Whakatāne District Council

2024-25 Resident Survey

| SIL Research

July 2025

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SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to consultatively engage with Whakatāne District's residents to determine levels of satisfaction and perceptions of Council's services, communications and management to identify opportunities for improvement.

Research was conducted quarterly throughout the 2024-25 year (data collected between October 2023 and June 2024). A total of n=600 surveys were used in the final analysis. The 2025 surveys continued the adjusted methodology adopted in 2019-20 (particularly mixed-method data collection, and rating scale expansion), and subsequent refinement to have respondents focus their responses on the three months (rather than the last 12 months) prior to each quarterly fieldwork period.

Considering the importance of national and regional contextual conditions, and the impact these play on local experiences, remains necessary when evaluating satisfaction levels and ability of the Council to meet its community's needs in 2024-25. Many critical factors have had a notable and ongoing impact in recent years, and the influence of these conditions continues to be felt across the community: the cost of living in New Zealand; a propensity for local Whakatāne District residents to feel ongoing financial pressure; increasingly conscious responses to personal financial impacts and wider District-wide civic spending. In this context, Council spending and financial management remain at the forefront of residents' minds, with rates increases and general value for money a persistent concern – the relative priorities of Council spending decisions become more salient given the anticipated impacts on residents' own household budgets. At this time, perceptions of and reactions to a range of Council-led developments, in addition to regular service delivery, are likely to be viewed by residents with a more critical eye focused on efficiency and cost-saving in a tough economic climate. The current year has seen Whakatāne District Council continuing to operate in an environment marked by these and other challenging factors; taken together, these factors have played a notable influence on the community and potentially influenced residents' perceptions of Council performance.

The main findings in 2025 were as follows:

1. Overall, about half of residents (49%) were satisfied with services received from the Whakatāne District Council over the 2025 year. While similar to 2024 (53%), current overall satisfaction has declined from previous years (lower than 61% in 2023) – despite remaining on par with both the New Zealand national (50%) and district council (50%) benchmarking average figures.

- Supporting these overall perceptions, 18 out of 29 Council services (62%, also 62% in 2024) rated by Whakatāne District residents achieved satisfaction ratings of 60% or above, with 6 services achieving 80% satisfaction or higher.

- Across the 2025 survey year, the five top-rated services were the Whakatāne Exhibition Centre (86% satisfaction), kerbside waste collection (83%), Whakatāne crematorium (83%), sports fields (82%) and the Whakatāne Museum and Research Centre (82%) – this top five has remained fairly consistent in recent years.

- In contrast, the five lowest-rated services in 2025 (all below 50% satisfaction) were: noise control (24%), dog control (29%) and three areas aimed at promoting the local district - business promotion (33%), event promotion (45%), and tourism promotion (47%).

- Playing a detrimental role on overall satisfaction, several services saw declines in satisfaction in the current year. The largest drops among users in 2025 were measured for the aforementioned noise control (-32 points), business promotion (-19 points), dog control (-11 points), and event promotion (-10 points). These service areas are typically among the least used/accessed, consequently with lower resident knowledge and subject to greater variations in satisfaction scores.

- In contrast, increased satisfaction in 2025 was measured for cemeteries (+11 points), sports fields (+5 points) and public toilets (+5 points).

2 3-in-4 residents (75%) in 2025 agreed (somewhat or strongly) that the Whakatāne District is generally a safe place to live. While remaining above the New Zealand Benchmarking Survey result of 53%, this continues a gradual decline in safety perceptions in recent years, with the proportion who agreed they feel 'safe' (currently 62%) falling to its lowest level since 2019-20 (76%). Just over half (54%) of residents in 2025 believed the quality of their life was '*good*' to '*very good*' – this has also been subject to falling perceptions in recent years (from 76% in 2020).

- In this context, residents in 2025 were again less inclined to recommend Whakatāne District as a place to live (NPS -25%) – the second consecutive year of negative net recommendation (from -16% in 2024) while continuing a longer declining trend over recent years. In addition, the propensity to recommend the District as a holiday destination also fell into negative territory in 2025 (anecdotal NPS -8%), following decline positivity in recent years.

- Contact with specific Council representatives increased slightly in 2025 compared to 2024. Almost half (46%) of residents had contacted the customer service front desk (up from 36% in 2024, and 30% in 2023), with 73% satisfied with this contact (similar to 2024). While only 15% had contact with a Community Board Member, this was up slightly from 2024 (10%), with 80% satisfied. Overall, half (50%) of all residents stated they had contacted the Council in 2025 (46% in 2024) – the highest rate since 2021; although satisfaction was lower (48%) for these residents.

- Community engagement remained positive in 2025 – overall and across specific activities – with half (51%) of respondents engaging with Council in some way (54% in 2024, but up from 43% in 2023 and 40% in 2022). Most typically, engaged residents reported talking to Council reps at public events (39%, compared to 25% in 2024), or providing feedback on social media (36%, 37% in 2024). However, the increase in residents who report making a formal submission continued this year (36%, up from 29% in 2024, and 21% in 2023) – possibly reflecting engagement with a range of Council-led consultations. Engagement overall remained more likely for younger residents (under 65 years).

- '*Social media*' remained the most preferred method of Council communication in 2025; for 60% of residents overall, and 79% of 18-39 year olds; with an ongoing increase among older residents (65 or older) – 33% in 2025, from 30% in 2024, and 14% in 2023. Traditional media (e.g. newspaper, radio) remained important, especially for older residents.

3 The decreases in satisfaction across a range of services in 2025 were particularly reflected in more negative sentiment around Council governance – in terms of communication, leadership and management. Each of these areas saw marked declines in satisfaction this year, overall and across specific attributes. Overall, 30% of residents were satisfied with Council's communication and consultation with the public – significantly below 42% in 2024 (similar to 2023). '*Listening to and acting on the needs of the people*' (22%) remained the least satisfactory communication attribute (falling to a new low from 27% in 2024 and 35% in 2022). However, all other communication attributes also fell this year; 'keeping people informed' (43%) still elicited the greatest satisfaction, but below 2024 levels (52%) and earlier.

- Satisfaction with Council leadership saw an overall drop in 2025 (29%, from 36% in 2024 and 44% in 2023) – with similar falls in terms of mayoral (37%) and councillor leadership (26%), and strategies for developing prosperity and wellbeing (24%). Overall satisfaction with Council's day-to-day business management also declined to 29% (from 33% in 2024, 46% in 2023) – perceptions of Council financial management were particularly low, as even fewer residents in 2025 expressed trust in WDC's management around making good spending decisions (18%), value for money (17%), and managing finances well (15%).

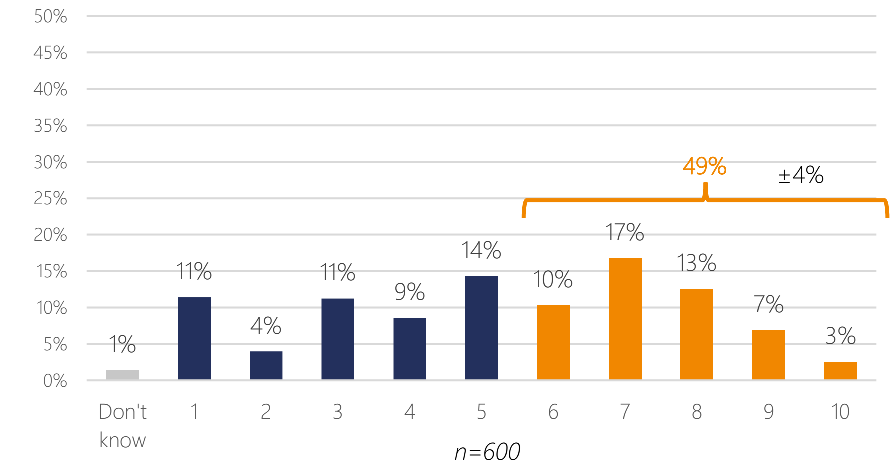
In 2025, overall resident satisfaction with Whakatāne District Council services remained broadly consistent with the previous year, although it continues a longer-term downward trend from earlier periods in some key areas. The context of sustained economic pressures - especially around cost of living and rising rates - appears to be influencing more critical perceptions of Council performance, particularly in areas tied to financial management and governance. While satisfaction with many core services remains strong (with 62% of services rated at or above 60%) – and in many cases at or above national benchmark levels - notable declines were seen in lower engagement areas such as noise control and business promotion. Furthermore, satisfaction with Council leadership, communication, and financial management dropped significantly, reflecting growing concerns about transparency and value for money in a fiscally sensitive environment.

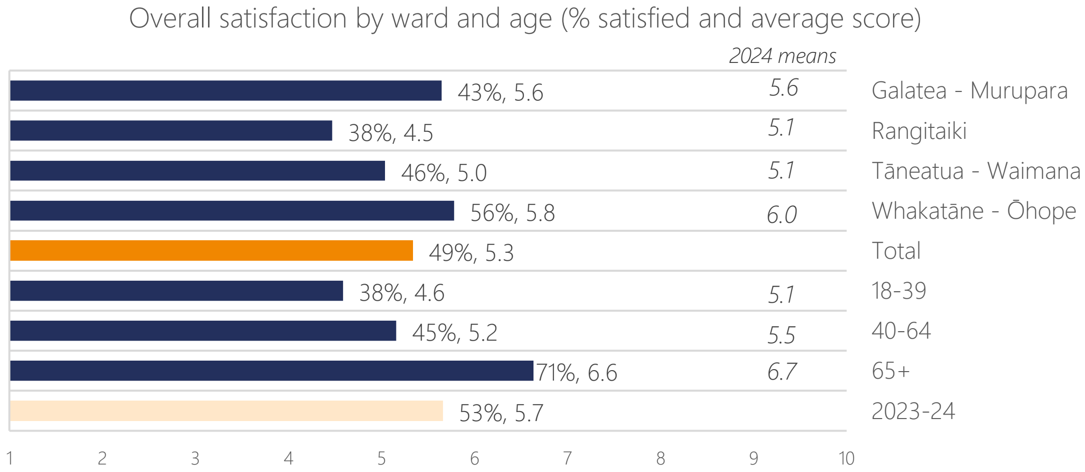
Given the current climate, improving resident satisfaction will require the Council to prioritise visible, cost-effective service delivery and strengthen community trust in its governance. Clearer, more transparent communication - particularly regarding how and why spending decisions are made - will be critical. This should include enhanced engagement on priority setting and better feedback loops, especially as reported formal submission rates are rising. Continued emphasis on effective communication through social media and targeted efforts to reach diverse age groups through a robust channel mix can help bridge gaps. Rebuilding confidence in Council leadership will also require a renewed focus on responsiveness, accountability, and inclusive decision-making to align civic planning more closely with the financial realities residents are facing. Targeted attempts to boost promotion of the District internally and externally – through business, event and tourism promotion – may encourage a renewed sense of positivity and a pathway to grow confidence in the economic prospects of the region moving forward.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE COUNCIL

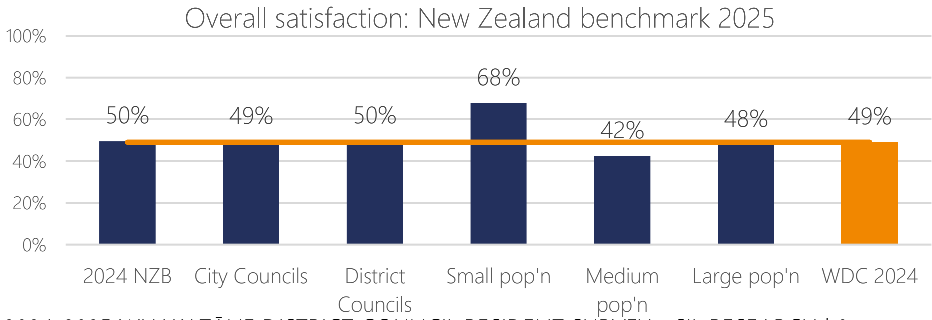
Overall satisfaction with services received from the Whakatāne District Council

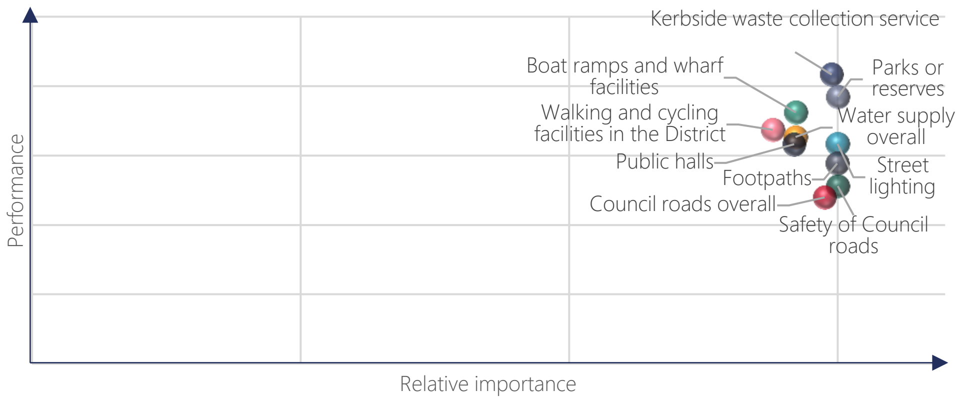
LTP MEASURE





- In 2025, half of residents (49%) were satisfied with overall services received from the Whakatāne District Council (on average rating 5.3 out of 10).
- The current result was similar to 2024 (53%, average 5.7 rating) but showed decline from previous years, including 2023 (61% satisfied, average 6.1 rating). However, the current result was on par with both the national (50%) and District Council (50%) benchmark averages.
- Residents aged under 65 remained less satisfied overall than older residents (aged 65+), although satisfaction ratings across age groups were only slightly lower compared to 2024 – but significantly lower than 2023.
- Satisfaction differed significantly by area, remaining highest in Whakatāne than in other areas, and lowest in Rangitakei in 2025. Satisfaction levels saw some recovery in Tāneatua-Waimana in 2024-25 (46%) compared to 2024 (34%).
- Out of all services surveyed, ten showed stronger influence on overall satisfaction.
- Assessing relative importance (strength of relationship) against measured performance of these ten services, Council roads, footpaths, street lighting and water supply represented the greatest improvement opportunity (with significant importance but relatively low performance).





SATISFACTION AT A GLANCE

Overall satisfaction
WDC 2025: 49% / 5.3
WDC 2024: 53% / 5.7
NZB 2025: 54% / 5.5

Waste collection service (LTP MEASURE)	Art and culture[1] (LTP MEASURE)	Cemeteries[2] (LTP MEASURE)	Recreation facilities[3] (LTP MEASURE)	Refuse transfer station (LTP MEASURE)	Swimming pools (LTP MEASURE)
WDC 2025: 83% / 7.7	WDC 2025: 83% / 8.0	WDC 2025: 81% / 7.9	WDC 2025: 76% / 7.1	WDC 2025: 76% / 7.1	WDC 2025: 76% / 6.8
WDC 2024: 89% / 8.2	WDC 2024: 81% / 8.1	WDC 2024: 77% / 7.6	WDC 2024: 76% / 7.1	WDC 2024: 78% / 7.4	WDC 2024: 77% / 6.9
NZB 2025: 67% / 6.5	NZB 2025: 78% / 7.5	NZB 2025: 78% / 7.3	NZB 2025: 75% / 7.0	NZB 2025: 64% / 6.5	NZB 2025: 56% / 6.1
Sewerage (LTP MEASURE)	**Wharf facilities (LTP MEASURE)**	**Stormwater**	**Walking and cycling**	**Street lighting**	**Public halls (LTP MEASURE)**
WDC 2025: 74% / 7.3	WDC 2025: 72% / 6.8	WDC 2025: 68% / 6.6	WDC 2025: 67% / 6.6	WDC 2025: 63% / 6.2	WDC 2025: 63% / 6.6
WDC 2024: 75% / 7.5	WDC 2024: 72% / 7.0	WDC 2024: 65% / 6.6	WDC 2024: 71% / 6.9	WDC 2024: 69% / 6.5	WDC 2024: 67% / 6.7
NZB 2025: 74% / 7.0	NZB 2025: n/a	NZB 2025: 51% / 5.4	NZB 2025: 52% / 5.8	NZB 2025: 64% / 6.3	NZB 2025: n/a
Water[4] (LTP MEASURE)	**Footpaths**	**Public toilets (LTP MEASURE)**	**Parking**	**Roads[5] (LTP MEASURE)**	**Tourism (LTP MEASURE)**
WDC 2025: 60% / 6.2	WDC 2025: 58% / 6.0	WDC 2025: 55% / 5.9	WDC 2025: 52% / 5.5	WDC 2025: 50% / 5.4	WDC 2025: 47% / 5.4
WDC 2024: 63% / 6.4	WDC 2024: 56% / 5.9	WDC 2024: 50% /	WDC 2024: 60% / 5.9	WDC 2024: 50% / 5.4	WDC 2024: 52% / 5.7
NZB 2025: 62% / 6.3	NZB 2025: 55% / 5.7	NZB 2025: 69% / 6.7	NZB 2025: 51% / 5.5	NZB 2025: 43% / 4.9	NZB 2025: n/a
Promoting events (LTP MEASURE)	**Business promotion (LTP MEASURE)**	**Dog control**	**Noise control**		
WDC 2025: 45% / 5.3	WDC 2025: 33% / 4.6	WDC 2025: 29% / 4.1	WDC 2024: 24% / 3.5		
WDC 2024: 56% / 5.8	WDC 2024: 52% / 5.5	WDC 2024: 40% / 4.7	WDC 2024: 56% / 5.7		
NZB 2025: 61% / 6.3	NZB 2025: n/a	NZB 2025: 57% / 5.7	NZB 2025: n/a		

- *Good performance (70% and above)*
- *Services with positive performance (at least 50% but below 70%)*
- *Services for improvement*
- *Overall performance indicators*
- LTP MEASURE - *Long Term Plan measure*

Aggregated average ratings for: [1] libraries, Whakatāne Exhibition Centre and Whakatāne museum; [2] cemeteries and crematorium facilities; [3] parks or reserves, sports fields and playgrounds; [4] water supply and quality; [5] roads and road safety.

Keeps people informed	Provides sufficient opportunities for people to have their say	Leadership of Mayor	Makes it easy for people to transact with Council	Makes it easy for people to interact and engage
WDC 2025: 43% / 4.9	WDC 2025: 38% / 4.7	WDC 2025: 37% / 4.7	WDC 2025: 36% / 4.6	WDC 2025: 35% / 4.5
WDC 2024: 52% / 5.5	WDC 2024: 46% / 5.2	WDC 2024: 42% / 5.0	WDC 2024: 44% / 5.1	WDC 2024: 44% / 5.0
NZB 2025: 46% / 5.1	NZB 2025: 43% / 4.9	NZB 2025: 45% / 4.8	NZB 2025: n/a	NZB 2025: 43% / 4.9
Managers and staff doing a good job	Working with other councils where relevant	Leadership of councillors	Skills and expertise to manage community affairs	Strategies for developing prosperity and wellbeing
WDC 2025: 30% / 4.3	WDC 2025: 27% / 4.0	WDC 2025: 26% / 3.9	WDC 2025: 25% / 3.9	WDC 2025: 24% / 3.8
WDC 2024: 41% / 4.7	WDC 2024: 35% / 4.6	WDC 2024: 34% / 4.4	WDC 2024: 31% / 4.2	WDC 2024: 30% / 4.2
NZB 2025: 43% / 5.0	NZB 2025: 41% / 4.7	NZB 2025: 39% / 4.5	NZB 2025: 38% / 4.5	NZB 2025: 33% / 4.1
Efficiency and effectiveness	Continual performance improvement	Listens to and acts on the needs of the people	Trust to make good spending decisions	Value for money
WDC 2025: 22% / 3.5	WDC 2025: 23% / 3.8	WDC 2025: 22% / 3.4	WDC 2025: 18% / 2.9	WDC 2025: 17% / 3.2
WDC 2024: 30% / 4.1	WDC 2024: 30% / 4.1	WDC 2024: 27% / 3.9	WDC 2024: 20% / 3.4	WDC 2024: 22% / 3.5
NZB 2025 35% / 4.3	NZB 2025: 33% / 4.1	NZB 2025: 31% / 4.0	NZB 2025: 30% / 3.7	NZB 2025: 30% / 3.9
Managing finances well	LTP MEASURE Customer Service front desk	Overall performance in managing day-to-day business	Overall performance in terms of communication	Overall performance in terms of leadership (Mayor and Councillors)
WDC 2025: 15% / 2.9	WDC 2025: 73% / 7.0	WDC 2025: 29% / 4.0	WDC 2025: 30% / 4.3	WDC 2025: 29% / 4.1
WDC 2024: 19% / 3.3	WDC 2024: 73% / 7.3	WDC 2024: 33% / 4.4	WDC 2024: 42% / 4.9	WDC 2024: 36% / 4.5
NZB 2025: 28% / 3.7	NZB 2025: n/a	NZB 2025: 37% / 4.5	NZB 2025: 37% / 4.5	NZB 2025: 37% / 4.4

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

As a part of its ongoing consultation process, Whakatāne District Council (WDC) commissions a Resident Satisfaction Survey every year. The purpose of this research was to consultatively engage with Whakatāne District's residents to determine levels of satisfaction and perceptions of Council's services, communications and management, to identify opportunities for improvement.

SIL Research, together with the Whakatāne District Council (WDC), developed a Resident Survey questionnaire in 2020, and repeated this in consecutive years. The initial drafting was based on research previously carried out for WDC.

The questionnaire was reviewed and tested prior to full-scale data collection to ensure the survey was fit for purpose.

RESEARCH PROCESS

From 2019-20, the Resident Survey has been conducted by SIL Research, and from 2020-21 data collection has been administered four times a year (quarterly) to allow for seasonal variations to be tracked using a 1-10 Likert scale, which provides more robust options for residents to express their views.

For the 2024-25 survey year, the data was collected from September (retrospectively covering the Jul-Sep quarter) to June (covering the Apr-Jun quarter) to align with WDC's annual reporting period of 1 July to 30 June.

With the change to quarterly fieldwork cycles, the recall window for respondents was also adjusted from 2020. Previously, respondents had been asked to indicate which services/facilities they had used or visited in '*the last 12 months*'. From 2021 Q1, respondents were instead asked about the services/facilities they used/visited in '*the last 3 months*'. While representing a shift from the previous method, the use of a narrower recall window should elicit more accurate responses (easier to recall behaviour over the previous 3 months than a longer 12-month period), while providing more sensitive measures of seasonal variations across quarterly cycles.

Every quarter, SIL used a multi-layered sampling technique to ensure a proportional spread of respondents from each of Whakatāne's community board areas, by age and gender distribution. Post-stratification (weighting) was then applied to the full dataset (Q1-Q4) to reflect the age and gender group proportions within each community board area as determined by Statistics New Zealand 2018 Census counts. This ensures more robust representativeness of reported results.

CHANGES IN 2024-25

While the questionnaire remained unchanged in 2024-25 to ensure consistency and comparability with previous years, changes were made to how some service measures were analysed – specifically, how measures were combined into service groups for quarterly tracking purposes. As such, the following adjustments were made to service groups in 2024-25:

- 'Recreation facilities' – 'Boat ramps and wharf facilities' was removed from Quarter 1 2024-25 (the service group now includes 'Parks or reserves', 'Playgrounds' and 'Sports fields'.
- 'Community facilities' – this service group was removed from Quarter 1 2024-25 (previously included 'Public toilets', 'Public halls', 'Crematorium', 'Cemeteries').

- ‘Cemeteries & Crematorium facilities’ – this service group was introduced from Quarter 1 2024-25.

DATA COLLECTION

In each quarter, multiple data collection methods were utilised to ensure residents were well-represented. The mixed-methods approach included:

(1) Telephone survey. Respondents were randomly selected from the publicly available telephone directories within specified territorial units;

(2) Social media (available via SIL Research social media platforms, such as Facebook). The invitation advertisement was randomly promoted to District residents within specified territorial units;

(3) Postal survey. Survey forms were sent to randomly selected Whakatāne District households within specified territorial units.

A total of n=150 surveys were used in the final analysis each quarter, providing a combined annual sample of n=600 for the 2024-25 year.

DATA ANALYSIS

Surveys were conducted proportional to the population in each of Whakatāne District's community board areas.

Table 1 Responses by community board areas

	Number of responses	Population %
Galatea - Murupara	13 (2%)	8%
Rangitāiki	168 (28%)	27%
Tāneatua - Waimana	41 (7%)	10%
Whakatāne - Ōhope	378 (63%)	55%

Responses were also statistically weighted (post-stratification) to reflect the gender, age and ethnicity group proportions as determined by the Statistics New Zealand 2018 Census. The 2018 Census population benchmarks were used in 2024-25 because the latest 2023 Census figures were not available until later in the 2024-25 year; 2018 figures were used by necessity from the start of the year's data collection and retained throughout 2024-25 for consistency. The 2023 Census benchmarks will be used from the start of the 2025-26 survey year.

SIL Research ensured quality control during the fieldwork period. In addition, a quality control check was performed using follow-up calls across randomly selected respondents (10% of those who agreed to the follow up) to verify the key responses.

Further checks included, but were not limited to, removal of incomplete responses and responses coming from outside of Whakatāne District.

The main resident groups analysed in this report were: area (community board), age, gender, ethnicity, home ownership and tenure in the District. During the analysis stage of this report, two sets of statistical testing were employed while reviewing data findings: Chi-square tests were used when comparing group results in tables; and ANOVA tests were used when comparing statement averages across groups. The threshold for reporting any statistically significant differences was a p-value of 0.05. Where differences were outside this threshold (less than 95%), no comments were made; where differences were within this threshold, comments have been made within the context of their practical relevance to WDC.

Overall results are reported with margins of error at a 95% confidence level; the key reported measures in the main report include specific margins of errors calculated taking into account the survey design and finite population size correction. Based on the Whakatāne district's population, the maximum margin of error for the annual sample of n=600 is +/- 4%. The margin of error varies based on the number of responses for each service area and depends on general awareness/knowledge about each service. Higher proportions of ‘Don't know’/‘Don't receive this service’ responses reduce the effective sample sizes and result in a larger margin of error.

NOTES ON REPORTING

The term '*Resident*' has been used to represent respondents who participated in the survey. Where results are reported by sub-groups of residents, estimates of results may not be statistically reliable due to higher margins of error (for small sample sizes).

Overall '*satisfaction*' percentages presented in this report are aggregated 6-10 responses on a 1-10 scale. Satisfaction percentages will differ from mean scores (average ratings). Satisfaction percentages represent positive ratings only, whereas mean scores provide an average of all ratings across the whole scale. Mean scores were calculated on responses excluding '*Don't know*'.

Satisfaction with Council services and facilities is reported in two ways:

- Total satisfaction percentage for the District (all responses), and
- Satisfaction percentages for '*Users/Visitors*' or '*Generally aware*' (e.g. residents who had visited/used specific Council services/facilities or knew enough to provide a rating).

Note that historical data is shown for '*Users/Visitors*' or '*Generally aware*' responses only.

Regression analysis was used to assess trends in historical results for key indicators. R^2 is a statistical measure based on the regression analysis of results over time. It was applied to the historical and current aggregated satisfaction ratings. In summary, the closer the R^2 value is to 100%, the more likely there is a trend towards an increase or decrease in performance ratings over time.

Comparative data prior to 2020 is indicative only; data collection methods before 2020 (including response scales) differed significantly from current methods.

Due to rounding, figures with percentages may not add to 100%. Reported percentages were calculated on actual results not rounded values.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Table 1 Responses by age

	Frequency	Percent
18-39	182	30.9
40-64	266	45.0
65+	142	24.1
Total	590	100.0

Table 2 Responses by time lived in the District

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	11	1.9
1 year to just under 2 years	19	3.3
2 years to just under 5 years	41	6.9
Five years to just under 10 years	59	9.9
10 years or more	455	77.1
I'd rather not say	5	0.9
Total	590	100.0

Table 3 Responses by income

	Frequency	Percent
$20,000 or less	12	2.0
$20,001-$30,000	36	6.0
$30,001-$50,000	40	6.8
$50,001-$70,000	53	9.0
$70,001-$100,000	78	13.2
$100,001 or more	210	35.7
Other	13	2.2
I'd rather not say	143	24.3
Total	590	100.0

Table 4 Responses by home ownership

	Frequency	Percent
Owned	498	84.4
Rented	27	4.5
Private trust	26	4.5
Other	4	0.7
I'd rather not say	34	5.8
Total	590	100.0

Table 5 Responses by ethnicity (multi-choice)

	Frequency	Percent
New Zealand European	450	77.0
Māori	178	30.4
Pacific people	9	1.6
Asian	4	0.6
Middle Eastern, Latin American or African	6	1.0
New Zealander/Kiwi/Not stated	29	4.9
Other	28	4.8
Total	590	100.0

Note: final dataset was statistically weighted to increase accuracy of the reported results.

BENCHMARKING

SIL Research conducts a representative National survey of Councils* to establish a series of benchmarks across a range of Council services. This allows Whakatāne District Council to compare their survey results against a National average (NZB).

The National survey data is collected throughout the year so that annual results can be presented without seasonal bias. The benchmarking results in this report are based on n=400 responses collected in 2025. The data is collected using a 1-10 scale; satisfaction percentages are aggregated 6-10 ratings.

Benchmarking results are reported at the 95% confidence level, +/- 5%.
**Excludes Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.*

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

When reading this report, it is important to note that factors such as the timing of unusual or one-off events can affect the ratings that residents give, particularly if they occur close to the time when the survey data is being gathered.

Factors that may have influenced public perception of the Council's performance in 2024-25 include:

Q1 factors (July-September 2024):

1. In early July 2024, Councillors adopted 'Our Climate Pathway' — Whakatāne District's Climate Change Strategy 2024-27 along with the accompanying Climate Change Action Plan. This strategy, developed through a community-led process, marks a significant move towards collective, community-wide action on climate change. The Council's adoption of the strategy signifies a commitment to supporting and facilitating the actions rather than asserting ownership. The supporting plan includes a broad range of actions from 'buying local and seasonal' to 'active travel to work or school' which the community can work towards collectively.
2. In early August 2024, Whakatāne District Council adopted its Long Term Plan 2024-34 and associated supporting documents at an Extraordinary Council Meeting. The Plan has been described as one of the most challenging in decades as councils throughout New Zealand have grappled with how to manage the impact of deferred rates increases, followed quickly by record-high inflation and interest rates meaning the cost to continue delivering the same services is significantly higher. Council received almost 1,000 submissions from individuals and groups and heard from approximately 80 submitters during public hearings. There was a very clear message from many submitters that 'times are tough'.
3. In mid-August 2024, Whakatāne District Council unanimously decided to retain Māori Wards for the 2025 triennial elections. The decision means voters in the 2025 Local Elections will be asked to vote on the Mayor,

Councillors and three Māori Ward Councillors, whilst at the same time voting on the retention or disestablishment of Māori Wards for the 2028-31 triennium through a binding poll. Council members included a resolution to seek legal advice on what the implications would be if Whakatāne District Council chose not to proceed with the binding poll.

4. From late August 2024, Whakatāne District Council implemented changes to its meeting processes to align with recommendations from the Chief Ombudsman's recent report on best practice for council workshops. The Council will adopt several new measures to ensure compliance with legislation and improve transparency, in response to the Chief Ombudsman's investigation into council meeting practices across eight councils, although Whakatāne District Council was not part of this initial investigation.
5. In September 2024, the government announced a significant initiative to improve the use of mobility parking spaces and update parking fines, impacting councils nationwide, including Whakatāne District Council. From 1 October 2024, parking fees in the district will increase as part of a government effort to align penalties and fees with inflation. This initiative aims to ensure the parking system remains efficient and fair, address accessibility issues and support local councils in managing parking more effectively.

Q2 factors (October-December 2024):

6. In early October 2024, Council adopted the Whakatāne District Tree Strategy – Ngā Taonga a Tāne; aiming to address the challenges associated with the Council's amenity trees which provide environmental, recreational, and aesthetic value to local streets and parks. The Strategy outlines a comprehensive framework for managing, protecting, and growing the district's tree population, recognising the vital role urban trees play in improving the wellbeing of communities.
7. In October 2024, applications opened for two key funding opportunities designed to support local community initiatives and water-related projects in the Whakatāne District. The first fund of multi-year grants is designed to provide long-term support to non-profit organisations and charitable trusts offering essential services to the local community. The Te Puaha Fund also opened its second round of applications this year, aimed at supporting non-profit organisations, charitable trusts and individuals working on water-related initiatives.
8. In October 2024, Council invited residents to help shape a new service aimed at improving access to Council services for those living in outlying communities. The Honoa Hapori Community Connections Service will feature two specially equipped vans designed to act as mobile hubs of engagement. The project is being externally funded with $500,000 from the Department of Internal Affairs Better Off Funding.
9. In October 2024, Council announced that its ability to deliver on local roading projects has been severely hampered following a decision by Central Government to significantly reduce external funding. This decision will impact the delivery of key improvements and planning activities outlined in the 2024-2027 Long Term Plan. Despite newly announced funding for two local resilience projects, there remains an overall shortfall of $13.4 million for planned local roading projects.
10. In October 2024, the Wharfside upgrade project at Port Ōhope officially commenced. Construction was expected to be completed by December 2024, and will transform Wharfside into a more flexible and appealing venue for both locals and visitors.
11. In October 2024, the Council's proposed Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan to address growth and guide the future of the Eastern Bay of Plenty sub-region was presented for community feedback. The plan will set out where the Eastern Bay wants to head in the next 30-plus years and provide a roadmap, or spatial plan, for how to get there. Community consultation is open through to November 2024.
12. In late October, Council took a significant step toward addressing long-standing environmental and public health challenges in Matatā by securing a key piece of land for a centralised wastewater system. The purchase will provide the necessary land for both a treatment plant and the disposal of treated wastewater. This long-term infrastructure investment will help

ensure the environmental and public health needs of Matatā are met, while also supporting future growth in the area.

13. In November and December 2024, significant road maintenance and improvement works were undertaken on several main streets as part of Council's ongoing road maintenance programme. The Strand, Kakahoroa Drive Service Lane and Commerce Street were scheduled for road re-sealing, including tree removals and minor parking amendments to CBD disability parking to better cater to community needs.
14. In November 2024, the Whakatāne District Tourism and Events team announced hopes that a significant amount of work to encourage visitors for the summer and autumn seasons would result in a much-needed boost for local businesses, following a challenging year. Annually visitors to the Whakatāne District spend around $68 million in the retail sector (excluding fuel and automotive) and approximately $29 million in hospitality services. Over 1200 people in the district are employed in the tourism sector. Tourism data shows it's been a challenging winter to attract the visitor dollar, corresponding with a tight economy across the country.

