

Access to government information

Office of the Ombudsman

September 2019



Key findings

- 78% think it is very or quite important to be able to access government information.
- 60% were aware they could access information held by Ministers and government agencies.
- 13% said they had attempted to access information held by Ministers and government agencies in the past three years.
- Ratings to the response to their request were evenly spread with a third satisfied and a third dissatisfied.
 - Dissatisfaction was largely driven by whether they the received the information at all.
 - 4% of those who got the information were dissatisfied.
 - 77% of those who did not get the information were dissatisfied.
- 58% of respondents who requested information said they had received it.
 - Out of that, 83% got it as quickly or faster than expected and 16% received it slower than expected.

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 1000 New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.
 - Fieldwork for the latest telephone survey was conducted between 27th August to 3rd September 2019.
 - The margin of error for a sample size of 1000 for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.1\%$.

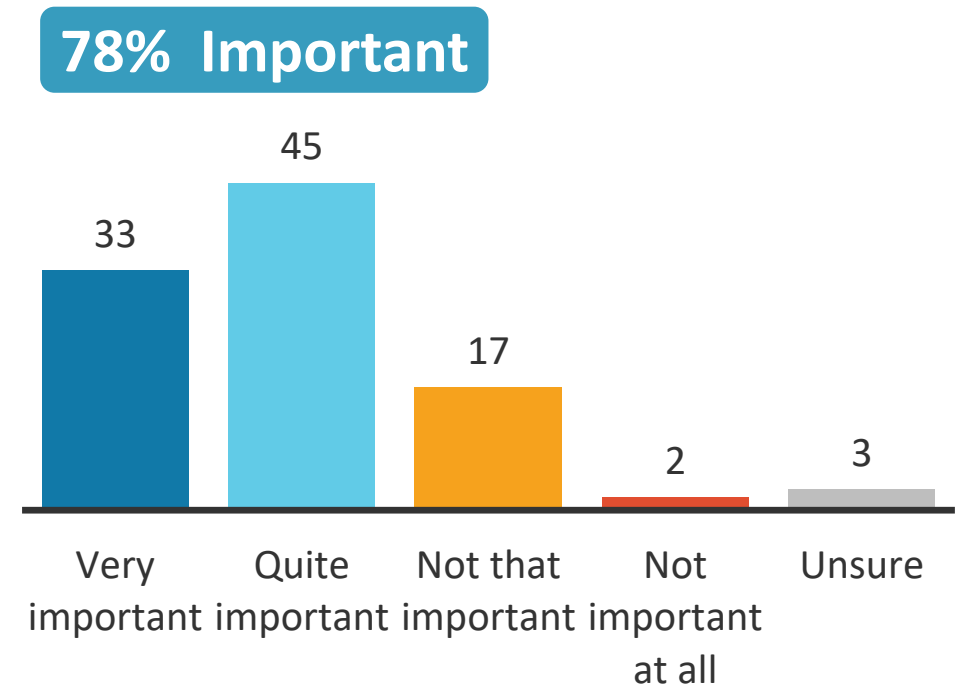
Note on rounding:

- *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: $3 + 4 = 6$.*

Importance of access to government information

- 78% of respondents said accessing government information was very important or quite important to them. A further 17% said it was not that important and 2% not important at all.
- Respondents who were aware that they can access information were more likely to declare accessing government information is important (85%) than those not aware (69%).

