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**Submission-makers' Perceptions of
the Annual Plan Process in New Zealand
Local Government**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for a
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Abstract

A purpose of local government in New Zealand as set out in s37K of the amended Local Government Act 1974 was to provide for public participation in local authority affairs. It was intended that this public participation provide citizens with a means of influencing local activities, as well as a way of making representatives more accountable to the citizens who elect them. The statutory annual planning and reporting cycle, and the special consultative procedure that it embodies, were the key mechanisms for achieving these objectives.

The focus of this research was to determine if the annual planning and reporting cycle which was introduced as an amendment to the Local Government Act 1974 in 1989 provides citizens with an adequate means of participating in local government and provides local authority accountability to citizens. A postal survey of citizens who made submissions in 1999/2000 was undertaken. It covered submission-makers from two city, two district and two regional councils all located in the lower part of the North Island. The overall response rate to the survey was 57.5%. Statistical analysis was used to isolate key interrelationships.

The survey responses indicated that most submission-makers value the opportunity the annual plan process provides to have an input into local government affairs. Despite the majority being of the opinion that submissions do not really make a difference or uncertain about whether they did or not, most submission-makers expressed the view they would make another submission in the future. Submissions were generally regarded as of 'some' importance to local authority decision-makers but not 'a lot'. Citizen satisfaction with involvement related more to benefits such as a chance to make their personal views known, than from any concrete outcomes in terms of influence on council decisions or accountability by council. How submission-makers perceived the public meetings to hear oral submissions and whether or not they were advised of the outcome were closely related to the level of satisfaction from involvement. People making submissions on behalf of organised groups were generally more positive about the process than individual submission-makers.

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Abbreviations

AP	Annual Plan
APP	Annual Plan Process
CDC	Carterton District Council
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DAP	Draft Annual Plan
DIA	Department of Internal Affairs
DOC	Department of Conservation
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
horizons.mw	Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council (horizons.mw is the trading name)
KCDC	Kapiti Coast District Council
LATE	Local Authority Trading Enterprise
LGOIMA	Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act
LGC	Local Government Commission
LTFS	Long Term Financial Strategy
NPDC	New Plymouth District Council
OCCLG	Officials' Co-ordinating Committee on Local Government
PNCC	Palmerston North City Council
RMA	Resource Management Act
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
WCC	Wellington City Council
WRC	Wellington Regional Council
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MAKING SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

In 1989 the Labour Government passed amending legislation that changed the structure and operation of local government in New Zealand. These reforms, the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989, were aimed at improving managerial efficiency, increasing transparency and accountability to citizens, limiting local authority involvement in commercial or quasi-commercial activities, and providing citizens with a way of participating in the affairs of their local community. To achieve these aims local government was restructured into larger units¹, the policy and regulation areas were separated, and, elected councillors were restricted to setting policy. A chief executive, the sole local authority employee responsible to elected representatives, was to oversee council staff and day-to-day operations.

Strengthening participation was a key aspect of the reforms. It was intended by the Officials' Co-ordinating Committee on Local Government (OCCLG)², as a means of increasing the accountability of local authorities to the public they represented and served. It was also regarded as essential for winning public acceptance of the much larger units of local government which would otherwise be perceived as undermining democracy (Cheyne, 1997).

To strengthen public participation, the statutory annual planning process (Section 223A) and the special consultative procedure (Section 716A) were introduced. These sections, which now form part of the revised Local Government Act 1974, are the focus of this research. The special consultative procedure is used as part of the annual planning cycle. It legislates the process local authorities must use to allow citizens to make submissions on their proposed budgets and plans. Each year a local authority must produce a plan, in particular terms for the coming year and general terms for the following two years which include: its intended significant policies and objectives; the nature and scope of the significant activities to be undertaken; performance targets and other similar measures for judging performance; indicative costs; sources of funds and

¹ 691 different local government and quasi local government organisations were amalgamated or dispensed with and replaced with 74 district/city councils and 12 regional councils.

² The committee formed to reform the local government sector.

the rating policy. In addition, every three years, citizens get to express their views on the long-term financial strategy (LTFS), which has a ten year horizon. The annual plan has to be consistent with the LTFS and the two may be reviewed together. While there has been some research on different aspects of the statutory provisions for public participation in local authority decision-making, there is very little, if any, research on the experiences of people who make submissions on the draft annual plan. Therefore, the aim of this research is to find out whether submission-makers consider the annual planning cycle and special consultative procedure provide for an effective form of public participation and whether they afford a satisfactory level of accountability by a local authority, to its citizens. The annual plan process was formulated to meet the aspirations of citizens to have a more meaningful influence over local authority decision-making than just the triennial elections. Therefore, it is important to find out whether the citizens who avail themselves of the opportunity regard the mechanisms established in 1989 as effective. Other provisions for grass-roots participation such as community boards and wards³ are not part of this research.

In place now for more than ten years, the annual planning legislation is regularly the subject of criticism. An example of such criticism is the following media report from a Palmerston North City Council meeting in relation to the draft annual plan:

It's time PNCC stopped the nonsense associated with formulating its annual plan and found another way of doing it, Cr Baty told his colleagues last night. Immediately after the annual plan for 1999/2000 had been finalised, Cr Baty described the process as an expensive charade. "We had meeting night after night, 20 hours of debate and we changed nine things. The system is absolutely hopeless. Let's try and find another way to do it. I bet it cost \$30,000-plus to go through this" Mayor Jill White said she could only agree with Cr Baty (*Manawatu Evening Standard*, 29/6/99).

Influential groups such as the New Zealand Business Roundtable also publicly express concern about the annual plan process:

³ Though wards are primarily an electoral device the formation of formal or informal committees which meet together to discuss the interests of the citizens within their boundaries provides an avenue for participation.

Consultation on local authority annual plans is a charade and the business sector has given up on close involvement as its views are being ignored, the Business Roundtable says. Plan consultations were mostly “a parade of vested interests seeking additional spending on their pet projects,” Mr Kerr [Roundtable executive director] said. “Groups representing the business sector, which has little voting power, are rarely listened to. For that reason we have decided that a detailed examination of city plans for 1999/2000 is a waste of effort” (*Dominion*, 28/5/99).

The views of local authority staff have been canvassed in two Department of Internal Affairs surveys carried out in 1992 and 1995 but little information is available on submission-makers’ perception of the effectiveness of making a submission. The annual planning process was intended to strengthen public participation and give citizens a voice, so the views and experiences of submission-makers are critical when evaluating how successful the legislation has been. The characteristics of individuals and groups who make submissions are also of relevance, as the annual plan process was intended to give all sectors of the community an avenue for input, not just a select few. Therefore, this present research also seeks to identify who makes submissions and how regularly they participate in local government affairs.

Many democratic theorists reject arguments in favour of citizen participation in government. These ‘elite’ theorists argue only a small select group are capable of governing (see Schumpeter, 1947; Crozier *et al.*, 1975). At the other end of the continuum proponents of participatory democracy support the view that citizen participation is part of our democratic heritage (see Burke, 1968; Mansbridge, 1980; Barber, 1984; Dahl 1989). More recent supporters of citizen involvement do so because they genuinely believe sustainability and community well-being cannot be achieved without greater citizen understanding of governance issues (Healey, 1997; Clark and Reddy, 1999; Armstrong cited in Hambleton, 2000; UNCED, 1992).

Democratic theory does not assume people want to be involved in civic affairs all the time. Nagel (1987) in his discussion of democratic participation attributes this to factors such as:

- Insufficient time - other social activities take priority over collective activities;
- The opportunity cost involved - foregoing work imposes an economic cost;

- Levels of competency - people do not feel they have the expertise to contribute;
- Lack of incentives - people are either satisfied with the status quo or apathetic and uninterested.

In a democracy these are all legitimate reasons for not participating. Liberty and freedom from coercion are valued as equally as the right to participate. In most circumstances if people are reasonably satisfied with the status quo they feel there is no need to be involved.

Two other reasons frequently given for non-participation are not however, so acceptable. According to Burns *et al.*, (1994, 156) they have the potential to undermine democratic government. These are:

- Lack of appropriate information to allow genuine participation;
- Lack of influence - people are not motivated to participate because they do not believe their efforts make any difference.

The annual planning process was written into legislation to overcome barriers to participation in local body affairs such as lack of information and inability to influence outcomes. My research aims to determine if those citizens who make submissions find these barriers still exist, what motivates them to participate and whether or not for them, the annual planning process is a worthwhile exercise.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the research was to gain an insight into how submission-makers find the annual plan process and determine their level of satisfaction with the opportunity it provides to participate in local government affairs.

The key research question of the study is therefore:

Do citizens who make submissions as part of the annual plan process find the experience satisfies their aspirations?

When answering this question the following issues are also considered:

1. Who makes submissions and why?
2. Do submission-makers regularly participate and how extensive is their interest and understanding?

3. How much time and effort is put into making submissions?
4. From the perspective of submission-makers what are the best aspects of the annual plan process?
5. From the perspective of submission-makers what are the worst aspects of the annual plan process?
6. From the perspective of submission-makers how can the annual plan process be improved?

Data for the research was gathered by sending out questionnaires to citizens from six local authorities in the lower North Island who had made submissions to draft annual plans in 1999/2000. The local authorities were selected to cover a range of local authority type and size. The two city councils surveyed were Wellington (WCC) and Palmerston North (PNCC). The first is a large metropolitan, urban area, the other a small provincial city. Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) was included as an example of a mid size urban/rural district council and Carterton District Council (CDC) a small rural council. The two regional councils that cover the lower North Island, Wellington Regional Council (WRC) and horizons.mw, the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council (h.mw) were also included. By surveying a range of local authorities it was hoped that the results would be representative of all submission-makers. While it is acknowledged that the make-up and characteristics of councils vary markedly from local authority to local authority, all councils have the same need and responsibility to be accountable to citizens and a legal requirement to follow the same annual plan process. Data was analysed both on an aggregated basis for all submission-makers combined and by individual local authority. Survey questionnaires were sent to all submission-makers in the district and regional councils and a randomly selected quarter of those in the city councils. In total 623 questionnaires were distributed and 357 (57.5%) were returned completed.

1.3 STRUCTURE/FORMAT OF THESIS

Figure 1.1 (on page 6) sets out the approach that has been used for researching submission-makers' views on the annual plan process.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two provides the background to the research by outlining the annual planning legislation introduced in 1989 and the Local Government Amendment Act (No.3) 1996. Research to date by the Department of

Internal Affairs, and others, on the public consultation aspect of the annual plan process and on how well the procedures work in practice, is discussed.

RESEARCH AIM:

To determine if citizens who get involved in the annual plan process find participation satisfies their aspirations

OBJECTIVES

METHODS

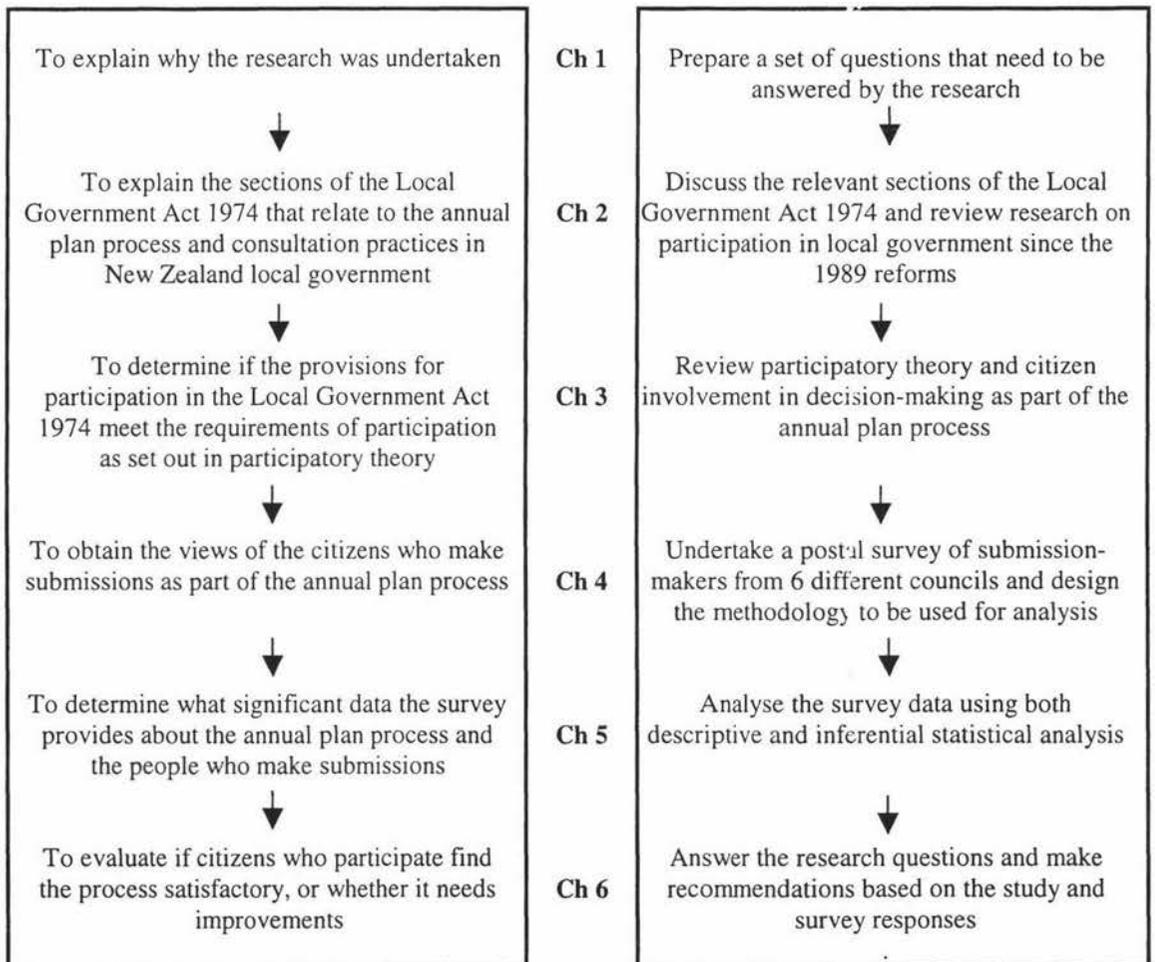


Figure 1.1: The Research Aim, Objectives and Methods

Public participation in decision-making is increasingly championed as a means of improving the quality of decision-making as well as building confidence in the public sector and providing a mandate for governmental activities. Chapter Three looks at contemporary theories of participatory and representative democracy and the way democracy functions in New Zealand local government. The benefits attributed to

participation and the acknowledged disadvantages are discussed as are their implications for the annual plan process and citizen involvement in local government.

Chapters Four and Five provide details of the empirical work undertaken for this study and the results. Chapter Four sets out the methodology used for the survey and outlines the techniques used to analyse the results. Chapter Five analyses the survey data and draws on this to answer the key research questions. The survey results are considered in the context of the participatory theory, discussed in Chapter Three and in light of the goals of the 1989 reforms and subsequent reforms, to enhance public participation.

Chapter Six draws together the conclusions of the research and discusses whether or not, from the point of view of participating citizens, allowing submissions as part of the annual plan process, achieves the goals of the original legislation. It endeavours to contribute to our understanding of how well democratic processes are working at the local government level. The benefits that accrue to the individuals in terms of participatory theory are considered. Recommendations for changes to the annual plan process derived from the research are made. The thesis then concludes by discussing whether the annual plan process is an adequate foundation on which to base extending the consultation and participation provisions proposed in the review of the local government legislation which was initiated in late 2000 by the Labour-Alliance Coalition Government. A key aim of this review is to improve the effectiveness of public participation. Therefore, the findings of this study which began well before the present statutory review was announced, have some bearings on current public policy concerns.

Chapter Two

STATUTORY PROCESSES AND RECENT RESEARCH

This chapter focuses on the legislative requirements to consult as set out in the Local Government Act 1974. This is prescribed in two parts of the statute. Section 223 sets out the annual planning process local authorities have to comply with and Section 716A details the 'special consultative procedure' and how it works. Additional requirements to consult were placed on local authorities in 1996 when the Local Government Amendment Act (No.3) made it compulsory for local authorities to use the special consultative procedure when preparing the long-term financial strategy.

According to Sir Brian Elwood, Chairman of the Local Government Commission (1994, 14) the two key objectives of the reforms were to:

1. Ensure better management of publicly owned resources; and
2. Achieve a higher standard of accountability to the public, at the political and managerial levels, in the use of those resources.

Elwood argued that citizens should be able to influence the political management of the community in which they reside beyond the three yearly ballot box. Citizens had the right to be informed about, and to voice an opinion on, problems needing to be addressed. They also were entitled to have an input into determining the preferred solutions. Elwood did not see the process of government as something citizens would participate in on a daily basis but felt they should be involved as of right when considering the choices between policy options. Participation was seen as a way to achieve collaborative rather than authoritarian consideration of major issues, and, improve the likelihood that final outcomes would make eminent political sense (Elwood, 1995, 5).

From the outset the reformers sought to give communities the right to decide the type of local government services they desired and make sure "those entrusted with decision-making concerning resource use [are] responsive and accountable to the communities they serve" (OCCLG, 1988). According to Pallot (1998, 14-18) a varied approach to the level of services offered by local authorities has taken place since 1989. This is illustrated by the contrast between Papakura City Council, which has extensively contracted out and privatised service provision, and Christchurch City Council, which

has promoted in-house service provision, retained assets and stressed the active role of the local authority in encouraging community and social cohesion. The extent to which such local variation in service provision can be attributed to community influence, through the annual plan process, rather than political and managerial leadership is, however, difficult to determine.

The studies carried out by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department of Internal Affairs, 1992 and 1995) found that local authorities meet the requirements of the legislation in terms of procedural matters. The extent to which local authorities comply with the intent of the legislation is not so easy to gauge. Determining this aspect is one of the aims of this research. A clear understanding of the statutory provisions is important to set the scene as the legislation sets the parameters within which submission-makers and local authorities must work. The next section outlines the current legislation.

2.1 LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Local Government Amendment Act (No.2) 1989 set out in legislation for the first time the purposes of local government in New Zealand. These now form Section 37K of the Local Government Act 1974. The purposes of local government are to provide at the appropriate level:

- (a) Recognition of the existence of different communities in New Zealand:
- (b) Recognition of the identities and values of those communities:
- (c) Definition and enforcement of appropriate rights within those communities:
- (d) Scope for communities to make choices between different kinds of local public facilities and services:
- (e) For the operation of trading undertakings of local authorities on a competitively neutral basis:
- (f) For the delivery of appropriate facilities and services on behalf of central government:
- (g) Recognition of communities of interest:

- (h) For the efficient and effective exercise of the functions, duties, and powers of the components of local government:
- (i) For the effective participation of local persons in local government.

Section 37K (i) extends the scope for citizen input in local government affairs beyond the triennial vote for councillors. It also incorporates the provision to encourage local authorities to define their activities and accountabilities in relation to the needs expressed by communities. Sections 223 and 716A are the mechanisms provided in the legislation to achieve these goals.

2.1.1 Section 223 - The Annual Plan Process

Section 223(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 1974 requires local authorities to prepare an annual plan that sets out the following information in detail for the coming financial year, and in general terms for the following two financial years:

- (i) The significant policies and objectives of the authority and any other organisation under its control;
- (ii) The nature and scope of the significant activities to be undertaken;
- (iii) The performance targets and other measures by which performance may be judged in relation to the objectives; and
- (iv) In total and for each significant activity of the authority -
 - (a) the indicative costs; and
 - (b) the sources of funds.

"Other organisation" in subsection (i) above, means any local authority trading enterprise (LATE) or company under the local authority's control, or in which it has a significant interest. Examples of local authority LATEs include Palmerston North City Investments Limited and Wellington Cable Car Limited, both wholly owned subsidiaries of the parent local authority. Companies in which significant interests are held by local authorities include airports, and sporting and cultural facilities run as trusts. Examples are the Regent Theatre Trust in Palmerston North, and the Wellington Regional Stadium Trust jointly owned by both Wellington City Council and the Wellington Regional Council.

There are further accountability requirements set out in Section 223C of the Act. These include the requirement that business is conducted in a manner that is open and comprehensible to the public and that regulatory functions are separate from policy and service delivery.

Section 223E (later amended by Section 122V) requires local authorities to publish an annual report on performance at the end of each financial year. Together these two provisions give effect to the objective of accountability that was central to the public sector reforms of the 1980s (Bush, 1995; Boston *et al.*, 1996). According to the Controller and Auditor-General (1991, 9) the accountability model has four key elements:

1. Public scrutiny of the plan;
2. Monitoring of the activities of the organisation throughout the period by those elected or appointed to be responsible for the organisation;
3. Public reporting of the actual results against those indicated in the plan;
4. The performance reported at year-end being subject to independent audit in financial and non-financial terms.

The annual plan must be adopted by the local authority no later than 30 September (that is, by the end of the first quarter of the new financial year). The annual report under s223E(14) is required to be adopted before the end of the fifth month after the close of the financial year to which it relates.

2.1.2 The Special Consultative Procedure

In preparing and adopting the annual plan the 'special consultative procedure' must be used. The special consultative procedure set out in Section 716A of the Local Government Act 1974 requires local authorities to provide opportunities for public input on their proposed plans, activities and programmes each financial year. Local authorities must publicly notify the availability of the draft plan, and specify a period that cannot be less than one month and is generally not more than three months, during which persons interested may make submissions. The legislation requires local authorities to ensure that any person who makes a written submission on a plan within the given time-frame also has a reasonable opportunity to present their submission orally to a local authority. The Act requires that all meetings at which submissions are heard, and at which the draft plan is deliberated upon, are open to the public (unless

there is a lawful reason why they should not be). Section 716A is also required to be used for a range of policies and actions taken by local authorities not just the annual plan. For example if local authorities want to transfer an existing under-taking to a LATE or other entity in which the local authority does not have a major interest, and this has not been part of the draft annual plan, consulting the public using Section 716A is mandatory. The following chart (Figure 2.1) gives an indication of the timeframe and cycle of events carried out by local authorities each year to comply with the requirements of the annual planning process.

ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS		
November-Jan	Managers undertake preliminary work for the next year's draft annual plan	
Feb	Discussion between the Council and Senior Management Team to review financial position and to consider level of service to be delivered and overall objectives in respect of rating levels for the next year (1 July – 30 June)	
	Departmental managers complete their section of draft Financial Plan and Annual Plan	
	Draft Plans considered by Senior Management Team	
March	Special Council Meeting to consider draft Plans and to approve release of Draft Annual Plan for public consultation	Open to public
April	Draft Plans presented to Community Boards where they exist	Open to public
	Draft Plans available for public submission	
May	Submissions close	Public Consultation
	Processing and reporting on submissions and arranging hearing(s) of submissions	
June	Submissions heard by Policy Committee at a Special Meeting (with some/all Councillors present)	
	Draft Annual Plan finally considered at a Special Council Meeting and adopted with amendments if so decided	
	Annual plan available to the public	
1 July	Year to which Annual Plan relates begins	
30 September	Last date by which Annual Plan must be adopted	

Source: Day (1998, 37)

Figure 2.1: The Annual Planning and Reporting Cycle

Figure 2.1 is based on the procedure that takes place at the New Plymouth District Council each year. Most local authorities follow a similar routine though may have different names for the procedures and documentation. For example, financial plans may be termed business plans.

2.1.3 The Local Government Amendment Act (No. 3) 1996

The Local Government Amendment Act (No. 3) 1996 introduced further financial management and public participation provisions into the local government sector. Local authorities are now, in addition to the annual plan process, required to prepare long-term financial strategy that is subject to public consultation. Section 122B(c) states one of the purposes of the financial reform legislation is to promote prudent, effective, and efficient financial management “By providing an effective and appropriate avenue for public participation in local authority financial policies and funding decisions”. To achieve this local authorities are required to prepare a ten year financial strategy that covers funding, borrowing and investment policies. The Local Government Amendment Act (No. 3) 1996 amended the principal act (the Local Government Act 1974) by repealing section 223E and substituting new sections relating to the annual plan and annual report. Section 122V specifies that every local authority must provide in its annual report sufficient information about its long-term financial strategy, funding policy, investment policy and borrowing management policy, to enable an informed assessment of the extent to which the objectives and provisions of the strategy and policies have been met during that year. The objective is an ‘open book’ approach to accounting so that citizens are aware of the true state of local infrastructure and new expenditure proposals are considered in a climate of reality.

The 1996 amendments are highly prescriptive stipulating the use of the special consultative procedure and making consultation on technical financial issues obligatory. They provide for public scrutiny and financial accountability through, for example, requiring local authorities to adopt the requirements of the Financial Reporting Act 1993 and to comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The Long Term Financial Strategy has to be reviewed every third year after adoption and *may* be consulted on in conjunction with the draft annual plan.

These new requirements have made the annual plan process more complex and complicated for submission-makers.

2.2 RESEARCH ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN NEW ZEALAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING

While not exhaustive the following section summarises some of the recent research and analysis undertaken in New Zealand pertinent to the annual plan process and the special consultative procedure.

Public Consultation in the Local Authority Annual Planning Process (Department of Internal Affairs, 1992) and *Is Public Consultation Working? The Local Authority Annual Planning Process* (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995)

The Department of Internal Affairs carried out surveys of local authorities to gauge the extent to which they felt the consultation provisions of the annual plan process were working. These surveys responded to by officers, in 1992 (answered by 85 out of the 87 local authorities) and 1995 (answered by 83 out of the 86 local authorities) indicated that all local authorities were meeting their statutory obligations. Local authorities were found to be producing and publicising their draft annual plans, holding public meetings to hear submissions, making written submissions available to the public, and making the final versions of plans available for public inspection. Results from the first survey showed that the number of submissions made per 1,000 electors ranged from 0.1 to 99.9 in 1991/92 (Department of Internal Affairs, 1992, 23). In 1994/95 the number of submissions varied from 0.04 to 17.4 per 1,000 electors (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 1). Among territorial authorities, the larger population centres generated greater response rates. This trend did not, however, apply to regional councils with 8 out of 11 councils receiving fewer than 50 submissions (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 22).

The 1995 survey results showed that, after six years of annual plan consultation local authority officers viewed the consultation process as expensive relative to results. Common criticism included; members of the public lack the information available to staff; submissions are generally along familiar and entrenched lines; few groups or individuals understand the process or have the necessary knowledge to make meaningful contributions; and, there is very little return for the effort involved in soliciting submissions. Over half those completing the survey responded that

consultation on the annual plan gave “little” or “no value” for money in terms of subsequent changes to the draft annual plan. About a third thought that the “quality of ideas generated” and “the number of people who responded” was of “little” or “no” value relative to the cost of the process (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 60). The following table shows the level of influence local authority officers felt the public had on the annual plan.

Table 2.1: Local Authorities’ Perceptions of Public Influence on Content of Final Plan

Response	1994/95	
	No.	%
Much influence	6	7
Some influence	8	10
Minimal/little influence	34	41
No influence	2	2
Influence prior to plan draft	7	8
Changes in expenditure/rates	5	6
General comment	5	6
Lack of public interest in process	4	5
Influence outside planning process	3	4
Too much effort/cost involved	3	4
Opportunity to influence the plan is limited	2	3
Public satisfied with plan	3	4
Influence of particular groups	2	2
Not enough time to make changes	1	1
Consultation process legitimises plans	1	1
Influenced sale of assets	1	8
No response	7	

Source : Department of Internal Affairs (1995, 62)

Comparison between the two surveys shows that acceptance and appreciation of the contribution consultation made to local authorities increased between 1991/92 and 1994/95. For all the measures used to evaluate the cost effectiveness of consultation more respondents answered positively in 1994/95 than in 1991/92 (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 60):

- Extent of accountability of local authorities (82% compared to 77% in 1991/92);
- The extent to which the public were informed (77% compared to 71%);
- The quality of ideas generated (60% compared to 44%);
- The number of people who responded (58% compared to 40%);
- The extent of change to the draft annual plan (41% compared to 23%).

The Department of Internal Affairs surveys also gathered data on the kinds of individuals and groups that local authorities encourage to make submissions on the draft

annual plan. Two thirds of local bodies indicated they approached interest groups for comment. These groups were generally economic and business interests, or ratepayers/residents' groups (whose specific purpose is to lobby local government). Less interest was shown in groups with an environmental, social or cultural focus (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 41).

Public Participation in New Zealand Regional Councils (Javison, 1994)

Javison's research aimed to ascertain the attitudes of decision-makers in regional councils to public participation, the kind of power afforded to participants, and, the objectives of public participatory programmes. Using a national postal survey he sought the views of a range of decision-makers (elected councillors, chief executive officers and local authority officers) to these issues. Javison found that, while decision-makers prescribe to the democratic ideal that citizens have the right to be consulted on policies and proposals that affect them, decision-makers are not ready to share decision-making power with citizens. For decision-makers the purpose of public participation was to realise the objectives of decision-making, support-building, conflict management and education (Javison, 1994, iii). He concludes that participation was carried out to serve local authority interests rather than citizens' interests and predominantly because public participation was mandatory (Javison, 1994, 246).

Javison also studied how regional councils implemented public participation processes. He found that decision-makers prefer participatory techniques that are easy to use, disseminate information and present proposals for public reaction rather than solicit clear indications of public preference. Changes to the annual plan as a result of submissions were dependent on the influence of the submission-maker and the perceived local authority benefit from agreeing. Two-thirds of decision-makers in regional councils surveyed by Javison (1994, 181) said they did not believe submissions provided a sufficient opportunity for citizens to get involved in decision-making.

The public participation strategies of two councils, Taranaki Regional Council and Hawke's Bay Regional Council, were also studied to assess the effectiveness of the different participatory approaches adopted.

To improve public participation in regional councils, Javison recommended, that central government should clearly state the goals of public participation; that regional councils should develop and institute public participation programmes; and that Maori

participation in the decision-making process of regional councils be elevated to satisfy the partnership principle under the Treaty of Waitangi (1994, 255-257).

Javison's research relates to the current study in that the views of decision-makers towards public participation are likely to be instrumental in determining how much influence submission-makers have. This in turn will affect the level of satisfaction submission-makers gain from their involvement in local body affairs.

Local Government and Politics in New Zealand (Bush, 1995)

Associate Professor Graham Bush is arguably the foremost scholar of local government and politics in New Zealand and is a respected commentator on local government in a number of publications and forums. In his comprehensive overview of local government published in 1995 he discusses the annual plan process, public participation provisions and who makes submissions. Bush expresses the view that, despite the annual plan presentation having elements of public relations gloss it is a quantum leap forward from the pre-reform days. Bush (1995, 227-8) argues the annual plan process is valuable as it imposes the following disciplines on both local authority staff and councillors:

- Councillors and officers have to cooperate and work together in its preparation;
- It reinforces that elected representatives are primarily policymakers;
- Elected representatives deliberations must be public and subject to comment and submission;
- It provides a strategy for transforming vision into reality. The annual report reinforces that policy must be implemented and performance measured;
- It restricts a local body's ability to interpret or articulate unchallenged the community's opinion and concerns.

According to Bush (1995, 228) survey statistics indicate only a small number of citizens examine the draft annual plan and make submissions and these submissions typically lead to few changes. Bush (1995, 292) gives the following three possible explanations for non-participation and acknowledges there is no real consensus on which is the more accurate:

1. Citizens deliberately choose not to participate because they have other priorities. This according to Bush can be interpreted as satisfaction with the performance and competence of local authority decision-making.

2. Citizens want to participate but they are insufficiently informed. Bush assumes this to mean they are reasonably neutral about local authorities activities.
3. Citizens want to participate but believe it makes no difference. This according to Bush can be interpreted as indicating mistrust of local authorities and their decision-makers.

My research endeavours to address this last point by exploring whether or not submission-makers who do participate in the annual plan process share this view. While it is unrealistic and undesirable for local authorities to heed every submission the extent to which participants generally feel local bodies hear and take due account of their views is important to ascertain. If the citizens who take part are generally disaffected by the unwillingness of elected representatives to heed their views, promoting greater public input in local government is unlikely to generate positive outcomes unless some obligation is placed on local authorities to act on submissions.

Bush (1995, 293) does not regard the present low level of participation as a concern as it has not yet been proven that improvements in participation would make corresponding differences in outcomes. The lack of participation, he argues, has the advantage of making the working environment for local government less adversarial and more pleasant.

Bush's comprehensive analysis of local government in New Zealand provides a very good background to understanding how local government has functioned traditionally and the implications of the changes brought about by the 1989 reforms.

Open Government at the Local Level (Brown, 1995)

Public access to information about the processes of government is a necessary and desirable part of democracy. For her research Brown looked at the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and analysed the reasons given for refusing information to the public and public exclusion from meetings. She also interviewed and surveyed local government officials. A similar exercise was carried out for Crown Health Enterprises and School Board of Trustees. The main issues with regard to openness at the local government level according to Brown's findings are: making decisions in the pre-meeting stage with only the formal resolution being passed in public; contracting out to LATEs not subject to the LGOIMA legislation; and, the

delegation of decision-making previously exercised by elected representatives to local authority officers.

Open government where the workings of government are both visible and accessible to citizens is regarded as a prerequisite to participation. According to Brown problems that occur in these areas in relation to the annual plan process include the timeliness of information and the annual reporting procedures. Though the public can request information, the timeliness of its supply can be an issue in terms of providing the necessary information to fully participate. As an accountability mechanism, Brown concluded, the annual report is suspect. The complete process is under the control by a local authority and the ability exists to gloss over and hide information if desired. Brown also makes the point that for effective public participation “something more is required than consultation as a duty or at the discretion of the authority. There must be opportunities for the public to initiate the consultation process” (Brown, 1995, 15).

Brown, whose research was carried out prior to 1995, notes the progressive tendency of local government legislation to move towards openness (1995, 72). Brown's work is of interest to the current research as for submission-makers to effectively participate in the annual plan process, the availability of information that is transparent, easy to comprehend and easy to access is essential.

Public Participation in Local Authority Annual Planning: ‘Spectacles and Acclamation’ or Prospects for Deliberative Democracy? (Cheyne, 1997)

The extent to which the statutory annual plan process introduced as part of the 1989 reform achieves the promoted objectives of enhanced democracy, accountability and efficiency was researched by Cheyne (1997). This work was based on a case study of the annual plan process at the Palmerston North City Council. Cheyne argued that the significant degree of management influence, and the restricted form of participation provided by the special consultative procedures, restricts citizens' ability to influence outcomes. Her study found disproportionately greater influence was wielded by bureaucrats (local authority officers), than by politicians (elected representatives), or the electorate (Cheyne, 1997, 304). Cheyne also argues that the statutory requirement for public participation as set out in s716A does not foster authentic public participation and that further devices for participation are needed if local government reform is to achieve its desired objectives. The special consultative procedure does not allow citizens to

shape political decision-making through deliberating on policy options. Cheyne maintains, as more emphasis is put on the strategic management of local government resources, greater importance needs to be placed on having effective means of determining public preferences.

Cheyne's research identifies the limitations of the annual plan process as a mechanism for encouraging public input into policy formation.

The Financial Management Regime of the Local Government Act 1974 (McCullough, 1997)

This research reviewed citizen interest in the public participation and consultation requirements of the new financial management regime introduced by the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 3) 1996. The Act was perceived by McCullough to expand the previous requirement for formal consultation into a public participation programme founded on citizen input into policy decisions (McCullough, 1997, i). McCullough carried out a random survey of ratepayers and residents to gauge their interest in participating in local government consultation on financial planning. Citizens were also asked what form of consultation they preferred - attending meetings or workshops or obtaining information by some other means. The low response rate (102 [22.5%] from the 454 questionnaire issued) led McCullough to conclude that there is little evidence the public really wants to participate (McCullough, 1997, 134). The following insights were derived from the small number that did respond:

- Ratepayers are more interested than non-ratepayers;
- About a third of respondents had some confidence their view would be taken into account;
- 85% were interested in obtaining more information about local authorities' financial policies but not interested in attending meetings.

McCullough concluded that the politics of local government are open, accountable and based on consensus. Citizens, however, are not interested in participating in specialised and technical areas unless they perceive strategic issues are going badly awry.

McCullough's works relates to the current study in that many of the issues in the draft annual plan are difficult to fully understand and the willingness of the general public to

involve themselves in complex, technical issues is questionable. Her finding that ratepayers are more interested in participating is also of relevance.

Local Authorities and Public Consultation in the No.3 Act Planning Process (Nash, 1998)

This report examines the requirement for local authorities to undertake public consultation when preparing the long-term financial plan. Using two councils as case studies (Palmerston North City Council and Manawatu District Council) Nash investigated how these councils went about the process. He found for these local authorities the aims of the Act to provide prudent financial planning conflicted with the requirement to allow public input via consultation. The importance of long-term fiscal sustainability was undermined by the short-term public reaction to increased rates and user-charges. Because of the difficulties associated with understanding the complex funding policy, public input rather than focusing on principles to guide decision-making, focused on dollars. As a result, participation did not provide the clear public priorities and preferences needed to assist the local authority with their decision-making. Weaknesses in the local authority consultation and decision-making processes further contributed to the tension and confusion caused from involving the public. Nash felt that the complexity of both the information provided by councils, and the decision-making procedures, limited the scope for meaningful public involvement.

Nash's research like McCullough's identified the problems the public has with understanding complex financial issues.

Public Participation in the Local Government Annual Plan Process (Day, 1998)

The intention of the local government reform agenda was to give the public a greater say in the decision-making. However, evidence shows that the level of involvement in the annual plan process is low. Day's research focused on why so few people participate in the local government annual plan process. To investigate this issue Day carried out a random survey of 400 citizens who were electors in the New Plymouth district (response rate 36.75%). He also surveyed a random sample of 200 individuals (response rate 59%) that had made submissions to the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC). In addition, 12 elected members and senior managers of NPDC were interviewed, and, three focus groups of survey respondents formed to discuss the survey findings. Day

concluded that the number of people who participate is linked to the effectiveness of the public participation process and that improvements to the annual plan process can be made.

Day (1998, 60-61) found differences in attitude existed between people who had made submissions and those who had not. Those who participate in the annual plan process find the process generally helpful and are more inclined to make contact with the local authority if they have something important to say. Their view is that the process can be improved with more effective communication; by the local authority listening to and taking more notice of the public; and by making the annual plan process easier to understand and be involved in. Those citizens who had never made a submission had little, or no confidence in either the process itself or the local authority and were reluctant to make contact with the Council when they had something important to say. These people expressed that view that Council did not listen, was not responsive to citizens, and did not communicate well with the community.

Day's investigation into why people participate in the annual plan process provides another assessment of submission-makers views on the annual plan process.

Public Consultation and Decision-making in Local Government (Controller and Auditor-General, 1998)

The increased requirements for consultation in local government has raised issues about what is exactly meant by 'consultation' and when and how local authorities are required to consult. In response to the need for some guidance the Controller and Auditor-General commissioned an analysis of the current statutory requirements and the relevant case law from law firm Simpson Grierson. This report identified the following issues of concern to the public, councils or both parties with regards to consultation (1998, 9):

1. The perception that consultation is "a sham" because:

- The local authority is unwilling to listen;
- Too little time is allowed for compiling submissions;
- Too little time is allowed for presenting submissions;
- The lack of feedback about the final decision;
- The vested interest of a local authority and its officers;
- Differences in expectations;
- It is used to avoid making a decision.

2. The costs associated with consultation including:
 - Publishing and distributing material;
 - Keeping in touch;
 - Public meetings.
3. Undue pressure group influence resulting in:
 - Reluctance to voice opinions;
 - Local authority "capture";
 - Encouragement of pressure groups;
 - The squeaky wheel syndrome.

The Controller and Auditor-General made the point that despite these problems the contribution of public involvement to democracy and decision-making is increasingly being recognised and valued. The potential benefits have the ability to outweigh the disadvantages:

The most tangible benefit of adequate and appropriate public consultation is that it will help to produce better decisions. Informed policy decisions are more likely to avoid constant review and revision. Projects that are understood and accepted by the community are less likely to face pressure for their revision or removal. Good consultation can produce better, sustainable decisions. Getting it right first time can save time and money (Controller and Auditor-General, 1998, 10).

Democracy in New Zealand Local Government: Purpose and Practice (Forgie et al., 1999)

This Occasional Paper looks at the changes in democratic practices in local government that occurred as a result of the 1989 reforms. Democratic theory provides the background for the discussion of the role of the citizen in local authority decision-making. The increase in the average size of local government units after amalgamation did not seem to diminish democracy in New Zealand as opponents of the reforms argued it would. In fact the statutory requirement for consultation encouraged greater citizen involvement in local authority affairs. Different avenues for public involvement are outlined in this paper, as are the underlying requirements for successful public participation. Empirical material on the gains from increased public involvement in local government as a result of the reforms was very limited. The view of submission-

makers was a conspicuous gap in the data available. How satisfactory the citizens who avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the annual plan process find the experience and whether or not their participation improves the quality and acceptability to the public of local authority decisions has not been researched. This absence of information initiated my research.

Other Relevant Research

Public Participation in Management Planning (James, 1990)

James, on behalf of DOC, surveyed submission-makers who had made submissions on the management plans for the Tararua Forest Park and Tongariro National Park. This was an extensive survey of submission-makers opinions, examining their reasons for participating, problems and difficulties associated with the process and how worthwhile they felt their involvement was.

