

Annual Residents Survey 2009

Background

In the past, the measurement of residents' satisfaction levels for services provided by the Council was primarily undertaken by telephone surveys carried out by external consultants.

For the 2009 Annual Residents Survey, a different approach was taken to provide a more cost-effective way of gaining residents' feedback that would also allow more regular surveys to take place throughout the year.

This new approach involved the establishment of an email based Citizens' Panel which was recruited by using a stratified sample of the property database. Younger people and some ethnic communities were targeted to boost their level of participation.

By recruiting a panel, Council has the opportunity to carry out more in-depth research with panel members, for example through more detailed follow-up surveys or by inviting them to attend focus groups. It also allows Council to share the results and outcomes of surveys with participants to help improve understanding of the Council's decision making process as well as monitoring satisfaction throughout the year as needed.

By the time of the survey being circulated in July, there were 399 members on the panel. Panel members were sent an email with a link to the online survey and two reminder emails were sent to non-responders over the following two weeks to encourage response.

As the panel had not yet been recruited to its required level, a further stratified sample of the property database was also posted a copy of the survey with a freepost return address but encouraged to fill in the survey online and join the panel if they had internet access.

This approach used a simpler method of measuring satisfaction based on the scale of very satisfied, fairly satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. In previous years, the scale used was from 0-10. However, residents were also asked to rate the importance of services and facilities as well as to identify which were most in need of improvement which gives Council greater understanding of the results.

Due to this change in methodology and change to the satisfaction scale, the results from the 2009 Annual Residents' Survey can not be compared accurately with previous results.

Sample size achieved for the Annual Residents Survey was 661 which gives a margin of error of +/-3.8% for a 95% confidence level.

302 responses were received from Citizens' Panel members giving a response rate of 75%, while 359 responses were received back from the postal mail-out – 17% of which were received online, and 83% by post.

Demographic breakdown

Key demographic information was collected from respondents to monitor how representative the sample was:

Age groups	Response	Census Target
16-24	5%	14%
25-34	4%	12%
35-44	17%	21%
45-54	19%	18%
55-64	21%	15%
65+	33%	19%

Gender

Male	42%	49%
Female	58%	51%

Ethnicity

New Zealander / European	93%	95%
Maori	1%	9%
Pacific	1%	2%
Asian	1%	3%
Mixed	2%	
Other	1%	0.4%

Location by Census

Area Unit

Hibiscus Coast ward		
Orewa	14%	8%
Red Beach	7%	7%
Silverdale	2%	3%
Whangaparaoa	23%	26%
	46%	44%

Northern ward

Algies Bay-Mahurangi	2%	1%
Cape Rodney	5%	7%
Kawau	0.3%	0.1%
Leigh / Matheson Bay	1%	0.6%
Snells Beach	4%	4%
Tauhoa – Puhoi	4%	5%
Waiwera	1%	0.3%
Warkworth	8%	4%
Wellsford	4%	2%
	31%	24%

Western ward		
Helensville	3%	3%
Kaukapakapa	2%	3%
Kumeu	6%	8%
Muriwai Beach	1%	2%
Parakai	1%	2%
Rewiti	0.3%	2%
South Head	1%	2%
Taupaki / Waipareira		2%
West	2%	
	14%	24%
Central / Western ward		
Dairy Flat-Redvale	5%	2%
Riverhead /		4%
Paremoremo West	3%	
Tahekeroa	1%	4%
	9%	10%

NB: The census target for age groups is based on population figures for residents over the age of 15 years. Respondents were asked to specify the town or community they lived in and were allocated to census area units based on those replies.

Topics covered

Community issues

A wide range of questions were asked to help understand how people felt about the place they live in, what they see as being important factors in living there, how satisfied they are with them and what they see as being most in need of improvement.

Services and facilities that are not provided by the Council were also included to give a better sense of place and give greater perspective on the issues that affect local communities. Those that aren't directly managed by the Council are relevant to our Memorandum of Understanding with partner agencies or to economic activities within the District.

Satisfaction with specific Council issues

Several questions were asked on specific activities for inclusion in the Annual Report while more detailed sections covered complaints, customer service, communications and democratic engagement.

To ensure the survey responses were manageable in-house, participants completing the paper survey received an abridged version of the survey that did not cover the more detailed customer service and communications issues.

