LOCAL GOVERNMENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



What Australian residents say about dealing with their council

COPC Inc. | September 2026

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THE ANZ TEAM

OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERTS

The COPC Australia and New Zealand team behind this research and our council work



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Alex has been with COPC since 2011. He has certified CX operations in many countries and has trained over 1,000 contact centre leaders. He leads COPC CX strategy and operational improvement work with councils across Australia.



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Leisha has more than twenty years experience across contact centre, BPO and SaaS operations, including a federal government managed service contract and a workforce management rollout to 320 sites. Her recent work includes local government CX strategy and operational improvement projects across Australia.



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Kelly has worked in contact centres since 1990, from agent to Director. At COPC, she works with local government clients across New Zealand and Australia. Her previous council clients include Rotorua and Nelson, both ALGIM Service Centre of the Year winners.

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

HOW THIS STUDY WAS RUN

COPC surveyed 613 Australian residents about their recent dealings with their local council. 348 of them, or 58%, had contacted their council in the previous three months. That group is the base for every question about the experience itself.

- **Method.** Online self-completion survey of a national consumer panel, fielded 5 May 2026. Residents were recruited nationally rather than by council area.
- **Bases.** Every chart carries its base. The total sample is 613. Questions about a specific enquiry are based on the 348 residents who had contact.
- **Small bases.** Results by enquiry type are shown only where 14 or more residents chose that type. Bases under 30 should be read as indicative.
- **Rounding.** Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100. Channel use allowed multiple responses, so it sums above 100.
- **Sample profile.** Of the residents who responded, 51% were female and 49% were male. 14% were aged 18 to 29, 25% were 30 to 44, 26% were 45 to 60 and 36% were over 60. Two thirds answered on a mobile device.

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PART 01

HOW RESIDENTS ENGAGE WITH COUNCIL



CONTACT WITH COUNCIL

MOST RESIDENTS DEAL WITH THEIR COUNCIL AT SOME POINT

Almost three in five residents had contact with their council in the past three months.



COMMENTARY

Council contact is routine rather than occasional. Almost three in five residents dealt with their council inside a single three month window, and one in twelve had a great deal of contact.

The service channels are reaching most of the resident base, not a small group of frequent complainants.

Base: all respondents (n=613)

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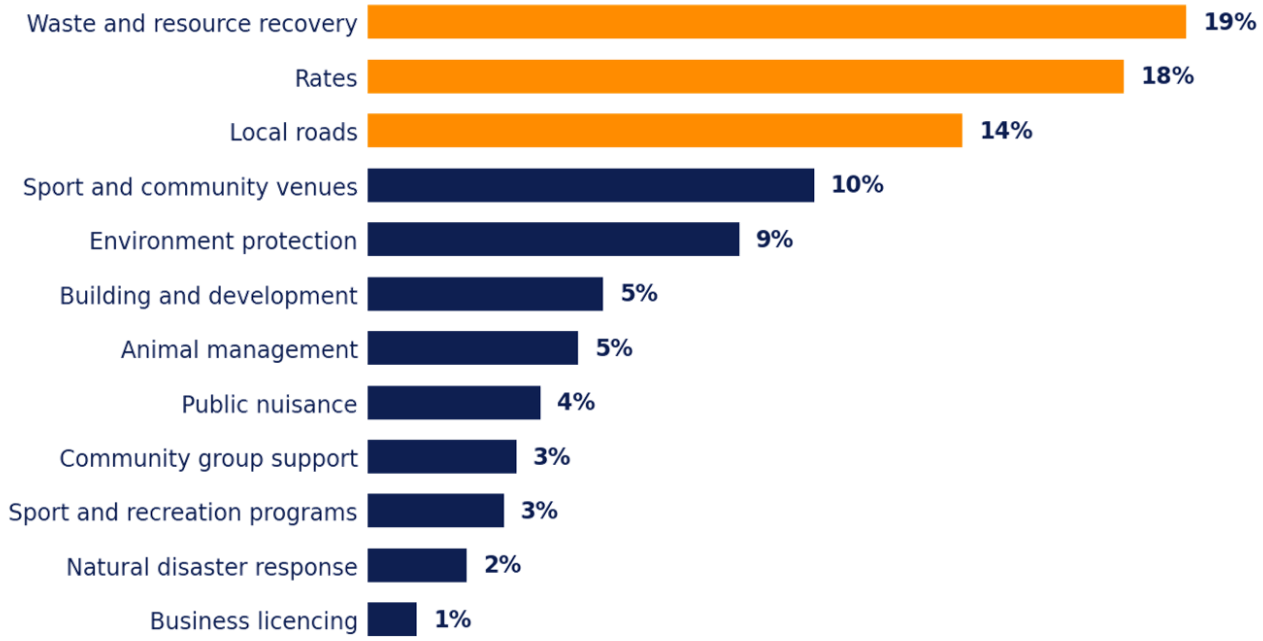
REASON FOR CONTACT

WASTE, RATES AND ROADS DRIVE HALF OF ALL CONTACT

Three service areas account for 50% of the enquiries residents raise.



