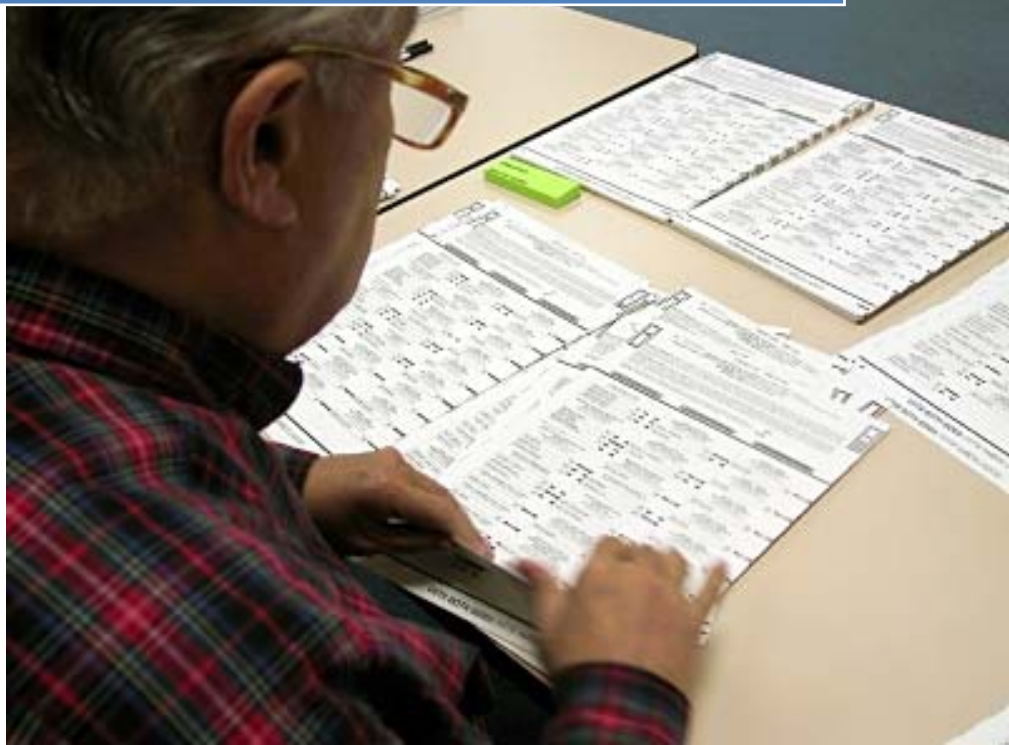


**February, 2008**

**Islands Trust – Trustee Election Administration  
Review, Public Survey Results**



**Prepared by:**

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## INTRODUCTION

In January, 2008 the Islands Trust engaged over 300 residents and property owners with an online survey to solicit their opinion about the way Trustee Elections are run in the Islands Trust Area. The timing of this survey coincides with the start of the planning process for the next Trustee Election in November of this year. The Islands Trust is committed to reviewing the manner in which elections are administered to address specific issues raised by voters in the Islands Trust Area.

Specifically, the Islands Trust wants to ensure that elections are administered in a cost-effective manner that maximizes clarity and minimizes confusion for individual voters. Islands Trust also wants to ensure that voting opportunities are provided in a fair and effective manner that is consistent with opportunities available to voters in other British Columbia municipalities.

The results of this survey will inform an Election Administration Review which is currently underway. The comments and opinions of the 300+ Islands Trust Electors who responded to this survey will be taken into careful consideration while reviewing the current Trustee election process.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the survey. How these results might influence Islands Trust election process policy will not be discussed here. That report will be available separately in the near future at the Islands Trust website [[www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)]. It's also important to note that the results of this survey are not meant to be interpreted as statistically significant or predicative of an entire population's behaviour. What this report does is summarize the thoughts and feelings of several hundred individuals to get an idea of where the big issues around Trustee elections lay.

**The views in this report are those of Friuch Consulting/Aaron Cruikshank and not necessarily those of the Islands Trust administration.**

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*Friuch Consulting and the Islands Trust actively encourages readers of this report to be environmentally responsible and save paper by reading this report electronically.*

**CONTENTS**

Introduction .....1

Summary .....3

Surveys 101 .....4

Demographics .....6

Previous Election Experience .....9

Communications ..... 15

Future Elections..... 19

    Mail-In Ballots ..... 19

    Internet/Telephone Voting ..... 21

    Election Administration..... 23

Appendix A: Survey Questions ..... 25

## SUMMARY

Overall, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the administration of previous Trustee Elections but have concerns that relate directly to the *Local Government Act*. These issues include questioning Voter Eligibility as defined by the Act – others have more to do with the current legal status of mail-in ballots for Islands Trust electors.

The survey respondents were a mixture of Resident Electors (42%) and Non-Resident Property Electors (56%) as well as a relatively broad geographic distribution. Some Local Trust Areas (LTAs) are better represented in this survey than others but the impact of respondents from individual LTAs does not influence the big picture findings.

Respondents were generally satisfied with the usefulness and timeliness of “official” communications around the previous Trustee Election as well as with the staff working at the polling stations.

**However, the majority of respondents do not believe that the current voting opportunities provided for Non-Resident Electors and Resident Electors are fair.** There are competing interests between these two categories of electors but both agree on this point – there are concerns about the fairness of the electoral process.

33% of Non-Resident Property Electors had difficulties registering to vote in the previous Trustee Election (November, 2005). Non-Resident Property Electors are strongly in favour of Internet or Mail-In ballots.

Resident Electors were more concerned with the way people registered to vote and specifically do not want to increase voting opportunities for Non-Resident Property Electors.

In the end, who can vote, how they can vote and other factors of this nature are issues that are not within the authority of the Islands Trust to change – they are entrenched in the British Columbia *Local Government Act*.

## SURVEYS 101

One of the biggest sins researchers commit is assuming that the audience knows as much about research methodologies as they do. The purpose of this section of the report is to explain the methods while acknowledging the limitations of the results.

**Let's start with "statistical significance".** Around election times, polls on TV and in the newspapers try to predict the outcome of the election before the results are actually in. In effect, what these media outlets are doing is sending temporary staffers out into the streets and hitting the call centre to ask citizens who they are going to vote for. The theory is that if one gets a large enough group of people to tell what they are planning to do or what they have done then one can predict the behaviour of the entire population in question. They state their confidence in their findings with a statement that often looks like:

*This model will correctly predict the outcome plus or minus 5%, 99 times out of 100.*

In the case of an election, a statement like this means that they're confident that they can predict how groups of individuals might vote to within 5% (plus or minus) with a 1% chance that the predictions are wrong. Why then, does it seem like pollsters aren't very good at predicting the outcomes of elections? It's because individuals change their minds over time based on a wide range of factors.

Public opinion is a complex and chaotic system not unlike the weather. Meteorologists and pollsters have this in common – the farther one is away from an event (such as the weather on Monday morning or the outcome of an election) the harder it is to predict what's going to happen.

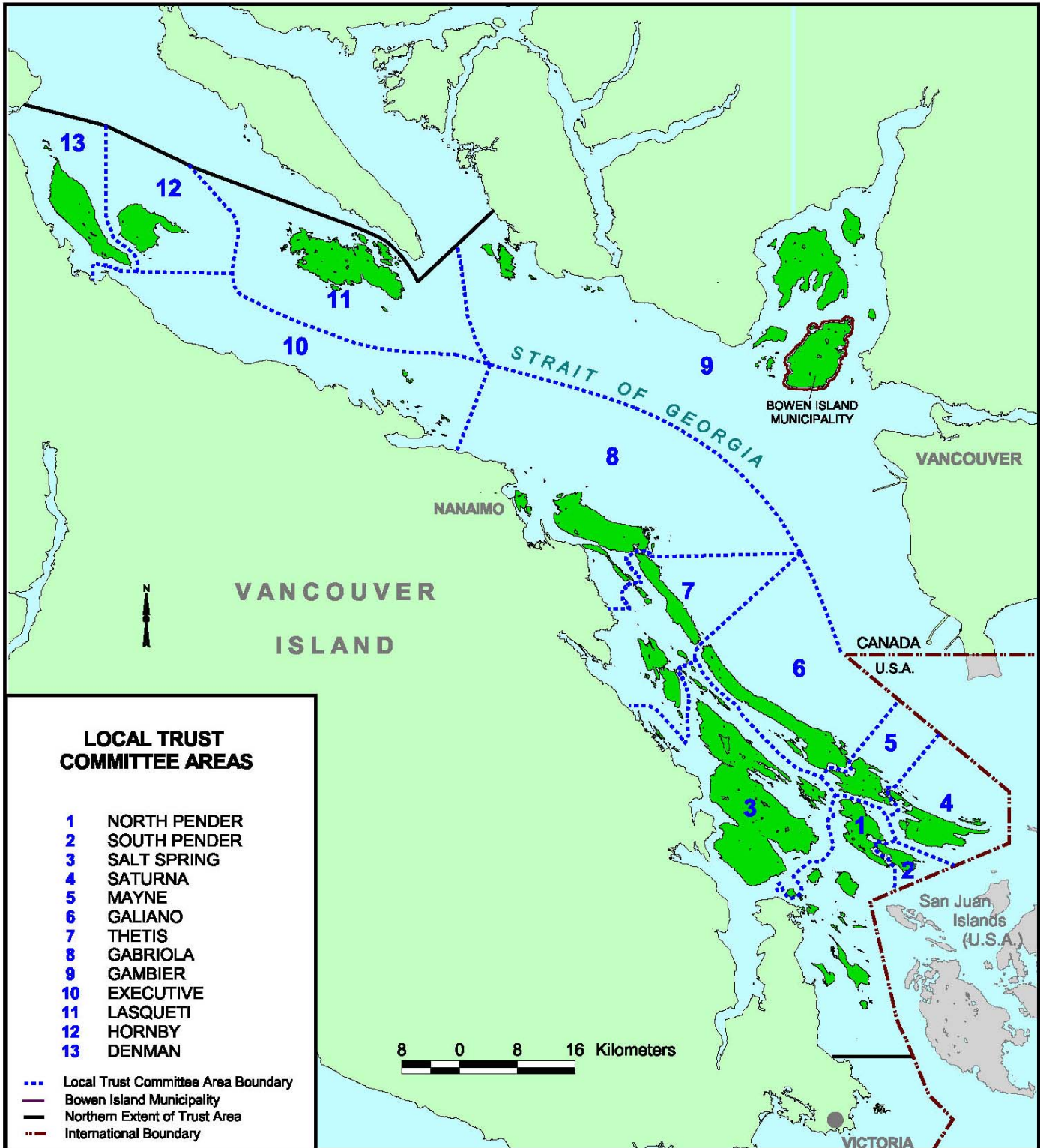
However, a good survey can predict within a measure of accuracy – what a group is going to do. Here is what those conditions are:

1. **A random sample.** The survey must talk to a completely random selection of individuals in the community. Surveyors find random research subjects by going out into the street and stopping people going by or they go through the phone book and call people at random. The less random the sample is, the less accurate the model is.
2. **A good sized sample.** The rule of thumb for sample size is 15 respondents for every question on the survey. That means if one has a 30 question survey; one needs at least 450 people to complete that survey in order for it to be an accurate model that can predict the behaviour of groups.

With 323 responses to our Election Process Review survey and around 30 questions on the survey this survey cannot be used to predict the behaviour of the people who responded. It can be used to give a sense of what people think is important. Note: this is not a random survey. It was conducted online.

Throughout this report, there are graphs that summarize respondents' attitudes towards things broken down by the LTA they live in or by their voter eligibility status. The **(n=...)** statement in every part of this report tells readers how many people the report is talking about.

Figure 1: Map of Island Trust Areas with Geographic Boundaries



## DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic information collected for the survey was the Local Trust Area (LTA) an individual owns property on/lives on, how long they have lived/owned property in the Islands Trust Area and their current voter eligibility. It is safe to assume that the overwhelming majority of respondents in the survey have the following characteristics that all eligible voters in the Islands Trust Area share:

- **Over the age of 18**
- **Canadian citizen**
- **Lived in British Columbia for at least six months**
- **Lived in the Islands Trust Area for at least 30 days or own property in the Islands Trust Area**

In total, 323 individuals responded to the survey between January 16, 2008 and February 5, 2008. Figure 2 (below) shows where the survey respondents reported they were eligible to vote. For the purposes of this survey, the island that a respondent is eligible to vote on will be referred to as the Local Trust Area (LTA). The writer recognizes that there may be several islands within an LTA, but for brevity has shortened the name of the LTA. E.g. "Gambier" = Gambier Local Trust Area.

