



Improving Water & Sewer Services – Customer Engagement Phase 3

July 2023



Water
and Sewer



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Executive Summary



1 Executive Summary

This report summarises the key findings from Phase 3 of Central Coast Council's Customer Engagement Program for ongoing engagement for IPART and the Water and Sewer Masterplan.

1.1 Background & Objectives

The objectives for Phase 3 of the engagement program were to:

- Test agreement with the community values developed during the Phase 1 and 2 forums with the wider community,
- Test how customers would like the existing and additional performance metrics to be communicated and how frequently,
- Test how the further information desired from Council, as specified from customers at the Phase 2 forums, should be communicated, and
- Test how customers would like to be communicated with about planned and unplanned interruptions.

1.2 Research Methodology

Phase 3 involved the following components:

- A mixed mode survey conducted by Woolcott Research amongst $n^1=626$ respondents (n=504 residents and n=122 businesses) (called 'WR Survey'),
- An opt-in online survey open to Central Coast Council residents and businesses through the Council's Your Voice Our Coast website that gained n=606 respondents (n=461 residents and n=145 businesses) (called 'YVOC Survey').

Businesses were defined as the owner of, or a senior decision maker for, a small or medium business in the Central Coast Council area with less than 200 employees.

The main themes from these activities are outlined below.

¹ n denotes the number of respondents in the sample.

1.3 Values and Outcomes

There is strong agreement with the water supply and sewerage service values and outcomes developed from the Phase 1 and 2 customer forums (Water Supply: Residents 88%, Businesses 88%; Sewerage Service: Residents 86%, Businesses 88%).

1.4 Performance Measures

Most customers are unaware that Council reports its performance on existing measures publicly (Residents 78%, Businesses 65%).

The preference for the reporting of existing performance measures is with quarterly bills (Residents 59%, Businesses 58%) and on Council websites (Residents 45%, Businesses 47%). Businesses are also significantly more likely to suggest email (42%) than residents (28%).

During the Phase 2 forums participants requested that some additional performance measures be reported on publicly by Council and in the survey respondents were asked how these should be reported on and how frequently. For the additional performance measures suggested, most want these reported publicly on a quarterly basis, generally on the Council websites (except for the average level of water consumption which customers want reported on bills). There was a trend for younger age groups to prefer online communication more than older age groups. However, older age groups did not express a strong desire for printed communication with bills either.

The following table provides a summary of the proportion of respondents who selected the top answers for each performance measure.

Table 1: Summary of findings for additional performance measures

	Residents (n=945)		Businesses (n=267)	
Proportion of urgent and non-urgent issues responded to within 1 and 5 business days respectively	Council websites (51%)	Quarterly (60%)	Council websites (50%) and bills (40%)	Quarterly (57%)
Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g. levels of pollutants emitted)	Council websites (55%) and bills (38%)	Quarterly (59%)	Council websites (54%) and bills (50%)	Quarterly (62%)
Number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable'	Council websites (58%)	Quarterly (57%)	Council websites (57%) and bills (39%)	Quarterly (60%)
Number of algal blooms in dams	Council websites (54%)	Quarterly (58%)	Council websites (55%) and bills (39%)	Quarterly (56%)

	Residents (n=945)		Businesses (n=267)	
Average level of water consumption by customers	With bills (61%) and on Council websites (40%)	Quarterly (74%)	With bills (68%) and on Council websites (42%)	Quarterly (71%)
Volume of water lost from water mains breaks	Council websites (52%) and bills (38%)	Quarterly (64%)	Council websites (52%) and bills (45%)	Quarterly (57%)
Volume of sewage overflows	Council websites (55%) and bills (34%)	Quarterly (61%)	Council websites (53%) and bills (46%)	Quarterly (67%)
Number of infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects – planned and completed	Council websites (58%) and bills (41%)	Quarterly (60%)	Council websites (57%) and bills (46%)	Quarterly (57%)

1.5 Additional Information from Council

At the Phase 2 forums, participants also requested that some additional information be communicated by Council. In the survey respondents were asked how they wanted this communicated. Most want the additional information communicated on the Council websites and via social media. Again, there was a trend for younger age groups to prefer online communication more than older age groups, however older age groups did not express a desire for printed communication.

The following table provides a summary of the proportion of respondents who selected the top answers for each piece of additional information.

Table 2: Summary of findings for additional information

	Residents (n=945)	Businesses (n=267)
Real time information when sewage overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways	Council websites (62%), social media (53%) and email (35%)	Social media (61%), Council websites (60%), and email (37%)
Environmental water sampling	Council websites (67%), social media (33%)	Council websites (64%), social media (41%)

	Residents (n=945)	Businesses (n=267)
A water quality rating to check before you swim at a beach/lagoon	Council websites (68%) and social media (49%)	Council websites (66%) and social media (54%)
Better information on water events, e.g. flooding	Council websites (66%) and social media (51%)	Council websites (62%) and social media (55%)
Locations with lower quality drinking water	Council websites (65%), social media (47%) and email (34%)	Council websites (64%), social media (48%) and email (37%)
Reasons for any changes in drinking water quality	Council websites (60%), social media (51%) and email (41%)	Council websites (59%), social media (55%) and email (40%)
Storage volume measures/dam levels	Council websites (68%) and social media (34%)	Council websites (67%) and social media (43%)

1.6 Communications about Interruptions

Residents and businesses would like Council to give notification about planned maintenance via SMS or text message (Residents 71%, Businesses 73%).

The preferred communications channel for unexpected interruptions is also SMS/text message (Residents 75%, Businesses 78%).

1.7 Conclusions

Council can assume support from the community for the values and outcomes developed in the community forums, as well as the priority order presented.

Since awareness of the existence of publicly reported performance measures is low, there is an opportunity for Council to publicise this further.

Council should consider including the results of the key performance measures (existing measures) with bills, if this is feasible from a cost perspective.

The additional performance measures deemed very important by participants at the Phase 2 forums should be communicated on Council websites primarily, and updated quarterly, except for the average level of water consumption which should be reported on bills every quarter.

The additional information deemed very important by participants at the Phase 2 forums should be communicated on Council websites and on social media.

Notifications about planned and unplanned interruptions should be provided by SMS/text.



Detailed Report



2 Background

Central Coast Council wished to conduct an integrated research and engagement program to inform its ongoing engagement for IPART submissions and the Water and Sewer Masterplan.

2.1 Water & Sewer Ongoing Engagement for IPART

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) sets the maximum prices for the water, wastewater and other services provided by Central Coast Council as a Water Supply Authority.

IPART recently reviewed Council's water prices to apply for the four years from July 2022 to June 2026. In reviewing these water prices IPART suggested that Council improves its performance and increases its accountability to its customers and regulators.

IPART has recommended that Council:

- Develop a set of performance measures that match the community's preferences and expectations (IPART have suggested some but the final set need to be developed collaboratively with customers),
- Put systems in place to publicly report on its performance against these measures every year starting in 2022-23,
- Uses a reporting format that suits customer preferences.



Council has also made several commitments itself to improve its performance and accountability to customers which include:

- Establishing an Accountability Strategy, which will focus on information provision from a customer centric lens,

- Developing a revised Customer Charter that will include water related measurable outcomes,
- Improving its asset management strategies, and
- Developing an outcomes-based reporting framework.

2.2 Water & Sewer Masterplan

Council is starting to prepare its Water and Sewer Masterplan in accordance with the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for local water utilities issued by the Department of Planning and Environment in July 2022.

The next phase of this will involve planning for the regions treatment and network assets and providing a framework for providing water and/or sewerage services to properties outside the Council's existing service area.

The current engagement program aims to assist Council in its planning.

3 Objectives

The objectives for the whole engagement program are outlined below.

3.1 Water & Sewer Ongoing Engagement for IPART

- Identify and understand community values,
- Gauge community feedback in relation to Council's commitment to a Customer Charter, and
- Develop a set of performance metrics that customer would like to know about, along with the desired method and frequency of reporting.

3.2 Water & Sewer Masterplan

- Identify levels of service and customers' expectations (long term),
- Identify the values related to treatment/network planning and ascertain whether they are the same values as for water resource planning, and
- Identify the issues and priorities that the community want considered as part of long term planning.



4 Engagement Design

The engagement program as a whole consisted of three phases. For the first two phases the main components were qualitative and for the third phase there was a quantitative survey.

A summary of the program is outlined in the figure below.

Figure 1: Overview of Engagement Program

	Planning (Dec 2022-Jan 2023)	Phase 1 - FORUM (Jan-Mar 2023)	Phase 2 - FORUM (Mar-May 2023)	Phase 3 – SURVEY (Apr-Jul 2023)
Engagement	Meetings with CCCW	2 x forums (n=40 each) 12 x in-depths with ATSI and CALD customers 5 x in-depths with large customers 1 x group with young people	2 x forums (n=40 each) 12 x in-depths with ATSI and CALD customers 5 x in-depths with large customers 1 x group with young people 2 x deep dive groups	Customer survey amongst residents (n=500) and businesses (n=120) Open community survey on YVOC
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation of the Engagement Plan, including the approach, methodologies and timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated and informed participants Identification of what's important to them - values and outcomes Exploration of desired performance metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation of values and outcomes Performance metric prioritisation Levels of service and customer expectations (long term) Identification of what should be included in a Customer Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation of the customer values and outcomes How performance metrics should be reported – method and frequency

Phase 3 consisted of the following components:

- A mixed mode survey conducted by Woolcott Research amongst n=626 respondents (n=504 residents and n=122 businesses) (called 'WR Survey'),
- An opt-in online survey open to Central Coast Council residents and businesses through the Council's Your Voice Our Coast website that gained n=606 respondents (n=461 residents and n=145 businesses) (called 'YVOC Survey').

Those with a close connection to Central coast Council Water and Sewer, water regulation or market research were excluded from the survey, along with those who do not contribute to their water/sewerage bills.

Businesses were defined as owners or a senior decision makers for a small or medium business in the Central Coast Council area with less than 200 employees.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this survey was carried out between 5 June and 3 July 2023. The survey was approximately 10 minutes in length.

For the YVOC survey there were 909 unique visits to the survey with n=62 screened out.

