

**PALMERSTON NORTH**

**COMMUNITY**

**OUTCOMES**

**MONITORING**

**REPORT**

September 2006

# MONITORING THE PALMERSTON NORTH COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

## Bullet-point Summary.

- **People have lots of fun things to do** - there is a wide range of leisure facilities and activities in Palmerston North and people are generally satisfied with the opportunities they have to participate in formal and informal leisure activities.
- **People feel safe** - many organisations are involved in safety and their work is having a positive impact in Palmerston North - safety has improved over the past five years and people feel safer.
- **Palmerston North is attractive, clean and green** - most people are happy with the look and feel of the City.
- **Businesses grow here and people have lots of job opportunities** - the region has had strong economic growth over the past five years. This has led to job and business growth in Palmerston North and the number of people receiving an unemployment benefit has dropped substantially.
- **People have lots of learning opportunities** - there is a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities in Palmerston North and people are taking advantage of these - Palmerston North people have high education participation rates and high levels of qualification.
- **People can move easily around Palmerston North** - nearly everybody is happy with the way traffic flows around the City during off-peak times. Satisfaction with the way traffic flows during peak times is lower, but still about two-thirds of people are at least fairly satisfied. Satisfaction with peak traffic flows has been steadily improving over time.
- **Palmerston North's physical infrastructure is reliable** - the City's infrastructure has been well maintained and is in good condition.
- **The community is supportive and people and organisations work together** - Palmerston North has a wide range of organisations and voluntary groups providing social support services. Community spirit in the City has increased markedly, with about three quarters of residents saying it is good or very good.
- **People are well-housed and healthy** - Palmerston North people generally have good health that matches or betters the rest of the MidCentral Health area. Housing in Palmerston North is less crowded than in other major cities. It is also relatively affordable for most people in the City.

The results show that Palmerston North is moving towards the community outcomes.

Organisations in the City are working to make sure that this continues and are looking at ways of doing things better. Things can always be done differently. More can be done. However, there is always the question of affordability. Decisions on this have to be made with the proper information. This report helps describe current trends in Palmerston North. It also shows that responsibility for the community outcomes is shared by a wide range of organisations. Individuals also have to work towards the outcomes.

## **PALMERSTON NORTH COMMUNITY OUTCOMES**

Community outcomes are the things that are important to people. They describe the sort of City that people want to live in. For Palmerston North this means:

- people have lots of fun things to do
- people feel safe
- Palmerston North is attractive, clean and green
- businesses grow here and people have lots of job opportunities
- people have lots of learning opportunities.
- people can move easily around Palmerston North
- Palmerston North's physical infrastructure is reliable
- the community is supportive and people and organisations work together
- people are well-housed and healthy

### **Where did the Community Outcomes come from?**

The community outcomes came from the community.

The outcomes consultation focussed on the 'person on the street' through interviews at shopping centres, suburban buses, festivals, schools, Massey University, UCOL, the Highbury Whanau Centre and Age Concern. A questionnaire was sent to all households. Reply-paid postcards were put in major businesses, cafes, the Council's Customer Service Centre, and libraries.

The Council also met with government agencies and key organisations to ask their views.

People had two months to have their say and over 1,000 people shared their thoughts. All their ideas were carefully considered and summarised into the community outcomes.

### **Achieving and Monitoring the Community Outcomes**

The Council has always said that:

- the community outcomes can only be achieved if lots of different organisations and individuals work towards them
- nothing in the outcomes should be a particular surprise and that organisations and individuals are already working towards them
- most of the work for the outcomes will be achieved by organisations doing their 'day-to-day work', eg, MidCentral Health providing health services, schools providing learning opportunities and sports clubs providing fun things to do
- Some parts of the community outcomes will be achieved by organisations working together on particular projects, eg, the Ministry of Social Development and the Council jointly fund a youth worker in Kelvin Grove.

Hence the aim of the monitoring report is to provide an overview of:

- what different organisations are doing to work towards the community outcomes in Palmerston North
- how the City is currently going
- what is happening in the future, in particular, what major projects or priorities organisations have for each outcome.

It is not intended to be a detailed monitoring report or action plan. It is meant to highlight general trends and major actions, especially to see if things are on track.

The report is about community trends. It is not about individuals. For example, unemployment in the City has dropped markedly. This shows that the community as a whole is moving towards the outcome of having lots of jobs. However, there are still individuals who are unemployed and who are not sharing in the gains. The report does show what organisations are doing to continue to push the gains the community is making to as many people as possible.

One of the difficulties in monitoring the outcomes in Palmerston North is that some data is only available at the regional level. This is especially so because the 2006 Census results have not been released yet. The report is based on information that is relatively easily available. Much of it comes from other organisations. This reflects their roles in the community outcomes.

The Council will monitor the outcomes every year. It will use the results to set its long-term direction. It will encourage other organisations in Palmerston North to use the information for their long-term plans.

## **People have lots of fun things to do**

### **Summary of where we are now**

There is a wide range of leisure facilities and activities in Palmerston North and people are generally satisfied with the opportunities they have to participate in formal and informal leisure activities.

### **Why is this important?**

Having lots of fun things to do means different things to different people - playing basketball, walking a dog, taking the kids to the playground, shopping, gardening, reading a book or playing a computer game. These are the things people enjoy doing in “their” time. They are important for peoples’ physical and mental health. They are also often social activities that people enjoy with family and friends.

A significant number of jobs and businesses in the City are also associated with leisure and recreation.

### **Who does what?**

Many of the fun things that people do are simple things that they organise themselves - reading, gardening, shopping, walking, going to the movies, shopping or eating out.

Sports clubs, hobby clubs and arts and cultural groups provide opportunities for a huge range of leisure activities and events. Private businesses also provide many leisure activities.

Organisations like sportsclubs, the City Council, schools, Massey University, and the Army provide a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, sportsfields and playgrounds in Palmerston North. These include the Esplanade, Ashhurst Domain, playgrounds, libraries, Te Manawa, swimming pools, walkways, the Arena, bowling clubs, tennis courts, squash clubs, and so on. Palmerston North people also use many of the facilities in Manawatu District (and vice versa).

Sport Manawatu co-ordinates the sports sector and is responsible for leading the implementation of the Regional Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. The Palmerston North Community Arts Council co-ordinates the community arts and cultural sector.

The Regent Theatre, Globe Theatre, Te Manawa and Caccia Birch Trust Boards and the Arena Board of Control all manage their respective recreation facilities.

Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), Creative New Zealand, the City Council, incorporated societies and trusts all help fund and support leisure groups and facilities.

The City Council also funds a range of events and festivals in the City.

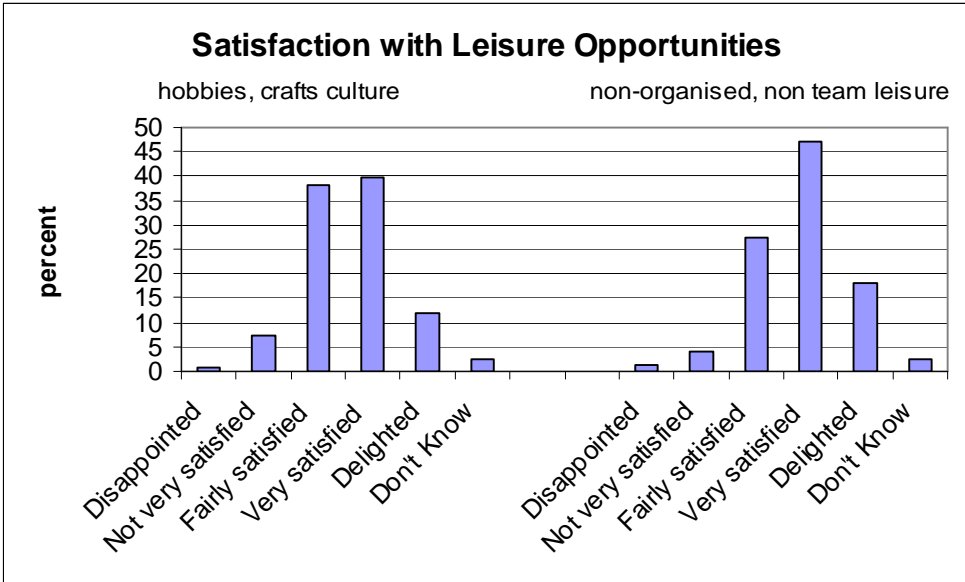
Destination Manawatu promotes what is on in the City and helps organisations attract events to the City.