**Figure 2: Local Trust Area of Respondents (n=314)**

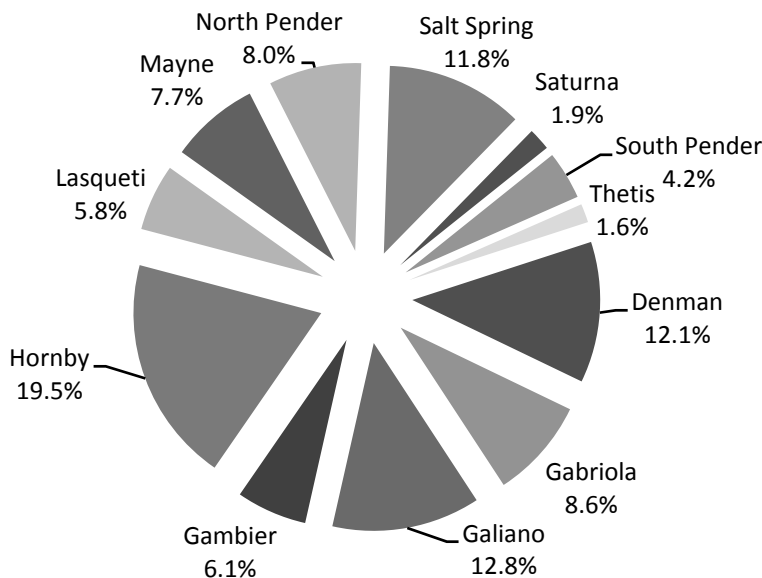
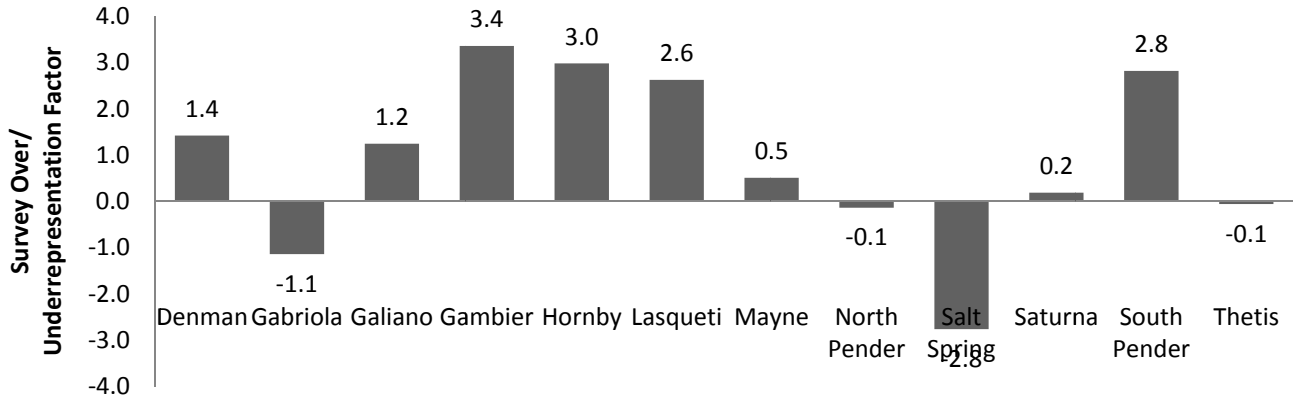


Figure 3 (see next page) makes an attempt to look at the degree to which respondents over or under-represent specific LTAs in this sample. Some LTAs such as Gambier, Hornby or Lasqueti have high factors of over-representation compared to other LTAs. Salt Spring and Gabriola are under-represented in this sample. What does that mean? It is a comparison of the percentage of respondents from each LTA in the survey samples (see percentages from the survey in Figure 2 above) to the actual percentage of the Islands Trust Area population each LTA represents (using 2006 Census data).

For example, respondents from Thetis LTA represent approximately 1.6% of survey respondents. According to the 2006 census, there are 372 people living on Thetis LTA and 22,004 people in the entire Islands Trust Area. 22,004 divided by 372 produces 1.7%. This means that the survey sample for Thetis LTA is very close to representative of the actual population of the LTA in comparison to the rest of the Islands Trust Area.

The over/under-representation factor in Figure 3 for Thetis is  $-(0.01)$ . This means that to get the percentage of the population represented by this survey, one would have to multiply the actual population percentage for Thetis by  $-(0.01)$ .

**Figure 3: Survey Respondent Over/Under-representation Factor, by Local Trust Area (n=314)**



What does this mean in the context of the survey? Given that this survey didn't produce statistically significant findings, it doesn't mean much other than to show how high the participation rate in the survey was by LTA. For example, Figure 3 gives Hornby LTA an over-representation factor of 3.0. In the context of this survey, this means that three times as many respondents per total population responded to the survey on Hornby than Thetis. In no way do these factors skew the findings of this survey - each LTA is a community unto itself and every result from this survey will be examined at the community level to ensure that the data doesn't paint the entire Islands Trust Area with a broad brush.

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the voter eligibility of respondents according to the [Local Government Act](#). The majority of respondents in this survey are either Resident Electors (live full-time in one of the Islands Trust communities) or Non-Resident Property Electors (own property in one of the Islands Trust communities with a primary residence elsewhere). Respondents eligible to vote in multiple trust areas (n=2) represent a mix of eligibility status. For example, someone could rent a home on Salt Spring and own a cabin on Lasqueti. There are only two respondents in this category so this category of eligibility status will not be further analyzed in this report.

**Figure 4: Voter Eligibility of Respondents (n=323)**

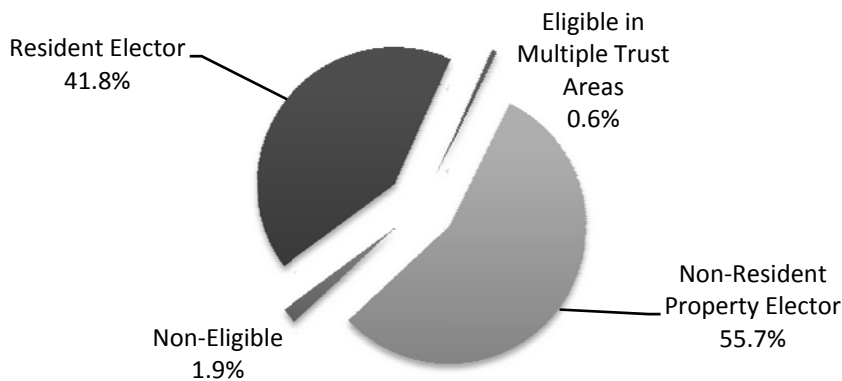


Figure 4 (previous page) shows that a few respondents were not eligible to vote in the Islands Trust Area. These respondents could potentially live in one of the LTAs but are not eligible to vote because they don't meet the criteria of the *Local Government Act*. Although these respondents were not asked any questions about Trustee Elections processes, they were given the opportunity to comment on the elections process.

**Figure 5: Eligibility Status of Respondents, By Local Trust Area (n=312)**

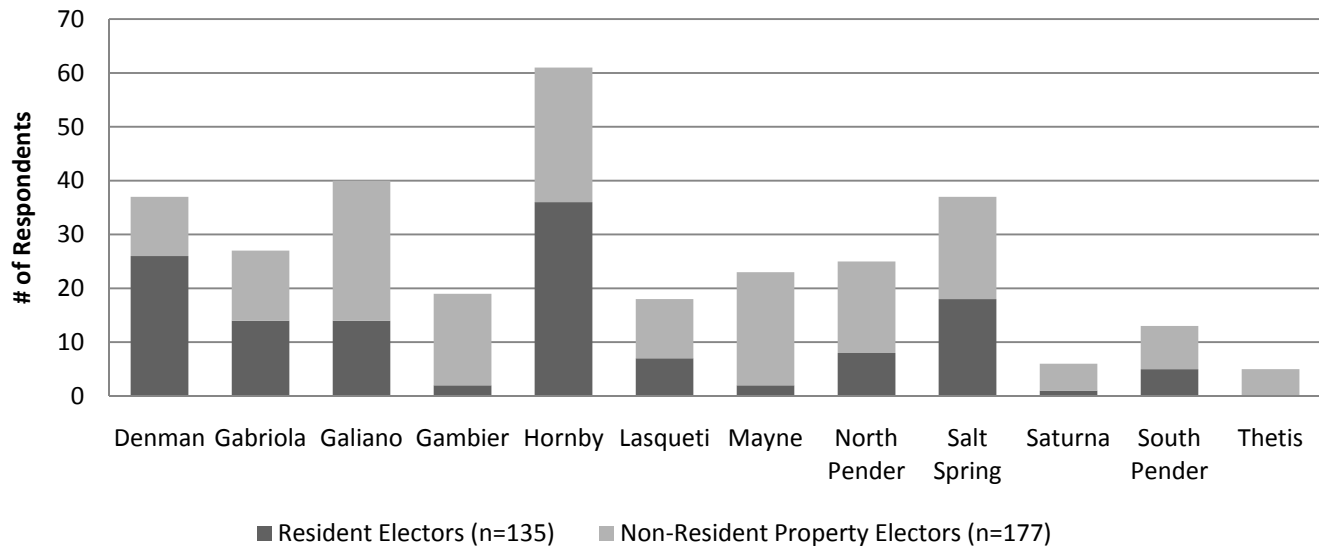
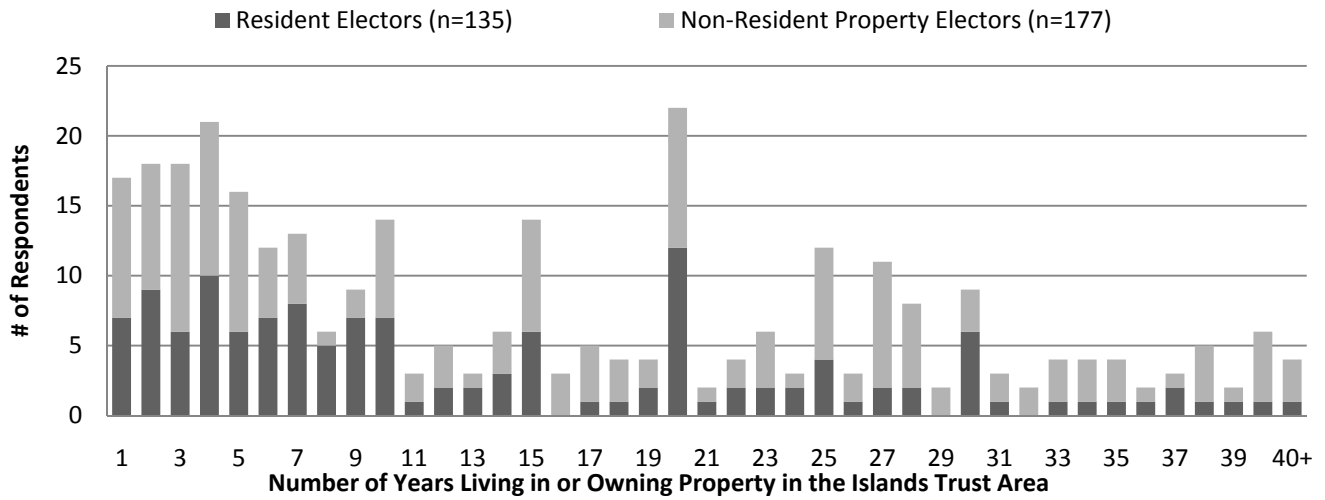


Figure 5 shows the representation of both Resident Electors and Non-Resident Property Electors by LTA by number of respondents. Non-Resident Property Electors are shown in light gray and Resident Electors are shown in charcoal. This chart is a “stacked bar chart” format that allows for a visual comparison of two different groups as a subset of a larger population. For example, the bar for Gabriola in Figure 5 is roughly half light-gray and half charcoal with the top of the bar reaching to approximately 28 respondents – this means that roughly 14 respondents from Gabriola are Resident Electors and another 14 are Non-Resident Property Electors. Some islands have heavier representation by Non-Resident Property Electors (e.g. Gambier and Mayne) while others have heavier representation by Resident Electors (e.g. Denman and Hornby).

Again, these numbers don't represent the percentage of the population that falls into each voter eligibility category – that information is not available. These numbers just represent the people who filled in the Trustee Election Administration Review survey. What this does tell us is that the results of the survey at the aggregate level are not skewed towards one Eligibility Category or another but the same cannot be said for individual LTAs. Again, all data in this study will be examined by Eligibility Category and LTA to avoid any misinterpretation of the results.

Figure 6 (following page) shows the reported length tenure (the number of years someone has owned property or lived in an Islands Trust community) of respondents based on their LTA. Notice that there are respondent spikes at five-year intervals suggesting that not all respondents put in an exact number for length of tenure in favour of an estimate. Figure 6 demonstrates that amongst respondents to this survey, the distribution of Resident and Non-Resident Property Electors is relatively even across the span of years these respondents have lived in the Islands Trust Area.

**Figure 6: Respondent Tenure in Local Trust Area, by Voter Eligibility Status (n=312)**



**PREVIOUS ELECTION EXPERIENCE**

The first portion of the online Trustee Election Administration Review survey asked eligible voters in the Islands Trust Area about their experiences with previous Trustee elections and by-elections. **A full 77% of respondents were eligible to vote in a previous Islands Trust election or by-election.** This indicates that 33% of respondents either moved into the Islands Trust Area, bought property in the Area or their voter eligibility changed (e.g. turned 18, gained Canadian citizenship) since November, 2005.