The results

Some weighting of the data by age was possible to help ensure the responses reflected a balanced view of the community. However, approximately a third of the responses were unable to be directly linked with the respondents' demographic data so this was not able to be as accurate as desired.

Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Very satisfied	37%
Fairly satisfied	48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%

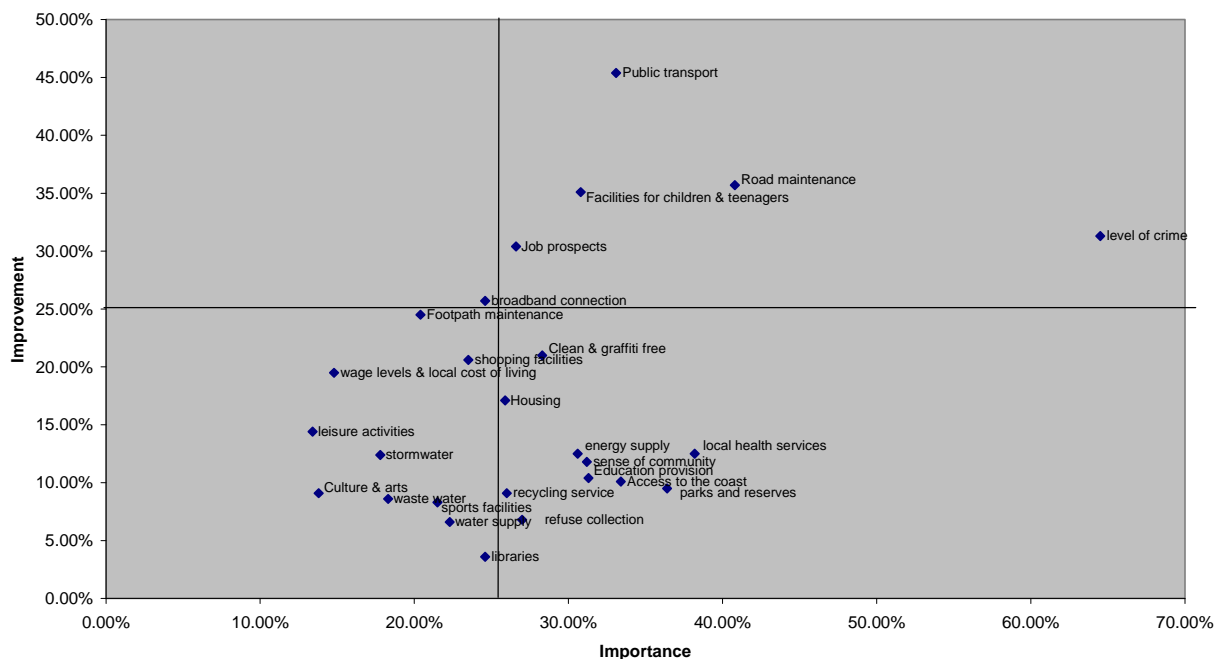
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following services or facilities?

Activity	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Access to the coast	44%	40%	11%	3%	2%
Affordable decent housing	9%	37%	41%	11%	2%
Clean & graffiti-free streets	8%	52%	22%	16%	3%
Amount of culture & arts in the community	8%	40%	43%	6%	3%
Public transport	2%	22%	34%	24%	18%
Facilities for children & teenagers	1%	30%	41%	23%	5%
Education provision	9%	44%	35%	9%	2%
Footpath maintenance	4%	39%	30%	19%	8%
Road maintenance	4%	40%	25%	22%	10%
Job prospects	1%	15%	53%	25%	7%
Leisure activities eg nightlife and entertainment	2%	21%	50%	19%	8%
Library services	32%	47%	16%	4%	1%
Local health services	17%	54%	19%	7%	3%

Local sports facilities	14%	48%	30%	7%	2%
Level of crime	7%	41%	26%	21%	5%
Parks & reserves in the area	29%	50%	14%	6%	2%
Range of shopping facilities	9%	45%	24%	18%	4%
Broadband connection	9%	34%	26%	18%	12%
Energy supply	11%	48%	26%	11%	4%
Recycling collection	22%	51%	14%	10%	3%
Refuse collection	22%	52%	16%	6%	4%
Storm water disposal	10%	36%	38%	10%	6%
Waste water	10%	35%	41%	6%	8%
Water supply	12%	38%	40%	6%	4%
Sense of community	14%	46%	30%	9%	2%
Wage levels and local cost of living	2%	18%	56%	20%	4%

What activities are most important in making somewhere a good place to live and what are most in need of improvement (participants were invited to select up to five for each question):

Improvement against importance



Issues in the top right corner are most important and most in need of improvement so should be considered as being of highest priority.

