

# Cultural Experiences Survey<sup>1</sup>

The Cultural Experiences Survey (CES) was conducted in the first quarter of 2002. It asked people whether they had experienced a range of activities during a set reference period – 12 months for goods and services experienced relatively infrequently, and four weeks for activities experienced on a more regular basis. People were asked how often they experienced these activities, whether they had encountered any barriers to doing so, how interested they were in New Zealand content and whether they had experienced the activities by any other means, such as radio, television or the Internet. Their responses were linked with data from the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) on personal characteristics such as age, sex, ethnicity, highest educational qualification, labour force status, income and location.

The results showed that 93 percent of the New Zealand population aged 15 and over had participated in at least one of the cultural activities asked about in the survey. Rates of participation for particular activities varied from 44 percent for purchasing books and 39 percent for visiting public libraries, to 11 percent for attending classical music performances and 10 percent for purchasing art.

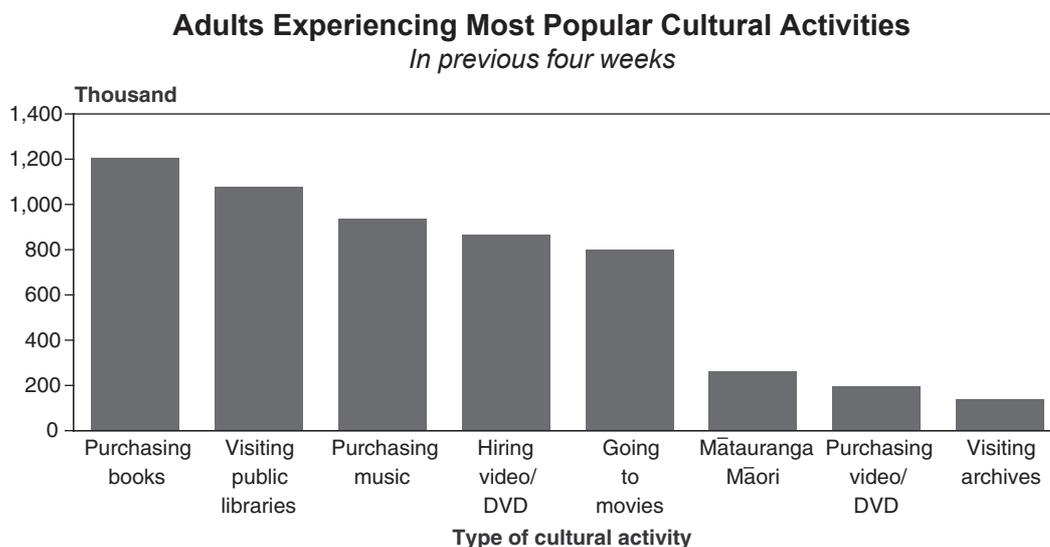
As figure 1.01 shows, purchasing books was the most popular cultural activity during the four-week reference period, with 1.2 million people, or 44 percent of the adult population, having purchased at least one book in that time.<sup>2</sup>

People with either secondary or tertiary qualifications were far more likely than people with no such qualifications to buy books, and women were more likely to do so than men. These patterns were also evident with the second most popular activity – visiting public libraries – which an estimated 1.1 million people had done during the reference period. However, this differed from many other cultural activities in that older people, and those not employed (either unemployed or not in the labour force), were more likely than others to use libraries.

About a third of the adult population (937,000 people) purchased an item of recorded music in the four weeks before the survey. This was one of several activities most popular among people in the 15–24 year group, and diminished with age. Education levels were also a factor in music purchasing, with people with formal qualifications being more likely to buy recorded music than those without such qualifications.

The next most popular activities, video or DVD hire (866,000 people) and going to the movies (801,000 people), were also more popular with young people, with both activities being most common in the 15–24 year group, and diminishing as people got older. Education was an important factor in whether people went to the movies, with people with formal qualifications being twice as likely to do so as those with no qualifications. Purchasing videos or DVDs was a much less common activity (197,000 people), but followed similar patterns in terms of age profile.

