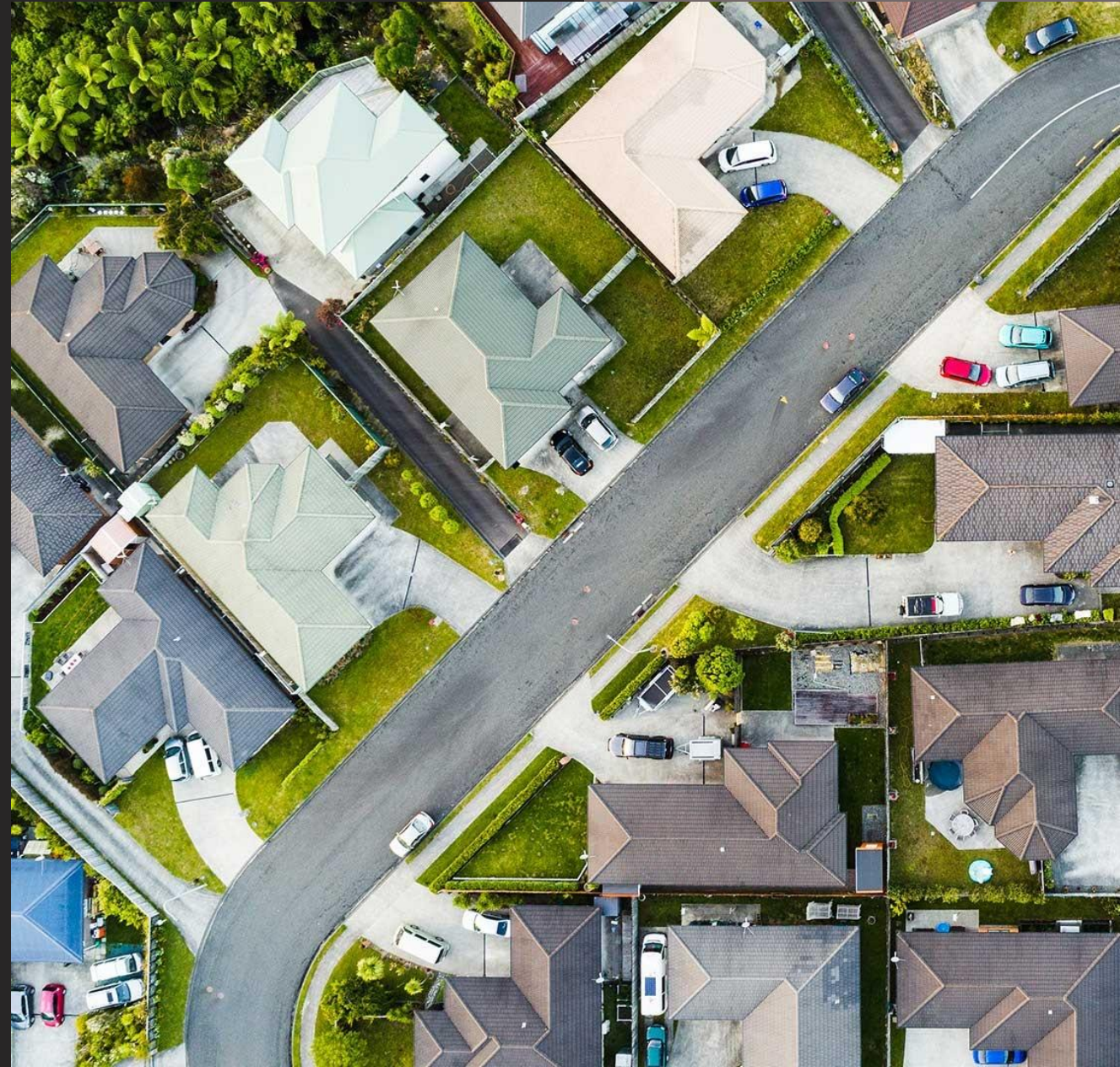




Verian 2026 **Public Sector** **Reputation Index**

WorkSafe New Zealand
Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

June 2026





1. Introduction to the Index

The Public Sector Reputation Index is a globally validated model which we have evolved to work in a public sector setting. The model contains 16 reputation attributes, which each sit under one of four pillars: trust, social responsibility, leadership and fairness.

Trust



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

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

We determine the importance of each pillar and use this to calculate each agency's reputation score

Social responsibility



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

Fairness



- Treats their employees well
- Deals fairly with people regardless of their background or role
- Works positively with Māori
- Works positively with Pacific peoples

Public Sector Reputation Index

10 years

Benchmarked in 2016

58

Public sector
organisations

3,500

New Zealanders

The 2026 survey was
carried out from
2 to 31 March.

In total, 3,500 online
interviews were
undertaken to reflect
the views of New
Zealanders

Sampled and weighted
to be nationally
representative by age,
gender, region,
ethnicity and income
by household size.



58 public sector agencies

Throughout this report, we've compared WorkSafe's results against a benchmark group, which is an average score for five selected peer agencies: Accident Compensation Corporation, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Civil Aviation Authority.

 He Kaupapa. He Manaaki. He Whakaora. prevention. care. recovery.		 Aviation Security Service <i>Kaitiaki Kaitiaki Rereangi</i>	 BSA BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY TE MANA WHANONGA KAIPĀHO	 Callaghan Innovation Te Pokapū Auaha	 CAA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF NEW ZEALAND Te Mana Rereangi Tōmatanui o Aotearoa	 COMMERCE COMMISSION NEW ZEALAND Te Komihana Tauhokohoko	 creative nz ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND Tei Aotearoa	 Te Tari Ture o te Karauna Crown Law	 Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai
 ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	 Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs	 Earth Sciences New Zealand	 EECA TE TARI TIARI PŌNGAO ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENT	 ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY TE MANA HIKO	 ELECTORAL COMMISSION TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI	 Environmental Protection Authority Te Mana Rauhi Taiao	 FMA FINANCIAL MARKETS AUTHORITY TE MANA TĀTAI HOKOHOKO	 FIRE EMERGENCY	 HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT NEW ZEALAND
 Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission	 NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION	 Inland Revenue Te Tari Taake	 Kāinga Ora Homes and Communities	 Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand	 MANATŪ HAUORA MINISTRY OF HEALTH	 Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture & Heritage	 MetService TE RATONGA TIORANGI	 Ministry for Primary Industries Manatū Ahu Matua	 Ministry for the Environment Manatū Mo Te Taiao
 MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT HIKINA WHAKATUTUKI	 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA	 NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE Manatū Aorere	 Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	 justice.govt.nz	 Ministry for Regulation Te Manatū Waeture	 MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TE MANATŪ WHAKAHATO ORA	 National Emergency Management Agency Te Rākau Whakamarumaru	 Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake	 NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS SERVICE TE MANA AHU O AOTEAROA
 New Zealand DEFENCE FORCE Te Kaitiaki o Aotearoa	 NEW ZEALAND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION Te Waihanga	 NEW ZEALAND POLICE Ngā Pirihimani o Aotearoa	 NEW ZEALAND TRADE & ENTERPRISE Te Taurapa Tūhono	 Irirangi Te Motu NZ On Air	 ORANGA TAMARIKI Ministry for Children	 PHARMAC TE PĀTAKA WHAIORANGA	 Reserve Bank of New Zealand Te Pūtea Matua	 RNZ	 Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa
 Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission	 Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand	 Te Mana Whakaatu CLASSIFICATION OFFICE	 SPORT NEW ZEALAND IHI AOTEAROA	 TE TAI ŌHANGA THE TREASURY	 100% PURE NEW ZEALAND	 WAKA KOTAHİ NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY	 WORKSAFE Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa		



2. Sector wide reputation findings

Overall reputation top 10 for 2026

Fire and Emergency New Zealand retains its position as the agency with the highest reputation score, but we have a lot of movement within the top 10 in 2026.

		2025 RANK
79		1
74	 Department of Conservation <i>Te Papa Atawhai</i>	2
74	 NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS SERVICE TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA	4
73	 National Emergency Management Agency Te Rākau Whakamarumaru	6
72	 Earth Sciences New Zealand	New this year
72	 TOURISM NEW ZEALAND	Outside top 10
71	 EECA ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TE TARI TIAKI PŪNGAO	Outside top 10
71	 MetService TE RATONGA TIORANGI	5
71	 creative <i>nz</i> ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND Tei Aotearoa	Outside top 10
71	 Aviation Security Service <i>Kaiwhakamau Rererangi</i>	8



Each of these agencies improved their overall reputation score by five points or more



Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Natural Hazards
Commission
Toka Tū Ake

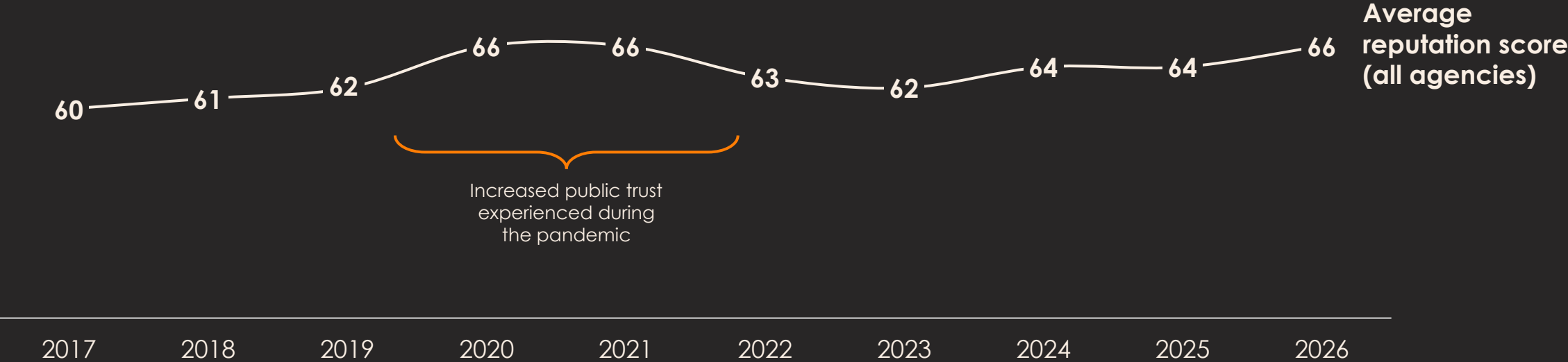


NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

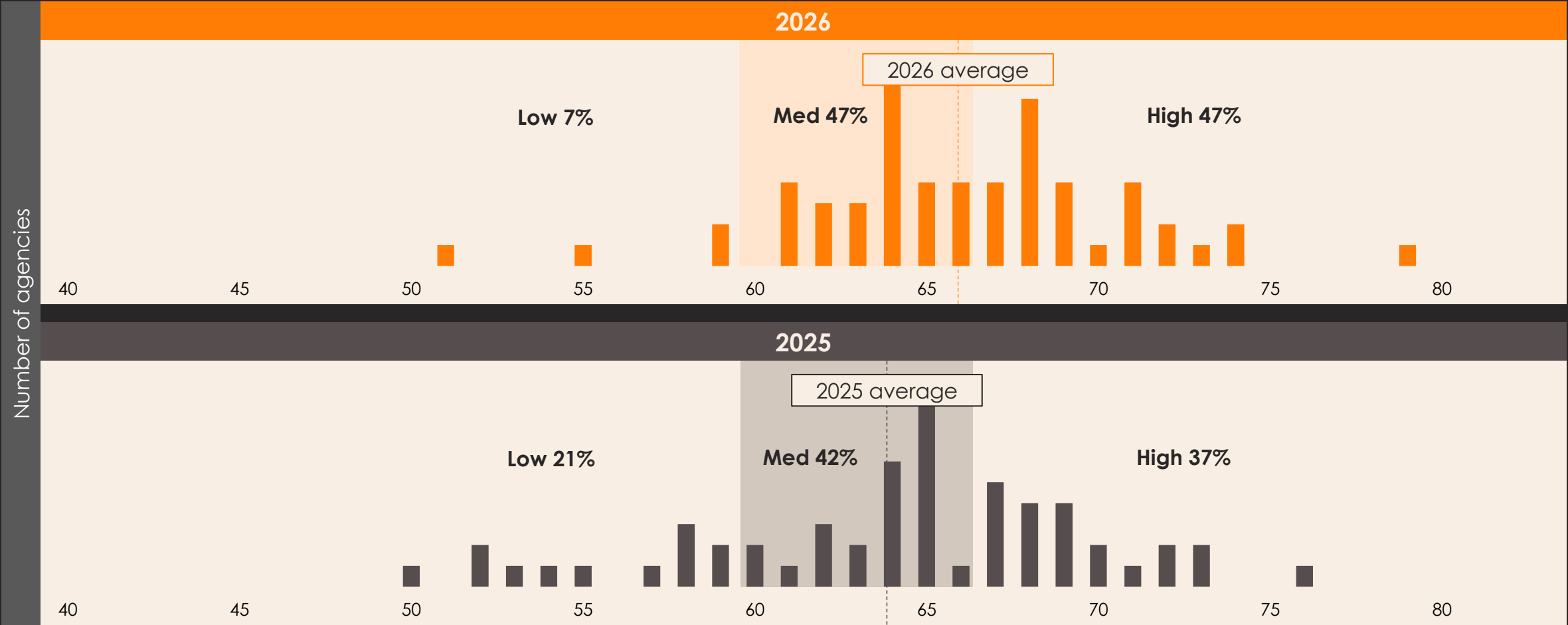


ENERGY EFFICIENCY &
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE TARI TIAKI PŪNGAO

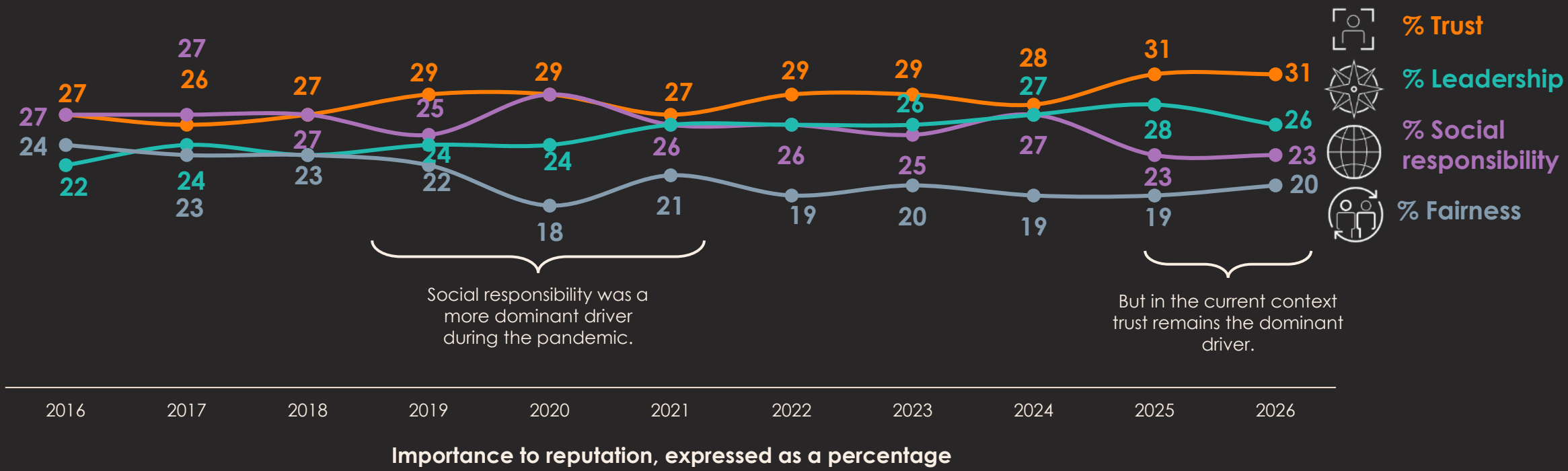
Since 2025 the reputation of the public sector has increased to a level not seen since the pandemic.



This rise is not just due to a small number of high performing agencies pulling ahead. It's due to a wider strengthening across the public sector, with many agencies moving out of the low range.



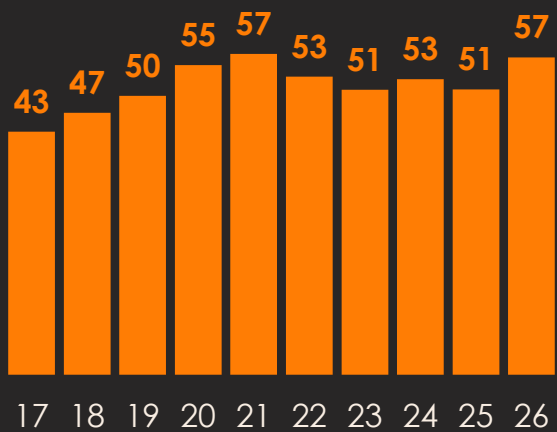
Over the last decade, reputation has shifted from being driven by a relatively even mix of factors to being much more anchored in **trust** and **organisational competence**.



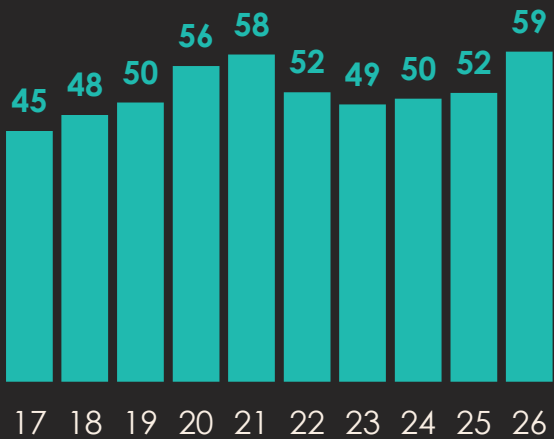
The public sector is not just more trusted this year. It’s also seen as fairer, better run, and more socially responsible.



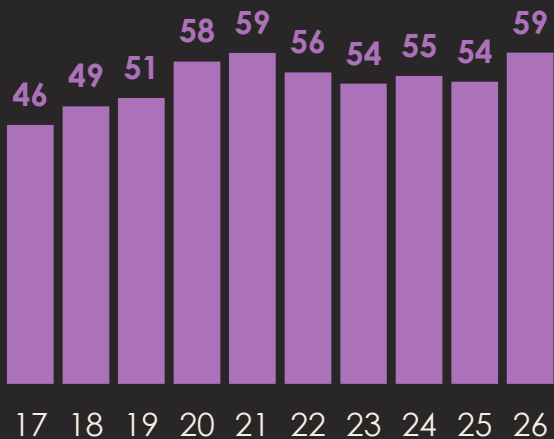
% Trust



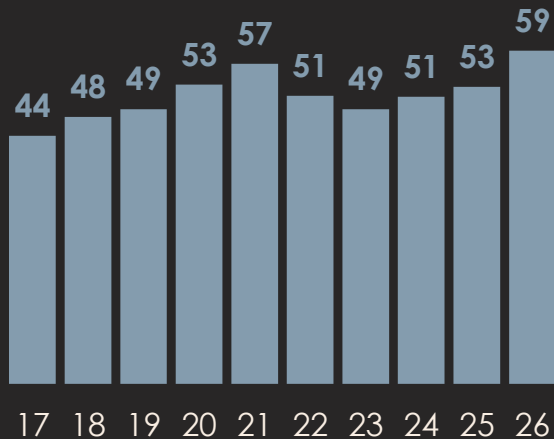
% Leadership



% Social responsibility

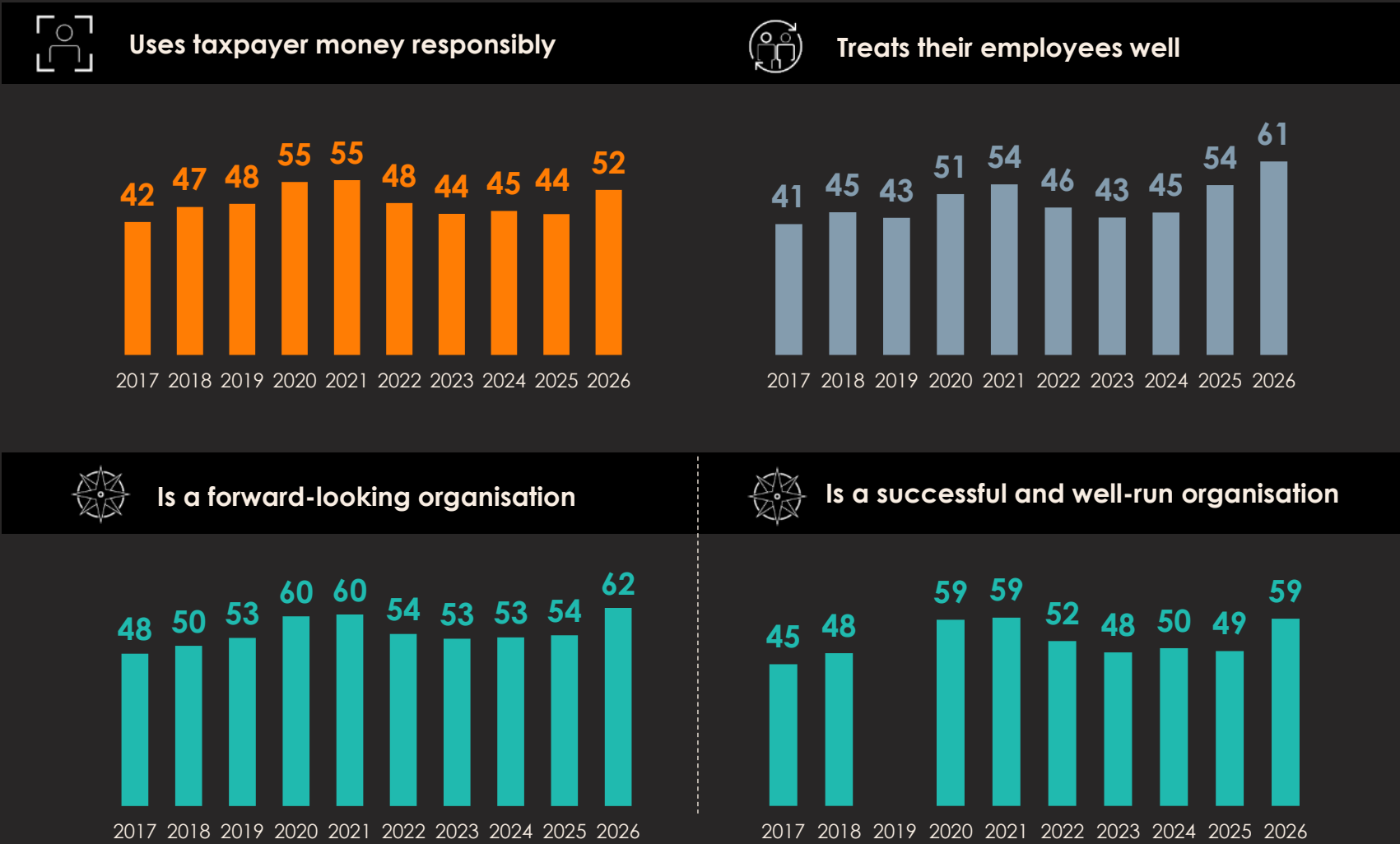


% Fairness



Average % agreement across attributes within each pillar, excluding don't know
(based only on the agencies included since the benchmark)

The largest attribute changes since 2025 suggest that, in a context shaped by spending restraint and service pressure, the public appears to be responding most strongly to signs of competence.



