



---

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOTERS 2022

// About the people who voted in the 2022 local government elections

// NOVEMBER 2023



## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Summary of results .....	4
Voter demographics.....	4
Voter preferences .....	4
Voter behaviour .....	4
Turnout: who voted and who didn't .....	5
Turnout by age .....	6
Turnout by ethnicity.....	7
Turnout by length of residency.....	8
Other elections respondents voted in .....	9
Reasons for voting or not.....	9
Reasons for voting.....	12
The issues that voters cared about .....	15
Suggestions for increasing turnout .....	16
Knowledge of the local body elections .....	18
Source of information .....	19
Knowledge of the Vote 2022 logo.....	21
Electoral and voting systems.....	22
Electoral systems .....	22
Voting methods.....	23
The electoral contests that voters participated in.....	24
Voting papers .....	25
Ease of posting completed voting papers.....	25
Length of time before posting voting papers .....	26
Voting papers completed but not posted.....	27
Profile of respondents.....	29
References.....	32



---

## Introduction

The willingness of people to turn out and vote tells us something about a community's level of interest in its local or national democracy. Democracy matters – the ability to choose leaders and hold them accountable is fundamental to responsive and inclusive government, and critical to ensuring that governments respond to community needs.

Local Government New Zealand's (LGNZ) vision is for New Zealand to be the most active and inclusive local democracy in the world. LGNZ is committed to strengthening local democracy, which underpins councils' mandate to act as an advocate and leader for its communities. Understanding why people vote or not is critical to the effectiveness of work that LGNZ, Taituarā, and councils undertake in the lead up to our local elections to encourage voter turnout.

The 2022 survey results are now in, and while there's work to be done, the data is showing some encouraging trends, including increased gender and ethnic diversity, and a younger voting group. Trends like these indicate that our local democracy is on its way to becoming more inclusive.

Special thanks and acknowledgement to Charles Crothers, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Auckland University of Technology, who died shortly before the completion of this report, for the help he provided in the analysis and presentation of the survey data. For more information on the survey or for any questions, please contact Dr Mike Reid at [mike.reid@lgnz.co.nz](mailto:mike.reid@lgnz.co.nz).

---

## Summary of results

Key results from the 2022 post-election survey of voters and non-voters included:

### Voter demographics

- Respondents who were more likely to vote tended to be male, older, property owners, live in the South Island, and employers.
- Since 2001 the proportion of New Zealanders under the age of 46 voting in local body elections has gradually increased, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of those 46 or older voting.
- The biggest proportional increase in those voting is in the 18-25 age group, which has increased from 27% in 2001 to 42% in 2022.
- New Zealand Europeans had the highest rate of turnout, followed by Māori and Pacific Island peoples.
- There is a strong correlation between the length of time a person has lived at the same address and their propensity to vote. Seventy-four% of those who had lived at the same residence for 10 years stated that they had voted.

### Voter preferences

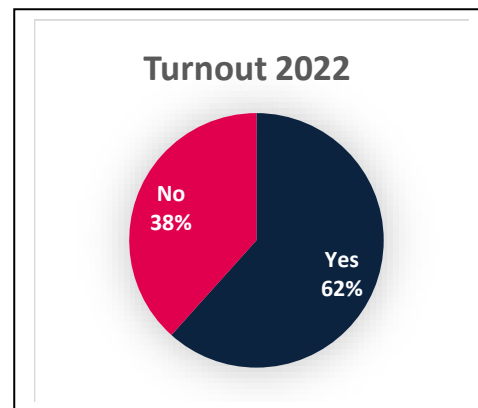
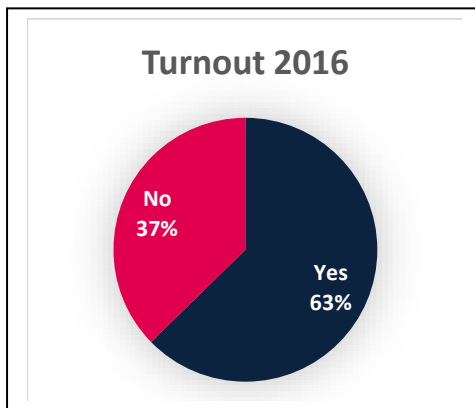
- The three main reasons respondents gave for not voting was a lack of information about candidates, a lack of interest and being too busy with other commitments.
- When asked what LGNZ could do to increase voter turnout, the most popular response was to increase understanding and awareness about the role of local government.
- The most popular source of information about the 2022 local body elections came from television and streaming services. Only 27% of respondents stated that they used websites to source electoral information.
- When asked what electoral system they preferred, First Past the Post (FPP) was preferred by 47% of respondents, compared to 26% who preferred Single Transferable Vote. 14% of respondents stated that they were unsure.
- 87% of the respondents who voted said they found voting to be easy or very easy.
- Support amongst all respondents for online voting was 67%. This is largely unchanged from 2016, when it was 68%.

### Voter behaviour

- The proportion of voters placing their completed voting papers in some form of ballot or voting box increased from 12% in 2016 to 28% in 2022.
- The proportion of respondents who filled in their voting papers but did not cast their vote was 18%, mostly because they “ran out of time”.

## Turnout: who voted and who didn't

According to survey responses, the number of people who voted was almost the same as in 2016, with 62% of respondents stating they had voted compared to 63% in 2016. In 2001, the percentage of respondents who stated that they had voted was 61%.<sup>1</sup>



Respondents who were more likely to vote tended to be male, older, property owners, South Islanders, and employers. See table 1.

**Table 1** Respondents more likely to vote:

More likely to vote	Percentage
Employers	72.7
Retirees	81.3
Lived at same address >10 years	75.8
Couple with no dependents	73.6
South Island residents	67.9
Males	66.3
Respondents aged >61 years	85.32
Property owners	72.7

<sup>1</sup> Caution is required in interpreting the answer to the question did you vote or not? In almost all surveys of this type, the number of respondents who state that they voted is greater than the number of eligible voters who actually voted – generally by 20% (the actual turnout rate was 41%). This reflects the nature of the question and the tendency for some respondents to believe that voting might be a legal requirement, to forget that they hadn't voted and a reflection that people who agree to answer surveys like this one are more likely to be people who take the notion of civic duty seriously.

In contrast, respondents who voted less than average (that is, those groups where non-voters were greater than 40%), tended to be poorer (unemployed or part time employees), students, younger, and have lived at the same address for less than a year, see table 2.

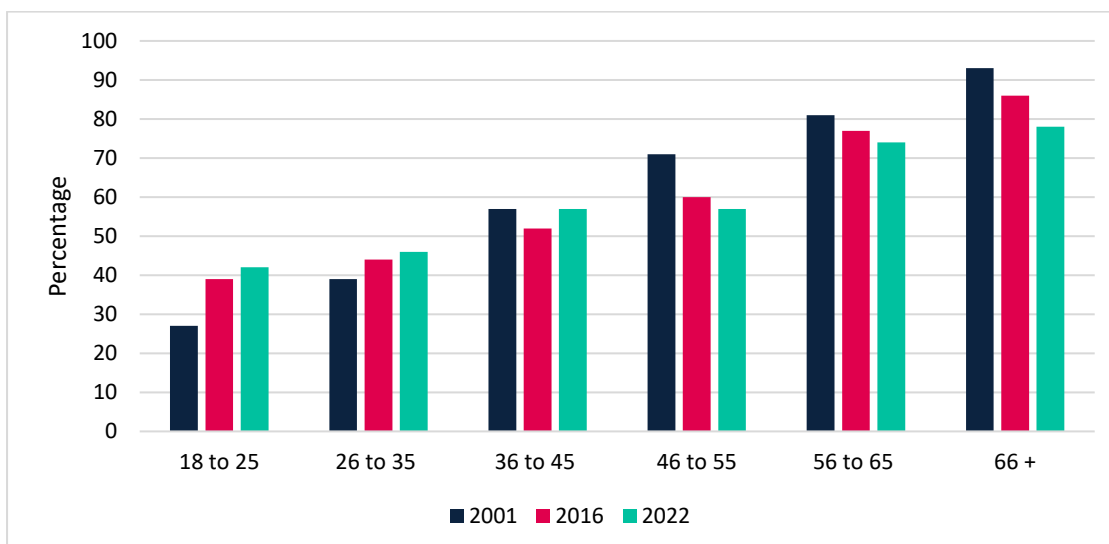
**Table 2 Respondents who were less likely to vote**

Less likely to vote	Percentage
Part time, or not in, paid employment	46.5
Student	59
Lived at the same address <1 year	45.9
One parent family with 3 or more dependents	60.9
People flatting or boarding	52.9
Respondents aged 18-25 years	56
Asian	48.5

### Turnout by age

The trend, since the first survey of voters and non-voters in 2001, has been for voters to be proportionally younger, see figure 2.

