

Greater Wellington brand health research

Wave 3: April 2021

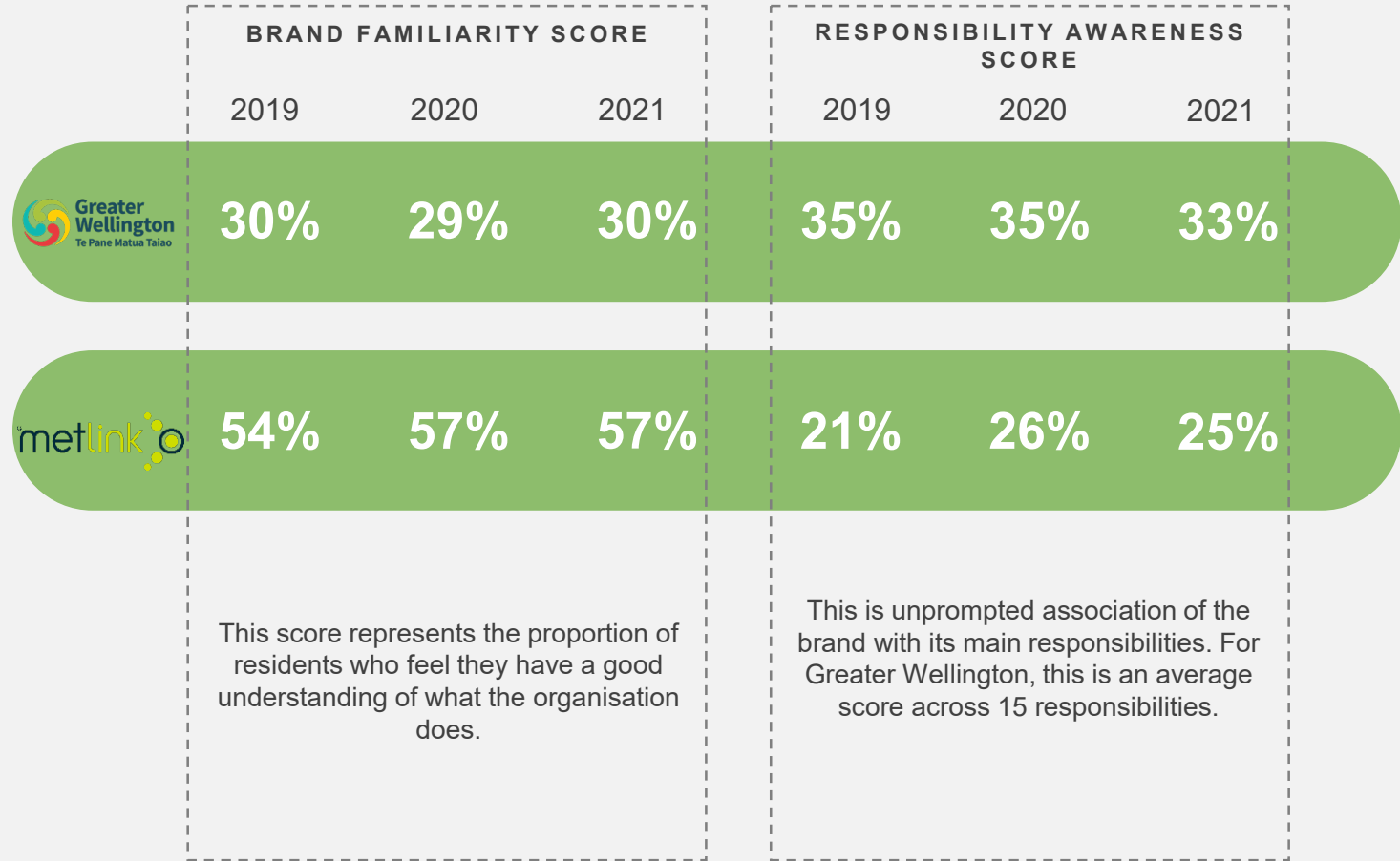


Executive summary

Awareness of the Greater Wellington and Metlink brands.

Awareness of both Greater Wellington and Metlink is consistent with the levels seen in 2020.

The strongest associations residents have with the Greater Wellington brand are water quality, regional transport planning, and pollution management.



Reputation.



The average public sector agency scores 100 on each measure.

Metlink’s reputation has taken a big jump from where it was in 2020 – this largely been driven by improved perceptions of public transport and also how COVID-19 has been handled.

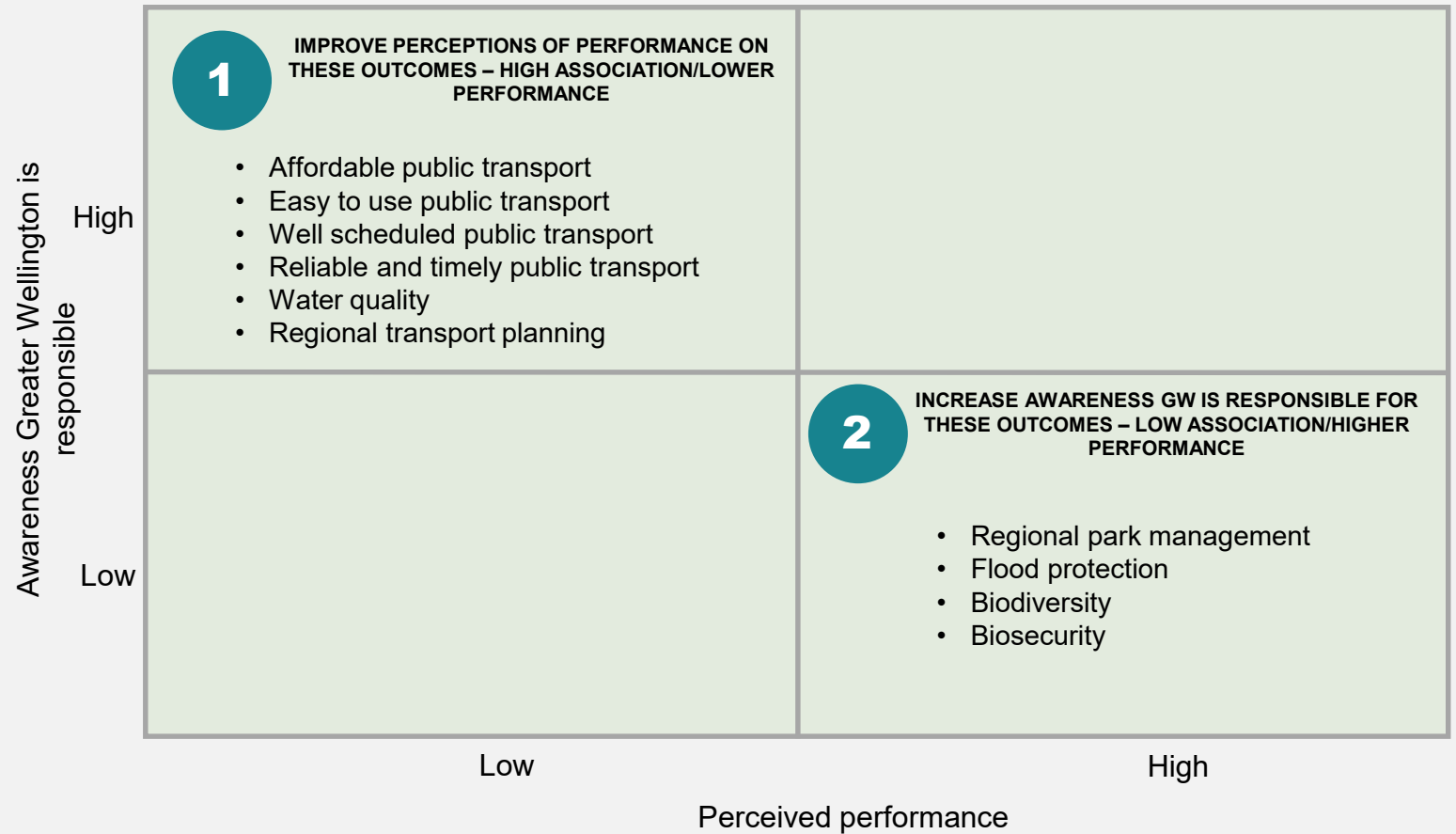
“The buses in Wellington were really unreliable 12 months ago (or more) and now they have improved!”

Greater Wellington’s reputation has improved one point since 2020.

“My most negative thoughts of GWRC was around the change of bus services. I have recently seen improvements, although slow coming. Also recent exposure to regional parks, and their management.”

Levers and priorities.

There are two ways Greater Wellington can improve its reputation: (a) it can focus on improving perceptions of its performance on high visibility/lower performance outcomes (box 1 to the right), or (b) it can focus on increasing awareness of low visibility/high performance outcomes (box 2 to the right).



Methodology



ONLINE
SURVEYS

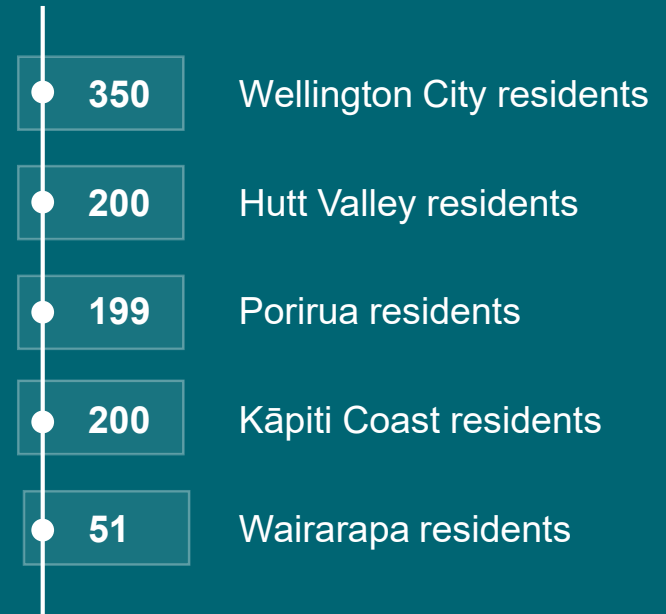


Results are post-weighted to be representative of the regional population by age, gender, and location.

FIELD-
WORK

4-11
MARCH 2020

1,000 residents of the Wellington Region. Quotas were set to ensure a robust sample of residents in each area:





Awareness of Greater Wellington and Metlink

Awareness of the Greater Wellington brand was measured in two ways, to capture both residents' own perceptions of familiarity with the brand, and what they actually know about what Greater Wellington does. Brand familiarity is in line with the 2020 result, while responsibility awareness has dropped slightly (not statistically significantly).