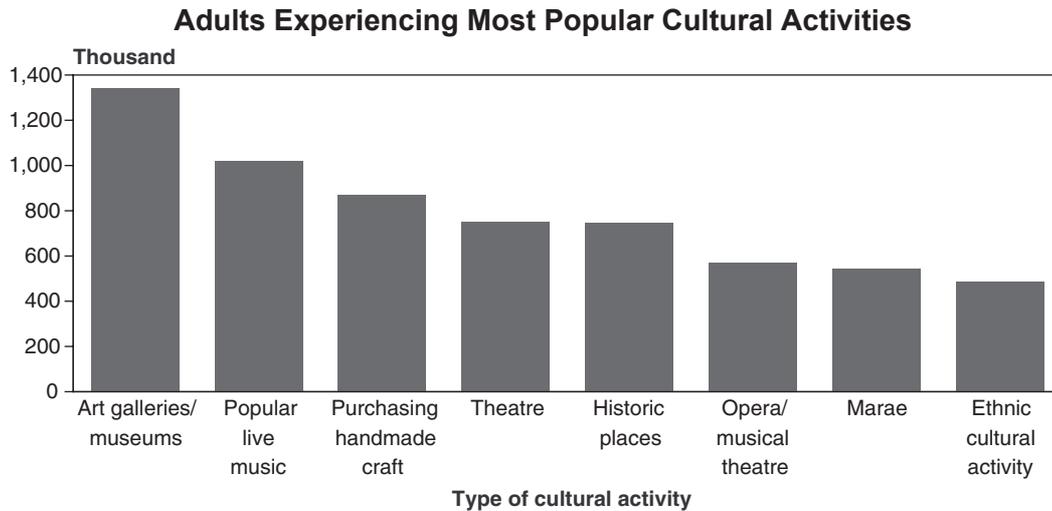
Figure 1.01



1. This article was prepared by Patrick Ongley of the Social Statistics Division of Statistics New Zealand.

2. It should be noted in respect of purchasing cultural items such as books, music, videos or DVDs, and art or craft, that no distinction was made as to whether people purchased these items for themselves or for others. For some respondents, the reference period included Christmas, so a certain amount of cultural purchasing would have been for gifts, rather than for personal consumption, though it is not possible to quantify how much.

Figure 1.02



Other activities surveyed during the four-week reference period were much less common, including mātauranga Māori (learning about traditional Māori customs, practices, history or beliefs), which was experienced by an estimated 264,000 people, and using the services of an archive (137,000 people).

Respondents were asked whether they had undertaken other cultural activities in the 12 months leading up to the survey. The most popular of these activities, as shown in figure 1.02, was visiting an art gallery or museum, with an estimated 1,340,000 people, or nearly half of the adult population, having done so. People with either secondary or tertiary qualifications were more likely than those without such educational qualifications to have been to art galleries or museums, and women were also slightly more likely than men to have undertaken this activity.

An estimated 1,021,000 people, or 37 percent of the adult population, attended live performances of popular music during the 12-month period. This was another activity more popular with young people, with more than half of all people in the 15–24 year group having been to live performances – a proportion which diminished progressively with age. Education was also a factor, with qualified people being more likely concert-goers than those without qualifications.

An estimated 869,000 people, or 31 percent of the adult population, purchased handmade craft during the 12-month period. This was another activity more common among women than men and more common among people with educational qualifications.

Theatrical performances were experienced by around 752,000 people (27 percent of the adult population) during the 12-month period. Again, people with educational qualifications were far more likely to go to the theatre than those without

qualifications, and women were more likely to do so than men. A similar number of people (747,000) visited historic places during the reference period, with education again being an important factor.

Other activities surveyed during the 12-month reference period included attending opera and musical theatre (570,000 people), visiting marae (543,000), attending ethnic cultural performances other than Māori performances (487,000), visiting wāhi taonga, or sites of historical importance to Māori (447,000), attending dance performances (401,000), attending exhibitions of taonga, or historical objects of Māori origin (390,000), attending classical music performances (307,000) and purchasing art (269,000).

