (68%).
- 27% of businesses perform a quarter or more of their business activities from home (23% in 2000, 17% in 1998 and 16% in 1997).

#### ***Customers and suppliers***

- As in 2000, main suppliers tend to be located in other parts of Auckland (74%). Main customers tend to be located in Waitakere City (65%), followed by other parts of Auckland (63%). 16% of businesses have main customers overseas (12% in 2000).

#### ***Access to other organisations***

- Almost two-thirds of businesses state that access to other business organisations is very good or good. Just over three-quarters indicate access to businesses that support their industry is very good or good.

### ***Investment, employment and profitability***

- Waitakere City businesses have stated positive investment and employment intentions since 1997. In 2002, almost all businesses expect investment to be maintained (57%) or increase (37%). Similarly, almost all expect employment to be maintained (65%) or increase (33%). Over half (56%) expect profitability to increase. Approximately one third expect it to be the same.

### **Being in Waitakere City**

#### ***Waitakere City***

- General regard for Waitakere City as a place to work (73% Very good/good), to live (70% Very Good/good), and to have a business (61% Very Good/good) is positive, although slightly down on previous years. Henderson Town Centre businesses were most likely to rate Waitakere City positively as place to have a business (71% Very good/good).

#### ***Eco City***

- 82% of businesses claim that they are supportive or somewhat supportive of Waitakere City's Eco City goals (91% 2000 and 1998, 92% 1997). Support is still high but appears to have decreased compared with previous years.
- 28% say the Eco City direction contributes significantly or somewhat (down from 40% in 1998, but similar to 2000). Approximately half of the businesses (51%) maintain the Eco City direction has no influence on their business.
- Recycling and waste reduction are the most common environmentally sustainable practices (84% of businesses). Recycling, waste reduction / minimisation, toxic substance reduction, energy efficiency measures and water conservation measures are each undertaken by the majority of businesses.

### **Business Locations**

- The most frequent locations of businesses responding are:
  - Henderson Town Centre (14%)
  - Lincoln/Central Park Dr (11%)
  - Glendene/Kelston (11%)
  - New Lynn - other (10%)
- Most businesses (86%) regard their present location as good or very good. With regard to particular aspects of their location, the factors most frequently rated very good or good were current business premises (88%), proximity to where I live (87%) and amount of rent or land price (80%). The factors most frequently rated poor or very poor were foot traffic volume (63%), freedom from graffiti (32%) and visibility (32%).
- Just over three-quarters of businesses (78%) are very satisfied or satisfied with access to road and rail networks.
- As in previous years, approximately two-thirds of businesses would prefer to stay in their present location.

## **Businesses and Council**

### ***Contact with Council***

- The majority of businesses state contacting Council by phone, in person, email or via the website is very good or good. The most positive channel is visiting in person (82% very good or good) and the least positive the website (57% very good or good).
- Approximately a third of businesses rate contact with Council services (i.e. Resource Consents, Building Consents, water supply, sewerage, storm water, roads and footpaths) as good. However, approximately half (in the case of Building Consents and Water) to just under two thirds (Resource Consents and Roading) rate them as fair or poor.
- 53% of businesses find access to information from Council very good (4%) or good (49%).

### ***Internet***

- Just over three quarters of the businesses (77%) state they have an email address. Most businesses are satisfied with speed of service (81% very satisfied or satisfied) and affordability (83%).

### ***Council***

- Just under half the businesses (47%) state that Council is very supportive (13%) or somewhat supportive (34%). Another third (33%) state Council is neither supportive nor unsupportive. This is down from 2000 but similar to 1998.
- More than half the businesses want Council to do more:
  - Fast decision making (55%)
  - Jobs locally (57%)
  - Strengthened local economy (68%)
  - Business area improvements (51%)
  - Public transport (54%)
- The majority of businesses would like rates (59%) and user charges (61%) to remain the same. 35% want less rates but 26% more user charges. 45% of businesses would like rules and regulations to remain the same, 47% less.

### ***Enterprise Waitakere***

- The majority of businesses (70%) reported they had heard of Enterprise Waitakere. This is an increase over previous years.
- 19% of businesses state they have made use of Enterprise Waitakere services.
- With regard to usefulness, just under half of the businesses who answered this question state Enterprise Waitakere usefulness is very good or good. Of those businesses who have used Enterprise Waitakere services, almost three quarters (72%) rate their usefulness as very good or good. This is similar to the 2000 results.