

# Access to government information

Office of the Ombudsman

September 2021



# Methodology

- Results in this report are based upon questions asked in the UMR Research nationwide omnibus survey. This is an online survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,005 New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.
  - Fieldwork for the latest online survey was conducted between 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
  - The margin of error for a sample size of 1,005 for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level is  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

## Note on rounding:

- *All numbers are shown rounded to zero decimal places. Hence specified totals are not always exactly equal to the sum of the specified sub-totals. The differences are seldom more than 1%.*
- *For example:  $2.7 + 3.5 = 6.2$  would appear:  $3 + 4 = 6$ .*

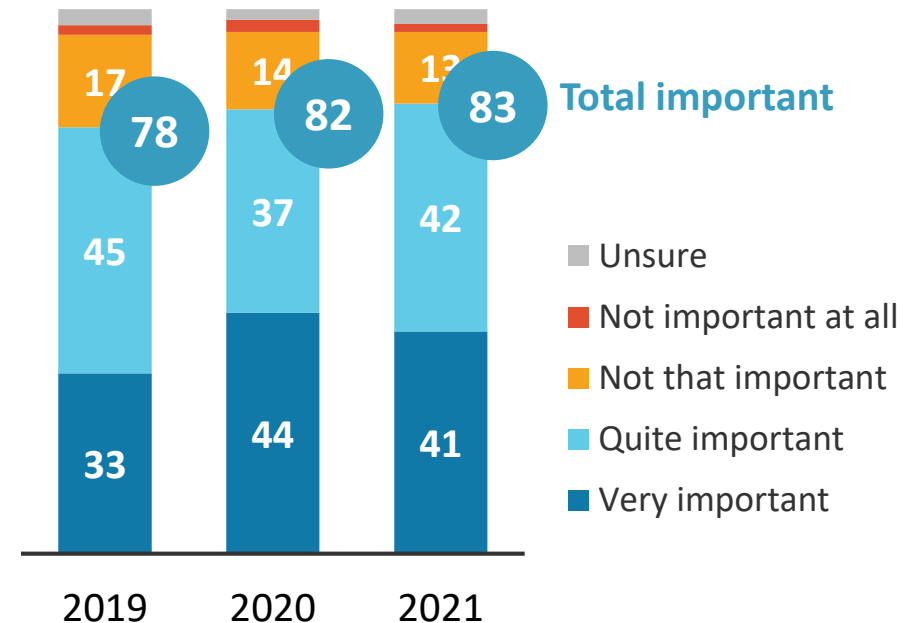
# Key findings

- Respondents' overall perceived importance of accessing government information remained similar to last year. 83% (up 1%) declared that it was important (*'Very important'* + *'Quite important'*) that they can access government information.
- 45% of the respondents declared awareness of the Official Information Act and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act. This was down 5% from 2020 and 15% from 2019.
- Similar to previous years, 12% said they have tried to access information held by Ministers, central or local government information in the last three years (down 3% from 2020).
- 47% of the respondents who had tried to access information in the last three years registered as *'Satisfied'* with their response; a 3% decrease from 2020.
- 67% (down 1%) of respondents who requested information had received it. An additional 8% were still waiting (down 5%).
- Of those who had received the information, 78% received it *'As quickly as expected'* or *'Faster than expected'* (up 2%).

# Importance of access to government information

- A strong majority continued to consider it important ('Very important' + 'Quite important') they can access government information (83%, up 1%).
- Those who had tried to access government information in the past 3 years were more likely to consider it important (96%) than those who haven't (81%).

