

Residents Survey Report

Period: January to June 2026

Overview

This report summarises results from council's refreshed Residents' Survey for January–June 2026. A total of 265 responses were received through council channels and community events. As the survey is voluntary and self-selected, the findings should be treated as indicative of respondent sentiment rather than statistically representative of Northland's population.

Overall, the results show a community that broadly supports the outcomes NRC is working towards, particularly environmental protection, biodiversity, transport resilience and economic wellbeing. Confidence in NRC's contribution to delivering those outcomes is more moderate, with notable levels of neutrality and uncertainty across several measures.

Awareness of NRC is relatively strong, with more than three-quarters of respondents indicating they are somewhat or very familiar with council's role. However, almost one quarter have limited familiarity, and some feedback suggests there remains confusion about the respective responsibilities of regional and district councils.

In terms of trust and confidence, respondents were generally more positive than negative about NRC's decision-making, responsiveness to community feedback, use of rates and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. However, large neutral and "don't know" cohorts across several measures suggest many residents do not yet feel sufficiently informed to form strong views. Perceptions around use of rates and responsiveness to feedback remain the most mixed.

Open-ended feedback identified communication and engagement, environmental protection, biosecurity, water monitoring, flood management and civil defence as key strengths. Communication also emerged as a significant improvement opportunity, with respondents seeking greater local visibility, easier access to information, clearer explanations of council activities and decisions, and stronger evidence that community feedback is being heard and acted on.

Rates and value for money were a prominent improvement theme, alongside calls for increased biosecurity action, stronger pest and weed control, continued environmental protection initiatives, and improvements to public transport services. Overall sentiment remained broadly stable and neutral-to-positive, with an average rating of 3.15 out of 5.

Survey methodology and reporting context

The Residents' Survey is an ongoing feedback tool designed to provide insight into community awareness, sentiment and perceptions of council's performance across its community outcomes. It covers familiarity with NRC, community priorities, trust and confidence,

communications and engagement, and residents' views on what council is doing well and where it could improve.

Responses were collected throughout the reporting period via council communication channels and community events and were analysed by staff. A total of 265 responses were received during the reporting period. Response numbers vary slightly by question as respondents were able to skip individual questions.

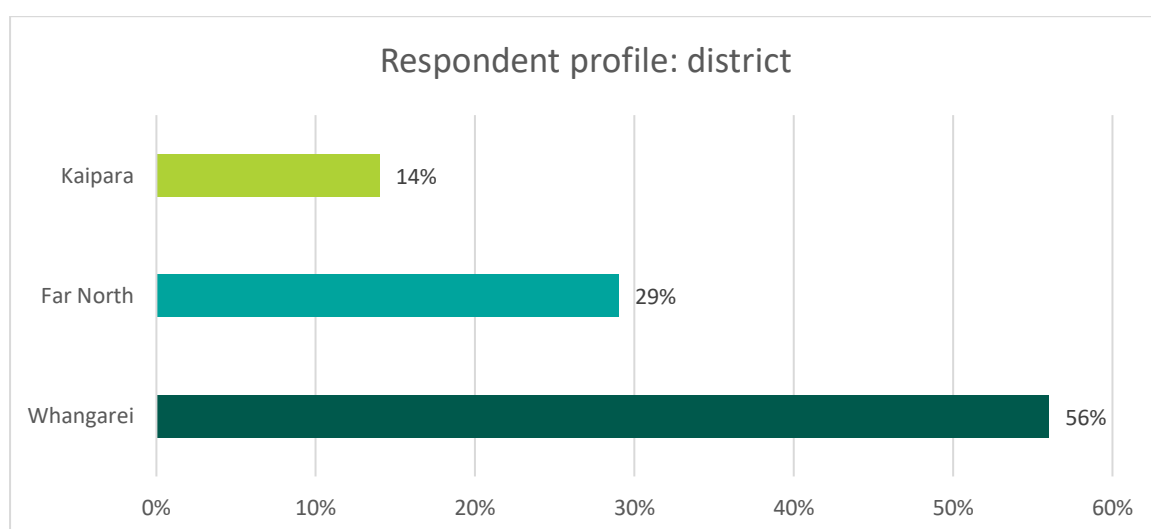
The in-house survey is voluntary and self-selected. As a result, findings provide an indication of respondent views but are not statistically representative of Northland's population. Māori and younger residents were slightly under-represented compared with regional population estimates. Response source also influenced some results, with respondents completing the survey at community events generally reporting higher sentiment than those participating through other channels.

