Invercargill
CITY COUNCIL

2026

Invercargill City Council Residents Satisfaction Survey - Q3 2025/26

External Report

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Invercargill City Council

Prepared By:
PublicVoice

PublicVoice

Prepared by PublicVoice Limited

This report was produced by PublicVoice Limited, in partnership with the Invercargill City Council. The analysis combines quantitative survey research with qualitative thematic coding to provide evidence-based insights for resident satisfaction and service delivery.

About PublicVoice

PublicVoice Limited is a leading research and engagement consultancy headquartered in Wellington, New Zealand. We specialise in public policy research and consultation, providing services to various local and central government agencies throughout New Zealand. To learn more about our work, please visit www.publicvoice.co.nz.

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Contents

1 Executive Summary 5
1.1 Survey Overview 5
1.2 Key Findings 5
1.3 Demographic Profile 6
1.4 Next Steps 6
2 Methodology 7
2.1 Survey Design and Purpose 7
2.2 Changes from Previous Financial Year 7
2.3 Data Collection Methods 8
2.4 Survey Period 9
2.5 Response Rate and Sample Size 9
2.6 Questionnaire Design 9
2.7 Data Analysis 9
2.8 Limitations and Considerations 10
3 Demographics 11
3.1 Survey Response Sources 11
3.2 Age Distribution 12
3.3 Gender Identity 13
3.4 Ethnicity 14
3.5 Employment Status 15
3.6 Resident Status 16
3.7 Location 17
4 Service Usage Patterns 19
5 Service Satisfaction 20
5.1 Overall Satisfaction with Council Services 20
5.2 Satisfaction Trends Over Time 21
5.3 Satisfaction by Age and Gender 22
5.4 Qualitative Feedback on Services 23
6 Community Engagement 33
6.1 Satisfaction with Community Engagement Opportunities 33
6.2 Engagement Activities Participation 34
6.3 Engagement Satisfaction by Age and Gender 34
6.4 Engagement Activities by Age and Gender 35

6.5 Qualitative Feedback on Community Engagement 36
7 Community Pride 38
7.1 Pride in Living in Invercargill 38
7.2 Pride in Living in Bluff 39
7.3 Pride by Age and Gender 40
7.4 Priorities for Making Invercargill a Better Place to Live 40
8 Council Contact and Satisfaction 48
8.1 Contact Recency 48
8.2 Reasons for Contacting Council 49
8.3 Method of Contact 50
8.4 Contact Satisfaction 51
8.5 Contact Satisfaction by Method and Type 52
8.6 Qualitative Feedback on Council Contact 53
9 Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces 56
9.1 Playgrounds Visited 56
9.2 Playground Age Groups 57
9.3 Playground Satisfaction 58
9.4 Playground Feature Preferences 59
9.5 Alternative Play Spaces 60
9.6 Qualitative Feedback on Playgrounds 63
10 Cemeteries 65
10.1 Cemeteries Visited 65
10.2 Cemetery Satisfaction 66
10.3 Qualitative Feedback on Cemeteries 67
11 Trees and Tree Management 68
11.1 Tree Satisfaction 68
11.2 Tree Issues Experienced 69
11.3 Qualitative Feedback on Trees 70

Figures

Figure 1: Distribution of survey responses by collection method (n=1,163) 11
Figure 2: Age distribution of survey respondents (n=1,139) 12
Figure 3: Gender identity distribution of respondents (n=975) 13
Figure 4: Ethnic diversity of survey respondents (n=628) 14

Figure 5: Employment status distribution of respondents (n=627) 15
Figure 6: Resident status distribution of respondents (n=816) 16
Figure 7: Overall satisfaction with ICC services (n=valid responses for each service) 20
Figure 8: Satisfaction with opportunities for community involvement (n=662) 33
Figure 9: Participation in community engagement activities (n=661) 34
Figure 10: Pride in living in Invercargill (n=755) 38
Figure 11: Pride in living in Bluff 39
Figure 12: Recency of contact with Council (n=704) 48
Figure 13: Reasons for contacting Council (n=365, multiple selections permitted) 49
Figure 14: Method of Council contact (n=411, multiple selections permitted) 50
Figure 15: Satisfaction with Council contact experiences 51
Figure 16: Playgrounds visited in the past 12 months (multiple selections permitted) 56
Figure 17: Age groups of children using playgrounds (multiple selections permitted) 57
Figure 18: Satisfaction with playground aspects 58
Figure 19: Preferred playground features (ranked) 59
Figure 20: Preferred alternative play types (ranked) 61
Figure 21: Preferred locations for alternative play spaces (ranked) 62
Figure 22: Cemeteries visited in the past 12 months (n=208, multiple selections permitted) 65
Figure 23: Satisfaction with cemetery aspects 66
Figure 24: Satisfaction with Council tree management (n=280, excluding Don't know) 68
Figure 25: Tree issues experienced by residents (n=298, multiple selections permitted) 69

Tables

Table 1: Location distribution of respondents 18
Table 2: Frequency of Council services usage by Invercargill residents 19
Table 3: Satisfaction trends with ICC services from 2021/22 to 2025/26 21
Table 4: Satisfaction with ICC services by age and gender 22
Table 5: Comments regarding satisfaction with the bus service 23
Table 6: Comments regarding satisfaction with Splash Palace 24
Table 7: Comments regarding satisfaction with Rugby Park 25
Table 8: Comments regarding satisfaction with Scottish Hall 26
Table 9: Comments regarding satisfaction with Civic Theatre 27
Table 10: Comments regarding satisfaction with parks and recreation spaces 29
Table 11: Comments regarding satisfaction with He Waka Tuia 30

Table 12: Comments regarding satisfaction with library services 31
Table 13: Comments regarding satisfaction with public toilets 32
Table 14: Satisfaction with community engagement opportunities by age and gender 34
Table 15: Participation in community engagement activities by age and gender 35
Table 16: Comments regarding satisfaction with community engagement opportunities 37
Table 17: Pride in living in Invercargill 38
Table 18: Pride in living in Bluff 39
Table 19: Pride by age and gender 40
Table 20: Priorities for making Invercargill a better place to live 47
Table 21: Contact satisfaction by method of contact 52
Table 22: Contact satisfaction by reason for contact 53
Table 23: Comments regarding satisfaction with Council customer service staff 54
Table 24: Comments regarding satisfaction with building and resource consent process 54
Table 25: 'Other' reasons for contacting Council 55
Table 26: Playgrounds visited in the past 12 months 56
Table 27: Age groups of children using playgrounds 57
Table 28: Satisfaction with playground aspects 58
Table 29: Playground feature preferences (ranked by importance) 60
Table 30: Support for alternative play spaces 60
Table 31: Preferred alternative play types (ranked) 61
Table 32: Preferred locations for alternative play spaces (ranked) 62
Table 33: Comments regarding satisfaction with playgrounds 63
Table 34: Detailed playground experiences and suggestions 64
Table 35: Cemeteries visited in the past 12 months 65
Table 36: Satisfaction with cemetery aspects 66
Table 37: Comments regarding satisfaction with cemeteries 67
Table 38: Detailed cemetery experiences and suggestions 67
Table 39: Satisfaction with Council tree management (excluding Don't know) 68
Table 40: Tree issues experienced by residents 69
Table 41: Comments regarding satisfaction with trees and tree management 70

1 Executive Summary

This report presents cumulative year-to-date findings from the 2025/26 Invercargill City Council Residents Satisfaction Survey, covering Q1 through Q3 (July 2025 to March 2026). One additional quarter of data collection remains scheduled for 2025/26.

1.1 Survey Overview

A total of 1,163 responses were included from seven collection channels: postal letters (47%), the Let's Talk online platform (16%), bus surveys (13%), social media (12%), library intercepts (10%), paper responses (2%), and democratic processes (<1%). Q3 introduced parks intercept surveys (iPad and paper) and venue-specific surveys for Civic Theatre, Scottish Hall, and Rugby Park, alongside a new parks module added to the main survey covering playgrounds, cemeteries, and tree management.

1.2 Key Findings

Service Satisfaction

Library services recorded the highest satisfaction at 91% (n=494), followed by Civic Theatre at 88% (n=389, including 26 responses from the dedicated venue survey) and Parks & Recreation at 79% (n=650). Cemeteries, measured for the first time in 2025/26, recorded 70% (n=174). Bus service quality recorded 74% (n=238) and Splash Palace 74% (n=302). He Waka Tuia recorded 66% (n=139).

Public Toilets recorded 57% (n=366), Playgrounds 55% (n=199), Bus service cost 54% (n=241), and Scottish Hall 52% (n=83). Rugby Park showed 39% (n=175) and democratic processes 33% (n=662).

Most services show higher satisfaction in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. As noted in the methodology, comparisons with previous years should account for the shift from online-only to postal-led collection, which may have influenced results alongside any genuine changes in sentiment.

Community Pride

Among the 755 respondents who answered this question, 74% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel proud to live in Invercargill." Pride was higher among older age groups (82% for 65+) and lower among younger respondents (53% for 14-24).

Community Engagement

A total of 72% of respondents (n=475) indicated they had not participated in any community engagement activities in the past 12 months. Satisfaction with opportunities for community involvement measured 33% (n=662), with 48% neutral.

Council Contact

Among the 704 respondents who answered the contact recency question, 41% reported never having contacted Council, whilst 31% had contacted Council within the last six months. Phone (51%) and visiting Council offices (41%) were the most common methods of contact.

Parks, Playgrounds, Cemeteries and Trees (Q3)

New questions introduced in Q3 provided detailed feedback on these areas. Playground satisfaction across six aspects ranged from highest for safety (62%) to lowest for accessibility for children with disabilities. A total of 59% of respondents were supportive of Council investing in alternative play experiences beyond

traditional playground equipment. Cemetery satisfaction was highest for overall atmosphere and environment (76%) and lowest for availability of seating and shelter (34%). Tree management satisfaction measured 59%, with 61% of respondents reporting no tree-related issues.

Priorities for Invercargill

A total of 601 respondents provided feedback on what Council should prioritise. The most prominent themes related to city development and the economy (340 coded mentions), infrastructure and roading (203), parks and recreation (188), and rates and financial management (180).

1.3 Demographic Profile

The year-to-date sample comprised 63% female respondents (n=613), 34% male (n=331), with those aged 65+ making up 26% (n=293) and 35-44 the next largest group at 20% (n=226). Pākehā/New Zealand European represented 83% (n=521) among 628 respondents who answered the ethnicity question. ICC residential ratepayers comprised 80% (n=652). Responses were received from 42 locations across Invercargill, with Windsor (9%), Waikiwi (6%), Richmond (6%), and Gladstone (6%) among the most represented.

Ethnicity and employment status questions were not included in the bus user or parks intercept surveys, resulting in lower response counts for these measures.

1.4 Next Steps

One quarter of data collection remains. The final annual report will synthesise findings across all four quarters and consider whether demographic weighting is required.

2 Methodology

2.1 Survey Design and Purpose

The Invercargill City Council Residents Satisfaction Survey 2025/26 is a quarterly survey programme measuring resident satisfaction with Council services, community engagement, and priorities. This report presents cumulative year-to-date findings from Q1 through Q3, including a targeted bus user survey and new parks and venue intercept surveys introduced in Q3.

2.2 Changes from Previous Financial Year

The 2025/26 methodology differs from 2024/25 in ways that may influence comparability of results.

Shift to Postal Surveys as Primary Method

The most notable change for 2025/26 is the introduction of postal surveys as the primary data collection method, replacing the previous all-online approach:

2024/25 approach: Data collection relied exclusively on digital channels (Let's Talk online platform and social media).

2025/26 approach: Postal surveys are the primary method (47% of year-to-date responses, n=544). Paper questionnaires with reply-paid envelopes are posted to randomly selected residential addresses across the Invercargill district, with new waves drawn each quarter using an R-based sampling process that excludes all prior wave recipients.

The existing digital channels serve as secondary collection methods: Let's Talk (16%, n=185), social media (12%, n=137), and library intercepts (10%, n=117). A targeted bus user survey contributed 13% (n=156), and paper responses from non-postal channels comprised 2% (n=21).

Expanded Collection in Q3

Q3 introduced two additional data collection approaches:

Parks intercept surveys: A shorter survey was deployed at parks, recreation spaces, and other locations via iPad (on-site intercepts by field staff) and paper (distributed at these locations). These surveys focused on parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, and tree management questions, with a subset of demographic questions. They did not include ethnicity, employment, or the full service satisfaction battery.

Venue surveys: Dedicated surveys for Civic Theatre, Scottish Hall, and Rugby Park were deployed via QR codes at each venue. These surveys ask about the specific venue experience alongside core demographic and satisfaction questions, with an option for respondents to continue into the full residents survey.

Potential Impact on Results

The shift to postal surveys as the primary method may have influenced 2025/26 results in several ways:

Demographic reach: Postal surveys reached residents less likely to participate through digital-only methods, including those with limited internet access or less comfortable with online participation.

Response patterns and online negativity bias: Research shows that individuals who hold strong opinions about a topic are more likely to participate in voluntary surveys than those with neutral views. Online surveys may be particularly susceptible to negativity bias, where dissatisfied residents are more motivated to participate than satisfied residents. The postal component involves proactive outreach to a random

sample of residential addresses rather than relying solely on self-selection, which may counteract this effect.

Intercept survey effects: The parks intercept and bus user surveys targeted people already using those specific services. Usage and satisfaction figures for these services are influenced by this targeted collection. This is noted in the relevant report sections.

Interpreting 2025/26 Results

Given these methodological changes, it remains difficult to determine whether observed differences from 2024/25 reflect genuine shifts in resident sentiment, or the influence of the expanded data collection approach reaching a broader sample. By maintaining consistent methodology across all four quarters of 2025/26, the quarterly series enables reliable tracking of satisfaction trends within the year.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Postal Survey

Paper questionnaires with reply-paid envelopes were sent to randomly selected residential addresses across the Invercargill district, accounting for 47% (n=544) of year-to-date responses. A new wave of approximately 750 addresses was drawn each quarter from the electoral roll, with all prior wave recipients excluded to prevent duplicate sampling. This serves as the primary data collection method for 2025/26.

Online Platform (Let's Talk)

The survey was available through Council's Let's Talk online engagement platform, accessible via the Council website. This accounted for 16% (n=185) of year-to-date responses.

Bus User Survey

A targeted survey of bus service users was conducted on-board buses during 8–20 December 2025, contributing 13% (n=156) of year-to-date responses. Two bus ambassadors administered surveys to passengers across all routes, covering weekday and Saturday services. This intercept approach captured feedback directly from regular bus users, using a shortened questionnaire focused on bus service usage, satisfaction, and basic demographics.

Social Media

The survey was promoted through Council's social media channels, with links to the online questionnaire. Social media contributed 12% (n=137) of year-to-date responses.

Library Intercept Surveys

Trained survey collectors conducted face-to-face intercepts at library locations, with participants completing paper questionnaires on-site. This contributed 10% (n=117) of year-to-date responses.

Parks Intercept Surveys (Q3)

A shorter survey focused on parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, and tree management was deployed at parks and recreation locations from Q3 via two channels: iPad-based on-site intercepts conducted by field staff, and paper questionnaires distributed at parks locations. These surveys used a reduced question set that

did not include ethnicity, employment status, or the full service satisfaction battery. Combined, parks intercepts contributed 82 responses to the dataset.

Venue Surveys (Q3)

Dedicated venue surveys for Civic Theatre, Scottish Hall, and Rugby Park were deployed in Q3 via QR codes displayed at each venue. Each survey asks about the specific venue experience alongside core satisfaction and demographic questions. Respondents who complete the venue survey are offered the option to continue into the full residents survey. Civic Theatre contributed 26 responses, which are included in the Civic Theatre satisfaction figure reported in this document. Scottish Hall and Rugby Park venue surveys were deployed but had not yet received completed responses at the data cutoff date of 31 March 2026. Any responses received after this date will be included in subsequent reporting.

2.4 Survey Period

Year-to-date data collection covers Q1 (1 July to 30 September 2025), Q2 (1 October to 31 December 2025), and Q3 (1 January to 31 March 2026). The bus user survey was conducted during Q2. Parks intercept surveys and venue surveys commenced during Q3.

2.5 Response Rate and Sample Size

Year-to-date achieved 1,163 included responses across all collection channels. Partial responses were included where respondents answered beyond the screening questions: for the main survey, respondents who answered the first substantive question (pride in Invercargill) were retained; for parks and venue surveys, respondents who answered at least the age screening question were retained. Response rates varied across questions, with earlier questions receiving higher response rates. Sample sizes are noted throughout the report (n=X).

Not all survey instruments included every question. The bus user and parks intercept surveys used shorter questionnaires, meaning some demographic and satisfaction questions have lower response counts than the total sample. This is reflected in the varying n values reported for each measure.

2.6 Questionnaire Design

The main residents survey questionnaire included demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, resident status, location), service usage and satisfaction ratings, community engagement, community pride, council contact experiences, and open-ended comments.

In Q3, the main survey was expanded to include a parks-specific module covering playgrounds (visited, age groups, satisfaction, feature preferences), cemeteries (visited, satisfaction), trees (satisfaction, issues experienced), and alternative play spaces (support, type and location preferences). This module included ranking questions where respondents ordered preferences.

The bus user survey focused on bus service usage and satisfaction with basic demographics. The parks intercept survey covered parks-specific questions with age, gender, location, and resident status. The venue surveys covered venue-specific satisfaction alongside core demographics.

Question types included multiple choice, five-point Likert scales for satisfaction and agreement measures, ranking questions, and open-ended text fields. Screening questions ensured respondents only answered satisfaction questions for services they had used.

2.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and cross-tabulations by demographic variables. Satisfaction measures combined ‘satisfied’ and ‘most satisfied’ responses (or ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ for agreement statements).

Qualitative responses were coded thematically with topics categorised into broader themes. Multiple topics could be identified within a single response, resulting in topic counts that may exceed the number of respondents.

Historical tracking data from previous survey periods (2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25) provide context for 2025/26 findings. Comparisons between periods describe observed differences without attributing causation.

Weighting Approach

2025/26 data have not been weighted. Previous annual surveys weighted responses based on demographic characteristics (age, gender, and ethnicity) compared to 2023 Census data for the Invercargill population. Demographic weighting will be considered and applied (if required) in the final annual report once the full year's data has been collected. Year-to-date reports present unweighted data.

2.8 Limitations and Considerations

Considerations when interpreting year-to-date findings:

- **Temporal snapshot**: Year-to-date data (July 2025 – March 2026) represents the first three of four quarterly data collections planned for 2025/26
- **Methodological changes**: Introduction of postal surveys as the primary method and inclusion of targeted intercept surveys may affect comparability with 2024/25
- **Self-selection**: Participation remained voluntary across all channels, which may introduce response bias
- **Variable question coverage**: Not all survey instruments included every question. Ethnicity and employment status were not asked in the bus user or parks intercept surveys, resulting in lower response counts for these measures (n=628 and n=627 respectively, compared to n=1,163 total)
- **Sample size variation**: Response rates varied across questions and services, with some measures based on small samples
- **Intercept survey effects**: Parks and bus satisfaction figures include responses from people already using those services, which may skew results compared to a general population sample
- **Unweighted data**: Year-to-date data are unweighted; demographic weighting will be considered for the annual report

3 Demographics

The demographic characteristics of survey respondents provide insight into who participated in the 2025/26 ICC Residents Satisfaction Survey. Understanding the demographic composition helps contextualise the findings and assess how well the sample represents Invercargill's population.