Base: residents with council contact (n=348). 'Other' responses (6%) excluded.

COMMENTARY

Demand is concentrated in a small number of services. Waste, rates and local roads account for half of all contact. The top five reasons account for seven in ten.

That is a narrow enough set of drivers to design for directly. Work on the top three enquiry types reaches half the contact volume.

COPC has technology capabilities which allow councils to understand exactly why residents contact them and how well they resolve those enquiry types.

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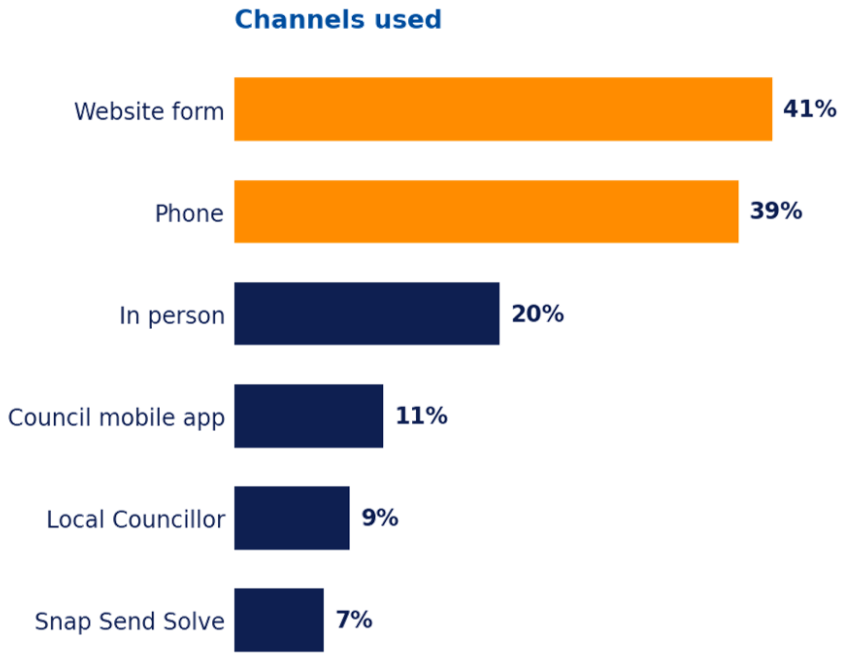
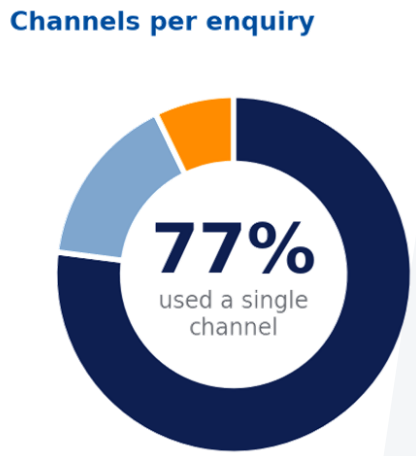
CHANNELS USED

THE WEBSITE FORM AND THE PHONE CARRY THE LOAD

Seven in ten residents used the website form or the phone, and most used a single channel.





COMMENTARY

Digital and voice carry comparable volume. The website form leads at 41% and the phone follows at 39%, with seven in ten residents using one or the other. Counter service remains material at 20%.

Most residents stay in a single channel, so each channel has to resolve on its own rather than hand the enquiry on.

COPC builds workforce management approaches which enable councils to manage multi-channel operations seamlessly, driving efficiency and improved customer satisfaction.

Base: residents with council contact (n=348). Multiple responses permitted, so channel use sums above 100%.

