

THE NEEDS, EXPECTATIONS AND PRIORITIES OF THE RICCARTON COMMUNITY

Research Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research aims to provide St. Ninians Presbyterian Church with information about the needs of the Fendalton/Riccarton area. This may help assist the St. Ninians Parish and the wider Fendalton/Riccarton community with future planning for facilities, services, and community development. The research area includes the block between Riccarton Road, Straven Road, Fendalton Road and Ilam Road.

Gathering information for this research entailed a number of strategies. These included analysing the 2006 New Zealand Census data, document analysis of existing research reports, interviews with various individuals and key informants from the community, and surveys of individuals and local businesses. These individuals were from the St. Ninians Presbyterian Parish, Si. Teresas Catholic Parish, residents from the local community and people that work within the Fendalton/Riccarton research area. This research makes recommendations as to what gaps there are within the area, what could enhance the quality of life in the area, and how St. Ninians can play a part in this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Providing services that are easily accessible for the elderly. For example, the Presbyterian and Catholic churches joining together twice a year for a muffin/soup morning, brunches or devonshire teas
- Creating a scheme so that students and elderly join forces. For example, students mowing an elderly neighbours lawn in return for a home-cooked meal.
- Street parties or similar activities such as get to know your neighbour days.
- Walking groups for any age. For example, retired andlor young mothers.
- More after school activities for children, perhaps with an afternoon tea or other means for parents to meet at the same time.
- Drop-in centre/community centre that offers a range of services such as computer classes, craft groups, lecture series, parenting courses and outreach activities. *More research would need to be done to assess whether or not these would be feasible.*
- More visible neighbourhood'watch.
- More advertising by St. Ninians Church about its services and facilities.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Previous research carried out in Riccarton has not included the specific area within the geographical boundaries of this research. Furthermore, these earlier studies have not fully addressed certain social aspects of the community.

Purpose of the Research

The aim of this project is to identify social needs and challenges, establish whether St. Ninians can respond appropriately to the identified challenges or issues presented, and determine if and where cases of social isolation exist within the allocated area of research.

Essential Questions to be Asked

- What attracts people to living in the area?
- What do people enjoy about living in the area?
- What do people see as challenges for those living in the area?
- What do people think would enhance the quality of life in this area?
- How could the local Presbyterian Church assist with enhancing the quality of life in the area?
- Is social isolation a challenge for some people living in this area?

HISTORY

The Maori name for Riccarton is Putaringamotu which translates as either 'the place of an echo', referring to the ability to place the ear to the ground and hear the sound of approaching footsteps, or 'the place of the severed ear', which is likely to refer to the bush being isolated from the rest. The area was rich in food sources from the river, swamps and forests and there was a small Pa near where the Bush Inn is currently located.

The first successful attempt to buy land was from the Deans Family, a name that would become synonymous with the area. Brothers, William and John Deans, were Scottish settlers and in 1843, they settled on the plains at Putaringamotu. The brothers began the construction of the first home to be built on the Canterbury Plains out of local materials and a plaque on a tree at the entrance to Riccarton House marks where it once stood. The Deans named their home 'Riccarton', after their Parish in Scotland and the stream that ran through their property was named the Avon. The Deans farm had sheep, horses, cattle and seeds brought from New South Wales and their productive farm encouraged the choice of Canterbury' for the proposed city of Christchurch.

Although close to town, the swamp and bog between Christchurch and Riccarton was almost impassable so one of the first constructions in the area was a road to Riccarton Bush especially because Riccarton Bush was one of the most convenient sources of timber. Begun in 1851, the road was originally called Harewood Road and followed the river through Hagley Park to avoid costly bridges across the countless bogs. Frequent flooding was a major concern but swamps were eventually drained and built over by the settlers.

Riccarton was slow to develop due to the swampy nature and the barrier created by Hagley Park. In 1857, there was 404 people living in Riccarton according to

Census data. Upper Riccarton developed faster after the establishment of the racecourse in 1856.

Transport to the area was restricted until the early 1900's. Although a coach service began in Riccarton in the 1870's, the road conditions were dismal. The railway station was a landmark from the late 1870's until 1976. Access from Christchurch town to Fendall Town was via Lower Riccarton. Fendall Town was named after Reverend Henry Fendall although he did not actually reside there very long. Fendall Town's first church was established in 1876 and was constituted as a separate parish in 1883. A school was set up in Fendalton in 1883 but there was no store until early 1900's.

