



RESIDENTS
OPINION
SURVEY

2023

REPORT | AUGUST 2023

Contents

Research design	3
Services and amenities used or experienced in the past 12 months	4
Satisfaction with services and amenities	5
Issues/problems with services and amenities.....	6
Problems faced	7
How could Council improve services?	8
Priorities.....	8
Satisfaction with Council's efforts on priority issues during the last year	11
Satisfaction with Council's economic development activity.....	12
Satisfaction with Council's tourism activity	14
Where do you obtain Council information?.....	16
Satisfaction with level of information from Council.....	17
Opportunities to have a say in Council activities.....	19
Contact with Council	20
Elected Member Performance.....	22
Other comments	27
Appendix One: How representative is this survey?	29
Gender.....	29
Age	30
Ward.....	31
Appendix Two: Promotion of the survey	32

Research design

Context

This report summarises the results of the 2023 Central Otago District Council Residents' Opinion Survey. The survey was carried out between 29 May and 17 July 2023.

Council carries out an annual survey to:

- measure its performance with respect to the services it provides during the year
- identify issues for the coming year
- identify priorities for the coming year

This was the eighth year Council has conducted the survey online and the second year using the Let's Talk consultation platform.

We received a total of 440 responses to the survey, 21 of which were hard copies that were manually input into the online system. This is a significantly higher response rate than the previous year (183).

Method

The 2023 survey was conducted using the Let's Talk Kōrero Mai consultation software. Respondents were required to register to participate, which may have been a barrier. The survey was promoted throughout the district through media channels, elected members and community outreach efforts (see Appendix Two). This survey used self-selection sampling. Some respondents were prompted to participate through an email sent to those who selected to pay rates electronically.

Based on the number of responses (440) and the population of the Central Otago District (21,558), the data in this survey is accurate to a margin of error +/- 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.¹ While every attempt was made to achieve a demographically representative sample (age, gender, ward), this was not completely achieved (see Appendix One).

Where possible, trend analysis is included to compare 2023 results to previous years.

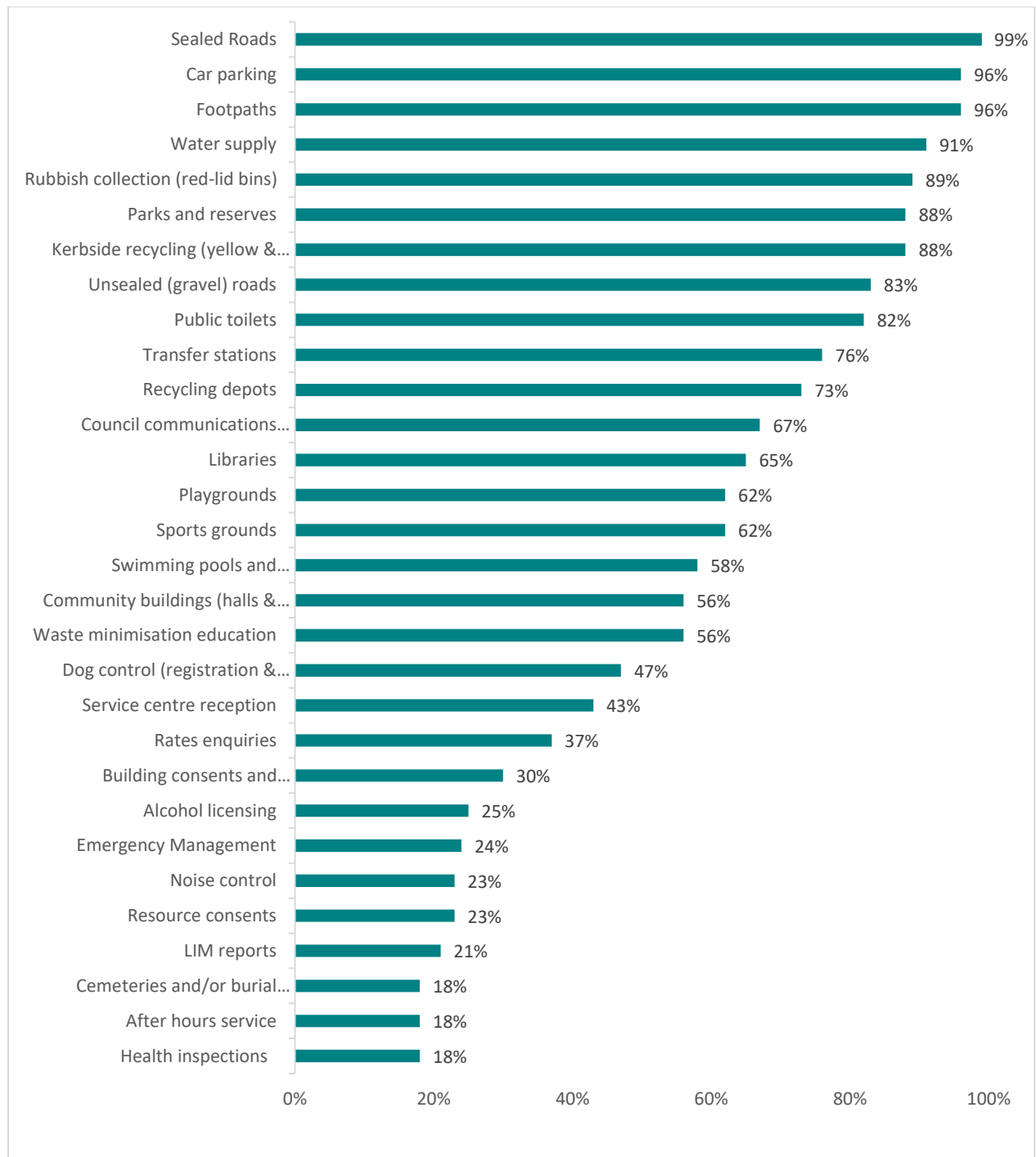
Questionnaire Design

In previous years, respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a wide range of Council services and amenities. This year, the option of '*Unsure/Don't know*' was added. This option enabled a better understanding of which services and amenities were used.

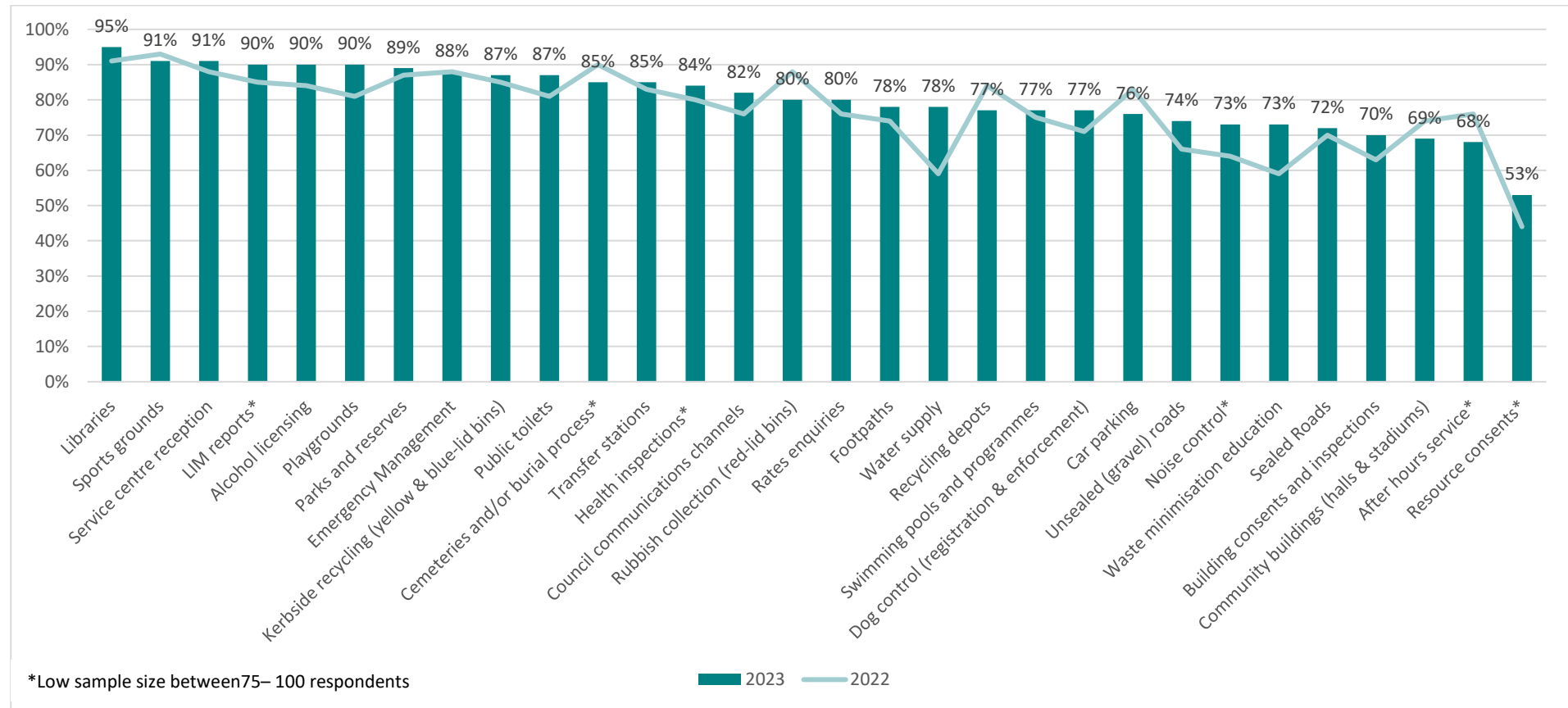
¹ [Sample size calculator - CheckMarket](#)

Services and amenities used or experienced in the past 12 months

Respondents were asked to select which of Council’s services and amenities they had used or experienced in the last 12 months and to indicate whether or not they were satisfied with them. This year respondents were also given the option of ‘Haven’t used this service or amenity’. The addition of that option helped to provide insight into those services that are most and least experienced by respondents. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents who have used or experienced each service or amenity.



Satisfaction with services and amenities

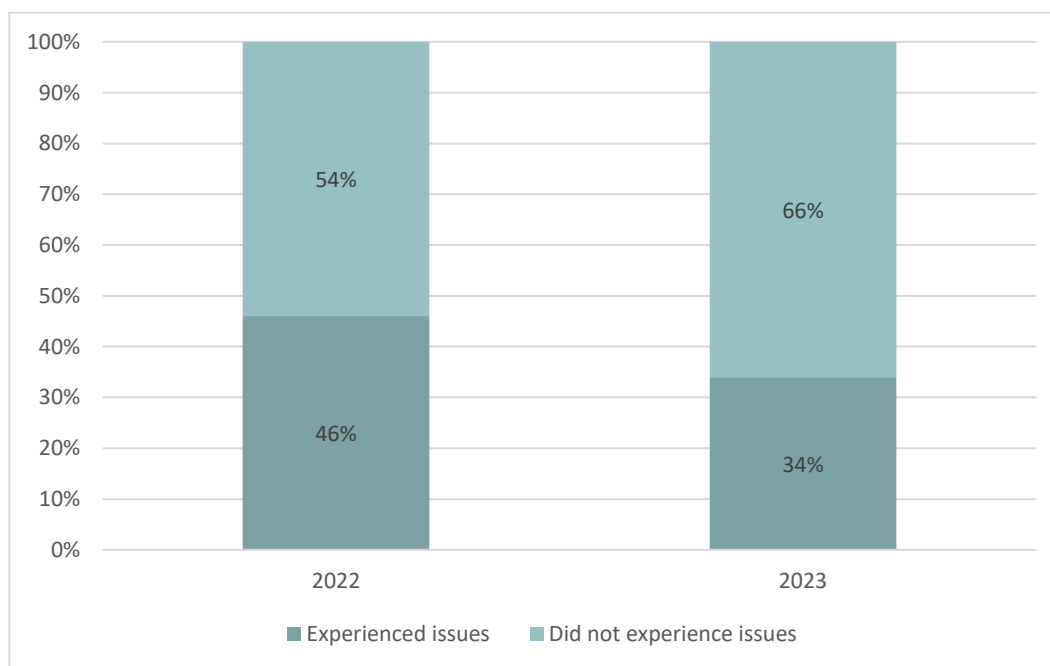


The graph above shows the 2023 results compared to the results from 2022. Overall, there is a slight increase in satisfaction with Council services and amenities across the board. Of note, satisfaction with water supply increased from 59% to 78%, waste minimisation education increased from 59% to 73% and noise control increased from 64% to 73%.

