

# IPART Stakeholder Engagement Survey 2022

# IPART

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal | NSW



the  
**consulting**  
space

Prepared for IPART by The Consulting Space

March 2022

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction & Methodology

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## Introduction


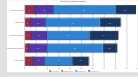
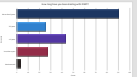

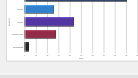
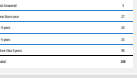



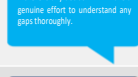


The IPART Stakeholder Engagement Survey was redesigned this year in line with IPART’s strategy to broadening their engagement with stakeholders.

The redesigned survey was intentionally distributed to a broader group of stakeholders than previous years which resulted in receiving 188 responses, almost triple that of previous years.

The questions were developed by independent consultancy, The Consulting Space, in consultation with IPART. The focus was on starting a dialogue with stakeholders, using relevant, ‘plain English’ questioning in order to establish a sound baseline for these surveys, moving forward.

Some consistency with previous surveys was maintained, especially in the questions that related to the Tribunal. However direct comparisons with previous surveys are minimal. In consultation with IPART’s leadership, it was decided that the relevance that more detailed feedback from our stakeholders was vital.

This report has been designed as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 Results	Chapter 3 Appendix
 Background	 Graphics: <b>Aggregated</b> responses to multiple questions	 Graphics: Responses to <b>every</b> question
 Methodology	 Graphics: Responses to individual <b>selected</b> questions	 <b>Numeric Tables:</b> Numeric data for <b>every</b> question
 Privacy & Distribution	 <b>Numeric Tables:</b> Numeric data by question or aggregated category	 Question & Response Recap (all questions)
	 Quotes: verbatim <b>stakeholder quotes</b> from survey & interviews	
	 Qualitative survey data & commentary from stakeholder interviews	
	 Comparisons with previous years & overall commentary	

## Methodology

The survey is divided into 6 categories:

1. **General Information** – background information on the stakeholder
2. **Communication & Information** – feedback on IPART’s one-way communication
3. **Professionalism** – feedback on dealing with IPART’s staff
4. **Stakeholder Consultation** – feedback on two-way consultation processes
5. **IPART’s Tribunal** – feedback on the work of IPART’s Tribunal
6. **Can we do more?** – opportunity for further comments

## Question Design & Scales

### ***Satisfaction Questions***

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a range of IPART’s activities. The questions were predominantly multiple choice in structure, using a four-point forced Likert scale (with no neutral option provided). This scale is commonly used in market research as it forces respondents to choose positive or negative opinion (even if moderately so) and can avoid the ‘auto-response’ of neutral, where people are rushing to finish.

N/A (Not Applicable) was provided as an option for questions where there was a possibility of respondents feeling unequipped to provide an opinion due to lack of exposure to certain activities within IPART.

### ***Channel Questions***

Some questions required a forced ranking of answers, such as 1-3, 1 being most frequent, 2 being second most frequent etc. Given that respondents are not generally keen on these matrix-style responses, only 3 questions with this structure were included. The quality of the data that they would provide was deemed worth the risk of fatigue.

### ***Open Comments***

An optional comment box was provided after each question, as well as a standalone optional comment box in the last category of the survey.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Survey respondents were also able to volunteer to take part in a short interview. 40 respondents volunteered and 27 were interviewed (some declined, others were unable to meet the scheduling window). Interviews were based on themes identified through initial analysis of the survey results and varied according to the respondent’s type of stakeholder interaction (eg those involved in Special Reviews were interviewed on the themes that arose, relevant to that process).

## Survey Distribution & Response

### Respondents

The survey was distributed via email to 1585 stakeholders who interact with IPART for a broad range of reasons including:

- Policy & pricing for Water, Local Government, Energy, Transport and also special reviews
- Regulation and compliance of the Energy Network, Water Licensing and the Energy Security Safeguard

Stakeholders included representatives from state and local government agencies, private large-scale organisations, small to medium enterprises, peak bodies and also individual private citizens.

### Distribution & Response Rate

The survey was distributed via email using a URL link to access the survey. 188 survey responses were received, with representation across all stakeholder groups. The response completion rate was 80%, meaning that some respondents did not answer all questions, or all parts of all questions. Where this is the case, the charts held in this report will provide representation of skipped or N/A (not applicable) responses.

### Privacy

All responses were anonymous unless respondents self-identified for the purpose of taking part in an interview. In these circumstances, their survey responses remained anonymous and were aggregated into the broader survey results. Their names and contact details were used purely for the purpose of contacting the individual for interview. Interview feedback has been de-identified for the purpose of this report.

# Chapter 2

## Survey Results

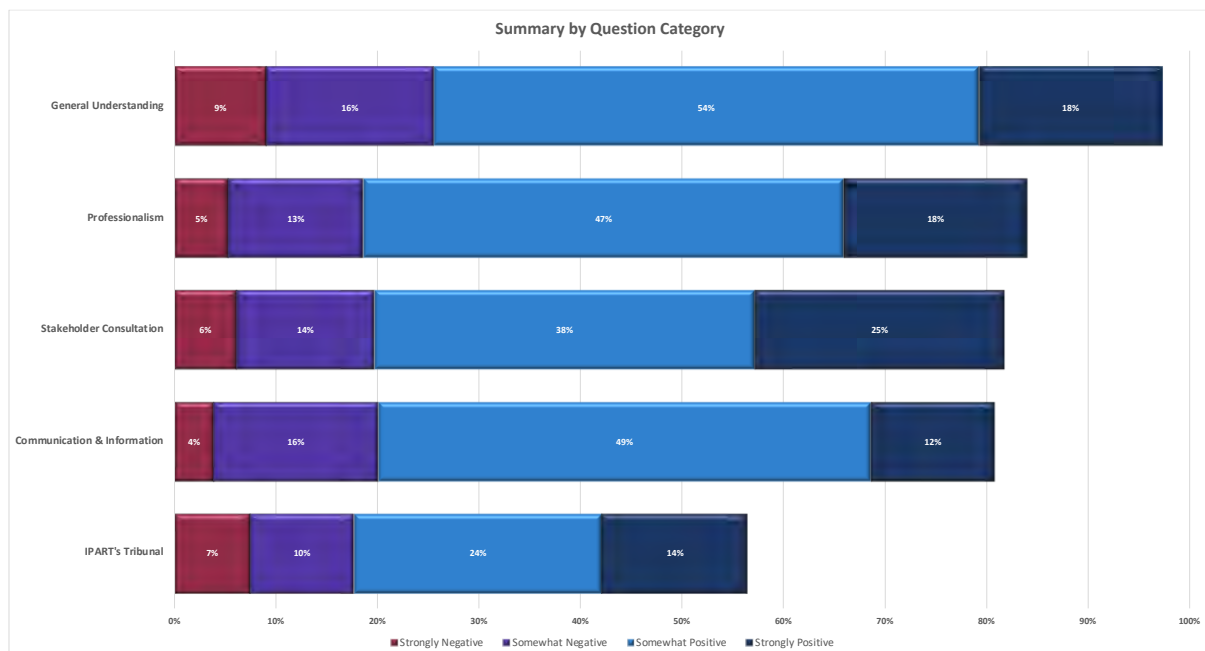


## Satisfaction Overview by Category

As outlined in the previous section, the survey was divided into 6 categories. We will explore an overview of each category in this section, incorporating both qualitative & quantitative responses.

### Figure 1: Summary by Question Category

This chart shows overall category satisfaction results, as calculated by aggregating responses to all **Satisfaction Questions** in each category. Given that the response options varied according to the question, they have been articulated here as ranging from Strongly Negative through to Strongly Positive. N/A or blank responses are excluded from the chart, therefore total responses in the graphic will not add up to 100%.



Question Category	Strongly Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Strongly Positive	NA or Not Answered
General Understanding	9%	16%	54%	18%	3%
Professionalism	5%	13%	47%	18%	16%
Stakeholder Consultation	6%	14%	38%	25%	18%
Communication & Information	4%	16%	49%	12%	19%
IPART's Tribunal	7%	10%	24%	14%	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>24%</b>

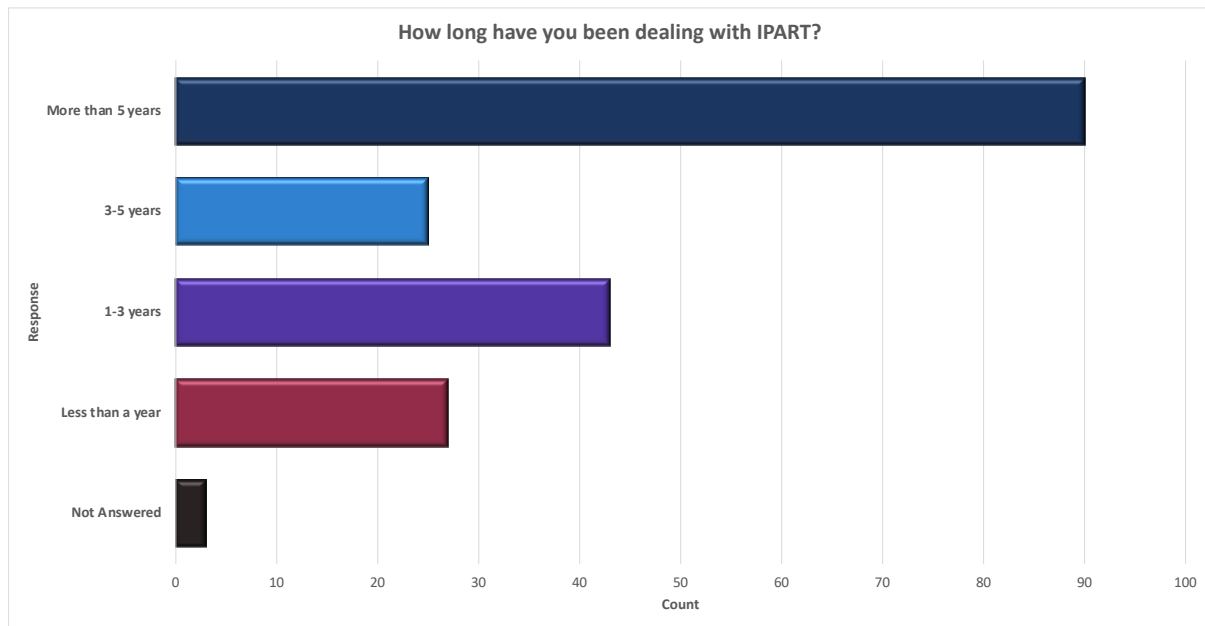


# Category 1: Background & General Understanding

## Category 1: Background & General Understanding, Key Survey Results

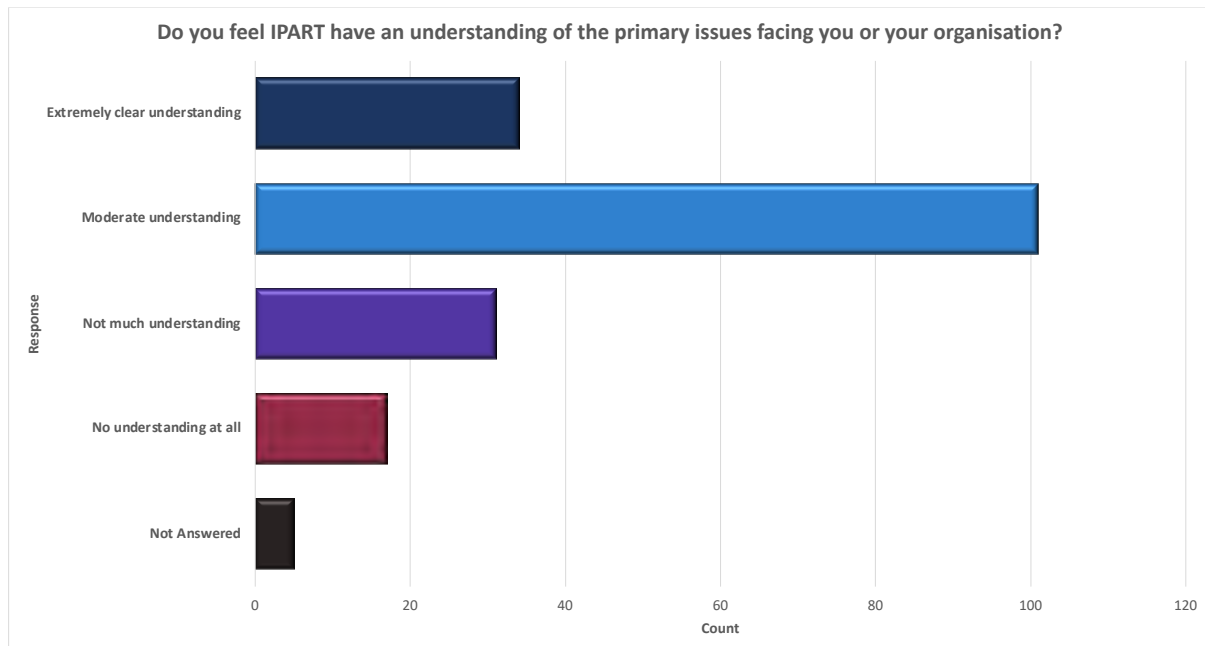
Category 1 contains questions to establish some background to stakeholders' relationships with IPART, including the length of the relationship and stakeholders' perception as to IPART's understanding of their industry or organisation.

