



Evaluating Public Perceptions of the Opportunity to Build a New Carisbrook Stadium

Mail Survey

Preliminary Research Report

Prepared for

Dunedin City Council

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1 Key Messages

1.1 Overview

In April of 2007, two surveys were commissioned to better understand the attitudes of Dunedin and Otago ratepayers and residents towards the opportunity to develop a new Carisbrook Stadium. These surveys were:

- A mail survey of ratepayers in the Otago region; and
- A telephone survey of 2,200 randomly selected Dunedin City Residents.

The mail survey was jointly commissioned by the Otago Regional Council (ORC) and the Dunedin City Council (DCC) and targeted ratepayers. The telephone survey was commissioned by the DCC and was a survey of Dunedin residents' over the age of 18. These surveys provide a valuable insight into the attitudes and perceptions of different members of the Dunedin and Otago populations.

This report focuses on the outcomes of the mail survey dealing with the Dunedin City results.

1.2 The Mail Survey

The mail survey was sent to 74,759 ratepayers across the Otago Region. Of these 37,780 were sent to ratepayers in Dunedin City. From these, 16,504 were returned, for a response rate in Dunedin City of 44%. This is a significant response rate, and means the mail survey provides a view into the attitudes and perceptions of key segments of the Dunedin populations. However, because of the self-selection inherent in self-completed survey such as mail surveys, it is important to note that large sample sizes do not necessarily equate to representative responses. In the mail survey there is a significant measure of self-selection bias¹ present in the achieved sample, and particularly so in regard to the gender and age of respondents. This means that the raw results are not representative (in a statistical sense) of the target populations.

¹ 'Self-selection bias' occurs when members of a survey sample essentially select themselves. Self-selection bias is most commonly associated with surveys that are made available to large populations. The results of such surveys reflect only the views of those who felt strongly enough about the particular issues to go to the trouble (and often the expense) of responding. Clearly, the views of such respondents are unlikely to be representative of those of the wider population of interest.

1.3 Synopsis of Key Results

The survey has produced the following key results:

- The response from the mail survey shows a population of ratepayer narrowly divided between supporting and opposing the new stadium.
- Respondents are divided about the DCC being involved with the stadium.
- The majority of respondents who indicated their support for the stadium also supported the DCC being involved to the sum of \$91.4 million.
- If the stadium is to be built there is a considerable proportion of the population that is undecided with regard to the amount of additional rates to be charged (among those who support the stadium, a significant majority approve of the proposed funding structure).
- There is no clear preference for a general or targeted rate as the mechanism to collect the extra rates needed to fund the stadium.

These results are discussed below, and are analysed in detail in the body of the report that follows this Key Results section.

1.3.1 Should a Stadium Be Built in Awatea St? (Mail and Telephone Survey)

Attitudes to the DCC's potential involvement with the stadium show a population with evenly split views.

Table 1.1: Should a Stadium Be Built in Awatea St, Dunedin?:

Mail Survey - Raw Data	
Support	Oppose
46.5%	49.9%

Mail Survey N = 16,540;

1.3.2 Should the DCC Be Involved in Funding the Stadium?

Respondents are divided about the DCC being involved with the stadium with the results indicating a slight preference for the DCC not to be involved in funding the stadium.

Table 1.2: Should the DCC Be Involved in Funding the Stadium?:

Mail Survey - Raw Data	
Support	Oppose
40.7%	57.2%

1.3.3 Should the DCC be Involved in Funding at a Level of \$91.4 Million?

The mail survey provides a perspective on the support for the proposed level of funding. Table 1.3 shows the support/opposition for the funding level as indicated by those respondents who also expressed overall support for building a new stadium.

Table 1.3: Should the DCC be Involved in Funding at a Level of \$91.4 Million?

Mail Survey - Raw Data	
Support	Oppose
84.3%	9.6%

1.3.4 Should the Rate Increase be in Line with Those Proposed in the Supplied Brochure?

Table 1.4 shows the relative support for the rate increase as indicated by those respondents who expressed support for building the stadium.

Table 1.4: Should the Rate Increase be in Line with Those Proposed in the Supplied Brochure

Mail Survey - Raw Data	
Support	Oppose
34.1%	19.0%

1.3.5 Should Any DCC Rate Increase Be General or Targeted?

The key point that the council should take from both surveys is that a large majority of respondents (63%) either had no preference, or did not respond to this question.

Table 1.5: Should Any DCC Rate Increase Be General or Targeted?

Mail Survey - Raw Data	
General	Targeted
12.0%	16.1%

2.0 Research Design

2.1 Mail Survey

A total of 37,780 questionnaires were mailed to ratepayers across the Dunedin City area. These ratepayers were identified from the ORC ratepayer database, once the database was filtered to ensure no ratepayer received the opportunity to present their views more than once for each property owned within one Territorial Authority (TLA)².

Three formats of mail-out were used:

1. A brochure with a DLE-sized card enclosed. The DLE card was printed in black, with questions from both the DCC and ORC. The DCC questions were listed first. These were mailed to ratepayers who owned property within the Dunedin City Council area. A total of 19,000 items were in this format.
2. A brochure with a DLE-sized card enclosed. The DLE card was printed in blue, with questions from both the DCC and ORC. The ORC questions were listed first. These were mailed to ratepayers who owned property within the Dunedin City Council area. A total of 19,000 items were in this format.

