

3WATERS

Our December survey asked participants to rank sources of water pollution in terms of how concerned they are with their impact on freshwater quality in NZ*, the results showed **concern was highest over wastewater discharges** (...not farming impacts!). The opposition to the Three Waters Reform Programme has been well documented in the press. These two public perceptions are an interesting juxtaposition that we thought warranted a closer look.

Despite it being seen as the major culprit in freshwater pollution, current provision is viewed relatively positively. Across the country **only roughly 1 in 5 are dissatisfied** with the current management of stormwater, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. The vast majority also see the service levels as stable compared with last year.

In August 2021 we tested awareness of the Three Waters Reform Programme. Back then, a third of the sample had not heard of it at all. **Awareness has clearly risen**, now only 11% of the sample had not heard of it. Also, a significantly higher proportion now state that they have a good knowledge of the programme.

In both surveys we asked those with at least some knowledge, whether they think the reforms will benefit their local area. Interestingly, the change in awareness levels has shifted the yes vote up. However, there has been no change in the proportion that don't think their local area would benefit, and this still holds the majority.

The reasons against focus on the cost of bureaucracy, loss of local control, and a lack of trust in Labour government.

There were also a number of comments stating that infrastructure is currently well-managed, so no change is needed. However, those that were dissatisfied with the current management of their water infrastructure were just as likely to think that the Three Waters Programme would not benefit their area. This suggests the factors around local control and trust in government are the real problems here.

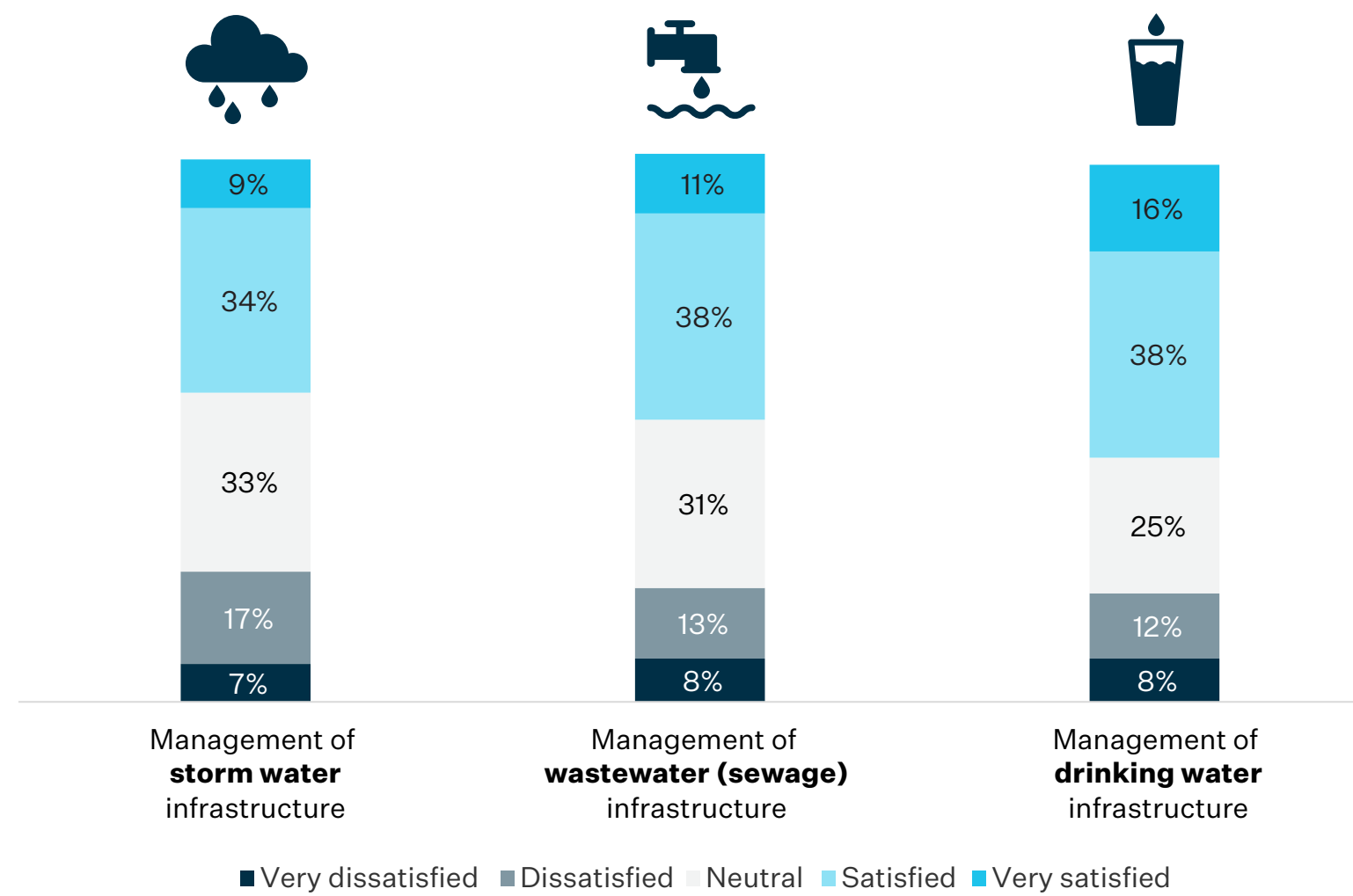
For more information get in touch with Liz Morley: liz@researchfirst.co.nz or visit our website for other key insights reports: <http://researchfirst.co.nz/insights/latest-insights/>