**Figure 2 Turnout by age: 2001, 2016 and 2022**



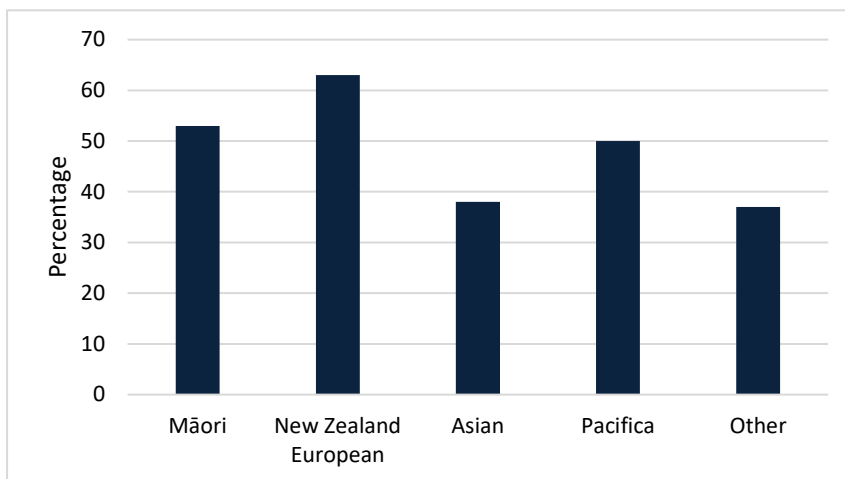
- Turnout in local authority elections is strongly correlated to age. As people become older, they are more likely to vote. However, since 2001, this correlation has diminished – highlighting the possible importance of other factors, such as the impact of promotional campaigns targeting younger residents.

- Since 2001 the proportion of New Zealanders under the age of 46 who vote in local elections has gradually increased, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of those aged 46 or older voting.
- The biggest proportional increase is in the 18-25 age group, which increased from 27% in 2001 to 42% in 2022.

### Turnout by ethnicity

Noting the qualifications discussed above (potential sample bias and tendency to state that they voted) the turnout rates for the 2022 local elections follow a similar pattern to previous years, with New Zealand Europeans having the highest voter turnout rate followed by Māori, see figure 3.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 3 Turnout by ethnicity**



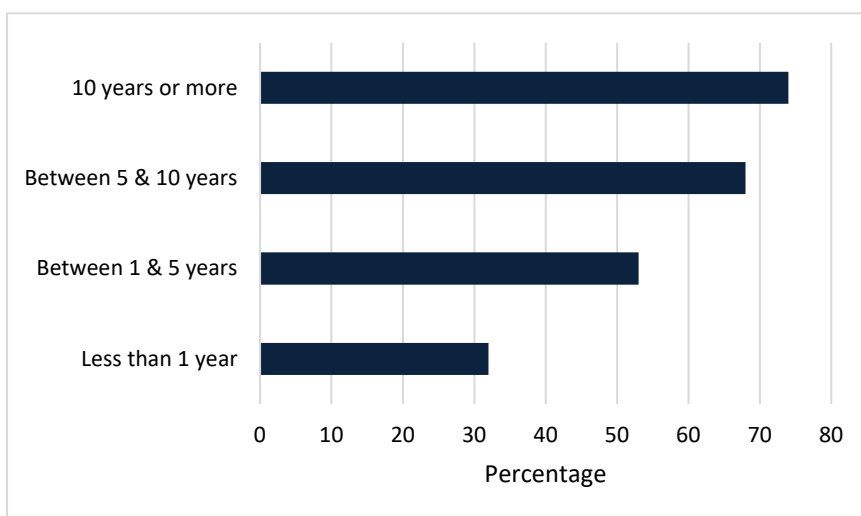
- New Zealand Europeans had the highest turnout of 63%, followed by Māori with 53% and Pacifica at 50%.
- New Zealanders of Asian descent had a turnout rate of 38%, followed by those of other ethnicities who voted at a rate of 37%

<sup>2</sup> The sample size does not allow for a more specific breakdown of ethnicity due to small sample size.

## Turnout by length of residency

All surveys of voters and non-voters undertaken by LGNZ have highlighted a strong correlation between a propensity to vote and the length of time a resident has lived in the same location, arguably indicating the degree to which residency over time strengthens a sense of connection to an area and encourages civic pride, see figure 4.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 4 Turnout by length of residence**



- Voter turnout for people who had lived at the same residence for 10 years or more was 74% – 12% higher than the average turnout rate.
- In contrast, residents who lived at the same residence for less than a year had a turnout rate of 32%, nearly half the average turnout rate. This category of respondents was also more likely to be young, flatters, and/or students, and would also have been more likely to have not received voting papers through the mail.
- The 2001 survey of voters and non-voters found that 68% of respondents who had lived at the same residence for 10 years or more voted, with the turnout rate for those who had lived at the same property for under three years sitting at 37%.

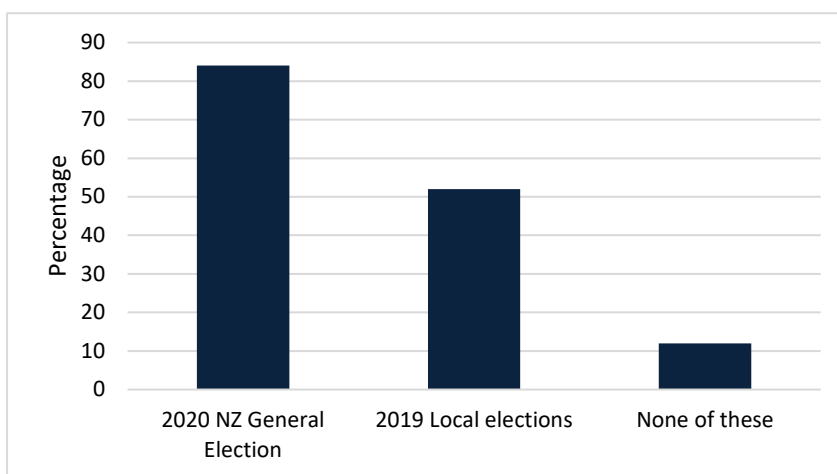
<sup>3</sup> Public choice economists would argue that length of residency indicates property ownership and that owners would have an interest in the liveability of their suburb, and thus a tendency to vote for candidates that would advocate for investment in local amenities.



## Other elections respondents voted in

The survey asked respondents to list any other elections that they had voted in. The purpose of this question was to enable comparisons to be made with the importance that some respondents may have given local elections, in contrast to others, see figure 5.

**Figure 5** Other elections respondents voted in



- The proportion of respondents who stated that they voted in the 2020 general election was 84%, compared to an actual turnout rate of 82%.
- In answer to the question of whether they voted in the 2019 local body election, 52% answered in the affirmative, reinforcing the additional interest people have in national, compared to local, elections.

## Reasons for voting or not

The reasons why people choose not to vote are perhaps the most intensively examined findings of each survey, as the motivation for commissioning the survey is to reduce barriers to voting. It is of concern that, despite the intent of the surveys, the factors identified as obstacles to voting have not changed significantly since 2001, particularly the number of respondents who describe their reason for not voting as being due to a lack of information about candidates or their policies. The factors that preclude people from voting should be able to be addressed through various forms of policy intervention as has been identified in multiple inquiries and research reports, see table 3.

**Table 3 Reasons for not voting**

I had other commitments during that time	4
I had work commitments during that time	3
I couldn't be bothered voting	7
I couldn't work out who to vote for	7
I didn't feel the candidates represented my views	5
I was away from home over the voting period	4
I didn't think my vote will make a difference	5
I'm not interested in politics or politicians	7
I'm not interested in local government	11
I'm not sure what local government does	2
I didn't know anything about the candidates	7
I didn't know enough about the policies	7
I did not like any of the candidates	6
I didn't know where or how to vote	3
Due to health reasons	2
I didn't receive any voting papers	9

- The percentage of people who stated that they would have voted but forgot fell from 14% in 2016 to 3% in 2022. This may have been due to the widespread use of voting boxes in supermarkets and other public places in the 2022 election, which meant it was easier to cast a vote right up to polling day, than in previous local elections.
- The percentage of respondents who stated they didn't vote because their vote would not make a difference has consistently stayed around 5% since surveys began. This points to a lack of understanding of the importance of local government and participating in local body elections.
- The percentage of respondents who stated that there were no candidates that shared their views varied from 6% in 2001, 15% in 2007 and 6% in 2022.
- The proportion of respondents who stated that they did not vote because they did not receive their voting papers was 7% in 2001 and 9% in 2022.

