

Randwick Park Survey Results

Introduction

Randwick Park is a suburb in Manurewa, South Auckland that is divided into two very different areas, with a large reserve in the centre. Much of the community has a socio economic deprivation index level of 10 (The deprivation level is calculated for each meshblock in New Zealand by combining census data relating to income, home ownership, employment, qualifications, family structure, housing, access to transport and communications. Deprivation scores are grouped into deciles: 1 signifies the areas with the least deprived scores and 10 represents the areas with the most deprived scores. Therefore, a value of 10 indicates that a meshblock is in the most deprived 10% of areas in New Zealand.) . Among the most deprived areas in New Zealand, this part of the community is marked by low quality housing and is known for its social problems such as poverty; high unemployment; gangs; violence and drugs. On the other side is a small, relatively newer subdivision. Based on the 2013 census, the community has a population of around 5772 residents, with those identifying as Maori (27%), Pacific (35%), Asian (27%), and European (25%) being the dominant groups.

Education levels in Randwick Park are significantly lower than those of other Auckland residents – 28.8 % of those over 15 years have no qualifications and only 7.6% hold a Bachelors degree or level 7 qualification. Only 44.2% of the population over 15 years are employed full-time and the unemployment level is almost double that for Auckland. The median income is \$23,700, compared with Auckland's \$29,600.

Reason for the research

As a second year social work student at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, I was required to undertake some voluntary work for an organisation/group in the community, to deepen my understanding of community development. Having heard something of the changes achieved in Randwick Park, I approached a member of the Randwick Park Residents' Association. It was agreed that I would undertake a small research project on behalf of the Residents' Association, to ascertain what changes longer term Randwick Park residents had noticed and why they thought those changes were happening.

Methodology

Residents were randomly visited between 29 and 30 September 2015, and invited to participate in a brief survey if they had lived in Randwick Park for five or more years. In total, 21 people were interviewed. Three key questions were asked to participants:

1. How long have you lived in Randwick Park?
2. Describe changes you have seen in Randwick Park since you lived here.
3. Why do you think those changes have occurred?

Further information was then obtained in relation to their age group, gender and ethnicity.

Participants were from the following streets:

- Hyperion Drive

- Foxlaw Street
- Nerissa Place
- Limond Street
- Balloch Street
- Melleray Place
- Stellata Ct
- Magic Way
- Ironstone Place
- Shiffnal Drive

Demographics of participants:

Gender: 6 males, 15 females

Age range:

- 10-18 years – 1
- 19-25 years – 1
- 26-35 years – 3
- 36-45 years – 3
- 46-55 years – 4
- 56+ years – 9

Length of time in Randwick Park:

- 5-10 years: 10 people
- 11-15 years: 8 people
- 20 + years: 3 people

Ethnic groups:

- Maori – 7
- NZ European/Pakeha – 7
- Pacific Islander – 5 (Tongan, Niuean, Samoan)
- Fijian Indian – 1
- Indian (Punjabi) – 2
- Iranian – 1

(Note: one person identified as Maori and European).

Findings

Part one – changes people noticed

Park developments:

Several people mentioned the developments at the park and generally viewed these as a positive thing. Two respondents commented on the lack of a children's playground at the park and one was unsure of what impact the developments would have or whether they would be looked after.

Housing:

Many people commented on housing changes. Those on the Magic Way side of the park talked about housing development and new buildings, while those on the Shiffnal Drive side talked more of renovations and an increase in property sales. Comments were that people appear to be taking more pride in their properties and the area is cleaner.

Crime:

A number of people, particularly on the Shiffnal Drive side of the park, identified a reduction in crime, violence and noisy parties. Some people commented they hardly ever see tagging now. Others mentioned that they don't hear much about burglaries any more. There were also comments about less gang activity, although one resident talked of more gang members near her home. Several people felt the neighbourhood was safer. Conversely, one resident (on the Magic Way side of the park) felt things had got rougher in the last year. Two people commented on increased police presence – one felt this helped reduce the crime, the other believed it reflected the fact that the neighbourhood was rougher.

Community:

Many participants felt there was an increasing sense of community. People were identified as being friendlier, more civilised, and more “neighbourly”. Neighbourhood watch was mentioned three times. Explored further, this seems to be not an organised approach but that people are looking out for each other more. There were more community events at the park and some people were organising their own neighbourhood gatherings and street barbeques. One person commented that “everyone is starting to know people in the community”. Another felt that the community is starting to knit together.

People:

Several commented that there were more new people in the area and less “riff raff”. One person felt that new people move in and don't look after the place. People identified a greater variety of ethnic groups; of particular mention was the increase in the number of Indians. One person felt the mixed races were getting on better, while another believed it made communication more difficult.

Other comments:

A few people talked about roading changes – the cutting off of Shiffnal Avenue appears to have made this area safer and quieter but has increased traffic on Magic Way. Roads and footpaths are being better maintained. Other comments include that there are more people in employment; more people going to church; the new car parks are good; and there are a lot more dogs in the area. One person stated there are more children going to school now.

Part two – why these changes are happening

Almost 30 percent of respondents connect the changes with people moving out of the area and different people moving in. Some see this as the result of rental increases and house sales, one person felt Housing New Zealand (HNZ) were changing the type of person they leased houses to. In

addition, people thought the sale of HNZ houses meant people are more likely to look after their property.

Some people believed the Resident's Association or the Community Centre (Community House) played a part in the changes. A smaller number thought the Council was behind them. People also mentioned the impact of developers and people's financial situations.

Of greater significance was the number of respondents who felt the changes were coming from within the community. Comments included:

- There are more community-minded people now – some have come in from outside and others are getting more involved.
- The community neighbourhood watch is significant... "good neighbours being good neighbours".
- People are more informed and aware of dangers their children could face and are trying to keep their children out of trouble.
- Having older, established residents is helping.
- More Christians are moving into the area and engaging with people more.
- Church people are working to make the community better.

Observations

There was a clear distinction between the respondents from one side of the neighbourhood compared to the other. Those spoken to who lived in the newer subdivision were largely unengaged with others in Randwick Park and did not feel there was much sense of community. They were less likely to notice changes apart from obvious developments. Many of them did not know their neighbours apart from to say hello, and they tended not to venture to the other side of the park. Although some who had children had attended community events, others did not. In comparison, those who lived in the older areas were well aware of changes taking place. They were more likely to be engaged in helping and looking out for their neighbours and were more proactive in arranging social gatherings such as street barbeques. They were also more likely to attend community events.

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