



**OTAGO
REGIONAL
COUNCIL
COMMUNITY
SURVEY
2026**

versus

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Otago Regional Council (the Council) commissioned the 2026 Community Survey to assess public perceptions of its service delivery, brand reputation, environmental priorities, and communications. The survey results are used to help inform future planning and strategies.

The 2026 survey used a revised approach to data collection to improve regional reach and cost efficiency of the project. A total of 14300 residents were selected from the electoral roll and invited to participate in the survey via postal invitation. This approach was supported by a targeted social media campaign to encourage broader demographic representation.

A total of 2302 responses were received across the data collection approaches: 68% were from the postal invitation, and 32% were from the social media campaign. The responses were stratified to a final dataset of 1700 responses, which better reflects regional age and gender distributions.

Activity awareness and delivery

Awareness of the Council's activities has remained high, with strong recognition of the Council's environmental management and public transport roles. Since 2023, respondents' awareness of the Council's involvement in consent processes, risk reduction initiatives, navigational safety roles, and climate change adaptation has increased.

Perceptions of the Council's delivery of its activities were generally positive, with high levels of excellent responses reported for public transport, harbour safety, port ownership, and river management. However, perceptions of technical or regulatory functions, such as consents, land information, or rules for sustainable resource use, received slightly lower ratings.

Service use and satisfaction

Use of the Council's services has remained consistent this year, and users' satisfaction ratings for public transport, the Council's website, and rule enquiries were similar to 2023. However, there has been a slight decline in users' satisfaction with resource consent processes and the Pollution Hotline response.

Brand perceptions and overall satisfaction with the Council

Brand perceptions remained similar to the previous monitoring period, although most measures have improved since the initial 2021 survey. The proportion of respondents who strongly agree they trust the content the Council provides has increased this year, reaching its highest level since monitoring began. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who were unsure how to respond has increased for all brand measures this year.

Around one-third of respondents were very satisfied with how the Council delivers its services, and perceptions of local and regional delivery were closely linked. Respondents from districts with larger rural populations tended to have slightly lower brand perceptions, while urban respondents reported higher ratings.

Environmental priorities

Environmental priorities among respondents included water quality, freshwater supply, air quality, growth management, and natural resource preservation. However, nearly one-quarter of respondents believed all environmental areas should be addressed in the future. Some respondents also cited explicit local environmental concerns, specifically those in Dunedin City (air quality, thriving ecosystems, and community resilience), Queenstown Lakes District (tourism growth and population pressures), Clutha District (pest management), and Waitaki District (water supply).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Respondents generally agreed that both the Council and communities have a role to play in achieving environmental outcomes and that there was a shared responsibility for the environment. Respondents' feedback suggests that ideally the Council provides leadership and regional guidance while supporting communities with strong engagement, elevation of local views and experiences, and transparency in funding.

Communications

Measures of the Council's communications have improved this year, particularly regarding accessibility and trust in information. Dunedin respondents rated the Council's communications most positively, likely reflecting the impact of a more significant physical presence in their area.

The communications environment in which the Council operates continues to evolve. Media use has become increasingly fragmented by age, with younger respondents preferring digital channels and older respondents favouring print and traditional media.

Considerations for future planning

Based on the findings from the Community Survey, the Council could consider the following points:

- Continue delivering content about localised impact and successful community partnerships.
- Continue utilising and expanding the mix of communications channels to account for increasing fragmentation.
- Consider strengthening communications about the Council's long-term role in protecting the region's environment.
- Address the relationship between perceptions of value for money and satisfaction ratings.
- Investigate perceptions of service delivery against actual programme delivery in areas where awareness is high, but satisfaction is lower.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CONTENTS	4
PROJECT OVERVIEW	5
PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL	8
THE OTAGO ENVIRONMENT	28
OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS	40
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	50
APPENDIX	54



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Otago Regional Council (the Council) is the local authority responsible for managing and monitoring the natural resources in the Otago region. It is also responsible for delivering region-based outcomes to different communities.

As part of its ongoing commitment to meeting communities' expectations, the Council undertakes its Community Survey of residents in the Otago region. The Community Survey aims to provide the Council with an understanding of:

- How the community perceives the Council in terms of service delivery and reputation
- What matters to the community and how the Council has delivered on these issues
- How the community wants to engage with the Council

The Community Survey informs the Council's action plan to address any themes that are identified in the findings and provides data to support regional plans and strategies, such as the Long-Term Plan.

This year's survey builds on previous monitoring undertaken in 2021, 2022, and 2023. This year, the Community Survey was undertaken using a post-to-online approach. Residents were selected from the electoral roll and were sent an invitation letter requesting their participation in the survey. The post-to-online approach was supported by targeted social media promotion to encourage broader participation across the region.

A total of 2302 responses were received across the post-to-online and social media approaches. The final dataset was stratified to 1700 responses to reflect regional age and gender distributions.

When reviewing the content in this report, readers should refer to the technical notes included in the appendix.

SAMPLE PROFILE

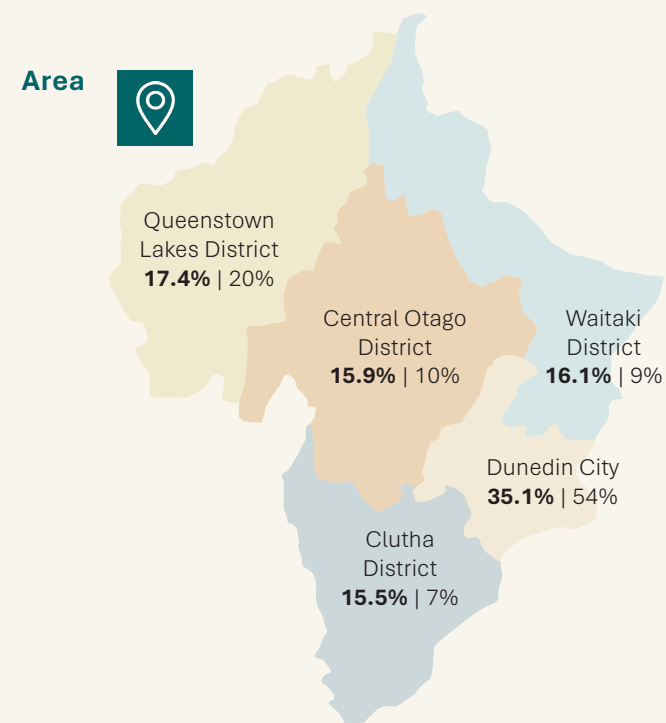
The demographic profile of the sample has been shown below and is compared with the 2023 Census proportions for the Otago region where possible. The figures below reflect the proportions achieved before weights were applied to the sample. Readers should be aware that area proportions were intentionally designed to ensure wider coverage of the region, rather than to be proportional to the population.

	2026 Sample	2023 Census
Age		
Under 19	1.3%	7.5%
20—34	22.7%	26.6%
35—49	24.5%	22.1%
50—64	24.4%	22.4%
65+	27.1%	21.4%
Gender		
Male	48.7%	49.0%
Female	49.9%	50.5%
Gender diverse	1.4%	0.5%
Ethnicity*		
European/ New Zealander	86.1%	77.6%
Māori	5.9%	9.1%
Pacific Islander	0.9%	2.6%
Asian	4.1%	8.5%
Other	5.2%	12.9%

* Response variables within the survey differ slightly from Census categories.

	2026 Sample
Employment	
Full-time paid work	42.7%
Part-time paid work	10.6%
Part-time self-employed / contractor	3.1%
Full-time self-employed / contractor	7.0%
Caring for children (unpaid)	2.0%
Volunteer work	1.8%
Not currently in paid employment	3.5%
Student	3.9%
Retired	20.8%
Other	3.1%
Prefer not to say	1.5%

	2026 Sample
Ratepayer	
Ratepayer	75.6%
Non-ratepayer	19.2%
Prefer not to say	5.2%



PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Awareness of the Council's role continues to revolve around environmental and water-related activities. Respondents generally hold positive views of the activity delivery, although planning, regulatory, and policy-related activities had lower awareness and more neutral ratings.

Use of the Council's services has remained similar to prior monitoring, with most services achieving solid satisfaction ratings.

Brand perceptions and overall satisfaction with the Council remain similar to previous monitoring. However, concerns about awareness and visibility of the Council, value for money, and organisational legitimacy were evident among some respondents.



ACTIVITIES

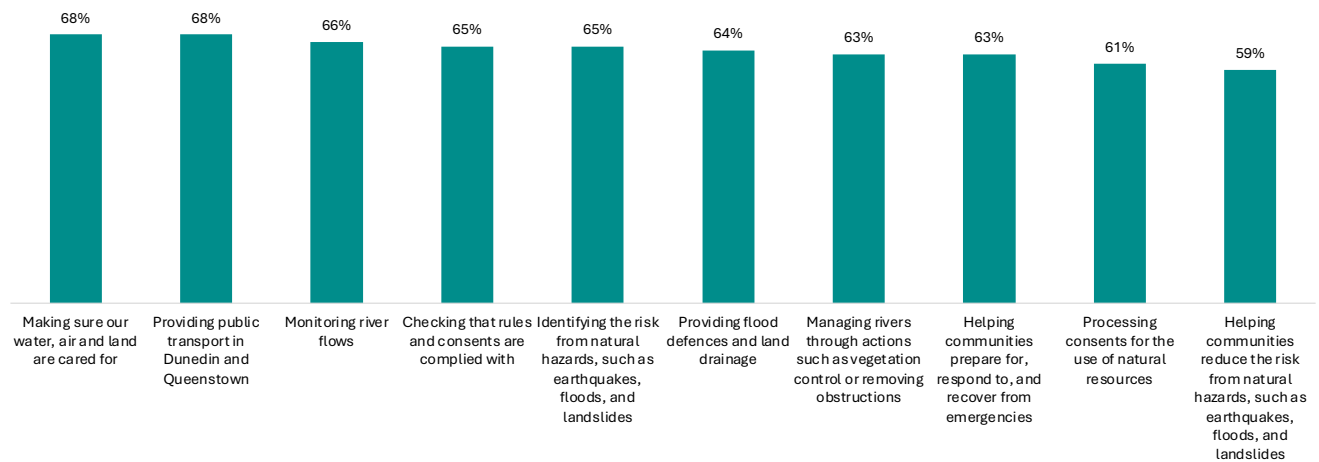
ACTIVITY AWARENESS

Respondents were presented with a list of activities the Council undertakes and asked which ones they were aware of. The main activities respondents were aware of were caring for the environment and providing public transport. This was closely followed by river monitoring, checking consent rules, identifying risks, and flood defence. The top ten activities respondents were aware of have been shown in the first chart, with most activities registering over 60% awareness.

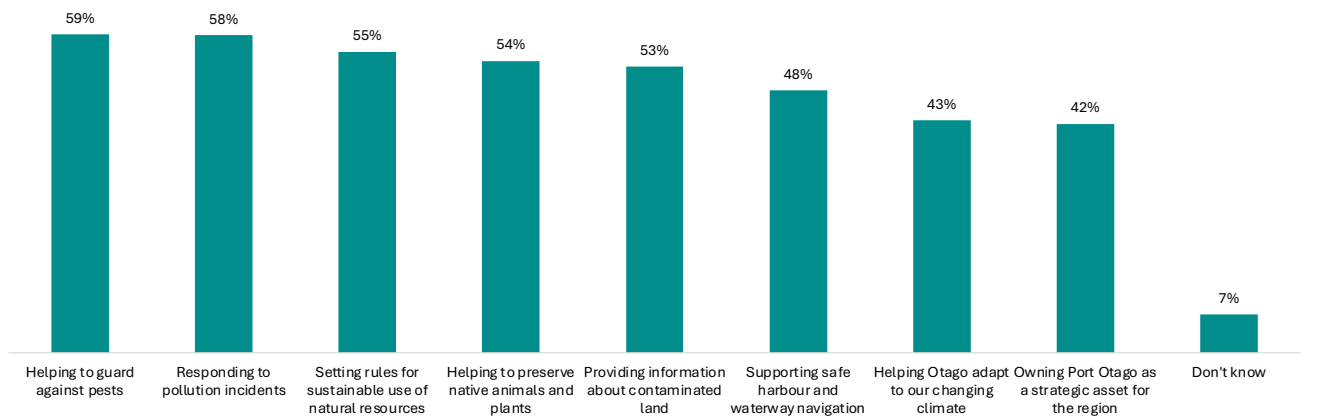
Among the remaining areas, pest management, pollution response, rule management, native preservation, supporting harbour navigation, and climate change adaptation were the activities respondents were most aware of. Only 7% of respondents were unaware that the Council undertook any of the stated activities.

Awareness appeared to be directly correlated with age, with those over 65 significantly more likely to be aware of nearly all activities. Male respondents were also aware of a greater number of services than female respondents.

Awareness of Otago Regional Council's activities (top ten)



Awareness of Otago Regional Council's activities (all others)



ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY AWARENESS

PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

The table to the right shows a year-on-year comparison in respondents' awareness of the Council's activities. The list of activities respondents were presented in the 2026 Community Survey was amended from previous monitoring in order to better reflect the activities the Council undertakes. The text in brackets references the wording used in prior surveys.

Areas with significant increases in awareness included issuing consents, reducing risks from natural hazards, climate change adaptation, and navigational safety. Awareness of flood protection work has declined significantly since 2023.

Awareness of Otago Regional Council's activities: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
Net water responses** (Water quality monitoring)	82%	79%	81%	83%
Providing flood defences and land drainage (Flood protection infrastructure)	69%	70%	68%	64%-
Providing public transport in Dunedin and Queenstown (Public transport)	61%	64%	66%	68%
Helping to guard against pests (Biodiversity and pest management)	60%	57%	62%	59%
Helping communities reduce the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides (Civil defence and emergency management)	54%	53%	58%	59%
Responding to pollution incidents (Pollution response)	53%	53%	56%	58%
Processing consents for the use of natural resources (Issuing resource consents)	52%	50%	54%	61%+
Setting rules for sustainable use of natural resources (Developing plans and policies)	54%	52%	53%	55%
Identifying the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides (Reducing risks from natural hazards)	44%	47%	49%	65%+
Helping Otago adapt to our changing climate (Climate change adaptation)	32%	34%	35%	43%+
Supporting safe harbour and waterway navigation (Navigational safety)	15%	17%	19%	48%+
Don't know	6%	6%	8%	7%

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. Text in brackets denotes phrasing prior to 2026.

**Net across monitoring river flows, making sure water, air, and land are cared for, and managing rivers through actions such as vegetation control or removing obstructions.

ACTIVITIES

DISTRICT PROFILES: ACTIVITY AWARENESS AND PERCEIVED DELIVERY

There were some localised differences across the region in respondents' awareness of the Council's activities. Respondents in Dunedin City were more likely to be aware the Council was responsible for flood defence, public transport, and ownership of Port Otago. In Clutha District, respondents had higher awareness of activities related to river flows and flood defence and Central Otago respondents were more aware of the Council's role in pest management.

Awareness of activities: district comparisons*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Monitoring river flows	70%	77% +	63%	68%	67%
Making sure our water, air and land are cared for	72%	70%	69%	65%	70%
Managing rivers through actions such as vegetation control or removing obstructions	69%	68%	62%	61%	66%
Checking that rules and consents are complied with	70%	71%	63%	66%	65%
Identifying the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	65%	68%	67%	61%	60%
Providing flood defences and land drainage	61%	72% +	67% +	55% -	58%
Helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies	63%	64%	64%	61%	60%
Providing public transport in Dunedin and Queenstown	55% -	51% -	74% +	71%	53% -
Responding to pollution incidents	66%	61%	58%	56%	57%
Processing consents for the use of natural resources	65%	60%	60%	61%	59%
Helping to guard against pests	68% +	58%	58%	56%	58%
Helping communities reduce the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	56%	63%	60%	58%	56%
Setting rules for sustainable use of natural resources	62%	54%	55%	52%	56%
Providing information about contaminated land	58%	50%	54%	49%	49%
Helping to preserve native animals and plants	57%	48%	55%	52%	49%
Supporting safe harbour and waterway navigation	53%	41%	51%	43%	45%
Owning Port Otago as a strategic asset for the region	45%	41%	48%+	29% -	36%
Helping Otago adapt to our changing climate	45%	43%	46%	34% -	40%
Don't know	9%	6%	6%	7%	10%

Otago Regional Council is the regional government authority that is responsible for the management of natural resources, transport, and civil defence across the Otago region, including those in Waitaki, Queenstown Lakes, Dunedin, Clutha, and Central Otago districts. Thinking about the work Otago Regional Council might do, please tick all of the areas you are aware they are involved in. Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.