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PART 02

EFFORT AND RESOLUTION

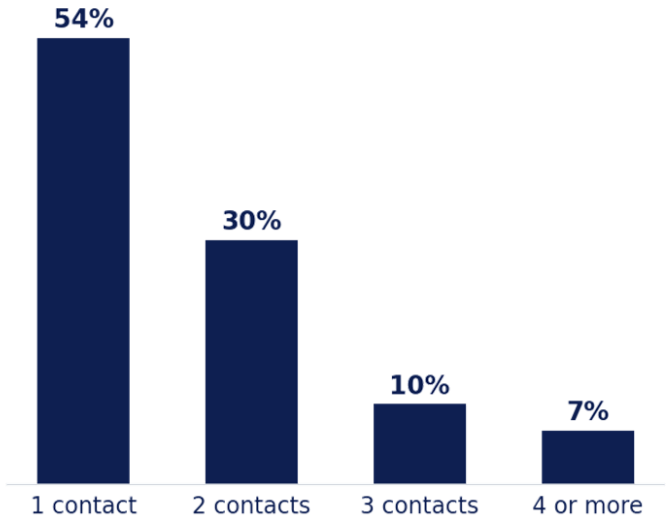


EFFORT AND RESOLUTION

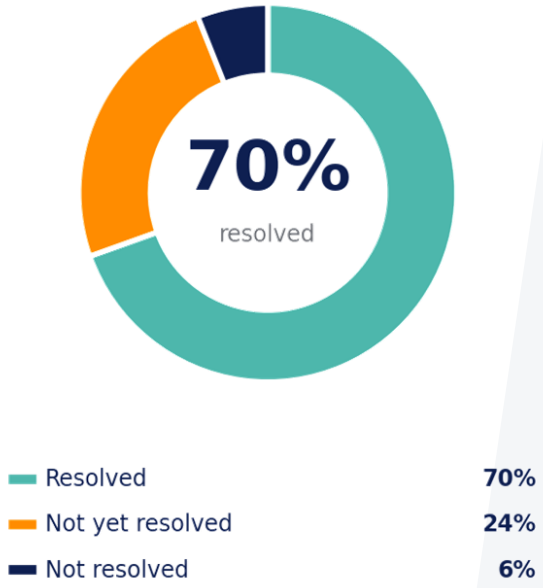
HALF OF ALL ENQUIRIES TAKE MORE THAN ONE CONTACT

54% of enquiries were handled in a single contact. 30% are still not resolved.

Contacts made to progress the enquiry



Resolution status



Base: residents with council contact (n=348)

COMMENTARY

Just over half of enquiries are settled in one contact. The other 46% take a second, third or further approach, which is volume the council handles twice.

Seven in ten enquiries reach resolution. Three in ten residents were still waiting or without an answer when surveyed.

COPC works with councils to understand the cost of repeat contacts and to identify the root causes of why residents have to contact more than once.

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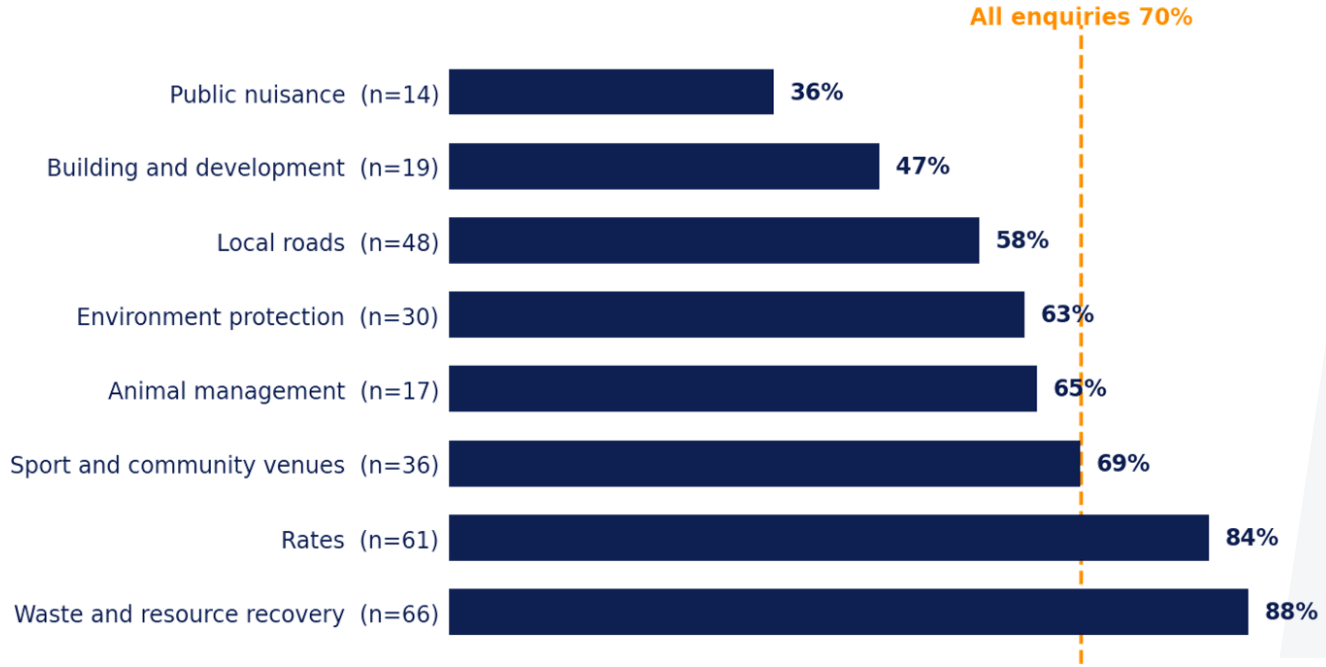
RESOLUTION BY ENQUIRY TYPE

RESOLUTION RATES INFLUENCED BY THE ENQUIRY TYPE

Transactional enquiries close quickly, but enquiries needing a council decision or a field response do not.



Base: residents with council contact, enquiry types with n=14 or more (n=291 of 348)

COMMENTARY

Resolution tracks the nature of the work. Waste and rates are transactional and largely system based, and they resolve at 88% and 84%.

