

Community Support Initiative Report

Department of Internal Affairs

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Executive summary

Knowledge of local government arrangements

- In the focus groups, the Auckland reorganisation and governance issues were not generally on the radar as a key issue for their region. Although, there were plenty of issues under the remit of Council which they felt needed to be addressed.
- In the quantitative survey, just over a third (35%) claimed to know ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount about local government in the Rodney Local Board area. This relatively low understanding of government arrangements was backed up in the focus groups – where most had sketchy understanding. There was a call for clarification over the responsibilities and authority held by Local Boards, along with feedback mechanisms available, and how funding was used and allocated.

Effectiveness of current arrangements

- Around one in ten respondents (13%) said they current arrangements were effective, almost half (48%) were neutral or unsure, while 39% rated arrangements as ineffective.
 - Dairy Flat respondents were more likely to be neutral or unsure (62%).
- The focus groups were not quite as negative but it was clear that there was some disillusionment with current arrangements. The main criticisms revolved around a lack of action on key issues, a lack of communication, and a lack of understanding of local issues. References to the Local Board, mostly related to their lack of power to make decisions.
- Most in the focus groups felt that they currently received poor value for the rates they paid. However, they did not want to see reduced rates for reduced services. There was a perceived need for serious development of the region so rates money was seen as necessary to support this, they just want funds spent in the right areas and on the right initiatives.

Executive summary (cont.)

Perceived need for change

- Two thirds (67%) said they think there needs to be change in the way local government in the Rodney Local Board area is organised.
 - The main reason for wanting change was better/smarter investment and fairer allocation of funding for things like infrastructure.
 - The dominant reason for not wanting was being content with how it is now.
- In the focus groups, on an unprompted basis, there was little appetite for major structural changes in local government arrangements. Nevertheless, there was some need for change - some advocated for an additional Councillor to represent the Rodney region, having additional representatives on the Local Board, and giving the Local Board more power to make decisions. There was also a call for better communication around decision making.

Executive summary (cont.)

The reorganisation

- In the quantitative survey, awareness of the current local government reorganisation process in Auckland was generally low in the Rodney Local Board area. Just over a quarter (27%) said they were aware, this was significantly higher in Wellsford (49%).
- Awareness was also higher in the Wellsford and Warkworth groups compared to the Kumeu and Dairy Flat groups, mainly due to activity by the Northern Action Group. Interest was tempered by the belief that they were powerless to have any influence in decision making – a number felt decisions had already been made on this issue.
- Only 9% of respondents said they were satisfied with the LGC process so far, 50% were neutral or unsure and 41% dissatisfied.
 - The main reason for dissatisfaction was that people did not know enough about it or felt like they had not been provided with enough information, which was backed up by the focus groups.
- A fifth (21%) said they trust those organising the process, 17% agreed it has been carried out fairly and 15% agreed the LGC understands Rodney issues.
- Only 11% said they had been closely following the process, this was lower in Dairy Flat (2%) and somewhat higher in Warkworth (19%).

Executive summary (cont.)

Alternative arrangements

- In the quantitative survey, when asked specifically about having two separate local boards, 39% said they support the idea and 36% oppose. Leaving the Local Board as it is had significantly lower support at 22%. However, this is still a very polarised audience with almost equal proportions supporting and opposing this move.
 - Warkworth respondents were generally more in favour of having two separate local boards (47% support).
 - While Dairy Flat had lower support for the two boards (31%), only marginally higher than their support for the status quo (30%).
- In the focus groups, participants were also divided on the issue of establishing two local boards. Those in favour, thought it would result in a more informed board and allow for local views to be more clearly represented. While those against, were concerned about the cost to set up and administer two boards – and it did not address problems, unless the boards were given more power to make decisions.
- Participants in the Wellsford and Warkworth groups showed no interest in joining Kaipara District Council (KDC). Most held negative views of KDC and felt no connection with the areas they currently govern.

Executive summary (cont.)

Communication

- A majority of respondents in the quantitative survey preferred to provide feedback via online surveys and email (78-80%). In the focus groups, participants were keen to provide feedback, so long as it was genuinely considered. Given the diverse population, they felt that multiple channels would be needed to provide feedback.
- Most of respondents in the quantitative survey preferred to get information by email (78%) or in the newspaper (68%). The groups showed that local newspapers were currently the most common source of information about local issues, along with social media sites with most areas hosting their own Facebook pages.
- Participants in the focus groups wanted to see information on:
 - Proposed timeframes for decisions
 - The pros and cons of the options being considered
 - Feedback that had been submitted to date.
- They also wanted information to be clear, concise and outlined in everyday language.

Executive summary (cont.)

Connections

- In the quantitative survey, Wellsford respondents strongest connection was to their immediate community (63%) followed by the Rodney Local Board area (29%). The lowest connection was for the Hibiscus Coast (3% strong).
 - The Wellsford focus group voiced a greater connection with Warkworth, than Warkworth residents did with Wellsford. Warkworth residents felt that the socio-economic make-up of Wellsford residents was quite different from Warkworth, tending to be at the lower end of the spectrum.
- Warkworth respondents strongest connection was also to their immediate community (59%) followed by the Rodney Local Board area (29%). The lowest connection was for the Kaipara District and Hibiscus Coast (7% strong).
- Kumeu respondents strongest connection was to their immediate community (51%) followed by the Kaipara District (18%). The lowest connection was for the Auckland Council area (7% strong).
 - As the focus groups followed the quantitative survey, we were able to probe participants on the results. Participants were asked about why there might be a relatively high affiliation with the Kaipara District given the physical distance from this area. Some participants in the groups did note a connection to 'Kaipara' which was mainly due to the fact that their children had attended Kaipara College and a strong connection to Kaipara Harbour in a leisure context. They felt that some respondents in the survey may have jumped automatically to their top-of-mind associations with 'Kaipara', namely the local school and the harbour.

Executive summary (cont.)

Connections (cont.)

- Dairy Flat respondents strongest connection was to the Hibiscus Coast (38%) followed by their immediate community (33%). The lowest connection was for the Kaipara District (7% strong).
 - In the groups, many Dairy Flat residents had only moved to Dairy Flat relatively recently – this meant connections to other areas was still quite strong or for some, left them relatively ‘stateless’. The connection to Hibiscus Coast was due to its close proximity, and its use as a leisure and shopping hub.
- The affiliation with their immediate community was backed up in the focus groups. Connections were mostly driven by spending formative years in an area, having friends/ family in an area, being involved in a community, using services locally, and having a life focused in that area (working, living, and having children in school there).

Background and methodology



Background

- The Local Government Commission is an independent body established by legislation. Its main role is to make decisions on the structure of local authorities and their electoral representation. Before the Commission makes any recommendation for change, it must be satisfied that a new structure would promote good local government.
- Good local government is defined in law and includes:
 - Democratic local decision-making by and on behalf of communities.
 - Meeting current and future needs for good-quality local infrastructure, public services and regulatory functions.
 - Producing efficiencies and cost savings. It must contribute to productivity improvements for local authorities, households and businesses. It must lead to simplified planning processes.
- In Auckland, the Northern Action Group made an application proposing a unitary authority for North Rodney separate from Auckland Council three and half years ago. Since then the Local Government Commission has been investigating the application. A report by consultants Morrison Low for the Local Government Commission was recently released which stated that separating these areas would be too costly for their ratepayers. They also believed that allowing Northern Rodney to join neighbouring Kaipara District would be a burden on Kaipara. It was suggested that a potential splitting of Auckland Council's Rodney Local Board into two local boards may be a viable option.
- The Local Government Commission are now exploring the possible community support for various options or aspects of the local government reorganisation in Auckland to support the Commission's decision-making process.

Methodology

- The research comprised of both qualitative and quantitative research.
- The qualitative stage comprised of four focus groups conducted across the following audiences.
 - 1x Wellsford [included seven participants]
 - 1x Warkworth [included eight participants]
 - 1x Dairy Flat [included eight participants]
 - 1x Kumeu [included eight participants]
- Fieldwork conducted on 4th and 5th October 2017.

Methodology (cont.)

- Quantitative stage comprised of a telephone survey of n=601 and was conducted at UMR's national interview facility in Auckland.
 - Fieldwork was conducted from the 24th to the 29th of September 2017.
 - The margin of error for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level for a sample size of 601 is $\pm 4\%$.
 - Oversampling was done in Wellsford subdivision to increase accuracy in this smaller area.
 - Quotas for age and gender were set in each Subdivision based off subnational population estimates from Statistics NZ. Final weighting was performed so the overall results were representative by population across the four districts.

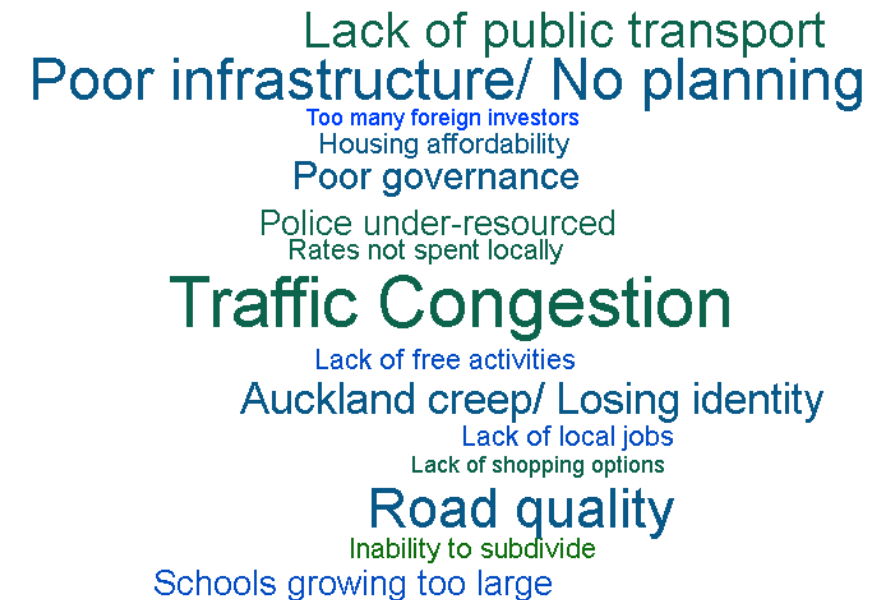
	Population	Population as percentage	Sample	Margin of error at 50% figure with 95% confidence
Wellsford Subdivision	4,600	9.7%	100	$\pm 9.7\%$
Warkworth Subdivision	15,716	33.3%	189	$\pm 7.1\%$
Dairy Flat Subdivision	5,658	12.0%	85	$\pm 10.6\%$
Kumeu Subdivision	21,240	45.0%	227	$\pm 6.5\%$
Total	47,214	100%	601	$\pm 4\%$

Knowledge of local government arrangements



Key local issues (focus groups)

- On an unprompted basis, the key local issues raised by participants in the focus groups were traffic and congestion, the lack of planning and infrastructure to meet population growth, poor quality roads, a lack of public transport, and the loss of local identity.
 - In the Wellsford focus group – the top issues were traffic congestion, road quality, and poor infrastructure
 - In the Warkworth focus group – the top issues were loss of local identity, road quality, traffic congestion, poor infrastructure/ planning
 - In the Kumeu focus group – the top issues were the lack of public transport, poor infrastructure/ planning, and traffic congestion
 - In the Dairy Flat group – the top issues were poor infrastructure/ planning, lack of public transport, and traffic congestion
- Governance and local board arrangements were only mentioned at a low level. However, many of the issues of concern were seen to be the responsibility of the Local Board and Council – in partnership with the Government and NZTA.



Key local issues: verbatim

We have some of the worst roads in New Zealand. (Wellsford, female)

The fact that the roads are breaking up all the time and the kerb is dropping away and there are big ruts. (Dairy Flat, male)

Now the Auckland creep has come up and everything is overflowing. There doesn't seem to be a plan for how you are going to cope with all the extra families that are coming into the area. (Wellsford, female)

I put down transport, roading, not keeping up with development, we have only been in Waimauku for three and a half years and even in that time the amount of traffic has built up significantly (Kumeu, male)

Infrastructure and losing our identity as a small community. [Infrastructure?] Roothing but other things as well like our public pool and setting us up putting all these houses in but we haven't got the backbone to support it. (Warkworth, female)

We are getting more and more people but we don't seem to have the infrastructure to support all these new people who are coming in. (Dairy Flat, female)

I would have to say also public transport. Mainly buses. I did try it out for a while but it was either a ridiculous hour in the morning or a ridiculously late at night. And only two trains a day, one there and one back. (Kumeu, male)