Q3 factors (December 2024-February 2025):

15. In December 2024, public hearings held for feedback on Plan Change 8 (Huna Road), with implications for the future of the district's housing stock. Significant progress has been made to date on the proposal, which seeks to amend the Whakatāne District Plan to address the district's housing demand by rezoning land from Deferred Residential to Residential to allow for housing to be developed, encouraging the development of a diverse range of housing. Additionally, the proposal includes a coordinated approach to the development of infrastructure, ensuring that necessary facilities and services accompany the growth in residential areas.
16. In December 2024, Whakatāne District Council considered options to protect and provide the community's water services under the Government's new 'Local Water Done Well' (LWDW) legislative requirements, to ensure sustainable and efficient water services for the community. As part of this programme, all councils must develop and submit Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDPs) by early September 2025. This process allows councils to design the structure, delivery method, and funding arrangements for their water services. Following consultation, elected members will make their final decision on the delivery model, with the Plan submitted to the Department of Internal Affairs by 3 September 2025
17. In December 2024, Council identified potential budget savings for 2025's Annual Plan, thanks to cost-saving measures and a slight easing of interest rates and inflation pressures. The Annual Plan draft budget report presented five options for allocating the savings identified; councillors indicated to staff to prepare a draft Annual Plan budget based a 'mixed model' approach; reducing rates increases up to 1%. Councillors opted not to undertake full consultation for this year's Annual Plan, as this is not a legislative requirement for Year 2 of a Long Term Plan, and because variations were not significant in terms of service change. Instead, information will be shared with communities to explain how the rates were set and implications for households.
18. In February 2025, Council sought community input on Plan Change 4 (PC4): Building Platform Level. The proposed change to the Whakatāne District Plan aims to better manage flood risk to buildings and simplify the consenting process.

Q4 factors (March – June 2025):

19. In March 2025, Council's draft 2025/26 Annual Plan budget was presented to the Mayor and Councillors, outlining a budget that keeps costs down while still investing in the district's future. The budget achieved a 2.2% reduction in the proposed operating expenditure for Year Two of the Long Term Plan (2025/26) while still delivering essential services and investing in the future; with an average rate increase of 11.7%, down from the forecast 12.7% for Year Two, with savings helping to reduce Council's deficit faster.
20. In March 2025, Council signalled its willingness to collaborate with other councils through a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) for the future delivery of water, wastewater and stormwater services. Under the

Government's Local Water Done Well legislation, all councils must submit a Water Services Delivery Plan by 3 September 2025, either individually or jointly. The Council planned to make a final decision on its preferred option in April 2025, with community consultation scheduled before a final plan is confirmed.

21. In April 2025, Council launched a trial of an electronic parking management system to improve parking warden safety. The technology aims to protect parking staff from confrontational situations while also improving parking efficiency for residents and visitors.
22. In May 2025, Council approved a key plan change to unlock new housing in Whakatāne has been, paving the way for around 175 new homes, including papakāinga and medium-density options. Council confirmed that Plan Change 8, which rezones around 15 hectares of land near Huna Road, will be fully operative by the end of the month.
23. In May 2025, Council adopted a revised Procurement Policy to bring its approach in line with modern best practices, support local outcomes, and strengthen financial and risk management. The revised policy sets out a clear and consistent framework that prioritises value for money, fairness, and strong local and environmental outcomes, and aligns with the New Zealand Government Procurement's five principles – including managing for great results, being fair to suppliers, and securing the best deal for everyone involved.
24. In May 2025, Council approved Plan Change 5: Accessible Parking, following extensive community consultation. This decision ensures accessible parking is required for key facilities such as medical centres, libraries, and shopping centres, despite the removal of general minimum parking requirements from the District Plan.
25. In May 2025, Council invited the community to share its views on proposed speed limit changes across several local roads, as part of a district-wide consultation process. The proposed changes aim to make roads safer and more suitable for how they're used today – particularly around schools, marae, residential areas, and popular recreational spots. Many of the proposed changes have been shaped by community input, safety assessments and requests from residents, schools, and local organisations.
26. In June 2025, Council announced solar installations were set to begin at three key Council facilities. Between June and September, grid-tied solar systems were to be installed at the Dog Pound, Whakatāne Resource Recovery Centre, and the Main Council Building on Commerce Street. These will be the first Council-owned buildings to transition to solar energy, marking a significant milestone in Council's sustainability journey.
27. In June 2025, Council formally adopted its Annual Plan for the 2025/26 financial year, confirming an average rates increase of 11.7% (aligning with the average across councils nationwide). The increase represents a reduction from the previously forecast 12.7% for Year 2 of the Long Term Plan 2024-34 – and regarded as a necessary response to a difficult economic environment. Compared to the forecast for 2025/26, operating expenditure has been reduced by 2.2%. The number of planned new full-time equivalent roles over the 10-year period has also been reduced from 32 to 26, with no new staff being added in Year 2.

TOP PERFORMING

Whakatāne Exhibition Centre - 86%
Kerbside waste collection service - 83%
Whakatāne Crematorium - 83%
Sports fields - 82%
Whakatāne Museum and Research Centre- 82%

LOWEST PERFORMING

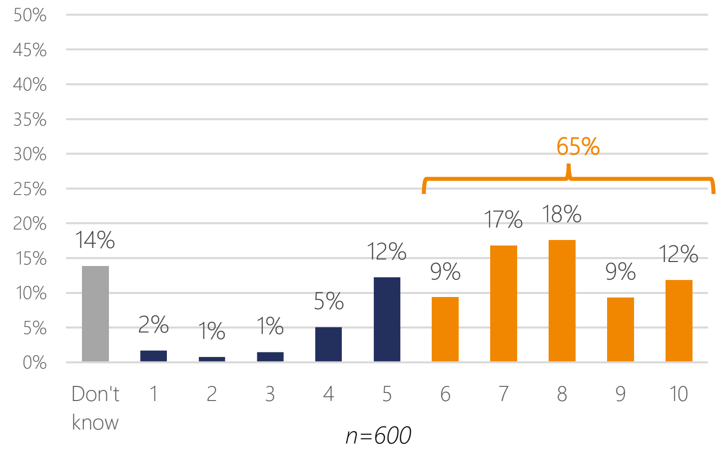
24% - Noise control
29% - Dog control
33% - Business promotion
45% - Event promotion
47% - Tourism promotion

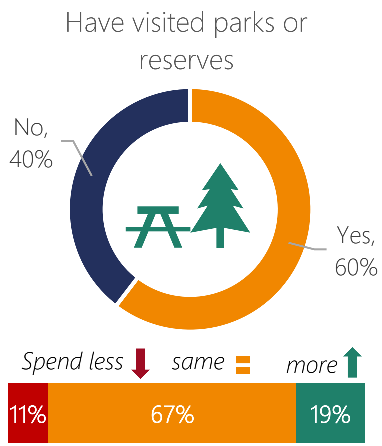
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN 2025

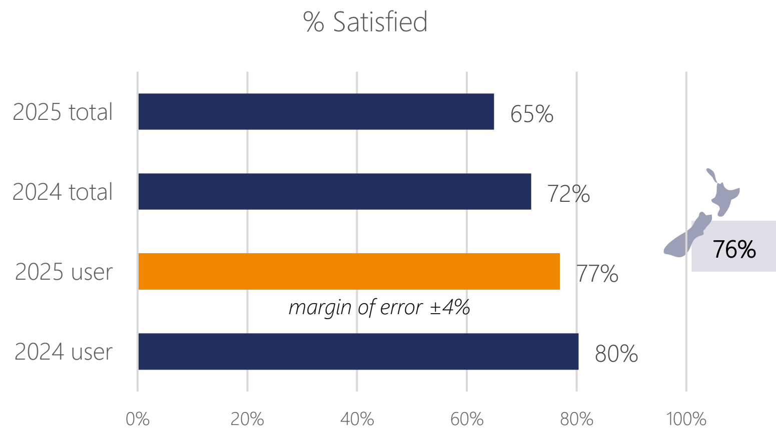
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

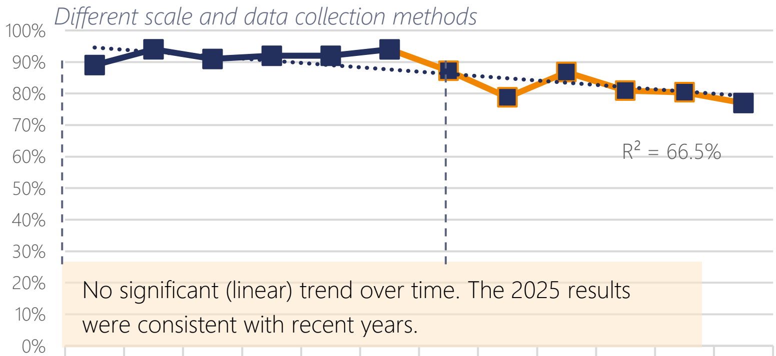
Parks and reserves





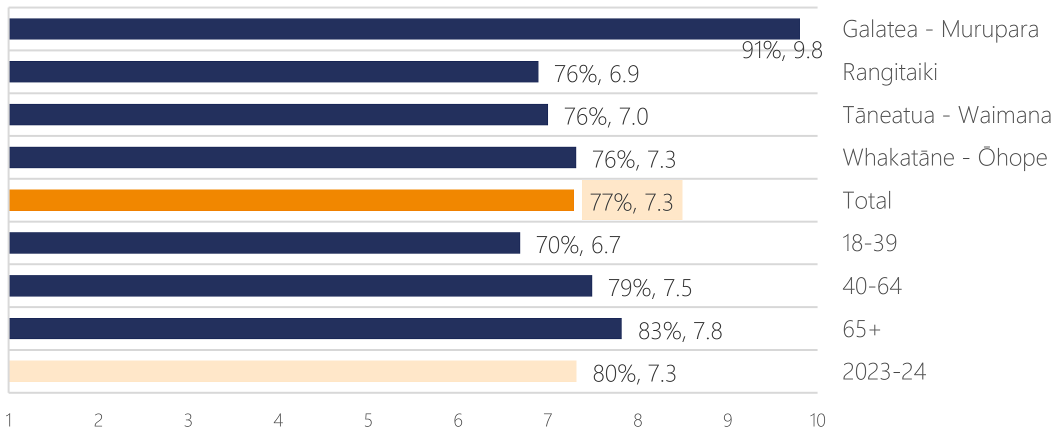


- In 2025, 60% of residents stated they had visited parks or reserves in the District (down from 71% in 2024 and 2023).
- 77% of these residents were satisfied with their parks or reserves, which was similar to 2024 (80%) and 2023 (81%), but still below the 2022 level (87%) – despite remaining on par with the national benchmark.
- The average satisfaction rating score (7.3 vs. 7.3 in 2024) remained consistent over the last few years.
- There were significant differences by age and area in 2024. Satisfaction continue to rise with age, older residents (aged 65+) remaining most satisfied – with all age groups achieving high satisfaction (70% or above).
- On average, satisfaction was highest in the Galatea-Murupara community board area (albeit limited by a smaller sub-sample). Other areas scored consistently.
- Overall, residents typically preferred seeing similar levels of Council funding spent on parks or reserves (67%, similar to 71% in 2024).



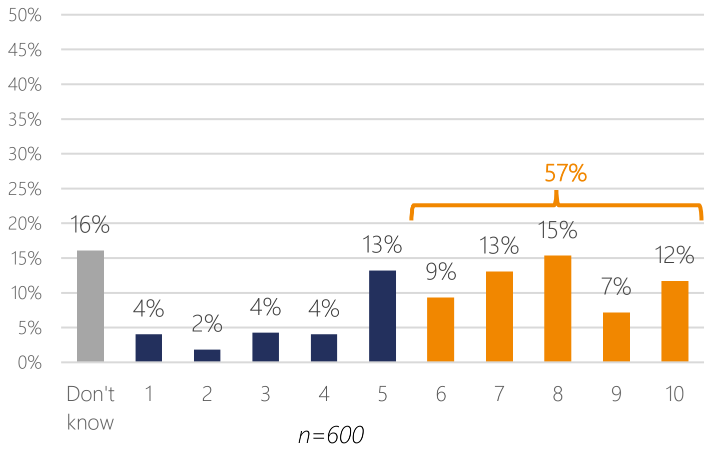
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	89%	94%	91%	92%	92%	94%	87%	79%	87%	81%	80%	77%

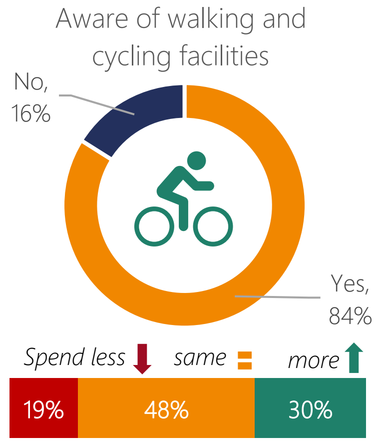
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

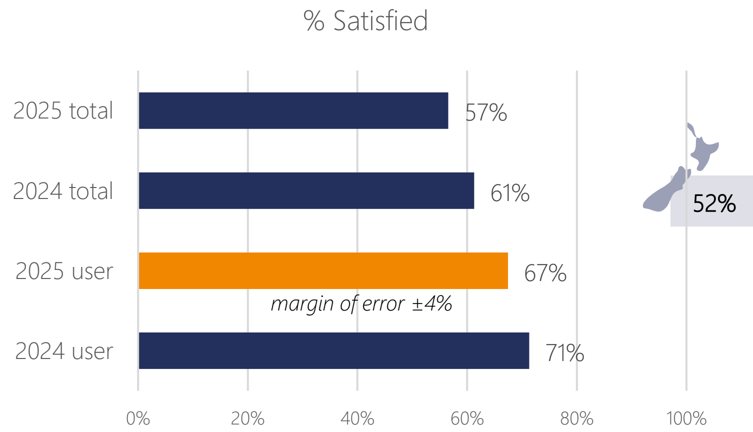


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

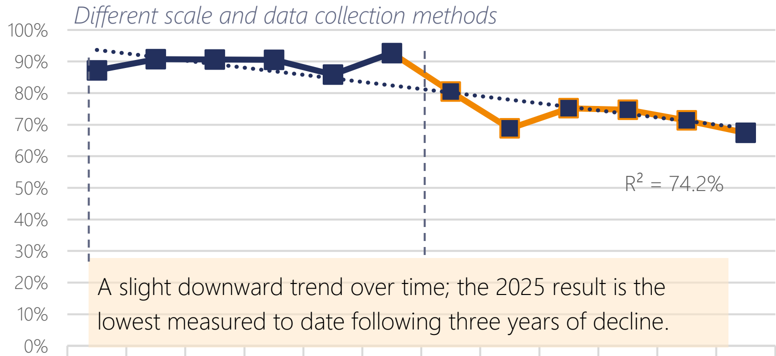
Walking and cycling facilities in the District



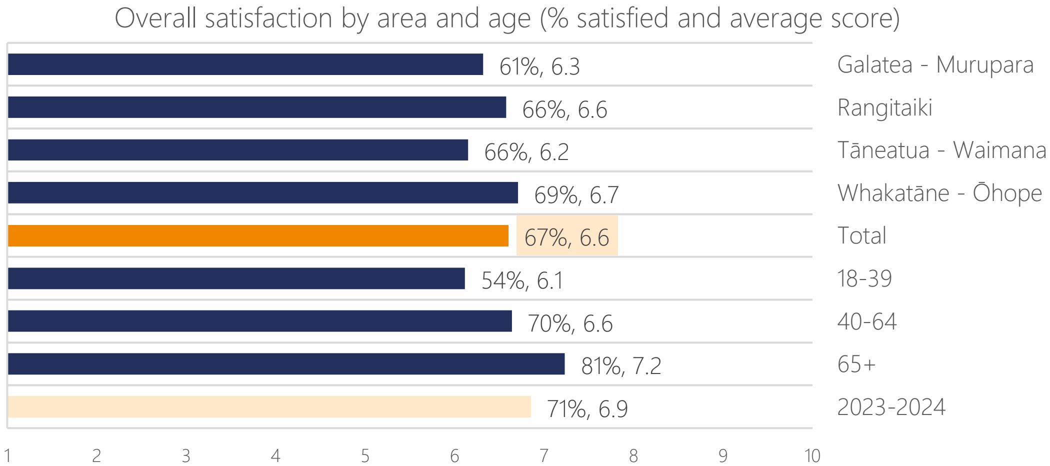




- Overall, 2-in-3 residents (67%) who provided a rating in 2025 were satisfied with walking and cycling facilities in the District (on average 6.7 out of 10).
- Satisfaction was similar to 2024 (71%), but has gradually declined over the last five years – and is currently the lowest score measured to date for this area. Nevertheless, local satisfaction remains above the national benchmark.
- In 2025, younger residents aged 18-39 remained less satisfied with walking and cycling facilities in the District (54%, down from 67% in 2024).
- Satisfaction was generally consistent across community board areas.
- Sentiment around Council funding was very similar to 2024, with calls for the same level of funding most prevalent (48%, also 48% in 2024).



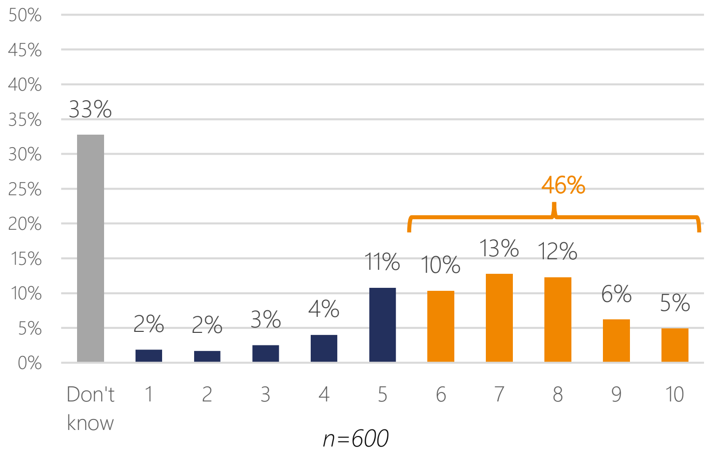
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	87%	91%	91%	91%	86%	93%	80%	69%	75%	75%	71%	67%

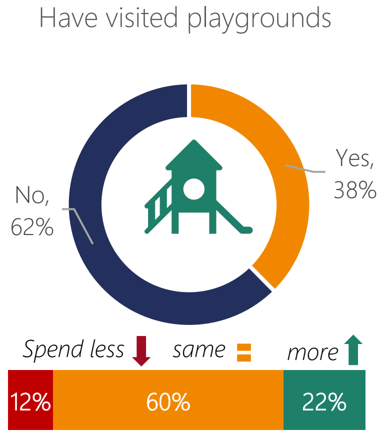


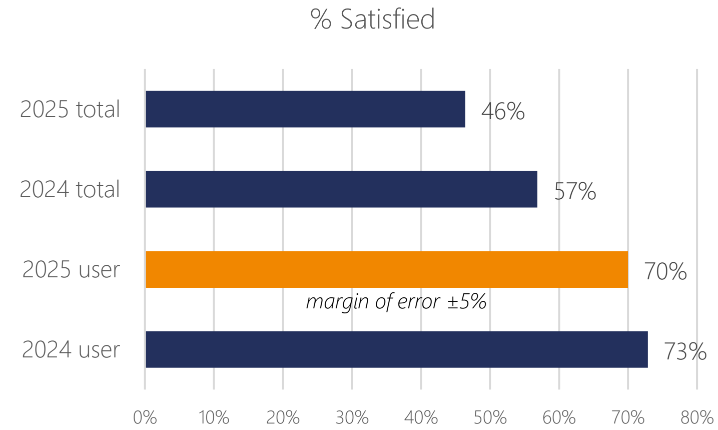
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Playgrounds

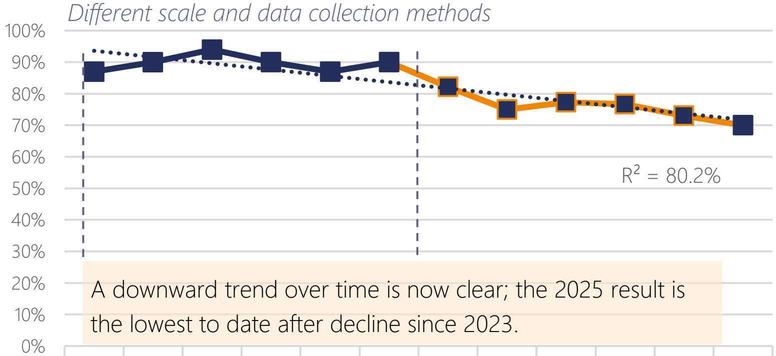
LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)



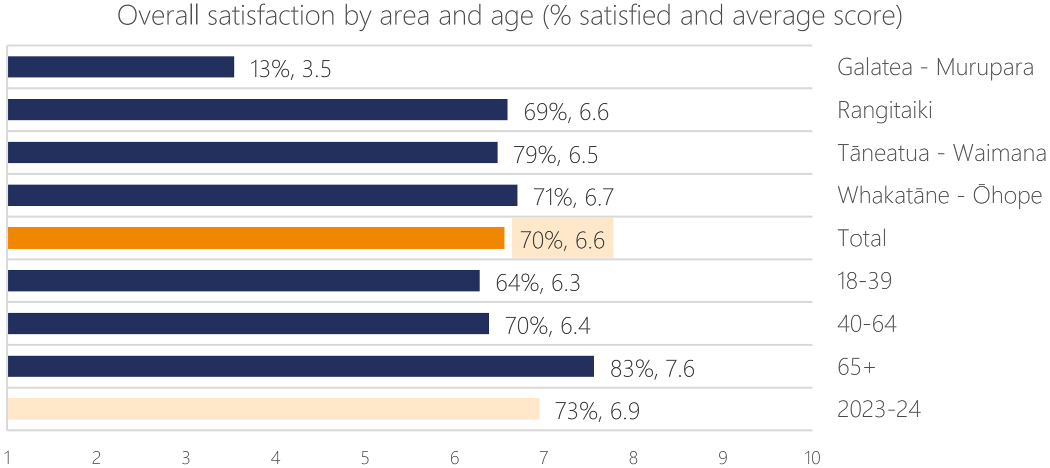




- In 2024, 38% of residents reported visiting a playground - down from 48% in 2024, but similar to 2022 (42%).
- Among playground visitors, satisfaction in 2025 (70%) was slightly lower than 2024 (73%) but has declined gradually in recent years to a new historical low level.
- Satisfaction with playgrounds remained lower among younger respondents, though similar to 2024. Results were generally similar across location (with low subsample in Galatea-Murupara contributing to the lower score there).
- The majority (60%) of residents preferred seeing the same level of Council funds spent on playgrounds (similar to 65% in 2024).



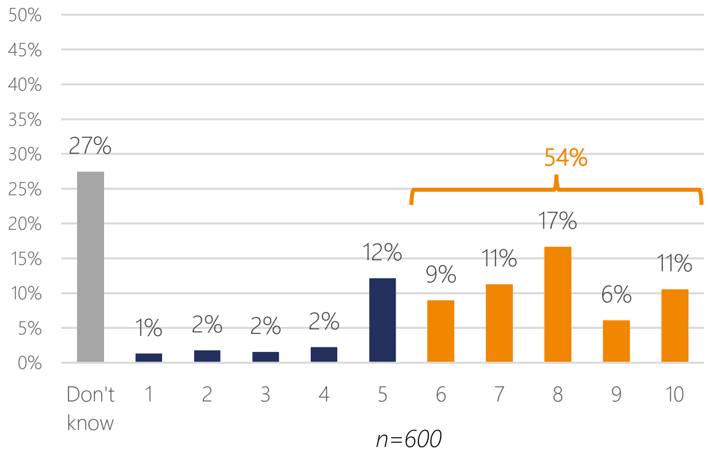
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	87%	90%	94%	90%	87%	90%	82%	75%	77%	77%	73%	70%

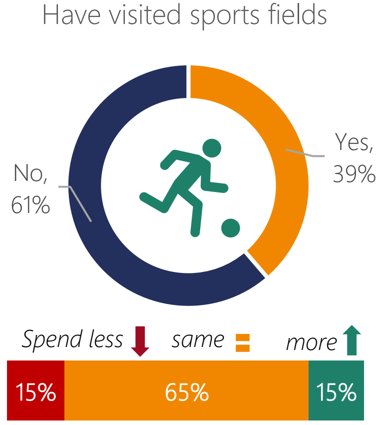


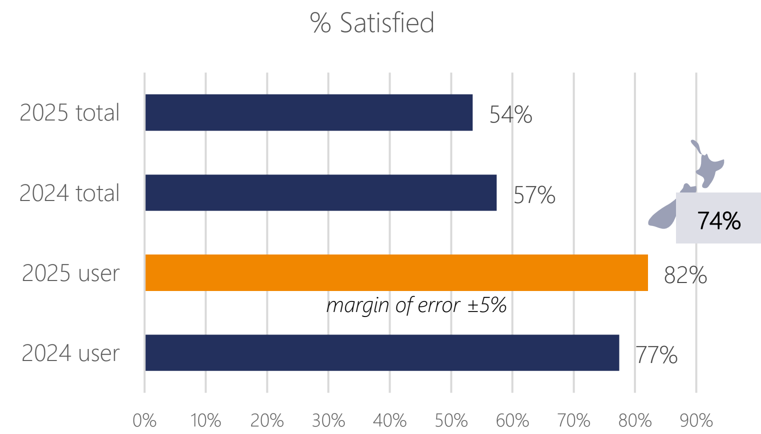
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

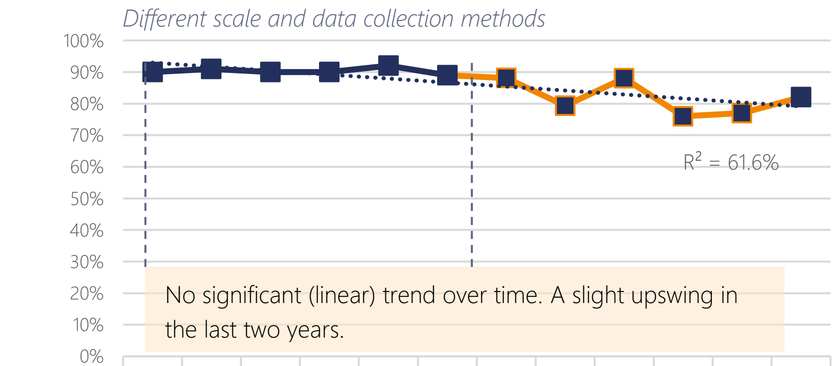
Sports fields



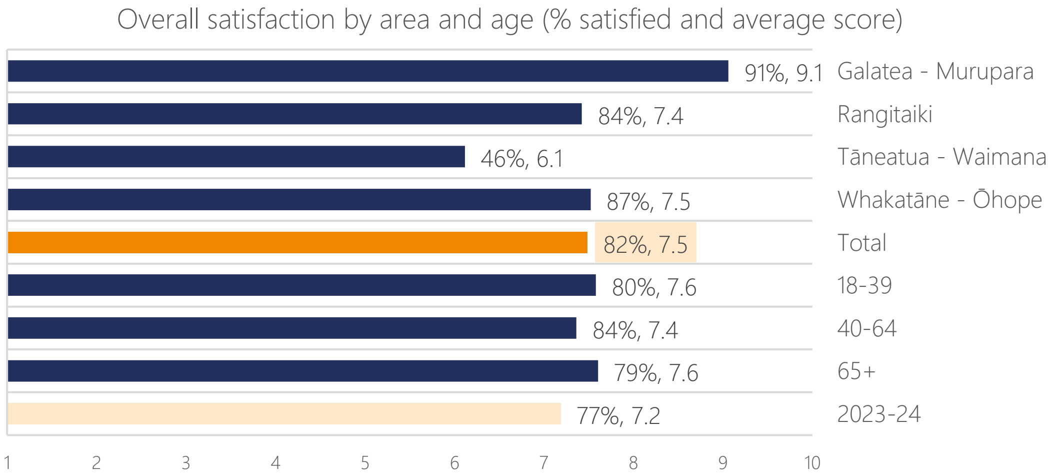




- In 2025, 2-in-5 residents (39%) reported visiting sports fields (consistent with 42% in 2024 and 2023, and 39% in 2022).
- Satisfaction with sports facilities has seen an upswing in the last two years, currently at 82% among users (reversing the low of 76% in 2023) – one of the more positive improvements in 2025, and above the national benchmark. 1-in-10 residents provided the highest satisfaction rating for this service area.
- Satisfaction remained similarly high across age groups, and particularly for 18-39 year olds (80% in both 2025 and 2024).
- Scores were also similar high (above 80%) across locations, except for Tāneatua-Waimana (small subsample of users).
- The majority (65%) of residents preferred seeing the same funding levels for sports fields (similar to 64% in 2024) – moreso than most other areas in 2025.



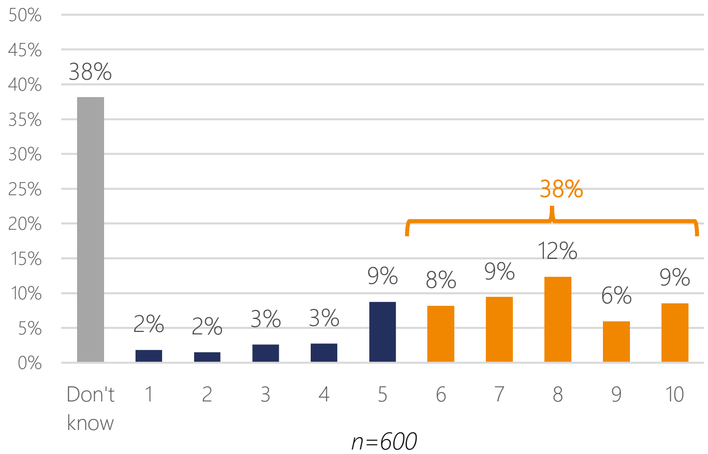
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	90%	91%	90%	90%	92%	89%	88%	79%	88%	76%	77%	82%

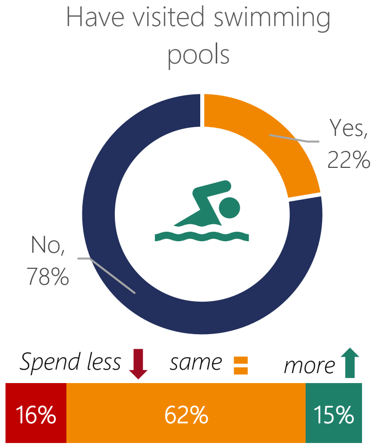


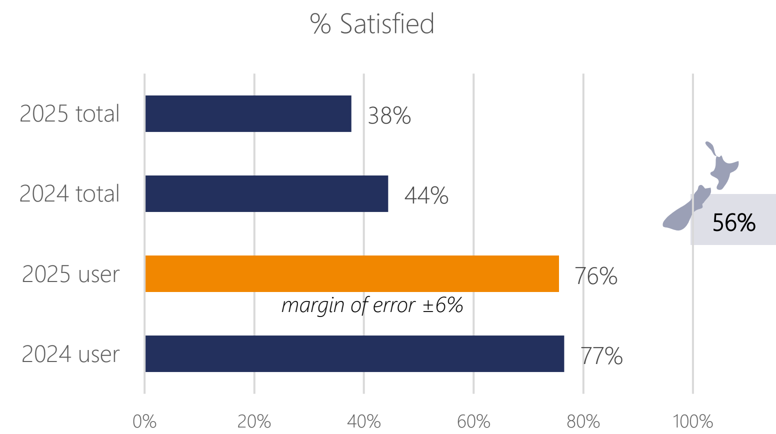
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public swimming pools

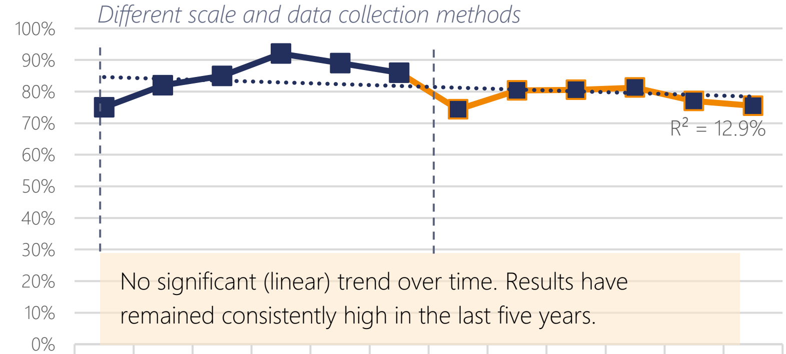
LTP MEASURE



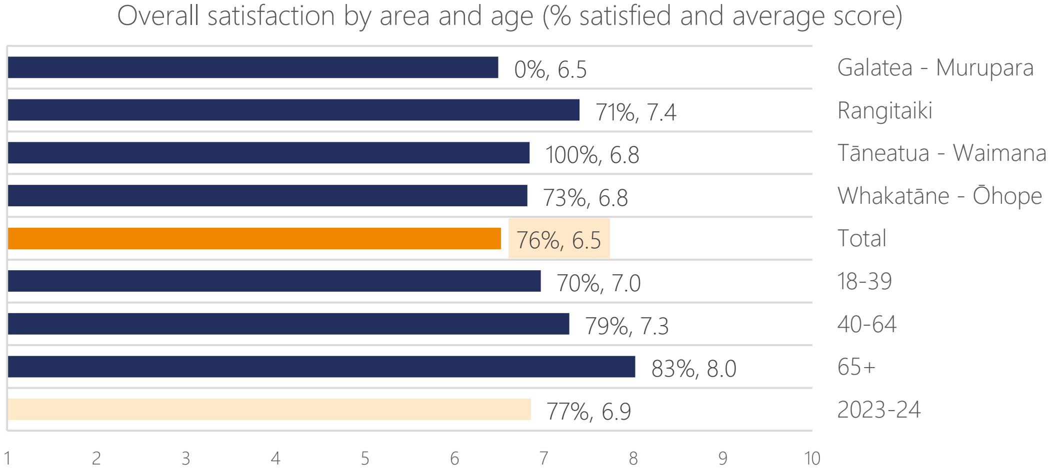




- 1-in-5 residents (22%) reported visiting a District swimming pool in 2025 (down from 32% in 2024, but similar to 26% in 2023 and 25% in 2022).
- Satisfaction among pool users in 2025 (76%) remained high and consistent with recent years – and now 20%-points above the national benchmark.
- In 2025, satisfaction was similar across age groups, but slightly lower for 18-39 year old users (although still high at 70%).
- Overall, 3-in-5 residents (62%) preferred the same level of Council funds applied to public swimming pools (64% in 2024).



