



Napier City Council

SIL Research

| 2021 Three Waters Reform

Community Engagement Survey

September 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to engage with the Napier community, obtain feedback in relation to water governance, and to inform Council's decision making in relation to the Three Waters Reform.

Research was conducted between 16 August and 10 September 2021. A total of n=720 surveys were used in the final analysis, with proportional representation across Napier's four wards.

The main findings were as follows:

- 1 Overall, 82% of respondents had heard about the Three Waters Reform; however, the perceived depth of knowledge was limited and polarised (38% felt informed and 38% felt not informed).
 - 83% of respondents indicated the importance of a strong local influence in the governing and/or delivery of the three waters services. Local voice and representation, Council control and greater local knowledge required to manage water supply were some key reasons mentioned by respondents.
- 2 At the same time, respondents were divided in their willingness to pay more to retain local representation for decision-making and service delivery; 48% stated 'yes' and 52% - 'no'.
 - Of those respondents who stated 'yes', 45% were prepared to pay an extra \$200 per year (reflecting 21% of all respondents).
- 3 57% of respondents provided additional (unprompted) comments in relation to the Three Waters Reform. 39% of these comments generally opposed the reform and/or preferred local control by the Council; fewer respondents actively supported the reform (13%). The majority of other comments expressed various concerns or highlighted the need to address water-related issues, improve infrastructure and provide quality water services.

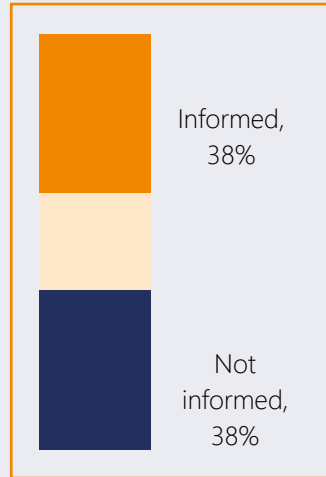


KEY RESULTS

Awareness



Were aware about the Three Waters Reform



Willingness to pay



Were prepared to pay more to retain local representation for decision-making and service delivery

Local voice

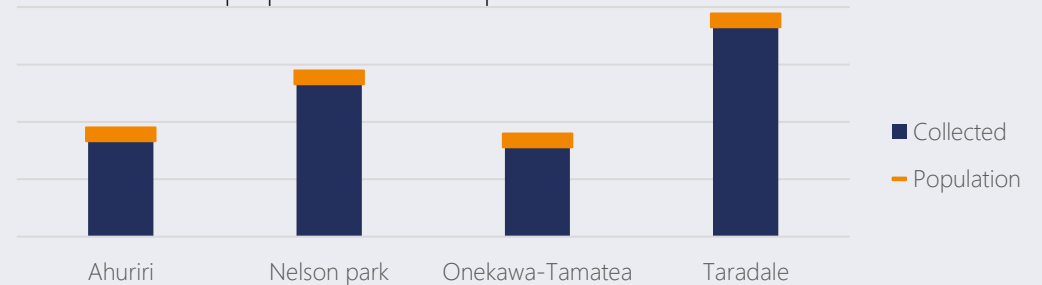
83%



Believed local influence in the governing and/or delivery of the three waters services was important

About survey

720 responses collected between 16 August and 10 September 2021 in proportion across Napier's four wards



METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Currently, 67 different Councils own and operate the majority of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater (i.e. three waters) services across New Zealand. The Government has been considering changes to the regulation and delivery of the country's three waters services – a system-side reform was proposed in 2020. The Government's intention is to reform local government's three waters services into a small number of multi-regional entities.



The Government has given Councils until 30 September 2021 to analyse the Three Waters Reform proposal and provide feedback. The proposal suggests boundaries for the four entities. Napier is part of Entity C, which is made up of the districts in eastern and lower parts of the North Island (Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, lower parts of the Manawatu-Whanganui region, Wellington) and local authorities at the top of the South Island (Tasman, Nelson and Marlborough).

Such amalgamation could remove Council's responsibility for maintaining critical water-related infrastructure and services. Local communities could have reduced influence over water decisions. It also may change how much ratepayers pay for water services, and who they pay for these services in the future.

