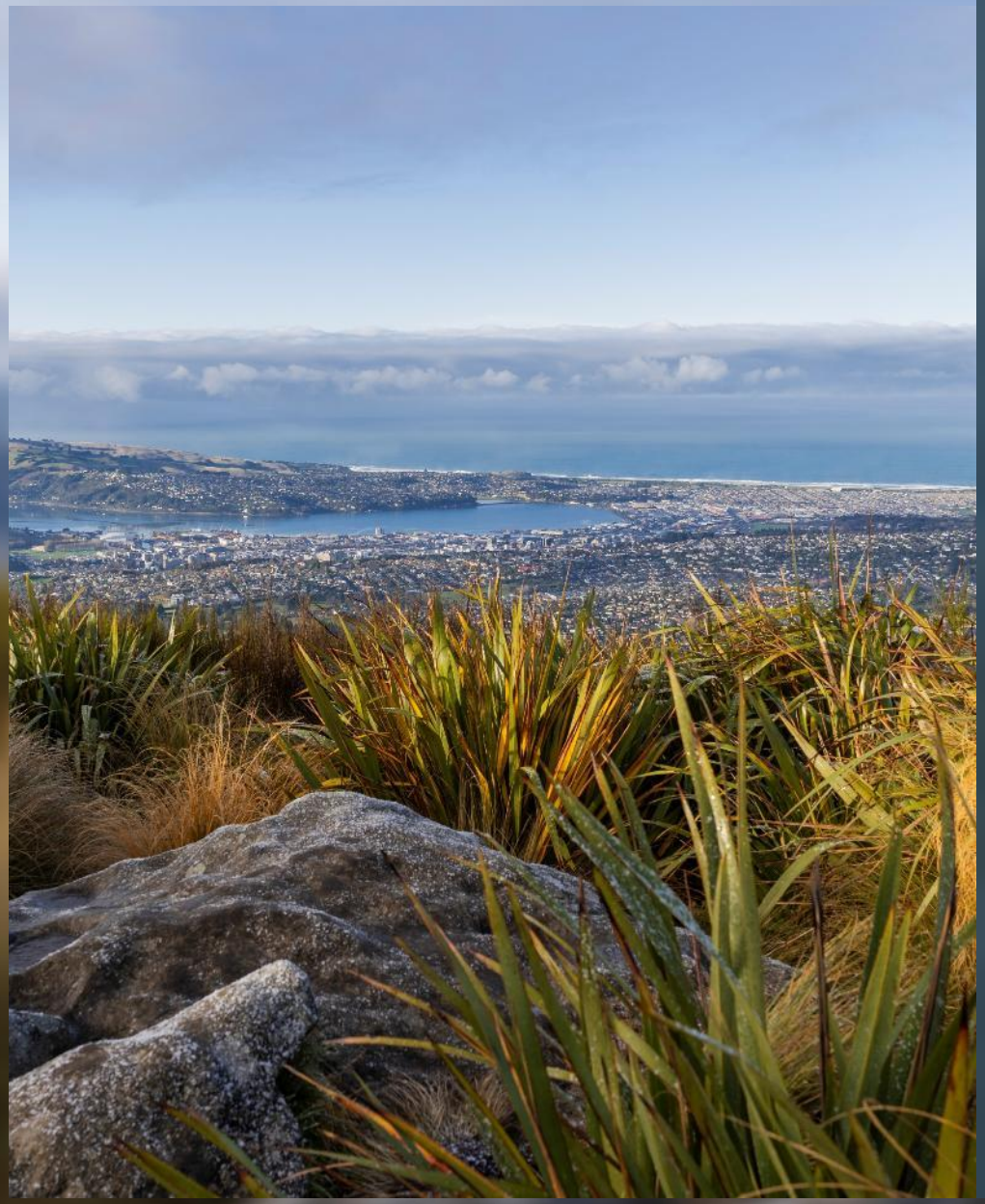

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL | kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti

RESIDENTS' OPINION RESEARCH

Annual Report 2025-26

Prepared by

EnlightenMe

August 2026

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Executive Summary

OVERALL SATISFACTION REMAINS SUBDUED

Satisfaction with the Council sits at 41%, down from 48% in 2024-25 and only just above the 2020-21 low of 40%. A dip around the October 2025 election pulled the year's figure down, with results back in the mid-40s either side of it. Perceived value for money is the strongest single driver of the overall result, and it has fallen to a recent low of 30% after two years of large rates rises.

PERCEIVED VALUE FOR MONEY & LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

The measures most closely tied to residents' overall view, being perceived value for money and how the Council is led and run, are also where satisfaction is weakest. All five leadership measures stepped down around 2020-21 and have stayed low since, lifting briefly around the 2025 election before easing again. Parks and waste management score highest, though they impact the overall result the least.

STRONGEST ON AMENITIES, WEAKEST ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Residents rate community facilities highly, with parks, reserves, and open spaces at 86%, sports and recreation at 79%, and creative and cultural facilities at 78%, though these are lower impact drivers. Core infrastructure rates lowest, being roading at 34% and water at 49%, and it is among the biggest service level drivers. Lifting the overall picture means making progress where residents are hardest to satisfy, particularly stormwater and flood resilience and the condition of the roads.

CHANGES RESIDENTS NOTICED

Two service changes were highlighted by residents this year. Playgrounds have turned around after years of falling satisfaction, and in unprompted, open-ended feedback, residents put it down to the upgrades and new builds. Kerbside rubbish collection is up too, the only waste measure to shift, and the four-bin rollout in July 2024 is the obvious reason.

PRESSURE POINTS

Stormwater and flooding drag the water related infrastructure score down, with residents of South Dunedin feeling this most acutely. Congestion, parking, and road condition drive dissatisfaction with roads, and parking enforcement is the sticking point in regulatory services. Where residents contact Council staff, the people are a strength, friendly, clear, knowledgeable, and quick to understand what's needed, but keeping residents informed on progress afterwards is where the biggest opportunity lies.

HOW RESIDENTS SEE THE CITY

Dunedin's identity as a heritage and cultural city is strongly felt, and its well-regarded venues back that up. Confidence in the city as a thriving, productive economy is more muted, and it sits close to how residents view the Council's leadership.

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ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Research Objectives & Methodology

Research objectives:

Dunedin City Council has commissioned its Residents' Opinion Survey since 1994. The monthly survey measures how residents use and experience the Council's facilities, services, and infrastructure, and how they feel about the city and the Council's leadership.

For 2025-26, the questionnaire was revised to align with a number of Council's levels of service and the community outcome measures adopted in the Long Term Plan.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Measure residents' satisfaction with the Council's facilities, services, and infrastructure.
- Provide evidence against the Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan performance measures.
- Understand how often residents use Council facilities, and which parts of the city that use happens in.
- Identify the improvements that matter most to residents.

Methodology:

The Residents' Opinion Survey runs continuously throughout the year. Each month residents aged 18 and over are randomly selected from the electoral roll, stratified so the sample reflects how the city's population is distributed geographically, and benchmarked against 2023 Census data. Everyone selected receives an invitation letter in the mail with a unique code to complete the questionnaire online, and paper or translated copies are available on request. Everyone who completes the survey goes into a monthly draw for a $100 voucher. A breakdown of the invited sample by area is in the appendix.

Across the year we sent 10,650 invitations and received 1,205 completed responses, a response rate of 11.3%. This year we moved to a single monthly mailout with no reminders, as reminders draw a lower response for the same print and postage cost, and focusing on initial invitations generates more completed surveys for the money spent. Response rates reported in previous years were calculated on first invitations alone and did not count reminders, so are not comparable.

From April to June 2026 each invitation also carried a household leaflet with additional unique codes, so that other adults in the household could take part.

Results in this report are weighted by age, gender, and ethnicity so they reflect the Dunedin adult population. Figures are rounded, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Full technical notes, including sampling, margin of error, weighting, and significance testing, are in the appendix.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

What Changed This Year

1. **Facility ratings now come from recent users only.** Satisfaction with a facility is asked only of residents who have visited it in the last 12 months, so each rating reflects direct and current experience.

2. **We now ask when people last visited.** Residents tell us when they last visited each facility, and anyone who visited within the last month then tells us how many times they visited within that month. People remember the last month far more accurately than a whole year, so figures reported are closer to what actually happened.

3. **Park feedback is tied to specific places.** An interactive map question in the online survey lets residents drop a pin on the park or open space their feedback relates to. Each pin is matched against DCC's GIS data to identify the site, giving the Council park level results wherever the sample supports them.

4. **Every facility has its own comment question.** Comments are attached to the facility they are about, so the Council can see what is driving the score for that specific place.

5. **The rating scale has changed.*** Rating questions now use a 5-point labelled scale, with Don't Know and Not Applicable options. Every point on the scale is described with a word, so residents all read it the same way. Reporting also matches what residents actually chose rather than a scored version of it as in previous years.

6. **Demographic questions have been broadened.** Finer age bands, a fuller ethnicity list with iwi and hapū affiliation, languages spoken, household composition, household income, and validated disability questions all allow deeper analysis of who is being served well and who is not.

** This year's survey moved to a 5-point scale in line with best practice in survey design. Although the scale looks similar to respondents, using the same five labels as before, the change means satisfaction results for 2025-26 form a new baseline and may not be directly comparable with previous years.*



01

The Big Picture

Overall satisfaction down and on par with recent lows

At 41%, overall satisfaction sits just above its 2020-21 low and below the 2017-18 peak of 58%. The annual figure is weighed down by a dip in satisfaction around the October 2025 election, where satisfaction dropped to 33% in October (three months rolling). It then recovered to a peak around April 2026 before easing again, leaving the underlying level in the mid-40s.

Overall satisfaction with Dunedin City Council:

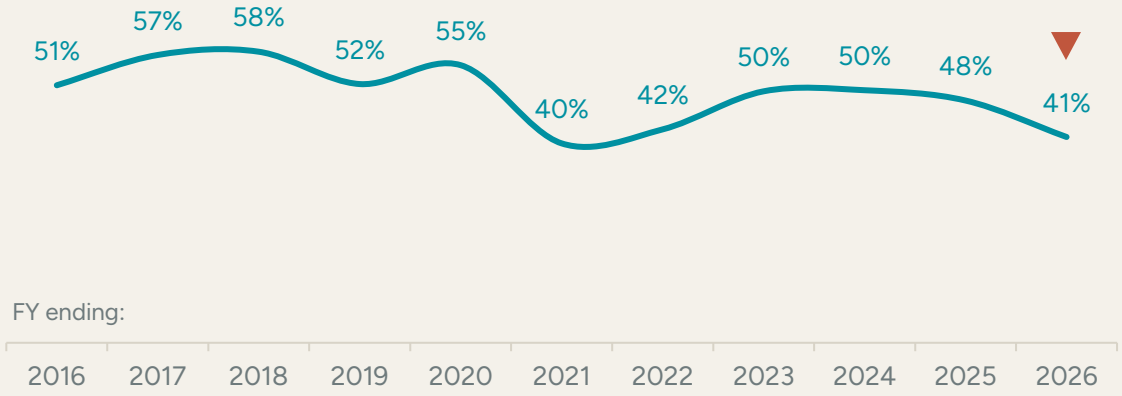


Figure 01: Overall satisfaction with Dunedin City Council.

41% satisfied in 2025-26

down significantly compared to 2024-25. A further 32% are neutral.

A DIP AROUND THE ELECTION-PERIOD

Satisfaction fell to around 33% on a three-month rolling basis around the 2025 election, then recovered steadily to a peak of 51% in early 2026 before settling at 45% by the end of year.

BELOW PRE-COVID

Although improving in the second half of the financial year, satisfaction remains below the mid-50s of the 2015-16 to 2019-20 period.

DRIVEN MOST BY PERCEIVED VALUE FOR MONEY

Perceived value for money is the measure most closely tied to overall satisfaction, and it has followed a similar decline, falling alongside increases in rates.

> *A great place to live, and we need a great council as well.*
> Male, 65+ years, South Dunedin.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Dunedin City Council? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=805.

Perceived value for money has fallen

At 30%, 2025-26 is the lowest perceived value for money result in recent times, down from a 54% peak in 2017-18. The decline has come alongside sustained rates increases, including two large rises in the last two years, though the 2025-26 figure is also pulled down by a lower scoring first half of the year.

