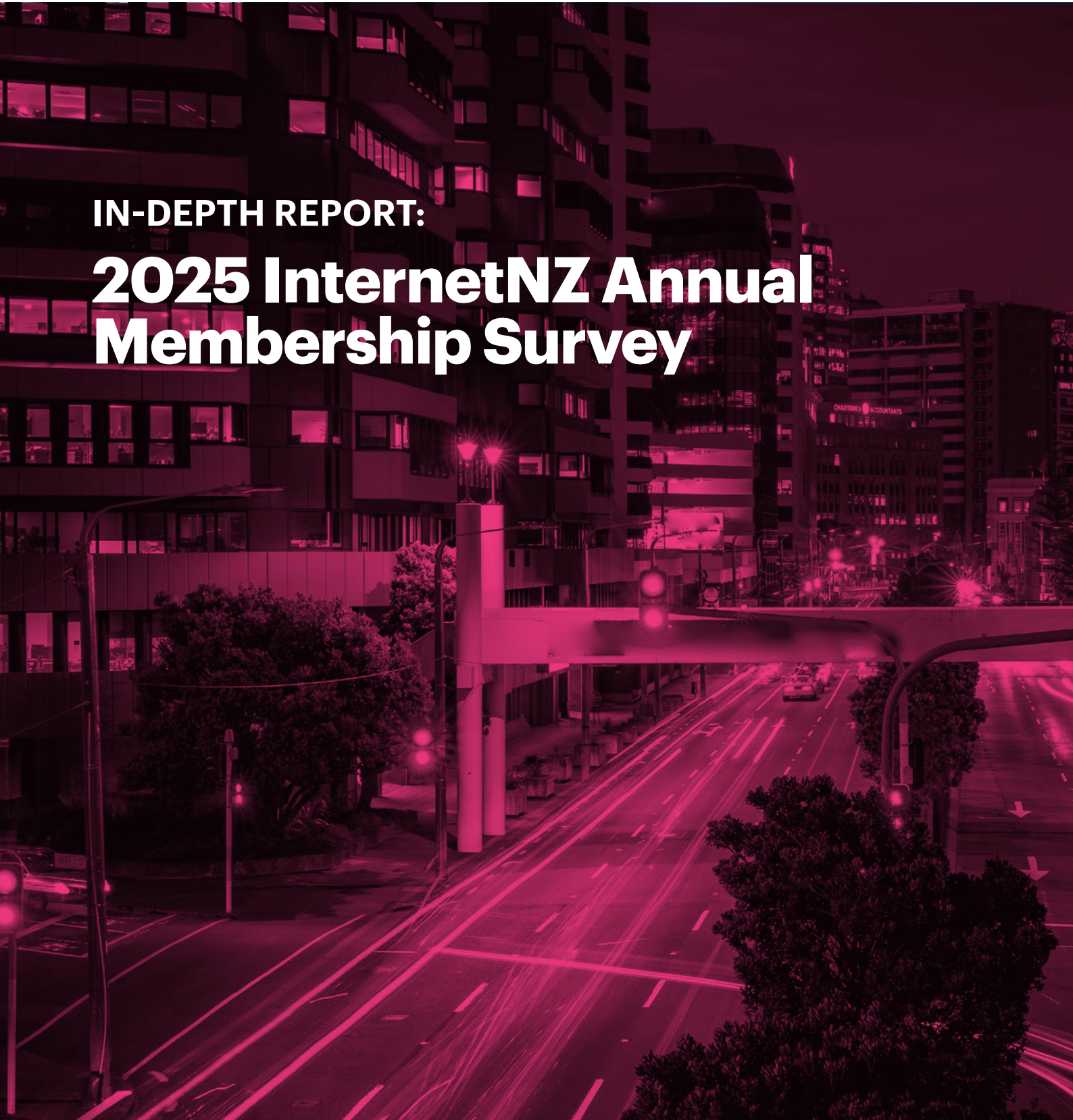


IN-DEPTH REPORT:

2025 InternetNZ Annual Membership Survey





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CONTENT WARNING

This report discusses the racist and harmful beliefs held by some InternetNZ members. These beliefs largely target Māori. They do not reflect the views or values held by our organisation. InternetNZ remains firmly committed to serving all New Zealanders, partnering with Māori, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and addressing racism wherever it appears.

VERSION

This version of the survey report was published on September 9, 2025. It replaces a previous version published in August 2025.

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Executive summary

The 2025 InternetNZ Annual Membership Survey was conducted during a year of historic growth, with membership increasing more than twelvefold from 380 to over 4,600. Against this backdrop, the survey aimed to provide meaningful insight into our expanded membership, enhance our communication strategies, and strengthen engagement practices. With a response rate of 34.7%, the highest since the survey began, this year’s results offer a significant mandate. However, we do note that the findings of this survey do not cover the opinions and perspectives of all InternetNZ members, only those who responded to the survey.