The City Council and the Ministry of Social Development help make sure that low income people can participate in recreation activities through the Recreation Ticket.

**How are things going?**

It is sometimes said that there is not enough to do in Palmerston North. However, a 2003 survey<sup>1</sup> showed that the majority of people are very satisfied or delighted with the range of recreation and leisure opportunities. Only about 1% are disappointed. These are similar levels to other major cities.

The survey does show that young males are most likely to be dissatisfied with the range of recreation opportunities.



The Citizens Advice Bureau database also shows there are lots of things to do in Palmerston North. It lists nearly 500 groups that cover a wide range of hobbies, interests and sports. These include kennel associations, quilting, vintage machinery, youth orchestra, horticultural society, rock climbing, tramping, film society, badminton, hockey, archery, and gymnastics.

The Communitrak Survey shows that public satisfaction with recreation facilities remains high<sup>2</sup>:

	Percent Very / Fairly Satisfied	Percent Not Very Satisfied
parks and reserves	94	4
sportsfields and playgrounds	88	3
public libraries	86	2
the Regent Theatre	85	2
Te Manawa	73	5
public swimming pools	71	5

These satisfaction levels are similar to other cities.

<sup>1</sup> 2003 City Vision Survey, Palmerston North City Council. The comparison data is from the 2001 Quality of Life in Big Cities Report  
<sup>2</sup> 2006 Communitrak Survey, Palmerston North City Council

## What is happening next?

Fun things to do means different things to different people. There is a general trend in the community towards indoor recreation and individual (non-team) outdoor recreation.

The groups and organisations identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure people have lots of fun things to do.

In particular, Sport Manawatu will lead implementation of the *Regional Sport and Active Recreation Strategy*. This focuses on:

- § encouraging people to participate in sport and active recreation and providing more opportunities for people to participate. For example, “Green Prescriptions” will encourage people to become more active, particularly for health reasons. It is funded by MidCentral and SPARC.
- § providing quality facilities in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner. Sport Manawatu is working with Councils to develop a regional assets database so that the public knows more about the range of facilities are available for use. It will also allow a more co-ordinated approach to asset development and maintenance.
- § having a co-ordinated approach to funding. Sport Manawatu works with many other funders.
- § and increasing the contribution of the sport and active recreation sector to economic and social development. Here Sport Manawatu is working with Vision Manawatu and Destination Manawatu to develop and promote events that will contribute to regional economy and pride.

The Council’s 10 Year Plan has an emphasis on enhancing its current recreation facilities and developing new leisure opportunities, including:

- § improvements to the Esplanade, Te Manawa, and Arena
- § improving the quality of events
- § expanding the Central Library, plus new branch libraries
- § developing more walkways
- § working with private developers to build a 37 ha recreation lake at Aokautere
- § developing a regional recreation and environment Eco-Park in the Kahuterawa and Turitea Valleys
- § developing play facilities for older children throughout the City.

## People feel Safe

### Summary of where we are now

Many organisations are involved in safety and their work is having a positive impact in Palmerston North - safety has improved over the past five years and people feel safer.

### Why is this important

At their most extreme, violence, crime and accidents threaten life. Even when they are not at this level, they still reduce the quality of life that people enjoy. Just feeling at risk can reduce what people do and how positively they feel.

Accidents and crime also have a large financial cost to individuals and to the wider community.

### Who does what?

Feelings of safety depend upon the actions of a wide range of organisations and individuals.

A key organisation is the Safety Advisory Board. It is a network of many of the organisations listed below and it ensures that they take a collaborative approach. Its focus is on crime prevention, rather than injury prevention.

Government agencies have a key role and they work together to support each other. For example, road safety depends upon a collaborative approach to education, accident prevention and enforcement between organisations like the Police, ACC, Transit, Land Transport New Zealand, City Council, Horizons Regional Council and.

Within this collaborative approach, ACC works to prevent injuries at home, at work, recreation, road and child safety. It has overall responsibility for the NZ Injury Prevention Strategy. Occupational Safety and Health looks after safety in the workforce. The Ministry of Social Development works to strengthen communities and families and to reduce family violence. Child, Youth and Family Services works to prevent child abuse and neglect and provides services for strong families. Housing New Zealand Corporation helps provide safe urban neighbourhoods.

The Police have an enforcement and prevention role. They improve public safety by reducing crime and vehicle crashes. The Fire Service responds to fires and other emergencies. It also promotes fire safety. St Johns Ambulance responds to accidents and teaches first aid safety.

MidCentral Health encourages safe lifestyles and treats people who are injured in accidents.

Transit, Horizons Regional Council, and the City Council provide safe transport networks – for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Horizons Regional Council leads the Manawatu-Wanganui Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group. The Group also involves organisations like the City Council, police, fire service, ambulance, army and Ministry of Social Development. The Group ensures that organisations and individuals are prepared for emergencies like earthquakes and floods.

The Regional Council is also responsible for flood protection on the Manawatu River and the Mangaone Stream. The City Council looks after stormwater and flood protection in other rivers and streams that have their catchment confined to the Palmerston North boundaries

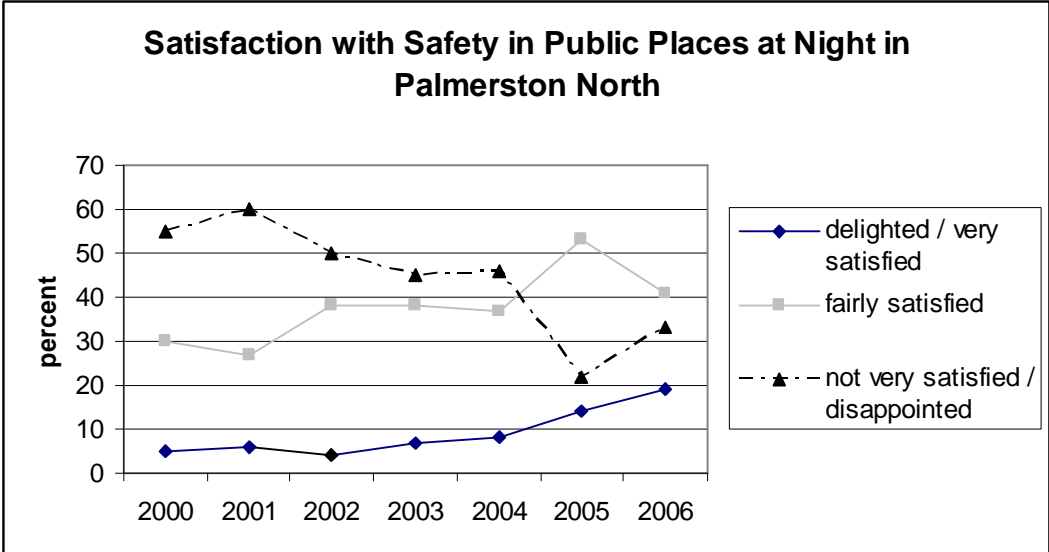
Community groups eg, Neighbourhood Support, SafeCity Hosts, DrugArm, Women’s Refuge all help keep people safe and reduce violence. Funding and support for many of these groups comes from central government, the City Council, funding trusts, businesses and volunteers.

The City Council’s regulatory services – animal control, health inspections, hazardous substances, building consents, bylaws, etc – help ensure that people live in safe places. The Council also makes sure that Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is part of projects like City Heart.

**How are things going?**

Palmerston North people feel a lot safer now than they did several years ago.

In the early 2000s, one third of people were ‘fairly satisfied’ to ‘delighted’ with safety in public places at night<sup>3</sup>. Now, this proportion has doubled - nearly two thirds feel this way. Most of the improvement happened in the last two years after the Safety Advisory Board, Police, the City Council, SafeCity Hosts and other organisations put a lot of effort into improving safety in The Square through things like City Heart, CCTV cameras, Liquor Control Bylaws and new policing practices.



Note: the graph excludes the “don’t knows”. These are around 10% a year.