Satisfaction with perceived value for money:

Rates rose **+17.5% (2024-25)** then **+10.5% (2025-26)**

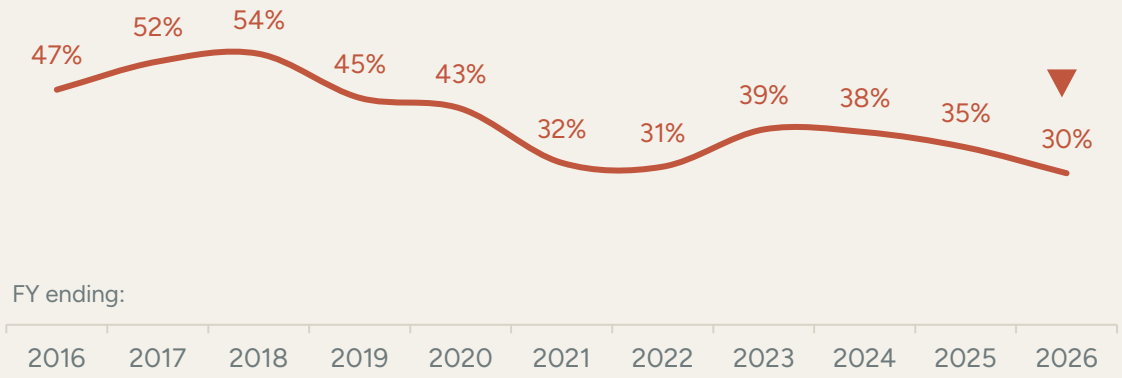


Figure 02: Satisfaction with perceived value for money.

30% satisfied in 2025-26

down significantly compared to 2024-25. A further 28% are neutral.

ALONGSIDE RISING RATES

The fall has come during several rates increases, stepping up sharply in the last two years (17.5% then 10.5%). The two move together closely.

A DIP, THEN RECOVERY WITHIN THE YEAR

Like overall satisfaction, perceived value for money was weakest around the election (around 25%, three months rolling), recovering to the high-30s towards the end of 2025-26, broadly back in line with 2024-25.

THE STRONGEST DRIVER OF SATISFACTION

Value for money is the measure most closely tied to residents' overall satisfaction with Dunedin City Council.

> *My rates are going up and up, what feels like every month, but the services I receive have not changed.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Mosgiel.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the value for money? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=792.

Residents see higher rates but feel no more to show for them

Residents' concern about value is twofold – rates keep rising, and they don't feel they get any more for it. Where people are satisfied, it's a broader sense that the city delivers decent services for its size, with the water and drainage renewals, parks and rubbish collection the everyday things people point to as worth the rates.

Why residents are dissatisfied with value for money:

1. **RATES TOO HIGH & RISING ~ 4 in 10**
   Rates are described as expensive and climbing every year, outpacing incomes and pensions. Some residents point to regional rates too.

2. **WASTEFUL/POORLY MANAGED SPENDING ~ 3 in 10**
   Waste, debt and "bureaucracy"/management costs – some residents call for money to be spent more "wisely and accountably".

3. **MONEY SPENT ON THE 'WRONG THINGS' ~ 2 in 10**
   Specific projects named as nice-to-haves ahead of essentials, including cycleways, the stadium, and the George Street upgrade.

4. **ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE ~ 2 in 10**
   A sense that basics like roads, footpaths, and water pipes are under-maintained and, for some, that this persists despite rising rates.

5. **AFFORDABILITY & STRUGGLE ~ 1 in 10**
   Some raise rates as a genuine financial strain, with residents naming pensions, single incomes, and the cost of living.

Note: Themes coded from open-ended comments; proportions indicative. Many comments raise more than one theme, so figures do not sum to 10.

> *"Rates are going up but we don't seem to get anymore for our money."*
> Female, 20 - 24 years, Peninsula.

> *"Council needs to spend on needs rather than nice to have."*
> Female, 65+ years, South Dunedin.

> *"Rates are up, but what for? Have we ever been given a breakdown of where our money goes?"*
> Male, 45 - 49 years, Hill Suburbs.

> *"Rates are too expensive, especially for single parents and retirees."*
> Female, 65+ years, area not stated.

> *"Rate rises are outrageous and far exceed the rate of inflation."*
> Female, 45 - 49 years, North Dunedin.

> *"The rubbish collection service is frustrating for the rates increase. Other facilities are great."*
> Female, 30 - 34 years, Kaikorai Valley.

> *"Too much money gets wasted on vanity projects and consultants."*
> Male, 45 - 49 years, North Coast.

Question: What are your top two priorities for the DCC this year?
Base: All respondents who provided a rating, Priority 1 n=1079, Priority 2 n=1029.

Leadership matters most and eased across the board this year

After value for money, leadership and direction are the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction. All five measures sit low compared to the services and facilities council provides, and each eased in 2025-26 as the lift around the new Council settled. Around 4 in 10 residents are neutral on most leadership measures, rising to nearly half for Community Boards.

25%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

▼ -5 vs 2024-25

35%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE: COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

30%

AMOUNT OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

▼ -6 vs 2024-25

30%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

▼ -6 vs 2024-25

46%

SUPPORTING FESTIVALS & EVENTS

▼ -10 vs 2024-25

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? And overall, when you think about the role that Council has, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the performance of the elected members? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=807.

25% satisfied in 2025-26

with the Mayor and Councillors, down significantly compared to 2024-25.

THEY MOVE AS ONE

All five leadership measures track each other year to year, acting as a single confidence signal that stepped down around 2020-21 and hasn't recovered.

A LIFT AROUND THE ELECTION, THEN A FADE

All five measures share the same 2025-26 pattern - a trough before the vote, followed by a peak as the new Council took office, then an ease back. This trend is sharpest for Mayor & Councillors and economic leadership.

WHY IT WEIGHS ON THE OVERALL RESULT

These measures are the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction and value for money, so a drop in scores here impacts the perception of Dunedin City Council as a whole.

LEADERSHIP AND VIEWS OF THE CITY MOVE TOGETHER

Confidence in leadership is closely linked to how residents view Dunedin itself. Residents satisfied with economic leadership are more likely to see a thriving, vibrant city.

Confidence in elected members moves with the overall mood

Satisfaction with the Mayor & Councillors and with Community Board members has followed the same path over the years – steady through the late 2010s, a step down around 2021, and a similar trend since. Both measures eased again in 2025-26.

Satisfaction with the performance of elected members:

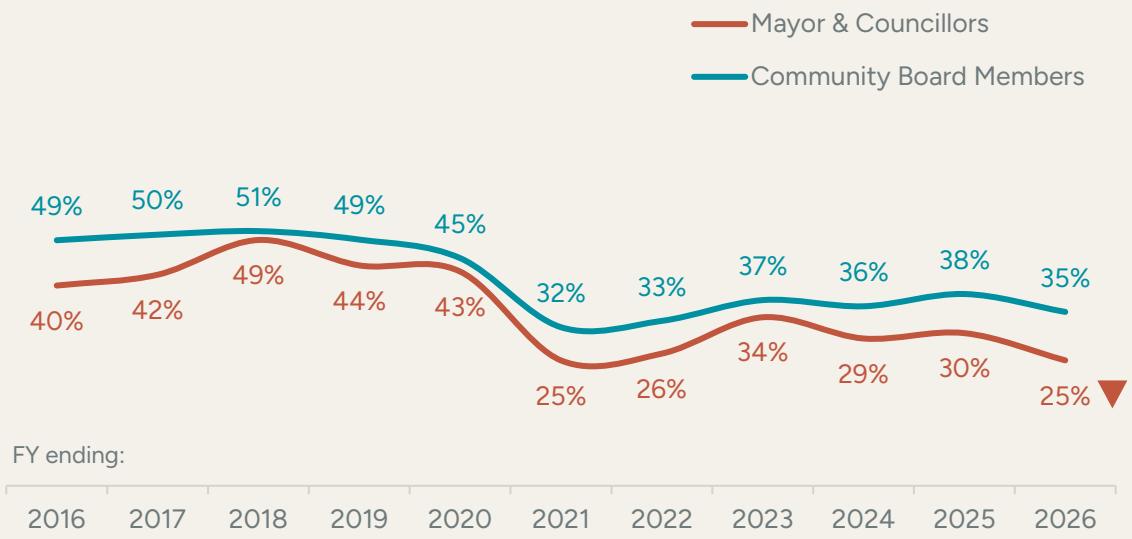


Figure 03: Satisfaction with the performance of elected members.

25% satisfied in 2025-26

with the Mayor and Councillors, the lowest since 2020-21.

BOTH STEPPED DOWN AND STAYED DOWN

Confidence in both elected tiers fell sharply around 2021 and has held at that lower level ever since. This is a structural shift and 2025-26 sits at or near the series low for both.

COMMUNITY BOARDS HELD UP BETTER

Throughout, satisfaction with Community Board members has sat above that with the Mayor & Councillors, and fell less this year.

SAME PATTERN ACROSS LEADERSHIP MEASURES

These two measures stand for the wider picture – all five, including economic leadership, public consultation, and festivals, follow the same path, moving together year to year. Whichever aspect of leadership residents are asked about, confidence has shifted as one.

Question: And overall, when you think about the role that Council has, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the performance of the elected members? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=589.

The measures that matter most are the ones scoring lowest

The things residents care about most when judging the Council, being value for money and how Council is led and run, are also the areas where satisfaction is lowest. The services that score best, like parks and waste, matter least to the overall result. Improving the overall picture means making progress where residents are hardest to satisfy.

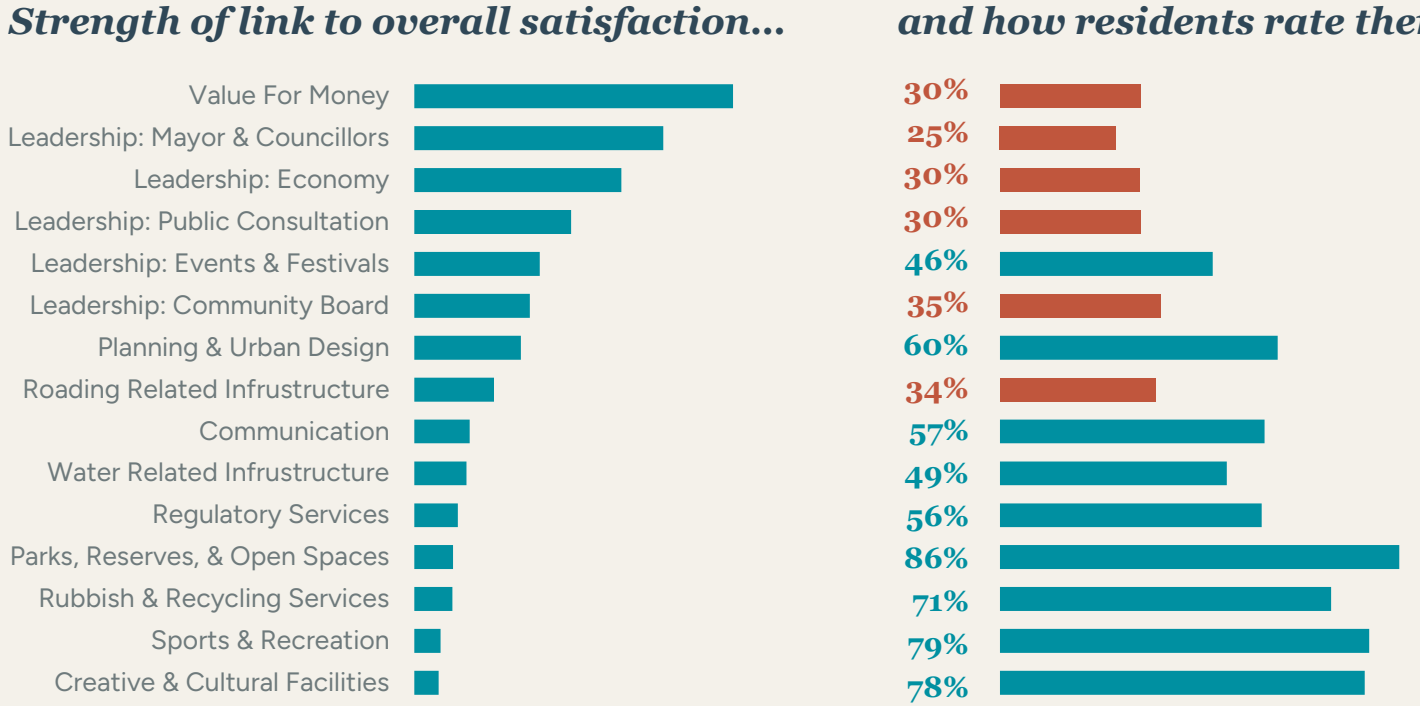


Figure 04: Strength of link of specific measures to overall satisfaction, and how residents rate them.

Value & Direction

Value for money shapes overall satisfaction more than anything. After value, Council governance and direction measures matter most. These are about how the Council is run, rather than the services it delivers.

THEY SCORE LOWEST

These top drivers sit at the bottom for satisfaction – the things residents care about most in forming their overall view are where they're least satisfied.

DRIVERS OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Among the aspects measured, the same areas that shape overall satisfaction, being leadership and how the city is developing, also most shape perceived value for money.

> *Focus on core services first.*
> Male, 65+ years, area not stated.

