Harbour Quays

Bus Improvements Feedback

Consultation Summary
19 May - 14 June 2026

904 submissions received



Absolutely Positively **Wellington** City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Greater Wellington
Te Pane Matua Taiao

metlink

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise community feedback received on proposed bus priority improvements along the Harbour Quays corridor. The Harbour Quays project is a joint initiative between Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council to create a new bus corridor through the central city to improve public transport reliability, increase network capacity and support future growth in passenger demand.

Harbour Quays forms part of a key public transport corridor connecting Wellington Railway Station, the waterfront, Te Papa, Tākina and Courtenay Place. The proposal responds to increasing pressure on existing bus routes through the Golden Mile (Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Manners Street and Courtenay Place), where high bus volumes contribute to delays and operational constraints.

Future growth of the bus network through the central city is currently limited by capacity on the Golden Mile. The Harbour Quays project enables Metlink to increase bus network capacity and respond to growing demand.

A second bus corridor via the Harbour Quays would enable public transport services to be easily diverted when the Golden Mile was closed, established stops for passengers to wait at.

The proposed changes included introducing peak-time bus lanes, relocating some bus routes to Harbour Quays, creating new bus stops and improving access to destinations along the waterfront. The proposal is intended to improve public transport travel times and reliability for bus passengers, increase the capacity of the public transport network, and provide a more resilient transport system for the future.

Public consultation was undertaken between 19 May and 14 June 2026 to gather feedback from the community.

Community feedback is presented in themes and graphs to give Councillors, officers, stakeholders, and the community a sense of the views shared during the consultation period.

Consultation summary

This consultation is the latest phase of ongoing work with stakeholders and the community on the proposed Harbour Quays bus corridor improvements. Public consultation took place between 19 May and 14 June 2026 and received 904 submissions from individuals and organisations.

Of the 874 respondents who answered the overall support question, 53% supported or strongly supported the proposal, with 43% opposed or strongly opposed to it.

Feedback from those in support focused on the anticipated benefits for public transport. Common themes included improved bus travel times, reliability and network capacity, reduced pressure on the Golden Mile bus corridor, and improved access to waterfront destinations such as Te Papa, Tākina and Wellington train station.

Feedback from those in opposition focused on the negative impact on traffic, including the potential for increased congestion, loss of parking, and longer walking distances between proposed bus stops and destinations. Respondents also raised concerns about impacts on people with mobility needs, older people, and city centre businesses.

Lack of rationale or data to support changes and the belief that WCC should focus on other things were also common concerns.

Feedback varied depending on the participant's relationship to the Harbour Quays area:

- 87% of respondents who visit the area were supportive or strongly supportive of the proposal.
- 85% of respondents using the area for recreational activities were supportive or strongly supportive.
- Respondents who work in the area were generally supportive (63%), while those travelling through the area were more divided (54% supportive, 49% opposing).
- Respondents who own or manage a business in the area were predominantly opposed or strongly opposed (85%).

Many submissions provided detailed site specific suggestions, including amended bus operating hours, improved shelter and passenger facilities, and improved pedestrian connections.

Overall, just over half of respondents showed support for the proposed Harbour Quays improvements, while also highlighting concerns.

How many responses did we get?

904

submissions were made by individuals, schools, or organisations

This report predominately summarises answers to the questions in the feedback form. Submissions received by email are considered by the project team, themed, and presented to elected members separately, however this report does not infer the level of support or opposition from these emails to avoid any risk of misinterpretation.

Duplicate submissions

Every submission we receive is considered genuine in the first instance. If someone has submitted more than once, we may:

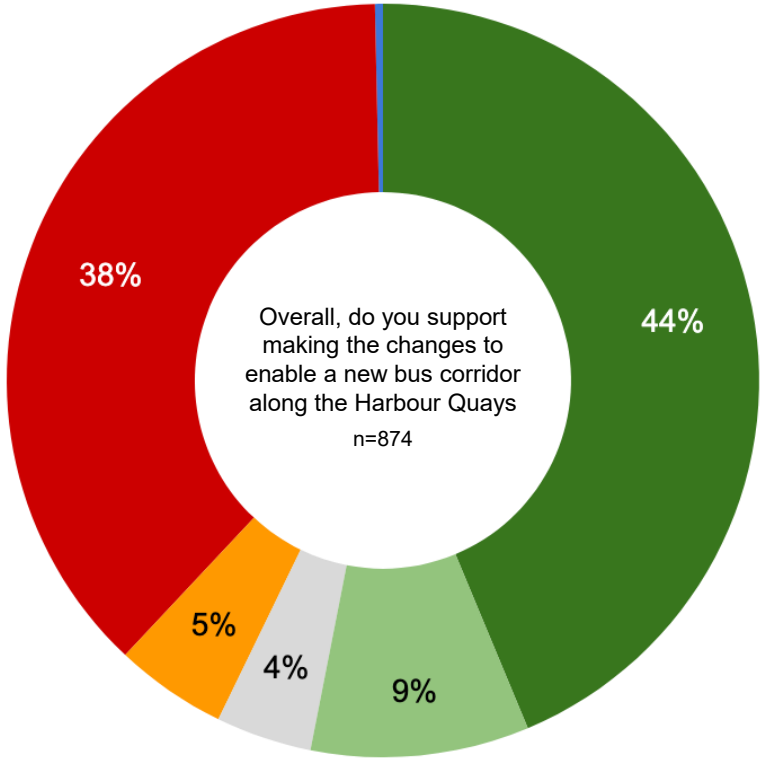
- combine submissions when the reason for submitting more than once is to add information to a previous submission
- keep the last submission submitted, removing the first; this is done when information in the submission has changed or is different from one submission to the next
- remove a submission where submissions are obviously in bad faith, such as multiple submissions under false names and/or malformed email addresses.

No matter how a submission is received during the consultation period (online, email or paper form), once duplicates have been removed, submissions are considered by the project team, analysed for the consultation summary report, and presented to Councillors. Across the joint consultation with the Eastern Bus Corridor project, where people could submit on one or both projects, eight duplicate submissions were identified then removed or merged, reducing the number of total submissions by eight.

