

PUBLIC SECTOR

# REPUTATION INDEX 2020



The Public Sector Reputation Index began in 2016 in response to demand from our public sector clients for rigorous, independent benchmarks of their reputation.

We took our globally validated reputation measurement framework, RepZ, and customised it to the needs of the New Zealand public sector.

## In 2020, we have:

- Surveyed 2,750 New Zealanders
- Included four new agencies
- Added four new reputational attributes
- Examined New Zealanders' perceptions of the legitimacy of each agency's purpose



# 54

## New Zealand public sector agencies

New agencies in 2020 are GNS Science, Immigration New Zealand, the Commerce Commission and the Productivity Commission.

 Te Kōporihana Āwhina Hūngo Wharo		 BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY TE MANA WHANONGA KAIPĀHO	 CallaghanInnovation New Zealand's Innovation Agency	 CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY TE Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri		 ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA	 Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai	 COMMERCE COMMISSION NEW ZEALAND Te Kōwhiri Take Kōwhiri
 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA	 Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs	 EARTHQUAKE COMMISSION Kōwhiri Kaitiaki	 ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY TE MANA HIKO	 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority Te Tari Tiaki Pūngao	 FINANCIAL MARKETS AUTHORITY TE MANA TAKE Kōwhiri - NEW ZEALAND	 FIRE EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND	 GNS SCIENCE TE PŪ AO	
 Inland Revenue Te Tari Taake	 Kāinga Ora Homes and Communities	 MARITIME NEW ZEALAND	 MetService	 ORANGA TAMARIKI Ministry for Children	 Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture & Heritage	 Ministry for Primary Industries Manatū Ahu Matua	 Ministry for the Environment Manatū Mo Te Taiao	 MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT HIKINA WHAKATUTUKI
 Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management Te Rākau Whakamaramaru	 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA	 NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE MANATŪ AROHĀ	 MINISTRY OF HEALTH MANATŪ HAUORA	 MINISTRY OF JUSTICE Tāhū o te Ture	 MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TE MANATŪ WHAKAHĀTO ORA	 NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS SERVICE TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA	 New Zealand DEFENCE FORCE Te Hiri Matua o Aotearoa	 NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION
 New Zealand POLICE Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa	 NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION Te Kōwhiri Take Kōwhiri	 NEW ZEALAND TRADE & ENTERPRISE	 NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY WAKA KOTAHĪ	 NIWA Tāhoro Nukurangi	 NZ On Air Tōrangā Te Māori	 OFFICE OF FILM & LITERATURE CLASSIFICATION Te Tari Whakarewa Takekōwhiri	 MANAKIITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI Children's Commissioner	 PHARMAC TE PĀTAKA WHAIORANGA
 RESERVE BANK OF NEW ZEALAND	 RNZ TE RED IRIRANGI O AOTEAROA	 SFO SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE	 SPORT NEW ZEALAND	 STATE SERVICES COMMISSION TE KAWA MĀTAIHO	 Stats NZ Tātaraunga Aotearoa	 TE TAI ŌHANGA THE TREASURY	 NEW ZEALAND TOURISM	

 = NEW AGENCY IN 2020

# 2750

## Interviews conducted to reflect the views of all New Zealanders

Nationally representative sample by age, gender, region, ethnicity and income



Online surveys conducted from 10 to 25 March\*



# Uses our globally validated RepZ framework, customised to the New Zealand public sector, with reputation measured across four pillars.



## TRUST

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



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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



## LEADERSHIP

- Is a forward looking organisation
- Contributes to economic growth
- Is easy to deal with in a digital environment
- Is a successful and well-run organisation\*
- Prepares New Zealanders for the future challenges that we face as a nation\*



## FAIRNESS

- Treats their employees well
- Deals fairly with people regardless of their background or role
- Works positively with Māori to improve Māori wellbeing\*
- Works positively with Pacific peoples to improve Pacific wellbeing\*

**What performance levels are New Zealand's public sector agencies achieving this year?**

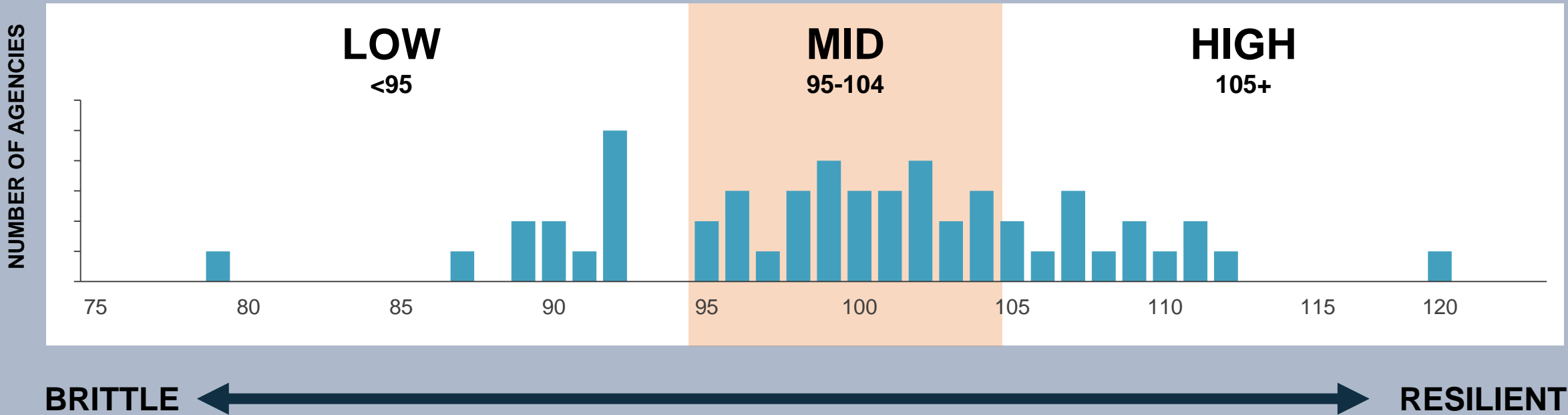


# New Zealand public sector agencies continue to have a healthy reputation with most RepZ scores in the mid to high range.

