

# FINDINGS FROM THE INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL 2019 STAKEHOLDER SURVEY



FINAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the many stakeholders who provided feedback about IPART's regulatory processes. We thank them for their time and insights and trust that their views are adequately represented in this report.

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# 1. Introduction

IPART has a number of core functions, rules and access regimes that are conferred by legislation. These ensure that IPART provides an integrated system of economic and license regulations in NSW that covers both pricing and service standards for water, transport, electricity and gas industries.

In carrying out its core functions and dealing with external stakeholders, IPART is committed to maintaining high quality processes.

In order to measure performance, IPART regularly surveys its key stakeholders. The current stakeholder survey is the ninth, following on from similar surveys in 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2017. The IPART survey evaluated IPART's performance across the following key result areas:

- leadership of IPART (Tribunal members)
- quality of IPART's consultation and communication processes
- quality of IPART's decision-making processes
- quality of IPART's reports
- professionalism of IPART's staff
- quality of administrative processes.

The stakeholder survey has remained relatively unchanged over time, so opportunities exist to track changes in perceptions over time.

## 1.1 Methodology

The research involved two main methods:

1. An online survey of stakeholders
2. In-depth telephone interviews.

### 1.1.1 Online survey

The stakeholder survey was delivered online. Stakeholders first received a letter from IPART advising them about the survey. Shortly thereafter, they received an email containing a personalised URL link to the online survey (August 18).

The survey was distributed according to a stakeholder contact list prepared by IPART. This original stakeholder list contained 207 stakeholders<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The original list had 218 stakeholders but some could not be reached due to incomplete contact details

A two-week survey period was announced, with reminders sent to non-respondents mid-way through and at the end of this two-week period. At the due date, it was decided to extend the survey period by one week, which was announced in an email to all non-respondents. A last reminder was sent on the new due date.

Overall, 67 stakeholders completed the survey, representing a response rate of 32%. By sector, the response rate varied from 22% for Water licensing to 50% for GGAS-ESS (Table 1).

Despite a similar survey process compared with 2017, the overall response rate was 10% lower in 2019. Response rates over time show that different stakeholder groups have different levels of motivation to respond to the survey at different times. For example, the response rate for GGAS-ESS stakeholders went up from 29% in 2017 to 50% in 2019, while water licensing went down from 61% to 22%. Generally, the stakeholder groups with the highest response rates provide the least positive responses, suggesting that stakeholders who are interacting with IPART on particular recent projects/ matters take the opportunity to provide feedback.

**Table 1. Response rates by stakeholder groups**

Stakeholder group	Number on list	Responses	Response rate
Water pricing	42	15	36%
Local Government	29	13	45%
GGAS-ESS	24	12	50%
E&T	43	10	23%
Water licensing	27	6	22%
Regulators	17	5	29%
ENRU	17	4	24%
Government	8	2	25%
Total	207	67	32%

### 1.1.2 Interviews

Respondents had the option to indicate in the survey whether they wanted to be contacted by the evaluation team to discuss their responses further in an interview. IPART also identified 33 'key stakeholders' who were contacted and offered the option of an interview in addition to the survey.

In total, 12 stakeholders were interviewed, which was fewer than in 2017. This is partly due to there being fewer stakeholders on the original list and fewer stakeholders taking up the offer of an interview. A number of stakeholders were either not available, did not respond to a request for an interview, did not feel they could add anything further to the information already provided in their survey or did not feel they were in a position to respond.

### **1.1.3 Analysis**

Feedback provided by interviewees was analysed together with open-ended comments provided on the self-completion questionnaire. Where one stakeholder provided comments in both the survey and the interview, these comments were analysed together.

All frequencies provided in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number so may add to slightly more or less than 100%. In addition to this report, detailed survey findings for each survey question, and broken down by sector (as per Table 1) are provided as a separate report. This is provided to IPART as reference data.

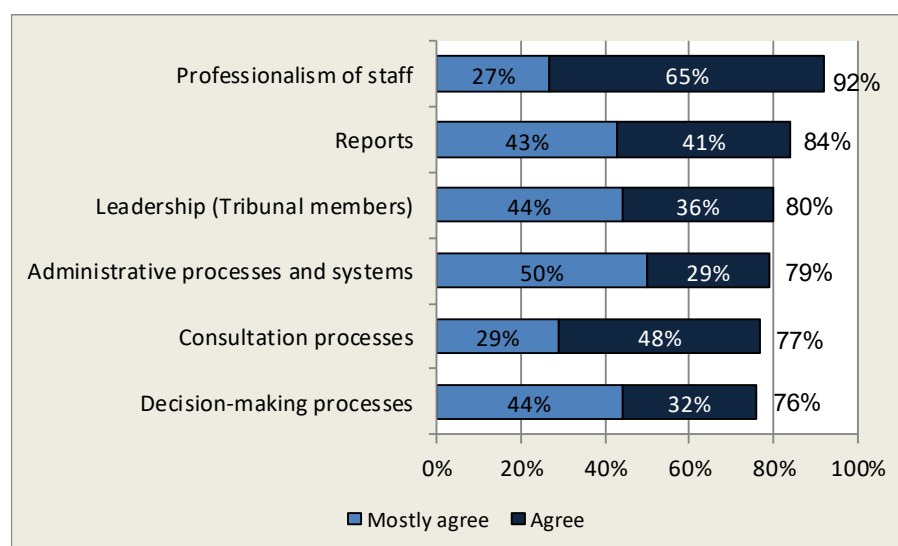
Open-ended responses provided in the survey and in interviews were thematically analysed and interpreted within the context of the survey findings.



## 2. Key findings

Overall, the great majority of stakeholders were positive about IPART in 2019, although there has been a decrease in satisfaction across all the result areas since 2017. This decrease is from a very high base in 2017 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Overall stakeholder perceptions of quality (proportion of stakeholders who rated the overall questions agree or tend to agree) by result area**



Across the stakeholder groups, the level of satisfaction was quite uniform, although GGAS-ESS stakeholders were generally less positive about Tribunal leadership, decision making and consultation processes. These differences should be interpreted cautiously due to the relatively small number of respondents in the GGAS-ESS group (12).