📊 How important is it to you that you can access government information? (%)

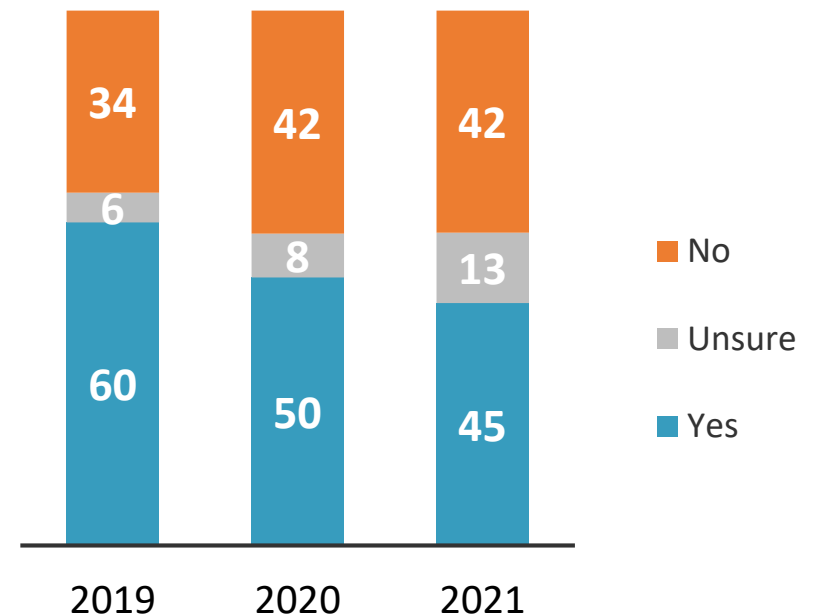


Base: All respondents (n=1005)

# Declared awareness of information acts

- Less than half of respondents were aware of the information acts listed. This was a 5% decrease from 2020 and 10% from 2019.
- The following demographic groups were more likely to say they were aware of the information acts:
  - Respondents aged 60+ (56%).
  - Males (53%).

**Q** *Did you know that under the law the Official Information Act and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act, you can access information held by Ministers and central and local government agencies (e.g. government departments, councils, health boards, schools)? (%)*

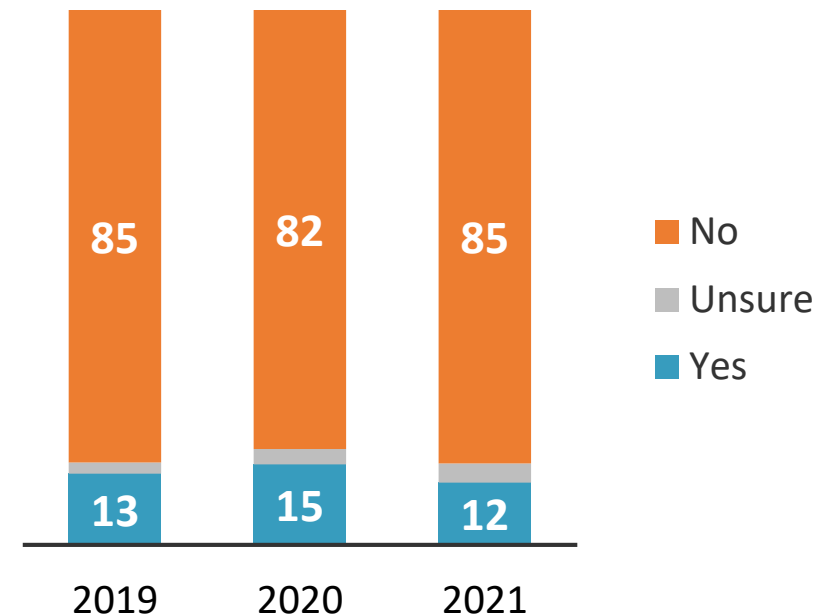


Base: All respondents (n=1005)

# Attempts to access information

- Similar to previous years, 12% said they have tried to access information held by Ministers, central or local government information in the last three years (down 3%).
- Respondents in the following demographic groups were more likely
  - Aucklanders (16%)
  - Aged under 30 (20%)
  - Asian (22%)
  - Full time employed (15%)

**Q** *In the last three years have you tried to access information held by Ministers, central or local government agencies? (%)*