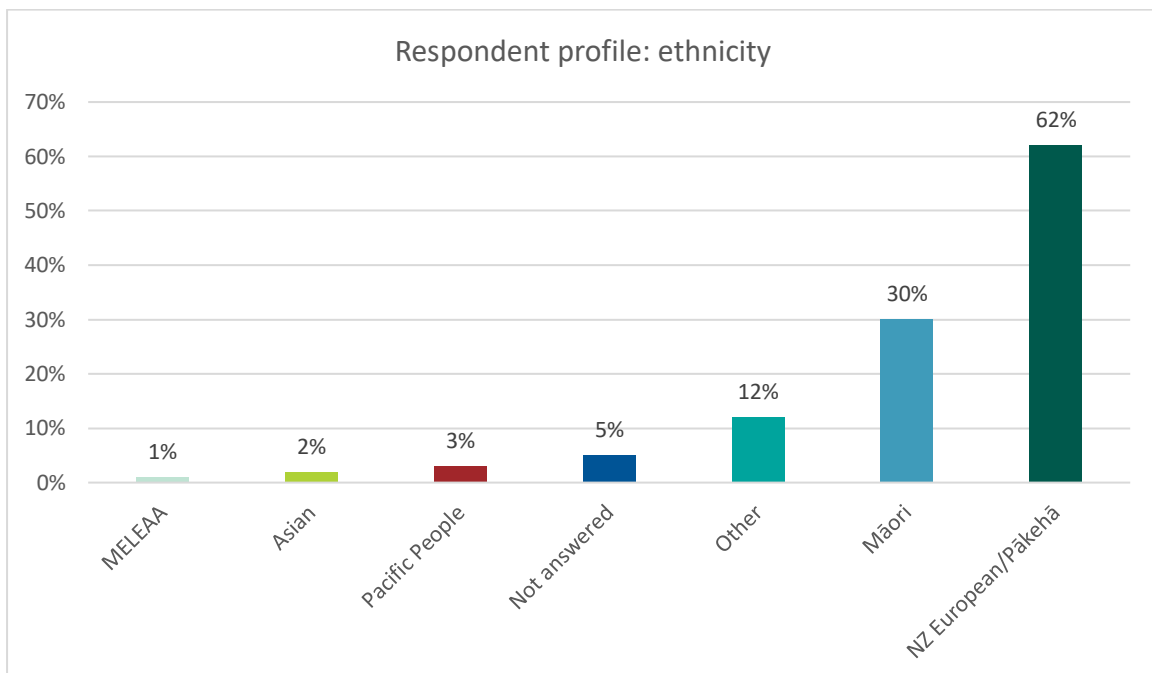
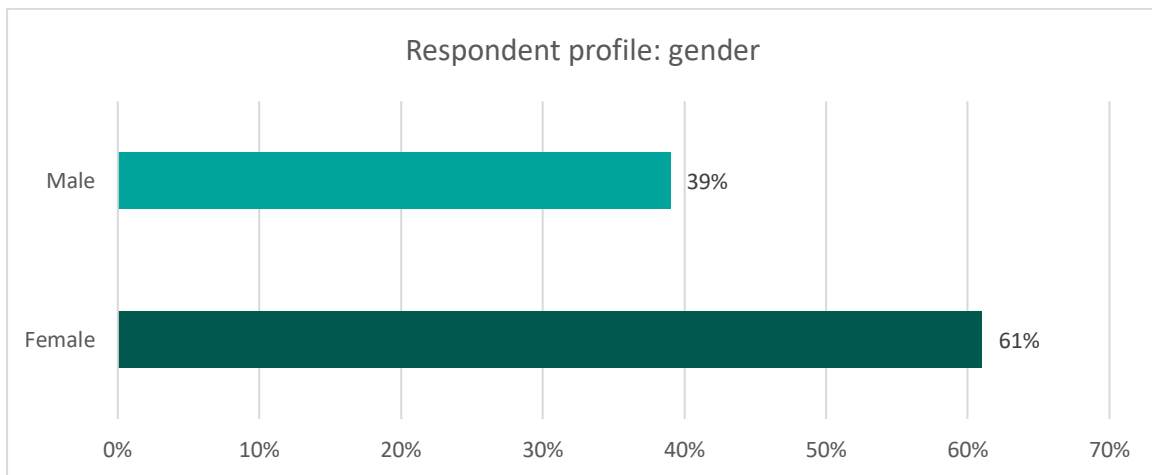
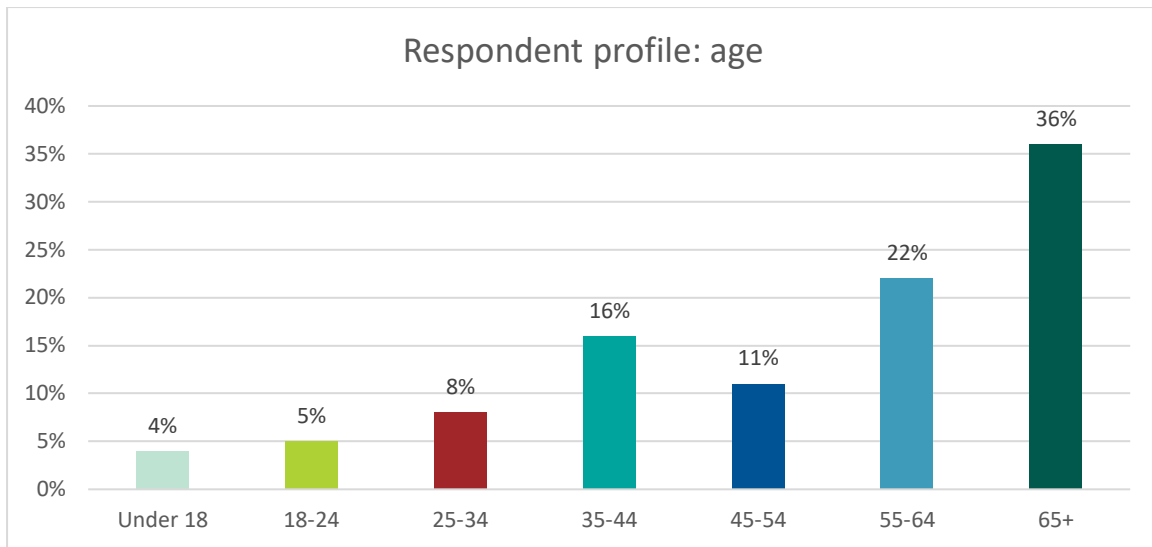
Following an internal review, the survey was refreshed in late 2025 to improve response quality and reporting value. This report (January–June 2026) represents the first full six-month reporting period under the revised framework.