The "strength of link" is based on a regression analysis (n=571; R^2=0.70) identifying which measures are most strongly associated with residents' overall satisfaction. It shows relative importance, not cause.

A creative, heritage city, though residents less sure it's thriving

Residents hold a strong, positive sense of Dunedin's identity, its heritage, arts and natural environment. They are less convinced it is a thriving, productive economy, and while residents see the city as sustainable, few credit the Council with leading on it.

72% agree

(or strongly agree) Dunedin preserves architectural history.

A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Residents most agree Dunedin is a place of heritage, arts and culture, diversity, and natural environment.

LESS SURE IT'S THRIVING

While residents are positive about the city's heritage, culture, and environment, confidence in its economic direction is more muted.

A GAP ON SUSTAINABILITY

Many see Dunedin as an environmentally sustainable city, but far fewer see the Council as leading on it.

> *I do think Dunedin is a vibrant city but believe this comes from the people, not the council.*
> Female, 30 - 34 years, Wakari.

Agreement that Dunedin...



Figure 05: Agreement with perceptions of Dunedin.

Question: Overall, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=1077.

Roads, rates, and careful spending top the priority list

Roading and transport is the most mentioned priority overall, with spending, rates and financial management close behind, and especially likely to be a resident's number one priority. Core infrastructure like water features strongly, while events, arts and heritage rank lower, and more often as a second priority than a first.

Residents' top priorities for the DCC this year:

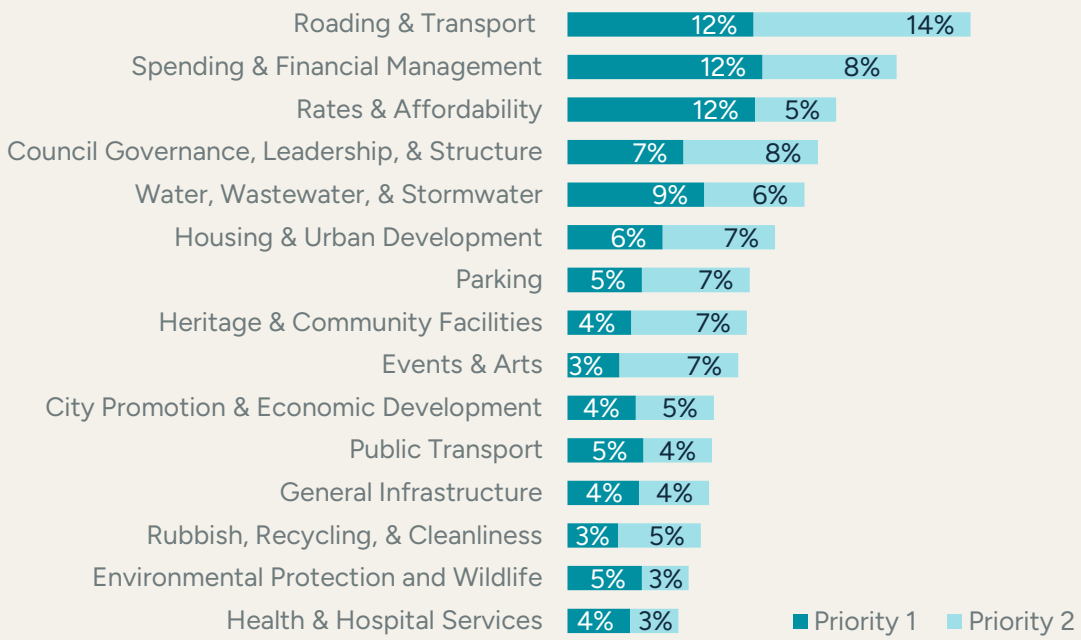


Figure 06: Residents top priorities for the year.

> *Start listening to the people and apply common sense.*
> Female, 45 - 49 years, North Dunedin.

> *The traffic is an absolute disgrace.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Mosgiel.

> *Spend less money on pavers and seesaws. Spend more money on water and roading infrastructure.*
> Male, 20 - 24 years, North Coast.

> *Stop wasting ratepayers money.*
> Female, 65+ years, South Coast.

> *Improve the bus routes, frequency and affordability.*
> Female, 30 - 34 years, South Dunedin.

> *Sort stadium costs, stop getting rid of parking, fix important stuff before cycle ways.*
> Male, 50 - 54 years, North Dunedin.

> *We need more car parking, or at least the current car parks not to be so expensive.*
> Female, 25 - 29 years, area not stated.

Question: What are your top two priorities for the DCC this year? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, Priority 1 n=1079, Priority 2 n=1029.



02

Six Standout Stories

Six Standout Stories

01

VALUE FOR MONEY

At a recent low and property owners feel it most.

02

LEADERSHIP

A lift in satisfaction with leadership under the new Council has since eased.

03

SOUTH DUNEDIN

Dissatisfaction focused on stormwater and flood infrastructure.

04

GEORGE STREET

A better place to walk since the upgrade, but with questions over cost.

05

WHERE EXPERIENCES DIFFER

One resident profile – working, car dependent property owners – are consistently less satisfied.

06

GETTING AROUND THE CITY

The physical central city retail area and footpaths are lacking for less mobile residents.

Perceived value for money has dropped most for property owners

Value for money is the lowest scoring and most influential measure, and property owners are feeling it the most. Property owners once rated value for money the same as non-property owners, however a gap has opened as rates rose, and owners are now markedly less satisfied with perceived value for money than non-owners.

Satisfaction with perceived value for money:

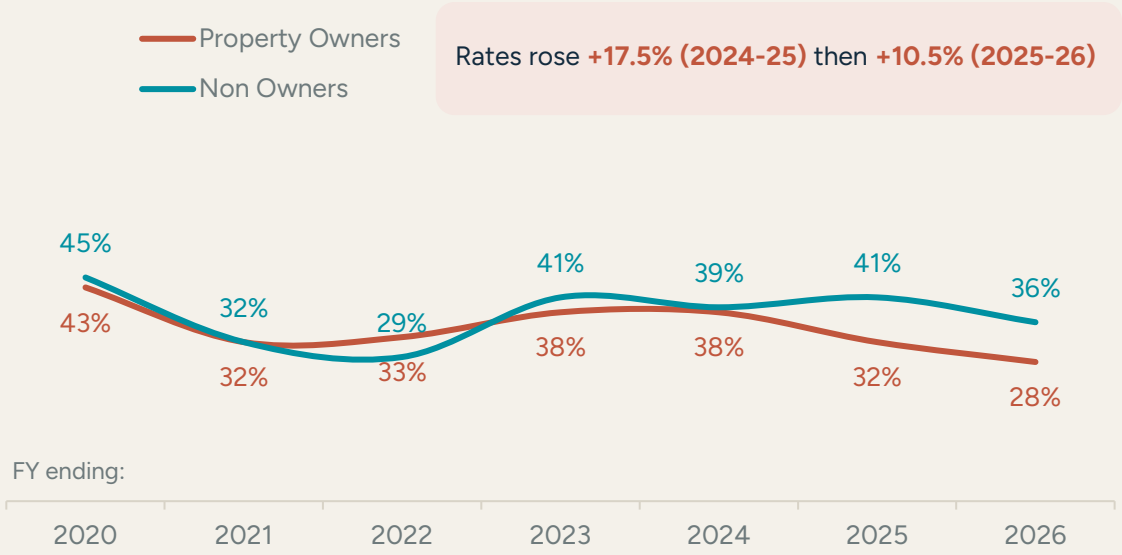


Figure 07: Satisfaction with perceived value for money.

8 point gap

A NOTABLE GAP

Property owner satisfaction with value for money has declined since 2023-24, creating a gap between owner and non-owner perceptions.

AS RATES CLIMBED

The decline in satisfaction with value has come during a period of rising rates, where rates stepped up 17.5% in 2024-25, and 10.5% in 2025-26.

PROPERTY OWNERS LESS SATISFIED OVERALL

Value for money is one of the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction, and property owners report lower overall satisfaction than non-owners.

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Rates and council spending was named frequently as priorities for DCC, with owners mentioning this more often than non-owners.

> *Council needs to spend on needs rather than nice-to-have.*
> Female, 65+ years, South Dunedin.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the value for money? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, owners minimum n=611, non-owners minimum n=149.

New Council sees early lift in satisfaction, then easing

Satisfaction with the Mayor and Councillors fell to a low around the October 2025 election, rose sharply as the new Council took office, then eased back after a few months. Other leadership measures, such as council's leadership to foster a vibrant economy through supporting the city's economic development in general, follow a similar trend.

Satisfaction with Mayor and Councillors (3 months rolling):

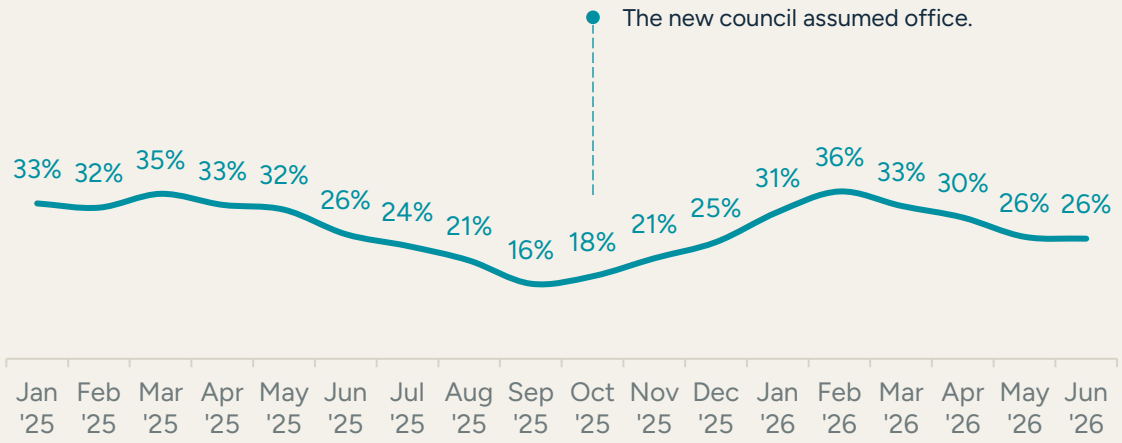


Figure 08: Satisfaction with Mayor and Councillors (three months rolling) .

Question: And overall, when you think about the role that Council has, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the performance of the elected members? - The overall performance of the Mayor and Councillors. Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=205.

36% peak

up from 16% in September 2025, followed by a drop to 26% by June.

A LIFT AS THE NEW COUNCIL TOOK OFFICE

Confidence fell to a low around the October 2025 election, then rose as the new Council took office, a shape shared by the other leadership measures. Comments suggest the lift may have been prompted by the idea of a fresh start rather than a change residents had seen.

EASING SINCE FEBRUARY

Since the February peak, satisfaction with the Mayor and Councillors has eased back to 26%.

A CALL TO WORK TOGETHER

Residents' feedback focuses mostly on how elected members work together, with many asking to stop fighting and get on with the job.

> *I wish the few elected city councillors would stop fighting and grow up. It's not about them, it's about serving your city.*
> Female, 60 - 64 years, Wakari.

STORY 03 - SOUTH DUNEDIN

A stormwater gap in the flood-exposed south

Residents in South Dunedin are significantly less satisfied with the management of water infrastructure than others. Flooding features in roughly a third of their comments, and where the rest of the city tends to describe a service to be managed better, South Dunedin residents speak of a lived and present concern.

Satisfaction with water related infrastructure:

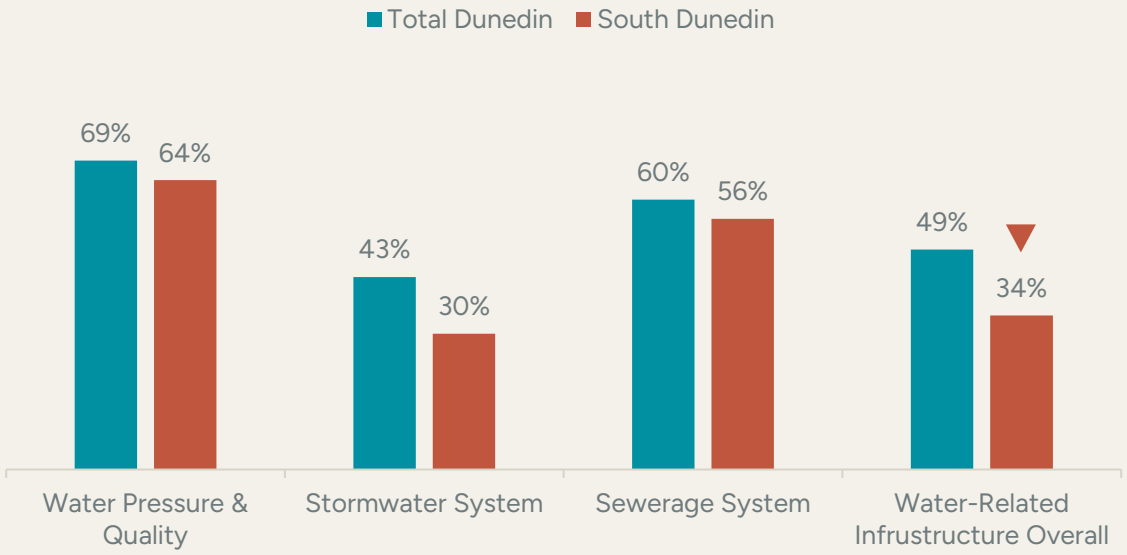


Figure 09: Satisfaction with water related infrastructure.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the DCC provides and manages the city's water-related infrastructure?
Base: All respondents who provided a rating, Total Dunedin minimum n=1075, South Dunedin minimum n=134.

