

3. MARKET RESEARCH RESULTS – RESOURCE CONSENT HEARING PROCESS

Officer responsible Environmental Services Manager	Author Jane Donaldson, DDI 371 1651
Corporate Plan Output: Resource Consents	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Environment and Resource Management Committees of the results of market research carried out late last year.

The Environmental Services Unit commissioned a market research study of the resource consent process as a first step towards the development of a communication strategy for planning issues. The study was broadened somewhat to assist the Outputs and Standards Review undertaken last year.

Councillors may recall that preliminary, “top line” results of the market research were presented to an Outputs and Standards Review meeting. Of concern at that meeting were initial qualitative results indicating negative feedback from applicants about the resource consent hearing process.

The full results of the quantitative market research are now available and show a high degree of satisfaction amongst commercial respondents relating to the hearing process. Of the 102 commercial applicants included in the study, 24% were involved in the hearing process during the course of their application. Each of these respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction on the attributes shown in the table below.

	Very/Quite Satisfied (Base 24) %
The location of the venue	91.67
Timing of the hearing (held during the day)	83.33
The seating arrangements	91.66
The degree of formality of the hearing	95.84
Being given enough information to understand the process	87.50
The degree of fairness of the proceedings	87.50
That you felt you were understood and listened to	87.50
Being given enough information in order for you to understand your role in the hearing	83.33
That the decision fairly represented the evidence you presented	83.33
That the panel were attentive	91.66
That the panel performed to the best of their ability	83.33
With the attendance of the panel during the whole proceedings	100.00
That reasons were given on the decision and the reasons were clear	91.67
That the panel performed well overall	91.67

Although the base size (24) is not large, these results are very positive. When the initial qualitative section of the study was conducted, three respondents indicated that they had encountered problems at the resource consent hearing, citing issues relating to the attendance of the panel and a lack of awareness of the panel of the application details. This was what skewed the preliminary results presented at the Outputs and Standards Review meeting.

Only two private applicants (out of 101) in the study had been involved in a hearing. Both were satisfied with each of the aspects detailed in the above table.

Chairman’s Recommendation: That the information be received.