### 2.1 Stakeholder comments

Stakeholders who took the opportunity to provide comments in the survey or in interviews often raised issues or made suggestions, which are outlined in detail in Chapter 3. These comments should be interpreted in the context of the overall positive survey results. The main issues raised that cut across the different result areas canvassed in the survey were:

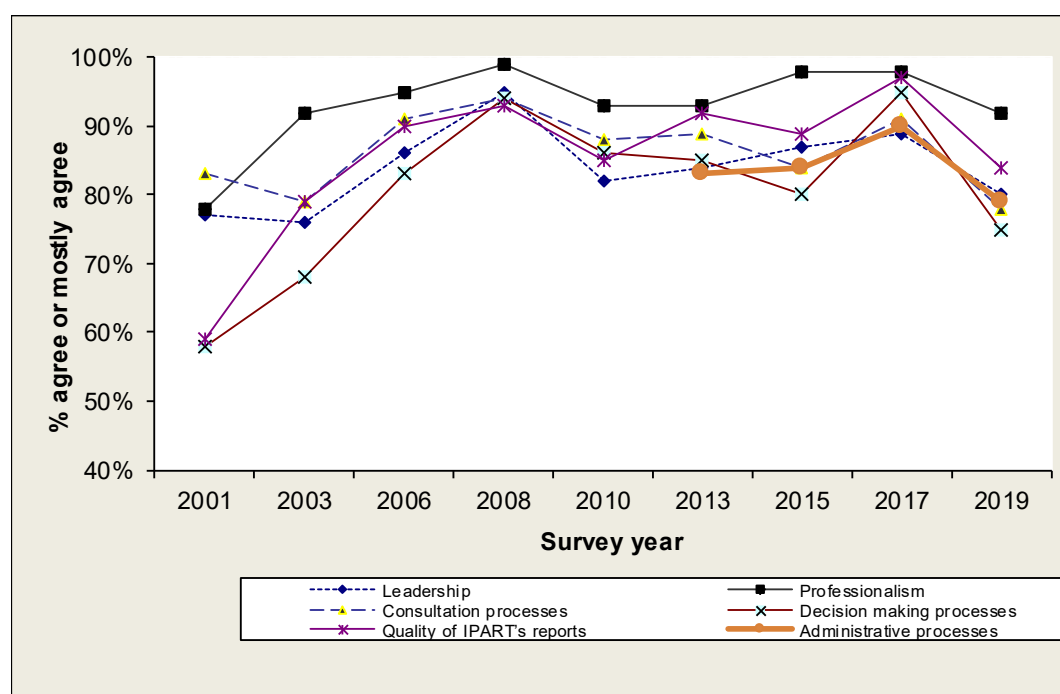
- Time taken to make decisions and timeliness of specific processes, including release of material and deadlines. Issues with timeliness were sometimes linked to resourcing and staff, and other times to administrative and decision-making processes.
- Perceived inadequate understanding and/or consideration of impacts on business and customers.

## 2.2 Changes over time

While it is interesting and useful to keep track of changes over time, it is at the same time important to remember that stakeholder satisfaction is subject to changes in expectations, the stakeholders are not necessarily the same from year to year and the regulatory environment in which IPART operates often change.

The first time the IPART survey was implemented in 2001, satisfaction among stakeholders varied considerably between the five areas measured in the survey. In response to these early findings, IPART implemented a range of measures to improve stakeholder satisfaction. The following three surveys saw both a steady improvement in satisfaction, and a convergence in the areas measured, with almost all stakeholders being positive in all areas by 2008. Since then, fairly high levels of satisfaction have been maintained in all areas. There was a peak in 2017 when a very high proportion of stakeholders were positive across all result areas. Since 2017 there has been a slight decrease in satisfaction across all the result areas (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Overall stakeholder satisfaction by result area and year (proportion of stakeholders who rated agree or tend to agree)**



## 2.3 Gap between importance and satisfaction

As well as providing satisfaction ratings, the survey asked stakeholders to rate the importance of different result areas. When deciding on strategies to address the survey findings, a gap analysis between perceived importance and satisfaction can be useful for deciding where to focus attention.

Almost all stakeholders rated all result areas as important or very important, so we have focussed the analysis on the gap between stakeholders rating an attribute as “very important” and the proportion who fully agreed that it is performed to a high level. This analysis shows that there are two areas in particular with a wide gap: perceived fairness in consultation and decision making, and transparency of rationale for decision making (Table 2).

**Table 2. Gap between the proportion of stakeholder rating result areas as very important and fully agree that it has been met to a high degree**

Result area	Very important	Fully agree	Gap
Fairness in consultation and decision-making	81%	37%	44%
Transparency of rationale for decisions	80%	48%	32%
Ease of administrative processes	50%	36%	14%
Quality of report	50%	41%	9%
Quality of consultation processes	57%	48%	9%
Independence from government and regulated industries	67%	62%	5%
Professionalism of staff	58%	65%	-7%

### 3. Detailed findings

This section contains more detailed findings for each of the result areas in the survey. Further details are provided in Appendix 1. A report showing survey ratings by stakeholder groups has been provided as a separate report.

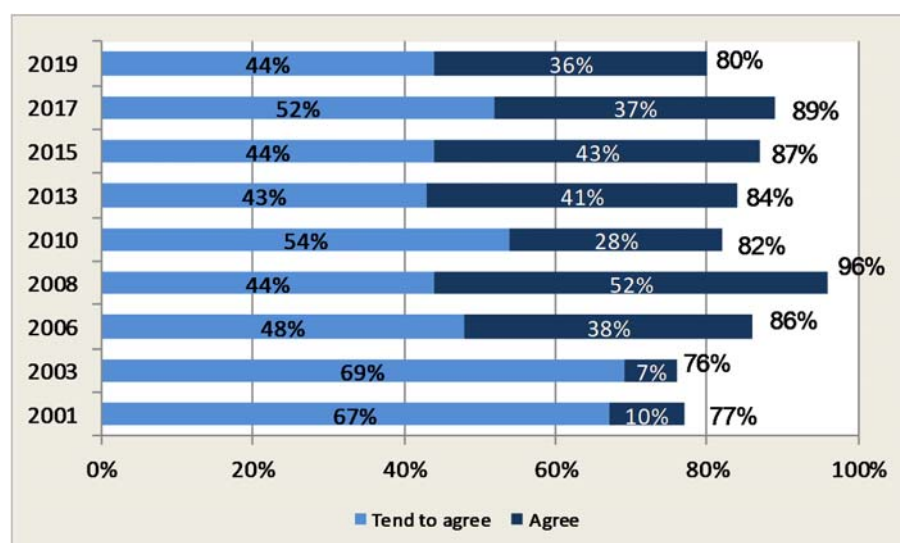
#### 3.1 IPART leadership

Overall, a very high proportion (80%) of stakeholders agreed or tended to agree that Tribunal members demonstrate leadership in implementing their legislative responsibilities, although it is a little lower than in 2017 (89%) (Figure 3).

