

Advancing an Integrated Leisure Research Strategy for New Zealand

An analysis of the perceived research
needs and priorities of stakeholders
in the arts, outdoor recreation, sport
and community recreation sectors

Michael Annear
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Executive Summary

This report describes a programme of research that seeks to advance the development of an integrated leisure research strategy for New Zealand. The research aims to assess current research utilisation and demand for an overarching national strategy, identify key research priorities and themes across the leisure sector, and facilitate greater dialogue between leisure stakeholders. The leisure sector is taken to include the sport, outdoor recreation, arts and community recreation sectors. There have been calls for an integrated leisure research strategy for New Zealand for at least the last decade, although relatively little progress has been made towards this end. While the findings and recommendations of this report do not constitute a leisure research strategy, it is hoped that they will be used to advance the development of a national leisure research strategy following further dialogue with stakeholders.

The research which led to this report was divided into two phases. In the first phase, an exploratory survey of leisure sector stakeholders was undertaken to determine current research utilisation and attitudes towards the development and implementation of a sector-wide research strategy. In the second, main, research phase, a survey was again used to identify key research priorities and themes within individual sectors as well as common research themes across the entire sector. A focus group was held with key stakeholders in the second research phase to triangulate the research findings and present initial conclusions. A wide variety of leisure sector stakeholders were consulted during this research, including: national and regional organisations; research producers and research users; public, private, and volunteer-sector groups; senior management, front line staff and volunteers. The diversity of feedback received during data collection suggests that the present research is likely to have relevance to a broad audience across the leisure sector.

A number of salient findings were identified during the research. In the first phase, the exploratory survey revealed high levels of research utilisation across the sector and a desire for an increase in the production of relevant research outputs. Respondents to the first survey also indicated their support for the development of a national leisure research strategy. The first phase also highlighted a general consensus among stakeholders that any future strategy be implemented by a centralised government agency, such as Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). In the second research phase, sector-specific research priorities were identified to account for some of the unique challenges and situations faced by individual sector groups. Thereafter, common research themes were explored to identify overarching research needs that could potentially form the basis of a leisure research strategy. While there were some differences between sectors (the arts sector was notable in this regard), leisure stakeholders identified a number of research themes that were important across the sector. In particular, leisure sector representatives called for more research to identify the benefits and outcomes of leisure participation and understand contemporary leisure behaviour and demand. Feedback from focus group participants was generally supportive of the research findings, and stakeholders were interested in ensuring that the research was widely disseminated, that there was good communication between research producers, and that steps were taken to move from preliminary research to the development of a full leisure research strategy.

A number of recommendations are presented at the end of the report to assist the further development and implementation of a national leisure research strategy. It is hoped that the research described in this report represents the first steps towards such a strategy. This will only be achieved, however, through ongoing communication between research-intensive institutions, government agencies and leisure sector stakeholders.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Report Rationale

For over a decade in New Zealand there have been calls for improved research strategising within the leisure sector (Graham et al., 2001; Perkins & Gidlow, 1991; Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006, 2009). The leisure sector currently lacks an integrated, national research strategy that identifies, prioritises and promotes research needed in the arts, outdoor recreation, sport and community recreation sectors – collectively regarded as the leisure sector in this research. Research strategies help ensure that there is direction and economy in research endeavours (Lynch & Brown, 1999) and that scarce research funds are not wasted on uncoordinated, duplicative or unproductive research practice. The present report represents an attempt to explore and advance the development of a leisure research strategy for the benefit of the sectors mentioned above. A desired, long-term aim of the research, but one which is not directly addressed, is to support the development of a comprehensive and integrated research strategy for the leisure sector that can be implemented by existing organisations or agencies.

In 2001, the New Zealand government commissioned a leisure-related report – Getting Set for an Active Nation (also known as the Graham report) – to provide a national vision for sports and active leisure to 2025. The report made a number relevant conclusions: 1) there is a lack of coordination, dissemination and use of research in the leisure sector; 2) research in New Zealand and relevant international research from overseas has not been made available to leisure sector stakeholders in an accessible form; 3) there is an active sport and leisure research domain in tertiary institutions, but dissemination of research findings to wider leisure stakeholders needs to be improved; 4) government agencies undertaking research have not ensured that it is contestable, rigorous or monitored effectively; 5) New Zealand leisure and sport is, in general, inadequately researched, and decisions in the sector have not been marked by a high level of research or analysis; 6) research in the New Zealand leisure sector has an imbalance in favour of sport-related research; 7) researchers have not met the needs of the leisure sector or proactively assisted the sector's development; 8) a number of research areas have been inadequately explored, including new technologies, the benefits of leisure participation (beyond the physical benefits), human development, quality of life, reduction in antisocial behaviour, strengthening the family unit and surrounding community, economic benefits, environmental awareness and stewardship (Graham et al., 2001). Consequently, it has been clear from the early 2000s that there is a significant paucity of coordinated and appropriate research within the leisure sector.

A quasi-autonomous, umbrella organisation, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), was introduced by the government in response to the Getting Set for an Active Nation report and as a replacement for the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure. While this organisation has been proactive in setting funding priorities and undertaking preliminary research regarding sport and physical activity participation, relatively little work has been undertaken to develop a coordinated research strategy for the entire leisure sector. In the mid 2000s, SPARC began work on a draft research strategy for sport, recreation and physical activity (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006); however, this strategy was never developed beyond an initial discussion document. Moreover, SPARC has an overt focus on active forms of leisure, such as sport and physical activity, which consequently receive the most attention in terms of both funding and research activity. SPARC is also expected to provide value for money for the government and taxpayer by targeting funding and resources to areas that are seen as most likely to provide a return on investment in terms of medals, world titles or rankings or international exposure and recognition for the New Zealand

'brand'. Notwithstanding SPARC's initiative in the area of sport and physical activity, little work on research strategising has been undertaken in New Zealand in the broad leisure sector.

In addition to the absence of an integrated approach to leisure research in New Zealand, a further rationale for the current project comes from the precedent set by Australian researchers in the mid-1990s in developing a leisure research strategy (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995). The Australian Leisure Research Agenda identified a large number of research priorities for the sector after extensive consultation with key stakeholders. The Agenda will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section. This work was supported by the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS) and received financial backing from the Australian Federal Government. Conversations between Australian and New Zealand members of ANZALS at the time the research was being undertaken suggested that there would be significant benefit for the leisure sector in New Zealand if a similar process of research strategising was undertaken; however, it has taken well over a decade for the environment in New Zealand to be conducive for such an initiative. The Australian Leisure Research Agenda provides significant impetus for the present research both in terms of its objectives, methods and outcomes.

The present research does not seek to develop a national leisure research strategy similar to the agenda developed in Australia, as there is not yet sufficient government or cross-leisure sector support or organisational capacity to accommodate such a strategy. The present research, however, can be seen as an initial investigation into relevant research themes and priorities, which could form the basis of a New Zealand leisure research strategy – subject to further government and stakeholder consultation. The research upon which this report is based was conducted at Lincoln University during 2009 in association with ANZALS and with the support of the organisation Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences (BRCSS). It replicates some of the objectives and methods employed in the comparable Australian research while respecting the changed environment in which leisure-related research activity is contextualized in our two countries.

1.2 Conceptualising Leisure and the Leisure Sector in New Zealand

Leisure is a wide ranging concept, which can be defined broadly as freedom from the constraints of everyday life and labour, or more specifically as activity undertaken in free time (Perkins & Cushman, 1998). A previous definition that has been employed for the purposes of developing an Australian Leisure Research Agenda is as follows: "the activities which people choose to do under conditions of relative freedom" (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995, p. 4). All of these definitions indicate a variety of possible activities: formal or informal, active or passive, solitary or group oriented. In the present research, the leisure sector is conceptualised as including volunteer, commercial or government-sector organisations that provide for or represent participants in the arts, outdoor recreation, sports or community recreation sectors. Throughout the course of the research, participants were given the freedom to subjectively choose which leisure sector they identified most closely with and to respond to our questionnaires accordingly. For the purposes of this report, an operational definition of each of the leisure sectors involved in this study is provided. A potential limitation of this research, however, may arise from differences between the definitions provided in this report and participants' own subjective interpretation of where their organisation is located within the leisure sector. In an effort to limit any potential bias, locally relevant definitions employed by government funding agencies are used for each sector as it is likely that many organisations will be familiar with such terminology.

In the context of this report, sport is defined as an institutionalised, competitive activity requiring the use of relatively complex physical skills (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2005). Commonly practised examples in New Zealand include rugby, netball, soccer, cricket, swimming, golf, athletics,

yachting and bowls. Representative organisations included in this research were government sports promotion agencies operating semi-autonomously at a local and national level, independent governing bodies of individual sports, and district and regional Councils. Sports arguably comprise the largest proportion of organisations or groups within the leisure sector in New Zealand, and, unsurprisingly, organisations from within this sector dominated responses to the present research.

The arts can be conceptualised as a broad subdivision of culture, which encompass creative and performance-oriented endeavours that would not otherwise be considered sport or community or outdoor recreation (Volkerling, 1998). Distinctions are often made also between the high arts and the popular arts and professional and amateur practice (Volkerling, 1998). Examples include the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture; dramatic and performing arts including music, theatre, opera and dance; and traditional cultural displays and practices (Creative New Zealand, 2009). Representative organisations that were canvassed during the research included charitable trusts supporting the arts; governing bodies for individual artistic pursuits; advocacy and support groups for emerging and established artists; government arts promotion and funding agencies; public and private arts institutions; and not for profit, community-based arts promotion groups. The arts sector is arguably the most diverse and awkward-fitting of the sectors that are encapsulated by the concept of leisure. (A significant challenge for researchers is to find a way to integrate, where desirable to stakeholders, the research needs of the arts with the wider leisure sector.)

The New Zealand Recreation Association defines community recreation as a process by which communities identify their own recreation issues, interests and needs and are actively involved in developing outcomes that support their well-being and celebrate their identity (New Zealand Recreation Association, 2008). Community recreation encompasses a gamut of activities that reflect a range of socio-cultural values and provide significant meaning and socialisation for participants. Haywood has defined community recreation in terms of a broad set of characteristics, including a focus on communities of interest and disadvantaged groups; decentralisation of services, localism and devolution of responsibility; community development; and integration with other service providers (Haywood, 1995). Examples of community recreation include hobby groups, night classes, cultural groups, local community events, 'flea' markets or farmers markets, scouting/guiding, charitable societies and clubs. Representative organisations that were identified as part of the community recreation sector and which participated in the present research included governing bodies for individual community based organisations; national and local advocacy groups for community or minority issues; and charitable trusts and societies which provide funding and support for community projects and events.

SPARC has recently defined outdoor recreation as "a range of leisure, recreation, cultural or sporting activities, undertaken in natural, heritage, rural and urban open space" (2009, p. 3). Well known examples include fishing, camping, hiking/tramping, caving, hunting, kayaking/canoeing, rock climbing, sailing, skiing, and surfing (Devlin & Booth, 1998). Representative organisations that have been identified as part of the outdoor recreation sector in New Zealand include local and national conservancies; national outdoor recreation organisations and agencies; and local and regional councils.

Tourism is often conceptualised as part of the leisure sector and can be defined as "the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence" (Veal, 2002, p. 3). In New Zealand, tourism is also a significant contributor to the national and regional economies. Given the rapid and sustained expansion of the tourism sector in New Zealand and the national, financial imperatives that drive much of the policy making in this sector, the researchers elected to omit tourism from present conceptions of the leisure sector to ensure that the scale of the project remained manageable and that leisure remained the primary focus of the research. It is acknowledged, however, that the groups and organisations covered in the research may have close

associations with the tourism sector. (It is beyond the scope of the present report to discuss the potential interactions between tourism and other leisure-related sectors.)

1.3 The Role of Research and its Benefits

Research provides many potential benefits for the leisure sector. It can generate new information leading to advances in knowledge or the development of theory, which may satisfy intellectual curiosity or have applications for the management of leisure sectors or organisations (Lynch & Brown, 1999). Where applied research is undertaken, it can provide cost savings for organisations by identifying where resources should be targeted to obtain more efficient service delivery, programme evaluation or monitoring of client behaviour (Lynch & Brown, 1999). Research can also play an important role in determining the structure and functions of an organisation, including setting goals and objectives, reviewing performance, identifying strategies for improvement, and monitoring the implementation of alternative courses of action (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995).

Although there are significant benefits to be realised from research, such endeavours can be costly, requiring investments of funding, time and human resources. The relatively high cost of research can be prohibitive for some organisations, which creates problems of equity within the leisure sector. Volunteer organisations, for example, may not have the resources to invest in research, opting instead to direct funds to the purchase of equipment or uniforms, cover the costs of travel, and pay any necessary rates, rentals or maintenance associated with facility use. In an environment of rising costs and a finite pool of financial resources, research may be too costly for such organisations. Moreover, when research involves organisational staff, research development, data collection and analysis can also take significant time away from administration, management or planning tasks. Arguments against research within the leisure sector, however, are difficult to sustain as the benefits of undertaking effective research can far outweigh the relatively short-term costs. Effective research can result in significant cost savings or income generation when the results are used to improve policy and management decision making, identify participant and user needs, restructure an organisation, or reorganise funding priorities.

1.4 Definition and Purpose of Research Strategies and Agendas

Research agendas and strategies are arguably not the same; although, the concepts are often used interchangeably in research and policy rhetoric (Cushman, Gidlow, Espiner, Toohey, & Annear, 2010). In the context of this report, the definition employed by Australian researchers in the development of a national research agenda is used:

We take research agendas [strategies] to be documents produced [best] by organisations via a consultative process and which focus, give direction to, and prioritise research activity. Such documents identify ways of promoting, funding and disseminating research in order to be of maximum benefit to users. In short, a research agenda [strategy] is a document containing a priority listing of research questions and themes, accompanied by procedures to implement the research identified (Lynch & Brown, 1996, p. 57).

Leisure research strategies may be produced for a variety of reasons: to 1) fill the knowledge gaps that exist in research-related information within the leisure-related field; 2) coordinate research across the leisure-related sectors for the purposes of developing strategic goals and direction; 3) contribute to evidence-based, outcome-led decision making in the public sector; 4) enhance linkages between performance measures and central and local government funding of research; and 5) enhance efficiencies in terms of the utilisation of organisational resources (Cushman et al., 2010).

While the present research does not constitute a leisure research strategy for New Zealand, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations contained within this report will assist agencies and organisations in New Zealand to work together in developing a national leisure research strategy. Internationally and within the Australasian context, there have been a number of recent examples of single and multi-sector research strategies, which reflect the growing recognition of the benefits that the development of such strategies can bring. A number of exemplar strategies are discussed in the following section.

1.5 A Review of International and National Leisure Research Strategies

A brief, narrative review of relevant research strategies produced by governments or research institutions is now presented. Relevant international examples include the Canadian Research Agenda for the Parks and Recreation Field (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2006); the Scottish Tourism, Culture and Sport Research Strategy 2004-2007 (Department of Tourism, 2005); and, of greatest significance to the present research, the previously mentioned Australian Leisure Research Agenda (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995). Relevant New Zealand examples include: a Research Strategy for the Sports Events Sector (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2007); an Outdoor Recreation Strategy (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009); a Government Agenda for New Zealand Research, Science and Technology (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2008); and a Draft Research Strategy for Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006). Each of these is discussed in more detail.

The aim of the Canadian Research Agenda for the Parks and Recreation Field (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2006) was to foster, facilitate and shape leisure-related research in Canada by building capacity, identifying research issues and facilitating the communication of research findings. Focus group discussions and workshops were undertaken with a range of leisure-related stakeholders, including parks and recreation groups and organisations, government agencies, universities, and research funding organisations. The Canadian agenda identified eleven key priorities for leisure research, including benefits and outcomes measurement, children and youth, community capacity building, community design and infrastructure, diverse and changing populations, environment and open space, leadership development, leisure behaviour and meaning, management and delivery systems, social challenges and interventions, and wellness and active living. Strategies for dissemination and sustaining the agenda were considered, although, it is unclear whether practical steps were taken to implement the agenda.