**Figure 7: Responses to Question "Were You Eligible to Vote in The Most Recent Trustee Election", by Voter Eligibility (n=311)**

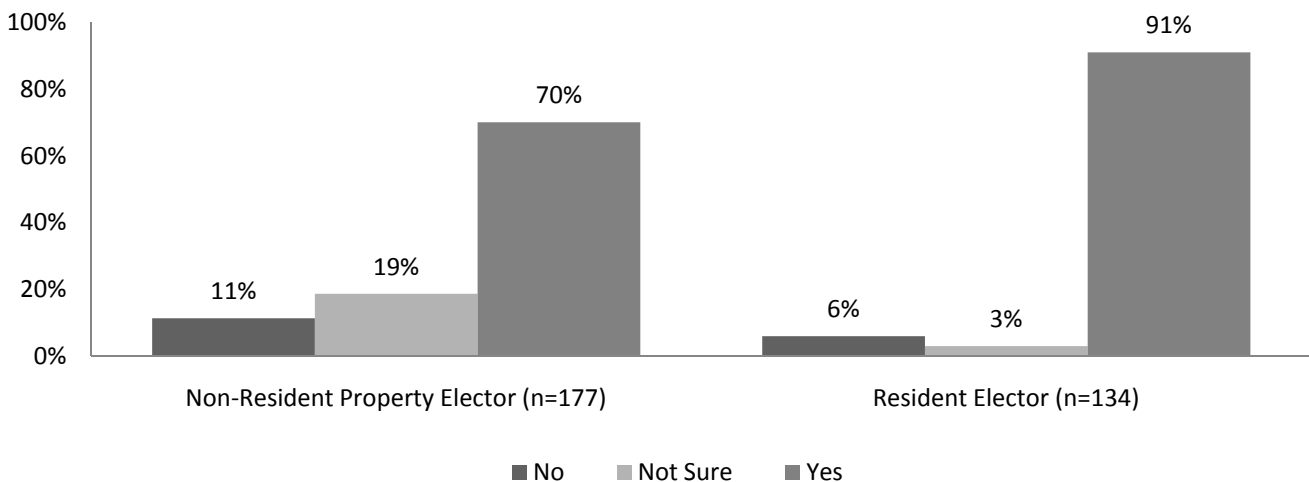


Figure 7 shows how respondents answered the question “were you eligible to vote in the most recent trustee election”? Note that for most respondents the last opportunity to vote would have been November, 2005 but South Pender and Hornby residents had by-elections in late August, 2007. Also note that Thetis and North Pender LTAs did not vote in the 2005 Trustee Election because all Trustees in these communities ran unopposed. For these communities, the last opportunity to vote would

have been the 2002 Trustee Elections or, in the case of North Pender, a by-election in 2004. What becomes immediately apparent is that there is a far more Non-Resident Property Electors who were confused about their voter eligibility in the last election.

**Please note that voter eligibility is determined by the Local Government Act – a piece of Provincial legislation that the Islands Trust has no authority over. Any concerns with the statutes of the Local Government Act must be directed to an appropriate Provincial Government representative. The Islands Trust will provide the results of this survey to the Ministry of Community Services for their information.**

It's possible that the higher number of respondents saying they are "not sure" what their voter eligibility was in the previous election is due to some confusion surrounding the *Local Government Act*.

**Figure 8: Percentage of Respondents Eligible to Vote in Last Election That Voted, By Voter Eligibility**

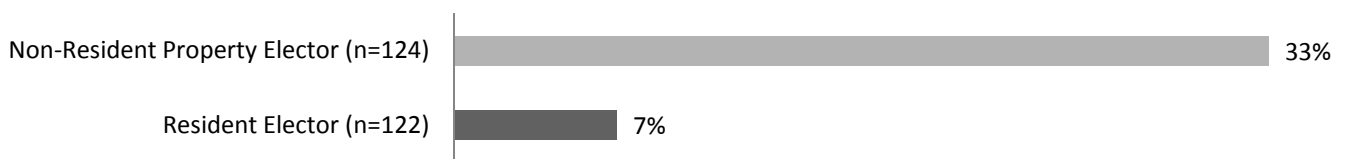


Figure 8 shows that amongst the respondents to this survey who were eligible to vote in the last Trustee election, Resident Electors were nearly twice as likely to have actually voted as Non-Resident Property Electors. Clearly, the election participation rate of Non-Resident Property Electors is dramatically different than Resident Electors.

During the South Pender and Hornby by-elections in late August, 2007, 67% (n=73) of respondents from both LTAs voted. Of those that voted, 18 had concerns about the way the by-election was conducted compared to regular Trustee Elections. Nine cited questionable practices by other voters and eight stated that voting in the by-election was inconvenient.

Figure 9 clearly shows that Non-Resident Property Elector respondents were much more likely to experience difficulties with the registration process than Resident Electors. This could explain some of the differences between the two categories of voters seen in Figure 8.

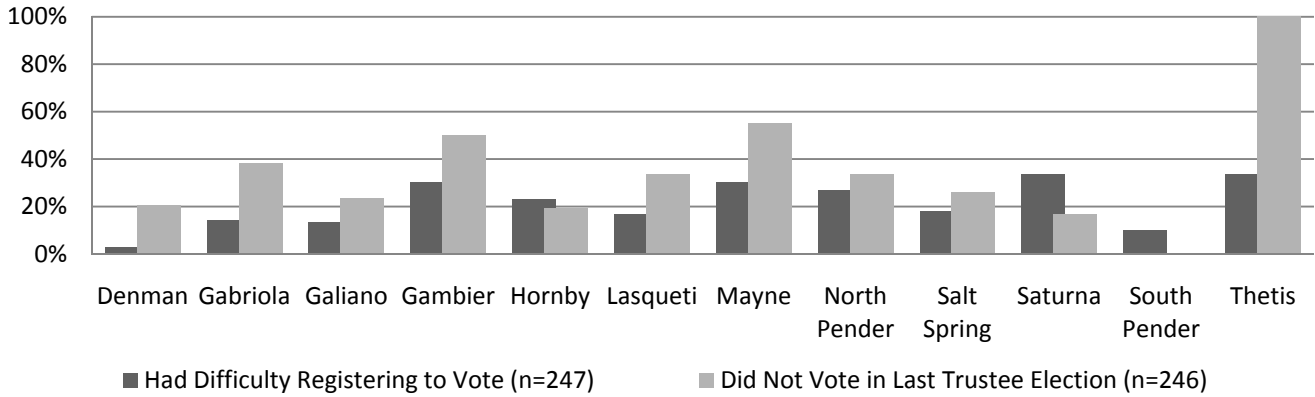
**Figure 9: Respondents That Were Eligible to Vote but had Difficulty Registering to Vote in the Last Trustee Election, by Voter Eligibility**



Of the Resident Elector respondents in Figure 9 that commented on their registration difficulties (n=10), six were challenged by elections officials when they tried to register, 2 were ineligible to vote and 2 did not know how to register. Of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents in Figure 9 that commented on their registration difficulties (n=50), 26 found the registration process to be inconvenient, 16 did not know how to register, and 8 were challenged by elections officials when they tried to register.

Figure 10 examines registration difficulties and voting behaviour in the context of the respondents’ LTA. Saturna and South Pender are interesting case studies in this figure in that they are the only LTAs where the percentage of respondents who had difficulty registering to vote was greater than the percentage of respondents who did not vote.

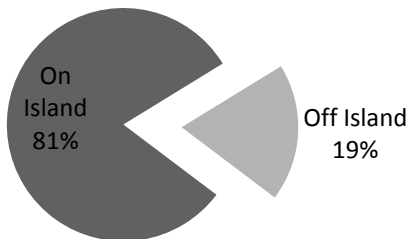
**Figure 10: Difficulty Registering to Vote vs. Voting Behaviour in Last Election, by Local Trust Area**



Of those respondents who were eligible but chose not to vote in the last Trustee Election (n=70), 59 chose to leave comments on why they did not vote. 37 stated that the process of voting was too inconvenient for them, 15 said they lacked enough information to vote and five cited “apathy” as their reason for not voting.

Figure 11 shows the categorized locations that Respondents voted at during the last Trustee election. “Off Island” polling stations were located in Courtenay, Coopers Green, Gibsons, Nanaimo, Richmond, Sidney and West Vancouver. One reason these polling stations are placed outside of the Islands Trust Area is to minimize the inconvenience of voting for Non-Resident Property Electors. This figure shows that of those respondents that were eligible to vote and did so, 19% of them voted at these polling stations outside of the Islands Trust Area.

**Figure 11: Polling Station Location Used by Eligible Voters Who Voted in the Last Trustee Election (n=177)**



**Figure 12: Non-Resident Property Elector Polling Station Location Use by Eligible Voters Who Voted in the Last Trustee Election (n=62)**

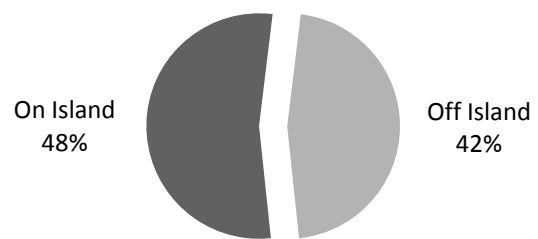
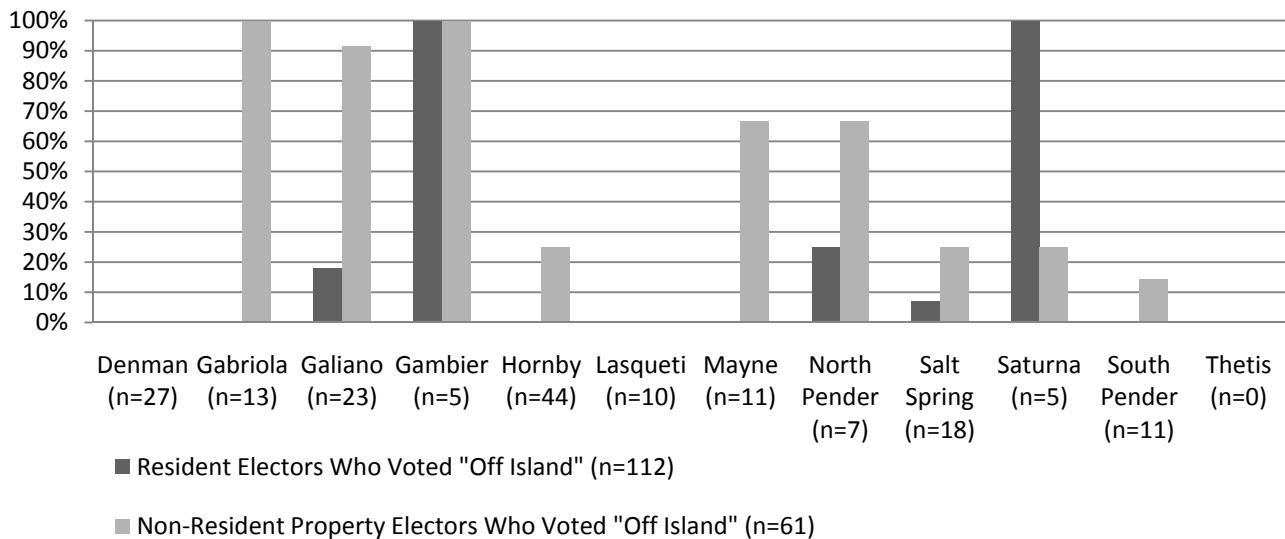


Figure 12 shows that “off island” polling stations are more popular with Non-Resident Property Elector respondents than the general population of respondents as shown in Figure 11. Off Island polling stations are designed, in part, to facilitate voting opportunities for Non-Resident voters.

Figure 13 explores this trend a little further by examining the geographic distribution of respondents who voted “off island” and their voter eligibility. Looking at the sample size for Gambier, Lasqueti, North Pender, Saturna and Thetis – it is clear that the figures for those LTAs are not useful. However, looking at the data for LTAs like Galiano, Denman, Hornby and Salt Spring in Figure 13 is interesting because they have relatively large sample sizes.

For some reason, all of the respondents who voted in the last election on Denman voted “on-island”. **This is in contrast to Galiano where nearly 20% of Resident Electors and over 90% of Non-Resident Property Electors chose to vote “off island”.** This survey did not ask respondents why they voted at the polling station they chose to vote at so there is no explanation as to why a Resident Elector would vote “off island”.

**Figure 13: Respondents Who Voted "Off Island" in Last Trustee Election, by Local Trust Area and by Voter Eligibility (n=174)**



**17% (n=239) of respondents who were eligible to vote in the last Trustee Election utilized Advance Polling.** Advance Polling stations give eligible voters the opportunity to vote one to two weeks (typically) in advance of a Trustee election in case they are unavailable to vote on the regularly scheduled Election Day. **18.3% of Resident Elector respondents used Advance Polling compared to 16.2% of Non-Resident Property Electors.**

Of those respondents who used Advance Polls (n=40), 31 found that the Advance Polls met their needs. 19 respondents provided further written feedback on Advance Polls. Of those respondents that felt Advance Polls met their needs (n=32), 6 thought polling staff did an adequate job, 2 still found the whole process to be inconvenient and one respondent commended the quality service received at their Advance Polling station.