Rubbish collection (red-lid bins) decreased in satisfaction from 88% to 80% and satisfaction with recycling depots decreased from 85% to 77%. Satisfaction with car parking decreased from 83% to 76%, and after hours service decreased from 76% to 53%. Please note that after hours service results are based on a low sample size.

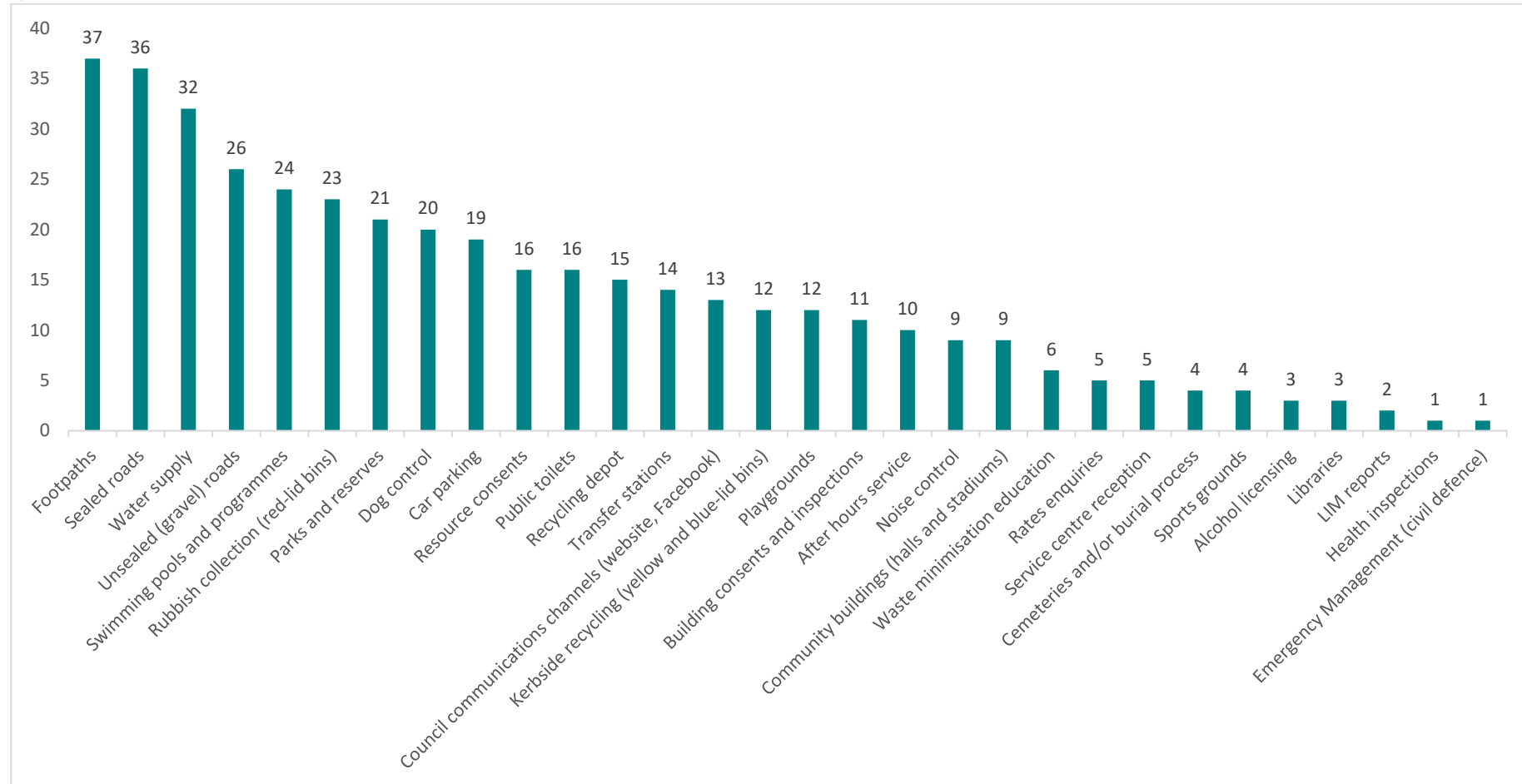
Issues/problems with services and amenities

Respondents were asked *'In the past 12 months have you personally experienced any issues or problems with any of Council services or amenities?'* Thirty-four percent of people said yes, which is a decrease compared with 2022 (46%).



Problems faced

To further identify the specific problem, respondents were asked *'Please indicate which of the following services or amenities were the subject of your issues or problems.'* To answer this question, a drop-down box was provided. Respondents could tick more than one option. This was a new question added in 2023.



N=148

How could Council improve services?

Respondents were asked, “*In your opinion, how could Council improve services?*” 131 respondents provided comments to this question. The information below outlines the areas in which respondents felt Council could improve services as well as the most commonly mentioned themes in each area.

Communication and Engagement (41 comments) – need better communication with the public and internally within Council; need to listen to the public; provide opportunities for direct communication; not enough consultation.

Roads (26 comments) – sealed roads and gravel roads need improvement. Suggestions included zebra crossings at schools and daycares and that the 40km speed limit only be applied to the centre of town.

Parks and Recreation (18 comments) – lacking facilities for sports fields (e.g. toilets); need indoor sports facility in Cromwell; provide playground equipment designed for young children; install gates and fencing at playgrounds for young children; provide shade sails for playgrounds; toilets needed at parks and playgrounds.

Pools (14 comments) – ensure temperature isn’t too cold, especially in Cromwell; increase pool hours.

Footpaths (14 comments) – comments focused primarily on the need to improve the quality; need to manage overhanging vegetation on footpaths.

Bins (13 comments) – most comments came from those who felt like the red bin was too small; others felt that there should have been better communication regarding the bin changeover; more frequent rubbish collection and more bins in recreational areas were also mentioned.

Water, including wastewater (10 comments) – Improve water supply; concern regarding stormwater drainpipes and blockage.

Dog Control (8 comments) – need more enforcement staff; more dog parks; improved signage to indicate where dogs are allowed on leash.

Parking (7 comments) – need enforcement of parking on footpaths; concern about lack of parking in Cromwell.

General (6 comments) – these were general comments about Council services e.g. ‘focus on core services’, ‘Council is underresourced’, and ‘move faster’.

Planning, including building consents, building inspections and resource consents (3 comments) – more efficient resource consent processes (e.g. more staff).

Priorities

Respondents were asked to tick up to four priority issues that they considered Council should give high priority in the next one to three years.

2023 Ranking	Answer Choices	Responses (%)	Actual Count	2022 ranking
1	Recycling depots	23%	101	20
2	Community development	23%	98	2
3	Sealed roads	22%	98	4
4	Water supply	21%	93	1
5=	Footpaths	17%	73	3
5=	Community halls and stadiums	17%	73	7
7	Walking/cycling tracks	15%	68	5
8	Economic development	14%	62	8
9	Car parking	13%	57	15
10=	Litter bins	12%	54	10=
10=	Parks and reserves	12%	54	10=

The top priority, recycling depots, represents a significant departure from the previous year when the same issue was ranked 20th. Consistent with previous years, community development remains a priority (ranked 2), along with sealed roads (ranked 3). Car parking (ranked 9) has increased in priority from 2022, where it didn't make the top 10.

Water supply (ranked 4) and footpaths (ranked 3) dropped in priority from the previous year.

Top priorities over the past three years

The table below shows the priorities identified in 2023 compared with the previous three years.

Ranking	2023 Priorities	2022 Priorities	2021 Priorities	2020 Priorities
1	Recycling depots	Water supply	Water supply	Water supply
2	Community development	Community development	Community planning	Footpaths
3	Sealed roads	Footpaths	Footpaths	Economic development
4	Water supply	Sealed roads	Unsealed (gravel) roads	Community planning
5	Footpaths 5=	Walking / cycling tracks	Community halls and stadiums	Walking / cycling tracks
6	Community halls and stadiums 5=	Unsealed (gravel) roads	Economic development	Sewerage System

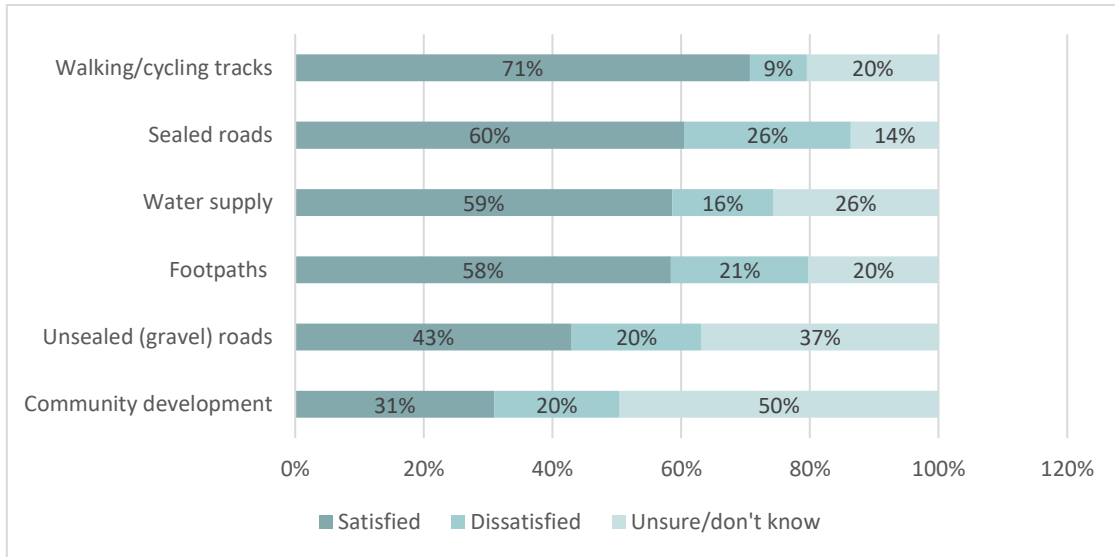
Top priorities by ward

The table below has the top priority services in each ward for 2023 and 2022. They are listed in priority order for that ward.

