



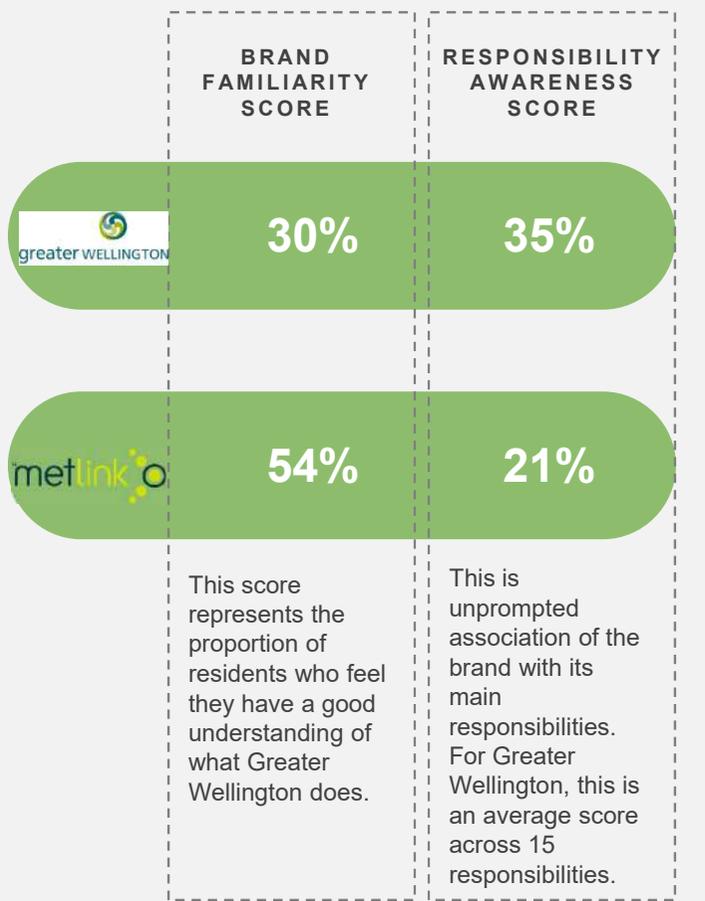
# Greater Wellington brand health research

May 2019



# Executive summary

# Awareness of the Greater Wellington and Metlink brands



The word “**regional**” is possibly a signal to residents that a role is the responsibility of Greater Wellington Regional Council. Of the 15 responsibilities tested, regional transport planning and regional park management have the highest awareness levels.



REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLANNING

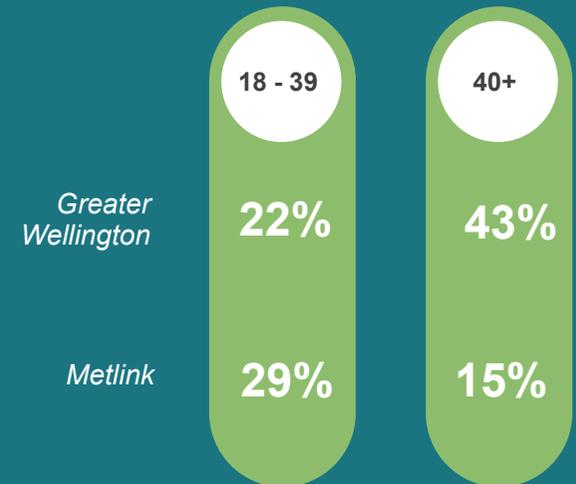


REGIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT

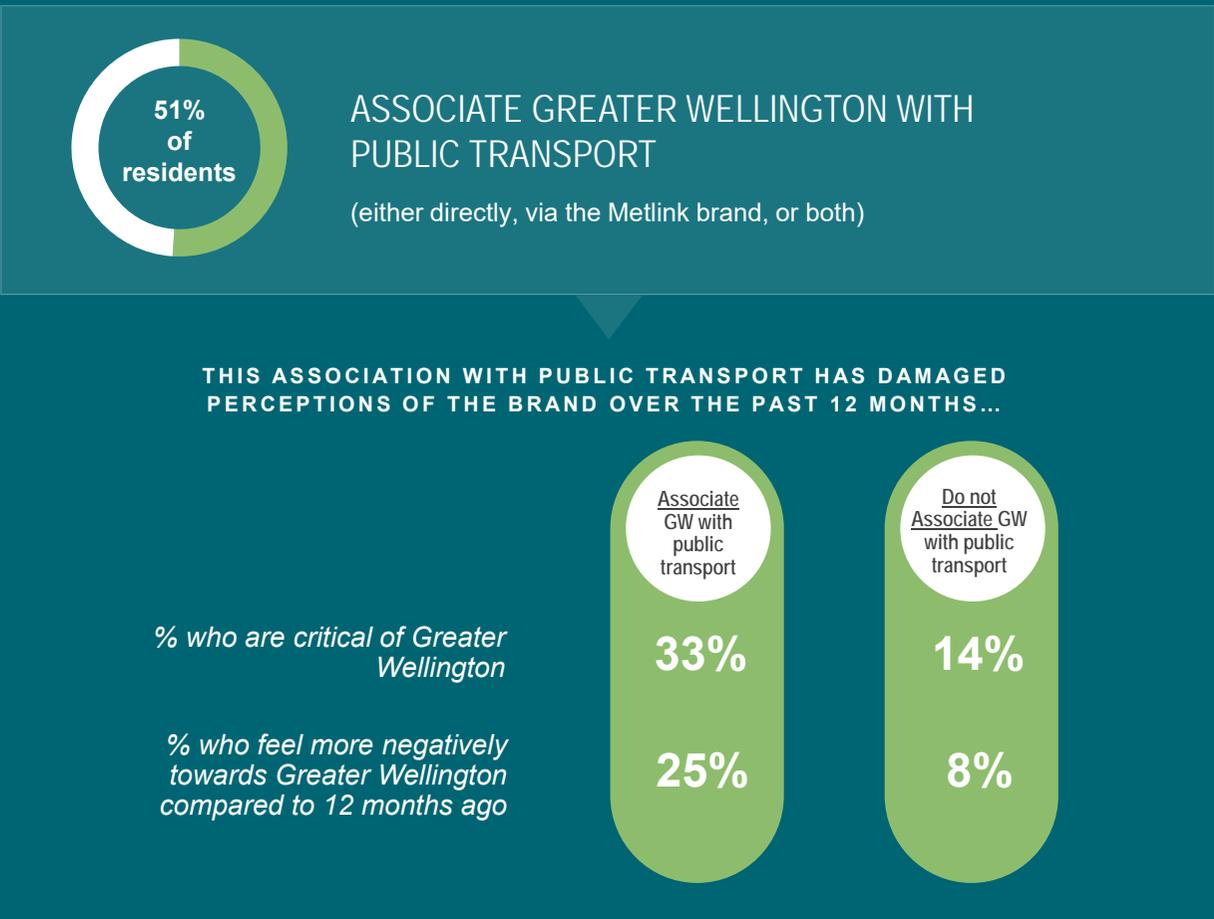
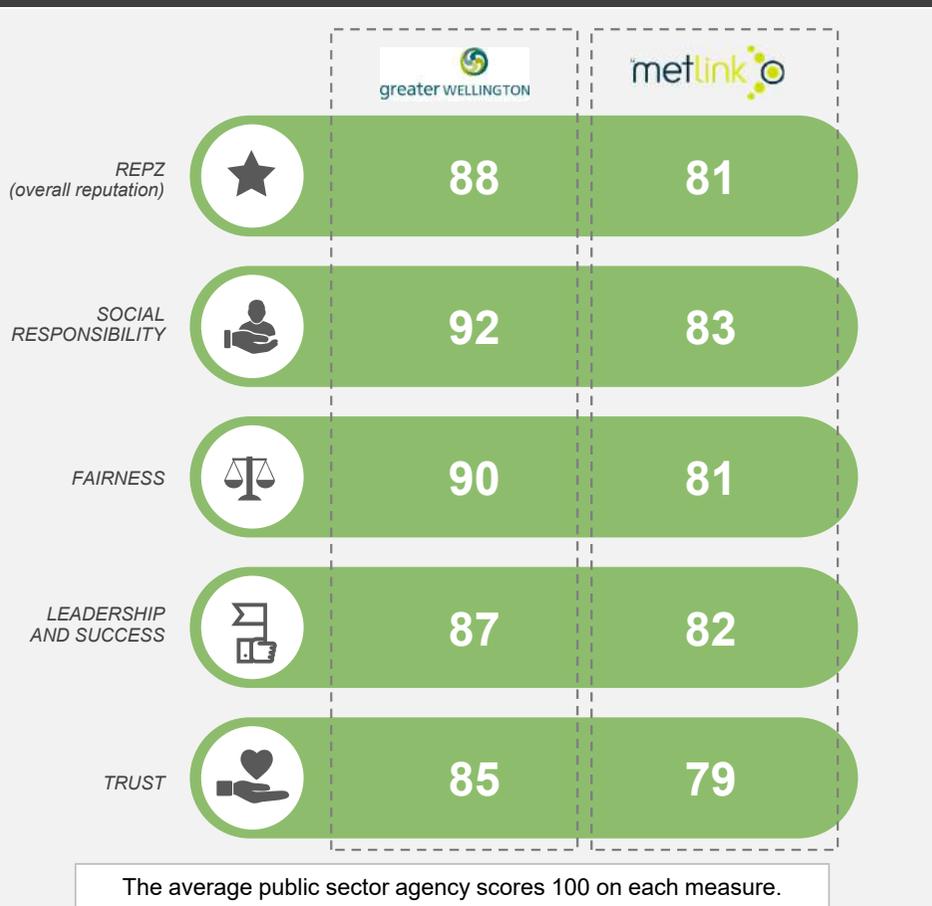
The influence and role of the word ‘regional’ will be explored in more depth in future research.

Responsibility awareness for Greater Wellington is much lower amongst 18-39 year-olds compared to those over 40, but 18-39 year-olds are most likely to associate public transport with the Metlink brand. Those aged 40+ are much more likely to associate public transport directly with Greater Wellington.