*https://researchfirst.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/25-Sources-of-Pollution_v1.pdf

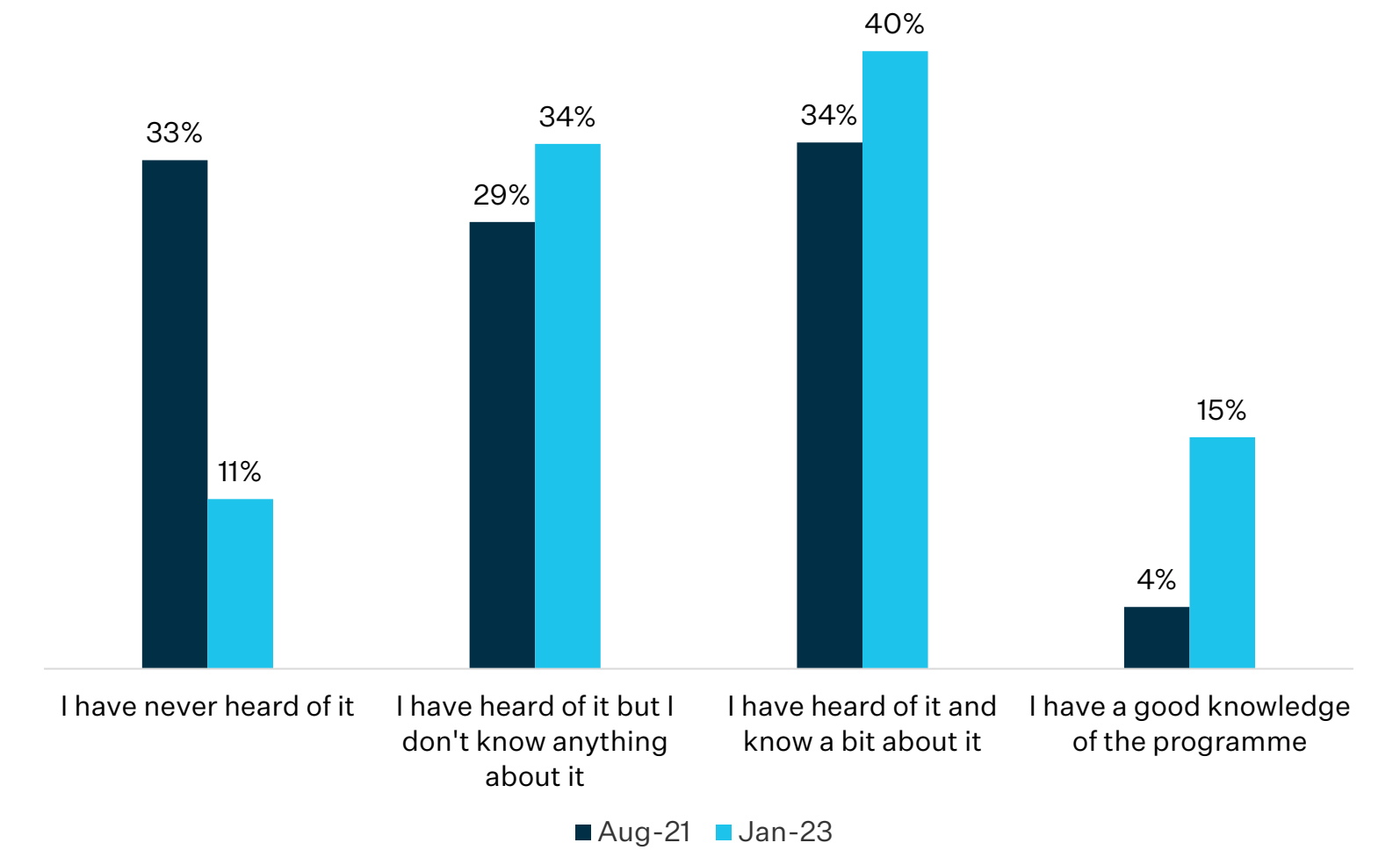