In very general terms, single variable analysis showed that participation in most cultural activities tended to be more common among people with educational qualifications, among those who were in the labour force, among those earning middle to high incomes, and among those who lived in larger urban areas.

There were, however, some contrasting patterns of participation across different types of cultural activities. For instance, younger people were more likely than older people to go to the movies, hire videos, attend popular live music performances and purchase recorded music. But they were less likely than those in most older age groups to purchase books or works of art, and to attend either opera and musical theatre, or classical music performances.

Women were more likely than men to participate in many cultural activities, including book purchasing, using public libraries, purchasing handmade craft and attending theatre, dance, opera or musical theatre. On the other hand, there was little difference between the sexes when it came to activities such as attending

popular live music performances, purchasing recorded music, going to the movies, watching videos, visiting historic places, purchasing art and experiencing most forms of taonga tuku iho or Māori culture.

Some activities showed varying levels of participation by different ethnic groups. People of European/Pākehā ethnicity were more likely than other ethnic groups to attend theatrical performances and performances of opera or musical theatre. Māori, not surprisingly, were more likely than other ethnic groups to participate in all forms of taonga tuku iho. Māori were just as likely as Pākehā to attend popular live music and dance performances, to purchase recorded music and to purchase handmade craft. Participation by other ethnic groups varied across different activities, but all were more likely than European/Pākehā people and Māori to have attended performances of non-Māori ethnic song and dance.

Some activities showed varying levels of participation across different locations, which could partly reflect the availability of activities in some areas, and also the composition of the population in those areas. People in main urban areas were more likely than others to visit art galleries and museums, go to the movies, hire videos or DVDs, and attend ethnic cultural performances. On the other hand, experiencing taonga tuku iho was more common among those living in minor urban and rural areas.

Regionally, many activities were most popular in Wellington, including visiting art galleries and museums, going to the movies and hiring videos or DVDs, and attending performances of theatre, dance, opera and musical theatre. Participation in some of these activities, particularly in the performing arts, would have been boosted by the fact that the International Festival of the Arts was held in Wellington during the reference period. The other clear regional pattern to emerge was that higher proportions of people in the Northland and Bay of Plenty regions – with relatively large Māori populations – had experienced Māori cultural activities.

Many cultural activities involve some expense for the participant, which is one factor accounting for differing patterns of participation by income and labour force status. People who were employed and earning higher incomes were more likely than others to purchase books, music, works of art and handmade craft, and to attend some forms of live performance, such as theatrical performances and opera or musical theatre. However, differing patterns of participation by income and labour force status could also be observed for less expensive activities, such as visiting historic places and visiting art galleries and museums. An activity which involves

little or no expense, such as using public library services, was more common among those unemployed or not in the labour force, and among low income earners. This was reflected in library usage being most common in the 65 and over age group, most of whom are retired.