Specific Council issues

How satisfied are you that the Council:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Provides value for money	1%	19%	33%	35%	13%
Makes decisions in the best interest of the natural environment	3%	37%	35%	19%	5%
Encourages economic growth within the District	2%	27%	42%	23%	7%

Complaints

Have you made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months?

Yes – 41.5%

No – 58.5%

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way in which your complaint(s) was/were handled?

Very satisfied	25%
Fairly satisfied	22%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%
Fairly dissatisfied	19%
Very dissatisfied	25%
Unspecified	1%

Satisfaction relating to the issue raised (out of 134 responses):

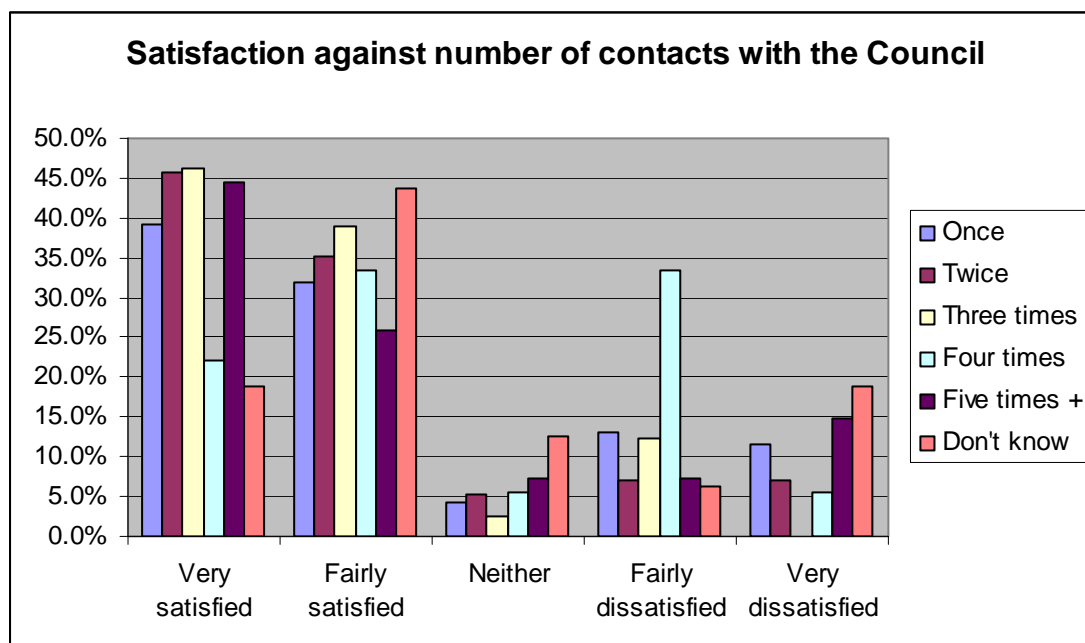
	Very or fairly satisfied	Neither	Very or fairly dissatisfied
Consents / compliance	3	0	11
Rates	3	3	9
Roading	15	0	8
Waste – refuse & recycling	4	1	6
District plan variations / zoning	2	0	5
Council – governance/ customer service	1	2	5
Animal-related eg dogs	6	0	4
Noise	2	1	4
Stormwater	4	1	3
Wastewater	1	0	3
Reserve maintenance	10	2	2
Signage	3	0	2
Street cleaning / graffiti	2	0	2
Street lights	4	2	1
Issues with neighbours	4	1	1
Footpaths	3	1	0
Water supply / maintenance	2	0	0
Boat ramps	1	0	0
Civil defence	1	0	0
Parking	1	0	0
Council buildings in park	0	1	0
Supercity	0	1	0

Customer services

How many times have you contacted the Council in the past 12 months for any other reason than to make a complaint?

No contact	18%
Once	25%
Twice	20%
Three times	15%
Four times	6%
Five times or more	10%
Don't know	6%

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received the last time you made contact with the Council?