For the Woolcott Research Survey online respondents were sourced from an online panel provider. Screening questions were applied to ensure that the respondents were residents of the area (see questionnaire in Appendix A).

The telephone interviews were conducted from electronic listings of publicly available landline and mobile phone numbers. The sample of potential contacts extracted was specific to the geographic area of the Central Coast Council. It was then randomised, and subject to the same screening criteria as the potential online respondents.

For the Woolcott Research survey target quotas were set to provide a solid base of respondents in each age, gender and former LGA category.

Participant Profile

The table below shows the demographics of the residents who completed the survey.

Table 3: Residential Survey Respondent Demographics (unweighted)

Survey Respondent Demographics	Total (n=965) %	WR Survey (n=504) %	YVOC Survey (n=461) %
Age			
18-29 years	11	18	5
30-49 years	33	36	30
50-69 years	40	34	47
70+years	16	11	19
Former LGA			
Gosford	56	55	56
Wyong	44	45	44
Gender			
Male	44	51	35
Female	54	48	61
Other/prefer not to indicate	2	1	4

Survey Respondent Demographics	Total (n=965) %	WR Survey (n=504) %	YVOC Survey (n=461) %
Language Other than English (CALD)			
Yes	8	9	8
No	92	91	92
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)			
Yes	4	5	3
No	89	93	85
Prefer not to say	6	2	11
Dwelling Ownership			
Currently rent	18	27	9
Currently own fully or with a mortgage	82	73	91
Income			
Less than \$41,600	15	15	14
Between \$41,600 and \$78,000	16	18	14
Between \$78,000 and \$104,000	10	11	8
Between \$104,000 and \$156,000	19	23	15
More than \$156,000	18	18	17
Prefer not to say	22	14	31

Survey Respondent Demographics	Total (n=965) %	WR Survey (n=504) %	YVOC Survey (n=461) %
Length of time living on Central Coast			
Less than 2 years	6	3	10
2-5 years	10	9	11
6-10 years	13	14	12
11-20 years	18	20	16
20+ years	52	53	51
Difficulty paying bills			
Yes	14	14	13
No	84	82	85
Prefer not to say	2	3	2

What age bracket do you fall into? / Do you speak a language other than English at home or with family members? / Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? / Which of the following best describes the dwelling where you are currently living? / What is your approximate annual household income (before tax)? / In the last 12 months, have you had any difficulty paying your water bills, e.g. had to ask for an extension or paid late, been on a special payment plan, been disconnected, delayed other payments or borrowed money to pay?/How long have you lived on the Central Coast?
 Base: All respondents (n=965); WR (n=504); YVOC (n=461)

The small to medium business owners and senior decision makers came from a variety of industries, mainly building/construction (13%), healthcare (9%), accounting/financial/insurance services (8%), transport/logistics/warehousing (6%), education and training (6%) and business services/consulting (6%). The full list is included in the appendix.

Analysis

After fieldwork was completed, all data processing, including editing and analysis was undertaken by Woolcott Research's internal data processing unit.

The data was weighted during analysis to ensure it was representative of the actual population of the Central Coast in terms of age, gender and former LGA.

Significance testing has been carried out at the 95% confidence interval. Results are shown in bold **green** where age differences are statistically significantly higher and bold **red** where statistically significantly lower than the total resident base (in relation to sub-groups). Significance has also been highlighted on the business results where they are significantly different to the residential results.

In this report percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a result, for some closed-ended questions (where a total of 100 per cent may be expected), total percentages may not add to exactly 100 per cent. For any open-ended questions, or the closed-ended questions that allowed for multiple answer responses, the total often exceeds 100% as respondents can provide an answer that has multiple themes within it – each of which are then represented.

5 Values and Outcomes – Water Supply Findings

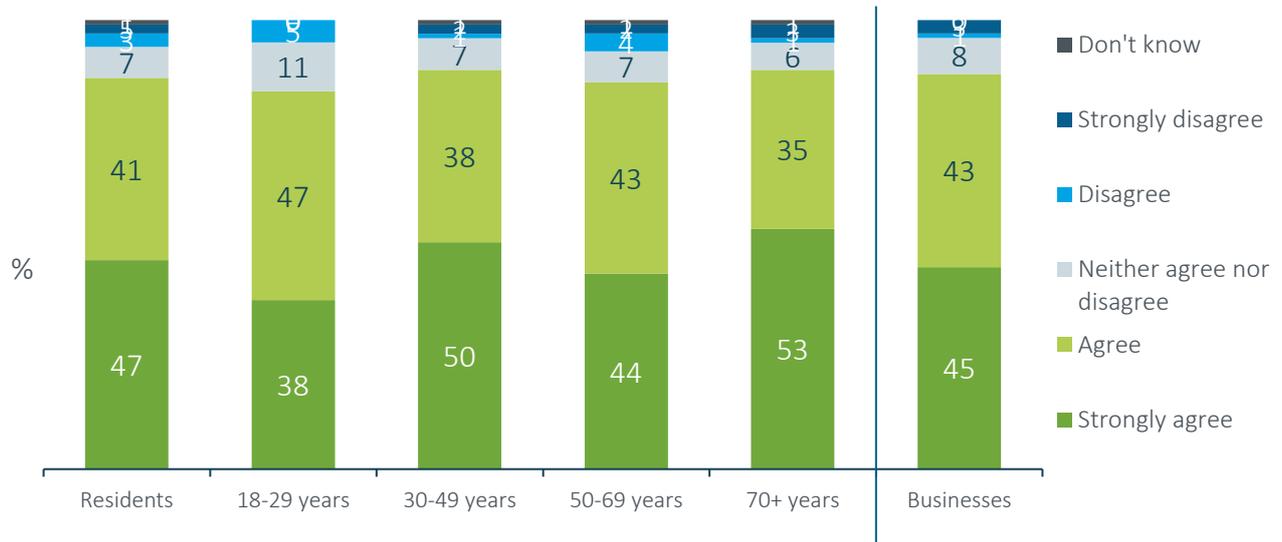
In the first part of the survey respondents were informed that recently Council conducted some community forums in the area and asked customers what is important to them about their water and sewer service. A prioritised list of values and outcomes was provided in the survey to show these aspects, as heard and agreed on, at the Phase 1 and 2 forums.

Values	Outcomes
Good quality water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, clear and safe drinking water. • Good taste and smell. • Water content is tested/monitored regularly, e.g. for chlorine levels, microplastics.
Reliable service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent water supply, available to everyone • Good water pressure. • Well maintained network, reducing leaks. • Responding to faults and issues quickly.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible. • Consistent bills over time (predictable). • Fair allocation of costs between customers.
Effective planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have enough water for an increased population. • Using a variety of sources for non-drinking purposes and to deal with varied climate conditions, e.g. recycled water, stormwater capture. • Collecting and reusing more water at household level e.g., rainwater tanks, use of greywater.
Environmental focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the natural environment within catchment areas
Transparency and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. • Raising community awareness about our water supply and water conservation. • Transparent pricing and costs – showing where money is spent. • Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed that the list of values and outcomes are important to focus on for the community's water supply.

Overall, 88% of residents agreed with the list of water supply values and outcomes presented to them. There did not seem to be any large variation by age group. Those who were an owner of, or were a senior decision maker for, a small to medium business also agreed with the list (88%).

Figure 2: Agreement with Water Supply Values and Outcomes



Q12. To what extent do you agree with the above list as things that are important to focus on for water supply?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Those who disagreed, stated 'neither' or 'don't know', which was a relatively small proportion of the residents and businesses, were asked to provide their reasons for their answer. The main comments made by this group were:

- Water quality is particularly bad (although this is already listed as the most important value so does not really differ from the prioritised list),
- That the order of the list could be amended slightly, e.g., a higher importance for affordability, transparency and education or just general disagreement with the order,
- Not knowing enough or not having strong enough feelings to comment.

Table 4: Reasons for Lack of Agreement with Water Supply Values and Outcomes

Reasons for lack of agreement with Q12 – Water Supply	Residents (n=122) %	Businesses (n=33) %
Our water quality is terrible/it stinks/is full of chemicals	17	9
Because of the prices/affordability, lowering rates is more important	14	3
I don't know enough about this to comment	12	9
I don't have strong feelings about this/neither agree or disagree	8	9
I don't trust the council/they don't listen anyway	8	3
Improving efficiency/productivity would solve the problem	5	-
Our water management is hopeless/leaks aren't fixed, we flood, many places have no services, etc	4	9
All the areas mentioned should be a focus of action	4	6
I don't agree with the order of importance for these factors	4	6
We don't have access to these services/pay for no service	3	3
Our water quality /reliability is fine/services okay	2	3
This is hype/waste of money	2	6
I don't know if there has been consultation/no one has asked me about anything	1	6
Transparency and education shouldn't be bottom of the list	1	9
Other	6	12
Nothing/don't know/not answered	22	12

Why do you say that?

