

Annual Budget 2017/2018 Communication and Consultation – Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview on the Annual Budget 2017/2018 communication and consultation campaign.

Executive summary

- The 2017/2018 Annual Budget Consultation process is an important proof point to demonstrate continued progress towards ensuring Aucklanders having a stronger voice in shaping Auckland and elected members receiving better support to make quality decisions. These two strategic outcomes are the core focus of the Engaging and Enabling Communities pillar of the 2017-2019 Performance Plan.
- The consultation on the Annual Budget 2017/2018 was designed to raise awareness and provide an opportunity for all Aucklanders to give feedback on the key topics, as well as deliver useful insights to decision makers.
- Specific focus was given to ensuring a wide cross section of Aucklanders was involved, particularly people from communities who do not often participate. This included Māori, Pacific Peoples, Chinese, other ethnicities and younger people.
- In addition to digital, online and social media channels a total 70 events were held to raise awareness and /or collect feedback. (Of these events, 45 were run by Auckland Council, 25 were delivered by partner organisations e.g. Chinese)
- In total, 8058 submissions were made. Of those, 44 per cent of submissions were made online, 28 per cent were made through hard copy forms and 28 per cent via email, letters or proforma. Nearly 25 per cent of submissions came via the Peoples Panel. This total represents a significant increase in submissions made by Aucklanders compared to last year.
- Of those who provided submissions, 23 per cent identified as Asian, 7 per cent were Pacific and 7 per cent identified as Maori. Sixteen per cent of submitters were aged between 15 and 34 years, This represents a much more diverse profile of submitters compared to previous years.
- Communication of progress and closing the loop with stakeholders and the general public will occur via a range of channels from April to July 2017.
- Accessibility for Aucklanders to have their say was a key driver in the engagement approach, and the geographical spread of events made this approach successful.

Background

Key elements of the consultation process undertaken for the Annual Budget 2017/2018 are set out below.

- The Engaging and Enabling Communities (EEC) Pillar of the 2017-2019 Performance Plan is committed to giving Aucklanders a stronger voice in shaping Auckland and providing better support to elected members to make quality decisions. The 2017/2018 Annual Budget Consultation process is an important proof point to tangibly demonstrate progress towards delivering these two strategic outcomes.
- The Significance and Engagement Policy provides council with flexibility to design and deliver an engagement approach for the 2017/2018 Annual Budget consultation which is tailored to the diverse communities of Auckland and the scale of the issues requiring public input.
- The 2017/2018 consultation document with supporting information was adopted by the Governing Body on 9 February 2017. The consultation document focussed on the potential changes for 2017/2018.
- Public consultation ran between 27 February 2017 and 27 March 2017 – a household summary was delivered to 540,000 letterboxes in the March edition of OurAuckland.

- Mana Whenua governors and officers received early advice of the Mayor’s proposal via email in January 17, along with a timeline of the overall process, the proposed 20 March elected member hui, and an invitation to meet and discuss the process.
- Public awareness raising activities were delivered from mid-February to the end of March to encourage Aucklanders to participate in the consultation process. These activities included the March edition of OurAuckland, advertisements in local and regional newspapers, ethnic media, online banner advertisements, media releases, targeted stakeholder communications and social media and media partnership with Fairfax.
- Information about the consultation process was distributed to Mana Whenua in early February. This included promotion through Māori community social media networks, and distribution of consultation material to Mana Whenua on 9 February including confirmation of the 20 March elected member hui.
- In addition, individual kanohi ki te kanohi hui and phone calls were conducted with ten Mana Whenua representatives on request to discuss the Annual Budget, other key planning for the 2017/2018 year and discuss value and scope for elected member hui.
- Council is committed to communication progress closing the loop with stakeholder organisations and the general public between April and July. This will be achieved through a variety of channels to ensure Aucklanders understand how their feedback was considered and the decisions that council have made.

Objectives

There were 4 key objectives to this consultation process:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the Annual Budget and consultation topics and key trade-offs through focussed and targeted engagement
- Make it easy for a wide range of Aucklanders to participate so they have a strong voice in shaping Auckland (EEC Outcome 1)
- Provide Finance and Performance members with useful insights into the views of Aucklanders so they can make quality decisions. (EEC Outcome 2)
- Increase overall trust and confidence in council processes, decision-making and financial management

Events and Attendance

Public Attendance

Through a targeted and focussed approach, 70 events (45 Council run and 25 partner organisation run) were held over the consultation period, with an attendance of 2510 Aucklanders.

