

Appendix III: Profile of Young People in Christchurch

Introduction

The data presented below place the consultation material in the context of some general issues facing young people in Christchurch. They also provide a demographic profile of young people in the city.

Data informing this section came from the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings, the Annual Report of the Christchurch Police Youth Aid Section, the Ministry of Education and Southern Regional Health's Locality Profile for Christchurch.

In most cases the data cover young people aged from 13 to 25 years. Where it is more appropriate the data cover different age ranges. In these cases, the age ranges have been specified.

The data highlight some significant issues about the availability and applicability of statistics about young people. In some cases age related data are not able to be used as they provide little information about the lives of young people. This is especially the case with Census data looking at family and household type. As respondents were not asked for their relationships to others in the household, it is impossible to tell from the Census breakdowns whether, for example, 'a couple with dependent children' includes young people living with their parents and siblings or whether the young person is themselves part of a couple.

Demographic Profile of Young People in Christchurch

The following data cover young people aged between 13 and 25 years who were usually resident in Christchurch city territorial local authority at the time of the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings⁶ (see map on previous page).

⁶ Statistics New Zealand. (1997). *1996 Census of Populations and Dwellings*.

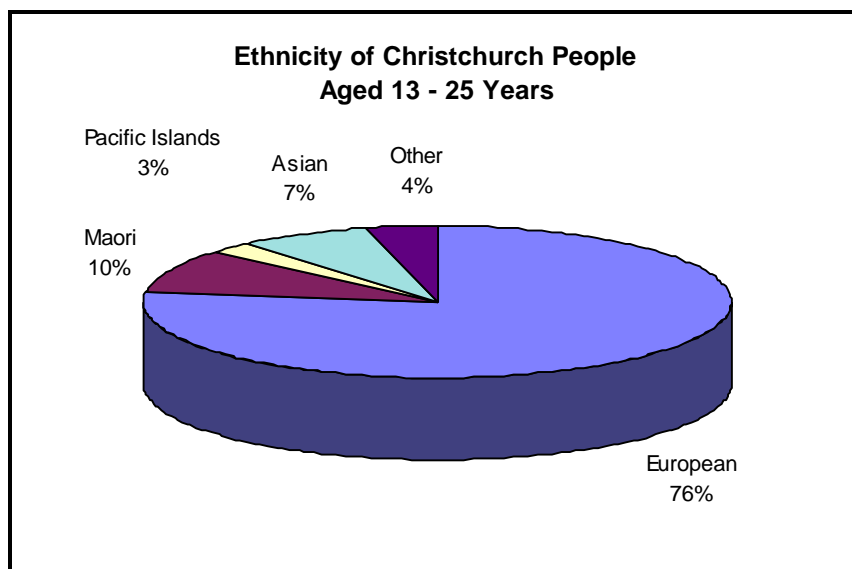
✠ Gender Breakdowns

The gender breakdown amongst young people in Christchurch follows a similar pattern to the Christchurch city totals. Fifty one percent of 13 to 25 year olds in Christchurch are male, compared with 48.4% for the city as a whole (1996 data).