Base: Those who answered neither/disagree/don't know to Q12: Residents (n=122); Businesses (n=33)

6 Values and Outcomes – Sewerage Service Findings

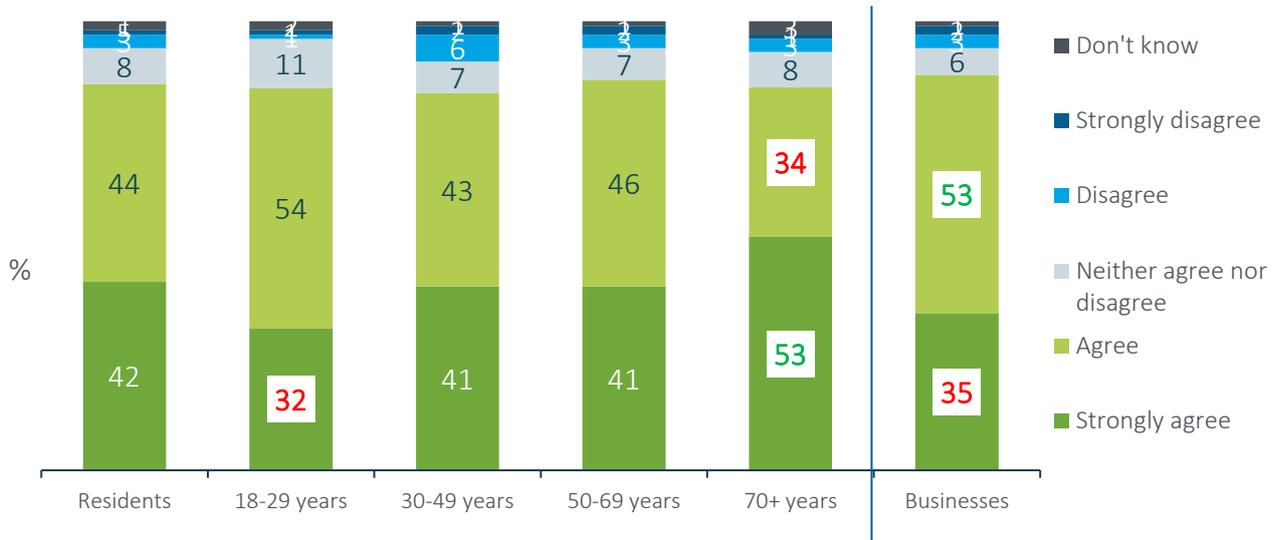
Respondents were then asked the same question for the sewerage service values and outcomes developed from the community forums. The following list was provided.

Values	Outcomes
Reliable service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal overflows, broken pipes – responding quickly to issues. • Suitable infrastructure, well maintained.
Quality treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No health impacts on customers or workers. • Suitable effluent quality. • Minimal odours.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible for customers. • Fair allocation of costs between customers.
Environmental focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the oceans and marine life. • Using renewable power for treatment plants. • Greater use of bio solids.
Effective planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term planning to ensure the sewerage service is sufficient for future needs. • Using the latest technology/innovations/learning from other countries. • Adaption to a changing climate.
Transparency and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. • Raising community awareness – what to put down the toilet, implications of not doing this, what happens to waste. • Transparent pricing and costs – what the service fee is made up of. • Easier accessible water safety ratings for beaches and recreation areas. • Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.

The vast majority of residents agreed with the list of sewerage services values and outcomes presented to them (86%) with 42% strongly agreeing. A significantly lower proportion of residents aged between 18 and 29 years old strongly agreed with this list (32%), and a significantly greater proportion of those aged 70 years or over strongly agreed (53%).

Similar to the residents, 88% of owners or senior decision makers of small to medium business agreed with the list.

Figure 3: Agreement with Sewerage Services Values and Outcomes



Q13. To what extent do you agree with the above list as things that are important to focus on for sewerage services?
 Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147);
 Businesses (n=267)

Those who disagreed, stated 'neither' or 'don't know', which again was a relatively small proportion of the residents and businesses, were asked to provide their reasons for their answer. The main comments made were:

- That the order of the list could be amended slightly, e.g., a higher importance for affordability, quality treatment, environment or transparency and education or just general disagreement with the order, and
- Not knowing enough or not having strong enough feelings to comment.

Table 5: Reasons for Lack of Agreement with Sewerage Service Values and Outcomes

Reasons for lack of agreement with Q13 – Sewerage Service	Residents (n=137) %	Businesses (n=32) %
Because of the prices/affordability, lower rates is more important	13	16
I don't know enough about this to comment	9	6
Sewage treatment is not adequate/foul odour in air/flows out into sea	8	9
We don't have access to these services/pay for no service	6	6
Improving efficiency/productivity would solve the problem	5	3
I don't have strong feelings about this/neither agree or disagree	5	6
I don't trust the council/they don't listen anyway	5	6
I think environmental impact should be higher on the list	4	-
Our water management is hopeless/leaks aren't fixed, we flood, many places have no services, etc	4	3
I don't agree with the order of importance for these factors	3	-
Transparency and education shouldn't be at the bottom of the list	2	-
Our water quality /reliability is fine/services okay	2	3
Basic, reliable services are the benchmark for a council/keep it simple	1	6
All the areas mentioned should be a focus of action	-	3
Other	11	32
Nothing/don't know/not answered	29	13

Why do you say that?

Base: Those who answered neither/disagree/don't know to Q13: Residents (n=137); Businesses (n=32)

7 Performance Measures

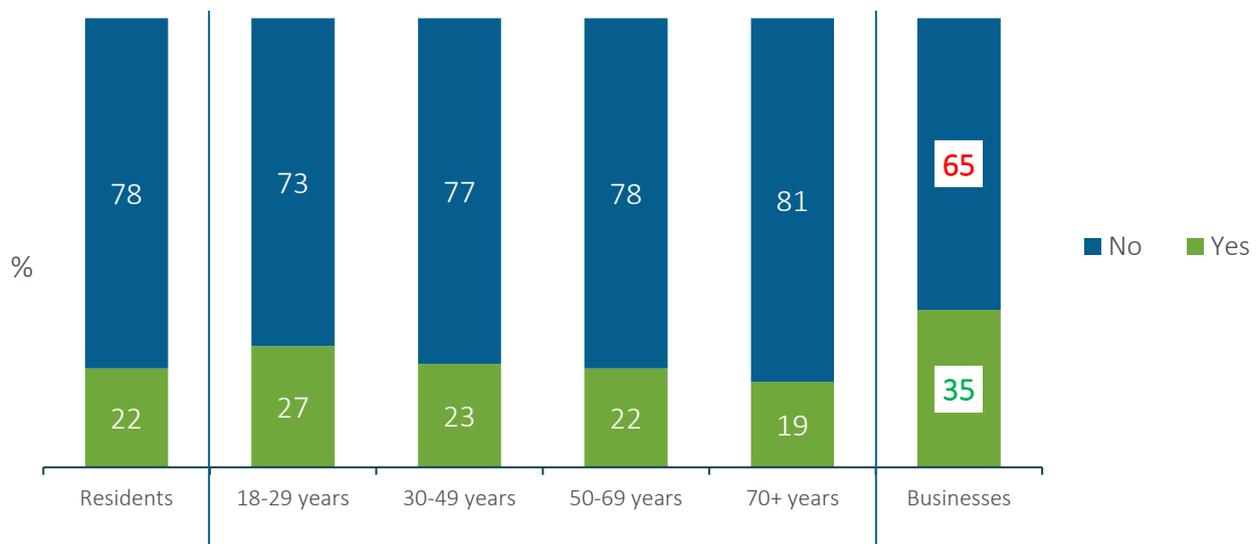
Next in the survey respondents were informed that Central Coast Council’s Water and Sewer measures its performance on a range of aspects, the results of which are publicly available, including the following:

- Water quality against Australian Drinking Water Guidelines;
- Effluent quality – released into oceans and used for recycled water;
- Number of water quality complaints;
- Number and duration of water supply interruptions;
- Number of water mains breaks;
- Number of sewage overflows;
- Number of sewer odour complaints (available upon request); and
- Number of sewer mains breaks and chokes.

They were asked if they had been aware of this before the survey. The majority of residents were not aware that Council reports its performance on these measures publicly (78%). This did not differ significantly by age group, however those aged between 18 and 29 years old were typically more aware (27%), and those aged 70 years or over were less aware (19%).

Although the majority of owners or senior decision makers for small to medium businesses were unaware, they were significantly more likely to be aware than residents (35%).

Figure 4: Awareness of Performance Measures



Q14. Before today, were you aware that Council reports its performance on these measures publicly?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Respondents were then asked how they would like these measures reported. Most residents indicated they would like Council to communicate its performance on these measures with quarterly bills (59%), and on Council websites (45%).

A significantly smaller proportion of residents aged between 18 and 29 would like communication with their quarterly bills (45%) or through Council reports (30%), and instead preferred this information through Council websites (63%). All other age groups suggested that this information should come with quarterly bills. Those aged 50-69 or 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want communication on Council’s performance on these measures through Council websites (37% and 34% respectively).

In general, younger residents were more likely to prefer receiving information via email and those aged 30-49 were significantly more likely to prefer this channel (34%).

Like residents, owners or senior decision makers for small to medium business wanted this information with their quarterly bills (58%) or through Council websites (47%). However, they were also significantly more likely to want it communicated via email (42%) or reports (29%) than residents.

Table 6: Performance Measures Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
With Quarterly Bills	59	45	62	62	60	58
Council Websites	45	63	50	37	34	47
Email	28	32	34	23	22	42
Council Reports	20	30	23	17	15	28
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	4	5	2	6	5	3
Other	3	4	4	5	7	4

Q15. In the future, how would you like Council to communicate its performance on these measures with you?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Following these general questions about performance measures, respondents were informed that during community consultation, the community thought it to be important that Council adopts a number of additional performance measures. It was explained that the purpose of the survey was to find out how and when these should be communicated to customers.

For each additional measure the choice of communication method was a multiple response question, however respondents were asked to consider prioritising their answers as it was explained that each reporting method has a cost implication associated. They were informed that this means that customers may have to pay more for each additional communication method chosen.

It was also explained that a greater reporting frequency would be more expensive than a less frequent reporting frequency.

The list of additional performance measures thought to be most important in the Phase 2 forum, and tested in the Phase 3 survey were:

- Proportion of urgent and non-urgent issues responded to within one and five business days respectively
- Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g. levels of pollutants emitted)
- Number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable'
- Number of algal blooms in dams
- Average level of water consumption by customers
- Volume of water lost from water mains breaks
- Volume of sewage overflows
- Number of infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects – planned and completed

The findings for the preferred communication channel and frequency for each of these is outlined below.

7.1 Proportion of urgent and non-urgent issues responded to within one and five business days respectively

Around half of residents indicated they would like Council to communicate its performance on how quickly it responds to urgent and non-urgent issues via Council websites (51%).

This was the most common answer for all age groups although residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information through Council reports (36%) than other age groups. Those aged 50 to 69 years old were significantly less likely to want this via email (21%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites or Council reports (37% and 17% respectively) and were significantly more likely to believe it is not necessary to provide these reports publicly (17%).

Those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business stated that they would prefer this information via Council websites (50%) or with quarterly bills (40%). This preference for bills was significantly higher amongst businesses than for residents (40% compared to 29%).