## RESPONSIBILITY AWARENESS SCORE



# Reputation and brand linkage



# Levers and priorities

There are two ways reputation can be improved...



## *Improving perceptions around transport will benefit both brands*

Improving performance on the following transport levers will have a relatively strong positive impact on **Greater Wellington's** reputation:

- Affordability of public transport
- Ease of use of public transport
- Sustainable transport
- Organisation of public transport
- Regional transport planning

Lifting perceptions around all aspects of public transport will improve **Metlink's** reputation, but organisation should be the priority:

1. Organisation of public transport
2. Ease of use of public transport
3. Affordability of public transport
4. Reliability of public transport



## *Changing the conversation from transport may also benefit the Greater Wellington brand*

Of all levers, improving performance on the following will have the greatest positive impact on Greater Wellington's reputation:

- Regional park management
- Flood protection

There is room to build awareness of Greater Wellington's responsibility for both of these roles. Fewer than half of residents are aware Greater Wellington is responsible for each.

These areas are already strengths for Greater Wellington (they have a high influence on advocacy, and performance is rated relatively highly), but there is room to improve perceptions further.

- 60% of residents rate regional park management highly
- 46% of residents rate flood protection highly



# Background, objectives, methodology

## Background and objectives



*Greater Wellington were criticised in the media after changes were made to the public transport network in 2018. They suspected this criticism damaged their reputation (and that of Metlink) but they had no hard evidence of this.*

*To better understand public perceptions of the two brands across the region, Greater Wellington commissioned Colmar Brunton to measure its brand health. The research is designed to provide a baseline measure against which Greater Wellington can measure their progress in restoring perceptions of the two brands.*

### *Specific objectives of the research include:*

- Measure awareness of the Greater Wellington and Metlink brands and perceptions of what each organisation does.
- Determine the strength of Greater Wellington's and Metlink's reputations in a way that can be replicated.
- Determine the strength of association between Greater Wellington and Metlink to understand how initiatives undertaken by Greater Wellington may be influenced by perceptions of Metlink (and vice versa).
- Determine levers that Greater Wellington can use to improve its reputation.
- Prioritise the actions Greater Wellington can take to improve the reputations of each of the brands.



# Methodology



**ONLINE  
SURVEYS**



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

**FIELD-  
WORK**

2-16  
APRIL 2019

**1,001** residents of the Wellington Region. Quotas were set to ensure a robust sample of residents in each area:

● 306	Wellington City residents
● 207	Hutt Valley residents
● 202	Porirua residents
● 204	Kāpiti Coast residents
● 82	Wairarapa residents



# Awareness of Greater Wellington and Metlink

We measured awareness of the Greater Wellington brand in two ways to capture both residents' own perceptions of familiarity with the brand, and what they actually know about what Greater Wellington does. We will use both scores to track awareness of the Greater Wellington brand going forwards.

## 30% Brand familiarity score

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?”*

## 35% Responsibility awareness score

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 \_\_\_\_\_?”*

Awareness comparisons: \*



= 74%

Kiwi bank.

= 57%



= 15%

Awareness of the various responsibilities is mixed. Residents are much more likely to associate Greater Wellington with regional transport planning and regional park management than biodiversity or resource consents.

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



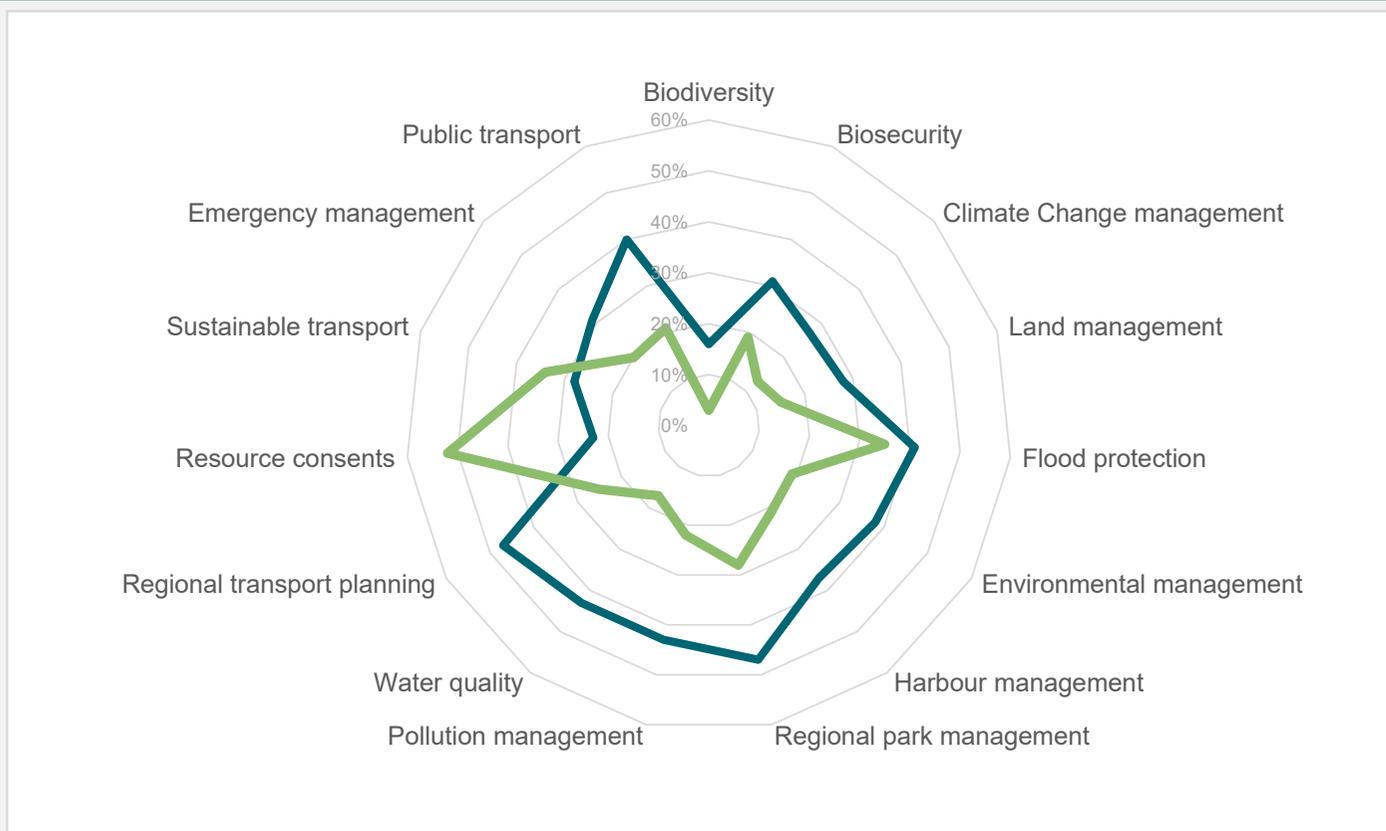
We think the word “regional” can be used as a cue to indicate what you do. This means that if you want a stronger association with a responsibility, always refer to it as “Regional xxxx”.

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



There is some confusion about which council is responsible for each role. On average, residents mention a city or district council 23% of the time when asked which organisation is mainly responsible for one of Greater Wellington’s roles (the average for Greater Wellington itself is 35%).

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



Compared to Greater Wellington, Metlink scores higher on brand familiarity, but lower on responsibility awareness.



## 54% Brand familiarity score

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?”*

## 21% Responsibility awareness score

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?”*

Awareness comparisons: \*



= 74%

Kiwi bank.