Where relevant, previous results are included to provide directional context on movement over time. However, the July–December 2025 reporting period includes responses collected under both the previous and revised survey formats, so should be interpreted with caution due to changes in survey design, question wording, response scales, and survey promotion methods.

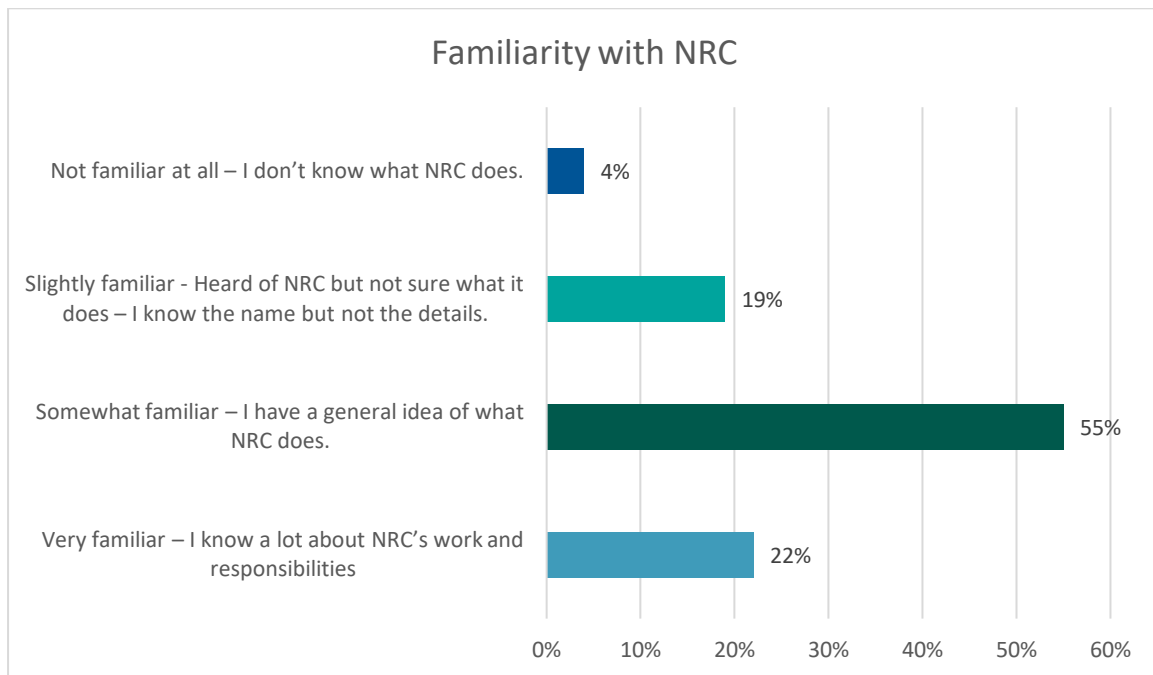
Respondent profile

Respondents were drawn from all three district areas and included a range of ages, genders and ethnicities. However, because the survey is voluntary and self-selected, and some groups are under-represented, findings should be treated as indicative of respondent views rather than representative of the Northland population.



