



Department of Conservation National Survey

Report 3: Department of Conservation Public Perception

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June 2011

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1.0 Summary

The primary roles associated with DOC were: care of animals (52%), care of National Parks (29%), care of plants (27%) and care of the environment (19%). Providing places to visit and recreate in was a top of mind DOC role for 14 percent of New Zealanders. When prompted, three-quarters of New Zealanders were aware that DOC provides recreation services. The groups of people who were least likely to be aware of DOC's roles (including being a recreation provider) were: young adults, non Pakeha and those who had not visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

Three quarters of New Zealanders had a favourable view of DOC. Few New Zealanders had an unfavourable view of DOC (4%) but nearly a quarter of New Zealanders (23%) did not know what their view of DOC was. The groups of people who were most likely to have an unfavourable view of DOC were: male and rural. The primary reasons for having a favourable view of DOC were: DOC generally does a good job, protection of the environment and protection of flora and fauna. The primary reasons for having an unfavourable view of DOC were: animal/pest control, poor management/too bureaucratic and land control/access.

Around three-quarters of New Zealanders agreed DOC is: 'a leader in the conservation field' and 'a good use of taxpayer money'. The majority of New Zealanders agreed 'DOC works well with local communities' (58%) and were unsure or neutral about whether DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be (60%).

Those who had visited DOC areas in the last 12 months were statistically significantly more likely to have positive views of DOC (favourable view of DOC, agree DOC works well with local communities, agree DOC is a leader in the conservation field and agree DOC is a good use of taxpayer money).

Those living in rural areas were statistically significantly more likely to have an unfavourable view of DOC and disagree DOC works well with local communities.

DOC has a mixed brand profile, just over two-thirds (70%) of New Zealanders agreed DOC can be described as relevant to New Zealand today. Between two-thirds and half of New Zealanders agreed DOC can be described as important (63%), hardworking (59%) and effective (49%). Less than half of New Zealanders said DOC can be described as trustworthy (42%), innovative (31%), inspiring (28%) and modern (24%).

2.0 Findings

2.1 Main Roles of DOC

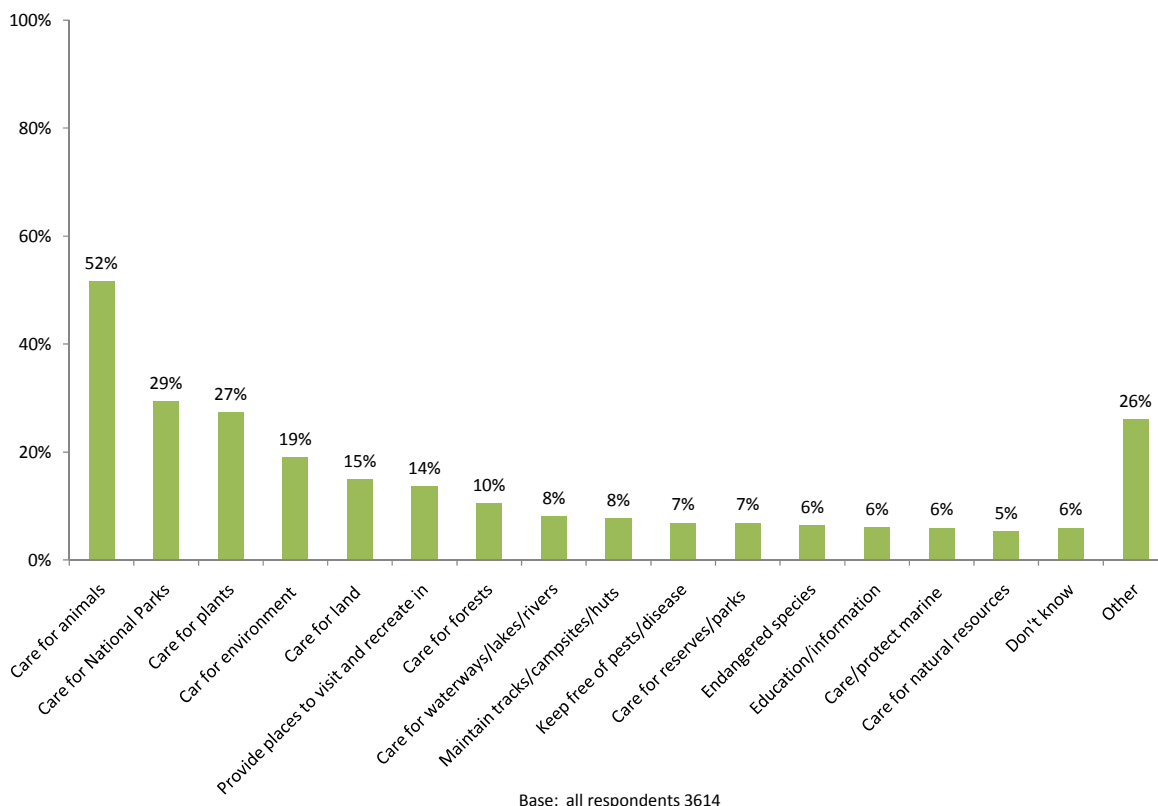
The primary roles associated with DOC were: care of animals (52%), care of National Parks (29%), care of plants (27%) and care of the environment (19%). Providing places to visit and recreate in was a top of mind DOC role for 14% of New Zealanders.