The most significant change in stakeholders' perception was in whether tribunal members understood significant issues affecting agencies/ organisations, which decreased by 21% between 2017 and 2019 (see Table 3).

Across the stakeholder groups, GGAS-ESS stakeholders were less likely to agree or tend to agree that IPART Tribunal members demonstrate leadership in implementing their legislative responsibilities (56%), that costs of implementation are adequately considered (50%) and that Tribunal members understand the issues affecting their agency (44%).

**Figure 3. Overall perceptions of whether Tribunal members demonstrate leadership in implementing its legislative responsibilities by year**



**Table 3. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of IPART's leadership (percent who agreed or tended to agree)**

Num	Survey question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
1_1	The Tribunal takes an approach to regulation that is proportionate and effective within their statutory obligations*	58%	57%	69%	79%	63%	72%	56%	56%	83%	-
1_2	The Tribunal's decisions are practical and adequately consider the costs of implementation*	77%	73%	82%	91%	83%	85%	72%	73%	68%	-
1_3	T.M. maintain their independence from government and regulated industries	73%	59%	74%	88%	84%	89%	95%	91%	94%	3%
1_4	T.M. understand significant issues affecting our agency	66%	64%	74%	78%	80%	81%	70%	82%	61%	-21%
1_5	T.M can be trusted in performing their roles and responsibilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	99%	98%	-1%
1_6	T.M use the minimum regulation to effectively meet their statutory obligation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71%	69%	-2%
1_7	Overall, T.M. demonstrate leadership in implementing their legislative responsibilities	77%	76%	86%	95%	82%	84%	87%	89%	80%	-9%

\* Question wording change in 2019 so direct comparison not possible

### 3.1.1 Stakeholder comments

Stakeholders were invited to give further feedback about IPART's leadership. Twenty-two stakeholders across a range of sectors participated, although no stakeholders from ENRU, government or regulators commented. A number of stakeholders reported that they find it difficult to comment on leadership as they have had no direct involvement with tribunal members, with one stakeholder saying that it is difficult to differentiate IPART teams and the Tribunal.

Consistent with the ratings provided in the survey, many commented briefly and positively about the Tribunal, such as *"IPART takes a balanced and reasonable approach to issues"* and *"my experience with IPART has been fair and transparent"*. A local government stakeholder spoke positively about the professionalism of IPART generally, especially in listening to the issues before determinations and clearly articulating why determinations are made.

One local government stakeholder commented favourably on the content knowledge and expertise of IPART staff in understanding their issues, *"there are quite a few disciplines that they have to have skillsets in and IPART has expertise in all of those key areas"*. In contrast, an E&T stakeholder was concerned that IPART staff had little experience in their particular area, and relied on some of the larger market players for their information, *'I don't think IPART staff understand the area enough to feel confident to push back'*.

One water licencing stakeholder called for the Tribunal to be clearer about why particular proposals or approaches are rejected, and what it would take for proposals to be reconsidered.

One E&T stakeholder commented about a perceived incomplete focus in recent reviews, citing the lack of consideration of charges in council rates review, and funeral pricing in the cemeteries and crematoria review.

Two water pricing stakeholders commented that IPART lack appreciation of customer impacts, citing annual updates as being easier for customers to absorb than the current periodic larger adjustments. Another stakeholder commented that IPART needs to be more proactive in making sure its agenda is seen as relevant to wider policy debates.

Two GGAS-ESS stakeholders commented that the Tribunal can show a lack of understanding of industry and the impacts of their decision.

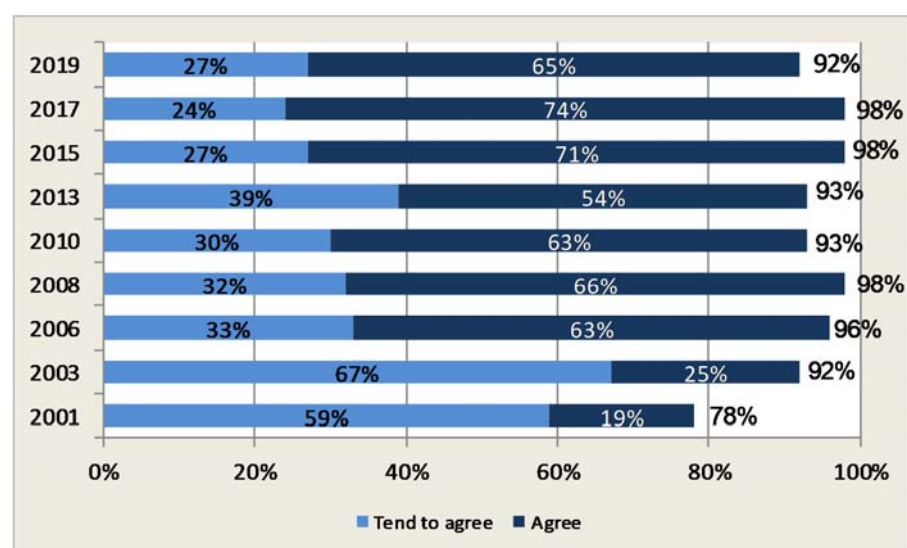
Feedback from water pricing and GGAS-ESS stakeholders provided some consistent themes about IPART culture and its interactions with companies and groups that it regulates. In particular, respondents would like to see IPART adjust its mindset towards considering how companies can perform better over time and how to encourage this good outcome. They argued that this is not a softer way of regulating but takes account of the bigger picture and is more aligned with industry success.

