

# **Central City 2025**

**Feedback on the Central City and related issues in Christchurch**

## **Life in Christchurch**

Prepared by Monitoring & Research

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## Key Messages



### Generally residents are feeling positive about the Central City at the moment.

When asked to describe the Central City in one word, the most used words describe its vibrancy or progress.

Almost two thirds (61-64%):

- Are satisfied with the look and feel of the streetscape and public artworks in the central city,
- Are satisfied with the look and feel of new buildings in the central city,
- Agree that the Central City has attractive and inviting open and green spaces, and
- Are satisfied with the look and feel of the landscaping and tree planting in the central city.

59% agree they feel a sense of pride in the Central City (16% disagree and 24% say neither). This has increased compared to 2022 when 47% agreed and 23% disagreed.



### Living in the Central City

Residents are divided in their opinions of living in the Central City.

- 55% would not consider moving to the Central City under any circumstances but 21% would consider it within the next 10 years.
- 33% agree the Central City offers a range of housing options but 36% disagree.

The close proximity to Hagley Park, Botanic Gardens, and the Avon River, as well as shops, cafes, bars and restaurants are what would make it appealing to live in the Central City.



### Visiting the Central City

The majority have visited the Central City in the past month (82%). Only 3% have not visited in the past 12 months.

Frequency of visits tend to be at least once a month or more often (71%).

- 65% agree the central city provides a range of things to do for all people.
- 65% agree the central city provides a range of spaces and places where communities can gather, socialise, celebrate, and hold events.



### Feelings of Safety in the Central City

Feelings of safety in the Central City is high during the day (82% feel safe), but after dark this decreases substantially (40% feel safe and 49% feel unsafe).

Half (50%) of those who feel unsafe in the central city (during the day or after dark) agree that it discourages them from visiting the central city for shopping, entertainment, recreation or dining out.



### Residents' top 5 overarching priorities for improving the central city over the next 10-15 year period include:

1. Easy and affordable accessibility to the central city regardless of what travel mode residents want to use.
2. A focus on rebuilding, repairing and revitalising still damaged or vacant areas: e.g. the Cathedral.
3. Making the Central City safer and keeping it clean.
4. Preserving, enhancing and increasing green spaces.
5. Enabling more vibrancy through the arts, culture, heritage, events and entertainment.

## About this Report

Feedback from the community about the Central City and related issues was collected via the Council's Life in Christchurch survey programme in February 2025.

The Life in Christchurch surveys are an ongoing initiative designed to gather feedback from residents on various aspects of life in the city. These surveys cover a wide range of topics, and the feedback collected helps inform the Council's decision-making processes. Residents can subscribe to these surveys to regularly share their opinions and contribute to the future of their city.

The survey asked a series of closed (quantitative) questions, with a number of options provided for respondents to provide open, written feedback. The closed questions used five-point likert scales with a don't know option where appropriate. Respondents could choose to not answer all questions as well. These responses are summarised in this report. Due to rounding conventions, figures may not sum to 100%.

## Who we heard from

The survey was open in February 2025. During this time, we heard from 3,748 respondents whereof 145 said they lived in the Central City area.

These respondents were from all walks of life. There was a range of ages, a mix of genders (50% identified as men, 49% as women and 1% as non-binary/another gender) and ethnicities. All wards and community boards were well represented and a small proportion even came from outside of Christchurch.

For more details on the demographics of those we heard from, please see "Demographics of respondents".

Respondents By Community Board and Ward								
Waihoru Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote			Waimāero Fendalton-Waimairi-Harewood			Waipapa Papanui-Innes-Central		
	919	25%		645	17%		643	17%
Spreydon	172	5%	Fendalton	228	6%	Papanui	111	3%
Cashmere	433	12%	Waimairi	163	4%	Innes	296	8%
Heathcote	314	8%	Harewood	254	7%	Central	236	6%
Waipuna Halswell-Hornby-Riccarton			Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood			Te Pātaka o Rākauhautū Banks Peninsula		
	568	15%		616	16%		111	3%
Halswell	291	8%	Coastal	244	7%	Banks Peninsula	111	3%
Hornby	97	3%	Burwood	204	5%	Outside of Christchurch / unknown suburb	246	7%
Riccarton	180	5%	Linwood	168	4%			



## Appearance of the Central City Environment

**Sentiment around the Central City's appearance is mixed, with litter and graffiti vandalism being two areas of concern.**

Almost two thirds (61-64%) are satisfied with the look and feel of:

- The streetscape and public artworks in the central city,
- New buildings in the central city, and
- The landscaping and tree planting in the central city.