**Figure 2: How long have you been dealing with IPART?**



Response	Count
More than 5 years	90
3-5 years	25
1-3 years	43
Less than a year	27
Not Answered	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

**Figure 3: Do you feel IPART have an understanding of the primary issues facing you or your organisation?**



Response	Count
Extremely clear understanding	34
Moderate understanding	101
Not much understanding	31
No understanding at all	17
Not Answered	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Whilst IPART is in a much stronger position in terms of understanding the challenges for the industry in comparison with the past, I believe that there is still more room to improve.

There are challenges on how IPART rolls out new activities and with narrow time frames and uncertainty around some factors such as product which makes it very challenging for the industry to plan and have the business model ready.

IPART acts like it sees a trade off between maintaining its independence and getting to know the industry it regulates.

If there is any doubt [about IPART's understanding of the sector], IPART make a genuine effort to understand any gaps thoroughly.

## Background & General Understanding: Interview & Quote Themes

### Themes from Survey Comments:

Most of the negative commentary in this section related to local government. There were a range of comments from ratepayers, stating that IPART was focused only on the needs of councils, and there were a range of comments obviously from LG councils, stating that IPART does not understand enough about the unique needs of individual councils.

Most of the positive commentary pointed towards improvements over the past year to 18 months in IPART seeking to understand the water and energy sectors. There were a number of comments that stated 'it depends on who you speak to', and indicated that some individual staff were excellent to deal with.

### Themes from Interview Comments:

In further exploring ratepayers' comments, there was a range of views. Some ratepayers felt that IPART's engagement process was loaded too heavily to favour councils, however there were other ratepayers who viewed IPART as highly impartial and felt heard throughout the engagement process.

Themes around recent improvements were discussed further in the interviews, with particular mention being made several times of the Water Team and the ESS Applications Team, as having obviously worked hard on their proactive stakeholder management and responsiveness over the past 18 months to 2 yrs.

### Stakeholder Suggestions for Improvement

- Provide more time and support to members of the public (who are unfamiliar with the process) to develop submissions.
- Provide more of an opportunity for ratepayers to engage with IPART in the same way that councils do.
- IPART to visit councils in order to get a better understanding of uniqueness.

### Commentary:

Although there are several negative comments represented here, it should be noted that 70% of the question responses were positive. As such the negative responses may be overrepresented in the comments – naturally, where respondents have a negative opinion, they are more likely to elaborate.

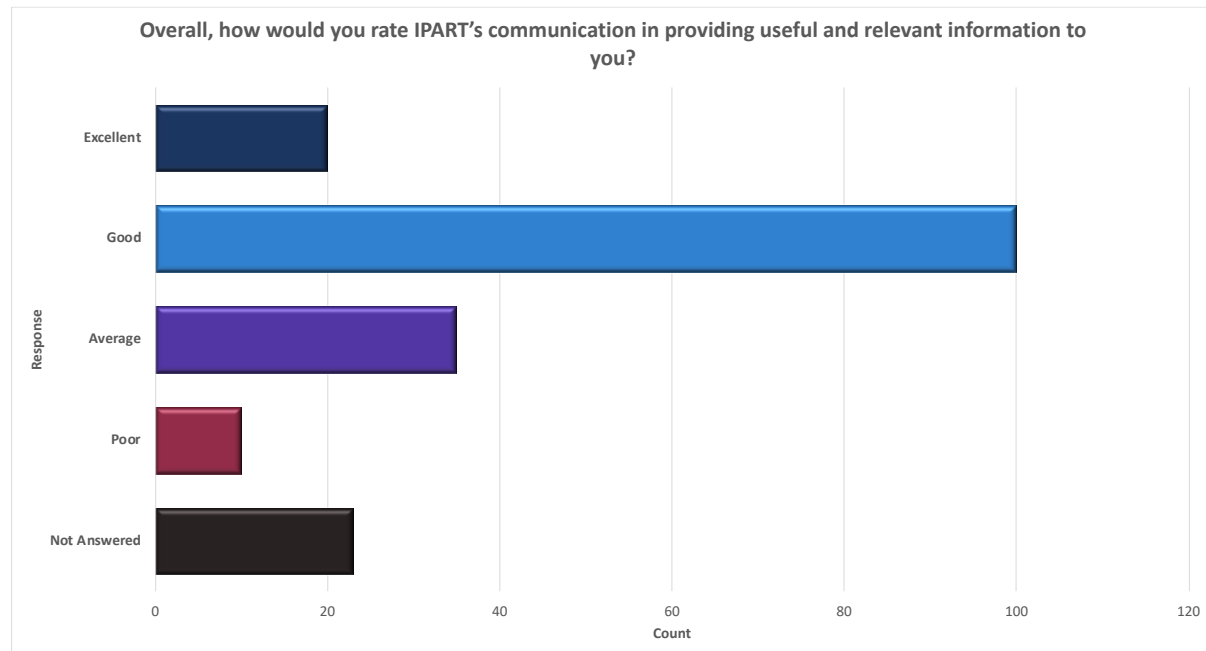
It is worth noting that a number of respondents pointed to improvements in IPART's understanding over the last two years. Taking a lead from the teams mentioned may help IPART to improve across the board. The issues in the council/ratepayer consultation process will be explored further in this report.

# Category 2: Communication & Information



## Category 2: Communication & Information, Key Survey Results

**Figure 4: Overall, how would you rate IPART’s communication in providing useful & relevant information to you?**



Response	Count
Excellent	20
Good	100
Average	35
Poor	10
Not Answered	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Reports are clearly written

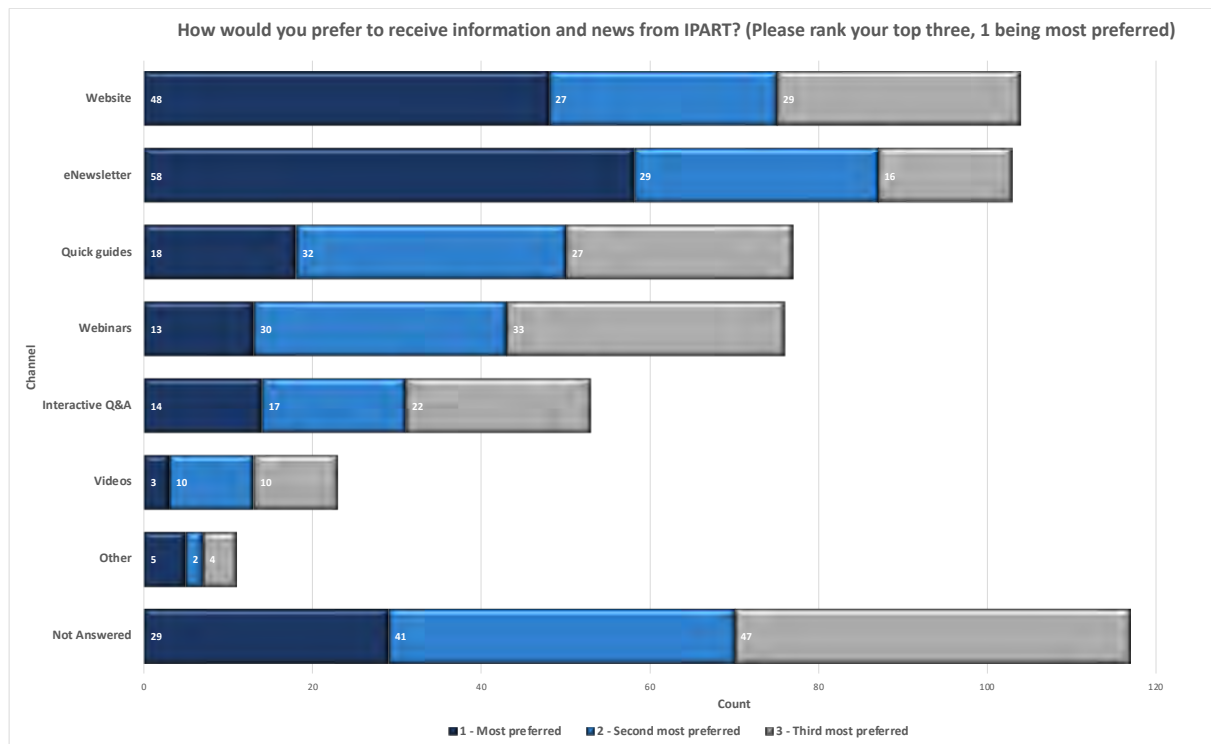
Well ahead of other agencies I deal with

Sometimes I think the reports get lost in jargon and don't think the readers comprehend. Although, this has markedly improved in recent years.

Can be difficult to find what you're looking for, but it's comprehensive.

The subject matter can be complex and hard to put in commonplace language. However, recognition should be made that many of the businesses making energy savings are time poor and/or lack skills in reading detailed regulatory information.

**Figure 5: How would you prefer to receive information and news from IPART?**



Response	1 - Most preferred	2 - Second most preferred	3 - Third most preferred
Website	48	27	29
eNewsletter	58	29	16
Quick guides	18	32	27
Webinars	13	30	33
Interactive Q&A	14	17	22
Videos	3	10	10
Other	5	2	4
Not Answered	29	41	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>

It depends on the type of information and news. e.g. change in Tribunal members - eNewsletter vs draft price determination - interactive Q&A.

Different dependent upon issue. Q & A for specific issues (rate increases); Quick for alerts/email reports.



## Communication & Information: Interview & Quote Themes

### Themes from Survey Comments:

Several positive mentions were made of the comprehensiveness of IPART's written communication and reports, however this was often balanced against difficulties in finding information, or its accessibility in terms of plain English.

There were also a number of comments with regard to ambiguity in responses, especially in the Energy Savings Scheme, where there were also requests for a staffed direct telephone number for assistance and more opportunities for direct communication.

### Themes from Interview Comments:

Further positive comments were made about the proactive communication and interaction with the Water Team from a wide range of stakeholders, where an approach of regular meetings has improved both IPART's and stakeholders' understanding of issues.

Interview themes around ESS specifically pointed towards recent improvements in communication, however stakeholders still experiencing some frustration with turnaround times on questions and accessibility of IPART staff. This was balanced with the feedback that some officers within ESS are extremely knowledgeable and helpful, once contact is established.

### Stakeholder Suggestions for Improvement:

- Have a fully staffed phone number to resolve ESS questions, understanding that some issues may need to be resolved by email reply, however access to Analysts to talk through questions would resolve many queries faster.
- Give stakeholders access to a timeline/process tracker for ESS audits so as they have some expectation on when audits will be completed or at what stage they are at.
- Keep forum videos up on the website for longer.
- Use local Facebook group pages to drive community engagement.

### Commentary:

There are encouraging themes outlined here, whereby improvements have been seen across a number of areas. Most of these improvements are typified by proactive and regular engagement with stakeholders.

Survey responses show a significant preference to receive information via the website and eNewsletters, so these media should be considered as a primary form of one-way communication. The qualitative data points to the effectiveness of utilising proactive meetings and check-ins with primary stakeholders (for certain areas of IPART) to discuss current or upcoming issues. Although it is not practicable or appropriate for this to be replicated across IPART with all stakeholder groups, it is worth considering whether there are other teams/stakeholder groups who would benefit from such an approach.