Of those respondents that felt Advance Polls did not meet their needs (n=16), seven found the process to be inconvenient and two respondents reported having difficulties with the elections staff at the polling station.

**Figure 14: Respondent Utilization of Advance Polling in the Last Trustee Election, by Local Trust Area**

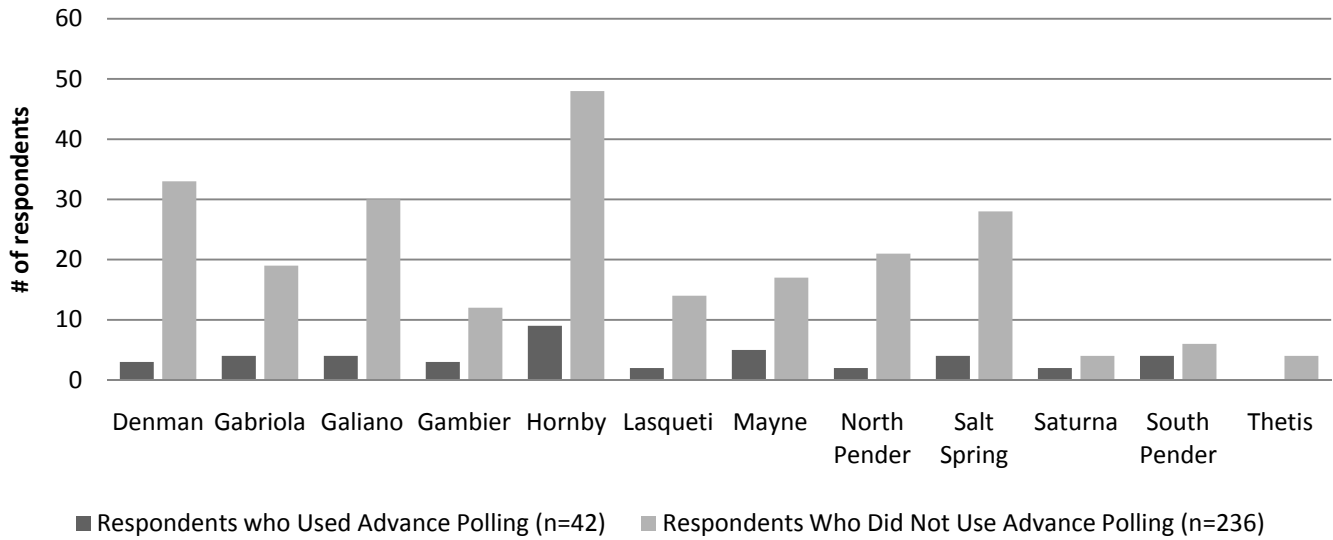
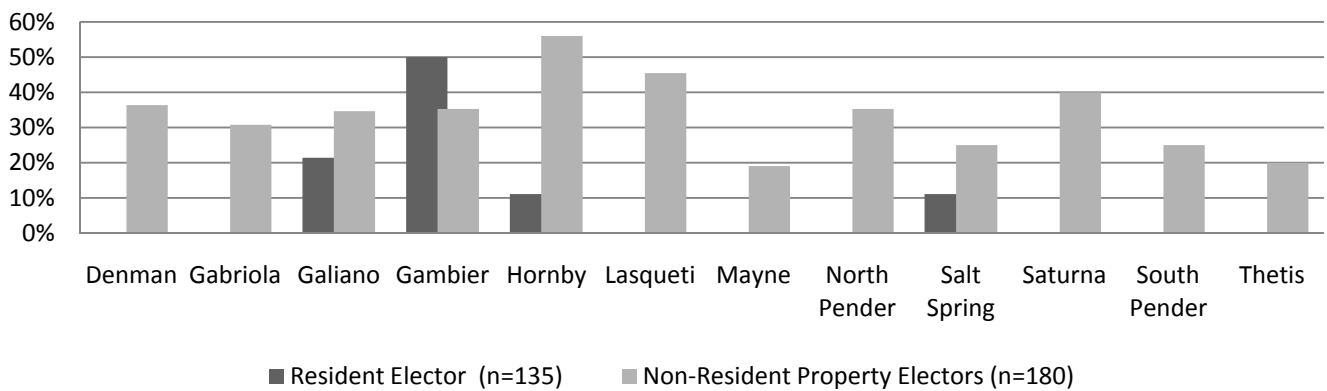


Figure 14 shows that with the exception of Saturna, South Pender and Thetis, a small percentage of total respondents for each LTA used advance polling in the last trustee election. **81% of eligible voter respondents (most of whom don't use Advance Polling) are in favour of keeping Advance Polls open from 8am to 8pm – no exceptions.**

**27% of respondents had some difficulty getting to or using their designated polling station.** Of these respondents, 42 had specific comments: 33 found it inconvenient to get to their designated polling station, four had problems with polling staff and four felt that the location of their designated polling station was a poor choice.

Figure 15 shows that both Non-Resident Property and Resident Electors had difficulty with their polling stations on Galiano and Gambier. Mayne appears to have had the best polling station in the eye of both categories of Electors and there is a big difference in the experience Non-Resident and Resident voters have had on Hornby.

**Figure 15: Respondents who had Difficulty Getting to or Using Their Designated Polling Station, by Local Trust Area and by Voter Eligibility (n=315)**

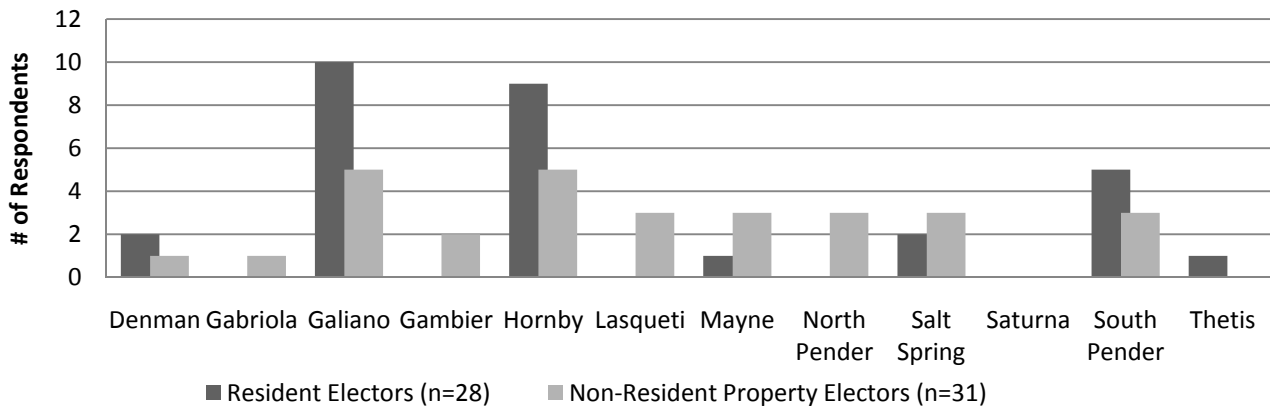


**23.5% (n=251) of respondents have concerns about the previous Trustee Election in terms of the way other people registered to vote.** Of these respondents expressing concerns, 51 described their concerns: 19 have problems with the *Local*

Government Act with regards to voter eligibility requirements, 15 felt that the process of registration was inconsistent, 8 felt that others were deliberately circumventing the *Local Government Act* when registering and five felt disenfranchised.

Figure 16 shows a strong Resident Elector base of respondents on Galiano and Hornby that have concerns about the way other people register to vote in their LTA. Other LTAs have a consistent base of Non-Resident Property Electors that feel there is a problem with the registration process. Some of this concern is related to rules in the *Local Government Act* that specify registration procedures for Non-Resident Property Electors.

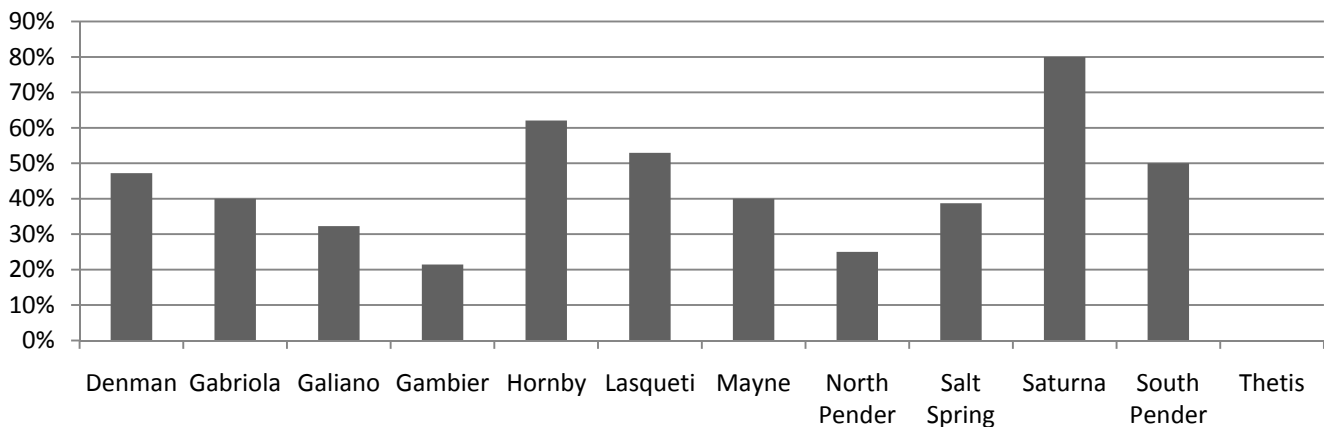
Figure 16: Respondents that Have Concerns about the Way Other People Registered to Vote in the Last Trustee Election, by Local Trust Area and by Voter Eligibility



Only 8% (n=268) of respondents did not feel that the staff at their Polling Station during the last Trustee Election were well trained and knowledgeable about the election process. Of those that did not feel that staff at the Polling Stations were well trained, 21 commented: Seven felt that the staff were very poorly trained; five felt that polling station workers were not courteous or welcoming and five respondents felt disenfranchised by polling staff.

Figure 17 shows that respondents from Saturna were the most satisfied with the performance level of polling station staff while others (such as those on Gambier and Thetis) are markedly less satisfied with the service of polling station workers.

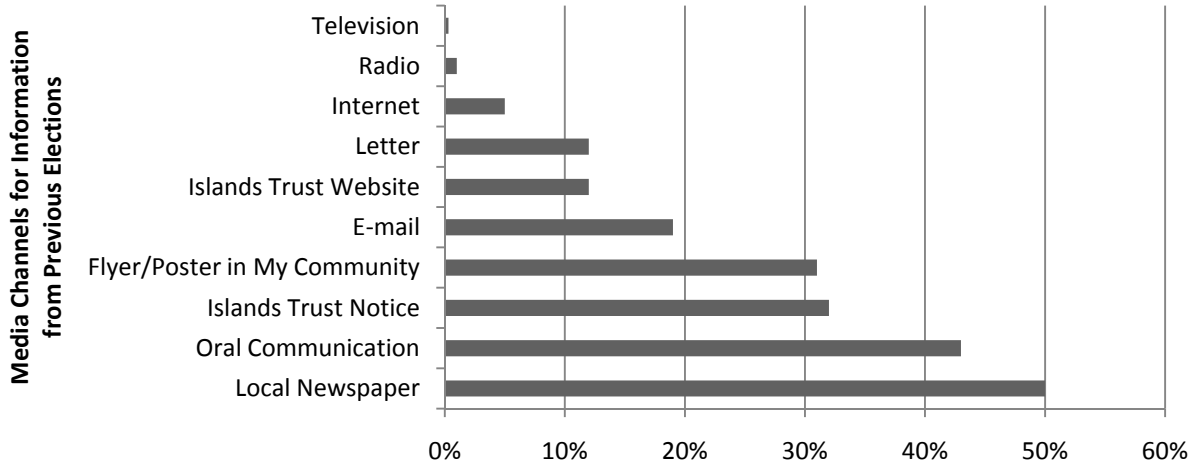
Figure 17: Respondents who Believe that the Staff at their Designated Voting Place was adequately Trained and Knowledgeable, by Geographic Distribution (n=268)



**COMMUNICATIONS**

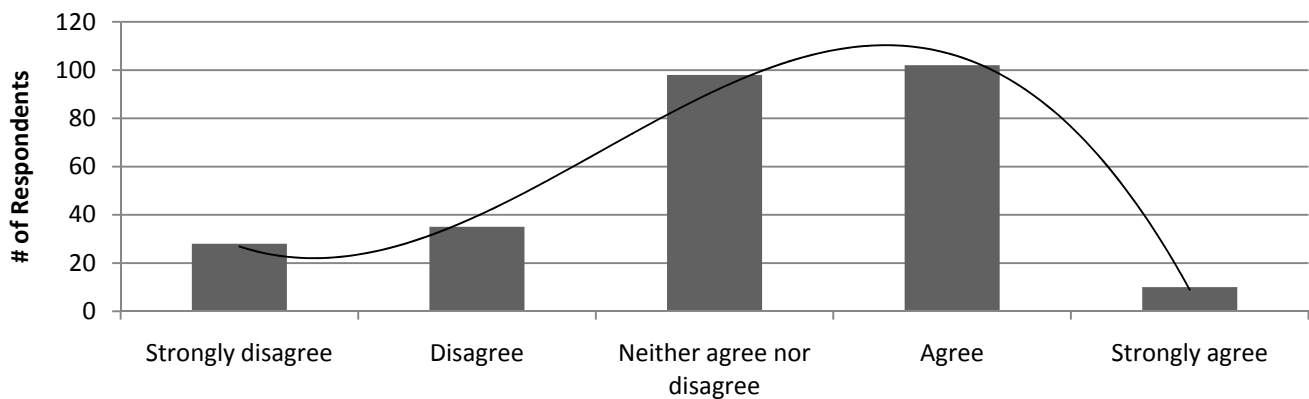
The next section of the survey asked some questions around the communications activities that take place before, during and after a Trustee Election. Figure 18 shows the most popular source of information about Trustee Elections for respondents. Clearly newspapers, oral communication, Islands Trust Notices and Flyers/Posters are the leaders in terms of grabbing the attention of eligible voters. There were no significant variations in this finding by LTA or by Voter Eligibility.