Local roads, building and development and public nuisance sit between 36% and 58%. These enquiries depend on a field visit, an assessment or a decision, and that is where the resolution gap sits.

COPC can implement technology solutions which allow councils to analyse resolution rates by enquiry type on a real-time basis.

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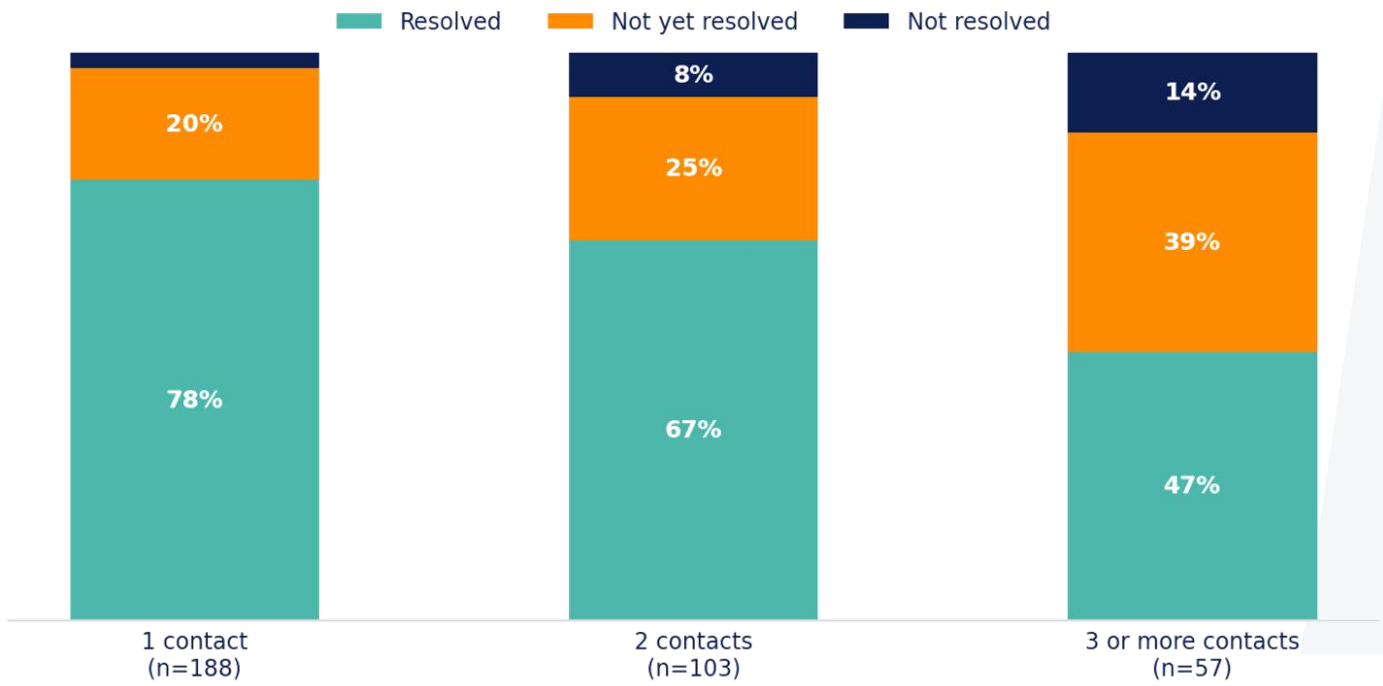
REPEAT CONTACT IS A SIGNAL THAT AN ENQUIRY HAS STALLED

Resolution falls from 78% at one contact to 47% once an enquiry takes three or more.



Base: residents with council contact (n=348)

COMMENTARY

When issues are complicated, then residents seem to have to contact multiple times.

The chart shows what that costs. Resolution falls from 78% at one contact to 47% once an enquiry takes three or more.

The share still open rises from 20% to 39% across the same three groups. The extra contacts are not moving these enquiries towards an answer.