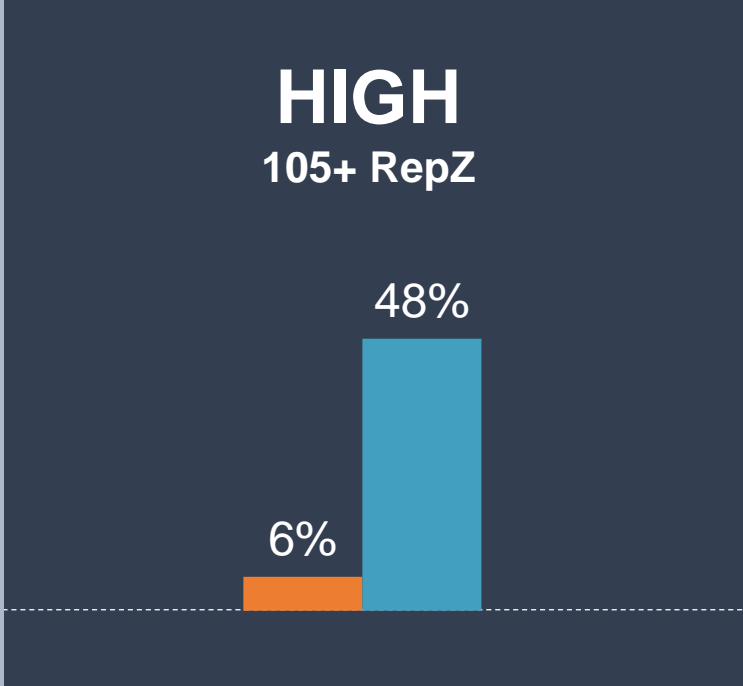
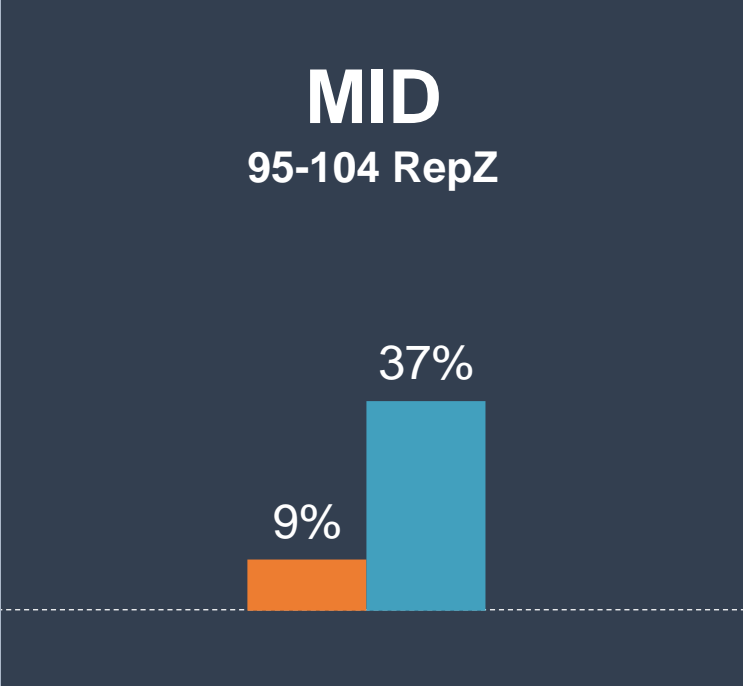
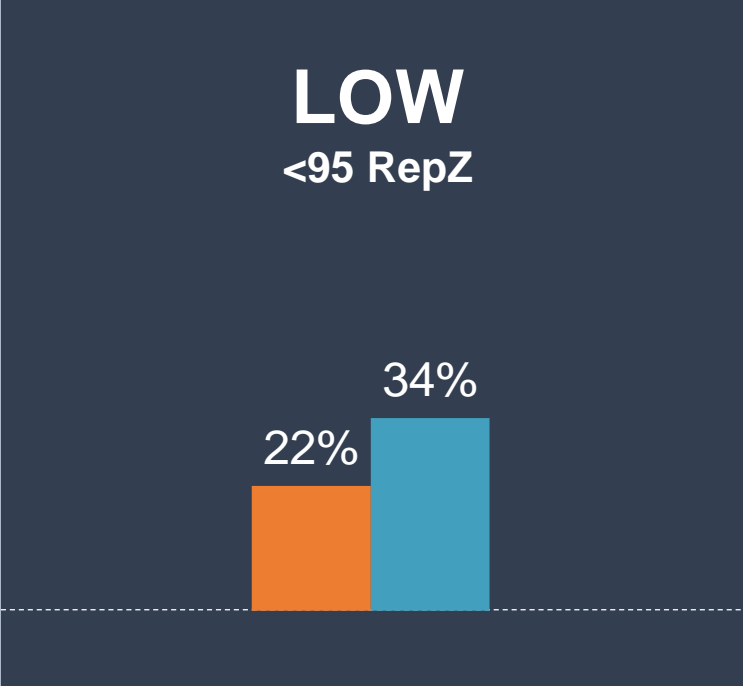
22%

52%

26%




# High performing agencies are rated eight times more positively than negatively across the reputational attributes. Low performing agencies are more polarising.



REPUTATION ATTRIBUTE ■ % Negative ■ % Positive

*Each agency is rated across 16 reputation attributes using a seven point agree/disagree scale. The percentages in the charts above represent the average agree/disagree across the 54 agencies on the 16 attributes in each of the RepZ ranges.*



A photograph of three people in a modern office setting. Two women are seated on a light-colored sofa, and a man in a dark suit is seated in front of them, seen from the back. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a blue sleeveless top. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a yellow ribbed halter top. They appear to be in a conversation. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

**Who are the top  
performing  
public sector  
agencies in 2020?**

# OVERALL REPUTATION

REPZ TOP 10

2020

- Fire and Emergency remains the benchmark agency when it comes to reputation.
- The Defence Force jumps from 10<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> position.
- The Customs Service also moves up from 9<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>.

120 

112 

111 

111 

110 

109 

109 

108 

107 

107 

▲ ▼ Increase/decrease of 3+ points from 2019

# TOP 5

ON EACH PILLAR

Highest scoring agencies on each of the four pillars

	 <b>TRUST</b>	 <b>SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>	 <b>LEADERSHIP</b>	 <b>FAIRNESS</b>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				

# TOP 5

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

Who's improved their RepZ score by five or more points since 2019?



Te Tari Taiwhenua  
Internal Affairs



## CASE STUDY

# How is Kāinga Ora building its reputation?

Kāinga Ora has been the most improved agency for two years running. We spoke to their Chief Executive, Andrew McKenzie, to find out what's behind this success.


McKenzie says that as an organisation, Kāinga Ora have tried to be very thoughtful and deliberate about everything they do. This thoughtfulness is what enables staff members to make high quality decisions, which advances their overall strategic direction.

Two years ago they took the time to sit down with customers to find out what they need, and (perhaps more importantly) how they want to feel when interacting with Kāinga Ora. These discussions highlighted that Kāinga Ora needed to go beyond providing warm, safe, quality housing to building better relationships with their customers based on mutual respect and trust. This emphasis is translating into stronger experience scores for the organisation.

The importance of relationships is also evidenced with media relations, through striving to create a respectful and responsive media discourse rather than 'reaching for the megaphones'. Kāinga Ora works hard to counter media bias against its tenants through putting a human face to its customers and helping them to tell their success stories. McKenzie feels that also telling positive stories through owned channels is important.

**For those looking to improve their own reputation, McKenzie has two pieces of advice:**

1. Be clear about what success is for your agency (and make sure this matches what success looks like for your customers)
2. Be clear on how staff should think about and interact with clients and customers



**What general  
reputation  
trends are we  
seeing?**

# In 2020, social responsibility had joined trust as a key driver of agency reputation, reflecting public focus on the environment and wellbeing.



## TRUST

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

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

## LEADERSHIP

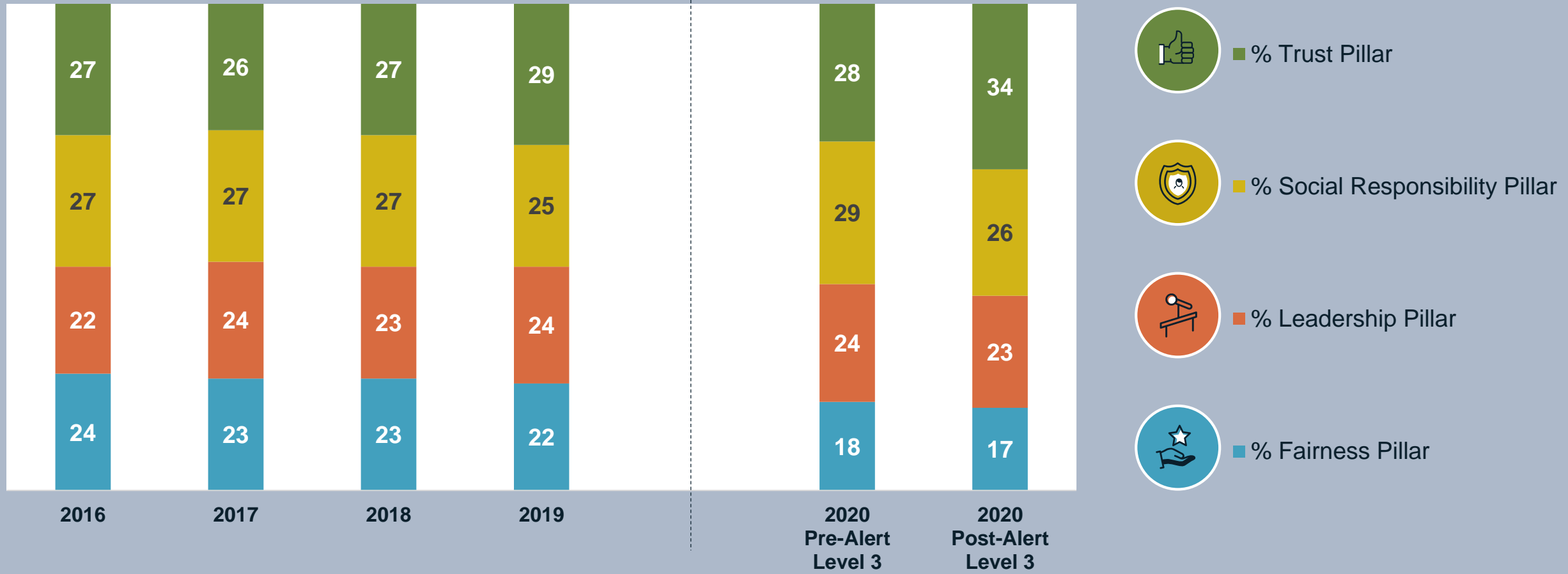
- Is a forward looking organisation
- Contributes to economic growth
- Is easy to deal with in a digital environment
- Is a successful and well-run organisation\*
- Prepares New Zealanders for the future challenges that we face as a nation\*