Returned questionnaires were scanned into a database. To ensure the accuracy of this process, 10% of questionnaires were selected random and manually checked to ensure data security. In addition, any data that the scanners identified as incomplete were manually checked to ensure all information was captured.

² Where a property owner was listed in the database as owning property in more than one TLA, forms were dispatched in the appropriate format to each recorded residence in separate TLAs.

3 Dunedin Research Results – Data Analysis

3.1 Overview of Data

Both mail items (DLE cards for the Dunedin City area and A4 cards for the remainder of the Otago region) had the final date for responses clearly listed. Despite this, a significant number of responses were received after the close-off date (2,162). All of these responses have been analysed.

3.2 Response Rates

For the mail survey:

- 37,780 questionnaires were mailed to ratepayers.
- 161 of the DCC council area (DLE) mail items were returned as undeliverable.
- 3 surveys were faxed to Research First, all on the closing date. These were included in the survey. One photocopy of a survey form was removed from the analysis.
- 16,504 questionnaires were returned.

The response rate to the mail survey was around 43% of the total distributed.

3.3 Representativeness of the Responses

The issue of representativeness in research addresses how well the results from the achieved sample can be generalised to the population from which that sample is drawn. As the mailout survey did not use a random selection process and was targeted at ratepayers as opposed to the general population it serves to provide an indication of ratepayer opinion only.

Table 1.5 provides the response rates to the Dunedin mail survey by age group and gender.

Table 1.5 Response Rates To Dunedin Mail Survey By Age Group And Gender

Group	Male	Female
	% of Responses	% of Responses
Age under 24	0.4%	0.2%
Age 25-34	3.7%	2.0%
Age 35-44	10.3%	5.0%
Age 45-54	17.7%	6.7%
Age 55-64	17.6%	6.7%
Age 65+	19.9%	10.5%

3.4 Responses, Raw Data

3.4.1 Overall Preference of the Population

The response from the mail survey shows a population of ratepayer narrowly divided between supporting and opposing the new stadium.

Table 1.6: Should a Stadium Be Built in Awatea St, Dunedin (Raw Data)?

Mail Survey - Raw Data ³	
Support	Oppose
46.5%	49.9%

Mail Survey N = 16,504

³ Where data do not add to 100%, the variance is those who have not responded

3.4.2 Should The DCC Be Involved In Funding The Stadium

The survey of the Dunedin City Council posed the question of whether the DCC should be involved as a funder. The response was as follows:

Table 1.9: What Level of Rates Increase is Supported to Meet the ORC Funding? (Mail and Telephone Surveys, Raw Data):

	Mail - Those Who Support The Stadium
Total Supporting DCC Funding	91.0%
Total Opposing DCC Funding	7.5%
No Response / Undecided	1.5%

Mail Survey - Supporters: N=6557

Should The DCC Be Involved In Funding At A Level Of \$91.4 Million?

The survey of the DCC posed the question of whether the council should be fund the stadium to the proposed level of \$91.4 million. The survey was formatted to suggest that those who were opposed to the funding should skip this question. Many did, while some provided a response. The general picture from the surveys is one of support for the DCC's involvement to the level of \$91.4 million. But as with questions about the DCC's involvement, the survey demonstrates that a sizeable minority of the Dunedin population remains opposed to the Council being involved to this level of funding. For the purpose of comprehensive analysis, both sets of data are shown:

Table 1.10: Should The DCC Be Involved In Funding to \$91.4 Million (Mail and Telephone Surveys, Raw Data):

	Mail - All Responses	Mail - Those Who Support The Stadium
Total Supporting DCC Funding at \$91.4M	36.9%	84.3%
Total Opposing DCC Funding at \$91.4M	22.2%	9.6%
No Response / Undecided	40.8%	6.1%

All responses N=16,504, Support Stadium N = 7,677

3.4.3 Should The Rate Increase Be In Line With Those Proposed In The Supplied Brochure?

The survey of the DCC posed the question of whether ratepayers supported an increase in rates to meet the payment of \$91.4M. Tables were supplied by mail to ensure respondents were informed. The survey was formatted to suggest that those who were opposed to the funding should skip this question. Many did, while some provided a response. For the purpose of comprehensive analysis, both sets of data are shown:

Table 1.11: Should The Rate Increase Be In Line With Those Proposed In The Supplied Brochure (Mail and Telephone Surveys, Raw Data):

	All Responses	Those Who Support The Stadium
Total Supporting proposed rate increase	34.1%	78.7%
Total Opposing DCC proposed rate increase	19.0%	11.1%
No Response / Undecided	46.9%	10.2%

All responses N=16,504; Support Stadium N = 7,677

3.4.4 Should Any DCC Rate Increase Be General Or Targeted?

Two rating structures have been proposed to generate sufficient funds to account for the costs of building a new stadium. Details of the rating structures were made available either in the brochure with the mail survey.

Table 1.12: Should Any DCC Rate Increase Be General Or Targeted (Raw Data):

	All Responses	Those Who Support The Stadium
Total Supporting General rate increase	12.0%	26.5%
Total Supporting Targeted rate	16.1%	34.7%
No Preference	12.5%	21.4%
No response / undecided	59.4%	17.4%

All responses N=16,504; Support N = 7,677

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