**Figure 18: Respondent Source of Information about Trustee Elections, by Mode of Communication (n=317)**



All of these communications platforms bring voters information on Trustee Elections, partly through organized communications efforts by the Islands Trust. The next set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with statements about the effectiveness of these communications campaigns. Figure 19 shows the overall level of agreement with a statement about the effectiveness of “official” communications leading up to the last Trustee elections. “Official”, in this case, means communications released by the Islands Trust, not third parties or candidates.

**Figure 19: Respondent Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "Official communications leading up to the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely." (n=273)**



The trend line has been added to emphasize where the highest level of agreement occurs – in this case, somewhere just short of “agree”. In essence, this means that the survey respondents thought that the Islands Trust did a good job with pre-election communications. The fact that very few respondents marked down “strongly agree” is just an indication that pre-election communications were not perfect.

**Figure 20: Respondent Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "Official communications during the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely." (n=271)**

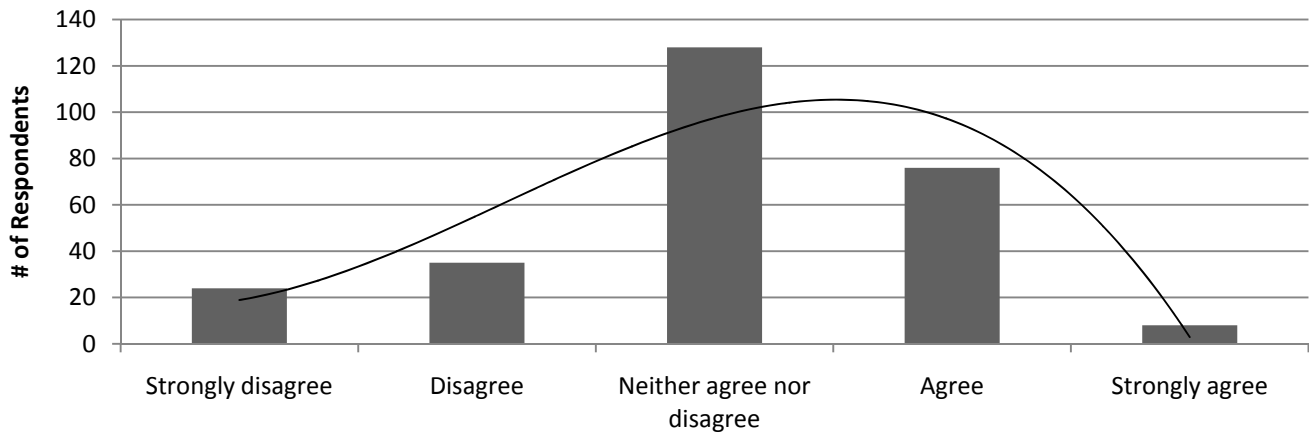
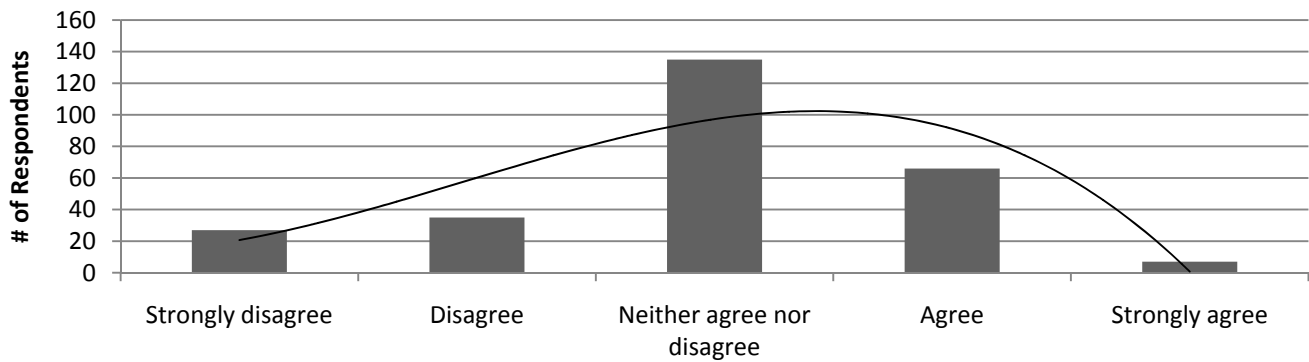


Figure 20 shows a stronger trend towards neutrality on the topic of “official communications during the previous Trustee Election”. This is an indicator that while satisfied overall with the usefulness and timeliness of official communications, the quality was not exceptional – just good. Figure 21 shows a nearly identical trend line to Figure 19 again indicating that respondents were satisfied overall with official communications after the previous Trustee Election.

**Figure 21: Respondent Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "Official communications after the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely." (n=270)**



**Figure 22: Respondent Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "Official communication of election results from the 2005 Trustee Election were useful and timely." (n=269)**

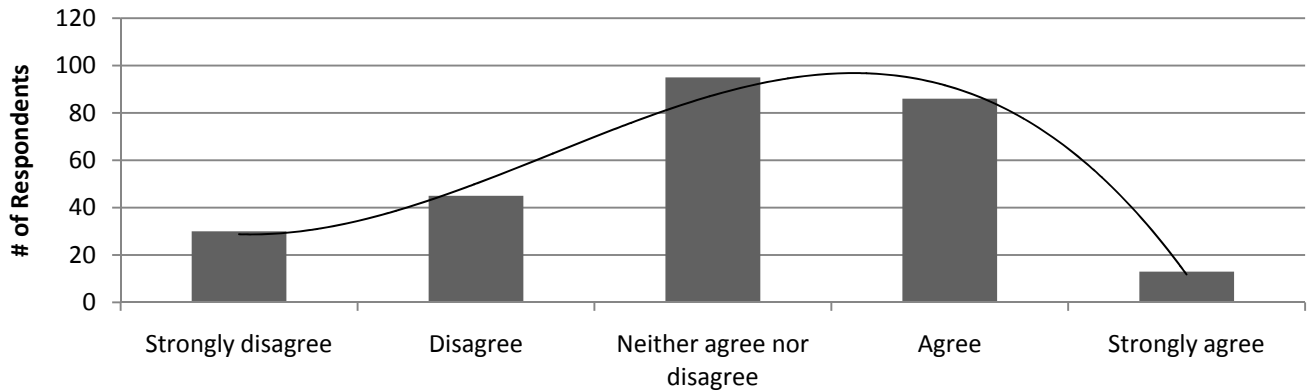
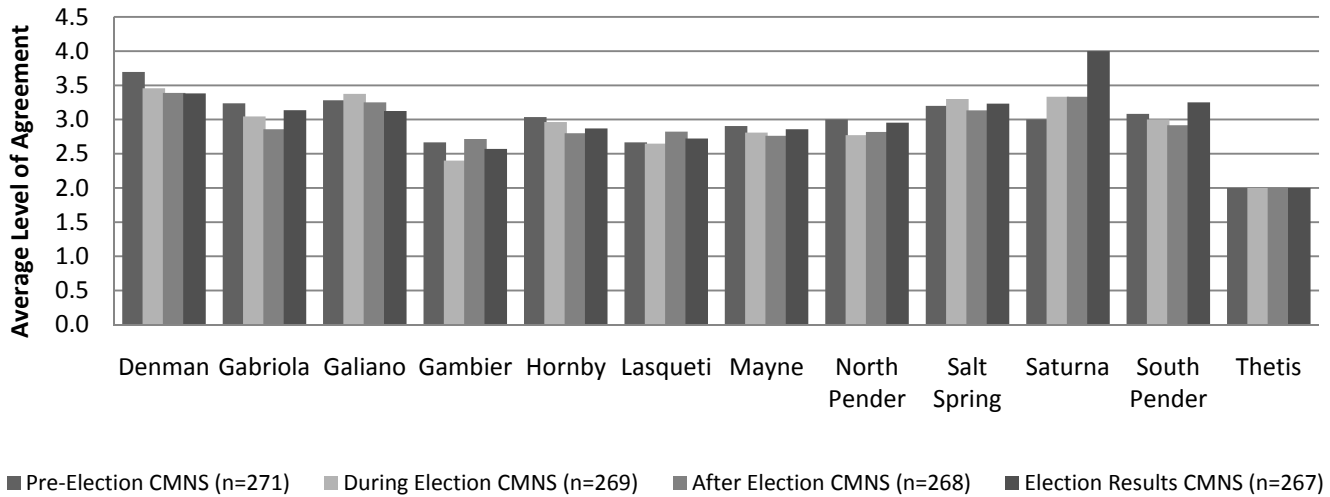


Figure 22 shows a very similar trend line to the previous three graphs solidifying the overall finding that respondents to this survey were generally satisfied with official communications surrounding the previous Trustee Election (November, 2005). The types of questions graphed in Figures 18 through 21 are called Likert Scale questions. They are designed using a scale of levels of agreement (typically a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” with a neutral rating in the middle) to force respondents to rank their opinion about a statement. What this allows for is to turn someone’s opinion on something into a number value. A numerical value of 1 to “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree” has been assigned to each point on the Likert Scale.

**Figure 23: Respondent Level of Agreement with Statements about Official Communications Before, During and After the Previous Trustee Election, by Local Trust Area**

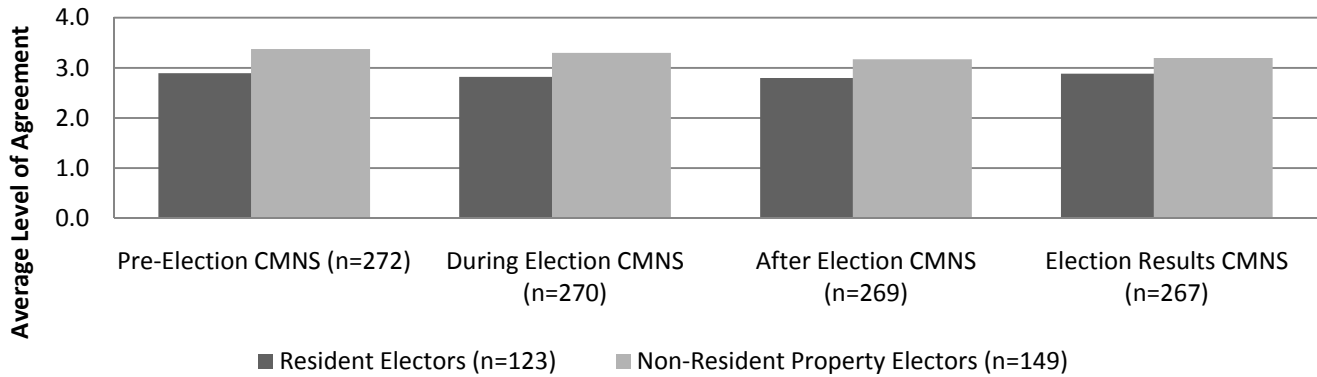


Once individual responses have been “recoded” into numbers, it enables analysis such as averaging an entire population’s level of agreement with a statement and examines levels of agreement by respondent LTA. Figure 23 does exactly this and shows some interesting results. For example, the lowest overall level of satisfaction with official communications by LTA can be seen in the low average level of agreement numbers for Thetis. The highest overall satisfaction level appears to be for respondents

from Denman and there is a large peak in satisfaction for “official communication of election results” for Saturna. **Clearly, there are regional differences in the perceived quality of communications around Trustee Elections.**

Figure 24 shows that Non-Resident Property Electors are, in general, more satisfied with Official Communications than their Resident Elector counterparts. Aside from this difference based on Voter Eligibility, there is no significant difference in average level of agreement for the different statements about communications before, during and after the previous Trustee Election.

