



SuperCity? Project: Voting Surveys

Working Paper 5

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### **(1) Introduction**

A telephone survey of n=350 randomly selected residents of Auckland was commissioned from Phoenix Research. Age-gender-place quotas were used to structure the data-collection. This has confidence limits of +/- 5%. The data has been weighted to better represent the various parts of Auckland and also ethnic proportions. The main attitude questions were collected on an 11-point Likert scale and this has been reduced to a 3-category scale. Field work was during July 2013. Questions covered both attitudes to performance of the Auckland Council & effects of the governance reforms and also attitudes re the forthcoming local authority elections. Included among the questions were several indicators specified by the DIA indicators framework:

- Interest in Local Politics, including past and likely future voting
- Attitude to Auckland as place to live, and whether this has changed since amalgamation (not covered in this working paper)
- Opinion re Auckland's future growth (also not covered)
- Attitude to Council plans (also not covered)
- Attitude to governance issues in relation to Auckland.



A second interviewing round in November/December 2013 was partly paid for with the original grant from the Dean but more from a further Faculty grant. In all 440 phone interviews were conducted: half were recontacts and the other half new. Most of the recontacts completed both the voting followup and the housing questionnaire while the new contacts were only asked to complete the housing questionnaire. Recontacts were asked some further socio-demographic information while new contacts were asked the full set. Since several questions were asked of recontacts before and after the election some estimate of their degree of consistency could be developed. Open-ended information has yet to be coded and although re-contacts have been connected with the data from their first interview, consistency is not reported here. Don't knows/refusals etc. have been removed before percentaging.

### **(1) Results: 1<sup>st</sup> Round**

A solid minority reported a current interest in local politics (37%).

The sample is evenly split between those who say their interest has changed over the last 3 years and those whose interest hadn't changed, but amongst the former a solid minority (40%) say it has increased.

Several areas of Auckland governance attracted solid agreement including opportunity for involvement in the arts (43%); seeing the mayor as an effective leader for the region (37%) and seeing the governance reforms as having benefitted the region as a whole (35%). But there was limited support that the reforms had benefitted local communities or that rates gave value for money.

Although just over half thought the balance of power between Local and Central government was about right, one third thought that local government needs more power and only a sixth thought central power needed to be strengthened.

In relation to the number of Local Boards most (nearly 2/3rds) thought the number about right and of the remainder more (nearly one quarter) would have preferred the number to be fewer.

Half gave some level of support to the Auckland system of local government with one-third being positive and one-sixth negative.

The relevance for voting of seven issues was asked about and also received high ratings: crime & safety (82%), roading congestion, rates and economy (about 3/4ths); while housing and social issues were seen as crucial to only about two-thirds. In addition, a small number of further issues relevant to the elections was volunteered by respondents, with as many as a third wanting to add to the seven issues covered.

Support for Maori seats was evenly split with a slight tip against. Support for the Independent Maori Statutory Authority has a similar distribution.

		Count	Column N %
Q2 INTEREST CHANGED SINCE AMALGAMATION INTO SUPERCITY	Yes	118	49.3%
	No	122	50.7%
Q3 INTEREST INCREASED OR DECREASED	More interested, or Same	92	38.9%
	Less interested in Local Government politics	122	52%
Q11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT VS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	Auckland Local Government is too powerful and Central Government needs more power	23	9.8%
	Central Government is too powerful and Auckland Local Government needs more power	32	14.4%
	The balance is about right	71	32.5%
Q14 OPINION ON NUMBER OF LOCAL BOARDS	Too many	117	53.1%
	Too few or About right	48	23.1%
		25	12.1%
		134	64.7%

Q8 SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF AUCKLAND	Disagree	Neither	Agree
	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %
- Auckland s beaches	4.0%	23.4%	72.7%
- Council facilities community halls and community centres	4.0%	37.7%	58.3%
- City-wide events	7.1%	39.1%	53.8%
- Library services	0.8%	16.1%	83.2%
- Council run parks and reserves	2.2%	24.7%	73.1%
- Recreational facilities	5.6%	29.7%	64.8%
- Public transport	26.3%	46%	32.0%
- Disposal and treatment of wastewater	14.1%	44.2%	47%
- The amount of council information available to you	12.6%	38.2%	49.2%
- The extent to which Auckland now is a single region compared to having several different councils previously	16.9%	43.8%	39.3%

