

## Summary

The Council received 97 submissions on the Annual Plan. This was made up of 96 written submissions (one late) and one audio submission. At a public hearing on 18 and 19 May 2023, 33 submitters presented their submissions to the Council.

The main theme of public feedback was that submitters supported the proposed budget reductions but felt that the rates increase is still too high and that further reductions are required. The other key themes we heard were:

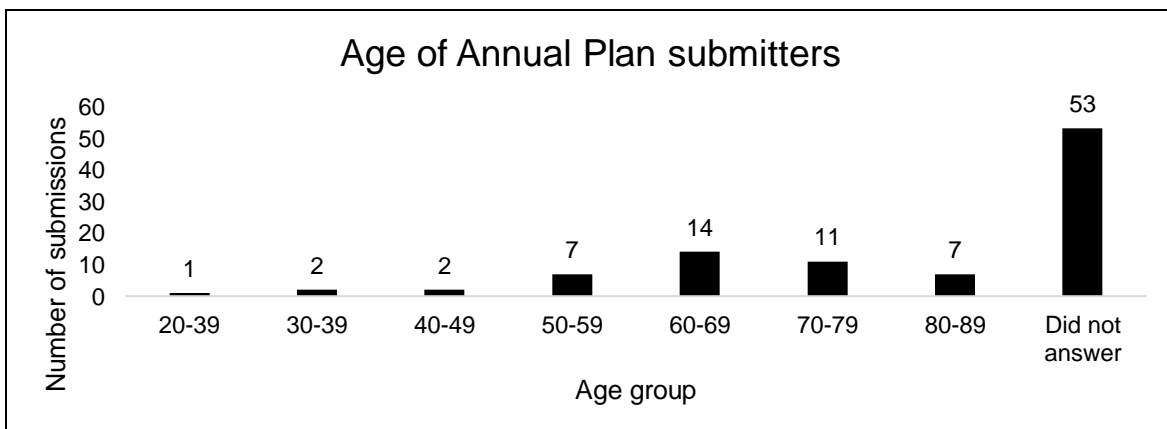
- Requests to reduce the budget for 'nice-to-haves' and focusing on core services.
- Concerns regarding the cost of living.
- Suggestions to further reduce the staffing budget and reduce staff numbers.
- Requests for further reductions to the parks and reserves maintenance budget.
- Opposition to the proposed budget reductions to river and stormwater management.
- Opposition to deferring funding for the Motueka Pool.

## Demographics

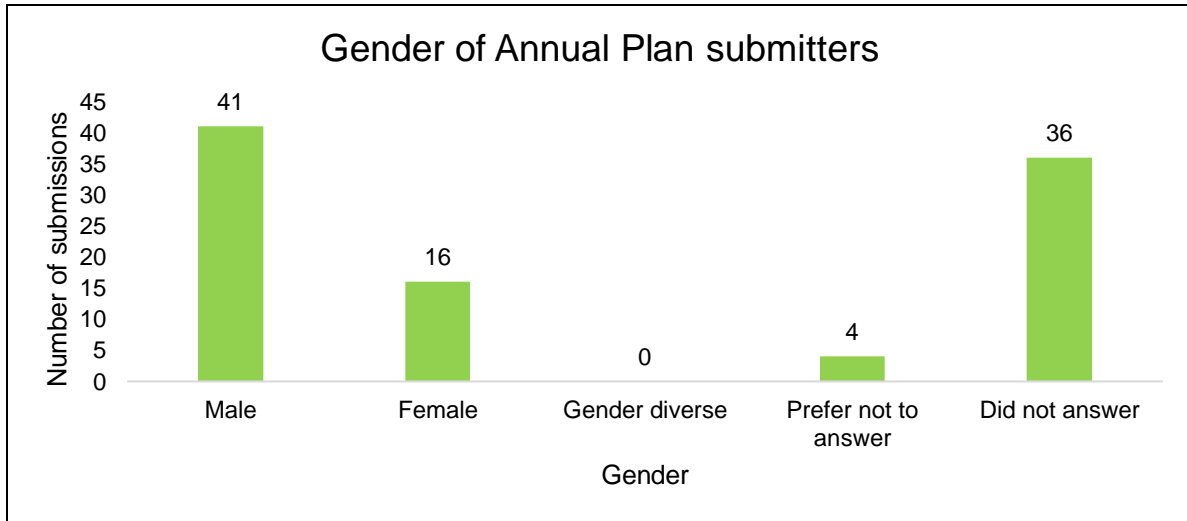
This year, we asked submitters for their age, ethnicity, and gender. We did this because we wanted to see what the demographic profile of submitters was, whether it is representative of the general population, and to identify what groups we need to engage with better in the future.

