



Taking responsibility for  
a sustainable future



# Lincoln Envirotown Survey Results 2006

## State-of-the-Town Report Summary

26 September 2006

[www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz](http://www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz)



Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*

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## LINCOLN EVIROTOWN SURVEY – SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

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The objective of the Lincoln Envirotown Survey was to gain information regarding the actions, knowledge and requirements of the Lincoln community as related to the progress of Lincoln towards being a sustainable township. The survey results provide a basis for the Lincoln Envirotown Trust to provide environmental sustainability education for the community and to engage the town's population in debate over development directions and quality as Lincoln grows.

The survey was carried out using structured questionnaires that were sent to residents, business owners and other community members. 105 of about 1000 distributed questionnaires were returned and analysed. Given a number of approximately 894 households in Lincoln, about 11-12% of the households responded to the survey.

The majority of the surveyed residents have a positive attitude towards living in Lincoln. The rural character of the community, the small size, quietness and friendliness of the town, the community feeling, the Liffey Reserve with its walkways, the relatively good air quality, the low levels of crime, the good range of commercial and community facilities including schools, the good bus service, and the ideal distance to Christchurch and other sub-centres were described as the major strengths of Lincoln.

These qualities of the community attract increasing numbers of people, and thus, Lincoln is currently undergoing rapid development. To gain insights into the residents' attitudes towards the rapid growth of their community, the respondents were asked to list the three issues they thought were most relevant for the future of Lincoln. The issues that were given by the residents have been grouped into 10 different categories. The following table shows the categories ordered by importance as perceived by the residents:

Category	Number of respondents
Growth of Lincoln, town planning, and subdivision design	49
The development of the business / shopping centre	33
Transport: traffic and parking, roads, foot paths and cycle ways, public transport	32
Recreation facilities and reserves	19
Environment and sustainability	15
Community facilities	12
Water availability and quality, wastewater	12
Appearance of the community and development of the town centre	10
Education (schools and university)	4
Other issues	6

Many residents are concerned that the population growth could undermine the community feeling and that the quiet, rural character of their community could get lost in favour of a busier, more anonymous, suburban like atmosphere. A majority of the respondents assessed the growth of their community as too extensive, too rapid and unplanned or not carefully enough adapted to the character of the existing township. The new high-density subdivisions were perceived as befitting to a city but not a rural town like Lincoln. Many residents argued in favour of larger section sizes and more public space. There was also general agreement that more linkages between the new subdivisions were needed to better integrate them into the community.

Contrary to the development of new subdivisions, a majority of the respondents expressed positive attitudes towards a possible development of the business / shopping centre in the centre of the township. They argued that the development of commercial facilities should keep up with the population growth and that the provision of more local infrastructure would avoid travelling. However, some residents perceived the existing range of facilities as sufficient and were concerned that commercial development would undermine the rural character of their community. As a 'compromise', many residents would like to see the commercial area planned and designed in a way that fits into the rural community and preserves the 'village' atmosphere. A number of residents suggested developing a 'social area' with a large pedestrian zone, cafés, seating, and trees in the town centre.

Another subject of community concerns are transport issues, especially the increasing traffic through the town centre and parking issues. The respondents suggested various solutions to improve the situation, including developing a by pass route, providing more parking space, and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport to reduce the reliance on private vehicles