The borough of Riccarton began in 1913. A shopping centre began at the corner of Straven and Clarence Streets in the 1920's and this dramatically increased after World War 2. Between 1935/40 the Straven building was developed and became known for its speciality stores and some of the current retailers having been there for several decades. The area has flourished from a small country town to a busy commercial centre, and this is how it remains to this day.

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out over a 3 month period at the beginning of 2007. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches were used for the research that has been undertaken on behalf of St. Ninians Church. Quantitative research is systematic and methodical and research should be easily able to be replicated. This means that if the research process were to be repeated, it would deliver the same results. Therefore, this approach delivers research outcomes that are high in reliability (Lunt et al, 2003). Qualitative research is less systematic and does not seek to generalise its findings to a population. Instead it aims to provide a of what people said or did in a particular research location (Lunt et al, 2003).

A combination of open (qualitative) and closed (quantitative) questions were used to provide the best information possible that was required for this research. Using this combination enabled us to uncover vital information such as the demographics of the area, and to gain an understanding of the unmet needs within the research area.

Procedure

It was initially thought that a door-to-door neighbourhood survey would be the most effective way of obtaining the information required for this research. However, after piloting the survey it became obvious that we needed to find another way of getting information as we had very little response. This was due to a number of factors including that very few people were home during the day and from those that were home, very few were obliging to help us.

We turned to the St Ninians congregation for their help and the questionnaires were filled out by parishioners of St Ninians at a Sunday worship service, followed by a focus group. After a successful focus group with the congregation, we decided that this might be a good way to engage with the local community.

Fifteen hundred invitations were distributed asking people to attend one of two focus

groups held over two separate evenings. We had an extremely disappointing response with only three people attending both focus groups, although their input was extremely valuable and useful. We still needed more information so needed to think of other strategies to engage with people.

We then enlisted the help of the St Teresa's Catholic parish who provided us with a list of 30 names to whom we sent out questionnaires. This proved one of the most successful methods for this research with a high response rate and a lot of relevant information in most responses.

It was decided that it would be beneficial to get the opinions of professionals working within the area. We approached a wide variety of local businesses with a questionnaire designed solely for this purpose. Nine questionnaires were left with a variety of different businesses that all appeared encouraging about completing the survey. However, despite a face-to-face reminder to all businesses, only two of these questionnaires were returned.

The last group of people to fill out the questionnaire was members of the local community who were contacted through previous research participants. This proved really positive and provided us with some vital information.

Challenges of the Research Procedure

Throughout the course of this research we have encountered many unforeseen challenges that have caused the research process to be slower than initially planned. In general, we found it difficult to access and engage with the community. This has meant that not as many people have responded as originally anticipated. These research challenges include:

- People not home during the day.
- High fences with security systems at a lot of houses preventing access to the properties.
- People appeared unconcerned with this type of social research.

- Lack of response to mail drop about the focus group. This could be due to a lack of community interest or reflect the busy nature of people's lives.
- Difficulties with people following through on making contacts on our behalf.
- Difficulties engaging businesses in the research process.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Please see appendix i for a copy of the survey.

Attraction to the area: was easily defined by groups, with several clear reasons being mentioned as promoting the area's attractiveness. Many people noted the availability of educational opportunities as being a primary reason for moving to, or remaining in the area. The proximity to the University and quality schools in the area contributed to the appeal of the area for families with children.

The central location and short distance to the city and other amenities, such as the airport and Hagley Park as well as the cultural atmosphere were also highlighted as influencing factors in the area's attractiveness. The physical attractiveness was also noted with the parks and tree lined streets being one of the major influences in deciding to live here.

Family connections also attracted participants to the area with many participants describing a long association with the area. Others cited security as an appealing feature. Housing also was mentioned as an attraction, although many participants also pointed out the high cost of dwellings in the area.

Specific Areas of Need or Improvement: While it was clear there were many beneficial aspects to living in the area, some needs for improvement were also identified.

Children: An area of need clearly identified was safety of children in relation to traffic congestion and the absence of designated cycle lanes. Many within the survey group expressed the lack of age appropriate safe areas, such as local playgrounds.

Youth/Students: The primary causes of concern for young people and students lay in issues such as the unavailability of affordable accommodation, the lack of age appropriate social facilities, the lack of suitable parking and traffic congestion. Another important issue expressed was the lack of safety, especially for young girls at night.

Families: Traffic congestion was again mentioned as a matter of concern. The lack of support for families new to the area resulting in isolation for these families was also mentioned. An absence of 'community feeling' was also noted in relation to new families. The wide-ranging of age groups within the area and the increase in the student population was given as a reason for neighbourhood division and a lack of similarity in interests. Another theme of concern was the rising property values and increasing construction of new buildings and motels.