Most submitters did not answer these questions, meaning we don't have a fully accurate demographic profile of submitters. Nevertheless, we did get some insight into who our submitters are and who we need to engage with in the future.

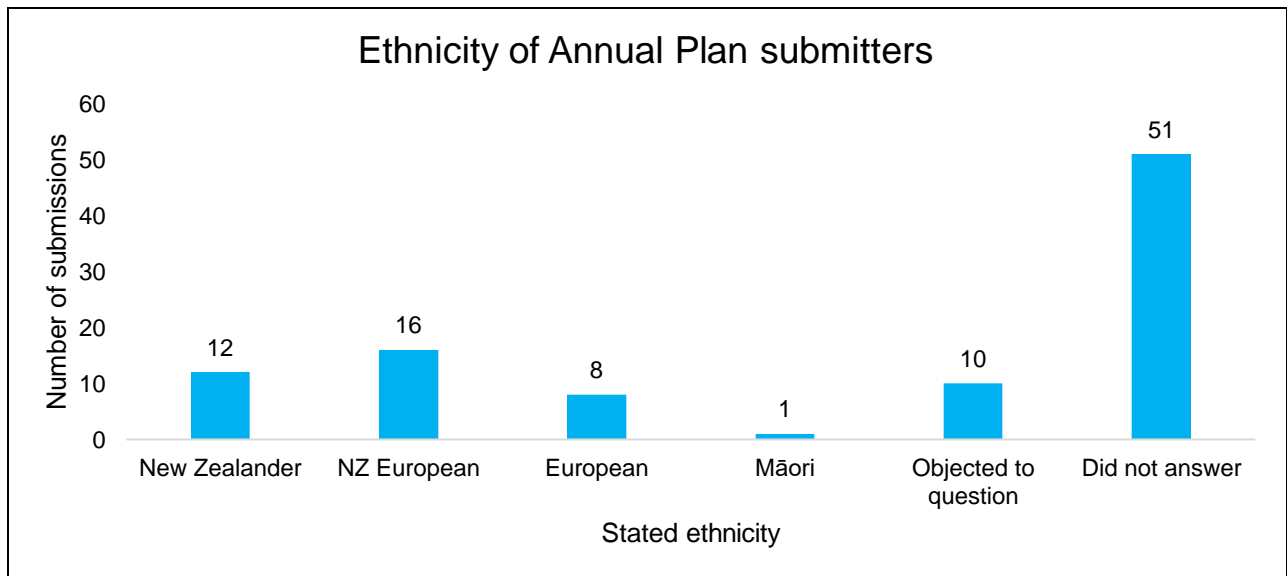
The median age of submitters on the Annual Plan was 66. The median age of the Tasman population is 47. Only five submitters were below the age of 50. Forty-four submitters answered this question, while fifty-three submitters did not.



Out of those submitters who stated their gender, 72% of submitters identified as male, while 28% identified as female. Sixty-one submitters answered this question, while thirty-six submitters did not.



