



WAKA KOTAHI PARTNER AND STAKEHOLDER SURVEY 2023

KANTAR PUBLIC

 WAKA KOTAHI
NZ TRANSPORT
AGENCY

Waka Kotahi commissioned Kantar Public to undertake a stakeholder survey to understand how it is perceived by partners and stakeholders, and how this has evolved over the past five years.



130

online
interviews



15

minute
survey



**8 June to
3 July 2023**

fieldwork
dates

Partner and stakeholder overall satisfaction is in line with recent years, 53%

Areas of improvement



Partner or stakeholder perceptions have mostly either improved (albeit not always significantly) or remained consistent.



Regions affected by severe weather: Perceptions that Waka Kotahi is solution focused and understands the needs of their area have increased among partners and stakeholders involved in regions affected by the 2023 severe weather.

Areas of concern



Staff authority: Partners and stakeholders continue to criticise the extent to which staff are not provided with the appropriate level of decision making.



Business case process: Some declines this year including that Waka Kotahi provides appropriate guidance.



Responsiveness to change: There's little confidence in the performance of Waka Kotahi in helping mitigate climate change or adapt to it.

The way forward is largely unchanged:

Primary area to focus on and invest



Prioritising partner and stakeholder needs

Secondary area to focus on and invest



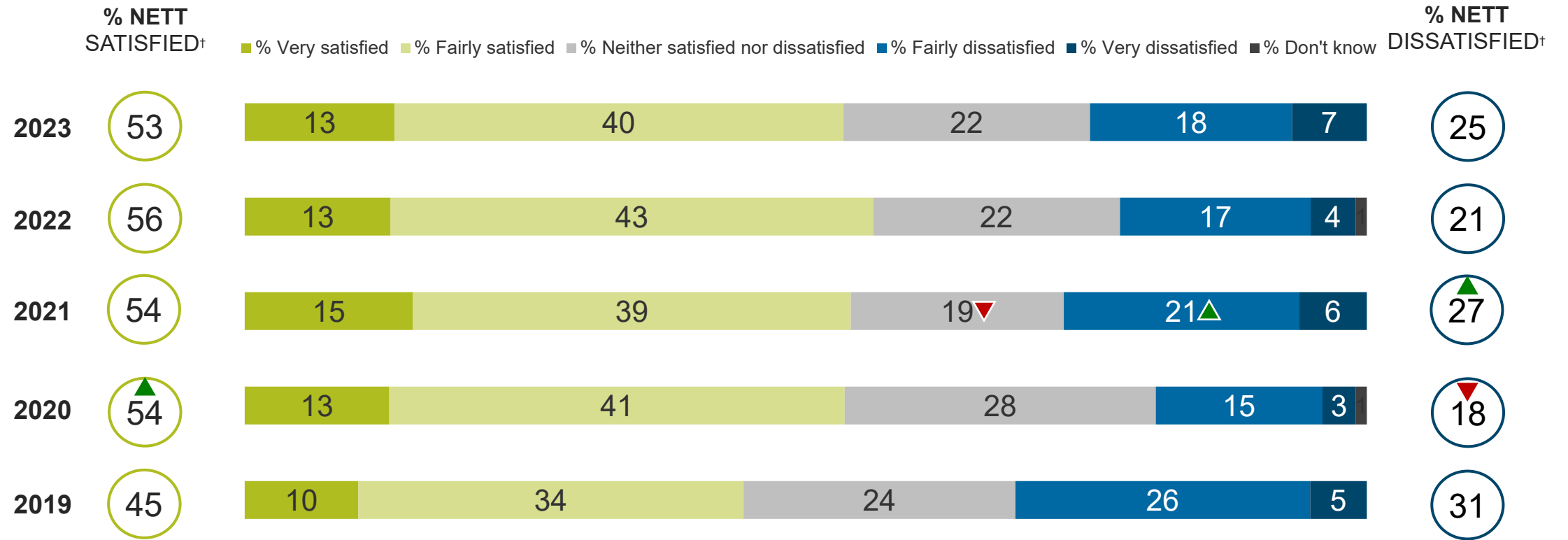
Internal system improvement

Overall satisfaction and perceptions of Waka Kotahi



Overall satisfaction

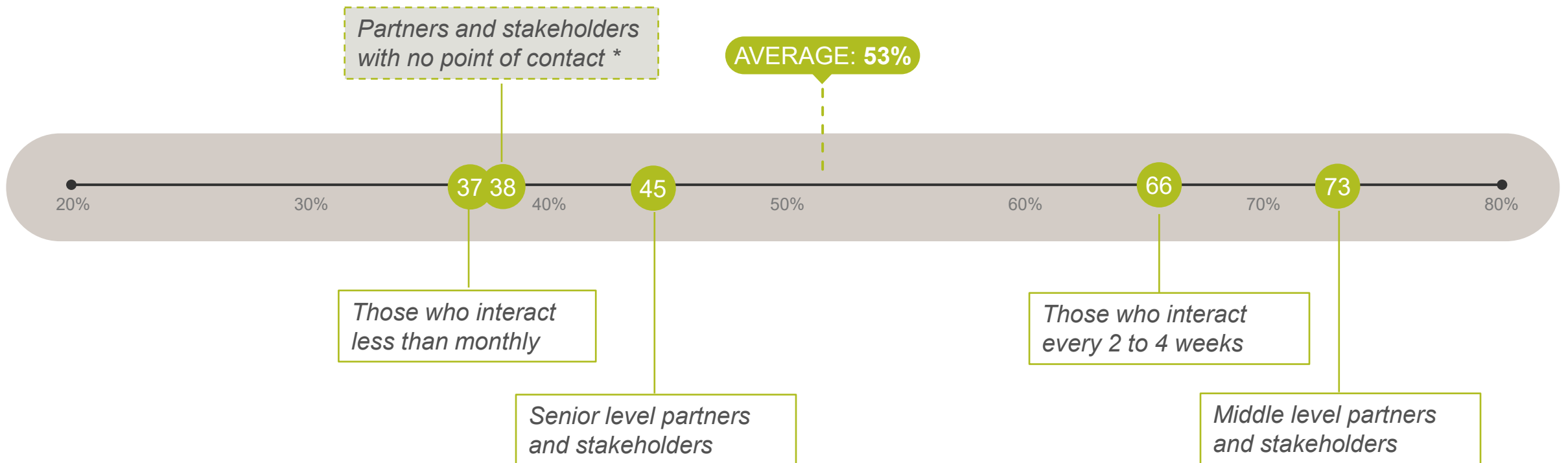
Overall satisfaction is slightly lower than the high of 56% seen last year but is similar to previous years at 53%. Dissatisfaction continues to fluctuate and has increased to 25% - but is lower than in 2021 and 2019.



Overall satisfaction – subgroup differences

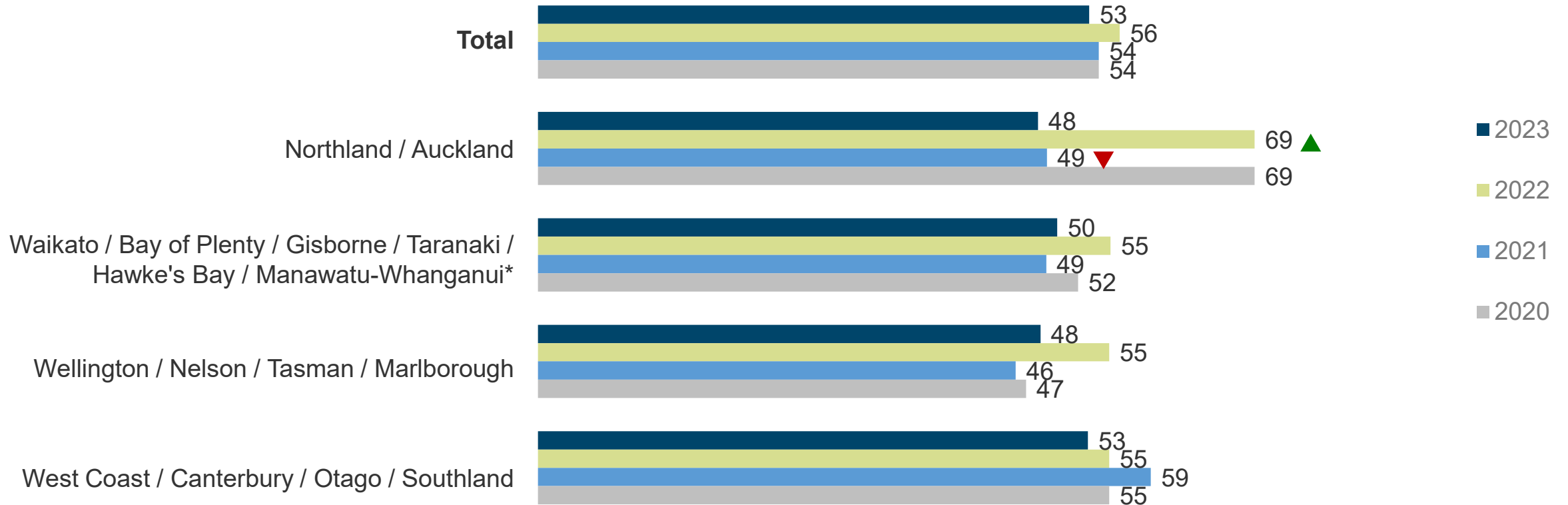
Middle level partners and stakeholders and those who interact more frequently with Waka Kotahi have higher overall satisfaction than senior level partners and stakeholders and those who interact infrequently.