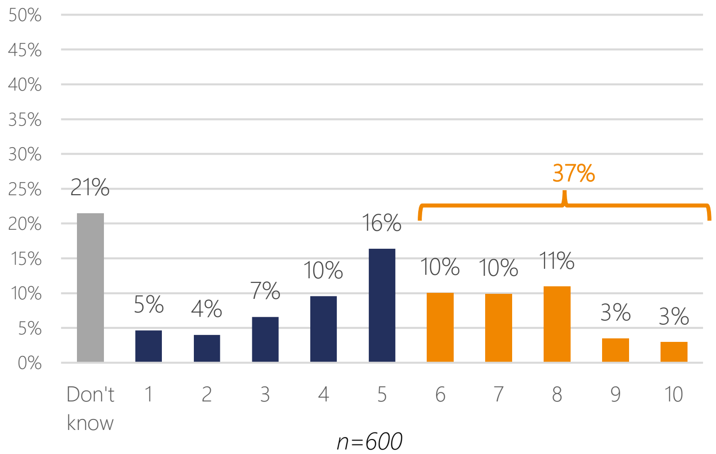
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	75%	82%	85%	92%	89%	86%	74%	80%	81%	81%	77%	76%

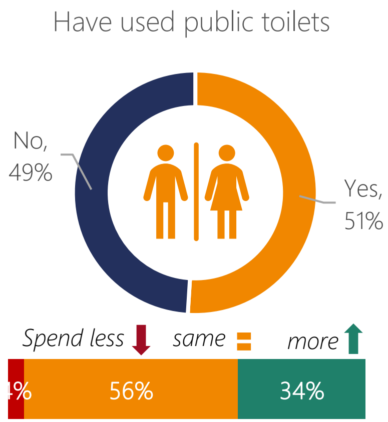


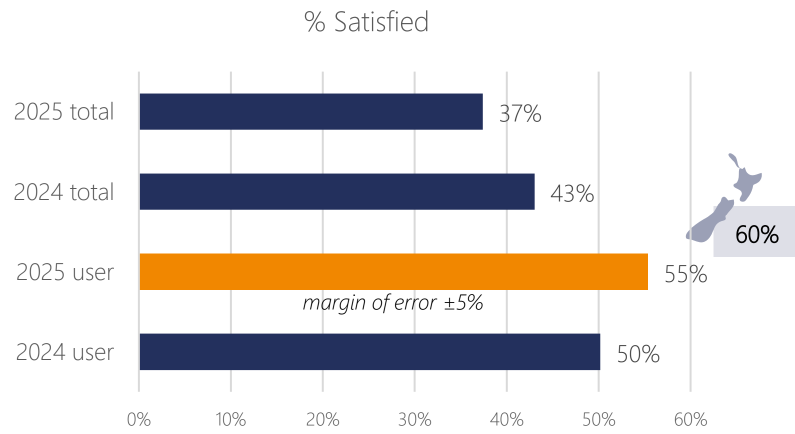
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public toilets

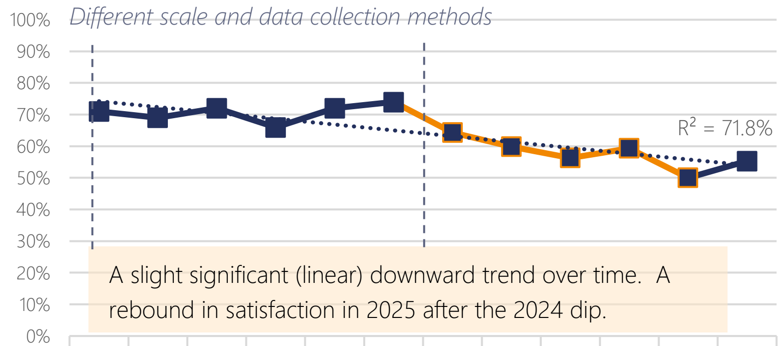
LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)



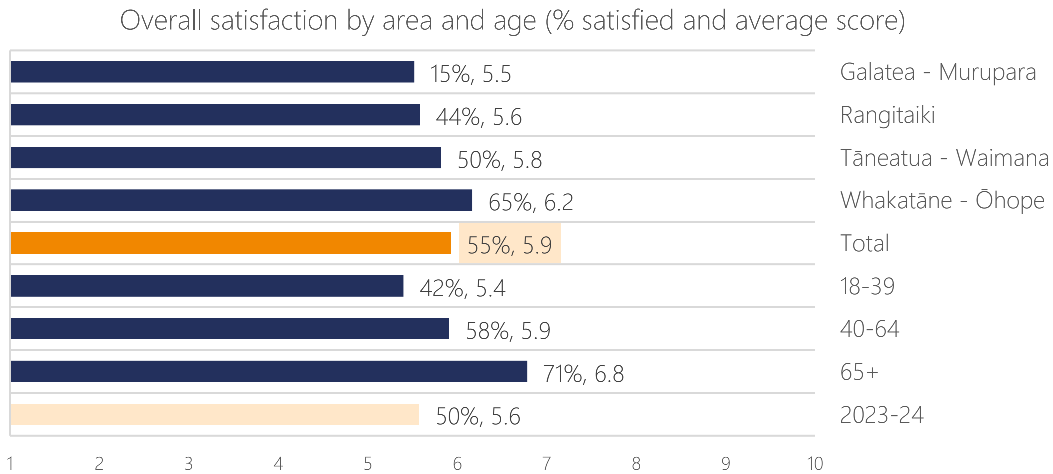




- In 2025, half of residents (51%) reported using a public toilet in the District (similar to 61% in 2024).
- Among public toilet users, satisfaction recovered slightly in 2025 (55%) from the historical low in 2024 (50%) after several years of stability (down from 59% in 2024) – just below the national benchmark average (60%).
- Satisfaction with public toilets remained lower among younger respondents (also typically higher users); and in areas outside Whakatāne-Ōhope.
- While the majority (56%) preferred the same funding levels for public toilets, these also remained a very high priority for more Council spending in 2025 (34% - the fifth-highest spending priority this year).

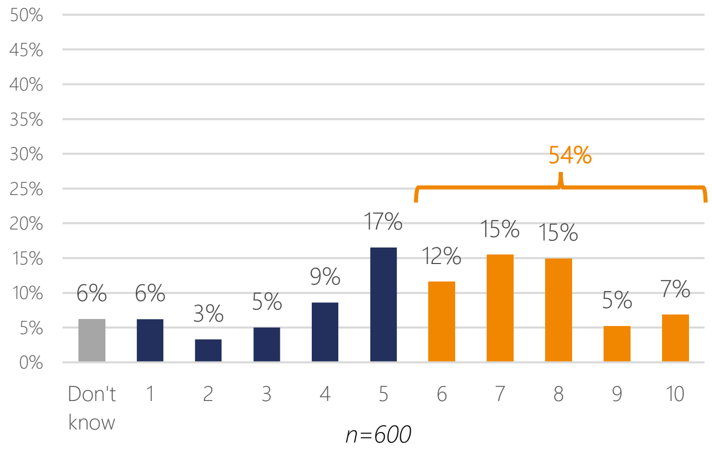


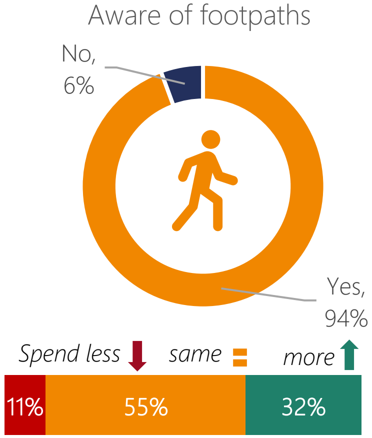
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	71%	69%	72%	66%	72%	74%	64%	60%	56%	59%	50%	55%

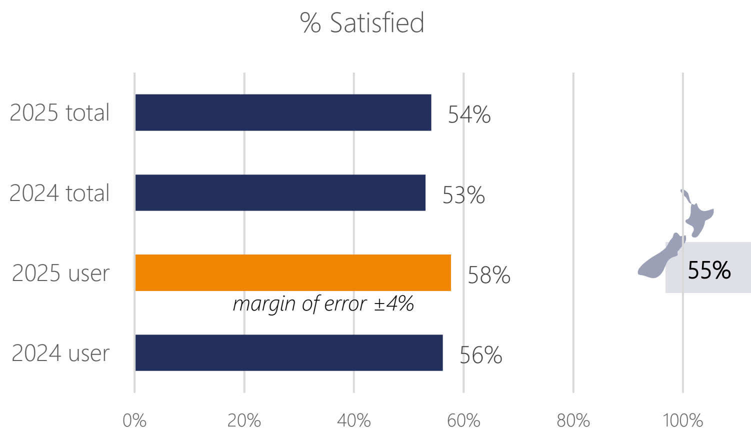


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

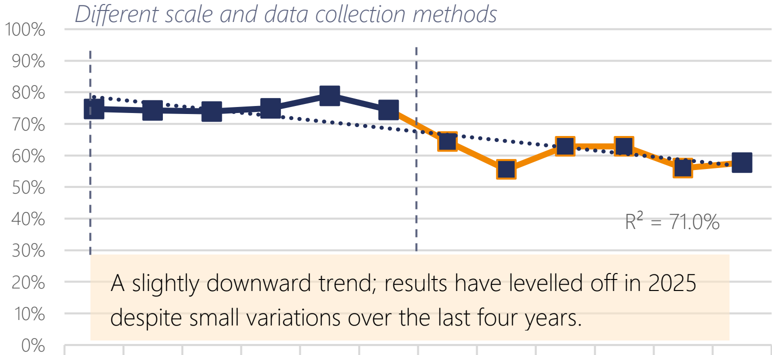
Footpaths



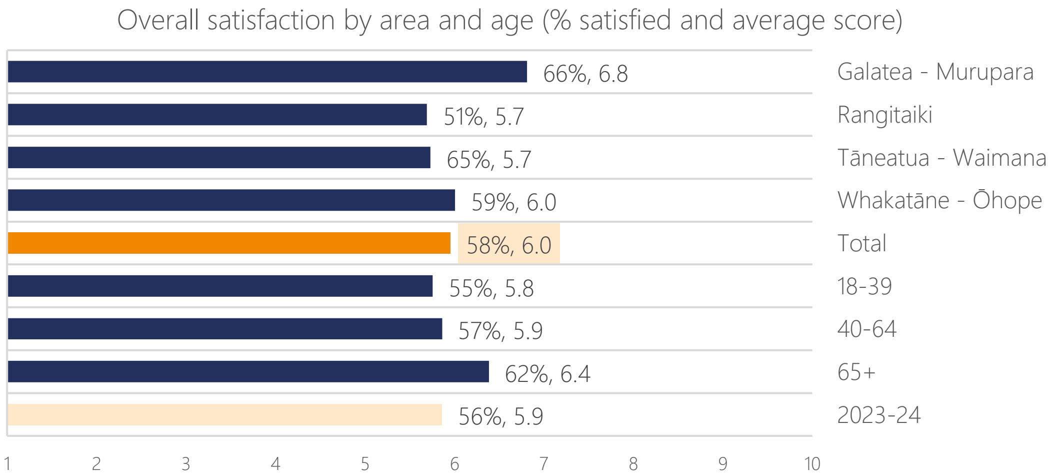




- Most residents (58%) who provided a rating were satisfied with footpaths in the District in 2025 (average rating 5.9 out of 10).
- Despite some small variations, satisfaction with footpaths has remained around the same level in thelast four years – and just above the national benchmark.
- Satisfaction was also similarly high across community subgroups.
- Over half (55%) of residents preferred seeing Council funding of footpaths to remain the same (52% in 2024), although this also remained a higher priority for more funding (32%, 35% in 2024).

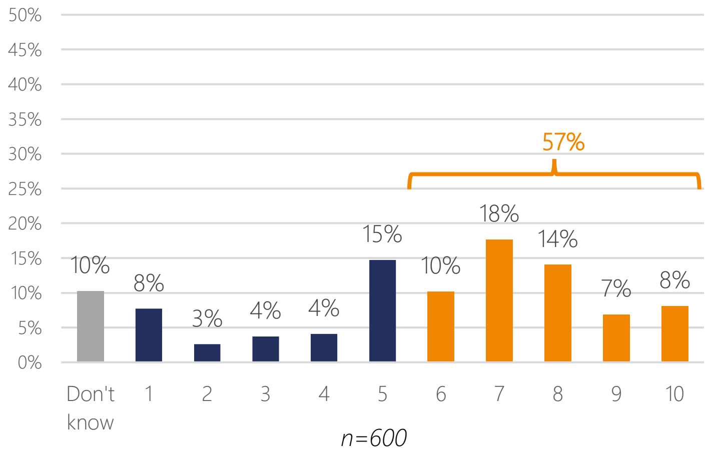


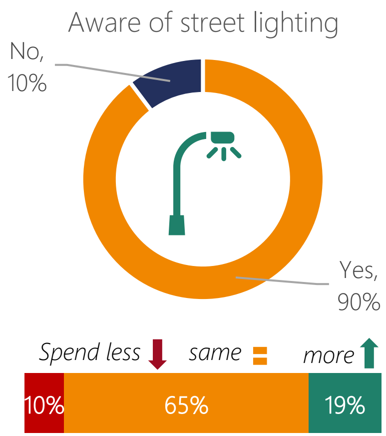
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	75%	74%	74%	75%	79%	74%	64%	56%	63%	63%	56%	58%

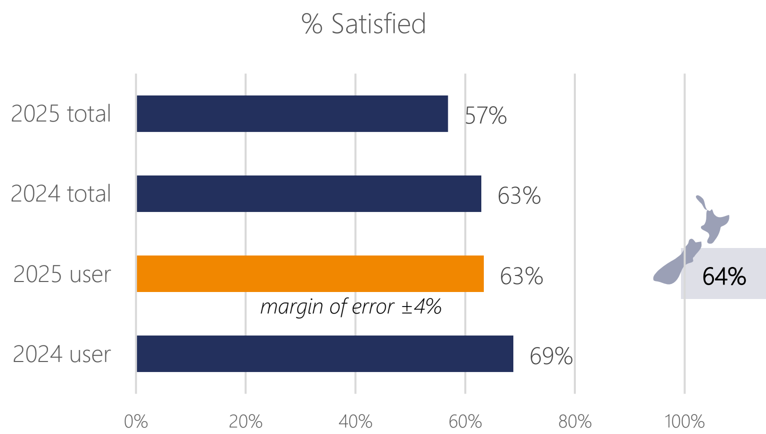


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

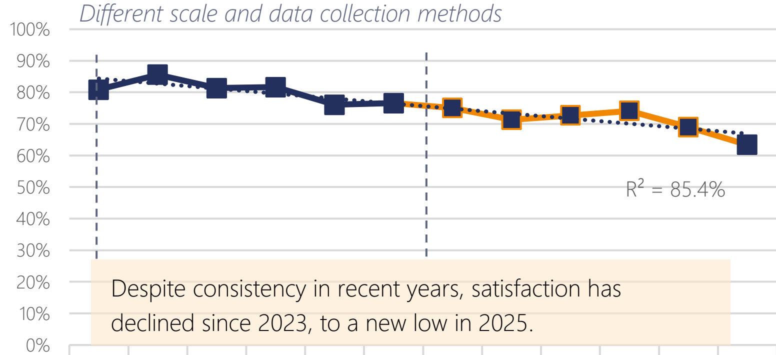
Street lighting



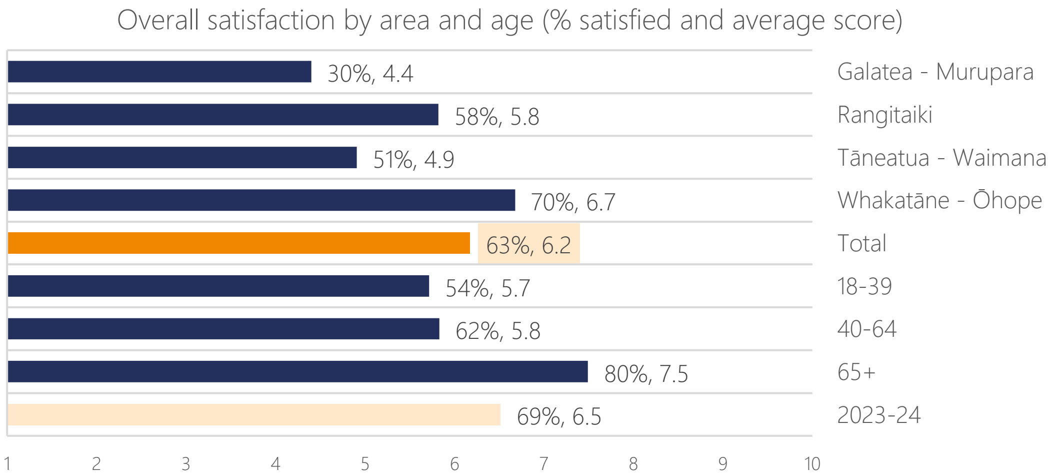




- Satisfaction with street lighting has seen gradual decline over the last two years, currently at an historical low (63%) - down slightly from 69% in 2024, but significantly below 74% in 2023. Nevertheless, it is level with the national benchmark (64%).
- Satisfaction remained notably lower in areas outside Whakatāne - Ōhope.
- There was also a stark difference across generations, with older adults (65+) significantly more satisfied (80%, 85% in 2024).
- Overall, 2-in-3 residents (65%) preferred the same funding levels assigned to street lighting – one of the highest proportions requesting the same funding for any service in 2025.



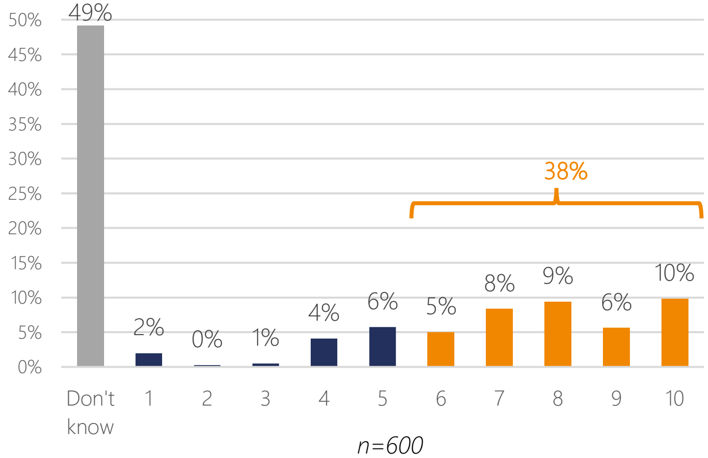
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	81%	86%	81%	82%	76%	77%	75%	71%	73%	74%	69%	63%

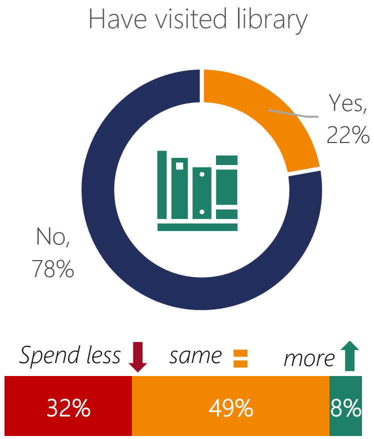


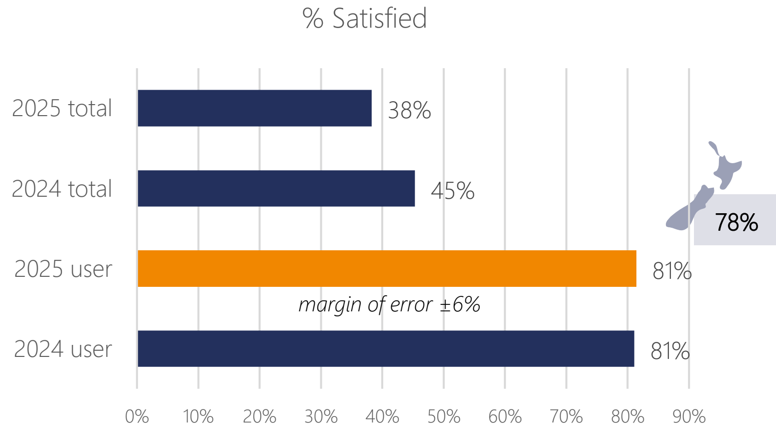
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

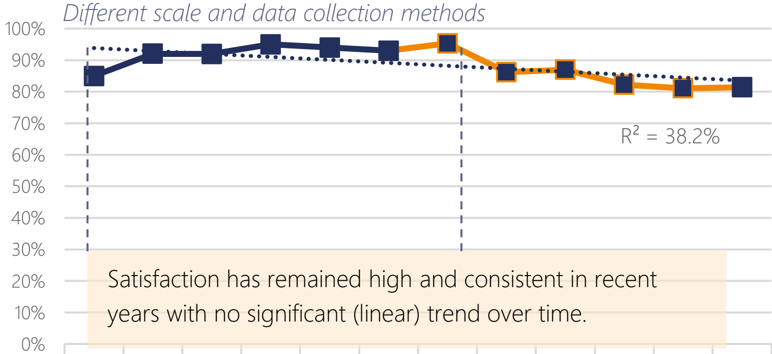
Libraries in the District



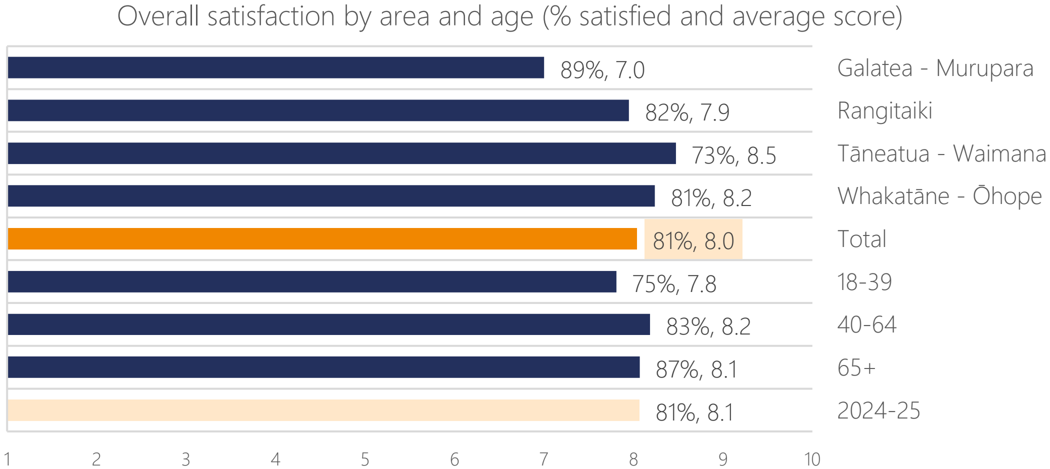




- In 2025, 1-in-5 respondents (22%) reported visiting District libraries (down from 29% in 2024, but similar to 25% in 2023).
- Among users, satisfaction has remained at a consistently high level in recent years – currently the sixth-highest rated in 2025 (81%), and just above the national benchmark.
- Consequently, satisfaction was similarly high across community board areas.
- Satisfaction was also similarly high across age groups (75% or higher)..
- While half of residents (49%) preferred seeing the same level of Council funds spent on public libraries, this service remained the 2nd-highest area targeted for less spending – with this rising to 32% of residents (from 25% in 2024).



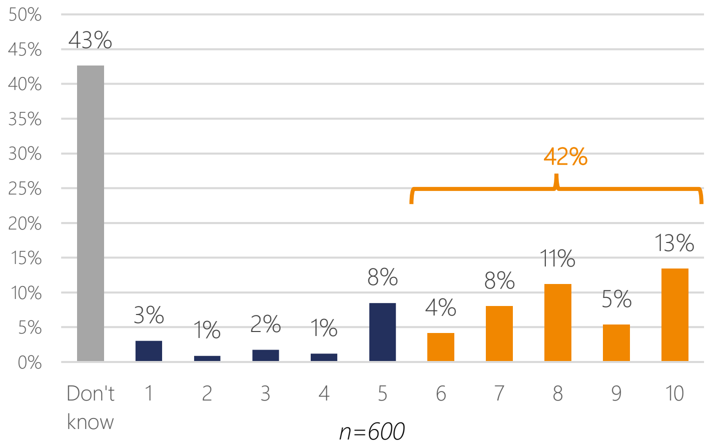
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	85%	92%	92%	95%	94%	93%	95%	86%	87%	82%	81%	81%

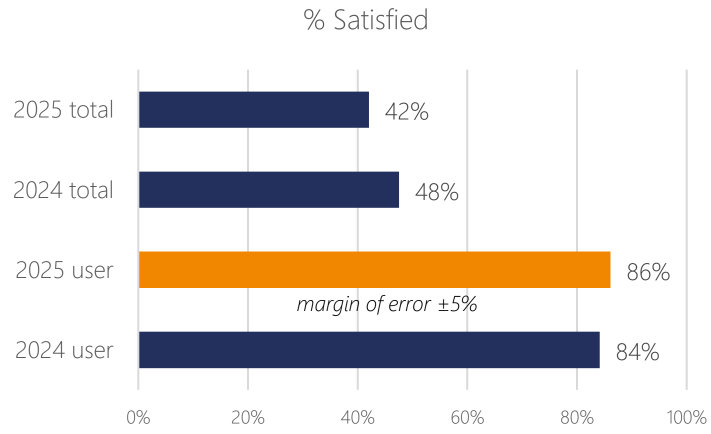


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

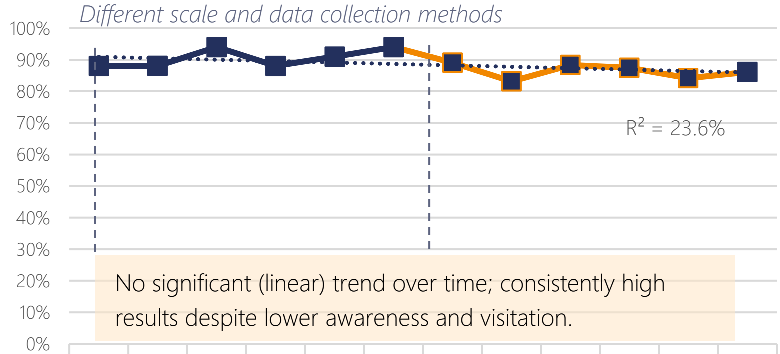
Te Kōputu a te Whanga a Toi - Whakatāne Library and Exhibition Centre

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

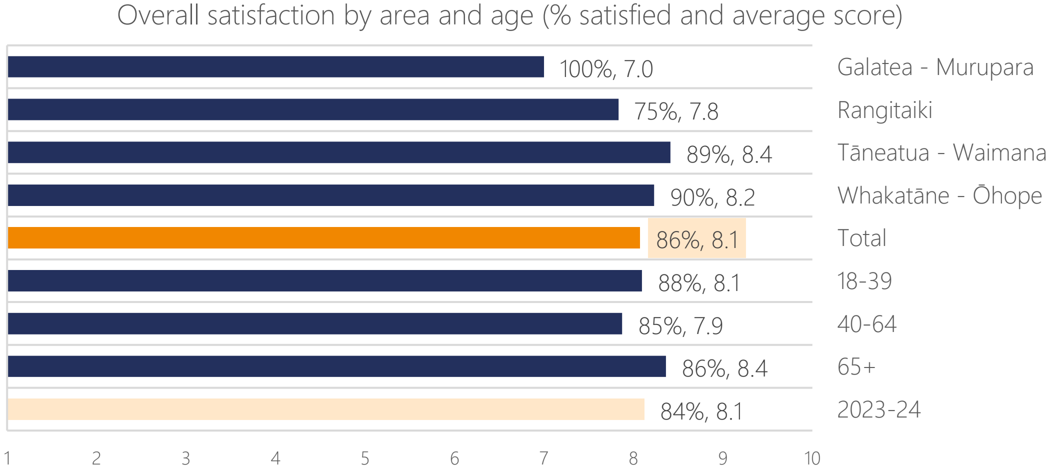




- 1-in-4 residents (26%) in 2025 reported visiting the Whakatāne Exhibition Centre (down from 31% in 2024).
- In line with low visitation levels, knowledge about the Centre also remained low with 2-in-5 residents not able to provide a rating (i.e. '*Don't know*' responses).
- However, satisfaction remained high among Exhibition Centre visitors in 2025 (86%) – this was the highest-rated service/facility in 2025.
- Satisfaction was also typically high across community board areas, and age groups, despite low sub-samples of users across these segments.



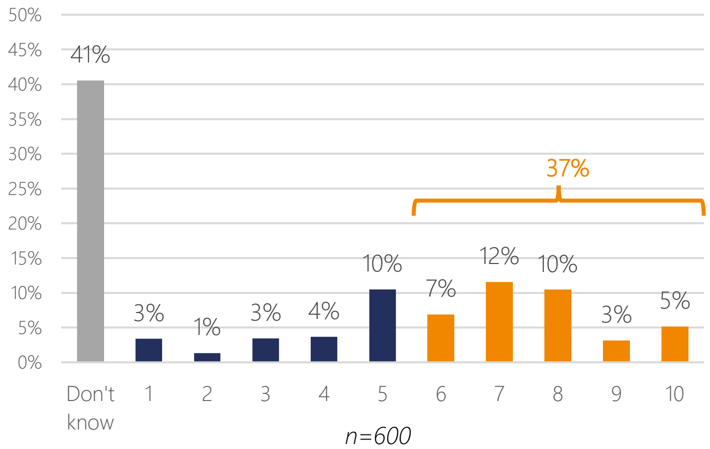
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	88%	88%	94%	88%	91%	94%	89%	83%	88%	87%	84%	86%

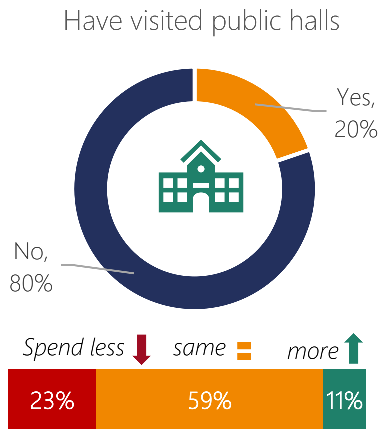


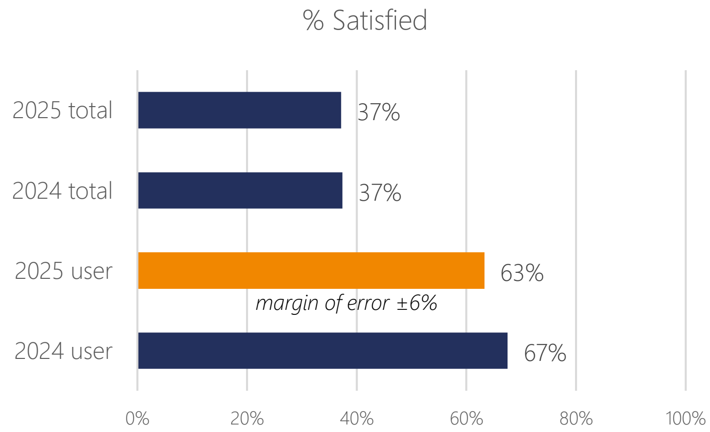
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public halls

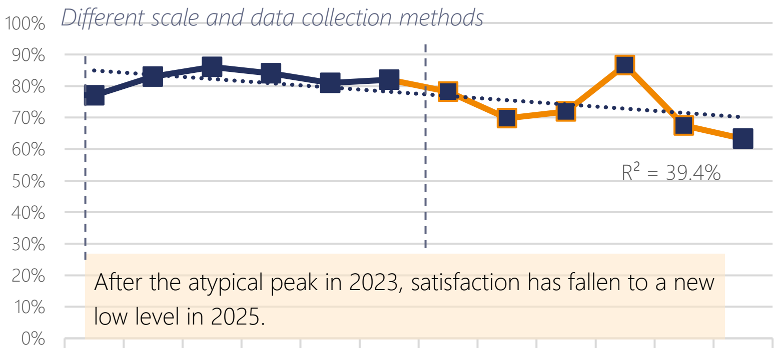
LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)



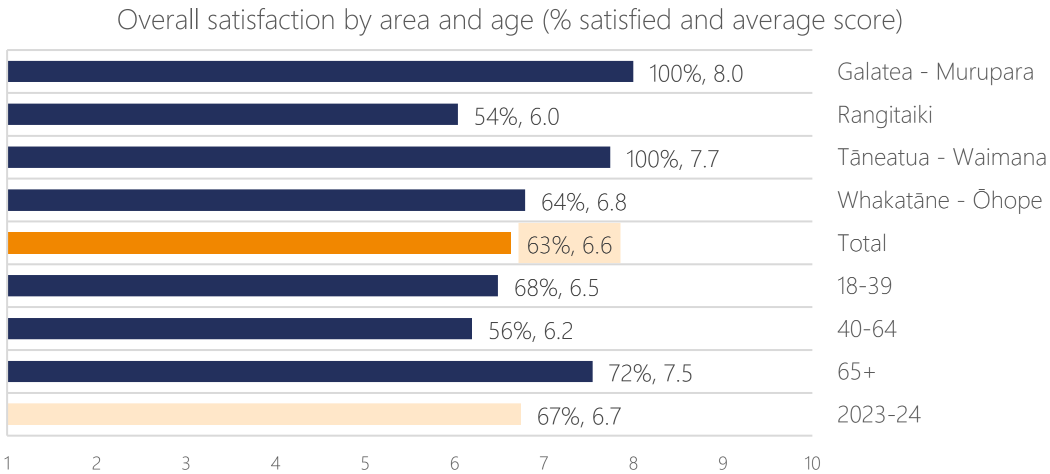




- As with the Whakatāne Exhibition Centre, many residents could not rate public halls in the district. Visitation of halls remained low in 2025 (20%), down from 2024 (27%) but similar to 2023 (also 20%).
- Despite low usage, satisfaction among public hall users (63%) fell to an historic low; down from 2024 (67%) and previous years (even accounting for the atypical peak of 2023).
- Community subsamples of users were low, nevertheless there was a rise in satisfaction for 18-39s (68%, 53% in 2024) despite greater satisfaction among 65+ year olds.
- Public halls remained a low spending priority - 59% of residents preferring the same level of Council funds spent on these facilities, with 1-in-4 (23%) wanting less spent.



