Community Safety Issues: Report on Phase 1 2003 – 2004

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Executive Summary

This report covers the first two years of the community safety module of the Building Attachment Research programme. The aim of this module is to explore the relationship between residential movement, attachment to a community or area, and perceptions and experiences of personal and public safety. As the research progressed, it was broadened to consider how individuals and families who move around frequently access the services and supports they need.

A selection of literature focusing on relationships between crime, attachment to a community; and residential movement was considered. Two theoretical approaches were examined: social disorganization theory and the systemic model of community attachment. It was found that there is a lack of clear agreement on the relationships between attachment, movement and crime, although differences in findings may simply be related to the different measures used and communities studied. Crime rates or perceptions of crime and safety are possibly less important as factors influencing residential movement than other factors such as housing quality and housing density. Furthermore, individual factors such as age and family life cycle stage are important influencers of movement.

Findings from panel interviews, in-depth interviews and focus groups in the four case study communities showed that research participants find their immediate area to be safe, even if they also identify crime and safety problems in their community. In all case study areas, problems with children and young people were identified as the main crime and safety concerns. Other issues common to all areas were concerns about property crime, drugs and to a lesser extent family violence and road safety.

Few participants have personally experienced crime, however many feel that crime is a high profile issue that sometimes negatively impacts on perceptions about their community. In all areas, there were more important reasons for moving house than concerns about crime or safety.

Children and young people were identified as a very mobile group in all the case study communities, but particularly so in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, Opotiki and Kawerau. Children and young people move with families, and in addition, some move independently of their family groups. Local social service providers, particularly in Opotiki and Kawerau note that they are increasingly providing services for grandparents who have taken over the care of grandchildren.

Social service agencies identified some reasons for movement that were related to offending or fears for personal safety; however they emphasised these reasons affected only a small proportion of families. Safety-related reasons were to do with:
- Avoidance of agency regulation or surveillance.
- Inability to address problems such as debt.
- Seeking a safer neighbourhood.
- Seeking support from other family members.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the first two years of the community safety module of the Building Attachment Research programme. An overview of the programme is provided in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 presents a brief description of the four case study areas in which the research is being undertaken – Amuri, Kawerau, Opotiki and Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, and the methods used to collect data.

The aim of the community safety module is to explore the relationship between residential movement, attachment to a community or area, and perceptions and experiences of personal and public safety. The key questions guiding the research are:
1) To what extent do concerns about crime or safety influence decisions about residential movement and affect attachment to a community?
2) How safe do residents perceive their communities to be?
3) Do residents see crime as something that is 'home grown' or something that is brought into their communities?

As the research progressed, it was broadened to consider a related issue raised by people in all the communities. That is, how do individuals and families who move around frequently access the services and supports they need? This issue is considered in sections 5 and 6.

This report presents findings about community safety, attachment and residential movement from qualitative interviews and focus groups conducted in 2003 in each case study area, and panel interviews[1] conducted in each area between September 2004 and January 2005. Interviewees were asked a number of questions relating to the following:
▪ Perceptions of the community as a safe place to live.
▪ Is movement to or from the case study area related to concerns about crime or safety?
▪ The safety concerns of residents.
▪ Participation in community safety activities.

The report is structured as follows:
▪ Section 2 presents an overview of selected literature that illuminates relationships between crime and safety issues, attachment to the community and residential movement.
▪ Section 3 presents the findings from the panel interviews, qualitative interviews and focus groups on perceptions of crime and safety.
▪ Section 4 presents the findings from the panel interviews, qualitative interviews and focus groups on whether concerns about crime or safety have influenced decisions about movement into the case study area, or their future intentions to move.
▪ Section 5 looks at the movement of children and young people. They are particularly mobile and sometimes move independently of their families.
▪ Section 6 considers issues relating to the provision of services for individuals and families who move frequently.
▪ Section 7 makes some concluding comments and outlines the next stage of the community safety component.

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[1] In each case study area, all members of a selection of households who were 16 years or older were interviewed. In total, 335 people residing in 146 households were interviewed.

2.   CRIME, ATTACHMENT AND MOVEMENT

There is a huge and diverse literature on crime and perceptions of safety. For the purposes of this report, a selection of literature focusing on the following was considered:
- The relationship between crime rates, perceptions of safety, and an individual's attachment to a community.
- The relationship between crime and residential movement.

Two theoretical approaches provide a conceptual framework with which to understand relationships between crime, residential movement and community attachment. They are social disorganization theory and the systemic model of community attachment.

Social disorganization theory provides a basis for identifying environmental or contextual factors in motivating crime. In this theory, crime is explained by collective, exogenous factors, rather than by recourse to the personal characteristics of individuals. Social disorganization theory emphasises the role of such exogenous factors as population mobility, population heterogeneity and weak social networks, in determining the incidence of crime and the risk of victimisation (Sampson and Groves 1989; Miethe and McDowall 1993). Central to social disorganization theory is the idea that large, densely populated and heterogeneous urban environments with high rates of residential mobility will manifest weak social integration, and this will in turn result in high crime rates (Crutchfield et al 1982). In contrast, the existence of social connections between residents and 'neighbourliness' are expected to reduce crime and disorder (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Sampson and Groves (1989) defined social disorganization as the inability of a neighbourhood to achieve the common goals of residents and maintain effective social controls.

This emphasis on local social interactions draws on the systemic model of community attachment, which has been used to suggest that crime is higher in particular types of communities. The model posits an expected connection between high residential mobility, low attachment to the community and crime. Rapid population turnover in an area is likely to lead to individuals having difficulties in establishing and maintaining relationships with others. Consequently, it is hypothesised that undermining attachment will affect social control and therefore crime rates will increase (Sampson and Groves 1989; Warner and Rountree 1997; Bursik 1999; Atkinson and Flint 2003; Sun et al 2004).

2.1 Attachment as a mediator of crime rates

Studies that deal with crime and social disorder as determinants of attachment consider a wide range of factors associated with crime, safety or nuisance. These include not only criminal activity and victimisation, but also aspects of the physical environment and appearance of the neighbourhood such as graffiti, abandoned vehicles, presence of empty or dilapidated houses, noise and pollution.

A body of research argues that attachment to social networks may help to reduce crime and enhance safety in communities. Those networks most commonly examined are (Bursik 1999):
- Private networks based on kinship and friendship
- Parochial networks relating to the neighbourhood and local groups
- Public networks linking individuals to groups and institutions located outside of the neighbourhood.

Both social disorganization theory and the systemic model of attachment assume that social ties between residents increase their ability to engage in social activities that contribute to decreasing crime. Examples of social control that are generated out of connections between residents are informal surveillance of streets, direct intervention in criminal events and informing parents about children's misconduct (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003).

There is research that both supports and challenges the role of community attachment factors in controlling crime.

For example, Sampson and Groves's (1989) analysis, based on data from England and Wales, suggests an association between high attachment to an area and low crime. They proposed that neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status, ethnic heterogeneity, family disruption and high residential mobility were predicted to have sparse local friendship networks, low participation in local organisations, and unsupervised youth. In turn, these factors were predicted to increase neighbourhood crime rates. Similarly, Sun et al's (2004) surveys in seven U.S.A. cities found that neighbourhoods with strong social networks tend to have lower robbery rates. Strong networks also affect assault rates. Neighbourhoods with weak social ties tend to have high levels of unsupervised youths.

Several of the studies reviewed found that fear of crime and feelings about personal safety are important predictors of neighbourhood satisfaction and appear to influence attachment. Sampson (1988) found that fear of crime depresses attachment. Groves et al (2003) also found in the Bournville Estate Birmingham, that the incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour are key factors contributing to residents' satisfaction and the relative success of a residential neighbourhood. Richardson and Corbishley (1999), who studied a group of frequent movers in Newcastle, found they were especially vigilant to any perceived threat, and some of their main reasons for moving were to escape violence or burglaries. Bartik et al (1990) found that mobility declines if the neighbourhood becomes safer from crime or improves its physical conditions.

Although Parkes et al (2002) found that important factors in predicting residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood are feeling safe in the home, and a perception of having friendly neighbours, they also reported that other studies have found that perceived safety is less important for neighbourhood satisfaction compared to environmental factors such as noise and lack of sunlight. Similarly, Parkes and Kearns (2002) found that decreased neighbourhood satisfaction was not only related to disorder, but also to noise, poor access to food stores and recreational areas, and dissatisfaction with house size and condition.

Other evidence on the role of attachment factors in decreasing crime is also mixed. Using Seattle data, Warner and Rountree (1997) found that local social ties appear to decrease the assault rate significantly. However, they found that social ties have differing effects in different types of ethnic neighbourhoods. Social ties decreased assault rates in white neighbourhoods, but had no significant effect in predominantly minority or racially mixed neighbourhoods. They also cited other studies that show the effectiveness of social networks in controlling problem behaviour is reduced in public housing areas and in ethnically and culturally diverse neighbourhoods.

According to Sun et al (2004) the effect of participation in local organisations on crime is not straightforward. They note research that found that most stable neighbourhoods have low levels of participation. With regard to participation in local

crime prevention initiatives, they found there is little evidence that such participation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods actually works to reduce local problems.

Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) suggest that the literature focuses more on social ties that are thought to enhance social order, not weaken it. Value systems may differ from community to community, so that residents may be highly integrated into their own local networks, but the shared norms and values differ from those of the wider society and social ties may not have controlling effects on criminal behaviour (Warner and Rountree 1997; Sun et al 2004).

Some studies argue that not only social ties, but also a willingness to take action to address problems is required. Also needed are resources to control crime. Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) suggest that social ties are only important in terms of their ability to mobilise resources to address problems. Warner and Rountree (1997) cite studies that found local ties have few or no significant effects on either official crime rates or self-reported crime rates. Furthermore, Atkinson and Flint (2003) found that high social cohesion in communities does not equal high levels of social control, or vice versa.

2.2 Residential mobility and crime

Some literature considers whether a deteriorating quality of life in an area due to social disorder influences households to move to escape crime. In particular, the literature considers two issues:
- whether residential mobility rates of an area have a connection with crime rates, and
- whether personal experience of crime determines individual movement decisions.

It is important to look at the dynamics of movement at both the collective level and the individual level. Individuals may be influenced in their decisions about moving by the crime rates of an area, or by their own personal experience of crime. The following overview shows that, like the studies on crime and community attachment, there is mixed evidence whether high crime rates in an area, or personal experience of crime, lead to moving house.

Crutchfield et al's (1982) analysis of U.S. metropolitan crime data found that, at least for most property crimes, mobility rates are a powerful predictor of crime rates. They found that their measures of lack of social integration (population size and residential mobility) were poor predictors of homicide and aggravated assault rates, but more effective for predicting rape and property crimes. Crutchfield et al differentiated between immigration and local mobility, and further found that immigration predicts violent crime better than local mobility measures. However, they pointed out that this does not necessarily mean that the immigrants are more involved in crime than locals. While some research has found that immigrant groups have higher crime rates, other studies have found immigrant groups less likely to engage in crime.

Kearns et al (2002) found that individuals' unhappiness with disorder in their immediate surroundings, along with dissatisfaction with the home, significantly increased the likelihood of a move. However, they also noted that people who perceived their neighbourhood to be in decline were also more likely to report being 'stuck' in that location. Ross et al (2000) also found in poor neighbourhoods that, although there was residential stability, there was evidence of social isolation among residents, and some people felt powerless to leave a dangerous place.

Walters (2002a) found five studies in which property crime was a predictor of out-migration in later life and confirmed this with his own analysis of three different retirement groups (amenity seekers, economically disadvantaged and severely disabled). However, Walters (2002b) also found that retirees generally avoid high crime rate areas mainly through movement locally, rather than long-distance migration.