The groups who were statistically significantly more likely to say they did not know (6%) what the main roles of DOC were:

- 18-24 years
- Maori, Pacific, Asian
- Income below \$40,000
- Not visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

Full significant differences follow overleaf.

**Main Roles of DOC
(mentioned by 5% +)**



Statistically significantly more likely to mention	
Care for animals	25-54 years, income \$60,001 +, favourable view of DOC, rural
Care for National Parks	40-54 years, income \$60,001 +, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Care for plants	55 years +
Care for environment	-
Care for land	-
Provide places to visit and recreate in	40-54 years, income \$60,001 +, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Care for forests	40-54 years, income below \$40,000, rural
Care for waterways/lakes/ivers	55 years +, Maori, income below \$40,000, small town
Maintain tracks/campsites/huts	Visited DOC area in last 12 months
Keep free of pests/disease	40-54 years
Care for reserves/parks	-
Endangered species	Other ethnicities (not Pakeha, Maori, Pacific or Asian)
Education/information	40-54 years, rural
Care/protect marine	40-54 years
Care for natural resources	Income \$60,001 +, unfavourable view of DOC
Don't know	18-24 years, Maori, Pacific, Asian, income below \$40,000, not visited DOC area in last 12 months

2.2 Awareness of DOC's role in providing recreation services

Three-quarters of New Zealanders (78%) were aware that DOC provides recreation services. This was an increase on the results in the 2010 UMR survey where 60% of those interviewed said they were aware that DOC provided recreation services.

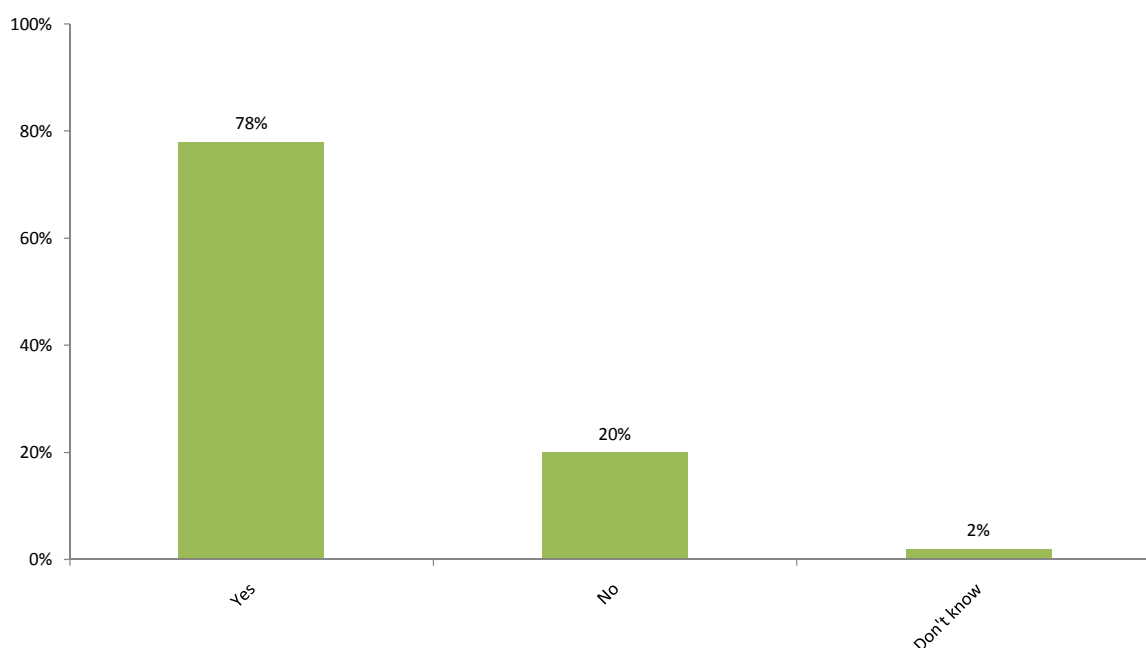
The following groups were statistically significantly **more** aware that DOC provides recreation services:

- 55 years plus
- Pakeha
- Income \$60,001 plus
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in the last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly **less** aware that DOC provides recreation services:

- 18-39 years
- All ethnicities other than Pakeha
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

Aware that DOC provides recreation services



Base: all respondents 3614

2.3 Favourable view of DOC

A total of 73 percent of New Zealanders had a favourable view of DOC (somewhat or very favourable). A third of New Zealanders (33%) had a very favourable view of DOC.