✠ Ethnicity

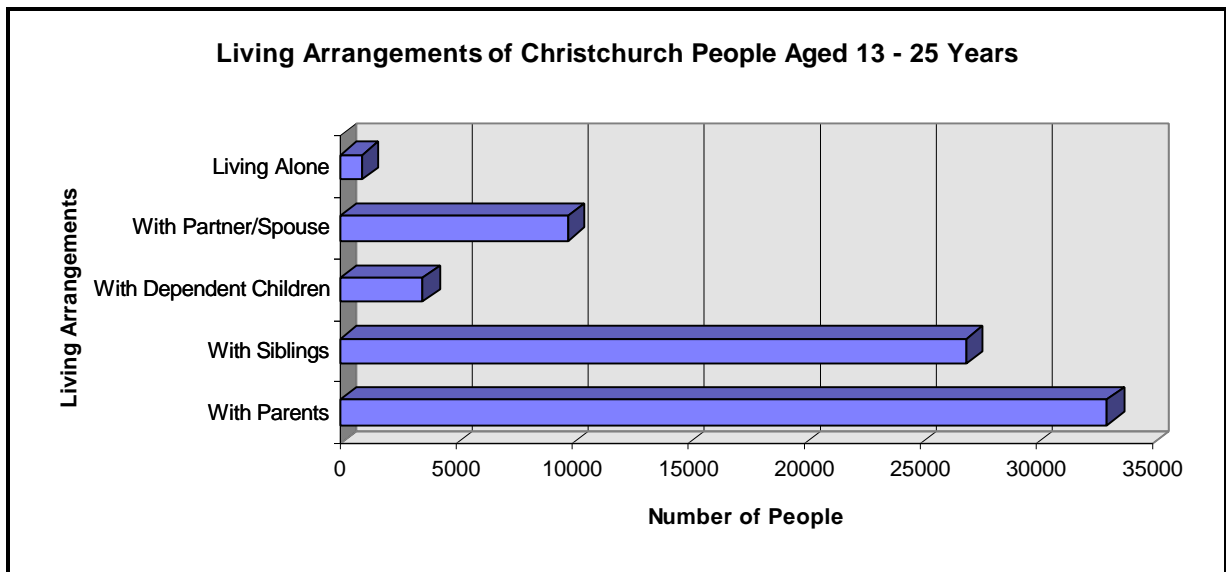
Seventy seven percent of Christchurch young people classify themselves as European, with 9.5% being New Zealand Maori and 2.5% classifying themselves as Pacific Islands people. Seven percent for Christchurch young people categorise themselves as Asian. These figures differ slightly from the Christchurch city totals, where 86% of the population are European, 7% are Maori, 2% are Pacific Islands people and 4.1% are Asian.

The Maori and Pacific Islands ethnic groups are slightly over-represented among young people, whereas the European population is under-represented. It may be that young people are over-represented among the Asian ethnic group with the presence of young students in the city for study purposes.



✠ Living Arrangements⁷

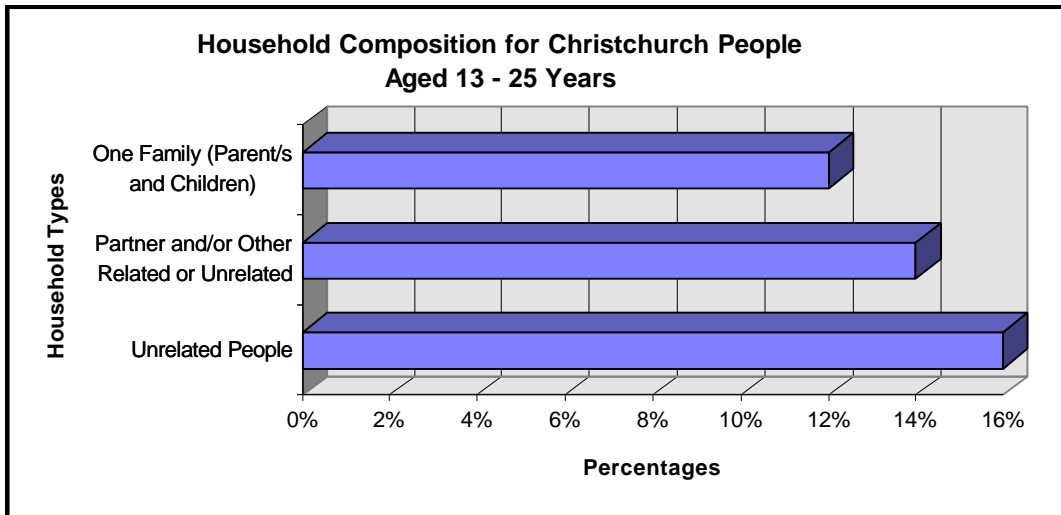
Many (33 030) Christchurch young people live with their parents and 26 982 live with siblings. Some (3603) young people are living with dependent children and 9819 are living with a partner/spouse. Nine hundred and sixty three young people were living alone at the time of the 1996 Census.