The events ranged in style and were as follows:

Event Type	Number of events	Attendance
HYS Round Table	7	144
HYS Drop in	10	312
Existing events (inc Pasifika)	12	580
Town Hall style	2	75
Regional Stakeholder Event	1	33
Auckland Conversations	2	103
Diverse Communities		
Indian	1	36
Chinese/Korean	20	784
Māori (inc Mana Whenua)	6	81
Pacific	6	307
ESOL Classes	3	55
TOTAL	70	2510

Councillor Attendance

Of the 25 Have Your Say events (drop in, town hall style and round table), 70 per cent of Councillors attended 15 of these 25 events, with a total of 26 Councillor attendances in total. (These figures exclude the regional stakeholder event on the 20th March.)

Feedback Channels

Feedback was received across three broad feedback channels – written, in-person and digital to gain feedback from a cross section of Aucklanders. In summary:

- 8,058 written submissions were received overall
- 7,849 addressed the regional questions and/or other regional issues (7,829 Q1-5 only)
- 4,708 addressed the local questions and/or other local issues (4,336 Q6 only)
- 2510 people attended 70 Have Your Say events and existing community events
- 103 feedback points were provided through digital channels (Twitter and Facebook). In addition, nearly 60 responses were received via 'Up South' regarding the living wage.
- A targeted youth led Māori and Pasifika rangatahi engagement campaign resulted in 210 individual written submissions from under 24s, 130 of which were from rangatahi who identified as Māori.

Of the submissions received, 72 per cent were made using the council consultation feedback form (either online, posted or emailed). The remaining 28 per cent were pro-forma, letters, etc.

Submissions

Overall Written Submissions

Compared to 2016/2017, the overall written submissions have increased by 148 per cent, from 3,321 to 8,058 in total.

Submission Type	%	n	2016/17 n
Online Form	44%	3,567	1044
Hard Copy Form	28%	2,258	1446
Non form (letter/email/pro-forma)	28%	2,233	831
	100%	8,058	3,321

All submissions will be available to view on council's website from early May.

Effectiveness of People's Panel

For the first time this year the Peoples Panel was used as a way to reach some of the more difficult to reach audiences. Three separate mailouts were sent out after awareness of the consultation was advised in a People's Panel newsletter. The mailouts generated opportunities for all 25,000 People's Panel members to give their feedback on the Annual Budget with the following success:

People's Panel	Number online submissions
Targeted young people	198
Targeted ethnic minority	314
Non-targeted	1327
TOTAL	1839

Submissions by ethnicity

Compared to the last Annual Budget consultation, there has been a significant increase in the number of submissions from some of the diverse groups that have previously been under-represented. From the 5470 Aucklanders who provided their ethnicity details, 23 per cent identified as Asian (compared to 5 per cent in 2016/2017). The proportion of Europeans submitting their feedback has decreased from 87 per cent in 2016/2017 to 66 per cent this year, indicating the approach targeted at diverse communities has been an effective one.

Ethnicity	%	n	n 2016/2017
European	66	3630	1638
Māori	7	390	61
Pacific	7	395	22
Asian	23	1245	98
African/M Eastern/Latin	1	47	10
Other	2	136	50
TOTAL	*	5470	1879

Submissions by age

Of the 5504 Aucklanders who provided their age details, we have achieved a spread across all age groups. Encouragingly this year sees a greater proportion in the 15-34 age groups than in 2016/2017.

2017/2018			2016/2017	2016/2017
Age	%	n	%	n
under 15	1	66	2	31
15-24	8	416	4	71
25-34	11	608	8	154
35-44	17	957	18	339
45-54	19	1049	19	355
55-64	19	1026	17	321
65-74	17	956	19	357
75+	8	426	12	218
		5504		1846

Have Your Say events compared to hearing style

Changes to the Local Government Act in 2014 gave councils more flexibility when it comes to consulting and receiving feedback on annual plans. For this annual plan we designed and adopted a communication process which best gave effect to the principles in the legislation.