Subgroup significant differences: % satisfied



Satisfaction continues to fluctuate among those working in Northland and Auckland. Elsewhere it is consistent.

Overall satisfaction with Waka Kotahi
(% satisfied / very satisfied with their relationship with Waka Kotahi)



Base: 2023: Northland / Auckland n=27, Waikato / Bay of Plenty / Gisborne / Taranaki / Hawke's Bay / Manawatu-Whanganui n=30, Wellington / Nelson / Tasman / Marlborough n=31, West Coast / Canterbury / Otago / Southland n=34
 Note: * Waikato / Bay of Plenty and Gisborne / Taranaki / Hawke's Bay / Manawatu-Whanganui have been combined in the analysis for 2023 due to low sample sizes

▲ ▼ = Significantly higher / lower than previous year

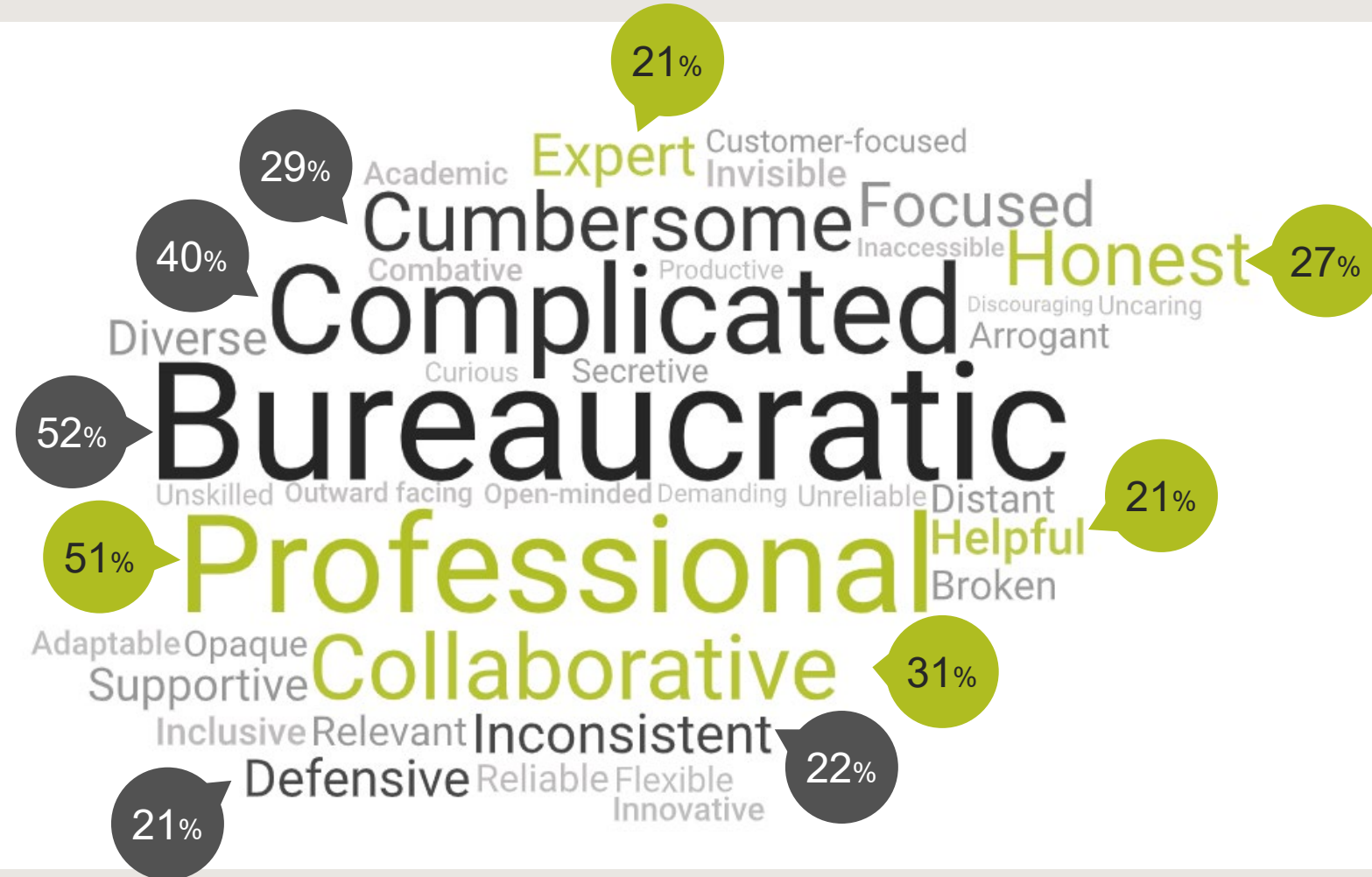
Partners and stakeholders view Waka Kotahi as professional, collaborative and honest – but also bureaucratic, complicated and cumbersome.

TOP 10 WORDS:

POSITIVE WORDS

NEGATIVE WORDS

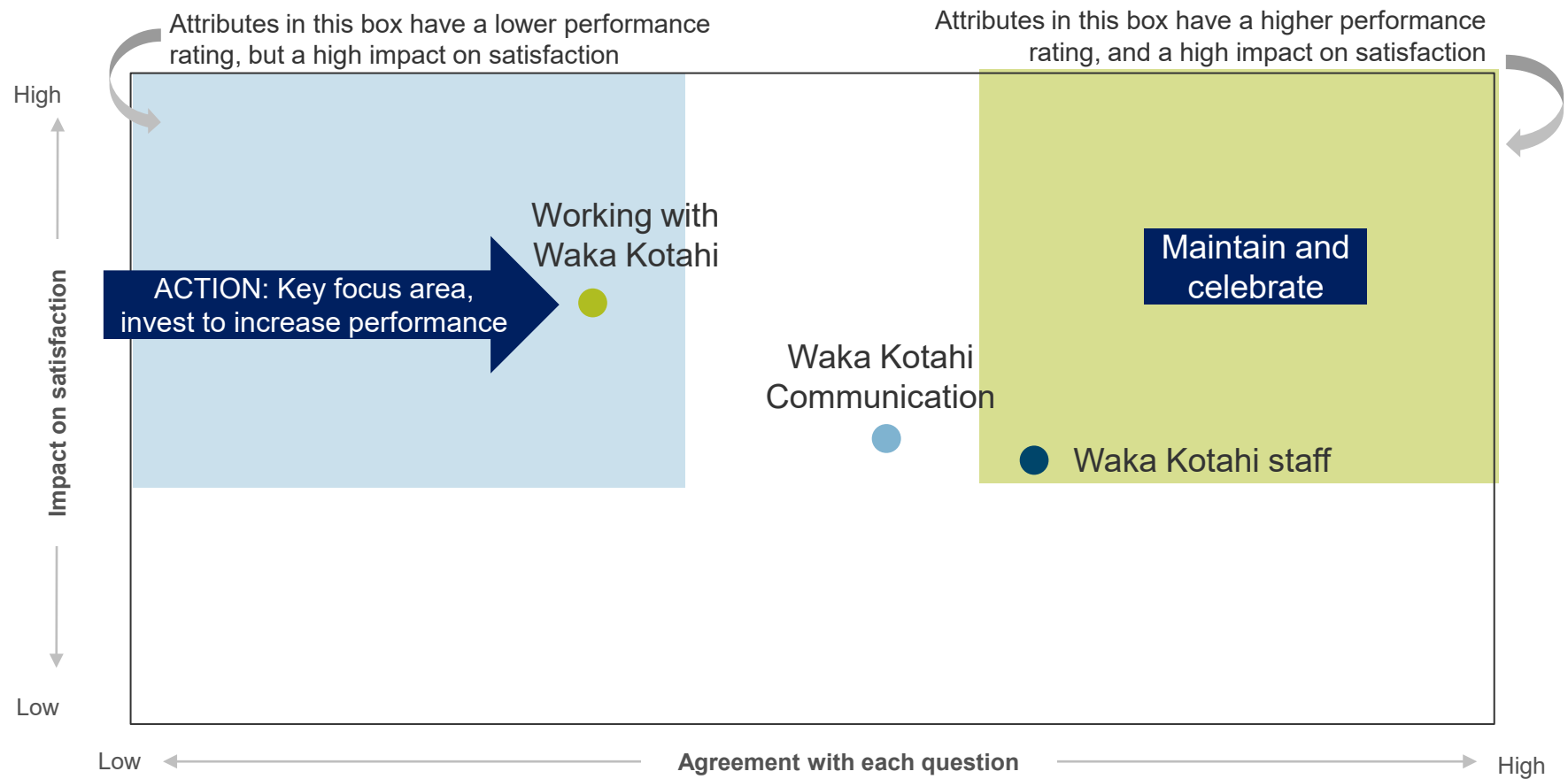
WORDS IN GREY
ARE NOT IN THE
TOP TEN
SELECTED



Drivers of satisfaction



Key themes



Below are some comments from stakeholders highlighting the strengths of Waka Kotahi staff.