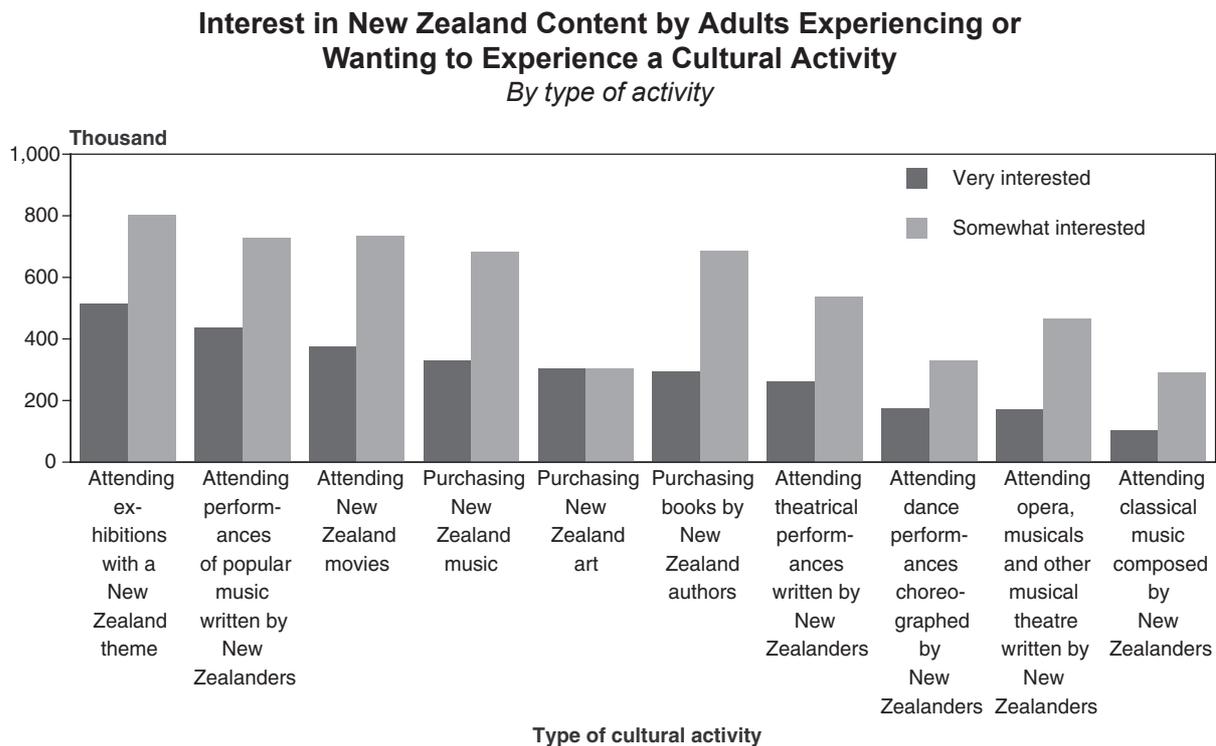
Variables such as age, education, labour force status and income are all inter-related. People with high incomes, for instance, tend to be employed and have tertiary qualifications, and tend not to be in the youngest and oldest age groups. Simple cross-tabular analysis may, therefore, show that participation in a particular activity differs by each of these variables, but it may not show which is the most important factor. It was necessary, therefore, to conduct multivariate analysis for selected activities to determine which variables were most important in explaining participation.

Multivariate analysis showed that for most activities, educational qualifications were the most important variable, with a clear split between people with either secondary or tertiary qualifications and those with no formal qualifications. Among those activities tested, highest educational qualification was the most important variable associated with attendance at theatrical performances, classical music performances, performances of opera or musical theatre, visiting art galleries or museums, visiting historic places, going to the movies, purchasing books, purchasing art and visiting exhibitions of taonga. Sex was the most important variable when it came to dance performance and using public library services. Ethnicity was the most important factor for most Māori cultural activities, including mātauranga Māori, visiting marae and visiting wāhi taonga. Age was the most important factor influencing attendance at live performances of popular music.

### **New Zealand content**

People who had participated in particular cultural activities, and those wanting to do so, were asked how interested they were in experiencing New Zealand content in that activity. For all activities, more than half the respondents were either very interested or somewhat interested. As figure 1.03 shows, the highest level of interest was in attending exhibitions with a New Zealand theme, with an estimated 513,000 being very interested and a further 802,000 being somewhat interested. High levels of interest were also expressed in attending performances of popular music composed by New Zealanders (with an estimated 436,000 people being very interested) and in attending New Zealand movies (374,000 very interested). The lowest level of interest was in classical music composed by New Zealanders, with only an estimated 104,000 people being very interested.

Figure 1.03



Women were generally more interested than men in New Zealand content, particularly in attending exhibitions with a New Zealand theme, attending dance performances choreographed by New Zealanders and attending theatrical performances written by New Zealanders. Māori were more interested than people from other ethnic groups in New Zealand content. Their level of interest was higher for all types of activity, but particularly for attending performances of popular music written by New Zealanders, attending exhibitions with a New Zealand theme, attending theatrical performances written by New Zealanders, and attending opera, musicals and other musical theatre written by New Zealanders.