We can now reach significantly more residents by having the option to provide a range of opportunities to provide feedback (existing events, drop-in style, social media etc) rather than solely a hearings style approach, which appealed to only a small proportion of the Auckland population.

In 2017/2018 through the 25 council Have Your Say (HYS) events, 772 people attended (this excludes those who gave feedback at existing events). This reached significantly more than with a hearings only process in 2014/2015 when only 283 gave their feedback.

For Māori communities, the more flexible approach also allowed us to explore innovative means of reaching key groups we don't usually hear from. This included engaging a Māori and Pasifika rangatahi group to undertake targeted engagement within their networks through youth groups and attendance at public events.

Regional Stakeholder Process

One of the Have your Say events was a regional stakeholder event (attended by the majority of Councillors) similar to what Council has run for other recent Annual Budgets.

The invitees to this event were representative organisations/associations which as an organisation/association had previously submitted to Auckland Council on annual plan/long term plan matters and/or which the Council considered would be likely to have an interest in the matters being consulted on. Councillors were given the opportunity to recommend organisations/groups to be added to the invitation list.

Invites and information were sent at the beginning of the Annual Budget consultation (Monday 27 February). Thirty three stakeholders attended the traditional hearing style event on Monday 20 March. Attendees were given 10 minutes to speak followed by a 5 minute question and answer time.

Council has heard from some organisations who wished to attend the event and weren't invited. These comments will be considered for any future such events. However Council gave people who may be affected by, or interested in, the proposals a number of options for giving their feedback, including the opportunity to present their views in person through the many 'Have your Say' events across the Auckland region and other engagement opportunities. All feedback, however received, is reported back to all councillors in the reports for the workshop.

Mana Whenua Engagement

The Mana Whenua (MW) governors hui with the Mayor and councillors was developed as a general check-in at the start of a new Mayoral term, with a significant level of strategic planning yet to come. This proposal was based on the awareness of a higher level of likely interest in the Auckland Plan and upcoming Long Term Plan discussions.

Initially a one hour lunch was proposed as per the process for the previous years' Annual Budget engagement. This proposal was tested with the MW who responded to January early engagement. Feedback from these representatives resulted in extending the hui to a one hour for general business followed by lunch. This amended proposal reflected MW indication of a preference for individual rather than group conversations with the Mayor at this point in the planning year, and/or progressing some priority executive level and local board relationships.

The event was scheduled within the regional stake-holders event due to availability of the elected members. Including it in the Stakeholder day resulted in confusion over the scope and partnership level of the discussion, and an inappropriate squeeze on time for the hui.

As noted above, briefing sessions were offered on the Annual Budget and 20 March hui, along with the early advice, and were taken up by 10 MW representatives.

Based on feedback on the day there is a need to ensure any future events are kept well separated, and that there is a stronger process around joint briefing perhaps closer to the time to ensure the purpose, scope and opportunity presented by these meetings is clear.

Approach to feedback analysis and reporting

The following approach has been used to ensure decision-makers are well informed about feedback received on the Annual Budget 2017/2018:

- A report has been prepared summarising feedback received on consultation items covered in the Consultation document.
- Staff with specific subject matter expertise have reviewed feedback received relevant to their own area and summarised the issues raised to ensure councillors understand community views.
- The report does not contain analysis of the implications of the feedback received. There are a series of workshops throughout May which will cover a budget update and key executives from across council will talk to their budget. Further advice and recommendations will be made ahead of final decision-making in June.
- 21 reports have also been developed summarising the feedback for each local board area and will be considered by each local board between 26 April and 9 May.
- A separate report was prepared for the Tūpuna Maunga o Tamaki Makaurau Authority and Finance and Performance committee for joint deliberation on the draft Tūpuna Maunga Operational Plan on the 13 April.

Next Steps

- General media releases (April – July)
- Go back to partner groups (including Manu Whenua) and Maatawaka to close the loop (April - July)
- Closing the loop via People's Panel newsletter (April - July)
- Print adverts following decisions end June (early July)
- Shape Auckland updates (May-July)
- Rates campaign (July)

Signatories

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