Key findings:

Membership composition:

Respondents were predominantly urban, Pākehā, and aged 25–54, with the majority identifying with technical, business, academic, or advocacy communities. A growing Te Ao Māori presence and interest from rangatahi were also noted.

Motivations for joining: Many new members were driven by a desire to support InternetNZ’s Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitment and counter perceived ideological threats. There is a strong alignment with values of inclusion, neutrality, and digital equity.

Engagement preferences: Email remains the dominant communication channel. However, members expressed a desire for more inclusive, clear, and accessible communication, both online and in-person. NetHub’s reach remains limited.

Perceptions of InternetNZ: 88% are satisfied with their membership. Yet, only 40% were familiar with the new Constitution, and just over half clearly understood our public role. While Te Tiriti o Waitangi visibility was high (73%), its relevance sparked significant debate.

Future priorities: Members called for a stronger public stance on digital equity, disinformation, and online safety, while also advocating for neutrality, transparency, and a more inclusive governance model.

Strategic insights:

Member feedback reflects strong support for InternetNZ’s technical and governance work but highlights critical gaps in clarity around our Constitution, the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and how decisions are made. Polarisation around cultural integration signals the need for enhanced education and dialogue, while shifting demographics demand a refresh of communication tools and engagement strategies.

Recommendations:

Based on member feedback, InternetNZ should improve newsletters to ensure they are concise, engaging, and accessible. A streamlined onboarding process and clear explanatory content about InternetNZ’s functions, including the distinction between advocacy and core operations, will support member understanding and involvement. In the longer term, developing a comprehensive onboarding programme will strengthen trust, accountability, and participation across the membership.

Participation, methodology and respondent profiles

Participation

The 2025 InternetNZ Annual Membership Survey occurred amid unprecedented membership growth. Over the first half of 2025, InternetNZ saw a 1,000% increase in our membership, from 380 members to over 4,600. The historical trends of membership growth had been very minimal, losing and gaining a handful of members per quarter. Given this shift, the survey’s role in understanding the new membership base became critically important.

Over the last four years, InternetNZ has seen a steady decrease in the participation rate of the survey:

Year	Participation Rate
2021	26%
2022	22.4%
2023	20.6%
2024	18%
2025	34.7%



One key objective of the 2025 survey was to increase the participation rate to 25%, a statistically significant percentage, ensuring that the results provided a clear mandate.

1,563 Completed

311 Incomplete

2,636 Not started

2025 Participation Rate: 34.7%

The 2025 survey was open for the standard 14 days, from 9 June to 23 June. Of the 4,510 InternetNZ members invited to participate, 34.7% completed it, and 65.3% did not respond. **This surpassed our participation target by almost 10%, providing us with the highest participation rate since the survey started in 2007.**

Respondent demographic profile

Demographic data collected from the survey questions aligns with Statistics New Zealand standards where practicable. The key demographic variables include geographic location, gender identity (male, female, non-binary, prefer not to say), ethnicity, age group (18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+), and Internet community affiliation (e.g., professional networks, advocacy groups, technical communities).

The respondent cohort is predominantly urban, Pākehā, and aged 25–54, with strong ties to digital rights and technical communities. Gender diversity remains limited, and the geographic spread shows larger numbers in New Zealand’s population centres and illustrates a continuing trend towards an increase in Auckland-based members.

Gender identity:

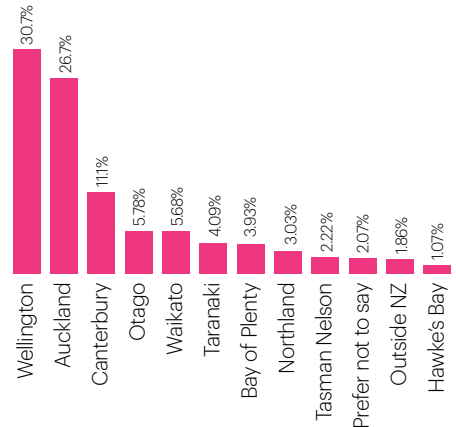
- 57.1% identify as male
- 30.1% identify as female
- 3.3% identify as gender diverse
- 9.6% preferred not to answer

Age distribution:

- 28.2% aged 66+
- 21.6% aged 56–65
- 21.7% aged 46–55
- 18.9% aged 36–45
- 8.3% aged 26–35
- 1.3% aged 18–25

Ethnic composition:

- 66.8% identify as NZ European / Pākehā
- 6.4% identify as Māori
- 12.0% declined to specify their ethnicity



Community affiliation profile of survey respondents

Understanding the composition of our membership is essential to shaping a strategic and inclusive approach to InternetNZ’s work. As part of the 2025 InternetNZ Annual Membership Survey, respondents were asked to identify the Internet communities or sectors they associate with. This question was designed to give us a clearer picture of the backgrounds, interests, and potential priorities of our member base, particularly in the context of unprecedented membership growth during the first half of 2025.