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

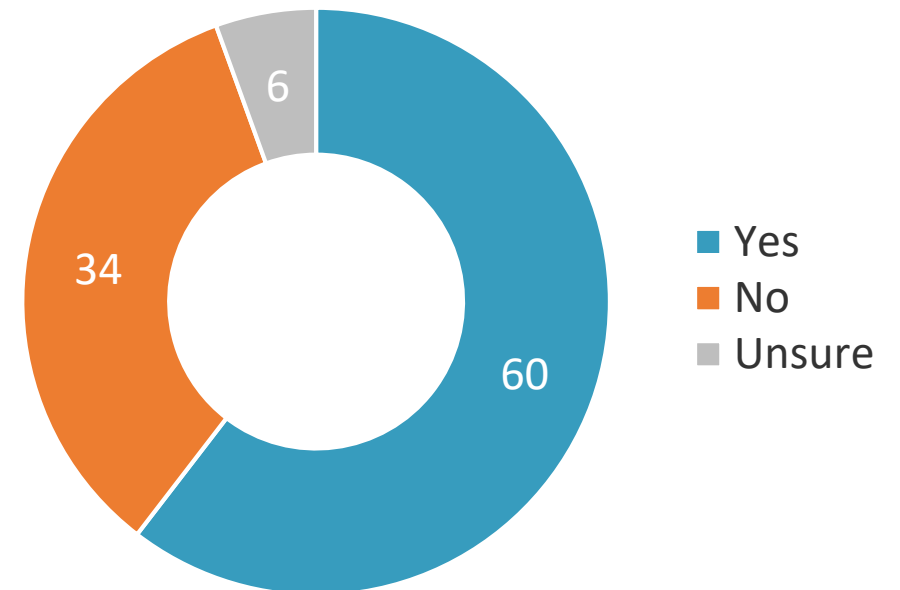


Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Awareness of information acts

- 60% of respondents said they were aware they can access information held by Ministers and government agencies.
 - Aucklanders were less likely to say they were aware (53%)
 - Males were more likely to declare awareness than females (69% and 52% respectively).
 - Older respondents were more likely to claim awareness compared to younger respondents (60 years and older: 76%; aged under 30: 39%).
 - Māori respondents were less likely to declare knowledge (49%) than NZ Europeans (63%).


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)? (%)*

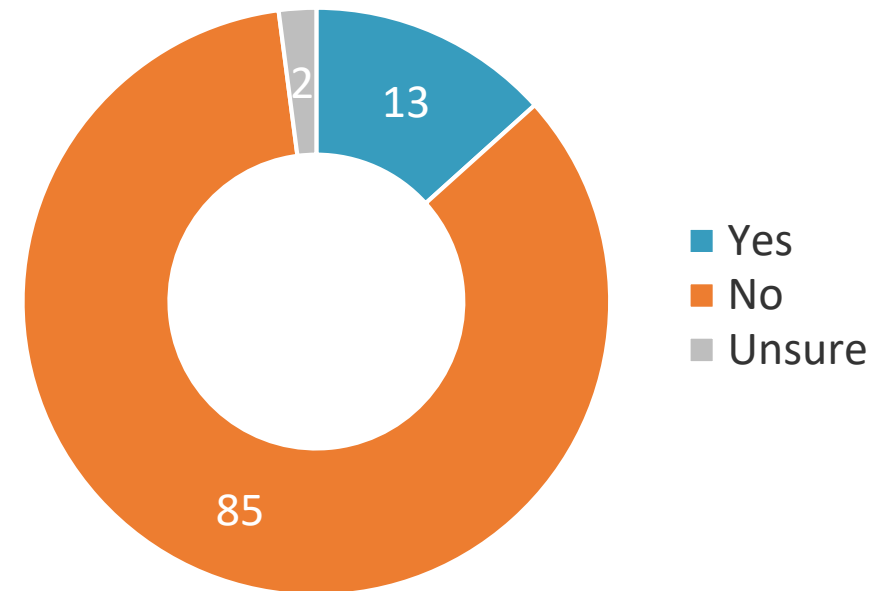


Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Attempts to access information

- 13% of respondents said they had attempted to access information held by Ministers and government agencies within the past three years.
 - Males were more likely to have tried to access information than females (17% and 10% respectively).