A scenic view of a winding road through a mountain valley. The road is paved and curves through lush green hills. A white truck is visible on the road, moving away from the viewer. The background shows more mountains under a bright sky.

3. Your reputation this year

WorkSafe has an overall reputation score of 69 and is ranked 14th overall, out of the 58 agencies included in 2026.

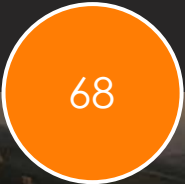
Reputation and pillar scores
WorkSafe



Overall reputation



Trust



Social responsibility



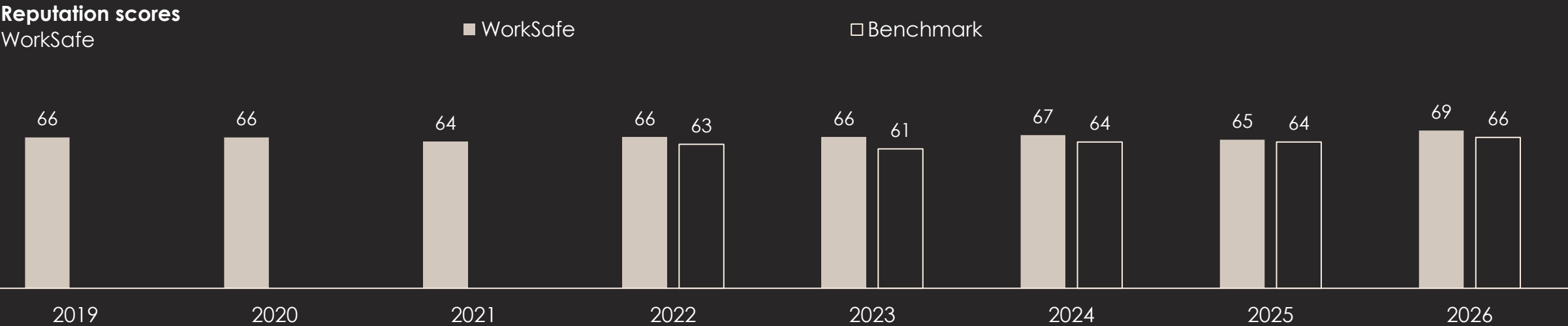
Leadership



Fairness



The four-point lift in reputation score pushes WorkSafe to an eight-year high, and three points ahead of the benchmark agency average.



Social responsibility is WorkSafe’s highest performing pillar on a score of 70, and the pillar with the widest lead over benchmark agencies (66).

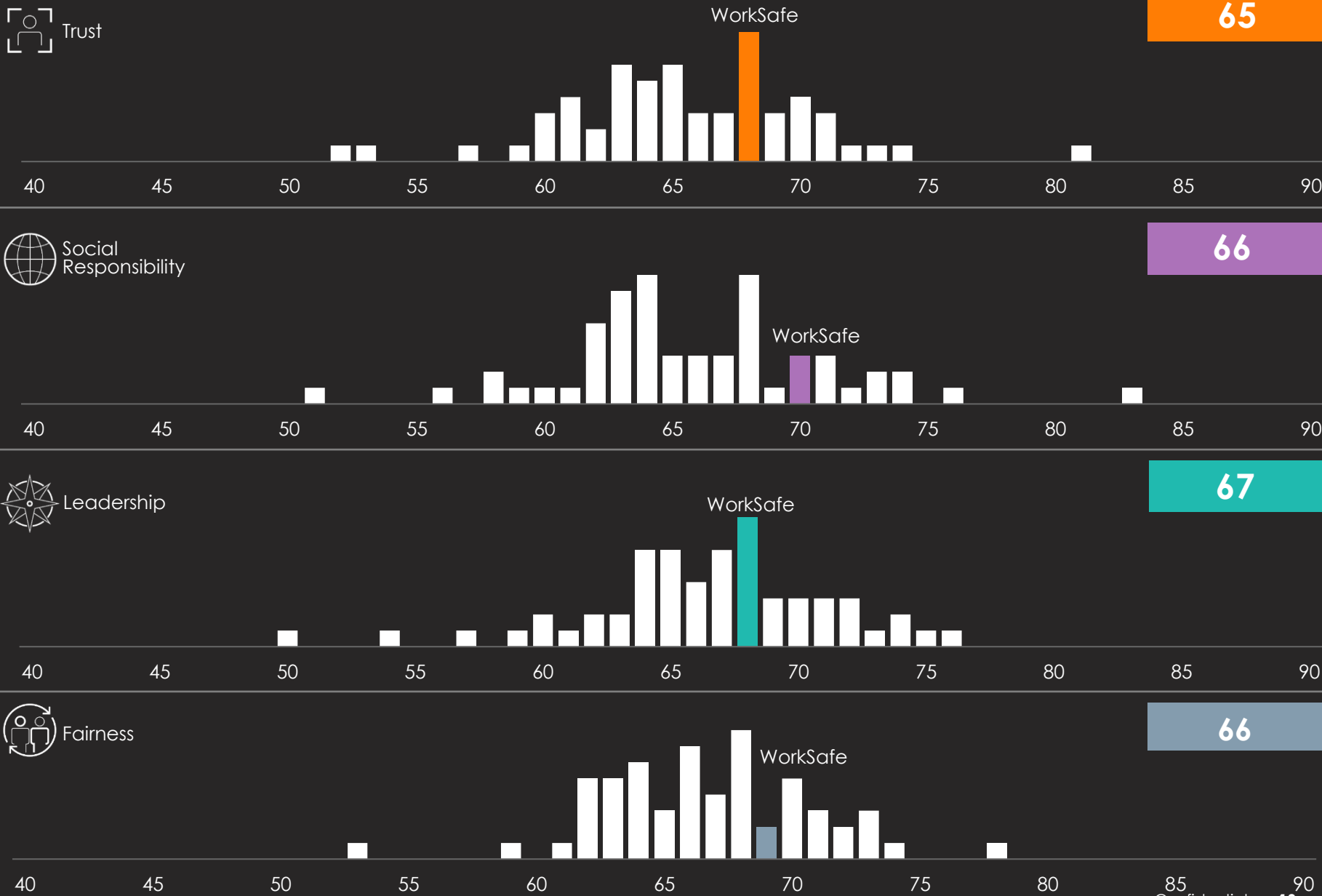
Across the board all pillars are at a seven-year high for WorkSafe.

Raw reputation pillar scores
WorkSafe



Compared to the public sector overall, WorkSafe sits just above the midpoint for all except social responsibility – where WorkSafe is in the top quartile.

WorkSafe distribution across pillars

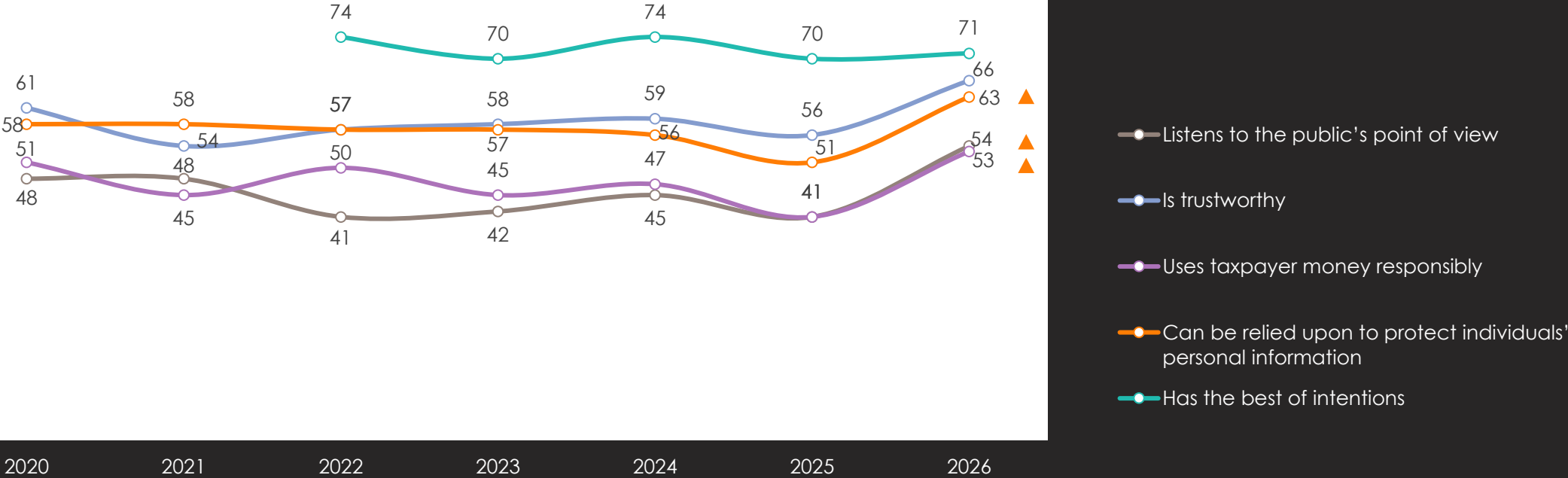


On the trust pillar, WorkSafe has seen strong gains since last year in responsible use of taxpayer money, listening to the public, and being relied upon to project personal information.



Agreement with trust attributes
WorkSafe

% Agree with each statement
(rate 5 to 7 out of 7)



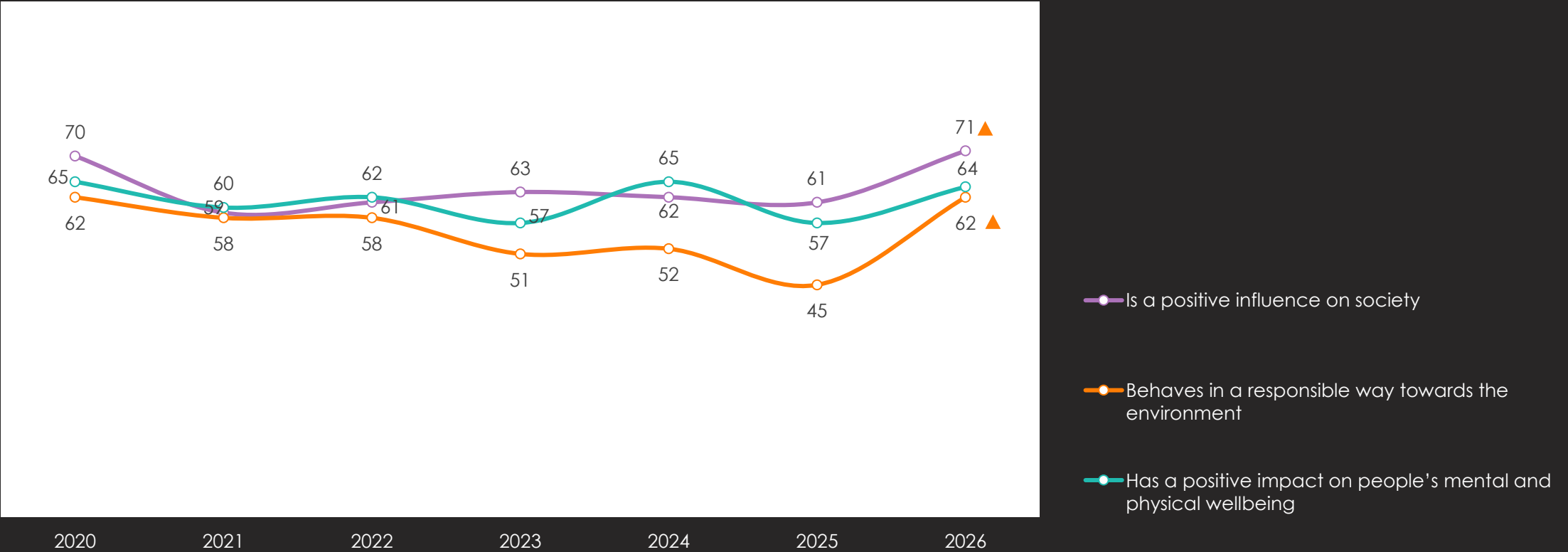
▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=189), 2025 (n=145), 2024 (n=149), 2023 (n=138), 2022 (n=161), 2021 (n=165), 2020 (n=128)

Social responsibility perceptions have also strengthened since 2025, with increased agreement that WorkSafe positively influences society and acts responsibly toward the environment.



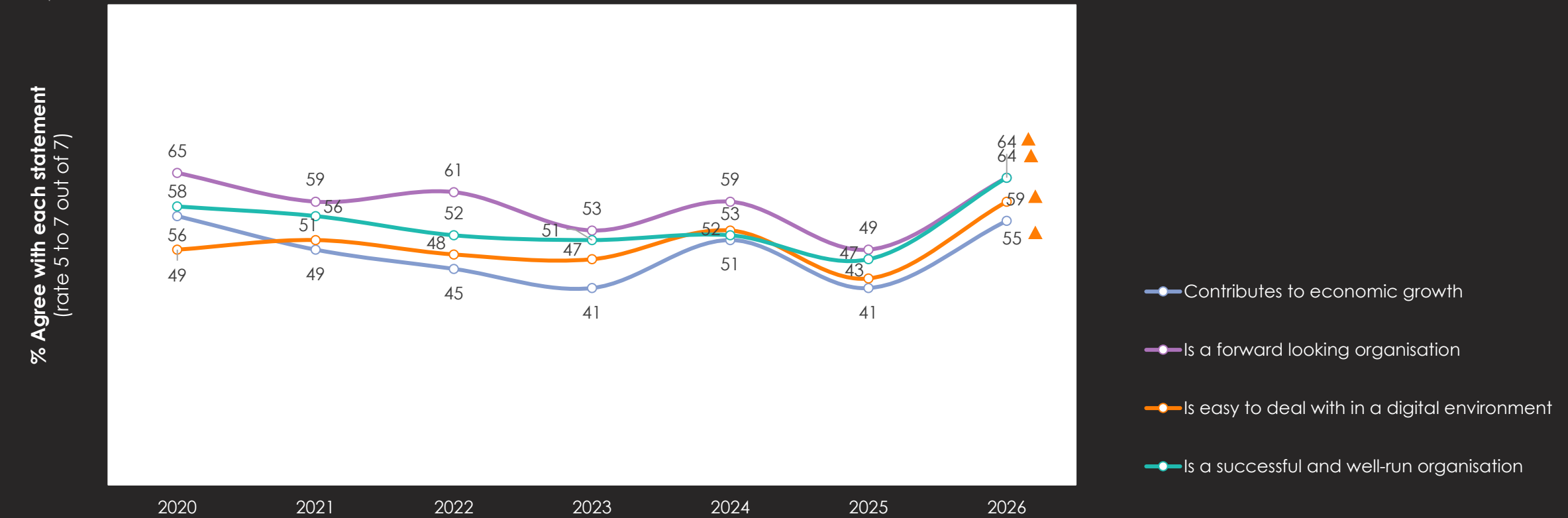
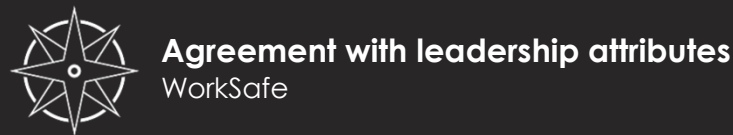
Agreement with social responsibility attributes
WorkSafe

% Agree with each statement
(rate 5 to 7 out of 7)



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=189), 2025 (n=145), 2024 (n=149), 2023 (n=138), 2022 (n=161), 2021 (n=165), 2020 (n=128)

Agreement with all leadership attributes has increased significantly this year, with perceptions of digital ease up 16 points and views that the organisation is well run up 17 points since 2025.



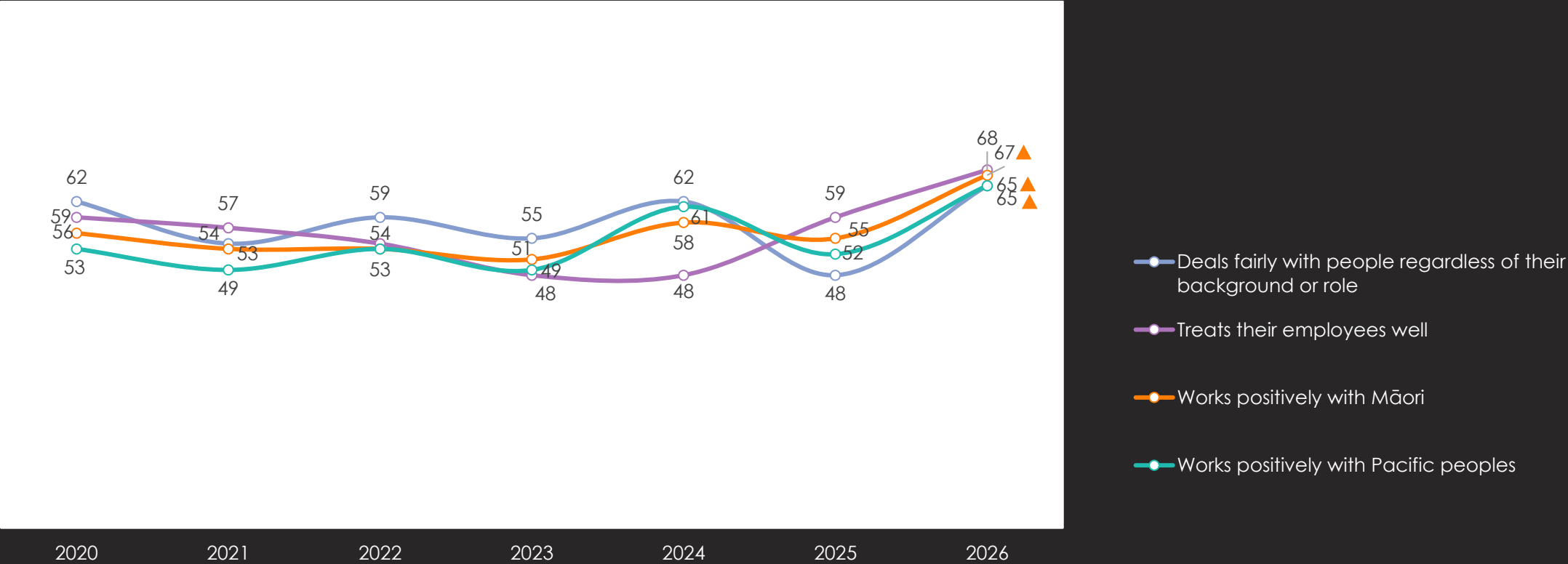
▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=189), 2025 (n=145), 2024 (n=149), 2023 (n=138), 2022 (n=161), 2021 (n=165), 2020 (n=128)

There have been significant increases across three of the four fairness attributes this year, most notably a 17-point rise in perceptions that WorkSafe treats people fairly regardless of background or role.



Agreement with fairness attributes
WorkSafe

% Agree with each statement
(rate 5 to 7 out of 7)



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=189), 2025 (n=145), 2024 (n=149), 2023 (n=138), 2022 (n=161), 2021 (n=165), 2020 (n=128)

This slide highlights that the biggest gains since 2025 are in fairness, environmental responsibility, digital ease, forward-looking leadership, and perceptions that the organisation is well run and successful.