The aim of this research was to engage with the Napier community, obtain feedback in relation to water governance, and to inform Council's decision making in relation to the Three Waters Reform.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND PROJECT SPECIFICS

In August 2021, SIL Research together with NCC developed a Three Waters Community Engagement questionnaire. The following questions were included:

- awareness and level of knowledge in relation to the Three Waters Reform,
- importance of having a local voice in water governance,
- willingness to pay more to maintain local governance over water-related services.

DATA COLLECTION

Research was conducted between 16 August and 10 September 2021.

Multiple data collection methods were utilised to ensure residents were well-represented. The mixed-methods approach included:

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

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

(3) Online/web based (available via NCC's channels). The survey was available via NCC's 'Say it Napier' page and Facebook.

In addition, an online community discussion event was held on 7 September.

A total of n=720 surveys were used in the final analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Surveys were conducted proportional to the population in each of Napier's wards. Post-stratification (weighting) was then applied to the full dataset to reflect the ward, age and gender group proportions as determined by the Statistics New Zealand 2018 Census.

Table 1 Responses by ward

| | Number of responses | % |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----|
| Ahuriri | 129 | 18% |
| Nelson Park | 195 | 27% |
| Onekawa-Tamatea | 125 | 17% |
| Taradale | 271 | 38% |

SIL Research ensured quality control during and after the fieldwork period. This included (but was not limited to) exclusion of incomplete responses, and responses coming from outside of Napier City Council catchment area.

The main resident demographic groups analysed in this report were: ward, age, gender and home ownership. During the analysis stage of this report, Chi-square tests were used when comparing group results

in tables. The threshold for reporting any statistically significant differences was a p-value of 0.05. Where differences were outside this threshold (less than 95%), no comments were made; where differences were within this threshold, comments have been made within the context of their practical relevance to NCC.

Using Statistics New Zealand population projections for the NCC catchment area, in general, a sample size of n=720 across around 47,400 residents aged 18 years and over allows for a 95% confidence level +/- 3.7% where residents are split 50/50 on any given issues, and a 95% confidence level +/- 2.9% where residents are split 80/20.

Where results are reported by sub-groups of residents, estimates of results may not be statistically reliable due to the high margins of error (small sample sizes).

NOTES ON REPORTING

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

On 17 August 2021, the Alert Level 4 (and national lockdown) was announced as a response to new community cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant. Following New Zealand Government recommendations, the data collection methods were reviewed and limited only to online and telephone interviewing methods to ensure safety of the Napier community.

WHO TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY

Table 1 Responses by age

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| 18-39 | 227 | 31.5 |
| 40-64 | 304 | 42.2 |
| 65+ | 189 | 26.3 |
| Total | 720 | 100.0 |

Table 2 Responses by gender

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Female | 378 | 52.5 |
| Male | 340 | 47.2 |
| Another gender | 2 | 0.3 |
| Total | 720 | 100.0 |

Table 3 Responses by home ownership

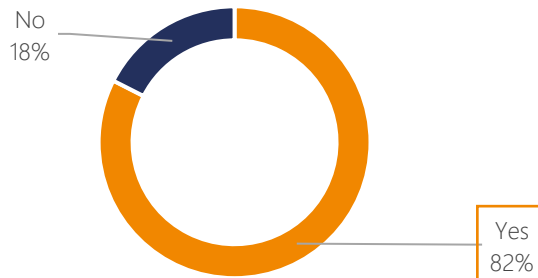
| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Own | 574 | 79.8 |
| Rent | 91 | 12.6 |
| Private trust | 14 | 2.0 |
| Other | 9 | 1.2 |
| Prefer not to say | 32 | 4.4 |
| Total | 720 | 100.0 |