The reasons given for participating by submission-makers' were not necessarily congruent with those of DOC officials. Submission-makers were concerned with promoting their interests as a park user, specific policies, supporting conservation and exercising their democratic rights. DOC officials were seeking public input to encourage public involvement, enhance acceptance of the plan and inform and educate the public (James, 1990, 7).

Submission-makers judged the success of their involvement pragmatically; by the level of influence they had on the outcome; personal satisfaction from involvement; and whether or not they felt their views had been taken seriously by the decision-making agency.

Many similarities were encountered in both the research procedure and findings between James' research and the survey carried out ten years later on submission-making to the draft annual plan.

Forsyte Research Survey (1995)

The Forsyte Research Survey, a nationwide survey of 1,502 people undertaken in September 1995, included a number of questions on local government. The results revealed most respondents believed that their quality of life was more affected by central government (53.3%) than local government (31.5%). Three quarters (75.7%) of

respondents felt they had the opportunity to express their views to local government. But for 65% the predominant feeling was that only very outspoken people and organisations were given attention by local government in their area (Forsyte Research, 1995).

New Zealand Politics at the Turn of the Millennium (Perry and Webster, 1999)

The 1998 New Zealand Values Survey was carried out as part of the World Values Survey. It was an extremely long survey (39 pages) that looked at a number of aspects of politics and government in New Zealand. It was a nationwide survey of people on the Electoral Roll and was answered by 1201 respondents (and achieved a 65% response rate). The attitude of respondents to both central and local government was explored. Generally the results indicated a cynical view towards democratic processes in New Zealand. Interest in elections was higher for central than local government but faith in participatory processes was greater at the local level. Local government was perceived as more responsive on a number of counts. It was considered (i) that local government was more open to influence by public opinion; (ii) the public had more control over what local government politicians did in office; and, (iii) that citizens had a better chance of getting their views across to local government officials. While faith in local government was higher than for central government the extent was not impressive, with, for example 76% of respondents believing the average person does not have great deal of influence on local government decisions. This figure was 84% for central government. (Perry and Webster, 1999, 94).

A number of factors may have influenced the results of this survey. The most likely of these is the timing of the survey at the end of the first term of a new system of government for New Zealand (Mixed Member Proportional). Problems that had arisen during this term had resulted in general dissatisfaction and disillusionment with both the government and political process. Another potential influence was that respondents were simply asked to agree, or disagree, so more intermediary responses were not catered for.

Both the Forsyte Research Survey and the New Zealand Values Survey provide a general picture of how citizens perceive local government in New Zealand. The findings from the survey of submission-makers can be compared with these.

2.3 MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUBMISSION-MAKING

Local authorities admit to making few changes to their plans and budgets as a result of the annual planning process. Palmerston North City Council changed nine things in 1999/2000 as a result of the 813 submissions they received (*Manawatu Evening Standard*, 29/6/99). According to Day (1995, 8) the NPDC received 472 individual submissions between 1990/91 and 1997/98, covering 123 different issues, which resulted in five changes being made to the draft annual plan. The 1994/95 Department of Internal Affairs survey showed more than half of the local authorities made “few” or “no changes” to the plan as a result of submissions. Two fifths of local authorities made “some” or “more than a few” changes to the draft annual plan: while only one made “extensive” changes (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 56). The 1994/95 Department of Internal Affairs survey did show a positive relationship between the number of submissions and the changes made, with the extent of changes to the draft annual plan increasing as the proportion of submissions per 1,000 electors increased (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 11). Problems are associated with the small numbers of changes made. The most significant of these is that publicity over the lack of change contributes to the apathy of those who do not participate and reinforces the belief that submissions do not make a difference.

However, factors other than the unwillingness of local authorities to be influenced by submission-makers, can contribute to the lack of changes made to the draft annual plan. Procedural reasons such as time constraints restrict the local authority’s ability to make significant changes. The annual plan has to be consistent with the long-term financial strategy. Also citizens regularly use the submission-making process as the only formal opportunity available to make their views on issues not related to the draft annual plan known to local authorities.

The number of submissions received by local authorities is steadily increasing as the following Table 2.2 illustrates.

Table 2.2: Number of Written and Oral Submissions to Annual Plans for all New Zealand 1991/1992 to 1999/2000

	1991/92	1994/95	1999/2000
Average number of submissions	67	160	339
Highest number of submissions	1855	2973	1869
% of councils receiving less than 20 submissions	56%	24%	02%

Source: Reid (2000)

Citizens are obviously becoming keener to express their views on local government issues. However, measuring the success of the annual plan process by the number of submissions presents interpretation difficulties. Firstly, a high level of interest may be equally indicative of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the local authority. Large numbers might point to the effectiveness of a local authority in engaging its citizens and communities. This though is unlikely in the New Zealand context where demands on peoples' time usually result in management by exception. That is, people are more likely to make submissions if they disagree than agree, or if they perceive the issue under discussion to be potentially controversial and in need of support. McCullough's (1997) research into participation supports this view. Large numbers of submissions are, therefore, more likely to point to citizen dissatisfaction with local authority performance in general, or on a particular matter. However, it is possible that the increase in the number of submissions can be attributable to greater public awareness of the annual plan process and a genuine desire to participate in local government democracy.

Likewise a small number of submissions on the draft annual plan can be interpreted as an indication of the effectiveness of on-going communication and a high level of public consensus concerning the policies and proposals contained in the plans. Or, it may indicate limitations on the capacity of a local authority, through the draft annual plan, to engage the community in meaningful debate and deliberation. It may also signify that citizens believe the annual planning process is such a farce it is not worth the time and effort necessary to make a submission.

Determining the number of citizens involved is also problematic because a single submission may be supported by a large number of individuals. It is also possible for one individual to make multiple submissions.

Because of these problems this research sought to evaluate the annual plan process by gauging the level of satisfaction citizens get from their involvement. This is perhaps a more reliable means of determining how effective the legislation for strengthening citizen participation in local government has been. While satisfaction will inevitably be related to the outcome, it will also be a measure of how well democratically elected representatives implement the annual plan legislation.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The annual plan cycle was introduced to give all citizens who wished to have an input into local government the ability to do so, to further encourage open government, and to provide a means of making local government accountable. There is now a reasonable level of public awareness of the opportunity to participate in the annual plan process. The 1998 Resident Satisfaction Survey carried out by the Wellington City Council showed that 65% of respondents were aware of the annual planning process (Wellington City Council, 1998). However, only a small number of citizens take up the opportunity. Elwood (1995, 314) the Chairman of the OCCLG did not view this as problematic:

What is important is not so much that thousands within each local area could participate but don't, but that the obligation upon councils to operate in a way that provides an opportunity for participation, keeps the system functioning in an open manner and is at all times capable of being brought to account.

Provision for public participation in government was unique to local government, but is gradually being introduced into other areas of government⁴. Without some means of gauging how worthwhile participants find their involvement to be it is difficult to determine how beneficial these expanded requirements will be.

This study aims to investigate what motivates those citizens that do participate to do so, whether they feel the annual plan process provides an adequate opportunity to participate in local body affairs, and also, whether or not it provides a means of ensuring local government is open and accountable. As Elwood points out the process does not require large scale participation if proved to work effectively by the small number of citizens who do participate. To foster the aims of participatory democrats, however, the annual plan process needs to achieve more than providing an opportunity for citizens to express their views. It needs to satisfy citizens' desire to participate in decision-making. The next chapter discusses key concepts in democratic theory that have shaped to some degree the reforms of local government in the late twentieth century.

⁴ The New Zealand Health and Disability Act 2000 imposes an obligation on District Health Boards to consult communities, service users and health care providers but does not prescribe a procedure such as s716A.

Chapter Three

DEMOCRATIC THEORY

To understand the nature and framework for citizen participation in the annual plan process it is necessary to explore the ideology of democratic theory. Within this body of theory there are a number of distinct strands. A fundamental distinction is that between participatory democracy and representative democracy. The role of the citizen is very different in these two approaches to democracy.

This chapter outlines the variations in theoretical approaches to public involvement in decision-making by government. Initially the characteristics of participatory democracy are discussed, then, the concept of representative democracy is examined. Representative democracy in New Zealand local government is also outlined. The more widely recognised advantages and disadvantages of public involvement in government are discussed. Lastly the impact of New Public Management on local government democracy is briefly discussed.

The wisdom of involving the public in the processes of government, has been contested since the initial articulation of democratic ideals by the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle (Heywood, 1999). Democracy as a form of government is understood to mean rule by the people. But what it means to rule and who should be entitled to make decisions is contentious. Participation in democratic government has historically been restricted, be it by status, gender, race, nationality or age. For most of those qualifying on even these grounds, participation is further limited. The majority of citizens have the right to choose only who makes decisions for them, not actively engage in the decision-making. Government is therefore removed from the people. According to Cronin (1989, 21) one of the greatest challenges for politics is to make sure government serves the preferences of the people, rather than service its own preferences.

Greater availability of information and higher levels of education among the public have led to increased dissatisfaction being voiced with the limitations governments place on citizen contribution (Fukuyama, 1995). People are increasingly critical of government, politicians and the lack of input into decisions that are made on their behalf (Kornberg and Clarke, 1992; Burns *et al.*, 1994; Perry and Webster, 1998). Governments, in turn, are increasingly aware of their limited ability to deal with complex social, economic and

environmental issues without public support. Government restructuring to accommodate greater public involvement initiatives reflect an effort to enhance the effectiveness of public policies and make them more responsive to citizens (Ingram and Smith, 1993, 1). As decisions made by public bodies can only be successfully implemented if the community accepts those decisions are responsible and appropriate ones, government policies need to have the same priorities and reflect the concerns and values of citizens:

We need to work out how collectively we give priorities to certain qualities of our local environment before we set out to devise policies to protect these priorities (Healey, 1997, 184-5).

Public participation is also tied in with the subsidiarity principle of decision-making at the level closest to those affected by a decision. The environmental movement and Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) promote this concept as a way of making individuals more aware of, and, responsible for their actions. In New Zealand the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) places more environmental responsibility within the local government sector. As a result local government has an increased influence on the day-to-day lives of its residents and is well positioned to engage citizens and promote participatory democracy in line with the subsidiarity principle.

Public involvement can incorporate different degrees of citizen input. This can range from low levels where people are happy to be simply informed and made aware, to the other end of the continuum where full participation in the decision-making process is desired. The following section discusses how different degrees of involvement are interpreted by participatory theorists.

3.1 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Participatory democracy is a term applied to theories of democracy that seek to involve the ordinary citizen more directly in the decision-making process than is normal within representative democracy (Parry, 1995). Many theorists (see Arnstein 1969; Burns *et al.*, 1994, 154) do not view public involvement as *participation* unless sufficient power redistribution takes place to allow participants active involvement in decision-making. This necessitates giving the public the ability to actually influence outcomes.

Arnstein (1969) in her citation classic, defines participation as the sharing of power, the ability to negotiate, to compromise and be directly involved in decisions made. Forms of public involvement which do not give the public some power to determine the final

outcome, are regarded as tokenism by Arnstein. As genuine participation is regarded as having the power to influence decisions, citizen control is seen as the ultimate objective and placed at the top of the hierarchy. To illustrate that different forms of involvement in public affairs have different levels of empowerment, she devised the “ladder of citizen participation” as set out below in Figure 3.1.



Source: Arnstein (1969)

Figure 3.1 Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation

Arnstein considers that the bottom rungs (manipulation, therapy and informing) cannot be regarded as participation. Instead they are means of trying to change the opinion or behaviour of those involved. The objective of involvement is to gain support for a proposal rather than come up with a proposition that takes into account the views and concerns of those affected.

Informing is an important first move towards legitimate participation as it can serve to increase individuals’ understanding of issues, but it is limited as it is a one-way process of giving out of information.

Consultation, the fourth step on Arnstein’s ladder, is another legitimate step. This involves a two-way exchange of information and opinion. At this level people are allowed to express their preferred choice, usually between pre-determined options. However, decision-making authority is retained by those in power. People are allowed to hear and to be heard, but they lack the power to ensure their views are heeded.

The next rung on the ladder is what Arnstein describes as placation. This encourages citizen input, for example in the form of working parties, to provide decision-makers with advice and a broader range of public opinion. But power holders again reserve the right to determine whether or not a proposal is acceptable.

Partnerships, the next step on the ladder, give citizens the power to negotiate and engage in bargaining. Decisions are made by agreement or majority vote. At the top of the ladder, the seventh and eighth steps, delegated power and citizen control provide citizens with active involvement in decision-making. For Arnstein it is only at this point that genuine participation takes place. Selznick (1966) uses the term 'substantive participation' to refer to this position where power is decentralised, and community groups make decisions that affect their immediate environment.

Moving towards the top of Arnstein's ladder is regarded as critical by supporters of 'strong' democracy (Barber, 1984; Burns *et al.*, 1994). Julian *et al.*, (1997, 352) argues if ongoing interest and commitment to public affairs is genuinely desired those who participate need some control over either the outcomes, or policies, of an organization. Supporters of 'strong' democracy believe most individuals are motivated to participate by the opportunity to influence decisions and continued interest and involvement will not eventuate if this does not occur.

Other supporters of participation do not view citizen control as the primary objective. For instance Valelly (1993, 243-234) places value on 'reconnected citizenship' and believes that effective government policies require feedback, assessment and modification in response to public input to ensure they met the users needs. Valelly advocates that good government decisions require the public to both partake in, and have confidence and understanding of the workings of government.

Wilcox (1994) maintains if decision-makers support the concept of public involvement, and are open-minded, genuine participation can take place at any point along a continuum. He simplifies Arnstein's ladder to five stages: (1) information, (2) consultation, (3) deciding together, (4) acting together and (5) supporting independent community interests. The view of Wilcox is that all levels are appropriate forms of citizen involvement and the important thing is to ensure that the form chosen meets the expectations of those involved. Empowerment for Wilcox (1994, 41) is a working style

which aims to help people achieve their own purposes by increasing their confidence and capacity. Empowerment, therefore, does not need to come from people making their own decision but from having an appropriate level of input in the decision-making process. Empowering the public is important according to Clarke and Stewart because:

Empowering the public recognises that the power the local authority has is not justified in its own right, but derives from the public. That power is dangerous if in some way it becomes separated from the public. Empowering the public lessens that danger by restoring a share in that power to those from whom it derives (Clarke and Stewart, 1992, 18).

Hucker (1998) and Clarke and Stewart (1992) view public involvement not as a way to devolve decision-making powers to the public, but as a way to support representative decision-making. By ensuring that decisions are more in line with the wishes of the public, the confidence citizens have in government increases.

Participatory democracy is concerned with consensus decision-making and the right of people to have a say in the important policy decisions affecting their lives. Participatory theorists (Mansbridge, 1980; Barber, 1984; Burns *et al.*, 1994) argue that representative democracy and decision-making by elites, removes people from the democratic rights they have as citizens and negates the fact that ordinary people are experts in the things that affect them. They advocate for greater citizen involvement and contribution to deliberation and decision-making.

Participation is, however, complicated by the fact that empowering some people disempowers others (Clarke and Stewart, 1992). Providing leadership and balancing the empowerment of different sections of the public can and does result in conflict and confusion about what the exact role and responsibilities of the elected representative are in a representative democracy.

3.2 REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Representative democracy is a system of government where the masses give up the right to govern themselves, to assigned agents. This surrender of power is, however, conditional on retaining the right to choose who the agents are, having access to those agents, and retaining the ability to regularly replace them if they do not consider their

services adequate (Cronin, 1989). Representative democracies are the most common form of modern democracy.

Advocates of representative democracy agree with Schumpeter (1947), a proponent of the elitist theory of democracy, that the majority of individuals are not capable of looking beyond their own personal interests to the 'public good'. Schumpeter viewed the classical ideal of participatory democracy as being based on the untenable assumptions that people are politically rational, that they always know what they want, and that they are capable of non-selfish judgements concerning public affairs. Proponents of representative democracy argue it is a system of providing leaders who defend citizens' interests more prudently than they can themselves (Cronin, 1989, 36). This is achieved in theory by:

Attracting persons of broad rather than narrow interests, and by permitting adequate information and time to such persons for high quality debate, deliberation and discussion and the possibility for revising and reversing their opinion (Cronin, 1989, 36).

Representative democracy places emphasis on the need for expertise in decision-making. Voting is supposedly the link, between the government and the governed, which ensures people's views are articulated and their interests secured (Heywood, 1999, 233). According to Dahl's theory of pluralism elites elected to positions of power are expected to be responsive to public opinion if they want to retain office (Dahl, 1989). Politicians need to present policies that appeal to the public to secure power so they are likely to be moderate and have wide appeal. If they do not, the defeat of elites in elections leads to policy changes thereby making the process democratic (Dahl, 1989).

Cronin (1989, 26) defines a representative as someone who serves on behalf of a person and is somehow held accountable to that person. Vowles *et al.* (1995, 123-4) identifies five different types of representative:

- The *delegate* who acts in accordance with the preferences of the electorate;
- The *trustee* who relies on personal judgement in deciding policy matters for the good of the community as a whole;

- The *partisan* who endorses the position of the political party on whose platform he/she was elected;
- The *interest group* representative who votes in accordance with the interest group with which he/she identifies;
- The *politico* who switches between party instructions and his/her own judgement.

The early form of democracy in the USA was participatory. It centered round the 'town hall meeting' where citizens made decisions on behalf of their local communities⁵ and elected representatives were instructed on how to vote in state and national legislatures (Cronin, 1989, 24). Madison, Jay and Hamilton, the fathers of the American constitution, argued against this 'delegate' form of representation. Their argument was that especially at the national level representatives needed to be free to consider the public and national good not just reflect narrow, short-term, special-interest views (Cronin, 1989, 25). If their role was that of a delegate they merely succumbed to the irrational prejudices and ill-informed judgements of the masses.

Modern elite democratic theorists (Schumpeter, 1947; Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki, 1975), argue that complexity and specialisation remove debate and decision-making roles from the public realm. Ordinary people need representatives to specialise in issues to help them find out what they, as citizens, believe and desire (Holmes, 1995). In addition, as most citizens have neither the time nor inclination to get involved, government has to rely on specialists and experts to make decisions on behalf of citizens.

The strength of representative democracy is seen as its ability to blend elite rule in the form of government by experts, with public accountability in the form of voting. This view is the foundation of liberal representative democracy and the basis of modern democracies.

Critics of representative democracy maintain that isolating politicians from public opinion by allowing them to think for themselves has the disadvantage of insulating decision-makers from popular pressure and enabling them to act in their own selfish

⁵ This form of democracy is still retained in some communities in the USA, for example, New England. However, the degree of self government in contemporary society is severely restricted by policies set at other levels of government (Parry, 1995).

interests (Heywood, 1999, 235). Other contemporary issues also contribute to citizens' reluctance to acceptance unrestricted elite decision-making as a form of government:

- Increased diversity - even, for those with the public interest at heart, the increasing assertion of difference and diversity makes it difficult for elected representatives to be responsive to the disparate requirements of the electorate (Gyford, 1991).
- Politics is more issue orientated - it is not as easy to align with sector groups with, for example, broad left or right ideologies.
- Technology - politicians work in an environment where modern communications and education make it possible for specialist interest groups and individuals to be as equally well informed, or better informed, by debate and deliberation than representatives.
- Interest group pressure - the extraordinary organisational proliferation and professionalisation of these groups has resulted in power being concentrated in sectors of society (Skocpol, 1999, 1). Instead of encouraging the dispersal of power, as espoused by pluralism, the public have become increasingly suspicious of the methods used for lobbying politicians and achieving political outcomes (Berry *et al.*, 1993).

Representative democracy and participatory democracy are both intended as deliberative processes designed to improve the chances that an intelligent and responsible collective decision is made. However, as Nagel (1987, 16) points out, advocates of participation and supporters of representative democracy, both have to accept that there are problems associated with combining knowledge with power, and competence with correct motivation.

3.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The form of democracy in New Zealand local government is representative democracy. Local citizens elect councillors and mayors every three years as representatives to make decisions on their behalf. The number of councillors varies depending on the population density. Generally, city and regional councils have a lower ratio of councillors to citizens than district councils. Decision-making is carried out according to committee procedure and decisions are made by majority vote. Many decisions, and often the

preceding deliberations, take place in standing committees with the full council only meeting to adopt their reports and recommendations.

Relying on elections as the sole means of accountability of elected members to voters is problematic at the local level. Electors cannot choose between elites on the basis of the policies they most prefer because most stand as independents. The absence of party politics at the local level means most elected councillors are trustees⁶. In the 1998 local elections only 21% of candidates and 16% of members of local authorities were connected to a party. Though there were a greater number of parties named in 1998 than in previous elections many of these parties only related to local issues (Department of Internal Affairs, 1999, 80). Candidates are able to express views on what policies they would like to achieve but as the composition of the local authority after the election is an unknown there is no reliable means by which individuals can effectively implement manifestos. Voter choice is usually made on the basis of brief biographical profiles published in local newspapers. It is further restricted by the requirement, in most local authorities, to vote only for candidates standing in the ward in which the elector resides. Incumbent councillors have traditionally had a greater chance of being elected (as is shown Table 3.1.) though an interesting development is that in the 1998 elections, compared to the previous two elections, sitting mayors were more likely to lose their seats (Department of Internal Affairs, 1999, 9). This may signal a change in tradition.

Table 3.1: Elected Representatives Previously Sitting Members 1992 to 1998

Type of Body	1992	1995	1998
Regional Council	57%	69%	61%
City Council			
Councillors	58%	68%	63%
Mayors	73%	67%	47%
District Council			
Councillors	61%	64%	62%
Mayors	73%	66%	68%
Community board	not available	59%	54%

Source: Department of Internal Affairs, 1999, 9

There is generally no published data on incumbents performance in their previous term/s (for example how they voted on controversial issues) so re-election would seem to be more influenced by conservatism and the higher public profile the office gives them, rather than performance. These issues highlight one of the fundamental criticisms of liberal representative democracy, - when participation consists solely of infrequent

⁶ See Vowles *et al.* Section 3.2.

and often meaningless voting, it enables one set of self-serving politicians to be replaced with another (Heywood, 1999, 229).

Local government decision-making has been criticised for being prone to interest group pressure (Controller and Auditor-General, 1998). The rationale for introducing the annual planning process, according to one of the officials involved in the local government reform process in New Zealand 1988-89 was to avoid this:

Prompted by a concern to ensure local authorities were not dancing to the tune of a few demanding individuals, they sought a more broad-based participation than that which had been evident in local government politics up to that time (Cheyne, 1997, 258).

Dissatisfaction with the way representative democracy functions in New Zealand has been expressed in two recent nation-wide surveys. The International Social Survey Programme looked at central government (ISSP, 1997) and, the World Values Survey looked at both central and local levels of government (Perry and Webster, 1999). These surveys indicated most New Zealanders do not believe they have a say in what government does or an ability to influence policies

The shortcomings of elections, as a means of providing any concept of responsibility of elected representatives to citizens was an issue for the OCCLG (Boston, 1996, 186-187). For this reason, moves were made to challenge the bureaucratic and unresponsive nature of representative government by strengthening public participation in local government with the annual plan process and s716A (Elwood 1994, 6)⁷. The view of the general population on the effectiveness of these moves is not very positive according to the World Values Survey (Perry and Webster, 1999). My thesis research sought to establish if this scepticism is shared by the citizens who utilise the opportunities provided for them to participate.

According to Dahl (1989) the consent of those being governed is fundamental to democracy. One way to achieve this is to allow greater public participation in governmental decision-making. This provision can, however, put pressures on

⁷ According to Elwood (1994, 6) in order to retain legitimacy and effectiveness the structures of government and the process of governance should be in harmony not just with the economic and social realities of the times but also the changing goals and expectations of the electors.

representative democracy and cause confusion about the roles and responsibilities of elected members.

How elected representatives respond to the input of citizens is a key area of interest in this study as it ultimately determines how constructive the legislation to encourage public participation has been.

3.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Both representative and participatory democratic systems of government have strengths and weaknesses. Rather than regarding them as conflicting theories of democratic government it is now argued that they can work together to provide a more relevant form of democracy for the 21st century (Cronin, 1989; Stewart, 1996; Hucker, 1998). The idea of public involvement is included in most contemporary theories of governance and management (Thomas, 1995, 10). It is, however, important to recognise that there are both advantages and disadvantages attributed to public involvement in political process. These are discussed in this section.

3.4.1 Benefits Attributed to Public Involvement in Decision-making

A number of desirable outcomes are associated with public involvement in government by proponents of participatory democracy. Some of these are as follows:

3.4.1.1 Improved Quality of Decision-Making

Just as the early founders of representative democracy argued for representation so that decision-makers could be better informed, supporters of participation argue for citizen involvement so that elected representatives can be better informed. This is associated with better governance. As the problems that require collective decisions become more complex and sensitive, involving the different groups with an interest (stakeholders) has the advantage of extending the range of values and inputs in the decision-making process. Including diverse views through public involvement according to theory is likely to increase the quality of decisions made by ensuring deliberation and debate covers all aspects of an issue and all views are taken into account. Dialogue with citizens and expressions of preference, provide a way for the representative to determine the wishes of electors and carry out the community's mandate (Stewart, 1996, 48).

Quality governance requires better information on customer needs, what citizens want from government and how they feel about what they get (Thomas, 1995, 113).

Even if the rationale for groups and individuals to participate is to promote their own self-interests this is regarded as having benefits. Government is made aware of these interests and pressured to produce public goods more consistent with citizen demand (Verba and Nie, 1972, 11).

3.4.1.2 More Integrated Policies and Services

Integrated service provision requires the input of the various organisations and individuals who are users and providers of services. Providing the policy framework for the integration of specialised functions is an important role of government that cannot take place without the involvement of the appropriate citizens, agencies, organisations and businesses.

3.4.1.3 Increased Acceptance of Decisions

Thomas (1995) makes the point that while public involvement in democratic processes may require more time and have higher transaction costs than the traditional representative decision-making, these costs are often offset by reaching solutions more acceptable to a wider section of the public. As well, savings can result from not having to deal with public objections and the provision of more streamlined services. According to Thomas (1995) the problems arising from public participation are fewer and of lesser consequence than those arising from lack of involvement. Participation is also a means of ensuring the actions of government are embedded in society rather than imposed on society.

While involving affected sections of the public in debate may not necessarily result in consensus, the discussion does allow each party to be aware of other points of view. Having been involved in the deliberation, if ultimately a majority decision is required, while not agreeing with it, the outvoted minority may be more likely to view it as a legitimate decision to accept and obey (Holmes, 1995). As Nagel (1987, 14) reasons:

Having had a chance to influence a decision, participants perceive the process as fair even when the outcome goes against their immediate interests. Group approval of a policy harnesses powerful social forces in favor of compliance.

3.4.1.4 Personal Development

John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century advocated participation both for its educative qualities, and the pressure it brought to consider the collective well-being of the wider community. Mill argued that participation requires an individual:

...to weigh interests not his own; to be guided in cases of conflicting claims, by another rule than his private partialities; to apply, at every turn, principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence the common good (Mill, cited in Berry *et al.*, 1993, 5).

Participation is still advocated as a means to advance personal freedom and individual development (Heywood, 1999, 222). Gutmann (1999) and Fishkin (1996) focus on the notion of democracy as a transformative process, stressing the role of deliberation within the public sphere as a means by which 'different' groups can come to respect others views and in turn be reflective about their own.

The view that co-operative behaviour is strongly influenced by the possibility of individuals having to deal with each other repeatedly is also widely promoted (Nagel 1987, 14; Berry *et al.*, 1993; Putnam 1993, 172). Identification with a group, association, or cause, is seen to elevate combined interests even if individuals' motives for membership are self-serving (Lakoff, 1996, 191). Public involvement provides opportunities for civic education and encourages a more politically interested, collectively responsible and active citizenry. These educative actions in turn enable participatory processes to be self-sustaining (Pateman, 1970, 42).

Recent research by De Montford University and The University of Strathclyde (1998) on public participation initiatives in England found that 'satisfied' citizens who had been actively involved in participatory exercises identified the benefits primarily in terms of personal development, and, increased understanding of local issues and local government in general. They had difficulty identifying specific service or policy-related outcomes they had achieved.

3.4.1.5 Outlet for Dissatisfaction

Structured public input into decision-making can provide a safety valve for citizens concerned about controversial decisions or by the performance of public officials. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood that citizens will resort to other forms of public

involvement that might otherwise weaken the direct authority of government and undermine the public's confidence in government (for example, strikes, riots, protests). There has been increasing recognition of direct forms of political action in western democracies since the late 1960s. The advent of some of these direct actions can be potentially disruptive and detrimental to the stability of democratically-elected governments. This has resulted in a search for other more inclusive forms of decision-making.

3.4.1.6 Better Citizen Understanding of Government

Governmental decision-making is notoriously top-down with little scope for grass-roots involvement. In such situations few citizens have the opportunity to participate in the processes of government and learn how government operates.

Proponents of participation (see Stewart (1996), Thomas (1995), Berry *et al.*, (1993)) advocate public involvement as a means to encourage greater appreciation of how democratic government functions. This in turn can serve to reduce citizen criticism of government agencies and improve the support for bureaucrats and elected government representatives. Involving different groups with conflicting demands can also extend some of the responsibility for finding an acceptable solution to them. Berry *et al.*, (1993) argues that by informing the different groups of the opinions and competing demands of others, these various parties may better appreciate the pressures on limited resources.

Too few people seem to feel that they share responsibility for making government work better. Too many people are content to rely on their elected officials to solve society's problems, even though they are dissatisfied with the results of those officials' actions (Berry *et al.*, 1993, 1).

3.4.1.7 Enhanced Citizenship and Stronger Democracies

Putnam (1993, 167-175) argues that after a prolonged period of bureaucratic paternalism with little recognition of the need for citizen input in decision-making and understanding of its contribution to citizenship, things are changing. He coined the term 'social capital' to measure features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions (Putman, 1993, 167). The ability to create and sustain voluntary associations that

interact with government is seen as an important measure of 'social capital' in a society. It is also seen as an indicator of the health of the democratic systems in place.

Strong, local communities are regarded as essential to the psychological well-being, personal growth, social order, and a sense of political efficacy of individuals (Schwarz cited in Daly and Cobb, 1994, 17). Increased public involvement in public affairs and reconnecting citizens with their government is seen as a way to increase social capital and strengthen communities.

Such communitarian principles that link involvement in community service and voluntary organisations with greater democracy have a long tradition. De Tocqueville and Jefferson, early writers on democracy, espoused their importance to society when democracy had its first roots in early America (Heywood, 1999). Communitarian political theory places importance on obligation and responsibility rather than personal liberty and rights (Barber, 1995). Communitarians regard voting for elected representatives as a very limited and infrequent form of citizen involvement in the political process that does not in itself constitute citizenship. Citizenship is meaningless without some kind of participation in public affairs (Heater, 1990, 212). According to Barber (1995, 922):

One of the great ironies of Western political history is that as democracies became more inclusive they became less participatory. The ancients permitted only a few to be citizens but asked much of them, while the moderns extend citizenship to everyone but ask almost nothing of them.

Participatory activities are a way of reminding citizens of their collective responsibilities and obligations.

3.4.2 Problems Associated with Public Involvement in Decision-making

Opponents of participatory democracy cite a number of negative outcomes associated with public involvement in government. All of these are potential problems for local authorities seeking to encourage greater participation in decision-making.

3.4.2.1 Undermines Representative Government

Opponents of public involvement in decision-making believe it puts excessive pressure on democratic government. Referred to as the excesses of democracy, public involvement is said to weaken representative government, lead to indecisiveness, time

delays and ultimately public disillusion, because government cannot satisfy all the aspirations and demands of citizens, many of which are in conflict (Crozier *et al.*, 1975). Requiring consultation can lead to increased fragmentation and lack of direction and create the potential for overlap and confusion. As participation slows down governmental decision-making, it may result in inefficiencies and loss of confidence. It can also undermine the standing of elected representatives if perceived as a lack of leadership and decisiveness.

3.4.2.2 Consultation Fatigue

Increasing demands on citizens' time for input by both government and commercial organizations (for example to complete surveys) can result in consultation fatigue. The sheer volume of requests means that people are likely to refrain from commenting unless it is their particular area of expertise or an issue affects them personally. This can reinforce interest group participation and result in narrow views being expressed which are not balanced against those of the ordinary citizens because they do not get involved.

3.4.2.3 Causes Conflict

In some situations public involvement results in conflict by encouraging the involvement of irreconcilable factions. Catering for the conflicting and overlapping interests of these groups is not always feasible. Keane (1988, 20-22) cautions against the appeal of greater 'community' involvement.

a democratic civil society...will never resemble a happy and contented family. It would always tend to be self-paralysing. Precisely because of pluralism, and its lack of a guiding centre ... civil society can also degenerate into a battlefield... pluralism, the multiplication of decision-making centres and space for individual and group autonomy, tends constantly to generate anarchy.

When intractable differences occur which cannot be resolved by participatory processes, it is necessary to have a system in place such as elected representatives, who have the legitimacy of the election process to give them authority and make decisions on the public's behalf (Nagel, 1987, 19). According to Stewart (1996, 48) it is the role of the elected representative to seek to reconcile, to balance and in the end, to determine the different demands.

3.4.2.4 The Capacity of Citizens is Limited

Citizens are seen as generally lacking the time and commitment to involve themselves in government affairs. James (1990, 25) study of submission-makers who made submissions to the Department of Conservation (see Section 2.3) identified access to information, time commitments, inexperience, and costs all as problems for people wanting to make submissions in the environmental arena. Citizens' lack of understanding of issues and the trade-offs that are part of political decision-making process are also seen as limiting the ability of ordinary members of the public to participate.

3.4.2.5 Decisions Are Not Always Optimal

Authors as early as Kaufman (1956) identified the problems associated with maximising the preference for 'consensus' and 'expertise' in participatory decision-making. Kaufman contends citizens cannot have an institutional design that delivers, representativeness, competence and executive leadership all at once as each arrangement involves trade-offs. Participatory or consensus decision-making requires deliberation and consideration of diverse views and perspectives. It usually results in negotiation and compromise to get a more widely accepted solution. Expert decision-making instead relies on financial and technical information to determine optimal solutions. Depending on what measure is used to determine what is 'ideal', participatory decision-making can be seen as less than efficient. According to Burke (1968, 287) a critical analysis of the general goal of citizen participation reveals basic conflicts between participatory democracy and professional expertise. Decisions arrived at by consensus are not necessarily 'optimal'.

3.4.2.6 Mass Participation is Impractical

The expense and organisation required for elections (which in many countries is accompanied by poor turnout) is an indication of the difficulties of involving large numbers of people in decision-making. Consulting the general public on every issue can be both expensive and paralysing. The benefits of participation are seen to accrue on a small rather than large scale and participatory processes are generally seen as more suited to low conflict situations.

3.4.2.7 Participation is Unrepresentative

Political participation is usually the prerogative of the better educated who have greater organisational skills to more effectively launch petitions, contact political leaders and exert pressure on the political system. Participatory democracy is often criticised for giving these already active groups an even more power (Marston, 1993, 132-133; Nagel 1987, 59). Thomas (1995, 28) makes the point that involvement of specific interest groups can be contrary to the broader public interests because they activate for benefits at the expense of the immobilised wider group. Participation also does little to empower excluded groups so is criticised for not contributing to a stable society (Agyeman and Evans, 1994).

Concern is frequently expressed that those who vote also partake in the political process between elections which makes their influence even more disproportionate. Vowles and Aimer (1993, 53) identified social position as the most important attribute in determining who is likely to vote in national elections.

Broadly speaking, those who are well integrated into the dominant structures of society, those who have well-paid jobs (or have retired from well-paid jobs), those who are looking after children and those who own, or are purchasing, their own homes, are more likely to participate in elections.

The characteristics of citizens who participate in local government affairs are expected to be similar. The research sought to establish if this was in fact correct.

3.4.2.8 The Tyranny of the Majority

Representative democracy was introduced as a way to overcome problems associated with government by opinion and prejudice. Filtering public opinion through representatives was a means of protecting one part of the public from acting unjustly towards another (Cronin, 1989). Participatory forms of government run the risk of being demagogic if decisions are made purely by weight of numbers and not as a result of effective deliberation.

3.5 NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The influence of New Public Management on the design and incorporation of public participation in New Zealand local government has been acknowledged in previous research (see Cheyne, 1997).

New Public Management assumes that the public sector can use the same managerial goals and systems as those used in the private sector (Boston *et al.*, 1996). New Public Management is based on public choice theory that views bureaucracy as self-interested and wasteful and promotes the market as a means of better allocating goods and services. The principles of New Public Management as set out in Boston *et al.* (1996, 28) are:

- a shift from process to output accountability
- devolution of managerial control
- disaggregation of large bureaucratic structures
- a preference for private ownership and contracting out
- emphasis on consumers
- the emulation of many private sector management practices
- emphasis on cost cutting and labour discipline

The respective roles of elected representatives and management are set out in the 1989 reform legislation. The councillors' role is limited to policy formulation, budgetary control and performance monitoring. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the only local authority staff member accountable to the elected representatives. Local authority staff report to the CEO who is required to ensure the effective, efficient and economic management of the activities and planning of the local authority (Elwood, 1994, 15).

Managers under this New Public Management system of operating are accorded greater freedom and responsibility to implement policy as determined by political leaders. Because they are directly responsible for the day-to-day operation of local authority activities, public consultation programmes, and the formation of policy that goes before elected representatives they have considerable influence. According to Mulgan (1997) in New Zealand the expanded role of local authority officers has seen them acquire greater decision-making powers since 1989. Therefore, more public interest decision-making takes place outside the political arena. Citizen awareness of the influence of government officials in decisions is growing according to Thomas (1995):

Perhaps because they recognise that many important governmental decisions are made by administrators, citizens have increasingly voiced their concerns about programs and services to those administrators. In contrast to their declining turnout

for elections, citizens have exhibited growing interest in contacting governmental agencies about services that affect their daily lives (Thomas, 1995, 99).

New Zealand case law gives officers of local authorities no role in the decision-making processes of s716A. According to *South Taranaki Energy Users Association Incorporated v South Taranaki District Council* [1997] CP5/97:

It is the council which must receive, consider and hear submissions with an open mind. Whilst it may be appropriate for a council officer to prepare a summary of submissions made in the course of the process, it is inappropriate for an officer to be proffering any advice or recommendation, to the council, as to how particular submissions should be dealt with. Any such summary should be neutral as to the final outcome. It is the councillors who are obliged to maintain an open mind, and a willingness to be persuaded to a different view and they are to approach that task uninfluenced by the views of its officers. Councillors are acting in something akin to a quasi-judicial role when considering submissions under this section.

Public participation with its need to consult and take public opinion into account is often seen as conflicting with the efficiency emphasis of New Public Management. An example of this was the desire expressed by Wellington citizens to retain public ownership of Capital Power. This conflicted with expert advice and was perceived by managers as an inefficient resource use. Although the Council went to the effort of setting up a citizens' jury to ascertain public opinion the Council's final decision went against that of the citizens' jury which was decisively in favour of retaining public ownership⁸. Local authority officers can have an influential part in both deciding when it is appropriate to consult with the public, and, when it is appropriate to heed the public's opinion. How submission-makers perceive the role local authority staff play in the annual plan process was, therefore, an area of interest for this research.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The 1989 reforms encouraged local authorities to move from decision-making by elected representatives to more participatory forms of decision-making. Demand for participation is often regarded as a symptom of dissatisfaction with governmental decision-making and the distance citizens feel from their decision-makers. Interaction

⁸ For more information see Bostwick (1999), Cheyne (1997) and Comrie (1998).

between citizens and representatives can provide an important means of overcoming this dissatisfaction and distance:

The attractiveness of participatory models of democracy is encouraged when the continuing conversation between citizens and their representative institutions is interrupted, and our local and central governments become remote and unresponsive to people's needs and wishes (Hucker, 1998, 18).

Submissions can provide local authorities with a means of keeping dialogue going and being more in tune with the wishes of the public. If valued and considered, they can provide a tool to strengthen rather than threaten representative government. They can also enhance the legitimacy of decisions both for those who participate, and those who do not. Those that had the opportunity to participate but declined are more likely to accept a decision reached after consultation than if it was made unilaterally. This assumption is, however, dependent on the degree of satisfaction and confidence expressed by the citizens who do participate in the process. If all that these citizens achieve is confined to providing input, without any certainty that power-holders will incorporate their views, then citizen involvement is more likely to result in cynicism, exhaustion and frustration (Nagel, 1987, 15). This in turn will undermine the legitimacy of the process both to those who get involved, and those who do not. The next chapters analyse the views of the citizens who participate in the annual plan process. Chapter Four sets out the methodology used for the study's empirical work and Chapter Five summarises the submission-makers' views on the annual plan process obtained from a postal questionnaire.

Chapter Four

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The annual planning and reporting cycle has been part of local government management for over ten years now. The research carried out for this thesis explored the opinions of citizens who made submissions to a sample of local authorities in the 1999/2000 annual planning round. A postal survey was carried out to determine if, from submission-makers perspectives, the provisions to allow public input as part of the annual plan process were satisfactory. A randomly selected sample of individuals who made submissions were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The aim of the survey was to provide empirical data on whether or not the citizens who make use of the statutory provision under the Act to make a submission, find the process meets their expectations. As well the survey sought to determine whether the annual plan process improved the quality of local authority decisions and the acceptability of those decisions to the public.