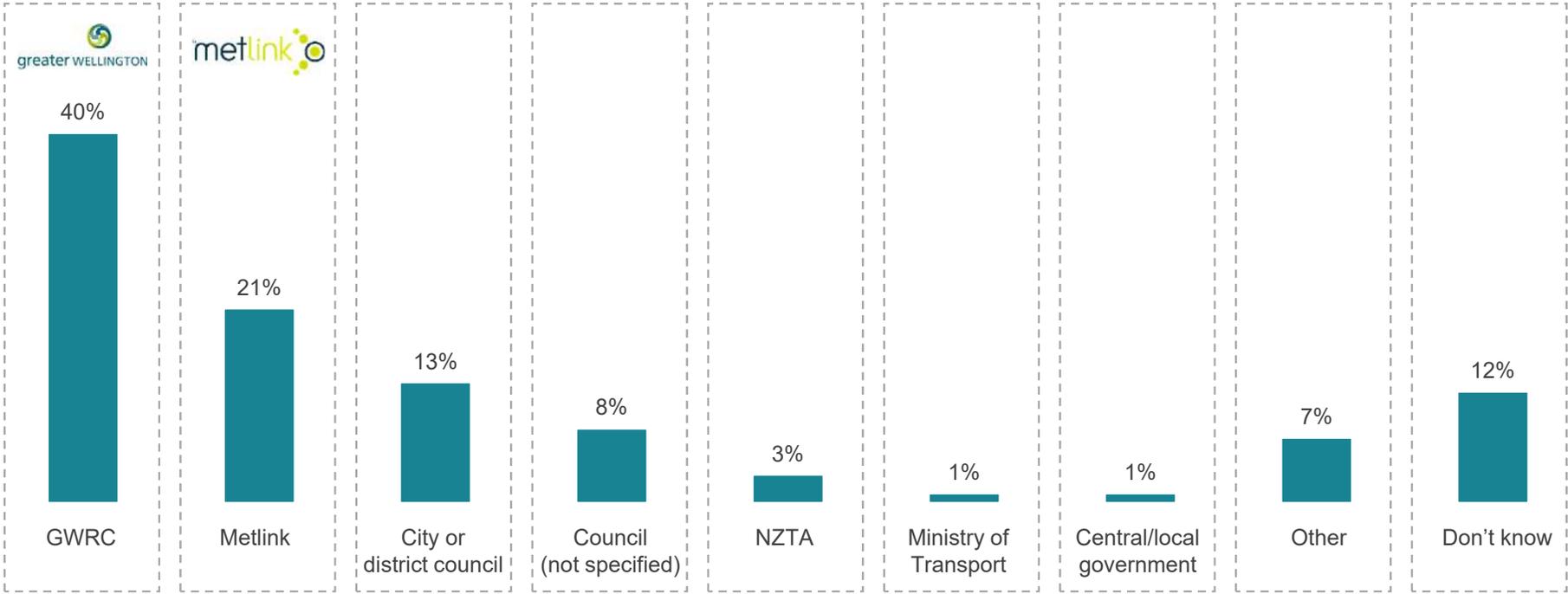
= 57%



= 15%

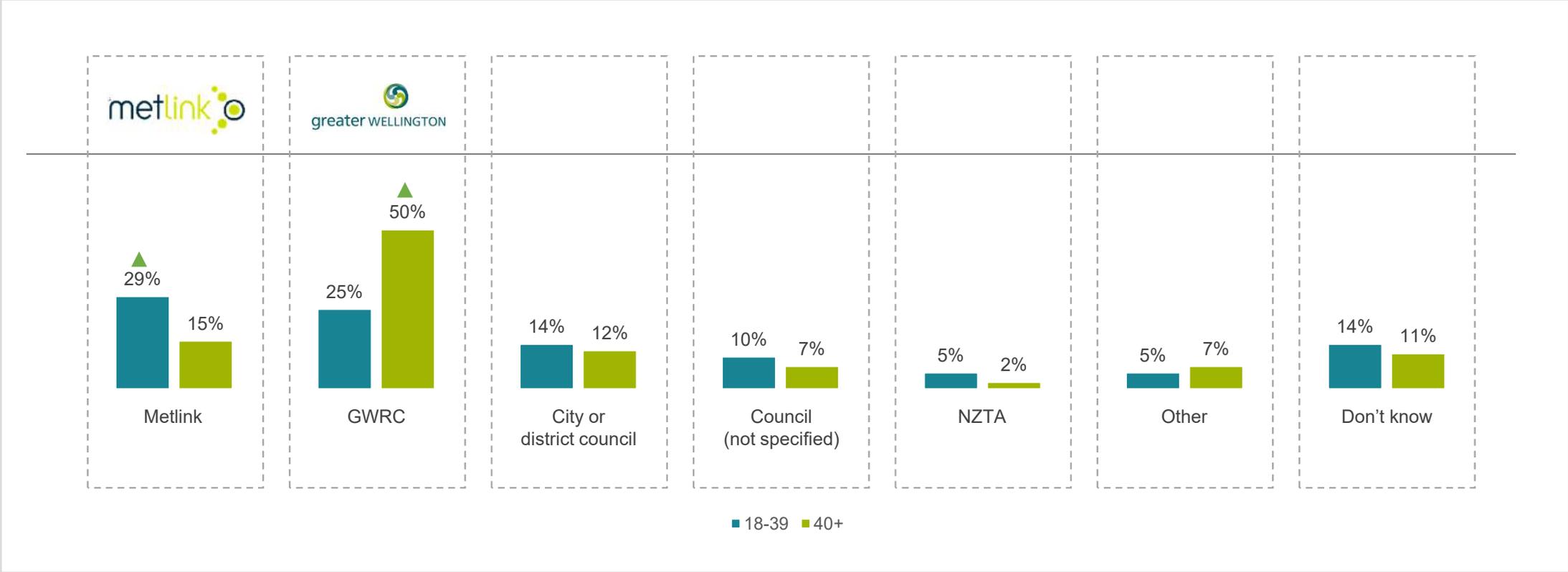
# Residents are twice as likely to think Greater Wellington is responsible for public transport, compared to Metlink.

## Unprompted awareness of organisation mainly responsible for public transport



However there is a clear age divide in perceptions of responsibility for public transport. Of any organisation, under 40s are most likely to associate Metlink with public transport, whereas over 40s are much more likely to mention Greater Wellington itself.

Awareness of public transport by age group



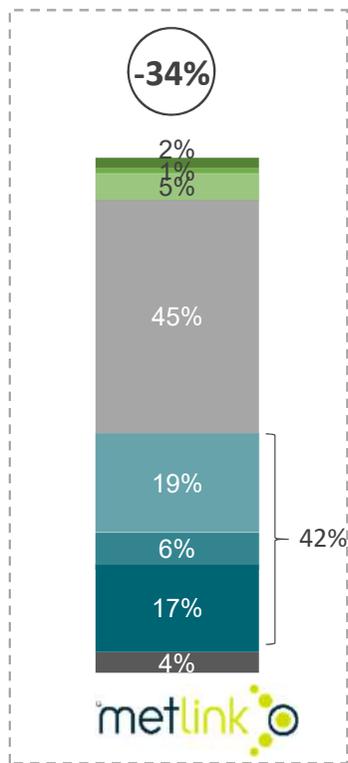
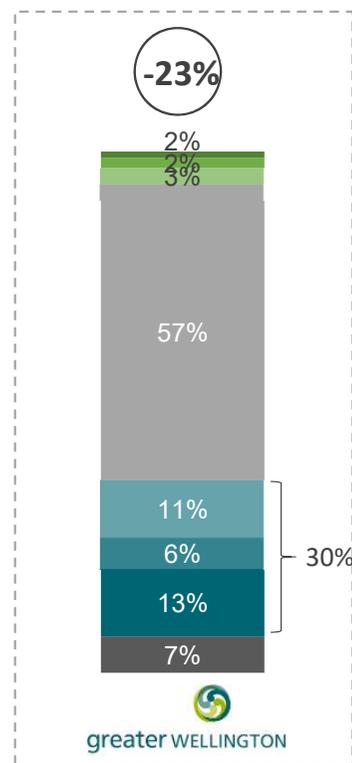
# Greater Wellington and Metlink reputation



# People feel more negatively towards both brands than they did 12 months ago.

## Perceptions of the brand compared to 12 months ago

Nett

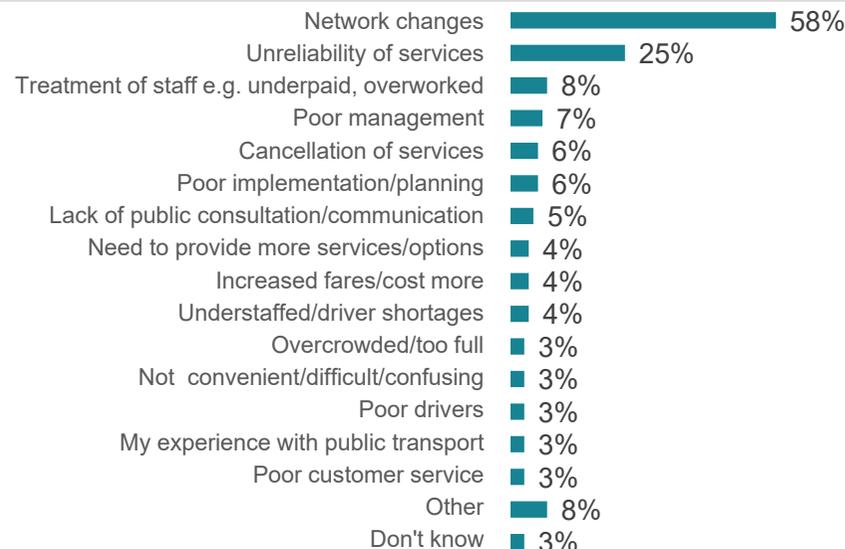
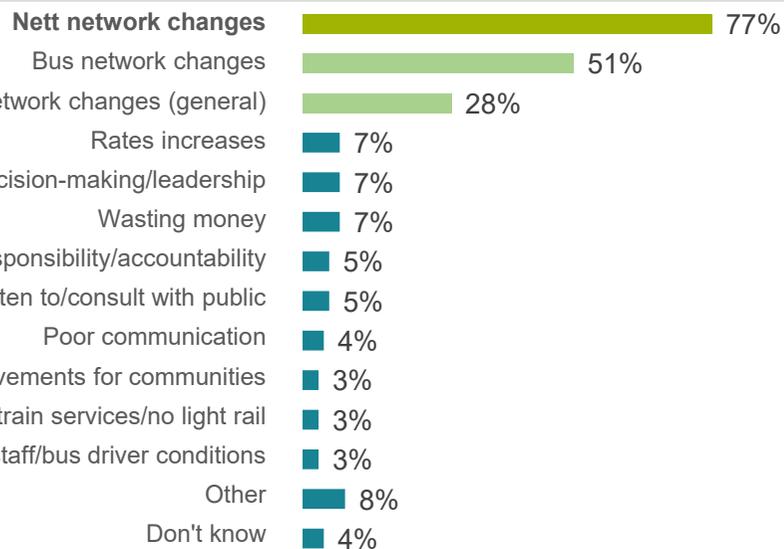


- 7...Much more positively
- 6
- 5
- 4...The same
- 3
- 2
- 1...Much more negatively
- Don't know/not aware



# The public transport network changes are mainly to blame.

## Reasons for more negative views compared to 12 months ago



## Those who feel more negatively said...



*Because they appear to have done a very poor job of re-organising the Wellington bus network and (as usual) ratepayers, of which I am one, will have to pay the bill for their ineptitude. Also, they never do the honourable thing, such as Chris Laidlaw, who seems to have played a significant role in this poorly run change, not tendering his resignation.*

*Male, 40-59, Wellington City, bus and train user*

*They are so arrogant, changing the network when it was working fine, and then trying to spin it like it's much better! How stupid do they think we are? Change it back!*

*Huge rate rises, blaming climate change for their inefficiencies. Transport chaos.*

*Male, 40-59, Kāpiti Coast, bus and train user*

*Female, 18-39, Wellington City, bus and ferry user*

*Twelve months ago I never used to think about GWRC. But, in the past 12 months they have completely redone the bus routes where I live and not for the better. I have experienced many cancelled buses. The routes no longer go where I want to go, it's the station or nothing. Apparently the bus drivers are unhappy because their pay and conditions were reduced when Metlink took over the contracts from Go Wellington. The system was working fine and now it's not. They removed the trolley buses which were environmentally friendly and replaced with diesel buses. They implemented a really good RTI system, but since the bus route changes it has broken. I just heard they want to raise their rates by 15% - are you kidding me!*