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PART 03

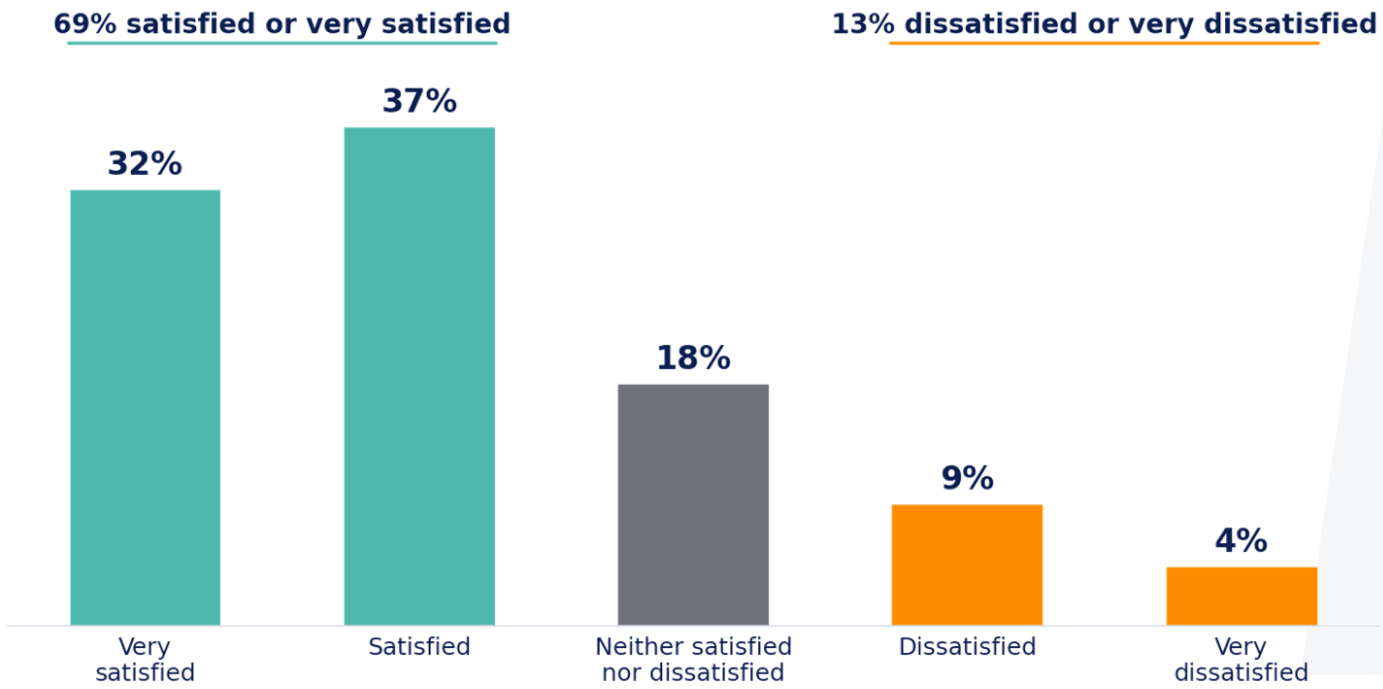
SATISFACTION



OVERALL SATISFACTION

SEVEN IN TEN RESIDENTS WERE SATISFIED

69% were satisfied or very satisfied. 13% were dissatisfied.



Base: residents with council contact (n=348)

COMMENTARY

Compared to the COPC benchmark of 85% (satisfied and very satisfied), satisfaction with local councils needs improvement.

The distribution shows where the gap sits. 32% of residents were very satisfied and 37% satisfied.

Close to a third of residents who contacted their council came away without a positive view of the service they received.

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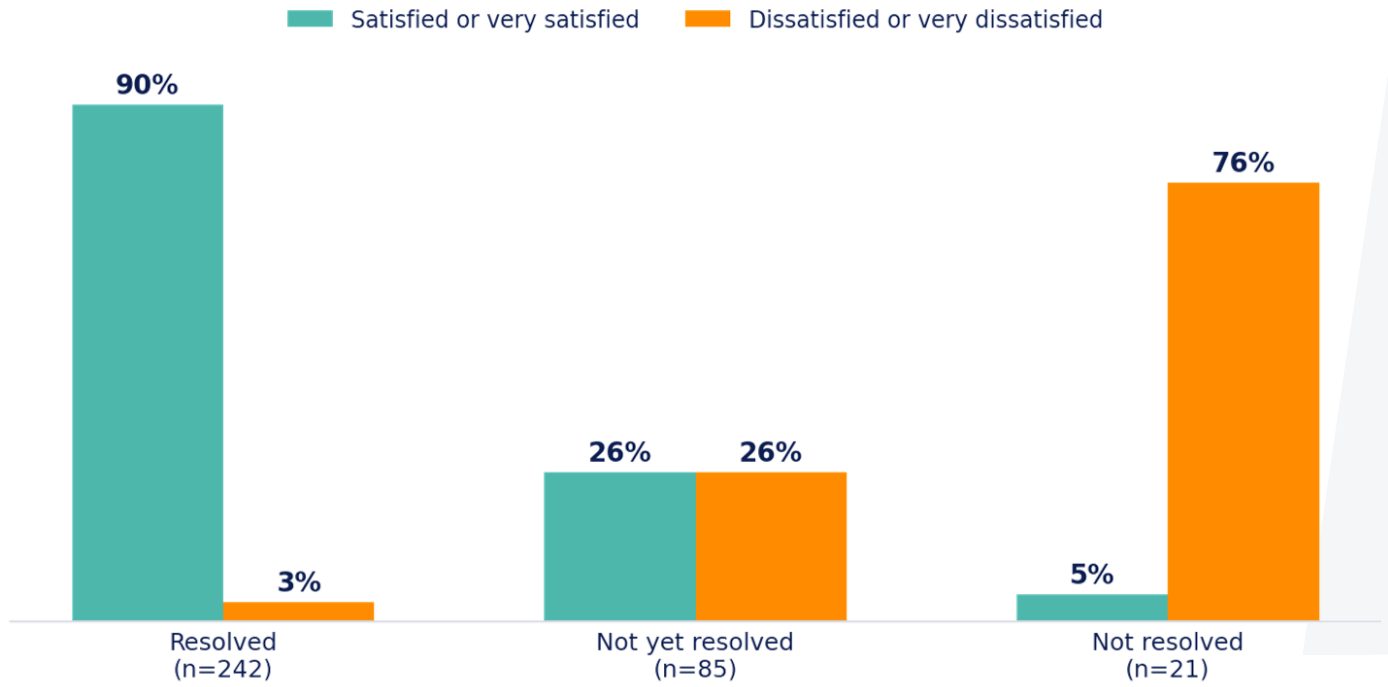
RESOLUTION IS THE STRONGEST DRIVER OF SATISFACTION

