

RN 009C – Impact of half-price public transport fares – a research note

Surveying undertaken up to September 2023

Published July 2024



A note to the audience

While NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) provided investment, the research was undertaken independently, and the resulting findings should not be regarded as being the opinion, responsibility or policy of NZTA or indeed of any NZ Government agency.

NZTA is established under the Land Transport Management Act 2003. The objective of NZTA is to undertake its functions in a way that contributes to an efficient, effective and safe land transport system in the public interest. NZTA funds innovative and relevant research that contributes to this objective.

People using this research should apply and rely on their own skill and judgement and, if necessary, they should seek appropriate legal or other expertise regarding its use.

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Sector Research Programme - overview

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) works with the sector to identify and address gaps in the sector's knowledge and understanding of the development, management and operation of the land transport system.

We work alongside subject matter experts to:

- develop a programme of research projects to address knowledge gaps, in consultation with the wider sector (including the Ministry of Transport and Local Government)
- procure research providers to undertake and deliver the work
- provide project oversight and guidance, and
- publish, promote and support the implementation of the resulting research outputs.

Summary of primary data sources

All primary data in this analysis is sourced from two existing surveys:

NZTA Customer Journey Monitor: a nationally representative monthly online survey of NZ adults 15+, usual sample n = c. 1,000. June and July 2022 surveys boosted to n = c. 2,000 adults to facilitate deeper half price fares analysis. Data are weighted each month to match the known sample universe for age and gender based on the 2018 census. Within analysis of most recent journey *only*, data are also weighted according to mode usage based on data from the New Zealand Household Travel survey. Targets are supplied by NZTA and weighting is processed by field and data supplier Dynata.

NZTA COVID Transport Impacts Survey: a nationally representative ad-hoc survey of NZ adults 15+, with boosts to major urban areas. Usual sample of n = c. 1,259. Data are weighted each wave to match the known sample universe for age, gender, region and ethnicity, based on the 2018 census. Targets are supplied and weighting processed by Ipsos. Note: targets for region weighting group the country into 6 regions, rather than the full 16 administrative regions. This is designed to mitigate the impact of over-sampling in Tauranga, Wellington City, Dunedin, Hamilton and Christchurch, which are down-weighted to normal population distributions.

Awareness and impact of half price fares have been collected in both surveys in different ways:

- In relation to *most recent journey, main mode used* within the **Customer Journey Monitor** for April of 2022 to September of 2023.
- In relation to *past week travel and mode usage* within the **COVID transport impacts survey** in May of 2022 and the **Customer Journey Monitor** in May of 2022 to September of 2023.

Sources are analysed either in isolation, or in a merged data set consisting of common variables (including demographic questions) from both surveys. Where datasets are merged, responses from each source retain their original weighting, with each source treated as a separate 'wave' of the research. Within this report, slide footers will clearly indicate the **project source, sample description** and (where not contained within graph axes) the bases for the relevant audiences.

Data sources are combined for analysis by Ipsos New Zealand.

Executive summary

Impact of half-price public transport fares

Executive summary – impact of half-price fares

From 1 July 2023 fares on public transport returned to full pricing for most users. Those under 25 and Community Services Card (CSC) holders who apply for Community Connect Concessions can still travel with reduced fares.

Whilst the scheme was in effect, survey analysis was focused on the respondent-reported past week impact of half-price fares on their usage of public transport. This consistently showed that around 6-9% of New Zealanders had used PT in the previous week because of half-price fares.

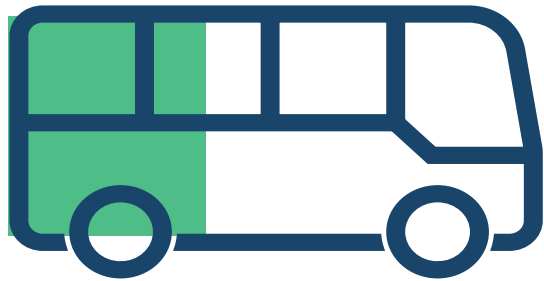
However, with the scheme concluded New Zealanders were asked to report what half-price fares related usage they experienced during the entire 14-month period where half-price fares were in place. Within this long-term view, almost a quarter indicated some form of public transport usage where they benefitted from half-price fares.

58% stated that prior to the half-price fares period, they did not tend to use PT. Of these, more than 1-in-10 reported trialling public transport due to the reduced fares. Whilst more than half of these trial users said they didn't continue their usage in the long term, the result was around 3% of the population who started using PT kept on doing so during the half-price fares period. Almost 2-in-5 people from this new user group reported some past-week PT usage in the post-half-price fares July-September period.

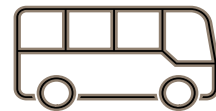
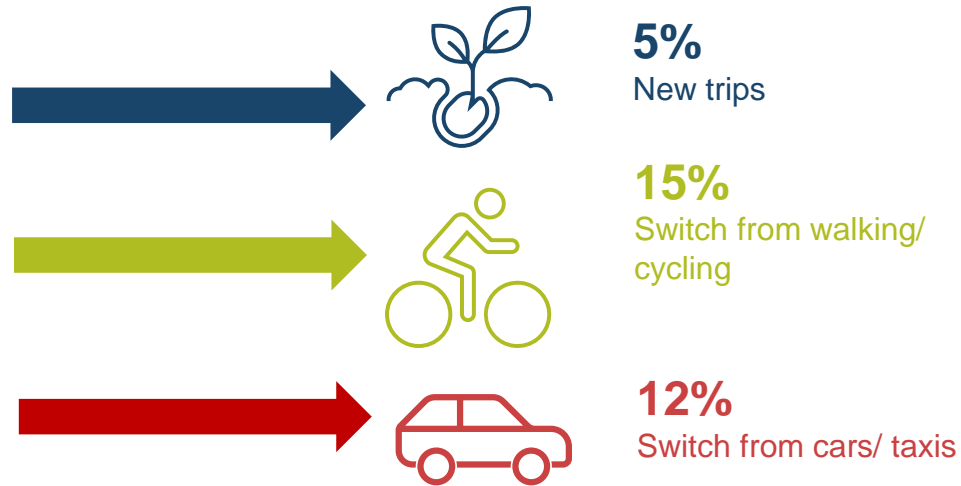
Impact was greatest for groups with high levels of pre-existing patronage. More than half of the most regular pre-scheme PT users said that they took extra journeys they might not have taken because of half-price fares.

Demographically, the groups most likely to report some impacted PT travel were those with greater pre-existing PT usage. This reflects previous findings, which shows demographic groups with more urban residents have greater access to PT networks and were better placed to benefit from half-price fares.

Journeys added during HPF period



During half-price fares a third (32%) of PT usage was due to HPF



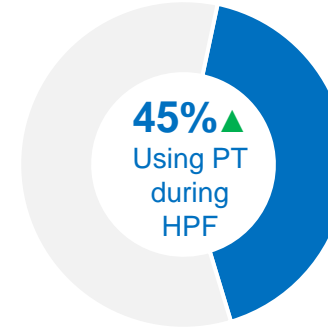
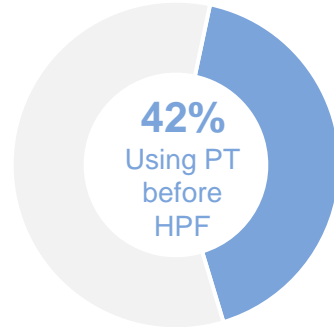
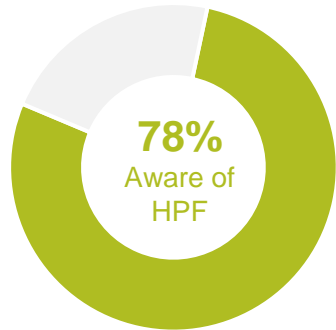
Half (53%)
of PT users would have taken PT anyway

One in seven (15%)
were unaware of HPF when they travelled

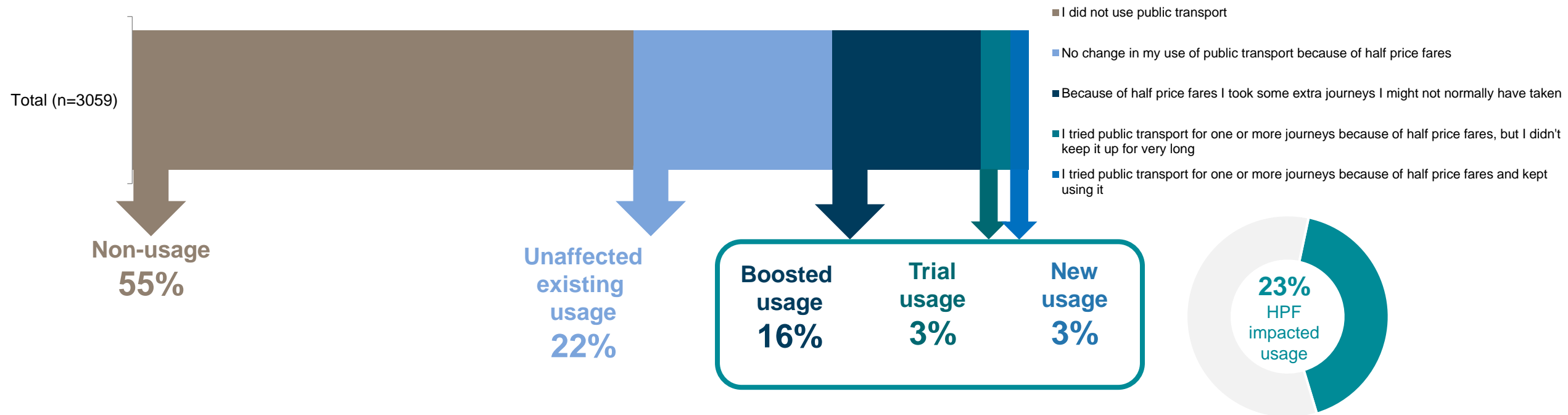
Q53d2 / Q53d3 On 1 April 2022 half-price public transport fares were introduced nationwide. Which statement best applies to your journey... You mentioned that you travelled by bus, train, or ferry in the past week. Half-price fares were in place during this time. Which statement best applies to your journey(s)...

Base: All travelling by public transport in past week, COVID-19 impact tracking May 2022, Journey Monitor survey May-22 – June-23

Overall HPF impact on New Zealanders



Statistically significant 3%pts increase in PT users



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Who added the most journeys?



Auckland & Wellington residents



People living in city centres



Under 30's

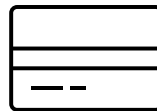


NZers of Asian ethnicity and Pacific Peoples

Under 30's, higher income, Asian ethnicity groups and those with disabilities are also concentrated in city centres and suburbs, therefore better served by public transport. They also had a higher incidence of usage before half-price fares



New Zealanders with disabilities



Community Services Card holders



Higher income households

HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?

Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Executive summary – changes in patronage

To date, survey evidence indicates that whilst the total number of boardings recorded may not have returned to pre-COVID levels, the proportion of New Zealanders taking public transport each week had increased and around a third of PT users took journeys as a result of half-price fares.

With most over 25s now subject to full-price fares, these additional trips and mode switching may become less common, resulting in reduced weekly usage. However, in the July-September period, there has been no clear evidence of a reduction in weekly PT users.

Weekly usage had already begun to decline among over 25s who do not hold a CSC and therefore without a continued fare discount, with a significant drop between Q1 and Q2 when they still had access to half-price fares. Reported weekly usage remained stable in Q3.

Reported usage among under 25s increased significantly after July 1, with CSC holder usage stable compared to Q2. More than half of those surveyed are qualified to receive some form of ongoing discount, however only around 1-in-5 indicated that they would have access. Around a third of CSC holders are not aware of community connect and of those aware only a third have signed up so far, with 1-in-4 intending to do so. If community connect concession uptake continues to grow, it may mitigate reduction in patronage.

Prior to the end of the scheme, about 2-in-5 of those who said they'd used PT due to half-price fares indicated that they would reduce their PT usage or stop using it altogether. So far, there doesn't appear to have been a reduction in usage at quite this scale. However, the proportion indicating that they intend to reduce their patronage remains consistent, perceived affordability of and stated preference for PT as a mode has begun to reduce, so a reduction in weekly PT users could still occur later in 2023 or next year.

Summary of existing evidence

Patronage, impact, drivers of public transport usage and mitigating factors

Summary of previous analysis to date

Patronage

Analysis of bus, train and ferry passenger boardings in showed a gradual increase during the HPF period up to June 2023, however this remained below patronage levels from 2019 (prior to impact of COVID-19 in New Zealand).

There was evidence that the way New Zealanders used the land transport network had undergone changes that may make demand less comparable to pre-COVID periods.

These include elevated incidence of working from home, particularly among populations that may be more likely to commute using public transport and reduced services or disruptions on the network.

These factors may limit patronage growth, at least in terms of the number of trips taken by passengers. Survey data showed that the proportion of weekly users for the period was comparable with 2019 levels, but that those PT users were travelling on fewer days, likely resulting in fewer trips recorded in patronage data.

Impact

The observable impact of half-price fares was in adding users to the public transport network who either took trips that they otherwise wouldn't have taken, or chose buses, trains and ferries to replace existing walked, cycled or driven journeys.

Around 6%-8% of all New Zealanders reported PT journeys in the June '22 – June '23 period that they otherwise wouldn't have taken. This equates to a third of those using the network during that period.

Journeys for work purposes are generally the most common form of patronage and so were the largest group of journeys added. However, completely new journeys were often one-off or infrequent trips that users might not have otherwise been able to take.

Journeys tended to be added in major urban areas, where networks are more developed and existing usage was relatively higher. This meant many of those with higher PT need (those with disabilities or without car access) were able to use half price fares to take more affordable journeys, as many live closer to existing networks.

Evidence covered in previous reports from [August 2022 and December 2022](#) and [July 2023](#).

Existing variations in usage

Higher usage groups

Long term, reported weekly usage of public transport was consistently above average for the following groups prior to the introduction of half-price fares:

- New Zealanders with disabilities
- under 30s
- the highest income households (\$100K pre-tax income per year and above)
- the lowest income households (\$30K pre-tax income per year or less)
- Asian communities
- Pacific peoples
- Māori communities.

As a result, these groups were more likely to take advantage of half-price fares, add new journeys or switch from driving, walking and cycling.

Area of residence

Generally, greater PT usage is common in demographic groups that tend to live in urban areas, where multiple public transport options may be available, including trains and ferries, or where bus networks at least serve more locations.

However, certain groups tend to have consistently higher reported PT usage even outside of major urban areas. These include:

- New Zealanders of Asian backgrounds in towns and rural areas
- Pacific peoples living in rural areas
- higher income households (\$100K pre-tax income per year and above) in New Zealand towns.

This meant that some groups were able to benefit from half-price fares, even when living outside of city centres.

However, for other groups, like the lowest income households (\$30K pre-tax income per year or less), European and Māori people, mode switching and new journeys due to half price fares were less common in areas outside of CBDs.

Evidence covered in previous reports from [August 2022 and December 2022](#) and [July 2023](#).

Summary of previous analysis to date

Mitigating factors

During the April 2022 – June 2023 period when half-price fares were available for all network users, several mitigating factors may have limited public transport usage among travellers who might have benefited from the discount.

Despite the absence of travel restrictions in 2022, COVID-19 cases early in the year were at the highest point recorded. Those infected and close contacts would have been restricted in their travel, meaning fewer journeys in general. However, the biggest impact from COVID-19 appeared to be the long-term change in travel patterns, with public transport much more impacted by increased working from home.

Service disruptions impacted different PT networks at different times, with periods of elevated delays and cancellations on bus networks across New Zealand and line closures (both planned and resulting from extreme weather) especially on Auckland train networks.

The impact of weather was varied: early in the HPF active period, there was little indication of unseasonal weather, allowing for easier measurement of reported usage and recorded patronage against the same time in previous years. However, early 2023 saw extreme weather events impact the North Island, leading to reduced travel in general and a significant volume of train cancellations in Auckland, with PT usage in the city declining around this time.

In addition, perceived feasibility of public transport for the journeys New Zealanders need to take did not appear to improve during the period that HPFs were available for all on the network. Those rejecting PT options as unrealistic tended to cite feasibility issues where the routes that exist simply do not serve their desired destinations, are too slow, complex, infrequent or unreliable to get them there as needed.

Finally, analysis in July 2023 showed that many New Zealanders are incentivised to use private vehicles or active mode travel by things like easily available free parking at the workplace, company vehicles (both cars and bikes/e-bikes) as well as storage and changing facilities provided by their employer at their most regular destination. These sorts of incentives can make these modes easier or more feasible, a different sort of incentive to the reduced PT travel cost from half-price fares.

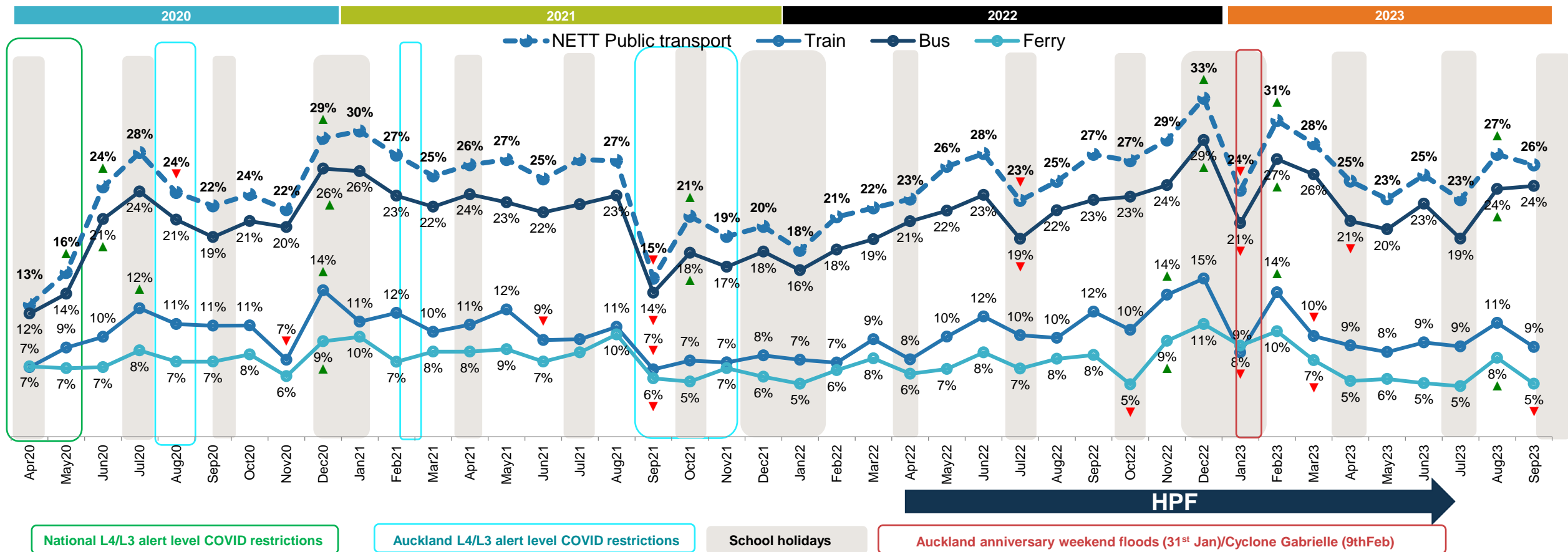
Evidence covered in previous reports from [August 2022 and December 2022](#) and [July 2023](#).

Did public transport usage change following the half-price fare period?

Reported weekly usage of public transport modes

Reported weekly users

The reported volume of weekly PT usage has remained consistent with the final months of the HPF period, with a reduction during July school holidays, but a significant increase in August.