Trust



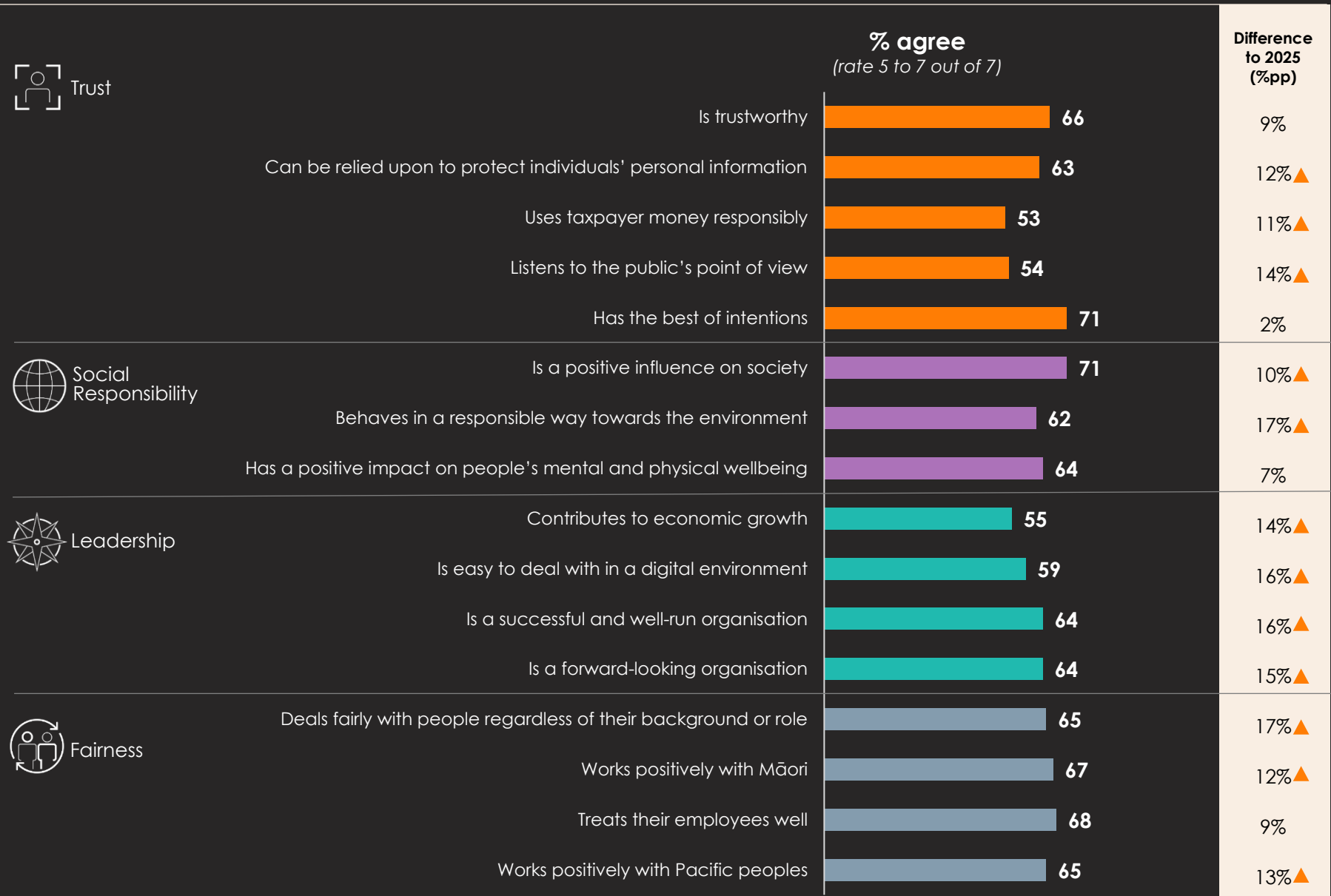
Social Responsibility



Leadership



Fairness

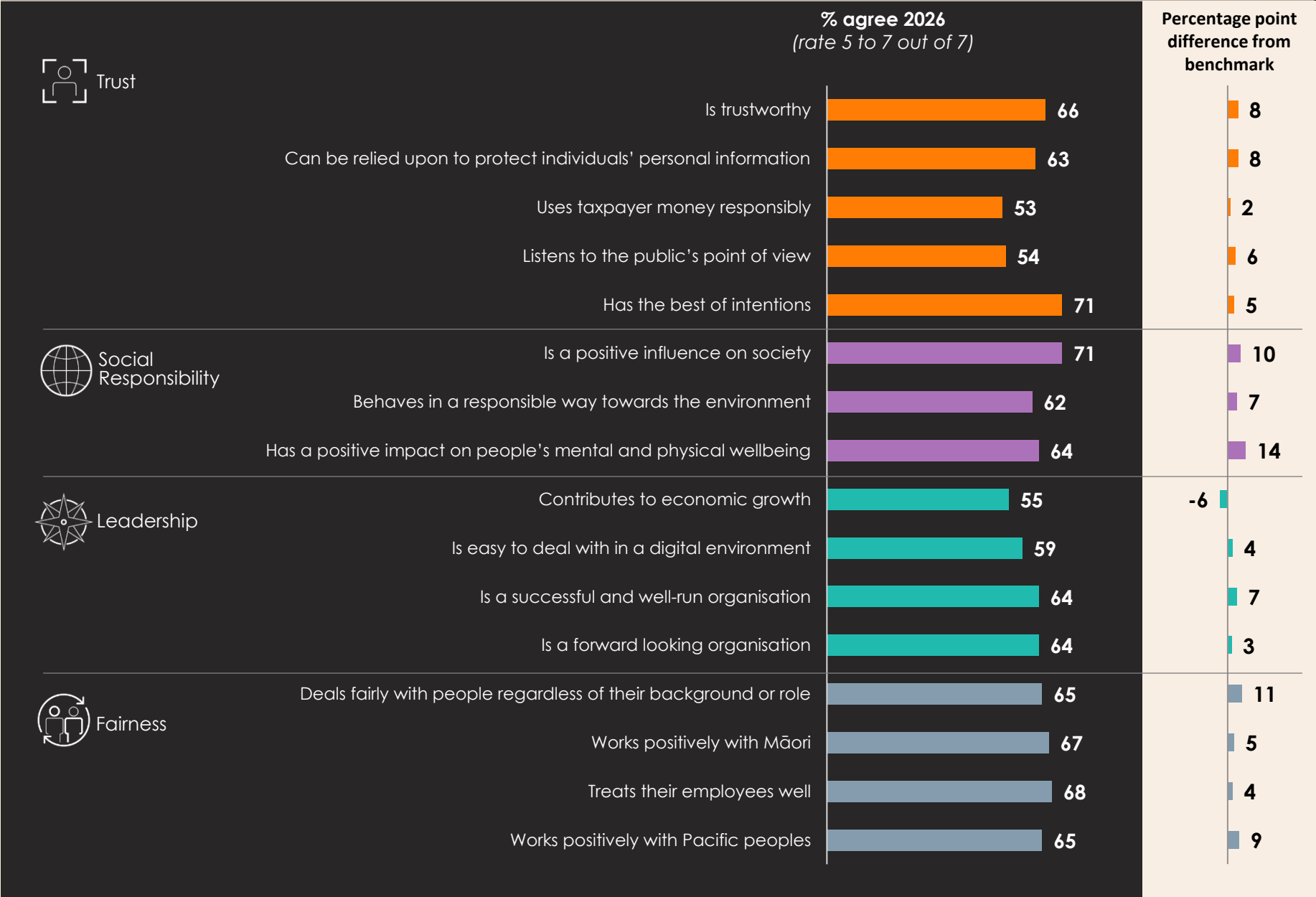


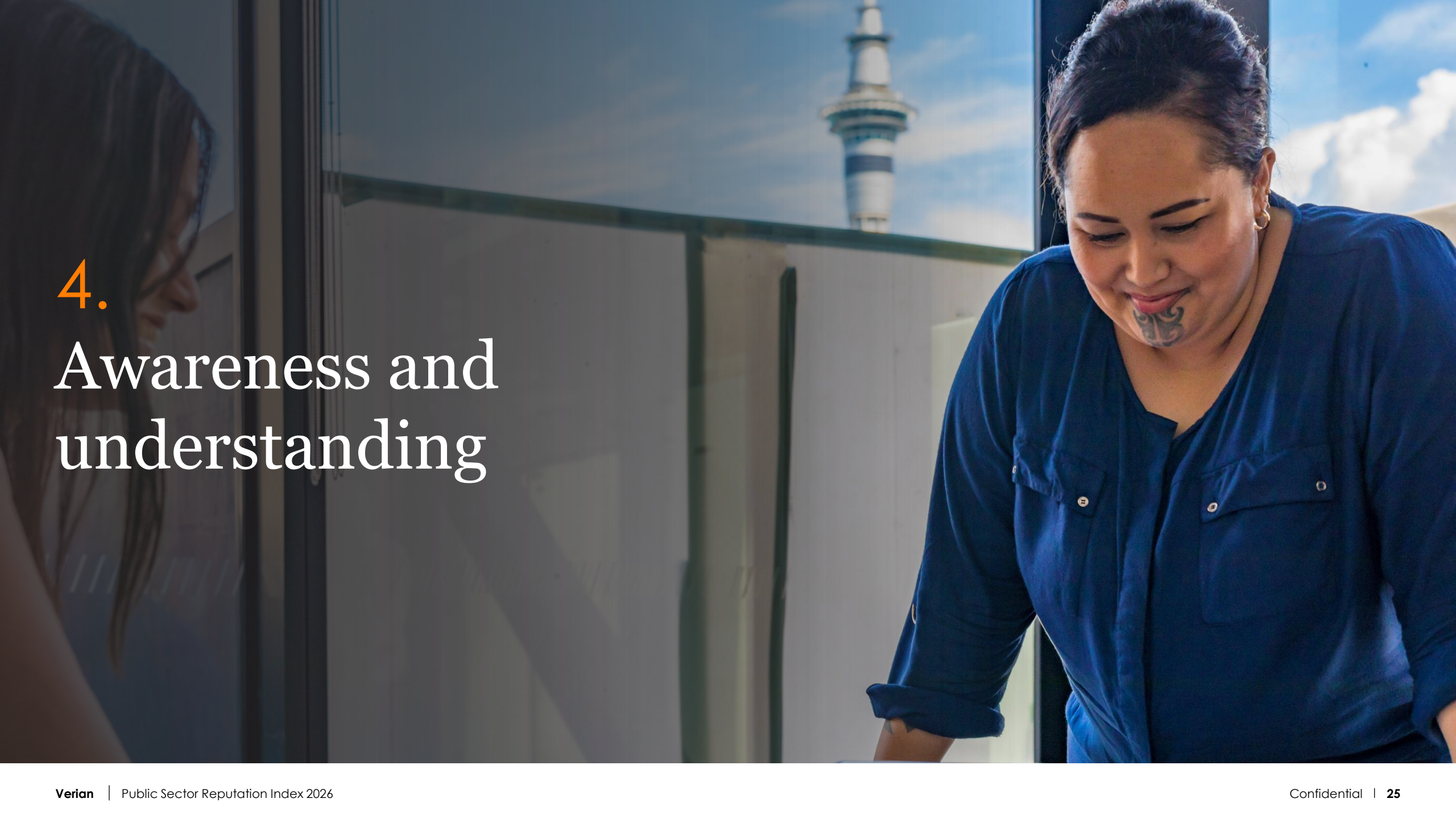
▼▲ These differences are significant at the 95% confidence level

BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=189), 2025 (n=145)

WorkSafe exceeds the benchmark on all but one attribute, with contributing to economic growth six points lower at 55% agreement.

The organisation most strongly outperforms the benchmark on impact on wellbeing, fairness, and positive influence on society.

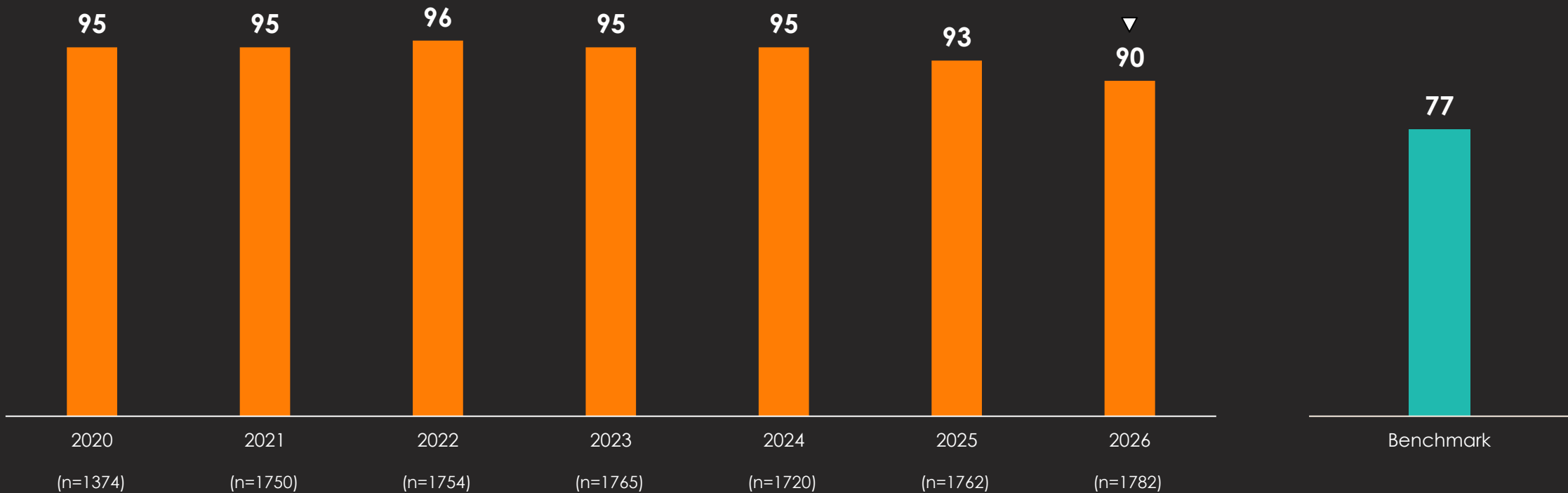


A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue button-down shirt, is looking down with a slight smile. She has a tattoo on her chin. The background shows a city skyline with a prominent tower, likely the CN Tower, under a blue sky with clouds. The scene is set indoors, possibly in an office or a public space, with large windows.

4. Awareness and understanding

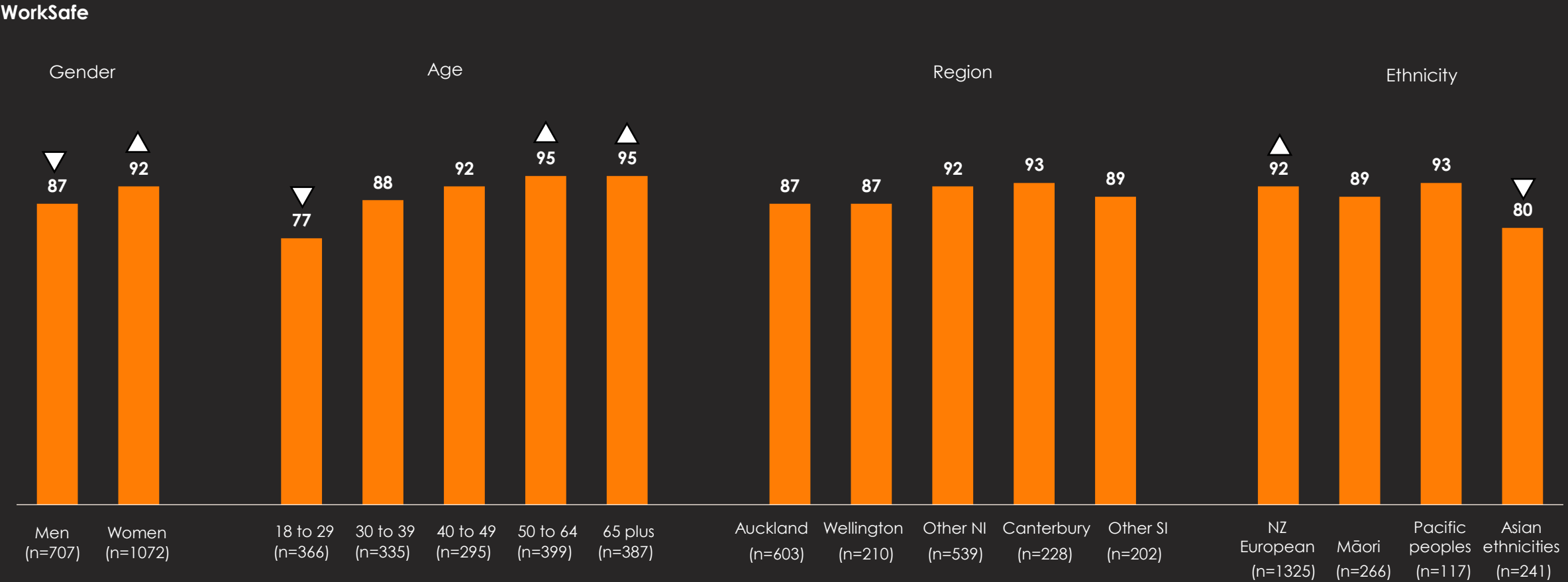
Nine in ten New Zealanders are aware of WorkSafe this year, which is down slightly from 2025, but well ahead of the benchmark.

Public awareness
WorkSafe



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: All respondents, base sizes shown on chart

Awareness of WorkSafe is higher among older New Zealanders, women, and NZ Europeans.

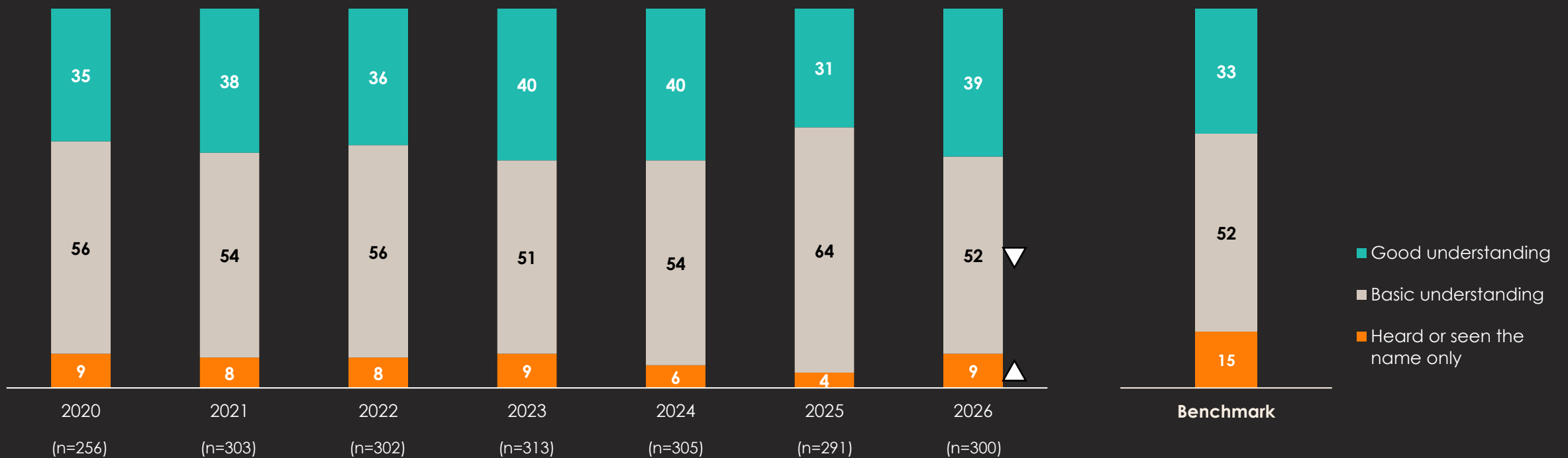


▼▲ These differences are significant at the 95% confidence level

BASE: All respondents, base sizes shown on chart

Among those aware of WorkSafe, 39% report a good understanding of its work, recovering from last year and remaining above the benchmark. At the same time, there has been a small increase in the proportion who have only seen or heard the name.

Understanding of what WorkSafe does



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe, excludes Don't know, base sizes shown on chart

People generally understand WorkSafe as the government regulator responsible for promoting, monitoring, and enforcing workplace health and safety, including setting rules, educating businesses, and investigating accidents.

“ Regulator for workplace health and safety

Is the health and safety regulator in NZ to make sure workplaces are safe for employees doing their job.

Female, aged 40 - 44, European, Auckland

Regulates health and safety regulations for different industries and attends work accidents, takes serious breaches to court and issues bulletins advising industries.

Female, aged 55 - 59, European / Māori, Hawke's Bay

It is a government agency responsible for workplace health and safety in New Zealand.

Female, aged 30 - 34, Asian ethnicities, Auckland

They define the rules to govern the safety process or procedures in the working industry.

Male, aged 50 - 54, Asian ethnicities, Auckland

“ Sets and monitors standards of health and safety

Inspect safety standards in the workplace.

Male, aged 55 - 59, European, Wellington

Provides education on safe working practices and investigates unsafe conditions causing accidents.

Male, aged 75 or older, European, Bay of Plenty

To ensure the safety standards are met in the workplace.

Female, aged 50 - 54, Asian ethnicities, Auckland

Ensures safe working environments around NZ. Carries out site inspections. Investigates incidents.

Female, aged 35 - 39, European, Auckland

Helps businesses keep themselves and their employees safe.

Female, aged 20 - 24, European / Māori, Bay of Plenty

“ Investigates accidents

Investigates accidents at work and ensures preventative measures taken.

Male, aged 20 - 24, European, West Coast

They investigate unsafe workplace practices.