Sun et al (2004) found that high residential mobility in an area tends to be associated with higher robbery and assault rates. But the existence of local social ties has an important mediating effect. However, Sun et al (2004) also found that, contrary to expectation, neighbourhoods with high residential mobility have stronger social ties.

Literature on moving out of deprived neighbourhoods also gives some insights into whether residential mobility is affected by crime or fear of crime. Among the cited benefits, movement out of poor neighbourhoods is believed to reduce exposure to crime (South and Crowder 1997).

2.3 Summary

The lack of clear agreement in the studies cited on attachment, movement and crime is related to the complexity of measuring local social relationships. Differences in findings may simply be related to the different measures used and communities studied. Researchers use a variety of indicators of social ties and social networks, including relationships among neighbours, knowledge of neighbours and relationships among friends. Similarly, measures of individual participation in local organisations and activities spans a wide variety of different types of organisations and levels of engagement.

Studies also vary in the size of population and types of settlements surveyed, although one deficit in the literature is a lack of application of the social disorganization theory to rural areas (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Warner and Rountree (1997) conclude that the systemic model of community attachment and crime may be more applicable to some types of communities and neighbourhoods than to others.

Similarly, the effects of crime on residential movement vary across studies. Crime rates or perceptions of crime and safety are possibly less important than other factors such as housing quality and housing density. Furthermore, individual factors such as age and family life cycle stage are important influencers of movement.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME AND SAFETY

This section presents the main findings from the panel interviews, the qualitative interviews and focus groups on participants' perceptions of the main crime and safety issues facing their community.

The panel interviews included questions about:
- Do you think there are any problems with crime or safety in [name of the case study area]?
- If so, what sort of problems do you think there are?
- Are you involved in any crime prevention activity?

The qualitative interviews and focus groups also considered those questions, but through wide ranging discussion.

In all case study areas, problems with children and young people were identified as the main crime and safety concerns. A key theme raised by residents in each area was lack of parental control. Many studies identify child and youth disorder as a major perceived problem in communities (Atkinson and Flint 2003). Often this is not particularly crime-related, but expressed as youth nuisance or 'hanging around' in public places such as shopping centres and recreation areas.

Other issues identified were common to all areas; particularly concerns about property crime, drugs and to a lesser extent family violence and road safety.

3.1 Crime and safety issues in Amuri

The main crime and safety concerns identified in the Amuri panel interviews were youth behaviour, drugs, road safety and property crime. Those participating in the qualitative interviews and focus groups identified the same issues. The isolation of rural areas and threats of home invasion were mentioned by a few, but did not appear to be widespread issues. Residents commented:

> There's nothing for the 15 – 18 year olds. They're into nuisance behaviour, bored[2].

> Young guys roaming the streets. I always lock to door at night, although I've never had any problem.

> Crime appears to be increasing, reading the local police news in the paper. Farm theft is increasing; we have had thing pinched. Drugs and petty theft, out of towners coming in.

> We now lock things up, never used to. We don't feel as safe as we did any more. Drugs is a big issue.

3.1.2 Children and young people

By far the most mentioned issue was a lack of family supervision of children and youth. Problematic youth behaviour was identified as a relatively recent issue, appearing in the last four to five years, generally localised around Waiau village and believed to be associated with only a few families. The problems were mainly associated with vandalism, absence from school and verbal abuse of others, especially older people, on the street.

> There's a hard core of ratbags, mostly 12 – 14 … some have been expelled from school and are on correspondence, but you can't ensure they are studying … elderly people are becoming quite scared.

> A lot of it has got to do with lack of parental control … schools don't know if the family will support them if they try to discipline their behaviour.

> College age kids that should be at school …. The biggest disruptions around the shops.

> It's mainly silly stuff, trying to get attention.

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[2] Comments are obtained from the panel interviews, qualitative interviews and focus groups. All comments reported here are paraphrased; they are not verbatim quotations.

Loss of casual work opportunities around the district was cited as reducing young people's opportunities for earning money and keeping them busy. This loss was attributed to the requirements of health and safety regulations, the changing nature of the local labour market, and young people's increased expectations of the type of employment they would obtain.

A gap in organised activities for older children and teenagers was identified. The expense of travel to organised sport and other activities, both within and outside of the district, was also cited as a barrier to participation.

Drugs, particularly cannabis, are seen as a problem in the area and an issue affecting local schools. One parent noted that their family's decision to send their children away for schooling was based on concerns about cannabis. Some employers have introduced drug clauses into employee contracts.

3.1.3 Road safety

Some considered that road safety is one of the biggest issues facing the area. Seventy percent of road crashes in the district involve drivers travelling through the district on state highways, not locals[3]. Many of those crashes are caused by fatigue. Residents of villages commented on drivers' speed and children's safety on the road.

One fatal crash involving a group of young local people in 2002 galvanised the community into addressing the issue with meetings, educational events and programmes in schools.

In general, those interviewed associated a local culture of meeting and socialising at pubs with road crashes. Drink-driving was considered to be characteristic of all age groups. However, there is a perception that young adults are particularly vulnerable to road accidents. A practice of driving very long distances to social events in the evenings and days off was noted as typical for residents of a rural area. People go to 'town', (Christchurch) or further for entertainment and leisure.

> There is nothing else to do [apart from work]. On weekends we go to Christchurch just to get away.

> It is nothing to go to Christchurch or Dunedin on days off. You feel like you've had time off if you go away.

> I'm disappointed that some people blame crime problems on the dairy industry, there's a view that there wouldn't be any road safety problems if there was no dairying in the area. Any place with young male farm workers is going to have road safety issues. Young men are in the accident statistics.

Driving on a learners or restricted license, without progressing on to a full license, appears to be common among young people (and is the case for some in older age groups too). This practice potentially exposes individuals to breaking the law if they drive outside of the conditions of their license (e.g. by carrying passengers). The nearest place for people to sit their license is Rangiora, and the distance to travel appears to exacerbate the tendency not to gain a full drivers license. One person noted that circumstances often mean that individuals with learner or restricted licenses drive themselves and others to access services in Rangiora or Christchurch.

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[3]Data from Road Safety Co-ordinator.

Currently a learner license course is being run in Waiau. It is intended that the group will then progress on to get their restricted and eventually the full license.

3.2 Crime and safety issues in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua

The panel interviews found that the main crime and safety issues in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua were property crime, graffiti and vandalism, youth behaviour and gangs. A number of people were also concerned about danger from unsupervised dogs:

> *I wouldn't let my kids walk alone at night, but there's a lot of areas like that.*

> *There's too much graffiti, too many bad influences.*

> *Teenagers on the street, annoying and stealing.*

> *Car theft and gangs, loose dogs.*

In the qualitative interviews and focus groups similar issues were identified, although the views of residents differed somewhat from those working in the justice sector and social services. Residents tended not to consider crime and safety to be major issues in their lives, although they did mention things they disliked about the area in which they live. One resident said that she was aware of where known burglars live, and that she would not leave windows open. Other residents were concerned about graffiti, noisy parties and uncontrolled dogs. There is general acknowledgment that there are gangs, and several commented that they did not like the influence of gangs in their area. But there is also a feeling that gangs are less visible than in the past.

Those working in the justice sector and social services see evidence of the negative impacts of gang activities, alcohol, drugs and violence on certain families. They work with families wanting to leave unsafe environments or violent situations. They identified three major safety concerns facing the community:
- Youth offending
- Drug abuse
- Family violence

3.2.1 Youth

Cannons Creek/Waitangirua has a relatively young population profile. Consequently young people are more visible and youth crime is more of a problem. Juvenile offending accounts for a substantial proportion of crime locally, and is perceived to be a significant issue. A variety of youth offending was identified, ranging in severity from petty theft and vandalism to burglary. In addition, a number of young people are at risk of educational failure, of offending or of harm. One social service provider spoke of:

> *… 15 – 17 year olds not at school, on the fringes of crime, drugs …*

The issues concerning young people were identified as follows:

- Truancy is seen to be linked with the high incidence of juvenile crime. Several of those interviewed considered that local schools are not meeting the needs of some young people. Nor are their families able to cope with them as they have multiple problems and need intensive support. A comment was made that there needs to be more resources for helping schools to deal with students' non-

attendance. Two alternative schools are located in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua. However, they cannot meet the demand for their services.

- A lack of recreation and leisure activities for young people.

- A lack of youth-oriented health services. In particular, one young person identified a lack of health services responsive to the needs of young Pacific mothers.

- A lack of mental health services for young people. In the view of one social service worker, this is the single biggest gap in services for young people.

- Parents working in multiple jobs and thereby leaving their children home alone, or requiring older children to look after younger children.

It was noted that there is a range of local organisations working with young people in the area. However, one Cannons Creek resident involved in community work commented that it is very difficult to attract volunteers to work with youth, because young people are perceived of as difficult and they do need a high degree of supervision. There is also an element of fear about the behaviour of young people.

3.2.2 Drugs

Those working with drug problems comments that, in common with many other areas, the biggest problems continue to be with alcohol and cannabis. Some social service organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the use of "P" (methamphetamine) by clients or members of clients' families. This results in clients' dangerous behaviour and associated increased risk for workers. "P" has also led to an increase in family members seeking help because of the effects of the drug in their families and their need to seek safe accommodation.

3.2.3 Family violence

Family violence was generally acknowledged as a problem in the community. Some justice and social services workers considered it to be a significant problem. They commented that a number of organisations are working on the issue with different ethnic groups in the community. Furthermore, it was considered that there is generally good community awareness and responsiveness to the problem.

> *If there is domestic violence the police are called right away.*

> *In [other areas] people don't report on their neighbours, they don't ring the police, in the Creek, the police are called, neighbours are on to it.*

The local Child Youth and Family Office, which services Porirua City and the Kapiti Coast, has noticed a significant increase in notifications from 2002/03 to 2003/04. This is attributed to increased community awareness of abuse and neglect, due to some high profile cases nationally in the media.

3.2.4 Other issues

Some justice sector workers have noted tensions between different ethnic groups, and between long standing residents and new migrants, that have resulted in violence and criminal behaviour. In a few cases victims have moved out of a neighbourhood because of harassment. More generally, some of those interviewed

spoke of people feeling uncomfortable in some neighbourhoods because of their cultural make-up and reluctance to take-up HNZC accommodation because of that.

3.3 Crime and safety issues in Kawerau

The main crime and safety concerns identified in the Kawerau panel interviews were to do with youth behaviour, care of children and young people, property crime, drugs and gangs:

> *Teenagers roaming, gangs, burglary, graffiti.*

> *Child neglect and abuse around the pokie machine areas, 10 – 14 year olds hanging around.*

> *Parents showing lack of control of their children resulting in vandalism, burglary.*

> *Vandalism, intimidation, burglaries, young gang recruits, alcoholism, pokies, child abuse, cannabis, neglect.*

The qualitative interviews and focus groups echoed the main concerns with youth offending and children and young people not being adequately cared for by their families.

3.3.1 Youth issues

There has always been a relatively high proportion of children and young people in Kawerau. In the 2001 census almost one third of the population was aged 0 – 14 years, and 12 percent were in the 15 – 24 age group. Consequently young people are a very visible part of the local population. Over the decades, concerns about youth behaviour have been prominent. However, those who have lived in Kawerau for some years, particularly those resident since the early days of the 1950s and 1960s, identified a number of broader social and economic changes that have affected the composition of the community and consequently the nature of the 'youth problem'. These changes include loss of employment opportunities, loss of the apprenticeship system, movement of employed people out of the town and influx of beneficiary families looking for affordable housing.