This chapter provides an overview of what each local authority surveyed did by way of annual plan consultation. It also gives a brief profile of the local authority and outlines the issues of concern during the 1999/2000 period. It then describes the data collection strategy employed in this research and the approach taken in analysing the data.

4.1 THE SAMPLE

The local authorities included in the survey are all located in the lower North Island. The objective was to survey a sample of local authorities that was broadly representative of the different size and type of local authority found throughout New Zealand. The sample was made up of two city councils, two district councils and two regional councils. One of the city councils is a large metropolitan area, the other is a provincial city with a small rural hinterland. Of the two district councils, one is a spread urban/rural mixed area and the other a small rural town and surround. The two regional councils cover the entire lower North Island region. The local authorities studied are all located in close proximity to Massey University and are currently being studied as part of the University's research on local government in New Zealand. Between 1993/94 and 1997 the four territorial authorities (Wellington City, Palmerston North City, Kapiti Coast District and Carterton District) all increased their gross expenditure on democracy

(see McDermott and Forgie, 1999)⁹. The present research provides a more detailed investigation into the level of satisfaction citizens obtain from this expenditure. Table 4.1 gives key statistics for each local authority surveyed as part of this research.

Table 4.1: Sample Local Authorities: Key Statistics

Local Authority	Population 1996 census	Full-time Staff	Hectares	\$ Rate Income (budgeted)	No of written Submissions 1999/2000
Wellington City	157,646	1,287	28,897	113.5 m	1,419 (107 oral)
Palmerston North City	75,000	515	32,594	34.3m	813
Kapiti Coast District	38,700 (41,000 3/99)	175	73,000	20.3m	75 (32 oral)
Carterton District	6,812	34	114,495	3.5m	27
horizons.mw	228,462	220	2,217,900	9.967m	32
Wellington Regional	413,950	370	813,002	68.4m	33

A request was made to each local authority for a list of the individuals and organisations that made submissions on the 1999/2000 draft annual plan. Only one local authority was reluctant to provide this information. It considered that to do so would involve a breach of the Privacy Act. Section 716A (1) (f) of the Local Government Act 1974 stipulates that submissions have to be made available to the public:

(1) Where this Act or any other Act requires a local authority to adopt the special consultative procedure in relation to any proposal (being an intention to act or a draft plan or policy), that local authority -

(f) Shall make all written submissions on the proposal available to the public unless there is in law some good reason why it should not do so;

Therefore, it is clear that the submissions are to be regarded as being in the public domain. The local authority in question eventually obliged and provided a copy of the submissions from which submission-makers names and addresses were obtained.

4.2 LOCAL AUTHORITY PROFILES

The following profiles give a brief description of the local authorities studied, an outline of their consultation practices, and the issues of concern during the 1999/2000 annual planning round.

⁹ The regional councils were not part of the study.

Wellington City Council

In its *Annual Plan*¹⁰ 1999/2000 Wellington City Council reports that it carried out extensive consultation on its *Draft Annual Plan* and increased the number of submissions received from 244 the previous year to 1,413 in 1999/2000. It reported its best consultation ever, with standing room only at many public meetings. In addition to citizens having the statutory right to make written and oral submissions, citizens were given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire on the *Draft Annual Plan*. This was published in local newspapers to make it readily available to all citizens. A total of 1,152 were returned. A summary of the decisions made on the *Draft Annual Plan* placed on the inside cover of the *Annual Plan 1999/2000* gave the main points as:

- Rates rise of 9.8% for the 1999/2000 year
- Next stage of Lambton Harbour development to go ahead
- Swimming, recreation and zoo charges to increase for adults (remain same for children)
- Proposals to close mobile library, cut library opening hours and charge \$1 for magazines rejected
- Increased charges for rubbish bags and parking
- Increased charges for tip - except for greenwaste

Table 4.2 shows the dramatic increase in submissions received in 1999/2000 by Wellington City Council on their draft annual plan compared to previous years.

Table 4.2: The Number of Written Submissions Received by Wellington City Council 1994/1995 to 1999/2000

1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1999/2000
570	99	247	244	1419
				-1154 individuals - 265 organisations

Source: *Consultation Feedback on 1999/00 Draft Annual Plan* (Wellington City Council, 1999, 1)

Figure 4.1 categorises submissions into the various Key Assessment Areas used by WCC. The greatest number of submissions were concerning Recreation and Leisure. Ninety-four percent of these focused on the proposal in the *Draft Annual Plan* to reduce

¹⁰ Each council has to prepare every year a Draft Annual Plan that outlines its proposed activities and funding regime in detail for the forthcoming year and in more general terms for the following two years. After submissions are considered, the Annual Plan, which is the official council working document is formulated. Each council has to assess its performance in respect of achieving the goals set out in the Annual Plan and report these back to the community in the Annual Report.

library services and increase user-charges. Almost all submissions in the Community and Health, and, Arts and Culture, categories concerned local authority funding. Thirty-five percent of the 148 submissions regarding the Built Environment concerned the Lambton Harbour proposal.

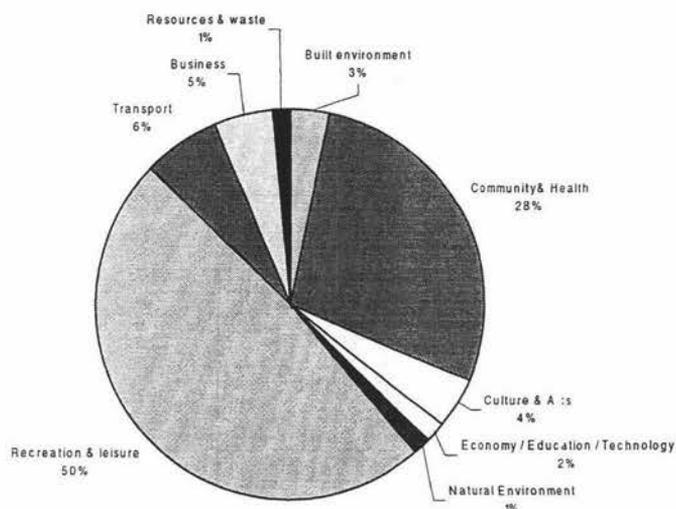


Figure 4.1: The Issues Written Submissions Were About (WCC) 1999/2000

Source: *Consultation Feedback on 1999/00 Draft Annual Plan* (Wellington City Council, 1999, 3)

Palmerston North City Council

Five public meetings were held to discuss the *Draft Annual Plan* and *Long-Term Financial Strategy*. One of these was a new format where a panel of members of the public gave their views on the *Draft Annual Plan*. The meetings and availability of the *Draft Annual Plan* were publicised in the local newspapers and on local radio. The important issues highlighted in the Palmerston North City Council *Draft Annual Plan* for 1999/2000 were:

- The City Vision and Mission statements and whether or not they needed updating
- The review of the rating system
- Changes to road management
- Water and wastewater reviews
- Proposed amendments to the RMA
- Public toilet improvements
- Events centre and convention centre development

- Aquatic facilities strategy review

The following Table 4.3 gives the number of submissions received by Palmerston North City Council each year since 1993/94.

Table 4.3: The Number of Submissions Received by Palmerston North City Council 1993/1994 to 1999/2000

1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
1034	267	664	495	475	876	813

Source: *Summary of Submissions 1999/00 Draft Annual Plan* (Palmerston North City Council, 1999, 3)

Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the breakdown of submissions between different Significant Activities which are key sections in the draft annual plan. The large category 'Recreation' included a substantial number of submissions (202) from school children for the provision of a heated swimming pool in Ashhurst.

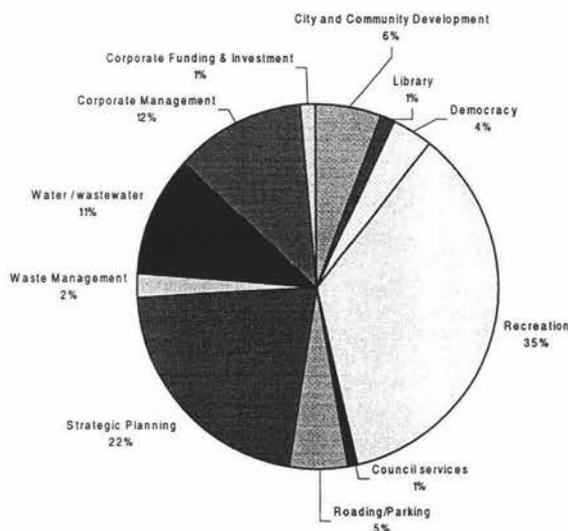


Figure 4.2: Submissions by Significant Activity (PNCC) 1999/2000

Source: *Summary of Submissions 1999/00 Draft Annual Plan* (Palmerston North City Council, 1999)

Kapiti Coast District Council

In a comparatively short period of time the Kapiti Coast District has grown from a series of beach holiday settlements and farming areas into one of New Zealand's most rapidly developing and popular districts. It is the fastest growing district in the

Wellington region growing at approximately 2% per annum. The main issues in the Annual Plan and Budget were listed as:

- Stormwater
- Water supply and sewerage treatment
- New legislation requiring depreciation of assets

Many of the submissions received in 1999/2000 requested an upgrading of Mahara Place the business area of Waikanae. This was due to a concerted effort by the Waikanae 2000 Residents/ Ratepayer Group to bring the issue to the local authority's attention. This request was supported by the KCDC and included in the annual plan.

Carterton District Council

Carterton District Council is the third smallest district council in New Zealand with only 3,028 rateable properties. It is largely a rural district, with one small urban area, the town of Carterton.

Draft Annual Plan highlights for 1999/2000 were given as:

- Infrastructure capital works
- Increased waste management costs
- Amalgamating services with other local authorities for greater cost efficiency
- Increased cost of the District Plan
- Decreased revenue from interest

horizons.mw

horizons.mw is the trading name of the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council. This local authority covers approximately 10% of New Zealand, an area of 22,179 square kilometres, and is based on four river catchments. The area is characterised by sharp physical contrasts extending as it does from volcanic uplands to coastal dunes. horizons.mw's work includes public transport, flood protection, soil conservation, pest control and environmental monitoring and protection.

The focus for the regional council's activities outlined in the *Annual Plan 1999/2000* were:

- Tuberculosis vector control (possum, ferrets, feral deer)
- Effective emergency management
- Support and assistance for tourism

- Improved customer service
- Development of asset management plans

Wellington Regional Council

Wellington Regional Council covers 813,000 hectares of land, a marine area of 786,000 hectares plus 497 kilometres of coastline. It is responsible for one of the largest flood protection schemes in New Zealand, and a public transport system that carries 25 million passengers per year. Key issues of concern in the 1999/2000 year were:

- Environmental management (including bovine tuberculosis, plants and pests)
- Regional water supply
- Regional parks
- Supporting the new regional stadium

4.3 ETHICAL ISSUES

The preceding overview introduces the six local authorities that were surveyed. Other aspects of the data collection strategy are now addressed, starting with ethical issues, then moving on to the survey instrument.

The approval of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee is required prior to carrying out research involving people. This is to ensure research meets the required university standards with regards to confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and does no harm to individuals. These requirements were complied with as follows:

- The questionnaire was coded to ensure returns were confidential;
- No submission-makers are identifiable in the presentation of results;
- Completing the survey or sections of the survey was optional.

As the survey was asking about submission-makers' past experience it was not regarded as a sensitive subject likely to cause harm. The covering letter included with the survey (see Appendix I) explained that returning the questionnaire was regarded as consenting to use the information provided. Submission-makers were not required to supply their name and address but had the option of doing so when they returned their questionnaire if they were interested in obtaining the research conclusions. In total over half (52%) of respondents took up this offer.

4.4 THE SURVEY

The questionnaire was structured into six different sections as illustrated in Figure 4.3.

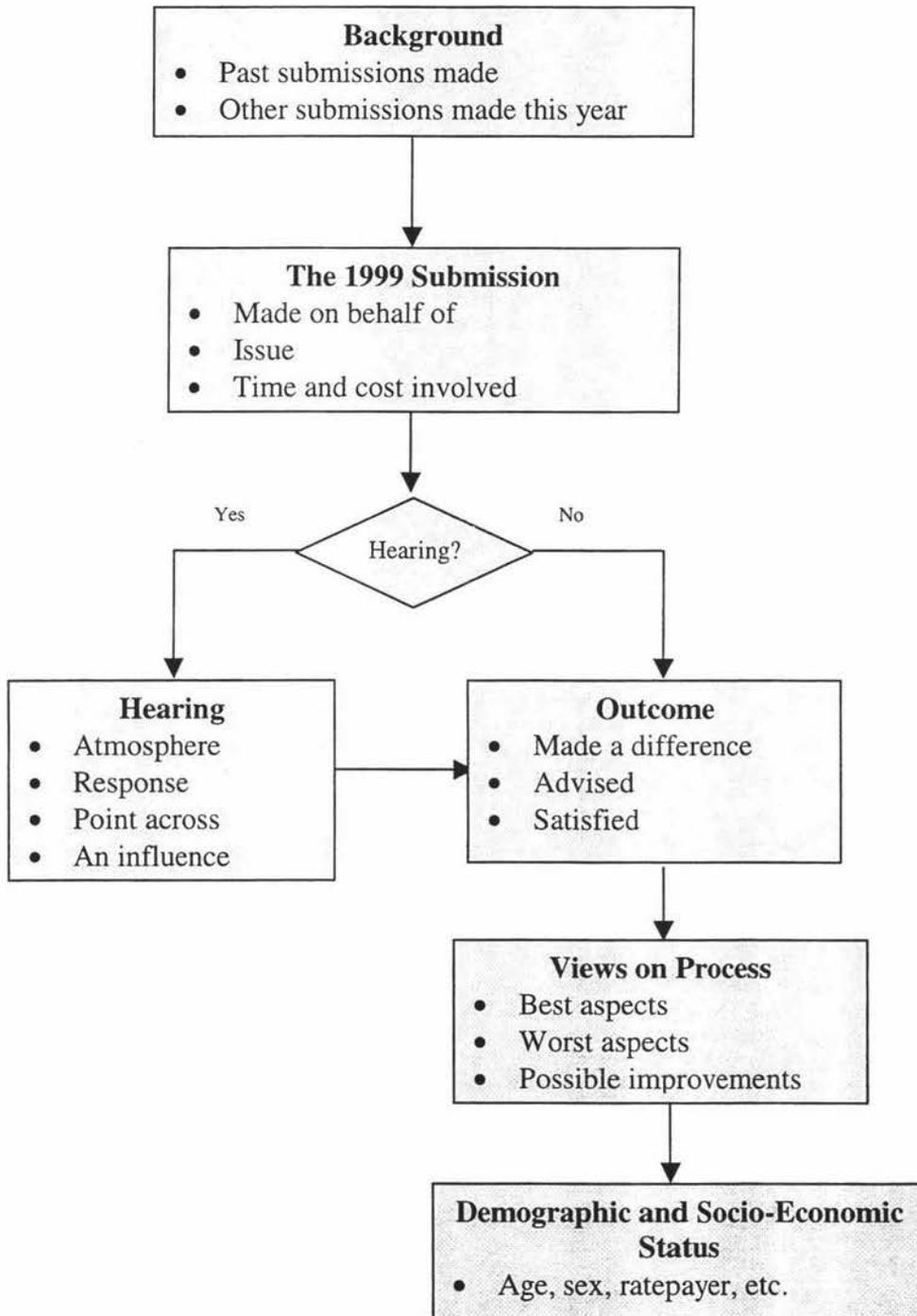


Figure 4.3: The Survey Structure

The questionnaire started with establishing the history of the submission-maker by asking how many submissions the person filling in the questionnaire had made in the last ten years and whether they had made any other submissions in 1999 to other local authorities. The issue/issues of concern to the respondent and the estimated cost in time and money were queried for their 1999/2000 submission. If the respondent attended a local authority meeting to present an oral submission their opinion on how they found this aspect of the annual planning process was sought. How knowledgeable submission-makers were about the outcome of their submission was also investigated. Respondents' views on the process, the best and worst features and any suggested improvements were asked for. Finally, some biographical details were collated to provide a profile of the type of person that makes submissions. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix I.

4.4.1 Administering the Survey

The research aimed to collect data from a representative sample of submission-makers. For four of the local authorities the small number of submissions received made it possible to survey all submission-makers. For the two large city authorities a quarter of submission-makers were sampled. This was necessary as sampling all submission-makers would have been too costly. To ensure randomness a computer generated random list was used to select submission-makers.

To encourage completion the survey was kept as short as possible. A covering letter was sent out with each questionnaire when it was posted in November 1999 explaining why the research was being undertaken and what it hoped to achieve.

An additional follow-up mail out was necessary. Another copy of the questionnaire with a covering letter was sent in January 2000 to the 338 people and organisations that had not replied to the initial questionnaire. As the covering letter sent out with the initial questionnaire stipulated only one follow-up attempt would be made no further effort was made to contact people. The second mailing increased the overall response rate from 44.9% to 57.5%.

Though not without difficulties, the postal survey method of gathering information was considered the best method available to get the views of a large number of people spread over a geographically dispersed area. As making a submission in itself, requires individuals and groups to make a personal effort it might be assumed that most people

who make submissions would be sufficiently interested and motivated to also respond to a postal survey. This was not always the situation. The response rate was affected by refusals, wrong addresses, people denying having made a submission, forgetting the reason for making their submission, feeling their submission was too insignificant to justify filling out the survey, and in two situations the death of the submission-maker. Three questionnaires were so poorly completed they had to be excluded from the analysis. The following table shows the number of surveys sent to each local authority and the nature of the response.

Table 4.4: The Postal Survey Coverage and Response Rates 1999/2000

Council Number of submissions received	Sent (less returned wrong address)	Follow up post	Returned completed 1 st mailing 2 nd mailing Total	Returned Total %	Returned - Wrong address	Returned - Did not want to fill in	Submission not made by person, person died, forgot, felt submission insignificant
Wellington City Council 1217	314 less 9 305	183	124 47 170	55.7%	9	10	6
Palmerston North City Council 690	170 less 10 160	100	59 14 73	45.6%	10	14	2
Ashhurst School 123	31		26	84%			
Kapiti Coast District Council 75	73 less 3 70	19	49 9 56	80%	3	3	1
Carterton District Council 27	27	13	13 4 17	63%			
horizons m.w 32	31	9	21 4 25	81%			
Wellington Regional Council 30	30	14	13 3 16	57%		2	
Over all councils 2194	623	338	357 280 first mailing	57.5% 44.9%	22	29	9

Notes on returns

1. WRC - 33 submissions received. One was anonymous, two were from the same Mayor, one was from combined mayors covered individually.
2. horizons m.w - 32 received, 31 were sent as one submission-maker participated in the pilot test.
3. Kapiti Coast District Council - 75 received. One had no address, two were from the same person.
4. Submissions returned with a large number of questions incomplete excluded.

The twenty-two survey questionnaires returned because the mailing address was no longer current may introduce a slight bias against transient populations (probably those in the lower income bracket and renting).

The actual response rate for Palmerston North City Council was reduced by the removal of replies from Ashhurst Primary School. Palmerston North City Council received 202 submissions for a heated swimming pool in Ashhurst, 123 of these submissions (15% of the 813 submissions received) from Ashhurst Primary School Year 7 and 8 students. As the submission-makers to which the survey was sent were randomly selected the sample included 31 of these students. The questionnaire was completed by 24 students, which gave a return rate of 84% for this group. This very high return rate from a group so similar, distorted the overall survey results so they were combined and treated as one submission for the overall analysis.

4.4.2 Questionnaire Format

The questionnaire used boxes where possible for responses in order to simplify completion and analysis. The questionnaire was piloted on five submission-makers prior to sending out the bulk mailing. Eight adjustments were made as a result of this testing. These included an additional question, increased answer options and layout changes. The questionnaire was designed to be as simple as possible, but not all respondents were able to fill out the form as intended because the categories for some closed-ended answers did not encompass all potential responses. This problem of insufficient response categories was not foreseen in the pilot testing as the submission-makers who completed the pilot survey found the categories provided adequate coverage. Survey respondents who had this problem usually dealt with it by ticking more than one box, or ticking between boxes to indicate their response fell between the two categories. Replies that fell outside the set categories were incorporated in the data analysis as separate categories where possible.

The survey was set out so sections of questions that did not apply to some respondents could be easily by-passed. The answers were coded for computer analysis with each box representing one code.

For the open-ended questions, answers were grouped into categories that expressed similar ideas to provide a means of analysing the responses and determining which views were most commonly held.

4.4.3 Comments from Respondents

At the end of the survey a space was provided for respondents to add further comments if they wished. Many of those taking this opportunity were positive about the survey and commented it was worthwhile research. There was also some negative feedback about expecting people to give their own time without recompense and the legality of supplying names under the Privacy Act. Both these issues are frequently raised with regard to consultation. People who made this point appeared to be unaware that the legislation stipulates that all submissions have to be made available to the public as part of the transparency requirements of the annual plan process. This is significant as it reveals a lack of public understanding about the open nature of the process that was a key goal of the reformers.

4.5 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY DATA

The data collected was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) database for analysis. This is a Windows based statistical package designed for social statistics. It allows data to be analysed on a number of levels. Two methods were used for the data analysis: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. For the inferential testing Chi-square cross-tabulation and ANOVA F-tests were carried out. Where statistical significance was tested the significance level was set at $p < 0.01$ for a two-tailed test. At this level the chance of any given result occurring randomly is less than one in 100. In other words the chance of a Type I error - (claiming the difference is significant when it is merely due to a sampling variation) is less than one in a hundred.

4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The analysis, the results of which are in Chapter 5, aimed to provide descriptive statistics that summarise and describe the characteristics and experiences of the submission-makers in the survey sample. These descriptive statistics were collated from the information collected from the 357 survey respondents. Descriptive statistics report on measurements actually taken from the sample population. They are a means of presenting data in an understandable way without seeking to make any inferences or generalisations about the population and/or the relationship between variables. As the survey characteristics were measured predominantly using nominal scales, the descriptive statistics were limited to frequencies, proportions and percentages.

4.5.2 Inferential Statistics

Statistical analysis aimed at identifying patterns in the data and determining whether or not these patterns are statistically significant enough to apply to the population as a whole were also carried out. This type of statistic (inferential statistic) is used to determine whether a generalisation about the characteristic of a population based on data from the sample population can be made (Weinbach and Grinnell, 1987, 12). The tests carried out were:

1. Chi-Square test for relatedness or independence

This test is used to analyse the relationship between two categorical variables. It focuses on the differences in proportion or frequency as they occur between two populations. Cross-tabulations using Chi-Square as a measure of significance can determine if a clear relationship exists between two variables or whether it is likely to occur just on the basis of chance. As the majority of the survey data is nominal (there is no intrinsic order in the categories used) non-parametric tests are appropriate. Cross-tabulations “cross” two variables to answer questions and show in tabular form the relationship by giving the frequencies that fall into each category. For example, by crossing Question 1a “How many other times have you made a submission to a draft annual plan since 1989?” with Question 2a “Was this made on behalf of an organisation, business or group?”, it is possible to determine whether individuals or groups make more frequent submissions.

The Chi-Square test is based on the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the two variables in the total population. The purpose of a Chi-Square test of independence is to determine whether the observed value for any cell deviates significantly from the expected value for that cell. To legitimately claim a true relationship exists between two variables, however, it is necessary to demonstrate that the apparent relationship is unlikely to occur just on the basis of chance. The Chi-Square statistic is computed by summing the squared deviations (observed value minus expected value) divided by the expected value for each cell: $X^2 = \sum [(fo-fe)^2 / fe]$. If there is a large discrepancy between the observed values and the expected values the X^2 statistic is large, suggesting a significant difference between observed and expected values. The chance of X^2 being large is also influenced by the size of the cross-tabulation table on which it is computed so each Chi-square value must also be evaluated in relation to the size of the table. This is expressed in terms of its degrees of

freedom and is equal to the number of rows minus one, times the number of columns minus one. Along with this statistic a probability value is computed. If the level of significance is $p < 0.01$, there is less than a 1% chance of this relationship occurring by chance. This was the level of significance chosen for the research and at this level it was accepted that a genuine association between the two variables was present (the observed values differ significantly from the expected values and the two variables are *not* independent of each other). Where this occurred (Chi-Square tests indicated a significance of $p < 0.01$) further testing was carried out to determine what factors this significance was attributed to.

This second series of tests calculated the adjusted standardised residuals for each cell that the initial Chi-Square tests had indicated an association existed at the ($p < 0.01$) level of significance. Monte Carlo exact tests that provide a means of obtaining accurate results when data fails to meet any underlying assumptions necessary for the standard asymptotic method, were also carried out. Monte Carlo techniques use simulation to randomly perform the relationship test to see how frequently it would occur, and, what the significance test would be if a larger sample were used. This overcomes the problem of results obtained using small data sets being misleading. The Monte Carlo exact significance is always reliable, regardless of the size, distribution, sparseness or balance of the data (SPSS Help file). Any cross-tabulation not significant with the more exhaustive Monte Carlo exact test (i.e. $p < 0.01$) was discarded.

The adjusted standardised residual can indicate where in the sample population the deviation from normal occurs. The frequency (or the *observed value*) within each cell and the *expected value* for each cell is first calculated. The residual is the observed count minus the expected count. SPSS calculates the adjusted residual using an estimate of the standard error. The distribution of the adjusted residual is a standard normal distribution, and cells with an adjusted residual of greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 are not likely to have occurred by chance (George and Mallery, 1995, 265). Cross-tabulations should not be used when in a 2 x 2 (4 cell) table, one or more of the cells has an expected value of less than 5, or when, in a larger than 2 x 2 table, more than 20% of the cells have expected values of less than 5. Statistically, the results are not regarded as reliable so any such cross-tabulation was excluded from the analysis.

The initial cross-tabulations were undertaken using the six direct questions (which sought to determine how satisfactory submission-makers found the submission-making

process) and comparing the responses to these questions with responses to other questions. The primary research question relates to how citizens who participate in the annual planning process find the procedure so the answers to these questions (shown in Figure 4.4 as the ‘Index of Satisfaction’) was the focus of the analysis. The factors that were shown to have a relationship to the responses to the ‘Index of Satisfaction’ questions (‘Factors Influencing Satisfaction’) are also shown in Figure 4.4. The number of times each response was found to be significant in relation to the six questions is listed alongside. The Chi-Square (X^2) and probability (p) results for all the Pearson’s Chi-Square tests can be found in Appendix II.

It should be noted that cross-tabulation examines the association between variables and provides evidence of a relationship. It does not identify causal relationships.

‘Index of Satisfaction’

‘Factors Influencing Satisfaction’

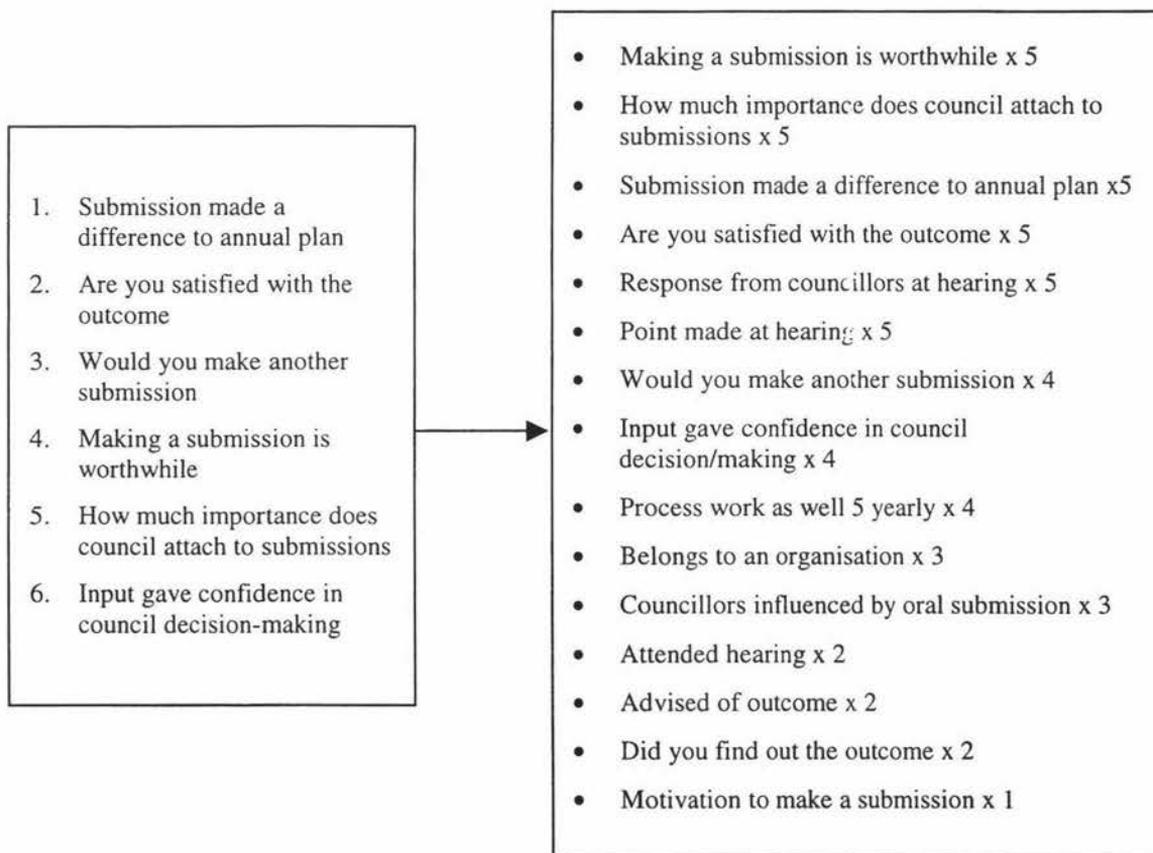


Figure 4.4: Analytical Model Used for Chi-Square Tests

Cross-tabulations and significance tests were also carried out for the ‘Number of previous submissions made’ as the independent variable to see what influence this had on the level of submission-maker satisfaction.

2. One-way ANOVA with post-hoc analysis (F-tests)

Likert scales provide interval type data that can be analysed using methods more powerful than the non-parametric Chi-Square test. Therefore One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) testing was used for Question 23. This test can compare the means of more than two groups or levels of an independent variable. It is described by (Coakes and Steed, 1999, 73) as follows:

The basic procedure is to derive two different estimates of population variance from the data, then calculate a statistic from the ratio of these two estimates. One of these estimates (between-groups variance) is a measure of the effect of the independent variable combined with error variance. The other estimate (within-groups variance) is of the error variance by itself. The F-ratio is the ratio of between-groups variance to within-groups variance. A significant F-value tells us the population means are probably not all equal. ... if any pair of means is unequal, you need to locate where the significant differences lie.

Question 23 was divided into the following five statements that had the possible responses of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'.

- a) Making a submission enables citizens to get things off their chests
- b) Calling for submissions encourages councillors to listen to what is worrying citizens
- c) Submissions provide an opportunity for the Council to fine tune its Annual Plan
- d) Submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the Annual Plan
- e) Local authorities only call for submissions because they have to by law

Differences in the responses to these questions were compared with the responses to all the other questions asked in the questionnaire. If a significant test result was found to exist a graph showing the differences in the mean value was drawn to identify where the significant differences occurred. The results for all the ANOVA F-tests can be found in Appendix III. The graphs can be found in Appendix IV.

3. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis provides a way to reduce or simplify the inter-relationships among a set of interval variables. Factors analysis detects clustering. By examining the patterns of

correlation it is possible to see if certain clusters of variables correlate with each other but not with other clusters of variables. The basic aim is to examine whether, on the basis of peoples answers to questions, a smaller number of more general factors that underlie the answers to individual questions can be identified (de Vaus, 1995, 257). This was carried out on the responses to the five statements in Question 23 to see if any underlying explanations for the responses were present

4.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Surveys are an extensively used research method because of their flexibility and usefulness at soliciting information that would not otherwise be available. They are often the only feasible way to attempt to explain mass behaviour (de Vaus, 1995).

As long as the sample is fairly large and not overclustered with specific view points, a randomised sample can result in a group from the population whose attitudes are very representative of the entire population.

Descriptive research plays a critical role in identifying problems that may require social action. Aggregate data is of interest and value as it explains what things are like and provides the necessary understanding of issues to investigate them further. Academic surveys, such as this survey, put more emphasis on discovering relationships in data that explain why things are like they are, and obtaining results that can be used to build or test theories. As such they provide a means of understanding the workings of social structures. As surveys allow several different questions to be used together, they can also provide an index of opinion. By collecting the same information from a number of different people it is possible to locate causes by comparing cases.

Correctly carried out analysis ensures a plausible explanation is not accepted simply because it makes sense. This is why the Chi-Square and F-tests were carried out on the survey data in this research. According to de Vaus (1995, 354) the range of statistical techniques now available in research can ensure that meaningful explanations and interpretations can be drawn if the appropriate tools are used.

Mail out questionnaires have certain disadvantages. They traditionally have a low response rate because lack of personal contact makes them easy to ignore. The 57.5% response rate for this survey is at the acceptable level. A sample size of 357, as was the case in this survey, infers a sampling error of approximately 5% (Weisberg and Bowen, 1977, 41). The survey results aggregated over all submission-makers would, therefore,

be reasonably reliable. This would not necessarily be so for some of the individual local authority statistics due to the smaller sample size. Other potential problems with mail-out questionnaires are:

- They are easy for someone other than the intended recipient to complete.
- Non-coverage errors can occur. (In this instance 22 questionnaires came back because of wrong addresses. This can introduce a bias against people who rent homes or move frequently.)
- A bias can be introduced if the respondents most interested and satisfied, or conversely dissatisfied, are more likely to reply.
- Monitoring the quality of the response given is difficult and inconsistencies in responses cannot be queried. Therefore, the researcher has to interpret some answers.
- Errors can occur both in the reading of the question and the recording of the answer. Respondents can also interpret questions differently which can make the data unreliable.
- The reliability and validity of questions can also be an issue if questions are not well worded. The way questions are asked can influence the answers.

Another criticism of surveys is that they are artificial as they restrict people's opinions to the questions asked. This aspect was addressed by including open-ended questions asking what respondents thought were the best and worst features and ideas for improvements. A comment section at the end gave respondents further opportunity to comment on general issues. Open-ended questions have the advantage of giving the respondent freedom when answering questions but take more time to analyse. Closed-ended questions while providing a structured response for ease of analysis, can have problems associated with bias in the questions asked, and simplify the categories to the extent that not all possible responses are covered.

According to de Vaus (1995, 7-9) surveys can also be criticised for a number of philosophical reasons, such as their inability to adequately establish causal connections, or get at the meaningful aspects of why people act as they do. Often factors outside of the survey questions influence answers, and these are not taken into account. Other

methods such as interviews, content analysis, observation, etc., may be more appropriate ways of obtaining information.

Use of a postal survey was the most cost-effective and practical means of collecting the information required for this study. With the benefit of hindsight the survey could have been better designed. While this issue was not substantive enough to undermine the integrity of the results reported better conclusions could possibly have been reached.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Though statistical tests may not provide explanations to all the questions associated with submission-making, they do provide a reliable way of generalising about how submission-makers regard the annual plan process. Therefore, it can be expected that the results of this research are broadly representative of other local authorities and other time frames. Having outlined the data analysis tools and the survey format the next chapter discusses the findings of the statistical analysis.

Chapter Five

SURVEY FINDINGS

The objective of the survey was to get information from a representative sample of submission-makers about their involvement in the annual plan process. This chapter summarises the responses that were obtained, and using this data answers the key research question:

Do citizens who make submissions as part of the annual plan process find the experience satisfies their aspirations?

Data from submission-makers has been aggregated for the analysis. Some aspects of the findings that are specific to individual local authorities and vary from the overall findings are also discussed. Aggregated data can obscure such detail and care, therefore, has to be taken when transferring the survey findings to a specific local authority or the local government sector as a whole.

One of the principles of participation according to Wilcox (1994, 52) is that people will only be involved if they understand each other, have the confidence to participate, and see some point in it. This section also endeavours to determine how well the annual plan process meets these criteria for submission-makers.

The aspirations of submission-makers, pertaining to the annual plan process, will naturally vary. Submission-makers seeking support for a cause they are passionate about are likely to have different expectations of the annual plan process than individuals making submissions because they regard it as their civic duty, or part of their employment responsibilities. The overall level of satisfaction, therefore, can only be determined by each submission-maker's subjective expression of satisfaction. How satisfactory submission-makers find the annual plan process was therefore determined by the responses of each individual to the 'index of satisfaction' questions.

This chapter proceeds as set out in Figure 5.1. The secondary research questions are first addressed and these results used to determine an overall conclusion about citizens' experiences of the annual plan process.

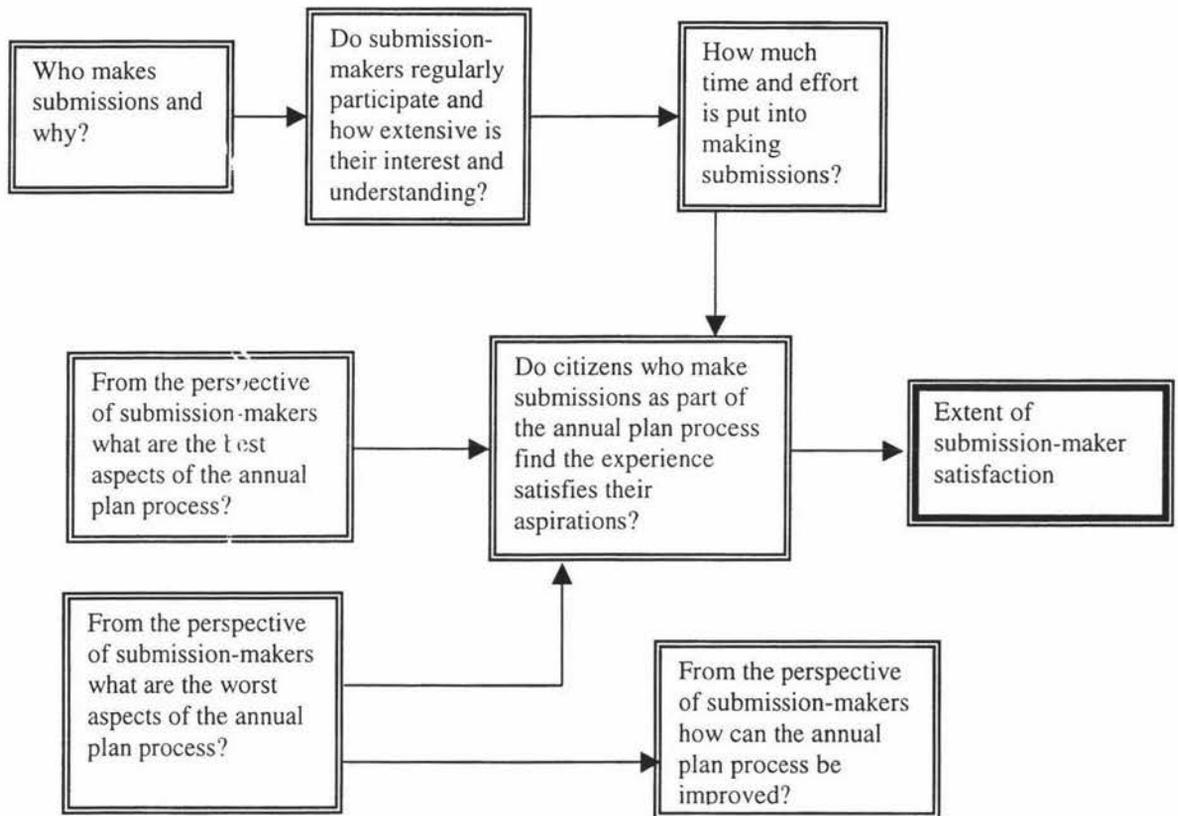


Figure 5.1: Research Aim: To determine if citizens who make submissions as part of the annual plan process find the experience satisfies their aspirations?

Each of the questions in Figure 5.1 is answered by first collating the descriptive statistics. Responses were then cross-tabulated to see if any significant relationship between the responses to different questions could be identified. If such a statistically significant relationship was apparent (at the $p < 0.01$ level), it was assumed the relationship did not exist through chance. Therefore, the interpretation of the results from the sample population could be extended to the population as a whole.

5.1 WHO MAKES SUBMISSIONS AND WHY?

Who makes submissions and why is an important aspect of the annual plan process so this question is a logical starting point. To reach an understanding of who makes submissions, respondents were asked if they had made their submission on an individual basis or on behalf of a business, group or organisation. They were also asked why they made a submission and to complete a section giving some demographic and socio-

economic data. Respondents answering on behalf of an organisation or business in most cases indicated they were doing so and did not provide socio-economic data.

5.1.1 Socio-Economic Data for Individual Submission-Makers

One of the common criticisms of citizen participation is though it is inspired by egalitarian ideals it often serves the interests of the privileged. Economic class, race, age, place of residence, sex etc. tend to predetermine who participates. The following statistics were collected to see if this criticism applied to the annual plan process.

5.1.1.1 Gender

For all the local authorities surveyed more males made submissions than females.