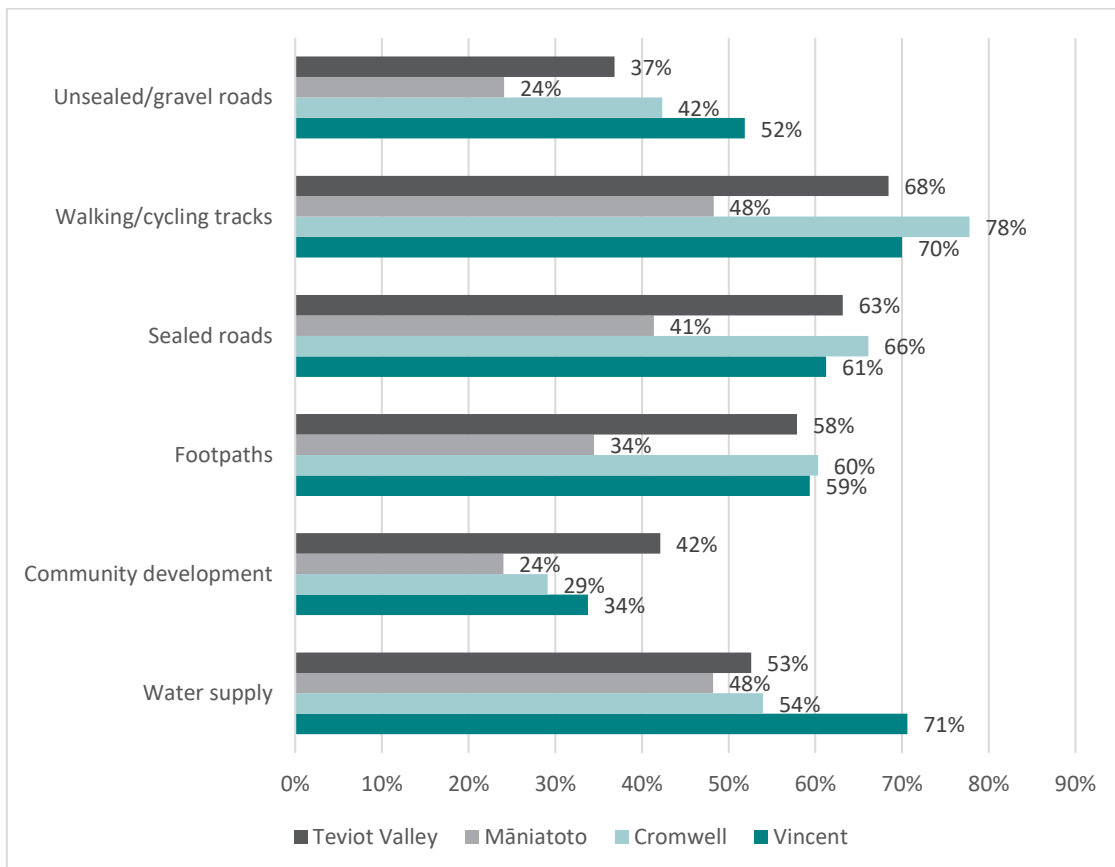
Ward	2023	2022
Vincent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recycling depots 2. Sealed roads 3. Community development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water supply 2. Economic development 3. Community development
Cromwell	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community halls and stadiums 2. Community development 3. Car parking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water supply 2. Community halls and stadiums 3. Community development
Māniatoto	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sealed roads 2. Unsealed roads 3. Water supply 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unsealed (gravel) roads 2. Footpaths 3. Water supply
Teviot Valley	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Footpaths 2. Sealed roads 3. Walking/cycling tracks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Litter bins 2. Car parks 3. Footpaths

Satisfaction with Council’s efforts on priority issues during the last year

Respondents were asked ‘Please indicate how satisfied you are with the Council’s efforts on these issues during the last year’. There were three options to choose from: satisfied, dissatisfied, unsure/don’t know.



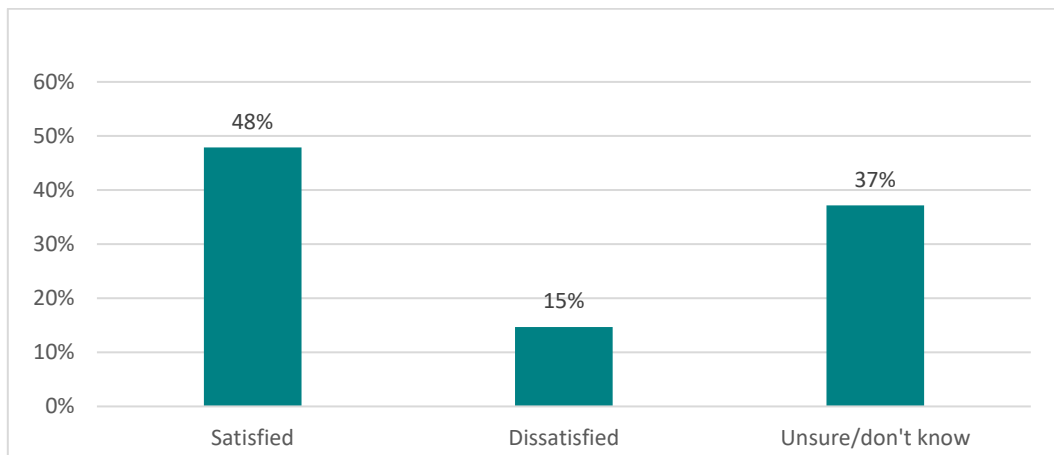
Satisfaction with Council’s efforts on priority issues – By Ward



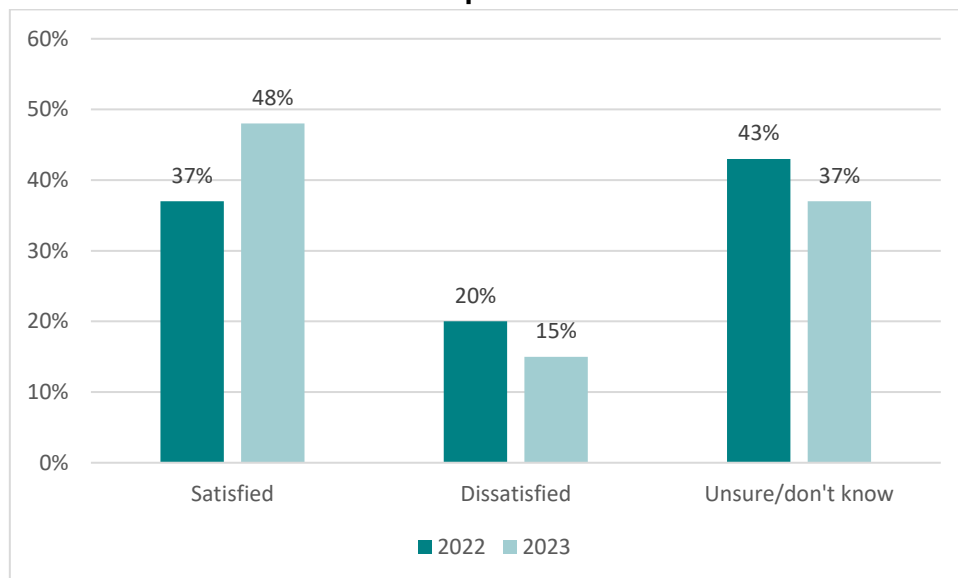
Satisfaction with Council’s economic development activity

This was a new question in last year’s survey. The following statement was presented to respondents, ‘*Economic development activities over the past 12 months have focussed on workforce attraction and development, supporting business startups, commercialising waste fruit, and regional collaboration*’.

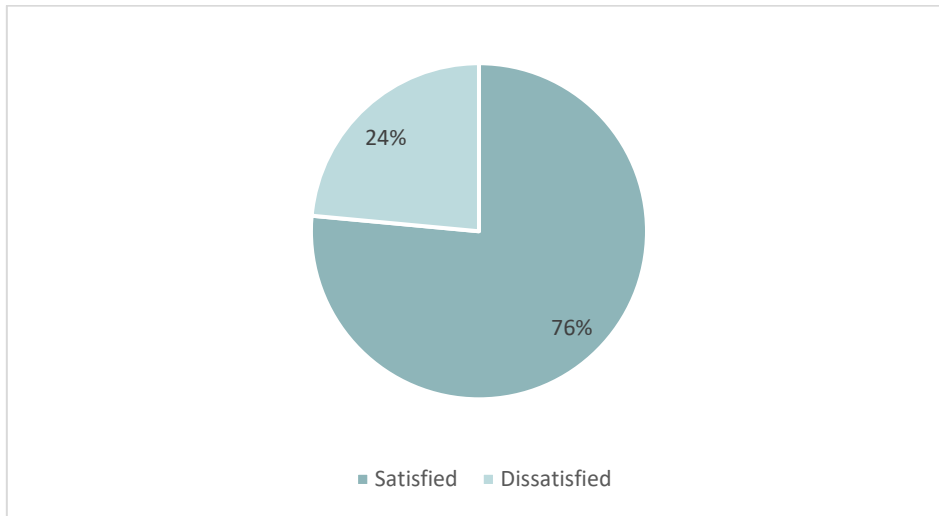
Respondents were asked ‘*How satisfied are you that these are the right types of economic development activity for Council to be involved in?*’



2023 Compared to 2022



‘Unsure/don’t know’ responses removed



Forty-eight percent of respondents were satisfied that Council's economic development activity focused on workforce, business resilience and improved sustainability. Thirty-seven percent of respondents selected 'unsure/don't know'.

Respondents were asked to "Please provide a comment if you wish" regarding their satisfaction with Council's economic development activity. 85 respondents chose to comment on this topic. The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes in each category:

Housing (20 comments) – Most comments related to the lack of affordable housing and the impact that has on economic development. *"Without appropriate housing economic development will continue to stall."*

Communication (11 comments) – would like more information about what is happening in this space or would like to be more informed of economic development activities.

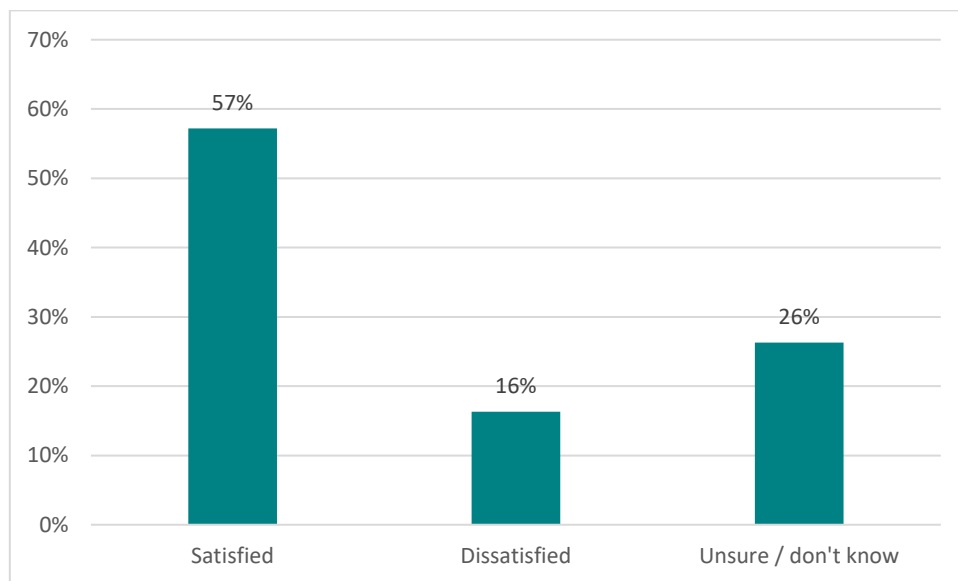
Community Development (10 comments) – These comments focused on the need for the community to be involved in economic development. Suggestions included the need for community gardens, the desire to attract a younger demographic and to allow the community to drive economic development initiatives.