Some young people in focus groups also talked about the issues for youth, as they saw them:

> *The first choice for young people is Australia, I'd move out, no hesitation, but you need the money to get there, but I haven't got it.*

> *It's really hard to get a job unless you have good contacts and qualifications … you even need qualifications for doing pruning.*

> *There's no excitement, no entertainment … no youth centre now.*

Police data show that youth offending is primarily focused on dishonesty offences such as shoplifting, theft and burglary. Groups of young people congregating in the town centre, particularly at holiday times, are particularly visible, and tend to become a talking point for local residents. Some high profile incidents of intermediate-aged children and teenagers harassing both other children and adults were highlighted as

evidence of a 'youth problem' growing in severity. Both children visiting the town for holidays, and local children were thought to be 'culprits'.

There is a general concern about the care and safety of children and young people. Concerns were expressed about lack of family supervision of children and young people, and their continued absence from school.

> *Truants keep slipping between the cracks. Parents don't care, they get expelled, there are alternative education classes for them but they don't turn up (Justice sector worker).*

> *[the young people] have no vision, they can't see beyond Kawerau … a lot of kids haven't been outside of Kawerau (focus group).*

> *Kids are a problem, from about 11 years, drinking, smoking, drugs … parents just say 'you can drink, you can smoke'. (focus group).*

> *Our sole focus has to be the youth, they will be running the town tomorrow. They lack education now. If we don't get to them, they'll be in jail. (Youth worker).*

> *Their koro or nanny doesn't know what the kids are up to (Youth worker.)*

Lack of education and illiteracy were highlighted in some discussions as key problems needing to be addressed. Illiteracy was cited as a factor in some young people driving without licenses, which resulted in driving offences and first encounters with the justice system.

> *They can't read and write and therefore lack confidence … they don't want to go back to school … they drop out of the course, they don't understand, can't read or write (Youth worker).*

> *Some young people find it difficult using a phone, they can't even read the phone book (Youth worker).*

3.3.2 Other issues

Other safety concerns were also raised in the qualitative interviews and focus groups, including:

- Drugs and alcohol abuse are seen as very serious problems, affecting all ages. These problems are seen to be associated with property crime and violence, including family violence. There was particular concern with the arrival of methamphetamines into the area.

- Family violence is a big issue according to the Police, although the point was made that community organisations are receptive to finding ways to deal with it and are making progress. The local social service providers that participated in the interviews all noted that their work included dealing with family violence, often as part of a complex range of difficulties facing a family such as financial, housing and family relationships.

- Lack of emergency accommodation for young people was raised as a key issue by one youth worker, who commented that local young people often end up in emergency accommodation in Whakatane.

- Gambling was raised by several people.

- Aggressive and uncontrolled dogs were also mentioned as threats to safety.

- The Police reported that gang influence is a big issue in Kawerau, although others interviewed varied in their views on this as a matter of concern. However, it was reported that there are emerging groups of teenagers forming their own gangs.

3.4 Crime and safety issues in Opotiki

In the Opotiki panel interviews, the main crime and safety concerns identified were youth behaviour, property crime, drink-driving and drugs:

> *There are a few youth who have nothing better to do than burgle homes.*

> *The robberies in my workplace were four times in one year.*

> *I think theft, burglary and drugs are a general concern.*

> *Drink-driving, especially in youth.*

In the qualitative interviews and focus groups, similar issues were identified, with the two major safety concerns being:
- Children and young people not being adequately cared for by their families.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.

3.4.1 Youth issues

Youth offending is a 'top of mind' issue for many in Opotiki town. Local Police advise that youth offending ranges across a broad spectrum from minor theft to serious assault. Children as young as 10 or earlier are coming to the notice of the Police. There is a concern that criminal behaviour is becoming entrenched early. Some commented that older people do feel vulnerable as young people are visible on the streets, particularly as they congregate at night in the town centre.

Many needs of young people were identified. A number of those interviewed commented on a perceived lack of employment and activities for young people. Many young people do not have access to transport, which limits what they can do.

> *I kind of feel something needs to be done within the community to help our young ones, because there is nothing here for them. And there needs to be something there for them because they're just running wild.*

> *I think a lot of the things that go on in this town, like your skateboarding and your tagging and all the rest of the stuff that goes on is through bored minds and plenty of time..*

> *Bored at home and are just looking for something to do …. Nothing to do at night.*

There were widely voiced concerns about the care and safety of children and young people. Concerns were expressed about lack of family supervision of children and young people, and absence from school. Young offenders tend not to be attached to

school. There is also considerable movement of young people independent of their families. One local social service provider expressed the view that "It becomes a mode of life for [young people], it's normal".

There is some concern that young people who move to Opotiki from out of the area are causing problems. However, it is also believed that a small group of local families with multiple problems regularly come to the notice of the Police.

Several individuals and local service providers noted that there are limited programmes for young people, although some holiday programmes operate. At the times where help is most needed – at night and at weekends – services are very difficult to access, or just not available. One local provider commented that a lot of the responsibility of working with young people falls on local non-government agencies working with families, and because their resources are stretched some families and young people miss out, or are picked up when in crisis, rather than earlier. It was also observed that a 'safe house' that used to operate for young people at night is no longer funded.

Despite concerns about youth behaviour, several people commented that, because Opotiki is a small place, the Police, Maori wardens, social service workers, community elders and other adults know the families of most children and young people, and keep an eye out for young people. A degree of informal care and control operates. The young people's focus group commented:

> *Everybody knows you, will look after you … older people look out for young people.*

3.4.2 Alcohol and drugs

There are varying levels of acceptance and tolerance of alcohol and cannabis use. In some parts of the community, cannabis use is regarded as 'normal' and its cultivation is tolerated as an income earner. However, others point to the widespread use of cannabis as negatively affecting young people's health and education. It was noted that the local College is making considerable efforts to address drug problems.

The recent arrival of methamphetamine in the district is widely seen as a very serious matter. There is a widespread perception that the hard drug business is run mainly by people from out of town. Some comments about amphetamines:

> *… this has united the iwi and the community as a whole, there's a common goal to protect the young … people are sitting up and taking notice (Police officer).*

> *It's really a public issue .. you definitely would notice strangers coming in (Resident).*

> *P is showing up in changes in clients' behaviour …it's a new issue, we are at a stage of understanding that we were with marijuana 10 years ago … no-one's too sure how to treat it … down the coast, whole communities are getting involved in being educated about P … watching out for strangers coming in (Local social service provider).*

> *P has brought a lot of grandparents to reality, they are stepping in and taking the grandchildren (Local social service provider).*

Some identified the lack of specialised drug and alcohol services, such as rehabilitation, as a gap in the area. Having to leave the area is a disincentive to people accessing a service. Kahunui Trust, situated in Opotiki District, is a kaupapa Maori alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation service, and the only service of its type in the country. It takes clients from all over New Zealand and cannot meet demand. Some of its clients' families re-locate to the district or the wider Bay of Plenty to be closer to their family member. After their stay at the centre, some clients and their families wish to remain in the area so that they can continue to be supported by the Trust's after care programme.

3.4.3 Other issues

A range of other crime and safety issues were raised. Although they may be significant, these issues were usually of concern in a particularly locality, or commented on by only a few people.

- Family violence was identified as a major issue by Police and some local social service providers. Those providers often work across the whole Eastern Bay of Plenty, and they noted many of the issues also identified by service providers in Kawerau concerning the need for programmes for perpetrators, support for victims and the lack of emergency accommodation. In particular, Opotiki social service providers commented on the isolation of women in rural areas, which affects their access to services.

- Particular concerns were raised about children's safety on rural roads. The perception is that the main problem is drivers from out of the area who are unfamiliar with the roads.

- Fish poaching is reported as a big problem, but it is not visible and does not obviously impact on most residents. Extensive networks stretching far beyond the Bay of Plenty to Auckland and even overseas, are involved.

- Natural hazards were identified as problems, in particular, house fires and floods. These issues were mainly raised by older people who had experienced floods in the past. Major floods were experienced in the Opotiki District between the completion of the qualitative interviews and focus groups, and the panel interviews.

- Aggressive and uncontrolled dogs were also mentioned as threats to safety by some.

- Although gangs were mentioned, the point was made by several people that they are generally not visible in Opotiki. 'Opotiki Rules' operate; this broad code of behaviour preventing the wearing of colours or patches in the town, was established through Police and Maori elders talking with gangs. It was also reported that there are emerging groups of teenagers forming their own gangs.

3.5 Participation in crime prevention activities

Table 1 presents data from the panel interviews that show the level of participation in local crime prevention activities. Participants reported that their crime prevention activities were mainly of the informal kind, such as keeping an eye on neighbours' property. However, others were involved in formal neighbourhood support groups, victim support, citizen's patrols, Maori Wardens, in youth programmes and church programmes.

Table 1: Participation in Crime Prevention Activities

Case Study Area	Yes		No		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Amuri	16	39	25	61	41
Cannons Creek/ Waitangirua	2	2	115	98	117
Kawerau	17	20	67	80	84
Opotiki	16	17	76	83	92

Source: 2004 Panel interview data

Amuri had the highest proportion of panel participants involved in some form of crime prevention activity. They commented on extensive informal networks that they were part of:

> As a group, it's a no tolerance policy, collaborative with neighbours, keep an eye on each other's property.

> We do it informally because we know neighbours and we have a list of numbers.

There was a view in Amuri that there is insufficient police coverage of the area. Some people complained of the time taken to answer calls that are diverted to Christchurch. The area has no safer community council, with the nearest one being in Waimakariri District. However, there is an active road safety committee in the district that appears to be one of the few local groups regularly bringing together local and central government agencies, and community organisations. While the group's focus is on road safety, they are also concerned with the wider community impacts of road safety for the area.

Kawerau also had a relatively high proportion of panel participants involved in some form of crime prevention activity. There is a very active core of people involved in community safety activities including the Maori Wardens, Maori Women's Welfare League, youth workers, local marae, victim support and citizen's patrol groups. The Safer Community Trust has taken a community development and capacity building approach, acting to bring together government agencies and community groups to share information and collaborate on activities. The Trust has also initiated the establishment of neighbourhood support groups, of which there are around 27. One resident remarked that the groups become ways of neighbours meeting and supporting one another:

> Often find when starting the groups that people don't know one another already. May know immediate neighbour, but not ones down the street. Consequence is that people start helping one another, have barbecues, help one another out when sick. It's not just looking out for suspicious activity or watching the house when the neighbour is away.

In Opotiki, the Safer Communities Council has identified over 40 community organisations and services providing some type of support service (e.g. to families or youth at risk, addressing drug or alcohol abuse, victim support), or working on crime prevention. In addition, around 20 government agencies provide some type of support service or are directly involved in crime reduction and crime prevention. Most of the latter are based outside of Opotiki, in the Bay of Plenty Region. The Safer

Communities Council has taken a community development role and capacity building approach, rather than a narrow crime reduction and prevention focus. Acting to facilitate information sharing among groups, the Safer Communities Council is the only local forum that provides a venue for government agencies and local organisations working in the justice, welfare, health, education, and employment sectors to discuss matters of common interest. It is through the Safer Communities Council that He Rangi Hou, a youth drug education programme has been established.

Although very few of Cannons Creek/Waitangirua residents involved in the panel interviews indicated participation in community safety activities, the area has a number of active groups. For example, the Porirua Community Guardians, mainly older Pacific men, voluntarily patrol schools, empty houses, shopping centres and attend local events.

3.5.1 Obtaining volunteers

In all case study areas, participants have noticed a decline in people willing to do voluntary work, and this can affect the time people are able to spend on community safety activities or helping others. People commented about the impacts of competing commitments and burnout on volunteering:

> *It's very hard to get community groups up and running Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).*

> *A small band of people do everything. There is often an overlap with the same people (Amuri).*

> *There's a general apathy, it's hard getting people to volunteer and getting harder (Kawerau).*

Some social service organisations in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua said that getting people to work with youth appears to be a particular problem. Several people noted that it was difficult to get neighbourhood support groups going and to maintain them as an effective network. Night-time community patrols have also suffered through lack of volunteers.