30%

Brand familiarity score

29% in 2020 and 30% in 2019

This score represents the proportion of residents who feel they have a good understanding of what Greater Wellington does.

“How much, if anything, do you know about what Greater Wellington Regional Council does?”

33%

Responsibility awareness score

35% in 2020 and 2019

We asked residents, unprompted, which organisation they think is mainly responsible for each of 15 roles Greater Wellington performs. The responsibility awareness score represents the average proportion of residents who mention Greater Wellington across the 15 roles.

“Which organisation do you think is mainly responsible for _____?”

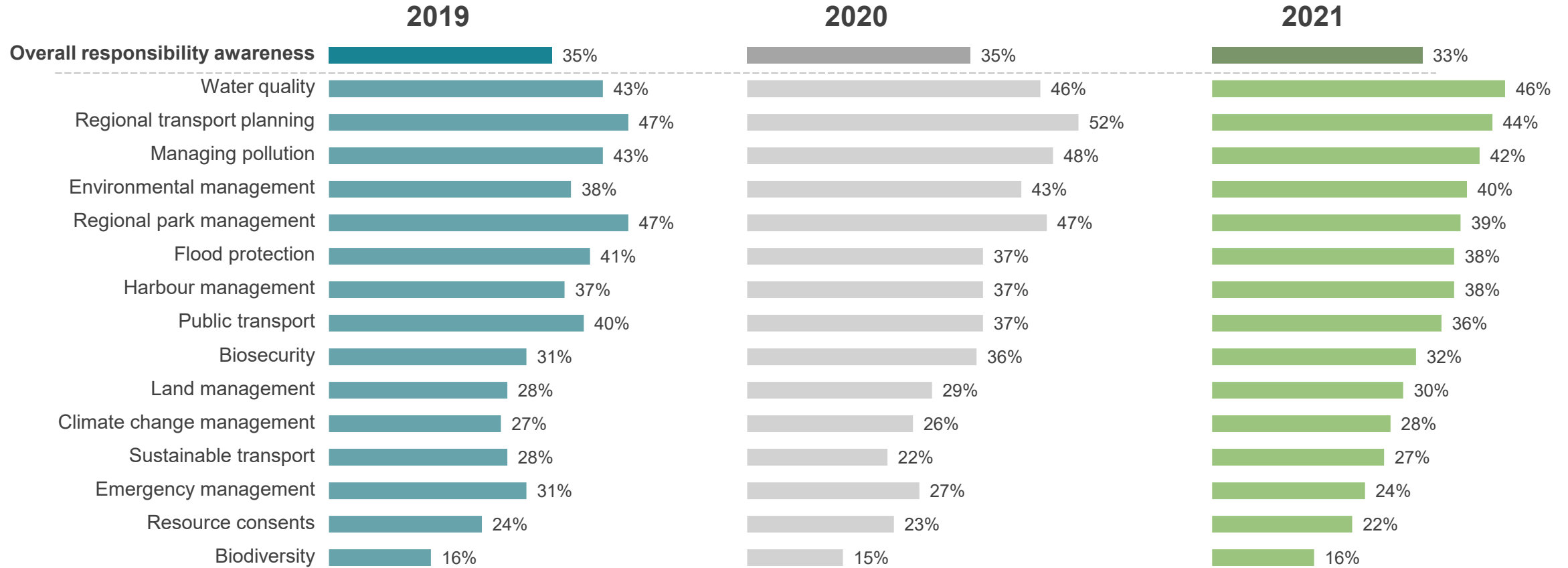
The word cloud below illustrates the responsibilities Greater Wellington has the greatest connection with.

The font size for each role represents the proportion of residents aware that Greater Wellington is responsible for it.



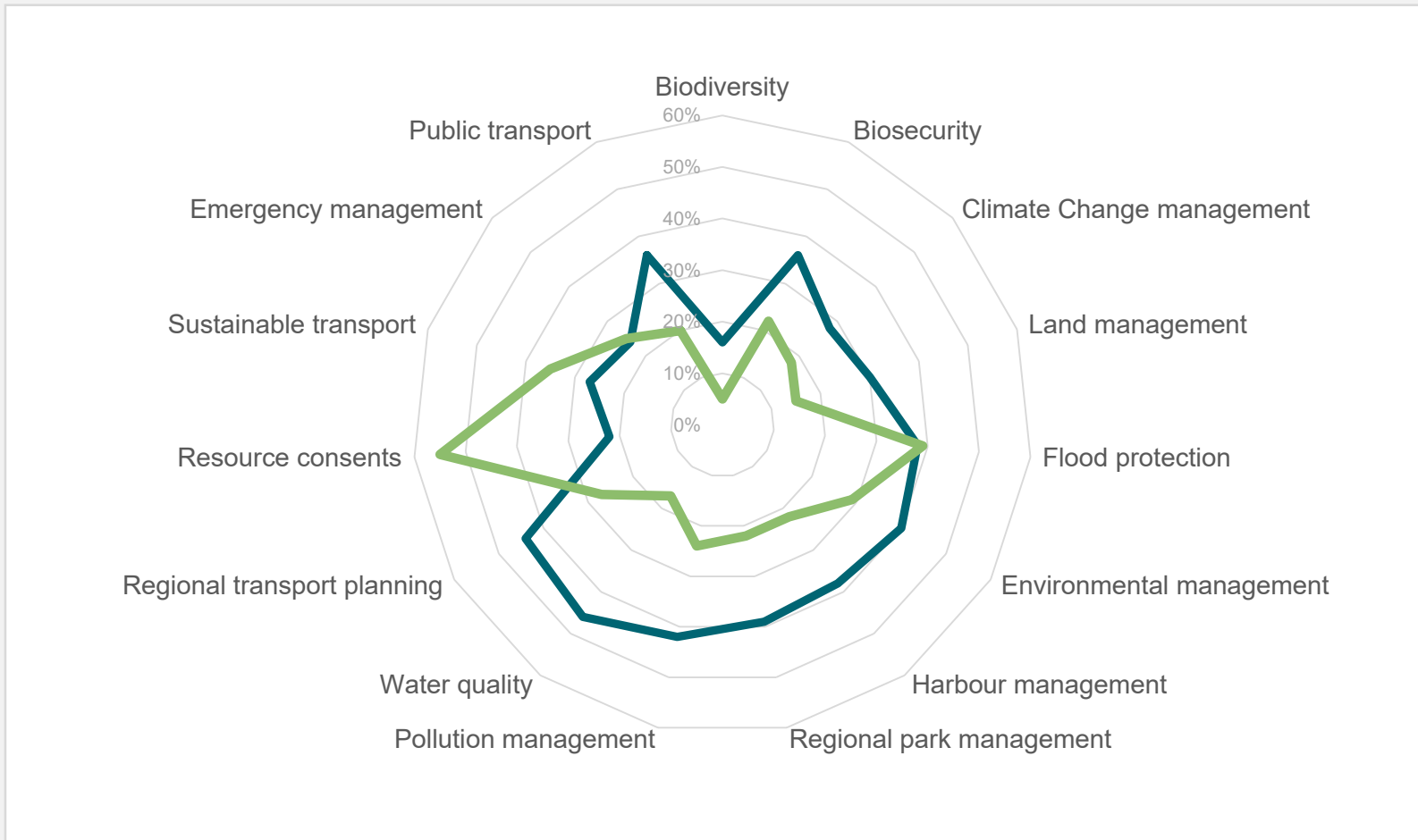
The largest declines in awareness of Greater Wellington’s responsibilities are: regional transport planning and regional park management – however these declines are not statistically significant.

Which organisation do you think is mainly responsible for...?*



There is a considerable amount of misattribution of Greater Wellington’s responsibilities to city/district councils – particularly resource consents, encouraging people to make sustainable transport choices, and flood protection.

Awareness of each responsibility – Greater Wellington vs. city/district council



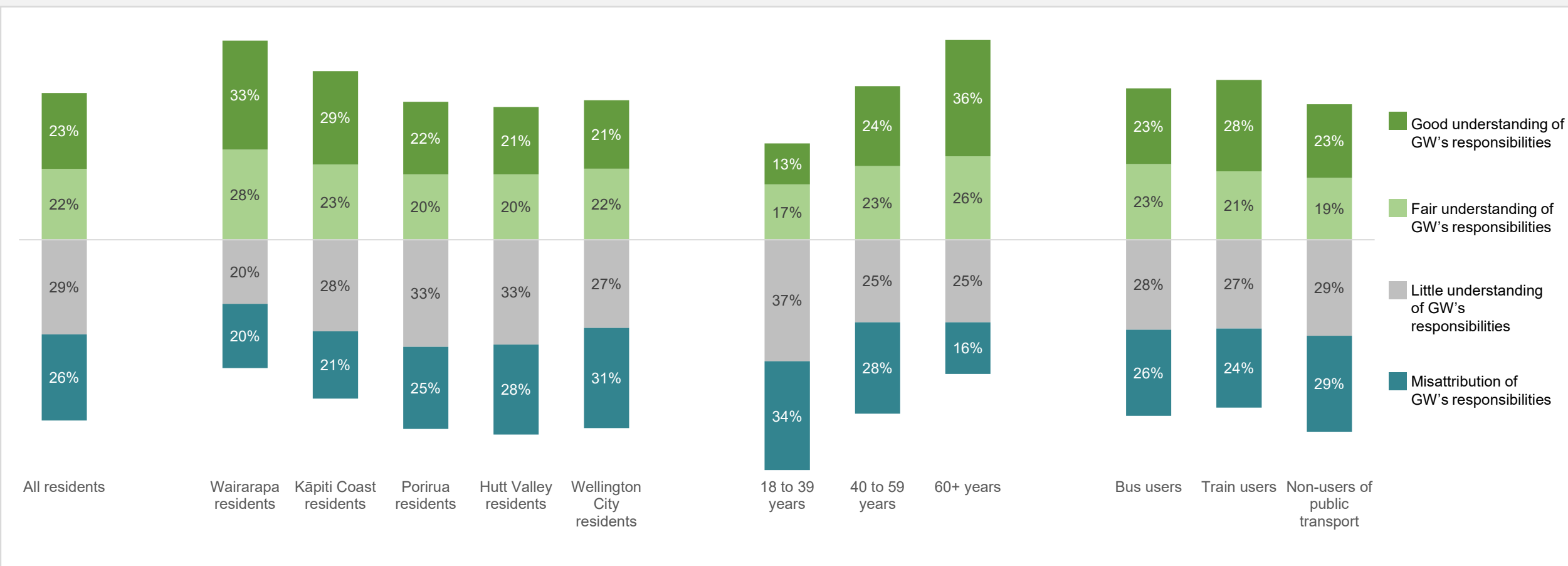


Greater Wellington
 Te Pane Matua Taiao


City/district council (or simply "Council")

Just under a quarter of residents have either a good understanding of Greater Wellington's responsibilities (they can spontaneously associate Greater Wellington with the majority of its responsibilities). Half of all residents are either unable to name which organisation is responsible for Greater Wellington's roles or misattribute them to a city/district council.