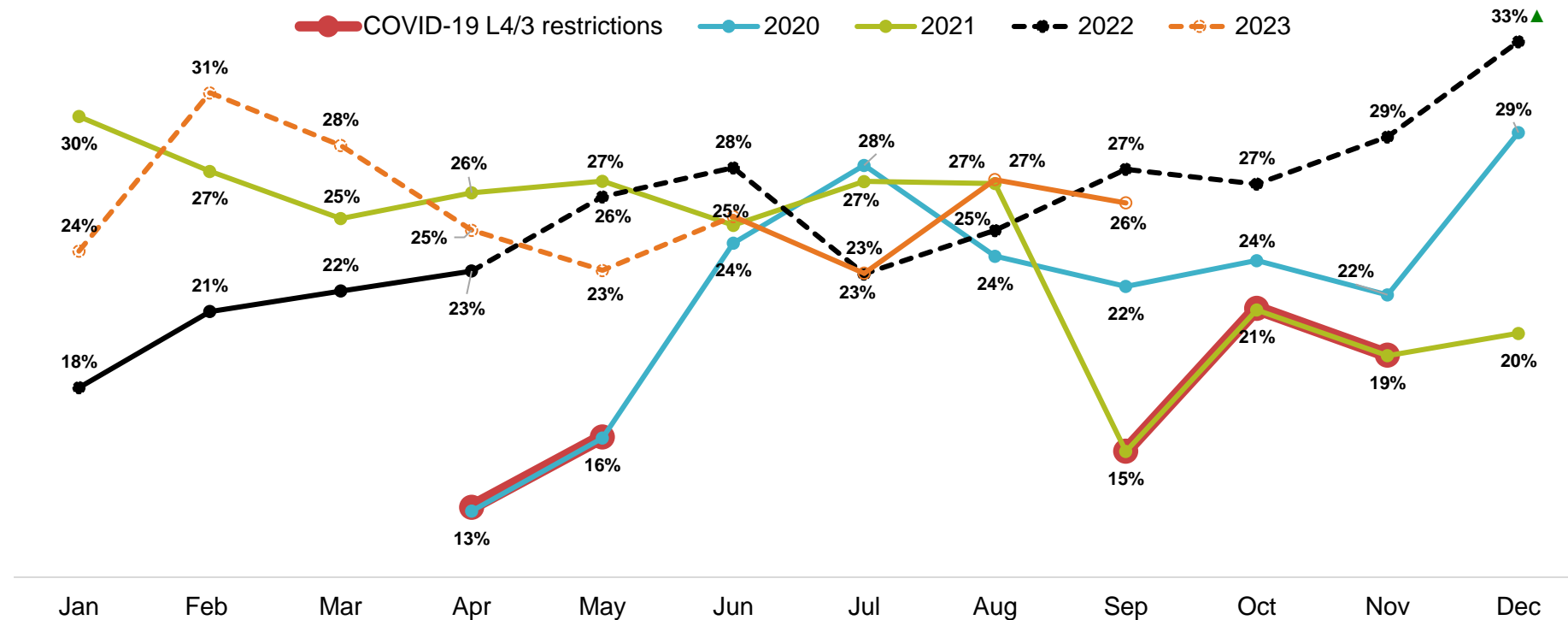


QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each/ average number of days selected
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sep-23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Reported weekly users, year-on-year

Reported weekly usage from July to September was comparable to the same period in 2022, when HPF were still in place for all users. In 2022, this preceded a significant increase in reported usage towards year end.



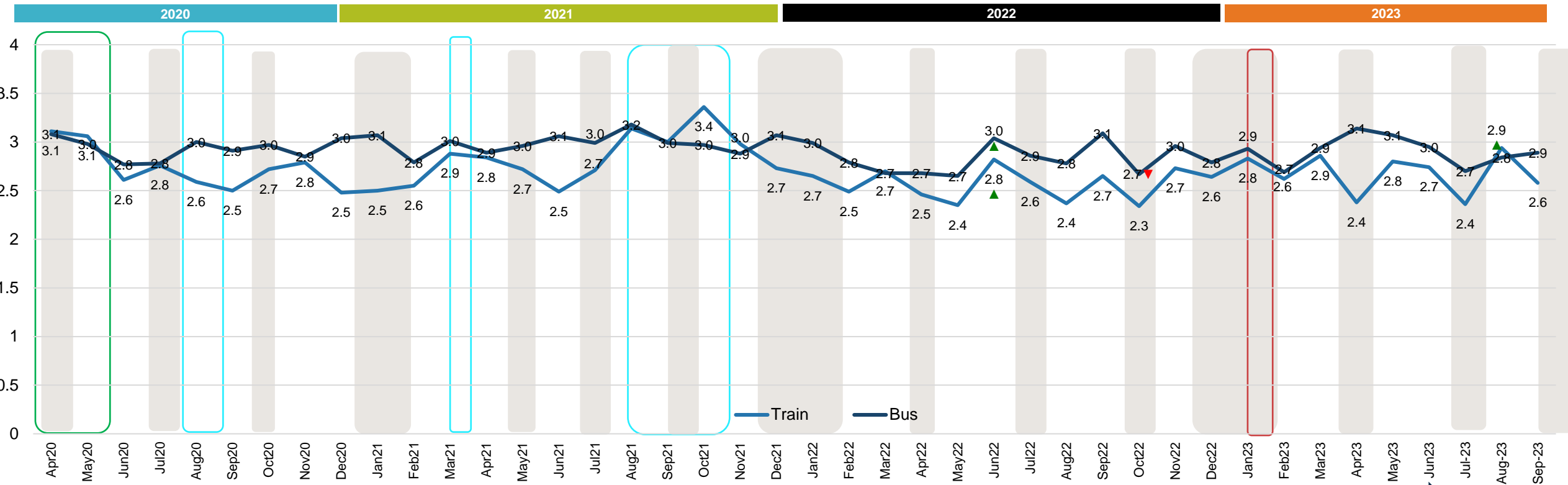
NB: dotted line indicates Half Price Fares in effect

QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each/ average number of days selected
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sept-23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Number of days travelled per week

The reported volume of travel days has also remained relatively consistent for both buses and trains in the first quarter without HPF for all users.



National L4/L3 alert level COVID restrictions

Auckland L4/L3 alert level COVID restrictions

School holidays

Auckland anniversary weekend floods (31st Jan)/Cyclone Gabrielle (9thFeb)

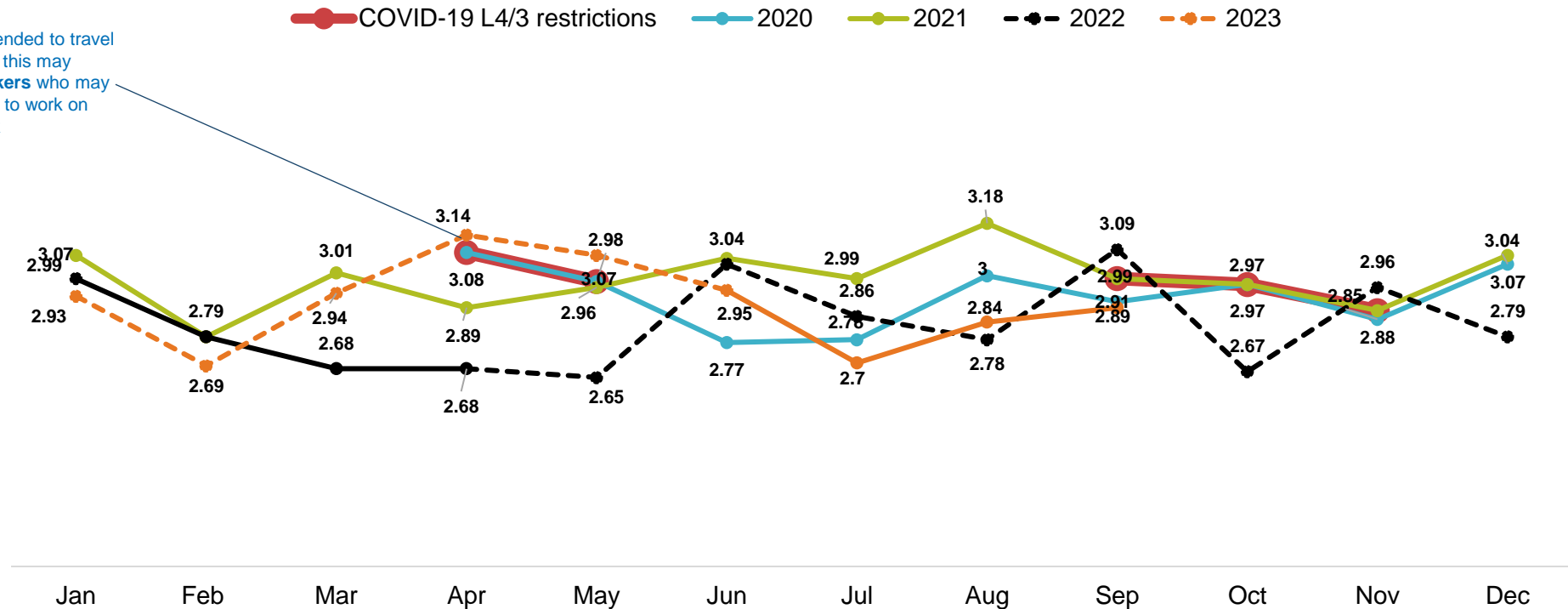
QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each/ average number of days selected
 Base: Journey Monitor data, Users of each mode each month; Train (n=55-192); Bus (n=117-410);
 NB - Ferry journeys suppressed from analysis due to low base sizes

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Reported bus days travelled, year-on-year

Whilst April and May 2023 saw more days of PT usage for each user than in previous years, this has declined following the end of HPF for most users. However, there is little difference in the average number of days per week travelling by public transport in the long term, with users generally travelling about three days a week.

In lockdowns, users tended to travel by bus on *more days*, this may reflect **essential workers** who may have needed to travel to work on more days each week



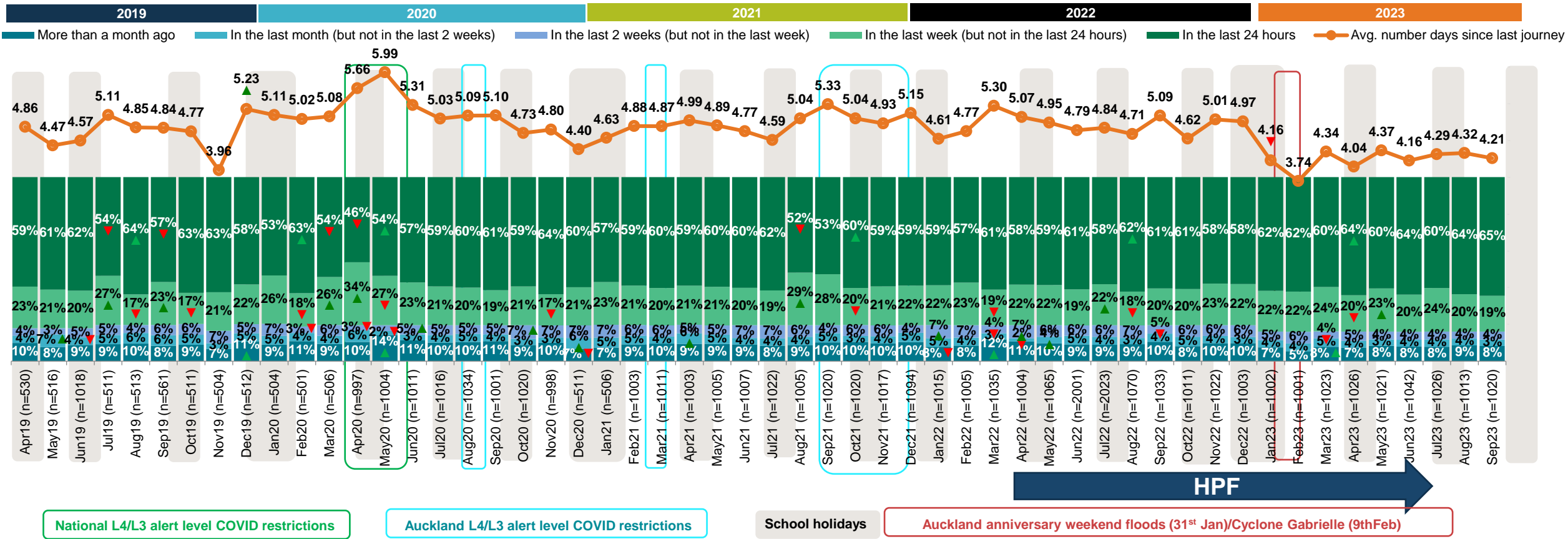
NB: dotted line indicates Half Price Fares in effect

QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each/ average number of days selected
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all bus users, Apr-20 – Sept 23 (n=between 117-410); weekly usage frequency not collected before April 2020

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Total levels of travel

In 2023, New Zealanders have generally reported more travel, with the proportion going more than a month between journeys consistently below 10%, and more than 3-in-5 reporting travel in the last day.

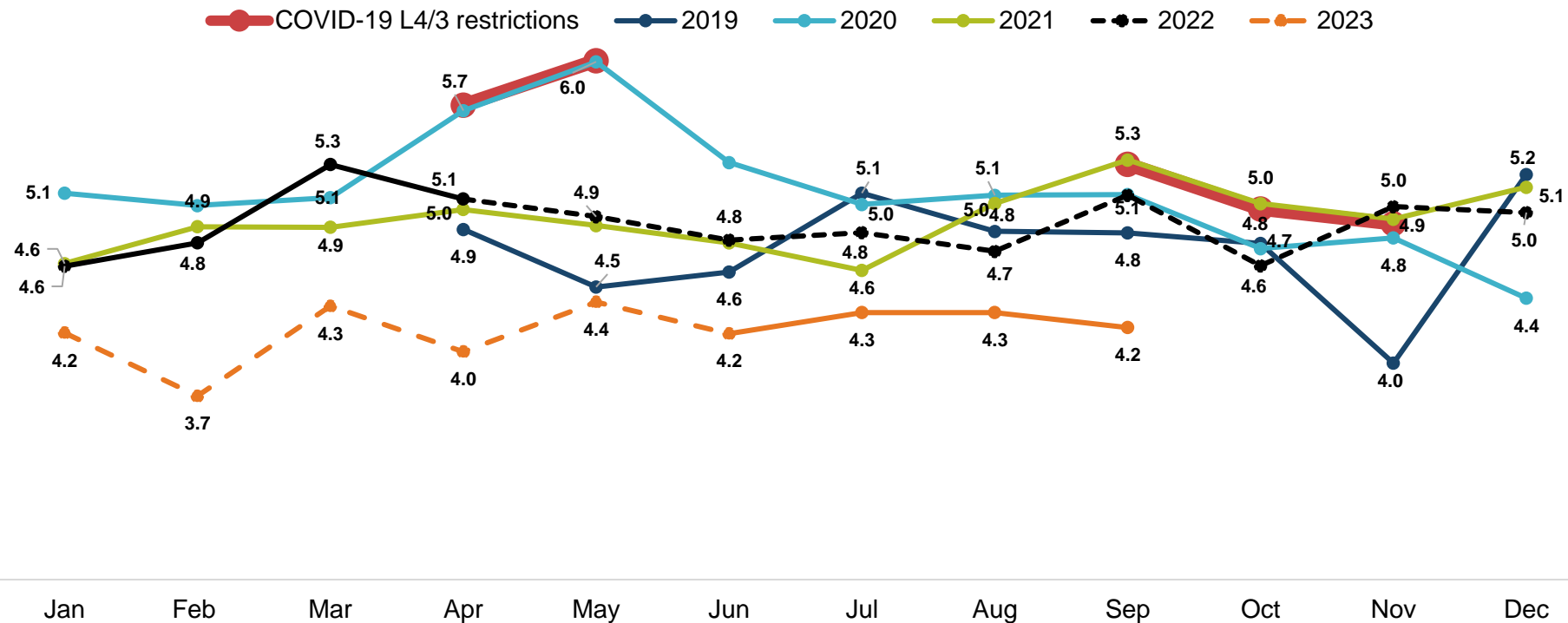


Q10 When did the most recent journey you have completed take place?
 Factors used to calculate the mean number of days since last travel: More than a month ago (30 days), In the last month (15 days), in the last 2 weeks (10.5 days), in the last week (3.5 days), in the last 24 hours (0 days) – Note, for past week users, average days since travel between 0.75 and 2 days.
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sept 23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Days since last journey, year-on-year

Throughout 2023, the average New Zealander has reported fewer days between journeys than comparable periods in previous years. This indicates a greater frequency of travel than even the pre-COVID (2019) period.



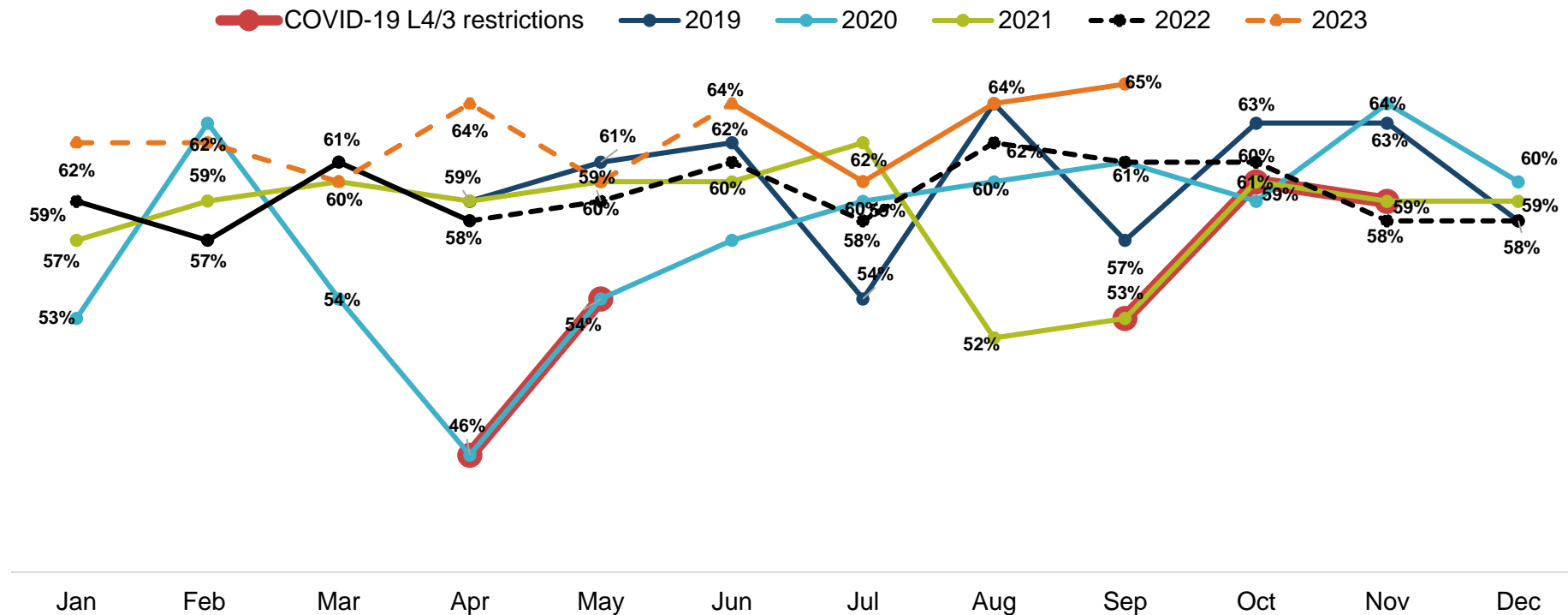
NB: dotted line indicates half-price fares in effect

Q10 When did the most recent journey you have completed take place?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sept 23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Reported past-24hr travel, year-on-year

By September 2023, the proportion reporting past 24-hr journeys had reached the highest level recorded to date, with almost two thirds having done so.