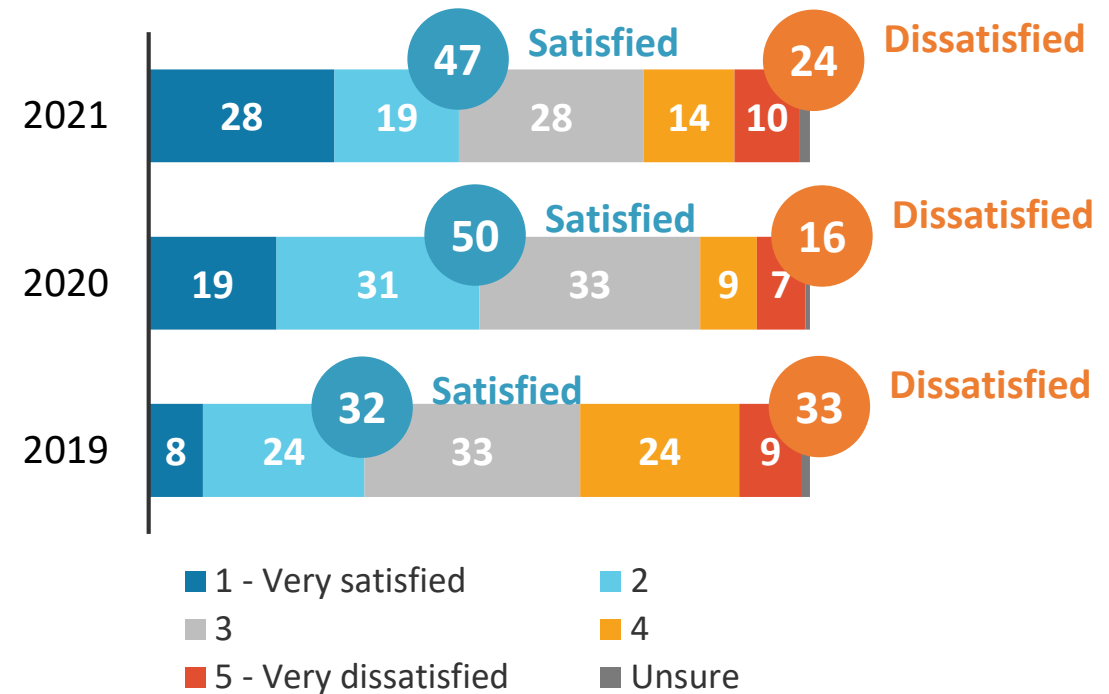


Base: All respondents (n=1005)

# Satisfaction with response

- Among respondents who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments in the last three years (n=117), 47% said they were satisfied ('1 – Very satisfied' + '2') with the response. This was consistent with 2020 (down 3%).
- 24% said they were dissatisfied (up 8%).
- Amongst those who did receive the information they requested only 12% dissatisfied. While amongst those who did not receive their information (or who are still waiting) 47% were dissatisfied.

Thinking about the last time you tried to access information, overall, how satisfied were you with the response? (%)