How were you in contact with the Council? (*participants were able to select more than one option*)

By telephone	44%
In person	27%
By email	14%
Via the Council's website	7%
By letter	7%
Other	2%

Why were you in contact with the Council? (*participants were able to select more than one option*)

Asked for advice/ information	42%
Reported an issue/ problem	41%
Applied for a consent	14%
Applied for a licence or permit	11%
Other	16%
Don't know	2%

Looking at satisfaction levels relating to the reason why people were in contact with the Council:

- 81% of those who contacted the Council to ask for advice or information were satisfied;
- 73% of those who applied for a consent or licence were satisfied and;
- 61% of people were satisfied when reporting an issue or problem.

How satisfied were you with:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissat	Very dissat	N/A
The initial contact (eg through call centre)	49%	31%	7%	4%	3%	7%
That it was easy to find the right person	43%	30%	10%	6%	6%	5%
The length of time it took to deal with the person you contacted	41%	31%	12%	7%	5%	5%
Any information you were given	37%	29%	10%	11%	10%	4%
How competent the staff were	44%	25%	15%	6%	6%	3%
How helpful the staff were	52%	25%	10%	5%	6%	2%
The final outcome	33%	25%	9%	9%	18%	6%

Have you had an issue with a Council service over the last 12 months that you didn't contact the Council about?

Yes – 33%, No – 67%

If yes, why didn't you contact the Council? (120 responses) (*participants were able to select more than one option*)

Didn't think it would make a difference	68%
Didn't know who to get in touch with	9%
Didn't seem important enough	5%
Have already contacted about issue but not been resolved	4%
The issue resolved itself	3%
Too busy	3%
Out of office hours	2%
Other	7%

Communications

How well informed do you feel about general Council issues and decisions?

Very well informed	4%
Fairly well informed	45%
Not very well informed	33%
Not at all well informed	14%
Don't know	5%

Participants were asked how often they had seen a number of communications activities:

Activity	% seen or heard at least occasionally
Rodney Times weekly columns	91%
Reporting on Rodney	38%
Radio adverts / broadcasts on Times FM	28%
Social media – Facebook, Twitter or Bebo	6%

How often on average do you visit the Council's website?

Daily	1%
Weekly	9%
Monthly	31%
Hardly at all	18%
Never	41%

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the Council's website:

	Very satisfied	fairly satisfied	neither	fairly dissat	very dissat
General look and feel	13%	42%	39%	5%	1%
Ease of getting around the site	10%	41%	37%	11%	2%
Ease of finding information	5%	39%	34%	18%	4%
Usefulness of the search	8%	37%	39%	14%	4%
Value of the information	9%	41%	51%	8%	2%

Suggestions for improvement included requests for e-newsletters, simpler layout to the committee meetings pages, online submissions, payments and discussions plus more project-related information (eg Penlink and Orewa Boulevard).

Other suggestions for improvement focused on the search facility, on the use of plain English, on ensuring that information is kept up-to-date and on being more honest and open.

Democratic engagement

Over the last twelve months, have you attended a Council-run meeting?

No – 83%, Yes – 17%:

- In the ward – 4%
- Council chambers – 11%
- Neighbourhood – 10%

If not, why not? (90 responses) (*participants were able to select more than one option*)

Unaware of where and when meetings held	32%
Too busy	30%
Not interested	17%
Not relevant to me	13%
Inconvenient time	8%
Inconvenient location	4%
Other	4%
Think it would be a waste of time / wouldn't make a difference	3%

How satisfied are you that you can make a difference in the democratic process?

Very satisfied	2%
Fairly satisfied	20%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	37%
Fairly dissatisfied	28%
Very dissatisfied	13%

How satisfied are you that the Council is open and honest in its dealings with residents?

Very satisfied	1%
Fairly satisfied	24%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	34%
Fairly dissatisfied	28%
Very dissatisfied	13%

The Council is considering holding an Open Day to help to explain the role of the Council and to improve opportunities for dialogue. Would you be interested in attending?

Yes – 44%, No – 56%

Suggestions for improving how the Council communicates with local residents

Several themes came out of the suggestions. Themes included the Council being more open and honest, improving efforts to gain greater involvement and input and being more genuine in its interaction with local residents specifically “*ordinary working people*”.

Other key issues raised included requests for email newsletters, more localised, direct or targeted communications, more opportunities for face-to-

face meetings with Councillors and messages or information to be better pitched at the target audience.

Other people used this opportunity to raise issues around the Council focusing on its core business, improving customer service, providing better value for money and aspects of governance.