*Female, 40-59, Wellington City, bus, train, and ferry user*



*Because I heard since the merge of buses with Metlink the pay and conditions for bus drivers has gone down.*

*Female, 40-59, Porirua, bus and train user*

*Disappearing buses, reports of not treating staff well and giving them a proper wage and breaks. Trains are run well but the buses are a huge negative.*

*Male, 18-39, Hutt Valley, bus and train user*

*The train service to the Wairarapa continues to be awful even though improvements have been promised. Breakdowns and points failures occur too often. Having just spent 6 months in Surrey, I have experienced a good suburban rail service on a huge scale, so the Wairarapa service should be easy to improve.*

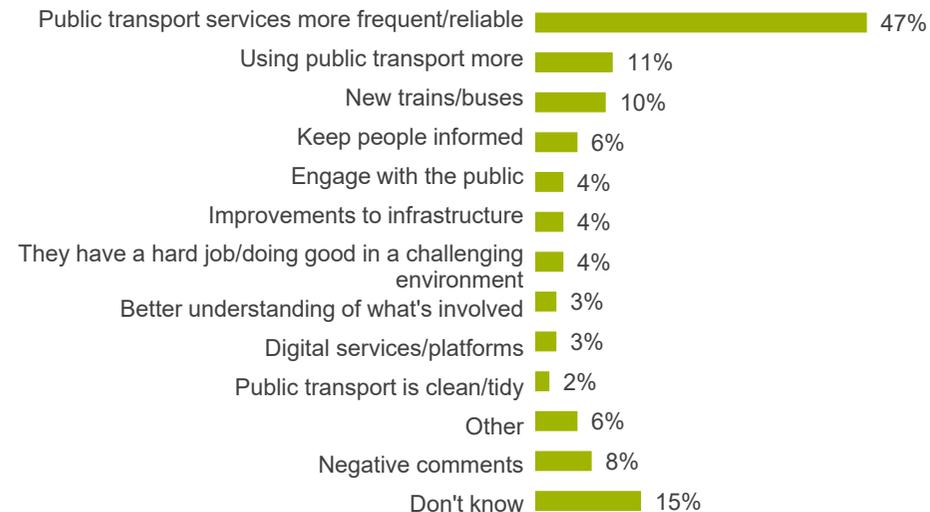
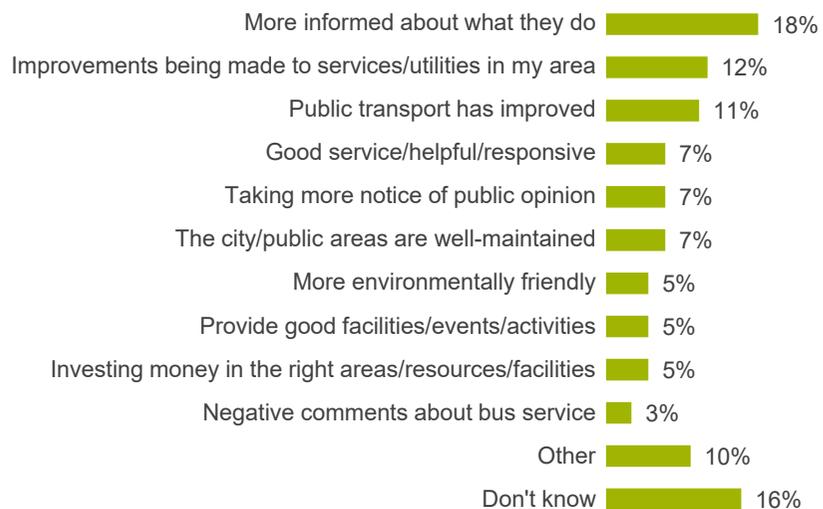
*Male, 40-59, Wairarapa, bus user*

*I am forced to use more public transportation, and now I see how bad it can be. For example, how is the Wellington main train-station in the city, not a hub? It is really expensive to get the trains from the Hutt to Welly CBD, and I have to get another very expensive bus from there to Miramar. It is cheaper to drive! And the Welly Main Train Station, is only goodish for people going around CBD, if you have to go far away, like Miramar, Newtown or any other place, the trains are not good. I often cycle, but my wife says it is too dangerous to go back to the Hutt on the motorway. It would be amazing to have a proper connection from Welly to Petone for cyclists and pedestrians.*

*Male, 18-39, Hutt Valley, bus user*

# The changes did improve some residents' perceptions

## Reasons for more positive views compared to 12 months ago



## Those who feel more positively said...



*I feel that they have improved safety against earthquake damage to utilities and have improved bus and train transport services.*

*Male, 60+, Hutt Valley, bus and train user*

*There are improvements in our area like the expressway that benefit me hugely.*

*Female, 18-39, Kāpiti Coast, bus user*

*Seems to be putting money into the right resources that people need.*

*Male, 18-39, Porirua, Train user*

*The opportunity to have direct engagement with them through attending an event they managed in my community, which was excellent*

*Male, 40-59, Wairarapa, non-public transport user*

*They have been open and forthcoming in relation to their/contractor issues. They have acted honourably.*

*Male, 18-39, Porirua, bus and train user*

*I see more birds around and feel like our city is being well looked after. I see works being done on water mains in our area.*

*Female, 18-39, Wellington City, bus and train user*



*I feel that the new bus service is better and the train service frequency has vastly improved.*

*Male, 60+, Hutt Valley, bus and train user*

*The changes to the bus network worked extremely well for me, I now catch the bus to work instead of the train, as there are more frequent buses and they are larger.*

*Male, 40-59, Wellington City, bus and train user*

*They've pulled out all the stops to cope with the debacle of changing contractors / introducing the hub system since last July, doing their best to respond and ensure service provision, despite increasing public anger and difficulties with staffing, scheduling, road works, closed bus stops, etc.*

*Female, 18-39, Wellington City, bus and train user*

*I have used the train into Wellington more in the past year and have appreciated the service, ease of using it and the reduced stress of traffic issues.*

*Female, 40-59, Kāpiti Coast, train user*

*Metlink have kept me informed and provided digital platforms which are helpful for catching buses. This has been extremely helpful when there have been insufficient buses.*

*Male, 40-59, Wellington City, bus user*

# 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.



## TRUST

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



## LEADERSHIP

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



## FAIRNESS

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



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Behaves in a responsible way towards the environment
- Is a positive influence on society

Both Greater Wellington and Metlink have weaker overall reputation scores than the average for public sector agencies. Trust is the weakest pillar for both brands.

		greater WELLINGTON	metlink	Average across all public sector agencies
OVERALL REPUTATION	REPZ ★	88	81	100
	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY 🧑	92	83	100
	FAIRNESS ⚖️	90	81	100
	LEADERSHIP 🏛️	87	82	100
	TRUST 🤝	85	79	100

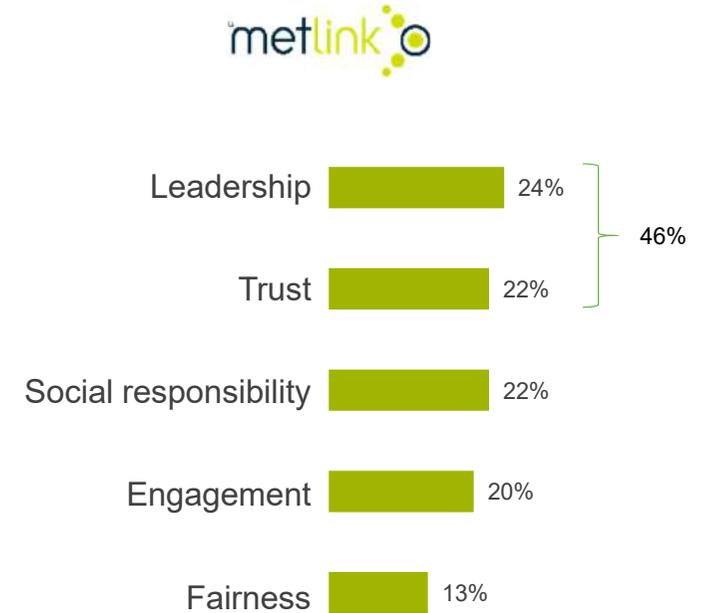
**SCALE**

- 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 (128), Department of Conservation (113), Tourism NZ (109).  
 Examples of agencies with an 'average' reputation: Ministry for the Environment (102), NZTE (102).

