

Cook Islands

International Visitor Survey Report
April - June 2025

SOLO



Acknowledgements

- ❖ The Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) expresses its gratitude to all contributors to this quarterly report on IVS data from April to June 2025 which provides insights into the visitor experience, enhancing our understanding of travel trends and behaviors across the region.
- ❖ Thank you to the visitors for completing the arrival cards, enabling this analysis. Meitaki to the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT) for providing the visitor emails to enable survey invitations to be dispatched in a timely manner.
- ❖ We also extend our sincere thanks to the New Zealand Government for their support and collaboration.
- ❖ Appreciation goes to the SPTO researchers and analysts for their meticulous work on visitor profiles, decision-making processes, and expenditure and satisfaction.
- ❖ Further research is needed to refine economic impact estimates, particularly the rate of prepaid expenditure into the local economy. Your ongoing support is highly valued.
- ❖ Thank you to everyone involved.

Executive Summary

- ❖ The survey analyzed 2,686 responses out of 2,758 collected, representing 12% of actual visitors with a 23% response rate. Among the respondents, 13% were solo travelers, and the average household income was NZD167,875.
- ❖ Visitors were primarily drawn to the Cook Islands for its reputation as a safe destination, warm climate, peaceful and relaxing atmosphere, and the friendliness of its local people. Overall satisfaction was very high, with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5. Notably, 98% of visitors indicated they would recommend the Cook Islands to others, while 93% expressed a willingness to return.
- ❖ The average prepaid spend per visitor was NZD2,889 with an estimated 40% (NZD1,156) flowing into the local economy. In-country spending per visitor per trip averaged NZD1,431 with an average stay of 8.5 nights. This contributed to an *estimated** economic impact of NZD122 million from April to June 2025.
- ❖ Visitors indicated comparatively lower satisfaction with public transport, certain infrastructure and amenities, the cost of goods and services, weather conditions, available activities, attractions, and the range of cultural entertainment and events. To enhance the overall visitor experience, they suggested improving public transport services and infrastructure maintenance, upgrading airport, immigration, and customs services, enhancing flight connectivity and affordability, as well as refurbishing select accommodations to raise standards and enrich the hotel experience.

Background

- ❖ The April - June 2025 Cook Islands Annual Visitor Survey is an initiative of the Pacific Tourism Data Initiative, funded by the Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZMFAT), and is conducted by the Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO).
- ❖ The report includes key sections on visitor profiles and characteristics, information and decision-making, visitor expenditure and satisfaction.
- ❖ **N.B.** The visitor emails were collected through the passenger arrival cards completed by visitors on their arrival into the Cook Islands.
- ❖ **N.B.** The estimated rate of prepaid expenditure flowing into local economy is 40%, which is observed from other Pacific Island countries. Further research is warranted to establish more accurate estimates.
- ❖ All amounts are reported in **NZD** currency using average rates for the April - June 2025 period.

Disclaimer

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- ❖ The **survey instrument** used to collect data for the April – June 2025 period was similar, but not exact, to the survey instrument used in the April – June 2024 period. New questions were added, some existing questions were revised or removed, and certain response options were adjusted. In those instances where comparisons cannot be made, we report only the results for the April – June 2025 period.
- ❖ **N.B.** All analyses are based on the IVS respondents. No weighting was applied, as the sample data is representative. Therefore, the IVS respondents were not weighted to the actual arrival data.
- ❖ Please note that the Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) and the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT) do not accept liability for any loss or damage incurred as a result of the use of information contained in this report. Users are advised to exercise their own judgment in the use of any information provided.

IVS Respondents (April - June 2025)

 **11,758** TOTAL VALID EMAILS SENT

 **2,686** TOTAL RESPONSES ANALYZED

23%
CONVERSION RATE

Note: 2,758 responses were received. After data cleaning, 2,686 responses remained.

RESPONSES COVERED

 **4,839** ADULTS  **684** CHILDREN

12%
OF ALL VISITORS IN THIS PERIOD

Cook Islands International Visitor Survey

Snapshot April – June 2025

Country of residence



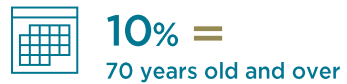
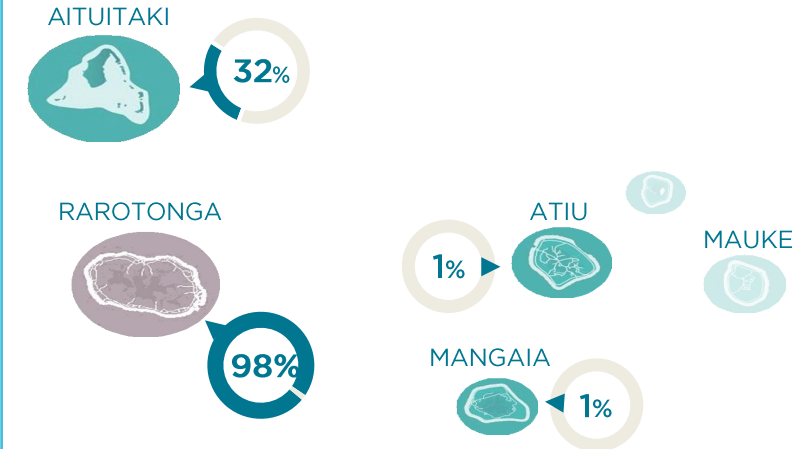
Purpose of visit



Most Participated Activities



Islands visited



Most appealing



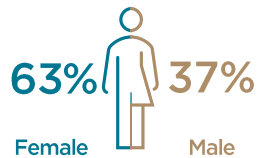
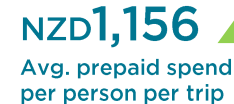
Least Appealing



Improvement



Economic impact

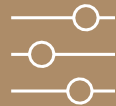


Note: The estimated flow-back rate into the Cook Islands for prepaid spend is 40%. With an average prepaid spend of \$2,889 per person per trip, this equates to \$1,156.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making

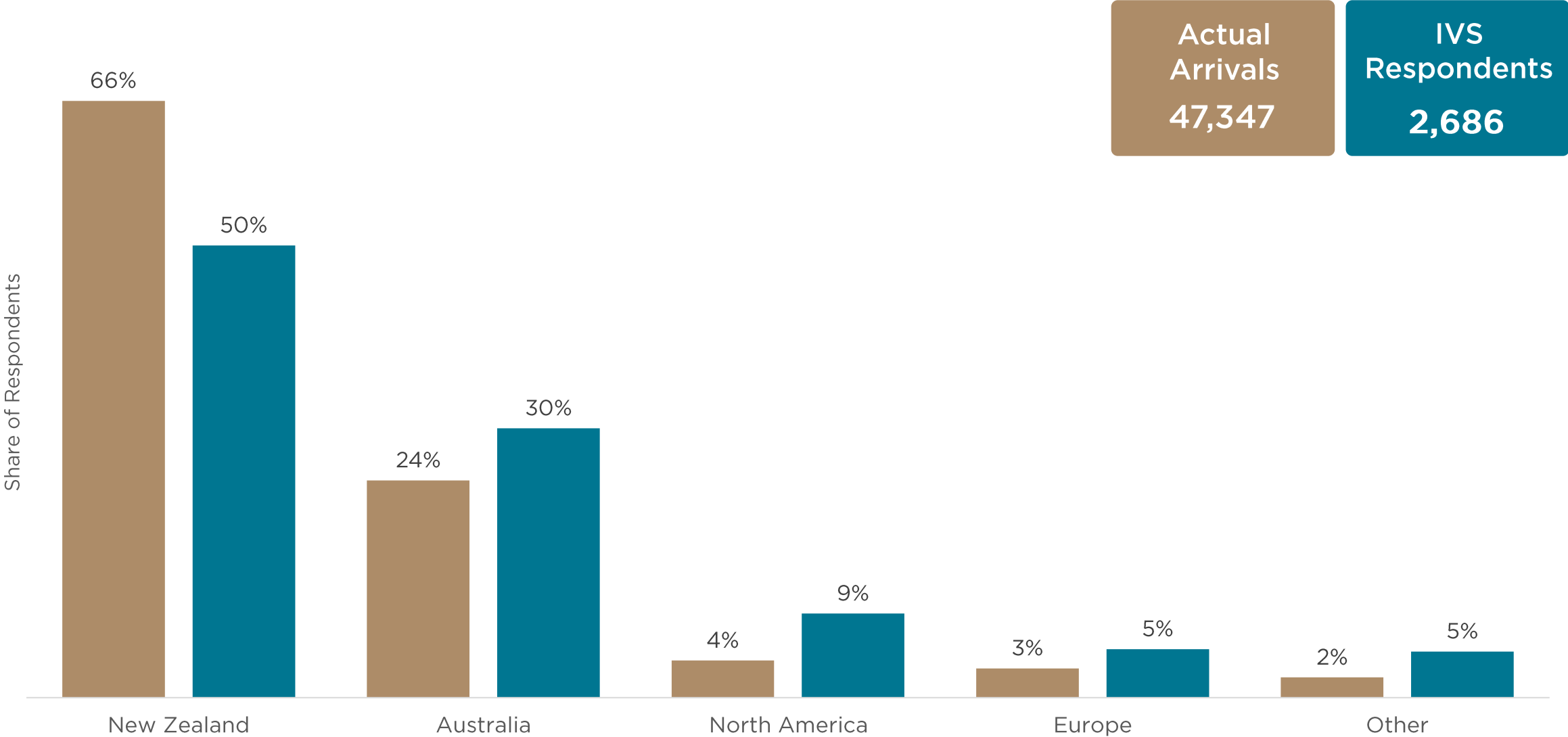


Visitor Spending
& Impact



Visitor
Satisfaction

Source Markets: IVS Respondents vs Actual Arrival

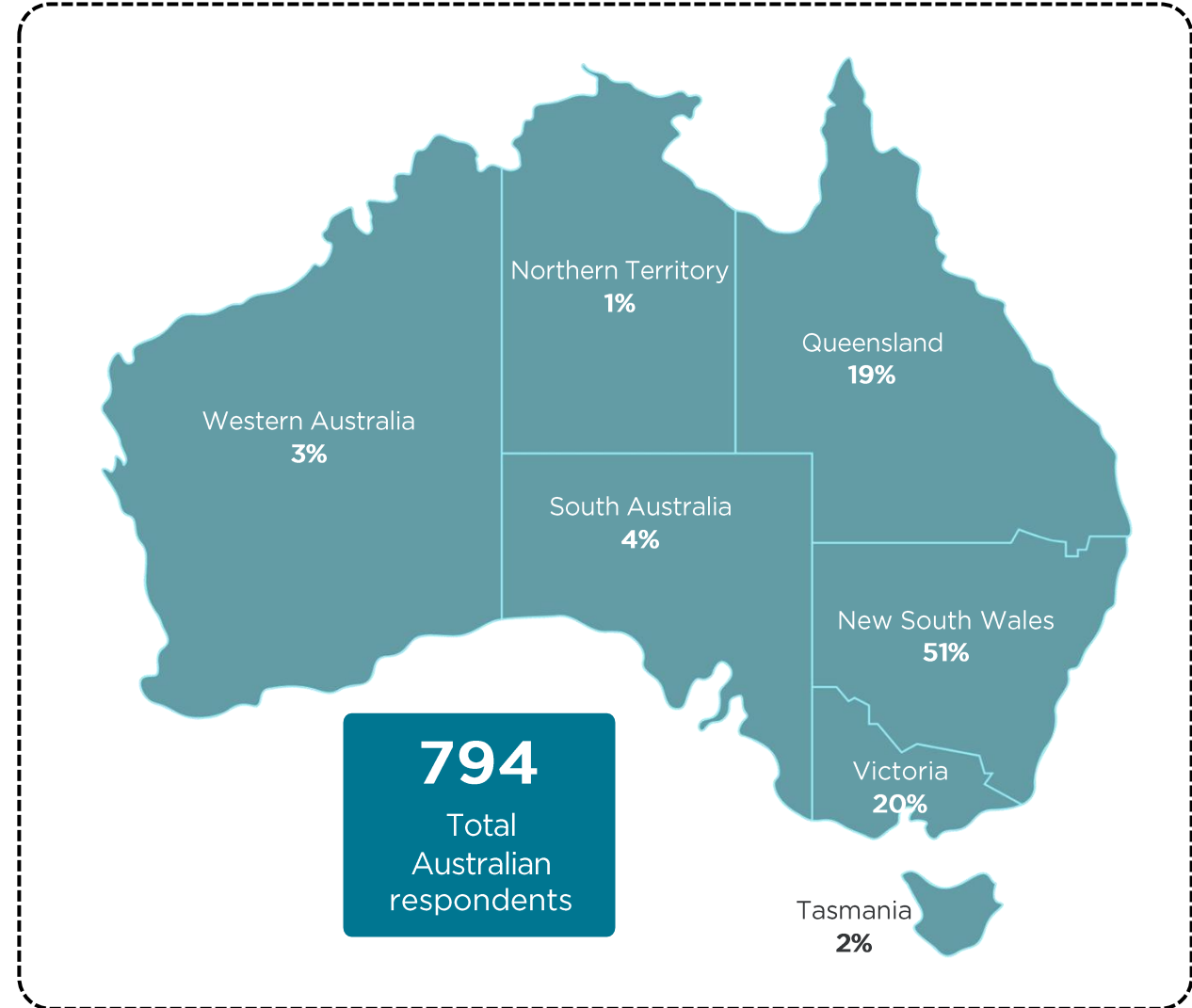
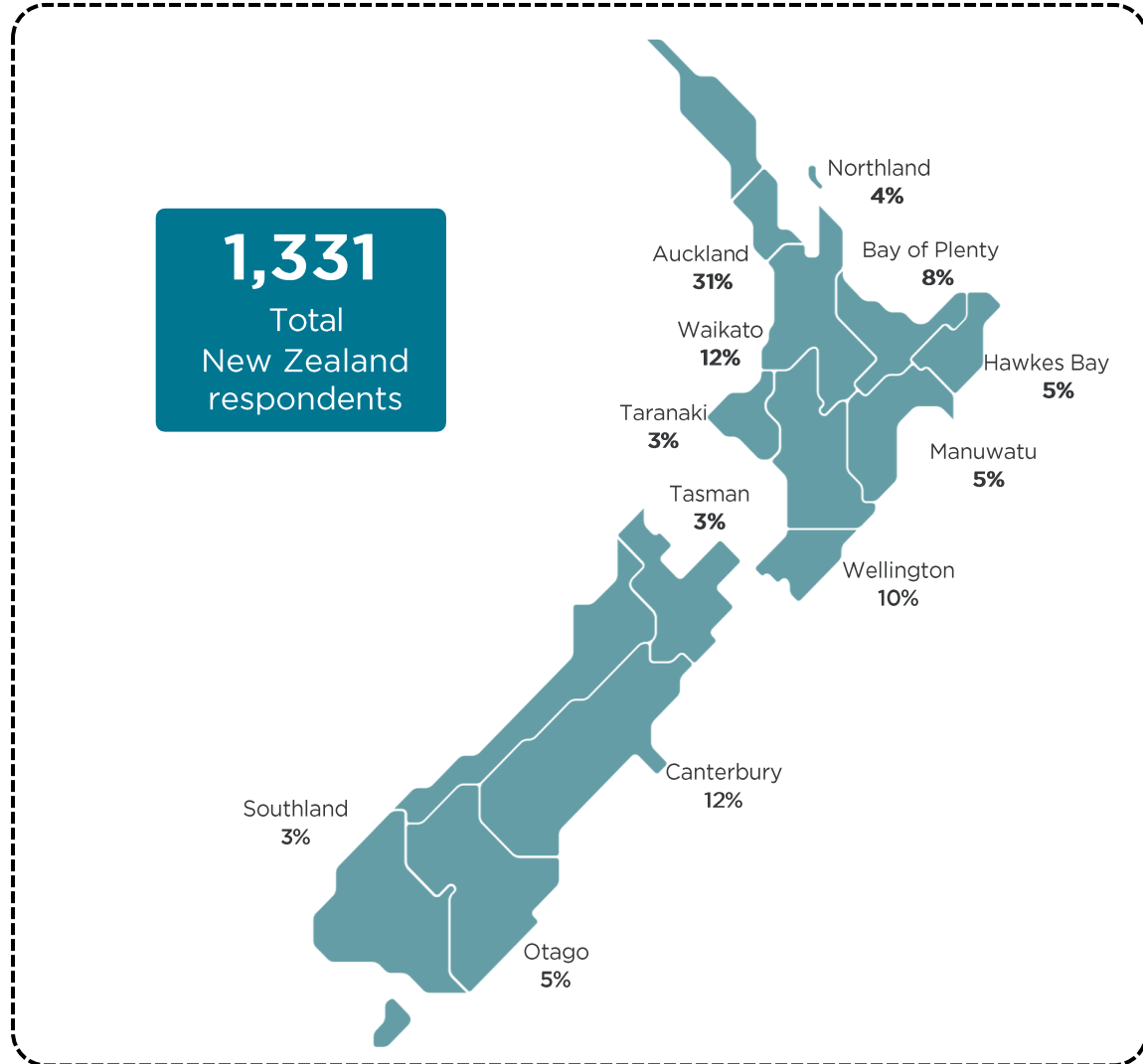


Actual Arrivals
47,347

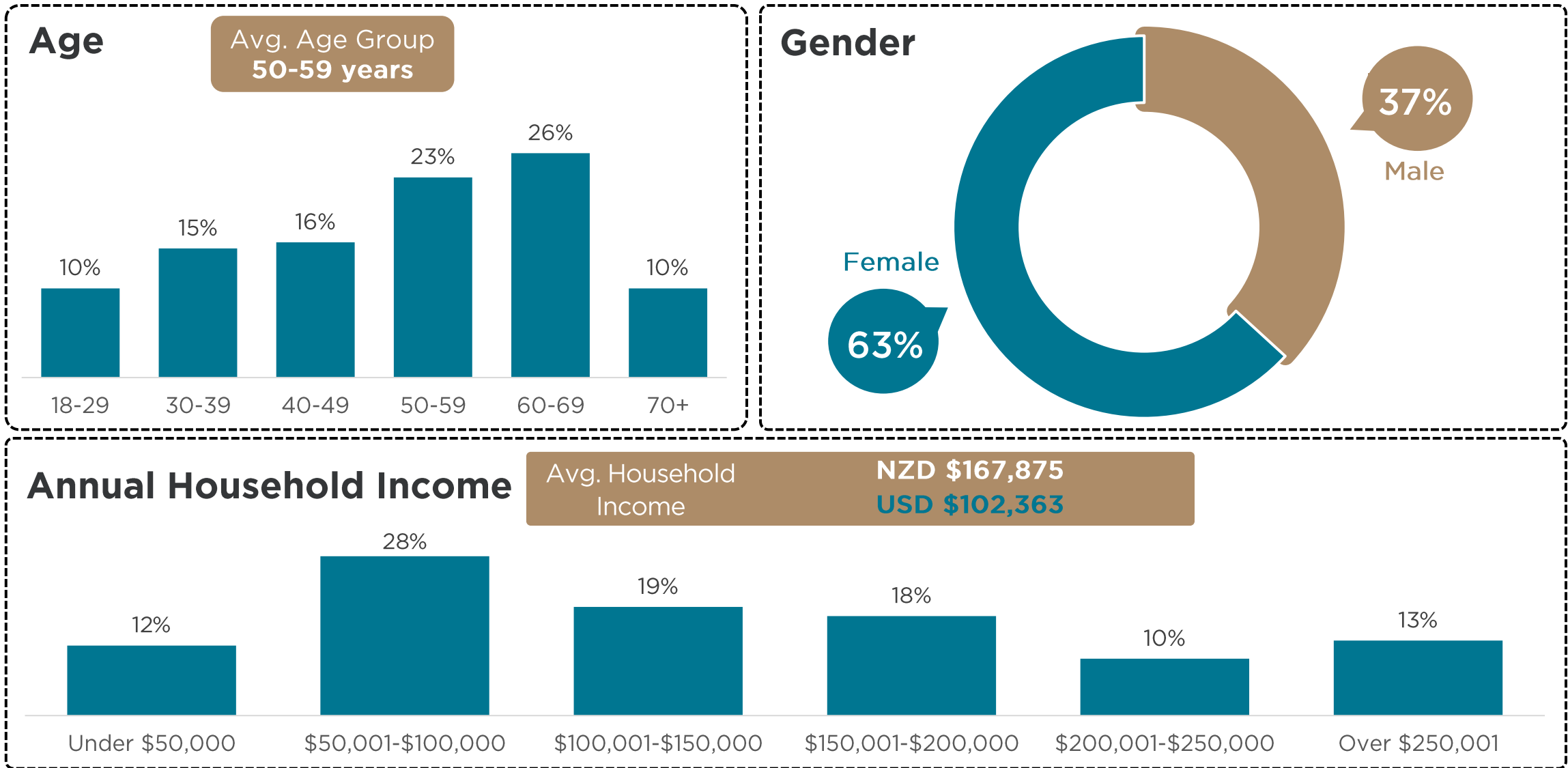
IVS Respondents
2,686

Note: Due to rounding, some totals do not sum to 100%. No weighting was applied, as the sample data is representative..

Top Source Markets



Respondent Demographics



Note: % share of IVS respondents. \$ in NZD. The average exchange rate to NZD and USD for Jan-Mar 2025 was applied.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making



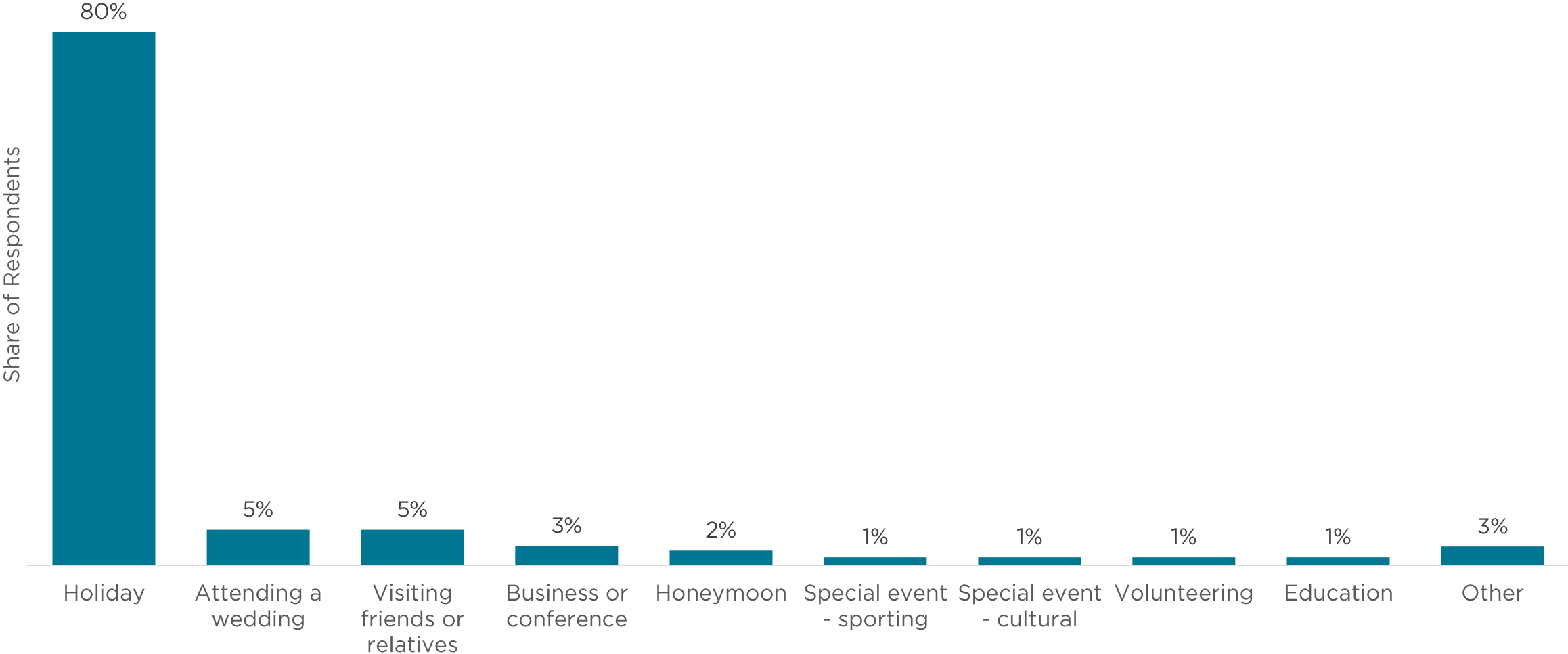
Visitor Spending
& Impact



Visitor
Satisfaction

Purpose of Visit

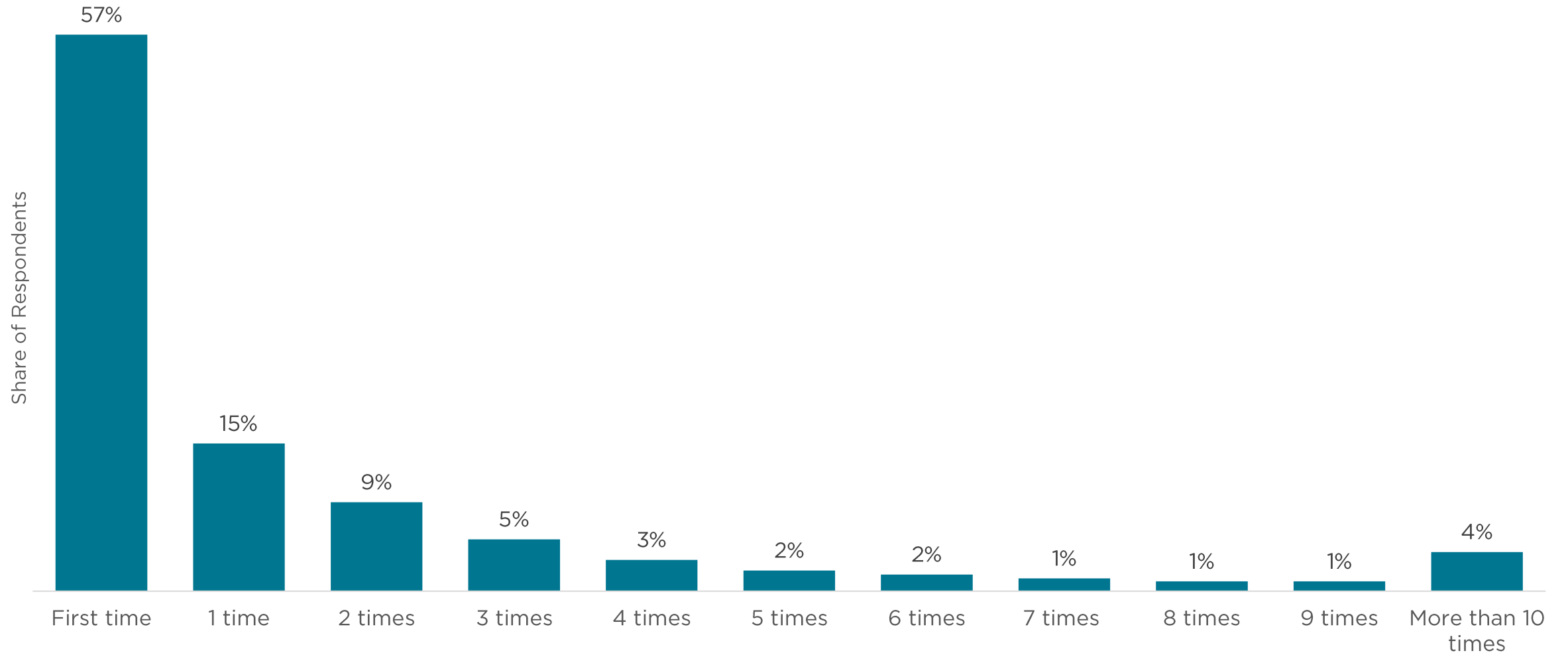
Q: What was the main purpose of your visit?



Note: N=2,627. Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%. VFR stands for "Visiting Friends and Relatives".

Number of Visits

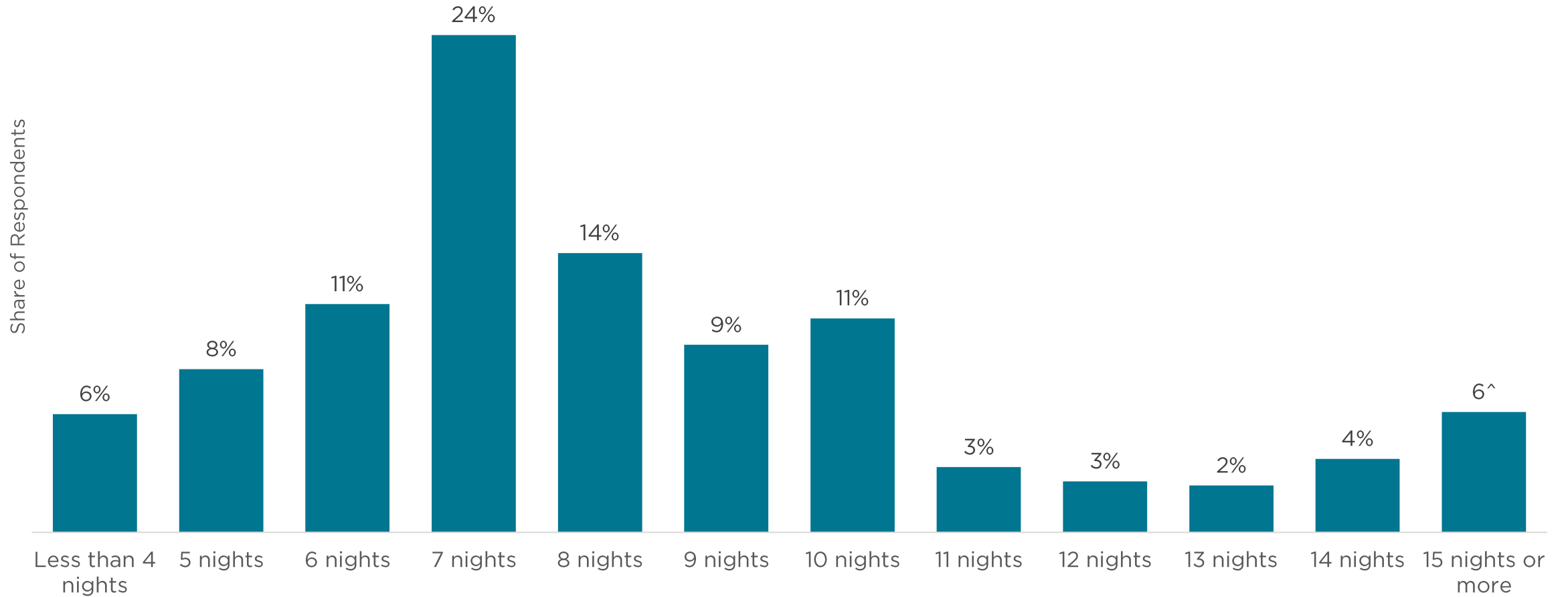
Q: How many times have been to the Cook Islands not including this recent visit?



Length of Stay (nights)

Q: How many nights did you spend in Cook Islands?

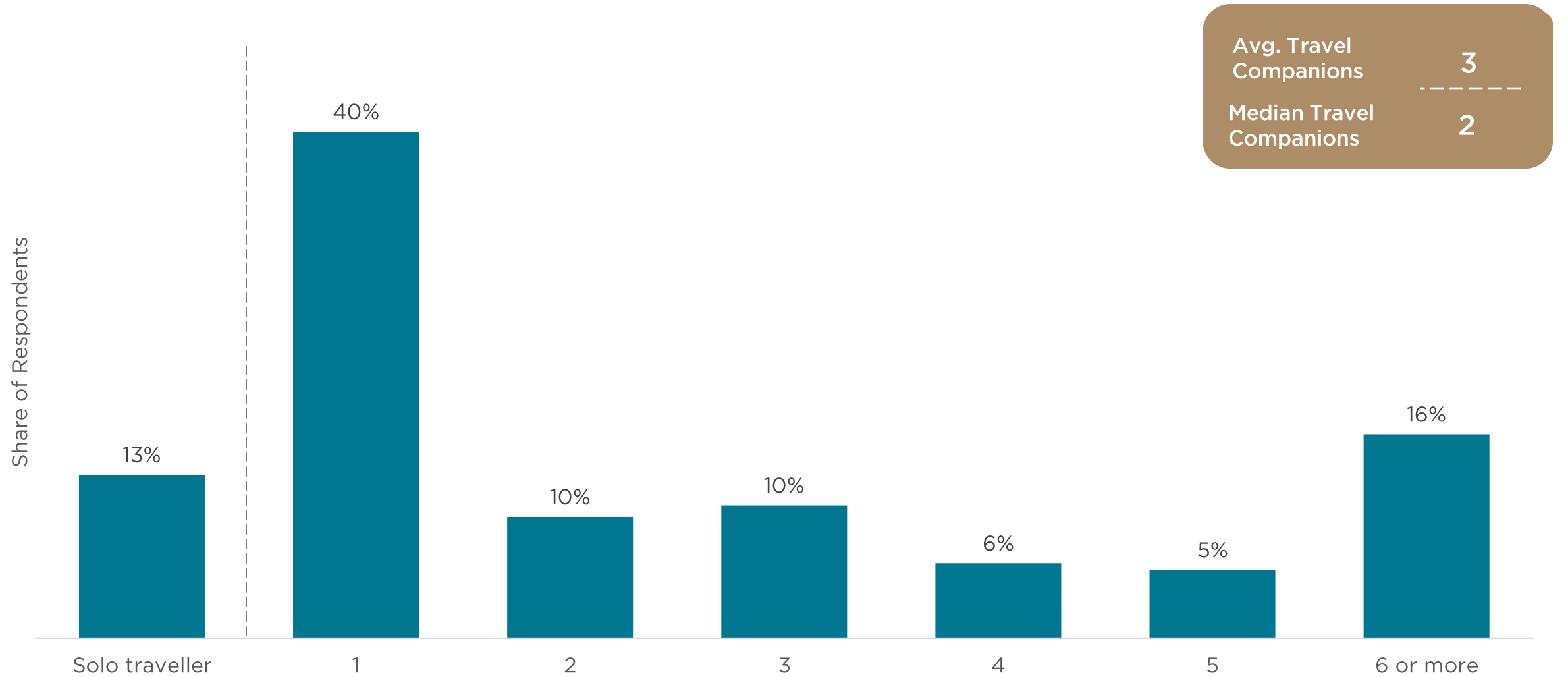
Avg. Length of Stay
8.5 Nights



Note: 31 and 31+ days as outliers were removed for length of stay analysis

Travel Group Size

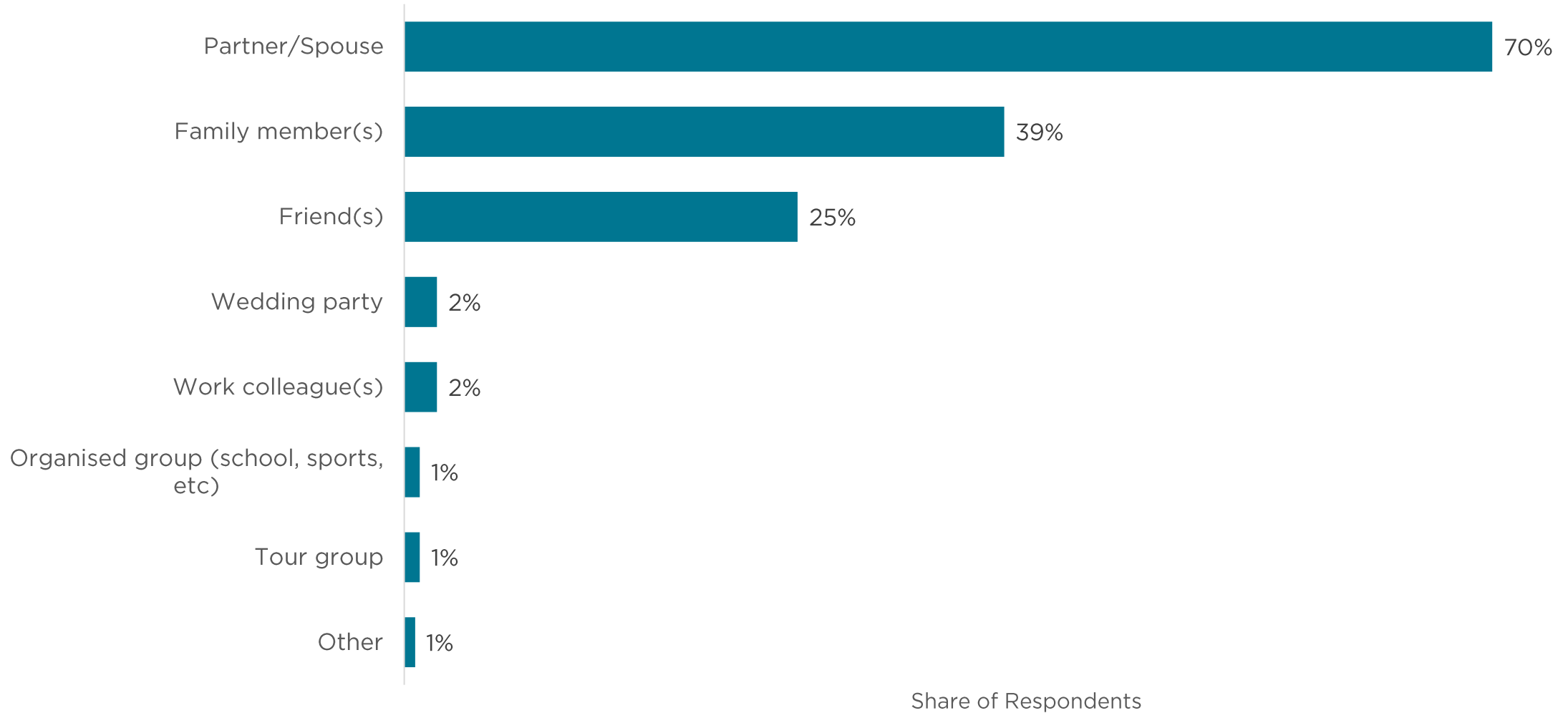
Q: How many people accompanied you on this trip?



Note: N=2,669. Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

Travel Companions

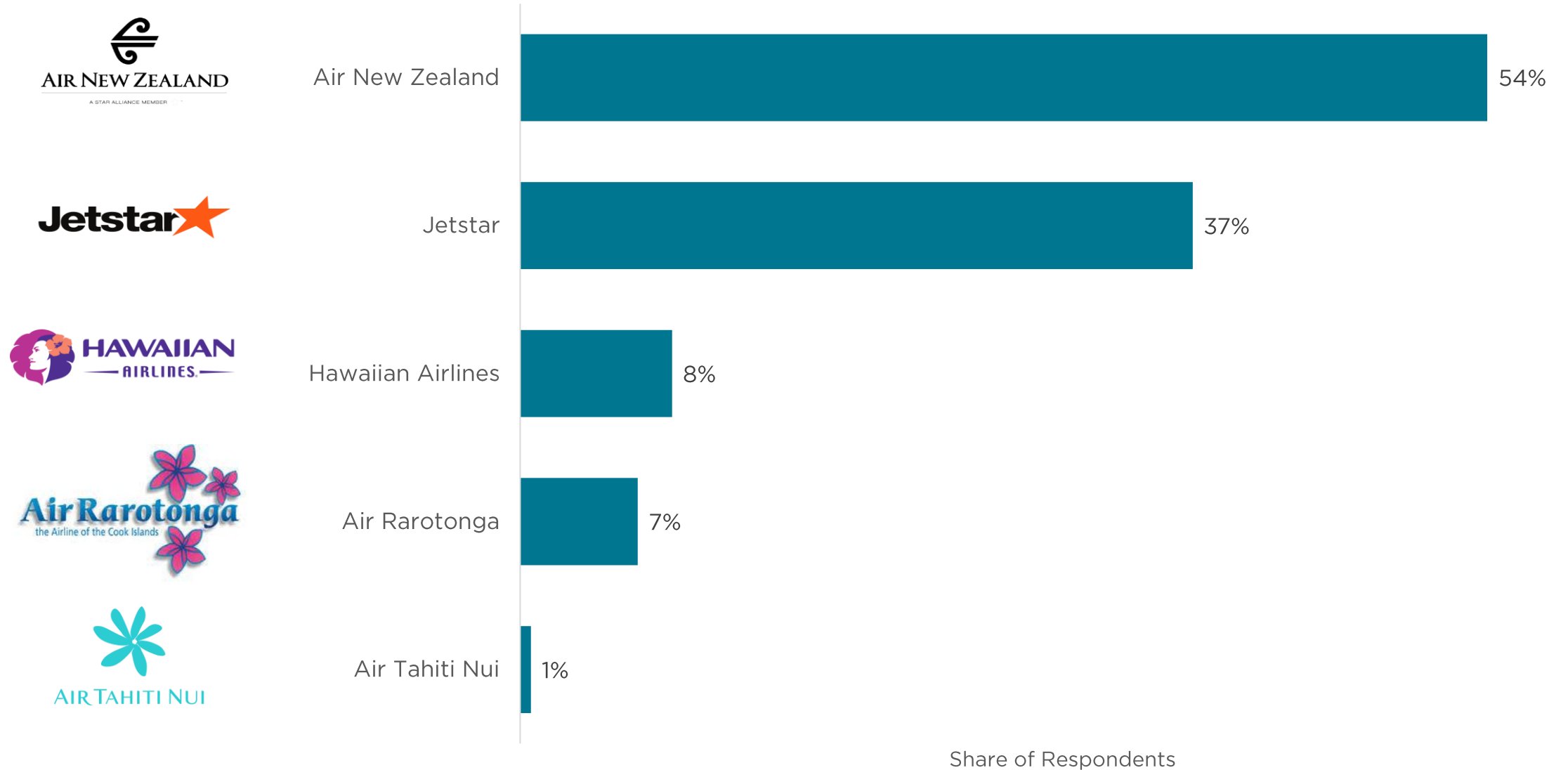
Q: Who were your travelling companions?



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Airlines Used for Travel

Q: How did you get to the Cook Islands?

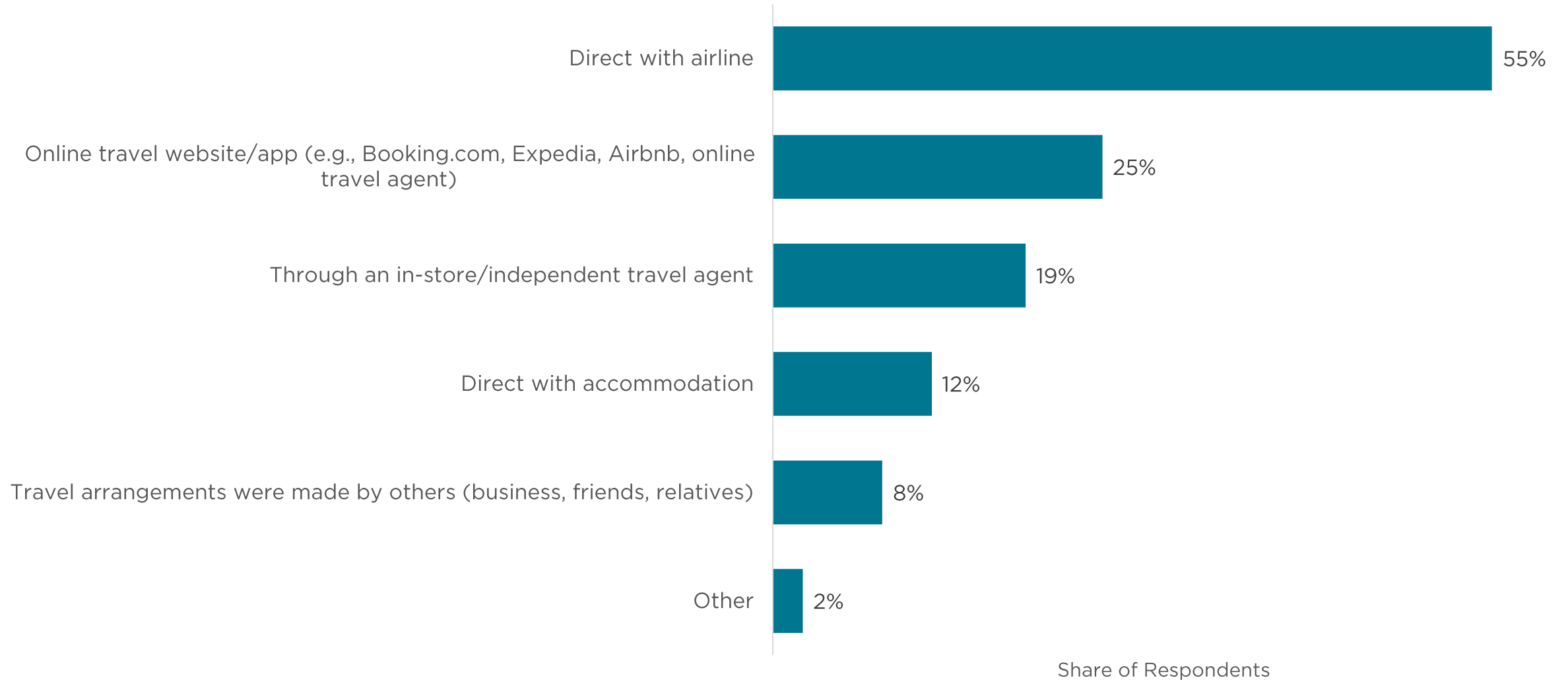


Share of Respondents

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Purchasing of Travel

Q: How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands?



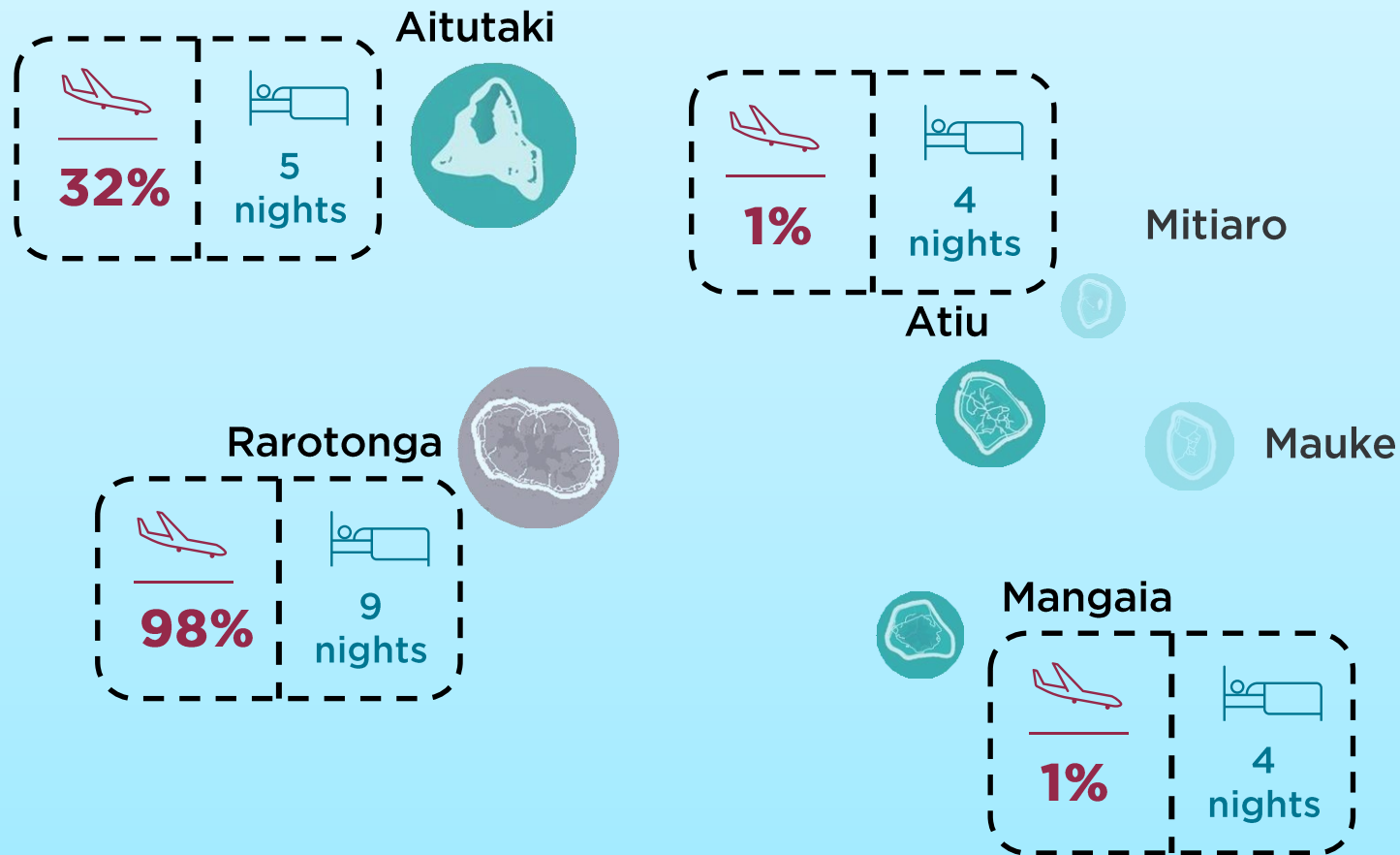
Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Islands Visited & Avg. Length of Stay

Avg. Length of Stay
8.5 Nights

Q: Which island(s) did you visit?

Q: How many nights did you spend on each island you visited?

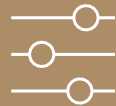


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making



Visitor Spending
& Impact

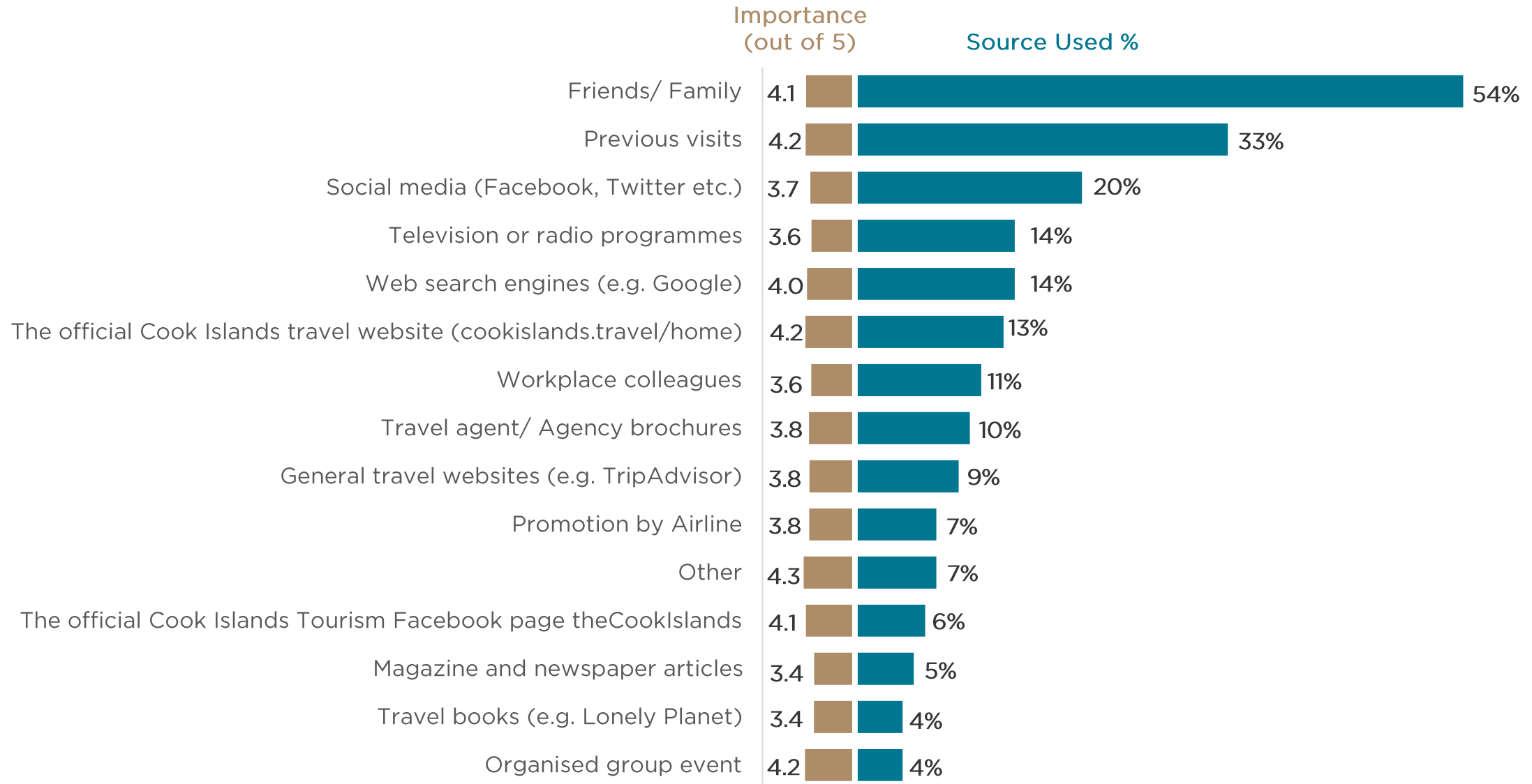


Visitor
Satisfaction

Information Source

Q: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination?

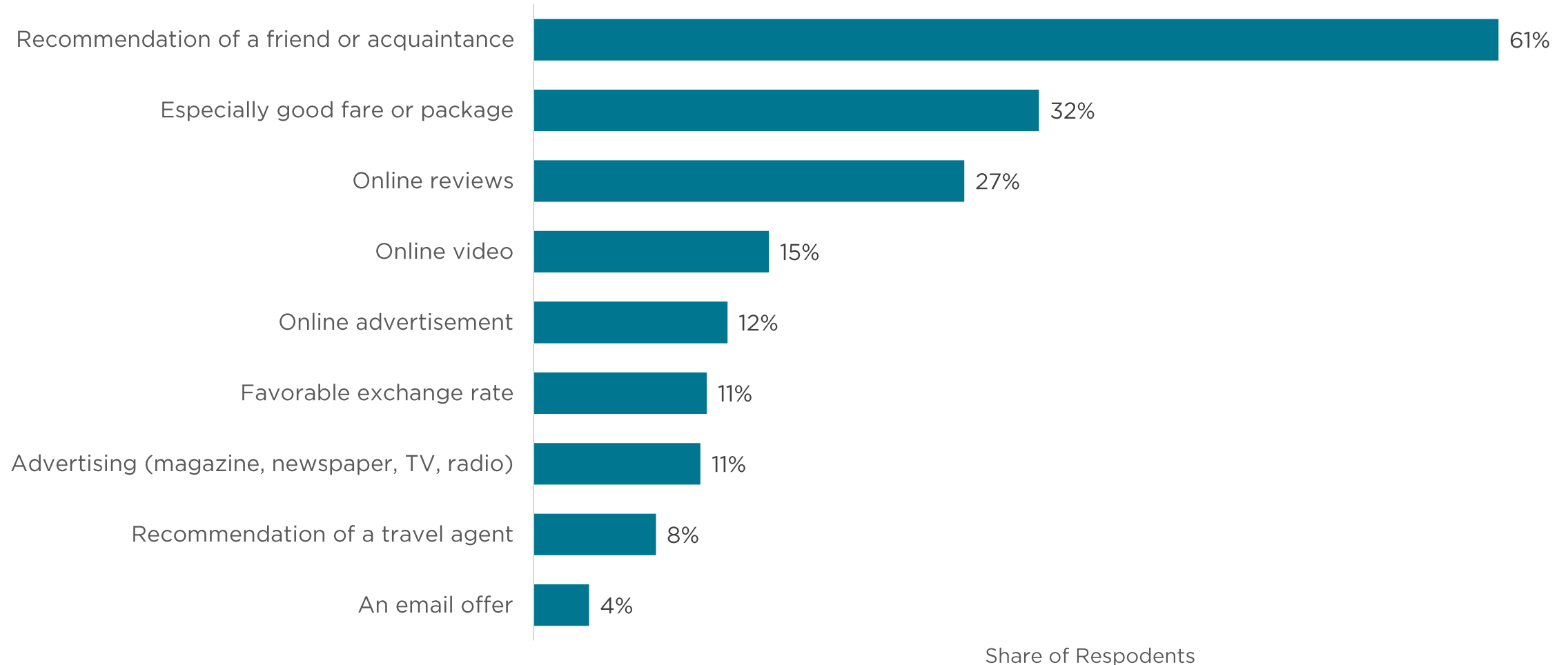
Q: How important was the information source?



Note: The satisfaction rate is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that information source

Promotion/Advertising Channels

Q: Which promotional or advertising channels influenced your decision to visit the Cook Islands?

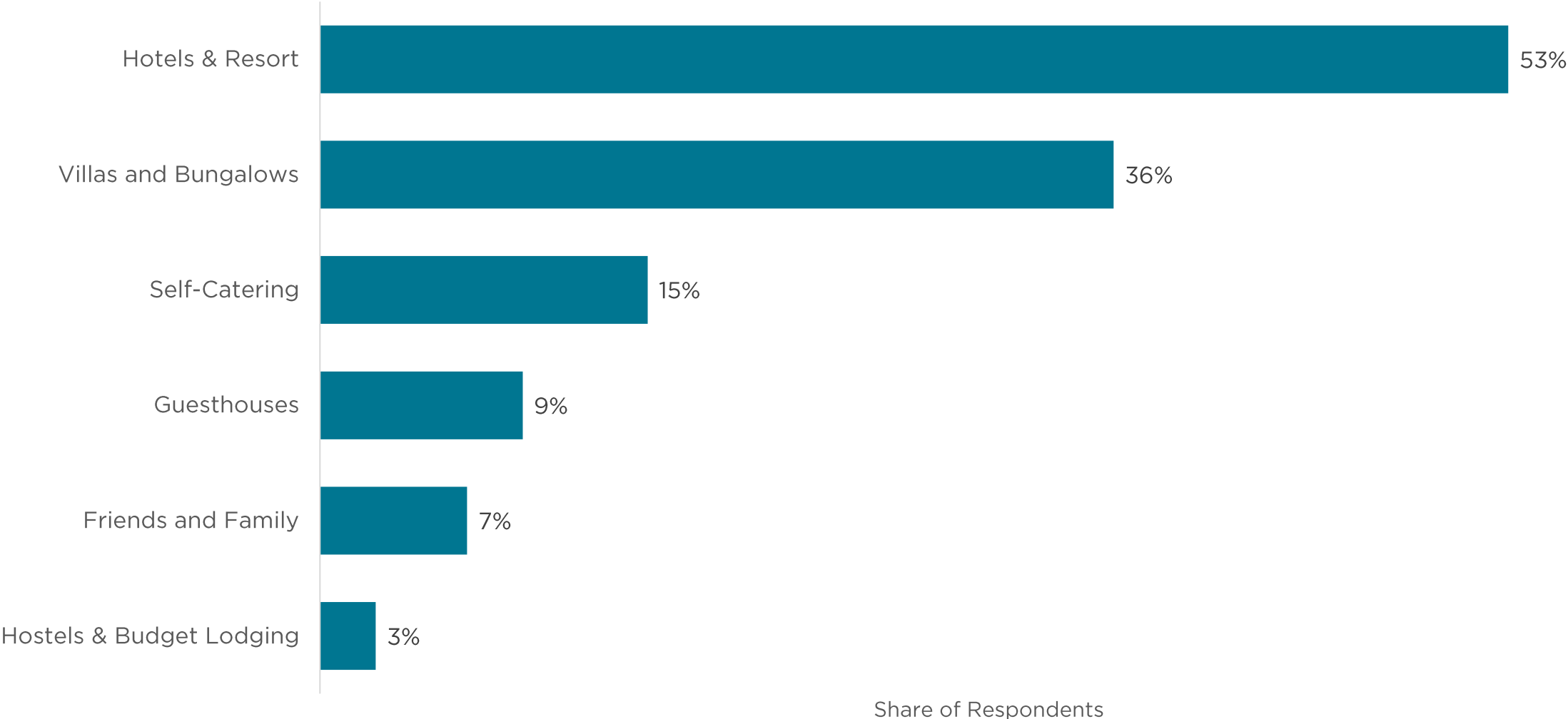


Share of Respondents

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Accommodation Type

Q: What type of accommodation did you stay in during your visit to the Cook Islands?



Share of Respondents

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%.

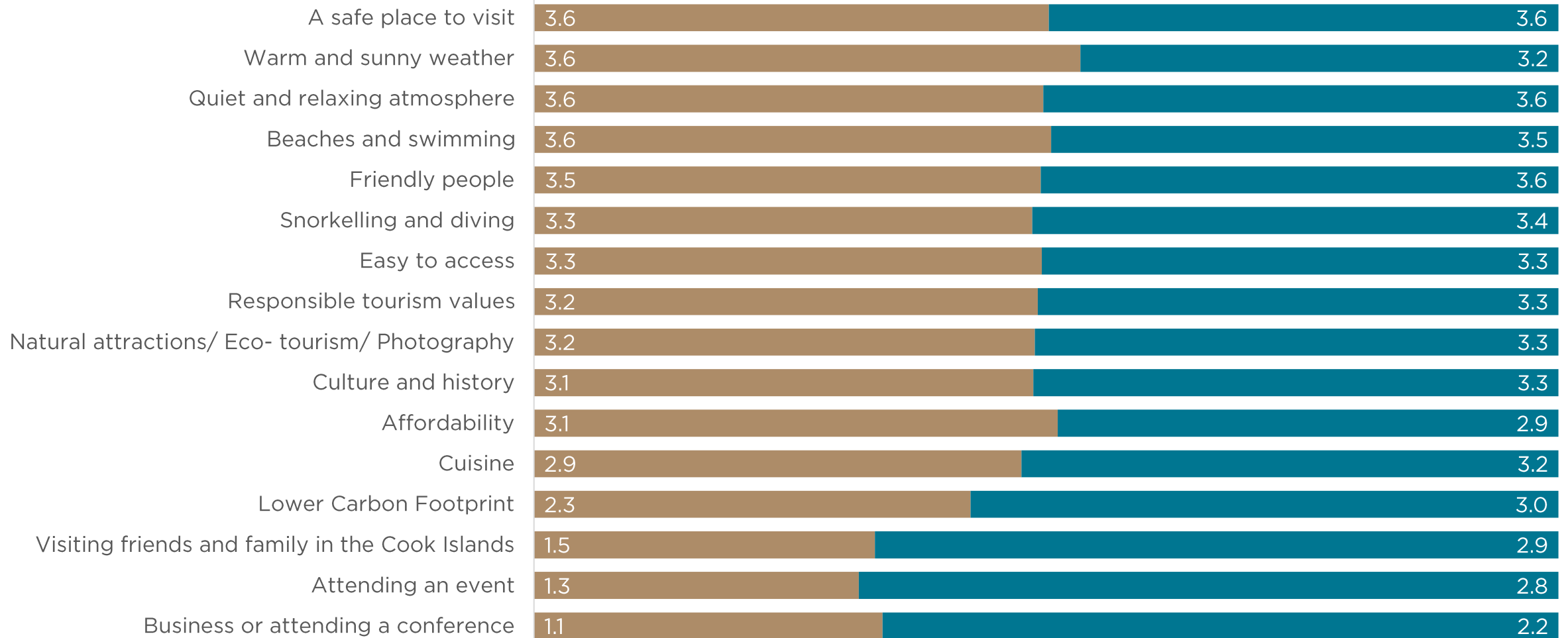
Pre-Travel Perceptions Vs Expectations

Q: How influential were the following factors in your selection of the Cook Islands for your recent visit?

Q: Please evaluate how well your experience aligned with your expectations.

1=No Influence to 4=Very Influential

1=Did Not Meet to 4=Exceeded

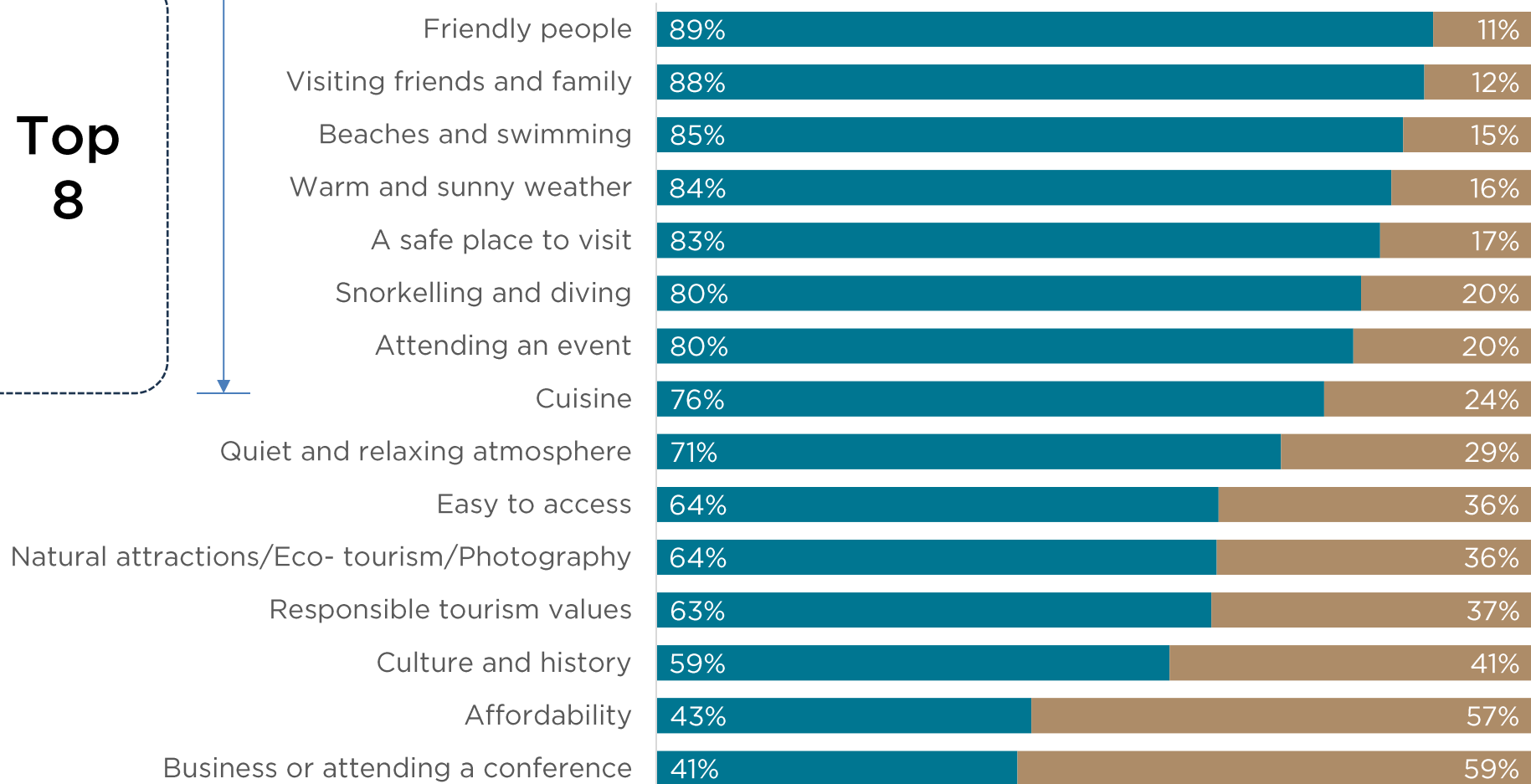


Note: The satisfaction rate is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that attribute.

Unique Selling Points: Cook Islands vs Competitors (based on Visitor Perceptions)

Q: Please attribute each statement below to the country, Cook Islands or Alternative Destination, that best represents its unique appeal.

Top
8



■ % of Respondents that chose the Cook Islands
 ■ % of Respondents that chose Other Destinations

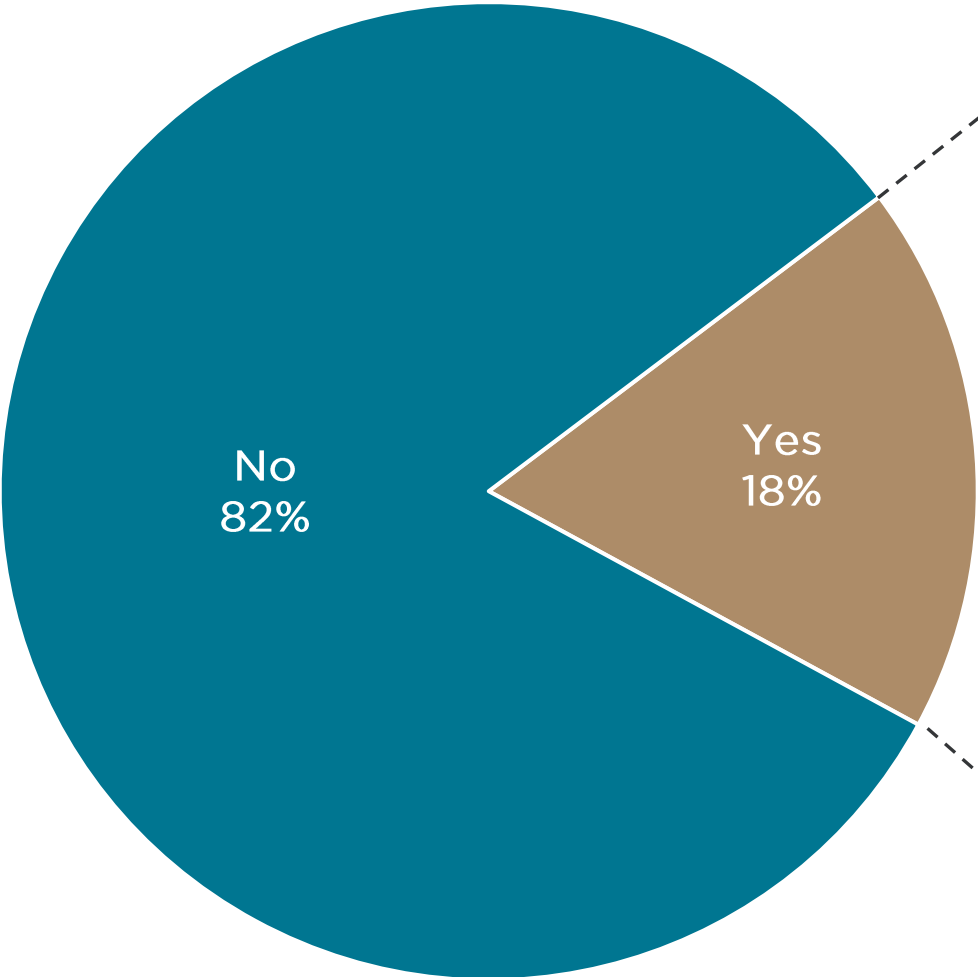
Bottom 6

Emphasizing these Unique Selling Points is important, as visitors increasingly associate them with other destinations when comparing with the Cook Islands.

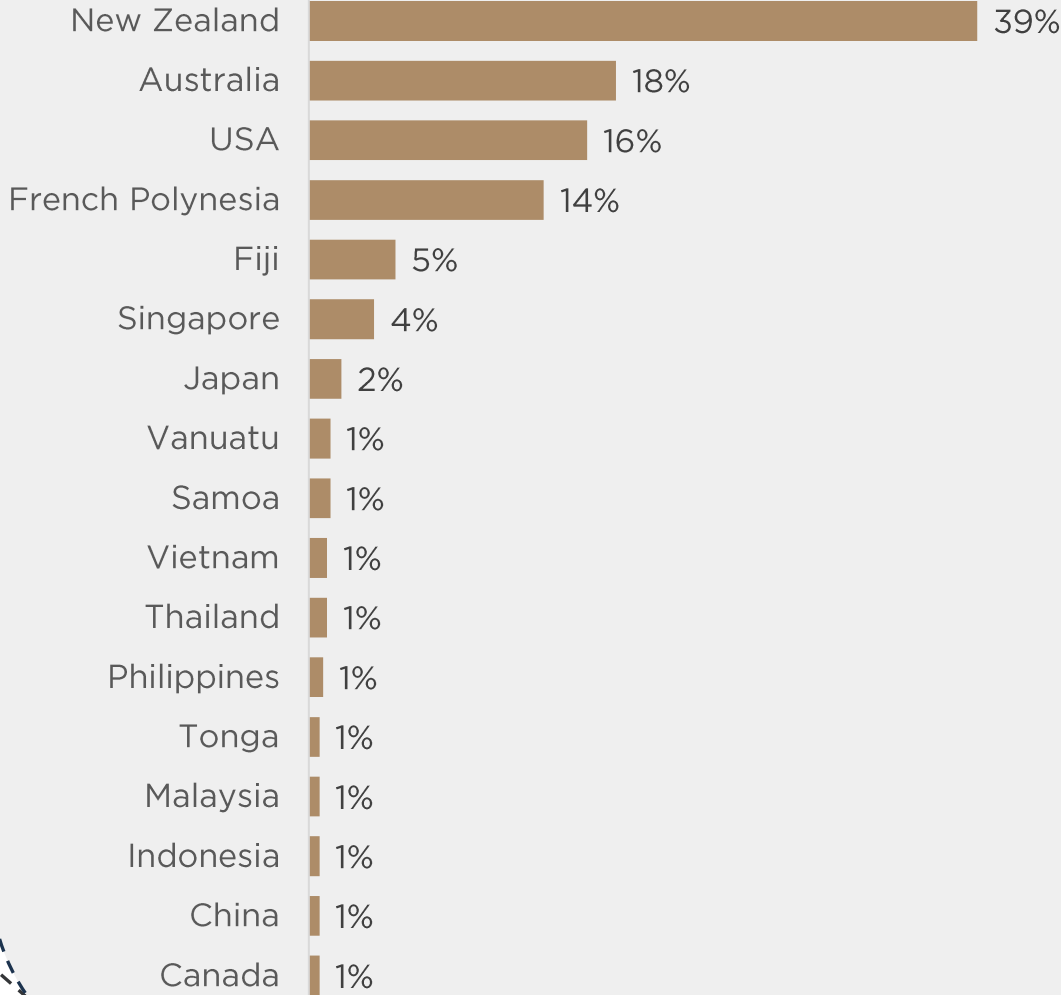


Other Considered Destinations

Q: When planning your trip, were there other destinations you were also contemplating but ultimately chose the Cook Islands?



Q: If Yes, what other destinations did you visit?

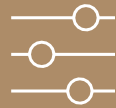


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making



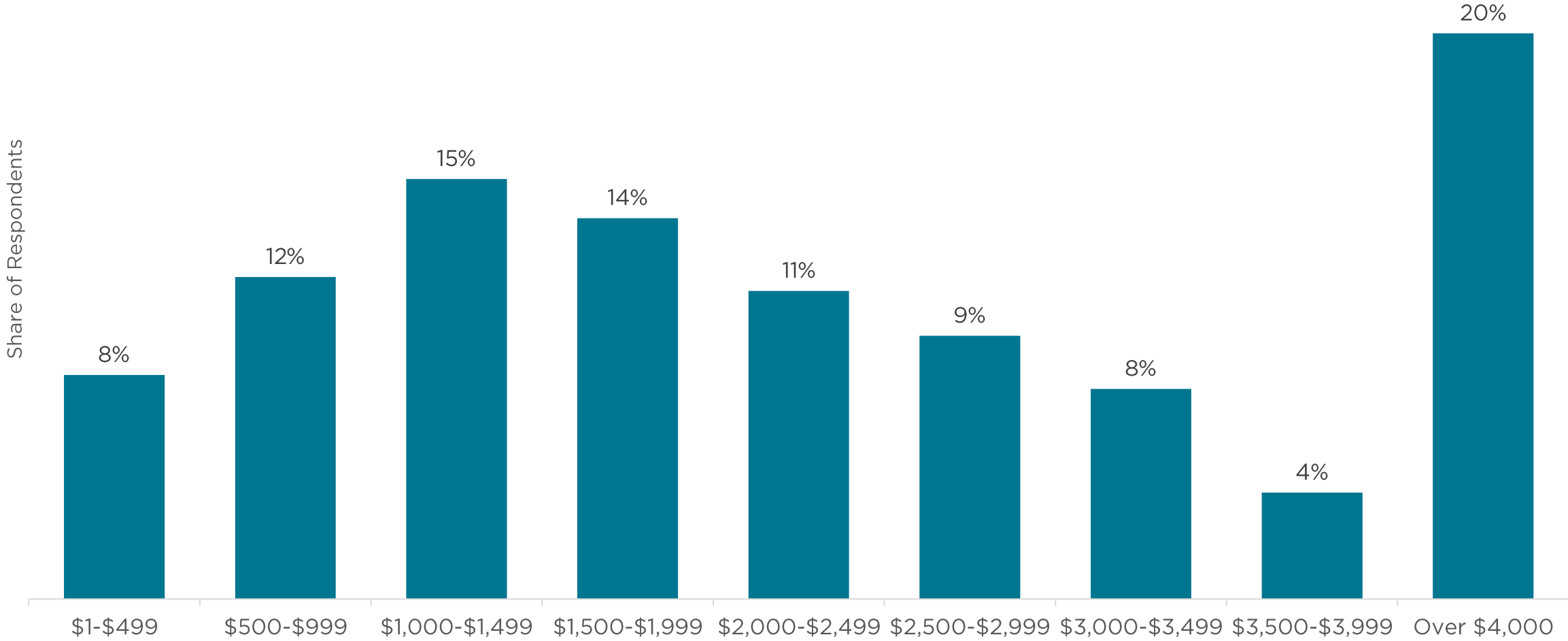
Visitor Spending
& Impact



Visitor
Satisfaction

Prepaid Expenditure

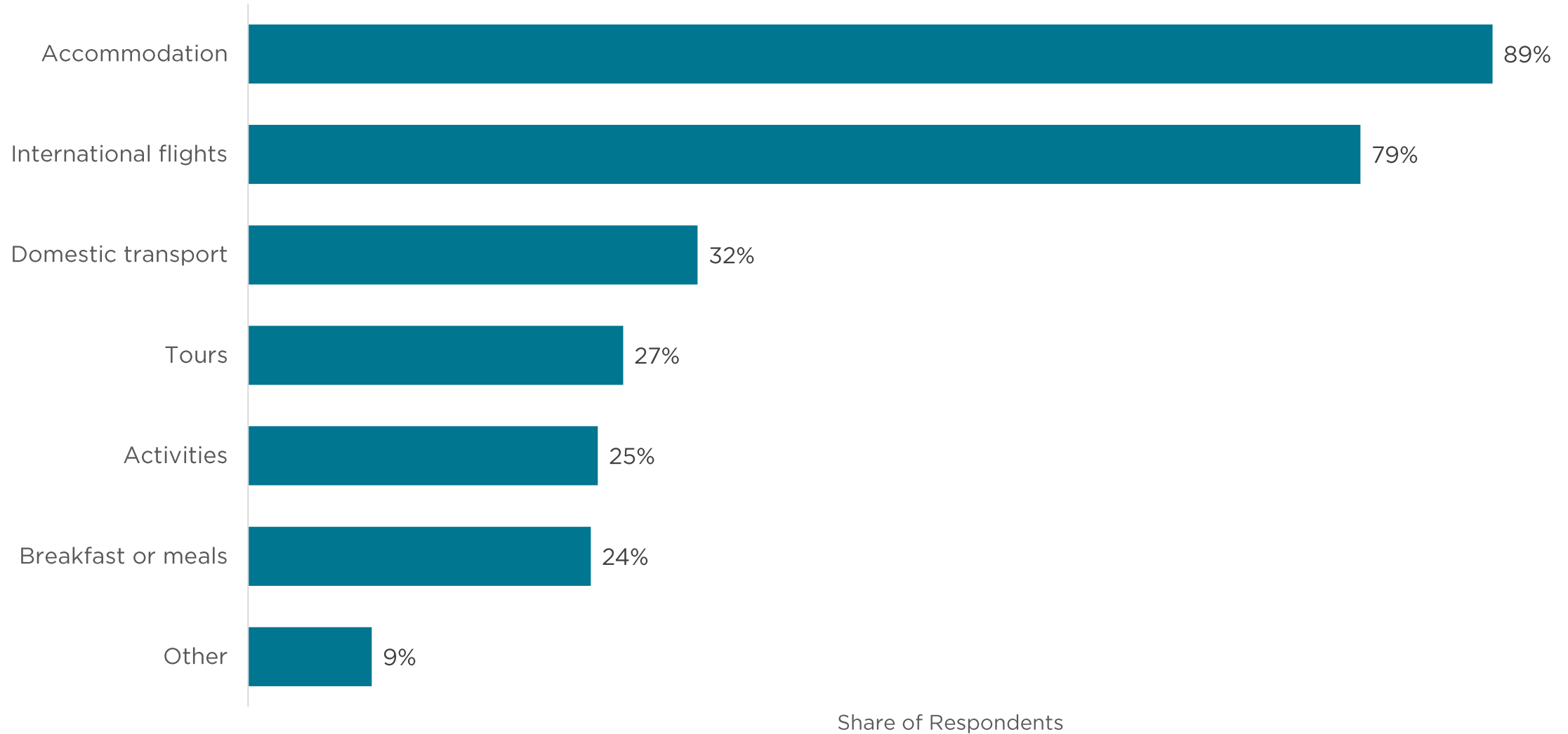
Avg. Prepaid per Person
NZ\$2,889



Note: NZ dollars. Outliers are not included in the average calculation.

Prepaid Items

Q: What items or services were included in your "Prepaid Spend"?



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

In-country Spend Per Person Per Day While in the Cook Islands

	Local Spend Per Person Per Day		
	<u>% of sector</u>	<u>NZD</u>	<u>USD</u>
Accommodation	27	46	28
Restaurant, Cafes & Bars	28	48	29
Vehicle Rental	9	15	9
Petrol	2	3	1
Domestic Flight	5	8	5
Public Transport	1	1	1
Internet Cost	1	1	1
Water-based activities	7	12	7
Land-based activities	3	5	3
Groceries	7	12	7
Shopping	11	18	11
Other	1	1	1
TOTAL	100%	170	103

Note: Total Economic Impact-Per Trip and Per Day are per-person expenditures and can be used to estimate the total economic impact, through extrapolating to the total number of visitor arrivals during the surveyed period.

Economic Impact - Per Person and Total

	Visitor Expenditure Per Person & Total	
	Apr - Jun 25	Apr - Jun 25
	NZD	USD
Average Spend Prior to arrival		
Per Person Per Trip	2,889	1,762
<i>Flowing into local economy rate - estimated 40%</i>		
Per Person Per Trip	1,156	705
Per Person per Day	136	83

Average Local Spend		
<i>Length of Stay (nights)</i>	<i>mean 8.5 nights</i>	
Per Person Per Trip	1,431	873
Per Person per Day	170	103

Total Economic Impact-Per Trip	2,587	1,578
Total Economic Impact-Per Day	304	186

April - June 2024

NZD 142 MILLION

FROM VISITORS 45,949

 PREPAID EXPENDITURE

 IN-COUNTRY SPEND

\$2,544

Prepaid per visitor per trip

\$218

In-country spend per day

40% Flowing into local economy rate

 x **9.5 nights** Average length of stay

\$1,018

Prepaid per visitor per trip

\$2,071

In-country spend per trip

 ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$3,089 per visitor per trip
\$325 per visitor per day

April - June 2025

NZD 122 MILLION

FROM VISITORS 47,347 ▲

 PREPAID EXPENDITURE

 IN-COUNTRY SPEND

\$2,889 ▲

Prepaid per visitor per trip

\$170 ▼

In-country spend per day

40% Flowing into local economy rate

 x **8.5 nights** ▼ Average length of stay

\$1,156 ▲

Prepaid per visitor per trip

\$1,431 ▼

In-country spend per trip

 ECONOMIC IMPACT

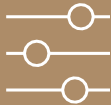
\$2,587 per visitor per trip ▼
\$304 per visitor per day ▼

Note: The amounts are in NZ dollars. The visitor numbers are based on official statistics provided by the CIT office.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making



Visitor Spending
& Impact

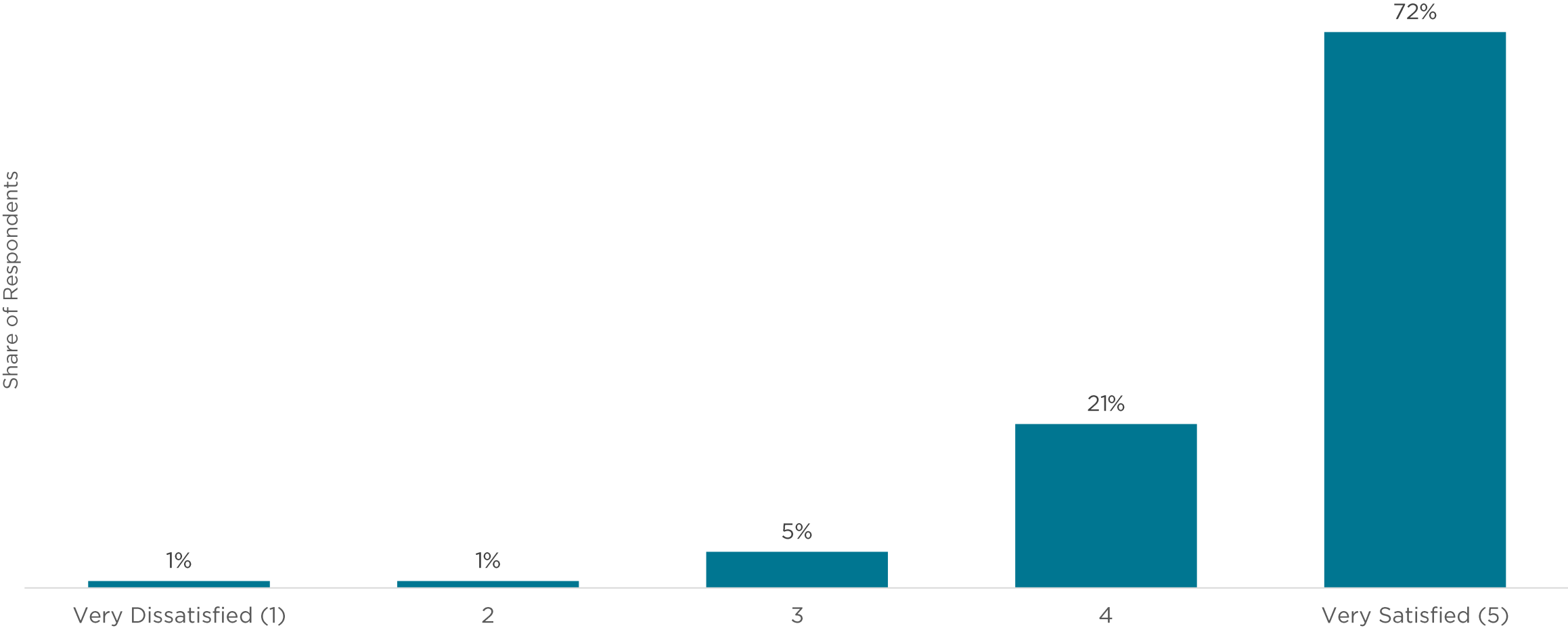


Visitor
Satisfaction

Visitor Overall Satisfaction

Q: How satisfied were you with your overall experience of the Cook Islands?

Avg. Overall Satisfaction
4.6

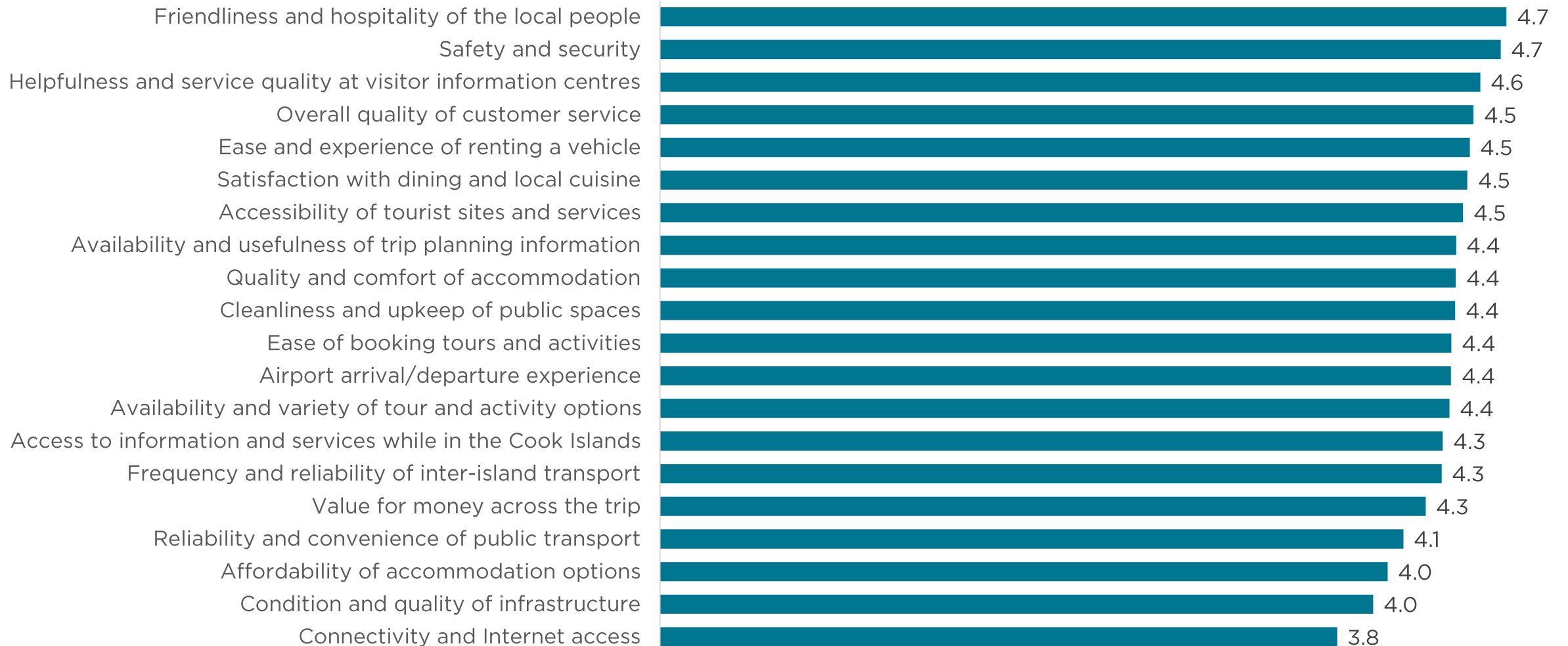


Note: Due to rounding, some totals do not sum to 100%

Satisfaction with Travel Experience

1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

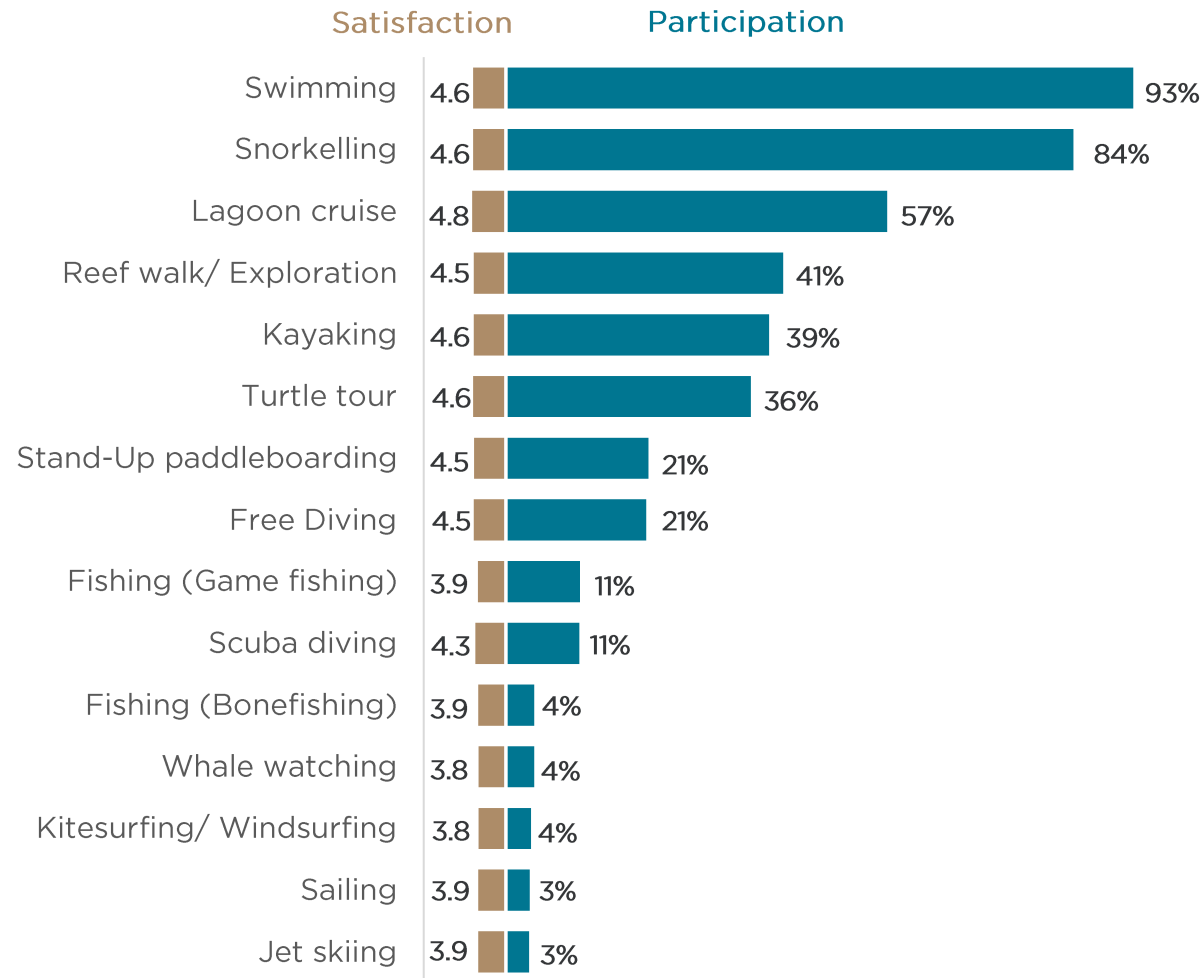


Note: The satisfaction rate is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that attribute.

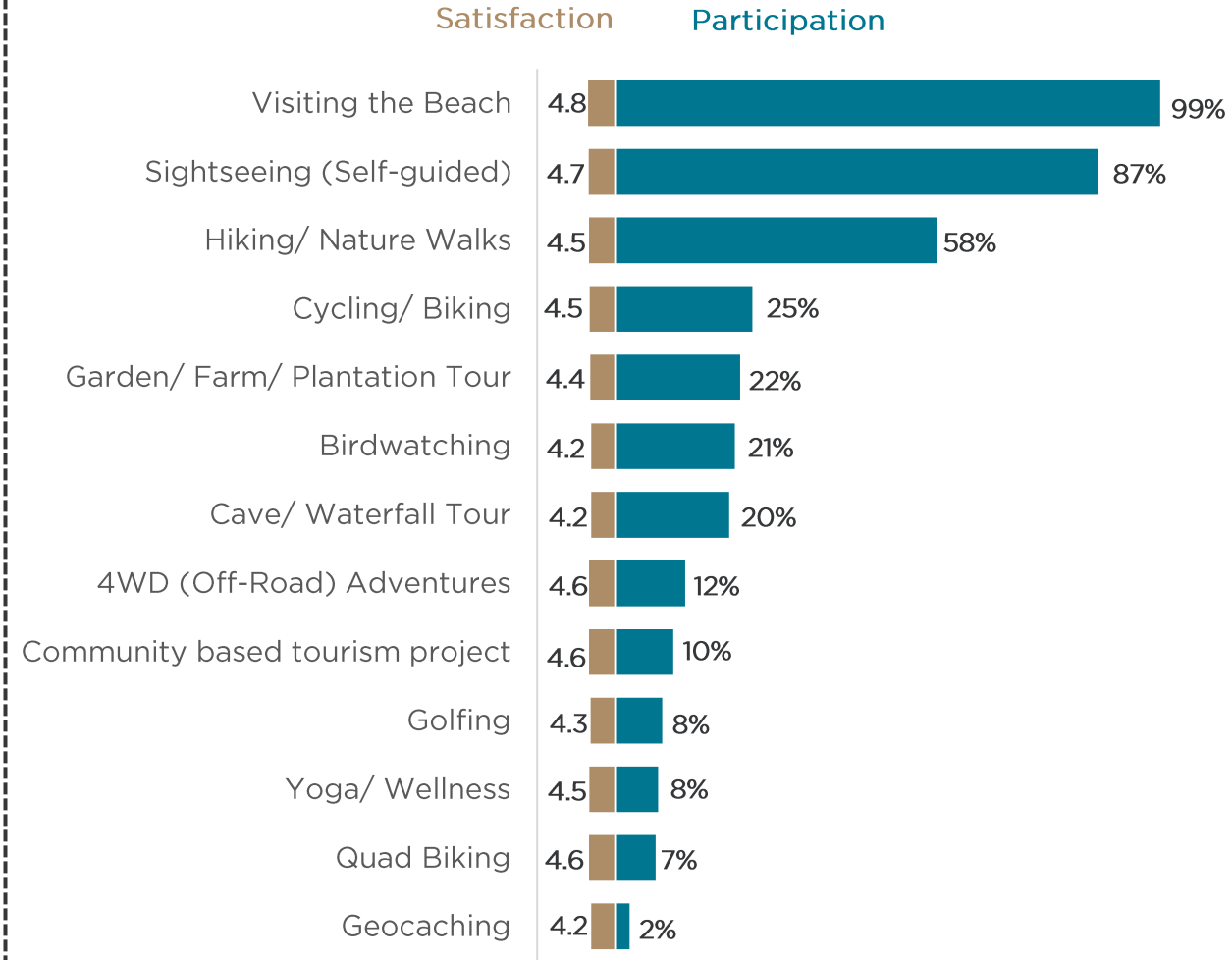
Satisfaction with Activities

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

Water-based activities



Land-based activities



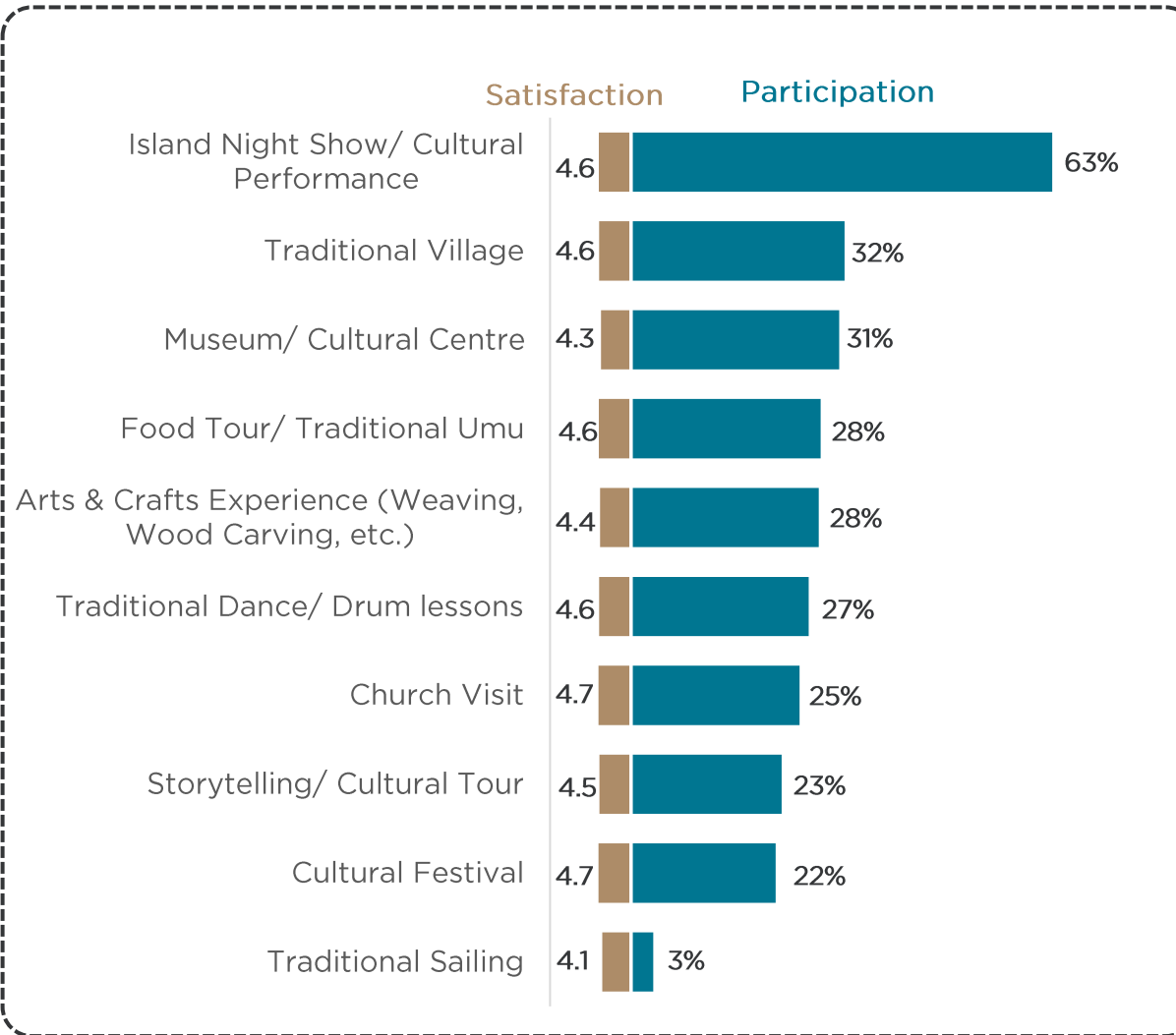
Scale: 1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%. Satisfaction is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that activity.

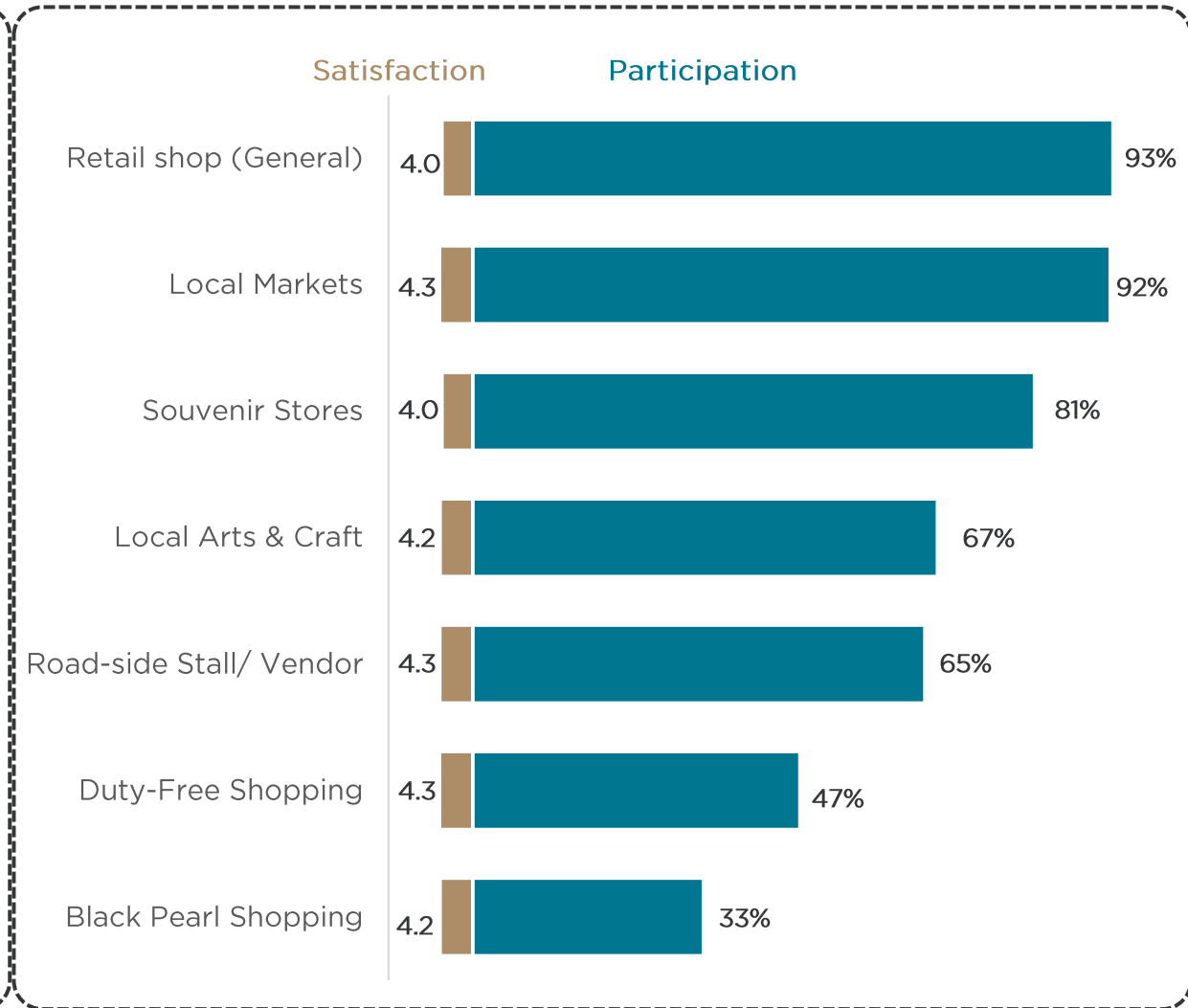
Satisfaction with Activities

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

Arts and Cultural Activities



Shopping activities



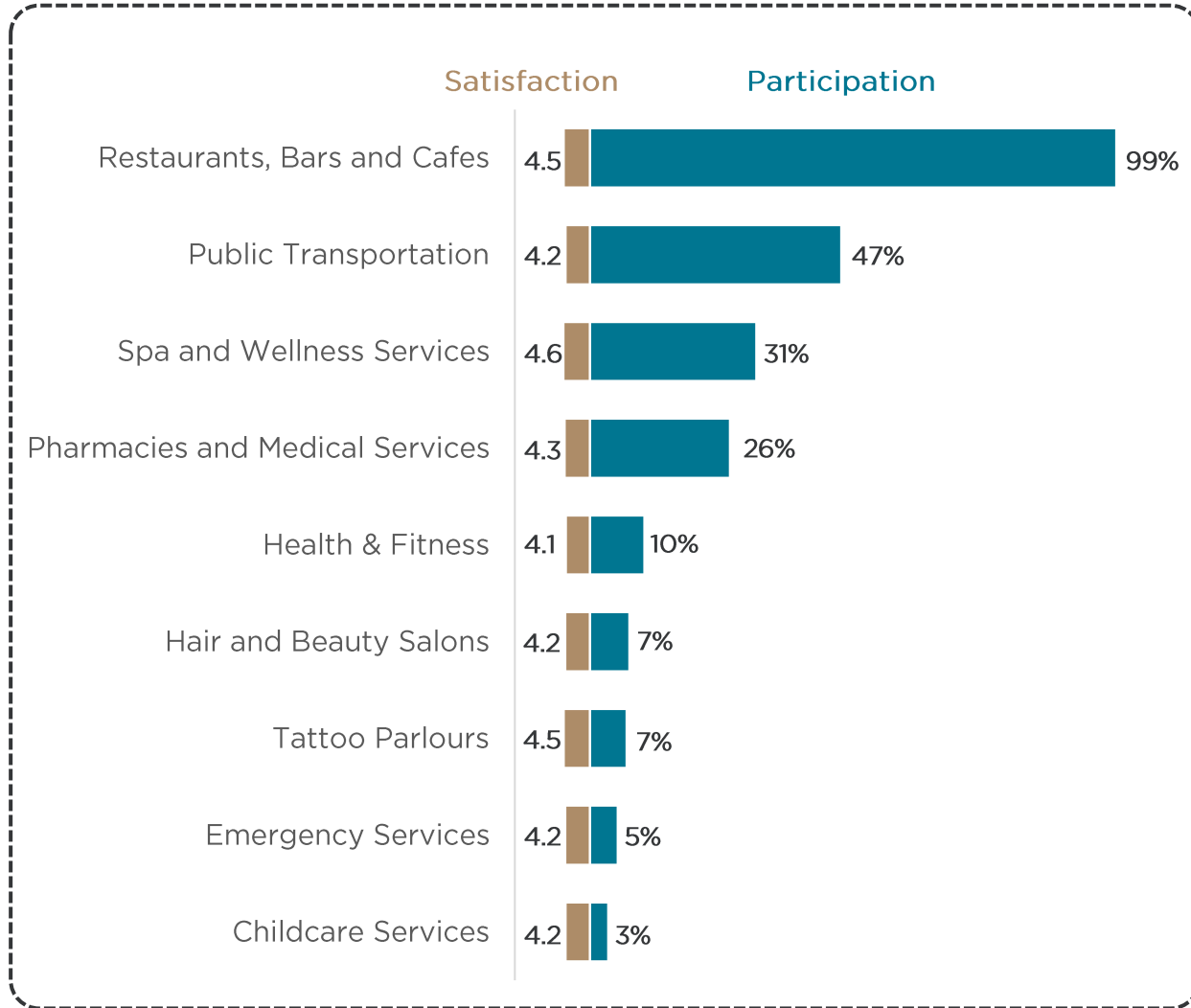
Scale: 1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%. Satisfaction is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that activity.

Satisfaction with Activities

Q: How satisfied were you with the following?

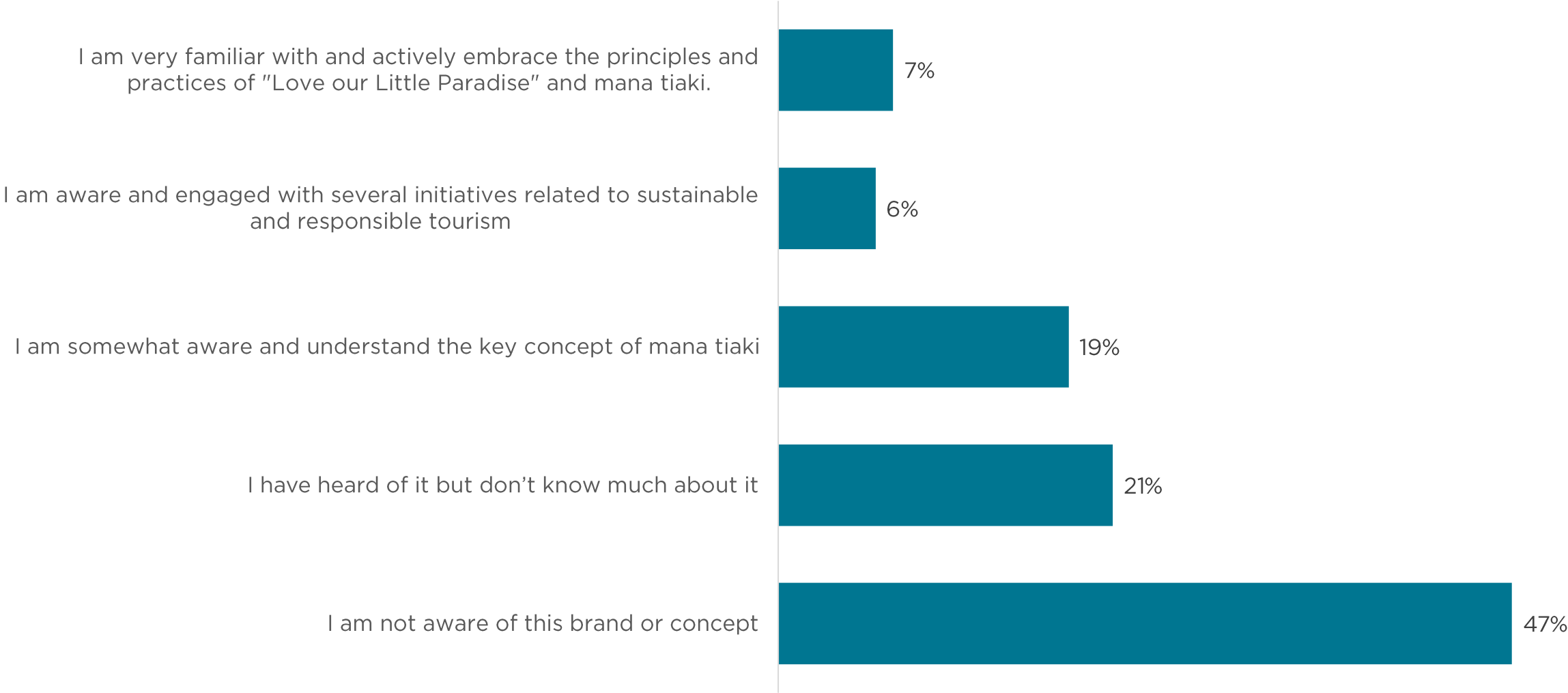
Services



Scale: 1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%. Satisfaction is the average of all ratings given by respondents for that activity.

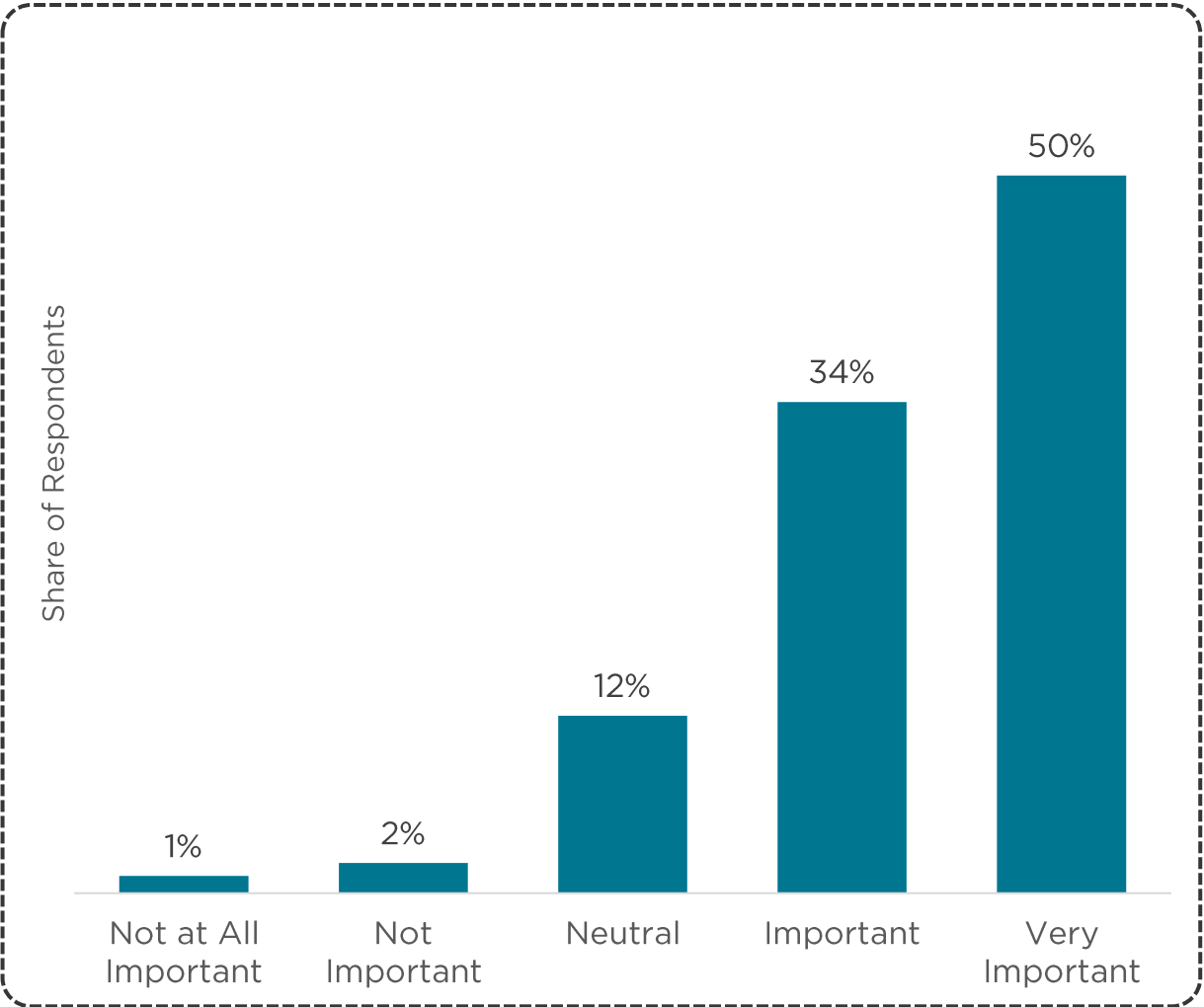
Awareness of "Love Our Little Paradise" and Mana Tiaki



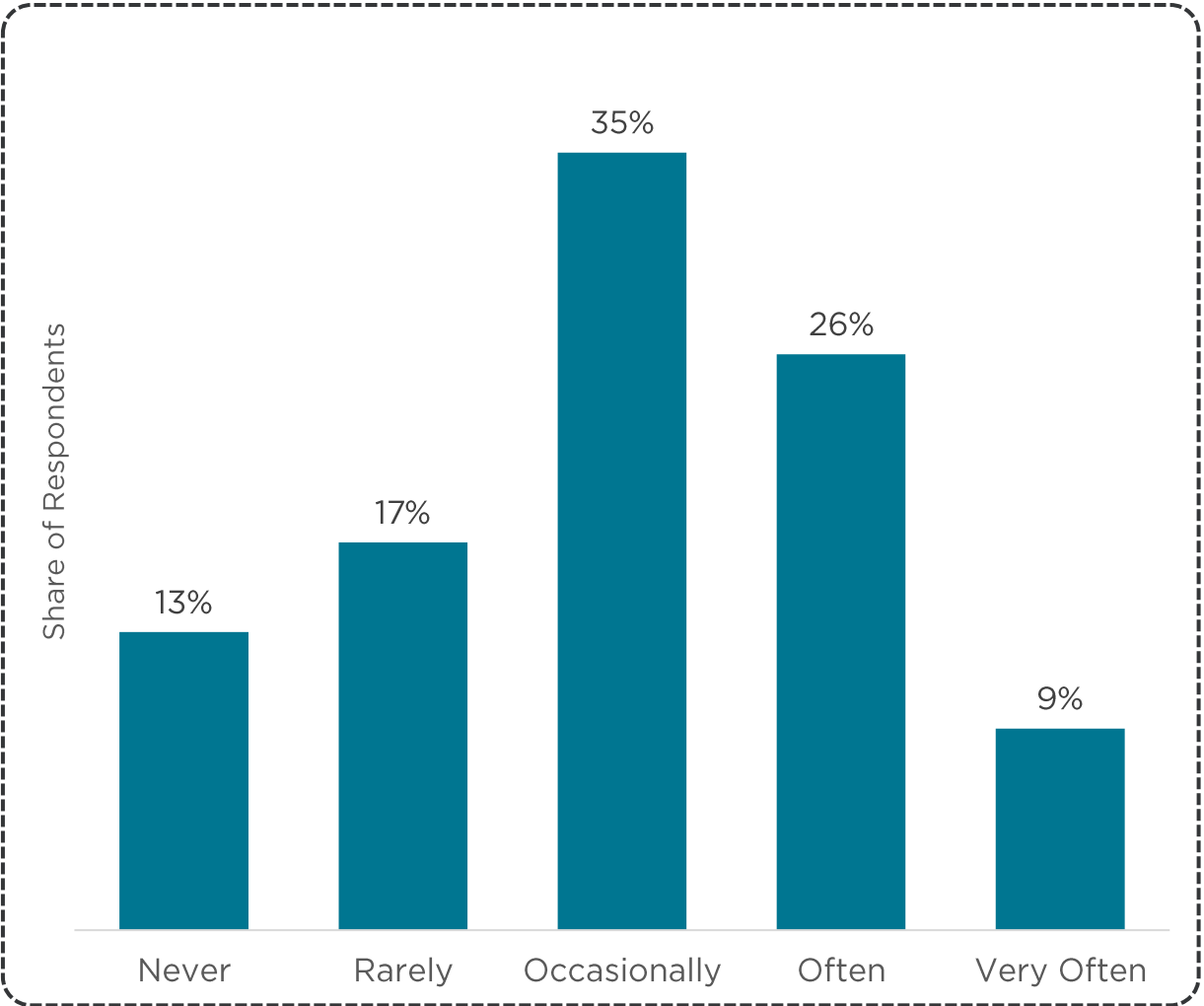
Note: New variable added for the July 2024-June 2025 survey period to address the question on the "Awareness of the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation branding".

Perceptions and Engagement in Sustainable Tourism

Q: How important is it to you that the Cook Islands tourism industry operates sustainably and responsibly?

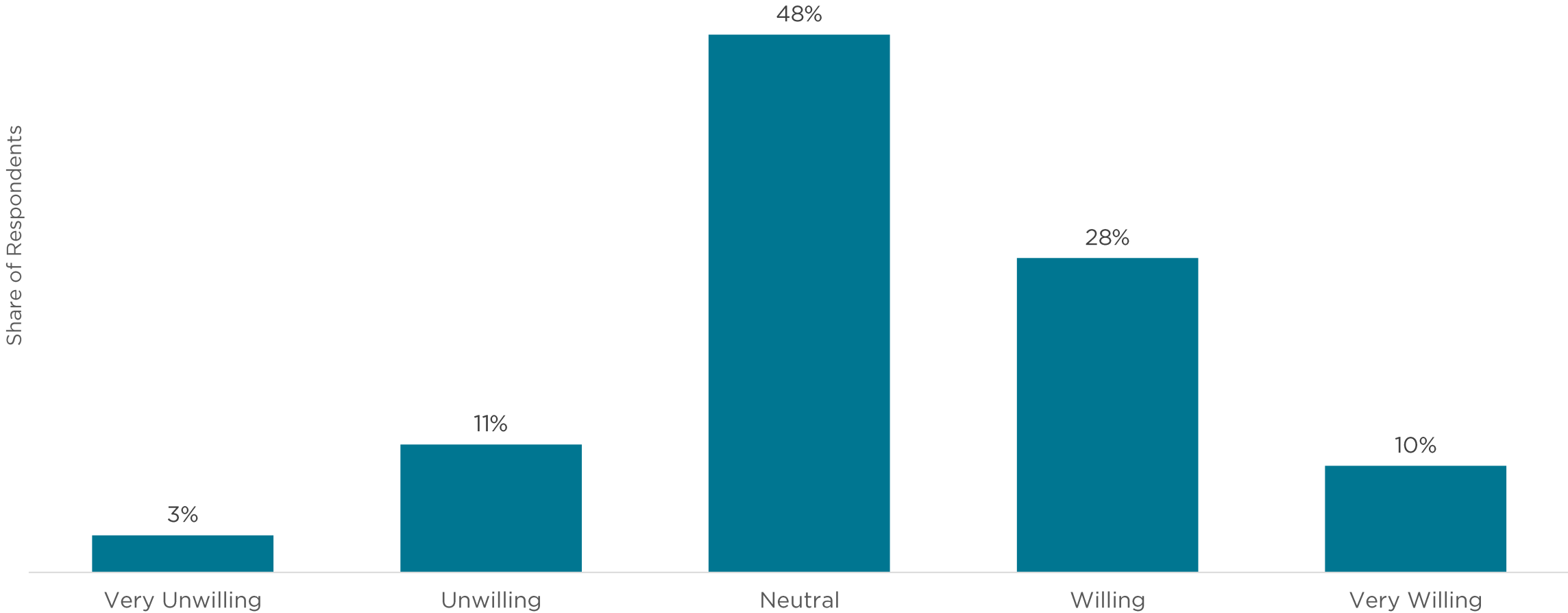


Q: During your visit, how often did you observe or participate in sustainable or responsible tourism practices (e.g., eco-friendly accommodations, conservation efforts)?



Note: New variable added for the July 2024-June 2025 survey period to address questions related to the "Perceptions and engagement in Sustainable Tourism".

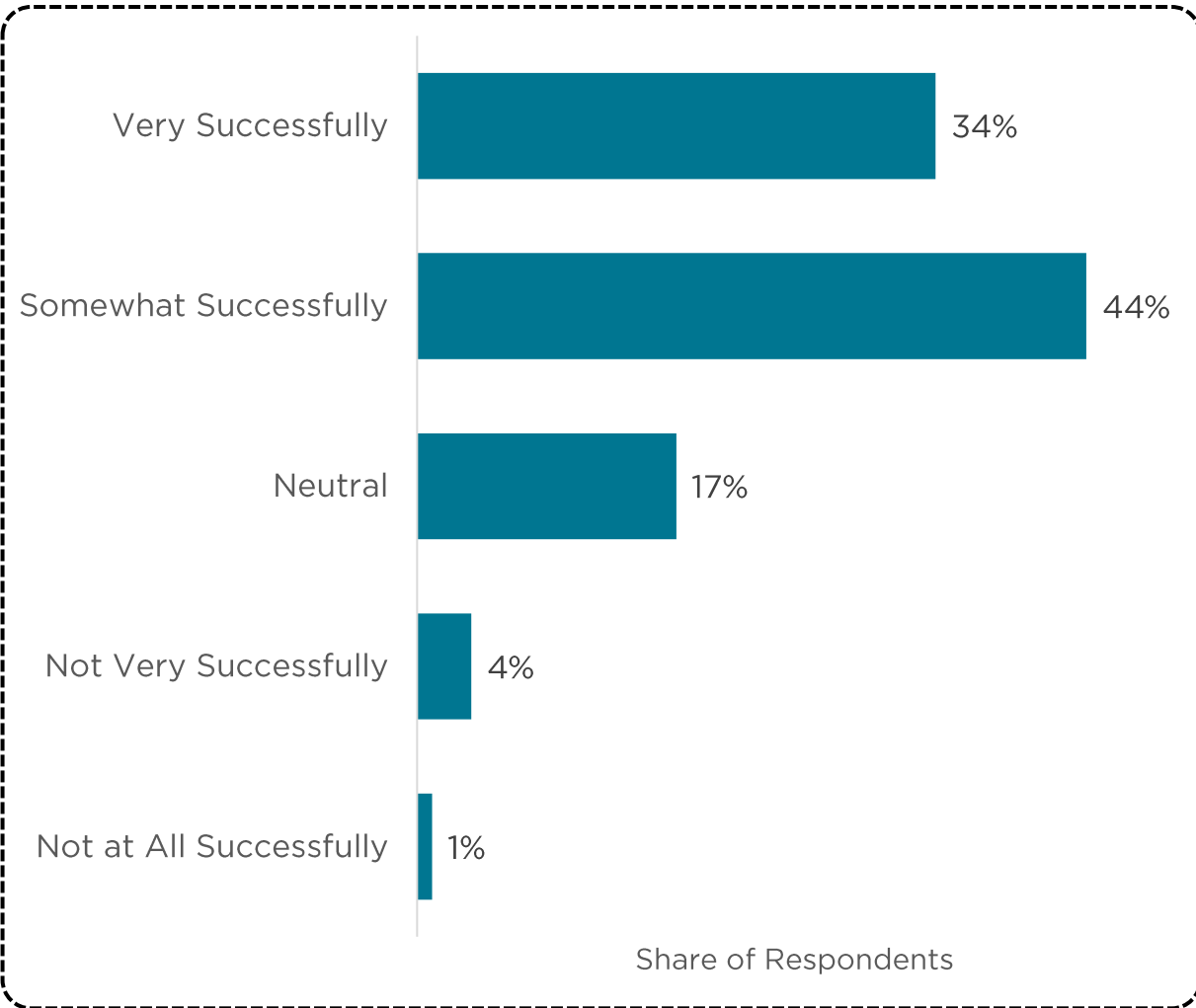
Willingness to Contribute to Tourism Give-Back Initiatives



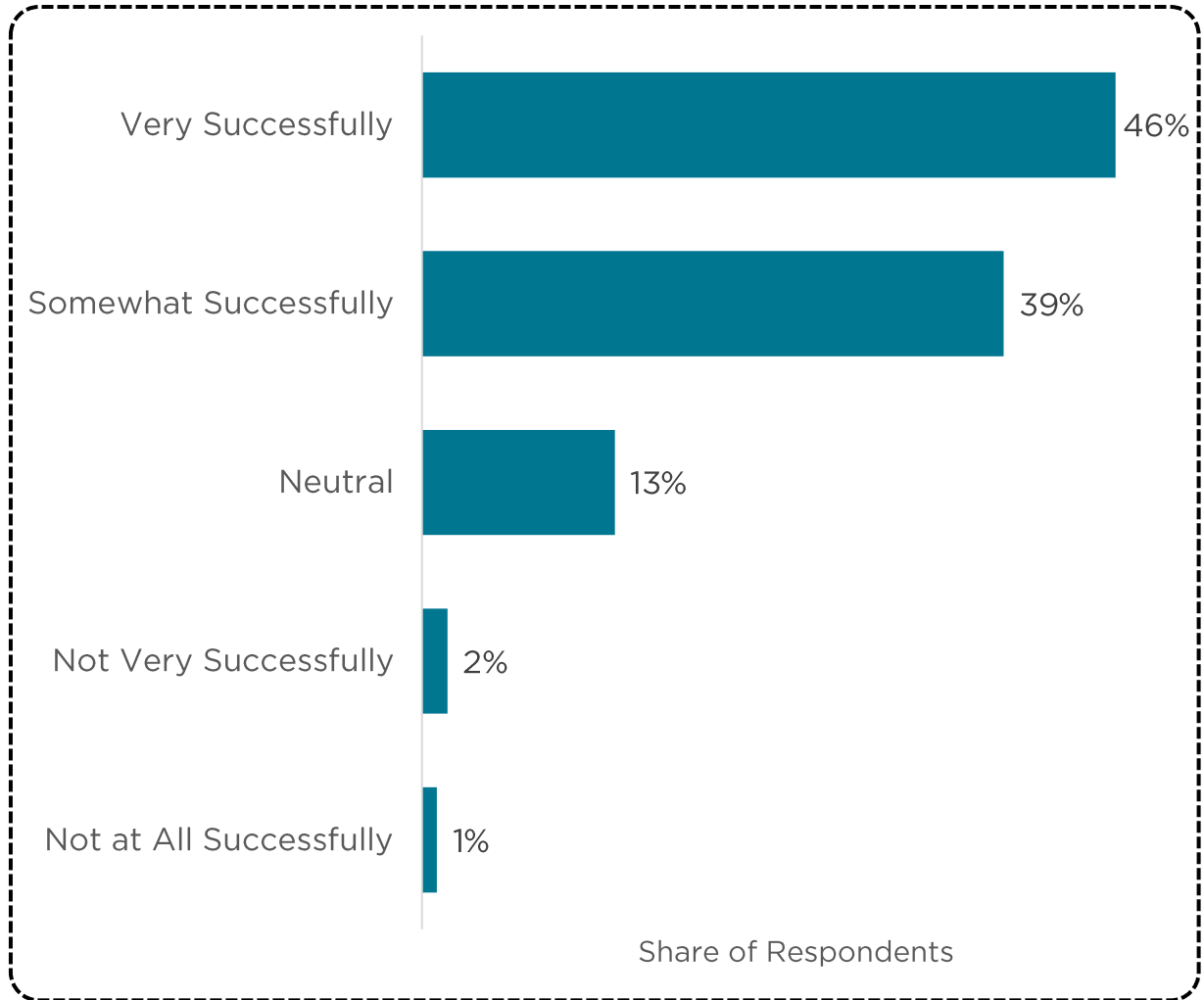
Note: The neutral bar rating of 49% for "Willingness to Contribute to Tourism Give Back Initiative" indicates a significance portion of respondents are uncertain, presenting an opportunity to engage and address their concerns to shift opinions more favorably.

Protecting Natural Environment, Cultural Identity and Supporting Local Communities

Q: How well do you think the Cook Islands is protecting its natural environment (e.g., marine life, reefs, forests, beaches)?

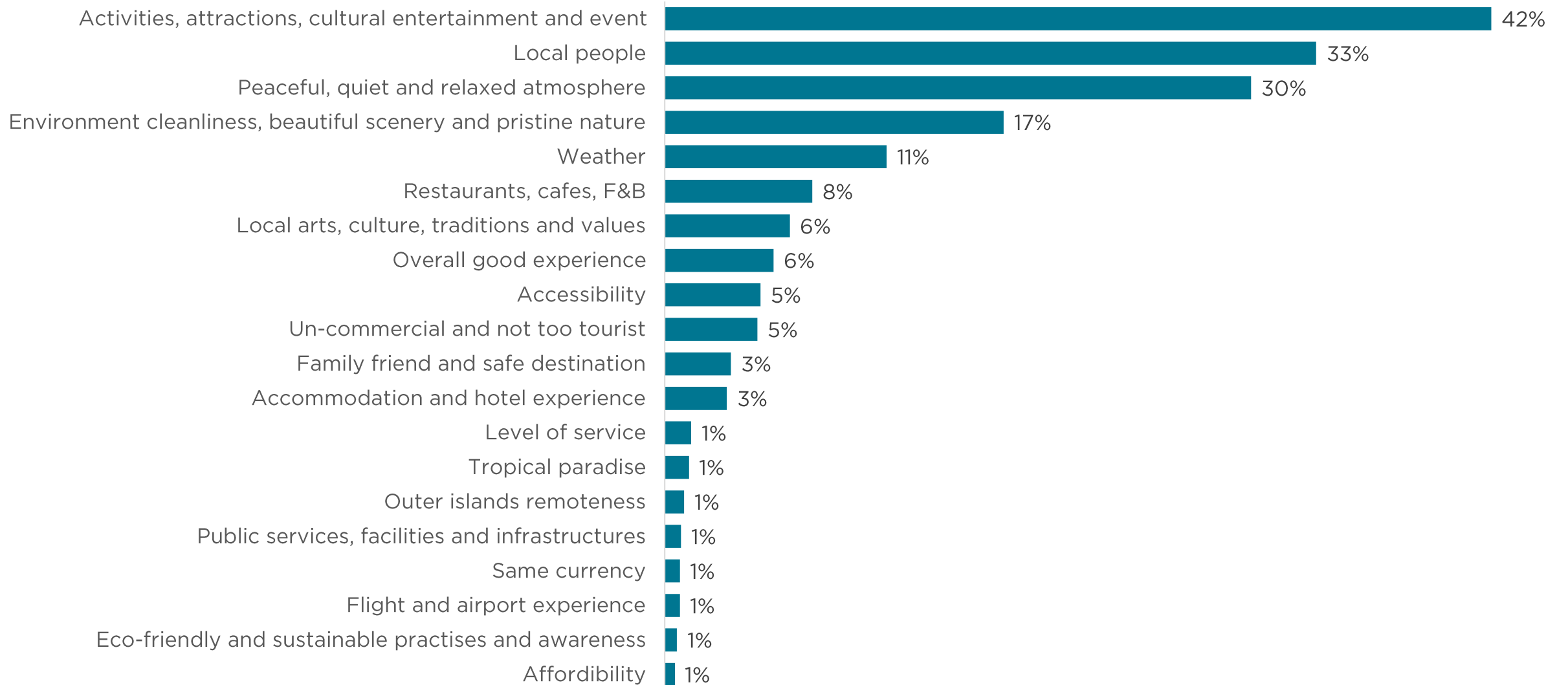


Q: How well do you think the Cook Islands is protecting its cultural identity and supporting local communities (e.g., traditional performances, Cook Islands Māori language, local arts and crafts)?



Note: New variable added for the July 2024-June 2025 survey period to address questions related to the "Protection of the Natural Environment and Cultural Identity, as well as support for Local Communities".

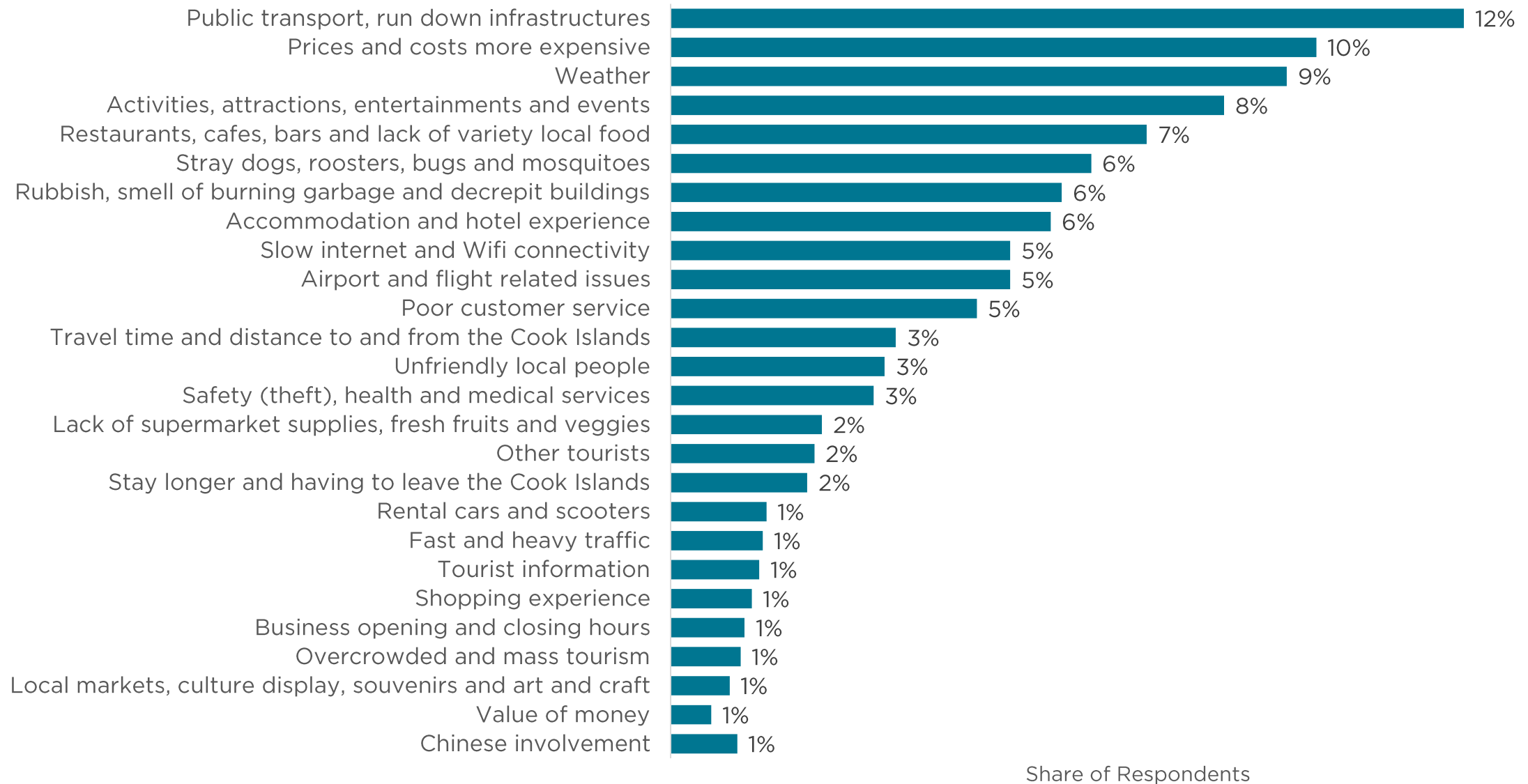
Most Appealing Aspects



Share of Respondents

Note: Total response N=1,915. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

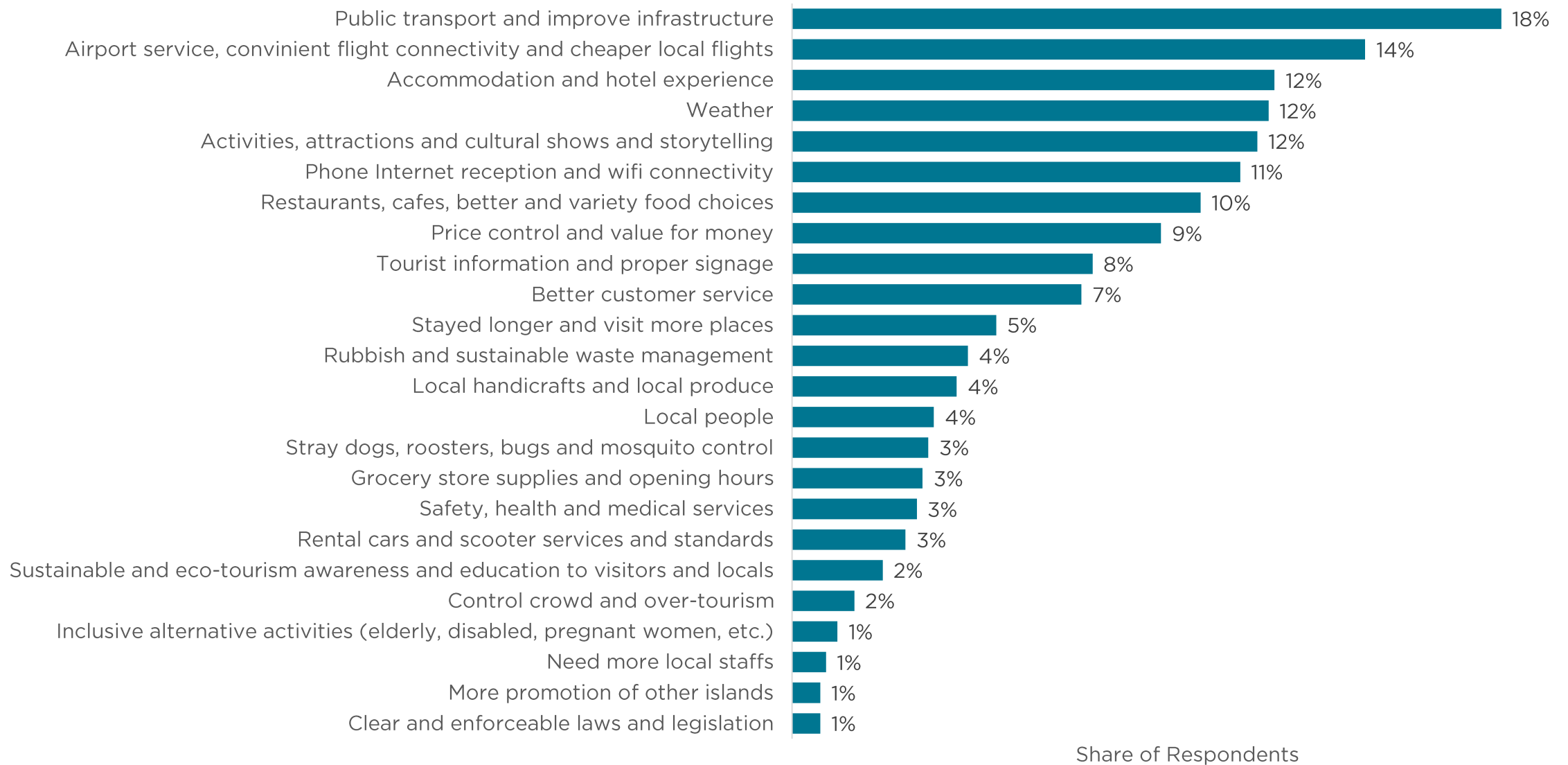
Least Appealing Aspects



Share of Respondents

Note: Total response N=1,809. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

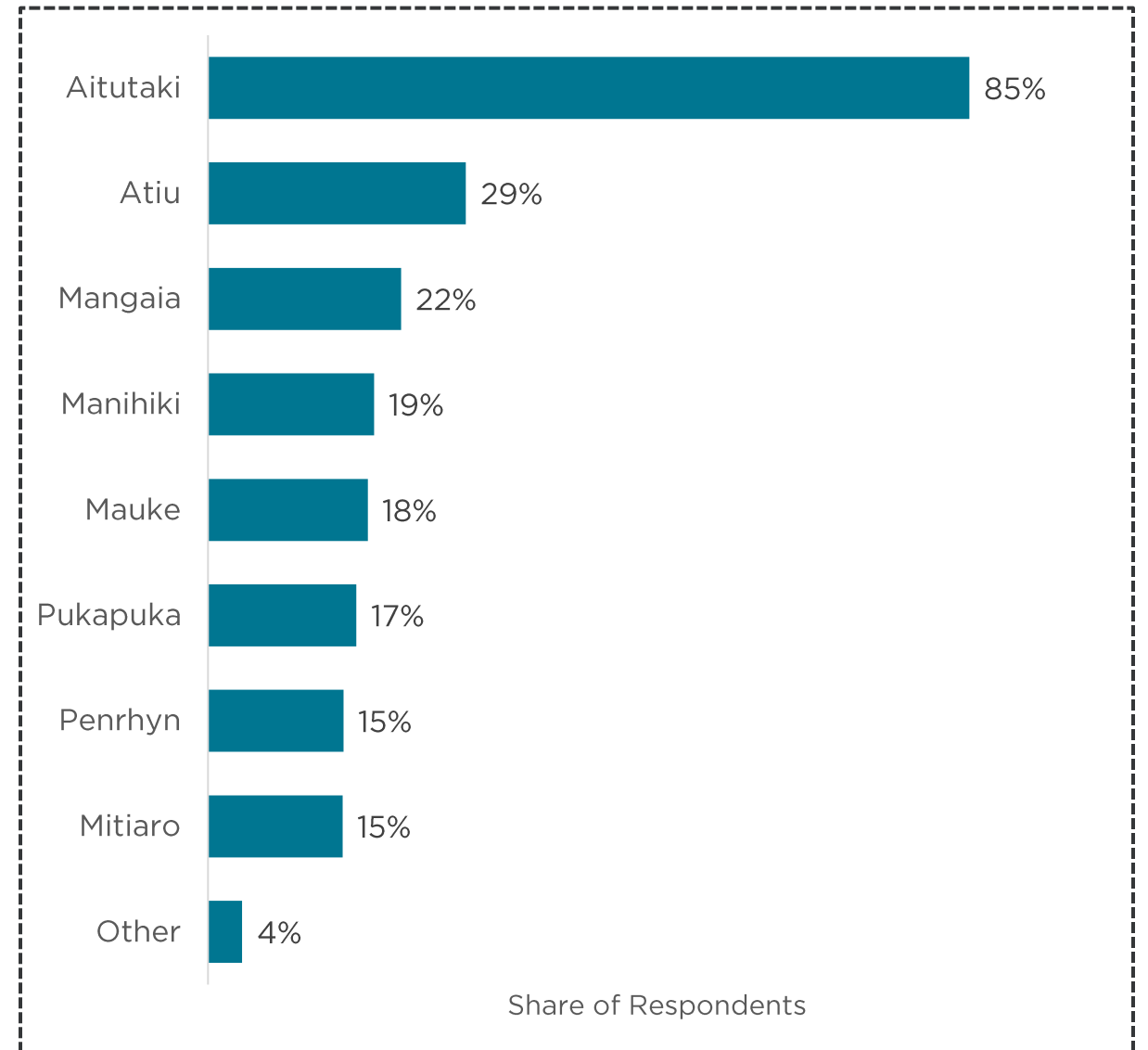
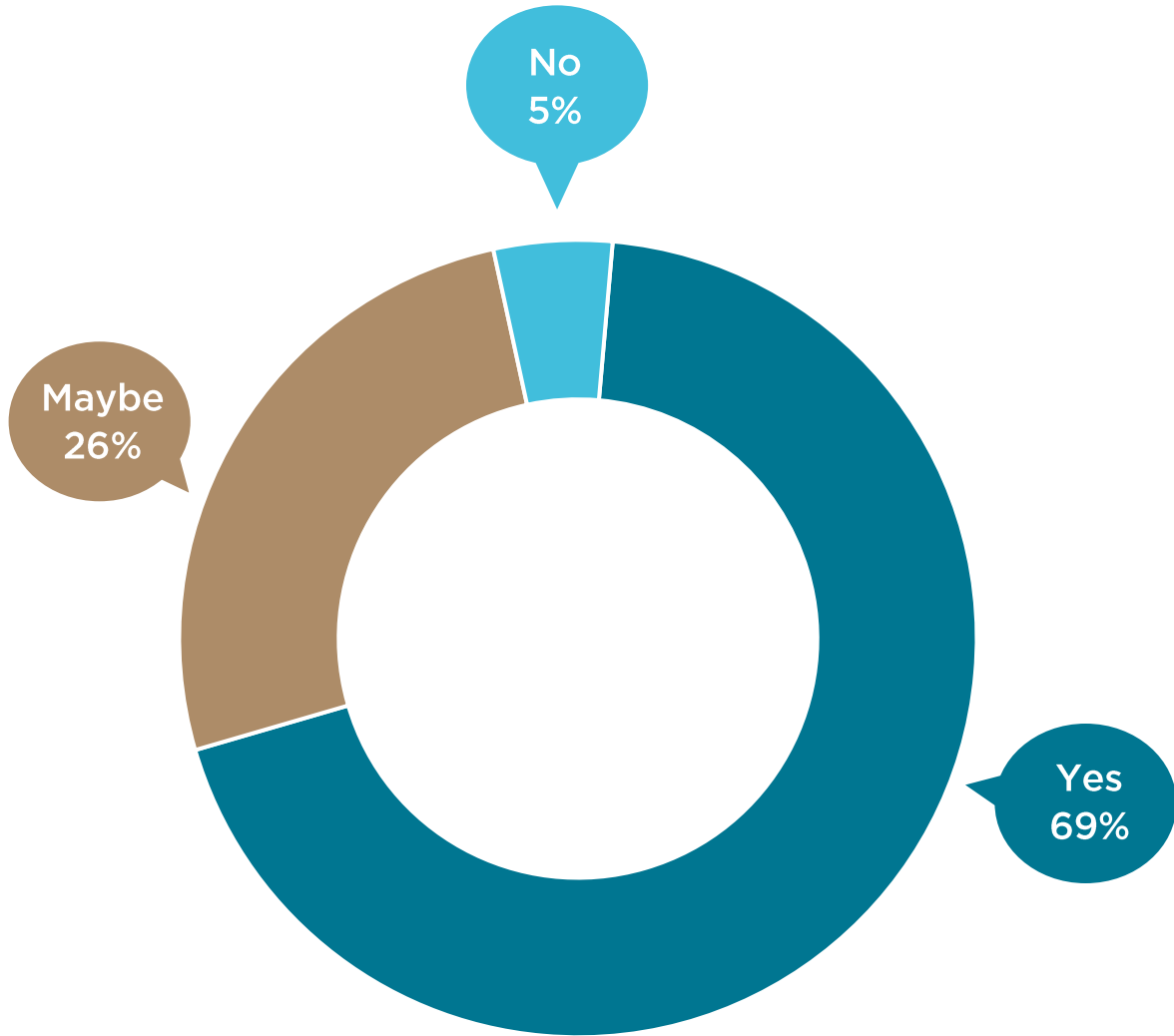
Suggestions for Improvement



Share of Respondents

Note: Total response N=697. Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

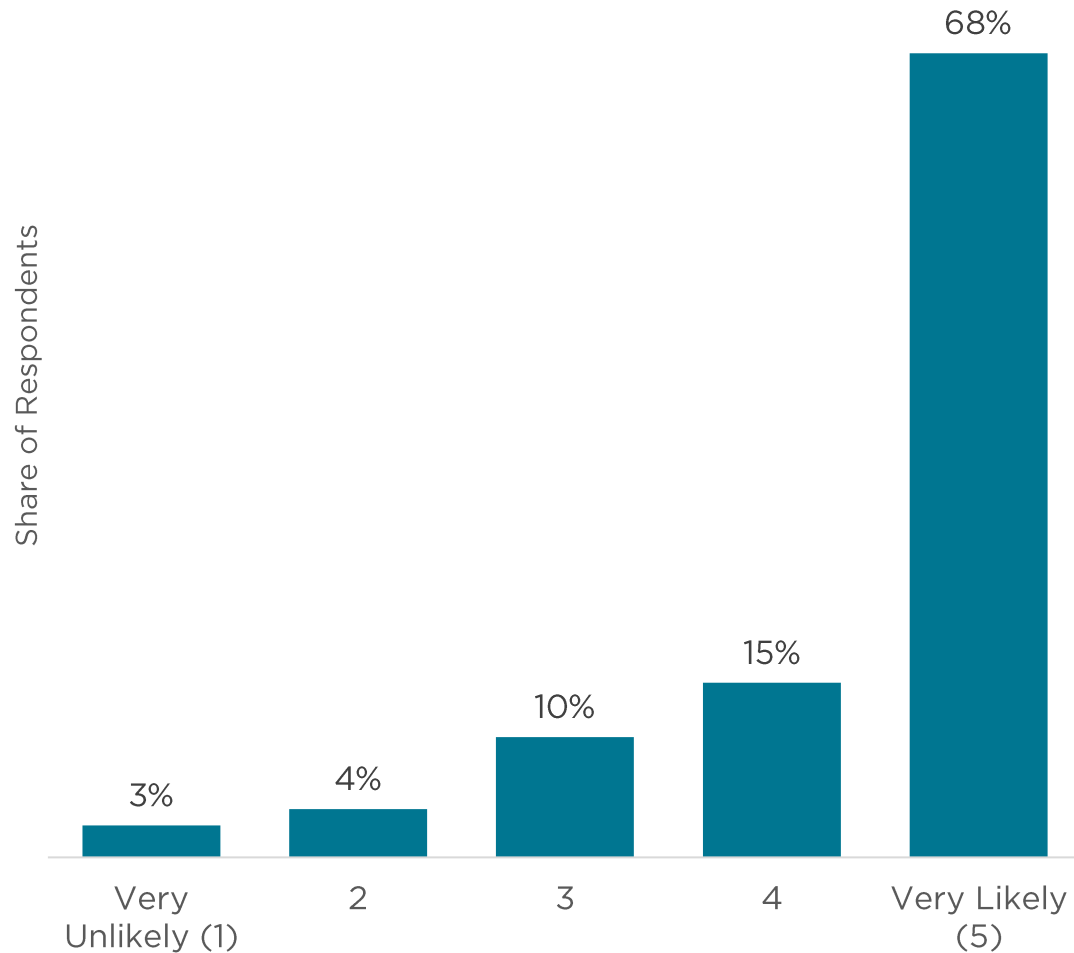
Willingness to Visit Outer Islands



Note: Due to rounding, some totals do not sum to 100%.

Future Motivations

Q: How likely would you return to the Cook Islands?

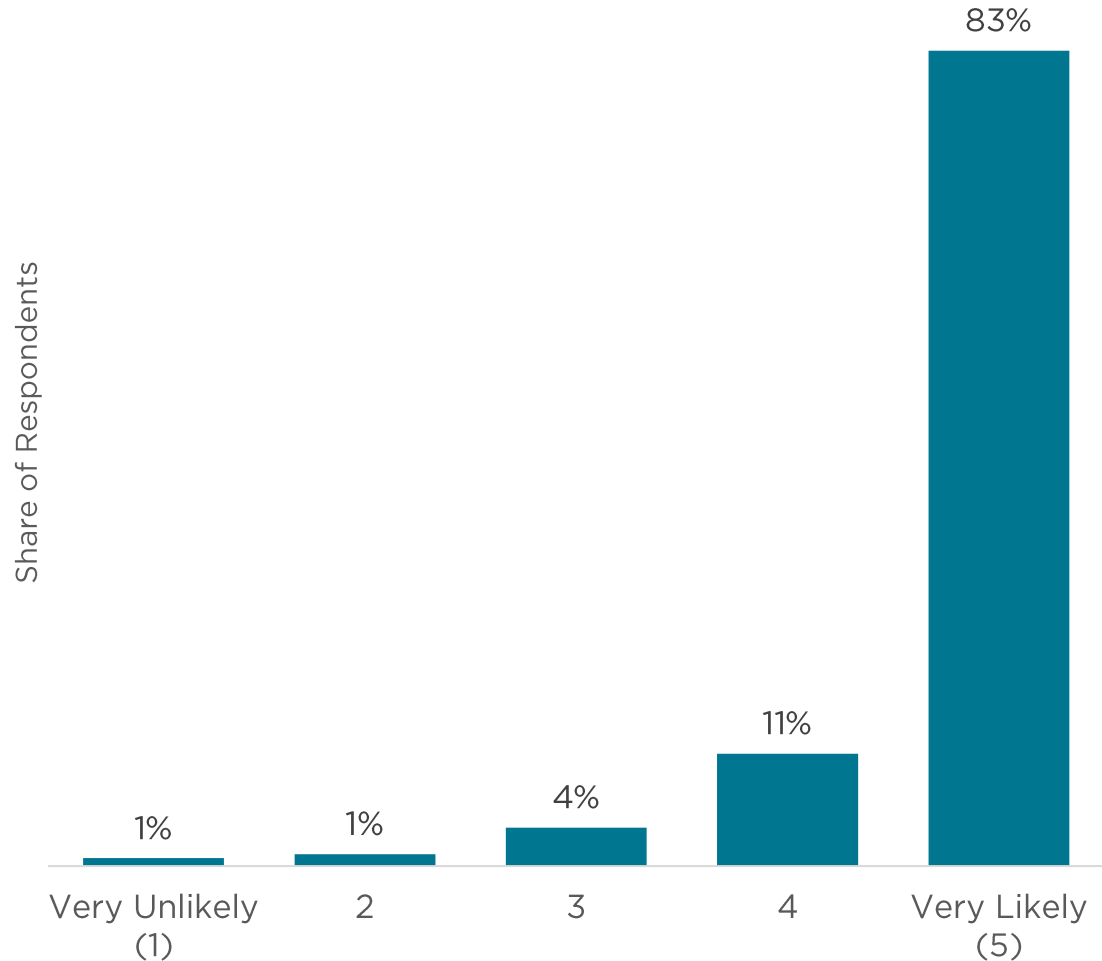


Quotes: Reasons to not return

- *It was not as paradise like as I was expecting and there are properly better South Pacific Islands alternatives where this is more the case.*
- *As senior adults , we experienced a medical emergency and Rarotonga Hospital refuses to assist with providing required medical report. Airport staff very rude. Prices much higher and charge for things that were complimentary, like storing luggage at airport.*
- *Not a scuba-diving destination and we came to scuba-dive.*
- *Distance makes length of travel burdensome. Cost to get there, in comparison with holidays in SE Asia.*
- *Cheaper to holiday in Thailand, Bali, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Australia.*
- *I have visited several times- but I feel it's becoming too expensive and less friendly- probably too much tourism.*
- *I spent so much money on internet as the Vodafone e-sim didn't work and no one would help. The resort Wi-Fi didn't work. No one cared. Needs to be better value for money honestly or offer top service/products.*
- *It's a very expensive destination to holiday in. Internet connectivity is very expensive. food and drinks are expensive. service is acceptable but rarely amazing. facilities are in many cases run down and poorly maintained.*
- *Not much offering in the retail sector, thought pearls were very expensive, poor choice of restaurants with differing types of food.*
- *Nothing new to see/experience. Weather is unpredictable. Infrastructure is tired. Reef is damaged/dead. Many other places to see.*
- *Roosters kept us awake ALL NIGHT not very friendly service; did not feel welcome by around half the places or people we dealt with. A real shame as the other half were a lot of fun and lovely. The cultural experience - food was a real let down as expected a lot more cultural food. and most of it was cold - the show itself was amazing.*
- *Unsanitary sewage conditions, dumps scattered throughout the island due to hotel dumping, lack of modern hospital/ healthcare facilities*
- *There are many other places I wish to explore.*
- *We are getting older and international travel is less likely.*

Future Motivations

Q: How likely would you recommend the Cook Islands?



Quotes: Reasons to not recommend

- *Bad medical experience, rising costs, not as kind as our visit in September 2024.*
- *Because airport safety is important. I would never tell someone I love to visit based off my airport experience. Being robbed and having no way to get help or talk to anyone that works there because the staff is doing the crime is very scary.*
- *I just didn't really enjoy my holiday, mainly because of the false advertising for the accommodation and from having my money stolen.*
- *I found Rarotonga boring, I had a day trip snorkeled, but it was again very hard against the tide. No shopping malls etc. to venture into not many food outlets accept hotel. and that was basic.*
- *Not many choices for places to eat. Shore fishing was difficult to find.*
- *Snorkeling better in French Polynesia. Food runs out at some places we ate.*
- *Other islands such as Tahiti, Fiji or Bali are of higher standard accommodation.*
- *The main marketing photos are deceptive. Only a small portion of the island looks like this.*
- *Service and not enough to do for people that like to be active all the time.*
- *Too overpriced from Europe.*
- *Too much wind and rain and poor value for money.*
- *Too many flights and the distance is a barrier.*
- *Not my favorite place to visit.*
- *Rude people and expensive.*
- *Not a lot of activities for small children.*

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This report was prepared at SPTO by the Pacific Tourism Data Initiative team in collaboration with the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and the New Zealand Government.

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