The three main reasons for not voting were a lack of information about candidates, a lack of interest and being too busy with other commitments, see table 4.

**Table 4 Main reasons for not voting**

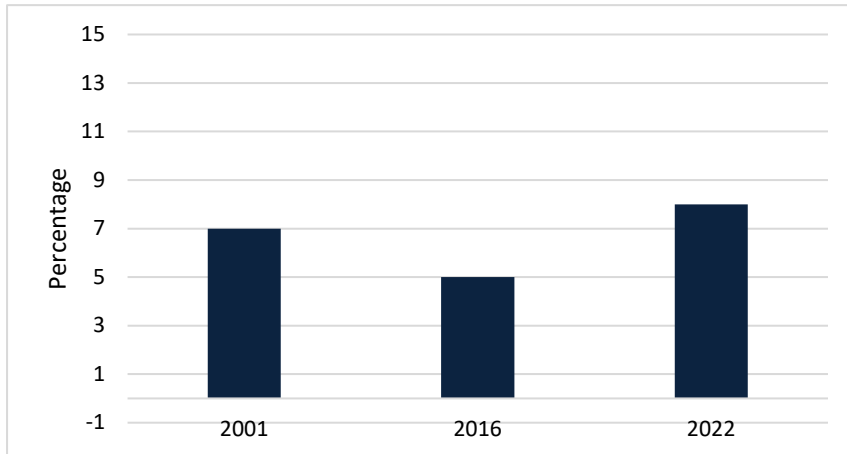
	2001	2004	2007	2016	2022
Not enough information about candidates	31	29	30	32	23
Lack of interest	14	18	19	16	18
Too busy/other commitments	14	12	17	9	13

Some responses have remained relatively similar over the last two decades while others have varied. For example:

- The most common reason for not voting was the lack of information about candidates. This reason was given, on average, by 30% of respondents between 2001 and 2016. This figure had fallen to 23% in 2022, a significant decline.
- In reply to the Auckland Council survey of voters and non-voters in 2022, 27% gave “I don’t know anything about the candidates” as their reason for not voting.
- People who didn’t vote in the 2022 election due to a lack of interest was 18%, which is consistent with survey responses since 2001. 16% of Aucklanders gave “lack of interest” as their reason for not voting.
- The percentage of respondents who stated that they were “too busy” has consistently been in the low teens. It was 13% in 2022, which is the average figure since 2001.

One reason given for not voting was the failure to receive voting papers. The percentage of respondents in 2001, 2016, and 2022, who gave this answer to the question, why they didn’t vote, is set out in figure 6.

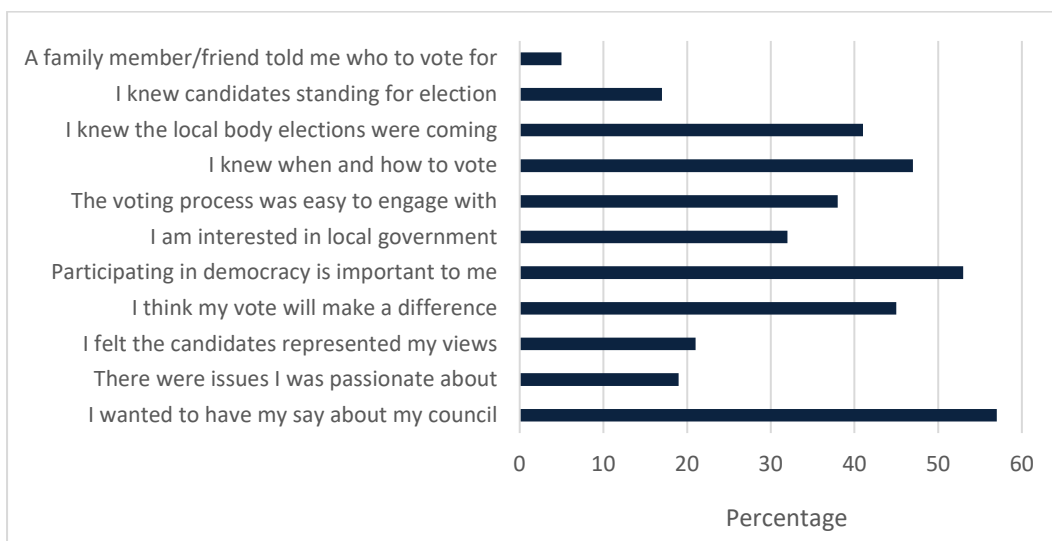
**Figure 6 Non-voters who did not receive voting papers**



## Reasons for voting

For agencies committed to strengthening our system of local democracy, it is not enough to know why people said they didn't vote, it's also helpful to understand the factors that make a person want to vote. Do people vote out of a sense of duty, out of a sense of commitment to their community, town, or city, or because they have a grievance? Understanding the reasons for voting should help policy makers and legislators when seeking to improve our democratic institutions. The reasons given for voting are summarised in figure 7.

**Figure 7: Reasons for voting**



- When asked to choose from a standard list of reasons, 57% of respondents selected “I wanted to have a say”, with 53% noting that participating in democracy and voting was important to them.
- Less than 20% voted because they felt passionately about an issue, while 21% voted because they felt candidates represented their views.

When asked what their main reasons for voting were, the two most popular answers are set out in table 5.

**Table 5 Main reasons for voting 2001 - 2022 (%)**

	2001	2004	2007	2016	2022
Voting is a democratic duty or right	26	44	41	45	55
To have a say	17	22	17	44	57

- The two most common reasons given for voting are “to have a say” and “because it is a democratic duty or right”. The proportion giving these as reasons to vote has increased considerably from 2001.
- Both findings were echoed by the 2022 Stuff survey of voters and non-voters which found more than two-thirds of those who voted said they saw it as a civic duty, while about half said it was an opportunity to make a difference in their region.
- Interestingly, the Local Government Commission’s 2007 survey found that women voters were more likely to say that it was “important to vote” than men, but men were more likely to say they voted because it was a democratic “right”.

---

### **Dominion Post survey of voters and non-voters (October 2022)**

- A Stuff research survey found that most Kiwis who did not vote in the 2022 local elections regretted it.
- It found of those surveyed, 40% voted, leaving 60% who did not.
- Of the people who did not vote, only 19% were happy with their elected mayor.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents who didn't vote later regretted their decision.
- Sixty-five% said they had intended to vote but didn't.
- According to the survey, the most common reason why people did not vote was that they didn't know enough about the candidates, at 36%.
- Meanwhile, 23% of those who did not vote said they did not receive their voting pack.
- More than two-thirds of those who voted said they saw it as a civic duty, while about half said it was an opportunity to make a difference in their region.
- Older people, Māori, men and Cantabrians were more likely than others to say they found it easy to choose who to vote for.

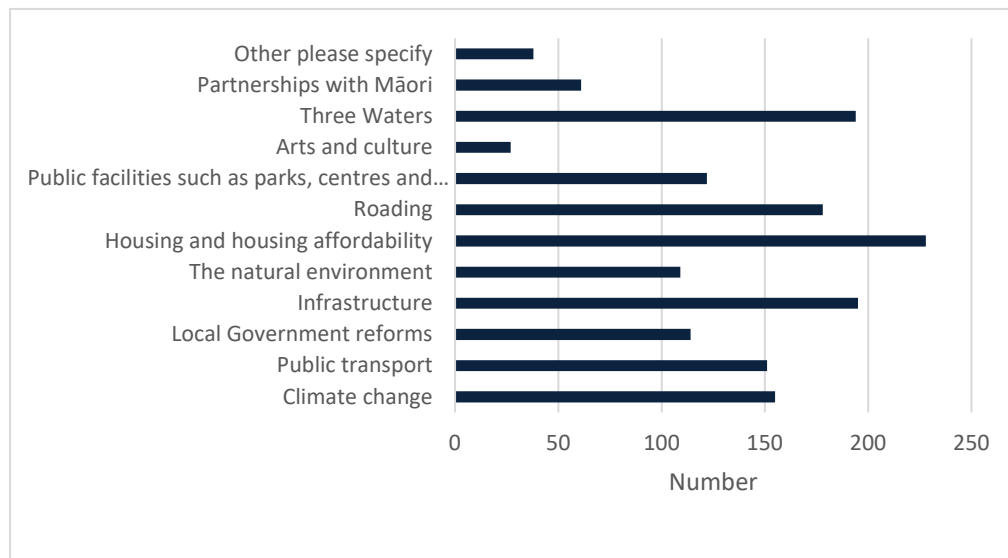
In answer to the question, how do we get more people to vote, respondents stated:

- While 69% of respondents wanted more information about candidates and policies, a majority (68%) also wanted the ability to vote online.
- Aucklanders and those aged 18-44 (which were the two groups with the lowest voter turnout) put online voting at the top of their list of factors that would get more people voting.

