

# Central Coast Council water prices- Results of survey on our draft decisions

29 April 2022

## Thank you

for your response to our survey  
on Central Coast water prices

 83

survey responses were received  
regarding our draft decisions on  
water prices

IPART is reviewing the maximum prices that Central Coast Council as a Water Supply Authority (CCC Water) can charge for its water, wastewater and other services from 1 July 2022. We released our Draft Report on 15 March 2022, seeking feedback via our [Have Your Say](#) survey and submissions to our website.

We would like to thank everyone for engaging with us through our survey, making submissions and participating at our second public hearing. Your feedback is valuable to us and will be a key input in making our decisions for our Final Report.

This Information Paper summarises the responses of our third stakeholder survey for our CCC Water price review. The survey is now closed. We received 83 survey responses.

## Prices and bill impacts

### There were mixed preferences on how price increases could be implemented over the 4 years

15 survey respondents preferred our draft decision to phase-in the increase to prices over the next 4 years to minimise impacts in any one year. Our draft decisions would lead to typical household bills that increase on average by \$200 in the first year and then by \$49 and inflation in each of the following 3 years. 12 respondents preferred that we introduce the full price increase in the first year, which would be a 25% increase, with prices increasing only by inflation in the following 3 years.

The majority of survey respondents selected the 'other' option. Of the 54 'other' responses:

- 25 wanted no increase at all, citing various reasons including affordability, mistrust in CCC Water, and CCC Water should improve efficiency
- 5 preferred prices to increase with inflation only
- 4 offered alternative paths, such as 4%, 4%, 4% and then the balance in the final year; or to wait 2 years for the council to show they can spend the money.
- 3 preferred a slower rate of increase
- 6 said that the increases are unaffordable
- 1 said there is no real difference between the options
- 10 provided comments that were not specific to the question, including that it is not acceptable to bail out the council when the same managers are in place; the council is bleeding the community dry; and one respondent indicated they would leave the area.

We considered different options for introducing price increases over the next 4 years.

How would you prefer price increases to be introduced?



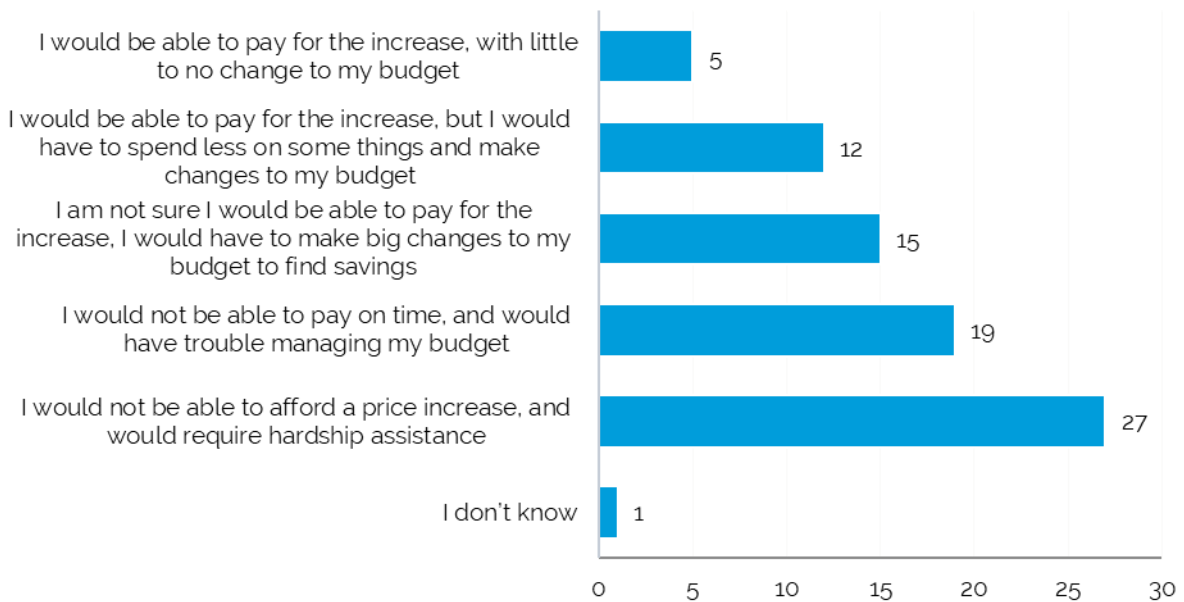
## 61 respondents don't think they can afford our draft bill increases

61 survey respondents don't think they can afford to pay for their bills under our draft decisions. Of these, 27 indicated that they would require hardship assistance while the remainder would have trouble managing their budget.