What We Heard

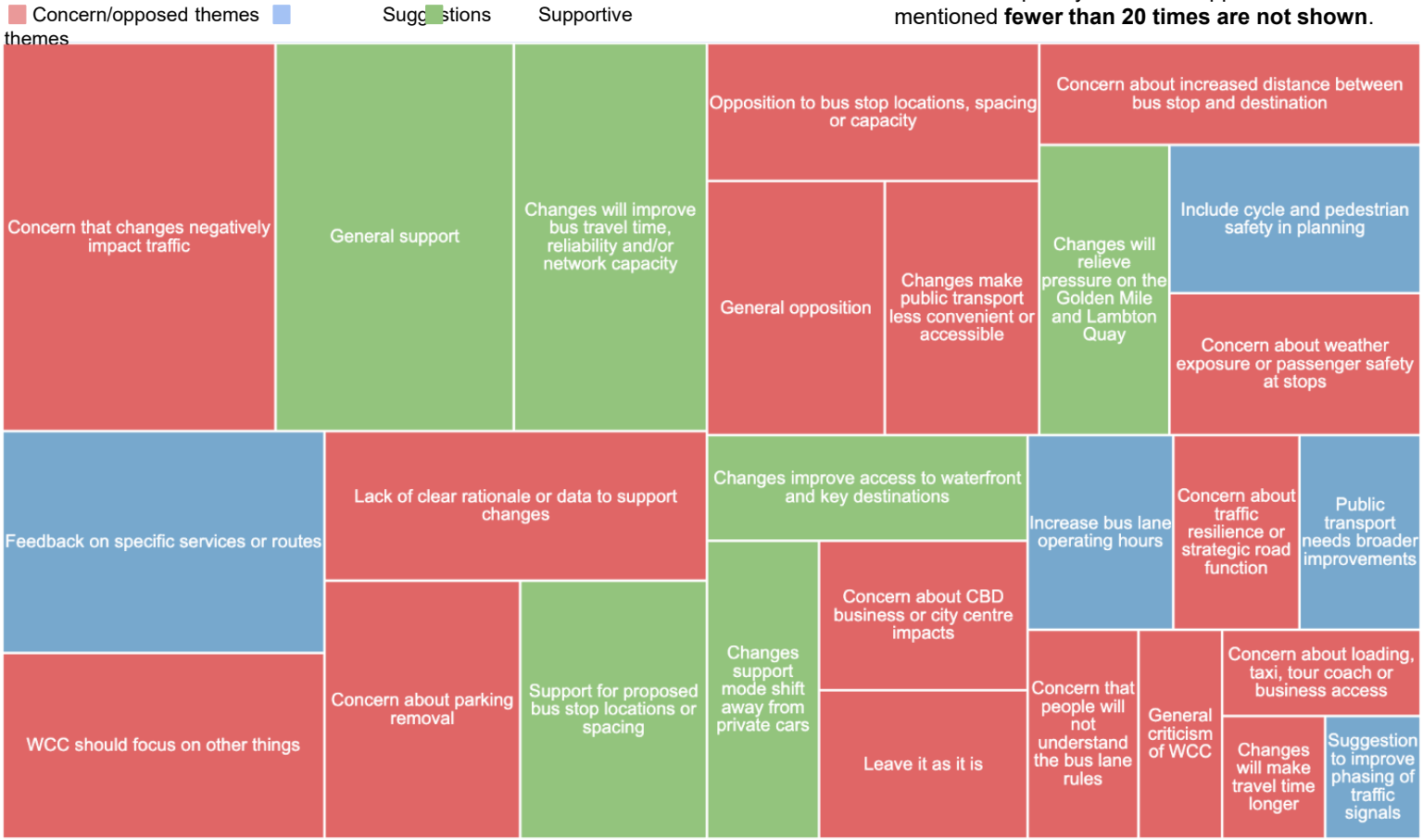
Overall level of support for proposal TR-0926 from all respondents

53%
of submissions **support** or **strongly support** the proposed changes



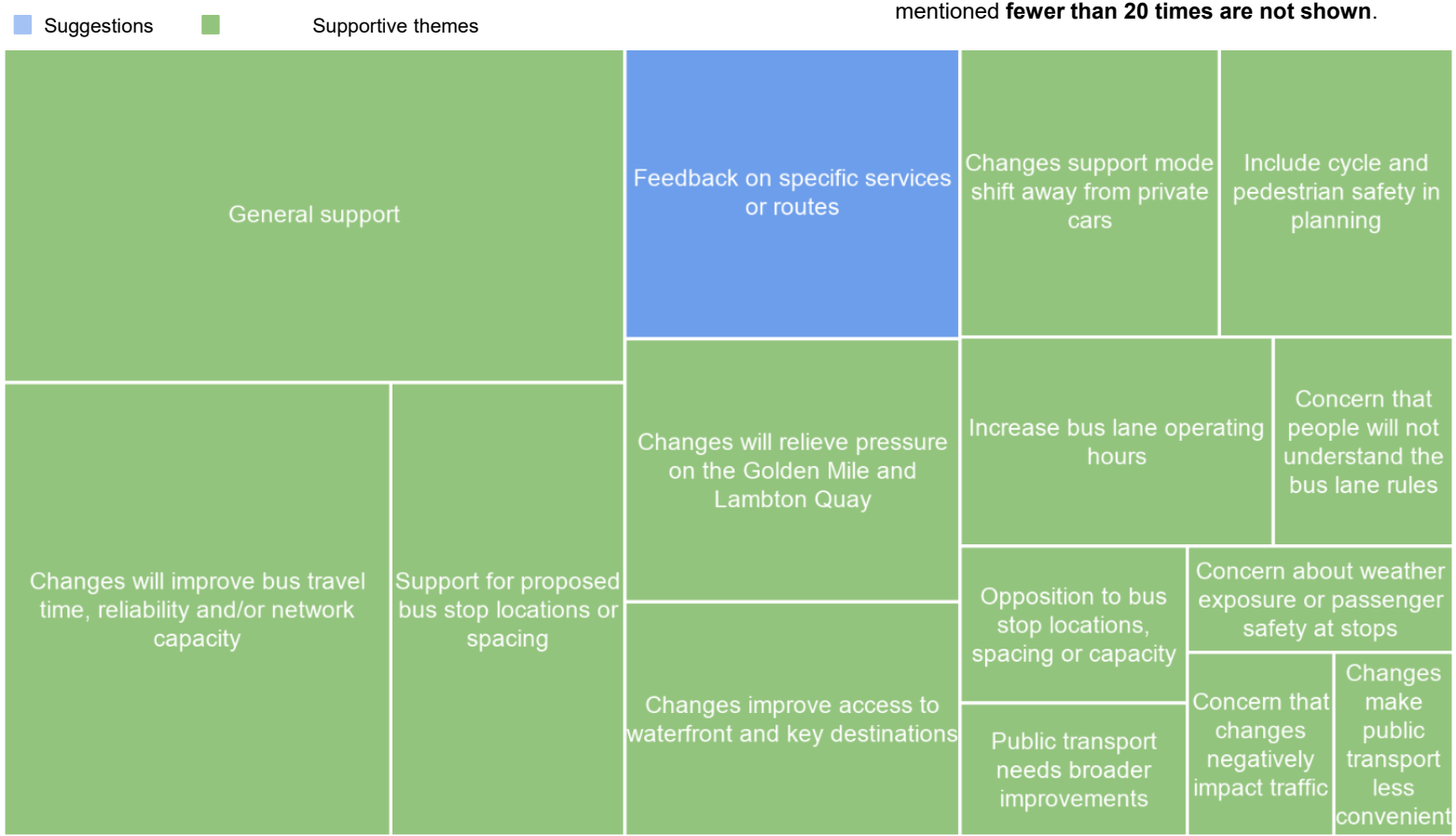
Overall themes from all respondents

Themes from everyone who gave feedback are proportionally represented below. The larger the box, the more frequently the theme appeared. Themes mentioned **fewer than 20 times are not shown**.



Overall themes from all respondents who support or strongly support the proposal

Themes from everyone who gave feedback are proportionally represented below. The larger the box, the more frequently the theme appeared. Themes mentioned **fewer than 20 times are not shown**.



Sample comments from respondents who strongly support or support the overall changes

"**The centre city is a bottleneck for buses; they are nose to tail and crawling through the city at peak hour, it's ridiculous. We need a second route to spread the load.** The better access this new route could give to Te Papa, Tākina and the new library is needed, especially for visitors and people with mobility issues. I use the 24 bus often and it is frequently delayed over its very long route. If it can move around the central city instead of through it, I hope it will be more reliable and efficient."

