Department of Internal Affairs
Barriers and Enablers to Participation in Local Government

[A Qualitative Report]

[June 2007]
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Department of Internal Affairs, (the Department) wishes to enhance public participation in the local government process to achieve better long-term decision-making for sustainable communities.

In June 2006, quantitative research conducted by UMR for the Department identified four primary causes for non-participation in local government. These were: apathy, lack of time/not a priority, satisfaction (or not dissatisfied enough) and why bother/will not make a difference. Based on that research, Senate Communications drafted a Public Information Strategy which identified four priority target audiences that would provide greatest behaviour change and or influence on other audiences. These audiences were:

- Māori;
- 30 to 55 year olds;
- Youth;
- Businesses.

As a result, the Department commissioned UMR Research to undertake qualitative research using focus groups to explore barriers and identify the factors that will motivate and enable two of these groups - Māori and the general public aged 30-55 years - to participate in local government.

1.2 Research objectives

The key objectives of the research were to explore:

- Views on local issues that are important to individuals or their families;
- Views on things Councils do that are important to individuals or their families;
- Levels of trust and confidence in Council and reasons driving trust and confidence;
- Assess if respondents are aware of ways of participating in local government and extent to which they may participate;
- Strategies to address barriers to participation and what types of information people need and how that is best delivered, and;
- The efficacy of tools to encourage public participation in local government.
1.3 The research design

Focus groups were conducted in Auckland, New Plymouth and Christchurch between 18-20 June 2007. Groups in the latter two centres included respondents from rural areas as well as from those cities. In this way, the research sought to cover a range of local government experiences which might impact on participation.

The specifications for the groups, which were all of mixed gender, were:

- 1 x Auckland Māori;
- 1 x Auckland 30-55 years;
- 1 x New Plymouth Māori including Taranaki rural;
- 1 x New Plymouth 30-55 years including Taranaki rural;
- 1 x Christchurch Māori including Canterbury rural;
- 1 x Christchurch 30-55 years including Canterbury rural.

Māori respondents were affiliated with the following iwi:

- Ngati Raunui;
- Ngati Raukawa;
- Ngati Maniapoto;
- Te Atiawa;
- Te Arawa;
- Ngati Raurua;
- Tuhoi;
- Ngati Porou;
- Ngati Awa;
- Ngapuhi;
- Ngati Kahungunu;
- Ngati Ruahine;
- Ngati Mara;
- Ngati Wairiri;
- Tainui.

1.4 Question-line

The focus group question-line was based on the research objectives and was developed in consultation with the Department.

A focus group question line is not like a quantitative questionnaire where questions are ordered and fixed. In focus groups question-lines are used as a guide to encourage participants to discuss and explore ideas and thoughts they have on the topic being researched. A strength of focus group inquiry is that lines of questioning are flexible and allow for additional questions to be asked both during focus group or at subsequent groups.

A copy of the focus group question-line is included in the Appendix.
1.5 Research analysis

Transcriptions of the focus group discussions were searched to identify key themes.

It should be noted that this is a qualitative research study. While qualitative research can be used to identify a range of issues and assess the intensity with which views are held, quantitative research is necessary to establish with certainty the extent to which views expressed are held throughout wider populations.

UMR is the author of this report and requires that all parties permitted to use the report and the research contained within the report give full and correct acknowledgement of authorship.
2. Summary

2.1 Methodology

The key objectives of this research were to explore:

- Views on local issues that are important to individuals or their families;
- Views on things Councils do that are important to individuals or their families;
- Levels of trust and confidence in Council and reasons driving trust and confidence;
- Assess if respondents are aware of ways of participating in local government and the extent to which they may participate;
- Strategies to address barriers to participation and what types of information people need and how that is best delivered, and;
- The efficacy of tools to encourage public participation in local government.

Qualitative research involving six focus groups were held in Auckland, New Plymouth and Christchurch from 18-20 June 2007. The groups were all of mixed gender and comprised:

- 1 x Auckland Māori;
- 1 x Auckland 30-55 years;
- 1 x New Plymouth Māori including Taranaki rural;
- 1 x New Plymouth 30-55 years including Taranaki rural;
- 1 x Christchurch Māori including Canterbury rural;
- 1 x Christchurch 30-55 years including Canterbury rural.

Māori affiliated to at least 15 different Iwi participated in the groups.
2.2 Overview

The research highlighted opportunities to encourage greater participation.

Local issues that are important to respondents can be leveraged to encourage participation, however, councils will simultaneously need to implement strategies to overcome current barriers to engagement. Local government needs to proactively establish an environment of trust with residents in its communities by demonstrating an ability to listen and respond. Local government was generally perceived by the focus groups to be difficult to access, slow and inconsistent in its responsiveness, and at times manipulative with respect to decision-making. Even so, levels of satisfaction with the way in which councils carry out their activities is relatively high in most areas. Building trust will need to address responsiveness at both the individual inquiry level as well as with broader community issues around which genuine consultation and public feedback needs to take place.

The diagram below summarises the main barriers to participation in local government as well as the tools to enable greater participation. Central to encouraging greater participation is the need for councils to pro-actively seek public opinion on key issues that are of interest, such as, the desire for a safe environment, and to being responsive and accountable to public input when making decisions on those issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Enablers (to build trust)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Pro-actively survey residents and public feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>• Mail out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Doors / Lack of Transparency</td>
<td>• Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge / information</td>
<td>• 0800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Councillors pro-active and visible in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unresponsive</td>
<td>Simple information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Planning</td>
<td>• Who to contact, when, how to submit, what council responsible for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Trust</td>
<td>Customer service focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>Multi channel communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mail outs etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key issues e.g.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pollution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rubbish disposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater Participation
2.3 Views on local issues that are important to individuals or their families (unprompted)

The things that matter most to people locally cover many activities and issues that are the responsibility of local government with recurring themes including, having a secure and safe environment, issues with regional infrastructure and planning, rates increases and recreational spaces and opportunities.

As the activities local government carries out are rated as highly important to respondents, this provides a strong foundation on which to construct communication strategies to encourage greater participation.

Respondents generally identified local councils as the key influencer over the things they had identified as important locally. However, it was clear that in some instances there was confusion over whether council, particular central government agencies or private organisations were the parties to contact to address issues.

A pre-requisite to engagement with local government is motivation and this is driven primarily by whether an issue will have an impact on an individual. Although this is not a sufficient reason for engagement, it is a necessary one therefore it will aid those who seek to encourage engagement with local government to focus on those issues that individuals consider most important to them locally.

For all respondents, the key unprompted issues that they identified that were important to them locally were:

- A safe environment;
- Access to recreation areas and amenities;
- A clean environment;
- Efficient transport routes.

A second tier of issues that were identified in almost all groups were:

- Rates (generally criticised for being too high);
- Town Planning (criticism of housing developments linked to increased traffic congestion and ongoing roadworks);
- Water quality (more specific to New Plymouth and Christchurch);
- Family and community.

Several groups also identified issues such as education and employment.

There were few issues that were specific only to Māori, but there were some respondents in the Māori groups who identified issues that were not raised in the other groups. These were:

- Importance of Māori culture;
- Quality and cost of housing.
### 2.4 Importance of Local Government activities and satisfaction with them

Respondents rated 20 prompted activities that councils do in terms of their importance to them and how satisfied they were with the delivery of those activities. The table below summarises the mean ratings across all focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance VS SATISFACTION – ALL</th>
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In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/ children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution control, protect environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Defence, emergency facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street beautification/graffiti removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise control, (food inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/reserves/sports grounds, cemeteries and crematoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art galleries, museums, and music venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming-pools/recreation and convention centres, halls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote city in NZ/overseas, economic/business development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/provide public events (fireworks displays, park concerts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: n=49; Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
The third column identifies the gap between satisfaction and level of importance. The key areas for councils to focus on are those activities with a high mean importance rating and a significantly lower mean satisfaction rating. Thus, the provision of safe streets is a critical issue as its has the highest mean rating in terms of importance yet one of the lowest mean satisfaction ratings with a gap between the two mean ratings being -3.3.

Other activities that demand some focus are:

- Setting rates (-2.5);
- Parking (-2.3);
- Pollution (-2.0);
- Rubbish disposal (-1.8).

Further analysis of ratings given by each focus group was done. This identified activities that were of high importance to the group and where their satisfaction with their local council doing that activity was lowest. Only activities that where there was a significantly higher level of dissatisfaction than in other groups were included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auckland 30-55 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art Galleries/Museums, and Music Venues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise control, (Food Inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland Māori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/ children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise control, (Food Inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Plymouth 30-55 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Reserves/Sports Grounds/Cemeteries/ and Crematoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch 30-55 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/ children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street beautification/graffiti removal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

No such activities were identifiable from the New Plymouth 30-55 year group*.

It is worth noting that the Māori groups in the two urban centres were significantly less satisfied than other respondents with how safe streets in their neighbourhood were.
The results in the tables above must be treated as indicative since this was qualitative research and not statistically valid. However, the results do indicate the kinds of issues that are likely to motivate individuals to engage with local government on.

### 2.5 Awareness of participation with Local Government

Although in all groups almost everyone indicated they voted in local government elections, engagement outside of that activity was somewhat limited. The reason why respondents engage with local government outside of elections most frequently centres on an issue that is quite specific to that individual and involved either a complaint about a problem or a request for information. That kind of contact is almost exclusively done by phone or letter.

Few respondents had engaged in more formal processes such as attending a meeting or making a formal submission even though they were aware they could do so. Respondents thought that participation in more formal processes required specialist assistance, such as legal support. Direct contact with council representatives was also rare, although, residents in rural areas were more likely to be comfortable approaching their council representatives.

Some respondents from New Plymouth and Christchurch noted the use of surveys by their councils to gain public opinion on issues.

The extent to which respondents participated in local government was limited by a general sense of powerlessness. The factors behind this are detailed more fully in Section 2.7.

### 2.6 Trust and confidence in Local Government

Respondents in most groups identified examples of activities that had undermined their trust and confidence in local government and had the potential to deter them from engaging with local government. This was because these experiences had given them the impression that decisions they had sought to have input to had already been made or would be made by councils regardless of the individual's participation.

Respondents cited examples where they believed genuine consultation between council and residents had not occurred. For instance, consultation had taken place so late in the decision-making process that they felt their voice would not hold any sway, or at times the outcome of consultation was disregarded which was particularly damaging to further engagement. Sometimes consultation timeframes were so tight as to frustrate genuine consultation. These barriers drove to the heart of trust and confidence in councils and affected the confidence respondents had in engagement.

Two examples of such activities that undermined trust and confidence and thus also created barriers to future participation included:

- A council making a decision counter to the popular views expressed by the public in a survey;
- A perception that some critical council decisions have been made by an inside clique of councillors and private companies behind ‘closed doors’.
These examples together with a strong desire across all the focus groups for councils to be pro-active, open and accountable in seeking the views of the community showed that trust and confidence was directly linked to how responsive and accountable councils are to public input to key decisions.

Individuals also lack confidence in contacting their council on a range of reasons that are more fully covered in the next section on barriers to participation.

2.7 Barriers to participation in Local Government

A number of negative perceptions about local government’s complexity, limited accessibility, and lack of both responsiveness and openness create barriers to participation. Respondents, particularly those from urban areas and to a lesser extent from provincial areas, tend to regard local government as large, complex and bureaucratic. They tend to think that in order to get things done or to carry influence it is a case of ‘who you know’ rather than ‘what you know’. Key decisions tend to be seen as being made behind ‘closed doors’ which undermines trust and confidence in the decision-making process.

There were no significant differences between the 30-55 year-old groups and Māori with respect to perceived barriers to participation in local government. The key barriers identified across all groups were:

- The size and complexity of local government which was more pronounced in urban areas;
- The size and complexity of issues;
- A sense of being an isolated voice on an issue;
- Sense of powerlessness;
- Lack of openness;
- Lack of knowledge;
- Lack of sense of community;
- Council impacts;
- Lack of responsiveness;
- Council in-fighting;
- Lack of trust;
- Personal impact.

Some respondents found the scale of the issues they wanted to have addressed were too daunting. For example, if an issue involved a significant engineering challenge or the expenditure required to address an issue were too big then participation was inhibited. In such instances, respondents indicated that they lacked the knowledge or expertise to have the confidence to participate, and so did not do so. This extended to perceptions about written submissions which some respondents saw as requiring some legal skills to do effectively. Strategies are required to minimise the intimidation of apparent complexity.

There were also barriers to engaging on issues that did not directly impact on day-to-day life. Due to the demands of everyday life, respondents noted that to become involved in an issue for altruistic reasons was a bit of a luxury. Some just begrudged the time and effort that would be involved.
Respondents were also unclear or even unaware of whose responsibility a particular issue might be, for example, a roading issue might partly be a Transit responsibility or street safety a Police matter. And even if they did know that a matter was a council responsibility they were not likely to know who they should contact to have a say on the issue. Thus, lack of knowledge also limits participation.

Delays and inconsistent responses to inquiries are other contributors that influence respondents negatively toward engaging with local government.

■ **New Plymouth differences**

There were some differences by location in terms of barriers to participation. Respondents from rural areas, who were present in both the New Plymouth groups, demonstrated a much greater awareness of who their local representatives were and could access them easily even to the point in some instances of respondents knowing representatives personally. Both New Plymouth groups had respondents who were more alienated toward their local council than the other groups. This was based on a perception that there was in-fighting and key decisions were made by clique of councillors and companies and concern about the changes the council was making to the character of the central business district.

■ **Christchurch and New Plymouth differences**

The Christchurch and New Plymouth groups did identify ways in which their councils had sought public opinion on key issues by employing some form of survey, a tool to enable participation that found firm support across all groups. However, in Christchurch several respondents recalled the council ignoring the public’s views in one survey it had conducted which had undermined confidence in the use of that tool.

### 2.8 Enabling participation in Local Government

Barriers to participation can be taken down by adopting a multiple layer of strategies. Strategies need to be put in place to motivate engagement, the right information needs to be provided to all residents about what councils do, steps must be taken to make it easier to make contact and for that contact to be a positive experience, and a range of communications tools need to be employed.

The tools identified in the groups to enable participation in local government are summarised in the diagram on the following page.
Motivating engagement

Councils must proactively contact and elicit opinions from residents through the use of surveys and through opportunities for face-to-face contact at times and in places that suit the target audience. Importantly, communications need to be open and balanced and must also include feedback to residents that demonstrates that council has listened and can be influenced by the voice of its community. When councils depart from public opinion, the reasons for doing so need to be explained to ensure there is clear accountability for decision-making. If councils adopt these measures, they will go a long way toward establishing the levels of trust and confidence required for residents to feel it is worth their while participating on issues that matter to them.

Not only will higher levels of participation demand the use of multiple communications channels and the wide distribution of basic information, it will also require local government to target its engagement with the public appropriately. It should start by engaging on issues that matter most to residents because that is where the impact of a positive, responsive and consultative approach is most likely to be noticed.

For instance, this piece of research identified issues such as rates, traffic flows, public transport, parking, safety on the streets, boy racers, rubbish collection (New Plymouth and Christchurch) and pollution (Christchurch) as high on the list of issues respondents felt were important and where there were relatively lower levels of satisfaction with local government’s performance.
Information needs

Respondents need to know what councils do and who within the council was responsible for different issues. This information needs to be provided to all residents not just ratepayers. There is also a need to provide information on the procedures and processes that needed to be followed and notification of council plans in advance with enough time for public input to make a difference.

There were also requests for feedback on input which would illustrate the council were taking an issue seriously and likely response times to address issues which would confer some level of accountability. All information would need to be clear, simple and easy to understand.

Facilitating input

Respondents called for more opportunities for face-to-face contact with suggestions ranging from more formal contact such as public meetings to informal ‘surgeries’ where councillors made themselves available to talk one-on-one with residents.

An 0800 number and using text messaging for feedback and providing information were viewed as effective ways to facilitate input.

There were also a number of internet tools that could be employed including setting up a council related blog (although some felt this could deteriorate into just a ‘whinge session’), online forms, organisational contact details on the website for each department, email forums and feedback loops and possibly providing free internet access at council sites.

Some suggested facilitating engagement by providing information via advertising and freepost feedback forms that could be sent out in flyers or put in the local paper.

Better customer service by council staff was also seen to facilitate engagement as it provides a more welcoming and less intimidating ‘face’ to the council. Some would also like council paperwork and processes to be streamlined. Related to council service was having enhanced accessibility by extending office hours and having a 24 hour telephone line.

One of the most common unprompted strategies that respondents suggested for promoting greater engagement in local government was the use of some form of survey so councils could provide a simple and easy way of enabling residents to provide input on issues. The survey was also important as it provided a measure of public opinion and accountability for council. Several ways of ensuring more personal contact between councillors and the public were also suggested across all groups such as councillors holding weekly ‘surgeries’ or more pro-actively making themselves available.

Best way to engage

Respondents wanted more open and honest communication with council. There was a general preference for face-to-face or telephone contact as these forms of communication were seen to enable a more personal connection to be made.
To make communication more personal, it could also be more localised. For example, it could involve targeting information to a particular neighbourhood about a matter affecting just that small part of the city, town or locality or it could involve taking an environmental issue about recycling to a supermarket mall to promote use of recyclable bags. Where face-to-face meetings are planned, the location and timing of meetings need to be scheduled to ensure maximum opportunity to participate.

Other common communication channels were mentioned as of ways of engaging with people, including mail, face-to-face contact, television, internet and surveys.

In summary, individuals will be motivated to participate in local government by issues that impact on them or their families. There are clearly important issues, such as safe environments, that are common to all respondents which would provide the firmest foundation for councils to expect their communities to engage with them on. However, a second set of conditions need to be in play to ensure participation occurs. These are:

- Confidence that there will be feedback and accountability for decisions made;
- The likelihood that an achievable solution can be found to the issue;
- Proactive consultation by the council;
- Easier ways of enabling contact between the public and council;
- Clear, simple information, particularly on who to contact about any particular issue, but also on procedures and processes, advance notice of council plans, feedback loops and timeframes;
- Better interface between council staff and the public;
- Positive outcomes experienced from participation.

The principal tools for facilitating communication across all groups were:

- Surveys using free-post return;
- Face-to-face engagement e.g. public meetings, citizen ‘surgeries’, information evenings;
- Internet enabling e-mail feedback, input through a blog space;
- 0800 numbers;
- Visible advertising of initiatives and easy ways to participate;
- Simple submission templates;
- Extended hours and more flexible times to make contact;
- Customer–friendly attitudes of council staff.

## 2.9 Prompted strategies to encourage participation

Two different sets of prompted strategies to encourage participation in local government were tested with the Māori and 30-55 year-old groups.

Across the 30-55 year olds, the strategy that attracted the most support was the mail-out consultation process which several respondents thought could be improved by allowing input from multiple communication channels. Use of website and internet media and having councillors meet the public face-to-face at local events to discuss concerns were also popular strategies.
### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – 30-55 YEARS

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose.</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of website/Internet activities e.g. chatrooms, message boards, online forums with councillors, email submissions.</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools, pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. Could involve 'trusted sources' to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional analysis of the activities was undertaken across each 30-55 year-old focus group. These tables can only be indicative as the number of respondents is so low that it does not enable any statistical conclusions to be drawn from the results, however, while a similar pattern of rating for each activity occurred across the three 30-55 year-old groups there were two exceptions being that:

- Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events where people can ask questions of councillors – this was rated a mean of 3.7 in New Plymouth compared with 7.4 and 6.3 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

- Free days at council facilities and give information on activities council does - this was rated a mean of 3.6 in New Plymouth compared with 5.9 and 5.4 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

The most highly rated activities for Māori involved meeting on marae or similar venues where councillors met with Māori on their terms. While an on-line activity rated relatively well too, respondents in the Auckland group pointed out this option would better suit those people who would not have an opportunity to speak in the formal setting of a marae. Equally, it was noted that few older Māori were likely to use the Internet to communicate with council on issues. The mail-out option, which was the top rated prompt among the 30-55 year-old groups, was not tested with the Māori groups.

### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – MĀORI

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face on Marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve 'trusted sources' to convey messages e.g. Kaumatua, celebrities</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local Kohanga-reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great care should also be taken to avoid activities which provide some kind of reward to Māori for participating as this was considered insulting and demeaning to Māori.

Again analysis of the activities across each Māori focus group was undertaken. As noted previously these tables can only be indicative as the number of respondents is so low that it does not enable any statistical conclusions to be drawn from the results, however, some notable differences were:

- Councillors meet face-to-face on Marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. Kaumatua, celebrities - this was rated a mean of 4.8 in Auckland compared with 7.7 and 6.7 in New Plymouth and Christchurch respectively.

- Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response - this was rated a mean of 4.1 in New Plymouth compared with 6.3 and 8.2 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

- Political speed-dating where local councillors met with Māori at an event. Each person attending is allowed a short time with each councillor to discuss whatever issues they want. This could be an event on its own - this was rated a mean of 2.9 in Auckland compared with 5.6 and 5.7 in New Plymouth and Christchurch respectively.

- Council sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and initiatives - this was rated a mean of 2.1 in New Plymouth compared with 4.3 and 5.4 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

2.10 Māori

Māori affiliated to at least 15 different Iwi were among respondents, including some respondents who identified with at least two different Iwi, and in many instances respondents lived outside their rohe. All but two respondents in the three Māori groups were able to identify their Iwi. Some respondents identified their Māori as well as other ethnic aspects of the genealogy stating all aspects were important to them.

There were few, clear, discernible differences between the things that mattered to Māori locally and those that mattered to respondents from the 30-55 year-old groups. The exceptions were issues that were only raised by some Māori respondents and were:

- The importance of Māori culture which was raised by respondents in the Auckland and Christchurch groups;
- An environmental issue that arose with the New Plymouth Māori group relating to coastal erosion and sand-mining;
- Housing which was raised as something that was important to respondents or their families was raised in the Auckland (2 respondents) and New Plymouth (1 respondent) Māori groups. Although care should be taken in interpreting too much from a mention by two respondents in one group, we are aware from other research that housing costs and housing quality for renters are issues that are pronounced in Auckland. The encroachment of housing subdivisions on available space was an issue for both Christchurch groups.
As noted earlier, Māori were more inclined to be less satisfied with the performance of their local councils in providing a safe environment, and the Auckland Māori group showed low levels of satisfaction with respect to setting of rates and RMA consents and district planning.

Only two Māori respondents across the three groups were aware of their iwi being involved in special consultation with local government on issues related to land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna or taonga. However, respondents did express the view that consultation on those issues would happen if required.

Respondents readily identified individuals such as ‘aunties’, who they would speak to if they knew of significant issues that were important to Māori that they wanted their iwi to take up with local government. Māori living outside their rohe regarded it as the role of the local iwi to deal with issues of specific interest to Māori. Thus, their engagement was likely to be more limited.

Some prompted strategies (see Appendix 3) that were tested to encourage Māori participation should be avoided as respondents found them insulting. These were strategies that involved any form of reward or grant for participation in local government. Strategies that appealed the most were ones that involved councillors meeting Māori face-to-face on Māori terms, such as, on a marae. Some strategies, such as the use of online communications, it was noted would be useful for providing individual input which would not be possible on a marae where only certain individuals would speak on behalf of others, but would be inappropriate for older Māori. Thus, communications need to be tailored to the needs of each audience.

### 2.11 30-55 years

Many of the respondents in the 30-55 year-old groups had dependent children, so the focus of their issues revolved around ensuring clean, safe environments with facilities that catered for families.

Face-to-face meetings with council members also appealed to this group though care should be taken in selecting appropriate venues as, for example, the suggestion of pubs was regarded as highly inappropriate. The most attractive strategy for encouraging engagement was a mail-out of issues which enabled residents to express their preferences on issues. The attraction of this option was that it let people respond in their own time and had the potential to deliver to council a clear measure of public opinion that could in turn be made public in order to provide valuable feedback and to hold councils accountable. Online and phone options for channelling responses should also be used as alternatives to posting responses to council.

Activities that should be avoided are those involving competitions to encourage greater awareness of council activities as these were not attractive and seemed to trivialise the issue for some. There was also weak support for opening up council facilities for free visits. Several respondents were confused about what facilities would be open for free that were currently charged for.
2.12 Rural/Provincial/Urban

For those from rural areas there was evidently a much stronger familiarity with key elected representatives than elsewhere. Three respondents in the two New Plymouth groups, for instance, knew their Mayor personally and all three had approached the Mayor to have a say on issues and had had some success.

This, however, contrasted sharply with provincial and urban respondents, who were unlikely to be aware of their local councillors and certainly would not seek their assistance on issues. Several respondents talked of seeing their local MP if a local issue was significant enough rather than a councillor. Individual councillors were not generally regarded as influential individuals who could get things done. This suggests the need for councillors to have more direct public contact, for instance, holding weekly clinics for residents. This was a suggestion made in Auckland which was echoed in Christchurch when respondents spoke highly of the clinic the Mayor held in the city’s Square.

In New Plymouth, there was a stronger sense of general alienation between respondents and their council with a perception that an ‘inside’ clique comprising key councillors and private companies were making many of the key decisions. It was evident that employment and tertiary opportunities were key issues for respondents in terms of the community’s sustainability. And issues with respect to water quality were more pronounced.

In Christchurch, environmental pollution issues and the encroachment of housing subdivisions were two issues that emerged that were more pronounced than in the other two centres. There was a stronger identification with the use of parks and reserves than elsewhere.

In Auckland, concerns about living in a safe environment were more pronounced though evident in the other two cities. Safety was not an issue for rural respondents, but school enrolments which were linked to the numbers of teachers at schools and the availability of school buses were more uniquely rural issues.
3. Key Point Analysis

3.1 Important local issues

An analysis of the issues that respondents identified unprompted which were important to them locally showed a high degree of commonality to critical issues like the need to live in a safe environment, access to recreational spaces and transport regardless of ethnicity, age (30-55 years general public) or location. The transport issue was often linked to criticisms of town planning decisions evidenced by traffic congestion or continual road-works. While access to quality education is less a responsibility of local government, it was another issue that was raised across almost all groups.

The desire for a safe environment was more clearly expressed in the Auckland groups with specific issues such as gangs, drugs, graffiti, burglaries and stray dogs identified as specific issues that needed to be addressed. Road and footpath construction as well as traffic delays also featured highly among concerns in Auckland. Clean beaches were also identified as an environmental issue.

Some issues were more peculiar to the urban centres such as environmental pollution with air quality and river quality a particularly strong issue for Christchurch in both groups. There was also stronger concern about lack of planning in both Christchurch groups which related to housing developments on the periphery of the city and the consequential impact on transport congestion in the city. The Christchurch groups said access to recreational opportunities, particularly parks and reserves, was important.

An environmental issue of a different order, coastal erosion, was particular to New Plymouth. Another issue that was unique to New Plymouth was a clear division in the groups over what was perceived as moves to change the character of the city with some strong opposition to initiatives that were designed to attract tourists and turn the city into a ‘Queenstown’. The New Plymouth 30-55 year old group made special mention that lifestyle issues were important to them and a key reason for choosing to live in the area.

While the issues identified above were common to all groups, there were some issues that were more pronounced in the Māori groups. The two urban Māori groups both had respondents who were concerned to have closer links with their culture. And housing and employment issues were also more pronounced among Māori respondents than others.

The table below summarises issues that were common and unique to specific groups:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Safe environment</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Rates</th>
<th>Access to recreation</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Housing Quality/ costs</th>
<th>Water Quality</th>
<th>Town Planning</th>
<th>Family/ Community</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>30-55 yrs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Importance and satisfaction with Local Government activities

Respondents were provided with prompt sheets (see appendix) which listed 20 activities undertaken by local government and were asked to rate the importance of these activities on a 0-10 scale where 0 meant ‘not that important’ and 10 meant ‘very important’. They were also asked on the same scale to top rate their level of satisfaction with the activities where 0 meant ‘not at all satisfied’ and 10 meant ‘very satisfied’. Analysis was subsequently carried out to identify those activities where there was greatest dissonance between the importance of the activity and how satisfied respondents were with their local council in each of those areas.

