

Desired outcomes

Everybody is satisfied with their participation in leisure and recreation activities. They have sufficient time to do what they want to do and can access an adequate range of opportunities for leisure and recreation.

Leisure and recreation

Introduction

Leisure and recreation are both crucial components of a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Leisure time is a time when people can do what they want to do, away from work and other commitments.

Recreation and leisure play an important role in social wellbeing by providing people with a sense of identity and personal autonomy. Involvement in leisure-time activities adds meaning to individual and community life and contributes to people's overall quality of life. Recreation can encourage personal growth and self-expression and provide increased learning opportunities, satisfying needs not met in people's non-leisure time.

For many people, participation in leisure and recreation improves their physical and mental health. Recreation often involves a physical activity or sport. Research shows increased physical activity can lead to fewer health problems and higher productivity at work, especially when combined with a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.

The benefits for mental health are equally important. Several studies have demonstrated links between regular physical activity and a reduction in the symptoms of mild or moderate depression, stress and anxiety. Passive leisure also has benefits for mental health, by providing an outlet for the mind. It may provide physical rest, tension release and opportunities to enjoy nature and escape from the daily routine.

Participation in leisure and recreation activities can also have social benefits. It creates opportunities for socialisation and contributes to social cohesion by allowing people to connect and network with others. It can also contribute to family bonding when families do things together in their leisure time.

Indicators

Three indicators are used in this chapter. They are: satisfaction with leisure time, participation in physical activity and participation in arts and cultural activities. Together, these indicators present a picture of how people feel about their leisure time and how they spend it.

The first indicator is satisfaction with leisure time. This measures how people feel about both the quantity and quality of leisure time available to them.

The second indicator measures people's participation in physical activity. It tells us how active New Zealanders are. Moderate physical activity can improve a number of health outcomes.

The final indicator measures people's involvement in arts and cultural activities, either through attendance at arts events or through active participation.

Satisfaction with leisure time

Definition

The proportion of people aged 15 years and over who are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their leisure time as reported in the Quality of Life Survey.

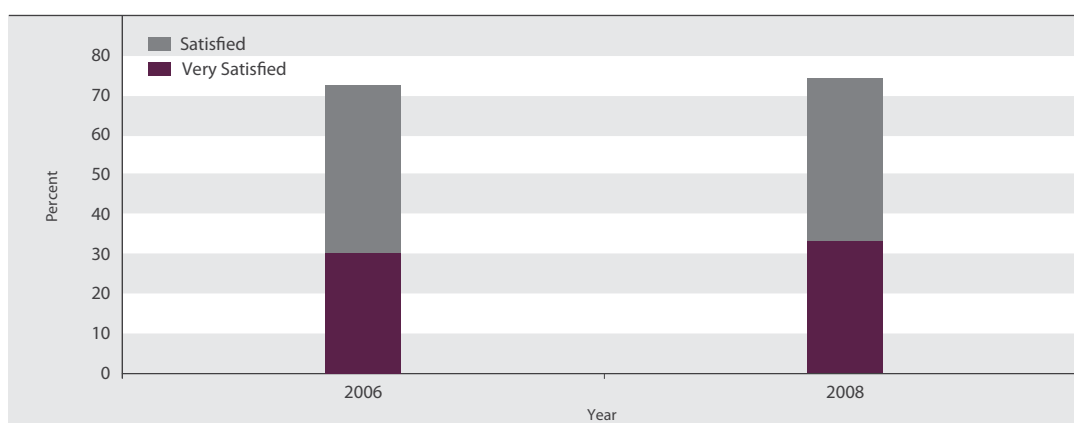
Relevance

Leisure time is a crucial component of a balanced and healthy lifestyle. It is a time when people can do what they want to, separate from work and other commitments.

Current level and trends

In 2008, three-quarters of New Zealanders (75 percent) were satisfied overall with their leisure time (41 percent were satisfied and 34 percent were very satisfied). These results are very similar to those in 2006, when 73 percent of New Zealanders were satisfied with their leisure time (42 percent satisfied and 31 percent very satisfied).