3.1 Survey Response Sources

Survey responses were collected through seven channels: postal letters (47%), the Let's Talk online platform (16%), bus surveys (13%), social media outreach (12%), library intercepts (10%), paper responses (2%), and democratic processes (<1%).

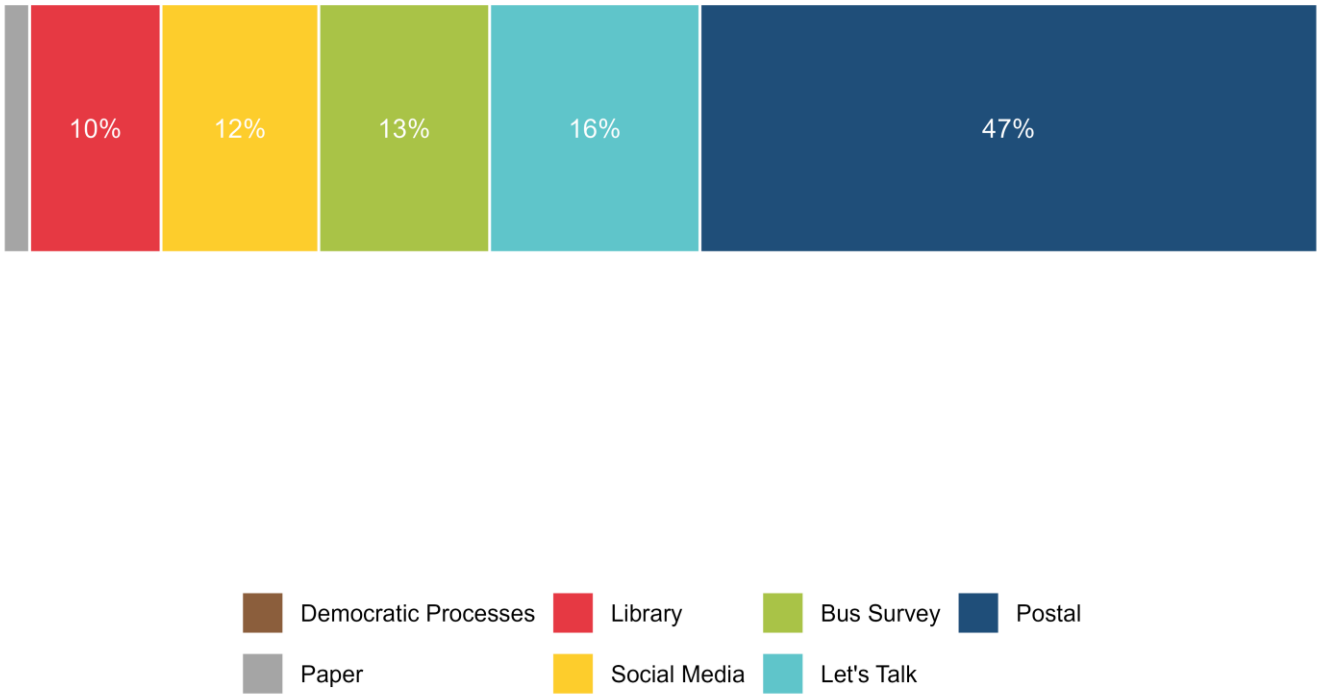

Figure 1: *Distribution of survey responses by collection method (n=1,163)*

3.2 Age Distribution

The age distribution shows strong representation from older residents, with those aged 65 and over comprising just over one-quarter (26%) of respondents. The 35–44 age group represented the second-largest cohort at 20%, followed by those aged 55–64 (16%) and 45–54 (13%). Younger residents were represented, with those aged 25–34 comprising 11%, 14–17 year-olds making up 8%, and 18–24 representing 5% of respondents. Only 1% preferred not to disclose their age.

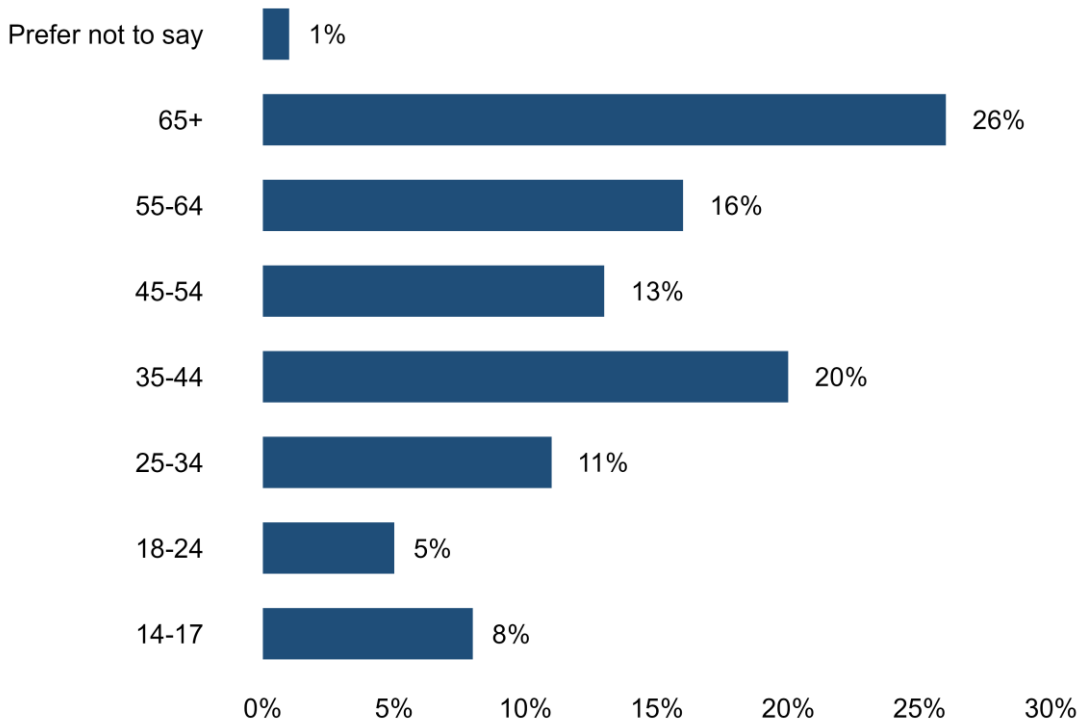

Figure 2: *Age distribution of survey respondents (n=1,139)*

3.3 Gender Identity

Female residents comprised nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents, while males represented 34%. A small number of respondents preferred not to disclose their gender (2%) or identified in other ways (1%).

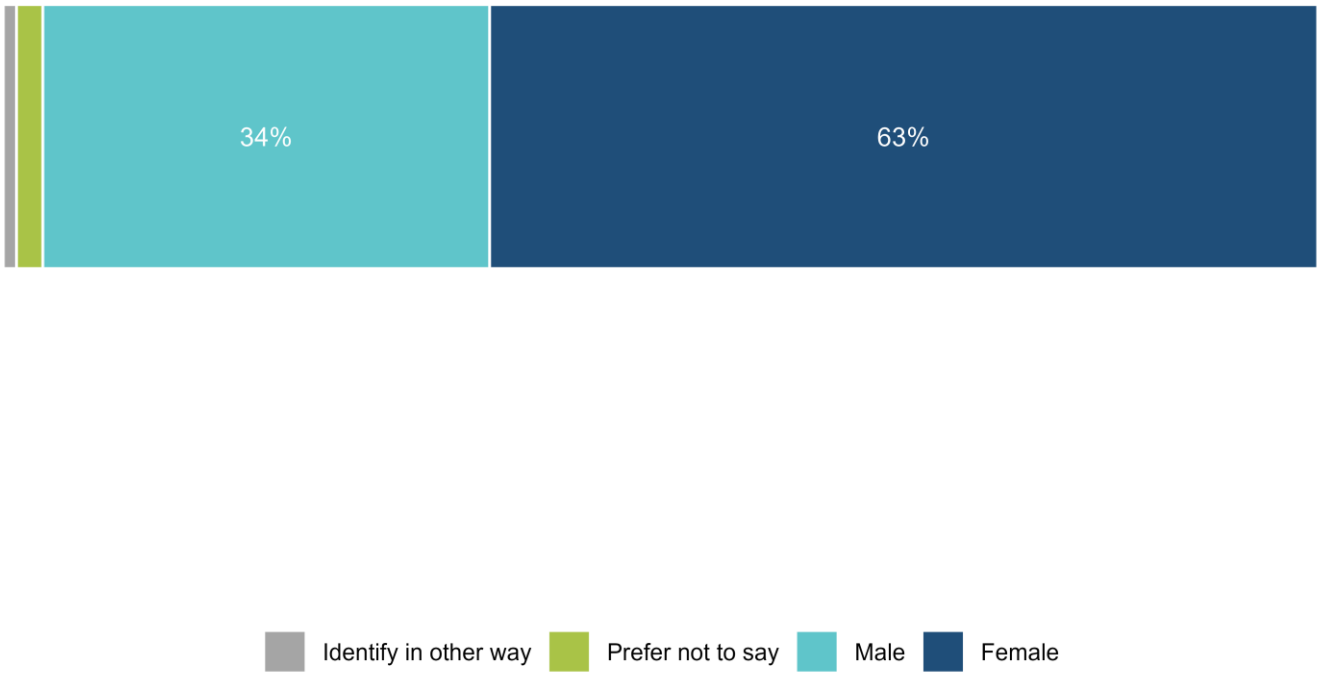

Figure 3: *Gender identity distribution of respondents (n=975)*

3.4 Ethnicity

The majority of respondents identified as Pākehā/New Zealand European (83%). Other ethnicities comprised 12%, Māori represented 8%, Asian 3%, and Pacific Islander 1%. Given that respondents could select multiple ethnicities, percentages total more than 100%. A total of 628 respondents answered this question, as it was not included in the bus user or parks intercept surveys.

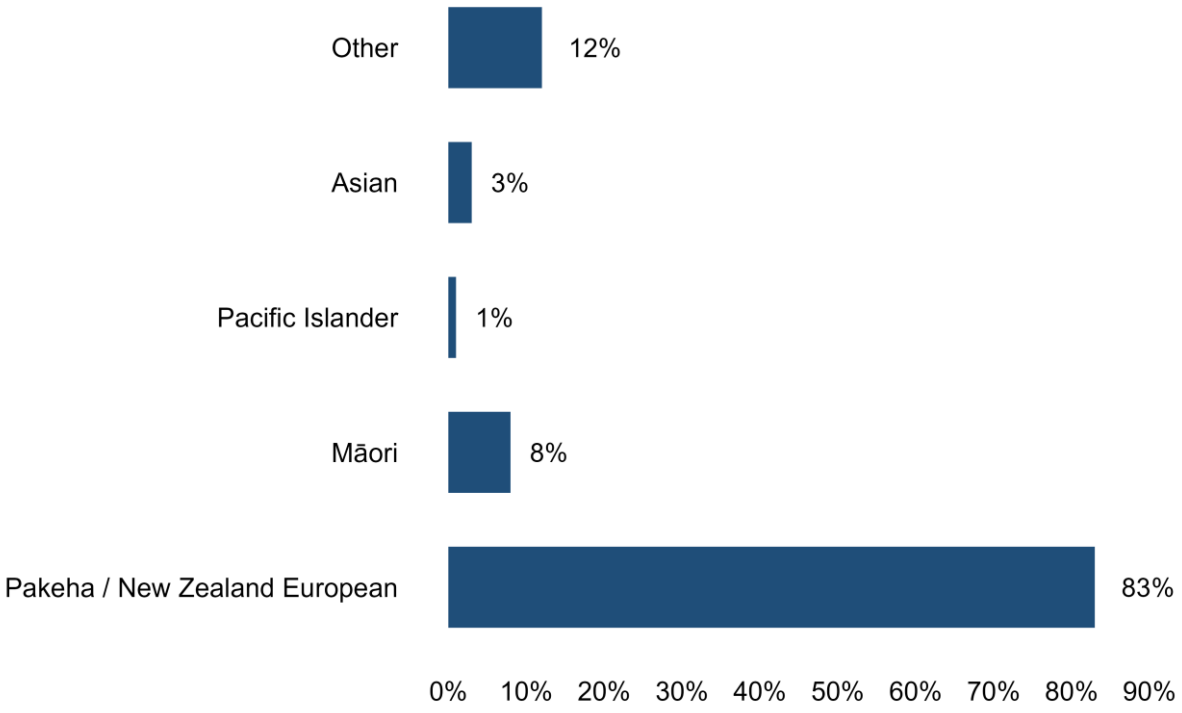

Figure 4: *Ethnic diversity of survey respondents (n=628)*

3.5 Employment Status

Of respondents who answered the employment question (n=627), the largest group were employed full-time (41%), followed by retired residents (27%), part-time workers (11%), and those who preferred not to say (9%). Self-employed residents comprised 5%, with students (3%), unemployed (2%), and beneficiaries (2%) making up the remainder. As with ethnicity, this question was not included in the bus user or parks intercept surveys.

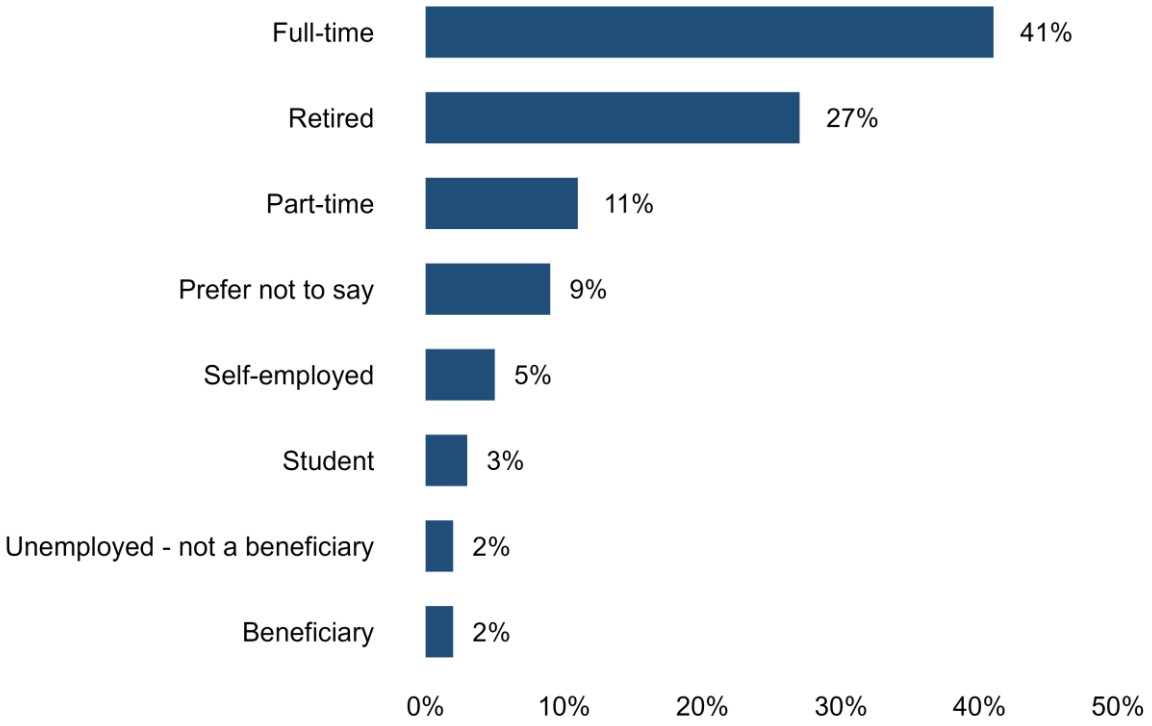

Figure 5: *Employment status distribution of respondents (n=627)*

3.6 Resident Status

The vast majority of respondents were ICC residential ratepayers (80%). ICC residents who are not ratepayers comprised 10%, while "Other" represented 8%, and non-residential ratepayers made up 2%.

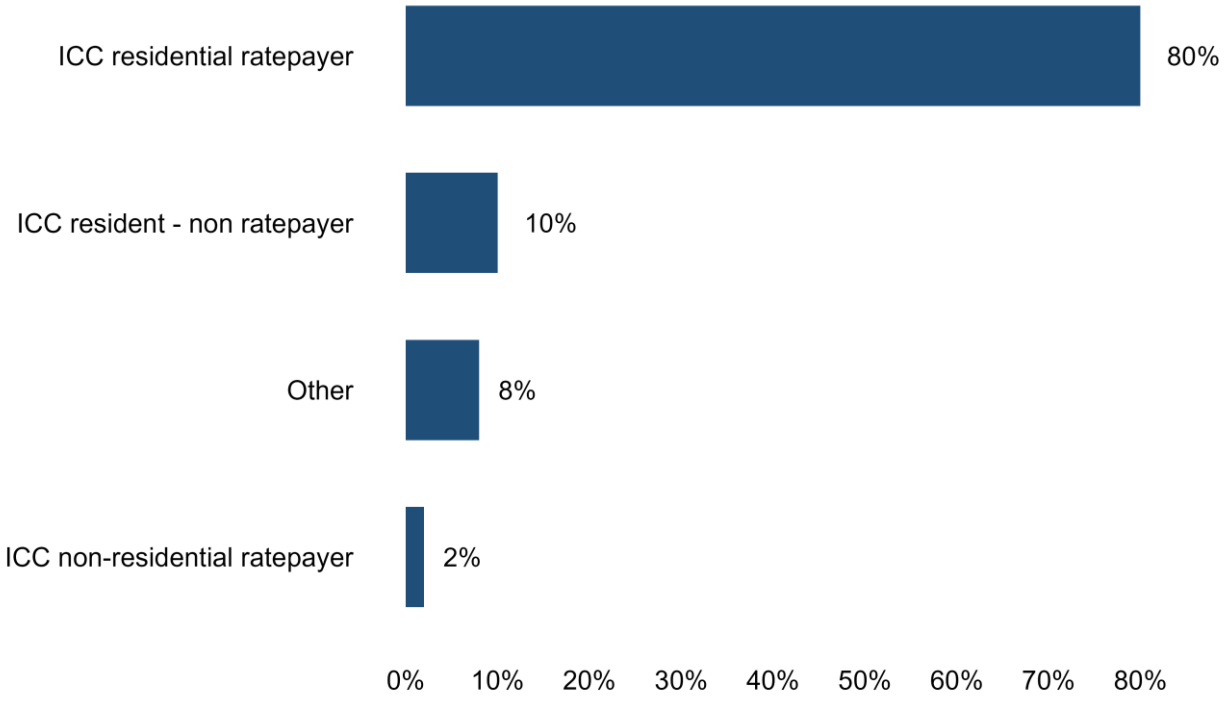

Figure 6: *Resident status distribution of respondents (n=816)*

3.7 Location

Respondents were spread across 42 suburbs and localities within the Invercargill district. The full distribution is shown in the table below.

