

Monitoring and improving relationships with Māori

WAKA KOTAHI

JUNE 2023



MAARAMA

Background

Waka Kotahi are working towards developing stronger relationships with Māori as the Crown's partner under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This is being driven by the Waka Kotahi Māori strategy, Te Ara Kotahi, which provides a guiding framework for the organisation to work with and respond to Māori.

In 2022 a benchmark online survey was conducted with Māori that Waka Kotahi engage with. This looked to:

- Better understand the needs of Māori and what is important in relationships.
- Determine how well Waka Kotahi were meeting these needs.
- Develop an SPE measure around the strength of relationships that Waka Kotahi have with Māori.
- Identify where improvements can be made to strengthen relationships with Māori.

This survey has been conducted again in 2023 to continue to gauge perceptions of the relationship in the eyes of Māori, how these may have changed over time, and identifying areas of focus to continue to strengthen relationships.



What we did

- A 12 minute online survey was conducted with Māori that Waka Kotahi engage with.
- Gauging perceptions of the performance of Waka Kotahi - both overall and across a range of key relationship metrics identified in the 2022 Research Programme and Benchmark Survey.
- This years survey looks to understand current perceptions of the relationship, how these may have changed over time, and to identify where further improvements can be made moving forward.
- The survey was sent to the complete client database of Māori (n=246).
- With fieldwork conducted between 27 Apr-25 May, 2023. This was conducted slightly later in the year vs. the 2022 benchmark survey to allow those Māori partners affected by the storms and cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023 to focus on the recovery efforts.
- The survey was completed by n=53 respondents – giving a 22% response rate (vs 22% in 2022).



Agenda

- 01.** Recapping the Māori relationship research from 2022 and the SPE measure.
- 02.** Gauging performance in meeting the relationship needs of Māori.
- 03.** Identifying areas for improving relationships with Māori.

The background features a close-up, high-contrast image of water ripples, creating a textured, shimmering effect in shades of teal and dark blue. Overlaid on the left side is a large, teal-colored speech bubble with a white interior. The text is positioned within this white area.

Recapping the
research from
2022 and the SPE
measure

01.

We identified a range of key drivers that make up the relationships we have with Māori

Qualitative research was undertaken with Māori that Waka Kotahi engage with to understand which factors are important when building and maintaining relationships.

These are the areas that we measure our performance against in the eyes of Māori - to gauge where we are today, how that compares to previous measures and to identify what areas we need to improve on.

When we do well in these areas we help to create trusted, enduring partnerships.

- Are genuine in their intent
- Act with integrity
- Are consistent in how they engage with you
- Can be relied on to deliver what they say they will
- Communicate well (Early engagement, Proactive, Open, Transparent)
- Are willing to be flexible in their approach
- Solve problems and issues quickly when they arise
- Learn from their experiences
- Are committed to a long term relationship
- Work in an inclusive and collaborative manner
- Are culturally aware and competent
- Look to understand and meet your needs as Māori
- See Māori as an equal partner
- Take Māori expertise into account when making decisions in your area
- Provide sufficient time, funding and resource to help foster the relationship
- Are delivering effective outcomes for Māori

Māori gave us clear direction on what works well, and what doesn't in these areas

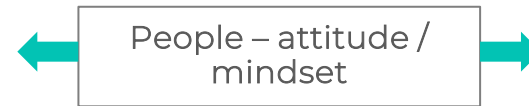
We need to keep doing / start doing these

Genuine, Listen, Have integrity, Fair, Respectful, Good communicators, Competent, Reliable, Consistent, Committed, Solution focused, Flexible, Learns from their experiences

Have a good cultural understanding of te ao Māori, te reo Māori, tikanga, kawa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Understand the history, context and needs of Māori

Early, Proactive, Engage with the right people, Collaborative, Involved in decision making, Open and transparent, Solves issues quickly, Relationship based, See Māori as equal, Long term focused

Sufficiently resourced in terms of putea, time and people (capacity and capability), Accountable to these



We need to avoid doing / stop doing these

Dictatorial, Inflexible, Disrespectful, Incompetent, Ignorant, Broken promises, Poor communicators, Doesn't learn from their experiences

A lack of understanding and duty of care around te ao Māori, te reo Māori, tikanga, kawa and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tokenism, trampling of mana, desecration of wahi tapu / wahi taonga

No engagement, Last minute, Reactive, Box ticking, Lack of transparency, Changing people – lack of consistency, Ad hoc – project based, One-way relationship, Short term focused

Lack of resource, Doing the bare minimum, Unreasonable budget and time constraints, Lack of accountability

Our SPE measure was built from 7 strategic priorities amongst these key relationship drivers

These particular drivers were those where our performance was weakest, or where our performance was relatively average but the drivers were of high importance to Māori.

They are also the key drivers that have specific nuance towards relationships with Māori.

- See Māori as an equal partner
- Are culturally aware and competent
- Look to understand and meet your needs as Māori
- Provide sufficient time, funding and resource to help foster the relationship
- Are delivering effective outcomes for Māori
- Take Māori expertise into account when making decisions in your area
- Can be relied on to deliver what they say they will

We measured the % of Māori who agree that Waka Kotahi do each of these.

Then we took the average performance score across these 7 drivers to build the overall SPE Measure.

A key priority within these is to see, and work with, Māori as an equal partner

Māori are ultimately looking for an equal partnership with Waka Kotahi, and other Crown agencies – a relationship that reflects the essence of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

However, few felt that Waka Kotahi see, or are engaging with Māori, in this manner.

This is a key priority of focus to work towards, so that we are truly meeting the needs of Māori and meeting our responsibilities as a Crown treaty partner.

“Take a partnership approach with Māori (which means equal).”

“Working together for the success of Māori and NZ as a whole.”

“Until we see equality then we cannot rest.”

“This is about understanding things from each others perspective.”