Adults: Vandalism and noise were identified as being two prominent issues of concern in the area. Also strongly indicated was the lack of community feeling and community support. The need for improved road maintenance and suitable parking were frequently raised, as was lack of affordable housing and accommodation.

Retired people: The use of skateboards, roller-blades and bicycles were expressed areas of concern for retired people. Living in an area with a high student population was cited as a cause of communication problems between retirees and students. Infrequent street maintenance was noted as causing accessibility and mobility problems. The lack of community activities and the lack of communication with neighbours were given as reasons for feelings of isolation.

Quality of Life: To enhance this, participants made various suggestions for improving the quality of the area itself and the lives of those within it.

Limiting the number of motels built within the area and limiting the student population per dwelling were outlined as ways the general living situation could be improved. In relation to general appearance and street tidiness, improving services such as rubbish collection, street cleaning and guttering cleaning were suggested. In addition, participants suggested increasing tree planting within the area and improving street curbing as ways in which the appearance of the area could be enhanced.

The need for better security was also highlighted. Examples of this included decreasing party noise (particularly from students), improving street lighting and the creation of cycle ways adjoined to footpaths. The emergence and fostering of better communication between neighbours through church activities or public events, as well as better networking between local groups were seen as significant factors to reduce social isolation within the neighbourhood.

Churches: were noted as a potential avenue for improving the quality of life by arranging community get-togethers. Suggestions included pot-luck dinners, inter-church gatherings and neighbourhood meetings. The creation of a drop-in centre offering craft groups and various other courses and activities were some of the other suggestions made.

Social Isolation: Some research participants noted the apparent reluctance of some people to mix with others. Walking groups were suggested as a means to overcome this. It was also recommended that the Christchurch City Council could play a more active role in reducing isolation by organising more street parties and other activities to promote and encourage a greater sense of community.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Participants in this study identified high levels of satisfaction with the overall appearance of streets and suburbs. However, there is still room for improvement including lighting, security, council services, cycle lanes and limiting the number of motels along Riccarton Road. Quality schooling and educational opportunities were identified as one of the primary reasons for moving to the area. The close proximity to amenities and the central city was cited as a prominent reason for moving to the area.

The most dominant concern expressed was of a lack of community and neighbourly feeling among residents, especially between students and retirees. Participants in the survey frequently expressed dissatisfaction with parking and traffic congestion. They also identified a lack of playgrounds and other venues for children as a concern. Church and neighbourhood based events were indicated to be one solution to this problem, as was council initiated neighbourhood gatherings. Availability and access to age appropriate activities and entertainment facilities was also mentioned and several participants suggested neighbourhood and community events become a regular occurrence.

Youth were seen as a significant problem for some participants and the high student ratio in the area was reported as a factor in impacting on neighbourly relationships. Elderly residents felt they were unable to form friendships with students because of the age difference. The research also highlighted the high number of students per household. A limitation to the number of residents residing together was suggested as a means of overcoming this.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The statistics compiled for this report were retrieved from the 2006 Census published by Statistics New Zealand. Due to circumstances beyond our control, only 2006 Census was available at the time of writing this report. Therefore, no comparisons could be made in reference to previous Census data. The data used is an indicator of how the research area compares with the remainder of Christchurch and with the nation. Our research included five designated areas of the Census. These were Deans Bush, Fendalton, Upper Riccarton, Riccarton and Mona Vale, and an average for these 5 areas is also given.

The 2006 census showed the resident population of the research area as 11,763.

Population by Gender

The statistics show that within the research area the proportion of males is slightly higher than for females. This applies to all five areas as well as the average and is consistent with both Christchurch and New Zealand statistics (refer Table 1).

% POPULATION BY GENDER 2006 (Table 1)			
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS
Deans Bush	49.6%	50.4%	1311
Fendalton	49.8%	50.2%	2376
Upper Riccarton	47.6%	52.4%	2592
Riccarton	47.2%	52.8%	3396
Mona Vale	48.5%	51.5%	2088
Average for area	48.5%	51.4%	11763 (Total)
Christchurch	48.3%	51.7%	348,435
New Zealand	48.8%	51.2%	4,027,947

Population by Age

All five areas generally recorded a lower or similar number of children (0-14 years) per family household than the national and Christchurch averages. The averages in this group were particularly low in the Riccarton and Upper Riccarton areas. The 15-64 age group was generally consistent with wider statistics. In the Upper Riccarton area, the 65+ age group was significantly higher than local and national averages, while the other four areas had either similar or slightly higher than Christchurch and national averages. This indicates that the population in the research area is slightly older than for Christchurch and New Zealand (refer Table 2).