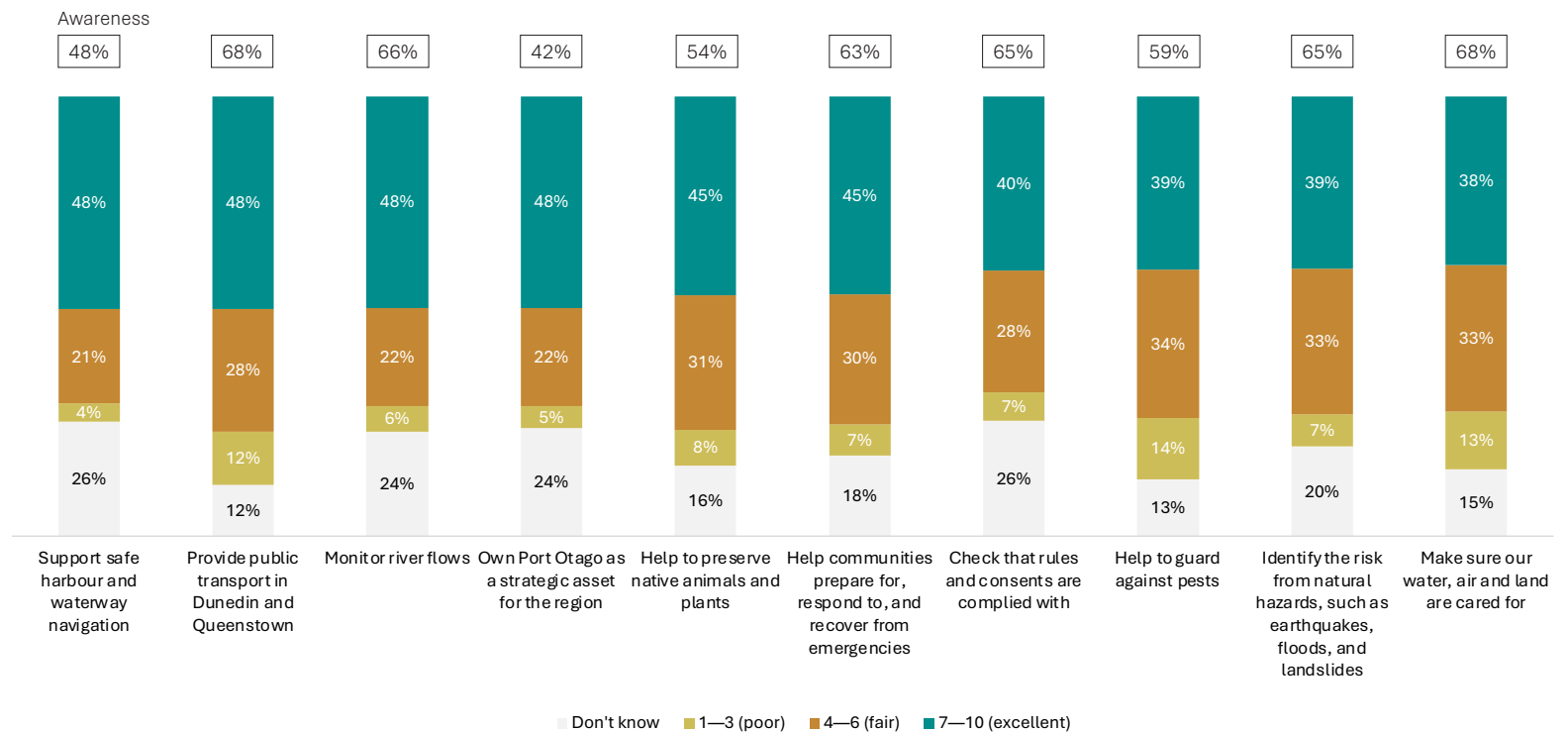
ACTIVITIES

PERCEIVED DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES

Respondents who were aware of a given activity were asked to rate the Council's delivery of that activity. This question was not asked in previous iterations of the Community Survey.

The services with the highest ratings were harbour and waterway navigation, public transport, monitoring river flows, and port ownership, all of which have an excellent rating of 48%. This was followed by helping communities prepare and respond to emergencies and preserving native animals and plants, then by checking consent rules, helping guard against pests, hazard identification, and caring for the natural environment. All activities had relatively low proportions of poor ratings.

Otago Regional Council delivery of activities (top ten)



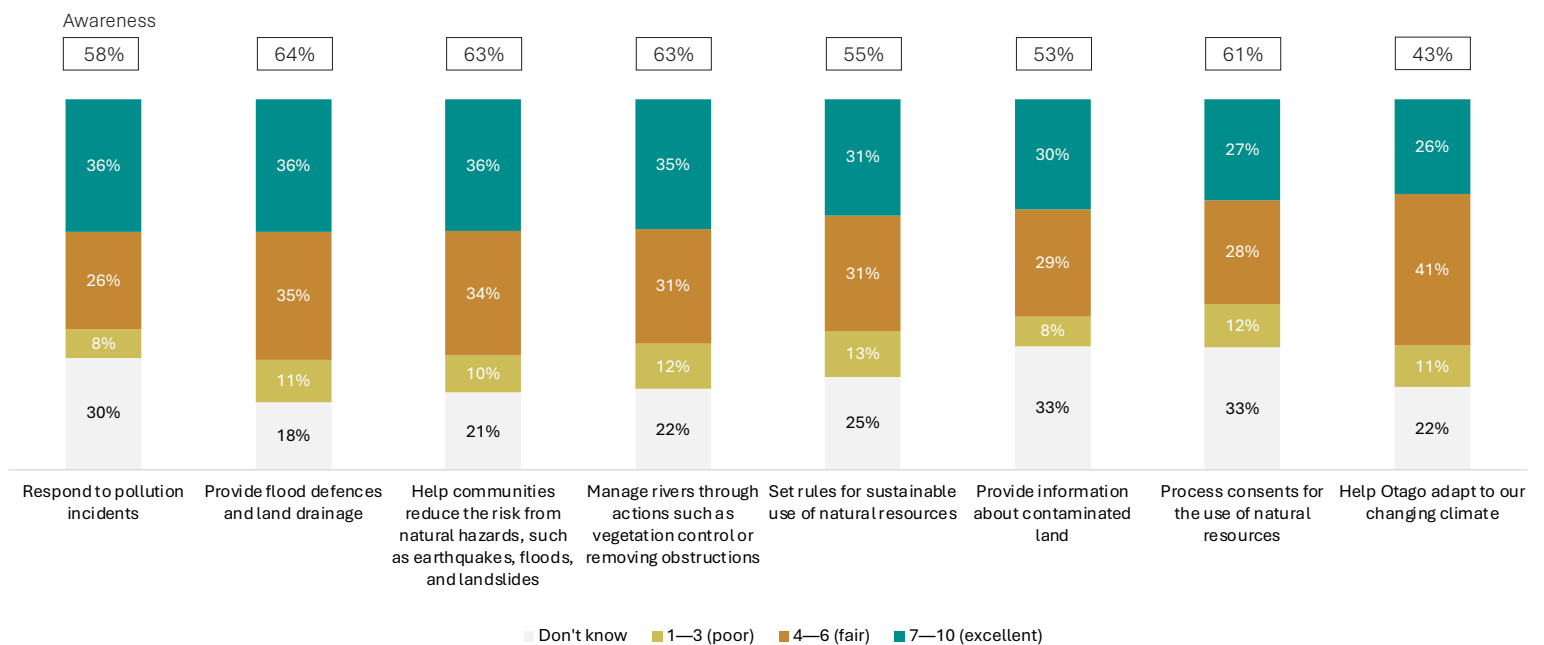
On a scale of 1 — 10, how well do you think Otago Regional Council does each of the following? Base those aware of the service: safe harbours n=812, public transport n=1088, monitoring rivers n=1167, owning Port Otago n=715, preserving native animals and plants n=900, preparing communities n=1068, checking rules and consent compliance n=1132, helping guard against pests n=1010, identifying risks n=1102, caring for air, water, and land n=1779.

ACTIVITIES

PERCEIVED DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES

Services with slightly lower proportion of excellent ratings included pollution response, flood defences, hazard risk reduction, river management, rules for sustainable resource use, information provision, consent processing, and climate change adaptation. However, the proportion of poor ratings for these services was again very low, and these activities had a relatively large proportion of ‘don’t know’ responses.

Otago Regional Council’s delivery of activities (all others)



On a scale of 1 — 10, how well do you think Otago Regional Council does each of the following? Base those aware of the service: responding to pollution incidence n=1013, flood defence n=1082, reducing risk for communities n=1002, managing rivers n=1107, setting rules n=951, providing information n=892, processing consents n=1039, adapting to climate change n=725.

ACTIVITIES

DISTRICT PROFILES: ACTIVITY AWARENESS AND PERCEIVED DELIVERY

District comparisons of service delivery showed that respondents in Dunedin City were more likely to rate services highly than those elsewhere. These respondents rated harbour safety, public transport, Port Otago provision, supporting communities to prepare for emergencies, pest reduction, and river management higher than in other areas. Other districts' ratings showed lower proportions of excellent ratings across localised issues. Respondents from Queenstown Lakes District reported lower ratings for harbour and waterway safety and port ownership. By comparison, respondents from Central Otago District or Clutha District reported lower ratings for public transport provision, with Central Otago District also reporting lower ratings for pest and river management.

Otago Regional Council's delivery of activities: district comparison ratings (7—10 excellent ratings only)*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Support safe harbour and waterway navigation	37%	42%	55% +	36% -	47%
Provide public transport in Dunedin and Queenstown	31% -	30% -	56% +	42%	39%
Monitor river flows	48%	52%	48%	47%	48%
Own Port Otago as a strategic asset for the region	48%	45%	53% +	25% -	50%
Help to preserve native animals and plants	37%	39%	49%	41%	44%
Help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies	36%	41%	50% +	37%	46%
Check that rules and consents are complied with	37%	35%	42%	33%	43%
Help to guard against pests	24% -	28%	47% +	30%	41%
Identify the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	34%	34%	41%	39%	36%
Make sure our water, air and land are cared for	36%	36%	42%	30%	40%
Respond to pollution incidents	34%	37%	38%	30%	39%
Provide flood defences and land drainage	35%	37%	38%	30%	30%
Help communities reduce the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	30%	39%	38%	29%	38%
Manage rivers through actions such as vegetation control or removing obstructions	25% -	31%	40% +	32%	32%
Set rules for the sustainable use of natural resources	29%	30%	35%	23%	35%
Provide information about contaminated land	29%	27%	33%	22%	28%
Process consents for the use of natural resources	26%	24%	29%	23%	29%
Help Otago adapt to our changing climate	26%	24%	25%	24%	31%

On a scale of 1 — 10, how well do you think Otago Regional Council does each of the following? Base those aware of service n=27—n=188.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.

SERVICES

SERVICE USE

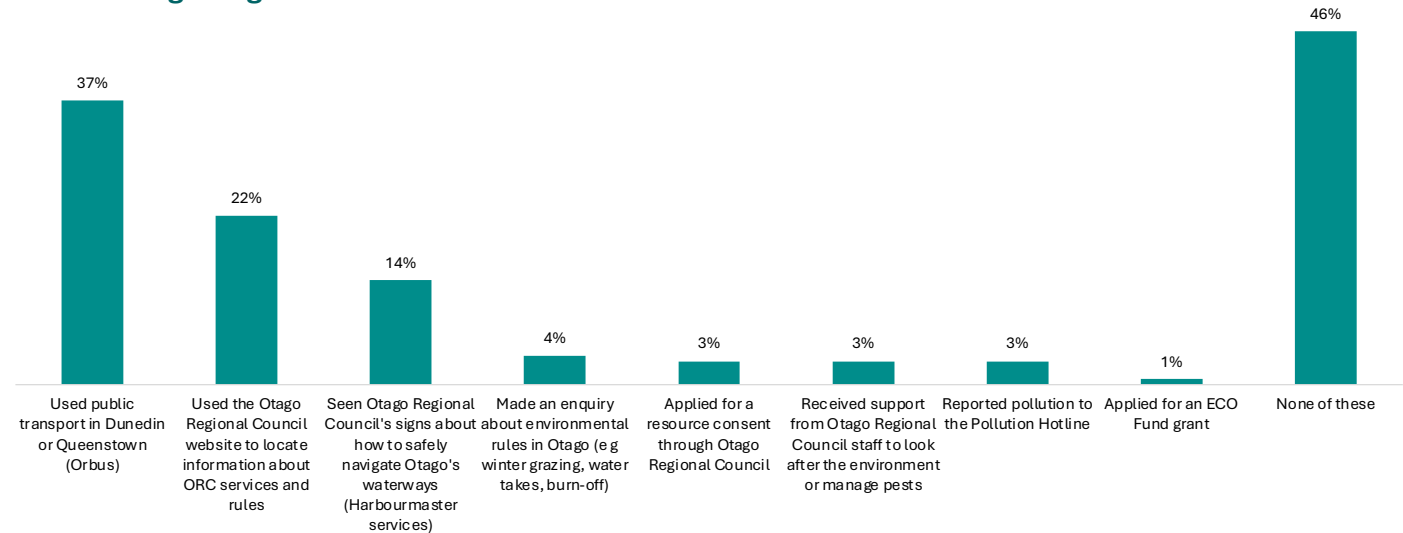
PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Respondents were asked about their use and perceptions of the Council's services. Public transport has been the most used service in the past 12 months. Twenty-two per cent of respondents accessed the Council's website, and 14% saw signs about navigational safety. All other services were used by fewer than 5% of respondents, and 46% had not used any of the Council's services in the past 12 months.

Female respondents and those under 50 were more likely to have used public transport. Respondents over 50 were less likely to have used any of the Council's services in the past 12 months.

With regard to year-on-year comparisons, public transport continued to be the most used service, while the use of most other services remained consistent with previous years. However, there has been a slight decline in the proportion of respondents who enquired about rules or who applied for a resource consent.

Use of Otago Regional Council's services*



Use of Otago Regional Council's services: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
Used the bus service in Dunedin or Queenstown (Orbus)	31%	32%	36%	37%
Used the Otago Regional Council website to locate information about ORC services and rules		22%	23%	22%
Made an enquiry about environmental rules in Otago (e.g., winter grazing, water takes, burn-off)	8%	5%	7%	4%-
Applied for a resource consent through the Otago Regional Council	4%	4%	5%	3%-
Reported pollution to the Pollution Hotline	3%	3%	3%	3%
None	61%	53%	48%	46%

Otago Regional Council delivers a range of activities and services. In the past 12 months, have you? Base all respondents n=1700.

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. Statements relating to seeing signs, getting support from staff, and applying for an ECO Fund grant were new in 2026.

SERVICES

DISTRICT PROFILES: SERVICE PROVISION AND USER SATISFACTION

The following tables present the use of the Council’s services and the subsequent ratings of service delivery across different districts. Generally, respondents from Dunedin City were more likely to use public transport than other respondents, particularly those in rural areas. By comparison, respondents from Central Otago were more likely to have applied for a resource consent or to have received support from the Council’s staff on how to look after the environment or manage pests. Queenstown Lakes District respondents were more likely to have used the harbourmaster’s services than other respondents.

Use of Otago Regional Council’s services: district comparison*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Used public transport in Dunedin or Queenstown (Orbus)	9% -	7% -	50% +	41%	5% -
Used the Otago Regional Council website to locate information about ORC services and rules	20%	18%	24%	23%	16%
Seen Otago Regional Council's signs about how to navigate Otago's waterways (Harbourmaster services) safely	17%	8%	12%	20% +	9%
Enquired about environmental rules in Otago (e.g., winter grazing, water takes, burn-off)	6%	5%	3%	4%	6%
Applied for a resource consent through the Otago Regional Council	7% +	2%	2% -	5%	4%
Received support from Otago Regional Council staff to look after the environment or manage pests	6% +	3%	3%	2%	3%
Reported pollution to the Pollution Hotline	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Applied for an ECO Fund grant	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
None of these	60% +	68% +	38% -	40%	71% +

Otago Regional Council delivers a range of activities and services. In the past 12 months, have you? Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district. Statements relating to seeing signs, getting support from staff, and applying for an ECO Fund grant were new in 2026.