A total of 2,122 responses were recorded from 1,563 respondents for this question. The largest proportion (484 responses) came from those identifying with the technical community, including developers, engineers, and infrastructure experts. This group accounts for approximately 22.8% of all responses, reaffirming InternetNZ’s continued relevance to New Zealand’s digital infrastructure and Internet communities.

The business and private sector followed closely at 19.4%, highlighting growing engagement with commercial stakeholders operating within or alongside Internet-related industries. This group is likely to have a strong interest in policy advocacy, regulatory certainty, and technical reliability.

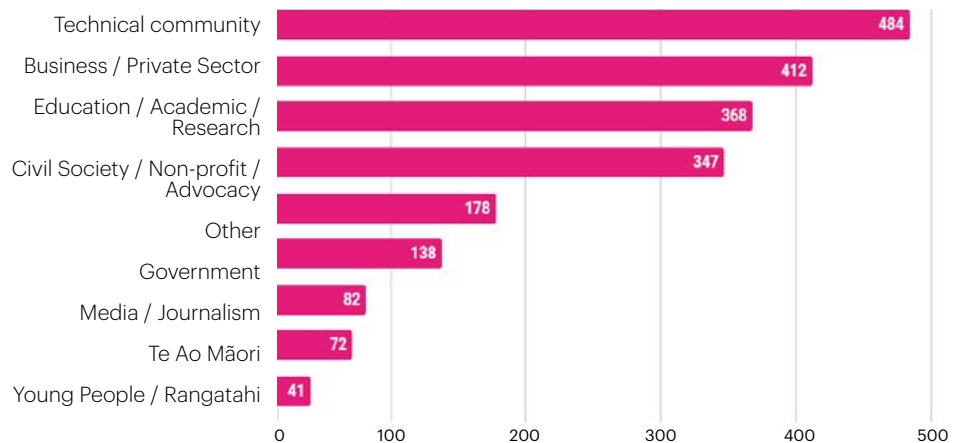
Education, academic, and research affiliations made up the third largest category (17.3%), followed by civil society, non-profit, and advocacy organisations (16.4%). These communities have historically played a key role in shaping public interest Internet policy, and their continued engagement reinforces InternetNZ’s commitment to equity, access, and openness.

Other notable communities include government, media and journalism, and Te Ao Māori. Notably, 72 respondents explicitly identified with Te Ao Māori, signalling a growing Māori presence and providing valuable insights for our Te Tiriti-based work. Meanwhile, a relatively small but important group of young people/rangatahi (41 respondents) represents an emerging demographic that is vital to our future sustainability, innovation, and relevance.



Finally, 178 respondents selected “Other,” a category that may include multidisciplinary professionals, members of the general public, or those who do not strongly identify with any specific sector.

Taken together, the diversity of affiliations reflects a broadening mandate and signals the need for ongoing adaptability in how we engage with our membership. This data will play a vital role in shaping future strategies to ensure that InternetNZ remains representative, responsive, and relevant to the communities we serve.



What we heard: a closer look at member responses

This section reviews all non-demographic questions from the survey and, where applicable, summarises free-text responses. Questions 1 to 5 were demographic in nature and, therefore, excluded from this analysis.

New and historical membership

Question 6: Have you been a member of InternetNZ for more than one year?

This question was designed to help us better understand the makeup of our respondents. Of those who answered, 11% identified as ‘historical members’, while 89% identified as new members. To learn more about our newer members, those who selected ‘no’ were presented with two follow-up questions.

Reasons for joining InternetNZ membership

Question 7: Why did you join InternetNZ? (Please share in your own words — was it a particular event or kaupapa, value, or connection that interested you?)

Newer members joined InternetNZ for a variety of reasons, with a strong focus on countering perceived threats from right-wing groups and supporting the organisation’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Many cited concerns about ideological influences seeking to shift InternetNZ’s values and direction, expressing a clear desire to safeguard the organisation’s independence and neutrality. There was also notable interest in InternetNZ’s advocacy work and its role in Internet governance, with some members motivated by professional interests in technology and digital equity. Overall, a common theme was the desire to protect InternetNZ’s mission and uphold its values of fairness, inclusivity, and public good.