## FAIRNESS

- Treats their employees well
- Deals fairly with people regardless of their background or role
- Works positively with Māori to improve Māori wellbeing\*
- Works positively with Pacific peoples to improve Pacific wellbeing\*

# However, in a COVID-19 environment trust becomes even more important.

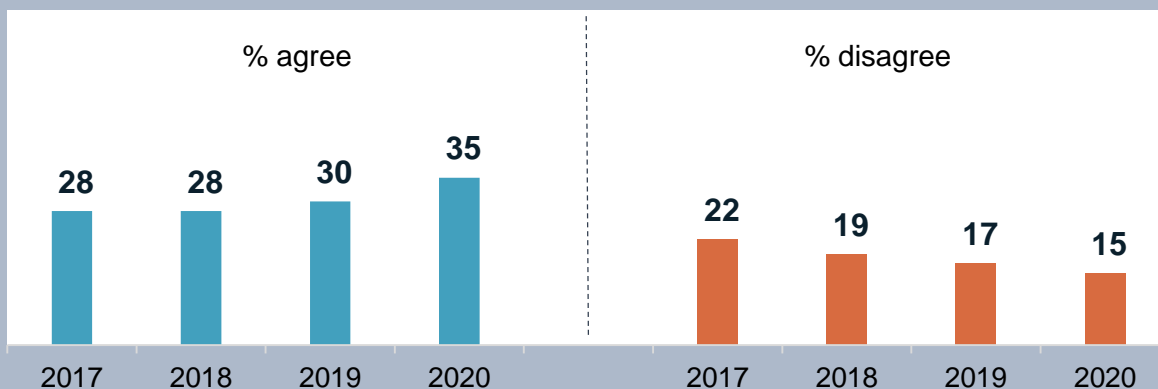
## PILLAR IMPACT ON AGENCY REPUTATION



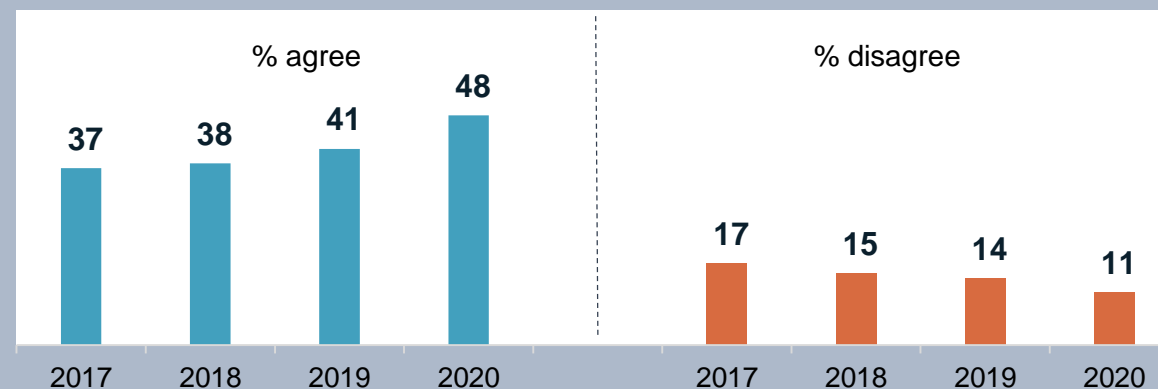


# In the lead in to COVID-19 Alert Level 4, New Zealand's public sector agencies were favourably positioned with unprecedented levels of **trust**.