These satisfaction figures compare well with other major cities, where surveys show that one third to a half of people feel safe in city centres at night<sup>4</sup>

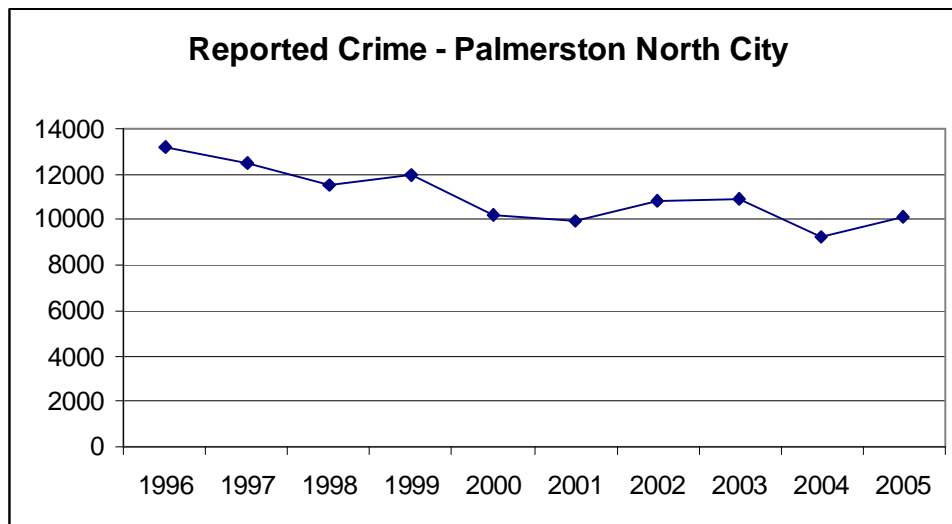
People also feel safe at home - around 90% are satisfied with safety for themselves, their families and their possessions in their homes and neighbourhoods.

And this is not just perception. People are safer.

Reported crime in the City has dropped from over 13,000 offences reported to the Police ten years ago to 10,000 offences in 2005. This is a drop of 23%. This compares favourably with the 15% drop for reported crime nationally. The most common offences are burglary and

<sup>3</sup> 2006 Communitrak Survey, Palmerston North City Council.  
<sup>4</sup> Quality of Life in New Zealand’s Eight Largest Cities 2003.

theft from cars. Although they have major impacts, violence and sexual crimes make up only 10% of all reported crime. However, the number of violent offences has remained fairly steady over the ten years, instead of dropping like other categories.



Incidents of fighting and disorder in the CBD have also dropped. In 2003/4 the SafeCity Hosts recorded an average of 18 incidents per month. In 2004/5 the figure was 9 and last year it was 11.

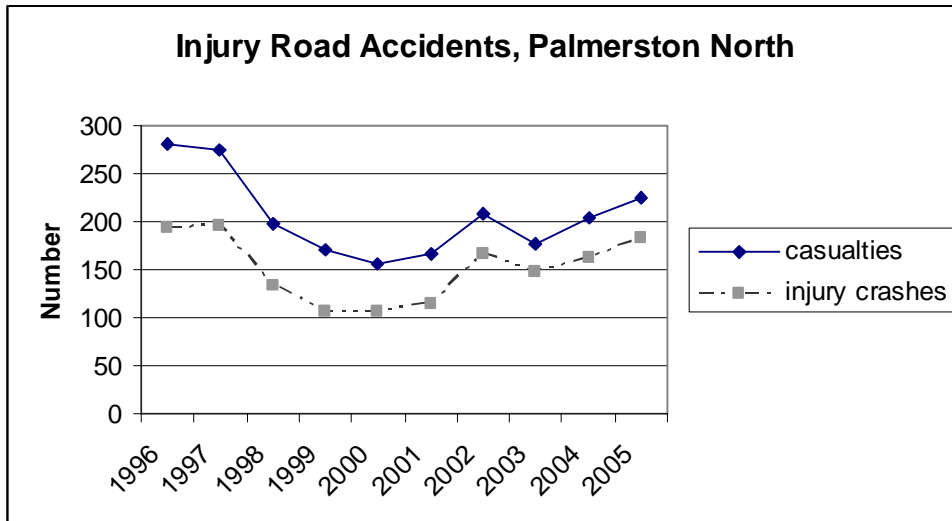
The number of road accidents have increased over the past few years - but are still lower than they were ten years ago<sup>5</sup>. Most of the accidents involve minor injuries (81%); 17% involve serious injury and 2% involve fatalities. The number of fatalities and serious injuries has reduced over the ten years. Over the past five years the average annual number of fatalities was three, with 33 people seriously injured. Most of the people involved in accidents are car or van drivers.

The number of injuries per 100,000 people for Palmerston North in 2005 was 287, compared with 353 for the whole of New Zealand. The number of deaths per 100,000 people was 1.3 compared with 9.9 nationally. (The death rate for 2005 was particularly low, but even over the past five years the average rate was 4.2 deaths per 100,000, less than half the national rate.)<sup>6</sup>

According to Land Transport New Zealand “the most frequent types of crash in the City are due to loss of control on rural roads and driving through intersections on urban roads. Poor driver skills related to judgement, observation or handling techniques were regularly recorded as contributing figures in injury crashes. An increasing proportion (over 20% in 2004) of all the drivers involved in injury crashes held learner or restricted licences”.

<sup>5</sup> Land Transport New Zealand and Palmerston North City Council data.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Social Development Social Report



The number of fires in Palmerston North has also dropped<sup>7</sup> Between 2000 and 2004 the number of structural fires dropped by 17% and the total number of call-outs that the Fire Service responded to dropped by 12%.

Year ending June	2001	2002	2003	2004	change
Structural Fires	160	140	114	133	-17%
Total Callouts	1553	1474	1424	1370	-12%

Data from the Accident Compensation Corporation shows that the total number of accidents in Palmerston North has dropped by 7% in the last 5 years and trend data shows pleasing results for home, workplace and recreational injuries. Even though trend data shows reductions in these areas they are still the highest causes of injuries and will continue to attract ongoing focus in this region.

ACC – Number of New Claims for Palmerston North				
2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
2554	2516	2536	2262	2379

### What is happening next?

The groups and organisations identified above will continue to work together to deliver and improve the services that make sure that people feel safe.

A major part of this is the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy. Government Agencies are responsible for leading out this strategy. In particular:

- Land Transport New Zealand for motor vehicle traffic crashes
- ACC for falls and drownings
- Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Development for assaults
- Department of Labour for workplace injuries
- Ministry of Health and Ministry of Youth Affairs for suicide and deliberate self-harm

<sup>7</sup> New Zealand Fire Service

The Police will focus on increasing community safety. Priorities in the Palmerston North City Policing Plan include reducing burglary, family violence, vehicle related crime, youth crime, organised crime and alcohol related crime.

ACC will continue the focus on workplace injuries, road crashes and falls within this region over the next 12 months. Alcohol related harm is also a major focus this year and ACC is working closely with the Police and MidCentral Health to achieve reduction both in alcohol related harm and offending. A Safe Community Coalition is being established to take an overview of injury prevention initiatives. It will work in conjunction with the Safety Advisory Board.

The Fire Service is identifying areas of “high risk of fire starts” and is working with households and businesses in these areas in particular to prevent fires.

The City Council will improve neighbourhood safety by putting more emphasis on making sure that trees are cut back from footpaths and that street lights are working. It is also taking a more proactive, zero-tolerance approach towards irresponsible dog owners. It will also continue to improve safety in the CBD through City Heart and CBD revitalisation.

The Manawatu-Wanganui Civil Defence and Emergency Group is putting more emphasis on making sure that households have emergency plans to help them cope during and after an emergency.

## Palmerston North is Attractive Clean and Green

### Summary of where we are now

Most people are happy with the look and feel of the City.

### Why is this important

The City is our home and people spend a lot of our time here so it is important that they like the way it looks and feels. People want the city to be attractive and clean. They want a city that is well-laid, and with lots of green space. These are all good for peoples' health and safety.

A city with lots of green space and trees also has a more sustainable natural environment.

### Who does what?

Environment Network Manawatu co-ordinates community groups working in the environmental sector (eg Urban Care, Environmental Trust, Manawatu Tree Trust, and Zero Waste Academy, etc). Other environmental groups carry out environmental projects and advocacy. The Council supports many of these groups.

The Council provides green space around the City through parks, walkways, reserves, etc, and through street trees and gardens. It carries out projects to keep the City looking attractive such as City Heart, undergrounding overhead cables and removing graffiti from public places. It is also responsible for waste management. This involves reduction, re-use, recycling, recovery, treatment, and disposal of waste.

Another major role for the Council is developing and implementing the District Plan. The District Plan sets out the rules on what people can and cannot do with land in the City. These rules make sure that the City looks after its natural and built environment and that the things that people do with land fit together well

Horizons Regional Council is responsible for the sustainable management of air, land, native biodiversity and water resources. It also undertakes environmental education.