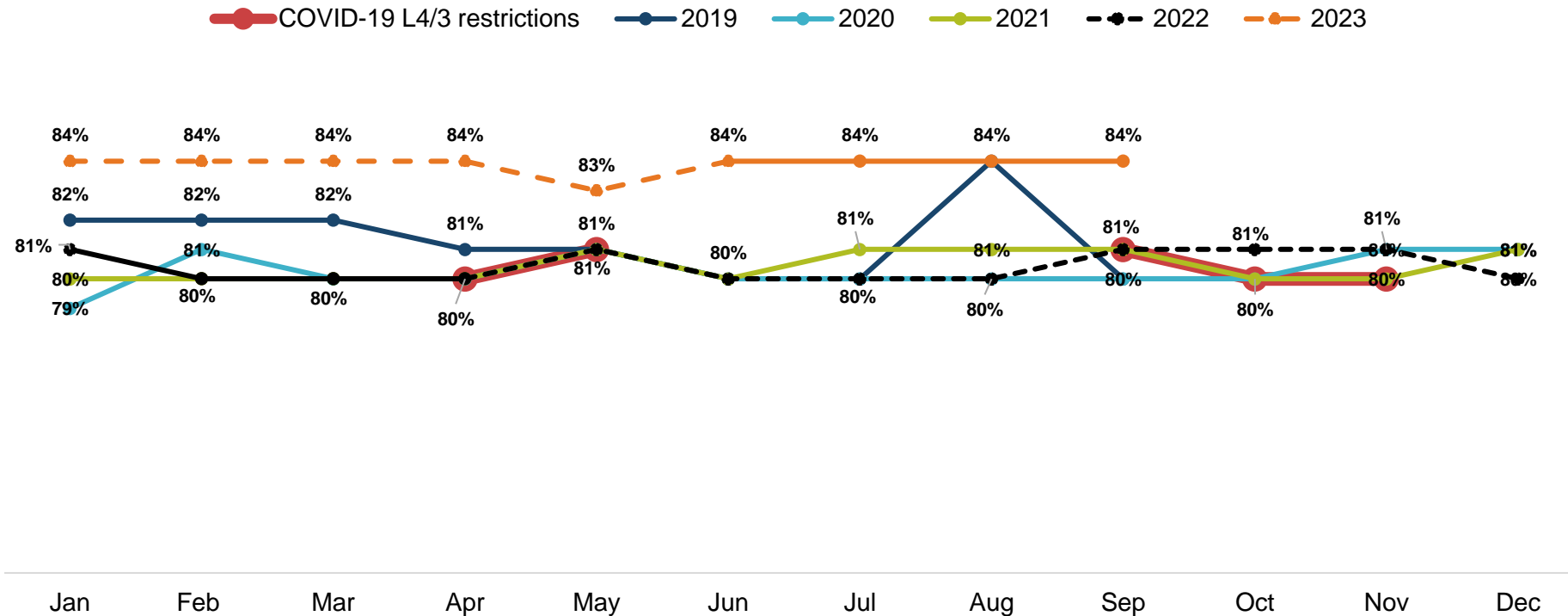
NB: dotted line indicates half-price fares in effect

Q10 When did the most recent journey you have completed take place?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sept 23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Reported past-week travel, year-on-year

Past-week travel has consistently been reported at around 4-in-5, with little variation, even under COVID restrictions. However, past week travel has been slightly elevated in 2023, with New Zealanders moving around more than in previous years.



NB: dotted line indicates half-price fares in effect

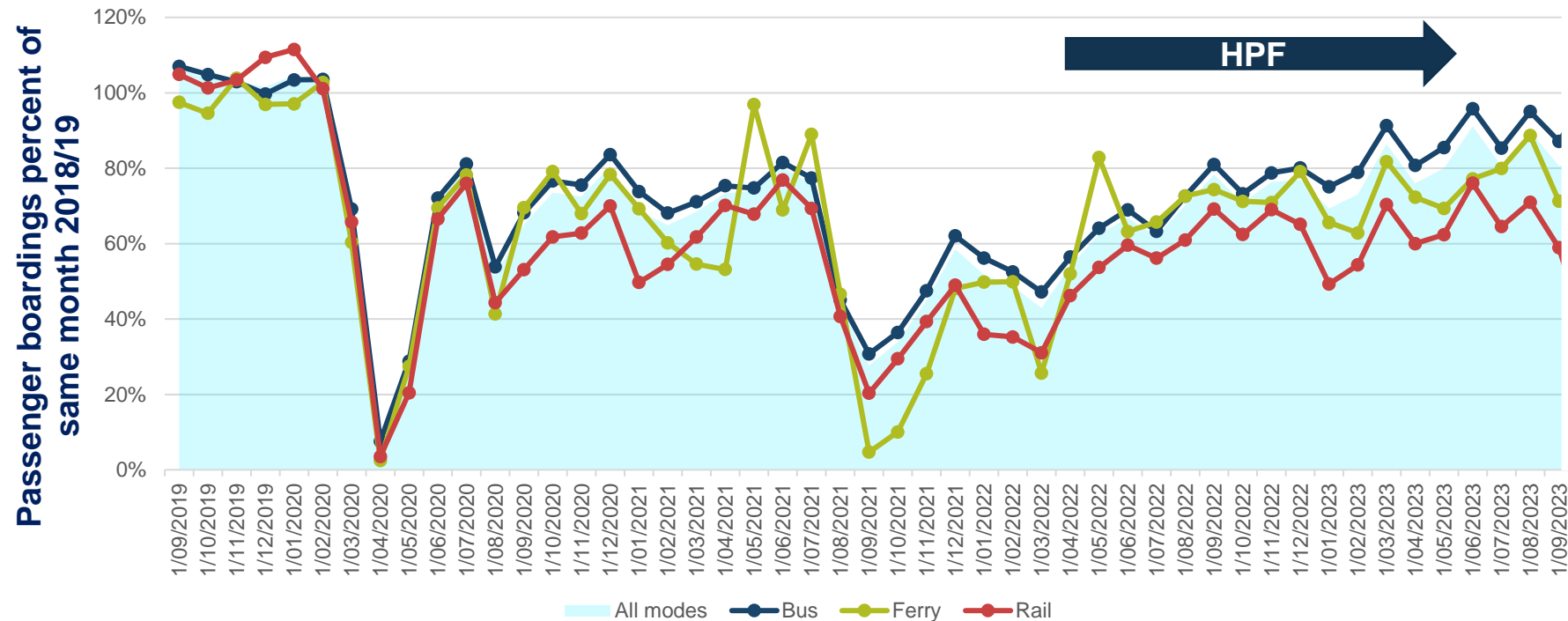
Q10 When did the most recent journey you have completed take place?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Apr-20 – Sept 23 (n=between 500 and 2,086)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Patronage summary

During the HPF period, patronage recovery figures showed a steady increase in boardings, with bus journeys counted at close to pre-COVID levels.

Patronage recovery compared to same month 2018/19

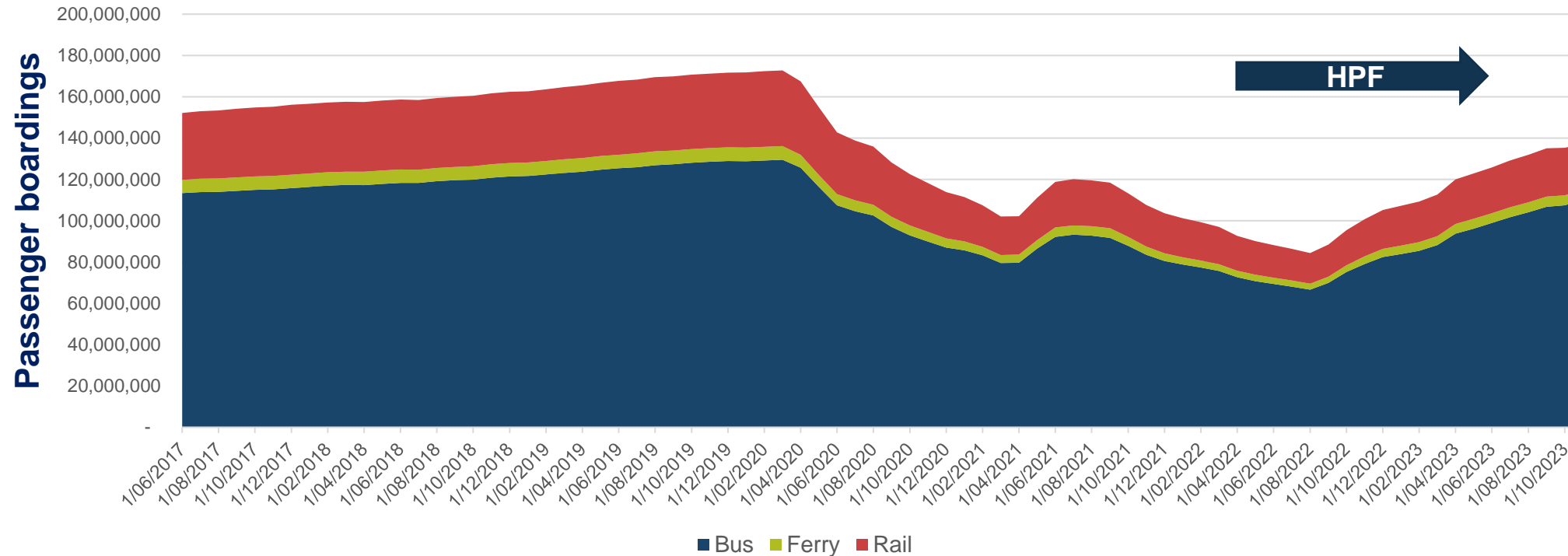


Passenger boardings as a percentage of same month FY 2018/2019
 Nationwide passenger boardings. Data is sourced from public transport authority monthly reporting to NZTA.

Patronage summary

Total passenger boardings had been steadily declining until the introduction of half-price fares and rose again with HPF in place. June 2023, the end of HPF, saw more boardings recorded across bus, train and ferry than any month in the preceding three years. Boardings have continued to climb since HPF finished.

Passenger boardings per year (12-month total)

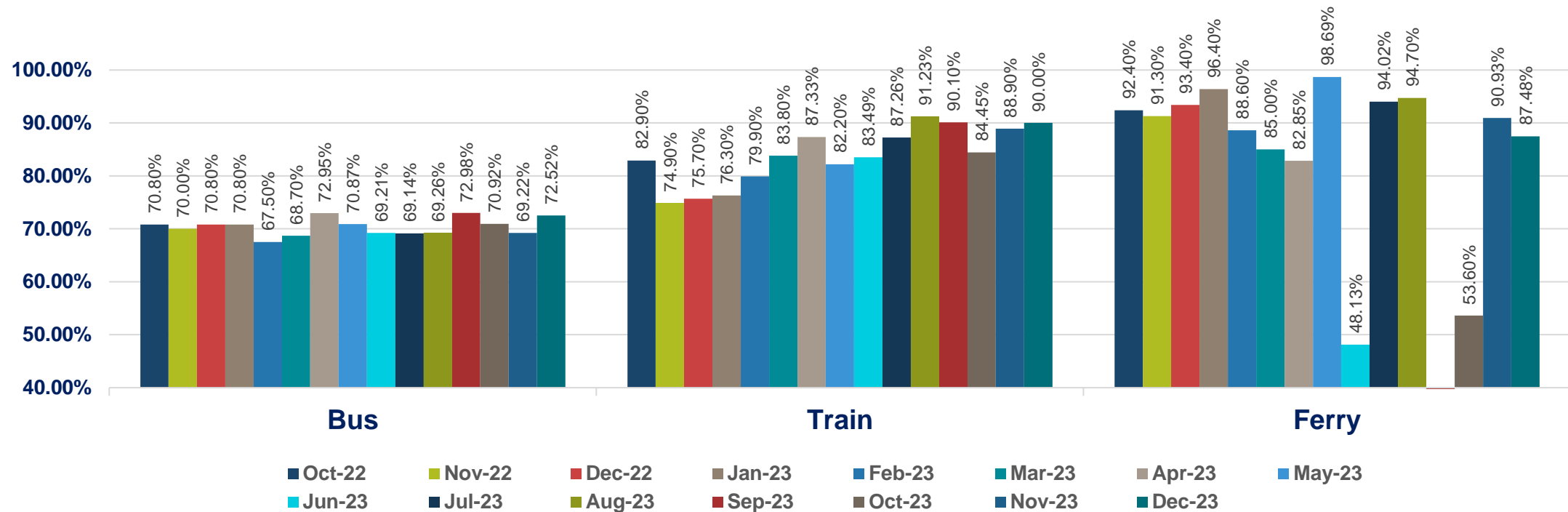


Total passenger boardings recorded, Jun-16 – Oct 23
Nationwide passenger boardings. Data is sourced from public transport authority monthly reporting to NZTA

Punctuality

Bus punctuality remained static, while train punctuality improved during HPF and beyond.

Punctuality per month to Dec-23

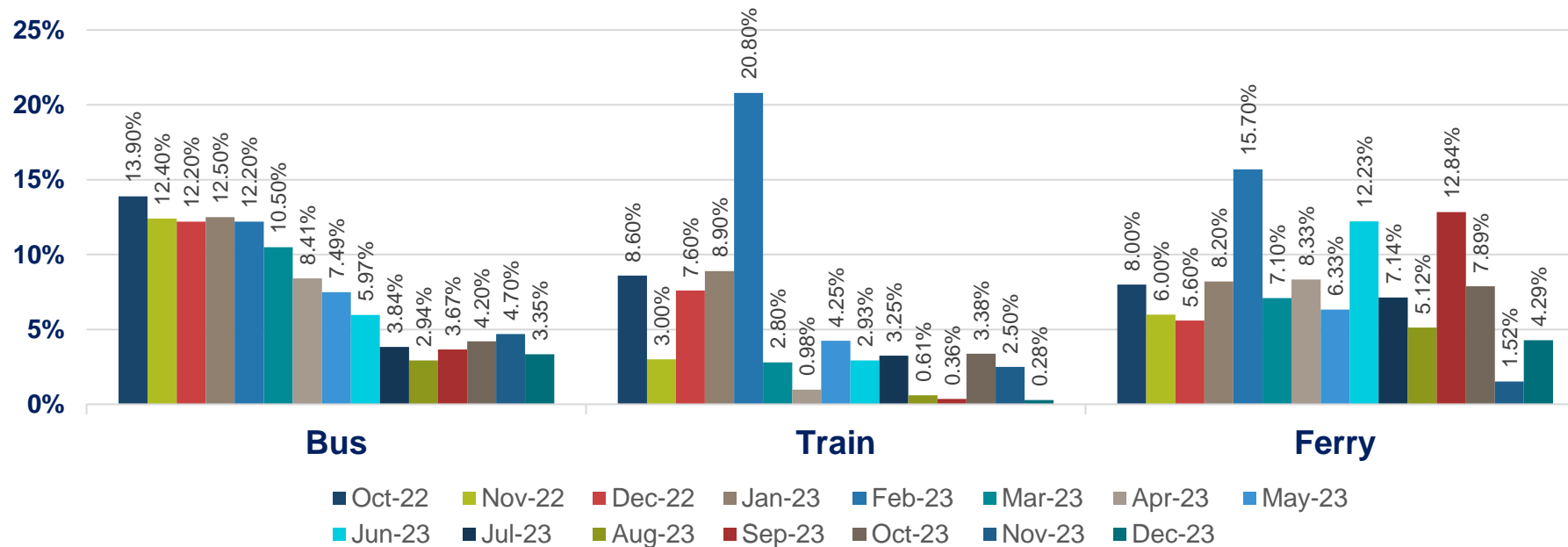


Data is sourced from public transport authority monthly reporting to NZTA

Cancellations

During the HPF period, there were months with elevated cancellations on services. This, combined with poor punctuality, may have limited some of the impact of HPF, with some of those hoping to benefit unable to catch services when needed, or discouraged when trialling services. It was not until HPF concluded in July 2023 that cancellations dropped below 5% for Bus.

Cancellations per month to Dec-23

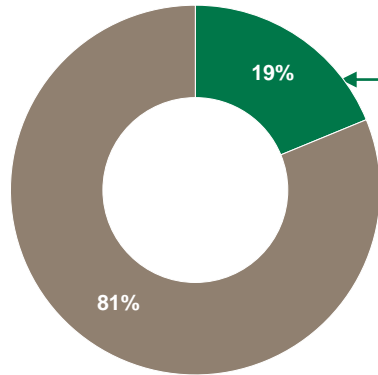


Data is sourced from public transport authority monthly reporting to NZTA

Continued access to half-price fares

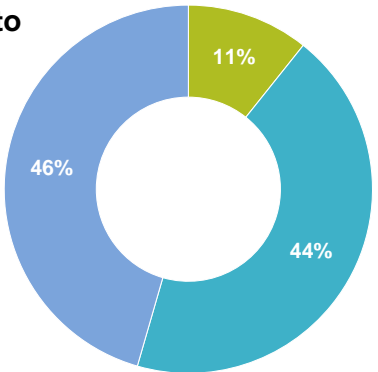
1-in-5 of those surveyed may still be travelling with reduced fares. This may increase as more CSC holders sign up for the Community Connect concession. More than half of adults 15+ indicate that they are qualified, but so far Community Connect concession uptake is limited by low awareness. Under 25s may also access the community connect concession if their age is registered on their travel card. Further to this, those aged 14 or under are able to travel for free but are not included in the survey research population.

HPF applicable post July 2023



- HPF applicable (aged under 25 or applied for Community Connect via CSC)
- HPF not applicable

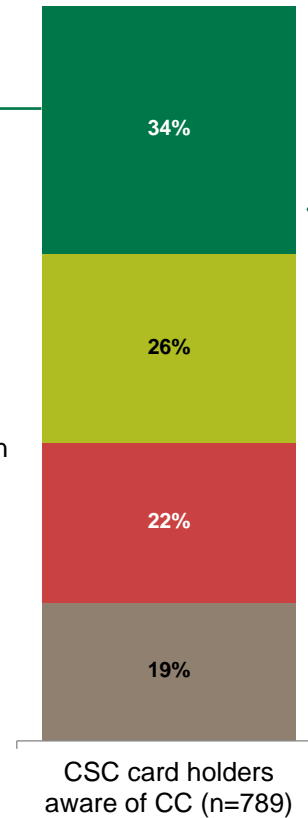
Potentially qualified to access HPF through Community Connect



- Under 25
- CSC holders
- Neither

Community Connect concession sign-up/usage

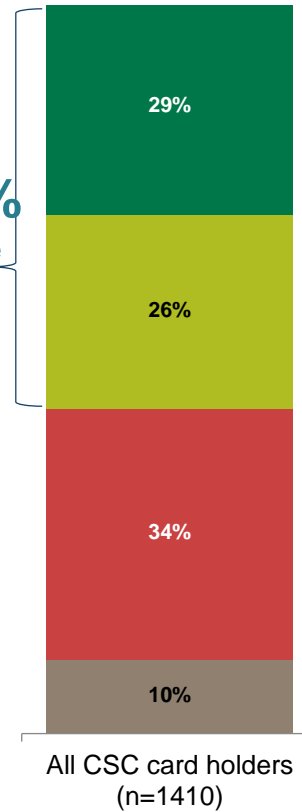
- I have already signed up
- I am definitely planning to sign up
- I am not interested in signing up
- Don't know/Unsure



56% aware

Awareness of Community Connect concession

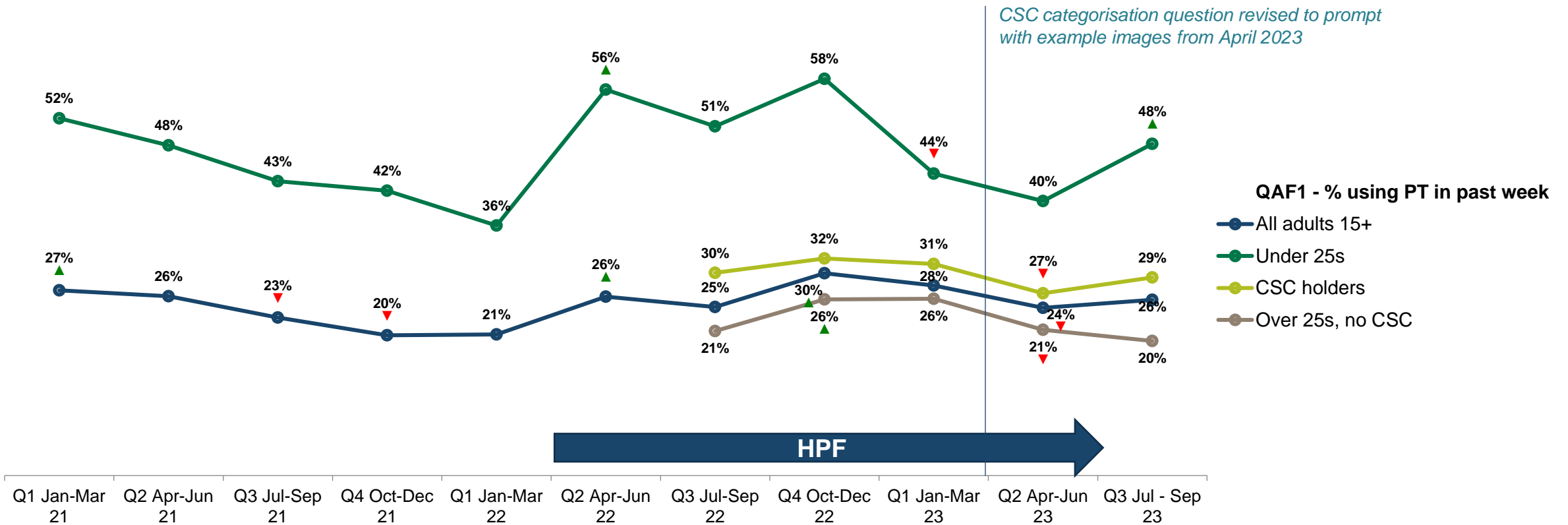
- I have definitely heard of it
- I think I have heard of it
- I have not heard of it before
- Don't know/Unsure



RESPONDENT AGE/ QCC1. Have you heard of the Community Connect concession for Community Service Card Holders? QCC2. Which of the following best describes whether you have signed up or used the Community Connect concession? (Single response)
 All adults aged 15+ in NZ/All CSC holders/ All CSC holders aware of Community Connect

Continued access to half-price fares

Reported PT usage has increased significantly among under 25s since HPF ended. The only group to see a decline was those not qualified for any discount after July 1. Usage had already been declining in this group and the change since Q2 is not statistically significant.



QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each/ average number of days selected
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults 15+, Jul22– Sep-22; Under 25s (n=between 216-461); Over 25s, no CSC (n=1,473-3,853); CSC holders (n=820-1,410)
 *NB-CSC holder question changed in Q2 2023 from simple yes no to prompt with image examples, no CSC question asked prior to Q3 2022, so data for CSC holders and non-discount qualified groups not available prior to this period.

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Section summary

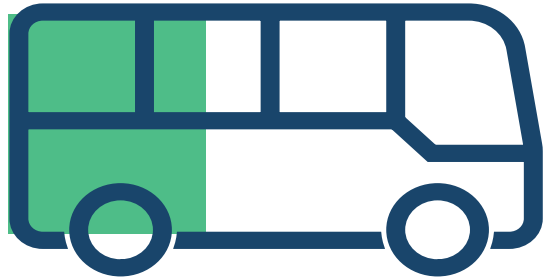
Users on the network

- Travel in New Zealand has been elevated in 2023, with more past-week and past-day travel reported. With more travel, any reduction in PT usage following the end of HPF for most users may be slower to appear.
- To date, there has not been clear evidence of a reduction in weekly PT users since scheme end in June.
 - Reported weekly usage has remained around 1-in-4 New Zealanders, comparable with the same time in 2022, when HPF were in effect for all PT users.
 - There has been some reduction in the average number of bus travel days reported by users, but volume of usage is not a factor shown to be impacted by HPF, COVID-19 or other factors so far.
 - Decreased bus travel days in July is in line with what is expected during winter holidays.
 - Actual PT patronage has almost returned to pre-COVID levels for bus, and bus cancellations lowered to under 5% after HPF finished.
- It should be noted that roughly 1-in-5 of those surveyed during this period still qualify for a 50% discount on fares, either through having a Community Services Card and actively signed up for a Community Connect Concession or being aged under 25.
 - Reported weekly usage among under 25s significantly increased in the July-September period, but not for CSC holders. There has been no significant change in reported weekly usage for those who no longer qualify for a discount.
 - If increased prices in the post-HPF period does discourage PT usage, the continuing presence of discounts for up to 19% of New Zealanders will limit the observable impact in the overall population.

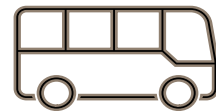
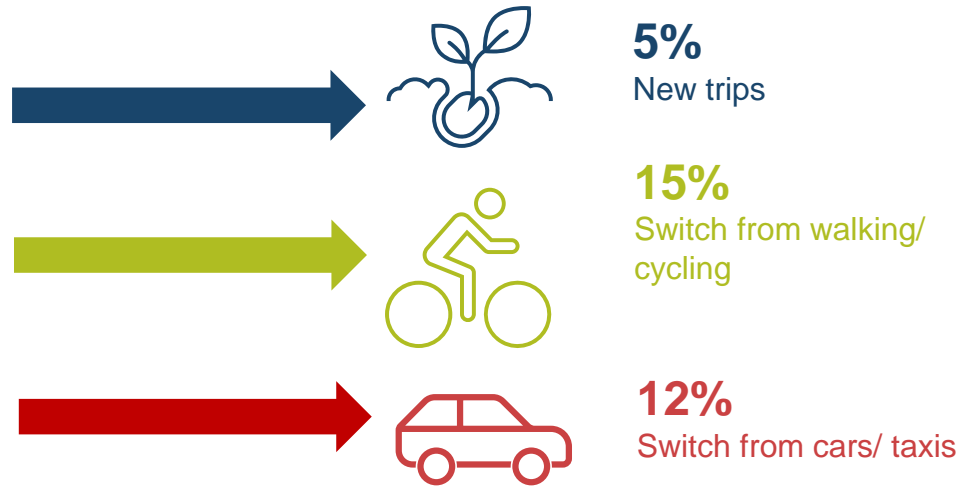
What was the stated impact of half-price fares?

Retrospective stated PT usage as a result of HPF

Journeys added during HPF period



During half price fares a third (32%) of weekly PT users made trips due to HPF



Half (53%)
of PT users would have taken PT anyway

One in seven (15%)
were unaware of HPF when they travelled

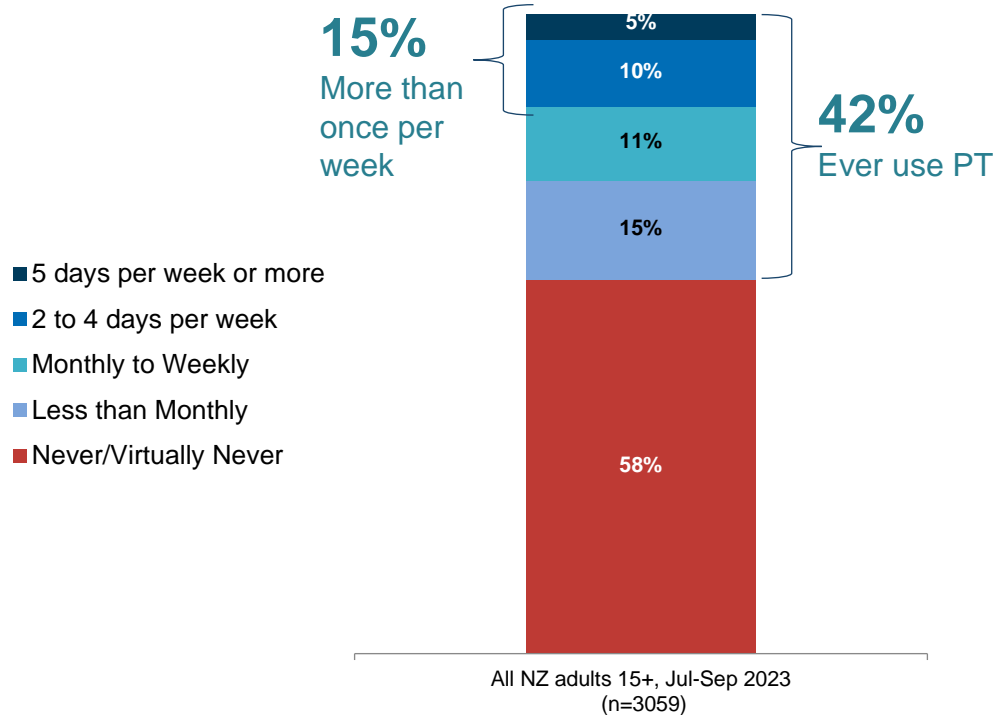
Q53d2 / Q53d3 On 1 April 2022 half-price public transport fares were introduced nationwide. Which statement best applies to your journey.../ You mentioned that you travelled by bus, train, or ferry in the past week. Half-price fares were in place during this time. Which statement best applies to your journey(s)...

Base: All travelling by public transport in past week, COVID-19 impact tracking May 2022, Journey Monitor survey May-22 – June-23

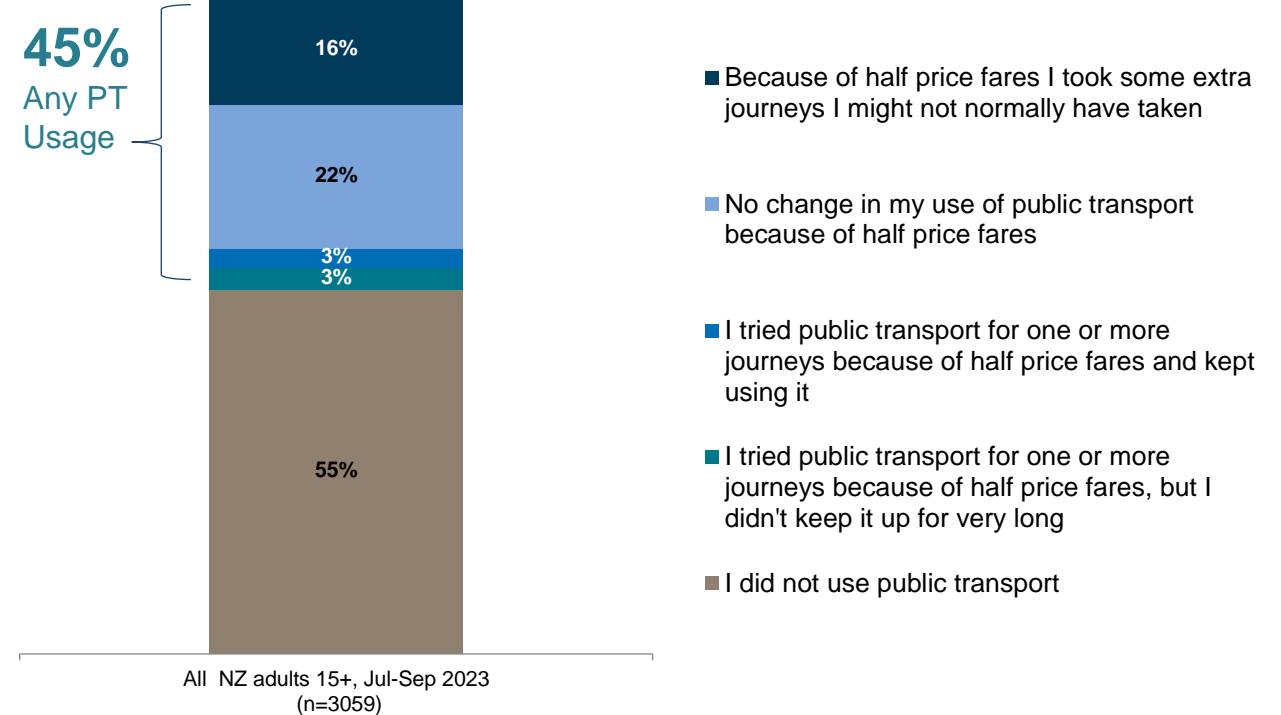
Stated pre-HPF and HPF period usage

About 2-in-5 New Zealanders interviewed this quarter indicated that they were users of public transport prior to HPF, with most of this usage occasional. They reported slightly higher usage during the HPF period, with 1-in-6 reporting that they made some extra journeys that they might not have taken without HPF.

How often were you using public transport before the half price fares period, i.e. before 1 April 2022?



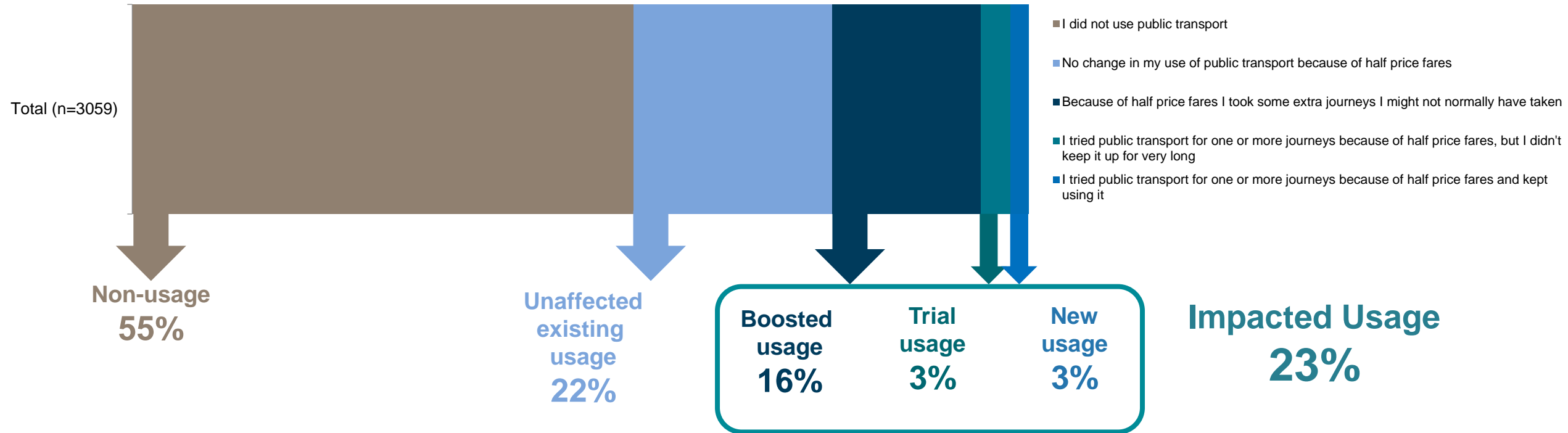
Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

PT usage categories

Reported usage during the HPF period fits into 3 broad categories: Non-Usage for the 55% who did not use PT at all in the 14-month period, Unaffected Usage for those who continued as they normally would and close to a quarter of the population who had some HPF Impacted Usage. This impacted group contains those making extra journeys (Boosted Usage) and two groups of trial users – Trial Usage, which was not sustained, and New Usage, which continued at least until the end of HPF.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?

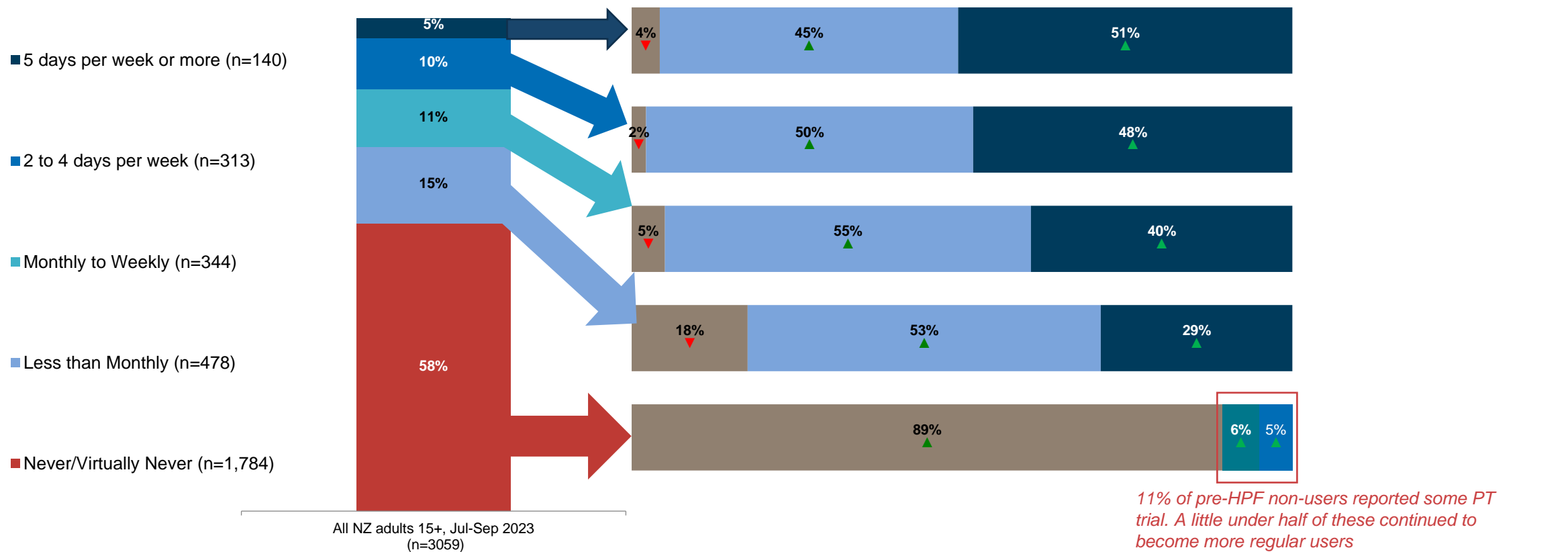
Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Stated pre-HPF and HPF period usage

Only pre-HPF non-users could report trial or new patronage. Some habitual users did not use PT during the HPF period, which would offset impact, but generally the amount of boosted patronage increased according to frequency of pre-HPF usage.

How often were you using public transport before the half price fares period, i.e. before 1 April 2022?

■ Non-usage ■ Trial usage ■ New usage ■ Unaffected existing usage ■ Boosted usage



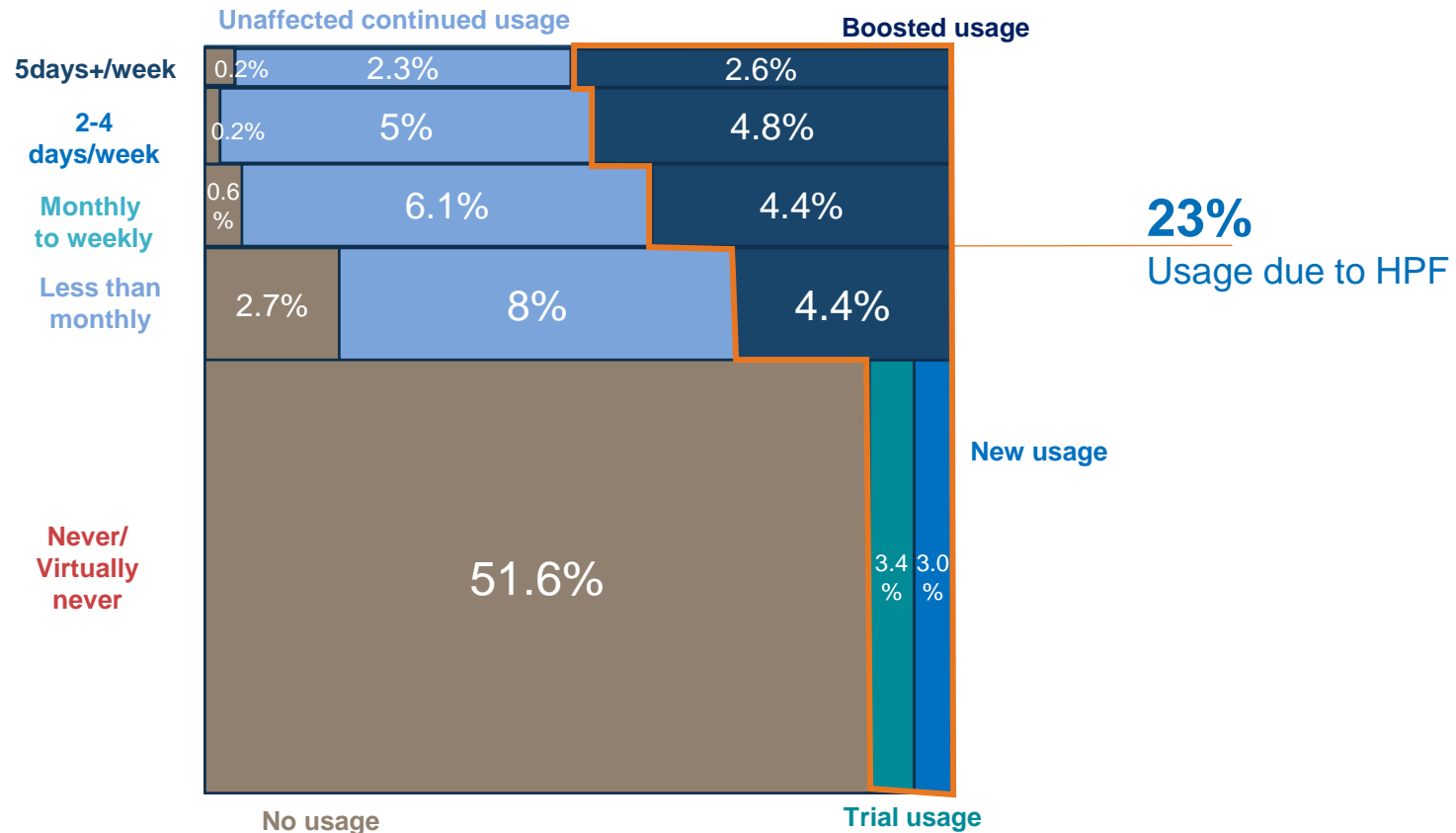
11% of pre-HPF non-users reported some PT trial. A little under half of these continued to become more regular users

HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

▲ Indicates proportion is higher than total sample to a statistically significant extent
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Breakdown of stated population impact