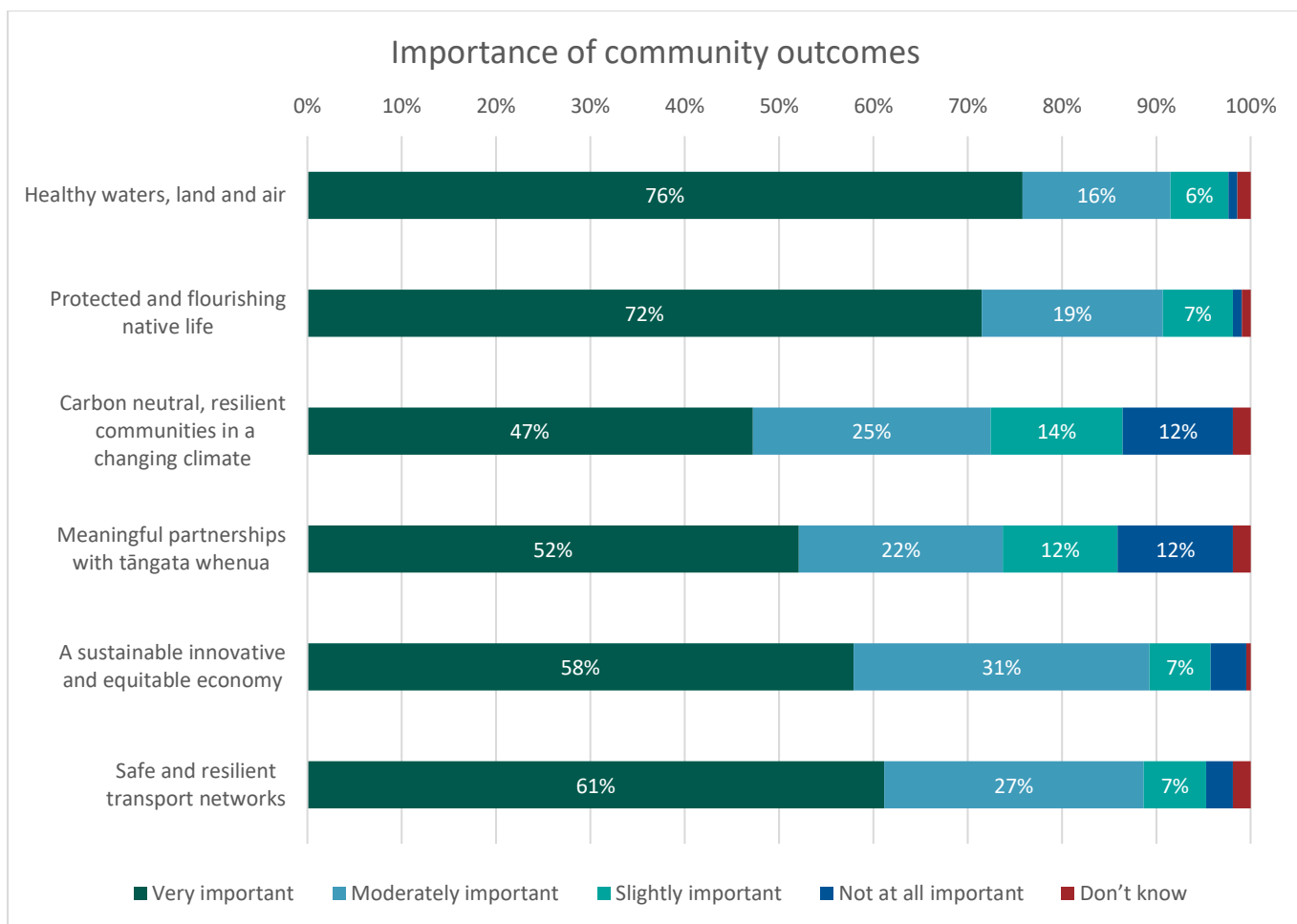


Key findings



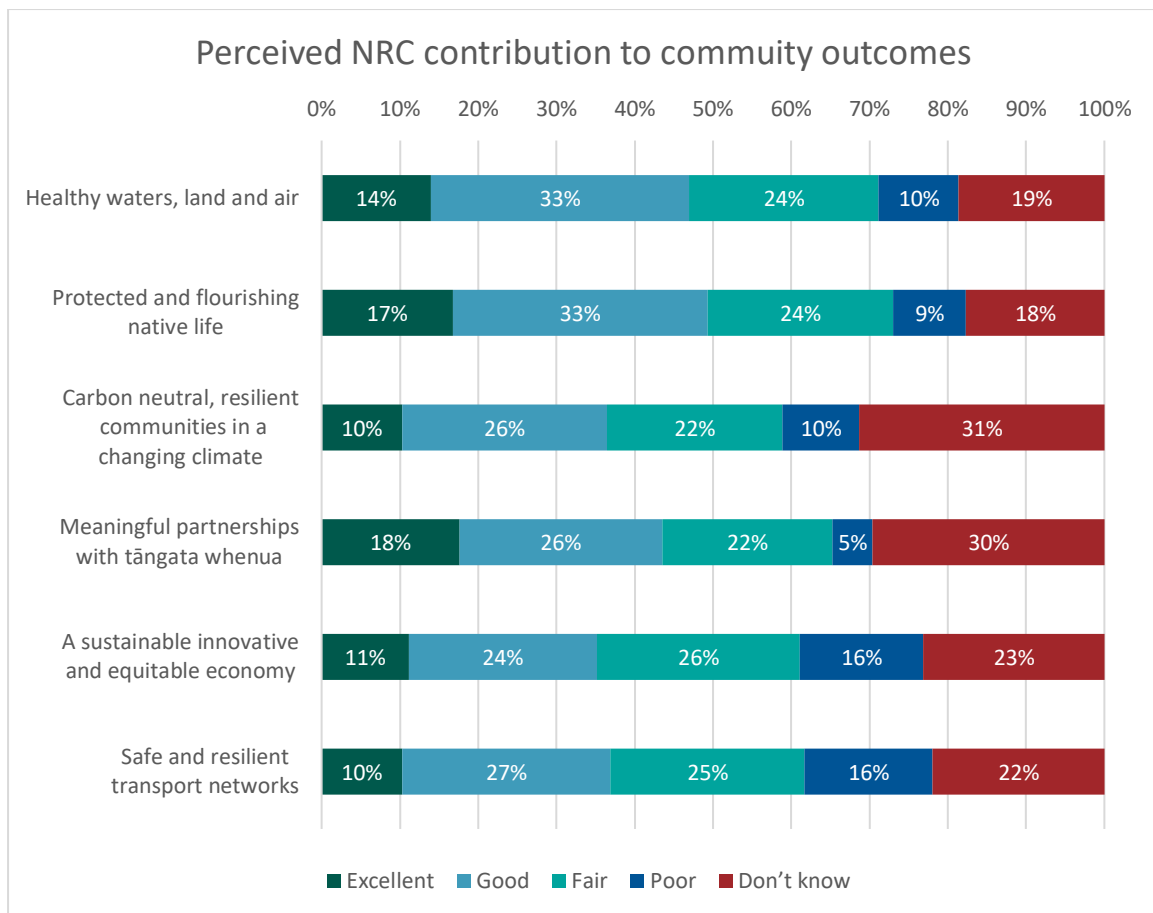
Awareness of NRC is relatively strong, with more than three-quarters of respondents indicating they are somewhat or very familiar with Council's role and responsibilities. Nearly one quarter have limited understanding of NRC's role, presenting an ongoing opportunity to improve public understanding.

Trend: This question was introduced as part of the refreshed survey and therefore establishes a baseline for future reporting.