The Department of Conservation looks after conservation issues in the City and is involved in reserve management. The NZ Historic Places Trust is responsible for the protection of heritage buildings. Housing New Zealand Corporation helps provide attractive and well designed neighbourhoods around its houses.

Residents and businesses also help keep the City attractive by maintaining their properties and gardens.

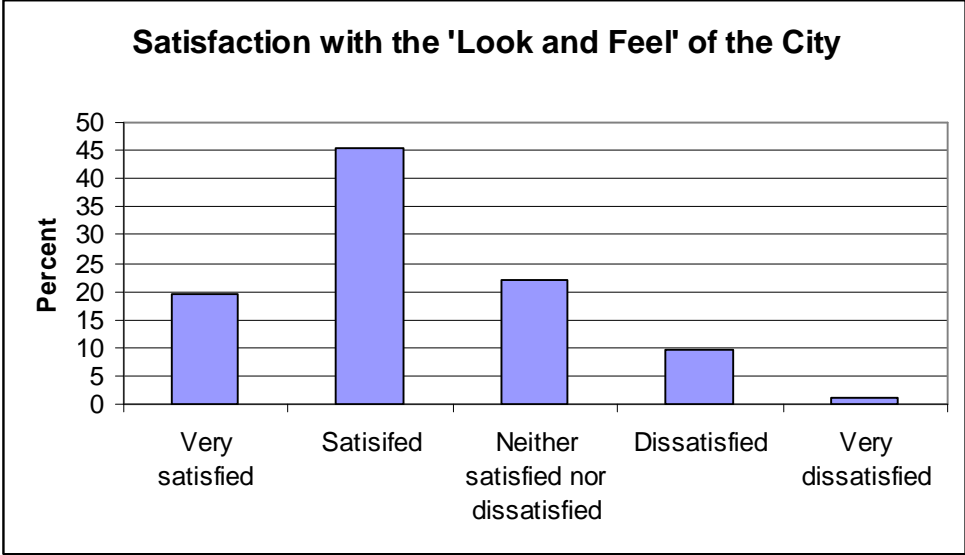
### How are things going?

Most people are satisfied with the way Palmerston North looks and feels - two thirds (65%) are satisfied or very satisfied<sup>8</sup>. These people said that the City is clean and tidy, it is nice looking, well laid out and there are plenty of parks, green areas, trees and gardens. This satisfaction is at a similar level to Waitakere, Auckland and Hamilton, but lower than Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

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<sup>8</sup> 2003 City Vision Survey, Palmerston North City Council.

Only 11% of people are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. They feel that the City is boring, untidy, and needs beautifying.



Making sure that the city is looking attractive today means preserving our past. Today there are 60 protected heritage buildings in Palmerston North.<sup>9</sup> Most of these are commercial, religious and institutional buildings. Over half are located in the central city. This number has been relatively constant over the past few years.

The City's heritage is more than buildings. There are seven protected sites of importance to Rangitaane. The City also has protected trees of historic, botanical and visual value.

There are many green public spaces in the City. There are more than 500 hectares of reserves. This is equivalent to 6.9 hectares of reserves per 1000 people<sup>10</sup>. This is well above the standard under the old Local Government Act of 4 hectares of reserves per 1000 people. (The new Act does not have a similar standard.) On top of this there are school sportsfields, and places like golf courses and tennis courts.

The State of the Environment Report 2005 concludes that the water quality in the Manawatu River is moderate, with most indicators being satisfactory 40-60% of the time. During the swimming season (November to April) water standards are satisfactory for swimming most (65%-85%) of the time. The times they are unsuitable tend to be after heavy rain when the water is dirty and people are not swimming. Most of the water quality in local streams is affected by what happens upstream.

The Kahuterawa and Turitea streams have good riparian habitat and water quality and support moderately healthy invertebrate communities. However, the water quality is not as good as the habitats would suggest. The Mangaone and other urban streams regularly exceed the guidelines for E.coli bacteria, which can cause illness. Most streams also occasionally exceed the guidelines for ammonia, which is toxic to aquatic organisms.

Horizons Regional Council and the City Council are working with nearby landowners and businesses to reduce the flow of contaminants into the streams and to improve their appearance.

<sup>9</sup> 2005 State of the Environment Report, Palmerston North City Council

<sup>10</sup> 2005 State of the Environment Report, Palmerston North City Council

Horizons Regional Council monitors air quality during winter and found that air quality in Palmerston North posed no environmental risks to public health<sup>11</sup>

### **What is happening next?**

The groups and organisations identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure that Palmerston North is attractive, clean and green.

The City Council has several projects in its 10 Year Plan that will improve the look and feel of the City. These include:

- having more public art around the City. This is a joint project between the Council and a group of interested residents who are helping fund the project.
- Putting more emphasis on landscaping, planting and beautification alongside major roads.
- Continuing with street tree planting and green corridors.
- Continuing to upgrade the CBD along the lines of the City Heart project.

Horizons Regional Council is bringing its seven current resource management plans into one easy-to-use document. The aim is to remove confusion and overlaps and to focus on existing provisions that work well. It is also carrying out a major Sustainable Land Use Initiative to reduce rural erosion, which impacts on regional rivers and streams. It is also has a Manawatu River Enhancement Project to enhance access to the River and the use that local people can make of it.

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<sup>11</sup> 2005 State of the Environment Report, Horizons Regional Council

## **Businesses grow here and people have lots of job opportunities**

### **Summary of where we are now**

Manawatu-Wanganui had strong economic growth over the past five years. This has led to job and business growth in Palmerston North and the number of people receiving an unemployment benefit has dropped substantially.

### **Why is this important?**

Jobs and businesses are necessary for economic and social growth and they underpin quality of life. Jobs give people the income that they need to get the basics of life and the comforts and luxuries that they enjoy. Jobs also give people a sense of belonging and importance. Many of their social contacts and activities will come through their work.

Job and business growth also give the City a sense of social and economic confidence.

### **Who does what?**

Most of the jobs and businesses in the City are provided by the private sector. The public sector also makes a strong contribution to the number of jobs, particularly in the areas of defence, education, health and social services.

Vision Manawatu provides economic development services to encourage business and job growth. Destination Manawatu markets the City as a great place to do business. Business groups like Manawatu Chamber of Commerce and the Employers and Manufacturers Association undertake co-ordination and advocacy.

Vision Manawatu is funded by the City Council, Manawatu District Council, Massey University, and CentralPower. Destination Manawatu is funded by the City Council and the District Council.

Trade and Enterprise New Zealand helps Vision Manawatu give advice and funding to business.

The Ministry of Social Development and the Department of Labour both help working age people get the right skills, education and training to enter or to stay in work. They do this through projects like Industry Partnerships, Tools for Schools and the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. The Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income) also provides income support for those unable to get work.

The Tertiary Education Commission works in this area too, through programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships.

The BioCommerce Centre supports new innovative industries that have the potential to grow into important business and employers in the City.

The City Council supports economic growth and jobs by providing the infrastructure such as roading, water and waste removal that businesses need. It plans industrial land and provides part of the regulatory framework within which businesses operate. The District Plan ensures that land is appropriately zoned to provide for business relocation and expansion.

The City Council also provides a vibrant CBD (City Heart) and parking so that the City has a strong retail centre. It funds events that attract visitors. It also makes sure that the City has good urban design, as this makes the City an attractive place for employees to come to.

Schools and tertiary education institutes give people the skills they need for employment. In Palmerston North the major tertiary education institutes are Massey University, UCOL, Te Wananga O Aotearoa and the International Pacific College. There are also a number of Private Training Establishments.

