

Waikato



REGIONAL COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

An aerial photograph of a large, dark blue lake winding through a lush green valley. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills, dense forests, and open fields. The sky is filled with large, white and grey clouds, with patches of blue visible. The overall scene is a beautiful natural landscape.

WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Strategy and Policy Committee
6 May 2026

Changes to Waikato Regional Plan – FW management Policy Amendment

Presenter: Naomi Crawford

waikatoregion.govt.nz

NPSFM 2020 – s55 Changes to Waikato Regional Plan

- Mandatory policy regarding natural inland wetlands - regional councils must include this policy in regional plans
- The policy included an exception for quarrying and mining with a 'functional need'. The Minister for the Environment recently amended the policy to include quarrying and mining with an 'operational need'
- Staff consider the amendment to be 'not inconsistent with' Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato

Draft Biodiversity Strategy for the Waikato Region

Presenter: Lisette Balsom and Angus McKenzie

waikatoregion.govt.nz

Draft Regional Biodiversity Strategy - Background



WRC is leading the development of a regional biodiversity strategy to meet statutory obligations and to deliver a coordinated regional approach



The Draft Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy:

- Builds on the work of the **Waikato Biodiversity Accord**
- Sets a **25-year direction to 2050** to protect, restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity across land, freshwater and coastal environments
- Contains a high level framework – **Vision, Outcomes, Pou and Strategic Focus Areas**
- Separate **Implementation Plan** to be developed following public consultation



The draft strategy has been informed by:

- stakeholder engagement workshops
- analysis of iwi environmental management plans
- state of the environment information
- review of other strategies
- learnings from other WRC projects

Key Changes to Draft

- **Key Changes from Council workshop feedback:**
 - Strengthened links between biodiversity, climate resilience and catchment management, highlighting nature-based solutions
 - Clarified intent around Māori leadership, funding equity and partnership-based decision-making
 - Improved alignment between biodiversity, pest management and biosecurity, and links to economic wellbeing
 - Increased emphasis on community and volunteer roles, measurable outcomes, monitoring and practical delivery
 - Made editorial refinements to improve clarity and readability across the strategy.

Next Steps



- Release the draft strategy for public consultation
- Use feedback to refine the strategy and develop a detailed implementation plan

Update on National Direction – Stock Exclusion Regulations and EV charging Infrastructure

Presenter: Naomi Crawford

waikatoregion.govt.nz

Stock Exclusion Regulations and EV charging Infrastructure

Amendments under the RMA

1. EV charging infrastructure (National Environmental Standard)
 2. Stock exclusion regulations
- Part of wider national reform programme
 - Immediate legal effect; future transition signaled

Stock Exclusion Regulations and EV charging Infrastructure

EV charging infrastructure..

- Primarily a territorial authority matter
- Very limited regional council role
- No change required to Waikato Regional Plan

Stock exclusion..

- Some national requirements reduced
- Regional Plans may remain more stringent, awaiting final decision on PC1

Waikato Residents Environmental Perceptions Survey

Presenter: Melissa Hackell and Louise Stone

waikatoregion.govt.nz

Background information



1266 residents participated in the survey in 2025.



State of the environment data is now included that gives context to participants' concerns.