Resident of Maupuia, normally uses an E-bike to travel through the central city

"I support **making access via public transport easier to all major event spaces**, which is great for locals but also visitors and tourists, and hope it will also calm the Lambton Quay bus routes."

Resident of Khandallah, normally uses an E-bike to travel through the central city

"I support the main proposals with caveats. Please consider Improving bus lane signage to make drivers aware of the bus lane restrictions and timings well ahead of the actual lanes. **Please consider how parking slots can not only be removed but replaced; this should be part of the system wide approach to the plan.**"

Resident of Khandallah, normally travels by bus through the central city

"It's efficiency 101. **Spreading the buses more evenly along two main corridors gives more people more choice.** Who wants to drive round and round city streets looking for a park when you can easily access a bus and be dropped close to your place of work, entertainment, dining or shopping."

Resident of Ngaio, normally travels by bus through the central city

Unpacking what we heard: Support

- **Faster, more reliable bus journeys and greater network capacity**
  The themes ***Changes will improve bus travel time, reliability and/or network capacity*** and ***Changes will relieve pressure on the Golden Mile and Lambton Quay*** reflect the strongest reasons for support. Respondents expect the additional corridor will reduce delays and bus congestion through the central city, while creating more network capacity for future services.

- **Better access to the waterfront and key destinations**
  The themes ***Changes improve access to waterfront and key destinations*** and ***Support for proposed bus stop locations or spacing*** reflect positivity toward direct public transport connections to places such as Te Papa, Tākina, the waterfront and Wellington Station.

- **Supporting mode shift and preparing for the future**
  The theme ***Changes support mode shift away from private cars*** reflects the view that faster and more dependable buses will make public transport a more attractive option. Some respondents also saw the proposal as a practical step towards a more sustainable and future proof transport network, including the potential for higher-capacity transit or light rail in the future.

- **Bus lane rules should be clear and consistent**
  The themes ***Increase bus lane operating hours*** and ***Concern that people will not understand the bus lane rules*** were often connected. Many supporters favoured longer or permanent operating hours, arguing that consistent rules across the city would be easier for drivers to understand and would provide more reliable priority for buses and cyclists.

- **Active modes should be considered alongside bus improvements**
  The theme ***Include cycle and pedestrian safety in planning*** reflects support for allowing cyclists to use the corridor and improving pedestrian access to stops. Respondents wanted the design to safely accommodate cyclists and people crossing the Quays (including better signal phasing), rather than considering bus movements in isolation.

- **Accessibility and stop amenity remain important**
  Among supporters, the themes ***Opposition to bus stop locations, spacing or capacity, Concern about weather exposure or passenger safety at stops*** and ***Changes make public transport less convenient or accessible*** indicated that there was some reservations about delivery. Respondents want priority placed on sufficient shelter, seating, accessible boarding, safe crossings and stop locations.

Overall themes from all respondents who oppose or strongly oppose the proposal

Themes from everyone who gave feedback are proportionally represented below. The larger the box, the more frequently the theme appeared. Themes mentioned **fewer than 20 times are not shown**.

Concern/opposed themes Suggestions



Sample comments from respondents who strongly oppose or oppose the overall changes

"I do not support these proposed changes. **There is plenty of room to place bus stops off street, and avoiding the removal of a traffic lane from other road users such as in front of NZ Portrait Gallary, within Frank Kitts Park.** Having a bus lane and a stop right where people pull into Queens Wharf/ TSB looks very unsafe. **How can WCC propose such a big change with absolutely zero information provided on how this will impact traffic flows.** This will cause gridlock across our city, which is already struggling. This will only further discourage people from coming into town."

Resident of Paparangi, normally uses car/van to travel through the central city

"There is not a problem needing solving here at this point in time. the savings to bus travel are inconsequential they do not justify the spend or disruption to what is the only alternative route across the city. **The reeks of a solution looking for a problem to solve!"**

Resident of Newlands, normally uses bus to travel through the central city

"Unlike council employees **many people work beyond the immediate area of the Quay.** Crossing the Quay in all weathers throughout the year will be unpleasant considering the climate. Summer is pleasant for just a brief time. **This means people will have to walk so much further.** Scooters are not a viable option for the disabled or older people"

Resident of Brooklyn, normally walks through the central city

“I understand the need to address congestion on the Golden Mile, but there are many other, much better solutions to do that than redirect public transport AWAY from where passengers want to go. **Buses in Wellington are popular because they go THROUGH the city, not AROUND it**. A much better solution would be to get rid of all cars and trucks on the Golden Mile, extend some bus stops and delete some others. Apart from the practical issues the harbour bus route would bring [...] **it actually removes one of the great advantages of Wellington bus network - its proximity to where people want to be.”**

Resident of Wadestown, normally uses E-bike to travel through the central city

Unpacking what we heard: Oppose

- **Concern about congestion and the function of a key traffic route**
  The themes ***Concern that changes negatively impact traffic*** and ***Concern about traffic resilience or strategic road function*** reflect the strongest opposition. Respondents felt reallocating a general traffic lane during peak periods will create congestion on the Quays and surrounding streets. Some also viewed the corridor as an important route for freight, emergency vehicles and network resilience during other road disruptions. Concerns were also raised that part-time operating hours could confuse drivers, particularly when entering the lane to turn, with calls for clear signage and consistent bus-lane rules across the city.

- **The case for change is not considered strong enough**
  The themes ***Lack of clear rationale or data to support changes, Leave it as it is*** and ***WCC should focus on other things*** reflect the view that the existing routes generally work and that the proposal is trying to solve a problem that is perceived to not exist. Respondents questioned the traffic modelling, population and passenger-growth projections, expected travel-time benefits and assumptions that the proposed change would reduce private vehicle trips. Many felt Council should instead prioritise core infrastructure and affordability.

- **The changes may make public transport less accessible or convenient**
  The themes ***Concern about increased distance between bus stop and destination, Changes make public transport less convenient or accessible*** and ***Concern about weather exposure or passenger safety at stops*** were closely connected. Respondents are concerned that moving services would create longer and more exposed walks, particularly for disabled and older passengers. Some felt that any bus travel-time savings would be outweighed by additional walking and crossing time.