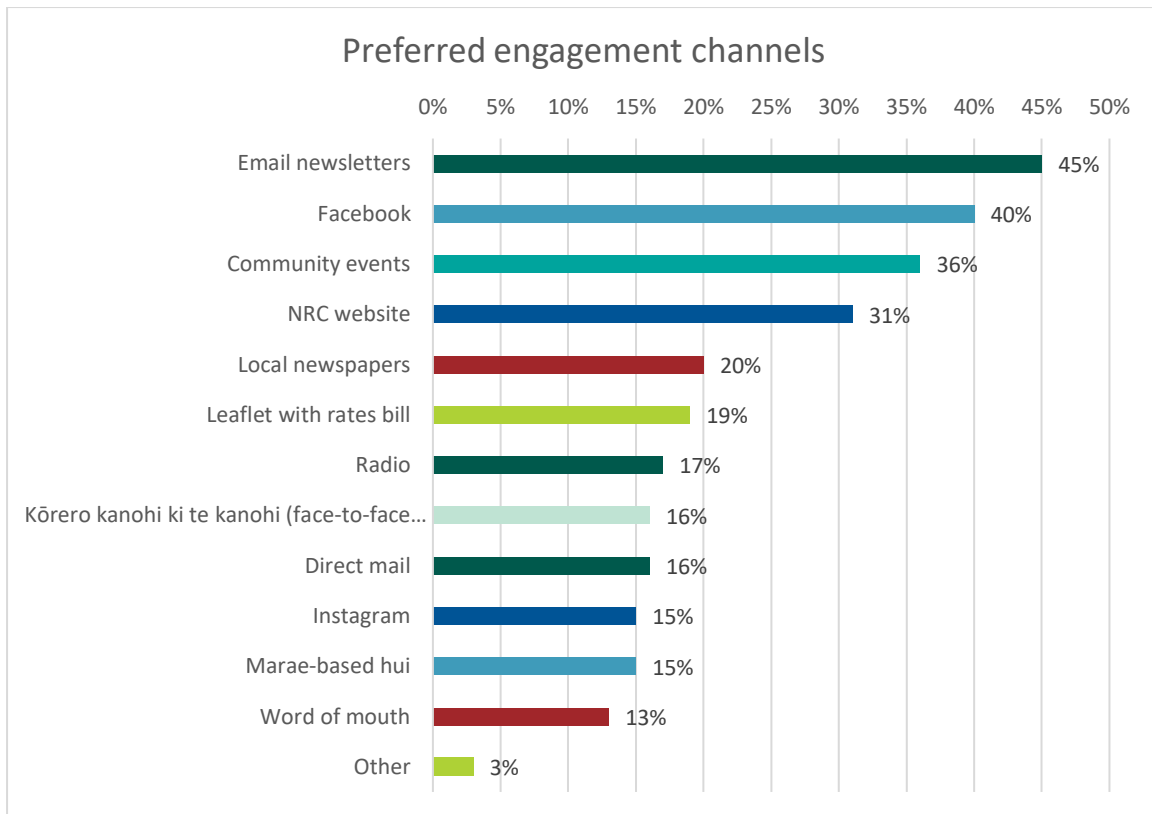


- Environmental outcomes were consistently rated as the most important community outcomes, reinforcing the central role residents expect NRC to play in environmental stewardship
- Resilient communities and partnerships with tangata whenua attracted more diverse views, although both were still considered important by most respondents, but also had the highest "not at all important" responses.