An overall analysis of these results is detailed in Section 7 of this report. This showed there was no significant difference across all the groups between the way in which the general public 30-55 year-olds and Māori rated the importance of activities. Further, there was no significant difference between these groups with respect to satisfaction ratings.

The 10 activities where the largest gap between level of satisfaction and importance existed are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/ children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting rates</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution control, protect environment</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Defence, emergency facilities</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street beautification/graffiti removal</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings reinforce those from the previous section where issues like safe environment, rates and environmental issues were among those that were identified as important to people locally. We conducted further analysis on each activity to see whether any significant difference could be identified by location or by specific focus group. The analysis for each activity is tabulated in the appendices, though we would stress this analysis should only be treated as indicative only as this is qualitative research and the numbers represented in each group are far too small to provide statistical robustness to the results.
From those tables we identify the following groups and specific activities where the mean satisfaction rating is significantly lower than the mean importance rating and lower than the mean for all. The mean for all is in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION – ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auckland 30-55 years</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>-2.1 (-1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-2.2 (-1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Galleries/Museums, and Music Venues</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-2.7 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise control, (Food Inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>-2.4 (-0.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auckland Māori</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-3.9 (-2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-4.1 (-1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise control, (Food Inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>-2.3 (-0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting rates</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-4.1 (-2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>-4.3 (-3.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Plymouth 30-55 years</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Plymouth Māori</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-3.9 (-1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-3.6 (-1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Reserves/Sports Grounds/Cemeteries/ and Crematoria</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>-2.4 (-0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christchurch 30-55 years</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>-3.2 (-1.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christchurch Māori</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street beautification/graffiti removal</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-2.7 (-1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>-4.3 (-3.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Barriers to participation

There were no significant differences between the 30-55 year-old groups and Māori with respect to perceived barriers to participation in local government. The key barriers identified across all groups were:

- The size and complexity of local government which was more pronounced in urban areas;
- The size and complexity of issues;
- A sense of being an isolated voice on an issue;
- Sense of powerlessness;
- Lack of openness;
- Lack of knowledge;
- Lack of sense of community;
- Council impacts;
- Lack of responsiveness;
- Council in-fighting;
- Personal impacts;
- Lack of trust;
- Personal impact.

There were some differences by location in terms of barriers to participation. Respondents from rural areas, who were present in both the New Plymouth groups, demonstrated a much greater awareness of who their local representatives were and could access them easily even to the point in some instances of respondents knowing representatives personally. Both New Plymouth groups had respondents who were more alienated towards their local council than the other groups. This was based on a perception that key decisions were made by clique of councillors and companies and concern about the changes the council was making to the character of the central business district.

The Christchurch and New Plymouth groups did identify ways in which their councils had sought public opinion on key issues by employing some form of survey, a tool to enable participation that found firm support across all groups. However, in Christchurch several respondents recalled the council ignoring the public’s views in one survey it had conducted which had undermined confidence in the use of that tool.

3.4 Tools to enable participation

3.4.1 Unprompted

Unprompted ideas to encourage participation in local government were developed by the respondents in all groups. Once again there was no were no specific enabling tools that emerged that were unique to any particular group.

What was common to all groups was that a key pre-requisite for engagement with council on an issue is motivation borne from the personal impact an issue might have on an individual. Motivation on its own though is a necessary, but not sufficient reason for engagement. There are therefore a number of other conditions which if they are in play will encourage participation.
These are:

- Confidence that there will be feedback and accountability for decisions made;
- The likelihood that an achievable solution can be found to the issue;
- Proactive consultation by the council;
- Easier ways of enabling contact between the public and council;
- Clear, simple information, particularly on who to contact about any particular issue, but also on procedures and processes, advance notice of council plans, feedback loops and timeframes;
- Better interface between council staff and the public;
- Positive outcomes experienced from participation.

The principle tools for facilitating communication across all groups were:

- Surveys using free-post return;
- Face-to-face engagement e.g. public meetings, citizen ‘surgeries’, information evenings;
- Internet enabling e-mail feedback, input through a blog space;
- 0800 numbers;
- Visible advertising of initiatives and easy ways to participate;
- Simple submission templates;
- Extended hours and more flexible times to make contact;
- Customer–friendly attitudes of council staff.

Mail-outs, face-to-face and the Internet were the preferred media for enabling engagement.

### 3.4.2 Prompted activities

#### 30-55 years

Sets of prompted activities (see appendix) were given to each respondent to rate on a 0-10 scale where 0 meant ‘not that likely’ and 10 meant ‘very likely’ how likely each activity was to increase engagement in local government. The general public 30-55 year-old group had a different set of activities to the Māori groups.

Mail-out surveys were the stand-out option of all those tested with a very high mean rating of 8.5, followed by on-line contact such as e-mail and face-to-face contact with councillors at local venues. The mean rating for this type of face-to-face contact would almost certainly have been higher had ‘pubs’ been deleted and the reference to ‘trusted sources e.g. local celebrities, musicians’ as there was significant criticism levelled at those aspects.
ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – 30-55 YEARS

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose.</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of website/Internet activities e.g. chatrooms, message boards, online forums with councillors, email submissions.</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools, pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. Could involve 'trusted sources' to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables in Appendix 3 show an analysis of each activity and how it was rated by each focus group. Again these tables can only be indicative as the number of respondents is so low that it does not enable any statistical conclusions to be drawn from the results. A similar pattern of rating for each activity occurred across the three 30-55 year-old groups with the most notable exceptions being that:

- Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events where people can ask questions of councillors – this was rated a mean of 3.7 in New Plymouth compared with 7.4 and 6.3 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

- Free days at council facilities and give information on activities council does - this was rated a mean of 3.6 in New Plymouth compared with 5.9 and 5.4 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

➢ Māori

The most highly rated activities involved were meeting on Marae or similar venues where councillors met with Māori on their terms. While an on-line activity rated relatively well too, respondents in the Auckland group pointed out that option this would better suit those people who would not have an opportunity to speak in the formal setting of a Marae. Equally, it was noted that few older Māori were likely to use the Internet to communicate with council on issues. The mail-out option, which was the top rated prompt among the 30-55 year-old groups, was not tested with the Māori groups.

Great care should also be taken to avoid activities which provide some kind of reward to Māori for participating as this was considered insulting and demeaning to Māori.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – MĀORI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN SCORE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face on Marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve 'trusted sources' to convey messages e.g. Kaumatua, celebrities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local Kohanga-reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables in Appendix 3 also show an analysis of each activity and how it was rated by each focus group. Again these tables can only be indicative as the number of respondents is so low that it does not enable any statistical conclusions to be drawn from the results. A similar pattern of rating for each activity occurred across the three Māori groups with the most notable exceptions being that:

- Councillors meet face-to-face on Marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve 'trusted sources' to convey messages e.g. Kaumatua, celebrities - this was rated a mean of 4.8 in Auckland compared with 7.7 and 6.7 in New Plymouth and Christchurch respectively.

- Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response - this was rated a mean of 4.1 in New Plymouth compared with 6.3 and 8.2 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

- Political speed-dating where local councillors met with Māori at an event. Each person attending is allowed a short time with each councillor to discuss whatever issues they want. This could be an event on its own - this was rated a mean of 2.9 in Auckland compared with 5.6 and 5.7 in New Plymouth and Christchurch respectively.

- Council sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and initiatives -this was rated a mean of 2.1 in New Plymouth compared with 4.3 and 5.4 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.
4. Important Local Issues

4.1 What matters to people locally?

Before respondents were advised what the focus of the research was they were asked to write down individually things that were important to them or their families locally. While core central government responsibilities such as education and health were raised, most matters that were identified were either the direct responsibility of local government or at least a shared responsibility. Some also identified matters that related to their sense of community and their relationship with neighbours which would have more indirect links to local government responsibilities.

Some issues recurred as strong themes across all groups. These included having a secure and safe environment (concerns about youth on the streets, gang problems, stray dogs, boy racers and graffiti), infrastructure and planning (traffic flows/congestion, road safety for children and cyclists, availability and cost of public transport, availability and/or cost of parking), rates increases and recreational spaces and opportunities.

There were few distinctive issues raised in the Māori groups as opposed to the 30-55 year-old groups. However, there was a noticeable difference in New Plymouth where one or two specific land and water issues were raised – Waitara land leases, the establishment of a marine reserve and sand-mining along the north Taranaki coast.

The following lists the things that were important to respondents in each of the groups.

4.1.1 Auckland Māori

The issues important to the Auckland Māori group primarily focused on having a safe environment, schooling, infrastructure and planning, family values, housing, recreation and cultural issues.

➢ Safe environment

The issue of most concern to Auckland Māori was having a safe environment. There were references to gangs, increasing burglaries, graffiti, stolen vehicles, stray dogs and a general wish to feel safe in their community.

Graffiti is a real problem around our area. We live on a corner with a big fence and it’s just constantly getting done. When it gets done it gets painted over by the graffiti guard or whatever they call them. Security. I actually copied that off yours but I thought that was a good one. We’ve had a couple of cars stolen and our house has been broken into. We’ve got alarms and deadlocks and things but I guess there’s certain areas of Auckland you feel safer in, not too many now actually. It would be good to see a bit more patrolling done. (Auckland, Māori, female)
There’s safety, gang disturbance around the neighbourhood, quite a few people hooning around in their cars and stuff like that. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Security was another one. Just thinking about how secure you can leave your house and not feel like you’re going to get it ripped off. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Can I just add on to the one about the dogs that just made me think, like dogs running around the streets. We had a Staffie that got attacked by a pit bull and then another dog at another time came and killed one of our cats. I just think that people are mongrels to let their dogs run around the streets. Those are animals but what about children, they do get attacked. (Auckland, Māori, female)

➢ Schooling

Schooling was also an issue raised by many Auckland Māori, they wanted access to better schools, a more consistent quality of schools and initiatives to attract good teachers to the profession.

Schooling. We have a plan to get back out of the area again shortly so we can get to a better area for better schools for the kids. Gang control. Just a bit of control, like people congregating outside, that sort of thing. (Auckland, Māori, male)

The other thing is schooling. There’s a whole raft of things in there. It’s like inconsistencies from one school to another. Attracting the right people into teaching. (Auckland, Māori, male)

➢ Infrastructure and planning

There were many complaints made by Auckland Māori regarding the planning processes in place for public works and traffic control.

Roadworks. We live on a corner and we’ve had roadworks for like the last year in the middle of the night. They just seem to be all over Auckland. My Mum and I talk about it quite a bit and she always says that it’s poor planning. They didn’t expect there to be such an increase in the size of the population. (Auckland, Māori, female)

We were laughing the other day because there’s so many footpaths being done, it must be coming to the end of the council’s calendar year, but will they actually get finished? (Auckland, Māori, female)

Because of that State Highway 20 up the back, is that going to get completed? That’s been on the plans for the last 35–40 odd years. Will it get done? And preserving the greenery around it. (Auckland, Māori, female)

I put down transport because we live right on basically the train line and bus line and they’re putting in a new western route and so basically in any peak traffic times you don’t go out of the house because you can’t get anywhere. (Auckland, Māori, male)
I put down transport first. It wasn’t a problem getting here tonight but I had to come this way last week and it took three-quarters of an hour just to get from the city out to here. It can take me from 30–35 minutes to walk from home into the city and it took me 40 minutes to drive into work the other day. I’ve tried taking public transport and the buses arrive 25 minutes late. I’ve tried the trains as well. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Family values

Auckland Māori were concerned that morals and family values were in decline.

Truancy. We see a lot of that out Papakura way. I’d like to see a move more towards values. I’d like to see how we can instil good solid family values. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Just on the community thing, there’s the safety and the moral values and disrespect for others. It seems strange the kids these days are just completely off the mark with who they respect. They’ve probably got talked to too much on an adult level that they consider themselves adults in their thinking and how they talk to you. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Housing

The cost of housing in Auckland was an issue for some Auckland Māori, their concerns included high rentals, rising rate bills and the view that home ownership was an almost impossible goal.

So I thought that maybe inflation and low pay rises – and the big one is renting for the rest of my life. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Housing prices. I just wonder how people are going to afford accommodation. It’s not just the house prices. It’s also rents and rates and all the cost of living I guess. I just don’t know how people are going to do it. People say you can go and live in Gore or somewhere but having lived in Southland briefly, I know that you pay for other things that overweight that. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Recreation

Access to recreational facilities was especially important to respondents with children.

Recreation in terms of having playgrounds for the kids and stuff like that. That’s always important when you’re in a neighbourhood. Spaces to kick the ball around. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Culture

As an urban Māori, one respondent was worried that he may be losing out on rights to family land.

Otherwise the thing that plagues me quite often and it’s not quite local is as an urban Māori living in the city and my marae are way up north and out east and so am I losing land by the moment, or my rights as a Māori? [Does your iwi keep you in touch on that one?] Obviously it’s up to me to get my aunties to send the word out. I’m sure they’ve got a big list of cousins to contact once they’ve got land for them. (Auckland, Māori, male)
4.1.2 Auckland 30-55 years

Issues that were important to the Auckland 30-55 year-old group included having a safe environment, infrastructure and planning, schooling and recreation.

➤ Safe environment

The Auckland group (aged 30-55 years) were very concerned about having a safe environment. They specifically mentioned graffiti, drunks and unsupervised children walking the streets, property damage, drug problems, gangs, boy racers and general personal safety.

Safety, too many alcohol shops, graffiti, violence at school. Too many alcohol shops. Back in the town centre alone I think we’ve got something like 12 within five minutes of each other. [You’re in Manurewa?] Yes. It’s especially in South Auckland and that brings up safety because there’s people down there that are drunk or quite aggro and that’s even during the morning time, the day time. I’d like to see policing back in the local shopping areas and stuff like that. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Vandalism. There seems to be a lot of crazy vandalism, private properties as well as shops and things like that. Random people’s fences or trees in the parks. [Has that happened to you?] No. I’ve noticed a lot of things. Where I live in Birkenhead there’s a lot of bush areas and that’s one of the things I really like and I have a dog and I do a lot of walking, taking him walking. I’ve noticed a lot of trees just get smashed. It’s not storm damage. It’s close to the walkways. They paint the trees and graffiti on the trees, 300 or 400 year old kauri trees with crazy writing on them and things like that. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Schooling, drugs, tagging, unsupervised children roaming at night. You go up the town centre at Manurewa and there’s 12 or 13-year-old girls hanging around the dark alleys and all sorts. [Dangerous?] Definitely dangerous I think. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I live in Mt Roskill and just the youth gang type things have been in the papers lately. Boy racers we get. We’ve got a quiet street but we’ve got another street coming off it and it means it’s quite a good place to do donuts. Most of that’s at night anyway and it’s annoying but sometimes it’s an after school activity and I think if the kids ran onto the road they could easily get hurt. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

We’re in Torbay which is quite a nice area. We’re up near Long Bay so there’s a lot of bush area and it’s really nice but there have been like, up towards Orewa and around the area, there have been attacks on women ... and that’s a real concern because you want to go for a walk but it’s so dark. The Browns Bay playground, you take your kids down first thing in the morning and there’ll be condoms on the slide. Boy racers are a huge problem up there. We had them in the street. There was a girl hit delivering the mail. It was on the news a couple of months back. She’s just up the road. I still see them getting out the wheelchair. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
Infrastructure and planning

A number in the Auckland 30-55 year-old group felt that planning of roadworks and road layouts could be handled better.

Roading is definitely an issue out there mainly because with all the construction out there which is great, if they could just negotiate the contractors to all work in at the right times... then they have to dig up these roads several times and that sort of thing. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Better provision for cyclists on the road. I was knocked off my bike about a month ago so I know what it feels like and that’s the second time in two years. There’s not enough space for bikes on the road and cars largely prefer to ignore you. I live in Avondale and we don’t really have that many trains out that way and we really should have a lot more but I think they’re working on that. It would be very, very handy. [Don’t come frequently enough?] You’re lucky to get one an hour which makes it unusable really. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Schooling

There were a number of general references of wanting access to better schooling.

Good schooling is important with two kids in schools and colleges in the area. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Recreation

In terms of recreational activities, the Auckland 30-55 year-old group mentioned the relocation of a local library, improving the quality of local beaches and having too many restrictions for dog owners.

We’re in between Devonport and Takapuna so we have a choice of going to Takapuna or Devonport and they’re looking at relocating the library. The decisions have been made but they’re still asking for submissions but the decisions have already been made. [How do you know the decision’s already been made?] The way that the submission is worded. [You can object but it ain’t going to do no good. (Interjection.)] It’s not going to make any difference and that’s really frustrating. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Our water and beach quality is important to our family but not just the beach quality but it’s also the state of the beaches because we do a lot of walking around there as well and it’s quite nice to do the coastal walk and go from Takapuna through to Milford. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

There are so many restrictions on where you can go and take your dog. Because some dog owners, they kind of penalise everybody because there are some bad dog owners around so I think they should actually register the owners not the dogs. The dogs are usually not the problem nine times out of 10. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
4.1.3 New Plymouth Māori

The New Plymouth Māori group identified council performance and spending, infrastructure and planning, rate increases, environmental issues, having a safe environment, water quality, employment and housing.

Specific council performance and spending

There were many issues raised in regard to council performance and decision making, including, opposition to the Len Lye centre, managing the development of the The Hub (a proposed entertainment complex in Hawera), rising parking costs and handling of the Waitara leases.

I did the parking, the Len Lye crap, the Waitara leases for land holders, the dredging of the port, the marine reserves that they may or may not do. [What was the Len Lye thing?] Len Lye, he wants to – the mayor’s very artsy fartsy. He’s making this town a retail come bloody holiday resort type thing, forgetting about everyday workers or everyday shop owners. They have closed down the bottom of the CBD. It’s now mainly restaurants, bars and so forth creating the drink/drugs problem and pushing everything else out of town ... so everyday shoppers, you have nowhere to go except the other end of town and it’s a joke and it’s all artsy fartsy, let’s bring in Taranaki Arts Festival, let’s blow money here there and everywhere and not on the actual community, the people who live here. [What was it about Waitara?] Land holders, lease holding, they’re still farting in the courts as to what they’re doing with the block. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

Bringing in the revenue is fine but when it destroys New Plymouth as a whole, makes the town commercialised into one great big – we’re not Queenstown – and when you’re changing all businesses and you’ve got all the small-town businesses going under and folding on a daily basis where you’ve had businesses here for over 30 years shutting their doors because there is no foot traffic down here unless you are a restaurant and why should we be paying prices to come into town, café style Auckland. That’s just ridiculous. We’re not Auckland. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

We’re building a big entertainment complex in Hawera in a few years’ time and at the moment the mayor is arguing with these guys. The mayor has said that these clubs are holding the community to ransom because they don’t want to give us their licence which in a way I don’t blame them – what they want to do is rip the whole place down and start a new building. What they want to do is take up all the rugby grounds, the cricket grounds and the camping area because there’s a camping site and have one big complex. That’s going to cost over $21 million. At the moment they’re arguing – the rugby team doesn’t want to give up their lease and the mayor’s saying that they’ll do it with them or without them. I can see why they don’t want to give it up because that’s their funding. They want to run their own bars. That’s the only income they can get through the season. [Other issues?] Boy racers. My view is it’s not only Normanby, it’s everywhere. If the community got together we’d stop them. Put my truck across the road and they stop. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

The first one would be in regards to the meter prices for parking - too expensive. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
**Infrastructure and planning**

A number of the New Plymouth Māori group complained about poor planning of the road system and the lack of public transport.

*The biggest issue for us is getting to school. When we first moved up that way we were a bit closer to the school and we’ve moved so now we actually have to take our kids 7 km to catch the bus which takes them 4 km to school. My kids go to Ratapiko School and it’s just been a really good school so we try to keep them there. We’d only be 4–5 km from Midhurst but we’ve tried to keep them going to that same school even though we’ve moved a bit closer to Midhurst. My kids go to Inglewood High School so they get picked up by the same bus but they’re still 20 minutes apart and in the afternoons they’re an hour apart so we’re sitting at the bus stop for an hour.* (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

*We haven’t got a very good public transport system in New Plymouth. They’ve changed it and I think it’s something that’s just appalling. [Is there public transport in New Plymouth? I can’t remember the last time I saw a bus. (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, Māori, male)*

*There was talk – they had a group in surveying the one-way systems and the traffic flows between Bell Block into Northgate. It gets quite congested. With most of the larger retail stores out in Waitaki Valley now, getting too and from there is a lot more difficult than it used to be but that’s just the way that’s happened so the changes there into the one-way systems, how that’s going to impact the way we’re going to be able to flow around the city because I think it’s got a good flow, it just needs a bit of tweaking here and there.* (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

**Environment**

The sand-mining and its impact on the environment was an issue of concern for some New Plymouth Māori. Māori were seen to have special affinity to the land and sea which heightened their concerns.

*I also touched on the sand mining because it’s going to affect from North Taranaki right up to up past Waikato I believe it is so it’s going to affect that whole coastline and from my own family issues and all that, it’s more the environmental impact and what will be there in later generations for everyone to enjoy.* (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

*[Or dredging. (Interjection.)] Yeah, the port dredging. They’re still looking at whether or not they’re going to sell off these iron sands and bullshit and who’s going to get it and who’s going to run it and what the hell they’re going to do. [How is that an important issue to you and your family?] Probably because we are Taranaki Māori and because we associate with the sea around here as well as the coastline. Everything that they do and the way that they affect it, this was and will always be what we stand up and say we belong to.* (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
**Safe environment**

Having a safe environment was key issue for New Plymouth Māori. Drugs, boy racers, alcohol and out of control youths were key concerns raised in this area.

*My family issues would probably be more to do with drugs and stuff. Drugs in Taranaki. There’s heaps of it around these days. It’s easy to get. Everyone’s doing it. P is everywhere. All my mates that I knew five years ago are all not the same people I knew 10 years ago. Just about all my mates have seen jail. It’s no good. [Other issues?] Alcohol, drugs and alcohol, crime. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)*

*The other one is more of a general problem but it’s the drugs and alcohol abuse and that that you get at night etc when you go into town etc because – I think it’s solely because people don’t have enough to do and it’s so easy to get. I might drink myself but it’s how you do it. It’s how you do it and control it I think is what it’s all about. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)*

*Boy racers. My view is it’s not only Normanby, it’s everywhere. If the community got together we’d stop them. Put my truck across the road and they stop. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)*

**Rate increases**

There were complaints about rate increases in the Taranaki area.

*The rates prices are going up and that just annoyed my mother but they don’t care. They’re saying put your rates up, we’ll add this in here too so you have to pay extra for that and it’s for little things that actually aren’t significant. [What sort of things?] What was in the newspaper the other week? It’s gone up 7% or 6 point something percent, and then there’s a little fee of $100 that’s been added into it as well and kind of curled my mother’s hair. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)*

*I’ve got rate rises. The main reason for that is, if you remember it’s not so long ago they sold off Powerco and all the rest of it and it generated income, had all this income coming in yet they turn around the next thing and say – well they’re supposed to be working towards New Plymouth having zero rates, that was the whole thing like we’re selling Powerco, we’re making a shitload of money and then it comes back to ‘hello, now you’ve got a rate rise coming in’. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)*

**Water quality**

The quality of water was considered poor by some New Plymouth Māori.

*[Water supply.] I live in Spotswood and that’s on their 10-year plan in another five years. You can’t drink the water, you have to boil it. I couldn’t believe that I’d moved back to Taranaki and the water is foul and gross and you can’t drink it. I used to live in Stratford where it was the freshest thing. It was one thing I was looking forward to coming home to. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)*
Employment

Many in the New Plymouth Māori group were concerned about the lack of quality employment opportunities in the region.

*Employment opportunities within the region and how you get your kids to come back – I know quite well, I’ve got one coming back from varsity and she says she’d love to stay in New Plymouth but there’s no way on earth she’s going to be able to stay in New Plymouth because she won’t get the job she wants. I think it’s just how do we make employment opportunities and that for kids who are coming back in and keeping them here. It’s a good region.*  
(New Plymouth, Māori, male)

*Stratford doesn’t have great employment opportunities so she’s (wife) with Mainland at the moment. They’d be about our biggest two issues at the moment. [Dairy farmers are getting big payouts.] Yes they are. The ones who are doing the work aren’t getting it though. I’ve been doing it for 20 years now and I’m basically about $5000 better off than I was 20 years ago.*  
(New Plymouth, Māori, male)

Conversely, some noted that they were finding it difficult to find and keep skilled labour in Taranaki and were recruiting overseas for some positions.

*Where I work we struggle to get good people. When I say good people, I mean good trained people. Welders, for example. We’ve been advertising now for the last two months trying to get aluminium welders. We haven’t had one reply, not one. [Because the dollar’s not there. (Interjection.)] The dollar’s there alright. We pay decent wages if we can get the people but we can’t get the people. [We usually train ours and send them overseas. (Interjection.)] We’re going outside of the province and we’ll go wherever we can to get the ... because otherwise we lose jobs and then everything else happens. [Most of them who do train here leave and they go overseas. (Interjection.)] A lot of people do. They train and then they disappear out of the region, I’ll give you that, but I think right now – and we’re talking about the people coming in from Australia, we’re having to get people – we’re searching the world. We’ll get people in from Germany if we have to because we just don’t have the skill base of people here.*  
(New Plymouth, Māori, male)

Housing

As found in other regions, New Plymouth Māori felt that rising house prices was making it more difficult for first home buyers to enter the market.

4.1.4 New Plymouth 30-55 years

The New Plymouth 30-55 year-old group focused on recreational and lifestyle issues, schooling, having a safe environment, environmental issues, hygiene in local eateries, water quality in certain parts of the city, the cost of rates, infrastructure and the local economy.

Recreation and lifestyle

Lifestyle and recreational opportunities were considered important and the key reasons most in the New Plymouth 30-55 year old group had chosen to live in the region.
Lifestyle is an important thing for us and encompassed closely with that is recreation and the services that the local body give to families like the parks and recreation, the mountain, walkway, all those types of things. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Where I live is central to everywhere I want to be, in Taranaki. I go out in the hills a lot. It’s only a hop and skip to New Plymouth. The other thing is no traffic problems. I live at the top of town but it’s a good excuse to go for a walk downtown and everything is convenient. There’re no parking problems. I don’t have the meter problems. So it’s central to where I want to be, there’s no traffic problems and it’s convenient for business and stuff like that. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Schooling

Some of the New Plymouth 30-55 year old group were worried about schooling in the area, this included the quality of schools, school quotas and associated number of teachers in rural areas and wanting provision of life skills offered through schools.

Environment and schooling. They’re quite important to me. We need to bring life skills back to kids a bit because they’re not being taught by their parents. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Just one other thing that we’ve observed recently as well is the schooling in New Zealand is getting very tight. A lot of schools are right on their quota in terms of the enrolments they can take like the school our kids are at, they’ve got four free spaces and that’s pretty typical of most schools. Because of the resource management they’re not allowed to add buildings on because they’ve saturated the percentage of land they’re allowed to occupy. Almost they’re getting to the point where we need new schools developed. We’ve got the Albany problem with a huge population base but no schools being built in the area. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The other problem for the school that I’m with is the fact that if we don’t meet a quota of children we lose staff. We are having that problem right now. We need two more students before we lose a teacher and our hours go down. I’ve gone from four hours a day to two hours a day in term three. That’s if I keep my job because the government’s decided as at the 30th of July we’re a semi-rural school and we need to meet a quota of a certain amount of children. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Safe environment

The New Plymouth 30-55 year old group wanted a safer environment with issues raised about personal safety, rising crime, gang problems and problem youths.

Health, work and keeping crime down. [Is there a bit of a crime problem in New Plymouth?] I think there is. It’s a really dangerous place to walk around at the moment. All these people with patches. [A gang problem?] It’s quite scary walking around late at night. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
And I think parent responsibility is no longer there ... allowing their children to do it. I had a discussion today with my son and there were some hoodlums with bandannas. We’ve got the Westside Crips in Stratford and they were walking up town intimidating other people. I just said to my son ‘if you ever do that, boy, your bum will be sore’. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I venture into town occasionally on a Friday or Saturday night with some friends. I need to make sure I leave town by a certain time because I feel uncomfortable after a certain time. The cameras are an improvement and it will improve with more cameras, the newer ones, the better ones. There’s certainly an element that hangs out waiting to kick someone’s head in or beat someone up. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

**Environment**

A few respondents felt that environmental issues were a key concern such as erosion and pollution.