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

AWARENESS OF THREE WATERS REFORM

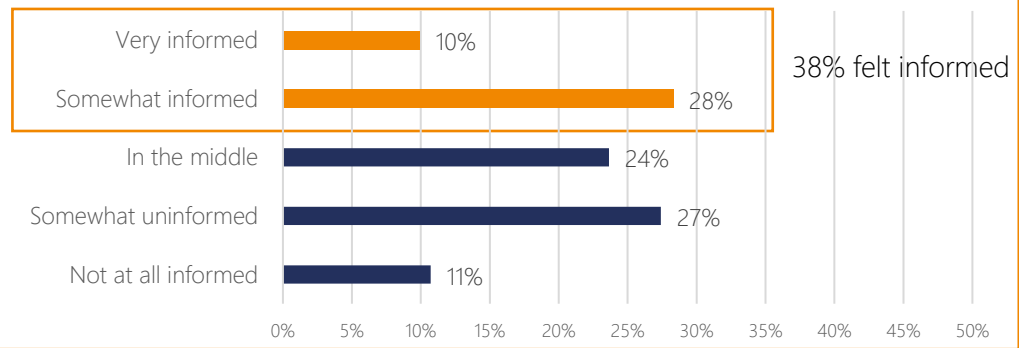
All respondents were asked: "Have you heard about the Three Waters Reform prior to this survey". Those stating 'Yes' were asked: "How informed do you feel about the Three Waters Reform proposed by central Government?".

Have heard about the Three Waters Reform prior to this survey



n=720 (stated 'Yes' n=594)

How informed do you feel about the Three Waters Reform proposed by central Government?



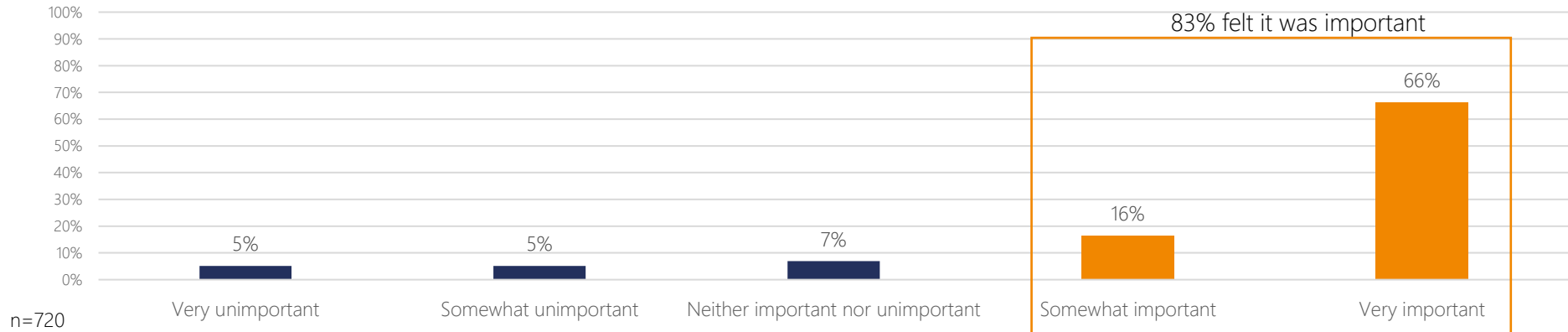
- Overall, **82%** of respondents stated they **had heard** about the **Three Waters Reform** prior to this survey.
- Although 8-in-10 respondents were aware of this reform, the general depth of knowledge was limited. **38%** of respondents who had heard about this reform **felt informed** to some extent; only 10% reported being '*very informed*'.
- The same percentage of respondents (**38%**) **felt not informed**.
- Residents in rental properties (70%) were less likely to have heard about the Three Waters reform.
- Older residents (65+) were more likely to feel informed to some degree (44%) compared to residents aged under 65.

| | Ahuriri | Nelson Park | Onekawa-Tamatea | Taradale | 18-39 yrs | 40-64 yrs | 65+ yrs | Total |
|---------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Aware | 83% | 78% | 81% | 86% | 80% | 85% | 81% | 82% |
| Not informed | 37% | 38% | 41% | 37% | 47% | 39% | 27% | 38% |
| In the middle | 22% | 22% | 31% | 22% | 17% | 25% | 29% | 24% |
| Informed | 41% | 39% | 28% | 41% | 36% | 37% | 44% | 38% |

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL VOICE

All respondents were asked: "Noting that regulation and standards are set nationally, how important is a strong local influence in the governing and/or delivery of the three waters services e.g. local representation in decision-making and priority setting, setting service levels and enabling growth in Napier".