Trend: Comparison with previous reporting period may indicate increased support for transport outcomes and tangata whenua partnerships, while climate resilience appears less prominent than previously. However, changes to question wording and survey design mean these results should be interpreted as indicative only.

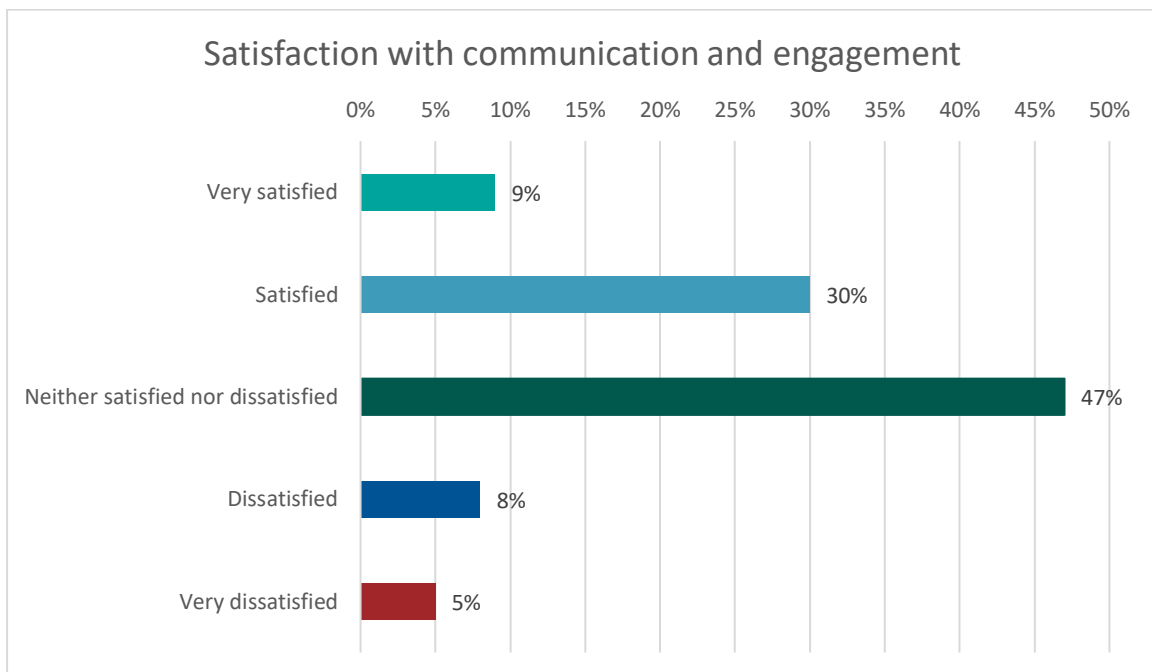


- Respondents were most likely to perceive NRC as making a positive contribution to environmental outcomes
- Across all outcomes, most responses sit in the Good/Fair range, with relatively low Poor ratings.
- Awareness remains a challenge, with a significant proportion of respondents unsure how NRC contributes to some outcomes (particularly climate resilience and tangata whenua partnerships), suggesting ongoing opportunities to increase awareness of NRC's role, activities and achievements.