Table 7: Measure of Urgent and Non-Urgent Issues - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	51	56	57	52	37	50
With Quarterly Bills	29	21	32	33	23	40
Email	26	30	28	21	28	30
Council Reports	25	36	25	23	17	28
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	11	9	8	10	17	7
Other	3	1	4	1	5	1

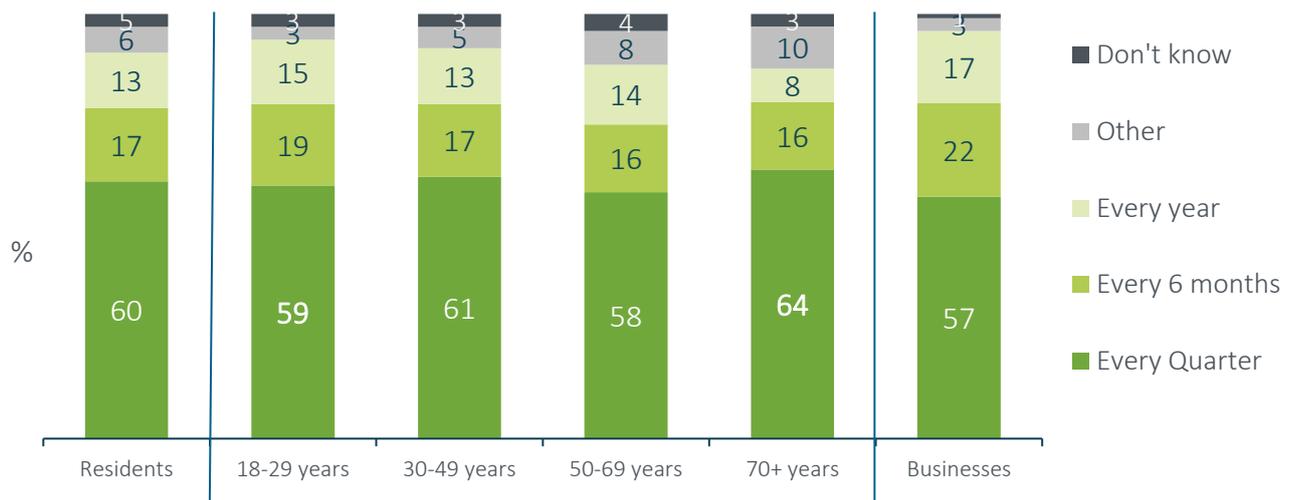
Q16_1. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

As shown in Figure 5 below, over half of residents who thought Council should communicate information on urgent and non-urgent issues thought they should do so every quarter (60%). This view did not appear to differ by age group.

Similar to residents, 57% of those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business believed this information should be communicated every quarter.

Figure 5: Measure of Urgent and Non-Urgent Issues - Frequency of Communication



Q17_1. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=866); Age Group (18-29 years n=101, 30-49 years n=293, 50-69 years n=350, 70+ years n=122); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=247)

7.2 Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g., levels of pollutants emitted)

Over half of residents indicated they would like Council to communicate its compliance with Environmental Protection Licences via Council websites (55%).

This preference was true across age groups but did vary in its strength. Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via Council websites (65%) or Council reports (35%) and were significantly less likely to want this with their quarterly bills (29%). Those aged 30-49 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via email (25%) than other age groups. For residents aged 70 or over the preference for Council websites or with quarterly bills was quite equal (41% and 39% respectively). They were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites than other age groups and were also less likely to want it via Council reports (18%).

Those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business stated that they would prefer this communication via Council websites (54%) or with their quarterly bills (50%). Their preference for bills was significantly higher than residents (38%).

Table 8: Measure of Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences - Preferred Communication Methods

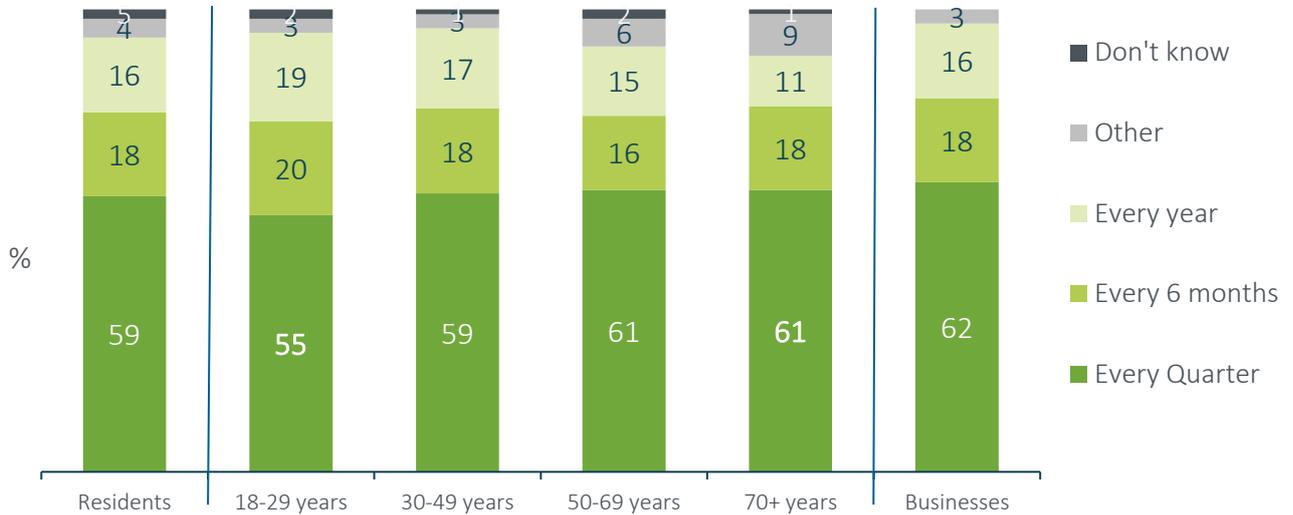
Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	55	65	60	54	41	54
With Quarterly Bills	38	29	41	40	39	50
Council Reports	26	35	29	24	18	28
Email	20	21	25	17	15	27
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	6	8	4	6	9	3
Other	2	1	5	2	5	2
Not Answered	<1	-	-	-	1	1

Q16_2. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

The majority of residents who thought Council should communicate its compliance with Environmental Protection Licences thought they should do so every quarter (59%). This did not really differ by age group and was also true of businesses (62%).

Figure 6: Measure of Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences - Frequency of Communication



Q17_2. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=905); Age Group (18-29 years n=103, 30-49 years n=303, 50-69 years n=366, 70+ years n=133); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=260)

7.3 Number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable'

The majority of residents, across all age groups, indicated that they would like Council to communicate the number of days that beaches and lagoons are not swimmable via Council websites (58%).

This preference was clear across age groups although there were some minor differences in feedback. Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via Council reports (38%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites or Council reports (43% and 14% respectively).

Those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly wanted this information via Council websites (57%) but were also significantly more likely to suggest they receive it with bills (39%).

Table 9: Measure of Days that Beaches and Lagoons Not Swimmable - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	58	64	64	59	43	57
Email	29	35	33	24	26	34
With Quarterly Bills	27	20	31	29	24	39
Council Reports	25	38	29	22	14	26
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	5	6	3	5	6	5
Other	14	7	13	16	17	6
Not Answered	<1	-	-	1	1	1

Q16_3. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

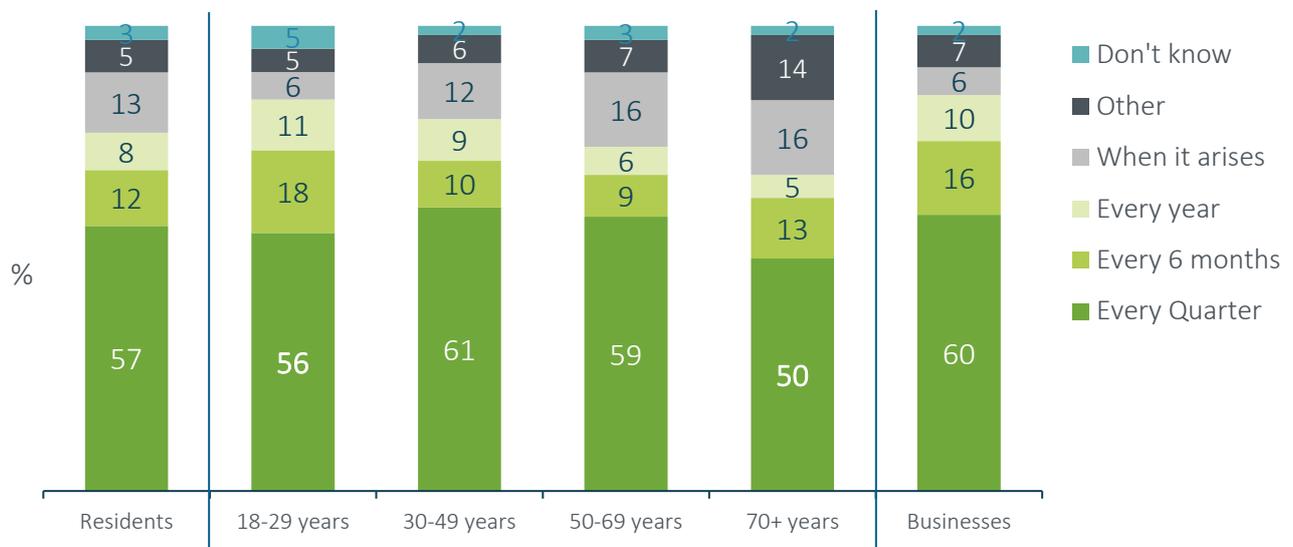
Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Most residents who thought Council should communicate its performance on the number of days that beaches and lagoons are not swimmable thought they should do so every quarter (57%). However, 13% thought this type of measure should be communicated every time it happens, (i.e., every day that a beach or lagoon is not swimmable).

Residents appeared to agree every quarter was an appropriate frequency for communication regardless of age group.

Similar to residents, 60% of those who owned or were a senior decision maker for small to medium business believed this information should be communicated every quarter.