Figure L1.1 **Satisfaction with leisure time, 2006 and 2008**

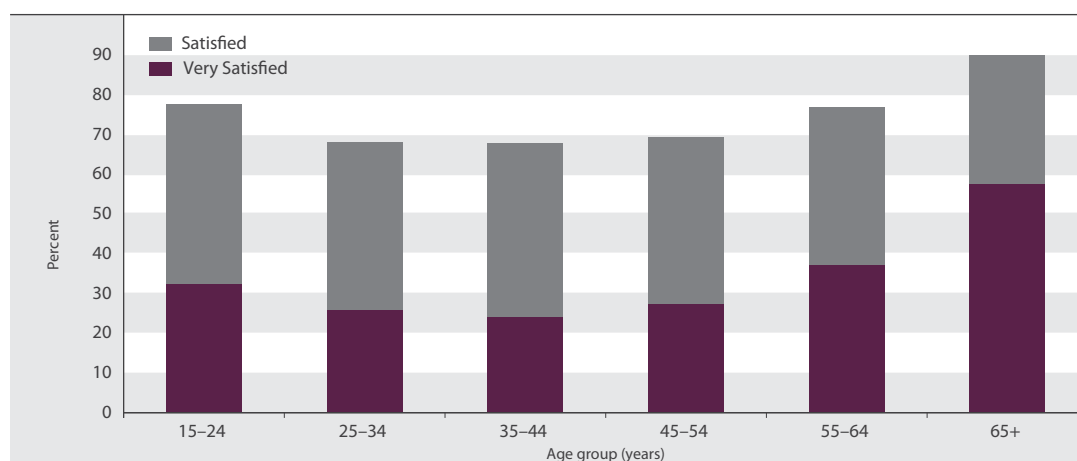


Sources: Quality of Life Survey 2006; Quality of Life Survey 2008

Age differences

While the majority of New Zealanders were satisfied with their leisure time, those aged 25–34 years (68 percent), 35–44 years (68 percent) and 45–54 years (70 percent) were less satisfied overall than other age groups. These age groups tend to have larger work and family commitments than other groups, which may impinge on the time available for leisure. In comparison, those aged 15–24 years and those aged 55–64 years were more likely to report being satisfied with their leisure time, with total satisfaction levels of 78 percent and 77 percent respectively. People aged 65 years and over reported the highest levels of overall satisfaction with their leisure time (90 percent).

Figure L1.2 **Satisfaction with leisure time, by age group, 2008**



Source: Quality of Life Survey 2008

Sex differences

There was little difference between males and females in reported satisfaction with leisure time. Seventy-four percent of men and 76 percent of women reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their leisure time.

Ethnic differences

Most New Zealanders, regardless of their ethnicity, were satisfied with their leisure time. In 2008, the European ethnic group (76 percent), Māori (75 percent) and Pacific peoples (74 percent) had similar levels of satisfaction with their leisure time, while people of Asian ethnicity had lower levels of satisfaction (70 percent).

Household type differences

People who live in households with children aged under 18 years had lower levels of satisfaction with their leisure time (68 percent) than people in households without children of that age (80 percent).

Socio-economic differences

In 2008, satisfaction with leisure time was highest for people with an annual personal income of \$30,000 or less (79 percent). This reflects the high proportion of people aged 65 years and over and 15-24 years in this income range. People with personal incomes in all income groups above \$30,000 had similar levels of satisfaction with their leisure time (between 73 percent and 70 percent).

People employed full-time had lower levels of satisfaction with their leisure time (69 percent) than people employed part-time (80 percent), those who were unemployed (77 percent) or those not in the labour force (85 percent).

Regional differences

People who live in Porirua City had the highest level of satisfaction with their leisure time (80 percent), while people from Waitakere City (70 percent) and Hamilton City (69 percent) had the lowest levels of satisfaction with their leisure time.