In Amuri it was observed that the number of people available to volunteer, and the tradition of supporting others is in decline. They noted that fewer women are available for community activities as they are working. Furthermore, daily travelling out of the area for work has completely changed people's lifestyles, resulting in less time for one's own family, let alone volunteering. There is a sense that there is not a younger group in the community who can take on volunteer work, while the mainstays of volunteer work are getting older. Further loss of club participation is noted when some farming families move out of the district.

In Kawerau issues were raised about sustaining the pool of volunteers in the future. There is a perception that the pool of volunteers is a small, ageing group, and those currently active are prone to burnout. The financial resources needed by volunteers was also raised as a barrier to participation. Furthermore, it was noted that a large proportion of the Kawerau workforce lives outside of the town[4], and consequently, do

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[4] Philip Morrison is analysing the relationship between commuting for work and residential movement as part of the research programme. From the early 1990s the trend of employees leaving Kawerau as a place of residence but continuing to work in the town is noticeable.

not have strong feelings of attachment to the place. Nor are they 'on the spot' to participate in evenings and weekends. A wider concern about difficulties in recruiting volunteers with managerial and professional skills was also voiced.

4. DO SAFETY CONCERNS AFFECT MOVEMENT?

This section presents the findings from the panel interviews, the qualitative interviews and focus groups on whether residents make decisions about moving house because of concerns about their own or their family's safety, or concern about crime in general.

The panel interviews included questions about:
- Are there any safety or security issues that would prompt you to move from your house?
- If so, what are those issues?

The qualitative interviews and focus groups also considered those questions, but through wide ranging discussion.

The general view in all four case study areas is that they find their immediate area to be safe, even if they also identify crime and safety problems in their community. It was perceived that problems tend to be localised. Few participants have personally experienced crime, however many feel that crime is a high profile issue that sometimes negatively impacts on perceptions about their community. In all areas, there were more important reasons for moving house than concerns about crime or safety.

4.1 Perceptions of the community as a safe place to live

Table 2 shows the numbers and proportions of interviewees from the panel interviews who considered there were problems with crime or safety in their area. Except for Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, the majority of those interviewed considered there were problems with crime or safety in their areas.

Table 2: Are there problems with crime or safety?

Case Study Area	Yes		No		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Amuri	25	61	16	39	41
Cannons Creek/ Waitangirua*	49	42	67	58	116
Kawerau*	72	86	12	14	84
Opotiki*	52	57	39	43	91

*One missing
Source: panel interviews

However, when comments from the panel interviews and qualitative research are examined, the general perception in all four case study areas is that their community is a safe one in which to live, even if some crime and safety problems are identified. What stood out was a conviction that the immediate area in which they lived was safe. While there may be dangers 'elsewhere' (across town, in the next suburb, in Auckland or Christchurch), their local surroundings were judged to be safe. Comments across the four case study areas were similar:

> *Homes don't have locks, it feels very safe. Someone's house got broken into and it was big news! (Opotiki).*

It feels a lot safer here than other areas, like cities. I've no personal experience of it, but I'm aware of thefts (Opotiki).

It's not excessive, minor crime, not excessive in comparison to other places (Kawerau).

Nothing different to what other areas have. I think Kawerau is a better place than most to raise children in (Kawerau).

The perception as a dangerous area is unfounded. There is less trouble than in [other places] … [although] there is a fair bit of poverty the place seems to have matured, it is more settled (Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).

This area where I am now, it's a lot safer. Got great neighbours on both sides (Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).

I'm not afraid of living in a rural area. We have the odd petrol theft from the farm, but that's gone on always … the neighbours are very good they keep an eye on things (Amuri).

I've been here all my life, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, it's a nice quiet street where I live (Amuri).

4.2 Experience of crime

Not all voiced such uniformly positive views of the safety of their communities, either because of some crime that had affected them, or that they had heard of. In smaller places, incidents of crime are big news. But even among those who cited concerns about crime or safety, they commented that problems tended to be localised and associated with a 'small element', who were generally well known.

Teenagers and intermediate aged kids are constant problems with burglary, graffiti, car theft, vandalism and intimidating older people (Kawerau).

In Kawerau, those interviewed talked of burglaries, vandalism, and incidents of older people being threatened, jostled and even mugged in the shopping centre by young people. Such incidents were well known.

In Amuri some people spoke of feeling less safe now that they had before. There was a view that, while there is little serious crime in the area, there has been a rise in anxiety about crime and greater incidence of young people's involvement in 'nuisance behaviour' locally. Furthermore, a couple of high profile crimes in the area recently have greatly affected locals. A few people noted that they had started to be more conscious of safety, and to take precautions like locking their door, not necessarily because of any direct experience of crime, but because of publicity about crime.

Once there was no fear of vandalism or dishonesty. Now I feel I can't take the risk, and I lock everything up … Teenagers floating around, taking any opportunity for crime if it's given to them (Amuri).

Crime appears to be increasing, just reading the local police news in the paper, farm theft seems to be increasing (Amuri).

> *People are going on to properties in a way never heard of before … people have become more conscious of the problem … the local papers make people more aware of little things (Amuri).*

4.3 The importance of social relationships

All four case studies areas suggested that knowing friends and neighbours, living near relatives, participation in local groups, and being connected with local institutions such as schools or churches, helped manage problem behaviour. Those living in the provincial or rural case study areas believe that strong social ties are important for controlling crime. In places such as Amuri, Opotiki and Kawerau, criminal and anti-social behaviour quickly becomes known, and a degree of social pressure can be exerted.

> *There's still a strong community feel though. Police will pick up people and take them home … A lot of young kids know the [elder] and will be deferential to him. He can place them through their whakapapa. The community is small enough to know who's who (Opotiki).*

> *It's a good thing that people are nosey … it's a small enough community to know when kids are wandering the streets … there were some kids persistently doing this and the Police were rung about it. They picked up the kids and took them to school (Amuri).*

> *We meet kids on a personal level, pick up on what's happening in their home life. I make it my business to meet young families (Kawerau).*

Several of those interviewed in all case study areas also said it was noticeable that local people support and 'look out for' one another. There are strong family and church networks, and neighbours know each other:

> *I find neighbours are very sharing and will give you a hand (Kawerau).*

> *There's a greater family influence … people pick up on problems. There's a better chance of problems being caught (Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).*

> *It's a small community; people keep an eye out for one another (Amuri).*

> *You can walk down the street you can have eyeball contact with people and they'll smile at you … it makes people feel comfortable and a lot safer than perhaps they would otherwise (Opotiki).*

4.4 Negative perceptions of an area

In three of the case study areas – Opotiki, Kawerau and Cannons Creek/Waitangirua – a common theme was the effect that publicity about local crime has on external perceptions of their communities. For example, there was an impression that families are put off from moving to Opotiki because of perceptions of a high crime rate.[5] But

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[5] It should be noted that the rate of offending per head of population for Opotiki was slightly higher than the national average in the late 1990s (source: Opotiki Safer Communities Council). The rate was lower than the national average for dishonesty offences (includes crimes against property), which is the biggest category of offences, but higher than the national average for drug related crime and violent offending.

in contrast to that negative image, some interviewees said they had moved to Opotiki precisely because they knew it to be a safe place for them.

In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, several interviewees commented on the negative image of gangs, crime and violence that has been associated in the past with the area. Furthermore, the negative impression appears to persist, at least in the minds of some who live outside of the area. Many of those interviewed noted that outsiders comment that Cannons Creek and Waitangirua are places where they would not want to live, because they associate those areas with state housing, low incomes and violence. A couple of those interviewed commented that they knew of residents who wanted to move out of Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, not because of any concerns about personal safety, but because they were uncomfortable about the negative image of the place. However, others acknowledged the advantages of living there, such as affordable housing, being close to amenities (including the Porirua city centre and Whitireia Polytechnic) and a good community atmosphere. Those who commented on the negative image of Cannons Creek/Waitangirua were also quick to say that they saw this as a largely unfair image, although they acknowledged the area still has its problems, including low incomes, unemployment and a gang culture that affects the well-being of some families.

Despite three of the case study areas noting they have had to deal with negative images relating to crime, there was general agreement among those interviewed that such negative images are largely unfair. Instead, they saw their communities as vibrant and settled, with many long-term residents. Local people are seen to be fiercely loyal about their community:

> *It's green. Its location is central to everything, towns, cities, beaches, lakes, bush walks. Has good small town dynamics, a very warm friendly town to live in (Kawerau).*

> *It's rural but it's not too far from Whakatane or Tauranga. It's got a great community. It's safe for children and the beaches are close (Opotiki).*

> *People out of the area are the ones with a bad perception. Those who live there love it … a friendliness, dynamism, a very supportive community … I had an idyllic childhood here (Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).*

4.5 Concerns about people moving in

In all case study areas a few people raised concerns about people moving into the area and bringing crime or associated problems with them. However, in no area were 'outsiders' considered to be a major cause of crime.

In Amuri there is very little direct association of crime with newcomers moving into the area, although a few considered that most of the crime was due to people moving in to the area. There is, however, some unease about the diversity within the district now, compared to years gone by. It was noted that the sense of 'knowing everyone in the district' might be disappearing. A few people commented that, with considerable in-movement of different groups over the last decade, the composition of the community has changed greatly. Comments included:

> *Single workers have come into the area, which used to only employ locals.*

> *Most of it is criminals coming into the Amuri … people will tell troublemakers to behave or you're not welcome around here.*

[change] hasn't always attracted the best people.

Very limited crime, mainly from transients, coming up from Christchurch.

Strong views were expressed about the value of dairying farming to the area, as this is the group most obviously associated with movement. Several people noted that the arrival of irrigation and change in land use to dairying has diversified the social mix of the community, and such change is seen as very much a 'mixed blessing'. There was a general acknowledgement of a 'them and us' attitude.

Some have a perception that the nature of the diary industry, which means that people move to progress their career and increase investment, results in less attachment to the area and less participation in community activities. However, others noted that the dairy industry has brought money into the area, and that many families, particularly farm owners, have put down roots and are actively involved in local organisations. While some considered that the perceptions of the older, established pastoral sector are changing to become more inclusive of those involved in the dairy industry, others expressed a view that diary farmers will continue to be seen as the 'transients' of the community.

In Kawerau, like Amuri, several people noted that the sense of 'knowing everyone in town' may be disappearing. They commented that, although the population has not increased (in fact it has fallen since 1991), there has been considerable movement in and out of different groups over the last decade, so that the composition of the community has changed. One person observed:

15 – 20 years ago I knew 90 percent of the people here and now I don't know many.

In the qualitative interviews and focus groups in Opotiki, those living in small rural areas commented that they were very aware of the recent arrival of methamphetamine in the district, which is widely seen as a very serious matter. There is a widespread perception that the hard drug business is run mainly by people from out of town. Some commented:

It's really a public issue .. you definitely would notice strangers coming in.

Down the coast, whole communities are getting involved in being educated about P … watching out for strangers coming in.

In Opotiki there was also discussion about the recent development of large coastal subdivisions in the area and proposals for new industries such as a mussel farm. Some are concerned that an influx of a more diverse workforce, and greater numbers of holiday or part-time residents will change the dynamics of the town. More people coming in is not necessarily seen as a safety issue, but it is more in terms of impacts on a way of life.

4.6 Reasons for moving into their current house

In all four case study areas, most residents said that concerns about crime and personal safety are not major drivers of movement. This was especially so in three of the four case study communities (Amuri, Kawerau and Opotiki).

