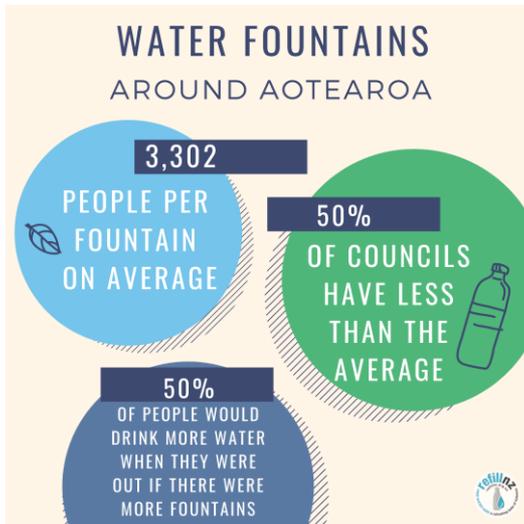


DRINKING FOUNTAINS IN AOTEAROA

Key facts:

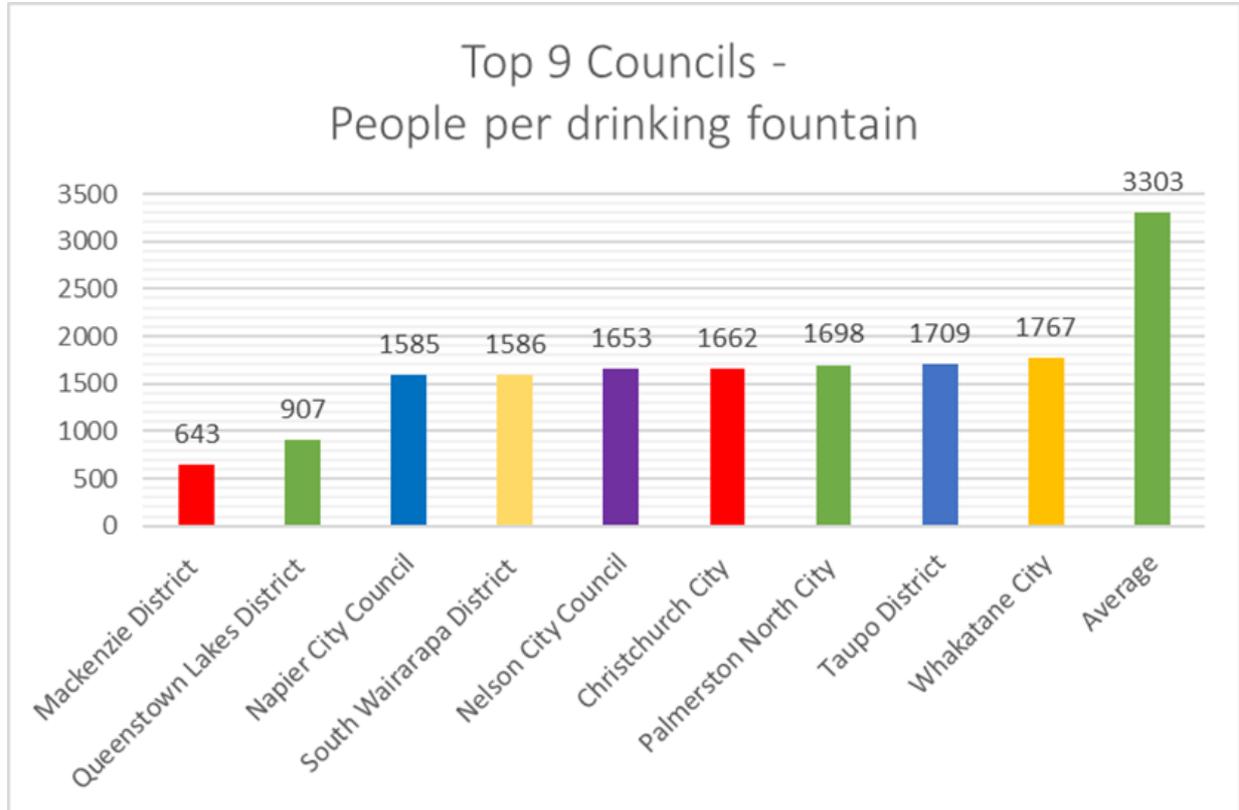
- On average, there is just one drinking fountain for every 3,303 people in NZ.
- The nine top performing councils have an average of one fountain for every 1,321 residents.



