

DEMOCRACY

Why is this important?

Citizen participation in public decision making is important for the sustainable development of communities. Voter turnout and confidence in local politicians reflect aspects of the relationship between citizens and the council.

Democracy indicators

- Turnout at national elections.
- Turnout at local elections.
- Confidence in mayor and councillors.
- Satisfaction with council consultation.
- Community involvement in decision-making.

How are we doing?



The Rotorua turnout for national elections fell to 75% in 2011 from 80% in 2008.

Voter turnout for the Rotorua District Council election fell to 42.9% in 2010 from 49% in 2004 and 60% in 1992.

The percentage of residents who rate the mayor and councillors' performance as fairly good or very good was 46% in 2010 compared to 55% in 2006.

The percentage of surveyed citizens who are satisfied with the way Council involves the public in its decisions fell to 41% in 2011 from 45% in 2010.

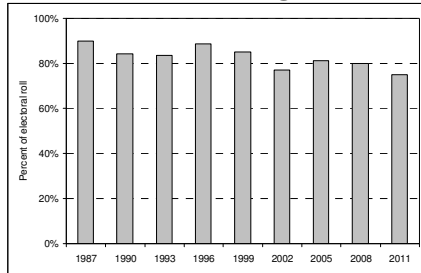
The percentage of survey respondents who feel the public has at least some influence on council decisions increased to 47% in 2011 compared to 40% in 2010.

Turnout at National Elections

Why is this important?

The local turnout at central government elections is an indicator of the level of interest and participation by Rotorua residents in public affairs.

How are we doing?



National election turnout rate, Rotorua District, 1987-2011

Source: Chief Electoral Office

The Rotorua turnout for national elections fell to 75% (32,097) in 2011 from 80% (33,847) in 2008. This figure is lower than the 77% in 2002. Historically, the turnout has been over 80%.

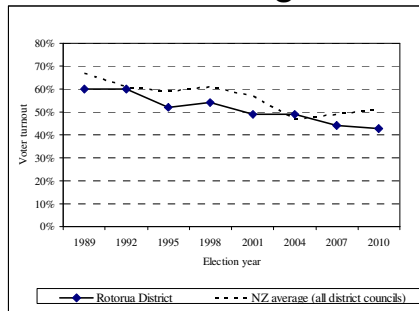
Part of the reason for the variable trend in recent years may be because a greater proportion of the electorate is now enrolled – the percentage of the electorate population that is enrolled climbed steadily to 69.7% in 2002 from 61.6% in 1987. It should also be noted that a boundary change in 1996 substantially enlarged the local electoral catchment.

Turnout at Local Elections

Why is this important?

Voter turnout at local body elections is an indicator of civic engagement and general community participation in public affairs. Rotorua District Council is the closest level of government for Rotorua citizens. Council provides vital public infrastructure and regulatory services and promotes social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of the community.

How are we doing?



Voter turnout for the Rotorua District Council election fell to 42.9% in 2010 compared to 43.9 in 2007 and 60% in 1992. Voter turnout for local government elections has fallen throughout New Zealand since the 1980s. Voter turnout in the Rotorua District has generally been below the national average for the past several elections.

Local body election turnout rate, Rotorua District and New Zealand, 1989-2010

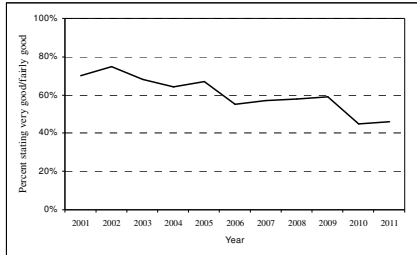
Source: Rotorua District Council Electoral Officer

Confidence in Mayor and Councillors

Why is this important?

Satisfaction with the performance of the mayor and councillors indicates the general level of public confidence in Rotorua's elected representatives.

How are we doing?



Public perception of performance of mayor and councillors, Rotorua District, 2001-2011

Source: NRB Communitrak Surveys and Rotorua District Council Community Satisfaction Survey

The results of the 2011 Community Satisfaction Survey show a slight change in residents' satisfaction with the performance of the mayor and councillors compared to the previous year. The percentage who rated the mayor and councillors' performance as very good or fairly good increased slightly to 46% in 2011 compared to 45% in 2010 but still remained below 55% in 2006 and 70% in 2001. At the same time, 14% of Rotorua respondents rated the performance of the mayor and councillors as poor or not very good compared to 7% in 2010.

2011 survey results show that in terms of those rating the mayor and councillors as very/fairly good, Rotorua residents rate their performance below the Peer Group (54%) and National Averages (53%).

Residents more likely to rate the performance of the Mayor and Councillors as very/fairly good, are:

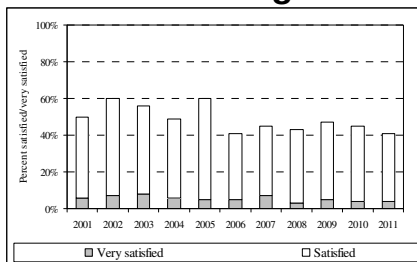
- women
- shorter term residents in the district 10 years or less,
- residents who live in a three or more, person household.

Satisfaction with Council Consultation

Why is this important?

Rotorua District Council has a policy of consulting on significant decisions that affect the community. A minimum level of community consultation is also prescribed by the Local Government Act 2002. By measuring residents' satisfaction with the way the public is consulted, Council gets an idea of how well it is meeting expectations in this important area.

How are we doing?



Ratings of residents' satisfaction with the way Rotorua District Council involves the public in its decision making, 2001-2011

Source: NRB Communitrak Surveys and Rotorua District Council Community Satisfaction Survey

The results of the 2011 Community Satisfaction Survey show that resident satisfaction with the way Council involves the public in its decisions, remains stable. The percentage of respondents who were either satisfied or very satisfied decreased slightly to 41% in 2011 compared with 45% in 2010. Most residents want the council to 'get on with the job, but keep them informed and consult on major issues.'

2011 survey results show that in terms of those rating the way Council involves the public in the decisions it makes as very satisfied/satisfied, Rotorua residents rate their performance below the Peer Group (47%) and National Averages (49%)

2011 survey results show that the dissatisfied/very dissatisfied reading (28%) is above the Peer Group (21%) and National Averages (19%).

Residents more likely to be dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with the way Council involves the public in the decisions it makes are:

- men
- longer term residents, those residing in the District more than 10 years,
- residents who live in a one or two person household.

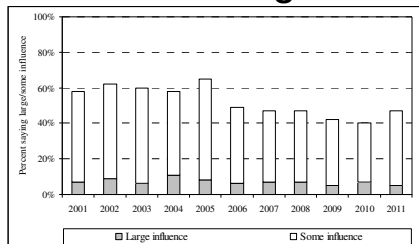
It also appears that North area residents are slightly more likely, than other area residents, to feel this way.

Community involvement in Council Decisions

Why is this important?

Research has found that meaningful community involvement in the public decision-making process is important for achieving sustainable outcomes. Community involvement leads to a sense of shared ownership in the development of the district.

How are we doing?



Rating of how much influence residents feel the public has on decisions that the council makes, 2001-2011

Source: NRB Communitrak Surveys and Rotorua District Council Community Satisfaction Survey

The percentage of Community Satisfaction Survey respondents who feel the public has at least some influence on Council decisions increased to 47% in 2011 from 40% in 2010 but remained slightly below the 2006 result of 49%.

Residents more likely to feel that members of the public have a small influence/no influence are:

- men
- residents with an annual household income of more than \$70,000.