“

Very professional and open organisation to work with. High quality of experienced and skilled staff. Very knowledgeable, who want to improve and are open to ideas.

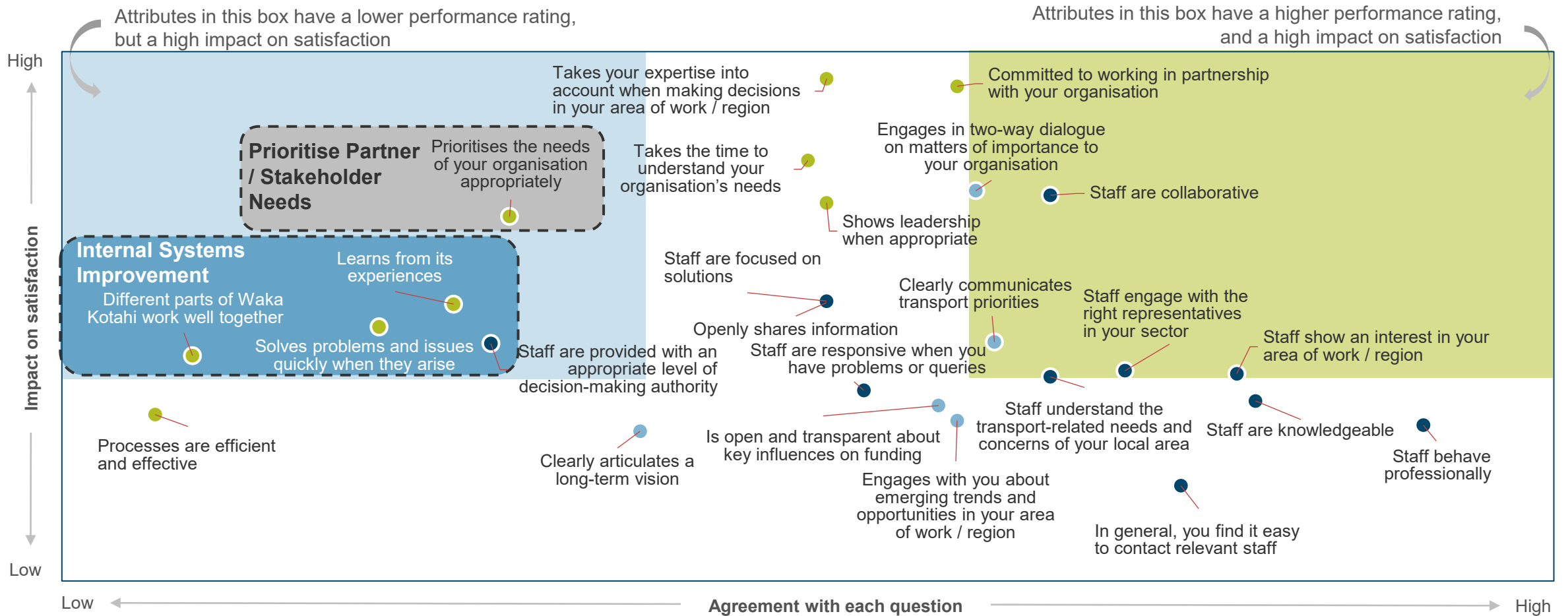
Open and trusting relationship with a couple of senior managers. Mutual respect, even when needing to take different organisational views / positions.

The staff with whom we engage work hard and seek to understand our requirements while working within their constraints / realities. On longer-term processes, they have been collaborative and lived through highs and lows with us - kudos for their resilience and perseverance!

Willingness to listen. Acknowledgement of our challenges. Competency of people.

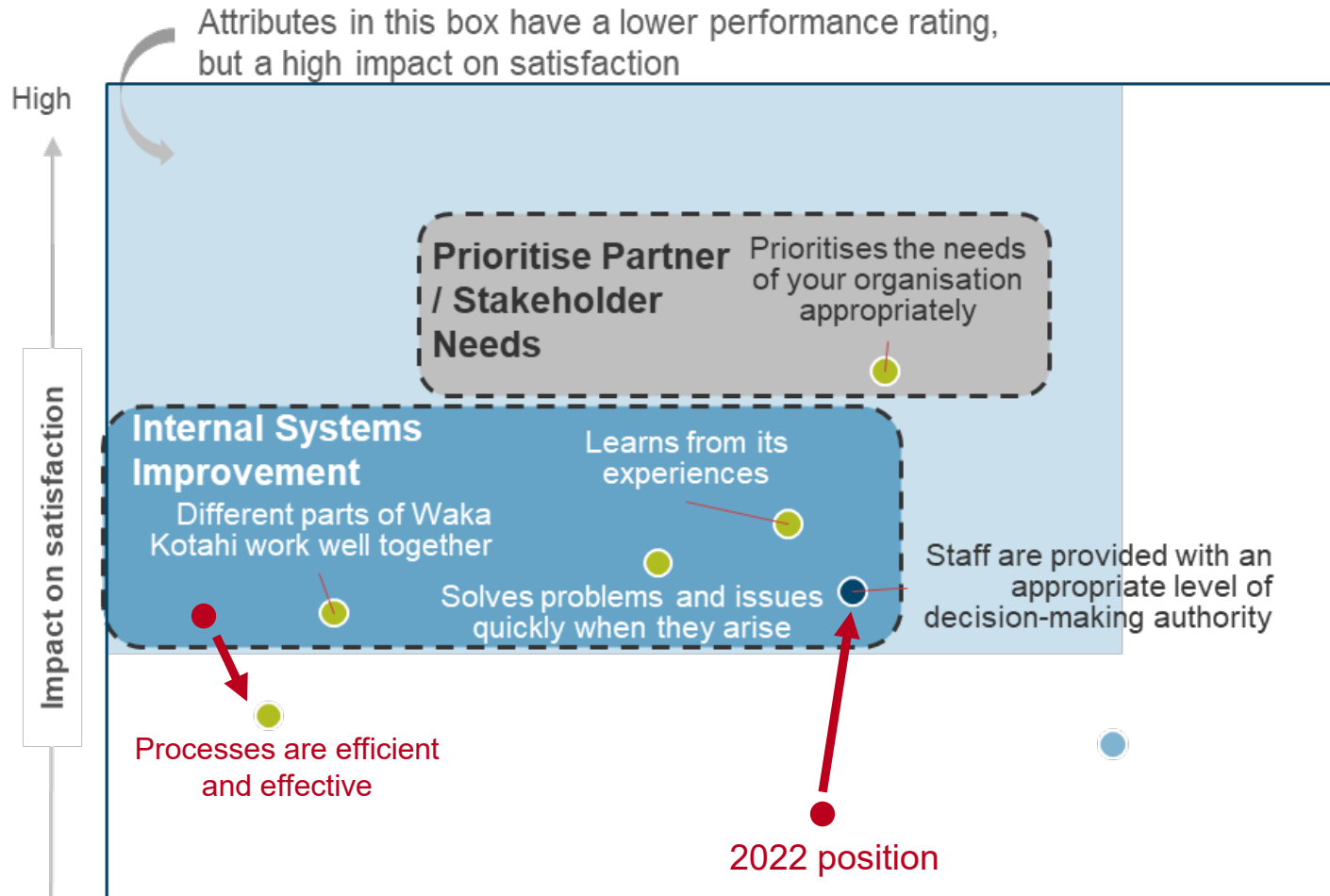
”

Drivers of satisfaction: Detailed picture



Drivers in satisfaction: Focus on priority areas

Although a few changes in the priorities for investment, prioritising stakeholder needs and improving internal systems remain the key focus.



Working with Waka Kotahi

The key focus area for improvement

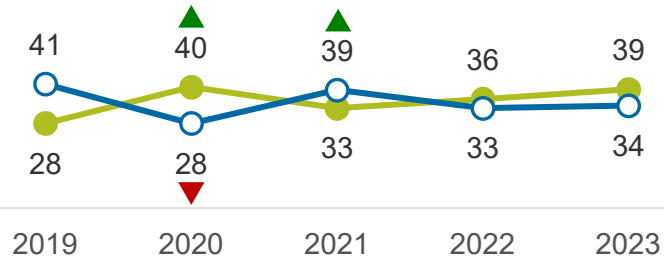


The way in which Waka Kotahi prioritises the needs of partners and stakeholders remains a pain point and is important to lifting satisfaction. Waka Kotahi also needs to focus on improving internal systems.