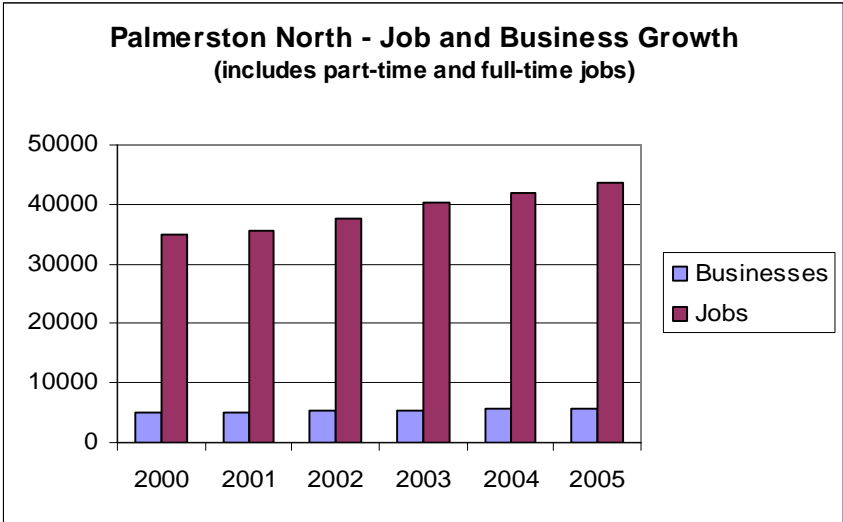
Career Services rapuara provides individuals and organisations with careers advice and information so they can confidently navigate their own pathways to success through work and training.

Community Groups (eg, Mature Employment and the Ethnic Council) undertake community employment initiatives to help people get jobs or more training.

**How are things going?**

The Manawatu-Wanganui region has shown strong economic growth for the last five years. In the year ending March 2006 the region’s economy grew by 3.3%.<sup>12</sup> This was the top equal regional growth rate in New Zealand and nearly twice the national growth of 1.6%. This is not just a short-term result. Between 2000 and 2005 the Manawatu-Wanganui economy grew by 4.4%, compared with 3.6% nationally.

This economic growth has been mirrored by a growth in jobs and businesses in Palmerston North. Since 2000 the number of jobs in the City has grown by about 25%. This is slightly above the national growth of 22%.<sup>13</sup> During the same time the number of businesses in the City grew by 13%. Over three quarters of the job growth came in health and community services, transport and warehousing, construction, property and business services, retail, government services and education. Nationally the number of businesses grew by 28%, suggesting that most of the local job growth came from major employers.



The growth in jobs has led to a marked decrease in the number of people receiving the unemployment benefit. Over the last five years this number has reduced by nearly three quarters. Most of this is a real drop, not just a transfer to other benefits. While there have

<sup>12</sup> Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Outlook for Year ended March 2006, Vision Manawatu  
<sup>13</sup> Statistics New Zealand

been some increases in other benefits there has been an overall decline in the number of people on benefits<sup>14</sup>.

<b>Number of People aged 18-64 Years Receiving Income Tested Benefits and Palmerston North and Terrace End</b>			
	March 2001	March 2006	change
All income tested benefits	7363	5731	-22%
Unemployment Benefit	2547	723	-72%
Domestic Purposes benefit	2305	2073	-10%
Sickness Benefit	590	795	35%
Invalids Benefit	1408	1889	34%

Although there are more jobs and the local economy is growing, not everybody is sharing in this growth. There are no current figures for poverty in Palmerston North but the levels are likely to be similar to national figures. The 2004 New Zealand Living Standards Report<sup>15</sup> shows that nationally 15% of people are in severe or significant hardship (see table). It also shows that families with dependent children have lower living standards than the overall population. For example, 22% of families with children are in severe or significant hardship, compared with 15% of people over all. Note that these percentages are before the Working for Families package was introduced. This package will improve family living standards for those on low and middle incomes.

<b>Economic Standard of Living Index</b>	<b>% of people (for whole country)</b>	<b>An example of what this means</b>
Severe hardship	8%	Struggle to pay bills on time, economise on food, have poor accommodation, second-hand clothes, postpone doctors visits
Significant hardship	7%	As above, but can afford occasional comforts or luxuries
Some hardship	9%	Have some comforts (things like hobbies, holidays, pay tv, etc) but may have to postpone some home maintenance or equipment purchases
Fairly comfortable living standard	16%	Have almost all the basics and many of the comforts or luxuries they desire
Comfortable living standard	25%	Lack only a few basics and have about half of the comforts they want
Good living standard	27%	Lack hardly any basics and have most of the comforts that they want
Very good living standard	8%	Have all of the basics and the majority of comforts that they want

The cost of living in Palmerston North is lower than other major centres. Student Association figures show that average costs of living in Palmerston North are \$210 per week, compared with an average of \$285 for all university cities<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Data provided by Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>15</sup> New Zealand Living Standards 2004, Ministry of Social Development, 2006

<sup>16</sup> 2004 Student Income and Expenditure Survey, Massey University Students Association.

## **What is happening next?**

The rate of growth in the national economy has been slowing since early 2005. This could reduce local business and job growth. All of the organisations identified above will work to growing the numbers of businesses and jobs.

Vision Manawatu is leading the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy. This will bring all of the relevant organisations and businesses together to focus on:

- making sure the Region and City have a vibrant lifestyle so that businesses and people stay here and that others are encourage to move here
- building on Region's transport and communication, education and bio-industry strengths
- encouraging smart businesses - these are businesses with high levels of innovation and productivity

The City Council is developing a City Economic Development Strategy. This will complement the Regional Strategy and show what the Council can do to help support economic growth in the City, including being a business friendly organisation, and making sure that Palmerston North is attractive to businesses, students, visitors and employees.

The Ministry of Social Development will work with other organisations to make sure that the benefits of growth are shared as widely as possible. Local priorities for getting people into work include long-term unemployed, Maori, Pacific Island peoples, migrants, youth, people with illness or disability, sole parents and older people. The recently introduced Working for Families package will increase the income that many families receive.

The Ministry is also working with the City Council to develop a Youth Transition Scheme. This will help young people make the step from school to work or further education.

Career Services rapuara is continuing to work with local secondary schools so that students can confidently make job, training and career choices. It is also promoting the concept of 'work in life decision making'. This illustrates that individuals make work decisions within a life-style context and – on a larger scale – that communities need to offer positive life-style options to attract and retain workers.

## **People have lots of learning opportunities**

### **Summary of where we are now**

There is a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities in Palmerston North and people are taking advantage of these - Palmerston North people have high education participation rates and high levels of qualification.

### **Why is this important?**

We live in a “knowledge society” so people need education to participate in our community and economy. Lifelong learning and education allow people to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence and to lead richer lives.

Our economy - and hence the number of businesses and jobs - is dependent on a skilled and educated workforce.

### **Who does what?**

A wide range of organisations (such as kindergartens, kohanga reo, playcentres, schools, tertiary institutes, community education groups, private training providers) all provide education and training opportunities. Some of these give formal qualifications; others are less formal.

The Ministry of Education - Special Education, works to support students at risk in education settings in terms of their presence, participation, learning and achievement. The Ministry of Education works towards removing barriers that affect student achievement.

The Tertiary Education Commission funds and co-ordinates the tertiary sector, including the Gateway programme in schools. The Guardian Group (a cluster of education groups) also provides advice to Vision Manawatu regarding links between businesses in the region and the education sector.

StudyLink (part of the Ministry of Social Development) provides financial support to tertiary students.

The Council works with Massey University, UCOL and other organisations to market the City as a learning centre. It also works to make the City attractive to students through events, and other initiatives. The Student City Group helps market the City as a student centre and carries out initiatives for students.

The tertiary sector, especially Massey University, make a huge contribution to Palmerston North. At least 40% of the population do some tertiary study or adult learning. The tertiary sector contributed over \$1billion to the City's economy. Without all the students and staff Palmerston North would not have the same range of clubs and organisations that local people enjoy.

The Council provides learning opportunities through the library and Te Manawa. It provides funding and support for community education groups.

## How are things going?

There are many learning opportunities in the City. There are over 75 education facilities, ranging from early childhood centres through to tertiary institutions. These include about 60 early childhood centres, kindergartens and primary schools. At the tertiary level Massey University, UCOL, Te Wananga O Aotearoa and the International Pacific College, along with other training organisations, all offer a wide range of courses.

There are also many community education opportunities for people to choose from. These include Te Whare Akonga Open Learning Centre, QEC, Adult Reading and Learning Assistance, English for Speakers of other Languages, Highbury Whanau Resource Centre, Youth One Stop Shop, Mature Employment Services, University of the Third Age, Senior Net, Methodist Social Services, Ethnic Centre, Te Aroha Noa, Te Manawa City Library, etc.

The figures show that many local people take advantage of these opportunities. They also show that involvement with education in the City starts at young age - 98% of children in their first year at school have attended an early childhood education centre.<sup>17</sup> These are higher levels than the national levels, especially for Maori and Pacific Island children.