The aim of the Scottish Tourism, Culture and Sport Research Strategy 2004-2007 (Department of Tourism, 2005) was to note gaps in the body of research relating to sport, culture and tourism in Scotland and identify current and future research needs to inform funding and policy responses. The strategy was based upon a literature review of the aforementioned sectors and developed by policy experts within the Scottish executive. The strategy identified a number of gaps in the knowledge base of the sport, culture and tourism sectors, including cultural participation; social and economic measures of wellbeing and quality of life in relation to culture and sport; the long-term impact of the arts and sport on justice and rehabilitation; social and economic evaluation of the benefits of arts initiatives and sport; the impact of creativity in education, social and economic impacts of events; health impacts of participation for youth; and understanding the drivers of participation and drop out. While this strategy sought to integrate priorities across the culture, sport and tourism sectors, it was essentially a top-down strategy, which identified and promoted government-identified research needs without consulting the wider leisure community or industry. It is unclear how much Scottish (or New Zealand) leisure sector stakeholders would value such a prescriptive approach to agenda setting.

The Australian Leisure Research Agenda was undertaken in conjunction with federal government support for the purposes of stimulating the development, dissemination and use of research in the leisure field through identifying the current research and information needs of leisure research users; identifying areas where the needs of users have not been met; establishing a priority list of research needs; and developing a plan of action for the conduct of identified research priorities (Lynch & Brown, 1996). The Australian agenda was developed on the basis of information gathered from a survey of leisure sector stakeholders and through subsequent focus group discussions conducted in each state and territory across Australia (Lynch & Brown, 1996). The survey questionnaire was designed to identify current and future research needs and existing programmes and organisations which support or fund research within Australia. The focus groups brought together key representatives from across the leisure sector to review and comment on the results of the survey and assess tentative conclusions and identified priorities. The focus groups also assisted in identifying strategies for the implementation of priorities discovered in the research process. The final outcome of the survey and focus group discussions was the development of a national leisure research strategy, which identified and classified research priorities for the years 1995 to 1997. Top research priorities identified by the Agenda included leisure service delivery, program quality, equity, cultural appropriateness and demand, social benefits and the significance and impacts of leisure (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995). In addition to the identification of priorities, the Agenda also made a large number of recommendations regarding the resourcing of research and the Agenda's implementation. Due to the significant diversity that exists within the governance structures and population within Australia, it was deemed that a strategy for implementing the recommendations of the research be multi-channelled, diverse and flexible. The authors of the Agenda noted, however, that at the time the research was undertaken, there was no one organisation or agency within Australia which had the mandate or resources for overseeing the implementation of a national leisure research strategy (Lynch & Brown, 1996). Subsequently, the authors indicated that implementation of the Agenda has been relatively limited due, in part, to a lack of a dedicated agency or department capable of addressing the report recommendations (Lynch & Brown, personal communication, 2010).

While there are a number of international examples of integrated leisure research strategies, within New Zealand it is considerably more common to find examples of specialised strategies in the areas of sport, fitness, the arts, events, tourism, parks and recreation. Examples of specialised domestic strategies include a research strategy for the sports events sector (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2007) and an outdoor recreation strategy (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009). Each of these strategies is discussed.

The New Zealand Tourism Research Institute developed a research strategy for the sports events sector which aimed to identify and prioritise the research needs of this sector in New Zealand (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2007). Importantly, this strategy was developed for SPARC, which suggests that the sport and recreation agency closest to the government is comfortable working with external institutions in the development of research strategies – a characteristic that may be useful in the formulation of a leisure research strategy for New Zealand. In congruence with the present study, this research was divided into two phases: 1) an online Delphi survey of event experts to determine a set of overall research themes; and 2) an online survey of event-related organisations and stakeholders throughout New Zealand, which was designed to rank the research themes and identify specific research projects. Eight themes were identified from a small number of purposively selected experts in the sports events sector. Specific research priorities within each of the eight themes were then identified by a larger number of respondents utilising an online survey. The report identified demand in the sport event sector for further research and identified key priority areas for the sector, including: participants and visitors; social and community impacts; revenue generation; infrastructure; human resource management; roles of local, regional and central government; and economic impacts. While this research only evaluated the research needs

of the sports events sector, it did canvas the views of relevant stakeholders and successfully employed a multi-phase, mixed method approach to identify research priorities. These approaches are similar to the ones taken in the present research.

A further sector-specific, leisure-related strategy was recently developed by SPARC: An Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2009–2015 (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009). The development of this strategy has implications for the present research as outdoor recreation is one of the components of the leisure sector included in this report. The strategy focussed on increasing participation in outdoor recreation, building the responsiveness of sector groups to the changes that impact on participation and ensuring that pressures on natural areas used for outdoor recreation are managed effectively and in a way that is beneficial to the sector. In the pursuit of the above ends, the strategy outlined a number of priority focus areas and desired outcomes. Significantly, one of the key priorities identified in the strategy was the need for more comprehensive outdoor recreation research, particularly in the area of participation-related research, to help the sector plan and manage more effectively. The strategy also called for the development of a robust research framework for the sector. The present report contributes to the development of such a framework by incorporating outdoor recreation within the context of multi-sector leisure research and seeking to identify the relevant research needs of outdoor recreation stakeholders in that context.

Although specialised research strategies dominate the leisure landscape in New Zealand, there are a small number of examples of integrated strategising which are relevant to the present report: the government agenda for New Zealand Research, Science and Technology (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2008) and the draft research strategy for sport, recreation and physical activity (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006).

The government's agenda for research, science and technology is a high-level policy document, which was developed to provide clarity concerning government directions for publicly-funded science and to support long-term planning and enable more confident collaboration (Ministry of Research Science and Technology, 2008). This strategy is important as it reflects the government's regard for the benefits of integrated research strategies, such as providing direction and identifying priority areas for funding. One of the desired outcomes of the strategy was support for studies of the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders across the life course. Leisure is a significant contributor to physical, social and cultural wellbeing, and the development of an integrated leisure research strategy would fit well within the government's framework for developing research capacity within New Zealand in the coming years. Significantly, the government agenda also seeks to build closer links with public research institutions and improve the accessibility of research. The present research potentially contributes to achieving these outcomes by facilitating a cross-sector discussion regarding the need for and potential content of a leisure research strategy, and through the publication and dissemination of findings.

While the government's agenda for research, science and technology provides executive-level guidance for research activity in New Zealand, there is a further, more specific, example of integrated research strategising that has relevance to the present research. In 2006, Sport and Recreation New Zealand began to consider the need for a more integrated approach to the development of research strategies. In response to a clear gap in the field, Sport and Recreation New Zealand developed a draft research strategy for sport, recreation and physical activity in New Zealand (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006). The aim of the strategy was to provide direction to the sector to ensure that research meets sector needs, is undertaken and disseminated appropriately, and utilised effectively. The strategy also outlines some preliminary research priorities that SPARC regards as necessary areas of future endeavour, including: sport, recreation and physical activity participation; high performance; sport and recreation systems development; strategic research; and evaluation research. The research, however, has not progressed significantly beyond

the first phase, which included the development of a draft vision, objectives and framework for the research strategy. In keeping with the earlier work undertaken by SPARC, there is a significant opportunity for the present research to contribute to and expand (by the inclusion of the arts, outdoor recreation and non-sport aspects of community recreation) the continued development of a leisure-related research strategy through a programme of research undertaken in collaboration with leisure sector stakeholders.

1.6 Limitations and Knowledge Gaps in the Existing National Research Framework

Evidence from overseas and in New Zealand suggests that there is significant diversity in terms of the focus of research strategies and a relative dearth of integrated or multi-sector approaches, particularly in the leisure sector. Where integrated leisure research strategies have been developed or initiated, much of the impetus has come from central government agencies, rather than research institutions, such as universities, and there has not always been consistency in terms of consultation with leisure sector stakeholders. In contrast to this, the present research represents an independent and institutional initiative supported by academic networks, including the Australian and New Zealand Association of Leisure Studies (ANZALS), for assessing the extent of commonality in research needs and priorities in the New Zealand leisure sector which might support the potential development of a national leisure strategy. The present research also involved wider consultation with the leisure industry stakeholders, including both leisure research users and producers.

With regard to the literature discussed in the previous section, there is also a diverse focus on sport, physical activity, culture, recreation and parks throughout the existing research strategies and agendas, and relatively few examples of the integration of these related sectors. The concept of leisure is a potentially useful organising principle for the development of a research agenda as it can integrate the related fields of sport, community recreation, outdoor recreation, the arts, and, in context, tourism. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no attempt to explore the potential development of an integrated leisure-sector research strategy in New Zealand. While early investigations have been undertaken by Sport and Recreation New Zealand, the present research provides the opportunity to complete and extend this research.

1.7 Project Aims

The general aims of the present research are to identify the level of support for the development of a leisure research strategy and to assess the extent of common ground between the leisure sectors regarding research needs and priorities. Specific aims of this present research are as follows:

1. To identify the current state of research and information needs of the leisure sector in New Zealand.
2. To identify research themes and priorities of importance to leisure sector stakeholders.
3. To facilitate a discussion among leisure stakeholders concerning research needs for the sector and to foster collaborative research networks and working relationships.
4. To encourage discussion of a plan of action for the implementation and conduct of identified research priorities.

1.8 Scope of the Project

The scope of this project includes the arts, sport, community recreation and outdoor recreation sectors, but, as outlined above, excludes the tourism sector. Our definitions of each sector are relatively general and accommodated the widest possible range of potential stakeholders that could be considered to be part of each sector. The project covers national and local organisations that represent the interests of their members within the context of the leisure sector. For the purpose of this report, these leisure organisations are conceptualised as either *research producers* or *research users* and they cover the gamut of government, commercial and volunteer operations. Within each of the participant organisations, views have been sought from a range of employees, including Chief Executive Officers and senior managers, mid-level managers or policy analysts, frontline managers and administrators, volunteer office holders, and researchers or educators.

Chapter 2

Research Methods

2.1 Introduction

The research was divided into two distinct phases. In the first phase, a database of leisure-research users was developed and an exploratory survey undertaken. In the second phase, an in-depth, postal survey was conducted, and a follow-up focus group discussion was held at the offices of Sport and Recreation New Zealand in Wellington.

In this section, the research design and process are discussed and an overview of the survey methods employed is presented. The sampling and recruitment strategy are then discussed and the data are reported and analysed. The limitations and strengths of the methods employed in this research are considered in a later, 'Discussion', section.

2.2 Research Design and Process

The research involved a number of distinctive design elements: mixed methods incorporating both quantitative (survey research) and qualitative aspects (focus group discussions); cross-sectional data collection; and a multiphase design to accommodate an exploratory research phase. The mixed methods approach consisted of two quantitative surveys – an exploratory survey and a main research survey – and a focus group discussion involving leisure sector stakeholders. Mixed methods were employed to provide triangulation of research findings. A cross-sectional design was employed due to the exploratory nature of this research, which sought to identify existing support for a leisure research strategy and identify potentially relevant themes and priorities that may form part of such a strategy. A multiphase research approach was also used to address the exploratory aspect of the research, and the early research phase provided the foundation for the secondary and substantive research phase – an approach not previously employed by other researchers in the development of leisure research strategies (Lynch, Brown, & Koloff, 1995).

The research involved six steps, which were separated into two distinct research phases:

1. Identifying existing research strategies and agendas in leisure-related fields in Australasia and internationally to explore methods of strategy development and implementation and identify limitations and gaps in local leisure-related research strategies.
2. Identifying groups and organisations in New Zealand generating and/or using leisure-related data that may be appropriate for inclusion in this research as potential leisure research stakeholders.
3. Conducting a preliminary survey of leisure-sector stakeholders to ascertain the current state of leisure research utilisation and level of support for the development of research agenda.
4. Providing information and responses leading to the development of a survey instrument to be distributed in the second phase of the research to leisure, sport and arts/culture agencies throughout New Zealand.
5. Conducting a main survey of a broad cross section of the arts, sport, outdoor recreation and community recreation sectors to explore the potential content and context for a leisure sector research strategy.

Phase 1

Phase 2

6. Undertaking a follow-up focus group discussion (stakeholder forum) to identify whether the themes and priorities identified as most significant through the process of data analysis were, indeed, congruent with the views of the forum.

2.3 Sampling and Recruitment

All phases of the research utilised a non-random method of sampling. Participants were purposively selected because of their involvement as either volunteers or paid employees of national or regional arts, community recreation, sport or outdoor recreation group. A purposive method of sampling was undertaken primarily because only the views of those with an in-depth knowledge of the leisure sector were sought. The process of participant selection involved structured database and internet searches and consultation with academics and organisations to build a database of eligible organisations – those which either used or produced leisure, sport or arts/cultural research. Participants for the exploratory and main surveys were recruited via an invitation letter. Follow-up letters were also sent to all potential participants to increase the response rate. Focus group participants were recruited by phone or email.

Preliminary searches of internet databases and organisational websites were undertaken to: 1) locate relevant local and international examples of leisure-related research strategies; 2) identify the contact details for key leisure sector stakeholders, particularly those groups and organisations that either used or produced leisure, sport or cultural research; and 3) develop a survey instrument to be distributed to leisure, sport and culture agencies throughout New Zealand.

With the exception of sports trusts and local Councils, only leisure, sport or cultural agencies with national offices were included in the research users/producers database. Organisations or groups that met the above criteria were added to the database. In addition to database and organisational website searches, a Delphi-style survey was employed whereby staff and post-graduate students within the Environment, Society and Design Division of Lincoln University and a variety of industry experts were emailed to pool their knowledge of further agencies which could be added to the database. Early discussions among project researchers, post-graduate students and other academics regarding the content of the stakeholder list led to the inclusion of outdoor recreation within the definition of leisure employed in the current research. The final stakeholder list of 418 organisations and groups incorporated a variety of sports trusts, sports organisations, district and regional councils, arts and cultural organisations.

2.4 Survey Methods

Survey methods were employed in both the exploratory and main research phases. A survey was determined by the research team to be the most efficient means of obtaining stakeholder feedback throughout the course of the research due to the far-flung location of potential respondents and practical difficulties associated with co-ordinating face-to-face meetings between national representatives of sports, arts or cultural organisations and agencies. To facilitate participation among respondents, surveys were self-administered and distributed via post.

2.4.1 Survey 1: Exploratory Survey

The first phase survey was designed to explore current leisure sector research utilisation and to evaluate levels of support for the development of a sector-wide research agenda. In particular, the preliminary survey sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Which, if any, types of research do leisure sector stakeholders currently utilise?

- Which organisations, agencies or institutions, if any, do leisure sector stakeholders consult for the purposes of obtaining research data?
- Which types of future research, if any, are required by leisure sector stakeholders?
- Which funding options, if any, exist to meet current research needs of the leisure sector?
- Is there sector-wide support for the development of a leisure-related research agenda serving the arts, sport, community recreation and outdoor recreation sectors?
- If a leisure research agenda were to be developed for the sector, which organisation should have responsibility for its implementation and administration?

The exploratory survey (Appendix 1) was composed of 16 open and closed ended questions. Questions 1 to 8 required respondents to provide contact and organisational details. Questions 9 to 16 addressed existing research and information relevant to leisure, arts, outdoor recreation and sport. In particular, this section asked respondents to consider the following: current sources of research information utilised; current research reports of use to the organisation; main sources of funding for research in the respondent's sector; organisational research planned or currently underway; future research needs for the respondent's sector; potential funding opportunities to address future research needs; importance of developing a national strategy for the leisure sector; and appropriate organisation to implement a national research strategy.