“I don’t believe that Waka Kotahi has seen Māori as equal treaty partners in the past and are still a long way from it but I see changes that are being made to head in that direction.”

So, what does our performance look like in 2023 from the viewpoint of our Māori partners?

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Gauging the
performance of
Waka Kotahi in
meeting the
relationship
needs of Māori

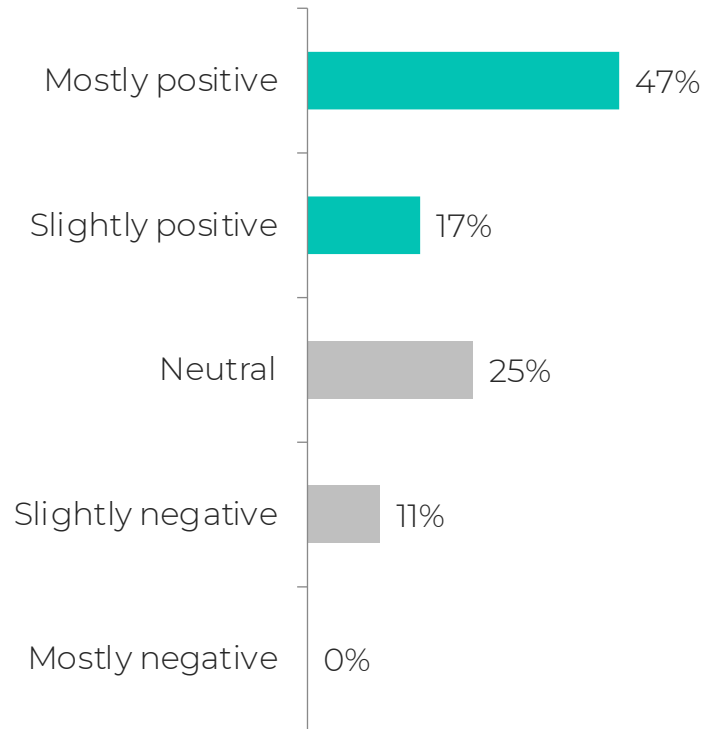
A black circular graphic containing the number '02.', positioned at the bottom of the teal speech bubble.

02.

Understanding the general perceptions that Māori hold of Waka Kotahi

General perceptions of Waka Kotahi as an organisation are largely positive

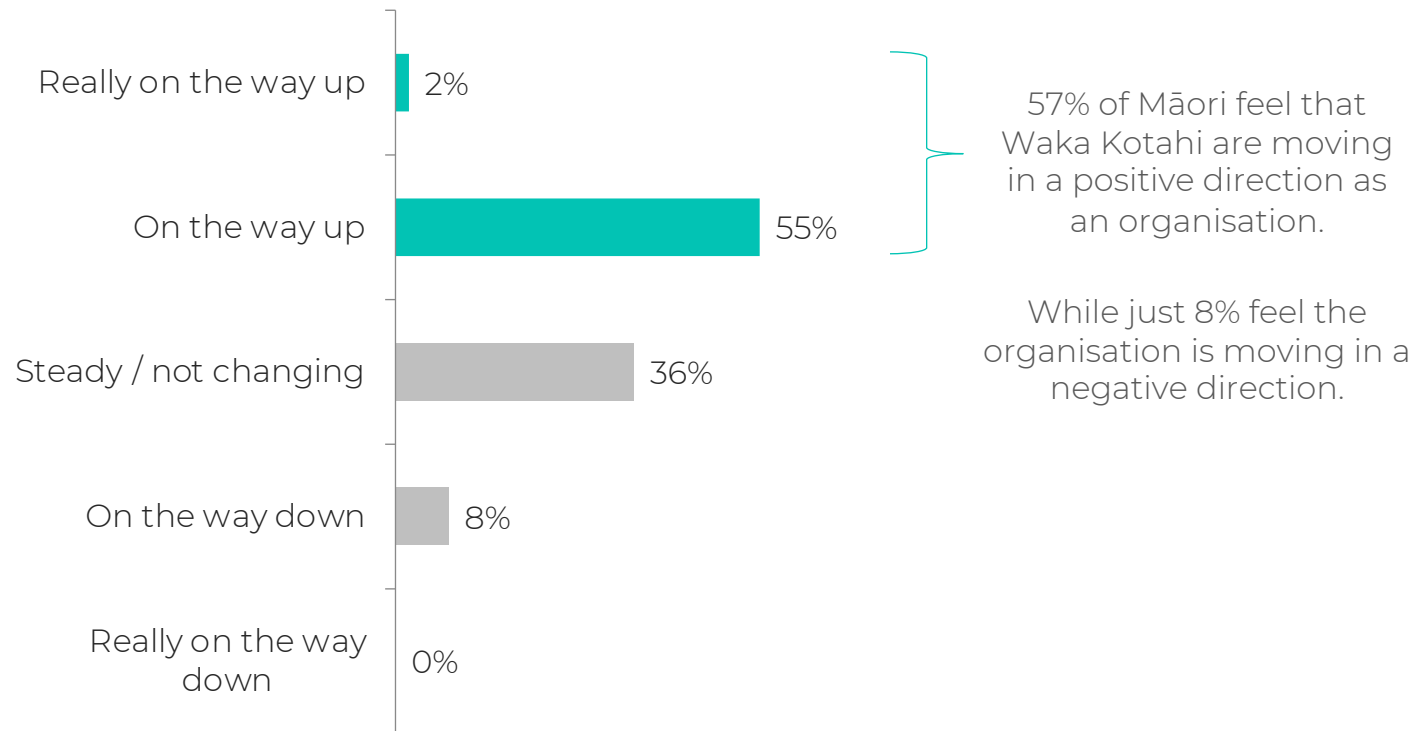
Thinking about your general perceptions of Waka Kotahi as an organisation, are they...?