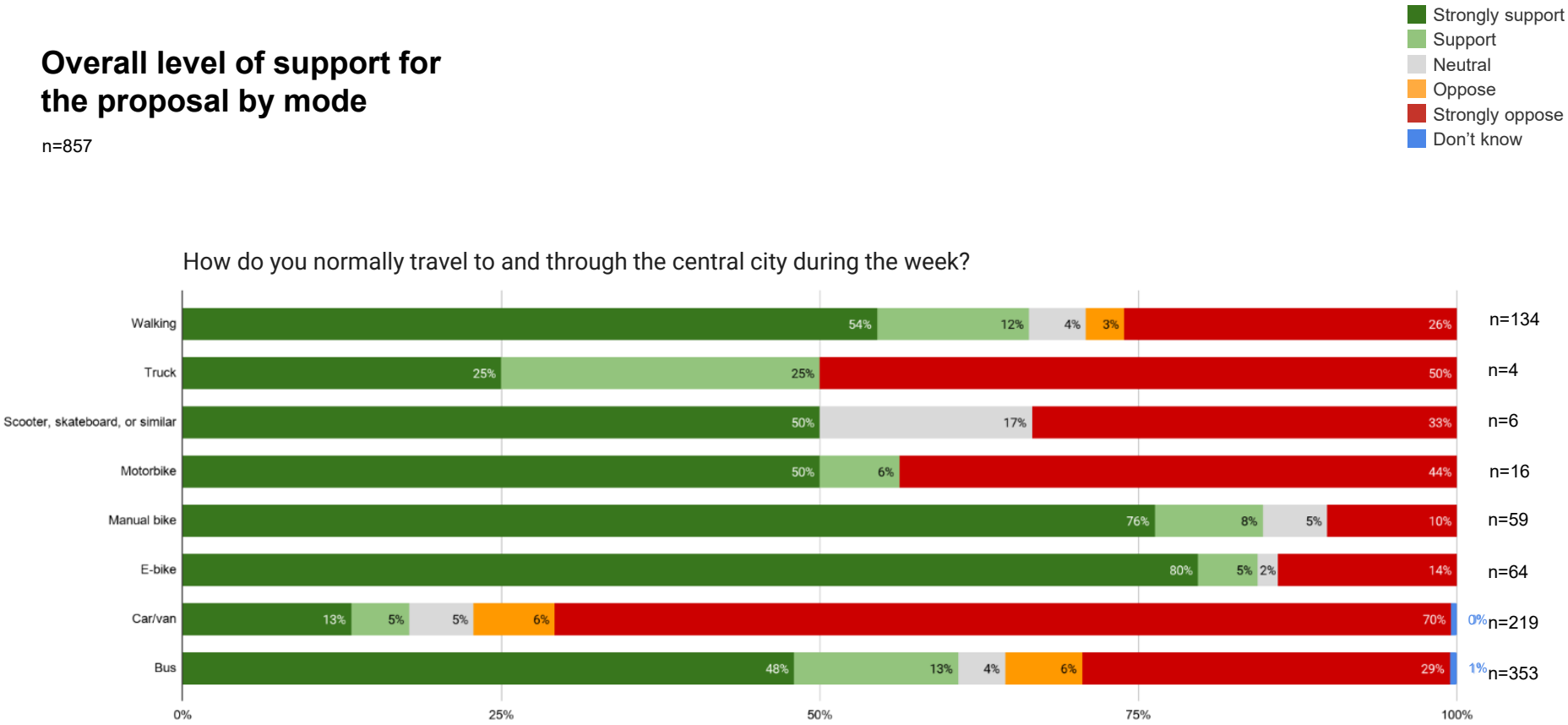
- **Concern about parking, business access and the CBD**
  The themes ***Concern about parking removal, Concern about CBD business or city centre impacts*** and ***Concern about loading, taxi, tour coach or business access*** reflect concerns that the proposal will make the central city harder to access. Respondents felt further reductions in parking, loading areas and taxi or coach facilities could affect businesses, visitors, families, tradespeople and people who cannot easily use public transport.

- **Opposition to the proposed routes and stop locations**
  The theme ***Opposition to bus stop locations, spacing or capacity*** reflects concern that the proposed stops may not align with where passengers work or want to travel. Some respondents support reducing pressure on the Golden Mile, but preferred alternative route structures, fewer stops, express services or trials before dedicated bus lanes are introduced.

Different Levels of Support for the Overall Proposed Changes

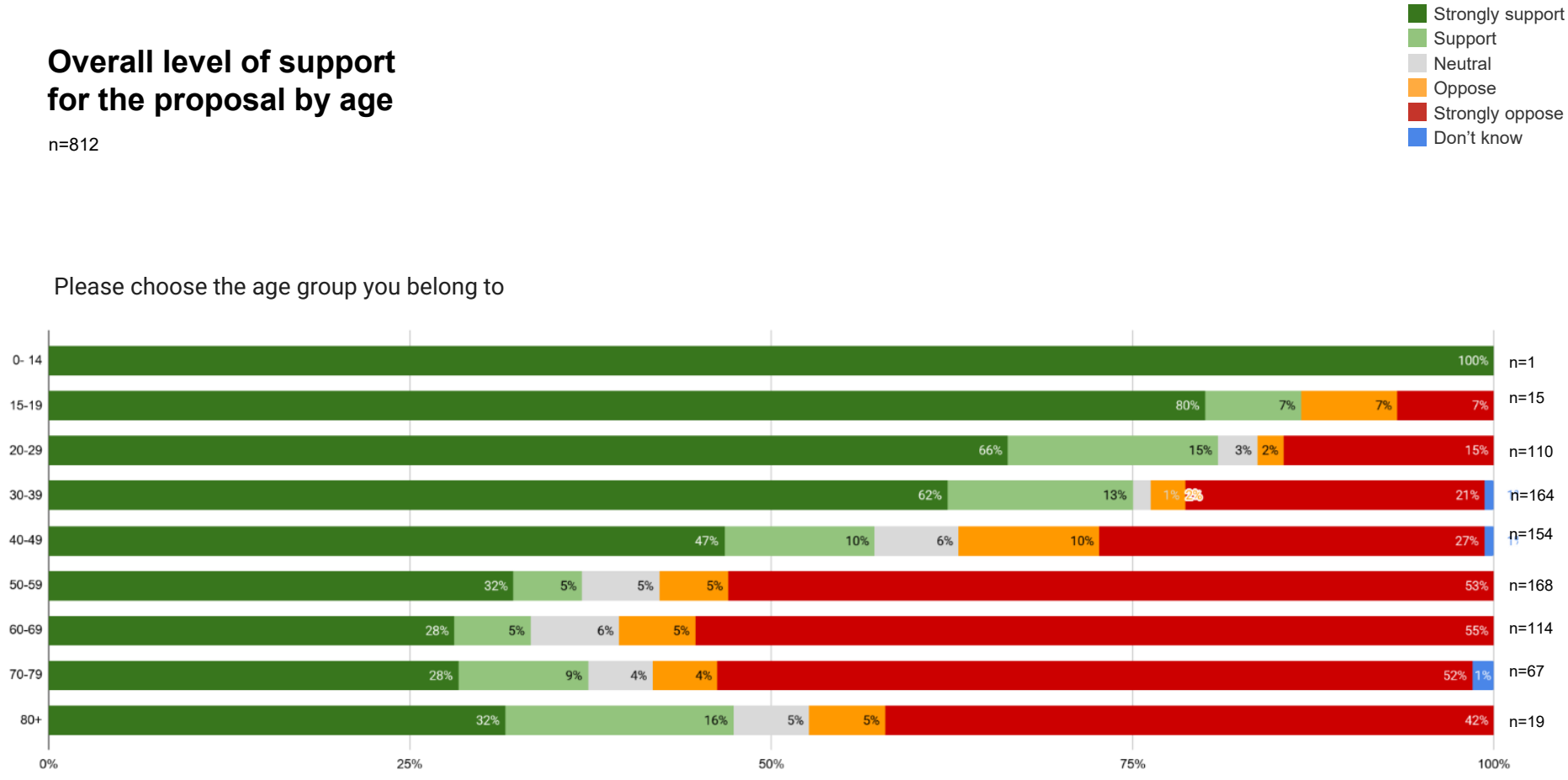
Overall level of support for the proposal by mode