% POPULATION BY AGE 2006 (Table 2)			
	0-14 years	15-64 years	65+ years
Deans Bush	21.5%	65.6%	12.7%
Fendalton	18.1%	65.8%	16.0%
Upper Riccarton	10.1%	69.1%	20.6%
Riccarton	10.5%	77.8%	11.8%
Mona Vale	14.3%	71.1%	14.9%
Average for area	14.9%	69.9%	15.2%
Christchurch	18.8%	67.6%	13.5%
New Zealand	21.5%	66.3%	12.3%

Income

From 2006 Census data, the median income bracket in Christchurch for 2006 was \$23,400 and \$24,400 for New Zealand as a whole. In the statistics examined, the less than \$5000 bracket was proportionally higher than the New Zealand and Christchurch averages. Several factors could influence this, such as a high student and/or retired population. The \$50,001 + was significantly higher for Deans Bush and Fendalton than for the other three areas as well as the national and Christchurch averages. This could indicate that the research area is relatively affluent (refer Table 3).

% INCOME 2006 (Table 3)						
	Less than \$5000	\$5001-10000	\$10001-20000	\$20001-130000	\$30001-50000	\$50001+
Mona Vale	16.4%	9.3%	19.3%	10.2%	18.0%	6.6%
Deans Bush	17.0%	6.4%	12.4%	10.1%	16.5%	33.5%
Fendalton	17.3%	9.1%	15.3%	11.7%	18.1%	23.1%
Riccarton	19.2%	11.0%	21.0%	14.5%	15.7%	7.5%
Upper Riccarton	20.3%	14.2%	22.0%	11.8%	12.5%	8.4%
Average for area	18.0%	10%	18%	11.7%	16.2%	11.80% 14.10%
Christchurch	12.0%	7.6%	21.1%	14.8%	21.6%	14.8%
New Zealand	12.1%	7.2%	19.5%	13.8%	21.1%	16.2%

Unemployment

Although the unemployment rate in Riccarton and Upper Riccarton is slightly higher than for New Zealand and Christchurch, overall the rate is generally consistent with wider patterns (Table 4).

% UNEMPLOYMENT 2006 (Table 4)	
Deans Bush	2.3%
Fendalton	2.8%
Riccarton	5.1%
Upper Riccarton	4.3%
Mona Vale	2.9%
Average for area	3.5%
Christchurch	3.0%
New Zealand	3.4%

Education

The area appears to be generally well educated in comparison to both Christchurch and New Zealand as a whole. All five areas have higher averages of both school and post-school education, while the number of people without education is significantly lower. This could be representative of the wide availability of educational providers in the area (refer Table 5).

% EOUCA TION 2006 (Table 5)			
	Post School	School	Nil
Deans Bush	54.0%	35.0%	7.6%
Fendalton	48.7%	37.3%	9.3%
Riccarton	34.7%	41.0%	14.5%
Upper Riccarton	36.2%	40.4%	12.0%
Mona Vale	44.1%	38.5%	10.6%
Average for area	43.5%	38.4%	10.8%
Christchurch	37.0%	33.1%	21.4%
New Zealand	35.9%	31.4%	22.4%

Ethnicity

The majority of people in the area reported their ethnicity as European. The level of Europeans in the area is consistent with the national average and slightly lower than the average for Christchurch. The one area where European was significantly lower was Riccarton. This is likely to be due to the high number of Asians in the area and this pattern was also apparent in the Upper Riccarton area. Both areas had over three times the national and Christchurch averages of Asian residents. Another significant point is that the Pacific Island and Maori populations were both dramatically lower than Christchurch and National averages. (refer Table 6).

% ETHNIC MIX 2006 (Table 6)					
	European	Maori	Pacific Is	Asian	Other
Deans Bush	78.7%	2.9%	0.2%	9.6%	12.5%
Fendalton	72.2%	2.5%	0.6%	16.1%	11.9%
Riccarton	54.4%	4.5%	1.8%	32.4%	8.9%
Upper Riccarton	64.4%	2.9%	1.6%	29.5%	7.7%
Mona Vale	74.8%	3.8%	1.1%	13.7%	11.2%
Average for area	68.9%	3.3%	1.1%	20.3%	10.4%
Christchurch	75.4%	7.6%	2.8%	7.9%	12.9%
New Zealand.	67.6%	14.6%	6.9%	9.2%	11.2%

Occupation

Although there were fluctuations within occupational groups, the averages worked out reasonably similar to those for Christchurch as a whole. The exceptions were the higher proportion of managers in the Mona Vale and Deans

Bush area, which was counter-balanced by the lower number in this group for Riccarton and Upper Riccarton. The opposite was apparent for service and sales and elementary occupations. Overall, the area as a whole has slightly lower proportion of trade and technical workers in comparison to the rest of Christchurch (refer Table 7).