The Taranaki coastal erosion really wants addressing fairly urgently. It upsets the river mouth as well so it upsets recreational fishing too. That is a problem for northern Taranaki to address, the erosion problems along the coast. I think the green policy of the riparian planting doesn’t seem to be taking place much. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Erosion of the coastline is a big one, especially up north through Waitara and Urenui. It’s getting pretty well battered through there and eaten up year on year. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

**Hygiene standards and water quality**

Some in the New Plymouth 30-55 year old group felt that poor hygiene standards in local eateries and water quality were important issues.

Water supply. New Plymouth is well-known for really bad odours from the water etc. The Ministry of Health tonight has decided that all councils have got to upgrade their water supply across the country so we’ll wait and see what happens there. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The water supply issue has been ongoing in New Plymouth for years. It raises its head periodically and it dies down again. We just get constantly fed by Mr Woolston, the city engineer or whatever, that it meets the standards, that there’s nothing wrong with it, yes it may have an odour and they’re trying to do something about that and all the rest of it, but it just doesn’t seem to get resolved if you like. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

We just recently had a situation where one of our local cafés was shut down a little bit due to their food hygiene standards and we later found out that there’s quite a few in Stratford that have an ‘E’ rating. We had quite often smokos from the same shop. To me the council should be making a bit more of a stance. If they’ve got an ‘E’ rating they should be shut down. It’s just not an option. This is people’s food. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)
➤ **Rates**

There were a few complaints about the high cost of rates in the area.

*Stratford rates are higher because we’d call a small borough. Stratford just covers Stratford so they’ve got a big area to service geographically wise but they’ve only got really one big town. So that’s why the rates are higher there.* [It’s just economies of scale. (Interjection.)] *I felt they were a bit high for what really they are. They don’t have to do as much work as probably the others either.* New Plymouth can draw in more people to pay for the same jobs at less cost.  
(New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

* Rates are very important because it can be expensive. They’re flying in the face of public opinion on that.*  
(New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

➤ **Infrastructure**

One respondent felt that footpaths were not properly maintained.

*Footpaths in our area are quite undulated. They’ve sprayed them probably about four times in the last six months to actually reseal them and the paint wears away and they come back and they respray and the paint wears away and they come back and spray and the paint wears away so we really don’t know what’s going on. There’s a lot of paint going down.*  
(New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

➤ **Local economy**

Another respondent praised New Plymouth for having a growing economy and providing good business opportunities.

*Also just the economy as well, just the local economy. Income opportunities, growth, that sort of thing. For us it would be opportunity of a big city but within a smaller environment so similar opportunity to what you would have in bigger places but two minutes to work or amenities are closer at hand, less travel, less stress, that sort of thing.*  
(New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

### 3.1.5 Christchurch Māori

The Christchurch Māori group identified recreational issues, family, having a safe environment, infrastructure and planning, environmental and cultural issues, employment, having a sense of community, schooling and water quality as important to them.

➤ **Recreation**

The Christchurch Māori group felt that having recreational activities available to them were important.

* Parks and reserves, the library is quite important to us - places where we can gather whether it’s the café down the road or in a park.*  
(Canterbury, Māori, female)
Sport because of socialising, you’ve got to do that. I play a lot of that.  (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Family

Family were considered very important the Christchurch Māori group. They wanted to maintain a close relationship and ensure family history was remembered.

Closeness. That comes into the communication closeness. It’s sort of like ... the family knowledge, like the knowledge shared with each other, for example we found that in my mother’s era all her siblings have had all their teeth removed and it was because they had impacted wisdom teeth. When my generation came along, because dental services were better, all of a sudden this problem started coming out with the older ones. We went back and said why is this happening and we found out it’s hereditary so a family knowledge of stuff like that.  (Canterbury, Māori, male)

To me it’s the family, knowing what you’re doing so in other words you’re not alone. If something does go wrong you’ve got security of contacting your family.  (Canterbury, Māori, male)

I’ve got family concerns too. My boys are 15 so they’re sort of getting out in the world and stuff like that, so where they’re going, what they’re doing. I’m just still happy to be part of their lives really because I think when I was 15, my father wasn’t part of my life. We didn’t have a relationship really so it’s kind of nice to be invited into their world and my daughter’s, for that matter, she’s older still.  (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Safe environment

The Christchurch Māori group were concerned about having a safe environment for themselves and their families.

Safety and security, being safe out there and connecting with your neighbours. Places like you said, the library, and just the whole safety and security.  (Canterbury, Māori, mixed, female)

I find around where I live there’s not enough street lighting. [A worry when you’re walking along at night?] It is and you see young kids, girls 10 walking down the street, especially in the winter time when it gets so dark so quickly.  (Canterbury, Māori, female)

It goes under the umbrella of security and safety as in yourself, your family, kids, just basically to know where they are and making sure everyone’s pretty much safe 24/7.  (Canterbury, Māori, male)
Infrastructure and planning

Some Christchurch Māori raised concerns about a perceived lack of town planning and disagreement with the approval of subdivisions in the city.

One thing that worries me a lot is the way that we’re constantly ... our country, constantly finding houses everywhere and anywhere we can find. I was in Italy 12 months ago and they’ve got 60-odd million people there and they’ve got more green space than we have. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

It seems that in two years Christchurch has recreated the problems of Auckland and that is surely just poor planning. They’ve allowed, and they’ve taken rates for constant development of various Hornby and north of the city and people have had no idea about how these people are going to get to these places. They’ve been quite happy to clip the ticket for the subdivisions and all that sort of thing but the roading has just never kept up and there’s massive traffic delays everywhere you go in the city in the mornings. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Some also raised concerns about street safety and wanted to change layouts to make roads safer around schools and also provide education to make children more traffic wise.

For example there is a road that has got quite a steep camber and you’ve got cars parked on the side of the road and if you’re cycling to school with your littlest and there’s traffic coming both ways, it actually gets a little bit crunchy. Things like that. We’ve got to cross or go down Jeffries Road depending on which route we decide to take. Because it’s a long straight road, people go fast down it on the way to work or on their way home from work, those sorts of things. So it’s the quality of the roads and the control of the traffic on them. It’s getting better around the school itself. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

Safe streets traffic-wise. I’ve got kids at school and the big ones bike to the high school. My little one bikes to the primary school. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

Environment

Environmental issues were raised by a number of Christchurch Māori including pressure on natural spaces for walking, preserving views, and pollution control.

For me I really took it as environmental in terms of physical so important to me is preserving nature spaces and being able to go for walks easily. Being surrounded by natives but definitely trees but mostly natives. I think also what’s important is a good view so whether it’s the hillside that’s not covered with housing or a park that’s nearby. Parks are really important with my son who’s seven. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

[Pollution control and protection of the environment.] If you’ve been out at Christchurch at night, the city stinks. It honestly does, it smells terrible. You can smell the fireplaces, you can smell the gasoline fumes from cars. The best place to be is around the west coast where you can’t smell all that. (Canterbury, Māori, male)
For me the pollution thing – there’s a couple of really key issues that worry me as ... dairy cows, I can’t stand it and it’s ruining our whole land and that’s got to be tidied up. There are things happening – I know it may be a little bit historic but they allowed water to be taken out of one of our local rivers or creeks to a point where even the whitebait found it difficult to spawn because there was just no water in it. A couple of years ago I went fishing one day in the Rakaia River and it didn’t have enough water in to keep its mouth open and when you’re talking about a river that’s that big, it’s disgusting. They’d taken that much water out of it. Those animals that live in that river must have the right to live there as much as we have to live where we do. I think it’s really bad. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Culture

Cultural issues were considered important by some Christchurch Māori, including exploring their Māori heritage and wanting to see more Māori art and sculpture around the city.

Just recently I wanted to see more Māori arts sculptures around the city. I think there’s a certain bias here. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

Culture, our culture at the moment is very important to us. I’m pretty much actually just basically getting back into it. I was actually brought up differently so basically I want to know where I came from, my whakapapa and what not, so I’m actually doing that at the moment so that’s pretty important. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Employment

Employment was seen as important as it provided financial security and the ability to retire comfortably.

I guess the other thing we’re thinking about is our future security. Got a new partner, getting married in August. We’re looking and thinking about retirement and stuff like that so financial security and stuff like that. I don’t want actually to retire so I’ve got to have options. Going ahead and still having an income, that sort of stuff. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Work is obviously part of your security as well and for your family and what not. You’ve got that, you’ve got income, you’ve got security. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Sense of community

The Christchurch Māori group felt it was important to have a sense of community as it provided a supportive environment and created a more united community.

One of the other things that’s come up for us in our family is the village parenting ethos. We have teenage children who have teenage friends and it’s become quite apparent to us that it’s important for us to network with the other parents in a strong framework, just looking after each other. Not necessarily taking responsibility for the other children. We have one child who’s got issues and so we all get together and say ‘how do we deal with it?’. So we’re very lucky. The village parenting ethos is quite strong. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

Also just the sense of community, the connection with people in our community. (Canterbury, Māori, female)
Schooling

One respondent felt that good quality schooling was important at all educational levels.

My big thing is that it’s got good schooling, good education, all types of education not just primary and secondary, but all types. That’s what I think is important. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

Water quality

As found in New Plymouth, some respondents were worried about water quality

The health of water. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

4.1.6 Christchurch 30-55 years

The Christchurch 30-55 year-old group focused on recreational and lifestyle issues, environmental issues, infrastructure and planning, having a safe environment and having a sense of community.

Recreation and lifestyle

The Christchurch 30-55 year old group felt that the recreational opportunities and lifestyle Christchurch provided was important to them.

Things that are important to us are being close to the city, close to parks and schools and nice areas to walk around in, clean and tidy. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

We have peace and quiet where we live which we enjoy. Although we’re out of town we’re quite close to services so proximity to service areas. [You mean like services in the city here or Rolleston?] Both. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Handy to amenities, close to the city, close to family and friends. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Space again. I can basically walk to the countryside. The neighbours are a very friendly and caring bunch of people. While we do get the occasional petrol head we also have the males around who can go out and give them a good bollocking so they don’t come back again which is really good, and it’s close to a lot of the amenities. [What amenities are important to you?] All of them: shops, schools, community areas, parks, buses, library. They’re pretty much all within walking or biking distance. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
Environment

Environmental issues were of key concern with issues raised regarding the need to keep the city clean and tidy, coastal erosion, air pollution and water pollution.

Water quality. I spend a lot of time in the surf so it’s the council ... the water quality for the estuary and for everybody involved from yachting to swimming ... good parks and mountain bike tracks out our way. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Pollution. I don’t like the pollution particularly when I see the Heathcote River or the air pollution at night. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Infrastructure and planning

As mentioned by a number in the Christchurch Māori group, there were some concerns over the encroachment of subdivisions on houses.

Taking it from where I live as in my close vicinity, I’m thinking in recent times there’s been a lot of development in Opawa and there’s been a lot of subdivision so things that are important to me are space. I don’t like being cramped. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Safe environment

As found across all groups – having a safe environment was important to the Christchurch 30-55 year old group. Respondents wanted to feel safe and felt there were problems with drugs and youths on the streets.

[What are the local issues for you?] Getting kids off the streets. [The safety issues?] Giving the kids something to do. Getting the parents involved or getting the parents to actually know where their kids are. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Feeling safe is important. A few weeks ago I was picking my boys up from Brighton and we got attacked by a young guy who was high on P with a knife. Never happened to me in 48 years of being in New Zealand but it can happen really quickly. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Sense of community

One respondent praised the level of community support available in her area.

I like the fact that in our community there’s quite a lot of community support. Our neighbours know each other. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
4.2 Key influencers

Respondents generally identified local councils as the key influencer over the things they had identified that mattered to them or their families locally.

[Who are the people who are going to influence what happens with these issues?]  
People like police and council.  (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Town planners, we have Sir Barry, he influences everything. He influenced the park to be named after him. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Who or what people or organisations might you contact to address any of the issues that were important to you?] The police and council I suppose. The city council, look up the particular department. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

However, it was clear that there was some confusion over who was responsible for certain services or who to report problems to.

Power lines have been an issue. Because I hear all the neighbours say we’ve been trying and haven’t got anywhere so we’re not even bothering any more, they can come down. [Would your inclination be to go to the council?] We’ve all done the power company because they’re easier. Everybody pays their bills. ‘Oh, by the way, we’ve got power lines with trees growing around them’ but they always refer you to council or your landlord. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Sometimes it’s not really clear where the line is between the council and the government. It’s like it’s really grey and they all kind of shove it between – like in Birkenhead, there’s been a small bridge at ... Road and all the local people have said ‘this bridge is only 2½ lanes wide, we want a bigger bridge’ and it was always Land Transport’s problem. So what’s the council there for if they’re not looking after the infrastructure? (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Some issues where councils clearly have some responsibility, such as safety on the streets, were regarded more as a Police issue. Other matters like schooling were regarded as matters outside the scope of councils.

I put down safe streets because you do feel, even in Mt Roskill, in New Lynn – I was just outside Lynn mall and there’s a bar and there were these guys hanging around outside. I just thought ‘I’m not going to walk past them’ because they just looked really dodgy and it was a dodgy bar so we went and cut through the car park. You start doing that sort of thing just to avoid people. [Would you consider doing anything?] I guess I don’t tend to. I didn’t tend to think of it as a council problem. I thought of it as a police problem. I guess I think of rubbish collecting as council, or dog things which I still haven’t done anything about. But I hadn’t thought in terms of social engineering. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
If land was owned by a particular entity then any issues related to that land were seen to come under their jurisdiction.

If you knew the land was owned by a particular – maybe Ngai Tahu, or like I think with the railway tracks it’s Transfield, if there were issues there then they would be the bodies that I’d be contacting. [Is this in terms of development?] Just like pollution or things that – like I can think of like flooding in our area. Just like upkeep and maintenance of what it is that they have on their land basically. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Often the only way individuals felt that they had any personal influence over the issues they raised as important was through voting in local body elections.

[Do you feel you have any influence on these things?] Only really at election time when issues are coming up. [I vote democracy every so many years. (Interjection.)] That’s when they start sort of panicking a little bit, particularly in the North Shore area where it’s very rare to stay in two terms. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[You said before the only way is by voting. Does that actually have an impact on those things?] It does, particularly the setting of the rates because you’re looking at ‘what are these people doing for us?’ (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

4.3 Long term issues

Issues that tended to be considered as long-term ones were generally large scale matters that affected the whole community and required considerable effort and/or expenditure to address. For example, air and water quality issues in Christchurch, transport infrastructure and regional employment and training opportunities in New Plymouth and traffic problems in Auckland.

[Longer term local issues?] Traffic. We’re spending millions of dollars building a 100-yard long motorway to bypass a town that nobody slows down for when all that’s going to do is deliver traffic to the narrow bridge faster and at a higher volume than before. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Other longer-term issues?] Education. Our juniors do really well and then the cream is skimmed off, they go to universities and then that’s I think where the crime is coming from. [Do they come back?] They might come back. I’m not too worried about them. They’re always going to be alright, but it’s the ones that are left here without a job and things like that. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I don’t know where I got this information from but I think by the year 2010 they’re expecting there to be a population over about 4 million, and in 2007 we’ve got X amount of people. So for example the motorways, there’s one lane onto the motorways so now they’re all changing them and making them two lanes which slows the traffic down over the whole of Auckland. (Auckland, Māori, female)
Many of the strategies identified in section 7.0, particularly the use of surveys were seen as effective ways of encouraging participation in long term issues. In New Plymouth, one respondent suggested councils should do what had been done in Wanganui where a mail-out had been sent to households with what amounted to the council’s wish-list inviting the public to vote on their preferences. This found strong support in the 30-55 year-old group and equally strong support when it was raised with the Christchurch 30-55 year-old group.

[Long-term plans: are these the ways it should be happening or are there any ways it should be improved from the way it happens at the moment?] What tends to happen at the moment is the council produces a long-term plan and then it goes out to submissions. It’s what we were saying before about consultation happens after the event so you always feel you’re on the back foot. [So to improve that, how would you change that process?] If you want to look at – what did Michael Laws do in Wanganui? Got a list of all the things on the council wishlist and asked all the ratepayers to rank them 1 to whatever. It’s a very good way of concentrating the mind. It’s my money they’re spending, spend it on things that matter to me. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Wanganui City Council sent out their wishlist and got people to rate their wishlist.] That’s a good idea. I think that’s what Garry Moore did with his council, how they set the budget. Give us your wishlist and you can have your first three. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
5. Dealings with Local Government

5.1 Overview

Although in all groups almost everyone indicated they voted in local government elections, engagement outside of that activity is somewhat limited. The reason why respondents engage with local government outside of elections most frequently centres on an issue that is quite specific to that individual either complaining about a problem or requiring information. That kind of contact is almost exclusively done by phone. While the experience is generally favourable once the individual has tracked down the right person to talk to, respondents report delays and inconsistent responses which create the impression that councils are ‘bottomless pits’ of bureaucracy.

Very few respondents had engaged in more formal processes with their councils such as attending a meeting or making a formal submission. Those that had had often been part of a larger group of other residents. Engaging in this manner generally had positive outcomes while those who had acted individually making a submission were dissatisfied with the outcome.

Respondents from New Plymouth and Christchurch were aware of or had participated in surveys that their councils had conducted to elicit public opinion on issues. In one of these cases, council had made a decision counter to public opinion which damaged the perception of consultation.

5.2 Phone calls

In all groups, there were respondents who had had dealings with local government. Telephone contact was the most common form of engagement with local government with respondents preferring the personal nature and accountability of talking with an actual person.

*The city council call centre is actually quite good for that. You ring up and they can shunt you around pretty quickly. I’m a great believer in talking to people who get things done ... very rarely solve something just on the internet or sending a brochure out. I always believe if you get to talk to someone you’ve got some accountability and you can go back to them. Get a name, ring back, say ‘why hasn’t it happened ...’*. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

*A phone call for me. I’ve found at times email’s actually almost too easy for people to ignore ... something wrong with the system or I hit delete accidentally or any number of things. [Can pin it down a bit more with a phone call?] Yes.* (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)
In most cases, the issues raised related directly to their property or themselves with respondents wanting matters rectified or to gain more information. A wide range of examples were given including:

- complaining about an uneven footpath which had cause someone to fall;
- a burst water main;
- building inspections;
- a leaky home;
- building permits;
- inquiries about requirements for building an extension to a house;
- noise control complaints;
- dog control complaints;
- tagging of property fences;
- street light failure;
- complaints about road works blocking driveways;
- complaints about driveway connections with the road.

There were instances where respondents were satisfied with their dealings over the telephone and noted that the council had taken action as a result.

We go out running in the morning and the streets aren’t lit up enough and I’ve fallen over a few times over where they’ve dug up the footpath and not put them back flush. You’re talking away and you fall over. So you ring up and complain and admittedly they come out, or they’ll let you know within the next couple of days what they’re doing. I’ve had neighbours pull up a driveway without any council consent and it was like a dual access on it. So they came out and sorted them out. So as long as I ring, then somebody will come. [Do you know who to ring?] I just rang the main number and the person there sorted it out. [How have you found talking to whoever you’ve talked to?] Fine. As long as you leave all your details they – because I know other people have said they haven’t done anything but they’re a little bit resistant to leave like their name and number and contact details. I pay my rates, they can come and sort it out. (Auckland, Māori, female)

[You mentioned noise control.] That was via the council. [What happened there?] I looked up in the yellow pages under the council, noise control officer, rang them up, they asked what the problem was and obviously sent someone out because half an hour later the noise abated and they rang back an hour later to see if it had been corrected. I was quite impressed. [So that all worked very well for you?] Yes. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I had an instance with dog control also where my dog decided to run and I couldn’t find her so I rang them up and she’d disappeared down to a neighbour’s apparently. The neighbour rang obviously dog control, dog control rang me back and I went and got her. [So dog control had the dog?] No, the neighbour had the dog. It was about five houses down. They were new so I didn’t know them but when they rang, the pound recognised her as my dog and they just rang me back immediately which was great. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I fairly regularly ring the Selwyn District Council, the water race ranger. We rely on the water races for stock water. We’re on the end of the line and quite often the water doesn’t come down ... contact them and ask them if they can do anything about it. [You just phone them up?] Yes. [Can they do anything about it?] Often they can. Once again it’s a culvert that’s blocked somewhere upstream. [Quite responsive, no problems.] Not too bad, yeah. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)
However, several respondents reported recurring criticisms which revolved around delays in responding, difficulty in being able to contact the right person and inconsistent responses where contact was made with two or more council officials. Those experiences contributed toward a reluctance to contact council again over similar issues.

[Have you had any dealings?] When I have I just get pinged from one person to the next, just back around and you give up in the end. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

[Did you know who to contact?] I guess the roading thing was obviously under the control of some engineering department and this thing was probably part of the parks and reserves or whatever but I started with the call centre and pretty rapidly got put through to people who seemed to know what they were talking about. There are two walkways at the end of the cul-de-sac. One does exist and the other one is on paper and I was trying to convince her about the one on paper and she was trying to tell me it was the other one. Anyway it got through the initial stages quite well and quite quickly and then sort of died with the people who if anything should have been taking up the interest. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Are there any reasons that might prevent you from getting in touch with the council?] Time on the other end. If you want to just phone the library, you have to go through the council. If you want any council service whatsoever, you go through the one office and you can be waiting 10–15 minutes just to be put through to a whole different complex. They don’t have direct phone numbers to any of their places. It’s just one call centre, so whether you’re doing the aquatic centre or you’re doing the library or you’re doing anything to do with the council, you’re waiting. Do you really want to wait that long? You might as well drive down there and go there yourself. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

You’ll get hold of somebody and they won’t actually know what you’re talking about so then you’ll have to go to somebody else who actually doesn’t know either so they’ll move you on to somebody else. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[Dealings with council?] I have, basically it came about because my car kept on scraping – the bottom of it kept on scraping the concrete as I was driving up my driveway. So I contacted the right people but I had to keep on their backs about it. I got a guy’s DDI line and actually just basically nagged him about it and he said ‘it’s on the cards’ and then finally about three months later there was a crew around to actually fix it. Then while I was there I found out that our road was in the stages of widening and I asked when that was going to happen and they had no idea. I asked who does and they said ‘I don’t know, couldn’t tell you’. So I hung up from him and actually started ringing other people and no-one knew when that was going to happen but I’ve been talking to my neighbours and they actually know that when they bought their houses they’ve been told that. About two metres of our property is going to be taken off us and then the road’s going to be widened. When’s it going to happen, I don’t know. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

I rang the council and probably spoke to two people and then had to ring back again probably twice more before they said ‘I’m sorry, we can’t help you, it’s not us, it’s Transit New Zealand’. If they’d been able to tell me that right at the beginning I would have rang Transit. (Canterbury, Māori, female)
Many issues respondents wished to raise with councils occurred out of office hours which caused some frustration trying to get hold of someone to deal with the problem.

[Have you had any dealings with your local council?] If you ring them up to complain about something – they were doing roadworks outside my house. Now there’s about five drives all connected to each other, all long ones and they did roadworks and they blocked the entire lot off and I rang the council to complain but nothing happened. It was just pointless what they were doing there. There was no point blocking them all off. [Did you know who to ring?] No, it was hard working that out. You went through the council working out which is the complaint line. Being out of hours it’s just like you’re almost completely wasting your time anyway. [What happened? Did you actually get a voice mail?] No, I actually did get to speak to somebody but nothing happened. [Did they say anything would happen?] Yes, they said they’d speak to the contractors but obviously nothing happened because the next day I got annoyed and kicked them all in. [Would you ring again if something like that happened, or not?] Yeah, but most of the time – it’s getting anyone to do something at a sensible time. It’s just impossible. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

You might have the same success I had with noise control at three o’clock in the morning. First of all it took about 10 numbers to finally get someone. ‘Yes, sir, you can lay a complaint.’ ‘Thank you.’ And that was it. I kept on raging and nobody turned up. [Would you ring again if that happened or not?] I don’t think so. [Wasn’t worth bothering?] I think it took us half an hour to actually find a number that somebody would answer because it was in the middle of the night. I don’t know if they do it over on the shore but we get our local telephone directory, the South Auckland one, so all the council numbers are in that. But again it’s a matter of who do you ring. [Sir Barry. (Interjection.)] I know his number’s not in it but I do know where he lives. [So even though you’ve got this book with all the numbers, it’s still hard to find the right number?] Yes. At three o’clock in the morning it’s pretty hard to find anybody who will answer a phone. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

One or two respondents had gathered together with neighbours to raise issues. For instance, a New Plymouth respondent together with his neighbours asked council to reseal the cul-de-sac in which they lived as they considered the job had been done poorly. This was eventually done, but involved a reasonable amount of blame-shifting between the council and the road-sealing contractor before that occurred.

Primarily I live in a cul-de-sac and obviously the council’s diary or whatever said it was time to reseal part of the road that we live in. We live at the end of the cul-de-sac. They only did half of the road. They did half from beginning to end, from side to side. In our opinion and that of the neighbours who live immediately around the cul-de-sac it was unsatisfactory because the car tyres were picking up the loose bitumen in the tar, it was being walked into the house, it ruined a carpet for the lady next door and all the rest of it. I made initial approaches to the council and other people then followed and we sort of really deluged them. They came back once and simply a couple of guys threw stuff over the top of it. The people in New Plymouth referred me to the contractor to try and resolve it with the contractor and I didn’t feel that was my job or purpose. The contractor blamed the council. I think a couple of the other neighbours pushed it a bit further. I just got pissed off with the thing. The lady across the road managed to get a bit of satisfaction. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
5.3 Submissions

The general tenor was that with respect to large scale issues, there was little point in taking the time to have a say as an individual, for instance, in raising an objection to a $300 million housing development or asking council to do something about long-standing pollution of the sea from storm-water drains. Respondents often felt in such circumstances that they lacked the confidence or the expertise to express their views in the face of projects of significant scale.

[Submission?] It was something to do with the motorway that’s going in through New Windsor. [What was it about the piece of paper that put you off?] We just didn’t know where to start and whether you had to try and work it in a legal sense and so whether you actually had to go to somebody that you knew was a solicitor to try and help you write it. It just wasn’t easy. (Auckland, Māori, female)

You’re moving from an individual complaint, whether it’s dogs or noise or boy racers outside to something that’s a collective group action that requires lobbying and some greater organisation ... hearing the case so there’s just more work in it. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

If it’s a really large project like a new stadium complex that’s worth $20 million having individual submissions may be good but fairly irrelevant. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

However, a small number of respondents had engaged either individually or as part of a group action in making formal and informal submissions to council on issues. It appeared that respondents that were part of a group action viewed the submission process more favourably. They also felt that the council were more likely to take notice of a group than of an individual.

We’re in Wairakei Road on a very dangerous bend. We were asked for submissions and I was very impressed that they sent us all – and it was actually written, a couple of the suggestions that I knew I’d written and neighbours and they were in it but it’s now gone over to the 2008/09 budget instead of 2007/08 or something. We’ve had cars on their roofs and in the houses. [Did you start it off?] No, it was an issue before we got there. It’s slowed lately but it would be at least every three to six months there’d be a car through a fence. [The process you went through, there was an invitation to put submissions in on the curbing and channelling. Is that something that happened quite independent or as a result of getting in touch with the council?] I don’t know, I think it’s just part of – because further up the street there’s curbing and channelling and they’re going right through, but no I was very impressed with the fact that we could put submissions in and because we’re so concerned at that, one particular thing I’d written was actually written in the thing we got back so that was impressive but I mean they’re not going to do it until someone is basically killed. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

[Was it pretty straightforward doing a submission?] Yes. The book came out like a magazine and you wrote in there what you wanted – they showed you all the areas and you put a submission in, just trying to get a feel of things. So had a meeting with the submissions sort of like during ... only way they could do it so you have to make a pretty big effort on your own part. We had a spokesman. The mayor was there and everything. [How did the submission get to you?] You had to go and pick it up at the council. [How could that process have been made better for you?] I thought it was pretty good really because as soon as the survey came out about all the green areas, people were getting onto it straight away and putting objections in straight away. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
I think just one voice, if you can become a collective as a group of voices and bombard them, you’re going to get listened to a hell of a lot more than just one person who just lives in a house that they can just write a letter back to. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I think that’s a means whereby if the individual isn’t getting far, you can get a lot more power or attention if you like if you can collectively get a group together, even if you appoint a spokesman as one person. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

However, one respondent felt that pro-forma submissions submitted by groups were less effective as they were only counted as representing one view.