The content of the exploratory survey was developed in consultation with leisure-sector academics and experts and by considering the methods employed in local and international leisure-related research strategies. The work of Lynch et al. (1995) was particularly valuable with regards to the development of both the exploratory and main research surveys. After the completion of the exploratory survey, which identified broad-based support for a sector-wide leisure research strategy (discussed in the following results section), the second research phase was undertaken, the results of which are discussed in the results and analyses chapters which follow.

2.4.2 Survey 2: Main Survey

The aim of the main survey was to identify preferred research themes and priorities amongst key leisure sector stakeholders in New Zealand. The survey also sought to identify which organisation(s) or agencies stakeholders believed should be responsible for implementing a national leisure strategy. In particular, the main survey sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the composition and characteristics of the leisure-related sectors participating in the current research?
- What are the top research priorities for each of the leisure related sectors?
- What is the relevance of across-sector research themes among leisure stakeholders?
- Which tasks within across-sector research themes receive the highest priority across the leisure research sector?

The main survey (Appendix 2) was composed of four sections: Section A, B, C and D. Section A required respondents to identify their role within an organisation or group and to identify which sector their organisation or group belonged to (arts, outdoor recreation, sport, community recreation). In Section B, respondents were asked to answer one of four questions related to their particular sector only. Each sector-specific question required respondents to select and order the three most relevant research priorities for the sector from a list of 10 to 14 possible choices. In Section C, respondents were asked to rate the relevance of research priorities associated with eight prescribed research themes. (Each research theme had 6 to 12 priorities, and scores for priorities were recorded on a 7-point Likert-type scale running from not-at-all relevant to highly relevant.) In

Section D, respondents were asked to rank a list of eight prescribed research themes in order of relevance to their particular sector. The research themes and priorities presented to stakeholders in the main survey were developed incrementally from analysing responses to the exploratory survey, accessing the knowledge of local leisure experts, and reviewing themes and priorities outlined in overseas research strategies, particularly those in Australia and Canada.

2.5 Focus group Discussion

Upon completion of the main research survey, a focus group discussion was undertaken in Wellington with a number of leisure sector stakeholders. The aims of the focus group discussion were:

- To present the preliminary results for the main survey and achieve triangulation of research findings through the discussion of results and early conclusions.
- To identify any projects currently underway by participating agencies, which may impact on the present research.
- To stimulate discussion on how research in the New Zealand leisure sector should be facilitated and managed.
- To raise issues and facilitate discussion among participating agencies with regard to the development of a national leisure research strategy.

Invitations to the focus group workshop were sent to a purposively selected group of stakeholders who were regarded as broadly representative of the leisure industry and included arts, community recreation, sports and outdoor recreation organisation representatives. A small group of focus group participants were assembled in Wellington in May, 2009 for the discussion. Two of the primary researchers facilitated the discussion, and all comments were recorded by a research associate to facilitate analysis.

2.6 Data Analysis

All data analysis for the present research was undertaken using the statistical software SPSS version 17.0, with the exception of the focus group discussion. SPSS was used to analyse the results of the exploratory and main surveys. A brief overview of the analyses undertaken during the course of the research follows.

In the context of the exploratory survey, descriptive statistics were employed to address the research aims. Percentages were employed to display common types of current or planned research, research needed by leisure industry sectors, current sources of research information available, funding options available to meet research priorities, and appropriate organisations to implement a potential future strategy. Level of support for the development of national leisure strategy was recorded using a 5-point Likert-type scale, and means and standard deviations were calculated to report the result.

The following analyses were undertaken for the purposes of meeting the aims of the main survey. The first section of the main survey addressed the respondents' sectors and roles. The frequency of participation for each sector and the percentage of total responses attributable to each sector are reported. Next, the frequency of respondents in different organisational roles is outlined and the percentage of total responses attributable to individuals in different sector roles is reported.

The second section of the main survey addressed research priorities for each individual sector. Firstly, weighted research priorities are presented for each sector as a percentage of total responses. Secondly, weighted research priorities are also presented by sector role (CEO/Senior manager and other role) as a percentage of all responses. Finally, weighted research priorities are presented by organisation type (research user or research producer) within each sector.

The third section of the main survey addressed common research themes for all sectors. With regards to the analysis, initially the mean scores for each theme are presented by individual sector. Mean scores for each theme are then presented by organisational role and, finally, by organisation type. A micro-analysis of research theme priorities is also presented.

The fourth, and final, section of the main survey addressed the relevance of common research themes. Initially, weighted research themes are identified by sector and expressed as a percentage of all responses. Secondly, weighted research themes are identified by organisational role and expressed as a percentage of all responses. Finally, weighted research themes are identified by organisation type (research user or research producer) and expressed as a percentage of all responses.

In addition to the surveys, focus group data also assisted in the analysis. Focus group comments were recorded by a research associate and transcribed to a Word document. Comments were summarised and used to assist in the interpretation and discussion of research findings. As previously stated, focus group comments were employed primarily to triangulate findings generated from the surveys.

Chapter 3

Results

This section presents the results of the exploratory and main surveys. Discussion of these results is provided in the following section.

3.1 Exploratory Survey Results¹

Sixty-five organisations out of a total of two hundred and seventy one approached by the researchers responded to the exploratory survey, which represented a response rate of approximately 24 percent. While this response rate was relatively modest, those individuals who participated provided a sufficient range and depth of data to allow the researchers to develop a classification of research themes and priorities (Table 1).

Table 1
Participation in the Exploratory Survey by Sector Group
(N= 63)

Sector groups	Percentage of respondents
Regional government	29
Sport, fitness and health sectors	25
Outdoor, adventure and parks sectors	13
Recreational arts	13
Education, research and consulting	13
Community and volunteer sectors	3
Central government	3
Other sector groups	2

When asked about current and planned research within their sector, leisure stakeholders were primarily concerned with sport and physical activity reviews, strategies and activity participation and needs analysis, and facility infrastructure and design studies (Table 2).

1 Percentages reported in this section may total more than 100 because respondents could select more than a single response to some questions.

Table 2
Current and Planned Research
(N= 36)

Types of current or planned research	Percentage of respondents
Sport and physical activity reviews and strategies	33
Activity participation surveys and needs analysis	17
Facility infrastructure and design studies	14
Arts and culture reviews and strategies	8
Site-specific surveys	6
Outdoor recreation reviews and strategy	6
Community recreation reviews and strategy	6
Training needs	3
Outcome effects and impacts	3
Outdoor recreation, environment and open space	3
Other	3

In terms of respondents' identification of research needs in their respective sectors (Table 3), they were most concerned with activity participation and needs analysis, and, to a lesser extent, outcomes effects and impacts.

Table 3
High Priority Research Needs
(N= 54)

Research needed (top priorities only)	Percentage of respondents
Activity participation surveys and needs analysis	24
Outcome effects and impacts	11
Sport and physical activity reviews and strategies	9
Management and delivery	9
Facilities infrastructure and design	9
Sports fitness/performance	7
Programme development and evaluation	7
Outdoor recreation reviews and strategies	6
Community recreation reviews and strategies	4
Barriers to participation	4
Other	9

Respondents were also asked to explain how these research priorities would benefit their respective industry sectors. The most commonly cited benefits were: 1) to promote community and social participation (28%); 2) evidential/evaluation (23%); 3) organisational programme development and evaluation (21%); 4) organisational management and delivery (15%); and 5) other reasons (13%).

A variety of sources of research information were utilised by respondents and their organisations, according to the exploratory survey; although, government-generated and in-house (organisation generated) research were identified as the most significant (Table 4).

Table 4
Sources of Research Information
(N= 60)

Sources of research information	Percentage of respondents
Central government surveys	75
In-house research	70
University of polytechnic conducted research	55
Regional and local government studies	53
Private consultancy / company research	47
Other sources	25

In regard to available funding options for meeting research priorities (Table 5), central and local government funding were identified as the most likely sources. Little confidence was expressed by stakeholders regarding the availability of funding from the private/commercial sector.

Table 5
Funding Options for Research
(N= 55)

Funding options available	Percentage of respondents
Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC)	38
Local and regional government	16
Commercial / private funding	13
Other government sources	9
Government research agency	7
Department of Conservation	5
Tertiary education organisation	5
Creative New Zealand	4
Other sources	2

Stakeholders expressed a high degree of support for the development of a national leisure research agenda. In response to a question concerning the importance of a national leisure research strategy, respondents produced a score of 3.9 (*sd* = 1.2) on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which ran from very unimportant (1) to very important (5), indicating that, on average, stakeholders viewed the development of a national research strategy as an important aim of the leisure sector. Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) was identified by leisure sector stakeholders as the most appropriate organisation to implement or administer a leisure research strategy (Table 6). A total of 28 percent of leisure sector stakeholders selected SPARC as the most appropriate agency; although, responses also suggested some wariness at locating responsibility in one, single, organisation which already had its own, specific, mission.

Table 6
Organisations to Implement a National Leisure Research Strategy
(N= 47)

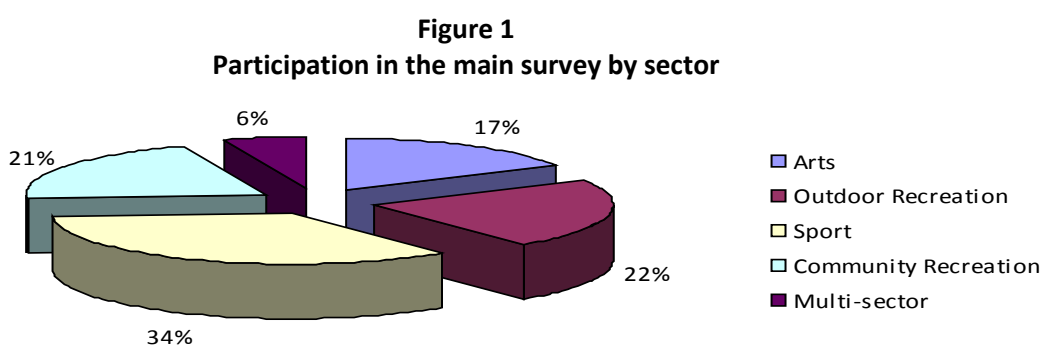
Appropriate organisation	Percentage of respondents
Sport and Recreation New Zealand	28
Cross industry and sector approach	24
Unsure / don't know	20
Cross government agency	15
Tertiary education organisations	4
Professional associations	2
Private sector companies	2
Local government	2
Other	2

3.2 Main Survey Results

The main survey was mailed to four hundred and eighteen groups and organisations in October, 2008. After multiple follow-up correspondence was undertaken, a total of 221 completed responses were received, which represented an acceptable response rate of 53 percent.

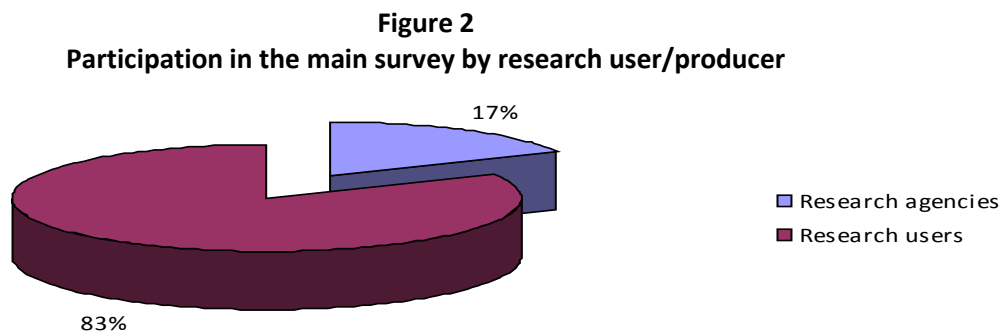
3.2.1 Sector participation

Respondents to the main survey were asked to identify which leisure-related sectors they belonged to: arts, outdoor recreation, sport or community recreation (Figure 1). A multi-sector option was added after surveys were returned to accommodate respondents who had identified their organisation with more than one sector. Sports organisations dominated the pool of respondents; although, the arts, community and outdoor recreation were also well represented. Only a small number of organisations identified with more than one sector.



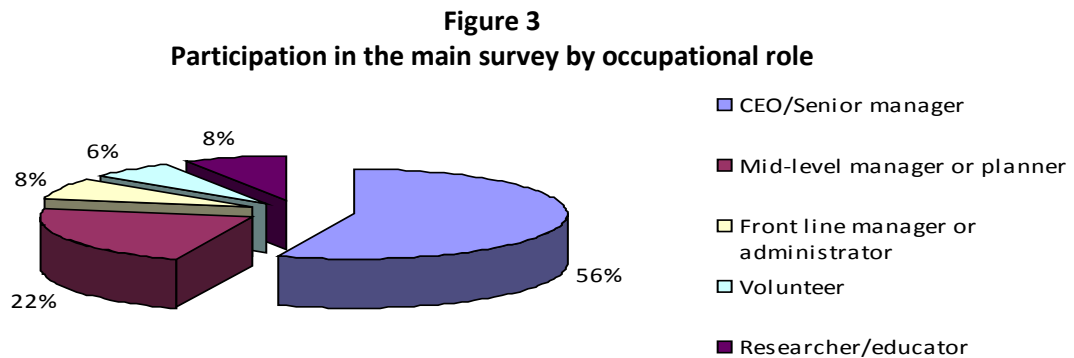
3.2.2 Research users relative to research producers

Respondents were automatically categorised as either leisure research users or research producers based on an assessment of their organisation's stated functions (Figure 2). The overwhelming majority of respondents were identified as users of research, rather than producers.



3.2.3 Occupational roles of main survey respondents

Respondents were also asked to identify their position within their organisation or group (Figure 3). Chief executive officers, senior managers, mid-level managers and planners comprised a significant proportion of all responses in this research. The response from researchers and educators was comparatively low.

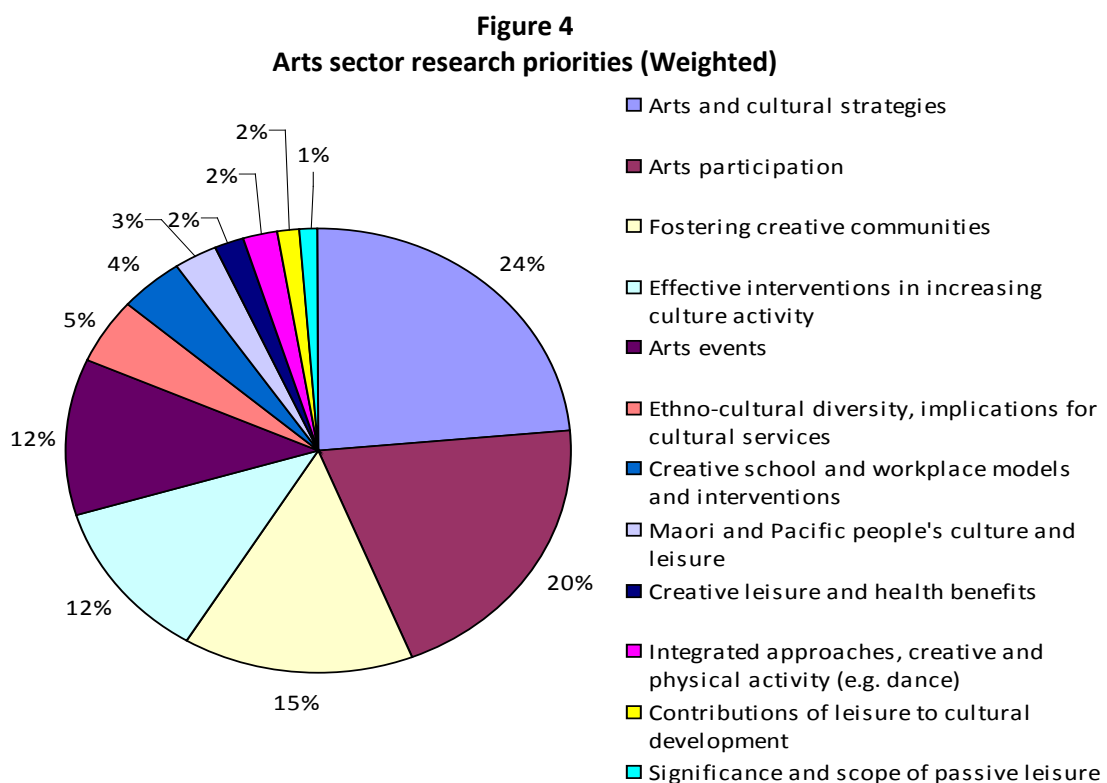


3.2.4 Research priorities by sector

In addition to the categorising of leisure stakeholders by sector, agency type and occupational role, sector-specific research priorities were also identified. Respondents were asked to identify the top three priorities for their particular sector from a list of 10 to 14 possible priorities.