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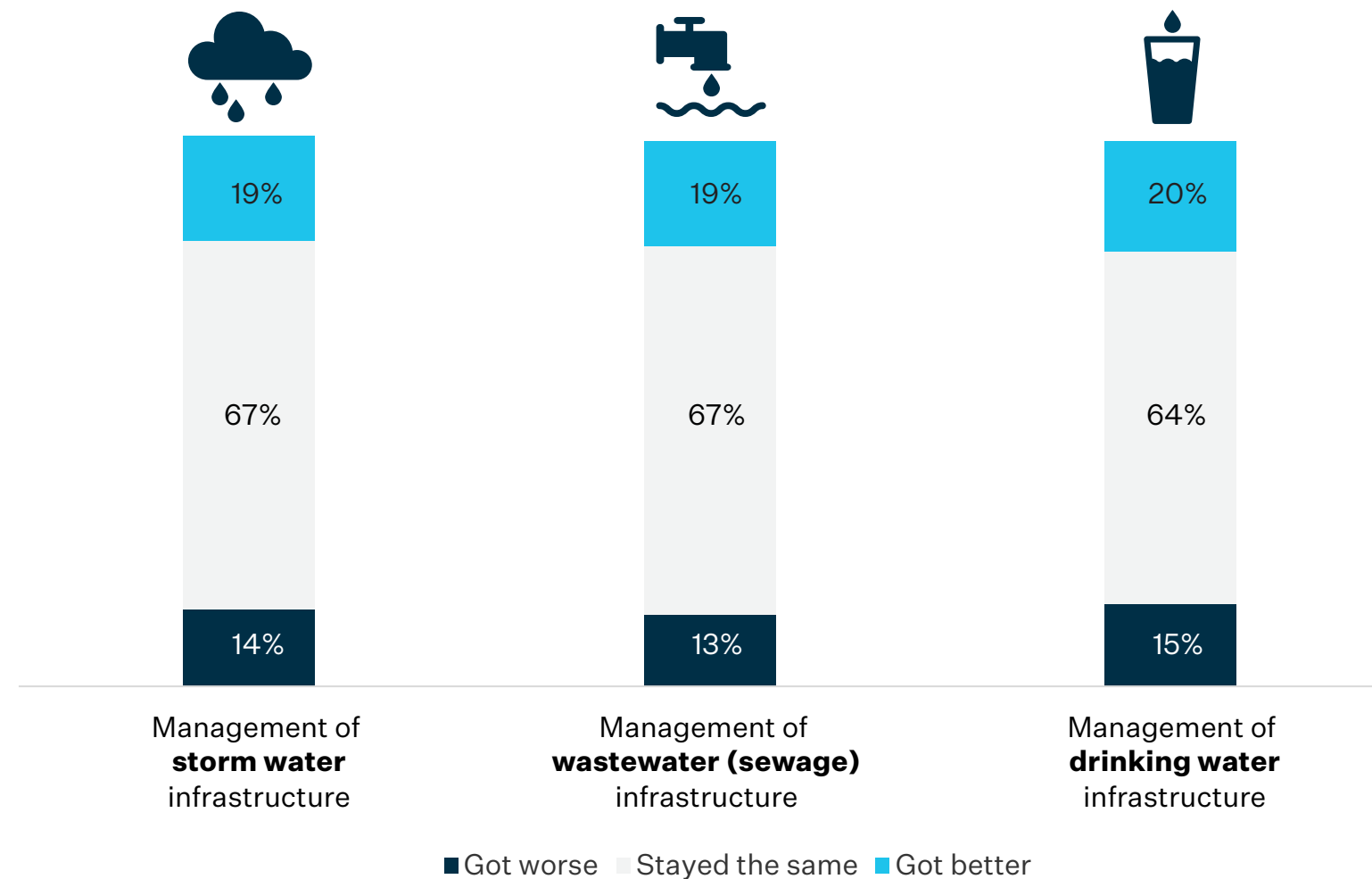
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your local Council's performance?