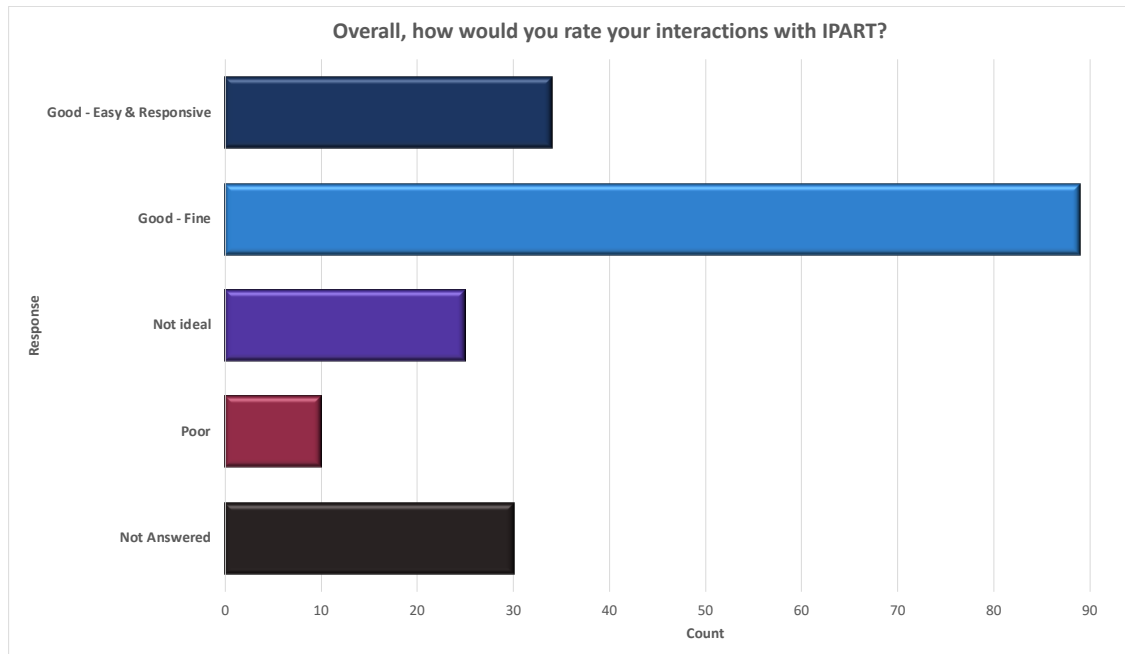


# Category 3: Professionalism & Interaction Channels



### Category 3: Professionalism, Key Survey Results

**Figure 6: Overall, how would you rate your interactions with IPART?**



Response	Count
Good - Easy & Responsive	34
Good - Fine	89
Not ideal	25
Poor	10
Not Answered	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Real engagement and discussion would help

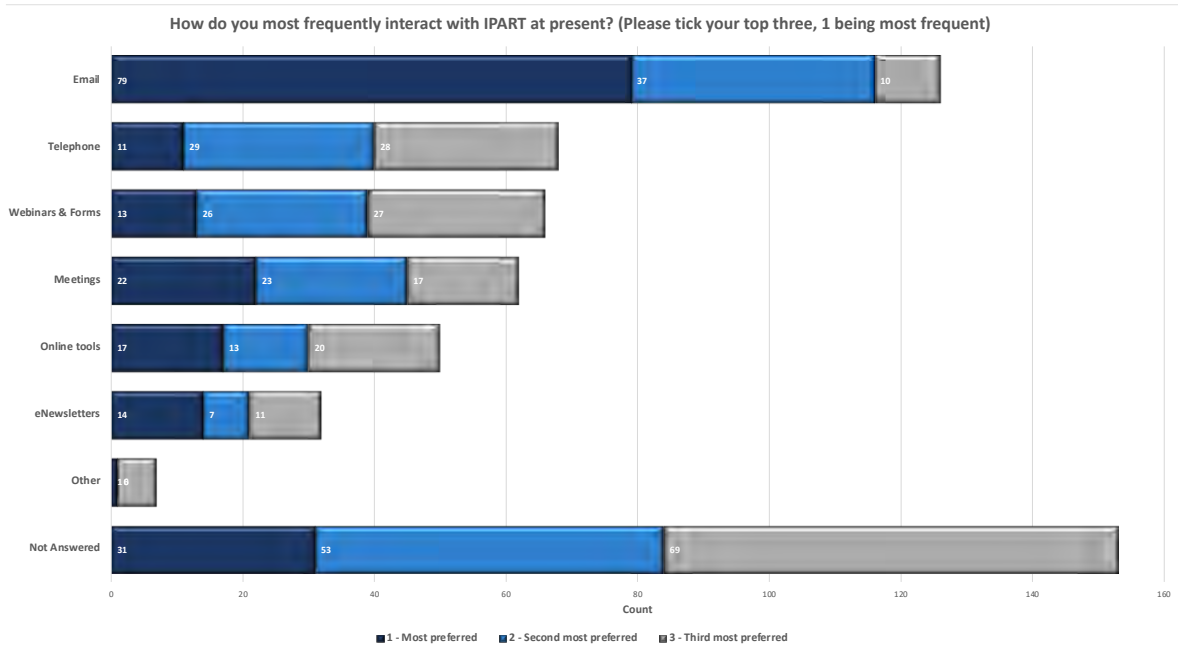
Between good and great!

Recently my experience with IPART was extremely positive, prompt phone calls followed by emails.

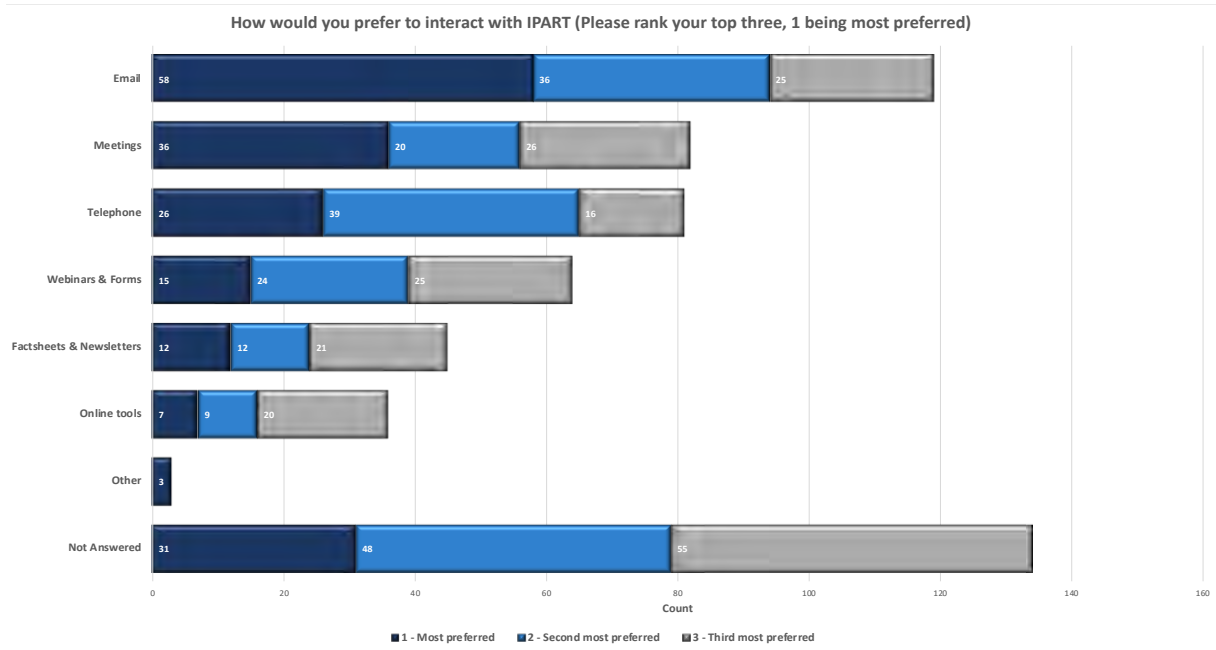
Interactions are always professional - the outcomes of some decisions though are not always ideal.

**Figure 7: A comparison of channel preferences...**

**Current channels**



**Preferred Channels**



**Text Responses**

**Suggestions of 'other' included:**

- After the experience of the last 2 years with online hearings on WaterNSW and WAMC pricing I believe it would be productive to return to face-to-face hearings about water pricing to allow more constructive discussion.
- It depends on the interaction
- Workshops
- I like the forums getting all stakeholders together is critical
- I find webinars with ample time for interactive Q&A most useful
- Also Quick Guides

## Professionalism: Interview & Commentary Themes

### Themes from Survey Comments:

Generally speaking, the theme from the survey comments was that IPART staff are professional, knowledgeable and courteous. This was often acknowledged alongside statements like, 'they don't have an easy job' or 'I don't always agree with their decisions'.

Several comments were made that IPART's regulatory staff find it difficult to walk the line between getting to know an industry and being its regulator, as such kept the industry at 'arm's length', impacting on their ability to truly understand the issues facing it. It was acknowledged that this is a difficult line to walk.

### Themes from Interview Comments:

The only new matter to arise in the interviews was the perception that perhaps IPART is under-resourced in some areas, as noted by some slow response times or difficulty accessing staff. The general consensus was that, once contact was made with an officer, they were excellent to deal with, however sometimes lack of feedback on submissions or questions gave the impression that they are understaffed.

Furthermore, some frustration was expressed at IPART consistently deferring to 'terms of reference' in relation to considering opinions. This was balanced by some stakeholders stating that they understood that IPART staff are often 'hamstrung' by terms of reference and relevant legislation.

### Stakeholder Suggestions for Improvement:

- After the experience of the last 2 years with online hearings on WaterNSW and WAMC pricing I believe it would be productive to return to face-to-face hearings about water pricing to allow more constructive discussion.

### Commentary:

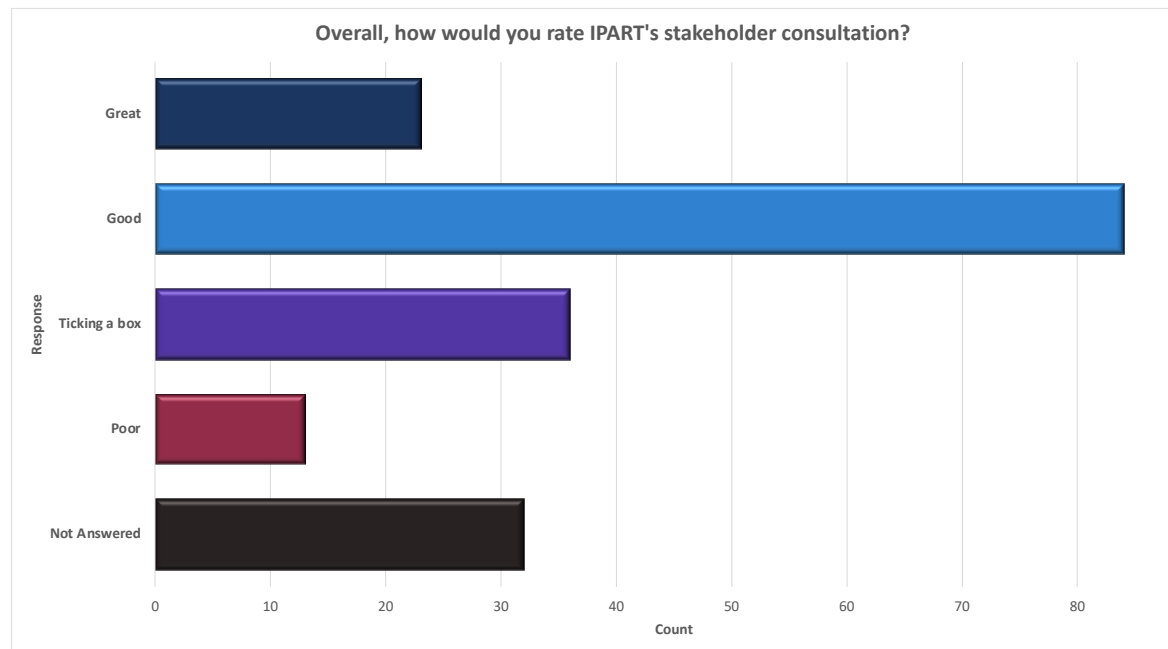
There was generally positive feedback on the quality of IPART staff, although for a small handful of stakeholders it was difficult to separate their dissatisfaction with IPART's decisions from the professionalism of IPART's staff.

The quantitative data from the channel preferences show us that in interacting directly with stakeholders, email is the most used and the most preferred format of interaction. This data also shows us that stakeholders would prefer more meetings with IPART in favour of webinars and forums— however this has obviously been stymied by COVID over the past two years. Interview data tells us that the two-way nature of meetings would be preferred over the one-way nature of some current IPART forums.