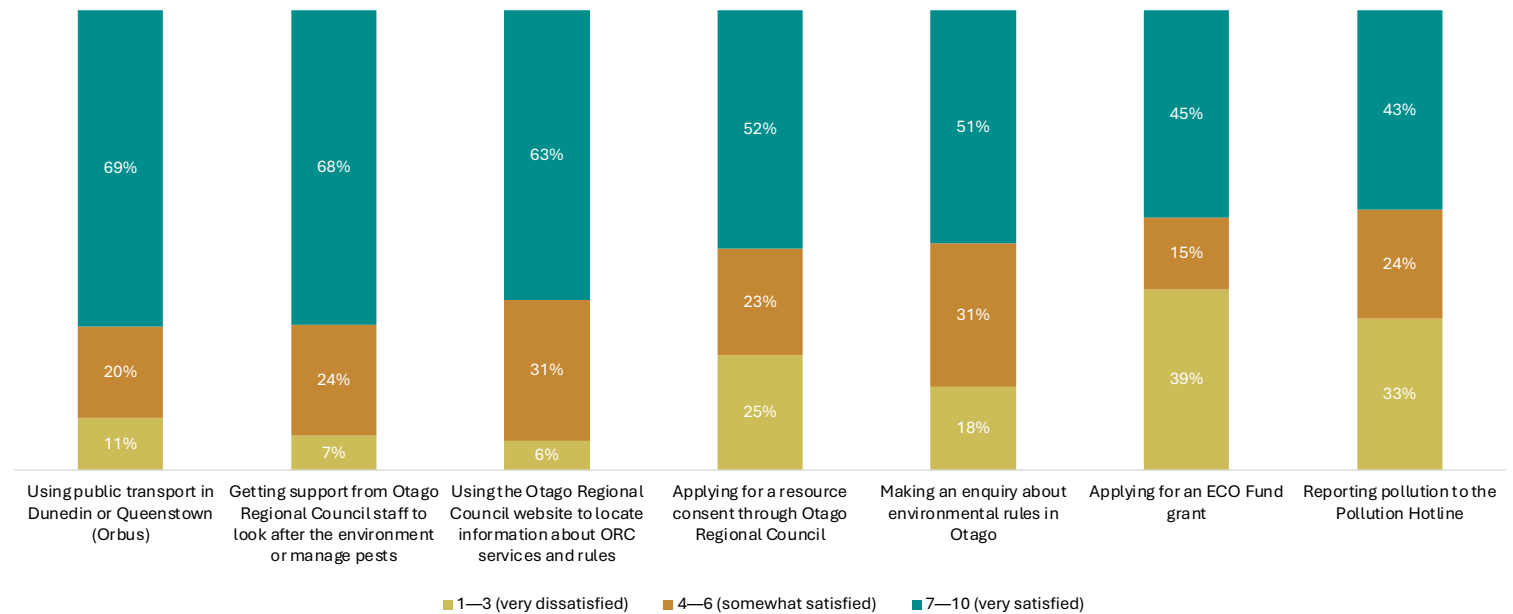
SERVICES

USER SATISFACTION WITH DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Respondents who had used one of the Council’s services were asked to rate their satisfaction with the service they received.

Public transport, information sourcing, and the Council’s website all received very satisfied ratings of above 60%, with very low levels of dissatisfaction across these services. Other services received lower proportions of very satisfied ratings, with reporting to the Pollution Hotline and ECO Fund applications recording the lowest ratings and the highest proportions of dissatisfaction.

Otago Regional Council delivery of services



For each of the services listed below, please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the SERVICE you received. Base all those who used a service: public transport n=476, getting support for managing pests or the environment n=58, applying for an ECO fund grant n=11, applying for a resource consent n=60, Reporting pollution to the Pollution Hotline n=47, enquiring about rules n=74, Using the website for information on services and rules n=346. Statements relating to getting support from staff and applying for an ECO Fund grant were new in 2026.

SERVICES

USER SATISFACTION WITH DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The proportion of users who were very satisfied with the service they received for public transport, the Council's website, and rule enquiries have remained similar to those in 2023.

However, the proportion of respondents who were very satisfied with the service they received for resource consents and reporting to the Pollution Hotline have both declined, although only the decline for the Pollution Hotline was a significant change. There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who were very dissatisfied with the service they received when they applied for a resource consent.

Used public transport in Dunedin or Queenstown: year-on-year**	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied	75%	58%	70%	69%
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied	19%	28%	23%	20%
1 — 3 very dissatisfied	6%	13%	7%	11%

Used the Otago Regional Council website: year-on-year	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied		59%	64%	63%
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied		32%	25%	31%
1 — 3 very dissatisfied		7%	10%	6%
Don't know		1%	1%	-

Made an enquiry about environmental rules: year-on-year	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied	29%	55%	51%	51%
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied	36%	25%	34%	31%
1 — 3 very dissatisfied	34%	19%	14%	18%
Don't know	1%	-	1%	-

Applied for a resource consent: year-on-year*	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied	51%	44%	64%	52%
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied	17%	42%	24%	23%
1 — 3 very dissatisfied	27%	14%	11%	25%+
Don't know	5%	-	1%	-

Reporting to Pollution Hotline: year-on-year* **	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied	24%	56%	65%	43%-
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied	19%	15%	10%	24%
1 — 3 very dissatisfied	56%	29%	25%	33%

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result.

**No 'don't know' responses provided by respondents.

SERVICES

DISTRICT PROFILES: SERVICE PROVISION AND USER SATISFACTION

There were no significant differences across the districts in service delivery perceptions. However, some of the sample sizes for the service ratings at a district level were very small, making significant differences difficult to determine. Specifically, results marked with an asterisk were based on fewer than 15 responses.

Otago Regional Council delivery of services: district comparison ratings (7—10 very satisfied ratings only)

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Using public transport in Dunedin or Queenstown (Orbus)	70%	75%	71%	63%	66%*
Using the Otago Regional Council website to locate information about ORC services and rules	56%	59%	65%	59%	68%
Enquiring about environmental rules in Otago	43%	22%*	50%	60%*	63%
Applying for a resource consent through Otago Regional Council	49%	35%*	71%*	52%*	11%*
Getting support from Otago Regional Council staff to look after the environment or manage pests	64%	40%	65%	100%	70%
Reporting pollution to the Pollution Hotline	38%*	30%*	51%*	36%*	40%*
Applying for an ECO Fund grant	100%*	-	21%*	68%*	72%*

BRAND & REPUTATION

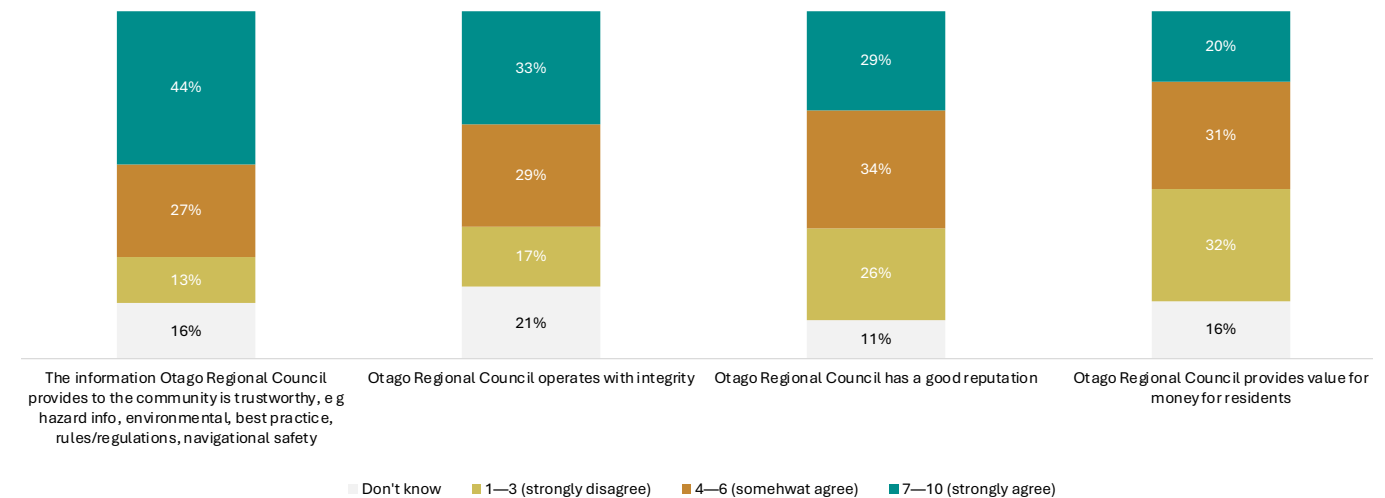
BRAND PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Respondents were asked about their overall impressions of the Council.

Forty-four per cent of respondents strongly agreed that the information the Council provides was trustworthy, and 33% strongly agreed that the Council operated with integrity. At a slightly lower level, 29% strongly agreed the Council had a good reputation, and 20% strongly agreed the Council provided value for money for residents. Overall, there were relatively low levels of disagreement across most statements, although disagreement was slightly higher for statements about reputation and value, than for those about information provision and integrity.

Respondents under 35 held more positive impressions of the Council with significantly higher proportions of positive ratings (strongly agree) than other respondents for measures relating to integrity, information provision, and reputation.

Perceptions of Otago Regional Council



These questions are about your perceptions of Otago Regional Council. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all respondents n=1700.

BRAND & REPUTATION

BRAND PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

While most statements have remained consistent, this year’s monitoring included a statement about the Council’s integrity, replacing the statement about the Council’s trustworthiness (as it was deemed too similar to the statement about information provision).

While there were no significant year-on-year changes in the strongly agree ratings across the measures, most results are now higher than the initial measures taken in 2021.

Notably, the proportion of respondents who strongly agree that the Council’s information was trustworthy has increased by 8% since 2021, with integrity and reputation measures increasing by 3% and 4%, respectively. Only the results for the value for money measure has remained consistent over the monitoring period and the proportion of respondents who strongly agree currently sits at 20%, identical to 2021.

It is also worth noting that this year sees an increase in the proportion of ‘don’t know’ responses, possibly reflecting the broader audience included in this year’s sample.

Trustworthy information: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	36%	37%	41%	44%
4 — 6 somewhat agree	37%	39%	34%	27%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	21%	18%	18%	13%-
Don't know	6%	6%	6%	16%+

Integrity (trustworthy): year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	30%	30%	35%	33%
4 — 6 somewhat agree	38%	39%	37%	29%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	23%	22%	20%	17%-
Don't know	9%	9%	8%	21%+

Good reputation: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	25%	25%	29%	29%
4 — 6 somewhat agree	40%	40%	38%	34%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	28%	28%	26%	26%
Don't know	7%	7%	7%	11%+

Value for money: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	20%	19%	21%	20%
4 — 6 somewhat agree	37%	39%	38%	31%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	35%	34%	32%	32%
Don't know	9%	8%	9%	16%+

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. Text in brackets denotes phrasing prior to 2026.

BRAND & REPUTATION

DISTRICT PROFILES: BRAND PERCEPTIONS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

The table below shows the brand perceptions of the Council across the region’s districts. Generally, respondents from Dunedin City reported more positive impressions of the Council than other respondents. In contrast, respondents from Clutha District reported lower overall perceptions, with Waitaki District respondents less likely to report trust in the information provided to the community.

Brand perceptions: district comparisons (7—10 strongly agree ratings only)

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
The information Otago Regional Council provides to the community is trustworthy, e.g., hazard info, environmental, best practice, rules/regulations, navigational safety	38%	33%-	49%+	43%	34%-
Otago Regional Council operates with integrity	28%	19%-	38%+	26%-	30%
Otago Regional Council has a good reputation	24%	17%-	32%+	26%	27%
Otago Regional Council provides value for money for residents	15%	11%-	24%+	20%	14%

District data for 2026 perception and satisfaction measures. Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

SATISFACTION WITH REGIONAL AND LOCAL DELIVERY

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the Council's performance. This year, the question was asked at both an overall regional level and a localised level.

Thirty-three per cent of respondents were very satisfied with the Council's overall delivery of its services to the region, 36% were somewhat satisfied, and 16% provided a very dissatisfied rating. Fifteen per cent of respondents were unsure how to respond to the question.

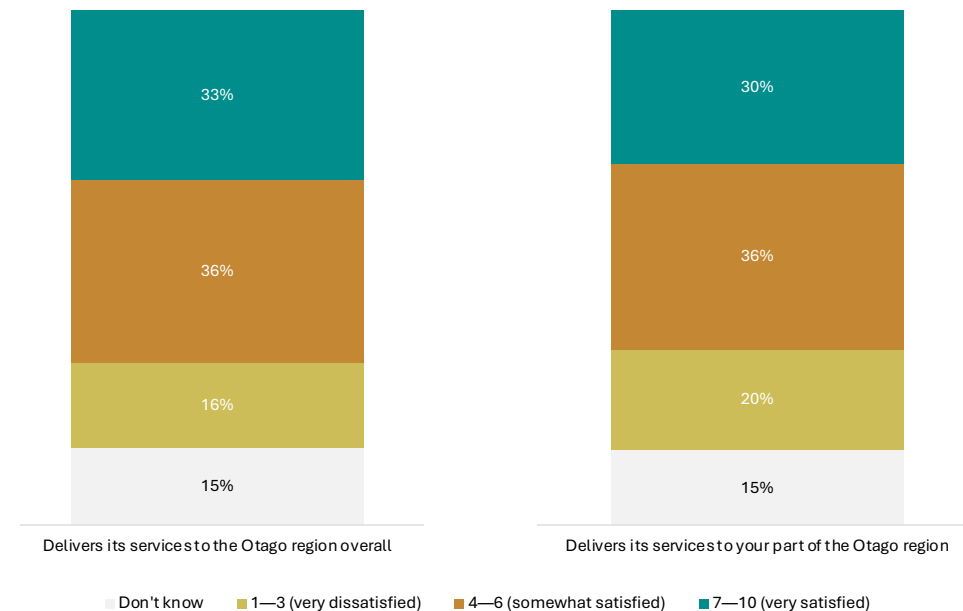
Regarding local delivery, 30% of respondents were very satisfied with the Council's local delivery of services, 36% were somewhat satisfied, and 20% provided a very dissatisfied rating. Fifteen per cent of respondents were unsure how to respond to the question.

Interestingly, there was a strong correlation between local and regional ratings, with a high proportion of ratings aligning directly between local and regional areas, specifically:

- 88% of those very dissatisfied with the regional delivery were also very dissatisfied with local delivery.
- 77% of those who were somewhat satisfied with the regional delivery were also somewhat satisfied with the local delivery.
- 78% of those very satisfied with the regional delivery were also very satisfied with the local delivery.

Respondents under the age of 35 and female respondents were more likely to state they were very satisfied with both the local and regional delivery. In comparison, respondents who were male or aged 50+ were more likely to state they were very dissatisfied with both the local and regional delivery.

Satisfaction with Otago Regional Council's delivery overall



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

SATISFACTION WITH REGIONAL AND LOCAL DELIVERY

The table to the right compares regional delivery ratings across monitoring periods. This year shows declines in the proportions of respondents who rated the Council's regional delivery as either somewhat satisfied or very dissatisfied. Instead, there was a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who were unsure how to respond to the question.

Satisfaction with Otago Regional Council's delivery overall: year-on-year (region only) *

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied (excellent)	31%	30%	35%	33%
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied (average)	39%	43%	40%	36% ⁻
1 — 3 very dissatisfied (poor)	21%	19%	20%	16% ⁻
Don't know	8%	8%	5%	15% ⁺

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. Text in brackets denotes phrasing prior to 2026.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

RATIONALE FOR SATISFACTION RATING

Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their rating of local and regional delivery. These reasons were recorded verbatim and grouped into categories after the data collection period.

Respondents who were very satisfied with the Council's regional delivery noted positive impressions and indicated that they felt the Council was generally doing a good job. This group had fewer negative comments, particularly around governance and environmental management, with 5% reporting a positive experience with public transport.

Thirty-two per cent of respondents who were somewhat satisfied provided a positive comment about the Council, although these were to a lesser extent than very satisfied respondents. This group were more likely to mention concerns about environmental management, with a net 16% of their comments related to this area. This group were also more likely than other areas to note regional disparities.

A net 44% of respondents who were very dissatisfied with the Council's regional delivery commented on the governance and performance of the Council,

Rationale for rating of Otago Regional Council delivery: by regional delivery rating*

	Don't know	1 — 3 (very dissatisfied)	4 — 6 (somewhat satisfied)	7 — 10 (very satisfied)
Overall satisfaction or neutrality NET	24% -	11% -	32% -	67% +
Generally satisfied/doing a good job	7% -	1% -	10% -	52% +
Room for improvement	5%	7%	13%	13%
Neutral/no strong view	12%	4% -	12%	8%
Awareness, visibility, and understanding of the Otago Regional Council NET	39% +	13%	17%	9% -
Low awareness/don't know what the Otago Regional Council does	31% +	7%	9%	5% ↓
Low visibility/unseen services (never see them)	6%	8%	7%	4%
Confusion between councils	2%	0%	2%	1%
Governance, performance, and trust NET	4% -	44% +	16%	3% -
Value for money concerns	1% -	19% +	8%	1% -
Organisational criticism/legitimacy	1% -	20% +	6%	1% -
Wasteful spending/priorities	2%	9% +	5%	1% -
Political or ideological criticism	0%	1%	0%	0%
Environmental management and natural resources NET	6%	21% +	16% +	5% -
Pest and weed control failures	3%	10% +	7%	2% -
River management and flooding	2%	7%	6%	1% -
Water quality concerns	1%	5%	5%	2%
Positive environmental management	1%	0%	0%	0%
Public transport NET	12%	10%	11%	11%
Reliability and frequency issues	2%	5%	5%	5%
Positive bus experience	5%	0%	1%	5% +

Please explain why you selected the levels of satisfaction for how Otago Regional Council delivers its services to the region and to your area. Base all those who provided a comment, n=1396.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that group is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that group.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

RATIONALE FOR SATISFACTION RATING

specifically raising concerns about value for money, spending priorities, and criticising the organisation. A net 21% of very dissatisfied respondents commented about environmental management, particularly pest and weed control failures. Only 11% of very dissatisfied respondents provided a positive comment about the Council's regional delivery.