A similar proportion (62%) also agree that the Central City has attractive and inviting open and green spaces.

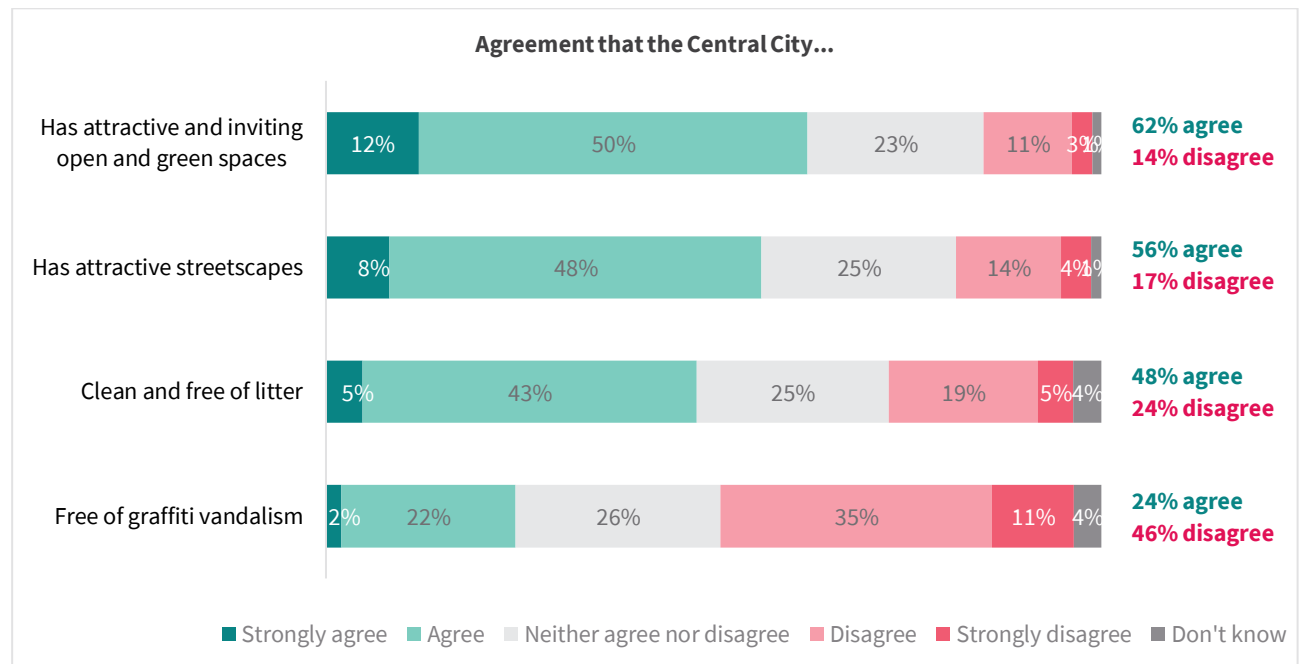
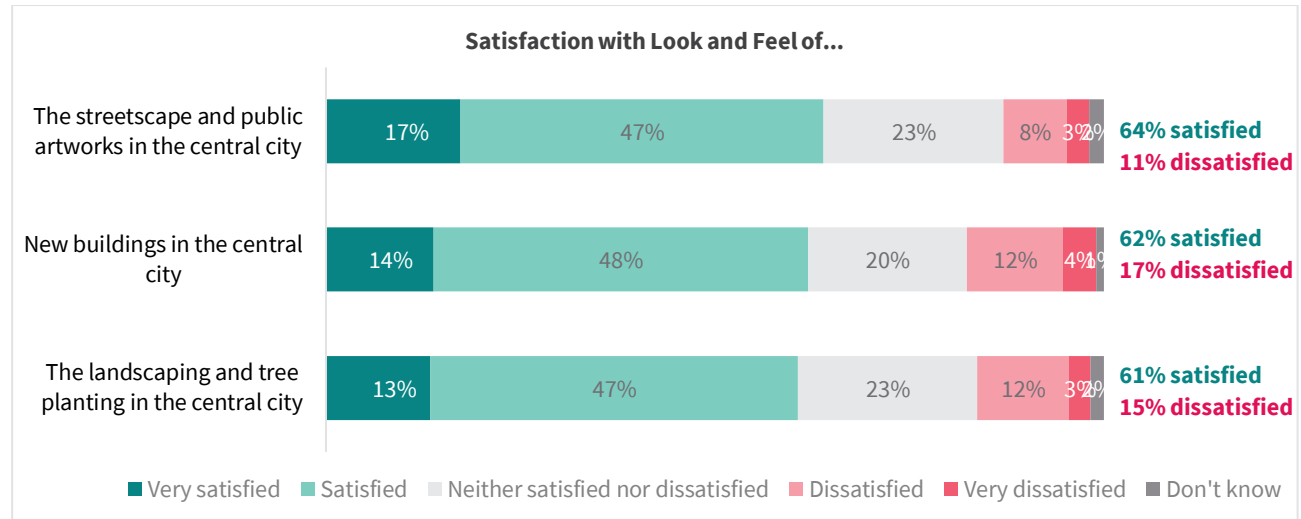
Just over half (56%) agree that the Central City has attractive streetscapes. Fewer than half agree that the Central City is clean and free of litter (48%) and a quarter disagree (24%).