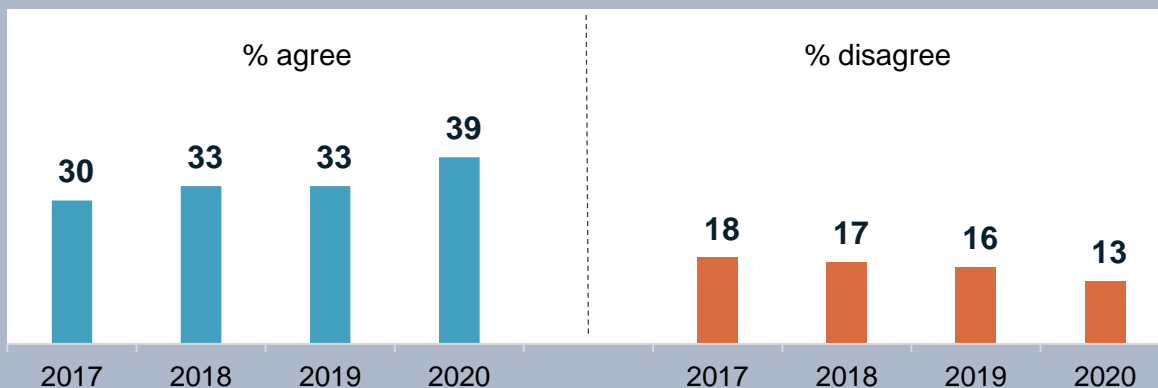
Listens to the public's point of view



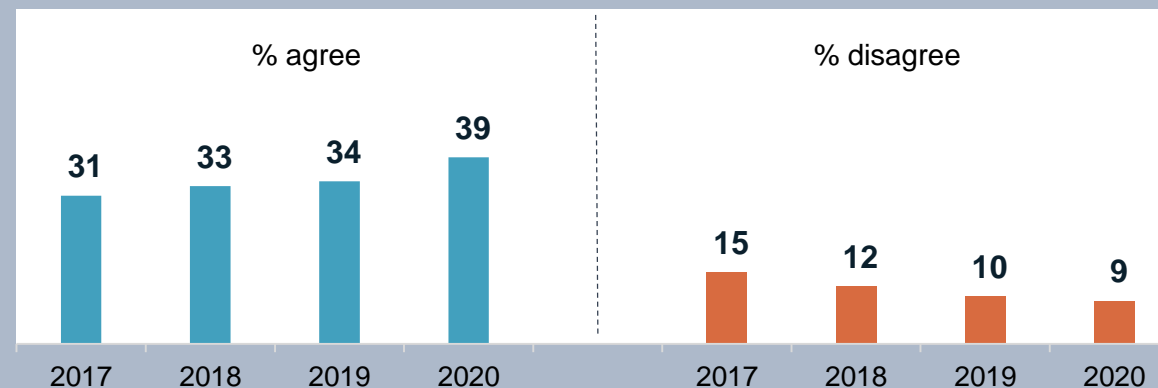
Is trustworthy



Uses taxpayer money responsibly

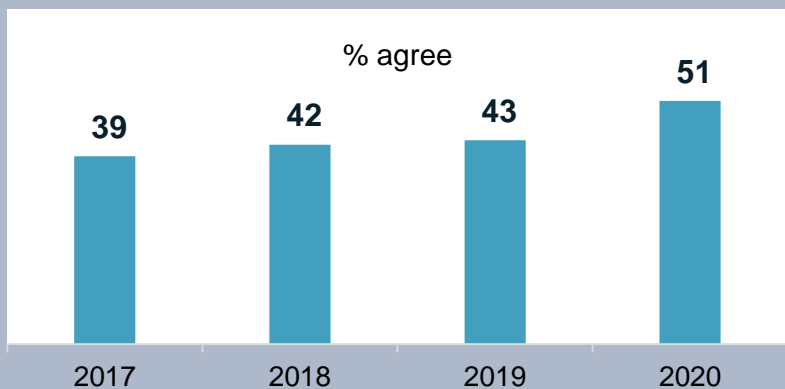


Can be relied upon to protect individuals' personal information

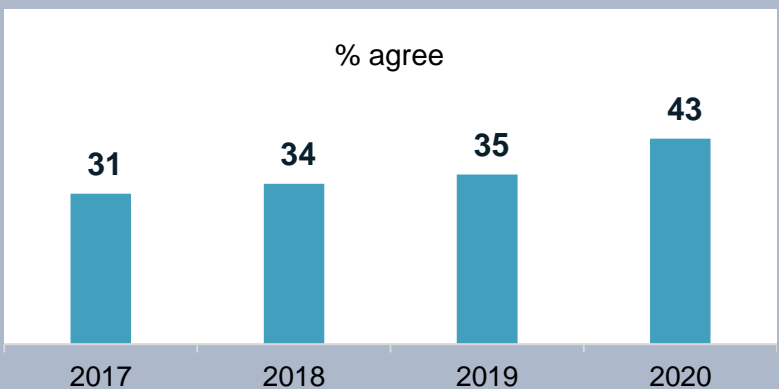


# New Zealanders' perceptions of the public sector have notably improved across the other pillars. COVID has accelerated what was a more gradual trend in recent years.

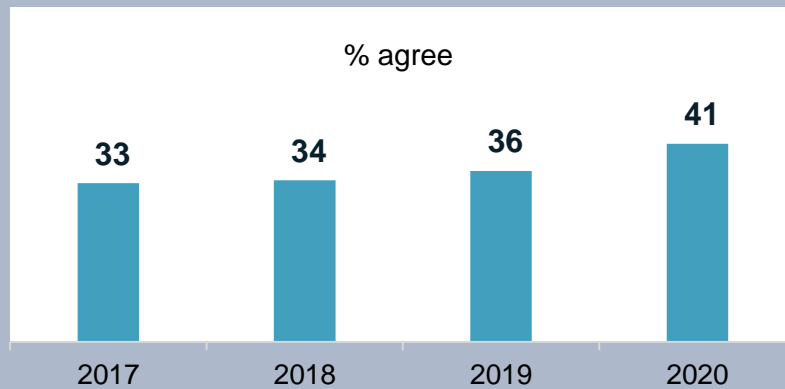
Is a positive influence on society



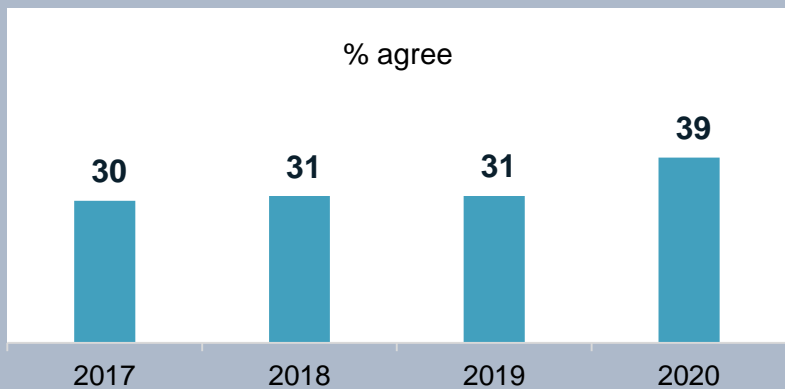
Contributes to economic growth



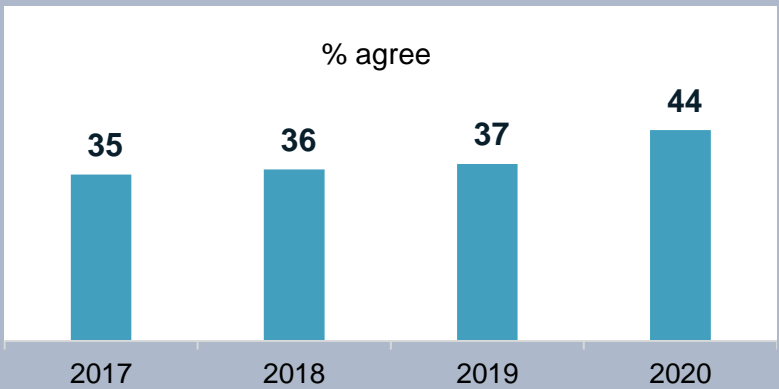
Deals fairly with people regardless of background or role



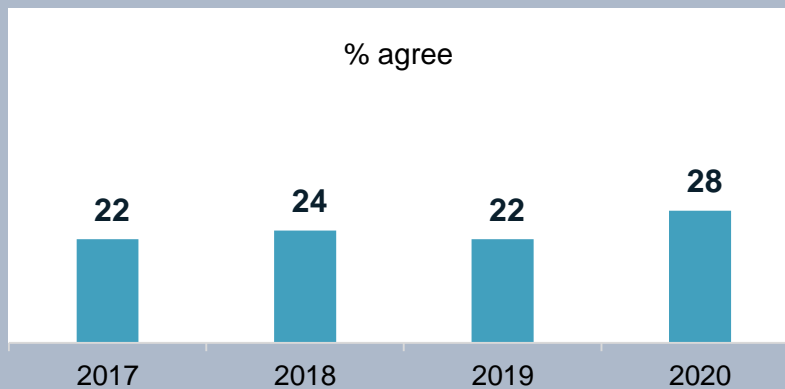
Behaves in a responsible way towards the environment



Is a forward looking organisation



Treats their employees well

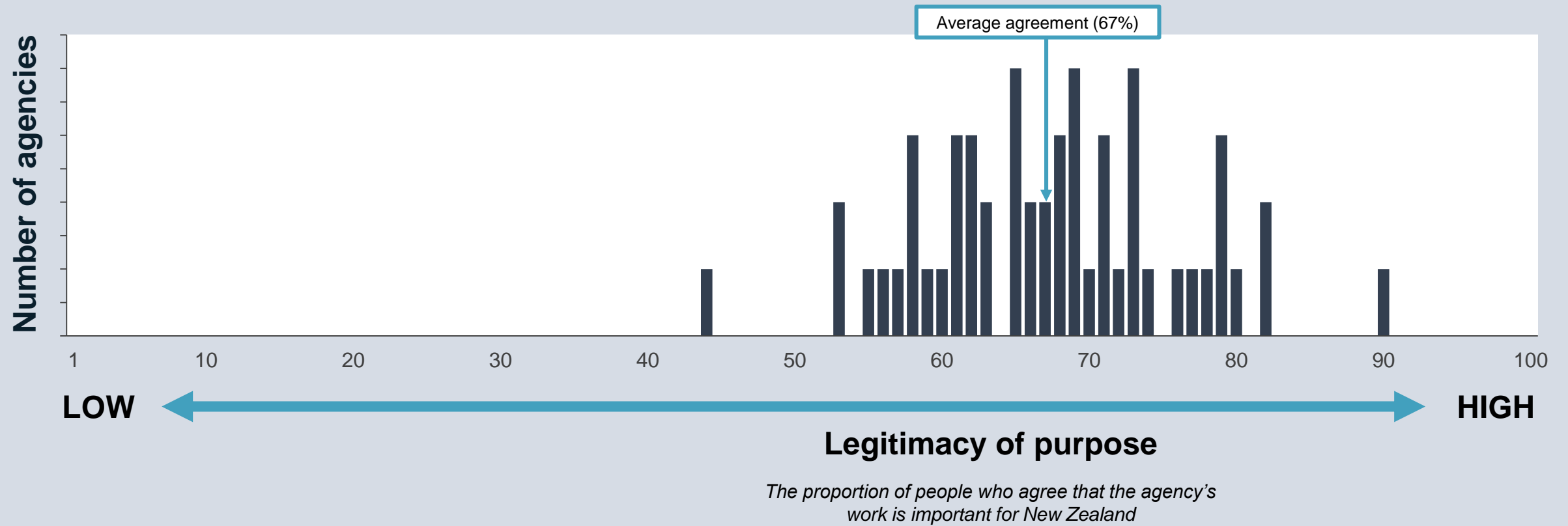


**Does public support for an agency's purpose impact their reputation level?**

Most agencies have majority support for their purpose, with ten agencies having support of at least 75% of adult New Zealanders.