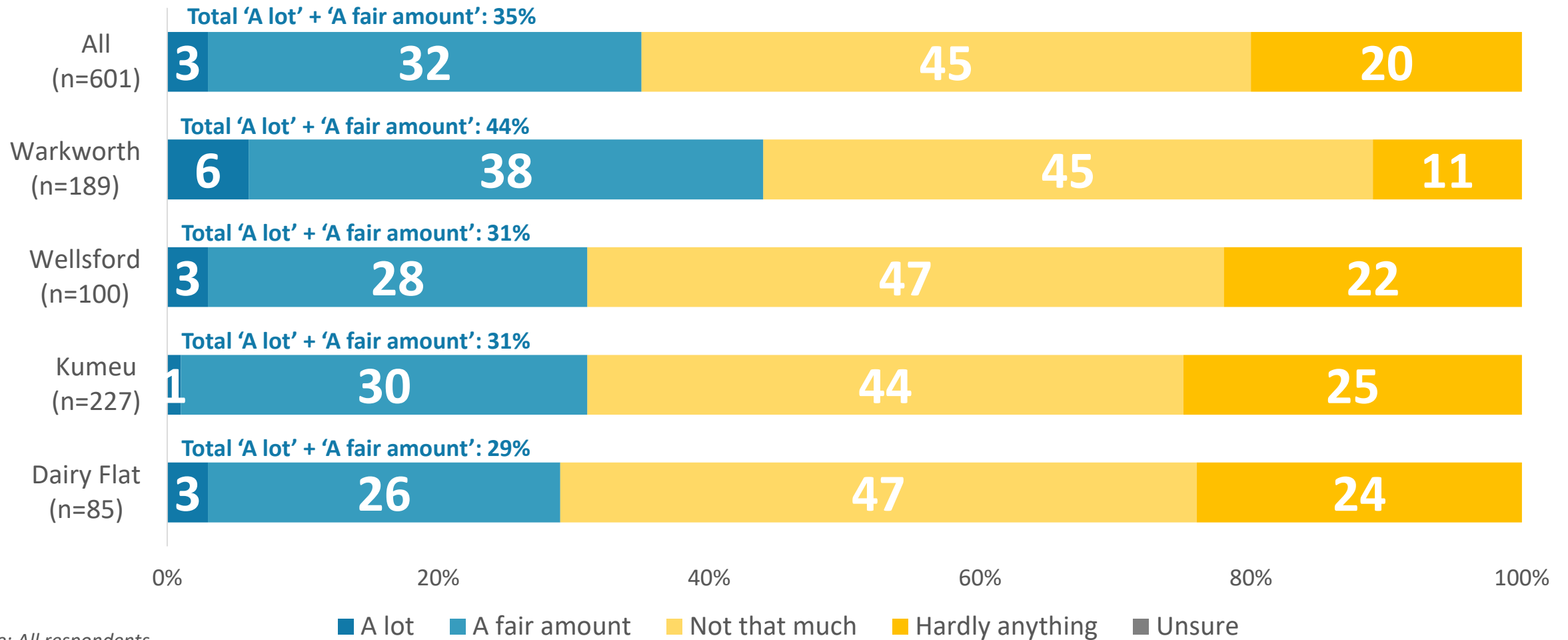
Knowledge of local government

Knowledge of local government in Rodney Local Board area

- In the quantitative survey, a little over a third of respondents (35%) indicated they were knowledgeable (a lot + a fair amount) about the local government in the Rodney Local Board area.
 - Warkworth respondents were more likely to declare they were knowledgeable about the local government in the Rodney Local Board area (44% compared to 35% overall).
 - Males were more likely to declare knowledge of the local government (45% compared to 35% overall), as were those over 60 (45% compared to 35% overall).
 - Those who voted in the local body elections last year were more likely to declare knowledge of the local government in the Rodney Local Board area (41% compared to 35% overall).
- This lines up with knowledge in the focus groups, with most participants aware there was local representation but with less knowledge of the names of specific representatives. In Wellsford and Warkworth most knew at least one or two local board members but knowledge was lower in the Kumeu and Dairy Flat groups with only a few able to name any members.

Knowledge of local government in Rodney Local Board area

How much do you know about local government in the Rodney Local Board area?



Base: All respondents

Understanding of local government arrangements (focus groups)

- As found in the quantitative survey, in the focus groups there was relatively low understanding of local government arrangements. Even those that felt they had some knowledge were uncertain about many aspects.
- Key areas to clarify raised in the focus groups were:
 - The process for decision-making.
 - The process to provide feedback.
 - The ability for the Local Board to make decisions, how much autonomy do they have?
 - What are the responsibilities of the Local Board?
 - Who do the Local Board report to?
 - How are local board's held accountable?
 - How much is spent in the local area and what proportion of rates collected locally are spent locally?
 - Future decisions currently being reviewed.

Understanding local government arrangements: verbatim

[What do you want to know?] *A breakdown of where all the expenditure goes, that would be quite handy. The money allocation that is going for Rodney, what money are they putting to Kumeu or Huapai and what are they putting into Riverhead. A breakdown would be quite nice.* (Dairy Flat, female)

If something pops up you say who has to sort this out and they say sorry I can't make a decision on this. Please just tell me who to complain to. (Warkworth, male)

[Do you feel you have a good understanding of how it works?] *No.* [Do you want to know how it works?] *I do at times. When I see for example the Tamaki roundabout, they have spent all of that money planting it two or three times over and now it is all overgrown again. Who do you go to, to say who is doing this.* (Kumeu, female)

How the funds are allocated, we all pay rates so there are all these wards and what are they responsible for. They all have a budget and they spend money in the local ward. Is it based on population numbers or is it based on what? (Dairy Flat, male)

Effectiveness of current arrangements

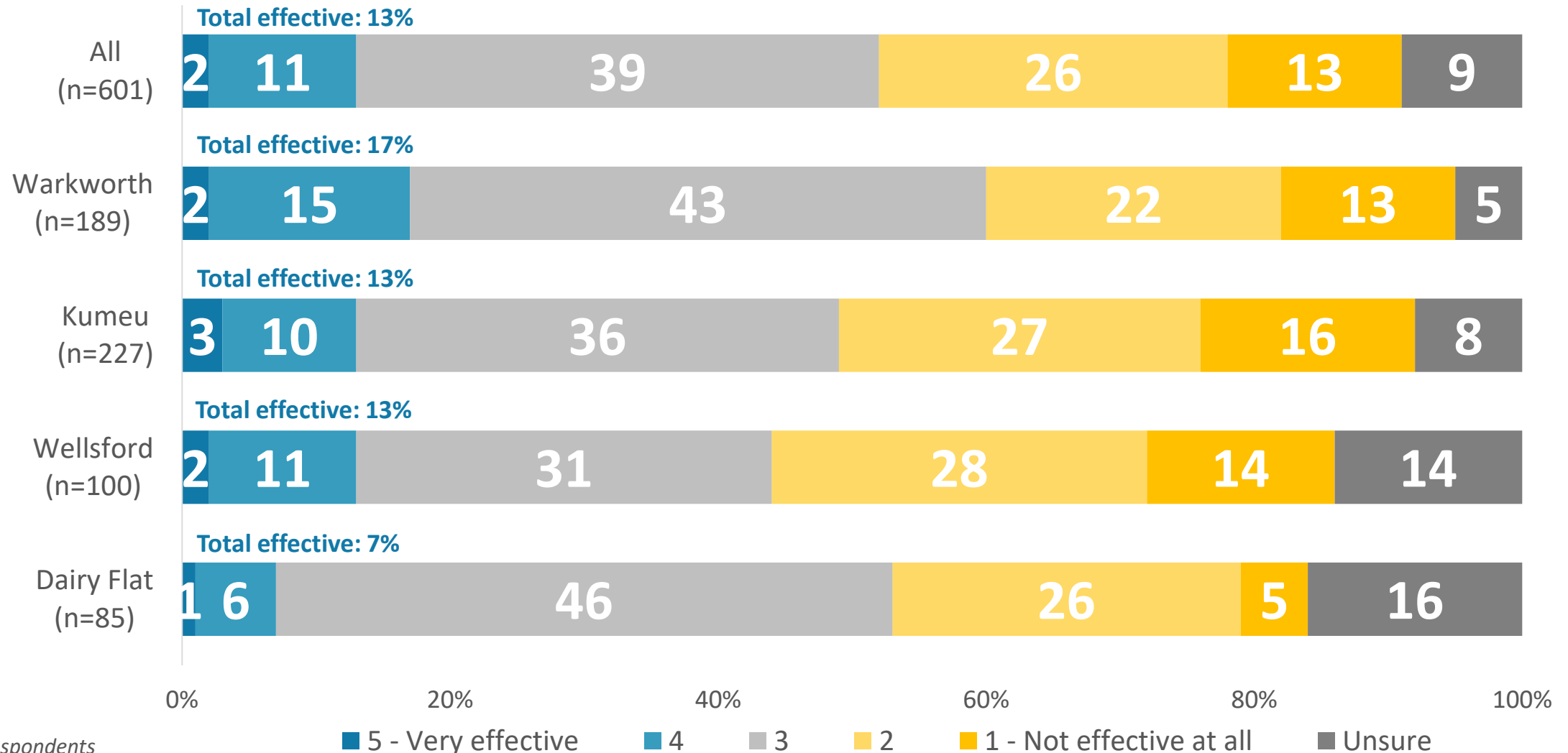


Effectiveness of current arrangements (quantitative survey)

- In the quantitative survey, around one in ten respondents (13%) indicated the current Rodney Local Board arrangements were effective.
 - 17% of Warkworth respondents indicated the current arrangements were effective.
- Almost half (48%) gave the effectiveness of the Rodney Local Board arrangements a neutral rating or were unsure what rating to give.
 - This was somewhat higher in Dairy Flat (62%).
- Thirty-nine percent rated the Rodney Local Board arrangements ineffective.

Effectiveness of current arrangements

How effective do you think the current Rodney Local Board arrangements are?



Base: All respondents

Satisfaction with current arrangements (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, there was some disillusionment with current arrangements – many felt disconnected with Council decision-making and believed their areas were overlooked and under-resourced.

Positives:

- Seen some progress – such as upgrade of local showgrounds
- No major concerns, adequate job
- Services delivered – rubbish, recycling, berm maintenance, public toilet maintenance, libraries (both local and in the city)
- Good local representatives – responsive, motivated, accessible

Negatives:

- Local issues not being addressed – no understanding of local issues
- Lack of transparency/ communication, feel no one is listening
 - Do not get to see bureaucrats
- Lack of accountability – poor decision making, waste
- Poor liaison with NZTA
- Local Board
 - Powerless/ no autonomy
 - Set up as scapegoat/ to fob off demands
 - Cover a large area
 - Under-resourced
 - Have own agendas

Local arrangements – positives: verbatim

Since we have had good local board representation and people like _____ I find he is all over it everywhere and I have to say that since he has been elected I feel so much better informed. And he is someone too that I can actually ask a question on Facebook and he answers. (Kumeu, female)

*[What works well at the moment?]
There are things happening, the showgrounds are getting down but there are lot of things that aren't happening. (Wellsford, female)*

The Wellsford library is fabulous. Having access to Auckland library is quite good too. (Wellsford, female)

I don't have anything to complain about so it can't be too bad. (Warkworth, female)

They are very available, you see it everywhere, there are meetings, there are clinics where you can book in and go and talk to people. (Kumeu, female)

At Snells Beach the toilets are cleaned regularly, the rubbish bins are emptied regularly, I think that is quite good, they mow the lawns. I think that is all done fairly well. (Warkworth, male)

Local arrangements – negatives: verbatim

I think my biggest issue is governance and transparency of this council. If you have a problem, if you ring up Noise Control at the council it is 90 minutes until someone turns up and they just don't seem to care.

(Warkworth, male)

They have too big of an area to cover for a local board. So, they are going to struggle the whole time and if you look at the issues they have to deal with each meeting. (Wellsford, male)

Wasteful spending, they have completely redone the carpark and Hill Street Junction and everyone knows that in a few years' time they are going to have to do something different. They could have properly sealed the road with that money.

(Warkworth, female)

I think I feel like we are a bit forgotten up here. A bit distant. (Wellsford, female)

I think they are under-funded. I don't think the local boards get enough funding. But I think the people on it are doing a good job with what they have got.

(Kumeu, female)

Local arrangements – negatives: verbatim

*Literally have no say in what happens. Local boards have no say in what council votes in.
(Dairy Flat, male)*

However the whole idea of having a local board did seem a bit like it was putting something between us and council. Council became further out of reach to us and I am sure that is why they did it. (Kumeu, female)

A recent development in Silverdale and Hibiscus Coast Highway someone had bought the land and he chopped down something like 40 Totara trees, Kauris, native trees that were quite old and he basically got a smack on the hand. It seems to be that if you have money and you are prepared to pay someone at the council you can do anything you like. (Dairy Flat, female)

*I feel I have no idea about anything that is going on. I know people my age don't necessarily seek it out. I feel they really make no effort to see what we would want.
(Dairy Flat, male)*

*And they may be bringing their own agendas because there is only a few of them for a massive area. Not their own agendas but focusing on their area.
(Wellsford, female)*

Rates (focus groups)

- Participants in the focus groups were asked if they felt that ‘the rates they pay are appropriate for the services they receive’. Most in the groups, felt that rates were poor value – living in rural areas they felt services were minimal as they paid extra for rubbish collection and were not on town supply for water or sewage.
 - However, a few that had lived in other areas felt that rates compared favourably to other New Zealand locations.
- There were suspicions that only a small proportion of the rates collected in the area were spent locally. They called for a breakdown on the amount of funds spent in the area.
 - In areas of high development, some also felt that developer fees were not being used locally.
- Nevertheless, there was a reluctance to pay lower rates for less services – participants continually stated that they just wanted the money spent in the local area on the right initiatives.
 - They felt lower rates would just result in less action on the key issues they felt need to be addressed locally. Most believed that development was required given there was no way to reverse the population growth in the area and upgraded infrastructure was desperately needed. Many noted that they did not mind paying rates if they felt that progress was being made and that the area was being developed in a positive way.

Rates: verbatim

The second point is the lack of services I get for the amount of rates I pay. No sewerage, no water, no footpaths, no rubbish collection, no street lights. (Dairy Flat, male)

*[Would anyone want to pay less rates but reduce some services?]
Just want to pay your rates and get something for your rates.
(Dairy Flat, female)*

*Personally, I would rather do the opposite, pay more and have better services. [You think there is a need for more?] I wouldn't want less services put it that way.
(Warkworth, male)*

*What I am averse to is getting charged more rates and not seeing that connected in our community but going somewhere else. There was a tax for subdivisions, where does that go?
(Kumeu, female)*

For me it is not about the services it is about the infrastructure that goes with the new development that is lacking. I couldn't care less about services I didn't move to the country to have someone mow my roadside. (Kumeu, female)

Rates (cont.): verbatim

But if you look at where our rates dollar is getting spent because there is no transparency where our money is collected from and where it is spent. It goes into the big pot in Auckland and that is it.