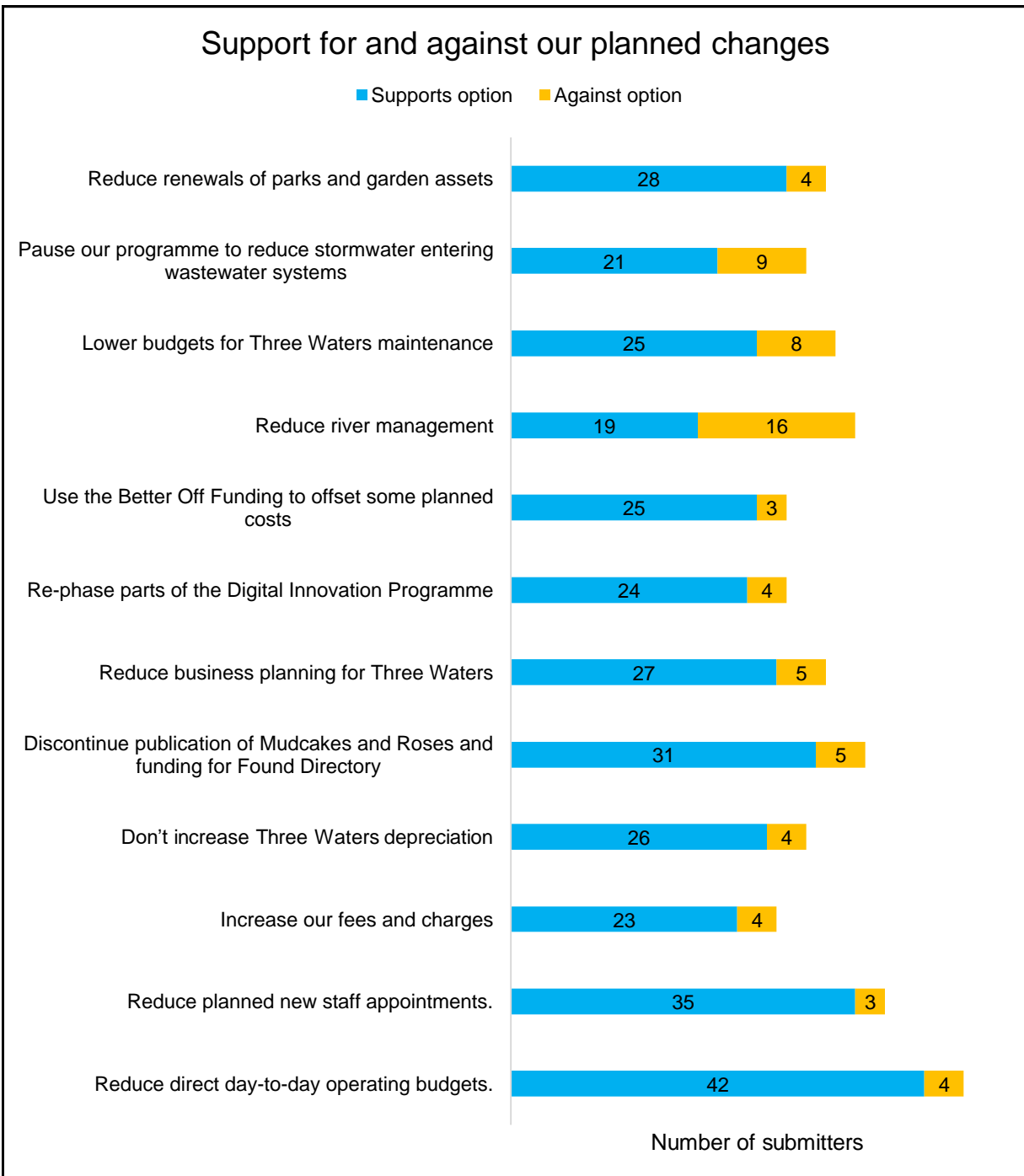
Most submitters did not state their ethnicity or objected to the question. Of those who answered the question, most were New Zealand European or European. Twelve submitters identified as “New Zealanders”. Forty-seven submitters answered this question, while fifty-one did not.