Female, aged 40 - 44, Asian ethnicities, Wellington

WorkSafe NZ is the government organisation that makes sure workplaces in New Zealand are safe. They set rules, give guidance, and check that businesses are following health and safety laws. They also investigate accidents or serious incidents at work and can take action if companies are not keeping workers safe.

Male, aged 35 - 39, Pacific peoples, Otago

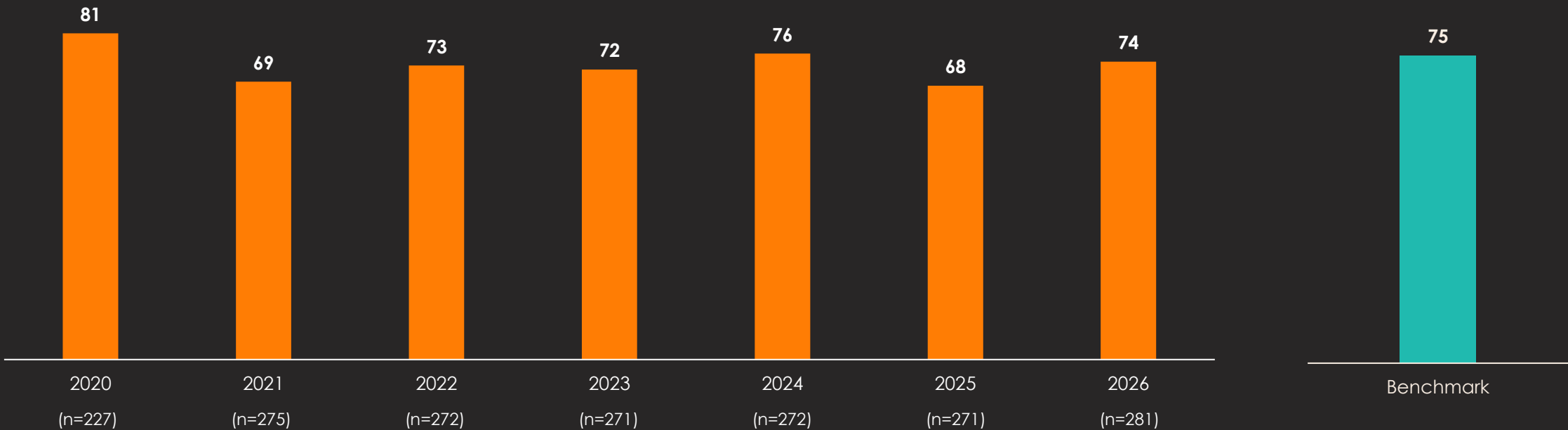
Reviews cause of workplace accidents and may lay charges. Upholds regulations workplaces are required to comply with for health and safety.

Female, aged 60 - 64, European, Auckland

Among those aware of WorkSafe, the proportion who agree the agency’s work is important for NZ is at 74%, which is in line with the benchmark average.

Legitimacy of purpose

The proportion of people who agree that WorkSafe’s work is important for New Zealand

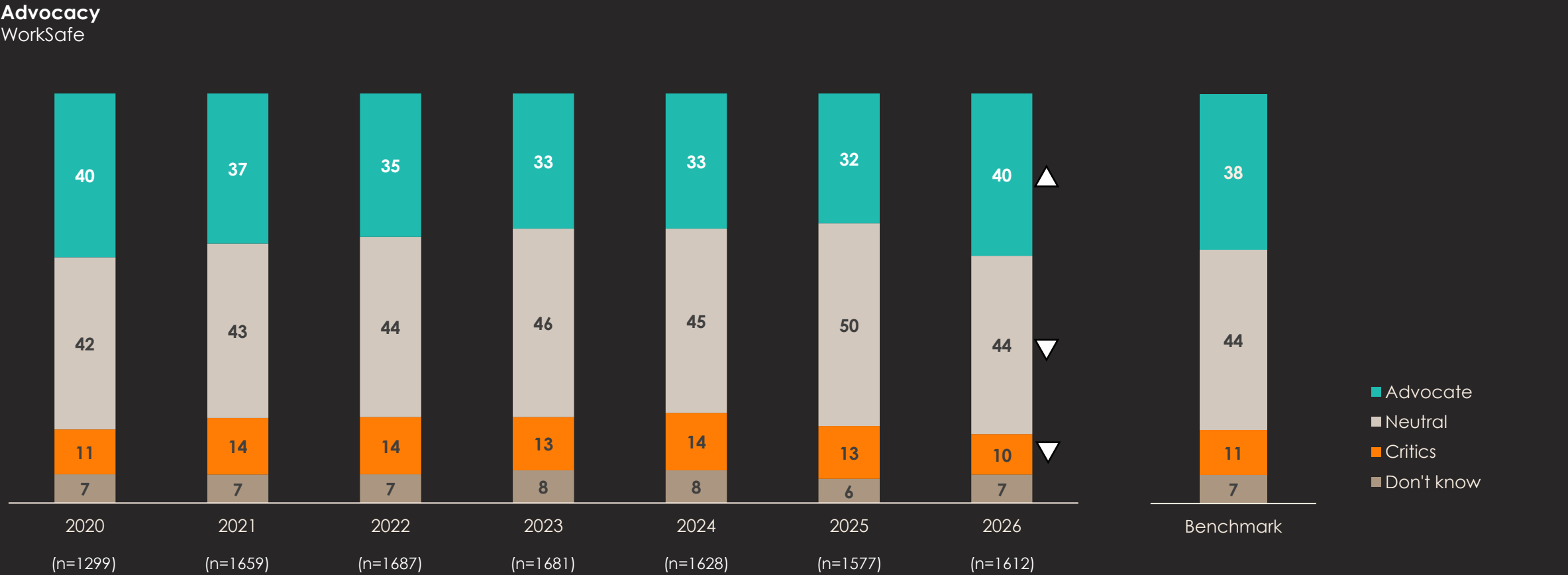


▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe, excludes Don't know, base sizes shown on chart



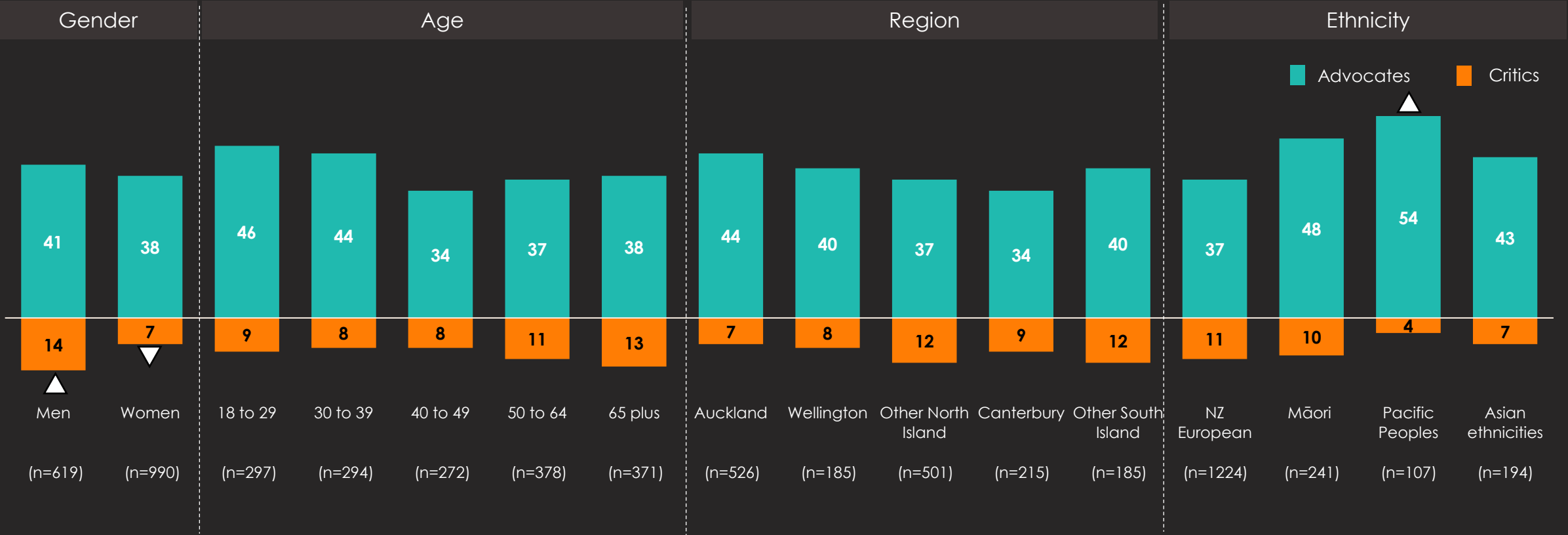
5. Advocacy

Four in ten New Zealanders are advocates for WorkSafe and would speak highly of the agency if asked. Advocacy has increased significantly from 2025, with a decrease in those who are neutral. The proportion who are critics has also decreased.



BASE: All respondents aware of WorkSafe, base sizes shown on chart

Pacific peoples are more likely to be advocates for WorkSafe, while men are more likely to be critics.



▼▲ These differences are significant at the 95% confidence level
BASE: All respondents aware of WorkSafe, base sizes shown on chart

People would advocate for WorkSafe due to positive personal experiences and interactions, trust in their role and expertise, and a strong belief that they effectively protect and support workers' safety.

What advocates say about WorkSafe.



Because they have policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe in their workplace.

Female, aged 65 - 69, Māori, Gisborne



I have been on some of their courses and dealt with them in the past. I think they do a great job.

Female, aged 60 - 64, European, Northland



You trust this organisation to provide rules and regulations so we feel we are working in a safe environment. They would assist and be there to protect the workers if they are contacted regarding unsafe working conditions/areas/equipment.

Female, aged 55 - 59, European, Canterbury



They have a well detailed and user-friendly website which supported my working queries.

Male, aged 18 - 19, Asian ethnicities, Auckland



Have done training and was excellent.

Male, aged 60 - 64, European, Southland



From my own dealings with them in the past. Also from the experiences told to me by my friends.

Male, aged 50 - 54, European / Māori, Wellington

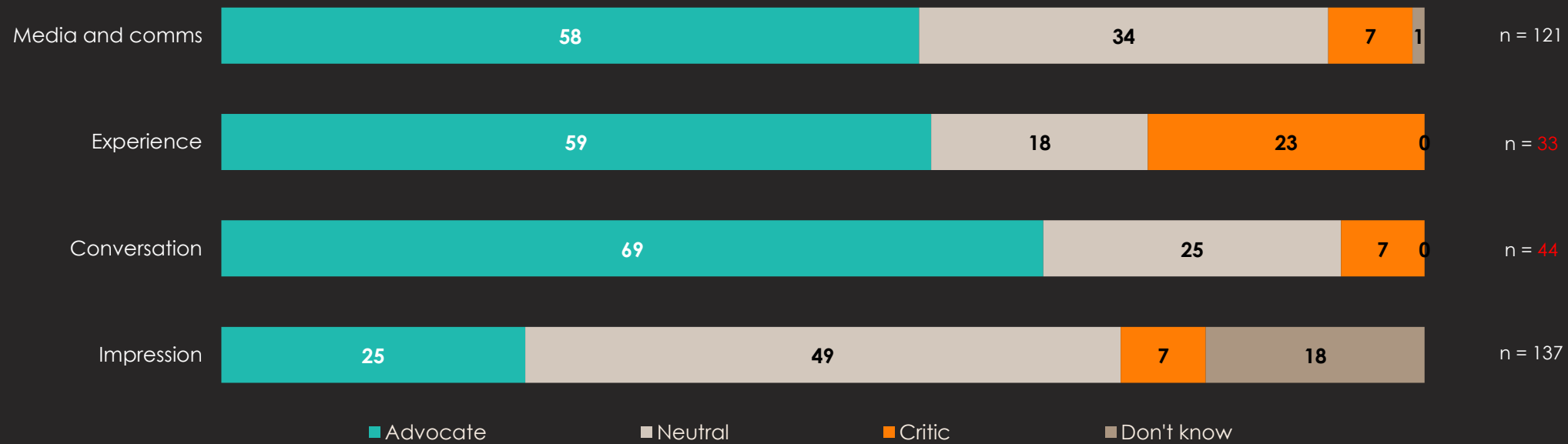


Because I have worked with them in the past.

Male, aged 35 - 39, European / Māori, Waikato

Strengthening understanding of WorkSafe’s role could further enhance its reputation. Those who base their views on media and communications, direct experience, or word of mouth are more likely to advocate for the organisation than those relying on general impressions alone.

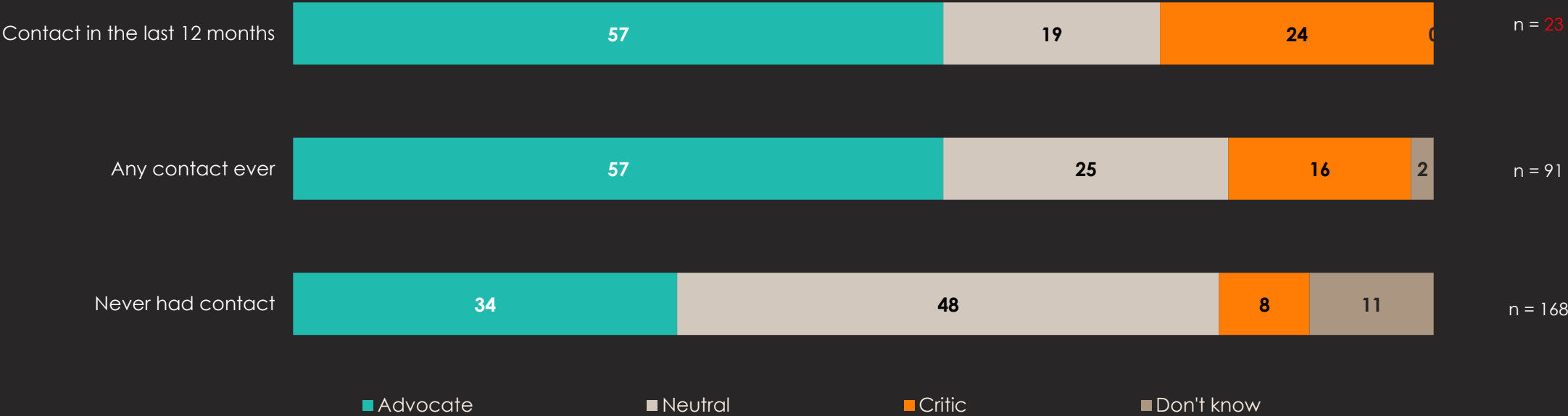
Advocacy by source of reputation



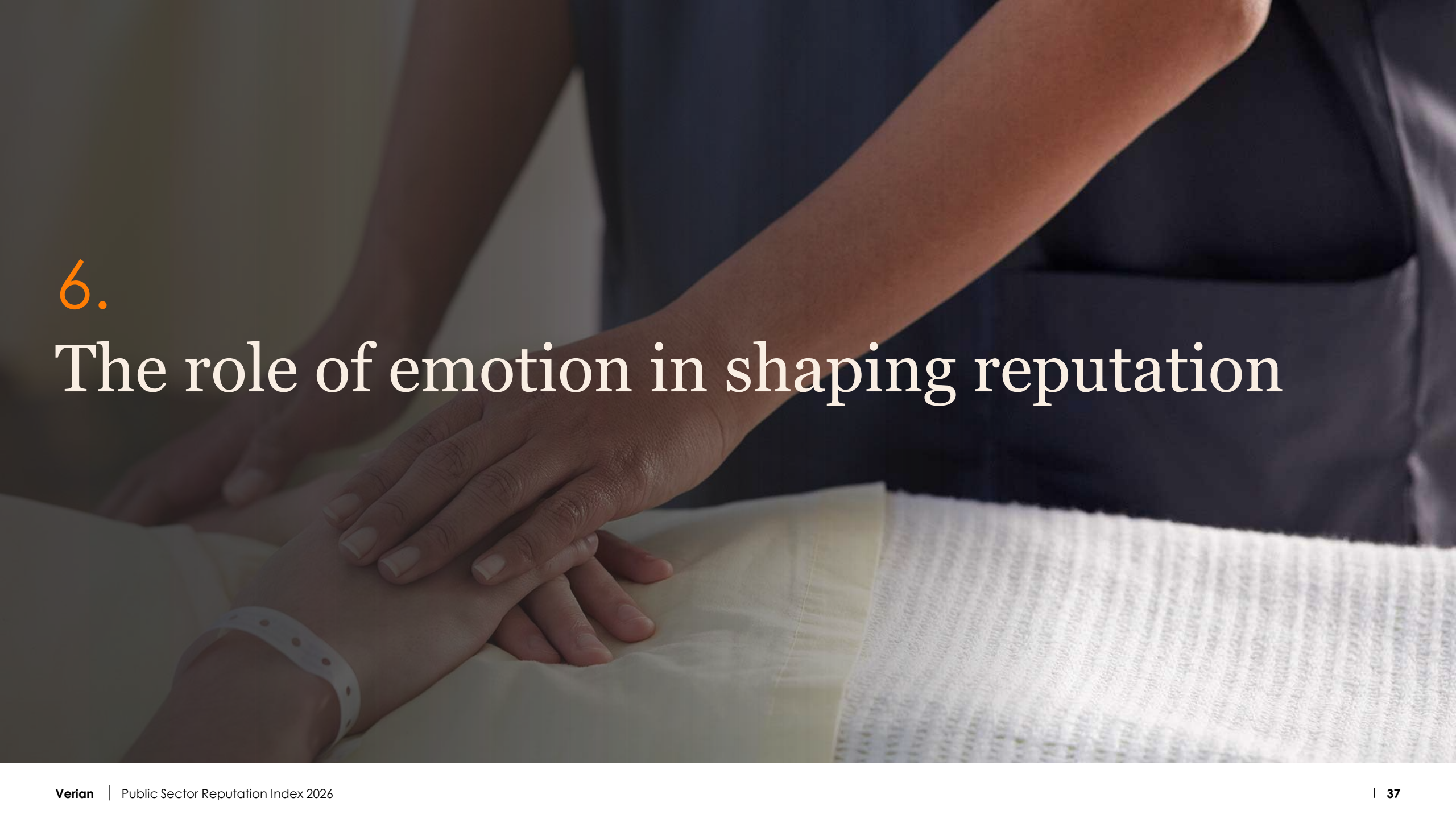
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe whose views are influenced by each source, base sizes shown on chart

Consistent with the previous slide, advocacy is especially high among those who have engaged with WorkSafe at some point.

Advocacy by time since last contact



BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe in 2026 by contact with the organisation, base sizes shown on chart

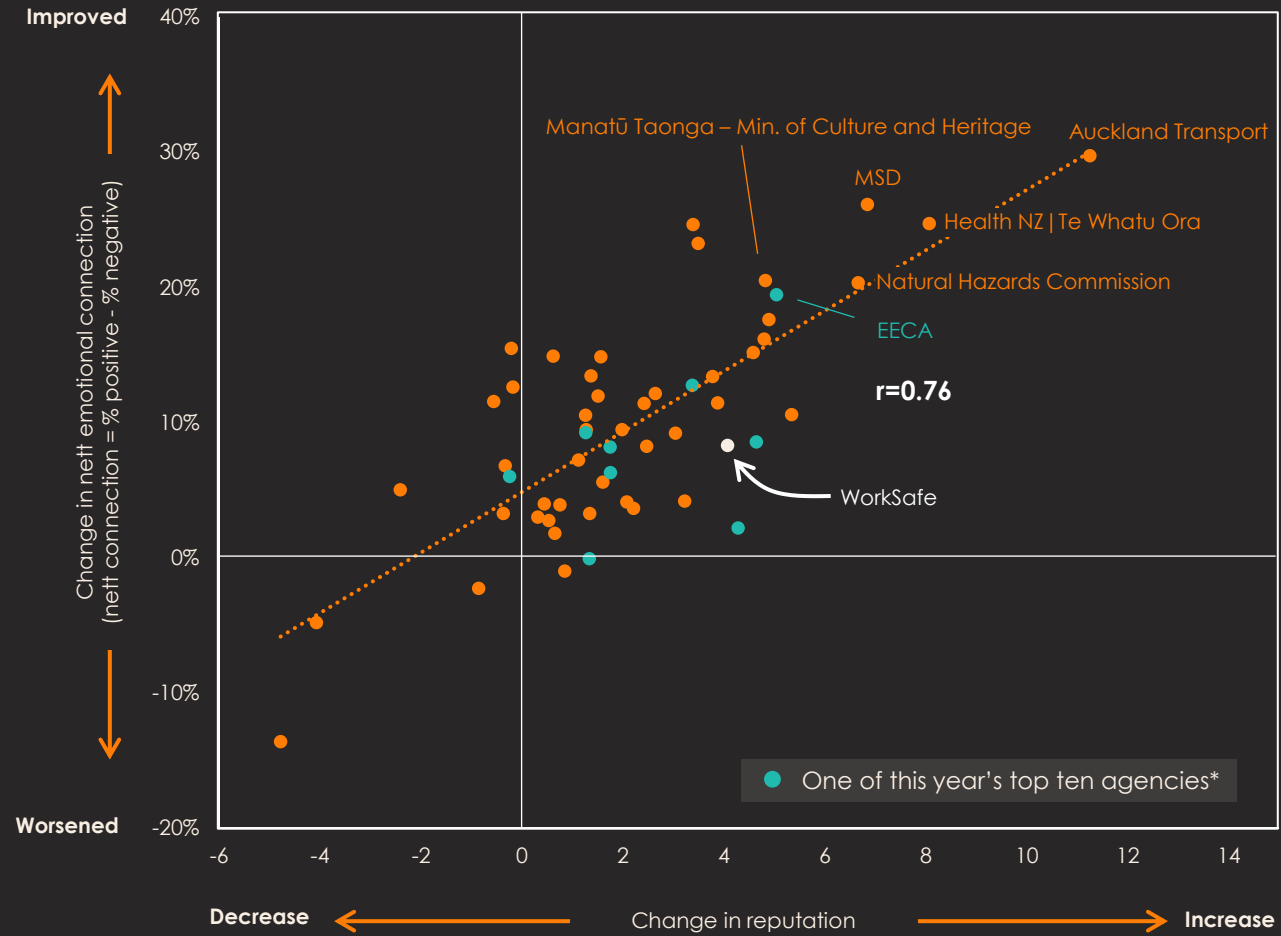
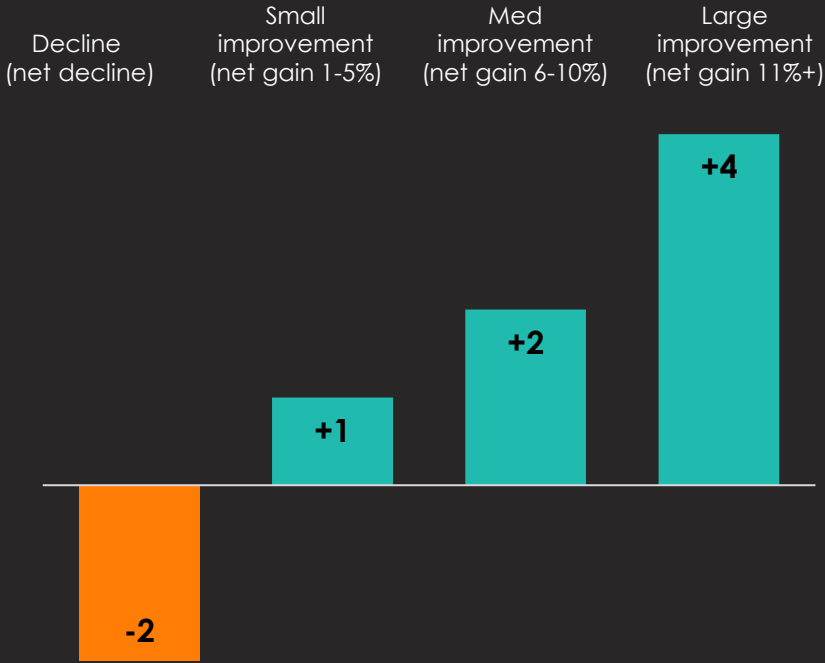
A close-up photograph showing a person in a blue uniform, likely a healthcare worker, holding the hand of a patient lying in a hospital bed. The patient's hand is resting on a white blanket, and a white hospital identification band is visible on their wrist. The background is softly blurred, focusing attention on the hand-holding gesture.

