

5.0 Importance and Priorities

Using the information contained in existing documents and gathered from the focus groups and stakeholder meetings, thirty-nine statements were developed by ACNielsen. Those thirty-nine statements formed the basis of a telephone survey of 600 residents across the region.

As part of the survey, participants were asked to rate the importance of each statement and then to rank them in terms of whether they considered that the amount of “effort” in each area should increase, decrease or be maintained at current levels. They were also asked to select five of the thirty-nine statements that they considered were the highest priority for work over the next ten years. They then proposed one way they would perceive progress had been made in each of the five areas they had considered were the highest priority.

The thirty-nine statements were then related back to the eight broad outcome areas. From that analysis, the outcome priorities for the region and the three districts emerged. The thirty-nine statements and how they fit under each outcome area are set out in Appendix III.

5.1 Regional and District Priorities

Top Ten Statements Rated for Importance

Participants in the telephone survey were first asked to rate the importance of the thirty-nine statements out of ten. The resulting “top ten” most important statements at the Regional and district levels and for Māori residents are shown in Appendix IV.

The statement *‘Ensure people feel safe in Northland at all times’* was considered the most important statement for the overall Northland region with 87%⁴⁴ of respondents rating the statement as very important. *‘Ensure an acceptable level of locally based health services with all residents having easy access to the health services they need’* was rated the second most important statement with 86% of all respondents rating it as very important.

Environmental, infrastructure, health and education/ training considerations were also considered to be important. The list of the top ten important statements for Northland residents also included the following statements:

- *Protect the natural character of the regions’ coastline and beaches (84%)*
- *Improve the quality of the roading in Northland (81%)*
- *Promote effective recycling and pollution control (79%)*
- *Control pests and weeds (79%)*
- *Address key health issues of all residents in Northland (79%)*
- *Protect our native bush and wildlife (77%)*
- *Improve road access to and from Northland (74%)*
- *Provide good educational/ training opportunities for residents (73%)*

⁴⁴ The percentage of respondents who considered the statement was very important (rated 8 to 10), weighted by population

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The relative importance rating of the top ten statements was consistent across the districts with a couple of exceptions. Residents of the Far North were the only district to include 'Sustain the friendly, relaxed and supportive atmosphere of Northland' in their top ten with 70% considering this very important. 'Promote effective recycling and pollution control' was more important to residents of the Kaipara district than the other two districts or at a regional level with 83% considering this very important. This group was also the only group to include 'Achieve better income levels for residents' in their top ten at 71%. More Whangarei residents considered that 'People feel safe in Northland at all times' to be very important than the other groups at 91%. They were also the only district to include both of the education/ training statements in their top ten – 'Ensure there are good educational and training opportunities' (78%) and 'Provide greater opportunities for industry based training' (76%).

Unlike at the regional and district levels, Māori residents included 'Achieve diversity in employment options for residents' (77%) in their top ten.

Top Ten Statements Ranked for Increased Effort

The telephone survey participants were also asked for their opinion as to what type of effort was required for each of the statements. They were asked whether they considered that the current level of effort should be maintained, whether it should be increased, or whether it should be decreased. The results are shown at a regional and district level and for Māori residents in Appendix IV.

Two of the top three statements identified by the residents at a regional level as needing the most increased effort were related to roading:

- *Improve the quality of roading in Northland (82%)⁴⁵*
- *Ensure people feel safe in Northland at all times (75%)*
- *Improve road access to and from Northland (73%)*

Residents also considered that increased effort was required on a range of other health, education/ training and economic areas. The list of the top ten statements perceived as requiring increased effort also included the following statements:

- *Ensure an acceptable level of locally based health services with easy access (70%)*
- *Provide greater opportunities for industry-based training (68%)*
- *Improve rail access to and from Northland (66%)*
- *Achieve better income levels for residents (64%)*
- *Address key health issues of all residents in Northland (64%)*
- *Ensure there are good educational and training opportunities for all Northland residents (63%)*
- *Achieve a more prosperous economy across the region (63%)*

⁴⁵ The percentage of respondents who considered that the statement required increased effort, weighted by population

Importance and Priorities, Continued

All of the three districts and Māori residents also perceived that *‘Improve the quality of roading in Northland’* required the most increased effort. Far North residents placed *‘Achieve diversity in employment options for residents’* in their top ten for increased effort, whilst both Kaipara and Whangarei residents placed *‘Improve public transport throughout the region’* in their top ten. More Māori residents believed that *‘Encourage the establishment of new businesses that fit within the natural environment’* required increased effort compared to the other groups and it was within their top ten.