(Wellsford, male)

I don't mind the rates I am paying to have some development in that area. And if you can see that happening I don't mind at all but if it is going down to the super city and things are happening down there, but even down there I don't mind because I do use that area. I like development, especially with the growth that has come. [So if you saw rates going down you would be worried?] I wouldn't like rates to go down.

(Wellsford, female)

Suggestions (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, suggested ways to improve the performance of the local board were to:
 - Give more power to the Local Board to make decisions
 - For the Board to share what they are doing, outline current decisions being made
 - Have more representatives on the Local Board so they cover all key areas in the Rodney region
 - Look to address ratepayer issues more quickly
 - Provide clarity over responsibilities
 - Be accessible and have a way to provide feedback
 - Canvas resident opinions before making major decisions such as through polls
 - Have qualified people
 - Be more effective in representing local views to Council.

Improvements to operation of the Local Board: verbatim

I think more autonomy for the Local Board.
(Warkworth, female)

Tell us how the funds are allocated, we all pay rates so there are all these wards and what are they responsible for. They all have a budget and they spend money in the local ward. Is it based on population numbers or is it based on what? (Dairy Flat, male)

I would ask the council members to satisfy the wishes of the ratepayers. (Warkworth, male)

*[What would you like to see.]
Get clarity around what are they responsible for in terms of decision making.* (Kumeu, female)

I guess it is an understanding of the local area and that over summer we require more services and how this area functions on a more minor level I suppose.
(Warkworth, female)

A website and possibly polls to see what the people want instead of them going ahead and making decisions behind our backs, especially if it is something we are against.
(Kumeu, female)

The need for change

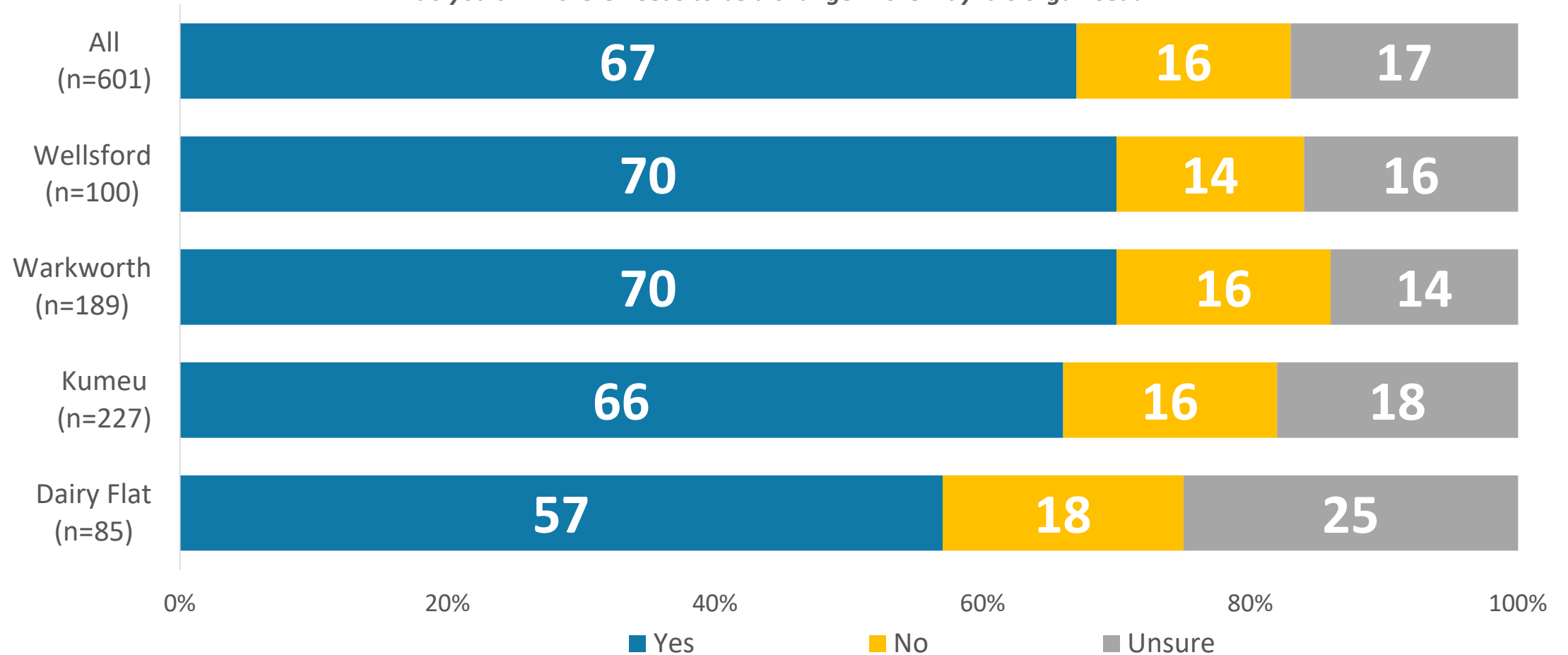


Need for change in organisation of local government in the Rodney Local Board area (quantitative survey)

- In the quantitative survey, two-thirds of respondents (67%) stated there needs to be a change in the way the local government in the Rodney Local Board area is organised.
 - A slightly lower percentage of Dairy Flat respondents said they wanted change (57%).
 - Respondents who declared they were knowledgeable about the local government in the Rodney Local Board area were more likely to state there needs to be a change in the way it is organised (77% compared to 67% overall).

Need a change in way local government is organised in the Rodney Local Board area

Regardless of how much you know about the way local government is organised in the Rodney Local Board area, do you think there needs to be a change in the way it is organised?



Base: All respondents

Attitude towards change (quantitative survey)

Reasons for wanting change

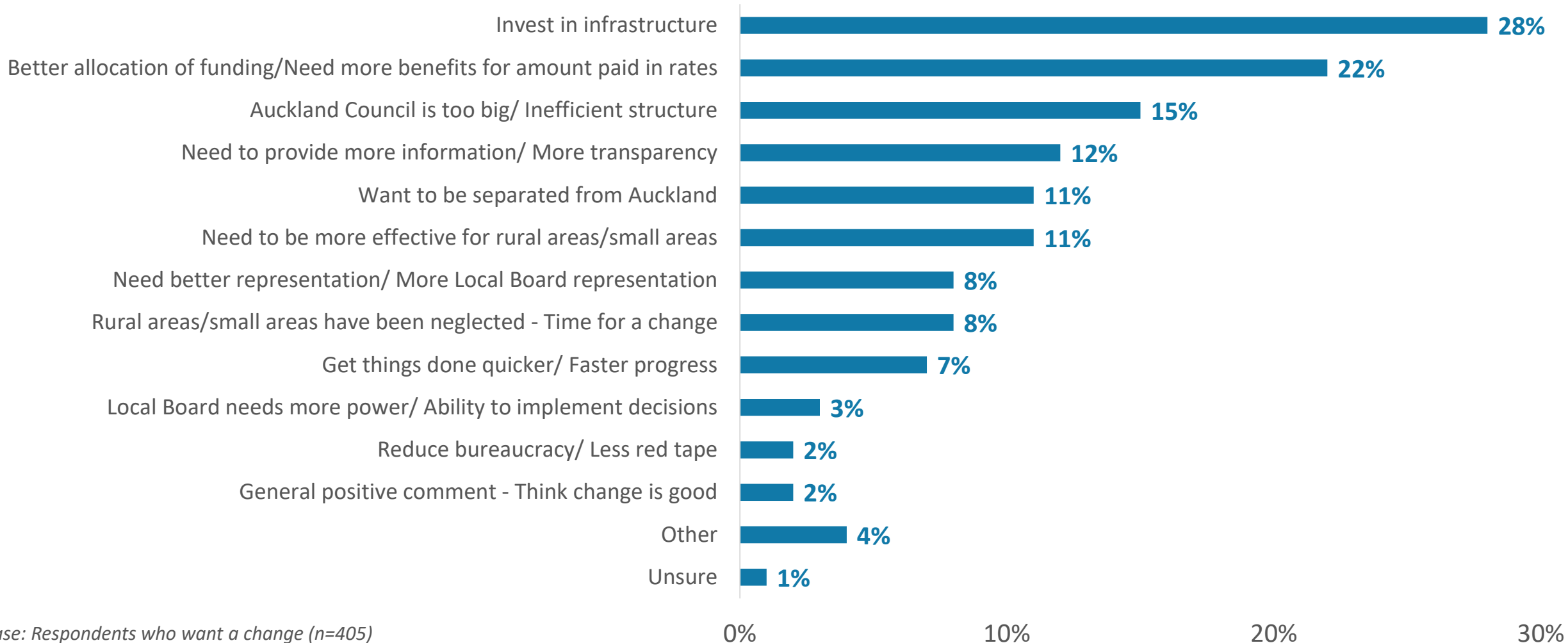
- Respondents in the quantitative survey, who indicated they wanted change were asked what were their main reasons.
 - The most commonly mentioned reason was to invest in infrastructure (28%), followed closely by 22% mentioning a need for better allocation of funding and that they need more benefits for the money they pay in rates.
 - Fifteen percent mentioned *'Auckland Council is too big/ Inefficient structure'* and 12% called for more information and transparency.

Reasons for not wanting change

- Respondents who were opposed to change were asked why they felt this way.
 - The most commonly mentioned reason was they were happy with the current arrangements (cited by 39%).
 - Followed by *'General positive comment - Doing a good job'* (cited by 16%) and *'Current Local board representatives are effective'* (cited by 10%).

Reasons for wanting change

What are your main reasons for wanting change?

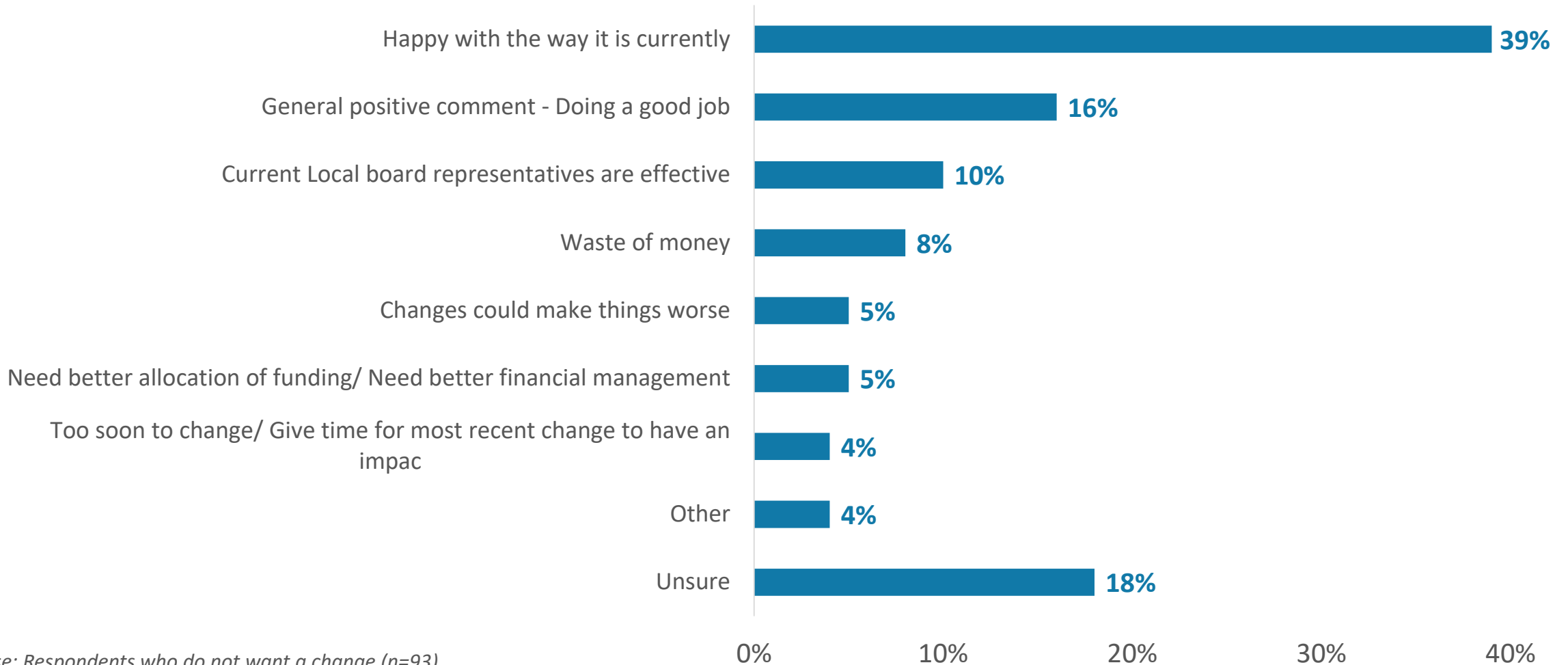


Base: Respondents who want a change (n=405)

Note: Multiple response question

Reasons for not wanting change

What are your main reasons for not wanting change?



Base: Respondents who do not want a change (n=93)

Note: Multiple response question

The need for change (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, most found it difficult to come up with potential changes to local government arrangements on an unprompted basis. There was some reluctance to make major structural changes as this was seen as costly.
- A few called for an additional councillor to represent the Rodney area – they felt councillors had much more power than a local board and that this would be more likely to result in local voices being taken into account when Council made decisions.
- There were a few suggested refinements to the current arrangements, including:
 - Additional representatives on the local board to ensure representation of all areas.
 - Council to listen to local boards and to give them more autonomy.
 - Better communication – outlining decisions being made and seeking feedback.
 - Run Council more efficiently and make it accountable.