Percentage of Year One Students who Attended Early Childhood Education before starting School						
	European	Maori	Pacific Island	Asian	Other	Total
Palmerston North	99.0	97.1	100.0	98.2	95.2	98.4
New Zealand	97.7	89.9	84.5	95.2	89.9	94.3

Qualifications levels for school leavers in the City show slightly mixed results compared with school leavers nationwide. Fewer Palmerston North students are leaving school without any NCEA qualifications, (11% compared with 13% nationally). However, fewer are also leaving school with higher NCEA qualifications (38% of City students left with 30 or more level 3 NCEA credits compared with 40% nationally)<sup>18</sup>

A relatively high proportion of Palmerston North people have tertiary qualifications. 2001 Census data shows that 35% of local adults have a tertiary qualification, compared with 32% in the whole country. This reflects the important role that the tertiary education sector plays in the City.

## What is happening next?

The groups and organisation identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure people have lots of learning opportunities.

The Ministry of Social Development and the City Council are developing a Youth Transition Scheme to help young people make the step from school to work or further education.

Population changes will affect the number of potential students in the future. The number of secondary school students is expected to decline over the next few years. The decline in the City is less marked than for the region and the country, but it will still affect student enrolments in tertiary institutions. This drop may be countered by increasing numbers of mature students - more than half of all students are now over the age of 25 years.

<sup>17</sup> 2006 Social Report - Territorial Authority data. Ministry of Social Development

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Education, data is for 2004

## **It is easy to move around Palmerston North**

### **Summary of where we are now**

Nearly everybody is happy with the way traffic flows around the City during off-peak times. Satisfaction with the way traffic flows during peak times is lower, but still about two-thirds of people are at least fairly satisfied. Satisfaction with peak traffic flows has been steadily improving over time.

### **Why is this important**

People need to be able to move easily and safely around the City so that they can get to shops, work, schools, the doctor, sports, friends, etc.

People also walk and cycle to get around the City for health, enjoyment, financial and environmental reasons.

Businesses rely on the safe and efficient movement of people and goods around the City. Palmerston North is also a key distribution hub because of its central location and easy transport links with other places.

### **Who does what?**

The City Council is responsible for providing safe transport networks – for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. It ensures that transport is part of land planning for new growth areas. The Council has a hierarchy of roads and it makes sure that the road standards are appropriate to their use: regional links, intra-City links, the CBD and neighbourhood areas.

Land Transport New Zealand also funds roading. It fully funds state highways, and helps the City Council pay for local roads. It also promotes safety and sustainability.

Horizons Regional Council is responsible for co-ordinating transport activities in the region through its Regional Land Transport Strategy and Plan. It also funds public transport services (including special services for people with disabilities) and has a road safety programme (Road Safe Central).

The Police undertake traffic enforcement, road safety, and crash investigations. The Accident Compensation Commission helps ensure road safety and injury prevention from road crashes. MidCentral Health also has road safety and accident prevention campaigns.

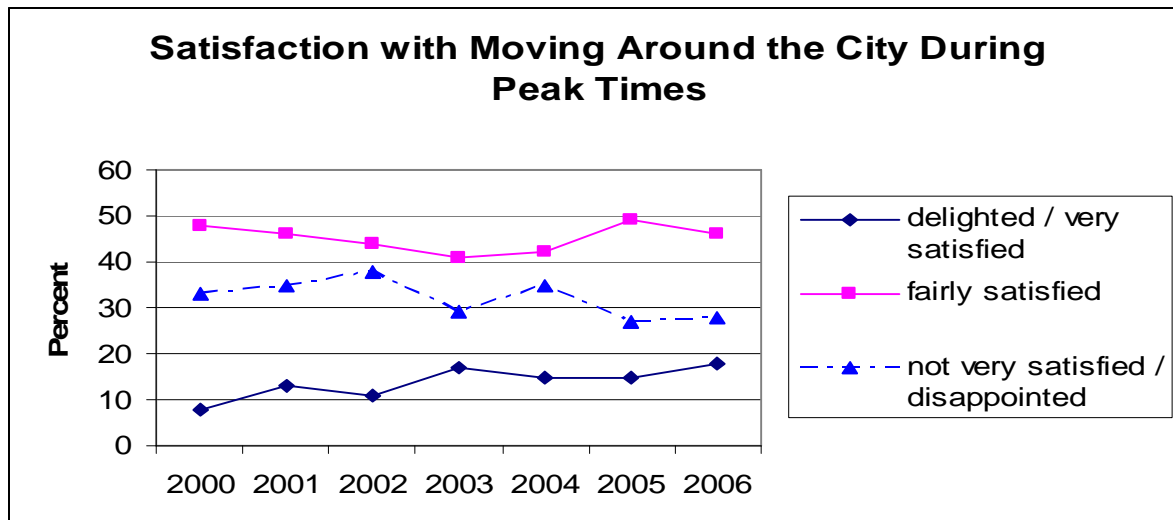
If traffic is to flow easily individuals need to drive, cycle and walk safely and courteously. They also need to use public transport to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads.

### **How are things going?**

Nearly everybody is happy with the way traffic flows around the City during off-peak times - only around 5% of people are not satisfied. Not surprisingly, satisfaction with the way traffic flows during peak times is lower, but it has been improving over time.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> 2006 Communitrak Survey, Palmerston North City Council



Motor vehicles are the key mode of transport - Land Transport figures show that people travel about 300 million vehicle kilometres in Palmerston North a year. This is not far off one million kilometres per day. Until 2006 Census results are released it is difficult to estimate what is happening with other modes of transport but until 2001 at least the long-term trend for cycling was declining numbers. Public transport numbers have increased over the past few years - concession bus usage has exceeded 500,000 trips in both 2002 and 2003<sup>20</sup>

The section on safety shows that traffic accidents have increased recently, but have dropped from what they were ten years ago.

### What is happening next?

All of the organisations identified above will work to make sure that moving around Palmerston North continues to be easy and safe.

The City Council will continue to implement the Transportation Management Plan. This plan shows likely future roading needs over the next twenty years. Key projects include: a new bridge across the Manawatu River and a ring road linked to urban growth in the Te Matai and Aokautere areas. Alternative forms of transport are also encouraged through improvements to the public transport system, the cycle network and walking areas.

The City Council and the Manawatu District Council are also implementing the Active Transportation Strategy (a cycling and walking plan). Key parts of this are encouraging people to walk and cycle more often for travel, health and enjoyment.

All organisations - the Police, ACC, Horizons Regional Council, Land Transport New Zealand, Transit, MidCentral Health and the City Council will focus on reducing the number of accidents on City roads. This will happen through projects like intersection driving campaigns, identifying and fixing accident blackspots, speeding blitzes and safe cycling campaigns.

<sup>20</sup> 2005 State of the Environment Report, Palmerston North City Council

## The City's Infrastructure is Reliable

### Summary of where we are now

The City's infrastructure has been well maintained and is in good condition.

The city's infrastructure is things like its roads, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, waste disposal, communication and energy supply. These are all crucial to the functioning of a city. They contribute to the health and safety of people and the environment. Businesses depend upon them. Some of them are literally the physical foundation on which the city is built.

### Who does what?

The City Council provides the bulk of the City's infrastructure - roading and parking, stormwater, waste management, waste water, water, property, and recreation facilities. Some of this is shared with other organisations. For example, Transit New Zealand looks after state highways. Horizons Regional Council has responsibility for the stopbanks along the Manawatu River and the Mangaone Stream. Some waste management facilities are provided by the private sector.

Communication and energy infrastructure is provided by the private sector.

### How are things going?

The City Council has Asset Management Plans for all its major infrastructural assets. These plans make sure that the infrastructure is reliable and can meet the needs of current and future users. Independent assessments show that the assets are well maintained<sup>21</sup>:

- **Roading:** the road surface is very smooth and has a high standard of maintenance. The overall condition of footpaths is good, reflecting the success of efforts over the past three years to address a maintenance backlog. Street lighting is in good condition with ongoing upgrading to national standards.
- **Waste:** all assets at the Awapuni landfill are in good condition or better, and the landfill has sufficient capacity to handle waste disposal needs until its closure in 2007. The Council's transfer station and recycling facilities are less than 10 years old and are in good condition or better.
- **Stormwater:** pipes are mostly less than 50 years old and will last for another 50-100 years. Pipes generally have the capacity to cope with periods of heavy rain. Pump stations are all relatively young and are in good condition with adequate capacity to meet pumping needs.
- **Wastewater:** pipes are in good condition and can meet dry weather flows. Overloading occurs in some areas during wet weather due to the entry of stormwater into the wastewater system. Pump stations are in good to excellent condition and generally have sufficient capacity. The Treatment Plants are well maintained and in good condition.
- **Water:** supplies are in good condition. There is sufficient water supply capacity until at least 2020. Treatment facilities are in very good to excellent condition and have sufficient capacity for the next 20 years. The pipes are generally in very good

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<sup>21</sup> Maunsells Ltd, in Palmerston North City Council Asset Management Plans.

condition. Some older pipes are softening and cracking so these are being replaced. Problems are experienced with iron and manganese in the Ashhurst and Palmerston North networks. This is not a health issue but can lead to complaints about discoloured water and these are being addressed. The supply and reticulation systems are graded Aa by the Ministry of Health. This means the Council's water presents minimal risk to public health.