3.2.5 Arts

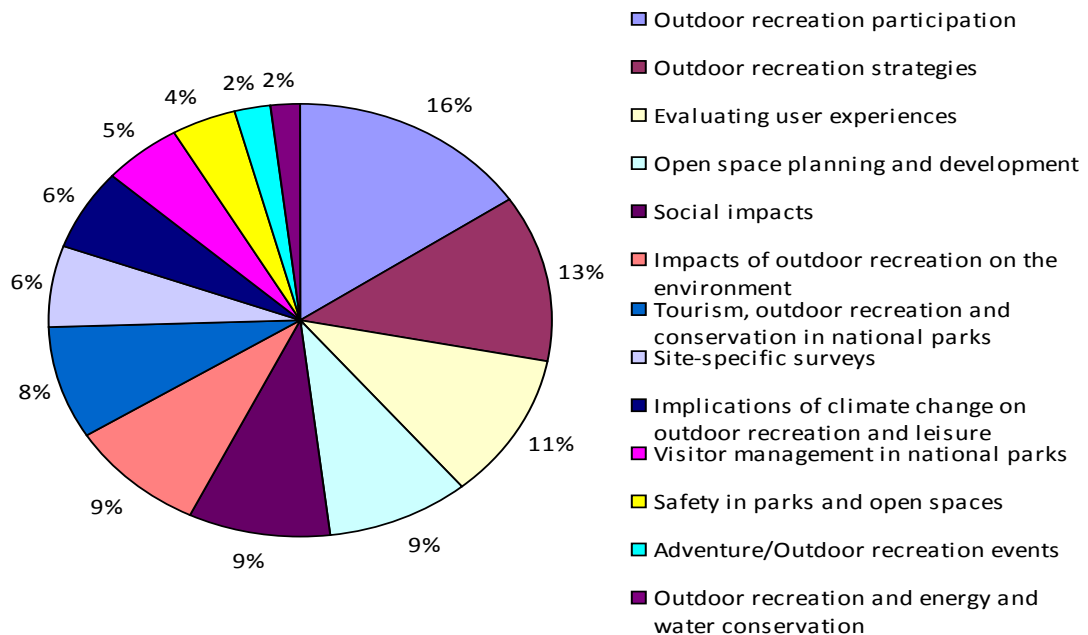
The single top research priority for the arts sector based on frequency of response was *arts and cultural strategies* (Figure 4). After weighting all responses to include second and third priority responses, arts and cultural strategies remained the overall top priority for the sector.



3.2.6 Outdoor recreation

The top research priority for the outdoor recreation sector based on frequency of response was *outdoor recreation participation* (Figure 5). After weighting all selections to include responses in the second and third priority response fields, outdoor recreation participation remained the overall top priority for the sector.

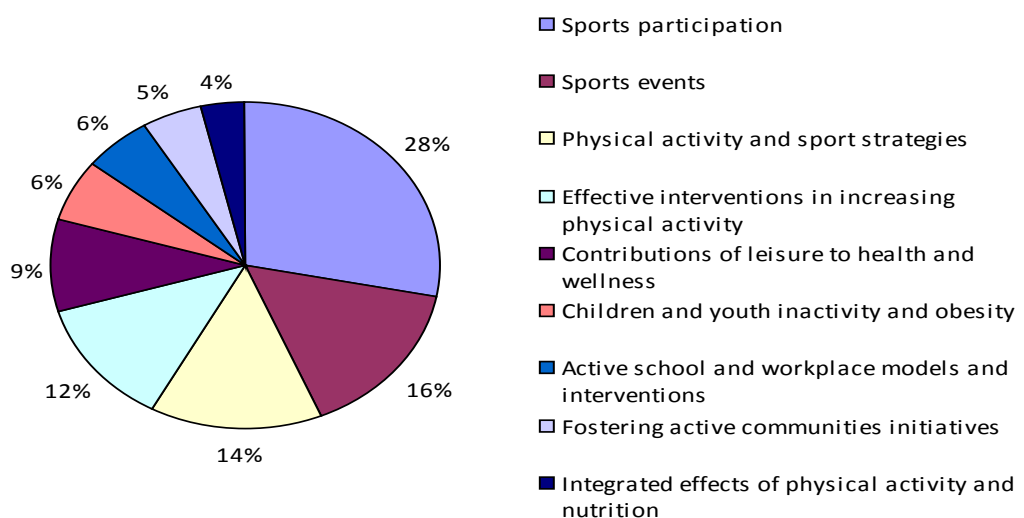
Figure 5
Outdoor recreation sector research priorities (Weighted)



3.2.7 Sport

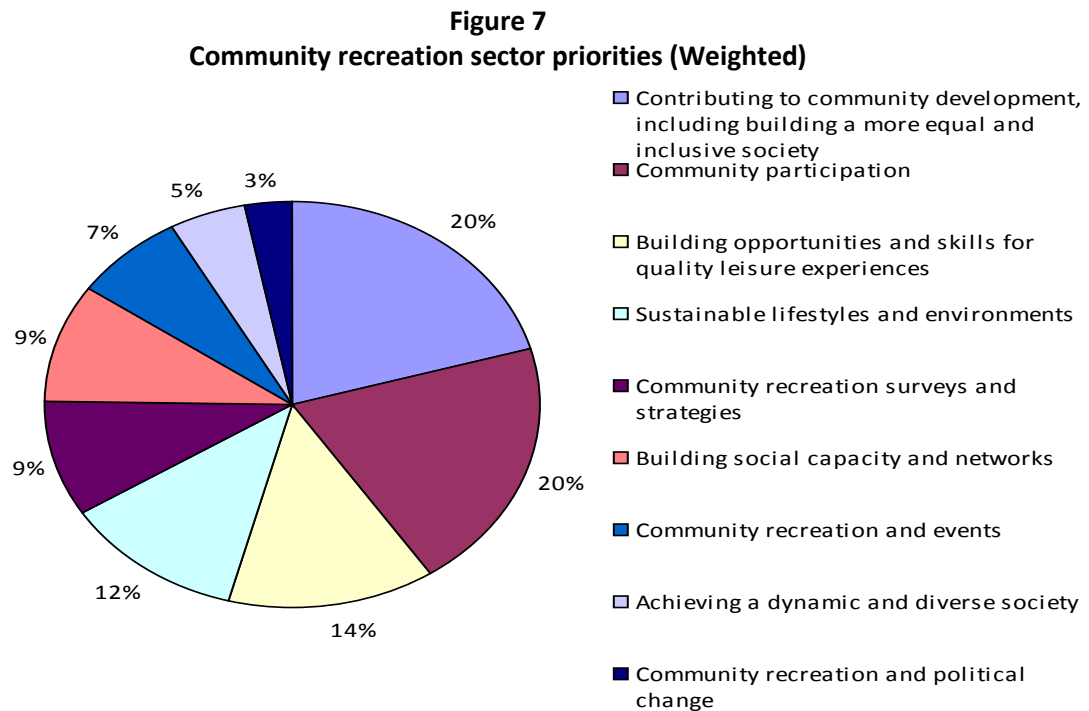
The top research priority for the sport sector based on frequency of response was *sports participation* (Figure 6). After weighting all selections to include responses in the second and third priority response fields, sports participation remained the overall top priority for the sector.

Figure 6
Sport sector research priorities (Weighted)



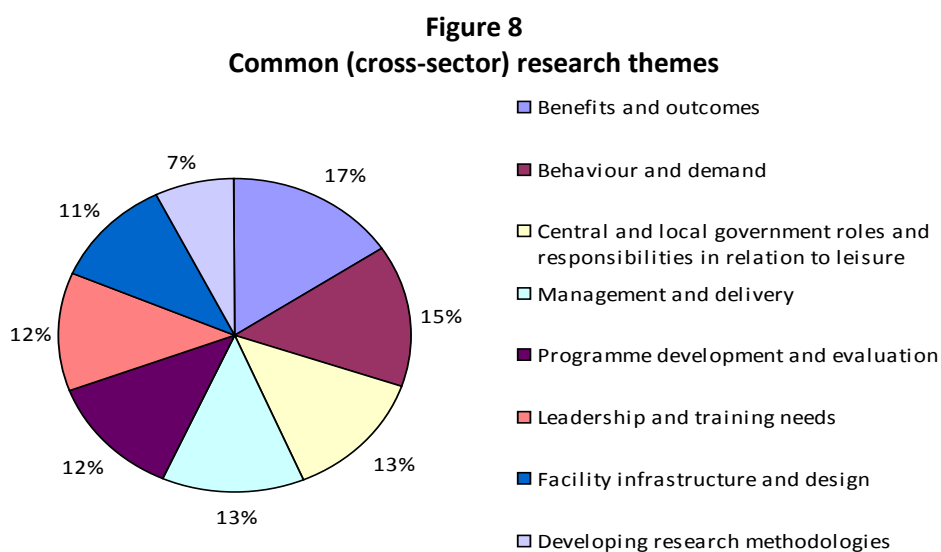
3.2.8 Community recreation

The top research priority for the community recreation sector based on frequency of response was contributing to community development (Figure 7). After weighting all selections to include responses in the second and third priority response fields, contributing to community development remained the overall top priority for the sector.



3.2.9 Common research themes

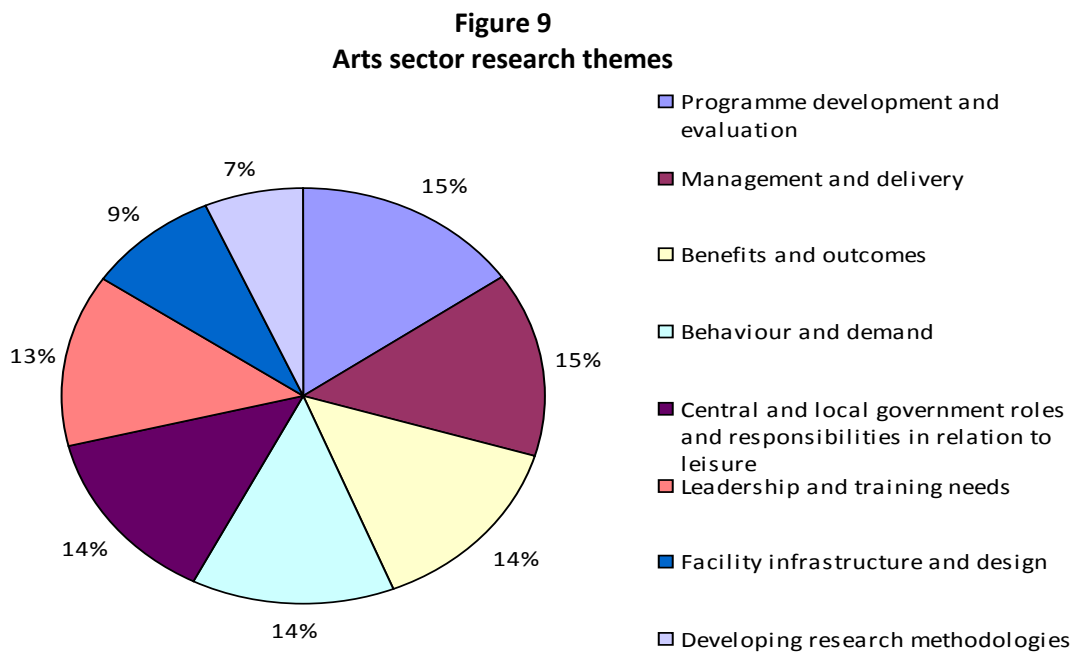
Once respondents had commented on relevant research priorities for their individual sectors, all respondents were presented with eight possible, cross-sector research themes (Figure 8), which were developed from responses to the exploratory, Phase One, survey. Respondents were asked to select and rank the themes in the order of relevance to their own organisation or group. Across all sectors, the main research themes were *benefits and outcomes* (17 per cent) and *leisure behaviour and demand* (15 per cent), but preferences were relatively widespread across organisations.



Once an across-sector response had been identified, a sector-by-sector analysis was undertaken to explore which of these themes was most relevant to each sector and which might require specialist consideration in the future development of a leisure research strategy. The themes identified by each sector are now presented.

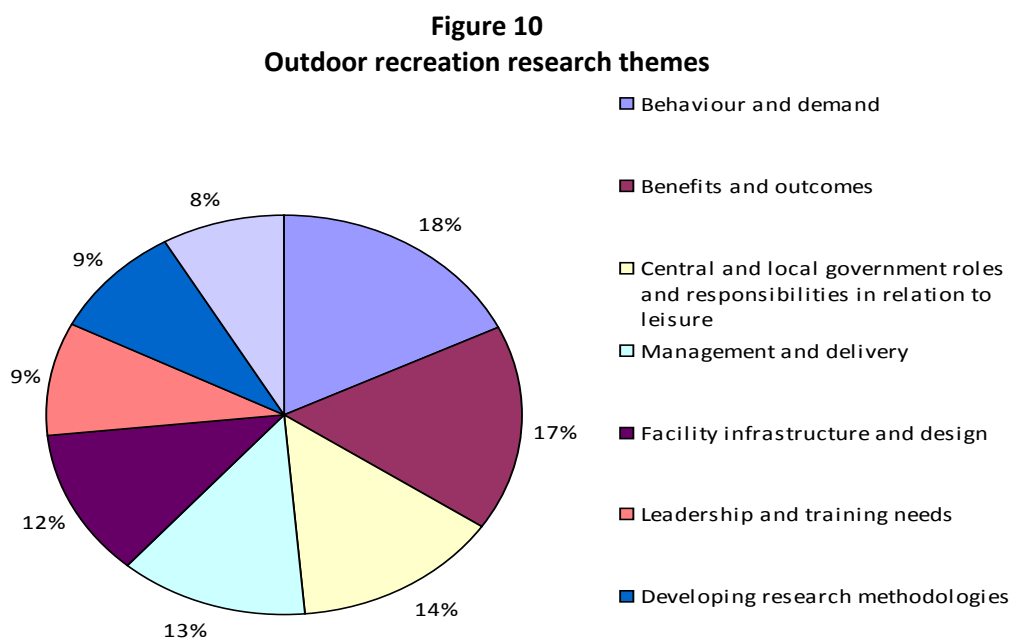
3.2.10 Arts

For the arts sector, the most relevant research themes included *programme development and evaluation* and *management and delivery* (Figure 9).