Table 5.1: Gender of Submission-makers Responding to Survey 1999/2000

		PNCC	WCC	KCDC	CDC	WRC	h.mw	Total
Male	No	16	57	22	6	4	8	113
	%	53.3	53.3	64.7	85.7	80.0	72.7	58.9
Female	No.	14	50	10	1	1	3	79
	%	46.7	46.7	29.4	14.3	20.0	27.3	41.1
		30	107	33	7	5	11	192
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.1.1.2 Property Ownership

For individual submission-makers 82% owned rateable properties and 11% rented. The other 7% either did not answer or indicated neither option applied. Most of the respondents replying to this question had properties valued at more than \$100,000.

Table 5.2: Value of Rateable Property Owned by Individual Submission-makers

Property Value	Frequency	Percent
<100,000	14	8.5
100,000 - 199,000	56	34.1
200,000 - 500,000	79	48.2
>500,000	15	9.2
Total	164	100.0

5.1.1.3 Income

Respondents were asked to indicate which income bracket their total before tax income fell into. From the replies that were given PNCC and horizons.mw had more submission-makers in the higher income bracket - \$50,000 plus range - than the other local authorities. An attempt was made to determine how representative submission-makers were of the general population in terms of income by comparing submission-makers with the aggregate data obtained from the 1996 census. No overall statistics were collated as the submission-makers would live in areas covered by both regional

and territorial authorities. This table needs to be interpreted with caution because of the low level of response but generally disproportionately fewer submissions are received from those in the lower income bracket (<\$30,000). This finding is consistent with that of other researchers who have looked at the socio-economic characteristics of individuals involved in political activities.

Table 5.3: Before Tax Income of Individuals Submission-makers 1999/2000 Compared with 1996 Census Statistics

Area	Income before tax	Survey Data		1996 Census Data	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
PNCC	<30,000	6	19.4	42,276	78.2
	30,000-50,000	5	16.1	8,586	15.8
	50,000-100,000	10	32.3	2,703	5.0
	>100,000	7	22.6	516	1
	no answer	3	9.7		
	Total	31	100.0	54,081	100
WCC	<30,000	26	23.6	73,929	62.2
	30,000-50,000	24	21.8	26,703	22.5
	50,000-100,000	33	30.0	14,196	11.9
	>100,000	13	11.8	4017	3.4
	no answer	14	12.7		
	Total	110	100.0	118,845	100
KCDC	<30,000	9	27.3	21,366	77.55
	30,000-50,000	14	42.4	4,227	15.3
	50,000-100,000	8	24.2	1,584	5.75
	>100,000	2	6.1	378	1.4
	no answer	1			
	Total	34	100.0	27,555	100.0
CDC	<30,000	3	42.9	3,933	83.2
	30,000-50,000	2	28.6	609	12.9
	50,000-100,000	2	28.6	141	3.0
	>100,000	0	0	45	1.0
	Total	7	100.0	4,728	100.0
	WRC	<30,000	2	40.0	206,106
30,000-50,000		0	0	58,077	19.6
50,000-100,000		2	40.0	25,392	8.6
>100,000		0	0	6,525	2.2
no answer		1	20.0		
Total		5	100.0	296100	100.0
h.mw	<30,000	3	27.3	130908	81.5
	30,000-50,000	4	36.4	22194	13.8
	50,000-100,000	3	27.3	6108	3.8
	>100,000	1	9.1	1422	0.1
	Total	11	100.0	160632	100.0

Because of rounding percentage total may not equal 100%

5.1.2 Socio-Economic Data for All Submission-Makers

Most submission-makers answered the questions concerning occupation, retirement and age. Therefore these statistics are presented for all submission-makers.

5.1.2.1 Occupation

Respondents were asked for their current occupation or if they were retired their previous occupation. This data provides another measure of how representative submission-makers are of the community overall. The diverse occupations (as preset categories were not provided) were grouped into categories for analysis. The following table gives the number and percent of submission-makers in each occupation group. A total of 93 retired people are included in the first two columns. These are excluded from the next two columns that give occupation frequency and percent for those currently employed.

Table 5.4: Occupations of Submission-makers Responding to Survey 1999/2000

	All Submission-makers		Currently Employed	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
management/own business	42	11.8	34	15.0
education sector	37	10.4	20	8.8
other	35	9.8	22	9.7
community/religious/police	27	7.6	20	8.8
government	23	6.4	16	7.0
engineering/information				
tech./communications	20	5.6	13	5.7
mother/home executive	17	4.8	11	4.8
agriculture	15	4.2	12	5.3
consultant	15	4.2	12	5.3
clerical/admin/banking	13	3.6	6	2.6
professional	12	3.4	7	3.1
scientist/research	12	3.4	10	4.4
student ¹	9	2.5	9	4.0
health	8	2.2	4	1.8
library	7	2.0	6	2.6
legal	6	1.7	3	1.3
unemployed/beneficiary	3	.8	3	1.3
missing	56	15.7	19	8.4
Total	357	100.0	227	100.0

¹ PNCC received a large number of submissions from school pupils all on the same issue which was treated as one single submission so as not to skew survey results as discussed in Chapter 4.

For those in current employment, the biggest single group making submissions were employed either in management positions or their own business. Submissions from people employed in the educated sector were the next most frequent.

5.1.2.2 Retired

In total, 28% of submission-makers were retired. The concentration of retired persons making submissions was highest in the KCDC area with 45% of individuals in the retired bracket, a reflection of the popularity of this area as a retirement region. The number of retired citizens who previously worked in the education sector with an active interest in local government affairs is of note. Table 5.5 gives the percentage of submission-makers who are retired or not retired. The break down is also given for both individual submission-makers, and, submission-makers making their submission on behalf of a group, business or organisation.

Table 5.5: Percentage of Survey Respondents Retired/Not Retired 1999/2000

	All	Individuals	Business/Group/ Organisations
Not Retired	227	122	105
%	63.6	61.9	65.6
Retired	100	70	30
%	28.0	35.5	18.8
No Reply	30	5	25
%	8.4	2.5	15.6
Total	357	197	160
%	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.1.2.3 Age

In all local authorities respondents in the 51-65 age group made the most submissions (for KCDC this was equalled by the 66+ bracket).

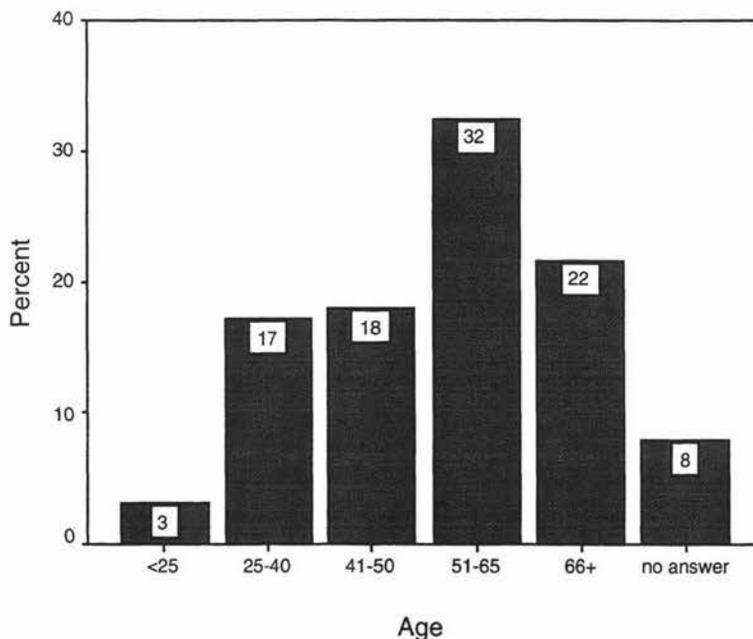


Figure 5.2: Age of Submission-makers Responding to Survey 1999/2000

The less than 25 age group, is not generally well represented in the annual planning process. Palmerston North City Council was an exception, receiving a large number of submissions from Ashhurst Primary School children. For the reasons outlined in Chapter 4 these submissions were not included in the overall analysis.

Generally, the profile of those who make submissions on draft annual plans matches that of those likely to participate in elections. According to Vowles and Aimer (1993, 53) citizens well integrated into the dominant structures of society, with well-paid jobs (or retired from well-paid jobs), who look after children and own, or are purchasing, their own homes, are more likely to participate in elections. There are, however, some differences. For example children who do not qualify to vote are able to make submissions to local authorities.

5.1.3 Businesses, Groups and Organisations Making Submissions

Over all the local authorities combined there were more submissions from individuals (55%) than from businesses, groups or organisations (45%)¹¹. For WCC and KCDC individuals made the greatest number of submissions. For PNCC, CDC and both the regional councils most submissions were from organisations. As the breakdown between individuals and organisations was also available directly from most of the local authorities in the survey these figures have also been included in Table 5.6 as a guide to how representative the survey sample was.

Table 5.6: Individual/Organisation Breakdown of Submission-makers 1999/2000

Local Authority	Survey Statistic		Local Authority Statistic	
	Individual	Org/Bus/Group	Individual	Org/Bus/Group
PNCC	42.5%	57.5%	n/a	n/a
WCC*	65%	35%	81%	19%
KCDC	61%	39%	55%	45%
CDC	41%	59%	44%	56%
WRC	29%	71%	25%	75%
h.mw	44%	56%	41%	59%
All areas	55.3%	44.7%		

* WCC statistics exactly as provided by council. The other figures were calculated from data provided.

As the above table shows WCC had a marked difference between the survey respondents and the actual data. There are two possible reasons. The first possible explanation is that though the survey was sent out to a randomly generated list of submission-makers the list generated was in fact not random. The other possibility is

¹¹ Referred to from here on as organisations.

that the response rate introduced a degree of bias with organisations being more willing to respond than individuals.

Respondents who answered yes to the question “Was this made on behalf of an organisation, business or group” were asked to give the name of the organisation, business or group. These were then coded using the categories in the Department of Internal Affairs surveys (Department of Internal Affairs 1992, 1995). Of the organisations Ratepayer/residents groups made the most submissions to local authorities. This was closely followed by groups dependent on their local authority for funding (local authority funded groups), voluntary groups, clubs, and, arts and cultural groups.

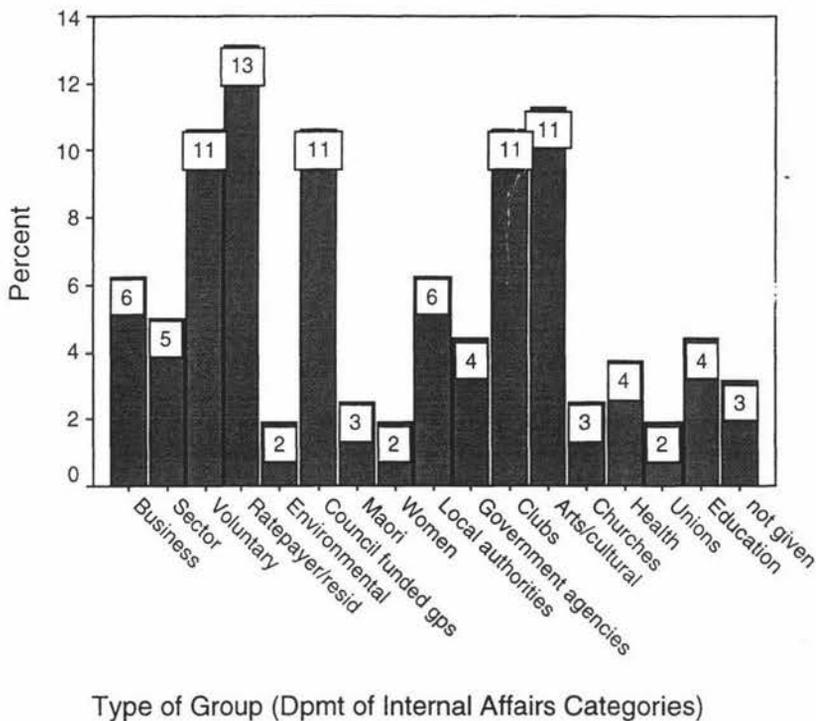


Figure 5.3: Types of Organisations Who Made Submissions 1999/2000

5.1.4 Why Submission-Makers Participate

Nagel (1987, 1) defines participation as the:

actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence outcomes.

An ordinary member of the political system according to Nagel (1987, 2) is any person except those that perform the political activity in question as a requirement of their

principal job. It was therefore interesting to determine how many 'ordinary' people made submissions. Many of the submissions received by local authorities are from government agencies, other local authorities, sector groups or people whose employment is determined by local authorities such as librarians. Therefore, a breakdown using organisation names, and submission-makers' occupation, age and reason for making a submission was done to distinguish between 'ordinary' members of the public and others. This showed that 79% of submission-makers were 'ordinary' citizens and 21% were making submissions as part of their employment obligations.

Cross-tabulating the number of times a submission-maker had made a submission with whether or not the submission-maker was an ordinary member of the public showed a relationship existed ($X^2=33.289$, $p<.0005$). A greater-than-expected number of ordinary submission-makers had not previously made a submission and a more than the expected number of professional submission-makers had previously made three or more submissions.

5.1.4.1 Why Individuals Made Submissions

To find out why individuals made submissions they were asked to indicate which of the following issues most accurately described their concerns:

- Rates and/or charges;
- Provision of physical facilities;
- Provision of social facilities;
- Quality of local environment;
- Quality of council services;
- Other.

If their submission was about more than one issue the submission-maker was asked to mark the most appropriate box for each issue. However, a large number of respondents did not tick just one issue as requested. The responses were subsequently weighted to overcome this. This was done by giving each issue a total score of one. For example if two boxes were ticked for an issue each was assigned a value of 0.5. This unfortunately precluded inference testing so the relationships between issues of concern and the responses to the other questions were not tested. The most frequent reasons given by individuals for making submissions were the provision of physical facilities and the quality of the local environment. When asked what their motivation for making a

submission was, almost half (49%) cited they wanted to express an opinion about a specific issue. The next highest ranked motive for participating was concern about the quality of decision-making (21%).

5.1.4.2 Why Organisations Made Submissions

To find out why organisations made submissions they were asked to indicate as set out in section 5.1.4.1 the issues that most accurately described their concerns.

An analysis of the groups making submissions showed that ratepayer and resident groups (the largest grouping) were most concerned with the provision of physical facilities and the quality of council services. Voluntary groups were concerned about the provision of social facilities, and clubs were concerned about the provision of physical facilities. Arts/cultural groups and Council-funded groups (those providing services under the umbrella of the local authority) made submissions to obtain or retain their funding. Business groups were concerned about the provision of physical facilities, and other local authorities and sector groups (groups whose primary objective is to lobby on behalf of their members, e.g. peak bodies for say farmers) made most of their submissions on the cost of local government services - rates and or charges.

Table 5.7: Issues Organisations Made Submissions About 1999/2000

	No	%	Main Issue
Ratepayer/resident	21	13.1	Physical and Quality of services
Arts/cultural	18	11.3	Funding
Voluntary	17	10.6	Social
Clubs	17	10.6	Physical
Council Funded	17	10.6	Funding
Business	10	6.3	Physical
Local Authorities	10	6.3	Rates and charges
Sector	8	5.0	Rates and charges
Government agencies	7	4.4	Quality of services
Education	7	4.4	Physical
Health	6	3.8	Physical
Not given	5	3.1	Social
Maori	4	2.5	Physical
Churches	4	2.5	Environment
Environmental	3	1.9	Environment
Women	3	1.9	Social
Unions	3	1.9	Social
Total	160	100.0	

Note - Responses were weighted if submission covered more than one issue.

When questioned on what motivated them to make a submission, by far the greatest number of submission-makers who made a submission on behalf of an organisation replied they wanted to express their opinion about a specific issue (43%). The next

highest ranked motive given by submission-makers who made a submission on behalf of an organisation was that it was part of their civic responsibilities (13%).

5.1.5 Submission-makers' Understanding of the Annual Plan Process

The aim of the next question was to determine if submission-makers' perceptions of how the annual plan process should work in practice were consistent with the intent of the legislation. Question 23 was structured as five statements with the responses presented as a Likert scale. Four of the statements were references to themes in the 1989 changes to the Local Government Act. The fifth statement asked submission-makers whether they thought local authorities would ask for submissions if it was not a statutory requirement to do so.

Submission-makers were asked if they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the following statements:

- a) Making a submission enables citizens to get things off their chests
- b) Calling for submissions encourages councillors to listen to what is worrying citizens
- c) Submissions provide an opportunity for the Council to fine tune its Annual Plan
- d) Submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the Annual Plan
- e) Local authorities only call for submissions because they have to by law

The following discussion summarises responses to each of these statements for all submission-makers combined.

In response to the statement “Making a submission enables citizens to get things off their chest” 59% of respondents said they agreed with the statement and 79% were in the combined ‘agree’/‘strongly agree’ bracket. Submission-makers strongly support the view that the annual plan process provides a forum for citizens to express their views on local body affairs.

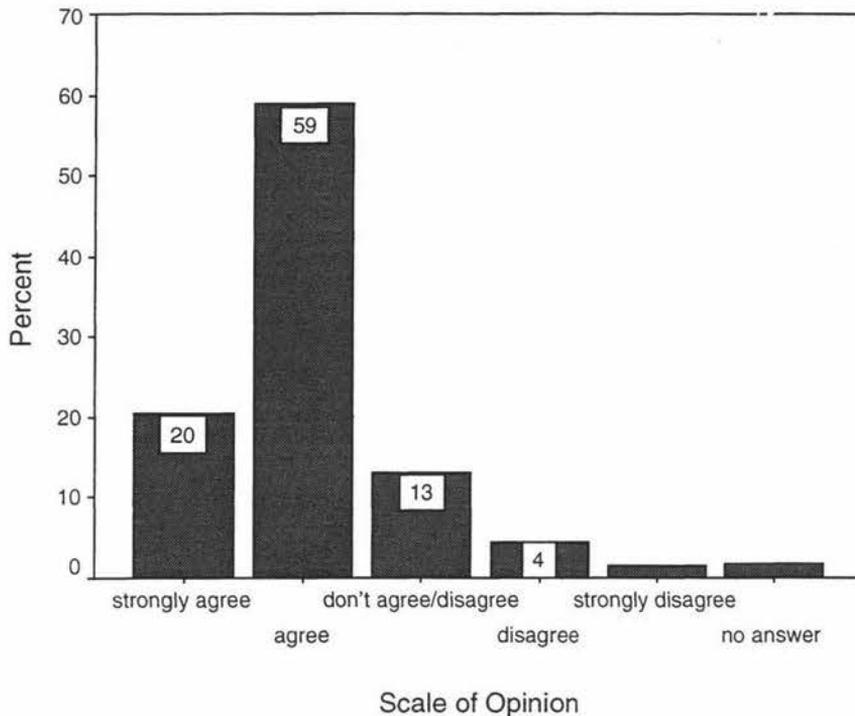


Figure 5.4: Survey Responses to the Question “Submissions Enable Citizens To Get Things Off Their Chests” 1999/2000

The OCCLG, the committee delegated with the task of reforming local government in New Zealand, was concerned about the inability of communities to determine the type of local government they wanted in their area (Cheyne, 1997). As discussed in Chapter 2 the reforms aimed to enhance responsiveness to citizens and better recognise the diversity of communities. The submission-making process was a way to formalise this process and give citizens a voice. Submission-makers were, therefore, asked whether they agreed that “Calling for submissions encourages councillors to listen to what is worrying citizens”. As with the first statement most respondents either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with this.

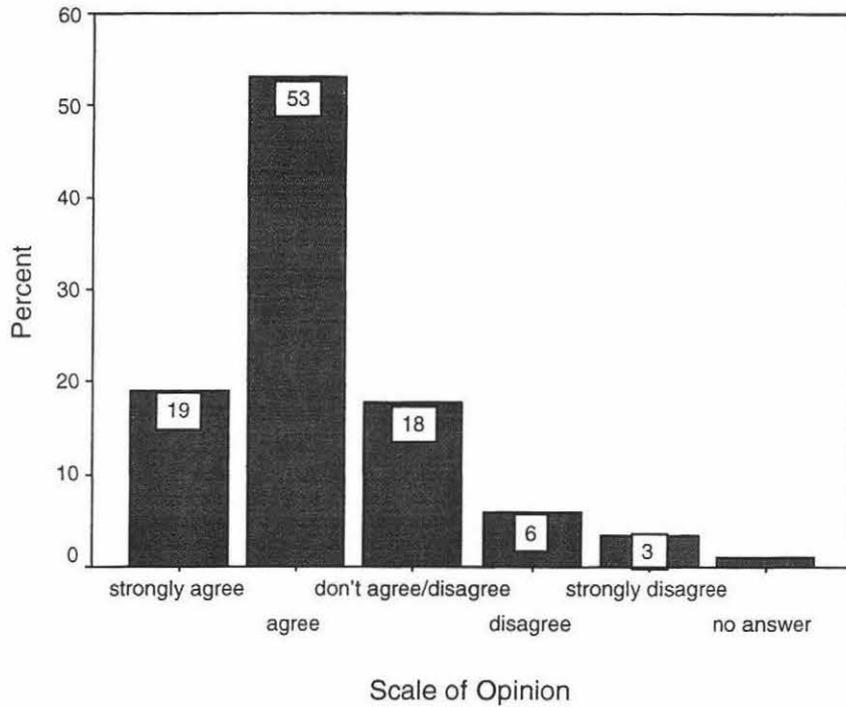


Figure 5.5: Survey Responses to the Question “Submissions Encourage Council to Listen to What is Worrying Citizens” 1999/2000

The draft annual plan sets out the proposed activities and budget for a local authority for the forthcoming year. Supposedly, transparency of information, and the opportunity to make submissions, makes it possible for proposals to be rejected if they are widely criticised. Submissions, therefore, are also a way to improve local authority performance and ensure services are tailored to the community’s needs. To evaluate how successful this aspect of the annual plan process is in the eyes of submission-makers they were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement “Submissions provide an opportunity for the Council to fine tune its Annual Plan”. Again the majority of responses were in agreement.

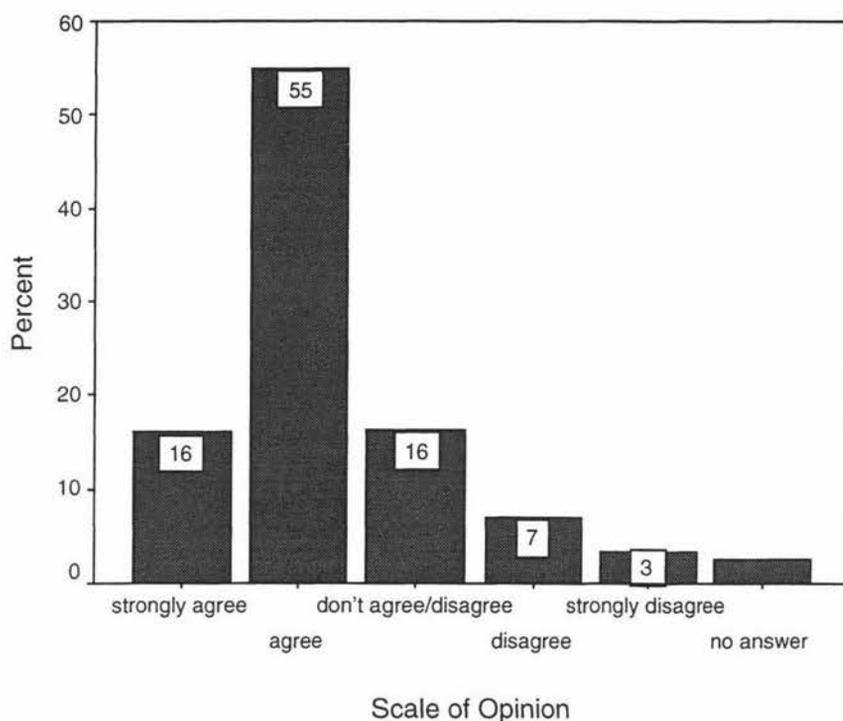


Figure 5.6: Survey Responses to the Question “Submissions Provide an Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plans” 1999/2000

If the goals of the reforms are to be achieved citizens need to feel their opinions are valued and taken into account in decision-making. Participatory theory also identifies these attributes as important for sustaining interest in community affairs. Respondents were therefore asked if they agreed with the statement “Submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan”. As is shown in Figure 5.7 again most respondents agreed with this. However, the positive response was lower than for the first three statements and a greater number of respondents than for the previous questions replied they neither agreed, nor disagreed. When disaggregated by local authority the data shows that for one local authority, WRC, less than half (47.1%) of respondents agreed with this statement.

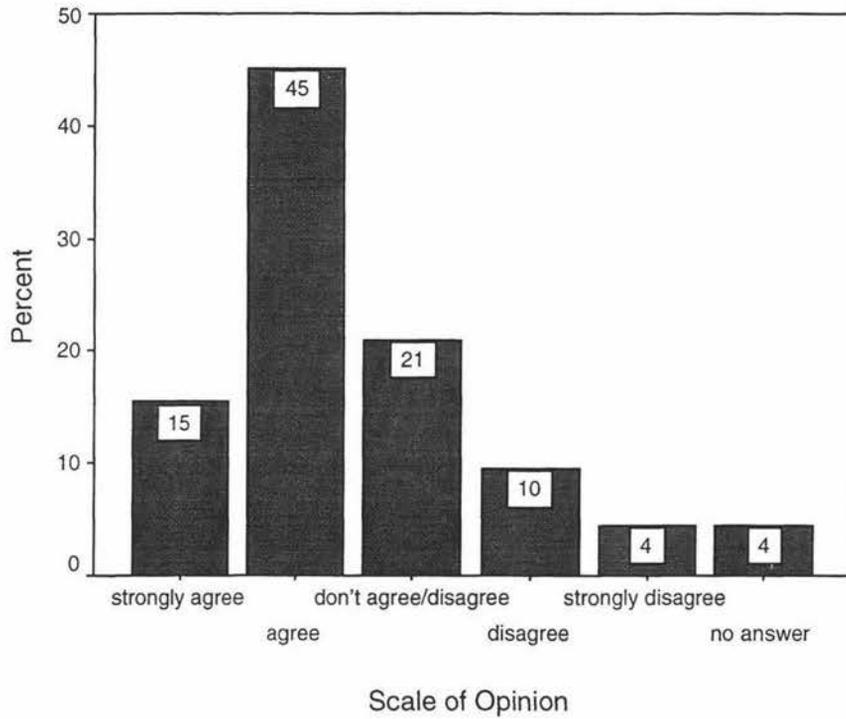


Figure 5.7: Survey Responses to the Question “Submissions Provide a Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plans” 1999/2000

The extent to which submission-makers feel their input is valued can be assessed by how willing they perceived elected representatives are to seek the opinions of citizens. When asked whether or not they thought local authorities would seek public input if they were not required to do so by law, most submission-makers believed local authorities would not. There was a degree of uncertainty expressed with regard to this question (more respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed) but little conviction that local authorities would actively seek input if there was not a statutory requirement to do so (only 14% overall).

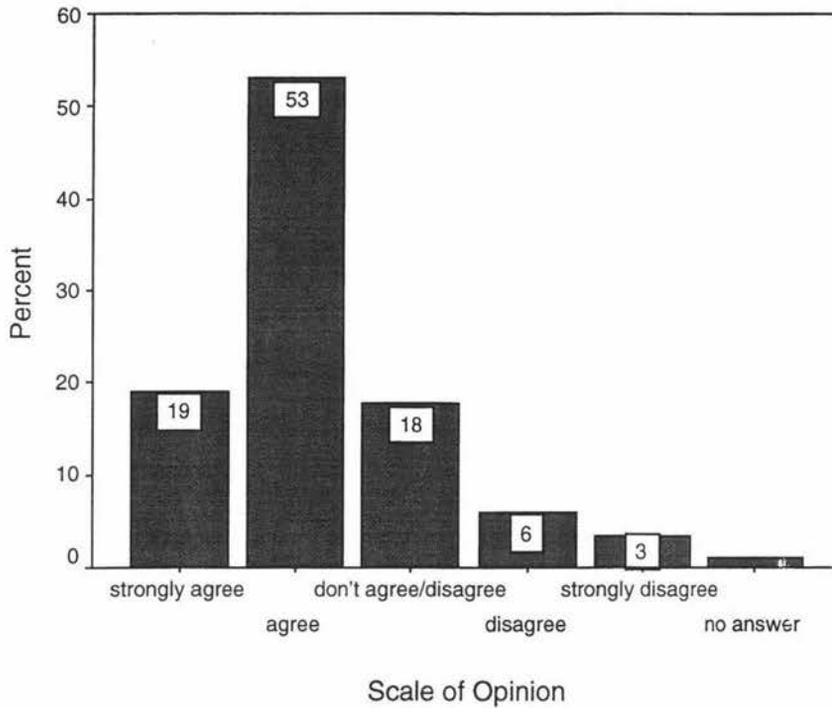


Figure 5.8: Survey Responses to the Question “Councils Only Call for Submissions Because Required to by Law” 1999/2000

Respondents therefore did not consider that local authorities would voluntarily solicit public input into their decision-making and engage in what Croft¹² (2000) describes as ‘open’ consultation. This view was most strongly felt in KCDC with 69% of respondents indicating they thought local authorities only sought input because it was required by law.

The responses to Question 23, which were ranked using a Likert scale, were analysed further using ANOVA F-tests. These tests compare the variability of values within groups with the variability of values between groups. The methodology set out in Chapter 4 was used. The One-Way between Groups ANOVA F-test results can be found in Appendix III.

¹² Croft (2000, 22) makes the distinction between ‘closed’ and ‘open’ consultation. The difference between the two types is the attitude of the decision-maker/s to the process rather than the actual practice. Open consultation recognises the importance of involving and keeping involved stakeholders; acknowledging stakeholders may have solid and far-reaching contributions to make; and, accepting that the local authority’s point of view is not the only correct one. Closed consultation is akin to consultation undertaken to fulfil legal requirements.

Statistical analysis showed no significant variation between the mean responses to the question 'Submissions allow citizens to get things off their chests' and the responses to the other questions. A high degree of association was shown to exist between the responses to the other four statements and replies to other questions. Graphs showing the mean responses for each of the associations shown to have a significant relationship can be found in Appendix IV. Generally these can be summarised as follows:

- Submission-makers making their submission on behalf of organisations are more positive about the outcome of their submission than individual submission-makers. They were more likely to believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, as well as a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. Individuals were more likely to believe local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law, than submission-makers from organisations.
- Submission-makers who found the hearing atmosphere relaxed; the committee response helpful; felt that they had made their point at the hearing; and, they influenced councillors were more likely to believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, and a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. Those submission-makers who found the hearing atmosphere daunting, formal or informal, the committee response neutral or unhelpful, and that they had failed to get their point across were likely to believe that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Submission-makers who thought submissions made a difference to the annual plan were more inclined to think that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, and a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They were less likely to think that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law than those submission-makers who did not think submissions made a difference.
- Submission-makers not advised, or not fully aware of the outcome of their submission, did not agree that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

- Submission-makers dissatisfied with the outcome of their submissions do not think that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They believe local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Submission-makers not willing to make another submission or undecided did not agree that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.
- Submission-maker who do not think that submissions are worthwhile, or are only 'somewhat' worthwhile, do not believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They believe that that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Submission-maker who think that submissions are not important to councils do not believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They believe that that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Submission-maker whose motive for making a submission was to express their frustration with council systems or concern about the quality of decision-making do not believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, and a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They believe that that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Submission-maker with no confidence in council decision-making do not believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan. They believe that that local authorities only ask for submissions because they are required to by law.
- Those submission-makers who thought that the planning process would work as well if carried out every five years obviously did not think it was effective as

they did not believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen, provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan, or a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

- Citizens making submissions with property values in the \$100,000 - \$199,000 bracket were more likely to think they had a chance of influencing the annual plan than submission-makers in the other income brackets.

Factor analysis was also done on the five statements with Likert responses to see if there was any correlation between the responses to the five statements. Factor analysis looks at the correlations between variables and tests to see if any reasonable correlations with other variables in the analysis are present. If so it identifies these variables and the level of clustering. The factor analysis carried out on the responses to the five Likert statements indicated that two factors explained 63% of the variance that occurred between the responses.

- Respondents who believed the annual plan process provided an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan were likely to answer that it gave citizens a chance to influence the annual plan. Both these responses can be explained by the factor 'citizen input is valued'.
- Respondents who felt that the annual plan process gave citizens a chance to get things off their chest were unlikely to agree with the statement the annual plan encouraged councillors to listen. Both these responses can be explained by the factor 'having an input does not guarantee that citizens are heard'.

5.2 DO SUBMISSION-MAKERS REGULARLY PARTICIPATE AND HOW EXTENSIVE IS THEIR INTEREST AND UNDERSTANDING?

This section details the respondent's history of involvement in the annual plan process to determine how regularly submission-makers participate. According to participatory theory participants in political activities have to sustain some benefit from their effort to maintain on-going interest (Julian *et al.*, 1997). It was therefore considered important to find out whether the same people and organisations regularly make submissions, or whether a different section of the public gets involved from year to year.

5.2.1 Frequency of Submissions

Two thirds of all submission-makers who answered the survey had previously made a submission.

The two large city councils PNCC and WCC had the highest percentage of first time submission-makers. The two district councils had regular submission-makers with those having made three or more being the largest single group - nearly a third for CDC and nearly a half for KCDC. City and district councils were more likely to have received three or more submissions from organisations than individuals. Regional councils received most of their submissions from organisations that had previously made three or more submissions. This is possibly attributable to the fact that they receive a large proportion of their submissions from other local authorities, government agencies and organisations that routinely participate as part of their own management function. The hierarchical and overlapping nature of local authority responsibilities means their activities, are affected by other local authority and government activities. A high percentage (80%) of individuals making submissions to regional councils had previously made a submission.

Table 5.8: Number of Previous Submissions Made by Survey Respondents 1999/2000

		PNCC	WCC	KCDC	CDC	WRC	h. m.w	All Areas
none	Frequency	29	69	14	6		2	120
	Percent	39.7	40.6	25.0	35.3		8.0	33.5
once	Frequency	11	40	15	2		2	70
	Percent	15.1	23.5	26.8	11.8		8.0	19.5
twice	Frequency	8	32	11	2	3	5	61
	Percent	11.0	18.8	19.6	11.8	18.8	20.0	17.0
3 or more	Frequency	23	27	16	7	14	15	102
	Percent	31.5	15.9	28.6	41.2	81.3	60.0	28.5
no answer	Frequency	2	2				1	5
	Percent	2.7	1.2				4.0	0
Total	Frequency	73	170	56	17	16	25	357
	Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Cross-tabulating the number of times a submission-maker had previously made a submission with whether or not the submission-maker was a member of an organisation identified a relationship ($X^2 = 30.490$, $p < 0.0005$). A greater-than-expected number of submission-makers who made a submission on behalf of an organisation had made three or more submissions before. The fact that organisations are more likely than individuals to have previously made a submission may be an indication that the organised public have a greater interest in local body affairs. It may also reflect their more successful

record in achieving their desired outcomes which makes participation more worthwhile. On the other hand it may be a reflection of the mailing list from which local authorities solicit submissions.

5.2.2 Extent of Interest

The extent of submission-maker interest in local government affairs was assessed by asking whether respondent had made a submission to any other local authority's draft annual plan in 1999/2000. Sixteen percent of submission-makers made a submission to more than one local authority. Two-thirds of these were made by organisations. The Chi-Square test ($X^2=76.254$, $p<.0005$) indicated an association between submission-makers who made a submission to another draft annual plan and the number of previous submissions made. People who had made their first submission in 1999/2000 or had previously only made one submission were unlikely to make a submission to another local authority. Whereas, those submission-makers who had previously made three or more submissions were more likely to have also made a submission to another local authority. As mentioned before these submission-makers were more likely to belong to an organisation. Local government, government agencies and health organisations accounted for a higher-than-expected number of submission-makers in this group. These organisations obviously regard submission-making as a routine part of their operation.

A significant proportion of the individuals and organisations making submissions to regional councils also made submissions to other local authorities (WRC 69%; horizons.mw 44%). For PNCC, WCC and KCDC most respondents (85% or more) made only one submission. For CDC, 29% of submission-makers (all organisations) made a submission(s) to other local authorities as well. All of these were to local authorities in the Wairarapa (Masterton District Council and South Wairarapa District Council) indicating perhaps that people in this region have larger communities of interest than the present local government structure acknowledges.

5.3 HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT IS PUT INTO MAKING SUBMISSIONS?

This section of the survey sought to determine whether time and cost were regarded as important issues for citizens making submissions. A frequent complaint made by local authorities with regard to the annual plan process is the cost to local authorities

compared with the quality of input they receive from the community (Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 60; Controller and Auditor-General, 1998, 40).

Time and cost are also widely recognised as reasons for non-participation by citizens (Nagel, 1987, 15). This survey therefore sought to gather data on the time and financial costs involved for individuals and organisations in the annual plan process to see if this had a significant impact on their participation. To date this aspect of the annual plan process has not been researched. The Department of Internal Affairs surveys focused on the costs incurred by local authorities but did not include the costs incurred by citizens.

The responses indicated most submission-makers did not regard participation as costly in terms of time and money. In response to the question "How many people worked on this submission?" the most frequent response across all local authorities was just one person (70%). Even for submissions made by groups, with the exception of WRC, most submissions were prepared by one person. A relationship was shown to exist between the number of previous submissions made and the number of people who worked on a submission ($X^2=26.784$, $p<.0005$) and the approximate time taken ($X^2=48.802$, $p<.0005$). People making their first submission tended to put in a personal submission and take less than four hours to prepare it. Those who had made three or more submissions worked in groups of two or more and took a much longer period of time to prepare their submission.

It might be expected that most people who make a submission read the draft annual plan and familiarised themselves with it which requires a reasonable time commitment. Submission-makers were not asked specifically if they had read the draft annual plan. This was an oversight in the survey design as this information would have proved useful. The survey responses did, however, indicate that a significant proportion of submission-makers had not read the draft annual plan. For example, it would appear from the actual submissions themselves that most of the people who made submissions to upgrade Mahara Place, in Waikanae did so in response to the Waikanae 2000 lobby not the draft annual plan. People are obviously willing to make submissions on a specific issue without concerning themselves with the detailed information included in the draft annual plan.

In response to the question regarding the cost of making a submission, by far the greatest number (50% of the submission-makers - 179 in total) replied that there had

been no cost to them at all. Another 10% just regarded it as the cost of an envelope and stamp. A significant proportion of the organisations in the sample put no cost on their time and effort, so it can be assumed for them, that time and cost were not a major consideration. A possible explanation for this is these organisations or groups were lobbying local authorities for their support and they considered the potential benefits outweighed the costs.

Regular submission-makers as previously mentioned, predominantly organisations, tend to take longer to prepare their submissions and have more people involved and as a result the cost of making a submission was higher. Ten (3%) of all organisations estimated the cost of making a submission as >\$1000 (wages, research, circulating material, consultants' fees). Three of these were sector groups putting forward submissions on behalf of their members affected by local government policy. There was one union group and one resident/ratepayer group in the \$1000 plus category. The most spent by any individual was reported to be \$400.

For most submission-makers it appears that time and cost were not major considerations as to whether or not to participate. This finding is similar to that of James's research on people who had made submissions to DOC management plans (1990, 24).

5.3.1 Public Meetings to Hear Submissions

Thirty six percent of submission-makers attended public meetings (referred to in the survey and from here on as hearings) to present their submissions. A greater-than-expected number of these were regular submission-makers ($\chi^2=37.481$, $p<.0005$). As regular submission-makers are more likely to be from organisations, it was not surprising that 62% of those attending these hearings were from organisations.

WCC had 19% of submission-makers speaking at hearings, which was by far the lowest percentage for the local authorities in the survey. This percentage was in fact double the actual number recorded by the Council itself, which showed only 8.4% (107 of the 1265) submission-makers spoke to them. This discrepancy indicates a bias in the survey responses with those giving oral submissions being more prepared to answer the questionnaire than those who did not. This possibly reflects a greater interest in local body affairs by those attending hearings and hence greater willingness to respond to the questionnaire. For three of the local authorities, KCDC (52%), PNCC (51%) and horizons.mw (48%) approximately half of the respondents attended the hearings. For

CDC 76% of those who answered the questionnaire attended the hearing. WRC had 38% of respondents attending.

The survey sought to gather information on the experiences of submission-makers when they presented their submission orally. A particular aim of the questionnaire was to find out whether the attitude of councillors and the atmosphere at the hearings influenced their level of satisfaction. How comfortable submission-makers were with presenting their submission orally would be likely to influence their willingness to make another submission. Table 5.9 shows the responses describing the formality of the atmosphere at the hearings:

Table 5.9: Respondents Perceptions of Atmosphere at Hearings 1999/2000

Area		Daunting	Formal	Informal	Relaxed/		Total	
					Relaxed	Formal		no answer
PN	Frequency		15	15	5	2	37	
	Percent		40.5	40.5	13.5	5.4	100.0	
WCC	Frequency	5	9	9	6	2	1	32
	Percent	15.6	28.1	28.1	18.8	6.3	3.1	100.0
KCDC	Frequency	2	18	2	6	1		29
	Percent	6.9	62.1	6.9	20.7	3.4		100.0
CDC	Frequency		4	4	4	1		13
	Percent		30.8	30.8	30.8	7.7		100.0
WRC	Frequency		1	3	2	1		7
	Percent		14.3	42.9	28.6	14.3		100.0
h.mw	Frequency	1	2	4	5			12
	Percent	8.3	16.7	33.3	41.7			100.0
Total	Frequency	8	49	36	28	7	1	129
	Percent	6.2	38.0	27.9	21.7	5.4	.8	100.0

As shown in Table 5.9, the most common response was that respondents found the atmosphere at the hearings to be formal. However, a considerable number of submission-makers considered it informal and relaxed. If these two categories are combined they outnumber those who considered the atmosphere formal.

