

WHAT IS DRIVING PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

July 2022

This July survey point continues our trend analysis into what is driving perceptions and satisfaction levels for councils across the country.

With many councils adopting annual plans in recent weeks, rates increases have been confirmed and have not gone down well. Our results show the biggest increase in the proportions believing the value for money they receive from their council has got worse over the last year, with roughly half of all residents holding this view.

The most discussed issue though has been the Christchurch stadium. With the majority of the population supporting the project, there was a notable push-back against the way in which the build has been relitigated and brought back for consultation.

Discussion around local body elections has begun to heat up but haven't yet broken through as top issues for residents, with the exception of Auckland. Three Waters is a consistent issue across all regions, most discussion on social media is opposed to the plan.

The information presented here provides a holistic view of public perceptions by combining data from a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders with social media trend analysis.

If you would like to unpack this more, get in touch with Liz Morley
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+8%

Discussion levels relating to local government have risen compared with the previous quarter

Discussion relating to local government.

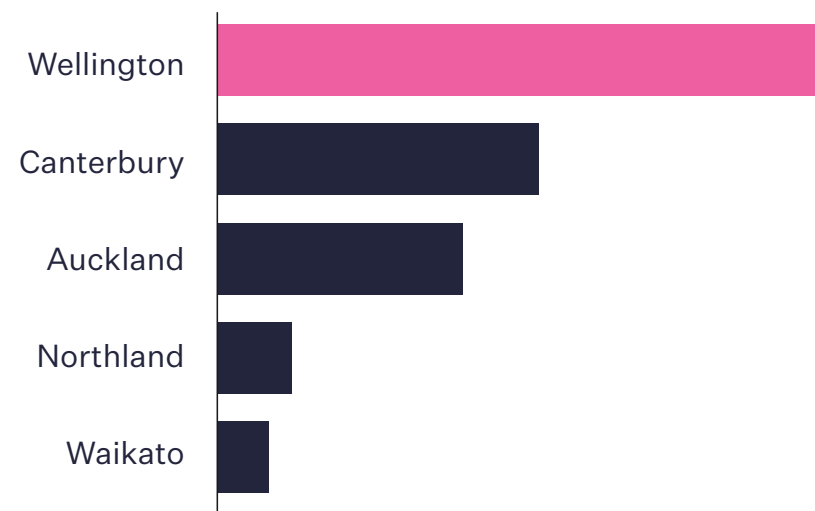
Wellington: Infrastructure was the key issue in the capital. The endorsement of the draft business case for the Wellington Strategic Rail Plan and the debate over water fluoridation drove dialogue.

Auckland: Auckland is the region that has engaged the most with the upcoming local body elections, with a focus on the campaign of controversial Leo Molloy. Transport projects and zoning were also among the top issues discussed.

Canterbury: Stadium, stadium, stadium.

Otago: Issues relating to the environment were at the top of the agenda, with the Three Waters bill a highly contentious issue, and beach access also generating conversation.

Discussion levels by location: weighted for population



When we asked whether residents think their councils are **getting better or worse** in these areas, the results in July are the most negative we have seen. The difference between April and July results is very high in relation to value for money and overall satisfaction.

Proportion who think these services have got worse over the last year	Aug-21	Dec-21	Apr-22	Jul-22
Information on decisions that affect your area	20%	23%	21%	27%
Opportunities to have my say	20%	23%	22%	26%
Value for money	35%	41%	37%	46%
Overall satisfaction	27%	29%	29%	38%

Top trending emojis 2022



The top trending emoji across the country changes:

August: raised fist - linked to speaking out against Council decisions

December: ROFL - related to elements of Council plans seen by some as radical

April: surprise and laughter – linked to disagreement with local government actions