Understanding of Greater Wellington's responsibilities



*Good understanding of Greater Wellington's responsibilities = correctly naming Greater Wellington as responsible for at least four of the six roles they were shown, Fair understanding = correctly naming Greater Wellington as responsible for two or three of the six roles they were shown and associating Greater Wellington with more roles than their city/district council, Misattribution = associating their city/district council with more roles than Greater Wellington, Little understanding = all other options.

Base: All residents n=1,000, Wairarapa residents n=51, Kāpiti Coast residents n=200, Porirua residents n=199, Hutt Valley residents n=200, Wellington City residents n=350, 18 to 39 years n=313, 40 to 59 years n=409, 60+ years n=278, bus users n=371, train users n=344, non-users of public transport n=467. Source: A15.

Awareness of the Metlink brand is consistent with 2020's levels.



57%

Brand familiarity score

57% in 2020 and 54% in 2019

This score represents the proportion of residents who feel they have a good understanding of what Metlink does.

“How much, if anything, do you know about what Metlink does?”

25%

Responsibility awareness score

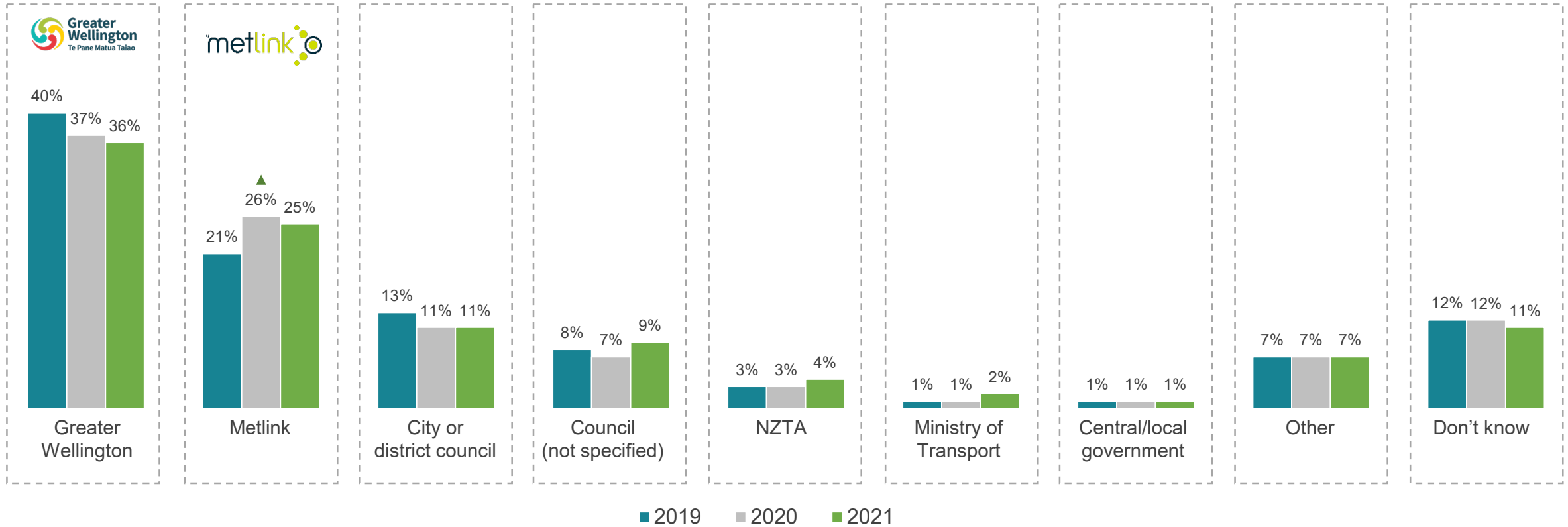
26% in 2020 and 21% in 2019

We asked residents, unprompted, which organisation they think is mainly responsible for public transport in the Wellington Region. The responsibility awareness score represents the proportion of residents who mention Metlink.

“Which organisation do you think is mainly responsible for managing the network of buses, trains, and harbour ferries in the region?”

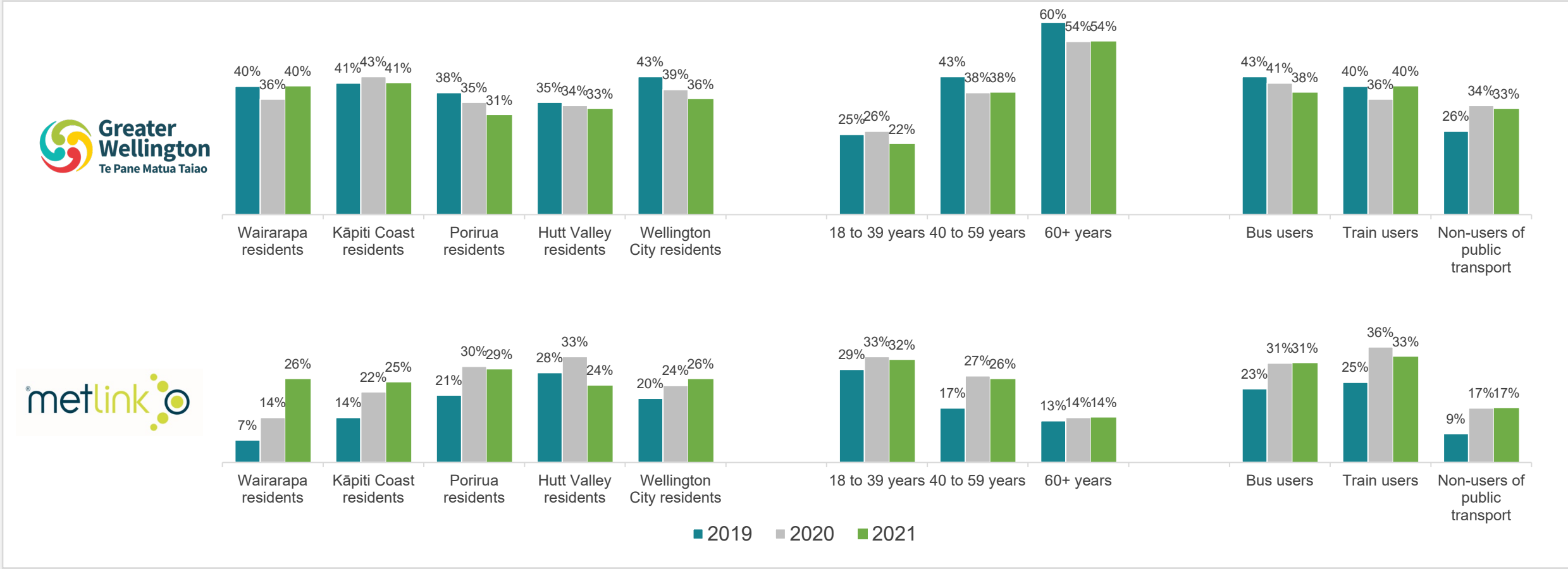
Residents are more likely to mention Greater Wellington than Metlink when asked who is responsible for public transport in the region.

Unprompted awareness of organisation mainly responsible for public transport



The link between Greater Wellington and public transport is much stronger amongst older residents than it is amongst younger residents.

Unprompted awareness of organisation mainly responsible for public transport





**Greater
Wellington
and Metlink
reputation**

We used a globally validated approach to measure the reputational strength of Greater Wellington and Metlink.

The index recognises that reputation is built on four key pillars: Trust, Leadership, Fairness, and Social Responsibility.



- Listens to the public's point of view
- Uses taxpayer money responsibly
- Is trustworthy
- Can be relied upon to protect individuals' personal information



- Is a forward looking organisation
- Contributes to economic growth
- Is easy to deal with in a digital environment



- Treats their employees well
- Deals fairly with people regardless of their background or role



- Behaves in a responsible way towards the environment
- Is a positive influence on society
- Has a positive impact on people's mental and physical wellbeing
- Helps people make a worthwhile contribution to society

Greater Wellington's overall reputation score has improved slightly since last year.



OVERALL REPUTATION

		2019	2020	2021	Av. across all public sector agencies*
REPZ	★	88	89	90	100
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	👤	92	91	91	100
FAIRNESS	⚖️	90	93	92	100
LEADERSHIP	🚩	87	89	89	100
TRUST	👉❤️	85	86	87	100