n=857



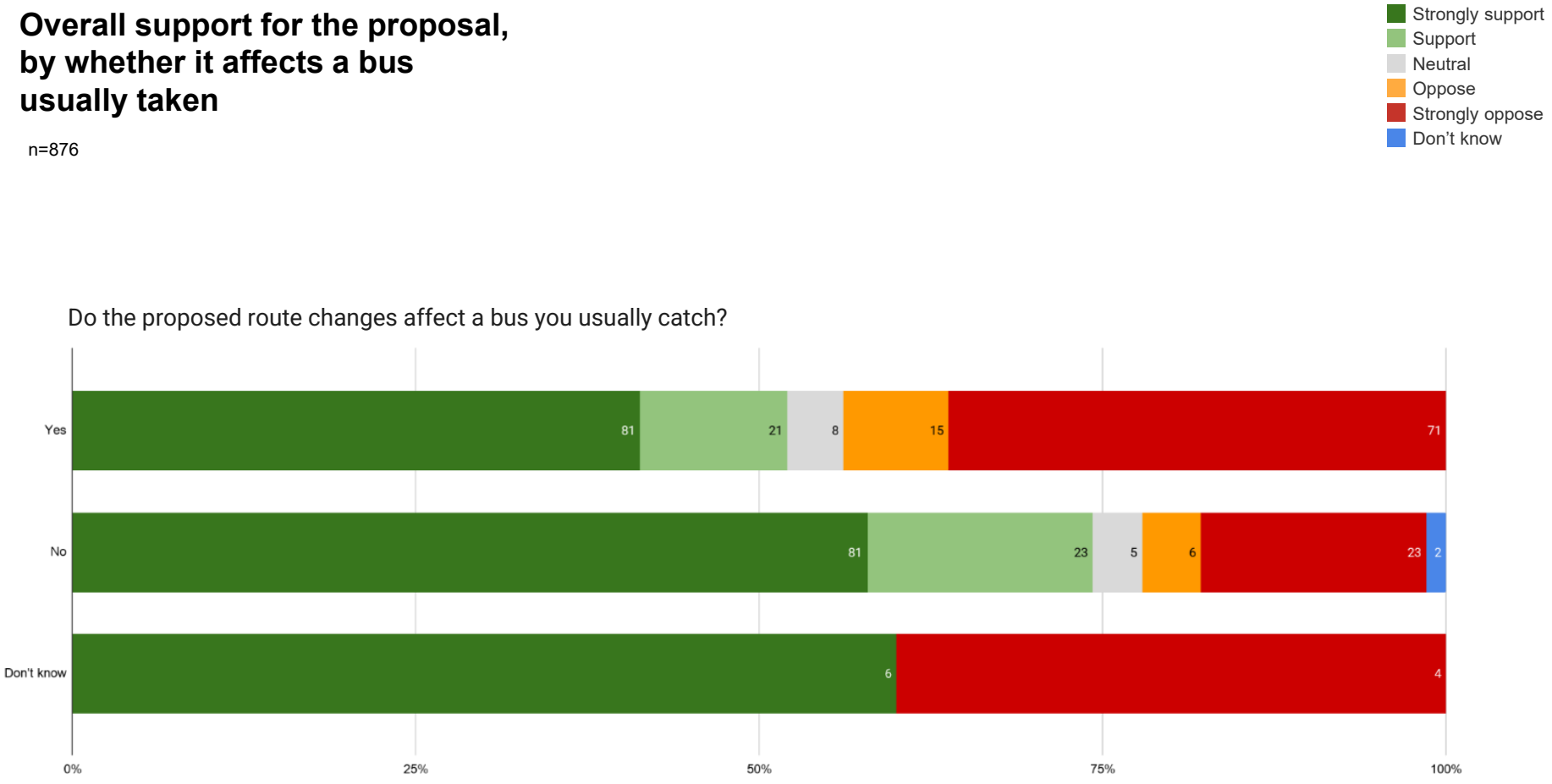
Overall level of support for the proposal by age

n=812



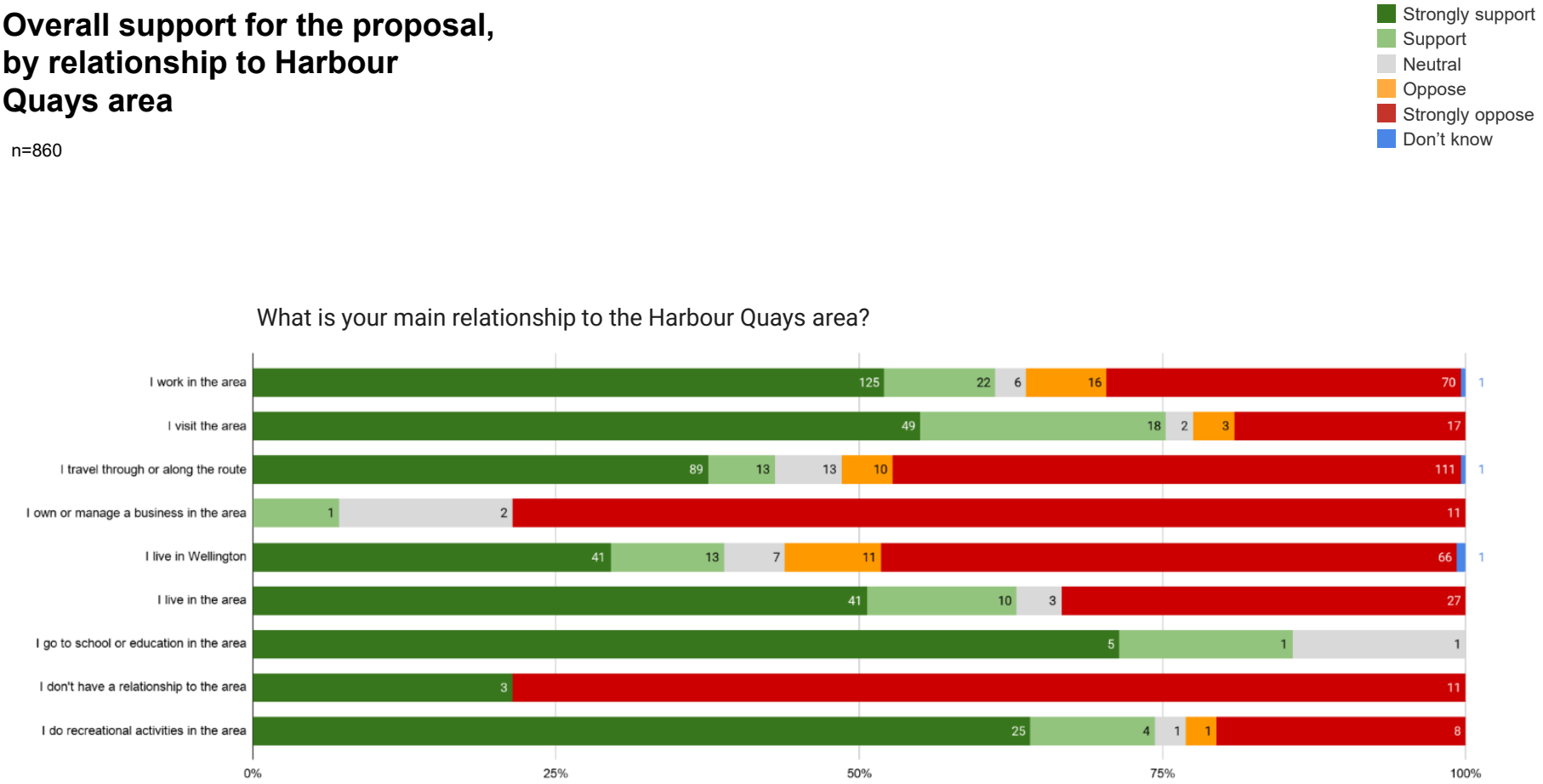
Overall support for the proposal, by whether it affects a bus usually taken