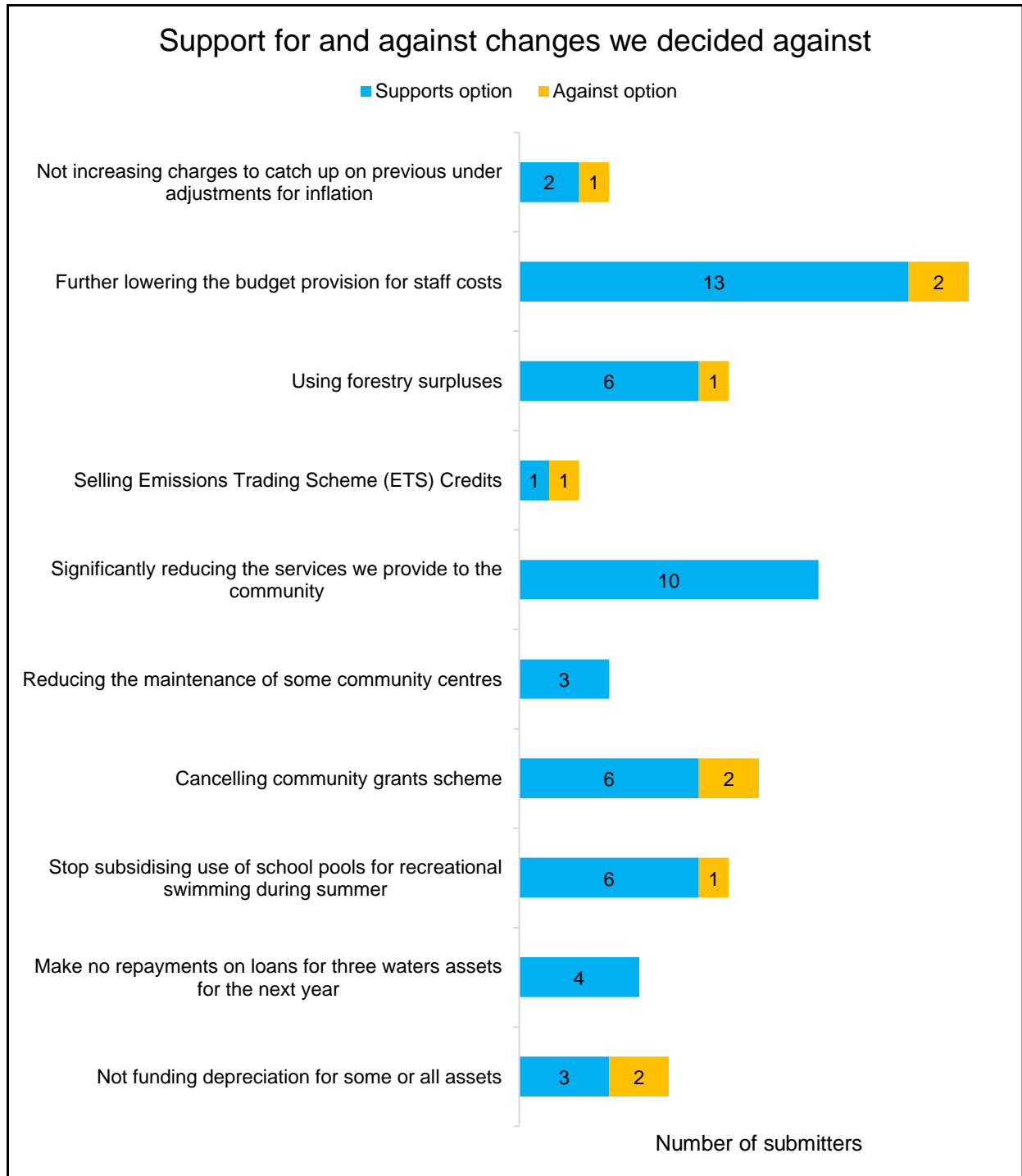
While we don't have data from all submitters, the information from those that did provide details suggests that Annual Plan submitters are largely not representative of Tasman's population as a whole.