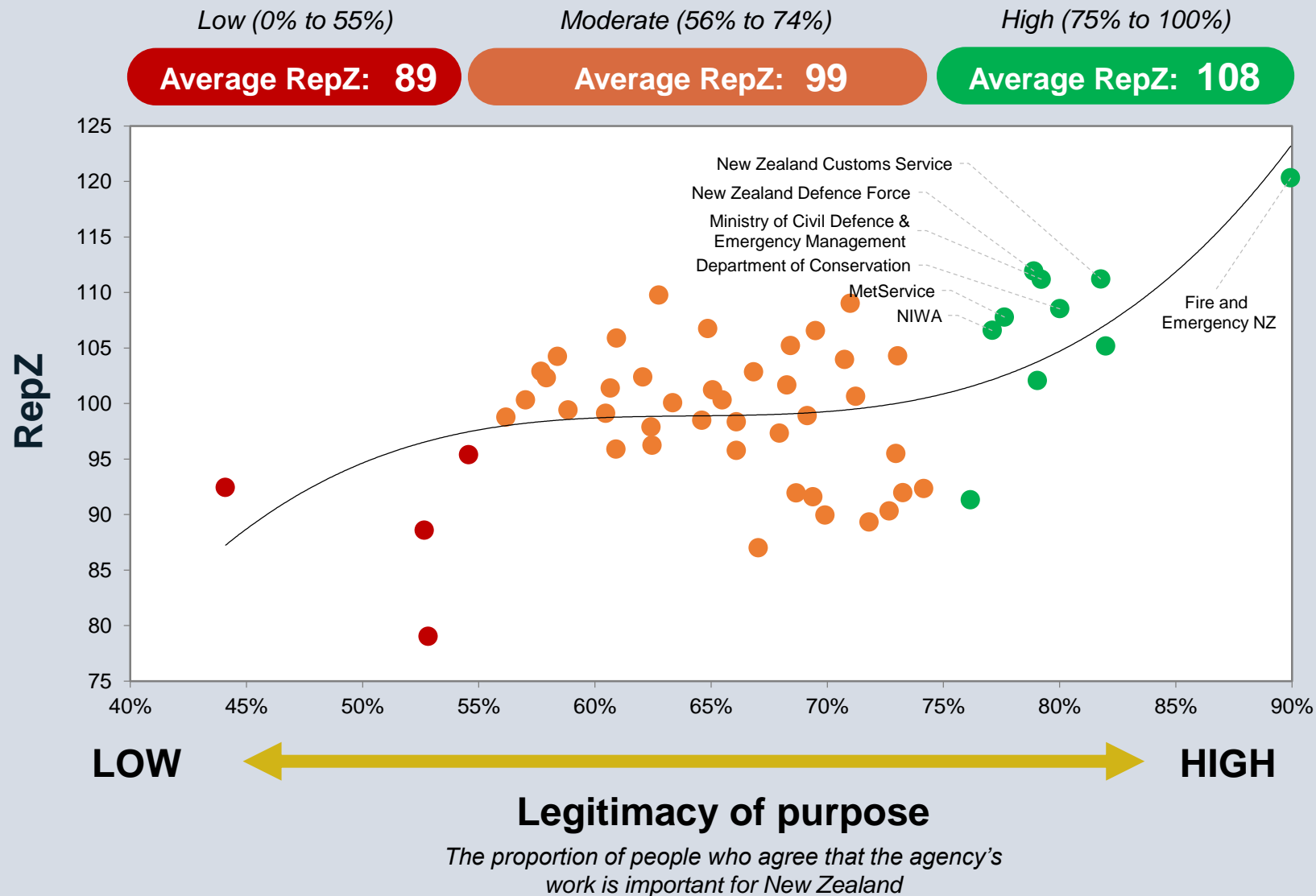
### New question in 2020:

How much do you agree or disagree that what the agency does is important for New Zealand?



Agencies which have clearly established their purpose in the eyes of the public are at an advantage.

However, it is still possible for agencies with moderate legitimacy of purpose to deliver a strong reputation performance, if they deliver on the four pillars.

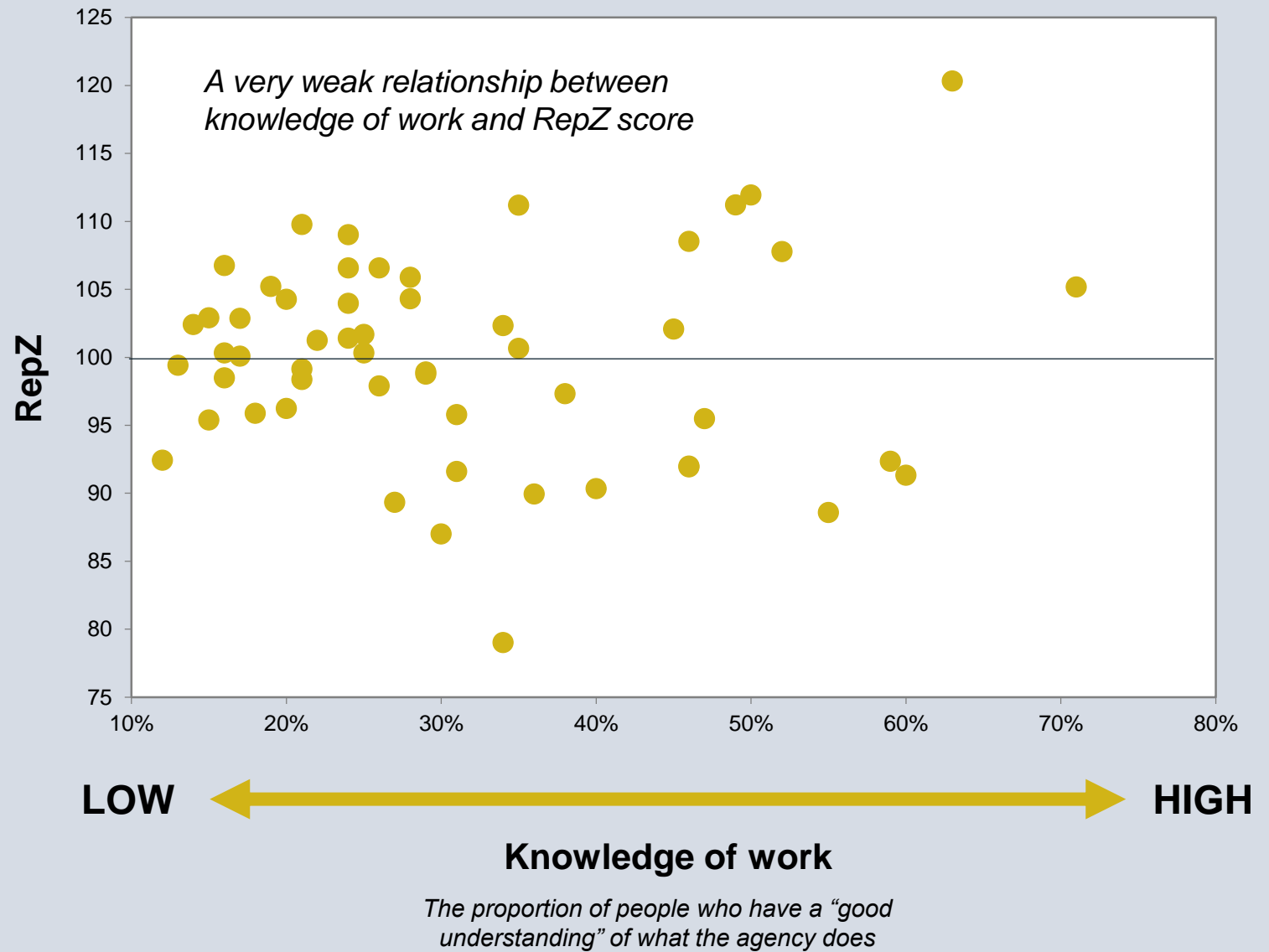


The public's impression of the importance of an agency's work is more important than the extent of their knowledge of what the agency does.