**Figure 24: Respondent Level of Agreement with Statements about Official Communications Before, During and After the Previous Trustee Election, by Voter Eligibility**



**42 respondents to this survey had additional comments about non-official communications before, during or after the previous Trustee Election:** 27 felt that information distributed by third parties leading up to the election consisted of misinformation/ offensive materials /libel, five would like to see better platforms to hear from and talk with Candidates before an election, five thought non-official communication (not from the Islands Trust) was helpful and four felt that they did not receive adequate communications from Trustees after they were elected.

**23% of respondents have had “trouble finding out the results of a Trustee Election or By-Election” in the past.** Of those respondents that had trouble finding the results of a previous election that left comments (n=45), 24 stated that they did not know where to look for results, 10 did not look for the results and expected someone to contact them personally with the information and 10 felt that the results were not distributed in a timely manner.

**Figure 25: Response When Asked "How would you like to receive information about future Island Trust Elections", by Voter Eligibility (n=315)**

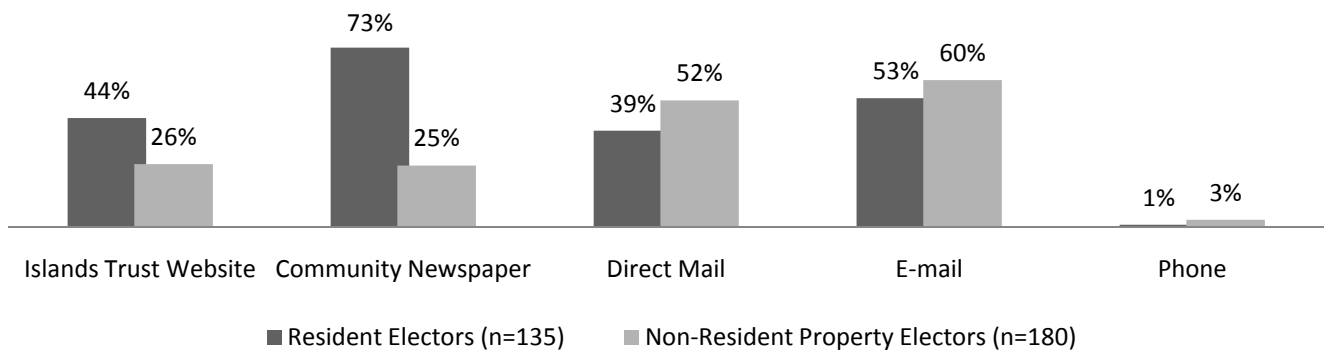


Figure 25 (previous page) shows that both Resident and Non-Resident Property Elector respondents support Direct Mail and E-mail as the best vehicles for receiving future information on elections from the Islands Trust. Resident Elector respondents were three times more likely to want to read about Trustee Elections in their community newspaper than Non-Resident Elector respondents.

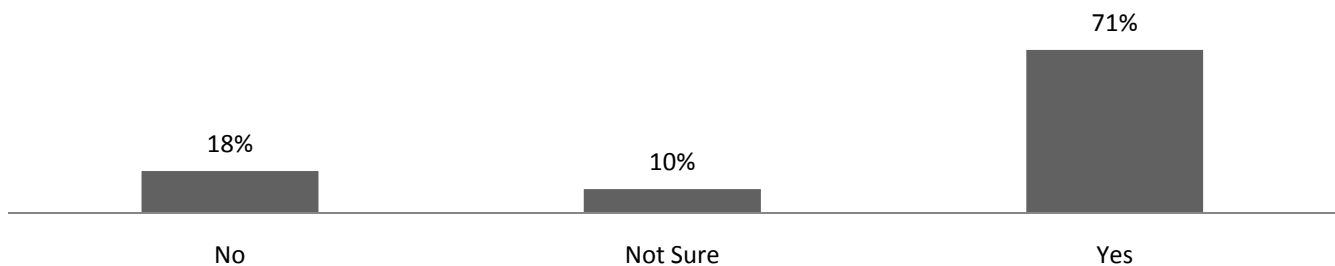
## FUTURE ELECTIONS

There are a number of options around the administration of future Trustee Elections that can be considered. The last section of the survey specifically talked about the option to introduce mail-in ballots and online/telephone voting. This section of the report details respondents’ opinions on these options.

### MAIL-IN BALLOTS

Mail-in ballots are not currently allowed under the *Local Government Act* except for Resident Electors who are in remote locations or disabled. The questions on the survey that relate to mail-in ballots asked respondents to give their opinion of them should they become a legal option for more widespread use in the Islands Trust Area. Figure 26 shows that the majority of respondents (71%) would use mail-in ballots if they were available.

**Figure 26: Response when asked “If mail-in ballots were legal under the *Local Government Act* for eligible electors who are not in the community on general voting day, would you use them to vote?” (n=290)**



The overwhelming majority of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents are in favour of mail-in ballots as shown in Figure 27. There is also a strong degree of support for mail-in ballots amongst Resident Electors.

**Figure 27: Response when asked “If mail-in ballots were legal under the *Local Government Act* for eligible electors who are not in the community on general voting day, would you use them to vote?”, by Voter Eligibility (n=289)**

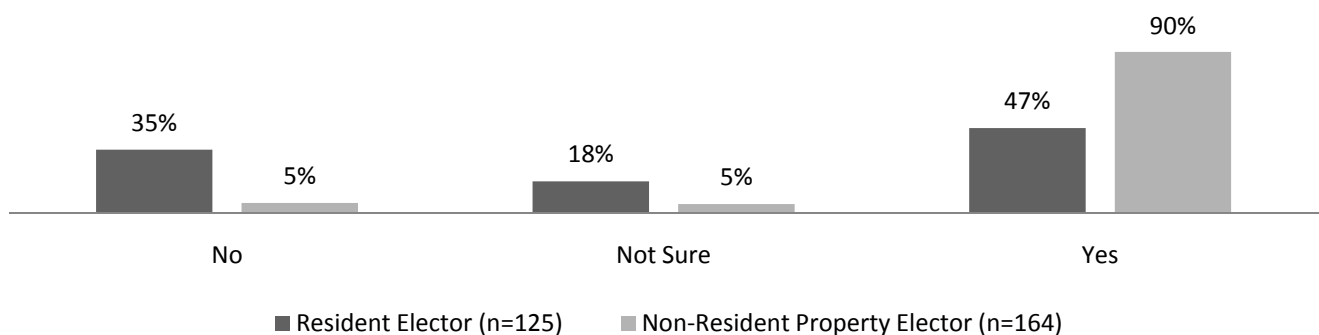
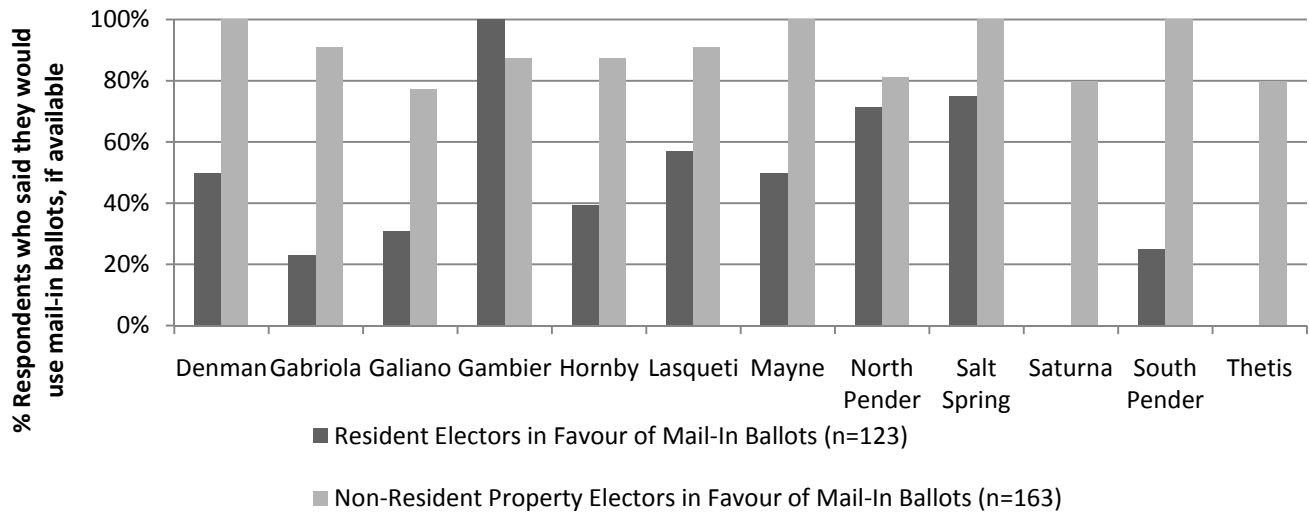


Figure 28 shows the willingness of both Resident Electors and Non-Resident Electors in all LTAs to use mail-in ballots at a future Trustee Election, should they become available. The majority of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents from each LTA are in favour of the ballots. Taken in the context of Figure 15 (which shows respondents who had difficulty getting to and using their designated polling stations, by Voter Eligibility), it is apparent that a large number of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents find it difficult to vote in a Trustee Election and would prefer to mail in their ballots.

**Figure 28: Willingness to Use Mail-In Ballots, by Local Trust Area and by Voter Eligibility (n=286)**



Another question of a very similar nature was asked on this survey and while initially, it might seem like a small difference, this question asked respondents if they would support mail-in ballots for everyone else. Figure 29 illustrates this important question and shows that general support for mail-in ballots corresponds roughly to Figure 26.

**Figure 29: Respondents' Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "I support the use of mail-in ballots for eligible electors who are not in the community on general voting day".**

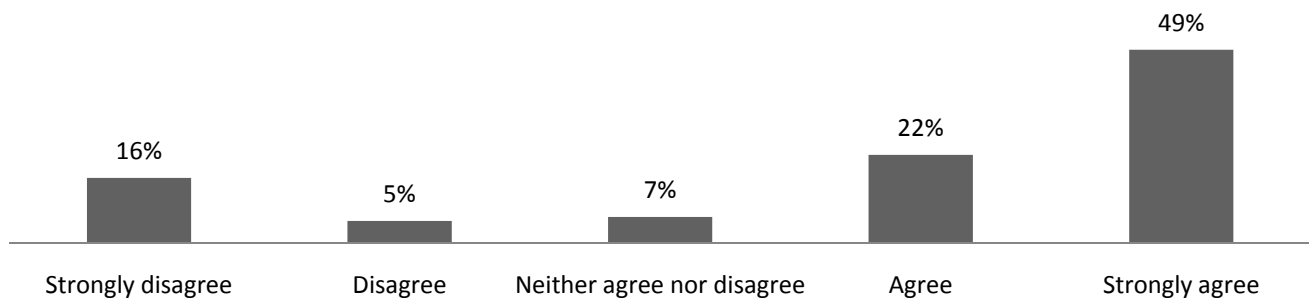
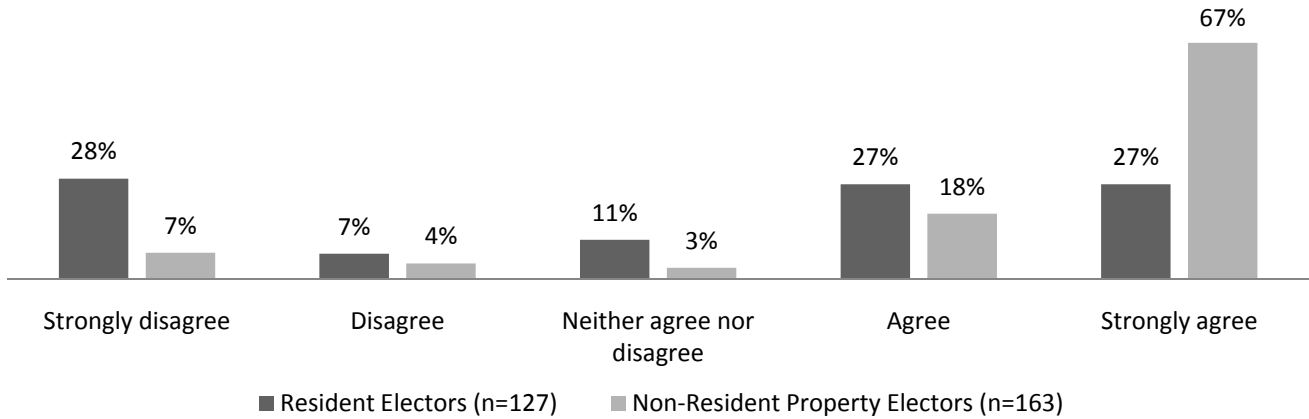


Figure 30 illustrates an interesting dynamic between Non-Resident Property Elector and Resident Elector Respondents. Not only are Resident Elector respondents less supportive of using mail-in ballots (shown in Figure 27); they are not as supportive as Non-Resident Property Elector respondents of others using them.