How important is a strong local influence in the governing and/or delivery of the three waters services?



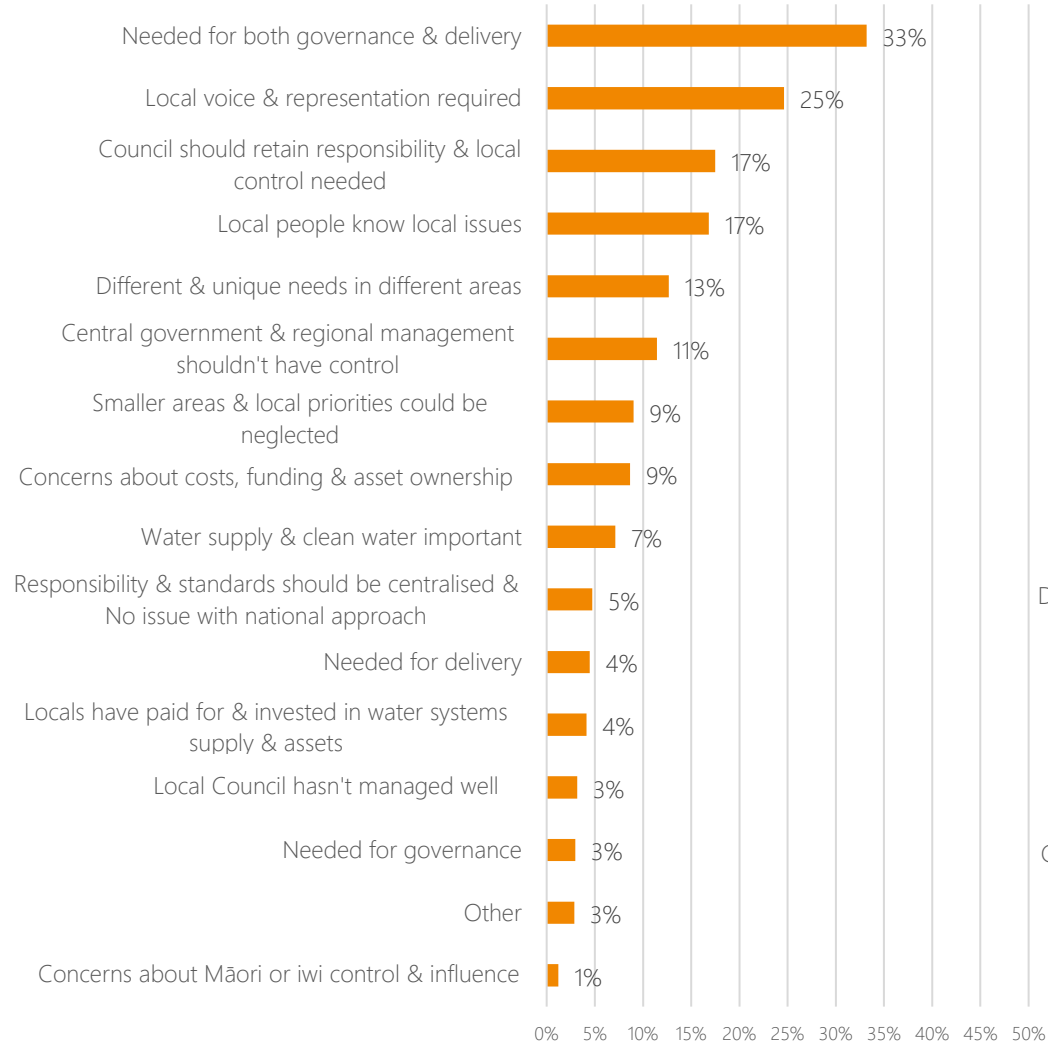
- Overall, **83%** of respondents indicated the **importance** of a strong **local influence** in the governing and/or delivery of the three waters services. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents felt this was 'very important'.
- Just 1-in-10 respondents (10%) said it was **unimportant** to some degree.
- The overall importance of local voice was similarly high between respondents from different wards, age groups, home ownership status, and was not influenced by initial awareness or level of knowledge (no statistically significant differences).