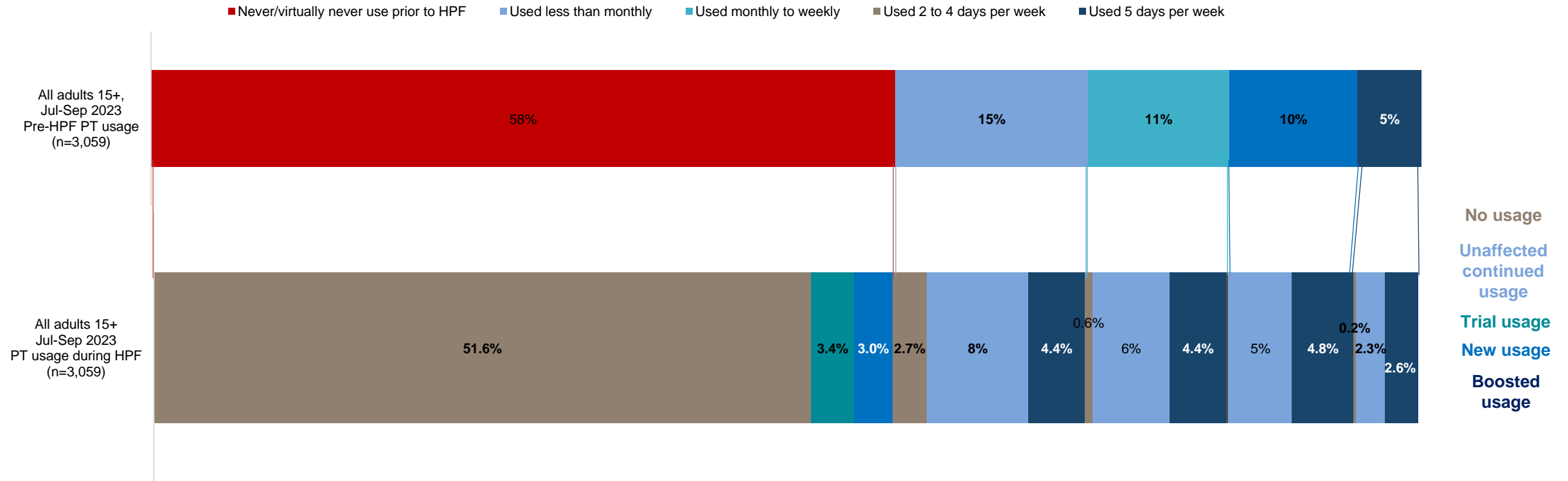
Re-based to population level, the biggest group in New Zealand were those existing non-users who continued not to use PT (more than half), followed by occasional users who used PT as normal.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
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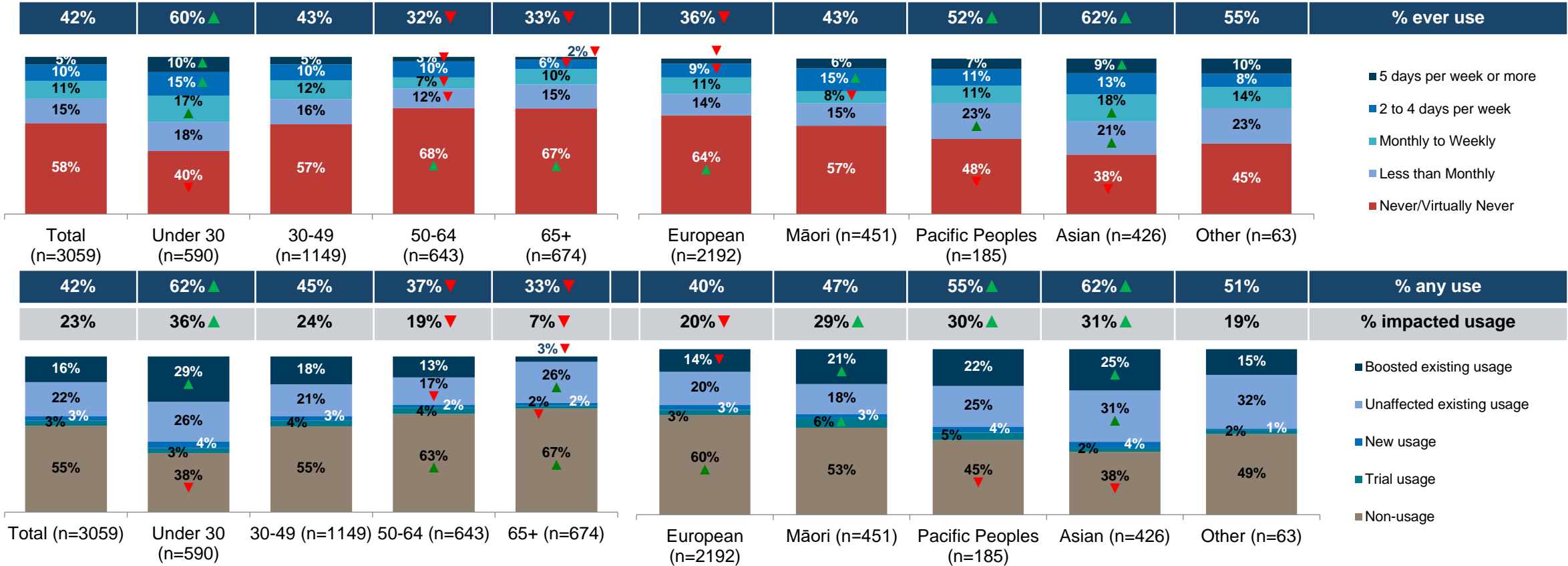
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HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Usage impact: age and ethnicity

Impact was most significantly higher in age and ethnicity groups which had high pre-existing PT adoption, such as young people, those from Asian backgrounds and Pacific Peoples. However, pre-HPF usage was close to average for Māori, who had significantly higher impacted usage, with more trial than other groups and 1-in-5 reporting boosted existing patronage.

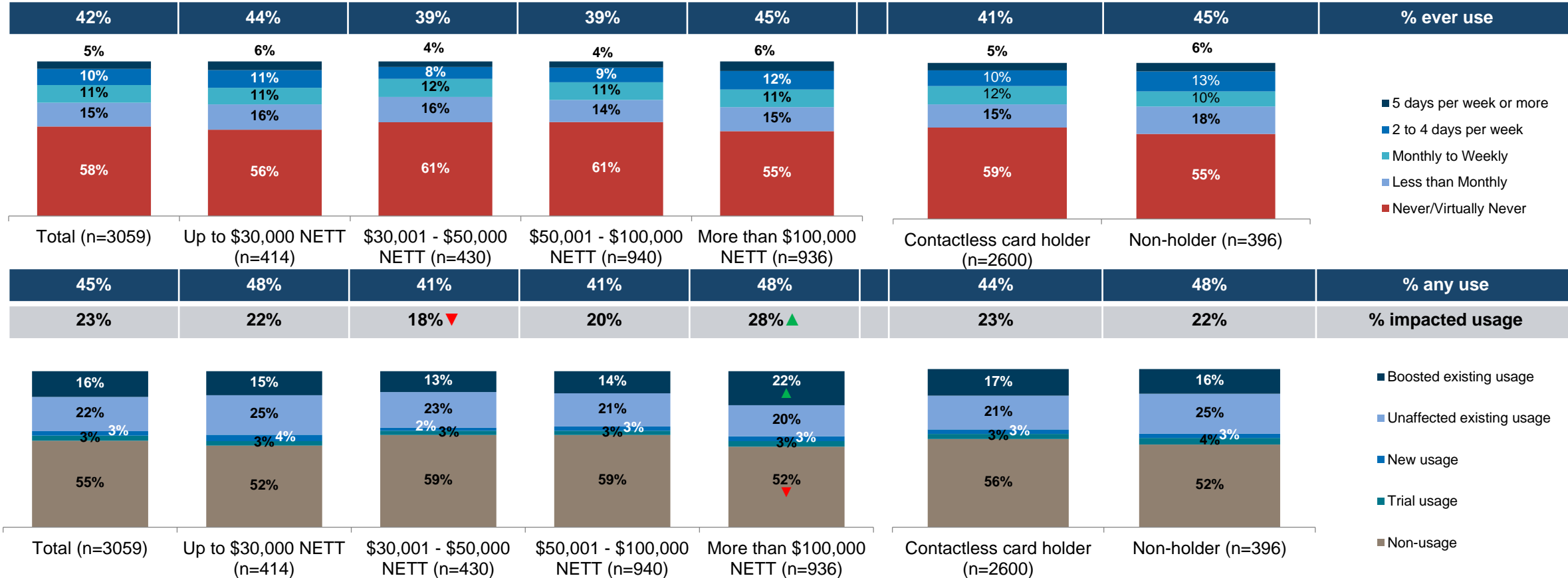


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Usage impact: financial inclusion

There is little variation in reported public transport usage both before and during the HPF period according to income and contactless card ownership. However, high income households reported significantly more impacted PT travel, with 1-in-5 reporting boosted usage during this period.

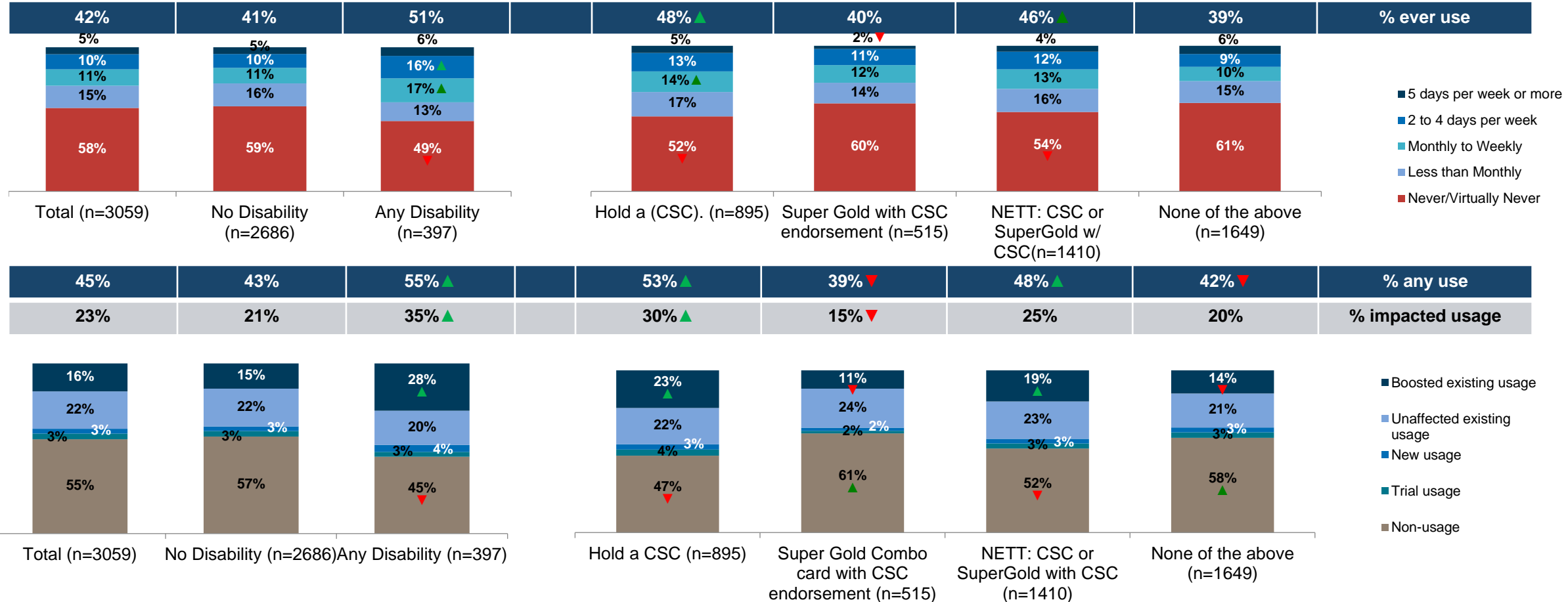


HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
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Usage impact: disability and CSC

Adults with disabilities are another group with high pre-scheme usage and high levels of reported boosted usage. Super Gold card holders with a CSC-endorsement are much like non-cardholders in their pre-scheme usage but reported even less impacted usage.

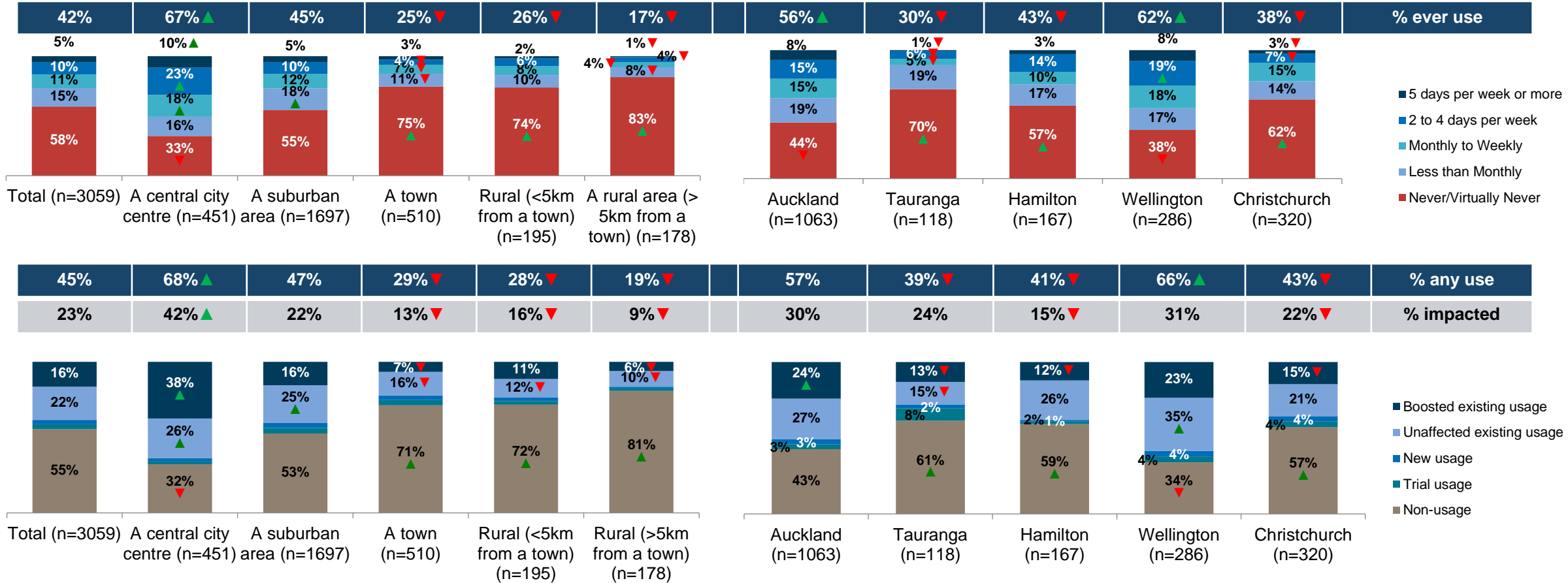


HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
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Usage impact: geography

Prior to HPF, PT usage was very concentrated in urban populations, particularly Auckland and Wellington. It is in these areas that reported HPF impact was significantly higher.

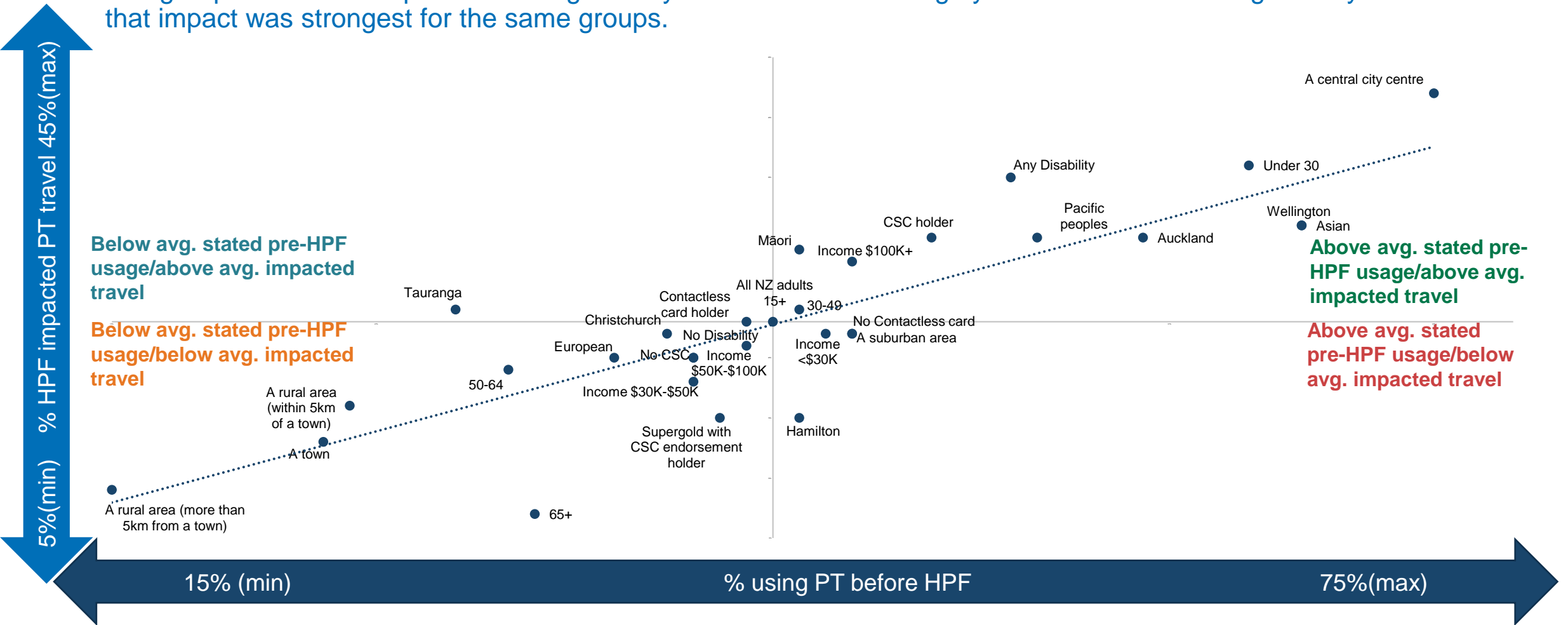


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Spread of usage impact – post HPF

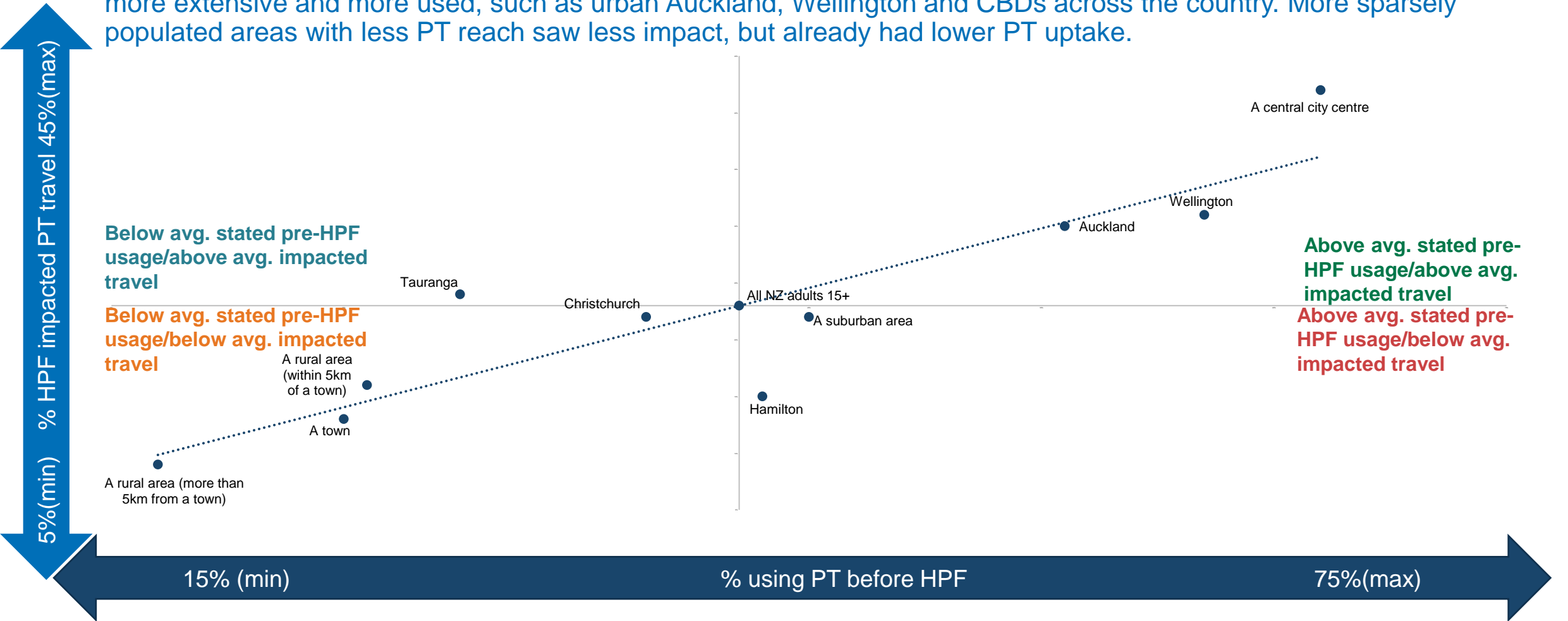
The groups with more impacted travel generally tended to be travelling by PT more before HPF generally showed that impact was strongest for the same groups.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
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Spread of usage impact - geography