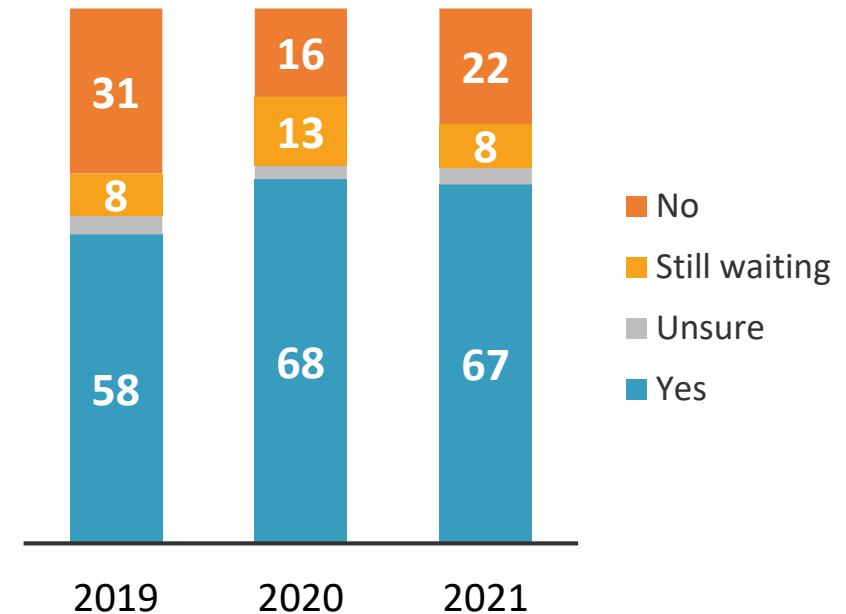


Base: Those who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments in the last three years (n=117)

# Getting the information

- 67% of respondents who have accessed information in the last three years (n=117), received the information they asked for. Consistent with 2020 (down 1%).
- 8% said they were still waiting and 22% said they didn't get the information. Both relatively consistent with last year (down 5% and up 6% respectively).
- There were no significant demographic differences.

🗉 Did you get the information you asked for? (%)



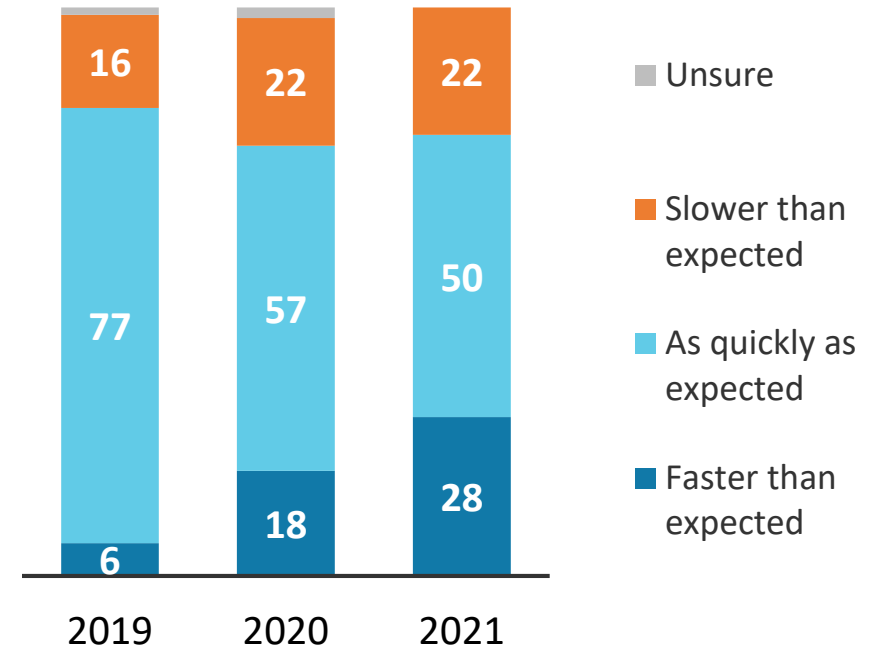
Base: Those who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments in the last three years (n=117)



# Expectations of speed

- In 2021, 28% of respondents who requested information (n=78) received it *'Faster than expected'*. This was a 10% increase compared with 2020 and 22% from 2019.
- Half of respondents received the information *'As quickly as expected'* (down 7%).
- The proportion of respondents who felt they received their information *'Slower than expected'* remained at 22%.
- There were no significant demographic differences.