For WCC five respondents (15.6%) described attending the hearings as daunting. Two people from KCDC and one from horizons.mw also found this to be the situation. Inexperience was not the only reason submission-makers found the experience daunting. Of those who described attending the hearings as daunting only four were first time submission-makers, the remainder had made three or more submissions. The local authority with the highest number of submission-makers describing the hearings as formal was KCDC with 63% giving this description.

An option for formal and relaxed was not provided on the survey form for Question 8 "How did you find the Committee's response?" However, seven out of 129 respondents

who attended the hearings indicated that this was how they found the proceeding suggesting that, although hearings may be structured in nature, they are not necessarily unfriendly.

Respondents had the options of 'helpful', 'neutral' (neither helpful or unhelpful) and 'unhelpful' to choose from for the question "How did you find the committee's response?" For all local authorities except horizons.mw most submission-makers described local authorities as 'neutral'. The next most common response was that the committees were helpful. A number of respondents from KCDC (37.9%) and horizons.mw (41.7%) regarded the hearing committee as unhelpful.

To gauge how worthwhile submission-makers found attendance at the hearings and making an oral submission respondents were asked whether or not attending the hearings helped them get their point across to council. The majority of respondents replied 'yes' (59%).

A question regarding the extent to which submission-makers felt their oral submission influenced the councillors in attendance was also asked with the options being 'definitely', 'definitely not', and 'don't know'. Less than a quarter (24%) of those attending the oral hearings felt they had definitely influenced the hearing committee.

5.4 WHAT IN THE VIEW OF SUBMISSION-MAKERS ARE THE BEST ASPECTS OF THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS?

To determine what features of the annual plan process submission-makers most valued they were asked to list the two things (if any) they regarded as the best aspects of the annual plan process. The replies were grouped into similar response categories so an overall interpretation of the aspects most highly rated by submission-makers could be made. Because respondents were asked to list two aspects and these were not ranked in order of importance responses were summed to get the frequency data. Table 5.10 ranks these in order of popularity.

Table 5.10: Best Aspects of the Annual Plan Process According to Survey Respondents 1999/2000

Best Aspects of Annual Plan Process	Count	% of Responses	% of Respondents
Opportunity to be heard/advocate/make council aware	101	23.1	17.3
Democracy/understanding council	86	19.6	14.7
Public planning/budgeting/information	80	18.3	13.7
Public scrutiny/accountability	43	9.8	7.4
Opportunity to influence decisions	35	8.0	6.0
Informed decision-making	32	7.3	5.5
Personal contact with councillors	21	4.8	3.6
Other	40	9.1	6.8
Did not answer this question			25.0
	438	100.0	100.0

The following listing gives more details of the reasons given by submission-makers for liking each of these different aspects:

1. Opportunity to be heard/advocate/make council aware - The annual plan process provides citizens with a formal mandatory opportunity to make councillors and local authority officers aware of issues of importance to them. In the view of one submission-maker it:

Gives me a chance to have my say irrespective of whether it has any effect.

2. Democracy/understanding council - The annual plan process allows citizens to feel part of the democratic process. It encourages the community to participate, contribute and understand what their local authority is doing.
3. Public planning/budgeting/information - The annual plan process makes it obligatory for local authorities to carry out planning and budgeting. It requires local authorities to set out their agenda and establish priorities. Information is made available to the public so they are aware in advance of proposed activities. The benefit of this according to one submission-maker is:

It makes councillors think ahead and understand implications of spending decisions.

4. Public scrutiny/accountability - The information provided in the draft annual plan and annual report provide a means by which citizens can review a local authority's performance.

5. Opportunity to influence decision-making - The annual plan process provides an opportunity for citizens to influence local authority decisions.
6. Informed decision-making - Input provided through the annual plan process allows local authorities to make better decisions as they are better informed about community matters. According to one submission-maker, the process:

Keeps council aware of community views.
7. Personal contact with councillors - The annual plan process provides an opportunity for personal contact with the people who have been elected to represent citizens and make decisions on their behalf.
8. Other - This category covered a number of responses that did not fit in the above. For example, comments to the effect that the compulsory nature of the annual plan process is one of its best aspects; the annual plan process makes submission-makers focus on their priorities; and the document is beautifully presented.

Submission-makers ranked the best aspects differently depending on which local authority they were from. The 'opportunity to be heard/advocate/make council aware' category was important to PNCC submission-makers with 45.5% of respondents listing this as the best feature. WCC submission-makers valued the 'public planning/budgeting /information' and 'democracy/understanding council' features. KCDC rated the 'democracy/understanding council' contribution of the annual plan process as the highest. CDC ranked the 'public scrutiny/accountability and democracy/understanding council' features equally highly. The 'public planning/budgeting/information provisions' were liked most by regional council submission-makers.

These results indicate that the annual plan process does achieve some of the goals of participatory democracy for some submission-makers. Submission-makers place a great deal of value on their right to be heard. The citizens who participate regard the formal opportunity provided by the annual plan process as the best way of making councillors and local authority officers aware of issues important to them. Having this input allows citizens to feel part of the democratic process. This involvement gives them the opportunity to both contribute, and increase their understanding of what their local authority is doing. Personal contact with elected representatives was also an aspect of submissions appreciated by citizens involved in the submission-making process reinforcing the theory that personal contact generates goodwill.

However, if for the majority of submission-makers the best aspect of involvement is that it allows the public to have a say with no real influence, according to Arnstein, the annual plan process would rate as consultation rather than genuine participation (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). The aspects most liked by submission-makers relate more to the personal needs of citizens than to their ability to influence outcomes. This finding corresponds with the recent study carried out by De Montford University and The University of Strathclyde (1998) which found that in England the benefits of participation in local government initiatives were more in the area of personal development and increased understanding of local issues and local government, than achieving desired outcomes.

The ability to influence decisions was not seen as a positive aspect of the annual plan process by many people (6% of respondents). Neither was having more informed decision-making (only 5.5% of respondents in total). These aspects are rated highly by participatory theorists as among the major benefits of public participation.

5.5 WHAT IN THE VIEW OF SUBMISSION-MAKERS ARE THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS?

To gain an appreciation of the aspects of the annual plan process respondents most disliked they were asked to list two things (if any) they regarded as the worst aspects. These responses had a broader range of answers than the best aspects and were summarised as follows in the 13 different categories set out in Table 5.11:

Table 5.11: Worst Aspect of Annual Plan Process According to Survey Respondents 1999/2000

Worst Aspects of Annual Plan Process	Count	% of Responses	% of Respondents
Predetermined outcomes/lack of influence	67	16.1	11.5
Information (too much, confusing, inadequate, propaganda)	55	13.2	9.4
Cost and time (for both local authority and citizens)	46	11.0	7.8
Process/lack of genuine consultation/not user friendly	40	9.6	6.8
Lack of feedback/transparent decision-making	31	7.4	5.3
Farce/waste of time and money	26	6.2	4.4
Treatment of submission-makers	24	5.8	4.1
Timing and frequency	20	4.8	3.4
Management not community focused	20	4.8	3.4
Manipulative	18	4.3	3.1
Lack of community interest/quality input	17	4.1	2.9
Minority/ pressure group prone	11	2.6	1.8
Other	42	10.1	7.2
Did not answer			28.0
	417	100.0	100.0

The following list summarises the comments made by the submission-makers in each category in order of the most disliked to least disliked:

1. Predetermined attitudes/lack of influence – The draft annual plan is put together by councillors and local authority officers before submissions are made. Submissions therefore tend to be reactive and more likely to be negative and critical in response to what is proposed rather than generating real ideas or vision. Submissions are also unlikely to influence any important decisions. The process is seen as a means of legitimising decisions made elsewhere. Submissions according to one respondent are just:

Rubber stamping decisions already decided.

2. Information problems - Many submission-makers find the information provided by local authorities difficult to read and understand. The sheer volume of information is a problem for many citizens, as is the presentation, which was described as public relations gloss and propaganda. The draft annual plans were found to be confusing and the unexplained breakdowns made it hard to see where money was spent. It was described by one submission-maker as a:

Minefield of often complicated information to decipher.

Though the amount of information provided was an issue for many submission-makers those interested in specific areas found it difficult to obtain the appropriate information. The problems associated with the local authority and regional council plans being published around the same time of the year and uncertainty associated with the time-frame for making submissions were also included in this category.

3. Cost and time – Though the responses to Questions 4, 5 and 6 showed most respondents did not regard the expense of the process in either money or time as an issue, some submission-makers did see this as a problem for both citizens and local authorities. This concern was expressed by one submission-maker as:

Too much time and money being spent on a very small percentage of the rate intake.

4. The process itself – The bureaucratic and impersonal nature, the lack of genuine consultation, and, the user-unfriendliness of the annual plan process were all aspects disliked by submission-makers. Process problems cited were the constant change,

formality, time restrictions and limited opportunity to speak to councillors. Comments on the lack of genuine consultation focused on the fact that there was little consultation before the plans were prepared, or with the general public, and also that a high proportion of local authority expenditure was excluded from annual plan process. As only relatively unimportant matters are discussed it was not really regarded as an avenue for genuine consultation between the public and the local authority. The process was not seen as user-friendly because it gave people the feeling they needed to be educated professionals before being confident to participate. As Nagel (1987, 58) points out this group already tends to be more effective politically because they are more articulate, can readily gain access to high officials and their higher level of education means they incur lower information costs learning about decisions and how to influence them. The annual, prescribed nature of the process, the number of important decisions made outside the annual plan cycle without consultation, and the absence of any obligation for local authorities to act on submissions were all aspects disliked by submission-makers.

5. Lack of feedback/transparency of decision-making – The lack of information with regard to the outcome of submissions or public reports in the media about the nature of the submissions and which ones were taken into account was seen as a key shortcoming of the annual plan process. Submission-makers cited instances of lengthy submissions backed by attendance at hearings not receiving a specific response. Lack of justification for a decision makes it difficult for submission-makers to understand the basis on which a decision was made. It is also very difficult for citizens to follow up on issues such as criticism of local authority spending and performance. This taints the views of submission-makers:

Failure of council to respond or comment on submissions makes the whole process a meaningless charade.

6. Farce/waste of time and money - The view that the process was a waste of time and money and raised false expectations was also expressed. The fact that local authorities have a statutory requirement to consult the public with regard to the annual plan gave a number of respondents the impression it was only being done for this reason not out of a genuine desire to know the views of citizens.

7. Treatment of submission-makers – The lack of basic courtesy shown by councillors was commented on by 4% of submission-makers. Submission-makers also commented on councillors' lack of attention and the obvious lack of prior preparation that meant few intelligent questions were asked at the hearings. This they felt made the whole process a waste of time. Consultation fatigue on the part of councillors was evident, with the process rushed and of no seeming interest. As one submission-maker commented:

The constant departure/returns of councillors during hearings show a lack of sincerity and commitment.

8. Timing – The length of time taken to make decisions in respect to submissions, and the short window of opportunity allowed for making submissions were both seen as problematic. Clubs and organisations that met monthly often struggled to meet time constraints.
9. Management not community focused – The whole process was felt to be more local authority centred than community centred with undue concern for sticking to procedure. Some submission-makers expressed concern at the level of influence officers had in the overall process. Councillors were seen as relying heavily on the recommendations officers made on the original written submissions.
10. Manipulative – A number of respondents felt that the annual plan process was manipulative as it did not present all of a local authority's objectives to the public. One submission-maker made the comment that the annual plan process gave the illusion of openness and democratic input but the real local authority intent was not reflected in the plan. Presenting unrealistic options that propose high rates or drastic cuts to services was also viewed cynically by submission-makers who felt this was a ploy to enable local authorities to claim that they listened to citizens when they finalised a more moderate annual plan. WCC submission-makers in particular felt the 1999/2000 draft annual plan alarmed a number of groups and individuals unnecessarily and attempted to 'channel' submissions and questionnaire responses to get the outcome the local authority wanted. In the view of one submission-maker:

WCC consultation was a cynical way of getting public support for rate rises by frightening citizens.

11. Lack of community input/quality community input – A number of submission-makers commented that the annual plan process did not function as well as it potentially could because there was insufficient awareness, interest and response from the community. The lack of community input into the draft annual plan was seen as a weakness, as was the lack of wider scientific assessment of public opinion on important decisions. The quality of community input was also seen as a problem. One submission-maker had a problem with “the uniformed reactions of the public”. Another disliked:

Having to listen to other off the point verbal submitters

After experiencing sitting through oral submissions some submission-makers expressed sympathy for councillors. The obligation to process all submissions even when they are poorly prepared and presented was regarded as a shortcoming of s716A. The annual plan process was also seen as at risk of becoming a forum for complaining.

12. Minority/pressure group influence – The influence of small pressure groups and minorities was seen a problem by some respondents. The very small response from a potentially large number of affected people has the potential risk that only minority views are expressed.

13. Other - This category covered a number of responses that did not fit in the above. Comments were very diverse for example, "councillors rely too much on consultants", "councillors are limited to making policy", and "there are insufficient links between the annual plans and the Resource Management Act.

When disaggregated by local authority the most disliked feature changed for all local authorities except WCC. This suggests that local authority specific factors such as councillor attitudes, or the corporate culture, contribute to the responses. The other five local authorities had the following aspects rated as most disliked:

- For PNCC the process itself was the most disliked aspect (18.5%).
- KCDC submission-makers disliked the attitude of the council/councillors towards them (15.2%).
- The process itself, and the cost and time involved for both the local authority and citizens were equally highly disliked by submission-makers from CDC (26.7%).

- WRC submission-makers disliked the process itself and had problems using the information provided or obtaining information they needed.
- For horizons.mw the predetermined attitudes of councillors, information problems and cost and time were ranked equally as the most disliked feature (14.3%).

The aspects submission-makers most disliked about the annual plan process were closely associated with the areas suggested for improvement. The following section looks at the more frequently cited suggestions for improvement.

5.6 IN THE VIEW OF SUBMISSION-MAKERS HOW CAN THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS BE IMPROVED ?

Respondents were asked what measures they would recommend to improve the annual planning process. Table 5.12 summarises the most cited views. However, as Table 5.12 also shows, replies were very diverse. The 'other' category listing ideas mentioned by less than four submission-makers is by far the largest category.

Table 5.12: Suggested Improvements to the Annual Planning Process Made by Survey Respondents 1999/2000

Suggested Improvements to Annual Plan Process	Count	% of Responses
Better and more consultation	35	12.9
Simplified, standardised transparent draft annual plan	29	10.7
Feedback and follow-up	22	8.1
Better communications with the public	16	5.9
Public involvement before draft annual plan	15	5.5
Councillors interested/open minded	15	5.5
More public awareness/interest	11	4.1
Less frequent; more link to long term objectives	10	3.7
Better informed council/mayor	9	3.3
More lead time for submissions	7	2.6
Legislate so submissions have influence	7	2.6
Councillor accountability	6	2.2
Remove from management	5	1.8
Other	84	31.0
	271	100.0

The following discussion covers some of the more realistic proposals for improvement put forward by submission-makers:

1. Better and more consultation - A better consultation process to get more community input at a stage where it mattered was the most frequently mentioned improvement needed. More variety in the consultation format so people without the time to go through the annual plan process could have an input was also suggested. (The difficulties associated with this are illustrated by the attempt by WCC to do this.

Different baskets of choices were presented as a simple way to allow citizens to express their preference. This was interpreted by some submission-makers as an attempt to guide responses.) In total 13% of submission-makers favoured more widespread consultation using focus groups, telephone surveys, and other reliable indicators. Six submission-makers specifically mentioned referenda as a potential tool to use when there was a large groundswell of public opinion against a proposal. The desire for better consultation was an interesting outcome given that the annual plan process has been described as prone to capture by groups only interested in furthering their own cause by the Business Roundtable (as reported in the *Dominion*, 28/5/99) and the Controller and Auditor-General (1998, 46).

2. Simplified, standardised transparent draft annual plan - The presentation of information was the second most frequently mentioned area with scope for improvement. The need for a more simple, standardised format, with less jargon was proposed, as was the need to identify areas which could, or could not, be changed or cancelled and the potential costs involved. To accommodate the requirement for more detail (as made by some submission-makers) and the requirement for a more simple format (made by other submission-makers) detailed information could be put in an appendix to the draft annual plan.
3. Feedback and follow-up - A suggestion was made that when local authority staff prepared background material for elected members about a submission, a copy of this should be sent to the submission-maker (in sufficient time for them to further investigate if necessary). Committees whose responsibilities cover the submission area should also be obligated to consider the submission and reply to the submission-maker (if they have indicated they would like a reply) explaining the recommendation.
4. Public involvement before the draft annual plan - Public input before the preparation of the draft annual plan was a suggested improvement by 15 submission-makers. Submission-makers thought that, because councillors were heavily involved in deciding what was in the draft annual plan, they were not open to changes. An open workshop approach where councillors, staff and citizens all had input prior to the draft annual plan was proposed. The annual nature of the annual plan process was seen by some submission-makers to restrict long-term planning and real

consultation. Providing citizens with an input at an earlier stage based on the LTFS and the previous annual plan's assessments for the next two years would remove the emphasis on the annual cycle of events and place it on a more long-term basis.

5. Interested/open minded councillors - Maintaining a good, long-term working relationship with the community is regarded as important in an era where there is high staff turnover at local authorities and a subsequent loss of institutional memory. Hearings were seen as a particular area where councillor consultation fatigue was obvious. Replying in writing to all submission-makers who indicated they would like a reply, and having hearings only for people who would like to discuss with councillors the decisions reached, were suggestions made to reduce the time commitment for councillors.
6. Better communication with public - More publicity by local authorities about the main issues and proposed projects was seen as essential to increasing public interest and the quality of input. Articles about the main ideas in the draft annual plan could be placed in newspapers, or on television and radio so people were more informed. Greater media interest was seen as critical to the success of the annual plan process. Publishing submission forms in the free newspaper was a proposal for increasing interest and public input.
7. More public awareness/interest - Providing education so the public had a good understanding of the role and responsibility of local government and an interest in civic affairs was a suggested improvement.
8. Less frequent/more linked to long-term objectives - The preference for having a longer than yearly planning cycle with less frequent but more genuine consultation was expressed. The need to link longer term objectives with the draft annual plan so that the overall goal of a programme was clearly understood was also emphasised.
9. Better informed council/mayor - More able councillors and mayor were seen as an area of potential improvement. This, however, is up to citizens in the three yearly elections and the ability of local government to attract high calibre candidates.
10. More lead time for submissions - Providing more time for submissions was a suggested improvement. Five out of the seven submission-makers who made this

suggestion were from organizations. This could be a reflection of the difficulty that time constraints place on groups that meet monthly or less frequently.

11. Legislate so submissions have an influence - Some submission-makers were keen for legislation to be put in place that made it obligatory for local authorities to take submissions into account. A suggestion made was for each annual plan to have a section outlining the changes that have been made as a result of the consultation.
12. Councillor accountability - A proposal for submissions to be voted on and records kept to identify which councillors voted for or against a submission was made. This would give citizens a better idea of councillor preferences and a foundation on which to base their voting in triennial elections.
13. Remove from management - A suggested improvement was that councillors should research issues themselves instead of relying on local authority officers to advise them.

5.6.1 A Less Frequent Planning Cycle

A commonly cited problem associated with the annual plan cycle is the consultation fatigue and overload it generates especially for those organisations and individuals that make submissions to more than one council. Local authority staff also find the tight and continuous planning cycle (see Figure 2.1) ties up a considerable amount of management time and resources. For these reasons submission-makers were asked if they thought a longer time frame would work for the annual plan process.

Only 22% of submission-makers felt the annual plan process could work on a 2 yearly cycle. The greatest response to the question 'Would the planning process work as well if done once every two years?' was 'no' (41%) with a further 32% replying they 'did not know'. Regional council submission-makers held strongly to the view that the draft plan consultation process would not work as well if it were based on a two yearly cycle. The views of submission-makers on this issue were influenced by the number of times they had made submissions ($X^2= 24.529$, $p<.0005$). Generally those submission-makers who had made three or more submissions did not think the annual plan process would work on a 2 yearly cycle. First and second time submission-makers did not really have an opinion.

Given the general conclusion that the planning process would not work as well if carried out on a biennial basis the result of the next question “Would the planning process work as well if done once every five years?” was predictable. Only 11 of the 347 respondents who answered this question replied ‘yes’. There was also a decrease in the number of respondents who were uncertain about how well the process would work if conducted less frequently. Across all local authorities 114 (31.8%) of respondents had answered ‘don’t know’ to the two yearly option, whereas only 76 (21.2%) were in this category for ‘once every 5 years’.

5.7 DO CITIZENS WHO MAKE SUBMISSIONS AS PART OF THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS FIND THE EXPERIENCE SATISFIES THEIR ASPIRATIONS?

According to participatory theory (Arnstein 1969; Burns *et al.*, 1994) participants need to have some influence on decisions if public involvement is to be meaningful. Without this ability the public quickly comes to regard participation as a meaningless ritual. As such it generates cynicism and frustration and such negative sentiments diminish rather build relationships with, and confidence in, government agencies. The annual plan process was not intended to give citizens direct involvement in decision-making. It was, however, intended to give them some degree of influence, and make councillors more aware of public opinion, and more accountable to the public (Cheyne, 1997). As Section 5.1.5 shows submission-makers responses indicate they have similar expectations of the annual plan process.

The key aim of the research was to explore the degree of satisfaction experienced by submission-makers participating in the annual plan process and to determine what factors influence this satisfaction. The ‘index of satisfaction’ questions were therefore analysed more rigorously as they were the means of identifying what factors influenced the degree to which the annual plan process met the aspirations of submission-makers. Chi-square tests were carried out on all the ‘index of satisfaction’ questions to establish if any relationship existed between them and the responses to other questions. If the test was significant at the $p < 0.01$ level it was assumed an association did exist and the underlying explanation for this was then sought.

Monte Carlo tests were also done to ensure that the association found in a small sample would also apply to a bigger sample. A number of the associations significant at the

$p < 0.01$ level for Chi-Square were not significant when the tighter Monte Carlo tests were carried out. These associations were not considered.

These tests are important as they enable the researcher to predict with a reasonable degree of certainty that the relationship that exists in the sample population will also be found in the general population. This allows the results from the random sample of submission-makers to be reliably extrapolated to all submission-makers.

The questions that the 'index of satisfaction' consisted of not surprisingly had a significant level of association between each other as they were all different ways of measuring the level of satisfaction with the annual plan process.

The only two questions where the responses showed no relationship were between 'Did your input give you confidence in local authority decision-making?' and 'Willingness to make another submission?'. The high number of submission-makers willing to make another submission was quite independent of the degree of confidence they expressed in local authority decision-making. Table 5.13 gives the significant Chi-Square test results at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 5.13: Significant Relationships ($p < 0.01$) Between the Index of Satisfaction Questions

Index of Satisfaction	Are you satisfied with the outcome?	Would make another submission?	Process is worthwhile?	How much importance does council attach to submissions?	Confidence in council decision-making?
Submission made a difference ?	$X^2=136.253$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=21.727$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=63.693$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=85.991$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=97.472$ $p < .0005$
Are you satisfied with the outcome?		$X^2=27.750$ $p < .004$	$X^2=78.579$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=130.707$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=106.183$ $p < .0005$
Would make another submission?			$X^2=50.895$ $p < .001^*$	$X^2=63.600$ $p < .0005$	
Process is worthwhile?				$X^2=318.391$ $p < .0005$	$X^2=65.542$ $p < .0005$
How much importance does council attach to submissions?					$X^2=94.703$ $p < .0005$

* Monte Carlo test probability

Note: For ease of understanding mirror image test results are not included in Table 5.13

The above matrix is a mirror image so exactly the same test results are found in each half. For example, "Are you satisfied with the outcome?" and "Do submissions make a difference to the Annual Plan?" have the same test result as the questions in reverse.

The cross-tabulation tables for the 'index of satisfaction' questions can be found in Appendix V. To avoid repetition reverse relationships have not been detailed in the following discussion.

5.7.1 Did You Feel Your Submission Helped Make a Difference to the Final Annual Plan?

The annual plan process was intended to be a mechanism to allow citizens to be informed about and to influence the decisions of local government. Submission-makers were therefore asked if they felt their submission had made a difference to the final annual plan.

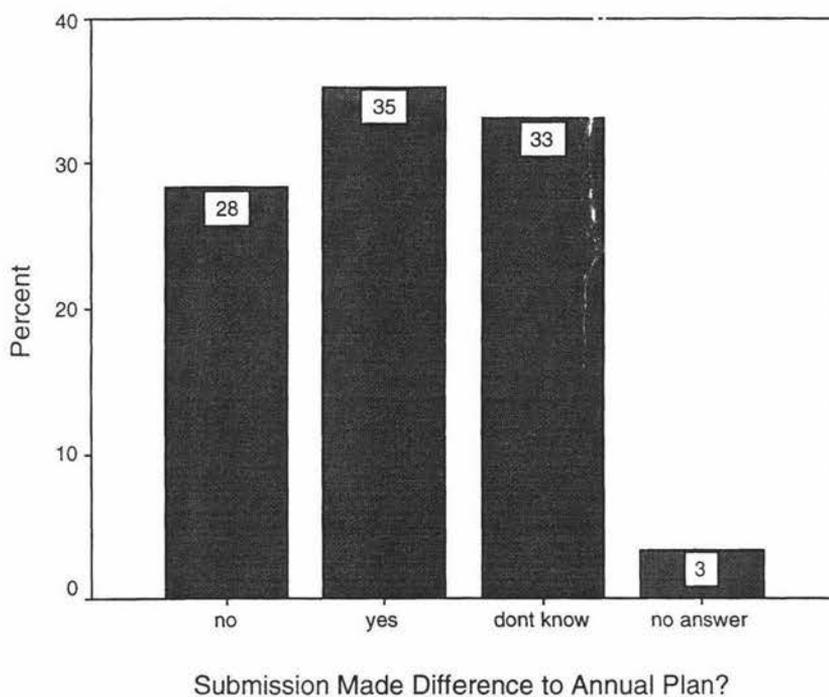


Figure 5.9: Survey Responses to the Question "Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan" 1999/2000

Tests for the relationships between whether submission-makers thought their submission made a difference and the other 'index of satisfaction' questions revealed that at the $p < 0.01$ level:

- Submission-makers who did not think submissions made a difference, did not think the annual plan process was worthwhile or of importance to council.
- Most of those submission-makers 'not satisfied' with the outcome of their submission (103 in total), felt that submissions did not make a difference to the

annual plan. Only 5% of those not getting the outcome they desired expressed the view that submissions made a difference. Even for those satisfied with the outcome a quarter did not believe submissions made a difference. Submission-makers only partially satisfied with the outcome generally did not know if their submission made a difference.

- Over half the submission-makers were prepared to make another submission with no confidence in their ability to make a difference. Most submission-makers indicated they would make another submission (299 in total). However, 84 (27%) of these did not believe submissions made a difference whilst a further (99) 32% indicated they did not know if submissions made a difference.
- The majority of submission-makers thought submissions were of 'some' importance (234) to the local authority. A higher-than-expected number of submission-makers who thought submissions were of 'some' importance responded they did not know whether submissions made a difference. The small number of submission-makers who thought submissions were of 'a lot' of importance (48) generally felt submissions made a difference.
- More of the submission-makers who did not think submissions made a difference said their input did not give them confidence in council decision-making (142) than said their input gave them confidence (93). Of those who did have confidence in council decision-making, a greater-than-expected number felt submissions did make a difference.

5.7.2 Are You Satisfied with the Outcome?

Submission-makers were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the outcome of their submission. Possible responses were; 'not satisfied', 'partially satisfied', 'very satisfied', or 'did not know'. This question was of interest, not just as a gauge of how many submission-makers considered their submission had achieved the desired results, but also as a means of determining whether satisfaction with the annual plan process was solely dependent on achieving set outcomes.

Nineteen percent of respondents replied that they were 'very satisfied' with the outcome and 43% reported they were partially satisfied. When these two categories 'very satisfied' and 'partially satisfied' were added together across all local authorities, involvement for the majority of respondents resulted in some degree of satisfaction.

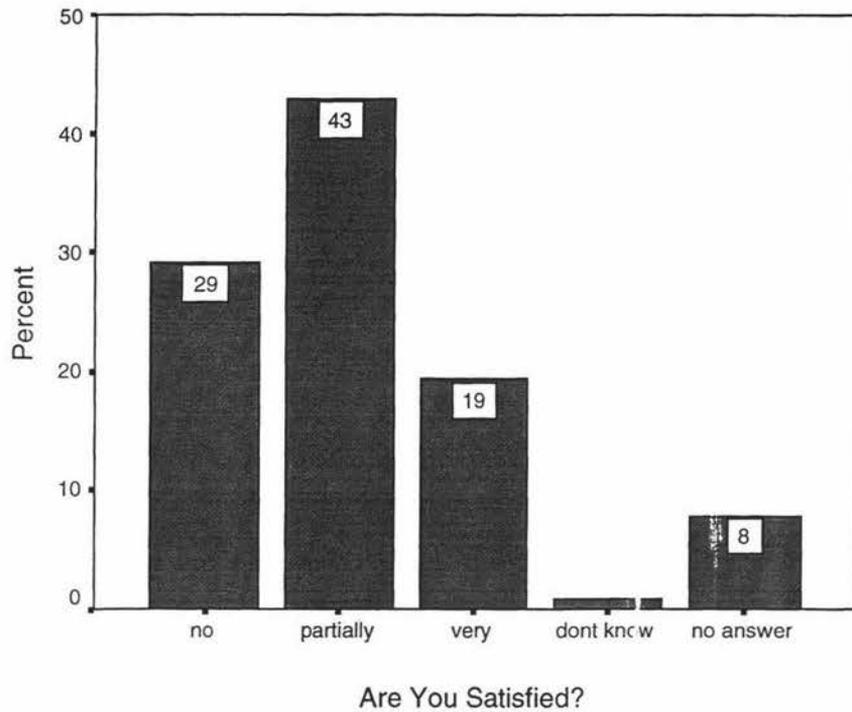


Figure 5.10: Survey Responses to the Question “Are You Satisfied with the Outcome” 1999/2000

5.7.2.1 Advice of Outcome

Involvement in the annual plan process would suggest that citizens take an interest in civic affairs. The survey, therefore, sought to establish whether local authorities acknowledged or recognised this by informing submission-makers of the decision on their submission. In order to determine whether they were sufficiently interested to find out for themselves, submission-makers were also asked whether they found out the outcome of their submission.

Just over half (51.5%) of submission-makers said they were advised of the outcome of their submission. For the local authorities dealing with small numbers of submissions (KCDC, CDC, WRC, and horizons.mw) the response to the question “Were you directly advised of the outcome of your submission?” was predominantly ‘yes’. Respondents from the larger local authorities PNCC and WCC responded with ‘no’ to a greater degree (over half of WCC and nearly two-thirds of PNCC respondents said ‘no’).

Table 5.14: Percentage of Respondents Advised of the Outcome 1999/2000

Area		No	Yes	Partly	No answer	Total
PN	Frequency	48	23	1	1	73
	Percent	65.8	31.5	1.4	1.4	100.0
WCC	Frequency	92	72		6	170
	Percent	54.1	42.4		3.5	100.0
KCDC	Frequency	9	44		3	56
	Percent	16.1	78.6		5.4	100.0
CDC	Frequency	5	11		1	17
	Percent	29.4	64.7		5.9	100.0
WRC	Frequency		15		2	17
	Percent		93.8		6.3	100.0
h.mw	Frequency	5	19	1		25
	Percent	20.0	76.0	4.0		100.0
All Local Authorities	Frequency	159	184	2	12	357
	Percent	44.5	51.5	0.6	3.4	100.0

The next section of the survey asked how submission-makers were advised of the outcome of their submission. The wording of this question resulted in some ambiguity. Some submission-makers considered a standard letter adequate advice of the outcome from a local authority. Others did not regard this as sufficient as they were interested in a reply that was specific to their own submission. The most frequently used form of feedback communication from a local authority was a letter - either a standard letter or a personalised letter. Due to the confusion with the replies regarding how submission-makers received feedback, no further analysis of this data was carried out.

Of those who were not directly advised, 54% attempted to find out what the outcome was. The way most of these people found out was to read about the outcome in either the media or annual plan itself at a later date. Most local authorities only publish a small number of adopted annual plans that are not automatically distributed to submission-makers. As there is no statutory requirement to publicise the availability of the annual plan finding out about the outcome of submissions by this means can be problematic.

Analysis of the relationships between satisfaction with outcome and the other 'index of satisfaction' questions showed that:

- Twenty six percent (83) of the 299 submission-makers willing to make another submission were 'not satisfied' with the outcome. Just under half (145) were only 'partially satisfied'. Submission-makers' willingness to make another submission is clearly not solely driven by success in securing what they want from the process. Of the nineteen submission-makers not willing to make another submission, sixteen

were not at all satisfied with the outcome the other three said they were partially satisfied.

- As would be expected, those not satisfied with the outcome thought the annual plan process was not worthwhile, whereas, if they were satisfied, they were inclined to think the process very worthwhile.

5.7.3 In Light of this Experience, Would You Make Another Submission in the Future?

A measure of submission-makers' assessment of the value of making submissions is their willingness to make a submission in the future. Submission-makers were therefore asked this question. As Figure 5.11 indicates by far the greatest number of submission-makers in all local authorities were prepared to make another submission.

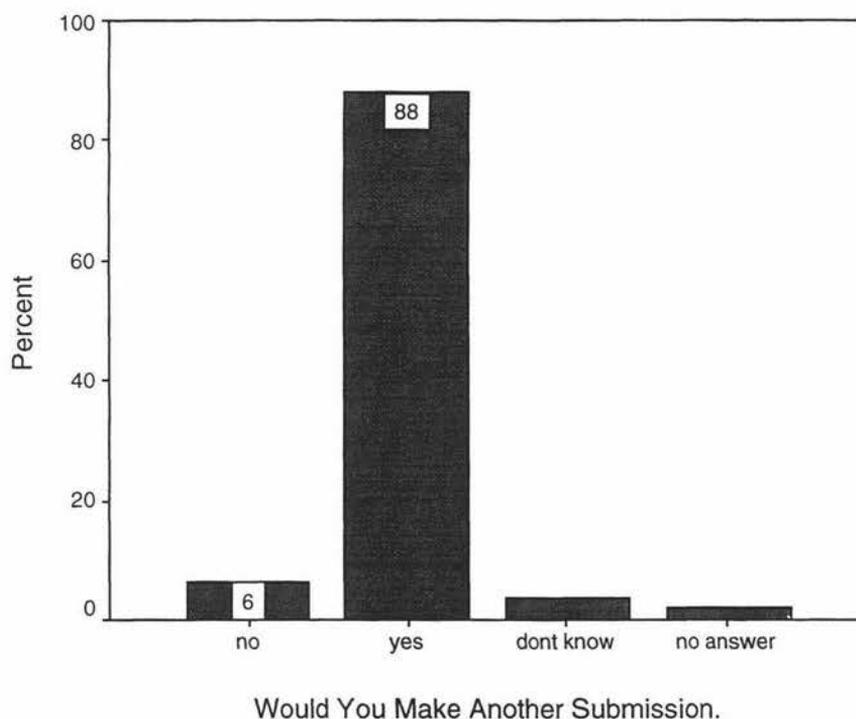


Figure 5.11: Survey Responses to the Question “Would You be Willing to Make Another Submission” 1999/2000

This overwhelmingly positive response indicates that those who participate in the annual planning process value the opportunity and gain some level of satisfaction from being able to take part despite not always being satisfied with the outcome, and the limited degree of influence on decision-making.

Only a small number of submission-makers (19) who answered this question said they would not make another submission. This response concurs with the participatory theory premise that participation fosters ‘strong’ democracy (Barber, 1984). Once involved, people retain interest in being part of the democratic process.

The significant relationship between ‘willingness to make another submission’ and ‘importance to council’ showed:

- The majority of submission-makers willing to make another submission believed submissions were only of ‘some’ importance to council. Only 4% submission-makers believed they were of ‘a lot’ of importance to council.

5.7.4 Do You Think the Process of Making Submissions to the Annual Plan is Worthwhile?

To determine how worthwhile submission-makers viewed the annual plan they were asked if they felt that making a submission to the annual plan was ‘very’, ‘somewhat’ or ‘not at all’ worthwhile. Over all councils the largest single category of respondents expressed the view that making a submission was ‘somewhat’ worthwhile. Just slightly less felt that it was a ‘very’ worthwhile process.

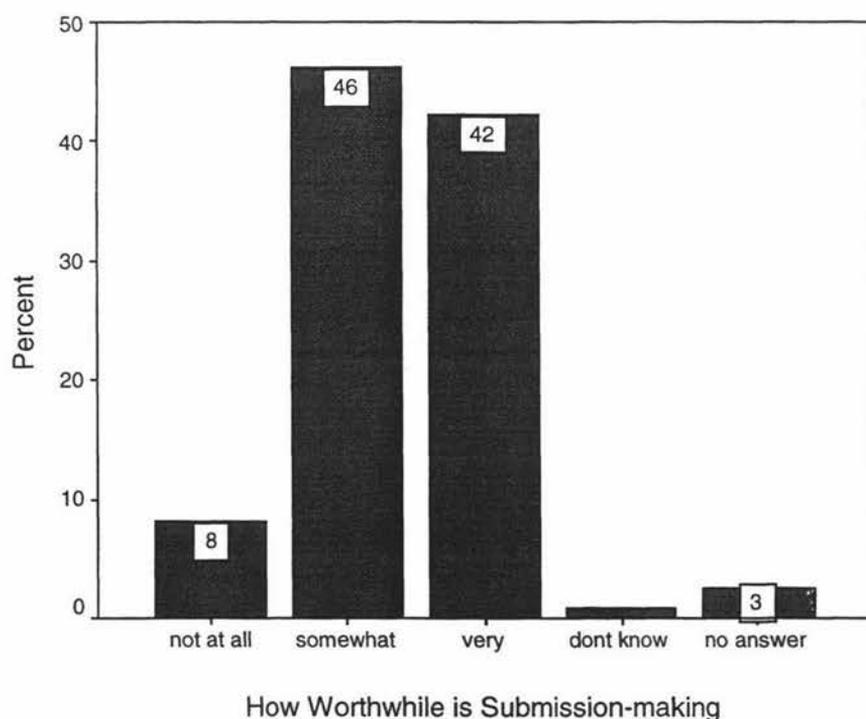


Figure 5.12: Survey Responses to the Question “Is the Process of Making a Submission Worthwhile” 1999/2000

PNCC had the lowest number of submission-makers (32.9%) who felt that it was a 'very' worthwhile process, and CDC the smallest council had the most (64.7%). When the total number of respondents replying 'somewhat worthwhile' and 'very worthwhile' are aggregated, 88% of submission-makers indicate that making a submission has some value.

The significant relationships between whether or not submission-makers thought the process was worthwhile were:

- Of those not willing to make another submission more than would be expected for this sample size thought the process was 'not at all' worthwhile.
- The degree of importance submission-makers felt elected members placed on submissions affected how worthwhile they thought the process was. Those considering submissions of 'no' importance to councillors, generally thought the annual plan was 'not at all' worthwhile. Those considering submissions of 'some' importance to the council generally rated it 'somewhat' worthwhile. Whereas, those considering submissions 'very' important to council rated the annual plan process as 'very' worthwhile.

5.7.5 How Much Importance Do You Think the Council Attaches to Submissions When Making Decisions?

To determine whether satisfaction was subjective or shaped by the ability to influence the outcome of the annual plan process, submission-makers were asked to indicate how much importance they thought the council attached to submissions when making decisions.

By far the greatest number of submission-makers felt that councils placed 'some' importance on submissions indicating that, overall, they felt they had some influence, though not 'a lot'. Most submission-makers expressed an opinion in response to this question.