n=876



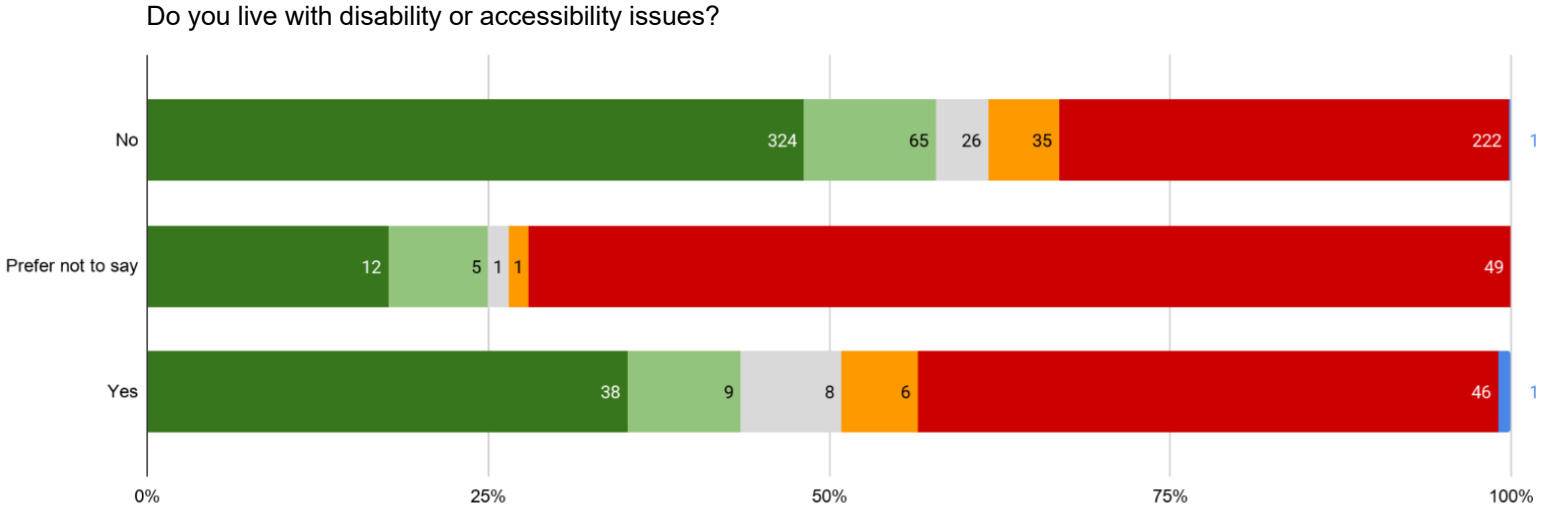
Overall support for the proposal, by relationship to Harbour Quays area