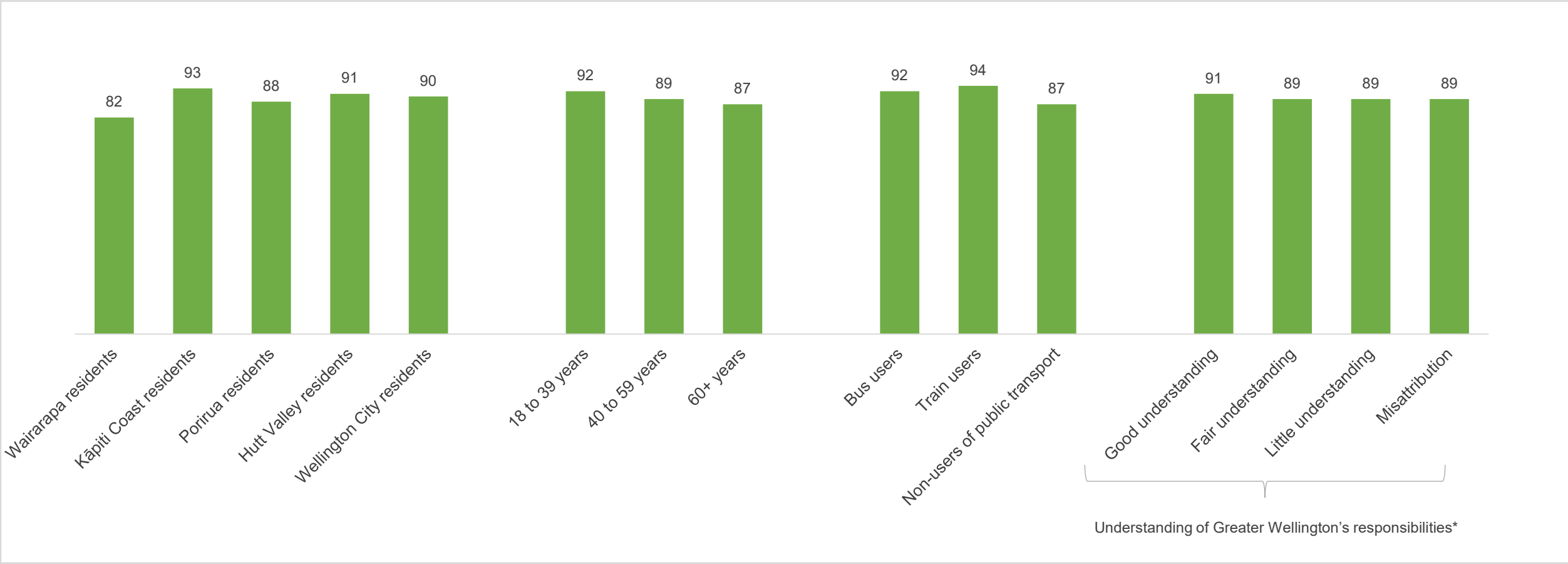
SCALE

105+	SUPERIOR STRENGTH
101-104	STRONG
100	AVERAGE
96-99	BELOW AVERAGE
95 and below	WEAK

Examples of public sector agencies with 'superior strength': Fire and Emergency NZ (122), Tourism NZ (111), Maritime NZ (110).
 Examples of agencies with an 'average' reputation: CAA (102), Stats NZ (101).

Greater Wellington's reputation is fairly consistent across demographic groups, albeit slightly lower amongst Wairarapa residents but this may be due to a small sample size for Wairarapa.

Overall reputation (RepZ)



*See earlier slide entitled 'Just under a quarter of residents have either a good understanding of Greater Wellington's responsibilities...' for definition of each group.

Base: Wairarapa residents n=51, Kāpiti Coast residents n=200, Porirua residents n=199, Hutt Valley residents n=200, Wellington City residents n=350, 18 to 39 years n=313, 40 to 59 years n=409, 60+ years n=278, bus users n=371, train users n=344, non-users of public transport n=467, good understanding n=232, fair understanding n=216, little understanding n=286, misattribution n=262.

Source: D1.

Metlink's reputation has improved since last year and is now on a par with Greater Wellington's.

			2019	2020	2021	Av. across all public sector agencies*
OVERALL REPUTATION	REPZ 		81	84	90	100
	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY 		83	83	89	100
	FAIRNESS 		81	83	92	100
	LEADERSHIP 		82	87	91	100
	TRUST 		79	82	89	100

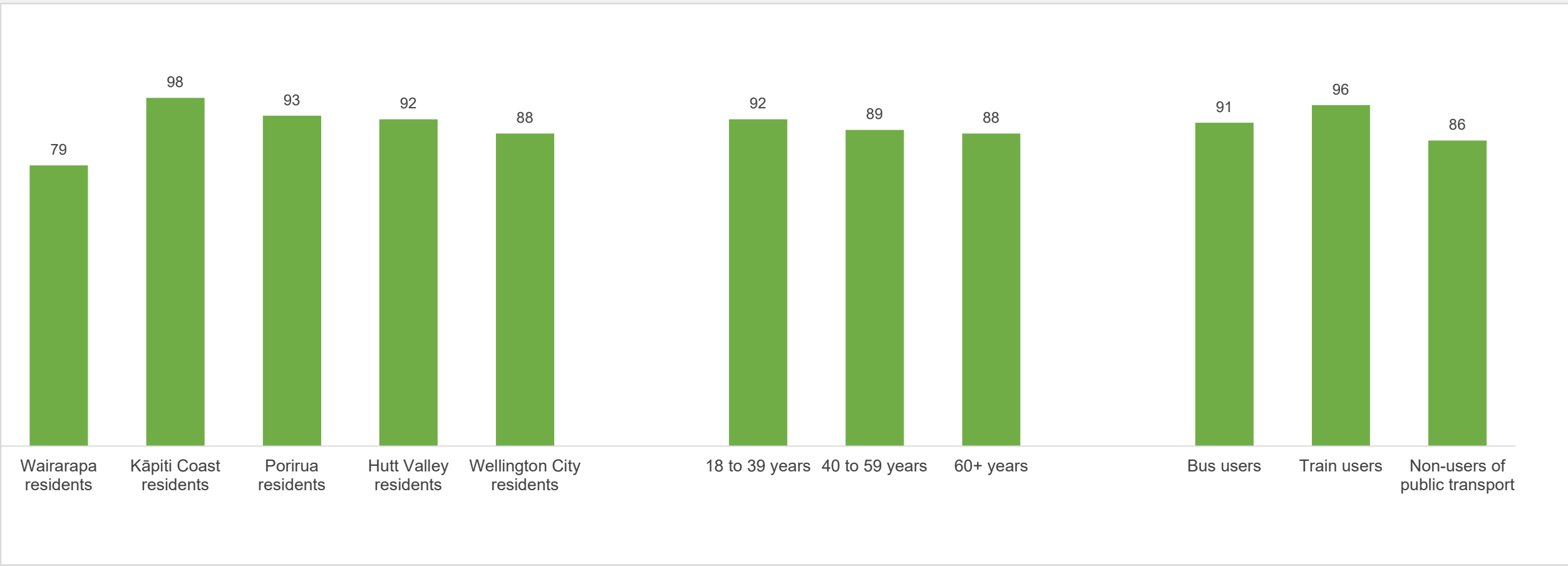
SCALE

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Examples of public sector agencies with 'superior strength': Fire and Emergency NZ (122), Tourism NZ (111), Maritime NZ (110).
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Metlink's reputation is strongest amongst Kāpiti Coast residents and train users.

Overall reputation (RepZ)



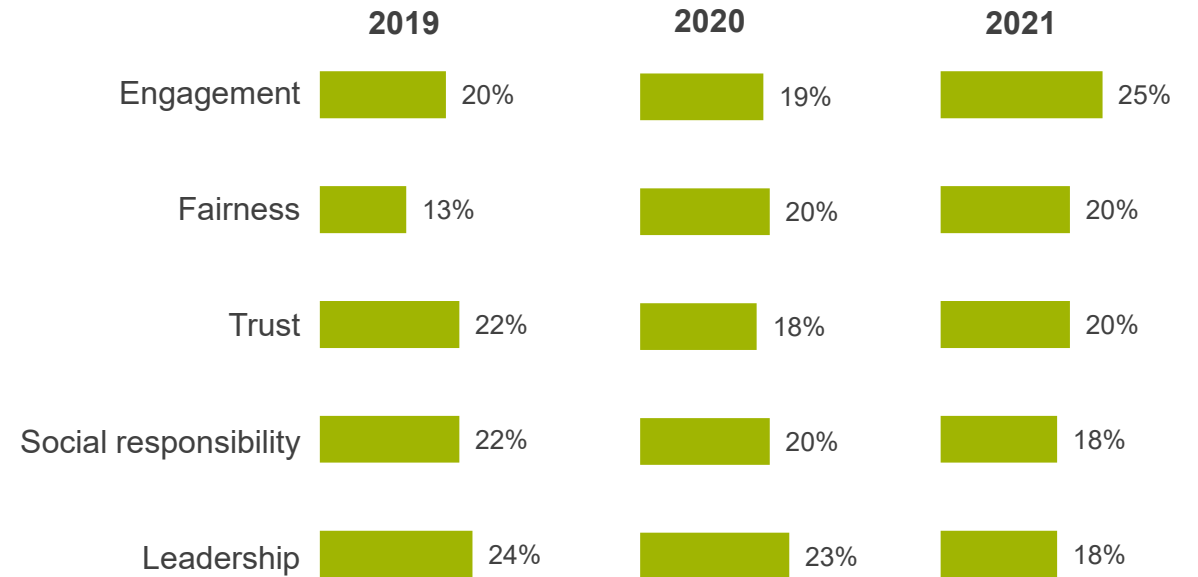
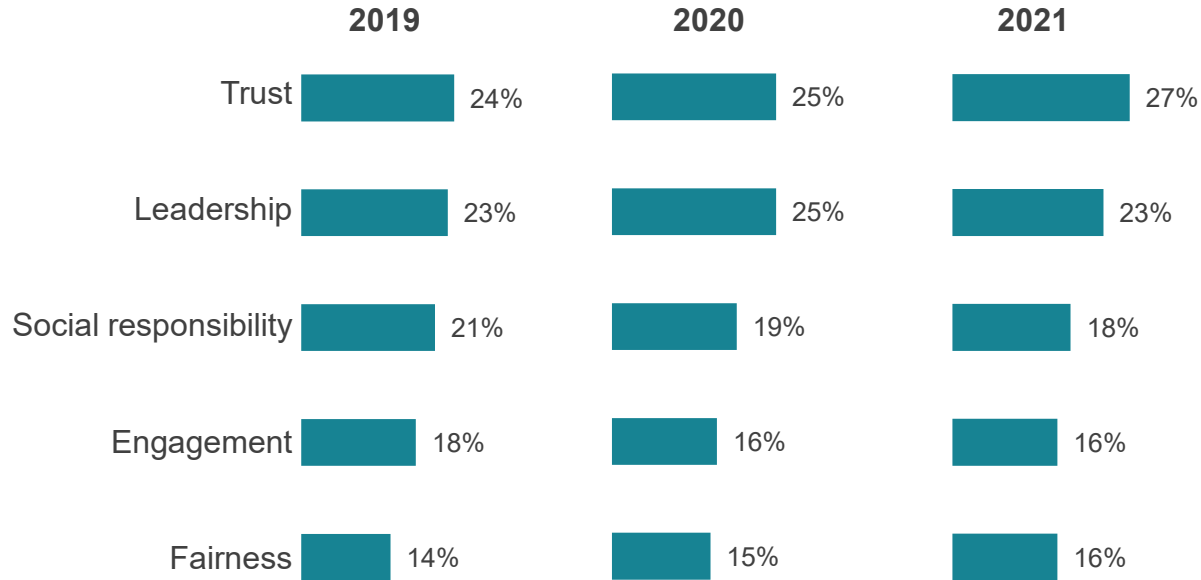
*See earlier slide entitled 'Just under a quarter of residents have either a good understanding of Greater Wellington's responsibilities...' for definition of each group.