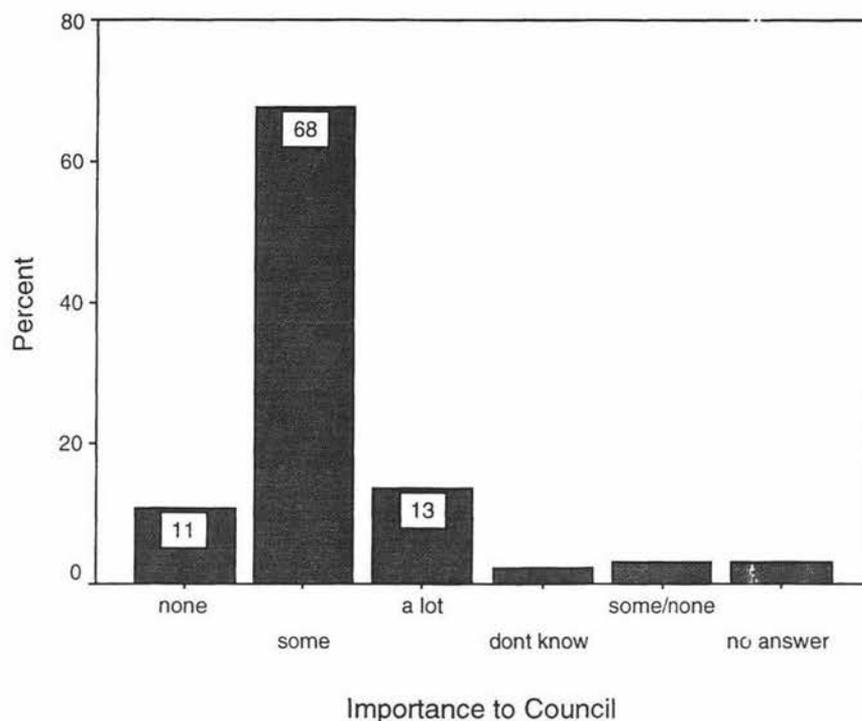


Figure 5.13: Survey Responses to the Question “How Much Importance Does Council Attach to Submissions”

Significant relationships between ‘importance of submissions to council’ and the other ‘index of satisfaction’ questions showed:

- Of those not satisfied with the outcome, a higher-than-expected number felt that council did not place any importance on the process or said they did not know. Submission-makers partially satisfied tended to believe council placed ‘some’ importance on submissions.
- Those that felt the submissions did make a difference and who were very satisfied with the outcome believed the council placed ‘a lot’ of importance on submissions.

5.7.6 Did Your Input into the Planning Process Give You Confidence in the Decision-making Processes of Council?

Increased legitimacy of decision-making is argued to be one of the benefits of participatory democracy (Nagel, 1987; Thomas, 1995). To obtain an insight into whether involvement increased participants’ understanding of local government affairs and gave them a greater understanding of how decisions were made (potentially increasing their acceptance of these decisions), respondents were asked whether their input gave them confidence in the decision-making processes of council. The largest

single response was 'no' (41%). The next most frequent response was 'don't know' (28%). Just over a quarter (26%) of respondents expressed the view that their participation gave them confidence in council decision-making. According to Day's research the level of confidence among citizens who participate in the annual plan process is higher than for the public at large. If this is the case, it can be inferred from this survey that over the community as a whole less than 26% of citizens have confidence in local government decision-making.

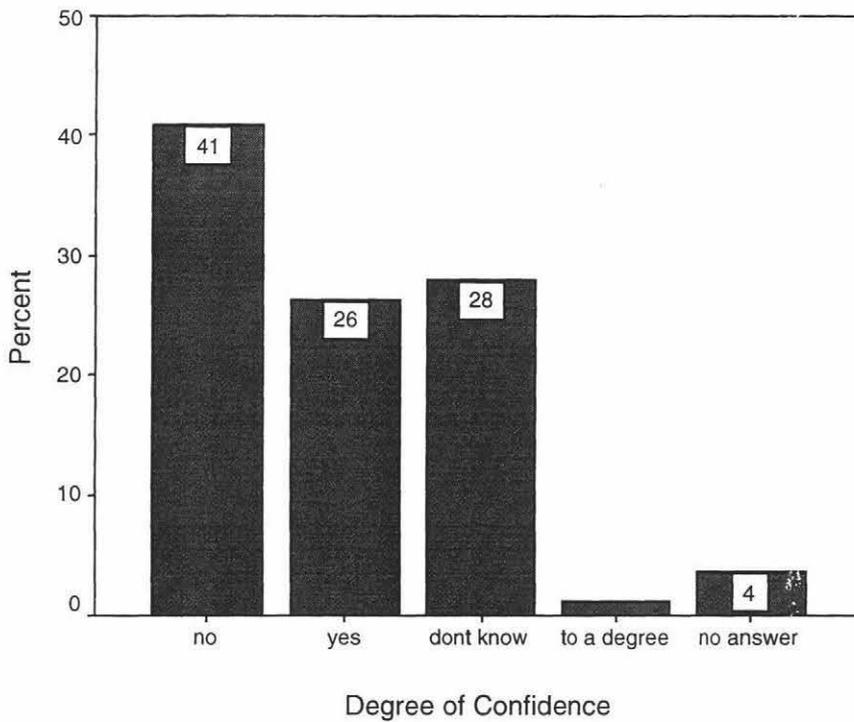


Figure 5.14: Survey Responses to the Question “Did Your Input Give You Confidence in Council Decision-making” 1999/2000

Significance testing showed that submission-makers' confidence in decision-making as a result of their input into the annual planning process was directly related to their response as to whether or not they felt the submissions made a difference and was worthwhile.

- If they felt it was 'not' worthwhile or 'somewhat' worthwhile, their input did not give them confidence. A greater-than-expected number of submission-makers who thought the process was very worthwhile said they had confidence in council decision-making.

- Those who felt their contribution had made a difference had confidence in the process, those uncertain did not know if it gave them confidence, and those who felt their contribution was not valued, had no confidence in the process.
- Satisfaction with the outcome was also directly linked to confidence. Those satisfied said their input gave them confidence in the process, while those not satisfied said the process gave them no confidence in decision-making. Of those describing themselves as ‘partially’ satisfied with the outcome, a less-than-expected number responded did not have confidence in council decision-making.

5.7.7 Extent of Submission-makers’ Satisfaction

Generally submission-makers who regarded the annual plan process positively felt that submissions did make a difference. They were also more likely to be happy with the outcome, willing to make another submission, to believe the process to be worthwhile, to consider that local authority placed importance on their submissions, and feel their involvement gave them confidence in the decision-making of council.

Submission-makers who regarded the annual plan process negatively generally felt that submissions did not make a difference, were more likely to be unhappy with the outcome, unwilling to make another submission, did not believe the process was worthwhile, or that the local authority placed importance on the submissions, and felt that their input did not give them confidence in the decision-making of the council.

To get an overall measure of how satisfactory submission-makers rated their experience in local government democracy responses were summed over the six ‘index of satisfaction’ questions. A point system was used where questions that had a positive reply were given a one, those with a partial or somewhat response allocated .5 and negative or don’t know replies ranked 0. These were then summed over all the local authorities and the results shown in the box-plot Figure 5.15. The black line across each box indicates the median - the point at which half the sample population fall above and below. The top of the box indicates the 75% percentile and the bottom the 25% percentile limit. The ‘whiskers’ extending from the box show the range of responses plotted. For all councils combined the median point was just less than 3, with 50% of submission-maker in the range of 2 to 4. Given that the range of outcomes is between 0 and 6, the overall conclusion was that people were moderately happy (in the intermediate range of a normal distribution).

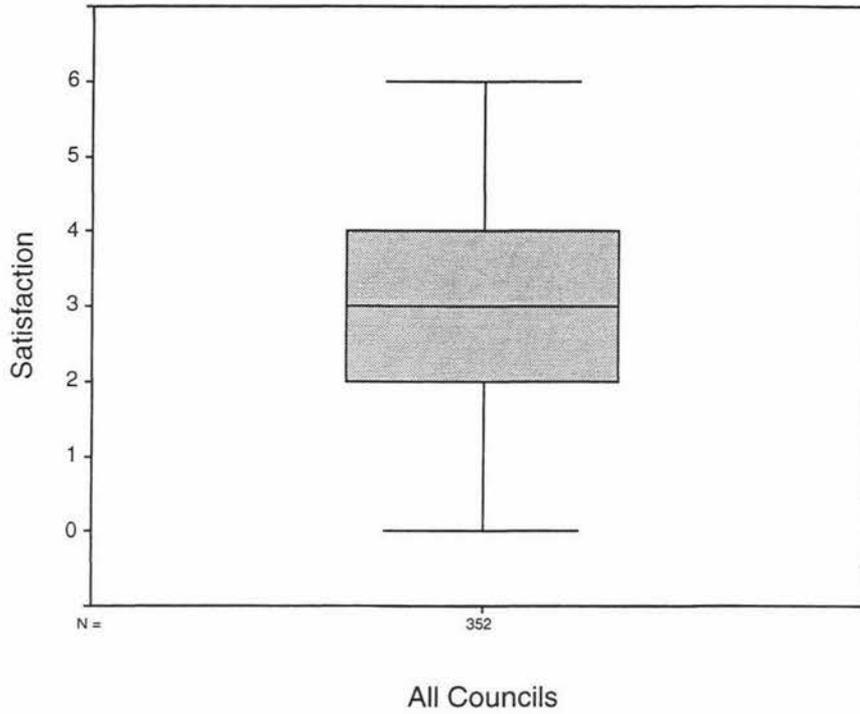


Figure 5.15: Box-plot of the Overall Level of Submission-maker Satisfaction

When the data is disaggregated by local authority submission-makers at CDC rated the process the highest out of the six local authorities.

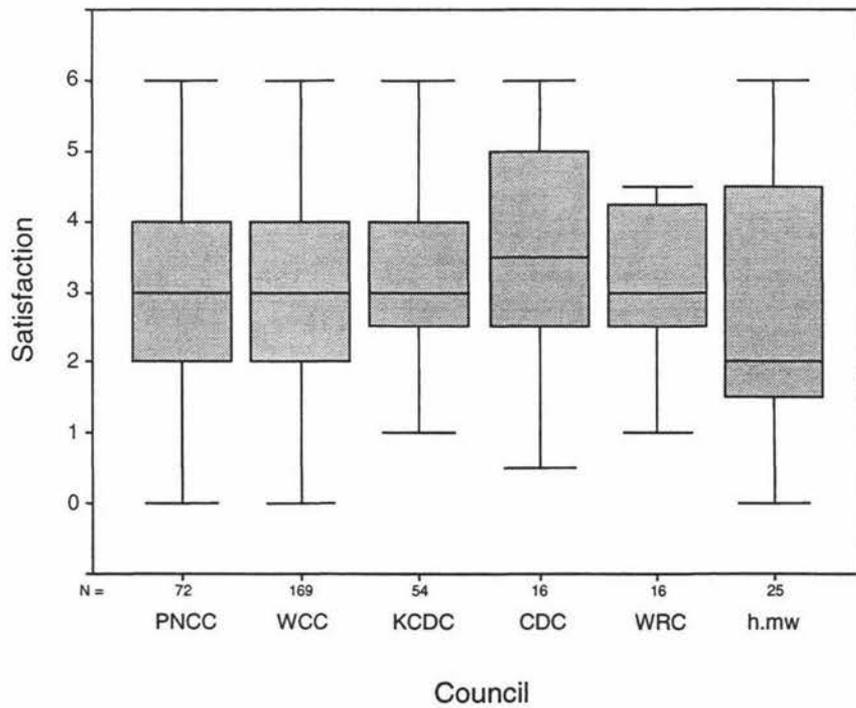


Figure 5.16: Box-plot of Submission-maker Satisfaction By Council

5.8 OTHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SATISFACTION

Chi-Square tests for independence or relatedness were carried out on the 'index of satisfaction' questions with the responses to all the other questions. Responses not in an appropriate format, such as, issues that submissions were made about, and the best and worst aspects of the annual plan process were not included. Significant relationships were shown to exist between the following responses and the 'index of satisfaction' questions:

1. The hearing process;
2. Belonging to an organisation;
3. Motivation for making a submission;
4. The outcome;
5. Carrying out the annual plan process every 5 years.

5.8.1 The Hearing Process

Although the relationships would only exist for those submission-makers that attended the public meetings to present their submission orally, these meetings were shown to have a very significant relationship with the 'index of satisfaction' questions. As Table 5.15 shows, both the hearing committee's response, and submission-makers feeling they had got their point across, were important aspect of satisfaction.

Table 5.15: Significant Relationships (p<0.01) Between Index of Satisfaction Questions and Hearings

Index of Satisfaction	Submission made a difference?	Are you satisfied with the outcome?	Would make another submission?	Process is worthwhile?	How much importance does council attach to submission?	Confidence in council decision-making?
Hearing committee response	$X^2=16.447$ p<.001*	$X^2=33.277$ p<.0005		$X^2=17.821$ p<.006*	$X^2=26.519$ p<.001	$X^2=50.075$ p<.0005
Helped get point across	$X^2=24.987$ p<.0005	$X^2=30.037$ p<.0005		$X^2=23.564$ p<.001	$X^2=31.076$ p<.0005	$X^2=25.379$ p<.001*
Hearing influenced council	$X^2=35.439$ p<.0005	$X^2=35.555$ p<.001*				$X^2=43.590$ p<.0005
Attended hearing	$X^2=12.432$ p<.001*	$X^2=12.681$ p<.003*				

* Monte Carlo test probability

5.8.1.1 Hearing Committee's Response to Oral Submission

- Those that found the hearings helpful were positive about the annual plan process – feeling that it was worthwhile, that councils placed a lot of importance on submissions, and input gave them confidence in council decision-making.
- Those finding the committee's response unhelpful did not think submissions made a difference and were not satisfied with the outcome.
- Submission-makers who did not find the hearing committee helpful also had no confidence in council decision-making.

5.8.1.2 Oral Submission Helped Get Point Across

- Those submission-makers who responded their 'submission made a difference' and that they were 'satisfied' with the outcome, felt their verbal submission helped them make their point to councillors. The converse also applied.
- Submission-makers who felt that their submission helped get their point across were positive about making another submission. However, not having got their point across did not deter submission-makers from being prepared to make another submission in the future. Being heard, in itself, is therefore an important aspect of encouraging citizens to participate.

5.8.1.3 Oral Submission Influenced Councillors

- Not surprisingly those who found the hearing committee's response helpful and felt the hearing helped them get their point across, thought that they had influenced councillors, that their submission made a difference, and that as a result they were satisfied with the outcome. They felt the process was very worthwhile and that council placed a lot of importance on submissions, and their attitude towards making another submission was positive. These respondents in general found the atmosphere at hearings relaxed and input gave them confidence in council decision-making. These views support the participatory theoretical argument that participation increases awareness of government and how it works.
- Respondents who felt the annual planning process was 'somewhat' worthwhile were uncertain as to how effective the hearing had been in terms of getting their point across. They did not know if their input gave them confidence in council decision-

making. They found the atmosphere at the hearings to be more formal, and they found the committee's response to be neutral.

5.8.1.4 Attending Hearings

- Respondents who attended hearings were more inclined to feel their submission made a difference than those who did not.
- Those attending hearings were not necessarily happy with the outcome, in fact a greater-than-expected number indicated they were not satisfied with the outcome. Sixty two percent of those attending hearings were from organisations and 38% were individuals.

Hearings were shown by the analysis to be an important aspect of satisfaction. A positive view of the hearing process, generally responded to a positive view of the annual plan process itself. While satisfaction with the hearing process was more likely to be expressed if the outcome of the submission was positive, satisfaction was not totally dependent on outcome.

Belonging to an Organisation

Belonging to an organisation was an important aspect of whether or not submission-makers viewed the annual plan process positively. As Table 5.16 shows there were four associations between the 'index of satisfaction' questions and whether or not the submission-maker belonged to an organisation.

Table 5.16: Significant Relationships (p<0.01) Between Index of Satisfaction Questions and Belonging to an Organisation

Index of Satisfaction	Submission made a difference?	Are you satisfied with the outcome?	Would make another submission?	Process is worthwhile?	How much importance does council attach to submissions?	Confidence in council decision-making?
Belongs to organisation	$X^2=17.092$ $p<.0005$	$X^2=17.344$ $p<.0005^*$	$X^2=12.370$ $p<.001^*$			$X^2=19.741$ $p<.0005$

* Monte Carlo test probability

Whether or not submission-makers belonged to a group or organisation was shown to be related to whether or not they thought their submission made a difference. A greater-than-expected number of those belonging to an organisation thought submissions did make a difference, whereas, individuals were more likely to think their submission made no difference or they did not know. An association also existed between

membership of an organisation and willingness to make another submissions. Organisations were also more likely to be willing to make another submission. Organisations were more likely to say that input gave them confidence in council decision-making. The analysis indicated that individuals were less inclined to make another submission and less likely to say their input gave them confidence in council decision-making. Participatory theory promotes the need for participants to feel they are influencing outcomes to sustain involvement. Organisations and groups obviously find their input more generally rewarding and this was reflected in the number that had made three or more submissions. The findings of this survey support the view that the annual plan process is more effective for organised publics than unorganised political actors.

5.8.2 Motivation for Making a Submission

One association was demonstrated to exist between the motivation given by submission-makers for making a submission and whether they felt submissions made a difference. Question 24 gave submission-makers a choice of six different statements to describe their motivation, plus the category 'Other'. The Chi-Square tests showed that a greater-than-expected number of submission-makers who thought submissions did not make a difference were motivated to participate by concern about the quality of decision-making ($X^2=36.541$, $p<0.005^*$).

5.8.3 The Outcome

As Table 5.17 shows an association was demonstrated to exist between the 'index of satisfaction' questions and the two questions 'Were you advised of the outcome?' and 'Did you find out the outcome?'

Table 5.17: Significant Relationships ($p<0.01$) Between Index of Satisfaction Questions and the Submission Outcome

Index of Satisfaction	Submission made a difference?	Are you satisfied with the outcome?	Would make another submission?	Process is worthwhile?	How much importance does council attach to submissions?	Confidence in council decision-making?
Were you advised of the outcome	$X^2=21.289$ $p<.0005$				$X^2=29.215$ $p<.009^*$	
Did you find out the outcome	$X^2=13.258$ $p<.001$	$X^2=17.012$ $p<.0005^*$	$X^2=12.155$ $p<.001^*$			$X^2=21.459$ $p<.0005$

* Monte Carlo test probability

As a rule where the submission-makers were advised of the outcome, they were more inclined to believe their submission made a difference. Those not advised of the outcome of their submission thought council placed no importance, or did not know if council placed importance on submissions. Advising submission-makers of the outcome would seem to give submission-makers the impression that councillors take notice of what is in submissions.

Those submission-makers who were not advised of the outcome of their submission were asked if they made an effort to find out the outcome for themselves. Those who did not take the time to find out responded that they did not know if submissions had made a difference. In contrast, those who did find out felt their submission had definitely made a difference. A greater-than-expected number of those who did not find out, were not satisfied with the outcome, were not willing to make another submission and had no confidence in council decision-making. Those who did make the effort themselves to find out were generally satisfied, prepared to make another submission, and had some confidence in council decision-making.

Beresford and Croft (1993, 40) highlight the need to provide feedback to persons involving themselves in participatory exercises. They believe this is much more than just a courtesy; it is a way of keeping people in touch with progress, developing trust and keeping them informed about what part they have played in bringing about change. If people are unaware they have been listened to, they are unlikely to get involved in the future. Feedback is essential to sustain interest. These results confirm the insights from other participatory exercises about the importance of feedback.

5.8.4 Carrying Out the Annual Plan Process Every Five Years

Submission-makers were asked if they thought it was necessary to have the annual plan process as often as every year. They were given the choice between every two years and every five years. There was no significance shown between the responses to the two year option and the 'index of satisfaction' questions but there were four different associations between the 'index of satisfaction' questions and the replies to whether the process would work as well on a five yearly basis.

Table 5.18: Significant Relationships (p<0.01) Between Index of Satisfaction Questions and the Planning Process Five Yearly

Index of Satisfaction	Submission made a difference?	Are you satisfied with the outcome?	Would make another submission?	Process is worthwhile?	How much importance does council attach to submissions?	Confidence in council decision-making?
Would the planning process work as well if only done once every five years?			X ² =17.360 p<.008*	X ² =42.909 p<.002*	X ² =26.733 p<.005*	X ² =22.760 p<.007*

* Monte Carlo test probability

Those submission-makers who were willing to make another submission, those who found the current process worthwhile, those that found that Council attached importance to submissions, and those that said it gave them confidence in council decision-making were strongly opposed to having a five yearly cycle. Those who responded negatively to these questions indicated they thought having submissions every five years would work. Not surprisingly those that did not consider that submissions make a difference, thought having the annual plan process less frequently would not compromise its overall effectiveness.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The descriptive data collated from the questionnaire provides an up-to-date picture of submission-makers and their views on the annual plan process. The views of submission-makers have not been collected in a survey of this type before.

The data reported in this chapter reveals that submission-makers generally view the annual plan process as worthwhile though it does not always meet their aspirations. The majority of submission-makers are either unsure whether submissions make a difference, or of the opinion submissions do not really make a difference. Most submission-makers believe that submissions are only of some importance to a local authority, therefore, they do not have a great deal of influence on the decisions made by their local authority.

Despite the acknowledged lack of influence most submission-makers believe it is their democratic right to make a submission and are prepared to make another submission at some stage in the future. People obviously value their right to express their views despite reservations about their council's willingness to listen to the public, and engage in 'open' consultation. This is confirmed by the fact that the best aspect of the annual plan process for the most people is the ability to be heard/advocate/make council aware.

People unhappy with the outcome of their submission generally did not think submissions made a difference. But partial satisfaction with the outcome gave submission-makers some degree of confidence in council decision-making. While almost two-thirds of respondents said they had some degree of satisfaction with the outcome of their submission, only a third felt they had made some difference to the annual plan. Therefore, it can be inferred that a third of participants benefited on a personal basis from involvement rather than from their ability to influence local authorities' decisions or make the local authority accountable.

The survey revealed other significant characteristics of the annual plan process, and the submission-makers who participate in it.

Most individual submission-makers owned their own homes and therefore paid rates. They were employed (or had been employed) in middle-class occupations and were over 50 years old. Slightly more men than women participated. Hearings were closely associated with how submission-makers viewed the annual plan process, a reflection most probably of the fact that people who attend hearings generally put more effort into their submission and have higher aspirations with regards to the outcomes. Submission-makers who found the hearing process a positive experience were more satisfied with the annual plan process and more likely to hold the view that submissions provided the opportunity to influence and fine tune the annual plan. Whether or not they were advised of the outcome was also directly associated with the level of satisfaction from involvement.

Submissions were received from a diverse range of groups, organisations and businesses many of which regularly participate. Submission-makers from organisations tend to be more positive about the annual plan process and how it works. Individuals have less enthusiasm and feel they lack influence.

Chapter Six

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUBMISSIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEMOCRACY

A purpose of local government as set out in s37K of the amended Local Government Act 1974 was to provide for public participation in local authority affairs. It was intended that this public participation would enable citizens to have a greater influence on local authority activities, and provide a means of making representatives accountable to the citizens who elected them.

While the reforms also included other provisions for increased public participation, such as community boards and increased remuneration for councillors,¹³ the statutory annual planning and reporting cycle, and the special consultative procedure that it embodies, were the key mechanisms. They were also to be the main measures for making local authorities accountable to citizens. My research focused on how effective the annual plan process has been at achieving these two objectives in the view of the citizens who avail themselves of the opportunities to participate in local government affairs.

This chapter sets out to answer the key points of interest with regard to submission-makers participation raised in the thesis thus far. The extent to which the provisions for public involvement, as set out in the annual planning process, achieve the theoretical benefits of participation are considered. It provides recommendations for improving the annual plan process, gives some comments on further areas of research and then concludes with how the findings can be interpreted in the wake of the current local government review.

6.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS

This thesis endeavoured to get the perspectives of submission-makers on the annual plan process. The research sought to explore a number of questions concerning participatory democracy and the submission-making process. At this point it is appropriate to consider the extent to which these have been answered by the information collated from the survey responses.

¹³ To enable more people to stand for election.

6.1.1 Do submission-makers consider the annual planning cycle and s716A provide an effective form of participation and an adequate opportunity to participate?

In general submission-makers believe the contribution their submissions make to local government democracy is limited. Most citizens who participate believe their views are of some importance to local authorities but not a lot. As far as they are concerned the best aspects of the annual plan process are that it provides an opportunity to have a say, advocate and make council aware of their concerns. It also increases their understanding of democracy in the local government context. The third best feature in the view of submission-makers is the provision of information and public nature of a local authorities' planning and budgeting functions.

In terms of whether or not the annual plan process provides an adequate opportunity to participate the view of submission-makers is that the provision to make submissions allows citizens to get things off their chest and encourages councillors to listen. While submission-makers acknowledge submissions provide a chance to influence the annual plan most submission-makers felt that this was not great. Only a third of submission-makers felt their contribution made a difference to the annual plan. Generally submission-makers expressed more concern over the lack of open-mindedness of elected representatives than their inability to be part of the decision-making process.

While submission-makers satisfied with the outcomes, had more confidence in council decision-making than those dissatisfied, the majority of submission-makers valued their chance to participate and would make another submission regardless of the outcome.

6.1.2 Do submission-makers consider the annual planning cycle and s716A provide a satisfactory level of accountability by local authorities to citizens, and, a local government that is open and accountable to its citizens? Previous surveys have found that the general public does not believe local government is responsive to citizens. Is this view shared by submission-makers? Does the annual plan process improve the quality and acceptability of local authority decisions to submission-makers?

The degree of importance submission-makers consider local authorities place on submissions is a gauge of the level of accountability they perceive local authorities have to submission-makers. Local authorities argue they are accountable to all citizens not just those who make submissions. However, accountability can involve not just

providing the outcomes people desire. It can include advising people of the decision made and providing justification for that decision.

The extent to which local government is considered to be open and accountable is reflected in the answers to two questions. The first is whether or not submission-makers believe councillors are genuinely interested in the views of citizens. This was obviously doubted, with 52% of submission-makers of the opinion that local authorities only carry out the annual plan process because they are required to by law. The second is the degree of confidence in local government decision-making. Only 26% of respondents said they had confidence in council decision-making. Day (1998), in his study of why people participate in the annual plan process, found that people who do not get involved have little or no confidence in either the process itself or the council. However, those who did participate found the annual plan process generally helpful. Submission-makers' perceptions of the openness and accountability of local government are therefore, likely to be more positive than for the public in general.

The extent to which the annual plan process contributes to the quality and acceptability of local authority decisions, is also reflected by the level of confidence in council decision-making. The relatively low level of confidence expressed would imply a lack of support among submission-makers for local authority decisions. The lack of opportunity for submission-makers to engage in discussion with decision-makers to increase submission-makers understanding of the various factors to be taken into account means that greater acceptability and understanding of local government decision-making is unlikely to result from the annual plan process as it now stands.

6.1.3 How satisfactory do submission-makers find the experience of participating in the annual plan process? Do submission-makers views conform with the principles of participation set out by Wilcox (1994) i.e. people will only be willing to be involved if they understand what is going on, have sufficient confidence to participate and see some point in it?

Using the 'index of satisfaction' questions as the measure, most submission-makers were neither extremely satisfied, nor very unsatisfied, with the annual plan process.

Wilcox's argument that participation is only effective if people understand each other, is borne out by the response to the questions regarding the hearings. There was a very strong association between the 'index of satisfaction' questions and the submission-

makers' experience at the hearing process. Having the confidence to participate was not an issue for those replying to the questionnaire. Only a small number described the hearings as daunting. This issue is likely to be more relevant to those citizens who do not make submissions. Participation is limited by factors such as difficulty in understanding the information provided. The high percentage of submission-makers in the professional occupations and the education sector is an indication that a reasonable level of education is required to participate.

Most people who make submissions do see some point in it - even if this is just their democratic right to have a say. This was confirmed by their willingness to make another submission.

6.1.4 Do submission-makers believe expenditure on consultation is worthwhile?

The willingness of submission-makers to make another submission at some other time and the fact that 46% of submission-makers felt the process was in some way worthwhile, and another 42% felt it was very worthwhile, would seem to indicate that submission-makers consider there is some value resulting from expenditure on consultation. The fact that very few submission-makers supported having the annual plan process less frequently (every 2 years 22%; every 5 years 3%) reinforces the view that submission-makers regard the expenditure on consultation as worthwhile.

These views were however, contradicted to some extent by submission-makers when they were asked what they regarded as the worst aspects of the annual plan process. The cost in time and money was ranked third in the worst aspect category with 46 responses to this effect. A further 26 respondents said the annual plan process was a farce and waste of money.

Most respondents regarded the ability to have their say as the best aspect of the annual plan process and the predetermined outcomes/lack of influence as the worst aspect. Therefore, the provision of some other forum for people to have an input may be more cost effective and just as profitable.

6.1.5 Is lack of appropriate information a barrier to participation?

The availability of appropriate information was regarded as a problem for a number of submission-makers. However, the problems were more to do with difficulties

understanding what was provided than lack of information. Providing the appropriate level of information to citizens with divergent interests and abilities will be difficult for local government. Legislative requirements, contracts, complicated resource allocation and the requirements of the LTFS make the affairs of local government reasonably complex. The information currently provided by local authorities is complicated. In many ways it is more tailored to meeting the local authority's internal accounting needs and complying with the GAAP requirements than the needs of citizens. This means that few people are knowledgeable enough to make a contribution to the overall operations of their local council without extensive preparation.

Despite the difficulties encountered with the information supplied by local authorities the discipline placed on councils to plan ahead, provide information to the public and report back to the public, was seen as the second greatest strength of the annual plan process.

6.1.6 Do submission-makers share the view of the general public that participation makes no difference? Is lack of influence a barrier to participation?

The opinion expressed by the general public in the Forsyte Research survey that people had a chance to express their views in local government, was confirmed by submission-makers. The majority believed that submissions allowed citizens to get things off their chests and the most liked aspect of the annual plan process was the opportunity it offered to be heard, advocate and make local authorities aware of their constituent's views. The statutory right to make submissions provided by the annual plan process gives citizens an opportunity to present their views in a way that does not exist at the central government level.

An indication of the extent to which local authorities are open to the influence of public opinion can possibly be gauged by the fact that 59% of submission-makers who attended the hearings felt they had got their point across to the politicians. However, only a quarter felt they had had some influence. In addition, only a third of all submission-makers felt they had made a difference to the annual plan. The general feeling expressed was that submissions are not of a lot of importance to elected representatives. As a means of providing accountability of local government to citizens, the annual plan provisions are therefore somewhat limited.

Submission-makers generally share the view of the general public (expressed in the World Values Survey) that participation does not make a significant difference. They acknowledge their lack of influence in the annual plan process with as few as 13% responding that they thought submissions were of 'a lot' of importance to local authorities and only 35% feeling their submission made a difference to the annual plan. The predetermined attitudes and lack of influence ranked as the worst aspect of the annual plan process. While the lack of influence was disliked, for the majority, it was not a barrier to participation. Submission-makers were more than willing to make another submission at some time in the future if they felt the need to express their views to council.

6.1.7 What motivates citizens to participate?

The majority of individuals and organisations were motivated to make a submission by their interest in a specific issue and their desire to express their opinion on this matter.

The next highest ranked motivation for participation was different for individuals than for organisations. Individuals expressed concern about the quality of decision-making, whereas organisations participated more because it was part of their civic responsibility.

6.1.8 Do submission-makers believe local authorities comply with the intent of the legislation?

Many regular submission-makers only have contact with their council through the annual plan process. The fact that only 15% of submission-makers thought that councils would ask for submissions if they were not required to by law, indicates that most do not believe local authorities comply with the intent of law, just the letter of the law.

6.1.9 How do elected representatives respond to submission-makers?

The response of elected representatives to the input of citizens can be a measure of how worthwhile they perceive citizens' submissions to be. The lack of feedback to submission-makers about the outcome of their submission is an indication that submissions are not highly valued. While it is understandable that councillors are reluctant to get into protracted correspondence with citizens, they still need to be accountable to the citizens who elect them. To make the process transparent, elected representatives should be able to give adequate information to citizens to enable them to understand the reason for their decision.

The treatment of submission-makers at hearings is also another gauge of how highly regarded submissions are. Submission-makers who found councillors at the hearing 'helpful' were far more positive about the annual plan process than submission-makers who found councillors 'unhelpful'. Dissatisfaction expressed by submission-makers with the hearings related to the lack of preparedness by councillors, their inattention, disinterest and the evident compliance mentality.

6.1.10 How do submission-makers perceive the role of local authorities officers?

There was no direct question asked in the survey about how submission-makers perceive the role of local authority staff. However, it was evident from the responses given to the most disliked aspect of the annual plan process that some submission-makers were dissatisfied with the amount of influence exerted by local authorities officers.

6.2 PARTICIPATORY THEORY AND THE ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS

Participatory theory holds that participation is critical to promote healthy democracy. This section considers how the annual plan process measures up on theoretical grounds.

6.2.1 Is the annual plan process genuine participation or tokenism?

Submission-making is fundamentally a means of information transfer. As best it corresponds to level 4, consultation, on Arnstein's ladder of participation (outlined in Chapter Three) and using Arnstein's criteria does not qualify as genuine participation. To satisfy s223D of the Act, through the vehicle of the draft annual plan, local authorities inform citizens of what they propose to do in the coming financial year. The Local Government Act 1974 allows citizens to contribute to deliberation by making submissions on proposed policies/programmes but the requirement to consult under s716A places no onus on local authorities to use the information to determine the outcome of the process (Controller and Auditor-General, 1998, 33). Citizens who choose to be involved inform their local authority of their opinions with regard to items included, or not included in the draft annual plan. Making a submission in response to the draft annual plan is not regarded as an appropriate time to present new ideas or concepts. Therefore, participation does not allow citizens to have a significant impact on policy outcomes, or involvement in setting the agenda, important aspects of participation (Wilcox, 1994; Burns *et al.*, 1994, 156). Nor does the annual plan

submission-making process provide citizens who aspire to more involvement in decision-making with the opportunity to do so. According to Cheyne (1999, 209) they are dissatisfied that the statutory provisions allow them to be well-informed and contribute but give them no real influence. As no power-sharing takes place, theory suggests there is likely to be a low level of on-going commitment and interest by submission-makers. However, the survey results indicated that even though they acknowledged they had little influence, the majority (88%) were willing to make another submission. Citizen empowerment does not therefore seem to be a primary objective for submission-makers. Citizens seem more concerned with making council aware of their views and having their views reflected in council decision-making.

6.2.2 Does genuine consultation take place between citizens and decision-makers?

Local authorities are required to use the special consultative procedure s716A with regard to the annual plan under s223D, s122K and s122N of the Local Government Act 1974¹⁴. There is now an established body of case law in New Zealand that clearly defines the legal requirements of consultation. The case most often cited as precedent is the *Wellington International Airport Limited v Air New Zealand* [1993] 1 NZLR 671 in which Justice McGechan determined that genuine consultation requires an open mind, two way exchange of information, and sufficient time to allow parties to be well-informed and respond. The *South Taranaki Energy Users Association Incorporated v South Taranaki District Council* [1997] CP5/97 case further spelt this out stating that members of the public who elect to participate in the process under s716A are entitled to expect a local authority to genuinely consider submissions, retain an open mind, and have proper regard to the submissions. The predetermined attitudes and lack of influence was the most disliked aspect of the annual plan process so the requirement of elected representatives to be 'open-minded' does not seem to be apparent to submission-makers. As the draft annual plan is finalised over a long period of time (See Figure 2.1 in Chapter Two) the process of making a submission tends to become a matter of persuading councillors (and staff) to move from their preferred position rather than engaging in open-minded consultation.

¹⁴ Section 716A is also required to be used for a number of other purposes such as Waste Management Plans and divestment of assets. See Appendix B of the Report of the Controller and Auditor-General (1998).

6.2.3 Does participation foster citizenship and understanding of governmental processes?

According to democratic theory, one of the benefits of participation is that involvement by the different parties in deliberation enables greater appreciation of others perspectives and views and therefore, wider acceptance of the final decision made. The annual plan process, however, makes no provision for citizens to engage in the deliberation process or be part of the two-way exchange of information critical to good deliberation.

Although decisions on submissions have to be made at a public meeting of the local authority, no justification for decisions is required. It is, therefore, an assumption of the Act that the debate that takes place between representatives prior to a decision being made, is sufficient to provide accountability to citizens. The annual plan process provides citizens with no formal or direct accountability, and in most instances no notification of when the decision will be made.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

From the comments made by the submission-makers who responded to the survey there are a number of areas in which local authorities can improve the annual plan process to make it more user-friendly and enhance citizen satisfaction.

6.3.1 Hearings

Hearings were shown to be a very important gauge of the overall level of satisfaction expressed by citizens in the annual plan process. Submission-makers who were happy with the hearing response (though not necessarily happy with the outcome) were generally positive about the annual plan process. From the comments made by citizens the following improvements are suggested:

- Ensure that hearings are more interactive sessions, with councillors undertaking sufficient preparation prior to the hearing to be able to ask pertinent questions.
- Separate substantial submissions from the regular 'pot hole' submissions and allocate a more appropriate amount of time. The commonly used time constraints make no allowances for the complexity of issues, size of the group making the submission or the civic impact.

- Ensure that councillors do not appear bored and disinterested. Councillors need to display a genuine interest rather than giving the impression they are 'going through the motions'. Many citizens place value on being able to meet councillors face to face, and this needs to be accommodated in a democratic polity. The variable quality of inputs is an acknowledged issue associated with public involvement (Fagance, 1977). This does not, however, excuse local authority officers and councillors from paying attention to citizen opinions.
- Schedule hearings in such a way that submissions on similar subjects are grouped together to allow citizens to increase their understanding of local government issues and gain a better appreciation of other viewpoints (one of the theoretical benefits attributed to participation). This requirements needs to be balanced with providing flexibility to accommodate the availability of submission-makers.

6.3.2 Advice of Outcome

Submission-makers who were aware of the outcome of their submissions were shown to be more satisfied with the annual plan process than those who were not. Advising submission-makers of the outcome is therefore a worthwhile exercise but it can also be an expensive process. An attempt to do this in a cost-effective way was made by PNCC in 2000/2001. They sent out a standard letter, outlining the changes they had made as a result of submissions and telling the submission-maker if they would like a specific response to contact the council secretary to make an appointment with the appropriate person to discuss the issue. Problems can be associated with time delays between submissions being considered and contact with submission-makers. A website with details of submissions and the decisions made could provide a speedier response and a wider coverage.

6.3.3 Positive Attitude to Consultation

The attitude of local authorities towards the consultation process affects submission-makers perceptions of the process. Submission-makers should be given credit for generating good ideas and consultation regarded as an investment in both democracy and better decision-making.

Publicity should therefore be given to good ideas generated by submission-makers. This could also have positive spin-offs for local authorities as it shows a willingness to engage in 'open' consultation with the public. While local authority staff may be appreciative of the public contributions, for example, Palmerston North City Council officers in their summary of submissions on the 1999/2000 Draft Annual Plan commented on the number of good ideas (PNCC, 1999) this information is often not communicated to the wider public.

Wellington City Council staff also commented that:

written and oral submissions are usually from highly motivated individuals and groups. They often have specialised knowledge of the subject area and may have invested considerable resources into research. These detailed viewpoints can clarify issues and raise concerns that may not have been identified previously. The submission process can also help the council to identify affected parties (Wellington City Council, 1999, 4).

This contribution from submission-makers is not necessarily publicly acknowledged in a way that encourages further input.

6.4 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ANNUAL PLAN FORMAT

To overcome a number of the problems submission-makers and local authorities have raised in conjunction with the annual plan process a revised format for the procedure is proposed in this section (see Figure 6.1).

This format is more in line with the approach taken by some submission-makers at present. They prefer to lobby prior to the production of the draft annual plan and use submission to legitimise and give more weight to their proposal. Soliciting input from citizens at the start of the process also has the advantage of changing submission-making from a reactive to a proactive undertaking. Wairoa District Council has adopted this procedure for the 2001 round of the annual planning cycle. The local authority first called for an initial round of submissions, then prepared a draft annual plan incorporating and costing those submissions, and asked for further public feedback before making a final decision (*Dominion*, 9/3/2001). According to Margoluis and Salafsky (1998) participation when a plan is in its early and formative stage gives the

flexibility to accommodate input on a wide range of issues not likely to be considered otherwise.