| | Ahuriri | Nelson Park | Onekawa-Tamatea | Taradale | 18-39 yrs | 40-64 yrs | 65+ yrs | Total |
|---------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Unimportant | 7% | 12% | 11% | 10% | 12% | 10% | 8% | 10% |
| In the middle | 4% | 9% | 11% | 5% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 7% |
| Important | 89% | 79% | 79% | 84% | 82% | 82% | 85% | 83% |

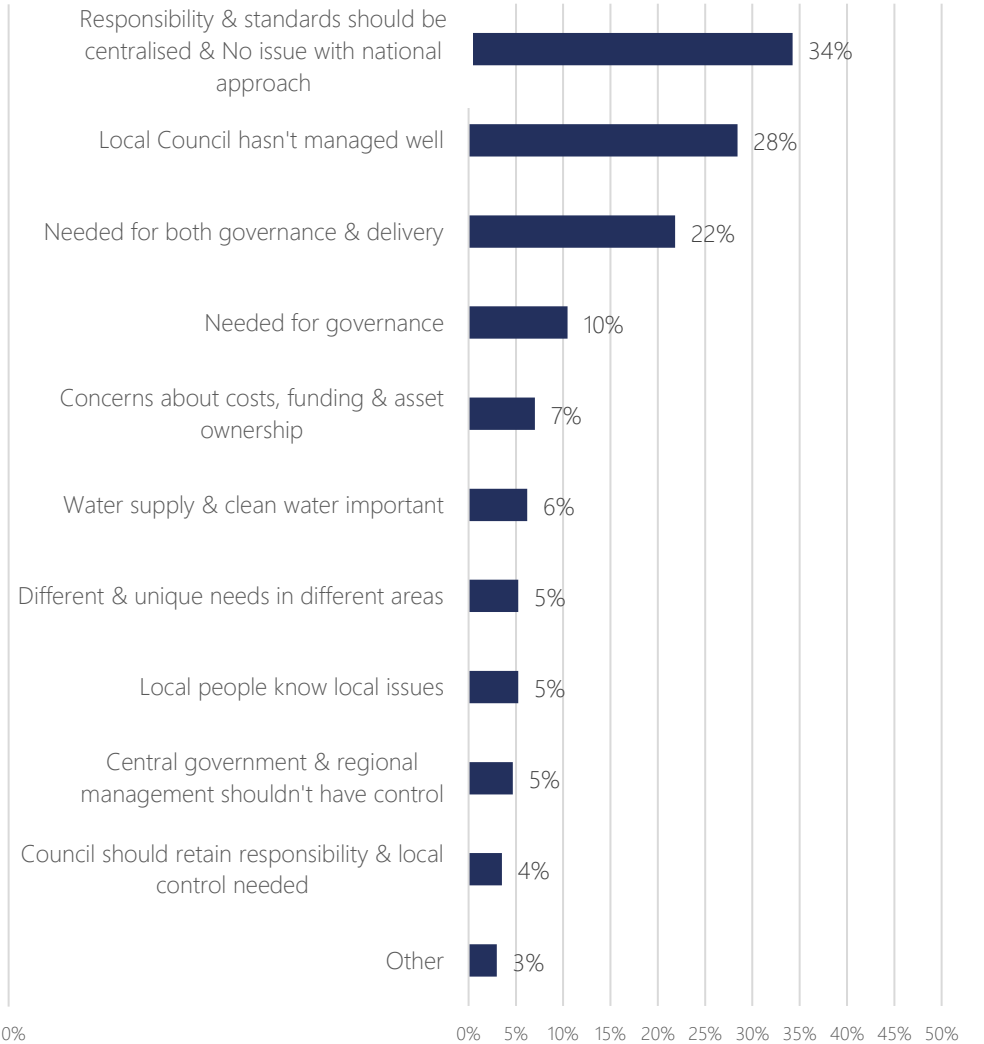
LOCAL VOICE IMPORTANCE

Open-ended comments sorted into categories. Totals may exceed 100% owing to multiple responses for each respondent.