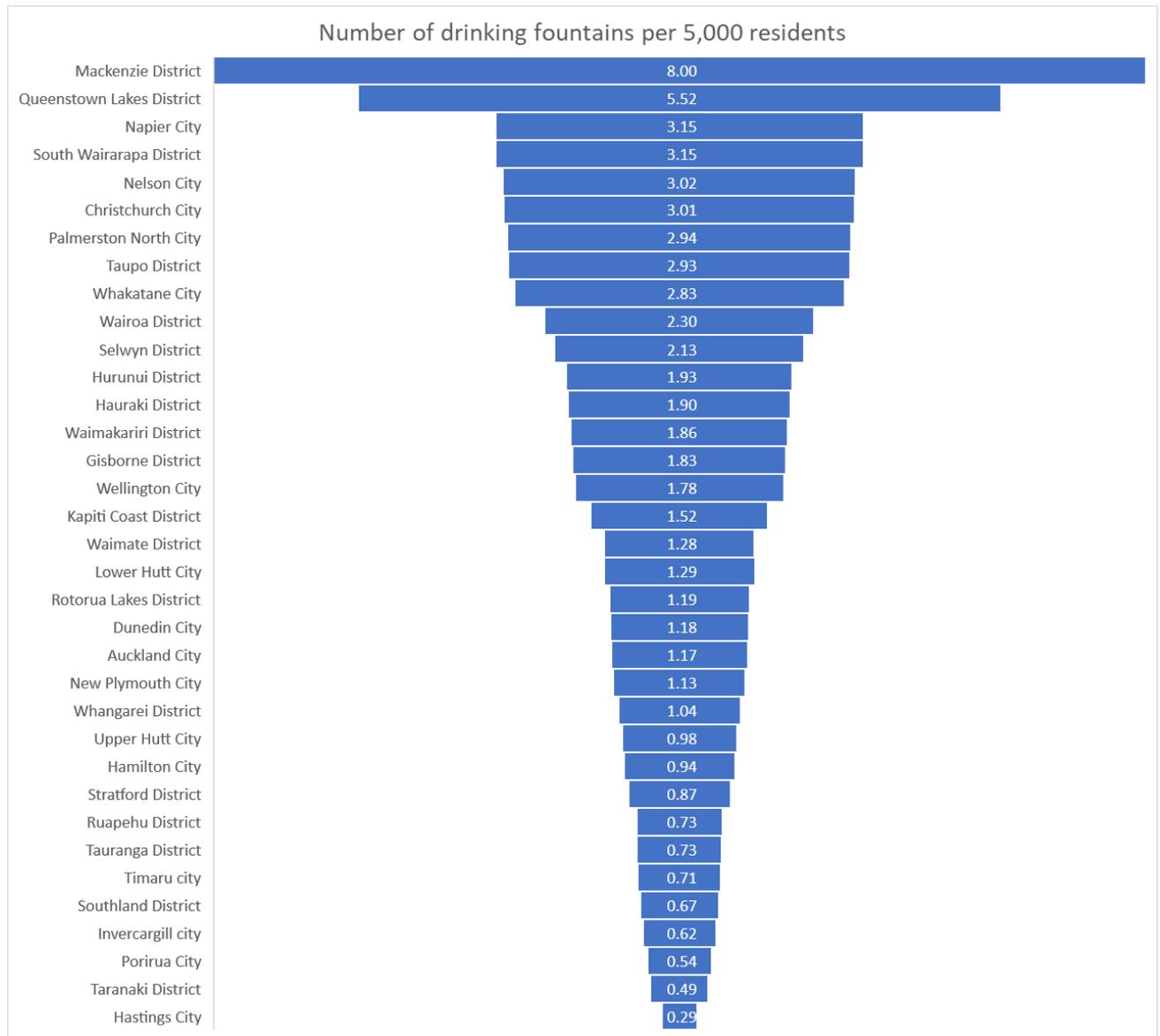
- The eleven councils with the fewest drinking fountains have on average one fountain for every 8,387 people.