Sometimes organisations lobby their members to make submissions in a pro forma way where you just tick the box and say ‘I oppose such and such because I don’t think it’s good’ or something like that. The officials can sometimes receive hundreds of submissions like that from members of an organisation but they tend to put them in a stack and say ‘this is basically the same submission really’ and treat it in that manner. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Some respondents felt that submissions were only a formality and that decisions had basically already been made.

[Submissions?] Bureaucracy. It starts becoming not official, it actually covers the whole concept of actually being shunted around from one place to the other in an attempt to either get rid of you or make your job as difficult as possible. Basically you have that whole feeling that despite what might have been done, I think it’s happened anyway. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Doing submissions is a way to have your say. Would you write a submission on any issue?] Do they ever actually get actioned? That’s the thing. Do they show the people that write the submissions that they actually take action with them? They just disappear into the wall and that’s the last time you see it. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Would you consider doing a submission?] I was going to. The last submission I saw was for the cinema in Devonport and they gave you a couple of options but none of them were what I thought was a very wise decision and from what they’ve said before they put out the public submissions, they’d already made their decision. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Also it’s the wording on those submissions that you know what they’re aiming for. Marketing and everything else aside, it’s the play on those words. They have got the – [It’s Hobson’s choice. (Interjection.)] Would you like this, this or this? I don’t like any of those. Where can I put my own idea? There’s nowhere to put it. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The relatively short timeframe allowed to present some submissions was raised as evidence that decisions had often already been made.

You’d think with a 10-year plan you’d have a little more than three weeks to actually have a look at it and actually get your points across. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)
Also in New Plymouth, respondents believed it was due largely to business associations – the local Road Transport Association and trucking companies – that the need for a Bell Block by-pass had been addressed.

There was a lot of stink over the delay in this Bell Block bypass we talked about earlier. Politicians, trucking companies, the local member of the Road Transport Association, etc, all got together and called several meetings and called the LTSA to heel pretty much in many of them and I think that collectively they managed to get that thing back on track, on board when it had been taken off the board. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Interestingly, it was noted by respondents that businesses tended to pick their fights with council carefully as it didn’t pay to lift one’s head up too high.

I think in New Plymouth, even though it’s big it is still quite small in that no-one really wants to put their head up on sensitive issues because they’ve got a stake in it too to go against the council. I think you have to be very careful to pick what fights you want to actually fight especially if you went out to some high profile business or corporate person. They’ve got to co-operate and get on well with the council. They’re running a business so they’ve got to be careful. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

In Christchurch, a respondent had joined with other surfers to put in a submission to the council about a proposed mussel farm which it was felt would interfere with natural wave patterns. In this case, the surfers raised $20,000 to pay for an expert to provide the evidence for a submission which was prepared by a legal expert who was one of their members. The weight of numbers and having a legal expert on-tap made the process easy for others like him to engage.

[How did the process go?] The mussel farm was quite a biggie because you’re up against a multi-million dollar corporation including Ngai Tahu that wants to get behind it so the people who are concerned about the recreation stopping, it took quite a bit of internal organisation. ______ had a really good grasp of resource management law which most surfers don’t have. If you want to tangle at that level you really have to have somebody that’s got that background…He’s a lawyer who surfs. He does have a fine appreciation for the actual activity. [Wasn’t just somebody out of the blue?] No, he’s passionate and that’s why, because he loves the ocean. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

A rural respondent said that while he had not made a submission to council he had made a submission to a parliamentary select committee and had appeared in person before it. He described the process as time-consuming.
[Have you ever made a submission?] A couple of times. [On what issues?] One was to a parliamentary select committee on the Firearms Amendment Bill No. 3. The other one was recently on the review of 1080 use in New Zealand. That was only a written one. [How did you find that process?] Relatively painless and easy. The written submission process. The parliamentary select committee was a verbal submission and was a bit more daunting but it wasn’t too bad. [So obviously you’d have to feel quite strongly about the issues to start heading down that path.] It’s time-consuming as people have said. You have to be fairly reasonably driven to be bothered. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Respondents were asked in the groups whether they would consider making a submission. While some said they would consider making one, the general view was that making a submission was a daunting process which would require one to have some legal knowledge. It was regarded as time-consuming and the prospect of possibly making an oral submission was too daunting for most to contemplate.

It can be quite time-consuming. It can be quite daunting especially when it comes to appearing. [An expectation that the council is going to ask you to appear before them and explain?] You can usually elect whether you want to appear in person and give a submission in person which is more daunting but it’s generally more effective. It’s easier to outline your case in person and be more persuasive. [That’s if you’re a good speaker with a good knowledge of English. For your average person it’s very daunting, public speaking. (Interjection)] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

You usually think lawyer. You really have to get someone in who knows what they’re talking about. [Technical, legal, formal. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

5.4 Meetings

A few respondents had attended meetings on issues organised by councils. Meetings were seen to provide a good outlet for people to voice their opinions and reservations about a particular issue.

The house we were living in, we were renting it from the Baptist Church and they were proposing to sell their entire lot. They had the church and they had five properties that they were going to sell up. They were going to sell the entire lot and stick in a bunch of sub-letted apartments. So we went through them to find out what processes we could do to prevent it from happening and stuff like that, but it came down to them just selling it in the end. [When you went through those processes, who was doing the talking and how did you get your views known to them?] They had quite a few local meetings with the local people around there. They gave us plenty of opportunity to voice our opinion. [Petitions and stuff? (Interjection.)] Yeah, they did all the petitioning and things like that and voted to the churches and to the local people. [And you and your close friends and family were able to go along and have your say?] Yeah. (Auckland, Māori, mixed, male)
However, a negative experience could easily deter attendance in the future. Respondents wanted to feel that their concerns were listened to.

_The other thing was I went to a council meeting once about an issue ... [Were they running a meeting on it?] Yes. [What issue was that?] That was a really long time ago. That was when I first came back. [Would you go to another meeting like that?] No. [Why not? What was it like?] Well I didn’t feel like, we had our little issue and we weren’t really listened to. They just went ahead. [Don’t feel like they took any notice?] No, none at all. [If that happened again, you feel like it would be a waste of time?] Well it depends on how passionate I was about it. I’d only do something if I really, really cared about something._ (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

In the case of a New Plymouth respondent (30-55 year-old), who along with others had wanted some old buildings preserved, he found that the only public meeting he was aware of was called too late in the piece for any influence to be brought on the outcome to pull the buildings down. He mentioned that the meeting was held at a time that had been difficult for some to attend.

[Did you manage to have a say on that issue?] _They had a meeting for it but it wasn’t well advertised and hardly anybody went. That’s the thing you have to be careful of. They’ll pass something right under your nose. Years ago it was all railway buildings along there for the engines and that and the warehouses to store everything. I’m a little bit wary. You have to really watch them a bit. These boys will have a go if there’s a bit of money in there but I suppose all councils are the same._ (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

There was also criticism that not all meetings were open to the public which made them question the decisions being made as a result.

_If the council is going to have open public meetings they should stay open public meetings. They shouldn’t be able to close them otherwise it sends the message out that they don’t want to hear us. [Or they’re doing something shady. (Interjection.)] Why are they closing a public meeting? What’s going on? [Have you ever attended a public meeting?] Not lately because they’ve been closed._ (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

In Christchurch, one respondent said she had attended a meeting in Riccarton where council members had been ‘aggressive’ towards those in the audience that objected to what was being proposed which discouraged participation in the future.

_Pretty much what happened is we went to the meeting, they discussed what they were going to do with their plans. People had objections to it and basically they actually got really angry and quite personal. [The council or the people?] The council and they were almost personally attacking the people that had objections to the changes that are going to be made and the outcome of the meeting was that there was going to be another meeting. But in my experience with the council, you don’t actually see anybody until its election time and the same with your MPs and things like that._ (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Another respondent felt that not enough people attended council arranged meetings to make them worthwhile and that often it was the same faces and views being put forward.
I’ve had experience with different processes in here. The attendance is really poor and it’s the same group each time. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Some felt that meetings did not allow individuals to voice their concerns.

You don’t want to go to a public meeting of 400 people, three of them are screaming about the public toilets down the road, 40 of them are worried because the road outside their place never got fixed, and you’re trying to get across a point about something else. It’s a complete waste of time. It’s a great way to have an appearance of consultation without actually doing anything. The Waipa District Council are experts at it. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

5.5 Surveys

Respondents in New Plymouth and Christchurch identified surveys as an existing way councils provided for people to have a say. The key to a favourable view of this engagement tool was if action had been taken as a direct result of the survey.

In New Plymouth, a number of survey tools were identified including forms that could be cut from the local newspaper that people could fill in and send in to council so they could express their views, internet surveys, telephone surveys and mail surveys. While these surveys were generally seen as a positive, in both groups respondents complained of the way the council had introduced parking meters and excessive parking charges in the central business area without public consultation and against public opinion.

They put out a quarterly like a ‘have your say’ type thing in the paper and I think if you’re wanting to, that’s probably the ideal forum to put those sorts of issue in. I can’t remember what they’re actually called. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Have you had any other engagement with council since?] Only with things like these telephone polls that they do when they’re considering some new move. If you think it’s a particularly good or bad idea ring up and dial 1 for yes and 2 for no. [So that’s what happens here in New Plymouth, if you want to have a view on something you dial 1?] It’s not quite that simple but yes, you can ring up. [It’s one of the methods. (Interjection.)] It depends on what it is. They were doing a thing a while ago now about whether they should offer a home collection service for garden rubbish and what form it should take. I’ve got a big gardener interest in me, I’d vote. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I think there was a survey came out in the mail on that, what would be your preferred option, one 20-litre bin or a 24 or a combination or whatever. [It’s come around several times. (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

They do some on the internet now too. On their website they have questions come out as well. There was a cycleways one recently, they were doing a survey and so they were inviting people to go and put their views on cycling in New Plymouth and where you’d like to cycle to and all that sort of thing in. That was quite helpful and you see some action coming from that as they’re developing the cycleways. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
In Christchurch, the council had surveyed residents about the size of rubbish collection bins they wanted. Subsequently, the media obtained and carried the results of the survey which showed council had chosen the option that most people objected to.

It was reported in the paper that 80% of people voted for this and the council voted for Option 3. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

These examples show that if consultation occurs it should be consistent with other actions taken by council and as Section 7.2 will show there needs to be clear, transparent and accountable components to any surveys. Generally though surveys are regarded as positive and easy means of participating in local government.

5.6 Direct contact with elected representatives

The size of a district appeared to impact on whether respondents had had direct contact with elected representatives with contact generally limited to respondents from rural Taranaki (30-55 years-old).

[Who would you contact in relation to those issues?] I’d go to my council. [Would you physically go to the council building, or would you phone someone up?] Yeah, we’ve got a pretty well approachable mayor. Basically you walk into the council and if you’re not sure who to see they always pretty well ‘oh well, you’ll need to see so and so’ and if they’re there they will see you so they’re quite approachable. [That covers the mayor, the councillors as well as the staff there?] Absolutely. [Which council is that?] Stratford District. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

For instance, one respondent said if he did have an issue he could easily raise it with the Mayor who sat close by every Sunday at church.

[Stratford experience: have you had a chat with the mayor or a councillor?] She sits in front of me in church. We have a good friendly handshake about every Sunday. We don’t really seem to have any problems like they have in New Plymouth. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

In another case a respondent wrote to the Mayor about faulty speedo checks on her road. The Mayor raised the issue with MP and Associate Transport Minister Harry Duynhoven and they were removed. The same person rallied neighbours about the lack of footpaths on their road and rang the Mayor saying they had seen no benefit from their rates. Footpaths were subsequently laid. Another rural respondent said he knew the Mayor personally and talked to her about issues.

[Have you had dealings with your council?] Yeah, I’ve had a couple of dealings with the council. One is quite a while ago but I’m actually really happy with the council that we’ve got in Stratford. The first one was speeding cameras. Traffic brought them out and then realised that they were faulty. Our local paper decided to put in there that you could check your speedos against them and that sort of thing. I had been down the same road three or four times and each time it was different so I wrote to the Minister of Transport and he sent me a letter back and said ‘if they put it on a hill it could affect it: if it’s in the dark or if you’re behind a car’ so I wrote to our local mayor and he basically said ‘come on in and we’ll have a chat’, then we got Harry Duynhoven in New Plymouth here and he wrote me a letter and I no
sooner found out that they were all taken off the road for about six months so I was really pleased at how the local body and Harry Duynhoven dealt with that, and then just recently we’ve just got footpaths put outside our place because we’ve had a lot of young drivers deciding that they want to pour diesel on the road and have a bit of fun. We’ve got quite a bit of a dip before our house and we often hear the cars all of a sudden, wheels spinning and they’ve got airborne and that sort of thing. That happens quite often so we rallied around the neighbours and the council ... come too and put footpaths outside our place. [Just talk me around that, you rallied around the neighbours and what happened then?] First I rang the council and said we’ve had a rates increase of like 100% since we’ve been there. We’ve seen nothing. We just want footpaths put down, what do I do? So I just rallied around the people and the council came out to the school and had a meeting. [Who did you ring at the council? Was it the receptionist?] It was our local mayor, the roading guy. [So you rang the mayor up?] Yes. Just left a message. I’m of the opinion that if you don’t ask, you don’t get. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Respondents from other areas felt that elected representatives were not as approachable in their area although one Auckland respondent’s mother had organised a petition she had taken to a local MP and councillors.

My mother and a group of her friends got a petition together against graffiti and violence in the community. Because they have a high profile in the community they have access to a lot of different people so they spoke to Judith Collins at one of the meetings they were at who is the National MP for out that way and a couple of council members and just ran it by her, showed her the wording of their petition and she said ‘that’s fine’. (Auckland, Māori, female)

[You’re in New Plymouth, do you know the mayor and the councillors?] I know of them. I don’t personally know them. In a city you don’t generally know them. But just adding to what was said before about going in to the local MP, I think New Plymouth is probably not as approachable as somewhere like Stratford or even South Taranaki District Council. I don’t think you could bowl into the mayor’s office. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

However, the clear impression across all groups was that council staff, rather than councillors, would be the first and in most cases the only contact on an issue. For example, in New Plymouth one respondent, who had organised with his neighbours what turned out to be a protracted dispute about resealing their street, said after he had been probed that he never considered contacting a councillor.

Talking about the councillors here, I think you can have good faith that they want to do their job well but it’s not them that you’re dealing with, it’s the underlings ... putting a lot of information across the board especially like with, for example, resourcing consent and stuff. The amount of things that come through, changes to legislation that you’re allowed to do this and all the leaky homes. If you get one guy who’s missed out on three memos, you’re going to get four different answers and you don’t know it’s the right one until you’ve paid your money and submitted it, somebody’s done a job, you get to the next stage, you’ve forked out more money and you take it back and they go ‘no no, this isn’t right way back here’ so it’s very hard to have faith that you’re talking to somebody who has all the information and has the power to do something with it. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[Approaching local councillors.] I probably should have, I never thought about it. I probably should have done that. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
I think it certainly is a matter over the years of actually remembering the name of the person you spoke to and write it down and get his or her number and actually you’ve really got to put your spoke in the right place if you want anything much to happen. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Councillors were often seen as the people to contact in reference to large scale issues such as major planning decisions or if an issue escalated and was unable to get any satisfaction from other council staff.

Being approached about petty little issues really is beyond his call of duty really. It shouldn’t actually get to where I have to ring [Name] who’s probably 70 years old. Caned me twice at school. But it’s like why should I – like in Peter’s case, why should I have to ring him to talk about some little piece of paper with two lines on it. [They’re paid to do it, that’s why they’re councillors. (Interjection.)] All he’s going to do is refer you back to someone else anyway. [It’s a start. You’ve got to start. (Interjection.)] There’s a system broken down when it gets to the point where you have to ring them who are there to lead and guide as opposed to do the work. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Under what circumstances would you contact a councillor?] We probably should have approached a councillor as a joint thing when we weren’t getting satisfaction over the tar and the bits going into our houses off the road. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Some respondents described councillors as powerless and part-timers who would not be able to deal with operational issues.

[Are there any other reasons that haven’t been raised why you wouldn’t get involved?] I don’t think its worth getting involved with councillors and elected people because they don’t actually do anything. They have no power to do anything. If you want something done, if you want a building consent, you ring up the building inspectors who are employed people. If you want some engineering done, you ring up the engineer. If you want this done or that done, you’ve got to ring the right person. It’s no good ringing the councillors. Again it comes back to if you want something done you ring the person that’s dealing with the paperwork at a lower level and to me that’s what happen. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

We’ve got community boards but you really don’t see them at any time. There’s no profile. They’re more like lip service. [I didn’t even know they were there. (Interjection.)] They’re just like toothless lions. They’re there, you elect them and then the next time you see anything about them really is the next time you have to vote. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
In larger council areas there was a feeling that there were not enough councillors to be able to address the issues posed by individual constituents.

[Anything else that stops people getting involved or engaged with council on issues?] I think there is the whole – you were saying about the older community – is that the city councils we have now are just too big and they’re just – I don’t know how many representatives there are in Auckland, how many councillors there are on Auckland City Council but the number’s not massive when you spread it around so there’s no way they can realistically deal with you. If it’s something at the city level then the whole notion of the individual city we’ve got is completely absurd and if it’s at the local level it’s equally absurd. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Apart from the people from Stratford, no-one’s immediately thinking they’d go straight to their local councillor to sort it out.] I know some of them but I don’t think for our area there would be a councillor that’s designated to our suburb. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

5.7 Letters and email

A number of respondents had engaged in written correspondence with their council with differing opinion as to the efficacy of this type of contact.

A New Plymouth respondent had written to the council in detail about the need to adopt green wave traffic flow control systems, but felt that the standard acknowledgement letter he received meant that no-one had really taken on board what he had said. As a result, he would be unlikely to write to council again.

Drive in New Plymouth and every light is red all the time. Haven’t even heard of green waves. This was invented 50 years ago, for Christ’s sake. It’s why traffic lights were invented. [They’ve never understood roundabouts in this town either. (Interjection.)] I have written and explained to the council in words of one syllable how a green wave works but it appears beyond them. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Engagement with local government: mentioned a letter you’d written.] When I first moved here a few years ago I was so horrified with the shambolic traffic that I thought I’d enlighten our council about green waves and things. I wrote a letter and explained the principles. [Who did you write to?] The Council, it obviously landed in some employee’s in tray and get ignored anyway but I thought I had to give it a go and I got a nice answer back from somebody, I don’t remember who now, saying thank you for your letter and we’ll consider it, etc. I think if I’d written ... put different toilet paper in the public toilets I would have got the same response. [So how did you feel about the type and nature of the response you got?] Not really. [I would have sent another letter just to find out. (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
Likewise another respondent had received acknowledgement of her correspondence and notification that the council had no plans to address the issue she raised in the near future.

Some years ago now we contacted the council about having the end of our street narrowed or having judder bars or something, sort of a traffic slowing mechanism at the top of our street. They responded with a letter to say that there weren’t any plans to change that. [Did you know who to write to or contact?] No, I think we just addressed it to the department responsible. Like I say it was some years ago now. Having said that, there has been work done in the surrounding streets but there’s still that little lane, that little area from Kowhai Avenue through Newell Avenue where we are. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

However, another respondent felt that letters could be an effective motivator for councils to take action if writers persisted and a large file of correspondence built up on an issue.

[Dealings with council.] If you want to get results, write a letter and then just keep on sending the same letter in because the file gets thicker and thicker and they don’t like that. You’ve got to persevere. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Some preferred contact by letter or email as it was seen to provide a paper trail and hard evidence that contact had been made with someone at the council.

I like both so you’ve got a paper trail. If you sit there worrying about people’s names and call at this time – I mean lots of companies record their phone calls anyway so you could say ‘I actually called at 12 o’clock on Thursday and spoke to Jim’ and if you’ve emailed him back about – you know, ‘here’s the email I sent through to Jim saying –’, my conversation, then you’ve got a paper trail and a phone call. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[What’s the advantage of email?] You’ve got a record. A lot of times they’ll say ‘no, nobody told me about that’. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Email also had the added advantage of providing a contact medium that was available outside normal work hours.

You can do it any time of the day or night. You could be working at 10 o’clock at night and something comes to your mind, you can flick off an email. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

### 5.8 Proxy agents

A number of respondents identified others they had approached or were likely to approach on issues that were council responsibilities.

Several respondents felt that they would approach their local MP about local issues.

I actually emailed about the alcohol shops – it was actually to George Hawkins. [How did you find his details?] He’s the local MP ... it was on a thing he’d sent out, stuff like that. But I actually haven’t done anything with the council. His message really was that the council don’t really care and you’re not going to stop the amount
of shops going in. [So that’s what he said?] Mmm. He was trying to do something about the licences, the actual certain places they could be put like the same sort of thing they did when they introduced legalising brothels and stuff like that. It couldn’t be in certain places, near schools and stuff. Never heard anything more about it. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Who are the people that you would go to try and influence the outcome that you would want on any of those issues?] I’d like to say the council but I’m not so sure about that. [So if you can’t go to the council, then where do you go?] Go to government. Local MPs. That would be your first port of call. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

[If something were happening would you be aware of that consultation going on? Would you be linked in?] Out of interest I’d be linked in because I’m always wondering how much further down is our Māori culture going to be devalued so for every tapu land taken I just kind of feel a loss so out of interest I will always try and – [Would you know who to link in with?] I’d always go to my local Māori MP. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Other respondents talked about going to the media about issues as a more effective means of getting councils to do something to avoid bad publicity.

I think Daily News or the local paper would have more influence over the council than the local councillor. They hate negative publicity and they generally will back-peddling put a lot of effort into it once it actually goes into the paper. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I think the media personalities are probably key ones like Brian Vickery and people like that. He’s radio and local TV. Gordon Brown who’s on the council at the moment but going back out to media again. People like that are probably ideal to get on board. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Community groups and business associations were also viewed as good groups to contact to address issues if they had related interests.

[Dealings with council.] There’s lots of little community organisations that have their own hobby horse and usually those people have usually got someone attached to them that knows the doors to knock on and the phone numbers to ring or the way to put submissions in and that is quite crucial if you’re just a Joe Public ordinary citizen. If you don’t know your way through the system it will be very difficult. But those organisations I guess, we’re in contact with them quite a lot, just in our general work, day to day stuff. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Another one that’s successful here, I believe, a public outcry but also retailers and the local guy who’s the president of the Chamber of Commerce ... speaks what he likes and it doesn’t matter. He says what he thinks and what he speaks and again collectively I believe that certainly – don’t forget the public pressure but also the retailers and the professional organisations ... change the council’s – seemingly we cannot change this until next year’s draft plan. They did change it. It was reversed and the parking fees were reduced accordingly. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
In most groups respondents could also name certain individuals that had a high profile in the community and had taken on local issues with some success. These were individuals that may be contacted if an issue was considered relevant to them.

If you've got someone in your district who has a very high profile and he or she is voicing concerns, if you get behind them it generally carries a bit of weight for some reason. It needs someone with a high profile. I can't think of anyone in New Plymouth at the moment. [The previous mayor. (Interjection.)] [We've got Russell Vickers. (Interjection.)] I'm talking about someone who's probably – I'll just give you an example, Anton Oliver, he's kicking up a big stink about the windmill. He's got a high profile and he's leading the charge. He's got a good group behind him. If we had someone like him and there's a particular issue and they're behind it, it does carry a lot of weight. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

These individuals were seen to be passionate about the causes they advocated for, tenacious and often had good contacts within councils.

I know a guy in Manukau who's a town planner. He's been town planning in South Auckland for 30 years. If I ever want to get something done I'll go and see him because he knows all the people and he is a passionate man about things and an honest man. [Does he get involved with lots of things?] Lots of things. He's a consultant now because the firm he worked for, he got to an age where they said 'you've got to step aside' so he stepped aside and opened an office next door and just carried on doing the work he did, but he knows all the people in there and he gets things done. [So having the contacts is really important?] Yes, in dealing with any bureaucracy it's all about who you know, not what you know. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

5.9 Other contact with local government

It was noted that many councils communicated with residents through the local newspaper. While some viewed coverage in local newspapers with some scepticism deeming it self-promotion and costly, others felt it was an effective way to communicate as most did read these publications.

They do use the local papers as well like the advertisers and things like that but it usually tends to be on a little bit of self-promotion or a big project that ... the reason why your rates are going up 10% is because of the big glossy thing on the back. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

We get the Bay Harbour News which is actually a community newspaper out there and it's really excellent. Everything right down to the croquet club ... right through to who's just climbed Mt Everest. It's amazing, the local content that goes in so you're pretty abreast of what's happening in terms of issues at the time ... you want to be involved with, once every couple of weeks it's right there. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)
[Have you had any dealings with local council?] Out south I find that they put out a lot of information like I think it’s every quarter we get a big glossy pamphlet of what’s going to be happening. [Do you read that?] I wouldn’t say read it, no. I look through it and I see Sir Barry’s photo on the front and throw it in the bin. If there’s something there that I’m interested in, yeah. [Do you think its good information that you’re getting in that?] I think its good information. It is self-promotion I suppose to a certain degree but they are trying to let the people know this is what we’re going to do. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

One respondent also noted that they had received information from the council with their rates bill and that council plans are also available at libraries.

[What other ways could they get the information out to you? The local papers. Are there any other ways that they could get information out to you?] They send the information through with the rates which is the proposed plans. Through the libraries, they always have the updates there. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Some areas had community newsletters that covered proposed council plans.

We have a community newsletter that comes out that advises us of things that are happening in the area and if we wish to attend meetings, but not all areas have that so a lot of the things people wouldn’t even know about. [Who puts that out?] I don’t actually know. It’s the one in North Beach, something to do with the North Beach Community Centre, a group of people involved with that. [That’s quite a useful way of getting advice.] It’s like you know when they’re going to update like doing Thompson Park or Ward Park or whatever. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

A few respondents had viewed proposed council plans and future developments when they had visited council offices.

Sometimes at the local council office too you can go in and if there’s developments going on, you can go and ask to see what’s being planned for the area. [Have you done that before?] Yes, I’ve had to go in and pay rates and things like that and it’s been there. [You’ve had a quick look?] Yes. The thing in Birkenhead, it was part of the library and they pulled it down a long time ago actually and they were going to build a new library and it’s just a vacant lot. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

5.10 Māori

Some in the Canterbury Māori group felt that Māoridom had a relatively strong voice and were consulted by council on issues related to land, water, waahi tapu and sites.

Those systems are well in place, they’re very well in place and they work pretty good. I think they work pretty damn good actually and there’s checks and balances. It’s hard to know – I think there’s probably – they get very strong voice from Māoridom’s side, I think they get a very strong voice. In my experience that voice is particularly strong in recent years. We’ve had issues like we wanted to build a boat ramp in Little Akaroa and they weren’t able to proceed with the boat ramp without talking to – we had people coming from Port Levy, from Māoridom to look at what we were doing. (Canterbury, Māori, male)
[Has anybody here ever had any experience through your iwi, extended whanau, hapu or whatever with council having consultation or discussions on any of those issues in any shape or form?] When we were in Wanganui we went up to Jerusalem. Because it rained everything went down into the river. Because the river was considered hapu, you didn’t throw things in there. They approached the council to clean it up and we went through a whole process of doing certain things and all that and because I was with the recycling arm, I got to go up with them. [How did that work out?] It worked out brilliantly. Because it was so far up the river road, it wasn’t feasible for the rubbish truck to go up there every week so what they put in was a depot where this rubbish went here, this rubbish went there, so it was all easy for recycling and things like that and they went up once a month, picked it all up and brought it back again. [That was raised by –] The local iwi. They just said – I think it was a whole area of the family decided to come back to the area where they came from and said ‘hey, this isn’t right’ and because the people there, it’s what they’d always done, thought this is how it is. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

The Auckland Māori group were only aware of local councils dealing with specific Māori issues somewhat indirectly. One respondent said he was aware of some frogs and eels being relocated and of some replanting because someone involved with that job had been to his workplace.