Satisfaction runs at 90% when the enquiry is resolved and 5% when it is not.



Base: residents with council contact (n=348)

COMMENTARY

There is a clear link between issue resolution and satisfaction. When the issue is resolved, 90% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied.

The reverse holds just as strongly. Where the enquiry was not resolved, satisfaction falls to 5% and dissatisfaction reaches 76%.

Residents still waiting sit between the two, split evenly at 26% satisfied and 26% dissatisfied. Resolution moves satisfaction by 85 points, further than any other factor measured in this study.

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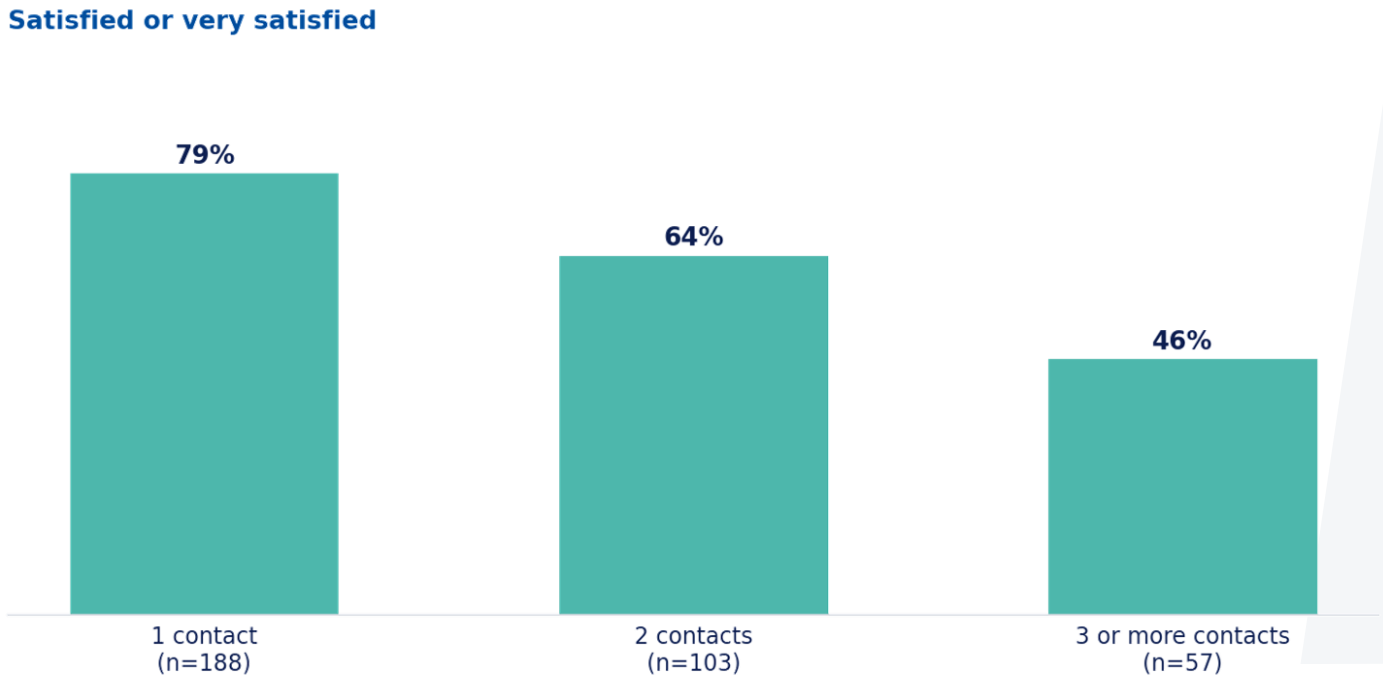
SATISFACTION AND EFFORT

SATISFACTION FALLS WITH EVERY ADDITIONAL CONTACT

Satisfaction drops from 79% at one contact to 46% once an enquiry takes three or more.



Base: residents with council contact (n=348)

COMMENTARY

Effort costs satisfaction directly. Residents whose enquiry is settled in one contact are satisfied 79% of the time. That falls to 64% at two contacts and 46% at three or more.