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

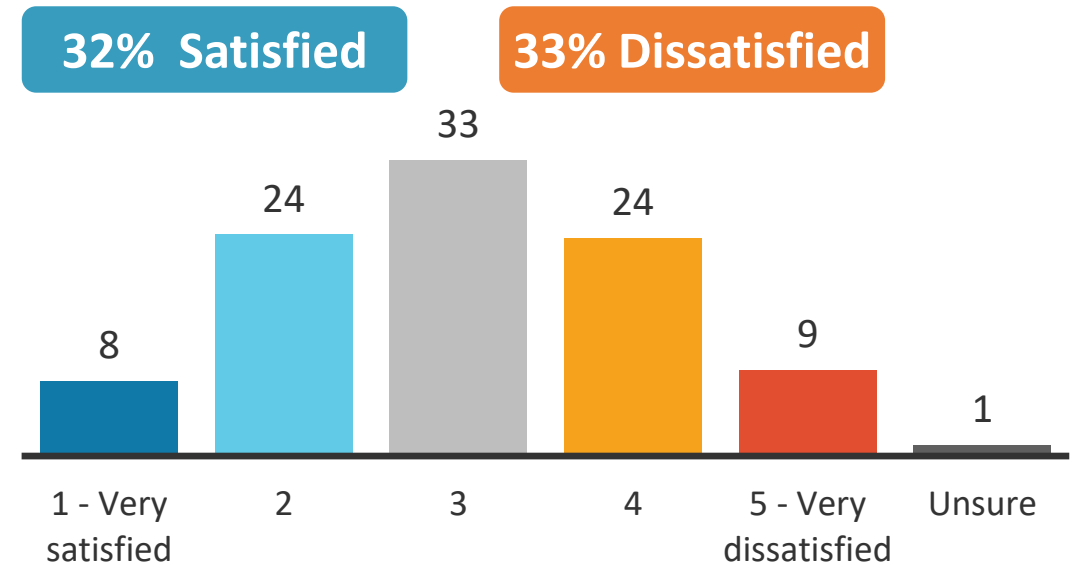


Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Satisfaction with response

- Of respondents who said they tried to access information held by Ministers and government agencies (n=133), ratings of their last experience were mixed. Around a third said they were satisfied, another third neutral and the last third were dissatisfied.
- Few respondents had strongly positive or negative experiences. 8% said they were very satisfied and 9% very dissatisfied.
- Amongst those who got the information they asked for, 52% were satisfied and only 4% were dissatisfied.
- While amongst those who have not (or who are still waiting) for the information, 5% were satisfied and 77% were dissatisfied.

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

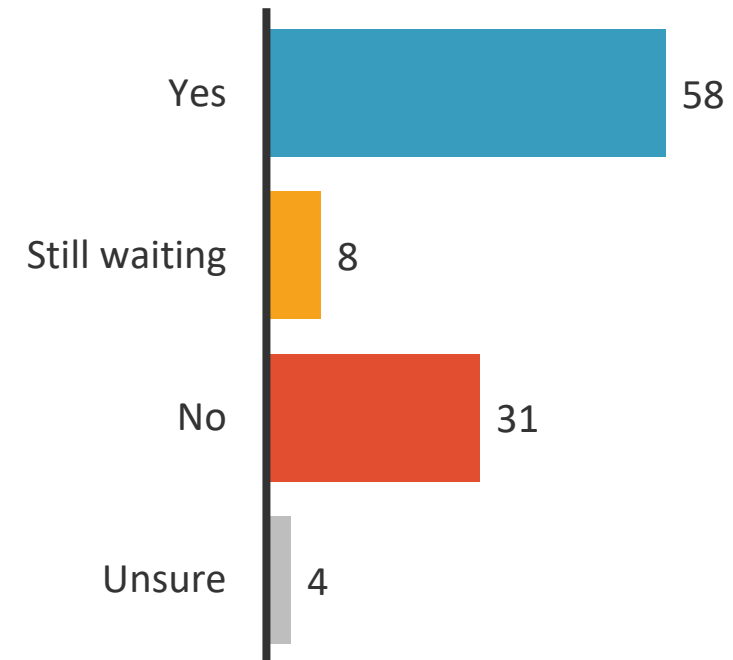


Base: Those who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments (n=133)

Getting the information

- 58% of those who tried to access information said they received the information they asked for. 8% were still waiting and 31% said they did not get the information.
- 93% of respondents who were satisfied with their experience got the information they asked for.