## The issues that voters cared about

The 2022 survey asked respondents who had voted to indicate what issues they cared most about, using a standard set of issues. The replies are set out in figure 8.

**Figure 8**                      **The issues that most concerned voters**



- The issue that ranked most highly was housing and housing affordability, identified by 228 respondents, or 38%. Respondents who identified housing and housing affordability as a key issue were more likely to be women (46.2%), residents living in the North Island, part time workers, people with disabilities, larger families with a single parent, new residents, respondents under the age of 35, and Māori and Pasifika respondents.
- Three waters reform (drinking, wastewater, and storm water) was ranked as the second most important issue, along with infrastructure, which were each identified by 194 respondents, or 32%. Those who ranked water reform as a key issue were most likely to be males living in the South Island, 66 years or older, New Zealand European, and have resided in the same location for longer than 10 years.
- Roothing was the fourth most identified issue that voters cared about. It was identified by 178 respondents or 29%.
- Climate change, the fifth ranked issue with 155 mentions, was identified by voters who were mostly women, Māori and New Zealand European. Support was especially high amongst students, with 62.5% identifying climate change as their reason for voting.
- Public facilities, such as parks, community centres and libraries received 122 mentions. Voters who identified public facilities as an important issue were more likely to be women,

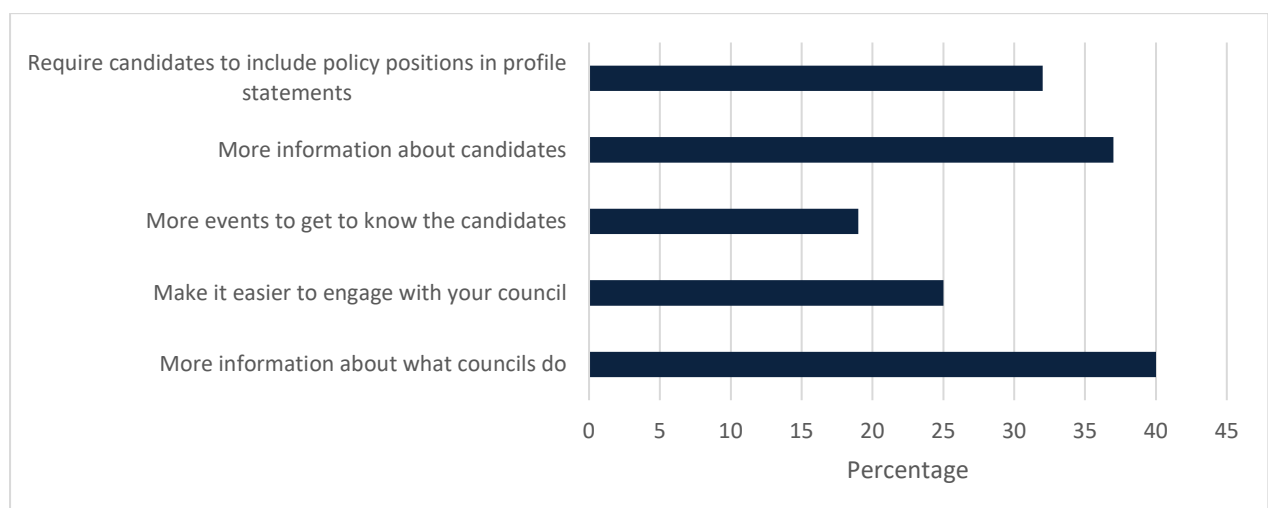
younger rather than older, and New Zealand European/Māori. Residents who had lived at an address between one and ten years were more likely to rank the issue highly.

- Public transport was identified by 25% of respondents as an important issue with 151 mentions. Not surprisingly, these respondents tended to live in Auckland and other major cities (which have public transport services), and were also recent residents, full time employees, and flatters.
- Local government reform in general (excluding three waters reform) was mentioned by only 19% of respondents. Groups which gave greater mention to local government reform were employers, respondents who were retired and who had lived at the same address for more than 10 years (marginally), and Asian.

## Suggestions for increasing turnout

For the first time, the post-election survey asked respondents for suggestions on what actions or interventions they think might increase voter turnout in the future. The answers are set out in figure 9.

**Figure 9**      **Suggestions for increasing turnout**



- The most popular suggestion (40%) was to provide more information about the role that councils play in their communities. This aligns well with research that shows that lack of awareness about the role and importance of local government contributes towards low turnout. It is also related to findings that perceptions of salience have a strong impact on peoples’ willingness to vote (Asquith et al 2021 and Reid 2016).
- The second most popular suggestion (37%) was to provide more information about candidates and what they were standing for. This suggestion was closely related to the third



---

most popular response, which was to have more information about candidate policies in the candidate profile booklet.

- 25% of respondents suggested that making it easier to engage with councils would encourage more people to vote. This view lines up with international research that shows institutional trust, such as trust in democracy, is positively correlated with openness and transparency.

### **Raising turnout**

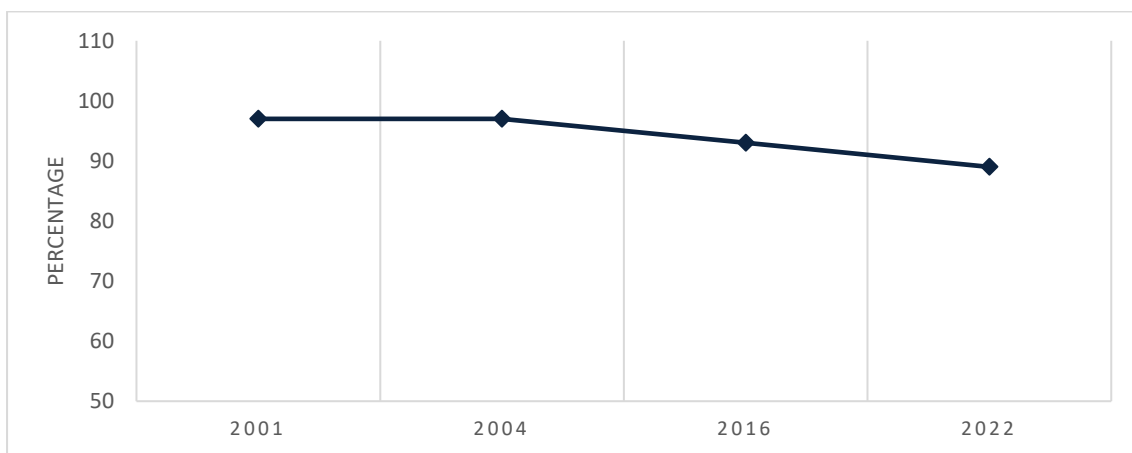
*In 2013 LGNZ asked a representative sample of councils what suggestions they had for increasing voter turnout. Their replies included:*

- *Online voting.*
- *Stronger national promotion campaign on voting.*
- *A national promotion campaign run by the Electoral Commission.*
- *More community engagement.*
- *Ask youth councils to have meetings to encourage young voters and e-voting.*
- *More local advertising.*
- *Encourage candidates to network with the public and encourage people to vote.*
- *Stronger analysis of candidate profiles (in blogs versus local newspapers).*
- *More analysis and profile of pre-election reports (by the Department of Internal Affairs).*
- *Target other tertiary institutions.*
- *Target Pacific communities.*
- *Make voting compulsory.*
- *Simplify the ratepayer roll application form.*
- *Better civics education in schools.*
- *Encourage candidates to raise their profiles.*
- *Return to booth voting.*
- *Address the delay in postal delivery as the frustrations involved in not receiving voting documents can lead to some people not voting.*
- *Door to door campaigning by candidates seemed to increase voter turnout in one council.*
- *Councils to coordinate "meet the candidates" evenings.*

## Knowledge of the local body elections

To understand what motivates people to vote or not involves whether they were aware that an election was about to take place. This question has been included in LGNZ's post-election surveys since they started in 2001 - the results are summarised in figure 10:

**Figure 10** Awareness of local elections



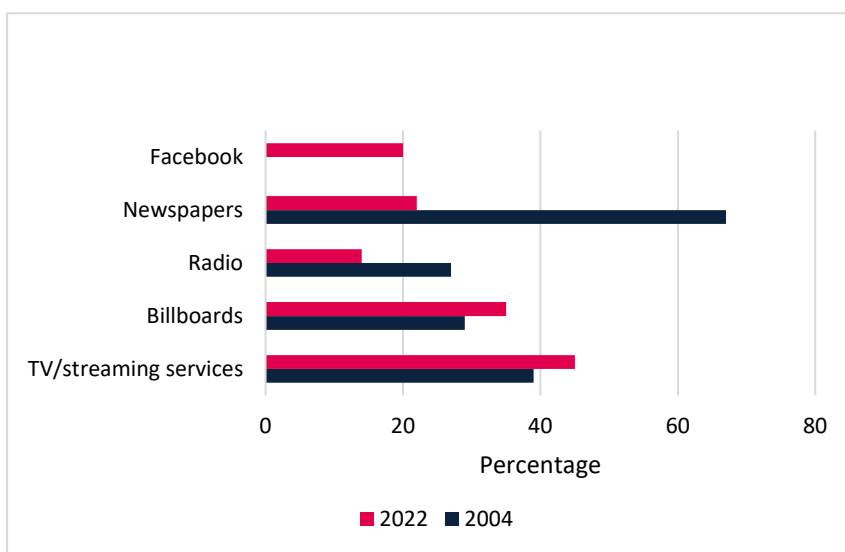
- In all surveys, respondents showed a high awareness of the fact that local elections were occurring.
- In 2001 and 2004, 97% of respondents stated that they were aware of the local elections.
- Awareness of the local elections fell to 93% in 2016 and 89% in 2022, reductions that are statistically significant.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ironically, 2016 and 2022 both saw the biggest local promotion campaigns to encourage people to stand and vote run by LGNZ and Taituarā.

## Source of information

Not surprisingly, the sources that respondents relied on to find out about the elections in 2001 and 2004, namely radio and newspaper, have since been supplanted by new forms of social media, see figure 11:

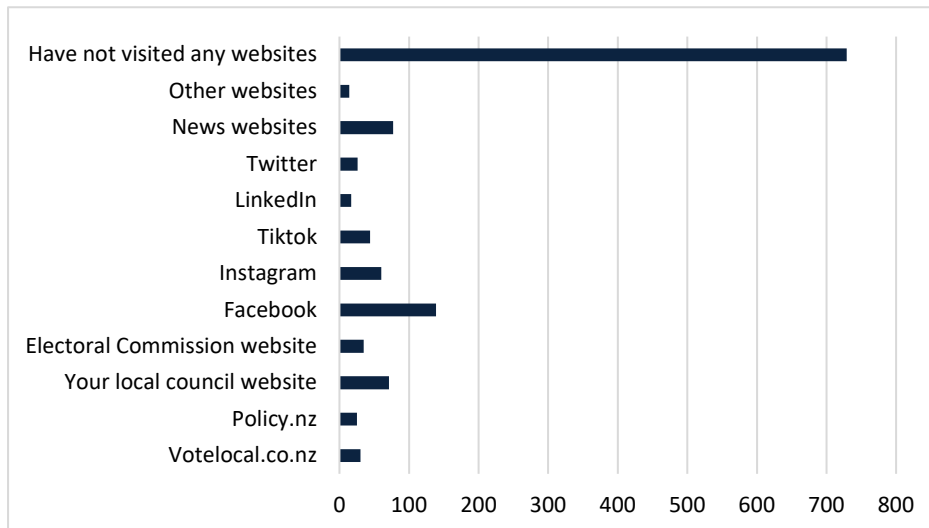
**Figure 11** Sources of information about candidates and the election



- The two most dramatic changes between 2004 and 2022 have been the use of Facebook to get information about elections, and the associated declining use of newspapers.
- In 2004, 27% of respondents sought information about the elections from radio, a figure that fell to 14% in 2022.
- In 2022 more people stated that they made use of billboards to get electoral information than was the case in 2004.

Increasingly, local agencies use websites to store and communicate electoral information, from candidate guidance to critical dates. Consequently, the post-election survey asked which websites and social media platforms respondents made most use of, see figure 12.

**Figure 12** Websites used by respondents to get information on the election

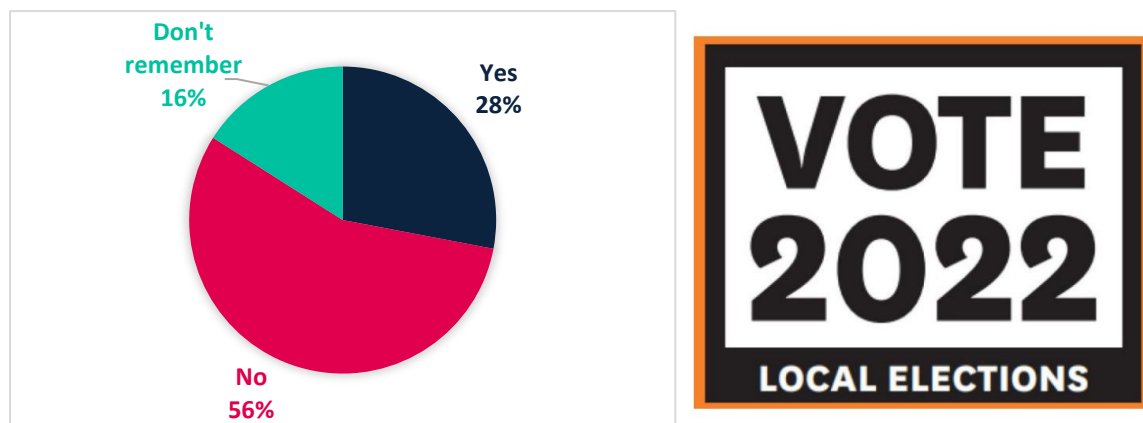


- 730 respondents (73%) never made use of websites for accessing electoral information.
- Of those who used websites and social media platforms, the most commonly used were Facebook, news websites, and local council websites.

## Knowledge of the Vote 2022 logo

To improve public awareness of local elections, the two national local government organisations, LGNZ and Taituarā, developed a logo (Vote 2022) (as part of a broader brand and promotional campaign) that was used widely to build awareness of the 2022 elections. The survey asked respondents whether, and if so, where, they had seen the logo. See figure 13.

**Figure 13**      **Vote 2022 logo recall**



- 28% of respondents recalled seeing the Vote 2022 logo, with 16% saying they weren't sure.
- The places where respondents remembered seeing the logo were varied and included:
  - Billboards
  - Websites
  - Council offices
  - Libraries
  - TikTok
  - TV
  - Facebook
  - YouTube
  - Instagram

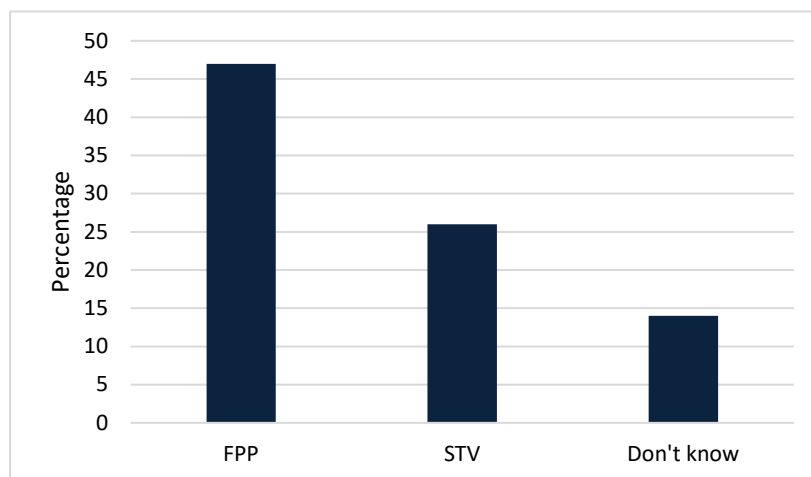
## Electoral and voting systems

LGNZ’s post-election surveys ask a number to gather information about respondents’ views about electoral and voting systems.

### Electoral systems

Councils in New Zealand have the choice of two electoral systems, First Past the Post (FPP) and Single Transferable Vote (STV). The 2022 survey asked respondents which they preferred, see figure 14.