3.2.11 Outdoor recreation

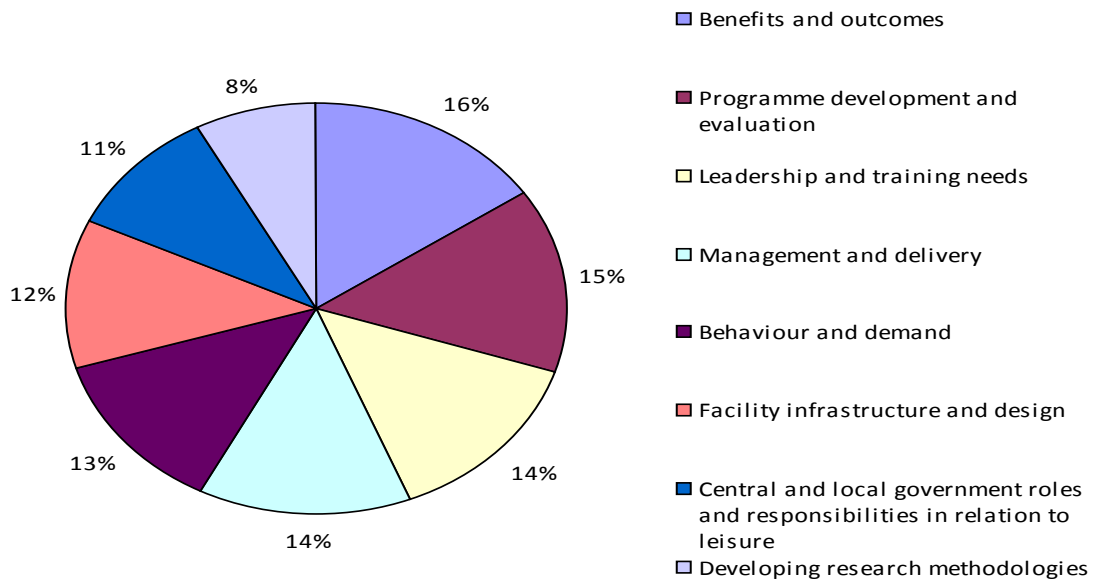
In the outdoor recreation sector, *behaviour and demand* and *benefits and outcomes* were identified as the most relevant research themes (Figure 10).



3.2.12 Sport

In congruence with the arts and outdoor recreation sectors, sport sector respondents identified *benefits and outcomes* and *programme development and evaluation* as the most preferred research themes (Figure 11).

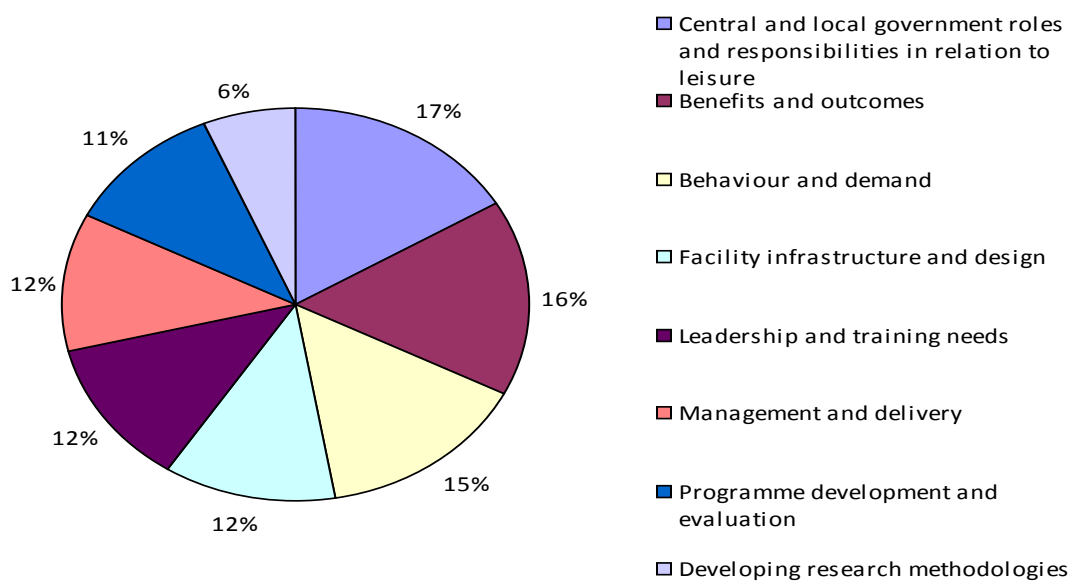
Figure 11
Sport sector research themes



3.2.13 Community recreation

In contrast to the other three sectors, respondents from the community recreation sector identified *central and local government roles and responsibilities in relation to leisure* as the most relevant research theme. Like the other sectors consulted, *benefits and outcomes* and *behaviour and demand* were also highly rated (Figure 12).

Figure 12
Community recreation sector research themes



3.2.14 Common research sub-themes

In this section of the main survey, evaluations of across-sector research sub-themes are presented. Respondents were asked to rate each sub-theme on a 7-point Likert-type scale, running from *Not relevant* (1) to *Highly relevant* (7), to determine those aspects of each research theme that were most important to leisure sectors.

Figure 13
Leisure behaviour and demand sub-themes (N = 196)

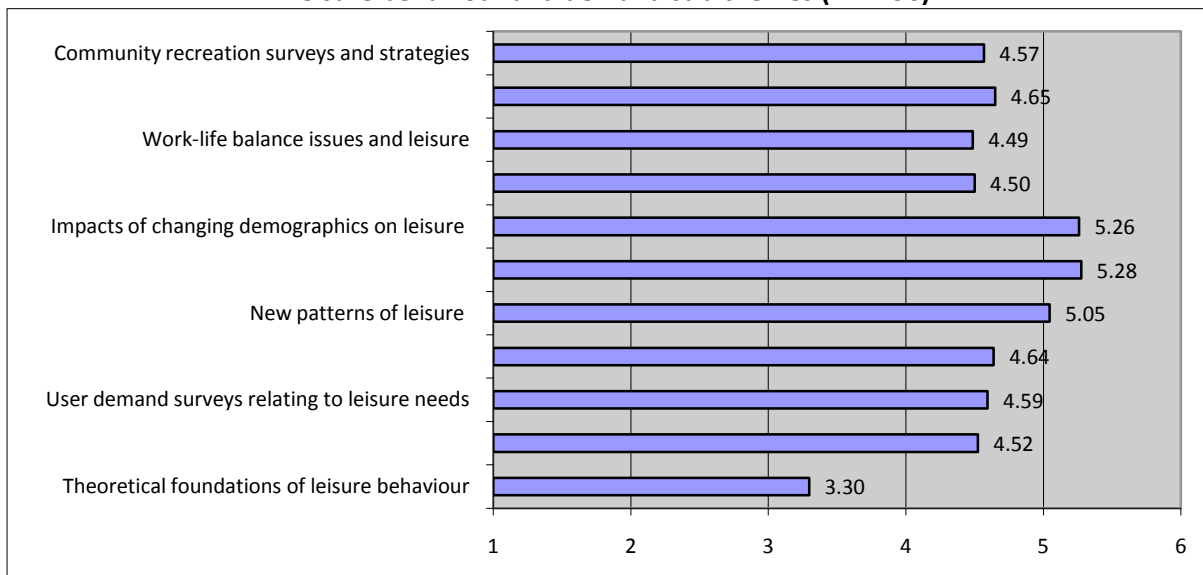


Figure 14
Benefits and outcomes sub-themes (N = 183)

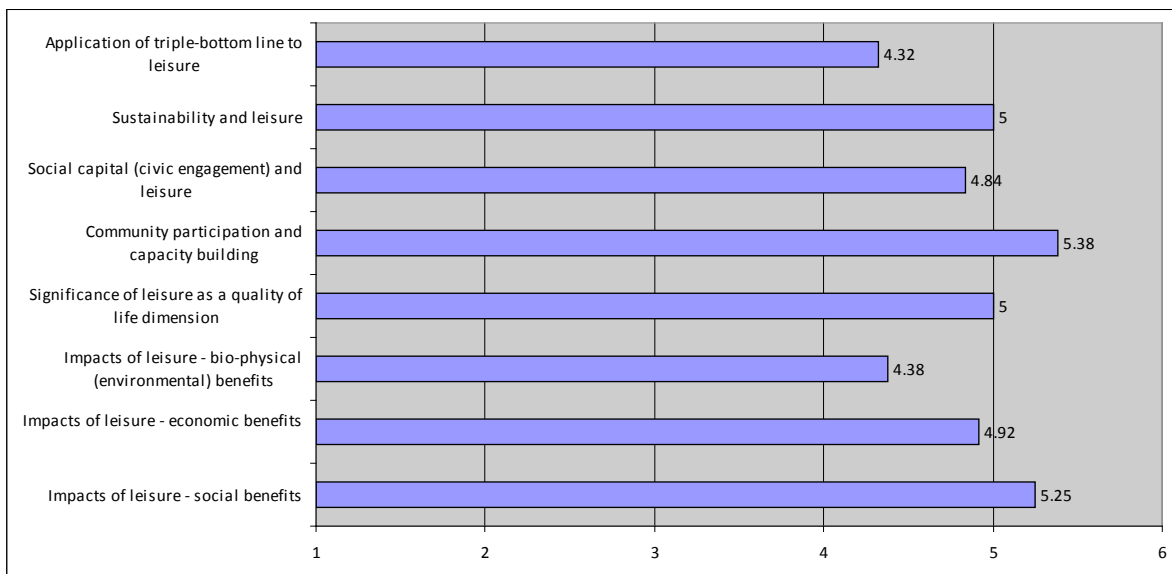


Figure 15
Facility infrastructure and design sub-themes (N = 196)

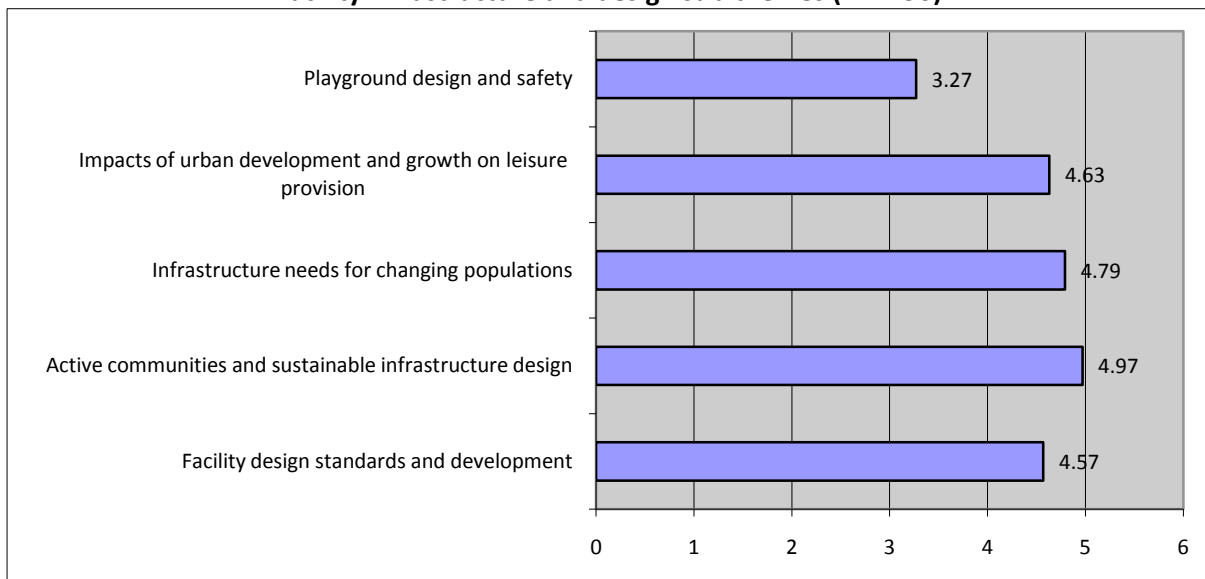


Figure 16
Programme development and evaluation sub-themes (N = 196)

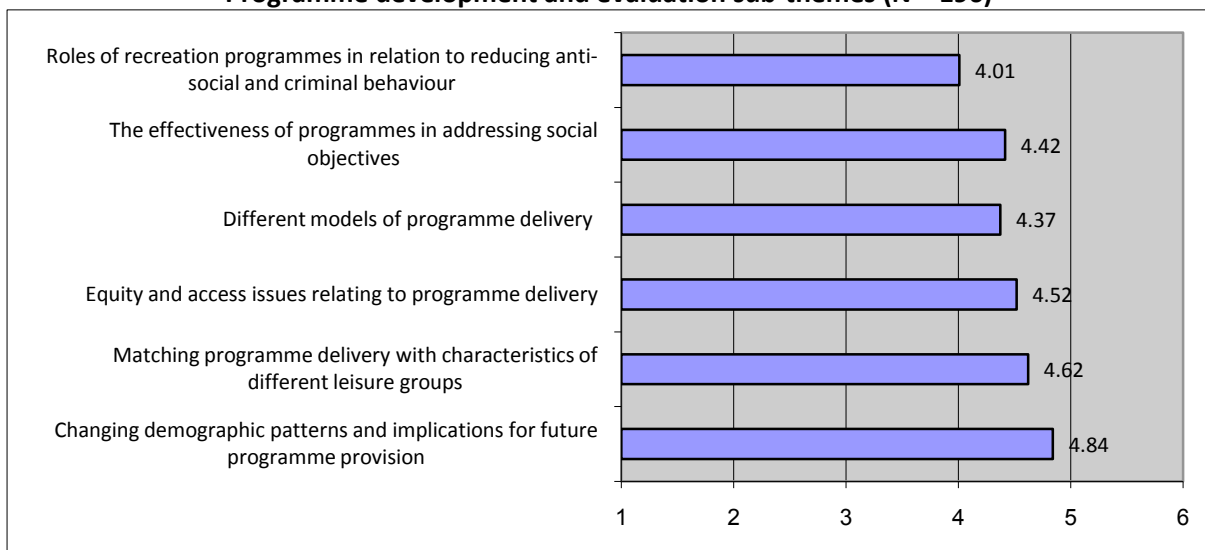


Figure 17
Management and delivery sub-themes (N = 196)

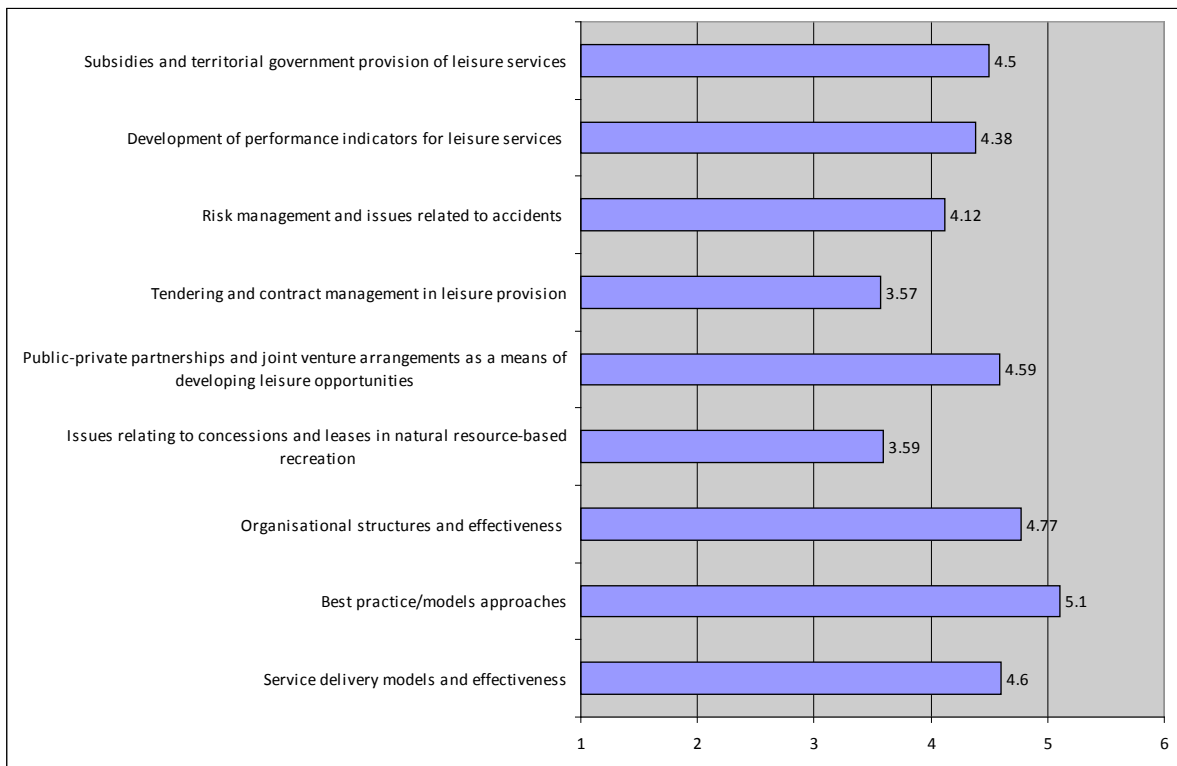


Figure 18
Leadership and training needs sub-themes (N = 197)