%Occupation- 2006 (Table 7)							
	Mona Vale	Deans Bush	Fendalton	Riccarton	Upper Riccarton	Average for Christchurch the area	
Managers	21.0%	23.9%	19.7%	11.6%	11.7%	17.6%	14.1%
Professional	21.5%	23.5%	26.9%	13.2%	18.2%	20.7%	19.8%
Clerical	10.9%	8.8%	10.6%	9.2%	11.0%	10.1%	12.1%
Service and Sales	15.8%	12.3%	13.9%	23.5%	20.7%	17.4%	19.7%
Agriculture and Fishery	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%	2.1%
Trades and technical	18.0%	21.8%	17.1%	17.2%	17.2%	18.3%	23.6%
Plant Machinery	3.7%	1.8%	2.4%	6.9%	4.5%	3.9%	6.2%
Elementary Occupation	8.1%	6.7%	7.4%	16.9%	10.7%	11.0%	13.2%

Religion

The majority of people in the area report to a Christian affiliation or no religion at all (refer Table 8).

%RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION - 2006 (Table 8)						
	Mona Vale	Deans Bush	Fendalton	Riccarton	Upper Riccarton	Average for area
No Religion	32.5%	28.7%	29.6%	39.6%	31.6%	32.4%
Christian	55.4%	64.8%	58.8%	40.2%	49.3%	53.7%
Muslim	2.0%	1.3%	2.2%	4.3%	4.2%	2.8%
Jewish	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	2.5%	1.2%
Ratana	0.9%	0.2%	0.7%	3.1%	2.2%	1.4%
Ringatu	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	1.1%	0.4%
Buddhist	0.1%	0	0.1%	0.2%	1.6%	0.4%
Hindu	0.1%	0	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%
Other	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	1.1%	0.6%

Household composition

Within this area one family households were represented fairly consistently throughout the research districts although Deans Bush stood out as having high amount of one family households overall. Multi-person dwellings were a lot higher than the average for Christchurch, which is influenced by the very high number of this type of dwelling in the Riccarton and Upper Riccarton. This is likely to be due to the large student population in these areas (refer Table 9).

%HOUSEHOLDS - 2006 (Table 9)				
	One family household	Two family household	Other multi-person	One person household
Mona Vale	64.6%	0.7%	11.3%	22.0%
Deans Bush	81.3%	1.1%	3.7%	13.4%
Fendalton	69.3%	1.4%	6.9%	21.2%
Riccarton	47.5%	2.0%	21.2%	27.3%
Upper Riccarton	49.9%	1.5%	21.1%	28.9%
Average for area	62.5%	1.3%	12.8%	22.6%
Christchurch	65.6%	1.7%	6.7%	25.1%

Transportation

The survey area would appear to be reasonably mobile, with only Riccarton and Upper Riccarton reporting no car averages higher than local and national averages. These two areas were also slightly lower on two car ownership. The higher of proportion of 3+ cars in Mona Vale and Deans Bush and two car ownership in Deans Bush and Fendalton could indicate easy mobility and possibly higher affluence (refer Table 10).

% TRANSPORT - 2006 (Table 10)				
	Nil	One	Two	Three +
Mona Vale	5.8%	39.2%	34.0%	18.2%
Deans Bush	2.1%	27.8%	47.6%	21.4%
Fendalton	6.0%	32.7%	44.1%	15.2%
Riccarton	15.2%	41.6%	25.7%	13.1%
Upper Riccarton	15.8%	40.2%	27.7%	14.9%
Average for area	9.0%	36.3%	35.8%	16.5%
Christchurch	11.5%	37.8%	36.1%	14.6%
New Zealand	11.8%	36.3%	36.6%	15.3%

SUMMARY

In general, the demographics of the research area are a standard reflection of what occurs throughout Christchurch and New Zealand. This is represented by the majority of people being of European descent, living in one-family households and having access to at least one motor vehicle. There is also low unemployment in the area and a slightly higher ratio of women to men.

Some features that are exceptions to this are the high Asian population, low number of people of Maori and Polynesian descent and a slightly older population. There is also a higher level of education, high access to motor vehicles and a lot of multi-person dwellings in the area.

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