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Windsor	77	9
Gladstone	50	6
Richmond	52	6
Waikiwi	56	6
Appleby	45	5
Glengarry	49	5
Heidelberg	43	5
Newfield	42	5
Otatara	49	5
Strathern	42	5
Waverley	43	5
Grasmere	39	4
Bluff	23	3
Georgetown	31	3
Hargest	23	3
Hawthorndale	24	3
Kingswell	27	3
Rosedale	24	3
Avenal	20	2
Prefer not to say	15	2
Andersons Park	7	1
Ascot Heights	8	1
CBD area	9	1
Clifton	12	1
Kew	8	1
Lorneville	8	1
Makarewa	9	1

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Myross Bush	11	1
Rockdale	5	1
Seaward Bush	9	1
Tisbury	8	1
Turnbull Thomson Park	6	1
Waihopai	5	1
Ascot	3	0
Greenhills	2	0
Mill Rd	3	0
Mokotua	2	0
New River Ferry	3	0
Omaui	1	0
Prestonville	3	0
West Invercargill	2	0
Woodend	1	0

Table 1: Location distribution of respondents

4 Service Usage Patterns

This section presents how frequently respondents reported using Council services and facilities. The survey assessed usage across eleven services, with response rates and usage patterns varying by service.

Usage figures should be interpreted with care. Response rates differ across services depending on which survey instruments included the question, and some results are influenced by collection method. For example, higher reported parks usage partly reflects the inclusion of parks-specific intercept surveys, which targeted people already visiting parks and recreation spaces. Similarly, bus usage figures include responses from the dedicated bus user survey. These figures describe who responded, not necessarily the broader Invercargill population.

The table below summarises usage frequency across all eleven services.

Frequency of ICC Council Services Usage

Frequency	Parks & Recreation	Playgrounds	Library	Splash Palace	Public Toilets	Bus Service	Cemeteries	He Waka Tuia	Rugby Park	Civic Theatre	Scottish Hall
Daily	15%	6%	1%	2%	2%	7%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
At least once a week	28%	18%	16%	13%	5%	11%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
At least once a fortnight	12%	9%	10%	5%	7%	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	
At least once a month	17%	11%	13%	7%	11%	3%	8%	4%	2%	3%	0%
Once every 2-3 months	15%	10%	15%	12%	17%	3%	15%	7%	4%	12%	1%
Once or twice a year	8%	10%	12%	14%	21%	5%	22%	15%	22%	45%	12%
Less often than yearly	3%	14%	15%	18%	14%	6%	26%	18%	26%	27%	25%
Never	2%	22%	17%	30%	24%	63%	25%	53%	44%	12%	61%
Total	**n=693**	**n=298**	**n=721**	**n=596**	**n=593**	**n=703**	**n=317**	**n=484**	**n=576**	**n=625**	**n=565**

Table 2: Frequency of Council services usage by Invercargill residents

5 Service Satisfaction

Resident satisfaction with Council services and facilities is examined in this section. Respondents were screened based on their responses to usage frequency questions; only those who had used a Council service or facility were invited to provide satisfaction ratings.

5.1 Overall Satisfaction with Council Services

Overall satisfaction levels varied across Council services. Library services recorded the highest satisfaction at 91% (n=494), followed by Civic Theatre at 88% (n=389) and Parks & Recreation at 79% (n=650). At the lower end, Rugby Park showed 39% satisfaction (n=175) and democratic processes recorded 33% (n=662).

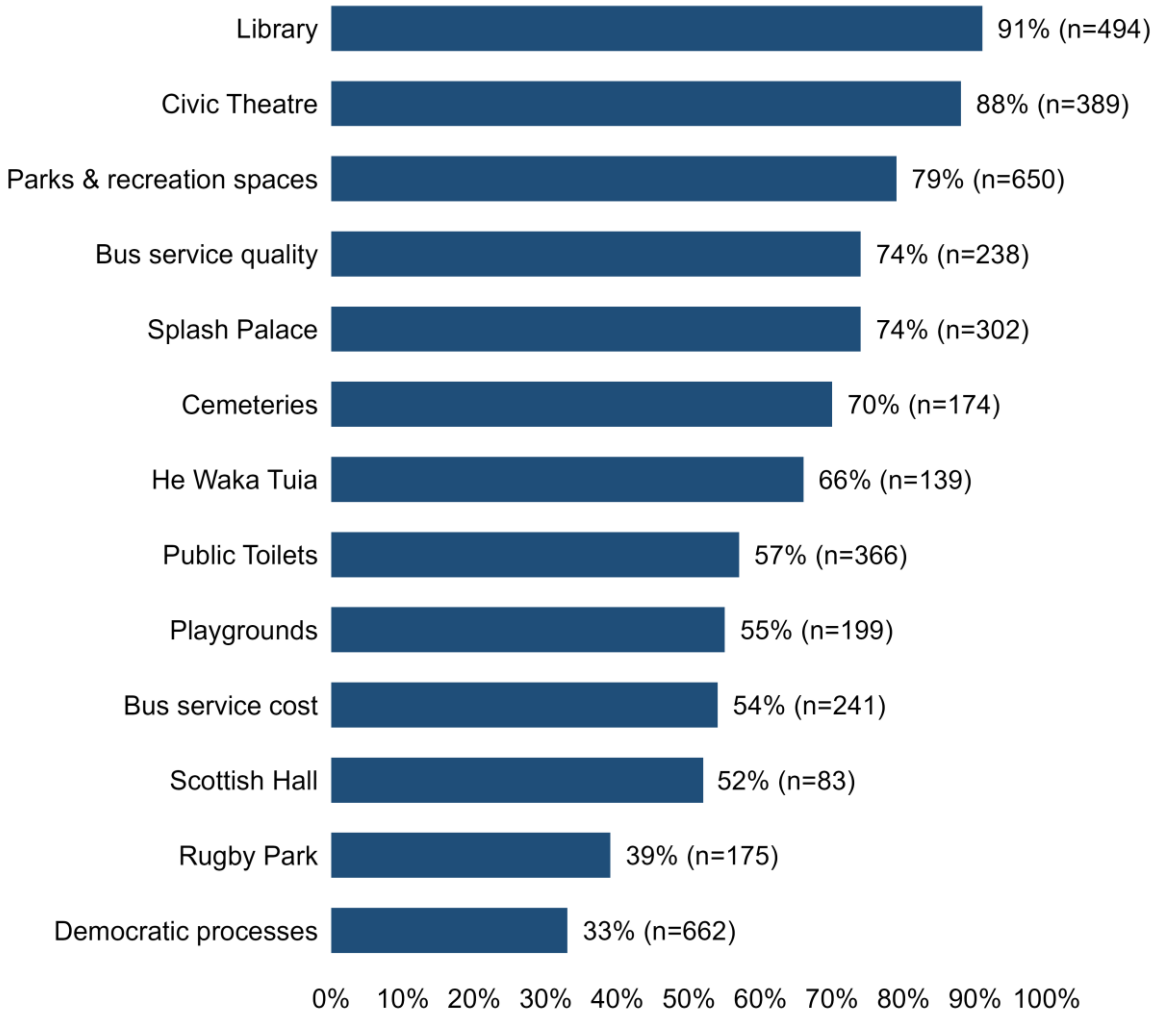

Figure 7: *Overall satisfaction with ICC services (n=valid responses for each service)*

5.2 Satisfaction Trends Over Time

The table below tracks satisfaction from 2021/22 to 2025/26. Most services show higher satisfaction in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. As noted in the methodology, comparisons with previous years should account for the shift from online-only to postal-led collection, which may have influenced results alongside any genuine changes in sentiment. Playgrounds and Cemeteries are measured for the first time in 2025/26 following the introduction of the parks-specific survey module.

Two year-on-year changes warrant specific attention. Bus service quality increased from 55% in 2024/25 to 74% in 2025/26, a period in which the dedicated bus user intercept survey was introduced, targeting people already using the service. Parks & Recreation increased from 73% to 79%, coinciding with the introduction of parks intercept surveys at parks and recreation locations. In both cases, the inclusion of targeted intercept respondents who were already using these services is likely to have contributed to the observed increases, independent of any underlying change in satisfaction. The Civic Theatre figure of 88% (n=389) includes 26 responses from the dedicated venue survey introduced in Q3.

Overall Satisfaction with ICC Services - Tracking Over Time

Year	Library	Civic Theatre	Parks & recreation	Cemeteries	Splash Palace	Bus service cost	Playgrounds	Scottish Hall	Bus service quality	Public Toilets	Rugby Park	He Waka Tuia	Democratic processes
'21-22	87%	-	80%	-	74%	65%	-	-	38%	-	-	19%	18%
'22-23	84%	-	80%	-	67%	64%	-	-	34%	-	-	17%	18%
'23-24	81%	-	75%	-	56%	48%	-	-	46%	-	-	23%	22%
'24-25	75%	71%	73%	-	65%	57%	-	51%	55%	36%	34%	54%	23%
'25-26	91%	88%	79%	70%	74%	54%	55%	52%	74%	57%	39%	66%	33%

Table 3: Satisfaction trends with ICC services from 2021/22 to 2025/26

5.3 Satisfaction by Age and Gender

The table below breaks down satisfaction by age group and gender. Across most services, satisfaction tends to increase with age. Gender differences are generally modest.

Overall Satisfaction with ICC Services by Age and Gender

Service	14-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female	Total
Library	83% (n=29)	85% (n=59)	91% (n=120)	89% (n=57)	91% (n=67)	94% (n=157)	90% (n=145)	93% (n=306)	**91% (n=494)**
Parks & recreation spaces	61% (n=74)	72% (n=76)	78% (n=126)	84% (n=90)	81% (n=107)	85% (n=165)	78% (n=224)	80% (n=362)	**79% (n=650)**
Civic Theatre	88% (n=17)	74% (n=42)	90% (n=86)	82% (n=61)	91% (n=66)	93% (n=108)	89% (n=110)	90% (n=236)	**88% (n=389)**
Splash Palace	67% (n=15)	60% (n=48)	70% (n=93)	72% (n=47)	81% (n=42)	89% (n=54)	75% (n=84)	73% (n=179)	**74% (n=302)**
Bus service - cost	46% (n=46)	40% (n=35)	45% (n=47)	40% (n=20)	78% (n=50)	67% (n=21)	55% (n=67)	54% (n=151)	**54% (n=241)**
Bus service - quality	78% (n=46)	65% (n=34)	77% (n=47)	50% (n=22)	78% (n=50)	62% (n=21)	79% (n=66)	71% (n=152)	**74% (n=238)**
Scottish Hall	40% (n=5)	14% (n=7)	32% (n=19)	46% (n=13)	69% (n=16)	77% (n=22)	43% (n=23)	51% (n=47)	**52% (n=83)**
He Waka Tuia	29% (n=7)	76% (n=21)	68% (n=44)	71% (n=17)	62% (n=26)	68% (n=22)	65% (n=34)	66% (n=87)	**66% (n=139)**
Public Toilets	36% (n=25)	43% (n=49)	51% (n=92)	54% (n=50)	63% (n=57)	71% (n=90)	58% (n=129)	56% (n=197)	**57% (n=366)**
Rugby Park	44% (n=9)	32% (n=22)	33% (n=48)	37% (n=27)	41% (n=32)	53% (n=32)	37% (n=71)	39% (n=94)	**39% (n=175)**
Playgrounds	37% (n=52)	43% (n=30)	60% (n=55)	80% (n=15)	47% (n=15)	79% (n=28)	56% (n=48)	57% (n=117)	**55% (n=199)**
Cemeteries	46% (n=48)	71% (n=17)	77% (n=22)	67% (n=12)	81% (n=21)	85% (n=48)	72% (n=54)	71% (n=103)	**70% (n=174)**
Democratic processes	39% (n=33)	26% (n=77)	32% (n=130)	31% (n=97)	38% (n=112)	35% (n=202)	33% (n=224)	33% (n=350)	**33% (n=662)**

Table 4: Satisfaction with ICC services by age and gender

5.4 Qualitative Feedback on Services

The following sections present qualitative feedback for each service, drawing on thematic coding of open-ended comments.

Bus Service

Views were mixed, with many praising the bus service for being regular, clean, and increasingly electric, while a substantial number raised concerns about limited operating hours, high fares, and inadequate coverage to areas like Otatara, Bluff, and Sandy Point. Several comments highlighted that it is often cheaper to drive and park than to catch the bus, undermining the incentive to use public transport. Accessibility drew both praise and criticism — the new electric buses offer good wheelchair spaces, but older, smaller buses rely on portable ramps that feel unsafe in wet conditions. Other recurring issues included the lack of Google Maps integration for route planning, long walking distances to bus stops, inconsistent driver quality, and a timetable that does not extend into evening hours, limiting usefulness for commuters and social trips alike.

Comments on the bus service

Theme	Frequency
Bus Service	**76**
Support: Good bus service	15
Concern: Timetable and hours inadequate	12
Concern: Fare too expensive	9
Concern: No service to some areas	8
Concern: Bus cleanliness and comfort	7
Concern: Driver behaviour and quality	6
Consider: Extend service hours and days	5
Support: Electric buses and school services	5
Concern: No bus service to Bluff	3
Concern: No electronic payment option	2
Concern: Wheelchair and accessibility issues	2
Consider: Better route information and technology	2

n = 54 respondents. Minimum threshold: 2 mentions.

Table 5: Comments regarding satisfaction with the bus service

Splash Palace

Splash Palace is widely regarded as a well-maintained, enjoyable facility with friendly and efficient staff, though several specific concerns temper overall satisfaction. Changing facilities drew repeated criticism, particularly the lack of adequate family changing rooms for larger families and limited baby-changing options, along with accessibility challenges for teenagers with disabilities. Cost was a prominent issue, with families finding admission and hydroslide fees increasingly unaffordable, and frustration expressed over a 25% increase in aqua aerobics charges and compulsory online payment fees for lessons. Other recurring points included the hydroslide being frequently closed, the pool area feeling at capacity during peak times, and suggestions for additional features such as a dedicated water play area for younger children and a lazy river.

Comments on Splash Palace

Theme	Frequency
Splash Palace	**236**
Support: Great facility and staff	98
Concern: Lane availability and pool space	22
Concern: Admission prices too high	21
Concern: Facility is dated and too small	19
Support: Well-maintained and clean facility	19
Concern: Not enough family changing rooms	16
Consider: Expand leisure pool and water features	11
Concern: Cleanliness issues	10
Concern: Hydroslide availability	7
Concern: Water temperature issues	6
Consider: Expand spa sauna and relaxation facilities	4
Support: Good swim school	3

n = 172 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 6: Comments regarding satisfaction with Splash Palace

Rugby Park

The dominant theme was frustration with the prolonged closure of part of the grandstand, which many see as an embarrassment for the city, particularly during nationally televised events. There is a strong desire for the council to invest in repairing and upgrading the existing facility rather than considering relocation, with several people noting that a fit-for-purpose stadium could host not just rugby but also concerts, family events, and other activities to generate broader community value. While appreciation exists for Rugby Park as a venue for Stags games and its general accessibility, concerns about deteriorating facilities—including outdated amenities, a poor western toilet block, and muddy pathways—underscore a sense that deferred maintenance has been left unaddressed for too long.

Comments on Rugby Park

Theme	Frequency
Rugby Park	**159**
Concern: Grandstand closure and disrepair	44
Consider: Fix and upgrade grandstand	31
Support: Enjoyable venue for events	27
Concern: Facility is outdated and run down	24
Consider: Multi-purpose venue and more events	22
Consider: Attract bigger events	6
Concern: Poor facilities and amenities	5

n = 98 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 7: Comments regarding satisfaction with Rugby Park

Scottish Hall

Views were mixed but leaned positive, with the Scottish Hall valued for its heritage significance, affordable pricing, and suitability for community events—particularly the Rotary book sale, which was mentioned repeatedly as a key use. The hall's Scottish character, tartan displays, and architectural quality were seen as unique assets worth preserving. However, several comments pointed to the building's age and need for upgrades, particularly to toilets and the entrance, while others noted it appears underutilised and could benefit from greater promotion or more accessible rental costs. Overall, the hall is regarded as a functional and historically important community venue, though one that requires ongoing maintenance and modernisation to remain fit for purpose.

Comments on Scottish Hall

Theme	Frequency
Scottish Hall	**43**
Support: Good functional community venue for events	21
Concern: Dated and needs upgrading	10
Support: Heritage and character valued	9
Consider: More use and lower hire costs	3

n = 38 respondents. Minimum threshold: 2 mentions.

Table 8: Comments regarding satisfaction with Scottish Hall

Civic Theatre

The Civic Theatre is widely valued as a beautiful heritage building and a proud asset to the city, with strong praise for its well-maintained presentation, welcoming staff, and diverse programme of shows and events. Several specific concerns emerged alongside this positive sentiment, including slippery exterior tiles posing a safety hazard, insufficient disability parking for an ageing population, narrow seating rows lacking a centre aisle, and a ceiling and walls that appear dirty and in need of repainting. Ticket pricing was also raised as a barrier to attendance, with the suggestion that high costs are leading to poor audience turnout and discouraging performers from visiting Invercargill. Parking availability more generally and a desire for more frequent attendance were recurring threads among those who otherwise expressed strong appreciation for the venue.

Comments on Civic Theatre

Theme	Frequency
Civic Theatre	**253**
Support: Great venue shows and staff	145
Support: Beautiful heritage building and community pride	90
Concern: Safety and accessibility issues	12
Concern: Seating comfort and layout	6
General	**6**
Concern: General dissatisfaction with facility or service	6
Infrastructure Roading	**4**
Concern: Parking cost and availability	4
City Development Economy	**3**
Consider: More events and entertainment	3

n = 217 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 9: Comments regarding satisfaction with Civic Theatre

Parks & Recreation

Queens Park stands out as a highly valued asset that generates strong positive sentiment, with many describing it as beautiful, awesome, and a "jewel in the crown" frequently used for walking, recreation, and impressing visitors. Alongside this appreciation, several practical concerns emerge: insufficient shade and seating, slippery surfaces at the splash pad, a need for more toilets, disappointment with the redesigned tuatara enclosure, and alarm at the number of trees being felled. Maintenance standards drew mixed views—some found parks well kept, while others pointed to summer weed growth and long grass as problems. Dog-related issues such as off-lead roaming and unattended waste at locations like Seaward Bush were also raised, along with calls for more inclusive, low-cost, and weather-suitable recreation options.

Comments on parks and recreation spaces

Theme	Frequency
Parks Recreation	**499**
Support: Parks are well maintained	212
Support: Queens Park is excellent	93
Concern: Parks maintenance declining	51
Consider: More family and youth recreation	29
Support: Sandy Point and walking tracks valued	28
Consider: Dog control in parks and public spaces	24
Concern: Queens Park specific issues	16
Concern: Sandy Point issues	14
Consider: More flowers and garden displays	9
Consider: Sports ground improvements	8
Consider: Protect waterways and environment	5
Consider: Community orchards and edible gardens	4
Concern: Anderson Park specific issues	3
Consider: BBQ and picnic facilities in parks	3
Playgrounds	**36**
Consider: More seating and picnic facilities	8
Support: Good variety of playgrounds	7
Concern: Equipment is functionally obsolete	6
Consider: Shade and shelter at playgrounds	5
Consider: Toilets at playgrounds	4
Concern: Safety issues at playgrounds	3
Consider: Upgrade Queens Park playground	3
Trees Tree Management	**20**
Support: Good storm response	10
Concern: Excessive tree removal	6

Comments on parks and recreation spaces	
Theme	**Frequency**
Consider: Better tree replacement planning	4
Safety Compliance	**10**
Consider: Better dog control enforcement	6
Concern: Antisocial behaviour in public spaces	4
Council Governance Engagement	**7**
Concern: Council does not listen to community	4
Concern: Equity across suburbs and areas	3
City Development Economy	**6**
Consider: Housing and district planning	3
Consider: More events and entertainment	3
General	**4**
Concern: General dissatisfaction with facility or service	4
Public Toilets	**4**
Consider: More toilets in parks and playgrounds	4
Rates Financial Management	**3**
Concern: Wasteful spending	3
Walkways Cycleways	**3**
Concern: Walkway maintenance issues	3

n = 399 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 10: Comments regarding satisfaction with parks and recreation spaces

He Waka Tuia

Satisfaction with He Waka Tuia was overwhelmingly positive, with praise directed at the quality and variety of rotating exhibitions, the engaging and friendly staff, and interactive offerings like the PLAY exhibition that cater to children and families. A recurring desire for a larger space emerged, with several comments noting the current facility feels limited in scale for showcasing local art and providing a fuller museum experience. Parking near the site was a notable pain point, particularly for those with mobility challenges who find it difficult to access the venue. A small number of comments indicated unfamiliarity with what He Waka Tuia actually is, while others acknowledged its value as a temporary facility and expressed enthusiasm for its future expansion.