Changes: verbatim

We should stay within Auckland but there real major concern was that there should be more ability for the Local Board members to have more clout. They are disenfranchised. So, it actually is to give more strength to the people that we vote for on our boards. (Warkworth, female)

I would like to see more local representation. Rural people's needs are different from city people's needs and we have a different way of approaching life and our circumstances are different. (Wellsford, female)

I think it is a waste of time mucking around with the boundaries again. We should run with it but maybe we need an extra councillor or somehow give the areas that are more different to Auckland City a bit more representation on the board. (Warkworth, female)

What would be more effective is to have two Auckland councillors for Rodney rather than two local boards. The council doesn't listen to the Local Board. (Dairy Flat, male)

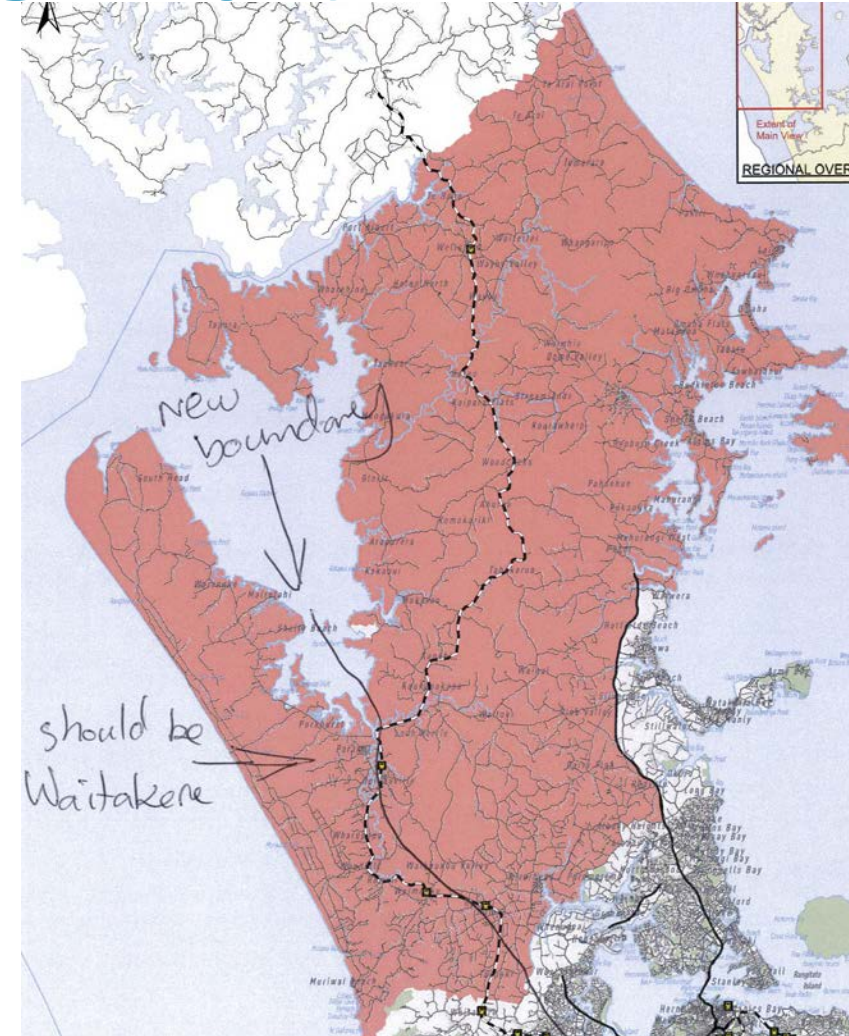
I think the Local Board is working fine but I do think having one elected representative and one elected councillor is not enough. And I know that is probably done on a population basis but I think you could make a case for geographically – there is that east/west thing and we need a western representative. (Kumeu, female)

I think definitely the transparency. Maybe more putting it out into the community more of what they are doing. Maybe it is not that they aren't being transparent maybe they are not sharing it in the right way that it is connecting with everyone. (Warkworth, female)

Boundary changes (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, most were reluctant to outline boundary changes – they felt they needed more information on the make-up of the populations in each area and current level of rates being collected.
- A few called for the region bordering Waitakere to be part of this region rather than Rodney as it was seen to have more in common with West Auckland.

*[Different boundary line?] I am finding it hard to do. I think it is more about understanding the region rather than drawing a line.
(Warkworth, female)*



The reorganisation



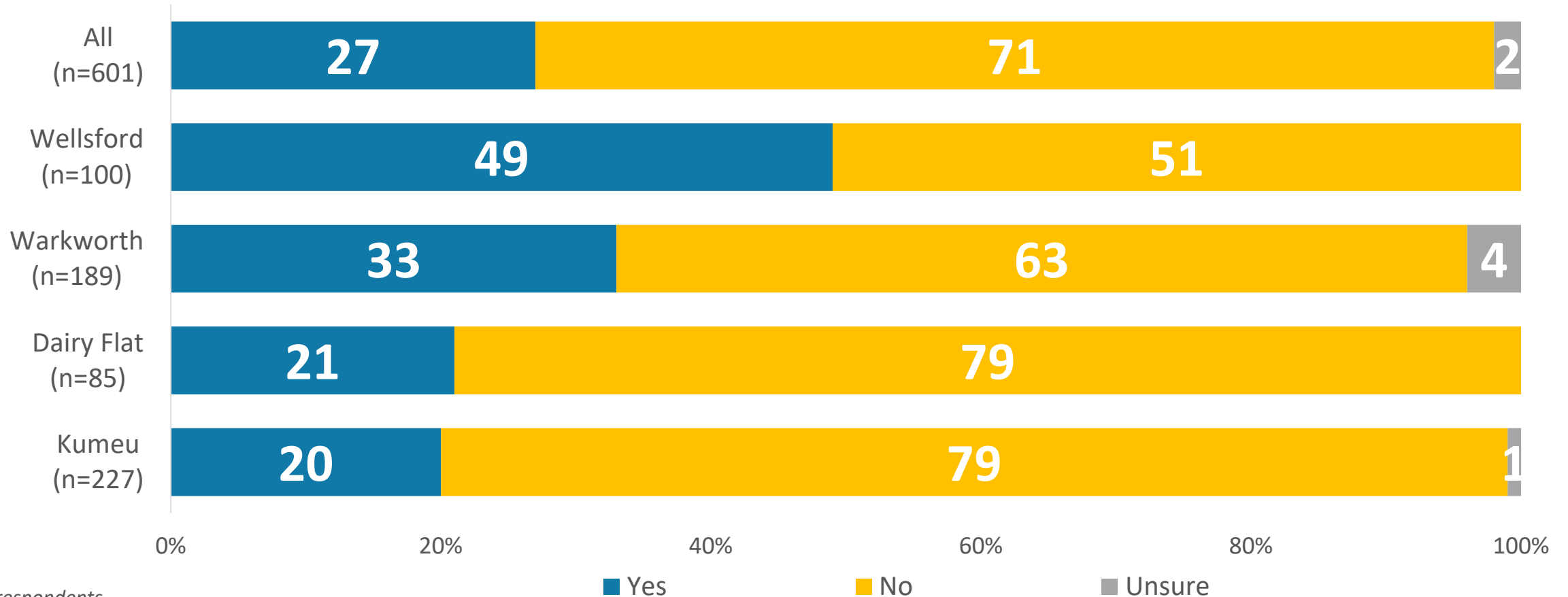
Declared awareness of reorganisation process (quantitative survey)

Aware of Local Government Commission reorganisation process

- A quarter of respondents (27%) in the quantitative survey were aware that the Local Government Commission is working through a reorganisation process in Auckland.
 - Highest declared awareness was from Wellsford respondents (49%), followed by a third of Warkworth respondents (33%).
 - Those over 60 were more likely to be aware of the process (41% compared to 27% overall).

Aware of local government commission reorganisation process

The Local Government Commission is working through a reorganisation process in Auckland, which includes the Rodney Local Board area. This is to establish whether there should be changes to local government arrangements and if so what changes should be made



Base: All respondents

Awareness of reorganisation (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, awareness of the reorganisation was higher in Wellsford and Warkworth – it was clear that the Northern Action Group has worked hard to push its agenda in these areas.
 - Even so, participants in this area were unsure of the current status of decision making. Most felt the issue had been decided as they had not heard much lately.
 - Most in the Kumeu and Dairy Flat groups were unaware of the proposed reorganisation or had thought the issue was dead.
- Interest in the topic had been tempered by overexposure by the Northern Action Group and belief the issue had been decided (generally voiced as decided ‘behind closed doors’ and ‘at a higher level than the Local Board’).
 - However, once participants knew the issue had not been resolved, there was some interest and a desire to have a say in the decision.
 - A desire to have input was stronger across ratepayers as they felt decisions could directly impact on rates while renters only saw a tenuous personal impact. A majority preferred to make improvements to the current arrangements rather than a structural overhaul – as they felt a major change would be costly.

Interest in reorganisation: verbatim

I have heard about it but I haven't given it much thought because I didn't think it would be going anywhere. I thought that once Auckland had made their decision that was that, rail-roaded. (Wellsford, female)

[So are you interested in learning more about it?] So many of these things happen or you get asked about and then you never hear a thing. (Kumeu, female)

I don't want major change. There would just be this whole bunch of time with restructuring so it is just a waste of effort. (Kumeu, male)

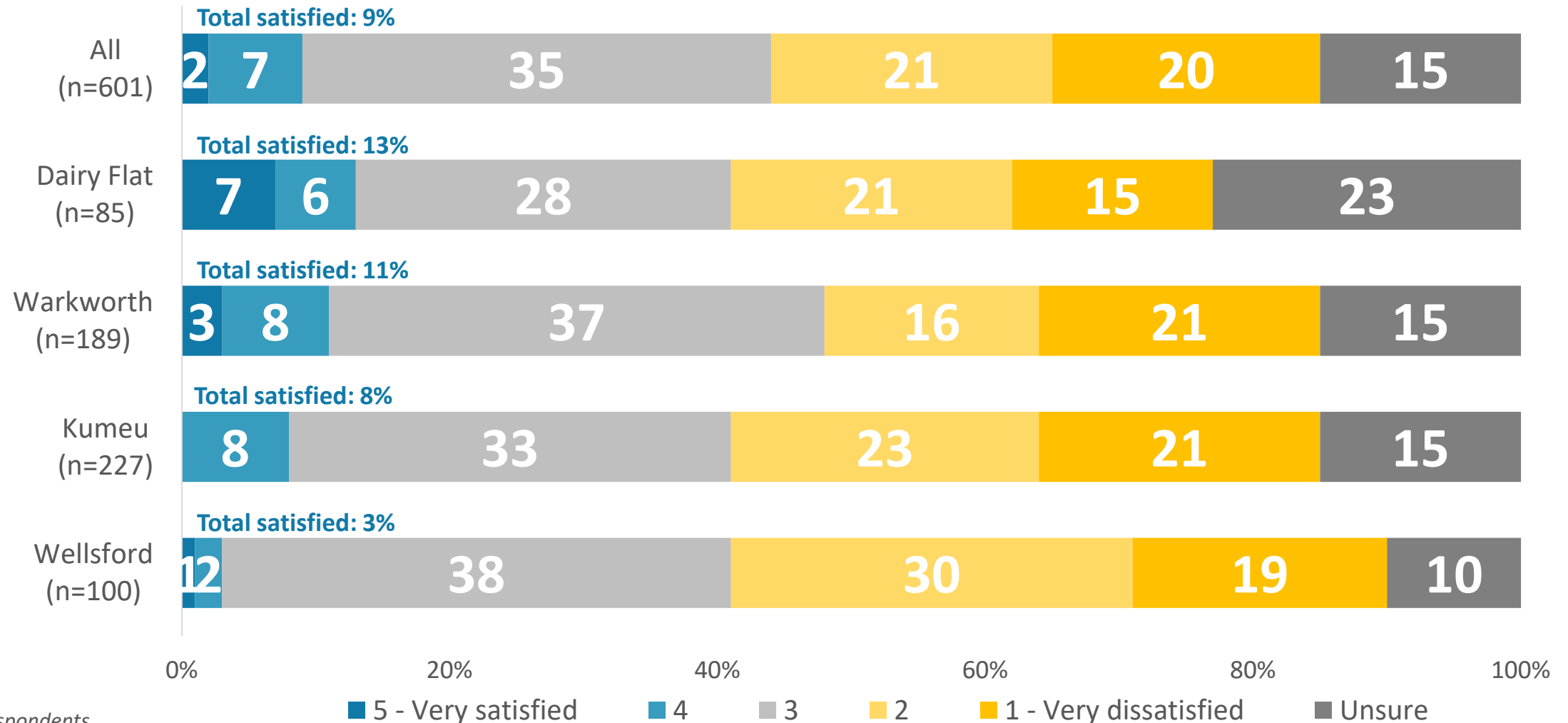
I like to know what's happening but I also get the feeling that there is absolutely nothing I can do about it. (Dairy Flat, male)

Satisfaction with the process (quantitative survey)

- A minority of respondents (9%) in the quantitative survey indicated they were satisfied with the process the Local Government Commission has undertaken. While two-fifths of respondents (41%) were dissatisfied with the process 50% were neutral or unsure.
- Respondents who were dissatisfied were asked their main reasons for their view. Thirty-nine percent mentioned they hadn't heard anything about it and didn't know what the process was and 22% said it was because the information wasn't available.
- Followed by the reasons below:
 - *No faith in council/ Do not trust the council* (cited by 20%)
 - *Isolated/ Neglected/ Not listened to* (cited by 19%).