Few New Zealanders had an unfavourable view of DOC (4%) but nearly a quarter of New Zealanders (23%) did not know what their view of DOC is.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to have a **favourable** view of DOC:

- 40-54 years
- Income \$60,001 plus
- Visited DOC area in the last 12 months.

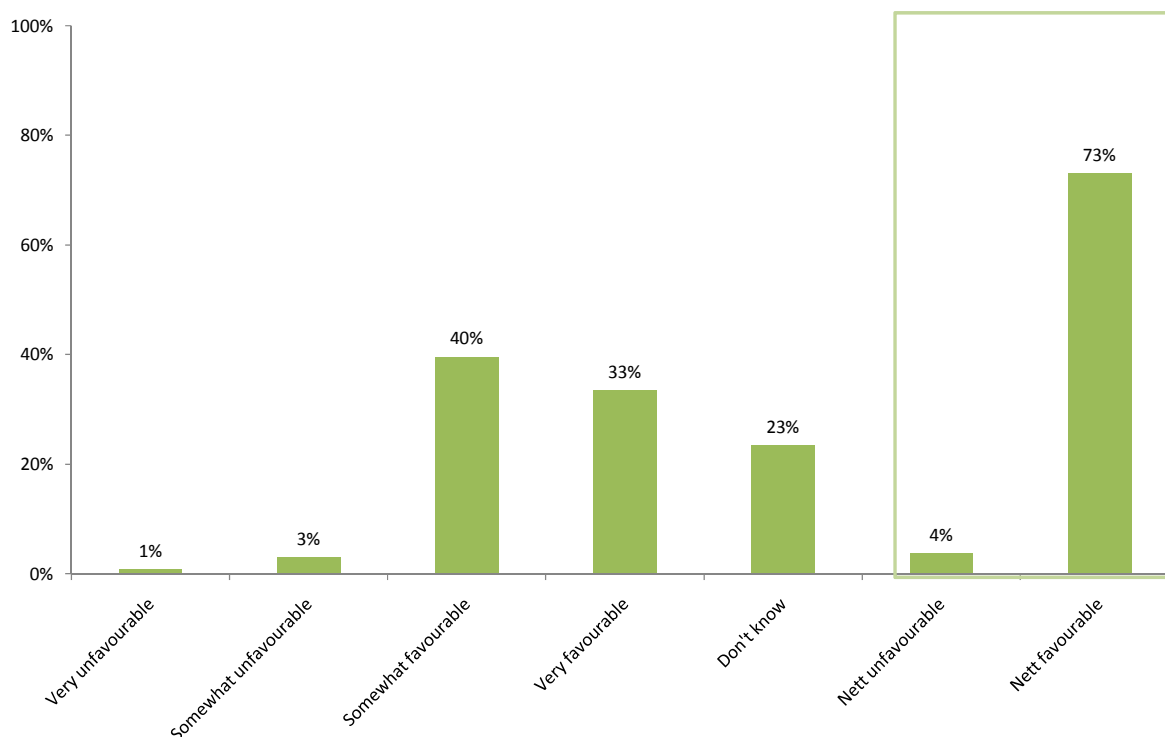
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to have an **unfavourable** view of DOC:

- Male
- Rural.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say they **didn't know** what their view of DOC was:

- Female
- 18-24 years
- All ethnicities other than Pakeha
- Income below \$40,000
- Not visited DOC area in the last 12 months.

View of DOC



Base: all respondents 3614

The primary reasons people gave for having a favourable view of DOC were:

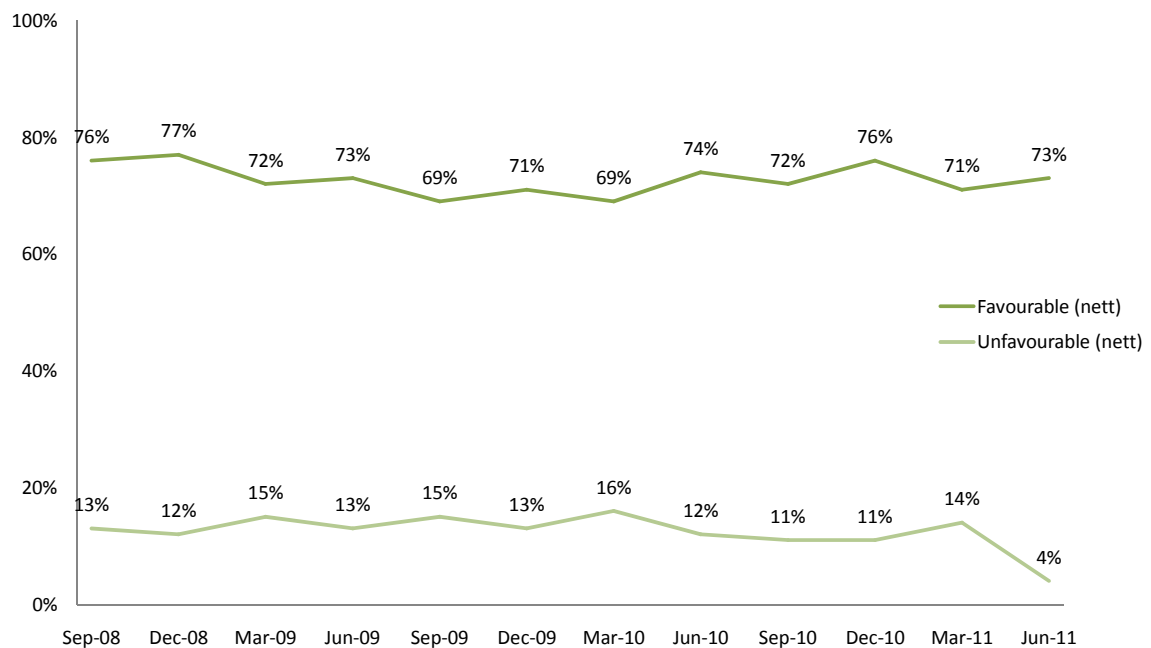
- Generally doing a good job
- Protecting the environment
- Protecting flora and fauna
- Maintenance of facilities
- Positive profile
- Personal opinions
- Appreciate what they do/importance of what they do
- Great facilities they offer
- Do the best they can with limited funding
- My knowledge/experience of them
- Educate/provide information
- Care about protecting NZ
- Make the outdoors accessible
- Friendly, welcoming staff.

The primary reasons people gave for having an unfavourable view of DOC were:

- Animal/pest control
- Poor management/too bureaucratic
- Control and access of land
- Negative public profile
- Narrow thinking/dogmatic attitude
- Misdirection of policies
- Not value for money

There has been little change over time in the proportion of New Zealanders that view DOC favourably, though there does appear to be a decrease in those who have an unfavourable view of DOC (this change may reflect a change in methodological approach between the 2010 and 2011 surveys).

View of DOC Change over time



2.4 DOC and local communities

Just over half (58%) of New Zealanders said DOC works well with local communities. Only four percent of New Zealanders said DOC does not work well with New Zealanders. The remainder didn't know or were neutral about their view on whether DOC works well with local communities.

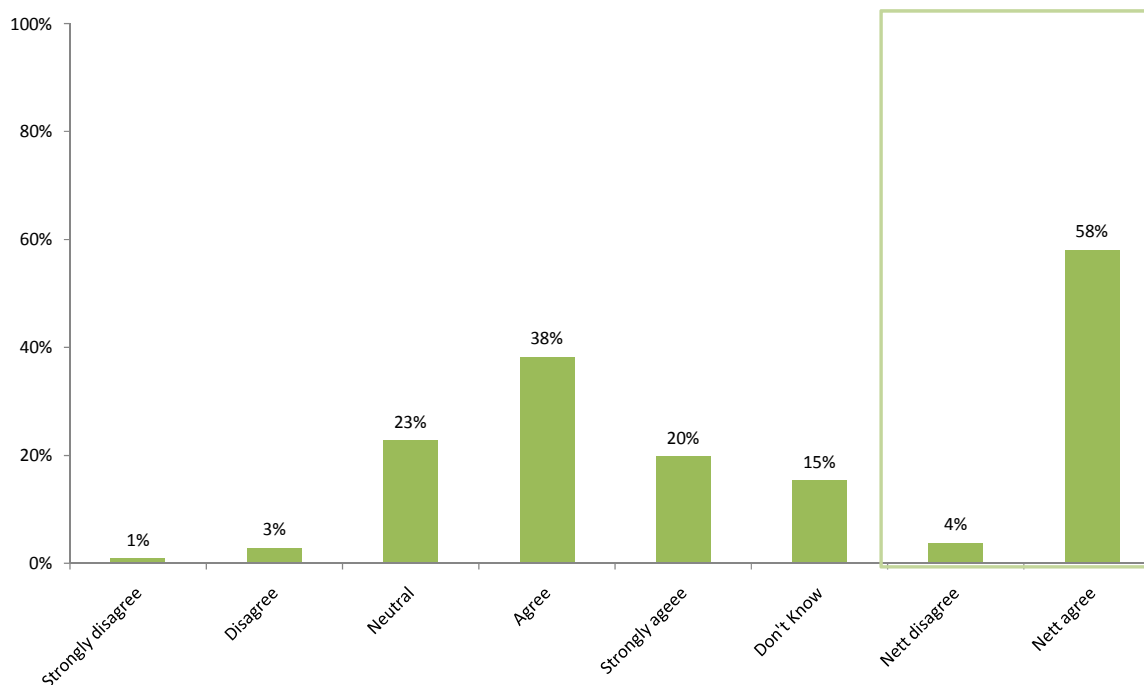
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree** DOC works well with local communities:

- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in the last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree** DOC works well with local communities:

- Income below \$40,000
- Small town, rural
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

DOC works well with local communities



Base: all respondents 3614

Additional statistical testing was undertaken for this question to determine the areas where DOC was perceived as working well with local communities. People living in the Tongariro/ Whanganui/ Taranaki area were statistically significantly more likely to agree DOC works well with local

communities. Those living in the West Coast were statistically significantly less likely to agree DOC works well with local communities.

2.5 DOC and commercial opportunities

The majority of New Zealanders (60%) were unsure or neutral about whether DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities that it used to be.

Just over a quarter (27%) of New Zealanders said DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be. Thirteen percent of New Zealanders said DOC is not more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be.

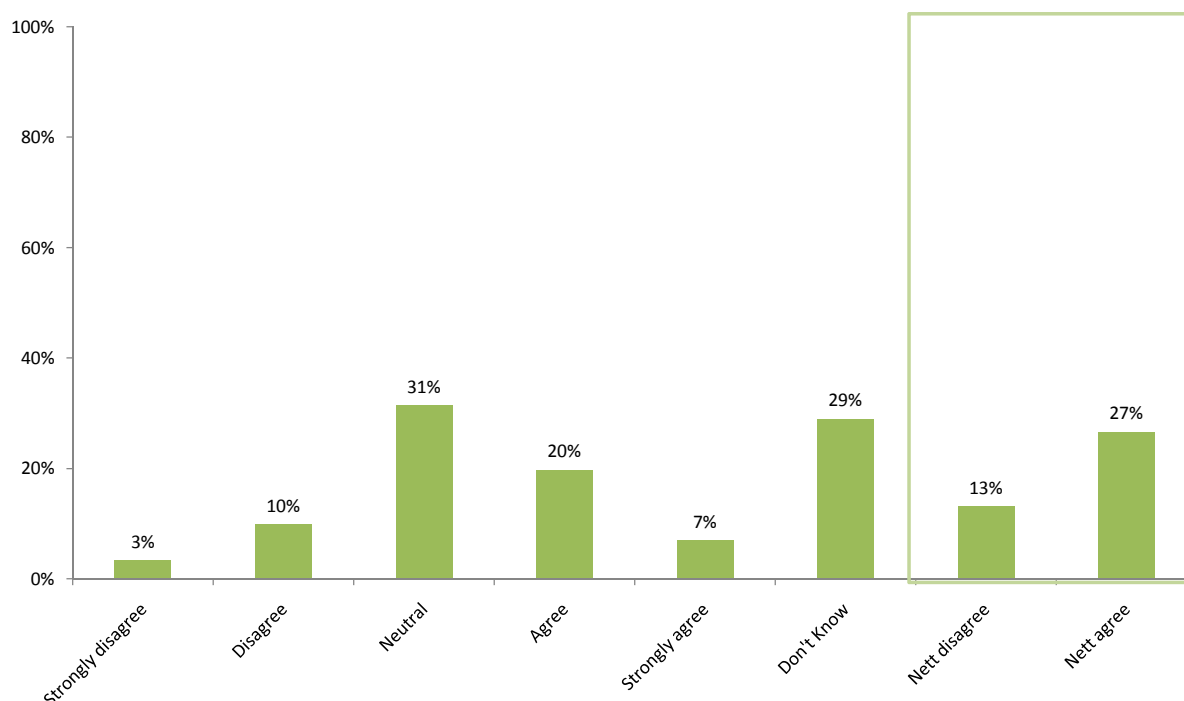
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree** DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be:

- 55 years plus
- Income below \$40,000
- Small city/large town
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree** DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be:

- Other ethnicities (not Pakeha, Maori, Pacific or Asian).

DOC is more interested in commercial opportunities than it used to be



Base: all respondents 3614

2.6 DOC is a leader in the conservation field

Just over three-quarters (76%) of New Zealanders agreed DOC is a leader in the conservation field. Just two percent of New Zealanders disagreed with this statement.