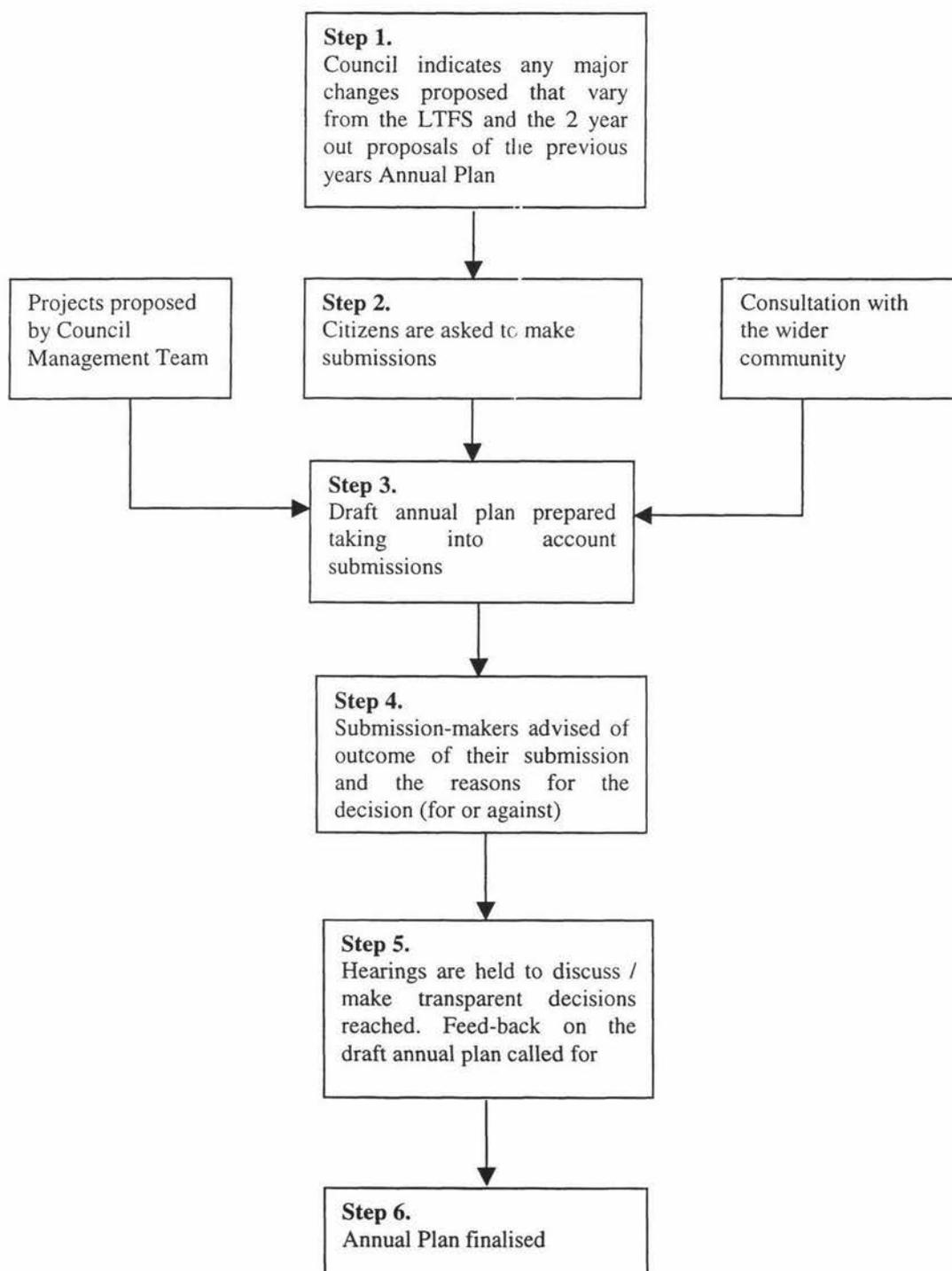


Figure 6.1: Proposed Change to Annual Plan Format

- Step 1. Ensure the community is aware of any proposed major policy change that varies from the LTFS or annual plan by flagging these issues to the public.
- Step 2. Enable submission-makers to have an input at a point where they can have a more substantial influence, by calling for submissions at the time when local authority staff are putting together their budgets for the forthcoming year. Because the annual plan is prepared for a three year period, with one year in detail and two years in more general terms, this should provide an adequate base from which to work. Local authorities could also survey the views of the general public on different issues. (Using the customer satisfaction surveys already done by many local authorities may be the most cost-effective way of doing this as surveys are expensive.)
- Step 3. Draw up the draft annual plan using the combined input from citizens, local authority staff and councillors.
- Step 4. Advise the submission-maker of the outcome of the submission and why it was made. This information can also be made available to the general public via the web.
- Step 5. Allow the submission-maker to discuss with councillors the outcome of their submission at a public hearing. The hearings would in fact become more like the District Plan process of cross-submissions. Such a session would involve debate, political interaction and deliberation - the ostensible value accorded to both participatory and representative democracy. Other public feedback on the draft annual plan can also be incorporated at this stage.
- Step 6. Complete the final plan after citizens have the opportunity to provide feedback and local authorities have the opportunity to consider their perspectives.

6.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

The data from the six different local authorities was aggregated for the purpose of analysis. Any noteworthy difference between responses from submission-makers in different local authorities was indicated. However, determining why the differences existed was not possible within the scope of this study. The local authorities chosen for the study were selected in such a way as to be broadly representative of local authorities

throughout New Zealand. However, the different patterns of responses found in individual local authorities may reflect specific local authority dynamics or be attributed to local authority type. To establish this would require further testing. Looking at all responses by regional council, city council, and district council may also explain some of these variations.

Responses from churches, businesses, other local authorities etc. were grouped together into a category 'organizations' for much of the analysis. The category 'organisation' covered a diverse range of groups (see Figure 5.3). The divergent views of some of these groups may have been obscured by the aggregation and further research into how their perspectives varied (if it in fact did) would be of interest.

More information about why submission-makers make submissions is a key focus for further research. Also finding out the extent to which people actually read and study the draft annual plan before they make submissions would be of interest. This would give a better idea of whether submissions are directed at fine-tuning the draft annual plan or used as the only formal opportunity to apply for funding or express views on local authority matters. Knowing how many submission-makers actually read the draft annual plan would be useful if the timing of when submissions are called for is changed. If a large number of the submissions are not directly related to the general contents of the draft annual plan, just specific issues, this would support the argument for asking for citizen input before plans are drawn up for the forth-coming year. The number of copies of the annual plan published and to whom they are distributed is also of interest.

Future research could also compare the characteristics of submission-makers who express similar opinions about the annual plan process. For example, are there common responses from respondents who say the local authority rates and charges are too high, or the annual plan process is minority or pressure group prone.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1974

The Local Government Act 1974 is currently under review. A Statement of Policy Direction for Review of Local Government Act 1974 was released on 9 November 2000 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2000). If, as proposed in the review, a more empowering legislative framework is adopted to enable local authorities to better meet

the needs of their communities, the findings of this research are of relevance. It is possible changes will follow along the lines of the Local Government Act 2000 passed in England and Wales in July 2000. This Act gives local authorities, for the first time in the history of local government, extensive new powers to do anything which they consider likely to improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area (Hambleton, 2000).

The review suggests reform is needed because the style of much of the current Act is detailed and prescriptive and as such imposes costs on local authorities. Because it is so prescriptive it also requires constant amending to fit changing circumstances (Department of Internal Affairs, 2000, 1). Any such reform would, however, need to be accompanied by measures to ensure local authorities are responsive and accountable to the communities they represent. Whether the provisions of the Local Government Act 1974 incorporating the annual plan process and s716A as they currently stand, provide an adequate foundation for extending consultation and participation provisions is debatable. The majority of the submission-makers covered by this survey do not generally believe that the current prescriptive legislation makes local authorities responsive and accountable to communities. They also have little faith that local authority consultation is 'open'. The survey results show that 52% of submission-makers hold the view that local authorities would not carry out the annual plan process if not required to by law, and another 27% are uncertain. Only 15% were of the view local authorities were genuinely interested in the opinions of their constituents. Confidence in local government decision-making is also low among submission-makers with only 26% of submission-makers saying they had confidence in local government decision-making. According to participatory theory, involvement should promote acceptance of decisions and confidence in decision-making even if the outcomes are not those desired, because people have a better understanding of how a decision was reached. However, this theory was not born out by the survey statistics.

The major contribution of this research is that it provides some empirical data on the views of submission-makers. In the current review of the Local Government Act it will be important to incorporate such data about the experiences and perspectives of submission-makers. The submission-makers who responded to this survey put value on the formal opportunity they have to present their views to council. Although the

attributed benefits are more individual in nature for many submission-makers (that is, their democratic right to have a say and gain an understanding of local authority issues) they generally feel the annual plan process is worthwhile. The current legislation at least obligates local authorities to make an effort to be aware of the views of citizens. While it is acknowledged that the annual plan process has deficiencies, submission-makers will be wary of any moves to make consultation less mandatory. They generally do not feel their views are taken into account to a great extent at present. If there were no formal process in place, their democratic right to express their view and have an input into governmental decision-making would be more tenuous.

6.7 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The annual plan process has promoted a more open form of local government in New Zealand which the citizens who participate in the annual plan process value. Their willingness to make another submission demonstrates this. Making submissions has the benefits of both allowing citizens to have a better understanding of the role of local government and local authorities to have a greater understanding of their constituents.

If the current review recommends less prescriptive legislation for citizen participation than is contained in the annual plan process there will need to be well defined outputs from the consultation process to ensure that the public retain their democratic right to have a say.

The annual plan process does not give the citizens who participate a significant influence in the processes of local government, because by the time the draft annual plan is drawn up, local authorities have already substantially decided what they want to achieve in the forthcoming year. Changing the process so that the opportunity to make submissions comes before the draft plans is a possible alternative that could provide more visionary and constructive input. There is evidence that local authorities already appreciate this and are building more flexibility into the annual plan process to overcome this acknowledged short-coming.

Appendix I

SURVEY OF PEOPLE MAKING SUBMISSIONS TO ANNUAL PLANS

Councils are required to prepare a draft annual plan outlining spending proposed for the next year and allow the public to make submissions before it is finalised. I am surveying submission makers from six territorial authorities to get their opinions on how satisfactory they found this process in 1999. This information can hopefully be used to make recommendations for improving the submission process in the future.

This Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to find out about people's experience with the annual planning submission process. Your name is on the list of people who made a submission to the horizon m.w Regional Council this year. I would be grateful if you would take some time out to complete this questionnaire to tell me about your experience.

The questionnaire is being sent to all submission makers to the Council's draft annual plan. All responses will be kept confidential, and the results collated to provide a general picture of experiences and lessons.

The Results

The survey is being undertaken as part of my research for a Masters degree in Resource and Environmental Planning. I will also write the results in a paper that will be publicly available. If you are interested in receiving a summary of results, please complete and return the enclosed request with your address at the same time as you return the questionnaire. The two will be kept separate to protect your identity.

Your Response?

You are not obliged to complete the questionnaire. However, research which it contributes to can help to make the way councils consult with citizens more effective. As you have taken the trouble to make a submission to council, I hope you will be willing to spend some time helping with my research. Returning the completed questionnaire will be accepted as allowing me to use the information in the way described above. If I have not received a reply by 1 December 1999 I will send a reminder. After that there will be no further follow-up. If you cannot complete the questionnaire please return it anyway so I can get it filled in by another submission maker to ensure my results are reliable.

Most questions can be answered simply by ticking the box that contains your answer, or best expresses your view. Please fill in the spaces and using the enclosed, stamped envelope, drop it in the mail as soon as you can. If you have any queries you can telephone me on 06 359 0620 evenings, or 06 350 4343 during the day. My email address is: V.E.Forgie@massey.ac.nz

Thank you.

Vicky Forgie
Vicky Forgie

School of Resource and Environmental Planning

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey

SURVEY OF PEOPLE MAKING SUBMISSIONS TO ANNUAL PLANS

Late last November I sent you a questionnaire to find out about your experience with the annual planning submission process. Unfortunately my response rate has not been high enough to avoid having to contact you and ask again if you would be willing to complete the survey.

The survey is being undertaken as part of my research for a Masters degree in Resource and Environmental Planning and I need a sufficiently high response rate to ensure my results are not biased and my thesis can be completed. Most questions can be answered simply by ticking the box that contains your answer, or best expresses your view. Another copy of the survey is enclosed in case you cannot locate your initial copy.

You are not obliged to complete the questionnaire. However, research it contributes to can help to make the way councils consult with citizens more effective. As you have taken the trouble to make a submission to council, I hope you will be willing to spend some time helping with my research. Returning the completed questionnaire will be accepted as allowing me to use the information.

I hope that now the Christmas and holiday period is over you will have time to fill in the spaces and using the enclosed, stamped envelope, drop it in the mail as soon as you can. If you have any queries you can telephone me on 06 359 0620 evenings, or 06 350 4343 during the day or my email address is V.E.Forgie@massey.ac.nz

Thanking you in anticipation of your helpful participation.
Yours sincerely


Vicky Forgie

School of Resource and Environmental Planning

Start herePlease tick the appropriate box or fill in space provided

Code _____

A BY WAY OF BACKGROUND

1a. How many other times have you made a submission to a Draft Annual Plan since 1989?

Never	Once	Twice	Three or more
-------	------	-------	---------------

1b. Did you make a submission to any other Council this year. If yes, please name: _____

B Your 1999 Submission TO PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL :

2a. Was this made on behalf of an organisation, business or group?

Yes	No
-----	----

2b. If Yes, please name the organisation / business / group: _____

3. What was your submission about? Please tick the most appropriate category (If your submission covered more than one issue, please tick one box for each issue):

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
Rates and/or charges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of physical facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of social facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of local environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of council services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How many people worked on this submission?

Just me	2	More than 2
---------	---	-------------

5. Approximately how long did you personally spend working on the submission for the 1999 Plan?

Under 4 Hours	Half to 1 Day	1 to 3 Days	Over 3 Days
---------------	---------------	-------------	-------------

6a. Approximately how much money did you (or your organisation) spend on preparing the submission?

\$ _____

6b. If you spent more than \$100.00 please itemise:

Research and Information	\$
Professional Advice	\$
Printing, copying and materials	\$
Labour	\$
Other	\$

C THE HEARINGS

7. Did you attend the Council's Hearings into Submissions: If No, go straight to Question 12

Yes	No
-----	----

8. How did you find the atmosphere at the Hearing?

Relaxed	Informal	Formal	Daunting
---------	----------	--------	----------

9. How did you find the Committee's response?

Helpful	Neutral	Unhelpful
---------	---------	-----------

10. Do you feel that making a verbal submission helped you get your point across?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

11. Do you think the Councillors were influenced by you?

Definitely	Definitely Not	Don't Know
------------	----------------	------------

Please Continue Here.....

D THE OUTCOME

12. Did you feel your submission helped make a difference to the Final Annual Plan?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------
13. Were you directly advised of the **outcome** of your submission?

Yes	No	
-----	----	--
14. How were you advised?
Other: _____

Phone call	Form Letter	Newspaper
------------	-------------	-----------
- 15a. If you were not advised, did you find out?

Yes	No
-----	----
- 15b. If Yes, how did you find out? _____
16. Are you satisfied with the outcome?

Very	Partially	No
------	-----------	----
17. In light of this experience, would you make another submission in the future?

Yes	No
-----	----

E WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PROCESS?

18. Do you think the process of making submissions to the Annual Plan is worthwhile?

Very	Somewhat	Not at All
------	----------	------------
19. How much importance do you think the Council attaches to the submissions when making decisions?

A Lot	Some	None
-------	------	------
20. What do you think are the two **best things** about the annual planning process (if any)
a: _____
b: _____
21. What do you think are the two **worst things** about the annual planning process (if any)
a: _____
b: _____
22. What measures can you think of that would improve the process?
a: _____
b: _____

23. **Please indicate how far you agree with each of the following five statements. Please tick one box in each row.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Making a submission enables citizens to get things off their chests					
b) Calling for submissions encourages councillors to listen to what is worrying citizens					
c) Submissions provide an opportunity for the Council to fine tune its Annual Plan					

- d) Submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the Annual Plan
- e) Councils only call for submissions because they have to by law

24. What following statement do you think **best** describes what motivated you to make a submission?

(Tick one only)

- Making a submission is an opportunity to express my opinion on specific issues
- Making a submission is an opportunity to express my opinion on general issues
- Making a submission is a means of expressing my frustration with council systems
- An input into decision-making is part of my civic responsibilities
- I am concerned about the quality of council decision-making
- My submission was to support proposed council action
- Other: please state _____

25. Did your input into the annual planning process give you confidence in the decision-making processes of council? Yes No Don't Know

26a. Would the planning process work as well if it were only done once every two years? Yes No Don't Know

26b. Would the planning process work as well if it was only done once every five years? Yes No Don't Know

F THE NEXT QUESTIONS HELP US IDENTIFY THE SORTS OF PEOPLE WHO MAKES SUBMISSIONS. PLEASE ANSWER WHERE APPLICABLE. THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

27. Are you?

Male	Female	Group/ Org	Business
------	--------	------------	----------

28. Do you own a rateable property in the Council area?

Yes	No Rent	Neither
-----	---------	---------

29. If you pay rates, what is the value of your property in the Council area?

Under \$100,000	\$100,000-\$200,000	\$200,000-\$500,000	Over \$500,000
-----------------	---------------------	---------------------	----------------

30. How many adults (over 17 years) live in your household? Number: _____

31. What is the total before tax income of your household / business / organisation?

Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
----------------	----------------------	-----------------------	----------------

32. Are you retired?

Yes	No
-----	----

33. What is your usual occupation (or what was it immediately prior to retirement?) _____

34. What age group do you belong to?

Under 25	25-40	41-50	51-65	66+
----------	-------	-------	-------	-----

Thank you for your time and interest. Please return your complete questionnaire in the stamped, return addressed envelope.

Any other comments:

I would like a summary of the research results when completed

Name: _____

Address _____

Appendix II

Pearsons Chi-Square tests at the $p < .01$ (one in a hundred) Level of Significance

	Submission made a difference to annual plan	Are you satisfied with the outcome	Would you make another submission	Making a submission is worthwhile	How much importance does council attach to submissions	Input gave confidence in council decision-making	Number of previous submissions made by submission-maker
Area	$X^2 = 18.246$ $p = .0510$	$X^2 = 21.733$ $p = .115$	$X^2 = 10.169$ $p = .426$	$X^2 = 15.768$ $p = .398$	$X^2 = 16.122$ $p = .709$	$X^2 = 16.439$ $p = .353$	$X^2 = 61.537$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
No. of previous submissions made	$X^2 = 8.728$ $p = .189$	$X^2 = 16.578$ $p = .056$	$X^2 = 7.298$ $p = .294$	$X^2 = 5.785$ $p = .761$	$X^2 = 12.291$ $p = .423$	$X^2 = 18.495$ $p = .030$	
Made a submission to another DAP	$X^2 = 1.733$ $p = .420$	$X^2 = 7.612$ $p = .055$	$X^2 = 2.369$ $p = .306$	$X^2 = 2.346$ $p = .504$	$X^2 = 3.269$ $p = .514$	$X^2 = 2.183$ $p = .535$	$X^2 = 76.254$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Belongs to an organisation	$X^2 = 17.092$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 17.344$ $p = .001$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 12.370$ $p = .002$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 7.158$ $p = .067$	$X^2 = 7.609$ $p = .107$	$X^2 = 19.741$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 30.490$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Member of ordinary public	$X^2 = 8.757$ $p = .013$	$X^2 = 6.627$ $p = .085$	$X^2 = 5.601$ $p = .061$	$X^2 = 5.367$ $p = .147$	$X^2 = 6.565$ $p = .161$	$X^2 = 4.947$ $p = .176$	$X^2 = 33.289$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
DIA group	$X^2 = 37.916$ $p = .218$	$X^2 = 75.950$ $p = .051$	$X^2 = 23.550$ $p = .860$	$X^2 = 53.485$ $p = .272$	$X^2 = 91.860$ $p = .013$	$X^2 = 67.519$ $p = .033$	$X^2 = 88.438$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
No people worked on the submission	$X^2 = 3.880$ $p = .422$	$X^2 = 9.957$ $p = .126$	$X^2 = 8.368$ $p = .079$	$X^2 = 5.131$ $p = .527$	$X^2 = 6.618$ $p = .578$	$X^2 = 9.891$ $p = .129$	$X^2 = 26.784$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Approximate time spent preparing	$X^2 = 11.098$ $p = .085$	$X^2 = 4.173$ $p = .900$	$X^2 = 2.962$ $p = .814$	$X^2 = 18.291$ $p = .032$	$X^2 = 18.101$ $p = .113$	$X^2 = 11.657$ $p = .233$	$X^2 = 48.802$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Estimated cost of the submission	$X^2 = 14.882$ $p = .533$	$X^2 = 11.863$ $p = .753$	$X^2 = 13.744$ $p = .618$	$X^2 = 29.883$ $p = .189$	$X^2 = 27.619$ $p = .688$	$X^2 = 25.029$ $p = .404$	$X^2 = 57.811$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Attended hearing	$X^2 = 12.432$ $p = .002$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 12.681$ $p = .005$ $p = .003$	$X^2 = 2.916$ $p = .233$	$X^2 = 3.297$ $p = .348$	$X^2 = 6.838$ $p = .145$	$X^2 = 3.465$ $p = .325$	$X^2 = 37.481$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$
Atmosphere at hearing	$X^2 = 13.964$ $p = .083$	$X^2 = 9.102$ $p = .694$	$X^2 = 3.608$ $p = .891$	$X^2 = 12.567$ $p = .401$	$X^2 = 21.659$ $p = .155$	$X^2 = 23.119$ $p = .027$	$X^2 = 13.078$ $p = .237$
Response from councillors at hearing	$X^2 = 16.447$ $p = .002$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 33.277$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 12.409$ $p = .015$	$X^2 = 17.821$ $p = .007$ $p = .006$	$X^2 = 26.519$ $p = .001$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 50.075$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 10.965$ $p = .089$
Point made at hearing	$X^2 = 24.987$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 30.037$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 11.991$ $p = .017$	$X^2 = 23.564$ $p = .001$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 31.076$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 25.379$ $p = .0005$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 5.231$ $p = .515$
Council influenced by oral submission	$X^2 = 35.439$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 35.555$ $p = .0005$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 14.778$ $p = .022$	$X^2 = 18.611$ $p = .029$	$X^2 = 24.497$ $p = .017$	$X^2 = 43.590$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 8.715$ $p = .464$
Submission made a difference to AP		$X^2 = 136.253$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 21.727$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 63.693$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 85.991$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 97.472$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 8.728$ $p = .189$
Advised of outcome	$X^2 = 21.289$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 13.282$ $p = .039$	$X^2 = 6.786$ $p = .148$	$X^2 = 9.096$ $p = .168$	$X^2 = 29.215$ $p = .0005$ $p = .009$	$X^2 = 18.268$ $p = .006$ $p = .022^*$	$X^2 = 3.671$ $p = .721$
Did you find out the outcome	$X^2 = 13.258$ $p = .001$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 17.012$ $p = .001$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 12.155$ $p = .002$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 1.743$ $p = .627$	$X^2 = 5.131$ $p = .274$	$X^2 = 21.459$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 7.991$ $p = .046$
Are you satisfied with the outcome	$X^2 = 136.253$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$		$X^2 = 27.750$ $p = .0005$ $p = .004$	$X^2 = 78.579$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 130.707$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 106.183$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 16.578$ $p = .056$
Would you make another submission	$X^2 = 21.727$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 27.750$ $p = .0005$ $p = .004$		$X^2 = 50.895$ $p = .0005$ $p = .001$	$X^2 = 63.600$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 10.563$ $p = .103$	$X^2 = 7.298$ $p = .294$
Making a submission is worthwhile	$X^2 = 63.693$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 78.579$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 50.895$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$		$X^2 = 318.391$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 62.542$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 5.785$ $p = .761$
How much importance are submissions to council	$X^2 = 85.991$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 130.707$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 63.600$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 318.391$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$		$X^2 = 94.703$ $p = .0005$ $p = .0005$	$X^2 = 12.291$ $p = .423$

	Submission made a difference to annual plan	Are you satisfied with the outcome	Would you make another submission	Making a submission is worthwhile	How much importance does council attach to submissions	Input gave confidence in council decision-making	Number of previous submissions made by submission-maker
Submissions allow citizens to get things off chest	$X^2=9.048$ p=.338	$X^2=11.193$ p=.512	$X^2=20.876$ p=.007	$X^2=18.457$ p=.103	$X^2=30.597$ p=.015	$X^2=9.475$ p=.662	$X^2=10.020$ p=.614
Submissions encourage councillors to listen	$X^2=60.596$ p=.0005	$X^2=46.335$ p=.0005	$X^2=26.420$ p=.001	$X^2=99.482$ p=.0005	$X^2=152.579$ p=.0005	$X^2=97.426$ p=.0005	$X^2=10.002$ p=.616
Submissions provide a way to fine tune AP	$X^2=53.630$ p=.0005	$X^2=51.353$ p=.0005	$X^2=18.333$ p=.019	$X^2=95.032$ p=.0005	$X^2=129.088$ p=.0005	$X^2=81.888$ p=.0005	$X^2=10.694$ p=.555
Submissions give chance to influence AP	$X^2=90.057$ p=.0005	$X^2=86.011$ p=.0005	$X^2=29.986$ p=.0005	$X^2=111.90$ p=.0005	$X^2=147.314$ p=.0005	$X^2=122.785$ p=.0005	$X^2=16.287$ p=.178
Councils only call for submissions because required by law	$X^2=23.817$ p=.002	$X^2=47.007$ p=.0005	$X^2=6.789$ p=.560	$X^2=41.804$ p=.0005	$X^2=58.263$ p=.0005	$X^2=68.104$ p=.0005	$X^2=22.323$ p=.034
Motivation to make a submission	$X^2=36.541$ p=.006 p=.005	$X^2=26.161$ p=.510	$X^2=11.463$ p=.874	$X^2=50.011$ p=.005 p=.026*	$X^2=60.955$ p=.006 p=.017*	$X^2=37.741$ p=.082	$X^2=40.533$ p=.046
Input gave confidence in council decision-making	$X^2=97.472$ p=.0005 p=.0005	$X^2=106.183$ p=.0005 p=.0005	$X^2=10.563$ p=.103	$X^2=62.542$ p=.0005 p=.001*	$X^2=94.703$ p=.0005 p=.0005		$X^2=18.495$ p=.030
Process work as well 2 yearly	$X^2=10.722$ p=.030	$X^2=11.381$ p=.077	$X^2=11.178$ p=.025	$X^2=10.405$ p=.109	$X^2=17.794$ p=.023	$X^2=6.826$ p=.337	$X^2=24.529$ p=.0005 p=.0005
Process work as well 5 yearly	$X^2=9.849$ p=.043	$X^2=2.667$ p=.849	$X^2=17.360$ p=.002 p=.008	$X^2=42.909$ p=.0005 p=.002*	$X^2=26.733$ p=.001 p=.005	$X^2=22.760$ p=.001 p=.007	$X^2=14.162$ p=.028
Gender / Organisation	$X^2=19.635$ p=.012	$X^2=13.438$ p=.338	$X^2=5.355$ p=.719	$X^2=9.300$ p=.677	$X^2=16.206$ p=.439	$X^2=24.880$ p=.003 p=.056*	$X^2=72.126$ p=.0005 p=.0005
Do you own a rateable property	$X^2=5.334$ p=.255	$X^2=7.384$ p=.287	$X^2=1.195$ p=.879	$X^2=8.030$ p=.236	$X^2=9.053$ p=.338	$X^2=10.722$ p=.097	$X^2=14.232$ p=.027
Property value	$X^2=8.904$ p=.179	$X^2=21.604$ p=.010 p=.014*	$X^2=8.852$ p=.182	$X^2=8.973$ p=.440	$X^2=24.281$ p=.019	$X^2=8.356$ p=.499	$X^2=7.539$ p=.581
Before tax income	$X^2=7.538$ p=.274	$X^2=10.604$ p=.304	$X^2=1.298$ p=.972	$X^2=9.710$ p=.374	$X^2=6.559$ p=.885	$X^2=10.760$ p=.293	$X^2=17.566$ p=.041
Are you retired	$X^2=1.250$ p=.535	$X^2=3.419$ p=.331	$X^2=2.715$ p=.257	$X^2=5.459$ p=.141	$X^2=5.790$ p=.215	$X^2=6.169$ p=.104	$X^2=3.484$ p=.323
Occupation	$X^2=47.579$ p=.038	$X^2=69.210$ p=.024	$X^2=44.645$ p=.068	$X^2=61.604$ p=.090	$X^2=84.239$ p=.046	$X^2=44.754$ p=.607	$X^2=56.179$ p=.195
Age group	$X^2=14.764$ p=.070	$X^2=26.379$ p=.034	$X^2=7.847$ p=.644	$X^2=12.781$ p=.619	$X^2=37.086$ p=.011	$X^2=17.675$ p=.280	$X^2=20.091$ p=.168

Notes on Appendix II

1. Bolded probabilities are the significant relationships that were identified by the Chi-Square tests. The probability (p) listed below is the probability the relationship exists when the more stringent Monte Carlo test is applied.
2. * The more stringent Monte Carlo tests were carried out on the relationships that were significant according to the Chi-Square tests. These were based on 10,000 sampled tables. If the Monte Carlo tests showed that $p > 0.01$ then the relationship was not considered significant enough to draw conclusions from and discarded. The Monte Carlo tests were not done for the five Likert scale questions as the F-tests are a more stringent measure of association.
3. The associations shown for the best aspects of the annual process, worst aspects and suggested improvements were not considered in the discussion as submission-makers were asked to list two features which were not ranked and therefore the relationships were not that meaningful.

SPSS Reference:

Chisqfeb.spo – All Chi-Square tests.

Finalanothersub.spo, Finalconf.spo, Finalimpt.spo, Finalsatisfied.spo, Finalsubdifference.spo, Finalworthwhile.spo

Finalsubbefore.spo – All Monte Carlo tests

Appendix III

F-Tests at the $p < .01$ (one in a hundred) Level of Significance

	Submissions allow citizens to get things off chest	Submissions encourage councillors to listen	Submissions provide a way to fine tune AP	Submissions give chance to influence AP	Councils only call for submissions because required by law
Area	F=1.085 p=.368	F=1.319 p=.255	F=2.926 p=.013	F=.942 p=.454	F=2.434 p=.035
No. of previous submissions made	F=1.627 p=.183	F=1.372 p=.368	F=.208 p=.891	F=1.160 p=.325	F=1.386 p=.247
Made a submission to another DAP	F=.007 p=.932	F=.131 p=.718	F=.300 p=.584	F=3.711 p=.055	F=.002 p=.968
Belongs to an organisation	F=4.897 p=.028	F=8.826 p=.003	F=.521 p=.471	F=5.568 p=.019	F=3.227 p=.073
Member of ordinary public	F=4.198 p=.041	F=.549 p=.459	F=1.112 p=.292	F=1.097 p=.296	F=2.079 p=.150
DIA group	F=1.085 p=.396	F=.543 p=.920	F=1.091 p=.369	F=1.272 p=.224	F=2.114 p=.011
No people worked on the submission	F=1.252 p=.287	F=.009 p=.991	F=.134 p=.874	F=2.186 p=.114	F=.269 p=.764
Approximate time spent preparing	F=.331 p=.803	F=2.341 p=.073	F=466 p=.706	F=.616 p=.605	F=.775 p=.509
Estimated cost of the submission	F=1.157 p=.325	F=.802 p=.602	F=.962 p=.466	F=.713 p=.680	F=.888 p=.527
Attended hearing	F=1.082 p=.299	F=.462 p=.497	F=2.347 p=.126	F=5.109 p=.024	F=2.528 p=.113
Atmosphere at hearing	F=2.977 p=.022	F=2.150 p=.079	F=2.150 p=.079	F=3.503 p=.010	F=1.872 p=.120
Response from councillors at hearing	F=.104 p=.902	F=13.749 p=.000	F=9.787 p=.000	F=8.566 p=.000	F=12.932 p=.000
Point made at hearing	F=3.708 p=.027	F=11.836 p=.000	F=7.574 p=.001	F=10.377 p=.000	F=6.971 p=.001
Councillors influenced by oral submission	F=.602 p=.615	F=6.601 p=.000	F=4.189 p=.007	F=5.034 p=.003	F=2.974 p=.035
Submission made a difference to AP	F=.322 p=.725	F=26.964 p=.000	F=16.203 p=.000	F=47.251 p=.000	F=8.253 p=.000
Advised of outcome	F=1.409 p=.246	F=5.867 p=.003	F=10.385 p=.000	F=5.632 p=.004	F=1.007 p=.367
Did you find out the outcome	F=.180 p=.894	F=.042 p=.839	F=.003 p=.960	F=.989 p=.322	F=1.101 p=.296
Are you satisfied with the outcome	F=.271 p=.846	F=14.780 p=.000	F=16.074 p=.000	F=24.051 p=.000	F=12.178 p=.000
Would you make another submission	F=1.025 p=.360	F=6.732 p=.001	F=6.395 p=.002	F=10.442 p=.000	F=2.216 p=.111
Making a submission is worthwhile	F=.063 p=.980	F=30.875 p=.000	F=24.426 p=.000	F=30.734 p=.000	F=8.235 p=.000
How much importance are submissions to council	F=1.077 p=.368	F=32.450 p=.000	F=24.189 p=.000	F=37.484 p=.000	F=9.076 p=.000
Motivation to make a submission	F=1.355 p=.208	F=2.683 p=.005	F=2.468 p=.010	F=2.729 p=.004	F=2.910 p=.003
Input gave confidence in council decision-making	F=.515 p=.672	F=36.402 p=.000	F=25.905 p=.000	F=46.463 p=.000	F=18.001 p=.000
Process work as well 2 yearly	F=2.224 p=.110	F=.926 p=.397	F=2.885 p=.057	F=1.404 p=.247	F=.707 p=.494
Process work as well 5 yearly	F=.438 p=.645	F=10.750 p=.000	F=13.138 p=.000	F=11.200 p=.000	F=1.668 p=.190
Gender / Organisation	F=.639 p=.635	F=1.720 p=.145	F=.365 p=.834	F=1.353 p=.250	F=1.962 p=.100

	Submissions allow citizens to get things off chest	Submissions encourage councillors to listen	Submissions provide a way to fine tune AP	Submissions give chance to influence AP	Councils only call for submissions because required by law
Do you own a rateable property	F=.410 p=.664	F=.074 p=.929	F=.600 p=.546	F=.215 p=.807	F=4.558 p=.011
Property value	F=1.225 p=.301	F=1.995 p=.115	F=3.552 p=.015	F=3.856 p=.010	F=1.546 p=.203
Before tax income	F=.222 p=.881	F=.290 p=.833	F=.417 p=.741	F=2.859 p=.037	F=.478 p=.698
Are you retired	F=.290 p=.591	F=4.574 p=.033	F=1.157 p=.283	F=.136 p=.712	F=.131 p=.718
Occupation	F=.507 p=.943	F=1.667 p=.052	F=1.125 p=.052	F=1.125 p=.331	F=1.378 p=.152
Age group	F=1.205 p=.279	F=.572 p=.722	F=.890 p=.488	F=1.526 p=.181	F=3.018 p=.011 ²

SPSS Reference:
FinalanovaFtests.spo

Appendix IV - Mean Graphs

Question 23 was divided into the following five statements which had the possible responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.

- a) Making a submission enables citizens to get things off their chests
- b) Calling for submissions encourages councillors to listen to what is worrying citizens
- c) Submissions provide an opportunity for the Council to fine tune its Annual Plan
- d) Submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the Annual Plan
- e) Councils only call for submissions because they have to by law

The five different responses were given the following numeric values:

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

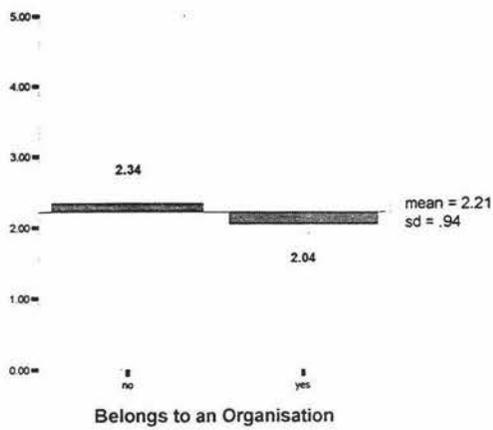
4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

All the possible logical associations between the five statements given above and the responses to the other questions were tested to see if there were any significant associations. Where this was shown to exist the means were graphed and these are found in Appendix 4. All the graphs have the Likert scale as the y-axis. If the mean is less than 2.5 the overall response can be interpreted as positive. If it is above 2.5 the overall response is more negative.

Associations shown to exist between the best aspects of the annual plan, worst aspects of the annual plan, and suggested improvements were not investigated further as these responses were not asked to be ranked so the associations that exist are not that meaningful.

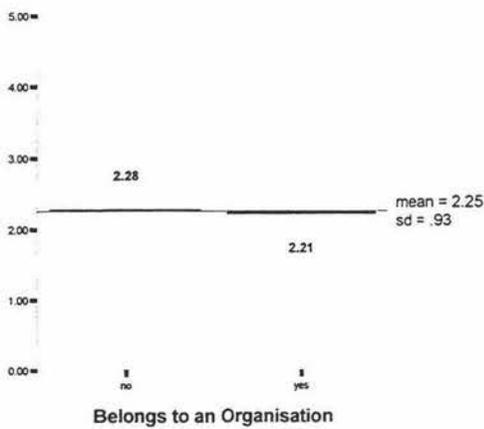
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Do you belong to an organisation?

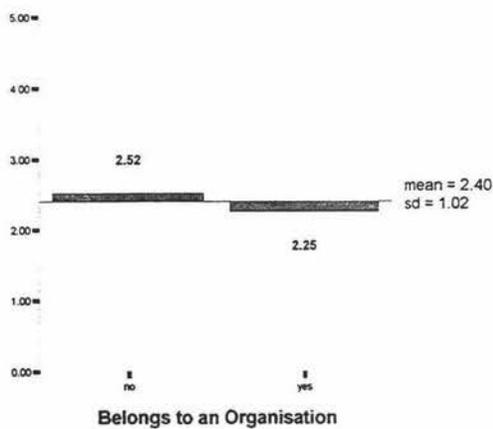
The submission-makers that made submissions on behalf of an organisation/business/group are more likely to believe submissions encourage councillors to listen than individuals who made submissions.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



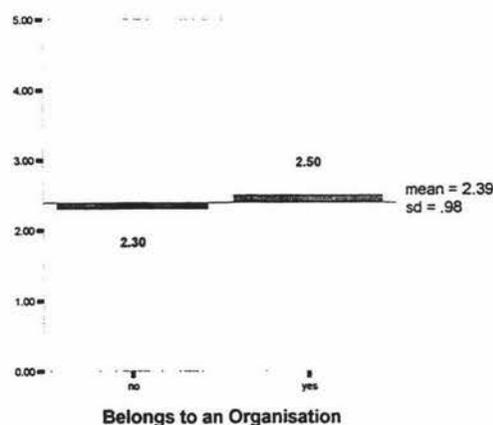
The submission-makers that made submissions on behalf of an organisation/business/group are marginally more likely to believe submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan than individuals who made submissions.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



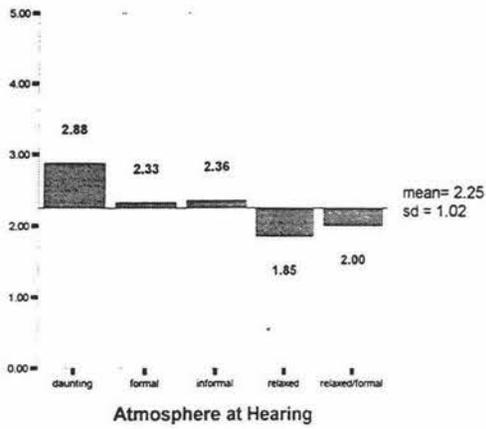
Submission-makers who made submissions on behalf of an organisation/business/group are more likely to believe submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan than individuals who made submissions.

Only Do Because Required by Law



Individuals are more likely to think local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law than submission-makers who make submissions on behalf of an organisation/business/group.

