

Moutere Hills Residents Association Water Supply Survey 2014

Survey Results

About the Survey

The objective of this survey was to establish the overall level of satisfaction of residents on the current water supply situation with a view to determine the level of support for a potential new, community-owned water supply scheme as an alternative to the Dovedale water scheme.

The survey also contained questions to determine the local population's view on the Waimea Dam funding models as proposed by TDC at the time.

The survey ran from 25 October 2014 for about three weeks. We have polled 600 households in the Moutere catchment, representing a population of approximately 1,500, by online survey and leaflet into each letterbox.

After three weeks, approximately 12% of households polled had participated in the survey.

The results of the survey have been evaluated as follows.

GENERAL SATISFACTION

The response to our basic question "Are you happy with your current water supply" was

45% Happy - 55% Unhappy

Those unhappy indicated the following needed to be improved: water quality (45%), quantity/availability (30%), lower cost (24%). All percentages are of total replies received.

POPULATION AND WATER NEEDS

We found the population of the Moutere Hills area contains two distinct groups: owners of properties on roof, bore, or well water supply (approximately 57% of replies) and residents of properties connected to the Dovedale water scheme (43% of replies).

Of those households on the Dovedale Scheme, 94% indicated they are unsatisfied with their current supply.

It is apparent that nearly all of those who are happy with their current supply are the ones on roof water or a similar, own supply. – The Editor

Water in the area is needed for: household (89%), stock (45%), irrigation (35%), other uses (11%).

46% of all respondents believe TDC is responsible for improving the situation.

A NEW COMMUNITY SCHEME

51% of all households who have replied indicated they would be interested in a newly formed, community-owned water scheme.

31% said this should be for household and stock use, 22% say this should be for household only.

WAIMEA DAM

Of those replies that had indicated an opinion on the Waimea Dam, 80% did not support the dam project as was proposed at the time (of total replies received 69% indicated no support, 18% indicated some support, and 14% indicated no opinion on the dam).

Of those replies that indicated support for the dam project, many made this support conditional on the prospect of a tangible benefit to the Moutere Hills area, such as the option to receive water from the dam through a reticulated supply via the Mapua pipeline.

Others indicated they would support the dam only on different funding models, not on the ones proposed.

Voices of opposition to the dam project included:

"I think expecting us to pay for Richmond's water is outrageous while we have to boil our water if we even get any!"

"The Waimea funding model seems to be a case of TDC subsidising the costs of agricultural interests."

"We realise the importance of contributing via our rates to other services for the benefit of all BUT PLEASE NOT THIS EXPENSIVE DAM."

Generally, there was a lot of concern about the dam funding models which proposed rates increases at a time at which many residents say it is hard enough for them to pay their current rates as they are.

"User pays" was a common recurring theme and residents were saying the dam should be funded accordingly.

MORE SELF-RELIANCE

Other comments put large emphasis on the promotion of more self-reliant solutions:

"Much more emphasis should be put on individual water collection, i.e. roof water and private catchment."

"Roof water should always be collected. Subdividers should be required to make independent provision and not be subsidised by others."

"All households should be encouraged to install water tanks regardless of the source of the water. TDC should subsidise tanks, pumps and point use of filters."

"TDC should be insisting on installation of own supply water tanks throughout the district on new builds and change of ownership. This would relieve volumes for agricultural supply from aquifers. Catchment dams could be installed where needed for horticultural use thus alleviating supply levels."

CONCLUSION

While there is significant dissatisfaction with the current water supply situation, especially among users of the Dovedale water scheme, the percentage of households directly supporting the creation of a new community-owned is not overwhelming when compared to the overall population.

This needs to be attributed to the fact that the population is split largely into two groups – those on the scheme and those who are already self-reliant with the latter group slightly in the majority.

THANKS

We would like to give thanks to all who have participated in the survey, to those who have helped us during distribution, and to council for listening patiently to such a large number of submitters during the dam hearings.