15 point gap

A SIGNIFICANT, TARGETED GAP

On overall water infrastructure management, 34% of South Dunedin residents are satisfied vs. 49% citywide – a statistically significant 15-point gap.

CONCENTRATED ON STORMWATER

Stormwater shows the biggest gap, while other water related measures, and satisfaction with council overall, sit closer to the city average.

A LIVED CONCERN, NOT JUST A SERVICE ISSUE

Across the city, residents want the basics managed better – meaning drains cleared and pipes renewed. In South Dunedin that comes with something the rest of the city voices far less – the lived, repeated experience of flooding itself.

> *"I live in South Dunedin, the flood issues are a constant concern and none of the options to mitigate the risk are satisfactory.*
> Male, 40 - 44 years, South Dunedin.

STORY 04 - GEORGE STREET

George Street a better street to walk, with questions over cost

Satisfaction with the central city retail area and ease of pedestrian movement rose around the rebuild of George Street in 2024-25, and have held strong into 2025-26, with many still positive about the upgrade. George Street is commonly mentioned, with the look and feel tending to be praised, and cost being a recurring concern.

Satisfaction with aspects relating to George Street upgrade:

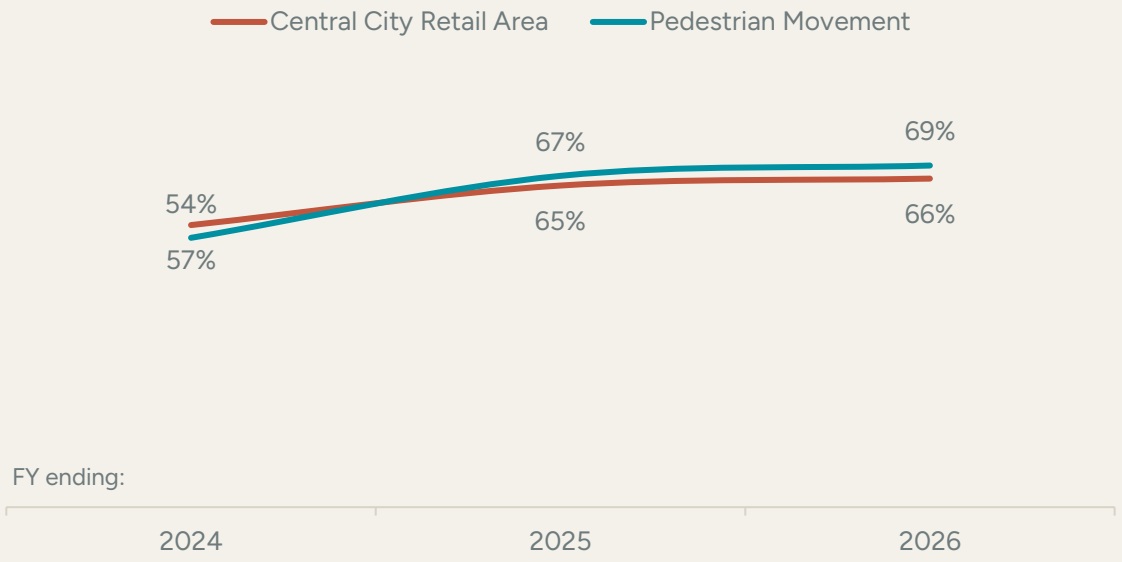


Figure 10: Satisfaction with aspects relating to George Street upgrade.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall look and feel of the following? - The central city retail area.
Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? - The ease of pedestrian movement throughout the city. Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=1184.

1/3 mention George Street

or the main street upgrade unprompted.

WHAT LIFTED

Satisfaction with the central-city retail area and walkability throughout the city rose around the rebuild and have held strong into 2025-26.

LIKED AS A PLACE, QUESTIONED AS SPEND

Some praise the street as a place to be, with walkability and look positively mentioned by most residents. Others see mainly “money wasted”.

THE FACE OF THE VALUE DEBATE

The see-saws and boulders have become what residents reach for to talk about “waste”. This is where a general concern about Council spending finds something concrete to point at.

> *George Street is much more pedestrian friendly now.*
> Male, 50 - 54 years, Wakari.

> *Money wasted on vanity projects such as the see saw on George Street.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, North Coast.

STORY 05 - WHERE EXPERIENCES DIFFER

One group is consistently less satisfied with value and direction

Working (full time or self employed), car dependent property owners are consistently less satisfied than others. Not so much with the everyday services they use, but with perceived value for money, leadership, and how the Council is run. They are also less likely to view Dunedin City as vibrant and thriving.

Satisfaction with aspects of value and leadership:

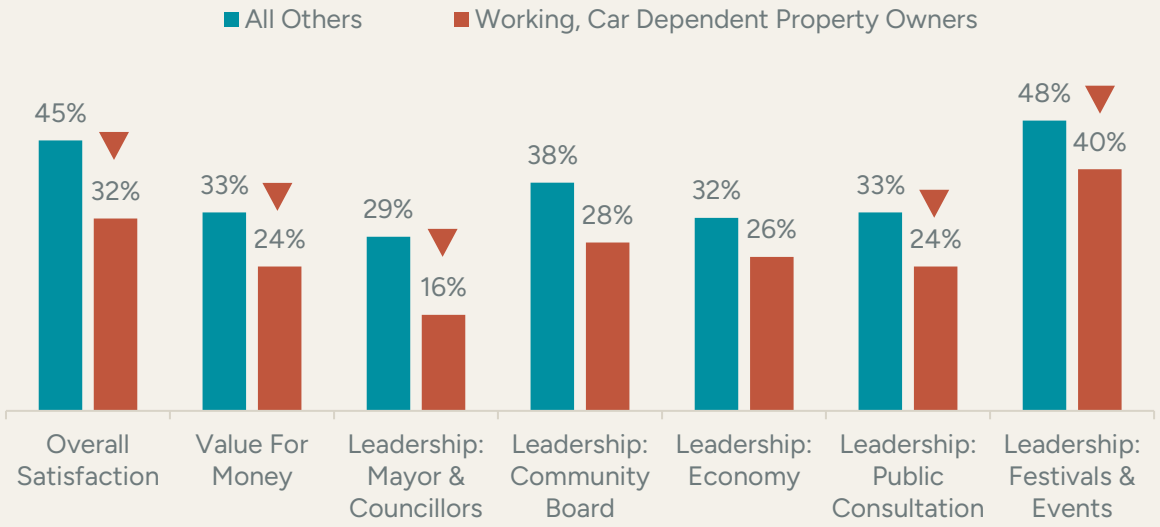


Figure 11: Satisfaction with aspects of value and leadership.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Dunedin City Council? Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the value for money? Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? Question: And overall, when you think about the role that Council has, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the performance of the elected members? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, All Others minimum n=543, Working, Car Dependent Property Owners minimum n=264.

32% vs 45%

property owning, car dependent, full time working residents significantly less satisfied overall compared to all other residents.

CRITICAL WHERE IT COUNTS MOST

The gaps fall on the measures that most drive overall satisfaction – perceived value for money, leadership, public consultation, how the city is developing, and roads. On the lower impact everyday services, such as parks, waste, water, sport, and culture, their perceptions are more in line with other residents.

LESS UPBEAT ABOUT THE CITY

They are also less likely to see Dunedin as vibrant and thriving, though they view its heritage and natural environment much like everyone else.

> *Rates are way too high for the facilities we have compared to other cities.*
>
> Male, 45 - 49 years, Andersons Bay.

The central city is harder for less mobile residents

Residents with mobility difficulties are significantly less satisfied with the central city area compared to those without difficulty, and the condition of footpaths is the standout. For some, uneven and poorly maintained footpaths come through as a barrier to getting around, especially for those using wheelchairs or mobility aids.

Satisfaction with the city centre and footpath condition:

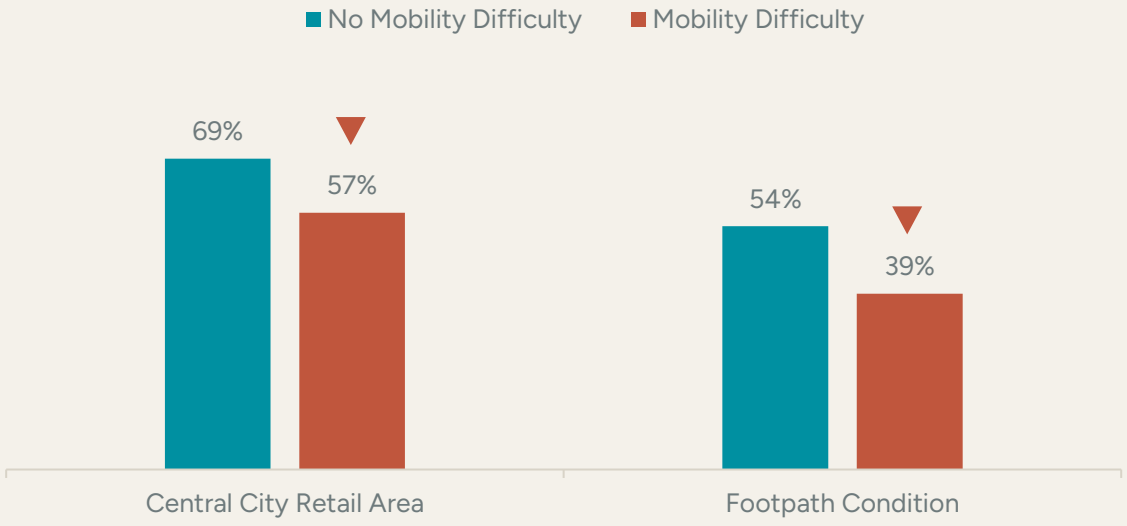


Figure 12: Satisfaction with the city centre and footpath condition.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall look and feel of the following? – The central city retail area. Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? – Overall condition of footpaths throughout the city. Base: All respondents who provided a rating, No Mobility minimum n=961, Mobility minimum n=191.

15 point gap

on the condition of footpaths for those with mobility difficulties.

AN EQUITY GAP IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The difference is about physically getting around on uneven footpaths and navigating the central city, not the services they use.

> *Our roads and footpaths are in need of updating - have you ever tried pushing a wheelchair? It is not easy.*
> Female, 60 - 64 years, South Dunedin.

GEORGE STREET SHOWS IT CAN IMPROVE

Some residents single out the rebuild as easier to use, evidence that upgrades can widen access for everyone.

> *The George Street upgrade is great, especially for a person with a disability.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Green Island.



03

Changes Residents Noticed

CHANGES RESIDENTS NOTICED

Playground and bin system changes have landed well

Two Council services saw notable changes this year - upgrades to playgrounds, and the new kerbside collection system.

PLAYGROUNDS

+5 percentage points this year

Satisfaction recovered after a decline.

After several years at its lowest levels, satisfaction with playgrounds rose notably, though not significantly from 65% to 70%. Residents point to recent playground upgrades and new builds across the city.

KERBSIDE RUBBISH COLLECTION

+11 percentage points this year

The only waste measure to move this year.

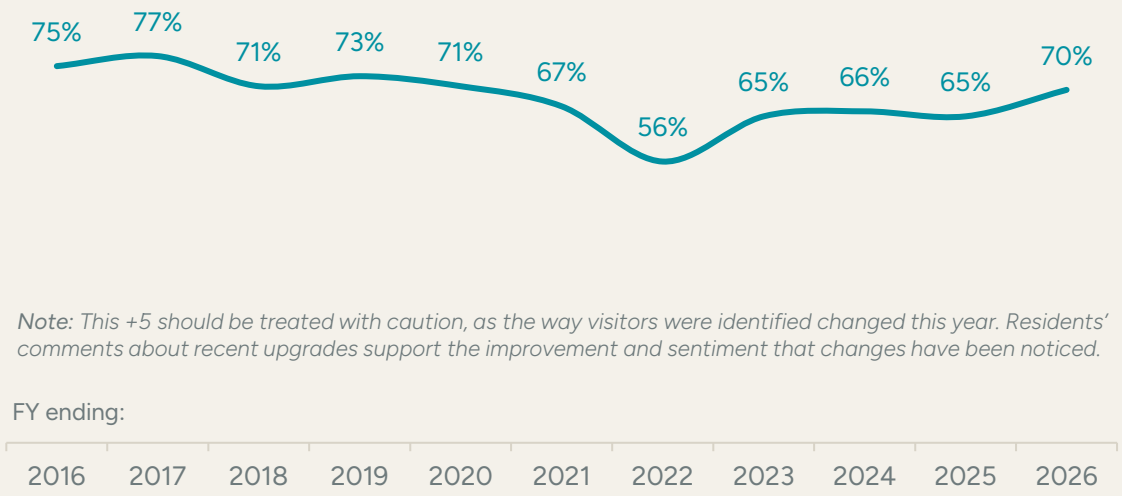
Satisfaction with kerbside rubbish collection rose significantly from 66% to 77%, following the July 2024 rollout of the new four-bin system, which replaced rubbish bags with bins, and added a new green waste bin. No other waste measure shifted significantly this year.