Business (10 comments) – There were some who had concerns about lack of business support in small communities, others expressed the difficulty that businesses are having and support for diversity in the workplace. The need for skilled employment opportunities was also mentioned. Some felt that economic development is not the role of Council. *"Propping up business seems to be a waste of Council funds - business should be able to operate without subsidies from rate payers."*

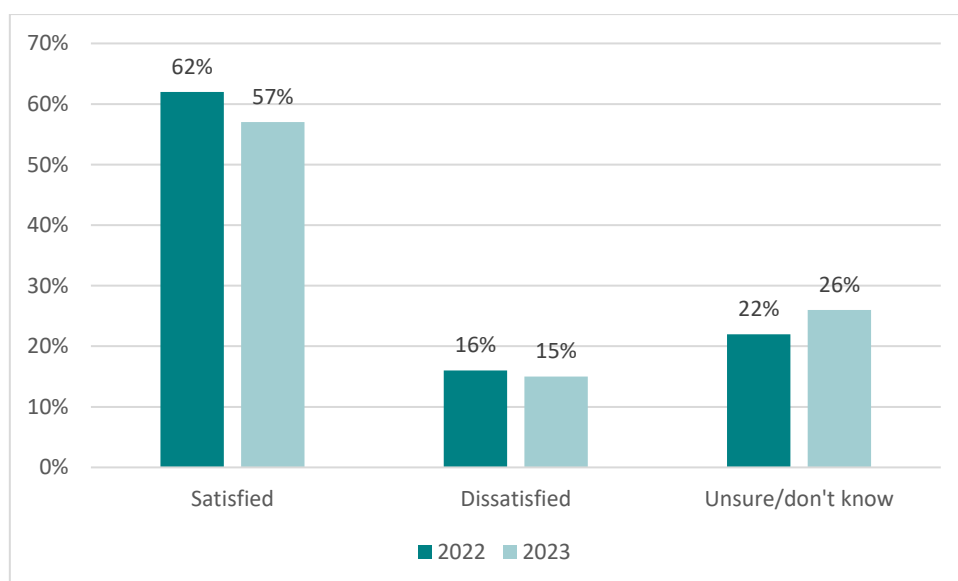
Satisfaction with Council’s tourism activity

This was also a new question in last year’s survey. The following statement was presented to respondents, *‘In the last 12 months Tourism Central Otago has finalised and started implementing the Central Otago Destination Management Plan (DMP), which has been endorsed by Council and mana whenua. The aim is to ensure that the visitor economy enriches the Central Otago district across the four well-beings (social, economic, environmental, cultural) and aligns to long-term community aspirations.’*

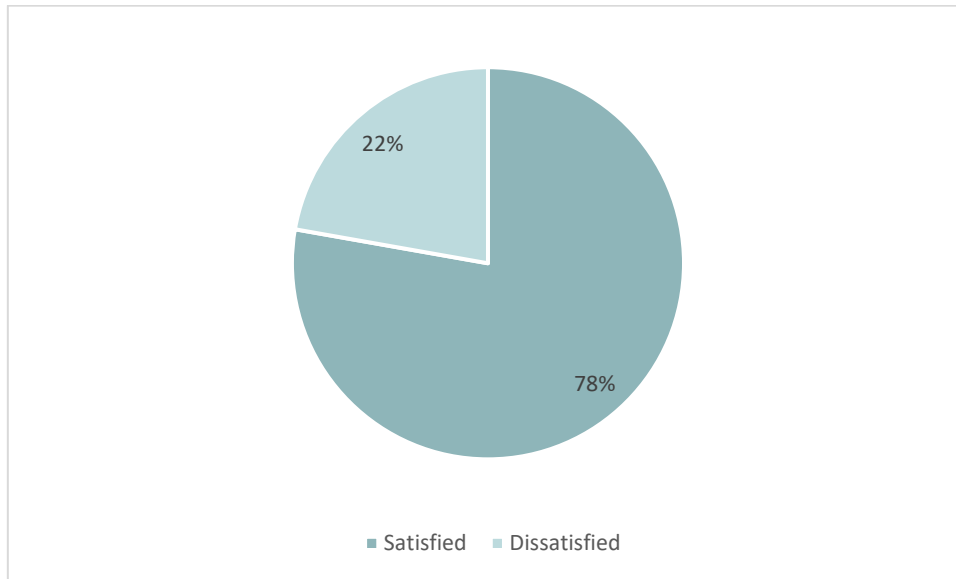
Respondents were asked *‘How satisfied are you that visitors to the district enrich the quality of life for residents?’*



2022 compared with 2023



'Unsure/don't know' responses removed



Fifty-seven percent of respondents were satisfied that visitors to the district enrich the quality of life for residents in Central Otago.

Respondents were asked to “Please provide a comment if you wish” regarding their satisfaction with Council’s economic development activity. Ninety-one respondents chose to comment on this topic. The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes in each category:

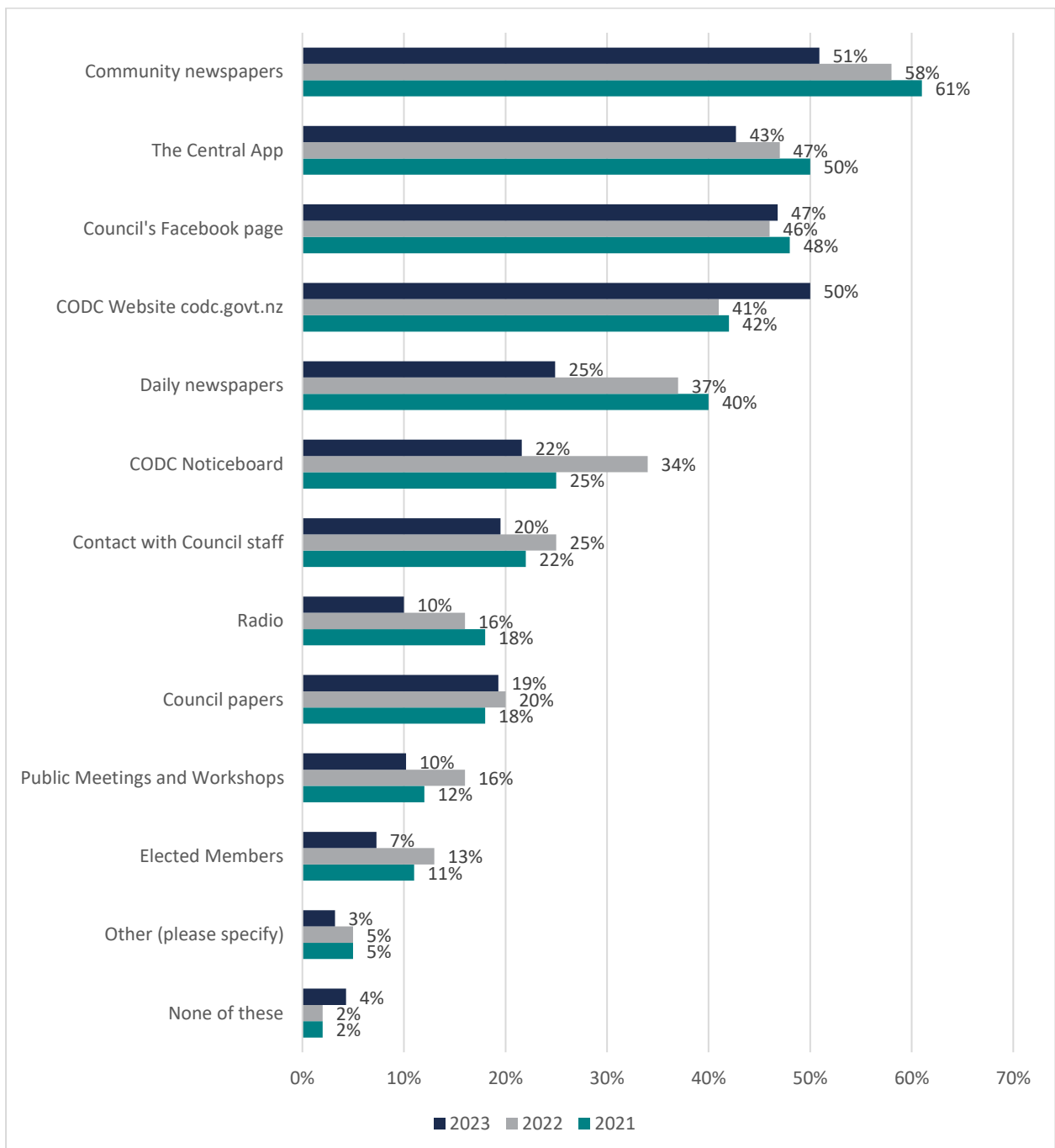
Tourism (20 comments) – Most of these comments (12) related to the need for more tourism to support businesses and the community. But some (6 comments) felt that tourism doesn’t enhance the quality of life for most in the district. Other respondents expressed support for tourism that promoted healthy lifestyles and others focused on the need to promote tourism in a specific community.

Tourists (20 comments) – There are different points of view with regard to the costs and benefits of tourists. Overall, the comments conveyed the need for balance between embracing tourists and prioritising locals.

Tourist Infrastructure (13 comments) – Respondents expressed a need for more infrastructure to support tourism, particularly with regard to campgrounds, roads, and parking.

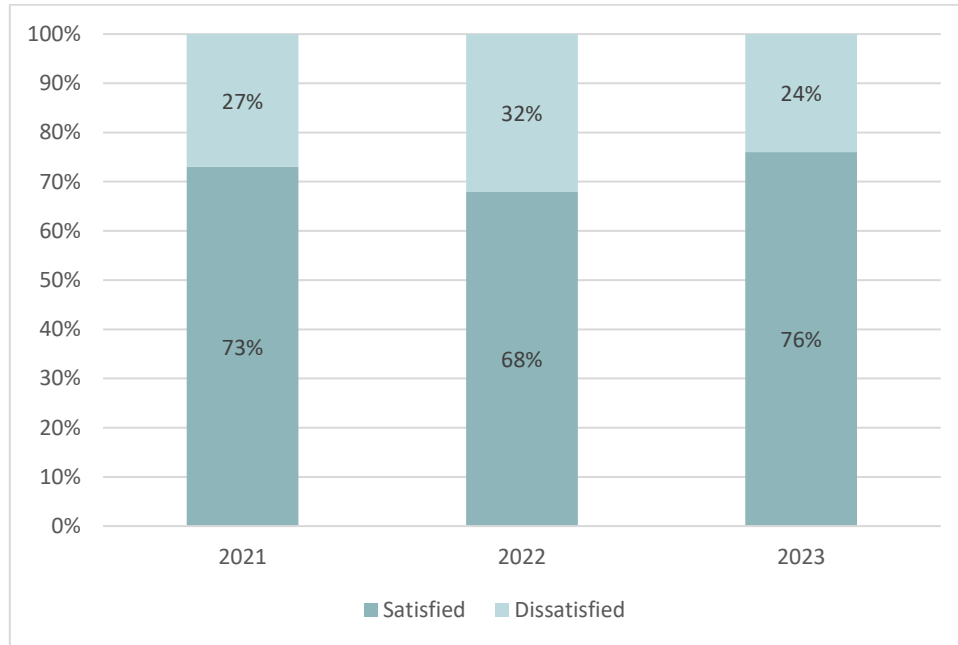
Where do you obtain Council information?