64% of Māori hold positive perceptions of Waka Kotahi in general. (No significant change vs 2022)

There is also a sense of positive momentum around the direction that Waka Kotahi is heading

Thinking about the direction that Waka Kotahi are heading as an organisation, would you say it is...?



NB: This is a new question added in 2023

Understanding perceptions of the relationship with Waka Kotahi

What do Māori feel is working well in the relationship?

There is a sense that the relationships we hold with Māori are moving from 'engagement' to 'partnership' - including a strong willingness and commitment, being respectful, openness, better understanding Māori, good communication and inclusion in planning and decision making.

"Iwi mana whenua have more engagement / contact beyond the project managers delivering a particular project."

"Commitment to aspirational partnerships."

"Waka Kotahi staff and consultants are making a concerted effort to engage tangata whenua."

"Being included in the planning and progress of the project. Excellent communication, respectful."

"The team's engagements with mana whenua is front and centre. That's a huge shift in the thinking by your regional leadership teams."

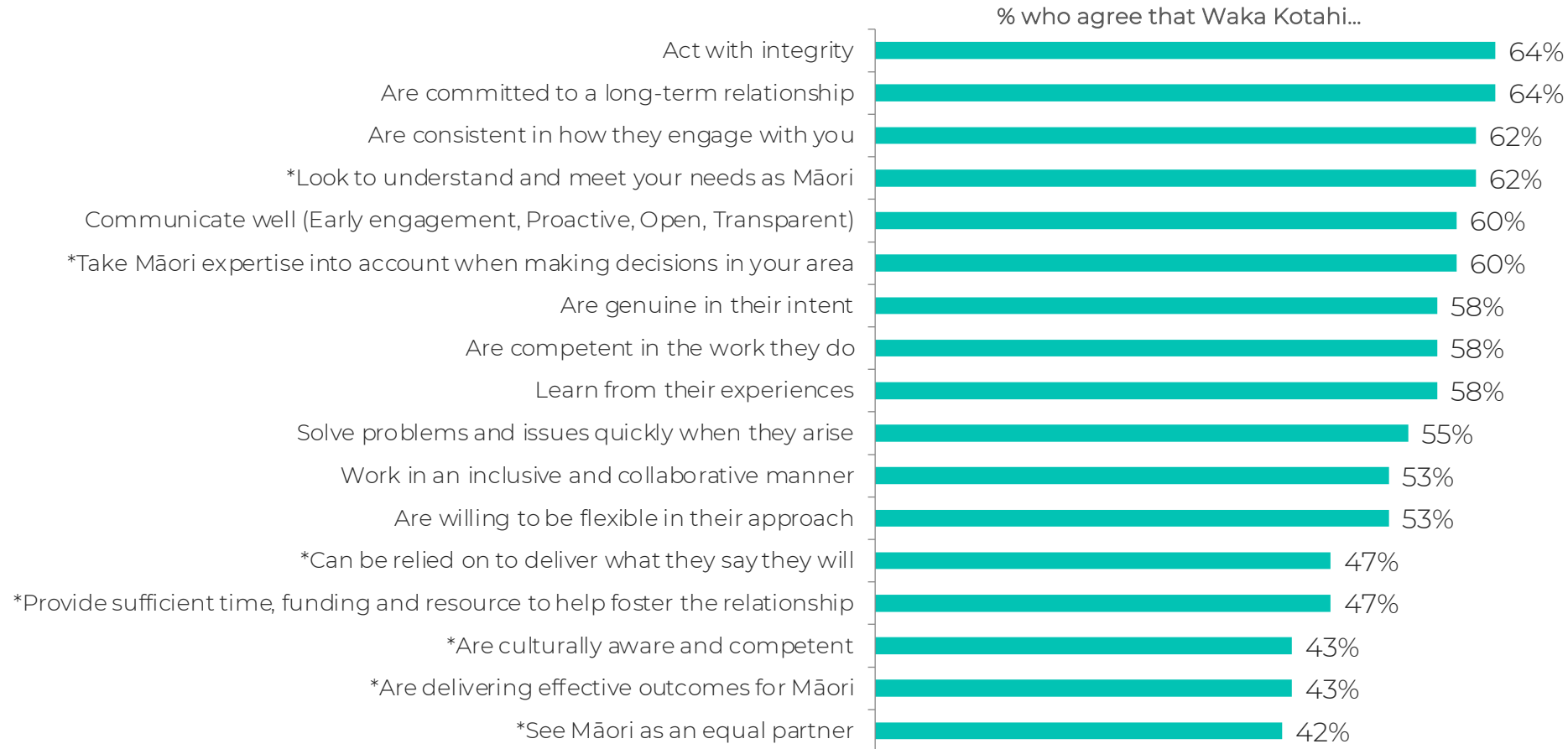
"Discussion and engagement is regular and conversations are frank and open."

"Good relationships built with Waka Kotahi staff. Our concerns are generally addressed. Willingness to engage in tikanga."

"Having localised staff that are involved in consistent communication and updates."

"I think they are slowly learning about how to work together with hapū and iwi. It has been a long road but I feel like they are getting there."

Looking at how Māori feel we are performing across the different of relationship drivers



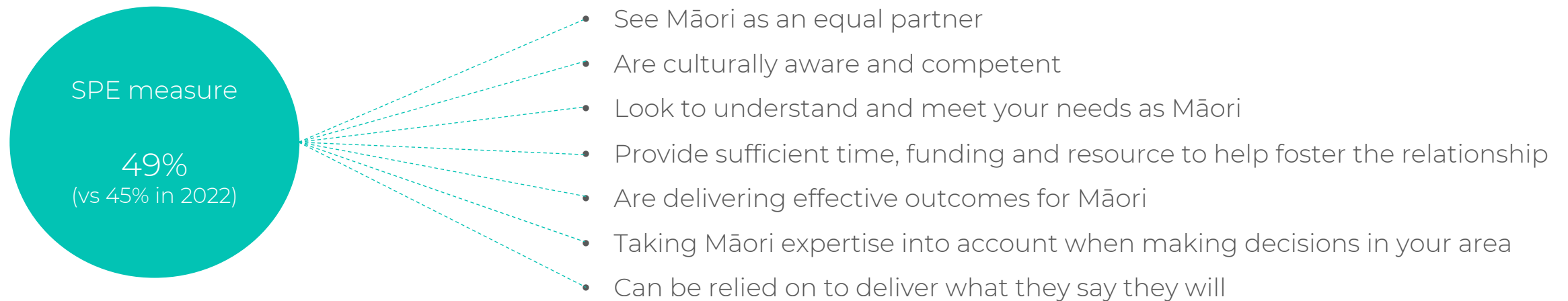
These are currently our relative strengths in our relationships with Māori.

These are currently our relative weaknesses in our relationships with Māori.

*SPE Measures

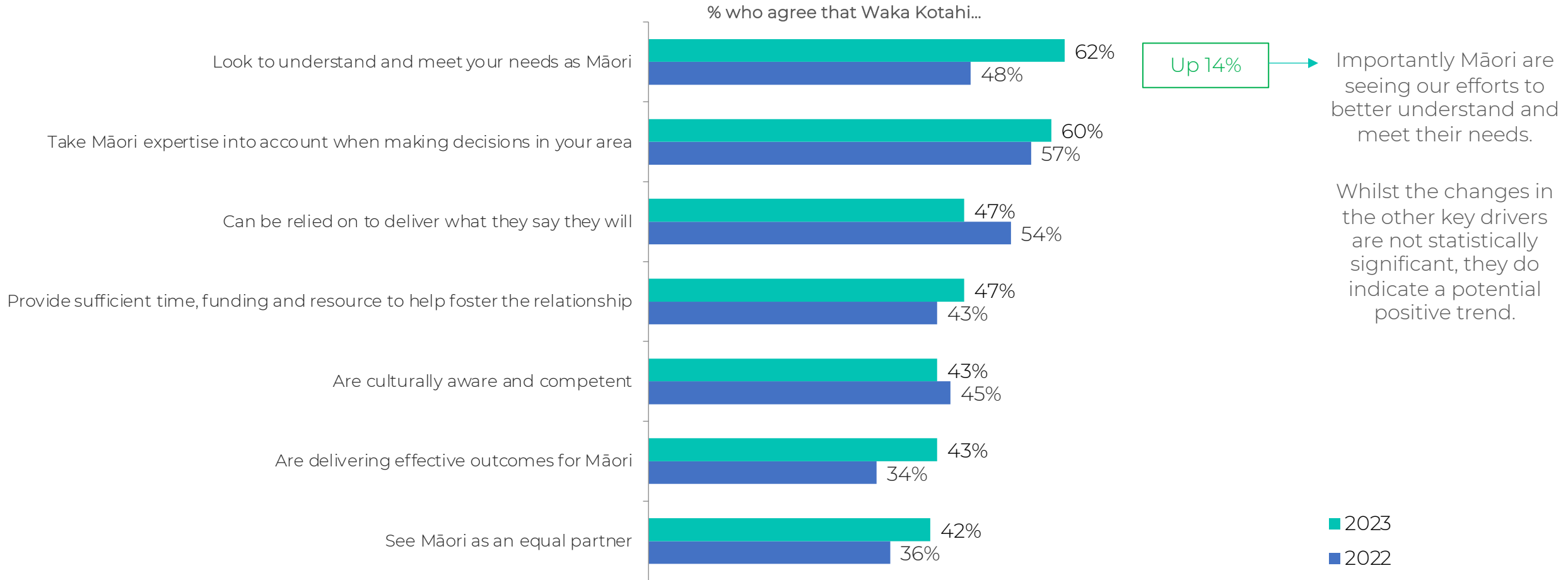
Our SPE measure has seen a slight increase from last years survey results

We take the average performance score across 7 key strategic drivers of the relationship (% who agree that Waka Kotahi...).



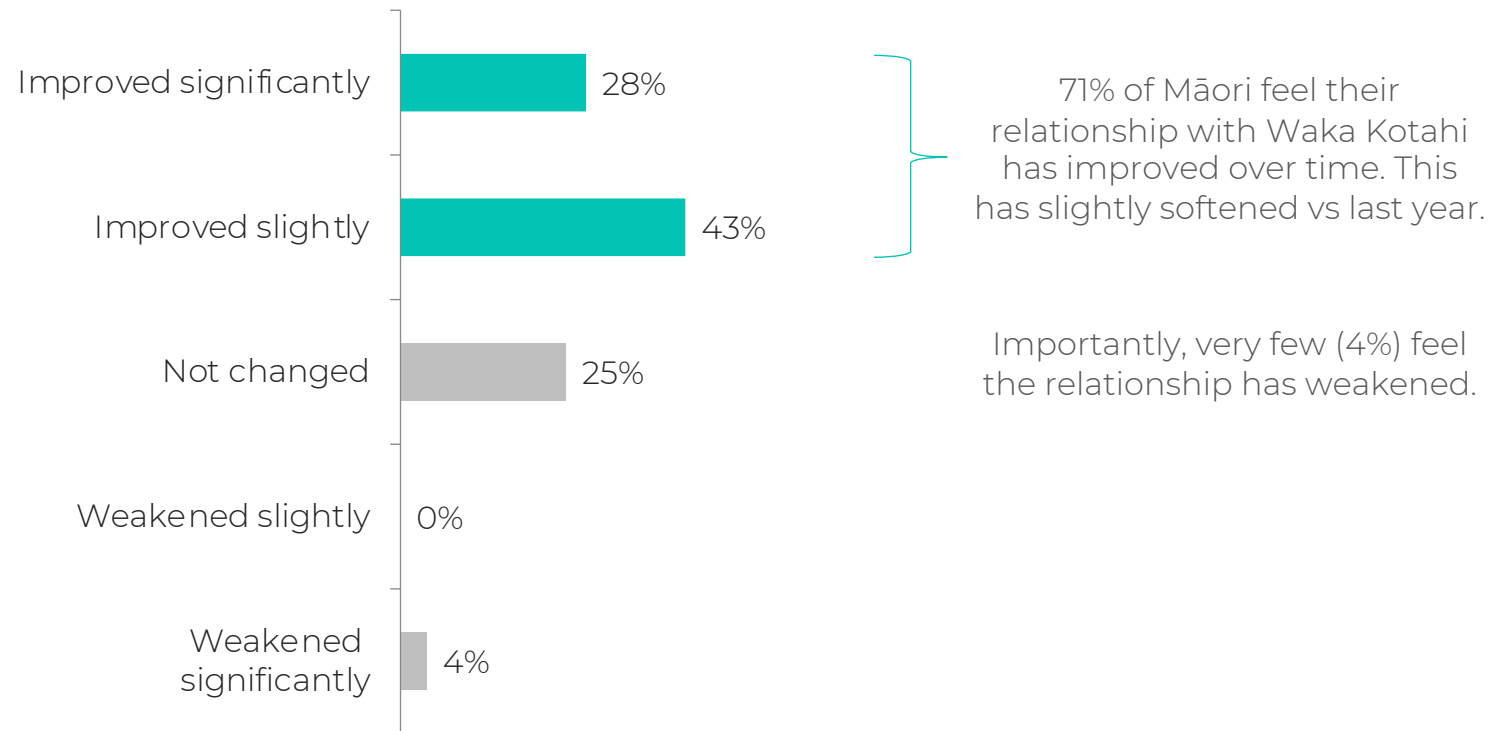
NB: It is important to note that this increase is not statistically significant.

We are seeing positive trends across most of our key strategic drivers within the SPE measure



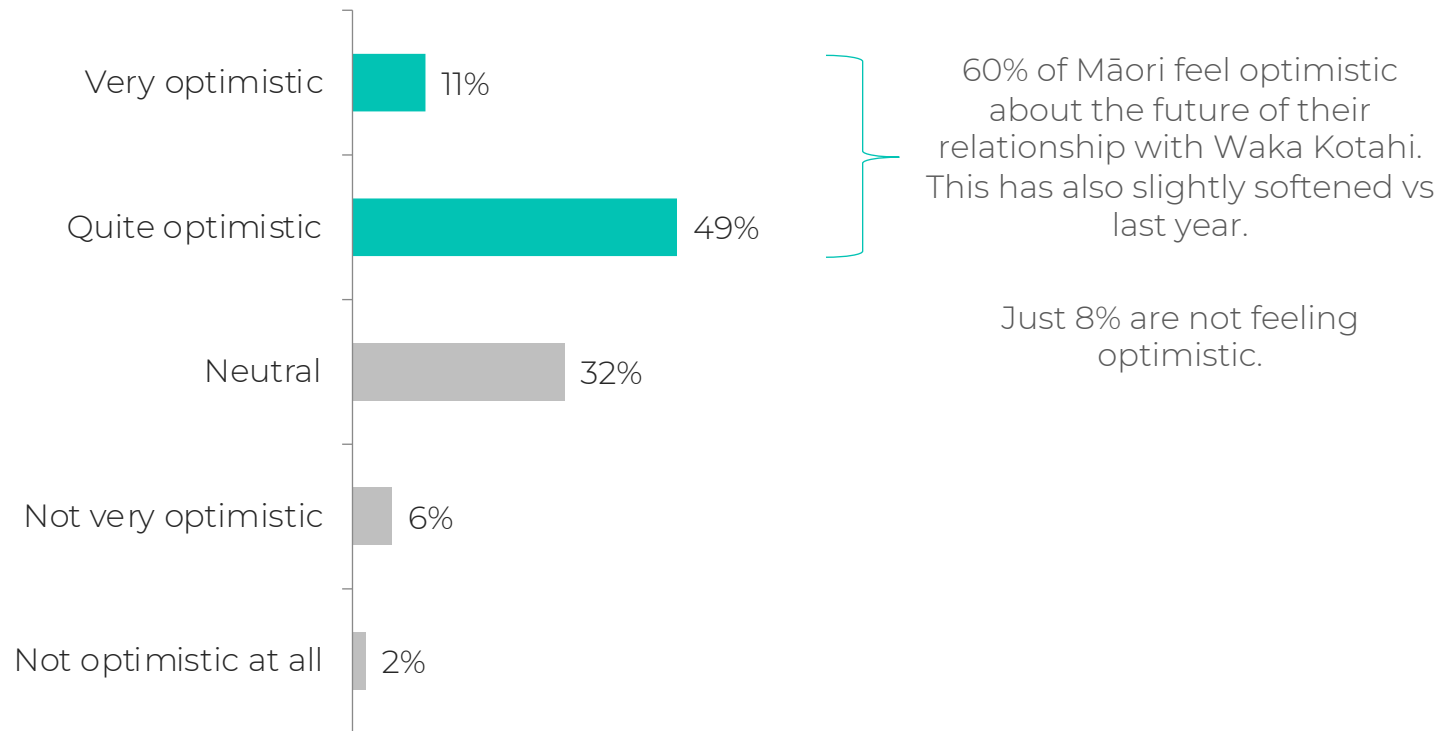
The majority of Māori feel their relationship with Waka Kotahi has improved over time

Thinking about the relationship that you and your organisation have with Waka Kotahi and how it has changed over time, would you say it has...?



Importantly, most Māori also have a sense of optimism towards the future of the relationship

How optimistic do you feel about the relationship that you and your organisation have with Waka Kotahi going forward?



IMPLICATION: Māori generally feel the organisation and their relationships are moving in a positive direction

The majority of Māori continue to hold positive perceptions of Waka Kotahi, and many feel the organisation has a positive sense of momentum.

We have seen slight improvement in our Māori relationship SPE measure, and most of the key strategic drivers within this;

- especially around 'looking to meet and understand the needs of Māori'.
- and importantly we are seeing positive trends in the areas where our performance is weakest - 'are delivering effective outcomes for Māori' and 'seeing Māori as equal partners'.

The majority of Māori also feel their relationship with Waka Kotahi has improved over time and they feel optimistic about the future of the relationship.

Māori feel there are some areas of the relationship that are still not working so well

Very few hold negative perceptions of Waka Kotahi, feel the relationship has weakened, or feel pessimistic about the future of the relationship. However, we still need to understand why this group may feel this way, and continue to look to improve.

"We listen to you, but you don't seem to listen to tangata whenua."

"Consistency in attitude and approach across the country."

"Keeping Iwi / Hapū updated on timelines as they are happening. Sometimes we receive information a little delayed."

"More regular consultation and updates, in between our normal hui dates."

"Communication skills between the changing staff levels and management."

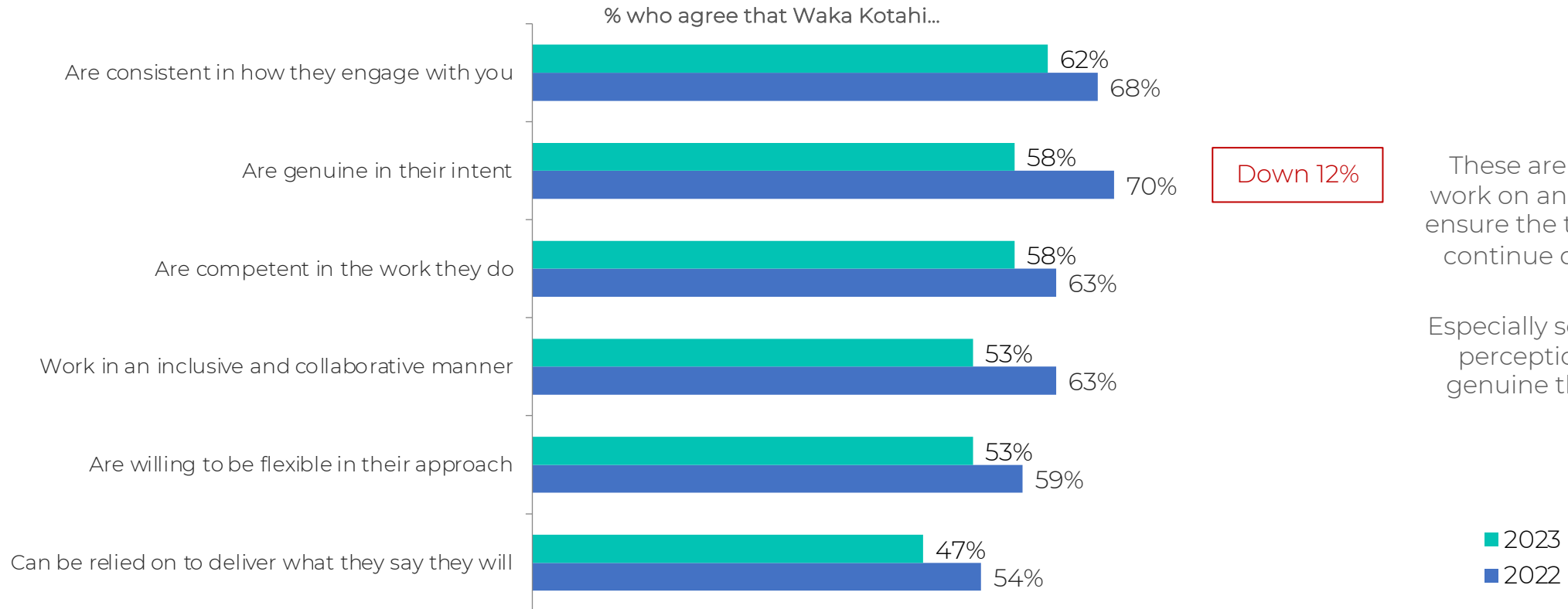
"Not a strong relationship and could, and should be better. Waka Kotahi need to be engaging with us more."

"I feel as though Waka Kotahi project management and contractor businesses are not always on the same page. Solutions are often very slow to reach action on the ground."

"When Waka Kotahi forgets that it is also a partner of Te Tiriti. It then becomes too easy to waive your obligations."

"Tangata whenua are always last and under resourced in their projects."

There are some of our relationship drivers that we need to work on and watch



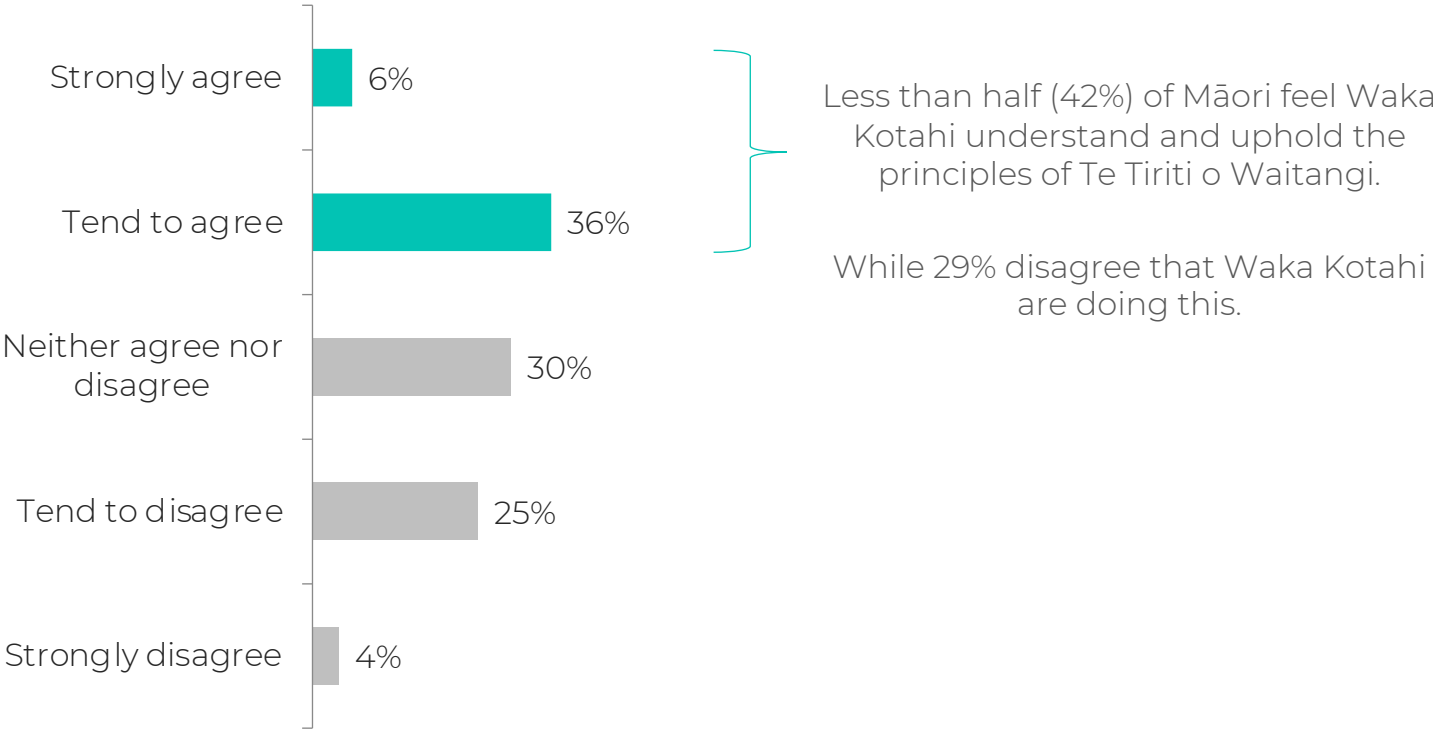
Down 12%

These are all areas to work on and monitor to ensure the trend doesn't continue downwards.

Especially so around the perceptions of how genuine the intent is.

A weakness also remains in how Māori perceive our focus, and delivery, around Te Tiriti o Waitangi

How much do you agree or disagree that Waka Kotahi understand and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?




IMPLICATION: Despite some small gains made, our relationships with Māori continue to require attention

Despite the overall positivity and slight gains that have been made, especially in recent years, there are still areas requiring improvement.

In the eyes of Māori, there remains areas of weakness and sources of frustration in the relationships we hold with them.

And there are still gains to be made in areas we have shown improvement – and standards to be maintained in areas of relative strength.

What this shows is that our relationships with Māori require constant attention and work.



Identifying areas
for improving
relationships with
Māori



03.

There are four key areas to focus on in improving our relationships with Māori

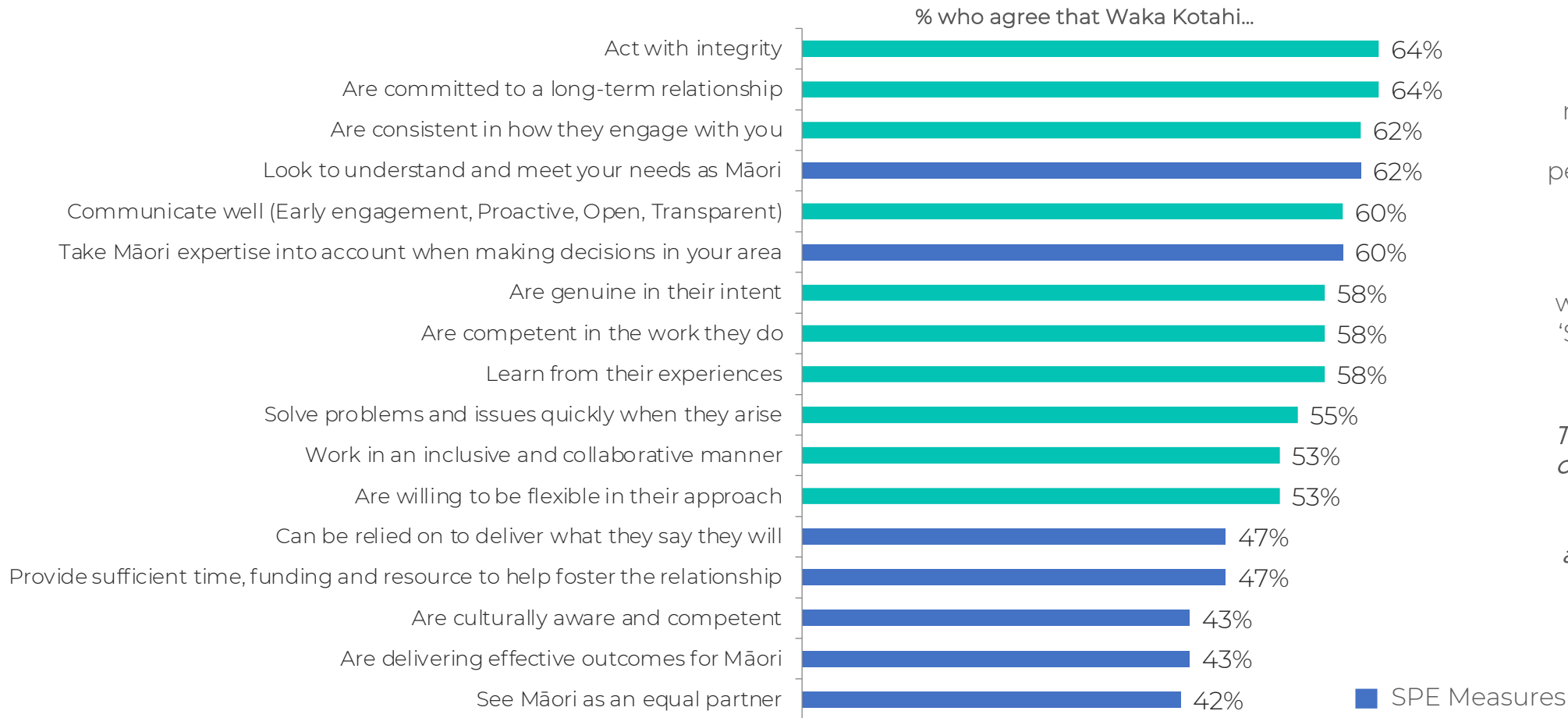
#1
Driving improvements on our 7 key strategic relationship drivers

#2
Taking a partnership approach to our relationships with Māori

#3
Increasing the levels of cultural competency and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

#4
Driving consistency across the relationship factors and all relationships with Māori

Focus area #1: Driving improvements on our 7 key strategic relationship drivers



Despite some progress made, our key SPE measures largely remain our weakest areas of performance, in the eyes of Māori.

And our performance is weakest in the key area of 'Seeing Māori as an equal partner'.

These areas must remain our key priorities of focus going forward to drive overall improvements across our relationships.

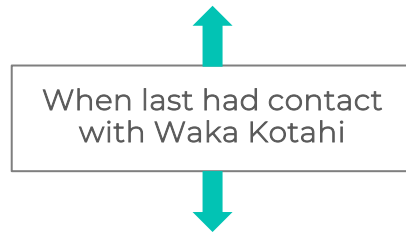
Focus area #2: Taking a partnership approach to our relationships with Māori

We know there are particular engagement factors that impact on the strength of our relationships.

- Satisfaction with the overall relationship is stronger when there is recent contact and the frequency of contact is more regular.

Stronger relationship

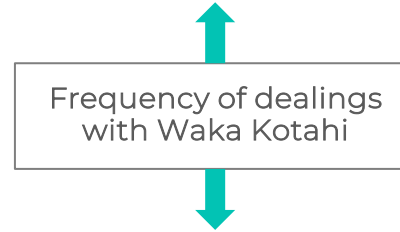
Within the last 12 months
(60% satisfaction with overall relationship)



More than 12 months ago
*(40% satisfaction with overall relationship)**

Weaker relationship

Monthly or more often
(62% satisfaction with overall relationship)



Quarterly or less often
*(50% satisfaction with overall relationship)**

“More regular consultation and updates, in between our normal hui dates”

“Considerations should be given to more regular meetings - not when there is a kaupapa that needs consultation.”

This is also about taking a more holistic partnership approach rather than an ad-hoc project or initiative based approach. *What can we do to optimise our engagement with our Māori partners?*

*Caution: Low base sizes

Focus area #3: Increasing the levels of cultural competency and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The perceptions that Māori hold of our levels of cultural competency remain relatively weak. Many also feel that Waka Kotahi do not truly understand and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Both are key in understanding, and delivering to, what it means to be an equal partner.

Continued focus is needed in these areas to help us better understand and meet the needs of Māori and fulfil our obligations as a Crown treaty partner.

“When Waka Kotahi forgets that it is also a partner of Te Tiriti, it then becomes too easy to waive your obligations.”

“Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the partnership that was envisaged by the Chiefs who signed, should be prominent and considered at every level of Waka Kotahi.”

“Be more attentive and open to understanding Te Ao Māori me Matauranga Māori kaupapa.”

“Iwi and hapū dynamics are more than pan-tribal. What works for one does not work for another - understand this difference.”

Focus area #4: Delivering consistency across relationship factors and all relationships with Māori

Currently we are performing stronger in some aspects of our relationships with Māori and weaker in other areas. And we know that this can also differ from relationship to relationship and from project to project.

We need to focus on delivering consistency of across all key aspects of the relationship, and all relationships.

This will come down to a combination of;

- *Our levels of cultural competency and understanding* – ensuring these are strong across all of our staff.
- *Our mindsets* – seeing Māori are equal partners - and the flow on effects that come from this around decision making and behaviours.
- *Our strategies, processes and systems* – using these to enable a true partnership approach rather than being the barrier.

The image features a diagonal split background, with the top-left portion being black and the bottom-right portion being white. On the black background, there are several teal-colored geometric shapes: a large thick ring, a smaller solid circle, and a thin circular outline. The text 'Ngā mihi nui!' is positioned in the white area, to the right of the solid teal circle.

Ngā mihi nui!

The background is split diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The upper-left portion is black, and the lower-right portion is white. On the black background, there are several teal-colored geometric shapes: a large thick ring on the left, a thin circle at the top, and a solid circle in the middle. The word "Appendix" is written in a teal serif font on the white background.

Appendix

Profiling those who completed the survey

Last time dealt with someone at Waka Kotahi		
	2023	2022
Within the last 12 months	81%	93%
Within the last 1-2 years	13%	4%
Within the last 3-5 years	6%	4%
How long have been engaging with Waka Kotahi		
Less than 12 months	19%	11%
1-2 years	13%	21%
3-5 years	23%	39%
6-10 years	32%	14%
More than 10 years	13%	14%

How often deal with Waka Kotahi		
	2023	2022
Weekly or more often	14%	22%
Every 2-3 weeks	23%	21%
Monthly	19%	34%
Quarterly	17%	16%
Less often	28%	8%
Role		
Leadership / Governance	47%	45%
Management	15%	21%
Kaitiaki	21%	21%
Some other role	11%	7%
Operations	6%	5%