

Tuesday 13 February 2018

Media Statement - Carterton Residents Survey 2017

Every three years since 2008, the Carterton District Council has undertaken a resident's satisfaction survey to ensure that the role of council is meeting the needs of the people of the Carterton District.

Historically the satisfaction survey was conducted via telephone, however a methodology change was made in 2017 to distribute letters to a sample population inviting them to participate in the survey on-line.

Corporate Services Manager Marty Sebire says that the new way of conducting the survey has proved successful; using 2013 Census breakdown for age, gender, and ethnicity to weight the results to match the distribution of the total population.

"We were thrilled to receive 1,061 responses from residents across the district. This engagement has provided Council with valuable feedback to ensure we are providing a high level of service."

The survey results produced a positive story with 67 percent of residents being satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of the Council.

Mayor John Booth said he and fellow Councillors were really pleased with the outcome when the results were distributed to them last week.

"With such a broad range of areas for our performance to be rated this high is great news."

The areas of Council that were rated included; services, infrastructure and facilities, governance and reputation, and value for money.

With Carterton's public facilities and the districts parks, reserves and open spaces being rated exceptionally well (Library - 89 percent, Events Centre - 87 percent, Swimming Pool - 72 percent, Playgrounds - 87 percent, Parks and Reserves - 87 percent, Cemetery - 86 percent, Street gardens - 84 percent, Sportsgrounds - 83 percent), Mayor Booth says elected members were thrilled with how satisfied their community was, and credits the hard work of council staff.

"These results are a really big pat on the back for our service and operations teams who are passionate about making Carterton a wonderful place to live. Not only do they accomplish this through our operational structure, but they also work alongside committed community groups and volunteers to ensure that they are delivering services and facilities that meet the needs of our people."

Although Council is evaluated well for its various services and facilities, it is not necessarily recognised as providing value for money, with only 48 percent of those surveyed being satisfied.

"The survey identified a need for us to demonstrate better value for the rates that rate payers are paying. As elected members we are very conscious of providing the best value services and infrastructure for our communities, and have agreed that we need to start providing better clarity about what we do, and how much it will cost."

Governance and reputation is another key driver of overall performance that offers an opportunity for improvement for Council. The main area to focus on is public access to decision-making. More than a third of residents feel that there could be greater clarity around how they can get involved with decision-making.

“We have been working hard over the past 18 months to improve how we communicate with our community and to involve our people in the decision making process. We are starting to see better engagement between council and residents, but there is still much more that can be done, and the survey indicates this.”

“It is also evident that Māori are less satisfied than other residents with their contribution to decision making. This has been acknowledged and our efforts being made to include local iwi in decision making must be more robust,” says Mayor Booth.

Now that the survey results have been reviewed, elected members and council officers have started to review areas for improvement .

“We are taking this feedback and the challenges to improve in these areas with great enthusiasm. We never like to rest on our laurels and therefore we strive to excel at delivering our services while endeavouring to demonstrate value for money to our ratepayers.”

Although acknowledging the challenge for improvement, Mayor Booth says he will not hold back on promoting Council’s successes.

“I am personally really pleased with how our residents have rated our performance. Providing day to day services for a district can be challenging, but reviewing these results fills me with great confidence that our organisation has a recipe for success, and puts the needs of our community first.

Mayor Booth is grateful to the members of the community who participated in the satisfaction survey.

“I would like to thank all the residents within the district who set aside their valuable time to complete our residents survey. I am very humbled to have such an engaged Carterton community.”

ENDS