6.

The role of emotion in shaping reputation

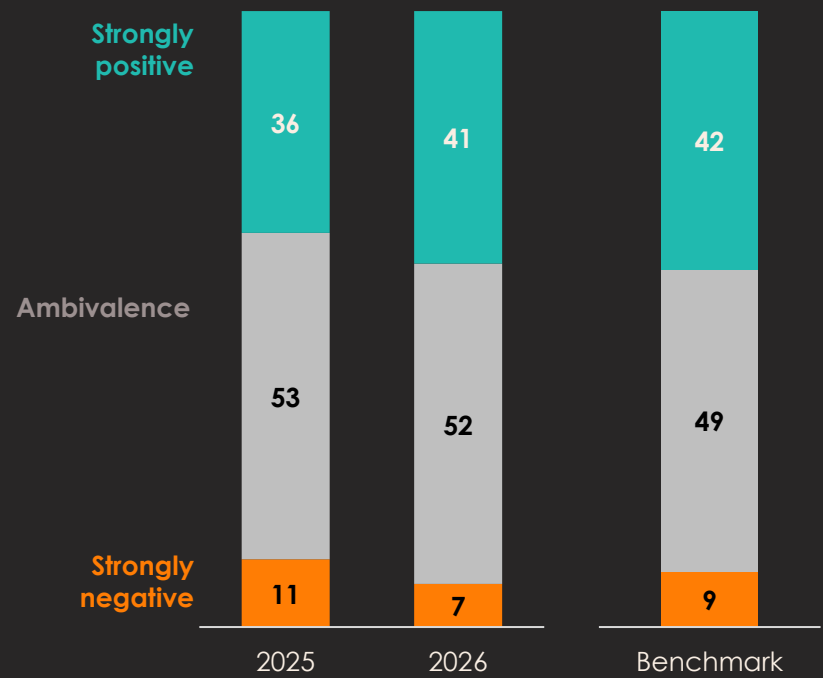
We know that strengthening emotional connection is a key enabler of reputational improvement. Agencies that deepen their emotional connection with New Zealanders can build trust and strengthen their overall reputation.

Average change in reputation score for agencies that saw a net change in emotional connection from 2024 to 2025.

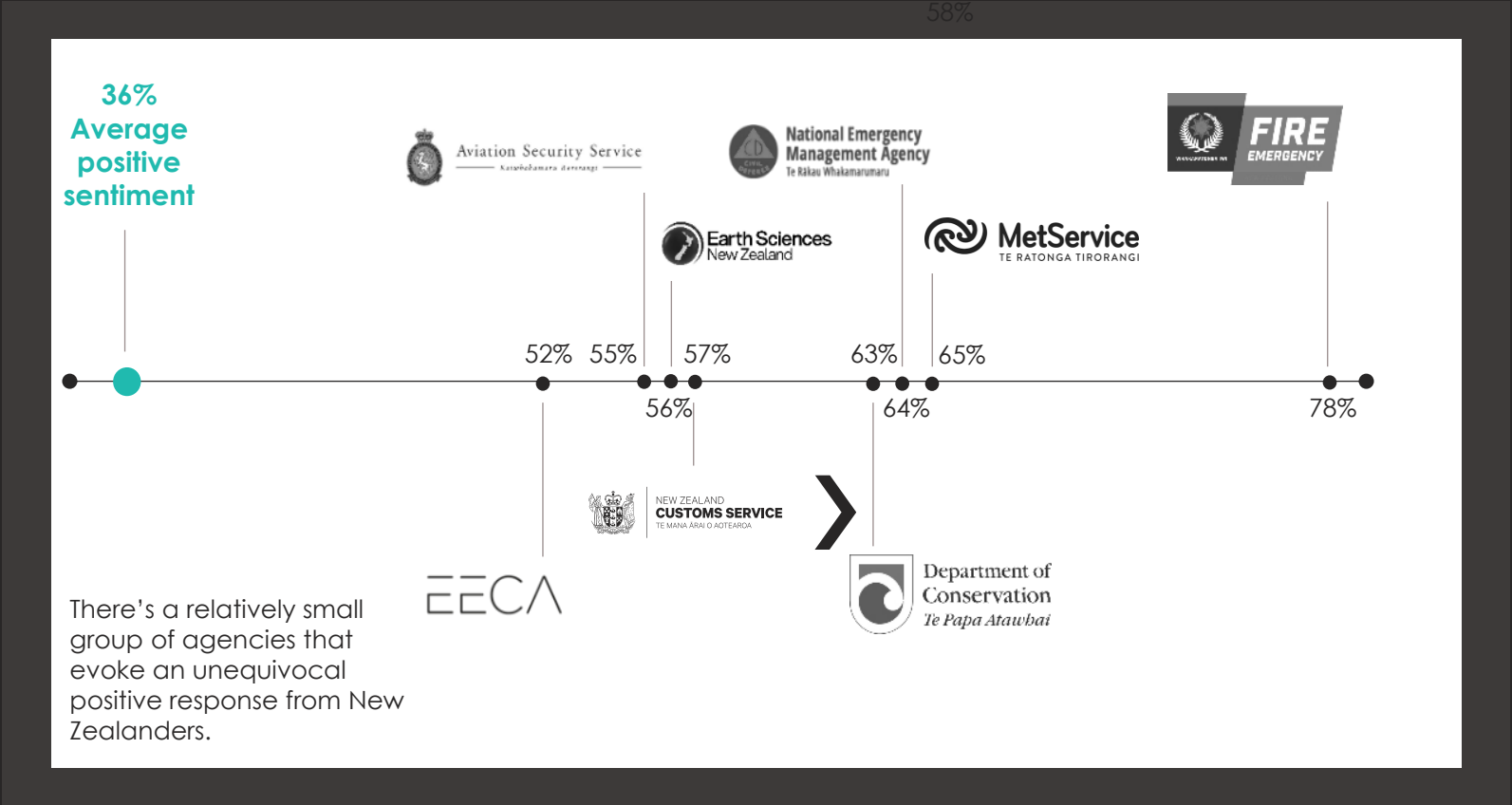


Positive sentiment towards WorkSafe is slightly higher than in 2025, now at 41%. This is in line with the benchmark agency average, and slightly ahead of the whole sector average.

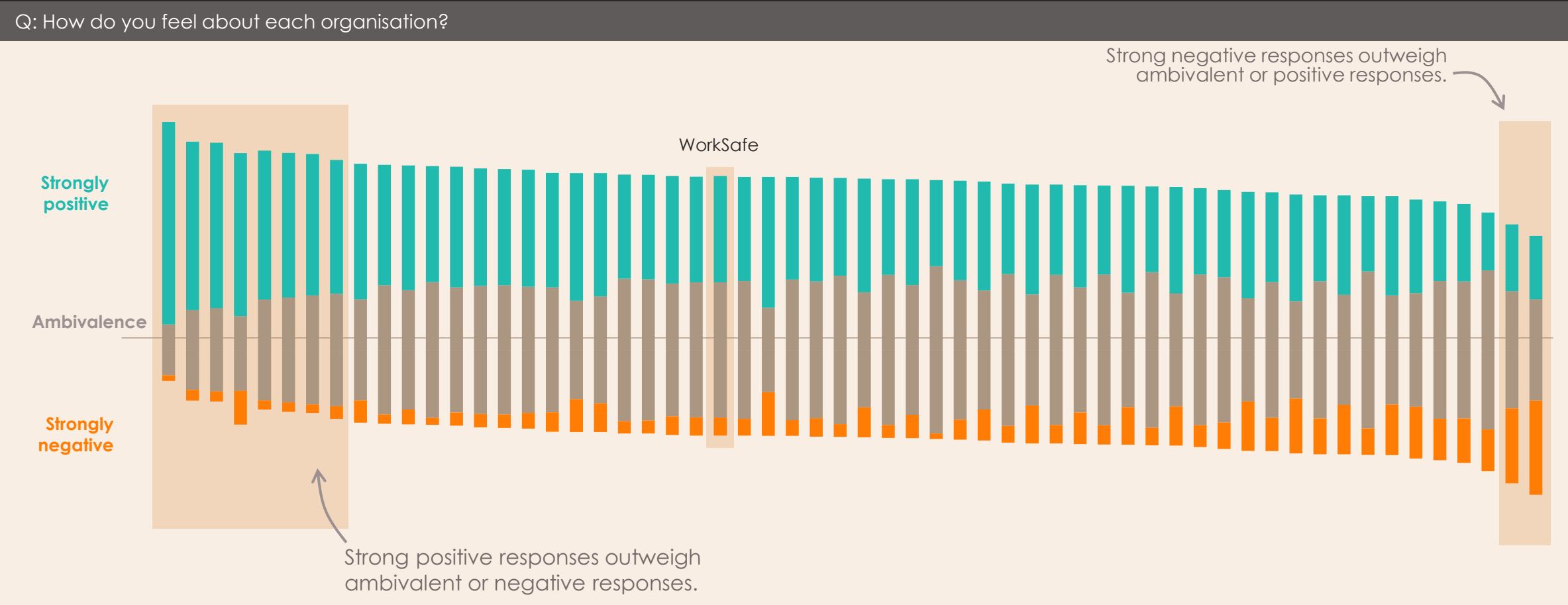
Emotive response to public sector organisations



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe in 2026 (n=300), 2025 (n=291)



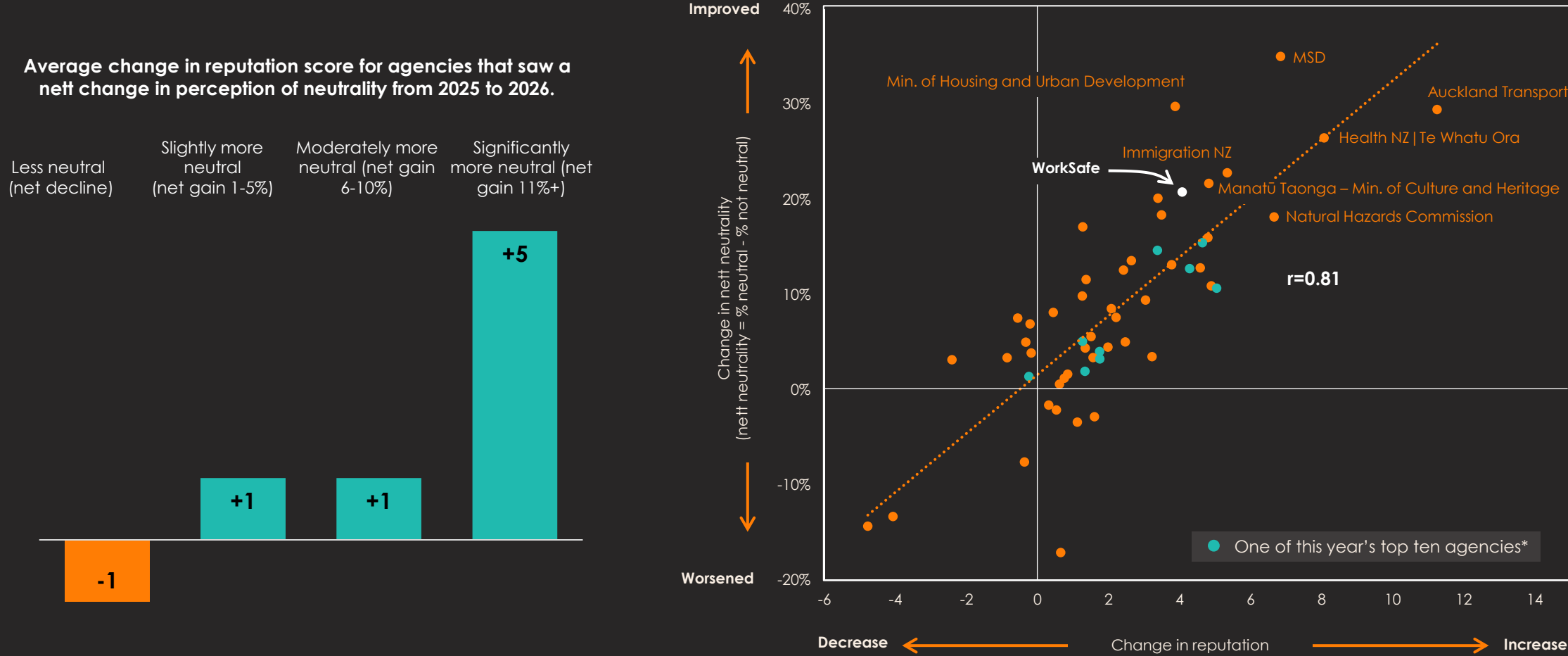
WorkSafe sits near the midpoint of all public sector agencies for sentiment. This presents an opportunity to improve reputation by creating a deeper connection with New Zealanders. For WorkSafe, perhaps this could be achieved by more visibly demonstrating the real-world impact of its work - sharing relatable stories of how it has helped protect workers and families, increasing community engagement, and making its support feel more accessible and human.



7. Political neutrality

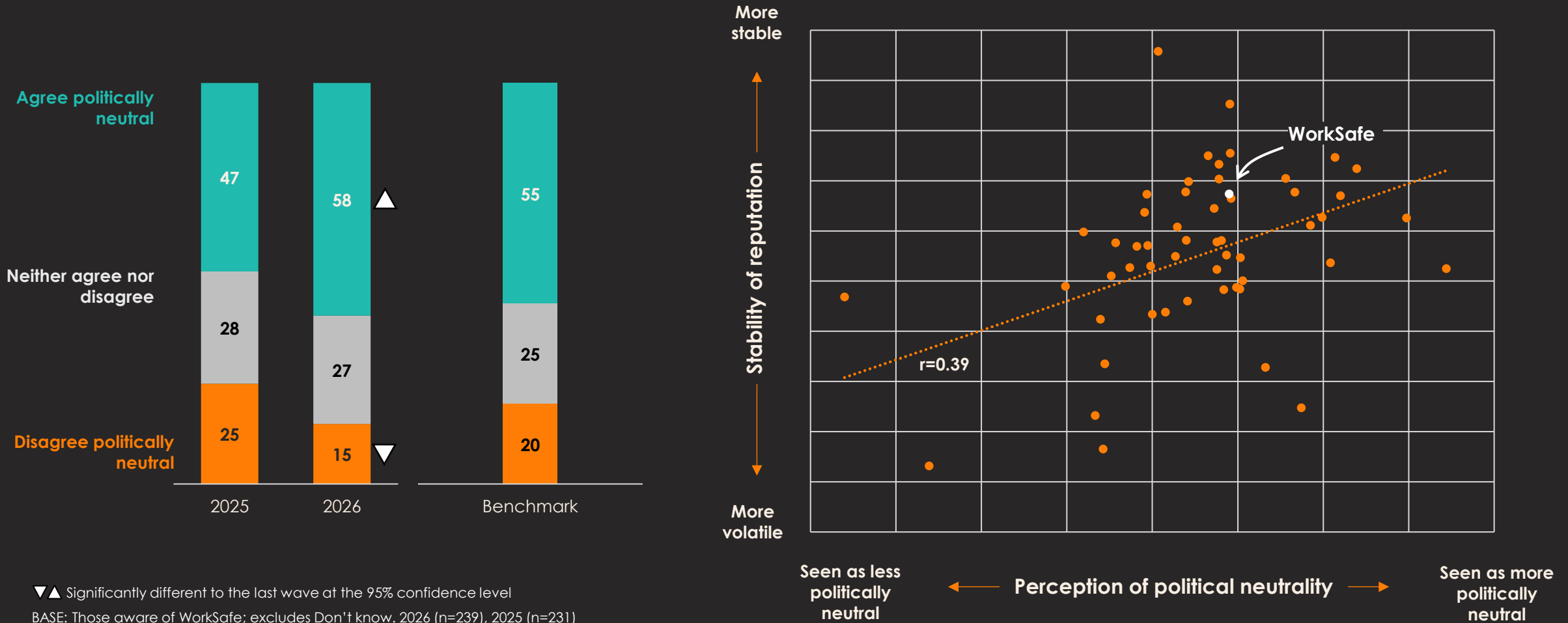


Agencies seen as *more apolitical* compared to last year tended to see an improvement to their reputation.