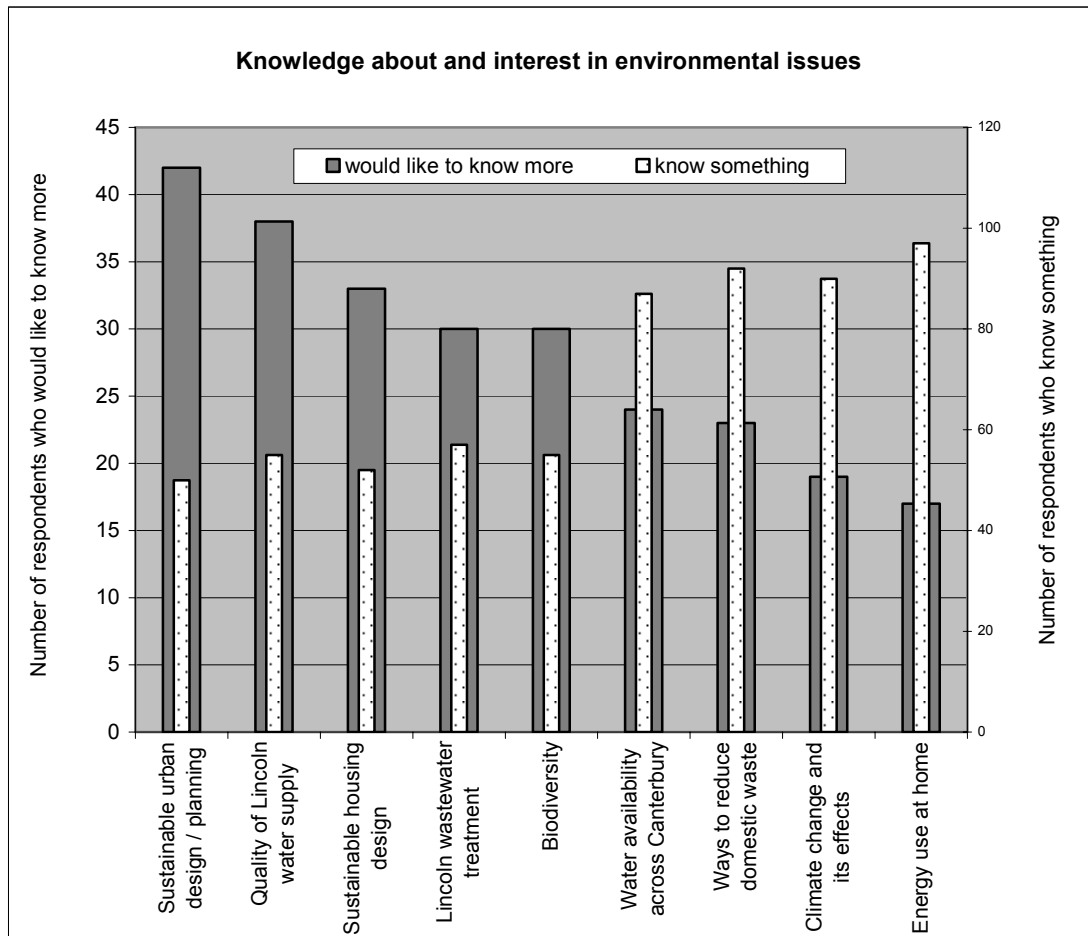
Regarding the future development of Lincoln, many residents argued that the planning process to date had too one-sidedly focussed on the design of new subdivisions, while the broader issues and development perspectives of the community as a whole had been ignored. There was general agreement that the growth of Lincoln should be planned in a way (or restricted) so that the rural character, the 'village' atmosphere, and the community feeling are maintained. Several residents suggested that planning decisions should primarily be made by the Council and / or the community.

Some residents were concerned that the growth of their community would place additional pressure on the environment (green areas, air quality) and generate more traffic. In particular, the preservation and maintenance of reserves was perceived as important for the future development of Lincoln. A number of residents proposed ways to enhance the environmental sustainability of their community. Most importantly, they commented on issues like waste management, clean energy sources, sustainable urban design principles, and sustainable housing design.

In addition to their perceptions regarding the future development of Lincoln, the respondents were asked about their current level of knowledge about and further interest in a number of environmental issues, their involvement in various 'environmental activities' and their preferred sources of information.

The survey shows that there is a positive correlation between the residents' environmental knowledge and their involvement in 'environmental activities', or in other words, that knowledge about environmental issues promotes 'environmentally friendly' lifestyles.

The following graph shows the residents' knowledge about environmental issues and their interest to learn more about these issues.