In the Cannons Creek/Waitangirua panel interviews, 14 percent said that they had moved to their present house because of a concern about crime or personal safety. Comments included:

> *The area is very safe for my children and closer to school.*

> *My [relative] lives here. This was the only place I could go when I had trouble with my partner.*

> *The neighbours in the old place were very noisy.*

> *[my husband] felt the area would be safe, the house is close to school and shops.*

Only 5 percent of participants in the Kawerau panel interviews mentioned safety concerns as a factor in moving to their current house. These included having to move because of relationship breakdown, conflict with relatives, and needing to establish a more stable and secure living environment. Often the safety issues were intertwined with difficult housing circumstances such as sharing with relatives and living in crowded conditions.

> *I had no choice, I had been evicted from [my relative's] home.*

> *I wanted to be with friends and away from parents.*

In Opotiki only 3 percent in the panel interviews had moved to their current house because of a safety concern. However, the qualitative interviews and focus groups in Opotiki indicated that for some, the decision to move to Opotiki has been directly related to concerns about personal safety. Opotiki is a place that families will move to, or send their children to, as it is seen as a safe place. Focus group participants said:

> *We moved away from Auckland because of the crime rate up there. I feel that I'm ready to bring up our children in a safe environment.*

> *The reason we moved away from [city] are because both our whanaus are patch members and my children were getting to like the scene … so we actually came here to get them out of that environment.*

> *We moved from [town] because most of my family's with the [gang] and my mum didn't want us around stuff like that.*

Some Opotiki social service organisations considered that there is movement to or return home to Opotiki District because individuals are seeking safety and security. Often individuals who have lost a job or support in the place where they were previously residing make the move to Opotiki:

> *There has been a recent increase in people moving to Opotiki from the city because it is a quiet place. (Justice sector worker).*

> *Some people are overwhelmed by the city lights and get tangled up in drugs and can't handle to pressure. The costs of living in the city are too high and it's hard to meet the expectations placed on you (Justice sector worker).*

In the panel interviews, no-one in Amuri reported moving to their current house because of safety concerns. Similarly while no-one in the focus groups had specifically moved to Amuri because of concerns about their own personal safety, some were aware of safety issues and noted the security and quietness of Amuri as a positive factor in their move. One person commented:

> *I returned to Christchurch, was burgled twice in the first four months, and so moved to the beach to be close to family and get away from crime, then I was looking for a house to buy and fell in love with this area and found a nice house here … you could say I moved to Culverden to get away from crime in Christchurch (Amuri).*

In all case study areas, there were more important reasons for moving to their current house than concerns about safety. The most important reasons were to do with being closer to family and for housing-related reasons. Some also moved to their current house to be closer to services and amenities, for employment, or for lifestyle reasons.

4.6.1 Family reasons

The panel interviews showed that in all case study areas, family reasons were strong factors in the decision to move to the area. In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, the main reasons for moving to the area were family decision (41%) and wanting to be closer to family members (38%). In Opotiki, 22 percent said that they moved to be closer to family, while 18 percent noted other family reasons were involved in the decision to move. In Kawerau, 19 percent said they moved to be closer to family, while 13 percent cited other family reasons. Family reasons were less important in Amuri, nevertheless 15 percent moved to be closer to family.

Moving to be close to other family members is a strong reason for coming to and staying in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, which is home to an increasing migrant population. The New Settlers Service reports that migrant families are well established in the area. There is a substantial group of Laotian families resident in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, some of whom have lived there for over 10 years. There is also a core of Iraqi families. While there may be some movement around the area, only a handful of migrant families originally settled in the area have moved to other localities.

All residents who were interviewed identified positive reasons for remaining in Cannons Creek or Waitangirua. These reasons were to do with liking their immediate neighbourhood, and having friends and family locally. For Pacific families, there was a strong element of coming to stay with other family members who have settled in the area. Participants in a focus group of Pacific residents said:

> *My children and sister live here in Waitangirua.*

> *I came to Cannons Creek because my family was here.*

> *One family comes as a beachhead and other family members come through … helping the young people find jobs and accommodation.*

Similarly, some Opotiki residents emphasised that support from other family members was an important reasons for returning home:

I was moving back to my home area. Parents live in Opotiki. So I had been visiting for several weeks each year since 1991. Always intended to build a house on the land. Worked in Wellington until I could afford to move to Opotiki (resident).

They are not coming to a job, they are coming home because it's tough in the city and because they have whanau to support them at home and to look after the children while they look for work (Local social service provider).

4.6.2 Housing

Findings from the panel interviews show that housing is an important reason for moving into and within three case study areas: Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, Kawerau and Opotiki.

In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, housing conditions were cited as a reason for moving by 32% of panel interviewees. Many people move to Cannons Creek/Waitangirua because of the availability of state housing, and participants in the qualitative interviews and focus groups commented that affordable housing is a primary consideration for remaining in the area.

In Kawerau, the panel interviews revealed that the main reasons for moving were related to housing costs (34 percent), the condition of the last house (30 percent) and living costs (27 percent). Furthermore, those participating in the Kawerau qualitative interviews and focus groups noted that some moved into the area because they were seeking a place where families can find affordable housing and live more cheaply. Often individuals who have lost a job or support in the place where they were previously residing also make the move to Kawerau.

In Amuri, movement of retired people to the area because of affordable housing prices and the river and mountains lifestyle was noted. Increasingly apparent are people buying holiday homes, which are cheaper in the area than in nearby Hanmer Springs. Several people in Kawerau also noted the increasing movement of retired people to the town, both those new to the town, and older people returning after years away. Retired people are attracted by affordable property prices, the flat and compact layout of the town centre, free facilities such as the library and swimming pool, pleasant parks and tree-lined streets and the town's central location. Opotiki residents also noted the appeal of affordable housing for retired people.

I won't move. Most of my family are gone, but there is no reason to move. I have no fears … the elderly on their own can be vulnerable, but we still want to live here (Opotiki).

I feel comfortable … lots of pensioners are moving into town, they must feel OK (Kawerau).

Retired people from Christchurch and North Canterbury have come to Culverden because the housing is reasonable … Rotherham is going ahead now; it is the place to buy and build (Amuri).

Housing difficulties as a driver of movement within Opotiki District was mentioned by some social service providers in Opotiki. Poor housing contributed to the precarious circumstances of some families:

> *You notice high transience, especially up the coast. The reason is poverty and no decent housing. Transients are often disconnected from the community in which they are living … having a large number of children is also a barrier to finding accommodation. Many families are one step away from being homeless (local social service provider, Opotiki).*

4.6.3 Services and amenities

Some people move to an area because of the range of services it provides. Service providers and justice sector workers commented that one reason for people moving to Cannons Creek/Waitangirua is because there is a range of support services for individuals and families in the area, including budget advice, family counselling and support services, and alternative education providers. Residents are also close to a large city centre and polytechnic in Porirua.

In the panel interviews 22 percent of Cannons Creek/Waitangirua interviewees cited education as a reason for their move to their house. In the qualitative interviews and focus groups, residents said they like being close to amenities their family uses, such as schools, public transport and shops. Pacific residents in particular noted that it is important to live close to their church. Two residents with health problems that make climbing steps difficult live on the flat and this is a big factor in their staying in their current homes. One resident wants to find another house without stairs, but is keen to remain in the area. Participants in focus groups said:

> *I am used to the place and the people. It's close to the sea and the wind is fresh. It's easy to move around without any problems … the rent is cheap, it's home and handy to everything.*

> *It's near the school, the bus stop and shops.*

Movement to be close to particular services and amenities was also noted by Kawerau residents. This was not only mentioned by older residents, but also in relation to families seeking a choice of primary school and health services. However, the point was also made that the lack of some service made older people feel vulnerable:

> *There's no local taxi service, which reduces old people's independence. You don't feel safe at night.*

4.6.4 Employment

The only area that showed employment or business reasons to be important drivers of in-movement was Amuri. In the panel interviews, 29 percent said they had moved to their current house because of business opportunities, while 17 percent said their move was because of employment. Perhaps the most significant pattern of movement into and out of the area is that of dairy farming families and single farm workers. Depending on the duration of contracts and employment prospects, this may mean only a few years' stay in the area. There is also some movement of seasonal workers into the area, mainly for shearing, and as vineyards come into production, further seasonal work opportunities are expected to develop.

4.6.5 Lifestyle and environment

In the panel interviews, those in Opotiki emphasised lifestyle and environment as reasons for moving to their present house. Lifestyle was the most cited reason in

Opotiki (27 percent), while location (24 percent) and environment (21 percent) were also important. Nineteen percent of Amuri panel interviewees and 18 percent of Kawerau interviewees also noted lifestyle as an important reason for moving. Part of the attraction of the area and the lifestyle offered is a safety aspect, as indicated in the following comments:

> *Children are largely unafraid, they are brought up without the strictures of town kids (Opotiki).*

> *Moved for the children's sake. Had to get them out of Auckland (Opotiki).*

> *We were moving away from traffic and noise (Kawerau).*

> *The semi-rural lifestyle for raising kids is very good (Kawerau).*

> *It was a change from the rat race. Get my children out of the North Island concept (Amuri).*

4.7 Reasons for moving out of the current house

Panel interviewees were asked whether they would move from their house because of any concerns about crime or safety. Table 3 shows that very few people would consider moving from their house because of a concern with safety or security.

Table 3: Are there safety issues that would prompt a move?

Case Study Area	Yes		No		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Amuri	1	2	40	98	41
Cannons Creek/ Waitangirua	11	9	106	91	117
Kawerau*	6	7	78	92	84
Opotiki*	8	9	83	91	91

* One missing
Source: panel interviews

Most residents who said that they would consider moving from their house for safety reasons did not cite crime. Instead their reasons were to do with road safety, natural hazards (flooding, earthquakes, landslides), or perceived safety problems with the condition of their house (such as vulnerability to fire). Natural hazards were a particular issues identified by Opotiki residents, as their area experienced very bad flooding and landslides in 2004 prior to the panel interviews. Across all case study areas only 15 people (4 percent) referred to criminal activity, such as home invasion, burglary or vandalism that would make them consider moving out of their house.

Information from the qualitative interviews and focus groups was similar. Most people said that their reasons for moving (whether within, or away from the area) have nothing to do with concerns about personal safety. In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua people commented that movement away from the area was about seeking work, escaping debt, or in response to housing problems.

For people in Kawerau, decisions to move away are due to a variety of factors, including education (both school and tertiary), seeking employment and a desire to increase property values. A move out of town, while continuing to work in the mill was noted as a common pattern.

Most mill workers now live out of town in Whakatane, Ohope and Rotorua (Kawerau resident).

No one participating in the qualitative interviews in Opotiki was thinking of moving because of a concern about their own or their family's personal safety. However, three people reported knowing of individuals who had moved out of Opotiki town, either because of direct experience of burglaries, or simply feeling less secure. More important issues that may prompt movement out for families is education, and for older people, access to health services.

Similarly, none of those interviewed in Amuri was thinking of moving out of the district because of a concern about personal safety. Nor had anyone heard of others moving or wanting to move because of a concern about safety. The main reasons for moving out are identified as education, employment and, for older people, loss of mobility and health problems.

4.7.2 Movement for education

Education influences decisions about going or staying in all of the case study areas, but particularly the three in rural and provincial areas: Opotiki, Amuri and Kawerau.

In Opotiki, participants in the qualitative interviews and focus groups observed that either individual students, or one of the parents and the student, or in some instances whole families, were moving out of the area for educational reasons. Reasons for seeking education outside of the area did not seem to focus on the safety of the local school environment. On the contrary, comments were made about boarding school not always working out for students, and positive comments were made about local schools. However, the safety benefits of a family living, working and schooling in the same place were important. Those parents who live in the district, but work outside (mainly in Whakatane) voiced a dilemma in deciding where their children should go to school that was often based on being accessible to their children if anything went wrong. One parent commented:

Because we work in Whakatane … we enrolled our son in Whakatane … but with our little one at the primary school here [Opotiki] and three of us in Whakatane for the day, I am not happy about that … it's a bad feeling being a long way from where your kids are.