17 respondents indicated they would be able to pay for the bill increase under our draft decisions.

Our draft decision phases in the price increases over the next 4 years to give customers more time to manage the impact.

### How would these bill increases affect you?



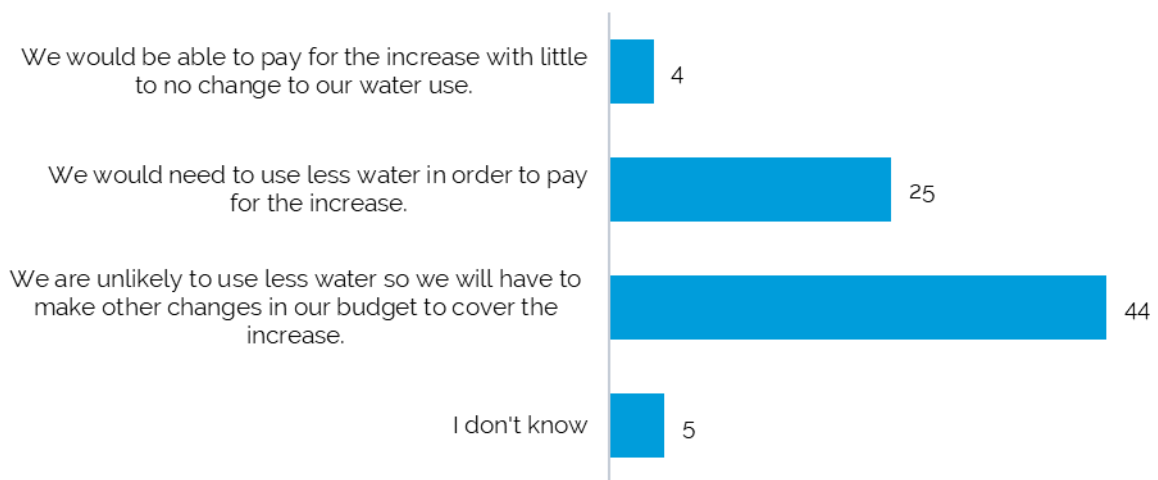
## 44 respondents are unlikely to use less water to reduce their bills

Under our draft decisions, fixed water service charges would increase more than usage charges. How this would affect customer bills depends on how much water they use. Reducing water usage could allow customers to reduce their bills.

44 survey respondents indicated they would be unlikely to change how much water they use and therefore, they would need make other changes to their budgets to pay for their bills. 25 indicated that they would need to use less water to pay for their bills. Only 4 said they would be able to pay for the increase with little to no change in their water use.

Under our draft decisions, fixed service charges would increase more than usage charges.