How quickly did you receive the information? (%)



Base: Those who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments in the last three years and received information (n=78)

# Supplementary tables



# Importance of access to government information

Row %		Very important	Quite important	Total important	Not that important	Not important at all	Total not important	Unsure	n
All		41	42	83	13	1	15	3	1005
Region	Upper North Is.	38	43	80	15	1	17	3	209
	Auckland	46	42	88	9	1	10	2	334
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	41	39	81	13	3	16	3	110
	Lower North Is.	39	44	83	13	1	14	3	109
	Canterbury	43	40	83	14	1	15	1	131
	Other South Is.	29	43	72	19	3	22	6	111
Gender	Male	42	42	84	12	2	13	2	487
	Female	40	41	81	15	1	16	3	515
Age	18-29	31	47	78	17	0	17	5	219
	30-44	44	41	86	12	1	13	2	253
	45-59	44	41	85	10	2	12	4	261
	60+	42	40	82	14	3	17	1	273
Ethnicity	NZ European	38	43	81	14	2	16	3	710
	NZ Māori	44	42	86	12	1	13	1	135
	Pasifika	43	43	86	9	0	9	4	27
	Asian	49	41	89	8	0	8	2	151
	Other	41	42	82	15	1	16	2	78
Employment	30 hours or more	43	41	85	12	1	13	2	472
	Less than 30 hours	41	42	83	13	1	14	3	172
	Not working	37	43	80	14	3	17	3	361
Household income	Under \$50k	40	42	82	14	3	16	2	307
	\$50k-\$100k	43	44	86	10	1	11	3	293
	More than \$100,000k	40	44	84	15	0	15	0	273
Dependent children	Yes	42	42	84	13	1	14	2	311
	No	40	42	82	13	2	15	3	694

# Awareness of information acts

Row %		Yes	No	Unsure	n
All		45	42	13	1005
Region	Upper North Is.	43	44	13	209
	Auckland	44	40	15	334
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	50	36	14	110
	Lower North Is.	40	47	13	109
	Canterbury	49	42	9	131
	Other South Is.	47	40	13	111
Gender	Male	53	36	11	487
	Female	38	46	16	515
Age	18-29	35	48	17	219
	30-44	42	47	11	253
	45-59	46	42	12	261
	60+	56	31	14	273
Ethnicity	NZ European	47	41	12	710
	NZ Māori	42	38	20	135
	Pasifika	36	47	17	27
	Asian	42	44	14	151
	Other	44	39	17	78
Employment	30 hours or more	46	43	11	472
	Less than 30 hours	41	42	17	172
	Not working	46	40	14	361
Household income	Under \$50k	42	43	14	307
	\$50k-\$100k	46	43	11	293
	More than \$100,000k	49	38	13	273
Dependent children	Yes	44	44	12	311
	No	46	40	14	694

# Attempts to access information

Row %		Yes	No	Unsure	<i>n</i>
All		12	85	4	1005
Region	Upper North Is.	10	87	4	209
	Auckland	16	80	4	334
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	9	84	7	110
	Lower North Is.	8	90	2	109
	Canterbury	14	86	1	131
	Other South Is.	6	90	4	111
Gender	Male	14	82	3	487
	Female	9	87	4	515
Age	18-29	20	75	5	219
	30-44	16	81	3	253
	45-59	6	90	4	261
	60+	6	92	2	273
Ethnicity	NZ European	10	87	3	710
	NZ Māori	11	85	4	135
	Pasifika	18	76	7	27
	Asian	22	72	6	151
	Other	3	96	2	78
Employment	30 hours or more	15	82	3	472
	Less than 30 hours	13	82	5	172
	Not working	7	90	3	361
Household income	Under \$50k	11	84	4	307
	\$50k-\$100k	11	86	4	293
	More than \$100,000k	15	83	2	273
Dependent children	Yes	20	74	6	311
	No	8	90	3	694