Base: Wairarapa residents n=51, Kāpiti Coast residents n=200, Porirua residents n=199, Hutt Valley residents n=200, Wellington City residents n=350, 18 to 39 years n=313, 40 to 59 years n=409, 60+ years n=278, bus users n=371, train users n=344, non-users of public transport n=467, good understanding n=232, fair understanding n=216, little understanding n=286, misattribution n=262.

Source: D4.

The drivers of Greater Wellington's reputation have been relatively consistent over time. In contrast, Metlink's drivers have changed – the most important of its reputation is now engagement.

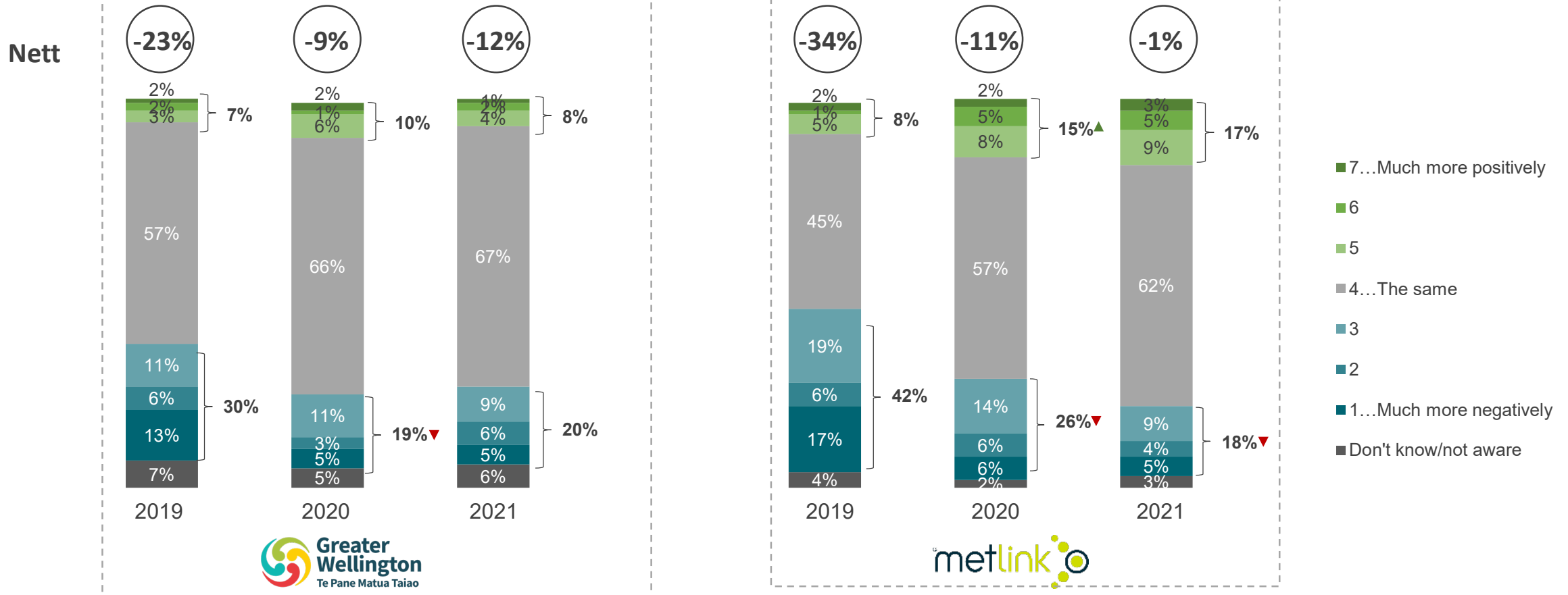
Impact of pillars on reputation



The **Engagement** pillar is not part of the core RepZ model but is included here to illustrate how important it is relative to the core pillars. It includes: provides opportunities for people to have their say, keeps people informed about what it is doing, has working relationships with local iwi.

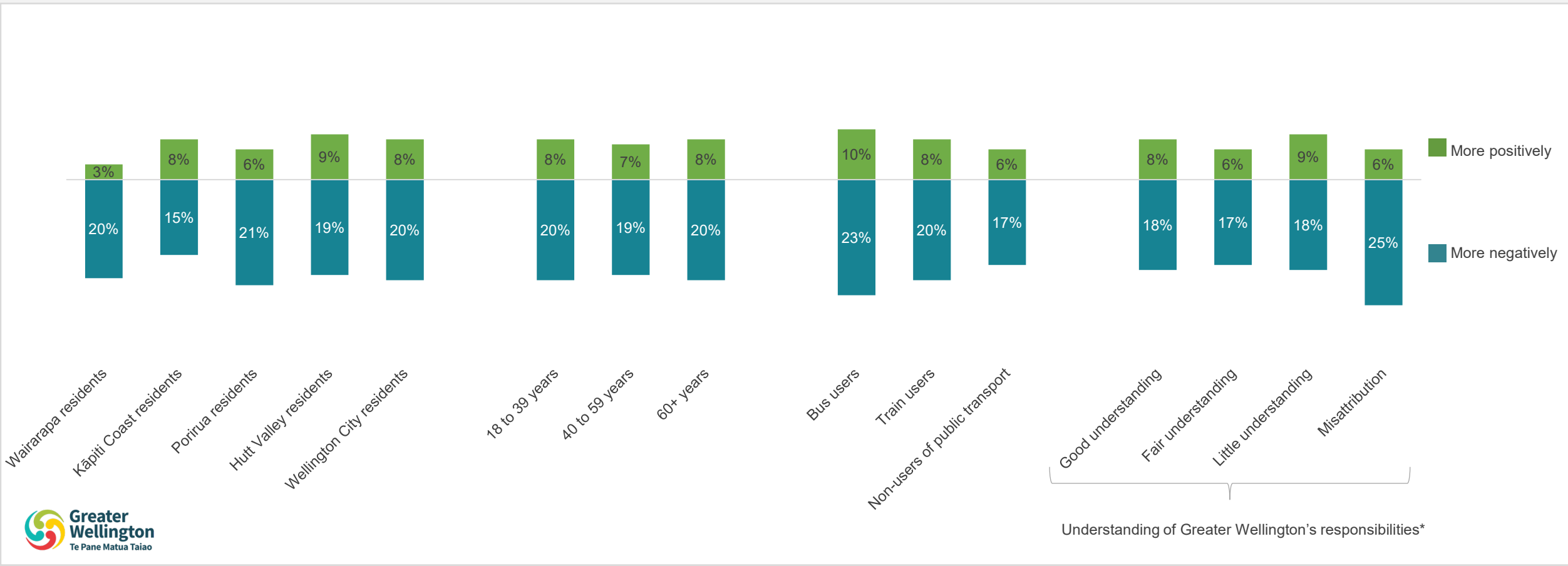
Residents were asked whether they feel more positively or negatively towards each brand than 12 months ago. The feelings towards Metlink have improved to such an extent that the proportions who feel more positively and more negatively are almost even.

Feelings towards the brands compared to 12 months ago



Sentiment towards Greater Wellington is fairly consistent across demographic groups.

Feelings towards the Greater Wellington brand compared to 12 months ago

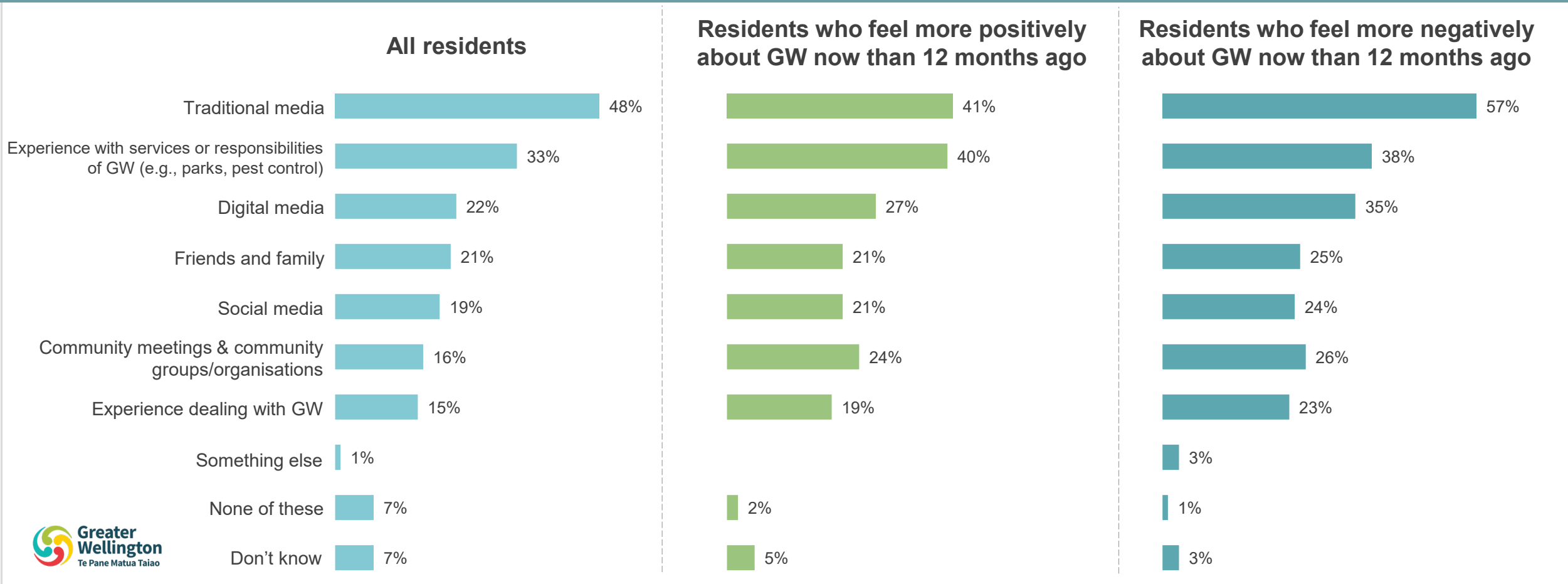


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 Source: C2.



Those who feel more negatively towards Greater Wellington than 12 months are more likely to say that traditional media and digital media have influenced their perceptions than all residents or those who feel more positively.

Channels that influence perceptions



Those who feel more negatively than 12 months ago are most likely to cite public transport and water infrastructure as the reasons.

Reasons for more negative views towards Greater Wellington compared to 12 months ago

Public transport – 28%



“The Wellington City public transport MESS - it was just starting to become marginally usable from the fiasco of 2019, and then its completely mucked up again re timetabling, a “new” Metlink online info portal that works about as well as holding ones finger in the air and spinning round (yes, Metlink, not GWRC, but unfortunately now all tarred with the same brush). Unfortunately some of the great work that GWRC has done, and is still doing in our regions “wild spaces” and forests is completely overshadowed by the complete lack of transparency, trust and general competence that has been shown around public transport.”