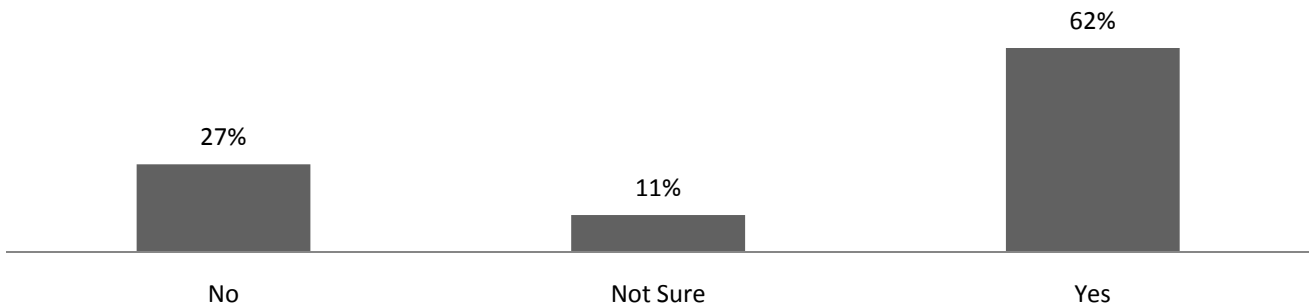
**Figure 30: Respondents' Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "I support the use of mail-in ballots for eligible electors who are not in the community on general voting day", by Eligibility Status (n=290)**



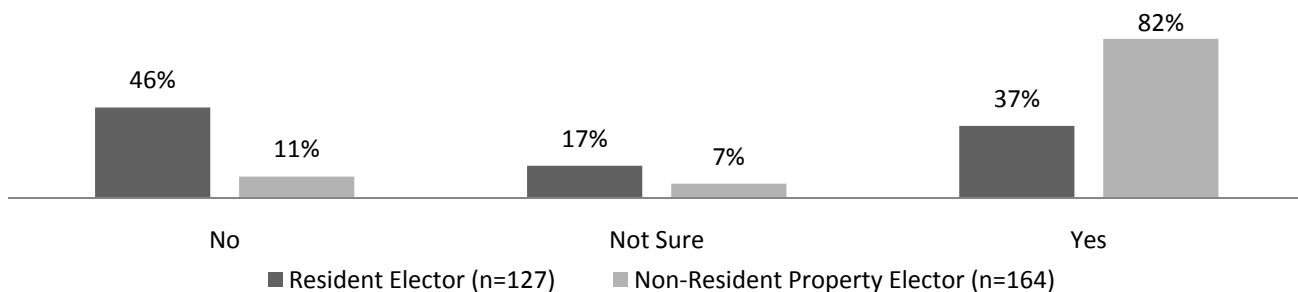
**INTERNET/TELEPHONE VOTING**

Under the *Local Government Act*, voting via the Internet or telephone is not allowed but the questions on the survey related to internet/telephone voting asked respondents to give their opinion of them should they become a legal option for the Islands Trust Area. Figure 31 shows that the majority of respondents (62%) would vote using the Internet or telephone if those options were available.

**Figure 31: Response when asked "If online (Internet) or telephone voting was legal under the Local Government Act, would you use them to vote instead of voting in person at the nearest polling station?" (n=292)**

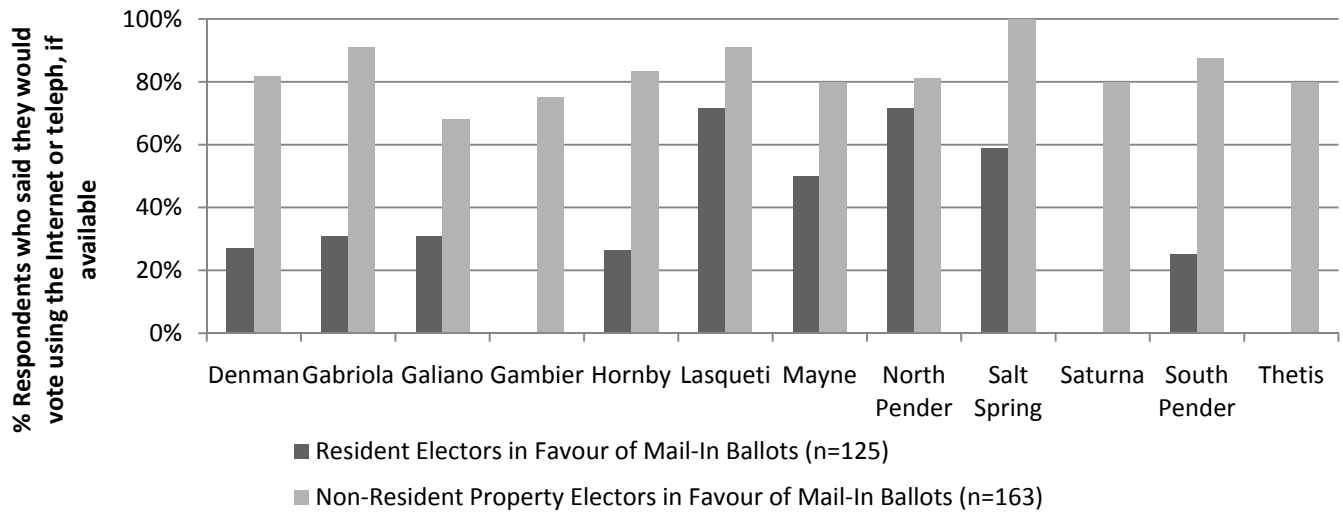


**Figure 32: Response when asked "If online (Internet) or telephone voting was legal under the Local Government Act, would you use them to vote instead of voting in person at the nearest polling station", by Voter Eligibility (n=291)**



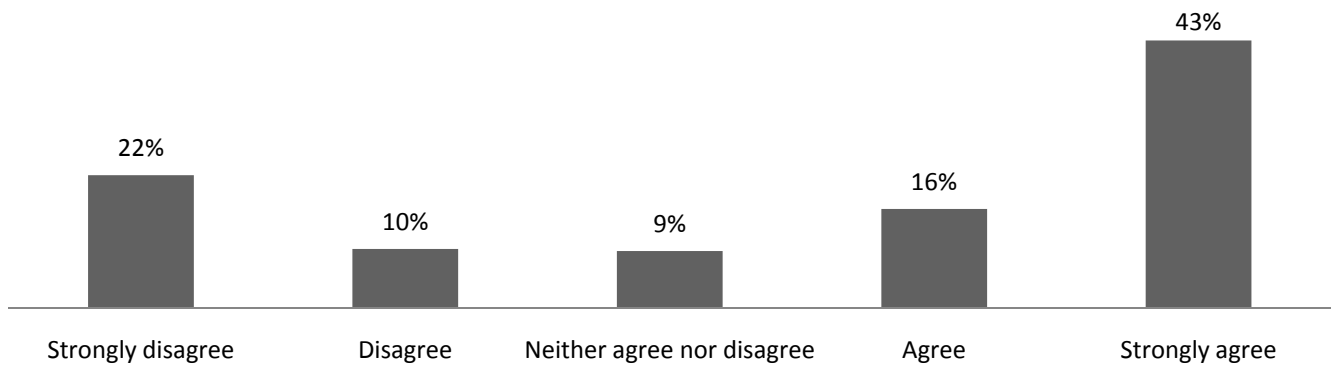
The majority of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents are in favour of Internet/Telephone voting as shown in Figure 32 and a significant number of Resident Electors are opposed to it. Figure 33 shows the willingness of both Resident Electors and Non-Resident Electors in all LTAs to use Internet/Telephone voting during a future Trustee Election, should the options become available. A large percentage of Non-Resident Property Elector respondents from each LTA are in favour of Internet/Telephone voting. Again, this is consistent with Figure 15 (which shows respondents who had difficulty getting to and using their designated polling stations, by Voter Eligibility).

**Figure 33: Willingness to Use Internet/Telephone voting, by Local Trust Area and by Voter Eligibility (n=288)**



A question of a similar nature was asked on this survey to determine if respondents would support Internet and telephone voting for everyone else. Figure 34 illustrates this important question and shows that the majority (59%) of respondents generally support Internet or telephone voting for others. The views of respondents on this matter are slightly polarized with a spike apparent in Figure 34 for respondents who “strongly disagree” with a statement supporting the use of Internet or telephone voting in any upcoming Trustee Elections.

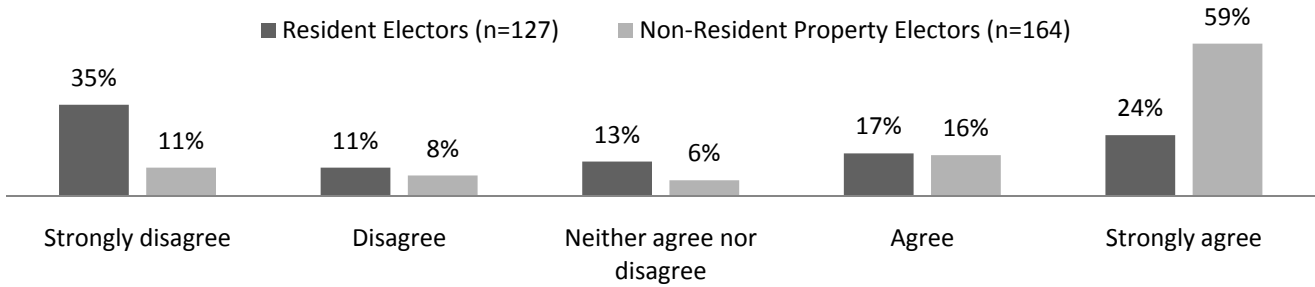
**Figure 34: Respondents' Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "I support the use of online (Internet) or telephone voting in an Islands Trust Trustee Election".**



Like Figure 30, Figure 35 illustrates an interesting dynamic between Non-Resident Property Elector and Resident Elector Respondents. The level of agreement with statements advocating the introduction of Internet and telephone voting

opportunities is polarized between Resident Elector respondents (who lean heavily against Internet or telephone voting) and Non-Resident Property Elector respondents (who are generally in favour of Internet and telephone voting).

**Figure 35: Respondents' Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: "I support the use of online (Internet) or telephone voting in an Islands Trust Trustee Election", by Eligibility Status (n=291)**



**ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

The last few questions in the survey dealt with the actual administration of Trustee Elections. Comments and other input around these questions were extracted from the data and will be dealt with separately in the full Election Administration Review document. The first of these questions deals with the opinion of respondents on voting opportunities in general.

**Figure 36: Responses to the following question: "Do you feel that voting opportunities are provided to all eligible voters in the Islands Trust Area in a fair and effective manner?" (n=286)**

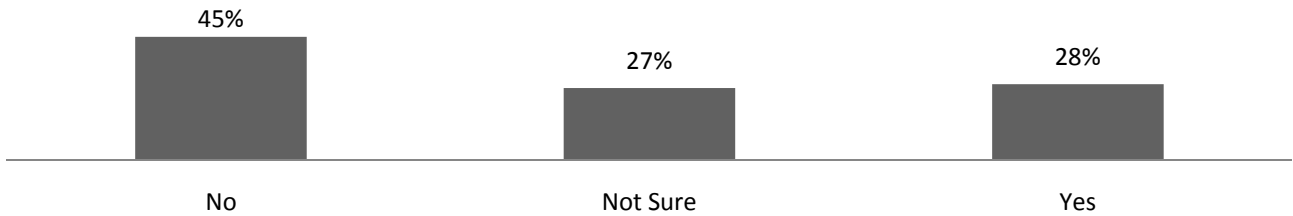
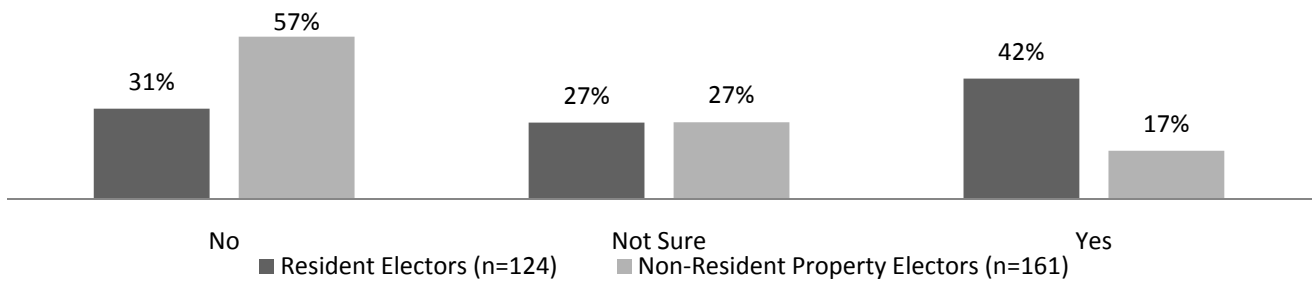


Figure 36 indicates that the majority of respondents do not feel that voting opportunities are provided in a fair and effective manner to all eligible voters. This is a strong statement and one that is further examined in Figure 37.