### New question in 2020:

Which of the following best describes what you know about each of the organisations below in terms of who they are and what they do?

- I've got a good understanding of what they do
- I've got a basic idea of what they do
- I have just seen or heard the name before





**Which agencies  
are delivering  
outstanding  
experiences?**



**COLMAR BRUNTON**  
A Kantar Company

# Experiences matter

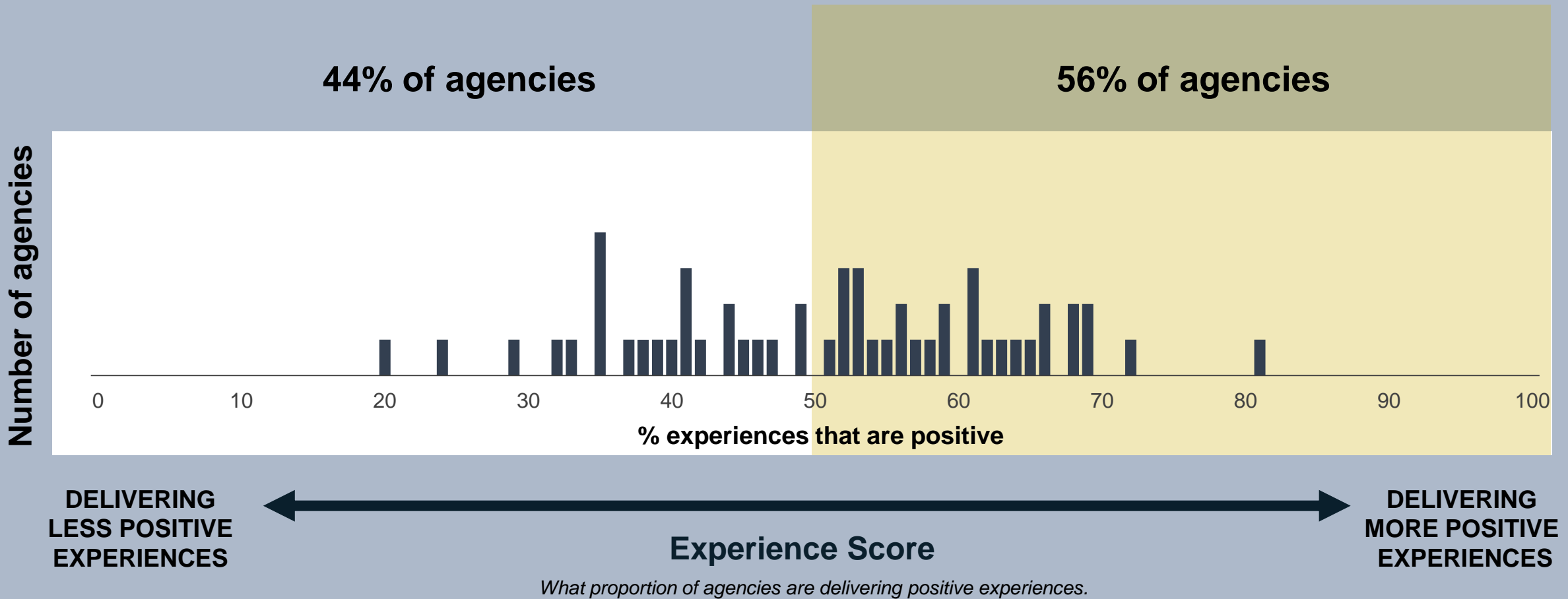


**In 2019, we showed that the experience delivered by an agency to the public can have a significant impact on the proportion of advocates and critics.**

**Good experiences stick in people's memories and bad experiences are particularly damaging initially but linger for up to ten years.**



# Yet many agencies are still giving a poor impression with the public.



# Top five agencies delivering superior experiences

% positive experience dealing with agency



81%

Commission for  
Financial Capability



72%



NEW ZEALAND  
CUSTOMS SERVICE  
TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA


69%



69%



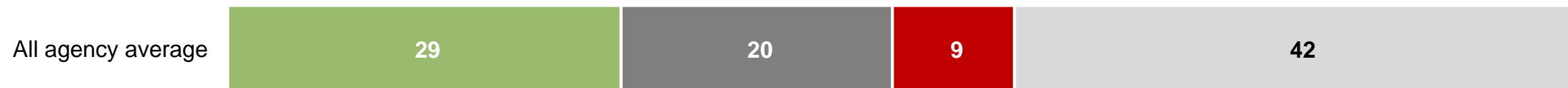
68%

A photograph of two young women of Pacific descent smiling warmly. They are in a home environment, with one woman leaning her arm over the other's shoulder. They are both looking towards the camera. The woman on the left has her hair pulled back, and the woman on the right has long dark hair. They are both wearing dark-colored tops. The background shows a window with light coming through and some indoor plants.

**Which agencies  
are working  
positively with  
Māori and  
Pacific peoples?**

# Most New Zealanders feel unable to comment on the way in which public agencies work with Māori and Pacific peoples. But those who do, generally believe they work positively.

## Works positively with Māori to improve Māori wellbeing



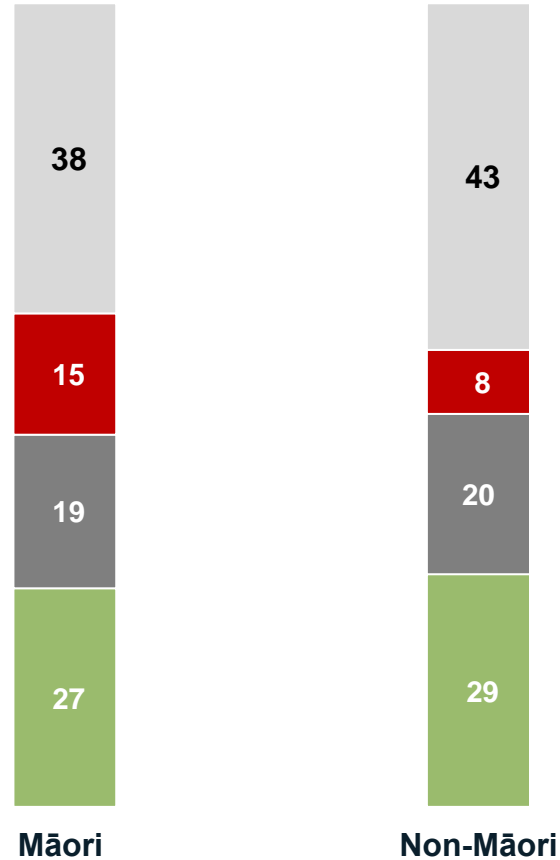
■ % Agree   ■ % Neutral   ■ % Disagree   ■ % Don't know