Only a quarter (24%) agree that the Central City is free of graffiti vandalism and 46% actively disagree.

Comments related to the appearance of the Central City reflect this mixed sentiment with common feedback highlighting the need to still restore areas affected by the earthquake and a desire for more greenery.

*"Some of the old earthquake damaged buildings and vacant blocks need tidying up."*

*"Need more greenspace, trees and gardens"*



## Pride in the Central City

**59% agree they feel a sense of pride in the Central City.**

The proportion who feel pride in the Central City agree has **increased compared to 2022** (from 47% who agreed and 23% who disagreed).

The Christchurch Botanic Gardens is a key contributor to feeling pride in the city

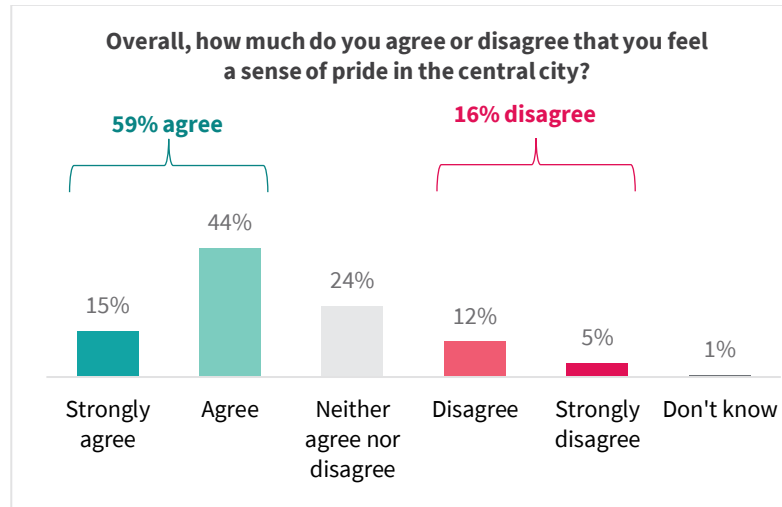
Some reasons for not agreeing include:

- Incomplete earthquake recovery with the Cathedral / The Cathedral Square being specific examples
- Expensive/lack of parking and car accessibility
- A sense that the Central city is lacking in heritage, character and 'soul'

## Priorities

Respondents provided a lot of feedback when asked what they considered to be their top priorities for improving the central city over the next 10-15 year period. The top 5 overarching themes were:

- **Access to the Central City.** Parking in particular was commonly mentioned, but there were mixed opinions on whether to focus on making it more accessible for those driving cars, improving public transport, or making it more bike / pedestrian friendly.
- **Rebuilding, repairing and revitalising** damaged or vacant areas, in particular the Cathedral / the Cathedral Square.
- **Safety and cleanliness** of the Central City: Safety in general and from anti-social behaviour and making the city clean, tidy and free from litter, vandalism and graffiti.
- Preserving, enhancing and increasing the **green spaces**.
- **Enabling more vibrancy** through the arts, culture, heritage, events and entertainment



**The proportion of respondents who are more likely to agree they feel a sense of pride in the Central City ...**

- Is significantly higher by those living in the Central, Fendalton or Innes wards.
- Is significantly higher by women
- Tends to increase as income increases
- Tends to decrease as the number of years living in Christchurch increases.



*"Improve public transport. Increase green spaces and use of water features etc.  
Remove (or very quickly fully repair) the cathedral."*

*"Make the city easier and more affordable to access (Car parking), more central city events and connect them together to engage people to hang around after the event."*

*"Get rid of the remaining derelict and damaged sites from the earthquakes – let's move on"*

*"Finish dealing with the cathedral (whether that's rebuilding, replacing or removing) so the space can be made attractive again."*

*"Keeping it safe, with Police walking around. Keeping it clean with more rubbish bins."*

*"More green space. Live performances in open areas. Community events in the central city."*

*"More attractions in the city centre. Entertainment and markets in the square."*

*"Safety. Variety of entertainment venues and retail shops. Ease and safety of transport to access."*



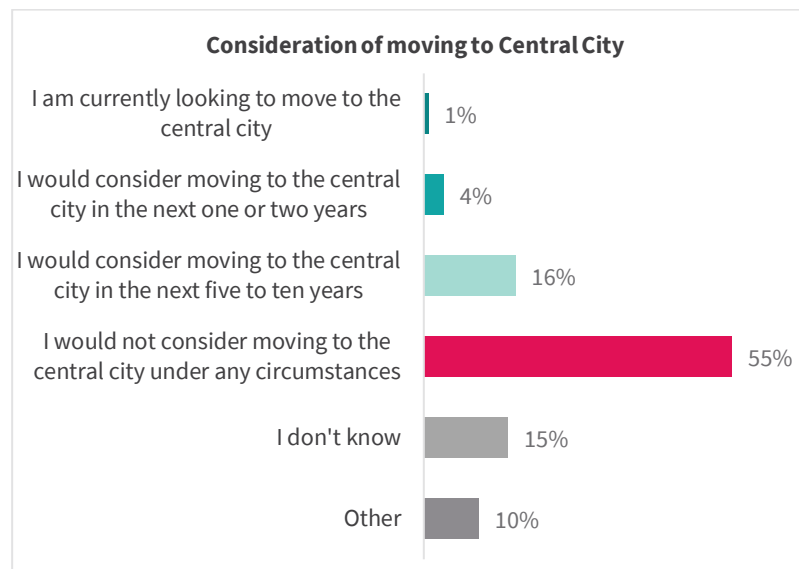
# Living in the Central City

## Moving to the Central City

As of 30 June 2024, according to StatsNZ, 9,160 residents lived in the Christchurch Centre - within the four avenues, representing 2.2% of Christchurch City's population.

Of respondents who did not live in the Central City, over half (55%) will not consider moving there under any circumstances when asked. 21% are open to considering it within the next 10 years.

There is a relationship between the consideration for living in the Central City and age, gender, income, area currently living in and the length living in Christchurch.



### The proportion of respondents who ...

Already live in the Central City or would consider moving in the next two years:

- Is higher amongst 18-34 year olds

Would consider moving in the next five to ten years:

- is higher for those living in Fendalton, Innes or Riccarton Wards, and
- increases as income increases

Would not consider moving under any circumstances:

- is higher for men,
- increases as age increases, and
- generally increases as the number of years living in Christchurch increases.