Participation in physical activity

Definition

The proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who met physical activity guidelines (ie were physically active for at least 30 minutes a day on five or more days over the last week), as measured by the 2002/2003 and 2006/2007 New Zealand Health Surveys.

Relevance Participation in physical activity is a source of enjoyment and has positive benefits for people's physical and mental health. It can also contribute to personal growth and development and is a good way to meet new people.

Current level and trends In 2006/2007, 51 percent of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over met physical activity guidelines, reporting they had been physically active for at least 30 minutes a day on five or more days over the last week. In 2002/2003, the proportion was 53 percent. However, the change between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007 was not statistically significant. The rates used in this section have been adjusted for age.

Sex and age differences Males were significantly more likely than females to meet physical activity guidelines. In 2006/2007, 54 percent of males reported being physically active for at least 30 minutes a day on five or more days in the last week, compared to 47 percent of females.

Activity levels tend to decline with age. In 2006/2007, the proportion of the population who met physical activity guidelines was highest for age groups under 35 years and lowest for age groups over 65 years. Only for those aged 75 years and over were the proportions significantly lower than the rate for all ages.

Between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007, men in the 35–44 years and 45–54 years age groups recorded a decline in the proportion who met physical activity guidelines, as did women aged 55–64 years.

Table L2.1 **Proportion (%) of the population aged 15 years and over who met physical activity guidelines in the last week, by age group and sex, 2002/2003 and 2006/2007**

Age group (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	2002/2003	2006/2007	2002/2003	2006/2007	2002/2003	2006/2007
15–24	63.6	63.4	47.0	47.0	55.3	55.2
25–34	53.2	57.5	51.0	48.7	52.0	52.9
35–44	57.9	52.5	47.7	49.6	52.6	51.0
45–54	59.9	51.6	50.4	51.9	55.1	51.8
55–64	54.8	50.2	57.7	50.3	56.2	50.2
65–74	51.5	51.3	46.3	43.5	48.7	47.2
75+	36.1	40.6	29.8	26.3	32.6	32.4
Total	56.2	54.0	48.4	47.3	52.1	50.5

Source: Ministry of Health

Ethnic differences

Asians aged 15 years and over were significantly less likely than the general population in that age group to have met physical activity guidelines in the last week. In 2006/2007, the age-standardised rate for Asians was 40 percent while the rate for all New Zealanders aged 15 years and over was 51 percent. In each ethnic group other than Pacific peoples, males were significantly more likely than females to have met physical activity guidelines. These patterns were similar in 2002/2003.

Table L2.2 **Proportion (%) of the population aged 15 years and over who met physical activity guidelines in the last week, by ethnic group and sex, 2002/2003 and 2006/2007**

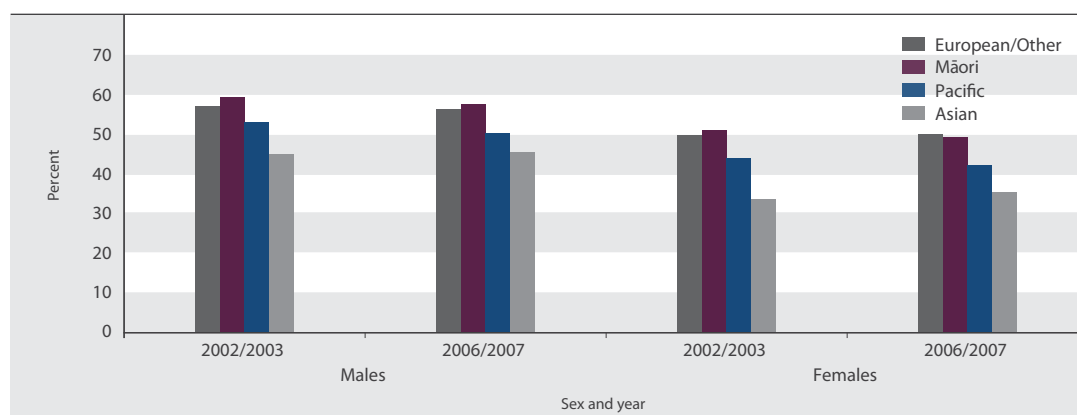
Ethnic group	Males		Females		Total	
	2002/2003	2006/2007	2002/2003	2006/2007	2002/2003	2006/2007
European/Other	57.4	56.6	49.9	50.3	53.5	53.3
Māori	59.7	57.9	51.2	49.4	55.2	53.4
Pacific peoples	53.2	50.4	44.2	42.3	48.5	46.1
Asian	45.3	45.8	33.8	35.6	39.1	40.4
Total	56.7	54.9	48.6	47.9	52.5	51.3