— % Agree — % Disagree

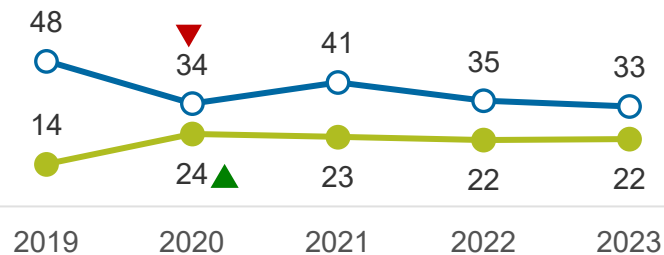
PRIMARY FOCUS: Prioritise Partner and Stakeholder Needs

Prioritises the needs of your organisation appropriately

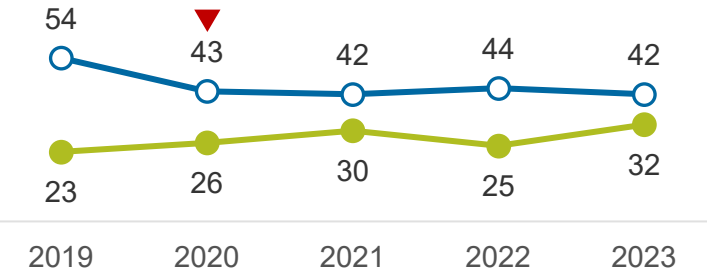


SECONDARY FOCUS: Internal Systems Improvements

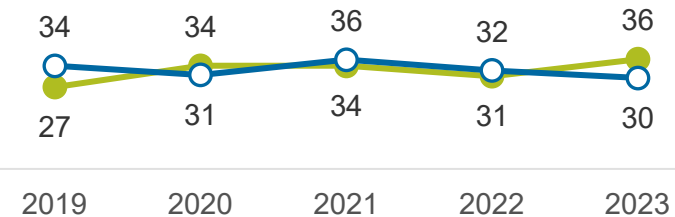
Different parts of Waka Kotahi work well together



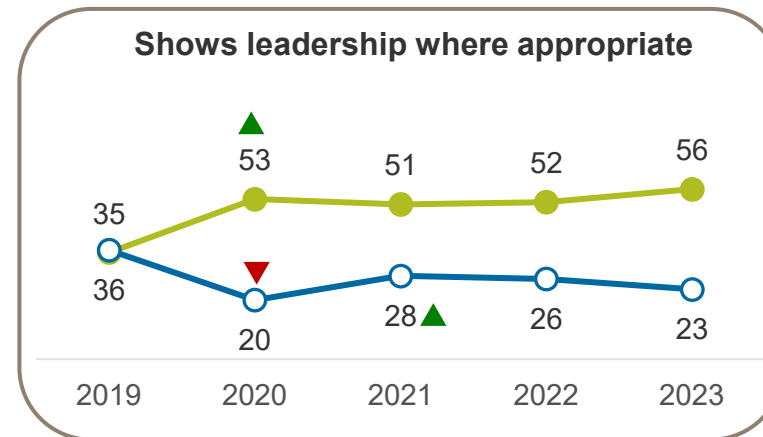
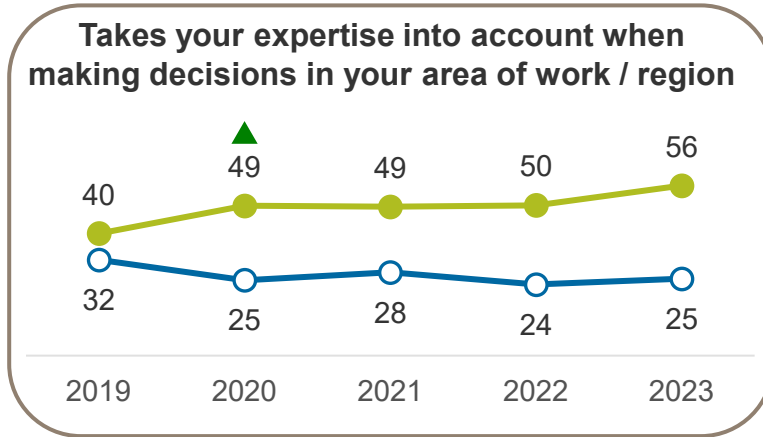
Solves problems and issues quickly when they arise



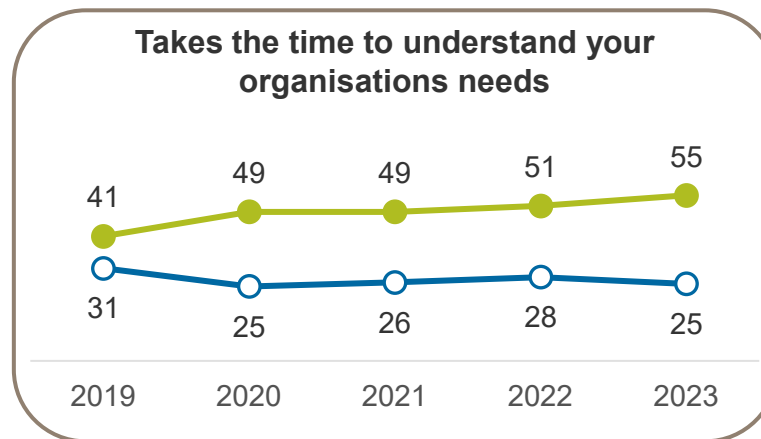
Learns from its experiences



There has been modest improvement (albeit not statistically significant) among partners and stakeholders that Waka Kotahi takes time to understand their needs, takes their expertise into account and shows leadership where appropriate.



— % Agree
— % Disagree



Below are some comments from stakeholders highlighting the issues they experience.

“

I feel sorry for NZTA staff they seem completely overwhelmed by the labyrinthian internal bureaucracy - I am amazed anything happens, it completely overwhelms the partnership focus. You just cannot get simple answers to simple questions.

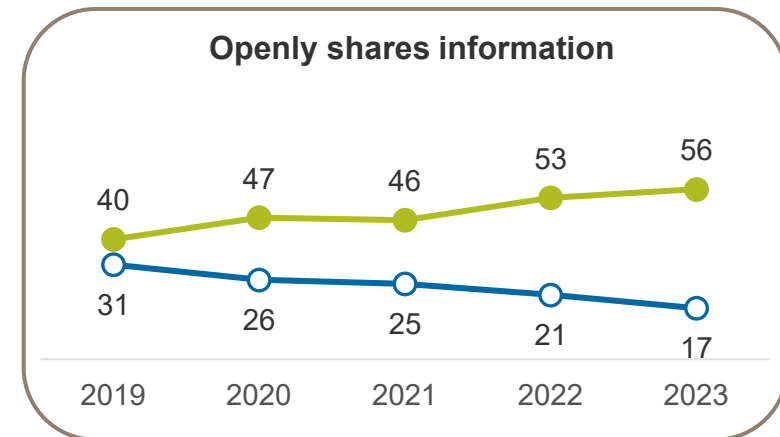
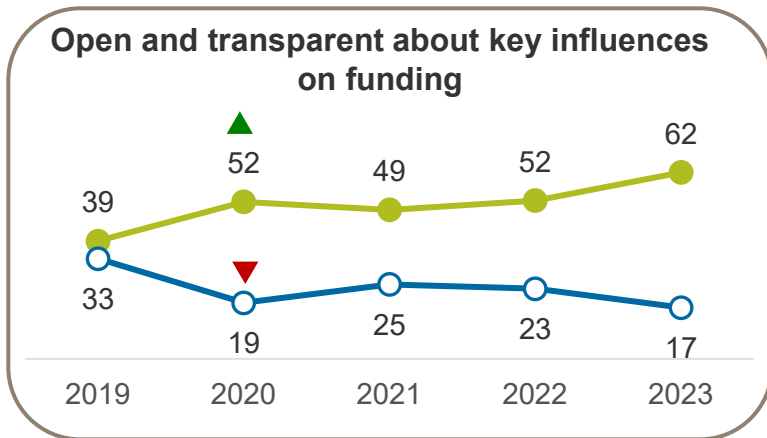
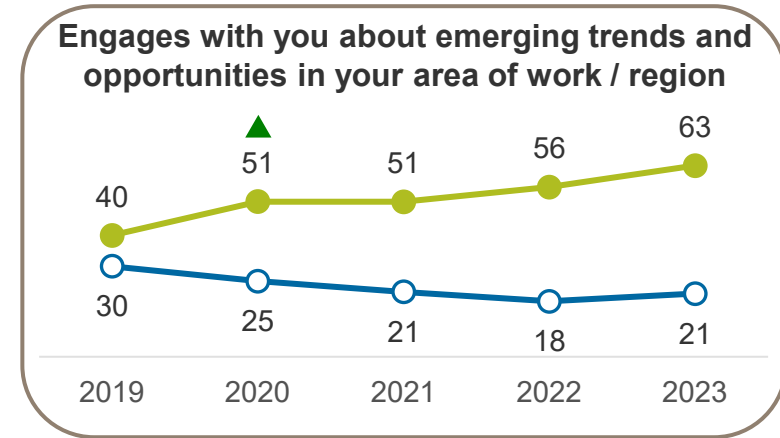
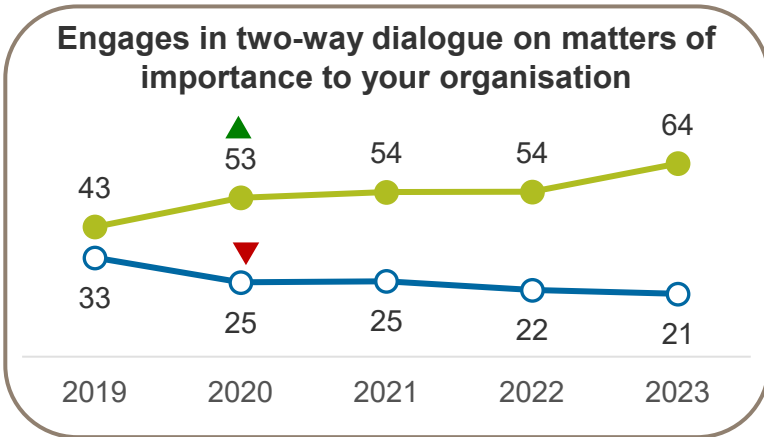
The process for getting approval, finding the right people in NZTA can be slow and delayed.