CHANGES RESIDENTS NOTICED – PLAYGROUNDS

The lowest rated facility showed some improvement

DCC playgrounds, the lowest rated aspect of the parks, reserves and open spaces facilities measured this year, have risen to 70% after a steady multi-year decline to a low of 56% in 2021-22. Residents point to recent playground upgrades and new builds across the city as reasons for their satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council playgrounds:



Note: This +5 should be treated with caution, as the way visitors were identified changed this year. Residents' comments about recent upgrades support the improvement and sentiment that changes have been noticed.

Figure 13: Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council playgrounds .

+5 percentage points

rise in playground satisfaction this year.

A CLEAR DECLINE, NOW RECOVERING

Playground satisfaction fell steadily from the low 70s to a low of 56% in 2021-22 and sat lower for several years. It has since recovered to 70%.

RESIDENTS CREDIT REAL UPGRADES

The improved score tracks visible investment, and residents name new and upgraded playgrounds unprompted as reasons they're more satisfied.

> *Thanks for the new library and the various playground upgrades.*
> Female, 45 - 49 years, South Dunedin.

STILL MORE TO DO

Residents welcome the upgrades but several playgrounds, such as Marlow Park and the Dinosaur Park, are still described as ageing or "tired".

> *Old, dated, boring. Need to hurry up and upgrade the Dinosaur Park.*
> Male, 45 - 49 years, South Dunedin.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of these facilities that you visited in the last year? - DCC Playgrounds. Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=678.

New kerbside collection system appearing to improve satisfaction

In July 2024 the Council rolled out a new four-bin kerbside system, replacing prepaid rubbish bags with a red lid bin and adding a green food scraps and garden waste bin for 52,000 households. In the first full survey year since, satisfaction with kerbside rubbish collection rose significantly.

Satisfaction with the kerbside rubbish collection:

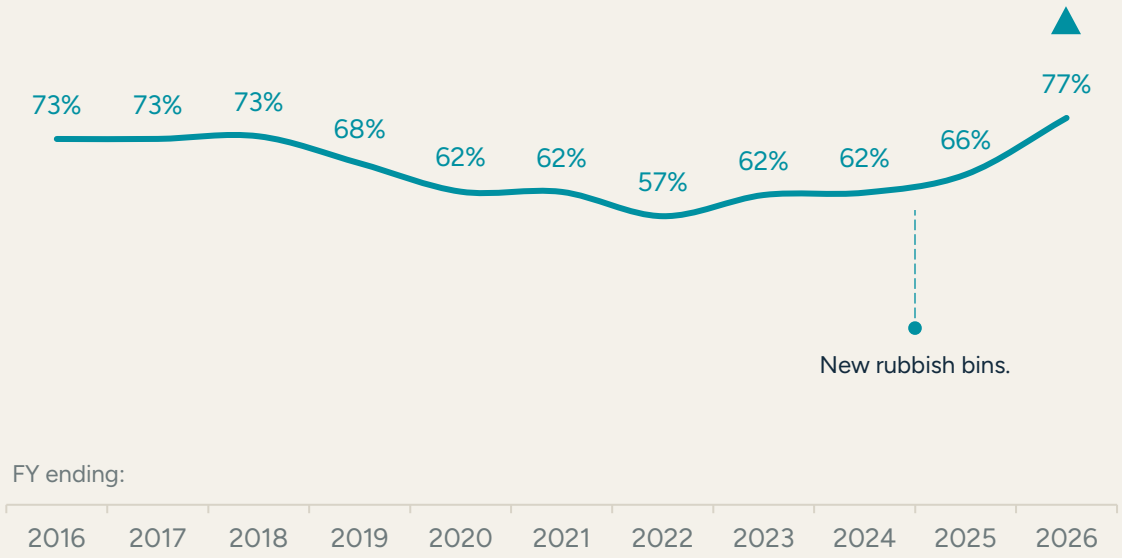


Figure 14: Satisfaction with the kerbside rubbish collection.

+11 percentage points

in one year - kerbside rubbish collection rose from 66% to 77%.

WHAT CHANGED

Prepaid rubbish bags were replaced with a red lid rubbish bin, and a new green lid bin was added for food scraps and garden waste. Rolled out to more than 52,000 households with an updated app.

RESIDENTS RESPONDED

Satisfaction with kerbside rubbish collection rose 11 percentage points, the only rubbish and recycling measure to move.

WHAT THEY VALUE

The move from bags to bins and the new green food bin draw praise. The main criticism is the size of the red rubbish bin being too small.

> *"Worked out better than we expected. Better having bin than bags as bins can't be ripped, spilling rubbish onto street."*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Green Island.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services? - Kerbside rubbish collection. Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=1177.



04

Service Areas

SERVICE AREAS

DCC rates highest on amenities and lowest on infrastructure

Satisfaction is highest for the amenities residents enjoy, being parks, sport, and culture, and lowest for roading and water related infrastructure. The low scoring services are among the biggest drivers of residents' overall view of the Council and the value they receive.

Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council's services:

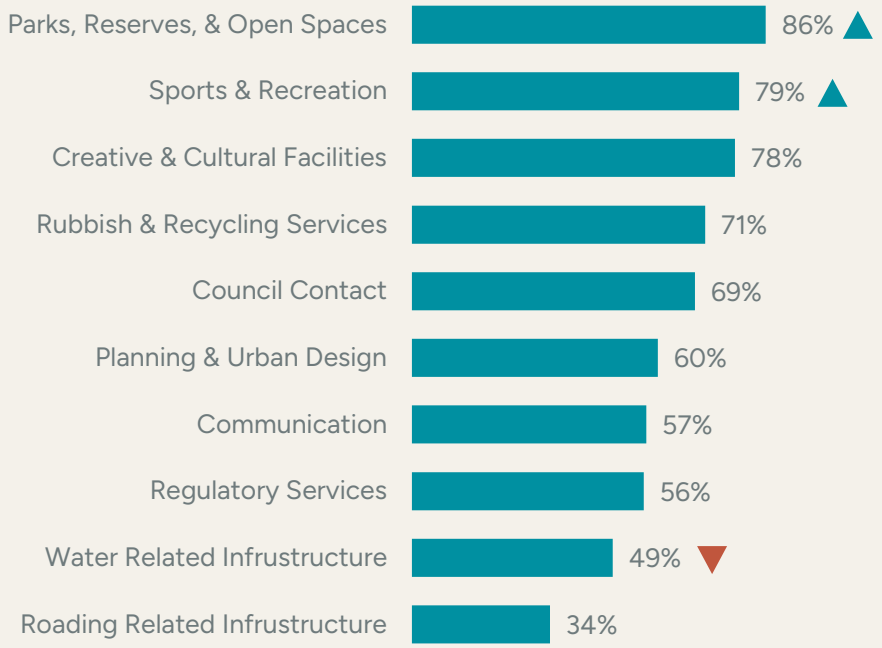


Figure 15: Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council's services.

Amenities Lead

VALUED, BUT NOT WHERE THE GAP IS

Amenities are a genuine strength to maintain, but the opportunity to lift the overall picture sits with roading, water, and how the Council is seen to be run.

SERVICES DRIVING OVERALL SATISFACTION TRAILING

Roading and water sit at the bottom yet are among the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction. The high scoring amenities move the overall result least.

SOME OF THIS IS EXPECTED

Infrastructure and regulatory services tend to score lower than amenities everywhere, where a reliable water supply or a well-run process is less visible than a park or a pool. Part of the gap reflects the nature of the service, not just performance.

TAKEN FOR GRANTED UNTIL THEY FAIL

Roads, water, and waste are the services people notice most when they go wrong and least when they work. They rarely score highly anywhere, but that's also why they weigh so heavily on residents' overall view – when the basics slip, the whole verdict slips.



SERVICE AREA

Facilities

Green spaces are well cared for, well used, and well loved

86% SATISFIED OVERALL (n=1,182)

LONG TERM TREND: Around 8 in 10 residents were satisfied each year from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Satisfaction eased to the high-70s in 2020-21 and held there for several years, before lifting significantly to its highest level in the series (86%) in 2025-26.

Visitor satisfaction with each facility:



Figure 16: Visitor satisfaction with each facility: Parks, Reserves, and Open Spaces.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of these facilities that you visited in the last year?

Why visitors gave those ratings:

WHAT RESIDENTS LOVE

Across all five facility types, residents are clear that these spaces are well cared for. Words like "well maintained", "tidy", and "well kept" come up often, and they come up consistently whichever facility is being rated. What residents do in these spaces varies, with walks through the gardens, along the tracks or by the coast, families at the playgrounds, and sport on the fields, but the common theme is having somewhere to get outside and be active.

> *"I walk to and from uni every day through these - always well maintained.*
> Female, 18 - 19 years, North Dunedin.

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

Where people were less happy, the complaints are about the basics slipping rather than the spaces themselves. Overflowing or missing bins are the top frustration, followed by dog mess and, in some places, too few toilets. These generally fixable things, and they are often raised by people who otherwise love the place.

> *"Well maintained walking track, but no rubbish bins available.*
> Male, 35 - 39 years, South Dunedin.

Note: The way visitors were identified changed this year, comparisons to 2024-25 not made.

Green spaces used mostly for walking and wellbeing

Walking is the most common activity undertaken at parks, reserves, and open spaces, and improving mental well-being is the most common motivation for visiting. Most visitors visit for a personal reason, to improve wellbeing, connect with nature, or spend time with others, while visiting to actively care for those spaces is less common.

What visitors did on their most recent visit:

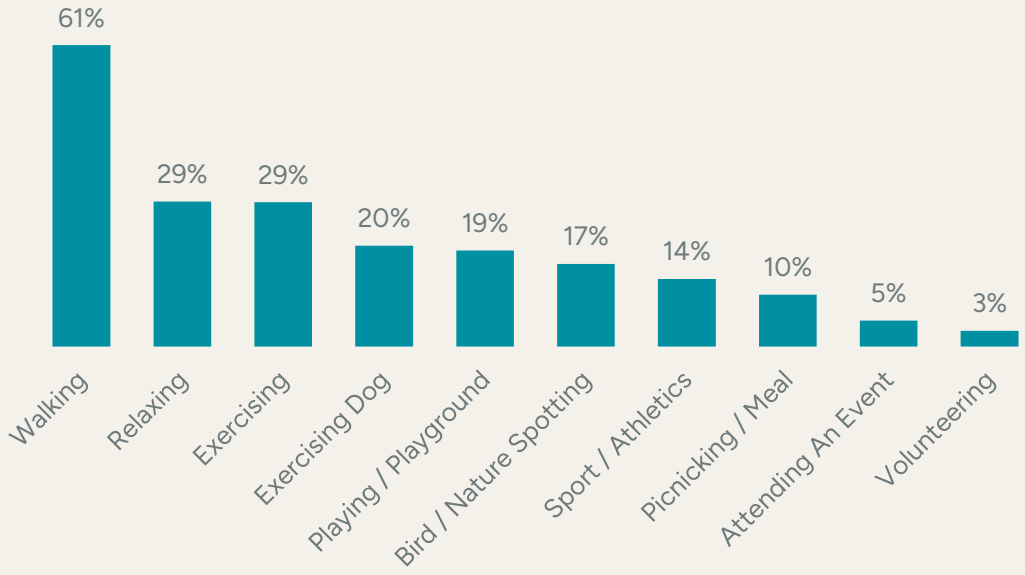


Figure 17: What visitors did on their most recent visit.

Question: What activities did you, or someone you were with, do on your most recent visit to a park, reserve, or open space? Base: All respondents who visited a park, reserve, or open space n=1205.