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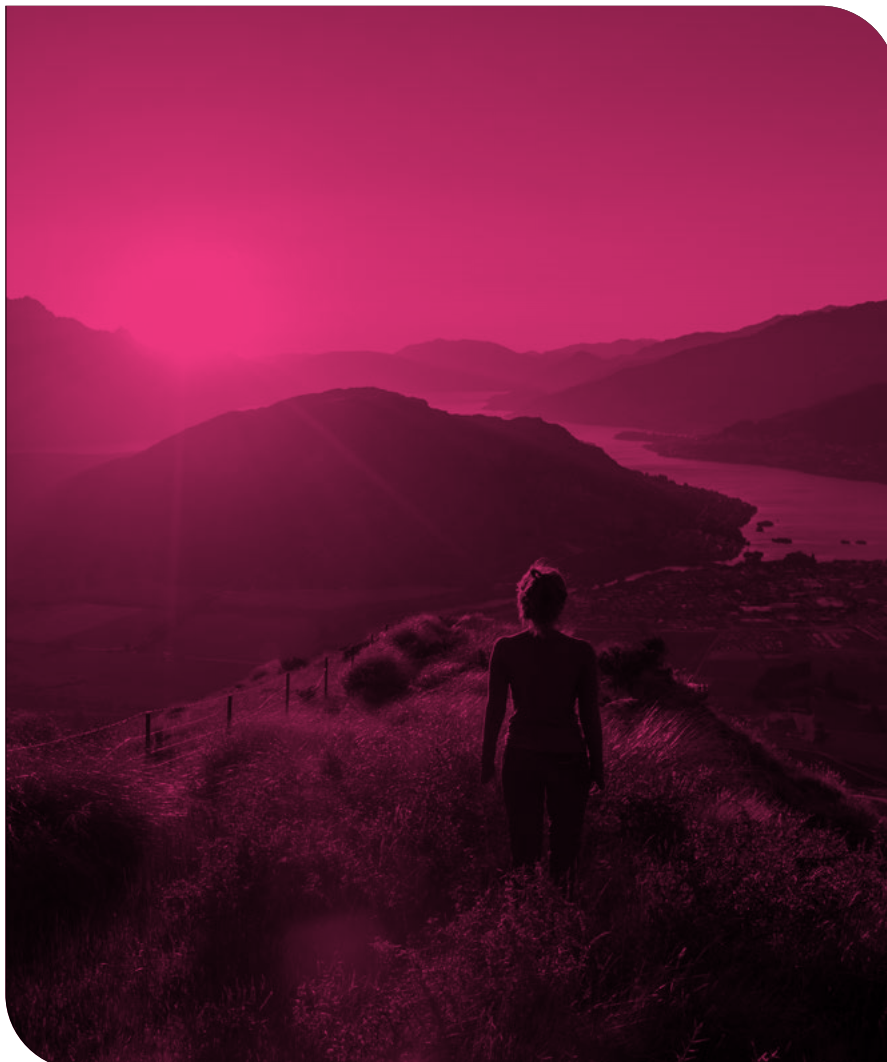


Value proposition of InternetNZ membership

Question 8: What would add the most value to your membership, or help attract others in your community?

New members highlighted several key areas to enhance the value of membership. Diversity and inclusion emerged as central themes, with calls for political neutrality and “equal treatment for all members”, alongside advocacy for greater Māori representation and inclusivity. Clear and consistent communication was another priority, with respondents seeking regular updates and the use of plain language to ensure accessibility, particularly for non-technical members.

Engagement was also seen as vital, both with the wider community and among members. Suggestions included more outreach to foster connections and dialogue, and increasing public awareness of InternetNZ’s role, impact and funding. Transparency in decision-making and governance processes was a recurring theme, with members expressing a desire for greater openness and accountability. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on upholding freedom of speech and “resisting censorship.” While this reflects a desire for open dialogue and safe expression of diverse viewpoints, it also highlights some confusion about InternetNZ’s technical and non-regulatory role in the online ecosystem.



Satisfaction levels

Question 9: I am satisfied with my decision to be a current InternetNZ member.