The graph below compares the results from 2023 with the previous two years. Community newspapers (51%) continues to be the most common source of Council information for respondents but has decreased from the previous two years. The CODC website has increased from 41% in 2022 to 50% this year. Central App's popularity has incrementally decreased over previous years as has daily newspapers, CODC Noticeboard (in The News). Respondents reported less reliance on radio, daily newspapers, Council papers, and elected members as a source of information.



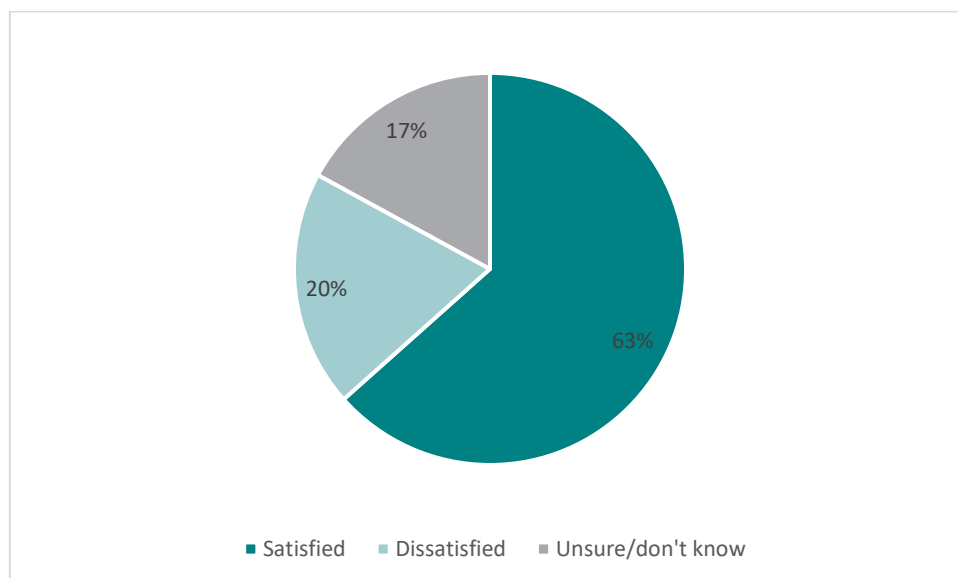
Satisfaction with level of information from Council

There has been an increase in residents' satisfaction with how well they have been kept informed by Council, from 68% in 2022 to 76% in 2023.



Respondents were provided a third option of 'Unsure/don't know' this year. The chart below represents residents' satisfaction when including the new 'Unsure/don't know' option.

'Unsure/don't know' responses included



Respondents were asked to “Please provide a comment if you wish” regarding their satisfaction with the level of information from Council. Eighty-two respondents selected to provide a comment on this topic. The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes in each category:

Need for better communication (28 comments) – Most of these comments were related to the need for more communication and more detailed information about a variety of Council services and amenities. Two respondents specifically noted the need for elected members to communicate better. One respondent observed that the security of the Council offices creates a barrier for communicating with the public.

CODC Facebook page (9 comments) – Three respondents indicated that they either don’t use Facebook or there is too much reliance on Facebook. Two respondents commented that they appreciated the CODC updates on this platform. Two other respondents were unhappy that at times Facebook comments were turned off and felt like this gave the impression that Council didn’t want to hear opposition points of view.

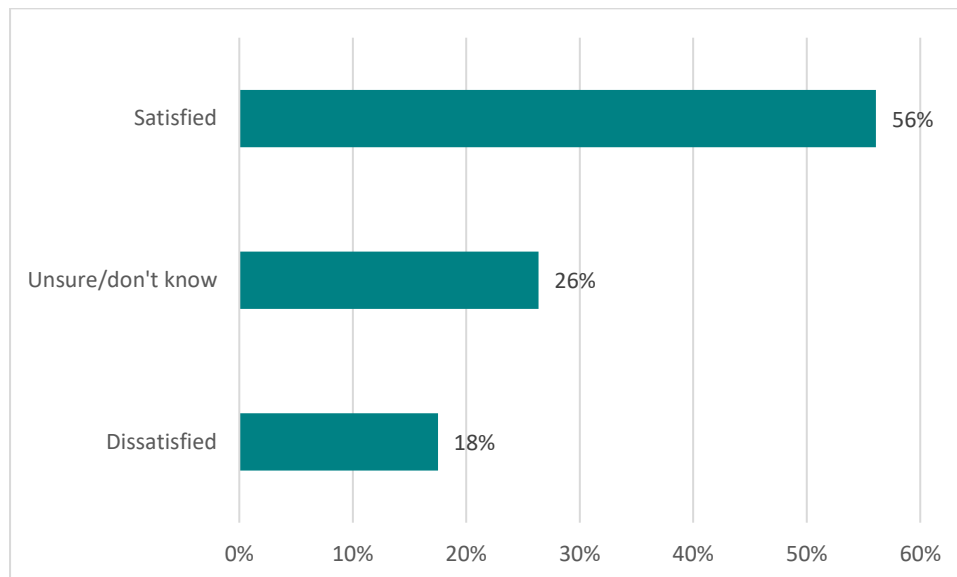
CODC website (9 comments) – Respondents reported that they found the website difficult to use (8) and information outdated (1).

Project Team communication (6 comments) – These comments focused on frustration with lack of responsiveness, including delays in returning phone calls or replying to emails. One respondent requested that staff focus on *“plain English and content relevant to the reader”*.

Consultation (4 comments) – Three respondents expressed the need for more consultation, while the other commented on the need for more follow-up on consultations.

Opportunities to have a say in Council activities

Respondents were asked whether or not they were satisfied that they are given adequate opportunities to have a say in Council activities. This year the option of 'Unsure/don't know' was included and eighteen percent of respondents chose this option. A majority (56%) said they were satisfied, and twenty-six percent were unsure.



Respondents were asked to “Please provide a comment if you wish” regarding their satisfaction with opportunities to have a say in Council activities. Forty-nine comments were received. The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes in each category:

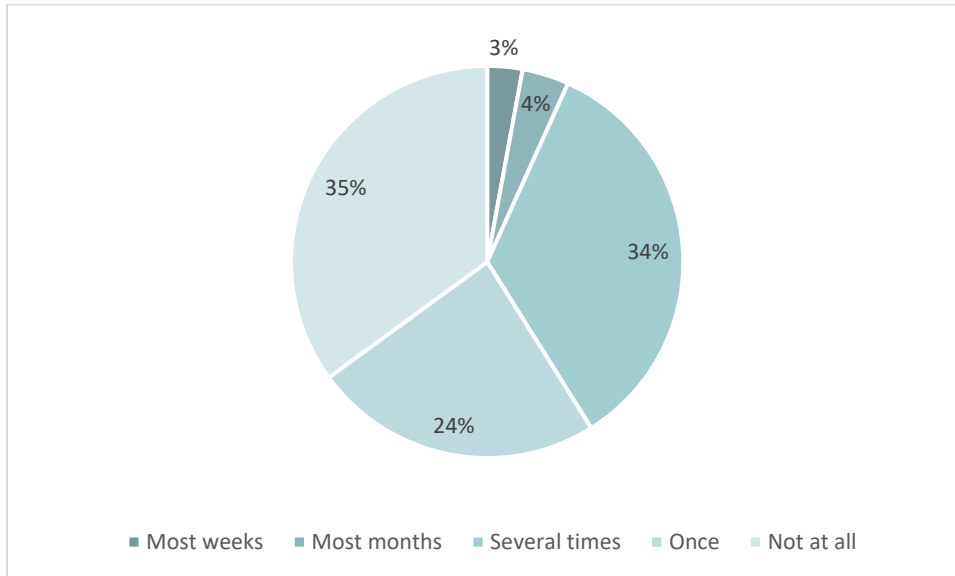
Consultation (18 comments) – The largest number of comments came from those who had concerns about some aspect of the Council consultation process, such as the need for more specific questions, the desire for alternative methods of consultation, difficulty registering with Let’s Talk, and more focus on rural communities. Suggestions that were made include the use of ratepayer emails/phone numbers for consultation, provide more context for questions and provide clear connections for the community showing the feedback and results. There were those who provided positive comments about the convenience of online surveys and community involvement in the consultation process.

Need to listen (12 comments) – Respondents commented that they did not feel that Council (elected members and staff) listen to them. More transparency in decision-making was included in this theme. One respondent commented that when comments are turned off on Facebook it gives the impression that Council doesn’t want to hear from those with different viewpoints.

Contact with Council

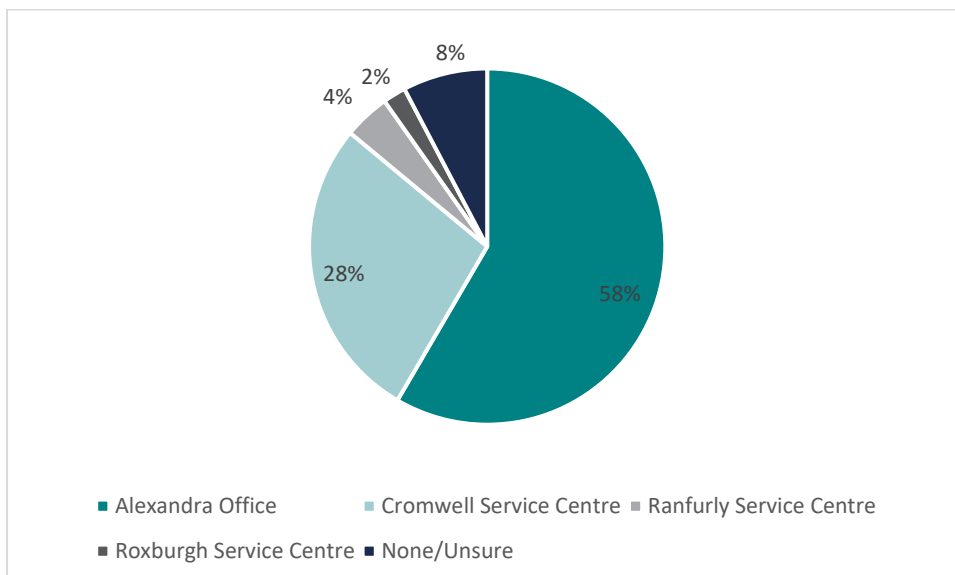
How often have you contacted Council in the last 12 months?

65% of respondents had contacted Council at least once in the last 12 months, down from 79% in 2022. Less than half (41%) had been in contact multiple times, while 35% of respondents had not contacted Council at all in the last 12 months.