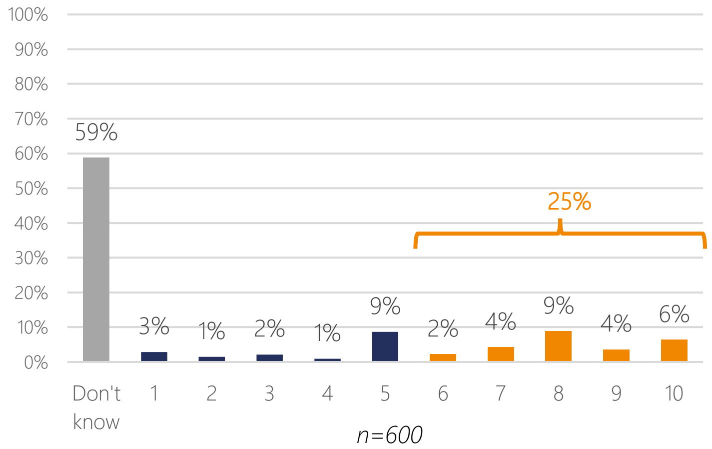
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	77%	83%	86%	84%	81%	82%	78%	70%	72%	87%	67%	63%

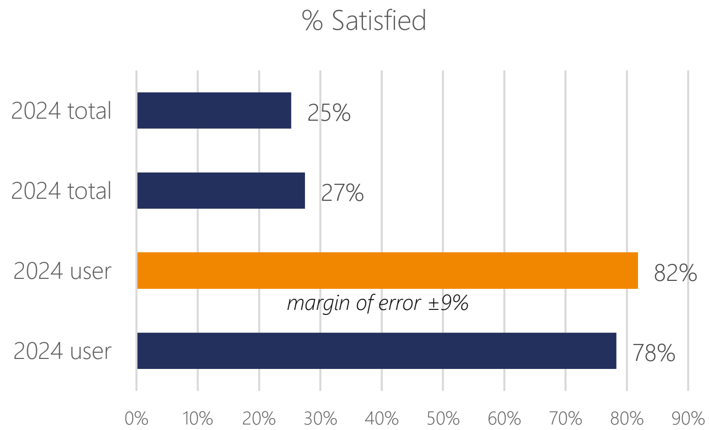


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

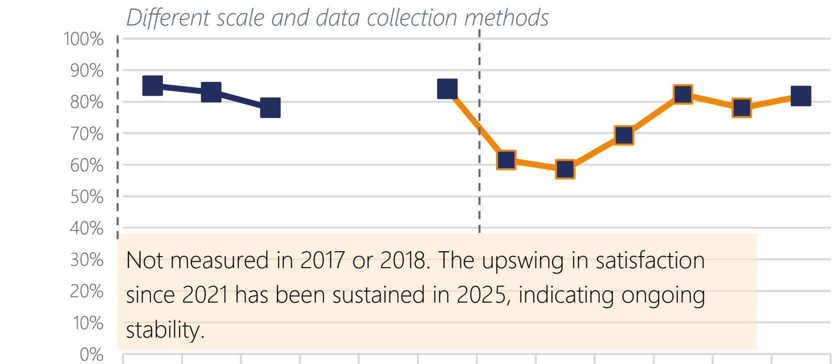
Te Whare Taonga o Taketake - Whakatāne Museum and Research Centre

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

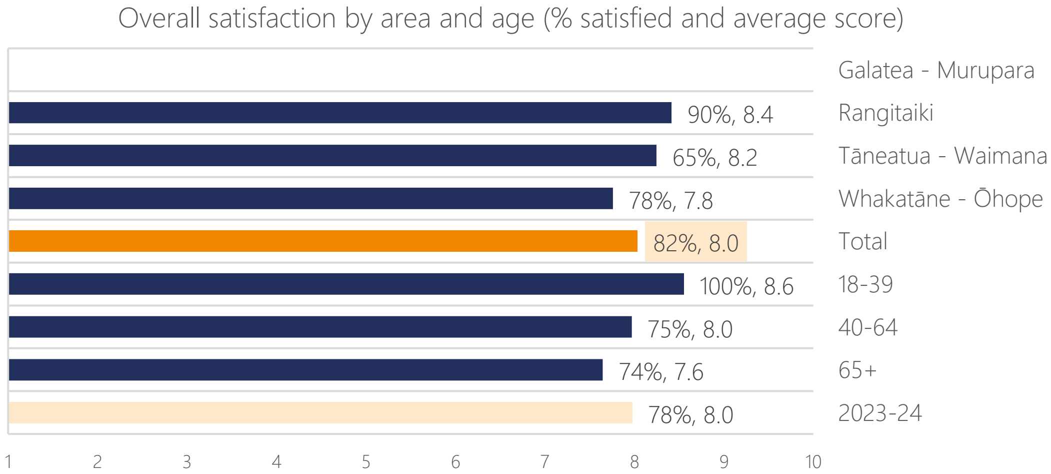




- In 2025, just 1-in-10 residents (11%) reported visiting the Whakatāne Museum and Research Centre (similar to recent years) – with low levels of knowledge as a result once again (59% providing '*Don't know*' ratings).
- However, visitors themselves were very highly satisfied at 82% in 2025 – the fifth-highest satisfaction level in 2025 – consistent with the previous two years.
- Reflecting these high overall results (and also low subsamples of users across community segments), satisfaction levels were consistently high across segments in 2025. Any observed differences particularly between community board areas were subject to small subsample sizes.



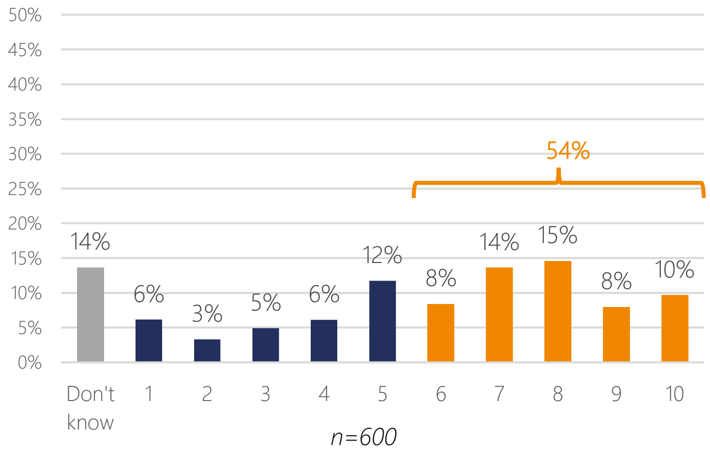
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	85%	83%	78%			84%	61%	59%	69%	82%	78%	82%

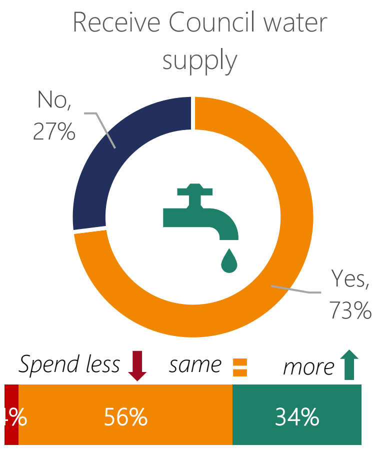


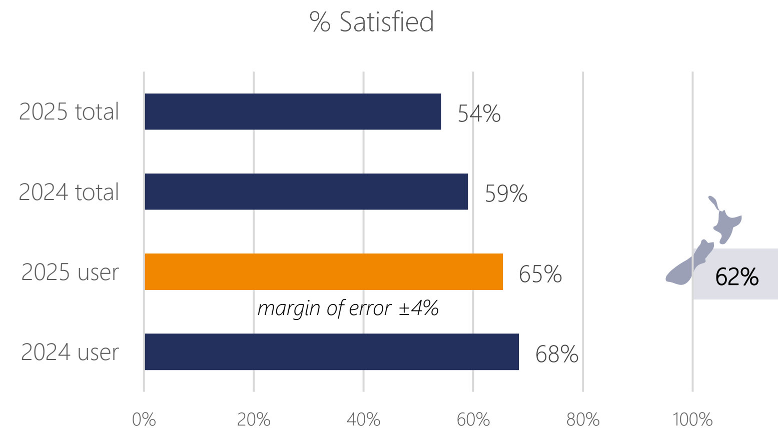
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Water supply

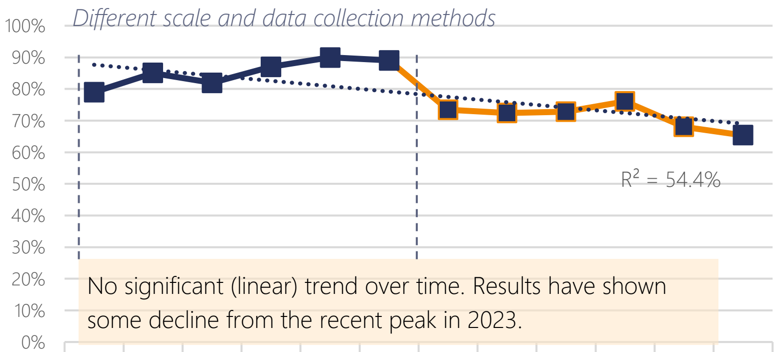
LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)





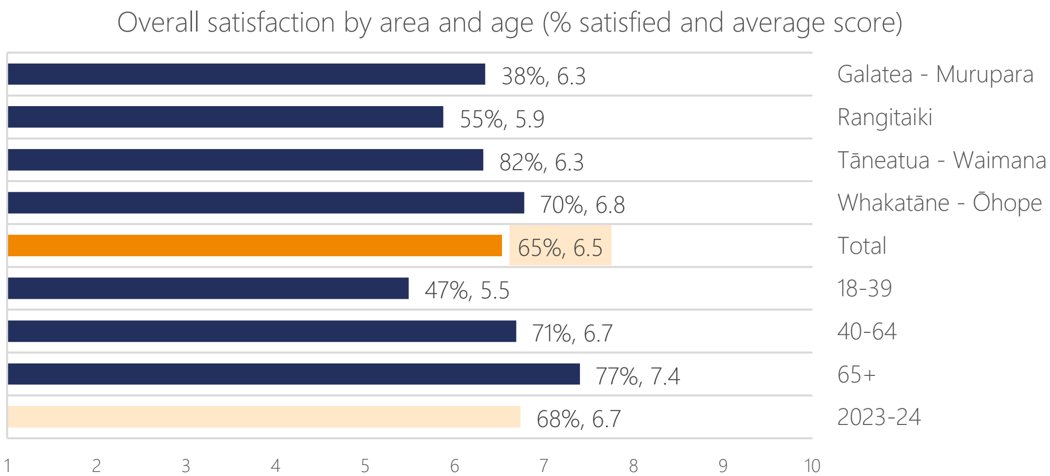


- In 2025, 3-in-4 residents (73%) reported being connected to Council's water supply (generally similar to previous years).
- Of residents on Council's water provision, 2-in-3 (65%) were satisfied with the supply overall (6.5 average rating). While similar to 2024, this has trended down since the recent peak of 2023 (76%) and higher levels of previous years.
- Overall satisfaction was driven mainly by Whakatāne-Ōhope residents (70%), with lower satisfaction levels measured in Rangataiki (55%). Satisfaction was also notably lower among younger adults (18-39 (47%).
- Reflecting the importance of this service, water supply remained a high priority (4th-most) for more Council funding (34%, similar to 38% in 2024).



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	79%	85%	82%	87%	90%	89%	73%	72%	73%	76%	68%	65%

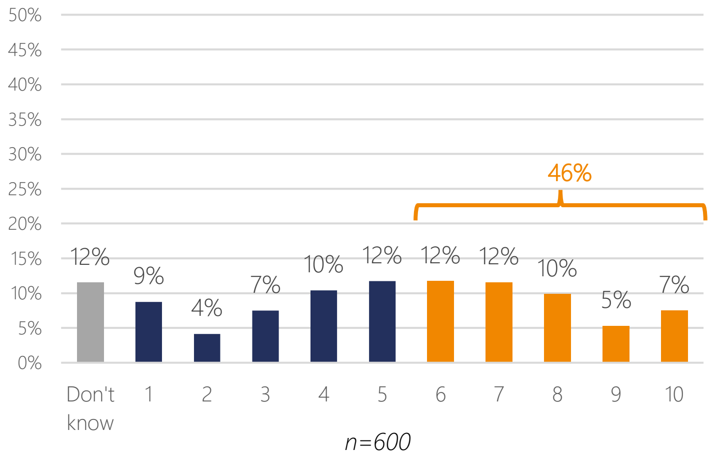
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

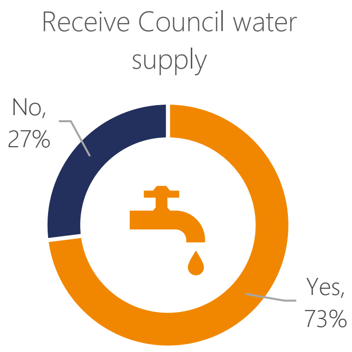


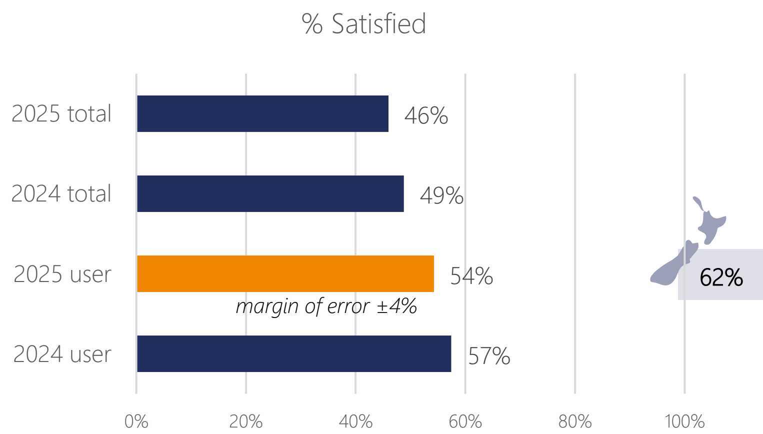
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

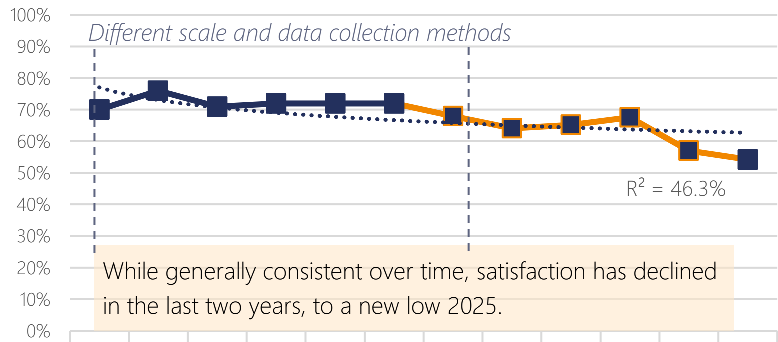
Quality of drinking water



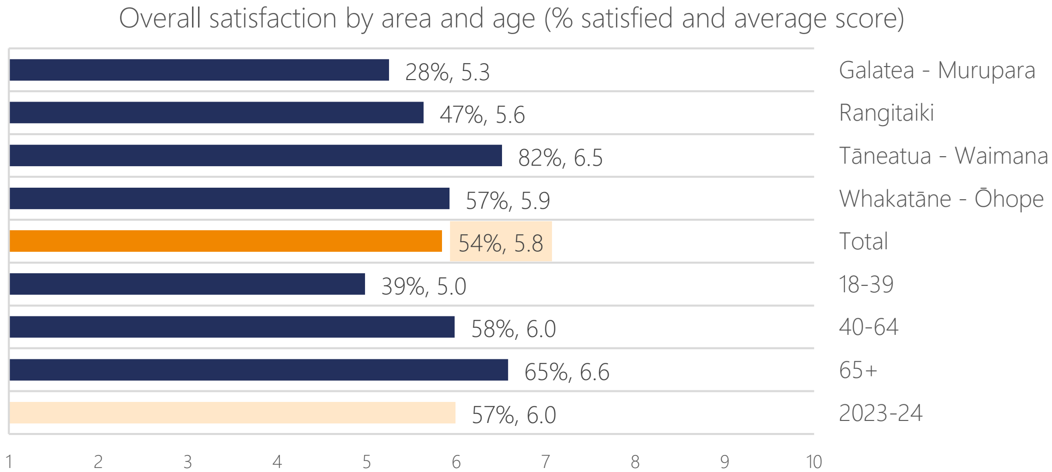




- Over half (54%) of residents on Council's water supply in 2025 were satisfied with quality of their drinking water (5.8 average rating). However, this represented a notable decrease in satisfaction since 2023 (68%) and previous years – and a new historical low (after the previous low score of 2024). This was also below the national benchmark average.
- Quality concerns were highest in Galatea-Murupara and Rangataiki, with satisfaction below 50% in these areas.
- Satisfaction with water quality was also lower among younger adults, as it was for the water supply generally.

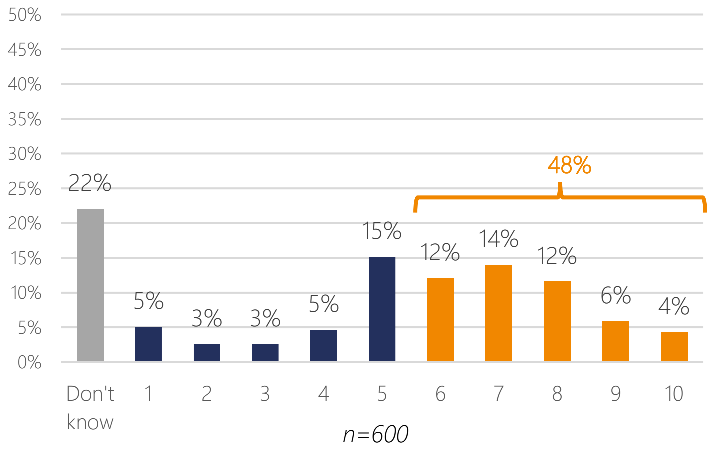


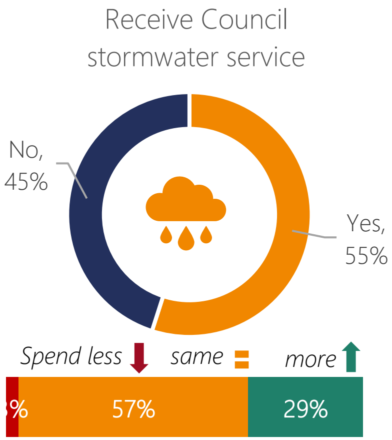
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	70%	76%	71%	72%	72%	72%	68%	64%	65%	68%	57%	54%

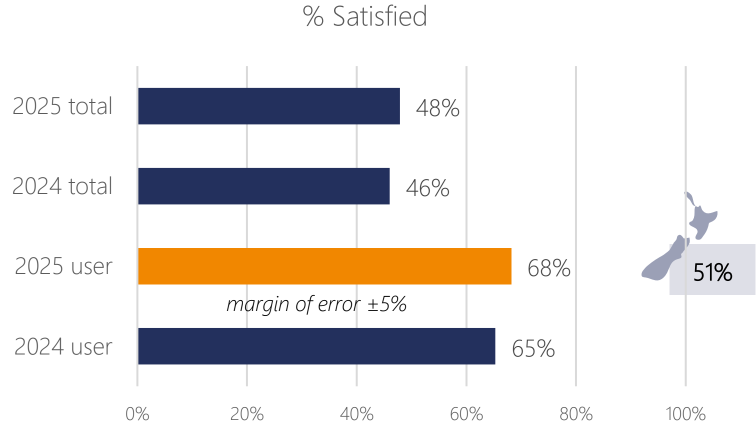


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

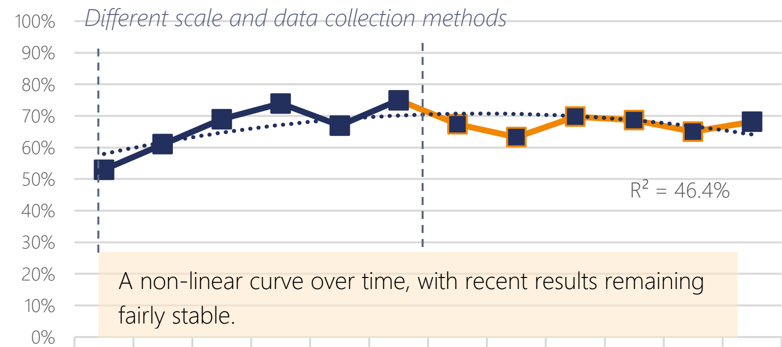
Stormwater service



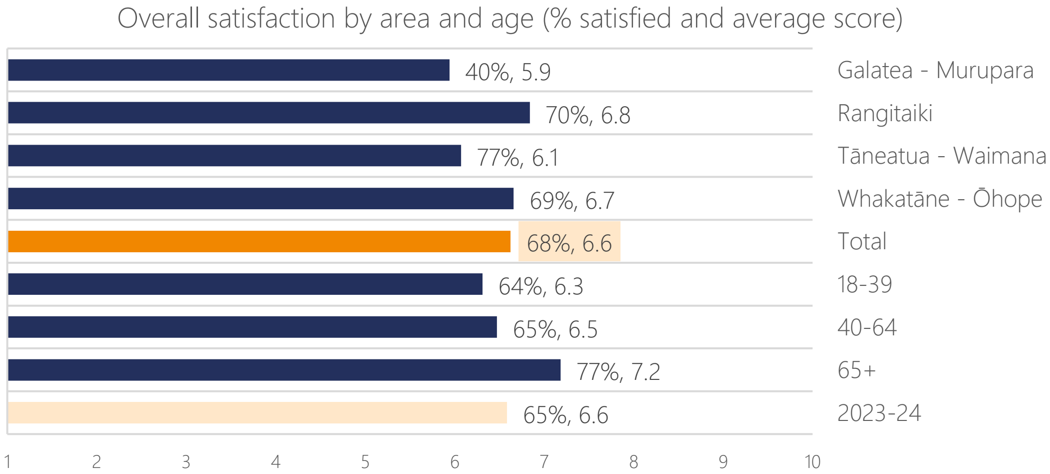




- Over half (55%) of surveyed residents in 2025 were aware of being on Council's stormwater service network (similar to 58% in 2024, 62% in 2023 and 57% in 2022).
- Of these residents, 68% were satisfied with this service (6.6 average rating); consistent with recent years and above the national benchmark in 2025.
- Satisfaction was similarly high across areas in 2025, with only Galatea-Murupara scoring lower (albeit a smaller sub-sample).
- 1-in-3 respondents highlighted stormwater for more Council funding (29%), similar to recent years.



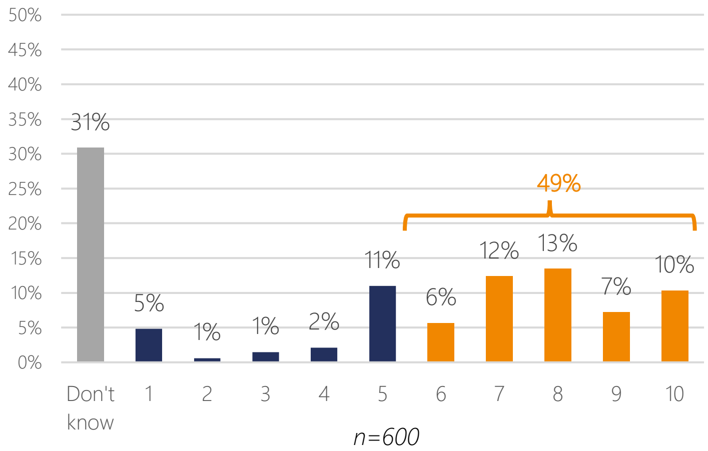
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	53%	61%	69%	74%	67%	75%	67%	63%	70%	69%	65%	68%

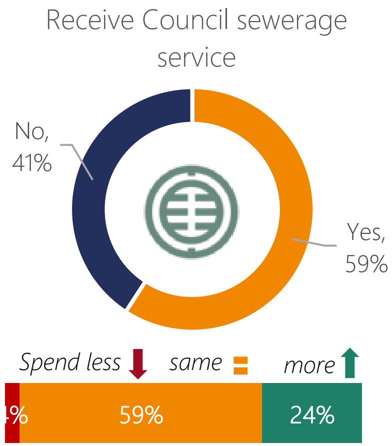


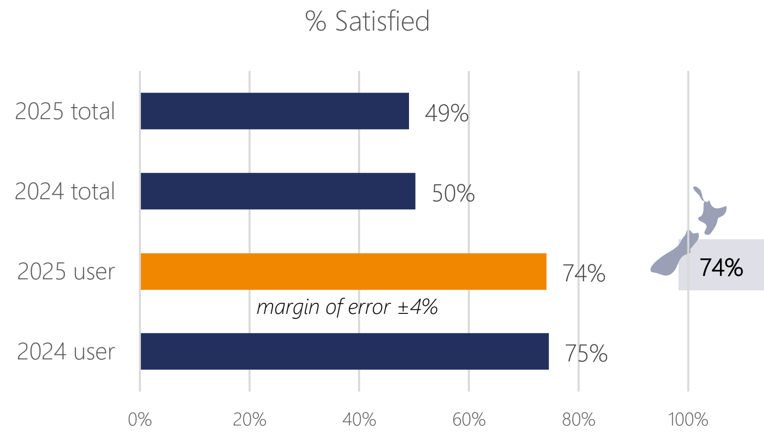
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Sewerage system

LTP MEASURE

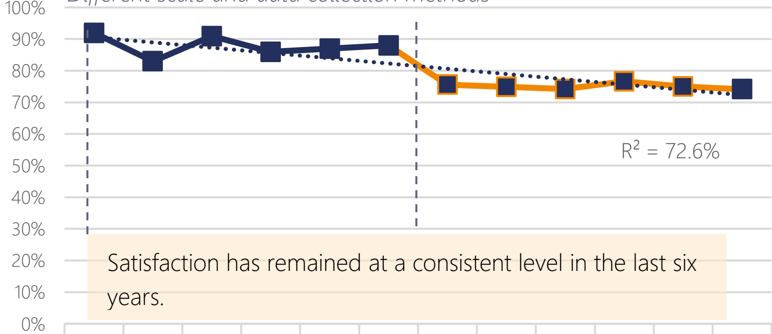






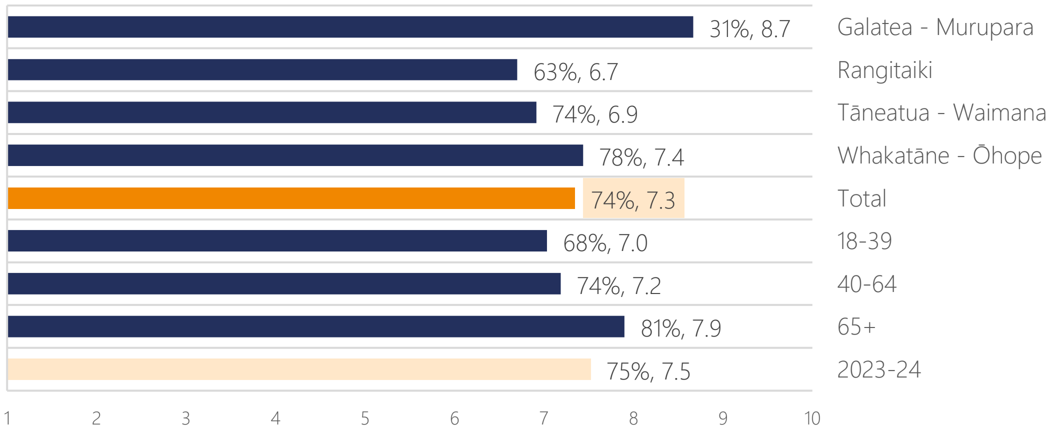
- Similar to stormwater, 3-in-5 (59%) surveyed residents reported being connected to Council sewerage services in 2025.
- 3-in-4 (74%) of these residents expressed satisfaction with the sewerage system (average rating 7.3); a result tha has stayed stable in recent years.
- Satisfaction was slightly lower outside the main centres of Whakatāne-Ōhope.
- Residents aged under 65 remained less satisfied with Council's sewerage service on average compared to older respondents.
- Overall, 3-in-5 residents (59%) preferred the same funding levels spent on the sewerage system; 1-in-4 wanted more spending in this area (consistent with recent years).

Different scale and data collection methods



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	92%	83%	91%	86%	87%	88%	76%	75%	74%	77%	75%	74%

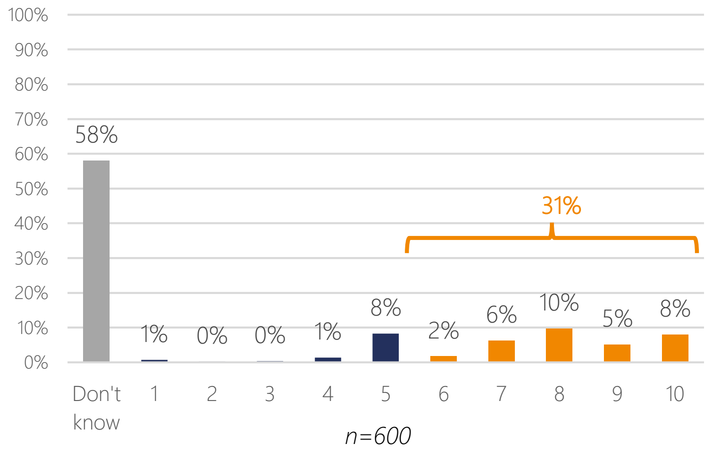
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

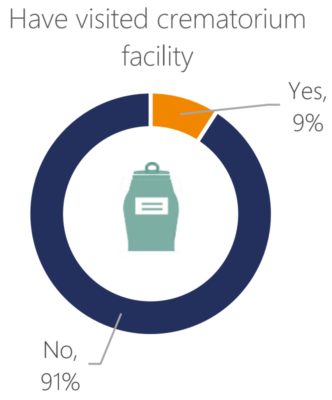


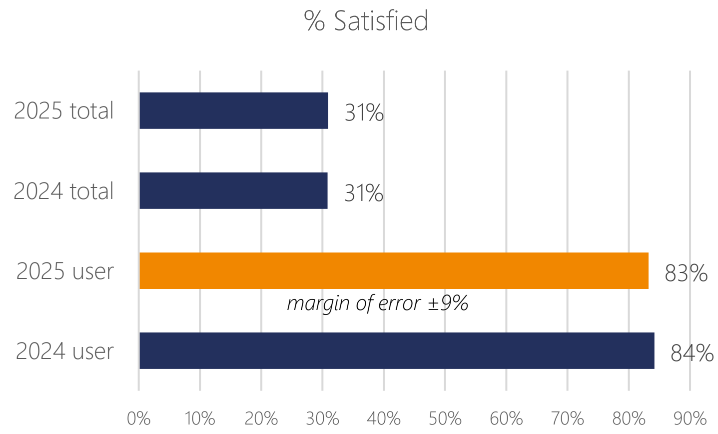
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Whakatāne crematorium facility

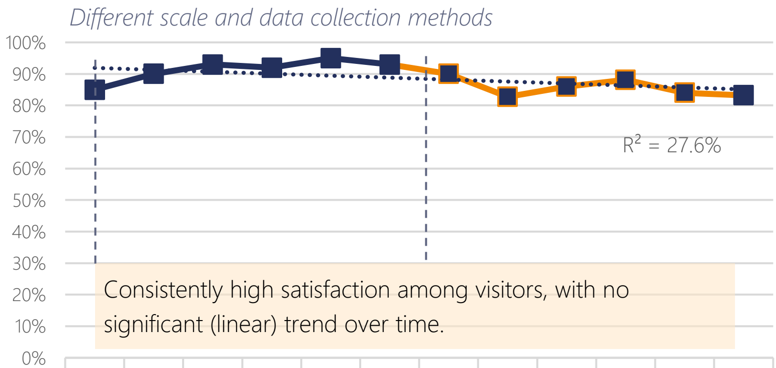
LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)



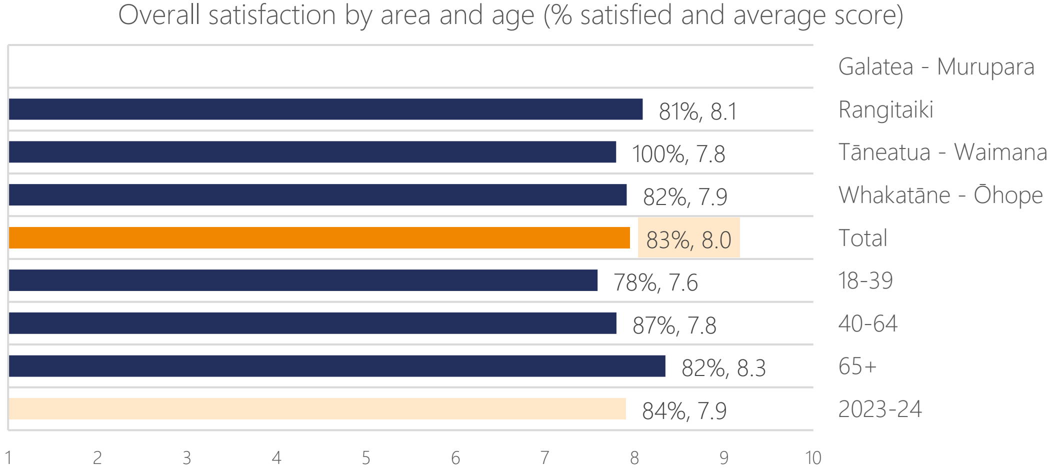




- Visitation of the Whakatāne crematorium has remained low historically; in 2025, just 1-in-10 (9%) residents reported visiting this facility (similar to recent years). As a result, knowledge of the facility remains low, with over half (58%) of residents unfamiliar with this in 2024 (62% in 2024).
- However, satisfaction among visitors remained very high in 2025 (83%, average rating 8.0), consistent with recent years.
- Due to the low sample of visitors to this facility and high margins of error, there were no significant differences between residents' demographic groups.