[Councils have an obligation to consult with Māori on issues related to land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna. Have you been aware of anything where the council has been doing that?] Where I’m working at the moment, on a contract for the State Highway 21 project, we’ve got environmental engineers there in the Manukau City ward I think it is. Each week they come out and they’ve got environmental testing and if they don’t meet certain requirements, then they can be closed down until that’s sorted. There were pictures in some Manukau paper, because we’ve got it at work, of them rehousing eels and frogs and all sorts of life. They had to replant a lot of things. It’s only the exposure from where I’m working. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Another respondent had read in a newsletter how there had been consultation with Māori over development of the Orakei basin.

I do personally think that the council probably – maybe they’re a little bit sensitive so they’re careful in that area but I think they do do a good job of consultation with that. There’s something going on with the Orakei Basin at the moment and I know that in a letter that I got regarding that, there was a reference made to them checking with the local iwi to make sure that what they were doing was not interfering with animals and fauna and stuff. They do okay in that area I think. As a council I suppose you wouldn’t want to muck that up. (Auckland, Māori, male)

One respondent was aware of a group based at the Papakura marae that dealt with issues important to the local Māori community with a variety of organisations. These were described as locals with a love of the community who had worked on issues ranging from youth suicide to education and general community matters. For this respondent, this was the identifiable Māori group to approach if there were issues that she felt were specific to Māori that needing attending to.
A lot of meetings are held at Papakura Marae. They’ve got a working group together. There’s a planning group. They don’t work with the council but they are in contact with each other. They’re putting a plan together. It’s not driven by the council. [What sort of plans are they?] The whole Māori thing is broad so it’s all to do with – it encompasses everything. Family, health, education, community. It’s huge. [Is it working well? Is it a means of addressing issues to council?] It’s a start. They do have a working relationship with each other so they do know each other. They’ve got [Name]. She’s the Māori youth – she copes with the Māori youth on the council but they’re all familiar with each other. [How has the group come together? How was it formed?] It’s been formed over a number of years and they meet monthly. I’m not part of that group. It’s community-driven, it’s not iwi-driven. [Dealing with Māori issues, could with the council, could be with central government, could be with the police, could be with whoever?] That’s right, all of those agencies. About three or four years ago there was a huge issue in Papakura with youth suicide and so police, gangs – they were all working together to help address that. [Looking at it in quite a holistic way, dealing with quite a lot of dimensions in the community.] Yes, and on a voluntary basis too, no-one’s getting paid. [Does it work? Have you had any involvement with it or know of people who are involved in it?] Yes I do, I know several people who are involved in it. [What issues have they dealt with?] Health, education, school holiday programmes, kaumatua, older people. [The kinds of people involved in it, driving it, they’re voluntary, they’re community, but what kinds of people have you got?] Local people who not only have a love for community but they’ve been involved with it for several years, some behind the scenes, some in front of the scenes, but I think that helps when you’re part of that local community. [How are they selected? (Interjection.)] It’s word of mouth, it’s open to everyone. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Māori living outside their rohe though said that local issues would be left for the local iwi to deal with. This did not mean they did not feel inclined to support or inform local iwi, but it did mean that representation of Māori on an issue would be left to them.

I suppose it’s much the same for me here. I’m a North Islander and I’m very much that way. I’ve got no family or Māori links here at all. We were certainly much more involved when we lived in Rotorua or in the Manawatu or Levin or whatever where I am surrounded by a lot of family who I know of. I’ve got some relations down here but you do have that disconnect because you’ve never met them. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

I’m not from here, I’m from Hawkes Bay. I leave it to local iwi to deal with local matters. The trouble is you get shareholders and when it comes down to us … shares so by the time you split it all up you don’t get much. [If there was something happening in Hawkes Bay, would you expect to hear about it?] Yes, especially in the area where I come from. [How would you make your views known?] We’ve got a guy that’s the head and we all go to that person and he sorts it out. So far it’s working. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

[If your iwi is a long way away, do you have a different perspective on things so you would tend to leave an issue around land or water to the local iwi to deal with?] I get voting forms periodically for runanga and stuff from up north. I don’t know who any of these people. I don’t feel connected to what the issues are so I tend not to vote in them because I can’t make an informed decision. So my issues environmentally are the ones around here. (Canterbury, Māori, female)
In New Plymouth, a respondent said a kuia from her iwi was involved in tapu lifting ceremonies for the council. Respondents also said that there were certain identifiable kaumatua that councils would consult on issues. In these cases, it was the senior members of the tribe that did the talking on behalf of individuals. Respondents in this group as well as the Christchurch one said they received newsletters from their iwi advising them of any issues that were of concern and on occasions had been invited to attend a meeting or have their vote on an issue though in this case it was not on a local government matter.

[Obligations that councils have to specifically consult with Māori on issues that relate to land, water, sites, waahi tapu. Have you had any experience with council on those issues?] Yes. My kuia always used to get called to do different things for the council, whether it be to lift a tapu or something. It depends what they were doing and what they found where they were. [Any consultation on things that the council was intending to do or thinking of doing where she might have been involved?] No, not really. In Havera they do it a lot more but then they have people down there that are more forceful and will be in the council’s face demanding to know. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

[Sand, coastal and marine issues: are you aware of anybody dealing with council on those issues at all?] They tend to go to certain people, not generally the entire iwi and expect somebody, depending on who their liaison person is, to speak to the rest of the iwi. When it comes to this sand dredging, it depends who the council deem at the time to be owners of it, depends on who you hear it from or who it goes through. It’s like we’re Ngati Ranui but our sub-tribe’s Ngati Tipaia and it’s more like we consult Ngati Ranui head rather than Ngati Tipaia or any of the smaller ones therefore they get no say whatsoever until something major has happened and then you see a full-scale protest because they haven’t been consulted. Like I said, it depends who the liaison people are and who they think they need to be talking to rather than actually approaching all. [Do you know who it is at council that calls the shots and says ‘we’re going to go and consult with these people’?] Don’t they have a liaison – they have a couple in there, don’t they? Howard Tamati does sometimes, doesn’t he? [A designated liaison person.] [Isn’t Jack Ngapuia too?] (Interjection.) I can’t remember. [He’s always the one you see in the paper.] (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

We get letters sent out if there’s something urgent and it’s a yes to attend, or don’t vote, because if it’s something major and it’s going to affect the entire iwi we get consultation first, whether it’s email, phone calls or mail. That’s Ngati Ranui. We get it directly. Or if it’s a major, there’s an emergency meeting on such and such a day and they’re always advertised in the paper, especially around Taranaki where it’s Te Atiawa, Ngati Whiti or down south. [Held on a marae for those who want to come along] Yeah. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

Most respondents knew of members of their extended whanau who they could approach if they ever wanted to be better informed of issues important to Māori or issues that they felt were important to Māori that they wanted to have taken up with councils.

I’m totally removed from it. I don’t partake but I keep an eye on what’s going on and if I did have an issue with something I’d know where to go. [Would that be on an individual basis? If you had an issue you’d go to someone in the council, or are you talking about?] I’d go to the iwi so I know the people that I’d go to if I needed to plug into something. [Who are the people in the iwi?] Is it someone who’s a legal expert? I’d go to family. The grapevine to the iwi, they know where things are and who’s buttons to push. If it was a council issue just go straight to the council. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)
I do know that my uncle’s involved with Tainui stuff so I would probably approach
him. Maybe I get to be the voice of people who haven’t been brought up in
Christchurch and in some way are not as connected to whanau. My father now lives
in Brisbane and he let go te reo and he never brought us up so there’s a disconnect
in terms of ongoing living culture in my experience. It would have to be really
strong within me to want to make a shift or a change and therefore approach my
uncle and from there I’d probably find out who to contact through him. (Canterbury,
Māori, female)

I’d just go to my sister. She used to be a Māori teacher so she pretty much had
feelers out all over the place so I’d just go to her. [A teacher of te reo?] Yes.
(Canterbury, Māori, female)

Typically, respondents would refer to an ‘aunty’ who was well connected with other iwi members who
also acted as a repository of knowledge.

[If there were an issue that you felt strongly about that was particular to those sorts
of issues, tapu issues, particular sites, land or water issues that were culturally
significant, would you know how to go about doing something about that?] I would
ring Auntie Mere and ask her who I should talk to. I’d just ring kaumatua. I happen
to know Auntie Mere’s quite involved with her iwi. That’s how I would do it.
(Canterbury, Māori, female)

In about six months’ time I’ll know all about it inside and out because the family, the
whanau, are actually going through the process of going through their land ...
basically left the family land and they made a trust and I’ve been nominated as a
trustee. Now I’m learning the processes of how to do this, that and the next thing but
there’s aunties and uncles there, especially Auntie Denise, she’s pretty much been
there right through the whole thing ... the culture, the ins and outs of the law, this
and that. She’s pretty much got everything under wraps but I’m pretty much in the
wean of her basically learning. So in six months’ time I’ll probably know the ins and
outs of it so we’re pretty much gathering the information of where the land is
because it’s pretty much spread throughout the whole South Island and then
gathering from that information and from there we ... be the successors of that land
and then from there basically we’ll have to use it or lose it. So that’s what we’ve
been told anyway so if we don’t know what lands what we’ve got, we probably don’t
use it, then we’re going to lose it so basically that’s what we’re going to do is find
out what it is and we’re using it. If not, let’s get someone to use it ... reserve or
whatever and then with the proceeds or whatever, put them in the trust and leave it
for the grandchildren. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

For me if there was an issue, I’d actually have to go through my grandmother who
would have a word to the aunts who would have a word to the uncles and get the
men in on it and then do something about it. For me I have to do a lot of
groundwork to get to where my voice would be heard. A lot of lobbying goes on.
[Would you know the network to plug into if you wanted to get something up and
going?] Yes. [What sort of issues might be ones that would matter to you and your
family?] For me anything that will impact on our environment severely or if it’s
something that we don’t have enough information about, if it’s something new, then
that’s something I’d go for. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
[Do you know the network that you might want to tap into?] Yes, I’ve got an auntie up there. She’s a lawyer through the Māori Land Court so she’d be the first one if I had an issue. She knows everybody up there. It’s a completely different community up that way, right up through Awakino. It’s quite a tight group. Nothing goes through there without going through them. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

In the Auckland group, there was no awareness of designated Māori wards or councillors. When this was prompted there was discussion over whether a Māori councillor could be trusted and there was certainly no sense that they would be more likely to see a Māori councillor. This was consistent with views expressed in the other groups where there was a low awareness of councillors or that they were not regarded as the people to see about issues.

I don’t think they have Māori councillors, do they? [In some parts of the country they do.] I don’t think I’ve ever seen one. (Auckland, Māori, male)

If there was a Māori councillor, I don’t know if I’d trust them. Can they be trusted? All these Māori groups start up occasionally. I know a couple of people who work for the Manukau Council. It’s almost like they’ve worked there, they’ve found out ways that they can get grants. A few are now working self-employed for some health authority thing getting grants to run their little clubs or whatever they call themselves. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Some respondents felt that they would approach their iwi, the local polytechnic or the council directly on any issue.

When I was working at … a different kind of situation but we had something we were researching. We were putting together an exhibition on things Māori and what have you and we didn’t know who to ring so I just rang the front desk at Ngai Tahu and had a chat to the receptionist and she said ‘you need to talk to so and so’. (Canterbury, Māori, mixed, female)

I’ve found the easiest place to call is the local polytech because there’s always a kaumatua there. [So it’s just knowing how they plug into the network in one way or another.] (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Myself, I’ve got a brother in Christchurch, I’ve got a brother in Auckland, I’ve got a sister in Fairlie so if I need to contact them – or my brother works for City Care so … so I keep in touch with him, he keeps in touch with me, but normally if I have a complaint I just take it straight to the council, bang on their door and annoy them. (Canterbury, Māori, male)
6. Barriers to Participation

6.1 Size and complexity of local government

At a high level, there was a consistent perception across all the groups, which was more pronounced in the urban areas, that local government was large and bureaucratic.

There seems to be this bureaucracy that runs the city council. If it’s not resource management it’s regional management. I get two sets of rates every year and I’m going Auckland Regional Council’s, Auckland City Council’s, what the hell am I paying here? It feels like I just have to pay this money and that’s the end of it and it doesn’t feel like I could influence anything. Maybe I’m completely wrong but that’s just how I feel. (Auckland, Māori, male)

[Barriers people face participating in local government. Anyone had any dealings with council?] I avoid anything like that. [Why do you avoid it?] It’s like a bottomless pit. You don’t know where you’re going to end up. There’s so many rules and regulations. I know if you’re going to do building for building consents and things like that, there’s a certain process you have to go through. I’ve never had to go down that road. They’re like just a small version of the big main government. It’s just this huge bureaucracy and sometimes you get disinterest when like I’ve been into the council office and I’ve had to pay a few things, you can ask a few questions here and there but sometimes they’re not really interested. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Respondents would talk about the difficulty in being able to get to talk to the right person or delays in getting anything done. Some gave examples where they had been given conflicting advice which led them to question the credibility of the advice they did get.

In a big place knowing the right person to talk to is probably the key. You could spend years talking to the wrong person. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Dealings with the council.] I try to avoid going to the council. [Why?] You don’t get the answers either way straight away. There’s big delays, there’s a lot of paperwork. You pretty much get shafted from one person to the next person and then you go to back to the original person you were speaking to and they’re going to get back to you. They don’t get back to you so you chase them. Then they suddenly don’t know anything about it, would you please start the process over again. [Is there an example where that’s happened? What was your issue?] We were wanting to put a retaining wall on our section and all I was trying to find was drainage plans so I didn’t go digging into the pipes or the gas or anything. That took a long time to find. [Would you go back again?] Only because I have to if I need that information. There’s nowhere else you can go to get that information. [What would have made that experience better for you?] It would be nice if they had people that were designated for that and you weren’t getting shafted. It would be nice if they said ‘well we don’t have the full plans but we have this’ instead of going ‘we’ll put you onto so and so’ and then not get back to me. I’m sure the person I spoke to was the person I was supposed to be speaking to but getting that service was lacking. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
In Hawera we found that when we want something such as using a hall or something like that. There’s a lot of paperwork. If you don’t get onto the right person, they shove you from one person to another one. If you go to the right person – sometimes it’s not what you know but who you know. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

An Auckland respondent said local government was too big in the city and councils were unable to bring issues down to the local level.

I think that’s what’s missing with the central Auckland councils is they’ve amalgamated and they’ve decentralised themselves into really big councils and the little areas that used to have their own councils are just another little area in a big thing like Takapuna and the bigger parts of the North Shore, they seem to get the lion’s share and Albany, all these areas that are being developed, they’re getting all the infrastructure. [The resources aren’t allocated.] So the resources are sort of centralised to what the council’s pet project is at the time. All the older areas, you don’t seem to get that local support. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

There were some indications that smaller councils were viewed as less bureaucratic.

In the last couple of weeks I’ve been looking at a property up north and I needed some information on it and I rang the Kaipara Council – I just got the phone number off the web, rang it. This lady couldn’t be more helpful. She answered all my questions and sent me all the information in an email just like that. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

6.2 Size and complexity of issues

Some issues, such as storm water pollution of Takapuna beach or the sewage odour from Christchurch’s Bromley treatment station or the decline of Manurewa had been ongoing over many years and the solutions were of such an apparent scale and cost that the respondents had become almost immune to the notion of considering engaging with council on the issue.

[Issue been around for so long and it’s so huge that what can I do?] There’s the American line: don’t fight city hall. We’re getting to that point. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I mean how am I going to stop a $300 million park being developed? You can do it at the election I suppose but we’ve been trying to throw Sir Barry out for the last 25 years and he just gets in with a landslide so he’s obviously doing something right because a lot of people keep voting for him. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[How would you classify doing something about water or air pollution? Is that achievable?] I don’t think you’d personally think it would be such a big issue as my little say and my little query ... going to make a big difference. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
In the case of the Takapuna beach pollution, the respondent simply phoned the beach watch programme when she was aware of pollution even though she felt strongly about the issue and had previously taken the trouble to make a written submission to save her local library.

*There’s very little you can do because things like when it rains and we have had heavy rain so our sewerage system, you know, the substations don’t cope and it goes into the sea and then you can’t swim and you have to ring and I went and checked that the water’s – Takapuna’s better but there’s a substation there that runs through so you just ring and make sure and then that’s beyond Joe Blow. That’s planning and that’s engineering. [They’re going to spend $420 million to fix the problems over the next few years. (Interjection.)] [How can you as an individual have any say on those things?] Apart from making all those calls to the beach line which we do, that’s just ... out numbers so they’re actually recognising that people are using their beaches and are concerned about the water quality. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)*

Some acknowledged that large scale issues were difficult to tackle and that they did not have any answers themselves which put them off raising the issue with council.

*My problem is I don’t think I’ve got any good ideas. I know I don’t want certain things, I don’t like certain things. I don’t like the pollution, I don’t like dumping water in the estuary, the waste water or whatever and I think they should do what they can to ... I haven’t got a better idea so that’s probably why I don’t do anything about it too much. Like I said before, we just try and do what we can at home. (Canterbury, Māori, male)*

### 6.3 Individual vs establishment

There were respondents that were clearly intimidated by the prospect of participation particularly if they felt they were a lone voice on an issue.

*Sometimes they’re a little bit intimidating and depending on what mood I’m in, I can be intimidated. [How do they intimidate? What’s typical?] What’s a typical reaction? Like they can’t be bothered, like it’s just a silly question, like when I asked for the tagging to be removed from a bin in my mother’s street because it looked ugly. (Canterbury, Māori, female)*

*I can talk in front of people if I’m introduced, but in a lot of situations I’ll just clam up and shy away. The fear of saying the wrong thing or being thought badly of; that would shut me up quite easily so it’s partly my own personality and partly I can’t be bothered. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)*

As one Auckland Māori respondent said people didn’t feel that their voice counted when it was ‘one normal person up against a suit’.

*In the end apart from these surveys and stuff, your viewpoint doesn’t really matter. You’re like one in a million and it’s one normal person against a suit or somebody who knows what they’re doing. (Auckland, Māori, male)*
It is worth noting that other respondents who favoured the use of online input to council did cite that they found that option less intimidating.

6.4 Powerlessness

A number of respondents felt that they were powerless and that no matter how they engaged with council it would make little difference to the outcome or decisions made.

There needs to be some empowering of the little people. There needs to be a sense that you actually can make a difference. I think maybe that’s a big problem. [How do you get to know that you can make a difference?] Have a good mayor who knows who to believe. I don’t know. I guess that’s the million dollar question. (Auckland, Māori, male)

I think someone else hit the nail on the head before by saying ‘so we go to the council and we give them our views and some input’ but really I mean I’m not really going to bother because they don’t want to listen to little old me. I don’t really feel like I’d be heard there. We rely on them and that issue should have been sorted out – the public transport system because of the huge increase in the population. (Auckland, Māori, female)

That’s the other thing, that whenever you get an announcement they’re doing something like that, you’ve actually got that feeling that there is nothing you can do about it. The whole mall thing that they’re doing – [I went to a couple of those meetings. (Interjection.)] You actually get the feeling that they’re going to do whatever they like no matter what people tell them. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The sense of powerlessness was exacerbated by examples where council had sought public opinion on matters and decisions had been made by council in direct opposition to popular opinion.

It just reminded me that there were some issues around reworking of Bolton Lane in the city and my recollection was that the council staff clearly did get input from the local businesses and the community and everything, and then they turned around and dismissed it all and said ‘oh no, that’s not the right way to do it because we think we know better’ which in actual fact caused quite a bit of an uproar over it because they actually just walked all over the opinion that they had actually obtained from the community. That left a bit of a bad taste. (Auckland, Māori, male)

I don’t know whether it was some sort of compromise for the people that have to go through there but it just seemed like a total waste of time, all the paperwork and all the people at meetings and whatever. There were a lot of residents that said no and yet they still went ahead and did it. [Has that put you off getting involved?] It almost seems pointless. At the end of the day it’s like there’s already been a decision made so what is the point of going along and using up your own time or whatever? (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
6.5 Lack of openness

Respondents also talked about decisions being made behind ‘closed doors’ and a sense that decisions sometimes had already been made even though council was going through the motions of consultation.

There’s often a whiff of subterfuge about the way our council goes about things. You tend not to hear about things until you’ve got like three hours to make a submission. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Long-term plans: are these the ways it should be happening or are there any ways it should be improved from the way it happens at the moment?] What tends to happen at the moment is the council produces a long-term plan and then it goes out to submissions. It’s what we were saying before about consultation happens after the event so you always feel you’re on the back foot. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[How could things be made easier to deal with the council? What would you like to know in order to be able to deal with the council?] They’ve got to be honest and open so whatever’s coming through, they’ve got to allow everybody the knowledge of knowing what’s coming through so those people who have issues on it can act accordingly and those who think ‘that’s alright I don’t mind that’ let it go. [So you need to know what they’re doing first of all.] Yes, it’s like having a loaf of bread it’s no use giving you a couple of crumbs and the whole loaf of bread’s going to go over here because it defeats the purpose because they don’t know and when they go and do all these big things and create these big ideas that ‘we’ll do that and then we’ll let the public know, the rates are going to go up this amount’. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

I want to see people who want to share their information with everyone and come up with a consensus agreement. I don’t want a dictator. I don’t want someone who’s got a title and says ‘I want it this way and that’s how I want it’. I’m not looking for people in these public positions to tell me what I’m going to have. I want people who want to get the right people together and get a consensus about what the right thing is to do. I don’t want someone who’s got all the answers in their head. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

As cited earlier, the Christchurch City Council had surveyed public opinion about rubbish bins and it was only after the media had sought and obtained the results of the survey that it was apparent that the public views had been ignored.

We got sent a thing. There were three options of how you wanted your rubbish to be picked up and recycling and stuff. [They totally bloody ignored it. It reported in the paper that the majority of people had said to keep 26 and the bins or something and the council voted totally different. (Interjection.)] They were going to do whatever they wanted to do anyway. It’s gone 360 though because they’re going to do it now. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
In almost all groups, respondents spoke about getting things done by councils was very much a question of who you knew rather than what you knew.

 ables going to the council because it’s a small group. All their contracts, tenders – they may put them out there but they all go to McFarlane Group. They closed down Pukekura Park kiosk ... they did it with the airport. He has a select group of friends to whom he does business with so whether or not they advertise it as tenders or anything else and ask for consultation – it’s done within that business group so you might as well say New Plymouth’s got a small business roundtable and unless you’re in that circle you haven’t got a shit show. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

Because those sort of decisions are made under the table. We had the same thing in Manurewa up through the gardens there. They had a paper road that was going to connect up with the road up on the top but it was never developed. All the area was developed, half million dollar houses and then all of a sudden the council said ‘we’re going to open the paper road’. The guy I was telling you about said ‘no it’s not’ and it was him, it was the people around that went to him and he went to the right people and said ‘that’s it, the paper road will stay a paper road, it’s not going to get connected’ so it always comes back to who you know. Now if all those people in that area didn’t know the right person or one of them didn’t know the right person and they didn’t get together and talk to him, that would have gone through and you would have had all the traffic streaming down through, taking the shortcut down through this lovely quiet area. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Council consultation was often viewed as one-sided and biased which also deterred engagement with local government.

I just want a system that you can rely on, that if you want to know some information, that they will give it to you without any strings attached, or the information you get is the same as what everyone else gets, or if you did put a submission in that they would look at it and think ‘maybe that’s got a bit of merit’ and give it to somebody who knows about this and say ‘do you think if we did this idea – ’ [You don’t feel that happens now?] No, I’m not sure because you don’t actually see it in action. You don’t hear where they got together and said ‘maybe if we did this and this’ – [How they decided on it?] And how they decided on it, yeah, they don’t kind of give you that sort of feedback. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

We’ve got a current one at the moment, Whenuapai Airbase, and quite a few councils are affected. It feels like the mayors and the council heads are totally running away from the people who are saying ‘we don’t want it there’ so they’re only speaking to the ones who would benefit from it. They seem to be feeding themselves with the information that the community wants it but really they’re only talking to businessmen. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Some decisions were seen to be based on political agendas rather than based on looking after the best interests of the public.

Banks Peninsula has just become part of Christchurch and like at the moment we can get anything done. They’re bending over backwards to throw money at us. We’re getting our domain done up, our hall done up. With the local domain we just asked the council to come along and fix it and they came along and fixed it. I think it is a matter of politics. (Canterbury, Māori, male)
[How do they get that information out to people?] The councils, are interested in whatever the day’s agendas are. They’re not really interested in everyday things that a council – what I think a council should be interested in. They’re more interested in pseudo political things that are really not about getting roads fixed etc. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

6.6 Lack of knowledge

Several respondents talked about how they were unsure whose responsibility some issues were and were unsure what particular divisions of council were responsible for. In short, this meant that they did not know who to contact which limited their confidence in engaging on issues.

I’ve never gone to a council meeting and said anything. I wouldn’t know where to go or who to see. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I don’t know who’d you see on the website about it. I haven’t kicked anything up about it, I don’t know. I don’t know who I’d go and see. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Once our water mains had burst. I think this is probably a barrier to people’s perceptions more than anything else. I looked in the phone book and there’s 150 bloody numbers to look at and I thought who do I ring, so you ring the council and then they tell you to ring Metro Water, so you ring Metro Water and they go ... and you kind of think once you’ve had that experience, it’s kind of like if I see a street light out should I, can I be bothered going through that process of having to ring three different people because seven different organisations are running the light. A lot of the times I will ignore what is happening purely because – maybe I’m just lazy but sometimes it’s just too much hassle to be going through different channels because different people run the electricity supply to the lights, who maintain the lights, who fix the lights, blah blah blah. It’s like when you go to phone the police. Sometimes you see something and you think shall I phone the police, and I think no I’m not going to phone the police because I’m going to be the one sitting here for an hour and a half filling out paperwork. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Lack of knowledge was also disempowering for those who regarded making written submissions as requiring expertise, often legal expertise was referred to, while some simply did not know how to make a submission. It would clearly be of benefit if the mystique of making a submission was removed from the process and people were simply encouraged to express themselves how they wished to make their views known.

For me a concern I would have if there was somebody there is I’d have to feel I could approach them because if you’d moved into the area and you’d missed half the process, you don’t want to come across sounding like you’re thick. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
6.7 Lack of sense of community

While a small number of respondents were able to give examples of how they had been able to work in concert with neighbours or others who shared similar concerns on an issue, there were others who decried the lack of any sense of community where they lived. Without having others with shared interests in the community’s well being it was difficult to establish the momentum to engage in localised issues.

I’ve seen the same with street lights that are out and I keep making a mental note, I should do something about that, they’ve been off for about a week. Obviously there’s thousands of people driving past there every day and nobody’s done anything about it. [Is it the same reason for you?] I guess also things are busy. I was thinking actually what it reminded me of, it can also, particularly when it’s something right in your immediate neighbourhood, it can depend on the actual people that are there. I’ve been in my house long enough that there’s been a turnover of the people around you and it’s gone from like a nice little self-contained community where everybody was in and out of everybody’s house to being – the people that live immediately behind me have never said boo to me. There’s an element to that. Saying that I won’t bother chasing up when your rubbish bin gets left out or your alarm goes off. (Auckland, Māori, male)

If it was a street light, all the street lights were out in your street and you had little kids or your teenage daughter might be coming home on the bus late at night, you might be inclined to ring them, but I think generally speaking people are self-centred. If it’s not affecting us personally you’re not going to bother. That’s just human nature. Really how do you fix that? I comment on it quite a bit with friends and family. Really there’s not a sense of community any more. People aren’t out to help other people. That’s a real shame but that’s what the issue really is. (Auckland, Māori, female)

6.8 Council in-fighting

While robust debate at council may be healthy, it was evident in New Plymouth that for some respondents this was reduced to the level of in-fighting. Some councillors were described as being on the ‘inside’, that is, they were the ones that controlled outcomes and others on the ‘outside’ were the ones who railed against decisions and carried less influence.