### Barriers to experiencing culture

People who had not taken part in each cultural activity, but had wanted to, or who had taken part in the activity and had wanted to do so more often, were asked whether there were any barriers that prevented them from doing so. Only those who had found it 'very hard' to attend, or 'somewhat hard' were included in the analysis, as it was assumed that those who responded 'not very hard', or 'did not know' (why they had not taken part) were not sufficiently interested in doing so. The main reasons given for not taking part in activities, or not taking part more often, were lack of time and the cost involved. In some cases, such as Māori cultural experiences, the main reason was lack of time, followed by lack of information, or the activities not being available locally. Cost was a major barrier for activities such as live dance, opera or musical theatre, live popular

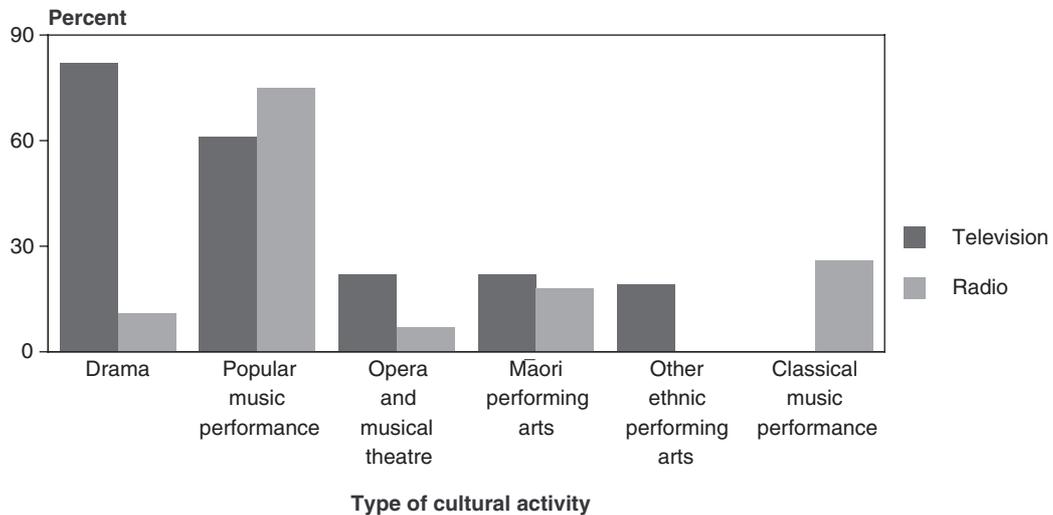
music performances, and the purchase of music and handmade craft. In general, the responses were too low to allow detailed analysis of the characteristics of people citing particular reasons.

### Other means of consumption

In addition to experiencing cultural activities in person, people were asked whether they had experienced them by other means – the Internet for some activities and television and/or radio for others. Television and radio were popular media for experiencing some cultural activities. In the four-week reference period, 71 percent of adult New Zealanders had watched movies on television, nearly double the proportion who had visited a cinema during that time. As figure 1.04 shows, watching drama on television was another popular activity, with 82 percent having done so during the 12-month period. Eleven percent had listened to drama on the radio. During the same period, 27 percent of the adult population attended live theatrical performances. Both television and radio were widely used for popular music experiences, with 75 percent listening to the radio and 61 percent watching and listening to television. While experiencing other performing arts through television and radio was much less common, the proportions experiencing opera and musical theatre, Māori performing arts and other ethnic performing arts were similar to, or greater than, the proportions experiencing them in person. And people were more than twice as likely to have listened to classical music on the radio as they were to have attended a live event.

Figure 1.04

**Proportion of Adults Experiencing Performing Arts on Television and Radio**  
*In previous 12 months*  
 By type of activity



The Internet was most commonly used for listening to popular music, with 20 percent of the adult population having done so in the 12 months before the survey. Other activities experienced over the Internet during the 12-month reference period included visiting library websites (15 percent) or archive websites (11 percent), and viewing movie clips (14 percent) or works of art (10 percent). In the four-week reference period, 3 percent of adult New Zealanders purchased music over the Internet and another 3 percent purchased books.

The characteristics of people experiencing cultural activities by these alternative means in general resembled the profile of those experiencing them in person. This was an indication that the nature of the cultural activity was more important than the medium, or the means of access, in influencing the make-up of the audience, or the consumers.