Response	%
I don't know	5%
Strongly disagree	2%
Disagree	2%
Somewhat disagree	4%
Somewhat agree	19%
Agree	47%
Strongly agree	22%

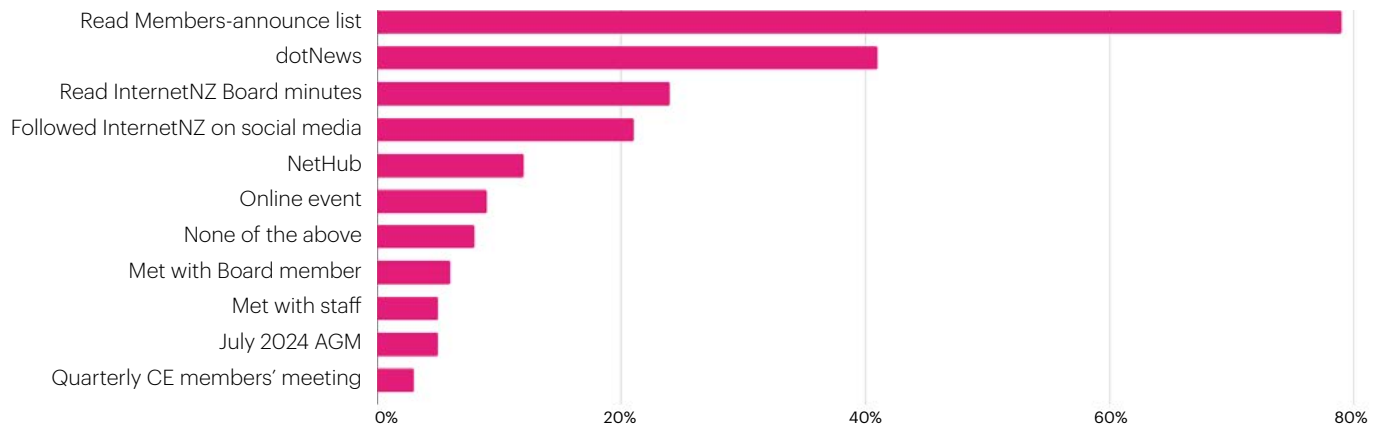
A clear majority of members are satisfied with their decision to join InternetNZ, with 88% expressing some level of agreement. Nearly half (47%) selected “agree” and 22% “strongly agree,” indicating a strong overall sense of satisfaction within the membership. A small proportion (8%) expressed some level of disagreement, while 5% were unsure, suggesting a small opportunity to better understand and address the concerns of these members to strengthen continued engagement and retention.



Membership engagement questions

Engagement over the last year

Question 10: How have you engaged with InternetNZ in the past 12 months?



Seventy-nine per cent of respondents reported reading emails received through the members-announce list, significantly higher than the next highest-engaged channel, dotNews, at 41%. This highlights the importance of continuing to improve our email communications, as they remain a key touchpoint for member engagement.

Member communication channels

Question 11: How would you rate the following member communication channels?

Rating	Members-announce	NetHub
I don't know	12%	62%
Very poor	2%	2%
Poor	4%	4%
Neutral	30%	19%
Meets expectations	47%	13%
Exceeds expectations	3%	0.80%

The two main member communication channels received markedly different responses. Sixty-two per cent of respondents selected "I don't know" when asked about NetHub, reflecting its continued low uptake and limited visibility. Only 13.8% rated NetHub as meeting or exceeding expectations, with feedback indicating ineffective moderation and a general lack of awareness about the platform.

In contrast, 47% felt that members-announce meets expectations, though just 3% said it exceeds them, suggesting room for improvement. These findings indicate that members-announce should remain our primary communications channel, with a secondary focus on increasing awareness and improving the moderation of NetHub.

Member-to-member mailing list

Question 12: Would you be interested in joining a member-to-member mailing list?

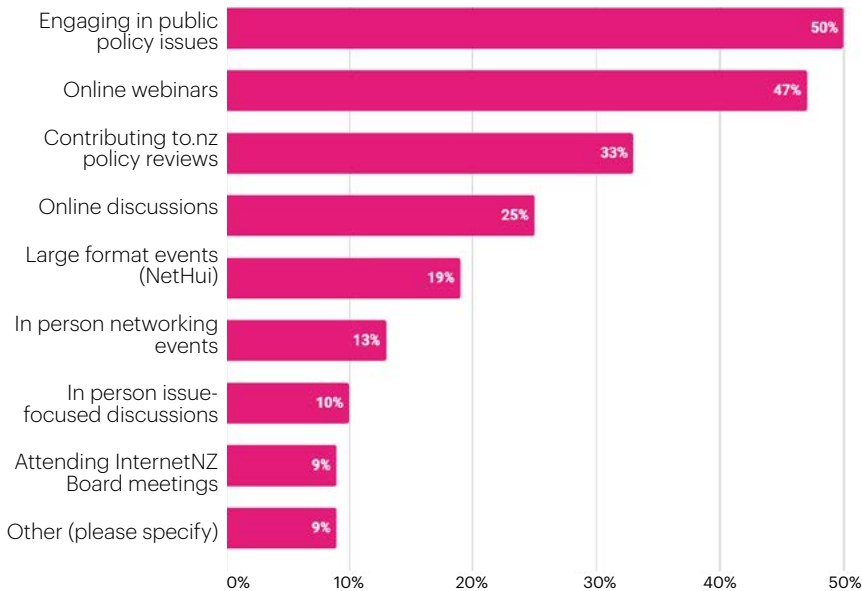
Given the recent shift in membership, InternetNZ sought to understand whether there was still interest in reinstating a member-to-member mailing list. The response was clear: **75% said no, while 25% were in favour.**