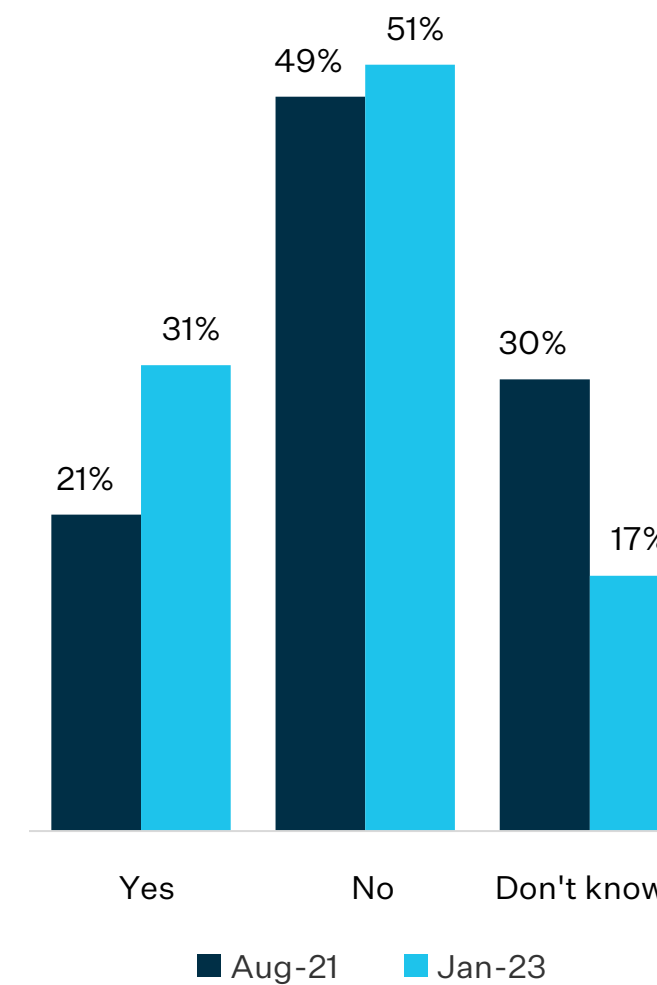
Have you heard about the government's Three Waters Reform Programme?



Do you think they have got better or worse on those aspects over the last year?



At this stage, do you think that the proposed reforms will benefit your local area?



“We will lose our voice and destiny due to larger cities having a big influence on decision making.”

“It will ruin the already good water system”

“The high-handed approach of this Government in stealing all our water assets without any consultation”

“It's so far been about political agendas in regard to the structure and set up for co-governance and people generally have had no say. It has not given any details on actual improvements to water quality. It is set up poorly and will only serve as revenue for Iwi.”