The CERA Wellbeing Survey sampled only those aged 18 years and over and on the electoral roll. In 2013 CERA led the development of the Youth Wellbeing Survey to better understand the recovery experiences and wellbeing needs of young people aged 12 to 24 years, and to hear the voices of young people in the recovery.

A cross-agency Working Group was established to develop and implement a survey. Survey questions were adapted from the CERA Wellbeing Survey to be suitable for youth and to meet the specific information needs of some partner agencies.

The online-only survey was promoted widely on public buses and in schools, youth-friendly workplaces, university campuses and cafés. It was supported by a social marketing campaign using Facebook and youth-focused websites. Diverse groups – including refugees and migrants, Pacific and Māori youth, and youth in mental health and youth justice services – were specifically invited to participate.

Incentives (donated prizes) for participation were promoted. However, recruitment was slower than expected. The Working Group agreed to change the recruitment strategy so that researchers approached young people face to face and invited them to complete the survey ‘there and then’ on electronic tablets. Researchers visited schools, community events and retail centres to talk with young people directly.

What we learnt
- Recruiting hard-to-reach populations is possible, but can be resource intensive.
- Collaboration to connect with hard-to-reach populations brings more resources to the table.
- It may be necessary to adapt the recruitment strategy to recruit a sample that is sufficiently large and diverse.

The survey ended up being a very organic thing. What worked for us in the end was that we had time, we had networks, and we were able to adapt our strategy, and we had to adapt that strategy.”

External participant

Jane Morgan
General Manager,
Social and Cultural Outcomes

When designing an online survey, consider how to create conditions so potential respondents can participate immediately.

Evidence is important – in response to a key finding that young people had no places to gather, the private sector and government jointly funded and organised an event called Winter Chill.