

LOCAL WATER DONE WELL

November 2024

“Local Water Done Well” is the current Coalition Government’s plan for managing water services delivery and infrastructure following the repeal of Water Services Reform legislation (Three Waters).

In August 2021 we tested awareness of the Three Waters Reform Programme. Back then, a third of the sample had not heard of it at all. In January 2023 awareness had risen, only 11% of the sample had not heard of it at that point. Labour’s 3 Waters legislation was repealed in February 2024.

In November 2024 plans for consultation on Local Water Done Well are underway across the country but over half of New Zealanders have never heard of it and those that have heard of it know very little about it. Awareness and knowledge are currently tracking well below where 3 Waters got to, media coverage is also low with no visible opposition groups mobilised.

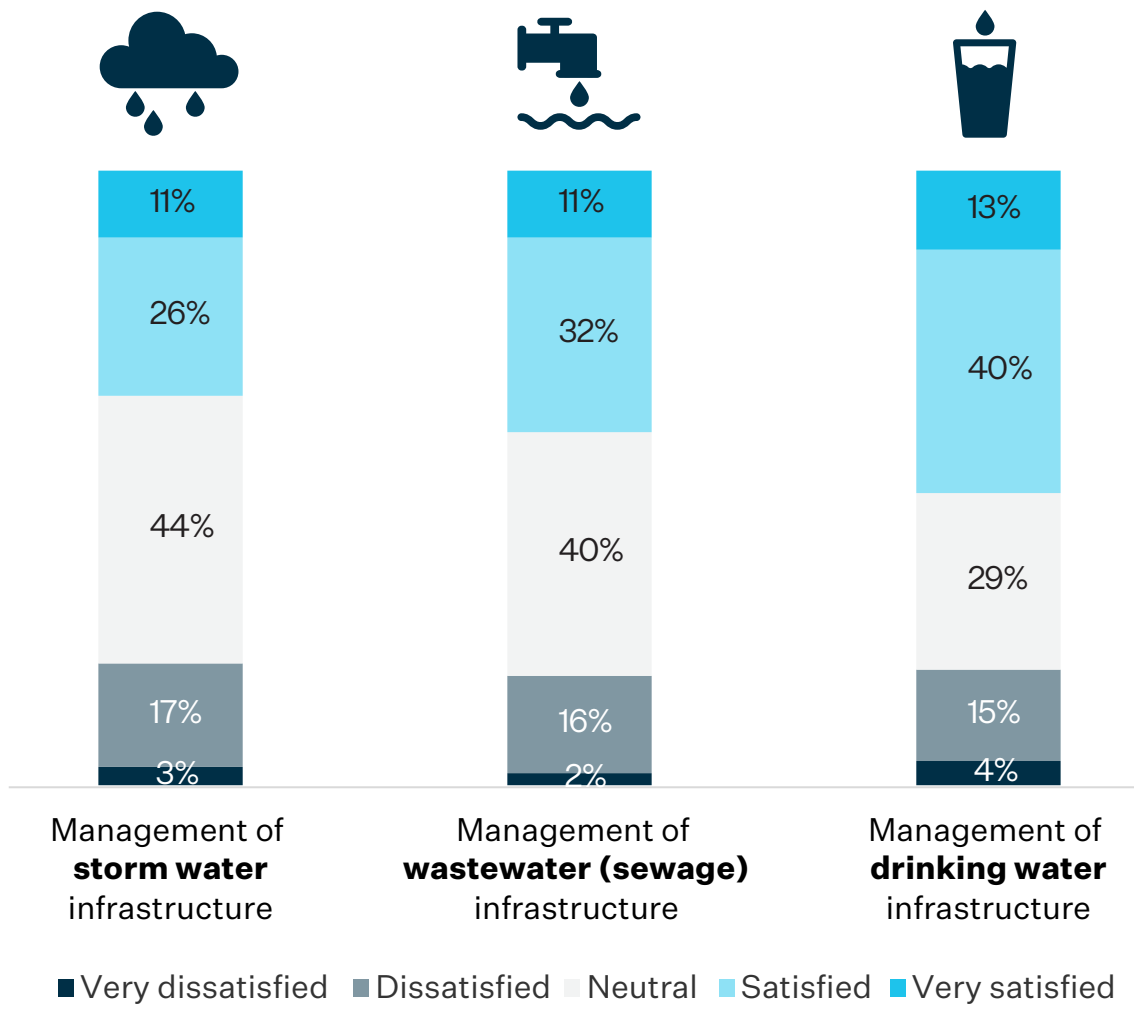
In all three surveys we asked those with at least some knowledge, whether they think the reforms will benefit their local area. The figures indicate that Local Water Done Well is perceived as more likely to benefit local areas than 3 Waters was. In the two 3 Waters surveys, there was no change in the proportion that didn’t think their local area would benefit between the two survey points, and this held the majority. In contrast, most think Local Water Done Well will benefit their area.