Satisfaction with process

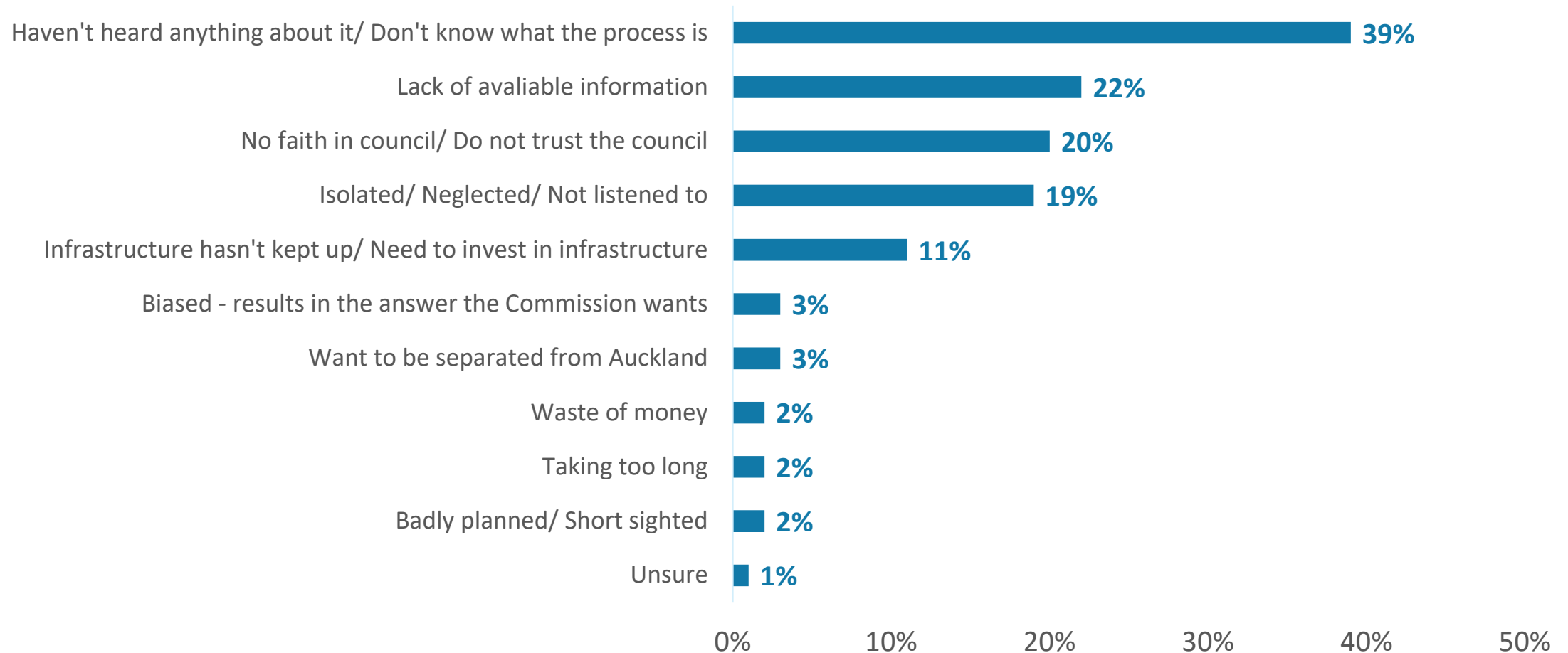
How satisfied are you with the process the Local Government Commission has undertaken?



Base: All respondents

Reasons for dissatisfaction with process

What are your main reasons for being dissatisfied with the process?



Base: Respondents who stated they were dissatisfied with the process (n=268)

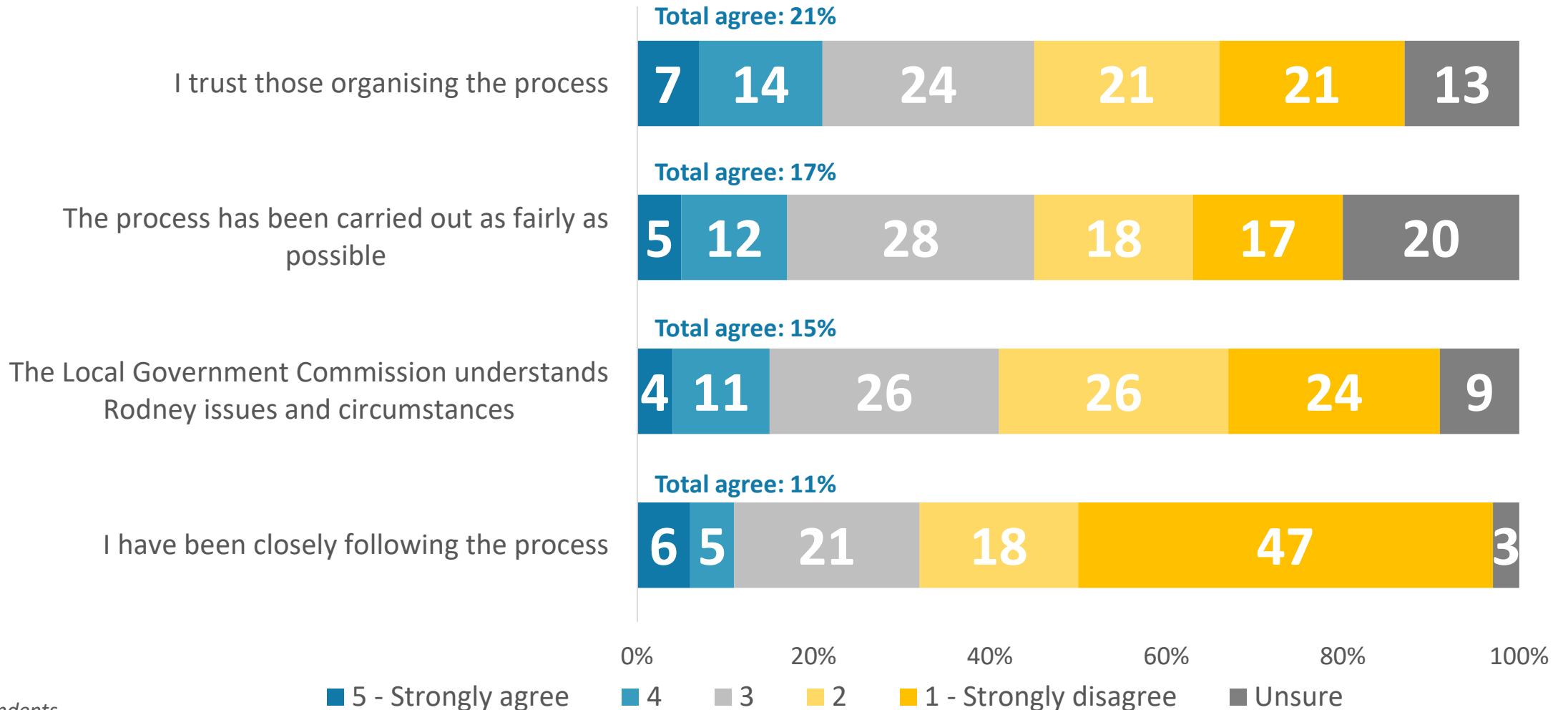
Note: Multiple response question

Process statement testing (quantitative survey)

- In the quantitative survey, one-fifth of respondents (21%) agreed they trust those organising the process.
- Seventeen percent of respondents agreed the process has been carried out as fairly as possible.
- Fifteen percent of respondents agreed that the Local Government Commission understands Rodney issues and circumstances.
- Only one in ten respondents (11%) agreed they had been closely following the process.
 - Nineteen percent of Warkworth respondents agreed they had been following the process closely.

Statement testing

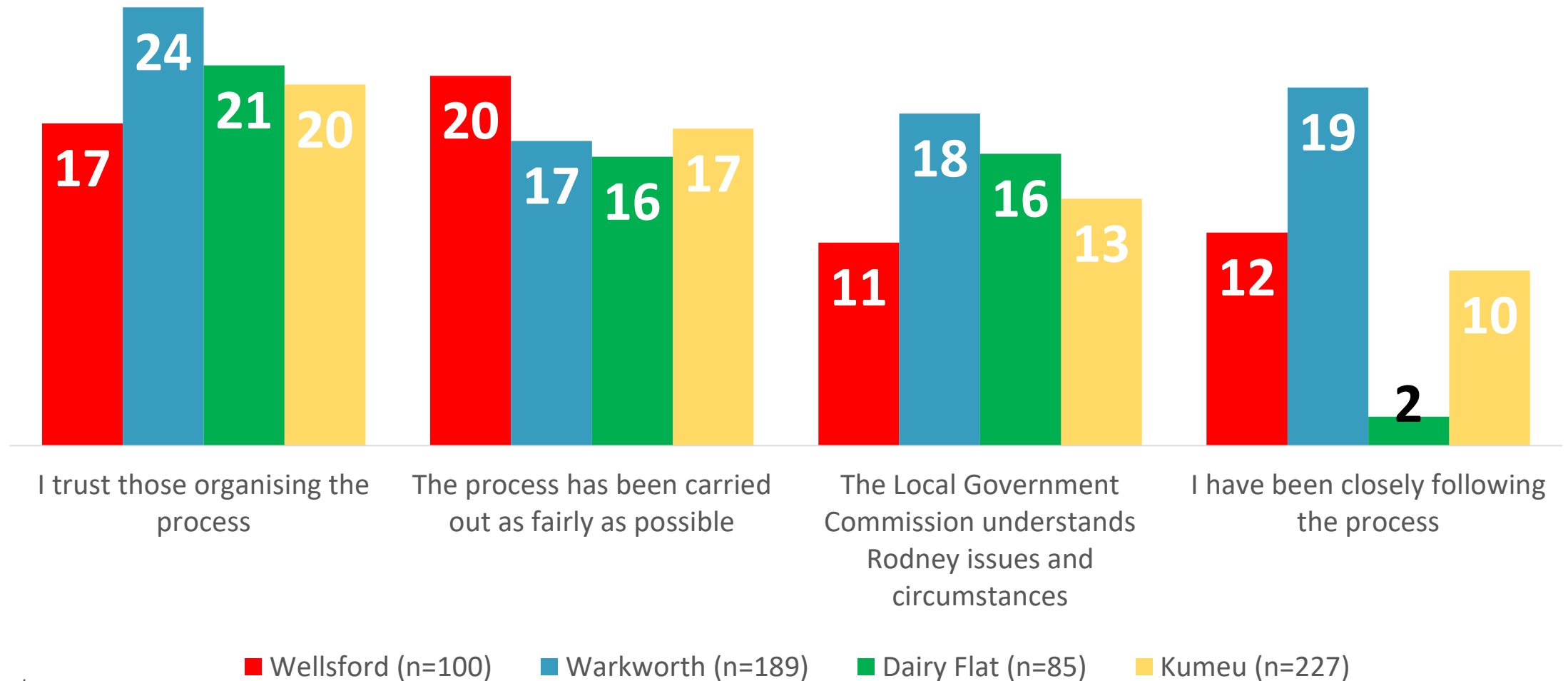
How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements:



Base: All respondents

Statement testing – by region

How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?
Total Agree (4+5)%



Base: All respondents

The process (focus groups)

- It was evident in the groups that a poor rating on the process taken by LGC regarding the reorganisation was due to a perceived lack of information.
 - Most felt that they had not heard much recently which meant that some felt decisions had been made (without consultation).
- Suggested improvements in the process included:
 - Making a quick decision – to keep costs down and remove uncertainty
 - Ensuring local voices are heard and considered in any decision making
 - Having open and honest communication regarding the options considered and decisions made.

Ideal process: verbatim

They need to be accountable for what they are doing. (Wellsford, male)

It has to be about us. It has to be about what our community wants. We have to be listened to. (Wellsford, female)

Ensure clear information is available and that the process is open and inclusive. (Warkworth, female)

Ensuring that they are gathering information from all sources from people in the local community first along with transparency and better communication before they go making any massive decisions. (Warkworth, female)

Just be honest. Don't flower it around with the bullshit. If you bake a cake and it is burnt I am just going to put nice icing on it and it looks fantastic but it is still shit underneath. I don't want that, just be honest. (Dairy Flat, female)