- 50% of councils have less than the average

Councils with the highest rate of drinking fountains per capita



An alternative measure is the number of drinking fountains per 5,000 residents which ranged from 8 per 5,000 to 0.29!



This means that it's often easier for people to find somewhere to buy a bottled drink than to find a drinking fountain.

Despite this, 50 per cent of people said they said they would drink more water when out and about if there were more drinking fountains*.



Council fountains are often unattractive and poorly maintained which means they are not easy to spot and are unhygienic.

This contrasts with the ready availability, high visibility, and strong promotion of soft drinks and bottled water by retailers and manufacturers, as well as high-profile promotional events at the beginning of summer, such as the Powerade Challenge.

As a result, sales of bottled drinks are increasing.

In 2018-19, sales of bottled water in New Zealand increased 20 per cent, despite our tap water being good to drink and FREE.

This leads to higher levels of littering of single-use plastic bottles as well as increased amounts of single-use beverage bottles going to landfill.

The availability of drinking fountains at sports fields and in playgrounds and parks is an issue.

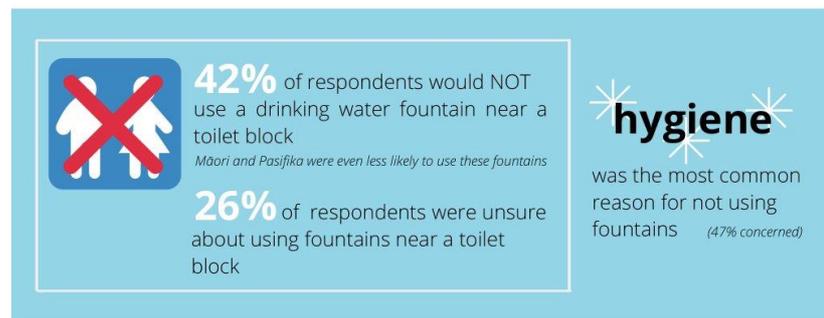
Research by Otago University found that there were as few as 1 drinking fountain for every 5 playgrounds and only 1 for every 10 parks.

Research for Wai Auckland* showed **water was the preferred choice for sport players BUT accessibility to water when playing sport is an issue.**

From players - "If there were water fountains that would make people more prone to drinking water instead of alternatives." - Sports player



Respondents would use fountains if they were more widely available in:



bottle refill > bubbler only

respondents preferred fountains that a bottle could be easily refilled from, not just being able to take a drink

Poor hygiene is the number one reason people give for not using water fountains when available*.



Approximately 828 million single-use plastic bottles being thrown away in NZ every year, contributing to plastic bottles and lids being in the top 5 commonly found items of rubbish on beaches.

Soft drinks are a source of significant amounts of sugar and a contributing factor in our high rates of obesity and health-related diseases, from Type 2 Diabetes to poor dental health.

Conclusion

While some councils are doing well, on the whole we need **more water fountains**, to both reduce waste and improve the health of our communities.

More fountains are needed in council venues; parks, playgrounds, sports venues, walk and cycleways, beaches.

Water fountains need to be hygienic and well-maintained - regularly cleaned and sanitised, as is done with public changing rooms / toilets.

Water fountains need to be attractive and easily visible. Lower Hutt and Porirua councils have been installing more water fountains, at the request of their communities and are making an effort for them to be more noticeable.

This can be as simple as having labels - we can supply you with RefillNZ ones, which just \$2.50 each - you could paint the fountains blue, or have signage as you do for public toilets. The extra cost is minimal and far less than the cost of expanding your landfills and collecting litter from streets and parks.

**Synergia report for Wai Auckland: Research Report on Attitudes towards sugary drinks in sports and the commercial challenges to promoting water, September 2019*