The reasons respondents gave against Local Water Done Well focus on the cost of bureaucracy, also on the perceived need for long term investment in the infrastructure that could be at risk from unnecessary bureaucratic spend. The reasons against 3 Waters also included costs, but focused on the loss of local control and a lack of trust in the Labour government.

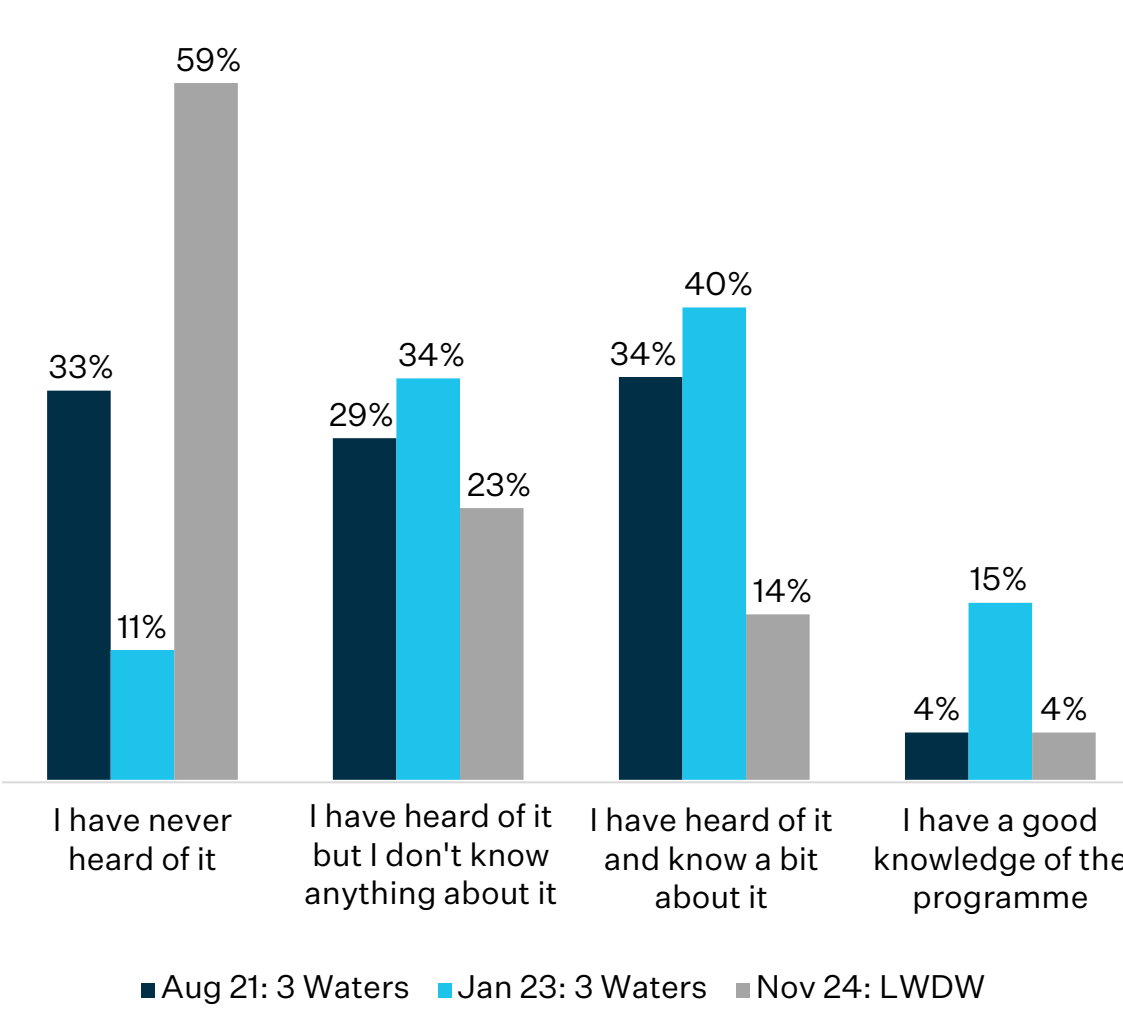
The new plan is formed around community control of water assets. Trust in local officials is seemingly higher than trust in the previous government. 44% either agreed or strongly agreed that they trust their local Council’s ability to objectively and impartially assess the options and choose the best delivery method for the current and future delivery of water services in their area.