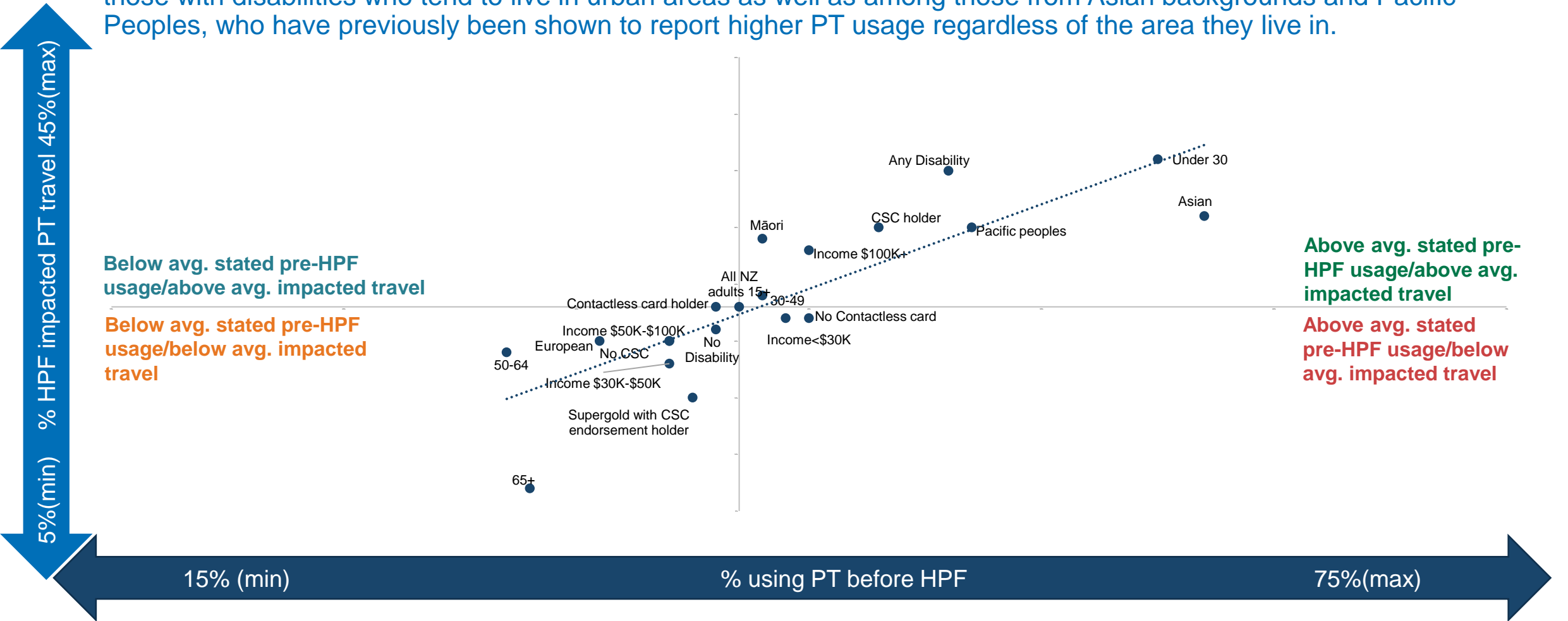
There is a greater deal of variance according to geography. Impact was greatest where PT networks were already more extensive and more used, such as urban Auckland, Wellington and CBDs across the country. More sparsely populated areas with less PT reach saw less impact, but already had lower PT uptake.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
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Spread of usage impact – other demographics

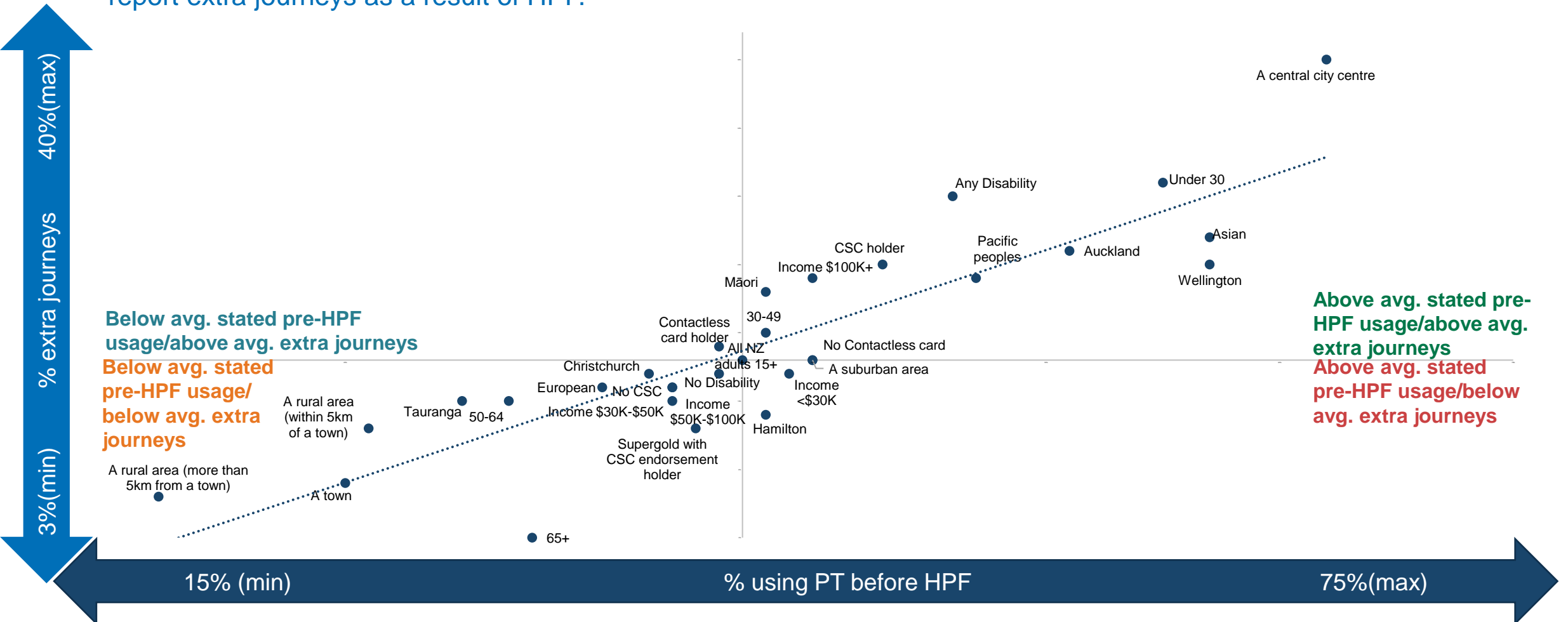
Slightly less variation exists according to other demographics, with impact highest in groups such as under 30s and those with disabilities who tend to live in urban areas as well as among those from Asian backgrounds and Pacific Peoples, who have previously been shown to report higher PT usage regardless of the area they live in.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Spread of extra journey impact – post HPF

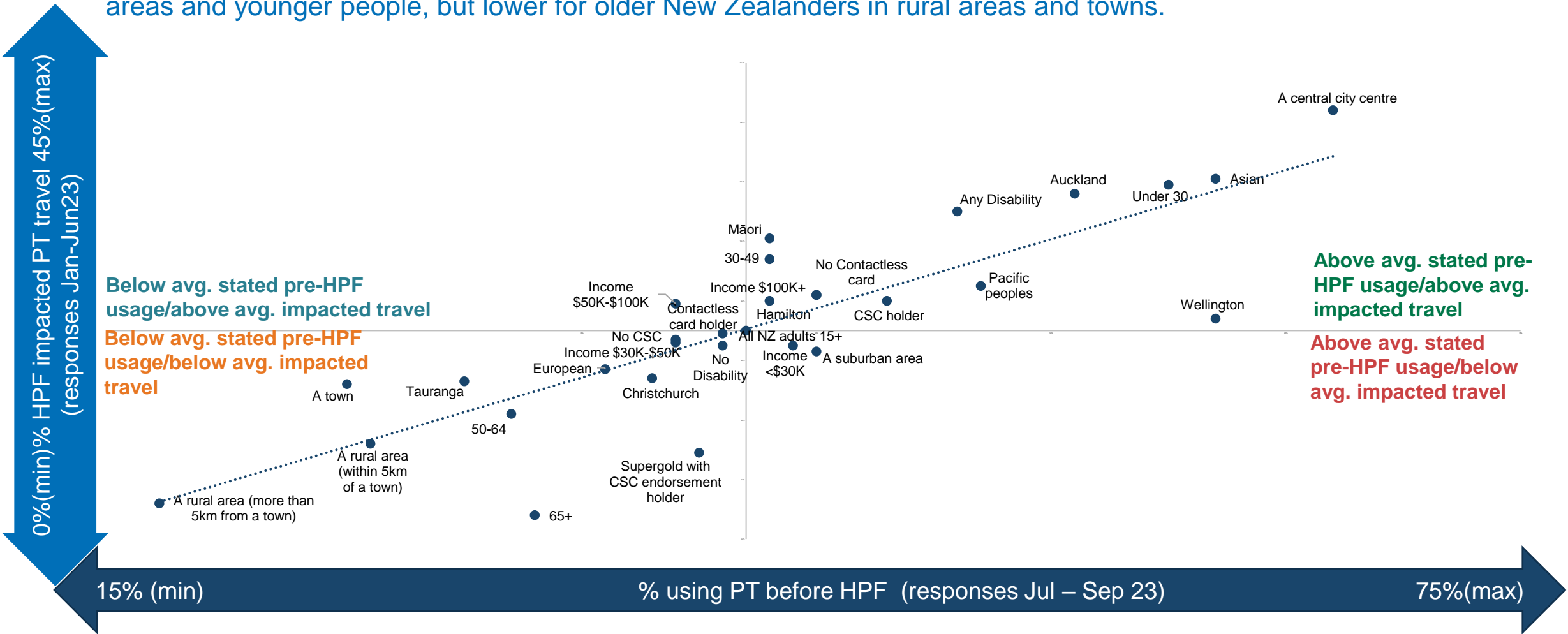
This variation in impact extends to boosted usage, with the same areas and groups of New Zealanders tending to report extra journeys as a result of HPF.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / HPF_BEHAVCHANGE Which of the following describes your experience of public transport during the half-price fares period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2023?
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059)

Spread of usage impact – during HPF

Responses *during* the time that HPF were in effect for all users follow a similar pattern, with impact higher for urban areas and younger people, but lower for older New Zealanders in rural areas and towns.



HPF_FREQ How often were you using public transport before the half-price fares period, ie, before 1 / Q53d2 / Q53d3 On 1 April 2022 half-price public transport fares were introduced nationwide. Which statement best applies to your journey.../ You mentioned that you travelled by bus, train, or ferry in the past week. Half-price fares were in place during this time. Which statement best applies to your journey(s)...
 Base: Journey Monitor data, all adults Jul-23 to Sep-23 (n=3,059) / Journey Monitor data, all adults Jan-23-Jul-23

Section summary

Impact on the population for the full HPF period

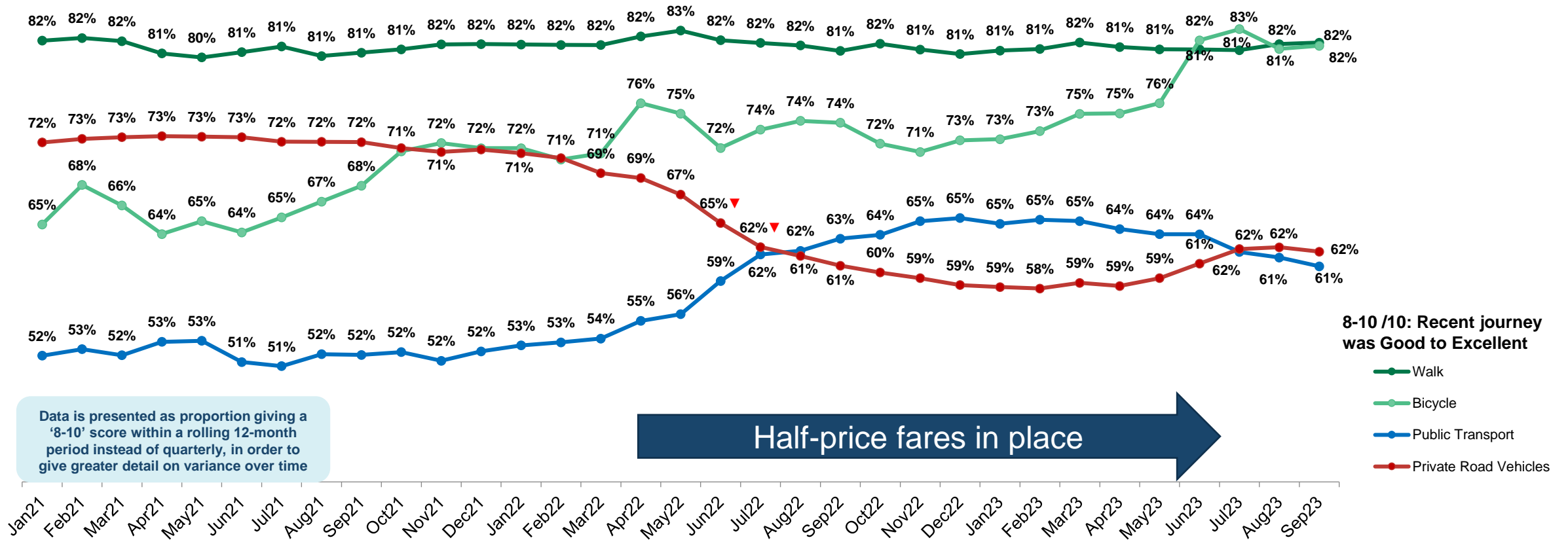
- For the period that half-price fares were available for all users, close to a third of public transport users have reported that some of their past-week travel was a direct result of half-price fares.
 - As a share of the total population, this was equivalent to between 6% and 9% of New Zealanders each week.
- However, for the entire period the proportion impacted may be higher. Based on responses in July-September 2023, close to a quarter (23%) of adults 15+ reported some form of new or additional PT usage due to HPF during this 14-month period.
 - 16% reported that due to HPF, they took at least one journey that they otherwise would not have taken.
 - About 6% reported some trial of PT services that they did not use before HPF were in effect. This was equivalent to more than 1-in-10 pre-HPF non-users of PT.
 - Of these, half did not continue their trial, but half converted into continued PT users longer term.
 - Whereas 42% indicated they ever travelled by PT (even infrequently) before HPF were in effect, this was increased to 45% for the 14-months that HPF were available to all. The addition of new and trial users was somewhat offset by some regular users who reported not travelling by PT during this period.
- More frequent habitual PT users were impacted more, with close to half of those who would normally have used PT more than 1 day a week saying they took additional journeys. The most impacted populations tended to be those demographic groups such as urban residents, young people and those of Asian ethnicity were heavier users of PT before HPF.
 - This corresponds with evidence from during the HPF period, where higher past-week impacted patronage was reported in these same groups.
 - Whilst HPF did help all sorts of New Zealanders to access journeys via PT, it was easier for those living close to existing train, bus and ferry services to experience the benefits and so impact was reported at greater scale with these travellers than those living away from services.

Have price perceptions and impacts changed post-HPF?

Affordability and value of journeys, missed journeys and cost

How affordable were journeys?

Perceived affordability of public transport was elevated during the half-price fare period, to the extent that PT users saw their journeys as more affordable than private vehicle users. This has now started to decline, whilst private vehicle affordability has begun to increase again. However, reported PT usage has not dropped, so a decline in perceived affordability of PT journeys has not yet reduced stated usage.



Data is presented as proportion giving a '8-10' score within a rolling 12-month period instead of quarterly, in order to give greater detail on variance over time

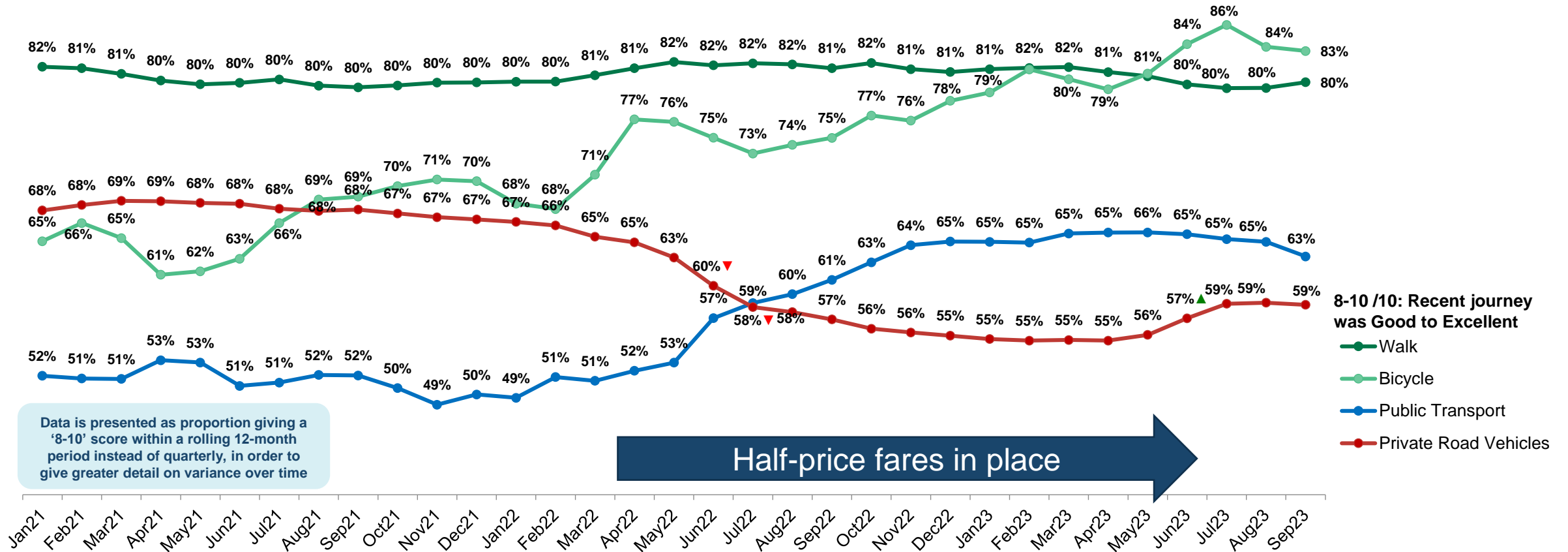
Half-price fares in place

Q30b. How affordable would you say this [IF MORE THAN ONE TRANSPORT USED AT Q24 ADD "part of your"] journey was for you...?
 Base: all using each as main mode in most recent journey: Walking (n=between 1,595-2,214); cycling (n=141-219); PT (n=408-974); Private Vehicle (n=3,556-4,881) Journey Monitor survey Jan-21 – Sep23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

To what extent did journeys offer value for money?

Although the perception that public transport journeys are good value for money has begun to decline, they are still seen as better value than the journeys of private vehicle users.