## Works positively with Pacific peoples to improve Pacific wellbeing

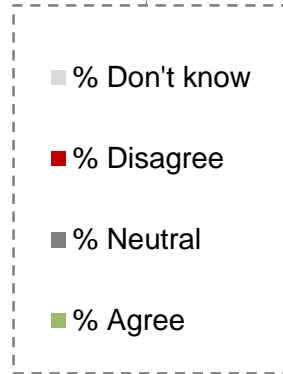
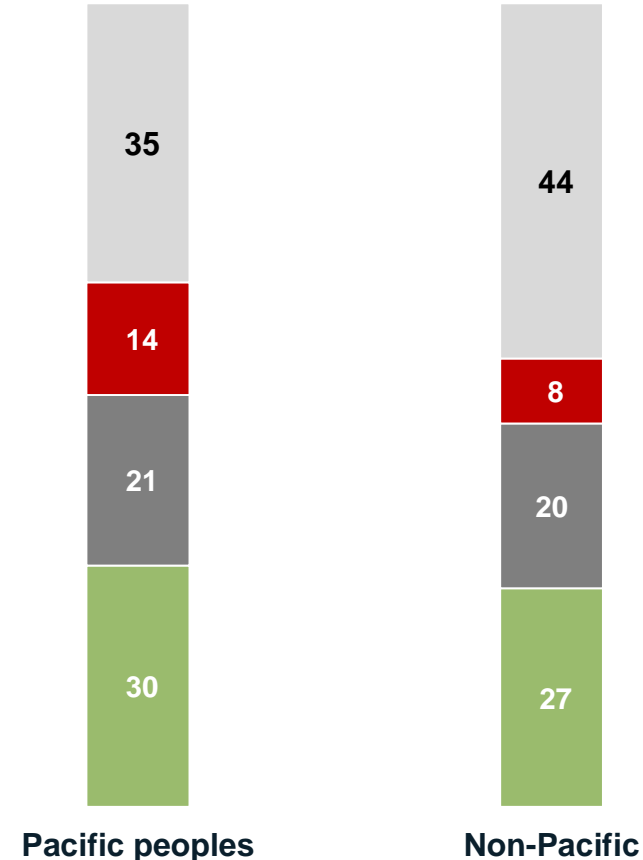


The picture is broadly the same when analysing by ethnicity. However, Māori and Pacific peoples are more critical than other ethnicities of the ways in which agencies work with their communities.

### Works positively with Māori to improve Māori wellbeing



### Works positively with Pacific peoples to improve Pacific wellbeing



# Top five agencies working positively with Māori and Pacific peoples

% agree each agency works positively with Māori

% agree each agency works positively with Pacific peoples



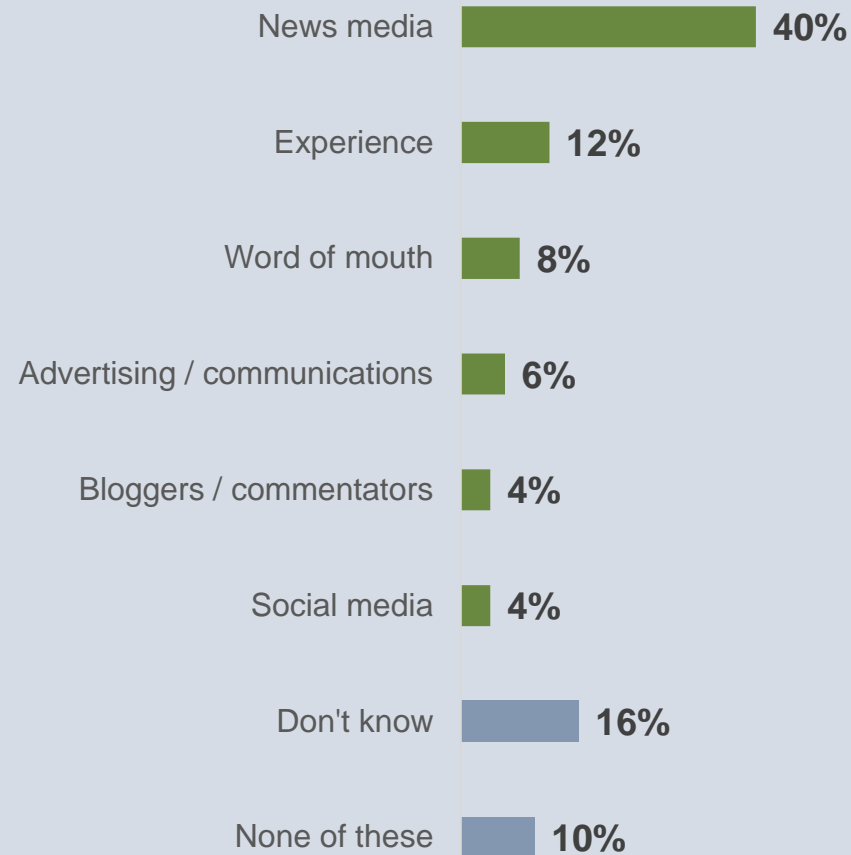


# Which communication channels build agency reputation?

# Source of reputation

The news media still has the biggest influence on perceptions of agencies, followed by experience.

## What has the greatest impact on people's views of public sector agencies





In 2020 we've continued to look closely at "source of reputation", breaking down media into granular detail.

**News media** remains the dominant influence on public sector reputation with 40% of people saying it is the main influence on their opinions of each agency (40% in 2019).

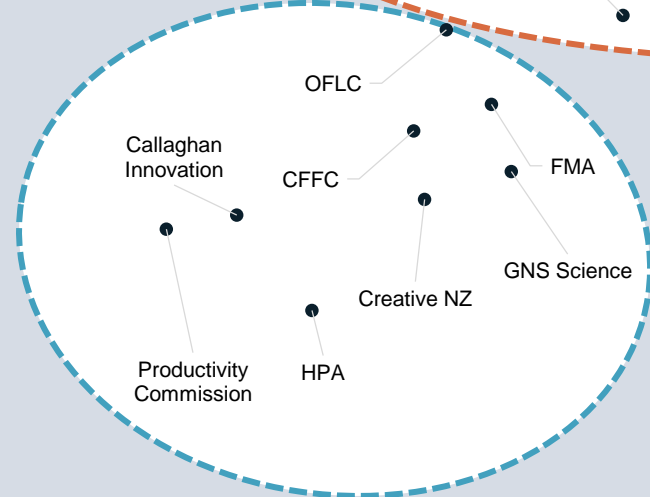
**Direct experience** is important as both positive and negative experiences can be spread through family & friends, and social media, and sometimes become elevated to the news.

**Conversation** plays a supporting role in telling each agency's story, which in turn may be picked up and amplified by the news media or agency advocates.