Comments on He Waka Tuia

Theme	Frequency
He Waka Tuia	**91**
Support: Excellent exhibitions and activities	34
Support: Friendly and helpful staff	14
Support: Good temporary museum and gallery space	13
Concern: Space is too small	12
Consider: More promotion needed	6
Concern: Lack of awareness and name recognition	5
Concern: Parking difficulties	4
Concern: Museum build too slow	3
General	**3**
Concern: General dissatisfaction with facility or service	3

n = 64 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 11: Comments regarding satisfaction with He Waka Tuia

Library

Satisfaction with the library was overwhelmingly positive, with praise centred on friendly and helpful staff, a welcoming space for all ages, good book selections, and the removal of overdue fees. Many comments highlighted the library as a valued community asset serving diverse needs — from children's activities and reading groups to study spaces and exercise programmes. A few constructive suggestions emerged, including a desire for more enclosed study areas, modernisation of the facility, improved layout bringing non-fiction closer to fiction, and better parking options. The overall tone reflects a well-regarded service where staff quality and accessibility stand out as particular strengths.

Desired Activities and Facilities

Feedback reflected a mix of general satisfaction with current library services and specific requests for expanded programming. Children's activities and workshops were a common theme, with calls for more kids' events, weekend drop-in craft sessions, and additional digital offerings for young people, alongside adult-oriented suggestions such as computing classes, arts and crafts workshops, and genealogy research sessions. Several comments praised existing programmes—particularly exercise classes and kids' classes—while practical concerns included the cost of meeting room hire, with multiple suggestions to replace the fee with a koha system, as well as requests for more BorrowBox content, better parking, and improved shelving for books. A recurring thread was the desire for the library to serve as a broader community hub, incorporating people's libraries, board game events, music rooms, and accessible spaces for gamers.

Comments on library services

Theme	Frequency
Library	**452**
Support: Great facility and book selection	198
Support: Excellent staff	122
Support: Events and programmes valued	52
Support: Wonderful children and family space	48
Support: Good parking and accessibility	12
Consider: More digital content	7
Consider: Exterior and entrance improvements	6
Consider: More children and youth activities	4
Consider: Free or koha meeting rooms	3
General	**5**
Support: General praise for facility or service	5
Infrastructure Roading	**4**
Concern: Parking cost and availability	4

n = 299 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 12: Comments regarding satisfaction with library services

Public Toilets

Views were mixed, with many acknowledging that public toilets are generally clean and functional when encountered, while a significant number raised concerns about there not being enough facilities available across the city. Cleanliness was a recurring point of contention—some found toilets well-maintained, while others described them as dirty and in need of more frequent cleaning. Specific mentions included the loss of toilets and showers at Wachner Place, closures on Don Street, and malfunctioning automatic doors at Queens Park facilities. The overall picture suggests that while the quality of individual toilets is often acceptable, gaps in coverage and inconsistent maintenance are key sources of frustration.

Comments on public toilets

Theme	Frequency
Public Toilets	**243**
Support: Clean and well maintained	90
Concern: Cleanliness issues	50
Concern: Not enough public toilets	38
Support: Good distribution and accessibility	26
Consider: Keep Wachner Place toilets open	13
Concern: Exeloo problems	12
Concern: Toilets are old and need upgrading	10
Consider: More toilets in parks and playgrounds	4
Safety Compliance	**4**
Concern: Antisocial behaviour in public spaces	4

n = 204 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 13: Comments regarding satisfaction with public toilets

6 Community Engagement

This section examines resident engagement with Council decision-making processes and satisfaction with opportunities for community involvement.

6.1 Satisfaction with Community Engagement Opportunities

Satisfaction with opportunities for community involvement in Council decision-making measured 33% (n=662), with 48% of respondents selecting 'Neutral'. This is the same measure reported as "Democratic Processes" in the service satisfaction tracking table; the label differs here to reflect the full question wording used in the survey.

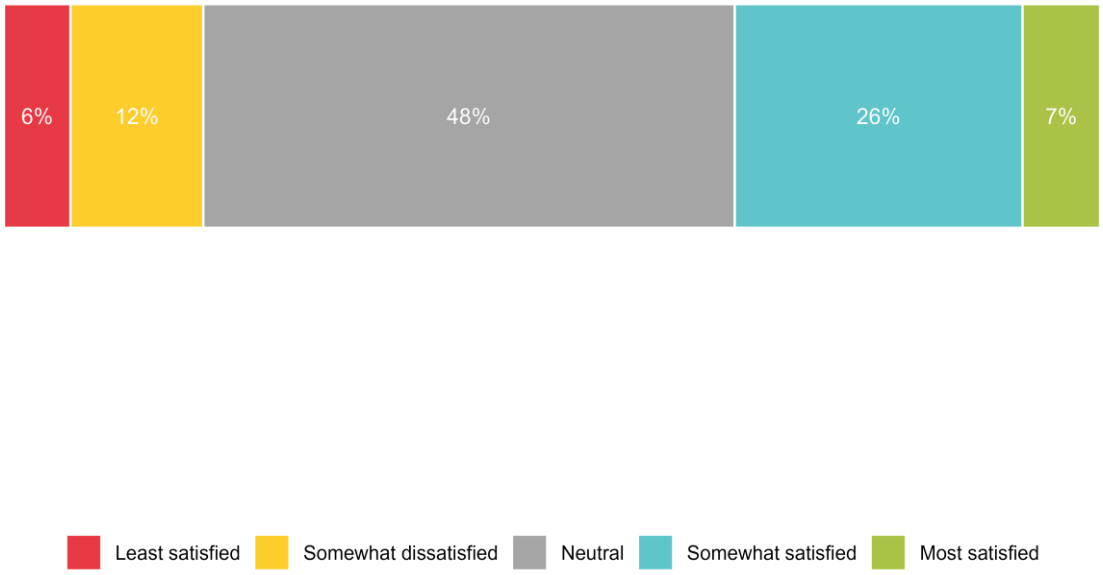

Figure 8: *Satisfaction with opportunities for community involvement (n=662)*

6.2 Engagement Activities Participation

Respondents were asked about their participation in various community engagement activities in the past 12 months. A total of 72% of respondents (n=475) indicated they had not participated in any of the listed engagement activities.

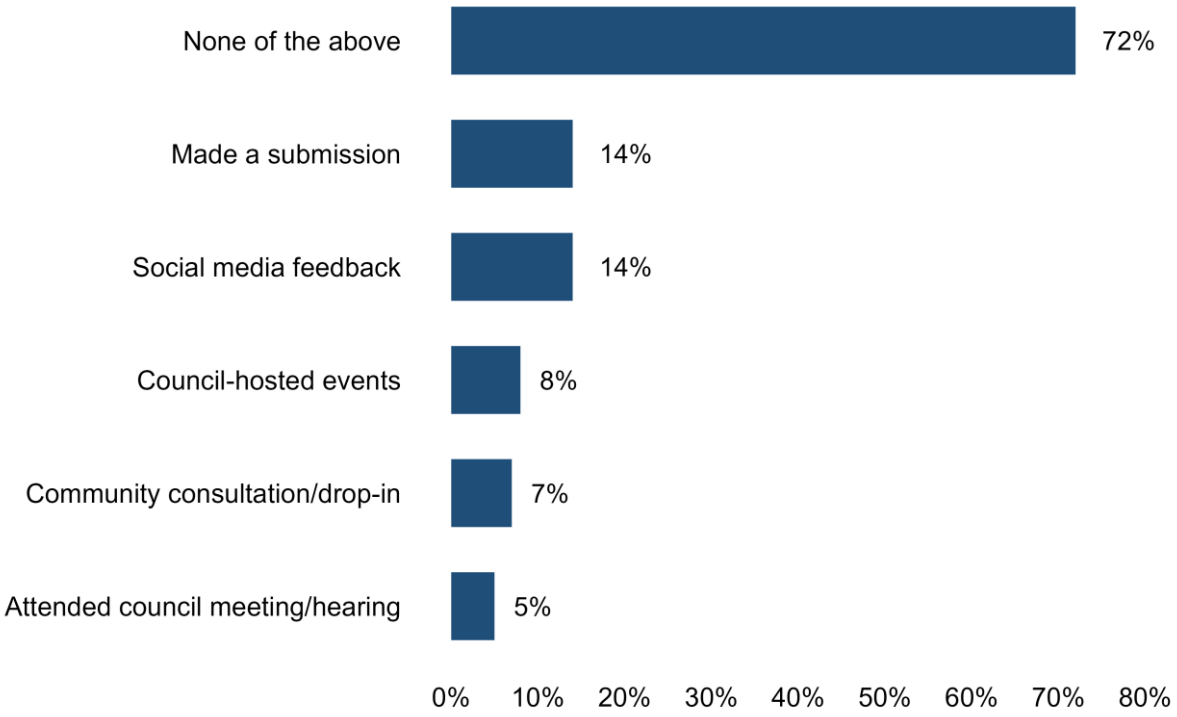

Figure 9: *Participation in community engagement activities (n=661)*

6.3 Engagement Satisfaction by Age and Gender

Engagement Satisfaction by Age and Gender

Measure	14-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female	Total
Satisfaction with engagement opportunities	39% (n=33)	26% (n=77)	32% (n=130)	31% (n=97)	38% (n=112)	35% (n=202)	33% (n=224)	33% (n=350)	**33% (n=662)**

Note: Percentages show respondents who selected 'Most satisfied' or 'Somewhat satisfied'

Table 14: Satisfaction with community engagement opportunities by age and gender

6.4 Engagement Activities by Age and Gender

Engagement Activities by Age and Gender

Activity	14-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female	Total
Made a submission	15% (n=5)	12% (n=9)	16% (n=20)	14% (n=14)	21% (n=23)	8% (n=17)	15% (n=33)	13% (n=46)	**14% (n=90)**
Attended council meeting/hearing	12% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	3% (n=4)	5% (n=5)	5% (n=6)	4% (n=9)	5% (n=11)	3% (n=11)	**5% (n=30)**
Community consultation/drop-in	9% (n=3)	3% (n=2)	9% (n=11)	6% (n=6)	7% (n=8)	6% (n=12)	9% (n=20)	5% (n=19)	**7% (n=43)**
Social media feedback	-	21% (n=16)	16% (n=21)	19% (n=18)	12% (n=14)	11% (n=22)	11% (n=25)	16% (n=55)	**14% (n=93)**
Council-hosted events	15% (n=5)	5% (n=4)	8% (n=10)	8% (n=8)	6% (n=7)	7% (n=15)	6% (n=14)	9% (n=31)	**8% (n=51)**
None of the above	85% (n=28)	69% (n=53)	71% (n=92)	67% (n=65)	67% (n=75)	78% (n=157)	72% (n=159)	72% (n=253)	**72% (n=475)**

Note: Percentages show respondents who participated in each activity (multiple selections possible)

Table 15: Participation in community engagement activities by age and gender

6.5 Qualitative Feedback on Community Engagement

The dominant theme was a strong sense that community consultation is performative rather than genuine, with many expressing the belief that council decisions are already made before public input is sought. While some positive notes emerged—including praise for the council's social media presence, the city app, and the new mayor's communication efforts—these were far outweighed by frustration that feedback is ignored or disregarded, with specific examples cited such as unresolved traffic issues at the North Road and Vogel Street corner, narrow CBD wheelchair parks that fail to meet government standards, and the long-delayed museum rebuild. Accessibility of engagement opportunities was also a concern, with pop-up consultation hours seen as too limited for working residents and some events poorly advertised. Several comments offered constructive suggestions, such as using more visual content and plain English in council documents, leveraging community leaders beyond just community board councillors, and ensuring that consultation processes lead to tangible outcomes to maintain public trust in future engagement.

Council Governance and Engagement

Views were mixed on Council's engagement and consultation efforts, with some praising accessible channels like social media, Let's Talk, and open council meetings, while a stronger undercurrent of frustration centred on the perception that Council has already made up its mind before seeking public input, rendering consultation exercises hollow. Specific grievances included the Wachner Place bus route decision, the rejection of the Urban Play project despite resident support, the new clock, and glass bin rollouts that residents felt they had no meaningful say in. Several comments highlighted that many people remain unaware of formal submission processes like the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan, suggesting that plain-language summaries and broader outreach—including letterbox delivery—could significantly boost participation. Rates increases, cost blowouts, and spending on consultants also surfaced as sore points, compounding a sense among some that ratepayer voices carry little weight in final decisions.

Rates and Financial Management

The dominant theme was a strong call for council to prioritise core infrastructure—roads, water, sewerage, and footpaths—over what many perceive as costly vanity projects, with the museum redevelopment and Invercargill Central Mall investment cited repeatedly as examples of wasteful spending. Fiscal discipline emerged as a central concern, with widespread frustration over rates increases, project cost overruns, and a sense that council spending does not reflect the financial pressures households face. Parks and green spaces drew mixed sentiment: some praised the parks team's work while others pointed to declining standards in mowing, roundabout plantings, and reserve maintenance, particularly in Bluff. A smaller but notable thread emphasised the importance of transparency, community consultation, and continued investment in cultural amenities like libraries, museums, and art galleries alongside the basics.

Comments on community involvement opportunities

Theme	Frequency
Council Governance Engagement	**283**
Concern: Council does not listen to community	75
Concern: Poor awareness of consultation opportunities	50
Consider: More accessible consultation methods	33
Support: Good engagement and communication efforts	32
Concern: Lack of transparency and communication	27

Comments on community involvement opportunities	
Theme	**Frequency**
Consider: Better online and social media engagement	24
Support: Adequate consultation opportunities provided	24
Consider: Close the feedback loop	14
Concern: Equity across suburbs and areas	4
Rates Financial Management	**13**
Concern: Wasteful spending	10
Concern: Consultant spending	3
City Development Economy	**11**
Concern: Wachner Place issues	6
Concern: Museum project concerns	5
Customer Service	**3**
Concern: Unhelpful or rude staff	3

n = 209 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 16: Comments regarding satisfaction with community engagement opportunities

7 Community Pride

This chapter examines resident pride in living in Invercargill and Bluff, along with priorities residents identified for making Invercargill an even better place to live.

7.1 Pride in Living in Invercargill

Among the 755 respondents who answered this question, 74% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel proud to live in Invercargill." Pride was higher among older age groups (82% for 65+) and lower among younger respondents (53% for 14-24).

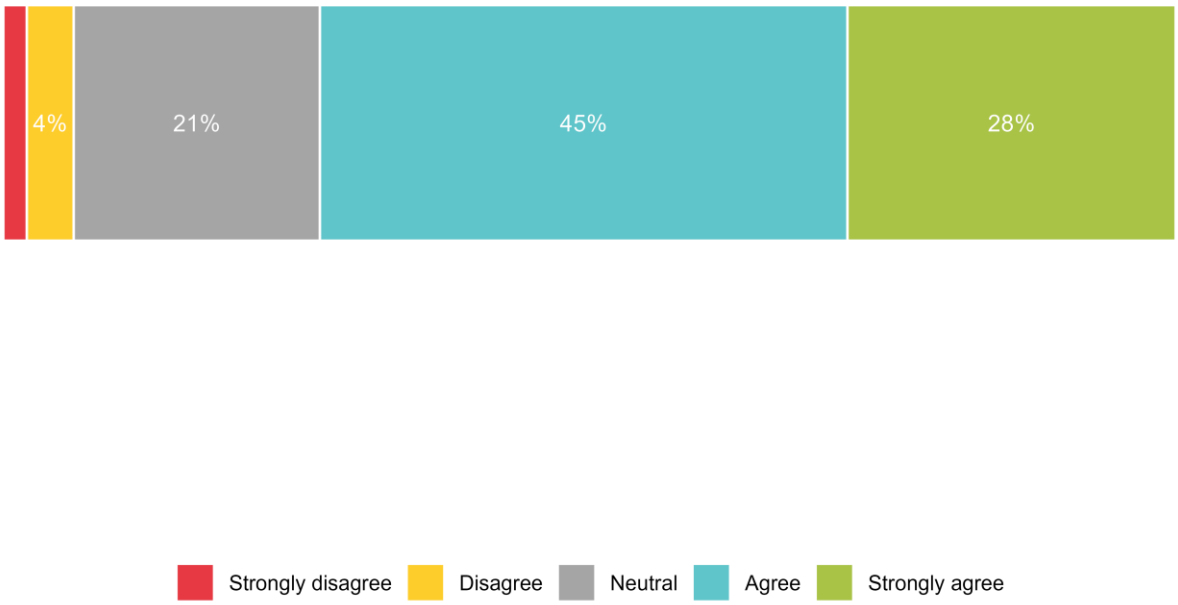

Figure 10: *Pride in living in Invercargill (n=755)*

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	15	2
Disagree	29	4
Neutral	156	21
Agree	342	45
Strongly agree	213	28

Table 17: Pride in living in Invercargill

7.2 Pride in Living in Bluff

Among the Bluff respondents who answered this question, the majority agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel proud to live in Bluff." Due to the small sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution and serve primarily as an indicator of sentiment among Bluff respondents who participated.