I think the mayor and the chief executive are pretty thick as thieves in that regard. You’re either with them or you’re not. You will see progress if you’re with them. That’s certainly the impression. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

And they’re trying to block her from actually having a say by changing the ward out there. She’s part of the Waitara Block. [Is she a councillor?] Yes and they’re trying to knock that by cutting down the number of council members and they’re also trying to change the wards so that Okiawa and everything else, and how they group them now, they’re actually cutting the numbers down so whether or not she’ll be able to run again depends on how many will actually come from out that way. It’s ridiculous. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
Just reading the paper there seems to be a lot of bickering or attitude between councils in New Plymouth. There’s always a soap opera to read and the other thing is I always seem to notice – well this seems to be a national trend – that councils seem to fly in the face of the general public’s opinion. I’ve noticed they’ve built several things here that have cost the ratepayers a bit extra. There’s been about a 70% no, ‘oh that’s okay, we’ll go ahead and build it anyway’, flying in the face – an attitude problem. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

6.9 Lack of responsiveness

Respondents in almost all the groups cited frustrations they had experienced in dealing with councils largely over personal matters. In several cases, councils had been slow to respond or inconsistent in the responses that were given. This had made some people disinclined to engage on issues in future.

[Did you phone them?] Yes we did. Everybody said ‘just give up, give up, no response from the council until there’s a fatality’ and because it had been happening for probably two or three years before we moved in, I might have been a new voice but you get tired. [How many times did you phone them up?] At least half a dozen probably in the first 12 months. [Did you know who to speak to?] No. [So you just rung up the general council number?] Traffic whatever. They’d come to our neighbours that moved out and stood there and said ‘wow, it’s dangerous here’. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

Also it’s your time that’s valuable so if you’re giving up your special time with your family or whatever you’re doing, then you actually want to be heard. [And you don’t feel like you are heard if you do –] No. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Some also felt that the council would not or could not take action if an issue became too difficult.

[Barriers to engaging with council?] I’ve got a bus depot next to us. It used to be railway land. When people complained to the council about the bus depot, it turned out the company had pretty much just done it overnight and the council basically either couldn’t do anything or weren’t willing to do anything to actually do anything about it so that kind of evaporates any feeling towards the council being able to get certain things done. If they run into a big enough obstacle it kind of just stops. When it got down to it there was nothing anything could really do anyway. It falls into the council’s area of expertise and they should be the ones doing something. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)
6.10 Personal impacts

Respondents were more driven to engage with council on small scale issues that directly impacted on their day-to-day life. It was noted that issues where the impact was less direct or were followed up for altruistic reasons were more likely to be prioritised against everyday demands.

I have dealt with creative communities, got funding for choir but other than that – I don’t know in terms of social and community – [You said you wanted to see more Māori art around the city?] I haven’t sought to shift or change that personally. [Why is that, do you think?] Maybe it’s not on a high priority important when it comes to getting to school each day, earning a living and just doing what it takes to get by.
(Canterbury, Māori, female)

Some respondents acknowledged that a reason they do not engage with council is that it involves too much effort and time.

Unfortunately it’s just the way of the world now. There’s too many people complaining and they’re not wanting to do anything about it to help themselves. Personally I sit around the table with my friends and we complain about this and that, but what are we actually doing to fix the problem? It is easy to complain.
(New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I did actually get a submission form in one of the City Scenes I think and it was one I think I pulled out and thought I should put some comments in it. It went on the kitchen bench and it got covered in bills and everything else that was more important than filling out the form so in the end I looked at it and I thought I haven’t got time to do this and it went into the recycling. (Auckland, Māori, male)

What about street meetings where they’ll meet the street and they’ll have a little feed they put up? [But the whole neighbourhood’s apathetic. (Interjection.)] (Auckland, Māori, male)

6.11 Lack of trust

A strong theme that emerged in the research was a sense that respondents had lost faith in council.

For me it’s just gone so completely past whether or not I can ring somebody. I hate to say that I have given up but there’s so many things that go on in my daily life that I just get to the point where I just think it’s not even worth me getting on the bandwagon about these things. It’s not even worth me – before I even think about whether I’m going to go to a Māori councillor or whether I think I’m going to find my local electorate man, I throw my hands in the air. Maybe we need a group of people that fight but I think for a lot of people it’s just gone so far beyond that nowadays. (Auckland, Māori, male)

I think they’ve lost credibility with the rubbish bins. It’s like what’s the point.
(Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
Many did not trust the motives of the council or believed that they would necessarily act in the best interests of its constituents.

*I think what’s really coming out of here is that we don’t have faith in the council. We don’t trust them ... what they need to work on, building that stuff up.* (Auckland, Māori, female)

*It seems that money talks. You’ve got to have lots of money to get results. You see big companies come along and bang ... straight up in the air. There’s whole lots of laws about how liability could be and bang, the stuff has gone up 20 storeys high. They pay money to the council and those rules got – ‘that’s okay, you’ve paid the required amount and you can build it as high as you like’.* (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
7. Perception of Local Government Issues

7.1 Important activities

Respondents in all groups were given a list of 20 activities councils carried out and were asked to rate first the importance of each activity to them or their family and secondly their level of satisfaction with their council’s performance with respect to each activity. Analysis has been undertaken across all six groups and is outlined following, but it should be noted that due to small sample sizes these results are indicative rather than definitive.

The top five activities rated as important were consistent across both the general public and Māori groups, namely, having safe streets, water supply, rubbish collection, pollution control and waste treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES – SUMMARY TABLE</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All N=49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<td>Pollution control, protect environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art galleries, museums, and music venues</td>
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<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/provide public events (fireworks displays, park concerts)</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote city in NZ/overseas, economic/business development</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council housing</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
A few activities tended to be rated relatively low in terms of importance in all groups. These were ‘Promote the city in New Zealand/overseas, economic/business development’ and ‘Council housing’. However, it should be noted that even where council housing was rated low, there were frequently one or two respondents that rated it very high, probably reflecting their income and household circumstances.

Water supply and waste treatment activities were not relevant to most rural respondents as they were not provided with these services.

7.2 Satisfaction with council activities

Respondents were most satisfied with the council management of recreational facilities such as libraries, parks and reserves, swimming pools/convention centres and sponsorship of public events.

[Is there anything your council does particularly well?] Libraries and parks. Swimming pools. They’re always neat and tidy. I go to three different pools.
(Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Across all respondents lowest satisfaction was recorded for parking, RMA consents/district planning, setting rates, council housing and public transport. City promotion was rated one of the lowest five across 30-55 year olds.

➢ Parking

Gripes with parking revolved around the cost and the number of parks available.

Parking in Stratford is – unless you want to park on the end of town, it’s a joke.
(New Plymouth, Māori, male)

The parking rates were changed and switched and put in by Monday before most people had even read or even sighted the document and it was already council law.
(New Plymouth, Māori, female)
### SATISFACTION WITH ACTIVITIES – SUMMARY TABLE

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>All N=49</th>
<th>30-55 Years N=24</th>
<th>Māori N=25</th>
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Consents and district planning

Criticisms were directed at the paperwork, cost and time involved in seeking various consents.

[Three ticks for least satisfaction.] You’ve got to have consents for everything these days. Gone are the days when you could actually milk cows. You’re filling out paperwork all the time. Most of it as far as farming with the regional council, it’s all being pushed through with Fonterra as well. They’re doing a lot of it. They’re pushing, they’re not just a dairy company any more. Half of them are practically in the council. Fencing off waterways. It’s all good but it’s just being pushed on you. A lot of cockies are kicking up because they’ve been on farms for 30 years and have never had to do that before. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

We’ve just put in to get consent for building works to happen. It’s not as if it’s a major renovation but I paid the same to the architect as I did to the planners at the council to get my building consent and they said I was going to get hit with more costs as they came out and did inspections which I’ve just got to wear but it’s like the architect’s done all the work and those guys – like it’s being passed around and they were able to track where the stages were but it was like what have you actually done to justify that fee. (Auckland, Māori, female)

There were also complaints about the slow response when waiting for consent applications to be processed.

[RMA consents and district planning.] I live in the Selwyn District. Selwyn is particularly poor in processing consent applications. [Slow?] Very. Weeks are very slow. Months. Currently five months I think for a building consent. [I thought they’d got a bit better. (Interjection.)] Supposed to have. They’ve got a reputation. They won an award a few years ago for being the most difficult council in the country to deal with. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Many felt that councils did not plan effectively for the future which resulted in poor decisions and money being wasted.

I think once again like poor planning. They put Britomart in and they thought that was going to make a big difference to transport. It’s hopeless. Not good planning into the future. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Well they’ve just done really strange things, like one park I go to they actually built this huge walkway right through the park, it’s beautiful and like two months later they ripped it all out because they didn’t get a resource consent to do it. Now that’s the council themselves. I’ve been walking in these parks for 15 years and it’s the first time they did quite a major bit of work and it was wheelchair access and I was actually down there with my dog one day and a young family came down in a pushchair because it was a really nice walkway and then like two weeks later – [So you don’t think it was worthwhile for you to do something yourself then?] No. [If they’re doing that sort of thing.] ... off their own bat and they got it completely wrong and they had to rip it all out because it wasn’t planned. They hadn’t gone through the right processes and I’m thinking ‘well this is the council’. I went down there and now it’s completely trackless now because they’ve pulled out the bridges and everything and you can’t even get across the streams and walk in and see it. It’s a beautiful place. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
It’s also about roading and things like that. It’s almost like you get to the end of the financial year and you can see them just absorbing the money that they’ve got left over from the budget doing random roading projects. Then a month later they’re digging it back up. There are some roads in Christchurch that are actually terrible and yet they get bypassed and the same roads keep getting dug up and dug up. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

- **Council housing**

The quality and upkeep of council housing was criticised.

[What about the housing one?] Some of the council houses, people move in there, other people move out and they’re not even fixed up. (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, male)

- **Public transport**

The cost, lack of a good public transport system and lack of incentives for people to use public transport were some of the problems identified by respondents regarding public transport.

I use the train as much as I can but the problem that I have, and I’ve never experienced it being late or on time really – [Been early. (Interjection.))] Sometimes it is. I live like too far away from the train station to walk to it yet the bus stop is sort of a bit too far around the corner but the bus doesn’t actually link up with direct access to the train station so you’re kind of finding yourself having to catch two different buses to get to the train station that literally is only five minutes away in my car yet they don’t provide enough car parks for me to drive my car down there. If they’d just planned it a little better, then maybe I can get on a bus at the end of my street that would take me to the train station that would have a train leaving approximately within a 20-minute window of that bus arriving there would probably mean that I would use it more but because they just never link up I’d sooner drive my car in. (Auckland, Māori, male)

Just on public transport, I think it’s something that does need upgrading. We haven’t got a very good public transport system in New Plymouth. They’ve changed it and I think it’s something that’s just appalling. [Is there public transport in New Plymouth? I can’t remember the last time I saw a bus. (Interjection.)] [It costs my daughter $12 a week to get to school and home from school every week. (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

I catch buses and boats to work and you can buy a Discovery pass they call it but it’s really expensive, $280. It covers buses, boats and trains. But if you just want to use buses and boats in my case, it’s cheaper for me to just buy a monthly pass with the ferry company and buy a bus ticket because it’s Birkenhead Transport where I am and you can’t buy a Birkenhead pass and use it on Stagecoach and that kind of thing, so I think they really need to – that’s one of the problems they have. The services are there. By and large they kind of cover the times, they’re quite good with their times but you’ve always got to put your hand in your pocket and have cash. They kind of discourage people from using it because they make it really expensive so people just think ‘why am I going to spend $280 a month, I might as well jump in my car and join the rest of the queue’. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
City promotion

The reasons given for rating city promotion so low revolved around the perception that either too little promotion was being done or because promotional activities were generally interpreted to be an opportunity for councillors to enjoy junkets such as trips to sister cities from which there was seen to be relatively little gain.

As far as promoting the town and the area, they are doing some promotion within New Zealand but as far as I’m aware there’s no promotion within Taranaki. There’s nothing out there saying ‘rates are really bad in New Plymouth, come to Stratford, it’s only a half-hour trip’ sort of thing. I mean we have got a lot of people coming out to countries now, now the farms are merging and there’s a lot more farm houses available and that’s straight out because of the rents and mortgages. People would rather travel a bit, get a bit of quiet, but they don’t seem to promote it. Everything in the promotion goes towards the Shakespeare side of town. We’ve got a glockenspiel in town. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

Economic business development. I think they have done nothing to attract business back to Manurewa and that’s why it’s got so run down. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Promoting New Zealand overseas?] King Pete goes on junket every six weeks for three years at a time. Spends vast amounts of money for absolutely no point whatsoever. Having a sister city with somewhere in China where they make buttons is not actually to me a great advance to New Plymouth, Taranaki or New Zealand. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

7.3 Importance vs satisfaction with council activities

Analysis comparing the importance of activities against satisfaction with council performance showed that the greatest gaps between what was considered important versus satisfaction with that activity were found for having safe streets in their neighbourhood, the setting of rates, parking and pollution control/protecting the environment.

Across 30-55 year olds the largest gaps were found for having safe streets in their neighbourhood, the setting of rates, RMA consents and district planning, and parking.

Across Māori respondents the largest gaps were found for safe streets in their neighbourhood, parking, the setting of rates and pollution control/protecting the environment.
In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

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<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
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Base: n=49; Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
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<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks/reserves/sports grounds, cemeteries and crematoria</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming-pools/recreation and convention centres, halls</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote city in NZ/overseas, economic/business development</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council housing</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/provide public events (fireworks displays, park concerts)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: N=24; Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION – MĀORI

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting rates</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution control, protect environment</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Defence, emergency facilities</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street beautification/graffiti removal</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
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<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
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<td>-1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks/reserves/sports grounds, cemeteries and crematoria</td>
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<td>7.2</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise control, (food inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
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<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
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8. Enabling Participation in Local Government

8.1 Developing a strategy unprompted

Respondents in each group broke into sub-groups of two to three and on one occasion four to devise how to encourage people like themselves to participate more in local government. Each sub-group answered the following questions and reported back to the group as a whole where the views were captured on the whiteboard and discussed:

- What would make me or someone like me get to tell the local Council what I think about issues that are important to me and my family locally?
- What information do I need from them?
- How can they make it really easy for me to have a say?
- What would be the best way to for them to engage with me?
- What might I do to engage?

Across all groups there was a strong desire for councils to proactively use surveys to establish residents’ views and for there to be direct feedback on such surveys, so there was confidence that public views were being taken seriously. Respondents wanted open and balanced communication on issues and greater effort made to publicise key issues, so people could be informed and thus able to engage. There was also a desire to see councillors more visible in the community.

The strategies identified in the groups to enable participation in local government are summarised in the following diagram.

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UMR Research Limited
8.2  Motivation

Most respondents identified the personal impact of an issue on them or their family as the prime motivator for engagement. Other motivations included receiving feedback on any input, perceiving that there is an achievable solution, seeing the council proactively consult with the community such as through surveys, better service from council staff, more visible communication channels, improved information being provided including to non-ratepayers and actually seeing positive results.

8.2.1  Personal impact

A strong motivation for engagement was an issue that had a direct or personal impact, or issues that impacted on their personal environment, and if an issue was raised by the media or by lobby groups that struck a personal chord.

*This is one of the best cities in the world to live in, do you really need to be involved if things are running smoothly? The fact that we’re not all jumping over one another and marching up and down with banners shows that the buses run on time, the rubbish is taken away on Mondays, the water is dirt cheap compared to Auckland and we can have as much as we want so really there may not be that much to get involved about a lot of the time if they’re doing a good job and most of the time they seem to be.* (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What might stop you responding to the mail out?] *Like all these things, if you’re interested in something ... if it’s not an issue to you or your immediate future you probably won’t even bother responding. You’d probably bin the thing.* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Generally to add another one to the top, you usually only get involved if you experience a personal crisis like they start digging up the road outside your house and you never knew that was coming. [So really it has to affect you personally?] (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What would make you tell the council what you think?] *It has to be something of sufficient magnitude to get you motivated, like the sewerage outside my place blowing up or something.* (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

8.2.2  Feedback and accountability

Another key motivator for engagement was having confidence that there would be feedback regarding their input.

*Adding to that again is motivating me to do it by giving me feedback. If you put your time into it, it’s actually good to see the results coming back to you which then motivates you to do it again.* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
[What would make you do it again? Does there have to be something else happen?]  
Got to be feedback even if it’s only a case of saying ‘this is the feedback we got, and 90% of people were in favour of that and 80% were in favour of the other thing’. It’s just sometimes nice to know whether you were going left right while everybody else is going right left. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The notion of following up, maybe not the next day because these things sometimes to take a long time so unless you queried them, then six months later something has happened, they let you know. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Obviously they record minutes for council meetings and that kind of thing. Are those easily – they need to be a bit more transparent about why they make decisions. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The thing that came through from our group on really easy ways of having feedback, it comes back again, it’s the major issue we feel, it’s accountability. It doesn’t really matter what you do, it won’t affect the outcome. It’s all very well for touchy feely – [Jump up and down all you like. (Interjection.)] Have your say but when 80% of the people say don’t spend $80 million on a new set of offices – [Oh whoops, budget blowout. (Interjection.)] There’s no accountability despite the fact that the feedback channels are there. I think if the council gets more information about how people are feeling on a particular issue, it would be great that 92% of people feel they shouldn’t pull down X swimming pool then maybe they should just keep it going. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What would make you be involved?] It’s just that you felt like you’re listened to. It actually counted, what you’re saying. [How do they show that?] Feedback so you know what’s come after you and you know what’s going on. [The notion of following up, maybe not the next day because these things sometimes to take a long time so unless you queried them, then six months later something has happened, they let you know. (Interjection)] (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Feedback and making sure they get back within 24 hours so it’s still relevant. Make sure you realise you’re not just a number. They let you know. (Auckland, Māori, male)

8.2.3 Achievable solutions

Respondents felt that they would be more likely to engage on issues that they felt had an achievable solution.

[What would make you tell the council what you think?] It would have to be something that directly affected us or our family. It’s not one of these global things. Achievable. [Something that actually can happen.] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
8.2.4 Proactive consultation

Proactive consultation by the council was seen as something that would motivate greater community involvement as it indicated that the council was willing to listen and that their opinion was being taken seriously.

I think that’s when they should put – when they do their plans, their proposed plans, their draft plans for five years, that it should be just a proposed plan so when we do, as ratepayers, put ourselves forward and say ‘actually we want it this way’ they should be listening because they’re not, they haven’t realised that we’re putting them in office, we are paying their salaries and also everybody else who's sitting in the council building, we are paying their salaries. So walk the walk, guys. This is what we want. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[What’s the best way to engage?] Survey at the start of the process that will lead it to an outcome as opposed to a survey at the end of the outcome, when they’ve actually come up with an outcome. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What would get you to tell the council?] It would be nice to have a local council that listened. [What would the council have to do to show that it was listening?] They should be willing to talk to you, not fob you off. Willingly try to find the information that you actually really need. [While you're there instead of ‘come back later’. (Interjection.)] If they say ‘we will find out the information and we will ring you back’, actually ring back. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

I tend to value knowing what’s going to happen is going to mean something, it’s going to have some sort of effect so before I even go to a meeting I’d probably want to know that it’s going to make a difference, it’s not going to be one small time. [You have to be lucky though because there’s just as many people think possibly different to you so you might not ever get to the meeting. (Interjection.)] [Want to know that it’s not just going to be ‘we heard, we’ve already made a decision, goodbye’.] Yes. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

[What would make you be involved?] It’s just that you felt like you’re listened to. It actually counted, what you’re saying. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What would make you get involved?] Having some sort of assurance that you’ll get listened to and not just dictated to. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

8.2.5 Better service

As the major interface with the community, improved frontline service by council staff was also seen as a way to encourage engagement with local government.

So that one would flow on to the next one which is for the council to provide better service. Their front desk people, their frontline people actually being able to get the information you need because you’ve been told it’s there. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)
Fast, friendly and efficient, reliable service. Surveys, phones and letter drops. To actually have the feeling that somebody was actually going to be there to help you. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

8.2.6 Visible communication channels

Having more visible communication channels such as a *333 number to phone in about local issues, clear contact points and greater visibility of council representatives to contact on issues were also seen as ways to encourage participation.

The other thing that’s obvious, instead a light being out, is a whole street being lit up at seven in the morning and you find it’s still on at seven at night. [Been on all day] When star 55 came out, you were able to think if ever a see a dodgy driver I’ll call that number so if it was that accessible on the council for any faulty power lines or whatever – [Star 333 council me. (Interjection.)] (Auckland, Māori, male)

The motivation thing is a big thing. Being motivated to actually do something but then also if someone actually physically came around and did a face to face personal survey then we’d be prepared to tell them what we think no doubt. If we personally knew somebody in the council which provided a contact point, that makes it easier to motivate yourself and get on the phone and tell them what you think of them. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Are there particular issues/avenues that would make it easier for people to have their say?] You were saying you didn’t even know who your councillor was. I don’t know who mine is. Why would I go to them if I don’t know who they are? What are they going to do to help me? Maybe they need to get out there more and tell the community what they’re going to do. This is where my office is, my phone number. (Auckland, Māori, female)

Have a clear communication channel to outline issues. Our other one was the listening one too. Council being prepared to listen. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

8.2.7 Better information

To encourage participation, information was seen to need to be provided to all households including non-ratepayers and information needed to be clear and concise.

We put down that we think that information should go out to not just ratepayers, that every household should get it because they’re the people that live in the area. If you don’t know what’s going on, you won’t get involved in it. [What sort of information?] With these big projects or things that affect the area and by the sound of things I didn’t realise it but people who aren’t paying rates don’t get the information they should perhaps get. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

They’ve got to be concise as well. You don’t want a 32-page report that you’ve got to fill in. You want just one page, two pages, whatever. Make it easy. [You don’t need a census every time.] (Interjection.) (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
8.2.8 Positive outcomes

To ensure continued engagement from the community respondents felt that they would need to start to see positive results and outcomes from their participation.

[What would make it a positive experience for you?] Having the results from things published. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Getting something done. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Getting a phone call a couple of days later saying ‘we’ve put this in place’. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Or even ‘you came in and complained about this, unfortunately at this point in time we cannot do anything because – however’. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[Why did you mark low for these?] It said what would increase my participation. None of that. [What would increase your participation then?] If I could see something actually being done because of – like you read it in the rag, you hear people complaining, everybody seems to be making gripes but nobody actually has alternatives that people are prepared to listen to. If you could see them just put one thing into action and it works and it doesn’t cost the ratepayers money, then you probably would say ‘that’s a good idea’. Where else, could you put it somewhere else in the community but there’s nothing the council give you back. They just take all the time. (Auckland, Māori, female)

8.3 Information needs

The key information needs related to knowing who to contact about an issue and how best to do that. Respondents also wanted to know within council who was responsible for different areas, the procedures and processes that needed to be followed, notification of council plans in advance, feedback and likely response times to address issues and clear, simple information.

8.3.1 Contact points and responsibilities

Respondents wanted information on who could be contacted on issues and the key responsibilities that each council department covers.

We weren’t so specific. We did the five Ws: who, what, where, why, when. In other words who do I see, where do I go, what will happen, how long will it take and what will take place. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Anything else that you’d want or need to know?] ... who the members are and what they’re doing or what they want to achieve. [Do you mean councillors?] Actually it’s council departments as well, and not just a mission statement because those are so naff. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
Just one thing, I didn’t actually mention it when we were doing it, but I was on the council just yesterday and it’s not actually clear where you go when you go there. You’re going to walk into the downstairs there and there’s a place that says information and there were 25 people sitting there waiting to be served. I wanted to go to a place where I knew where I wanted to go but there was nowhere that would actually tell me what floor that person was on. It was really unclear. [Council offices.] (Canterbury, Māori, mixed, male)

A list of names and phone numbers for councillors and council departments that relate to the various issues they’re in charge of. Not just ring one number and be put on hold and maybe get there. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

[Anything else you’d like to know?] Maybe there is but we haven’t … the council but like a general one phone number help line that would be able to redirect you – like maybe even put you through to people that you need instead of ‘just ring this number’ … at least then you’re getting somewhere. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

### 8.3.2 Procedures and processes

There were calls for information on the procedures and processes that needed to be followed, tailored to the level of engagement required which may range from a simple phone call to a lobby exercise where a spokesperson and expert opinion are required.

[Any other ideas about how they can find out what people actually want to know?] When you look at the younger generation the whole issue of council gets more confusing … just something like … this is what your council does, do these areas affect your interests, this is what you can do about it, this is who you can call. The phone book is a good start but not many people – [How do they get that information across to someone?] I don’t know. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[What do I need to know?] What are they actually capable of. [So what they could actually do?] Yeah because it’s very grey when you’re ringing up with things like a piece of roading and you know that if there’s a bridge on it then it’s Transit but at the point before that it becomes a council issue so you actually need to know what their jurisdiction really is. [Are you wasting your breath. (Interjection.)] And can they point you in the right direction. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Who do I talk to, so that’s pretty much who’s behind it, and what is the procedure or process from here. Then moving into process tracking. You do this and then you tell me and I’ll do this. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

[What sort of information do I need?] I need guidelines to follow the procedures. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

[Where to go for information, what else?] Who to talk to. What procedures, if there’s any set procedure. How long you’ve got to submit things. Is there a cut-off date. [How to go about doing it] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
### 8.3.3 Council services

Clear information was requested on what services are available from the council with staff outlining the process or service that would benefit the person the most.

*Need to know who are the right people and how can they be easily reached or contacted. Also on a slightly related but not necessarily directly related topic, need to know what services are available.* (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

*And you have to hear through urban legends how you can get it cheaper or you hear of exceptions and stuff like that, like my dogs would cost a hell of a lot cheaper if I went through dog training or something. You hear it through mates rather than the council.* (Auckland, Māori, male)

*You see their photos everywhere when there’s elections but it would be good to know what my councillor can do for me.* (Auckland, Māori, female)

### 8.3.4 Advance notice of council plans

Respondents wanted advance notice of local council plans and intentions including outlining the pros and cons on issues.

*What we need from the council is local community plans, advanced notice of any intended new by-laws, direct notification of things affecting my neighbourhood. After the builders have started it’s a bit late to find out.* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

*What is the best to get the information to you?* [It would be nice if they actually ...] [Or if they posted it to you?] No, if it’s in the newspaper or you get the annual reports for what the council is doing. It’s not detailed enough, it’s quite vague. [So you want more information on what they’re up to.] Yeah. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

### 8.3.5 Feedback and timeframes

A key way to show that a residents input can make a difference was seen to be to provide feedback and copies of the minutes on council decisions.

*I think councils should be made to – if they’re voting on something, you should be able to – they might sit around and say ‘yeah I’ll go with you on that’ and then when they have the secret ballot they don’t so I think they should be accountable for – you should be able to see whether they voted for something or against. [The Americans do that with all their politicians. You can get anybody’s voting record. That’s how it should be. (Interjection.)]* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
Adding to that but also post that is communication/feedback after you’ve actually gone through and put your complaint or submission in because sometimes you just fall on deaf ears. You put a submission in but you don’t really see any results from them. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

The whole notion of a helpline, the thing is they’ll talk to one person and then they’ll deal with you and forget it but you need someone there – also somebody needs to be at the back collating all that data and say ‘we’ve had 20 people ring up about something, maybe we ought to do something about it’ rather than each individual doing it. If one person gets it, it could be insignificant, but if a number of people then you’re … start doing it. That sort of collation would give you – if you knew they were going to be doing that, then you’d feel much more confident about going to them when something’s gone wrong. [Because they’d take you seriously. (Interjection.)] … get all your mates to ring up … [You know you’re having a say and it’s actually being counted?] Yes. [Taking you seriously. (Interjection.)] But it requires process to actually do that and for you to know that that process exists. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Respondents also wanted clear timeframes for action on an issue this was seen to lead to greater accountability.

Sometimes their response time like if you phoned up and asked, like if there was a sewer main broken outside your house and they said ‘yes, fine, we’ll get around to that’, you want to know like how long, today or do I need to phone someone else, that sort of thing. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

8.3.6 Clear, simple information

Respondents felt that having clear and simple information would also help them engage with local government.