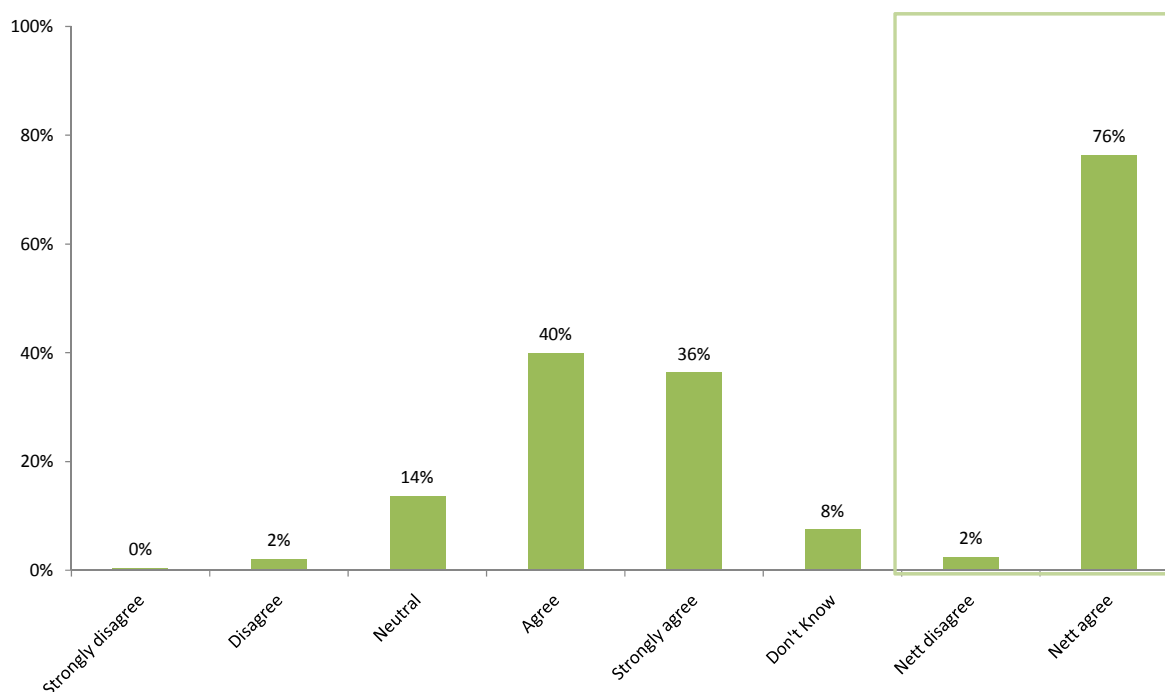
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree** DOC is a leader in the conservation field:

- 55 years plus
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree** DOC is a leader in the conservation field:

- Other ethnicities (not Pakeha, Maori, Pacific or Asian)
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

DOC is a leader in the conservation field



Base: all respondents 3614

2.7 DOC is a good use of taxpayer money

Just under three-quarters (71%) of New Zealanders agreed DOC is a good use of taxpayer money. Just four percent of New Zealanders disagreed with this statement.

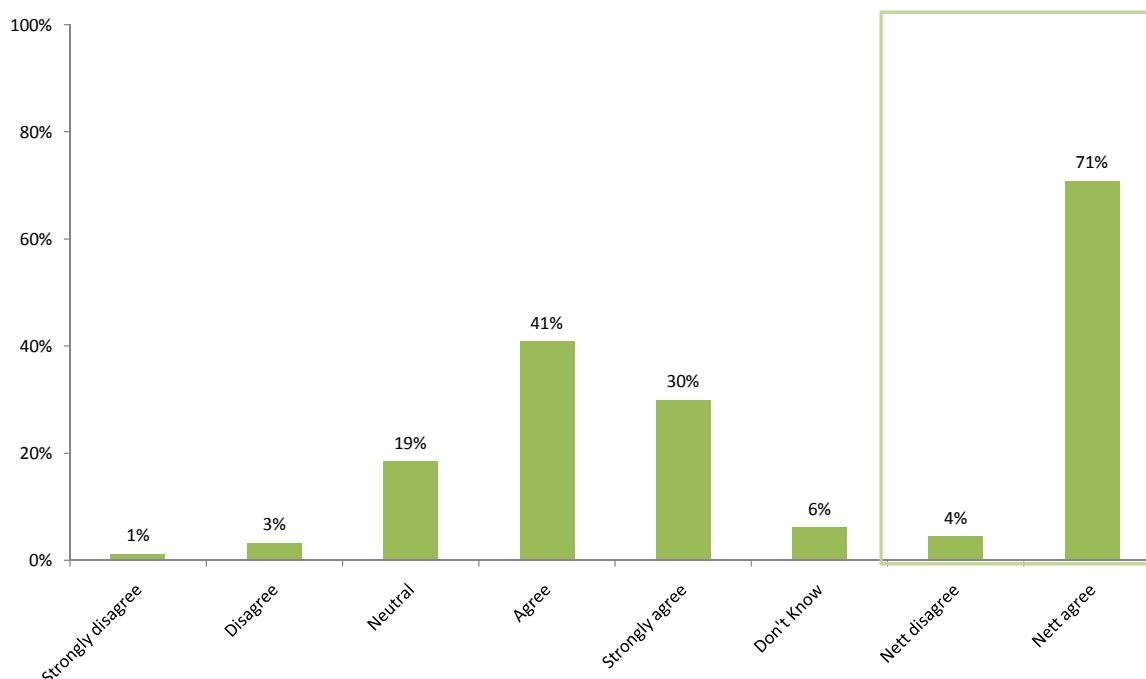
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree** DOC is a good use of taxpayer money:

- Income \$60,001 plus
- Big city
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree** DOC is a good use of taxpayer money:

- Male
- Other ethnicities (not Pakeha, Maori, Pacific or Asian)
- Small town, rural
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

DOC is a good use of taxpayer money



Base: all respondents 3614

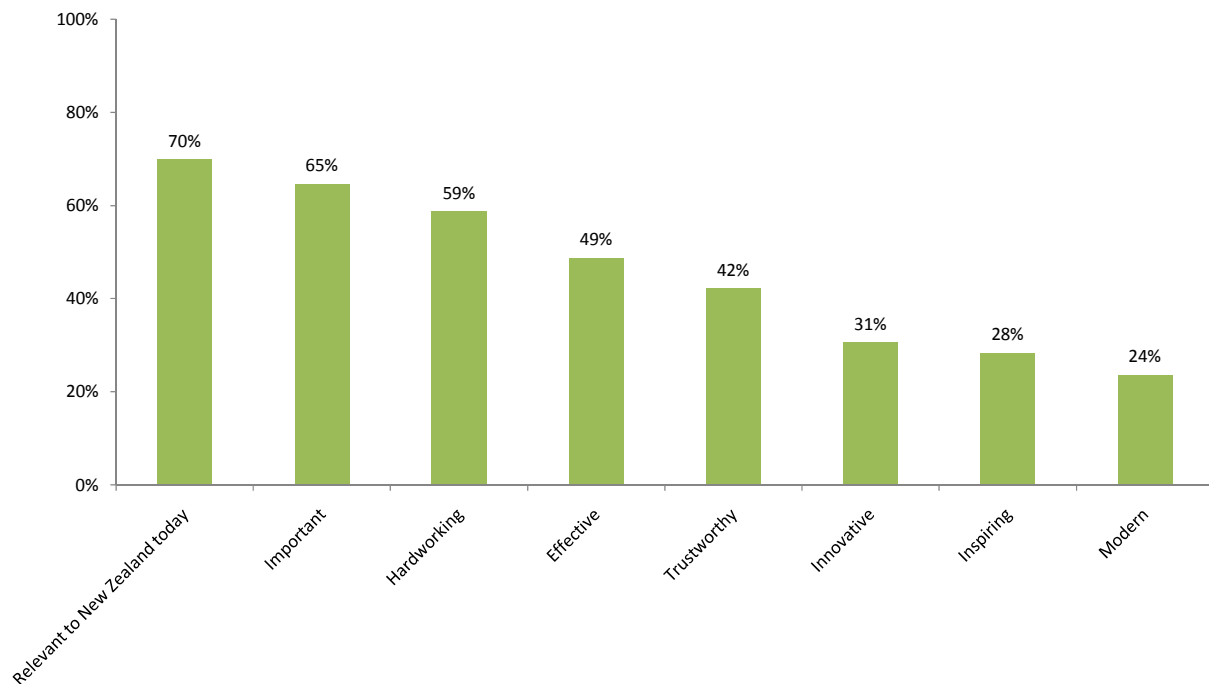
2.8 Brand associations

Just over two-thirds (70%) of New Zealanders agreed DOC can be described as relevant to New Zealand today. Between two-thirds and half of New Zealanders agreed DOC can be described as important (63%), hardworking (59%) and effective (49%). Less than half of New Zealanders said DOC can be described as trustworthy (42%), innovative (31%), inspiring (28%) and modern (24%).

Groups that were significantly more likely to describe DOC as:

- Relevant – female, 40 years plus
- Important – Maori
- Hardworking – 40-54 years
- Effective – 55 years plus
- Trustworthy – 40-54 years, income \$60,001 plus
- Innovative – 55 years plus, income below \$40,000, rural
- Inspiring – Maori
- Modern – 55 years plus, income below \$40,000.