## Our proposed reductions

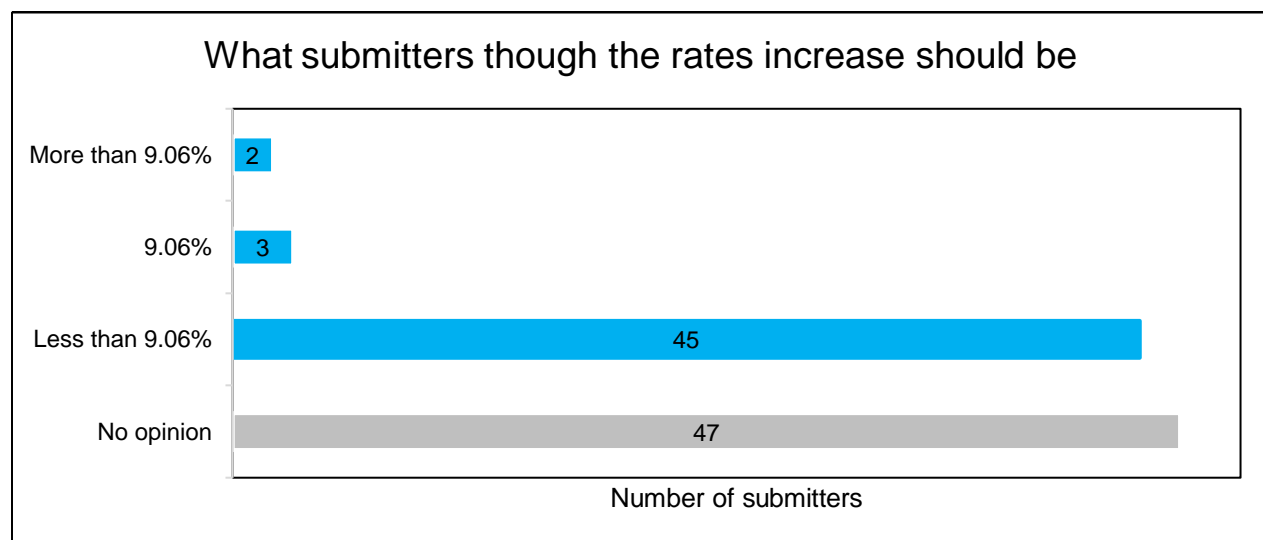
The majority of submitters were in favour of all budget reductions that the Council proposed in the Annual Plan. Nine of the twelve proposed reductions had greater than 80% support. The three reductions that had less support were lower budgets for Three Waters maintenance (76% support), pausing our programme to reduce stormwater entering wastewater systems (70% support) and reduced river management (54% support).



In the Annual Plan consultation document, the Council also noted several budget reductions that it considered but decided against. Most submitters did not comment on these budget reductions. The options that submitters supported the most were lowering the budget provision for staff costs and significantly reducing the services that we provide to the community. It should be noted that submitters who stated they were for these options were a significant minority of overall submissions – 13% and 10% respectively.



Approximately half of submitters did not express a view on whether the proposed rates increase was too high or not. Out of those submitters that did express a view, the vast majority thought that the proposed rates increase was too high.



## Other key themes we heard

- Twenty-eight submitters were concerned about the general unaffordability of rates and its impact on the cost of living.
  - Four submitters were concerned with the impact on retirees and other residents on fixed incomes.
  - Two submitters specifically mentioned the impact on rural residents.
- Twenty-one submitters suggested freezing or reducing staff numbers and/or reducing salary levels.
- Thirty-three submitters suggested we should focus on core services and eliminate 'nice-to-haves'. However, there was no clear agreement on what a 'core service' is. More broadly, activities cited as 'core services' were roads, Three Waters, and river management. The most common activities that were named as nice-to-haves include:
  - Public and active transport improvements (eight submitters, although eight submitters supported more improvements)
  - Mudcakes and Roses (nine submitters, although one submitter wanted us to keep Mudcakes and Roses and three submitters wanted us to keep the Found Directory)
  - Community grants (eleven submitters, although three submitters supported it).
  - Parks and reserves maintenance (eight submitters, although one submitter supported it).

- Eleven submitters raised the cost of the Waimea Community Dam and (in some cases) a desire to charge irrigators more.
- Eight submitters were against deferring funding for the Motueka Pool.
- Sixteen submitters opposed our planned budget reductions to river management. These submitters were concerned that with more frequent flooding due to climate change river management should remain a high priority (and core service) for the Council.
- Seven submitters commented on climate change issues, most suggesting we act faster to reduce greenhouse gases. Four submitters suggested we fund the Climate Forum more, while three submitters thought we should align our climate response more effectively with Nelson City Council.
- The transport choices programme was a divisive topic for submitters. Eight submitters want improved services and better infrastructure for active/public transport, but eight submitters thought we were going too fast and spending too much money on these activities. The low usage level for cycleways was heavily cited by submitters who oppose any additional active transport improvements.
- Nine submitters think we should stop or reduce Three Waters planning/maintenance/general work.
- Five submitters thought we should reduce or cancel our work with community organisations to reduce the increase in rates revenue.