Figure 19

Central and local governments' role and responsibilities in relation to leisure sub-themes (N = 198)

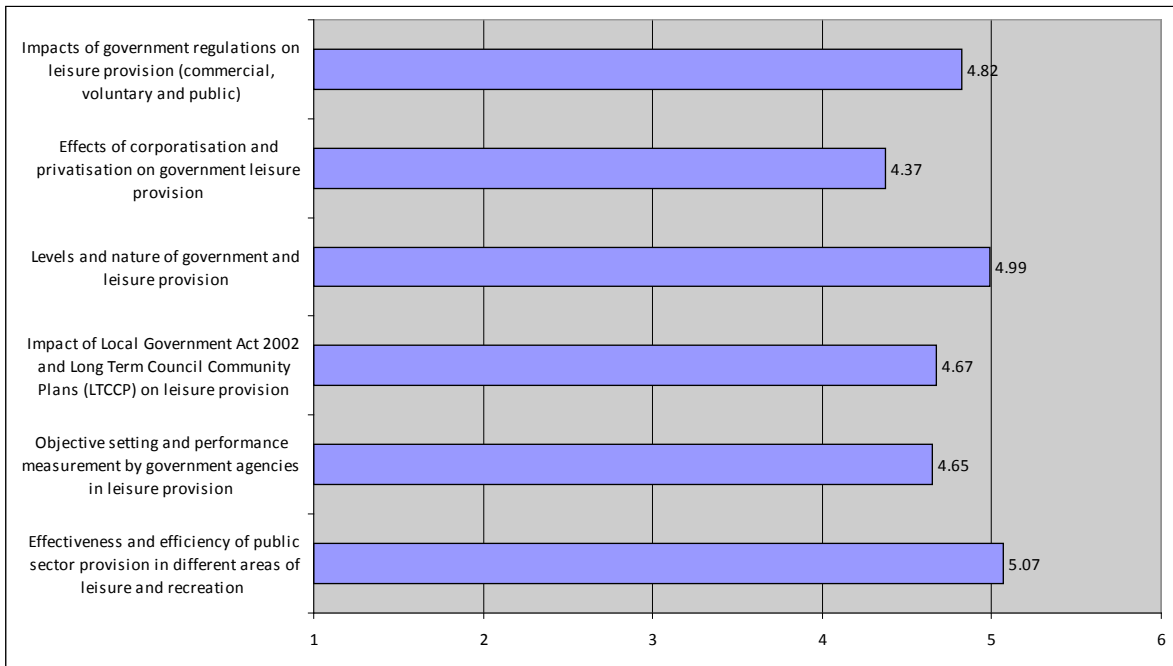
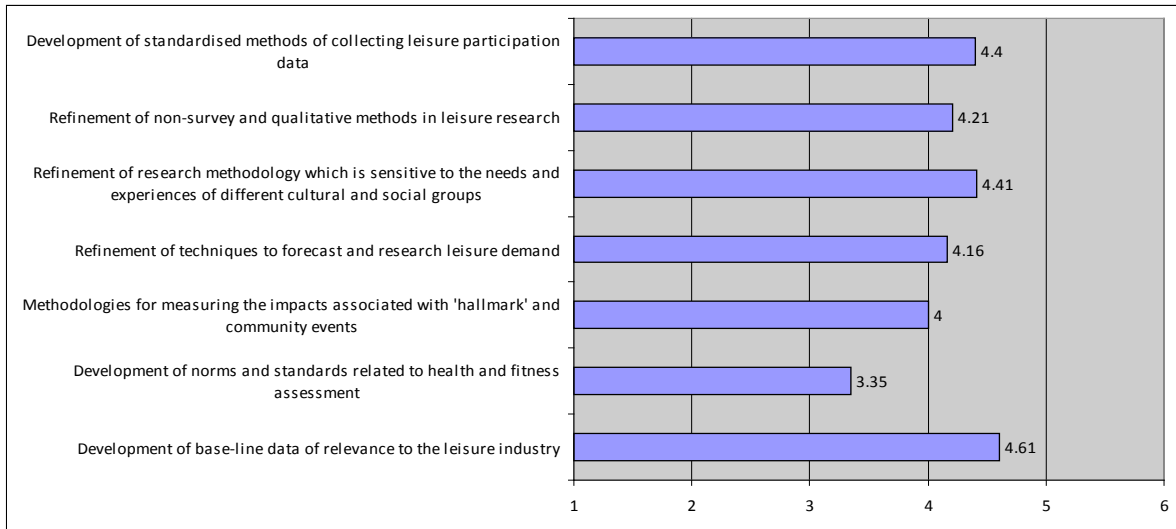


Figure 20

Developing research methodologies sub-themes (N = 197)



3.3 Focus Group Discussion

Following the completion of the main survey, a focus group workshop was held in Wellington with key leisure sector stakeholders to discuss the results of the project. Issues raised by leisure sector stakeholders related to not only the results of the research, but also communication between research organisations and possibilities for implementation. The main issues raised in the workshop relevant to the present results are summarised below:

- Focus group participants were concerned to know what other universities and research institutions were doing with regards to the development of a research agenda for the leisure sector. It was clear from the workshop that there was a desire for communication and efficiency in research strategising.
- Stakeholders asked for clarification of research outcomes and suggested that researchers be very specific when identifying research results and the meaning of these for the sector or for the development of a subsequent leisure research strategy.
- Concerns were raised that leisure research outcomes identified in the report should reflect the needs of communities and local government, such as linking leisure and health/wellness. Hence, emphasis was placed on ensuring that any future strategy reflects the needs of national and local government and of those they represent – including grass roots organisations. Leisure stakeholders were clearly concerned that the research and any subsequent strategising should have a ‘bottom-up’ focus.
- Leisure sector stakeholders were also concerned that any research outputs and eventual research strategies that may incorporate the results be widely disseminated, so they could be of use to the sector and not ‘locked away’ in universities or government departments.
- Stakeholders commented that any future leisure research strategy developments would need to have a clear action plan to provide a pathway for achieving outcomes. There was a concern to avoid ‘knowledge for knowledge’s sake’ and ensure that the outcomes of any strategy resulting from this research have an ‘applied’ focus.
- Concerns were raised by key stakeholders about the persistence of significant silos within the research community and within the leisure sector. The stakeholders felt that there would thus be significant challenges for researchers to get diverse organisations to work together and agree on shared themes and priorities for an integrated strategy.
- Avoiding duplication in research efforts was another concern of leisure-sector stakeholders. Stakeholders felt that cross-government research actions could result in gains, but that greater communication between all leisure research producers was required.
- The need to align research priorities with organisational objectives and outputs to achieve broad implementation was also seen as a challenge for future research.
- Finally, stakeholders felt that some large-scale organisations, such as SPARC, may have a current research agenda, but do not necessarily have a good understanding of future research needs across the breadth of the leisure sector. This suggests a potential role for the present research in informing the development of a future research agenda.

Chapter 4

Discussion

4.1 General Discussion

The results of the exploratory survey suggested that there was a high degree of consensus among leisure sector stakeholders with regard to the need for an integrated, national leisure research strategy. Respondents indicated that such a strategy needed to have an applied focus on the everyday concerns of leisure sector organisations, such as participation, performance reviews, facility and infrastructure matters, and outcomes and effects of organisation policy and action. This result was not surprising as research may be seen as a luxury expense in organisations – especially ones with restricted, service-dominated, funding – so any results must represent value for money in terms of producing knowledge related to core services: increasing participation, reducing operational costs and inefficiencies and improving access to or sustainability of necessary facilities or infrastructure.

Respondents to the exploratory survey indicated that if a national leisure sector research strategy were to be developed, such a strategy should be implemented by a large, central government organisation, such as Sport and Recreation New Zealand. SPARC is arguably a well funded and centrally coordinated agency that is known to the majority of leisure research organisations. As a consequence, it would be relatively efficient to utilise SPARC's existing networks and resources to disseminate, monitor and support an integrated leisure research strategy. (We are unsure whether SPARC's role as a major financial contributor to many sports, community and outdoor recreation organisations would provide an organisational imperative among leisure groups to subscribe to such a strategy.) SPARC's mandate, however, does not currently extend to the arts and cultural endeavours and it may be difficult for SPARC to implement a leisure research strategy that includes organisations that are outside its field of expertise. Furthermore, as with any central government agency, there is considerable scope for a largely 'top-down' development and implementation of leisure research strategy which may lead to the exclusion of a range of minority interests and unnecessary politicisation of the strategy.

With regard to the main survey, respondents represented a wide variety of organisations within the leisure sector; although, numerically responses were dominated by sports-related groups. Both leisure research users and producers were consulted during the course of the research, but a definite majority of respondents identified their organisations as leisure research users. In terms of organisational roles, main survey respondents were mostly drawn from CEOs, senior planners or mid level planners and managers, which suggests that responses are likely to be representative of the knowledge of senior decision making staff within leisure sector organisations. The dominance of senior organisational personnel among survey respondents was encouraging as this group is likely to be the most well-informed with regards to the research needs and capacities of their organisations.

The weighted results of the main survey identified sector-specific research priorities for the arts, community recreation, sport and outdoor recreation sectors. Information on sector-specific research priorities is relevant to the present study as it highlights the diversity of research requirements within the leisure sector and identifies areas where a targeted approach may be required in the development of a future, integrated leisure research strategy. With regard to the arts sector, research relating to participation and the development of arts and cultural strategies were identified. These priorities represent a balance between the pragmatic need to maintain a strong participant base and also organisational imperatives to ensure that the strategic direction of arts groups is appropriate and sustainable. In congruence with the arts sector, outdoor recreation

stakeholders also identified participation and strategy development as sector specific needs, reinforcing the necessity of multi-faceted research response addressing both participation and longer-term strategic thinking. Sport sector stakeholders also prioritised participation as a research need, but in contrast to the other sectors, identified sports events as an area requiring further research. This may be due to this significant financial risks involved with running events and the need to fully consider the opportunity costs of such activity. Sports events are also a significant aspect of the cultural life of many New Zealanders, and research may be required to ascertain the less tangible benefits of such activity. As with the other sectors which participated in the survey, community recreation groups identified participation as a high priority research need. In contrast to other sectors, however, contributing to community development was a top priority for this sector. This suggests that the community recreation sector is concerned with evaluating its performance with regard to the achievement of social objectives. This can be expected as an aim of community recreation is to address a range of salient local issues through the provision of recreation services.

Although all sectors which participated in the main survey responded to different, sector-specific, sets of questions, research into participation was identified as a key priority for all groups and organisations. This may reflect concerns about the changing nature of leisure participation, issues associated with dropout rates, or the need to maintain sufficient numbers to ensure that government or other funding remains at a sustainable level.

When asked to prioritise a common set of all-sector research themes, leisure respondents identified 'benefits and outcomes' and 'leisure behaviour and demand', after the results were weighted, as of most importance. Research regarding the benefits and outcomes of leisure are likely to be an important concern to arts, outdoor recreation, sport and community recreation groups, because such information is invaluable for the promotion of these sectors to new participants, providing evidence-based support for funding applications, and allowing organisations to determine the efficacy and success of a variety of activities, events and approaches. Research concerning leisure behaviour and demand is likely to be important for sector groups because it concerns the utilisation of leisure services and styles and the evaluation of participation and/or drop out rates within particular groups or organisations. Such research is likely to be useful when undertaking strategic planning and identifying resource or financial requirements.

Within the identified research themes for all sectors, a range of sub-themes were also highlighted. A discussion of all sub-themes is beyond the scope of this report, but a comment on the composition of the 'leisure behaviour and demand' and 'benefits and outcomes' themes, which were highly rated by all sectors, is appropriate. With regard to the 'benefits and outcomes of leisure', the most important sub-themes for respondents were 'community participation and capacity building', 'the social benefits of leisure, 'the sustainability of leisure' and 'leisure as a quality of life dimension'. These sub-themes reveal a concern among leisure sector stakeholders for the long-term social and community influences of leisure, which is seen as a significant contributor to the well-being and quality of life of individuals. Among all sectors, the most important aspects of the 'leisure behaviour and demand' theme were factors influencing leisure participation, impacts of changing demographics on leisure, and new patterns of leisure. The leisure behaviour and demand sub-themes identified by stakeholders suggest that the leisure sector is concerned with understanding the composition and motivations of participants and responding to evolving leisure needs and styles.

Analysis of common research themes was also undertaken by sector to identify whether there were any major differences between the arts, community recreation, sport and outdoor recreation sectors. After weighting responses, arts sector groups identified 'management and delivery' and 'programme development and evaluation' as the most important research themes. These themes relate to the assessment of operational matters, which could lead to improvements in organisational efficiency. The top research themes for the outdoor recreation sector included 'benefits and

outcomes' and 'leisure behaviour and demand', which reflected the general themes identified among all-sectors as top priorities. Like the other sectors, sport organisations identified benefits and outcomes as an important research theme. In contrast to other sectors, however, sports organisations selected 'programme development and evaluation' as an important research theme, which suggests that it is important for sports organisations to constantly evaluate and update programmes to ensure that they are meeting organisational objectives and participant needs. Community recreation organisations also identified research related to benefits and outcomes as an important research theme. In contrast to other sectors, however, community recreation groups identified research regarding 'central government roles and responsibilities in relation to leisure' as an important theme, which suggests the reliance of the community sector on central and local government funding and support and a concern among sector groups with the evaluation of the performance and involvement of the public sector.

As previously stated, our research does not present a fully articulated leisure research strategy. The aims of the research were to determine levels of support for the development of a leisure research strategy, identify research themes and priorities which are important to all leisure sector stakeholders, and develop recommendation which can contribute to the potential future development of a national leisure research strategy. The present research may constitute a first step and in the future, it is hoped that an integrated leisure research strategy can be developed based, in part, on the present research findings. It may be appropriate for a research-intensive institution, rather than a central government agency, to develop the first iteration of such a strategy, to maintain a degree of political independence and a position whereby discussions and data can be freely considered with a range of leisure sector stakeholders whose operations are not dependent upon the research institution for policy guidance, funding or facility provision (as they may be in the case of a government agency).

4.2 Limitations of the present research

There are a number of limitations associated with the present research which should be taken into account as these results are considered. Prominent limitations included the purposive selection of organisations and groups, non-response rates, and exclusion of certain organisations or groups.

The purposive selection of organisations and groups from the World Wide Web which was undertaken during the creation of a database of leisure stakeholders may have resulted in some groups being under-represented or excluded from the research. Purposive internet searches have been utilised by others in the early stage preparation of research agendas (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2007). It is acknowledged, however, that there may be some organisations, particularly those with a largely volunteer network, which may not maintain a presence on the internet. In an effort to limit the selection bias associated with a small number of researchers developing a database of leisure stakeholders, academics and post graduate students at Lincoln University were consulted to determine whether any significant organisations or groups were overlooked.