Some families in Opotiki perceive there are more opportunities and greater subject choice at schools outside of the area. For example, those parents seeking a Maori immersion or bilingual secondary education look to secondary schools in Rotorua, Auckland, Palmerston North and other centres. The East Coast area, particularly among Maori families, has a tradition of sending students away to school.

I don't know anyone who has actually moved from Opotiki because of crime or personal safety. They've moved because they want a more sophisticated education for their kids perhaps (coast resident).

I've spent times away from here for my health and my daughter's schooling … the biggest issues for us are education and housing … when children reach secondary age some families move out, or dad stays here and mum and the kids move out (coast resident).

Similarly in Amuri, it was noted as common for young people to leave for secondary education, or earlier in some cases. One person observed that families moving away for education *"is a big factor in whether people stay"*.

In Kawerau several people noted a move away to seek tertiary education:

> *It's a move for education – mum wants to get qualifications (Kawerau resident).*

While education was not such a driver of outward movement from Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, some gave examples of families moving to a university city when a young adult entered university. Movement of a family for primary and secondary education was not so much an issue; children could attend schools in other parts of Porirua if desired.

4.7.3 Movement for employment

All of the case study areas noted some movement out for employment reasons, particularly for young people.

Cannons Creek/Waitangirua residents noted that some young people, who leave the area to look for work and to widen their life experience, tend to stay in contact with their home community, sharing information about what they are doing. These moves away are seen as positive and not necessarily as losing contact with the area. According to some, such young people intend to return to 'the Creek' eventually.

While local employment opportunities in Amuri have increased through the development of dairying and tourism, most young people move away after schooling. Job opportunities for young women were noted to be particularly sparse.

4.7.4 Movement of older people

Movement of older people out of the community was particularly mentioned in Amuri and Opotiki. In contrast, Kawerau has observed an increasing inward movement of retired people.

In Amuri several individuals commented that older people did not feel safe, because of incidents of verbal abuse from young people on the street. However, it was generally agreed that, while such incidents were unsettling, these did not compel older people to move from the district. When older people did move from the district, it was mainly to do with loss of a driver's license and associated loss of mobility, the house and garden getting to be a burden, or health worries. They wish to be closer to health services, public transport and to move into a smaller home.

> *The kids were probably the last straw, rather than what caused them to move … it's having a big house and grounds, there are no small units here so they have to move to Christchurch where there is a choice (Amuri resident).*

> *The drawback is that when you are ancient you have to move. You've got to have wheels. It's a penalty we pay for living here (Amuri resident).*

Opotiki interviewees also talked about older relatives moving away. Sometimes an older person's decision to move is due to a variety of factors, with personal safety being only one, and usually not the most important factor. Often most important are

concerns about health, difficulties in accessing services, reduced personal mobility and distance from family. Participants in a focus group commented:

> *I do feel safe but I know two or three people who don't. The recently widowed feel vulnerable, maybe have never driven a car. They move to join their family, but would have stayed if their family were in Opotiki … widows having to manage finances might feel insecure. There is a lack of information. Some might feel unsure of themselves … they have been relying on their husband and they suddenly find they have no husband and they have got no form of transport.*

> *Would I consider moving because I am concerned about crime and personal safety? No I wouldn't. I would only move if circumstances got, for my family, concerns for my family, being ill or something like that.*

5. MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people were identified as very mobile in all the case study communities, but particularly so in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, Opotiki and Kawerau.

Residents in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, Opotiki and Kawerau noted the movement of children and young people into the area and circulating around the area. They stay with extended family members or friends. Such movement was often a decision made by the family to benefit the young person, by enabling them to attend a chosen school, by providing more space and a quiet environment for older children or providing them with a safer and more supportive environment. Family decisions about placing children in another household appeared to be relatively common, and not confined to any one ethnic group.

In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, few examples were given of people moving away because of safety concerns, but one issue stood out – movement of children and young people to improve their care and protection. The most common example given was families sending children and young people to relatives to remove them from negative peer group influences. There was a view that this practice is common among Pacific, Maori and European families, but that it is more likely for European parents and their children to move away from the area, while Maori and Pacific families tend more to send the child who is at risk to another household.

Several of those interviewed in Cannons Cree/Waitangirua noted that the movement of children and youth between families is usual, particularly within Pacific families as it is part of the way the wider kin group cares for its members. It can be a very positive experience for those concerned. Grandparents play an important role in caring for the young. Families make choices about their children's education and welfare by placing them with family members and new arrivals in the community look to locally-established relatives for support when they enrol in secondary school or look for a job.

> *When there's a problem the child will go to stay with a relative, when the family can't cope with behavioural problems like drinking, drugs, stealing, interpersonal behaviour with brothers or sisters … the family works with the kid to sort things out … sometimes the kid has a say sometimes they don't, but you try and get a consensus (social service worker).*

It's not seen as moving if people go to stay with relatives. Children will go stay in the holidays, or young people looking for employment (Pacific service provider).

Newly arrived Pacific Islanders get a wrap around service from their own people (social service worker).

In addition to the usual patterns of young people's movement between relatives, organisations working with young people in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua identified a small proportion of very mobile youth who are not linked into any stable family base. Sometimes they are moving around to escape unsafe home environments. It appears that there is a set of young people without jobs or family support who have been drawn to Cannons Creek/Waitangirua through a network of youth. They come from many areas, including the Hutt Valley, the Kapiti Coast and as far away as Auckland. Social service organisations commented that such young people may move between households, staying with friends or family members, or move into flats and receive the Independent Youth Benefit. It was also noted that young people who have left Child Youth and Family care at 17 and are unsupported by either a family or community organisation have housing difficulties and are particularly vulnerable to getting caught up in offending or self-harm.

In both Opotiki and Kawerau, considerable movement of young people independent of their families was noted. This involves not only local youth moving around families and friends, but also young people from out of town moving in with friends or relatives. Even within the course of a week, a young person may stay in more than one house. Some of these young people are not enrolled at school, or attend only infrequently. Some are vulnerable to violence and abuse.

Sometimes [the young people] are unmanageable or get into strife. They look around for a relative or a friend to stay with … it often happens in the teenage years when the movement starts, it would have been stable up to then (Teacher, Opotiki).

Some children decide to move in with grandparents (Resident, Opotiki).

A lot of kids going into youth justice are from no settled home … they don't belong in any particular place they could call their own and feel secure (Local social service provider, Opotiki).

Lots of kids from the coast and Tuhoe come to stay with whanau … these kids just decide they're going to stay with relatives in Kawerau (Resident, Kawerau).

Kids are here, then not here, they are here for a few months, then disappear, then come back … they come here because a family is willing to take them (Local service provider, Kawerau).

5.1 Grandparents caring for grandchildren

Local social service organisations in Opotiki and Kawerau noted that, as well as working with families who move a lot, they are also increasingly providing services for grandparents caring for grandchildren in their household. Grandparents caring for

grandchildren are a growing group that need support services[6]. Service providers gave a number of reasons for the increasing trend of children moving in with grandparents, including:

- the relationship break down of the children's parents,
- parents' inability to cope with their children,
- domestic violence, and
- parents' drug and alcohol abuse.

One Maori social service provider made the point that, while grandparents raising grandchildren has been a traditional cultural practice associated with the passing on of cultural knowledge, now children are being raised by grandparents because of family problems.

Many grandparents are elderly, without sufficient financial resources themselves, and often they lack transport. They may lack the skills to cope with grandchildren who come with a range of health, learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties. Often grandparents are reluctant to seek help, or do not know where to go for assistance.

The social services tend to provide assistance to grandparents as part of working with the whanau, however one Maori service provider is considering providing specific kaumatua services because of the distress experienced by grandparents caring for grandchildren.

6.   PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR MOBILE PEOPLE

The needs of mobile people for support services, and their access to those services was one of the significant issues that arose in the course of research for this project. In all case study areas, local social service providers were asked about how they deliver services for families and individuals who move around.

6.1 Defining high mobility

New Zealanders have high levels of residential mobility[7]. Between 1991 and 1996, around half the population moved at least once. Similarly, half the population moved at least once between 1996 and 2001. The most mobile are those in their twenties. At the 2001 census, 70 percent of adults 25 – 29 years had changed their address since 1996.

Three of the case study areas are in the two regions, Canterbury and Bay of Plenty that had the highest population gains in internal migration between 1996 and 2001.

Hurunui District, which is in Canterbury Region and includes Amuri, gained population between 1996 and 2001, at a rate greater than for New Zealand as a whole. At the 2001 Census, 47 percent of the Amuri population had lived at their current address for 5 years or more.

The Bay of Plenty had large inward movements of people 25 – 64 and those 65 years and over, but lost the 15 – 24 age group to other places. Opotiki District, part of the Bay of Plenty Region, slightly increased its population. At the 2001 Census 45

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[6] Increasing numbers of grandparents becoming full-time surrogate parents for grandchildren, and their needs for supports, is a recognised phenomenon overseas. See Edwards (2003).
[7] Source: Statistics New Zealand 2001 and 1996 censuses.

percent of the Opotiki population had lived at their current address for 5 years or more. Although Kawerau District is part of the high growth Bay of Plenty region, its population declined between 1996 and 2001. At the 2001 Census 46 percent of the Kawerau population had lived at their current address for 5 years or more.

The 2001 Census showed that 45 percent of the Cannons Creek/Waitangirua population had lived at their current address for 5 years or more. However, Wellington Region, in which Cannons Creek/Waitangirua is situated, had the largest net loss of people of Pacific ethnicity.

Because New Zealanders generally have a high level of mobility, moving house may be expected and usual behaviour. However, social service providers in all of the case study areas indicated that some individuals and families appear to move more than the average, and this does have some impacts on individuals, families and on the providers themselves.

The international literature suggests that high levels of residential mobility can have significant costs for local communities, individuals and families (e.g. Michigan Public Policy Initiative 2001; Family Housing Fund 2001; The Providence Plan 2002; Conway 1999; Lonner et al 1994). Highly mobile families and individuals may find it difficult to access health and education services, to find adequate housing and to remain in employment. Families may be mobile, not because they are attracted by opportunities elsewhere, but because they are fleeing their current situation.

Community and government agencies are concerned that where familial problems develop, high levels of residential mobility make those problems difficult for agencies to address. For example, the challenge of providing effective social services to individuals and families frequently on the move has long been recognised as a critical issue in Australia (e.g. Eddy, 1998; Taylor 1996), Britain (e.g. Richardson and Corbishley 1999; Green et al 2001) and the United States (e.g. ERIC 2003; Lonner et al 1994; Paik and Phillips 2002). Sometimes those who are highly mobile require specialised services for mental illness, drug or alcohol problems, or physical disability, but find it difficult to access those services. Furthermore, the needs of young people who are highly mobile are often not met.

Defining mobility or high mobility is difficult. A wide range of definitions are used internationally, depending on the age group or issue under investigation. Some examples of definitions are:
- "Highly mobile families": Changing residences two or more times in the year prior to kindergarten (Civitan International Research 2000).
- "Frequent mover": Changing residences three or more times a year (Richardson and Corbishley1999).
- "High mobility": Six or more residential moves during a student's school years (Michigan Public Policy Initiative 2001).
- "Mobile students": any move within the six month period under study (Family Housing Fund 2001).
- "Residential mobility": any address change between 1997 – 2001 (The Providence Plan 2002).
- "Highly mobile children": Those who have moved more than twice in five years (Lonner et al 1994).

While there is no consistent or widely used definition of mobility, all definitions focus on the frequency of moves within a particular time period as an indicator of mobility.