What is also clear is that consultation with local residents is critical. 94% of New Zealanders believe it is important that there is widespread consultation with local residents on water service delivery plans.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your local Council’s performance?

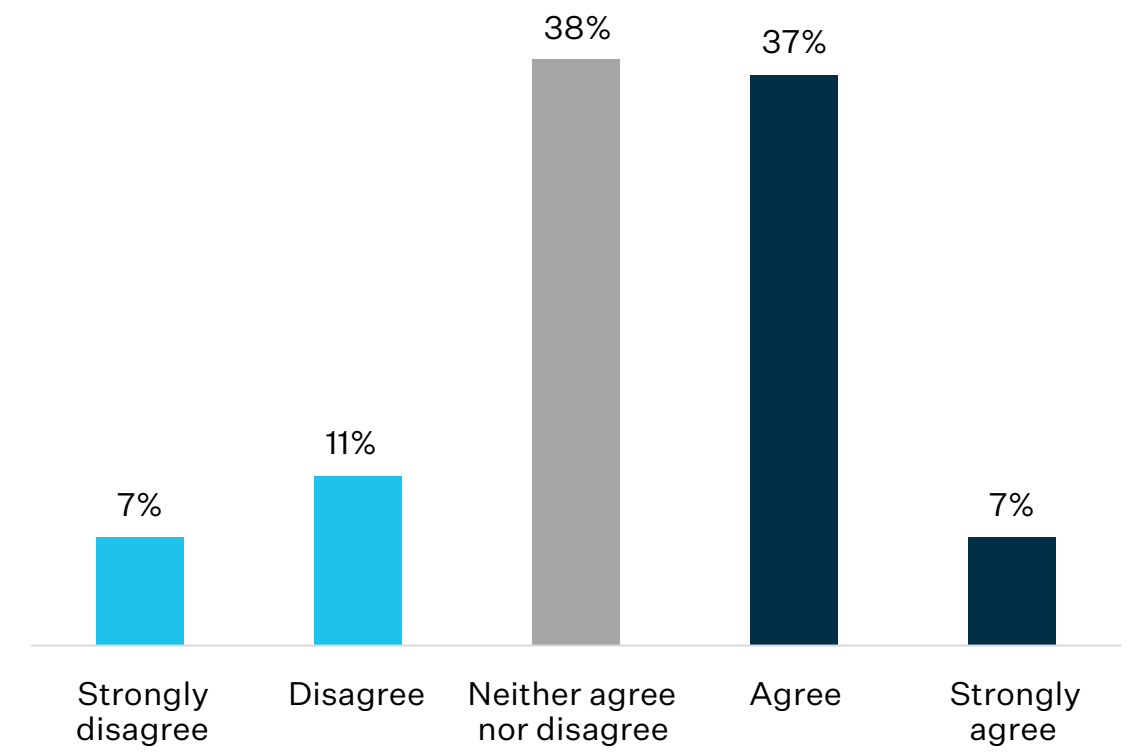


Have you heard about the government’s Three Waters Reform Programme? / Have you heard about “Local Water Done Well”?