# Category 4: Stakeholder Consultation

Category 4: Stakeholder Consultation, Key Survey Results

**Figure 8: Overall, how would you rate IPART’s stakeholder consultation?**



Response	Count
Great	23
Good	84
Ticking a box	36
Poor	13
Not Answered	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

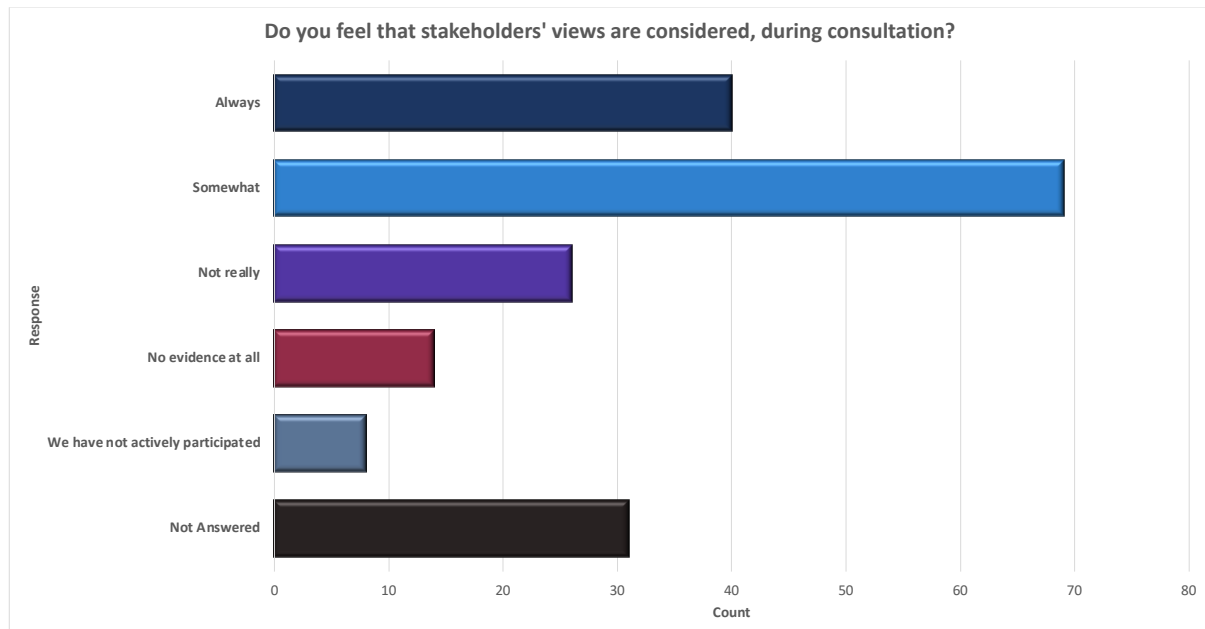
I always find IPART staff very responsive. They provide detailed answers to questions quickly and are keen to follow up matters they cannot respond to immediately. The staff are highly professional, reliable and extremely courteous. I respect the staff and the organisation highly, although I do sometimes wonder whether government expectations of them are unrealistic, particularly with respect to timeframes and that sometimes this means they cannot fully research material or cannot edit content to make it more accessible to more audiences

Has been an issue with receiving subscribed alerts - these seem to be very hit and miss.

What I expect from a regulator but rarely experience!

IPART's responsiveness has improved markedly in the last few years - it was extremely poor before that.

**Figure 9: Do you feel that stakeholders' views are considered during consultation?**



Response	Count
Always	40
Somewhat	69
Not really	26
No evidence at all	14
We have not actively participated	8
Not Answered	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Those presenting alternate views do not have the same resources or access to information as IPART or the prime stakeholder. Maybe IPART should provide assistance to those wanting to present information to the debate for consideration.

Our views are listened to but IPART once it has made a decision is hard to shift.

There has been an improvement with IPART listening to stakeholders' views in recent years. But there are still many times when stakeholders provide information, IPART say "we will take this on board", or "we don't have an answer for that, we will get back to you" and then there is no follow up, no indication they have taken anything onboard. Suggest that IPART use their forums as more like workshops, where ideas, issues or questions can actually be worked on together, rather than those forums being a one-way street.

## Stakeholder Consultation: Interview & Quote Themes

### Themes from Survey Comments:

There were several key themes identified throughout the survey comments with regard to stakeholder consultation. **Firstly**, there was a regular perception that there is an inequality between stakeholders in most consultations: councils vs ratepayers, small organisations vs big organisations, new/niche organisations vs established players, to name a few.

**Secondly**, there is a perception that although they undertake consultation, it is often difficult to shift IPART's position on many matters, especially if it requires a change to their methodology.

**Thirdly**, stakeholders said that IPART does not provide feedback on submissions, so they are often left wondering if their submission has been read, if there is no evidence of it in the relevant decision.

### Themes from Interview Comments:

In exploring the **first** theme, in interview, there were many stakeholders who agreed that there is an imbalance in stakeholder consultation. However, equally as many stakeholders stated that there often needs to be more weight applied to those primary stakeholders, for a range of reasons: level of impact; robustness of submissions; size of organisation's infrastructure or customer base.

Most stakeholders, when asked about the **second** theme stated that it was very difficult to change IPART's position once they have taken a stance. A number stated that there is a small window to influence.

With regard to the **third** theme, it was identified that those receiving little/no feedback were usually householders (re council submissions) and small-medium businesses involved in special reviews.

### Stakeholder Suggestions for Improvement:

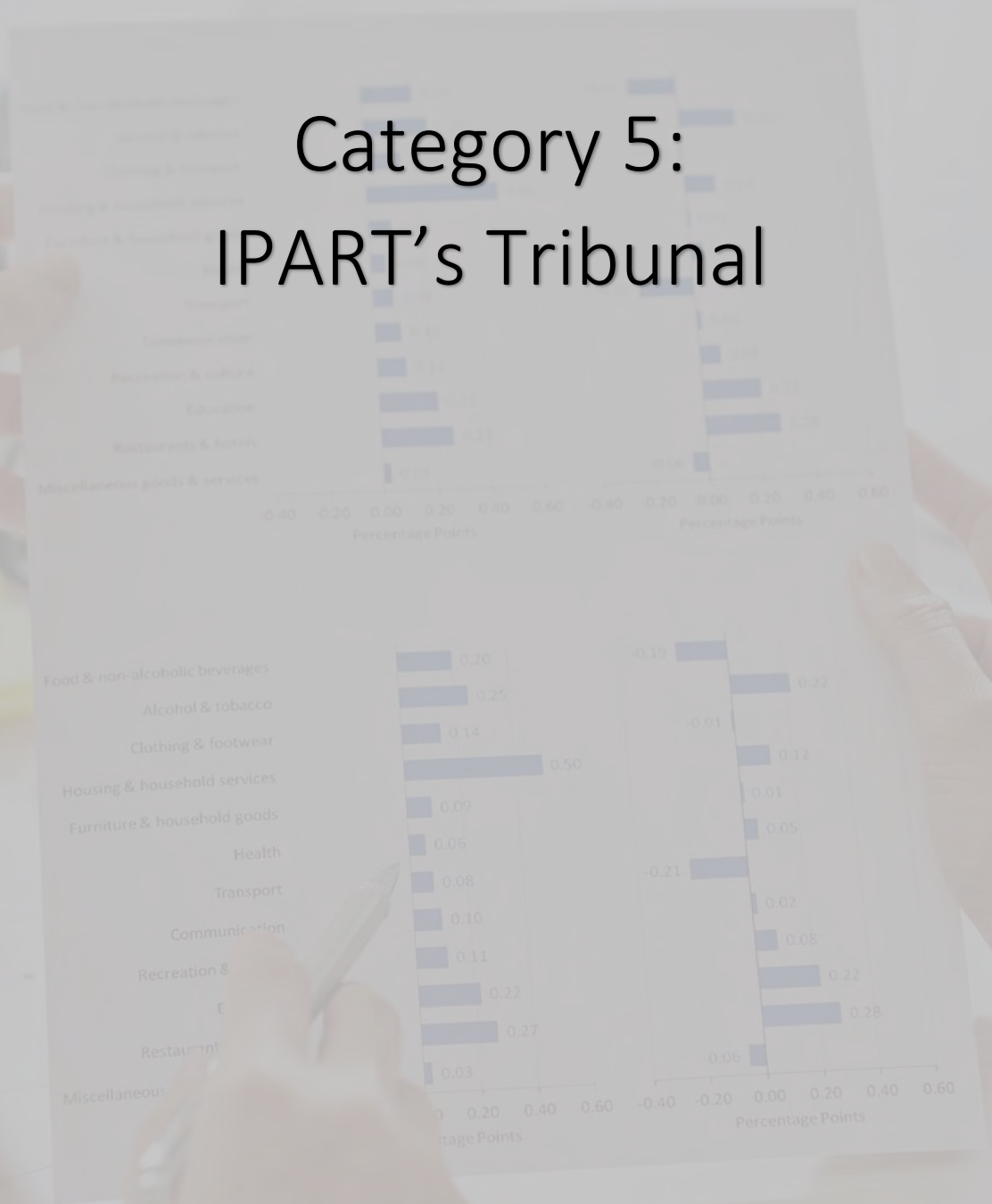
- If certain stakeholders are given more weight, explain why in decisions and reports handed down.
- Support 'smaller' stakeholders in understanding how to make a quality submission.
- IPART should lobby for the development of more public advocacy groups in order to have a more representative interaction with the public.
- Allow ratepayer representatives to meet with IPART independently of council.
- Tailor consultation to stakeholder groups: don't try to accommodate all types of stakeholder in one consultation because it leads to nobody getting what they need. Divide the consultations – perhaps IPART can provide the same presentation, but Q&A can then be tailored to needs.
- Construct specific mailing lists: mail decisions and public reports to stakeholders who took the time to make a submission.

### Commentary:

It is acknowledged on multiple levels that IPART have a difficult job to do in balancing multiple stakeholder interests with the limits of legislation and terms of reference. Some stakeholders understand that these constraints impact on how much IPART can truly 'change' their approach or methodology, however there is a perception that this may impact on IPART's willingness to truly listen to stakeholder feedback.

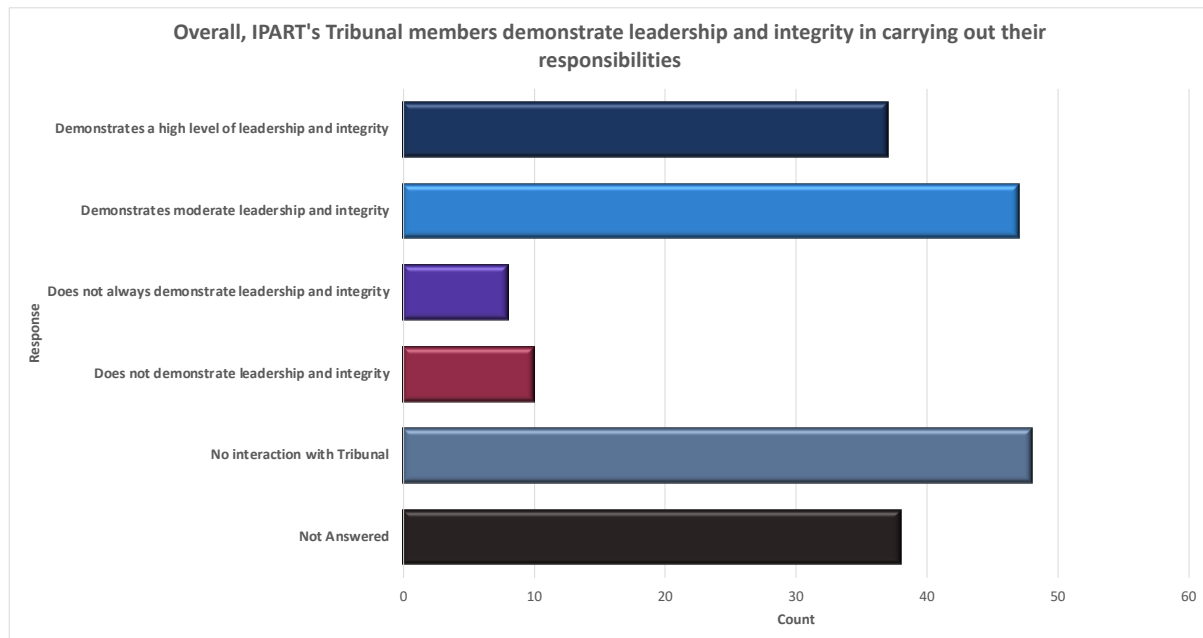


# Category 5: IPART's Tribunal



## Category 5: IPART’s Tribunal, Key Survey Results

**Figure 10: Overall, IPART's Tribunal members demonstrate leadership and integrity in carrying out their responsibilities**



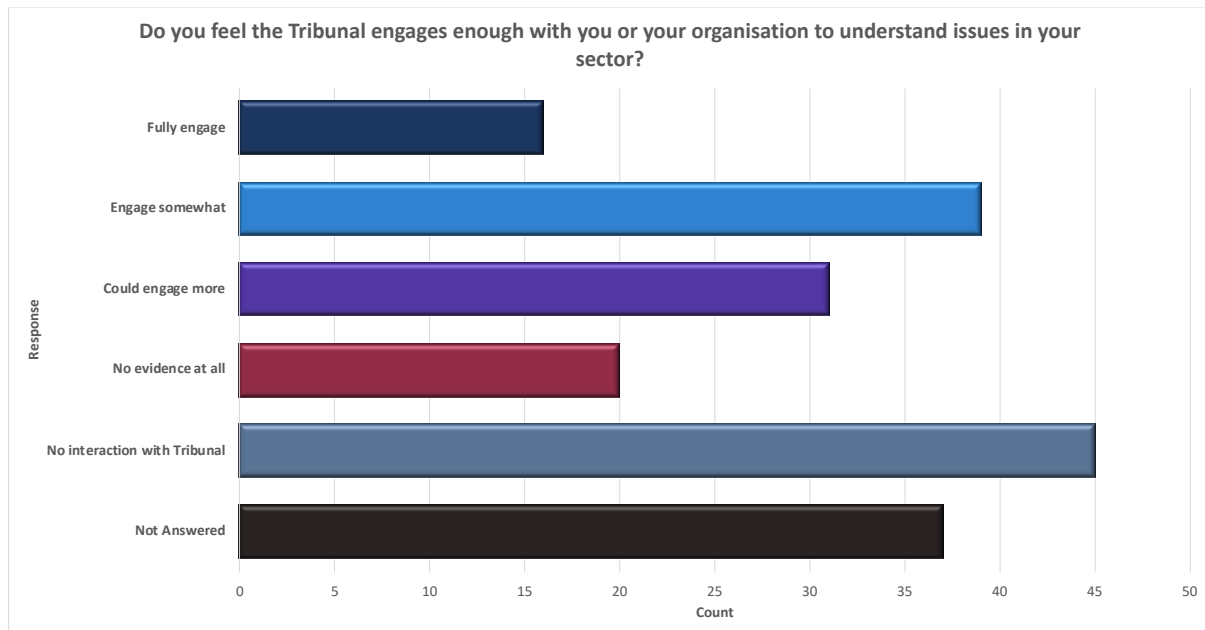
Response	Count
Demonstrates a high level of leadership and integrity	37
Demonstrates moderate leadership and integrity	47
Does not always demonstrate leadership and integrity	8
Does not demonstrate leadership and integrity	10
No interaction with Tribunal	48
Not Answered	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Integrity yes, leadership no. They should show more leadership in developing the ESS to meet government energy and climate policies.