Due to the purposive nature of the sampling, there was a significant bias in the pool of participants towards sports-related organisations. This was largely anticipated, however, as this bias reflects the domination of the New Zealand leisure sector by sports groups and organisations. Offsetting this bias somewhat, respondents were given the opportunity to answer general sector-wide questions as well as questions specific to their own sector within the main survey. Furthermore, data analysis was undertaken sector-by-sector to ensure that the themes and priorities relevant to the arts, sports, outdoor and community recreation communities as well as the sport sector were identified and presented for discussion and dissemination.

Surveys were sent to specific individuals within organisations who were deemed to have a good overall knowledge of the research needs and capacities of their particular group. Potential respondents included CEOs, senior managers and planners, front line staff, volunteers, researchers and educators. While feedback was deliberately sought from a variety of individuals within an organisation (for some larger organisations, feedback from more than one individual was sought), responses to the questions are likely to have varied significantly on the basis of personal experience in a particular role, knowledge of organisational structures and processes, and level of formal education. Another related limitation concerns the possibility that those in senior positions with arguably the greatest level of organisational knowledge may not always have had the time to complete the required surveys. In order to address this limitation, data analysis was also undertaken according to sector role. (Some organisations also took proactive steps to increase the validity of their organisations response, by discussing answers to the survey in a group context and preparing an organisation-wide response.)

A majority of respondents represented leisure research users. This was expected as there are more organisations catering for the practical needs of leisure participation, rather than for leisure research, policy formation and strategy in New Zealand. The predominance of leisure research users in the sampled organisations also implies that the results of the study – the research priorities identified – are more likely to reflect pragmatic considerations relating to leisure participation and behaviour and operational and administrative matters, rather than theoretical or policy related concerns.

While the response rate for both surveys was in keeping with the type of methodology employed, there were still a significant number of non-respondents in each research phase. It is difficult to determine whether individuals and organisations which failed to acknowledge the request to participate did so for reasons related to, or unconnected with, the research questions or topic. It is possible that those organisations which chose not to respond to the questionnaire may have been able to contribute significant insights to the research topic. A consequence of non response may be that some perspectives concerning the content and feasibility of a national leisure research strategy may not have been identified through the present research process; although, this is a difficulty that confronts most survey research. Despite the inevitable non-response, there were 65 respondents to the preliminary survey and 221 respondents to the main survey, which permitted a statistical analysis of research findings. In particular, the responses provided a level of detail concerning sector-wide research needs and priorities and support for a national leisure research strategy. A key recommendation of this report is also that further research be undertaken with specialist groups prior to the final development of a national leisure research strategy. Such an approach will ensure that minority and potentially overlooked issues are identified prior to final strategy development.

A number of local organisations and groups were deliberately excluded from the study as it was deemed that they were less likely to have direct input into decisions concerning research than the relevant national body. It is, however, likely that many local groups or organisations would have valued the opportunity to contribute to the discussion regarding the research needs of their sector. (The decision to exclude local groups was a pragmatic one based on time and resource constraints of the project.) If further work is undertaken to develop a national leisure research strategy, it would be desirable for wider consultation to be undertaken that potentially includes more local organisations and research users.

While there have been a number of justifiable limitations associated with this project, the research has also resulted in a number of beneficial outcomes. Much like the Australian exercise, the current project has allowed those in the leisure industry to come together and collectively consider the research needs for the sector. A significant number of leisure research users and producers contributed to the research and this has resulted in the identification of a number of significant

research priorities and themes which received broad support across the entire leisure sector. A number of recommendations have also resulted from the research process, and the realisation of these will assist in the dissemination and further utilisation of the research outputs.

4.3 Recommendations and Future Directions

1. The results of the present research indicated that there were few major differences between the sectors in terms of research priorities and themes identified as significant. 'Leisure behaviour and demand' and 'benefits and outcomes' were identified as relevant to all sectors. This suggests that there is sufficient cause to consider the arts, community recreation, sport and outdoor recreation as part of a larger, integrated, leisure sector. Such a conceptualisation could usefully be employed in the future by research institutions and government organisations for the purposes of achieving greater levels of efficiency and cooperation with regard to the development of research strategies.
2. The relatively high level of consensus among leisure sector research users and producers and the wide support for the *development* of a national strategy, suggests that further efforts could be made to develop an integrated, leisure sector research strategy for the arts, community recreation, sport and outdoor recreation. The development of this strategy could be led by either a research institution or appropriate government agency, but should also be the product of further consultation across the sector. Moreover, it may be appropriate for an organisation with sufficient resources to work in conjunction with other research organisations or institutions on the development of such a strategy. A partnership between a research institution and a government agency may be appropriate in this instance and may lead to more effective uptake and implementation of such a strategy. Such an approach may also help to overcome tensions that exist within research strategising between theoretically informed and/or university driven research and the (arguably) more practical, management-oriented and/or applied research of central and local government (Cushman, Gidlow, Espiner, Toohey, & Annear, 2010).
3. An appropriate government agency, such as SPARC, Creative New Zealand, the Department of Conservation or Statistics New Zealand, perhaps via a cross-agency committee, should lead the *implementation* of a national leisure research strategy. A framework would need to be developed to support leisure sector stakeholders to align some of their research endeavours with wider strategic themes and priorities. The coordinating government agency should also regularly review and update the strategy, once implemented, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of leisure sector stakeholders. A national register of leisure-related research should also be created, which could provide access to past and current research. While this wider focus on the leisure sector may be counter to current policy of government agencies, which focus on a narrower set of functions (including organisations with a statutory focus on conservation, sport or the arts), we are convinced that an across sector approach with coordination from a central agency (either new or existing) would be an appropriate response.
4. Given the range of participants in this study and its coverage of sector specific and wider research priorities, it would be appropriate and effective for a future leisure research strategy to be based on the results presented in this report. Wider consultation with local or regional stakeholders and specific user groups (such as individual sectors and interest groups) should, of course, be undertaken in the preparation of a final leisure research strategy to ensure that it represents a variety of concerns, including those specific to minority groups or particular regions. The significance of incorporating the tourism sector, notably those aspects of tourism which relate most closely to leisure, could usefully be explored.
5. There is potential for the development of a cross-agency structure to achieve a greater integration of research and other outcomes for the leisure sector. Such an agency could be

charged with implementing, reviewing and updating a leisure research strategy and coordinating the diverse needs of different stakeholders and might appropriately be attached to an existing government agency, such as SPARC, Creative New Zealand, the Department of Conservation or Statistics New Zealand (Cushman et al, forthcoming.). The Australian Leisure Research Agenda, which provided much of the impetus for the present research, was premised on the assumption that the implementation of a leisure research strategy should not require the creation of new agencies or the creation of new functions within existing organisations. However, it is the opinion of the present researchers that complete implementation of a leisure research strategy would most effectively be achieved through the development of a new cross-agency structure located in one of these central government organisations, catering for 'active', 'passive', 'outdoor' and 'creative' pursuits. We believe that this could potentially lead to greater efficiencies and reduced competition between sectors for scarce government resources. Given previous work by SPARC in promoting research strategies in sport, recreation and physical activity (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006), advocating the development of a robust research framework within an Outdoor Recreation Strategy (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010) and funding a sports events sector research strategy (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2007), it would be logical for SPARC to take the lead role in this undertaking.

6. It may also be appropriate to develop both a parallel strategy which focuses on Maori research needs and interests in the leisure field and an agenda which specifically addresses minority issues as a subset of a national leisure research agenda. This strategy could focus on such issues as disability, sexuality, ethnicity, geography and others.
7. Before further work is undertaken to develop a national research strategy for the leisure sector, it is recommended that a programme of consultation is undertaken with Maori and also with minority ethnic groups. Further consultation should also be undertaken with representatives from disabled groups and communities who often have difficulty accessing leisure services where provision is aimed at the more able bodied.
8. Research intensive organisations, such as New Zealand universities, are increasingly facing pressure to specialise, rationalise and generate a profit. With such imperatives, there may be opportunities for closer collaborations between leisure industry organisations and universities – with universities being in a position to provide research services, at a modest cost (through the utilisation of postgraduate student researchers and existing facilities or equipment, for example), to those within the industry who may have otherwise lacked the funding, expertise or time to undertake needed research. By way of example, Lincoln University has recently developed a new research centre or group (Land, Environment and People – LEaP) which aims to partner with industries, government and other researchers to achieve greater dissemination of high quality research outcomes. Strong partnerships have already been developed between the LEaP research group and other tourism, outdoor recreation, conservation, fisheries and landscape interests, and there is definite scope to enhance connections with leisure industries.
9. The present research indicated that leisure sector stakeholders depend significantly on government funding for research purposes and to a lesser extent on local government and tertiary institution funding. Considering the costs of research, which may be prohibitive to some volunteer organisations in particular, it would be useful to develop a data base of potential funding sources for leisure-related research as part of the development and implementation of a national leisure research agenda.
10. The results of the present research should be formally discussed with key leisure research agencies for the purposes of disseminating knowledge obtained through the research process and generating support for the development of a national leisure research agenda that draws on the present results. In particular, relevant government agencies, including SPARC, DOC and Creative New Zealand and other research institutions, including universities and polytechnics, should have access to the research results and outcomes and be encouraged to consider them.

Further discussions will also need to be undertaken with key stakeholders concerning the resourcing and responsibilities for future developments associated with a national leisure strategy.

11. There have been difficulties and barriers associated with developing broad-based research agendas in both Australia and New Zealand in recent years, which have resulted in the stalling of agendas, failures to achieve full implementation, and failures to achieve national distribution and uptake. Many of these problems are associated with the lack of a centralised, coordinating organisation, which has the resources, influence and reach to effectively promote a national agenda. It is important that barriers to the implementation of a national leisure research strategy are identified and that all stakeholders contribute to building a consensus around the future directions of such a strategy. A centralised organisation, either new or existing, would be required to successfully coordinate the strategy. Considering the comparatively small size of New Zealand and the closeness of governance structures to leisure providers and participants, there is every opportunity that a national research strategy can be successfully developed and implemented in this country.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Exploratory survey

Survey of Representatives of Industry Sectors *Please complete and return promptly (see last page)*

DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORT

This survey is being undertaken by Lincoln University in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies. The aim of this survey is to identify existing research and future research needs in the leisure, arts, outdoor recreation and sport industry sectors, as well as to identify existing programmes/organisations which support or fund related research.

By completing this survey, you will be contributing to the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation and Sport Research Strategy. We are interested in the opinions of individuals, groups and organisations in different sectors of the leisure industry (incorporating recreation, sport and fitness, outdoor recreation, parks and arts), as well as individuals, groups or organisations which either produce and/or use leisure-related research (e.g., consultants, research agencies, central government agencies, universities, regional and local councils).

It is important that you, your group or your organisation be represented in the survey so that:

- *completed, ongoing* and *planned* research in different sectors of the industry can be identified;
- a list of research needs in different sectors of the industry can be developed; and
- existing programmes/organisations which support or fund research within different industry sectors can be determined.

(Please note that the code at the top of the page is for administrative purposes only; no individual responses will be identified in any discussions of results.)

You are welcome to discuss the questions with colleagues and take advice as needed in completing them.

If you would prefer to complete this survey in electronic form, please contact any one of us by e-mail and we will send you a 'Word' version. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND

SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRY SECTORS

(Please answer in the spaces provided; use extra sheets if necessary)

1.	Name:			
2.	Organisation:			
3.	Postal Address:			
4.	Physical Address:			
5.	Your Position:		E-mail:	
6.	Telephone:	Area code: Number:	Fax:	
7.	Which industry sectors best and primarily describe your own, your group(s) or your organisation's area(s) of activity? Possible examples might include: community and voluntary; government recreation; sport and fitness; outdoor recreation/parks; arts; gambling services; research or data collection; education. (Please list up to two industry sectors.)			
	Main industry sector:			
	Other industry sector (if applicable):			
8.	Please provide any additional information about your area(s) of activity or interest which might have a bearing on your research needs and/or strengths. (Including any affiliations you may have with other organisations and industry sectors.)			

IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING RESEARCH AND INFORMATION RELEVANT TO LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORT

9.	<p>With reference to your own, your group(s) or your organisation's area(s) of activity, please indicate the current sources of research information, <i>specific to leisure, arts, outdoor recreation and/or sport</i>, that you use (e.g., databases, registers).</p>	
	<p>Tick <u>any</u> that apply:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Private Consultancy/Company research</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> University- or Polytechnic- conducted research</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Regional and Local Government studies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Central Government surveys (e.g. Sport and Active Leisure Survey or Cultural Experiences and Cultural Spending Survey)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In-house research</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other source (1) Specify.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other source (2) Specify.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other source (3) Specify.....</p>	
10.	<p>From the research sources you selected in Question 9, please list <u>up to four</u> publications or reports. (Please include title(s), date(s) and name(s) of researcher(s) or agency/agencies.)</p>	
	10.1	
	10.2	
	10.3	
	10.4	
11.	<p>What are the main funding sources for research in your area(s) of activity? For example, commercial or private organisations, SPARC, DOC, Creative New Zealand, Waitakere City Council, University of Otago. (Please be as specific as possible.)</p>	
12.	<p>With reference to your own, your group(s) or your organisation's area(s) of interest, please list any leisure, arts, outdoor recreation or sport research studies which are <i>currently underway</i>, or are <i>due to commence in the next two years</i>.</p>	
	<p><i>Study title and name of researcher or agency conducting the study</i></p>	<p><i>Status of study (underway or proposed)</i></p>
13.	<p>What research is needed in your industry sector? Please list up to 5 research needs, in order of priority, for your sector or area of interest, which are not covered or only partly covered by the research studies mentioned in Question 12. (You may wish to cite research priorities within existing strategic plans, where these exist, your own knowledge and input from your colleagues.)</p>	
	<p><i>Research projects needed (List in Priority</i></p>	<p><i>How will this research benefit your industry sector?</i></p>
	Priority 1	
	Priority 2	
	Priority 3	
	Priority 4	
	Priority 5	
14.	<p>For the research priorities you listed in Question 13, what funding possibilities exist for each?</p>	

	Priority 1
	Priority 2
	Priority 3
	Priority 4
	Priority 5
15.	How important to you is it that a national research strategy for leisure, arts, outdoor recreation and sport, be developed? Please circle appropriate response on the following scale: Very Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important
16.	With the <i>implementation</i> of a national research strategy in mind, which organisation(s) do you think would be most appropriate for this role?

Thank you for completing the survey.

Returning Completed Survey

Please return in the Freepost Envelope provided. (New Zealand Leisure Research Strategy, Freepost 36, Lincoln University, CANTERBURY.)

by: _____(Date)

Focus groups

We hope to conduct half-day focus groups with industry representatives, at mutually acceptable times and in major centres, to gain further insight into the information gathered in this survey, including the development of a national research strategy.

If you, or a member of your group(s) or organisation(s), would consider involvement in such a focus group, please tick the box.

‘Yes I/my organisation would consider an invitation to attend a half-day focus group.’

(Please tick)

Appendix 2 Main survey

Survey of Representatives of Industry Sectors

Please complete and return promptly (see last page)

This survey questionnaire is organised into four sections:

- (A) Locating your sector;
- (B) Research priorities for your sector;
- (C) Common research themes;
- (D) Ranking common research themes.

Please respond to **all four** sections and **all** relevant questions in each section.

In answering the questions, it is important that you approach them from the point of view of your organisation or group.

Section A: Locating Your Sector

Which of the following best describes your *primary* role in your organisation or group?

(Please tick ✓ **one** box)

- ₁ CEO/Senior Manager or Planner/Senior Executive Officer
- ₂ Mid-level Manager/Planner/Policy Analyst/Administrator
- ₃ Front-line Manager/Administrator
- ₄ Volunteer Office Holder
- ₅ Researcher/Educator

Which of the following broad descriptors/sectors is 'best fit' for your organisation or group?