# Satisfaction with response

Row %		1 - Very satisfied	2	Total satisfied (1+2)	3	4	5 - Very dissatisfied	Total dissatisfied (4+5)	Unsure	n
All		28	19	47	28	14	10	24	2	117
Region	Upper North Is.	28	24	52	21	4	20	24	4	20
	Auckland	24	16	40	31	23	6	29	0	53
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	49	9	58	15	19	9	27	0	10
	Lower North Is.	56	8	64	19	0	17	17	0	9
	Canterbury	22	32	54	34	0	6	6	7	18
	Other South Is.	13	16	30	40	14	16	31	0	7
Gender	Male	30	17	47	28	15	10	25	0	69
	Female	26	22	47	27	13	9	22	4	47
Age	18-29	26	14	41	30	18	9	26	3	44
	30-44	32	15	47	26	16	9	25	2	41
	45-59	20	34	54	31	0	14	14	0	15
	60+	30	25	55	25	11	10	21	0	17
Ethnicity	NZ European	18	18	36	31	19	12	31	1	72
	NZ Māori	51	10	61	0	29	10	39	0	15
	Pasifika	65	0	65	35	0	0	0	0	5
	Asian	29	28	56	32	7	4	12	0	32
	Other	0	42	42	0	0	0	0	58	2
Employment	30 hours or more	26	14	40	34	16	8	24	2	70
	Less than 30 hours	29	27	56	13	18	9	28	3	23
	Not working	33	24	57	24	3	16	19	0	24
Household income	Under \$50k	32	6	38	32	9	17	27	3	34
	\$50k-\$100k	16	26	42	32	18	5	23	2	31
	More than \$100,000k	40	19	58	23	12	6	18	0	41
Dependent children	Yes	34	21	54	17	16	11	27	1	63
	No	22	16	38	40	11	9	20	2	54

# Getting the information

Row %		Yes	Still waiting	No	Unsure	n
All		67	8	22	3	117
Region	Upper North Is.	66	13	21	0	20
	Auckland	67	5	25	4	53
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	66	15	20	0	10
	Lower North Is.	74	8	8	10	9
	Canterbury	65	6	24	4	18
	Other South Is.	69	16	14	0	7
Gender	Male	72	8	17	3	69
	Female	61	9	28	2	47
Age	18-29	56	6	35	3	44
	30-44	75	8	13	4	41
	45-59	72	15	13	0	15
	60+	70	9	16	5	17
Ethnicity	NZ European	63	9	23	4	72
	NZ Māori	71	0	29	0	15
	Pasifika	60	0	40	0	5
	Asian	75	6	17	2	32
	Other	42	0	58	0	2
Employment	30 hours or more	68	5	24	3	70
	Less than 30 hours	54	15	28	4	23
	Not working	77	11	8	4	24
Household income	Under \$50k	56	11	24	9	34
	\$50k-\$100k	74	2	21	2	31
	More than \$100,000k	74	10	16	0	41
Dependent children	Yes	69	8	21	2	63
	No	65	8	23	4	54

# Expectations of speed

Row %		Faster than expected	As quickly as expected	Slower than expected	Unsure	n
All		28	50	22	0	78
Region	Upper North Is.	9	67	24	0	13
	Auckland	29	42	30	0	35
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	34	66	0	0	7
	Lower North Is.	50	37	13	0	7
	Canterbury	24	56	19	0	12
	Other South Is.	43	39	18	0	5
Gender	Male	26	52	22	0	50
	Female	31	46	23	0	29
Age	18-29	26	41	33	0	25
	30-44	37	52	10	0	31
	45-59	21	54	26	0	11
	60+	15	58	28	0	12
Ethnicity	NZ European	18	51	31	0	45
	NZ Māori	58	28	14	0	11
	Pasifika	0	41	59	0	3
	Asian	34	51	15	0	24
	Other	0	100	0	0	1
Employment	30 hours or more	29	47	25	0	47
	Less than 30 hours	39	53	8	0	12
	Not working	19	55	26	0	19
Household income	Under \$50k	26	50	24	0	19
	\$50k-\$100k	34	38	29	0	23
	More than \$100,000k	28	51	21	0	30
Dependent children	Yes	36	49	15	0	44
	No	17	51	32	0	35