Observation is they give a lot of time to loud interest groups and classify industry with one brush

I have had nothing but excellent interactions with the Tribunal members in the many reviews I have been a part of.

**Figure 11: Do you feel the Tribunal engages enough with you or your organisation to understand issues in your sector?**



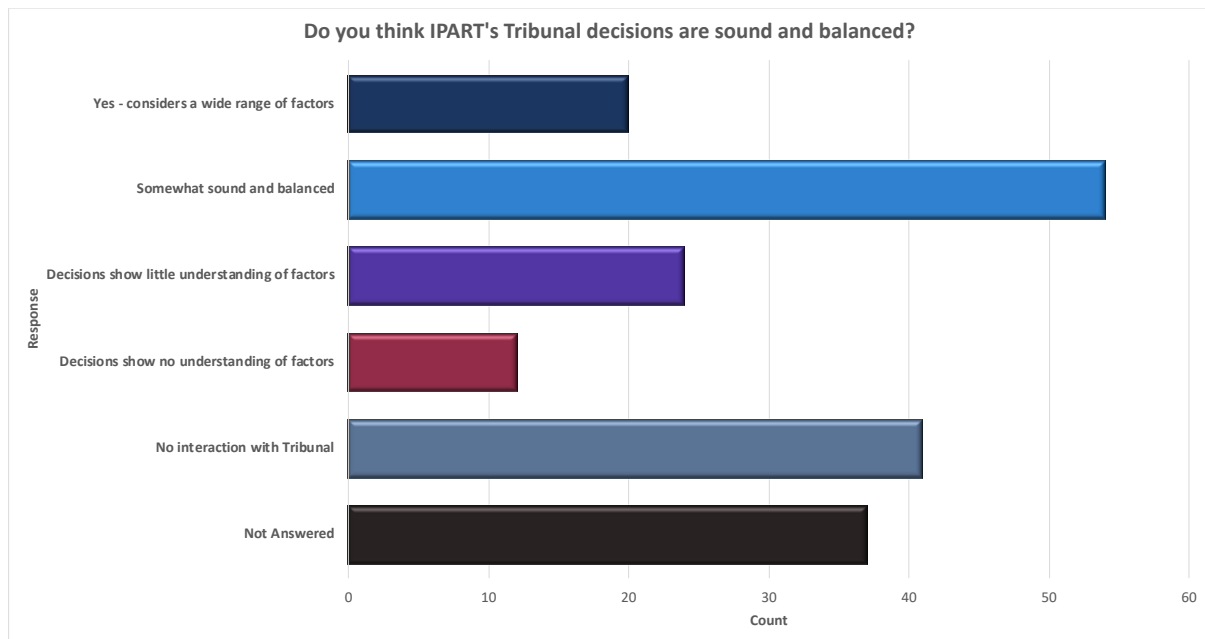
Response	Count
Fully engage	16
Engage somewhat	39
Could engage more	31
No evidence at all	20
No interaction with Tribunal	45
Not Answered	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

There are not many opportunities for Board/Tribunal engagement, it would be good to have more engagement at that level.

We imagine that the Tribunal only receives information provided by IPART employees and doesn't do anything to confirm, query or take other factors into consideration.

We've never had direct interaction with the Tribunal, only second-hand reports of dealings with the Tribunal by IPART staff.

**Figure 12: Do you think IPART’s Tribunal decisions are sound and balanced?**



Response	Count
Yes - considers a wide range of factors	20
Somewhat sound and balanced	54
Decisions show little understanding of factors	24
Decisions show no understanding of factors	12
No interaction with Tribunal	41
Not Answered	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Generally clear, sometimes ambiguous. I acknowledge that it's challenging to balance brevity with clarity. Sometimes the ambiguity seems to arise due to lack of practical experience (in how the issue would be applied in the real world).

My experience has been the decisions are often at odds with the recommendations of advocacy groups, professional organisations and best practice overseas. Lower charges are not always best for the long term.

IPART’s special rate variation methodology is flawed because it places too much weight on the “financial need” of councils. It should look more closely at what has created the “financial need” in the first place.

## IPART's Tribunal: Interview & Commentary Themes

### Themes from Survey Comments:

Themes from the survey echoed statements from the previous category, whereby there is a perception that although the Tribunal consults, they are not necessarily open to hearing views that fundamentally change their position. Comments also echoed that there is a perceived imbalance in stakeholder 'importance'.

There is also a perception that the Tribunal may not interrogate information presented by 'primary' stakeholders and will take on recommendations of IPART staff without requiring input from other parties. It was also suggested by some stakeholders that their approach to reviews is 'one size fits all'.

### Themes from Interview Comments:

Through the interview process, again there were some independent stakeholders who saw a need for certain stakeholder groups to be treated as 'primary', however other gave examples of why this should not be the case.

In regard to decision-making, some stakeholders viewed the Tribunal's process as 'opaque', while others stated that they felt in that some reviews, 'the stage was already set' and that the Tribunal were unlikely to be moved, regardless of consultation and submissions. Some comments from interview stated that the Tribunal had been highly engaged and consultative in their interactions with them and others stated that industry workshops with the Tribunal had been very useful.

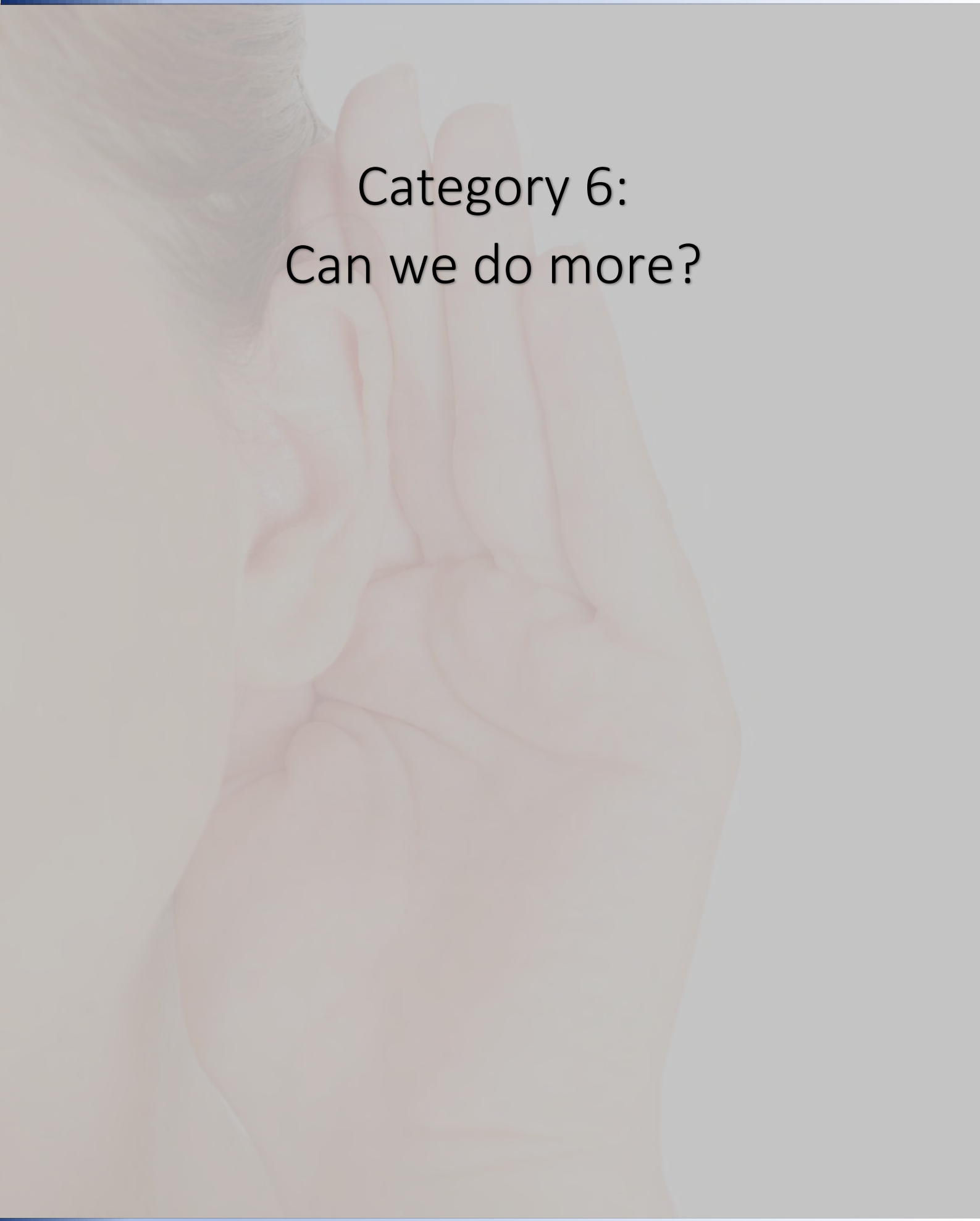
### Stakeholder Suggestions for Improvement:

- Publish minutes/summaries of Tribunal meetings to create transparency in the decision-making process
- Allocate a Tribunal member to each review – it's important to see that they are actively engaged
- Organisations would like an opportunity to interact with the Tribunal in less formal settings than forums, without this being perceived as impacting on the Tribunal's independence.

### Commentary:

It should be noted that approximately half of the survey's respondents did not answer the questions relating to the Tribunal, either by selecting N/A or skipping the question. Not all stakeholders have had direct interaction with the Tribunal, therefore it was important for respondents to be able to opt out.

Most stakeholders viewed the Tribunal as highly independent although a small handful did not. There were some comments made regarding IPART's independence in refusing to review their methodology on rate increases. It is assumed by some stakeholders that this is due to influence from government agencies. Generally speaking (although not always), negative comments regarding the Tribunal came from smaller organisations or householders, potentially in line with the perception of these stakeholders that their views are undervalued in consultation.



# Category 6: Can we do more?

### Category 6: Can we do more? Key Survey Results

This category provided only an open text question. A selection of verbatim quotes from stakeholder responses to this question, shown below, are representative of common themes provided in response to this specific question.

**We really appreciate feedback from our stakeholders - please provide any comments about your dealings with IPART.**

I have found all staff to be engaging and professional, their approach is considered and balanced with clear visibility of the decision-making pathway. Always happy to deal with IPART.

IPART are ticking boxes and not considering the impact of decisions such as rate peg on individual councils, it's not a one size fits all.

Continue to take the time to listen to industry reps and relevant others who are experienced and knowledgeable. Simpler methods to increase revenue to fund things that benefit society would be a big help.

IPART is sometimes dogmatic in applying economic theory and principles, ignoring the practical realities.

The process rarely addresses stakeholder concerns. There would be benefit from a Q&A session prior to the public hearing which usually is at the end of the consultation process.

Quite positive, we worked with IPART recently on the Local Infrastructure Benchmarking, it went well and everyone was listened to and given consideration.

I think more local media and sharing of your activities to local Facebook pages would gain more active engagement from stakeholders.

My over the phone contact with IPART has been very good. I would like to see officers come onsite to discuss issues and see them from a first-hand experience.



# Comparisons & Commentary



## Comparisons with Previous Years

As mentioned in the introduction, direct comparisons with previous years are difficult, as the stakeholder survey has been overhauled.

Two overall category ‘satisfaction’ questions were purposely kept very similar to those in previous years. However, it should be noted that many of the preceding questions within each category were new, making the comparison less than direct.