”

How Waka Kotahi communicates and engages



Partners and stakeholders are more positive about how Waka Kotahi communicates, and there has been a lift (albeit not significant) on a number of attributes focused on engagement and openness.



Perceptions of Waka Kotahi staff

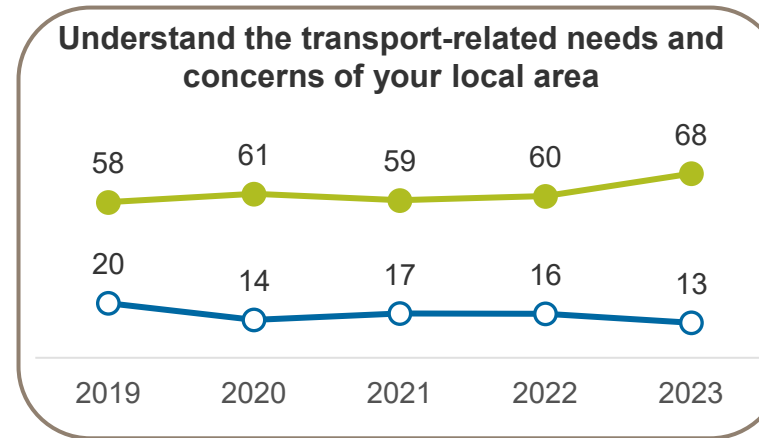
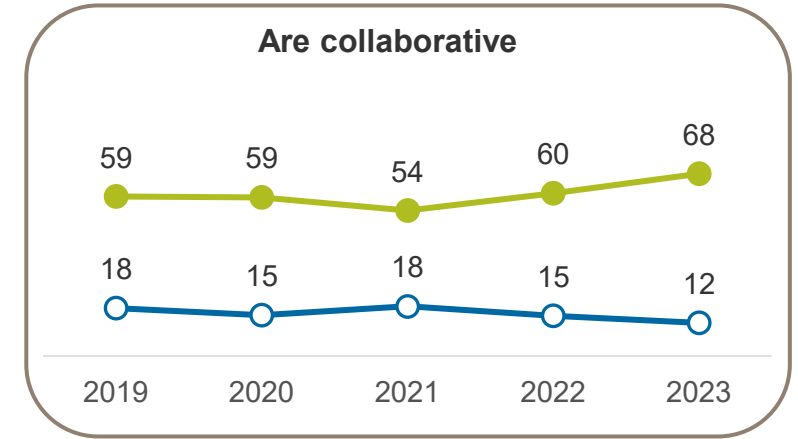
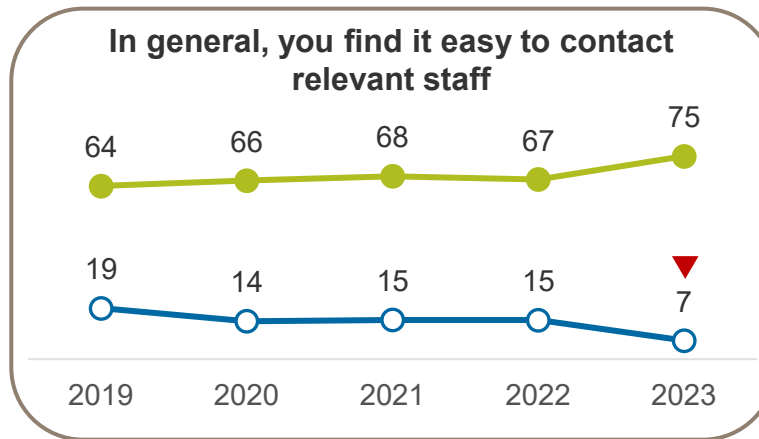
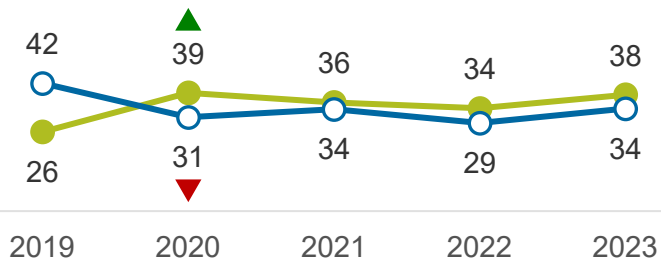


Staff authority is a pain point for many partners and stakeholders and should be a focus for improvement. Performance has increased (albeit not significantly) for ease of contact, collaboration and understanding of needs.

— % Agree — % Disagree

Secondary focus area as high impact on overall satisfaction

Staff are provided with an appropriate level of decision-making authority



Below are some comments from stakeholders highlighting the pain points with staff around lack of decision making authority.

“

There are some individuals that we have a really professional and productive relationship with, however it feels that they do not have the authority to make good fast decisions happen and that creates the frustration in the relationship.

Staff are not empowered sufficiently to do their jobs and get things done efficiently.

”