Why residents visited on their most recent visit:

PERSONAL WELLBEING BENEFIT ON ALMOST EVERY VISIT

86% agree
visited to improve mental well-being

79% agree
visited to connect with nature

76% agree
visited to spend time with others

ACTIVE CARE FOR NATURE ON FEWER VISITS

32% agree
to engage in activities that improve our natural environment

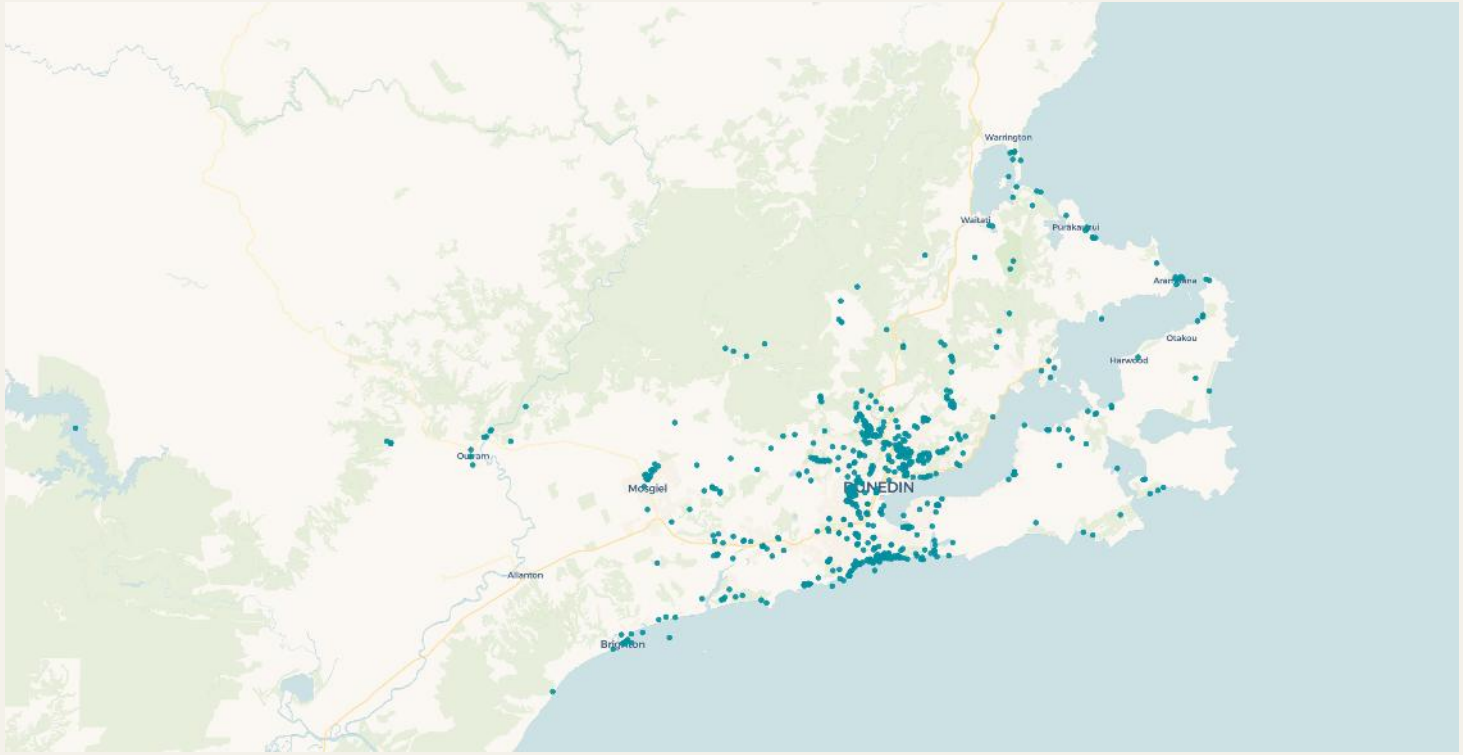
19% agree
to volunteer in activities that improve our natural environment

Figure 18: Why residents visited on their most recent visit.

Question: How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following statements were reasons for your most recent visit? Base: All respondents who visited a park, reserve, or open space n=955.

Parks are visited right across the district

Each dot shows the park a resident visited on their most recent visit. Visits cluster in and around the central city and harbour, but reach across the whole district, from Mosgiel and the coast to the peninsula and northern suburbs.



CONCENTRATED IN THE CENTRE

The densest cluster is central Dunedin and around the harbour, consistent with where most residents live.

BUT GENUINELY DISTRICT-WIDE

Visits extend well beyond the city centre, Mosgiel, the southern coast (St Clair to Brighton), the Otago Peninsula, and northern areas like Waitati and Warrington all feature.

BOTANIC GARDENS MOST POPULAR

The Dunedin Botanic Garden was the most commonly visited park, named by a little over 1 in 10 of those who identified where they went. Ross Creek Reservoir Reserve, Ocean Beach Domain, Marlow Park, and Jubilee Park also featured among the most visited.

Figure 18: The parks residents visited on their most recent visit.

Question: What activities did you, or someone you were with, do on your most recent visit to a park, reserve, or open space? Base: All respondents who visited a park, reserve, or open space n=1205.

Great experiences in recreation venues that are showing their age

79% SATISFIED OVERALL (n=1,182)

LONG TERM TREND: Satisfaction with sports and recreation facilities overall increased significantly from 75% in 2024-25 to 79% in 2025-26. This follows a period of easing from the low-80s across 2015-16 to 2019-20 down to the mid-70s from 2020-21.

Visitor satisfaction with each facility:



Figure 19: Visitor satisfaction with each facility: Sports and recreation facilities.

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of these facilities that you visited in the last year?

Why visitors gave those ratings:

WHAT RESIDENTS LOVE

Friendly, helpful staff, and the sense that there is something for everyone, with aqua-jogging at Moana Pool, hockey and skating at the Ice Stadium, netball and the book sale at Edgar Centre, and rugby and concerts at Forsyth Barr Stadium.

> *"Went for two rugby games in the last month. Very well run, kind staff and exceptionally clean bathrooms.*
> Female, 20 - 24 years, Mosgiel.

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

Older venues are showing their age, with Moana Pool's changing rooms, the Ice Stadium's rink and building, and a cold, leaky roofed Edgar Centre all called for a refresh. At the bigger venues the niggles are cost and logistics, with pricey food and drink at Forsyth Barr Stadium, and parking that divides opinion at Edgar Centre. The same people often call a place great and overdue for care in the same breath.

> *"The pool and surrounds looked tired and in need of care.*
> Female, 65+ years, Middlemarch.

Note: The way visitors were identified changed this year, comparisons to 2024-25 not made.

Creative and cultural facilities are Dunedin's most loved venues

78% SATISFIED OVERALL (n=1,138)

LONG TERM TREND: Satisfaction with Dunedin creative and cultural facilities overall sat around 9 in 10 through to 2019-20, then drifted gradually down over the following years. Unlike other facilities, it eased again in 2025-26 to 78% - the lowest in the series.

Visitor satisfaction with each facility:

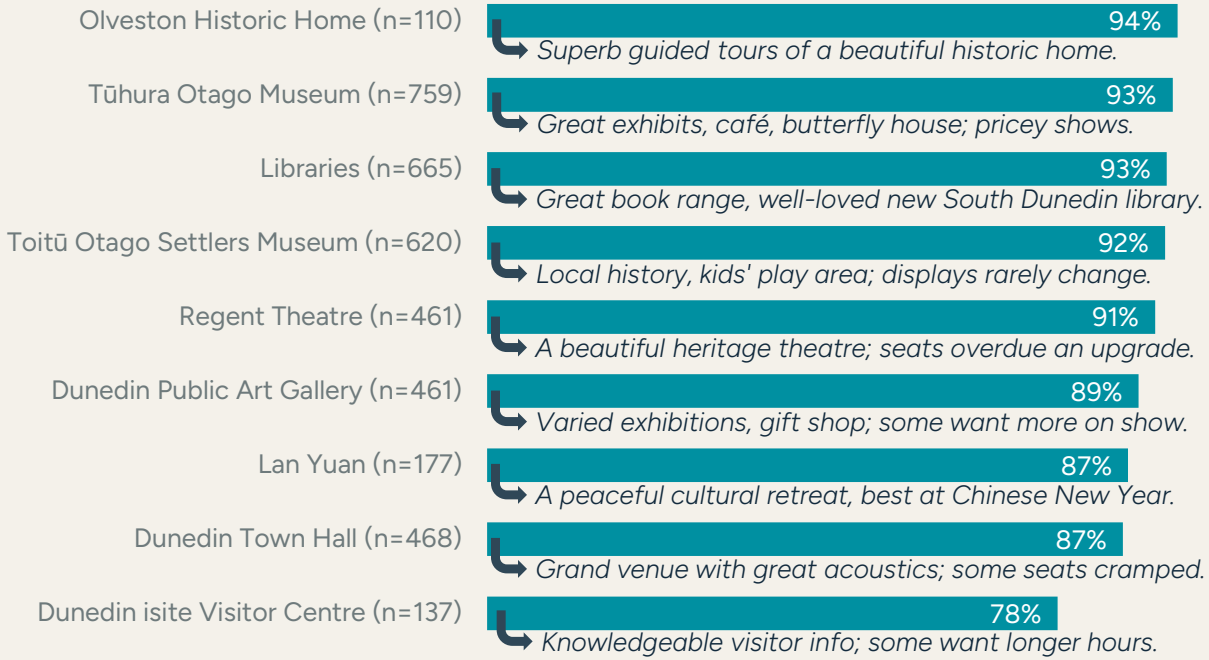


Figure 20: Visitor satisfaction with each facility: Creative and Cultural Facilities..

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of these facilities that you visited in the last year?

Why visitors gave those ratings:

WHAT RESIDENTS LOVE

Helpful, friendly, knowledgeable staff are the most-praised element. These are also the places Dunedin is proud to show off, with many describing visits with children, grandchildren and out of town visitors. The spaces themselves are consistently described as well kept and welcoming.

> *"The interactive nature of [Tūhura Science Centre] and the butterflies make it a great place to take kids.*
> Female, 30 - 34 years, Kaikorai Valley.

WHAT COULD BE BETTER

There's little residents would change, and what they mention is small and specific. The most common thread across the museums and gallery is a wish for exhibits to change more often, giving a fresh reason to return. At the older venues the recurring note is seating comfort, with Regent's seats and Town Hall's chairs both drawing calls for an upgrade.

> *"Great, but the seats need upgrading.*
> Female, 45 - 49 years, South Dunedin.

Note: The way visitors were identified changed this year, comparisons to 2024-25 not made.



SERVICE AREA

Infrastructure

Water infrastructure down, with stormwater the main challenge

Residents rate their drinking water highly, but overall satisfaction with water infrastructure fell this year to 49%. Flooding and stormwater are the dominant concern and, on a measure this important to overall satisfaction, the biggest opportunity to improve.

Satisfaction with water related infrastructure:

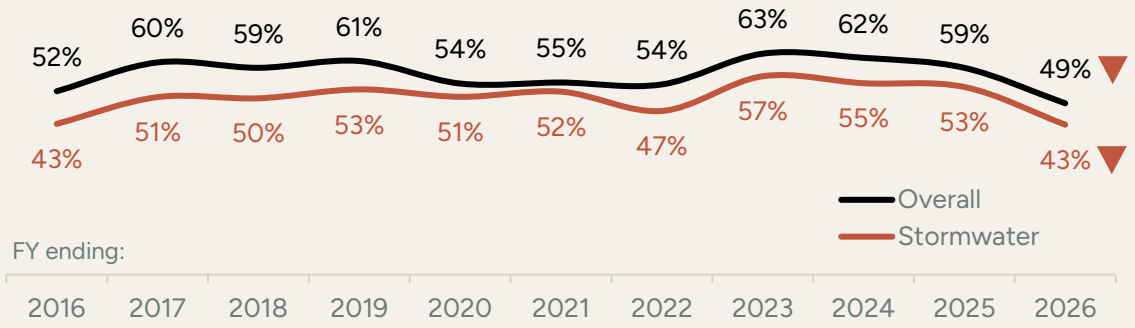


Figure 21: Satisfaction with water related infrastructure.

69%
Water Pressure & Quality

60%
Sewerage System
▼ -6 vs 2024-25

43%
Stormwater
▼ -11 vs 2024-25

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the DCC provides and manages the city's water-related infrastructure? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=762.

49% satisfied in 2025-26

with how DCC provides and manages water-related infrastructure.

CLEAN DRINKING WATER IS VALUED

Water pressure and quality rate well, and many positive comments are about clean, reliable supply.

STORMWATER AND FLOODING IS THE DRAG

By far the biggest concern is flooding, drainage and stormwater capacity in heavy rain. It's felt most acutely in South Dunedin but raised across the city.

> *"The stormwater drainage in my area is always flooding after a large downpour.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Mosgiel.

WHAT WOULD MOVE THE DIAL

Water is a strong driver of overall satisfaction. Flood resilience, drainage, and stormwater capacity is a lever to lift both satisfaction and perceived value for money.