Members expressed concerns about information overload and the potential for spam, noting that a member-to-member email list could result in an unmanageable volume of messages and fragmented discussions. Some suggested alternatives, such as curated summaries of forum activity based on engagement, to reduce email clutter. Privacy and security were also noted, with apprehension about sharing personal email addresses in such a system.



Most desired methods and reasons for engagement

Question 13: Select up to three ways you'd most like to engage with us



Respondents expressed a strong preference for varied forms of engagement. The most selected option was participating in public policy discussions, followed by general online webinars, and contributing to .nz policy reviews. These responses reflect a clear interest in both InternetNZ's advocacy work and its core business.

Online engagement is particularly valued for its convenience and accessibility. Many respondents appreciate webinars, asynchronous discussions, and email communications, which allow them to stay informed without needing to participate in real time. That said, there was also notable interest in in-person events, with 42% indicating a preference for large-format gatherings, networking opportunities, and issue-focused discussions, provided these are geographically inclusive. Time and location constraints remain a barrier, reinforcing the need for flexible and inclusive engagement options. Overall, members value opportunities that are accessible, meaningful, and mindful of their time and energy.

Feedback on current engagement methods

Question 14: Do you have any feedback on InternetNZ's current engagement methods?

InternetNZ's engagement methods received mixed feedback, reflecting both strengths and opportunities for improvement. While some members value the use of email and Slack for communication, others view these channels as outdated and suggest adopting more contemporary platforms — such as Discord — to better connect with younger members.

Concerns around transparency and inclusivity were common, with calls for clearer communication and more "open decision-making processes." It's worth noting that many of these concerns were raised by newer members.

The onboarding process also drew criticism, with some describing it as slow and unclear, leaving new members uncertain about how to participate effectively.

Despite these challenges, several respondents commended the organisation's efforts to engage constructively and appreciate the informative nature of recent communications. Overall, members are calling for InternetNZ to modernise its engagement methods and enhance transparency.





What members said about the new Constitution:

Familiarity with the new Constitution

Question 15: How familiar are you with the new Constitution?

Familiarity level	%
Not at all familiar	27%
Somewhat familiar	33%
Aware, but not familiar with the details	35%
Very familiar	5%

Detailed familiarity with the new Constitution was relatively low, with only 5% indicating they were very familiar and a further 33% being somewhat familiar. This illustrates an opportunity to better inform members about the Constitution's content, intent, and potential impact.

In the free text responses, the new Constitution sparked considerable debate, with a wide range of views on its implications. A key point of contention was the inclusion of "race-based policies" and references to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which some participants described as unnecessary and divisive. These respondents questioned the relevance of such references, arguing that the organisation should remain neutral and focused solely on its core purpose of managing Internet domains and infrastructure.

In contrast, many others supported the changes, viewing them as positive steps toward diversity, inclusion, and honouring Te Tiriti commitments. Some praised the organisation for embedding these principles into its governance structure.

Concerns around political influence and a perceived erosion of neutrality were common across the spectrum, with several members expressing unease about the potential politicisation of InternetNZ's work. Overall, responses reflected a clear divide between those advocating for stronger cultural integration and those prioritising organisational neutrality and focus.

InternetNZ's public role

Question 16: How would you rate InternetNZ's public role in areas that matter to you (e.g., digital equity, disinformation, internet openness)?

Rating	%
Not sure	25%
Very weak	6%
Weak	11%
Neutral	21%
Strong	29%
Very strong	7%

Thirty-six per cent of respondents view InternetNZ's public role as Strong/Very Strong. Seventeen per cent rated it as Weak or Very Weak, 21% were Neutral, and 25% selected Not Sure. While the overall perception is generally positive, the high number of Neutral and Not Sure responses suggests a need to improve clarity and visibility around InternetNZ's public role.

Free text responses reflected a broad range of views. Some members believe InternetNZ should focus exclusively on its technical functions — such as managing the .nz domain — and avoid involvement in political or social issues like disinformation and digital equity. Others strongly support a more visible and proactive public role, particularly in advocating for Internet openness and combating disinformation.