Source: Ministry of Health

Notes: (1) People who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. (2) Age-standardised using WHO world population.

Between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007, there were no significant increases in the rate at which the population aged 15 years and over met physical activity guidelines for any ethnic group.

Figure L2.1 **Proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who met physical activity guidelines in the last week, by ethnic group and sex, 2002/2003 and 2006/2007**



Source: Ministry of Health

Notes: (1) People who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. (2) Age-standardised using WHO world population.

Socio-economic differences

In 2006/2007, there was no association between physical activity and the level of neighbourhood deprivation (as measured by NZDep2006 quintiles).

Participation in arts and cultural activities

Definition

The proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who had attended at least one arts event or had actively participated in the arts in the previous 12 months, as measured by Creative New Zealand's survey: New Zealanders and the arts: Attitudes, attendance and participation.

Arts events refers to art galleries (including online galleries), exhibitions, film festivals; performances in theatre, contemporary dance and ballet, music concerts, circuses; poetry or book readings, literary festivals or events; cultural performances and festivals, and celebrations of Māori or Pacific arts. Participation is defined as being directly involved in the making or presentation of art. It does not include such activities as listening to a CD, reading a book or going to a movie.

Relevance

Arts and cultural activities are an integral part of leisure and recreation. People attend arts events or actively participate in the arts for a wide variety of reasons: for enjoyment and entertainment, as a means of creative expression, for personal growth and the pursuit of excellence, to learn new skills, to meet new people, and to celebrate cultural traditions. A shared appreciation of the arts can help to promote understanding between peoples, both within and beyond a country's borders.

Current level and trends

In 2008, 83 percent of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over had attended at least one arts event in the previous 12 months. Around one-third (34 percent) had high attendance at arts events, having been to more than 10 events in the past year. These proportions were similar to those found in the 2005 survey (84 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

Almost half of the population aged 15 years and over (48 percent) were actively participating in the arts in 2008, similar to the proportion in 2005 (50 percent). Just over one-quarter of the population (26 percent) were frequent participants in the arts, having been actively involved more than 12 times in the past year.

In 2008, two-thirds (65 percent) of New Zealanders agreed the arts were part of their everyday life, up from 57 percent in 2005. Commonly held views of what "the arts" included were the visual arts (painting, photography, sculpture and drawing); music and singing (symphony orchestra, concerts, opera); ballet and other dancing; theatre, plays, drama, comedy and live performances; carvings, sculpture and things people make or create; movies; literature, poetry, writings, readings. In both 2005 and 2008, attendance and participation rates were highest for the visual and performance arts.

Changes in technology are reflected in the arts. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the adult population aged 15 years and over said they had created original works of art using a computer. The proportion was highest among young adults aged 15–24 years: 43 percent had created digital art in the past 12 months.

Sex and age differences

While 86 percent of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over were involved in the arts, either by attending arts events or by participating in the arts, women were slightly more likely than men to be involved (89 percent, compared to 84 percent). People aged 70 years and over had a lower than average level of involvement in the arts, but it was still high, at 77 percent.