n=860



Overall level of support for the proposal by accessibility issues

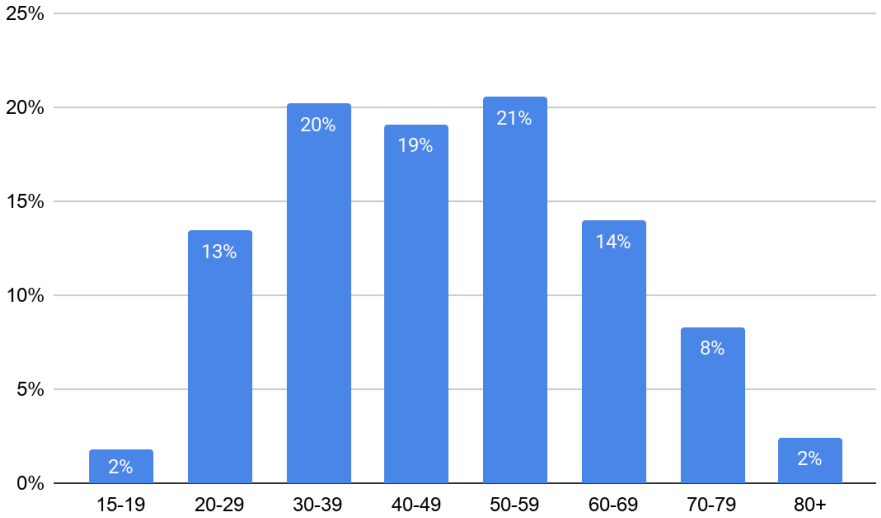
n=849



Who We Heard From

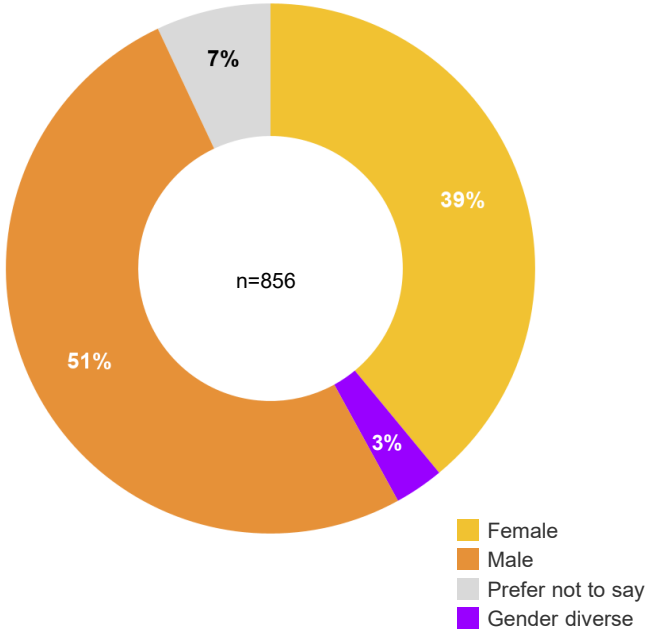
Who we heard from

Age



n=817

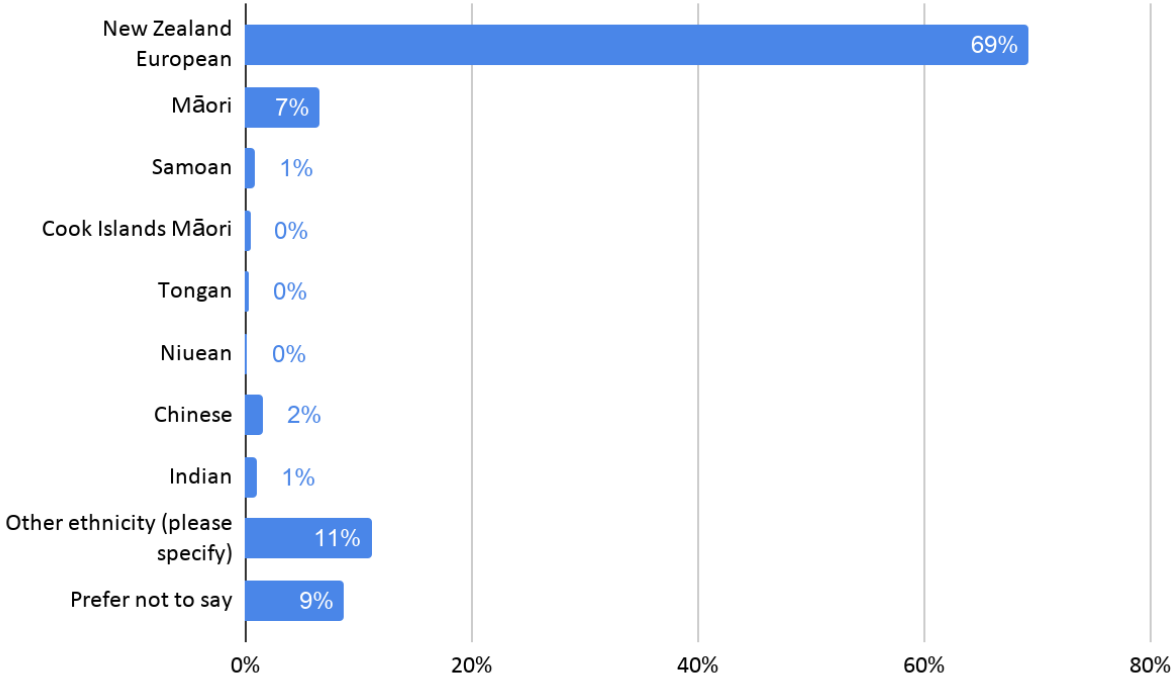
Gender



Who we heard from

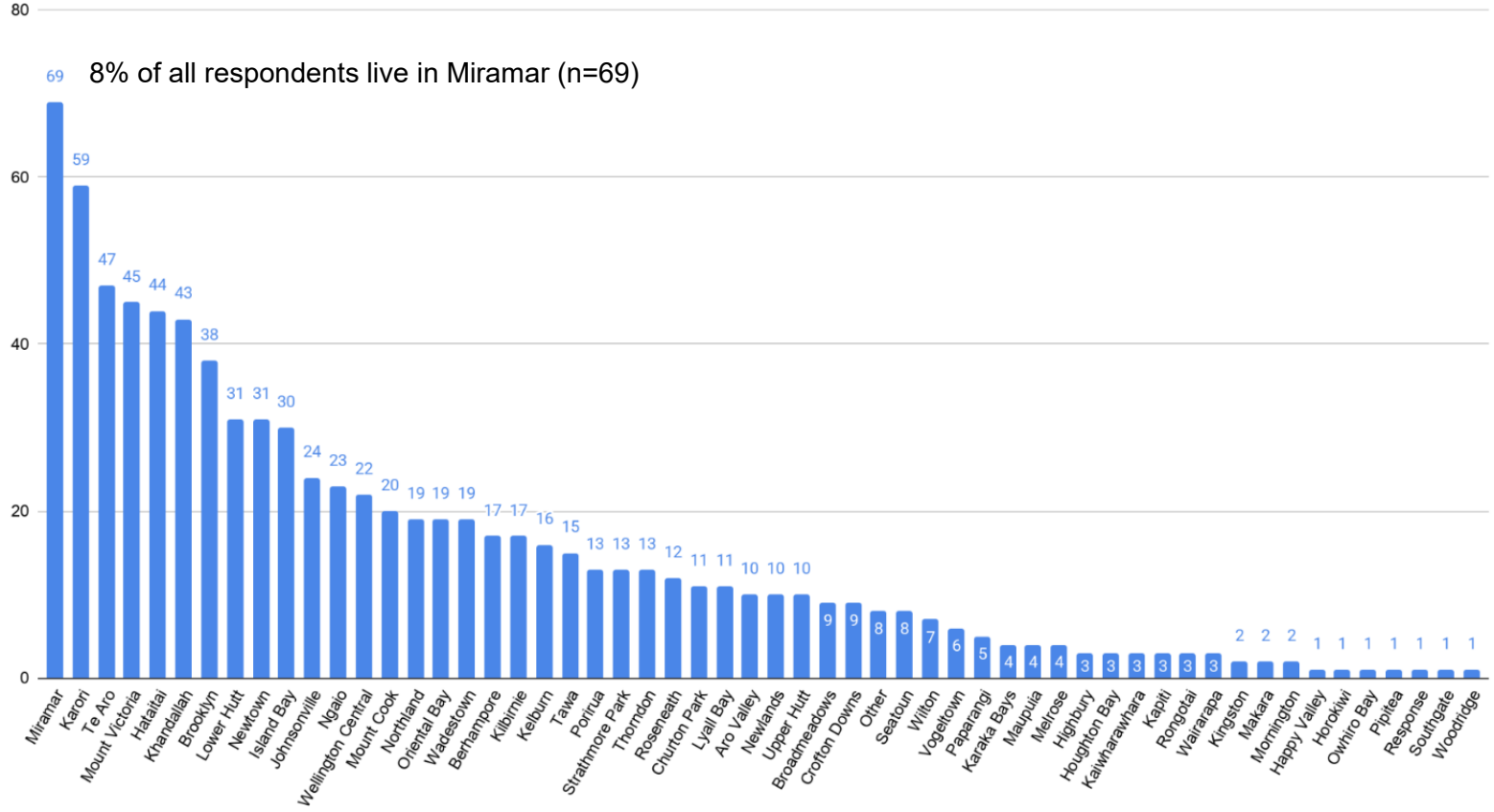
Note:
Respondents could select more than one option so the total exceeds 100%

Ethnicity



n=903

Location of submitters



n=846

Organisations we heard from

- Brown & Co Ltd
- Good Natured Garden Services Ltd
- Fair Intelligent Transport Wellington
- M E transport Ltd
- Hannah Playhouse Trust
- Inner City Wellington Residents Association
- Orca
- Wilson Parking
- Wharf Offices Apartments Body Corporate
- Cycle Wellington
- Wellington Airport
- Queens Wharf Holdings
- Mt Victoria Residents Association
- Blind Citizens NZ
- AA Wellington District Council

Other Engagement Activity

Community drop-in sessions

We hosted eight drop-in sessions during the consultation period, giving people the opportunity to speak directly with the project team. The sessions were held jointly with the Eastern Bus Corridor Improvements consultation, allowing people affected by both projects to learn about them in one place. Sessions were held at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library (two sessions), Miramar Library, Miramar & Maupuia Community Centre Hall, Kilbirnie & Lyall Bay Community Centre, Hataitai Community House Community Room, Clyde Quay School Hall (Mt Victoria), and Waitohi Johnsonville Library.

Drop-in sessions generally ran for two to three hours. Some drop-ins attracted only a handful of attendees while the most popular, at Te Matapihi Central Library, was visited by about fifty people. Across all engagements, 143 attendees were counted.

At each drop-in, explanatory collateral included several A3 corflute maps zooming in on different areas of the route, A3 folders featuring technical drawings for those interested in more detail, and flyers promoting the website and submission. Tablets and laptops were also available for people to view the maps online or make a submission with the help of the Council officers present.

We also handed out brochures and spoke to bus passengers waiting at Brandon Street during the evening peak to ensure we reached customers from the western and northern suburbs who will be affected by services moving from Brandon Street to Harbour Quays. During the two-hour session, we spoke with and distributed brochures to approximately 200–300 people.



Promotion and advertising

Communications for the consultation used a joint approach across the Harbour Quays and Eastern Bus Corridor projects, designed to raise awareness of the proposed changes and encourage participation from people across Wellington who live, work and travel in the areas of concern and might be impacted by the changes.The campaign focused on explaining why the improvements are needed, how they would support a more reliable and future-ready public transport network, and how people could provide feedback.

The consultation was promoted through a dedicated consultation webpage, WCC's Let's Talk newsletter, media releases, social media, stakeholder communications, radio advertising, newspaper advertising, digital advertising and community engagement activities. Advertising channels included Newstalk ZB, ZM, The Post, NZ Herald and Stuff digital advertising, Google Search advertising, digital billboards, bus shelter advertising and urban panels across Wellington.

Wellington City Council and Metlink social media channels were used throughout the consultation period to raise awareness, explain the proposals and encourage participation. Communications were supported by FAQs, stakeholder engagement, direct communications including letter drops with affected parties, community drop-in sessions and targeted outreach to key stakeholder groups.





Appendix A:
Theme Descriptions

Themes

The consultation asked the community to provide feedback on a number of different aspects of the scheme, as well as the overall proposal. This resulted in a large number of themes, all of which are listed on the following pages with a definition of each.

The list is ordered from the most frequently mentioned theme across all questions and comments, to the least.

Theme descriptions (1/6)

Theme	Description
Concern that changes negatively impact traffic	Comment concerned that the proposal will worsen general traffic, cause congestion, slow vehicles, worsen pollution, create queues, or disrupt traffic flow.
General support	Comment expressing general support for the Harbour Quays bus corridor, bus stop changes, or associated street changes without giving a more specific reason.
WCC should focus on other things	Comment suggesting WCC should prioritise spending on other projects.
Changes will improve bus travel time, reliability and/or network capacity	Comment suggesting the corridor, bus lanes, stops or route changes will make bus journeys faster, more reliable, less delayed and increase network capacity.
Feedback on specific services or routes	Comment suggesting which bus services should use Harbour Quays, remain on Lambton Quay/Golden Mile, be added, removed, extended, trialled, split, operated as express/shuttle services, or continue on the existing route.
Lack of clear rationale or data to support changes	Comment questioning the evidence, rationale, modelling, forecasts, expected benefits, travel-time savings, patronage assumptions, population growth assumptions, or need for the proposal.

Theme descriptions (2/6)

Theme	Description
Concern about parking removal	Comment concerned about the removal, reduction, cost or replacement of metered parking or other parking availability.
General opposition	Comment expressing general opposition to the Harbour Quays bus corridor, bus stop changes, or associated street changes without giving a more specific reason.
Concern about increased distance between bus stop and destination	Comment concerned that moving services or stops to Harbour Quays will reduce convenient access to Lambton Quay, the Golden Mile, central-city workplaces, shops, medical appointments or other established destinations.
Changes make public transport less convenient or accessible	Comment suggesting the proposal will make bus use harder, less accessible, less convenient, less safe or less suitable for disabled people, older people, families, children, workers, or people with mobility limitations.
Opposition to bus stop locations, spacing or capacity	Comment opposing proposed bus stop locations, spacing, stop removals, stop relocations, stop consolidation or distance from destinations.
Support for proposed bus stop locations or spacing	Comment supporting the proposed bus stop locations, spacing, stop capacity, stop consolidation, stop length or accessibility.

Theme descriptions (3/6)

Theme	Description
Leave it as it is	Comment suggesting the current route, street, stop, bus lane or bus network arrangement should be retained rather than changed.
Include cycle and pedestrian safety in planning	Comment suggesting the proposal should also improve or protect walking, cycling, pedestrian access or connections to the waterfront.
Concern about CBD business or city centre impacts	Comment suggesting the proposal, parking loss, congestion, reduced access, bus-route relocation or stop changes will discourage people from visiting the CBD or harm local businesses.
Concern about weather exposure or passenger safety at stops	Comment concerned that proposed stops or walking routes are exposed, windy, poorly sheltered, isolated, unsafe at night, or lack weather protection.
Changes improve access to waterfront and key destinations	Comment suggesting the proposal improves access to the waterfront, Te Papa, Tākina, TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Frank Kitts Park, Embassy Theatre, offices, venues or other destinations.
Changes support mode shift away from private cars	Comment suggesting the proposal encourages public transport or active transport use, reduces car reliance, reduces emissions, or benefits road users by getting people out of cars.

Theme descriptions (4/6)

Theme	Description
Changes will relieve pressure on the Golden Mile and Lambton Quay	Comment supporting the proposal because it reduces bus congestion, crowding or load on Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Manners Street, Courtenay Place or the Golden Mile.
Concern about traffic resilience or strategic road function	Comment concerned that Harbour Quays is an important strategic road for resilience, airport access, freight, SH1 disruption, motorway access, emergency diversion, or regional traffic movement.
Increase bus lane operating hours	Comment suggesting to increase proposed bus lane operating times.
Public transport needs broader improvements	Comment suggesting the Harbour Quays corridor alone is not enough and public transport also needs wider improvements such as frequency, reliability, fares, timetables, connections, safety, incentives or service quality.
Concern that people will not understand the bus lane rules	Comment concerned people will not understand when and/or where the bus lanes apply.
General criticism of WCC	Comment expressing broad negative views about WCC, councillors, staff or Council competence without a more specific process, evidence, cost or priority concern.

Theme descriptions (5/6)

Theme	Description
Concern about loading, taxi, tour coach or business access	Comment concerned about impacts on loading zones, taxi stands, tour coach stops, deliveries, business operations, venue access or commercial access.
Changes will make travel time longer	Comment suggesting the corridor, bus lanes, stops or route changes will make bus journeys longer.
Suggestion to improve phasing of traffic signals	Comment suggesting traffic-signal phasing should enable general traffic or buses to flow more easily and/or enable pedestrians to more easily cross the Harbour Quays
Suggestion to try a different lane type	Comment suggesting a different kind of priority lane should be used such as peak-only, T2/carpool, clearway or trial arrangements.
Criticism of WCC engagement process and decision making	Comment criticising the consultation process, survey design, lack of engagement with partners, predetermined decision-making, modelling process, or public display of named comments.
Reduce bus lane operating hours	Comment suggesting a reduction in the proposed bus lane operating times.

Theme descriptions (6/6)

Theme	Description
Suggestion to improve compliance	Comment with suggestions to improve bus lane compliance such as making sure the bus lane is obvious for all road users, adding camera enforcement to keep cars out of the lane, ensuring bus drivers stop at the front-most end of the long bus stops
Future proof for light rail or rapid transit	Comment suggesting the corridor should be future-proofed for light rail, bus rapid transit, mass rapid transit or higher-capacity public transport.
Support for removal of car parking	Comment expressing support for removing car parks to allow more space for other amenities such as bus lane/bus stops.
Replace lost car parking	Comment suggesting WCC should replace car parking lost through the changes.
Extend bus lane further	Comment suggesting to extend the bus lane beyond the proposed area.