Some stakeholders made the point that for IPART to be influential, it must be relevant, and that it could gain insights from companies and other bodies that it regulates. At the moment, strategic conversations are held at a working level, but not at senior level. There is scope for senior members of the IPART secretariat to have more conversations with senior levels within industry. Without these conversations there is a risk of having a level of disconnect on some issues. These stakeholders argued that this type of relationship is possible for a regulator without impacting on independence and would only strengthen the relevance of its decisions.

### **3.2 Professionalism of IPART staff**

Overall, almost all stakeholders (92%) agreed or tended to agree that IPART's staff demonstrate a high level of professionalism. Stakeholder perceptions of professionalism have been very positive over the last few surveys and this continued in 2019, although it was slightly lower than in 2017 (Figure 4).

Across the stakeholder groups, the GGAS-ESS group was slightly less positive.

**Figure 4. Overall perceptions of professionalism of IPART staff by year****Table 4. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of staff professionalism (percentage who agreed or tended to agree)**

Num	Survey question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
2_1	Staff are courteous in any dealings with our agency	100%	96%	100%	100%	97%	99%	99%	99%	97%	-2%
2_2	Staff conduct their dealings with our agency with honesty and probity	91%	93%	100%	99%	99%	99%	100%	99%	97%	-2%
2_3	Staff conduct their dealings with our agency with diligence and efficiency	75%	88%	95%	97%	93%	93%	93%	92%	87%	-5%
2_4	Staff are competent to fully analyse industry, economic, financial and legal regulatory issues	63%	68%	81%	89%	86%	87%	91%	90%	84%	-6%
2_5	Adequately resourced to undertake its regulatory roles and responsibilities	43%	46%	73%	87%	73%	78%	82%	89%	80%	-9%
2_6	Overall, IPART's staff demonstrate a high level of professionalism	78%	92%	95%	99%	93%	93%	97%	98%	92%	-6%

### 3.2.1 Stakeholder comments

Stakeholders were invited to give further feedback about the professionalism of IPART staff. Fourteen respondents across a range of sectors provided comments and many were positive, praising staff for professionalism and commitment. One ENRU stakeholder commented that *"IPART has a very strong team who are experienced and professional, making them one of the best regulatory bodies in Australia"*. A water pricing respondent commented that *"IPART staff are courteous, professional and appear committed to being leaders in regulatory management in Australia"*.

The main issues raised was a perceived under-resourcing of IPART, affecting communication and causing delays. Some respondents observed that many of IPART's staff work part-time, and this is a factor impacting timeliness. Another issue raised by two respondents was staff turn-over, which was perceived as a cause of delays as it can take time to bring new staff up-to-speed on stakeholder's businesses.

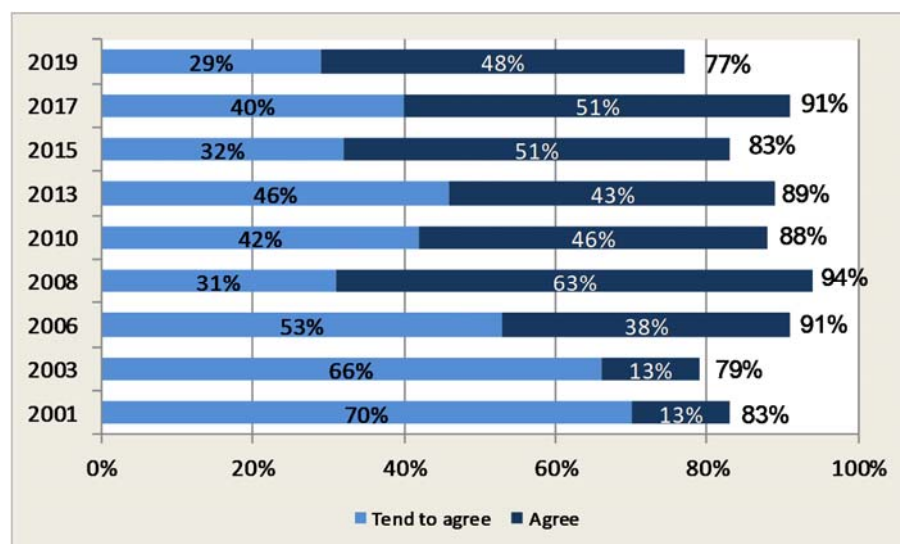
One water pricing respondent suggested that staff should expand their skillset to include lived consumer experience.

### 3.3 Consultation processes

Overall, just over three-quarters of stakeholders (77%) agreed or tended to agree that IPART's consultation processes are of a high quality. This is slightly lower than in 2017 when it was 91% and is the lowest satisfaction since surveys began in 2001 (Figure 5).

Across the groups, GGAS-ESS stakeholders were less likely to agree or tend to agree across all attributes of consultation.

**Figure 5. Overall perceptions of whether IPART's consultation processes are of high quality**





**Table 5. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of IPART's consultation processes (percentage who agreed or tended to agree)**

Num	Survey question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
3_1	Consultation processes are appropriately promoted	93%	84%	89%	96%	93%	94%	90%	96%	87%	-9%
3_2	Consultation processes are accessible	74%	77%	89%	93%	95%	88%	91%	94%	88%	-6%
3_3	Consultation processes are transparent	93%	87%	92%	95%	90%	90%	96%	94%	92%	-2%
3_4	Consultation processes are impartial	77%	69%	88%	91%	85%	88%	85%	90%	88%	-2%
3_5	Overall, IPART's consultation processes are of high quality	83%	79%	91%	94%	88%	89%	84%	91%	78%	-13%

### 3.3.1 Stakeholder comments – consultations

Twenty-one people commented about IPART's consultation processes, with almost half of these (nine) being from the GGAS-ESS group.

Stakeholders were mixed in their views, with some commenting very positively while others identified shortcomings and suggested improvements.

On the positive side, one ENRU stakeholder commented that *"IPART provide a predictable, transparent and fair process during consultations and have improved communication techniques over recent years with fact sheets and info-graphic style communication"*. Another water licensing stakeholder commented that the move from public hearings to workshops has been an excellent initiative, being less daunting for participants. Others praised live streaming for participants unable to attend and email communication. Another local government stakeholder appreciated having one point of contact within IPART, particularly as their submissions to IPART are quite complex involving many disciplines, and the contact can *'filter the information and what is the level of response we should be providing so it is consistent across all of the disciplines'*. A water pricing stakeholder positively described IPART's consultations as *"genuine"*.