6.2 Defining mobility in the case study communities

In this project, no definition of high mobility was established. Social service providers did not have an operational definition of mobility or high mobility, although they did identify some of their clients as movers. In some instances these clients were referred to as 'transient'. The providers were asked questions to explore whether mobility is an issue. They were asked:

- Whether they considered they had some clients who changed residence more than usual.
- What are the characteristics of people who move around a lot.
- Whether mobility is a problem, and who it is a problem for.

6.2.1. Mobility in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua

There are differing views on the amount of movement experienced in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua. Some consider that the area has a generally stable population, with many residents who have lived in the area for many years. However, some local social service providers commented on what they called a 'transient' population associated with public sector housing (HNZC), although others saw this type of housing and associated income-related rents as contributing to a stable population in the area.

Local social service providers could identify a group of clients that appear to move frequently, either within the Cannons Creek/Waitangirua area, or further afield. However, estimates of the proportion of their clients who made up this group varied. In the experience of one social service organisation, frequent movement can be as much as 3 – 4 times in a year. Another service provider estimated that half its clients would move within a two-year period.

Such frequent movement appears to be confined to specific groups, such as young people, or those with particular difficulties. One worker commented that a change in life situation and increasing stress, such as with health, housing or child custody may result in a client moving.

6.2.2. Mobility in Kawerau

In Kawerau it appears that mobile families make up a substantial minority of some social service providers' case loads. Four Kawerau social service providers said that mobile clients were evident in their service, and identified those families and individuals as posing particular difficulties for delivering services. They noted that members of mobile families tend to be the ones most in need, the most vulnerable, and to have the most difficulties in keeping safe at a personal level. Comments included:

> There are a lot of families moving in and out … families moving in with other families, and trying to rent their own accommodation.

> There is a flow of people moving in and out, sometimes because of cheap housing … families move around during the time we are working with them. They usually move back to an area where they have a family base, or move to a larger town looking for work … sometime a family moves because they want a new beginning and don't necessarily want to be linked into a service.

> Some movement is of children only, but family units also move around the whanau. There are financial reasons for a lot of this.

6.2.3 Mobility in Opotiki

Five Opotiki social service providers said that mobile clients were evident in their service. Numbers are not known, however, they make up a visible proportion of some social service providers' case loads. Clients who move frequently come to the notice of providers because of their experiences of family violence, assault or exploitation at work. Often they are in casual, low paid or seasonal employment. The social service providers made the following observations:

> *Most of our clients have either come from another area or another agency.*

> *Families that move frequently would make up at least 30 percent of our clients … the faces change from year to year as the [seasonal] workforce changes.*

> *The average time that clients stay with us is about 2 – 3 months. The most common reason for leaving is that the case is closed, but sometimes it is because they have moved on. We have many more joining the service because they have moved in, rather than losing people because they move away.*

6.2.4. Mobility in Amuri

The main type of mobility identified in Amuri is that associated with the dairy industry, which is expected and planned. With regard to other groups moving, it was a general view that Amuri does not have a large number of individuals or families who move frequently. Some of those interviewed noted that in the past, there have been (mainly beneficiary) families coming into the district seeking cheap housing, however, some of those had now moved on. There were difficulties for them in coming to a relatively isolated area, with no transport.

Nevertheless, it was mentioned that there are a small number of families who seem to move often within the district, usually every few months. Frequent movement appears to be mainly related to accommodation or family problems. Rental housing is in very short supply and keenly sought after.

Although mobile families do not appear to be common, in a small community any movement is very noticeable, and specific issues may arise with regard to their access to services. One local service provider commented generally about young families moving into the district:

> *Trying to serve their needs and making sure that they are up with things like immunisation is very difficult.*

6.3 Characteristics of frequent movers

Families and individuals on the move are very diverse. They are not limited to any age group, ethnic background or family type. They may be employed or unemployed. In helping our understanding of who the frequent movers are, social service providers in the four case study areas identified a range of characteristics of frequent movers. Some of these characteristics were common to two or more areas while a few were specific to one area. The common characteristics identified were:

▪ Families and individuals with accommodation problems were identified as frequent movers in all four case study areas. Accommodation problems included

houses in poor physical condition, overcrowding, incipient homelessness, lack of affordable housing, a limited rental housing market and eviction.

- Families and individuals who move to avoid regulation and surveillance were identified in three case study areas. For example, people moving to avoid debt or a court order to undertake a programme. For some, the frequent movement is part of their way of coping with problems or avoiding dealing with problems, and is an indicator of a range of difficulties they have.

People move as a way of coping with what's happening in their lives. Issues come up for them and they see a move as the solution. Sometimes it's because things start catching up with them (social service provider, Kawerau).

People carry their problems with them when they shift. We try to stop them shifting and deal with their problems (social service provider, Opotiki).

- Two case study areas identified some frequent movers as families that have 'worn out their welcome' with services in other areas.

- Family break up sometimes results in frequent movement of family members.

Specific examples of mobile families and individuals in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, include:

- Individuals moving to be with family members. This often includes young adult men moving frequently between different relatives' households.

- Those escaping an unsafe situation e.g. family violence, drugs.

- Mental health service users seeking affordable and safe accommodation.

- Some ex-prisoners have chosen to stay in the area after release and seek work rather than return to negative influences in their former home environment. Some justice sector workers noted that Cannons Creek/Waitangirua is seen as a less 'daunting' environment than a larger city for someone coming out of prison. However, it was reported that a small number have difficulty obtaining suitable, permanent accommodation and tend to shift address frequently, relying on hostels and staying with others. It is difficult for organisations to keep contact with them. Acquiring safe accommodation appears to be a particular problem for women coming out of prison.

Examples of mobile families in Kawerau include:

- A small number of families move to Kawerau to be closer to specialised services, such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation, mental health support services, or services for high-needs children. These families were not necessarily frequent movers after coming into the district, but needed specific support services.

Examples of mobile families in Opotiki include:

- Seasonal workers. There is an influx of workers into the district for horticultural and agricultural work. Some seasonal workers are from outside the district, while others are based in Opotiki, and travel around the country following seasonal work opportunities. The social service providers notice the strong impacts of seasonal work on demand for their services. When seasonal workers are not

employed, the demand for housing assistance, finding employment, debt management, and family counselling rises.

- A small number are families locating to be closer to their family members using residential services (such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation). These families were not necessarily frequent movers after coming into the district, but needed specific support services.

- Some justice sector workers noted that while most offenders settling in the district are, or have been locals, some ex-prisoners coming to live in the area have connections through their partners or extended family. There are those who move to Opotiki to sever ties with their old way of life and associates. Sometimes they come for seasonal work. There are a few organisations providing support for integrating ex-offenders into the community, but it is also reported that ex-prisoners are often not aware of supports available.

6.4 Service gaps for mobile people

Across the four case study areas, a range of service gaps for mobile people were identified. The main ones were emergency housing,, family support services and services for people with mental health needs. One social service worker also noted the lack of services of adults and children with disabilities.

6.4.1 Service gaps in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua

Local social service providers in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua identified a lack of emergency housing as a major problem facing diverse groups of people including:
- Families with housing problems, or those moving into the area with no resources.
- Families wanting to leave unsafe environments.
- Women leaving violent relationships.
- People coming out of prison with no accommodation.
- Young people who have no stable home base. Youth workers talked of young people who have left home to get away from abuse or alcohol and drug problems who find it difficult to get safe accommodation.

Salvation Army Community and Family Services based in Cannons Creek operates three emergency houses and cannot meet demand. Depending on the availability of other accommodation, residents stay in them for periods ranging from a few days, to several months.

A women's refuge worker commented that the refuge often gets calls from women not in a violent situation who nevertheless seek accommodation with the refuge because they have housing problems.

Mental health service users were also identified as a group that could benefit from better services that would improve their safety and integration within the community. Suggestions were made about safe accommodation, support services and alcohol and drug services. One justice sector worker commented that mental health service users are a group particularly vulnerable to victimisation.

The Pacific Island Forum has identified two areas of need in the Cannons Creek/Waitangirua communities. Those are:
- Youth development services, including information and training opportunities.
- Housing for Pacific elders.
The Forum is working on initiatives to address these gaps.

Some comment was made about the needs of refugees and migrants who have settled in to Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, which include:

- More English language courses locally.
- Improved assistance for those shifting between the unemployment benefit and student allowances, and attention to problems arising out the interface between the tax and benefit systems.
- Mental health services responsive to their particular circumstances.
- Services for youth at risk of offending.
- Assistance for cultural groups to establish their own community centres or venues for cultural events and religious observances.

The comment was made that the active networks of providers help families that move frequently to link up with services. Such networks include the youth workers network, the Strengthening Families network and the family violence prevention network. Some individuals noted the strong support networks among the Pacific community in particular that include families, churches and local organisations. On a more cautious note however, another provider observed that networking was sometimes 'patchy' in coverage and difficult to maintain effectively as it took up time, and not all organisations are able to commit to on-going networking.

6.4.2 Service gaps in Kawerau

Lack of emergency housing is a major problem identified by local social service providers in Kawerau. Difficulties in finding safe and secure accommodation contributes to lack of residential stability:

> "*Leaky roof, leaking plumbing, faulty wiring, our workers are dealing with these problems … we have got clients looking but there is just no rental housing available* " (social service provider, Kawerau).

There is a general concern that Kawerau is under-serviced, with most government agencies based in Whakatane and a lack of local offices in Kawerau. Heartlands is seen as a useful venue for visiting government agencies, non-government organisations and private businesses, although the comment was made that more services could be added.

People identified the following services as lacking in Kawerau:
- Services for people with disabilities, including services for Maori.
- Local Child Youth and Family office.
- A range of shopping.
- More frequent public transport to other centres, and public transport and taxi service within town.

One social service worker noted that although some services are lacking in Kawerau, there is a wide range of support services and perhaps what is needed is better publicising of the services that are available, and their hours of operation.

6.4.3 Service gaps in Opotiki

Like Kawerau, Opotiki experiences housing problems. Some social service organisations said that emergency housing is particularly lacking. They rely on hotels or camping grounds for temporary accommodation for their clients. Eastern Bay of Plenty Women's Refuge, which covers both Kawerau and Opotiki, notes that some women come to them seeking housing, not because of domestic violence, but

because they have no accommodation and no other options. Several participants in the panel interviews commented on difficulties they had in finding safe and secure housing:

> *We had no option but to move because the house we were renting was sold.*

> *It was the only place to go. There are no homes in our area to rent.*

> *I was looking for five months for a house to rent and it was the only house that came up that was a house and not a shed with power and water.*

> *We had to move here which was the garage of the family home where my husband was brought up. There are very few homes to rent in this area.*

There is a general concern that the district is under-serviced, particularly in relation to health services, including 24-hour coverage of doctors and emergency services. Several people identified limited health services as a major safety issue for the community, because of potential impacts on life.

6.4.3 Service gaps in Amuri

In Amuri, there was a widespread view that, regardless of the time people have lived in the area, there are general difficulties in rural people accessing a range of services needed. A key issue is the availability of transport, which affects access to services. Several people suggested that, where there is clearly a demand for a service locally, that the service should make regular visits to the area. Specific groups needing support were noted. A number of people identified the lack of mental health services and recovery supports as a big gap in services. A lack of special education services was also mentioned.

Many of the services provided locally are done through local initiatives and volunteers, including a fire service, St John's Ambulance, health services and a range of other support services. The local health centre is a wholly community initiative, made possible by local fund raising. A volunteer support group, Community Care, is involved in a wide range of activities including assistance to the elderly (with transport or meals) and provision of food parcels. Plunket and Playcentre also provide important contacts and meeting places for young families. A network of church parishioners is spread throughout the district. Other important voluntary organisations are Federated Farmers and Rural Women New Zealand, while the Dairy Employers Group provides support for people in the dairy industry. The Group has worked to improve job conditions for employees, and to ensure that they have adequate housing. There is also a strong element of pastoral care of young farm workers. A pastoral care group at Amuri Area School links up agencies and services. Another example is the Waiau Project based in the local hall largely run by volunteers and with a paid co-ordinator. The project began because people identified negative things about the community and older people were feeling vulnerable. The role of the project is to support local groups to develop new initiatives and help them sustain activities. The project is encouraging people to get involved in their community, especially those people who want to be involved but are not sure how.