(Please tick ✓ **one** box below, then go *only* to the appropriate question in Section B.)

- ₁ Arts (Please go to Section B, Question 1)
- ₂ Outdoor recreation (Please go to Section B, Question 2)
- ₃ Sport (Please go to Section B, Question 3)
- ₄ Community recreation (Please go to Section B, Question 4)

Section B: Research Priorities for Your Sector

In this section, please go to the sector (1, 2, 3 or 4) you identified in Section A and respond *only* to the questions which relate to that sector. Then proceed to Section C.

1. Arts (*Arts, Culture and Creative Communities*)

Here are 13 possible broad priorities for research in this sector:

- (a) Contributions of leisure to cultural development
- (b) Significance and scope of passive leisure
- (c) Fostering creative communities
- (d) Effective interventions in increasing culture activity.
- (e) Arts and cultural strategies
- (f) Creative leisure and health benefits
- (g) Integrated approaches, creative and physical activity (e.g., dance)
- (h) Creative school and workplace models and interventions
- (i) Ethno-cultural diversity, implications for cultural services
- (j) Maori and Pacific people's culture and leisure
- (k) Arts participation
- (l) Arts events
- (m) Other (Please specify)

Please select and rank in order of importance from list (a) - (m) the **THREE** research priorities which are of most current relevance to your organisation.

1st Priority

2nd Priority

3rd Priority

For example, if you think 'Arts and cultural strategies' is the 1st Priority, put 'e' in the 1st Priority 'box', etc.

2. Outdoor Recreation (*Outdoor Recreation, Environment and Open Space*)

Here are 14 possible broad priorities for research in this sector:

- (a) Social impacts (e.g., conflict and crowding)
- (b) Implications of climate change on outdoor recreation and leisure
- (c) Impacts of outdoor recreation on the environment
- (d) Safety in parks and open spaces
- (e) Adventure/Outdoor recreation events
- (f) Outdoor recreation and energy and water conservation
- (g) Open space planning and development
- (h) Visitor management in National Parks
- (i) Outdoor recreation strategies
- (j) Site-specific surveys
- (k) Outdoor recreation participation
- (l) Evaluating user experiences
- (m) Tourism, outdoor recreation & conservation in National Parks
- (n) Other (Please specify)

Please select and rank in order of importance from list (a) - (n) the **THREE** research priorities which are of most current relevance to your organisation.

1st Priority

2nd Priority

3rd Priority

For example, if you think 'Site-specific surveys' is the 1st Priority, put 'j' in the 1st Priority 'box', etc.

3. Sport (Sport, Wellness and Active Living)

Here are ten possible broad priorities for research in this sector:

- (a) Contributions of leisure to health and wellness
- (b) Sports events
- (c) Children and youth inactivity and obesity
- (d) Physical activity and sport strategies
- (e) Fostering active communities initiations
- (f) Effective interventions in increasing physical activity
- (g) Integrated effects of physical activity and nutrition
- (h) Active school and workplace models and interventions
- (i) Sport participation
- (j) Other (Please specify)

Please select and rank in order of importance from list (a) - (j) the THREE research priorities which are of most current relevance to your organisation.

1st Priority

2nd Priority

3rd Priority

For example, if you think 'Sports events' is the 1st Priority, put 'b' in the 1st Priority 'box', etc.

4. Community Recreation (Community Recreation and Community Development)

Here are ten possible broad priorities for research in this sector:

- (a) Achieving a dynamic and diverse society
- (b) Building opportunities and skills for quality leisure experiences
- (c) Contributing to community development, including building a more equal and inclusive society
- (d) Community recreation and political change
- (e) Community recreation surveys and strategies
- (f) Building social capacity and networks
- (g) Community recreation and events
- (h) 'Sustainable' lifestyles and environments
- (i) Community participation
- (j) Other (Please specify)

Please select and rank in order of importance from list (a) - (j) the THREE research priorities which are of most current relevance to your organisation.

1st Priority

2nd Priority

3rd Priority

For example, if you think 'Community recreation and political change' is the 1st Priority, put 'd' in the 1st Priority 'box', etc.

Section C: Common Research Themes

This section contains eight possible research themes revealed by our earlier survey or by a review of related research strategies in New Zealand and other countries.

Please respond to *all* the themes listed in this section.

Each theme has a number of possible research priorities associated with it. For each theme, please assess the relevance of the priorities to your organisation or group.

To indicate your assessment, circle the appropriate number on the 7-point scale. (E.g., if your assessment is that the priority has no relevance at all to your organisation, then circle number '1' for that item. If, on the other hand, you assess that the priority is very highly relevant, then circle number '7'. If the priority has 'some' relevance, then circle one of numbers 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6, depending on how relevant you assess that priority to be to your organisation or group.)

1. Leisure Behaviour and Demand

	Not at all relevant				Highly relevant		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Theoretical foundations of leisure behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leisure attitudes, values and meanings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
User demand surveys relating to leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Research relating to leisure needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New patterns of leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Factors that influence leisure participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impacts of changing demographics on leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Technology and leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work-life balance issues and leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Benefits and constraints to leisure behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Community recreation surveys and strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Benefits and Outcomes

	Not at all relevant				Highly relevant			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Impacts of leisure – social benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Impacts of leisure – economic benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Impacts of leisure – bio-physical (environmental) benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Significance of leisure as a quality-of-life dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Community participation and capacity building	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Social capital (civic engagement) and leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sustainability and leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Application of triple-bottom line to leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

3. Facility Infrastructure and Design

	Not at all relevant				Highly relevant			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Facility design standards and development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Active communities and sustainable infrastructure design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Infrastructure needs for changing populations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Impacts of urban development and growth on leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Playground design and safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. Programme Development and Evaluation

Not at all **Highly**
relevant **relevant**
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7

Changing demographic patterns and implications for future programme provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Matching programme delivery with characteristics of different leisure groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Equity and access issues relating to programme provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Different models of programme delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The effectiveness of programmes in addressing social objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Roles of recreation programmes in relation to reducing anti-social and criminal behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Management and Delivery

Not at all **Highly**
relevant **relevant**
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7

Service delivery models and effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Best practice/models approaches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organisational structures and effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Issues relating to concessions and leases in natural resource-based recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public-private partnerships and joint venture arrangements as a means of developing leisure opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tendering and contract management in leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Risk management and issues related to accidents, litigation and insurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Development of performance indicators for leisure services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Subsidies and territorial government provision of leisure services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Leadership and Training Needs

	Not at all relevant				Highly relevant		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Training needs and career paths in the leisure industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment patterns and trends in the leisure industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Research into the profiles of different industry sectors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Training needs of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Scope and scale of the leisure industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Continuous professional development of leisure industry personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Review of models of delivery of post-secondary education/training programme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Surveys of graduates from leisure education/training programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Qualifications, accreditation and certification issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Central and Local Governments' Role and Responsibilities in Relation to Leisure

	Not at all relevant				Highly relevant		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Effectiveness and efficiency of public sector provision in different areas of leisure and recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Objective setting and performance measurement by government agencies in leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impact of the Local Government Act 2002 and Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP) on leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Levels and nature of government expenditure and leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Effects of corporatisation and privatisation on government leisure provision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impacts of government regulations on leisure provision (commercial, voluntary and public)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Developing Research Methodologies

Not relevant
 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
 Highly relevant

Development of base-line data of relevance to the leisure industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Development of norms and standards related to health and fitness assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Methodologies for measuring the impacts associated with 'hallmark' and community events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Refinement of techniques to forecast and research leisure demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Refinement of research methodology which is sensitive to the needs of and experiences of different cultural and social groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Refinement of non-survey and qualitative methods in leisure research	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Development of standardised methods of collecting leisure participation data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section D: Ranking Common Research Themes for Their Relevance to Your Organisation or Group

Here are the 8 possible common (across-the-sector) research themes listed in Section C. (They are not listed in any order of importance.):

- (a) Leisure behaviour and demand
- (b) Benefits and outcomes
- (c) Facility infrastructure and design
- (d) Programme development and evaluation
- (e) Management and delivery
- (f) Leadership and training needs
- (g) Central and local government roles and responsibilities in relation to leisure
- (h) Developing research methodologies

Please select and rank in order of priority from (1) – (8)* the research themes which are most relevant to your organisation or group.

1st Priority

2nd Priority

3rd Priority

4th Priority

5th Priority

6th Priority

7th Priority

8th Priority

For example, if you think 'Leadership and training needs' is the 1st priority, put 'f' in the 1st Priority 'box', etc.

*Exclude from your ranking any theme which you feel you know little or nothing about.

That completes our questions. Thank you.

Please remember to check that you have completed all questions which apply.

Returning completed survey.

Please return in the postage paid envelope provided:

Freepost 36
Michael Toohey - New Zealand Leisure Research Strategy Survey
Environment, Society & Design Division
6th Floor, Forbes Building
Lincoln University
PO Box 84
Lincoln 7647, Canterbury

Appendix 3

Preliminary survey documents

Preliminary survey: introduction letter

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORT

Lincoln University, in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies, is undertaking a survey identifying existing and future research needs in the leisure industry as well as identifying existing programmes/organisations which support or fund this research. (The 'leisure industry' is defined for research purposes as comprising leisure, sport, outdoor recreation and arts-as-participation sectors.)

Our interest is in gaining opinions from individuals, groups and organisations representing the different sections of the leisure industry that either produce and/or use leisure-related research.

We anticipate that the results of the survey, together with data from follow-up focus groups, will contribute to the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation and Sport Research Strategy.

We invite you, or the most appropriate member of your staff, to complete this survey. You are welcome to discuss the questions with colleagues and take advice as needed in completing them.

We would very much appreciate a response by (Date) so that we can collate our data and generate results.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one or more of us.

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

Bob Gidlow
Email: gidlow@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
Email: espines@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 8770

Preliminary survey: first follow-up letter

23rd November 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORT

In the last two weeks, you should have received a survey asking for your participation in the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation and Sport Research Strategy. If you have returned the completed survey, we would like to thank you for your prompt action.

If you are yet to return the survey, please accept this gentle reminder that your completion of the survey form is very important as a contribution to the development of the strategy.

If the survey form has been mislaid or if you prefer to complete the survey in electronic form (we can e-mail you a copy in 'Word'), please do not hesitate to contact any one of us.

If you simply need more time because of the pressure of other commitments or the level of consultation needed to complete the form, then please take that additional time.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

Bob Gidlow
Email: gidlow@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
Email: espines@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 8770

Preliminary survey: second follow-up letter

21st February 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORT

Late last year, you should have received a survey asking for your participation in the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation and Sports Research Strategy.

As our records indicate that you have not yet completed the survey form, please accept this gentle reminder that your completion of the survey form is *very* important as a contribution to the development of the strategy.

Enclosed please find a survey form together with a 'Freepost' envelope.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

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Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
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Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 8770

Appendix 4

Main survey documents

Main survey: pre-warning letter.

21st October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION, SPORT AND COMMUNITY RECREATION

This letter is to let you know that in a few days time we will be sending you/your organisation a questionnaire which we very much hope you will complete and send back to us in the stamped-addressed envelope which will be provided.

The questionnaire is a follow-up to an earlier survey undertaken by Lincoln University in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS). This second, final, survey builds on the responses to that earlier survey. It also incorporates possible priority areas drawn from other Research Strategy documents, including an Australian study, the Canadian Research Agenda for the Parks and Recreation field (2006) and resource strategies (non-leisure) adopted in New Zealand.

The aim of the current survey is to identify and prioritise research needs across key leisure sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand.

By completing this survey, you will be contributing to the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation, Sport and Community Recreation Research Strategy.

It is important that your organisation is represented in the survey so that the *research priorities in different sectors of the industry can be identified. The results of this follow-up survey stand on their own and will contribute to the final report and recommendations, so we would appreciate a response from you whether or not you or your organisation responded to the first survey.*

When you receive the questionnaire, you are welcome to discuss it with colleagues and take advice as needed in completing it. The collected data will be made available in a variety of publication forms, e.g., reports to SPARC New Zealand, Department of Conservation, Creative New Zealand, New Zealand Recreation Association, as well as regular academic outlets. (Be assured that no individual responses will be identified in any discussions of results.)

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
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Bob Gidlow
Email: gidlow@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
Email: espines@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 8770

Main survey: introduction letter.

28th October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION, SPORT AND COMMUNITY RECREATION

We recently sent you a letter, informing you that we would be sending you a questionnaire in connection with the development of the above National Research Strategy.

Please find enclosed the questionnaire and a stamped-addressed envelope for returning it upon completion.

In the previous letter, we explained that this is a follow-up to an earlier survey undertaken by Lincoln University in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS).

The aim of the current survey is to identify and prioritise research needs across key leisure sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand.

By completing this survey, you will be contributing to the development of a National Leisure, Arts, Outdoor Recreation, Sport and Community Recreation Research Strategy.

As we said in the letter, it is important that your organisation is represented in the survey so that the research priorities in different sectors of the industry can be identified. The results of this follow-up survey stand on their own and will contribute to the final report and recommendations, so we would appreciate a response from you whether or not you or your organisation responded to the first survey.

Most questions require only tick-box selections and the entire survey should take only about 10-15 minutes to complete. You are welcome to discuss the questionnaire with colleagues and take advice as needed in completing it. (Please note that the code at the top of the front page of the questionnaire is for administrative purposes only; no individual responses will be identified in any discussions of results.)

The collected data will be made available in a variety of publication forms, e.g., reports to SPARC New Zealand, Department of Conservation, Creative New Zealand, New Zealand Recreation Association, as well as regular academic outlets.

If you would prefer to complete this survey in electronic form, please contact any one of us by e-mail and we will send you a 'Word' version.

We would be grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided to reach us by Friday, 15th November.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

Bob Gidlow
Email: gidlow@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
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Main survey: first follow-up letter.

10th November 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION,
SPORT AND COMMUNITY RECREATION**

In the last 10-14 days you should have received a questionnaire from us in connection with the development of the above National Research Strategy. (You were requested to complete the questionnaire and return it in the 'Freepost' envelope provided.)

If you have returned the completed questionnaire, we would like to thank you for your prompt action. If you are yet to return it, please accept this gentle reminder that your completion of the questionnaire is very important to our study. (Indeed, it is very important that your organisation is represented in the survey so that the research priorities in different sectors of the industry can be identified).

If the questionnaire has been mislaid, or if you prefer to complete the survey in electronic form (e.g., as a 'Word' document), please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

Bob Gidlow
Email: gidlow@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone 03 325 3820 ext 8766

Stephen Espiner
Email: espines@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 8770

Main survey: second follow-up letter.

24th November 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR LEISURE, ARTS, OUTDOOR RECREATION, SPORT AND COMMUNITY RECREATION

We recently sent you a follow-up reminder relating to the completion of a questionnaire on the development of the above National Research Strategy. (You were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the 'Freepost' envelope provided.)

If you have returned the completed questionnaire (our letters may have crossed in the post), we would like to apologise for sending this additional follow-up letter.

If you are yet to return the questionnaire, please accept this further reminder that its completion is very important to our study.

In case the questionnaire has been mislaid, we include a spare copy with this letter, together with a spare stamped-addressed envelope. We will be extremely grateful if you took the time to assist us by completing it and returning it in the stamped-addressed envelope provided. This action will also ensure that your organisation is represented in the development of research priorities in different sectors of the leisure industry.

We would very much appreciate the speedy return of the completed questionnaire in the stamped-addressed envelope provided, so that your data can be included in the discussion of results.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Grant Cushman
Email: cushmanj@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: 03 325 3820 ext 7806

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