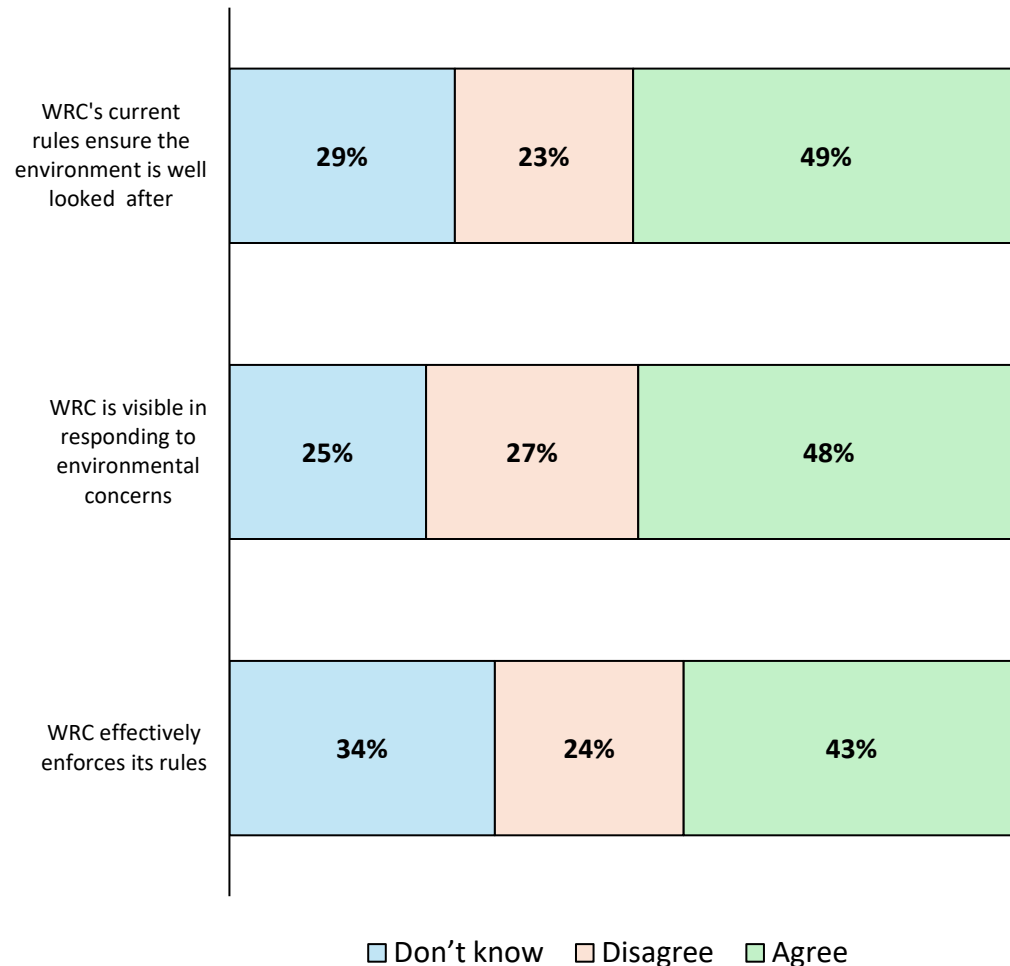
The survey results in 2025 compared with previous surveys suggests that residents' concerns about environmental problems and their multiple drivers are changing.