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

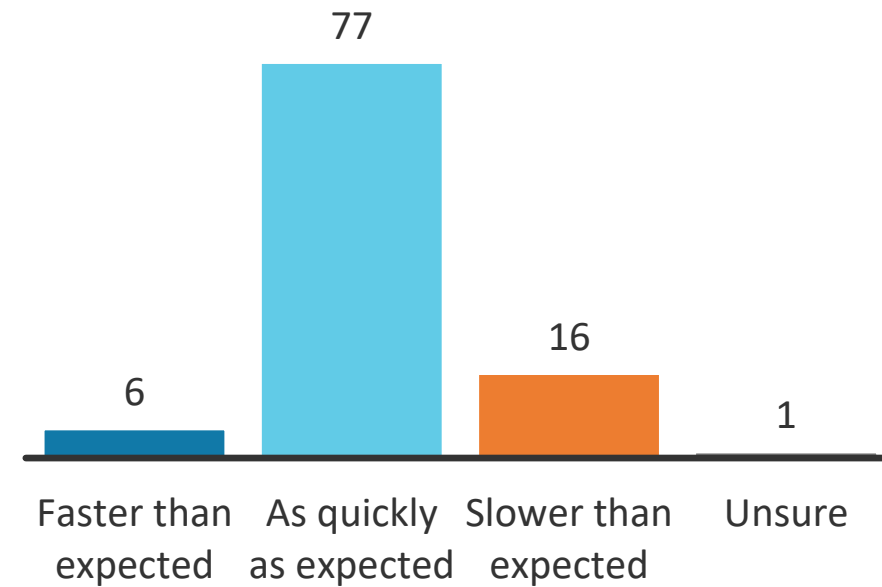


Base: Those who accessed information held by Ministers, central or local governments (n=133)

Expectations of speed

- Of those who received their requested information, 83% said they either received the information faster than expected (6%) or as quickly as expected (77%).
- 16% said the response was slower than expected and 1% were unsure.

📊 How quickly did you receive the information? (%)



Base: Those who received information (n=77)

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	.	33	45	78	17	2	19	3	1,000
Region	Upper North Is.	31	44	76	17	2	19	6	206
	Auckland	32	47	79	16	2	18	3	332
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	39	45	84	15	1	16	0	118
	Lower North Is.	30	50	80	18	0	18	2	103
	Canterbury	34	42	76	19	3	22	1	133
	Other South Is.	35	41	76	19	2	21	3	108
Gender	Male	37	41	78	17	2	19	3	483
	Female	29	49	79	17	2	18	3	513
Age	18-29	28	45	74	20	2	22	4	209
	30-44	32	44	77	17	2	19	4	259
	45-59	35	44	80	14	3	17	4	269
	60+	35	47	82	17	0	18	0	263
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	33	45	78	18	2	20	2	813
	NZ Māori	40	41	81	13	1	14	6	114
	Pasifika	31	38	69	23	0	23	8	54
	Asian	39	49	88	8	1	9	3	110
Employment	30 hours or more	36	43	80	15	2	17	3	481
	Less than 30 hours	31	47	78	17	2	19	3	189
	Not working	29	47	76	20	1	21	2	330
Household income	Under \$50k	35	44	79	17	1	17	3	276
	\$50k-\$100k	29	51	80	17	2	18	1	282
	More than \$100,000k	37	43	80	14	2	17	3	300
Dependent children	Yes	33	44	77	18	2	20	3	285
	No	33	45	79	17	2	18	3	715

Awareness of information acts

Row %		Yes	No	Unsure	<i>n</i>
All	.	60	34	6	1,000
Region	Upper North Is.	61	33	6	206
	Auckland	53	39	8	332
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	70	28	1	118
	Lower North Is.	59	35	7	103
	Canterbury	65	33	2	133
	Other South Is.	66	28	6	108
Gender	Male	69	27	4	483
	Female	52	41	7	513
Age	18-29	39	56	5	209
	30-44	54	41	5	259
	45-59	67	24	9	269
	60+	76	20	3	263
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	63	31	5	813
	NZ Māori	49	46	5	114
	Pasifika	52	42	6	54
	Asian	50	44	6	110
Employment	30 hours or more	65	30	5	481
	Less than 30 hours	52	42	6	189
	Not working	59	35	6	330
Household income	Under \$50k	58	35	7	276
	\$50k-\$100k	60	35	5	282
	More than \$100,000k	68	29	3	300
Dependent children	Yes	56	38	6	285
	No	62	32	5	715

Attempts to access information

Row %		Yes	No	Unsure	<i>n</i>
All	.	13	85	2	1,000
Region	Upper North Is.	14	85	1	206
	Auckland	12	84	4	332
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	17	83	0	118
	Lower North Is.	13	85	2	103
	Canterbury	14	85	1	133
	Other South Is.	11	88	1	108
Gender	Male	17	81	2	483
	Female	10	88	2	513
Age	18-29	17	80	3	209
	30-44	14	83	3	259
	45-59	10	88	2	269
	60+	14	86	0	263
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	12	86	1	813
	NZ Māori	19	77	4	114
	Pasifika	22	72	6	54
	Asian	21	77	3	110
Employment	30 hours or more	15	83	1	481
	Less than 30 hours	14	83	3	189
	Not working	10	87	3	330
Household income	Under \$50k	14	84	2	276
	\$50k-\$100k	14	84	2	282
	More than \$100,000k	12	87	1	300
Dependent children	Yes	14	84	3	285
	No	13	85	2	715