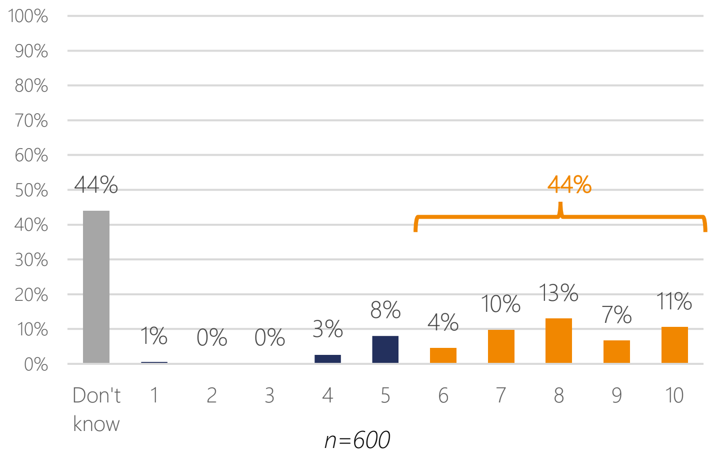
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	85%	90%	93%	92%	95%	93%	90%	83%	86%	88%	84%	83%



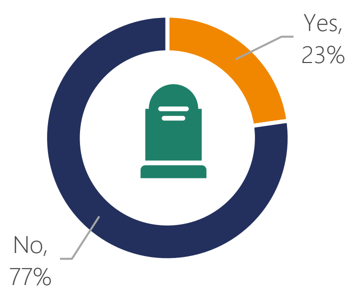
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE *(aggregated)*

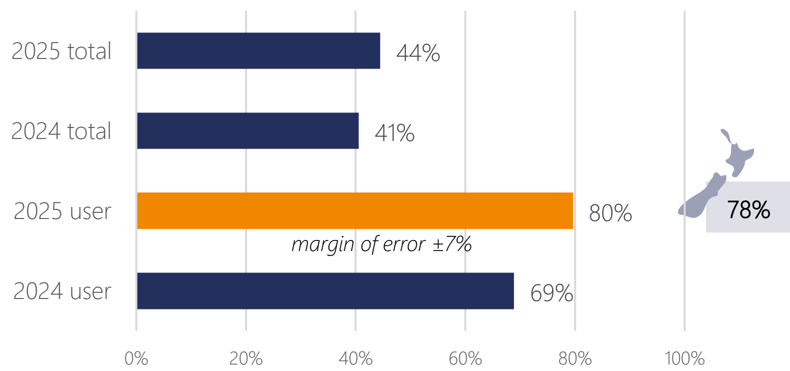
Cemeteries overall



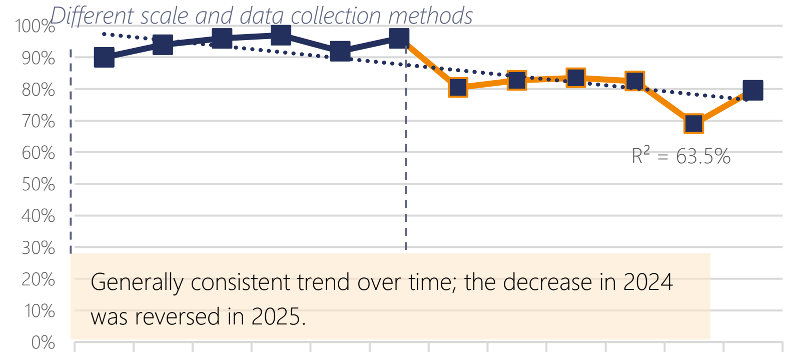
Have visited cemeteries



% Satisfied

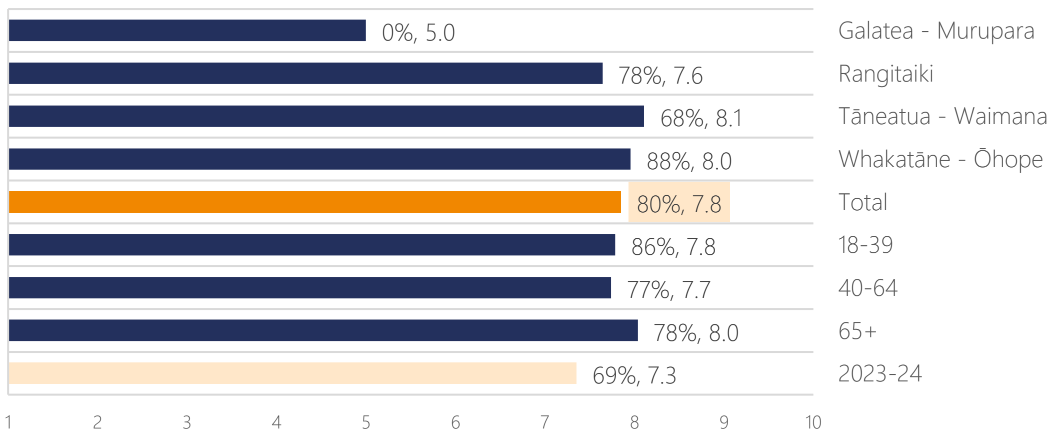


- Visits to cemeteries remained low in 2025, just 1-in-4 residents (23%) reporting this (similar to previous years).
- 4-in-5 (80%) of these residents were satisfied with cemeteries overall – rebounding back from the historical low of 2024.
- Low subsample sizes of visitors limit comparisons across segments; however satisfaction levels were similarly high across age groups in 2025.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	90%	94%	96%	97%	92%	96%	80%	83%	84%	82%	69%	80%

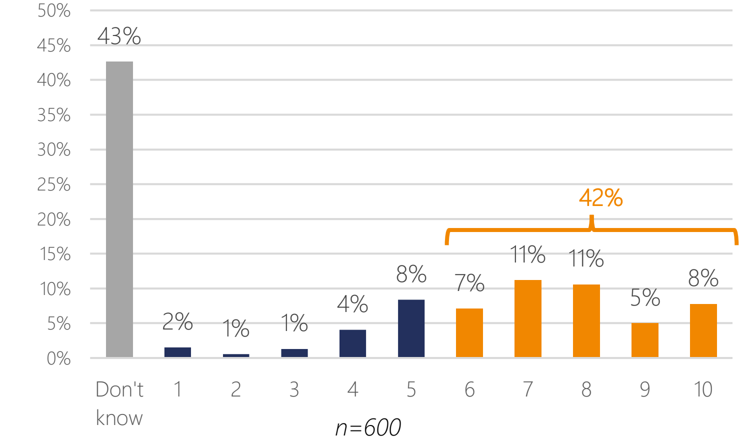
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

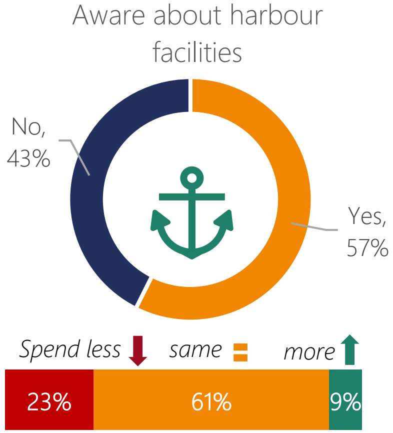


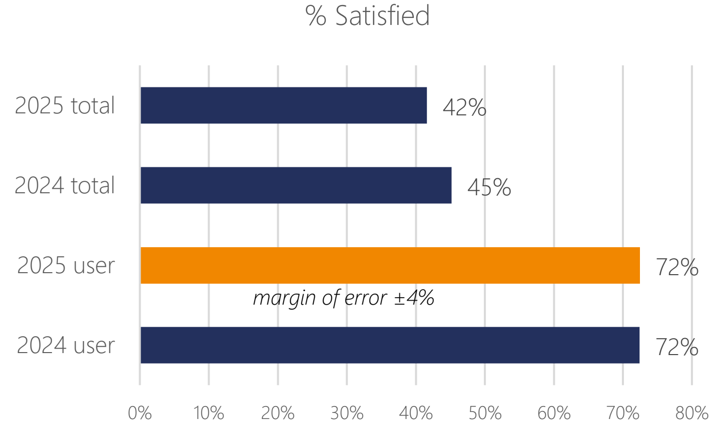
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

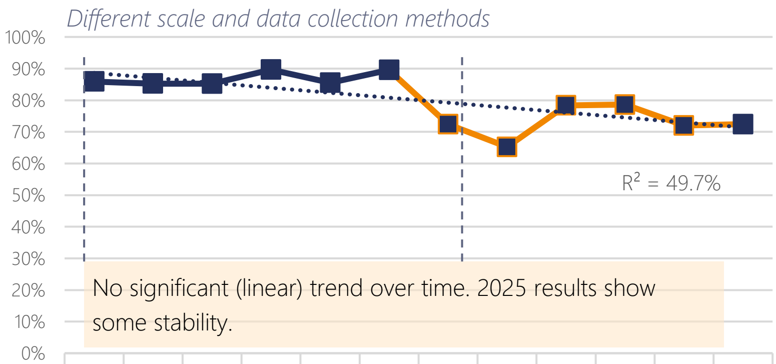
Boat ramps and wharf facilities (new wording in 2022).



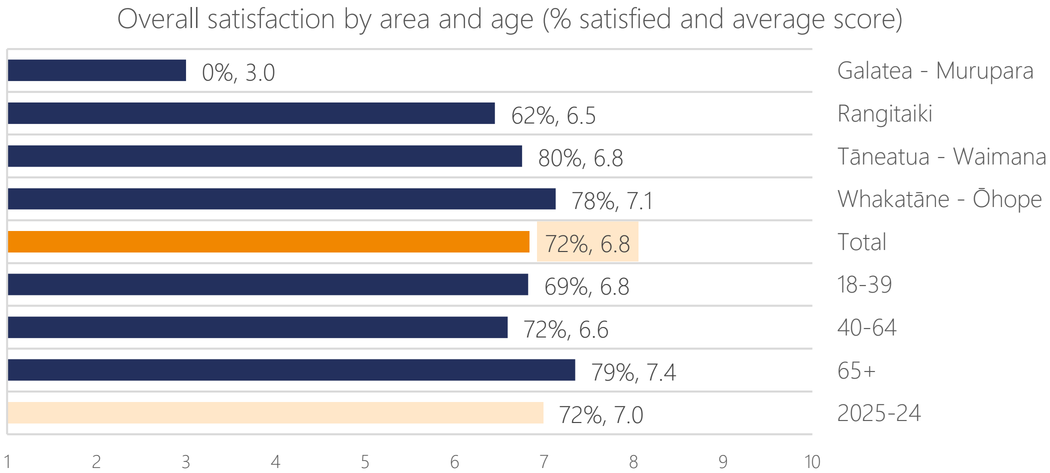




- Awareness of harbour and wharf facilities remained low in 2025, with 2-in-5 residents (42%) unsure about these, and just 57% providing a rating (similar to 2024).
- 72% of residents who were generally aware of these facilities were satisfied, similar to 2024 but still below 2022-23 levels.
- There were few significant differences across community segments in 2025.
- This remained a low priority for further Council spending in 2025; while 3-in-5 (61%) suggested the same funding levels were appropriate, 23% of respondents requested less spending – as such, remaining the 3rd most suggested service for lower spending.

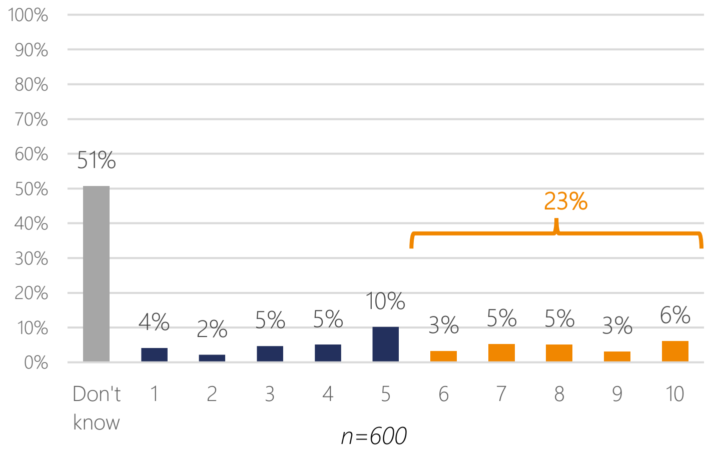


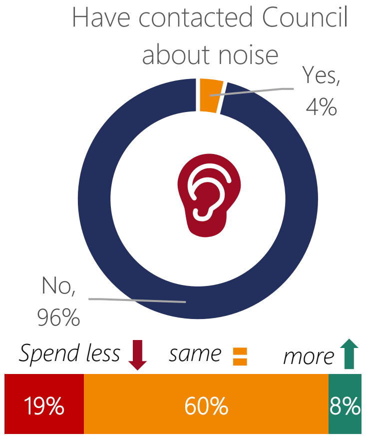
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	86%	85%	85%	90%	86%	90%	72%	65%	78%	79%	72%	0.724

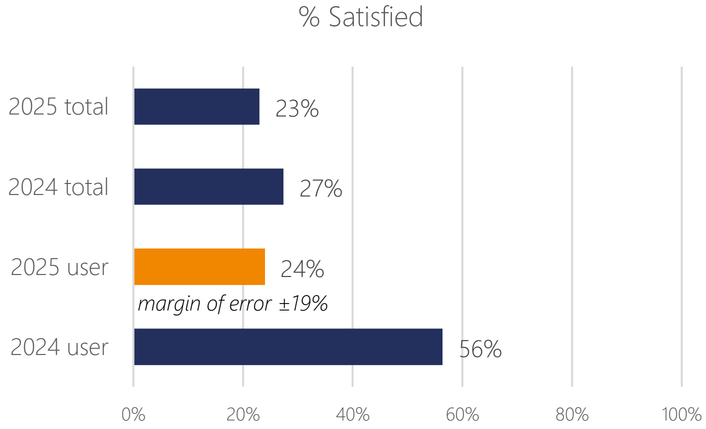


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

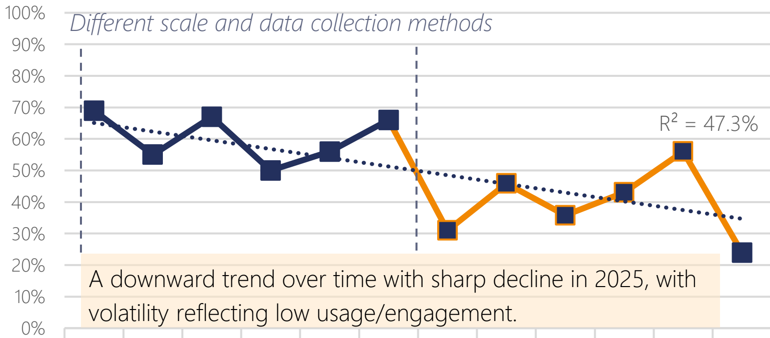
Noise control



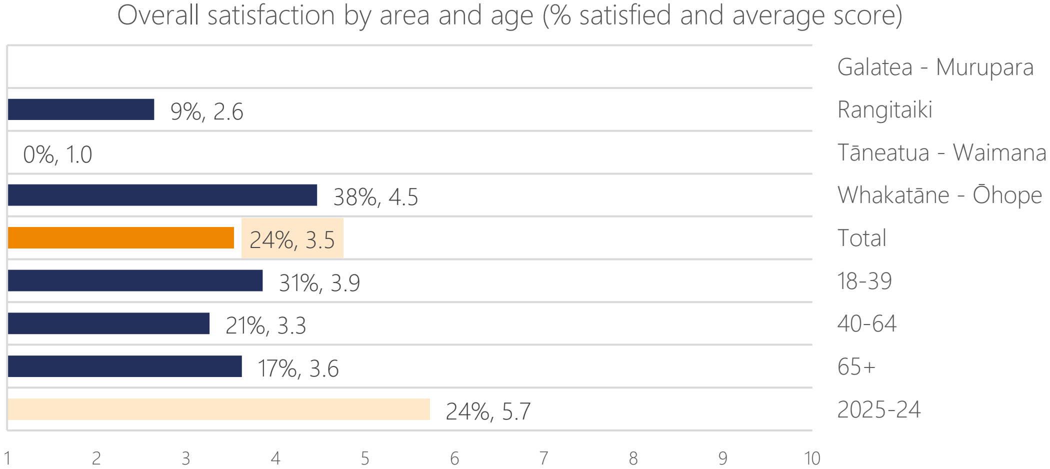




- Historically, relatively few residents contact the Council about noise issues – a trend continued in 2024 (4%, similar to 2024).
- Variability in satisfaction with noise control is evident over time due to low sample sizes and greater margins of error reducing comparability. As such, satisfaction among relevant residents fell again in 2025, to an historical low of 24%, following the recent peak of 56% in 2024.
- Observed differences between community segments were not significant due to noted low sample sizes.
- Overall, current funding levels for noise control were considered appropriate, with 60% of residents requesting no change. However, a higher percentage of residents were generally unsure about spending priorities for noise control (13%), with little change over time.

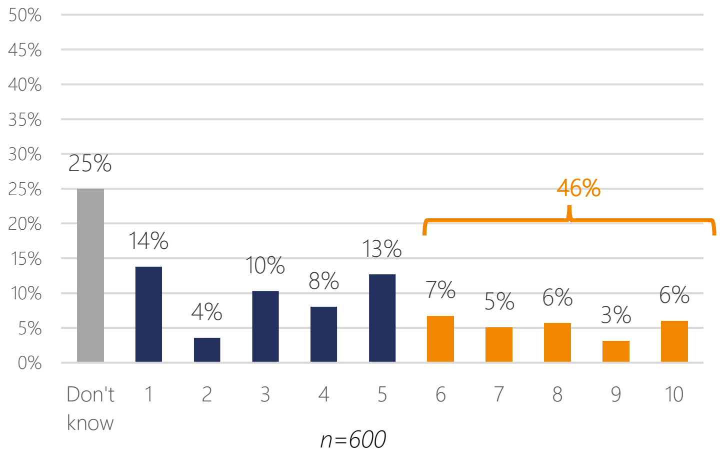


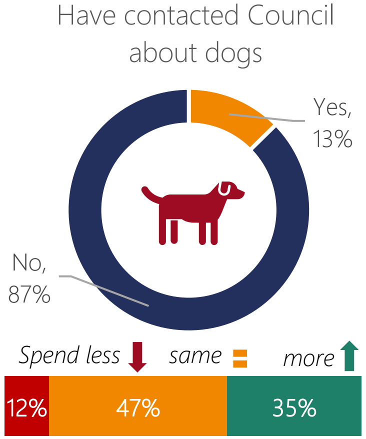
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	69%	55%	67%	50%	56%	66%	31%	46%	36%	43%	56%	24%

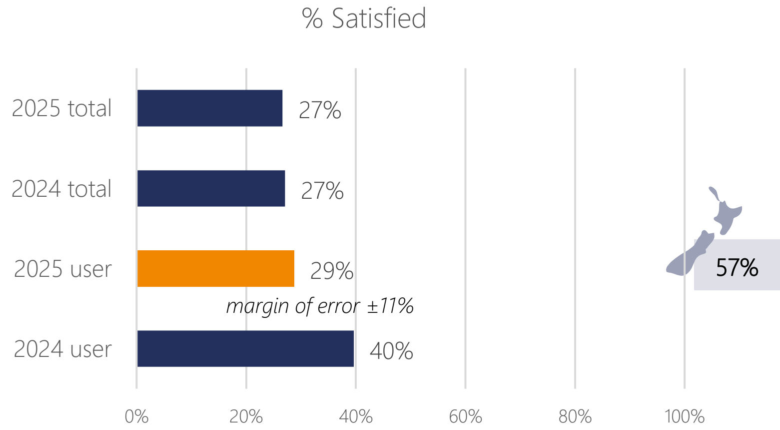


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

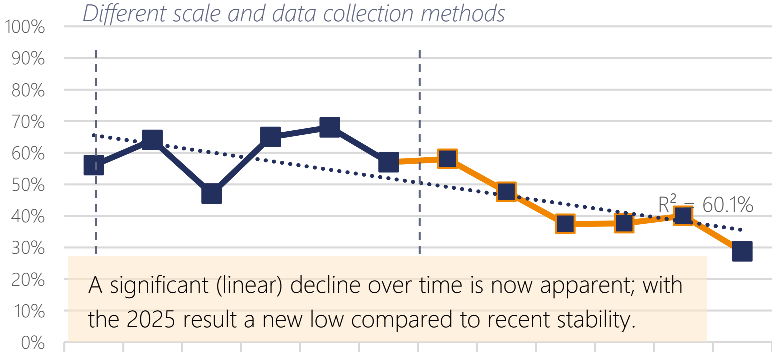
Dog control





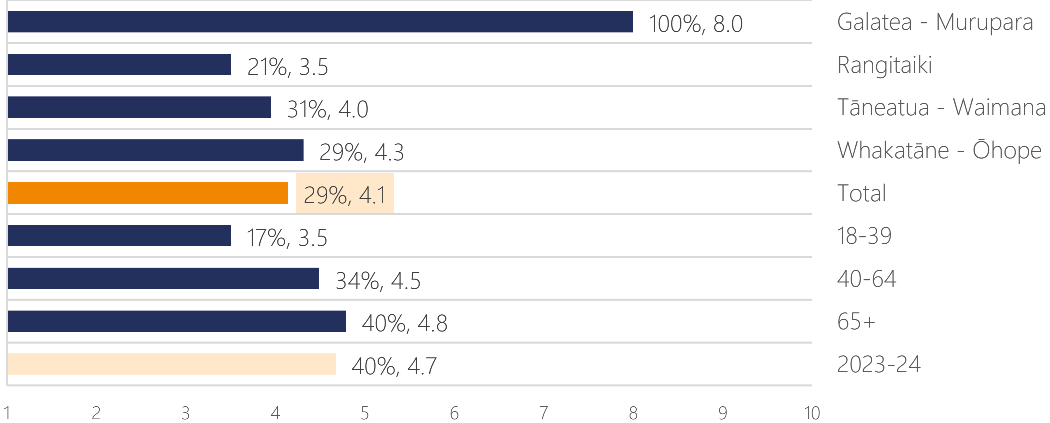


- In 2025, just 1-in-10 residents (13%) reported contacting the Council about dogs (similar to previous years), reflected in low knowledge about this service overall (25% unable to provide a rating).
- Of residents making contact about dog control in 2025, satisfaction (29%) fell to an historic low – the second-lowest rated service in 2025 - significantly below previous years and the current national benchmark.
- Low sample sizes of service users limited comparisons across community segments in 2025.
- This service remained a high target for more Council funding (third-highest in 2025), with 35% calling for more spending; similar to 2024 (34%) but above previous years (30% in 2023, 24% in 2022, 20% in 2021) – again reinforced by unprompted comments raising concerns about this issue in the District.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	56%	64%	47%	65%	68%	57%	58%	48%	37%	38%	40%	29%

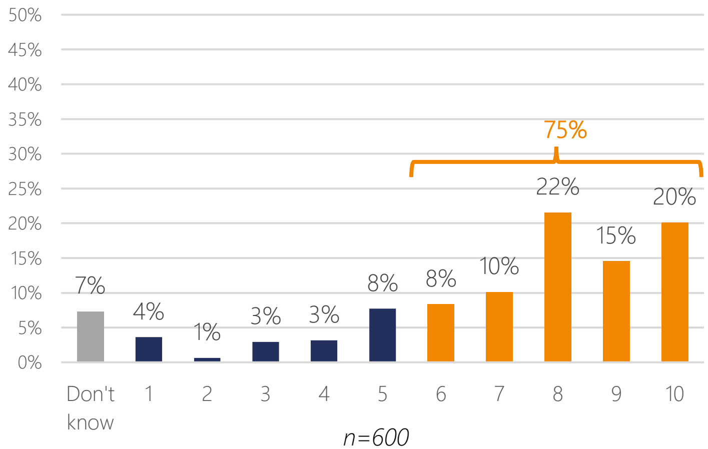
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

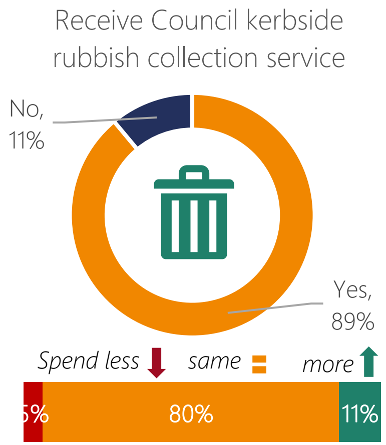


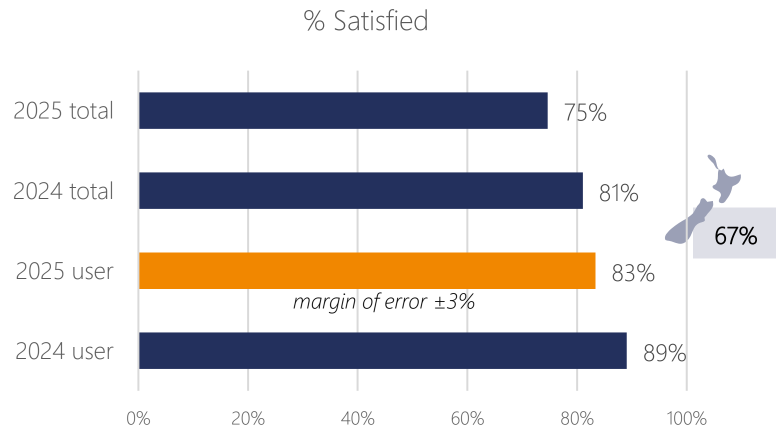
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Kerbside waste collection service

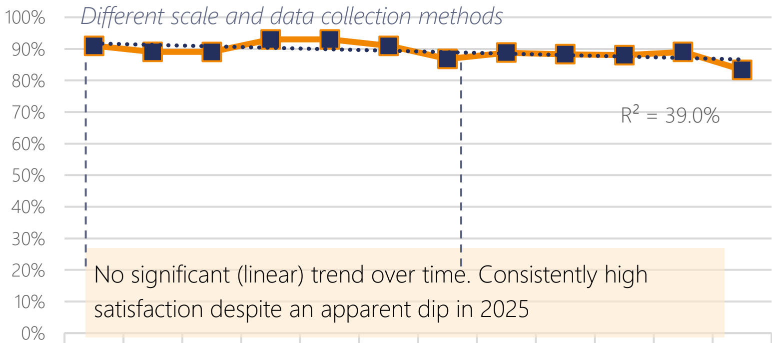
LTP MEASURE



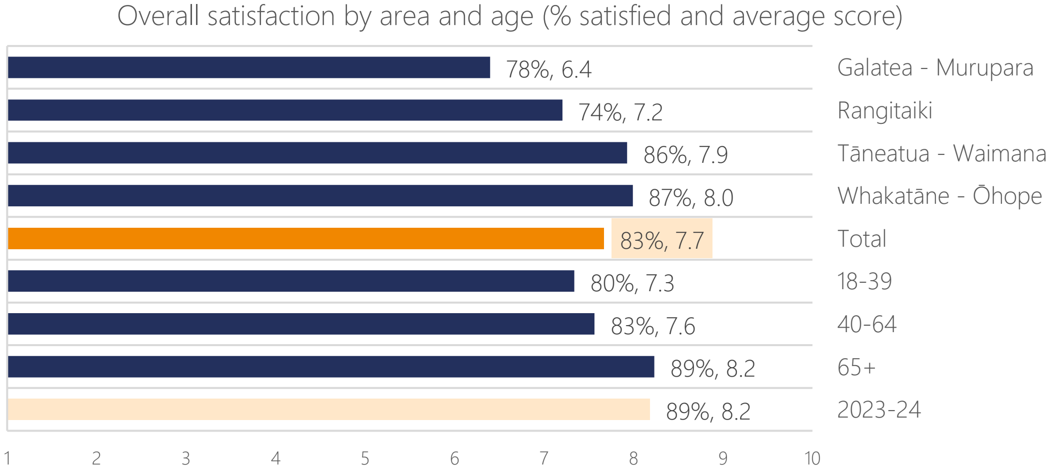




- Most surveyed residents (89%) reported regular kerbside waste collection at their property in 2025 (consistent with previous years).
- As in 2023 and 2024, this remained a very highly rated service in 2025 (second-highest this year) with very high satisfaction (83%, 7.7 average rating) – still one of the most consistent results across all service measures historically, and exceeding the national benchmark.
- 1-in-5 (20%) rated this service the maximum 10-out-of-10 (32% in 2024).
- Satisfaction was generally consistent across community segments in 2025.
- High satisfaction levels were again reflected in the high proportion (80%) of residents preferring the same level of spending for waste collection services (77% in 2024), with the current service funding considered appropriate.



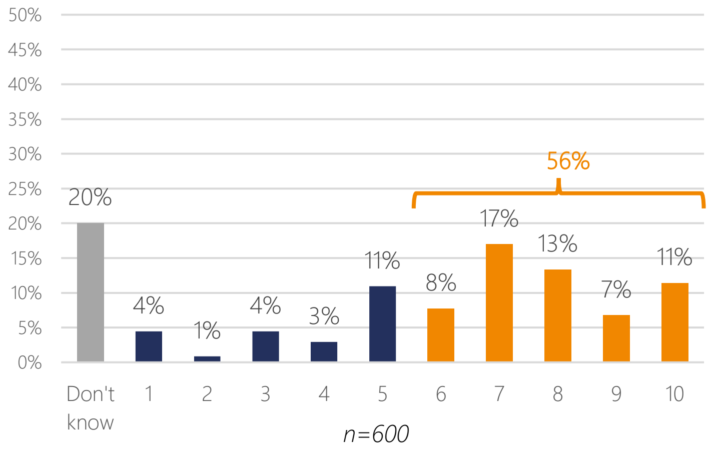
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	91%	89%	89%	93%	93%	91%	87%	89%	88%	88%	89%	83%



SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

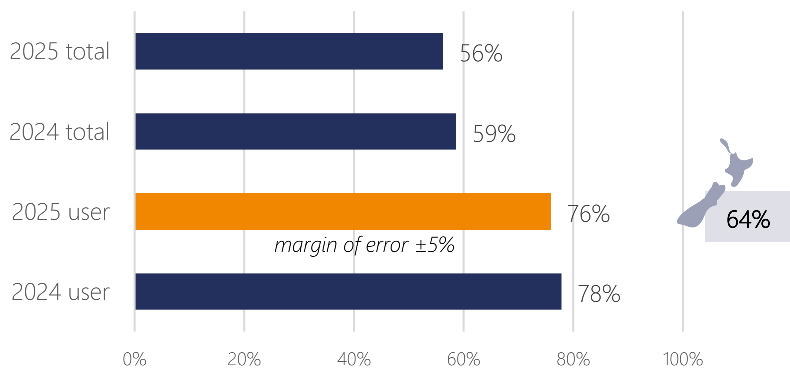
Refuse transfer station facilities

LTP MEASURE

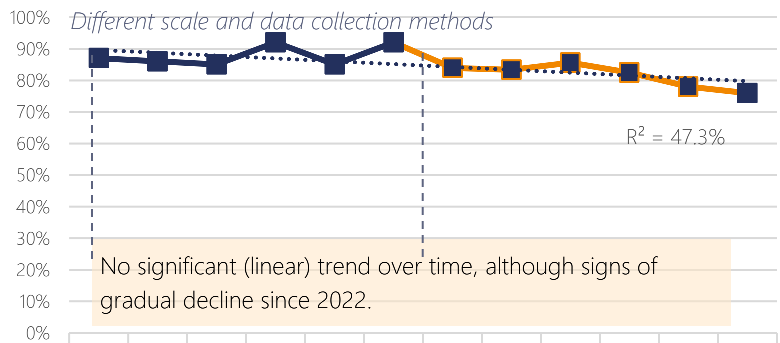


Have used refuse transfer station

% Satisfied

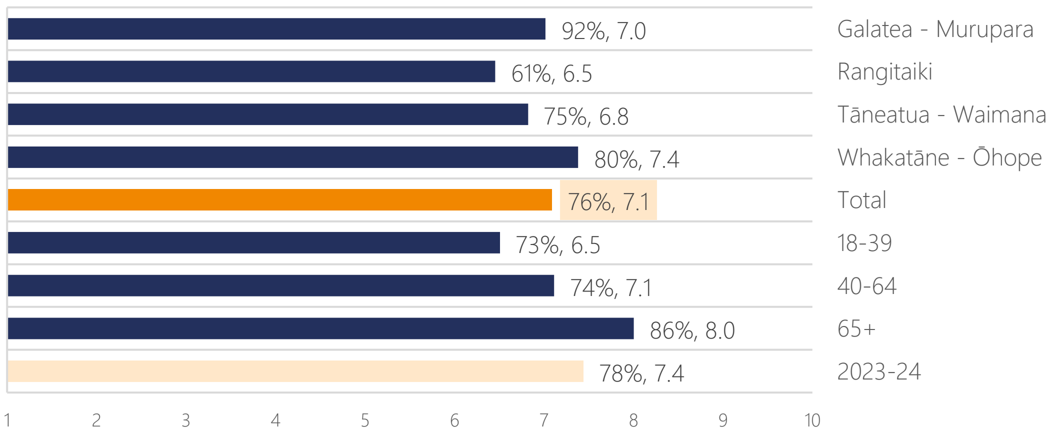


- In 2025, over half (55%) of residents reported using the District's refuse transfer station facilities through the year (similar to 51% in 2024, up from 45% in 2023).
- 3-in-4 users (76%) were satisfied with these facilities (average rating 7.1) – however, this continued a gradual decline from 2022 (86%) despite remaining highly positive – and above the NZ benchmark – in absolute terms.
- Satisfaction was higher in Whakatāne-Ōhope and notably in Galatea-Murupara.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	87%	86%	85%	92%	85%	92%	84%	83%	86%	82%	78%	76%

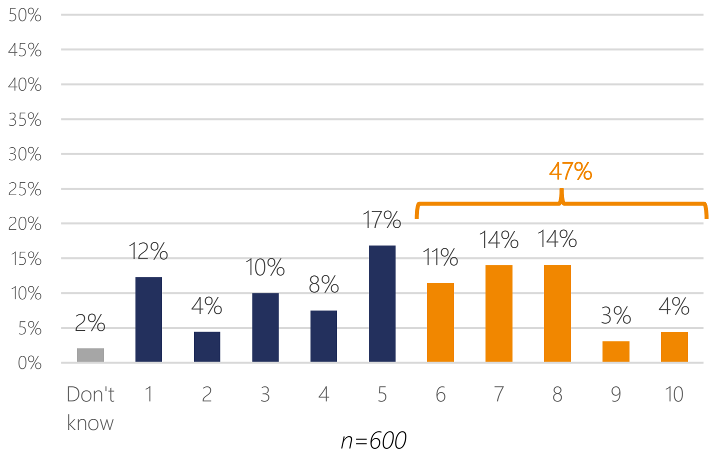
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

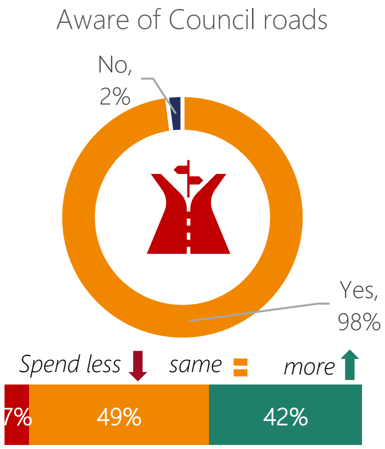


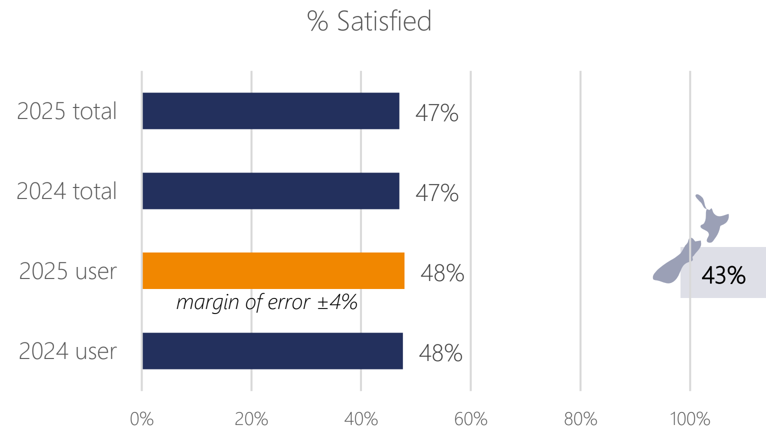
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE *(aggregated)*

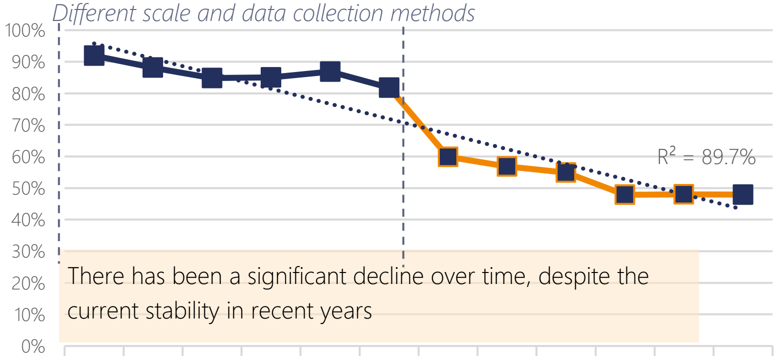
Council roads overall



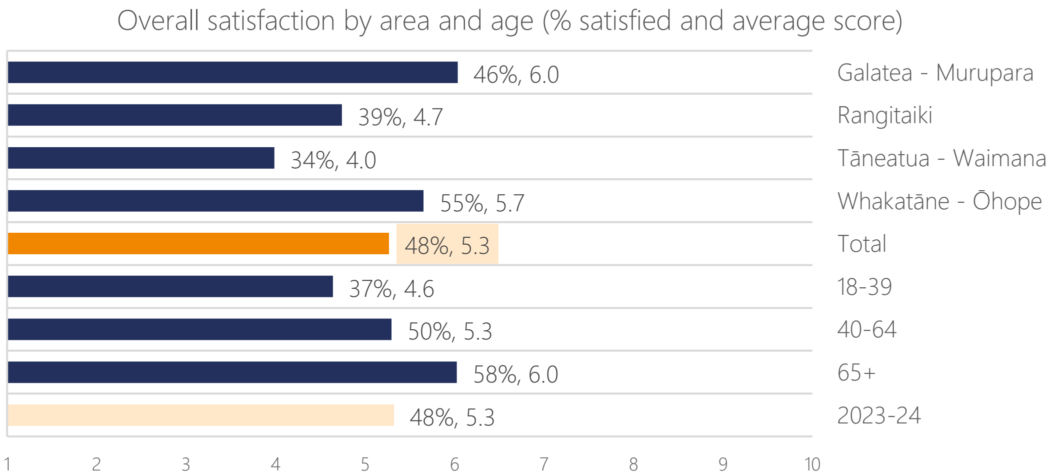




- Satisfaction with roads remained stable in 2025, with satisfaction at 48% for the third consecutive year – after the previous gradual decline from 2020.
- Note that satisfaction with roads has been declining nationwide in part reportedly to the increased frequency of extreme weather events and the reported presence of potholes across New Zealand – as reflected in the low national benchmark figure of 43% in 2025. Variations in satisfaction were also noted across the District, with lower ratings outside Whakatāne-Ōhope.
- Satisfaction with roads remained higher among older residents (aged 65+) (58%), especially compared to younger residents 18-39 (37%).
- Roads remained the highest spending priority, with 42% of respondents requesting more Council spending in this area in 2025 – however, this was lower than in previous years (48% 2024, 59% in 2023, 52% 2022). Roading issues continued to be raised in verbatim comments.