Satisfaction in regions impacted by severe weather

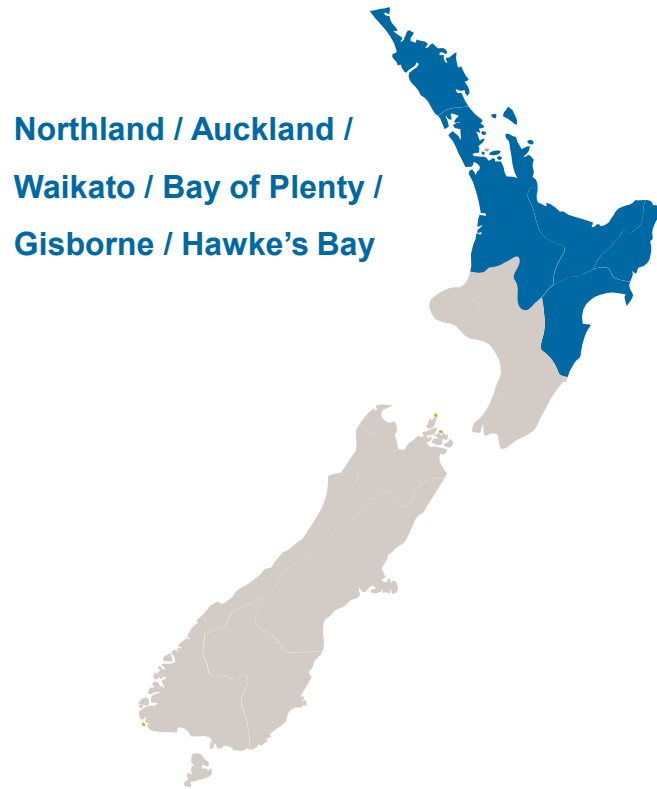




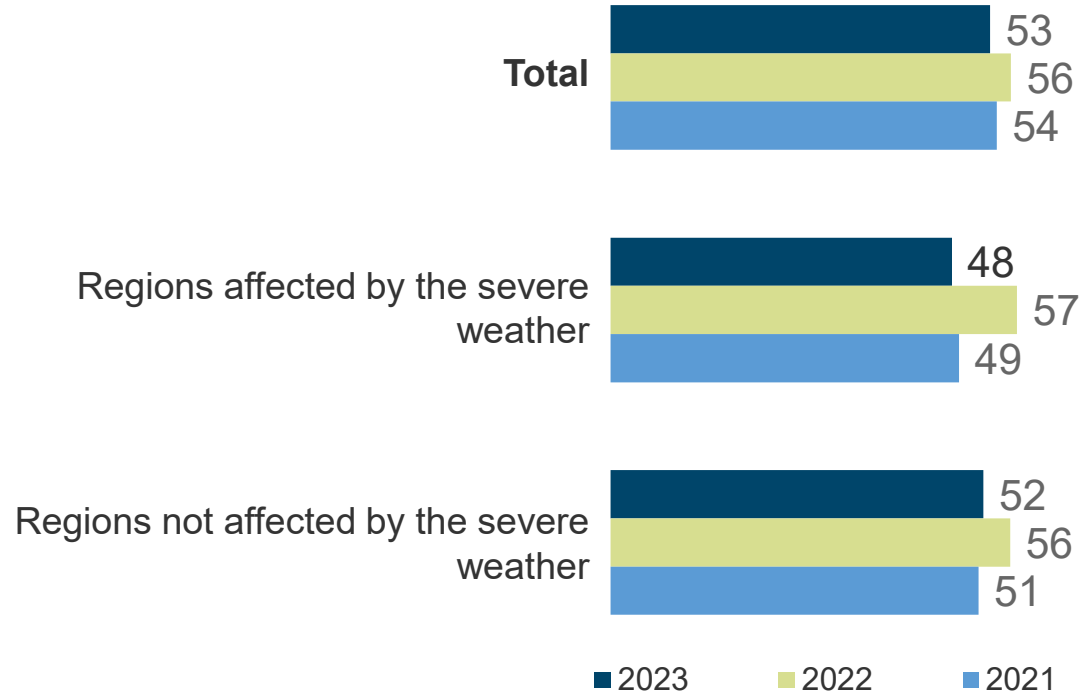
Regional comparison: Those affected by severe weather in 2023

A number of regions within the North Island have been affected by severe weather events during 2023. Satisfaction is similar among partners and stakeholders either involved or not involved in these regions.

Regions affected by the severe weather in 2023



Overall satisfaction with Waka Kotahi
(% satisfied / very satisfied with their relationship with Waka Kotahi)





Regions affected by severe weather in 2023: Shifts in agreement

Agreement has increased among partners and stakeholders involved in regions affected by the severe weather that Waka Kotahi staff are focused on solutions and understand the transport-related needs of their local area.

Statistically significant increases in agreement

Attribute	2022	2023
Understand the transport-related needs and concerns of your local area	62%	80%
Staff are focused on solutions	48%	70%

Indicative increases in agreement (not statistically significant)*

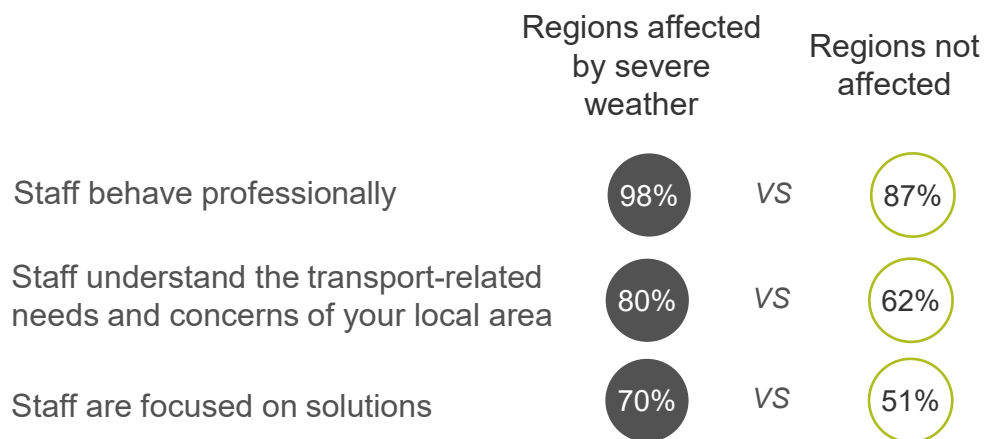
Attribute	2022	2023
<i>Waka Kotahi is committed to working in partnership with your organisation</i>	63%	73%
<i>Waka Kotahi solves problems and issues quickly when they arise</i>	25%	39%
<i>Waka Kotahi takes your expertise into account when making decisions in your area of work / region</i>	47%	57%
<i>Waka Kotahi is open and transparent about key influences on funding</i>	53%	64%
<i>Waka Kotahi openly shares information</i>	52%	64%
<i>Staff behave professionally</i>	88%	98%
<i>Staff show an interest in your area of work / region</i>	74%	84%
<i>Staff engage with the right representatives in your sector</i>	72%	82%



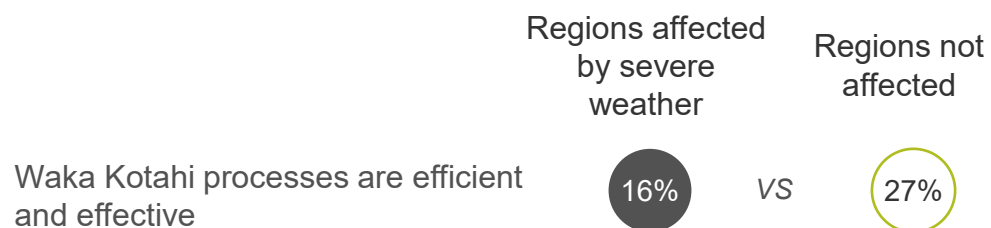
Regions affected by severe weather in 2023: Attitude comparison

Partners and stakeholders involved in regions affected by the severe weather in 2023 have higher agreement than those in areas not affected on a number of attributes.

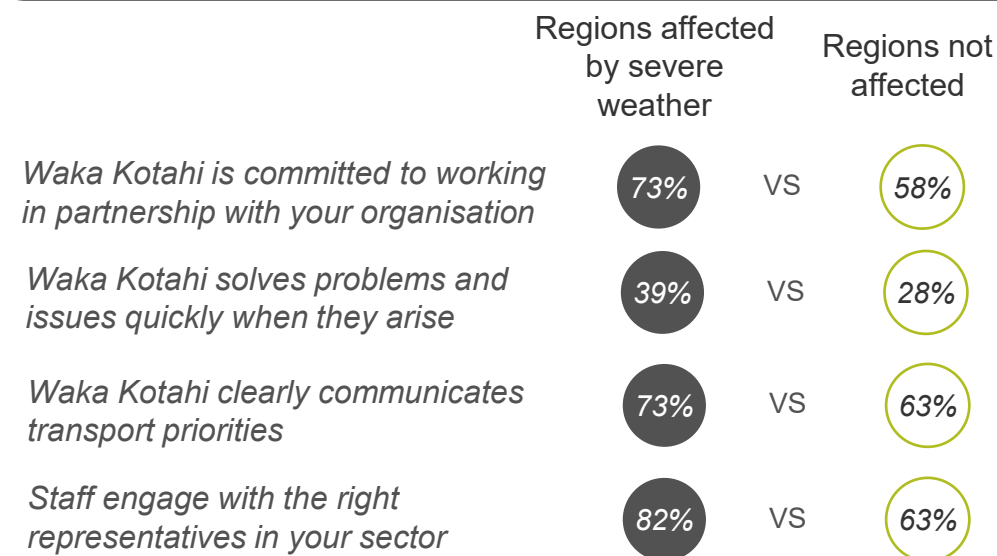
Statistically significant differences in agreement which are higher within regions affected by severe weather



Statistically significant differences in agreement which are lower within regions affected by severe weather