**Figure 37: Responses to the following question: "Do you feel that voting opportunities are provided to all eligible voters in the Islands Trust Area in a fair and effective manner?" by Voter Eligibility (n=285)**



**111 respondents chose to comment on why they felt that voting opportunities are not provided to all eligible voters in a fair and effective manner:** 56 felt that the current system is inconvenient for Non-Resident Property Electors, 32 felt disenfranchised, 12 thought voters need more information before an election and 10 felt that the location of the polling stations were poor.

Another question asked “do you have any other opinions about how voting opportunities are provided to eligible voters. 55 respondents answered this question and their answers can be categorized as follows: 20 want to see options for mail-in/Internet and phone voting examined, 11 would like to see some change in the current Trustee Election system, seven respondents feel disenfranchised, six respondents made negative comments towards Non-Resident Property Electors and five respondents think that there should be an established voter list that is accessible to the public on voting day.

**A full 63% of respondents think that the Islands Trust should continue running Trustee Elections in conjunction with the Regional District and School District elections.** 122 respondents left additional comments on this question: 66 felt that there were beneficial cost savings to the community by running all elections together, 28 felt that this move would increase convenience for voters, 14 felt that by having all of the elections on one day it would bring focus to community issues and 13 respondents didn't want to see any change to the current system.

**When asked what additional information they would like to see the Islands Trust provide leading up to the next Trustee Election, 63 respondents answered this question:** 21 want to see basic biographies and a stated election platform for each candidate well in advance of the election, 12 want to be provided with basic registration and voting instructions prior to the election, six wanted to see a summary of the candidates and the major issues that will be decided by the results, five wanted to see an established voters list and four wanted more information on the roles and responsibilities of the Islands Trust.

**APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS**

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## Introduction

The Islands Trust is currently reviewing the way it administers its elections, with the aim of making improvements for the next local government elections in November 2008. Because of the geography of the Islands Trust Area and the number of non-resident voters, the administration of Islands Trust elections is complex. The Islands Trust must ensure elections are cost effective while giving voters a good opportunity to cast their votes. Like other local governments in British Columbia, the Islands Trust administers its elections in accordance with the Local Government Act. The Act defines most aspects of the election process, and determines who is eligible to vote. To be eligible to vote you must qualify as either a "Resident Elector" or a "Non-Resident Property Elector":

You qualify as a Resident Elector if you:

- are 18 years of age or more on general voting day
- are a Canadian Citizen
- have lived in British Columbia for at least 6 months before you register to vote, and
- have lived in the jurisdiction where you wish to vote for 30 days or more before you register to vote

You may vote as a Non-Resident Property Elector if you:

- are not a Resident Elector in the community
- are 18 years of age or more on general voting day
- are a Canadian Citizen
- have lived in British Columbia for at least 6 months before you register to vote
- have owned property for in the jurisdiction where you wish to vote for at least 30 days before you register to vote.
- Only one non-resident property owner may vote for each property.

Whether or not you are an eligible voter in the Islands Trust Area, your input into this survey will provide valuable information that will help the Islands Trust improve the elections process. The Islands Trust Council will consider public input, including that collected by this survey, in March. It will then determine if it wants to make any changes to its elections procedures for November 2008.

This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Now is your chance to be heard. Please take advantage of it. Anyone wishing to provide more in-depth comments about the trustee election process should send their thoughts in writing to [information@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:information@islandstrust.bc.ca) before February 5, 2008.

At the end of this survey you will have a choice of providing your personal contact information. It is not necessary for you to provide contact information; however, if you choose to provide this information, you can also choose to be added to a mailing list maintained by the Island Trust to circulate information about the results of this review. Personal information collected under this survey will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you choose to provide your contact information, it will be separated from your survey answers before the survey data is reviewed. All responses to the survey will be compiled by an independent consultant and will remain anonymous.

Participants in the survey may also have their names entered into a random prize draw. Please indicate at the end of this survey whether or not you wish to have your name entered into the prize draw.

By completing this survey, you are indicating that you have read, understood and agree to the above conditions. If you do not agree with these conditions, please do not complete the survey.

*Please note that Bowen Island Municipality administers elections for Municipal Trustees from Bowen Island and those elections are not the subject of this survey.*

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## Voter Eligibility

What is your voter eligibility in the Islands Trust Area?

- Resident Elector(eligible to vote because you live in the Islands Trust Area)
- Non-Resident Property Elector(eligible to vote because you own property in a Local Trust Area, but do not live there)
- Eligible to vote in multiple Local Trust Areas (example: resident of one Local Trust Area and property owner in one or more other Local Trust Areas)
- Not eligible to vote in the Islands Trust Area

[Click here for more information on voter eligibility in BC.](#)

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## Stream A - Resident Electors

You have been directed to this section of the survey because you have indicated that you are a Resident Elector in the Islands Trust Area. If you are not a Resident Elector, press the back button on your web browser to choose again. If, for example you are a Resident Elector, but are also a Non-Resident Property Elector on another island, please go back and choose "eligible to vote in multiple Local Trust Areas".

As a Resident Elector, which Local Trust Area do you reside in? [Click here to see a map of Local Trust Areas if you're unsure.](#)

As a Resident Elector, how many years have you been a resident of the Islands Trust Area? (please enter a number, don't spell it out)

Did you have any trouble registering as a Resident Elector in a previous Trustee Election or By-election?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the challenges that you had and when they occurred.

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## Stream B - Non-Resident Electors

You have been directed to this section of the survey because you have indicated that you are a Non-Resident Property Elector in a Local Trust Area. If you are not a Non-Resident Property Elector, hit the "back" button to choose again. If, for example you are a Resident Elector but are also a Non-Resident Property Elector on another island, please go back and choose "eligible to vote in multiple Local Trust Areas".

As a Non-Resident Property Elector, which Local Trust Area do you own property in? (Check all that apply). [Click here to see a map of Local Trust Areas if you're unsure.](#)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denman Island       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hornby Island       | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturna Island      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Executive" Islands | <input type="checkbox"/> Lasqueti Island     | <input type="checkbox"/> South Pender Island |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gabriola Island     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mayne Island        | <input type="checkbox"/> Thetis Island       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Galiano Island      | <input type="checkbox"/> North Pender Island |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gambier Island      | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt Spring Island  |  |

Where is your primary (permanent) residence located?

Note: Your primary residence is where you live for the majority of a calendar year. Please note that the *BC Local Government Act* only permits residents of British Columbia to vote in local government elections.

As a Non-Resident Property Elector, how many years have you been a property owner in the Islands Trust Area? (please enter a number, don't spell it out)

Did you have any trouble registering as a Non-Resident Property Elector in a previous Trustee Election or By-election?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the challenges that you had and when they occurred:

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## Stream C - ELIGIBLE IN MULTIPLE LOCAL TRUST AREAS

You have been directed to this section of the survey because you have indicated that you are eligible to vote in multiple local trust areas. If you are not eligible to vote in more than one local trust area, hit "back" to choose again. If, for example you are a Resident Elector of one local trust area and do not own property elsewhere in the Trust Area, please go back and choose "Resident Elector".

Where is your primary (permanent) residence located? Click here to see a map of the Islands Trust Area if your primary residence is in the Islands Trust Area, but you are unsure about which Local Trust Area it is in. [Click here to see a map of Local Trust Areas if you're unsure.](#)

Which Local Trust Areas are you eligible to vote in? (Check all that apply) [Click here to see a map of Local Trust Areas if you're unsure.](#)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denman Island       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hornby Island       | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturna Island      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Executive" Islands | <input type="checkbox"/> Lasqueti Island     | <input type="checkbox"/> South Pender Island |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gabriola Island     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mayne Island        | <input type="checkbox"/> Thetis Island       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Galiano Island      | <input type="checkbox"/> North Pender Island |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gambier Island      | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt Spring Island  |  |

How many years have you been a resident or property owner in the Islands Trust Area? (Please enter a number, don't spell it out)

Did you have any trouble registering as a Resident Elector in a previous Trustee Election or By-election?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the challenges that you had and when they occurred.

Did you have any trouble registering as a Non-Resident Property Elector during a previous Trustee Election or By-election?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the challenges that you had and when they occurred.

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## STREAM D – NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

Your eligibility to vote is determined by the BC Local Government Act. However, the input of those who are not eligible to vote is also important to us so please feel free to give your comments below about the administration of the Islands Trust Area elections process. If you are, in fact, eligible to vote in the Islands Trust Area, hit "back" to return to the previous section and re-select the appropriate category.

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## PREVIOUS ELECTIONS EXPERIENCE

Were you eligible to vote in the last Trustee Election in the Islands Trust Area?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Did you vote in the last Trustee Election in the Islands Trust Area?

Yes

No

If you were eligible to vote in the last Trustee Election but did not do so, why?

If you voted in the last Trustee Election, where was the Voting Place located?

Did you vote in an Advance Voting opportunity?

Yes

No

If your answer to the above question was yes, did the Advance Voting opportunities meet your needs?

Yes

No

n/a

Please elaborate on your answer

Do you believe it is necessary to have Advance Polls open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm?

Yes

No

If you answered "no" to the above question...

Poll Opening Time

Poll Closing Time

What time do you think  
Advanced Polls should  
open and close?

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## PREVIOUS ELECTIONS EXPERIENCE - 2

Did you have any difficulty getting to or using your designated polling station?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the difficulties you had.

Did you have any concerns in the previous Trustee Election about the way other people registered to vote?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe your concerns.

Did you vote in a recent Islands Trust by-election?

Yes

No

If yes, did you have any concerns about the way the by-election was conducted compared to normal Trustee Elections?

Were the staff at your Voting Place adequately trained and knowledgeable about the election process?

Yes

No

No Opinion

If no, please explain

Do you believe there are adequate voting opportunities in your area for residents of nursing homes and care facilities and those who are hospitalized?

Yes

No

No Opinion

If no, please explain

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## COMMUNICATIONS

How did you get information about the previous election (check all that apply)?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Newspaper       | <input type="checkbox"/> email                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Islands Trust website | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Islands Trust notice  | <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer/Poster in my Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet              |   |

For the purposes of the following two questions, "official communications" are those originating from the Islands Trust, regional districts and chief elections officers with information about Trustee Elections such as the locations, dates and times for polling stations and official lists of candidates for each Local Trust Area. Blogs, e-mails, mail-outs, posters and other campaign materials provided by candidates and third parties are not considered official communications.

In regard to official communications around the previous Trustee Election, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Official communications <u>leading up to</u> the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Official communications <u>during</u> the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Official communications <u>after</u> the previous Trustee Election were useful and timely	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Official communication of <u>election results</u> from the 2005 Trustee Election were useful and timely	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Do you have any other comments about official communications before, during or after the previous Trustee Election?

Do you have any comments about other communications (communications that were not "official communications") before, during or after Trustee elections?

Did you have any trouble finding out the results of Trustee elections or by-elections?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the difficulties you had

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## FUTURE ELECTIONS

If mail-in ballots were legal under the Local Government Act for eligible electors who were not in the community on general voting day, would you use them to vote?

Yes

No

Not Sure

In regard to the possible use of mail-in ballots in an Islands Trustee Election, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I support the use of mail-in ballots for eligible electors who are not in the community on general voting day."

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

If online (Internet) or telephone voting was legal under the Local Government Act, would you use them to vote instead of voting in person at the nearest polling station?

Yes

No

Not Sure

In regard to the possible use of online (Internet) or telephone voting in an Islands Trust Trustee Election, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I support the use online (Internet) or telephone voting in an Islands Trust Trustee Election."

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

How would you like to receive information about future Island Trust Elections?

- Islands Trust website
- Community newspaper
- Direct mail to my home
- E-mail
- Telephone
- Other (please specify)

How could the Islands Trust make it easier for you to participate in the next Trustee Election?

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## FUTURE ELECTIONS - 2

Do you feel that voting opportunities are provided to all eligible voters in the Islands Trust Area in a fair and effective manner?

Yes

No

Not Sure

If no, please describe how the current system is not fair and effective for all voters.

Do you have any other opinions about how voting opportunities are provided to eligible voters?

In the past, Islands Trust has worked in conjunction with Regional Districts and School Districts in individual island communities when their elections occur at the same time.

Do you feel that running Trustee Elections in conjunction with Regional District and School District elections is a good idea?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Please expand on your opinion

What additional information would you like to see the Islands Trust provide to you leading up to the next Trustee Election?

What additional comments do you have about the elections process for Trustee Elections?

# Islands Trust - 2008 Trustee Election Survey

## MAILING LIST AND PRIZE DRAW

To thank you for your participation in this survey, we will be entering anyone who volunteers their contact information below into a draw for a gift basket of island products. Your submission of the following information is completely voluntary. Your information will not be sold or provided to any third parties and will only be used for the purposes indicated. Your privacy will be maintained in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Your Name

Your E-mail Address

Check here if you wish to receive a summary report on the results of this survey when it becomes available.

If you wish, you may also go to [the Islands Trust website](#) and subscribe to receive copies of Islands Trust newsletters, news releases and other notices, including information about elections and by-elections in the Islands Trust Area.