Top Ten Statement Priorities

Out of the thirty-nine statements that formed the basis of the telephone survey, participants were asked to rank what they believed were the five most important areas that Northland needs to work on over the next ten years or so. They were asked to choose five statements only. The results at a regional and district level and for Māori residents are set out in Appendix IV, in terms of the top ten statements mentioned as one of the ‘top five’ and of these, how many chose it as their ‘number one’.

Just over half of the region’s residents chose *‘Improve the quality of roading in Northland’* within their top five priorities (52%), with almost one-quarter of the residents choosing it as their ‘number one’ (23%). Almost four out of ten residents chose *‘Ensure an acceptable level of locally based health services with all residents having easy access to the health services they need’* (39%) within their ‘top five’.

The list of the remaining top ten statements ranked in the ‘top five’ also included the following statements:

- *Ensure people feel safe in Northland at all times (30%)*
- *Promote effective recycling and pollution control (21%)*
- *Achieve a more prosperous economy across the region (20%)*
- *Protect the natural character of the region’s coastline and beaches (18%)*
- *Ensure any initiatives that may impact on the natural environment are carefully managed and regulated (18%)*
- *Improves road access to and from Northland (18%)*
- *Improve rail access to and from Northland (18%)*
- *Address key health issues of all residents in Northland (16%)*

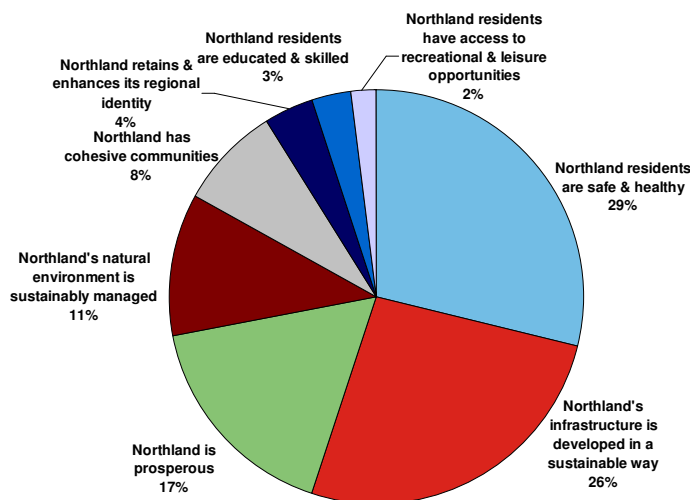
As with the previous measures, many of the statements ranked in the ‘top five’ were similar across the districts and the region. Both Far North and Māori residents placed *‘Meet the recreational and leisure needs of our young people’* in their ‘top five’. Only Māori residents placed *‘Ensure everyone has access to adequate housing at a reasonable cost’* within their ‘top five’.

Importance and Priorities, Continued

The statements were then related to the eight broad outcome areas. The percentage of people who ranked a statement as number one out of the five most important areas that **Northland needs to work on over the next ten years or so** was calculated and related back to its broad outcome area to determine which outcome areas the community considers to be Northland's top priorities for work.

Almost three out of ten residents chose a statement that related to the regional community outcome "**Northland residents are safe and healthy**" as their ranked number one statement (29%). Slightly less residents chose a statement that related to the regional community outcome "**Northland's infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way**" (26%). This is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proportion of Northland residents who ranked a statement in each outcome area as the top priority that Northland needs to work on over the next ten years – Regional level