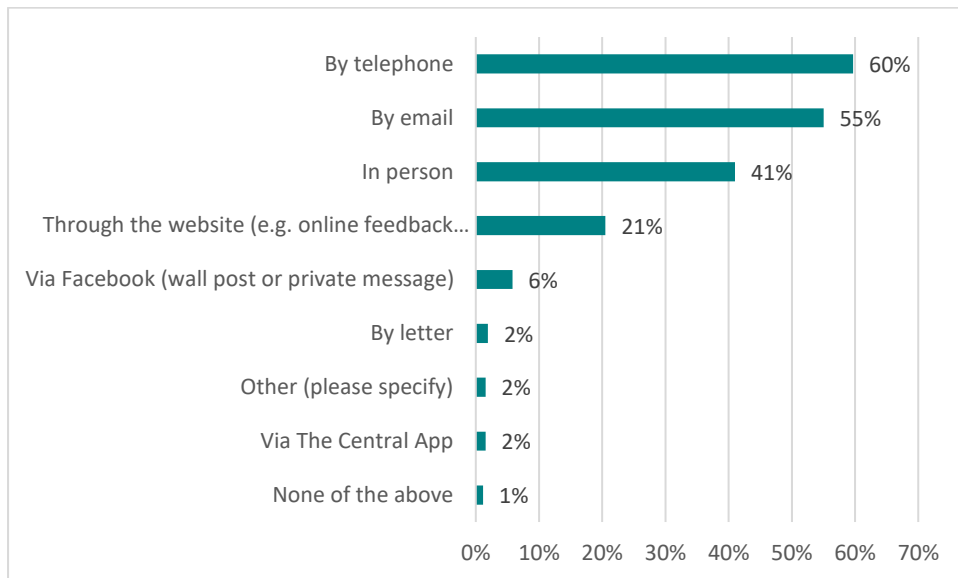
Which CODC office did you have most contact with in the last 12 months?

The majority of respondents had had most of their contact with Council through the Alexandra office (58%) and the Cromwell Service Centre (28%).



N=286

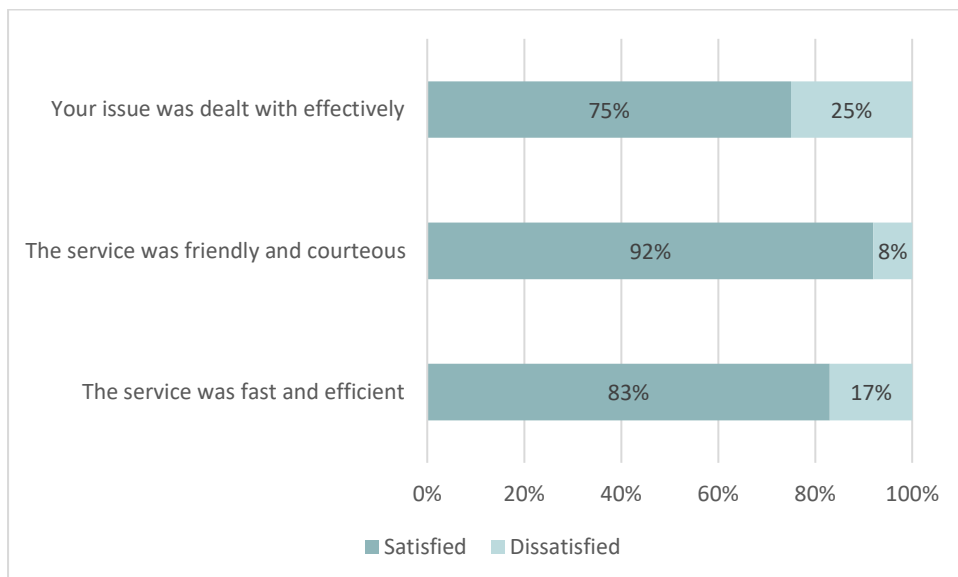
How did you make contact?



N=285

Thinking of the initial contact or response you received, how satisfied were you with the following...

In the majority of cases respondents felt that their contact with Council was a positive experience, even though for 25% of respondents the issue was not or could not be dealt with effectively.



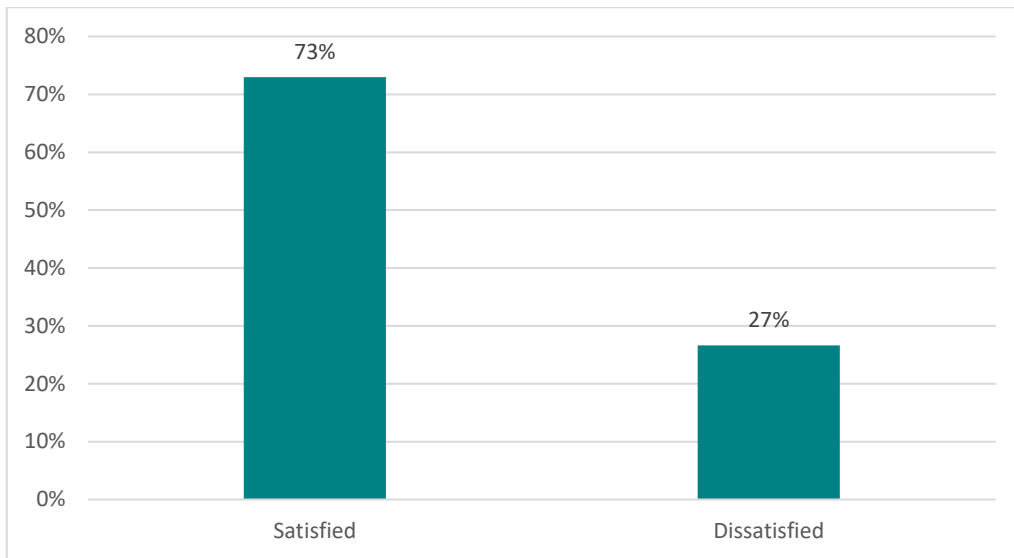
N=282

Elected Member Performance

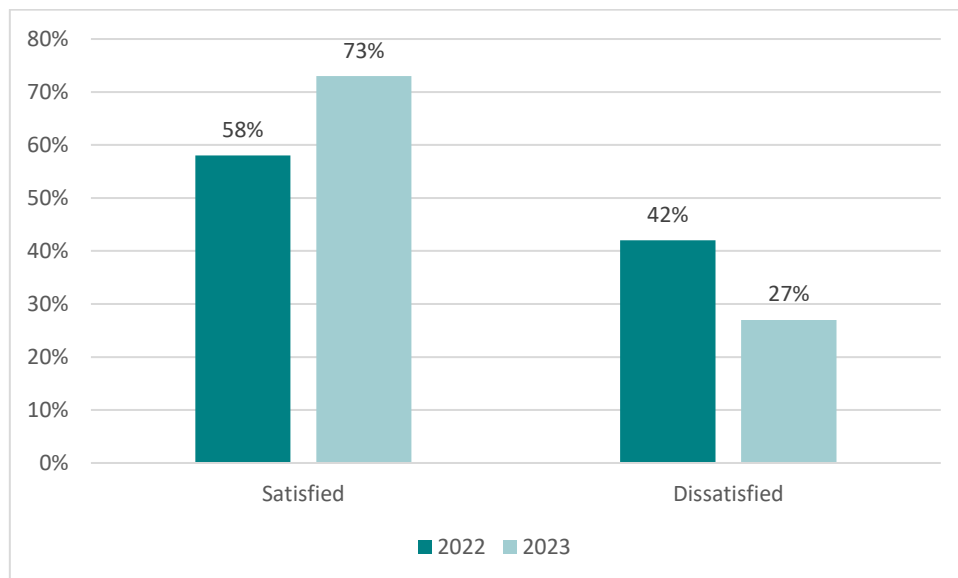
Performance of Councillors

Respondents were asked, 'Please indicate how you feel about the performance of your elected Councillors in the past 12 months?'

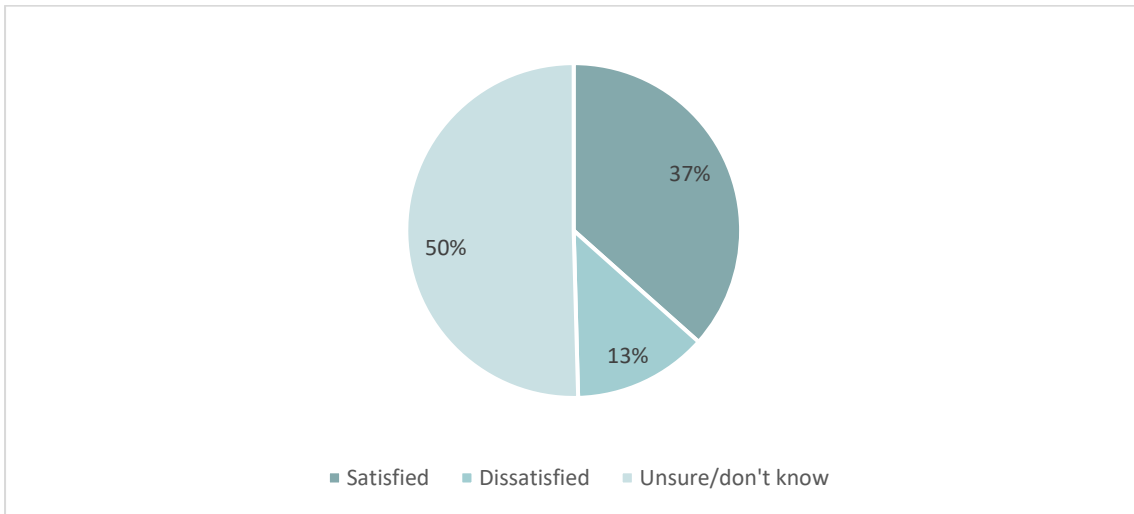
District-wide



2022 compared with 2023

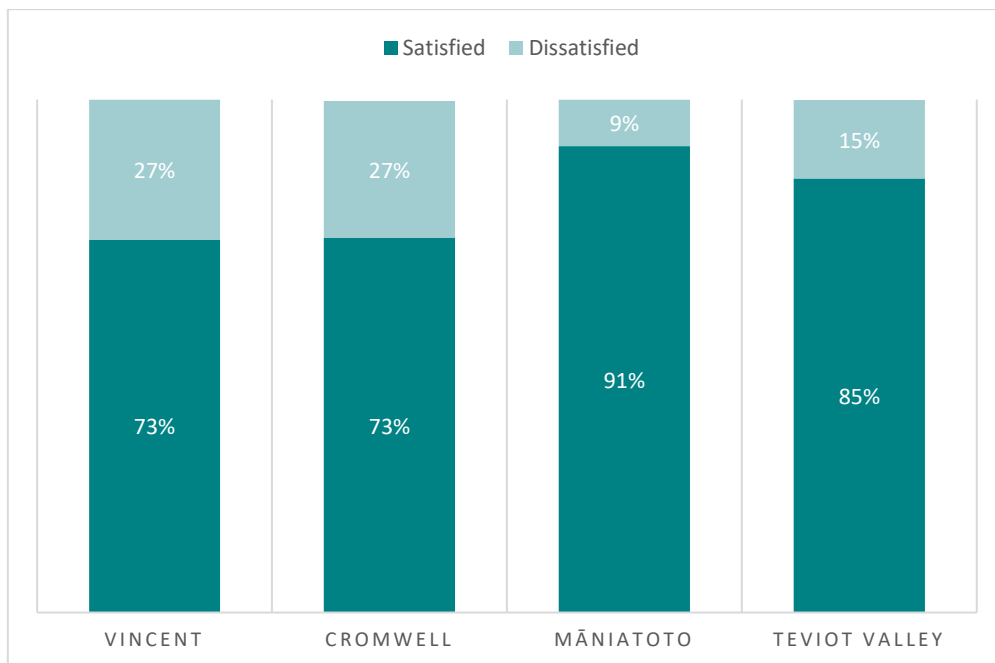


'Unsure/don't know' responses included



This year for the first time the option to choose *'unsure/don't know'* was provided. The chart above shows the results of the same question but includes those who chose the *'unsure/don't know'* option.