Figure 7: Measure of Days that Beaches and Lagoons Not Swimmable - Frequency of Communication



Q17_3. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=920); Age Group (18-29 years n=105, 30-49 years n=307, 50-69 years n=370, 70+ years n=138); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=254)

7.4 Number of algal blooms in dams

Just over half of residents indicated they would like Council to communicate its performance on the number of algal blooms in dams via Council websites (54%).

Although across all age groups the preferred communication method was Council websites, there were some minor differences by age. Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via Council reports than other age groups (34%), and significantly less likely to want this communicated with their quarterly bills (21%). As for other performance measures, residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (42%).

Those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly requested that this information be provided via Council websites (55%). However, businesses were more likely to also want the information with bills (39%) and via email (30%) than residents.

Table 10: Measure of Number of Algal Blooms in Dams - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	54	61	59	52	42	55
With Quarterly Bills	31	21	35	33	31	39
Council Reports	25	34	27	21	17	28
Email	21	21	26	18	18	30
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	9	10	7	9	10	5
Other	5	3	6	9	8	1
Not Answered	1	2	-	-	1	<1

Q16_4. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

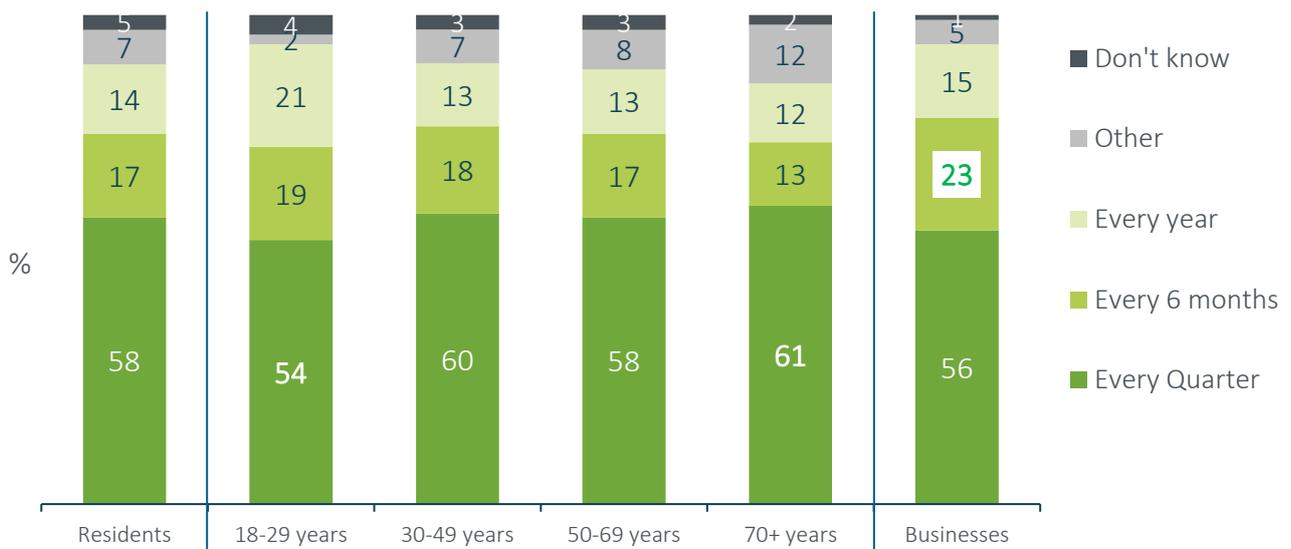
Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

The majority of residents who thought Council should communicate information on the number of algal blooms in dams thought they should do so every quarter (58%).

This desire did not appear to differ greatly by age group.

Similar to residents, 56% of businesses believed this information should be communicated every quarter but there was a slightly higher percentage of businesses than residents who wanted it communicated every six months instead (23%).

Figure 8: Measure of Number of Algal Blooms in Dams - Frequency of Communication



Q17_4. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=884); Age Group (18-29 years n=100, 30-49 years n=294, 50-69 years n=357, 70+ years n=133); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=253)

7.5 Average level of water consumption by customers

This performance measure garnered different responses to the others. Almost two thirds of residents indicated they would like Council to communicate information on the average level of water consumption by customers with their quarterly bills (61%).

However, residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information on Council websites (55%) than the other age groups, and significantly less likely to want this communicated with their quarterly bills (49%). They were also more likely to want it via Council reports (29%).

Those aged 30-49 years old were significantly more likely to want this with their quarterly bills (68%). 50-69 year old residents were significantly less likely to want this information via email (13%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (29%) or in Council reports (8%).

Similar to residents, owners or senior decision makers for small to medium businesses mostly requested this information be provided with their quarterly bills (68%).

Table 11 Measure of Average Level of Water Consumption by Customers - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
With Quarterly Bills	61	49	68	61	60	68
Via Council Websites	40	55	41	37	29	42
Council Reports	18	29	20	18	8	22
Email	18	24	22	13	15	24
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	6	7	6	6	7	4
Other	1	1	2	1	5	2

Q16_5. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

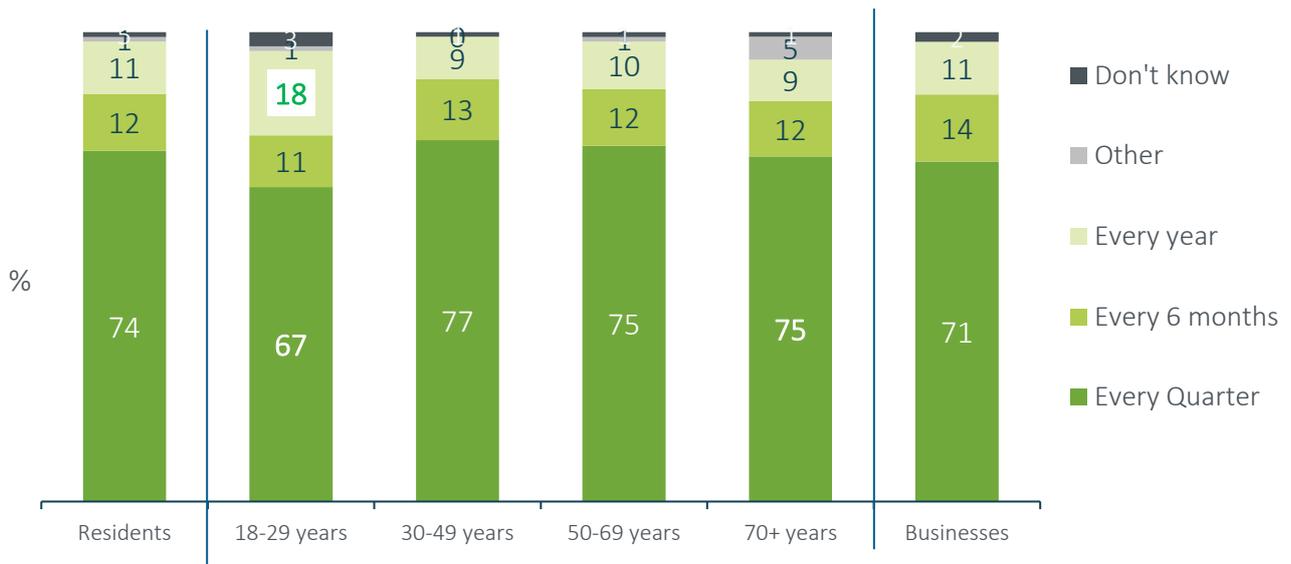
Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Almost three quarters of residents who thought Council should communicate information on the average level of water consumption by customers thought they should do so every quarter (74%).

Although a minority, a significantly larger proportion of those aged 18 to 29 years old compared to other age groups believed this information should be communicated every year (18%).

Similar to residents, 71% of those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business believed this information should be communicated every quarter.

Figure 9: Measure of Average Level of Water Consumption by Customers - Frequency of Communication



Q17_5. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=904); Age Group (18-29 years n=104, 30-49 years n=299, 50-69 years n=365, 70+ years n=136); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=256)

7.6 Volume of water lost from water mains breaks

Just over half of residents indicated they would like Council to communicate its performance on the volume of water lost from water mains breaks via Council websites (52%).

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old or 30 to 49 years old were significantly more likely to want this information on Council websites (65% and 59% respectively) than older age groups (70+ years 33%). Those aged 18-29 years old were significantly less likely to want this included with their quarterly bills (26%) and for those aged 70+ the strongest preference was for quarterly bills (38%)

Those who own or are a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly preferred this communicated via Council websites or with their quarterly bills (52% and 45% respectively). They were significantly more likely to select bills than residents.

Table 12: Measure of Volume of Water Lost from Water Mains Breaks - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	52	65	59	50	33	52
With Quarterly Bills	38	26	40	41	38	45
Council Reports	26	34	30	24	18	27
Email	18	24	22	14	14	24
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	10	8	8	9	14	5
Other	1	2	4	2	4	3
Not Answered	<1	-	-	1	-	<1

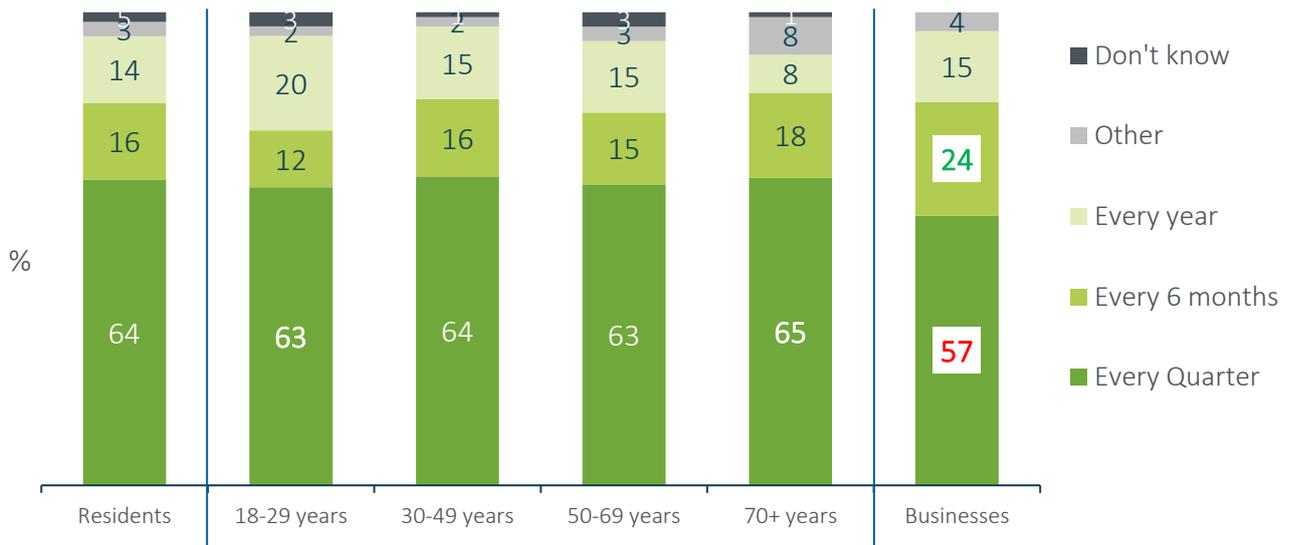
Q16_6. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Almost two thirds of residents who thought Council should communicate information on the volume of water lost from water mains breaks thought they should do so every quarter (64%). This effect did not differ by age group.

