



## Case Study

# Residents report on life in Christchurch

## Background

Christchurch is New Zealand's second largest city, located on the east coast of the South Island. The Christchurch City Council is a local authority responsible for the city, and providing services to residents.

Christchurch City Council is working toward a set of community outcomes, which describe what the Council aims to achieve in meeting the current and future needs of its communities for good quality local infrastructure, local public services, and regulatory functions.

The community outcomes also set the direction for the Council's long-term plan and its other key strategy and planning documents.

The Council runs a monitoring program for the community outcomes, to gauge how its progress is tracking and what changes are occurring in the community, and big part of this process is data analysis.

Where available, the Council is using already available secondary data sources to give them a picture of residents in the city. However it is also necessary for the Council to seek direct community feedback by surveying them.

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## Life in Christchurch surveys

In the first half of 2017, the Council undertook the Life in Christchurch: Transport survey which was designed to find out the opinions of residents on issues such as public transport and the barriers to using it, their attitudes towards cycling lanes, and how they felt about parking in the city, among others.

The survey garnered more than 4,500 responses, and was designed to include a combination of open and closed ended questions, as well as including an option at the end of the survey for respondents to include any further comments on other issues. This resulted in a significant and complex data set, and this is where Interpris came in.

“We run the Life in Christchurch surveys in SurveyMonkey, which gives us an Excel data set. In the past, we've just worked our way through that doing a lot of manual coding” said Kath Jamieson, Principal Research Adviser; Team Leader Monitoring and Research at Christchurch City Council, “Interpris was really good at speeding up the process of interpreting the result for us.”

“A data set of that size would usually take our team about a week to work through the initial coding, whereas Interpris was able to do the first cut of it very quickly and we followed that up with some manual theme setting as well. It cut the time down significantly, saving us four days of work” said Kath.

## Informing future survey design

One of the challenges often faced in survey design for community consultation, is the question of how many 'open ended' questions should be included, a challenge that Kath and the Christchurch City Council are quite familiar with.

**“It could be easy to shy away from including open ended questions because we don’t always have the resources to interpret that information, and that’s where something like Interpris can really help”**

“It is really important to ask open ended questions, but it is always a challenge as a researcher to weigh up the pros and cons of asking them, against the amount of time that we have to spend making sense of the results” Kath said.

“At times, it could be easy to shy away from including open ended questions because we don’t always have the resources to interpret that information, and that’s where something like Interpris can really help, as it cuts down on the amount of time we have to spend in making sense of the information.”

The results of the Life in Christchurch survey help inform future planning and policy decisions as the Council continues to develop Christchurch into a great place where people want to live and visit. More information about the results can be found in their [report](#).

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