Local voice is **important** (83% of respondents)



Local voice is **not important** (10% of respondents)

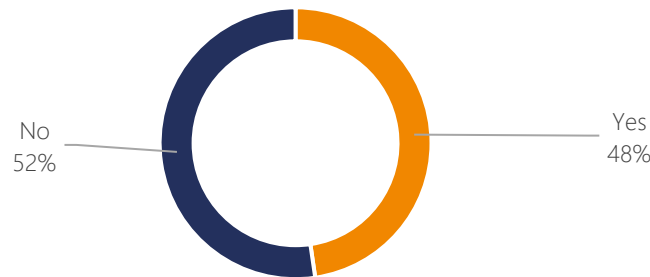


- Out of 83% of respondents who believed local influence is **important**, 1-in-3 (33%) indicated it was *'needed for both governance and delivery'* of water services.
- Other key themes highlighted the perceived importance of *'local voice/representation'*, *'local control'* (e.g. *'Council should retain responsibility'*), and greater local knowledge required to manage water supply (e.g. *'local people know local issues'*).
- Despite rating local governance and/or delivery of the water services as important, some respondents raised their concerns about local water supply (e.g. *'local Council hasn't managed well'* and *'responsibility/standards should be centralised/no issue with national/regional control'*).
- Just 10% of respondents mentioned a strong local influence was **not important**.
- Key reasons behind this choice were the perceived need for a centralised approach (e.g. *'Responsibility & standards should be centralised'*) and dissatisfaction with current Council water services management (e.g. *'Local Council hasn't managed well'*).
- Nevertheless, some of these respondents still felt that some local influence or input was needed.

WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE (FOR LOCAL REPRESENTATION)

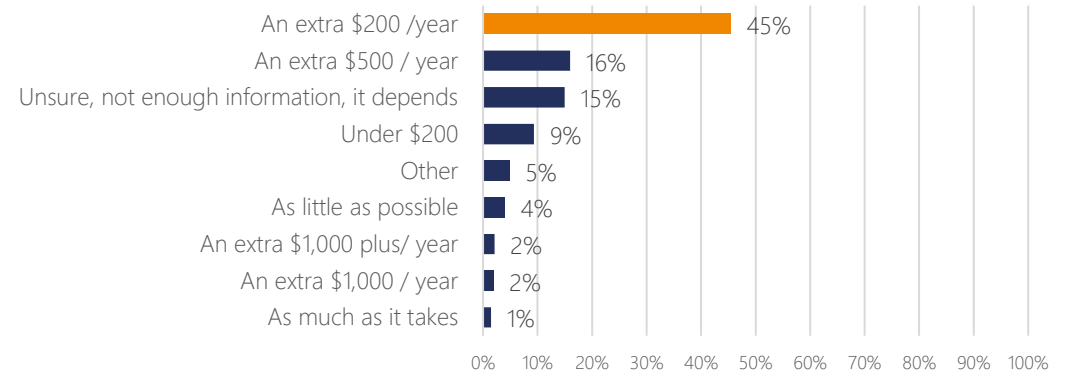
All respondents were asked: "When thinking about Three Waters delivery, would you be prepared to pay more to retain local representation for decision-making and service delivery?". Those stating 'Yes' were asked: "How much would you be prepared to pay?".

Would be prepared to pay more to retain local representation for decision-making and service delivery



n=720 (stated 'Yes' n=343)

How much more would you be prepared to pay?