Alternative arrangements

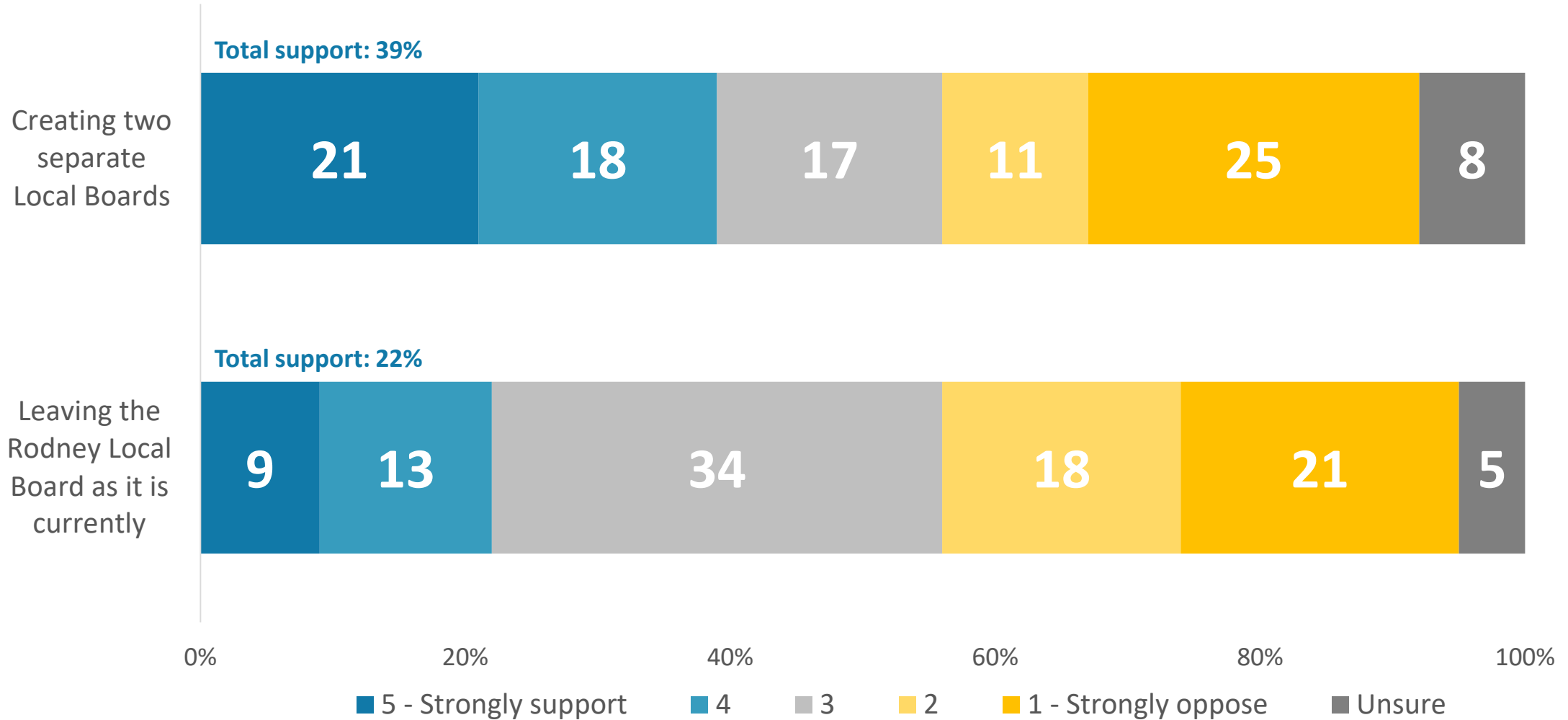


Support for two local boards (quantitative survey)

Support for two local boards

- Two-fifths of respondents (39%) in the quantitative survey supported creating two separate Local Boards. While a little over one-fifth (22%) supported leaving the Rodney Local Board as it is currently.
 - Close to half of Warkworth respondents (47%) supported creating two separate local boards.
 - There was almost equal support in Dairy Flat from the two boards (31%) and the status quo (30%).

Possible local government arrangements for the Rodney Local Board area – All

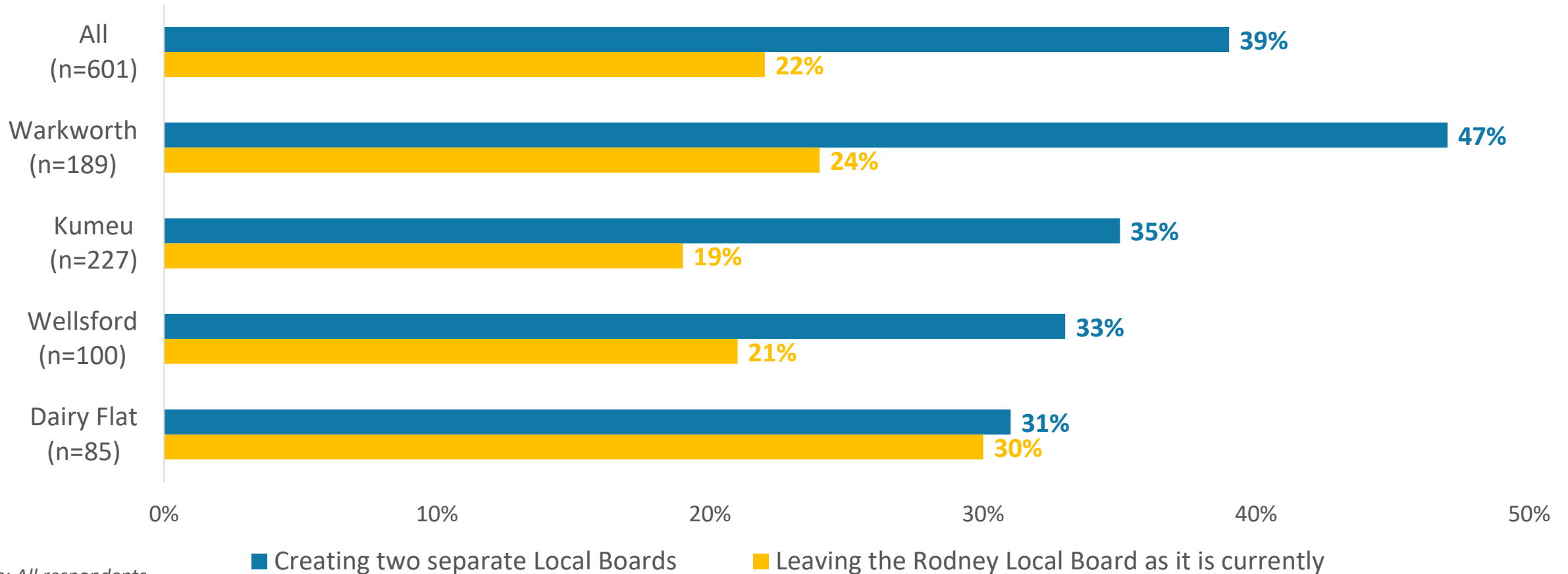


Base: All respondents

Possible local government arrangements for the Rodney Local Board area

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means strongly oppose and 5 means strongly support can you tell me how strongly do you oppose or support the following possible local government arrangements for the Rodney Local Board area?

Total support (4 + 5)%



Base: All respondents

Two local boards (focus groups)

- In line with the quantitative survey, participants in the groups were divided on whether to establish two local boards in the Rodney area. The main reasons for being in favour were the potential to have a more informed board and a greater local voice on issues, while those against were concerned about the cost to set up and administer two boards.

Positives:

- More local representation/ local issues heard/ bigger voice in specific areas
- More informed decisions/ will understand local issues
- More likely to protect local area – ensure developer funds spent locally
- More cohesive decisions
- May make faster decisions
- May be more accessible.

Negatives:

- Cost to set up and administer two boards
 - Possible rates increase to cover these costs
- Adds another layer of bureaucracy, duplication of functions
- Potential dilution of funding
- Will not be any better if the local boards are not given more power to make decisions.

Two local boards - positives: verbatim

I think it comes back to the size of the area of the local board, got people in Kumeu and Huapai and that sort of place and it is so far removed from Silverdale and Dairy Flat. You can't say if you live on one side you are associated with the other because geographically it is just too far away. (Dairy Flat, male)

I think the local issues would be dealt with on a much more prompt basis and hopefully some better long term planning for the local issues as opposed to coming out of Auckland. (Dairy Flat, male)

It would be nice to know that the people who are spending the money and calling the shots are actually in the area and can see for themselves so then they make informed decisions or choices. They are not sitting in an office all day in the middle of the city centre. (Warkworth, female)

Having two boards the people will tend to be more local to the area and they will be in a better situation to make informed decisions. (Wellsford, male)

Two local boards – positives (cont.): verbatim

I would hope you would have a bigger voice in the particular area you lived in. I would hope. (Warkworth, female)

A smaller area would probably let us be heard better. (Kumeu, female)

More focus on more localised issues. (Warkworth, female)

Less red tape. We could see them as people and meet them in person. We would be more likely if the locals had called a meeting to discuss what is happening in the community we would be more likely to go. (Wellsford, female)

Two local boards - negatives: verbatim

Another layer of bureaucracy. (Warkworth, male)

I don't think you would be heard better because your population base would be diminished, your funding would be diminished. I think it would give us a smaller power base and be quite negative in terms of that. Because we already have the two different groups within Rodney that are quite accessible. (Kumeu, female)

[What are the negatives then?] The dilution of funding. (Kumeu, female)

I wouldn't want to go back to separate ones because there would be a massive cost to that. (Dairy Flat, male)

[Do you think we would end up with two ineffective local boards?] We already have a pretty ineffective local board so it is just doubling it. (Dairy Flat, male)

I don't think it is the size that slows it down it is the funding that slows it down so nothing would happen faster and in fact things would be slower because it would take longer. (Kumeu, female)

Joining Kaipara District Council (Wellsford/Warkworth) (focus groups)

- In the groups held with Wellsford and Warkworth residents, there was no appetite to become part of the Kaipara District Council (KDC). The main reasons for the lack of interest in this option were negative views of the KDC and a lack of connection with the area the KDC currently covers.

Positives:

- Possibly more aligned and aware of issues facing rural communities.

Negatives:

- Feel no connection with the KDC area – many noted that it reaches right up to Dargaville which was viewed as having little relationship to their area
- Viewed as a poorly run council
 - Disfunction relationships across different areas covered by the council
 - Has lax consent rules which may result in negative environment impacts
 - In debt from mismanaged implementation of a sewage treatment plant
- Rating base consists of many low-socio economic areas which may mean they subsidise those areas
- Joining an area with a smaller economy with less resources
- Would be a long and costly process to implement.

Joining Kaipara District Council: verbatim

*I think putting aside their past mishaps they might have a better understanding of rural issues.
(Warkworth, female)*

Not after they blew their budget on the sewerage scheme and we would just have to pay the rates for that. (Wellsford, male)

[Joining Kaipara District Council] It would be a much bigger board and they would pay less attention to the individual area than the council and we would become more invisible to the council. (Warkworth, male)

*I think if we get lured into saying, yes – you have got two things here, you have got the geographical thing and then you have got the population and in Rodney we don't have the population to split off. It would actually make us into too small, even more impotent bodies.
(Warkworth, female)*

*[Negative of joining Kaipara District Council?] Probably the fact that we would have to put up with about a five-year long debate on referendums.
(Warkworth, male)*

Joining Kaipara District Council (cont.): verbatim

They have completely stuffed it up. They had a plan going back years ago where they wanted to bring water and sewerage and it didn't happen. There is too much dissention between Dargaville and what they call they rich at Mangawhai. It would not be a good mix. (Warkworth, female)

Talking about building consents there is also some stuff around the lack of attention Kaipara pays to certain activities. [They might be a bit lax?] Very lax. And it impacts on the environment. If they are building they don't give a monkeys, if they are building in the bush they are flattening sites in Kaipara and Rodney wouldn't even let you put that in. I think the environment needs to be protected. (Wellsford, female)

They are in strife and also because we are closer to being part of Auckland whether we like it or not. We have all moved here and lived here and contributed to the changing society that we live in, there is no use complaining, I have moved here from Auckland so I think we are part of Auckland. (Warkworth, male)

Communications



Communications – Providing Feedback (quantitative survey)

- Four-fifths of respondents (78-80%) stated they would provide feedback via an online survey or email.
- Half of respondents (51%) said they would provide feedback via information booths in the local community.
- Around two-fifths of respondents said they would provide feedback through social media, the Local Government Commission website, a formal submission and a public meeting (39-43%).
- Only 12% of respondents said they would provide feedback in other ways some of their more frequently cited ways were:
 - A phone line – speaking with someone (mentioned by 24%)
 - Direct contact with Local Board representative (mentioned by 15%)
 - Send feedback via mail (mentioned by 15%).

Providing feedback

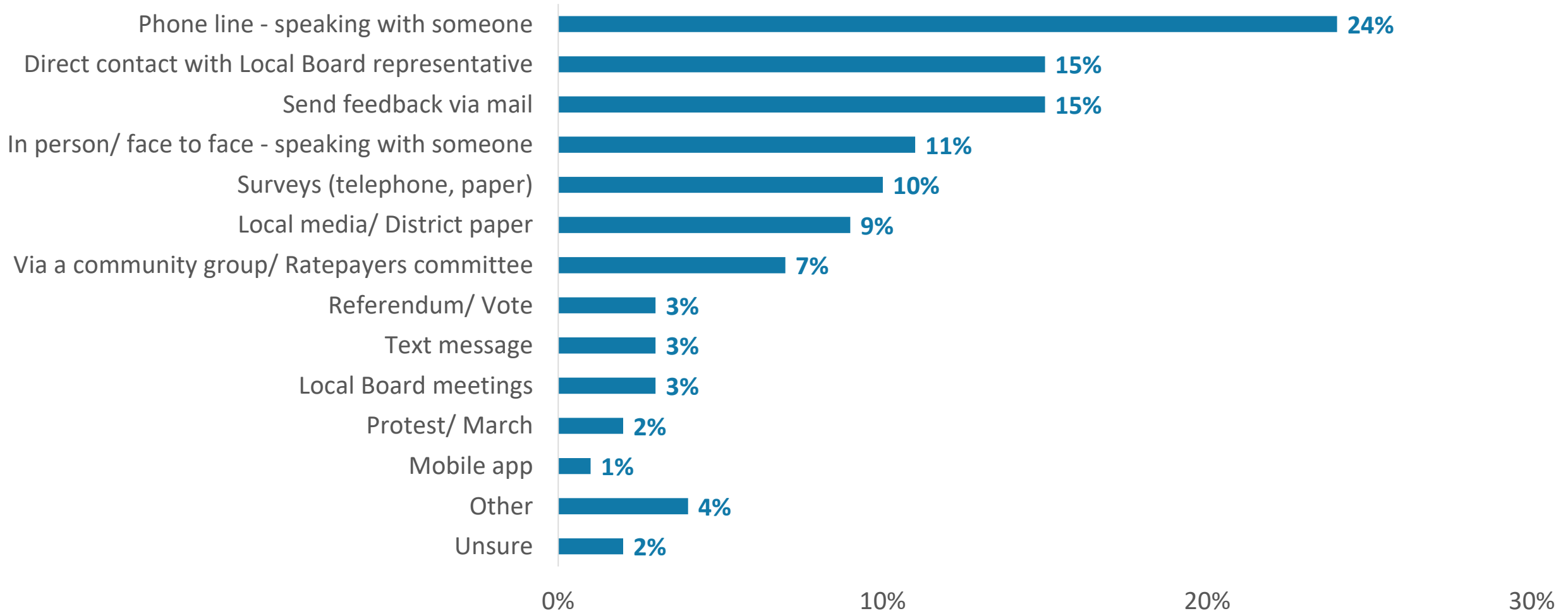
Which of the following ways would you provide feedback? Total yes %

	All (n=601)	Wellsford (n=100)	Warkworth (n=189)	Dairy Flat (n=85)	Kumeu (n=227)
An online survey	80	75	77	83	83
Email	78	72	79	75	81
Information booths in the local community	51	57	56	55	45
Social media	43	42	41	41	46
The Local Government Commission website	41	53	37	42	41
A formal Submission	41	42	42	37	42
A public meeting	39	43	43	35	36
Other	12	9	8	18	14

Base: All respondents

Other ways of providing feedback

Which of the following ways would you provide feedback? Please specify any other ways?