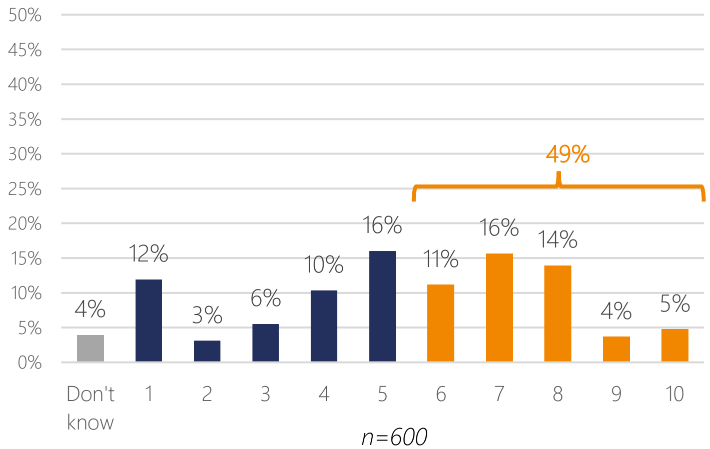
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	92%	88%	85%	85%	87%	82%	60%	57%	55%	48%	48%	48%

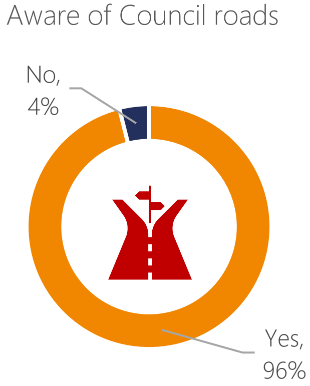


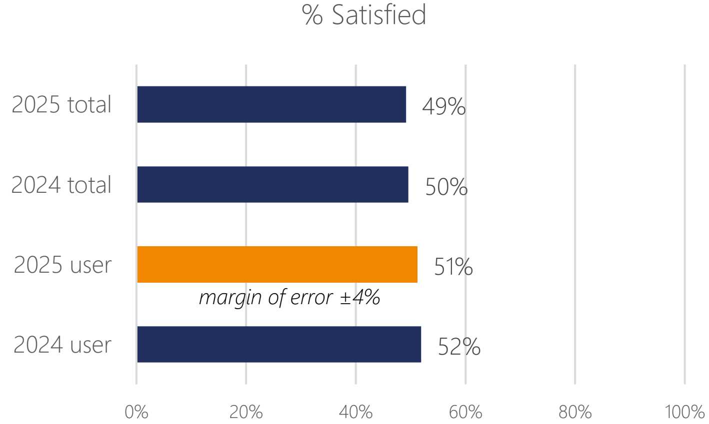
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LTP MEASURE
(aggregated)

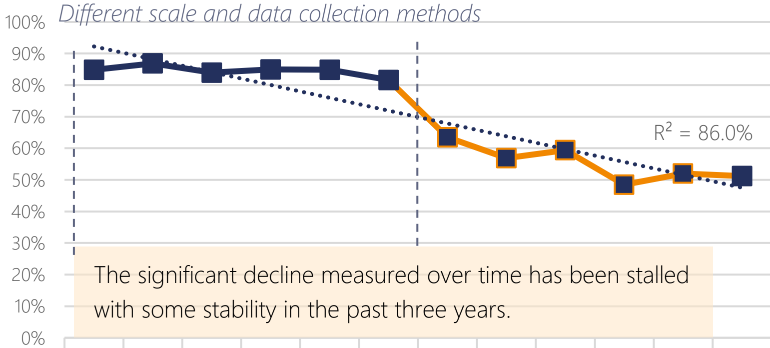
Safety of Council roads



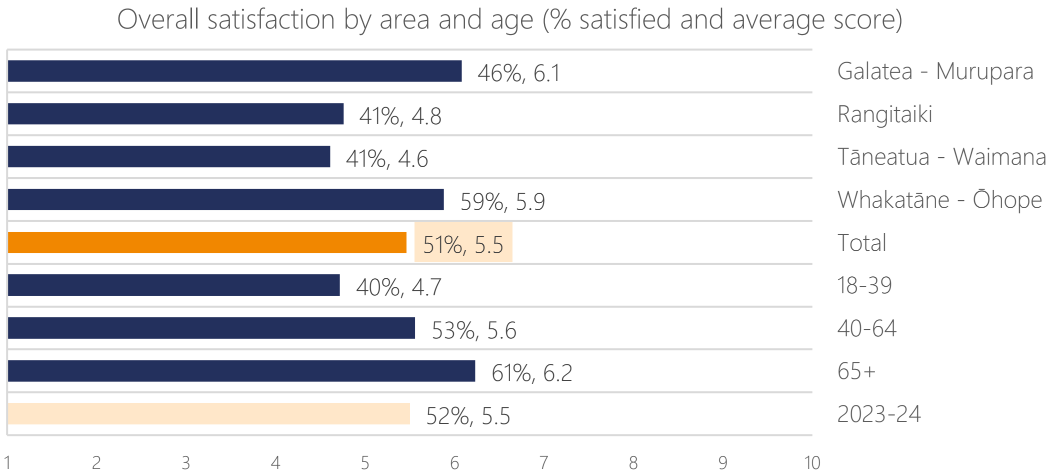




- Perceptions of road safety also saw a more stable three-year trend in 2025 (51%), compared to the previously measured decline from 2020.
- Again, satisfaction with road safety was lower in more rural areas outside Whakatāne-Ōhope.
- Overall, satisfaction with roads generally and safety of Council roads exhibited a strong correlation with provided ratings.
- Community feedback continued to highlight resident concerns about roading and related infrastructure needs and developments, particularly the ongoing demand for a second bridge in Whakatāne, the presence or need for speed calming, layout and speed limit changes, the condition of rural roads, and maintenance.

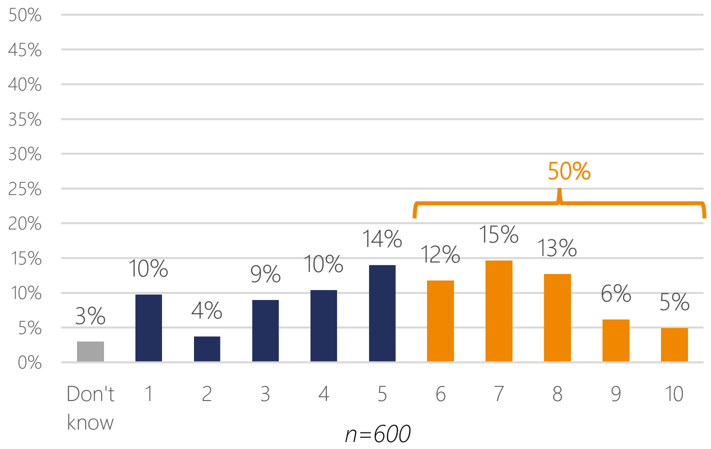


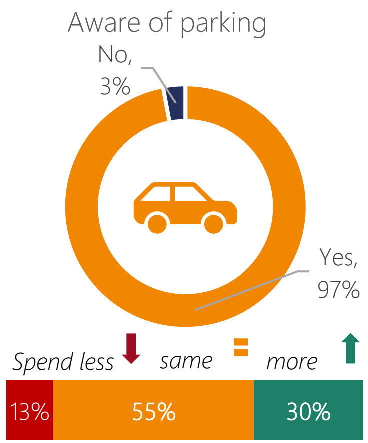
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	85%	87%	84%	85%	85%	82%	63%	57%	59%	48%	52%	51%

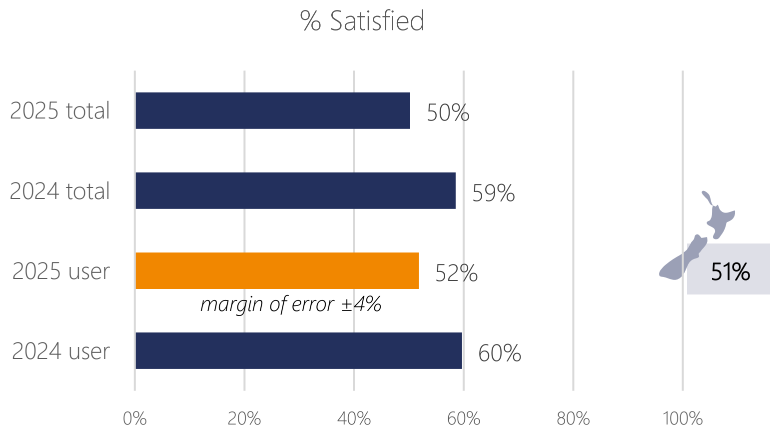


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

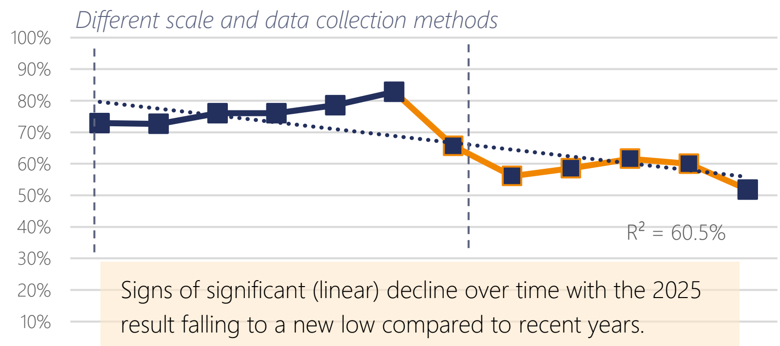
Parking in Whakatāne



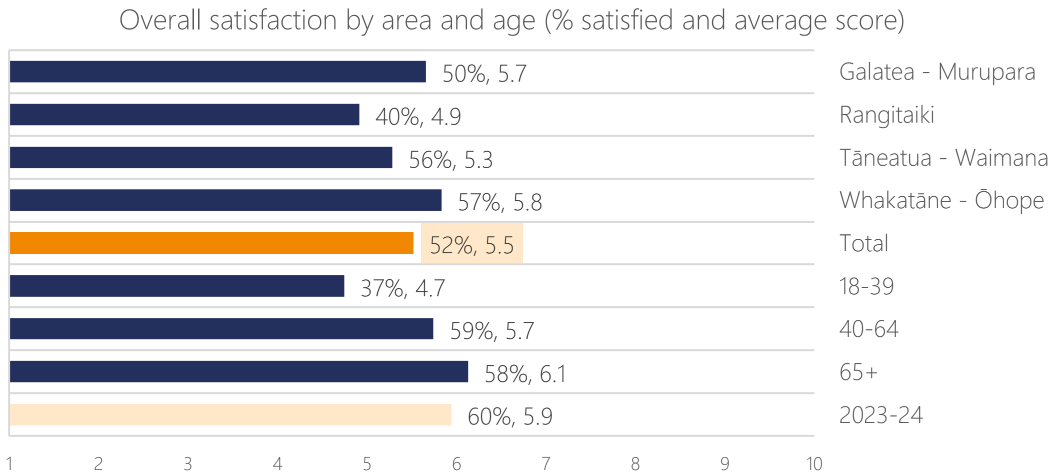




- Following a recent three-year uplift in satisfaction with parking in Whakatāne, satisfaction dipped again in 2025 to a new historic low (52%), down from 60% in 2024.
- Satisfaction with parking was generally consistent across the district, except for lower ratings in Rangataiki. Satisfaction was also lower among younger adults.
- Consistent with previous years, around half (55%) of residents in 2025 favoured maintaining the same expenditure on car parking, though 1-in-3 (30%) requested more spending.



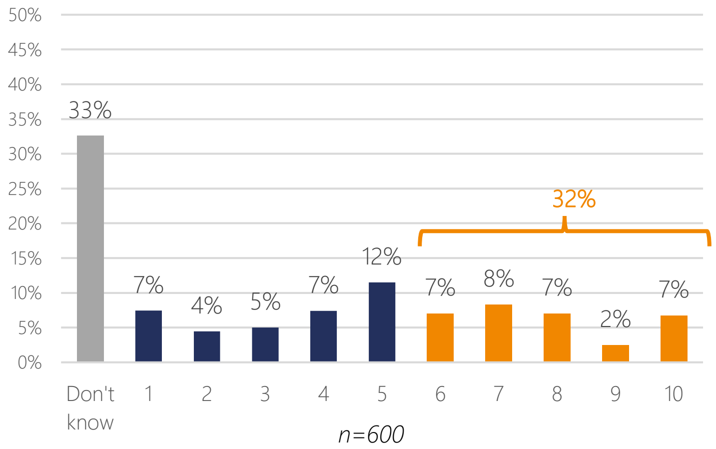
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	73%	73%	76%	76%	79%	83%	66%	56%	59%	62%	60%	52%

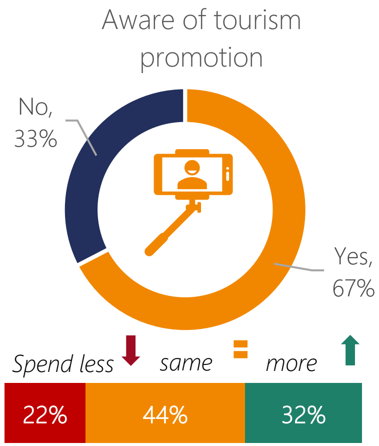


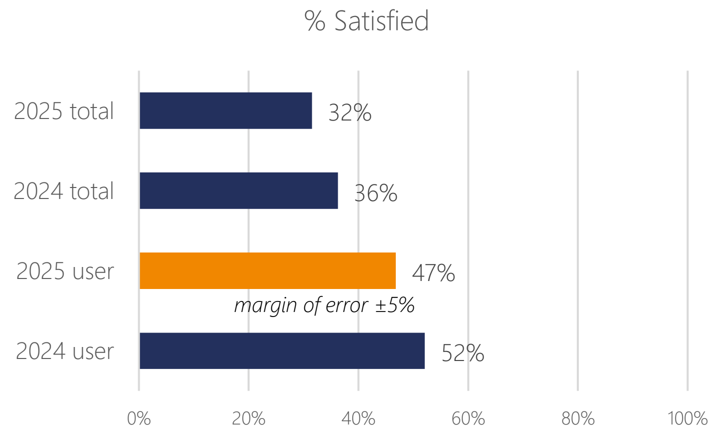
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Tourism promotion

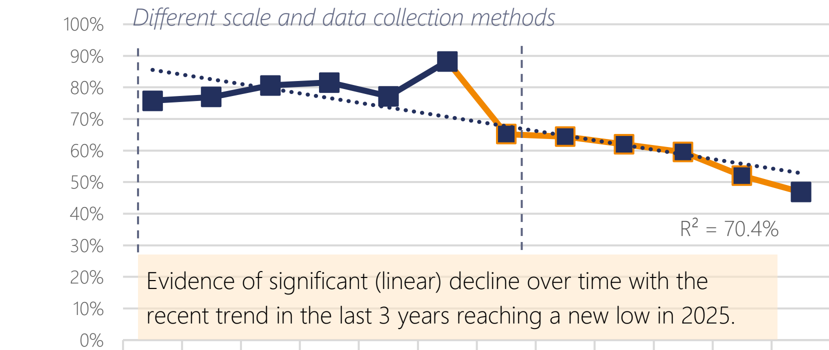
LTP MEASURE





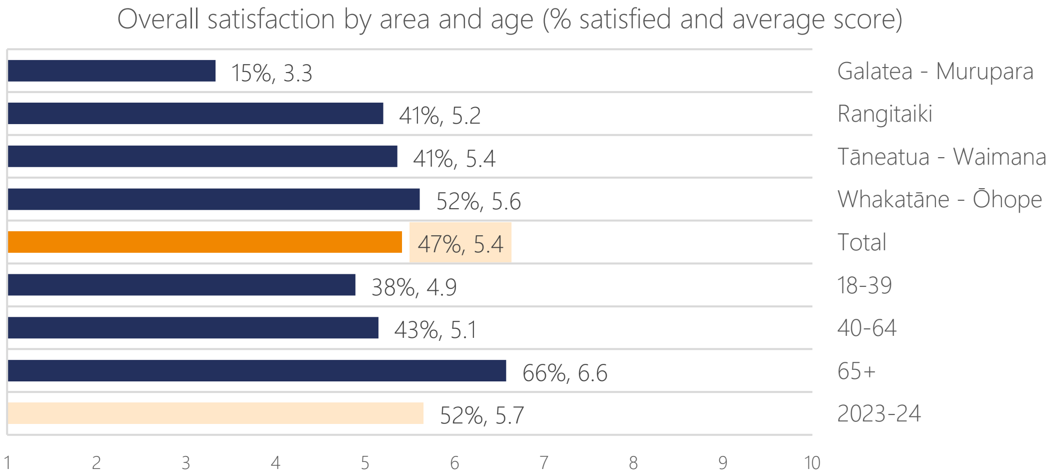


- In 2025, 2-in-3 respondents (67%) were able to rate Council's support of tourism promotion. Just under half (47%) of these residents were satisfied with this service (5.4 average rating); nevertheless, this conrinued an ongoing downward trend measured since 2021 - reaching a new historic low following the previous low of 2024.
- Notable differences were apparent in attitudes towards tourism promotion – with lower satisfaction outside Whakatāne-Ōhope, and residents under 65.
- Reflecting these sentiments, Council spending preferences for tourism promotion remained divided – while 44% wanted the same level of funding maintained, this was the 7th-most requested area for an increase (32%, up from 26% in 2024), and also the 6th-most area highlighted for less spending (22%, no change from 2024).



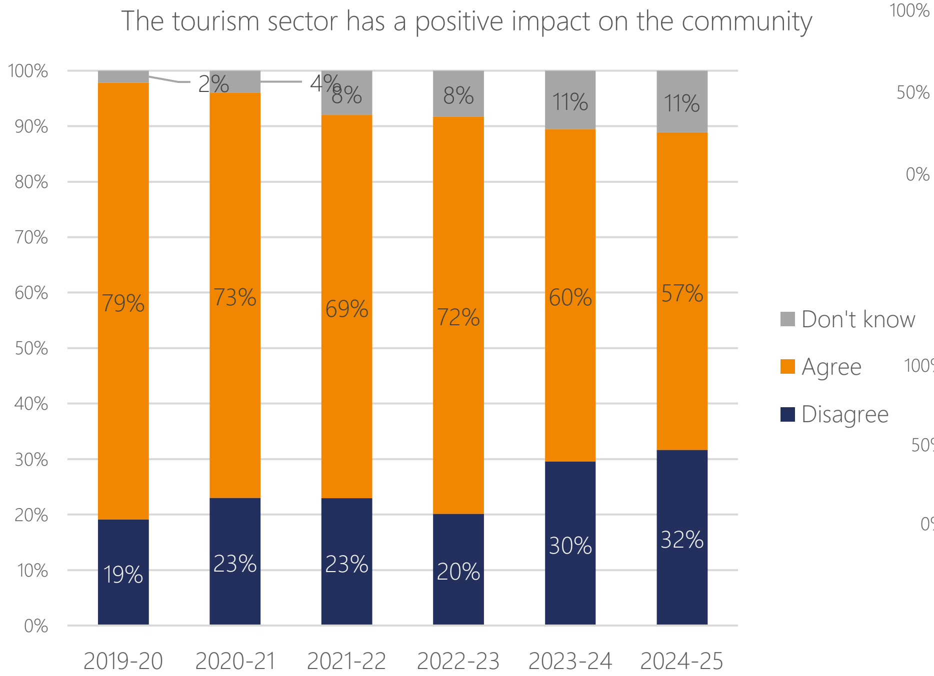
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	76%	77%	81%	82%	77%	88%	65%	64%	62%	60%	52%	47%

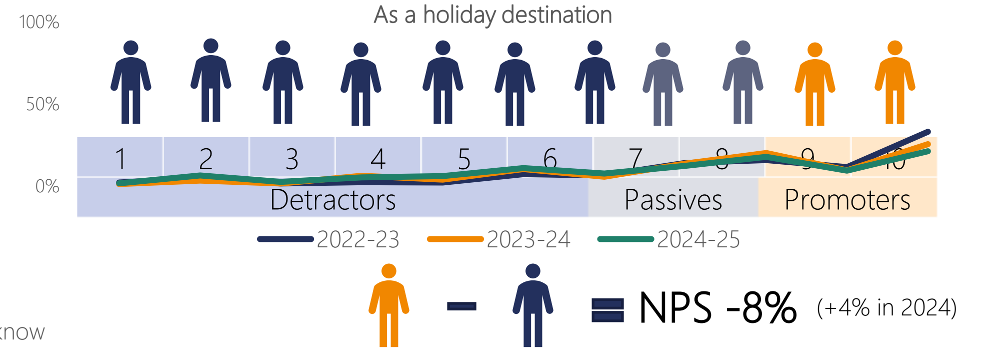
Overall satisfaction by area and age (% satisfied and average score)

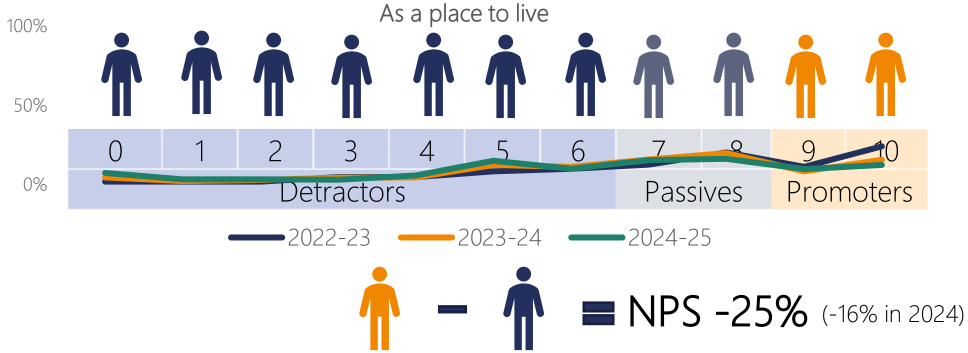


SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Whakatāne as a holiday destination and tourism impact on the community







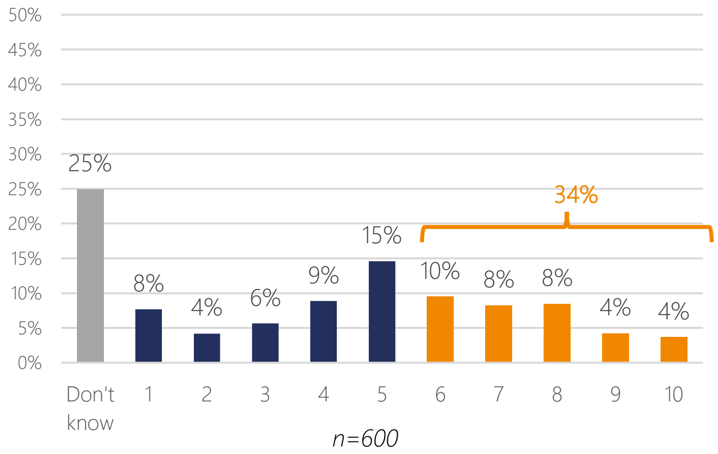
- Overall, many residents were likely to recommend the Whakatāne District as a holiday destination; with 30% providing top ratings of 9 and 10 – although down from 35% in 2024 and 44% in 2023.
- However, the decline in these top ratings had a direct impact on the anecdotal NPS (Whakatāne District as a holiday destination), with this falling into negative territory for the first time, at -8% in 2025. This was, however, a continuing downward trend observed in recent years (+28% in 2021, +24% in 2022, +20% in 2023, +4% in 2024).
- Nevertheless, this score remained above the recommendation of Whakatāne District as a place to live - continuing to fall and remain negative for a second consecutive year (NPS -25%, from -16% in 2024, +3% in 2023, +7% in 2022).
- As seen on p.45, 47% of residents were satisfied with Council's support of tourism promotion – albeit declining in recent years (from 65% in 2020). In this context, while the majority (57%) of residents in 2025 continued to believe that tourism has a positive impact on the community, this optimism has also diminished more recently (down from 60% in 2024, and 72% in 2023).
- Note: Net Promoter Scores* range from -100 to +100, and can vary greatly across industries. A general rule is to keep the score above 0; results below zero should encourage improvements. In New Zealand, a good NPS should be around +30.

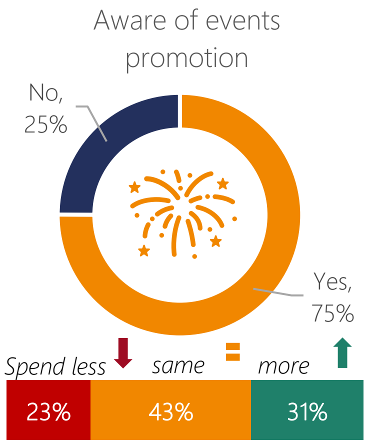
The Net Promoter Score (NPS) question asks respondents to rate the likelihood that they would recommend Whakatāne as a place to live on a scale from 0 ('not at all likely') to 10 ('extremely likely'). The reported score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (ratings 0 to 6) from the percentage of promoters (ratings 9 to 10).

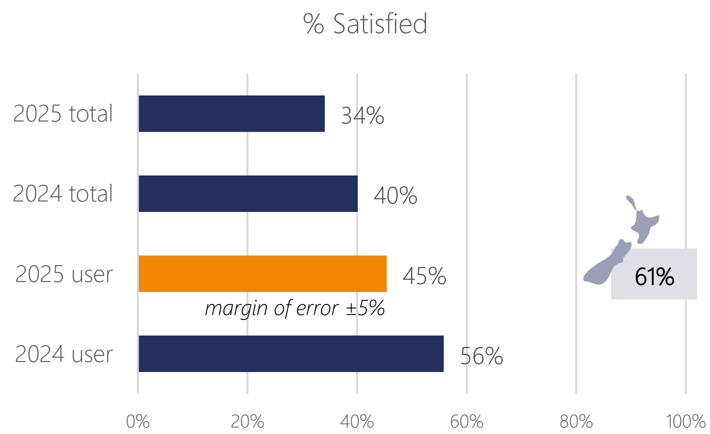
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Efforts to enable and promote events

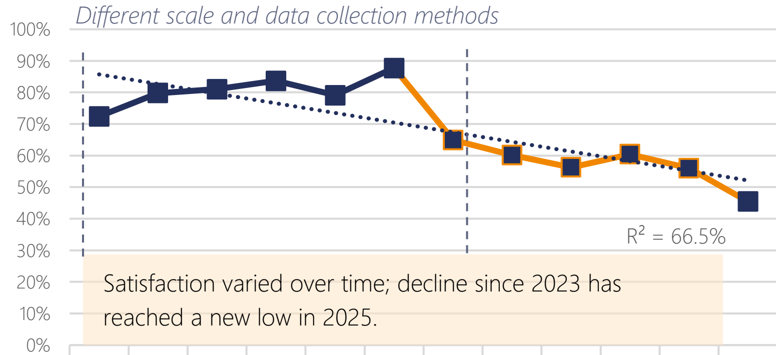
LTP MEASURE



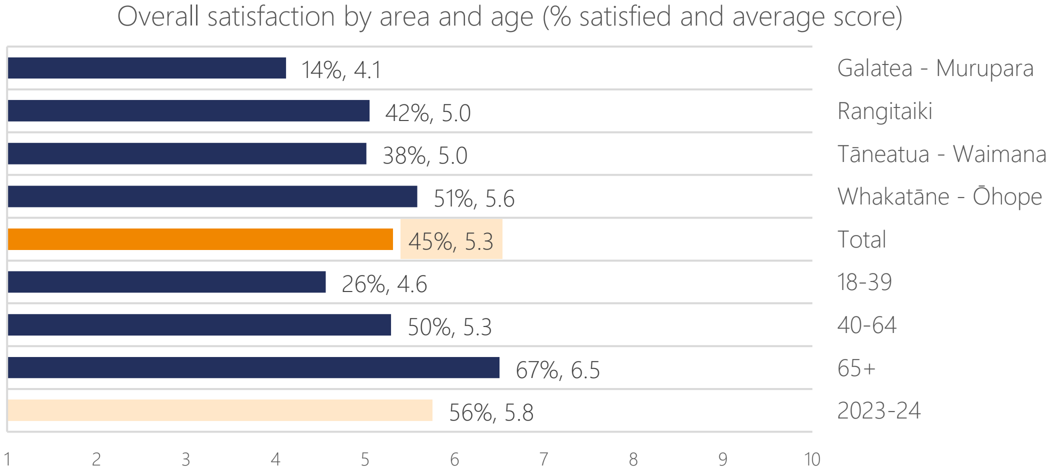




- In 2025, 3-in-4 residents (75%) rated Council's efforts to enable and promote events; with uncertainty still high within the community (25% unsure, 28% in 2024).
- Under half (45%) of residents who provided a rating were satisfied with event promotion (average rating 5.3) – a new historic low following a drop from 2024 (56%) – and below the national benchmark.
- Previously measured differences in tourism promotion perceptions continued, with lower satisfaction among younger residents, and those from Tāneatua-Waimana and Galatea-Murupara.
- As for tourism promotion, there were divided opinions on future Council funding for events promotion, with 43% of residents preferring maintained levels of spending, but 1-in-3 (31%) seeking more funding.



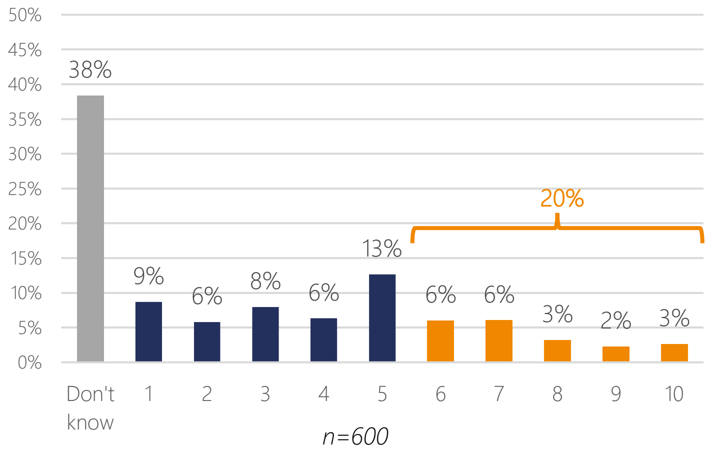
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	72%	80%	81%	84%	79%	88%	65%	60%	56%	60%	56%	45%

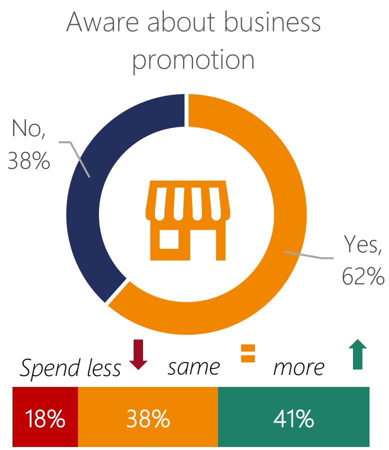


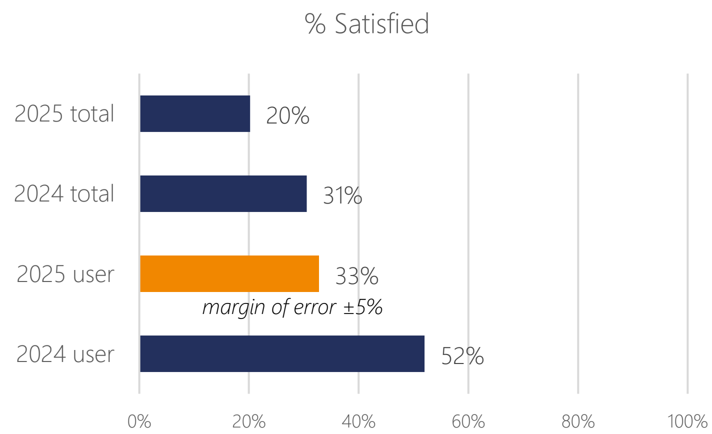
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Business promotion

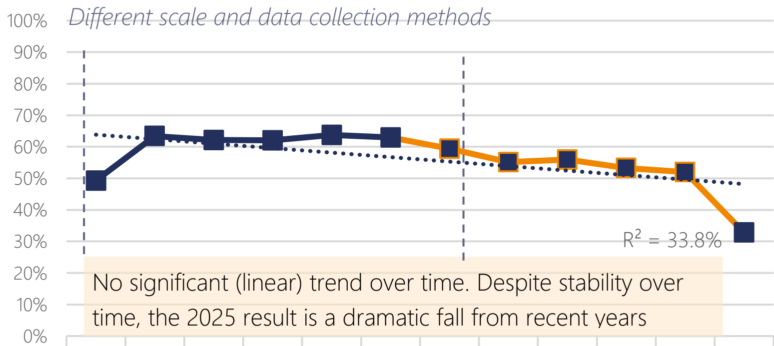
LTP MEASURE



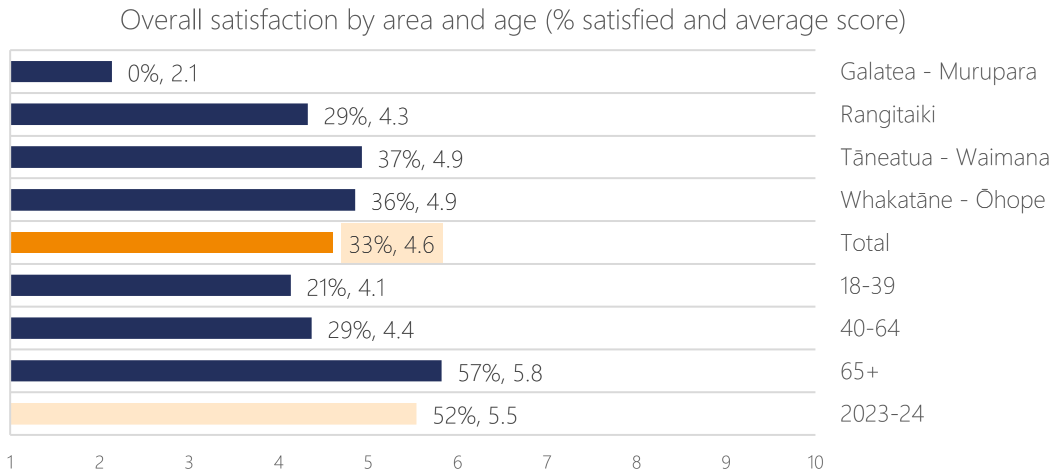




- Lack of knowledge about Council's business promotion activity remained apparent in 2025 (38% of residents were unaware, similar to prior years).
- Satisfaction with Council's efforts to attract and expand businesses also took a knock in 2025, falling to a new historic low of 33% among residents providing a rating; significantly below 52% in 2024 and previous years' levels.
- A stark contrast in satisfaction was notable across generations, with satisfaction much lower among younger compared to older adults.
- Reflecting low satisfaction in challenging economic times, this activity remained a high priority among residents for more funding (41%) – ranked 2nd for more Council spending in 2025 (behind only funding for roads).