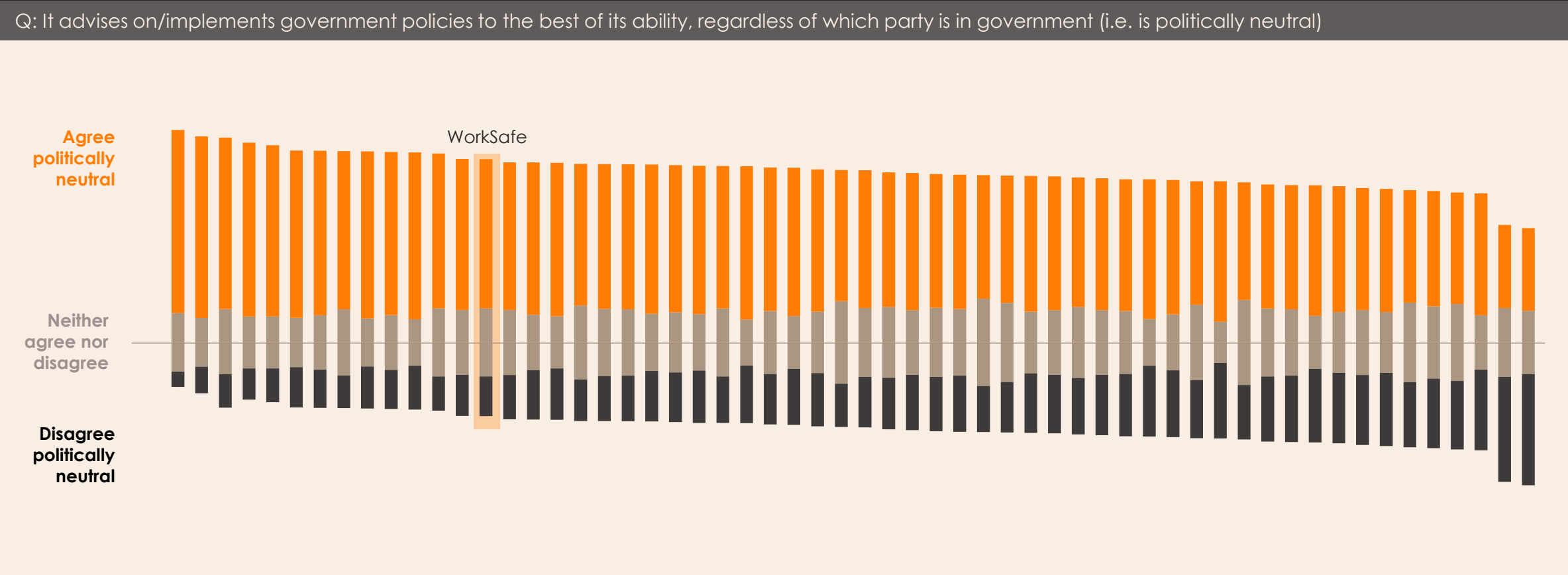


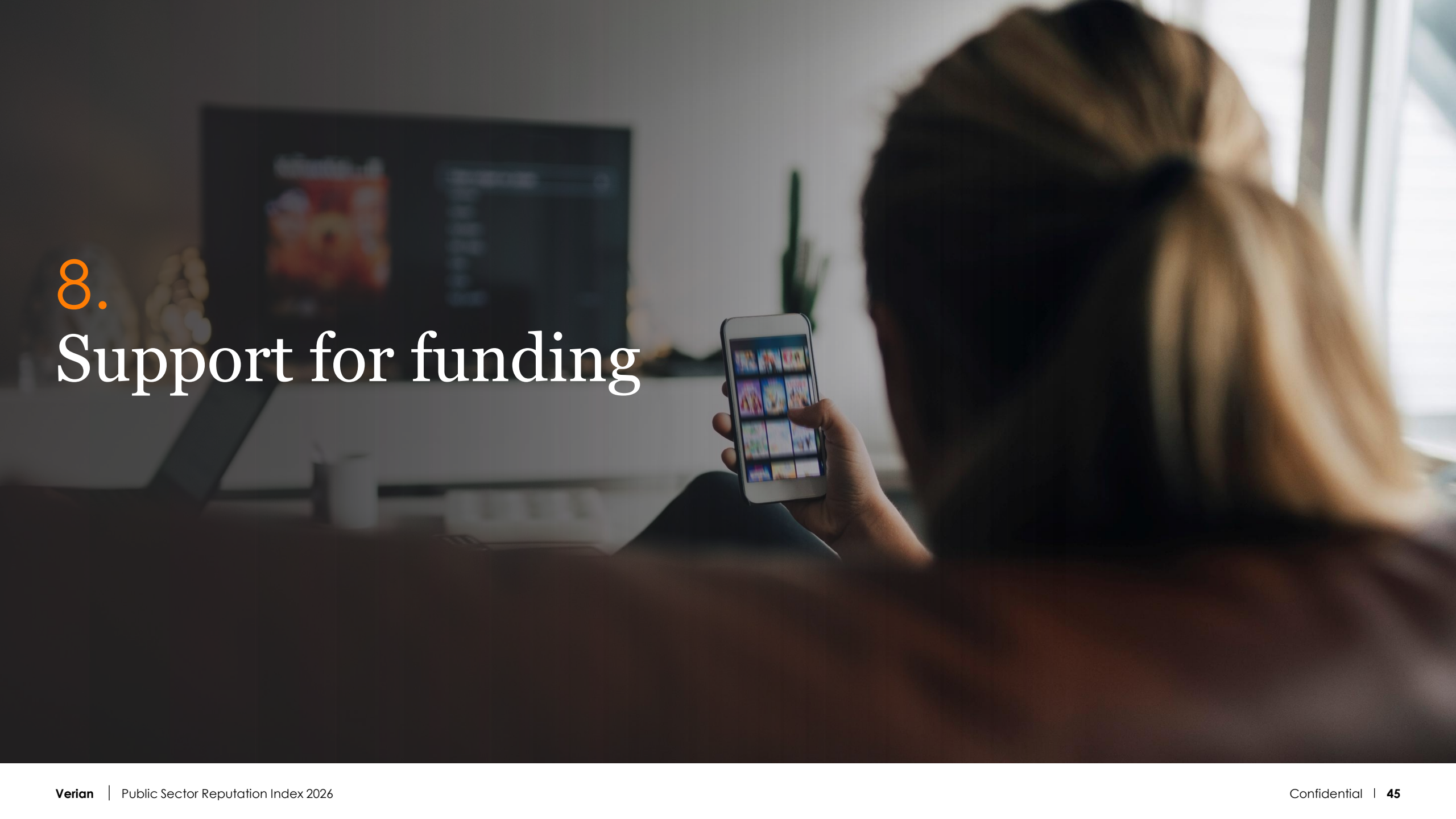
Perceptions of WorkSafe’s political neutrality have improved significantly since 2025. WorkSafe is now seen as slightly more apolitical than the benchmark average.

Political neutrality [The agency] advises on/implements government policies to the best of its ability, regardless of which party is in government (i.e. is politically neutral)



WorkSafe sits in the upper third of all agencies for political neutrality. This is an improvement from sitting below the midpoint in 2025.

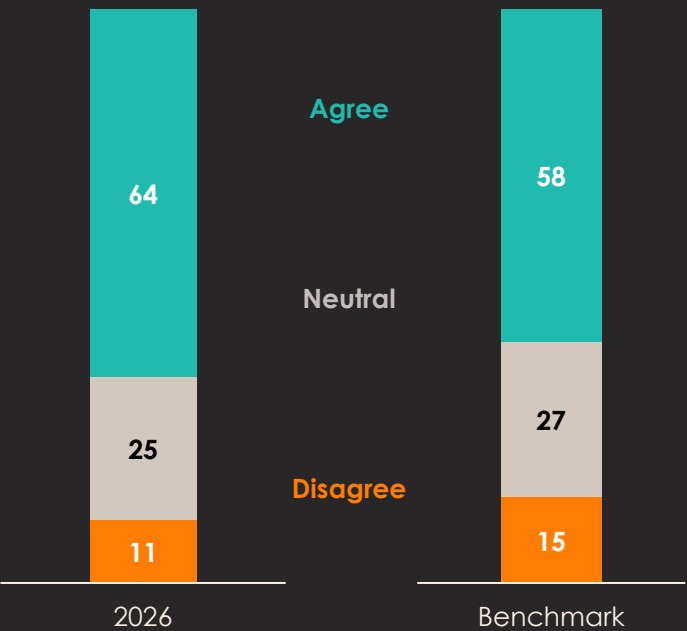




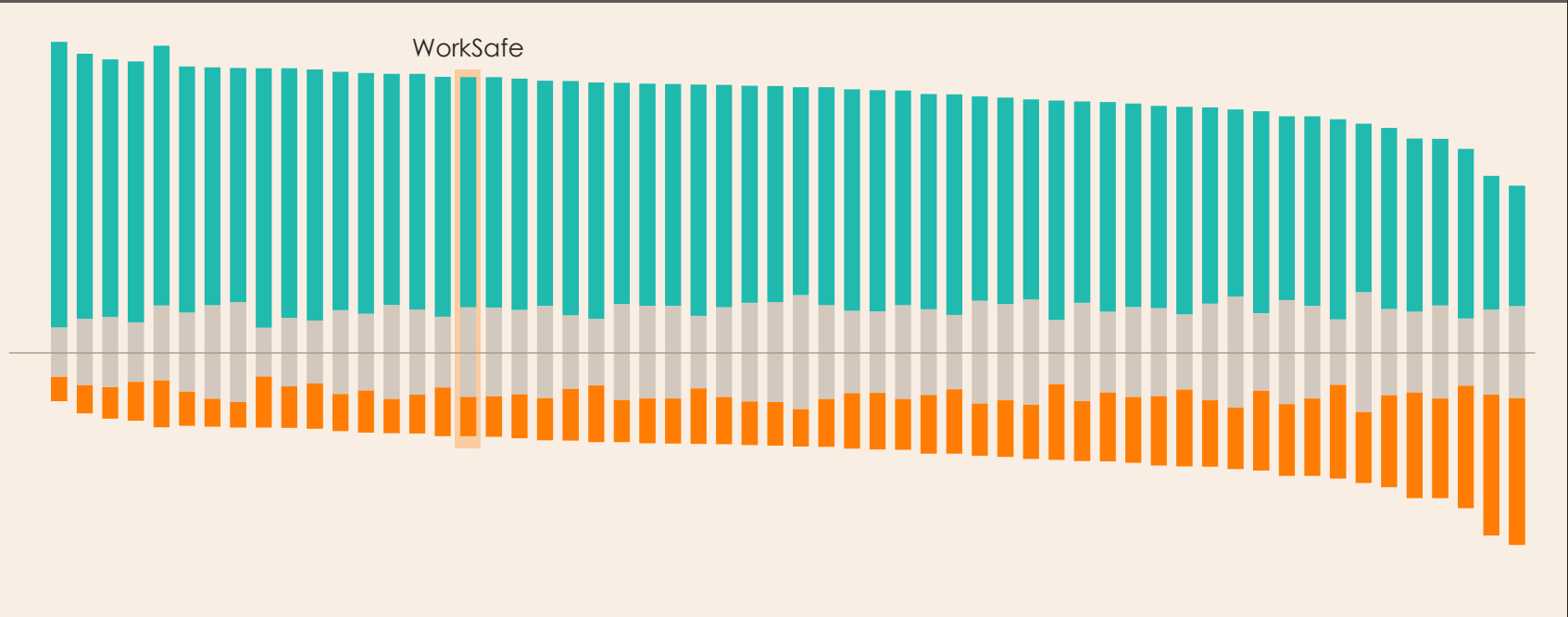
8. Support for funding

Almost two thirds of New Zealanders agree that WorkSafe has maintained service delivery despite public sector funding cuts. This is slightly higher than the benchmark average.

Service delivery through funding restraint



Q: Has maintained its level of service since the public sector funding cuts

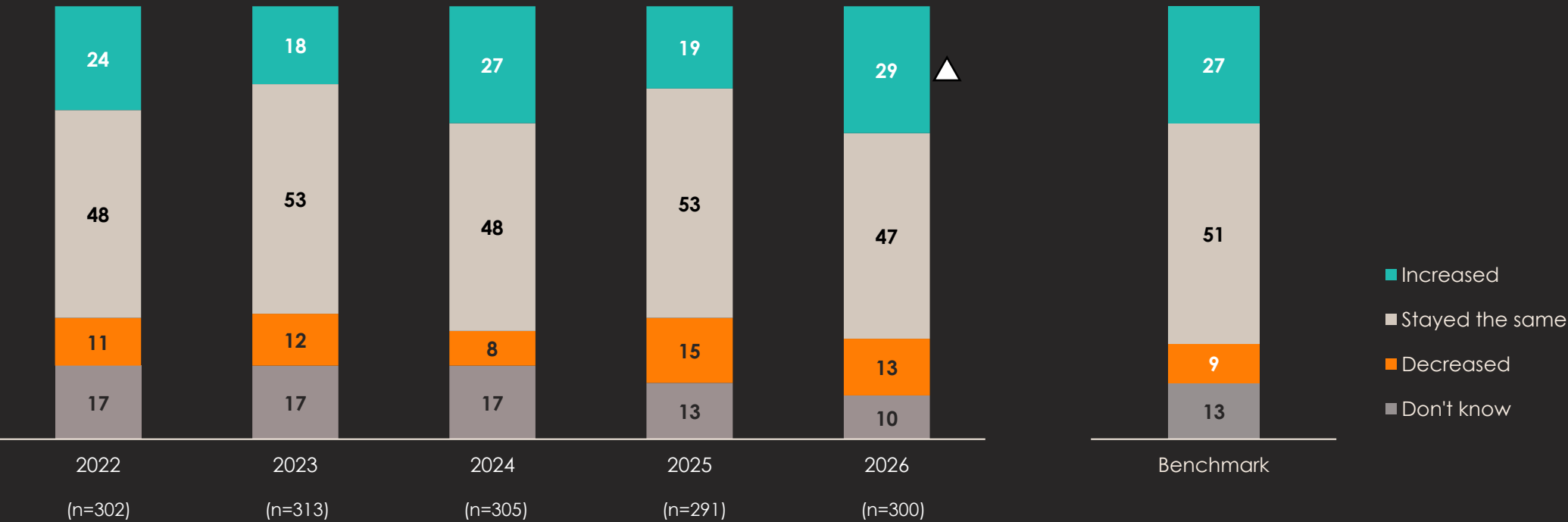


BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. 2026 (n=203)

Support for increasing WorkSafe funding has strengthened this year, rising ten points since 2025 to match the benchmark average.

Social license to operate

Should WorkSafe's funding increase, decrease or stay the same?

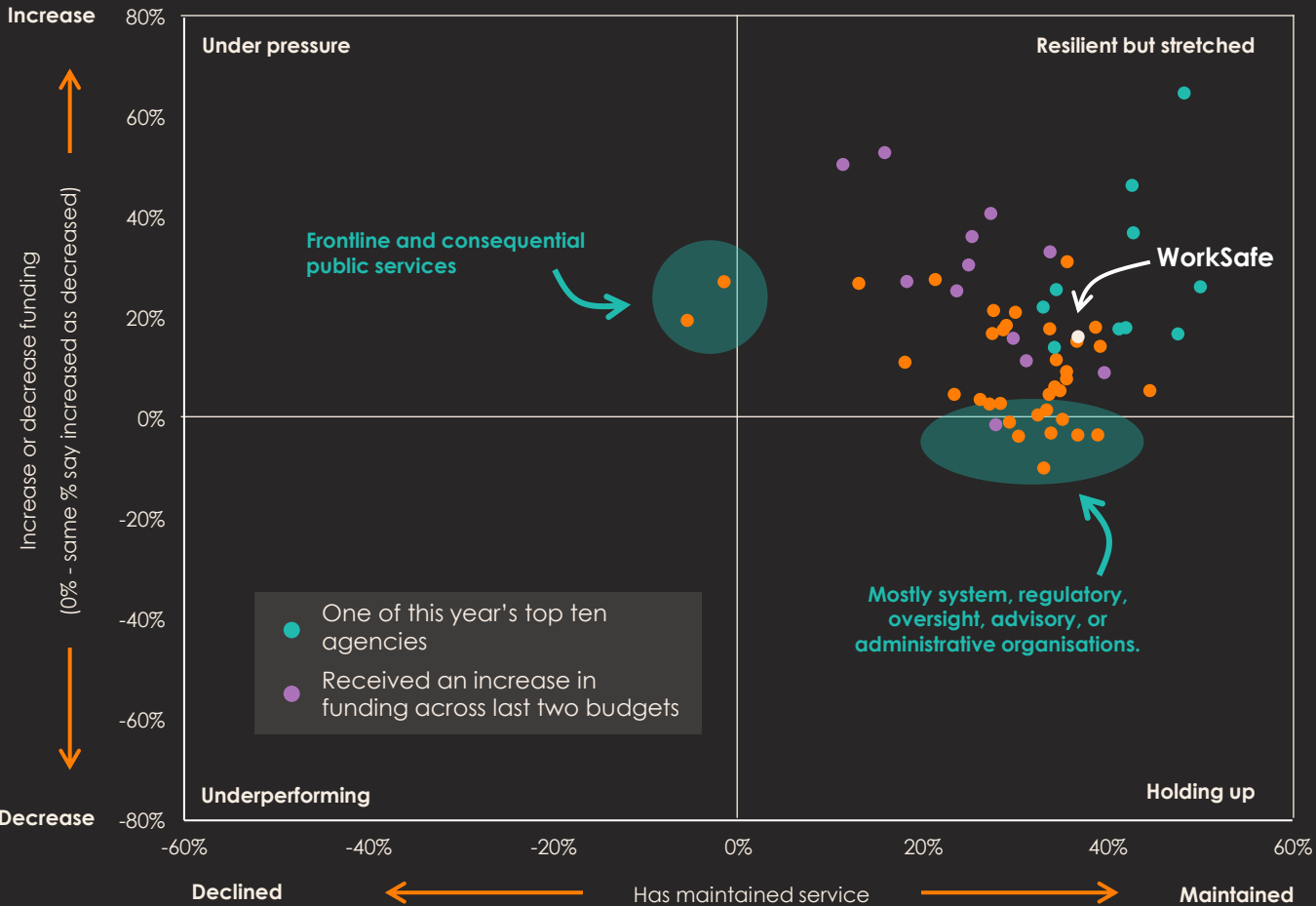


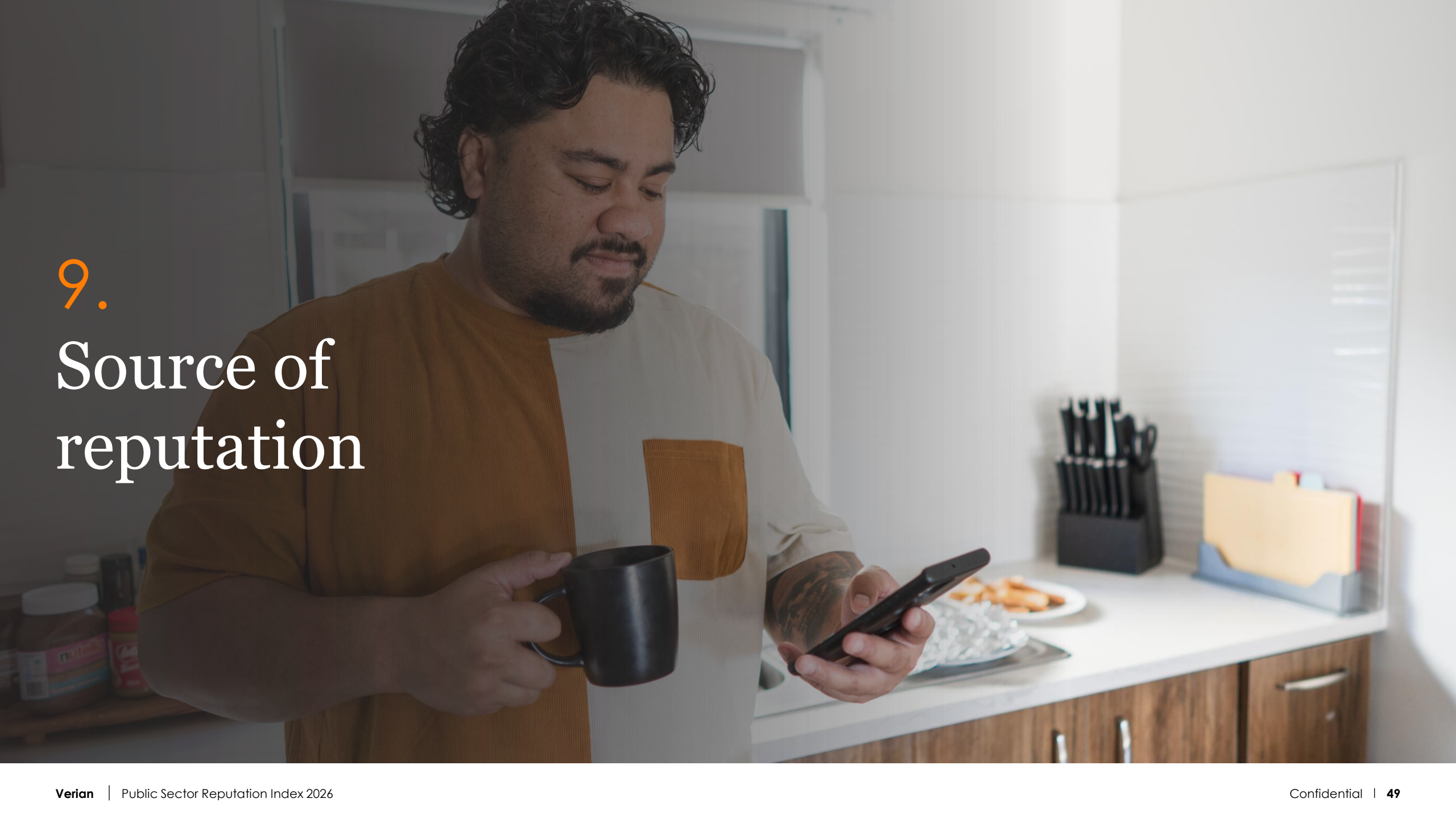
▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level

BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe, base sizes shown on chart

Most New Zealanders believe the public sector has been resilient in the face of funding restraint.

WorkSafe is clustered with agencies that New Zealanders believe are managing reasonably with current funding, even in a constrained environment.