Most important environmental issue facing the region? What residents had to say

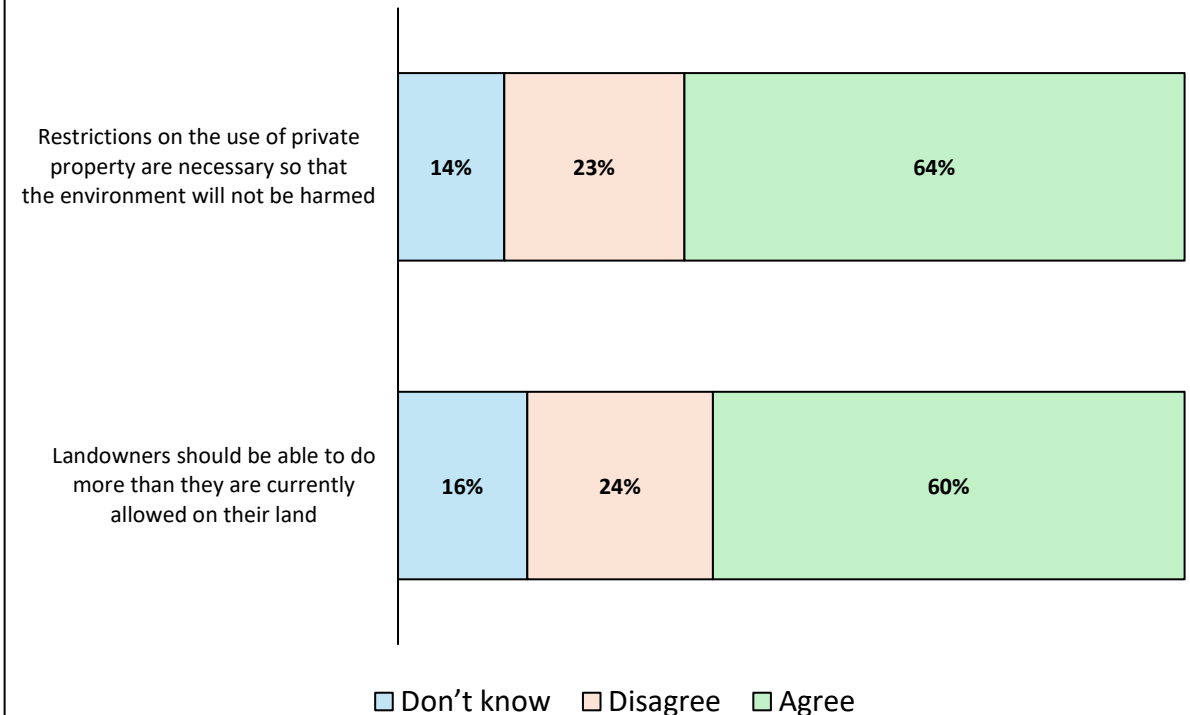
- Stronger action on declining water quality.
- Population growth/urbanisation, loss of food producing land, urban green space and rising rates.
- Information about, and investment in, resilience to extreme weather.
- Compliance, monitoring, and enforcement.
- What are regional rates for?