Concerns were also raised about perceived political bias and a lack of clarity in how InternetNZ engages publicly. Many participants noted confusion around the organisation's structure and outputs, particularly the distinction between its advocacy and technical functions. These insights reinforce the need for clearer communication about InternetNZ's public-facing work and how it aligns with its core purpose.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Question 17: InternetNZ has committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in its work. How clear or visible is this commitment to you?

Familiarity level	%
Not sure	12%
Not at all clear	11%
Not very clear	5%
Somewhat clear	28%
Very clear	45%

A significant majority of members, 73%, find InternetNZ’s commitment to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi clear. This suggests that the organisation’s efforts in this space are visible and resonating with many. However, 16% of respondents indicated that this commitment is not clear, presenting an opportunity for InternetNZ to further embed and communicate its Te Tiriti commitment in visible, tangible ways across its programmes, communications, and member engagement.

In the free text responses, members expressed a range of views. Some felt that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not relevant to InternetNZ’s core functions and believe the organisation should remain focused on its technical mission. Others viewed the commitment as both clear and essential, advocating for Te Tiriti to remain central to InternetNZ’s work. A portion of respondents were unsure about its relevance or necessity, highlighting a need for greater clarity around how Te Tiriti principles influence and inform InternetNZ’s core business.

The next 1-2 years

Question 18: What issues do you think InternetNZ should focus on over the next 1-2 years?

Respondents identified several key focus areas for InternetNZ over

This feedback reflects a desire for inclusivity and neutrality in InternetNZ’s operations, and reinforces the need to clearly communicate how the Constitution affects the management of the .nz domain.

the next 1-2 years. A strong emphasis was placed on maintaining diversity and inclusion, with calls to support marginalised communities and uphold commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Addressing disinformation and misinformation, particularly in relation to social media and political campaigns, emerged as a priority, with some suggesting the regulation of AI-generated content to prevent misuse. At the same time, freedom of speech remains a critical concern, with some members advocating for Internet neutrality and opposing censorship (except for illegal content). These views suggest an ongoing need to clarify the boundaries of InternetNZ’s role within the broader Internet ecosystem, particularly its focus on technical infrastructure.

Digital equity was also highlighted as a key area, with respondents urging InternetNZ to help ensure fair and affordable access to the Internet, especially for rural communities, older populations, and others who may be digitally underserved.

Other feedback from members

Question 19: Do you have any other feedback you would like to share with us?

Respondents provided extensive feedback on InternetNZ’s focus on diversity and inclusion, particularly in relation to Māori representation and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. While some supported these efforts, others expressed concern that such emphasis could be divisive and detract from the organisation’s core mission of serving all New Zealanders.

Governance was another key theme, with calls for unbiased governance, equal voting rights, and concerns about political influence and constitutional changes. Many respondents also stressed the importance of maintaining an open and uncensored Internet, advocating for freedom of speech and expression.

At the same time, the InternetNZ team was appreciated for its hard work and encouraged to continue their efforts while remaining apolitical and focused on the organisation’s primary objectives.

Overall, this feedback reflects a desire for inclusivity and neutrality in InternetNZ’s operations, and reinforces the need to clearly communicate how the Constitution affects the management of the .nz domain, as well as the distinction between InternetNZ’s advocacy work and its core technical functions.



Are we on the right track?

This section assesses how the 2025 Member Survey findings align with [InternetNZ's five strategic goals for 2025/2026](#). Amid a period of unprecedented membership growth, the feedback reveals both strong alignment and areas of tension. Members broadly support the organisation's focus on technical excellence in managing .nz and contributing to global Internet governance (Goal 1). However, notable gaps emerged in understanding and clarity around Te Tiriti integration (Goal 3), as well as in member engagement, inclusivity and awareness of constitutional changes (Goal 4). This analysis synthesises the results of the survey, including 6,474 free text responses, to examine how well member sentiment aligns with InternetNZ's strategic direction.

Clarifying InternetNZ's roles and responsibilities

It is essential to reaffirm InternetNZ's core functions, as some member feedback indicates misconceptions about the scope of our work. As the steward of the .nz domain, our primary responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the technical stability and security of the Domain Name System
- Facilitating inclusive participation in Internet governance
- Advocating for a safe, open and accessible internet

We do not engage in content moderation or censorship — these matters fall under the jurisdiction of New Zealand law and individual platform policies. Clarifying this distinction is crucial to understanding the boundaries of our work and influence.

Strategic goal analysis

Goal 1. A thriving and trusted .nz domain, actively influencing good global Internet governance.

Member feedback strongly supports our technical stewardship of the .nz domain, with particular appreciation for its reliability and security. However, some respondents questioned the connection between this work and our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Goal 2. We increase the resilience of our business model in a rapidly changing environment.