### How would these price increases affect you?



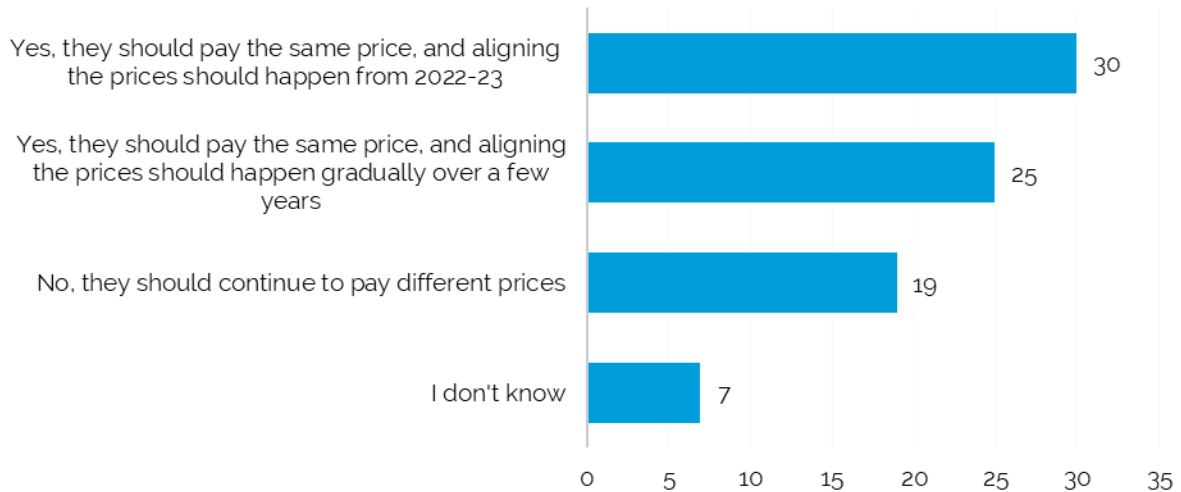
## 55 respondents agreed that Gosford and Wyong customers should pay the same

Currently Wyong customers pay slightly less than Gosford customers, due to different wastewater pricing. Our draft decision was to accept CCC Water's proposal to align wastewater prices so that customers in these areas pay the same. This means that the increase in wastewater prices is higher for Wyong customers than it is for Gosford customers.

Of the 55 that agreed that Gosford and Wyong customers should pay the same prices, 30 preferred this begin from 1 July 2022 while the rest (25) preferred the price alignment to happen gradually over a few years. 19 survey respondents thought the two areas should continue to pay different prices.

Under our draft decisions, customers in the former Gosford Local Government Area and former Wyong Local Government Area would pay the same prices.

### Do you agree that customers should pay the same wastewater price across the Gosford and Wyong areas?



## Services and expenditure

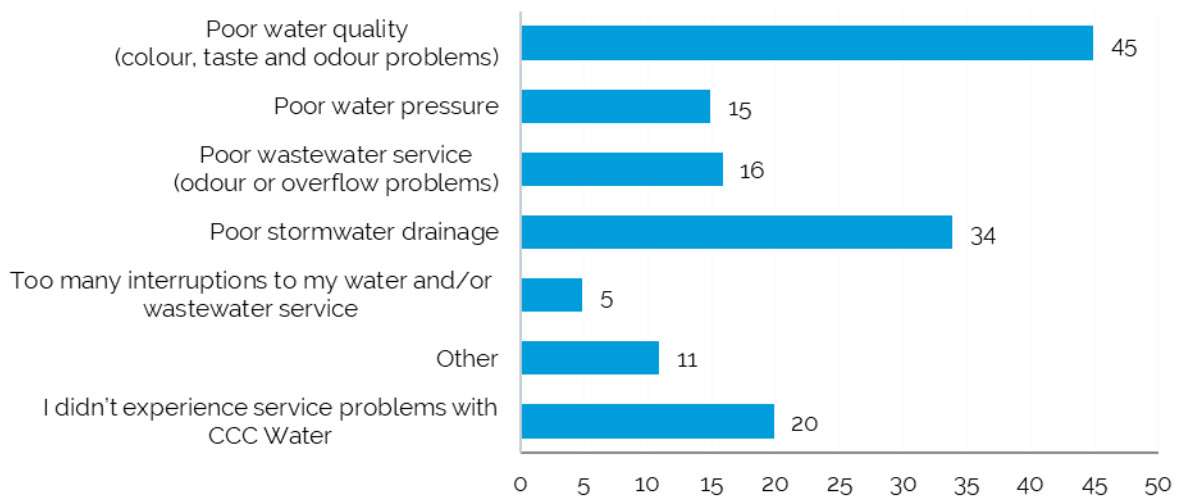
### 62 respondents experienced service problems in the last 3 years

In this question, survey respondents could select more than one option. Poor water quality was the most common water service problem experienced by respondents (45), followed by poor stormwater drainage (34). 20 survey respondents indicated that they have not experienced water service problems with CCC Water.