“They have made an awful mess of public transport. The decision makers should be made to use public transport for 12 months before making decisions. Their consultations are a farce. They never listen to the people that actually use the services. Lip service is given.”

“Their mismanagement of the Wellington bus services. I don't use these but my family in Wellington were left in the lurch with some of the changes to the bus services.”

“Bus service issues with lack of staff. Do not appear to get things done, seems to be a lot of talk and not much action.”

“The continual bus changes and lack of communication in rectifying matters.”

“Oh mate, the bus fiasco. I was in town and it WAS SO BAD. It's still so bad. And they are in control of the contracts with the trash bus operators who pay their drivers so poorly. Where are the extra electric buses. The converted trolley buses? And the constant train delays. And the dodging of responsibility.”

Water infrastructure/problems – 18%



“I feel that I've heard a lot in the last few months about the decrepit state of the Wellington Region's water system. Things like that seem to indicate a lack of vision and planning for the future.”

“To allow the waste water pipes to get to such a poor state as they have and expect a massive rates hike is just poor management.”

“Water supply and water as a resource still a huge issue for South Wairarapa and there are constant faults so feel the infrastructure is old and neglected. Feel that the use and storage of water is insufficient, not properly forecast for increased demand and no clear plan on what is our future proofing of this.”

“Water issues and lack of prioritisation of maintenance ... Welly is dying, up your game.”

[CONT.] Those who feel more negatively than 12 months ago are most likely to cite public transport and water infrastructure as the reasons.

Reasons for more negative views towards Greater Wellington compared to 12 months ago

Poor decision making / leadership – 12%



“The lack of forward planning and money put into maintaining vital infrastructure, causing rate hikes.”

“Lack of leadership and planning for the city.”

“They seem to be part of the overall inept way in which Wellington is being mismanaged.”

Inefficient / lack of progress – 12%



“They seldom get done what they say they are going to do , or take forever to get it done.”

“It is an outfit which sets high goals but doesn’t achieve them e.g., when Fran Wilde was leading the organisation she said that there would be an electronic device like Snapper which would be able to be used on trains and buses by 2013. We are still waiting for this to happen and its now 2021.”

Rate increases – 9%



“At a time of high stress they put the rates up 14% partly because they have not been forward thinking enough. They have wasted money at the expense of the poor rate payers.”

“Their cost has increased but services decreased. Poor record in water and flood mitigation.”

Environment – 7%



“My friends got trespassed by them, for making the beach safer and cleaner, GWRC called the police, had them trespassed, and said they were not allowed to do what they were doing, they couldn’t care less about safety, and they are overpaid for doing nothing.”

“Hearing more and more negative viewpoints regarding protection of the environment & being difficult to interact with.”

No public consultation – 6%



“They are not listening to the people. They make a decision then put it out for public discussion and then ignore what the public says and goes with their decision anyway.”

Those who feel more positively about Greater Wellington than 12 months ago mention improvements, the COVID-19 response, and understanding as their reasons.

Reasons for more positive views towards Greater Wellington compared to 12 months ago

Improvements to public transport – 15%



“They seem to have sorted the problems with Wellington buses.”

“Trying to address public transport issues.”

“The main positive is that they have improved the Metlink bus service in the region.”

“My most negative thoughts of GWRC was around the change of bus services. I have recently seen improvements, although slow coming. Also recent exposure to regional parks, and their management.”

COVID-19 response – 13%



“The way they reacted to the pandemic was generally more positive than negative.”

“Response to COVID has been really good.”

“They have been thinking to improve fare rates and did well during lockdown.”

More understanding of what they do – 10%



“I have been more aware of their role in this region.”

“Up until 12 months ago I really didn't take much notice of what they did.”

“I have become aware of their work with Pest control and biodiversity in the region.”

Moving forward – 8%

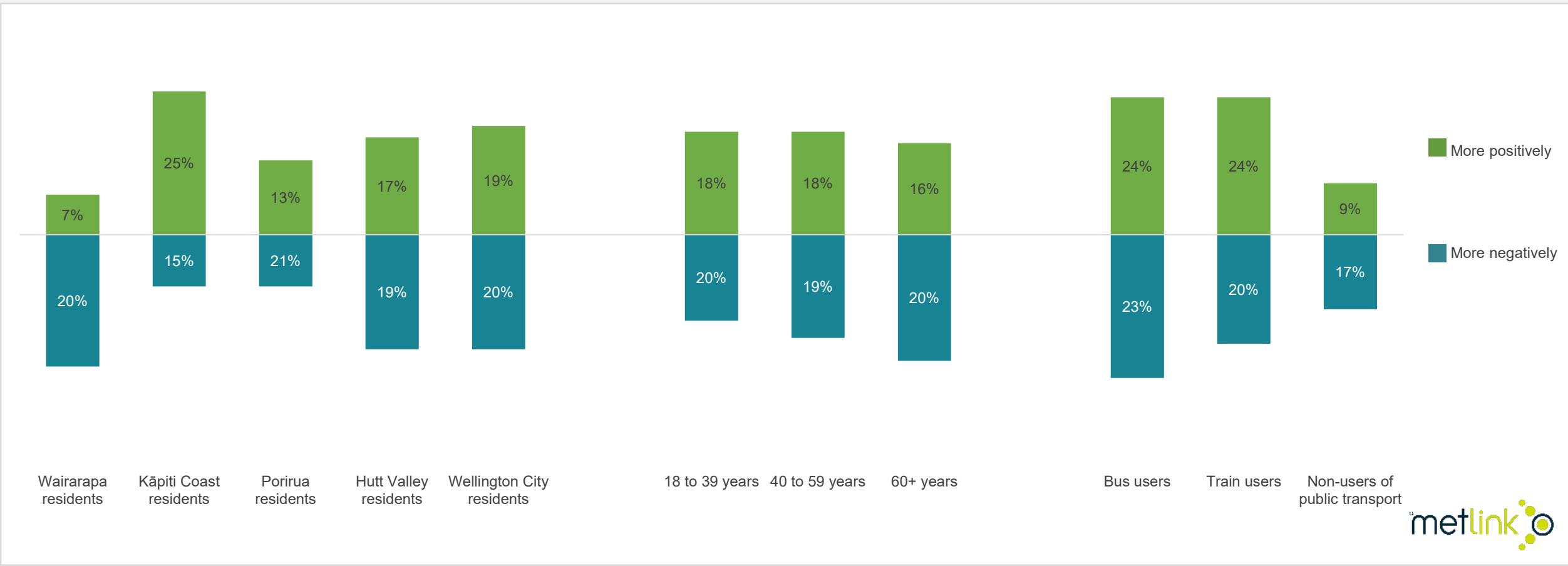


“A few more items being sorted and more local input.”

“Forward thinking/sustainable/environment.”

Kāpiti coast residents and public transport users are the most likely to say that they feel more positively towards Metlink than they did 12 months ago.

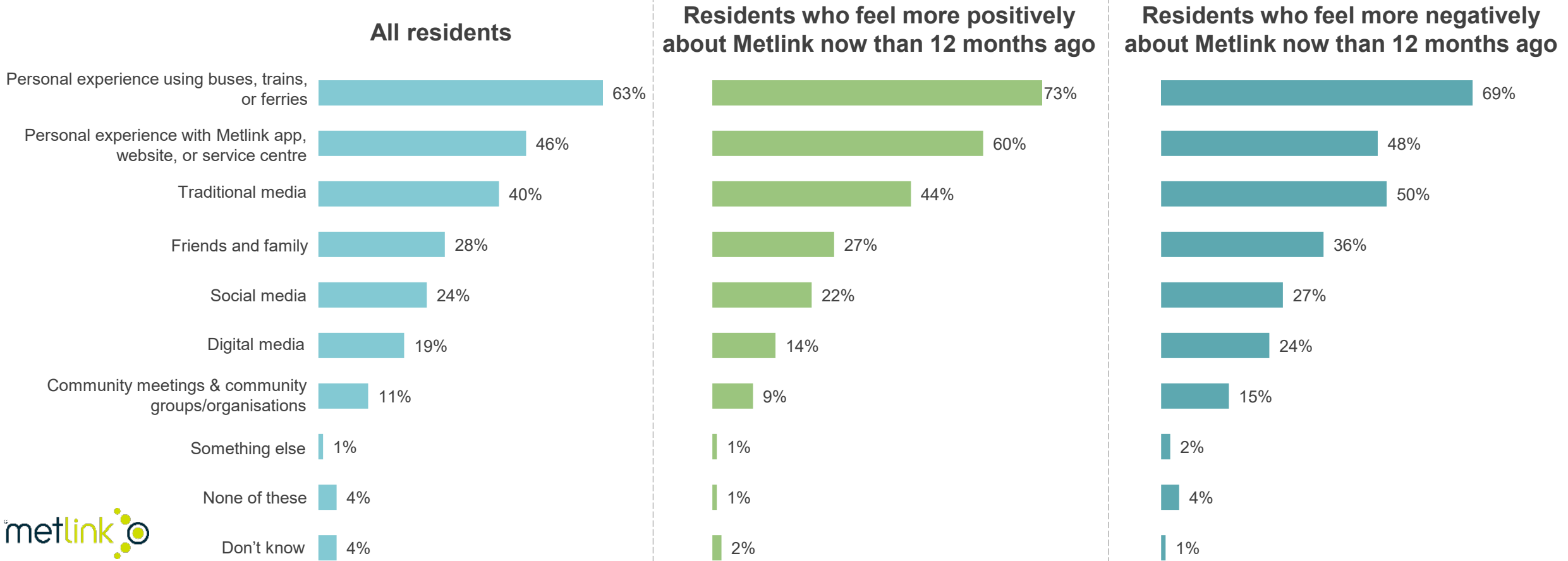
Feelings towards the Metlink brand compared to 12 months ago



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Source: C4.

Personal experience is the biggest influence on perceptions of Metlink.

Channels that influence perceptions



People feel more positively towards Metlink because of improvements to public transport and Metlink's efforts during COVID-19.

Reasons for more positive views towards Metlink compared to 12 months ago

Improvements to public transport – 31%



"I think the bus services have improved. They are more punctual and reliable."

"Bus system in our area is the best it has ever been."

"They are getting there act together with real tine buses being on time."

"Trains seem to be operating better than previous years. Appears to be a lot more buses on the roads."