✠ Household Composition

Sixteen percent of young people live in households of unrelated people, mostly in flatting arrangements. Fourteen percent live in households with a partner and other related or unrelated people. Twelve percent of young people live in one family households of one parent and children.

⁷ Some double counting occurs within this section as respondents may belong to more than one category. For this reason percentages have not been calculated.



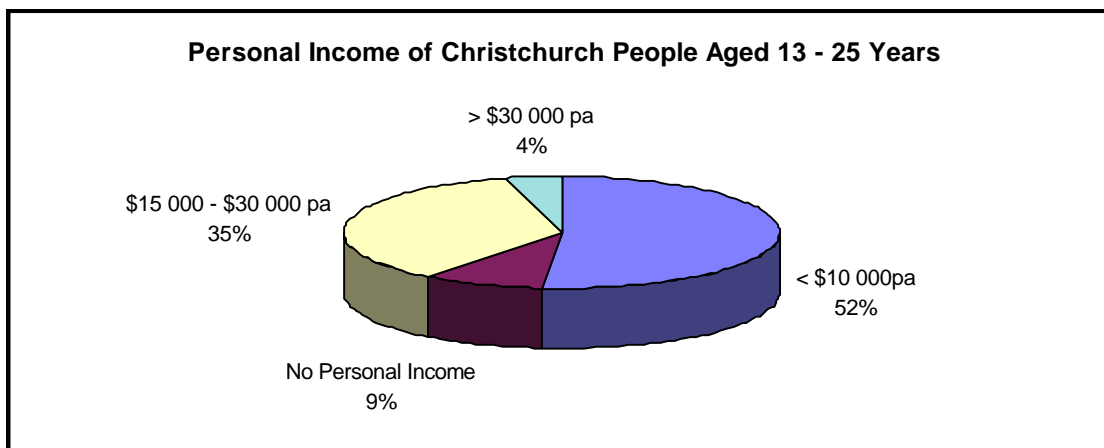
✠ Total Family Income

Nineteen percent of young people do not specify their family's income level. Thirteen percent report living in families with total incomes of under \$20 000 per annum. Another 19% report that they live in a families with total incomes of more than \$70 000.