One GGAS-ESS stakeholder perceived that there is a reluctance by IPART to engage with stakeholders in person, making it more time-consuming and difficult to resolve issues.

A couple of stakeholders commented about representation in consultations. One GGAS-ESS respondent commented that the stakeholder groups involved in consultations are skewed towards consultants and service providers and large energy users being under-represented. One water pricing respondent reported that many important stakeholders do not know about or are unable to engage in IPART's consultations. More informal engagements were suggested as a solution.

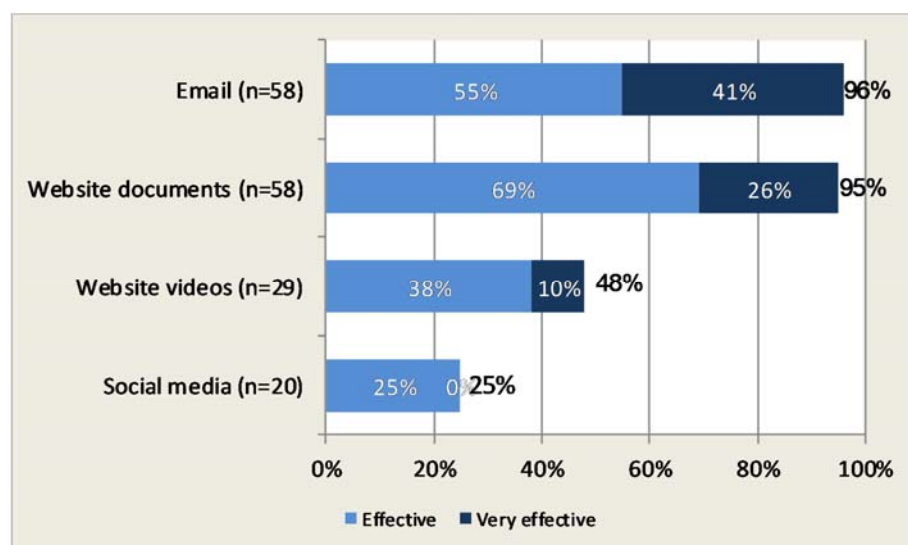
One regulator stakeholder commented that IPART's consultations come late in the process when strongly held views have already developed that shape expectations.

### 3.3.2 Effectiveness of communication channels

The 2015 survey introduced a set of new questions about specific channels of communication and these were repeated in the 2017 and 2019 surveys. Overall, a very high proportion of stakeholders reported that email (96%) and website documents (95%) were either effective or very effective. Social media (25%) and Website videos (48%) were perceived as less effective (Figure 6).

Compared with 2017, a slightly higher proportion of stakeholders rated website documents as effective or very effective (+11%) and a lower proportion rated videos (-6%) and social media (-13%) as effective or very effective.

**Figure 6. Overall perception of the effectiveness of channels of communication IPART uses in promoting its consultation**



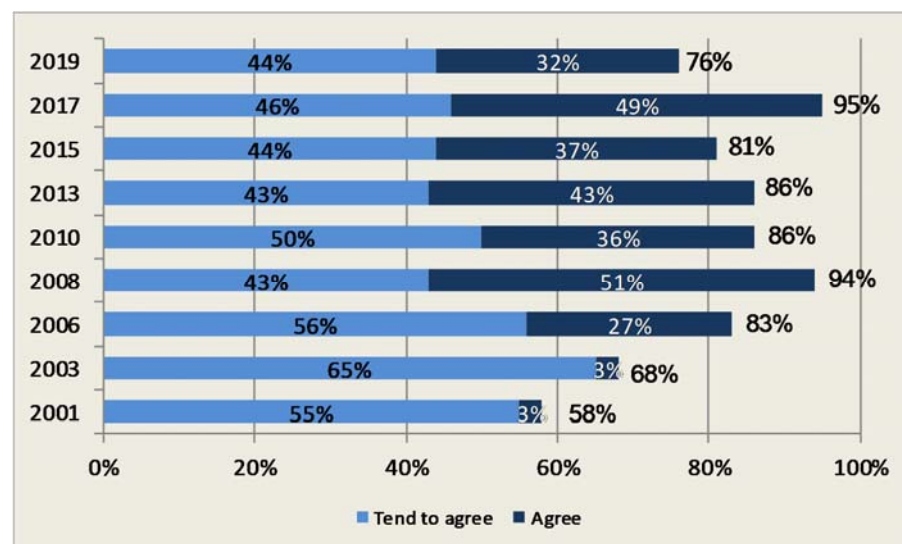
## 3.4 Decision-making processes

Overall, about three-quarters of stakeholders agreed or tended to agree that IPART's decision-making processes are of a high quality. This is lower than in 2017 when it was 95% (Figure 7). Among the attributes of decision-making, perceived fairness decreased the most (Table 6).

Stakeholders were most likely to be positive about decision making processes being independent (85%) and IPART's compliance with the legislative framework (89%). Stakeholders were slightly less positive that processes are fair (71%) or timely (71%) (Table 6).

Across stakeholder groups, GGAS-ESS stakeholders were less likely to provide positive responses across all attributes of decision-making, particularly that decisions are fair (55%) and timely (45%).

**Figure 7. Overall perceptions of whether IPART's decision-making processes are of high quality**



**Table 6. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of IPART's decision-making processes (percentage who agreed or tended to agree)**

Num	Survey question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
4_1	Decision making processes are independent	59%	59%	81%	90%	82%	92%	89%	88%	85%	-3%
4_2	Decision making processes are fair	66%	63%	73%	91%	73%	82%	78%	91%	71%	-20%
4_3	Decision making processes comply with their legislative framework	85%	76%	93%	97%	95%	99%	96%	99%	89%	-10%
4_4	Decision making processes are timely	52%	71%	75%	83%	88%	80%	78%	84%	71%	-13%
4_4	Overall, IPART's decision making processes are of high quality	58%	68%	83%	94%	86%	85%	81%	94%	75%	-20%

### 3.4.1 Stakeholder comments

Twenty-three survey respondents provided feedback around IPART's decision-making processes, representing all stakeholder groups except government and regulators.

As in 2017, comments were mainly around the time taken to make decisions; the extent to which IPART's decision-making processes are independent; and the extent to which they are of high quality and are transparent.