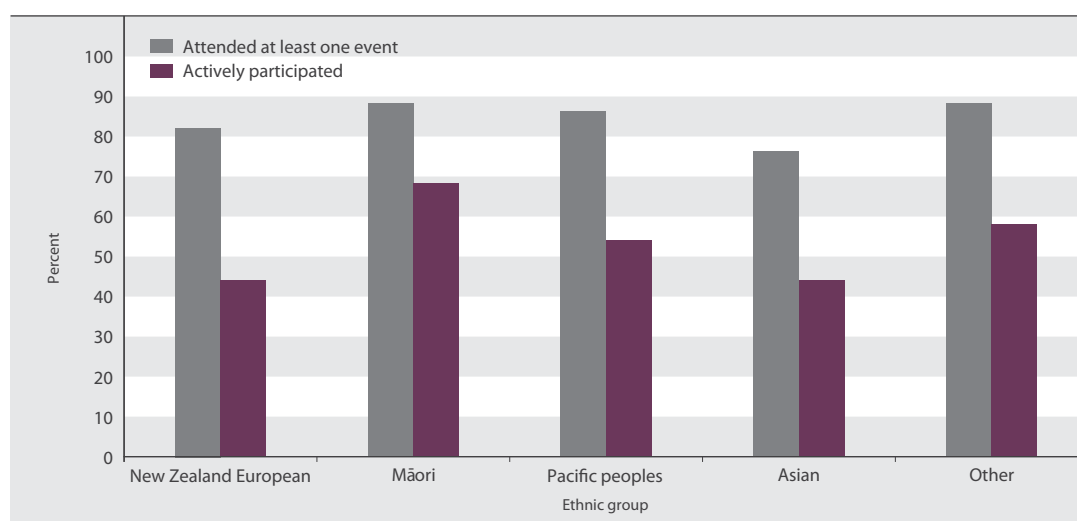
Childhood experiences of the arts influences adult attendance and participation. Of adults who were regularly taken to arts events as children, 92 percent had attended at least one arts event in the past 12 months and 62 percent were active participants in the arts.

Ethnic differences

Ideas about what the arts included tended to be broader among Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples. These ethnic groups were more likely to view crafts, cultural events and expressions or interpretations of ideas, feelings and beliefs as being part of the arts.

Māori and Pacific people had slightly higher than average attendance at arts events in 2008 (88 percent and 86 percent, respectively), compared to the national average of 83 percent. People in these two ethnic groups had much higher than average active participation in the arts (Māori 68 percent, Pacific peoples 54 percent), compared to the national average of 48 percent. Both attendance and participation rates were lower than average for Asian people, although 76 percent had attended at least one arts event in the past 12 months and 44 percent were active participants in the arts.

Figure L3.1 **Proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who attended arts events or participated in the arts, by ethnic group, 2008**



Source: Creative New Zealand (2009)

Socio-economic differences

Attendance at arts events varies by education level. In 2008, attendance ranged from 77 percent for people with no formal education beyond secondary school level, to 93 percent for those with a postgraduate degree. Active participation in the arts varied less markedly, from 43 percent for people with no more than secondary school education, to 54 percent for those with a postgraduate degree. Both the 2005 and 2008 surveys found no substantial relationship between income and participation in the arts.

International comparison

Surveys similar to those commissioned by Creative New Zealand have been conducted in Australia, England and Scotland. On attendance at arts events in the past year, New Zealand ranked highest with 83 percent in 2008, followed by Australia (72 percent in 2009), Scotland (68 percent in 2008) and England (67 percent in 2008). However, the New Zealand survey included attendances at film festivals (though not films generally), which were not counted in the Australian survey. A 2007 survey of leisure activities in 34 countries by the International Social Survey Program, which included questions on arts attendance, placed New Zealand among the “high attendance” countries (scoring 70–79 percent), alongside Austria, France, Germany, Australia and Great Britain.⁹⁴

In 2008, New Zealand had a relatively high level of creative participation in the arts (48 percent), compared to 47 percent in England and 41 percent in Australia.