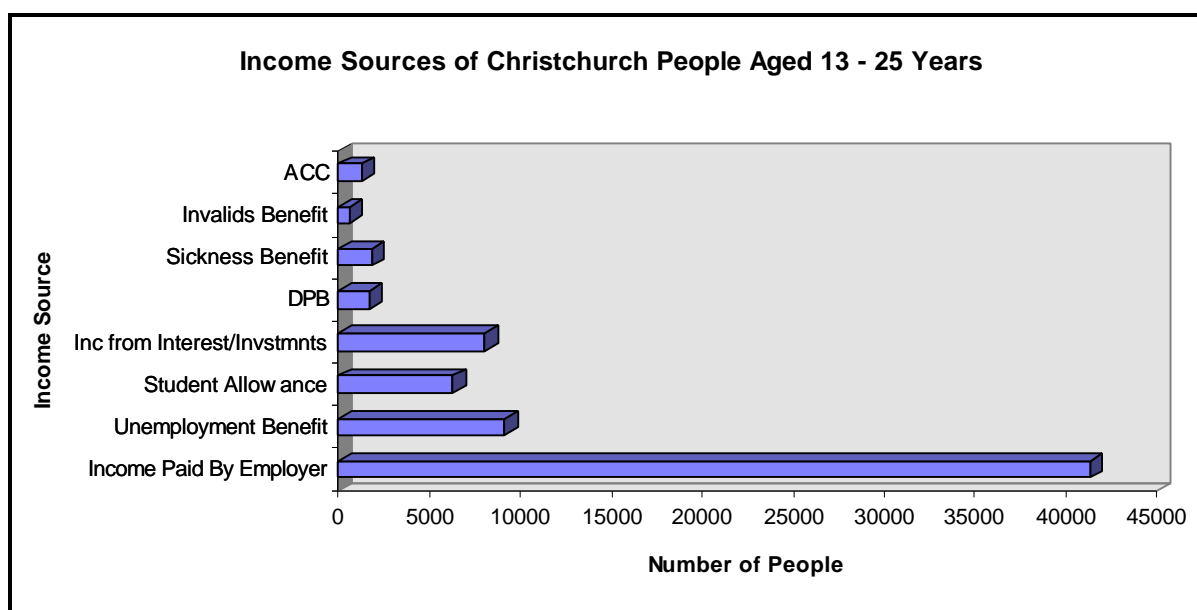
✠ Personal Income⁸

Most young people with personal income are on fairly limited incomes. Fifty one percent of young people have personal incomes of less than \$10 000 per annum. Nine percent of these have no personal income. Thirty five percent are earning between \$15 000 and \$30 000 per annum. Only 4% are earning over \$30 000.

⁸ These data cover young people aged between 15 and 25 years and include New Zealand Income Support Service benefit payments and Inland Revenue Department payments.



✦ Income Sources⁹

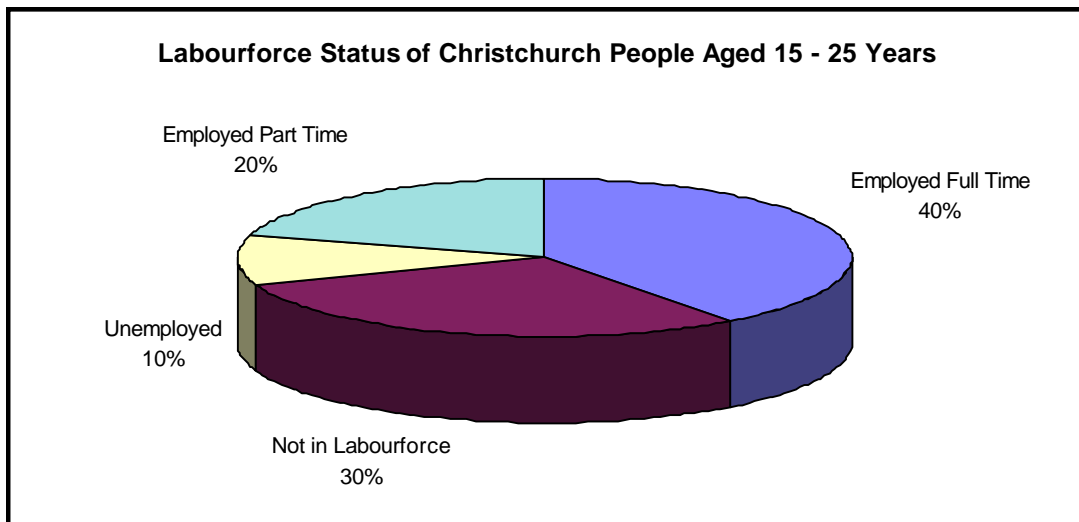


Most (41 343) young people who have an income source derive this income from wages paid by an employer. The next most common income source for young people is the Unemployment Benefit (according to the Census 9129 are in receipt of this benefit). In line with non-labourforce

⁹ These data cover young people aged between 15 and 25 years. Some respondents will have been double counted as they belong to more than one category and for this reason data are not broken down into percentages.

figures, 6240 young people receive a Student Allowance and 8007 receive income from interest and other investments. Only 1722 young people receive income from the Domestic Purposes Benefit. Some young people have health problems significant enough to warrant seeking their income from assistance designated for those in ill health. Most (1776) of these are on the shorter term Sickness Benefit, while another 567 are on the longer term Invalids Benefit and 1281 receive ACC payments.

✠ Labourforce Status¹⁰



Thirty nine percent of young people aged between 15 and 25 years are employed full time. Another 29% are not in the labourforce. Many of these young people are students engaged in secondary and tertiary education. Ten percent are considered unemployed and actively seeking work. Another 20% are employed part time.

