

Dunedin City Council - 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey: Summary Points

Introduction and Objectives

The Dunedin City Council has been running an annual Residents' Opinion Survey since 1994. The 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey (the Survey) is designed to measure residents' satisfaction with the services and facilities the Council is involved with and with Dunedin itself. The Council uses the results of the Survey to assess the extent to which it has met (or is progressing towards meeting) its Annual Plan and Community Plan objectives.

Research Design

Overview: The Sequential-mixed Mode Survey Design

The 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey utilised a sequential-mixed mode methodology. This involved a self-completion survey, with individual residents selected at random as sampling units sent a postal invitation encouraging them to complete the survey online initially. Non responding individuals were provided a postal survey pack including a self-complete paper questionnaire.

The initial sample for the 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey involved 4,500 names randomly selected from the relevant Electoral Rolls. 68 items were returned as being undeliverable. In line with a policy of maximising response rate, all of these had been returned within a suitable time frame for a replacement survey to be mailed, meaning the total 'valid' potential sample was 4,500. Of these, 1,212 responses (24.7%) were received. This is a significant increase from the 780 (17.5%) responses received in 2012. These 1,212 responses constitute the primary data set.

Following the sequential-mixed mode methodology of sending a paper questionnaire to non-respondents ensured an additional 298 responses were obtained. The online response to the invitation cover letter was 914 completed surveys.

The Achieved Sample

There are two key data sets to keep in mind when reading this report. The first data set ('the primary data set') comprises survey responses from those selected in the original sample. These are those respondents invited to participate in the survey via a letter from the Dunedin City Council. In addition, the Dunedin City Council decided to make the online survey questionnaire available to any residents who were interested in completing it, including sending the survey link to members of its own Peoples Panel, an email database of residents who have agreed to be contacted by the Council. Because this additional sample was not selected randomly (that is, it is self-selected), it has been treated separately as a second data set ('the secondary data set').

The final achieved samples for the 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey were:

- 1,212 responses were obtained, analysed and reported in the primary data set. These represent the results that the Dunedin City Council reports in its Annual Reports and LTPs.
- 486 responses were obtained, analysed and reported in the secondary data set.

PLEASE NOTE: The Primary Data Set is random and was developed in line with previous collections of data and should be considered the valid comparative data set for the 2013 Survey. For this reason, all of the results presented in this report are based on the Primary Data Set unless otherwise stated.

Key results – 2013 Residents' Opinion Survey

Overall Satisfaction with Dunedin City Council

- Satisfaction with the overall performance of the Dunedin City Council increased by 15 percentage points to 54% in 2013 from 39% in 2012. Levels of dissatisfaction also decreased from 26% in 2012 to 15% in 2013.

Within this general pattern:

- While there is no significant differences in the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the overall performance of the Dunedin City Council within location or age group, respondents from Northern Suburbs were most satisfied (58%) as were respondents aged 35 - 44 year or 65 years and older (55%).

Planning and Urban Design

- Satisfaction was highest with the overall look and feel of the city (72%) and the overall look and feel of your most convenient retail centre (70%).
- Satisfaction with the overall look and feel of the South Dunedin retail area has increased by 15 percentage points in 2013 (31%) compared to 2012 (16%).
- Over one quarter (27%) of residents considered the Central City to be their most convenient retail centre followed by South Dunedin (17%) and Mosgiel (14%).
- When residents considered their most convenient retail centre¹, satisfaction with the look and feel of Central City (81%) and Mosgiel (76%) rated highest while satisfaction with South Dunedin (56%) and Green Island (62%) rated lowest.²

Overall Perceptions of Dunedin

- Residents considered that it was most important that Dunedin was a safe city (94%), a sustainable city (88%) and a thriving city (88%).
- 60% of residents actually considered Dunedin to be a safe city (up 11 percentage points from 2012), 36% that it is a sustainable city (up 3 percentage points) and 25% that it is a thriving city (up 1 percentage point).
- Residents were most likely to perceive that Dunedin maintains and preserves its architectural heritage (76% in 2013 compared to 65% in 2012) and recognises and supports cultural diversity (64% in 2013 compared to 59% in 2012).

¹ Only retail centres that have had over 10 respondents considering them their most convenient centre have been included.

² Due to small sample sizes these results have a large margin of error.

Satisfaction with Council Services

Rubbish Collection

- Satisfaction with all activities has increased since 2012.
- Satisfaction was highest for the reliability of rubbish collection (92%), kerbside recycling (90%) and household rubbish collection (87%).
- Satisfaction with cleanliness of the streets in general has increased by 9 percentage points since 2013.
- Unsolicited issue of importance – Rubbish / glass / dog faeces on streets - need to be swept more / gutters and verges need to be cleaned out more (63 responses).