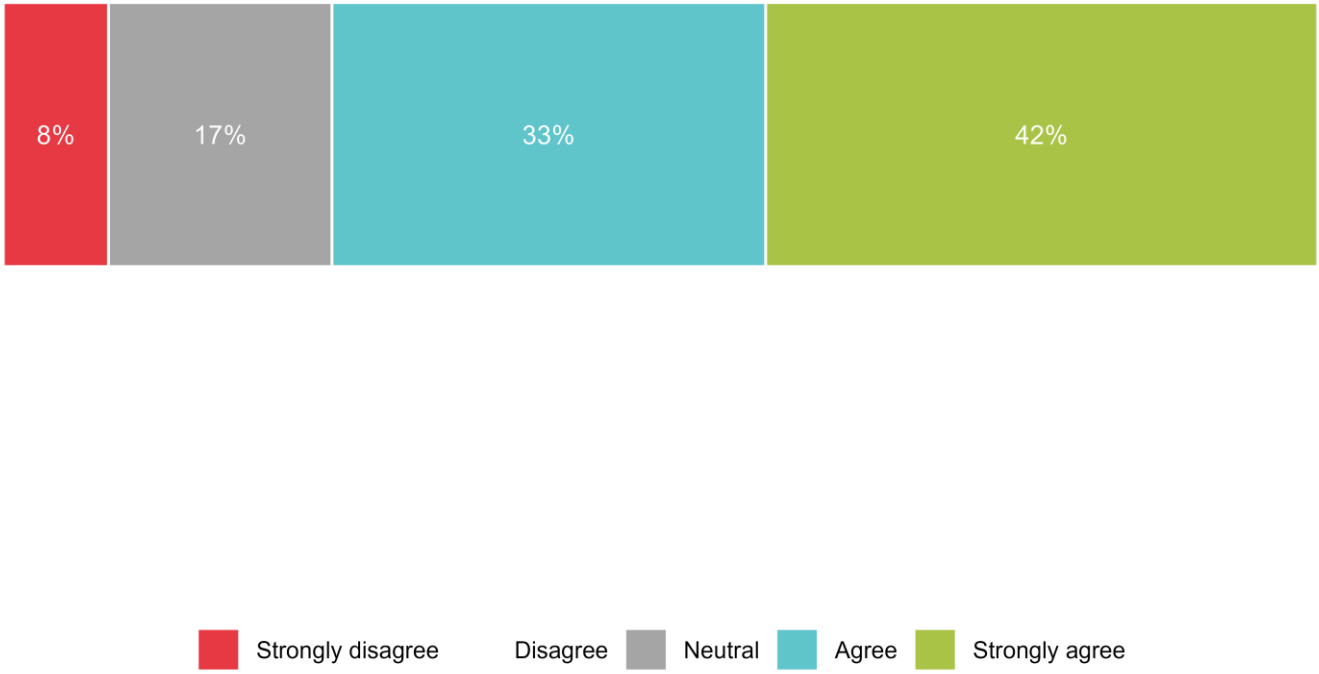

Figure 11: *Pride in living in Bluff*

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	1	8
Neutral	2	17
Agree	4	33
Strongly agree	5	42

Table 18: Pride in living in Bluff

7.3 Pride by Age and Gender

Pride by Age and Gender

Pride Statement	14-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female	Total
I feel proud to live in Invercargill	53% (n=38)	59% (n=83)	75% (n=147)	68% (n=115)	78% (n=126)	82% (n=236)	75% (n=217)	77% (n=350)	**74% (n=755)**
I feel proud to live in Bluff	0% (n=1)	-	80% (n=5)	50% (n=2)	100% (n=2)	100% (n=2)	62% (n=8)	100% (n=4)	**75% (n=12)**

Note: Percentages show respondents who selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'

Table 19: Pride by age and gender

7.4 Priorities for Making Invercargill a Better Place to Live

Respondents were asked what Council should prioritise to make Invercargill an even better place to live. A total of 601 respondents provided feedback on what Council should prioritise. The most prominent themes related to city development and the economy (340 coded mentions), infrastructure and roading (203), parks and recreation (188), and rates and financial management (180).

Qualitative Feedback

Several interconnected priorities emerged, with parks and green spaces, roading quality, and fiscal responsibility forming the core concerns. Many called for better maintenance of existing infrastructure—particularly road surfaces, mowed green belts, and parks—while others emphasised the need for recreational facilities for young people, including playgrounds in South Invercargill and dedicated spaces for teenagers. A strong undercurrent of frustration with rising rates, cost blowouts on major projects like the museum, and perceived wasteful spending on consultants ran through the feedback, alongside calls for Council to finish current projects before starting new ones. Balancing these critical voices, some acknowledged Council is doing a good job and encouraged continued focus on core services such as water supply, sewage, and roading.

City Development & Economy

Feedback centred on the need for a cleaner, tidier city—particularly addressing graffiti, unkempt berms, dilapidated CBD buildings, and neglected areas like Bluff and South Invercargill—alongside strong calls for more family-friendly and youth-oriented activities, indoor venues, and community events to retain young people and boost vibrancy. Economic development concerns highlighted the importance of improving Invercargill's brand reputation, reducing barriers to business, addressing high hospitality prices, and making better use of empty CBD buildings to attract investment and visitors. A recurring tension emerged between desire for aesthetic improvements and public amenities versus frustration at perceived overspending on legacy projects like the museum, with many urging the council to prioritise getting the basics right—roads, footpaths, lighting, and parks maintenance—before pursuing larger ambitions.

Infrastructure & Roading

Concerns focused heavily on the quality of road maintenance, with pothole repairs, short-lived seal work, and contractor accountability cited as persistent frustrations—particularly the perceived waste of redoing recently completed work, as highlighted by the Severn Street example. Infrastructure priorities such as securing a second water source, maintaining stormwater drainage, and improving footpath accessibility featured prominently alongside calls for the council to focus spending on core services rather than discretionary projects. Parking was another notable pain point, with criticism directed at the current pay-

by-plate system, insufficient disability parking in the city centre, and calls for free parking for pensioners. Across these responses, there is a strong undercurrent of ratepayer frustration about fiscal accountability, with repeated demands for lower rates, reduced debt, and greater transparency around infrastructure spending decisions.

Parks & Recreation

Queens Park stands out as a widely valued asset, with many praising its accessibility, presentation, and overall appeal, though specific concerns were raised about the rose gardens' upkeep, storm damage to trees, and the condition of playground toilets. Sandy Point drew notable criticism for weed management and general neglect, while Elizabeth Park was singled out for persistent boggy ground that limits usability. Beyond maintenance, there is clear appetite for more family-oriented and inclusive activities, upgraded playgrounds, weather-suitable recreation options, and amenities such as sensory spaces, picnic areas, and dog waste stations. A recurring tension emerged between appreciation for the city's green spaces and frustration over inconsistent upkeep—particularly around mowing standards, garden plantings, and the balance between native vegetation and colourful displays.

Rates & Financial Management

The dominant theme was a strong call for council to prioritise core infrastructure—roads, water, sewerage, and footpaths—over what many perceive as costly vanity projects, with the museum redevelopment and Invercargill Central Mall investment cited repeatedly as examples of wasteful spending. Fiscal discipline emerged as a central concern, with widespread frustration over rates increases, project cost overruns, and a sense that council spending does not reflect the financial pressures households face. Parks and green spaces drew mixed sentiment: some praised the parks team's work while others pointed to declining standards in mowing, roundabout plantings, and reserve maintenance, particularly in Bluff. A smaller but notable thread emphasised the importance of transparency, community consultation, and continued investment in cultural amenities like libraries, museums, and art galleries alongside the basics.

Council Governance & Engagement

Views were mixed on Council's engagement and consultation efforts, with some praising accessible channels like social media, Let's Talk, and open council meetings, while a stronger undercurrent of frustration centred on the perception that Council has already made up its mind before seeking public input, rendering consultation exercises hollow. Specific grievances included the Wachner Place bus route decision, the rejection of the Urban Play project despite resident support, the new clock, and glass bin rollouts that residents felt they had no meaningful say in. Several comments highlighted that many people remain unaware of formal submission processes like the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan, suggesting that plain-language summaries and broader outreach—including letterbox delivery—could significantly boost participation. Rates increases, cost blowouts, and spending on consultants also surfaced as sore points, compounding a sense among some that ratepayer voices carry little weight in final decisions.

Playgrounds

Views were mixed, with many appreciating the variety and availability of playgrounds across Invercargill while expressing a strong desire for equipment upgrades, as much of the current infrastructure is seen as outdated or in disrepair—specific examples include broken steering wheels on the Crawford Street playground car and deteriorating facilities at Sandy Point. A recurring concern is the lack of engaging options for older children and teenagers, with calls for more diverse, age-appropriate equipment, indoor play options for winter, and features like pump tracks and basketball courts. Practical amenities also drew attention, particularly the absence of toilets at Elizabeth Park, the need for shade sails and sheltered seating for supervising adults, and improved accessibility for children with disabilities. Specific parks such as Queens Park, Anderson Park, Elizabeth Park, and Donovan Park were named as having significant potential that could be better realised through targeted investment.

Safety & Compliance

Concerns focused heavily on personal safety and antisocial behaviour, with repeated mentions of boy racers, crime, inadequate lighting, and feeling unsafe in town at night and at specific locations such as Sandy Point Domain, Myers Park, and Wachner Place. Dog control emerged as a persistent frustration, with complaints about uncontrolled off-leash dogs, widespread dog fouling on footpaths and in parks including Queens Park and along Philip Street, and a perceived lack of enforcement of existing rules. Cleanliness and maintenance issues—graffiti, broken glass, litter, and poorly serviced public toilets—compounded the sense that public spaces are not being adequately managed, while a smaller number of responses acknowledged valued assets like Queens Park and Anderson Park. Overall, the tone is predominantly negative, reflecting a community that appreciates its facilities but feels let down by insufficient enforcement, policing, and upkeep across safety and compliance matters.

General

Views were mixed, with a notable portion describing Invercargill as “boring,” outdated, and visually unappealing—citing unkempt streetscapes, abandoned buildings, and a lack of attractions—while others valued the city as a safe, friendly, and family-oriented place with accessible community assets like libraries, pools, parks, and the new CBD developments on Don Street and Esk Street. Several comments pointed to specific operational concerns, including high staff turnover at swim school, poor communication, underwhelming civic design choices such as the museum lacking solar panels, and malfunctioning Christmas lights. The overall tone suggests a community that appreciates the fundamentals of small-city living but sees significant room for modernisation, better maintenance, and more ambitious urban presentation to make Invercargill a more vibrant and attractive place.

Bus Service

Views were mixed, with some praising the bus service as great or excellent, while a larger share raised specific operational frustrations. Limited operating hours emerged as a key concern, particularly the timetable ending before 6pm, which prevents use for evening commutes, dining out, or social activities. Coverage gaps were also prominent, with multiple calls for service to Bluff, Otatara, and better-located stops, alongside complaints about driver behaviour, vehicle cleanliness, and the lack of modern payment options or integration with platforms like Google Maps. Accessibility for wheelchair users drew attention to the contrast between the new electric bus’s built-in spaces and the unsafe portable ramps on smaller vehicles.

Walkways & Cycleways

The dominant theme was a strong desire for better-connected, safer cycling infrastructure throughout the city and improved walkway maintenance, with multiple mentions of overgrown grass, lack of gravel on tracks, and dumped rubbish along routes such as the Otepuni and estuary walking loops, the Waihopai Dam to Queens Drive track, and Otatara walkways. Many comments called for a more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly city centre, including dedicated off-road bike lanes, better footpath coverage on side roads, and even pedestrianising parts of Dee Street to encourage foot traffic and local commerce. Maintenance concerns were particularly pointed, with criticism of infrequent mowing leaving parks and green spaces looking unkempt during peak summer when visitors are in town. Alongside infrastructure improvements, there was a clear appetite for more biodiverse planting, covered bike stands, and amenities like public toilets and sheltered walking tracks that would make active transport and outdoor recreation more practical year-round.

Waste Management

The dominant theme was a strong desire for council-provided green waste bins, with the vast majority of these responses calling for a dedicated green waste collection service to divert organic material from general rubbish. Closely linked to this was widespread concern about dump fees being too high, with

several people arguing that expensive tip charges drive illegal dumping on rural roads and that reducing costs—or offering free disposal for ratepayers—would help keep the city and surrounding areas clean. A number of responses also raised service issues such as damaged bins not being replaced in a timely manner, the lack of rubbish and recycling collection in areas like Otatara, and a feeling that residents were not given a genuine choice when decisions about bin types were made. Overall, sentiment was predominantly critical, reflecting frustration that waste management services have not kept pace with community expectations around green waste, affordability, and equitable access across the district.

Trees & Tree Management

Feedback centred on several interconnected concerns: tree root damage to footpaths creating hazards for elderly and mobility-impaired residents, the need for better species selection (with calls to replace conifers and pines with natives to support birdlife), and anxiety about large or aging trees posing safety risks near homes and intersections, particularly following the October 2025 storm. The storm response drew notably positive praise, with TreeTech and council grounds staff recognised for their cleanup efforts, though some felt the pace was too slow and that decades of inadequate succession planning left the city vulnerable. Queens Park remains a much-loved asset, but there is growing unease about the volume of trees being felled there without a clear vision for future replanting, alongside frustration that overhanging trees and hedges on private and council land obstruct footpaths and sightlines to street signs. A recurring thread links tree management to broader urban planning, with residents wanting more street greenery in barren areas while simultaneously calling for better control of problem trees near houses, fences, and infrastructure.

Splash Palace

Views were mixed, with many praising Splash Palace as a clean, well-maintained, and world-class facility with friendly and efficient staff, while a significant number raised concerns about entry costs being too high—particularly the additional charge for hydroslides—making regular visits unaffordable for families. Changing facilities were a recurring point of contention, with calls for more family changing rooms and upgrades to existing ones described as “grotty.” Several comments also highlighted overcrowding, the need for better supervision of teenagers, improved lane availability systems, and suggestions for off-peak pricing to make the facility more accessible for exercise and community use.

He Waka Tuia

He Waka Tuia draws broadly positive feedback as a welcoming, well-managed space with engaging rotating exhibitions, popular children’s Play programmes, and consistently praised staff. Parking difficulties emerged as a recurring frustration, particularly for older visitors and families, while several comments noted the space is too small and falls short as a long-term replacement for the museum, with the museum rebuild seen as overdue. A lack of public awareness about the facility was also flagged, along with confusion over the te reo Māori name, suggesting more could be done to promote and explain the space to the wider community.

Building & Resource Consents

Views were mixed, with some positive experiences noted around property file requests, LIM turnaround times, and helpful phone interactions, but the dominant theme was frustration with consenting processes perceived as too slow, overly restrictive, and inconsistent. Many comments pointed to excessive regulation and red tape as barriers to development, subdivision, and private investment, with calls for the council to streamline building and resource consent requirements rather than rigidly quoting rules without offering practical solutions. Inconsistent building inspections, poor communication during consent processes, and instances of dismissive or unhelpful staff in the building department were specific pain points, alongside concerns that the council fails to follow up on outstanding compliance matters such as missing codes of compliance. A recurring sentiment was that the council should actively enable and encourage development

rather than obstruct it, with suggestions including reduced fees or incentives for developers who incorporate community and environmental features.

Library

Satisfaction with the library was overwhelmingly positive, with praise directed at helpful and friendly staff, the well-designed layout of the upgraded space, and the extensive selection of books, puzzles, and other materials. Children's programming emerged as a standout strength, with numerous comments highlighting kids' classes, activities, and clubs as valuable for both socialisation and skill development. The removal of overdue fees was noted approvingly, and several comments emphasised the library's broader role as a vital community resource and cultural asset. The most common suggestions for improvement centred on expanding children's and weekend activities and increasing the range of books by specific authors, though these were minor requests within an otherwise highly satisfied group.

Public Toilets

Views were mixed, with many acknowledging that public toilets are generally clean and well-stocked, while others described them as dirty and rundown. The Exeloo automated toilets drew particular frustration, with complaints about overly insensitive motion sensors that threaten to lock users out, painfully slow toilet paper dispensers, and inadequate time limits that would be especially challenging for people with disabilities. Specific locations flagged for attention include Queens Park (faulty doors, cleanliness), Sandy Point (cramped and bug-ridden facilities), Wachner Place (concern over removal), and the bus station. A recurring call for more public toilets across the city sits alongside appreciation that they exist at all, with several people praising the work of cleaning staff.

Rugby Park

The dominant theme was deep frustration over the partially closed grandstand, which many view as a long-deferred maintenance issue that should have been resolved by now, with particular confusion about why parts of the stand are deemed unsafe while corporate boxes above remain operational. There is a strong and consistent push to invest in repairing Rugby Park and transforming it into a genuine multi-purpose venue capable of hosting concerts, family events, and other attractions beyond rugby season to generate revenue year-round. While some positive sentiment exists around the venue's suitability for Stags games and its cultural importance to Southland, the overall tone reflects impatience with inaction, concerns about deteriorating facilities, and a desire for the council to commit to upgrading rather than relocating or neglecting the stadium.

What should Council prioritise to make Invercargill even better?

Theme	Frequency
City Development Economy	**340**
Consider: More events and entertainment	80
Consider: Fill empty buildings and address derelict properties	61
Consider: General city tidiness and appearance	58
Consider: Economic development and business support	44
Consider: Street beautification and plantings	34
Consider: Housing and district planning	25
Consider: Support for community groups and volunteers	17
Concern: Museum project concerns	16
Concern: Wachner Place issues	5

What should Council prioritise to make Invercargill even better?

Theme	Frequency
Infrastructure Roading	**203**
Consider: Infrastructure investment and maintenance	62
Consider: Fix and maintain roads	40
Concern: Poor road conditions	19
Concern: Parking cost and availability	17
Consider: Traffic and speed limit changes	17
Concern: Contractor delays and rework	15
Consider: Fix and maintain footpaths	12
Concern: Stormwater drainage and flooding	9
Concern: Footpath condition and accessibility	6
Consider: More disability and accessible parking	6
Parks Recreation	**188**
Consider: More family and youth recreation	88
Support: Parks are well maintained	20
Concern: Parks maintenance declining	15
Consider: Protect waterways and environment	13
Consider: Dog control in parks and public spaces	10
Consider: Heritage monuments and public art	10
Consider: More flowers and garden displays	10
Consider: Community orchards and edible gardens	6
Consider: Sports ground improvements	5
Support: Queens Park is excellent	4
Support: Sandy Point and walking tracks valued	4
Concern: Queens Park specific issues	3
Rates Financial Management	**180**
Consider: Financial prudence and core services focus	67
Concern: Wasteful spending	40
Concern: Rates too high	37
Consider: Lower rates	21
Concern: Consultant spending	6
Consider: Long-term investment strategy	5
Consider: Use local contractors	4
Council Governance Engagement	**59**
Concern: Equity across suburbs and areas	23

What should Council prioritise to make Invercargill even better?

Theme	Frequency
Concern: Council does not listen to community	19
Concern: Lack of transparency and communication	10
Concern: Council infighting and politics	7
Playgrounds	**40**
Consider: Inclusive and accessible play equipment	5
Consider: More equipment for older children	5
Consider: More equipment for younger children	5
Consider: Water play features	5
Consider: Pump tracks and wheeled recreation	4
Consider: Upgrade Queens Park playground	4
Concern: Equipment is functionally obsolete	3
Concern: Safety issues at playgrounds	3
Consider: Fencing at playgrounds	3
Consider: More seating and picnic facilities	3
Safety Compliance	**34**
Consider: More visible policing and safety	20
Concern: Antisocial behaviour in public spaces	10
Consider: Better dog control enforcement	4
General	**29**
Support: Generally satisfied with Invercargill	17
Support: General praise for facility or service	7
Concern: General city decline and aesthetics	5
Bus Service	**25**
Consider: Extend service hours and days	9
Concern: No service to some areas	5
Concern: Timetable and hours inadequate	5
Concern: Fare too expensive	3
Consider: Better route information and technology	3
Walkways Cycleways	**24**
Consider: Maintain and develop safe walkways	10
Consider: Cycling infrastructure and facilities	7
Consider: Develop safe cycleways	7
Waste Management	**17**
Consider: Free green waste bin	11

What should Council prioritise to make Invercargill even better?	
Theme	**Frequency**
Consider: Reduce dump fees	6
Trees Tree Management	**16**
Consider: Plant more trees	7
Concern: Dangerous trees not addressed	3
Concern: Overhanging trees and hedges on footpaths	3
Consider: Better tree replacement planning	3
Splash Palace	**11**
Concern: Admission prices too high	8
Consider: Expand leisure pool and water features	3
He Waka Tuia	**10**
Concern: Museum build too slow	10
Building Resource Consents	**4**
Consider: Reduce red tape and consenting barriers	4
Library	**4**
Support: Great facility and book selection	4
Public Toilets	**3**
Concern: Not enough public toilets	3
Rugby Park	**3**
Concern: Grandstand closure and disrepair	3

n = 601 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 20: Priorities for making Invercargill a better place to live

8 Council Contact and Satisfaction

This section examines how residents interact with Council, their reasons for making contact, preferred methods, and satisfaction with the contact experience.