Data is presented as proportion giving a '8-10' score within a rolling 12-month period instead of quarterly, in order to give greater detail on variance over time

Half-price fares in place

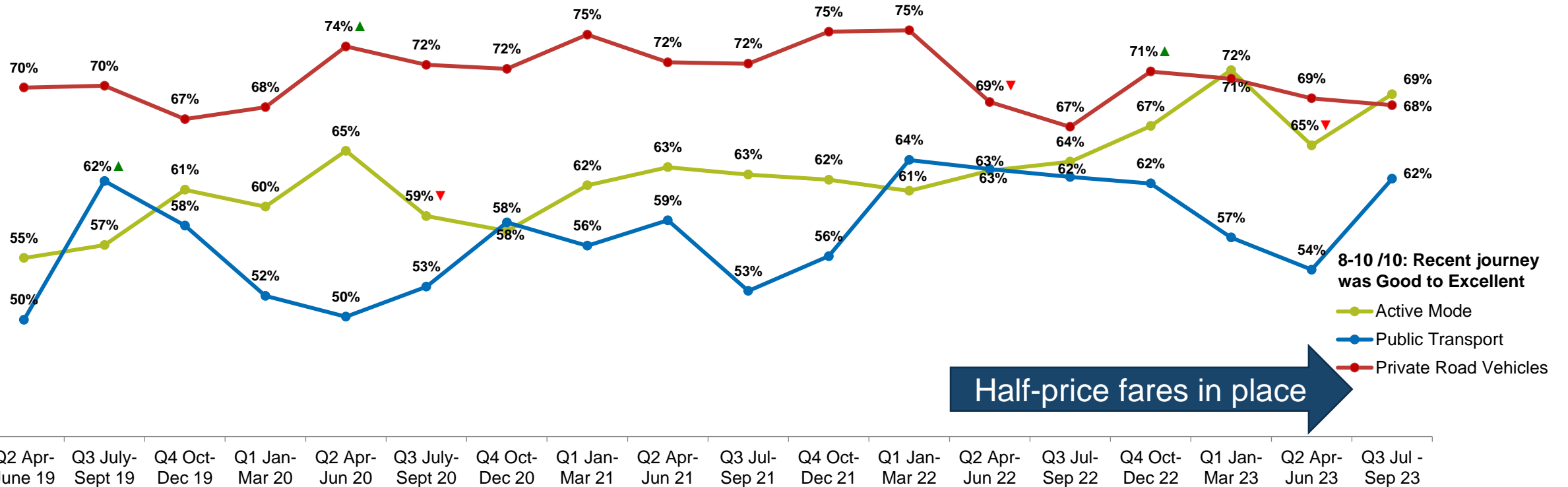
Q31. How would you rate this [IF MORE THAN ONE TRANSPORT USED AT Q24 ADD "part of your"] journey for value for money?
 Base: all using each as main mode in most recent journey: Walking (n=between 1,595-2,214); cycling (n=141-219); PT (n=408-974); Private Vehicle (n=3,556-4,881) Journey Monitor survey Jan 21 – Sep 23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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Overall journey experience by mode

Overall PT journey experience scores actually saw an increase, having declined during the last two quarters of the HPF scheme.

Previous analysis has shown that price factors do not impact overall journey satisfaction as much as practical considerations such as ease of access.



Half-price fares in place

8-10 /10: Recent journey was Good to Excellent

Q15NEW. Overall, how would you rate your overall experience of this journey?
 Base: mode users for each quarter: Active mode (n = between 282 – 748) of which cycling (n=between 39-71 and; walking(n=between 282-616); PT (n=between 153-259); Private vehicle (n=between 729-1,665) Journey Monitor survey Apr – Sep23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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Other factors influencing journey experience

Additional drivers and services may have increased reliability for users in recent months. Whilst this does not appear to have changed feelings about *crowding* since the end of HPF, there has been directional improvement in waiting times and significant improvement in access ratings for the end of journeys. Access and transfer experiences are among the most improved areas.

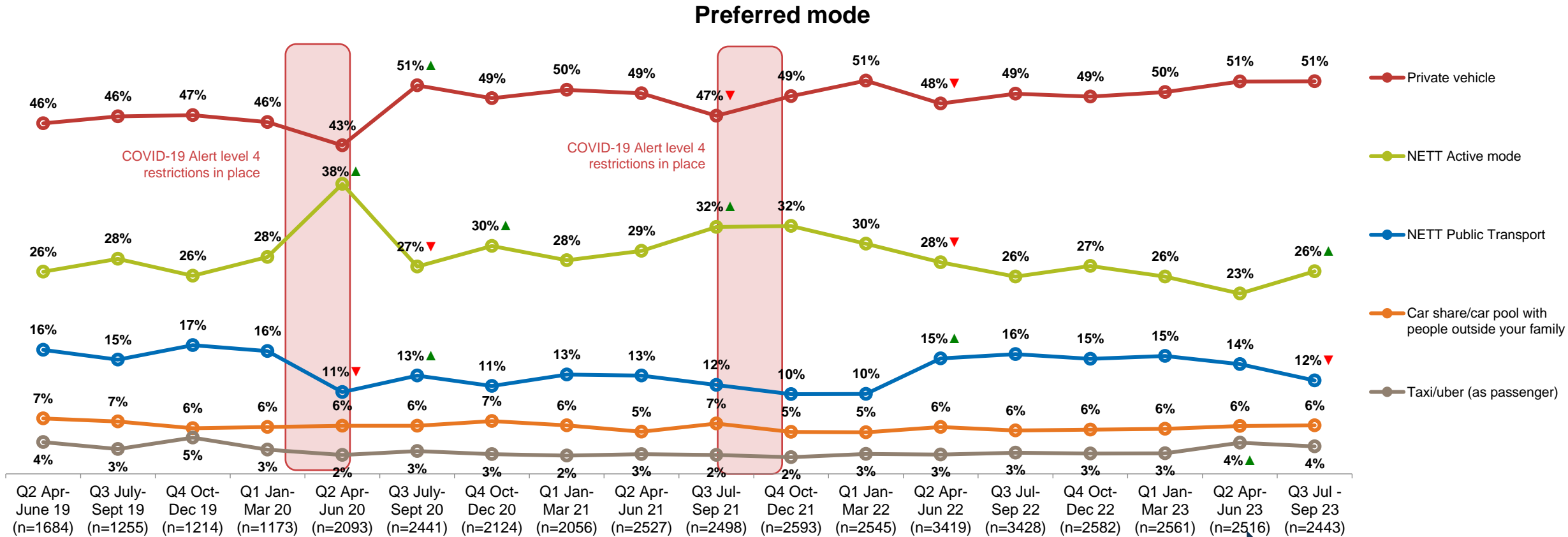


Q48/Q49/Q50/Q51/Q52/Q53b/Q53c/Q53d – PT journey satisfaction drivers
 Base: all using Public Transport as main mode in most recent journey, Pre HPF Apr'19-Mar'22 (n=23,292), HPF Apr'22-Jun'23 (n=13,960), post-HPF Jul'23-Sep'23 (n=2,346) Journey Monitor survey Apr – Sep'23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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Has preference been impacted?

New Zealanders have continued to choose public transport at roughly the same rate as during the HPF period. However, the proportion indicating preference for PT modes above others for their most recent journey significantly declined once the scheme ended for most users.



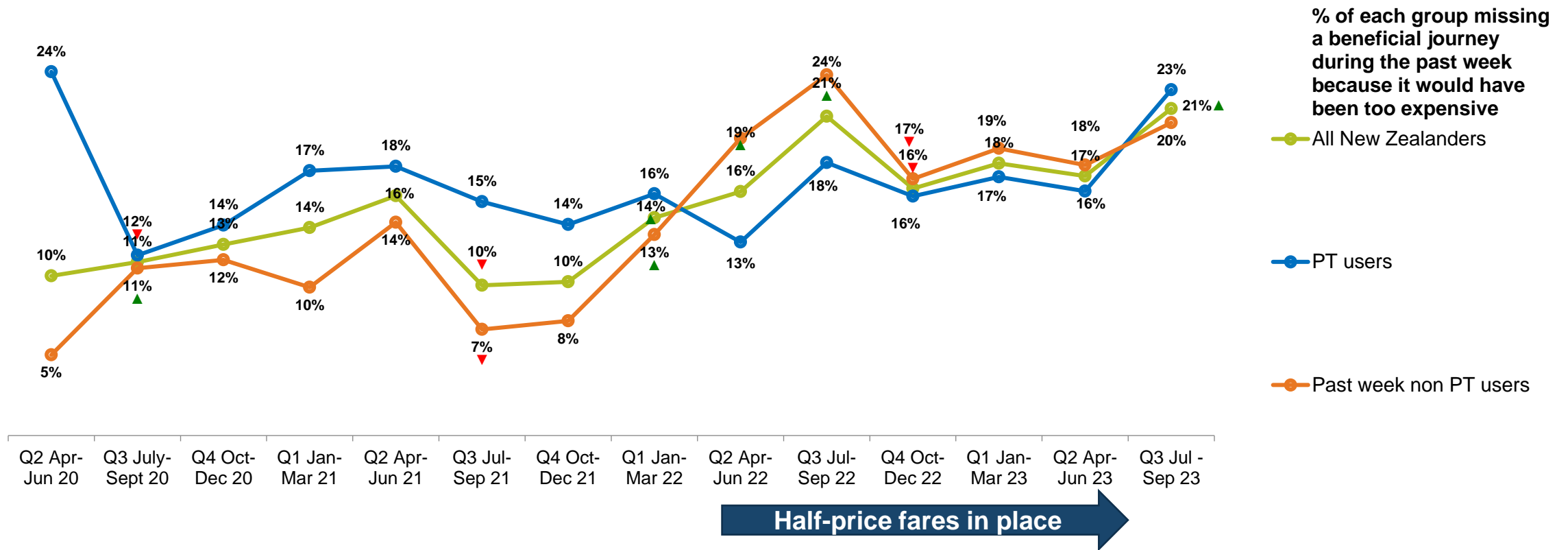
Half-price fares in place

Q55/26anew: In an ideal world, if cost, time and availability were no issue how would you have preferred to travel for that part of the journey?/main mode in most recent journey
 Base: All making a recent journey (base in x-axis) Journey Monitor survey Apr-19– Sep23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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Do PT users miss journeys due to cost?

During the HPF period, past-week PT users were less likely to miss out on journeys due to expense than those who did not use PT at all. To date, it has only been whilst HPF were available for all users that this has been the case.



Q11 Were there any journeys within the last week which would have been beneficial to undertake, but you couldn't?
 Base: Journey Monitor, past week public transport users (n=546-895 per time period), non public transport users (n=1,963-3,231 per time period)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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Section summary

What has been the response to the return to full price fares?

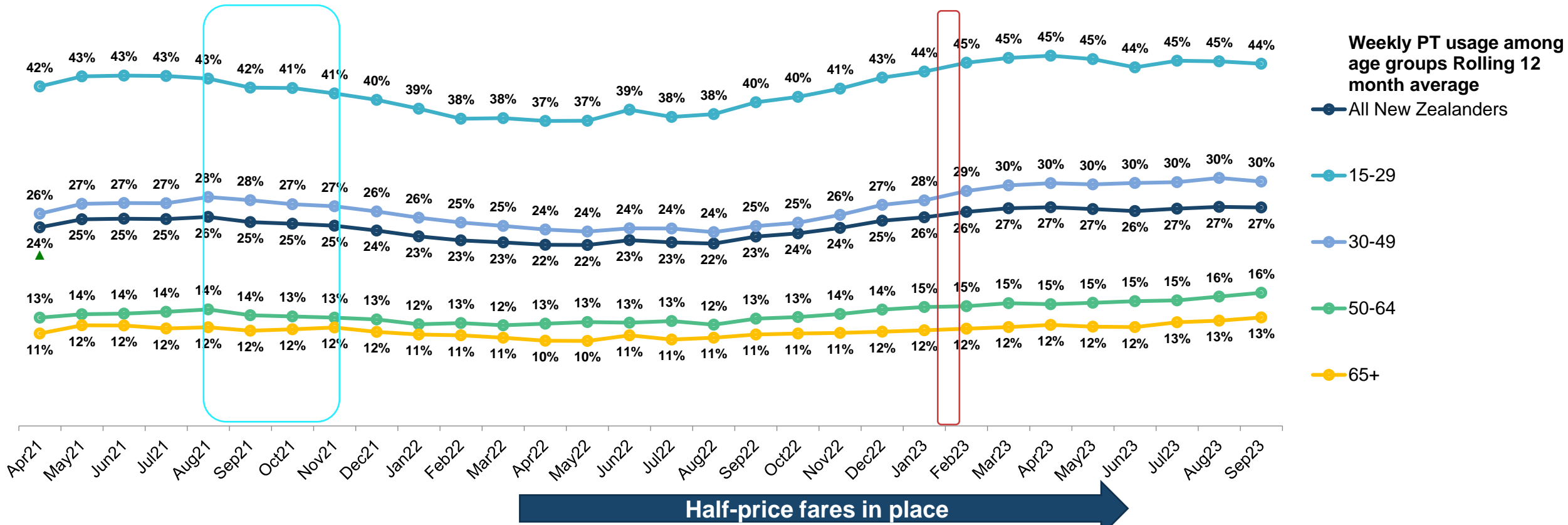
- For those using public transport as the main mode in their most recent journey, perceptions of affordability have declined since the return to full-priced fares for most users.
 - With fuel price increases in early 2022, PT journeys were viewed as more affordable than driving for much of the HPF period. This is no longer the case, with perceived affordability now slightly higher for private vehicles.
 - Perceived value for money of journeys has followed a similar trend, but PT journeys are still seen as greater value for money than those taken by private vehicle.
 - Whilst cost perceptions among PT users are in decline, this does not appear to have impacted usage rates and overall experience ratings have also strengthened from July to September. Previous analysis has shown that these cost factors do not drive experience ratings on public transport.
- Whilst reported usage and experiences are not declining, there was a significant drop in the proportion stating that public transport would have been their preferred mode for their most recent journey. This had significantly increased with the introduction of HPF and remained elevated compared to 2020/2021 scores throughout.
- During the HPF period, weekly PT users had been less likely than others to miss journeys due to cost barriers. The reverse had been true prior to the HPF introduction.
 - This was not necessarily related to a decrease in these missed journeys among PT users, missed journeys for non-users had significantly increased during this time.
 - Nonetheless, a 7-point increase in these cost-related missed journeys for PT users following the end of HPF for all users has meant that they are now more likely to do so.

Will public transport usage be sustained?

Analysis of demographics within reported usage and intent to continue

How has weekly PT usage varied across age groups

In the three months since the end of HPF for all users, no age group has seen a significant or sustained decline in reported weekly usage. In fact, there are some indications of a small increase in usage for those aged 50+ in this time.

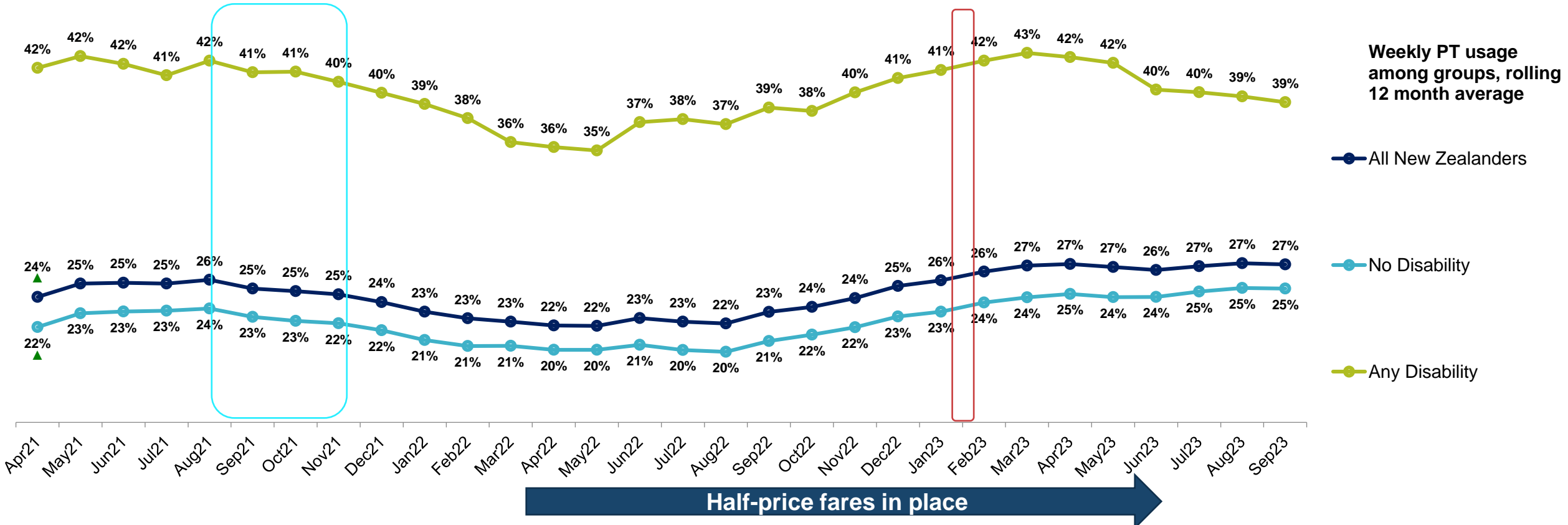


QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for a PT mode
 Base: Journey Monitor data, 12 month rolling average

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
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How has weekly PT usage varied for those with disabilities

Reported usage among those with disabilities had already begun to decline prior to the end of the HPF period. Despite increases in reported usage from start of HPF scheme onwards, usage is no higher for these New Zealanders than the same period of 2021, which saw a return of significant covid restrictions.



Auckland L4/L3 alert level COVID restrictions

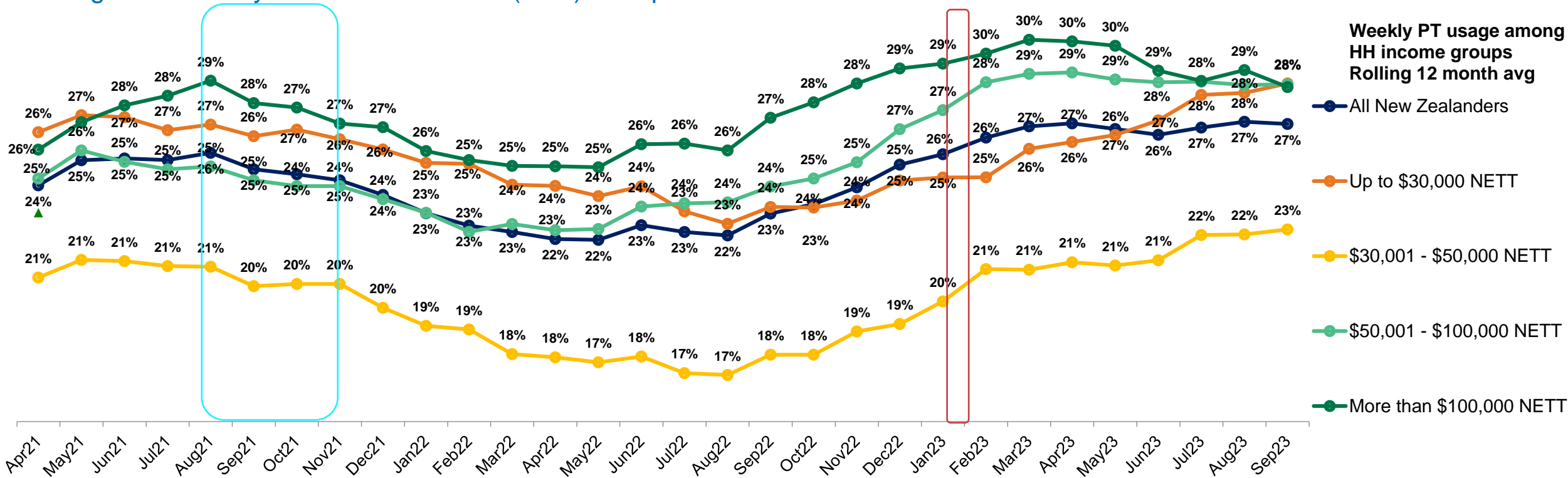
Auckland anniversary weekend floods (31st Jan)/Cyclone Gabrielle (9thFeb)

QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for a PT mode
 Base: Journey Monitor data, 12 month rolling average

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How has weekly PT usage varied across income groups

Since the start of July, reported PT usage has only fallen for those in the highest income households. At present, only those with incomes between \$30K-\$50K report usage below the national average, with other household income groups using PT at exactly the same incidence (28%) in September.