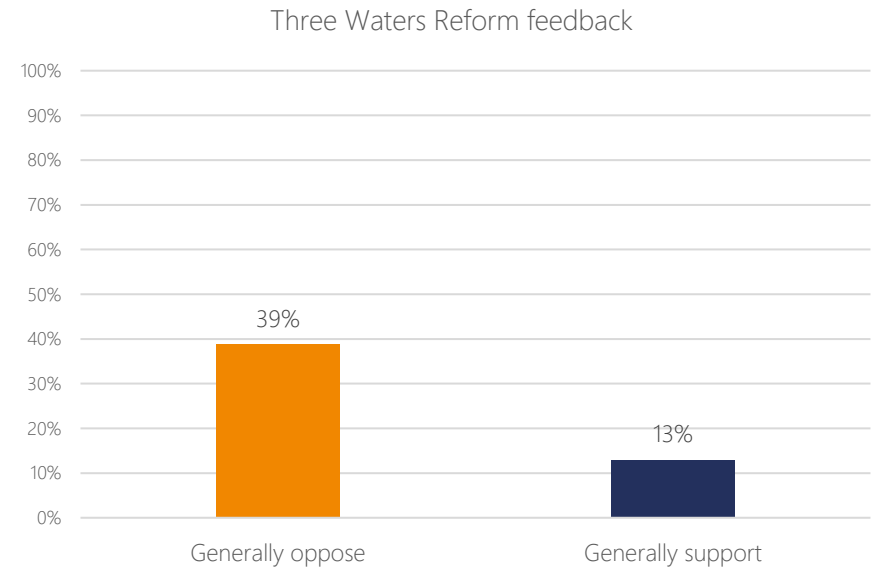
- Just under half of all respondents (48%) indicated they were prepared to pay more to retain local representation for decision-making and service delivery; 52% stated 'No'.
- Of those respondents who stated 'Yes', 45% were prepared to pay an extra \$200 per year; that is 21% of all respondents.
- At the same time, 15% were generally uncertain and not prepared to make this decision without further information.
- Respondents who felt informed about the reform (59%) and/or placed greater importance on local voice and control (54%) were more prepared to pay extra to retain this control.
- Just 6% of respondents willing to pay were prepared to spend \$1,000+ or 'As much as it takes'.
- Fewer younger residents aged 18-39 (who also felt less informed) were prepared to pay more (40%).
- Respondents living in rental properties (27%) were also less willing to pay more.
- More respondents from Ahuriri ward agreed to pay more to retain local control over water services (62%).

| | Ahuriri | Nelson Park | Onekawa-Tamatea | Taradale | 18-39 yrs | 40-64 yrs | 65+ yrs | Total |
|---------------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Willing to pay more | 62% | 49% | 43% | 42% | 40% | 51% | 52% | 48% |

OTHER COMMENTS

Open-ended comments sorted into categories. Totals may exceed 100% owing to multiple responses for each respondent.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Concerned about costs / rates / taxes / funding | 32% |
| Oppose reforms / government control | 27% |
| Water issues / infrastructure quality / improvement is priority | 26% |
| Retain local / Council control | 19% |
| More information / openness needed | 14% |
| Concerned about asset ownership / retention / privatisation / sell-off | 14% |
| Concerned about increased management / inefficient bureaucracy | 13% |
| Support reforms / National standardisation / management | 10% |
| Change / action needed | 9% |
| Concern about Entity size / boundaries | 7% |
| Need to consider / listen to ratepayers / hold referendum | 6% |
| Dissatisfied with Council water management | 6% |
| Concerns about Māori / iwi control / influence | 6% |
| Local input / representation still needed | 4% |
| Other | 3% |
| Support smaller / more local regional management / cooperation | 3% |



- 57% of respondents provided additional comments in relation to the Three Waters Reform.
- 39% of these comments generally opposed the reform and/or preferred local control by the Council; fewer respondents actively supported the reform (13%).
- The rest of the comments (48%) expressed various concerns or highlighted the need to address water-related issues, improve infrastructure and provide quality water services.
- One-third of all provided comments (32%) stated the concern about future costs (e.g. *'Concerned about costs / rates / taxes / funding'*).
- Lack of detailed information, transparency and clarity was also evident (*'more information/openness needed'*, *'concerned about asset ownership'*, *'listen to ratepayers/hold referendum'*).
- 6% expressed their concern about Mana whenua (e.g. *'Concerns about Māori / iwi control / influence'*).