Of the 11 responses to 'other':

- 3 responded that there is no water service to rural properties
- 3 responded about discourtesy/customer relations
- 3 referred to council management/financial management
- one reported wastewater issues
- one replied that reported leaks are not fixed.

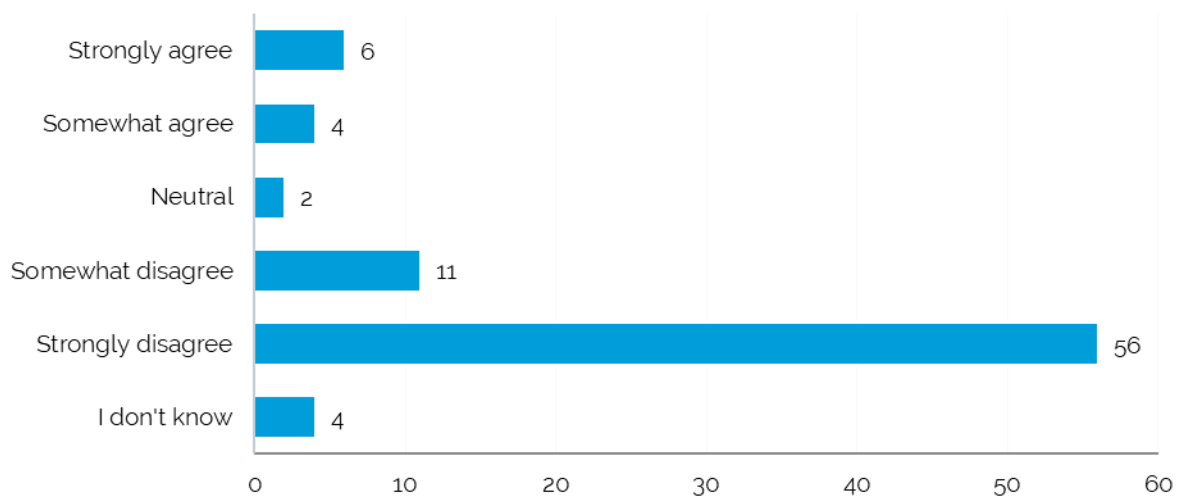
Can you tell us any service problems you have experienced with CCC Water over the past 3 years?



## 67 respondents disagree that CCC Water will spend on what is needed

56 survey respondents strongly disagreed that CCC Water is likely to spend on what is most needed to improve services and 11 somewhat disagreed. However, 10 survey respondents agreed that CCC Water would spend on what is needed. 4 did not know.

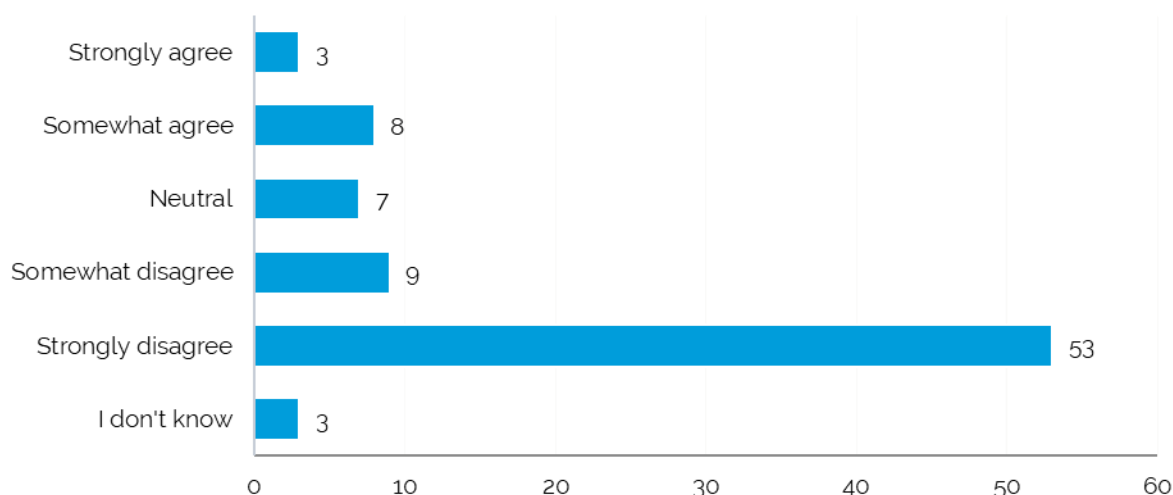
Do you think CCC Water is likely to spend money on what is most needed to improve water, wastewater and other water-related services for the community?