Respondents who were unsure how to rate the Council's regional delivery mostly provided comments about low awareness and understanding of the Council.

Across the responses, respondents under 35 were more likely to say they were generally satisfied with the Council and less likely to comment on environmental management issues or on governance, performance, or trust concerns. The opposite pattern was observed among those aged 50—64, who were more likely to comment on governance issues, particularly value for money concerns, and who were less likely to say they were satisfied with the Council. Respondents over 65 were also less likely to say they were generally satisfied with the Council and more likely to mention concerns about environmental management, particularly pest control.

Rationale for rating of Otago Regional Council delivery: by regional delivery rating continued*

	Don't know	1 — 3 (very dissatisfied)	4 — 6 (somewhat satisfied)	7 — 10 (very satisfied)
No public transport/lack of coverage	4%	4%	4%	0%
Route design and connectivity issues	0%	2%	2%	1%
Equity and fairness of public transport	1%	0%	0%	0%
Suggestions and improvements NET	4%	7%	7%	4%
Need better communication and visibility	1%	3%	3%	2%
Improve public transport	1%	1%	1%	1%
Stronger environmental enforcement	1%	2%	2%	1%
Better planning and prioritisation	1%	2%	2%	1%
Equity and regional balance NET	0%	1%	5%+	2%
Rural or small-town neglect	0%	1%	4% +	1%
Dunedin/Queenstown bias	0%	0%	1%	1%
Service access and responsiveness NET	1%	4%	4%	2%
Poor communication or slow response	1%	2%	2%	1%
Lack of public services/hospital/rubbish pick up	0%	1%	1%	0%
Passed between agencies	0%	1%	>1%	0%
Other	1%	3%	1%	1%
Don't know/no comment	19% +	2% -	6%	5%

Please explain why you selected the levels of satisfaction for how Otago Regional Council delivers its services to the region and to your area. Base all those who provided a comment, n=1396.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that group is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that group.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISTRICT PROFILES: OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

The table to the right shows the brand perceptions of the Council across the region's districts. Dunedin City respondents reported higher proportions of very satisfied responses both locally and regionally, while respondents from Central Otago District, Clutha District, or Waitaki District reported lower proportions of very satisfied responses at both a regional and local level.

Dunedin City respondents also reported a higher proportion of comments, which demonstrated overall satisfaction or neutrality with the Council. In contrast, respondents from Clutha District were more likely to mention issues or concerns with environmental management and natural resources, as were respondents from Central Otago District. Furthermore, Clutha District respondents were also more likely to note issues with river management, flooding, and pest or weed control failures.

Queenstown Lakes District respondents were more likely to provide suggestions or improvements, focusing on better planning and prioritising of the environment, and on improvements to public transport.

While there were no significant points noted at a net level for Waitaki District, respondents in this area appeared to focus on value for money, lack of public transport, and lack of local services.

Brand perception and satisfaction measures: district comparisons*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Overall delivery					
Very satisfied with regional delivery (7—10 rating)	23%-	23%-	39%+	29%	25%-
Very satisfied with local delivery (7—10 rating)	21%-	19%-	36%+	26%	19%-
Rationale for satisfaction					
Overall satisfaction or neutrality NET	33%	30%	45%+	31%	31%
Awareness, visibility, and understanding of the Otago Regional Council NET	17%	15%	26%	17%	15%
Governance, performance, and trust NET	21%	9%	13%	17%	21%
Environmental management and natural resources NET	19%+	24%+	8%-	15%	9%
Public transport NET	3%-	3%-	12%	13%	12%
Suggestions and improvements NET	7%	5%	4%	11%+	1%
Equity and regional balance NET	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Service access and responsiveness NET	4%	5%	2%	3%	5%
Other	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%
Don't know/no comment	6%	7%	7%	4%	12%

Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.

THE OTAGO ENVIRONMENT

A vast majority of respondents report being proud of the Otago region and feel a connection to its environment.

Water-related issues remain the most important environmental priorities. However, there was strong recognition of the need to manage growth and balance this with the preservation of the environment for future generations.

Respondents saw environmental outcomes as a shared responsibility between the Council and the community. The Council has a leadership role, but respondents recognised that communities must be supported and empowered to contribute.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE REGION'S ENVIRONMENT

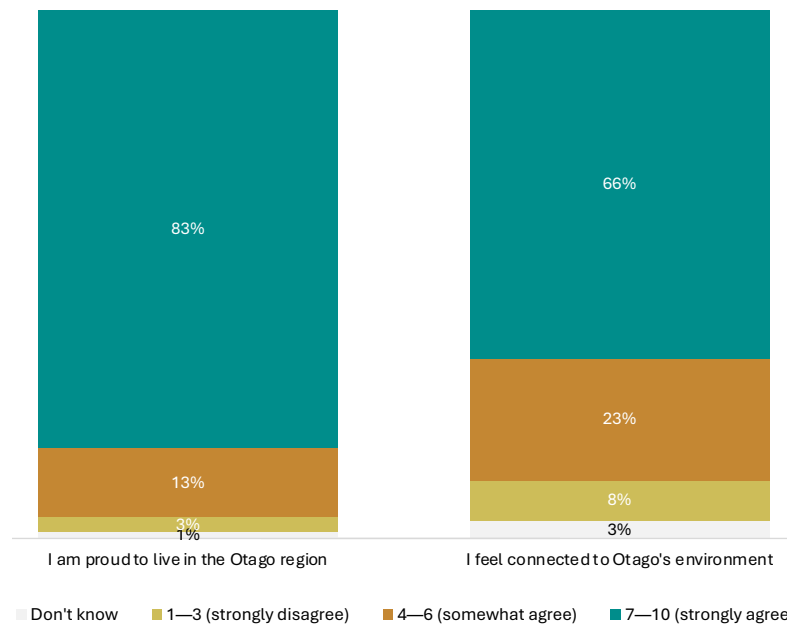
This year, respondents were asked about pride in and connectedness to the Otago region, with the latter question newly added in 2026.

Overall, 83% of respondents strongly agreed they were proud to live in the Otago region, and 66% strongly agreed they felt connected to the region's environment. There was a clear correlation between these measures, with 75% of respondents who strongly agreed they were proud to live in the Otago region also indicating they felt connected to the Otago environment.

There were no significant differences in responses across demographic groups.

This year, regional pride has increased significantly, with 3% more respondents stating they were proud to live in the region.

Environmental perceptions



Proud to live in the region: year-on-year (7—10 strongly agree ratings only)*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	81%	79%	80%	83%+
4 — 6 somewhat agree	14%	16%	15%	13%
1 — 3 strongly disagree	4%	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	1%

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Base all respondents n=1700.

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. The statement about being to being connected to the environment is new in 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

In a new question this year, respondents were presented with a list of environmental issues and asked which they considered important. Forty-eight per cent of respondents selected good water quality as the most important issue, followed by sufficient availability of fresh water, management of growth, air quality, and management of natural resources for future generations. Twenty-four per cent of respondents indicated that all the stated issues are important, and only 3% thought that none of these issues were important.

Respondents over the age of 65 were significantly more likely to select water quality and sufficient fresh water as key issues. In contrast, respondents under 35 were more likely to select thriving native plants, animals, and ecosystems, or that the reduction of climate change was an important issue. Female respondents were more likely to indicate that all the issues were important.

Environmental priorities



48%

Good water quality supports a healthy environment, communities and businesses



38%

There is **enough fresh water** to meet the needs of my community, business and nature



37%

Economic and population growth are managed well, leaving space for nature, food and other productive land use



35%

The **air my community breathes is clean** and good for our health



33%

Otago's **natural resources are managed** to look after the environment and the needs of future generations



30%

Otago's native **plants, animals and ecosystems are thriving** and healthy



29%

My community is aware of and **resilient to natural hazards**, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides or extreme weather



24%

Pressure on Otago's lakes from tourism and population growth is well managed



21%

Pests and weeds do not harm native plants, animals and ecosystems landscapes and businesses



17%

Otago is playing its part to **reduce climate change**

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Across the region, there was consensus that water quality was important; however, district analysis showed some notable differences. Specifically, respondents from Central Otago District were more likely to prioritise freshwater availability and the management of tourism and population pressures. Clutha District respondents placed greater emphasis on pest and weed control, while Dunedin City respondents prioritised air quality, natural hazard resilience, and participation in climate change mitigation. Queenstown Lakes District respondents had a strong focus on resource management and the impacts of tourism on natural resources, while Waitaki District respondents prioritised sufficient freshwater.

Environmental priorities: district comparisons*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Good water quality supports a healthy environment, communities and businesses	54%	49%	48%	43%	48%
There is enough fresh water to meet the needs of my community, business and nature	48% +	41%	38%	29% -	46% +
Economic and population growth are managed well, leaving space for nature, food and other productive land use	39%	31%	35%	49% +	28% -
The air my community breathes is clean and good for our health	32%	33%	38% +	27% -	41%
Otago's natural resources are managed to look after the environment and the needs of future generations	33%	32%	35%	33%	26% -
My community is aware of and resilient to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides or extreme weather	24%	32%	33% +	22% -	22% -
Otago's native plants, animals, and ecosystems are thriving and healthy	23% -	28%	32%	29%	26%
Pressure on Otago's lakes from tourism and population growth is well managed	31% +	22%	17% -	43% +	20%
Pests and weeds do not harm native plants, animals and ecosystems, landscapes and businesses	24%	28% +	20%	21%	23%
Otago is playing its part to reduce climate change	12% -	9% -	22% +	13%	12%
All of the above	21%	22%	24%	27%	26%
None	5%	5%	2%	2%	5%

Environmental health is the responsibility of all communities. Thinking about how you want Otago's environment to be in the future, please select up to five issues that are most important to you. Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273.

**A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.*

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

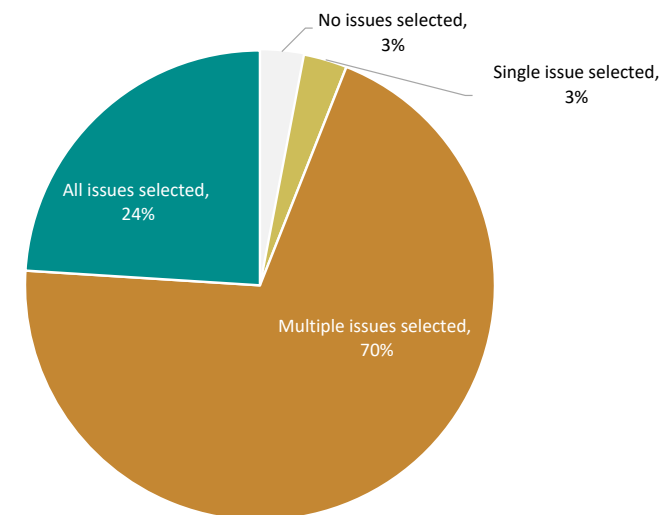
Across the data, 3% of respondents indicated that none of the environmental issues were important, 3% selected a single issue as important, and 24% indicated that all issues were important. The remaining respondents (70%) selected more than one environmental issue as important.

Among those who felt that a single issue was important (3%), good water quality dominated their responses, with open text comments indicating their views were based on prior drinking water quality failures, the sense that water was important for life, and that there were human health impacts from poor water quality. These respondents seemed to have a stronger view that communities should be empowered to contribute to environmental outcomes and cited dissatisfaction with the Council.

Among respondents who identified that all issues were important (24%), the overwhelming response was that there was a need to preserve the environment for future generations. Specifically, respondents stated the need to protect the current ecosystems from threats of unmanaged growth, climate change, and development. Respondents who felt that all the issues were important saw responsibility for achieving environmental outcomes as the role of both the Council and the community. They indicated the Council should lead and guide the region while also engaging the community through education, practical tools, and raising local voices and experiences.

The remainder of this section focuses on the feedback from respondents who selected more than one environmental issue as important (70% of all respondents). However, further analysis around the responses of those who selected a single issue or who indicated that all the environmental issues were important has been included in the appendix.

Number of environmental issues selected as important



ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

MULTIPLE ISSUES SELECTED

The respondents who selected more than one issue as important were asked to narrow their selection to the single issue they considered most important. The issues that received the highest share of votes were the management of growth, good water quality, and the management of resources to protect the environment for future generations.

Respondents over the age of 65 were significantly more likely to select sufficient fresh water as the most important issue. In contrast, respondents under 35 were more likely to select either thriving native plants, animals, and ecosystems, or the reduction of climate change as the most important issue.

Environmental priorities (most important)



19%

Economic and population growth are managed well, leaving space for nature, food and other productive land use



18%

Good water quality supports a healthy environment, communities and businesses



16%

Otago's **natural resources are managed** to look after the environment and the needs of future generations



11%

There is **enough fresh water** to meet the needs of my community, businesses and nature



7%

The **air my community breathes is clean** and good for our health



7%

Otago's native **plants, animals and ecosystems are thriving** and healthy



7%

My community is aware of and **resilient to natural hazards**, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides or extreme weather



6%

Pressure on Otago's lakes from tourism and population growth is well managed



4%

Otago is playing its part to **reduce climate change**



4%

Pests and weeds do not harm native plants, animals and ecosystems landscapes and businesses

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

MULTIPLE ISSUES SELECTED

Regarding district differences in priorities, Queenstown Lakes District respondents placed a stronger focus on managing growth, with 31% indicating economic and population growth be managed and 20% prioritising the management of tourism and population growth to protect lakes. Dunedin City respondents were more likely to focus on air quality, thriving ecosystems, and community resilience, while Clutha District respondents were more likely to focus on pest management.

Environmental priorities (most important): district comparisons*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
Economic and population growth are managed well, leaving space for nature, food and other productive land use	22%	14%	16%-	31%+	12%
Good water quality supports a healthy environment, communities and businesses	24%	22%	19%	10%-	21%
Otago's natural resources are managed to look after the environment and the needs of future generations	20%	13%	18%	11%	15%
There is enough fresh water to meet the needs of my community, businesses and nature	10%	15%	9%	10%	23%+
The air my community breathes is clean and good for our health	5%	7%	9%+	3%-	9%
Otago's native plants, animals, and ecosystems are thriving and healthy	3%-	5%	10%+	6%	4%
My community is aware of and resilient to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides or extreme weather	4%	11%	9%+	3%-	6%
Pressure on Otago's lakes from tourism and population growth is well managed	6%	2%-	2%-	20%+	2%
Otago is playing its part to reduce climate change	2%	2%	5%	3%	4%
Pests and weeds do not harm native plants, animals and ecosystems, landscapes and businesses	4%	10%+	3%	3%	3%

And which ONE of these is most important to you? Base all those who think more than one issue is important: Central Otago District n=196, Clutha District n=184, Dunedin City n=417, Queenstown Lakes District n=205, Waitaki District n=178.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

RATIONALE FOR ISSUE SELECTION

ISSUE 1—3

Among respondents who selected multiple issues, 19% considered the management of economic and population growth the most important issue. The primary reasons cited were concerns about past mismanagement of infrastructure and growth, the need for economic stability, and the protection of productive land, with respondents also concerned about population spread across the natural environment. Good water quality was the next most important issue, with overwhelming feedback stating that water was fundamental for life and that supply and safety needed to be preserved. The third most important area was the management and preservation of Otago’s natural resources, where respondents identified an intergenerational responsibility for the environment and stated that the environment underpins the health of all ecosystems.