Community survey results from recent years show that public satisfaction with parking, roading, and sewerage is higher than in other cities. The 2006 results showed that water was below other cities. This was largely because of problems residents were experiencing with discoloured water from rusting pipes. This was not a health issue but the Council is working to remove the rust from the system and to replace the pipes.

### **What is happening next?**

The groups and organisation identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure that the city's physical infrastructure is reliable.

The Council will continue to implement Asset Management Plans. It also has other plans, such as the Traffic Management Plan, Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan, and the Wastewater Network Management Plan to make sure that these assets are developed to meet the needs of a growing City.

The Council's Wastewater 2006 project will continue to make sure that the discharge of waste from the City's wastewater treatment plant meets the required environmental standards.

Horizons Regional Council will continue to lead the implementation of the Lifelines Project. This looks at all major infrastructure in the region and overlays this with hazard information (earthquakes, flooding etc) so that the risks to the infrastructure from natural disasters can be minimised.

## **The Community is Supportive and People and Organisations Work Together**

### **Summary of where we are now**

Palmerston North has a wide range of organisations and voluntary groups providing social support services.

Community spirit in the City has increased markedly, with about three quarters of residents saying it is good or very good.

### **Why is this important?**

People want to feel part of their communities. Most peoples' social circles are around family, whanau and friends. The "social circle" that people have is also very important. The relationships that these involve help keep people happy and healthy.

People want to feel supported when they are going through difficult times. This also means that people need to help others when they can.

People also want to feel that they can help set common goals and work towards these alongside other individuals and groups.

### **Who does what?**

Responsibility for community well-being is shared by everybody - individuals, community groups, central government and City Council.

Most of the support in our community happens through families and friendships. Volunteers also have a key role in keeping community groups running.

These community groups provide a wide range of help in areas like children, youth, families, older people, low income, safety, ethnic groups, advocacy, housing, health, and learning.

The Ministry of Social Development improves peoples' well-being and ability to participate in the community. Local priorities include helping children, young people and families succeed; improving opportunities for working age people; and enhancing the wellbeing of older people.

Child, Youth and Family is a service of the Ministry of Social Development and is committed to safe children and young people in strong families and responsive communities. It works to ensure that they are free from abuse, neglect and offending.

Housing New Zealand Corporation provides community agency housing. The Department of Internal Affairs gives advice, information and funding for strong communities and encourages a strong volunteer sector. Te Puni Kokiri provides policy for Maori development.

The City Council helps support and fund a wide range of community groups. It also provides community halls and community infrastructure. The Council's strategic planning and democratic services are about getting people working together on agreed actions. It provides a range of fun events and festivals that celebrate the City's diversity

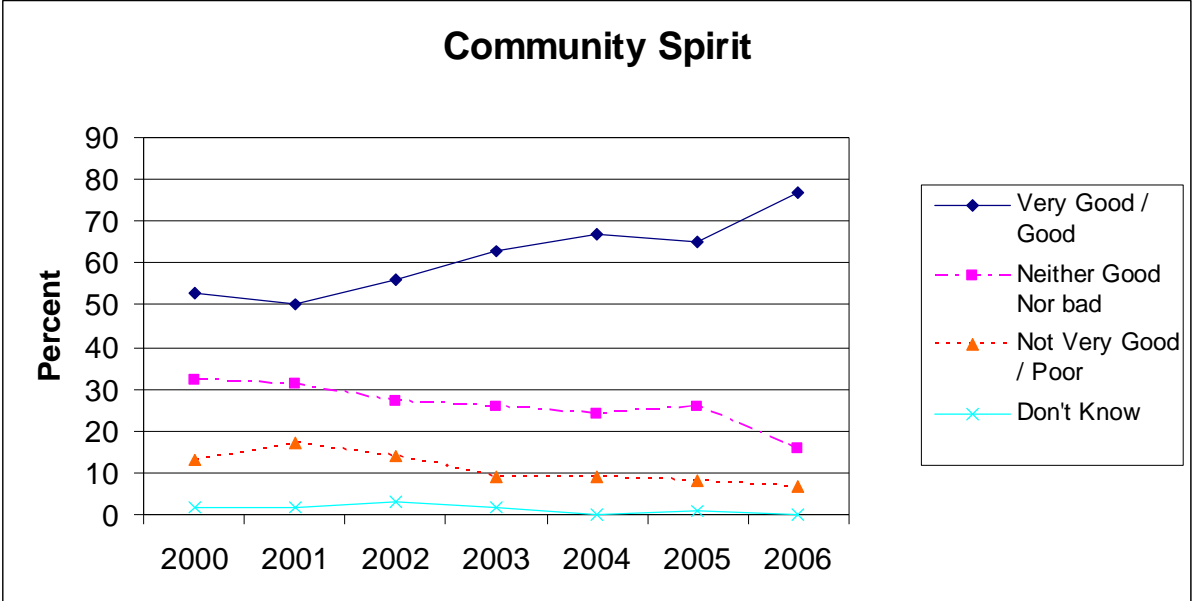
Networking and co-ordinating groups (eg, the Regional InterAgency Network, Community Arts Council, Ethnic Council, Environment Network Manawatu, Community Services Council, etc) provide co-ordination and leadership in their particular areas, as well as carrying out specific projects.

**How are things going?**

Community spirit has increased over the past seven years. About three quarters of people (77%) say community spirit in Palmerston North is good or very good.<sup>22</sup> In the early 2000s about half of the respondents felt this way. (The survey defines community spirit as “a sense of belonging and togetherness, a pride in the area and a good atmosphere among people”.)

The reasons people rated community spirit as poor or very poor were mostly to do with a desire for more community events and a feeling that people are not friendly.

The number of people saying community spirit is good or very good is above other similar cities.



The community also looks after itself. The City has a large voluntary sector - the Citizens Advice database lists over 250 community service and support groups. The number of people doing voluntary work for these types of group is similar to other cities - around 16% of adults were involved in some type of voluntary work in the previous four weeks<sup>23</sup>.

There are many networks in the City that involve a wide range of organisations. They all make sure that organisations in “their patch” know what each other is doing and work together. These include the Regional InterAgency Network (government agencies), Sport Manawatu, Community Arts Council, Ethnic Centre, Community Services Council, Environment Network, Strengthening Families, Safety Advisory Board, Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and the Manawatu Commerce Centre.

<sup>22</sup> 2006 Communitrak Survey, Palmerston North City Council. The comparison with other cities is from the Quality of Life in New Zealand's Eight Largest Cities Survey, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> New Zealand Statistics, 2001 Census

There is also a wide range of government agencies based in the City (around 35). Most of these are in the social sector and they provide a wide range of support to the community and to individuals. These include the Ministry of Social Development, Accident Compensation Corporation, Community Probation Services, Ministry of Education, Housing New Zealand, Internal Affairs, Police, MidCentral Health, Careers Services and Te Puni Kokiri

Because of its strong education base, Palmerston North has many people from different countries teaching or studying here. A survey of residents showed that most people (69%) feel that having people here from different countries and with different lifestyles and cultures is a positive thing. Only 5% felt it made the City a worse place. These figures are similar to other cities like Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, and much more positive than Auckland<sup>24</sup>.

Local democracy involves getting people together. Most people (54%) are satisfied with the way that the Council involves them in its decision-making. Only 14% are dissatisfied and this figure has dropped from 28% several years ago. Satisfaction levels are slightly higher than in other similar cities<sup>25</sup>

### **What is happening next?**

The groups and organisation identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure that the community is supportive and that people and organisations work together.