"The buses in Wellington were really unreliable 12 months ago (or more) and now they have improved!"

"Have reliable timetables in spite of staff shortages."

"Well, the shambles over the new bus system seems to have been resolved to some degree."

"The service is running to time most of the time and the trains are very comfortable."

"Kapiti line seems less prone to holdups."

Efforts during COVID-19 – 20%



"Loved the free travel on trains bus last year during lockdown to do shopping supermarket and pharmacy around the Wellington region."

"I think they have managed the COVID-19 epidemic precautions very well."

"They handled the COVID-19 big lockdown very well and kept the city running through it."

"I believe that behaved responsibly and positively during COVID lockdown and are doing so now during levels 1 and 2."

Kept better informed – 10%



"Better communication about what is happening - delays etc."

"They keep the public notified of changes to train services e.g., bus replacement."

"They have gotten better at communicating when you're on the train and it stops or is delayed."

[CONT.] People feel more positively towards Metlink because of improvements to public transport and Metlink's efforts during COVID-19.

Reasons for more positive views towards Metlink compared to 12 months ago

Using it more – 9%



"I've since moved further away, and have been using public transport more."

"I catch the bus more often, which has generally been fine."

"I am using Metlink more often."

Improvements to infrastructure – 5%



"The upgrading of the railway tracks in the Hutt area."

"I can physically see the improvements they are doing to their infrastructure with public funding."

Trying to improve – 5%



"I think they are working well to improve services and over come issues of the past."

"They seem to have stepped up more."

Those who feel more negatively towards Metlink tend to mention unreliability and cancellation of services as their reasons.

Reasons for more negative views towards Metlink compared to 12 months ago

Unreliability of services – 31%



“Service is more erratic and no planning or thought is evident to suggest they care. E.g. Xmas Eve when we all know Govt Depts (and many firms) finish around lunch time the train was a single set for us to squash into. No doubt an empty 6 car set ran at 5.30pm.”

“The train service is not reliable; staff organise themselves to improve things for commuters and have to put up with a lot of hassle from Metlink. The staff on the train service are amazing - it's not their fault the service is crap.”

“People always complaining about the trains network breaking down.”

“Unable to use trains for commuting due to unreliability, delays and bus replacements.”

“Because buses are still late and not on time or don't turn up at all!”

“Reliability of the service has continued to deteriorate.”

“Seems to be more delays and adverse impacts on services than 12 months ago but don't really know why. Also communications seem to be less accurate.”

“Buses not as reliable. Bus drivers not getting paid enough. Shortage of bus drivers. Sometimes the buses get cancelled.”

Cancellation of services – 23%



“Taking away the Airport Flyer makes it very difficult for pensioners to get to the Airport and others too but a 7minute walk from bus stop to the Airport isn't 7minutes when you're elderly pulling a suitcase. Not everyone has someone to drive them to the Airport. Bus replacements for going over the Remutakas to the Wairarapa is terrible especially for those who get car sickness and on hot days no air-conditioning on bus - disgusting.”

“The number of buses servicing this area are cancelled more often than previously.”

“Trains are always cancelled and buses put on.”

“Airport Flyer no longer running. The Hutt needs transport to the airport.”

Need to provide more services – 10%



“I caught a train from Wellington to Porirua around midday, then had to wait 53 minutes for the next bus to my home in Titahi Bay. Services are out of sync and not structured to serve commuters.”

“There are not enough buses as if the weather is even slightly bad, the buses are always full when they reach my stop so I can't get on and I end up being later for work than if I had just walked.”

[CONT.] Those who feel more negatively towards Metlink tend to mention unreliability and cancellation of services as their reasons.

Reasons for more negative views towards Metlink compared to 12 months ago

Problems with buses – 10%



“Changing from electric to diesel buses ...”

“Problems with the buses.”

Treatment of staff – 9%



“Spoken to a few bus drivers who complain about their payslips being unfair and unfairly treated in the work place.”

“They don't treat their employees fairly or pay them appropriately.”

Changes to timetables – 9%



“The change in the bus schedule was quite out of the blue and didn't seem to fully plan out what would happen to those that lose their bus route.”

“New bus route less favourable for me personally.”

Poor COVID management – 8%



“They do not accept responsibility for enforcing mask use on their services.”

“Because they have not enforced the Government directive re the use of face masks on public transport specifically their bus drivers thus creating an unsafe environment for the public particularly the elderly public.”

Personal experience – 5%



“Try commuting to work everyday. You will understand our woes.”

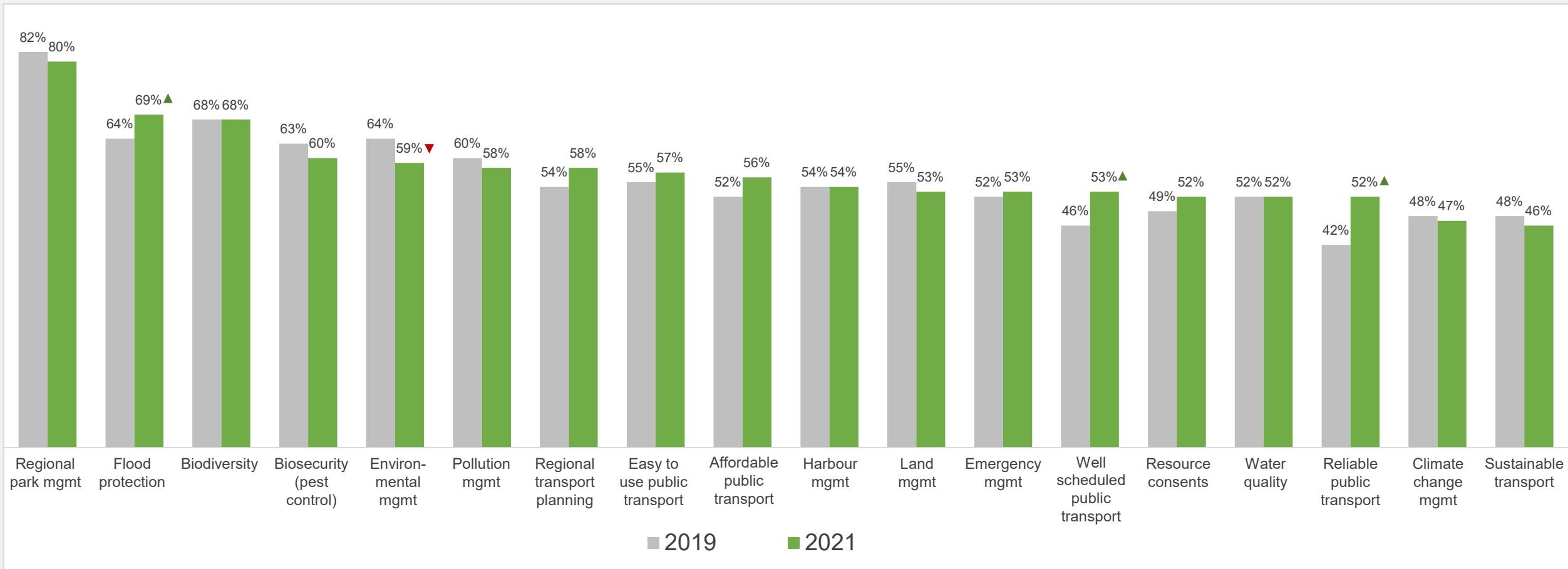
“Recently I had to use public transport for a week, instead of taking my car to work, and it was so expensive, slow and unreliable I could not wait to get my car back. I would gladly leave my car at home but there is zero incentive to do that when it costs twice as much and the journey take 2-3 times longer than a car.”



**What can
Greater
Wellington
and Metlink
do to
improve
perceptions?**

Residents were asked to state how well they thought a range of outcomes were being delivered – these outcomes were aligned with Greater Wellington’s responsibilities but were asked without reference to Greater Wellington*. Regional park management, flood protection, and biodiversity are the outcomes that residents think are being best delivered.

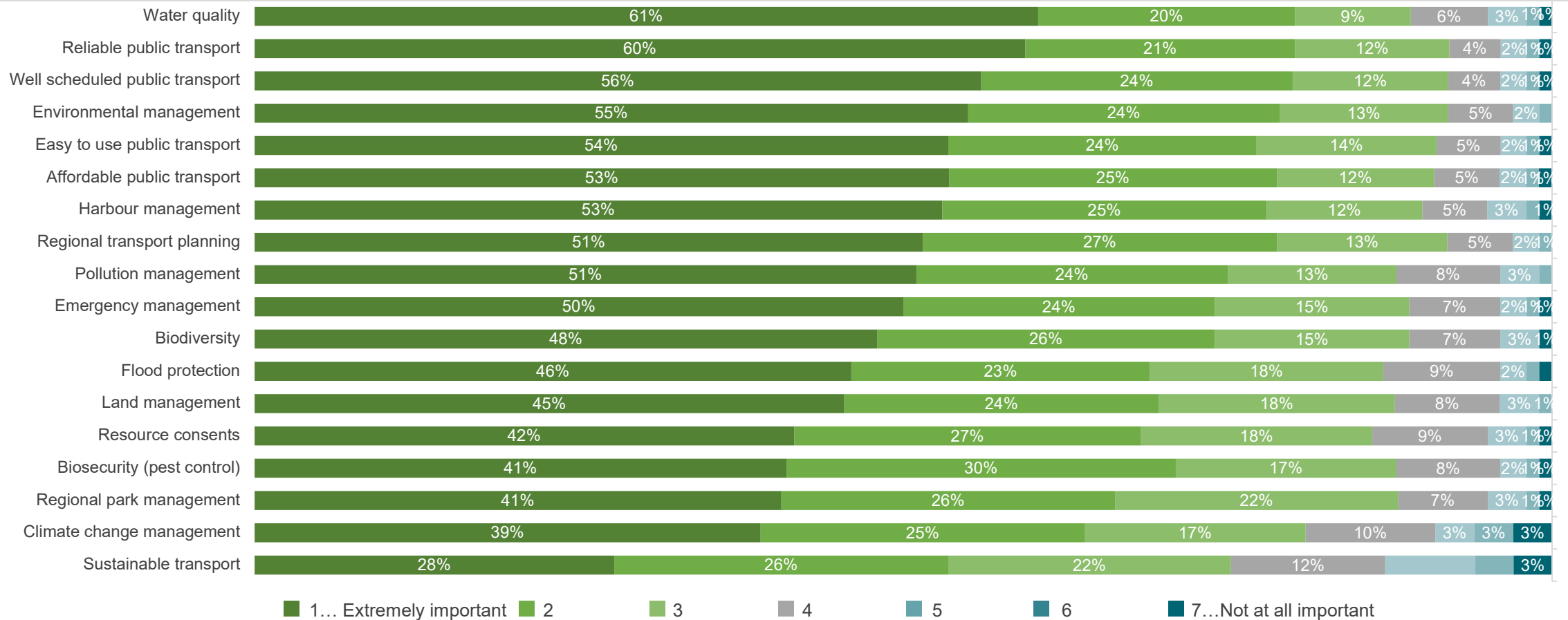
Performance on the outcomes GW delivers – nett % agree