Significantly fewer of those who owned or were a senior decision maker for a small to medium business believed this information should be communicated every quarter (57%) although this was still the preferred frequency.

Figure 10: Measure of Volume of Water Lost from Water Mains Breaks - Frequency of Communication



Q17_6. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=873); Age Group (18-29 years n=102, 30-49 years n=292, 50-69 years n=353, 70+ years n=126); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=253)

7.7 Volume of sewage overflows

Similar to most of the other performance measures, most residents indicated they would like Council to communicate information on the volume of sewage overflows via Council websites (55%).

This was particularly the case for residents aged 30 to 49 years old who significantly more likely to want this on Council websites (62%) compared to those aged 70 years or over who were significantly less likely to choose this method (36%). Younger residents aged 18 to 29 years old were also most likely to select Council websites (61%) but were significantly less likely to want this information with their quarterly bills (22%) than other age groups. They were significantly more likely than other groups to want this included in Council reports (35%).

Those who own or are a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly suggested that this be communicated via Council websites or with their quarterly bills (53% and 46% respectively), however they also preferred email compared to residents (30%).

Table 13: Measure of Volume of Sewage Overflows - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	55	61	62	55	36	53
With Quarterly Bills	34	22	37	38	31	46
Council Reports	26	35	30	22	17	31
Email	22	24	26	19	19	30
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	8	10	5	6	14	6
Other	4	4	5	6	8	2
Not Answered	<1	-	-	1	-	<1

Q16_7. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Quarterly was the desired frequency of communication for almost two thirds of residents who thought Council should communicate its performance on this measure (61%).

A significantly larger proportion of those aged 18 to 29 years old believed this information should be communicated every 6 months (24%), whereas a significantly lower proportion of residents aged 50 to 69 years old found this time frequency to be appropriate (11%).

A similar proportion of business owners or senior decision makers believed this information should be communicated every quarter (67%).

Figure 11: Measure of Volume of Sewage Overflows - Frequency of Communication



Q17_7. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=894); Age Group (18-29 years n=100, 30-49 years n=302, 50-69 years n=366, 70+ years n=126); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=252)

7.8 Number of infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects – planned and completed

Council websites was a preferred channel of communication for this performance measure for residents (58%) and businesses (57%).

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly less likely to want this information with their quarterly bills (27%). Residents aged 30 to 49 years old were significantly more likely to want this via email (30%), whereas those aged 50 to 69 years old were significantly less likely to prefer this method (17%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (46%) or in Council reports (17%).

Although most businesses selected Council websites as a preferred communication channel, there were almost half who wanted it with their quarterly bills (57% and 46% respectively).

Table 14: Measure of Infrastructure Upgrades/ New Infrastructure - Preferred Communication Methods

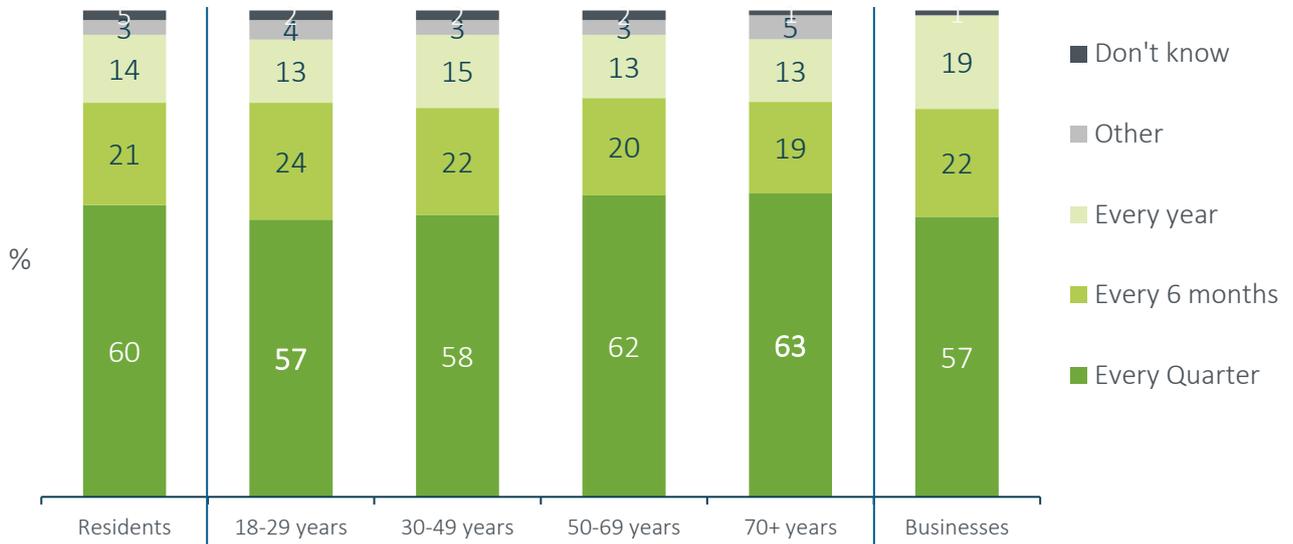
Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	58	67	62	57	46	57
With Quarterly Bills	41	27	47	44	40	46
Council Reports	26	33	27	25	17	29
Email	24	31	30	17	19	31
Not Necessary to Provide Reports Publicly	4	7	2	3	5	3
Other	4	3	5	1	6	2

Q16_8. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Most residents and businesses thought that this information should be communicated every quarter (60% Residents, 57% Businesses). This view was prevalent across age groups.

Figure 12: Measure of Infrastructure Upgrades/ New Infrastructure - Frequency of Communication



Q17_8. How frequently should these measures be reported publicly?

Base: Residents who thought this measure should be reported (n=929); Age Group (18-29 years n=103, 30-49 years n=309, 50-69 years n=377, 70+ years n=140); Businesses who thought this measure should be reported (n=260)

8 Information from Council

Next in the survey respondents were informed that there were also some suggestions at the forums for extra information, rather than performance measures, that it was thought should be provided by Council.

For each piece of information, they were asked to say how it should be communicated to the public. Again this was a multiple response question but they were asked to consider that each has a cost implication associated. The following pieces of information were included:

- Real time information when sewage overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways
- Environmental water sampling
- A water quality rating to check before you swim at a beach/lagoon
- Better information on water events, e.g. flooding
- Locations with lower quality drinking water
- Reasons for any changes in drinking water quality
- Storage volume measures/dam levels

Findings are outlined below.

8.1 Real time information when sewage overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways

Most residents and businesses thought that real time information on sewage overflows that impact recreational waterways should be communicated on Council websites and social media. For residents almost two thirds indicated Council websites (62%), and a further 53% indicated Council's social media. For businesses it was similar proportions for these communications channels (Council websites 60% and Council's social media 61%). They had a significantly stronger preference for social media than residents.

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via Council websites or Council reports (72% and 29% respectively). Residents aged 30 to 49 years old were significantly more likely to believe Council's social media was an appropriate method for communication (62%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (40%), on Council's social media (43%) or in Council reports (9%).

Table 15: Real Time Information Sewage Overflow/ Pollution - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	62	72	66	67	40	60
Council's Social Media	53	52	62	51	43	61
Email	35	36	40	30	36	37
Council Reports	17	29	19	13	9	20
With Quarterly Bills	16	10	19	18	16	19
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	-	-	-	-	-	<1
Other	8	2	5	13	12	7
Not Answered	<1	1	-	1	-	<1

Q18_1. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.2 Environmental water sampling

Council websites were considered the preferred communication channel for environmental water sampling results amongst both residents (67%) and businesses (64%). This was the case for all age groups, although those aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to desire this channel (46%) than other age groups.

Social media was selected by a third of residents (33%). Those aged 30-49 were most likely to suggest social media was how they would want this information communicated (41%) and those aged 70+ were less significantly less likely to state this (24%). Businesses were more likely to state this option than residents (41%).

Table 16: Environmental Water Sampling - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	67	73	75	69	46	64
Council's Social Media	33	35	41	29	24	41
Council Reports	26	33	30	22	18	29
With Quarterly Bills	24	16	27	25	28	26
Email	18	22	22	14	15	23
Other	3	5	2	3	6	1
Not Answered	1	2	1	-	-	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	<1	-	-	1	-	1

Q18_2. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.3 A water quality rating to check before you swim at a beach/lagoon

Council websites was also the preferred channel for a water quality rating to check before swimming at a beach or lagoon with 68% of residents and 66% of businesses choosing this option. Social media was the next preferred channel (Residents 49%, Businesses 54%).

Those aged between 30 and 49 were significantly more likely to select Council websites and Council's social media to be most appropriate (75% and 58% respectively). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (52%) or on Council's social media (31%).