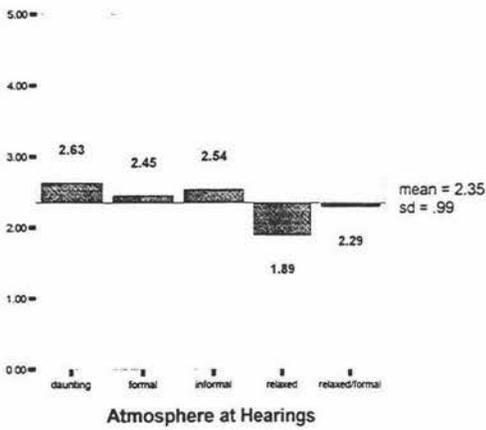
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Atmosphere at Hearing

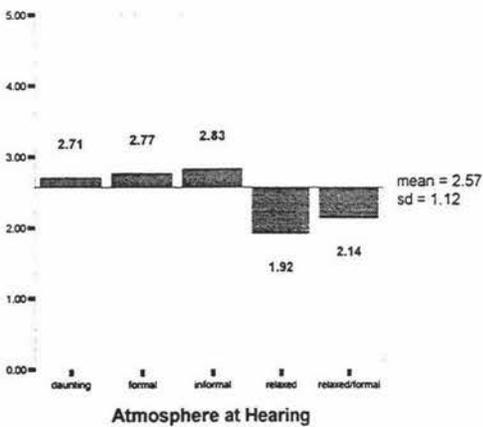
Submission-makers who found the atmosphere at hearings relaxed (or relaxed/informal) are more likely to believe submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



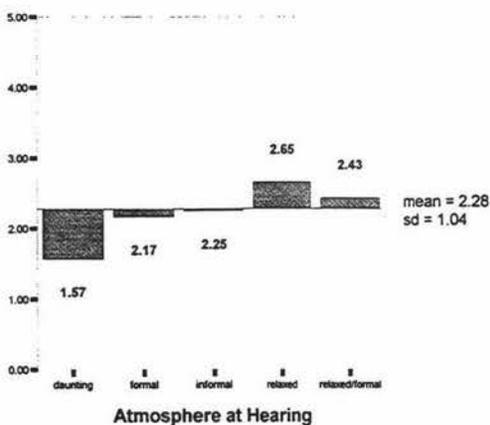
Submission-makers who found the atmosphere at hearings relaxed (or relaxed/informal) are more likely to believe submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



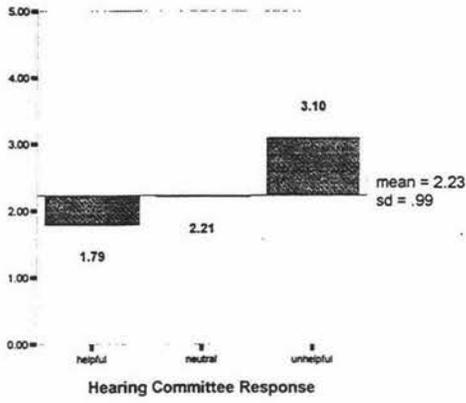
Submission-makers who found the atmosphere at hearings relaxed (or relaxed/informal) are more likely to believe submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

Only Do Because Required by Law



Submission-makers who found the atmosphere at hearings daunting, formal or informal are more likely to believe local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

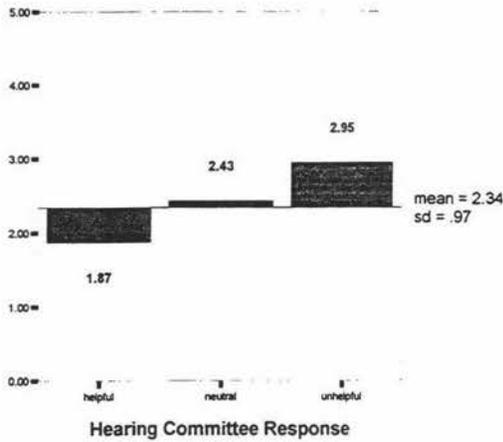
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Hearing Committee Response

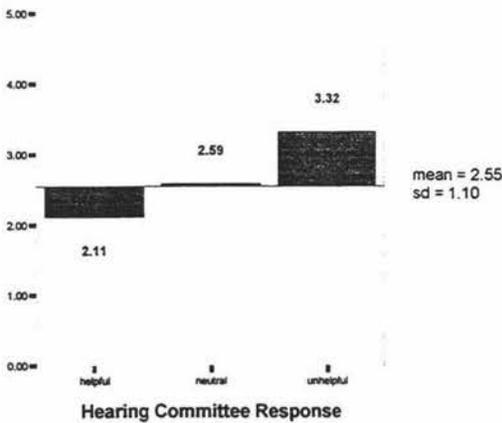
Submission-makers who found the hearing committee response helpful are more likely to believe submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



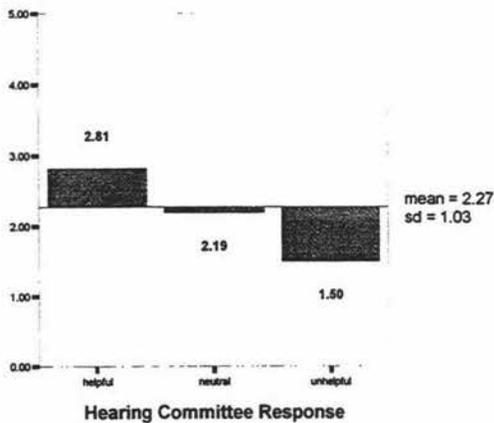
Submission-makers who found the hearing committee response helpful are more likely to believe submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan

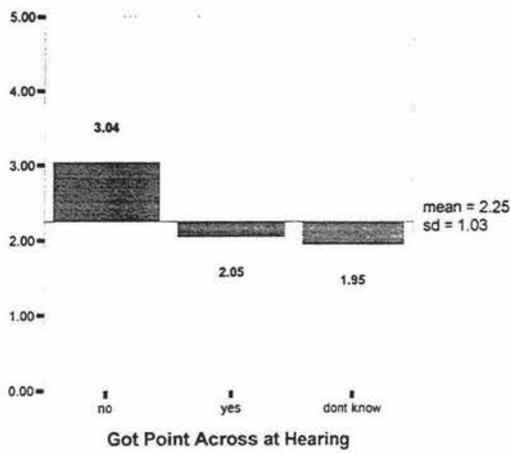


Submission-makers who found the hearing committee response helpful are more likely to believe submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan

Only Do Because Required by Law

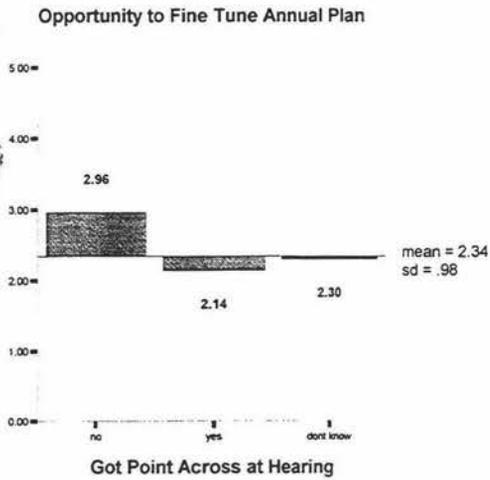


Submission-makers who found the hearings committee response neutral or unhelpful are more likely to believe local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

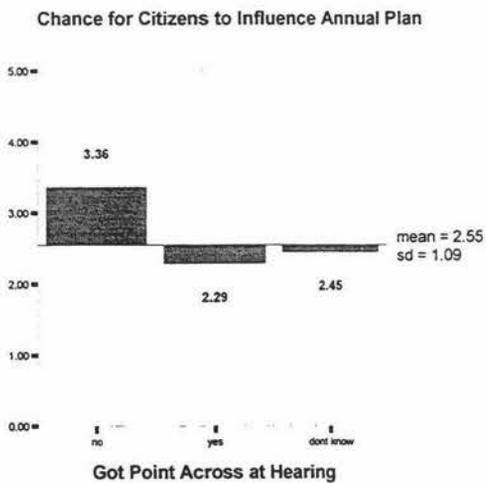


Got Point Across at Hearing

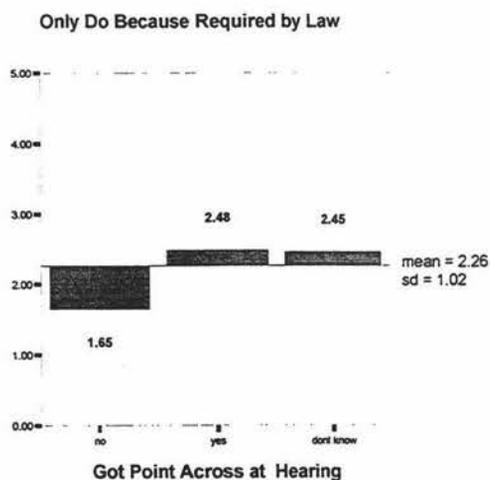
Submission-makers who felt they had got their point across, or were uncertain about whether they had got their point across or not, were more likely to believe submissions encourage councillors to listen.



Submission-makers who felt they had got their point across, or were uncertain about whether they had got their point across or not, were more likely to believe submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

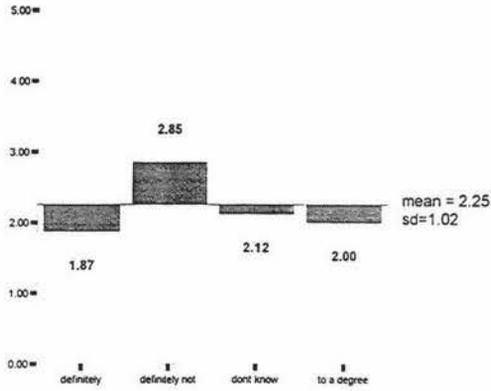


Submission-makers who felt they had got their point across, or were uncertain about whether they had got their point across or not, were more likely to believe submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.



Submission-makers who did not feel they got their point across at the hearing were more likely to believe local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

Encourage Councillors to Listen

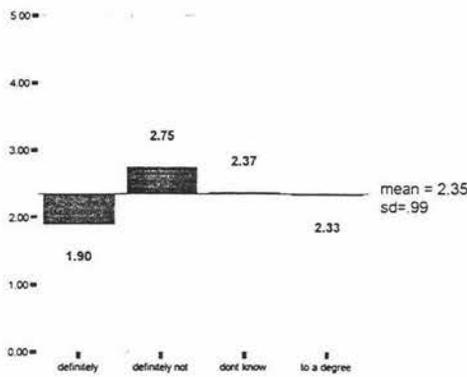


Councillors Influenced by Oral Submission

Councillors were Influenced by the Oral Submission?

Submission-makers who felt councillors were definitely not influenced by the oral submission did not think submissions encourage councillors to listen.

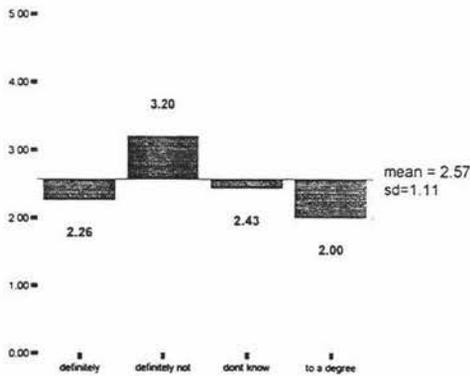
Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



Councillors Influenced by Oral Submission

Submission-makers who felt councillors were definitely influenced by the oral submission thought submissions provided an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

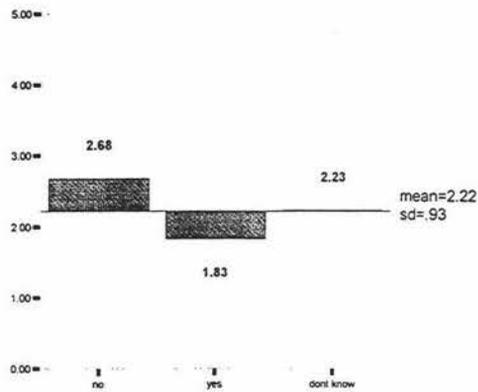
Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



Councillors Influenced by Oral Submission

Submission-makers who felt councillors were definitely not influenced by the oral submission do not think submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

Encourage Councillors to Listen

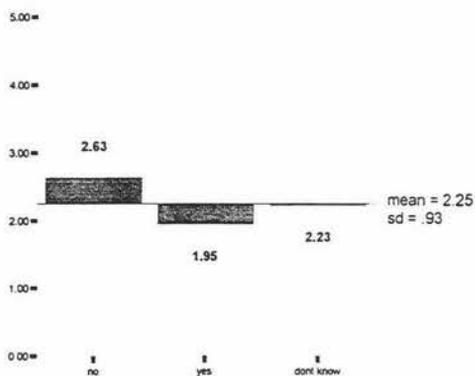


Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Submissions Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Submission-makers who thought that submissions made a difference to the annual plan were of the opinion submissions encourage councillors to listen.

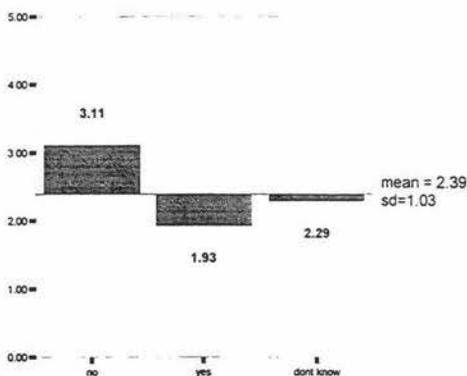
Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Submission-makers who thought that submissions made a difference to the annual plan were of the opinion submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

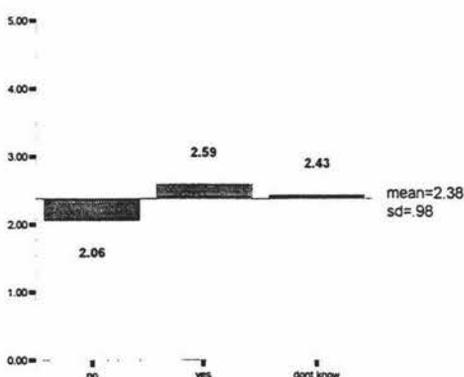
Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Submission-makers who thought the submissions made a difference to the annual plan were of the opinion submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

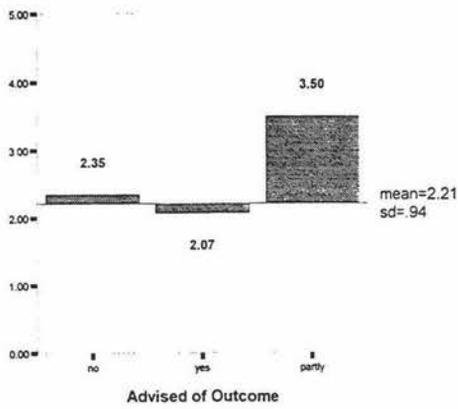
Only Do Because Required by Law



Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Submission-makers who did not believe submissions made a difference to the annual plan tended to agree with the statement local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

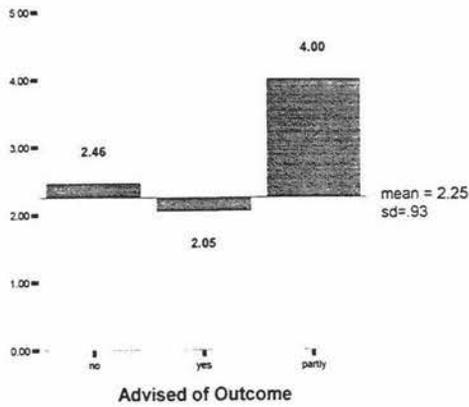
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Advised of Outcome

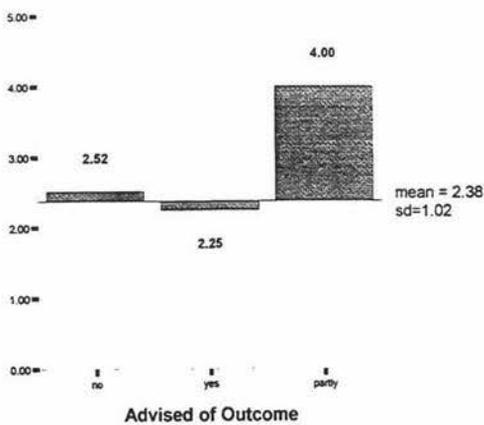
Submission-makers not advised of the outcome or only partly aware of the outcome were less inclined to believe that submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



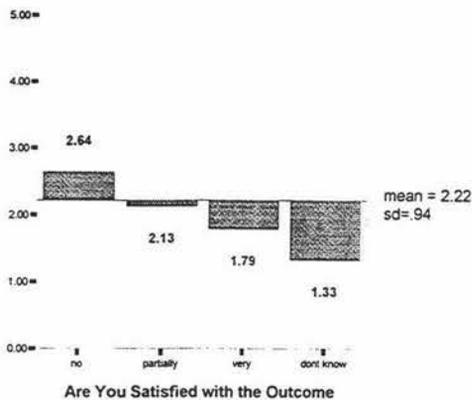
Submission-makers not advised of the outcome or only partly aware of the outcome were less inclined to believe that submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



Submission-makers not advised of the outcome or only partly aware of the outcome were less inclined to believe that submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

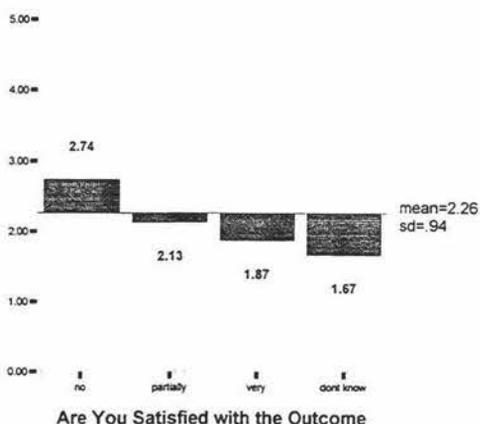
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Are you satisfied with the outcome?

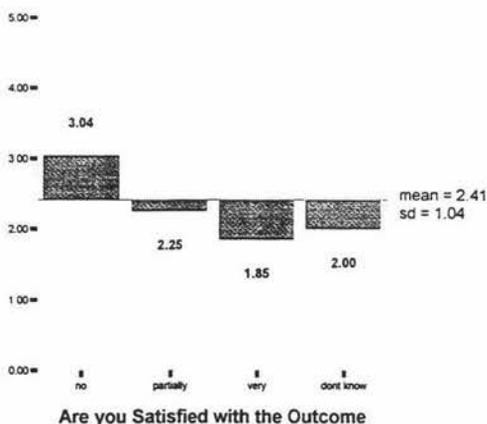
Submission-makers dissatisfied with the outcome of their submission are less inclined to agree that submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



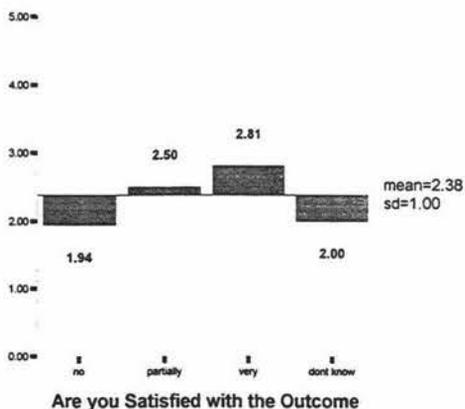
Submission-makers dissatisfied with the outcome of their submission are less inclined to agree that submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



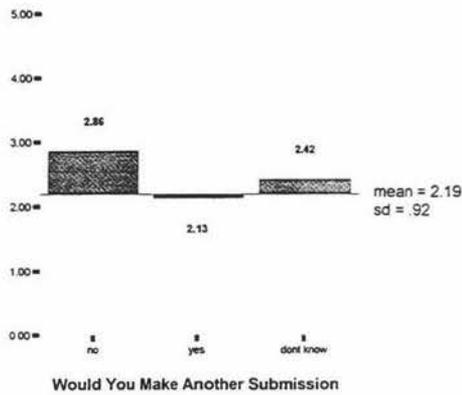
Submission-makers dissatisfied with the outcome of their submission are less inclined to agree that submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

Only Do Because Required by Law



Submission-makers dissatisfied with the outcome, or those that do not know if they are satisfied with the outcome are more likely to believe local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

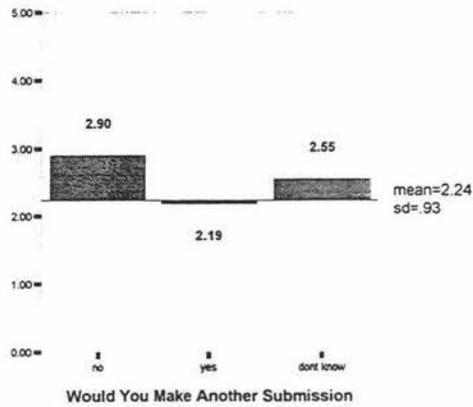
Encourage Councillors to Listen



In light of this experience would you make another submission in the future?

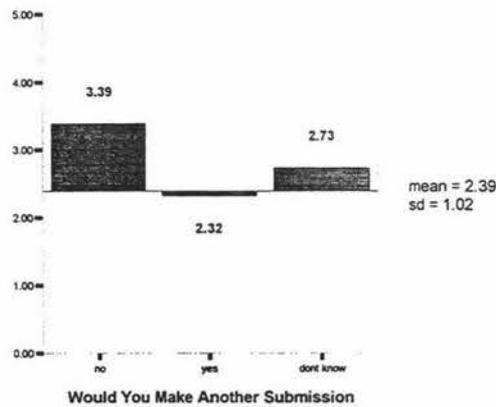
Submission-makers not willing to make another submission or uncertain about whether they would or not, do not think submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



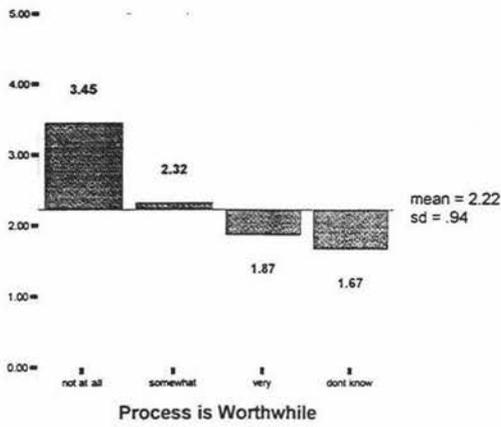
Submission-makers not willing to make another submission or uncertain about whether they would or not, do not think submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



Submission-makers not willing to make another submission or uncertain about whether they would or not, do not think submissions provide a chance to influence the annual plan.

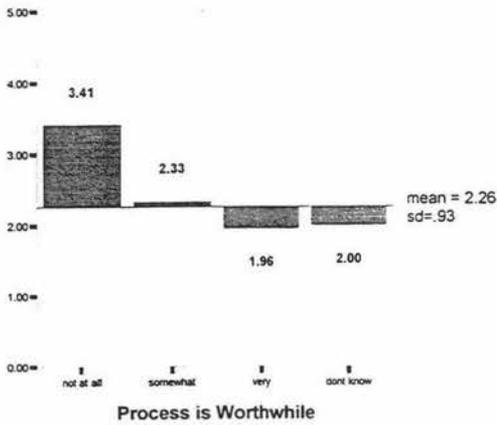
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Do you think the process of making submissions to the annual plan is worthwhile?

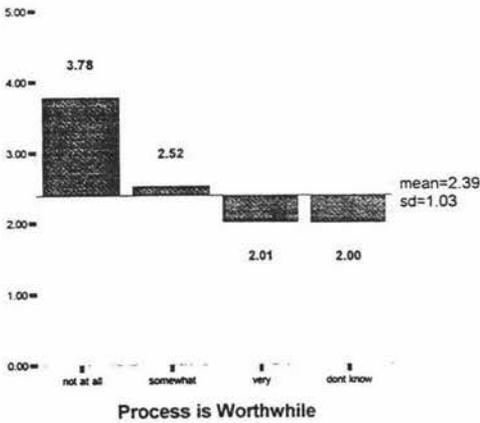
Submission-makers who do not think the submission-making process is worthwhile, or only believe it is somewhat worthwhile, do not generally think submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



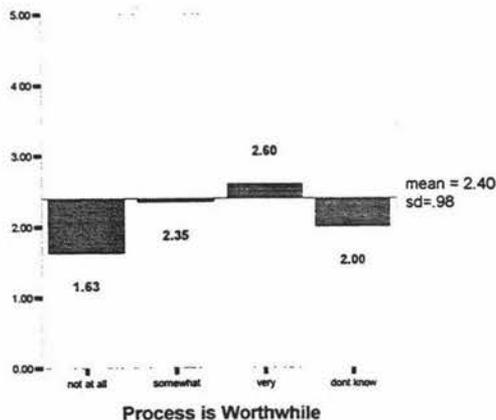
Submission-makers who do not think the submission-making process is worthwhile, or only believe it is somewhat worthwhile, do not generally think submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plans



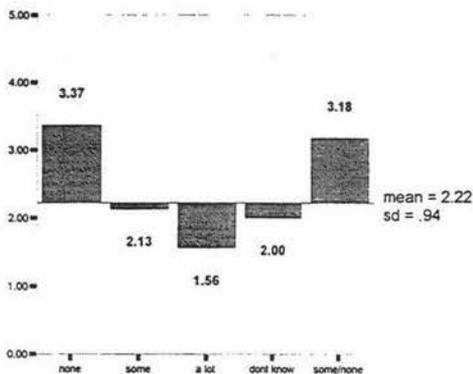
Submission-makers who do not think the submission-making process is worthwhile, or only believe it is somewhat worthwhile, do not generally think submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

Only Do Because Required by Law



Only those submission-makers that think the submission-making process is very worthwhile, generally are of the opinion that local authorities would ask for submissions even if it was not required by law.

Encourage Councillors to Listen

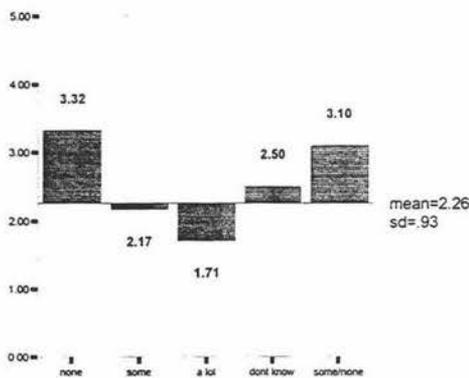


How Much Importance are Submissions to Council when making Decisions

How much importance do you think the Council attaches to submissions when making decisions?

Generally submission-makers that think submissions are of either some importance, a lot of importance or do not know if they are of any importance, think submissions encourage councillors to listen.

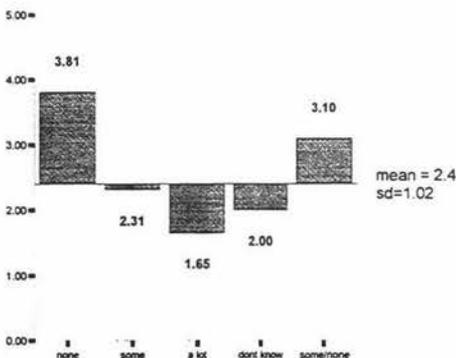
Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



How Much Importance are Submissions to Council when Making Decisions

Generally submission-makers who think submissions are either of some importance, or, a lot of importance think submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

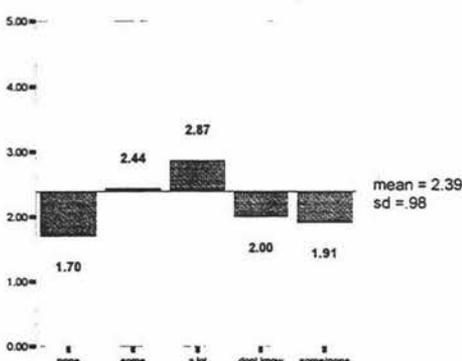
Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



How Much Importance are Submissions to Council when Making Decisions

Generally submission-makers who think submissions are of some importance, a lot of importance, or do not know if they are of any importance think submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

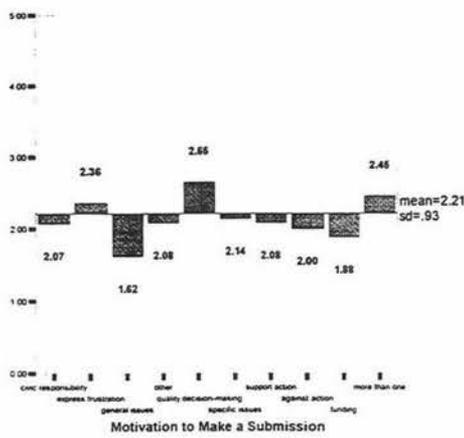
Only Do Because Required by Law



How Much Importance are Submissions to Council when Making Decisions

Generally submission-makers who think submissions are of no importance, some importance or do not know if they are of any importance think local authorities only call for submissions because they are required to by law.

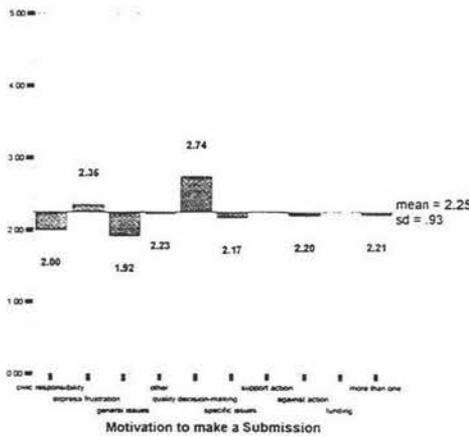
Encourage Councillors to Listen



What of the following statements best describes what motivated you to make a submission?

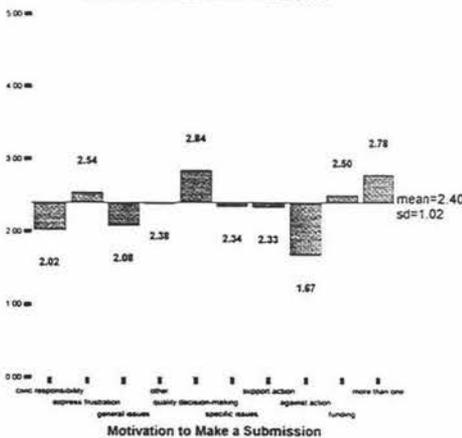
Submission-makers whose motivation for making a submission was to express frustration, concern about the quality of decision-making or more than one of the options given were more inclined to feel that submissions do not encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



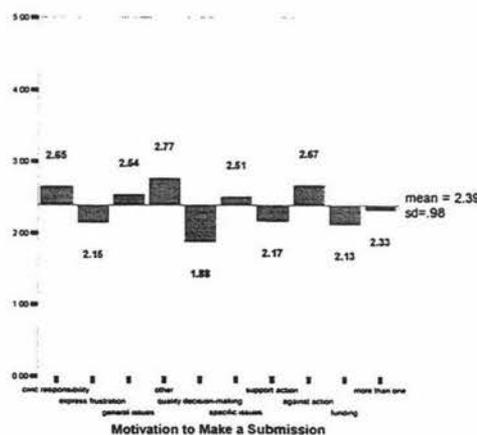
Submission-makers whose motivation for making a submission was to express frustration, or concern about the quality of decision-making were more inclined to feel that submissions do not provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance to influence Annual Plan

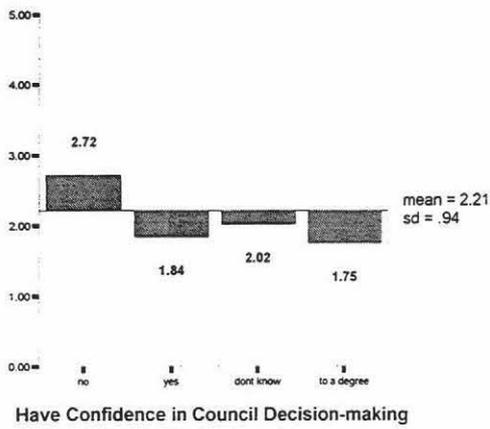


Submission-makers whose motivation for making a submission was to express frustration, concern about the quality of decision-making, other or funding were more inclined to feel that submissions do not provide a chance to influence the annual plan.

Only Do Because Required by Law

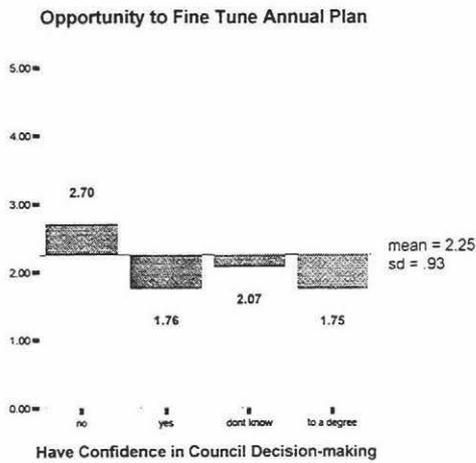


Submission-makers whose motivation for making a submission was to express frustration, concern about the quality of decision-making, to support council action, funding, or more than one of these were more inclined to feel that submissions were only called for because it was required by law.

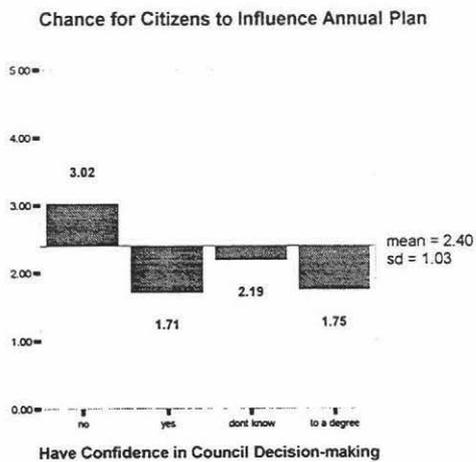


Did your input give you confidence in the decision-making processes of Council?

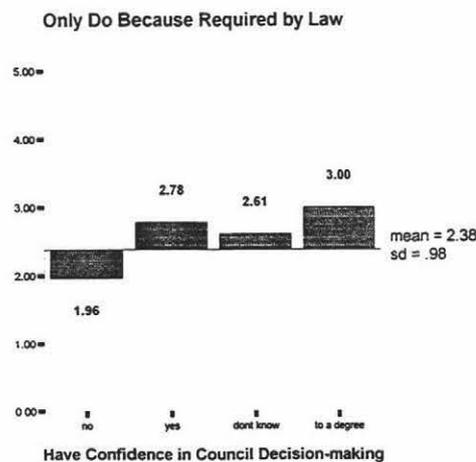
Submission-makers who had no confidence in local authority decision-making were did not think submissions encourage councillors to listen.



Submission-makers who had no confidence in local authority decision-making did not think submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

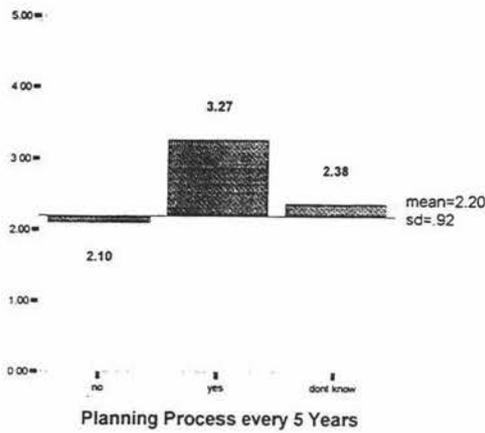


Submission-makers who had no confidence in local authority decision-making did not think submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.



Submission-makers who had no confidence in local authority decision-making felt that submissions were only called for because it was required by law.

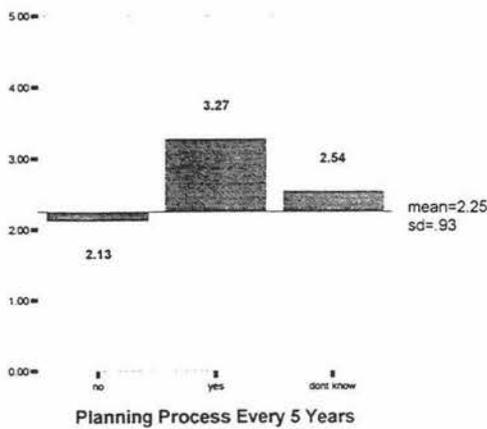
Encourage Councillors to Listen



Would the planning process work as well if it was only done once every five years?

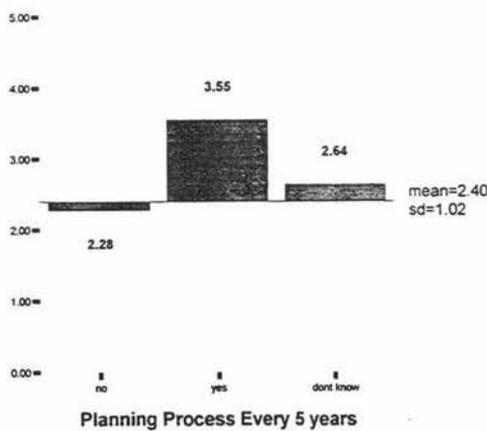
Submission-makers who thought the submission process would work as well if only done 5 yearly did not think submissions encourage councillors to listen.

Opportunity to Fine Tune Annual Plan



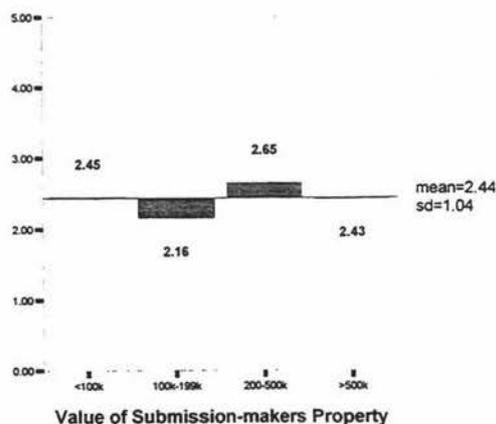
Submission-makers who thought the submission process would work as well if only done 5 yearly did not think submissions provide an opportunity to fine tune the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



Submission-makers who thought the submission process would work as well if only done 5 yearly did not think submissions provide a chance for citizens to influence the annual plan.

Chance for Citizens to Influence Annual Plan



If you pay rates what is the value of your property in the Council area?

Submission-makers with property in the \$100,000 - \$199,000 range are more likely to think that they have a chance of influencing the annual plan.

Appendix V

The following tables give the number of respondents to each of 'Index of Satisfaction' questions when the questions are cross-tabulating with each other.

Submission Made a Difference to Annual Plan

Are you satisfied with the outcome	No	Partially	Very	Don't Know	No Answer	TOTAL
No	70	25	3	1	2	101
Yes	5	64	53	1	3	126
Don't know	28	58	13	1	18	118
No answer	1	6	0	0	5	12
	104	153	69	3	28	357

Would you make another submission	No	Partially	Don't Know	No Answer	TOTAL
No	12	84	2	3	101
Yes	0	125	1	0	126
Don't know	9	99	7	3	118
No answer	1	7	3	1	12
	22	315	13	7	357

How much importance does council attach to submissions	None	Some	A lot	Don't Know	Some/None	No answer	TOTAL
No	26	61	4	0	7	3	101
Yes	3	84	37	0	1	1	126
Don't Know	9	89	7	7	3	3	118
No answer	0	7	0	1	0	4	12
	38	241	48	8	11	11	357

Input gave confidence in council decision-making	No	Yes	Don't know	To a degree	No answer	TOTAL
No	74	11	12	1	3	101
Yes	33	61	27	2	3	126
Don't Know	35	21	55	1	6	118
No answer	4	1	6	0	1	12
TOTAL	146	94	100	4	13	357

Making a submission is worthwhile	Not at all worthwhile	Somewhat	Very	Don't know	No answer	TOTAL
No	22	54	24	0	1	101
Yes	2	46	78	0	0	126
Don't know	4	63	44	3	4	118
No answer	1	2	5	0	4	12
TOTAL	29	165	151	3	9	357

Are You Satisfied with the Outcome?

Would you make another submission	No	Yes	Don't Know	No answer	TOTAL
No	16	83	3	2	104
Partially	3	145	2	3	153
Very	0	68	1	0	69
Don't Know	0	3	0	0	3
No Answer	3	16	7	2	28
TOTAL	22	315	13	7	357

How much importance does council attach to submissions	None	Some	A lot	Don't Know	None or some	No answer	TOTAL
No	32	54	1	5	8	4	104
Partially	5	128	15	1	3	1	153
Very	0	41	28	0	0	0	69
Don't Know	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
No Answer	1	16	3	2	0	6	28
TOTAL	38	241	48	8	11	11	357

Input gave confidence in council decision-making	No	Yes	Don't Know	To a Degree	No Answer	TOTAL
No	77	3	20	1	3	104
Partially	56	44	47	3	3	153
Very	7	44	16	0	2	69
Don't Know	0	1	2	0	0	3
No Answer	6	2	15	0	5	28
TOTAL	146	94	100	4	13	357

Making a submission is worthwhile	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Don't Know	No answer	TOTAL
No	25	53	22	2	2	104
Partially	3	80	69	0	1	153
Very	0	20	49	0	0	69
Don't Know	0	1	2	0	0	3
No answer	1	11	9	1	6	28
TOTAL	29	165	151	3	9	357

Would You Make Another Submission?

How much importance does council attach to submissions	None	Some	A lot	Don't Know	Some/None	No Answer	TOTAL
No	11	7	0	1	0	3	22
Yes	25	222	48	5	10	5	315
Don't Know	1	7	0	2	1	2	13
No Answer	1	5	0	0	0	1	7
TOTAL	38	241	48	8	11	11	357

Input gave confidence in council decision-making	No	Yes	Don't Know	To A Degree	No Answer	TOTAL
No	12	0	8	0	2	22
Yes	124	93	87	4	7	315
Don't Know	5	1	3	0	4	13
No Answer	5	0	2	0	0	7
TOTAL	146	94	100	4	13	357

Making a submission is worthwhile	Not at all	Very	Somewhat	Don't Know	No Answer	TOTAL
No	9	10	0	1	2	22
Yes	17	149	144	2	3	315
Don't Know	1	4	5	0	3	13
No Answer	2	2	2	0	1	7
TOTAL	29	165	151	3	9	357

How Much Importance Does Council Attach to Submissions?

Input gave confidence in council decision-making	No	Yes	Don't Know	To A Degree	No Answer	TOTAL
None	33	1	3	0	1	38
Some	90	61	76	4	10	241
A Lot	6	31	11	0	0	48
Don't Know	2	0	6	0	0	8
Some / None	11	0	0	0	0	11
No Answer	4	1	4	0	3	11
TOTAL	146	94	100	4	13	357

Making a submission is worthwhile	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Don't Know	No Answer	TOTAL
None	23	11	3	0	1	38
Some	4	135	100	0	2	241
A lot	0	9	39	0	0	48
Don't Know	0	2	3	3	0	8
Some/ None	1	7	3	0	0	11
No Answer	1	1	3	0	6	11
TOTAL	29	165	151	3	9	357

Input Gave Confidence in Council Decision-making?

Making a submission is worthwhile	Not at All	Somewhat	Very	Don't Know	No Answer	TOTAL
No	25	77	41	0	3	146
Yes	1	28	65	0	0	94
Don't Know	2	52	40	3	3	100
To A Degree	0	2	2	0	0	4
No Answer	1	6	3	0	3	13
TOTAL	29	165	151	3	9	357

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