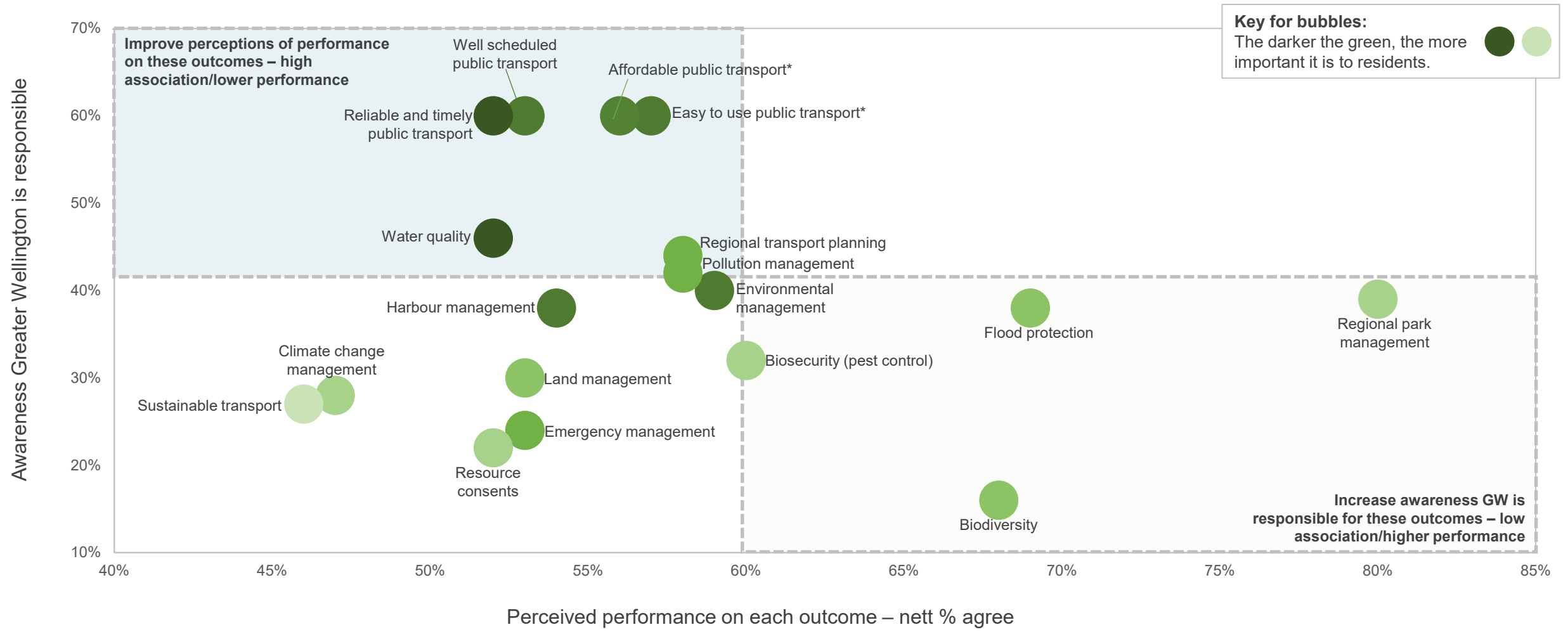
*For example, the flood protection outcome question was: “How much do you agree or disagree you, your family, and your property are protected from the threat of floods” and the biodiversity outcome question was: “How much do you agree or disagree native birds, plants, and animals in the region are protected”.
 Base: All residents, 2019 n=1,001, 2021 n=1,000.
 Source: E2.

Residents were also asked how important the outcomes were to them – again without reference to Greater Wellington*. Water quality and public transport are the most important.

Perceived importance of outcomes GW delivers

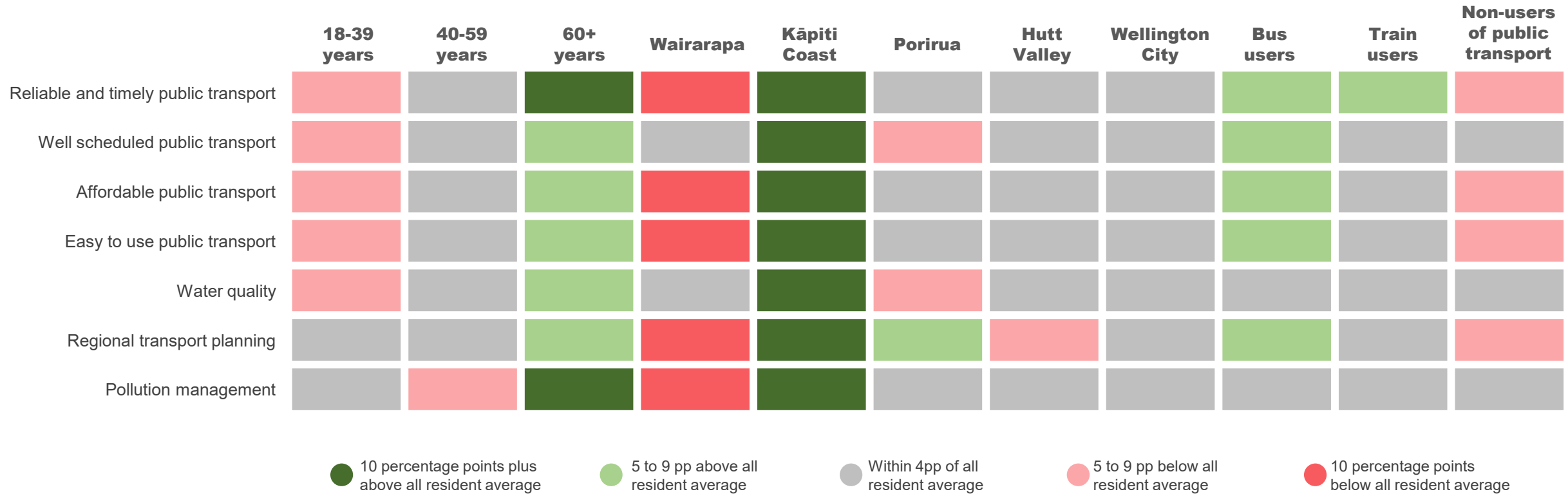


There are two ways Greater Wellington can improve its reputation: (a) it can focus on improving perceptions of its performance on high visibility/lower performance outcomes (top left box), or (b) it can focus on increasing awareness of low visibility/high performance outcomes (bottom right box).



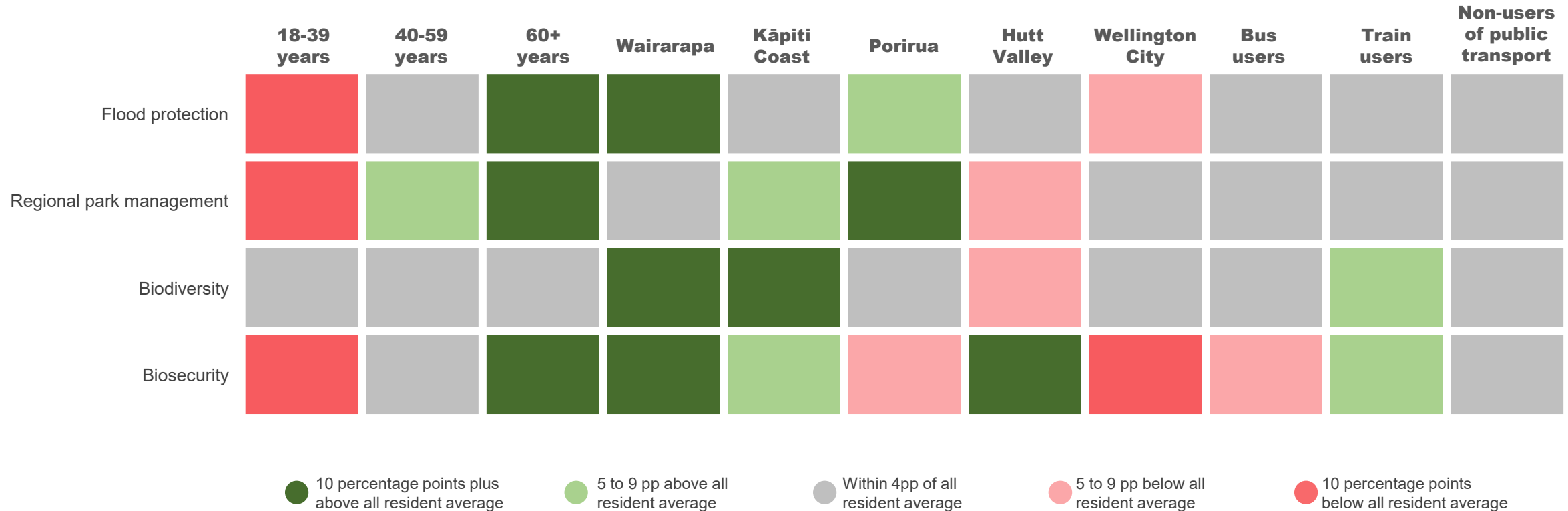
The priority groups to improve perceptions of performance amongst are: Wairarapa residents, non-users of public transport, and 18 to 39 year olds. These groups all have lower perceptions of performance on the outcomes that are highly associated with Greater Wellington.

Perceived performance by demographic groups on priority to improve outcomes



The priority group to increase knowledge of Greater Wellington’s responsibilities is 18 to 39 year olds. This group are the least likely to associate high performing outcomes with Greater Wellington.

Awareness of Greater Wellington’s responsibilities – roles which are priorities to increase awareness of





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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Publication of a Research Project

Article 31 of the Research Association NZ Code states:

Where a client publishes any of the findings of a research project the client has a responsibility to ensure these are not misleading. The Researcher must be consulted and agree in advance to the form and content for publication. Where this does not happen the Researcher is entitled to:

- a. Refuse permission for their name to be quoted in connection with the published findings
- b. Publish the appropriate details of the project
- c. Correct any misleading aspects of the published presentation of the findings

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