Correct, easy, simple information. Not Acts, not reference numbers, not jargon and open, direct discussions. I don’t want to know a form number. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

8.4 Facilitating input

Ideas for facilitating input from the general public were to conduct surveys, have more avenues for face-to-face contact, use a range of different internet tools, have more effective and up-to-date telephone contact, provide feedback mechanisms via mail, simplify paperwork, use advertising to communicate with residents, provide better service, have access to an intermediary for contentious issues and have better access to appropriate council staff.
8.4.1 Surveys

Surveys were mentioned as a means of facilitating public input, but as indicated earlier these needed to have a clear, accountable feedback loop.

*The first thing is to ask. If you want to know something about mail from me, ask me.*

[Letter drops and surveys.] *Exactly. If it’s going to affect me in 10 years’ time ask me now.* (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

[So what should they do?] *They should have more people like UMR perhaps who ask you these questions. All of us are here because when you ring and you ask us, we actually genuinely want to say what we think otherwise none of us would be here, so if they just actually took the time to canvass the odd person on a more personable basis like you guys do, maybe they would learn a bit more rather than waiting for someone to fill out a form that gets sent with the junk mail.* (Auckland, Māori, male)

8.4.2 Face-to-face contact

There were suggestions for providing more avenues for face-to-face engagement such as holding public meetings, councillors to make themselves more available to the public and holding information evenings that allow people to ask questions about the council.

*The thing I came across in the UK, all the councils held surgeries. It’s sort of like going to your local MP. They will be in a particular place, usually something like a library or something like that and you could go and talk to them about issues.* [It’s like contacting MPs really.] (Interjection.) (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

*The mayor used to go and sit in the square and wait for people to come up. A similar sort of approach really.* [That’s pretty impressive having someone make themselves available.] (Interjection.) *Absolutely.* (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

8.4.3 Internet contact

Some advocated the greater use of online input to councils including providing a blog space for input, simple, user-friendly online submission templates, having full contact details on the website, allowing email feedback and making internet access available to everyone by having online facilities located on council premises and in public areas.

*We were thinking if you could – I don’t know if you can but if there’s a submission you want to make, if you could just go onto the internet and make it – instead of having to go to your local library.* (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
Website ... the rewards system because we haven’t had our first rates so that’s not important to me. [What would the website ...] Just easy access to make a submission on what’s wrong, what’s not wrong. I don’t care whether they give me feedback or not. It’s more for me to make my submission. Maybe that’s an easy alternative for a lot of people, to get on the computer and say ‘this is what’s wrong, this is what I think is wrong’ and if enough people complained on there ... (Auckland, Māori, male)

Also having internet that’s really user friendly. Unless you know what the terms are that you’re looking for you that you need to do you don’t really know where to start. I believe there’s something to help women in business going on in the North Shore, enterprise something, and you search and you can’t find anything. [So make it more easy?] Yeah, I think you have to accept that most people aren’t going to know how to talk council look. [Make it as simple as you can.] And we’re all busy, just like they are. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

They should have a site. [They do have a site. (Interjection.)] Obviously if you’ve got an issue, click on a list as in what we’ve got here. I’ve got a problem with the rubbish, click on that and then basically just go from there as in recycling or disposal or whatever and then have your say and then leave an address, phone number or email address and they can get back to you on it. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

I really like personally the idea of something on the site. I have been to the website, but ... like that where people can just prompt on it and leave an opinion. That is a really good idea. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

We said about having the website more user-friendly with full contact details on there. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

8.4.4 Telephone contact

Using telephone communication more effectively by having an 0800 number and enabling communication via text messaging were other suggestions for facilitating participation.

[Council has to do long-term plans. If you want better planning, how best could you have your say on that planning?] It would be really convenient if you could email, or for young people texting. That seems to be the way for them rather than making a phone call and going through all those automated things. (Auckland, Māori, female)

The Pizza Hut number 0800 83 83 83, you know that and it’s a dedicated number, so maybe a number like that. We also thought a discount on rates for feedback so if you actually engaged with the council and gave them some feedback on issues, that they – (Auckland, Māori, male)
8.4.5 Mail contact

There were some suggestions for facilitating input via mail contact including sending out postage paid flyers to return, clip-out ads in local media that could be sent in to council and providing information on proposed council initiatives through mail outs.

[How to make it easy to have a say?] Having some place to write concerns, for example a newspaper. [Being able to write to the local newspaper?] Like if they say ‘have your say’ and it’s there in the newspaper, you quickly write it, clip it out and send it. [A council blog or something. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, Māori, female)

[Mail outs?] If something’s happening in your area they should inform you of what’s happening. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

8.4.6 Simplify paperwork

Simplifying paperwork and processes was another suggestion for facilitating input.

Also the forms that need to be ... so you know what to fill in and then take it from there. It’s like going to polytech, you pick a subject and they actually give you a brochure or a pamphlet on what the actual course is all about, so basically why can’t the council basically say ‘look, right, this is your problem, this is a pamphlet on it, on the do’s and don’ts and the follow throughs’. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

[How to make it easy?] Simple yes. Pre-printed documentation. One copy that they can copy if they require. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

8.4.7 Advertising

Informing residents of council communication channels and council plans through advertising was seen as a way to facilitate input.

More advertising would be good that actually says you can go to these meetings or do something about it and have your say ... papers like what was said, a segment in there, that’s a good idea then they can have the issue in hand and you go ‘oh right, I’ll write that down’, have your say and post it away, sweet as. It’s like radio as well. Radio is a powerful thing. Everyone listens to it when they’re working. If they have a little segment for the council itself they can say this public meeting on this issue at seven o’clock or whatever, then people can turn up and be there. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

[How to make it easy to have a say?] We struggled a bit on this. Really we could only come up with they, the council if you like, need to communicate opportunities to enable us to express opinion on an issue. It’s pretty broad. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
I find the Times Advertiser’s quite helpful in letting you know what’s going on. [How do you hear about these things happening?] Usually in the paper if I get it. [The local paper?] Yes. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

[How would you improve that process?] ... advertising of what’s going to happen then. That could have been made a lot more clearer. That’s about all you can do really. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[What would you do?] He needs to market it the same way he marketed whether it’s the Taranaki Festival of the Arts or whether it’s the light festival. He spends a great deal of money with the companies for Venture Taranaki and so forth that if they applied the same service they’d get the same feedback that they do now. I mean if he can engage the world and he can engage New Zealand to come here, why can’t he engage his own people to attend a council meeting. [So the sorts of things they’d do would be things like surveys and meetings?] Absolutely, talk to the people that live here. (New Plymouth, Māori, female)

8.4.8 Better service

Enhancing customer service was seen to potentially encourage residents to engage with council.

You’ll get hold of somebody and they won’t actually know what you’re talking about so then you’ll have to go to somebody else who actually doesn’t know either so they’ll move you on to somebody else. It would be nice for them to perhaps have a database of some sort that okay you’re talking about this particular street, this is the area of this particular person. It should be something that would be reasonably easy to set up. [Maybe they have trouble keeping staff. (Interjection.)] If it’s on a database you can change a name very, very quickly. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Often when you have trouble getting a response from an organisation it’s due to a staffing issue, lack of staff or only a limited number of staff to deal with a particular area, stretched to the limit or something like that. Perhaps Christchurch city could use a customer services section or something as a first point of call for enquiries. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Customer service ethic. Just a frontline customer service attitude to the people coming into the council, that would be really nice, and that extended to the idea of an up-sell. If you went to Placemakers for example for a paintbrush they would say ‘what are you doing, oh right, so do you need this and this and this’ so if you say you’re applying for this or you want to talk about this, they’ll go ‘oh well, then you’ll need this information and you’ll need this information and have you considered this?’ instead of just keeping it narrow, being proactive with advice. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

It’s tricky to make too many assessments about who’s on the end of the phone but for some people the intimidation of picking up the phone and talking to someone in the council puts them on the back foot so it’s not only treat that person like a human being and a normal person but treat that person who might be a bit afraid to call and there’s that sense of drawing the best out of the person on the end of the phone. [That’s definitely that proactiveness. They need to be fully trained in customer service. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, Māori, female)
[Best way to engage?] We didn’t really have much here, just return calls and sound interested and informative. (Canterbury, Māori, f male)

One of the things that came up before is making connections within us as Māori. I think it would be really useful to hear the views of local Māori when it comes to considering issues so in terms of posting information, it would be great for a Māori spokesperson to be posting their views and values so that we could all be aware of those views and make our connections. [Are there any Māori spokespeople out there that you know that could fulfil that kind of role?] Auntie Mere. She’s getting a bit old now but she’d know somebody. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

One of the Māori groups identified the need for councils to adopt manakitanga, so that the public making contact with council would be met with an hospitable and empathetic response.

[Best way to engage?] Definitely pleasant greeting and being honest immediately and being empathetic. Having an attitude of making it easy and being hospitable towards people who are coming in. Developing that sensibility around council culture. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

8.4.9 Intermediary

One respondent suggested having an intermediary to mediate on contentious issues involving the council and residents.

[What could have been improved about that process for you?] I’m looking at it from both sides. As a ratepayer I don’t want to see the council just lying down and saying ‘every claim, we’ll just cough up’ because otherwise every other ratepayer ends up paying for it. Maybe they just need to be a little less – take a step back and maybe let an intermediary actually deal with it all rather than trying to get involved personally. (Auckland, Māori, male)

8.4.10 Better access

Respondents felt that having extended office hours, providing access to information at convenient times and being able to contact someone via the telephone at any time of the day would encourage participation.

In that City Scene too they say you can come in and view the plans that they’ve got for changes between like 2 and 4 on a Tuesday afternoon at some place that might be in Avondale. Only a small amount of people could actually get to there at that time and there’ll be somebody there to answer your questions. It’s like most people are working at that time in the day, what’s the point in having it then. (Auckland, Māori, female)

It would need to be 24/7. Obviously we don’t expect them to have so many people manning it at night but particularly in the evenings when most people are going to want them because at the moment with people working it’s the only time you can do it. Ringing the council at night, it doesn’t work. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)
One respondent from the Christchurch Māori group would like a spokesperson for each marae or runanga.

*If there was a spokesperson for each marae or each runanga that would be very cool.* (Canterbury, Māori, female)

### 8.5 Best way to engage

Most of the common communication channels were mentioned as of ways of engaging with people which reflected the varied preferences found across all groups, including mail, face-to-face contact, television, internet, and surveys. There was also a request for open communication and a preference for having a personal approach.

#### 8.5.1 Mail

Some respondents favoured the option of engaging by mail for both submitting feedback and also to receive information. They felt that mail correspondence was more accountable as it left a paper trail.

[What’s the information that you’d like and how is it best to get that information to you?] Get it in the mail to every letterbox rather than delivering it in the North Shore Times, putting it at the back, the council wants to know your view on this. Get it on a card and say call us if you want this or don’t want this to go through. That should be council cards. (Auckland, Māori, male)

*Do a letter drop to a certain area or something. Not everyone has PCs and goes looking at the council’s website but that’s another avenue.* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

*I want written communication so when I need to follow up I know who wrote me the letter, what his name is, not ‘hi, I’m Kylie, I’ll be your councillor for today’, the McDonalds system. Ever rang Inland Revenue and tried to get a surname. [Try to get a direct dial, that’s even worse. (Interjection.)] There is a website that tells you all the key ... to press to get a real person.* (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

#### 8.5.2 Face-to-face

Face-to-face engagement received strong support, it was seen to be a way of making the information provision process less formal and provide a means to make councillors more visible in the community.

It was also seen as the medium that was most likely to prove that the council really was listening to the community.
[What would be the best ways for the council to find out what you want?] Listen to what you’ve got to say. [How do they do that? What sort of media do they use for that?] I thought the suggestion about having a place and a time when you know you can go and see someone. I know they have area offices but it’s not generally known that there’s usually council employees there for a lot of different ... someone who actually puts their finger on it and makes the decisions if you wanted to and in an informal way, not like I have to fill out a form and formally approach them about a particular issue and state all the questions you’re going to ask them so they can go away and find the answers but just to sit down like we’re doing here. You can go in and talk to someone if you have something on your mind without having to fill out forms and that kind of thing. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Anything else about making it easy to engage with council?] Information evenings. You hear about them but not very often. [And not just advertising that they’re so wonderful but actually ... (Interjection.)] (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

We were talking about direct contact with the council. We had people who actually seem to listen. People who know the processes and the procedures so professional type people. In other words treat me like a person. [Treat me like I matter. I pay my rates therefore I’m your boss. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, Māori, male)

The thing with long-term plans is they’re so broad and boring anyway that not many people are likely to be motivated to make submissions on them. So to get more engagement I think the council would be better off to come and personally contact people, the door to door surveys that we talked about. Put them on the spot really. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Respondents also wanted public meetings to be on specific issues which they felt would make the meetings more effective.

If there’s public meetings I think they need to be specific though. I went to one out at Urenui last year when they were looking at the parks and reserves things and they were looking at giving the land back to the Māoris or the lease or whatever and it got all messy. It was specific to that issue as opposed to a general public meeting. It just narrows the audience. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Meetings in a particular affected area. A meeting at the local hall or something explaining what they’re intending to do and why. [And not during the day time. (Interjection.)] [A variety of times people can attend. (Interjection.)] [Got to love those daytime meetings when everyone’s at work. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

8.5.3 Television

Some felt that television could be used effectively as a means for the council to engage with the community.

It’s interesting because being from Southland I watch a lot of Q TV, I don’t know why ... on Sky and they just have like a little 15-minute bulletin and it’s amazing how that 15-minute bulletin never really has anything of national news or content in it. It’s all a lot to do with what’s going on in the council and that’s how they I think use
that channel to get people submitting on consents and having a say. I don’t know whether Southlanders are big on watching it but if every little region had their own little 15-minute bulletin – I know that TVNZ are looking into that and that all comes under the charter agreement and all that stuff, but it’s like what I said before, there’s an assumption that these people should know what they’re doing. That’s why you put them there. Why should we have to chase them up all the time to make sure – (Auckland, Māori, male)

A lot of things get done on the TV. When we have meetings back home where I come from, they’re normally on Marae. [On the Māori channel. (Interjection.)] I don’t know whether the council still do it. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)

8.5.4 Open communication

Open and honest communications were desired by all.

I think with the initial mail out or contact, Kiwis in particular, I don’t know, you really need to pander to our vanity in a way and say ‘you are important, this is going to affect you, we want to know what you have to say about it and we will keep you involved and informed’ and it won’t happen overnight because we have been kept in the dark for so long so that little issue of trust has to come. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I think they need to recognise what sort of area. The different areas on the North Shore have different issues each time. Albany’s obviously going through huge growth whereas Northcote needs a lot of help. I think if they can make you aware of what is needed and important in your area and what is going to concern you and possibly affect you directly, then I think you’d be more likely to get involved. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

8.5.5 Internet

The internet was seen to be an effective way to engage with the community by providing a means to provide feedback and also possibly track progress on the council response much like tracking a courier package. There was also a suggestion to provide a web-based forum for people to have their say about council issues.

A website that they’ve set up so you can log on there and getting your information onto there and making sure what you’ve said is being followed up. (Auckland, Māori, male)

[Best way to engage?] Also listening to this internet idea coming up, it would be quite handy to have a forum or something where you could log in and just state your opinions and threads and all those sorts of things. Like talkback radio for intellectuals, internet geeks. [And mothers at home with two-year-olds, it would be so easy to get onto the net. (Interjection.)] [Not everybody has a computer. (Interjection.)] But many houses do. (Canterbury, Māori, female)

For me personally I think having an open and local web-based system that you can go and make a submission on. Find the subject, click in the box, type in what you want to say would be good. It’s just because I’m used to working that way and it’s a lot more easier. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
I suspect maybe they just need to deformatise things a little bit because I think people are probably a bit more genuine in their thoughts and what they really want to say if it doesn’t seem like they’re doing a whole lot of paperwork. I work for a radio stations and a lot of the really good feedback that we get about issues and what we do comes from the TradeMe website where a blog is a free for all for people just to really just spit it out there. Maybe instead of writing a huge submission to the council they could just have a blog where you are free to just write things down without having to — (Auckland, Māori, male)

8.5.6 Surveys

While surveys were suggested as a way to facilitate engagement, they were also seen as a useful tool to administer at the start of the consultation process, so public input is seen to lead toward the outcome.

The surveys are good although you’ve got to watch that you don’t get the PR company loaded question syndrome. The hang them all referendum of the 90s. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

[Developing 10-year plans, obliged to consult with people about those plans?] I think you need to have more – you know how they put the ads in the back of the paper saying ‘come to this meeting regarding town planning’ or whatever, not everyone can go to a meeting so maybe they do need to do more surveys on the phone, more going around to certain areas and picking suburbs and doing face-to-face, just to spread the options around and do face-to-face, do a mail drop in certain areas. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

All you’re doing is you’re giving something to everybody whereby they can actually scribble something in and send it back. You have one little issue every week and you can have your say in quite a lot. Of course the mailing costs would be a bit prohibitive so maybe that could be a freepost address or something. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

It doesn’t have to be posted back. They could have an 0800 number for a yes and another 0800 number for a no. It would be a free call and it’s straight in there and your vote’s registered. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

8.5.7 Personal approach

There was a preference for having personal contact which could be by telephone or face-to-face so that a relationship is built between the council and the questioner.

We kind of like the personal approach, the personal basis through a visit or a phone call, something like that. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

They could come out and actually meet you or ring you personally. [Is that the councillors?] Whoever’s in charge rather than you go to the front desk and deal with the dolly bird at the front. She sends out a form. They get the form back. They send you another form, etc. [Anything else?] Just being upfront and honest. (New Plymouth, Māori, male)
8.5.8 Other suggestions

One respondent suggested providing a discount on rates for those providing council with views.

[Best idea for engaging people?] Reward us with a rates rebate. The same sort of thing like Mercury give you a discount even though they’ve probably hiked the rates in the first place. [You get a rates rebate for what?] They want us to engage with them and they’re sending us out a little questionnaire. It’s a trade. [How much would the rebate have to be?] I don’t know, make me an offer. (Auckland, Māori, female)

One respondent suggested conducting binding referenda on major issues.

Maybe ... referendums, like big decisions, actually binding referendums, not ones that they can ... a lot of people don’t want this so we’ll go ahead anyway. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Someone else proposed setting up a ‘citizens jury type service’ where people could be called in to help with decision-making in the local area.

As citizens of the country we get called in to sit on trials in juries. They could do a similar thing with council. You could get a notice to say they’re having council meetings in your area and you’ve been asked to come and join, actually being invited. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

There was a suggestion to hold focus group type discussions with a wide range of people.

The answer is sitting in this room, for them to have more sessions like we’re having here where you’ve actually got a relatively random set of people so you haven’t got people who have all got their own bone to pick because that inevitably winds up with ... all moaning. The whole thing ends up with far too much of a ... thing which doesn’t tend to solve very much. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

8.6 Engagement

When asked what actions people would actually take to engage with local government, respondents in addition to what they had identified previously also referred to approaching other organisations like the media and citizens advice bureau. The following list captures the ideas put forward by the groups that answered this question.

• Write letters;
• Attend meetings;
• Complete a survey;
• Go to the media to escalate issue if no response;
• Get a high profile person on board;
• Join a group protest;
• Ask for a contact list;
• Start a neighbourhood group or discussion;
• Petitions;
• Contact the Citizens Advice Bureau.
9. Testing Prompted Strategies

9.1 General

Two different sets of prompted strategies were tested with the Māori and 30-55 year-old groups. The prompted strategies were proposals put forward by Senate Communications’ Public Information Strategy. Respondents individually rated each strategy on how likely it was to increase their participation in local government and in most groups were asked to tick their top three strategies. They were also invited to add any additional strategies they wished and as this exercise followed their unprompted development of ideas to encourage participation (Section 7.0) several chose to include ideas generated in that exercise.

The 30-55 year-old groups firmly rejected strategies that proposed competitions to encourage participation. The strategy that attracted the most support was the mail-out consultation process which several respondents thought could be improved with the use of other channels, for example, responding online or via a free-phone number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – 30-55 YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN SCORE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of website/Internet activities e.g. chatrooms, message boards, online forums with councillors, email submissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events where people can ask questions about council issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger Council branding on all council-funded facilities, service etc to better identify all the things the Council does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free days at Council facilities and give visitors information on activities the Council does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio competitions to encourage greater awareness of Council Activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: n=24; Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
Although the Auckland Māori group in the unprompted exercise had suggested rewards for participating in local government, the prompted strategies that suggested some form of financial assistance or reward for participation were firmly rejected, particularly by the New Plymouth and Christchurch groups, as they were considered demeaning to Māori. Across all Māori, there was strong support for council engaging with Māori on marae as they preferred engagement to be on their terms, online e-forums with councillors and councillors volunteering on projects important to Māori.

### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – MĀORI

*Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors meet face-to-face on Marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. Kaumatua, celebrities</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local Kohanga-reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Answer booths at events where residents can ask questions about local issues. Forums might include Kapa haka competitions, local rugby league games, celebration events e.g. Matariki, Waitangi Day</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council sponsored funding/grants for Māori representative groups to help with administration/secretarial services to make submission processes easier.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political speed-dating where local councillors meet with Māori at an event. Each person attending is allowed a short time with each councillor to discuss whatever issues they want. This could be an event on its own.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and initiatives</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: n=25; Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.

### 9.1.1 Auckland Māori

The three strategies that rated most highly across the group were:

- (2) Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response;
- (6) Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local kohanga reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals;
(5) Question-Answer booths at events where residents can ask questions about local issues. Forums might include Kapa haka competitions, local rugby league games, celebration events e.g. Matariki, Waitangi Day.

Strategy (2) topped the ratings for the group. The internet was generally seen to be accessible to a wide audience and would allow for mass feedback to be collated.

_They don’t work on these things because none of us are doing nothing about it. We’re all just lying down there and paying those rates and paying the insurance or the ... and whatever else and we complain to each other, we complain to our partners or whatever and we just don’t do nothing. Maybe somebody needs to start off a website where we can all put our names down and say ‘hey yeah, we’ll support that’. Something that we can all have access to. I think the internet – 80% of people, 85% are on the internet, they can get on there. Even as Māoris we go onto a site._ (Auckland, Māori, male)

One respondent said all the strategies only appealed to a narrow, younger age band and noted that older Māori would have difficulty engaging with any. The only strategy she gave a rating greater than zero was face-to-face meeting on marae. In this group, the female respondents ranked most strategies quite low. Another respondent said they wanted to see things done by council, such as, responding to input or complaints.

_[Why did you rate them all low?] I think the group of people you capture at these events is very narrow in terms of age. I think the younger people would be there. I don’t know many older Māori people who know how to use a computer let alone own one. All the younger ones do. That’s a narrow group to capture from my point of view._ (Auckland, Māori, female)

### 9.1.2 Auckland 30-55 years

The strategies that received the most ticks (top three) in the group were:

- (3) Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose. (5 ticks);

- (1) Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc (4 ticks);

- (2) Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events where people can ask questions about council issues (4 ticks).
Strategy (3) was liked because it would reach a wide audience and showed that council had taken the initiative to inform people what was happening before an issue arose.

*Mail outs to the residents is great because it puts it in our face. We’re not going to hopefully miss it but the response from the residents, there should be a few options.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Some felt that there also needed to be other response options such as an 0800 number or online. And feedback on the results was important, so people could trust the process. It was also suggested that the mail-out be timed to avoid the time when ‘all the ads come in the mail’ and it needed to be headed up in such a way to appeal to people.

*Don’t send it on a Tuesday because that’s when all the advertising comes through the mail. You get wads of stuff and you just pick it up and chuck it in the recycling bin.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

While strategy (1) was popular it was pointed out that people needed to feel passionate about an issue to attend and that it was important to choose the right meeting venue. Pubs were described as a ‘stupid’ venue while kindergartens for those with young children would be appropriate.

[What would stop you taking part in turning up to see councillors face to face?] *The location. If you feel threatened you’re not going to go. If it was about boy racers a lot of people would turn up I believe because a lot of people are very passionate about it, but if you had it say in a hall next to where all the car sales and the muffler places and everything are, I’m not going to go there. And times, the time of those meetings.* [What time is a good time?] *It’s the stage you’re at in your life.* [So they’d have to run them at different times?] *Yes because that would get a wide audience.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

It was also felt important that there was follow-up by councillors, so people could see there was a response to their input at meetings. Most respondents would not like to see celebrities involved in the process as they were not seen as experts on these types of issues.

[Ticks.] *I ticked 2 and 3, I ticked 1 but talking about getting told what you want to say, the trusted sources I think is a con.* [Don’t like that part of it?] *Tim Finn is huge in Devonport for promoting green this and green that ... as soon as they say Tim Finn I’m not interested.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

The booths in strategy (2) were seen as a performing a suggestion box function. It was liked because anyone could approach the booth about any issue and was contrasted to a face-to-face meeting with a councillor which was considered more appropriate for bigger issues. It was pointed out that the person in the booth would need to have a lot of patience.

[Question and answer similar.] *It’s like a suggestion box. I think it’s a great idea because people might be walking past there and think ‘what do I do about it, oh look, there you go, done’.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

*I liked it because of that. I didn’t think of it as being – like I thought the meeting face to face would be the big one issue things but this would be – anyone could come in about anything.*

(Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
It’s like the Citizens Advice Bureau where you can go in, have a sit down, have a chat. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

It was however weaker than the other top strategies because there was a perception that it would be difficult for any one person to be able to answer everyone’s questions. This led respondents to think that a booth would more likely be used as a way to direct you to the right person to address an issue rather than answer the questions themselves.

[Is that idea weaker than the others, a question and answer booth?] I think so because you’ll never find anybody who can answer everybody’s questions. Think about it, you have 300 people walking down the road, all got something different. You can’t expect one person to sit down and answer all their questions. Politicians try that and look what they do to themselves. [So you could get a lot of people actually unhappy with the experience they have?] If somebody goes in and says ‘hey look, the dogs are across the road, what are you going to do about it?’. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Not necessarily answer your question but they could guide you to where to go or how to deal with the situation. Someone knowledgeable in the process. [In the process, you’re right. (Interjection.)] (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

The use of websites and Internet activities rated narrowly behind strategy (2) indicating this communication channel will work effectively for some people.

[Ticks.] I thought it was quite good like when you were talking about texting, just using technology so people can access – making it accessible. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Radio competitions and free days at council facilities were the two weakest strategies. The former was regarded as a silly idea and respondents were unsure which facilities apart from swimming–pools and recreation centres would be free for the day.

[What was your worst?] Probably the free days at the council. It would take an awful lot to convince me it was worth my time. Having a tour of little cubicles is what you envisage. [More fun things like playgroup programmes, not going around the offices?] I suppose it’s not clarified very well. I mean what’s a council facility? (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)

There was little support for increased council branding as this was viewed as self-promotion and a waste of money.

[Ticks.] The thing that concerns me about that stronger council branding on all council-funded facilities is I’ve seen things in the newspaper, just self-promotion I think. We’re just paying for them to promote them. I’d be thinking ‘okay that’s where all my money’s going, what a waste when it could be better put to other uses’. (Auckland, general public, 30-55 years, female)
9.1.3  New Plymouth Māori

The strategies that received the most ticks (top three) in the group were:

- (1) Councillors meet face-to-face on marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. kaumatua, celebrities (3 ticks);

- (3) Political speed-dating where local councillors meet with Māori at an event. Each person attending is allowed a short time with each councillor to discuss whatever issues they want. This could be an event on its own. (3 ticks);

- (6) Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local kohanga reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals. (3 ticks).

Based on the actual ratings of all in the group, strategy (1) was the most highly rated. The reason given for this was that it required councillors to consult with Māori under Māori protocol. Most respondents viewed this as consultation on marae, but other venues could be appropriate as long as Māori protocol was followed. The only criticism of this strategy was the reference to celebrities.