Base: Respondents who stated they would provide feedback another way (n=77)

Note: Multiple response question

Providing feedback (focus groups)

- Participants in the focus groups clearly felt that community views should be canvased on any options being considered. Although some acknowledged cynicism that they would be listened to.
- There was seen to be the need to provide multiple channels to provide feedback given the diverse population.
- Backing up the quantitative findings, suggestions raised in the focus groups to provide feedback were:
 - Online surveys or polls
 - Mail (freepost)/ email feedback
 - Open meetings with key decision makers
 - A referendum
 - Places to lodge feedback – kiosks/ notices/ suggestion boxes at libraries, schools, council offices
 - Social media – links to submission pages or surveys
 - Websites.

Communications – Getting information (quantitative survey)

- In the quantitative survey, the most preferred ways of getting information on any potential changes to local government arrangements in the Rodney Local Board area were by email and newspapers (78% and 68% respectively).
- Half of respondents indicated that they would like to receive information by Local Government Commission posters, information booths in the local community and social media (50-54%).
- Two-fifths (41%) indicated they would like to get information via a public meeting and a third (32%) stated they would like to get information from the Local Government Commission website.
- Among the 20% of respondents that said they would like to get information from another source the most common medium by far was by posted mail in the form of flyers, pamphlets or a letter (20%). District papers and local radio stations featured at lower levels (9% and 8% respectively).

Getting information

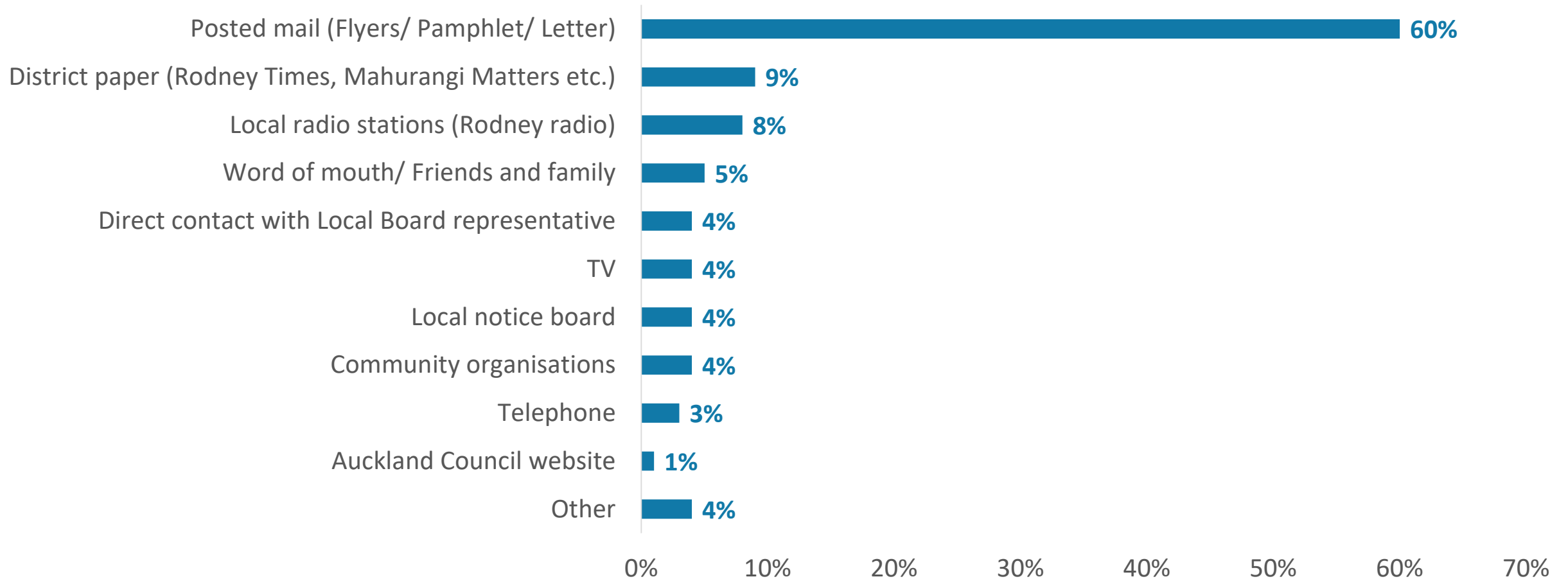
Which of the following ways would you like to get information on any potential changes to local government arrangements in the Rodney Local Board area? Total yes %

	All (n=601)	Wellsford (n=100)	Warkworth (n=189)	Dairy Flat (n=85)	Kumeu (n=227)
Email	78	72	76	82	81
A Newspaper	68	77	76	52	64
Local Government Commission posters	54	61	55	50	52
Information booths in the local community	52	59	52	46	53
Social media	50	49	50	44	51
A public meeting	41	50	43	45	36
The Local Government Commission website	32	37	29	29	33
Other	20	9	16	17	26

Base: All respondents

Other ways of getting information

Which of the following ways would you like to get information on any potential changes to local government arrangements in the Rodney Local Board area? Please specify any other ways?



Base: Respondents who stated they would like to get information another way (n=114)

Note: Multiple response question

Information sources on local issues (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, preferred channels to receive information were in line with the quantitative survey.
- Current information sources
 - Local paper such as Rodney Times, Mahurangi Matters, Helensville News, Kumeu Courier, Nor-West News
 - Social media – Facebook pages for local areas, Facebook page for Auckland Council, Local board, Neighbourly
 - Local newsletters
 - Northern Action Group – in local paper, door-to-door
 - Notices in local shops, schools
 - Word of mouth
 - Unitary plan
- Preferred channels
 - Local papers
 - Email or texts
 - Council website
 - Social media – Facebook
 - Newsletters – some still like hard copy material, suggestion to include in Our Auckland (section for Rodney) or rates bill
 - Notices in libraries, community halls, citizen advice bureaus

Information sought (focus groups)

- Participants in the focus groups were asked to outline information they would like on the reorganisation process. The key information sought included:
 - Transparency – a timeline on what is currently happening
 - Outline of options being considered and the pros and cons of each, particularly:
 - The impact on rates
 - Cost benefit analysis
 - Impact on specific communities
 - Comparisons with other similar areas of New Zealand and which option has worked well/not well for that area
 - The cost to implement
 - The ongoing running costs compared with the status quo
 - Summary of feedback received on the options
 - All information to be clear and concise, in everyday language

Information sought: verbatim

[What do you want to know?] Making people aware these are the options. Sometimes decisions get made and if other people had put input into that we probably could have got a better decision. (Wellsford, male)

Either way that they go what would our benefits be for our community and the pros and cons for each situation that they want to put to us and for us to have a say what one is chosen and which direction it goes. (Wellsford, female)

[So you want concise, informative, brief, to the point stuff.] Yes. And don't put it in the lawyer speak and all the Geotech stuff that goes over most simple people's head. Just plain common language that we can understand. (Dairy Flat, male)

A smaller area would probably let us be heard better. (Kumeu, female)

I would suggest that if you do have to then there is a summary of the analysis so that people are at least a bit informed. (Kumeu, female)

Connections

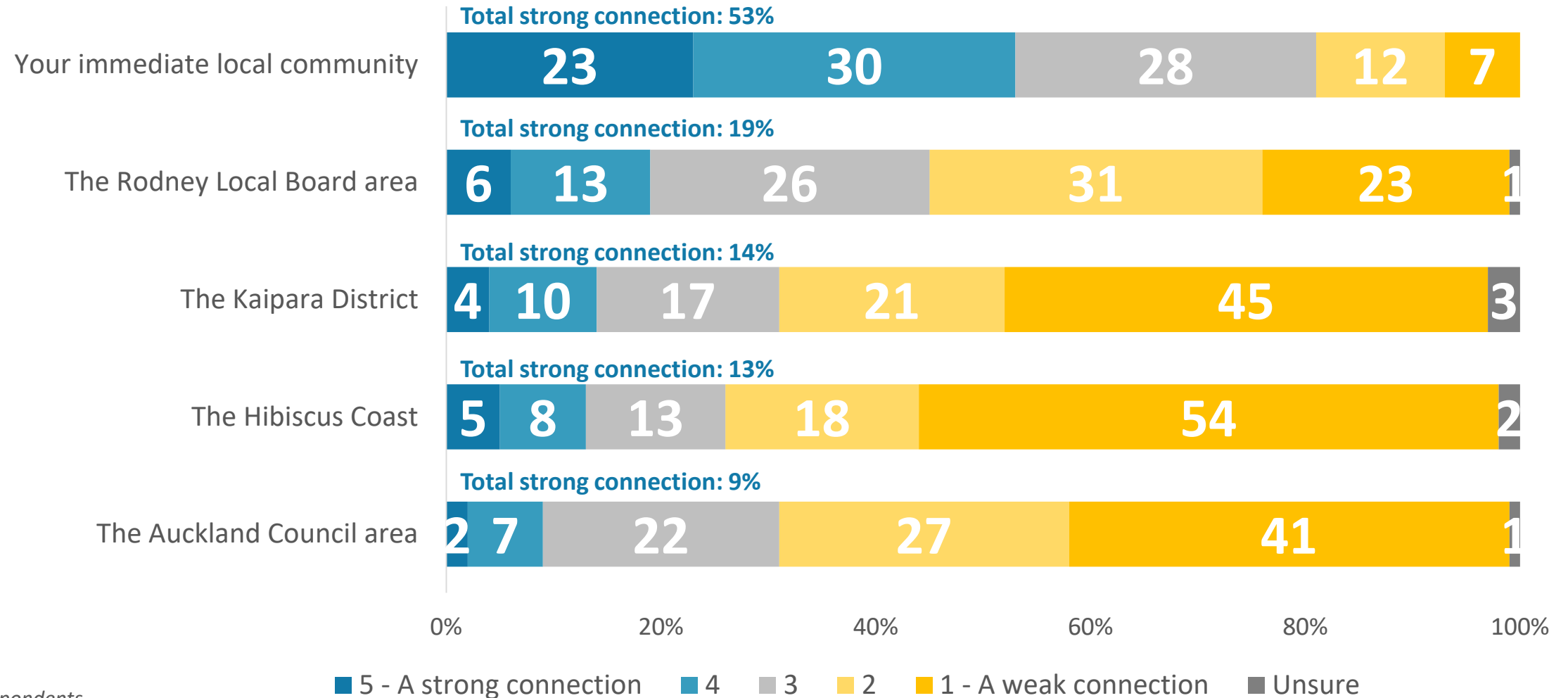


Connections (quantitative survey)

- In the quantitative survey, overall the highest strong connection people felt was for their immediate local community and lowest was for the Auckland Council area.
- Just over half (53%) said they had a strong connection to their immediate local community.
 - Lower in Dairy Flat (32%).
- A fifth (19%) said they had a strong connection with the Rodney Local Board area.
 - Higher in Warkworth (29%).
- 14% had a strong connection to the Kaipara District.
 - Lower in Warkworth and Dairy Flat (7% each).
- 13% had a strong connection to the Hibiscus Coast .
 - Lower in Wellsford (3%) and much higher in Dairy Flat (37%).
- 9% had a strong connection to The Auckland Council area.
 - Relatively consistent across the four areas.

