



## Ministry for the Environment commissioned customer research – September 2018 survey

Date Submitted:	6 November 2018	Tracking #: 2018-B-05059	
Security Level	UNCLASSIFIED	MfE Priority:	Non-Urgent

	Action sought:
To Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment	Note
To Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for the Environment	Note
To Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment	Note
To Hon James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change	Note

Actions for Minister's office staff	Return the signed report to MfE
Number of Attachments #	Nil
Note any feedback on the quality of the report	

### Ministry for the Environment contacts

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Principal Author	Gemma O'Sullivan	s 9(2)(a)	
Responsible Manager	Laurie Edwards		✓
Director	Vicki Connor		

## Ministry for the Environment commissioned customer research – September 2018 survey

### Key Messages

1. This briefing is to inform Ministers and Associate Ministers about recent research commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry).
2. In April 2018, Colmar Brunton was tasked with completing a baseline environmental attitudes survey to better understand what New Zealanders think about climate change, water and waste issues. The key findings were shared with you in August.
3. We recently commissioned Colmar Brunton to repeat the survey with a small set of the original research questions and several new questions. The survey ran from 6-16 September. The purpose was to test whether the consultations on the Zero Carbon Bill and single-use plastic shopping bags had impacted New Zealanders' attitudes since April – therefore we only ran questions on climate and waste.
4. Other relevant events of note (for climate and waste) occurring between the two surveys included the launch of the New Zealand Plastic Packaging Declaration, announcement of the Government's work programme for waste, release of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report on the contribution of New Zealand's livestock methane emissions to global warming, and the release of the Productivity Commission's final report on transitioning to a low emissions economy.
5. Benchmark research will be repeated annually to help us understand how perceptions of environmental issues are changing over time.
6. Comprehensive results from both the April and September surveys can be made available to Ministers on request.

### Key findings September 2018 – climate change

7. Generally the findings from the September survey were consistent with those from the April survey in relation to climate change.
8. This suggests that New Zealanders' views on climate change are relatively stable and remain broadly in support of action.
9. Notable shifts were observed for four metrics:
  - More New Zealanders agreed that 'climate change is likely to have a big impact on people like me' (increased 3 percentage points from 53 to 56% between April and September).
  - Fewer New Zealanders agreed that 'science and technology will eventually solve our problems with climate change' (decreased 3 percentage points from 27 to 24% indicating greater sentiment that we need to act, and not wait for a solution).
  - More New Zealanders agreed that climate change is entirely or mainly caused by human activity (increased 3 percentage points from 39 to 42%).
  - Less New Zealanders thought that New Zealand is heading in the right direction in how it approaches climate change (decreased 2 percentage points from 57 to 55%) and more New Zealanders thought we're heading in the wrong direction (increase 2 percentage points from 23 to 25%). This may be due to the increased domestic and international media coverage on climate change during this period, and debate on the approach New Zealand should take to address our emissions.



### **Key findings September 2018 - Waste**

10. 'Reducing waste and its impact on the environment' was ranked by the September survey respondents as the second (equal) most important challenge facing New Zealand in the next 20 years, only below 'reducing poverty in New Zealand' and on par with 'increasing the supply of affordable housing'. This was up from third (equal) in the April survey.
11. Overall we saw positive shifts in the metrics, with notable shifts including:
  - More New Zealanders agreed that New Zealand is heading in the right direction in how it approaches reducing waste (increased by 3 percentage points from 63 to 66% between April and September).
  - More New Zealanders agreed that the Government is doing enough to reduce waste (increased 2 percentage points from 19 to 21%, with those who disagreed decreasing by 5 percentage points and more people taking a neutral position).
  - Significantly more New Zealanders agreed that they are prepared to pay more, for example in taxes, rates or levies, to significantly reduce waste (increased 10 percentage points from 31 to 41%).
  - Significantly more New Zealanders said that they 'always' bring their own reusable bags when shopping, rather than being given plastic bags (increased 15 percentage points from 35 to 50%).

### **How the Ministry will use the research**

12. The ongoing Colmar Brunton research will be used to inform:
  - Future policy development:
    - The themes in the research will help inform the Ministry's policy work to ensure it aligns with areas of public concern.
  - Communication work:
    - The research helps the Ministry understand the attitudes and motivations of different audience segments, which will be used to develop communications that these segments will be more receptive to.
    - The results will be referenced in speeches, press releases and other communication activity.
  - Stakeholder engagement:
    - The Ministry will share the research with partners, where the insights will be valuable to their work.
    - The Ministry will use the research to better develop strategic partnerships with key stakeholders.

## Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **Note** the Ministry for the Environment's customer-focused research. The key findings are summarised above.
- b. **Note** the complete results are available on request.

Yes/No

### Signature



Vicki Connor  
Director Communications and Engagement

Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**

Date

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
**Associate Minister for the Environment**

Date

Hon James Shaw  
**Minister for Climate Change**

Date

Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Associate Minister for the Environment**

Date

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