[Councillors meet face to face on marae or at local sports clubs. Why does that strongly appeal to you?] Because they’re not in control, especially on a marae. They have to listen. [Different protocol. (Interjection.)] [So it’s done on your terms, not their terms basically?] Yes. (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, male)

[Would you need any particular skills or knowledge?] Us or them? [You?] The only reason I asked that is because you’re asking councillors to go to a marae and protocol is different everywhere you go so I think they may require skills rather than the tangata whenua of the marae. [So they’ll need the skills?] They will, and the protocol for what they can do and what they can’t do within the whare. (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, female)

Strategy (3) was attractive to some because it enabled individuals to have a say which would not be the case in the more formal environment of the marae.

[Would political speed dating suit all people of all ages?] I actually like it because it’s individuals. Even on the marae or at sports groups or whatever, you’re going to have your nominated – like your club presidents or your kaumatua that are going to be speaking for you. At least with the political speed dating, you get your little two cents in, your own personal – [Don’t you run the risk you won’t be heard?] (Interjection.) Well if he’s sitting on the other side of the table at least I’m getting my two cents out whether he’s listening or not. He’s not going to listen to me probably anyway no matter where I am but at least he’s face to face and I can actually say it to him rather than say it to his lackey who’s – the online thing, no councillor’s going to look at the bloody online thing. They’re going to get their people underneath them to do it all. (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, male)
There was, however, criticism of the strategy as some thought it would be inappropriate to conduct this type of consultation at some events. For example, one respondent said if he was going to rugby league that is all he would want to do there and another said if there was a Māori celebration like Matariki, guests would be expected to attend to celebrate, not consult.

*If you go to the league ... oh by the way at half-time I’ll go and answer calls to the jolly council. [But if we’re falling and we’re pissed off anyway, feel free because then you’ll get a reaction. (Interjection.)] (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, male)*

Strategy (6) was supported because it was seen as important that councillors understood what was important to Māori and required them to go beyond the normal channels of communication.

*Again this is councillors volunteering on projects that are important to Māori, who to contact in Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori: three ticks.] *I did that because for councillors to understand anything Māori they need to be put in the domain of Māori like the marae. When they can understand or appreciate how much we do value the importance of kohanga reo or anything else to do with Māori, then they need to be made aware of it. It’s not just Peter Tennant going tena kou tou tena kou tou, it’s Waitangi Day, it’s everybody’s day, let’s celebrate. It’s actually going beyond that, going behind that. It’s not calling up Howie and saying ‘oh could you do this’ or ... for this because you’re a council member. It’s actually being involved and actually understanding. To actually do grass roots and be involved with a project the councillors will get a better understanding.* (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, female)

Two respondents rated online forums very highly indicating that there will be some people who enjoy this approach. Criticism was made that it might not be that responsive to public inquiries.

There was strong opposition to providing council sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and weak support for the provision of grants for Māori groups to assist in administration and submission processes. These strategies were variously described as ‘demeaning’, ‘bribery’ and ‘blackmail’.

*Well, I thought it was insulting actually to ... funding or grants with admin because you’re just bribing us to tick a box. Some of it is really pretty insulting. Why do we need special awards just to get us involved in the processes and initiatives? It’s just blackmail for a vote. It’s disrespectful. [Which ones fall into that category? For you it would be 7?] 3. [7 and 3 are the key ones?] Yes. But in saying that 5, to me, when you want a celebration you don’t want the bullshit of council. You’re not going to a kapa haka competition to have half the group protesting against Tennant’s latest plan for this, that and the other. You take away the joy of the celebration. Don’t bring council into anything that Māori are proud to achieve.* (New Plymouth, Māori, mixed, female)
9.1.4 New Plymouth 30-55 years

The strategies that received the most ticks (top three) in the group were:

- (3) Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose. (7 ticks);

- (7) Use of website/Internet activities e.g. chatrooms, message boards, online forums with councillors, email submissions. (6 ticks);

- (1) Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc (4 ticks).

Based on the actual ratings of all in the group, strategy (3) was the most highly rated. This was attractive because respondents said they could respond in their own time and they had the ability to discuss issues with others before responding. It was essential, they said, that there be feedback on the results of the survey and the survey should be a simple, 1-2 page document about issues of interest to most people.

[Mail outs with list of issues?] It’s in the comfort of your own home. Everybody gets mail. You can do it in your own time. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

You also put a lot more thought into it as well. You can ponder on it. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Strategy (7) rated well, but comments were made that it was important for council to market the site, so residents were aware that it was available to them. It was suggested, for example, that a link could be placed on the Taranaki Savings Bank website and media websites.

[Use of the web, internet activities, how do you see that working?] It’s probably a difficult one in that people don’t know it’s there unless they actually physically go to the website or are on some sort of mailing list to be there. However they can use other websites as pointers like TradeMe or Daily News or whatever and so they can pay colossal fees if they’ve got the money to do that which we’re paying for anyway to actually get that presence and say ‘there’s an online service subscription’. Market it to TradeMe or via TradeMe or whatever. Through TSB Bank probably a lot of us do internet banking. Go to TSB Bank and on their login page there’s a survey at the District Council. Go and fill it in and you’ll get $10 credited. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

I look at the New Zealand Herald every morning on line. [Put it on there. (Interjection.)] I have a look at a few things. Once a week, once a fortnight, bingo, you’re invited to participate in a survey. I don’t always choose to but you’re invited to. Polls or whatever. I’m not saying it’s the right way but again use of the internet or a website to me, again there’s a convenience factor. I can do it in my time at my place at my comfort. (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
Another advantage of this strategy was that it was cost-effective and did not use paper.

_It’s also cost-effective. Very cost-effective. There’s no paper. We’re coming back to the environmental thing._ (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

A few respondents noted that not everyone had access to the internet or were computer literate.

_We can’t get it at our place. Even the phones are bad._ [Not everybody’s computer literate.] (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Strategy (1) was attractive subject to some amendments primarily because it required councillors to proactively engage in person with their communities. However, there was strong opposition to the use of pubs as venues and no-one regarded a local celebrity as either a trusted source or particularly knowledgeable on an issue.

[What would be a more appropriate place to hold those sorts of meetings?] _I went to one of those meetings at the local school and it was really good because it was on neutral ground but very few people turned up, but those of us who did turn up were able to have quite a good discussion in relation to what was the issue at hand._ (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

The strategy that proposed radio competitions rated particularly poorly and was described as ‘crazy.’

[Were any of these other ones completely barmy?] _Radio competitions. I thought that was pretty crazy too._ (Interjection.) (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Free days at council facilities was somewhat confusing as respondents were unsure which facilities were being referred too and it rated poorly as did stronger council branding as this was seen as spending money on expensive logos.

_Nothing makes me more excited than seeing the council spend another billion dollars getting a logo designed._ (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)

_Free days at council facilities, I mean I’m not quite sure – I didn’t think a lot about that. I mean that should be, for instance, taking your kids to the swimming pool free for a day. I’m not quite sure what you meant by council facilities. If it’s walking into the foyer of the palace up here, they’ll show you what they want to show you but if it was something maybe different about a free day at the swimming pool or whatever, I might have warmed to that one. I didn’t really know what that meant._ (New Plymouth, general public, 30-55 years, male)
9.1.5 Christchurch Māori

The three strategies that rated most highly across the group were:

- (2) Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response;

- (1) Councillors meet face-to-face on marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. kaumatua, celebrities;

- (6) Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local kohanga reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals.

There was limited time for discussion of the choices made by this group. Strategy (2) was liked as it was viewed as less intimidating than other options.

*It's a bit more impersonal as well. You can have your say without meeting any type of barriers.* (Canterbury, Māori, female)

The only respondent to rate Strategy (2) low wrote on their paper that they had no broadband which was a point raised by some rural respondents in Taranaki too. Also, a respondent in the Auckland Māori group said older Māori would not use online communications, thus reinforcing the need for multiple communication channels to be in play.

Respondents liked the opportunity to meet someone face-to-face offered by Strategy (1). However, as found in other groups they disliked the use of celebrities as trusted sources.

*The meeting at sports functions and that, I think if they’re there people would talk to them. That type of thing, I think people would, especially if they’re available.* (Canterbury, Māori, male)

The strategy that proposed sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and initiatives rated the lowest with one respondents simply writing ‘opposed’ on their sheet instead of a number. Political speed-dating also rated relatively poorly.

*The only thing on the list that I didn’t like was the seventh one, sponsoring something. To me it smacks of: because you’re a Māori you’re going to get this.* [You find it offensive?] *Yes I do.* (Canterbury, Māori, male)

*They shouldn’t just sponsor Māori. They should sponsor whatever areas need sponsoring if they’re going to.* (Canterbury, Māori, male)
The strategy that proposed that council grants for Māori groups to assist in administration and submission processes rated better than either of the other two Māori groups. One respondent wrote on their sheet that such assistance should not be limited to just Māori.

[Did any of these suggestions seem ridiculous to you?] No. It seems to me as though everybody’s putting in, everybody’s co-operating with everyone else, in other words there’s one great big whanau, not just two cultures going at one another. (Canterbury, Māori, male)

9.1.6 Christchurch 30-55 years

Respondents in this group had the last sentence in strategy (1), Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc, blanked out as the experience with the previous groups was that this was inhibiting support for this option. The strategies that received the most ticks (top three) in the group were:

- (3) Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they choose. (8 ticks);
- (1) Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls, schools pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents. (7 ticks);
- (2) Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events where people can ask questions about council issues (5 ticks).

Strategy (3) stood out because respondents liked the convenience of participating in their own time and it was a process that some said enabled them to be more honest.

People are busy nowadays and they could do that in their leisure. They don’t feel pressured. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I think people would be more honest as well. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

A lot of people these days are doing mail outs on cards and then saying you can do this survey online so you can take the postage out of it. [That’s a goodie. (Interjection.)] (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

As with other groups, it was regarded as important that all results be published. One or two suggested the use of online surveys too.

[Mail outs?] There’s the expense of posting it out but I’d rather they spent that and got our opinions with people replying. [And we get the results, genuine. (Interjection.)] Yes we get the results, follow up from the survey. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)
I think they need to publish the results in the Press to the survey, 87% of people want three rubbish bins, council will probably back the initiative. So you can actually see what’s going on. [And that it was worthwhile to fill it out. (Interjection.)] Then people feel like ‘there we go, oh yeah, cool’. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

Strategy (1) had some caveats placed on it. Again, pubs were not considered an appropriate venue, though schools and events sponsored by the council were suggested as more appropriate places to meet. It was also felt important to ensure meetings were not timed when residents would be under pressure doing other things, for example, pre-Christmas. Preferred times were at the weekend or during holiday periods.

[Face to face?] Once again you’re talking evenings, holidays. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

I think if a council have targeted a particular market, like I’m thinking if I saw a councillor at a supermarket when we’re getting our groceries and they were saying ‘have you thought about using paper bags or whatever’, I think that’s quite effective and would really ring home. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Strategy (2) drew suggestions that these booths could be places where key information sheets could be distributed and one respondent pointed out that this concept seemed to work well for companies like American Express. It was pointed out that public expectations needed to be set to expect that the person staffing the booth would have a broad, rather than any specific knowledge of council matters. It was important that the staff had a strong customer service focus.

[Q&A booths?] It’s a similar approach to the Garry Moore sitting in the square idea. [How do you envisage the person inside the booth?] A customer services type of representative with a broad knowledge of what the council does but doesn’t necessarily have any specific knowledge of a particular issue. Knows who to contact. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, male)

A computer in front of them so they can show the information. Or a sheet or brochure of information that’s going to be happening in your area over the next three or four months or six months or whatever. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

It clearly works because you have people from American Express, Unicef, all those sorts of people are all standing in the mall and approaching people so obviously that works otherwise they wouldn’t pay them all to be there. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

Libraries are good. [Good for what? Meetings?] Councillors, the question and answer booths. A lot of libraries do incorporate now a council type area. That could easily have a question and answer booth in it. (Canterbury, general public, 30-55 years, female)

The strategy that proposed website and online activities rated almost as highly as strategy (2) indicating that it is a channel that will be effective for some. Some respondents said the use of email enabled them to have a paper trail which tracked their correspondence on an issue. The weakest of the strategies was the radio competition followed by the free days at council facilities.
10. Conclusions Summarised

If councils want to increase the level of participation in local government, they must identify those issues that their communities consider to be the most important to them locally. These are likely to be issues such as the need for safe and clean environments which people feel motivated about because the direct impact these issues have on themselves or their families.

Councils, though, need to go further than identifying the key issues to focus on. They must also implement strategies to overcome current barriers to engagement and proactively establish an environment of trust with residents in their communities by demonstrating an ability to listen and respond to their views. The use of public surveys, which provide an easy means for providing input and accountability for decision-making is one of the most strongly supported means of enabling engagement. However, different channels need to be employed to facilitate engagement including the use of the Internet for on-line input, opportunities for face-to-face meetings with councillors and for Māori, the ability to meet on marae or other such venues that enable Māori to engage on their own terms.

Greater effort needs to be made to inform people about where to obtain information about the services councils provide and how to contact the most appropriate people. Formal submission processes should be demystified, for example, by providing simple templates to enable people to make submissions. And if local government presented a more customer focused face over the counter or on the phone to those who interact with it, this would go some way to encouraging people to engage more often.

Local government was generally perceived by the focus groups to be difficult to access, slow and inconsistent in its responsiveness, and at times manipulative with respect to decision-making. Even so, levels of satisfaction with the way in which councils carry out their activities is relatively high in most areas. Building trust will need to address responsiveness at both the individual inquiry level as well as with broader community issues around which genuine consultation and public feedback needs to take place.

The diagram on the next page summarises the main barriers to participation in local government as well as the tools to enable greater participation. Central to encouraging greater participation is the need for councils to pro-actively seek public opinion on key issues that are of interest, such as, the desire for a safe environment, and to being responsive and accountable to public input when making decisions on those issues.
### Barriers

- Bureaucratic
- Complex
- Closed Doors / Lack of Transparency
- Lack of knowledge / information
- Accessibility
- Unresponsive
- Lack of Planning
- Lack of Trust
- Powerlessness

### Enablers (to build trust)

- Pro-actively survey residents and public feedback
  - Mail out
  - Online
  - 0800
- Councillors pro-active and visible in community
- Simple information:
  - Who to contact, when, how to submit, what council responsible for
- Customer service focus
- Multi channel communications
  - Face to face
  - Online
  - Mail outs etc.
- Key issues e.g.:
  - Safety
  - Pollution
  - Rubbish disposal

### Greater Participation
11. Appendix 1: Discussion Guide and Prompts

Discussion guide
Barriers and enablers for enhancing participation in local government

■ Standard introduction (5 minutes):
  • Why focus groups
  • No right/wrong answers
  • Confidentiality
  • Right to pass on any questions
  • Advise recording
  • Logistics – duration, mobile calls, rest room, health and safety issues, emergency exits etc
  • Take any questions

■ Warm up - respondents introduce themselves (5minutes):
  • Identify occupation, how long lived in the area, household circumstances, Iwi affiliation (Māori group)

■ Local Issues (10-12 minutes):
  • Can you start by just writing down what are the things about the town/area you live in that are important to you or your family? [Roundtable discussion]
  • In what ways do these things matter to you or your family? Who are the people that are going to influence what happens?
  • What sorts of things matter longer term? What are more typically short-term horizon issues?

■ Local Councils (40 minutes):
  [What we are looking at tonight are the barriers people face in participating in local government, that is, knowing what your local council does, having a say on things that matter to you and how to go about doing that]
  • First of all, has anyone had any dealings with their local council? [Explore extent and type of experience] How did you go about doing that? How did you know what to do? What could have been improved about that experience?
• [If Māori, explore local iwi/hapu dealings with Council, if not mentioned prompt on land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora/fauna, other taonga] Some dealings with council are conducted by local iwi or hapu, or through Māori wards, working groups or special Māori liaison staff. Are you aware of any such dealings yourself? If so, tell me about them. Did you or any member of your close family follow what happened closely? What was important to you? Did you or a member of your close family have a say in those dealings or was it others in the hapu/iwi who had a say? If so, how? Did you feel you could have had input if you had wanted to? Was it the best way for Council to go about dealing with Māori? What could have been improved?

• Those of you who have had no dealings – tell me why? [Probe on time, inertia, others more actively representing their views]

• Let’s explore the time issue – is that because you think it takes a lot of time? How much time? What do you think is involved? How could it be made really easy using the least amount of your time?

• Let’s explore the things that would make it easier to engage with Council:

  - For example, do you know how you might go about dealing with Council about something that was important to you or your family? If not sure or limited knowledge – what sort of things would you like to know that could help you? How could they best get that kind of information to you? One way of having a say is to make a submission to Council – how do you feel about making a submission? Do you have any concerns about making a submission? What sort of concerns? What could be done to help you make a submission? What would work best for you?

  - Sometimes people may learn in the media or through friends that there is somebody out there that shares their views who is already dealing with the Council? If so, what sort of people would they be? Do you think it would be important to make your views known to them? If not, why not? If so how?

  - Have you had any past experiences with Councils that made it difficult to engage with them? If so, how could things have been improved?

• Here’s a list of some of the things that Councils do. Have a look at the list and mark down in the first column on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that important’ and 10 means ‘very important’ how important each of those activities is to you or your family. In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not at all satisfied’ and 10 means ‘very satisfied’, mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas. [Distribute Prompt 1]

• Did any one mark any of these low, that is, less 5 for satisfaction? [elicit areas of high dissatisfaction, how important is that area to you? Why? Have you taken any action about that? If YES, what happened? How did you find the experience? How did you know what to do? If NO, why not? Did you know what to do?]
Tackling time/inertia (20 minutes):

- Can you break into groups of 2 or 3 and talk among yourselves about ways you think Councils need to do more of to get encourage more participation? How should they be engaging with people? What do they need to do to get people on board? I want one of you from each group to report back. So, ask yourselves these questions:
  - What would make me or someone like me get to tell the local Council what I think about issues that are important to me and my family locally? What do information do I need from them? How can they make it really easy for me to have a say? What would be the best way to for them to engage with me?
  - What sort of things might I or someone like me do?

[Capture responses on whiteboard from each group and discuss]

- Councils have to develop long term plans for their community based on what each community has identified as important to them. It’s the Council’s job to lead the way in finding out what the community wants. What sort of ways would work best for your age group/Māori to get your views across?

Toolbox of Strategies/Activities (25 minutes):

- Here’s a list of strategies and activities others have thought of [Distribute Prompt 2 for Māori and Prompt 3 for 30-55 years]. Have a good look at them, rate them for how likely each is to increase your participation in local government, then we’ll discuss your thoughts.

- OK, let’s take the activities you rated highest [Elicit top rating ones from the list] [Activity 1] – what would it take to get you to take part in that activity? [Desire] what information would you need to take part? [Knowledge] what might stop you taking part? [Skills required] what would make it a positive experience to take part? [Stimulation] what would make you do it again/recommend it to others? [Reinforcement]

- [Repeat for Activity 2 and 3 – no more than 3 activities]

- So, thinking of these activities which of these activities would work best? /would not work well? [explore reasons] How could it be improved? Is this providing the information people need? And in the best way?

Wrap Up (2-3 minutes):
Are there any final comments anyone would like to make – anything you feel we haven’t touched on and may be we should have?
PROMPT 1

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that important’ and 10 means ‘very important’ how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not at all satisfied’ and 10 means ‘very satisfied’, mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COUNCIL ACTIVITY</th>
<th>0-10 HOW IMPORTANT TO ME/MY FAMILY</th>
<th>0-10 HOW SATISFIED WITH LOCAL COUNCIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rubbish/waste disposal/recycling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Roads, footpaths and street lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parks/reserves/sports grounds, cemeteries and crematoria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Waste treatment (sewage), Drainage and storm water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Swimming-pools/recreation and convention centres, halls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>RMA consents and district planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Street beautification/ graffiti removal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sponsor/provide public events (fireworks displays, park concerts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Promote city in NZ/overseas, economic/business development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Art galleries, museums, and music venues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Civil Defence, emergency facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Council housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Noise control, (food inspections) and liquor licensing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Setting rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pollution control, protect environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Safe streets in your neighbourhood for yourself/ children, street lights at night, dogs etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROMPT 2

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

Include in Rows 8 and 9 any additional ideas you want included. These could include any one of the ones that came up in the previous discussion when you split into small groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>0-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Councillors meet face-to-face on marae or local sports clubs or art and culture groups with opportunities to have a say/present views. Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. kaumatua, celebrities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Online e-forums with councillors where Māori email councillors their opinions/ideas and get a response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Council sponsored awards for Māori involved in council processes and initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Political speed-dating where local councillors meet with Māori at an event. Each person attending is allowed a short time with each councillor to discuss whatever issues they want. This could be an event on its own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Question-Answer booths at events where residents can ask questions about local issues. Forums might include Kapa haka competitions, local rugby league games, celebration events e.g. Matariki, Waitangi Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Councillors volunteer on projects important to Māori, so improving contact with Māori and giving councillors a chance to participate in things important to Māori e.g. local kohanga reo campaign to build a new swimming-pool, group fundraising to go to the nationals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Council sponsored funding/grants for Māori representative groups to help with administration/secretarial services to make submission processes easier.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PROMPT 3**

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

Include in Rows 8 and 9 any additional ideas you want included. These could include any one of the ones that came up in the previous discussion when you split into small groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>0-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Councillors meet face-to-face at local sports clubs, halls,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools pubs etc to hear concerns and talk one-on-one with residents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could involve ‘trusted sources’ to convey messages e.g. local celebrities, musicians etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Question-Answer booths in high pedestrian areas or at key events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>where people can ask questions about council issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ticking their preferences and Council contacts them on the issues they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Radio competitions to encourage greater awareness of Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stronger Council branding on all council-funded facilities, service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>etc to better identify all the things the Council does</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Free days at Council facilities and give visitors information on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities the Council does.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use of website/Internet activities e.g. chatrooms, message boards,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online forums with councillors, email submissions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Appendix 2: Analysis of Importance and Satisfaction of Activities by Focus Group and Location

| MEAN SCORE |
|---|---|---|---|
| n | Importance | Satisfaction | Satisfaction – Importance |
| All | 49 | 8.9 | 7.1 | -1.8 |
| Māori | 25 | 8.9 | 7.0 | -1.9 |
| 30-55 yrs | 24 | 8.9 | 7.2 | -1.7 |
| Auckland | 16 | 8.9 | 8.3 | -0.6 |
| New Plymouth | 14 | 8.3 | 6.0 | -2.3 |
| Christchurch | 19 | 9.3 | 6.8 | -2.5 |
| Auckland - Māori | 8 | 8.4 | 8.1 | -0.3 |
| Auckland - 30-55 | 8 | 9.4 | 8.5 | -0.9 |
| New Plymouth - Māori | 7 | 8.6 | 4.7 | -3.9 |
| New Plymouth - 30-55 | 7 | 8.0 | 7.5 | -0.5 |
| Christchurch - Māori | 10 | 9.5 | 7.6 | -1.9 |
| Christchurch - 30-55 | 9 | 9.1 | 5.9 | -3.2 |

**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - RUBBISH/WASTE DISPOSAL/RECYCLING**

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.
**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - ROADS, FOOTPATHS AND STREET LIGHTING**

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

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<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction – Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-55 yrs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<td>Auckland</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8.8</td>
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<td>-2.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Plymouth - 30-55</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch - Māori</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christchurch - 30-55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION – WATER SUPPLY

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that important’ and 10 means ‘very important’, how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not at all satisfied’ and 10 means ‘very satisfied’, mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

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<tbody>
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<td>49</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>9.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christchurch - 30-55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - PARKS/RESERVES/SPORTS GROUNDS, CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities to you or your family.

**In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-55 yrs</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - WASTE TREATMENT (SEWAGE), DRAINAGE AND STORM WATER**

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.

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<tr>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
## IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - LIBRARIES

*In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.*

*In the second column, using the 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied', mark down how satisfied you are with your local council in each of those areas.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - SWIMMING-POOLS/RECREATION AND CONVENTION CENTRES, HALLS

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

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IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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## IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - RMA CONSENTS AND DISTRICT PLANNING

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### IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - STREET BEAUTIFICATION/GRAFFITI REMOVAL

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IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - PARKING

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In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

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**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - PROMOTE CITY IN NZ/OVERSEAS, ECONOMIC/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

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### IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - ART GALLERIES, MUSEUMS, AND MUSIC VENUES

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IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - NOISE CONTROL, (FOOD INSPECTIONS) AND LIQUOR LICENSING

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**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION – SETTING RATES**

*In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.*

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**IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION - SAFE STREETS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD FOR YOURSELF/ CHILDREN, STREET LIGHTS AT NIGHT, DOGS ETC**

In the first column, on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that important' and 10 means 'very important', how important is each of these activities is to you or your family.

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – COUNCILORS MEET FACE-TO-FACE ON MARAE OR LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS OR ART AND CULTURE GROUPS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE A SAY/PRESENT VIEWS. COULD INVOLVE 'TRUSTED SOURCES' TO CONVEY MESSAGES E.G. KAUMATUA, CELEBRITIES

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – ONLINE E-FORUMS WITH COUNCILLORS WHERE MĀORI EMAIL COUNCILLORS THEIR OPINIONS/IDEAS AND GET A RESPONSE

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – COUNCIL SPONSORED AWARDS FOR MĀORI INVOLVED IN COUNCIL PROCESSES AND INITIATIVES

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – POLITICAL SPEED-DATING WHERE LOCAL COUNCILLORS MEET WITH MĀORI AT AN EVENT. EACH PERSON ATTENDING IS ALLOWED A SHORT TIME WITH EACH COUNCILLOR TO DISCUSS WHATEVER ISSUES THEY WANT. THIS COULD BE AN EVENT ON ITS OWN

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT –
QUESTION-ANSWER BOOTHs AT EVENTS WHERE RESIDENTS CAN ASK QUESTIONS
ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES. FORUMS MIGHT INCLUDE KAPAHAKA COMPETITIONS, LOCAL
RUGBY LEAGUE GAMES, CELEBRATION EVENTS E.G. MATARIKI, WAITANGI DAY

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for
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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT –
COUNCILLORS VOLUNTEER ON PROJECTS IMPORTANT TO MĀORI, SO IMPROVING
CONTACT WITH MĀORI AND GIVING COUNCILLORS A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN
THINGS IMPORTANT TO MĀORI E.G. LOCAL KOHANGA REO CAMPAIGN TO BUILD A
NEW SWIMMING-POOL, GROUP FUNDRAISING TO GO TO THE NATIONALS

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for
on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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### ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – COUNCIL SPONSORED FUNDING/GRANTS FOR MĀORI REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS TO HELP WITH ADMINISTRATION/SERVICES TO MAKE SUBMISSION PROCESSES EASIER

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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**ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – COUNCILLORS MEET FACE-TO-FACE AT LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS, HALLS, SCHOOLS, PUBS ETC TO HEAR CONCERNS AND TALK ONE-ON-ONE WITH RESIDENTS. COULD INVOLVE 'TRUSTED SOURCES' TO CONVEY MESSAGES E.G. LOCAL CELEBRITIES, MUSICIANS ETC**

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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**ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – QUESTION-ANSWER BOOTHS IN HIGH PEDESTRIAN AREAS OR AT KEY EVENTS WHERE PEOPLE CAN ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT COUNCIL ISSUES**

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who did not provide a rating or were unsure have been omitted from the mean calculations.
ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – Mail-outs with a list of issues residents may want to be informed about and ways of contacting them on issues. Residents send back form ticking their preferences and council contacts them on the issues they choose.

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-55 yrs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – Radio competitions to encourage greater awareness of council activities.

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means 'not that likely' and 10 means 'very likely' for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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</tr>
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<td>3.0</td>
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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – STRONGER COUNCIL BRANDING ON ALL COUNCIL-FUNDED FACILITIES, SERVICE ETC TO BETTER IDENTIFY ALL THE THINGS THE COUNCIL DOES

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – FREE DAYS AT COUNCIL FACILITIES AND GIVE VISITORS INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES THE COUNCIL DOES

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – USE OF WEBSITE/INTERNET ACTIVITIES E.G. CHATROOMS, MESSAGE BOARDS, ONLINE FORUMS WITH COUNCILLORS, EMAIL SUBMISSIONS

Rate each activity on a 0-10 scale where 0 means ‘not that likely’ and 10 means ‘very likely’ for on how likely each activity would be to increase your participation in local government.

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