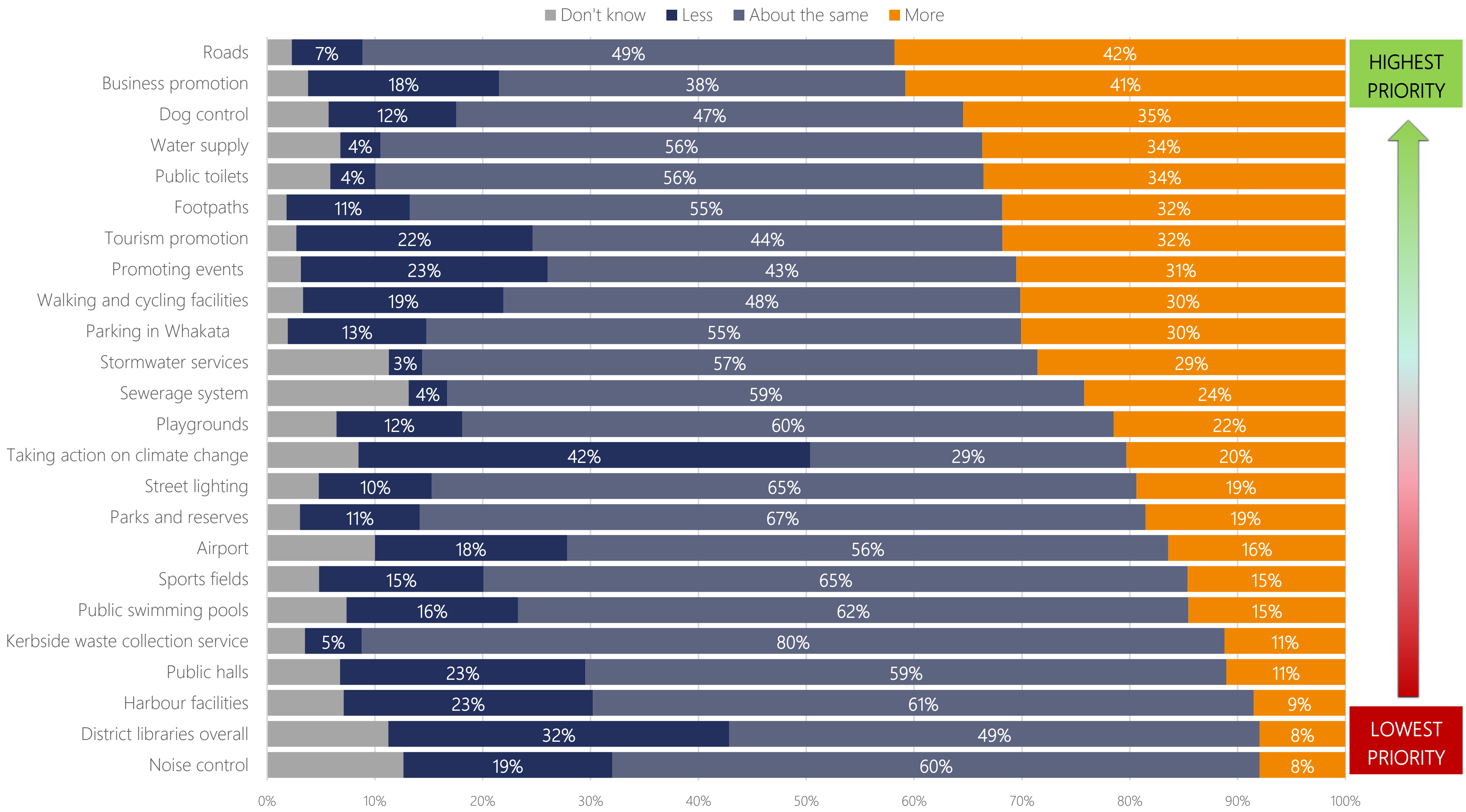


	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	49%	63%	62%	62%	64%	63%	59%	55%	56%	53%	52%	33%

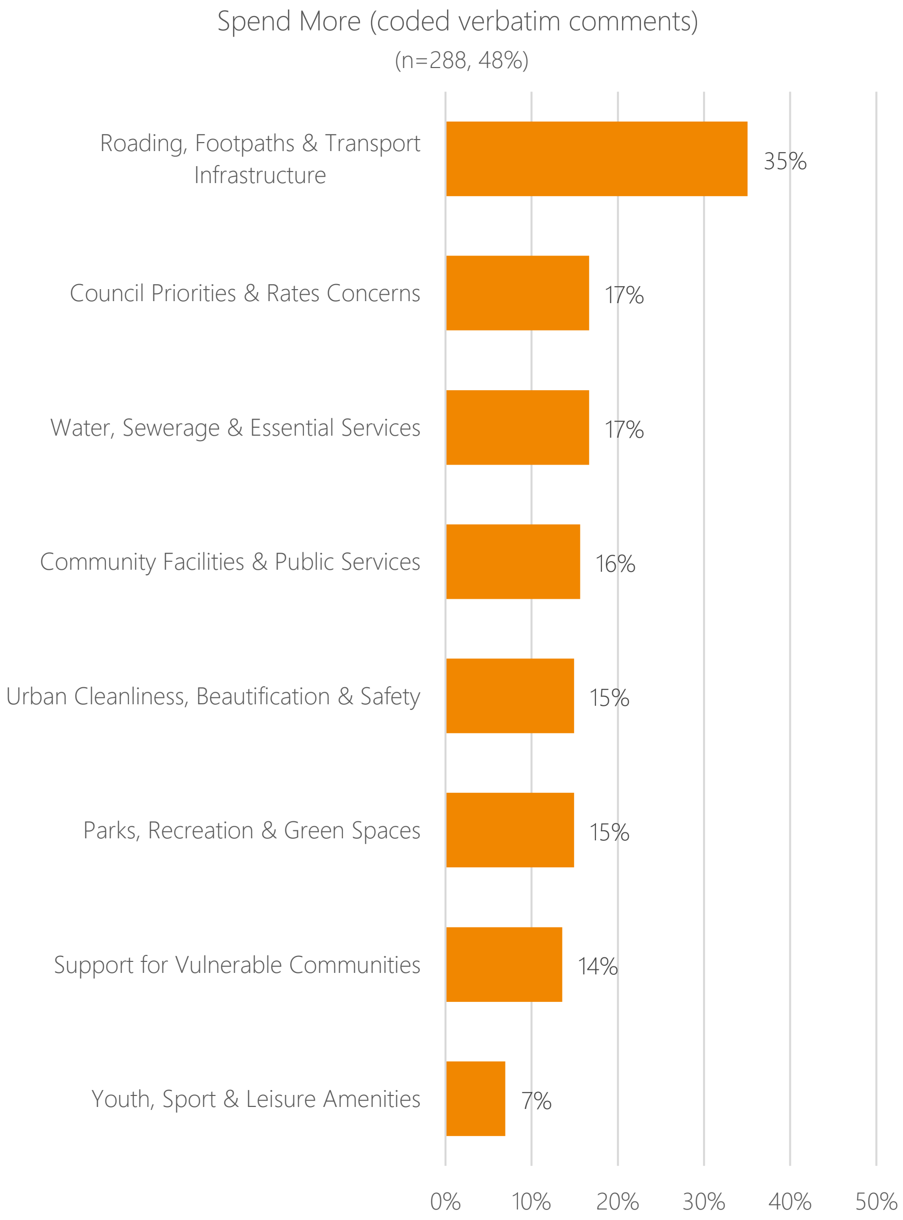


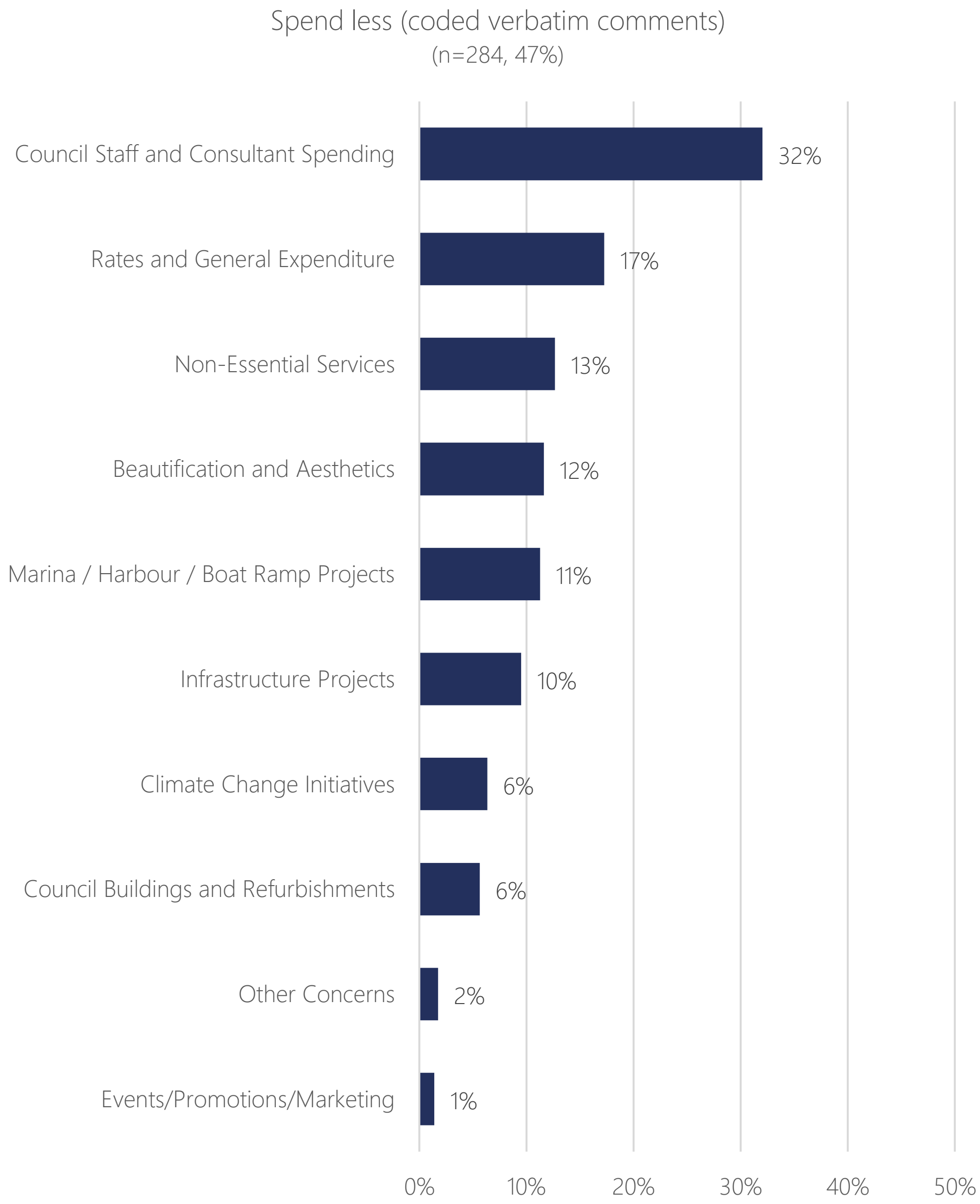
SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Spending priorities



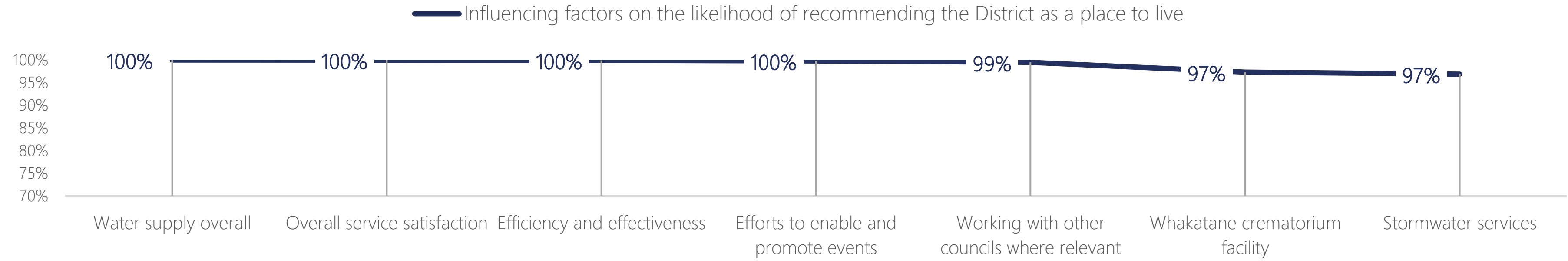
- Consistent with previous years, the highest priority investment area in 2025 was roads (42%, down from 48% in 2024 and 59% in 2023). Business promotion (41%), dog control (35%, ranked 7th in 2024), water supply (34%) and public toilets (34%) rounded out the top five priorities for residents; with all but dog control also in the top five in 2024.
- Unprompted (free text) comments from residents again highlighted roading and transport infrastructure as the leading areas for further development. Council priorities and concerns about rates generally also remained frequently mentioned on a spontaneous basis (see chart on following page).
- Again reflecting a now persistent theme of residents' concerns around rates increases and Council spending, 2025 continued a general fall in the proportion of residents wanting more funds spent across most service areas. Notably, while roads remained the highest priority area for more spending, preference for this spending focus fell again, another 6% lower in 2025 than in 2024 (and now 17% lower than in 2023). Overall, three service areas saw support for more funding fall by 5%-points or more; in addition to roads, this included public toilets (down 5%), and climate change action (down 11%, also down 17% from 2023).
- In this context, more respondents did suggest further increased spending in a few service areas, particularly around promoting the district to boost economic performance: business promotion (41%, up from 36% in 2024), tourism promotion (32%, up from 26% in 2024), and event promotion (31%, also up from 26% in 2024).
- Again, reflecting broader spending concerns, almost half (47%) of residents provided further spontaneous comments to decrease Council spending. Priority areas for reduced spending were Council staffing and consultant spending generally, general expenditure that impact on rates increases, and what residents perceive to be non-essential services and/or focus on aesthetic improvements or beautification (see chart on following page).
- Roads remained a high spending priority across most areas in the district, especially in Rangitāiki (48%).
- Galatea-Murupara residents typically wanted greater increased funding in many service areas, including business promotion (73%), tourism promotion (63%), sports fields (52%), and event promotion (45%).
- Dog control and public toilets in 2025 were a higher priority in Tāneatua-Waimana (44% and 46%, respectively).
- Footpaths and water supply were a greater concern in Whakatāne-Ōhope (36% and 38%, respectively).

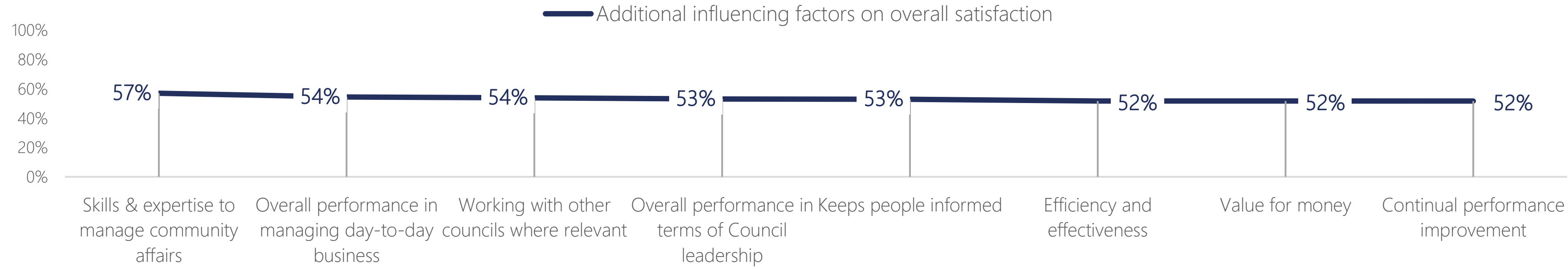

Spend More (coded verbatim comments)
(n=288, 48%)
Roading, Footpaths & Transport Infrastructure
35%
Council Priorities & Rates Concerns
17%
Water, Sewerage & Essential Services
17%
Community Facilities & Public Services
16%
Urban Cleanliness, Beautification & Safety
15%
Parks, Recreation & Green Spaces
15%
Support for Vulnerable Communities
14%
Youth, Sport & Leisure Amenities
7%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%


Spend less (coded verbatim comments)
(n=284, 47%)
Council Staff and Consultant Spending
32%
Rates and General Expenditure
17%
Non-Essential Services
13%
Beautification and Aesthetics
12%
Marina / Harbour / Boat Ramp Projects
11%
Infrastructure Projects
10%
Climate Change Initiatives
6%
Council Buildings and Refurbishments
6%
Other Concerns
2%
Events/Promotions/Marketing
1%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%

SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements





- Infrastructure provision and particularly roads remained the primary theme identified for potential improvement by assessing relative importance against measured performance, and also being selected by residents as their highest spending priority.
- Council reputation continued to be in the spotlight for residents, with financial management a high concern in the current economic climate with clear impacts on overall satisfaction with Council performance. Communication, financial and general management were of prime consideration for residents given the rates implications of recent Long Term Plan spending decisions.
- Seven areas were identified as having a significant impact on the likelihood of recommending the District as a place to live: water supply, overall service provision, general efficiency and effectiveness, event promotion, cooperation with neighbouring councils, Whakatāne crematorium, and stormwater services.
- In light of the above concerns and considerations, public sentiment around council daily management, financial control and overall leadership had a clear and direct impact on resident satisfaction.

CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL

Satisfied with direct contact – 48%
Satisfied with community board member contact – 80%
Satisfied with customer service front desk – 73%

COUNCIL POLICIES AND DIRECTIONS

11% - Liked or approved recent Council actions, decisions or management
60% - Disliked or disapproved recent Council actions, decisions or management

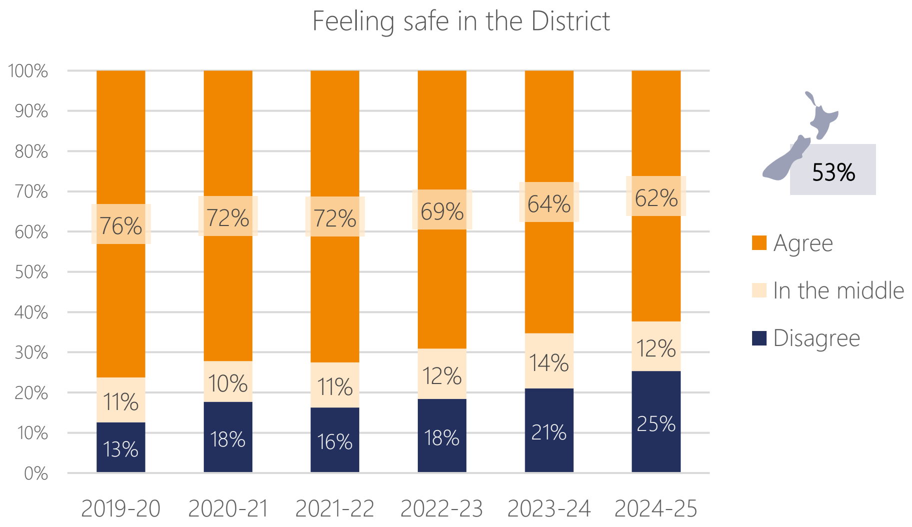
COUNCIL REPUTATION

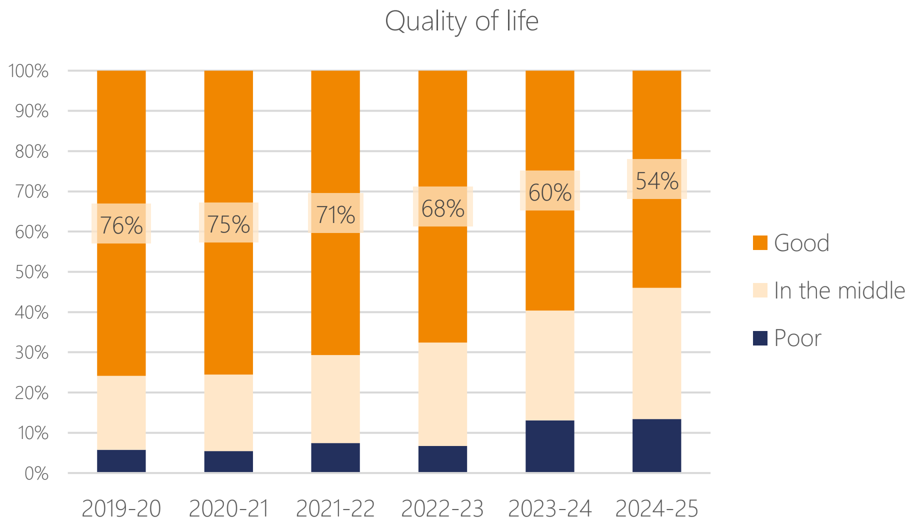
Communication with residents – 30%
Leadership – 29%
Day-to-day management – 29%

OTHER FINDINGS 2025

LIFE IN THE DISTRICT

Perception of safety and quality of life in the District



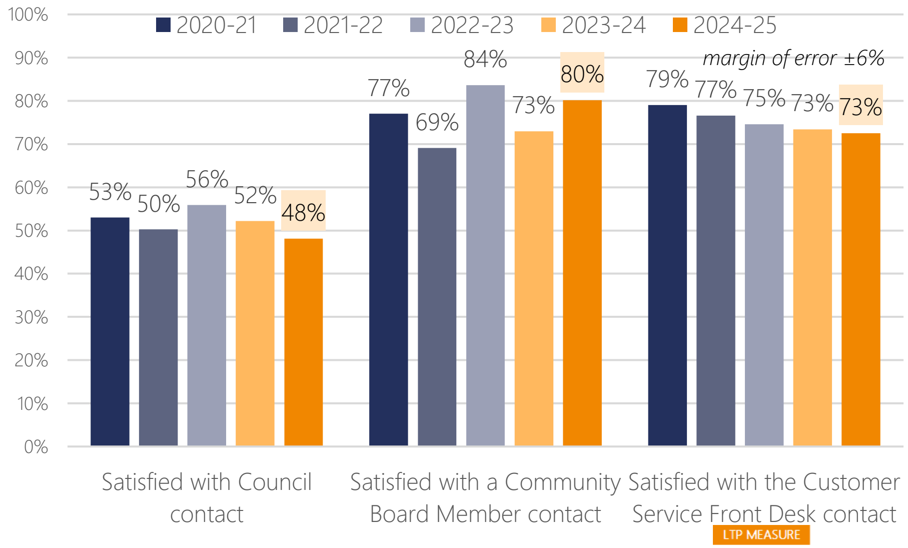


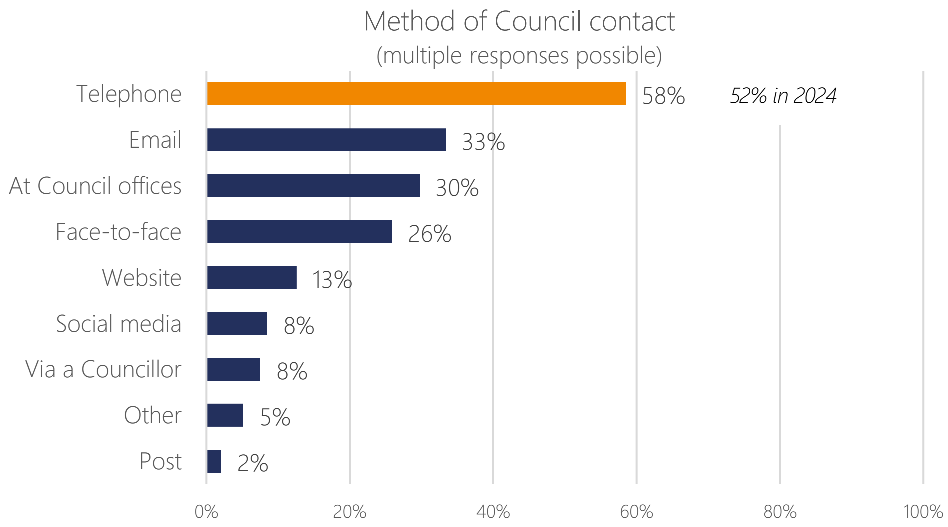
- Overall, 3-in-4 residents (74%) in 2025 felt that the Whakatāne District is generally a safe place to live, to some extent (similar to 78% in 2024). This, however, continues a gradual decline in safety perceptions in recent years, with the proportion who agreed (somewhat or strongly) they feel safe (currently 62%) falling to its lowest level since 2019-20 (76%) – with small drops year-on-year. Nevertheless, feelings of safety in Whakatāne district remain above the national benchmark (currently 53%).
- Respondents aged under 65 typically less likely to feeling safe than those aged 65+. Safety perceptions were also lower in Tāneatua-Waimana (52%) and Rangataiki (56%).
- Just over half (54%) of residents in 2025 believed their quality of life was '*good*' to '*very good*'. However, this measure also continued to exhibit a gradual downward trend, falling from 76% in 2020 but more notably in the last two years.
- Again, satisfaction with quality of life increased with markedly with age; rated good by 73% of 65+ year olds compared to those aged 40-64 (51%) and 18-39 (43%). Perceptions of life quality were also lowest in Rangataiki (47%), particularly compared to Galatea-Murupara (63%).

CONTACT WITH COUNCIL

Contacted the Council, a community board member or customer service front desk

LTP MEASURE

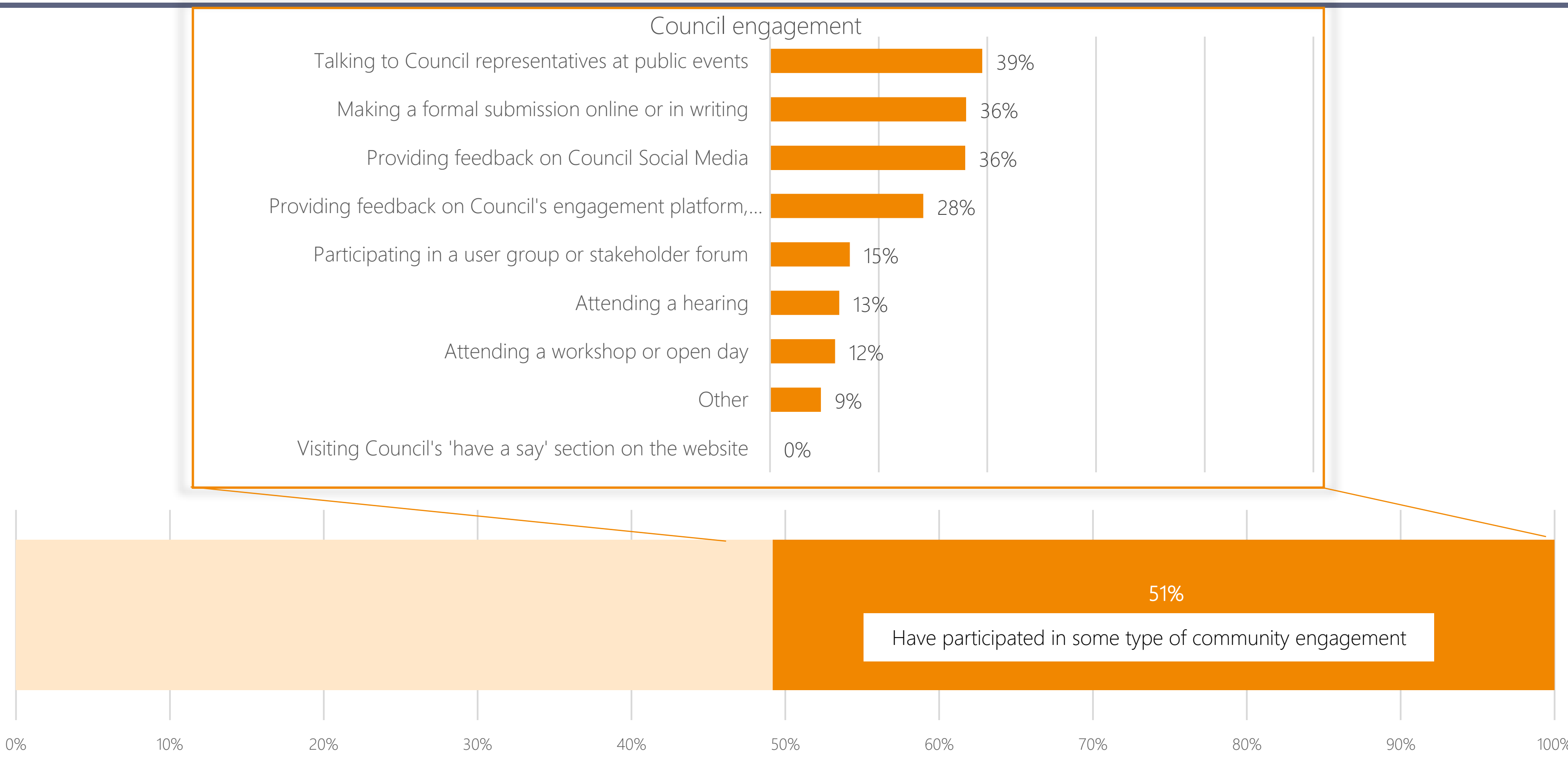




- Overall, half (50%) of all residents in 2025 stated they had contacted the Council throughout the year (46% in 2024) – the highest rate since 2021.
- '*Telephone*' remained the primary contact method (58%, 52% in 2024), with '*email*' (33%, 34% in 2024) and personal contact also important.
- Younger residents (18-39) remained more likely to contact the Council by phone (77%), with website (19%) and social media (10%) also more prevalent. Older residents still preferred face-to-face or office visits.
- In 2025, half (48%) of residents who contacted the Council directly were satisfied with this contact (generally consistent with previous years).
- There were no significant differences across community segments in this regard.
- 1-in-7 (15%) of residents in 2025 reported contacting a Community Board Member (up slightly from previous years, with 10% in 2024), and almost half (46%) had contacted the customer service front desk (36% in 2024).
- Whakatāne-Ōhope and Rangitāiki residents remained less likely to contact a Community Board Member, compared to residents in other areas – with contact highest in Galatea-Murupara.
- In contrast, Galatea-Murupara residents were least likely to contact the customer service desk, with this most likely for Rangataiki residents (29% vs 54%). Māori were more likely than others to make contact generally.
- Satisfaction with Community Board contact in 2025 (80%) improved from 2024 (73%).
- Satisfaction with customer service contact in 2025 (73%) was consistent with 2024. The gradual downward trend over the last five years has not been statistically significant.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

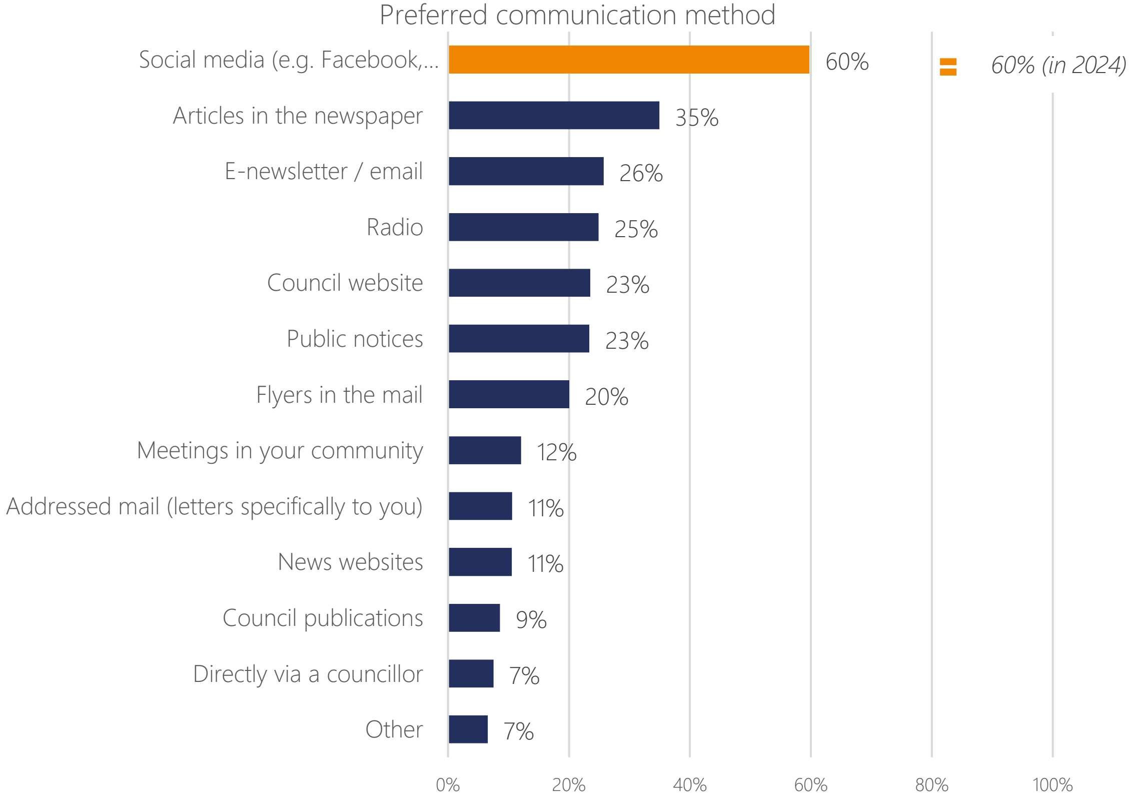
Community engagement

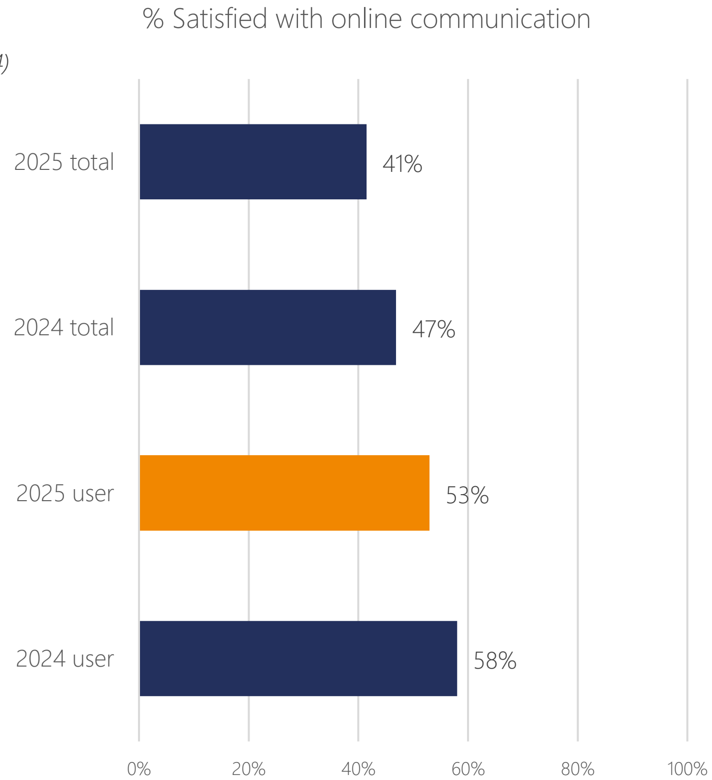


- Half (51%) of residents in 2025 reported taking part in community engagement of some kind (similar to 54% in 2024, above 43% in 2023).
- Most typically, engaged residents reported talking to Council reps at public events (39%, compared to 25% in 2024), making a formal submission (36%, 29% in 2024), or providing feedback on social media (36%, 37% in 2024).
- The remaining half (49%) of residents stated they had not engaged in any Council-related activities; this remained more likely among older residents (67% of those aged 65+).