## 62 respondents do not believe that CCC Water will meet community's expectations and regulatory obligations

53 survey respondents strongly disagreed that CCC Water would meet community expectations and its regulatory obligations in the future. A total of 11 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would. 7 were neutral and 3 did not know.

Do you think CCC Water is likely to meet the community's expectations and its regulatory obligations in delivering good quality, safe and reliable water, wastewater and other water-related services in the future?



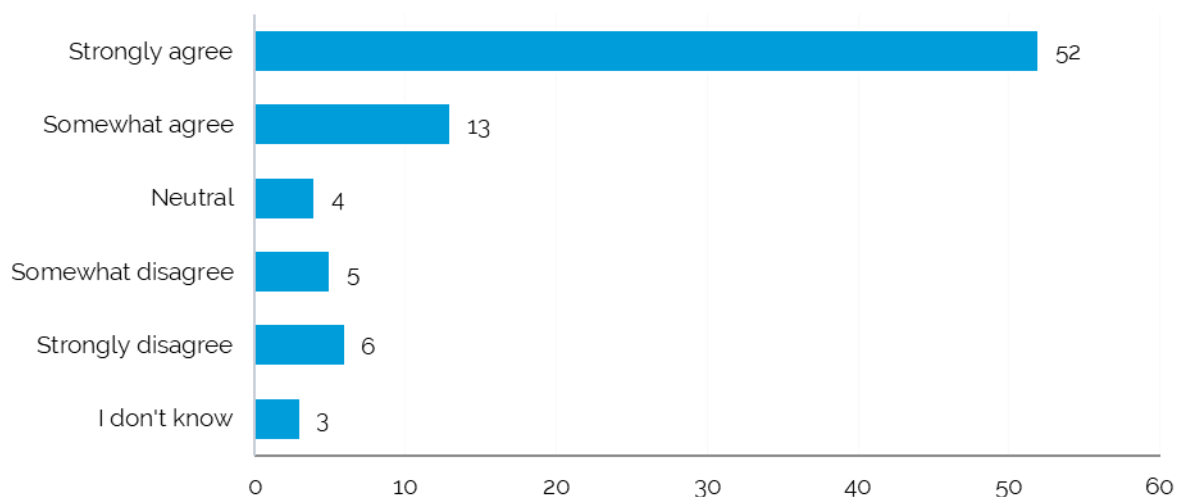


## Performance and accountability

### 65 respondents think customers should monitor CCC Water's performance

52 survey respondents strongly agreed that the community has a role in monitoring performance, while 13 somewhat agreed. 11 disagreed and the remainder were neutral on this question or did not know.

Do you think customers and the community should have a role in monitoring the performance of CCC Water?



### Survey respondents supported performance measures to help them understand CCC Water's performance

In this question, survey respondents could select more than one option. 37 respondents indicated that they would like to see all the performance measure options we provided.