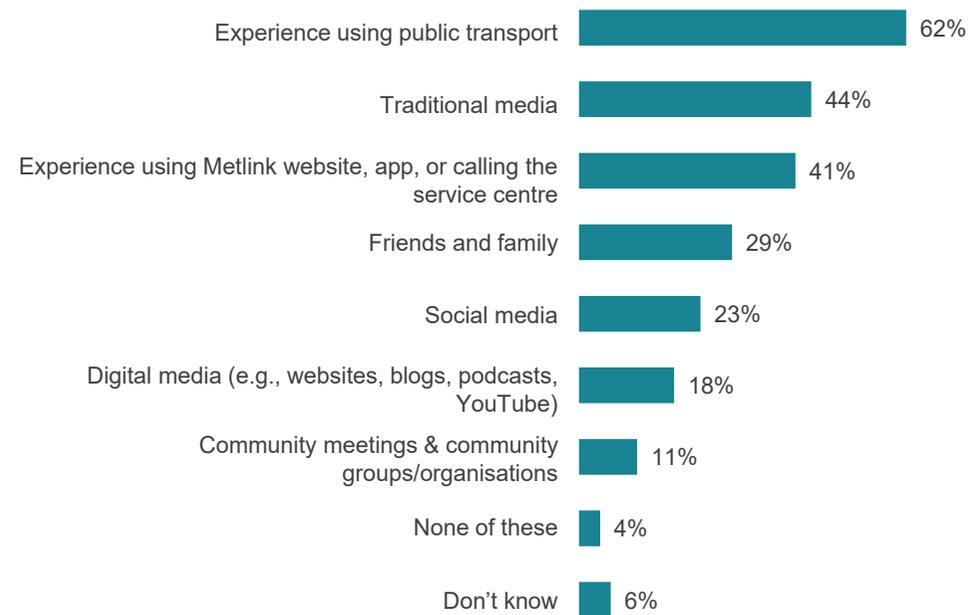
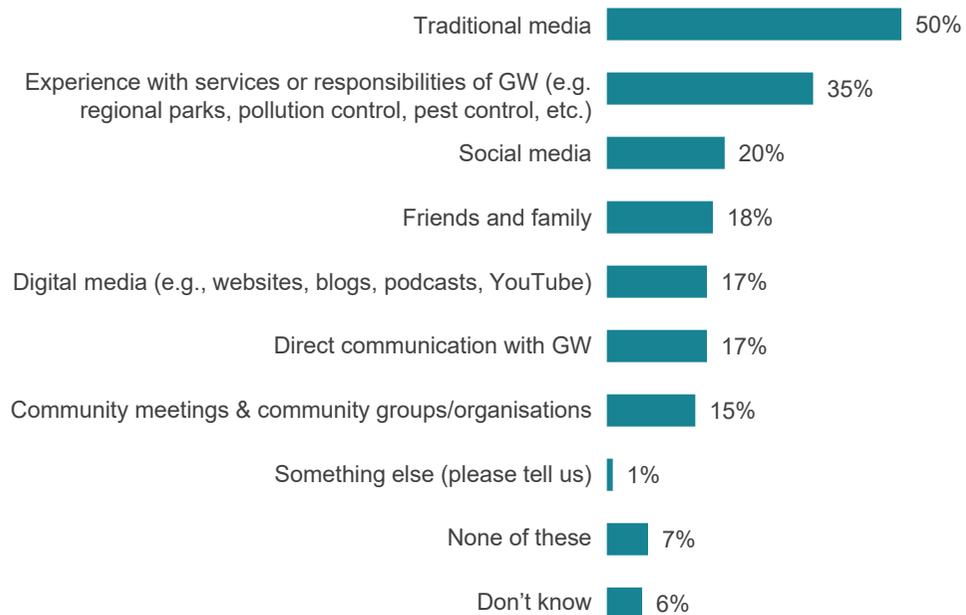
# The trust, leadership, and social responsibility pillars are most strongly linked to advocacy for both brands.

## Impact of pillars on reputation



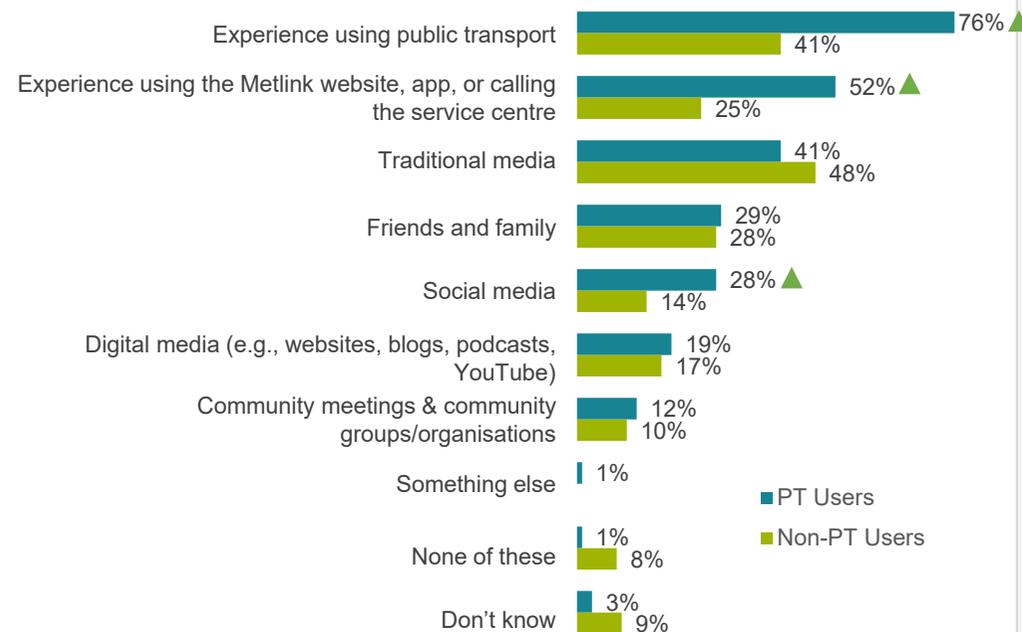
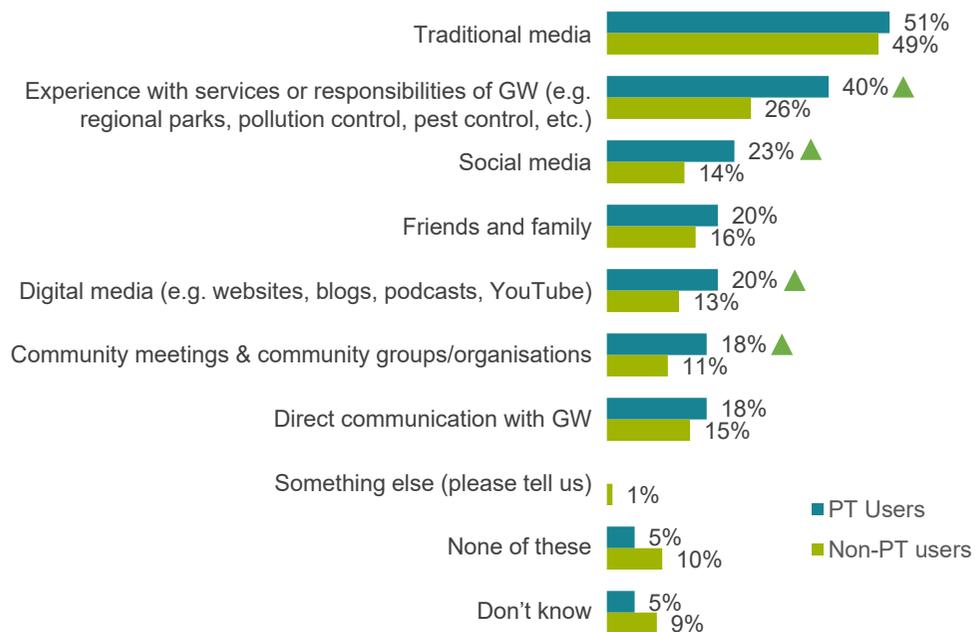
For both brands, perceptions are driven both by experiences directly with services and what residents hear in the media. Media is the strongest influence on perceptions of the Greater Wellington brand, but public transport experience has a greater impact on perceptions of Metlink.

## Channels that influence perceptions



# The top sources of influence among public transport users are similar to those of all residents, although some sources (such as social media) have a greater impact on PT users than non-users.

## Channels that influence perceptions





# Greater Wellington, Metlink, & public transport

A quarter of residents associate Greater Wellington with the Metlink brand. However, another quarter of the population also directly associate Greater Wellington with public transport. This means in total just over half the population link Greater Wellington with public transport in the region.

### Link between the brands



A quarter of residents associate Greater Wellington with Metlink...

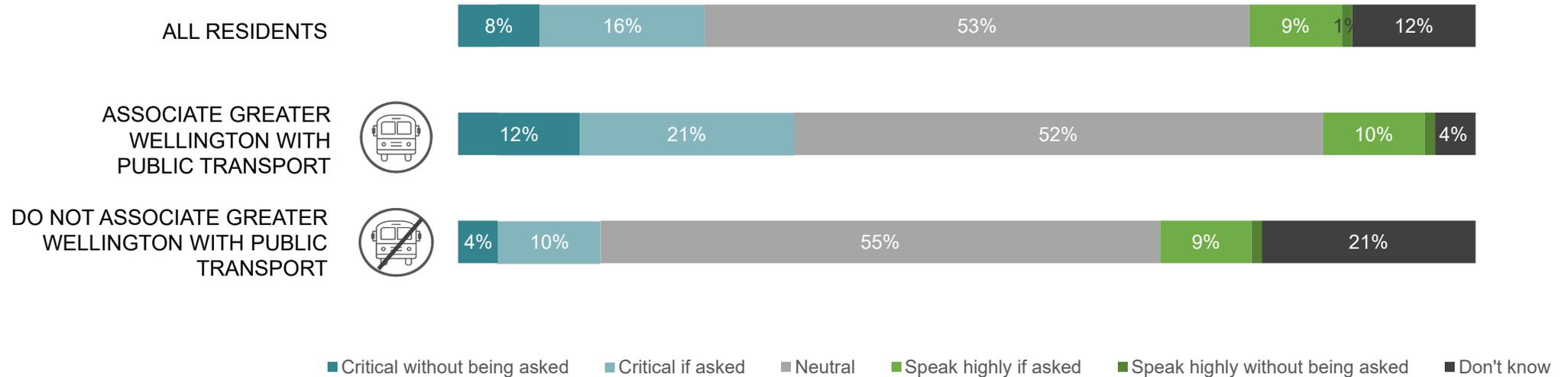


Half of residents associate Greater Wellington with either Metlink or public transport...