### The top 5 reasons why those who live in the Central City chose to live there are:

1. It is walking distance to shops, cafes and restaurants (79%)
2. It suits my lifestyle (78%)
3. I prefer to live in the central city (67%)
4. Access to Hagley Park & the Botanic Gardens (58%)
5. It is close to good entertainment options (53%)

### The top 5 things that would make the Central City an appealing place to live by those who do not live in the Central City but would consider it.

1. Proximity to natural features (e.g. Hagley Park, the Botanic Gardens, the Avon River) (89%)
2. Proximity to shopping, cafes, bars and restaurants (82%)
3. Proximity to a range of things to do (68%)
4. Convenient transport options (54%)
5. The streetscapes, street trees and gardens (46%)

### The top 5 reasons why people who do not live in the Central City would not consider a move are:

1. The types of housing in the central city do not meet my needs (66%)
2. There is not enough parking (both on street and off street) (61%)
3. Lifestyle factors (e.g. enjoy living near the beach or the hills) (52%)
4. There are better value for money options on the periphery of the central city (40%)
5. The central city is too noisy (35%)

*"Already live in a wonderful part of town. Nothing wrong with the central city but why would I move from such a lovely area "*

*"I'd be happy to move to the Central City if circumstances required it, but they don't require it at the moment and there's no time frame involved."*



**More respondents disagree than agree that the Central City provides a range of housing options that that are well -designed and/or affordable.**

Commentary about the types of housing available in the Central City were generally of negative sentiment, with topics covering things such as the lack of parking, garages, storage and outdoor space; the type of housing available, who they suited and the smaller sizes; questionable visual appeal and quality; pricing and affordability; and more.

Respondents who live in the Central City are significantly more likely to agree. 57% agree there is a range of housing, 42% agree there are well designed housing options and 33% agree there are affordable housing options.

A few however have concerns about impact that some types of housing may have on the sense of community, specifically housing that is mostly used as rentals or Airbnb's.







## What the Central City Provides and Offers

**Almost two-thirds (65%) agree that the Central City provides a range of things to do for all people, and, a range of spaces and places where communities can gather, socialise, celebrate and hold events.**

Those who do not agree tend to be in the middle at neither agree nor disagree (21% and 20% respectively).

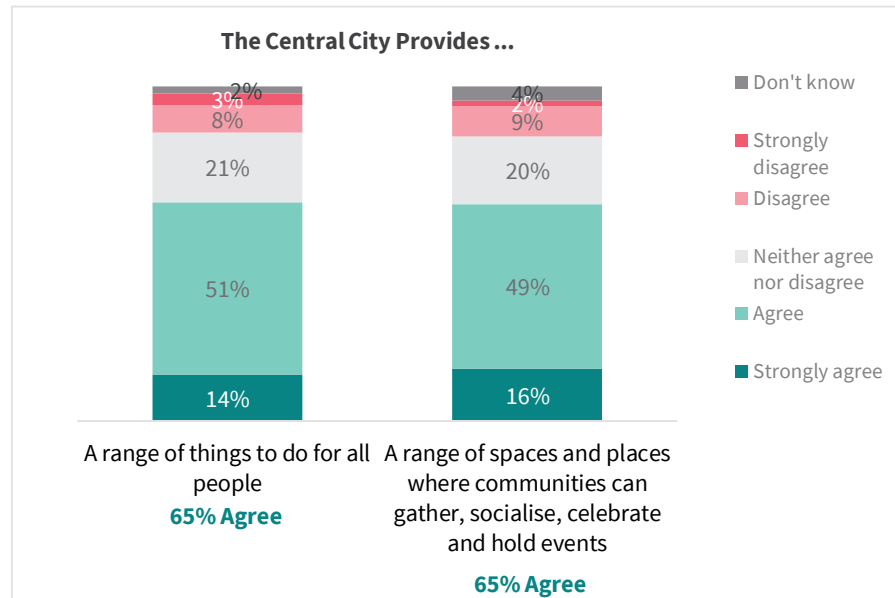
**When looking at specific offerings, three quarters or more (76% - 88%) agree that the Central City offers:**

- Access to a range of restaurants and bars
- A range of cafes
- A range of entertainment opportunities such as live music, theatre, movie cinemas and events
- Access to parks, open spaces and other outdoor recreation opportunities.