Table 17: A Water Quality Rating to Check Before Swimming Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	68	76	75	68	52	66
Council's Social Media	49	50	58	49	31	54
Email	22	27	24	19	21	27
Council Reports	17	26	20	14	7	19
With Quarterly Bills	16	13	18	16	15	19
Other	9	9	5	10	16	2
Not Answered	1	2	-	-	-	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	-	-	-	-	-	1

Q18_3. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.4 Better information on water events, e.g. flooding

Two thirds of residents believed Council should communicate better information on water events such as flooding via Council websites, however social media was also thought to be appropriate by just over half (51%). Businesses presented similar results, with 62% choosing Council websites as a preferred option and 55% viewing social media as appropriate.

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information in Council reports (29%) than other age groups. A significantly higher proportion of those aged 30 to 49 years old found Council's social media to be appropriate (64%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (50%), on Council's social media (35%) or in Council reports (12%).

As mentioned, those who own or are a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly preferred this communicated on Council websites (62%) or on Council's social media (55%) but over a third preferred email (36%), a higher proportion than for residents (29%).

Table 18: Better Information on Water Events Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	66	75	69	68	50	62
Council's Social Media	51	54	64	46	35	55
Email	29	35	33	26	24	36
Council Reports	20	29	21	17	12	21
With Quarterly Bills	19	13	23	21	18	19
Other	7	5	4	8	12	4
Not Answered	<1	1	-	-	-	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	-	-	-	-	-	1

Q18_4. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.5 Locations with lower quality drinking water

Most residents and businesses thought that Council should publish locations with lower quality drinking water via Council websites (Residents 65%, Businesses 64%).

This channel was preferred by all age groups although there were some minor differences. A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 30 to 49 years old found Council's social media and in their quarterly bills to be appropriate (54% and 36% respectively). Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information in Council reports (36%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (47%), on Council's social media (34%) or in Council reports (12%).

Table 19: Locations with Lower Quality Drinking Water Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	65	74	70	65	47	64
Council's Social Media	47	52	54	44	34	48
Email	34	38	40	30	31	37
With Quarterly Bills	27	22	36	25	21	27
Council Reports	24	36	29	20	12	27
Other	8	5	2	9	10	1
Not Answered	1	2	-	1	-	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	-	-	-	-	-	1

Q18_5. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.6 Reasons for any changes in drinking water quality

Again, Council websites was the preferred communications channel for reasons for any changes in drinking water quality (60%), however social media was selected as a preference by just over half making it a close second choice (51%).

A significantly higher proportion of those aged 30 to 49 years old found Council's social media to be appropriate (61%), almost as many as Council websites (64%).

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information via Council websites (71%) or in Council reports (37%). Those aged between 50 and 69 years old were significantly less likely to find this information being communicated via email and in Council reports to be preferred (33% and 17% respectively). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (41%), on Council's social media (35%) or in Council reports (14%).

Those who own or are a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly requested that this information be communicated on Council websites (59%) or Council's social media (55%).

Table 20: Reasons for Any Changes in Drinking Water Quality - Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	60	71	64	62	41	59
Council's Social Media	51	59	61	45	35	55
Email	41	50	46	33	35	40
With Quarterly Bills	28	29	34	25	22	27
Council Reports	22	37	25	17	14	24
Other	7	2	7	10	13	3
Not Answered	1	1	-	1	1	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	-	-	-	-	-	1

Q18_6. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

8.7 Storage volume measures/dam levels

There was a clear preference for information about water storage volume or dam levels to be made available on Council websites (Residents 68%, Businesses 67%).

This top preference was clear across age groups although a significantly larger proportion of those aged 30 to 49 years old found Council's social media or via email to be appropriate (43% and 21% respectively). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council websites (52%), on Council's social media (22%) or in Council reports (16%). Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information in Council reports (36%).

Those who own or are a senior decision maker for a small to medium business mostly preferred this communicated on Council websites (67%) but were also more likely to suggest social media as a preferred channel to residents (43%).

Table 21: Storage Volume Measures/ Dam Levels Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
Via Council Websites	68	69	73	70	52	67
Council's Social Media	34	37	43	31	22	43
With Quarterly Bills	29	21	34	29	29	30
Council Reports	24	36	26	22	16	25
Email	15	13	21	12	14	21
Other	3	3	2	3	8	<1
Not Answered	<1	1	-	-	-	<1
Not Necessary to Provide Publicly	<1	-	-	1	-	1

Q18_7. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated.

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

9 Communications about Interruptions

The last section of the survey focussed on desired communications about water supply or sewerage service interruptions.

Firstly, respondents were asked how they would like to be notified about any planned maintenance that will result in an interruption to water or sewage services. Almost three quarters of residents and businesses believed Council should give notification about planned maintenance via SMS or text message (Residents 71%, Businesses 73%). Letter was the second preference amongst residents (42%) whereas social media and Council website were the next preferences for businesses (49% and 44% respectively).

Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information on social media (50%). A significantly higher proportion of those aged 30 to 49 years old found receiving this information via SMS or text message (78%), through Council's social media (46%) or on Council websites (41%) to be appropriate. Those aged 50 to 69 years old found social media to be appropriate (31%). Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council's social media (20%) or on Council websites (20%).

Table 22: Notification About Planned Maintenance Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
SMS/ Text message (this would require customers to provide their mobile number)	71	69	78	70	64	73
Letter	42	40	48	42	35	37
Social Media	37	50	46	31	20	49
Council Website	33	40	41	30	20	44
Email	5	5	5	4	6	6
Other	2	-	2	2	2	-
Not Answered	1	2	-	1	1	<1

Q19. How would you like to be notified about any planned maintenance that will result in an interruption to your water or sewage services?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

Next respondents were asked about their preferred communications channels for unexpected interruptions. Again there was a clear preference for SMS/text message with 75% of residents and 78% of businesses choosing this option. The next preferred options were social media and Council’s website for both residents and businesses, although businesses had significantly stronger preferences for these.

The clear preference was for SMS/text across all age groups, although there were some minor differences. Residents aged 18 to 29 years old were significantly more likely to want this information on social media (50%). A significantly higher proportion of those aged 30 to 49 years old found receiving this information through Council’s social media (51%) or on Council websites (41%) to be appropriate. Residents aged 70 years or over were significantly less likely to want this information via Council’s social media (21%) or on Council websites (20%).

Table 23: Notification About Unexpected Interruptions Preferred Communication Methods

Communication Method	Residents (n=965) %	18-29 years (n=111) %	30-49 years (n=317) %	50-69 years (n=390) %	70+ years (n=147) %	Businesses (n=267) %
SMS/ Text message (this would require customers to provide their mobile number)	75	70	80	75	69	78
Social Media	40	50	51	37	21	51
Council Website	35	42	41	34	20	44
Letter	27	24	29	26	27	26
Email	4	4	5	4	4	5
Other	3	1	-	4	5	<1
Do Not Want to be Notified	1	-	-	2	-	1
Not Answered	<1	-	-	-	1	<1

Q20. How would you like to be notified and updated about any unexpected interruptions to your water or sewage services?

Base: All respondents (n=965); Age Group (18-29 years n=111, 30-49 years n=317, 50-69 years n=390, 70+ years n=147); Businesses (n=267)

9 Other feedback

Lastly in the survey, respondents were asked if they had any other feedback that they would like to provide to Council on their water and sewer services.

Most of the respondents did not have any further feedback to provide (Residents 58%, Businesses 50%). The feedback that was provided was varied. The main comments were about poor water quality (Residents 7%, Businesses 6%), being happy with the service (Residents 6%, Businesses 5%), affordability/making it cheaper (Residents 5%, Businesses 5%) and transparency/communication about issues (Residents 3%, Businesses 5%).

Table 24: Other Feedback Provided

Other feedback to Council	Residents (n=965) %	Businesses (n=267) %
The water quality is bad/it stinks/is brown	7	6
I am happy with the service/thanks/keep up the good work	6	5
Please make it cheaper/reduce the rates/affordability is a priority	5	5
Let the public know of any issues/quickly/transparency is the key	3	5
The council is inefficient/needs to improve its productivity/value for money	2	3
The sewer pumping station stinks	2	2
The kerbs and gutters need improvement/maintenance/big impact on drainage	2	3
Infrastructure is getting too old/needs replacing/much better maintenance	2	2
The water has a strong chlorine taste/smell	1	1
Run off/discharge into the waterways/beaches is terrible	1	2
Proper data on water quality/management should be available to the public	1	2
Please stop putting fluoride/so much fluoride in the water	1	1
I am charged for services I don't have e.g. we have no gutters, stormwater, etc	1	2

Other	14	18
Nothing/don't know/not answered	58	50

Q20. Is there any other feedback you would like to provide to Council on water and sewer services?

Base: All respondents: Residents (n=965); Businesses (n=267)



Appendix



Appendix A: Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking part in this important survey.

Central Coast Council Water and Sewer are seeking feedback from residents and businesses about the water and sewer services provided and how customers would like to be informed and communicated with in the future.

Your valued feedback will help identify key focus areas and future cost efficiencies to ensure the water and sewer services that council delivers are focussed on what their customers and community value most.

Please complete this questionnaire on behalf of your household or business. It will take around 15 minutes to complete.

If you are not a Central Coast Council employee, on completion you will be given the option to go into a prize draw to win one of four \$250 GiftPay gift cards.

Any information provided here will not be stored in association with your personal details. Your responses will remain anonymous, and your answers will only be used in conjunction with other respondents to determine overall trends and community sentiment.

Please use the '>>' (next) button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen to move to the next question. You can also use the '<<' (back) button to go back, but please DO NOT use your browser's back button.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Woolcott Research on (02) 9261 5221 (during office hours) or at info@woolcott.com.au.

Please press the >> (next) button to commence the survey.

SCREENER QUESTIONS

Firstly, just some questions to ensure we have a good cross section of people.

1. Do you live in the Central Coast Council local government area? SR

Yes	1
No	2

2. Are you the owner or a senior decision maker for a small or medium business in the Central Coast Council area (less than 200 employees)?

- | | | |
|------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | 1 | CODE AS A SMALL BUSINESS AND CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | IF CODE 2 AT Q1 AND Q2 TERMINATE. IF CODE 1 AT Q1 SKIP TO Q4 |
| Don't know | 3 | IF CODE 2 AT Q1 AND Q2 TERMINATE. IF CODE 1 AT Q1 SKIP TO Q4 |

3. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q2) What industry does the business operate within?