Q13 LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT LIFE AND POLITICS	Disagree	Neither	Agree
	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %
- The Auckland governance reforms have benefited the region as a whole	23%	47.2%	35%
- The Auckland governance reforms have benefited your local community	29.6%	50.6%	19.8%
- There are many opportunities for active participation and involvement in the arts	9.6%	47.7%	42.7%
- The mayor is an effective leader for the region	23.4%	39.5%	37.1%
- You have received good value for money from your rates	34.9%	42.9%	22.2%

Q20 RELEVANCE OF TOPIC TO VOTING CHOICE	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Mean (10 point scale)
	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %	
- Rooding congestion	5.9%	17.5%	76.6%	7.01
- Public transport	8.6%	19.7%	77%	7.01
- The Auckland economy	4.6%	24%	74.0%	7.04
- Rates	7.1%	24%	75%	7.21
- Housing	7.3%	26.5%	66.2%	6.23
- Crime & safety	3.8%	14.0%	82.2%	6.95
- Social issues	6.9%	30.3%	62.8%	6.59

### (3) Results: Round 2

Over two-thirds claimed to have voted.

Declared motives for voting are fairly evenly split between seeing voting as a democratic duty and 'to have a say'.

Non-voting was partially rational: in that too little was known about the candidates.

Ease of voting prevailed: Voting by internet was preferred to postal voting over booth voting.

Considerable support for Brown was claimed despite the breaking media storm immediately after the election.

Voters claimed about equally to support block voting as opposed to support independent candidates. C&R got low support, while Labor was surprisingly high.

Claimed concerns related to voting choice included: Rates, the Auckland economy, roading and public transport, crime & safety, social issues and finally housing.

		Column N %
Q1 VOTE IN 2013 LOCAL ELECTIONS	Yes	70.3%
	No	29.7%
Q2A REASONS VOTED	Voting is a democratic duty	44.9%
	To have a say	36.5%
	Because I could not complain if I had not voted	17.9%
	None of these	0.6%

Reasons Didn't vote	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Knew too little about the candidates	27	34.2%	40.9%
Forgot to vote or left it too late	13	16.5%	19.7%
Too busy	17	21.5%	25.8%
Not interested	5	6.3%	7.6%
My vote would have had no effect	2	2.5%	3.0%
None of these	15	19.0%	22.7%
Total	79	100.0%	119.7%

		Column N %
Q2C PREFERRED VOTING METHOD	In a polling booth	13.5%
	By post	22.5%
	On the internet	27.0%
	Any combination of the above	36.9%
Q3 MAYORAL VOTE	Len Brown	60.0%
	John Palino	32.6%
	John Minto	3.0%
	Rev Uesifili Unasa	0.0%
	Penny Bright	0.7%
	Stephen Berry	0.0%
	Wayne Young	0.0%
	Reuben Shadbolt	0.0%
	Paul Duffy	0.0%
	Phil O Conner	0.0%
Other	3.7%	

		Column N %
Q5 VOTE FOR INDEPENDENTS OR GROUPS	Independent candidates	46.9%
	Electoral groupings/Party candidate	27.3%
	Some of each	25.9%
	Citizens and Ratepayers	5.9%
Q6 WHICH GROUPING VOTE FOR	City Vision	32.4%
	Community and Residents	11.8%
	Labour	26.5%
	Other	23.5%

RELEVANCE OF TOPIC TO VOTING CHOICE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q7 - Roading congestion	155	7.01	2.271
Q7 - Public transport	155	7.01	2.382
Q7 - The Auckland economy	154	7.04	2.193
Q7 - Rates	155	7.21	2.349
Q7 - Housing	154	6.23	2.631
Q7 - Crime & safety	155	6.95	2.442
Q7 - Social issues	153	6.59	2.261