Perceptions on environmental regulation

WRC's effectiveness and visibility

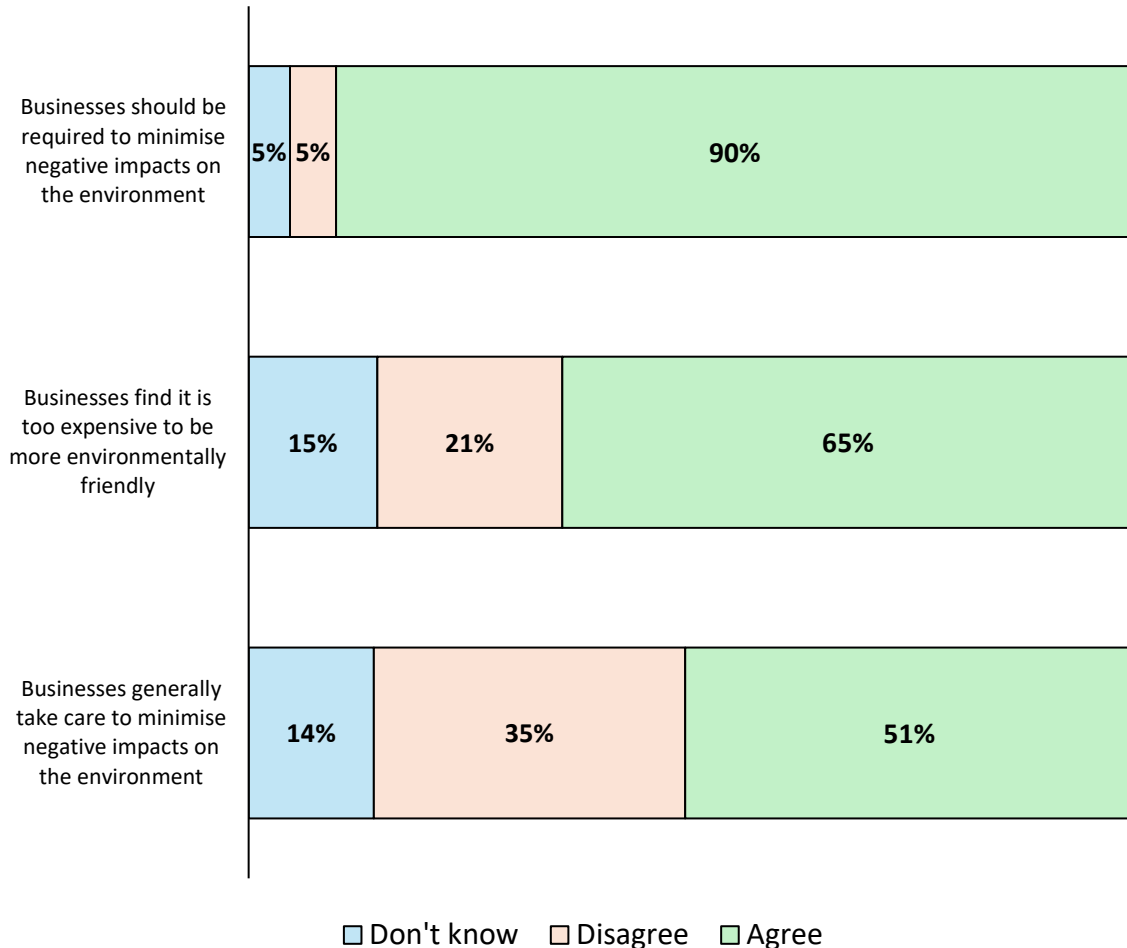


Regulations regarding private property

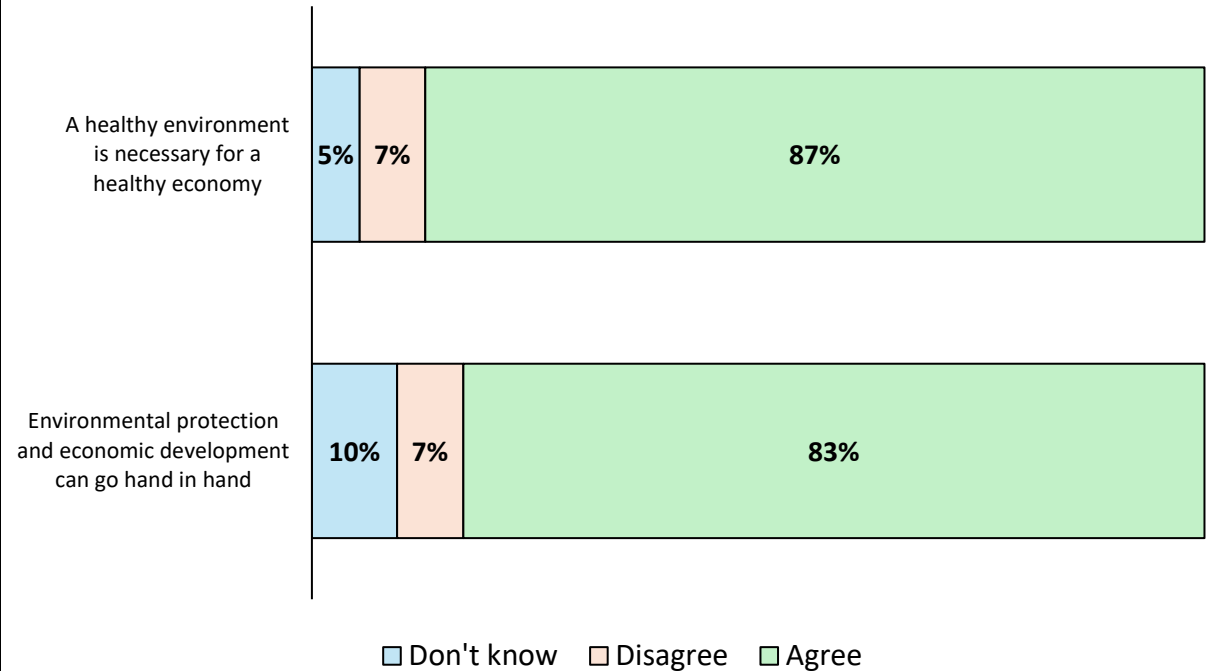


Perceptions of the economy and environment

Businesses and protecting the environment



Relationship between economy & environment



He taiao mauriora

Healthy environment

He ōhanga pakari

Strong economy

He hapori hihiri

Vibrant communities

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