ISSUE 1: Economic and population growth 19%



Infrastructure and growth mismanagement NET 40%

- Population growth and overpopulation 22%
- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl 16%
- Infrastructure not keeping up 11%
- Tourism pressure 2%

Economic stability and productive land NET 28%

- Economic growth must be balanced 14%
- Protecting productive land 13%
- Environment as an economic asset 2%

Other key mentions

- Biodiversity and native species protection 5%
- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 4%
- Perceived regulatory failure 4%
- Inter-generational responsibility/protection for children 4%

ISSUE 2: Good water quality 18%



Water is fundamental to life, NET 88%

- Water=life/essential for survival 51%
- Water quality/supply/pollution control 22%
- Safe drinking water as a right 13%
- Public health and illness prevention 8%

Other key mentions

- Inter-generational responsibility/protection or children 2%
- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 2%
- Infrastructure not keeping up 1%
- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl 1%
- Population growth and overpopulation 1%

ISSUE 3: Natural resources are managed 16%



Stewardship responsibility and connection NET 41%

- Inter-generational responsibility/protection for children 39%
- Moral or ethical duty/kaitiakitanga 3%

Ecosystem integrity as a foundation for everything NET 23%

- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 11%
- Biodiversity and native species protection 10%
- Pest and weed control 1%
- Air quality 1%

Economic stability and productive land NET 7%

- Environment as an economic asset 4%
- Protecting productive land 3%

Water is fundamental to life, NET 7%

- Water quality/supply/pollution control 5%
- Water=life/essential for survival 1%
- Safe drinking water as a right 1%

Governance, accountability, and trust NET 7%

- Frustration with fast-track mining and consents 6%
- Perceived regulatory failure 1%

Other mentions

- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl 3%
- Population growth and overpopulation 3%

Respondents provided an open-text response, and the reasons were coded into themes after data collection. The reasons are grouped by the issue respondents felt was most important. The feedback includes only key themes, with any unspecified feedback (e.g., 'it's important') and 'don't know' comments excluded for brevity.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

RATIONALE FOR ISSUE SELECTION

ISSUE 4—7

Areas considered moderately important included freshwater, air quality, healthy ecosystems, and community resilience. The rationale for selecting fresh water as the most important issue was that water is deemed valuable for life and needed to be controlled for sustainability. Air quality was selected largely because of current concerns about public health, illness prevention, and the essential need for clean air. Ecosystems were considered important because they underpin the natural environment and because there was a need to protect native species and biodiversity. Resilient communities were considered important because of the need for local preparedness, given the increased risk of flooding, storms, and sea level rise.

ISSUE 4: Enough fresh water 11%



Water is fundamental for life, NET 82%

- Water=life/essential for survival 58%
- Water quality/supply/pollution control 16%
- Safe drinking water as a right 7%
- Public health and illness prevention 2%

Other mentions

- Infrastructure not keeping up 1%
- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl 1%
- Tourism pressure 1%
- Population growth and overpopulation 1%

ISSUE 5: Air my community breathes is clean 7%



Ecosystem integrity as a foundation for everything NET 62%

- Air quality concerns 59%
- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 3%

Other mentions

- Public health and illness prevention 17%
- Essential for survival 6%
- Inter-generational responsibility/protection for children 2%

ISSUE 6: Plants, animals, and ecosystems are thriving 7%



Ecosystem integrity as a foundation for everything NET 74%

- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 36%
- Biodiversity and native species protection 35%
- Air quality 4%
- Pest and weed control 3%

Water is fundamental for life, NET 6%

- Water=life/essential for survival 3%
- Water quality/supply/pollution control 2%
- Personal experience with water failure 1%

Other mentions

- Environment as an economic asset 3%
- Moral or ethical duty/kaitiakitanga 2%

ISSUE 7: Resilient to natural hazards 7%



Climate change and natural hazard risk NET 54%

- Preparedness and civil defence 23%
- Flooding, storms, and sea-level rising 19%
- Climate change as overarching risk 16%

Water is fundamental to life, NET 5%

- Public health and illness prevention 3%
- Water=life/essential for survival 2%

Other mentions

- Distrust or anti-council sentiment 3%

Respondents provided an open-text response, and the reasons were coded into themes after data collection. The reasons are grouped by the issue respondents felt was most important. The feedback includes only key themes, with any unspecified feedback (e.g., 'it's important') and 'don't know' comments excluded for brevity.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

RATIONALE FOR ISSUE SELECTION

ISSUE 8—10

Lower-ranked areas included the pressure on Otago’s lakes from tourism and development, Otago playing its part to reduce climate change and pests, and weeds not harming native plants.

The importance of managing tourism and population growth on the region’s lakes was considered important, given the pressure from current tourism and growth levels. However, lagging local infrastructure and the impact on water quality and supply were also factors. Climate change involvement was considered important given the risks associated with a changing climate, especially flooding, storms, and sea level rise. However, a net 9% of respondents who ranked this issue as important noted that there was a guardian role that current generations have for preserving the environment for future generations. The reduction of harm from pests and weeds was considered important, as control of such species protects the natural environment and native biodiversity, which assists in developing a thriving ecosystem.

ISSUE 8: Pressure on Otago’s lakes 6%



Infrastructure and growth mismanagement NET 67%

- Tourism pressure 39%
- Population growth and overpopulation 27%
- Infrastructure not keeping up 27%
- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl 9%

Water is fundamental to life, NET 14%

- Water quality/supply/pollution control 13%
- Public health and illness prevention 1%

Governance, accountability, and trust NET 4%

- Perceived regulatory failure 4%

ISSUE 9: Reduce climate change 4%



Climate change and natural hazard risk NET 68%

- Climate change as overarching risk 64%
- Flooding, storms, and sea-level rising 9%

Stewardship responsibility and connection NET 9%

- Inter-generational responsibility/protection for children 5%
- Moral or ethical duty/kaitiakitanga 4%

Water is fundamental to life, NET 6%

- Water quality/supply/pollution control 5%
- Water=life/essential for survival 1%

‘Infrastructure and growth mismanagement NET 4%

- Tourism pressure 4%
- Population growth and overpopulation 4%

Other mentions

- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 3%

ISSUE 10: Pests and weeds 4%



Ecosystem integrity as a foundation for everything NET 76%

- Pest and weed control 57%
- Biodiversity and native species protection 20%
- Thriving ecosystems = everything else follows 3%

Other mentions

- Protecting productive land 1%

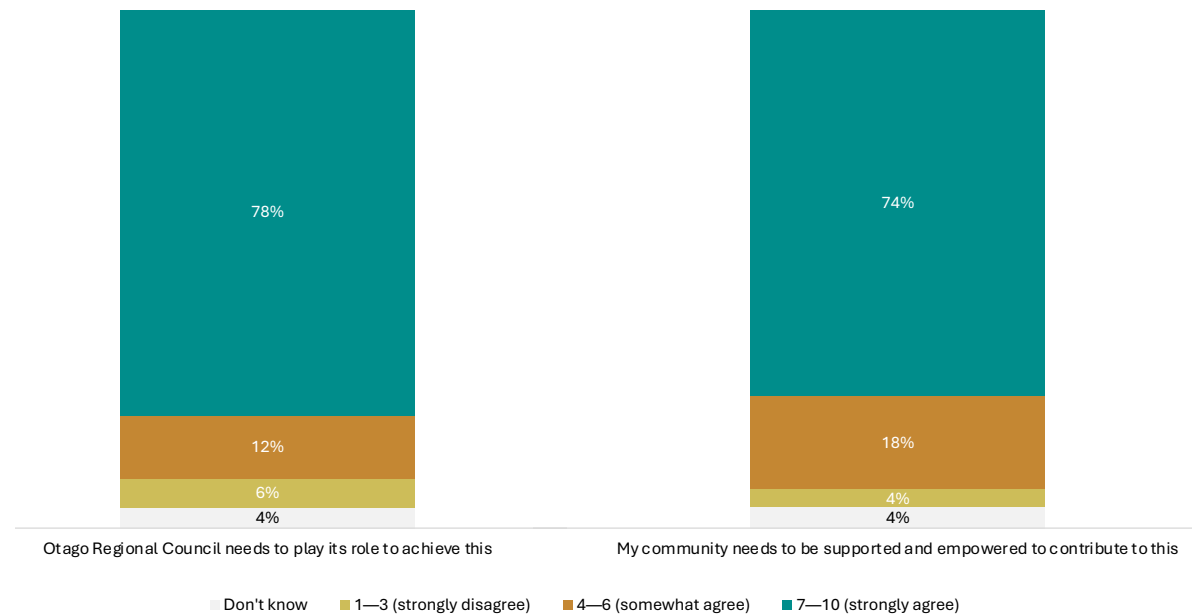
Respondents provided an open-text response, and the reasons were coded into themes after data collection. The reasons are grouped by the issue respondents felt was most important. The feedback includes only key themes, with any unspecified feedback (e.g., it’s important) and ‘don’t know’ comments excluded for brevity.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Respondents were asked who should be involved to achieve environmental success for their selected issue. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents strongly agreed that the Council has a role to play, and 74% strongly agreed that communities needed support to contribute to positive environmental outcomes. Very few respondents strongly disagreed with either statement.

Requirements to achieve environmental success



You stated that the most important issue is: [ISSUE]. Thinking about what is needed to achieve this, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all those who think more than one issue is important n=1180.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Respondents were asked why they provided the ratings they did for the Council and the community. They offered a wide range of responses, with a key focus on the need for collective responsibility for environmental management and for the Council to take a leadership role across the region. There were also strong mentions of the need for community engagement and for elevating the community's voice in decisions.

Eleven per cent of respondents made comments about specific environmental actions that needed to be taken across the region, many of which were localised, e.g., pests and weeds in Clutha District, water quality in Waitaki District and Dunedin City, and tourism impacts in Queenstown Lakes District.

Further comments were also made about the operational components of the Council, mostly around rate value for money, clarity around roles for different governing bodies, and the need for regulation and enforcement in environmental stewardship.

Rationale for the ratings of the community and Otago Regional Council involvement

Shared responsibility and fairness NET	17%	Environmental monitoring and science	1%	Resource consents and allocation decisions	1%
Collective responsibility	16%	Visibility of ORC in local communities	1%	Performance trust and legitimacy NET	4%
Fairness across sectors	1%	Engagement quality and local voice NET	7%	Performance dissatisfaction with ORC	4%
ORC's leadership, mandate, and regional role NET	13%	Meaningful engagement and listening	4%	Distrust of ORC	>1%
Provide regional direction and leadership	10%	Local knowledge and lived experience	2%	Infrastructure, growth, and long-term planning NET	3%
ORC as an environmental guardian/steward	2%	Communication	1%	Long-term planning and risk preparedness	2%
Advocacy for the environment	1%	Transparency, accountability, and value for money NET	6%	Infrastructure before development	1%
Community engagement, education, and enablement NET	12%	Value for money and rate fairness	4%	Unspecified feedback NET	16%
Supporting community groups and local initiatives	4%	Transparency about actions and outcomes	1%	My opinion/how I feel	8%
Education and awareness	4%	Bureaucracy and inefficiency concerns	1%	Because it is important	4%
Practical tools, incentives, and support	4%	Governance boundaries and system design NET	5%	Satisfied/all is well	3%
Specific actions noted NET	11%	Role and clarity overlap (ORC vs council vs central)	3%	Room for improvement	2%
Water and pollution controls	5%	Governance change/plans	2%	Other	4%
Air quality management	2%	Regulation, consents, and enforcement NET	4%	Don't know/no comment	8%
Pest and weed management	2%	Enforcement, compliance, and penalties	2%		
Tourism impact	1%	Holding other actors to account (businesses, farmers, councils)	2%		

Please explain why you selected the agreement ratings you did for Otago Regional Council's role and the support your community needs. Base all those who think more than one issue is important and who provided a comment, n=872.

OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS

Respondents' primary source of information about the Council was through their rates invoice, with the website and newsletter also featuring strongly.

Digital channels continued to grow in importance for communication with residents and present an opportunity to expand the Council's portfolio.

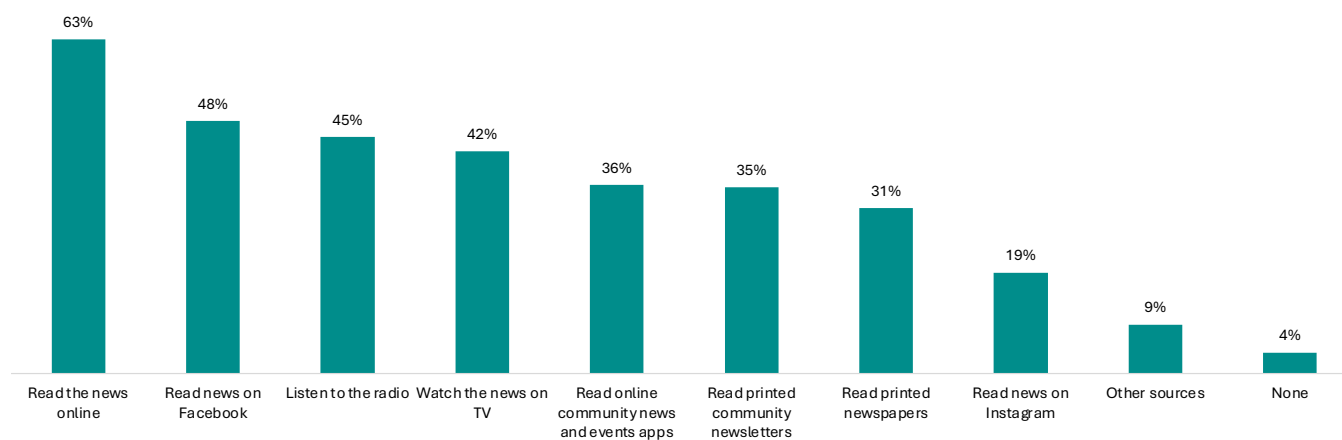
This year sees strong gains in most communication measures, particularly around trust in information and overall satisfaction with the information.

MEDIA ACCESSED BY RESPONDENTS

Respondents were provided with a list of media channels and asked which ones they regularly accessed. The most common were reading the news online, followed by listening to the radio, and watching the news on television. Around one-third of respondents sourced news from newspapers, with only 4% stating they did not access any of the sources.

While online news readership has remained relatively stable over time, use of television news, printed community newsletters, and print newspapers has declined steadily. By comparison, the use of Instagram as a news source has increased. Facebook use has also increased over time, although there has been no significant change since 2023.

Media accessed regularly



Media accessed regularly: year-on-year

	2022	2023	2026
Read the news online	63%	65%	63%
Watch the news on TV	62%	54%	42%-
Listen to the radio	52%	49%	45%-
Read news on Facebook	43%	46%	48%
Read printed community newsletters	-	45%	35%-
Read print newspapers	44%	37%	31%-
Read online community news and events apps	-	36%	36%
Read news on Instagram	10%	15%	19%+
None	2%	3%	4%

MEDIA ACCESSED BY RESPONDENTS

The results showed clear differences in media use when the results were compared across demographic groups. Primarily, female respondents and those under 35 had higher use of news via social media platforms and significantly lower use of traditional media and print formats. In contrast, the opposite pattern was observed among male respondents and respondents over the age of 50.

Media accessed regularly: demographic differences*

	Under 35 years	35—49 years	50—64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Gender diverse
Read the news online	61%	67%	68%	58% -	65%	62%	66%
Read news on Facebook	58% +	53%	44%	29% -	37% -	58% +	41%
Listen to the radio	34% -	42%	57% +	53% +	51% +	40% -	30%
Watch the news on TV	22% -	29% -	57% +	73% +	51% +	35% -	28%
Read online community news and events apps	32%	37%	41%	35%	34%	39%	18%
Read printed community newsletters	22% -	30% -	41% +	57% +	36%	35%	47%
Read printed newspapers	17% -	24% -	39% +	54% +	36% +	27% -	21%
Read news on Instagram	38% +	17%	7% -	4% -	13% -	24% +	32%
Get information from other sources	11%	9%	6% -	11%	9%	10%	12%
None	7% +	5%	2%	1% -	4%	3%	4%

Which of the following do you regularly do? Base all respondents Under 35 n=408, 35—49 n=417, 50—64 n=415, 65+ n=460, Male n=828, Female n=849, Gender Diverse n=20.