Satisfaction with response

Row %		1 - Very satisfied	2	Total satisfied (1+2)	3	4	5 - Very dissatisfied	Total dissatisfied (4+5)	Unsure	n
All	.	8	24	33	33	24	9	66	1	133
Region	Upper North Is.	8	18	25	36	34	5	64	0	29
	Auckland	6	35	41	35	12	11	63	1	41
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	12	17	29	19	32	20	81	0	21
	Lower North Is.	16	36	52	31	17	0	69	0	13
	Canterbury	5	22	26	32	24	12	62	6	18
	Other South Is.	8	7	15	45	35	6	55	0	12
Gender	Male	11	23	34	29	22	14	69	2	82
	Female	4	27	32	40	26	3	60	0	51
Age	18-29	8	34	42	41	12	2	56	3	35
	30-44	6	26	32	31	23	13	69	0	35
	45-59	3	21	24	22	41	12	78	0	27
	60+	15	15	30	33	24	11	65	2	36
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	8	24	32	31	25	11	68	1	98
	NZ Māori	10	39	48	17	27	7	83	0	21
	Pasifika	0	41	41	32	17	9	68	0	12
	Asian	10	34	44	41	15	0	59	0	23
Employment	30 hours or more	11	26	37	23	27	11	75	1	73
	Less than 30 hours	0	23	23	51	19	5	47	2	26
	Not working	9	22	31	39	21	9	61	0	34
Household income	Under \$50k	8	16	24	39	27	10	61	0	39
	\$50k-\$100k	9	21	30	36	33	1	64	0	40
	More than \$100,000k	8	38	46	19	20	14	80	2	36
Dependent children	Yes	6	19	25	36	32	7	64	0	39
	No	9	26	36	31	21	10	67	2	95

Getting the information

Row %		Yes	Still waiting	No	Unsure	<i>n</i>
All	.	58	8	31	4	133
Region	Upper North Is.	60	15	21	4	29
	Auckland	65	5	28	2	41
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	44	13	43	0	21
	Lower North Is.	85	0	9	6	13
	Canterbury	45	0	44	11	18
	Other South Is.	39	12	49	0	12
Gender	Male	56	8	29	5	82
	Female	62	6	33	2	51
Age	18-29	74	8	29	3	35
	30-44	54	3	20	0	35
	45-59	35	10	37	7	27
	60+	63	15	43	5	36
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	59	6	27	3	98
	NZ Māori	58	0	27	8	21
	Pasifika	61	18	30	0	12
	Asian	74	0	26	0	23
Employment	30 hours or more	55	12	33	4	73
	Less than 30 hours	63	5	49	0	26
	Not working	60	9	29	4	34
Household income	Under \$50k	52	0	34	5	39
	\$50k-\$100k	58	0	39	0	40
	More than \$100,000k	62	7	19	5	36
Dependent children	Yes	47	10	31	0	39
	No	62	9	28	5	95

Expectations of speed

Row %		Faster than expected	As quickly as expected	Slower than expected	Unsure	n
All	.	6	77	16	1	77
Region	Upper North Is.	18	63	19	0	17
	Auckland	5	76	19	0	27
	Wellington/ Wairarapa	0	82	18	0	9
	Lower North Is.	0	85	15	0	11
	Canterbury	0	100	0	0	8
	Other South Is.	0	59	20	22	5
Gender	Male	6	80	13	0	46
	Female	5	71	21	3	31
Age	18-29	11	73	12	4	26
	30-44	8	74	18	0	19
	45-59	0	100	0	0	9
	60+	0	73	27	0	23
Ethnicity	Non Maori/Pasifika/Asian	3	81	14	2	57
	NZ Māori	0	79	21	0	12
	Pasifika	0	81	19	0	7
	Asian	18	67	15	0	17
Employment	30 hours or more	10	72	18	0	40
	Less than 30 hours	4	76	14	6	17
	Not working	0	85	15	0	20
Household income	Under \$50k	0	75	21	5	20
	\$50k-\$100k	16	77	7	0	23
	More than \$100,000k	3	73	24	0	23
Dependent children	Yes	12	68	19	0	18
	No	4	79	16	2	59