¹⁰ These data describe Christchurch young people aged between 15 and 25 years. The labourforce consists of people aged 15 years and over who regularly work for one or more hours per week for financial gain or as an unpaid worker in a family business. Also included are people who are unemployed and actively seeking either full or part time work.

✠ Highest Qualification Gained¹¹

Nineteen percent of those aged between 15 and 25 years do not have any qualifications. (However, this includes students who were in the process of completing their qualifications at the time of the Census). Almost half (48%) of Christchurch young people have a school qualification (School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate or Higher School Certificate). According to Ministry of Education records, 17% of school leavers in 1996 left without any formal qualifications¹².

At 1 July 1997, there were 20 663 students aged between 13 and 25 years enrolled in Christchurch schools.

✠ Health

Between 1984 and 1993 hospital discharge rates for Christchurch young people remained reasonably constant, and are comparable to those of the overall Southern Region¹³.

Young men aged between 13 and 24 years are more than twice as likely as young women to die. Between 1984 and 1993, there were an average of thirteen young women's deaths per year in Christchurch compared to 37 young men's deaths. This translates to a combined death rate of 97.6 per 100,000 people. Motor vehicle accidents contributed to 40% of young people's deaths in Christchurch City in this period. Suicides and self-inflicted injuries contributed to 25%¹⁴ of deaths. There was a trend toward increasing youth suicide rates in Christchurch City over the period from 1984 and 1993¹⁵.

¹¹ These data describe Christchurch young people aged between 15 and 25 years.

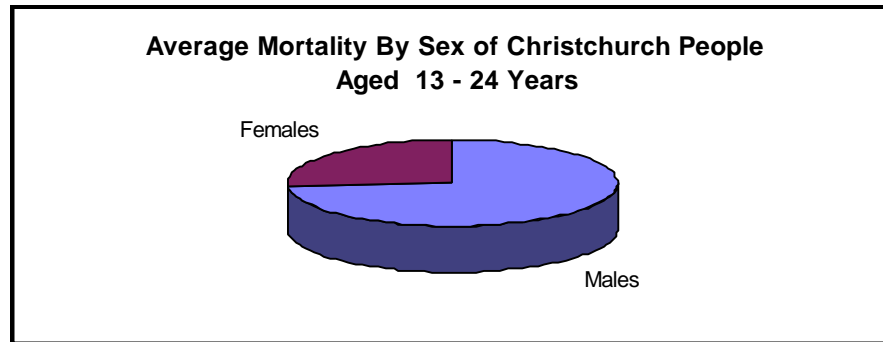
¹² This information was provided by the Ministry of Education in a personal communication in 1997.

¹³ Southern Regional Health Authority. 1996. *Locality Profile - Draft*. Southern Regional Health Authority Dunedin.

¹⁴ Suicide and self-inflicted injuries contributed to 29% of deaths of young men during this period, compared to 14% of deaths of young women.

¹⁵ Southern Regional Health Authority. 1996. *Locality Profile - Draft*. Southern Regional Health Authority Dunedin.

According to the Christchurch Police homicide contributed to only 2% of the deaths of young people in Christchurch City between 1984 and 1993.