Among GGAS-ESS respondents, one praised IPART for basing decisions on rules and legislation and not being duly influenced by vested interests, while another called for IPART to be more proactive in supporting the intent of the scheme. Another respondent called for a better and fairer dispute resolution process to be developed, including the ability to have disputed certificates within an audit set aside to prevent forced acceptance due to commercial pressures and/or lengthy dispute resolution processes.

Among local government, some respondents provided general positive comments, such as *"I have worked with IPART on two occasions in the last 2 years and find their staff and their assessments very professional and thorough"*. Other comments related to timeliness and the timing of specific processes, including the need to bring forward the release of the annual SRV timetable and OLG issues guidelines. It was also suggested that the submission deadline be moved to end of February or early March to enable councils sufficient time to brief councillors.

Among water licencing respondents, two stakeholders commented that IPART places too much weight on the government perspective, leading to increases in customer cost share. Other comments stated that the 80:20 cost sharing arrangement (based on the impactor-pays principle) is inappropriate for the agricultural industry. Another water pricing stakeholder commented that decisions such as the 80:20 cost sharing arrangement should be communicated in plain English for the general public, so that farmers can receive the social benefit of being seen by the public as major contributors to significant positive social benefits.

Two water licensing and pricing stakeholders commented that IPART can be swayed by minority groups and that broader stakeholder engagement is essential to prevent this.

One respondent commented that interpretation of legislation varies with different legal staff, which can create confusion and instability.

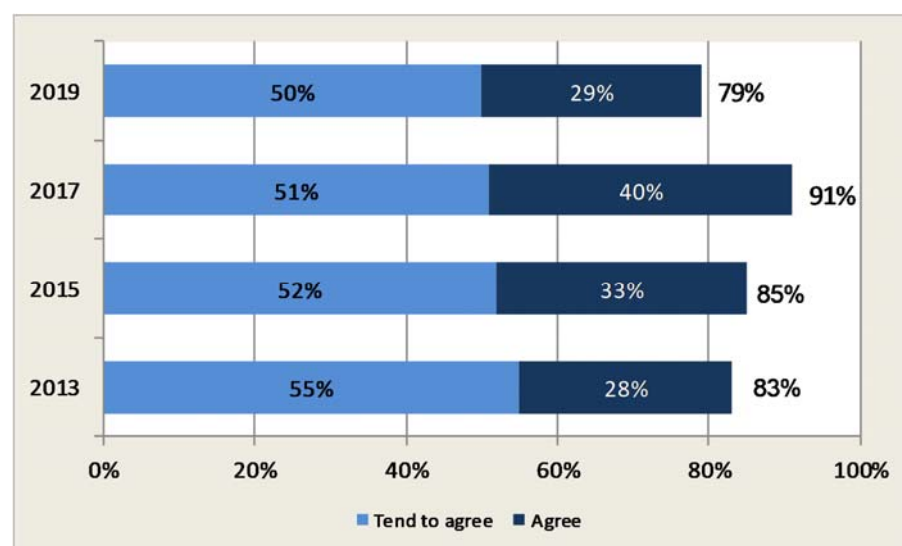
One ENRU respondent commented that timeframes are insufficient to allow for board approval processes among regulated enterprises.

### 3.5 Administrative processes

This was the fourth time administrative processes have been included in the survey. Overall, 79% of stakeholders agreed or tended to agree that they are of a high quality. This is lower than in 2017 when it was 91% (Figure 8).

Across the stakeholder groups, GGAS-ESS stakeholders were less likely to agree or tend to agree that IPART has a strong focus on the needs of stakeholders (45%). Across all stakeholder groups, the proportion who agreed or tended to agree that IPART has a strong focus on the needs of its stakeholders has decreased from 85% to 67% (Table 7).

**Figure 8. Proportion of stakeholders who agreed or tended to agree that IPART's administrative processes are of high quality by year**



**Table 7. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of IPART's administrative processes (percentage who agreed or tended to agree)**

Survey question	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
IPART'S system make it easy to do business with IPART	72%	80%	82%	75%	-7%
IPART has a strong focus on the needs of its stakeholders	78%	84%	85%	67%	-18%
Overall, IPART's administrative processes are of high quality	83%	84%	90%	79%	-11%

### 3.5.1 Stakeholder comments

Nine stakeholders commented on IPART's administrative processes, half of whom were GGAS-ESS stakeholders.

The most commonly raised issue was timeliness and delays. One respondent commented that while product approvals have improved, other processes have gone backwards. Another respondent commented that it can take four weeks to get simple administrative answers to queries, and that getting assistance over the phone is difficult.

One water licencing respondent commented that smaller community-based projects have to go through processes designed for larger scale projects, and that more fit-for-purpose processes should be developed.

One water pricing stakeholder suggested that IPART processes are too strongly influenced by government objectives and that the views and arguments of all stakeholder groups are not adequately taken account of. This stakeholder cited ACCC's 2014 review as a model for rigour

and independence. Another water pricing stakeholder was very positive about IPART, describing it as a 'strong independent regulator that delivers broadly sound outcomes', but was concerned that IPART was "rigid" and could move faster.

One respondent suggested that the ESS audit regime is anti-commercial, although did not elaborate further. Others from this sector made the point that their commercial viability is impacted by the delays they experience from IPART, whether for clarifications of guidelines or making decisions. They noted that given the pace of change in the sector, it is not acceptable to be stalled for several weeks waiting for a response from IPART. For a simple question of clarification, they would expect a 24 to 48 hours turnaround and for harder questions would expect a response within 3 to 5 working days. It was also observed that IPART is increasingly sitting behind email and is not accessible for direct conversations by phone.