# Advocacy is much lower among those who associate Greater Wellington with public transport or Metlink.

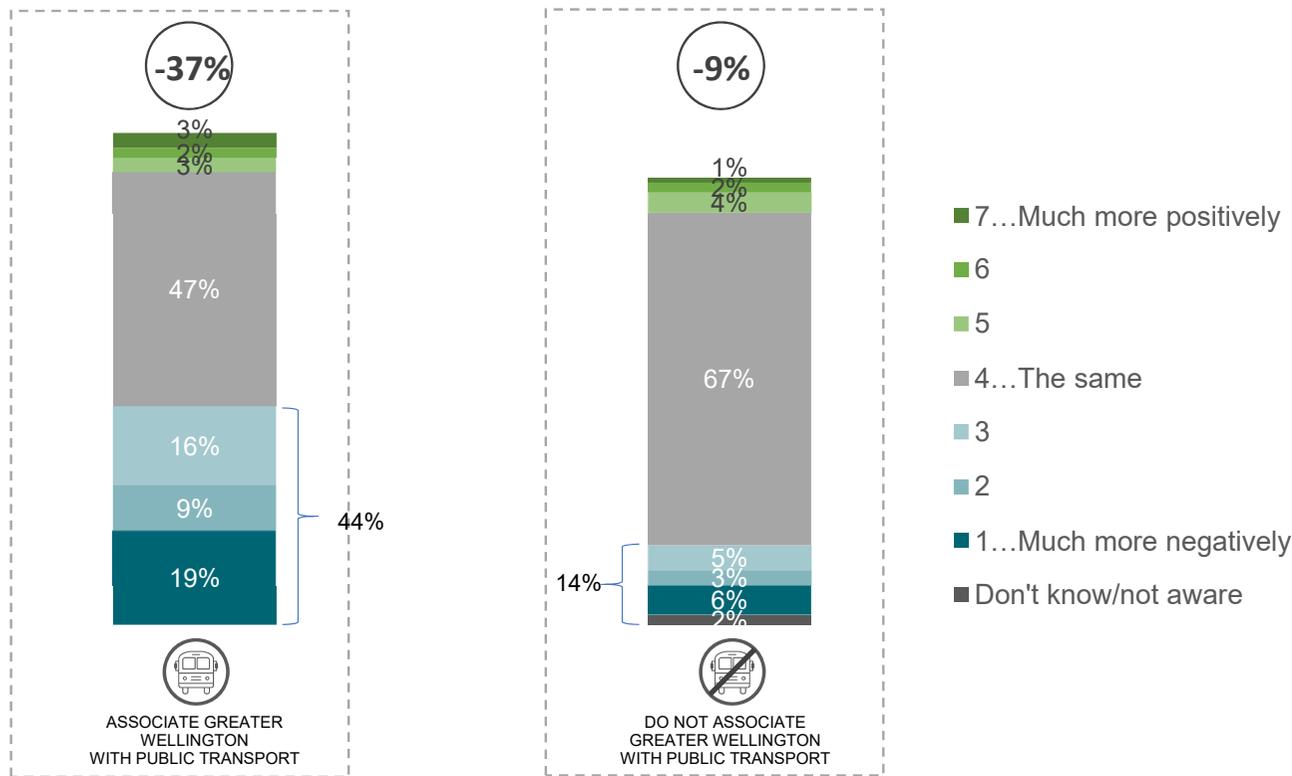
## Advocacy of Greater Welling by association with public transport



# And perceptions of Greater Wellington have declined to a much greater extent among those who associate the organisation with public transport.

## Perceptions of the brand compared to 12 months ago by association with public transport

Nett



## Those who associate Greater Wellington with public transport said...



*The debacle over the new bus service contract has been one of the worst demonstrations on how not to make a big change where only small incremental changes should have been done. Despite huge amount of negative feedback and warnings over what they were about to do, the GWRC just marched on regardless. Given that we are all trying to encourage people to use public transport and there had been a significant increase in the usability of the bus network in particular up until the change last July, the movement has taken a significant backward leap.*

*Female, 40-59, Wellington City, bus user*

*I believe they have done the public a disservice in contracting a cheaper and way inferior transport provider which has had a detrimental effect on so many people. I didn't think it was possible for buses and trains to have got worse but they have.*

*Female, 60+, Hutt Valley, bus user*

*Because they've utterly ruined the bus system in Wellington and blame everyone else for the problems. Their latest excuses seem to be irregular congestion in Wellington and a lack of bus drivers. They need to ask why there is a driver shortage issue but this wasn't significant 12-18 month ago*

*Male, 18-39, Wellington City, bus user*

*100% to do with how they've handled the changeover of bus operators. Although there have been penalties dished out to the bus operator for delays/cancellations, it's obvious this hasn't fixed the core issue. So the big question is - why hasn't GWRC been a leader in this, and stepped up to take responsibility, and try to fix the issue? We heard of all the different consultants that were flown in from the UK and Australia, yet there was no clear leadership to say "Ok, we messed up, here's what we are doing to fix it", and following through with a plan on how to fix the issue. If someone actually said this, it certainly never reached my ears, and I visit a site like Stuff at least daily.*

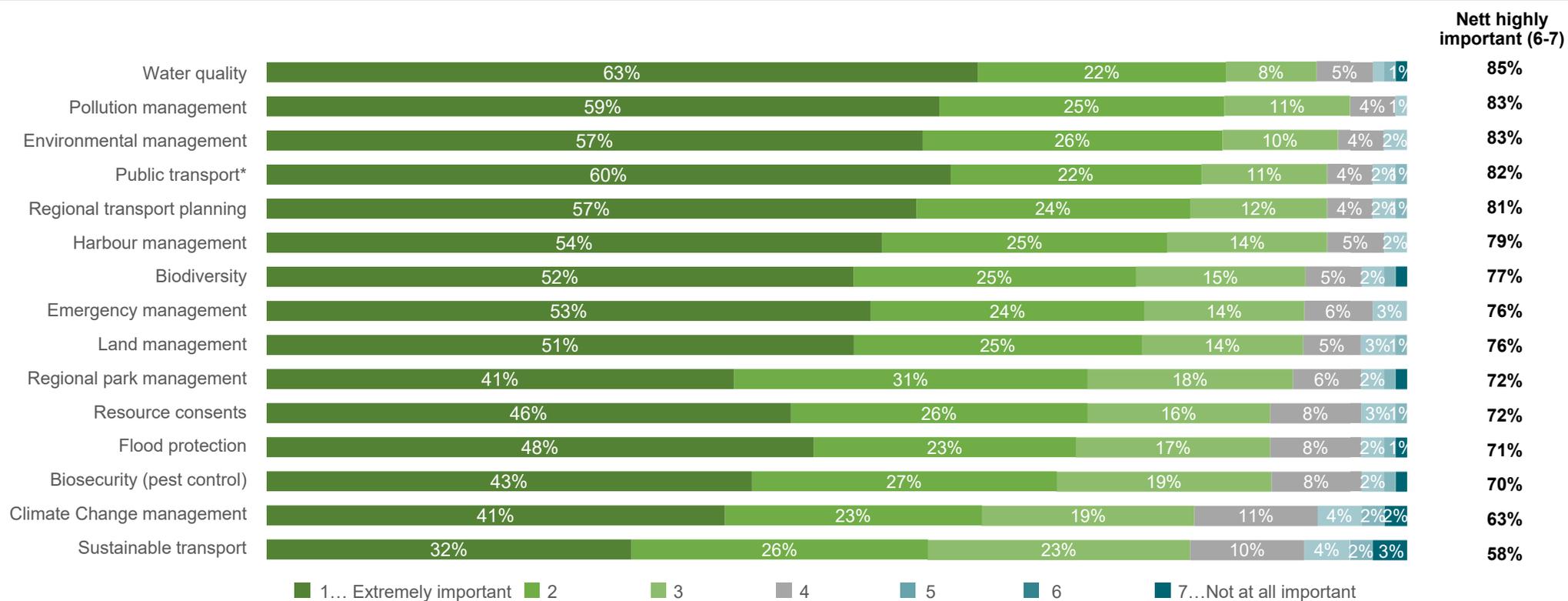
*Male, 18-39, Wellington City, ferry user*



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

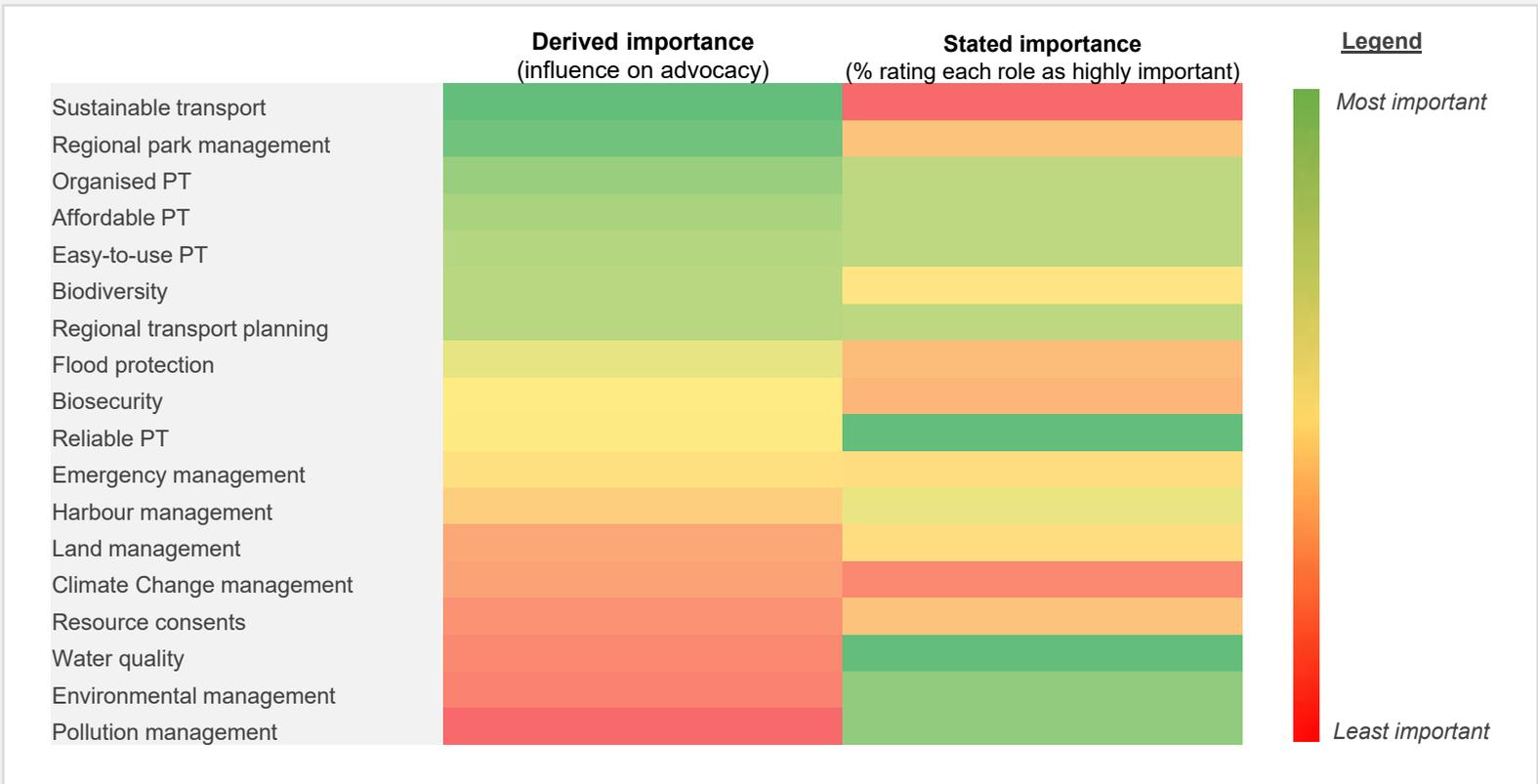
# We asked residents how important each of Greater Wellington's roles are to them. All roles are viewed as important by the majority of residents.