**Figure 14** Electoral system preferences



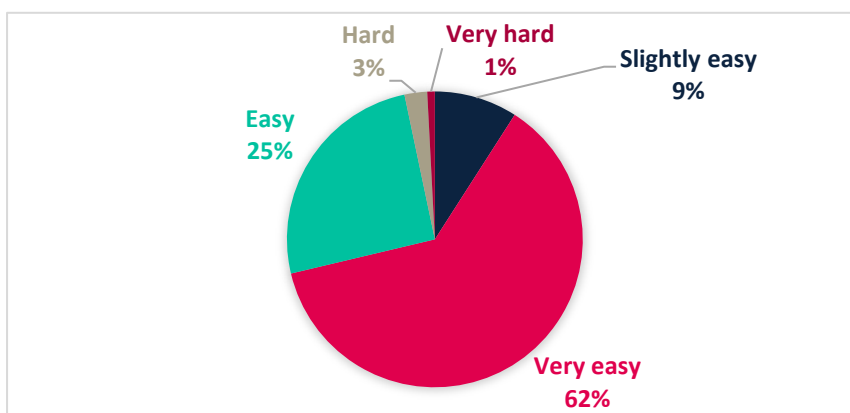
- First Past the Post (FPP) was preferred by 47% of respondents, compared to 26% who preferred Single Transferable Vote, with 14% of respondents stating that they were unsure.
- Those who preferred FPP referred to its ease and less time-consuming nature, while those who preferred STV referred to the opportunity for ‘fairer’ and more diverse representation. A common theme in the responses was that both systems had advantages and disadvantages.

The 2004 survey of voters and non-voters also sought respondents’ views on STV. Those districts that used STV, such as Wellington City, were the most supportive with 56% of Wellingtonians preferring it to FPP. Arguments given in support of STV were that it was fairer, more democratic, and more representative. Those who supported FPP tended to prefer its simplicity.

## Voting methods

Leading into the 2022 elections there had been considerable media discussion about whether the complexity of voting in local elections acted as a disincentive to people choosing to vote. Those who took part in the survey and who voted were asked whether they found voting easy or not, see figure 15.

**Figure 15** Ease of voting

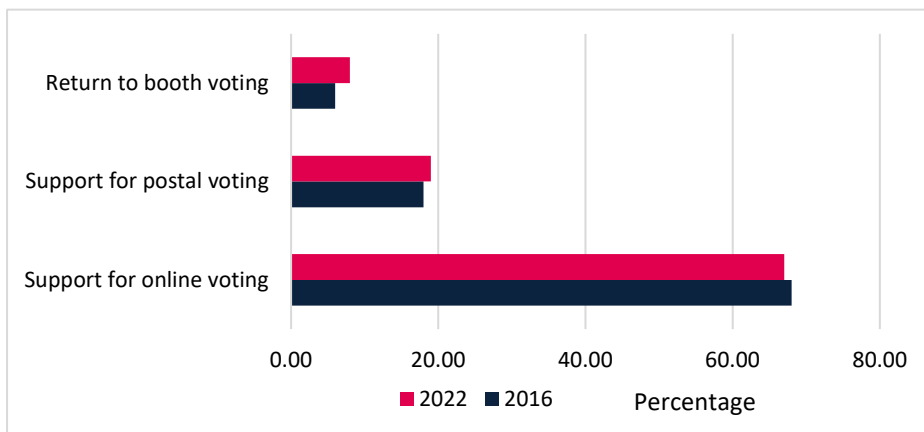


- The proportion of respondents who voted and found it to be easy, or very easy, was 87%. Only 4% found it hard or very hard.

A new question added to the 2022 survey asked non-voters whether they would have voted if there had been a different voting method. 52% of non-voters replied in the affirmative. This was reinforced by the Stuff survey which found Aucklanders, and those aged 18-44 years, agreed that online voting would get more people voting.

A common question raised in the months preceding polling day concerned the future of postal voting and whether it was still “fit for the job”. Respondents were asked for their views on three different systems for voting, namely support for a return to booth voting, support for postal voting as currently practiced, or support for online voting, see figure 16.

**Figure 16** Preferences for voting methods 2016 - 2022



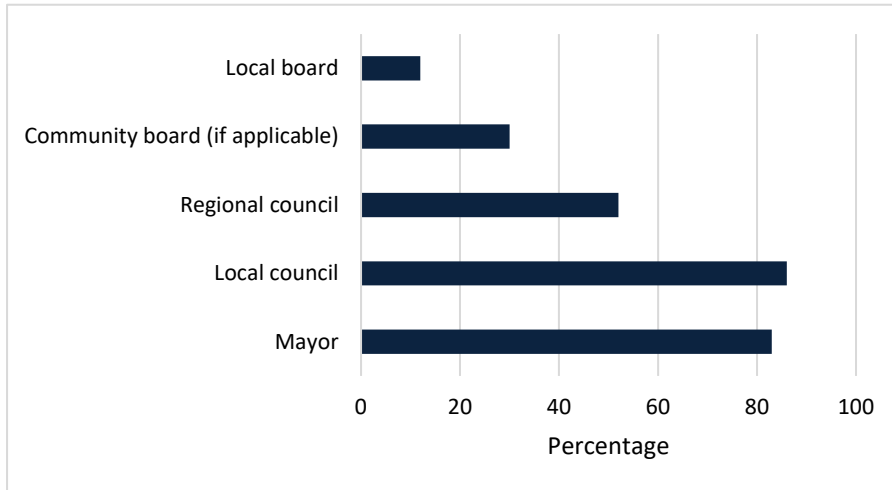
- Online voting received by far the most support, with 67% of respondents in 2022 and 68% of respondents in 2016 indicating that it was their first preference.
- The second preference was for a continuation of postal voting. This was supported by 19% of respondents in 2022 and 18% in 2016.
- A return to booth voting was the third preference in 2022, supported by 8% of respondents, and also in 2016, when it was supported by 6% of respondents.

### The electoral contests that voters participated in

When people vote in local authority elections they don't always vote in every electoral contest, noting that local elections involve multiple electoral races. Figure 17 describes who respondents voted for in 2022.



**Figure 17** Electoral contests participated in



- The most popular electoral contest, at 86%, was the contest for councillors, who make up a council’s governing body. The second most popular was the contest for mayor, at 83%.
- Response figures were less for regional councils, local and community boards, partly because, in the case of community boards, they are distributed unequally across the country.

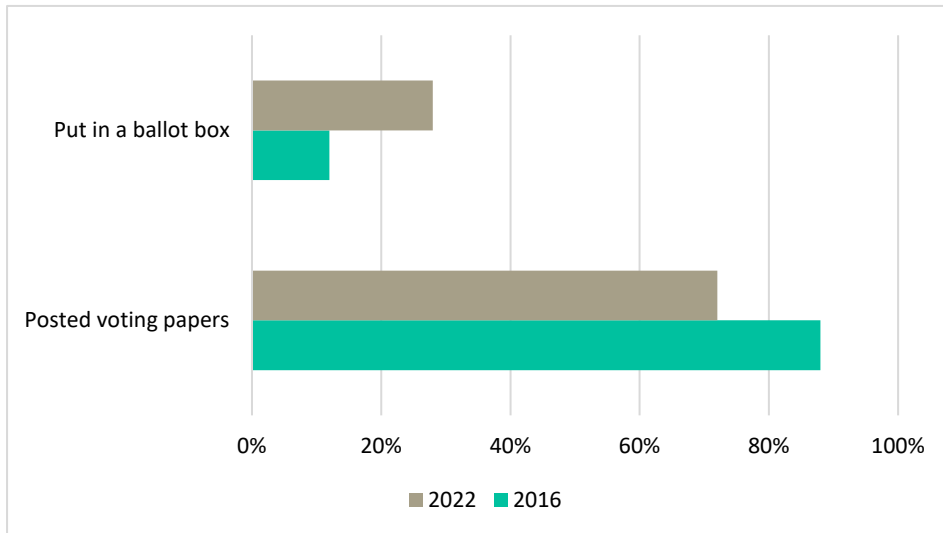
## Voting papers

Voter turnout is affected by numerous factors, including whether potential voters receive their voting papers in time to cast an informed vote, and, having completed their papers, are able to return them by post.

### Ease of posting completed voting papers

Post-election surveys have been a helpful way to track existing and emerging trends in electoral practice. One such trend concerns the decisions voters make about where to post their voting papers. This has become a topical question given the significant decline in the number of NZ Post boxes, meaning that some voters may need to travel some distance to post their completed papers. Both the 2016 and 2022 surveys asked for information on where voters put their completed voting papers, see figure 18.