Roading infrastructure falters most for those in a vehicle

34% SATISFIED OVERALL (n=1,162)

Roading is the lowest scoring service area, and one of the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction. Getting around on foot rates somewhat well, though congestion, parking, and the condition of the roads are where residents are least satisfied.

Satisfaction with the city's roading-related infrastructure:

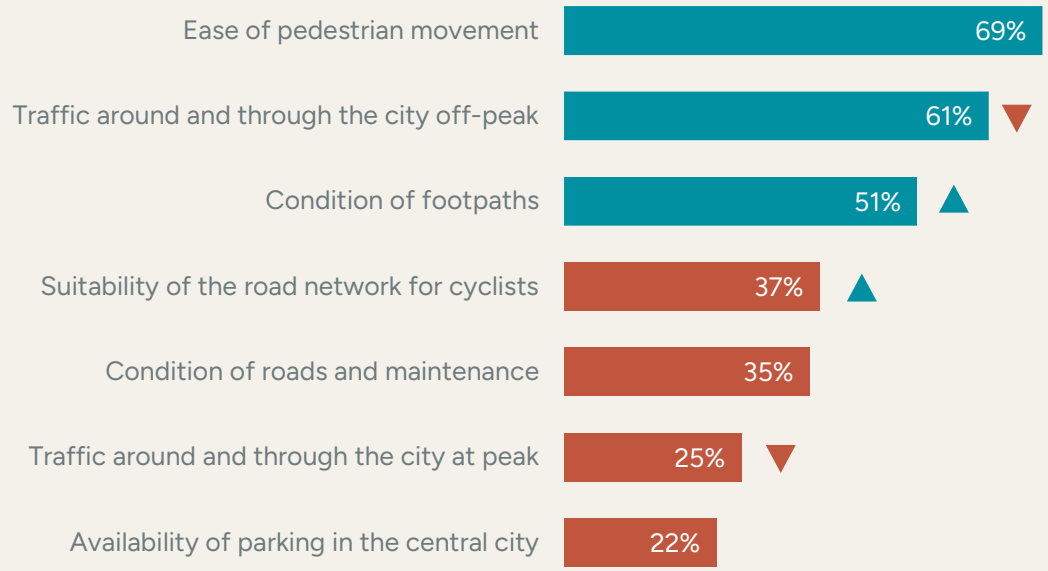


Figure 22: Satisfaction with the city's roading-related infrastructure.

THREE PAIN POINTS, ALL ABOUT DRIVING

Congestion at peak times, central-city parking, and the condition of the roads are the biggest concerns. Walking around the city, by contrast, rates reasonably well.

ROAD CONDITION IS THE STANDOUT

Potholes and patch-up repairs draw the most complaints, and road condition has slipped over the decade. As a top driver of overall satisfaction, sustained road maintenance would likely help move the dial.

> *Dunedin roads are rubbish - uneven, potholes, very hard on suspension and tyres.*
> Male, 45 - 49 years, North Dunedin.

IMPROVEMENT FOR CYCLING

Satisfaction with the road network for cyclists is up significantly compared to last year, and at its highest in the last decade. This rise coincides with recent cycleway investment. It remains low in absolute terms, but is moving in the right direction, even as some residents question the spending.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the DCC manages the city's roading-related infrastructure? Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following?
Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=944.



SERVICE AREA

Services

Kerbside waste collection strong, public bins and cleaning weaker

Overall satisfaction with the rubbish disposal and recycling services provided by the council is on a steady trend up, following a low in 2020-21. Residents rate the at-home kerbside collection services highest, with kerbside rubbish improving significantly this year. The public on-street services sit lower.

Satisfaction with rubbish disposal and recycling services:

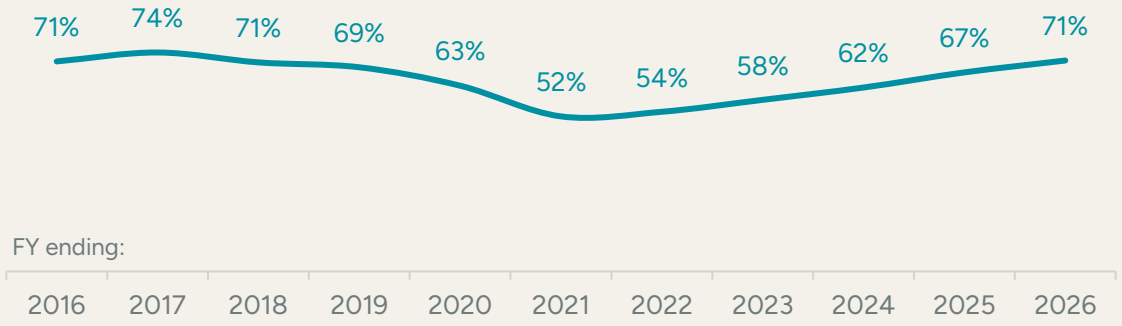


Figure 23: Satisfaction with rubbish disposal and recycling services.

80%	77%	59%	58%	57%
Kerbside Recycling Collection	**Kerbside Rubbish Collection** ▲ +11 vs 2024-25	**Public Street Litter Bins**	**Public Recycling Bins**	**General Street Cleanliness**

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the rubbish disposal and recycling services provided by the DCC? Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=821.

71% satisfied in 2025-26

with rubbish disposal and recycling services overall.

THE KERBSIDE SYSTEM IS WORKING

The at-home kerbside services rate highest, and kerbside rubbish collection has risen 11 percentage points in a year. Residents repeatedly single out the new bin system, and the green food scraps and garden waste bin in particular, as a genuine improvement, with many also praising the reminder app.

> *I love the new bin system, well done.*
> Female, 50 - 54 years, Middlemarch.

THE GAP IS ON-STREET

Scores are lower for the public-facing services, being litter bins, recycling bins, and general street cleanliness. Residents want more public bins across the suburbs and the CBD and say the ones already there are often full or overflowing. The most common on-street frustration is the state of student areas, where broken glass and dumped rubbish draw repeated complaints, and some central city residents note there is no kerbside collection in the CBD at all.

Parking enforcement shows the most room for improvement

Overall satisfaction with council's regulatory services tracks reasonably steadily over time. Parking enforcement is the clear low point, and the most divisive, while dog and noise control are the other friction areas.

Satisfaction with regulatory services the DCC provides:

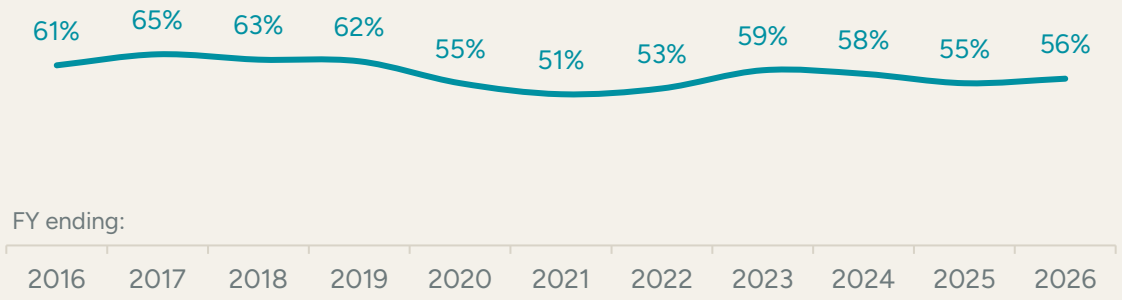


Figure 24: Satisfaction with regulatory services the Dunedin City Council provides.

58%	56%	53%	43%
Roaming Dog Control	Noise Control	Barking Dog Control	Parking Enforcement

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the regulatory services provided that the DCC provides? Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following regulatory, monitoring, and enforcement services? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=761.

56% satisfied in 2025-26

with the regulatory services that the DCC provides.

PARKING CUTS BOTH WAYS

This is the biggest single complaint, though residents are split on it. Some see enforcement as too harsh and hard on CBD businesses, while others want it applied more consistently and point to all-day parkers and illegal parking going unchecked. Some of the frustration is aimed at private operators rather than the DCC.

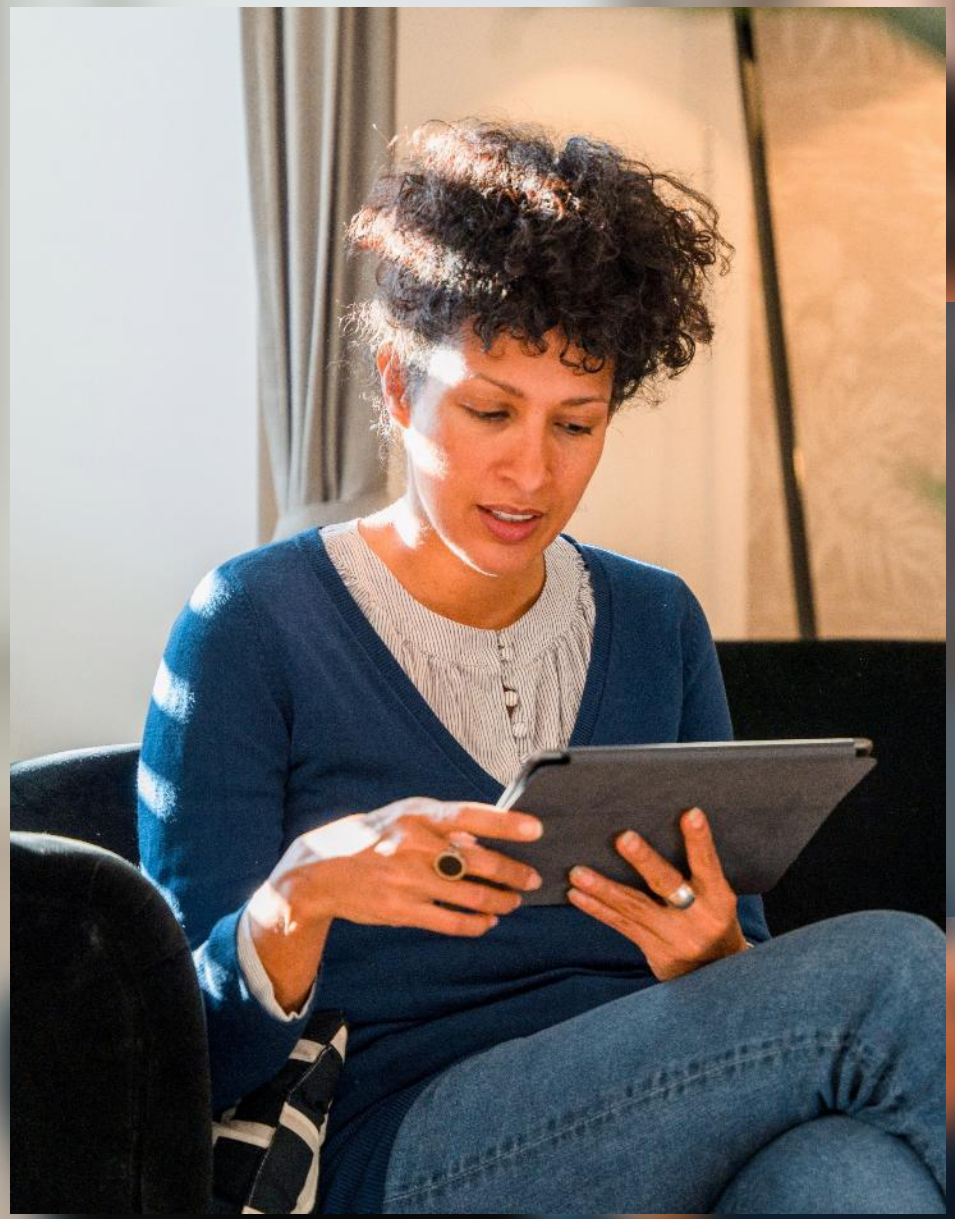
> *Parking enforcement is just money-making and hurting businesses in the CBD.*
> Male, 50 - 54 years, North Dunedin.

> *A lot of illegal and dangerous parking in the city centre after hours is allowed to go unpunished.*
> Male, 65+ years, area not stated.

DOGS AND NOISE THE OTHER FRICTIONS

Roaming and barking dogs, and unaddressed noise, are also concerns.

> *Noise issues are still happening on my street.*
> Male, 25 - 29 years, North Dunedin.



SERVICE AREA

Contact & Information

No single channel reaches everyone

Just over half of residents feel well informed by the Council. The website is the best rated channel, but many rely on social media and the local news, such as the Otago Daily Times, instead, and what they'd like from Council covers both digital and physical. Satisfaction with communication channels remains stable with last year.

OVERALL

57%

satisfied with how well the DCC keeps people informed

62%	**DCC Website**
54%	**FYI Newsletter**
53%	**DCC Social Media**
46%	**Other Newsletters**

Figure 25: Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council's communication.

HOW RESIDENTS RATE IT

The website is the strongest DCC channel, but many say they hear about things through social media or the Otago Daily Times rather than from the Council directly, and some find out too late.