## Perceived importance of outcomes GW delivers



As well as asking people how important each outcome is to them, we also derived its importance to the overall reputation of GW (i.e., the impact of each on GW’s reputation). The chart below shows that there are some differences between the stated importance of each outcome and its derived importance – particularly with the environmental management of the region

### Stated importance vs. derived importance

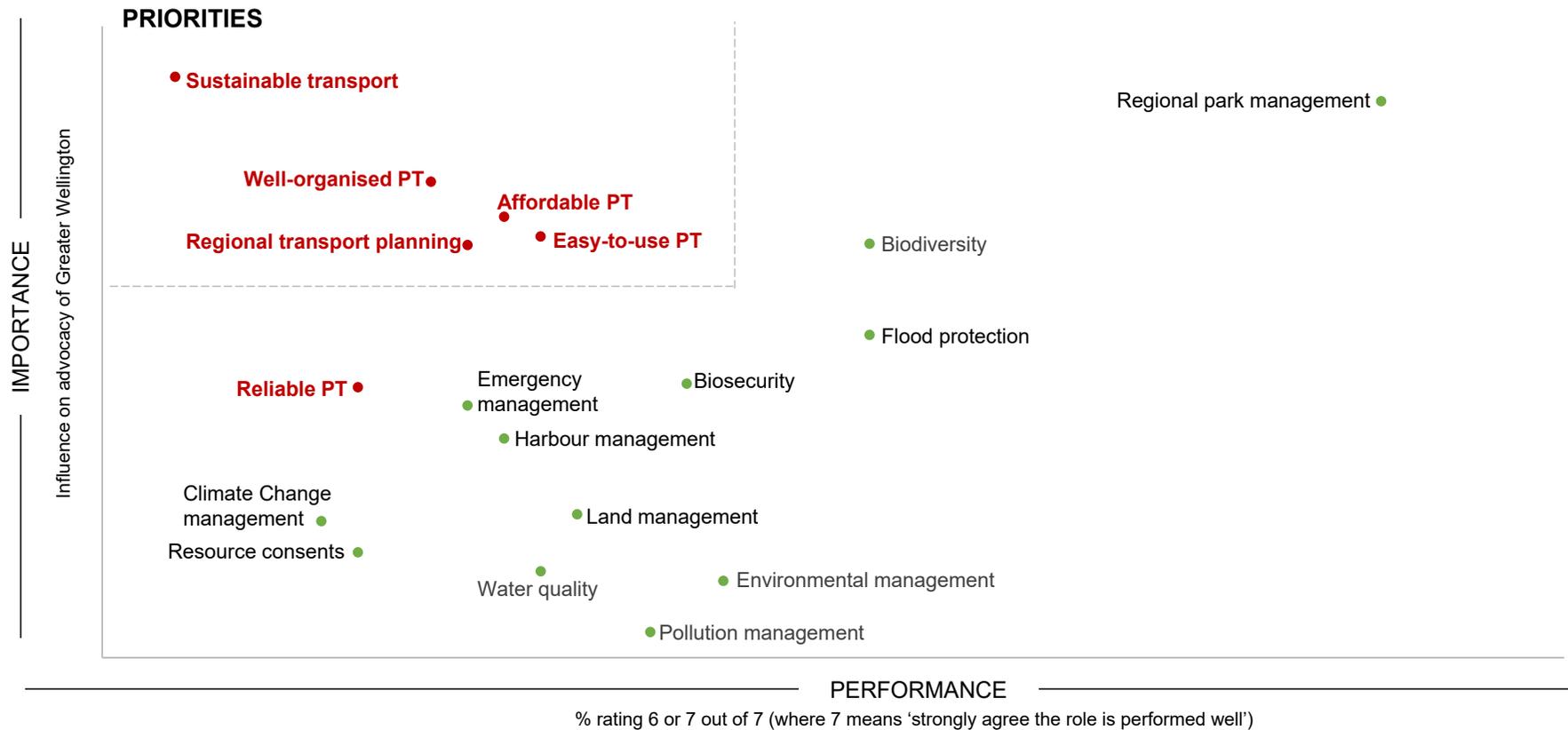


**Why doesn't the stated importance of environmental management outcomes match derived importance?**

There are two likely explanations:

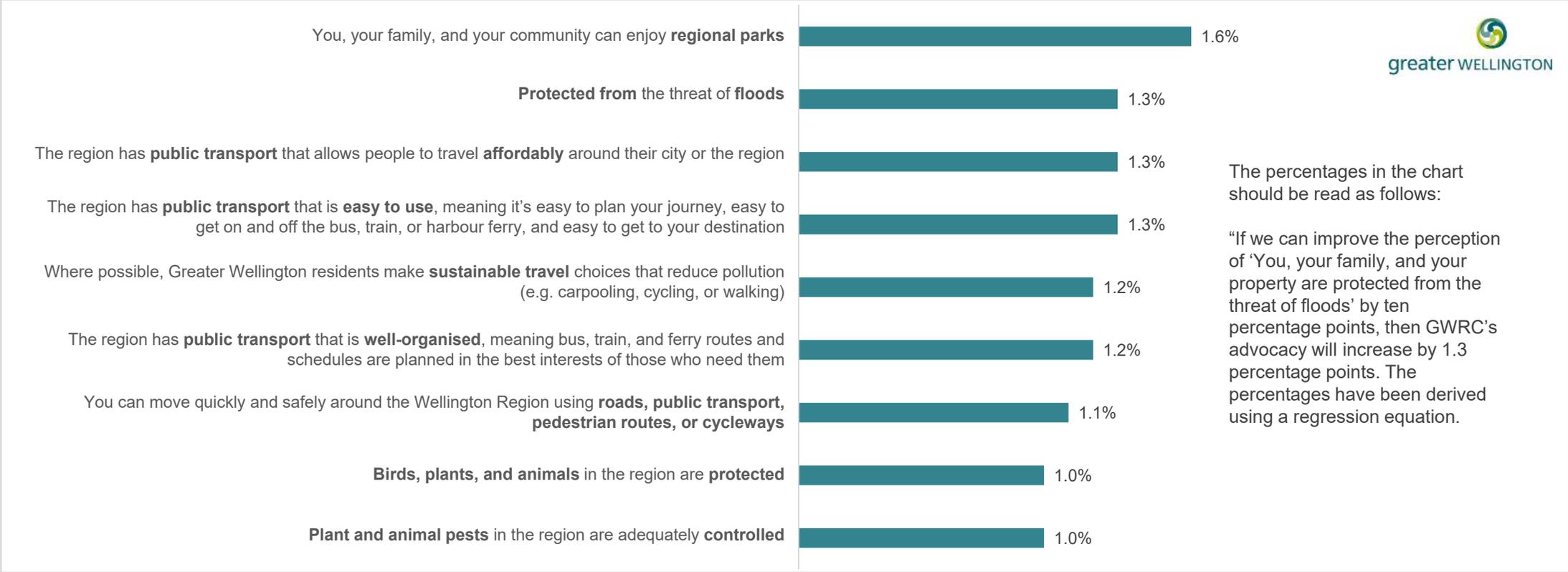
- (1) people may overstate how important these outcomes are to them, because they think they should say they are important, and;
- (2) there may be a weaker mental association with GW because they perceive that many organisations contribute to the environmental management of the region (e.g., 52% think DOC are mainly responsible for protecting native birds, plants, and animals, compared to 16% for GW).

When we overlay the derived importance of each role onto residents' ratings of performance, transport emerges as the most impactful on negative perceptions and so is the priority to address.



However when we look at what could lift perceptions of Greater Wellington, talking about regional parks and flood protection, as well as solutions to perceived public transport issues will have the most positive impact.