8.1 Contact Recency

Among the 704 respondents who answered the contact recency question, 41% reported never having contacted Council, whilst 31% had contacted Council within the last six months.

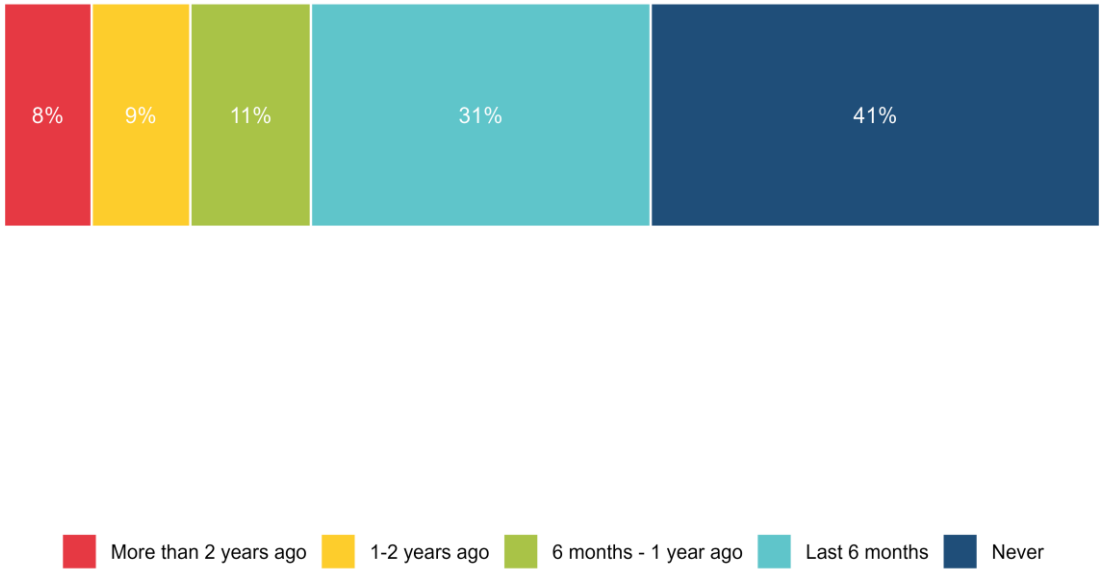

Figure 12: *Recency of contact with Council (n=704)*

8.2 Reasons for Contacting Council

Among the 365 respondents who reported their reason for contact, the most common reasons were rates enquiries (23%), general enquiries (21%), and dog registration (16%).

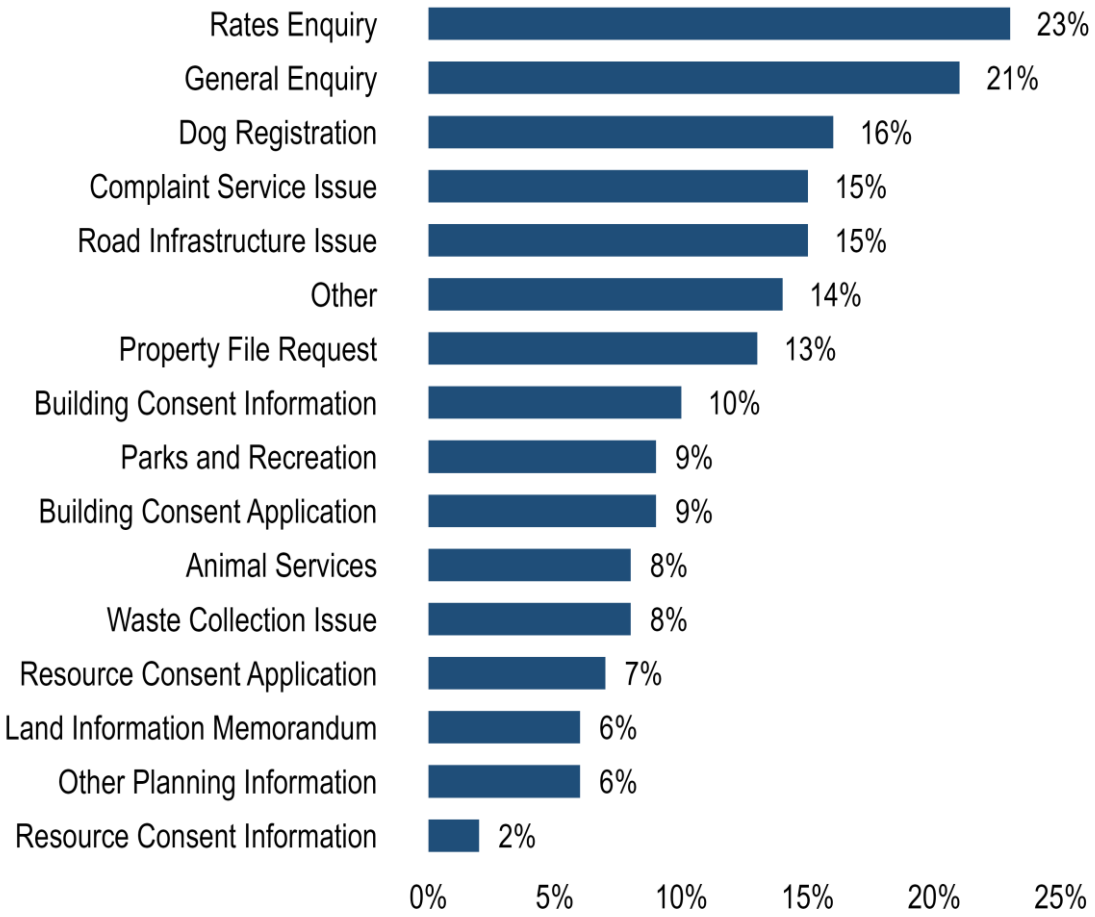

Figure 13: *Reasons for contacting Council (n=365, multiple selections permitted)*

8.3 Method of Contact

Phone was the most common method of contacting Council at 51% (n=411), followed by visiting Council offices (41%), email (25%), and the Council website (24%).

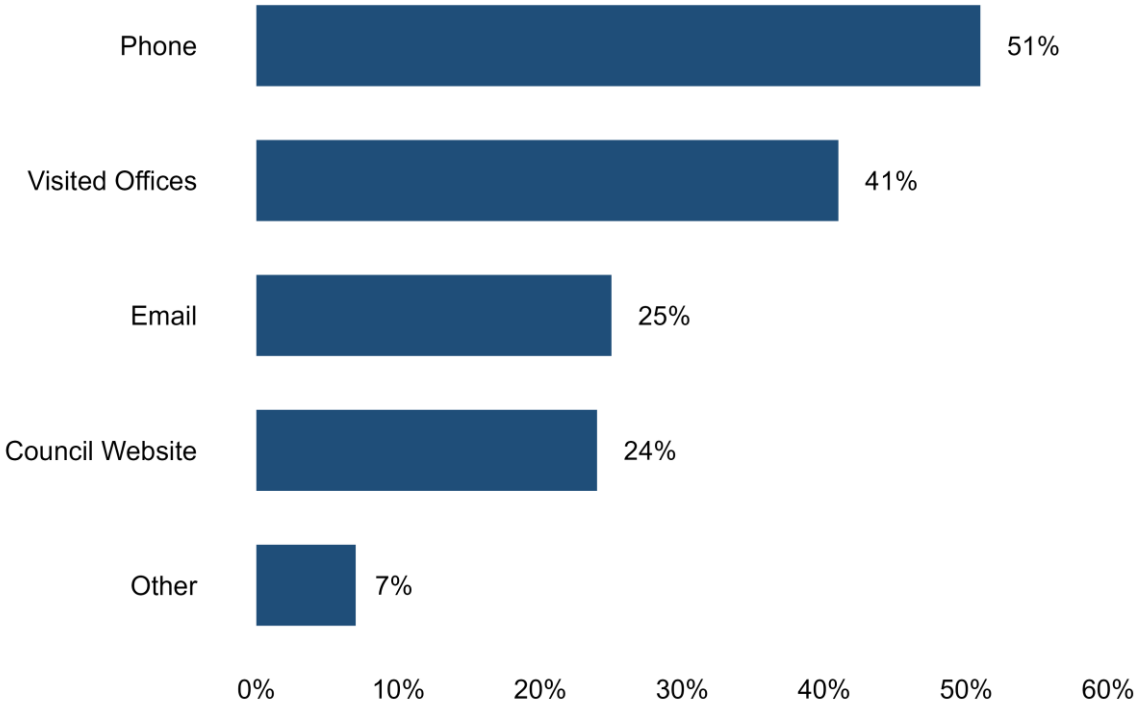

Figure 14: *Method of Council contact (n=411, multiple selections permitted)*

8.4 Contact Satisfaction

Satisfaction with Council contact experiences varied across five measures. Council staff professionalism and efficiency recorded the highest satisfaction at 68% (n=281). Resource Consent process showed 44% satisfaction, but this is based on only 9 responses and should not be treated as a reliable measure at this sample size.

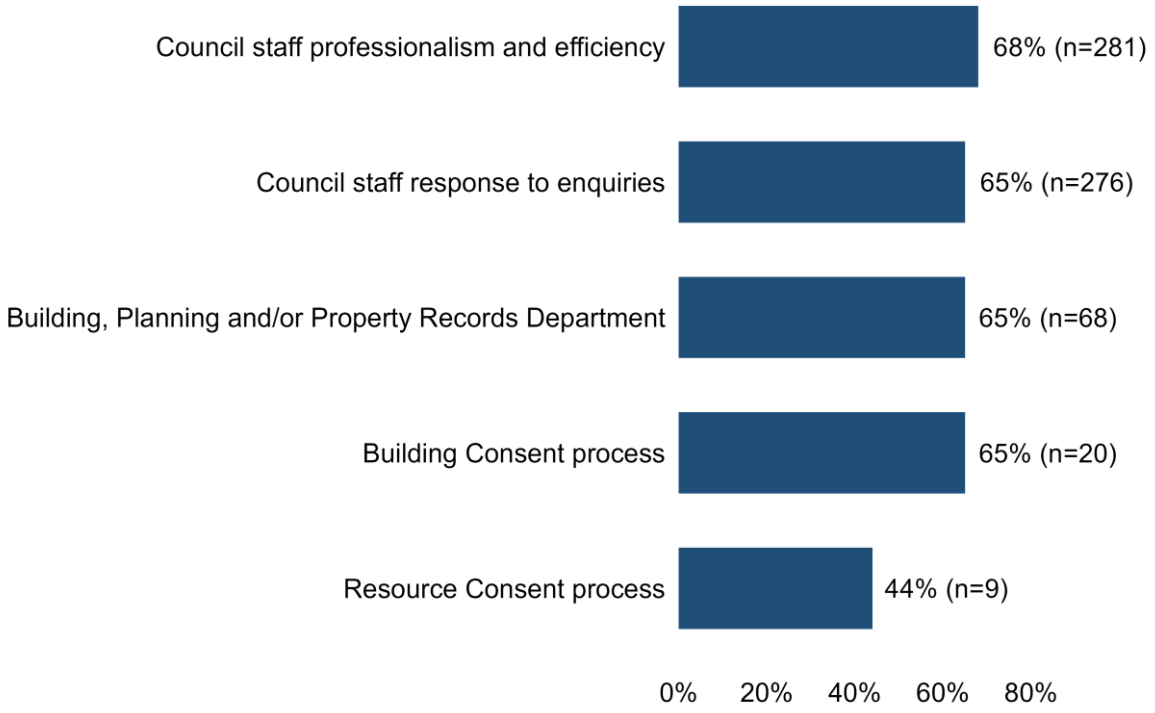

Figure 15: *Satisfaction with Council contact experiences*

8.5 Contact Satisfaction by Method and Type

Contact Satisfaction by Contact Method

Contact Method	Council staff professionalism and efficiency	Council staff response to enquiries	Building, Planning and/or Property Records Department	Building Consent process	Resource Consent process
Council Website	62% (n=65)	57% (n=65)	58% (n=19)	71% (n=7)	33% (n=3)
Phone	64% (n=142)	60% (n=140)	55% (n=40)	60% (n=15)	38% (n=8)
Email	56% (n=81)	54% (n=81)	61% (n=31)	80% (n=10)	75% (n=4)
Visited Offices	78% (n=109)	76% (n=106)	61% (n=31)	43% (n=7)	50% (n=6)
Other	52% (n=21)	43% (n=21)	0% (n=3)	100% (n=1)	-
Total	**68% (n=281)**	**65% (n=276)**	**65% (n=68)**	**65% (n=20)**	**44% (n=9)**

Note: Multiple contact methods allowed. Rows show satisfaction for all who used that method, including those who used other methods.

Table 21: Contact satisfaction by method of contact

Contact Satisfaction by Contact Type

Contact Type	Council staff professionalism and efficiency	Council staff response to enquiries	Building, Planning and/or Property Records Department	Building Consent process	Resource Consent process
Animal Services	50% (n=20)	55% (n=20)	100% (n=2)	100% (n=1)	-
Building Consent Information	65% (n=20)	60% (n=20)	50% (n=20)	54% (n=13)	25% (n=4)
Complaint Service Issue	57% (n=37)	57% (n=37)	56% (n=18)	20% (n=5)	33% (n=3)
Dog Registration	67% (n=45)	58% (n=45)	44% (n=16)	40% (n=5)	50% (n=6)
General Enquiry	69% (n=54)	66% (n=53)	72% (n=18)	60% (n=5)	100% (n=1)
Land Information Memorandum	90% (n=10)	90% (n=10)	80% (n=10)	0% (n=3)	33% (n=3)
Other Planning Information	50% (n=14)	50% (n=14)	50% (n=14)	50% (n=2)	100% (n=1)
Parks and Recreation	60% (n=25)	64% (n=25)	75% (n=4)	100% (n=1)	-
Property File Request	67% (n=27)	78% (n=27)	78% (n=27)	56% (n=9)	33% (n=3)
Rates Enquiry	79% (n=62)	82% (n=62)	77% (n=13)	67% (n=3)	100% (n=1)
Resource Consent Information	57% (n=7)	29% (n=7)	43% (n=7)	25% (n=4)	25% (n=4)
Road Infrastructure Issue	62% (n=40)	51% (n=39)	64% (n=14)	80% (n=5)	50% (n=2)

Contact Satisfaction by Contact Type					
Contact Type	**Council staff professionalism and efficiency**	**Council staff response to enquiries**	**Building, Planning and/or Property Records Department**	**Building Consent process**	**Resource Consent process**
Building Consent Application	59% (n=22)	68% (n=22)	71% (n=17)	60% (n=15)	0% (n=3)
Resource Consent Application	82% (n=17)	76% (n=17)	71% (n=7)	0% (n=3)	33% (n=3)
Waste Collection Issue	61% (n=18)	67% (n=18)	0% (n=2)	100% (n=1)	-
Other	71% (n=34)	67% (n=33)	100% (n=2)	-	-
Total	**68% (n=281)**	**65% (n=276)**	**65% (n=68)**	**65% (n=20)**	**44% (n=9)**

Note: Multiple contact types allowed. Rows show satisfaction for all who contacted about that topic, including those who also contacted about other topics.

Table 22: Contact satisfaction by reason for contact

8.6 Qualitative Feedback on Council Contact

Customer Service Staff

The dominant theme was strong appreciation for the friendliness, helpfulness, and professionalism of front-line customer service staff, with many praising counter and phone interactions as efficient, personable, and knowledgeable. Several comments highlighted specific positive experiences, including assistance with rates rebates, parking fine payments, driveway consent enquiries, and prompt email or same-day responses. A smaller number of comments pointed to unresolved issues or follow-up failures, such as not receiving a replacement waste bin, needing to contact Council multiple times to correct dog registration details, and frustration over a culvert maintenance issue and unnotified driveway works on private property. Overall, sentiment was heavily positive toward staff demeanour and competence, while the negative experiences tended to relate to back-end processes, resolution timelines, and communication gaps rather than the staff themselves.

Comments on Council Customer Service Staff	
Theme	**Frequency**
Customer Service	**236**
Support: Friendly and helpful staff	74
Concern: Inadequate follow-through or resolution	60
Support: Issue resolved quickly	37
Support: Knowledgeable and professional staff	20
Concern: Dog and animal control issues	18
Concern: Unhelpful or rude staff	10
Concern: Transferred between departments	9

Comments on Council Customer Service Staff	
Theme	**Frequency**
Support: Online and digital services	5
Concern: Parking enforcement complaints	3
Infrastructure Roading	**8**
Concern: Stormwater drainage and flooding	5
Concern: Contractor delays and rework	3
Council Governance Engagement	**4**
Concern: Lack of transparency and communication	4
Building Resource Consents	**3**
Concern: Unhelpful or rigid consent staff	3

n = 167 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 23: Comments regarding satisfaction with Council customer service staff

Building and Resource Consent Process

Views were mixed, with a notable split between those who praised the efficiency and professionalism of specific teams—particularly property file requests, LIM processing, and initial customer service staff—and those who expressed frustration with inconsistent building inspections, slow consent timelines, and limited or vague communication during the process. A recurring concern was that building and resource consent staff could be rigid in quoting rules rather than offering practical guidance, and that information provided was sometimes inconsistent or inaccurate across different interactions. Several positive comments highlighted prompt responses and pleasant staff, while criticisms also extended to ancillary issues such as storm water drainage charges for rural properties and a lack of public awareness around changing parking rules and bylaws.

Comments on building/resource consent process	
Theme	**Frequency**
Building Resource Consents	**19**
Support: Efficient consent process	8
Concern: Inconsistent inspections or information	4
Concern: Slow consent processing	3
Concern: Poor communication during consent process	2
Concern: Unhelpful or rigid consent staff	2
Customer Service	**7**
Support: Friendly and helpful staff	5
Concern: Inadequate follow-through or resolution	2

n = 20 respondents. Minimum threshold: 2 mentions.

Table 24: Comments regarding satisfaction with building and resource consent process

Other Reasons for Contact

A total of 31 respondents selected 'Other' as their reason for contacting Council.

Other Contact Reason	Frequency
As a contractor to the council	1
Bee card	1
Building WOF	1
I am a youth councillor	1
I requested a rebate on my rates as I'm a pensioner.	1
Infringement notices	1
New Total Mobility Card	1
Overdue rates	1
Parking	1
Parking for Disabled/Parking Permit holders, and do we still get the 30 minute conciliation as was	1
Parking ticket	1
Pay a $70 fine - I was a minute over time! I'd gone to the toilet at GWD's	1
Purchase of tickets for events at Civic theatre	1
Reported dumped rubbish on our road	1
Reporting someone living in a tent in softball fields in trees . Nothing has been done	1
Street sweeping as leaves blocked drains	1
To find out why our Lim report said we were on the public waste system but we are not and the	1
To get wheelie bin clips	1
Trees in neighbor's yard	1
Various submissions.	1
Voting form for glass bin etc	1
Water upgrade	1
Weed infestation on Myers reserve	1
Work matters - I work with some of the legends at ICC	1
Youth Council presentation to CWC.	1
buying event tickets	1
cemetery, complaint	1
information	1
parking ticket dispute	1
top up bee card. lower bus costs please	1
with councillor	1

Table 25: 'Other' reasons for contacting Council

9 Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces

This section presents findings from the parks-specific survey module introduced in Q3 2025/26. These questions were asked alongside the main residents' satisfaction survey to gather detailed feedback on playgrounds, play spaces, and related amenities. A total of 199 respondents provided playground satisfaction ratings, with additional respondents contributing to questions about playground visits, feature preferences, and alternative play spaces.