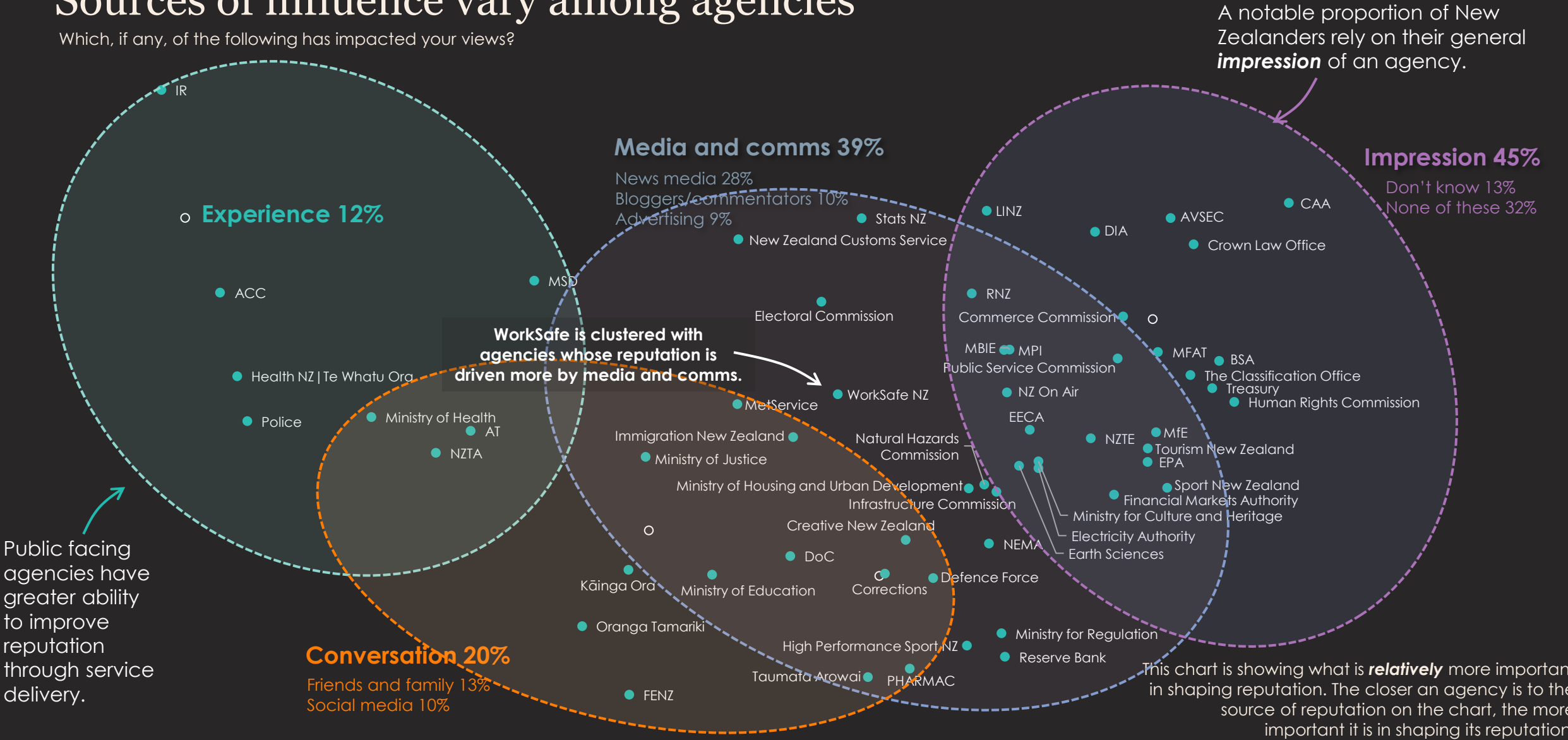


A man with dark, curly hair and a beard is standing in a kitchen. He is wearing a brown and white long-sleeved shirt. He is holding a black mug in his right hand and a smartphone in his left hand, looking down at the phone. The kitchen has white cabinets and a white countertop. On the countertop, there is a knife block with several knives, a plate of food, and a folder. The background is slightly blurred.

9. Source of reputation

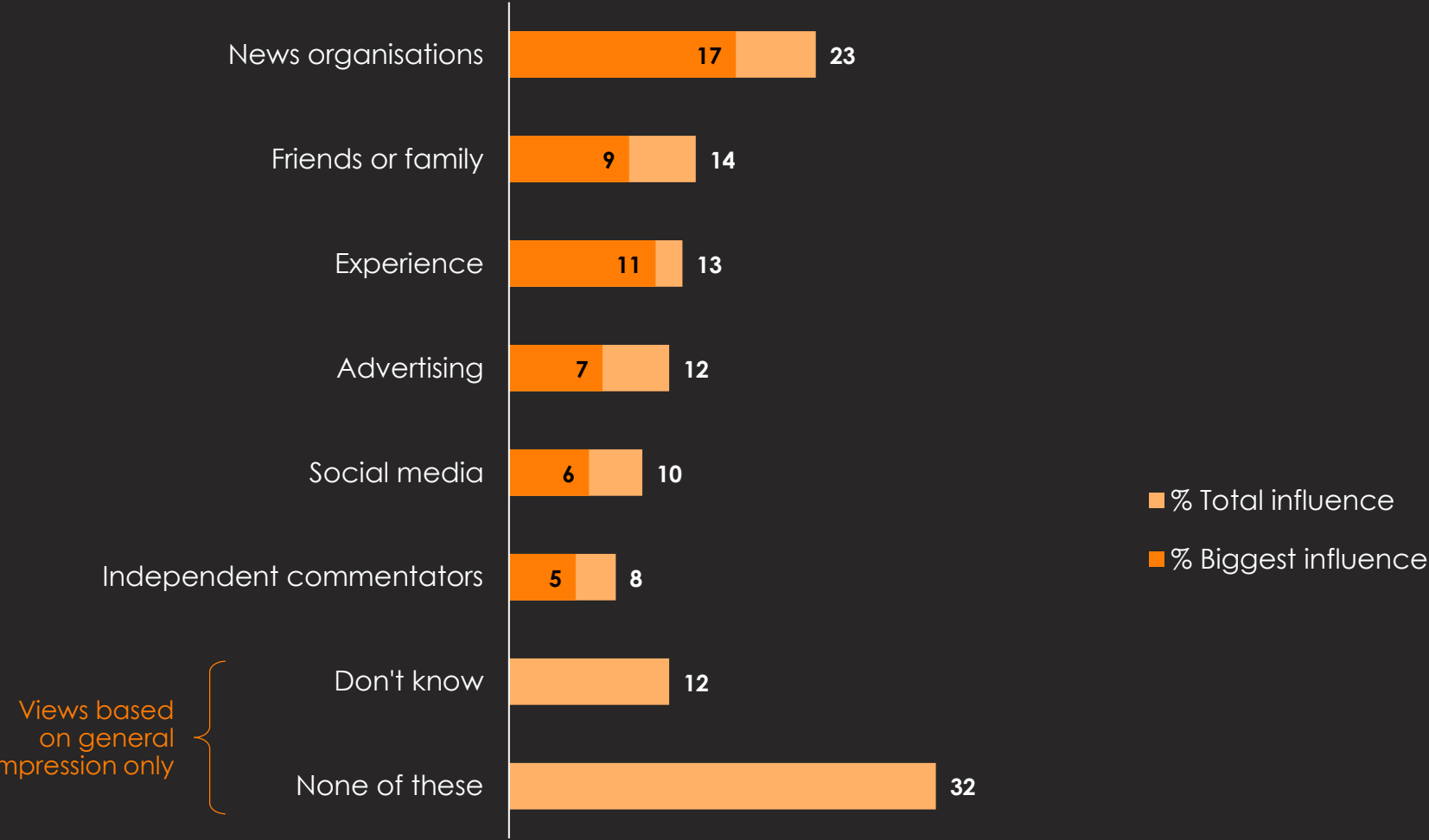
Sources of influence vary among agencies

Which, if any, of the following has impacted your views?



News organisations are the main source of influence on people’s views of WorkSafe, although 44% of New Zealanders aware of WorkSafe base their views of the organisation on general impression only (i.e., 12% don’t know what has influenced their views, and 32% say none of these sources have influenced them).

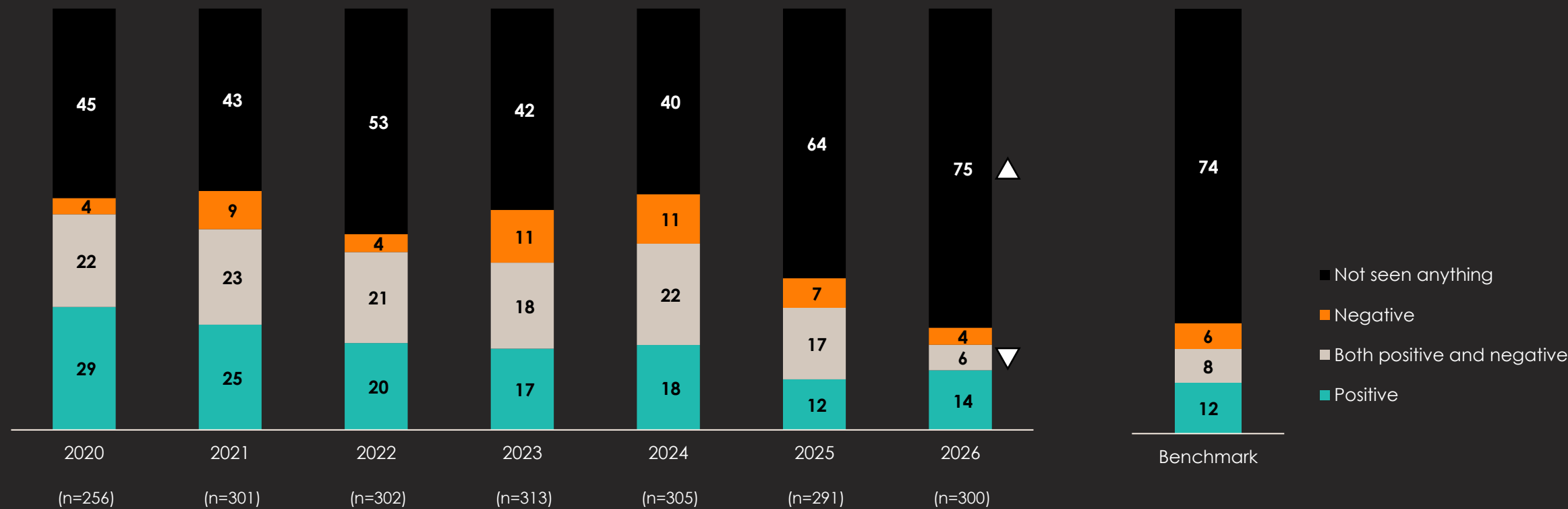
What impacts people's views of WorkSafe



BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe in 2026 (n=300)

Although news organisations are the main source of influence on views of WorkSafe, fewer people recall seeing or hearing about it in the media this year.

Sentiment of what was seen / heard in the media



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level

BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe, base sizes shown on chart

People tend to recall WorkSafe in the media through a mix of workplace incident investigations, enforcement actions, and safety campaigns, alongside some perceptions of regulatory burden or red tape.

What people have seen or heard about WorkSafe

“

All the work investigations after accidents.
Female, aged 20 - 25, European, Canterbury

It was a conversation with a friend. He stated that he was required to reapply for something. I think he was a bit anxious about doing it but it ended up being an easy thing to do.
Male, aged 50 - 54, European / Māori, Wellington

Online safety renewals.
Male, aged 45 - 49, European, Southland

Too picky, too much red tape.
Female, aged 70 - 74, Māori/European, Wellington

Paperwork at my work.
Female, aged 30 - 34, European, Otago

“

Ads outlining safe practices.
Female, aged 55 - 59, European, Otago

Workplace safety campaigns.
Male, aged 45 - 49, European, Southland

Ad on TV about being safe.
Female, aged 40 - 44, European, Southland

Workmates cheering on worker back into work after time out.
Female, aged 65 - 69, European, Wellington

Fatality in Southland back in 2025. Fatal landslide at Mt Maunganui in 2026.
Female, aged 40 - 44, Pasifika, Auckland

I guess it always has to do with when WorkSafe fails, but they do so much that prevents accidents but no one talks about that and the government is wanting to remove the funding it's just stupid.
Female, aged 40 - 44, European, Auckland

“

Fining companies for non-compliant machinery/protection resulting with injuries to the staff.
Female, aged 55 - 59, European, Canterbury

A TV item reporting a seafood company not taking action on WorkSafe recommendations.
Female, aged 70 - 74, European, Waikato

We learnt about work safe legal cases at university.
Female, aged 20 - 24, European / Māori, Auckland

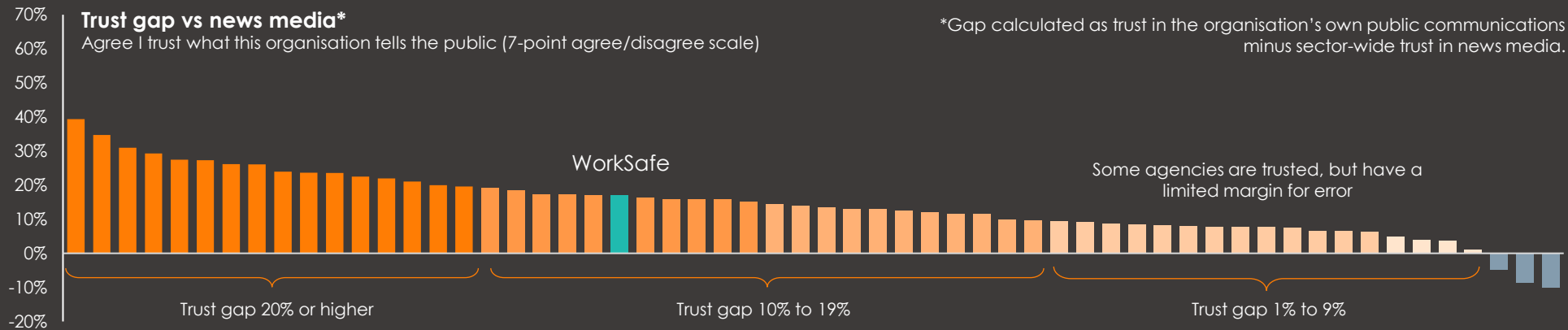
Reading about workplace accidents/deaths in the media and WorkSafe investigating.
Female, aged 60 - 64, European, Auckland

Different newspaper articles about incidents in NZ investigations.
Female, aged 30 - 34, European, Marlborough

Most public sector organisations are trusted to tell their own story more than media and wider information environment.

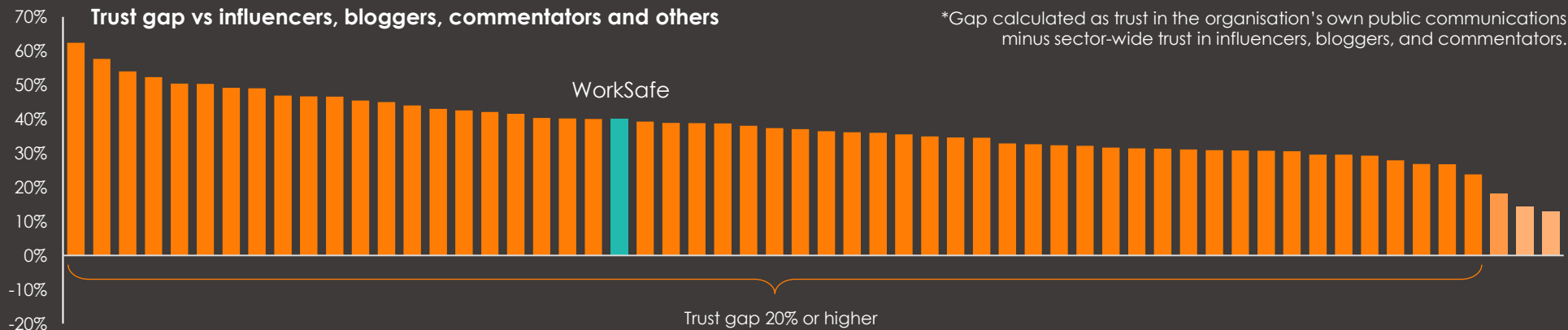
45%

of New Zealanders agree they **trust what news organisations** tell the public about government agencies.



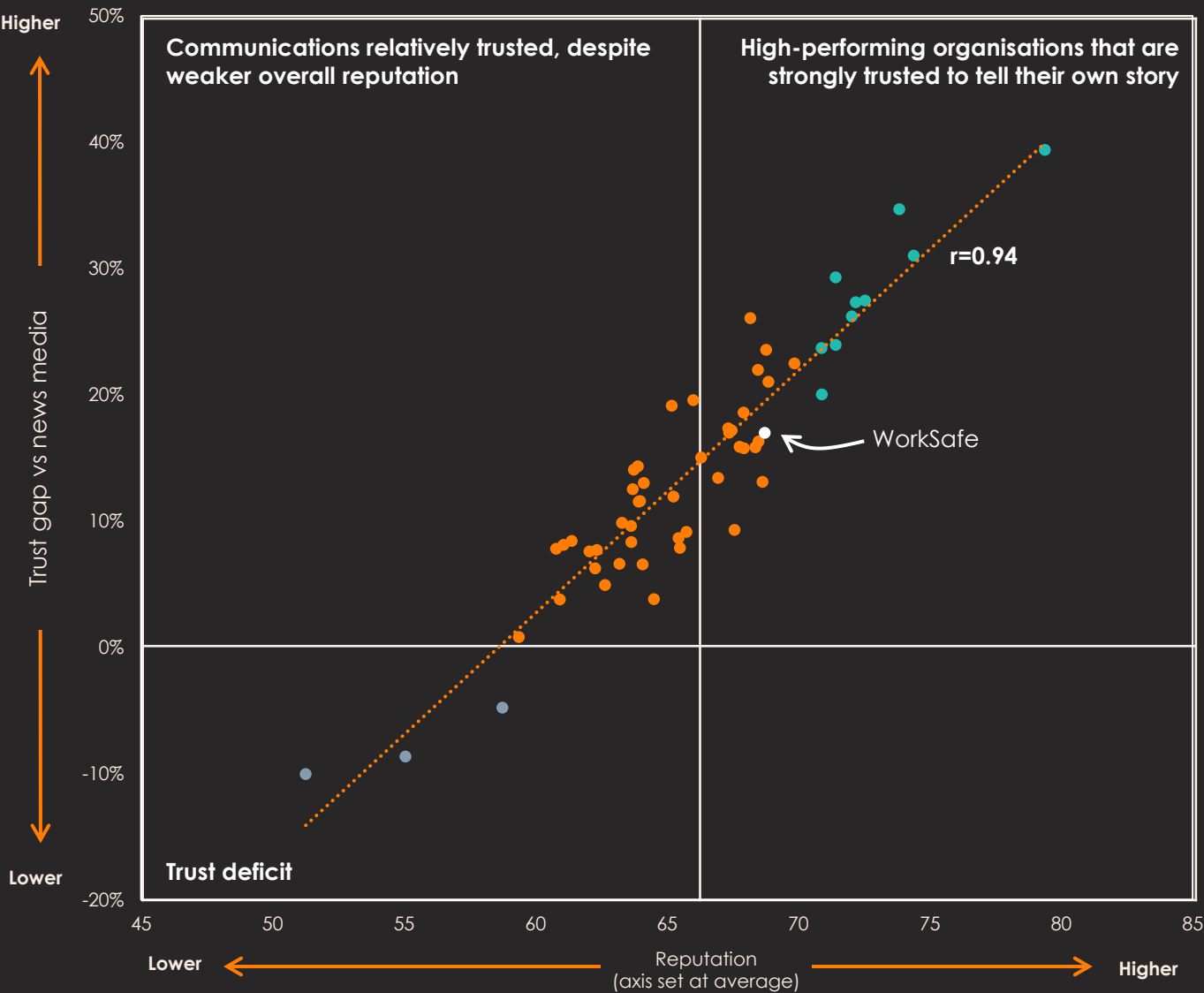
22%

of New Zealanders agree they **trust what influencers, bloggers, commentators and other people they don't know** tell the public about government agencies.



The ability to communicate credibly with the public is intrinsically tied to organisational reputation.

WorkSafe’s reputation puts it in a strong position to tell its own story.

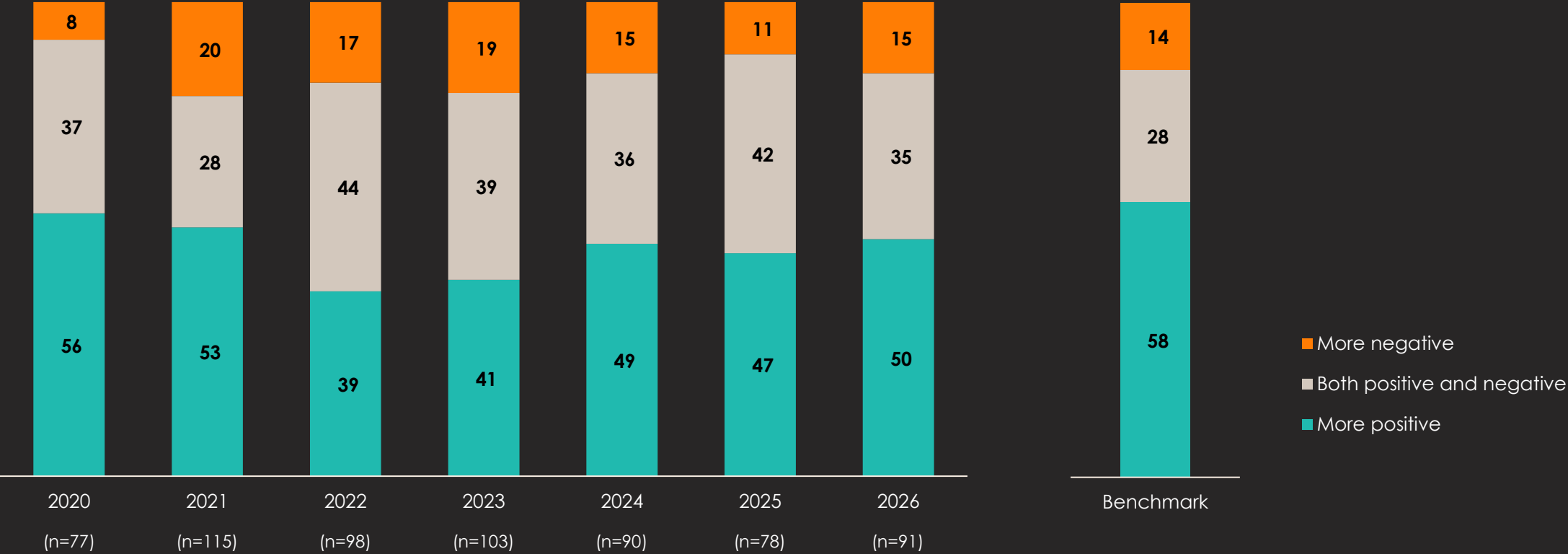




10.
Customer
experience

Fifty percent of those with direct experience with WorkSafe report a positive experience, while only 15% find it negative.