*“Cashel mall and environs are great, especially alongside the river. Big tick for Riverside”*

*“Hagley Park and Victoria Square are both excellent assets to the city, as is the Town Hall and Theatre Royal. Cathedral Square should be also, but for decades it has been de-greened and is unattractive.”*

*“Miss the museum being closed. Enjoy the art gallery and the arts centre and the botanical gardens.”*



The proportion of respondents who agree that there is a range of things to do:

- is higher for women,
- increases as income increases,
- decreases as age increases, and
- decreases as length living in Christchurch increases.

The proportion of respondents who agree that there is a range of spaces and places

- tends to increase as income increases, and
- is lower for those who are 65 years or older



# Safety in the Central City

## Feelings of safety during the day and after dark

Feelings of safety in the Central City is high during the day (82% feel safe), but after dark this decreases substantially (40% feel safe and 49% feel unsafe). **Half (50%) of those who feel unsafe** in the central city (during the day or after dark) **agree that it discourages them from visiting** the central city for shopping, entertainment, recreation or dining out.

The top two issues causing feelings of unsafety during both times of day are 1) antisocial behaviour and 2) people under the influence of drugs and alcohol.



## Demographics of respondents

<b>Age</b>	n=	%
18 - 24 years	17	1%
25 - 34 years	196	6%
35 - 49 years	506	15%
50 - 64 years	1137	34%
65 - 79 years	1274	38%
80 years and over	215	6%
Total stated	3345	

<b>Gender</b>	n=	%
As a man	1681	50%
As a woman	1640	49%
Non-binary / another gender	24	1%
Total stated	3345	

<b>Ethnicity</b>	n=	%
European	2950	92%
Māori	139	4%
Pacific Peoples	30	1%
Asian	79	2%
MELAA	26	1%
Other	198	6%
<i>New Zealander/Kiwi/Pākehā</i>	187	6%
<i>Other</i>	11	0.3%
Total stated	3197	

<b>Household Income</b>	n=	%
\$20,000 or less	50	2%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	200	6%
\$30,001 - \$50,000	327	10%
\$50,001 - \$70,000	374	12%
\$70,001 - \$100,000	416	13%
\$100,001 - \$150,000	560	17%
\$150,001 or more	745	23%
Total stated	2672	

<b>Current City</b>	n=	%
I live in Christchurch (including Banks Peninsula)	3560	95%
I live elsewhere in Canterbury (e.g. Rolleston, Lincoln, Rangiora, Kaiapoi)	150	4%
I don't live in Christchurch or Canterbury	38	1%
Total stated	3748	

<b>Length living in Christchurch</b>	n=	%
Less than 1 year	16	0%
1 - 5 years	207	6%
6 - 10 years	261	7%
10 - 20 years	604	17%
More than 20 years	2459	69%
Total stated	3547	

<b>Community Board &amp; Ward</b> <i>(Residents in Christchurch in known wards)</i>	n=	%
Waihoru Spreydon – Cashmere - Heathcote	919	26%
- Spreydon	172	5%
- Cashmere	433	12%
- Heathcote	314	9%
Waimāero Fendalton – Waimairi -Harewood	645	18%
- Fendalton	228	7%
- Waimairi	163	5%
- Harewood	254	7%
Waipapa Papanui - Innes - Central	643	18%
- Papanui	111	3%
- Innes	296	8%
- Central	236	7%
Waitai Coastal – Burwood - Linwood	616	18%
- Coastal	244	7%
- Burwood	204	6%
- Linwood	168	5%
Waipuna Halswell – Hornby - Riccarton	568	16%
- Halswell	291	8%
- Hornby	97	3%
- Riccarton	180	5%
Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula	111	3%
- Banks Peninsula	111	3%
Total stated	3502	

<b>Length living in Central City</b>	n=	%
Less than 1 year	8	6%
1 - 5 years	30	21%
6 - 10 years	33	23%
10 - 20 years	20	14%
More than 20 years	53	37%
Total stated	144	