Auckland L4/L3 alert level COVID restrictions

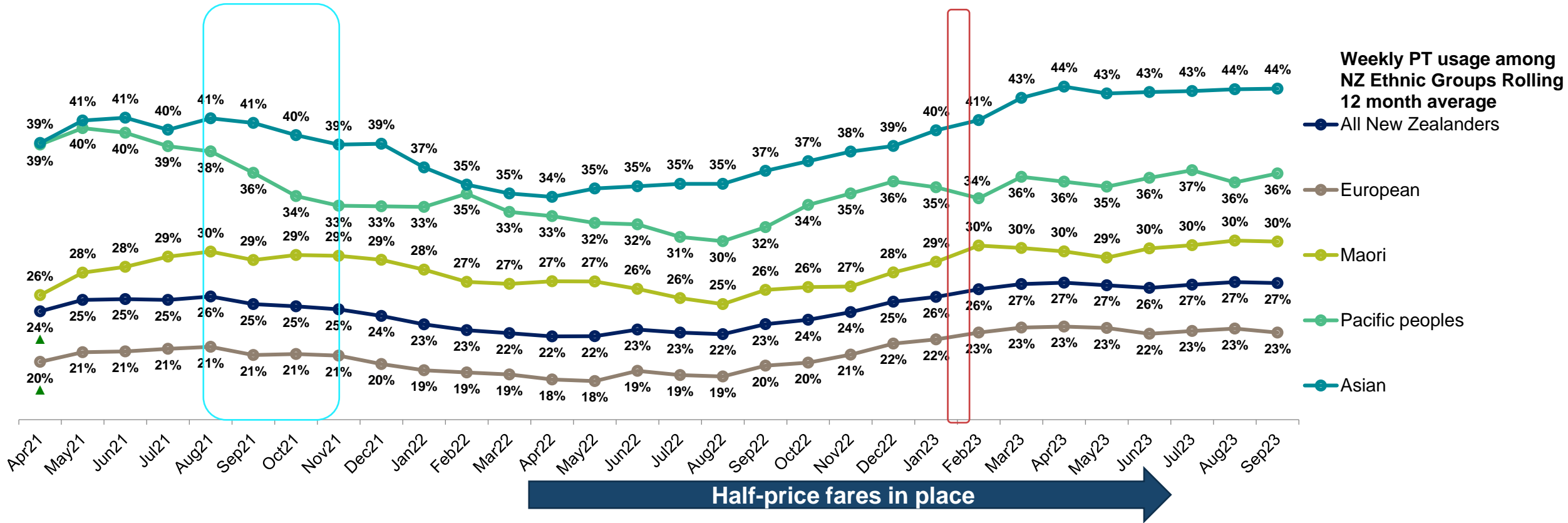
Auckland anniversary weekend floods (31st Jan)/Cyclone Gabrielle (9thFeb)

QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for a PT mode
Base: Journey Monitor data, 12 month rolling average

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How does normal PT usage vary across ethnic groups?

New Zealanders of all ethnic groups have continued to use public transport at roughly the same rate as they did in June, with no indication so far that their patronage will be reduced,



Auckland L4/L3 alert level COVID restrictions

Auckland anniversary weekend floods (31st Jan)/Cyclone Gabrielle (9thFeb)

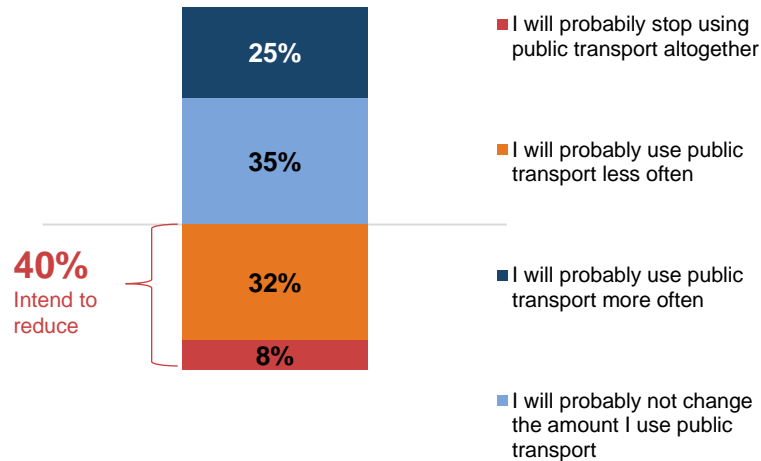
QAF1 - On how many days in the last week have you travelled each of these ways? % selecting 1-7 days for each more
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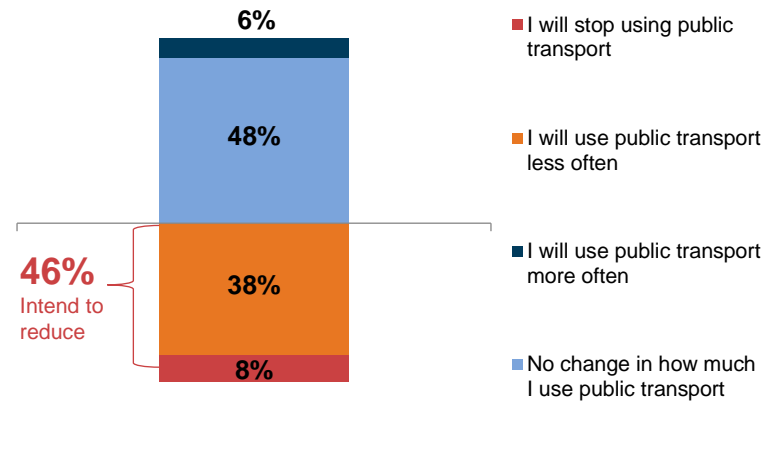
Will journeys continue after HPFs?

As the HPF scheme ended, at least 2-in-5 of the new users it had brought to the service said that they would not continue their patronage to the same extent. However, to date the number of reported bus travel days has not been significantly reduced and the proportion of reported weekly users remains consistent.

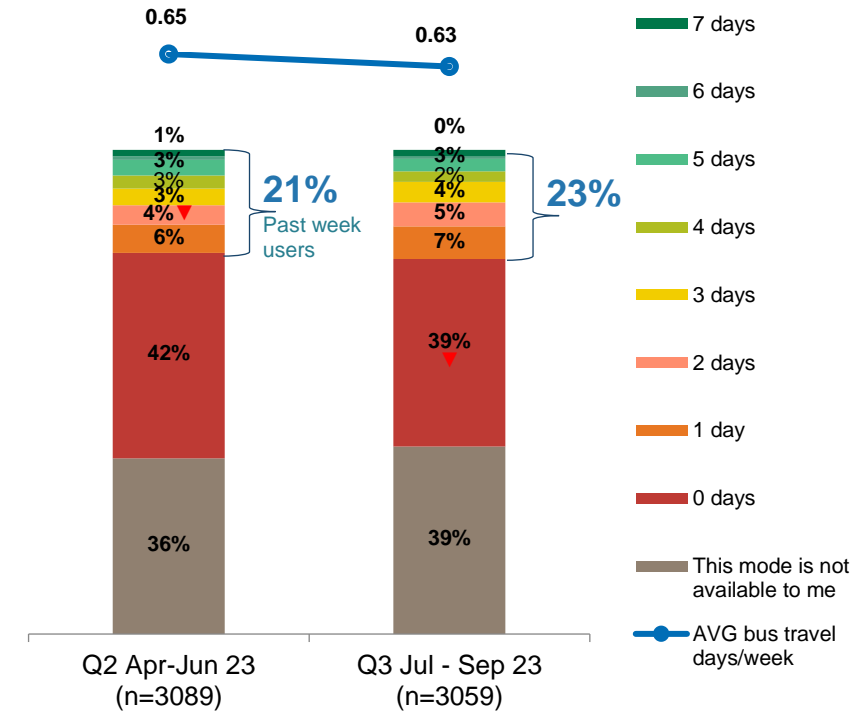
Intention to continue, Q2 '23 (during HPF)



Intention to continue, Q3 '23 (post HPF)



Past week bus travel days, Q2-Q3 '23



All travelling on PT because of HPF, Apr-Jun23 data (n=781)

All who increased PT usage due to HPF, Jul-Sep23 data (n=455)

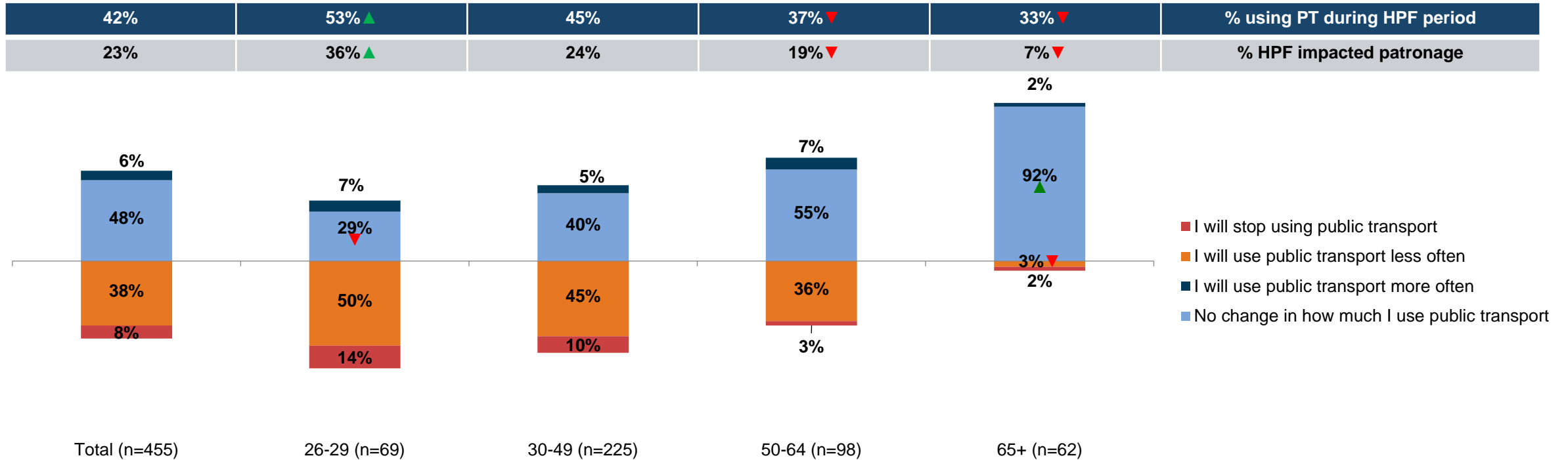
Q54d6a You indicated that you have used public transport in the last seven days. Half-price fares for public transport are due to end on [31 March/30 June) 2023, to what extent, if at all, will this change how often you use public transport?/ HPF_FUT_FREQ1: Since 1 July 2023 public transport fares have returned to full price. Which of the following do you think will apply to your use of public transport in the future?

Base: All adults travelling on PT because of Half Price Fares, Journey Monitor survey Apr-23 – June-23 / All adults aged 26+ who used PT more because of HPF, Journey Monitor survey Jul-23 – Sep23, Wellington region only included in Aug-23-Sep-23

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase from preceding time period
▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease from preceding time period

Will journeys continue after HPFs?

Younger age groups, who indicated more benefit from HPF are most likely to indicate a future reduction in patronage. It should be noted that as discounts continue for under 25s, the reduction in the younger group is limited to a smaller 26-29 year old subset.



HPF_FUT_FREQ1: Since 1 July 2023 public transport fares have returned to full price. Which of the following do you think will apply to your use of public transport in the future?

Base: All adults aged 26+ who used PT more because of HPF, Journey Monitor survey Jul-23 – Sep23, Wellington region only included in Aug-23-Sep-23. For more information on % using see slide 31, HPF impacted see slide 32.



Indicates proportion is higher than total sample to a statistically significant extent

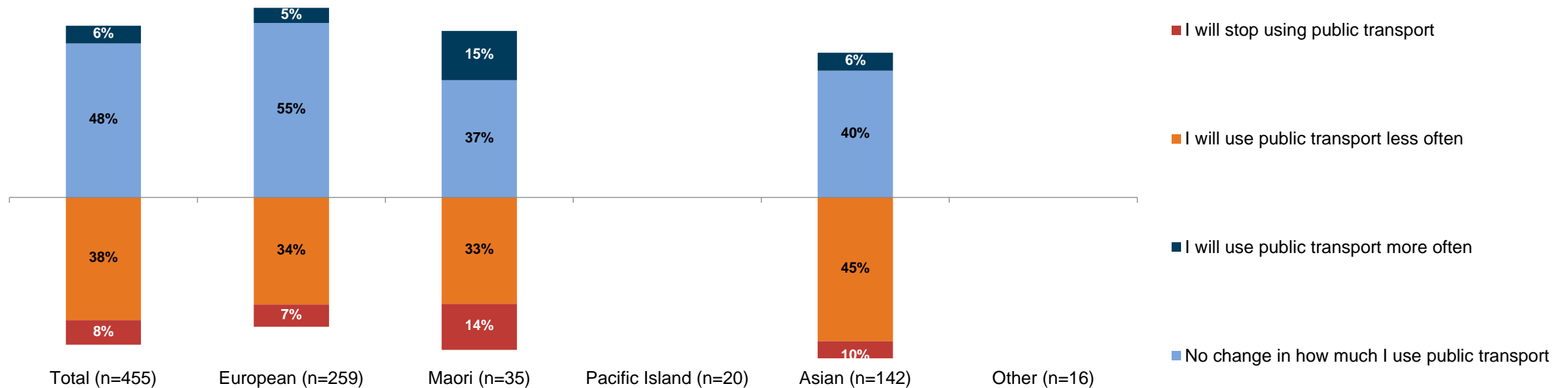


Indicates proportion is lower than total sample to a statistically significant extent

Who will continue PT journeys after HPFs?

There is less variation according to ethnicity, with intent to reduce slightly higher in some groups with more HPF-impacted patronage.

42%	40%	47%	55% ▲	62% ▲	51%	% any use
23%	20% ▼	29% ▲	30% ▲	31% ▲	19%	% impacted patronage



HPF_FUT_FREQ1: Since 1 July 2023 public transport fares have returned to full price. Which of the following do you think will apply to your use of public transport in the future?

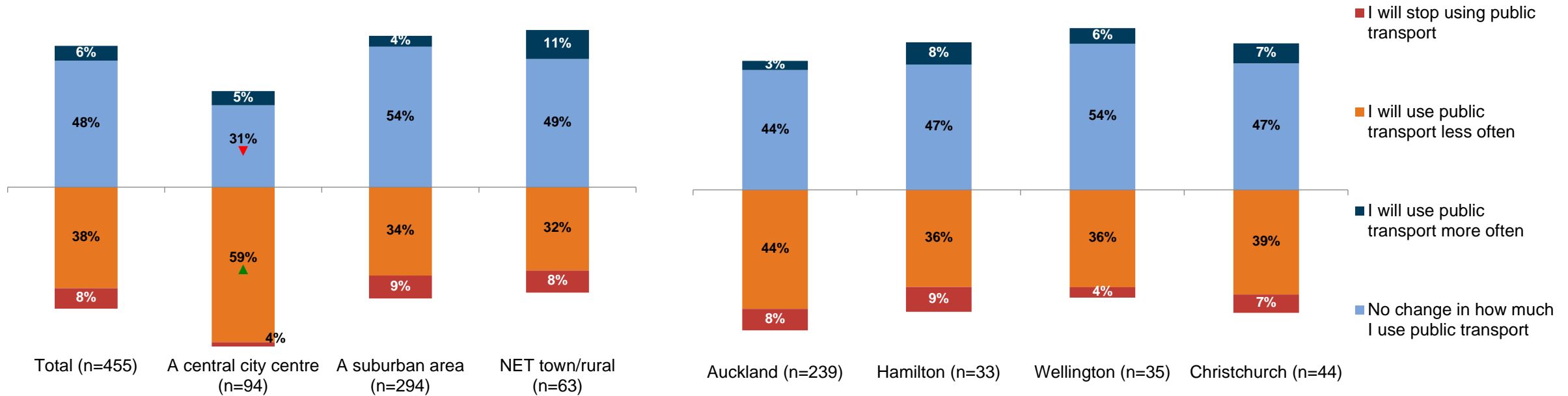
Base: All adults aged 26+ who used PT more because of HPF, Journey Monitor survey Jul-23 – Sep-23, Wellington region only included in Aug-23-Sep-23. For more information on % using see slide 31, HPF impacted see slide 32.

▲ Indicates proportion is higher than total sample to a statistically significant extent
▼ Indicates proportion is lower than total sample to a statistically significant extent

Who will continue PT journeys after HPFs?

Intention to reduce PT usage is significantly higher in CBDs, but few of these are likely to stop travelling by PT altogether. The majority of this comes from the Auckland area, but there is little variance in intent according to city.

45%	68% ▲	47%	27% ▼		57%	39% ▼	66% ▲	43% ▼	% any use
23%	42% ▲	22%	16% ▼		30%	24%	31%	22% ▼	% impacted



HPF_FUT_FREQ1: Since 1 July 2023 public transport fares have returned to full price. Which of the following do you think will apply to your use of public transport in the future?

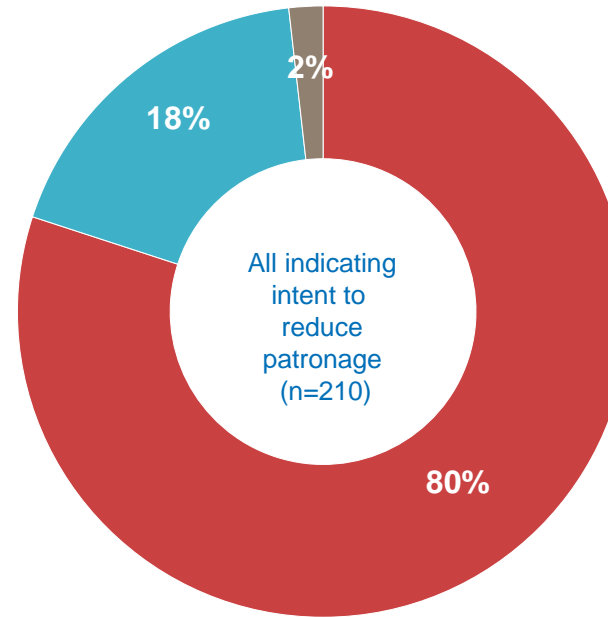
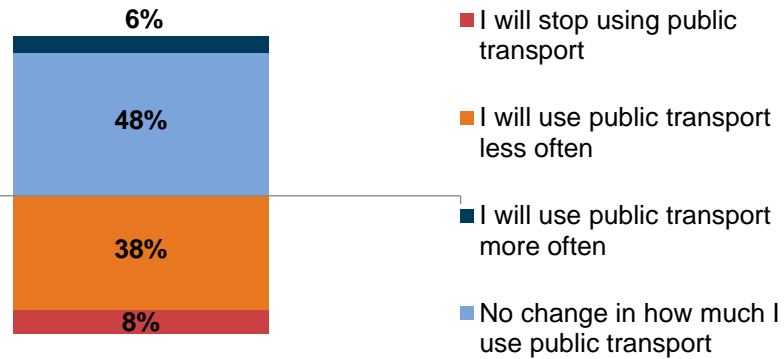
Base: All adults aged 26+ who used PT more because of HPF, Journey Monitor survey Jul-23 – Sep-23, Wellington region only included in Aug-23-Sep-23 *base in rural areas & Tauranga <30, insufficient for reliable analysis. For more information on % using see slide 31, HPF impacted see slide 32.

▲ Indicates proportion is higher than total sample to a statistically significant extent
▼ Indicates proportion is lower than total sample to a statistically significant extent

Impact of HPF removal

The majority of those stating an intent to reduce or stop their PT usage say that the cost consideration of full-price fares is the reason.

Intention to continue, Q3 '23 (post HPF)



You said you think you will [stop using/using public transport less], is this because...

- Full price fares are too expensive
- Another reason
- Prefer not to say

All who increased PT usage due to HPF, Jul-Sep23
data (n=455)

HPF_FUT_FREQ1: Since 1 July 2023 public transport fares have returned to full price. Which of the following do you think will apply to your use of public transport in the future? /HPF_FUT_FREQ2 You said you think you will [IF HPF_FUT_FREQ = 1 <<stop using>> IF HPF_FUT_FREQ = 2<< use public transport less>>], is this because....
All adults aged 26+ who used PT more because of HPF, Journey Monitor survey Jul-23 – Sep23, Wellington region only included in Aug-23-Sep-23

Section summary

Could additional PT travel be sustained?

- To date, there has not been a drop off in reported weekly usage of public transport, even in those groups where a larger share of travel was impacted by half-price fares.
- Prior to the end of universal HPF for all users, there was some stated intent to reduce usage, which has not materialised to a noticeable extent so far.
- Since July, there has been further indication that users intend to scale down their PT usage. This is particularly true in groups that were both high-volume users and who experienced greater impact on their journeys from HPF.
 - Among those living in city centres who travelled more due to HPF, almost 3-in-5 intend to use public transport less going forward. However, very few of these indicate an intent to stop using PT.
 - Those 26-29 who took advantage of HPF to travel more are also more likely to plan to scale down their patronage and 14% of these intend to stop.
 - Outside of this, there is little significant difference in intent to continue or reduce patronage according to demographics.
 - Of those intending to reduce or stop using public transport, 4-in-5 say this is because full price fares are too expensive and not some other reason.

For further information

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<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/planning-and-investment/learning-and-resources/research-programme/>

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