**Figure 13: Comparison with Previous Years: IPART’s Stakeholder Consultation & IPART’s Tribunal**  
Percentage of respondents who provided a strongly positive or positive response (as a percentage of those who provided an active response, not N/A or skipped question)

Question	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
Overall, IPART’s consultation processes are of a high quality?	83%	79%	91%	94%	88%	89%	84%	91%	78%	
<b>Q15. Overall, how would you rate IPART’s stakeholder consultation?</b>										<b>69%</b>
Overall, Tribunal Members demonstrate leadership in implementing their legislative responsibilities.	77%	76%	86%	95%	82%	82%	84%	87%	89%	
<b>Q19. Overall, IPART’s Tribunal members demonstrate leadership and integrity in carrying out their responsibilities</b>										<b>82%</b>

As noted above, a direct comparison is difficult, given changes in the survey structure. It should also be noted that:

- The respondent numbers were significantly more (almost triple) what they were in the 2019 survey.
- Respondents were given an ‘opt out’ option in all questions relating to the Tribunal, for those respondents who had not been exposed to the Tribunal and its function. This was not an option in the 2019 survey, therefore, potentially there was some guesswork in previous responses.

## Overall Commentary by Group

### **Policy & Pricing: Local Government**

The Local Government themes paint a difficult picture. LGA representatives generally felt that IPART were not proactive enough in their engagement and need to undertake more ‘grass roots’ engagement in visiting and hearing the perspective of different LGAs in order to understand them better. There was consistent criticism of the rate pegging methodology and frustration that IPART appears unwilling to revise it, despite extensive feedback.

Ratepayers were divided into two camps: the first camp felt that IPART’s consultation process is structured in favour of councils and that engagement with householders was perfunctory, and that individuals or community groups could affect little influence on IPART’s decision making. It should be noted that this first camp was almost entirely householders in the Central Coast Council area. However, the second camp felt that IPART’s engagement with householders/private citizens was worthwhile, open and inclusive, even if they did not always agree with the final decisions.

### **Regulation & Compliance: Energy Savings Scheme**

ESS feedback varied, however there were numerous comments stating that responsiveness had improved over the past 18 months, especially regarding applications.

Some sources of frustration stem from an inability to contact the Compliance team easily in order to ask questions, long wait times on email responses and a perception of ambiguity in those responses. There was criticism of some methodologies, significantly Project Impact Assessment with Measurement and Verification (PIAM&V). There was also some frustration in the lack of visibility of the audit process, with no standard SLAs in place or ability to view the status of audits prior to conclusion.

Stakeholders requested more two-way opportunities to engage with IPART, including targeted workshops and case studies with smaller groups of stakeholders to help increase understanding of certain methods. There were also suggestions of ‘closing the loop’ with stakeholders who had made submissions.

### **Policy & Pricing: Water**

There was positive feedback from a range of key stakeholders stating that IPART’s water team was effectively managing ongoing proactive consultation, by undertaking regular informal meetings, industry workshops and formal consultations.

These key stakeholders did express some frustration with not being able to exert influence on IPART’s decision making and stated that although consultation is undertaken, it is very difficult to shift IPART’s position on most matters. There was also feedback that consultation forums often try to manage too wide a range of stakeholders at once and could improve by being broken down and targeted.

There was also feedback from ratepayers that they did not feel that their feedback was valued or considered in recent water rate decisions. Again, this group generally represented those in the Central Coast LGA. They suggested that ‘looping back’ to those who had made a submission would provide an impression that their submissions had been considered, even if decisions had not gone in their favour. There was also consistent feedback that reports are hard to find and not written in plain English and that perhaps report ‘summaries’ would assist.

### **Regulation & Compliance: Energy Network Regulation & Water Licensing**

Feedback in this area was largely positive, with consistent comments that IPART had improved over the past few years. Mention was made that the audit process had been improved significantly and that these improvements had made for a more satisfactory relationship with IPART. Generally speaking, IPART staff were described as knowledgeable and responsive.

With regard to written communication and the website it was noted by stakeholders that it can still be hard to find information unless you know exactly what you are looking for.

### **Policy & Pricing: Transport**

Key themes that emerged here were around inequality in stakeholder value. There was a question by a number of respondents as to whether IPART interrogates data enough when it is presented by a primary stakeholder or whether their submissions are accepted on face value.

Generally speaking, respondents were satisfied with the level of engagement undertaken by IPART, although they did make comment that working within legislation and terms of reference can present frustrations for both IPART and its stakeholders, but there is a perception that IPART is unwilling to challenge the status quo.

There were several comments stating that IPART are pragmatic and do not 'over-regulate' in this area.

### **Policy & Pricing: Energy**

There were few themes that emerged here. Private citizen and community responses were generally focused on dissatisfaction with energy pricing rather than being focused on the engagement process itself.

Organisations and advocacy groups commented that IPART's proactive engagement was generally good and that it maintains its appropriate level of independence.

### **Policy & Pricing: Special Reviews**

There was mixed feedback with regard to Special Reviews, dependent on a number of factors including the review(s) they had been involved with and the outcome of those reviews.

There was again a perceived inequality among stakeholders, whereby some stakeholder views were perceived to be given more weight than others. There was also some feedback that terms of reference excluded the application of relevant and necessary information within submissions. This, at times led to the perception that initial research was not undertaken sufficiently and that a 'one size fits all' approach was taken to the review process.

There was also some frustration that IPART's position was difficult to shift, once certain decisions had been made, regardless of the strength of submissions and that there was a reluctance on IPART's part to be moved away from the status quo or the 'expected outcome'.

However, there was feedback by other respondents who stated that they felt that engagement levels were realistic though the review process and understood that IPART was working within a legislative framework which didn't always allow for the representation of all needs for all stakeholders.

# Chapter 3

## Appendix

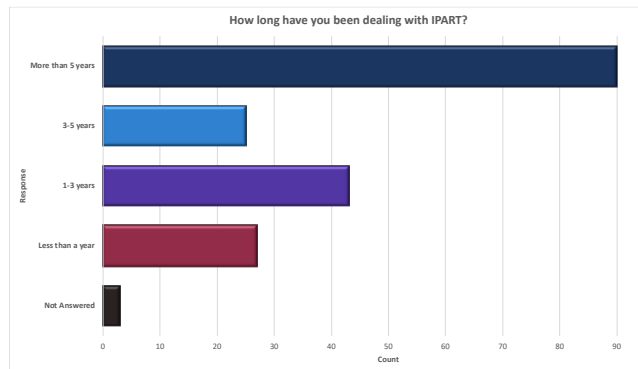
APPENDIX ...



## Appendix 1: All Quantitative Survey Results - Charts & Numeric Tables

### CATEGORY 1: GENERAL UNDERSTANDING

#### Question 1: How long have you been dealing with IPART?

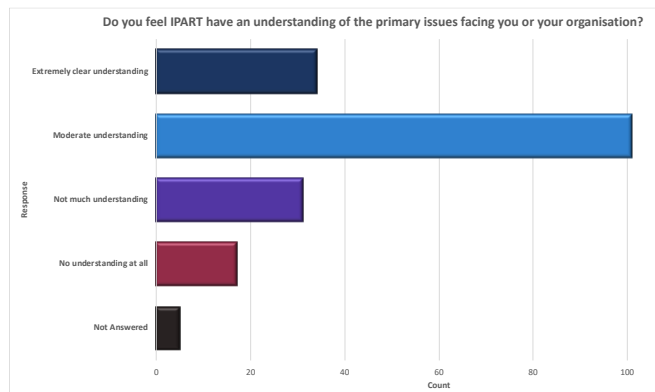


#### Question 1

*How long have you been dealing with IPART?*

Response	Count
Not Answered	3
Less than a year	27
1-3 years	43
3-5 years	25
More than 5 years	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

#### Question 2: Do you feel IPART have an understanding of the primary issues facing your organisation?



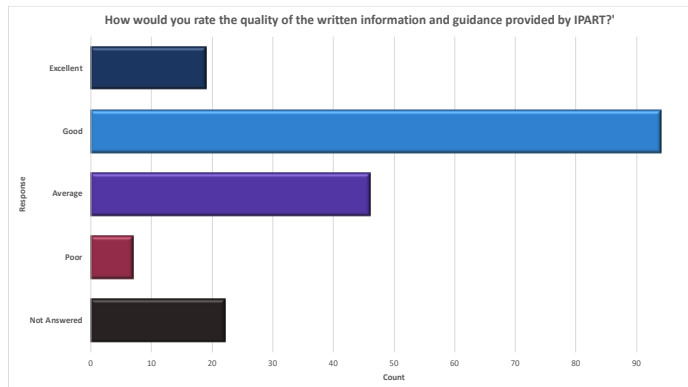
#### Question 2

*Do you feel IPART have an understanding of the primary issues facing you or your organisation?*

Response	Count
Not Answered	5
No understanding at all	17
Not much understanding	31
Moderate understanding	101
Extremely clear understanding	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

## CATEGORY 2: COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

### Question 3: How would you rate the quality of the written information & guidance provided by IPART?

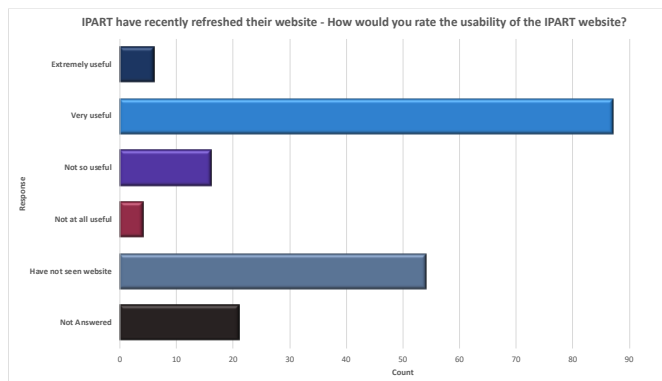


#### Question 3

How would you rate the quality of the written information and guidance provided by IPART?

Response	Count
Not Answered	22
Poor	7
Average	46
Good	94
Excellent	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 4: IPART have recently refreshed their website – How would you rate the usability of the IPART website?

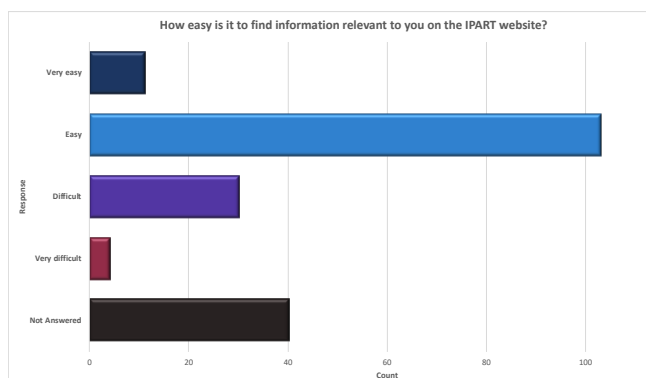


#### Question 4

IPART have recently refreshed their website - How would you rate the usability of the IPART website?

Response	Count
Not Answered	21
Have not seen website	54
Not at all useful	4
Not so useful	16
Very useful	87
Extremely useful	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 5: How easy is it to find information relevant to you on the IPART website?

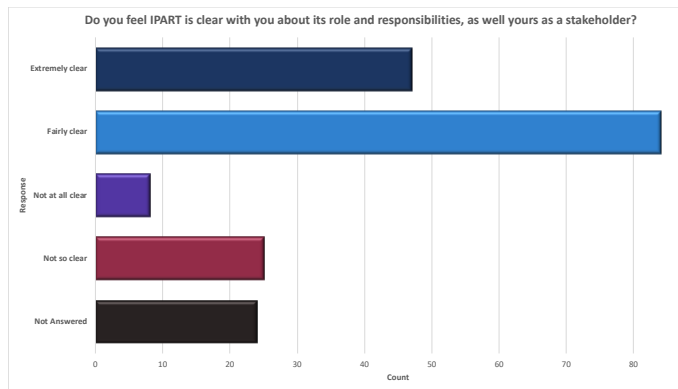


#### Question 5

How easy is it to find information relevant to you on the IPART website?

Response	Count
Not Answered	40
Very difficult	4
Difficult	30
Easy	103
Very easy	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 6: Do you feel IPART is clear with you about its role & responsibilities, as well as yours as a stakeholder?