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Preferred method of communication

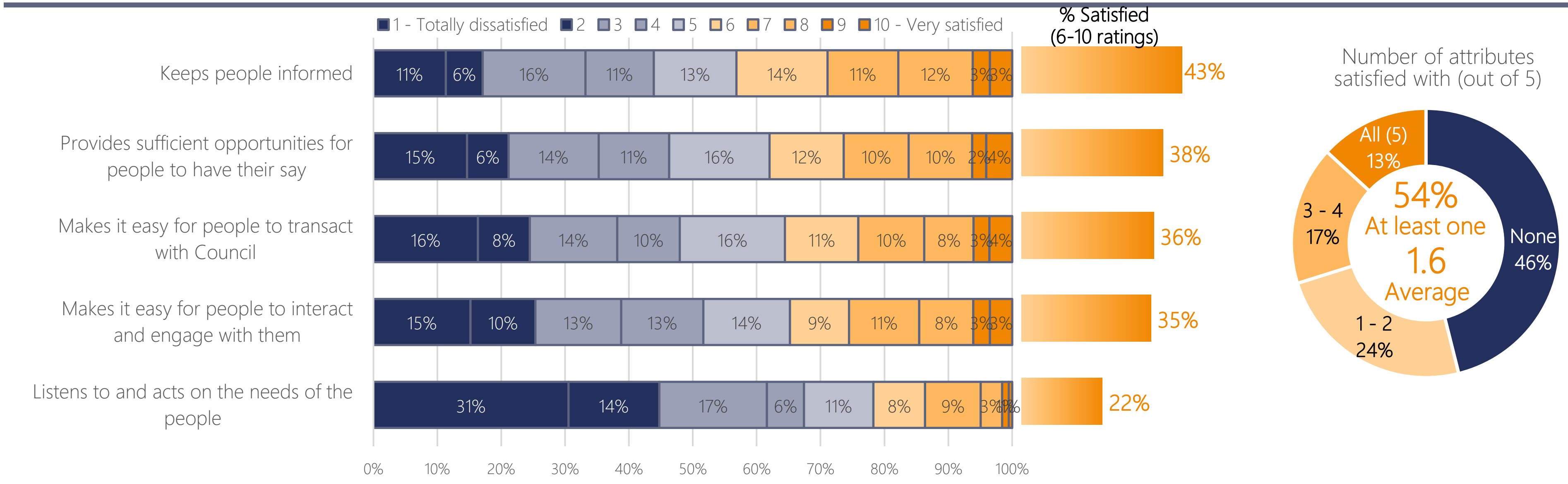




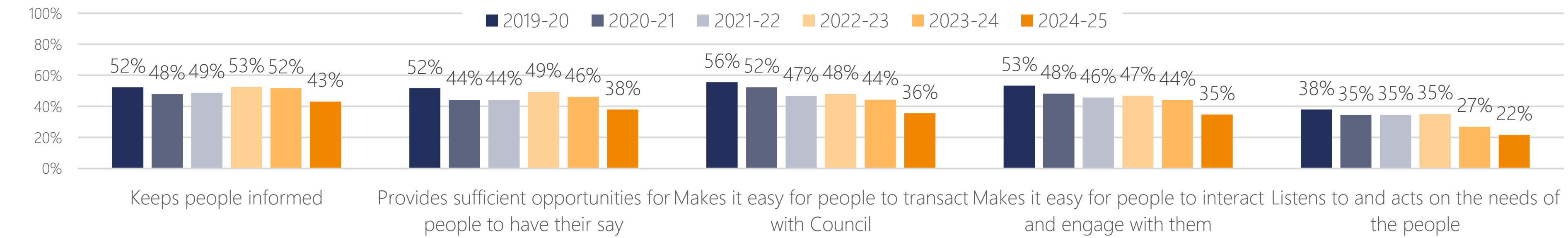
- '*Social media*' remained the most preferred method for Council communications, for 3-in-5 (60%) of residents in 2025 (no change in the past years).
- Social media remained significantly more preferable for younger compared to older residents (79% 18-39, 61% 40-64, 33% 65+); though growing in prominence among those aged 65+ (up from 30% in 2024, 14% in 2023).
- Newspaper articles were still the second-most preferred channel overall (35%, compared to 33% in 2024), and remained most preferred by residents aged 65+ (59%, 64% in 2024; with 25% 18-39, 28% 40-64).
- Social media represented the most preferred across all wards. Possibly reflecting distribution/access, newspaper articles remained less preferred in Galatea-Murupara and Tāneatua-Waimana – electronic comms (email, Council website) had greater utility in these areas, respectively.
- Half (53%) of residents aware of online Council communications were satisfied with this online service and information provision, although this has dropped somewhat in recent years (from 66% in 2022).

COMMUNICATION

Communication with residents



- Residents had low satisfaction with communication attributes in 2025, with some decline since 2024. Overall, half (54%) agreed with at least one of the five statements (61% in 2024), while just 13% agreed with all five (18% in 2024).
- Satisfaction with most communication attributes was down from 2024.
- '*Keeps people informed*' (43%) was the most satisfactory attribute, though lower than in 2024 (52%) and the peak in 2023 (53%).
- In contrast, '*Listens to and acts on the needs of the people*' (22%) remained the least satisfactory attribute, and also down from previous years.
- Satisfaction with most communication attributes remained higher for older (65+) residents than younger residents, on average. '*Keeps people informed*' again received the most consistent ratings across age groups.
- Ratings were typically lower in Rangataiki.

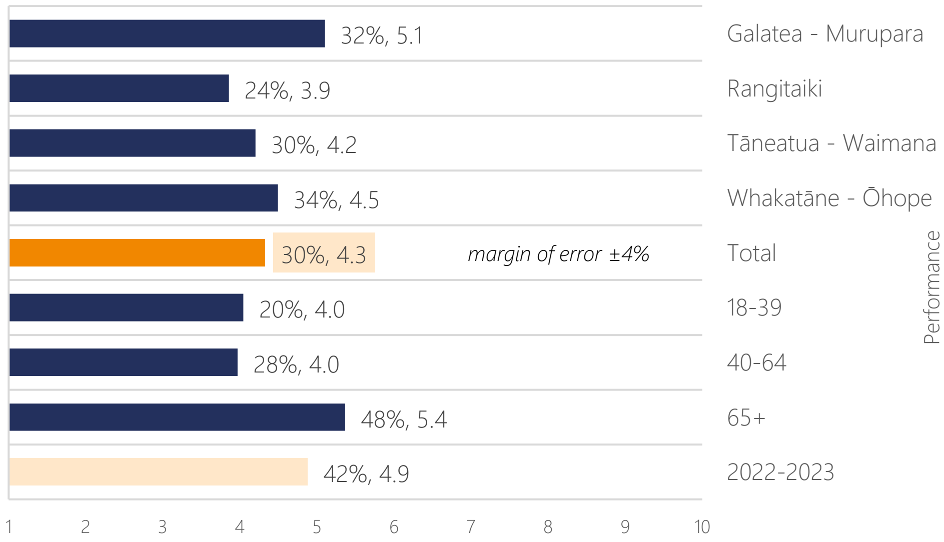


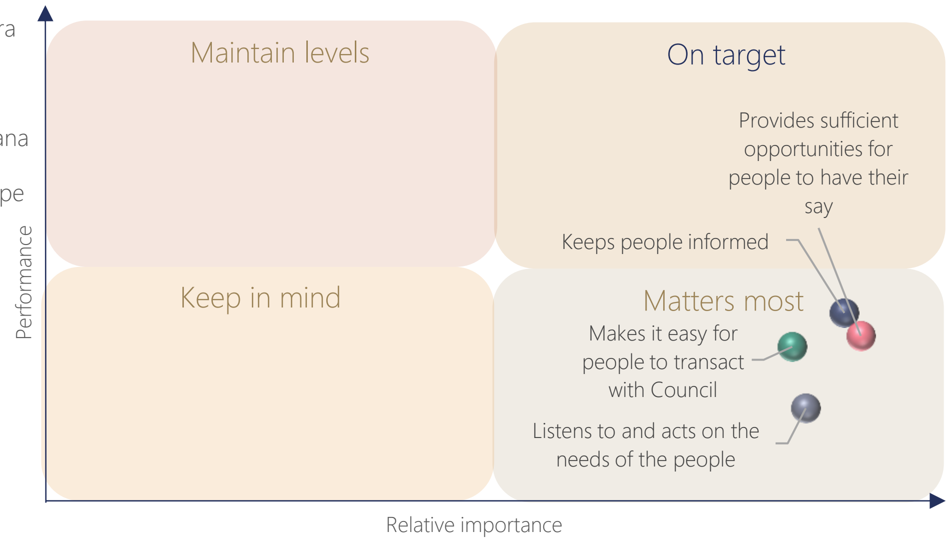
COMMUNICATION

Overall satisfaction with performance in communicating with residents and ratepayers

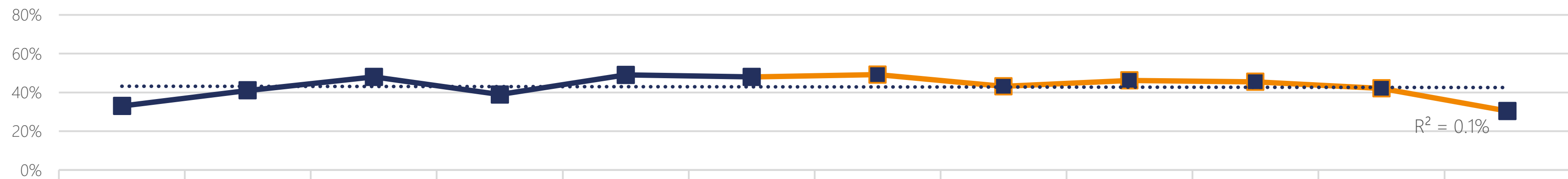
LTP MEASURE

Overall satisfaction by area and age
(% satisfied and average score)





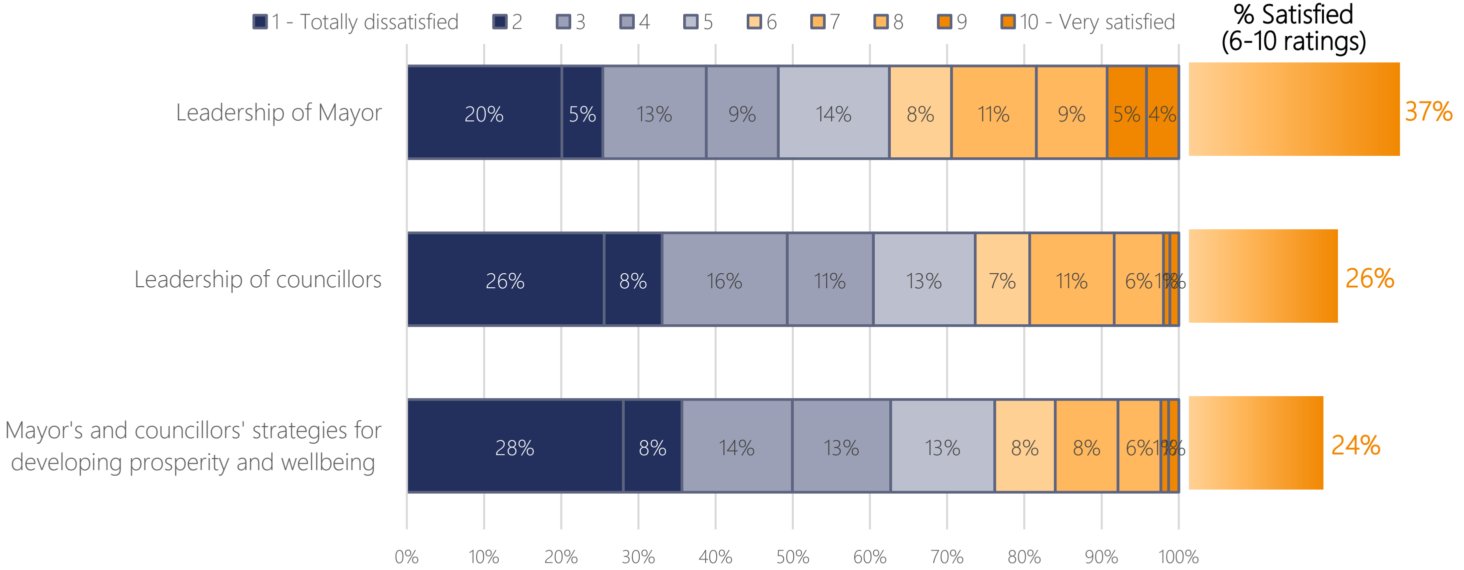
- Overall in 2025, just 1-in-3 (30%) of residents were satisfied with Council's performance in communicating and consulting with the public – significantly below previous years (including 42% in 2024). Noted differences based on both age and area remained in 2025.
- Four statements relating to communication contributed significantly towards overall satisfaction.
- *'Providing sufficient opportunities for people to have their say'* and *'Listening to and acting on the needs of the people'* (due to relatively low performance despite high relative importance) remain key factors to focus on improving to enhance resident sentiment and increase performance ratings.

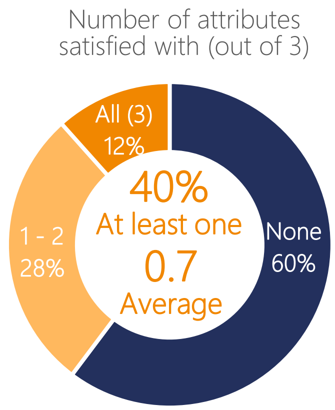


	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	33%	41%	48%	39%	49%	48%	49%	43%	46%	45%	42%	30%

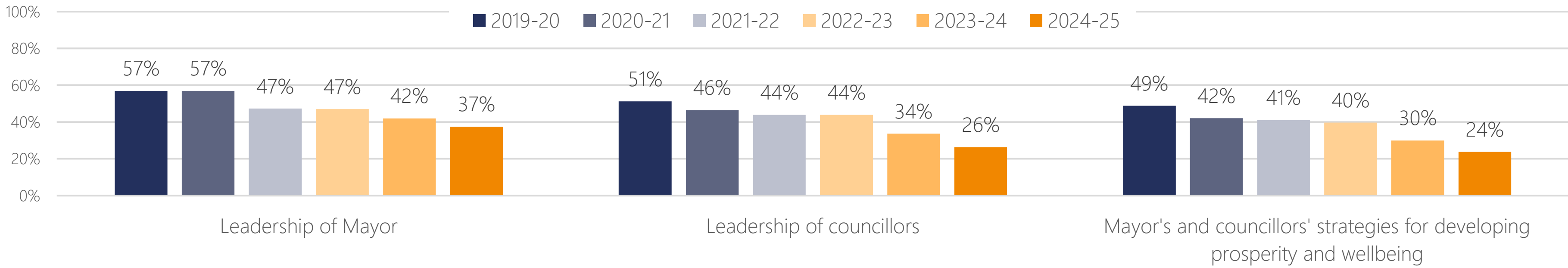
COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Performance in terms of Council leadership





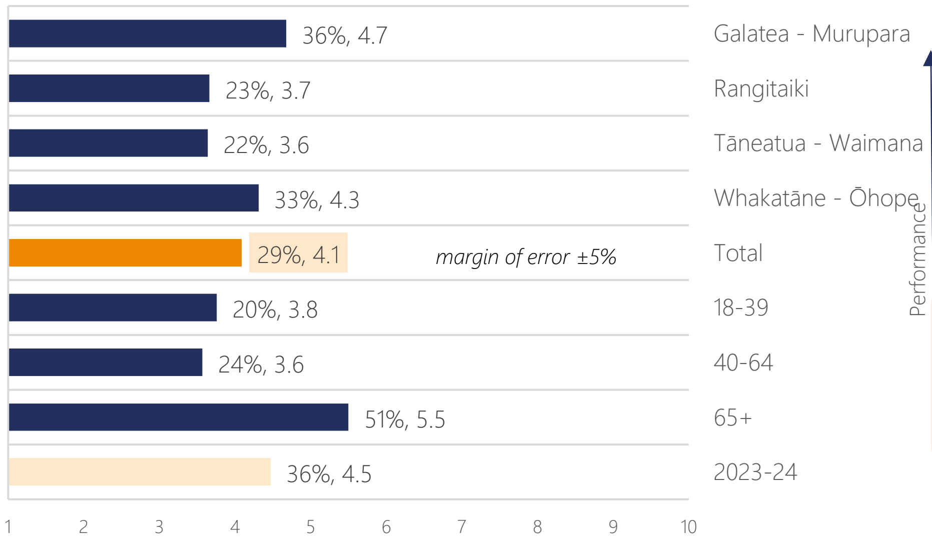
- In 2025, residents also had very low satisfaction with Council leadership attributes, with declines again measured since 2024. Overall, just 2-in-5 (40%) agreed with at least one of the three statements (39% in 2024), while just 12% agreed with all three (14% in 2024, but down from 20% in 2023 and earlier).
- All three attributes have seen satisfaction decline since 2023-24.
- Satisfaction with Council leadership typically remained lower among younger residents (aged under 65 years), and residents outside Whakatāne-Ōhope.
- Satisfaction with leadership of the mayor remained lower in Galatea-Murupara and Tāneatua-Waimana, on average.

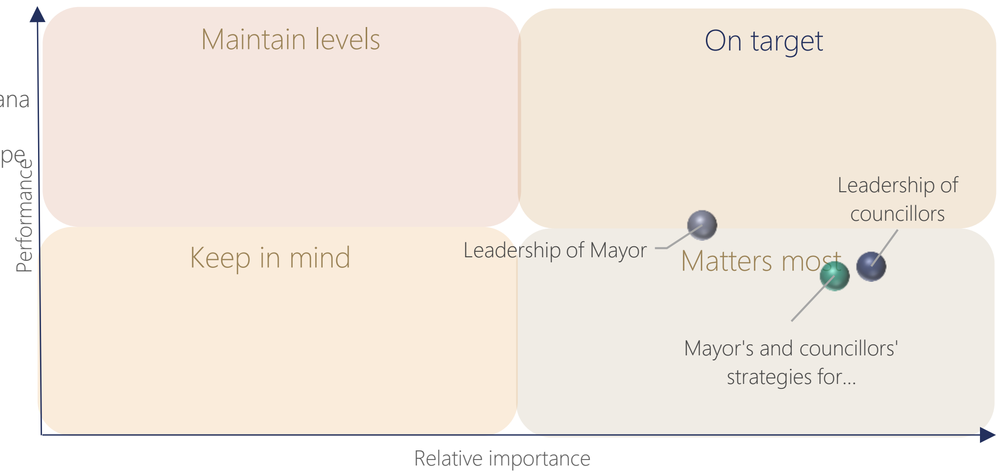


COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

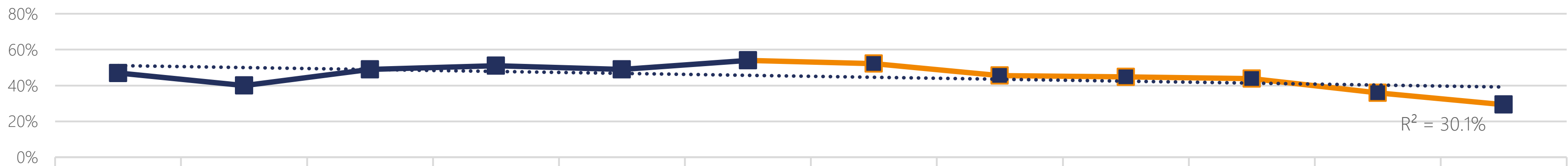
Overall satisfaction with Council leadership

Overall satisfaction by area and age
(% satisfied and average score)





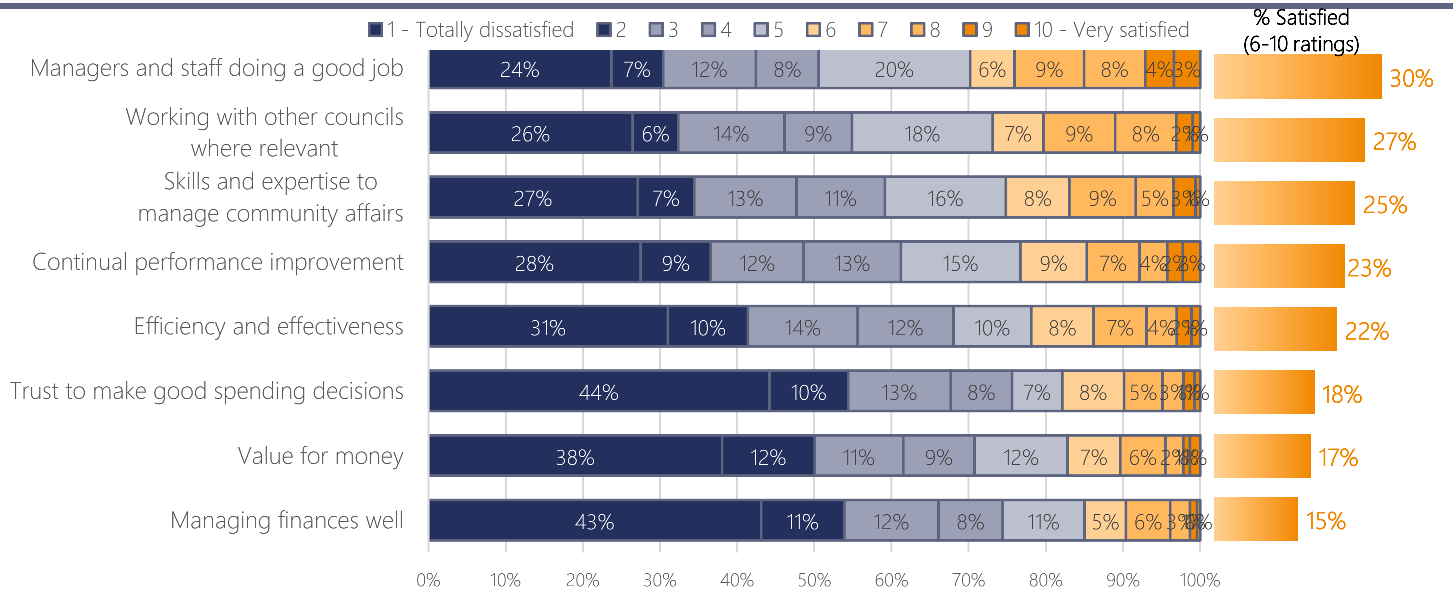
- In 2024, 1-in-3 (29%) of residents were satisfied with the overall performance of Council leadership (down from 36% in 2024, 44% in 2023 and previous years).
- Older residents aged 65+ remained significantly more satisfied with Council leadership overall.
- Satisfaction was low across wards, with less distinct differences between these.
- All three leadership-related attributes contributed significantly towards overall satisfaction. Given the continuing challenges of the current economic climate, *'Mayor's and councillors' strategies for developing prosperity and wellbeing'* remains of high importance; with further leadership from councillors also critical to enhance resident sentiments of civic leadership generally.

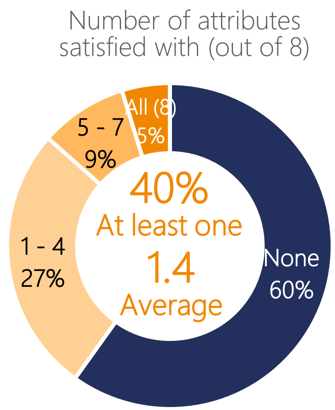


	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	47%	40%	49%	51%	49%	54%	52%	46%	45%	44%	36%	29%

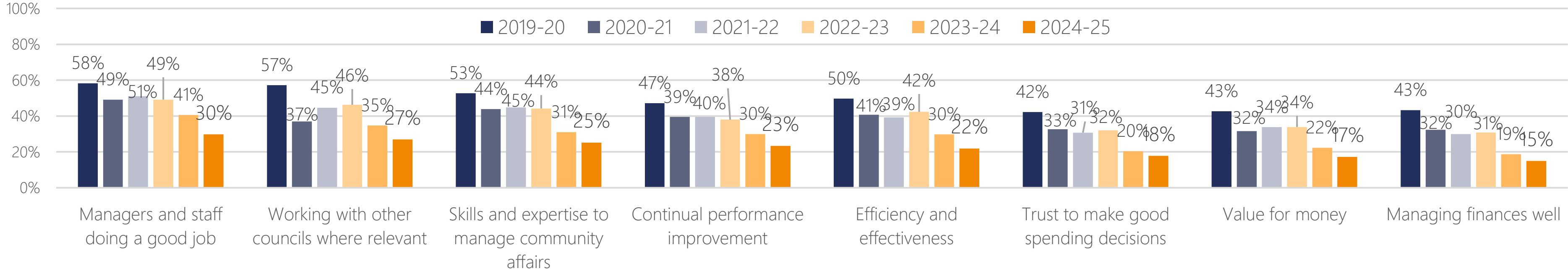
MANAGEMENT

Managing day-to-day business





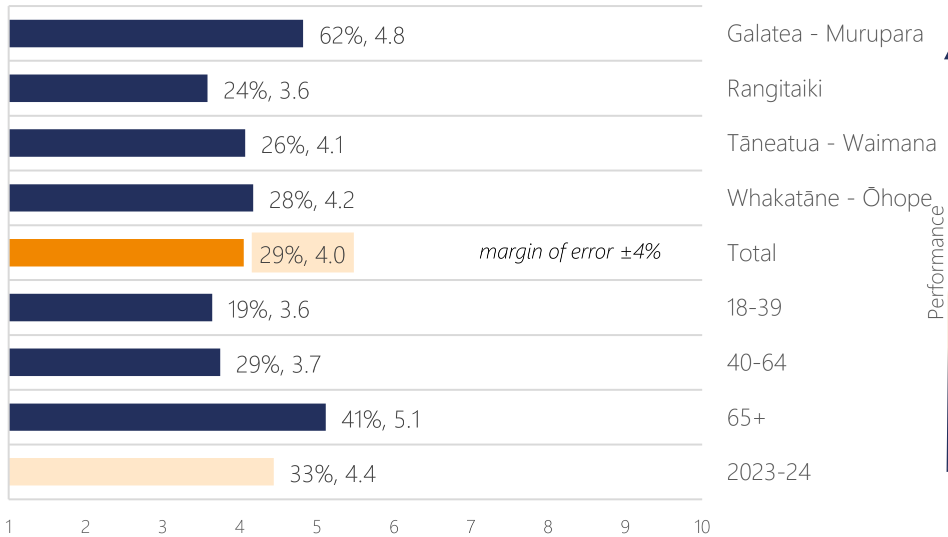
- In 2025, residents reported low satisfaction with management attributes overall, with a pattern of decline also apparent. Overall, 2-in-5 (40%) agreed with at least one of the eight statements (45% in 2024), with just 5% agreeing with all eight (6% in 2024).
- Satisfaction with all eight management attributes continued to fall compared to 2024 and previous years. Nevertheless, residents remained most satisfied with managers and staff doing a good job (30% in 2025, 41% in 2024, 49% in 2023).
- Residents continued to be least satisfied with financial management: trust to make good spending decisions (18%), value for money (17%), and managing finances well (15%). Financial management remained a key theme from community feedback regarding Council spending.
- Older residents (65+) remained more satisfied with Council management, including financial matters, on average.

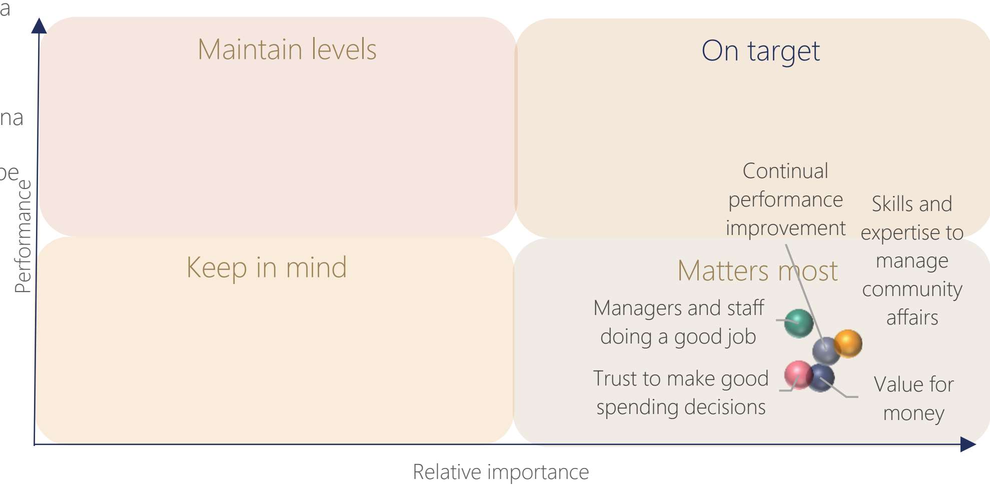


MANAGEMENT

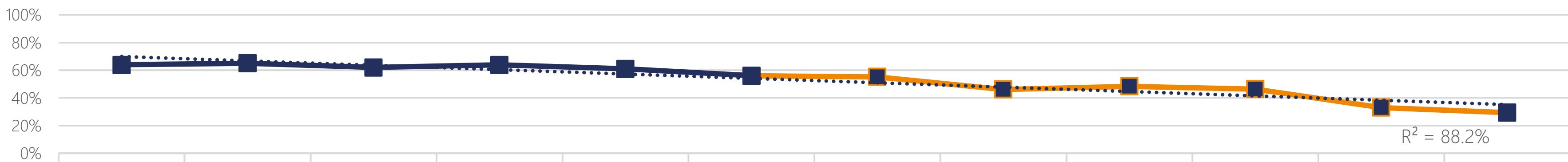
Overall satisfaction with performance in managing day-to-day business

Overall satisfaction by area and age
(% satisfied and average score)





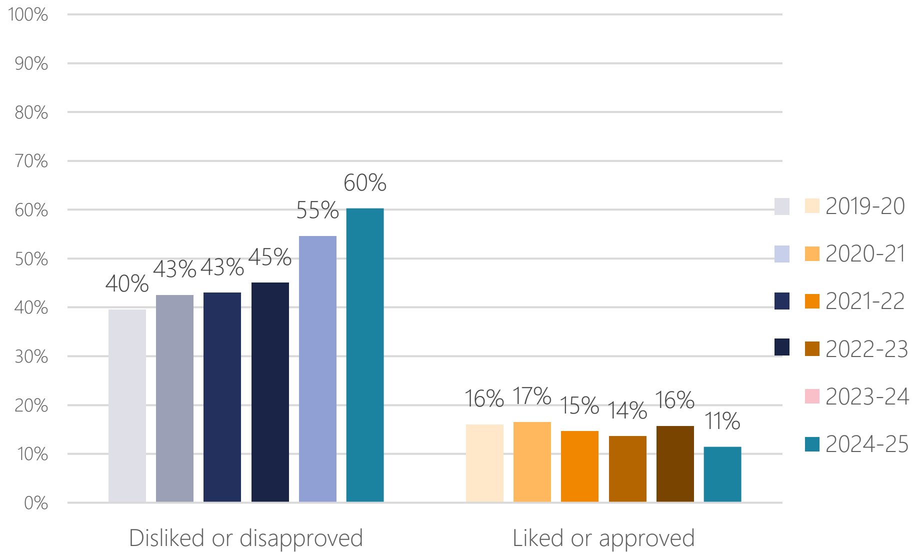
- 1-in-3 (29%) of residents in 2025 were satisfied with Council's overall management of day-to-day business; slightly down from 2024 (33%) but significantly below 2023 and previous years .
- Older residents (aged 65+) remained most satisfied with Council management overall (41%), though still low and down from 2024 (50%) and 2023 (65%).
- Five attributes significantly contributed towards overall satisfaction with Council performance in managing day-to-day business. In light of continuing resident concerns about Council spending, value for money and trust in spending decisions remain the most critical opportunities for improving perceptions of management generally.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Satisfied	64%	65%	62%	64%	61%	56%	55%	46%	48%	46%	33%	29%

POLICY AND DIRECTION

Council policy and direction approval or disapproval



- Overall, 1-in-10 (11%) of residents in 2025 recalled a recent Council action, decision, or management experience they **approved** of (down from 16% in 2024). Residents primariy expressed approval of Council's strategic planning and vision generally, maintenance and infrastructure works, community facilities, and general Council communication and transparency.
- In contrast, 3-in-5 (60%) of residents recalled a recent action, decision, or management experience they **disapproved** of, continuing the increasing trend from previous years (and up from 55% in 2024). Rates increases remained the primary area of concern (43%, no change from 2024). Other key concerns were general waste and mismanagement, continued opposition to the boat harbour/wharf development, and general concerns about Council leadership and governance.

Approved

- Strategic Planning & Long-Term Vision – 34%
- Infrastructure Improvements – 30%
- Community Facilities and Amenities – 20%
- Public Communication and Transparency – 10%

Under 10%:

- Responsiveness and Leadership
- Environmental and Waste Management Initiatives
- Support for Local Business and Tourism

Disapproved

- Concerns Over Rates Increases – 43% (43% in 2024)
- General Wastefulness or Mismanagement – 19%
- Opposition to the Boat Harbour/Marina Development – 13%
- Concerns About Leadership and Governance – 13%
- Lack of Progress on Infrastructure Projects - 13%

Under 10%:

- Disapproval of Spending on Specific Projects
- Discontent with Council Priorities
- Perceived Lack of Transparency and Communication