In particular

- Community groups will continue to provide a wide range of services - youth, safety, advocacy, information, housing, cultural, education, older people, families, employment.
- The Ministry of Social Development will implement its 2006/7 Central Regional Plan. Priorities are leading social development in the region and City, helping children, young people and families succeed; improving opportunities for working age people; enhancing the wellbeing of older people. Child, Youth and Family target social work services to children, youth and their families and to working with community organisations.
- The City Council will implement the new Community Development and Funding Policies. The Community Development Policy shows how the Council will support community groups, work with central government, and monitor or advocate on social issues. The Funding Policy makes sure that the Council funds current community priorities and that it monitors more closely the effectiveness of this funding.

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<sup>24</sup> 2003 City Vision Survey, Palmerston North City Council; Quality of Life in New Zealand's Eight Largest Cities Survey, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> 2006 Communitrak Survey, Palmerston North City Council

## People are Healthy and Well-Housed

### Summary of where we are now

Palmerston North people generally have good health that matches or betters the rest of the MidCentral Health area.

Housing in Palmerston North is less crowded than in other major cities. It is also relatively affordable for most people in the City.

### Why is this important?

Health is about leading healthy lifestyles and receiving good health care when it is needed.

Good health is critical to well-being and independence. Without it, people are less able to enjoy their lives to the fullest; their work and social options may be limited and they may find themselves unable to be fully involved in the community.

People need good housing. Housing greatly affects our health and the quality of life that we can enjoy. Decent housing, that is affordable and conveniently located, builds peoples' sense of well being. It makes it easier for them to find and keep work, to study and to get involved in social activities.

### Who does what?

Responsibility for leading health lifestyles rests mostly with individuals and families.

MidCentral Health, the Primary Health Organisation, schools and other organisations encourage people to eat well, to exercise, to not smoke and to have regular health checks.

Primary healthcare services are provided by the Manawatu Primary Health Organisation, GPs, nurses, MidCentral Health, Maori Health providers (Whakapai Hauora, Te Waka Huia, Manawahenua Hauorao), other health professionals and community groups (Youth One Stop Shop, Womens Health Collective, etc).

MidCentral Health also provides a full range of secondary health services and some tertiary services. It also provides disability services. It provides some of these services directly; other services are provided with funding from MidCentral Health.

The Council provides much of the physical infrastructure necessary for public health - clean water, and sewerage and rubbish disposal. It also provides, along with schools and recreation providers, opportunities for formal and informal exercising and sports.

Most of the houses in Palmerston North are owned by the people who live in them.

The other major housing provider is Housing New Zealand Corporation. It provides rental housing (around 1550 units in Palmerston North), along with advice and assistance into home ownership. The City Council provides 400 community and public rental units primarily for low income elderly people. MASH and other community groups help provide sheltered housing.

MidCentral Health and the Ministry of Health give funding and support for people to stay in their own houses. The Ministry of Health also funds housing for people with special needs.

Work and Income provides the accommodation supplement and gives grants or loans for modifying housing for people with special needs. It also helps fund the Healthy Homes programme. Tenancy Services resolves disputes between tenants and landlords.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority encourages energy efficient and healthy homes.

Community housing groups such as Housing Advice Centre and Manawatu Tenants Association are involved in advice and advocacy.

Government agencies and the Council support community groups involved in health and housing.

### How are things going?

Palmerston North people live slightly longer lives than the national average. The life expectancy of a girl born in Palmerston North in 2000-2002 is 81.7 years, compared with the national average of 81.1. For a boy the corresponding figures are 77.5 and 76.3 years.

These relatively long lives reflect peoples' good health - the health of Palmerston North people is the same as or better than the health of people in the rest of MidCentral's area.<sup>26</sup>

Palmerston North has 11% fewer than expected deaths from all causes, including the most common causes of circulatory disease, cancer, respiratory disease and intentional injury and accident. These figures are in comparison with death rates across the whole MidCentral District and are age adjusted so the differences are not due to different age structures in the different areas.

<b>MidCentral Death Rates, Age Adjusted (1999 – 2001)</b>			
	<b>No. of deaths</b>	<b>Crude rate per 100,000 people</b>	<b>Age Adjusted ratio</b>
Palmerston North	1481	2060	0.89
MidCentral total	4035	2600	1

Hospital discharge rates for Palmerston North people were fairly constant between 1999 and 2003. Major causes of discharge are pregnancy / birth, circulatory system, digestive system, musculoskeletal system, and ENMT (ear, nose, mouth, throat). Palmerston North discharge rates are similar to MidCentral age adjusted averages for most problems, although they are higher for circulatory problems, ischaemic heart disease (blockages of heart arteries), and asthma.

People from poorer areas of Palmerston North (and other parts of MidCentral) have higher hospitalisation and death rates than the rest of the City. This includes hospitalisation for things like heart disease, asthma, respiratory infections and glue ear.

The Manawatu Primary Health Organisation (PHO) is being set up to make services more readily available and more affordable, especially for the young and the elderly.

Most people in the City own their own houses, either with or without a mortgage. Because of the high number of student flats, home-ownership is lower here than in the country as a whole (66% for Palmerston North compared with 69% nationally - 2001 Census). Recent

<sup>26</sup> Most of this information comes from the MidCentral 2005 Health Needs Assessment.

trends indicate homeownership is dropping, especially in places where homes are very expensive.

This trend is not likely to be as marked here as in some other places as housing is relatively affordable in Palmerston North. When the country's 15 cities are ranked in order of ratio of income to house prices, Palmerston North is the 5<sup>th</sup> most affordable place for low income households to purchase a house<sup>27</sup>. Between 1991 and 2001 the overall housing affordability (the cost of borrowing for a house compared with income) declined nationally and locally.

Palmerston North also has a low proportion of over-crowded houses when compared with the national average - 6% of households are crowded compared with 10% nationally<sup>28</sup>. Household crowding in the City has reduced over time and it is now nearly half what it was 15 years ago.

Maori and Pacific Island households are more likely to be crowded, but still their households in Palmerston North households are not as crowded as elsewhere. (26% of Pacific Island houses in Palmerston North are crowded compared with 43% nationally. For Maori the corresponding figures are 15% and 25%.)

As at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006 there are 296 people on Housing New Zealand Corporation waiting lists in the wider Manawatu area (Palmerston North, Rongotea and Feilding)<sup>29</sup>.

<b>Level of Housing Need</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Severe and persistent. The household has needs that must be addressed immediately.	0
Significant and persistent. The household's wellbeing is affected in a significant and persistent way by their housing circumstances. The household cannot get suitable housing without state intervention.	50
Moderate housing needs. The household is disadvantaged, and this is likely to compound over time due to their housing circumstances. The household cannot get suitable housing without state intervention.	160
Low housing needs. The household is able to function in the market without state help but has low level housing problems.	86

The numbers on waiting lists have increased over the past 12 months from 243 to 296. The main increase was for moderate housing applicants who have increased from 116 to 160 over the past 12 months. This is due to an increased number of applicants who are having difficulty sustaining or accessing affordable housing within Palmerston North.

### **What is happening next?**

The groups and organisations identified above will continue to deliver and improve the services that make sure that people are healthy and well-housed.

As the City's population ages there will be increasing pressure on our medical services. The only real long-term solution to this is for people to lead healthy lifestyles. There is a growing focus on keeping people well rather than only treating them after they have become ill. The

<sup>27</sup> Housing New Zealand. Local Measures of the Ability of Working Households to become Home Owners NB - figures are based on 2001 Census results

<sup>28</sup> 2006 Social Report - Territorial Authority data. Ministry of Social Development. NB – figures are based on 2001 Census results.

<sup>29</sup> Information from Housing New Zealand Corporation

Primary Health Organisation is being established to make services more readily available and more affordable.

MidCentral Health will help deliver “quality living and healthy lives” through its Strategic Plan. This focuses on:

- keeping people well within a healthy environment,
- providing accessible and affordable services,
- meeting the particular needs of Maori, the disabled, older people and children,
- diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, mental health and oral health.

A decline in housing affordability is likely to continue (but this cannot be confirmed until 2006 Census data is released). Even with this, Palmerston North will still be one of the more affordable cities for housing. Household ownership rates may continue to drop slightly in the City, but not as much as in other cities, because housing is relatively affordable here.

Key local issues for Housing New Zealand are housing single people, prisoners, and low income people. Housing New Zealand is also working to upgrade its properties and their surroundings in high density areas like Highbury.