Most survey responses did not directly address business resilience, suggesting potential low visibility of these efforts among members.

Goal 3. Centring Te Tiriti o Waitangi throughout all that we do.

The integration of Te Tiriti principles represents both a significant opportunity and a source of member concern. While some view this commitment as essential, emphasising a need for an Internet that truly serves all New Zealanders, others questioned whether an 'Internet organisation' should prioritise Te Tiriti at all. This divergence of views highlights a polarising issue and presents a challenge for future membership engagement. One survey question in particular brought this tension to the fore: *'InternetNZ has committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in its work. How clear or visible is this commitment to you?'*

Many respondents argue that Te Tiriti o Waitangi — as a historical agreement between the Crown and Māori — is not relevant to InternetNZ's core mission of managing the .nz domain. They express concerns that focusing on the Treaty

could introduce political bias and distract from the organisation's technical responsibilities.

Conversely, others strongly supported the commitment, emphasising the importance of Māori representation and the alignment between Te Tiriti and InternetNZ's broader advocacy work. These respondents called for clear communication about how Te Tiriti informs the organisation's goals, decision-making, and operations.

Across the spectrum, there was a consistent call for greater transparency and clarity, particularly around how Te Tiriti principles are being integrated into InternetNZ's work in practice.

Overall, the comments reflect a tension between those who view Te Tiriti as a foundational document that should guide organisational policy and those who see it as outside the scope of the organisation's core mission. This divide emphasises the need for InternetNZ to clearly articulate its position and clarify the practical implications of this strategic goal.

Goal 4. InternetNZ Group has a clear purpose and values that drives our long-term strategy.

One key measure for this goal is the successful implementation of the Constitutional transition plan. Although the new Constitution has only been in effect for a few months, it has already been a focal point of discussion among members. Despite this, 95% of respondents indicated they were unfamiliar with it, highlighting a clear opportunity for targeted education and engagement. By improving understanding, we can help transform dissent into informed dialogue and ensure our purpose is both tangible and inclusive.

With 79% of members reading emails from the members-announce list, it's evident that members are willing to engage. This presents a strong case



for continuing to use this channel, and others, to keep members informed and involved in the organisation's ongoing work.

Goal 5. Community, partnership, collaboration and investment.
Supporting shared community outcomes and value for an Internet that benefits all of Aotearoa.

Two key critiques strongly influenced members' views on the functions related to this goal: the perception that InternetNZ's work, including funding, is overly concentrated in Wellington and Auckland, and concerns about the appearance of "race-based quotas."

Perceptions of Goal 5's success will depend on InternetNZ demonstrating that targeted investment delivers benefits for all. By highlighting tangible outcomes and showcasing regional impact, the organisation can illustrate how equity-driven approaches strengthen the broader Internet ecosystem for everyone.

Actionable recommendations

This section includes some actionable recommendations for InternetNZ staff, based on feedback gathered through the 2025 Annual InternetNZ Membership Survey.

Improve and revise newsletters

Revamp newsletters to be more concise, engaging, and easier to digest. This will help ensure members stay informed without feeling overwhelmed, improving both engagement and information retention.

Streamline the onboarding process

Provide clear, step-by-step guidance to help new members navigate their first interactions with InternetNZ. A simplified onboarding experience will support quicker integration and help members understand how to get involved.

Who is INZ, and what do we do?

Develop clear, accessible content that explains InternetNZ's structure and functions, including the distinction between our advocacy work and our core business (such as managing the .nz domain). Consider including a simple explainer on the Constitution and its relevance. A deeper dive into member feedback could help identify where to focus this content for the greatest impact.

Strengthen governance transparency and member trust

Develop and embed a governance transparency approach that provides members with clear, timely insight into how decisions are made, who is involved, and how strategic priorities are set. This could include regular updates on board decisions, improved visibility of consultation processes, and accessible reporting on how member feedback influences governance. A transparent and inclusive approach will help build long-term trust and accountability across the membership.

Clarify and communicate InternetNZ's vision for Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Develop a clear, organisation-wide vision for how Te Tiriti o Waitangi is upheld in both governance and operations. This includes articulating how Te

Tiriti principles guide our strategic decisions and technical work. Support this with consistent, transparent communication to members — building trust, addressing misconceptions, and ensuring all members understand the role of Te Tiriti in our work.

Develop a comprehensive onboarding program

Design a structured onboarding experience that includes interactive orientation sessions, peer mentorship, and accessible documentation tailored to both technical and non-technical members. This will ensure new members feel welcomed, understand InternetNZ's purpose and structure, and are empowered to participate meaningfully from the outset.