**Figure 18 Post or ballot box?**

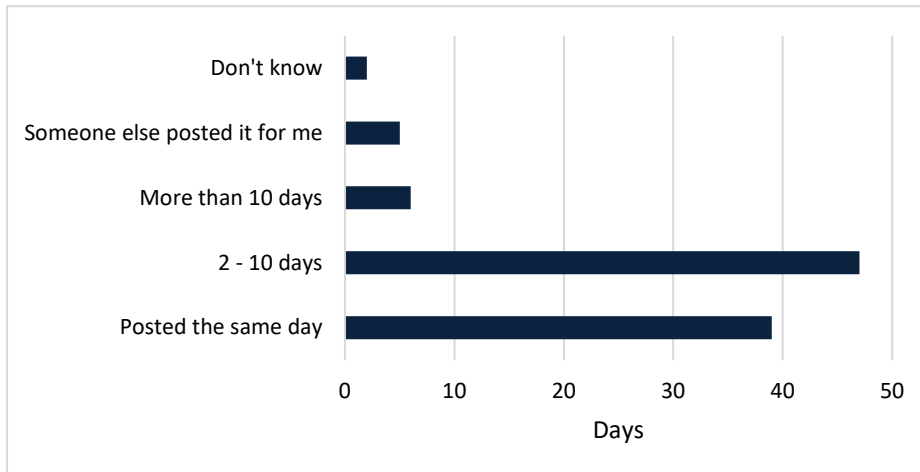


- The proportion of voters placing their completed voting papers in some form of ballot or voting box, usually located in a supermarket or library, increased from 12% in 2016 to 28% in 2022. It was 31% of all votes in Auckland.
- This finding coincided with a campaign organised by LGNZ which saw ballot boxes (funded by the Department of Internal Affairs) provided to larger councils for distribution.

### Length of time before posting voting papers

When it comes to deciding where to place boxes for receiving voting papers, it is helpful to understand how quickly people respond once they have filled in their papers. Figure 19 shows the number of days that those respondents who voted took to post their completed voting papers.

**Figure 19** Time taken to post papers

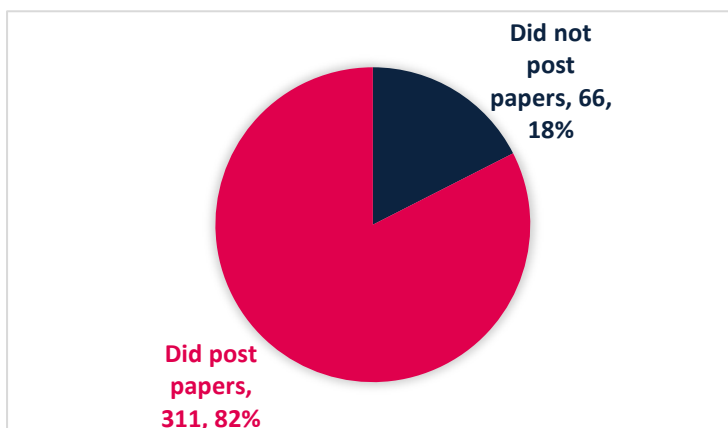


- Almost 40% of voters posted their voting paper on the same day that they completed them.
- 47% of voters posted their voting papers within 2-10 days of filling them in.
- In total, 87% of respondents stated that they posted their voting papers within the first half of the three-week voting period.

### Voting papers completed but not posted

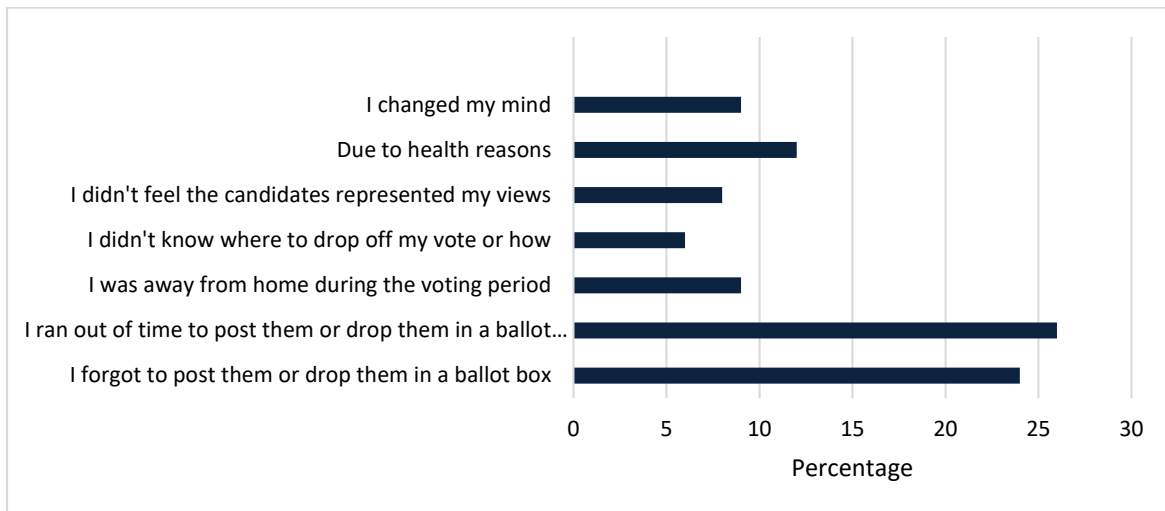
Each election a percentage of people fill in their voting papers but fail to post them. Understanding the number of those who fail to complete the voting process and their reasons may help policy makers to think about ways to increase turnout. The number of respondents who completed but failed to post their papers is set out in figure 20.

**Figure 20** Respondents who completed a voting paper but did not vote



When asked why they hadn't posted their completed voting papers the replies ranged from having changed their mind to having run out of time, see figure 21.

**Figure 21** Reasons for not posting completed papers

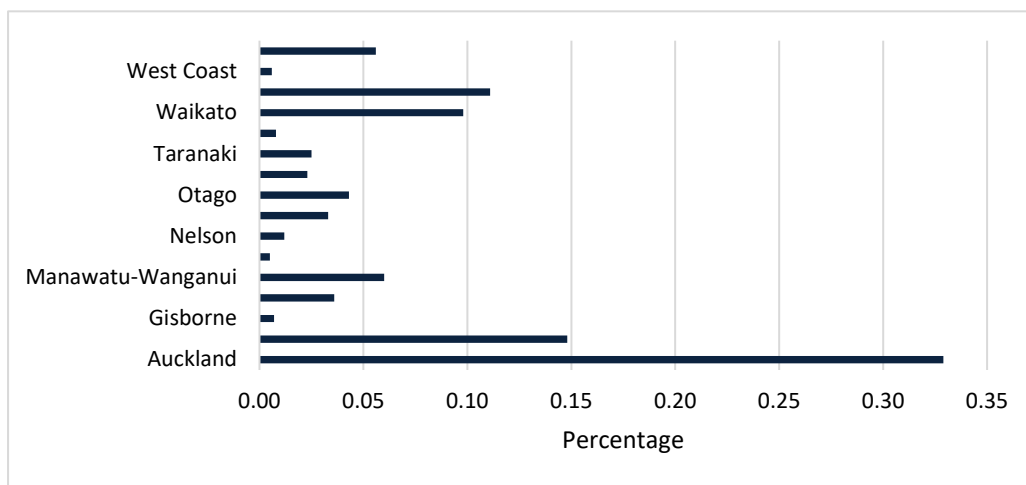


- The proportion of respondents who filled in their voting papers but did not vote was 18%.
- The most common reason for not posting completed voting papers was that they “ran out of time” (26%).
- The second most common reason (24%) was that they forgot.