> *Besides the thing I get in the mail, all my communication comes from the ODT.*
> Male, 50 - 54 years, Mosgiel.

WHAT THEY'D LIKE - A SPREAD OF CHANNELS

No single channel suits everyone. Requests for more social media, almost always Facebook, which many already value, came up alongside a clear wish for something physical in the letterbox, strongest among older residents but raised across the age range. Email and local media also featured.

> *I mostly get my updates from Facebook and haven't had any issues.*
> Female, 30 - 34 years, Hill Suburbs.

> *I used to get the monthly newsletter from the council, but haven't had it at all this year. It used to be delivered to my letter box.*
> Male, 65+ years, Green Island.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well the DCC keeps people informed? Question: How satisfied are you with each of the following? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=533.

Helpful in the moment, but a gap with following up

69% SATISFIED OVERALL (n=343)

Around a third of residents contacted DCC staff in the past three months, mostly by phone. Staff rate highly for being friendly, clear and knowledgeable, but keeping people informed on progress is the weak point.

Satisfaction with aspects of council contact:

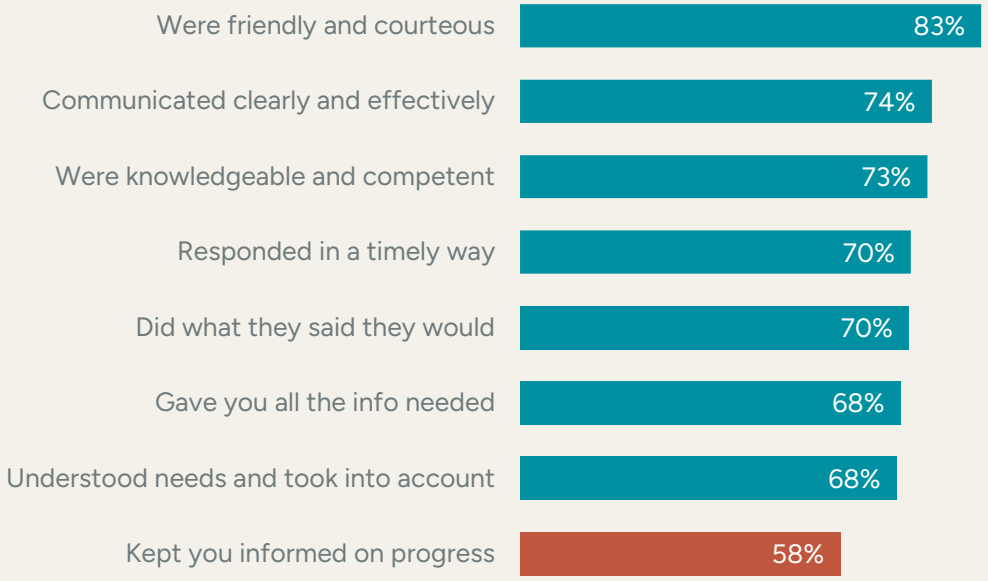


Figure 26: Satisfaction with aspects of council contact.

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how staff handled your enquiry? Question: Thinking about your most recent contact with DCC staff, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you that staff? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, minimum n=306.

WARM, CAPABLE, AND QUICK WHEN REACHED

The interaction itself is a genuine strength, with residents describing staff as friendly and knowledgeable, and efficient at getting the problem sorted when things go smoothly. The person-to-person side works well.

> *Friendly, knowledgeable, got job done.*
> Anonymous resident.

A COMMON GAP

By far the most common frustration is not hearing back after the initial conversation, with promised call-backs that never come and enquiries left open, described as "still waiting" and "had to chase". Slower resolution and no acknowledgement that an issue is being looked at are the related complaints.

> *I was told someone would get in touch to discuss a stormwater issue. Never happened. Had to phone 3 times to finally get some action.*
> Male, 50 - 54 years, North Coast.

A PROCESS ISSUE, NOT A PEOPLE ONE

Because the staff themselves rate so well, the follow-up failure appears as a system problem, rather than a shortcoming of those answering the call.

Note: Specific aspects were asked after differently in previous years, so comparisons to 2024-25 have not been made.



SERVICE AREA

Planning & Urban Design

Residents broadly happy with how the city looks

Satisfaction with how the city is developing sits at 60%, having recovered from a low around 2020-21 before easing slightly. Residents like the city's greenery and steady improvement, but empty shopfronts and heritage loss are recurring concerns. Notably, satisfaction with the centre residents visited most recently improved significantly compared to 2024-25.

Satisfaction with the way the city is developing:

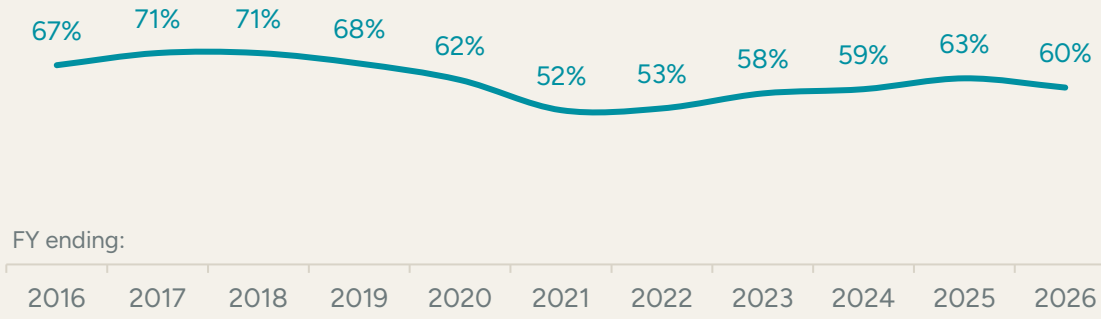


Figure 27: Satisfaction with the way the city is developing.

69%	68%	67%	66%
Local Suburb	**Most Visited Centre** ▲ +5 vs 2024-25	**The City**	**Central City Retail**

Question: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the city is developing in terms of its look and feel? Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall look and feel of the following? Base: All respondents who provided a rating, n=817.

6/10 satisfied in 2025-26

with the way the city is developing in terms of its look and feel.

WHAT PEOPLE VALUE

The city's greenery and trees, a tidier, more modern look, and a sense that things are steadily improving, with heritage character valued where it has been kept.

> *People are starting to take a little pride in the way the City looks.*
> Male, 65+ years, area not stated.

WHAT CONCERNS THEM

Empty and run-down shopfronts, described as "shabby" and "dying", are the biggest planning worry, alongside the loss of heritage buildings.

> *Too many empty shops in Dunedin. This makes Dunedin look shabby.*
> Female, 65+ years, Mosgiel.

> *Heritage is being overlooked in place of short-term profit.*
> Male, 40 - 44 years, West Harbour.



05

Who We Spoke To

Sample profile

	No. Invited
AREA	
Andersons Bay	742
Dunedin Centre	1,421
Green Island	632
Hill Suburbs	763
Kaikorai Valley	520
Middlemarch	281
Mosgiel	752
North Coast	315
North Dunedin	2,320
Peninsula	280
South Coast	253
South Dunedin	1,353
Wakari	672
West Harbour	346
Total	10,650

	No. Invited
ELECTORAL ROLL	
Māori Roll	1,056
General Roll	9,594

Respondent profile

	Weighted %	Unweighted Base	Weighted Base
GENDER			
Male	46%	505	550
Female	49%	634	591
Gender Diverse	2%	19	19
Prefer not to say	4%	47	45
AGE			
18 - 29 years	27%	222	319
30 - 49 years	28%	364	337
50 - 64 years	22%	313	269
65+ years	21%	258	258
Prefer not to say	2%	48	22
ETHNICITY			
European	85%	1035	1021
Māori	8%	122	101
Pacific	3%	18	39
Asian	8%	48	94
MELAA	1%	7	16
Other Ethnicity	4%	62	52
Prefer not to say	4%	62	47
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN DUNEDIN			
Yes	64%	831	766
No	31%	309	377
Underway	2%	13	18
Prefer not to say	4%	52	44

	Weighted %	Unweighted Base	Weighted Base
AREA			
Andersons Bay	7%	83	81
Dunedin Centre	6%	68	74
Green Island	5%	60	61
Hill Suburbs	9%	115	114
Kaikorai Valley	7%	79	79
Middlemarch	2%	29	26
Mosgiel	6%	80	78
North Coast	3%	43	39
North Dunedin	18%	197	213
Peninsula	3%	37	34
South Coast	3%	33	35
South Dunedin	12%	143	143
Wakari	5%	61	58
West Harbour	4%	49	45
Not Stated	10%	128	126

Respondent profile

	Weighted %	Unweighted Base	Weighted Base
EMPLOYMENT			
Employed full-time	44%	536	529
Employed part-time	11%	138	127
Employed casually	3%	29	35
Self-employed	6%	74	71
Unemployed / looking / in between jobs	3%	28	31
Student / Education / Training	11%	95	127
Retired	17%	208	200
Volunteering	1%	16	15
Not in paid work (e g , caregiving)	2%	27	25
Prefer not to say	4%	54	45
TRANSPORT TO WORK / STUDY			
I work from home (in paid employment)	6%	57	52
Public bus	9%	80	84
Drive a car, van, or truck - passengers	20%	193	186
Drive a car, van, or truck - no passengers	38%	341	343
As a passenger in a car, van, or truck	3%	27	31
Motorbike	1%	7	7
Non-electric bicycle	4%	27	33
Electric bike / scooter	2%	22	20
Walk or jog	15%	120	135
Not applicable	2%	17	16
Prefer not to say	1%	8	8

	Weighted %	Unweighted Base	Weighted Base
VEHICLE TYPE			
Electric	5%	26	26
Hybrid	11%	64	61
Petrol or Diesel	84%	467	469
Don't Know	0%	1	1
Prefer not to say	0%	2	2
INCOME			
Under $50,000	17%	190	205
$50,000 - $79,999	12%	141	143
$80,000 - $109,999	13%	155	153
$110,000 - $139,999	8%	102	101
$140,000 - $169,999	9%	108	106
$170,000 - $199,999	7%	85	86
$200,000 +	9%	111	106
Dont Know	7%	62	80
Prefer not to say	19%	250	223

Respondent profile

	Weighted %	Unweighted Base	Weighted Base
HOUSEHOLD MAKEUP			
Young, single living alone	3%	38	39
Young couple without children	4%	37	44
Group flatting	11%	98	129
Living with my parents	8%	67	97
Family with mainly pre-school kids	6%	66	67
Family with mainly school aged kids	8%	109	98
Family with kids aged 15 or more	6%	90	78
Family with kids of mixed ages	4%	55	51
Extended family, multiple generations	3%	35	36
Older couple, no kids at home	23%	289	272
Older, single living alone	8%	109	101
Prefer not to say	6%	90	71
Other	10%	122	123
DIFFICULTIES*			
Seeing, even if wearing glasses	19%	236	231
Hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)	15%	179	179
Walking or climbing steps	16%	206	195
Remembering or concentrating	19%	218	223
Self-care, e.g., washing all over, dressing	4%	43	43
Communicating using usual language	5%	57	60

** 'some difficulty', 'a lot of difficulty', and 'cannot do at all' combined.*

Technical notes

Method:

The Residents' Opinion Survey ran monthly from July 2025 to June 2026. Each month a fresh sample of Ōtepoti Dunedin residents aged 18 and over was drawn from the electoral roll and sent an invitation letter with a unique code to complete the survey online, with a paper copy available to anyone who called and requested one. Paper accounted for 1% of completed responses, down from 10% last year, when full paper questionnaires were posted out to a random selection of people who had not responded. From April to June 2026 a test was carried out, where invitations also carried a household leaflet with additional unique codes, so other adults in the household could take part. This intervention did not result in a significant difference in new responses.

Sampling:

The monthly sample is stratified by area so it reflects how the Dunedin population is distributed across the city, benchmarked against 2023 Census data. Everyone selected is contacted once, and residents drawn in earlier months are stood down so no one is invited twice in the same year. We sent 10,650 invitations and received 1,205 completed responses, a response rate of 11.3%, against a target of 1,200 agreed with the Council.

Margin of error:

The total sample has a maximum margin of error of +/- 2.8% at the 95% confidence level. Subgroup results carry a wider margin.

Significance testing:

Statistically significant differences between 2025-26 and 2024-25 results are marked with arrows throughout this report, indicating a result that is significantly higher or lower at the 95% confidence level. Differences without an arrow are not statistically significant at that level. The questionnaire was revised for 2025-26, including a change from a ten-point rating scale to a five-point scale, so a marked difference may reflect the change in measurement as well as a change in residents' views.

Weighting:

Results are weighted by age, gender, and ethnicity to 2023 Census distributions for the Dunedin adult population. Weights are capped and applied to all results in this report unless a chart states otherwise.

Other notes:

Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding. Don't Know and Not Applicable responses are excluded from satisfaction results, and base sizes are shown alongside each chart.