9.1 Playgrounds Visited

Respondents who indicated they had visited a playground in the past 12 months were asked which playgrounds they had used. Queens Park playground was the most visited at 79%, followed by Anderson Park (38%), Russell Square (26%), and Elizabeth Park (25%). A small number of respondents (7%) indicated they do not visit playgrounds.

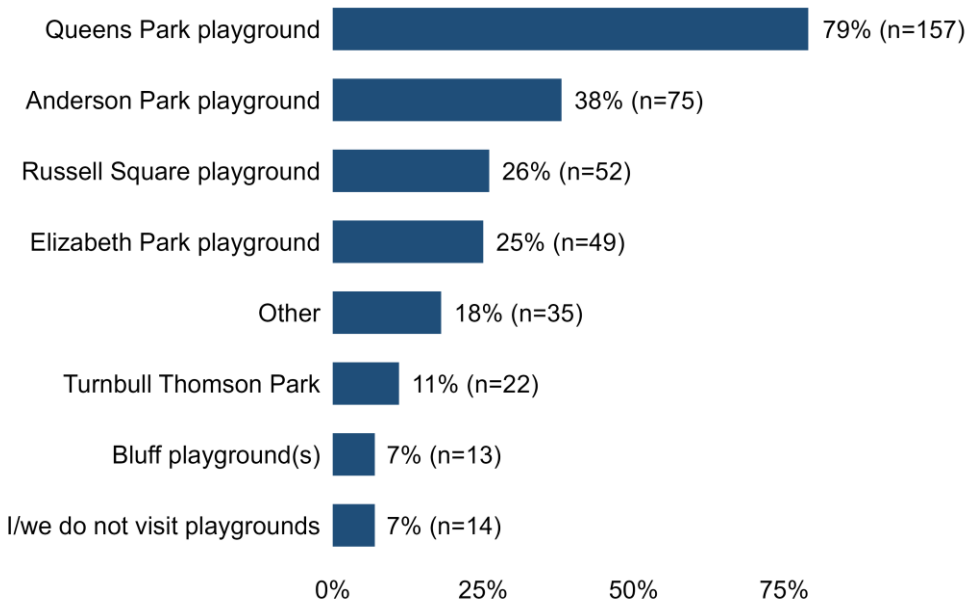

Figure 16: *Playgrounds visited in the past 12 months (multiple selections permitted)*

Option	Count	Percentage (%)
Queens Park playground	157	79
Anderson Park playground	75	38
Russell Square playground	52	26
Elizabeth Park playground	49	25
Other	35	18
Turnbull Thomson Park	22	11
Bluff playground(s)	13	7
I/we do not visit playgrounds	14	7

Table 26: Playgrounds visited in the past 12 months

9.2 Playground Age Groups

Respondents were asked about the age groups of children who use the playgrounds they visit. The 5-9 years age group was most commonly reported (41%), closely followed by under 5 years (38%). Children aged 10-14 were reported by 31% of respondents, and 15+ years by 21%.

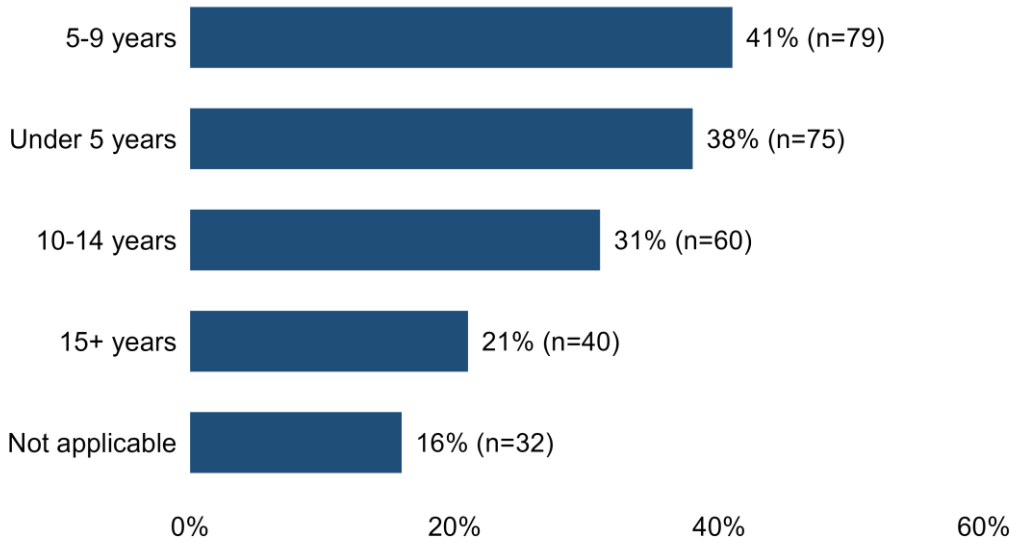

Figure 17: *Age groups of children using playgrounds (multiple selections permitted)*

Option	Count	Percentage (%)
5-9 years	79	41
Under 5 years	75	38
10-14 years	60	31
15+ years	40	21
Not applicable	32	16

Table 27: Age groups of children using playgrounds

9.3 Playground Satisfaction

Respondents rated their satisfaction across six aspects of playground provision. Safety recorded the highest satisfaction at 62% (n=170), followed by condition and maintenance at 51% (n=171) and range and variety of equipment at 50% (n=173). Satisfaction was lower for suitability for different age groups (48%), seating and shade for caregivers (36%), and accessibility for children with disabilities (34%). These results suggest that while basic safety standards are broadly met, there is scope for improvement in amenities and inclusivity.

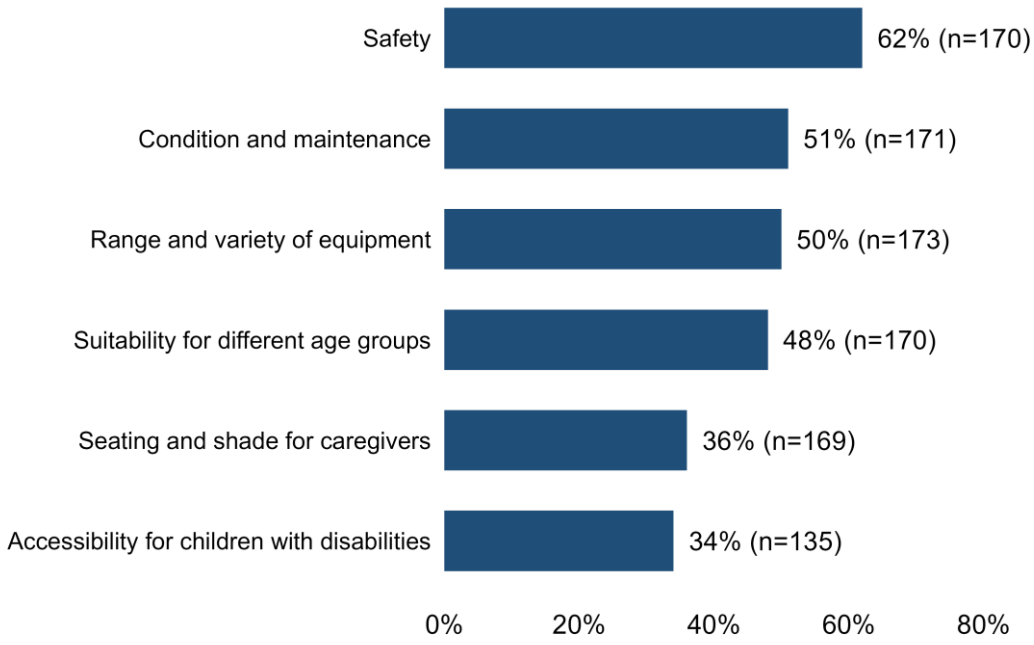

Figure 18: *Satisfaction with playground aspects*

Aspect	Valid Responses (n)	Satisfaction (%)
Safety	170	62
Condition and maintenance	171	51
Range and variety of equipment	173	50
Suitability for different age groups	170	48
Seating and shade for caregivers	169	36
Accessibility for children with disabilities	135	34

Table 28: Satisfaction with playground aspects

9.4 Playground Feature Preferences

Respondents ranked the features they consider most important in a playground. Equipment for a wider range of ages was the most preferred feature, followed by fencing around the playground and more seating and shade. Toilets nearby and inclusive or accessible equipment also ranked highly. Nature play elements ranked lowest among the nine options, though still attracted strong engagement with 105 respondents ranking it.

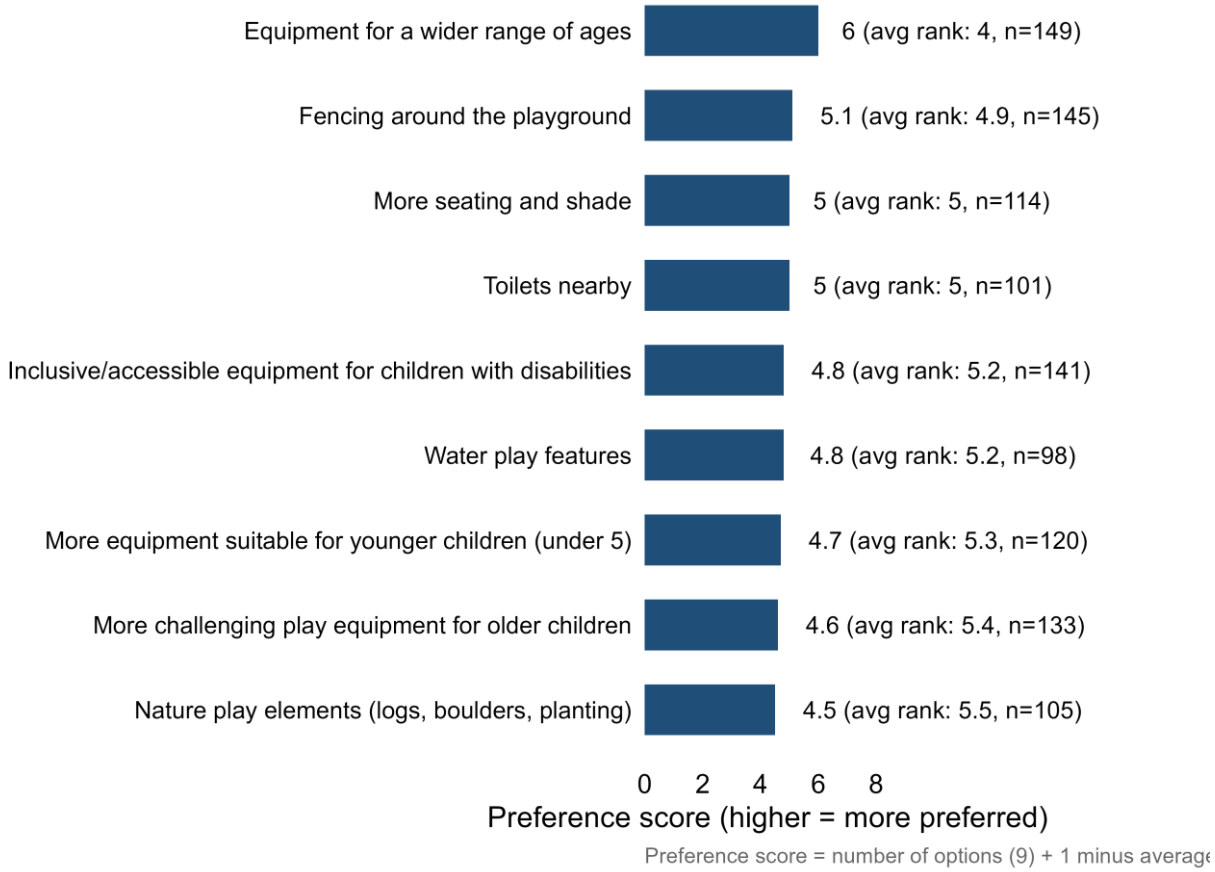

Figure 19: *Preferred playground features (ranked)*

Rank	Feature	Preference Score	Average Rank	Responses (n)
1	Equipment for a wider range of ages	6.0	4.0	149
2	Fencing around the playground	5.1	4.9	145
3	More seating and shade	5.0	5.0	114
4	Toilets nearby	5.0	5.0	101
5	Inclusive/accessible equipment for children with disabilities	4.8	5.2	141
6	Water play features	4.8	5.2	98
7	More equipment suitable for younger children (under 5)	4.7	5.3	120

Rank	Feature	Preference Score	Average Rank	Responses (n)
8	More challenging play equipment for older children	4.6	5.4	133
9	Nature play elements (logs, boulders, planting)	4.5	5.5	105

Preference score = number of options (9) + 1 minus average rank. A higher score indicates stronger preference.

Table 29: Playground feature preferences (ranked by importance)

9.5 Alternative Play Spaces

Respondents were asked about their level of support for Council investing in alternative play experiences beyond traditional playground equipment. Overall, 59% of respondents (n=288) were supportive or very supportive, with 23% neutral and 17% not supportive.

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Not at all supportive	24	8
Not supportive	27	9
Neutral	65	23
Supportive	99	34
Very supportive	73	25

Table 30: Support for alternative play spaces

Preferred Alternative Play Types

Among those who supported alternative play investment, interactive street furniture (musical and sensory elements) was the most preferred type, followed by nature play areas in parks. Outdoor fitness and exercise equipment ranked third. Pump tracks and wheeled play areas ranked lowest among the six options.

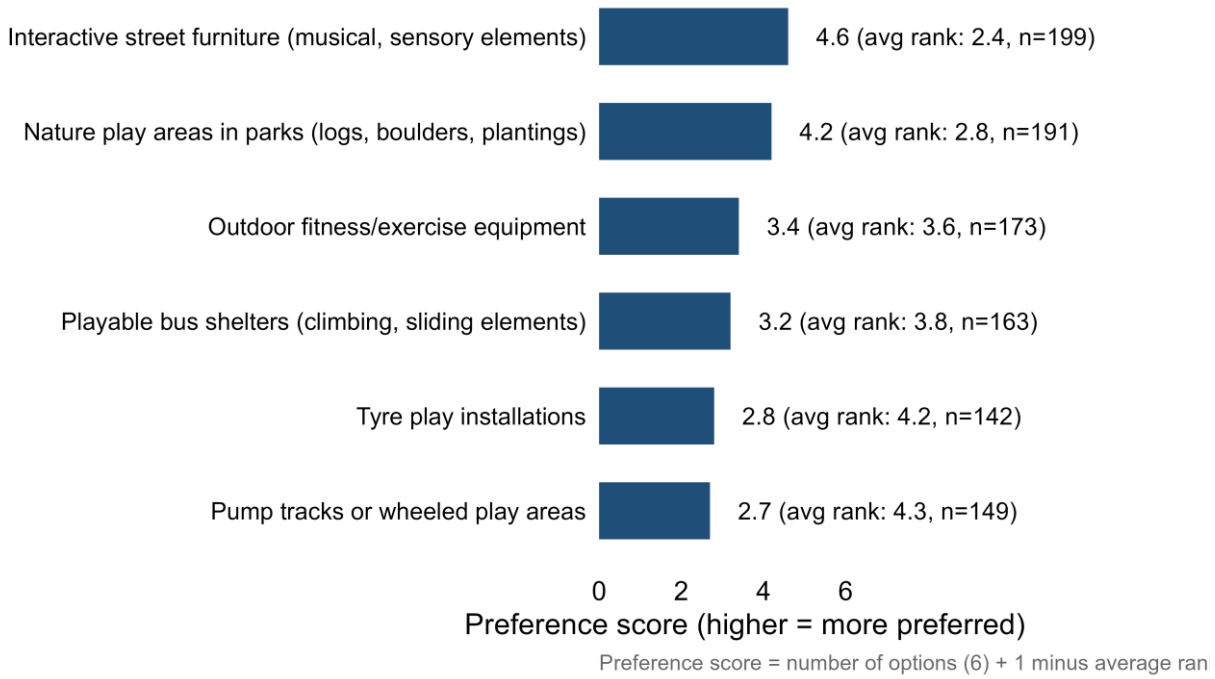

Figure 20: *Preferred alternative play types (ranked)*

Rank	Feature	Preference Score	Average Rank	Responses (n)
1	Interactive street furniture (musical, sensory elements)	4.6	2.4	199
2	Nature play areas in parks (logs, boulders, plantings)	4.2	2.8	191
3	Outdoor fitness/exercise equipment	3.4	3.6	173
4	Playable bus shelters (climbing, sliding elements)	3.2	3.8	163
5	Tyre play installations	2.8	4.2	142
6	Pump tracks or wheeled play areas	2.7	4.3	149

Preference score = number of options (6) + 1 minus average rank. A higher score indicates stronger preference.

Table 31: Preferred alternative play types (ranked)

Preferred Alternative Play Locations

Queens Park was the most preferred location for alternative play spaces, closely followed by neighbourhood reserves closer to where respondents live. Along walkways and cycleways and the town centre or CBD were also well supported. Near schools ranked lowest among the seven location options.

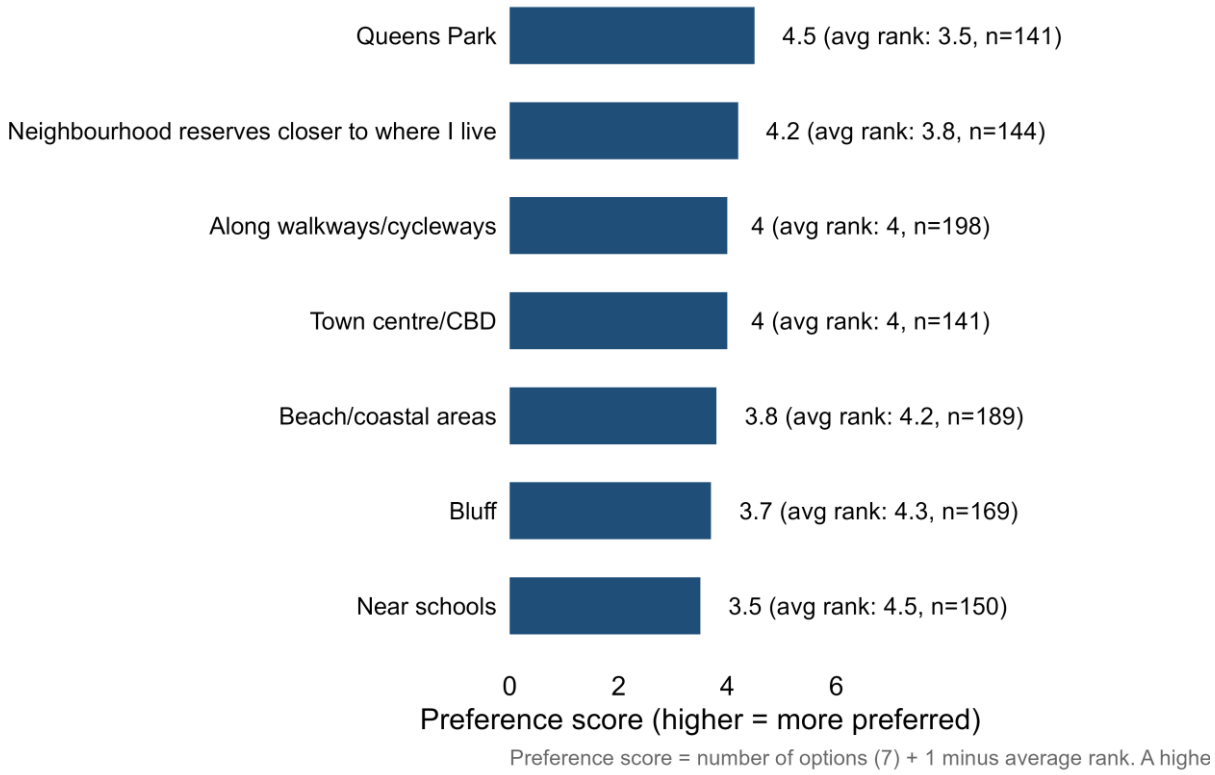

Figure 21: *Preferred locations for alternative play spaces (ranked)*

Rank	Feature	Preference Score	Average Rank	Responses (n)
1	Queens Park	4.5	3.5	141
2	Neighbourhood reserves closer to where I live	4.2	3.8	144
3	Along walkways/cycleways	4.0	4.0	198
4	Town centre/CBD	4.0	4.0	141
5	Beach/coastal areas	3.8	4.2	189
6	Bluff	3.7	4.3	169
7	Near schools	3.5	4.5	150

Preference score = number of options (7) + 1 minus average rank. A higher score indicates stronger preference.