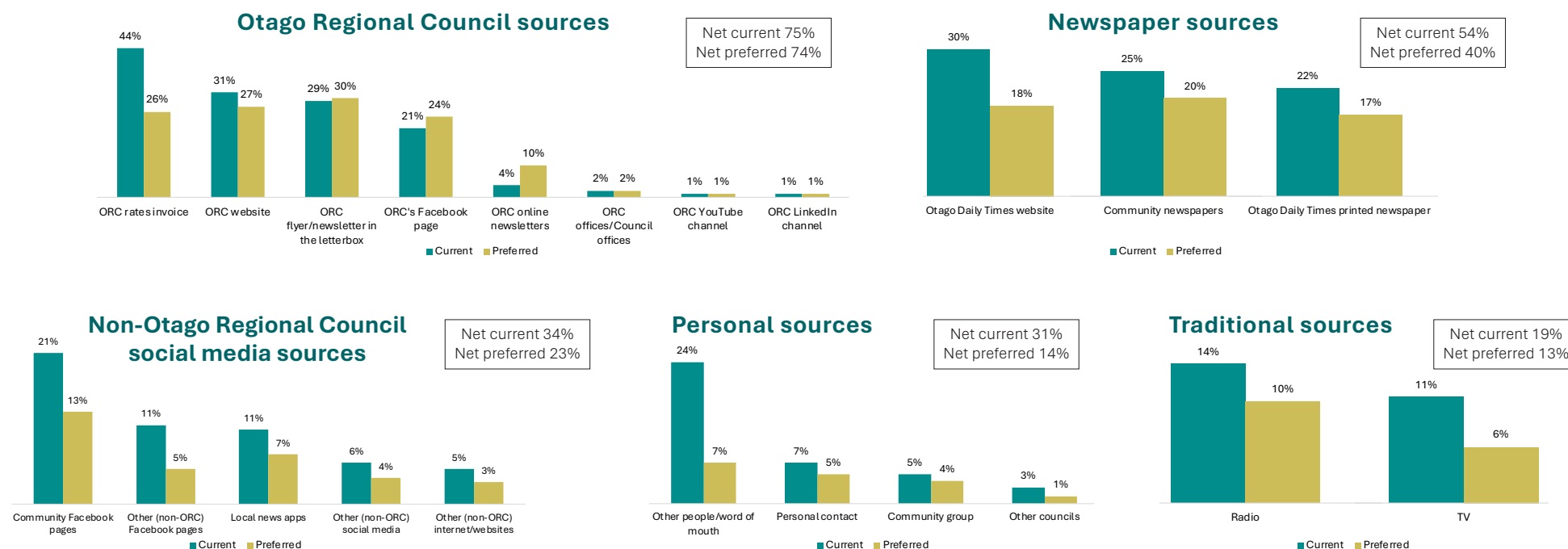
*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that group is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that group.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Respondents were asked where they currently obtain information about the Council and where they would prefer to receive it. The most used sources were Council-created, with most respondents citing rates invoices, followed by the website and newsletters. Other sources included the Otago Daily Times website, community newspapers, Facebook pages, and other people.

Generally, preferred sources align with those that respondents were currently using, with Council-created sources most preferred. Interestingly, the Council's newsletter and Facebook pages appeared underutilised, with preference slightly higher than current use.

While similar questions have been included in previous monitoring, the structure has changed from an open-text question (used in 2021—2023) to a prompted question (used in 2026), making clear comparisons difficult to achieve.



Where, or from whom, do you get information about Otago Regional Council? Base all respondents n=1700.
 What are your preferred forms of receiving information about the Otago Regional Council? Base all respondents n=1700.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Council-created information was the most preferred source across all demographic groups, although the preferred format varies. Older respondents (65+) and male respondents preferred to receive invoices or posted content, while female respondents and those under 35 preferred to receive this content via Facebook.

Similar patterns were observed in the use of traditional channels and newspapers, with preference higher among older respondents, particularly for community newspapers and the printed Otago Daily Times. By comparison, younger respondents did not prefer these options. Respondents under the age of 35 were more likely to prefer non-Council Facebook pages and social media pages.

Preferred sources of information about Otago Regional Council: demographic comparisons*

	Under 35 years	35—49 years	50—64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Gender diverse
ORC NET	74%	80%	73%	71%	72%	77%	60%
ORC rates invoice	15% -	28%	26%	38% +	30% +	22% -	6%
ORC website	26%	32%	33%	18% -	29%	25%	29%
ORC flyer/newsletter in the letterbox	23% -	28%	31%	40% +	31%	29%	24%
ORC's Facebook page	38% +	28%	15% -	8% -	16% ↓	31% +	28%
ORC online newsletters	8%	11%	10%	10%	10%	9%	18%
ORC offices/Council offices	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%	0%
ORC YouTube channel	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%
ORC LinkedIn page	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Newspapers NET	33% -	36%	41%	55% +	42%	38%	51%
Otago Daily Times website	22%	19%	16%	15%	19%	18%	13%
Community newspapers	11% -	17%	25%	32% +	20%	19%	35%
Otago Daily Times printed newspaper	10% -	12%	14%	34% +	21% +	12% -	22%
Other social NET	26%	23%	23%	17% -	19% -	25%	33%
Community Facebook pages	16%	15%	11%	9% -	9% -	17% +	16%
Other (non-ORC) Facebook pages	8% +	4%	3%	2% -	3%	6%	13%
Local news apps	5%	6%	11% +	8%	7%	7%	0%

Where, or from whom, do you get information about Otago Regional Council? (Select all that apply). What are your preferred forms of receiving information about the Otago Regional Council? Traditional sources. Base all respondents who source information from ORC Under 35 n=358, 35—49 n=375, 50—64 n=382, 65+ n=432, Male n=755, Female n=772, Gender Diverse n=19.

*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that group is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that group.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Preferred sources of information about Otago Regional Council: demographic comparisons continued*

	Under 35 years	35—49 years	50—64 years	65+ years	Male	Female	Gender diverse
Other (non-ORC) social media	6% +	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	13%
Other (non-ORC) internet/websites	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	5%
Personal NET	16%	13%	14%	12%	14%	13%	32%
Other people/word of mouth	11% +	6%	3% -	4%	5%	7%	26% +
Personal contact	4%	5%	6%	4%	6%	3% -	13%
Community group	2%	3%	6%	4%	3%	4%	0%
Other councils	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Traditional channels NET	12%	8% -	13%	21%+	16% +	10% -	19%
Radio	9%	7%	11%	15% +	13% +	8% -	19%
TV	4%	3% -	5%	12% +	7%	4%	6%
None/no preference	9%	8%	11%	11%	12%	8%	7%

Where, or from whom, do you get information about Otago Regional Council? (Select all that apply). What are your preferred forms of receiving information about the Otago Regional Council? Traditional sources. Base all respondents who source information from ORC Under 35 n=358, 35—49 n=375, 50—64 n=382, 65+ n=432, Male n=755, Female n=772, Gender Diverse n=19.

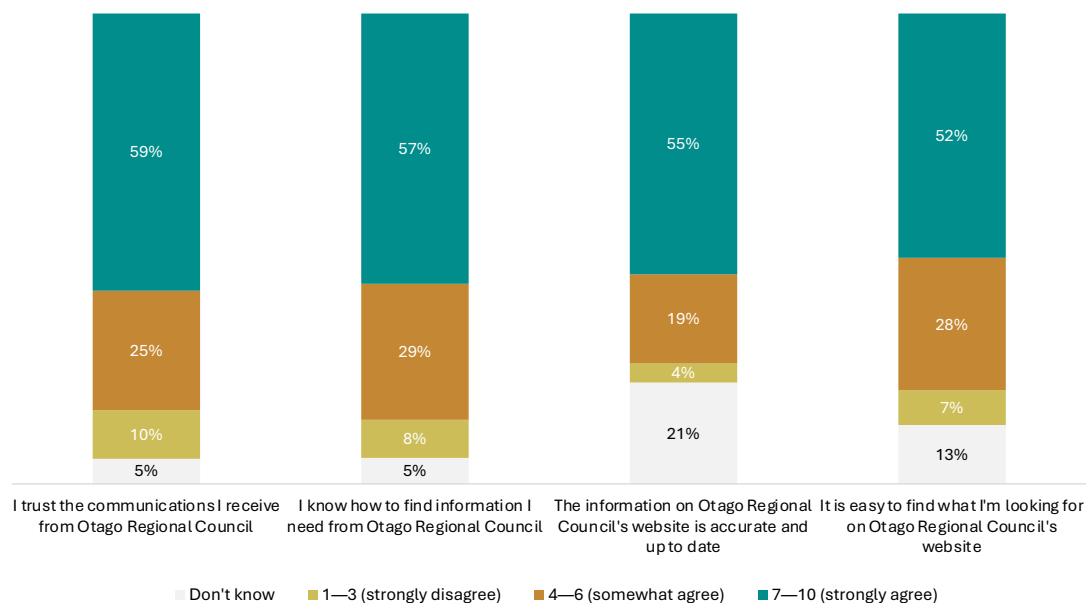
*A + or - sign denotes that the result for that group is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that group.

COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERY

Respondents were asked to rate the Council's communications. Overall, 59% of respondents strongly agreed that they trusted the communications they received from the Council, and 57% strongly agreed that they knew how to find information from the Council. Respondents under 35 years were more likely to strongly agree that they trusted the communications they received from the Council, while those aged 50—64 were less likely to strongly agree.

Among website users, 55% strongly agreed that the information on the Council's website was accurate and up to date, while 52% strongly agreed that it was easy to find what they were looking for.

Otago Regional Council's communications delivery*



Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the information you receive from Otago Regional Council. Base all respondents n=1700, website users n=511.
*Website statements were new in 2026.

COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERY

This year, two of the communications measures were comparable to those from previous monitoring.

The proportion of respondents who strongly agreed that they trusted the information they received from the Council has significantly increased, while the proportions who somewhat agreed or strongly disagreed declined.

Similar results were seen for the measure relating to knowing how to find the Council's information. This year saw a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed with this measure with declines in the proportion who somewhat agreed, strongly disagreed, or who didn't know.

I trust the information I receive from Otago Regional Council: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	40%	39%	45%	59%+
4 — 6 somewhat agree	36%	38%	33%	25%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	16%	15%	15%	10%-
Don't know	8%	8%	8%	5%-

I know how to find the information I need from Otago Regional Council (easy to access): year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 strongly agree	31%	33%	37%	57%+
4 — 6 somewhat agree	38%	38%	35%	29%-
1 — 3 strongly disagree	17%	15%	15%	8%-
Don't know	14%	14%	13%	5%-

Base all respondents n=1700.

*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result. Text in brackets denotes phrasing prior to 2026.

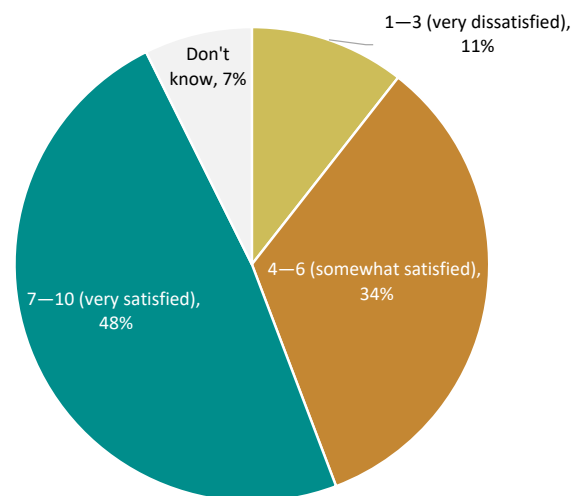
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATIONS

Overall, 48% of respondents were very satisfied with the communications they received from Council, with 34% indicating they were somewhat satisfied, and only 11% very dissatisfied with the Council's communications.

Respondents under 35 were significantly more likely to be very satisfied with the Council's communications, whereas respondents who were 50+ or male were more likely to be very dissatisfied.

This year showed a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who were very satisfied with the Council's communications, up 9% on the previous monitoring period. There were corresponding declines in the proportions who were somewhat satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Overall satisfaction with information



Overall satisfaction with information: year-on-year*

	2021	2022	2023	2026
7 — 10 very satisfied	33%	36%	39%	48%+
4 — 6 somewhat satisfied	40%	39%	38%	34%-
1 — 3 very dissatisfied	19%	18%	17%	11%-
Don't know	9%	8%	6%	7%

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the information you receive from Otago Regional Council? Base all respondents n=1700.
*A + or - sign denotes that the 2026 result is significantly higher or lower than the 2023 result.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATIONS

DISTRICT PROFILE: COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERY AND SATISFACTION

Dunedin City respondents were significantly more likely to hold positive views of the Council's communications than respondents from other areas. This pattern was particularly evident in overall satisfaction, where Dunedin City respondents' ratings were 9% higher than those of the next-closest district (Central Otago District).

Communications summary: district comparisons (7—10 very satisfied ratings only)*

	Central Otago District	Clutha District	Dunedin City	Queenstown Lakes District	Waitaki District
I trust the communications I receive from the Otago Regional Council	50%	49%	64% +	58%	51%
I know how to find the information I need from Otago Regional Council	51%	56%	60%	57%	52%
The information on the Otago Regional Council's website is accurate and up to date	53%	59%	60%	45%	50%
It is easy to find what I'm looking for on the Otago Regional Council's website	52%	50%	55%	48%	44%
Overall satisfaction	44%	42%	53% +	42%	43%

District comparison of communications rating. Base all respondents Central Otago District n=270, Clutha District n=264, Dunedin City n=597, Queenstown Lakes District n=296, Waitaki District n=273. Website users Central Otago District n=99, Clutha District n=60, Dunedin City n=188, Queenstown Lakes District n=103, Waitaki District n=61.

**A + or - sign denotes that the result for that district is significantly higher or lower than the result for all others not in that district.*



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This year's results indicate relatively positive impressions of the Council. Although perceptions have not changed significantly since the last monitoring period, there was strong awareness of the Council's activities, favourable ratings for several Council-provided services, and positive impressions of the Council's communications.

When interpreting these findings, it is important to consider the role and limitations of this feedback. The Community Survey primarily reflects public perceptions of the Council rather than verified service interactions. Respondents' views are shaped by a range of influences, which may not include direct engagement with the Council's services and may instead reflect broader narratives, media coverage, community discussion, or individual expectations.

Accordingly, the Community Survey findings are particularly valuable for informing the Council's communications approach, brand positioning, and overall reputation management. However, they can also serve as an early indicator of potential issues or emerging concerns that may warrant further investigation through more targeted service-level evaluation.

With this context in mind, the following considerations are intended to support future engagement and communications strategies, alongside providing early indicators for operational planning and performance monitoring.

Continue to build on communications gains.

A significant finding in this year's results was the increase in communications perceptions, particularly trust in content and overall satisfaction. Looking ahead, the Council should consider how it can utilise both content and channels to build its regional perceptions.

For content: continue delivering content on localised impact and successful community partnerships.

The Community Survey results indicate a strong link between regional and local satisfaction, although perceptions of the Council vary across districts. To support both regional and local perceptions, the Council should consider how communications can continue to emphasise district-level initiatives and activities. It is especially important not only to showcase these activities but also to highlight the tangible outcomes and impact of local actions, so residents can clearly see the value these efforts bring to their community and the region.

When creating local-focused content, it is also beneficial to emphasise instances where the Council has collaborated with or supported community groups. While the Community Survey results indicate a demand for regional environmental leadership, they also highlight the importance of local action and shared accountability. Showcasing successful partnerships and their positive outcomes can help foster a favourable view of the Council's local and regional role.

For channels: continue to utilise and expand the mix of communication channels to account for increasing fragmentation

Respondents show a strong preference for receiving information about the Council's activities and services directly from the Council, presenting an opportunity to explore and expand how the Council communicates and engages with residents.

Digital channels will continue to grow, offering opportunities to engage more broadly with diverse audiences, particularly through topic videos, expert podcasts, and short-clip social channels. Using broader channels enables content to reach a younger and more varied audience through broader sharing mechanisms, which are unavailable in traditional media formats.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Despite growth in the digital communications landscape, there remains a need to maintain printed communications. Older residents and those who do not connect online must be considered in future strategies to ensure they can receive and engage with the Council's content.

Consider strengthening communications that highlight the Council's role in protecting and preserving the region's environment for future generations.

When looking at environmental importance, there appeared to be a shift in the issues respondents considered critical once they were asked to prioritise their key environmental concerns. When initially selecting issues of importance, water quality and water supply were the key areas identified. This is consistent with previous Community Surveys, which have measured top-of-mind environmental priorities. However, when respondents were asked to identify a single most important environmental issue, the management of growth and natural resources for future generations became increasingly prominent. While water quality and supply remained important, they were placed alongside the long-term preservation of the region's environment.

This shift in prioritisation has implications for the underlying emphasis of the Council's communications. Specifically, it suggests there may be an opportunity to strengthen communications that explain who the Council's work is ultimately for, and why that work is undertaken, placing greater emphasis on how current actions protect and sustain the region for future generations.

Such an approach could sit alongside business-as-usual tactical communications about specific initiatives and services. In addition, it could provide a broader narrative pillar that reinforces the Council's role in safeguarding the region's long-term environmental health and builds a clearer understanding of the purpose behind the Council's work.

Address the relationship between perceptions of value for money and satisfaction ratings.

Perceptions of value for money have remained largely unchanged over the monitoring period. Only 20% of respondents rated this measure positively, while 32% were dissatisfied. Respondents over 50 years, ratepayers, males, and those living outside Dunedin City reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied respondents are also more likely to rate the Council's delivery poorly, with strong correlations between negative delivery ratings and value for money ratings.

Open-text feedback further supports the link between value for money and satisfaction ratings, showing that respondents dissatisfied with the Council's delivery are primarily concerned about cost and organisational efficiency. Specific comments note increases in rates, limited tangible outcomes in respondents' own communities, perceived duplication of services with territorial authorities, and capital investment decisions, such as the new Dunedin office.

Importantly, dissatisfaction with the Council does not appear to stem from negative perceptions of the quality of environmental management or the importance of the Council's work. Rather, feedback suggests that concerns centre on the Council's role and its perceived alignment with what respondents consider 'core' regional functions. This distinction is significant, as it indicates that dissatisfaction with the Council's delivery is less about performance capability and more about spending prioritisation and perceived necessity.