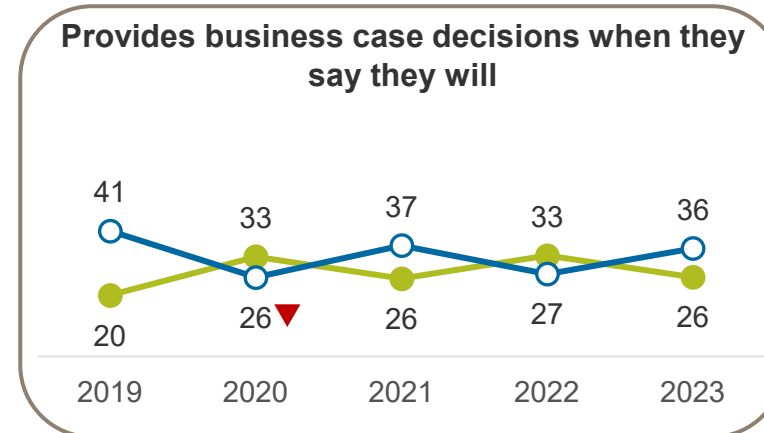
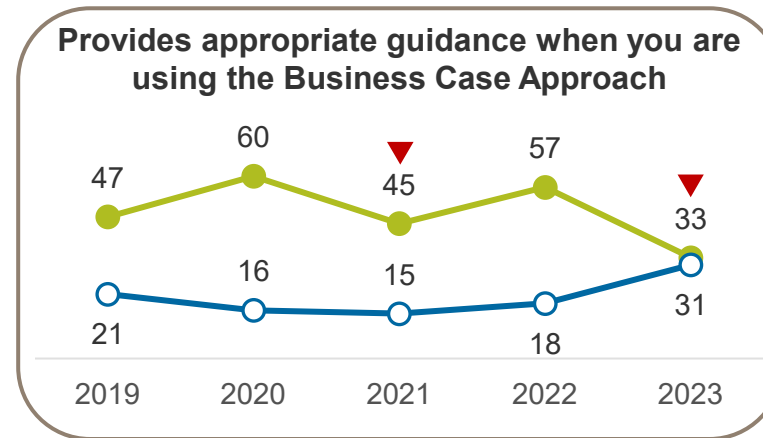
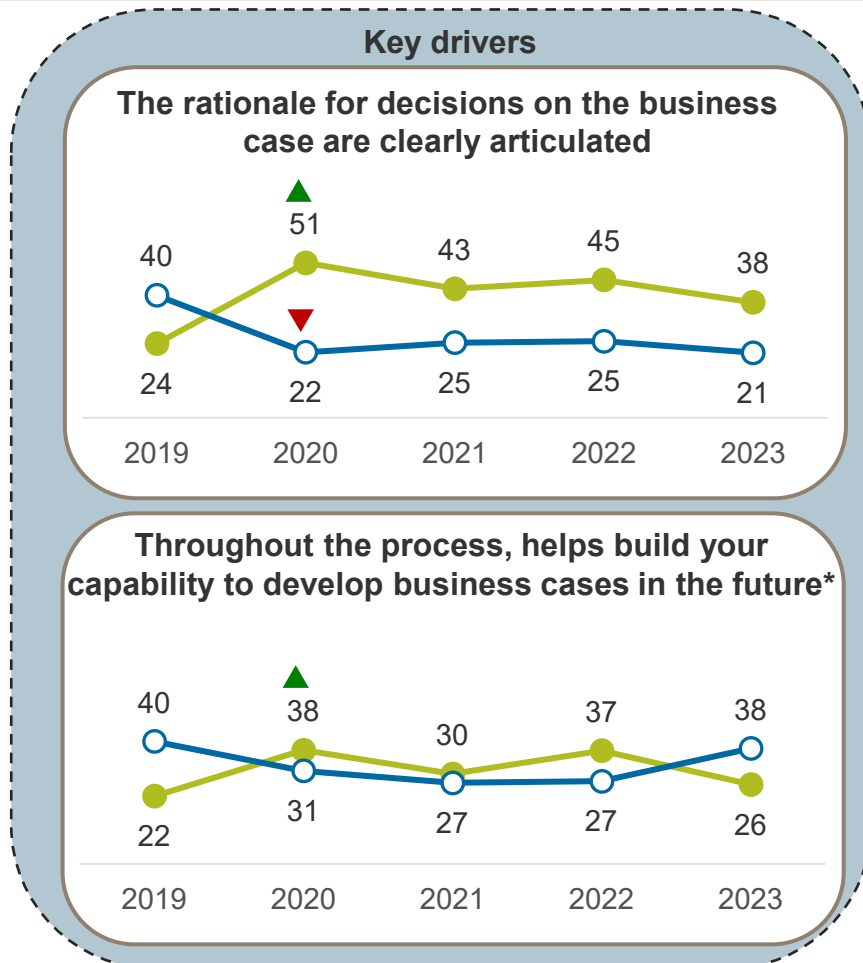
Indicative differences in agreement (which are not statistically significant)*



Partners and stakeholders involved in business cases



Perceptions have declined for providing appropriate guidance and, although not significantly, for helping build capability and for providing timely decisions (a key driver in 2022).



← Note: Key driver in 2022

Source: E2 Thinking about the most recent NLTP Business Case you have undertaken, how much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Base: All partners and stakeholders who submitted a business case (2023 n=42, 2022 n=99, 2021 n=101, 2020 n=88, 2019 n=94)

Note: *Key driver of satisfaction in 2022

▲ ▼ = Significantly higher / lower than previous year

Below are some comments from partners and stakeholders illustrating some key issues they experience with the business case process.

“

The business case process is fundamentally broken - treated as some sort of holy grail by SMEs who seem to thrive on delaying and disagreeing for reasons that are inexplicable to understand; it should be relatively straight forward and clear for most projects (up to \$100m) yet small projects can take months to get through the labyrinthine process for review and assessment with multitudes of personal opinions heaped in under the guise of advice.

Business case processes are tortuous, expensive, time consuming and fail to recognise wider strategic, economic, social benefits and urban development needs.

”

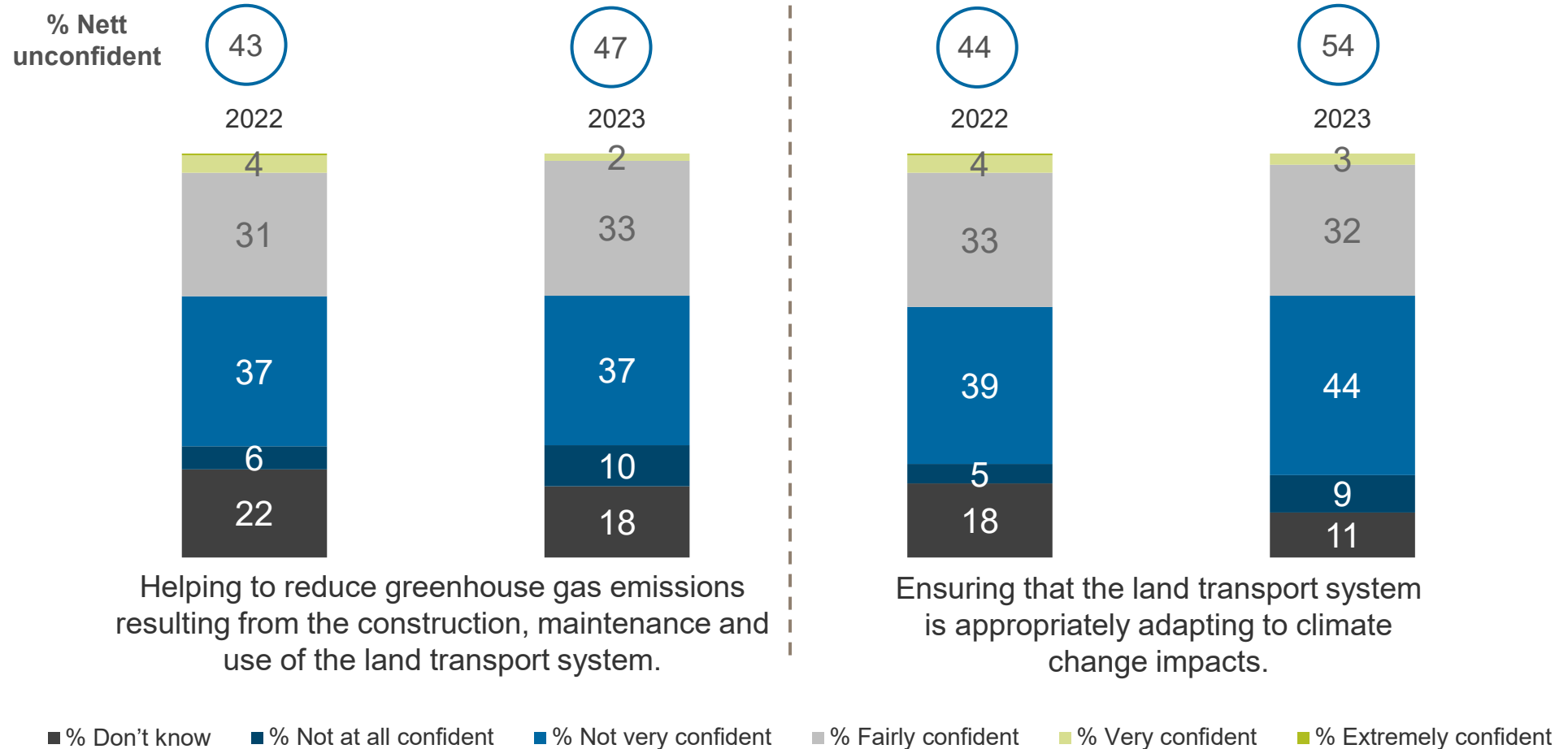
Confidence around climate change impacts