Words that describe DOC



Base: all respondents 3614

3.0 Conclusions

Overall DOC was regarded favourably by New Zealanders, most (73%) had a favourable view of DOC. Few had an unfavourable view of DOC (4%). There was a significant group (23%) who were unsure what their view of DOC was, suggesting that DOC has not formed a relationship with these people – who were statistically significantly more likely to be: female, 18-24 years, all ethnicities other than Pakeha, had an income below \$40,000 and had not visited a DOC area in the last 12 months. These may be key groups for DOC to increase its presence with (perhaps by encouraging them to visit DOC areas).

DOC was not regarded unfavourably on any of the performance aspects measured in this survey. Less than five percent of New Zealanders disagreed: DOC works well with local communities, DOC is a leader in the conservation community and DOC is a good use of taxpayer money. However, like the overall favorability, there is a significant number of people who gave either a neutral rating or said they didn't know how DOC performs (22%-38%) again suggesting DOC does not have a relationship with some New Zealanders.

DOC's brand positioning has a mix of both strengths and weaknesses, at the positive end it was regarded by the majority of New Zealanders as relevant and important. DOC was not however regarded by most New Zealanders as modern, inspiring or innovative. This supports the findings of the Core Conservation Consumer Insights Research (Premium Research December 2009) which found New Zealanders to perceive DOC as weakly branded – reliable, but lacking inspiration and innovation. The findings of both studies support use of a strategy to actively strengthen DOC's reputation.

There were clear relationships between perceptions of DOC and both attitudes towards conservation **and** propensity to visit DOC areas. Those with a favourable view of DOC and who had visited a DOC area in the last 12 months were more likely to agree with positive statements about DOC.

4.0 Methodology

The Department of Conservation (DOC) undertook a survey of adult New Zealanders (The National Survey) in June 2011. The National Survey replaced a range of independent general public surveys undertaken by DOC. The intention of the National Survey was to consolidate surveying of the general public for increased efficiency and improved methodological rigour. The launch of the National Survey also provided an opportunity for DOC to survey the general public on topical issues and areas of strategic focus, including the Destination Management Framework, for DOC.

The National Survey was a survey of the adult population (18 years plus) of New Zealand. A total of 3,614 people were interviewed for the survey. The primary methodology was telephone (sample of 2,224) and the secondary methodology was online (sample of 1,390). The telephone sample was sourced via a random sample of people listed on the Electoral Roll. The online sample was sourced from the Colmar Brunton online panel.

The survey sample was stratified and then post weighted to match the actual population distribution (2006 Census) by:

- 1) Ethnicity (at a Conservancy level)
- 2) Interlocking age and gender¹ (at a Conservancy level).

The sample included a minimum of 270 people in each Conservancy – to allow for Conservancy level analysis. In the total sample the Conservancy data was weighted to match the actual population distribution (2006 Census). The sample profile follows overleaf.

Results shown in this report as statistically significant are significantly higher at the 95 percent confidence interval or higher and where the total is n=30 or greater. The following factors are reported on for statistical significance:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Household income
- Living area (e.g. big city/rural)
- View of DOC (excluded when inter-related)
- Visited DOC area (defined by respondent) in last 12 months (excluded when inter-related).

This report focuses on the questions respondents were asked about their perception of the Department of Conservation.

¹ For each Conservancy the population in each age group of both males and females was calculated as a proportion of the total population. The proportions were then applied to the total sample to determine target quotas for both males and females by age group for each Conservancy.

Sample Profile
(unweighted numbers and weighted %)

Gender	n=	%	Area	n=	%
Male	1,678	48%	Northland	317	4%
Female	1,936	52%	Auckland	332	32%
Age			Waikato	314	9%
24 years or younger	405	12%	Bay of Plenty	337	7%
25-39 years	937	28%	Tongariro/Whanganui/Taranaki	323	8%
40-54 years	1,012	28%	Wellington/Hawke's Bay	351	16%
55 years plus	1,247	31%	Nelson/Marlborough	344	3%
Refused	13	1%	West Coast	270	1%
Ethnicity (multiple response possible)			Canterbury	341	13%
Pakeha	3,278	88%	Otago	347	5%
Maori	438	11%	Southland	325	2%
Pacific	79	3%	Household income before tax		
Asian	107	4%	\$40,000 or less	844	20%
Other	131	5%	\$40,001-\$60,001	637	16%
Refused	-	1%	\$60,001 or more	1,671	51%
Location			Refused/DK	462	12%
Big city	951	47%			
Small city/large town	1,322	27%			
Small town	905	16%			
Rural	425	9%			