## Profile of respondents

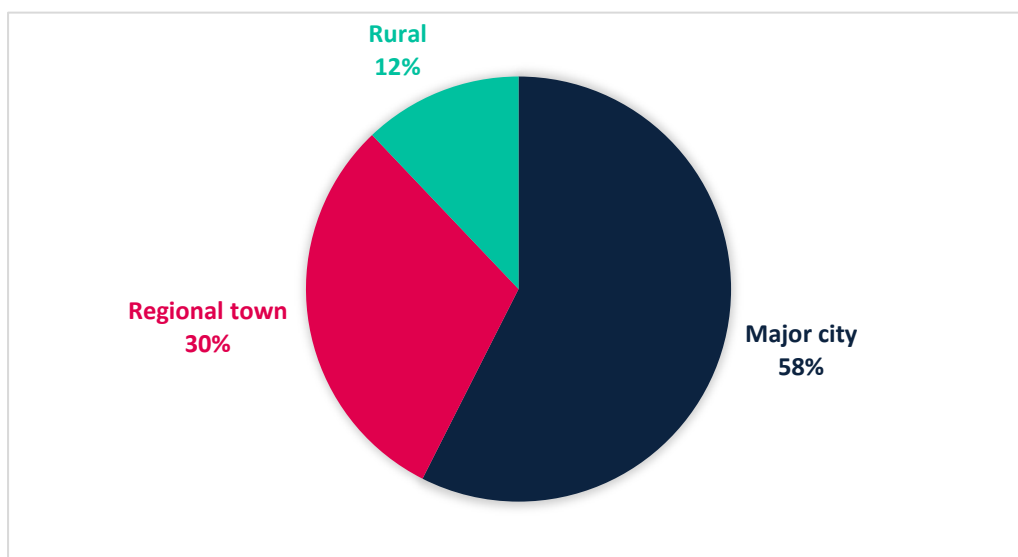
The survey of voters and non-voters was carried out in the last weeks of October 2022 and involved a sample size of 1000. All respondents were New Zealand citizens or residents and all regions were represented, see figure 22.

**Figure 22** Regional distribution of respondents



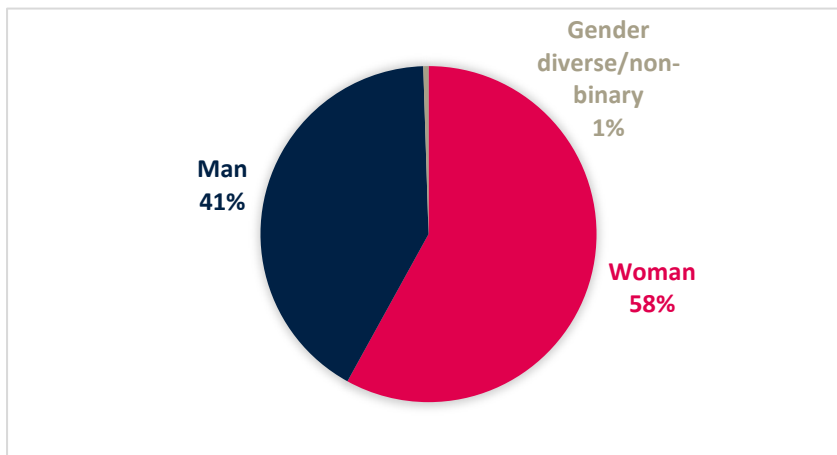
The sample also reflected the share of New Zealand’s population that live in major cities, regional towns, and rural communities, see figure 23.

**Figure 23** Distribution of sample by type of area



The gender breakdown of respondents was women (58%), men (41.4%), gender diverse (0.3%) and non-binary (.2%). A further .2% of respondents did not give their gender, see figure 24.

**Figure 24 Respondents distribution by gender**



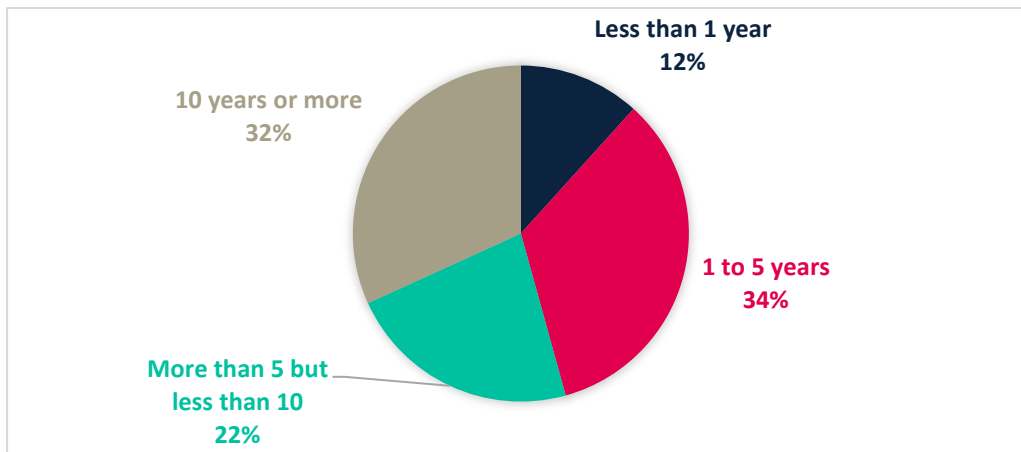
Most respondents (64%) were New Zealand European, with the next largest single group being Māori at approximately 18%. Please note that proportions will differ to the national ethnicity data published by Statistics NZ as respondents to the LGNZ survey were only able to choose a single ethnic category, see figure 25.

**Figure 25 Ethnicity**

NZ European	694
Māori	177
Cook Island Māori	20
Tongan	12
Niuean	4
Tokelauan	2
Fijian	5
Other Pacific Island	29
Southeast Asian	17
South Asian	7
Other Asian	20
Chinese	33
Indian	30
Middle Eastern	4
Latin American	5
African	7
Another ethnicity	67
Prefer not to say	7

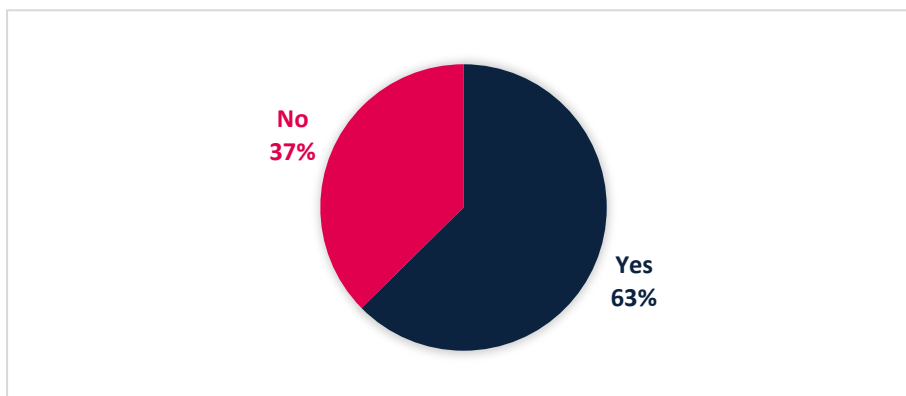
The share of respondents who had lived at their current address for ten years or more, or between one and five years was similar, at 32% and 34% respectively. The smallest group of respondents by tenure were those who had lived at their current address for less than one year (12%), see figure 26.

**Figure 26** Tenure: length of time at same address



Most respondents (63%) paid rates directly to their local council due to owning their own residential or business property. The remaining 37% paid their rates indirectly, through some form of rent or lease arrangement, see figure 27.

**Figure 27** Respondents who paid rates directly



---

## References

- Asquith, A, Webster, K. & Cardow, A (2021) Voting in New Zealand local government elections: the need to encourage greater voter turnout, in *the Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, Issue 24, accessed at <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>
- Auckland Council (2016) *Election Research 2016, pre, during, and post campaign results*, presentation November 2016
- Bush, G. (1980) *Local Government and Politics in New Zealand*, George Unwin, Auckland.
- Crothers (2016) *Post Election Follow-up Survey*, AUT, Auckland.
- Crothers, C, and Reid, M, (2023) *Voters' Issues in the 2021 Local Authority Elections*, (publication date to be confirmed).
- Local Government Commission (2007) *Knowledge, of, and participation in, local government*, DIA
- LGNZ (2016) *Local elections 2016: voters' choices and reasons*.  
<https://www.lgnz.co.nz/assets/ed9f75954b/Post-election-report-2016.pdf>
- LGNZ (2020) *Elected members' profile 2019 – 2022: A description of New Zealand's elected members and their reasons for standing*, <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/assets/Elected-member-profile-2019-2022.pdf>
- LGNZ (2023) *inquiry into the 2022 local elections*: LGNZ's submission on the Inquiry into the 2022 Local Elections, February 2023 <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/assets/Submissions/LGNZ-Submission-Inquiry-into-the-2022-Local-Elections.pdf>
- Reid, M. (2016) Local Government Turnout: what's the story, Vol. 12 No. 4 (2016): *Policy Quarterly*, accessed from <https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/pq/article/view/4625/4114>
- Stuff (2022) The real reasons people didn't vote at the local elections, at <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/local-body-elections/130439994/the-real-reasons-people-didnt-vote-at-the-local-elections>
- Webster, K. & Crothers, V., (2022) Women, ethnic minorities and local electoral success in Auckland, New Zealand, *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, Issue 27: December 2022  
<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/cjlg>