

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

## Demographic information on your community (2023 Census)

Community demographic information will soon be available from me [lynnemtaylor@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lynnemtaylor@xtra.co.nz)

This gives good background information on the area you are ministering in and can help with your decision making if you are considering different options for ministry or church planting.

## General history or background to the city or suburb

Check out the local or central library (and online) for publications and other resources on the history of the area. What has the community celebrated together in the past? Are there any historic issues that remain unaddressed?

*To get a feel for the history of the area*

## Planning information from local Council

Obtain from the local Council information on planned new developments, zoning changes, roading plans, etc.

*To discover what is expected to happen in the area over the next 5,10,25 years*

## Local schools

Information can be obtained both from school's website, school staff and Education Review Office reports ([www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz))

What are the rolls doing?

- Numerically?
- Ethnically?

Is the school zoned? What proportion of pupils come from within/out of zone.

What are the strengths and unique characteristics of the school? How do those relate to the wider community?

Are there any particular issues faced by the students, parents, Board, etc?

What changes have staff observed?

*Challenges and changes, trends and tales*

## Real estate agents

How long do people tend to stay in the area?

What types of people are moving in? Moving out?

What are their impressions of the area? What changes have they observed?

What is the cost to rent a house, purchase a house, purchase land?

*Perceptions, trends and tales*

## Local police

What local community strengths have they observed?

What are the major and minor crime problems?

What are their impressions of the area?

## **Other local government agencies (e.g. Oranga Tamaraki, Kāinga Ora, Work and Income, etc)**

What are the major needs and strengths in the area?

*Perceptions, trends and tales*

## **Citizen's advice bureau**

*Perceptions, trends and tales*

## **Other churches**

What are they currently doing? What sorts of ministries are they running/people are they reaching?

What are they celebrating?

What are the challenges they are facing?

How can you complement each other?

## **Marae and other community organisations**

What are they currently doing? What sorts of people come to their activities?

What are they celebrating?

What are the challenges they are facing?

How can you complement each other?

## **Surveys (or even better, consider a community research project)**

Don't use surveys to find out information that is available in the Census.

Do use surveys to say and to ask:

We're here (or we're coming)

What do you love about living or working in this area?

We're here to help: to build on what is, and make it even better

We've got these ideas... what do you think?

What would further strengthen this community?

How could we as a local church better relate to the community?

Ask demographic questions to check how representative your sample is (compare your sample with the demographics of the whole area).

## **In conclusion**

Don't do research that has already been done for you.

Get to know your area as best you can.

Utilise the information and resources available.

Look for the strengths, assets, potential partners.

**Lynne Taylor**

Researcher

AngelWings Ltd

027 304 6228 // lynnemtaylor@xtra.co.nz