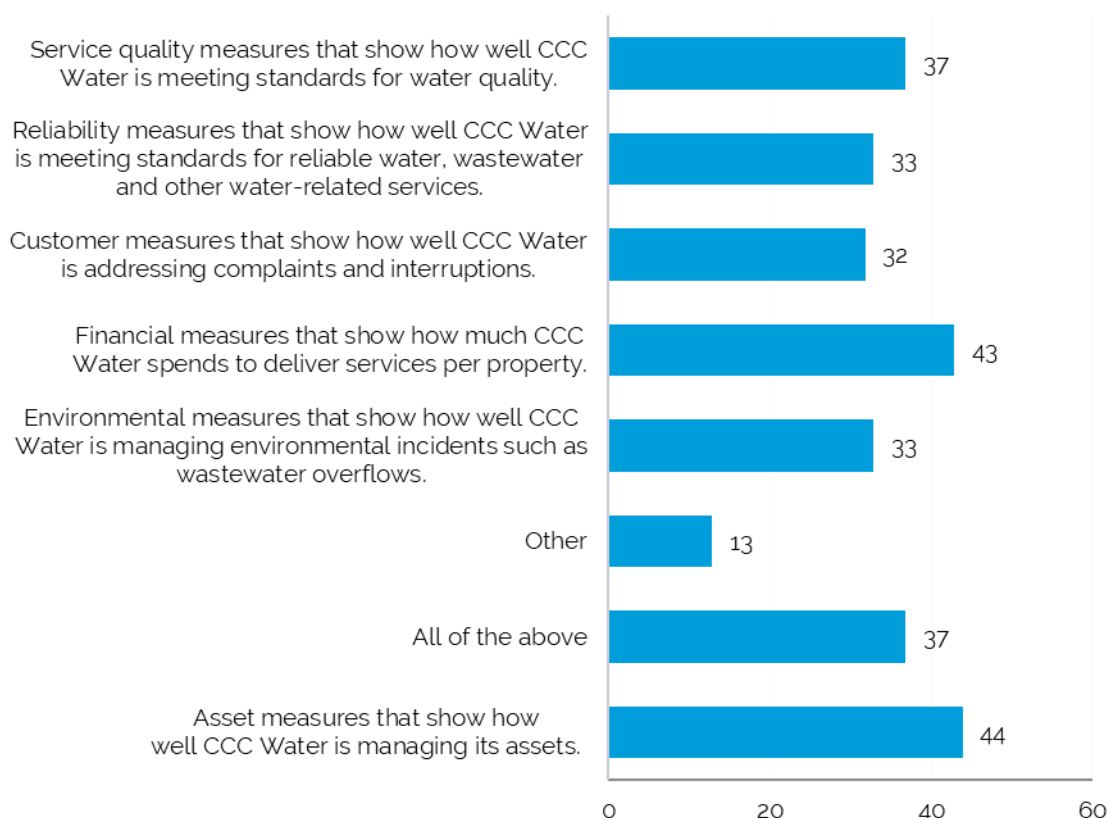
The most popular responses were for asset measures showing how well CCC Water is managing its assets (44) and financial measures showing how much CCC Water spends to deliver services per property (43). Between 32 and 37 respondents selected measures for performance relating to service quality, reliability, customer service, and environment. 13 chose 'other'.

Of the 13 responses to 'other':

- 2 suggested a comparison of increases to inflation.
- One suggested benchmarking against other councils.
- One suggested how much rainwater is acquired for free in rain events, how much profit CCC Water achieves through the sale of water and what CCC Water is doing to give households sustainable solutions.

- One suggested taking water samples from beaches and lakes as a performance measure.
- 6 suggested none, because either the reports would be false, or performance reports won't lead to improvement.
- 2 had other comments; that extra money should be raised after performance improvements are realised, and 34% is too high an increase and unaffordable,

### What performance measures would be most useful to you in understanding how CCC Water is performing over the next 4 years?