Confidence in mitigating and adapting to climate impacts

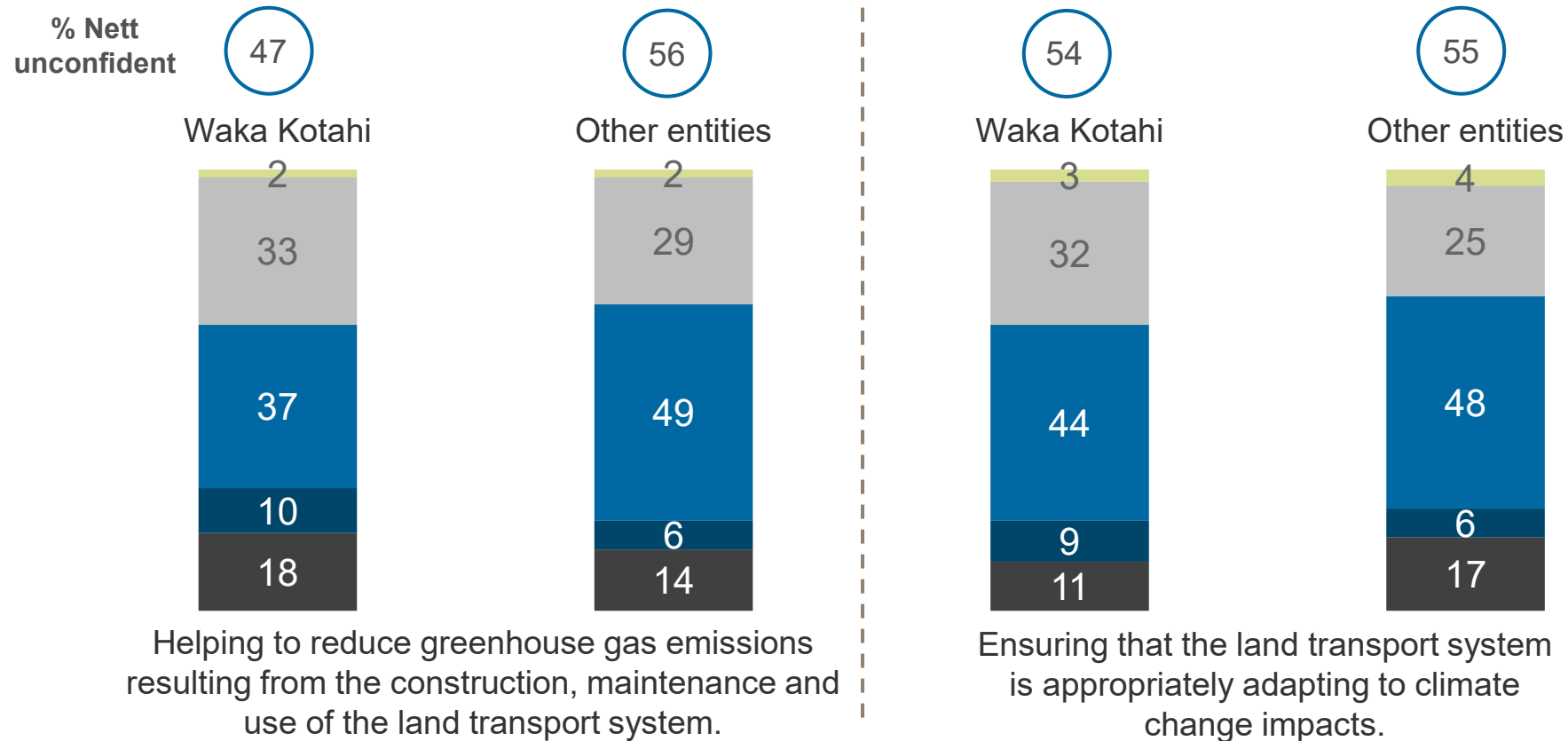
Partners and stakeholders continue to have little confidence in the performance of Waka Kotahi in helping mitigate climate change or adapt to it.





Confidence in mitigating and adapting to climate impacts

Although they have little confidence in Waka Kotahi, partners and stakeholders also have little confidence in the performance of other entities in helping mitigate climate change or adapt to it.



■ % Don't know ■ % Not at all confident ■ % Not very confident ■ % Fairly confident ■ % Very confident ■ % Extremely confident

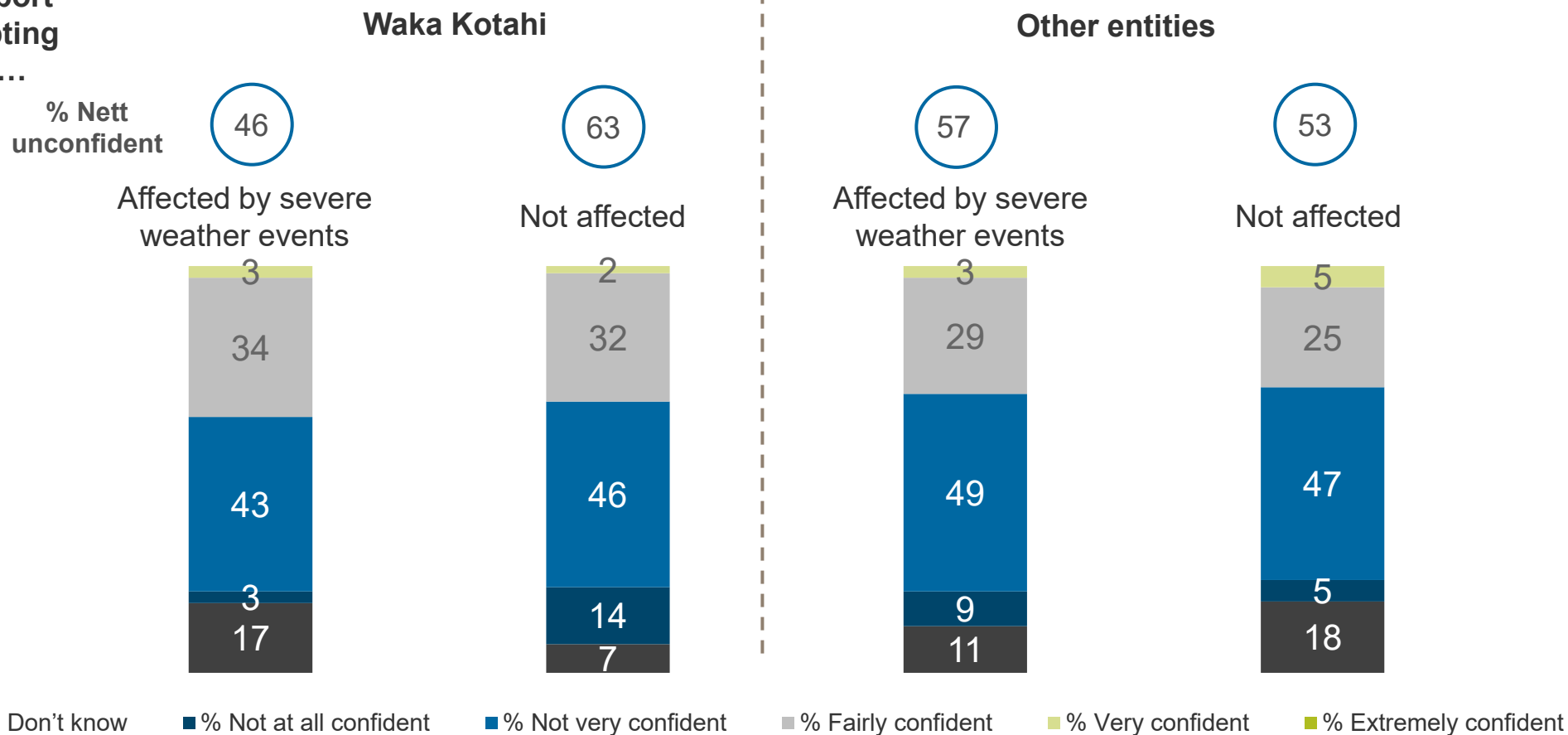
Source: K3: How confident, or not, are you that Waka Kotahi is ...
K4: For this question we'd like you to think of those entities involved in the land transport system, outside of Waka Kotahi. These entities are organisations also involved with transport: modes (e.g. private vehicles, roads, rail, walking, and cycling), assets, procedures, regulations/ laws, information, construction, maintenance or plans. How confident, or not, are you that other non-Waka Kotahi entities involved in the land transport system are...
Base: All partners and stakeholders (2023 n=108)



Confidence in adapting to climate impacts: By involvement in regions affected by severe weather

Partners and stakeholders in regions affected by severe weather are not as unconfident in the ability of Waka Kotahi to adapt to climate change as those in regions not affected – but this is because they are more uncertain than more confident.

Ensuring that the land transport system is appropriately adapting to climate change impacts...



Source: K3: How confident, or not, are you that Waka Kotahi is ...
 K4: For this question we'd like you to think of those entities involved in the land transport system, outside of Waka Kotahi. These entities are organisations also involved with transport: modes (e.g. private vehicles, roads, rail, walking, and cycling), assets, procedures, regulations/ laws, information, construction, maintenance or plans. How confident, or not, are you that other non-Waka Kotahi entities involved in the land transport system are...
 Base: Partners and stakeholders involved in regions affected by severe weather in 2023 n=35. Not involved in regions affected by severe weather n=57

The key pain points for partners and stakeholders remain very similar to previous survey waves albeit staff authority is again a driver of satisfaction (as in 2019), and process efficiency and effectiveness is not currently a key driver.

Primary area to focus on and invest



Prioritising partner and stakeholder needs

- Prioritises the needs of your organisation appropriately

Secondary area to focus on and invest



Internal system improvement

- **Learns** from its experiences
- **Solves** problems and issues **quickly** when they arise
- Different parts of Waka Kotahi **work well together**.
- Providing staff with an **appropriate level of decision-making authority**

Audiences to pay particular attention to:



Partners and stakeholders with no point of contact*



Partners and stakeholders with less regular contact (less than monthly)



Local Government partners and stakeholders



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