First contact resolution is a satisfaction lever, not only an efficiency measure.

COPC analyses the reasons for repeat contacts and implements process improvements which reduce unnecessary repeat contact – resulting in improved resident satisfaction and reduced internal costs.

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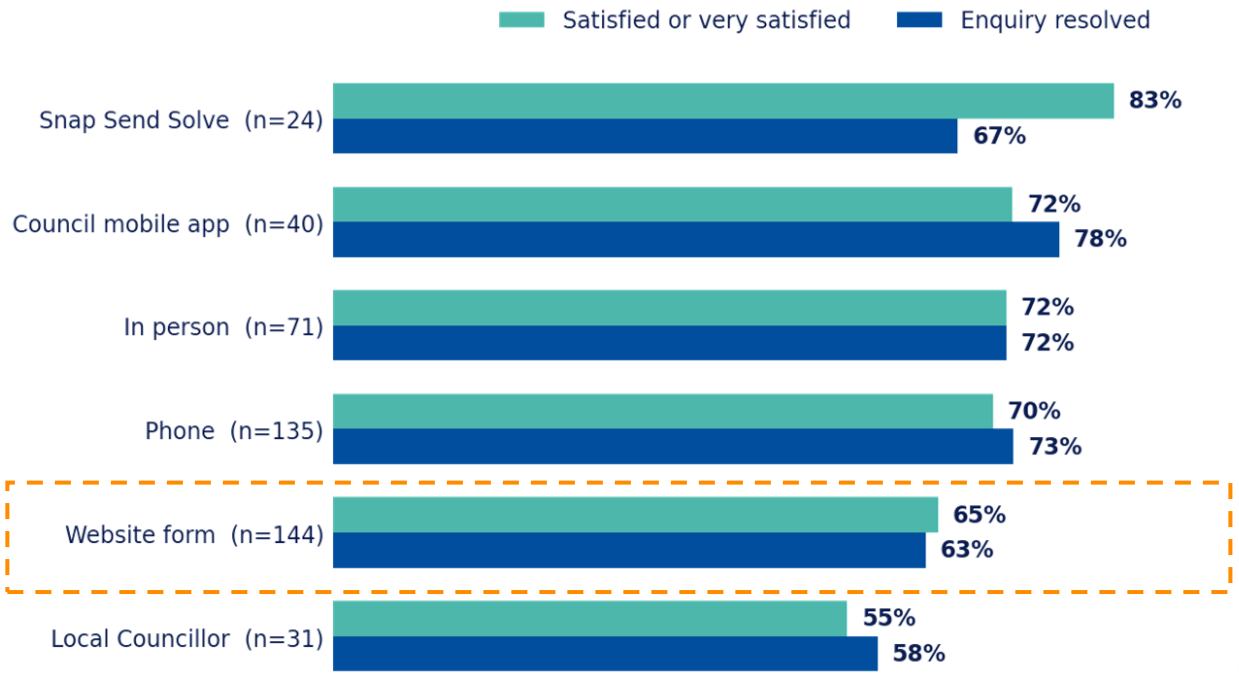
CHANNEL PERFORMANCE

THE BUSIEST CHANNEL PERFORMS POORLY

The website form carries the most volume and returns one of the lowest resolution rates of any council-operated channel.



Base: residents using each channel. Multiple responses permitted, so a resident may appear against more than one channel.

COMMENTARY

The website form carries the largest share of contact and returns some of the lowest satisfaction and resolution rates of the council-operated channels, at 65% and 63%. The phone and the counter both perform better.

Interestingly, the council mobile app (although infrequently used – probably because not all councils have them) has a high level of resolution. This would indicate that only specific enquiry types can be managed through the app.

COPC blueprints the service journeys the residents go through and implements changes to reduce friction, improve satisfaction and increase internal efficiency.