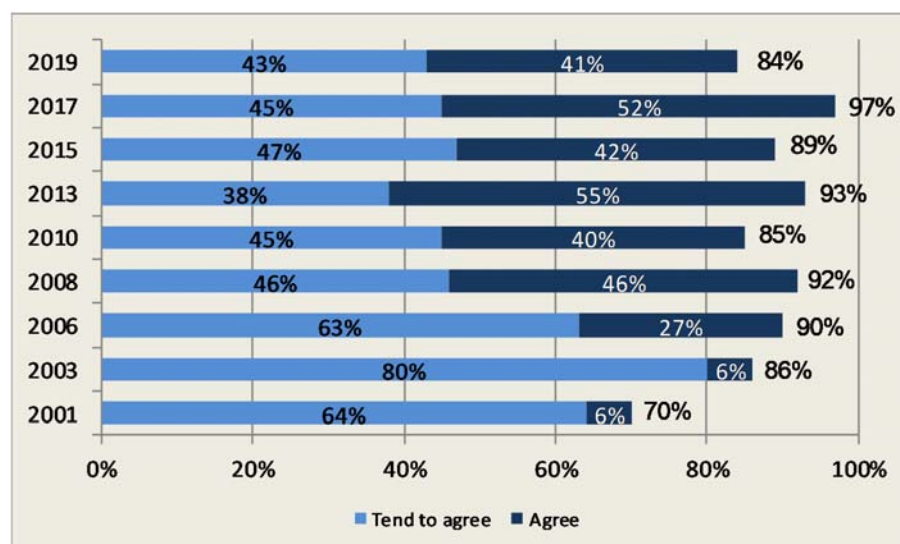
One suggestion was made that IPART develop a platform for Frequently Asked Questions that would help people find quick clarifications to questions. Another suggested a public registry of rulings on issues that showed interpretation of the guidelines that would facilitate planning by industry.

### 3.6 Quality of IPART's reports

Overall, 84% of stakeholders agreed or tended to agree that IPART's reports are of high quality, which is slightly lower than in 2017, when it was 97% (Figure 9).

While the perceptions of reports were generally positive across the stakeholder groups and attributes of reports, GGAS-ESS stakeholders were less likely to agree or tend to agree that reports are transparent (38%).

**Figure 9. Overall perceptions of whether IPART's regulatory reports are of high quality**



**Table 8. Stakeholder perceptions of specific attributes of IPART's reports (percentage who agreed or tended to agree)**

Q No	Survey question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	Change
5_1	Reports are transparent	56%	76%	82%	93%	86%	90%	92%	95%	83%	-12%
5_2	Reports are credible	52%	71%	78%	91%	84%	88%	91%	95%	81%	-14%
5_3	Reports are easy to read and understand	70%	86%	94%	94%	84%	89%	92%	93%	88%	-5%
5_4	Overall, regulatory reports are of high quality	59%	79%	90%	93%	85%	92%	89%	97%	84%	-13%

### 3.6.1 Stakeholder comments

Seventeen stakeholders provided feedback about IPART's reports, which were spread across the stakeholder groups except for government and ENRA stakeholders who were not represented among those who commented.

A large majority of survey respondents rated IPART's reports as easy to read and understand, and some simply stated their satisfaction with report, such as *"IPART's reports are highly professional"*. Other comments from the survey and interviews were mixed.

While stakeholders value clarity and brevity, one stakeholder commented that there is a risk with placing too much information in the appendices: *"Sometimes the appendices (specialist advice) contain information that I think should be brought forward into the main report, so it's not lost"*.

One respondent commented that in the last two years reports have contained incorrect referencing and that insufficient permissions have been sought for publishing confidential client reports.

One stakeholder commented that, *".....at times, IPART appears to have locked in views and argues against submissions, rather than considering a diversity of opinions, which could result in better decision making"*.

One stakeholder commented that they feel that the use of the word "on balance" in reports usually means the rationale for the decision is unclear.

One stakeholder suggested using more infographics to assist customers' decisions at a glance.



### 3.7 Importance of attributes

The survey included a section about stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of various IPART attributes. There were minimal changes in perception between 2017 and 2019, with a high proportion of stakeholders rating all attributes as important or very important (Figure 10).

Knowing the relative importance of different attributes can be important when formulating responses to the survey findings. In particular, if there are attributes that stakeholders say are important and where IPART's performance is below expectation, such attributes may become priorities for action.

**Figure 10. Overall perceptions of the importance of IPART attributes**



Because almost all stakeholders rated attributes either important or very important it is most relevant to focus on the gaps between stakeholders rating an attribute as "very important" and the proportion who fully agreed that it was being performed to a high level. This analysis shows that there are two areas with a wider gap than other areas: perceived fairness in consultation and decision making and transparency of rationale for decision making (Table 9).



**Table 9. Gap between the proportion of stakeholder rating result areas as very important and fully agree that it has been met to a high degree**

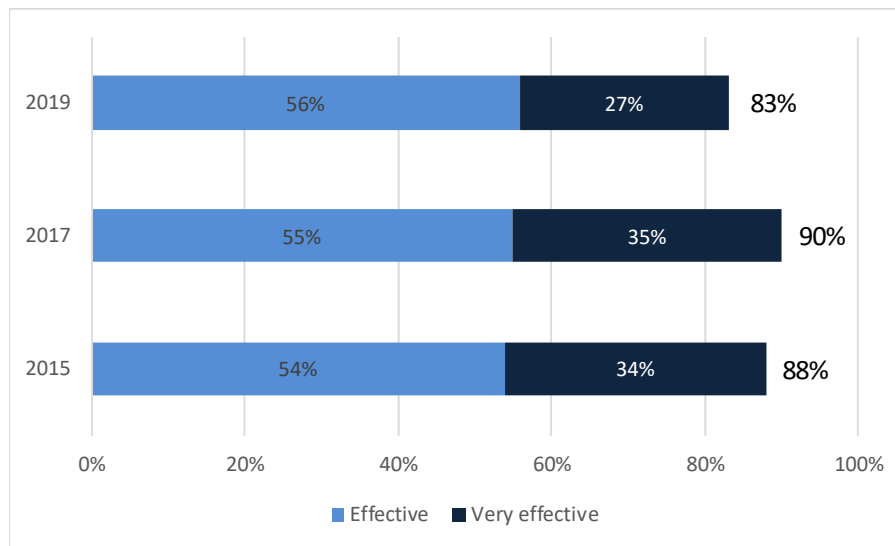
Result area*	Very important	Fully agree	Gap
Fairness in consultation and decision-making	81%	37%	44%
Transparency of rationale for decisions	80%	48%	32%
Ease of administrative processes	50%	36%	14%
Quality of report	50%	41%	9%
Quality of consultation processes	57%	48%	9%
Independence from government and regulated industries	67%	62%	5%
Professionalism of staff	58%	65%	-7%

\*The survey section on importance included trustworthiness and consideration of practical implications of decision. These are not displayed in the table as there were no direct corresponding survey questions.