----- Please answer the survey questions based on your role as the owner or senior decision maker of this business. SKIP TO Q7

4. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) What suburb do you live in? CHECK QUOTAS

5. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Are you? SR. CHECK QUOTAS

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Male | 1 |
| Female | 2 |
| Non-gender specific | 3 |
| Prefer not to indicate | 4 |

6. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Which of the following age groups best describes you? SR. CHECK QUOTAS

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| Under 18 | 1 | TERMINATE |
| 18-24 | 2 | |
| 25-29 | 3 | |
| 30-39 | 4 | |
| 40-49 | 5 | |
| 50-59 | 6 | |
| 60-69 | 7 | |
| 70-79 | 8 | |
| 80+ | 9 | |

7. (ASK ALL) Do you, or does anyone in your household, work for any of the following organisations?

- Water supply or sewerage services
- Market research
- IPART (the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal)
- NSW Health in a role related to water quality regulation
- NSW Environment Protection Authority
- Central Coast Council Water and Sewer

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | TERMINATE |
| No | 2 | |

TERMINATE MESSAGE FOR Q7. Unfortunately, we are unable to include anyone with a close connection to Central Coast Council Water and Sewer, water regulation or market research. Thanks again for your interest.

8. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Does your household receive water/sewerage bills from Central Coast Council and/or your body corporate?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Yes, from Central Coast Council | 1 (skip to Q10) |
| Yes, from my body corporate/landlord/strata management | 2 (skip to Q10) |
| Yes, from Central Coast Council and my body corporate | 3 (skip to Q10) |
| No | 4 |

9. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Does your landlord ask you to contribute to your water/sewerage bill?

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | TERMINATE |

10. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Is your household connected to town water?

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

11. (ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1) Is your household connected to the sewer?

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

VALUES FOR WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

Recently, Council has conducted some community consultation in the area and asked customers what is important to them about their water and sewer service.

These are the things that were mentioned for **water supply** (the values are in order of importance):

Values	Outcomes
Good quality water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, clear and safe drinking water. • Good taste and smell. • Water content is tested/monitored regularly, e.g. for chlorine levels, microplastics.
Reliable service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent water supply, available to everyone • Good water pressure. • Well maintained network, reducing leaks. • Responding to faults and issues quickly.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible. • Consistent bills over time (predictable). • Fair allocation of costs between customers.
Effective planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have enough water for an increased population. • Using a variety of sources for non-drinking purposes and to deal with varied climate conditions, e.g. recycled water, stormwater capture. • Collecting and reusing more water at household level e.g., rainwater tanks, use of greywater.
Environmental focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the natural environment within catchment areas
Transparency and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. • Raising community awareness about our water supply and water conservation. • Transparent pricing and costs – showing where money is spent. • Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.

12. To what extent do you agree with the above list as things that are important to focus on for water supply?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Neither agree or disagree | 3 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

(IF ANSWER CODE 3, 4, 5, 6) Please provide an explanation of your answer.

These are the things that were mentioned for the **sewerage service** (in this order of importance):

Values	Outcomes
Reliable service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal overflows, broken pipes – responding quickly to issues. Suitable infrastructure, well maintained.
Quality treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No health impacts on customers or workers. Suitable effluent quality. Minimal odours.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible for customers. Fair allocation of costs between customers.
Environmental focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the oceans and marine life. Using renewable power for treatment plants. Greater use of bio solids.
Effective planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term planning to ensure the sewerage service is sufficient for future needs. Using the latest technology/innovations/learning from other countries. Adaption to a changing climate.
Transparency and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. Raising community awareness – what to put down the toilet, implications of not doing this, what happens to waste. Transparent pricing and costs – what the service fee is made up of. Easier accessible water safety ratings for beaches and recreation areas. Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.

13. To what extent do you agree with the above list as things that are important to focus on for sewerage services?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Neither agree or disagree | 3 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

(IF ANSWER CODE 3, 4, 5, 6) Please provide an explanation of your answer.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

Currently, Central Coast Council Water and Sewer measures its performance on a range of aspects, the results of which are publicly available. These include the following:

- Water quality against Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
- Effluent quality – released into oceans and used for recycled water
- Number of water quality complaints
- Number and duration of water supply interruptions
- Number of water mains breaks
- Number of sewage overflows
- Number of sewer odour complaints (available upon request)
- Number of sewer mains breaks and chokes

14. Before today, were you aware that Council reports its performance on these measures publicly?

Yes	1
No	2

15. In the future, how would you like Council to communicate its performance on these measures with you? *Please select all that apply*

Council websites	1
With quarterly bills	2
Email	3
Council reports	4
Other – please specify	5
Not necessary to provide results publicly	6

During community consultation, it was thought to be very important that Council adopts a number of additional performance measures. We want to find out how and when you think these should be communicated to customers.

For each additional measure, please indicate **how you think it should be communicated** to the public and **how frequently it should be communicated**. Please indicate all that apply but please consider prioritising your answers as each reporting method and how frequently it's reported has a cost implication associated. This means that customers may have to pay more for each additional communication method chosen.

LOOP Q16 WITH Q17 SO THAT EACH PERFORMANCE MEASURE COMES UP WITH THE TWO QUESTIONS.

Measures: RANDOMISE

Proportion of urgent and non-urgent issues responded to within 1 and 5 business days respectively
Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g. levels of pollutants emitted)
Number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable'
Number of algal blooms in dams
Average level of water consumption by customers
Volume of water lost from water mains breaks
Volume of sewage overflows
Number of infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects – planned and completed

16. How do you think this measure should be communicated to the public?

Via council websites	1
With quarterly bills	2
Email	3
Council reports	4
Other (please specify)	5
Not necessary to provide publicly	6

17. How frequently should this measure be reported publicly?

Every quarter	1
Every six months	2
Every year	3
Other (please specify)	4
Don't know	5

INFORMATION ON WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

There were also some suggestions for extra information, rather than performance measures, that should be provided by Council.

18. For each piece of information, please tick how you think it should be communicated to the public. Please tick all boxes that apply but please consider that each has a cost implication associated. **RANDOMISE**

	Via Council websites	Council's social media	Email	With quarterly bills	Council reports	Other – please specify

Real time information when sewage overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways						
Environmental water sampling						
A water quality rating to check before you swim at a beach/lagoon						
Better information on water events, e.g. flooding						
Locations with lower quality drinking water						
Reasons for any changes in drinking water quality						
Storage volume measures/dam levels						

19. How would you like to be notified about any **planned** maintenance that will result in an interruption to your water or sewage services? *Please tick all that apply.*

- SMS/text message (*this would require customers to provide their mobile number*) 1
- Social media 2
- Council website 3
- Letter 4
- Other (please specify) 5

20. How would you like to be notified and updated about any **unexpected** interruptions to your water or sewage services? *Please tick all that apply.*

- SMS/text message (*this would require customers to provide their mobile number*) 1
- Social media 2
- Council website 3
- Letter 4
- Other (please specify) 5
- Do not want to be notified 6

21. Is there any other feedback you would like to provide to Council on your water and sewer services?"

OPEN TEXT

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Just some final demographic questions...

22. Which of the following best describes the dwelling where you are currently living?

SR

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| I/We own this property (either outright or with a mortgage) | 1 |
| I/We currently rent this property | 2 |

23. How long have you lived on the Central Coast? SR

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Less than 2 years | 1 |
| 2-5 years | 2 |
| 6-10 years | 3 |
| 11-20 years | 4 |
| 20+ years | 5 |

24. What is your household size...? SR

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 person | 1 |
| 2 people | 2 |
| 3 people | 3 |
| 4 people | 4 |
| 5 people | 5 |
| 6+ people | 6 |

25. What is your approximate annual household income?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Less than \$41,600 | 1 |
| Between \$41,600 and \$78,000 | 2 |
| Between \$78,000 and \$104,000 | 3 |
| Between \$104,000 and \$156,000 | 4 |
| More than \$156,000 | 5 |
| Do not wish to answer | 6 |

26. Do you currently hold a concession card/low income healthcare card?

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Yes | 1 (CODE AS VULNERABLE) |
| No | 2 |
| Prefer not to indicate | 3 |

27. In the last 12 months, have you had any difficulty paying your water bills, e.g. had to ask for an extension or paid late, been on a special payment plan, been disconnected, delayed other payments or borrowed money to pay?

- | | |
|------------|------------------------|
| Yes | 1 (CODE AS VULNERABLE) |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 3 |

28. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin? MR (CODES 2&3 ONLY)

No	1
Yes, Aboriginal	2
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	3
Prefer not to say	4

29. Do you speak a language other than English at home? SR

Yes	1
No, English only	2

PRIZE DRAW

30. Are you a CCC employee?

Yes - CLOSE

No - CONTINUE

31. Would you like to go into the draw to win one of four \$250 GiftPay gift cards?

Yes 1

No 2

32. (IF CODE 1 at Q29) Please supply your name, phone number and email address. Your contact details will not be used for any other purpose than the prize draw.

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

[Prize draw T&Cs \(link\)](#)

Thank you very much for your time.

If you would like to register for updates from Central Coast Council Water and Sewer, please provide your details here (link: https://centralcoastcouncil.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eWeGwNN8UBzp4ma).

Otherwise just close the browser.

Appendix B: Business Industry Type

Table 25: Industry Type of Businesses

Industry	Businesses (n=267) %
Building/construction	13%
Healthcare	9%
Accounting/financial/insurance services	8%
Transport/logistics/warehousing	6%
Education and training	6%
Business services/consulting	6%
Retail	5%
IT services	5%
Hospitality/clubs	5%
Manufacturing	3%
Agriculture/horticulture/gardening	3%
Real estate	3%
Automotive/mechanical	3%
Other trades	2%
Arts/music/entertainment	2%
Beauty/hairdressing	2%
Marketing/communication	2%
Cleaning/laundry	2%
Child care	1%
Maintenance	1%

Engineering	1%
Fitness/sport/recreation	1%
Religious services	1%
Telecommunications	0%
Tourism	0%
Other	5%
Refused	3%



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