# SOURCE OF REPUTATION

## IMPRESSION

Don't know 16%  
None of these 10%

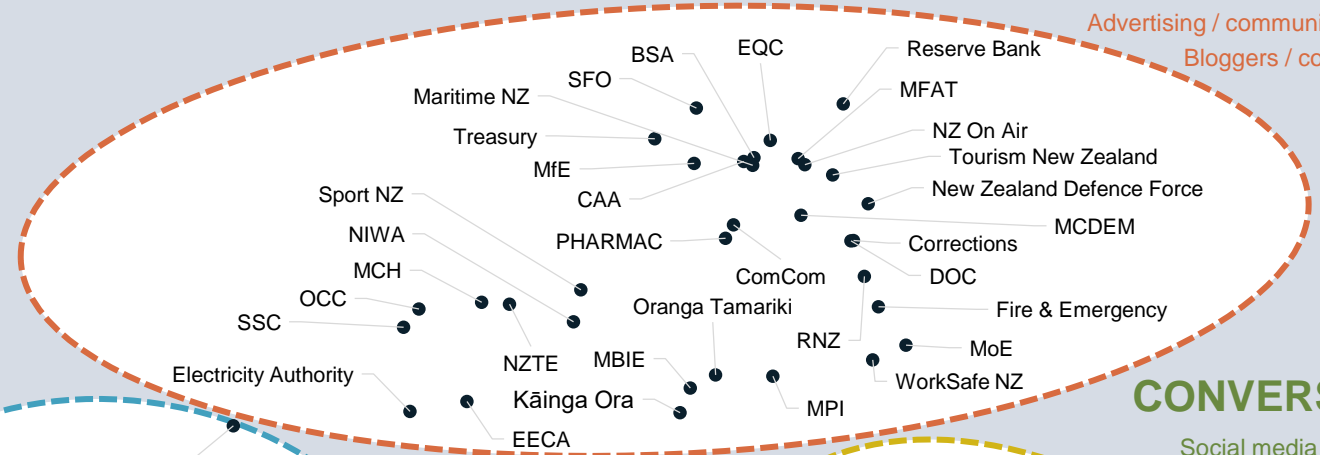


## MEDIA & COMMS

News media 40%

Advertising / communications 6%

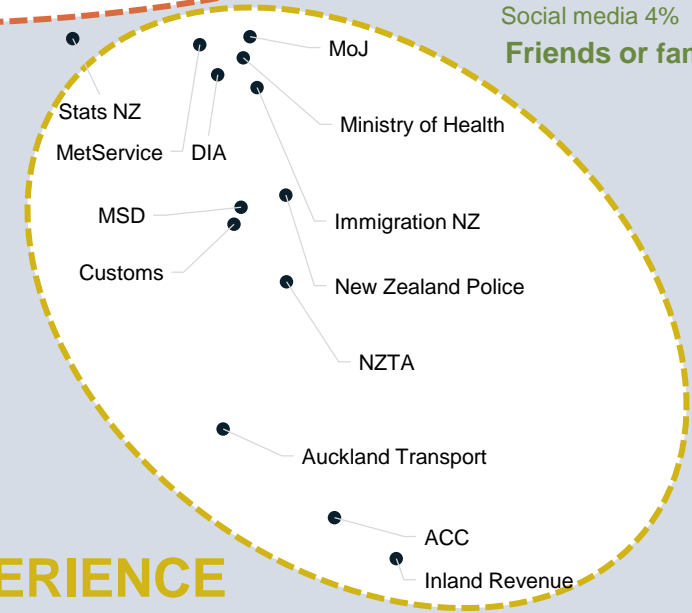
Bloggers / commentators 4%



## CONVERSATION

Social media 4%

Friends or family 8%



## EXPERIENCE

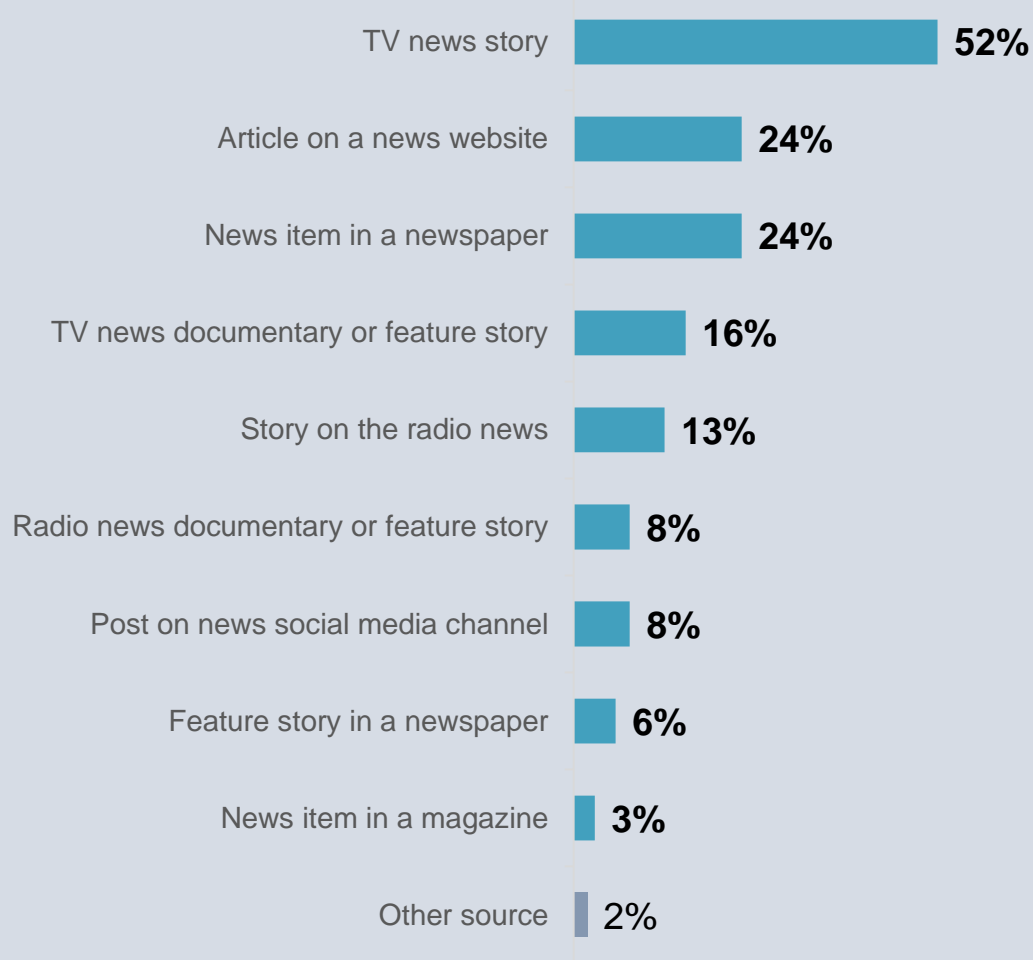
Experience 12%

# News influences on reputation

## TV news remains the chief influence.

Of those who said the news media has the largest impact on agency perceptions, half cited TV news stories. Newspapers and news websites are next most persuasive.

## What people have seen or heard from news organisations





# Key take-outs

# TAKE OUT

## 1

## Improved perceptions of the public sector provide a strong platform for the Government's COVID-19 response

In the days leading up to COVID-19 Alert Level 4 i.e. "lockdown", New Zealand citizens placed greater weight on attributes relating to trust when evaluating the reputation of the nation's public sector agencies. These include being trustworthy, listening to the public, protecting an individual's private information and using taxpayer money responsibly.

Over the past four years, we have seen ratings for these trust attributes gradually improve. This positive trend also extends to the other three reputation pillars. This meant New Zealand entered the COVID-19 response with agencies favourably positioned in the hearts and minds of the public.

This helped provide the Government with a solid platform to deliver clear and effective COVID-19 communications.

# TAKE OUT

## 2

## Building legitimacy of purpose is essential

This year we started to explore the issue of agency purpose. This new area of inquiry was in response to previous deep dive reports for various agencies where it appeared the level of support (particularly lack of support) for an agency's purpose was placing a ceiling on the reputation heights it could achieve.

We examined purpose through two lenses. The first was the degree to which the public understands the role of the agency. This had a very weak, almost non-existent relationship with reputation. The second was through legitimacy of purpose, or more precisely the extent to which the public agreed that the agency's work was important for New Zealand. This had a much stronger impact on reputation, emphasising the need for agencies to build support for their work in order to achieve higher reputation levels.

# TAKE OUT

3

## **Delivering outstanding experiences will become even more critical in COVID-19 times**

Last year, we clearly demonstrated the impact positive and negative experiences have on the level of advocacy and criticism an agency can expect to receive. We also showed these effects can last for up to a decade and sometimes longer.

Yet many agencies are continuing to provide less than ideal experiences which have undesirable impacts on their reputation. The COVID-19 response provides agencies with the opportunity to break the mould even though the circumstances will be challenging and potential demand for services at record levels.



**For more  
information,  
please contact**

---

**Edward Langley  
or Katelynn Fuller**

Edward.Langley@colmarbrunton.co.nz  
Katelynn.Fuller@colmarbrunton.co.nz

PUBLIC SECTOR

# REPUTATION INDEX 2020