Water, Drainage, and Sewerage:

- Satisfaction levels were relatively similar to 2012.
- Residents are most satisfied with water pressure (84%) and least satisfied with the storm water collection service (66%).

Roads, Footpaths, Lighting, and Parking:

- Satisfaction levels were highest for the flow of traffic around and through the city at off-peak times of the day (83%), that there are footpaths where you need them throughout the city (78%) and street lighting throughout the city (78%).
- Satisfaction has increased significantly with the ease of pedestrian access throughout the transport network which has risen to 72% satisfied compared to 61% in 2012.
- Residents were least satisfied with the suitability of the road network for cyclists (22%) and the availability of on-street parking in the central city (38%).
- Unsolicited issue of importance – cycle lanes are dangerous / need improving / need more driver awareness (143 responses), roads neglected / poor quality / lack of maintenance / repairs not up to standard (79), and footpaths neglected / inadequate repairs / better access to footpaths for wheelchairs and mobility scooters (78).

Regulatory, Monitoring, and Environmental Services:

- Satisfaction was highest for the enforcement of hygiene standards in city food establishments (76%) and lowest for the processing of applications for building consents (27%).
- The highest increase in satisfaction was for enforcing liquor licensing standards in the city's licensed premises (65%) which had risen by 13 percentage points since 2012 (52%).
- Unsolicited issue of importance – Dog faeces on streets / need more dog bag collection points / more bins (48 responses) and dog control is poor (48).

Customer Service:

- Customer service scores have increased since 2012. The survey found that 60% of residents were satisfied that the Council was constantly striving to improve and only 10% are dissatisfied. This compared to 53% and 13% respectively last year.
- Also, 37% of residents were satisfied that the Council delivers good value for ratepayer money compared to 34% in 2012.

Satisfaction with Council Facilities

- Satisfaction amongst users with most Council facilities is very high.
- Residents were most satisfied with the Botanic Garden (98%) and the Otago Museum (97%).
- Lowest levels of satisfaction were recorded for public toilets (62%) and the Dunedin Chinese Garden (69%).
- The highest increase in levels of satisfaction were the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum (93%) which has increased by 21 percentage points since 2012 (72%) and the Dunedin Stadium (Ice Stadium) (81%) which has increased by 17 percentage points since 2012 (64%).
- The most widely used facilities were the Botanic Garden (65% of respondents stated that they had visited one or more times in the past 12 months), the Forsyth Barr Stadium (60%) and the Otago Museum (58%).

Satisfaction with Council Activities

Consultation and Communication:

- Satisfaction was highest for the availability of information held by the Council (61% compared to 53% in 2012) and the quality of information held by the DCC (58% compared to 50% in 2012).
- The lowest level of satisfaction was for the amount of public consultation undertaken (40% compared to 37% in 2012).

Economic Development and Promotion:

- Satisfaction was down on most measures compared to 2012.
- Satisfaction with city festivals and events (67%) and media coverage of events run in Dunedin (50%) was moderate but levels of dissatisfaction are low (7% and 18% respectively).
- Satisfaction remained fairly low in other areas. Satisfaction with retaining existing businesses and jobs in Dunedin (16%) and attracting new businesses and jobs to Dunedin (19%) were the lowest.

Elected Representatives and Council Staff

- Residents were most satisfied with their contact and dealings with DCC staff (67% compared to 60% in 2012).
- Satisfaction with contact with Community Board members (32%) decreased by 14 percentage points compared to 2012 (46%) while satisfaction with the Mayor and Councillors (33%) decreased by 12 percentage points since 2012 (45%).

Communications through Media:

- Satisfaction levels were relatively similar to 2012.
- Satisfaction levels were highest with the Customer Service Agency in the Civic Centre (79%) and lowest with the FYI Magazine (70%).

What would you like to change about Dunedin (unsolicited responses)

- Important to prioritise sustainability (164 responses)
- City / suburbs untidy or tired looking (149)
- Need to attract / help more businesses come to Dunedin (138)
- Need lower bus fares / more ticket options (136)

What are you positive about (unsolicited responses)

- Dunedin's environment is good / beautiful (190)
- Satisfied with the arts and cultural environment of Dunedin (187)
- Satisfied with council staff (142)
- Satisfied with the appearance of your suburb or township (124)

Priorities for the Council for the coming year

- Encourage businesses / economic development (312)
- Reduce Council spending / control debt (195)
- Control rates (141)
- Improve roads (89)

Notes on the Calculation of Satisfaction Results

The 2013 Dunedin Residents' Opinion Survey has been conducted using standard analytical methods. Where the number of responses received to a specific question is less than the total number of responses, those who have not responded are considered to either not know, or not have a relevant response to the question. As such, the analysis of responses, and of satisfaction levels, is generated based on the number of valid responses to that question.