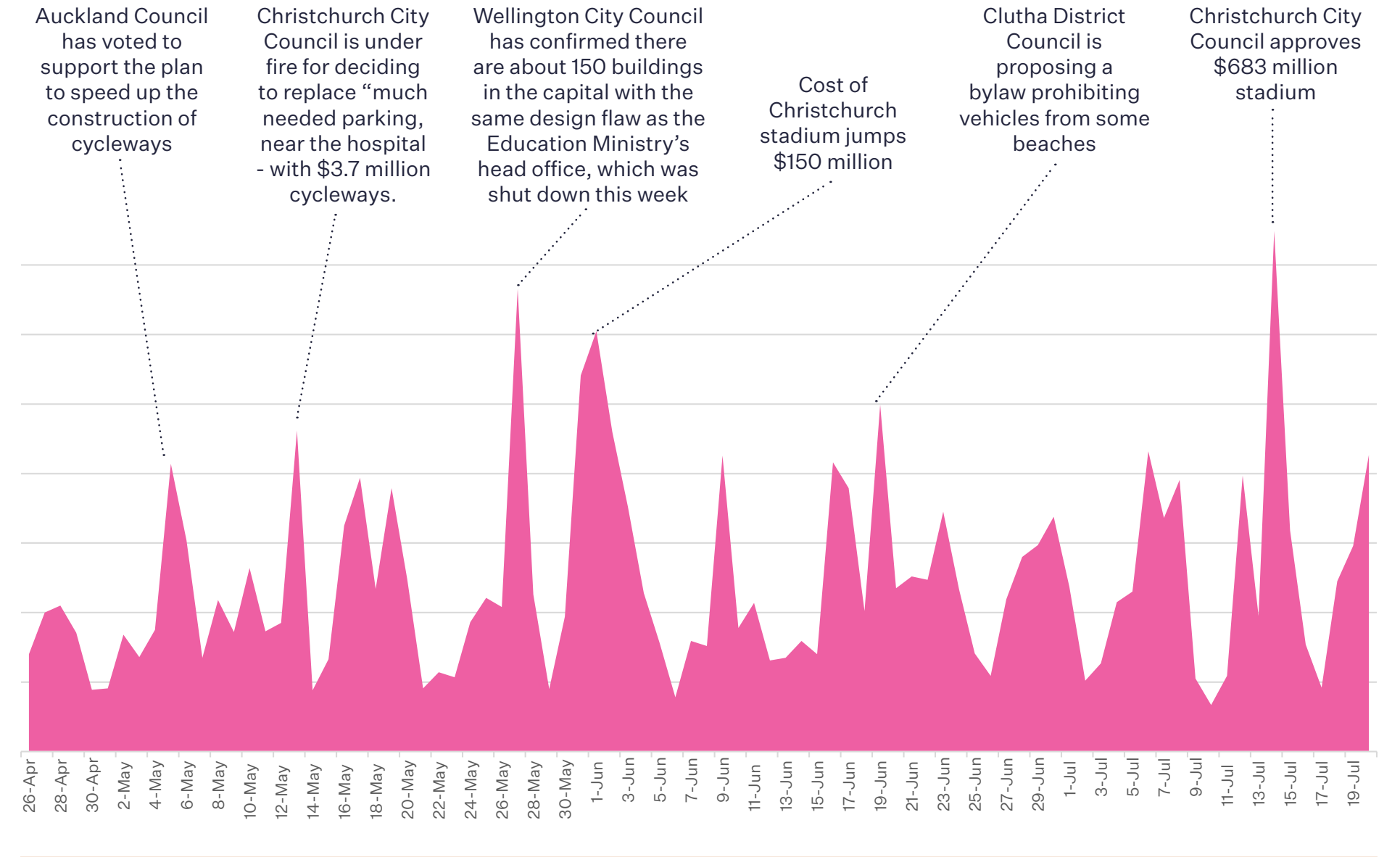
July: thumbs up and applause – linked to the Christchurch stadium approval

Road improvements and public transport remain a high priority across the country. This survey saw a lot of negative feeling toward cycleways and calls for real solutions to congestion.

Rates are a focus. Comments covered the unfairness of rate increases, wasteful council spending and perceptions of council salaries.