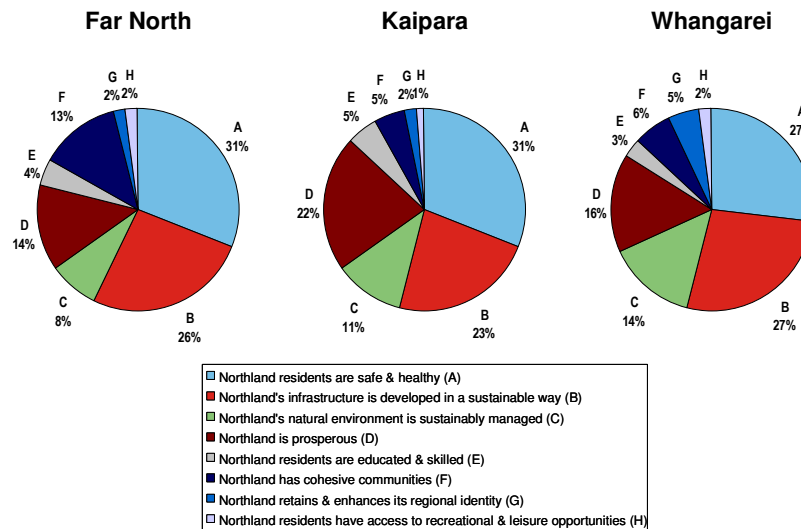
Base: Northland Region 600

By district, the ranking of the thirty-nine statements under each broad outcome area as the top priorities that Northland needs to work on over the next ten years was relatively similar. As per the regional view, the top priority for most residents in the Far North and Kaipara districts were related to the regional community outcome "**Northland residents are safe and healthy**" – 31% of residents in each district chose a statement related to this outcome. Residents in Whangarei were evenly split in terms of their number one priority for work – 27% chose a statement related to "**Northland residents are safe and healthy**" or "**Northland's infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way**".

Importance and Priorities, Continued

The top work priorities for Northland by district are detailed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Proportion of residents in each district who ranked a statement in each outcome area as the top priority that Northland needs to work on over the next ten years



Base: Far North 211; Kaipara 132; Whangarei 257

Summary of priorities: an analysis of the “top tens”

A comparison of each “top ten” list enables us to determine which statements and therefore which broad outcome areas should be focused on by local authorities and other organisations in the Northland region. An analysis of the “top tens” is detailed for the Region, districts and Māori residents in Appendix IV.

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Figure 4: Tying it all together: an analysis of the “top tens” – Regional level

Tying it all together – An analysis of the ‘top tens’ Regional			
	Top Ten (% rated 8 to 10 on importance)	Top Ten (% increase effort)	Top Ten (% ranked in top 5)
Ensure people feel safe in Northland at all times	1	2	3
Ensure an acceptable level of local health services	2	4	2
Protect the natural character of region's beaches/coastlines	3	-	6
Improve quality of roading	4	1	1
Promote effective recycling & pollution control	5	-	4
Control pests & weeds	6	-	-
Address key health issues of all residents in Northland	7	8	10
Protect our native bush & wildlife	8	-	-
Improve road access to & from Northland	9	3	8
Ensures there are good educational/training opportunities	10	9	-
		Greater opportunities for industry based	5
		Improve rail access	6
		Better income levels	7
		Prosperous economy	10
		Ensure environ. impact 7	5

Annotations in the table:

- Red box: "Important but not priorities for increased effort or work" with arrows pointing to rows 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- Red box: "Increased effort needed but not priorities for work" with arrows pointing to rows 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- Red box: "Not as important (less essential) but increased effort needed, so seen as priority for work" with arrows pointing to rows 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Figure 4 above details the ‘top ten’ list for the three key measures and clearly illustrates which statements appear consistently across each of the three lists. The five individual statements that were identified as having the highest priority for work for the greatest proportion of residents at a regional level were:

- *Ensure people feel safe in Northland at all times*
- *Ensure an acceptable level of local health services*
- *Improve the quality of roading in Northland*
- *Improve road access to and from Northland*
- *Address key health issues of all residents in Northland*

The broad outcome areas of “Northland’s infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way” and “Northland residents are safe and healthy” were seen as priority areas by the greatest proportion of Northland residents.

Priority Differences For the Districts and For Māori Residents

Although there were similarities in the rating and ranking of outcomes across the region and districts and for Māori residents, there were also some differences. Both the Far North and Kaipara districts had ‘Promote effective recycling and pollution control’ as a priority across all of the three key measures. Whangarei Districts and Māori residents both had ‘Provide greater opportunities for industry-based training’ as priorities. ‘Protect our native bush and wildlife’ was also a priority for Māori residents compared to the other groups.