While strengthening the visibility of the Council's community-level impact through communications initiatives (noted earlier) may help address perceptions of limited local delivery, a more direct response to value-for-money concerns is likely needed. This could include communications about the cost of delivering statutory and 'core' services, greater transparency on expenditure and trade-offs in service delivery, or

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

stronger articulation of the Council's distinct role relative to territorial authorities. Given the broader national discussion on local government reform, proactive engagement on these issues may be important to mitigate declining views of the value of a regional environmental body.

Investigate perceptions of service delivery against actual programme delivery.

The Community Survey results indicate that overall perceptions of most activities remain strong. Activities that are more prominently communicated or publicly recognised, such as public transport or river monitoring, tend to attract stronger performance ratings, suggesting that visibility and awareness at least partly influence these ratings.

However, this pattern does not hold for all activities. Some have high awareness (over 60%) but relatively low satisfaction ratings (under 40%). These activities include flood protection, community hazard identification, natural hazard risk reduction, and consent processing. While lower ratings may reflect limited awareness or understanding rather than activity performance, it may be worth conducting a targeted investigation into these early indicators.

Similar findings are evident in the limited user feedback collected by the survey on key Council-provided services. While satisfaction ratings for the website, buses, and rule enquiries have remained consistent, reporting to the Pollution Hotline and applying for the ECO Fund grant have received lower satisfaction ratings than in previous years. Further investigation into these two areas may be warranted to assess whether service delivery aligns with public expectations and to identify any potential service improvements.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX ONE: TECHNICAL NOTES

Method

Data collection

The Community Survey has previously been conducted in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Data collection was undertaken via a combined online and telephone approach. For this year's Community Survey, participant details were sourced from the electoral roll, and a post-to-online approach was used for data collection. The primary reasons for the change in method are cost and the desire to achieve a broader sample across the region, particularly by targeting younger audiences and those in rural areas.

A total of 14300 residents were invited to participate in the Community Survey. Invitation letters were posted to residents, and recipients were asked to complete the survey online. Those who were unable to complete the survey online were offered a paper copy; a total of 23 recipients requested a paper copy of the survey.

The Council promoted the Community Survey via targeted campaigns on its social media channels and website. This component of the data collection aimed to raise awareness of the survey and encourage participation, while also targeting demographics and areas traditionally under-represented across the region.

Responses from both social media and the postal invitations were combined to create a final dataset.

Sample overview

A total of 2302 completed responses were collected from residents. A breakdown of the number of surveys collected from each data collection approach is shown in the table below. The postal survey achieved an 11% response rate.

Data collection approach	Number collected	Proportion of total surveys collected	Number retained in the final sample	Proportion of final sample
Postal invitation	1570	68%	1185	70%
Social media	563	25%	405	24%
Council website	169	7%	110	6%

The final sample was stratified after fieldwork closed to achieve the most representative sample of respondents based on regional gender and age distributions. The final reported sample comprises 1700 responses.

APPENDIX ONE: TECHNICAL NOTES

Notes on reporting

Margin of error

Margin of error (MOE) is a statistic that quantifies the amount of random sampling error in a survey's results. The MOE is particularly relevant when analysing a subset of the data, as smaller sample sizes produce a larger MOE. The final sample size for the study was 1700. This yields a maximum margin of error of +/-2.38% at the 95% confidence interval. That is, if the observed result for the total sample of 1700 is 50% (the point of maximum margin of error), then there is a 95% probability that the true answer falls between 47.62% and 52.38%.

Significance testing

Where year-on-year results have been presented, significance testing has been used to identify statistically significant differences between 2023 and 2026 findings. Significant differences are shown throughout the report, indicated by a + or – sign in the tables and annotated in the page footer.

Weights

Age and area weightings have been applied to the final data set. Weighting is a standard research practice used to correct for any skew in the data set, i.e., to ensure each group is represented as it would be in the population. The weighting proportions are based on the 2023 Census (Statistics New Zealand) and are designed to reflect overall regional proportions.

Presentation of data

The following details should be considered when reviewing this report:

- The question and base size for each chart are shown at the bottom of the page.
- On certain charts, labels of 2% or less have not been shown due to overlapping results, making them difficult to read.
- Due to rounding and multi-choice questions, not all percentages add up to 100%.
- Comparisons to previous monitoring periods are included where appropriate in tabulated format. The text within the tables represents the terminology used in previous monitoring periods. Readers should be aware that the phrasing for some questions may have changed, and some results may be indicative only. Changes in phrasing are noted in the relevant tables.
- Throughout this report, demographic variables were used to conduct the analysis. This analysis has been completed independently for each demographic variable, and correlations between these demographics have not been accounted for or reported in this analysis. Readers should bear this in mind when reviewing these findings.
- Expanded scales of the one to ten ratings are shown in appendix five.

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

Thank you for requesting a survey form. If you have any questions about completing or returning the survey, please get in touch with Natalie Richards at Veritas Research on 0800 837 787.

Enter your Survey ID here: _____

1 Are you 16 years of age or over?	Please tick one response
Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

2 Does anyone in your household work for a local government council in Otago?	Please tick one response
Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

3 Which of the following areas do you live in?	Please tick one response
Waitaki District	<input type="radio"/>
Central Otago District	<input type="radio"/>
Queenstown Lakes District	<input type="radio"/>
Dunedin City District	<input type="radio"/>
Clutha District	<input type="radio"/>
None of these	<input type="radio"/>

4 Please enter the town or suburb you live in: _____

5 Which of the following age groups are you in?	Please tick one response
Under 19 years	<input type="radio"/>
20-34 years	<input type="radio"/>
35-49 years	<input type="radio"/>
50-64 years	<input type="radio"/>
65+ years	<input type="radio"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="radio"/>

6 Which of the following best describes you?	Please tick one response
Male	<input type="radio"/>
Female	<input type="radio"/>
Gender diverse	<input type="radio"/>
I identify as:	<input type="radio"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="radio"/>

Page 1 of 10

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

SECTION A: OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Otago Regional Council is the regional government authority that is responsible for the management of natural resources, transport, and civil defence across the Otago region, including those in Waitaki, Queenstown Lakes, Dunedin, Clutha, and Central Otago districts.

At On a scale of 1 - 10, how well do you think Otago Regional Council does each of the following activities?

If you were not aware that Otago Regional Council undertook this activity, please tick 'I did not know that ORC did this activity'

Please tick one option per row.

	1 - Extremely Poor	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Extremely well	Don't know	I did not know that ORC did this activity
Help to preserve native animals and plants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help to guard against pests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make sure our water, air and land are cared for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Set rules for sustainable use of natural resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Process consents for the use of natural resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Check that rules and consents are complied with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respond to pollution incidents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support sea-harbour and waterway navigation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help Otago adapt to our changing climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identify the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 2 of 10

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

A1 continued	1 - Extremely Poor	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Extremely well	Don't know	I did not know that ORC did this activity
Help communities reduce the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide information about contaminated land	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitor river flows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide flood defences and land drainage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manage rivers through actions such as vegetation control or removing obstructions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide public transport in Dunedin and Queenstown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Own Port Otago as a strategic asset for the region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A2 Have you seen any signs about how to safely navigate Otago's waterways (harbourmaster services)?	Please tick one response
Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

Page 3 of 10

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

A3 For each of the services listed below, please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the SERVICE you received.

If you did not use the service in the past 12 months, please tick 'I did not use this service'.

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Extremely dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Extremely satisfied	I did not use this service
Using public transport in Dunedin or Queenstown (Orbus)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting support from ORC staff to look after the environment or manage pests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Applying for an ECO Fund grant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Applying for a resource consent through ORC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting pollution to the Pollution Hotline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making an enquiry about environmental rules in Otago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the ORC website to locate information about ORC services and rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A4 Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with how Otago Regional Council ...

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Extremely dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Extremely satisfied	Don't know
Delivers its services to the Otago region overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delivers its services to your part of the Otago region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A5 Please explain why you selected the levels of satisfaction for how Otago Regional Council delivers its services to the region and to your area

Page 4 of 10

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

A6 These questions are about your perceptions of Otago Regional Council. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Completely agree	Don't know
Otago Regional Council operates with integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information Otago Regional Council provides to the community is trustworthy, e.g. hazard info, environmental, land practices, rules/regulations, navigational safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otago Regional Council has a good reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otago Regional Council provides value for money for ratepayers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION B: THE OTAGO ENVIRONMENT

B1 The next few questions are about the Otago region and its environment. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Completely agree	Don't know
I am proud to live in the Otago region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel connected to Otago's environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 5 of 10

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

B2 Environmental health is the responsibility of all communities. Thinking about how you want Otago's environment to be in the future, please answer the following questions.

IN COLUMN A: Please select up to FIVE issues that are important to you.

IN COLUMN B: Please pick the ONE issue that you think is the most important.

	COLUMN A Top Five Issues (Tick up to FIVE issues)	COLUMN B Most Important Issue (Tick only ONE issue)
My community is aware of and resilient to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides or extreme weather	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rocks and weeds do not form native plants, animals and ecosystems; land-croppers and businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic and population growth are managed well, leaving space for nature, food and other productive land use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is enough fresh water to meet the needs of my community, businesses and nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good water quality supports a healthy environment, communities and businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otago's native plants, animals, and ecosystems are thriving and healthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressure on Otago's lakes from tourism and population growth is well managed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otago's natural resources are managed to look after the environment and the needs of future generations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otago is playing its part to reduce climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The air my community breathes is clean and good for our health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All issues are important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None of these issues are important	GO TO SECTION C	

B3 Why do you think the issue you selected in COLUMN B (at question B2) is the MOST important issue?

Page 6 of 10

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

B4 Thinking about what is needed to address the issue you selected in COLUMN B (at question B2), please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Completely agree	Don't know
Otago Regional Council needs to play its role to achieve this	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community needs to be supported and empowered to contribute to this	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B5 Please explain why you selected the agreement ratings you did for Otago Regional Council's role and the support your community needs.

SECTION C: OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS

C1 Which of the following do you regularly do?

	Please tick all that apply
Read the news online	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read printed newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read news on Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read news on Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to the radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch the news on TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read online community news and events apps	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read printed community newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get information from other sources (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 7 of 10

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

C2 These questions are about information about Otago Regional Council (ORC).

IN COLUMN A: Please indicate where, or from whom, you CURRENTLY get information about Otago Regional Council.

IN COLUMN B: Please indicate where you would PREFER to receive information about Otago Regional Council.

	COLUMN A Where do you CURRENTLY get information about ORC from (Tick all that apply)	COLUMN B Where would you PREFER to get information about ORC from (Tick all that apply)
ORC website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC flyer/newsletter in the letterbox	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC rates invoice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC offices/Council offices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC's Facebook page	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC YouTube channel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC LinkedIn channel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORC online newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otago Daily Times website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otago Daily Times printed newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (non-ORC) Facebook pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (non-ORC) internet/websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (non-ORC) social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local news apps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Facebook pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people/word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't get any information about Otago Regional Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 8 of 10

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

C3 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the information you receive from Otago Regional Council.

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Completely agree	Don't know
The information on Otago Regional Council's website is accurate and up to date	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to find what I'm looking for on Otago Regional Council's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust the communications I receive from Otago Regional Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to find the information I need from Otago Regional Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C4 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the information you receive from Otago Regional Council?

Please tick one option per row

	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Very satisfied	Don't know
Overall satisfaction with Otago Regional Council information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION D: DEMOGRAPHICS AND PRIZE DRAW

D1 Do you pay rates on a property in the Otago region?

Please tick one response

Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="radio"/>

D2 Which of the following best describes you?

Please tick all that apply

European/New Zealander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Māori	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another ethnicity — write in (required):	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 5 of 10

Otago Regional Council Community Survey 2026

D3 Which of the following best describes the kind of work you do?

Please tick one response

Full-time paid work	<input type="radio"/>
Part-time paid work	<input type="radio"/>
Part-time self-employed/contractor	<input type="radio"/>
Full-time self-employed/contractor	<input type="radio"/>
Caring for children (unpaid)	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>
Not currently in paid employment	<input type="radio"/>
Student	<input type="radio"/>
Retired	<input type="radio"/>
Other — write in (required):	<input type="radio"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="radio"/>

D4 Thank you for completing our survey. If you would like to go into the draw to win one of six \$100 supermarket vouchers, please include your contact details below.

Terms and conditions apply; these can be viewed online at: <https://www.orc.govt.nz/your-council/orc-community-survey-2026-terms-and-conditions/>

Name	
Email	
Phone number	

Thank you for your response. Please place the completed form in the envelope provided and return it to:

Vocus Research
Freemont 172567
PO Box 5516
Frankton
Hamilton 3242

Page 10 of 10

APPENDIX THREE: SAMPLE

The tables below show the trend in demographics over the monitoring period. These proportions do not include 'prefer not to say' responses, so may not add to 100%.

Gender

	2021	2022	2023	2026
Male	52%	41%	47%	49%
Female	48%	29%	53%	50%
Gender diverse	-	-	-	1%

Age

	2021	2022	2023	2026*
Under 39 years	24%	24%	22%	Under 35 years 24%
40-64 years	43%	46%	46%	35-49 years 25% 50-64 years 24%
65+ years	30%	35%	35%	65+ years 27%

*Age brackets changed in the 2026 survey.

Ethnicity

	2021	2022	2023	2026
NZ European/Pākehā	89%	90%	90%	86%
Māori	4%	5%	4%	6%
Pasifika	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	4%	3%	3%	4%
Other	5%	4%	5%	5%

Employment

	2021	2022	2023	2026
Full-time paid work	47%	46%	44%	50%
Part-time paid work	20%	18%	16%	14%
Caring for children (unpaid)	3%	4%	4%	2%
Volunteer work	4%	6%	5%	2%
Not currently in paid employment	4%	4%	4%	4%
Student	3%	3%	2%	4%
Retired	25%	26%	31%	21%
Other	1%	2%	2%	3%

Ratepayer

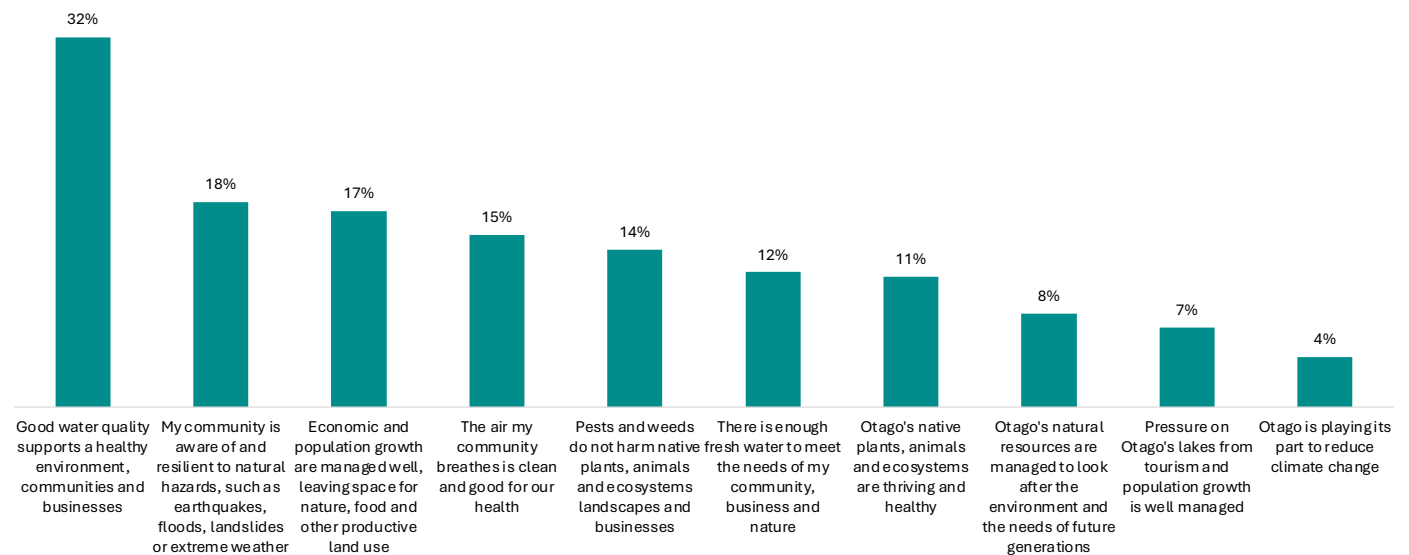
	2021	2022	2023	2026
Ratepayer	80%	80%	80%	76%
Non-ratepayer	18%	18%	18%	19%

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

SINGLE ISSUE SELECTED

Two per cent of respondents selected only a single environmental issue as important, with good water quality the choice of 32% of these respondents. Good water quality was followed by community resilience, growth management, air quality, and pest management.