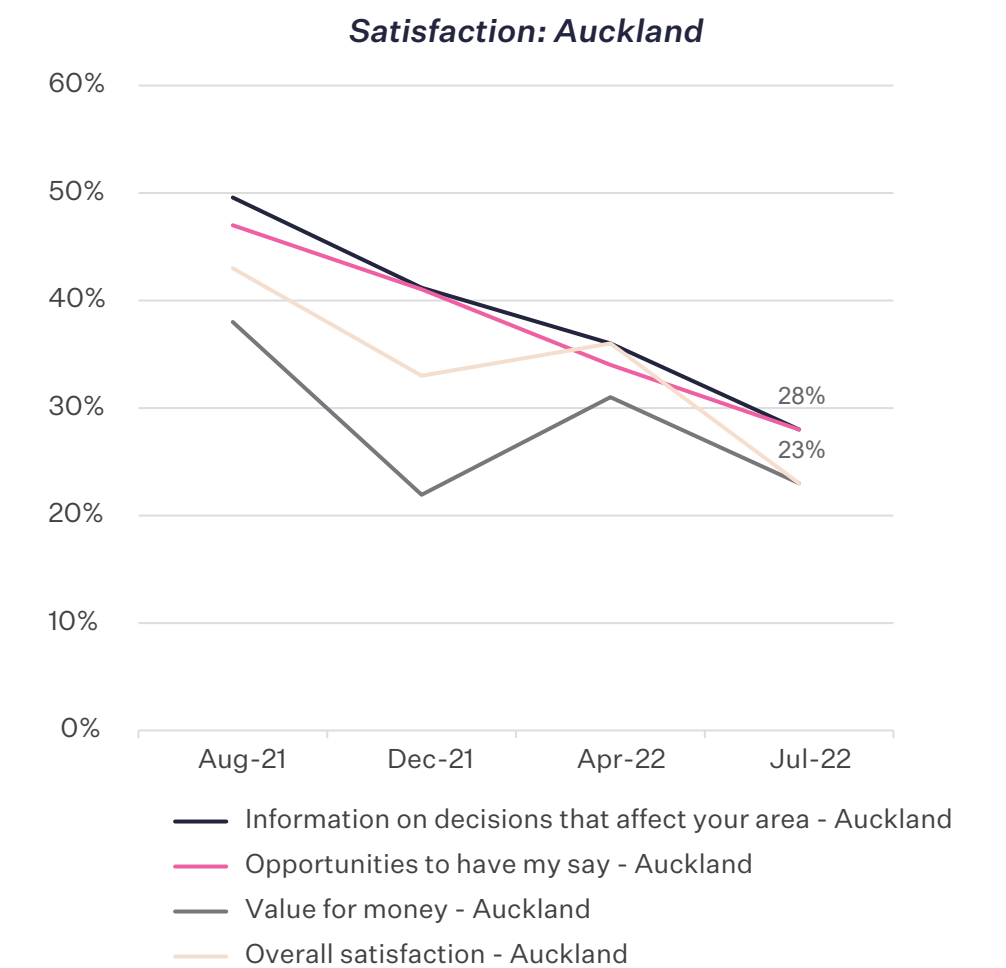
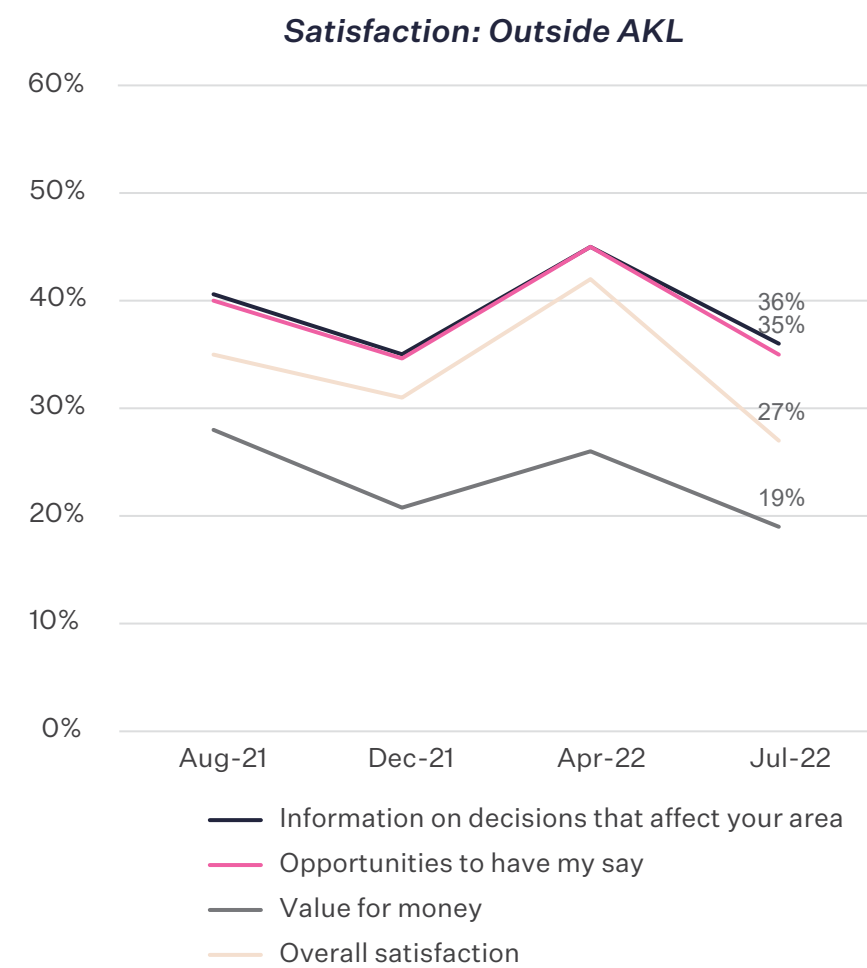
“ They need to provide rate payers value and not get high paid councillors who fill their own pockets and then retire

Water management, tree planting and recycling have all moved up in frequency of mentions.



Improvement areas: Engagement, Comms and VFM

Perceptions of engagement, communication and value for money are the common key drivers of overall negative perceptions resident feedback surveys. After improved perceptions outside of AKL in April, July results have dropped back to the summer results. Auckland results continue to decline.



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