Personal experience with WorkSafe



▼▲ Significantly different to the last wave at the 95% confidence level
BASE: Those who have had direct personal experience with WorkSafe, base sizes shown on chart

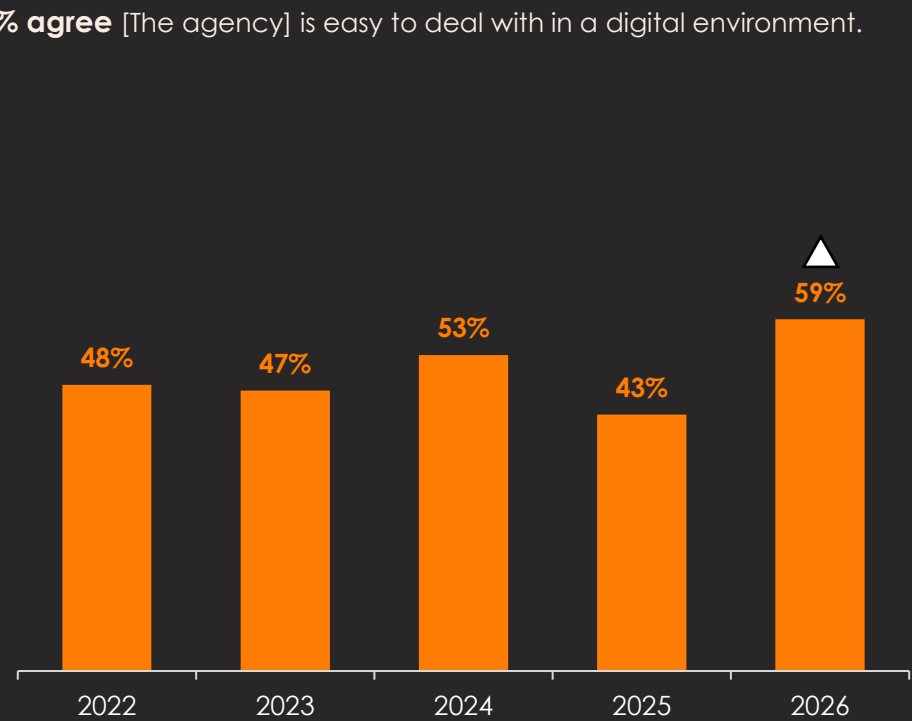
The primary sources of experience with WorkSafe are in face-to-face interactions (40%) and service delivery (33%).

Source of experience

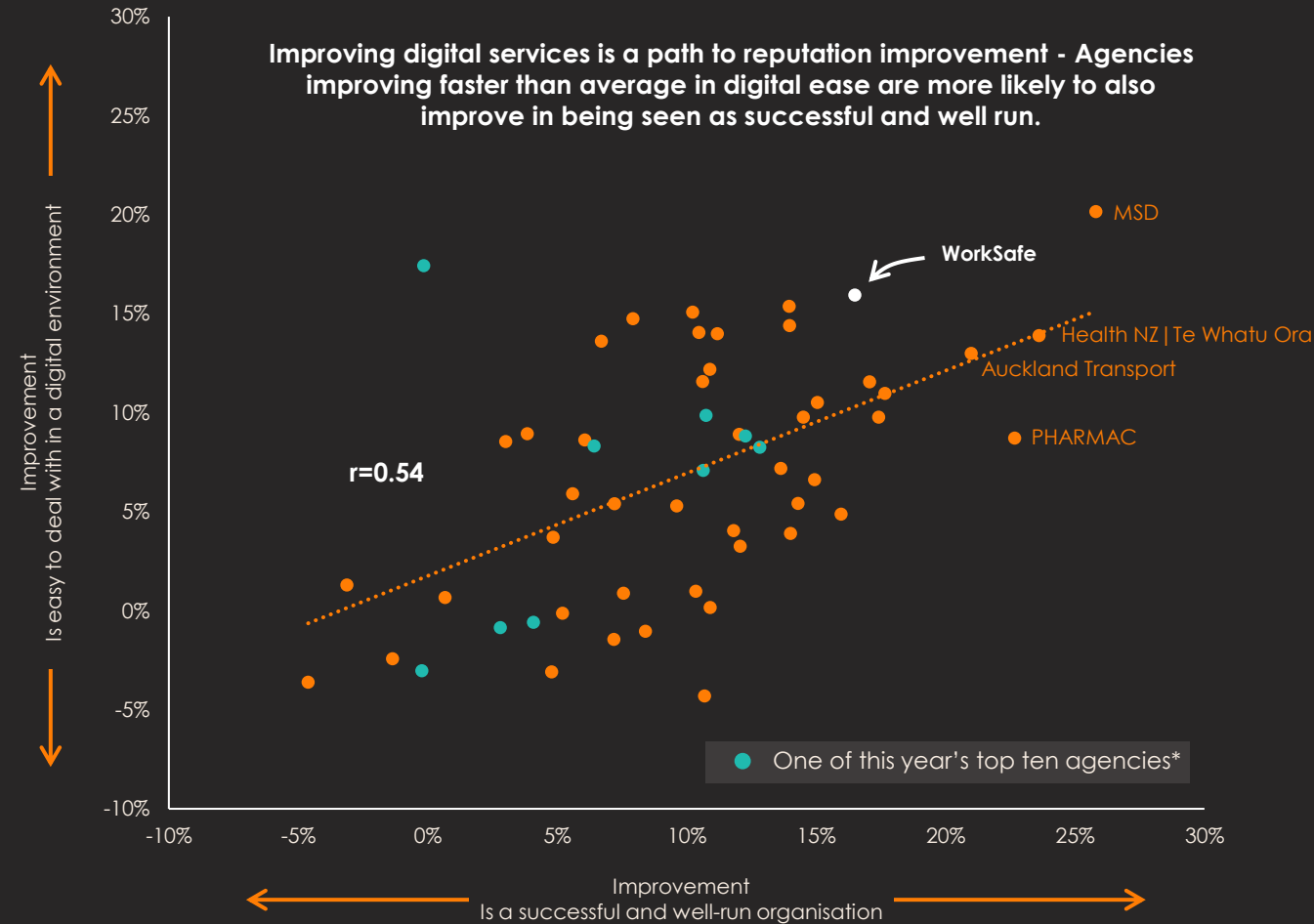


BASE: Those who have had direct personal experience with WorkSafe in 2026 (n=91)

Since last year WorkSafe is considered to have improved its digital ease, coinciding with stronger perceptions of the organisation as successful and well run.



BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe; excludes Don't know. Minimum base in 2026 (n=173), 2025 (n=118), 2024 (n=128), 2023 (n=115), 2022 (n=125), 2021 (n=132)

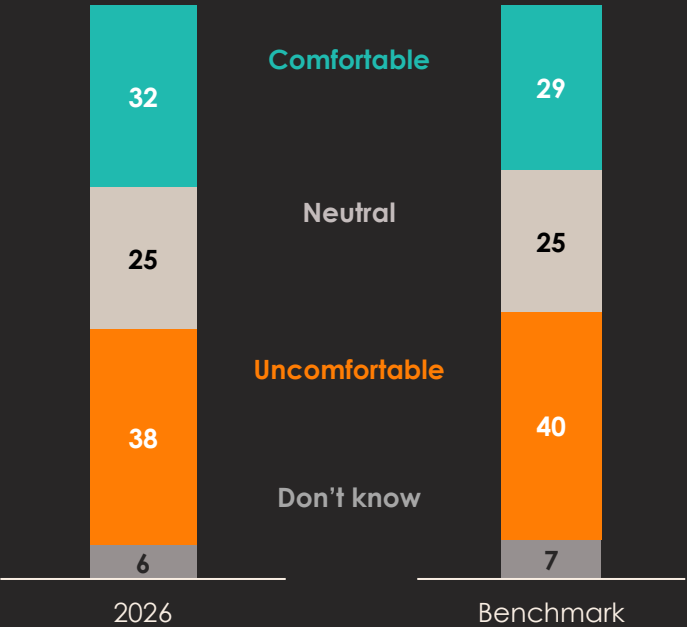




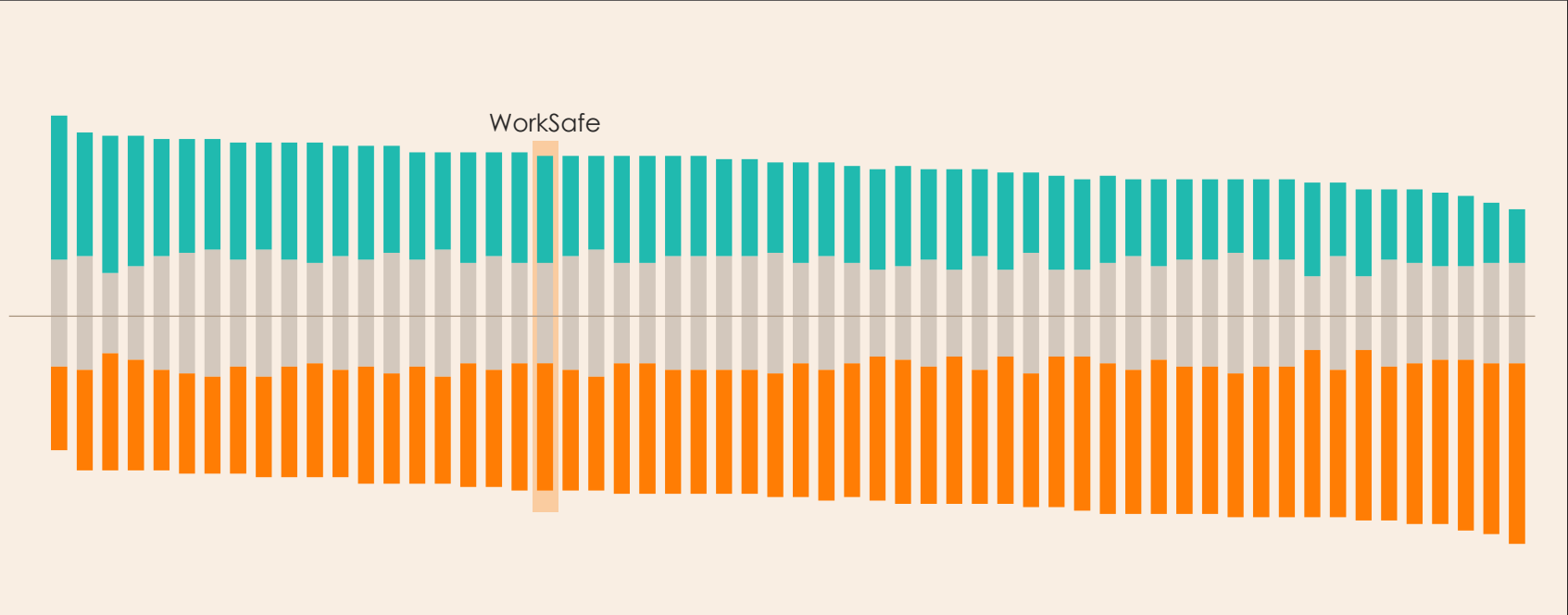
11. Artificial Intelligence

In general, information, data, or insight-led agencies are more trusted to use AI in the public sector. WorkSafe sits just above the sector midpoint for this trust, on par with the benchmark agency average.

Comfort with use of AI



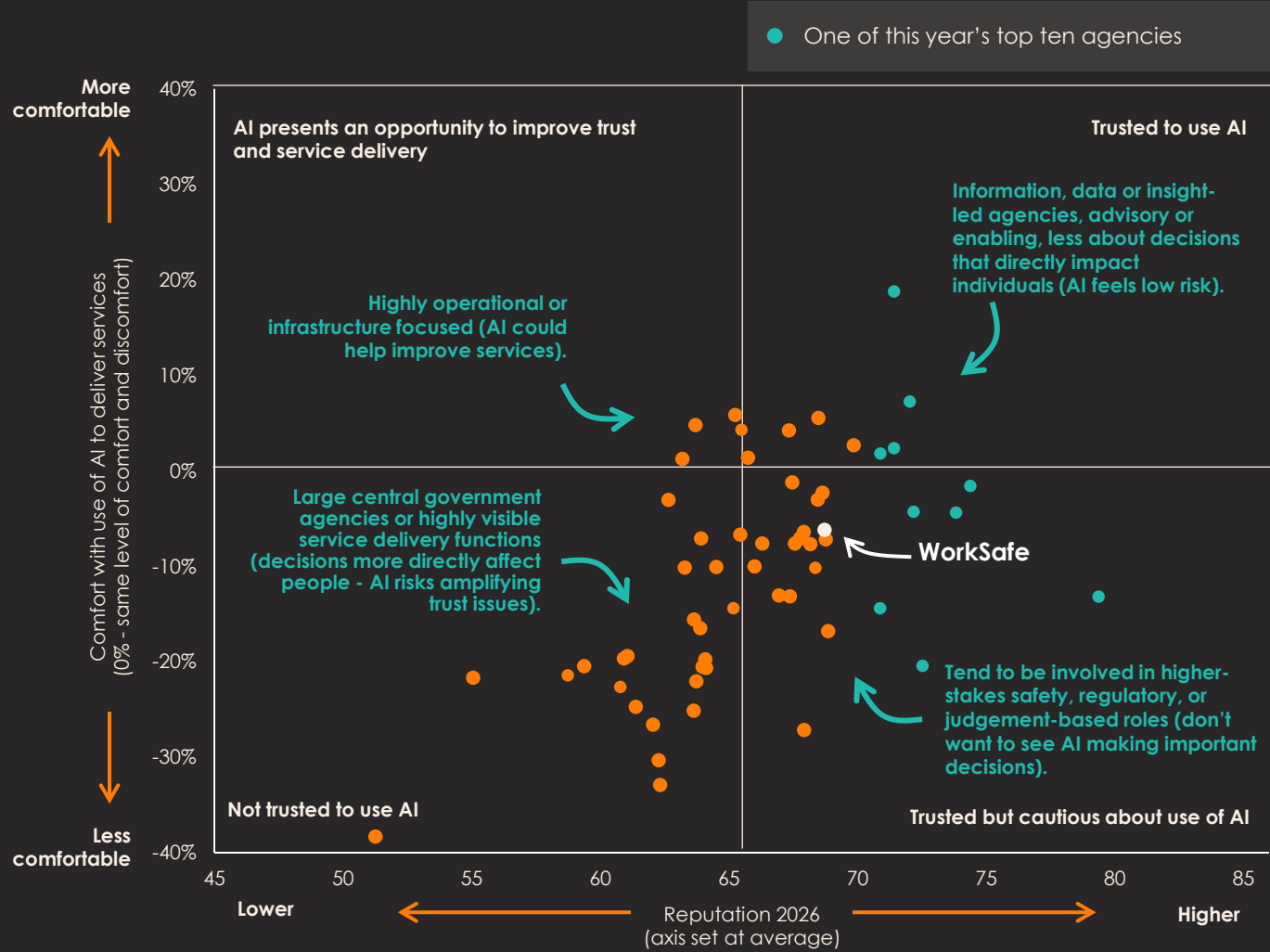
Q: How comfortable or uncomfortable are you with these organisations using AI to deliver their services?



BASE: Those aware of WorkSafe in 2026 (n=300)

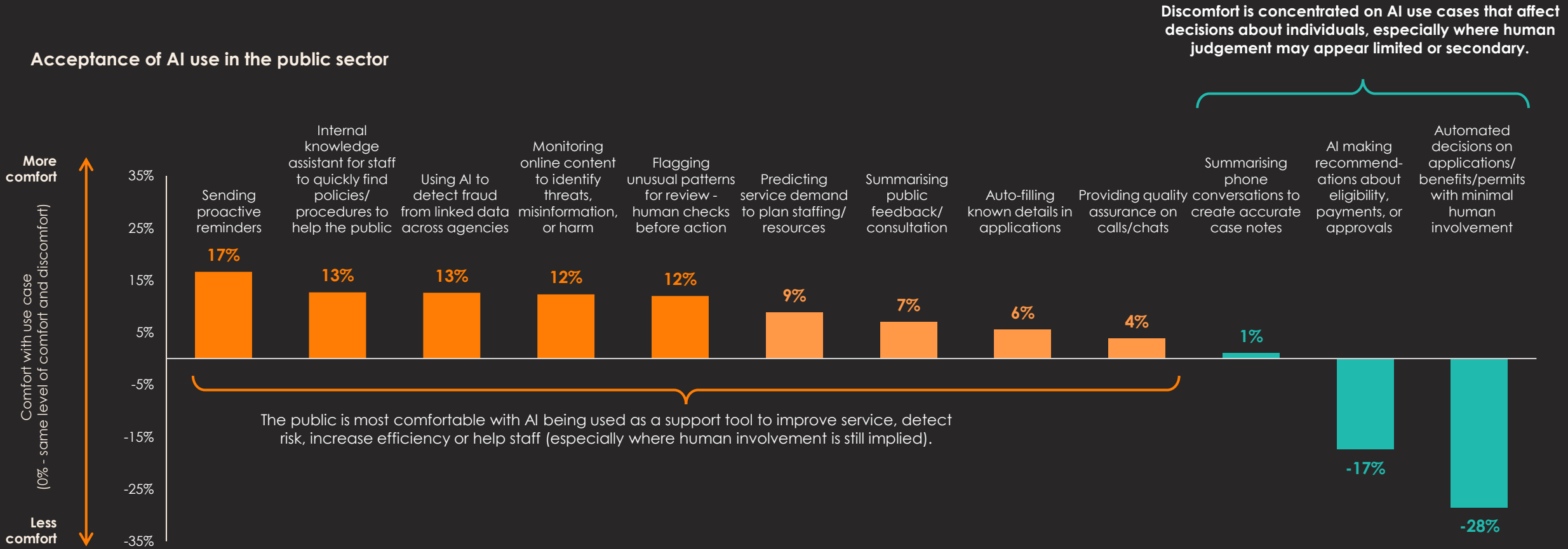
Should New Zealand’s public sector use Artificial Intelligence to deliver its services?

WorkSafe sits alongside agencies that are trusted, but that New Zealanders believe should take a cautious approach to AI - likely reflecting concerns about its use in decisions or judgements that affect individuals or businesses.



Acceptance of AI in public services depends on the use case. Administrative and support uses are more acceptable, but automated or decision-shaping uses are not.

Acceptance of AI use in the public sector



NOTE: Question asked at an overall sector level, not specific to individual agencies



12. Key considerations

Six evidence-based considerations for WorkSafe

1

Make prevention more visible to rebalance perceptions of enforcement

Why this matters: People recall WorkSafe most strongly through incidents, investigations, and enforcement action, while its preventative impact is less visible. At the same time, social responsibility is its strongest-performing pillar. Making prevention and impact more visible can help reinforce trust and rebalance how the organisation is understood

2

Convert high awareness into deeper understanding of WorkSafe's role

Why this matters: Awareness is very high, but only 39% report a good understanding of what WorkSafe does. Those with stronger understanding are more likely to advocate, suggesting a clear opportunity to strengthen reputation by closing this gap.

3

Leverage direct experience to build advocacy and trust

Why this matters: Advocacy is significantly higher among those who have had direct contact with WorkSafe, reinforcing that experience can be a driver of reputation. Prioritising high-quality, user-friendly touchpoints, such as digital services, guidance materials, and frontline engagement can help turn everyday interactions into moments that build trust and advocacy.

4

Sustain and reinforce gains in organisational competence

Why this matters: WorkSafe has seen strong improvements in leadership attributes, particularly being well run and digitally easy to deal with, which are key drivers of reputation in the current environment. Maintaining these gains will be critical to sustaining momentum

5

Turn improvements in fairness into consistently visible experiences

Why this matters: Fairness is one of the biggest areas of improvement, particularly in treating people fairly regardless of background. Embedding this in day-to-day interactions will help strengthen trust and make these gains more tangible to the public.

6

Build emotional connection by linking safety to real-life outcomes

Why this matters: WorkSafe sits near the midpoint on emotional connection, while stronger connection is linked to improved reputation. Framing its work in terms of protecting people, families, and communities can help shift perceptions from compliance to care.

For more information, please contact

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Powering decisions
that shape the world.

At its core, our evidence suggests trust comes down to four things New Zealanders consider when forming a view of an agency. We've flipped this into four simple questions agencies can use to test whether they're building (or undermining) trust.

Verian trust test

	Performance - what you do	Perceptions - how it's received
Delivery/experience	Are we delivering? • Is our experience getting better or worse? • Will it be easier for people to deal with us (including digitally)? • When something goes wrong, do we respond promptly? Are we authentic when we do?	Are we believable? • Does our story match our reality? • Are we giving people a clear, credible story to counterbalance external narratives? • Why should people believe us? Are we acting in ways that earn that belief?
Intent/legitimacy	Are we fair? • Would people see this as a good use of money? • Will this feel fair to people within varying backgrounds or roles? • How will this decision land with those under pressure?	Are we acting in the public interest? • Are we seen as independent and professional? • Have we explained our role in a way people can easily understand? • Will people feel comfortable with how much judgement we're delegating to systems? (e.g. use of AI)