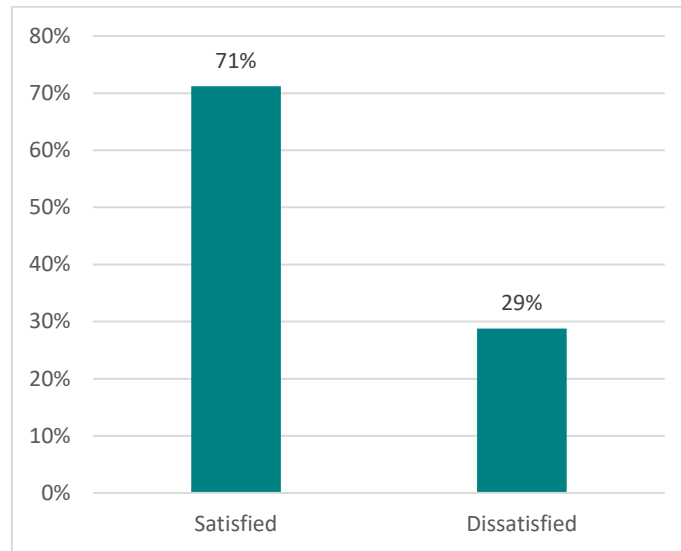
By Ward



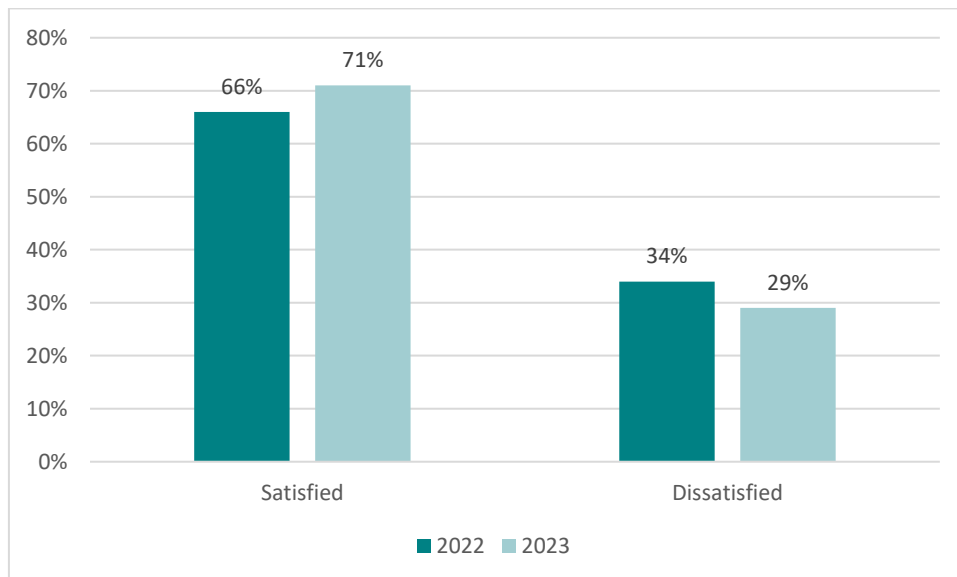
Performance of Community Board Members

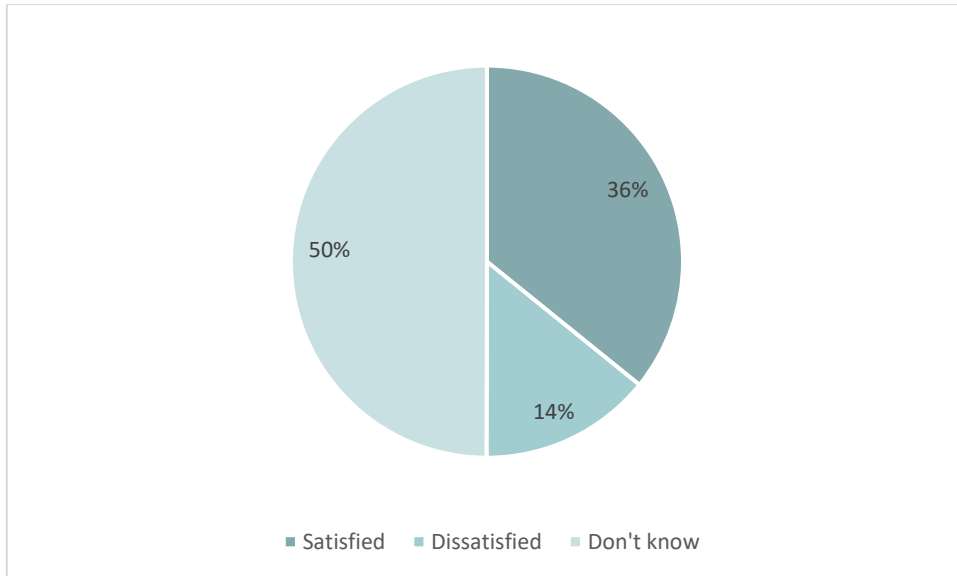
Respondents were asked, 'Please indicate how you feel about the performance of your local community board in the past 12 months?' The chart below represents those who commented that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of their local community board.

District-wide



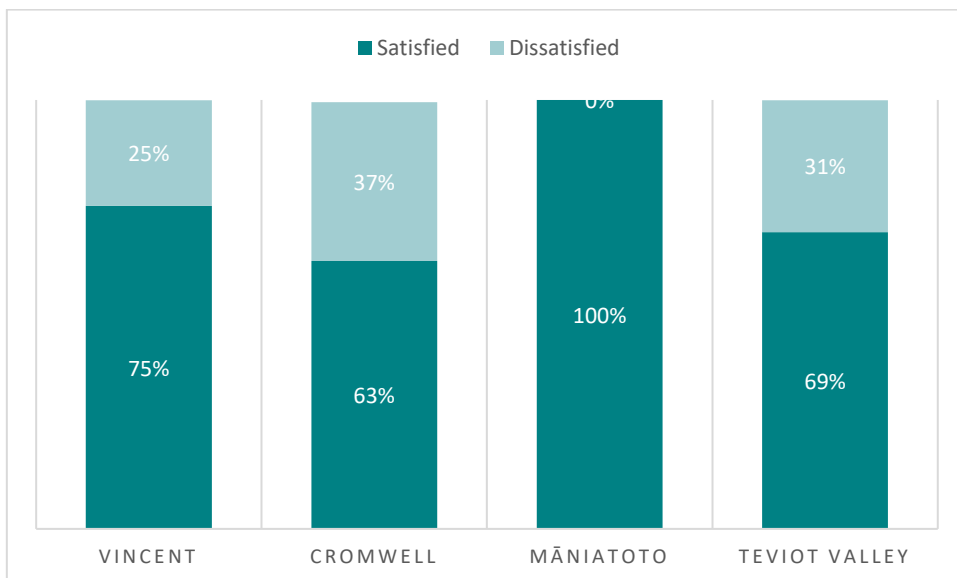
2022 compared with 2023





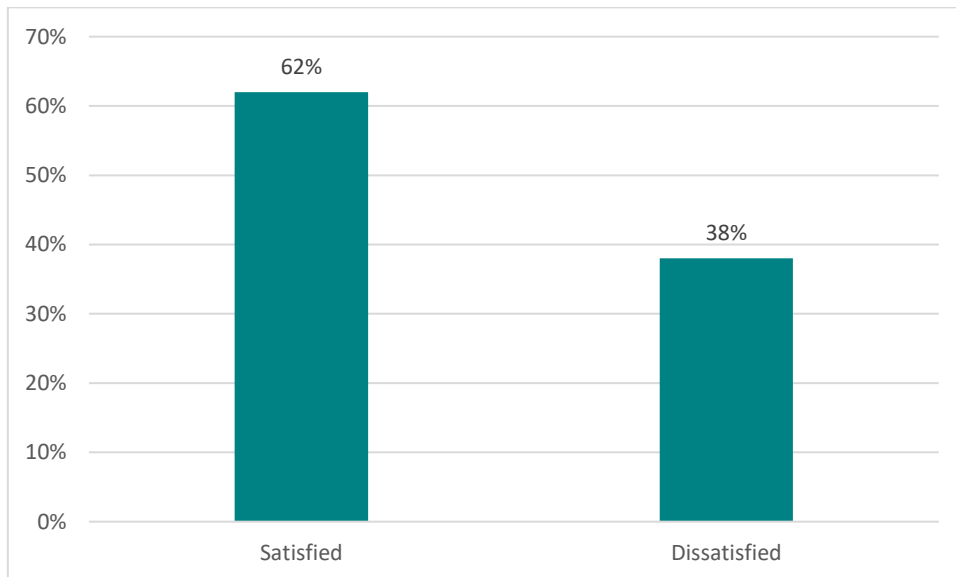
This year for the first time the option to choose *'unsure/don't know'* was provided. The chart above show the results of the same question but includes those who chose the *'unsure/don't know'* option.

By Ward

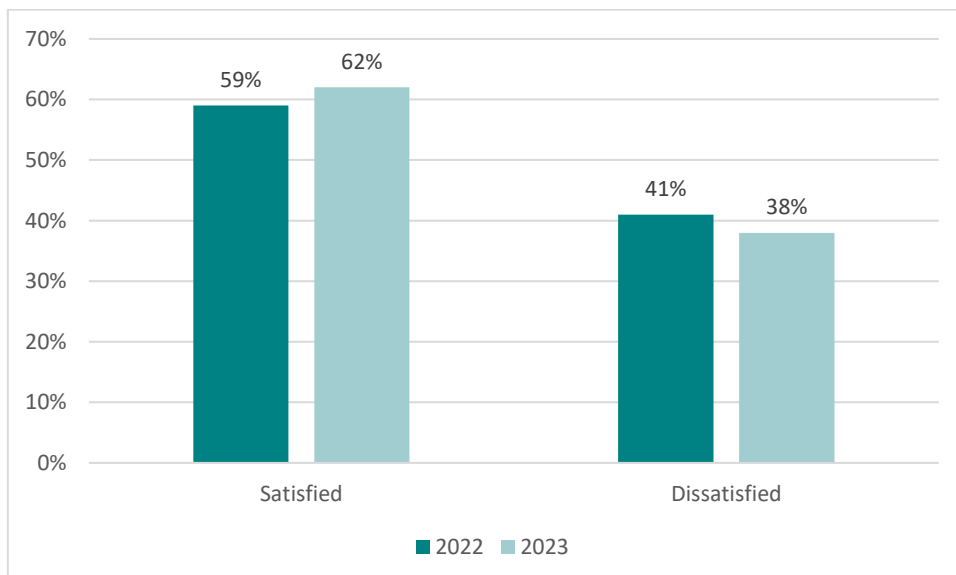


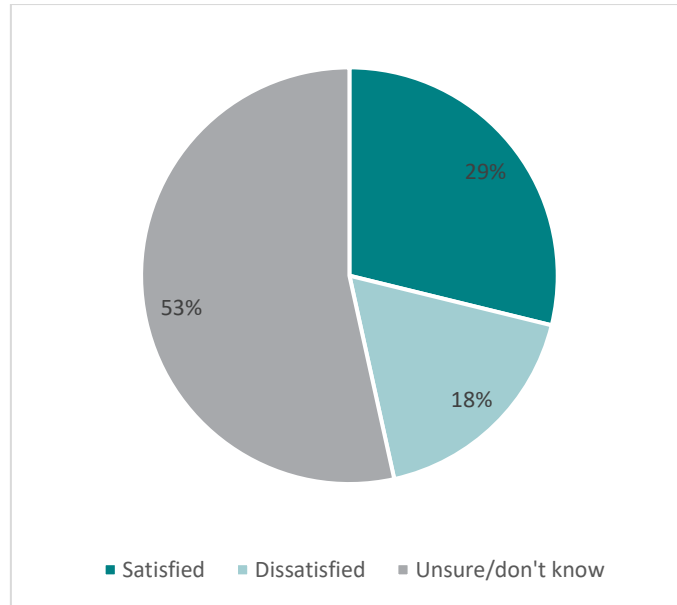
Elected members making a positive difference

This question was asked for the first time in 2022. Respondents were asked to indicate how they feel about whether elected members (Councillors and Community Board members) have made a positive difference through leadership, representation, and decision-making over the past 12 months. There was a slight improvement in satisfaction from 59% in 2022 to 62% in 2023. This year respondents were given the additional option to choose 'unsure/don't know'. 53% of respondents chose 'unsure/don't know'.