### Respondents supported various forms of performance reporting

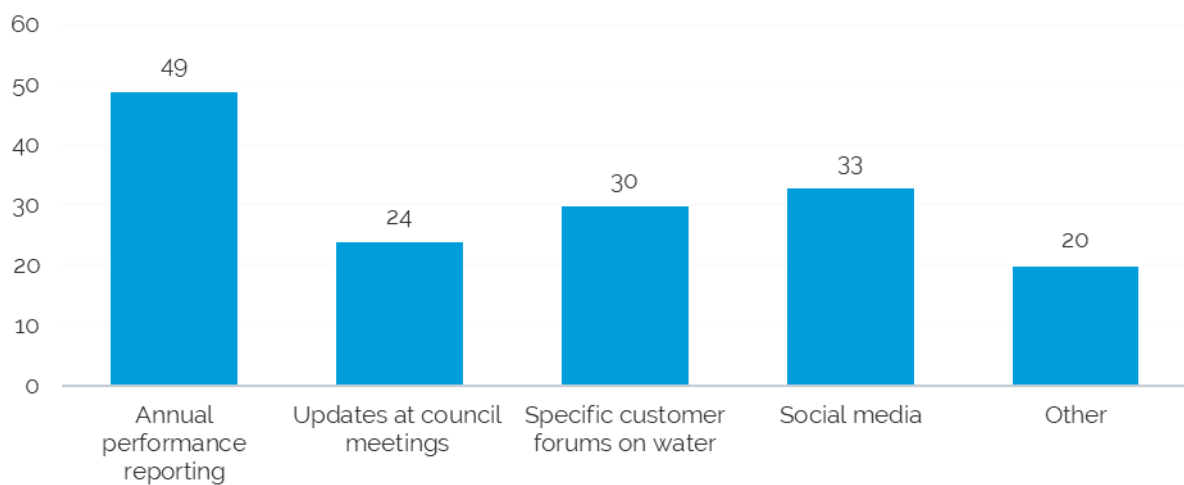
In this question, survey respondents could select more than one option. The majority (49) of survey respondents indicated they would like CCC Water to communicate performance with annual performance reporting. 33 indicated a desire for CCC Water to communicate through social media, and there was support for specific forums and updates at council meetings.

Of the 20 responses to 'other':

- 2 suggested engagement via email
- 2 suggested information be issued with rates notices
- one suggested full and open disclosure of performance and finance

- one suggested information graphics on expenditure and outcomes
- 10 said they had no preference because the information provided would be false or that it was a waste of time
- 4 had other comments, about the level of rates, affordability, not paying for issues caused by amalgamation, and questioning why CCC Water needs more funds to provide the same services without making improvements in productivity.

How would you like to be engaged with by CCC Water on its future performance?

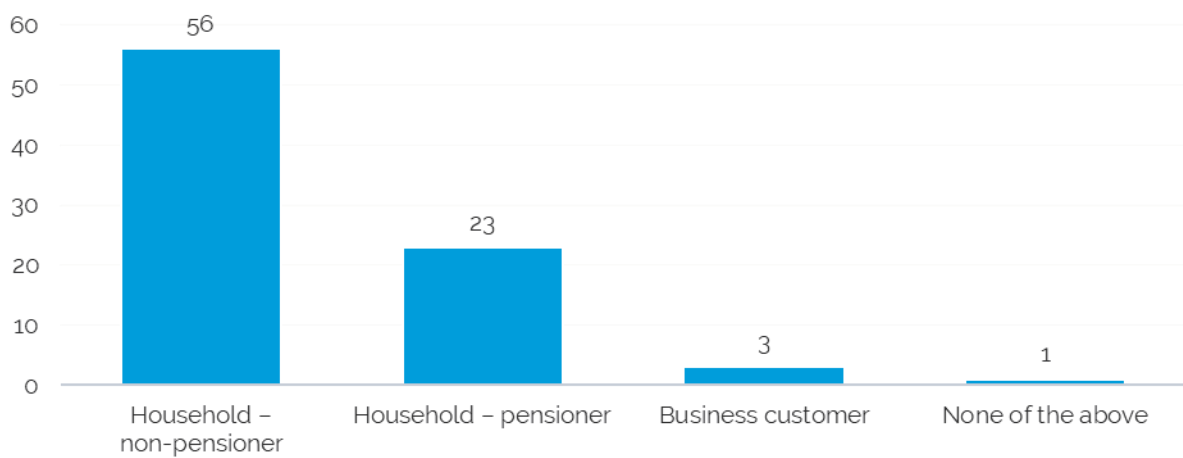


## About survey respondents

### 79 respondents were household customers

The majority of survey respondents were household customers. 23 respondents were pensioners in households. Business customers accounted for 3 respondents.

#### What best describes you?



## We have published submissions on our website

In response to our Draft Report we have also received 61 submissions. We have processed these in line with IPART’s Submissions Policy and have published all non-confidential submissions on our website.

## We will publish our Final Report in May 2022

We will publish our final decisions and final prices for this review in our Final Report which we will release in May 2022. We will consider all feedback when making our final decisions for CCC Water’s prices to apply from 1 July 2022.

