

8. ARTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Officer responsible
Leisure Manager

Author
Paul Cottam, Leisure Planning Projects Officer, DDI 941-6385

The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the results of the Arts Participation Survey that was carried out in Christchurch earlier this year. These have been summarised in the booklet entitled "The Arts Scene in Christchurch: A Survey of Arts Participation", from which this report draws.

BACKGROUND

The Christchurch City Council Arts Policy and Strategy (2002) has adopted an "arts for all" goal, to ensure an increased opportunity for people to participate in the arts.

As part of the process to develop the "Arts Policy and Strategy", the extent and importance of arts activity was difficult to quantify in terms of expenditure for the Christchurch City Council and general participation in the wider community. In particular, statistics to support the strength of the arts community in Christchurch City were practically non-existent, apart from Canterbury region figures on employment in the cultural sector as compared nationally.

To help achieve the goal of "arts for all", gaps in the current provision of opportunities for arts participation needed to be identified in order to be able to improve access to and participation in the arts. As a facilitator and supporter to community participation, the Christchurch City Council commissioned a survey that would give a more accurate picture of arts participation for Christchurch City.

Survey Aims

The aim of the survey was to establish a current picture of arts participation for Christchurch City in 2003 so that improved access and participation can be achieved for the arts. The more specific objectives were:

- To determine motivations for arts participation.
- To determine the level of participation in arts activities both at home and away from home.
- To identify life style patterns and trends in arts participation.
- To identify barriers to participation in the arts in Christchurch.
- To identify gaps in provision of the arts in Christchurch.
- To establish reliable benchmarking data on participation in the arts for Christchurch.

Two definitions were required to address these research objectives. Firstly, as individuals often have different opinions as to what are and are not arts activities, a defined list of arts activities was developed and utilised. Activities were grouped into twelve categories, including Toi Maori arts.

Secondly, to determine the types of involvement in the arts, participation was defined and categorised in a range of either active involvement (eg as a creator or performer) or passive involvement (eg an audience member) ways. Like the Creative New Zealand 'Arts Every Day' survey upon which the survey was based, arts have been defined in a broad way to encompass as many types of arts and levels of participation as possible.

Method

Five hundred face-to-face interviews were undertaken in people's homes. Respondents for this research were drawn from a random sample of Christchurch residents aged 18 years and older, living in private dwellings. Only one person per household was interviewed.

Opinions Market Research Ltd undertook the interviewing. Many questions in the questionnaire were consistent with the 1999 Creative New Zealand Arts Every Day Survey. It was piloted extensively prior to finalisation with the Council's Leisure Unit and representatives from the Christchurch Arts Council.

The survey data was weighted (by gender and age) to represent the Christchurch population aged 18 years and over, as identified in the 2001 Census. Due to seasonality issues, participants were asked about their arts behaviour over a twelve month period.

Key Highlights

Respondents were asked questions on a range of areas, including what activities they participated in and why they did so, in what capacity these activities were undertaken, where they took place and who they were undertaken with, and barriers to further participation. Key points to emerge were:

- Virtually everyone surveyed (98%) took part in an arts activity during the last twelve months, with people participating in an average of eight activities in this period. The arts activities with the highest participation levels - such as movie going, reading, music, drama - were mostly experienced in a passive sense, ie as an audience member, as a visitor, or through watching, listening, or reading.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of those surveyed participated in an active way in arts activities. Those actively involved in the arts were more positive overall about the value of the arts generally and what it does for them personally.
- Nearly half (46%) took part as creators of arts activities. Around one third were a visitor to a gallery, museum or exhibition place and a quarter were performers or students.
- Maori were more likely than Pakeha to be involved in the arts in an 'active' capacity, ie as creators, performers, students or teachers.
- Women (80%) were found to participate actively in arts activities much more than men did (49%). Women also took part in more activities - nine on average in the last 12 months - compared to men, whose average was seven.
- Those in white-collar occupations were more involved in arts activities. Young people (particularly students), those not in paid employment and the elderly had lower participation rates than the overall sample. The main barrier to greater participation for these groups is cost.
- The main motivation for involvement in arts activities was for enjoyment and entertainment. Arts activities also fulfilled a range of other social, economic and health needs. Among the active segment the arts appears to fulfil far greater 'personal' growth/satisfaction needs than is the case for those in the passive segment.
- Many arts activities were undertaken in the home (94%). Other places where people participate in arts activities ranged from public places such as universities, schools etc, cafes/bars, work situations and community venues. Those on low incomes were less likely to attend activities away from home.
- Almost all indicated that some of the arts activities they are involved in are solitary activities. Three quarters undertook activities with family and friends. Other activities were undertaken with workmates, other club members, other artists, and classmates.
- Over half (59%) of those surveyed were interested in trying other arts activities. Interest was strongest from those who already participated actively, who also listed further activities that had a strong 'active' element to them, eg. in the categories of craft and music.
- One third (34%) said that they felt they lacked the skills to take part in arts activities. This group was more likely than others to say that a reason for not participating in more activities was because they did not have people to go with them (42%) and that they did not have transport (48%).

Attitudinal questions were also asked. Among other things, these showed over three-quarters of people surveyed agreed with statements that:

- Arts and cultural activities helped them understand cultures other than their own (80%),
- Arts and cultural activities helped define who they are (77%),
- Arts were made very accessible to them (80%),
- City Council rates should be used to support the provision of arts activities (79%),
- It was a good idea to have public art works around the city (88%).

CONCLUSION

The arts participation survey carried out in 2003 has shown that Christchurch has high levels of involvement in arts activities. Furthermore, participation is often 'actively' orientated, with most people placing a high value of the arts in Christchurch. The results of the survey are to be made available to the arts community in particular and the public in general as a planning and information resource.

The research also raises some issues to address for some groups of the population, for example those groups who feel that they lack skills to take part but want to do more. This points the way to future areas of delivery and provision. Accordingly, it is planned to use the survey information to build on the enjoyed arts experiences and to continue to ensure that they are available and accessible for as much of the community as possible.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.