2022 compared with 2023





This year for the first time the option to choose ‘*unsure/don't know*’ was provided. The chart above show the results of the same question but includes those who chose the ‘*unsure/don't know*’ option.

Other comments

Respondents were asked ‘*If you have any other comments or thoughts about CODC’s services or amenities, please let us know below.*’ There were 145 comments provided. The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes in each category:

Roading (17 comments) – Five respondents commented about footpaths, either that they needed to be repaired or improved. Four respondents commented that sealed roads need to be improved. Two respondents commented on reduced speed limits, two respondents noted the need for improvements to sealed and unsealed roads. Other comments related to parking on footpaths, rubbish on footpaths and the need for lines on the parking lot at the Cromwell pool.

Economic development (14 comments) – These comments focused on the need for thriving town centres, specifically Alexandra, Cromwell and Ranfurly, e.g. “*The population in Alexandra has stayed static for years. We need our town to grow. Economic Development and forward planning is key!*” Other comments expressed support for the Cromwell Memorial Hall project.

Parks and recreation (13 comments) – Three respondents noted that the Half Mile had been handled poorly, with one expressing support for the continued removal of wilding pines and another in support of native planting. There were two comments on the need for mowing to keep the community tidy and two requesting shade sails for playgrounds.

Recycling (10 comments) – Eight of the ten comments were in opposition to the closure of Wastebusters. Other comments related to support for free green waste drop-off at transfer stations and disappointment that commercial recycling service is no longer available.

Good job (10 comments) – One respondent captured the essence of these comments when they commented, *“Happy with the general direction that the district is going in terms of services and amenities.”* Others commented to *“keep up the good work”*.

Communication (9 comments) – Respondents noted the need for better communication, specifically on the bin changeover and service requests. There was also a comment regarding the need for better internal communication.

Water (8 comments) – Two respondents commented on the improvement of the water and the removal of lime. Others commented on fluoride in the water, both in support and in opposition. One comment focused on the need to improve the water supply in Cromwell and one in Ranfurly. Another commented on blocked stormwater drains in Naseby.

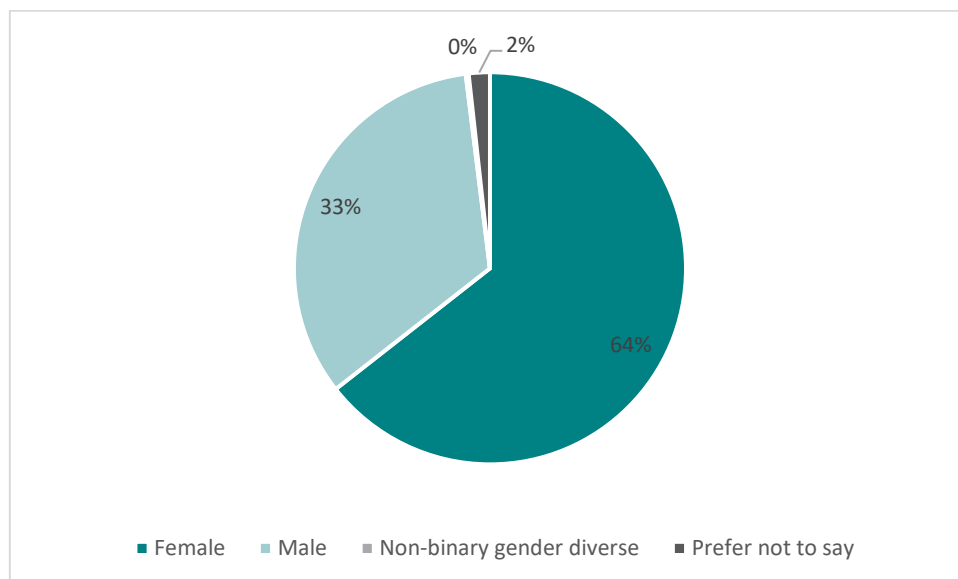
Other (12) – There were a wide range of comments, but four asked Council to listen and three suggested that Council focus on core services and get those right.

Appendix One: How representative is this survey?

Gender

The table below shows that the sample has a higher proportional representation towards women when compared to the 2022 results and the 2018 Census counts. The number of men completing the survey has gone down from 42% in 2022 to 33% in 2023. The options of 'gender diverse' and 'prefer not to say' were new additions last year.

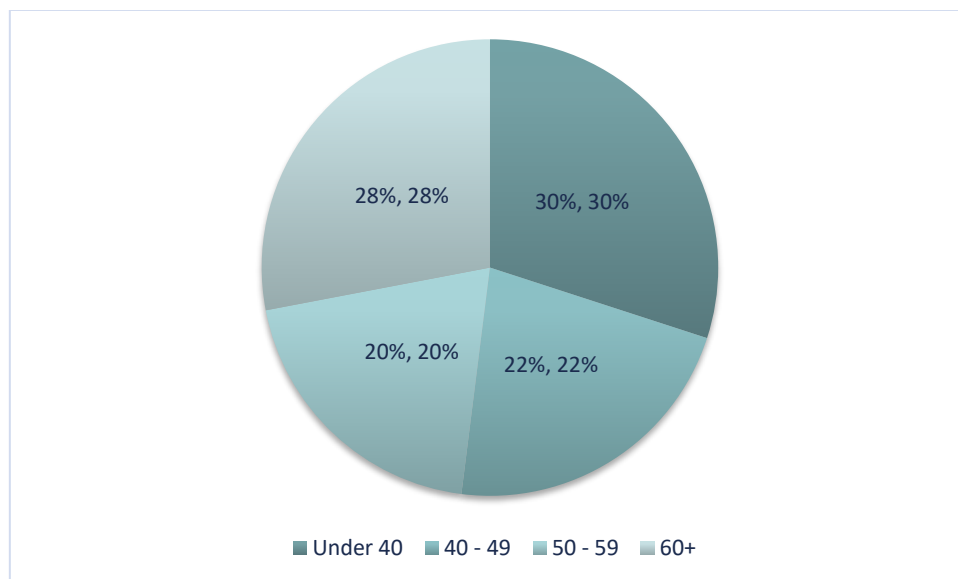
	2023 sample	2022 sample	2018 Census counts
Male	33%	42%	50.9%
Female	64%	55%	49.1%
Gender diverse	0%	0%	-
Prefer not to say	2%	3%	-



Age

The number of respondents in the under 40 age bracket dramatically increased this year, but continues to be under-represented when compared to the 2018 census data, though this is not unexpected. There were incremental increases in the 40-49 and 50-59 age brackets. The 60 and over age bracket is lower than in previous years but is more in line with the demographic makeup of the district based on 2018 Census data.

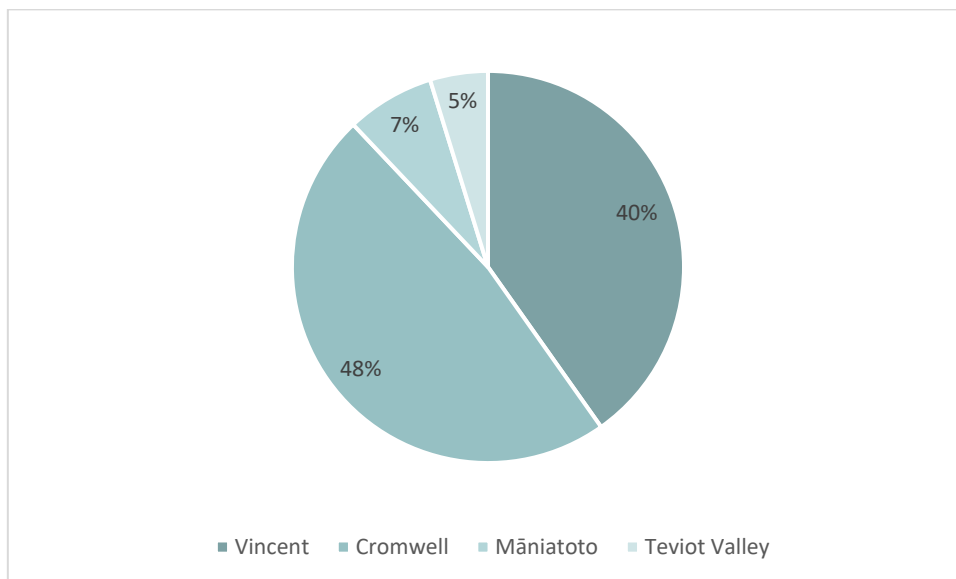
	2023 sample	2022 sample	2018 Census counts
Under 40	30%	15%	42%
40-49	22%	17%	12%
50-59	20%	17%	15%
60 and over	28%	51%	31%



Ward

The 2023 survey sample is not entirely representative of the district with Cromwell being over-represented and Vincent, Māniatoto and Teviot Valley being slightly under-represented when compared to the 2016 electoral roll percentages.

	2023 sample	2022 sample	District population by ward based on electoral roll
Vincent	40%	60%	47%
Cromwell	48%	22%	37%
Māniatoto	7%	13%	8%
Teviot Valley	5%	5%	8%



Appendix Two: Promotion of the survey

The survey was promoted the following ways:

Community
Presentation at REAP Choices (adult literacy) class
Completed as part of the ESOL programme at REAP
Contacted Cromwell Youth Trust
Contacted all secondary schools and areas schools
Hard copy surveys provided to Alexandra Community House
Hard copy and electronic surveys provided to Alexandra Council of Social Services members
Promoted at Business Breakfast meetings
Presentation at Central Otago Youth Council
Media
Media release on opening week
Print adverts in the Teviot Bulletin and Cromwell Bulletin
Inclusion in the CODC Noticeboard in The News throughout the survey period.
Main banner advertisement on The Central App.
Elected members
Mentions on Mayor Tim's weekly Facebook Live sessions and his radio interviews.
Elected members competition by ward
Elected member posts on social media
Council
Emailed survey to ratepayers who receive rates via email
Email signature on all Council email addresses for the duration of the survey being open.
Onelan screens in all Council service centres, libraries and pools.
Banner on the Central Otago District Council page on The Central App.
Facebook banner image
Library or service centre drop-ins in all wards