Interviewees identified two groups that experience isolation: young mothers, and older people living alone. The group most mentioned as needing support is young mothers who have moved to the area with their partners (usually employed in farm work), and who are often living in an isolated situation with no family or friends close by. One resident involved in a support network observed:

A more significant problem than crime is isolation. We have our share of people who are lonely, sick, isolated. Those people aren't always picked up … there is a tendency to struggle on and cope by themselves.

6.5 Service delivery affected by the movement of clients

In Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, Kawerau and Opotiki, social service providers commented on a range of funding, management and organisational issues they face in providing services for individuals and families who move. Movement affects the type of service able to be provided, the quality of service, the duration of service and the resources needed. As well as mobile families, organisations also provide services for families whose members live in different households that are often spread over some distance. Additional resources are required for providing services to such families. Providers commented:

> *A proportion of families are frequent movers … they would be a minority but they are the more complex to engage and contact (social service provider, Opotiki).*

> *Managing the fluidity of households is difficult. We tend to work with whoever is there at the time. … if family members are in the area, we will look at ways of working with everyone (social service provider, Kawerau).*

> *We can't keep connected to these families long enough to help (social service provider, Cannons Creek/Waitangirua).*

Common issues raised by providers across the case study areas included:

- The isolation of mobile families from social services, which affects the ability of services to identify needs, provide them with information and deliver assistance. It is difficult to establish and maintain regular contact with clients as they move around.

- A lack of information about individuals moving into the area who need services, especially children and young people. This includes lack of communication between social service agencies in different areas, and lack of co-ordination between different services within the district.

- Managing referrals to services outside of the area when clients move on.

- Dealing with clients' problems that are specific to their moving frequently. One example given was sole parents using up certain entitlements to income assistance. As one provider commented: "*A woman who moves every three months soon uses up all her entitlements, e.g. WINZ grants for rental bonds*". Another example was the problems families on the move experience in accessing energy providers, which are reluctant to take on new customers. Also mentioned were families not seeking health care until a health condition was serious.

- Planning for the delivery of services is difficult because levels of demand are affected by population movement.

- Delivering services to geographically separated family members. It is common for providers to work with family members living in different households, not only within one locality, but also in some cases, spread across different areas. Opotiki

providers reported working with family members in locations spread throughout the North Island, including Whakatane, Kawerau, Rotorua, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Auckland and Wellington. Kawerau providers reported working with family members as far away as Auckland, Palmerston North and Wellington.

- Contracts with providers do not usually include resources for a lot of the extra work involved in servicing mobile families, such as tracing family members and maintaining contact with them, helping them access services, finding employment or housing, equipping them with household goods, providing transport, arranging for family members to come together for meetings, and arranging and supervising access of separated parents to their children.

6.5 Attracting skilled people to work in social services

In one area, Opotiki, the mobility of professionals was identified as a general concern across a variety of occupational areas, including the social services. All the Opotiki social service providers identified difficulties in recruitment and retention of appropriately trained and skilled staff. However, mobility has had one positive effect in Opotiki; the return of Maori skilled professionals appears to be part of the trend of Maori with attachments to the area returning home. Local elders have made efforts to encourage skilled people home to run local services. Some of the workers in local social services who were interviewed commented:

> *I made a conscious decision to come home and do this work.*

> *We identify the skill base out there and bully them home.*

> *I came home to work on domestic violence.*

7. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Crime is not seen as a major problem in any of the case study communities. While each community acknowledges that there are major issues with youth offending, and identified other issue concerning drugs, property crime, family violence and to a lesser extent road safety, overall the immediate surroundings where they live are perceived to be safe. Furthermore, whenever there are notable incidents of crime these tend to be known and remarked upon, especially in small places. Also, strangers are noticed.

In none of the four case study communities were individuals' motivations for moving house strongly related to concerns about crime or personal safety. In the panel interviews, only a very small proportion of interviewees noted that safety was a reason for moving to the house they currently live in. Similarly, in the qualitative interviews and focus groups, only a few people reported that they had moved for safety reasons.

Those working in social service agencies identified some reasons for movement that were related to offending or fears for personal safety; however they emphasised these reasons affected only a small proportion of families. Safety-related reasons were to do with:
- Avoidance of agency regulation or surveillance.
- Inability to address problems such as debt.
- Seeking a safer neighbourhood.
- Seeking support from other family members.

- Relocating to be closer to specialised services.
- Moving children or young people for care and protection reasons. This was often a family decision, rather than being initiated by Child Youth and Family.

Because of the relatively minor part that crime and safety issues play in initiating residential movement, this module will now be incorporated into other components of the Building Attachment research programme. Further analysis of community safety will be carried out through:
- Specified questions on community safety in the second wave of the panel interviews, due to be undertaken in the last quarter of 2005.
- Investigation of community responses and supports for individuals and families coming into the community and those who are 'frequent movers'. This will include specific consideration of issues that have come out of the Community Safety phase one work such as:
  - The characteristics of mobile families.
  - The patterns of movement of mobile families.
  - The types of services incomers need.

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Appendix 1: Building Attachment in Families and Communities Affected by Transience and Residential Movement Research Programme

The Building Attachment in Families and Communities Affected by Transience and Residential Movement Research Programme is funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Research is taking place in four communities over six years: Kawerau, Opotiki, Amuri and Cannons Creek/Waitangirua.

All these communities have experienced considerable in- and out- migration over the last decade and have particular concerns about the implications of the changing population on the economic and social viability of their communities. The research asks, how can communities optimise the benefits of residential mobility while mitigating its potentially negative impacts on communities and the individuals and families living in them?

The research explores the dynamics and drivers of residential mobility and transience and its impacts on: (a) community attachment among the residents of local communities and the major institutional stakeholders in communities – public and private service providers, community organisations, and local employers and business; (b) individual and familial outcomes in relation to: employment, education, health, housing, safety from crime; (c) two critical life stages and processes in the individual life cycle – the cognitive development of children, and transitions of young people to adulthood, and (d) community outcomes in relation to the sustainability of the local economy, the public infrastructure and community attachment. The research will identify the mechanisms, processes and relations required to build and sustain community and family wellbeing, optimise attachment in changing communities and address problems arising out of transience and residential mobility.

This paper focuses on the community safety module, which explores a number of questions around how individuals see residential mobility in relation to community safety.

Appendix 2: The Case Study Areas

Amuri

Amuri is a pastoral and dairy farming area situated in North Canterbury between the Amuri range and Lawry Peaks range. It includes three settlements, Culverden, Rotherham and Waiau. This area comprises the Amuri Ward of the Hurunui District Council. In 2001 the total usually resident population of Amuri was 2,013. The population is primarily European.

Interviews were conducted in Amuri on 22 – 24 October 2003 with 13 individuals and six focus groups of residents (those included 36 people). A range of residents, staff of government agencies, community groups and local social service providers were involved. These included:
- Amuri Community Health Centre
- Amuri Dairy Employers Group
- Road Safety Co-ordinator, Hurunui District
- A district councillor
- A local Vicar
- Police
- Strengthening Families Co-ordinator
- A focus group of village residents at Culverden
- A focus group of rural residents near Culverden
- A focus group of village residents at Rotherham
- A focus group of village residents at Waiau
- A focus group of senior students at Amuri Area School
- A focus group of dairy farm workers
- Members of the Community Reference Group and other local residents.

Cannons Creek/Waitangirua

Cannons Creek/Waitangirua is part of Porirua City and the wider Wellington metropolitan region. Over half (58 percent) of the population is Pacific, while European make up 26 percent and Maori 24 percent.

Residents and organisations who were interviewed for the Community Safety module see Cannons Creek/Waitangirua as part of a wider urban region in which people move around for a variety of housing, work and family-related reasons.

Many government and community organisations servicing Cannons Creek/Waitangirua residents also service the wider Porirua and Kapiti Coast areas. Some organisations specifically focus on Cannons Creek/Waitangirua and are located in the area. Because of the large number of organisations servicing Cannons Creek/Waitangirua that have some involvement in community safety, a decision was made to focus on organisations located in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua, those with clients in the area and those with a broad overview of community safety issues. A selection of organisations that could be contacted during the research period participated in interviews.

The research was conducted in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua during June – September 2003 with a range of residents, staff of central and local government agencies, community groups and local social service providers. Information was gathered through interviews with 21 individuals, three focus groups of residents (comprising 17 individuals) and attendance at meetings of community organisations. These included:

- Porirua Healthy Safer City Trust
- Salvation Army Community and Family Services
- Wesley Community Action
- Cannons Creek Opportunity Centre
- New Settlers Service
- Te Akamata Anga Ou Charitable Trust
- Housing Action Porirua
- Porirua District Court
- Family Court, Porirua
- Police in Cannons Creek and Waitangirua
- Whitireia Community Law Centre
- Women's Refuge
- Housing New Zealand Corporation Community Renewal
- Child Youth and Family
- Community Probation Service
- Strengthening Families
- Porirua Community Guardians
- A focus group of Pacific Island residents
- A focus group of Lao residents
- A focus group of tertiary education students
- Members of the Community Reference Group for the research.

Kawerau

Kawerau is located in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, at the foot of Mt Putauaki. For the purpose of the Building Attachment Research Programme, Kawerau comprises the whole of the Kawerau District and the locality of Onepu just on the outskirts of the district. The usually resident population totalled 7,278 at the 2001 Census. The population is made up of 56 percent Maori and 49 percent European. There is a small proportion of other ethnic groups.

Interviews were conducted with 29 individuals and two focus groups of residents (comprising 15 people). Most of the interviews were conducted in Kawerau on 23 – 25 September 2003, while a few were completed in 2004. Discussions were held with a range of residents, staff of central and local government agencies, community groups and local social service providers. These included:
- Mayor and three councillors.
- Police.
- The Safer Community Trust Co-ordinator.
- Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator.
- Maori Warden.
- Kawerau Enterprise Agency.
- Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau Hau Ora.
- James Family Trust.
- Women's Refuge.
- Child Youth and Family.
- Community Probation.
- Strengthening Families Co-ordinator.
- Local retailer.
- Members of Citizen's Patrol.
- Individuals working with youth.
- A focus group of young people in tertiary education.
- A focus group of older people.
- Members of the Community Reference Group for the research.

Opotiki

The whole of the Opotiki District is included in the Building Attachment Research Programme. Opotiki is situated in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The total usually resident population of Opotiki in 2001 was 9,201. The population comprises 54 percent Maori and 53 percent European, with a small proportion of other ethnic groups.

Interviews were conducted in Opotiki District on 1 – 3 October 2003 with 19 individuals and five focus groups of residents (comprising 28 people). They included a range of residents, staff of central and local government agencies, community groups and local social service providers. These included:

- The Safer Community Council Co-ordinator, Opotiki District Council.
- The Mayor of Opotiki.
- Victim Support.
- Police.
- Ministry of Fisheries.
- Local duty solicitor.
- Te Ha o te Whanau Trust.
- Kahunui Trust.
- Whanau support staff of Whakatohea Trust Board.
- Women's Refuge.
- Child Youth and Family.
- Community Probation.
- Strengthening Families Co-ordinator.
- A focus group of rural residents at Waiotahi.
- A focus group of rural residents in Maraenui.
- A focus group of young people in tertiary education.
- A focus group of older people.
- A focus group of women.
- Members of the Community Reference Group for the research.