Table 32: Preferred locations for alternative play spaces (ranked)

9.6 Qualitative Feedback on Playgrounds

Views were mixed, with many praising playgrounds as enjoyable and well-maintained spaces for children, while a notable number described equipment as outdated, broken, or in need of upgrading. Several suggestions pointed to expanding the range of facilities, including basketball hoops for teenagers, more inclusive play equipment, shade sails, fencing, and amenities like toilets and water fountains. Specific locations such as Queens Park, Waverley Park, and the Tweed Street playground were mentioned, along with a desire for more all-weather and age-diverse options. Overall, there is evident appreciation for existing green spaces but a clear call for modernisation and better amenities to increase usage and appeal.

Detailed Playground Experiences

Several specific issues emerged around the need for upgraded, more diverse, and age-appropriate equipment, with Queens Park singled out multiple times as outdated and falling short of its potential compared to playgrounds in other cities like Timaru and Christchurch. Practical amenities were a strong focus, particularly the lack of toilets at Elizabeth Park, insufficient shaded seating at multiple locations, and a desire for more fencing and safety improvements. Alongside these concerns, there was genuine appreciation for the number and maintenance of Invercargill's playgrounds, though many comments urged the council to transform basic play spaces into more inviting, multifunctional park environments with trees, picnic areas, natural play elements, and facilities catering to a wider range of ages including younger teens.

Comments on playgrounds

Theme	Frequency
Playgrounds	**123**
Support: Good variety of playgrounds	38
Concern: Equipment is functionally obsolete	29
Consider: More equipment for older children	11
Concern: Safety issues at playgrounds	8
Consider: More equipment for younger children	8
Consider: Shade and shelter at playgrounds	7
Consider: Toilets at playgrounds	7
Consider: Upgrade Queens Park playground	6
Consider: Fencing at playgrounds	5
Concern: Equipment needs cosmetic maintenance	4
Parks Recreation	**15**
Support: Parks are well maintained	11
Consider: More family and youth recreation	4

n = 120 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 33: Comments regarding satisfaction with playgrounds

Detailed playground experiences and suggestions

Theme	Frequency
Playgrounds	**120**
Concern: Equipment is functionally obsolete	15
Support: Good variety of playgrounds	14
Consider: More seating and picnic facilities	12
Consider: Shade and shelter at playgrounds	12
Concern: Safety issues at playgrounds	11
Consider: More equipment for older children	11
Consider: Inclusive and accessible play equipment	8
Consider: Fencing at playgrounds	7
Consider: Nature play elements	6
Consider: Upgrade Queens Park playground	6
Consider: Water play features	6
Consider: Toilets at playgrounds	5
Consider: More equipment for younger children	4
Consider: Pump tracks and wheeled recreation	3
Parks Recreation	**13**
Consider: More family and youth recreation	5
Support: Parks are well maintained	5
Concern: Parks maintenance declining	3

n = 84 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 34: Detailed playground experiences and suggestions

10 Cemeteries

This section presents findings from the cemeteries section of the parks-specific survey module introduced in Q3 2025/26. These questions gathered detailed feedback from residents who have visited Council cemeteries in the past 12 months.

10.1 Cemeteries Visited

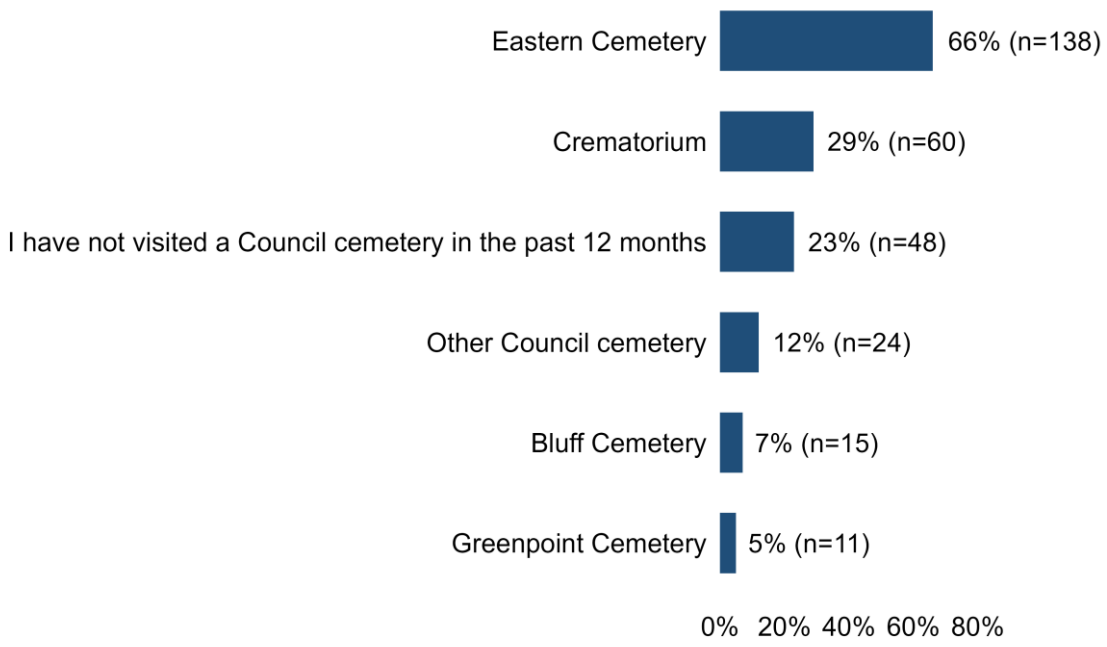

Figure 22: *Cemeteries visited in the past 12 months (n=208, multiple selections permitted)*

Cemetery	Count	Percentage (%)
Eastern Cemetery	138	66
Crematorium	60	29
I have not visited a Council cemetery in the past 12 months	48	23
Other Council cemetery	24	12
Bluff Cemetery	15	7
Greenpoint Cemetery	11	5

Table 35: Cemeteries visited in the past 12 months

10.2 Cemetery Satisfaction

Respondents rated their satisfaction across six aspects of cemetery provision.

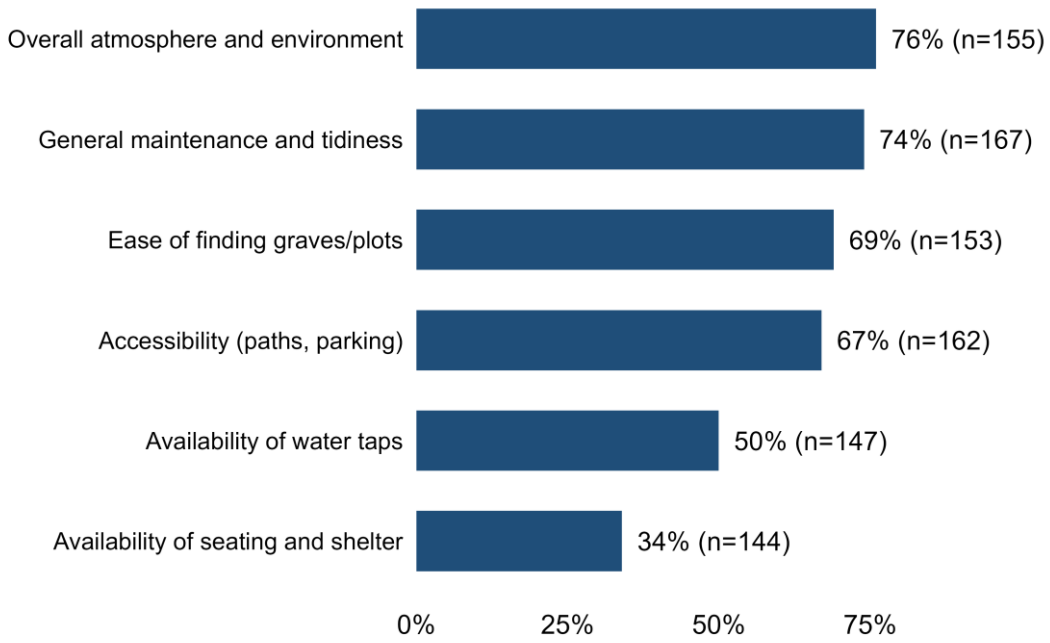

Figure 23: *Satisfaction with cemetery aspects*

Aspect	Valid Responses (n)	Satisfaction (%)
Overall atmosphere and environment	155	76
General maintenance and tidiness	167	74
Ease of finding graves/plots	153	69
Accessibility (paths, parking)	162	67
Availability of water taps	147	50
Availability of seating and shelter	144	34

Table 36: Satisfaction with cemetery aspects

10.3 Qualitative Feedback on Cemeteries

Views were mixed but leaned positive overall, with many comments praising cemeteries as well kept, clean, tidy, and beautifully presented — East Cemetery and the Crematorium receiving specific commendation for their park-like appearance and excellent staff. A notable cluster of concerns centred on maintenance issues including subsiding ground at family plots, lichen growth making gravestones unreadable, and specific sites like St Johns Cemetery and Winton Cemetery being seen as needing more attention. Safety and navigability were also raised, alongside a sense of sadness that historical graves are deteriorating beyond recognition for visiting families. A number of people had limited engagement with cemeteries and offered neutral or minimal feedback.

Detailed Cemetery Experiences

Views were mixed, with a number of comments praising the tidiness and maintenance of cemeteries—particularly the Eastern Cemetery and the Invercargill Cemetery and Crematorium—while others described specific sites as depressing or poorly kept, notably the Old Bluff Cemetery and Wallace Town Cemetery. Practical concerns centred on insufficient water access at grave sites, a lack of seating and shelter, overgrown trees and hedges along Rockdale Road, and the need for restoration of old and broken tombstones. A growing rabbit population and tree debris on graves were also raised as specific maintenance issues, suggesting that while core upkeep is generally adequate, attention to amenities and outlying or older cemetery areas is lacking.

Comments on cemeteries

Theme	Frequency
Cemeteries	**80**
Support: Well maintained and tidy	56
Concern: Grass and grounds maintenance	10
Concern: Old graves need attention	8
Concern: Rabbit and pest problems	3
Consider: Better water tap access	3

n = 94 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 37: Comments regarding satisfaction with cemeteries

Detailed cemetery experiences and suggestions

Theme	Frequency
Cemeteries	**32**
Support: Well maintained and tidy	13
Consider: More seating and shelter	6
Consider: Better water tap access	5
Concern: Grass and grounds maintenance	4
Concern: Old graves need attention	4

n = 40 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 38: Detailed cemetery experiences and suggestions

11 Trees and Tree Management

This section presents findings from the trees section of the parks-specific survey module introduced in Q3 2025/26. These questions gathered feedback on residents' satisfaction with Council's tree management and any tree-related issues experienced.

11.1 Tree Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with Council's management of trees across the district measured 59% (n=280, excluding 'Don't know' responses). The distribution showed 19% were very satisfied, 40% satisfied, 26% neutral, 10% dissatisfied, and 5% very dissatisfied.

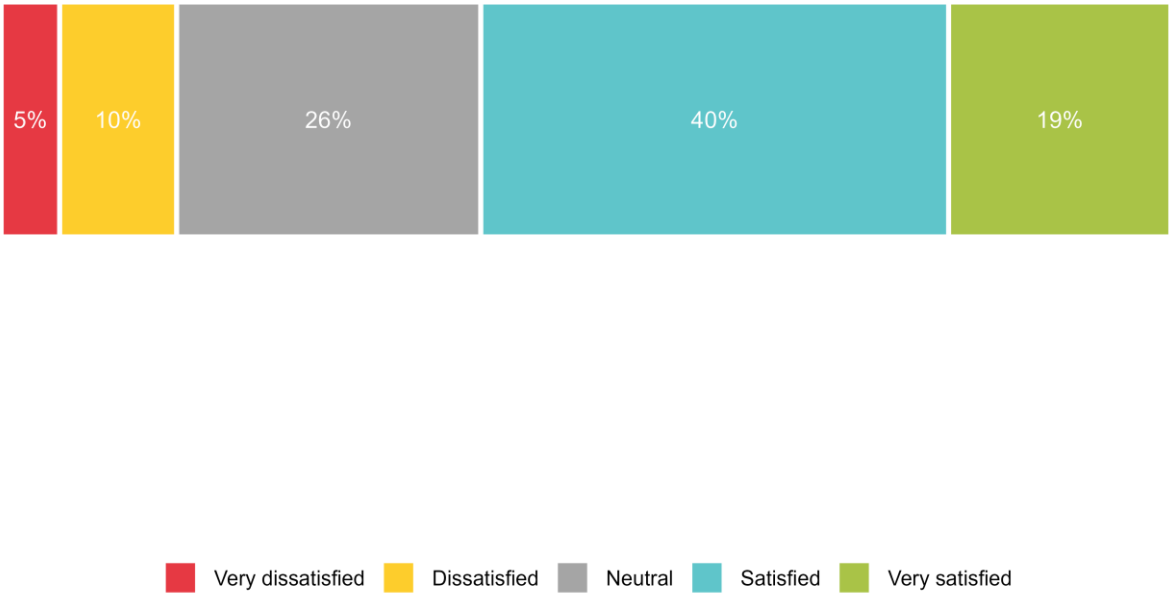

Figure 24: *Satisfaction with Council tree management (n=280, excluding Don't know)*

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Very dissatisfied	14	5
Dissatisfied	28	10
Neutral	74	26
Satisfied	111	40
Very satisfied	53	19

Table 39: Satisfaction with Council tree management (excluding Don't know)

11.2 Tree Issues Experienced

Among the 298 respondents who answered this question, the majority (61%) reported no tree-related issues. Of those who did experience issues, concerns about tree health or safety (13%) and roots damaging footpaths or property (13%) were the most common. Overhanging branches causing obstruction were reported by 11% of respondents. Other issues (9%) and removal of trees residents would have preferred to keep (7%) were also noted. Blocked views or light affected 4% of respondents.

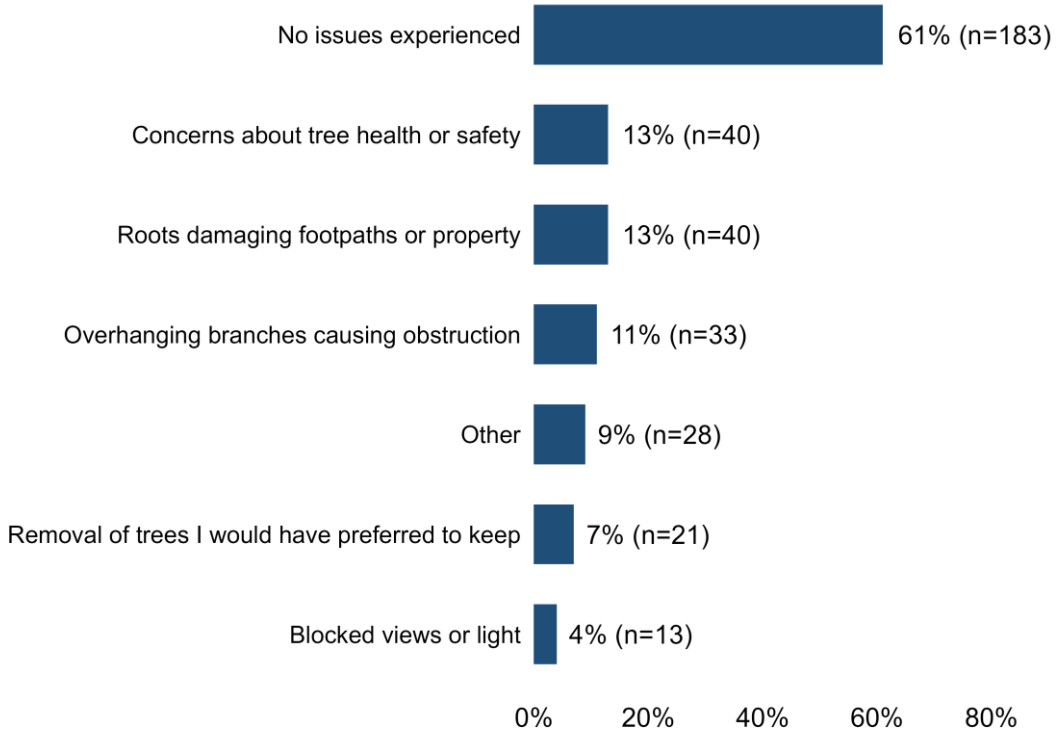

Figure 25: *Tree issues experienced by residents (n=298, multiple selections permitted)*

Issue	Count	Percentage (%)
No issues experienced	183	61
Concerns about tree health or safety	40	13
Roots damaging footpaths or property	40	13
Overhanging branches causing obstruction	33	11
Other	28	9
Removal of trees I would have preferred to keep	21	7
Blocked views or light	13	4

Table 40: Tree issues experienced by residents

11.3 Qualitative Feedback on Trees

The dominant theme was the impact of the October wind event and its aftermath, with views split between praise for the Council's storm response and frustration at the pace of tree removal and the perceived lack of long-term planning for ageing tree stock. Specific locations recurred, particularly the trees at the corner of Queens Drive and Don Street and along Elles Road opposite Mitre 10, which multiple people urged the Council to remove as hazards. Broader concerns included overgrown vegetation encroaching on footpaths and carriageways, tree roots damaging paths, forestry mismanagement at Sandy Point, and a desire to shift planting toward natives and ornamental species rather than conifers. Positive comments acknowledged strong communication from the Parks division, the community firewood initiative, and the quality of ongoing tree maintenance in Queens Park.

Comments on trees and tree management	
Theme	**Frequency**
Trees Tree Management	**104**
Support: Good storm response	17
Concern: Dangerous trees not addressed	16
Support: Trees well managed overall	12
Concern: Excessive tree removal	11
Concern: Overhanging trees and hedges on footpaths	11
Consider: Remove specific dangerous trees	9
Consider: Better tree replacement planning	8
Concern: Tree roots damaging footpaths	6
Consider: Plant more trees	6
Concern: Storm debris still not cleared	4
Consider: Address pest plants	4

n = 95 respondents. Minimum threshold: 3 mentions.

Table 41: Comments regarding satisfaction with trees and tree management