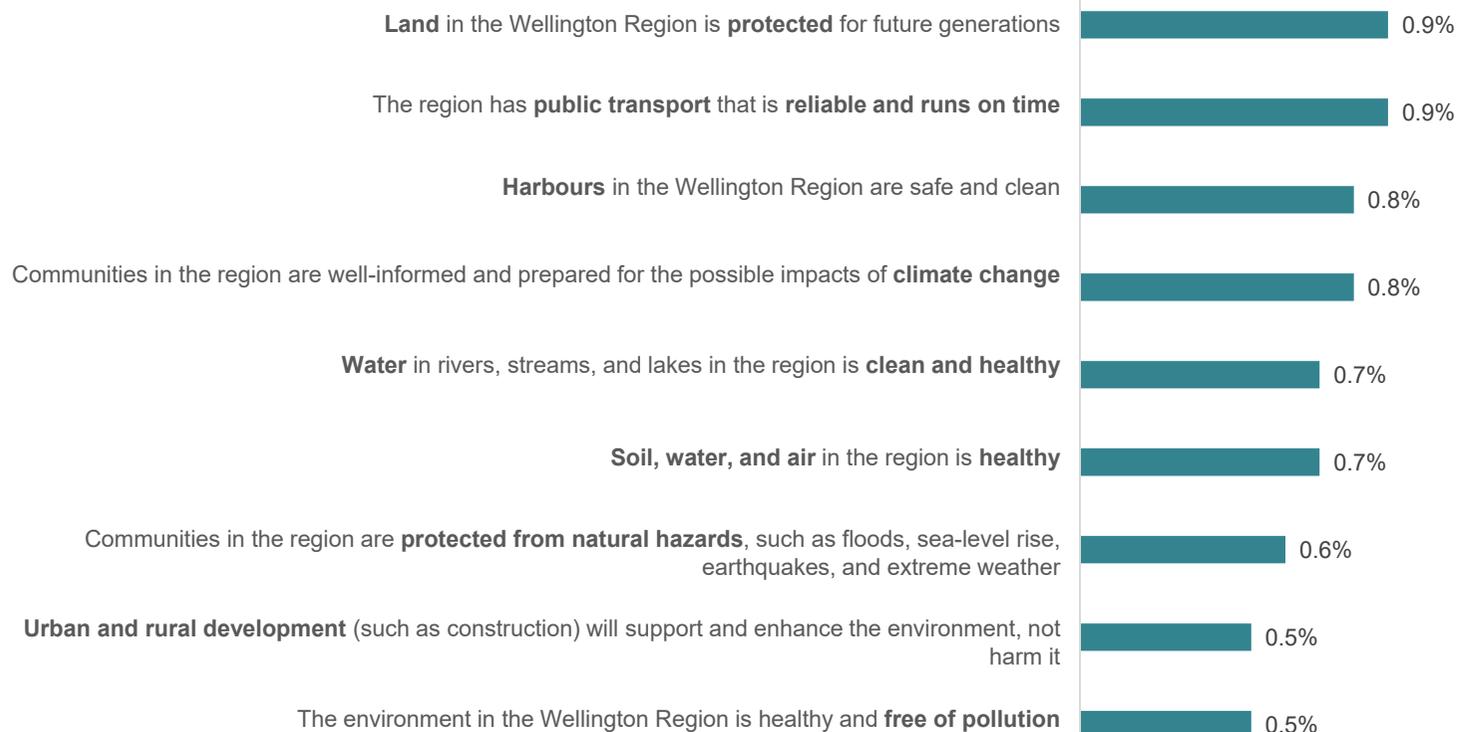
Size of improvement in overall reputation if perception of that area is improved by ten percentage points



The percentages in the chart should be read as follows:  
 "If we can improve the perception of 'You, your family, and your property are protected from the threat of floods' by ten percentage points, then GWRC's advocacy will increase by 1.3 percentage points. The percentages have been derived using a regression equation.

# Improving performance on other levers will have a lesser impact on reputation.

## Size of improvement in overall reputation if perception of that area is improved by ten percentage points

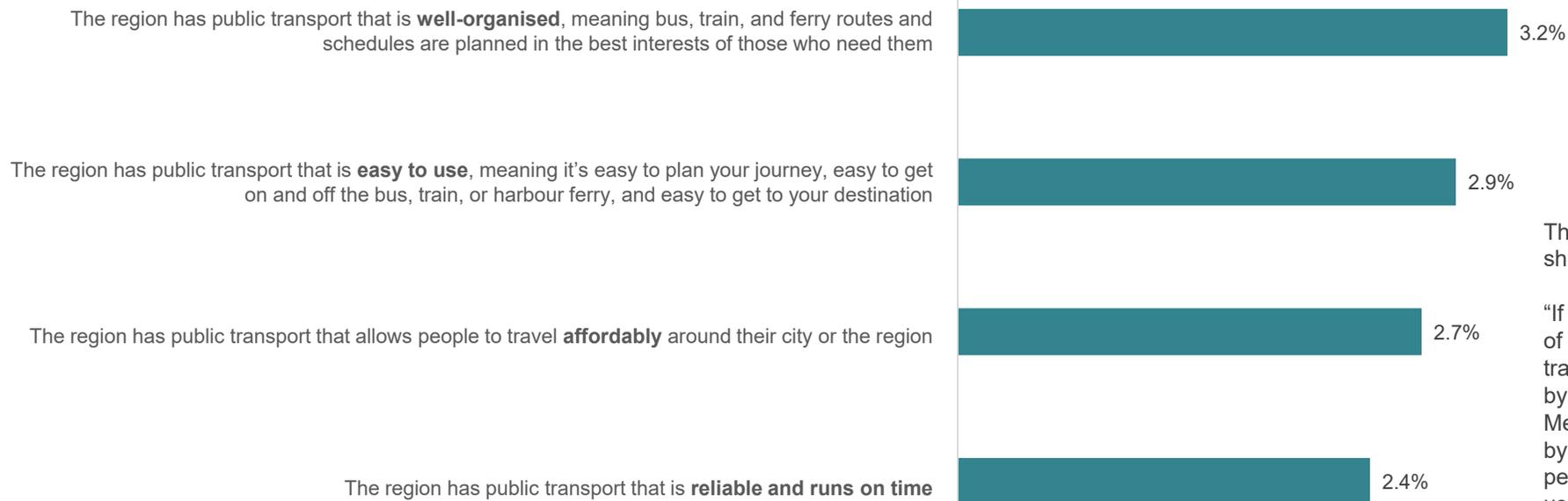


The percentages in the chart should be read as follows:

“Land in the Wellington Region is protected for future generations’ by ten percentage points, then GWRC’s advocacy will increase by 0.9 percentage points. The percentages have been derived using a regression equation.

# When it comes to the Metlink brand, improving perceptions around the organisation of public transport will have the most positive impact.

Size of improvement in overall reputation if perception of that area is improved by ten percentage points



The percentages in the chart should be read as follows:

“If we can improve the perception of ‘The region has public transport that is well-organised’ by ten percentage points, then Metlink’s advocacy will increase by 3.2 percentage points. The percentages have been derived using a regression equation.”

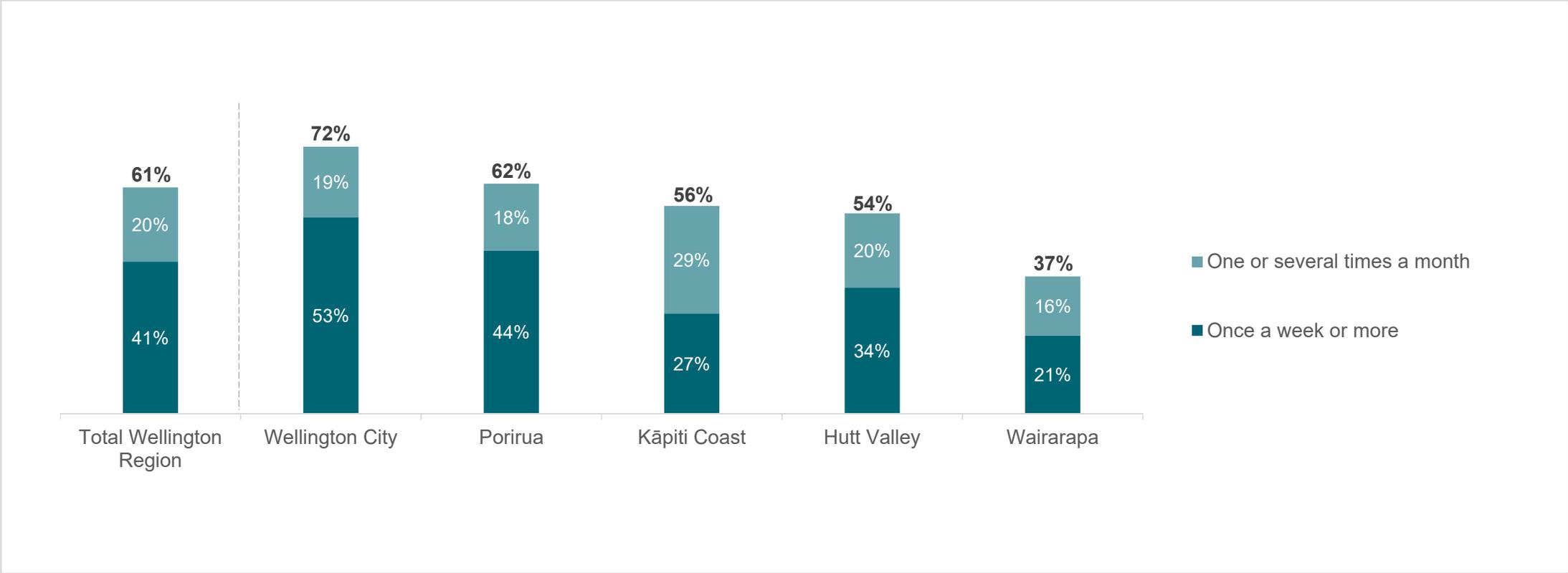


# Appendix A: Public transport usage



# Public transport by usage by sub-region

Proportion of public transport users (those using buses, trains, or harbour ferries at least once a month) by sub-region





# Appendix B: Derived importance

## What is derived importance?

As well as asking respondents directly how important each outcome is to them, importance of the aspects was derived. This was done using a combination of regression and correlation analyses between each the performance ratings of each outcome and advocacy for each brand.

An outcome is deemed important if when it is rated highly, so too is advocacy, and conversely if it is rated lowly, so too is the advocacy. In other words, the more advocacy mirrors the rating for a specific aspect, the more important that outcome is. If an outcome appears to be unrelated (i.e. even if the outcome is rated highly, advocacy could be high, or could be low), then the outcome is determined to be unimportant (i.e. it is not a direct driver of advocacy for the brand).



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**greater WELLINGTON**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Te Pane Matua Taiao

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