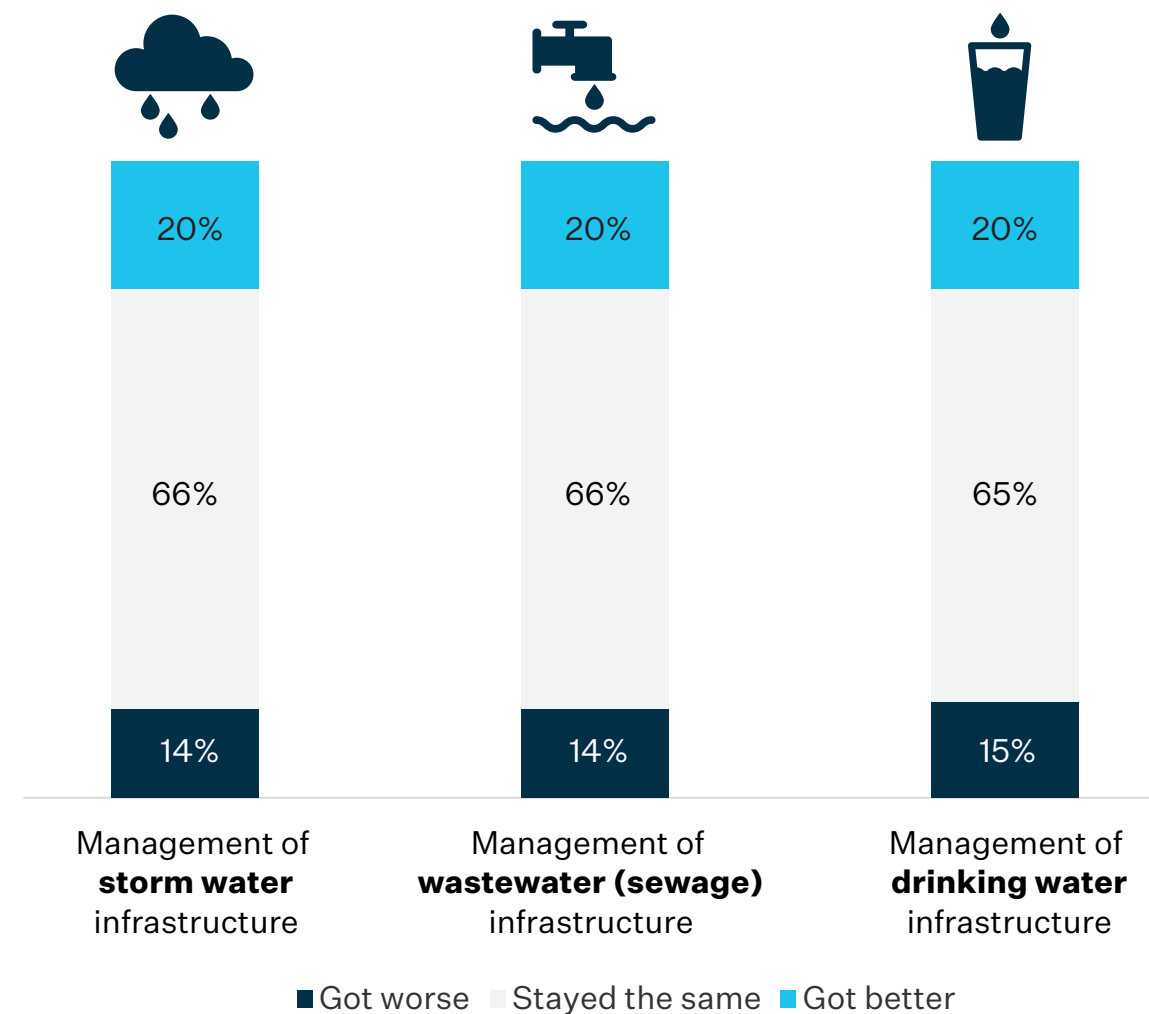


How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

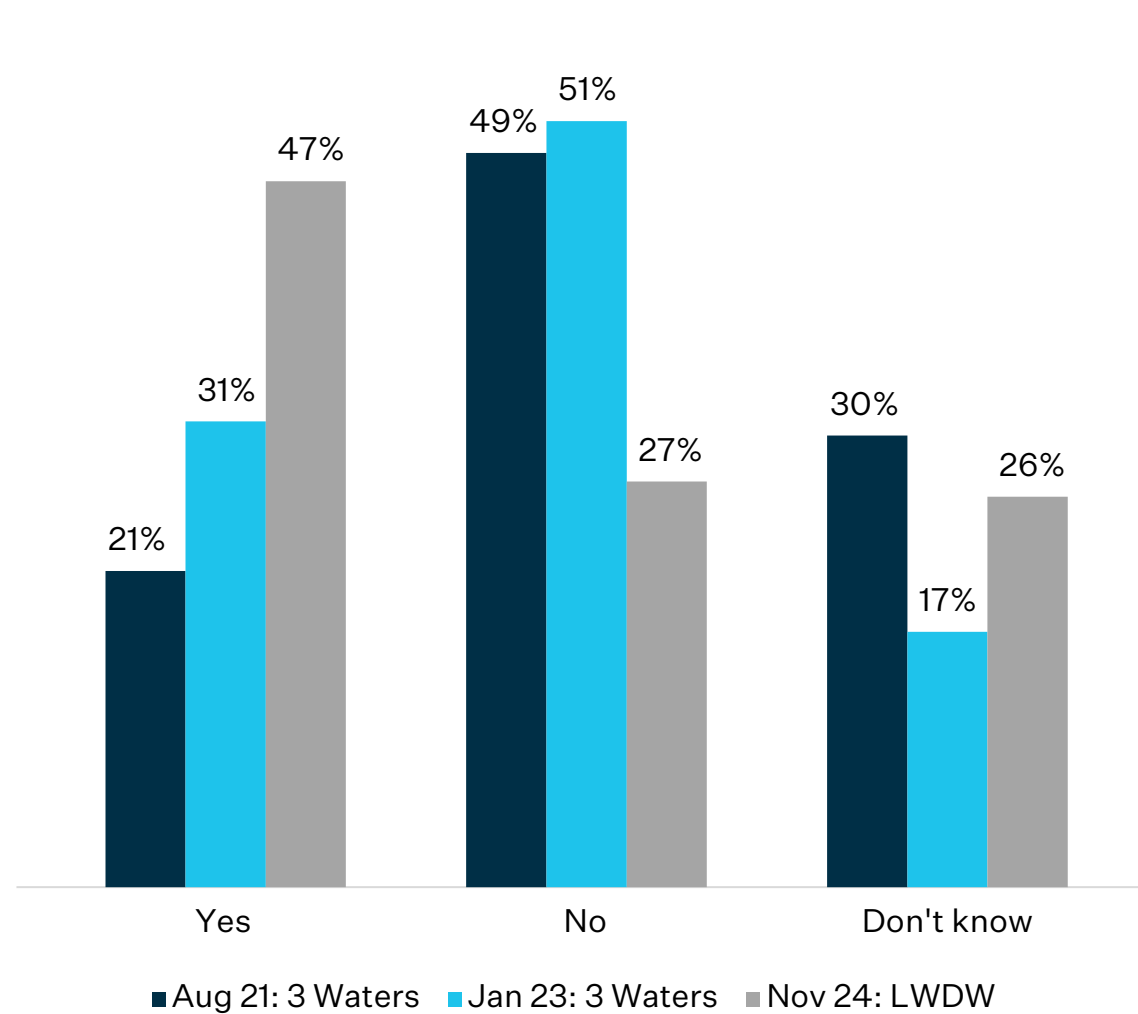
I trust my local Council’s ability to objectively and impartially assess the options and choose the best delivery method for the current and future delivery of water services in my area.



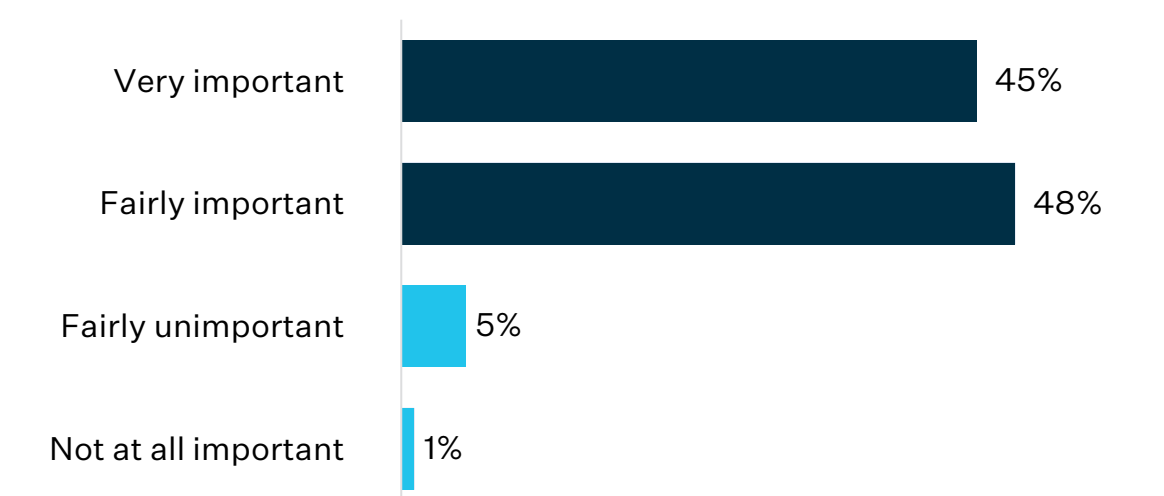
Do you think they have got better or worse on those aspects over the last year?



At this stage, do you think that the proposed reforms will benefit your local area?



How important to you is it that there is widespread consultation with local residents on water service delivery plans?



We will provide an update on this data in 2025.

Get in touch with Liz if you would like to receive it or would like to discuss a bespoke community engagement project in your area.
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