### 3.8 Overall effectiveness

A new question was introduced in 2015 asking stakeholders to rate the overall effectiveness of IPART's engagement with them and their organisation. Overall, 83% of stakeholders rated IPART's engagement with them as effective or very effective. This was slightly lower than in 2017 when it was 90% (Figure 11). Among stakeholder groups, it was lowest among GGAS-ESS stakeholders (67%).

**Figure 11. Overall effectiveness of IPART's engagement with stakeholders and their organisations**



## Appendix 1: Summary of survey responses

Q ID	Question	Per cent positive	n	Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree
<b>Leadership</b>							
Q1	The Tribunal takes an approach to regulation that is proportionate and effective within their statutory obligations	83%	53	42%	42%	9%	8%
Q2	The Tribunal's decisions are practical and adequately consider the costs of implementation	68%	53	30%	38%	15%	17%
Q3	Tribunal members maintain their independence from government and regulated industries	94%	47	62%	32%	2%	4%
Q4	Tribunal members demonstrate understanding of the significant issues affecting our agency/organisation	61%	51	31%	29%	22%	18%
Q5	Tribunal members can be trusted in performing their roles and responsibilities	98%	47	60%	38%	2%	0%
Q6	Tribunal members use the minimum regulation to effectively meet their statutory obligations	69%	45	27%	42%	20%	11%
Q7	Overall, Tribunal members demonstrate leadership in implementing their legislative responsibilities	80%	45	36%	44%	11%	9%
<b>Consultation processes</b>							
Q8	IPART's consultation processes are appropriately promoted (i.e. all relevant stakeholders are aware of reviews and ongoing issues)	87%	60	47%	40%	7%	7%
Q9	IPART's consultation processes are accessible (i.e. stakeholders have adequate information and appropriate avenues and time to express their views)	88%	60	50%	38%	5%	7%
Q10	IPART's consultation processes are transparent (i.e. with public access to submissions and hearings)	92%	59	53%	39%	3%	5%
Q11	IPART's consultation processes are impartial (i.e. the full range of stakeholder views and all competing claims are included in considerations)	88%	56	45%	43%	7%	5%
Q12	Overall, IPART's consultation processes are of high quality	78%	58	48%	29%	9%	14%
<b>Effectiveness of consultation methods</b>							
		Per cent positive	n	Very Effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	
Q13	Effectiveness: Email	96%	56	41%	55%	2%	2%
Q14	Effectiveness: Website documents	95%	58	26%	69%	5%	0%
Q15	Effectiveness: Website videos	48%	29	10%	38%	31%	21%

Q16	Effectiveness: Social media	25%	20	0%	25%	35%	40%
<b>Decision making processes</b>							
Q17	IPART's decision-making processes are independent (i.e competing claims are analysed without undue influence from vested interests)	85%	55	35%	51%	7%	7%
Q18	IPART's decision-making processes are fair (i.e. due weight is given to competing claims to reach a balanced outcome)	71%	59	37%	34%	17%	12%
Q19	IPART's decision-making processes comply with the relevant legislative framework	89%	55	58%	31%	9%	2%
Q20	IPART's decision-making processes are timely	71%	58	41%	29%	16%	14%
Q21	Overall, IPART's decision-making processes are of high quality	75%	57	32%	44%	12%	12%
<b>Reporting</b>		<b>Per cent positive</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Q22	IPART's reports are transparent (i.e. the rationale for decisions are made explicit and it is clear how competing claims have been considered)	83%	58	48%	34%	14%	3%
Q23	IPART's reports are credible (i.e. decisions are convincingly argued and based on a comprehensive review of all relevant evidence)	81%	57	42%	39%	12%	7%
Q24	IPART's reports are easy to read and understand	88%	57	54%	33%	9%	4%
Q25	Overall, IPART's regulatory reports are of high quality	84%	58	41%	43%	7%	9%
<b>Professionalism</b>		<b>Per cent positive</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Q26	IPART's staff are courteous in any dealings with our agency/organisation	97%	61	82%	15%	2%	2%
Q27	IPART's staff conduct their dealings with our agency/organisation with honesty and probity	97%	60	78%	18%	3%	0%
Q28	IPART's staff conduct their dealings with our agency/organisation with diligence and efficiency	87%	61	62%	25%	7%	7%
Q29	IPART's staff are competent to fully analyse industry, economic, financial and legal regulatory issues	84%	57	49%	35%	5%	11%
Q30	IPART is adequately resourced to undertake its regulatory roles and responsibilities	80%	50	30%	50%	8%	12%
Q31	Overall, IPART's staff demonstrate a high level of professionalism	92%	60	65%	27%	5%	3%
<b>Admin processes</b>		<b>Per cent positive</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Q32	IPART's systems make it easy to do business with IPART (e.g. licence or ESS accreditation or local government applications, auditing, monitoring and reporting).	75%	44	36%	39%	14%	11%
Q33	IPART has a strong focus on the needs of its stakeholders	67%	55	22%	45%	20%	13%
Q34	Overall, IPART's administrative processes are of	79%	52	29%	50%	15%	6%

high quality							
Importance of attributes		Per cent positive	n	Very imp.	Imp.	Not very imp	Not at all imp.
Q35	Independence from government and regulated industries	97%	60	67%	30%	3%	0%
Q36	Fairness in consultation and decision-making	100%	59	81%	19%	0%	0%
Q37	Consideration of practical implications of decisions	98%	60	85%	13%	2%	0%
Q38	Trustworthiness	100%	60	78%	22%	0%	0%
Q39	Transparency of rationale for decisions	100%	60	80%	20%	0%	0%
Q40	Quality of consultation processes	93%	60	57%	37%	5%	2%
Q41	Quality of reports	97%	60	50%	47%	3%	0%
Q42	Professionalism of staff	100%	59	58%	42%	0%	0%
Q43	Ease of administrative processes	91%	58	50%	41%	9%	0%
Overall effectiveness		Per cent positive	n	Very Effective	Effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective.
Q44	Overall, to what extent do you think IPART's engagement with you and your agency/organisation is effective?	83%	63	27%	56%	14%	3%