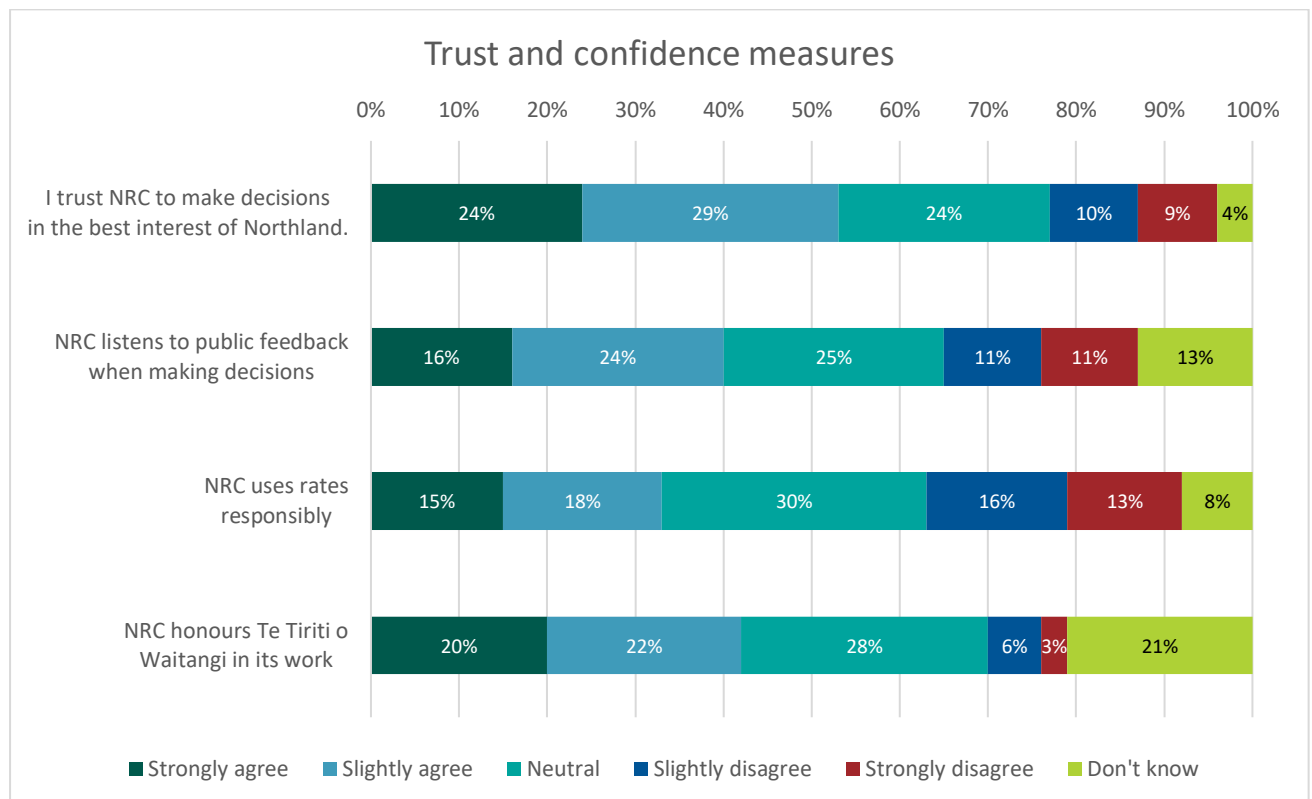
The results reinforce the importance of a multi-channel engagement approach. While digital channels provide the broadest reach, respondents continue to value opportunities for direct, face-to-face engagement with council.

Trend: This question was introduced as part of the refreshed survey and therefore establishes a baseline for future reporting.



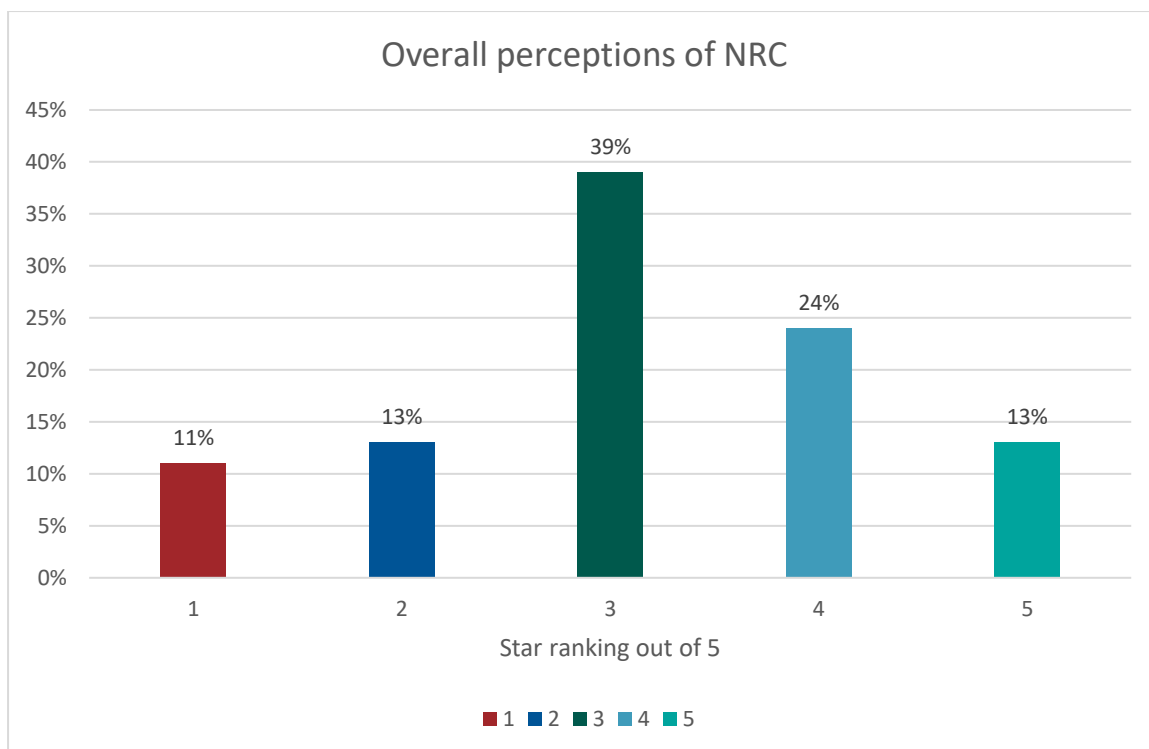
- Respondents were generally neutral to positive about NRC's communication and engagement activities.
- While nearly half of respondents selected a neutral rating (47%), positive ratings (39%) outweighed negative ratings (14%)
- Opportunities remain to improve communication effectiveness and increase awareness of NRC's work and responsibilities.