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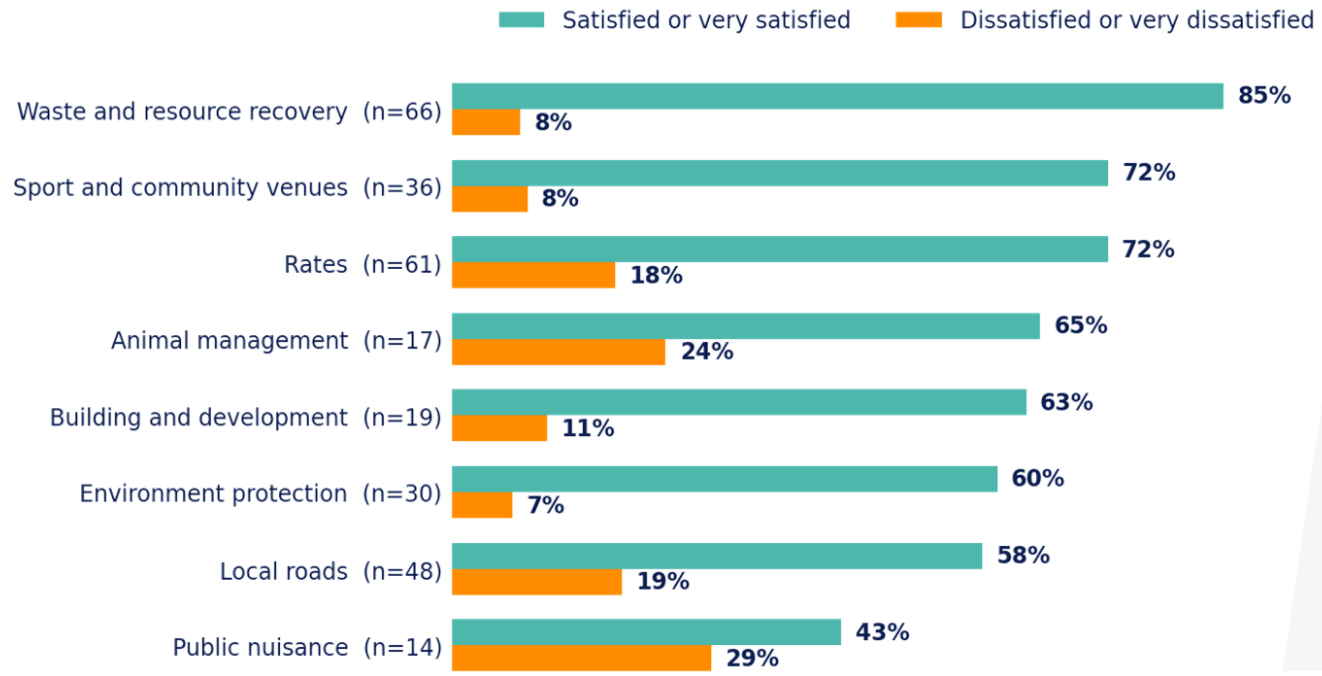
SATISFACTION BY ENQUIRY TYPE

THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENQUIRY TYPES

Waste enquiries satisfy 85% of residents. Public nuisance satisfies 43%.



Base: residents with council contact, enquiry types with n=14 or more (n=291 of 348)

COMMENTARY

Satisfaction follows the same pattern as resolution. Waste sits at 85%, well above the 69% average. Local roads at 58% and public nuisance at 43% sit well below it.

In general, the enquiry types that satisfy residents least are the same ones that resolve least often, which supports the hypothesis that resolution is the key driver of satisfaction rather than the manner of service.

COPC can analyse contact reasons and channels to help councils make informed decisions about automation, process simplification and contact reduction.

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HOW WE HELP LOCAL COUNCILS IMPROVE CX

COPC Inc. assesses council operations against an independent standard, designs the service model, and builds the capability to run it. The benchmarks we use come from thirty years of performance improvement in CX operations and from our local government research across Australia and New Zealand.

ASSESS

- CX maturity assessment
- Operations health check
- Citizen and employee surveys
- Technology assessment
- Journey mapping and benchmarking
- Contact driver analysis
- Knowledge and resolution assessment

TRANSFORM

- CX strategy and roadmap
- Customer service charter
- Governance framework
- Service design standards
- Journey improvements
- Voice of customer program design
- Knowledge transformation

ENABLE

- Leadership training
- Manager capability
- Train the trainer
- Service journey toolkit
- Technology implementation
- COPC certification
- Knowledge management platform

WE SOLVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CX PROBLEMS THROUGH:

Research | Assessment | Strategy | Technology | Transformation | Contact Driver Analysis | Knowledge Management | Benchmarking

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IN CLOSING

WHERE TO START WITH THIS RESEARCH

Resolution is the key to resident satisfaction. Nearly everything in this report points back to it.



Ian Aitchison
CEO, ASIA PACIFIC
COPC Inc.

We have worked with local government for many years – improving operations, supporting technology decisions, blueprinting service journeys and building CX strategies.

We found was that many councils don't have access to reliable, quantified data about resident satisfaction. This led us to conduct this study and to some interesting findings about why residents contact their council.

A bin that was not collected, a rates notice that did not make sense, a footpath that needed fixing. These may be small moments, but how council deals with them shapes how residents feel about the organisation that serves them.

Our research found that almost three in five residents had that "moment-of-truth" inside a single three-month window. Council contact is not a niche service. It reaches most of the community.

Overall, resident satisfaction was almost 70%, but what we found more interesting was what was beneath that headline figure.

Satisfaction runs at 90% when the enquiry is resolved and 5% when it is not. The residents who had to come back a second and third time were the least likely to get an answer at all.

So, if you are looking for one place to start, start with resolution. The demand is concentrated enough to make that practical. Waste, rates and local roads account for half of all contact.

Ask three questions of your own operation. What are residents contacting us about, how often do we resolve it at the first contact, and what happens to the ones we do not?

You can contact our local government CX experts at any time for advice, or reach me directly at **iaitchison@copc.com**.

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