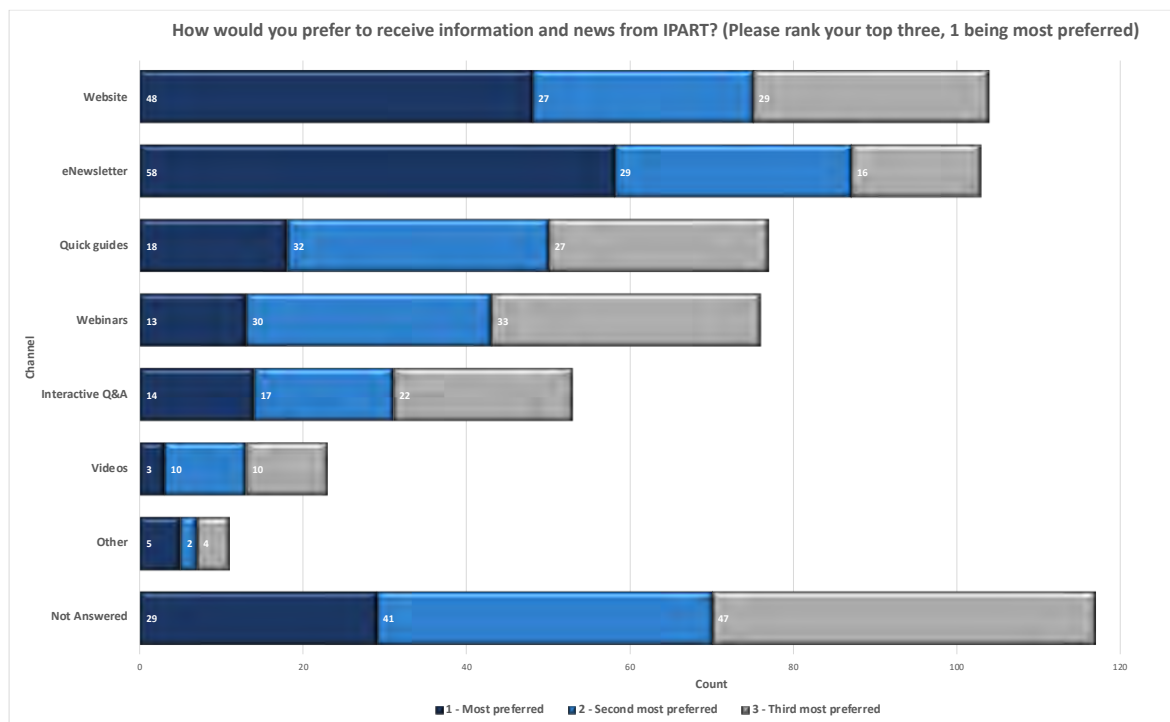


#### Question 6

Do you feel IPART is clear with you about its role and responsibilities, as well yours as a stakeholder?

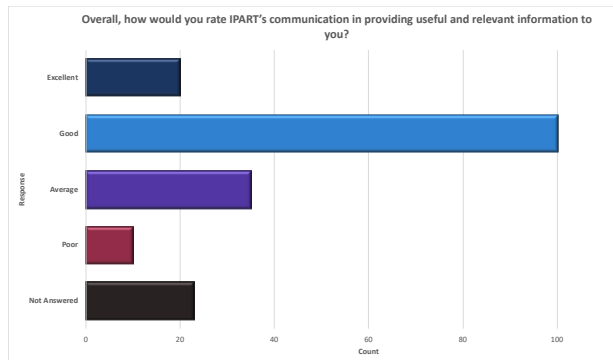
Response	Count
Not Answered	24
Not so clear	25
Not at all clear	8
Fairly clear	84
Extremely clear	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 7: How would you prefer to receive information & news from IPART?



Response	1 - Most preferred	2 - Second most preferred	3 - Third most preferred
Not Answered	29	41	47
Other	5	2	4
Videos	3	10	10
Interactive Q&A	14	17	22
Webinars	13	30	33
Quick guides	18	32	27
eNewsletter	58	29	16
Website	48	27	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 8: Overall how would you rate IPART's communication in providing useful & relevant information to you?



**Question 8**

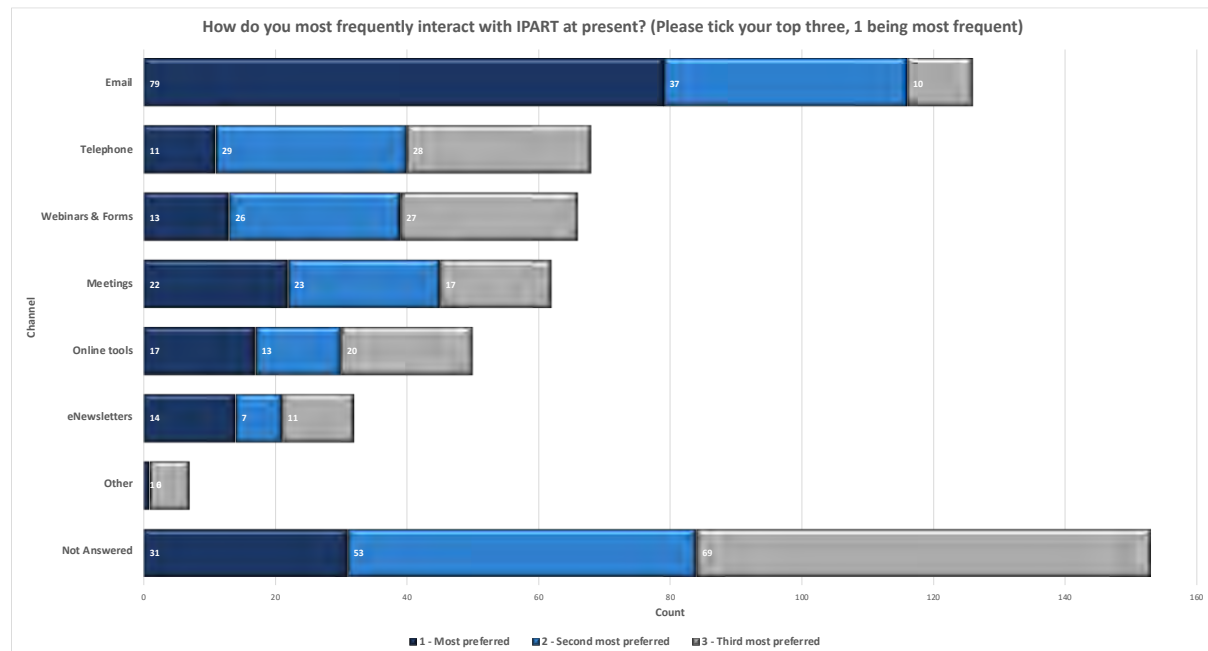
Overall, how would you rate IPART's communication in providing useful and relevant information to you?

Response	Count
Not Answered	23
Poor	10
Average	35
Good	100
Excellent	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>



## CATEGORY 3: INTERACTION CHANNELS & PROFESSIONALISM

### Question 9: How do you most frequently interact with IPART at present?

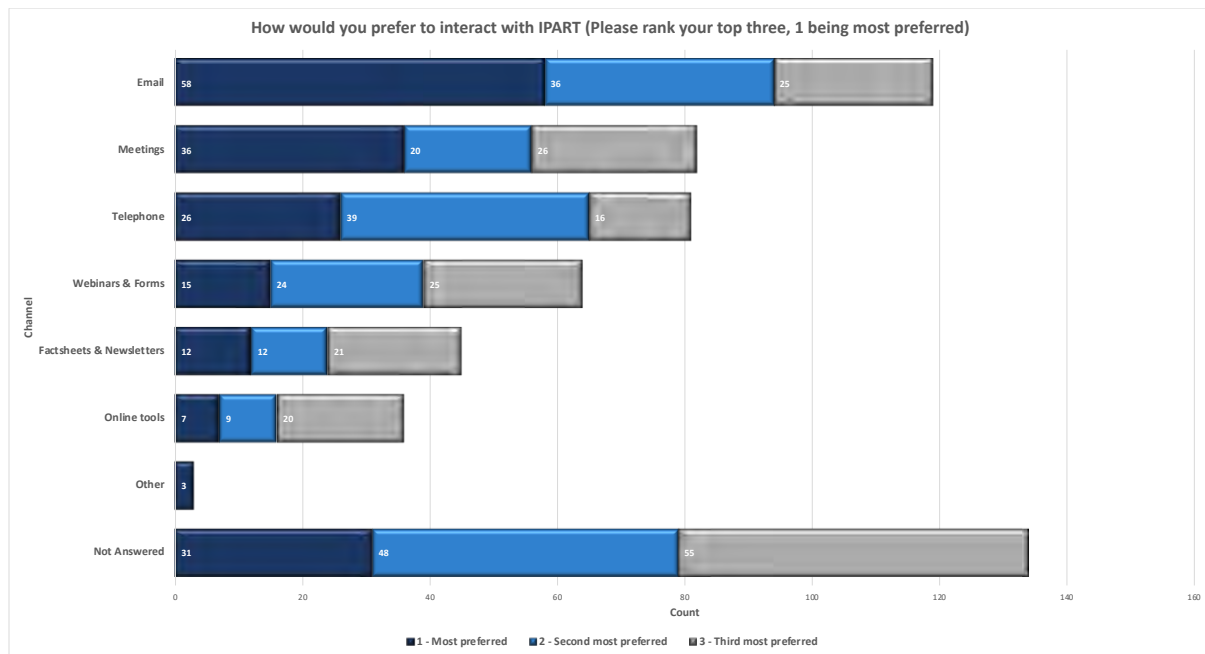


#### Question 9

How do you most frequently interact with IPART at present? (Please tick your top three, 1 being most frequent)

Response	1 - Most preferred	2 - Second most preferred	3 - Third most preferred	Total
Not Answered	31	53	69	153
Other	1	0	6	7
eNewsletters	14	7	11	32
Online tools	17	13	20	50
Meetings	22	23	17	62
Webinars & Forms	13	26	27	66
Telephone	11	29	28	68
Email	79	37	10	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>564</b>

### Question 10: How would you prefer to interact with IPART?

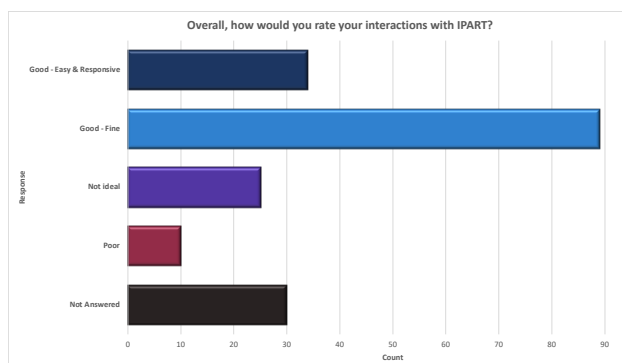


#### Question 10

How would you prefer to interact with IPART (Please rank your top three, 1 being most preferred)

Response	1 - Most preferred	2 - Second most preferred	3 - Third most preferred	Total
Not Answered	31	48	55	134
Other	3	0	0	3
Online tools	7	9	20	36
Factsheets & Newsletters	12	12	21	45
Webinars & Forms	15	24	25	64
Telephone	26	39	16	81
Meetings	36	20	26	82
Email	58	36	25	119
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>564</b>

### Question 11: Overall, how would you rate your interactions with IPART?



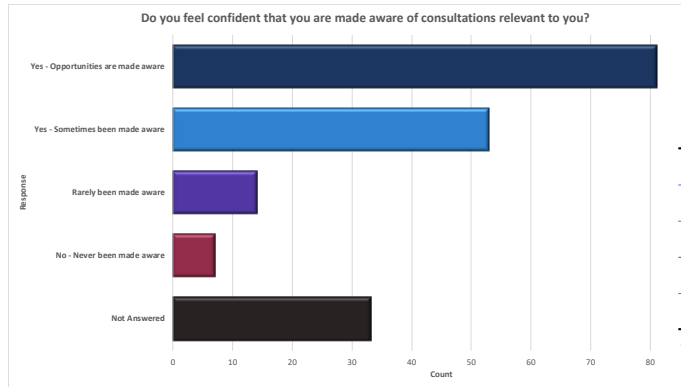
#### Question 11

Overall, how would you rate your interactions with IPART?

Response	Count
Not Answered	30
Poor	10
Not ideal	25
Good - Fine	89
Good - Easy & Responsive	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

## CATEGORY 4: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Question 12: Do you feel confident that you are made aware of consultations relevant to you?

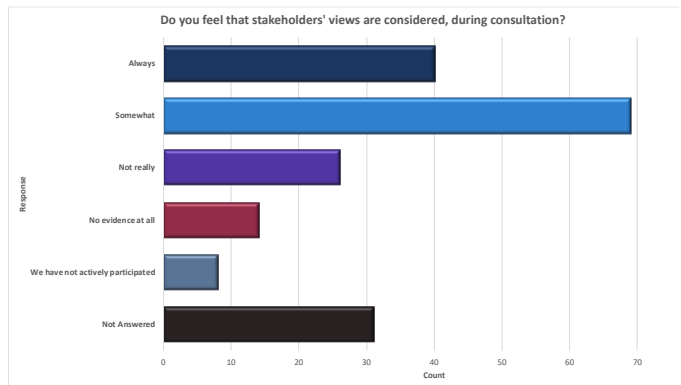


### Question 12

Do you feel confident that you are made aware of consultations relevant to you?

Response	Count
Not Answered	33
No - Never been made aware	7
Rarely been made aware	14
Yes - Sometimes been made aware	53
Yes - Opportunities are made aware	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Question 13: Do you feel that stakeholders' views are considered, during consultation?