Trend: Satisfaction with NRC's communication and engagement activities remained broadly consistent with the previous reporting period. While positive ratings were slightly lower, negative ratings decreased (20% to 14%), resulting in a 10% higher proportion of neutral responses.



- Respondents were generally more positive than negative across the trust and confidence measures.
- Confidence was strongest in NRC's decision-making, while perceptions of fiscal responsibility and responsiveness to public feedback were more mixed.
- Responses relating to Te Tiriti showed comparatively high levels of uncertainty, with around one in five respondents selecting 'Don't know'.

Trend: This question was introduced as part of the refreshed survey and therefore establishes a baseline for future reporting.



- Overall perceptions of NRC were neutral to positive, with an average rating of 3.15 out of 5.
- Community perceptions are generally moderate rather than strongly positive or strongly negative.

Trend: Overall sentiment remained broadly stable, with the average rating moving from 3.12 out of 5 in July-December 2025 to 3.15 out of 5 in January-June 2026.

Strengths and improvement opportunities

Many respondents took the opportunity to provide detailed comments about NRC's work. These comments were reviewed and grouped into common themes to help identify what residents value most, where they would like to see improvement, and the issues that matter most to them.

What we're doing well		
Theme	Mentions	%
Communication & Engagement	34	23%
Pest & Weed Control / Biosecurity	24	17%
Environmental Protection & Biodiversity	18	12%
Water Quality & Environmental Monitoring	14	10%
Flood Management	5	3%
Treaty Partnerships / Māori Engagement	4	3%
Civil Defence & Emergency Management	4	3%

Areas for improvement		
Theme	Mentions	%
Communication & Engagement	30	20%
Rates & Value for Money	22	14%
Pest & Weed Control / Biosecurity	20	13%
Infrastructure & Transport	13	9%
Treaty Partnerships / Māori Issues	12	8%
Environmental Protection & Biodiversity	8	5%
Water Quality & Environmental Monitoring	4	3%
Flood Management	2	1%

Communication and engagement emerged as both a key strength and an area for improvement. Many respondents positively referenced being kept informed through newsletters, social media, public events, and direct engagement with staff. Respondents valued NRC's visibility in communities, accessibility of information, and opportunities to provide feedback. At the same time, many called for greater local-level engagement, easier access to information, more communication through a wider range of channels, clearer explanations of council activities and decisions, and stronger evidence that community feedback is being heard and acted on. Some respondents also highlighted positive interactions with staff and access to practical advice.

Environmental protection, biosecurity, monitoring, flood management and civil defence work were frequently identified as strengths. Positive comments referenced pest plant and animal control, trapping programmes, environmental protection initiatives, freshwater and coastal monitoring, flood schemes, and emergency management activities. Many respondents expressed support for NRC's environmental focus and recognised the value of work undertaken to protect Northland's natural environment.

Rates and value for money were a prominent improvement theme, with respondents seeking clearer information about how rates are used, stronger control of spending, and clearer links between council investment and community outcomes.

Many respondents also called for increased investment in biosecurity, including greater weed and pest control, expanded community pest management programmes, stronger invasive species management, and increased support for environmental protection initiatives. Several comments reflected a desire for more visible environmental action and practical on-the-ground outcomes.

Public transport was another recurring theme. Respondents suggested improvements to bus routes, service frequency, operating hours, commuter connectivity and access to services in areas such as Kerikeri and Waipapa.

Feedback on Māori partnerships and Te Tiriti o Waitangi reflected a range of views. Some respondents supported stronger relationships with iwi, tangata whenua and mana whenua, while others questioned the level of focus in this area. This indicates an area where community views differ.

Some comments related to services delivered by territorial authorities rather than NRC functions. More than 12% of improvement comments referenced matters such as local roads,

public toilets, rubbish collection, parks, dog control, libraries, public housing and building consents.

Overall conclusion

The survey suggests residents broadly support the outcomes NRC is working towards and generally hold neutral-to-positive views of council. The strongest opportunities lie in increasing awareness of council's role, demonstrating the impact of council's work, and continuing to strengthen communication and engagement with communities. Results should be interpreted as indicative of respondent sentiment rather than representative of the wider Northland population