Strength of connection

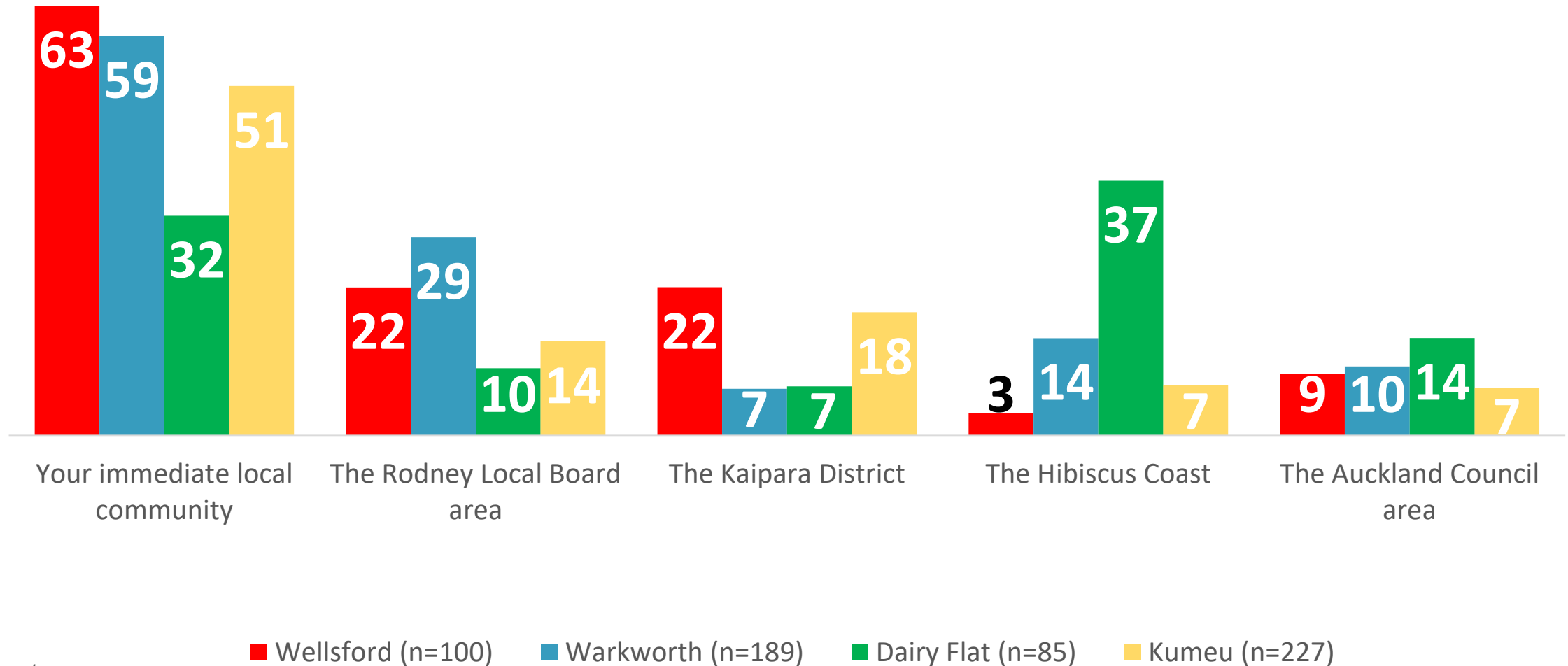
How connected do you feel to the following?



Base: All respondents

Strength of connection by region

*How connected do you feel to the following?
Total strong connection (4+5)%*



Base: All respondents

Connections (focus groups)

- Most participants in the groups had the strongest connection with the area they were currently living in – which tended to comprise quite a small vicinity.
 - A group affiliated with Auckland generally as they had lived in many locations within the Auckland region.
 - A number in the Wellsford and Warkworth groups had lived in the area long-term (20 years plus).



Driver of connections (focus groups)

- It was evident in the focus groups that connections were driven by the following:
 - Spent formative years in area
 - Grew up there
 - Children born and grew up there
 - Lived in that area the longest time
 - Friends and family live in the area
 - Involved in community – know people, attend local events
 - Use of local services – church, shops, sports facilities
 - Life focused in the area – work, live, children in school there
 - Emotional connection – resonate with rural landscape, beaches
 - Spend leisure time/ fun hours there (younger)
 - Cultural connection – prefer small town/ village culture.

Most tended to spend *leisure time* in the region unless they were forced to leave the area for specific activities.

- Those with children complained that they had to ferry children to Auckland for sports activities.
- Younger participants also felt leisure options were limited locally, so they tended to travel into town.

Most tried to use local *health services*.

- In general, they could stay local but after hour services were limited and some practices were very busy which made it hard to get appointments.

Connection to Auckland (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, participants were asked if they ‘felt part of Auckland or did they feel their local area was quite distinct’ - a minority claimed to feel a strong connection with Auckland (and often grudgingly).
 - While not specifically defined, from responses it appeared that participants were thinking of urban Auckland – and the historical boundaries which bordered their areas, namely, the North Shore and West Auckland
- Participants with a closer connection with Auckland had often worked their entire career in Auckland or still worked in Auckland and had to travel there every day.
 - Others noted that they had made a conscious decision to move away from Auckland for a quieter lifestyle. The fact that Auckland was knocking at their door, meant that the lifestyle they valued was under threat.
 - Some also felt that their area was treated like a ‘poor cousin’ by Auckland Council and lacked the investment required to keep up with development in the region.

Connection to Auckland: verbatim

In Riverhead we are smack bang in between borders so we have got the north and west trying to palm us off to each other and nobody cares about us too much out here. [So you don't feel part of Auckland necessarily?] Not really, no. Don't feel a part of anything. (Kumeu, female)

I don't want to feel it but I am feeling it, Auckland is encroaching. (Kumeu, female)

[Feel like part of Auckland?] Yes, increasingly but begrudgingly. (Warkworth, female)

All we are is a money sink hole, we get nothing back in return. (Wellsford, female)

Closest to Auckland but I don't really feel connected to anywhere and haven't for a very long time. I think because I don't have my own place, I don't have my own roots and I can't really see when that will happen so I feel a bit disjointed and not very connected. (Dairy Flat, female)

Wellsford/ Warkworth connections (focus groups)

Wellsford – connection with Warkworth

- A majority felt a connection with Warkworth mainly due to its close proximity, being the closest main shopping centre, having friends and family there, while some also worked there.
- The few that didn't feel a connection did not know anyone in the area and saw the Dome Valley as a natural division between the regions.

Warkworth – connection with Wellsford

- No-one in the Warkworth group felt a connection with Wellsford.
 - They felt the culture of the regions was quite different – and noted that Wellsford was known as a lower socio-economic, railway town. Some recounted how it was viewed as an area where 'people went to sit on the benefit'.
 - A number stated that they felt closer to 'white middle class areas' like Orewa.
 - They were also conscious of the division created by the Dome Valley.

Connection to Warkworth (Wellsford): verbatim

I don't feel part of Warkworth at all, I have never had any connection whatsoever with Warkworth in any of my dealings at all. It is over the hill. People say I know such and such from Warkworth – blank wall. (Wellsford, female)

I feel connected to Warkworth, I went to school here. I think moving from Auckland to out where I live now, that little taste. (Wellsford, female)

[So you do feel a connection?] It has been part of my life. And I know a lot of people. I like going down by the river. (Wellsford, female)

Warkworth is part of the community. Warkworth is part of north east and I look at the community as a bigger plan. [So you do feel something for it.] Yes, it is 15 minutes down the road and I think you are pretty narrow if you say home is the local village I have never been out of. (Wellsford, female)

Connection to Wellsford (Warkworth): verbatim

[Do you feel a connection to Wellsford?] *No. There is a disconnect between the feeling of Warkworth and the feeling of Wellsford.* (Warkworth, female)

It is changing but Wellsford has tended to be Wellsford people. Warkworth people have come into the district and that is why I said was anybody here an original. I am the only original. It doesn't matter but what I am trying to say is people have moved from Auckland and other places to this area, very few people are original. (Warkworth, female)

I probably feel closer to Orewa or Hibiscus Coast. [Why is that?] Because we are snobs. Yes the socio economic make-up of the place yes we are. More white middle class. [Interjection] (Warkworth, male)

Wellsford the general perception whether it is right or wrong that Wellsford is a good place to go to if you want to sit on the benefit basically. You can rent a cheap house. It is changing, I admit that, the main street now is really thriving and things have changed there. (Warkworth, male)

Driving through the Dome Valley somehow it just doesn't link the two. (Warkworth, female)

Kumeu/ Dairy Flat connection to Hibiscus Coast (focus groups)

Kumeu – connection with Hibiscus Coast

- A few felt a connection with the Hibiscus Coast mainly due to going to school there when they were young, having friends in the area, and spending leisure time there.
- However, most noted a division between the West Coast and East Coast – and felt that the cultures of both regions were quite different.
 - The East Coast was viewed as more beachy, white, and middle class, while the West Coast was seen as more rural and down-to-earth.

Dairy Flat – connection with Hibiscus Coast

- Around half in the Dairy Flat group felt some connection with the Hibiscus Coast. Most appeared to feel a stronger connection with the Hibiscus Coast than with Kumeu, often because it was seen as the major shopping hub for the area.
- It was also viewed as relatively close geographically and used for leisure activities.

Connection to Hibiscus Coast (Kumeu): verbatim

[Do you feel any connection to Hibiscus Coast?] No. They are a different breed of people. (Kumeu, male)

They tend to live a different lifestyle. They are not rural farmers, they are surf boarder, SUV owners, that is a very broad generalisation but that is how I feel. I know a few people who live over there and they are a little bit different than my mates in Helensville. (Kumeu, male)

I would feel closer to Hibiscus Coast than I would to Auckland City. Multiple reasons. We went to Wainui School and another school that was closer to Hibiscus Coast. I have friends living there, I have worked in Silverdale. I go and collect seaweed from the beaches over there for my property. They are safer beaches to take kids to when they were little. I always travel that way because I am used to it now so even if I am going to Auckland I go across the east coast. It is a faster road. But I think there is a bit of a disconnect. (Kumeu, female)

It is a slightly different culture the North Shore culture than the Westie culture. (Kumeu, female)

Connection to Hibiscus Coast (Dairy Flat): verbatim

[Connection to Hibiscus Coast?] I do a little bit but that is because that is where I grew up and Silverdale and where we are now it used to be farmland. (Dairy Flat, female)

[Connected to Hibiscus Coast?] I do, my parents had a beach place at Stanmore Bay for 40 years before it finally got sold. We were there in the days when you were out from dawn to dusk and it was great. [Do you feel more connected to there than Kumeu?] Probably more than Kumeu. I have a son and his wife and two kids at Murawai but they are renting and they are looking. (Dairy Flat, male)

I think it comes back to the size of the area of the Local Board, got people in Kumeu and Huapai and that sort of place and it is so far removed from Silverdale and Dairy Flat. You can't say if you live on one side you are associated with the other because geographically it is just too far away. (Dairy Flat, male)

[Do you feel closer to Hibiscus Coast than Kumeu?] Definitely. I go through Kumeu and Huapai quite regularly but I don't feel associated with that area. [You go to Silverdale for the shops?] Yes, you basically have the big box retailers there and the Bunnings and Countdown, it is only 3km up the road. (Dairy Flat, male)

Connection to Kaipara (focus groups)

- In the focus groups, connections to Kaipara were tenuous – a few in Wellsford felt connected to the Kaipara Harbour as it was prominent to their view, some also spent leisure time there – owning a bach and regularly fishing there.
 - Some in the Kumeu group felt a connection with Kaipara College where their children had spent many years and also used the harbour for recreational activities.
 - However, most considered it a totally different area with the road network acting as a natural barrier between the regions.
- There was even less connection with Kaipara District Council – it was seen to cover an area that was distant from their location and they did not pay rates there.

Connection to Kaipara: verbatim

[Do you feel a connection to the Kaipara area or not?] Absolutely not. [Why is that?] Because they are a different part of the country. (Warkworth, female)

I fish on the Kaipara, my kids went to Kaipara College. So just the name itself implies I have got quite strong connections to it. (Kumeu, male)

The Kaipara harbour is there but it is quite inaccessible in many ways. But when you say Kaipara, the Kaipara District is actually up there and it takes in Mangawhai and places like that. It is a long way away. (Kumeu, female)

I look at it out every window in my house so in terms of the water. [So you feel connected to the water?] I say to people that I live in the Kaipara. Further down the country they say where do you live and I say on the Kaipara. [But not the council at all?] They are up in Dargaville and that is miles away. (Wellsford, female)

[Do you feel a connection to the Kaipara?] I just don't go up there. The roading network doesn't really help because of Pakiri. (Warkworth, male)

Conclusions



Conclusions

- The survey findings were fairly consistent across the four regions and between the quantitative survey and focus groups.
- A majority of people in the quantitative survey did not know much about local government in the Rodney area or the reorganisation process. However, they did feel change was needed to address their broader concerns and, when prompted, had ideas about changes they would like implemented. This was consistent with the focus groups – with slightly higher awareness shown in Wellsford and Warkworth.
- When asked to provide open ended responses on reasons for change, the most common reasons were the need to invest in infrastructure, more effective allocation of rates money, the perceived inefficiency and scale of Auckland Council, the need for greater transparency, and better handling of rural issues.
 - These findings were generally consistent across both the quantitative survey and the focus groups. The focus groups were more clearly against major structural changes such as establishing a separate district council, believing many issues could be addressed under the current structure by having an additional Councillor, more Local Board representatives, giving Local Boards more authority, and by having better communication mechanisms.

Conclusions (cont.)

- People in Rodney appeared to be more focussed on addressing their immediate concerns rather than/or in addition to a particular solution (e.g. unitary authority). Relatively few people in the quantitative survey or focus groups raised local government reorganisation as a change they wanted (i.e. de-amalgamation), although as noted some in the focus groups would like to see the Local Board have more authority and more representatives.
- When prompted about an additional local board in Rodney, people were polarised – with almost equal proportions supporting or opposing this course of action, with a small proportion remaining neutral or unsure.
 - This was consistent across the focus groups where participants were also divided on the possibility of having two local boards. Those in favour, thought it would result in a more informed board and allow for local views to be more clearly represented. While those against, were concerned about the cost to set up and administer two boards – and it did not address problems, unless the boards were given more power to make decisions.
- Given the lack of awareness about local government in Rodney and the strong desire for change in the quantitative survey, this might reflect the need for improvement to the current system rather than a preference for a major change in how local government arrangements are structured - which was certainly the sentiment voiced in the focus groups.

Conclusions (cont.)

- There was low satisfaction with LGC's process so far with high neutral and negative responses. Negative responses were largely driven by lack of awareness or an impression there was a lack of information available – which was consistent with the focus groups.
- Email was the preferred way of giving feedback and getting information, with the addition of online surveys for giving feedback and newspapers for getting information. The groups had similar responses. They also noted the need for multiple channels and the need to use simple language given the diverse population.
 - Participants in the focus groups wanted to see information on - proposed timeframes for decisions, the pros and cons of the options being considered, and feedback that had been submitted to date.
- Overall, there was a low sense of connection with the Auckland Council area which was consistent across both the quantitative survey and the focus groups.