Environmental priorities (most important)



Environmental health is the responsibility of all communities. Thinking about how you want Otago's environment to be in the future, please select up to five issues that are most important to you. Base all those who selected a single issue, n=51.

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

SINGLE ISSUE SELECTED

Respondents were asked why they selected the issue they did. A total of 41 respondents provided comments, and the reasons were coded into themes after data collection. Given the small sample sizes, only the top three issues have been included in this analysis.

Overall, respondents who selected good water quality believed there were clear problems with the current provision of drinking water, that water quality was important for life, and that poor water quality has direct human health impacts. Respondents who thought that community resilience was important stated that preservation for future generations was important, while those who rated economic and population growth as needing to be managed stated that the environment underpins the economy and that there were human health impacts in balancing growth and the environment.

ISSUE 1: Good water quality 32% (14 respondents)



- Drinking water quality failures 24%
- Is important for life 23%
- Human health impacts 19%
- Everything is interconnected 12%
- Water pollution sources identified 9%
- Future generations and legacy 7%
- Growth outpacing infrastructure 4%

ISSUE 2: Resilient to natural hazards 18% (8 respondents)



- Important for future generations and legacy 15%
- ORC responsibility and leadership expectations 7%
- Important for quality of life and wellbeing 6%
- Other reason 64%

ISSUE 3: Economic and population growth 17% (7 respondents)

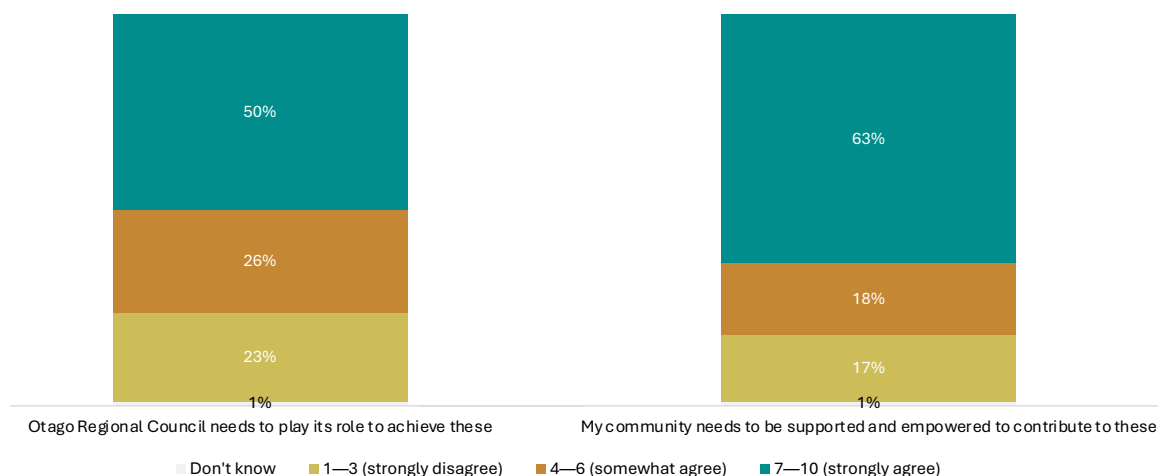


- Environment underpins economy 26%
- Human health impacts 22%
- Historic lack of enforcement/regulation 8%
- Poor planning/land-use decisions 7%
- Other reason 38%

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS SINGLE ISSUE SELECTED

Respondents were asked what was needed to achieve environmental success for their selected issue. Fifty per cent of respondents agreed that the Council has a role to play, and 63% agreed that communities needed support to contribute to positive environmental outcomes.

Requirements to achieve environmental success



Respondents were asked why they gave the ratings they did for the Council and the community. Only 36 respondents provided a comment, and the most common responses expressed dissatisfaction with the Council and a need for greater support for the community. Thirteen per cent of the comments noted the need for collective involvement in environmental management, specifically stating that the Council’s role was in regional direction and leadership.

Rationale for the ratings of the community and Otago Regional Council involvement

Performance dissatisfaction with ORC	20%
Practical tools, incentives, and support for the community	19%
Collective responsibility	13%
Provide regional direction and leadership	12%
Role and clarity overlap and involvement (ORC, council, and central)	6%
Unspecific feedback	15%
Other	5%
Don't know/no comment	13%

You stated that the most important issue is: [ISSUE]. Thinking about what is needed to achieve this, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all those who think only one issue is important, n=51. Please explain why you selected the agreement ratings you did for Otago Regional Council's role and the support your community needs. Base all those who think one issue is important and who provided a comment, n=36.

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS SINGLE ISSUE SELECTED

Twenty-four per cent of respondents identified that all the stated issues were important. These respondents were asked why they thought all the issues were important; their responses were recorded verbatim and then coded into groups after data collection.

The most common theme across these responses was a need and desire to preserve the environment for future generations, with current residents seen as responsible guardians for this to happen. This theme was followed by a sense of urgency and a need to alleviate the environmental pressures, which respondents linked to population growth and climate change. Similarly, 11% of respondents noted the community and economic benefits from having a broader environmental focus. In comparison, 9% of respondents discussed concerns related to specific areas of the environment.

Rationale: all environmental issues are important

Reasons these elements matter NET	59%	Water quality and safe freshwater	6%
Future generations and legacy	24%	Land use, landscapes, planning and urban form	3%
Intrinsic value of environment/taiao/kaitiaki	12%	Pest animals	2%
Interconnected systems and 'everything is linked'	12%	Pest plants/weeds/invasives	2%
Human health and basic needs	9%	Air quality	2%
Protecting what makes Otago special	6%	Natural hazards in practice (flooding, storms, earthquakes)	1%
Safety, risk reduction, and resilience	2%	Water quantity, flows, and allocation	1%
Pressures, change, and urgency NET	12%	Mining and extractive industries	1%
Growth, tourism, and development pressures	6%	Role of council/governance NET	4%
Climate change urgency	4%	Otago Regional Council mandate, duty, and accountability	2%
Environmental decline and degradation (trend over time)	1%	Need for oversight, checks, and balances (esp. local councils)	1%
Need for action/urgency: "not enough being done"	1%	Criticism of Otago Regional Council not doing enough/wrong priorities	1%
Community and economic benefits NET	11%	General comment NET	18%
Sustainability and balance of trade-offs	5%	Generic agreement, e.g., why not, isn't it obvious	16%
Economy and livelihoods depend on the environment	3%	Personal values/identity statement, e.g., just my opinion	2%
Community wellbeing and social cohesion	3%	Don't know/no reason	1%
Issue-specific importance NET	9%	No comment	2%

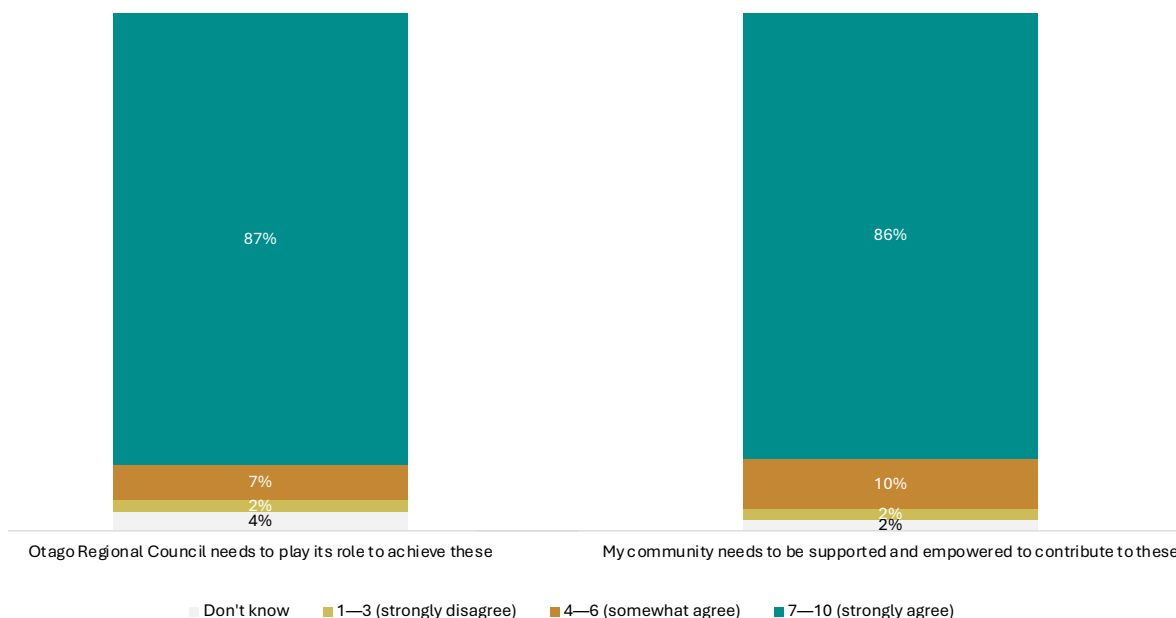
Why do you think all these issues are important? Base all those who think all issues are important and who provided a comment, n=351.

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

ALL ISSUES SELECTED

Respondents were asked what is needed to achieve environmental success across these issues. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents agreed that the Council has a role to play, and 86% agreed that communities also have a role to play and need support to contribute to positive environmental outcomes.

Requirements to achieve environmental success



You stated that all the listed issues are important to you. Thinking about what is needed to achieve all these, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all those who think all issues are important n=409.

APPENDIX FOUR: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

ALL ISSUES SELECTED

Respondents were asked why they gave the ratings they did for the Council and the community. Generally, respondents indicated that they felt the Council had a mandate to take a regional leadership role and to provide guidance and advice to the community. However, there was also a strong sentiment that the community has a collective responsibility for the environment and that supporting communities through engagement and knowledge sharing was important. Elevating local voices was also seen as critical to achieving positive environmental outcomes.

Rationale for the ratings of the community and Otago Regional Council involvement

ORC's leadership, mandate, and regional role	32%	Role and clarity overlap and involvement (ORC, council, and central)	4%
Provide regional direction and leadership	21%	Central government change/plans	1%
ORC as an environmental guardian/steward	10%	Infrastructure, growth, and long-term planning NET	4%
Advocacy for the environment	3%	Long-term planning and risk preparedness	4%
Shared responsibility and fairness NET	34%	Infrastructure before development	2%
Collective responsibility	34%	Local presence, equity, and responsiveness NET	4%
Fairness across sectors	>1%	Visibility of ORC in local communities	3%
Community engagement, education, and enablement NET	19%	Perceived inequity across Otago	1%
Practical tools, incentives, and support	9%	Performance trust and legitimacy NET	4%
Education and awareness	7%	Performance dissatisfaction with ORC	3%
Supporting community groups and local initiatives	6%	Distrust of ORC	1%
Engagement quality and local voice NET	11%	Unspecified NET	6%
Local knowledge and lived experience are critical	7%	Because it is important	3%
Meaningful engagement and listening	4%	Room for improvement	2%
Communication	2%	Satisfied/all is well	1%
Transparency, accountability, and value for money NET	8%	My opinion/how I feel	1%
Value for money and rate fairness	7%	Other	2%
Transparency about actions and outcomes	1%	Don't know/no comment	5%
Governance boundaries and system design NET	5%		

APPENDIX FIVE: EXPANDED RATINGS SCALES

Otago Regional Council delivery of activities

	Don't know	1 — 3 (poor)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (excellent)
Support safe harbour and waterway navigation	26%	4%	3%	11%	7%	48%
Provide public transport in Dunedin and Queenstown	12%	12%	5%	12%	11%	48%
Monitor river flows	24%	6%	4%	9%	9%	48%
Own Port Otago as a strategic asset for the region	24%	5%	4%	10%	8%	48%
Help to preserve native animals and plants	16%	8%	5%	13%	13%	45%
Help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies	18%	7%	6%	13%	11%	45%
Check that rules and consents are complied with	26%	7%	5%	13%	10%	40%
Help to guard against pests	13%	14%	7%	14%	13%	39%
Identify the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	20%	7%	7%	13%	13%	39%
Make sure our water, air and land are cared for	15%	13%	6%	13%	14%	38%
Respond to pollution incidents	30%	8%	6%	12%	8%	36%
Provide flood defences and land drainage	18%	11%	7%	17%	11%	36%
Help communities reduce the risk from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides	21%	10%	7%	13%	14%	36%
Manage rivers through actions such as vegetation control or removing obstructions	22%	12%	7%	12%	12%	35%
Set rules for sustainable use of natural resources	25%	13%	7%	11%	13%	31%
Provide information about contaminated land	33%	8%	6%	14%	9%	30%
Process consents for the use of natural resources	33%	12%	6%	13%	9%	27%
Help Otago adapt to our changing climate	22%	11%	9%	17%	15%	26%

On a scale of 1 — 10, how well do you think Otago Regional Council does each of the following? Base those aware of the service: safe harbours n=812, public transport n=1088, monitoring rivers n=1167, owning Port Otago n=715, preserving native animals and plants n=900, preparing communities n=1068, checking rules and consent compliance n=1132, helping guard against pests n=1010, identifying risks n=1102, caring for air, water, and land n=1779, responding to pollution incidence n=1013, flood defence n=1082, reducing risk for communities n=1002, managing rivers n=1107, setting rules n=951, providing information n=892, processing consents n=1039, adapting to climate change n=725.

APPENDIX FIVE: EXPANDED RATINGS SCALES

Otago Regional Council delivery of services

	1 — 3 (very dissatisfied)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (very satisfied)
Using public transport in Dunedin or Queenstown (Orbus)	11%	4%	7%	9%	69%
Getting support from Otago Regional Council staff to look after the environment or manage pests	7%	8%	8%	8%	68%
Using the Otago Regional Council website to locate information about ORC services and rules	6%	4%	12%	15%	63%
Applying for a resource consent through Otago Regional Council	25%	5%	11%	7%	52%
Making an enquiry about environmental rules in Otago	18%	9%	13%	9%	51%
Applying for an ECO Fund grant	39%	15%	0%	0%	45%
Reporting pollution to the Pollution Hotline	33%	6%	7%	11%	43%

Perceptions of Otago Regional Council

	Don't know	1 — 3 (strongly disagree)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (strongly agree)
The information Otago Regional Council provides to the community is trustworthy, e.g. hazard info, environmental, best practice, rules/regulations, navigational safety	16%	13%	5%	13%	9%	44%
Otago Regional Council operates with integrity	21%	17%	7%	13%	9%	33%
Otago Regional Council has a good reputation	11%	26%	7%	17%	10%	29%
Otago Regional Council provides value for money for residents	16%	32%	8%	14%	9%	20%

Satisfaction with Otago Regional Council's delivery overall

	Don't know	1 — 3 (very dissatisfied)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (very satisfied)
Delivers its services to the Otago region overall	15%	16%	7%	17%	12%	33%
Delivers its services to your part of the Otago region	15%	20%	9%	14%	13%	30%

For each of the services listed below, please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the SERVICE you received. Base all those who used a service: public transport n=476, getting support for managing pests or the environment n=58, applying for an ECO fund grant n=11, applying for a resource consent n=60, Reporting pollution to the Pollution Hotline n=47, enquiring about rules n=74, Using the website for information on services and rules n=346.

These questions are about your perceptions of Otago Regional Council. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all respondents n=1700.

Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with how Otago Regional Council . . . Base all respondents n=1700.

APPENDIX FIVE: EXPANDED RATINGS SCALES

Environmental perceptions

	Don't know	1 — 3 (strongly disagree)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (strongly agree)
I am proud to live in the Otago region	1%	3%	1%	7%	5%	83%
I feel connected to Otago's environment	3%	8%	4%	10%	9%	66%

Requirements to achieve environmental success

	Don't know	1 — 3 (strongly disagree)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (strongly agree)
Otago Regional Council needs to play its role to achieve these	4%	6%	2%	6%	4%	78%
My community needs to be supported and empowered to contribute to these	4%	4%	2%	8%	8%	74%

Otago Regional Council's communications delivery

	Don't know	1 — 3 (strongly disagree)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (strongly agree)
The information on Otago Regional Council's website is accurate and up to date	21%	4%	3%	9%	7%	55%
It is easy to find what I'm looking for on Otago Regional Council's website	13%	7%	4%	12%	12%	52%
I trust the communications I receive from Otago Regional Council	5%	10%	4%	12%	9%	59%
I know how to find information I need from Otago Regional Council	5%	8%	6%	13%	10%	57%

Overall satisfaction with information

	Don't know	1 — 3 (very dissatisfied)	4	5	6	7 — 10 (very satisfied)
Overall rating	7%	11%	6%	17%	11%	48%

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Base all respondents n=1700.

You stated that the most important issue is: [ISSUE]. Thinking about what is needed to achieve this, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base all those who think more than one issue is important n=1180.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the information you receive from Otago Regional Council. Base all respondents n=1700, website users n=511.