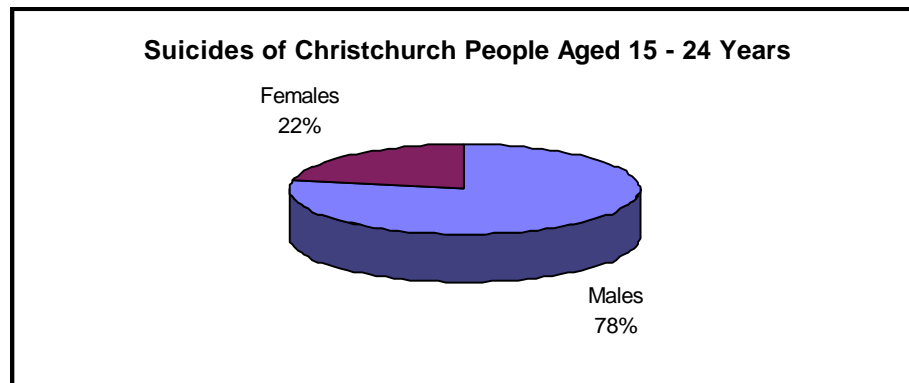


Suicide is the second most common cause of death amongst young New Zealanders aged between 15 to 24 years¹⁶. Statistics show that the youth suicide rate has increased over the last twenty years and is continuing to climb, with New Zealand now having one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world. New Zealand youth aged 15 to 24 years are over-represented in suicide statistics compared to all other age groups. For instance, in 1994, youth suicide deaths represented 26.8% (137) of total suicide deaths while this age group comprised only 15.6% of the total population¹⁷. Young males continue to commit suicide at a much higher rate than females, with the latter representing 22% of all youth suicide deaths in 1995¹⁸.

¹⁶ The highest cause of death is vehicle accidents.

¹⁷ Ministry of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Health and Te Puni Kokiri August 1997 *An Approach for Action: Phase Two in the Development of a National Strategy to Help Prevent Youth Suicide in New Zealand*.

¹⁸ New Zealand Health Information Service 1997 *Youth Suicide in New Zealand: Summary of Statistics to 1995*.



The presence of serious mental health problems has been found to be associated with suicide attempts amongst young people in New Zealand. A study¹⁹ has recently been completed by the Canterbury Suicide Project on the extent of psychiatric illness among young people making serious suicide attempts. In the month preceding a serious suicide attempt, 89% of 13 to 24 year olds in the study had at least one mental disorder compared to 31% of control subjects.

There are few recently collected statistics available about the health status of young people in the city although some organisations, such as the 198 Youth Health Centre, do collect information about youth health issues. Most (73%) of the young people using this service between May and December 1997 came from least advantaged backgrounds (that is, residential areas identified by the Southern Regional Health Authority's Health Equity Quotients as being predominantly of lower socio-economic status²⁰). Between October and December 1997, Centre users were predominantly female (72%). In line with the ethnic distribution of young people in the city, users were also predominantly European (78%), although proportions of Maori (9%) and Pacific Islands youth reflected citywide youth ethnic breakdowns. Looking at presenting issues²¹, many (37%) young people sought contraceptive advice. Forty seven percent sought general medical advice and treatment. Thirty eight percent sought assistance for what could be

¹⁹ Reported in Canterbury Suicide Project. Bulletin No. 11 August 1997.

²⁰ Southern Regional Health Authority 1996 *Locality Profile - Draft* Southern Regional Health Authority Dunedin.

²¹ Clients may have given more than one reason for presenting at the Centre, thus resulting in percentage totals of over 100.

classed as mental health issues ranging from alcohol and drug issues and anxiety/depression to abuse, suicide and psychiatric problems.

Justice

Information available about justice issues tends to focus on the small percentage of young people who come to the attention of the Police. It is obvious from the figures below, however, that the vast majority of young people in Christchurch never have this type of involvement in the justice system.

According to the Police Youth Aid Section Annual Report for 1996-1997 there were a total of 1148 appearances in the Youth Court in Christchurch by young offenders²². This was a slight reduction on last year where there were 1341 total appearances. The Youth Aid Section has adopted a policy of identifying recidivist offenders and pushing for custodial sentences where appropriate. The Youth Court has been backing the police, resulting in 12 young people being sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from between two months and life imprisonment.

According to the head of the Police Youth Aid Section, Sergeant Chris Roper, a small group of hard core recidivist offenders are responsible for a huge amount of youth crime in Christchurch. Sergeant Roper recently reported that if 54 hard core young offenders were taken out of circulation in the city, then youth crime in Christchurch would "slump dramatically"²³. The Police have noted a strong link between family background and criminal behaviour. Most (42) of these young people come from families immersed in crime, drug and alcohol addictions.

²² It is important to remember that these data cover total appearances. Individual youth offenders may have made more than one appearance in the Youth Court.

²³ *The Christchurch Mail*. (19 January 1997). *City Has 54 Hard-Core Youth Crims*. p.1.