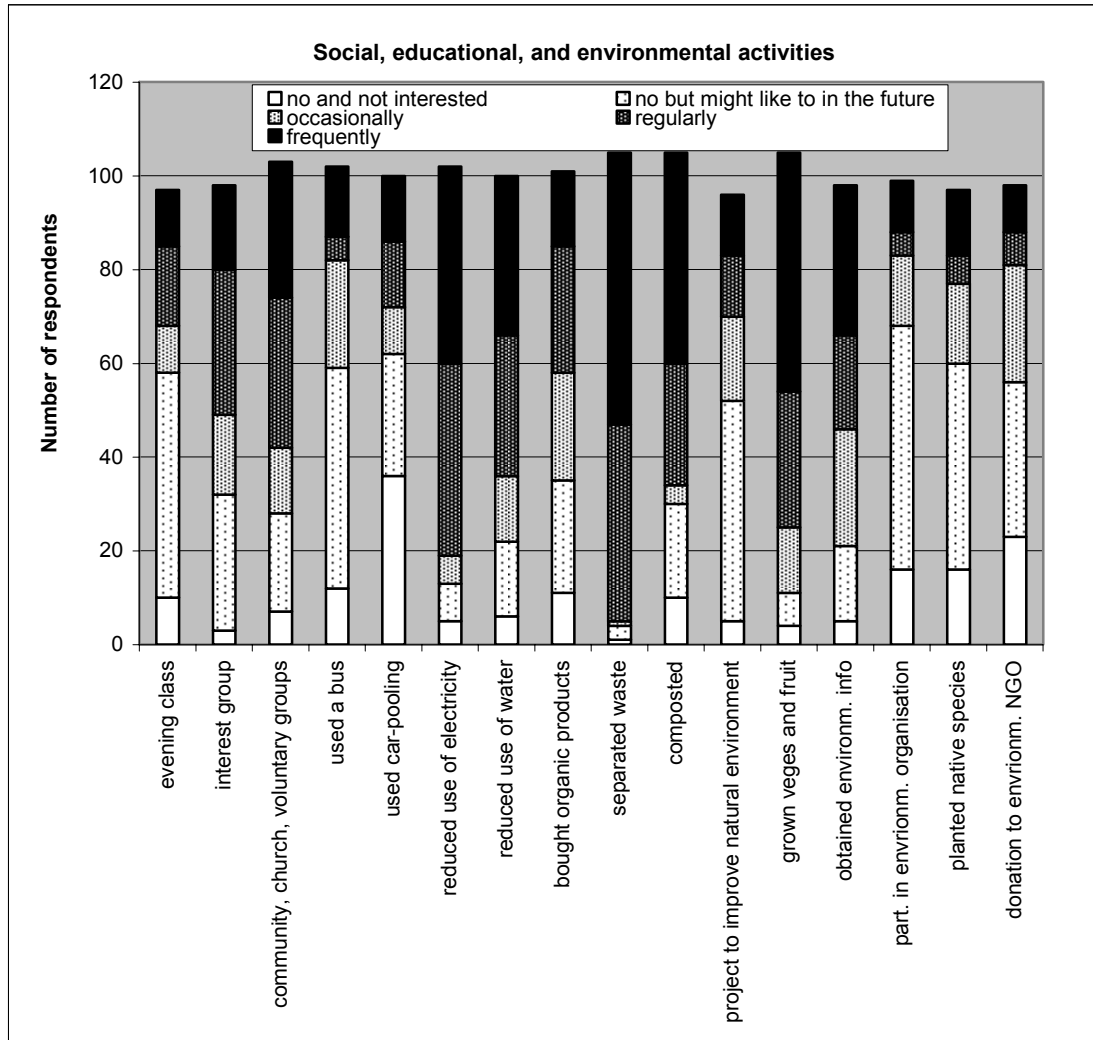


The top issues most respondents were conversant in were domestic energy use, climate change, waste separation, and water availability across Canterbury. Rather limited was the knowledge about sustainable housing design, sustainable urban planning, biodiversity, Lincoln waste water treatment, and the quality of Lincoln water supply.

The top issues the residents would like to know more about are sustainable urban design, the quality of Lincoln water supply, and sustainable green housing design. The residents' high levels of interest in sustainable urban design and green housing design, together with the fact that Lincoln is currently undergoing rapid developments in terms of population growth and housing development, provides tremendous opportunities for the Lincoln Envirotown Trust to provide opportunities for the community to learn about and discuss these issues and encourage the community to contribute their knowledge and views to the future development of the community.

Most common among the various 'environmental' activities (see graph on next page) are those that are related to individual households, such as the separation of waste, the reduced use of electricity, the cultivation of fruit and vegetables, the responsible use of tap water, and the composting of garden and kitchen scraps. Less common are the activities that go beyond the level of the own household, such as participation in an environmental organisation, the planting of native species, or participation in a project to improve the natural environment.

More than three quarters of the respondents stated that they had obtained some type of environmental information over the course of the past year. Most of the residents who had not obtained any environmental information might in the future be interested in doing so. Only 5 respondents did not show any interest in obtaining environmental information at all.



To understand in what form information could best be provided to the community, the Lincoln Envirotown Survey asked the residents about the sources of information they prefer and use most. The three most commonly used sources of information are the internet, books/magazines and asking friends. Community oriented sources of information, such as discussion meetings, evening classes, demonstrations, projects, videos, and field-days, were perceived as less important. The younger age groups as well as residents who have already been engaged in interest and community groups or who have attended evening classes are clearly more open minded towards community oriented sources of information than average.

The survey provided much valuable information regarding the residents' environmental knowledge and interest, their attitudes towards Lincoln, and how they would like to see their community develop in the future. Complete survey results are available at the Lincoln Library/SDC Service Centre and on our website: [www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz](http://www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz)