

Waikato Affordable Energy Webinar Series

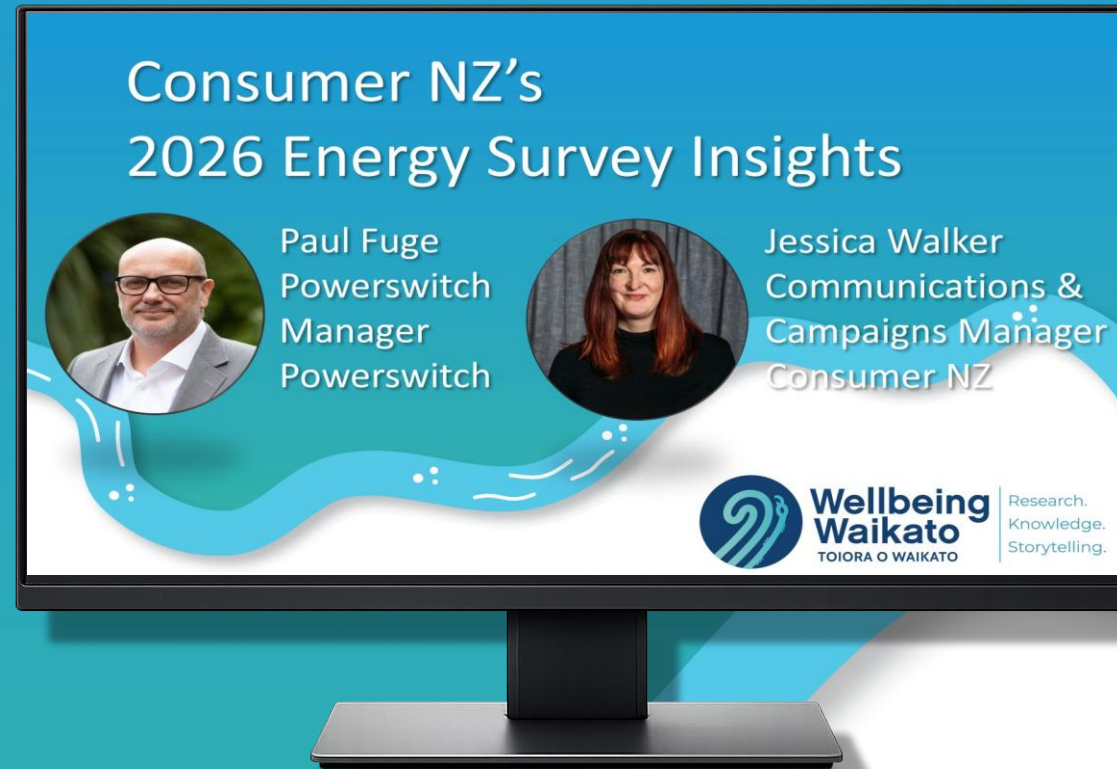
June-November 2026



**Wellbeing
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Research.
Knowledge.
Storytelling.

To View This Webinar On Line, Click on the Image Below





Harvey Brookes
Executive Director
Wellbeing Waikato



Reflections: Ernie Newman,
Independent Competition Expert
and Commentator



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Independent Charitable Trust focused on:

- Regional intelligence about what's most important to households and whanau
- Identifying emerging risks early
- Surfacing underlying drivers, not just symptoms
- Convening government, iwi, councils, community organisations and the private sector around decision-useful insights.





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July 2026

Social Investment in New Zealand

A Summary

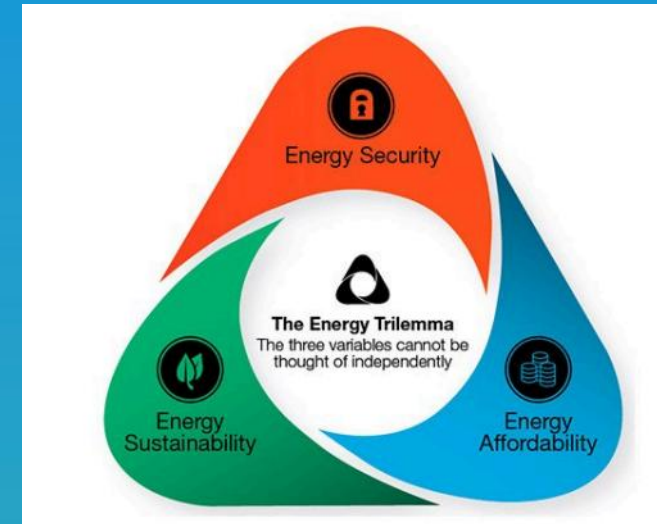


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Energy systems need to be:

- Affordable
- Reliable
- Sustainable



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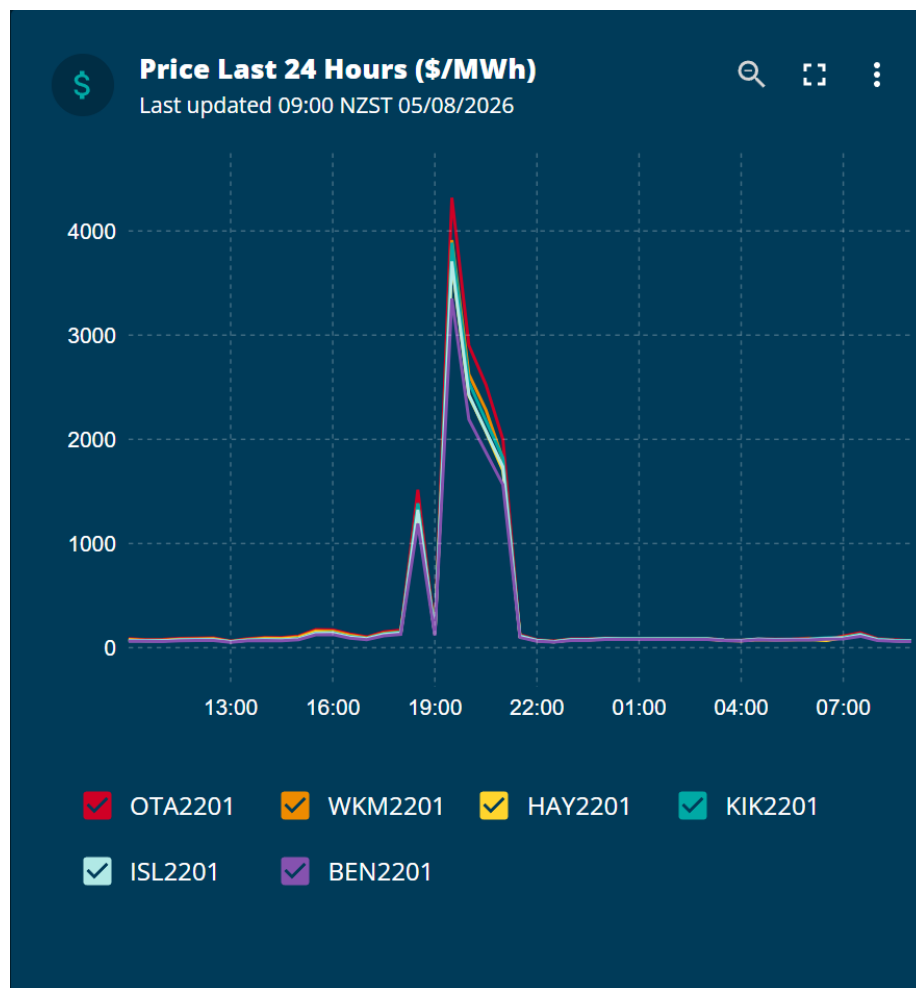
4 Big Questions

1. How does the electricity system actually work—and why is it designed this way?
2. What drives power prices, and how could they be made more affordable?
3. How does energy affordability affect household and community wellbeing?
4. What would a better system look like—and how do we get there?



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Source: Electricity Market Overview Website em6



Excursion Notice

To: SO Notice North Island Participants
From: The System Operator
Sent: 04-aug-2026 20:07
Ref: 800000278
Telephone: 0800 488 500
Email: NMData@transpower.co.nz

Revision of:

Excursion:	Frequency/Voltage
Time:	04-aug-2026 19:45
Location:	North Island
Affected Plant:	
SI Hz Level:	NI Hz Level: 49.24
Comments:	Huntly generation tripped

Frequency Excursion notices are only issued if the deviation is outside 49.5 and 50.5 Hz.

Source: Transpower Excursion Notices

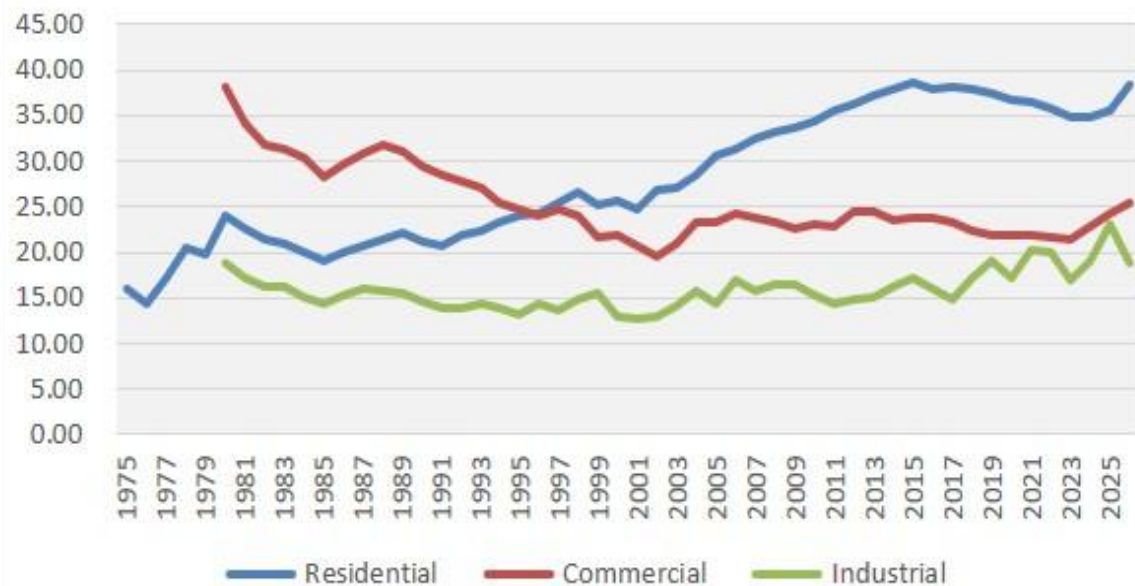


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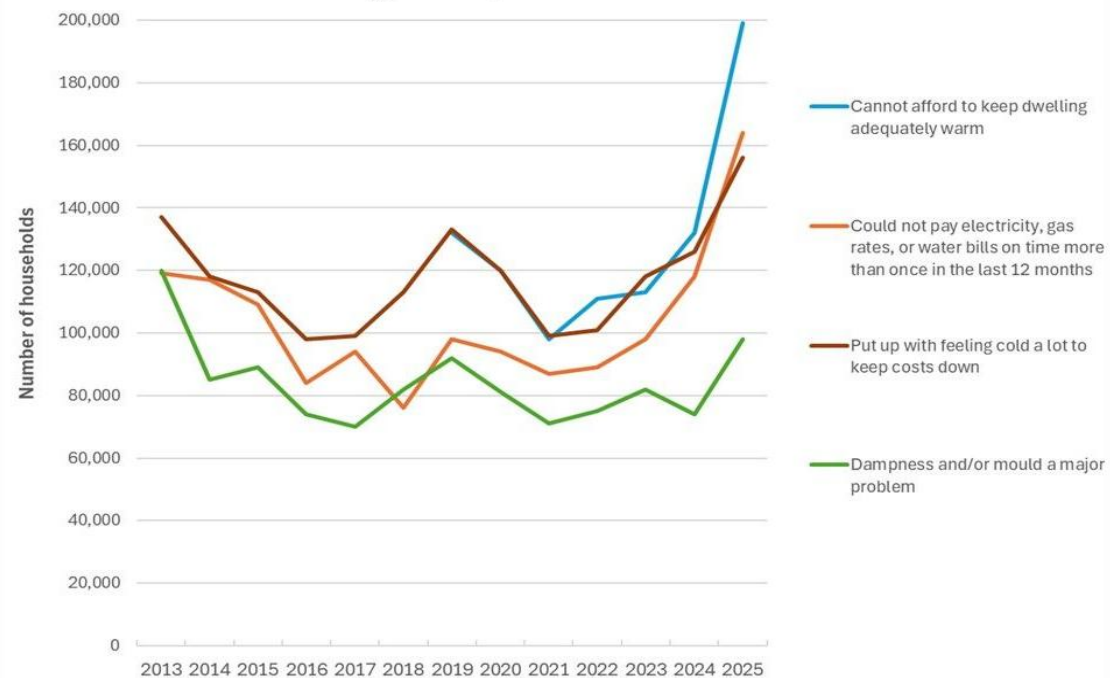
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Real Annual Average Energy Prices (2025 Prices)

Source: [Energy prices](#) | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment



Formal energy hardship measures from 2013



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Mercury profit jumps to \$321 million as its boss promises smaller power price rises

August 18, 2026

Mercury Energy has reported a net profit of \$321 million for the year to 30 June 2026, up from just \$1 million the year before, and its chief executive has told analysts the company expects residential power price rises to sit at or below inflation over the next few years.

The result, released to the NZX on Tuesday morning, was driven largely by water. Strong inflows into the Waikato catchment lifted Mercury's hydro generation by 31 percent, and total output across its fleet rose to 9,070 gigawatt hours from 7,906 the year before. Revenue fell to \$3 billion on the previous year.

Home / New Zealand

Genesis Energy announces record profits

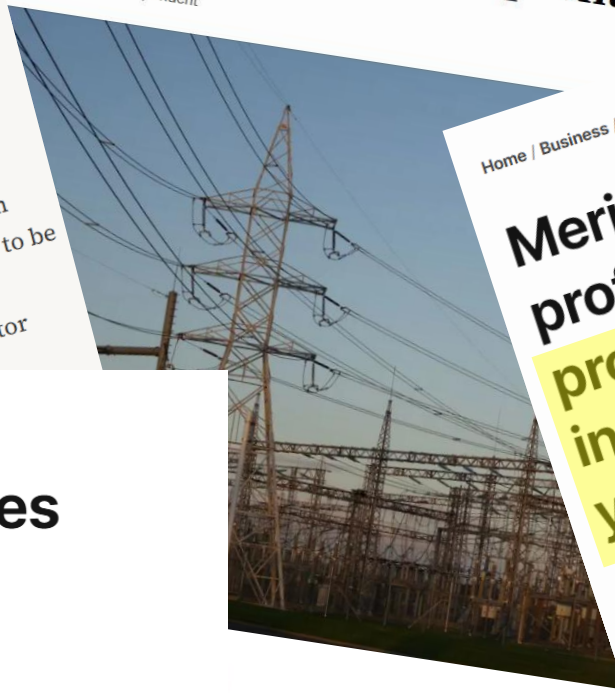
 **NZ Herald**
24 Feb, 2026 07:09 AM

 Save  Share

News / Business 26 February 2026, 9:10am

Is it fair that prices rise as power companies bank profits?

 **Susan Edmunds**
Money Correspondent



Home / Business / Companies / Energy

Meridian Energy returns to \$130m profit after drought-hit loss, promises to keep energy price increases below inflation in coming year



Jamie Gray
Business Reporter

NZ Herald · 26 Aug, 2026 09:25 AM · 3 mins to read





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Consumer NZ's 2026 Energy Survey Insights



Paul Fuge
Powerswitch
Manager
Powerswitch



Jessica Walker
Communications &
Campaigns Manager
Consumer NZ



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consumer.

Welcome

Consumer NZ's 2026 Energy Survey Insights

WELLBEING WAIKATO AFFORDABLE ENERGY WEBINAR | 26 August 2026





What we're covering today

01

The consumer reality

What financial pressures look like for households in 2026

02

Sector performance

How the sector is going and what's driving brand performance

03

Electrification

The same gap, bigger stakes – EVs, gas, solar, time-of-use plans

04

Switching

Perceptions still a barrier

05

Industry perceptions

How consumers feel about the sector

06

Consumer NZ Power Petition

Bring down high power prices

Nine years of nationally representative energy tracking



1,937

Respondents

17 March to 10 April 2026

- **Nationally representative** weighted to Stats NZ 2023 Census
- **Market-share quotas applied** (EA EMI)
- **Main or joint household energy decision-makers only**
- **Significance tested at 95% confidence** (+- 2.2% MOE)
- **Same method year-on-year** - results are comparable

Other Consumer NZ data

Sentiment Tracker

Quarterly | n=1,000

Sector surveys

Annually | Sample sizes vary

Consumer Rights Survey

Feb 2026 | n=1,000

Vehicle ownership Survey

Dec 2025 | n=5,791

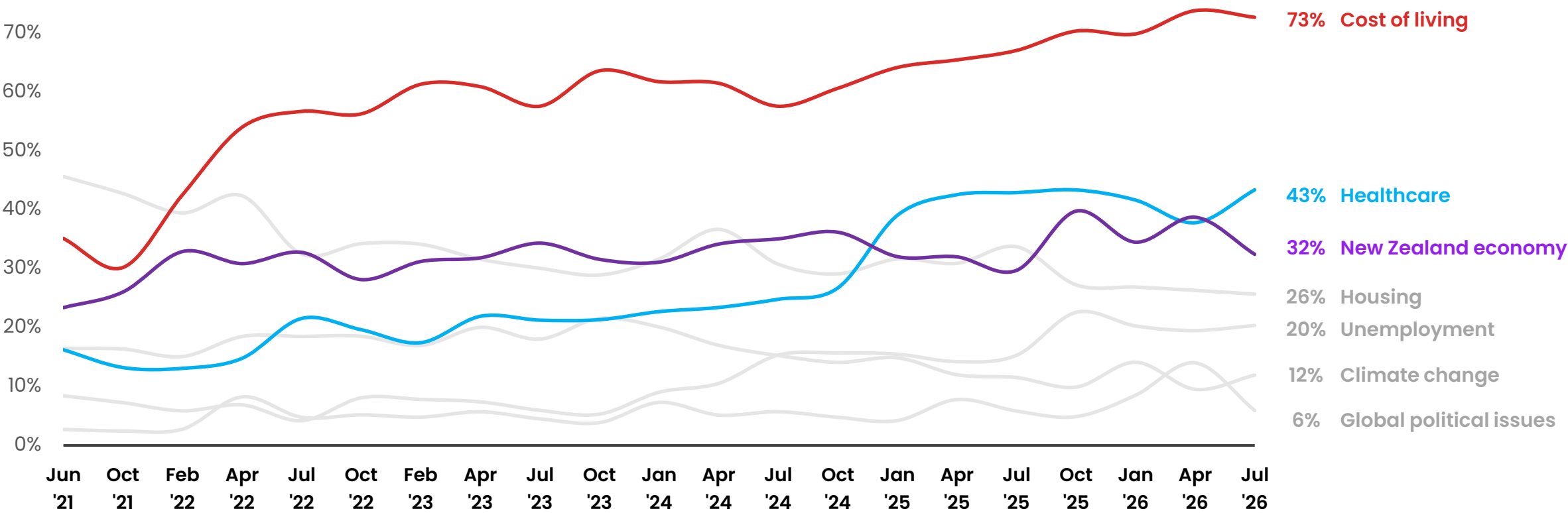
01

The consumer reality

**What financial pressures look like
for households in 2026**

Cost of living remains the top concern, as economic worries ease and healthcare climbs

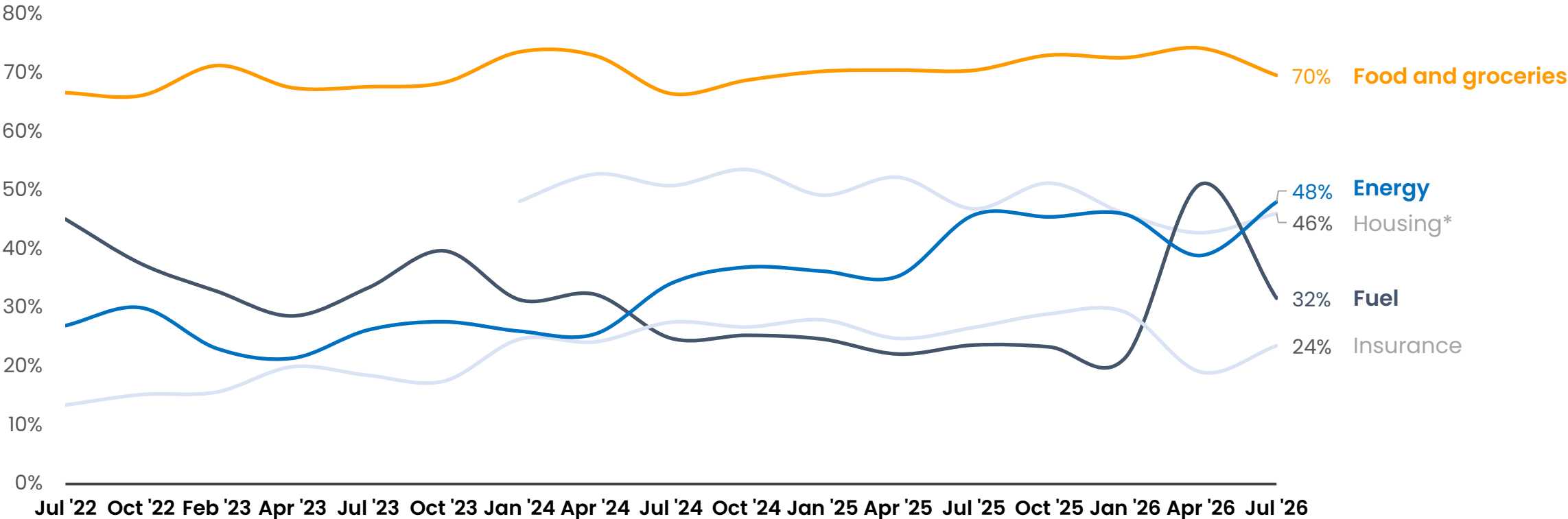
Most concerning issues New Zealand is currently facing



Source: Consumer NZ Sentiment Tracker. Q. Which three of the following do you believe are the most urgent or concerning issues for New Zealand right now? Please select up to three. Results show the proportion who selected each issue in their top three. Not all issues are shown.

Groceries remain the biggest pressure, energy hit a new winter high, and fuel concern falls sharply from April's spike

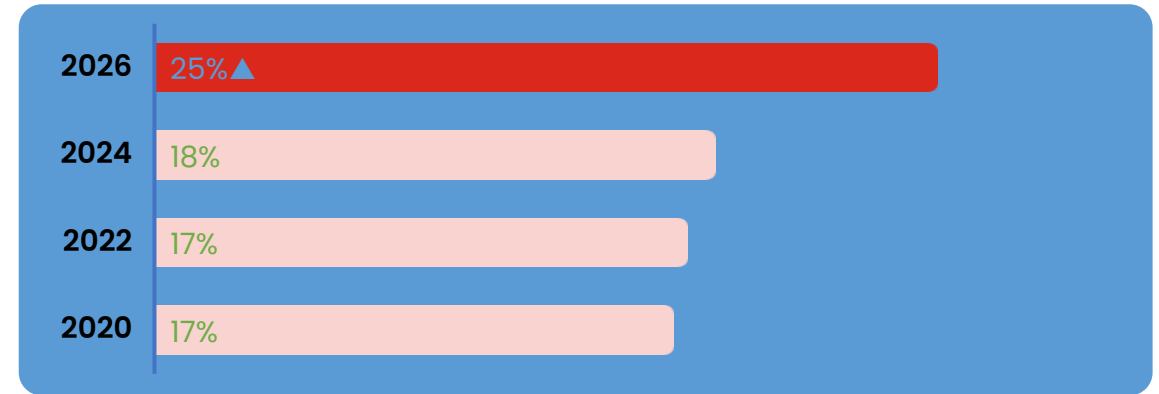
Biggest financial concerns over the next 12 months
(Prevalence: % who ranked each concern in the top three)



Source: Consumer NZ Sentiment Tracker. Q. Which of the following expenses are your biggest financial concerns over the next 12 months? Please rank up to three options. Results show the proportion who ranked each expense in their top three. Note: methodology changed in January 2024. Not all financial concerns are shown.

1 in 4 households
struggled to pay
their power bill in
the past year

Households that struggle to pay their monthly power bill



24% missed payments
▲ 19% in 2025

19% borrowed from family or friends
▲ 14% in 2025

15% have cut back on heating because of cost
▲ 11% in 2025

Energy hardship is concentrated among specific ethnic and income groups

Hardship results by ethnicity and household income; comparisons are against overall survey results.

BY ETHNICITY

Pacific Peoples: greatest bill-payment hardship

- 53%** missed payments
▲ 24% overall
- 35%** struggle to pay their power bills
▲ 25% overall

Māori: greatest heating difficulty

- 25%** find it difficult to heat their home in winter
▲ 19% overall
- 20%** have cut back on heating because of cost
▲ 15% overall

BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Under \$30k: greatest hardship

- 35%** struggle to pay their power bills
▲ 25% overall
- 36%** missed payments
▲ 24% overall
- 26%** have cut back on heating because of cost
▲ 15% overall

\$30–50k: heating pressure persists

- 24%** find it difficult to heat their home in winter
▲ 19% overall

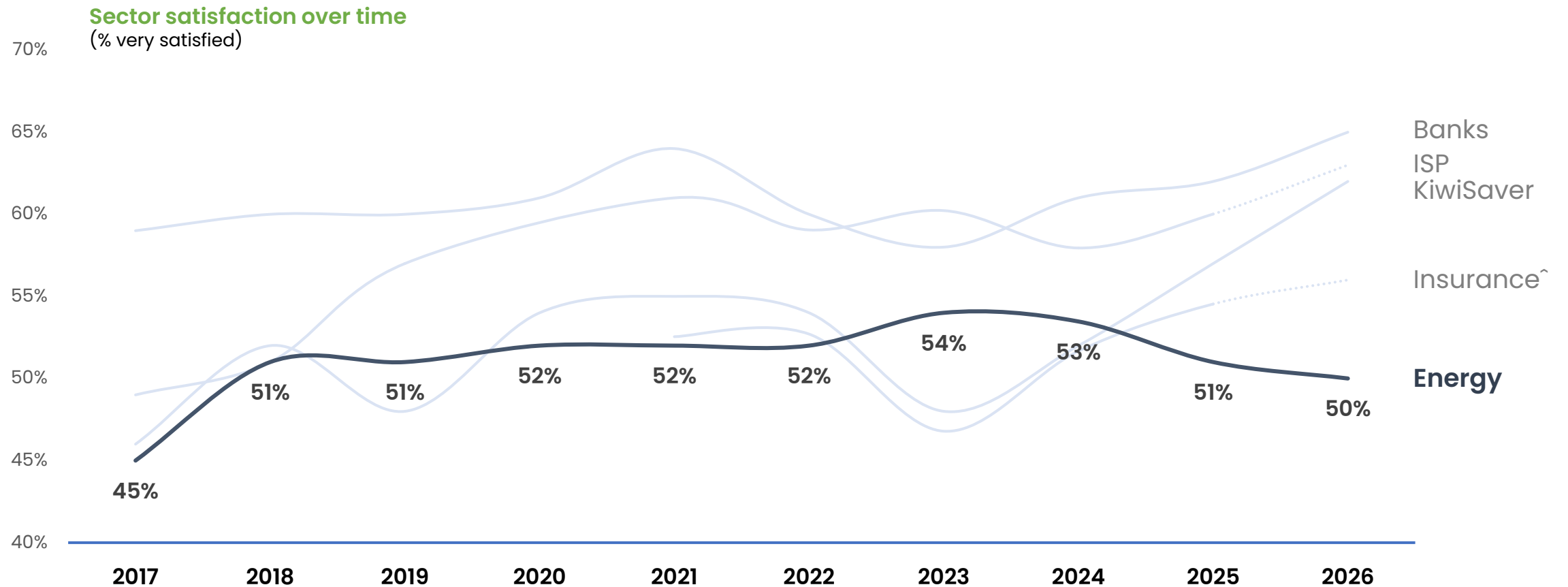
Takeaway: Energy hardship is concentrated among Pacific Peoples, Māori and lower-income households. Pacific Peoples face the greatest bill-payment hardship, while Māori experience the greatest heating difficulties. Affordability pressures extend beyond the lowest-income households to those earning \$30k–50k.

02

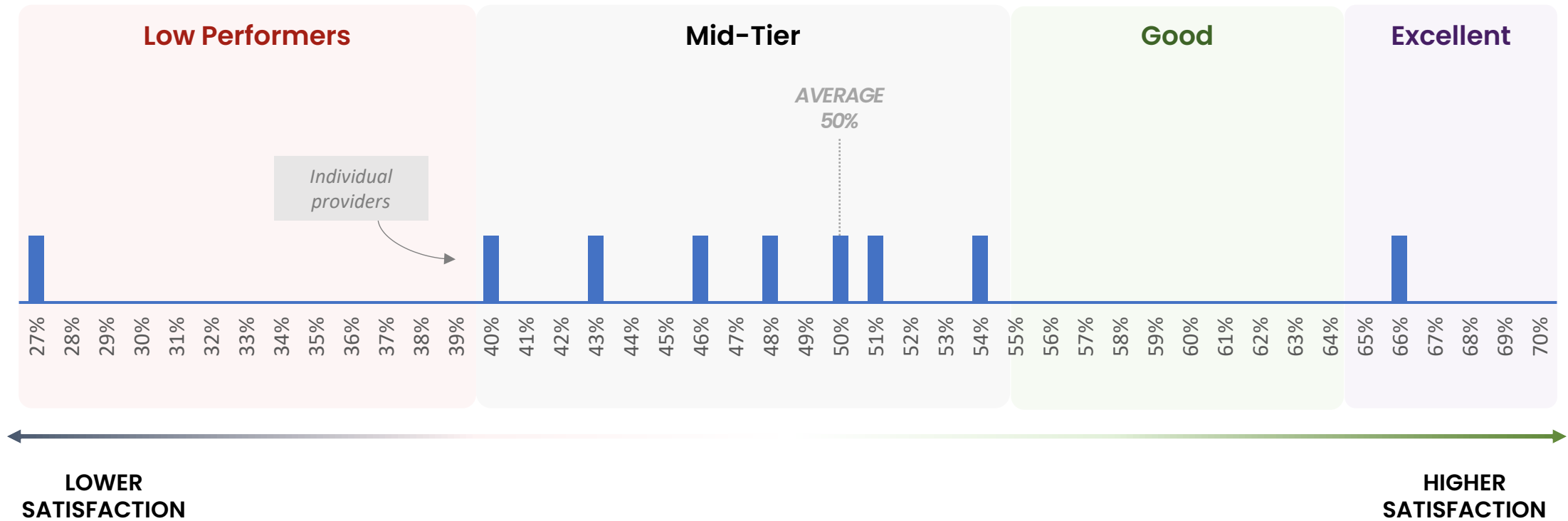
Sector performance

How the sector and brands are
performing

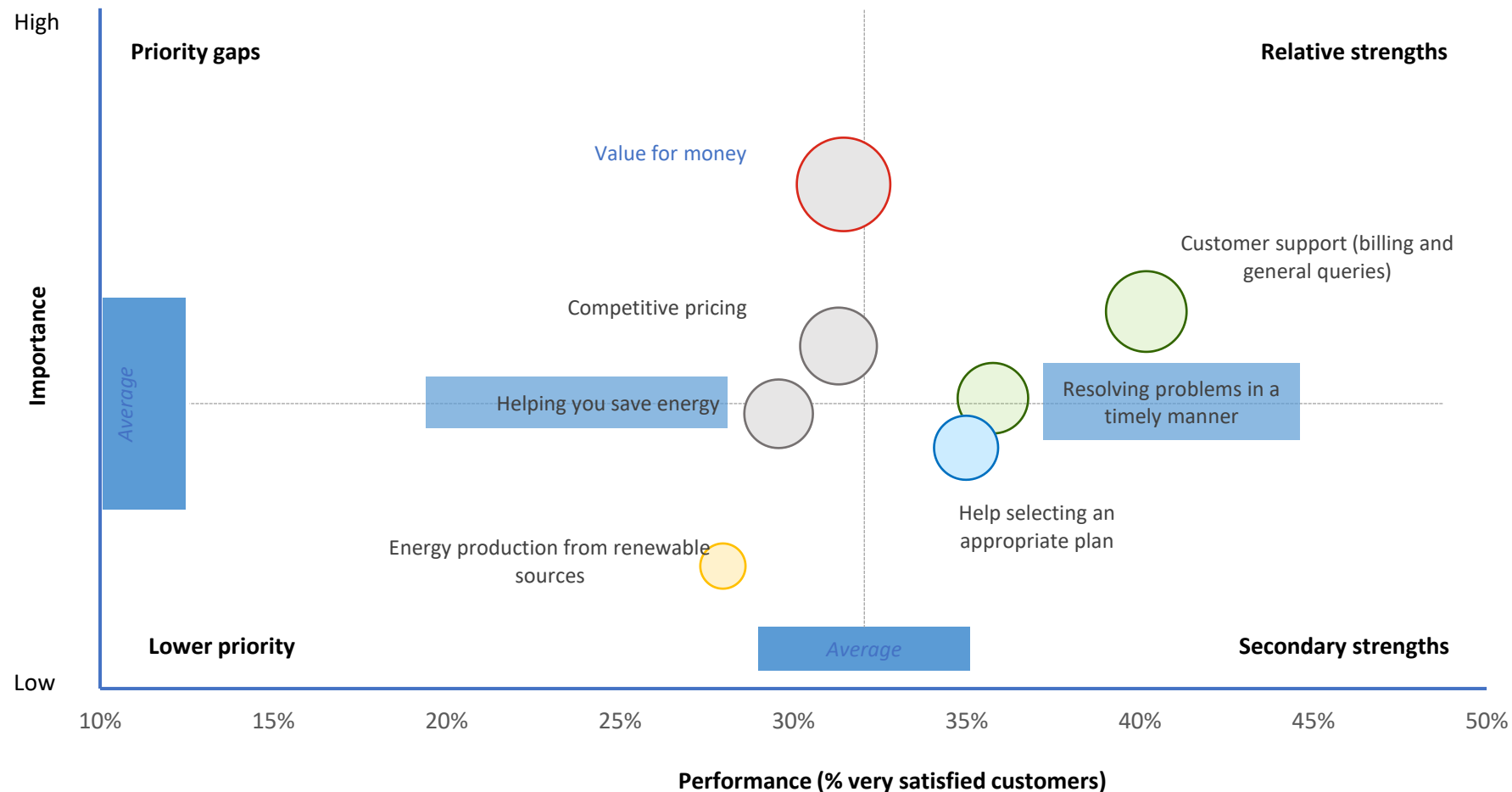
Energy satisfaction is softening while other tracked sectors have improved



Customer satisfaction varies widely across energy providers



How well are providers delivering against the things customers care about most



What customers most want and what ranks lowest

Value for money is the strongest driver of overall satisfaction, followed by customer support and competitive pricing.

Helping you save energy – no brand currently stands out on this.

03

Electrification perceptions

The same gap, bigger stakes

Electrification is not one decision



Transport

Petrol → EV



Heating

Gas → heat pump



Cooking

Gas → Induction



Power

Solar



Time-of-use

Smart use

Surveys cover four distinct decision areas – transport, heating, cooking and power generation

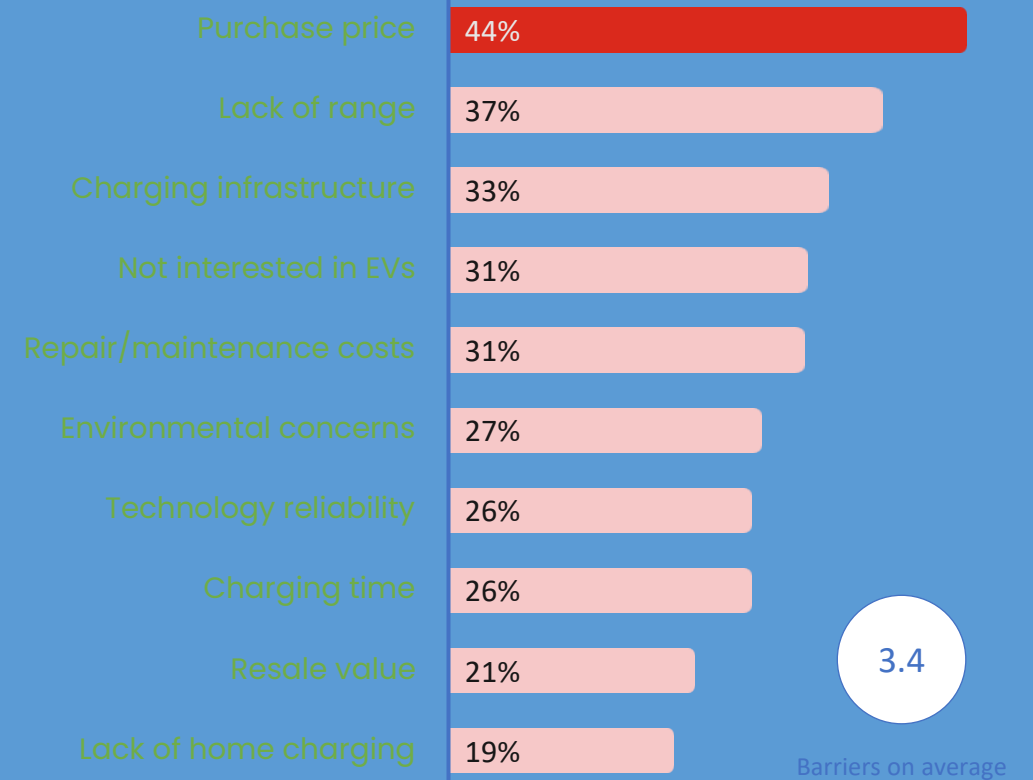
EVs show the pattern: Once people switch, they rarely go back

96%

of EV owners would buy an EV again

But 44% of non-owners cite purchase price as the main barrier to getting there.

Top barriers to EV adoption (non-EV owners)



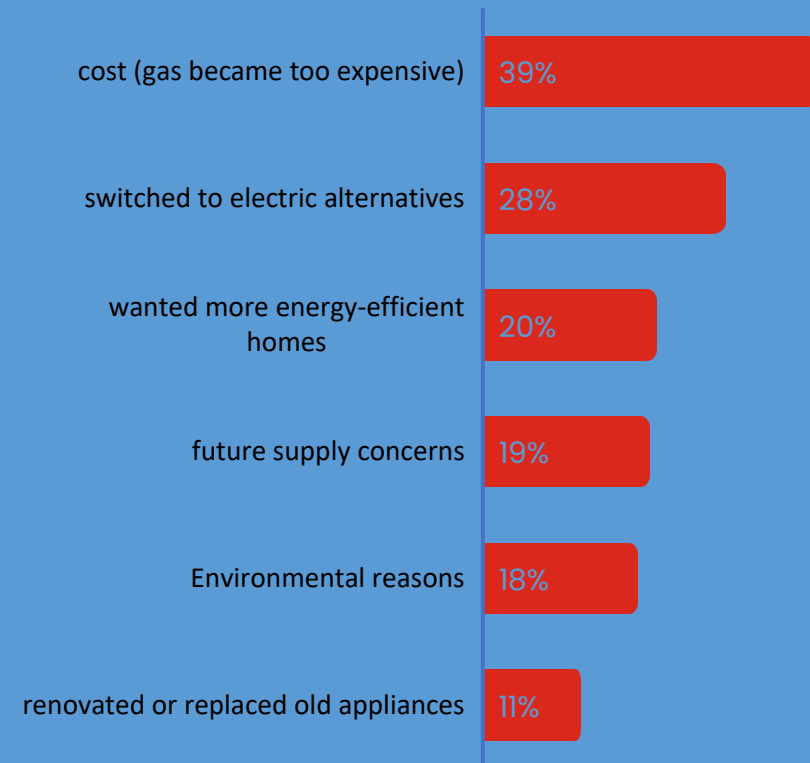
40%

use gas at home

57% use about the same amount as 5 years ago

20% use less, but still use some

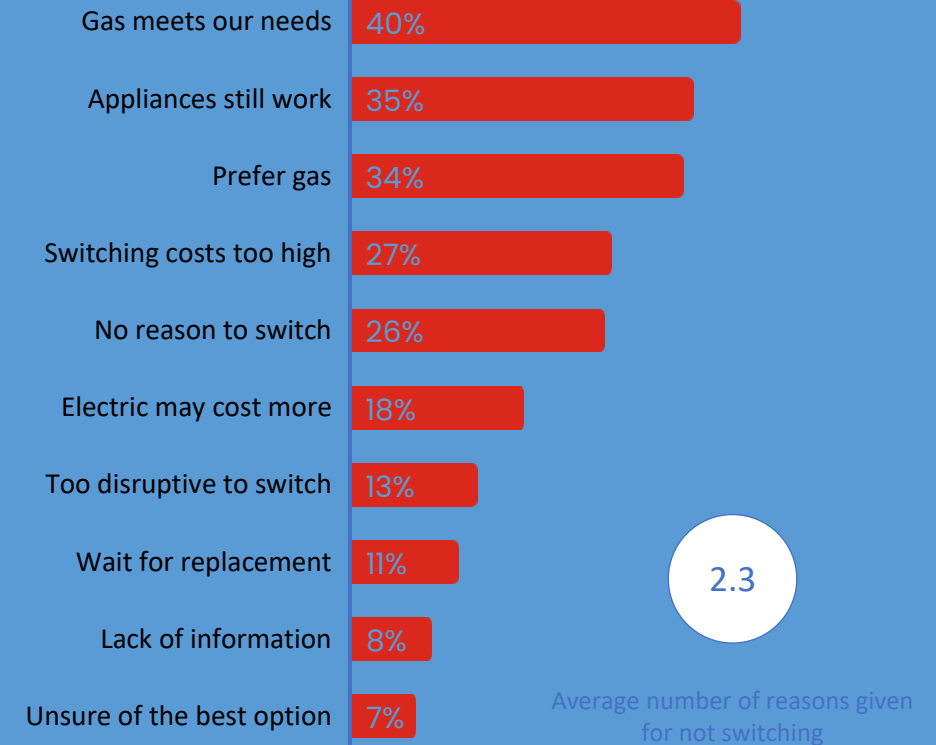
Reasons people moved away from gas (reduced or stopped using gas)



3 in 4

gas users expect to
make no real
change to their gas
use over the next 5
years

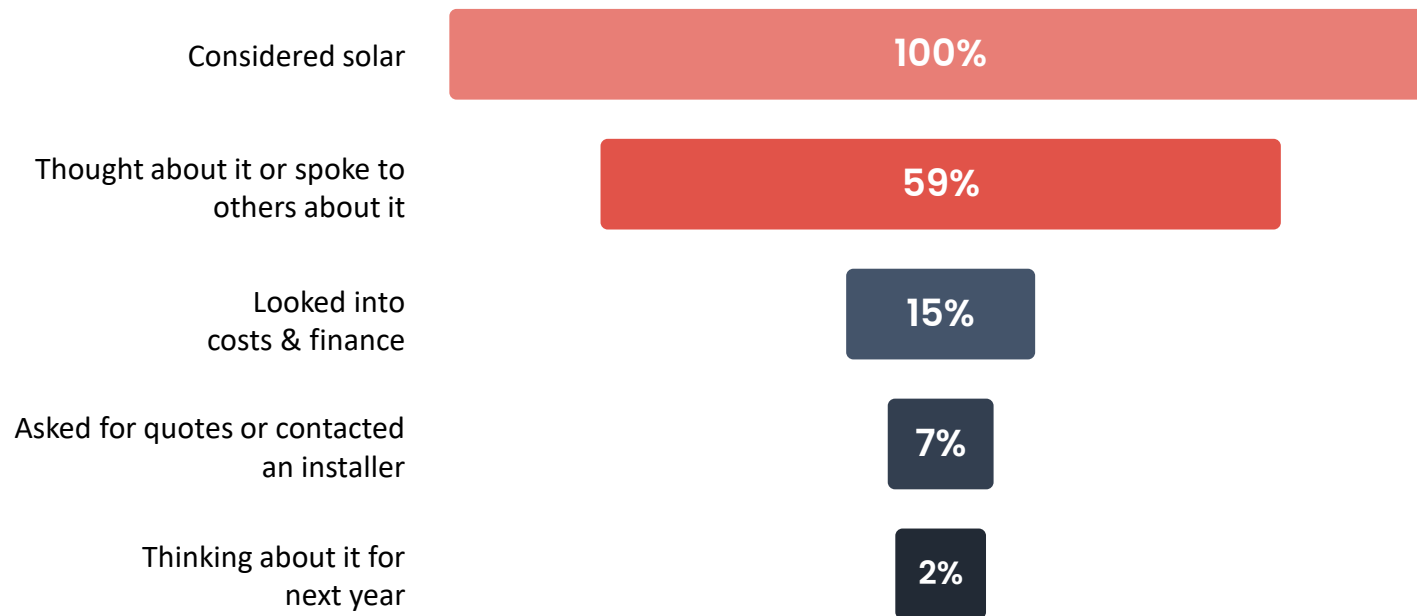
What's holding households back from reducing or stopping gas use?



Solar interest is broad, but most households are still early in the journey

Half of eligible homeowners (48%) have considered solar – but among them, the journey stalls early.

Of those who considered solar (n=533)



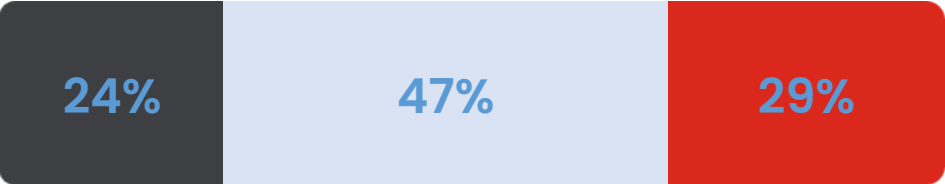
6 in 10

never get past thinking about it or light research

Cost perceptions and uncertainty stop many before they reach an informed quote – so people reach a cost conclusion without ever getting a price

Time-of-use plans can shift behaviour when people know they're on one

Do households know what plan they're on?



-  **Don't know** whether they're on a time-of-use plan
-  **Not** on a time-of-use plan
-  **On** a time-of-use plan

1 in 4
Can't tell you if their pricing varies by time of day, so they're unlikely to change their behaviour as a result.

Among those who know they're on one

74%
of those on a plan changed how they use power

69%
say it saves them money

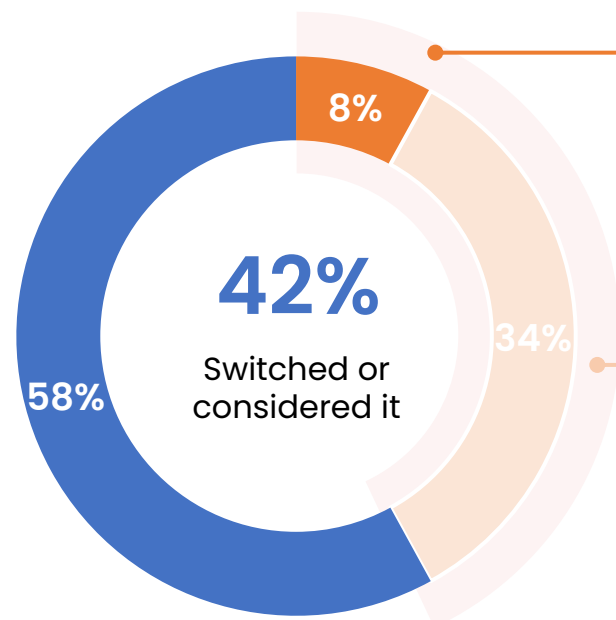
04

Switching

Perceptions still a barrier

Many considered switching, yet fewer actually move

Have you considered changing electricity retailers in the past 12 months?

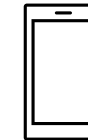


● No
● Yes - I switched
● Yes - but didn't end up switching

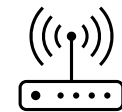
Cross-sector comparisons
(% changed provider)



Banking
4%



Mobile
10%



ISP
13%

Primary reason you didn't end up switching

- 38% couldn't find a good enough price to switch
- 19% too much hassle
- 17% didn't get around to it

Switching is easier than expected, but feels harder the longer people stay with the same provider

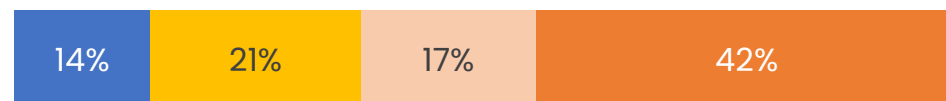
Switching providers: Actual ease vs perceived ease

Those who switched in the past 12 months



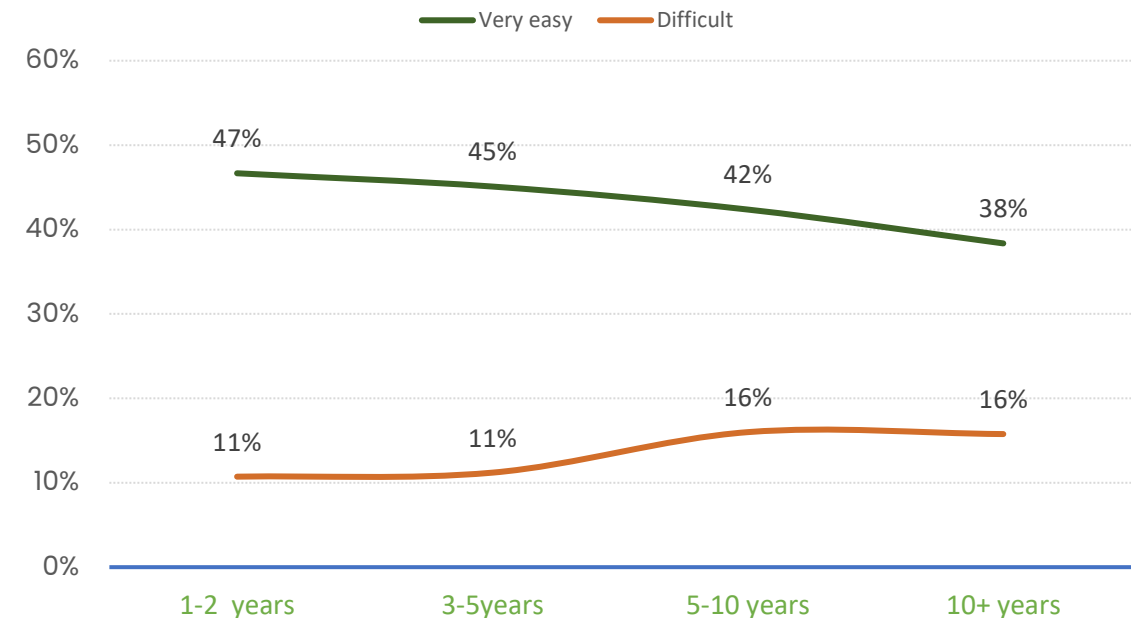
● Difficult ● Neutral ● Easy ● Very easy

Those who didn't switch in the past 12 months



● Difficult ● Neutral ● Easy ● Very easy

How easy customers think switching is, by time with provider (% very easy)



Tenure since last switched provider

Powerswitch has moved ahead of provider websites as a source used by electricity switchers

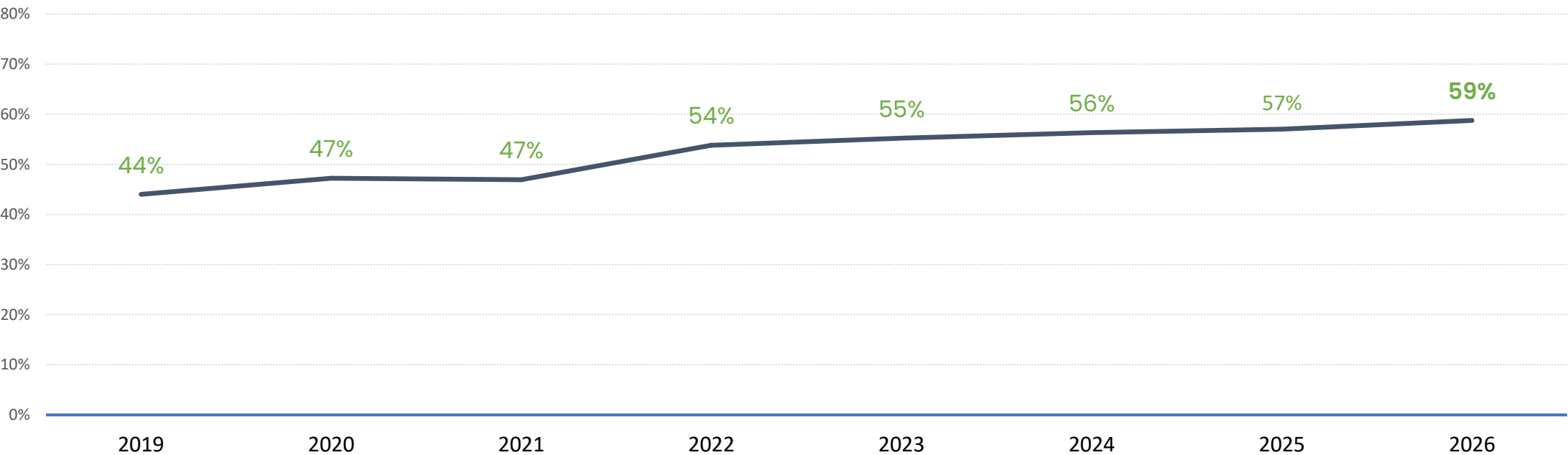
Q. How did you go about finding a new electricity provider?	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Visited Consumer NZ's Powerswitch website	42%	39%	35%	38%	36%	35%
Visited the electricity providers' websites	37%	44%	46%	50%	40%	38%
Was contacted by a sales representative	19%	16%	17%	14%	20%	32%
Rang around the electricity providers	15%	19%	15%	14%	15%	15%
Other	8%	11%	9%	6%	6%	6%
Visited a price comparison website other than Powerswitch	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Total	124%	133%	126%	124%	119%	128%
Column n	163	167	219	231	238	206

Steady growth in Powerswitch awareness.

Awareness of Powerswitch rose steadily since 2019, with a significant increase in 2024, following the 'It pays to change' campaign (up 6 percentage points since March 2024). However, the 2025 Energy survey, shows a decline in awareness, likely due to survey timing – the 2024 post campaign measure was taken in September, post Winter, when switching is typically more top of mind.

Have you heard of Powerswitch before this survey?

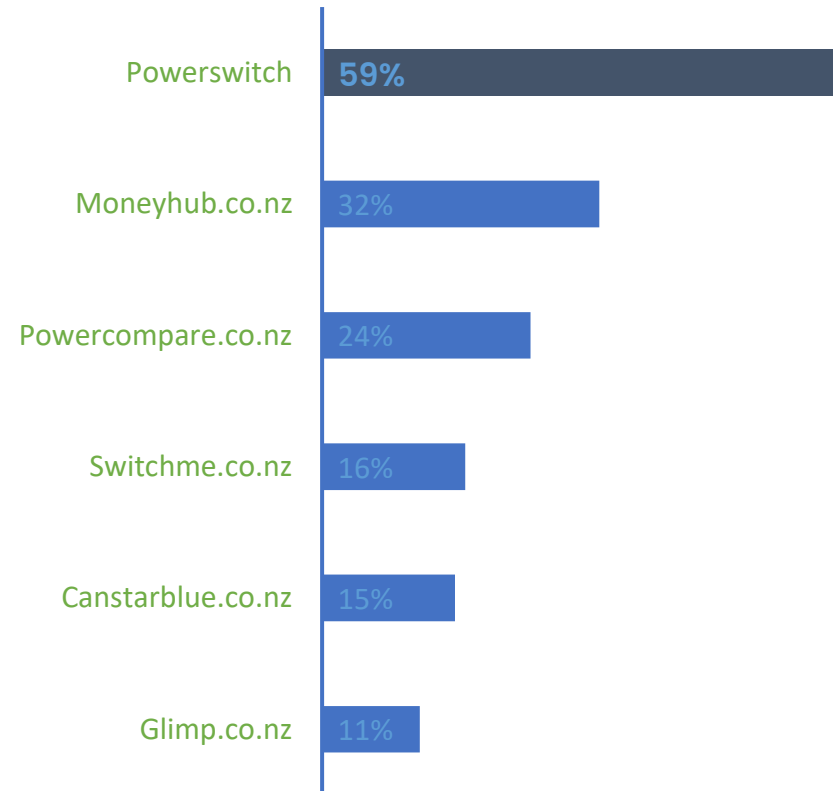
(% Yes)



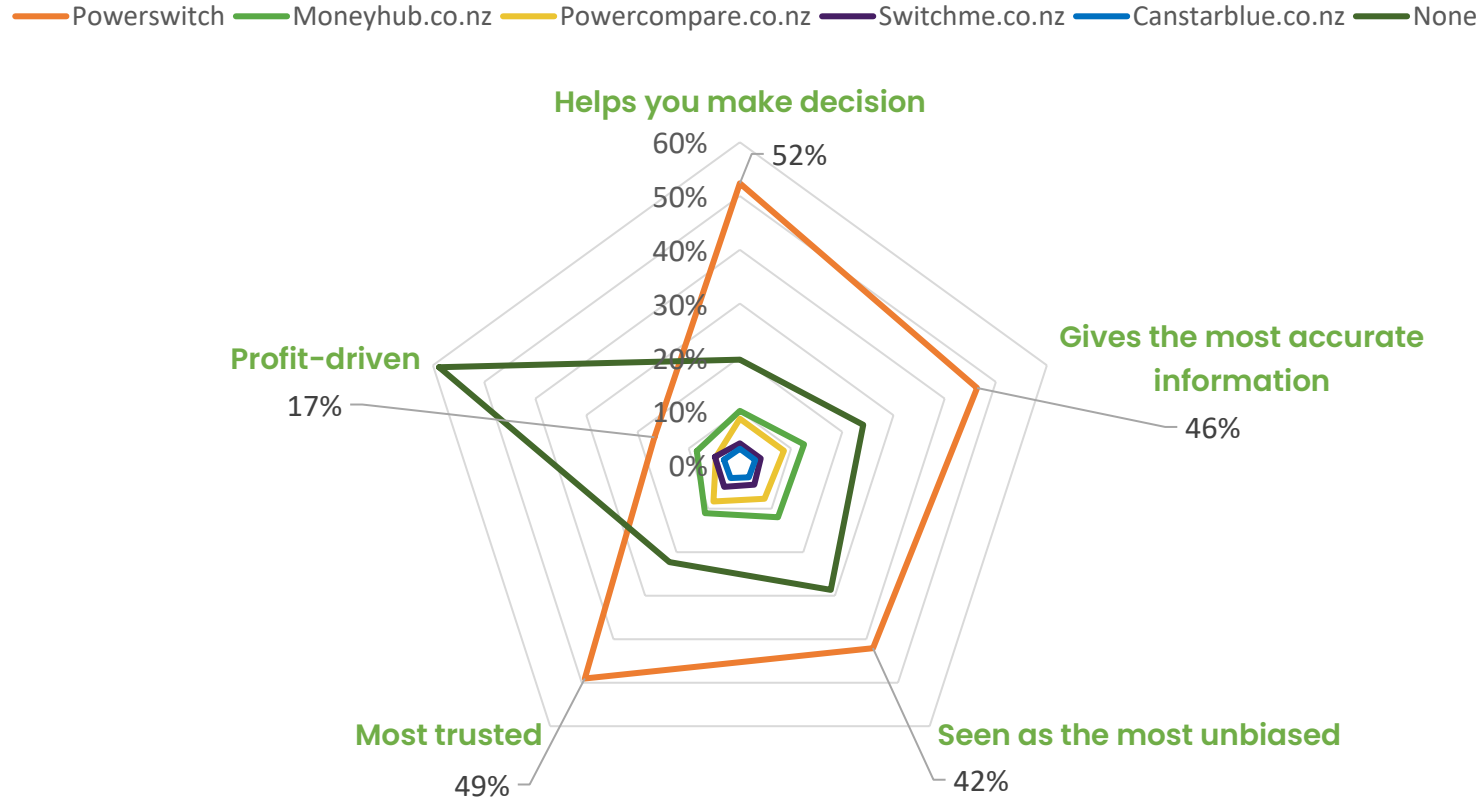
Note: Two awareness surveys were conducted in 2024.
"2024 (pre)" refers to the Energy Providers Satisfaction Survey from March 2024, conducted before the new Powerswitch advertising campaign.
"2024 (post)" refers to the Powerswitch Survey from September, 2024 measuring awareness after the campaign.

Powerswitch is the most recognised power comparison site and is seen as the most trusted and unbiased. It outperforms other sites in helping users make decisions and providing accurate information.

Have you heard of any of the following?*



Please tell us which website you associate with the following qualities.*



*Source: 2026 Energy Retailers Survey
Q. Have you heard of any of the following?
Q. Please tell us which website you associate with the following qualities.

From awareness to action: Powerswitch conversion performance. 59% of consumers are aware of Powerswitch, 39% have used the service, and 29% attributed using it with deciding to switch.

Heard of Powerswitch

base: n=1,937 total
▲ 57% in 2025

59%

1,147 people aware

Primary sources: Google (33%), CNZ directly (23%), online ads and social media (both 20%).
No significant changes since 2025.

↓ of those aware...

Used Powerswitch

base: n=1,147 aware
▼ 41% in 2025

39%

453 people visited Powerswitch

Reasons: compare current deal (52%), check available deals (47%), want to save money (42%)
No significant changes since 2025.

↓ of those who visited...

Switched as a result

base: n=453 visited
▼ 31% in 2025

29%

131 people switched

Didn't switch reasons: couldn't find a better price (40%), already on cheapest plan (27%)
No significant changes since 2025.

Q. Have you heard of Powerswitch before this survey? Base: Total sample (n=1937).

Q. Have you visited the Powerswitch website in the past 12 months? Total sample filtered on those who have heard of Powerswitch (n=1147)

Q. As a result of using Powerswitch, did you decide to switch power companies? Base: Total sample filtered on those who have visited the Powerswitch website in the past 12 months (n=453)

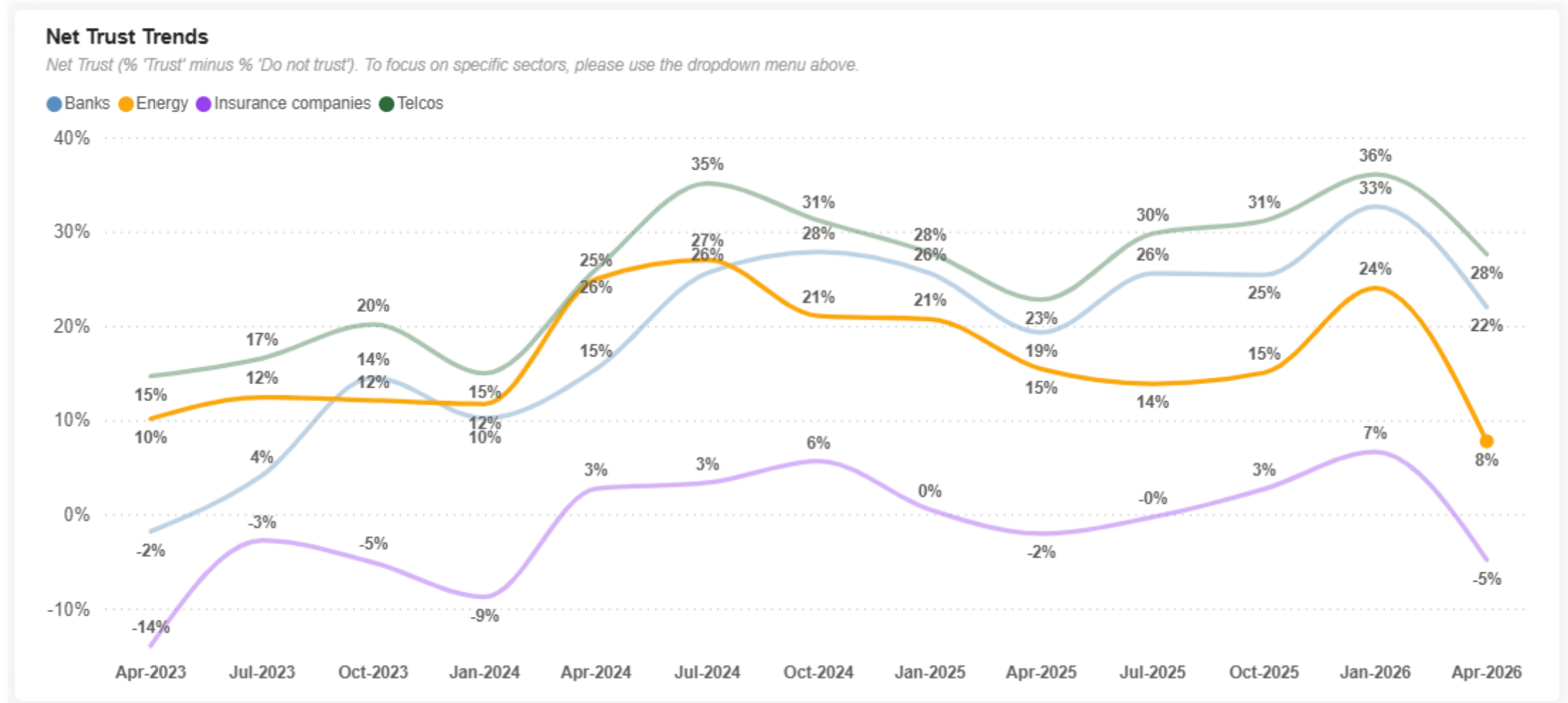
Sourced from the Energy Satisfaction Survey 2026.

05

Industry perceptions

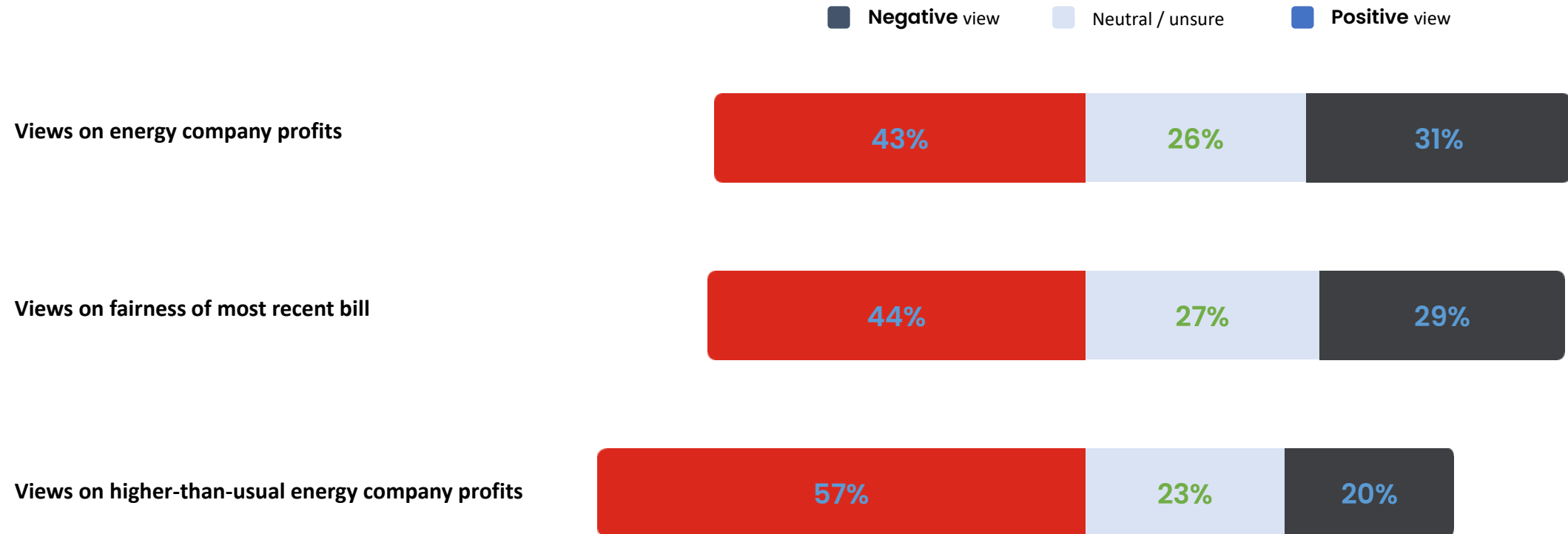
How consumers feel about the sector

Trust in energy providers has softened



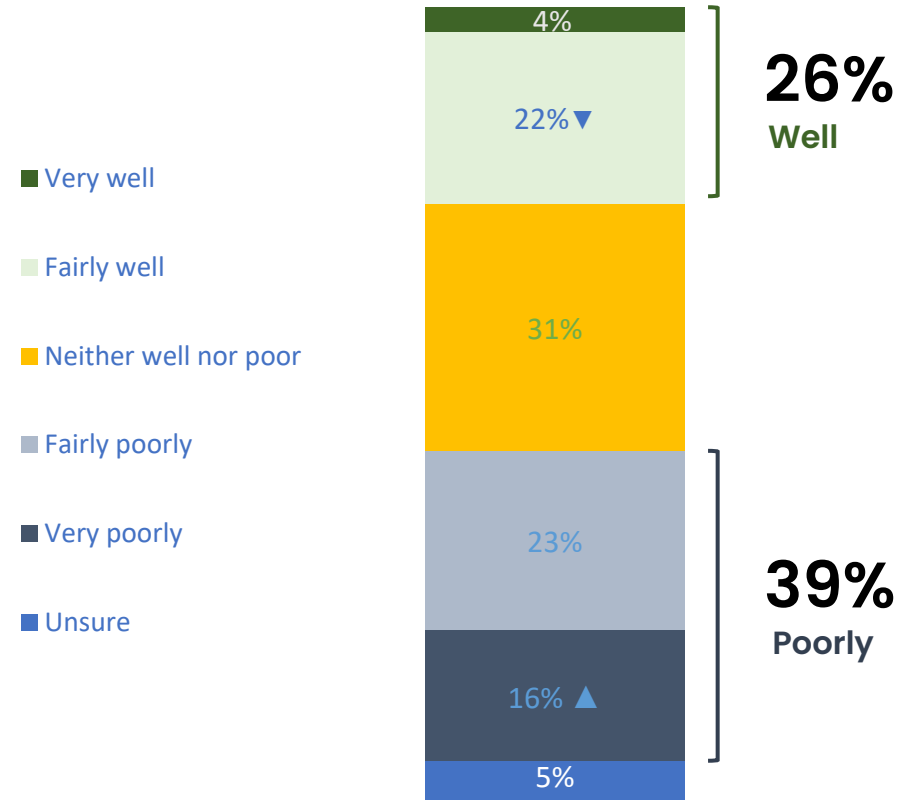
Many consumers question fairness, bills and profit levels

Across three independent questions, negative views consistently outweigh positive – and on higher-than-usual profits, by nearly 3 to 1.

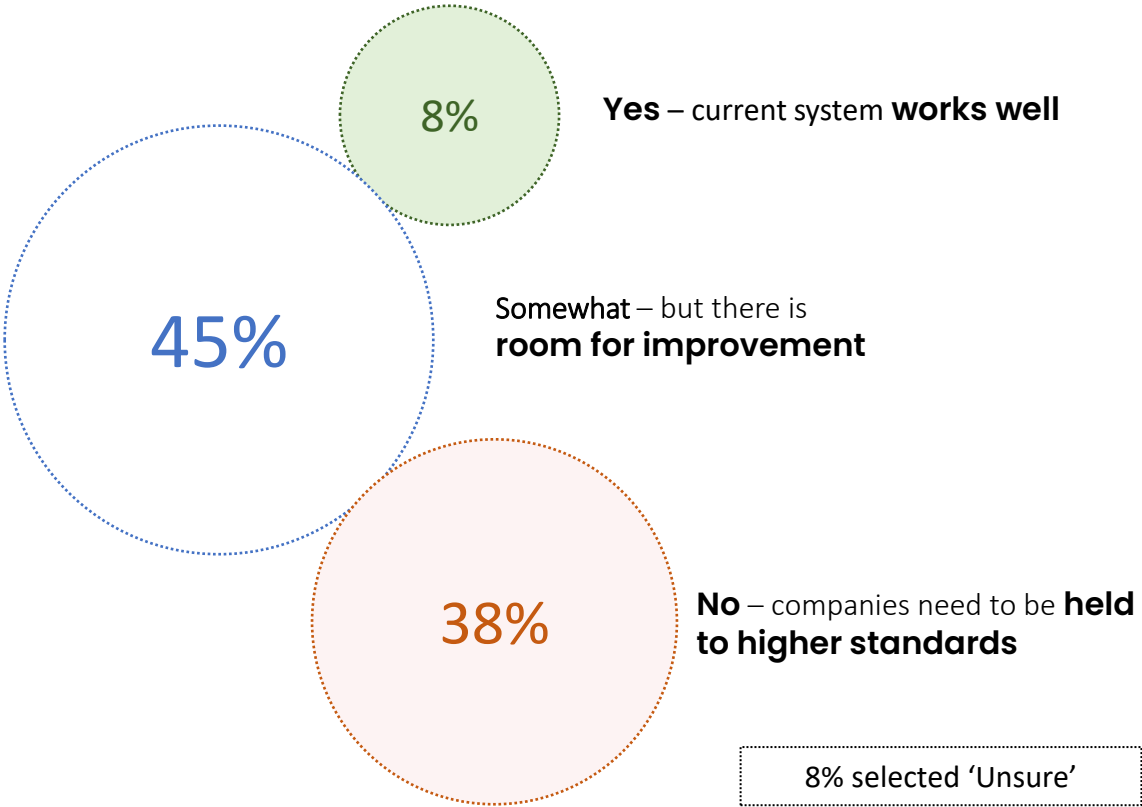


Many consumers see room for improvement in how the market works

How well do you think New Zealand's electricity market is working for consumers like you?



Do you think electricity companies are regulated fairly to ensure customers get good service and fair pricing?

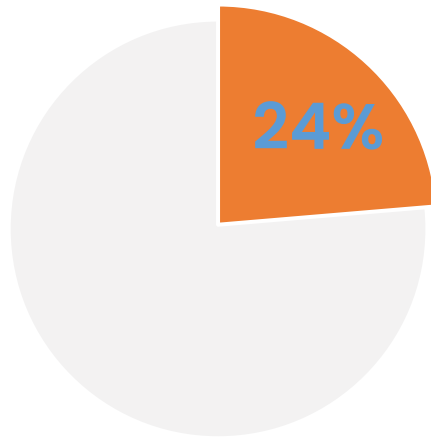


Source: Consumer NZ Energy Retailer Survey, April 2026. Base: New Zealanders aged 18+, n=1,937.
▲ ▼ significantly higher or lower than the previous year.

Awareness of Consumer Care Obligations is not keeping pace with hardship

3 in 4

had never heard of the Consumer Care Obligations before this survey

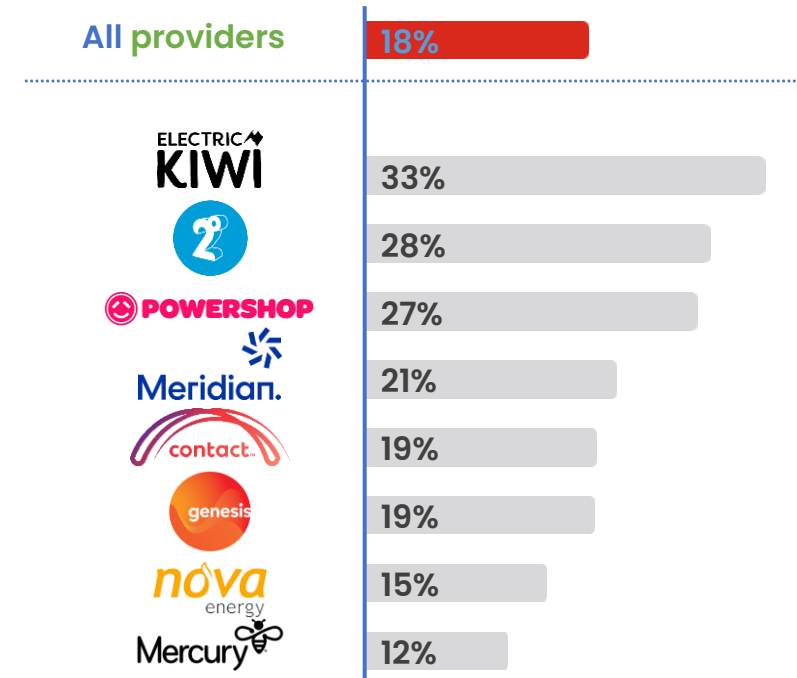


20% among households under \$50k

The households most exposed to hardship are less likely to know the protections exist.

1 in 5

say their electricity provider informed them about their specific consumer care policy



06

Consumer NZ Petition

Bring down high power prices

consumer.

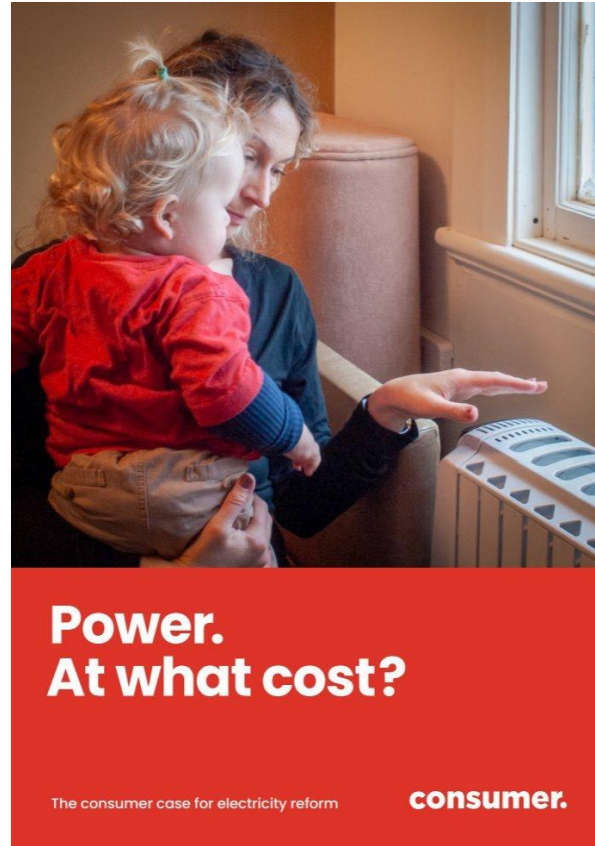
End high power prices now

Back our four-point plan and help us fight for cheaper power.

[Sign the petition](#)



The consumer experience of the electricity market



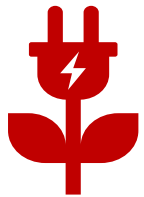
Four areas for action



**Four big power
companies dominate
the market**



**Power prices don't
reflect real costs**



**We haven't
invested enough in
homegrown energy**



**Party politics have
got in the way of
a long-term plan**

ENERGY ISSUES MATTER BEYOND THE POWER BILL

55%

**of New Zealanders say energy issues
will affect how they vote**

consumer.

Questions

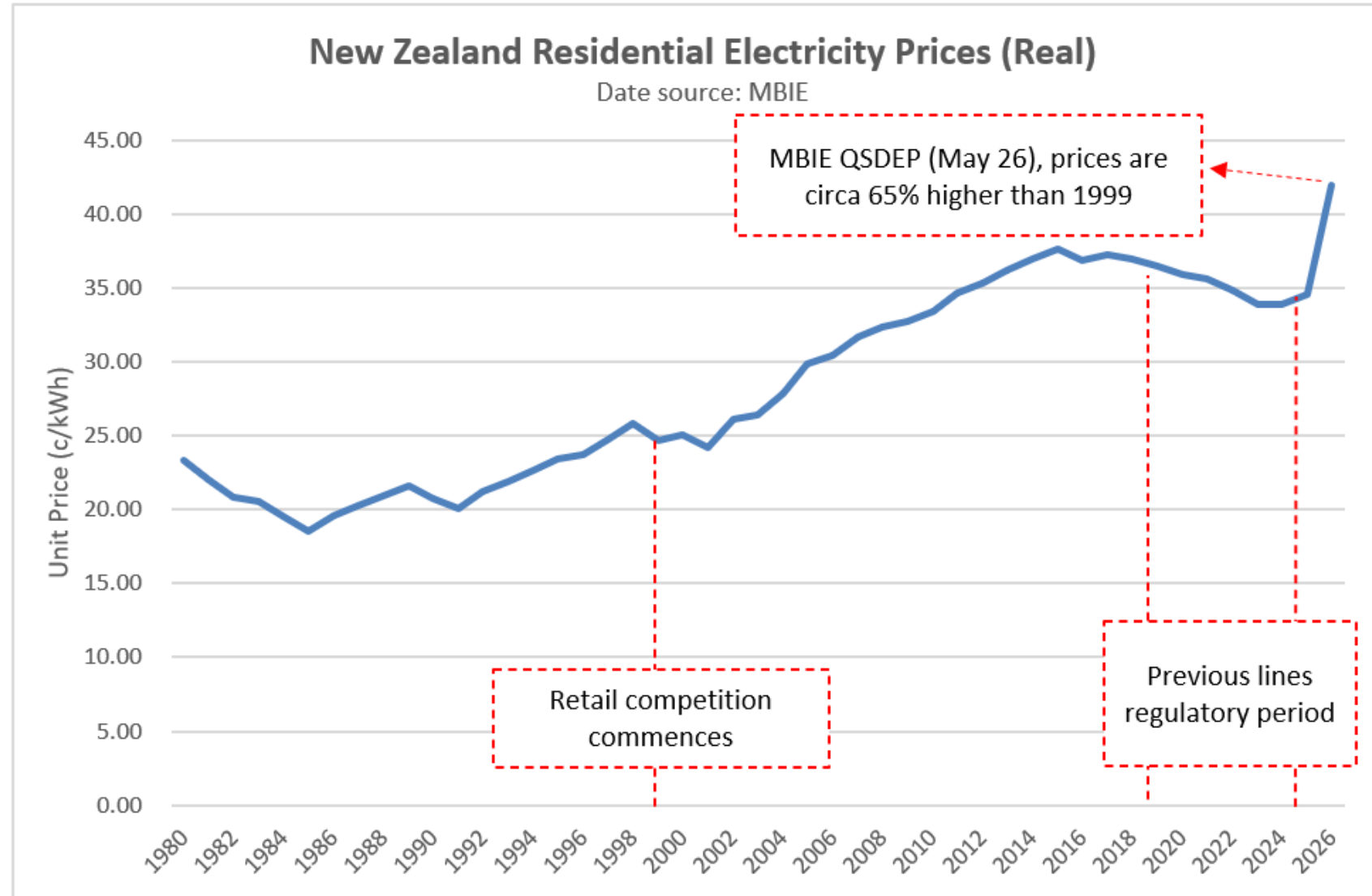


POWERSWITCH
by consumer.

consumer.

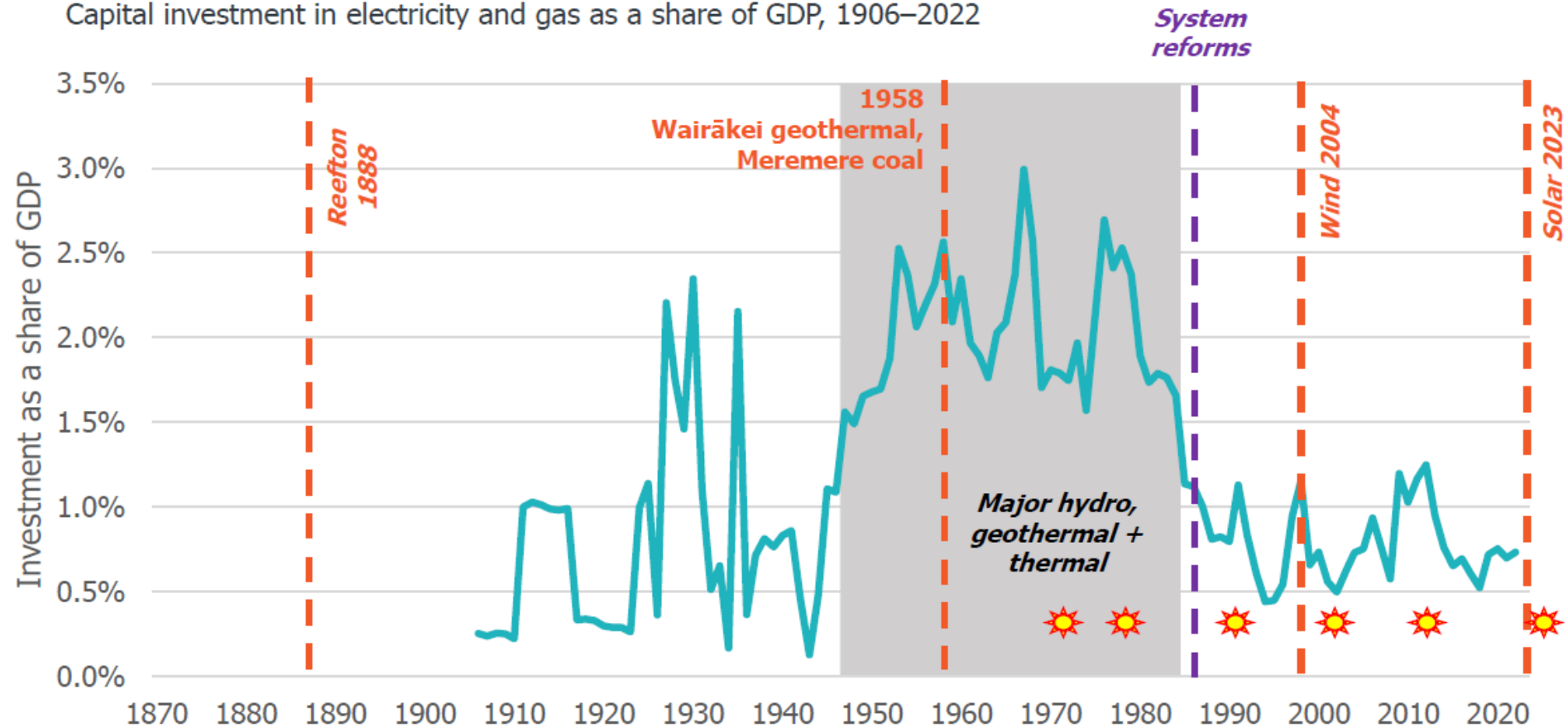
Background slides





We have a long history in renewable electricity

Capital investment in electricity and gas as a share of GDP, 1906–2022



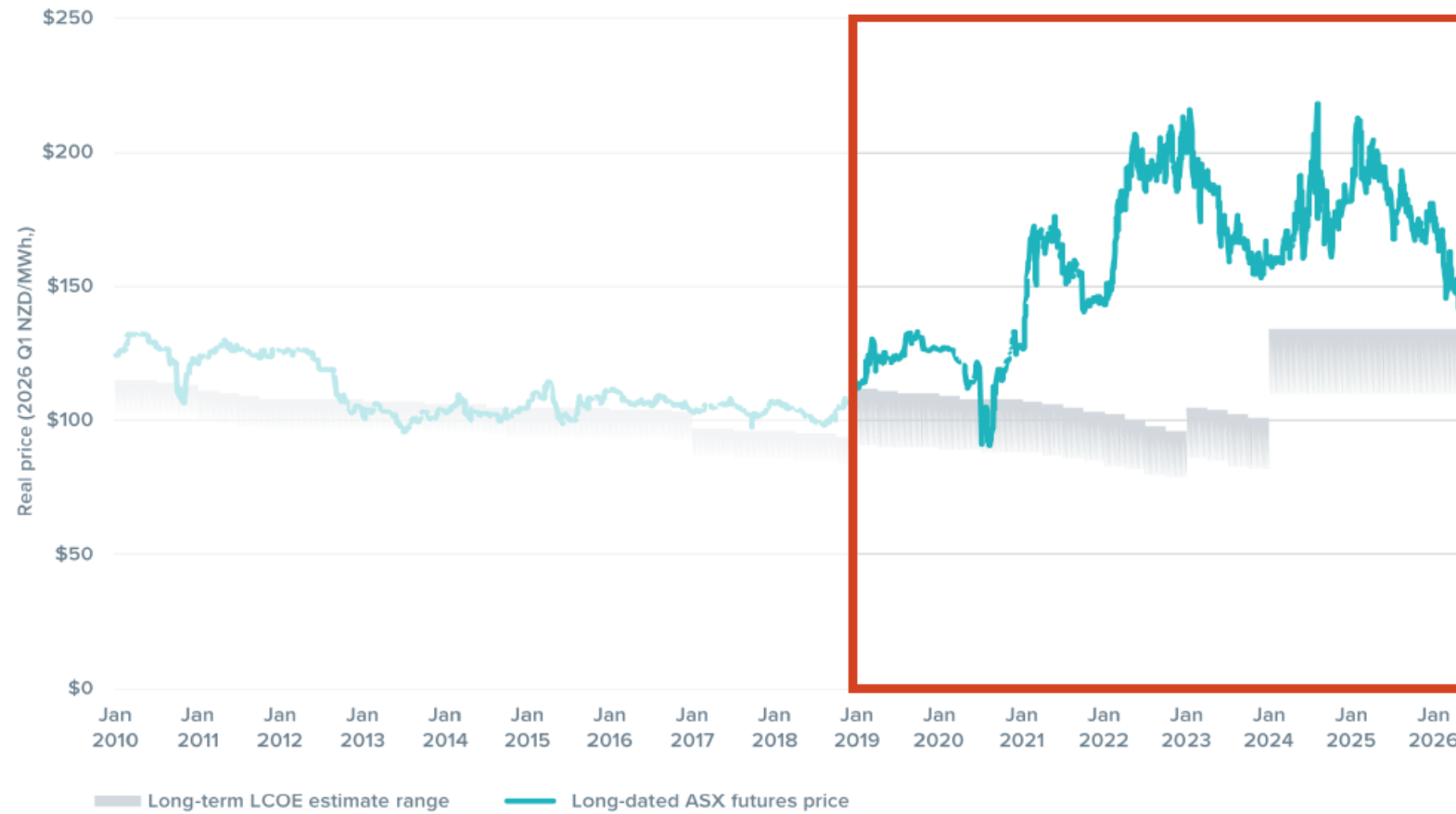
Source: New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, [Nation Building: A Century and a Half of Infrastructure Investment in New Zealand](#) (2025).

Note: Grey periods denote a boom period in investment, where investment was more than 0.5% of GDP higher than its historical average. Electricity and gas sector does not include "upstream" investment in extraction and refinery equipment.

How have prices been tracking costs?

Starting in 2019, prices have been stubbornly high

Long-dated ASX futures prices relative to the cost to build and operate new generation



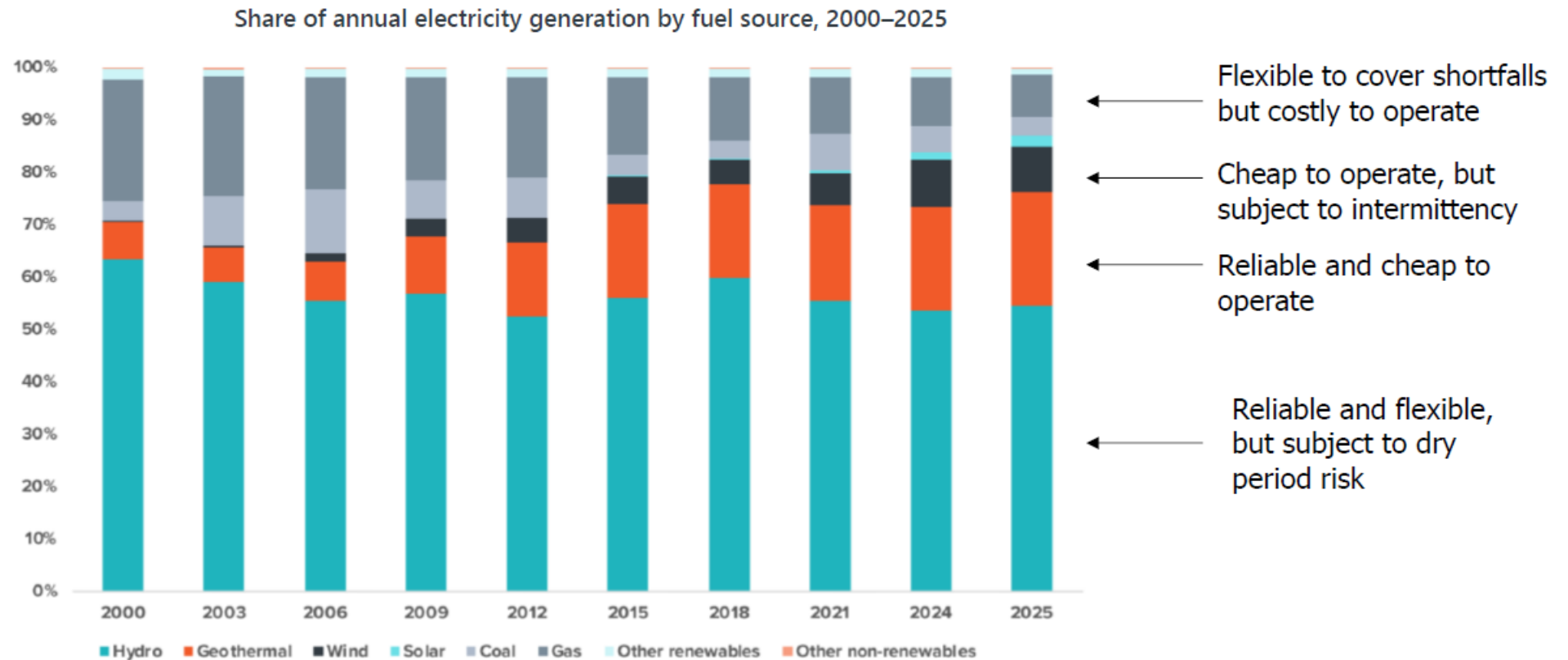
Prices for electricity have been well above costs to build and operate

What's been going on?

Source: Chart recreated from futures contract price data and long-run LCOE estimates published by the [Electricity Authority](#). Futures prices and LCOE estimates are inflation-adjusted using Stats NZ's CPI.

Background and context

How this country generates electricity



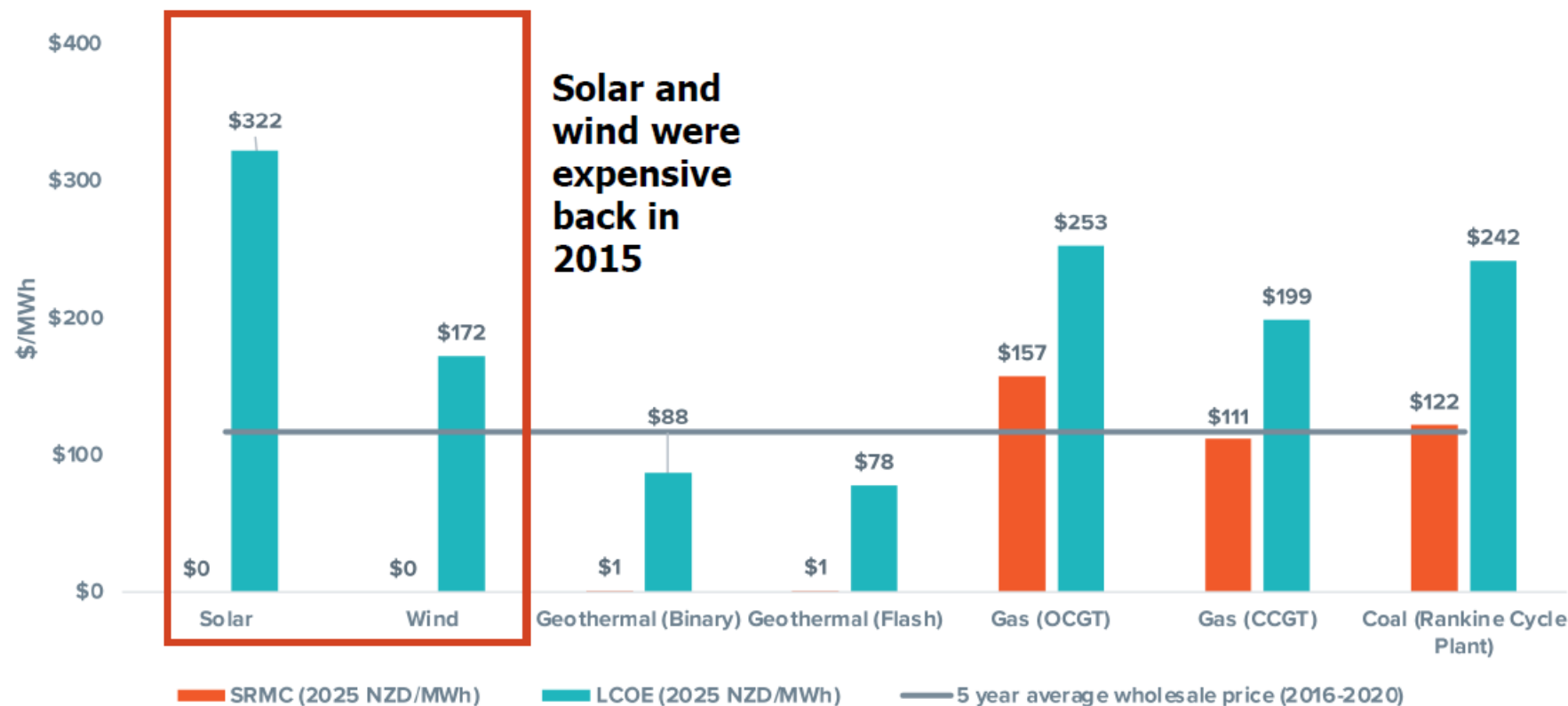
Source: MBIE, [Electricity data tables](#).

Note: Data is displayed as snapshots of specific years, rather than period averages.

Why have prices been high recently

Flexible firming generation has become uncompetitive

Estimates and projections of short-run marginal cost and levelised cost of electricity, by type of plant. 2015

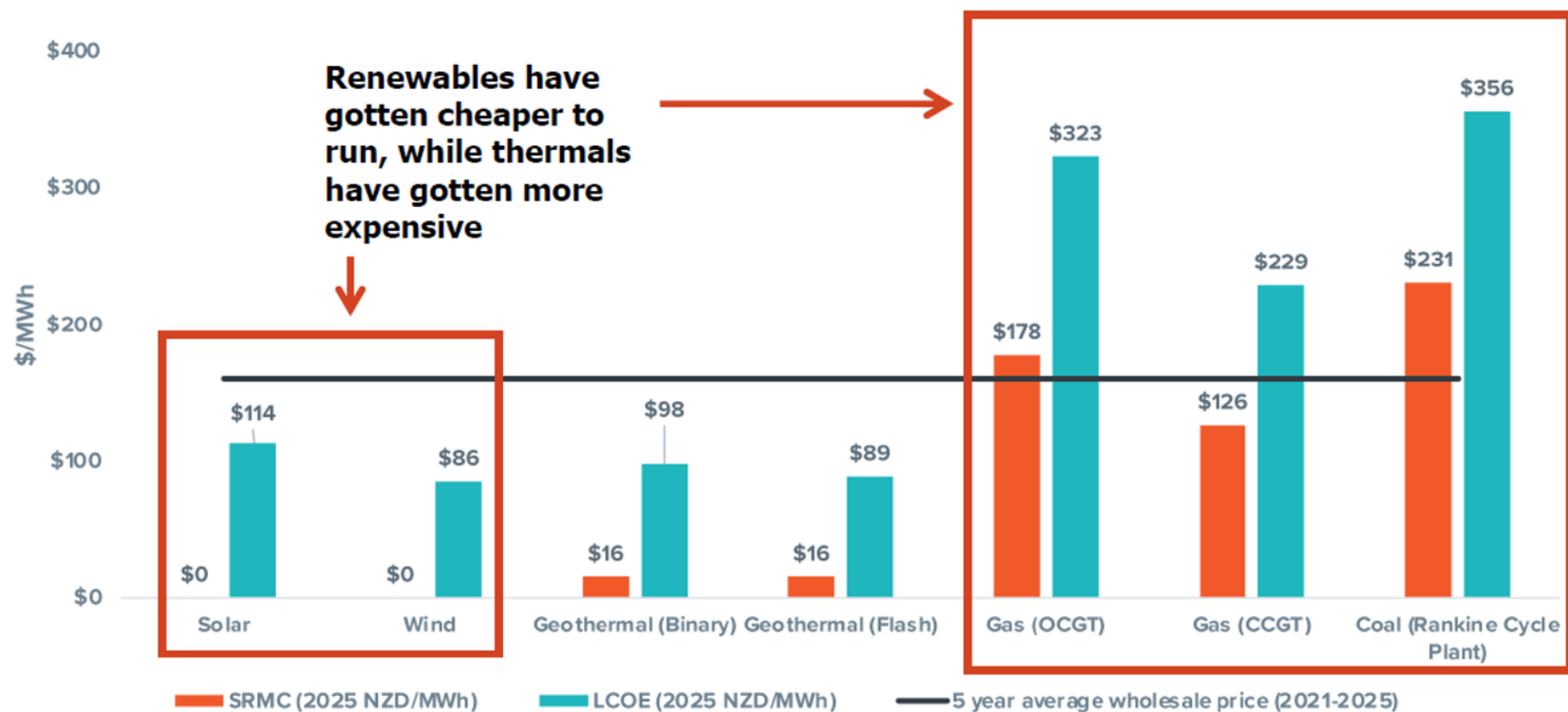


Source: New Zealand Infrastructure Commission analysis.

Why have prices been high recently

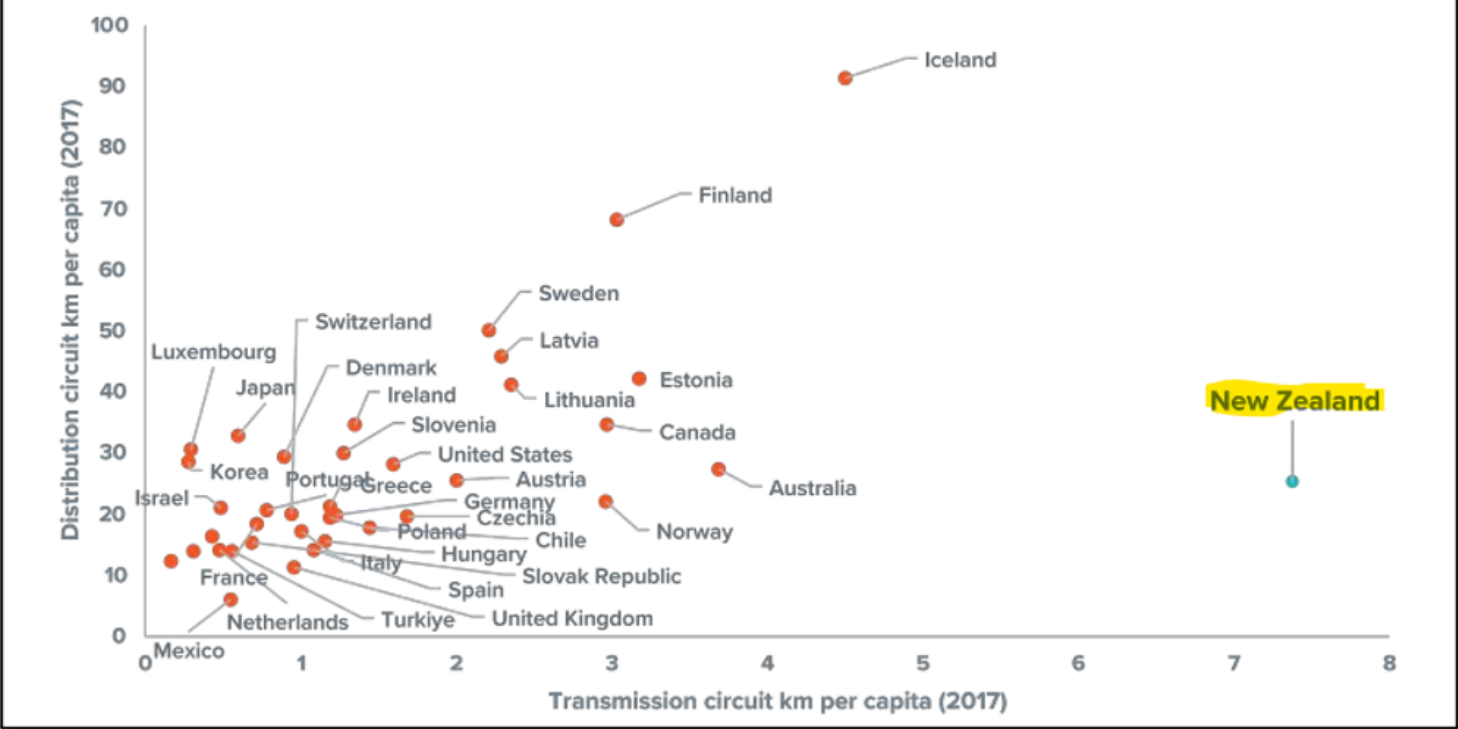
Flexible firming generation has become uncompetitive

Estimates and projections of short-run marginal cost and levelised cost of electricity, by type of plant. 2025



Source: New Zealand Infrastructure Commission analysis.

Figure 15: Transmission and distribution infrastructure length per capita, OECD countries, 2017



The full dataset goes deeper

Data packs include cuts by:

By retailer

By income

By bill value

By region

By home ownership

By switching history

By age & gender

By plan type

By tenure

Electrification: *solar decision journey, gas transition timing, time-of-use awareness and behaviour, and the EV pathway.*

To discuss data access:

deanne.teague@consumer.org.nz

For media enquiries:

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Q&A



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The Affordable Energy Webinar Series

June-November 2026



Barney Irvine, CEO: Northern Infrastructure
Forum/Auckland Chamber of Commerce
2 September 11:00am

Use same link as this webinar to join back in.



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Upcoming Speakers:

Rob Johnson, Ezra Hirawani, Founders: Nau Mai Ra

John Campbell, Our Energy

Kelli Pike, Activator for Community Led Zero Waste: GoEco

Gareth Cartwright, Executive Officer: Community Energy Network

Stew Hamilton, CEO of Mercury NZ

David Wilson, Member of Parliament: New Zealand First

Blair Dickie, Principal Strategic Advisor: Waikato Regional Council

16 September

23 September

30 September

14 October

21 October

28 October

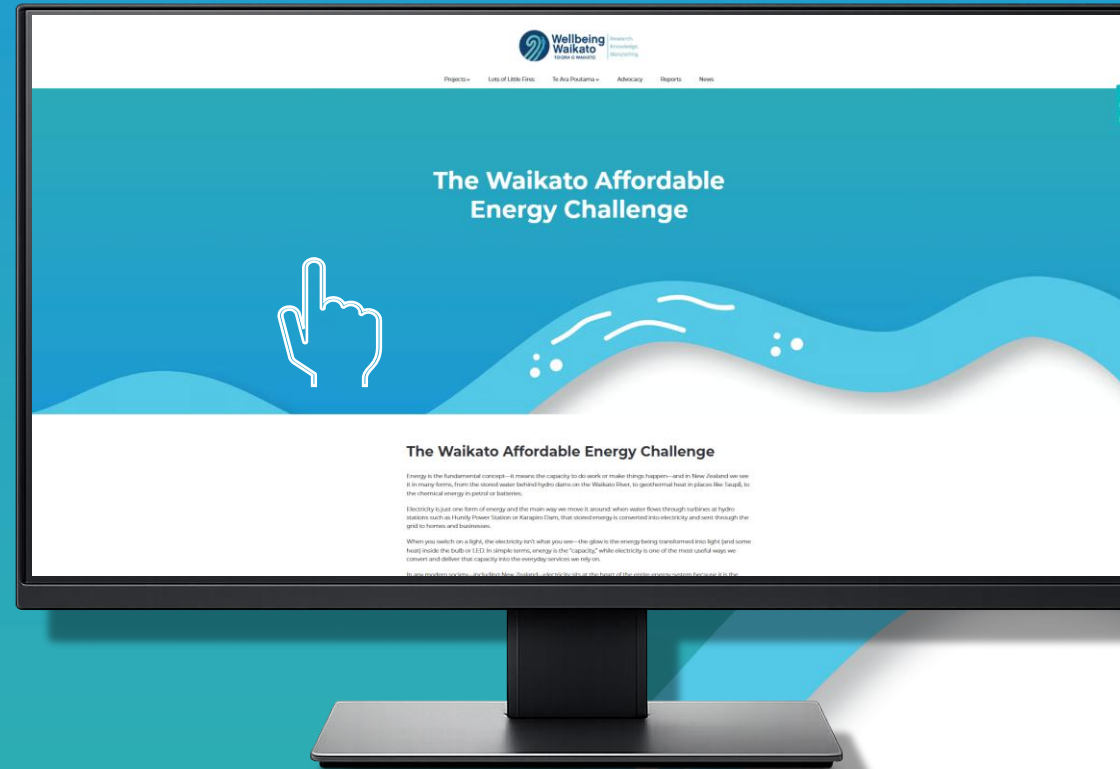
4 November



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Thank you!

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