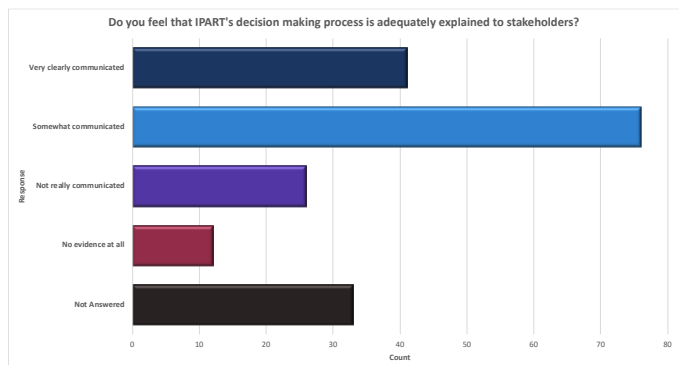


### Question 13

Do you feel that stakeholders' views are considered, during consultation?

Response	Count
Not Answered	31
We have not actively participated	8
No evidence at all	14
Not really	26
Somewhat	69
Always	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Question 14: Do you feel that IPART's decision making process is adequately explained to stakeholders?

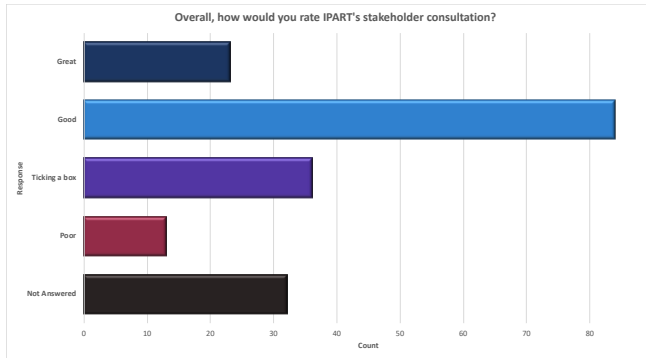


### Question 14

Do you feel that IPART's decision making process is adequately explained to stakeholders?

Response	Count
Not Answered	33
No evidence at all	12
Not really communicated	26
Somewhat communicated	76
Very clearly communicated	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 15: Overall, how would you rate IPART's stakeholder consultation?



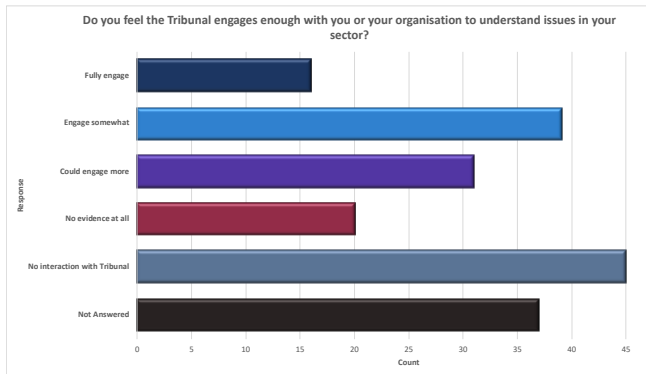
**Question 15**

Overall, how would you rate IPART's stakeholder consultation?

Response	Count
Not Answered	32
Poor	13
Ticking a box	36
Good	84
Great	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

## CATEGORY 5: IPART'S TRIBUNAL

### Question 16: Do you feel the Tribunal engages enough with you or your organisation to understand issues in your sector?

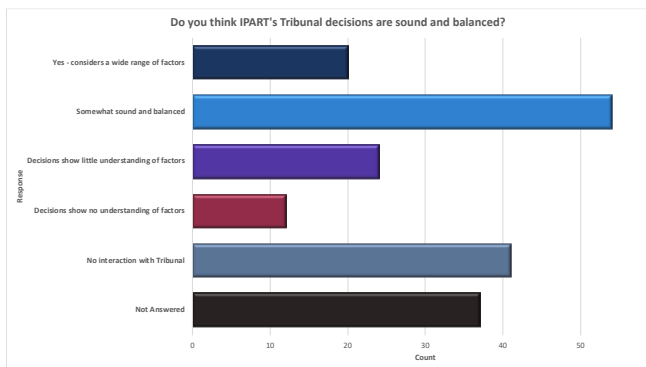


**Question 16**

Do you feel the Tribunal engages enough with you or your organisation to understand issues in your sector?

Response	Count
Not Answered	37
No interaction with Tribunal	45
No evidence at all	20
Could engage more	31
Engage somewhat	39
Fully engage	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 17: Do you feel the Tribunal engages enough with you or your organisation to understand issues in your sector?

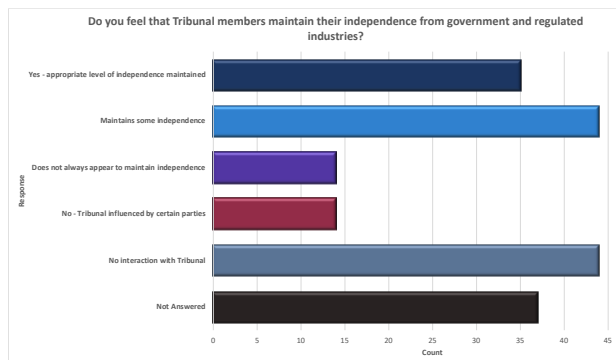


**Question 17**

Do you think IPART's Tribunal decisions are sound and balanced?

Response	Count
Not Answered	37
No interaction with Tribunal	41
Decisions show no understanding of factors	12
Decisions show little understanding of factors	24
Somewhat sound and balanced	54
Yes - considers a wide range of factors	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 18: Do you feel that the Tribunal members maintain their independence from government & regulated industries?

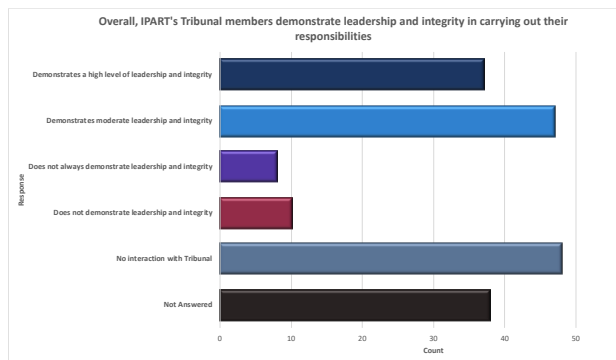


**Question 18**

*Do you feel that Tribunal members maintain their independence from government and regulated industries?*

Response	Count
Not Answered	37
No interaction with Tribunal	44
No - Tribunal influenced by certain parties	14
Does not always appear to maintain independence	14
Maintains some independence	44
Yes - appropriate level of independence maintained	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

### Question 19: Overall, IPART's Tribunal members demonstrate leadership & integrity in carrying out their responsibilities.



**Question 19**

*Overall, IPART's Tribunal members demonstrate leadership and integrity in carrying out their responsibilities*

Response	Count
Not Answered	38
No interaction with Tribunal	48
Does not demonstrate leadership and integrity	10
Does not always demonstrate leadership and integrity	8
Demonstrates moderate leadership and integrity	47
Demonstrates a high level of leadership and integrity	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

## Appendix 2: Survey Questions (with answer options)

### Q1. How long have you been dealing with IPART?

Answer Choices

- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- More than 5 years

### Q2. Do you feel IPART have an understanding of the primary issues facing you or your organisation?

Answer Choices

- Extremely clear understanding
- Moderate understanding
- Not much understanding
- No understanding at all
- Optional comment:

### Q3. How would you rate the quality of the written information and guidance provided by IPART?'

Answer Choices

- Excellent – easy to find, easy to understand
- Good – comprehensive
- Average – not always easy to understand
- Poor – hard to find, not in plain English
- Optional comment:

### Q4. IPART have recently refreshed their website - How would you rate the usability of the IPART website?

Answer Choices

- N/A - I haven't seen the new website
- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Not so useful
- Not at all useful
- Optional comment:

### Q5. How easy is it to find information relevant to you on the IPART website?

Answer Choices

- Very easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Optional comment:

### Q6. Do you feel IPART is clear with you about its role and responsibilities, as well yours as a stakeholder?

Answer Choices

- Extremely clear - I know exactly what is expected of me
- Fairly clear
- Not so clear

Not at all clear - I find it very confusing

Optional comment:

**Q7. How would you prefer to receive information and news from IPART? (Please rank your top three, 1 being most preferred)**

Website

Webinars

Videos

Interactive Q&A

eNewsletter

Quick guides

Other

Please specify

**Q8. Overall, how would you rate IPART's communication in providing useful and relevant information to you?**

Answer Choices

Excellent – easy to find, easy to understand

Good – comprehensive

Average – not always easy to understand

Poor – hard to find, not in plain English

Optional comment:

**Q9. How do you most frequently interact with IPART at present? (Please tick your top three, 1 being most frequent)**

Telephone

eMail

Meetings (online/F2F)

Webinars/Forums

eNewsletters

Online tools

Other

Please specify:

**Q10. How would you prefer to interact with IPART (Please rank your top three, 1 being most preferred)**

By telephone – I like to speak to somebody directly

By email – I like my responses in writing

Meetings (online or face to face)

Webinars and forums – I like to hear what other people are asking

Factsheets/Newsletters – I prefer just to read what's on the website

Online Tools (portal, online forms etc) - I like the information to be specific and in one place

Other

Please specify:

**Q11. Overall, how would you rate your interactions with IPART?**

Answer Choices

Great – easy to deal with and responsive

Good – fine – what I would expect from a regulator

Not ideal – sometimes hard to find information or get responses

Poor – never get what we need from them

Optional Comment:

**Q12. Do you feel confident that you are made aware of consultations relevant to you?**

Answer Choices

Yes, we are made aware of consultation opportunities

Yes, we have sometimes been made aware of consultation opportunities

Not really, we have rarely been made aware of consultation activities

No, we have never been made aware that we can contribute to consultations

Optional comment:

**Q13. Do you feel that stakeholders' views are considered, during consultation?**

Answer Choices

N/A we have not actively participated in consultation

Yes, our views are always taken into consideration

Somewhat, we feel that our views are sometimes considered

Not really, we rarely feel that our views are considered

No, we have seen no evidence that our views have been considered

Optional comment:

**Q14. Do you feel that IPART's decision making process is adequately explained to stakeholders?**

Answer Choices

Yes, it's very clearly communicated how decisions and recommendations are reached

Somewhat, we get some idea of how decisions and recommendations are reached

Not really, we rarely get insight into how decisions and recommendations are reached

No, we have seen no evidence of how decisions and recommendations are reached

Optional comment:

**Q15. Overall, how would you rate IPART's stakeholder consultation?**

Answer Choices

Great – we feel engaged

Good – fine – what I would expect from a regulator

Not ideal – sometimes like ticking a box rather than true engagement

Poor – we never feel that our input is valued

Optional Comment:

**Q16. Do you feel the Tribunal engages enough with you or your organisation to understand issues in your sector?**

Answer Choices

N/A - I have had no interaction with the Tribunal

Yes, they engage fully

Yes, they engage somewhat

No, they could engage more

No, I've seen no evidence of their engagement

Optional comment:

**Q17. Do you think IPART's Tribunal decisions are sound and balanced?**

Answer Choices

N/A - I have had no interaction with the Tribunal

Yes, the Tribunal's decisions definitely take into consideration a wide range of relevant factors

Somewhat, the Tribunal's decisions take into consideration some relevant factors



Not really, the Tribunal's decisions show little understanding of the relevant factors

Not at all, the Tribunal's decisions show no understanding of the relevant factors

Optional comment:

**Q18. Do you feel that Tribunal members maintain their independence from government and regulated industries?**

Answer Choices

N/A - I have had no interaction with the Tribunal

Yes, the Tribunal maintains the appropriate level of independence

Somewhat, the Tribunal appears to maintain some independence

Not really, the Tribunal does not always appear to maintain independence

Not at all, the Tribunal seems unduly influenced by certain parties

Optional comment:

**Q19. Overall, IPART's Tribunal members demonstrate leadership and integrity in carrying out their responsibilities**

Answer Choices

N/A - I have had no interaction with the Tribunal

Yes, the Tribunal demonstrate a high level of leadership and integrity

Somewhat, the Tribunal demonstrates moderate leadership and integrity

Not really, the Tribunal does not always demonstrate leadership and integrity

Not at all, the Tribunal does not demonstrate leadership and integrity

Optional comment:

**Q20. We really appreciate feedback from our stakeholders - please provide any comments about your dealings with IPART.**

Comment

**Q21. We are very keen to hear in depth feedback from our stakeholders, would you be willing to take part in a 15 minute telephone interview with one of our consultants?**

Answer Choices

Yes

No thanks

**Q22. If yes, please enter your preferred email so we can contact you. You will be contacted by The Consulting Space, the independent consultancy we have engaged to undertake our survey and interviews.**