

Driving net-zero:

Survey of Tasmanians' attitudes towards
reducing transport emissions



Report prepared by the
Tasmanian Policy Exchange
September 2023

A close-up photograph of traditional Indigenous Australian objects. In the foreground, there is a large, shallow, reddish-brown bowl made of ochre. To its left, a small, dark, woven basket with a blue and white cord around its rim sits on a bed of dry grass. In the background, another woven basket is visible, containing some dark objects. The entire scene is set against a blurred natural background.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the palawa/pakana of lutruwita, the traditional owners of the land upon which we live and work.

We pay respects to Elders past and present as the knowledge holders and sharers. We honour their strong culture and knowledges as vital to the self-determination, wellbeing and resilience of their communities.

We stand for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history.

About the Tasmanian Policy Exchange

The TPE has been established at the University of Tasmania to make timely and informed contributions to key policy debates occurring in Tasmania and beyond, thus making a positive contribution to the future of our state and its people.

The TPE's policy work and analysis can be found at www.utas.edu.au/tpe

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We would like to acknowledge the RACT and the Mercury for their support promoting this survey.





Driving net-zero: Options for reducing Tasmania's transport emissions

While it's great that Tasmania has had a net-negative greenhouse gas emissions profile for nearly a decade, our absolute emissions have barely changed – if anything, they are trending upward.

Right now, transport offers some of the best opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, so it makes sense that the Tasmanian Government's first Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan, due in November 2023, will focus on transport.

To support this important step in Tasmania's transition to a low-carbon society, the TPE has prepared a Discussion Paper and survey to find out from Tasmanians what you think the best ways to reduce transport emissions in our State.

Have your say...



Take our Transport Survey!

Want to learn more?



Visit our website!

www.utas.edu.au/tpe/netzerotransport

Background and context

In August 2023, the Tasmanian Policy Exchange conducted a survey – in partnership with the RACT and The Mercury – to better understand Tasmanians' attitudes towards options for reducing transport emissions in the state.

The University of Tasmania is deeply committed to addressing the global climate challenge and is working with communities, industry, and governments to develop policies and strategies to establish Tasmania as a leader on climate action.

We welcome the release of the Tasmanian Government's *Climate Action Plan* and its commitment to develop Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plans (ERRPs) for key industry sectors, starting with transport.

Following the release of our [discussion paper](#) and [technical policy paper](#), we conducted the survey to better understand community attitudes and preferences in relation to different transport emissions reduction options. The survey results are intended to help inform the design of Tasmania's first ERP.

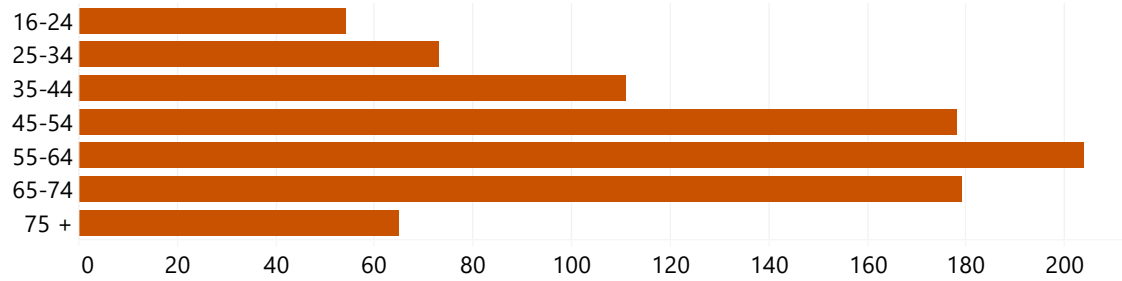
This report summarises the key findings from the data gathered.

The survey sample

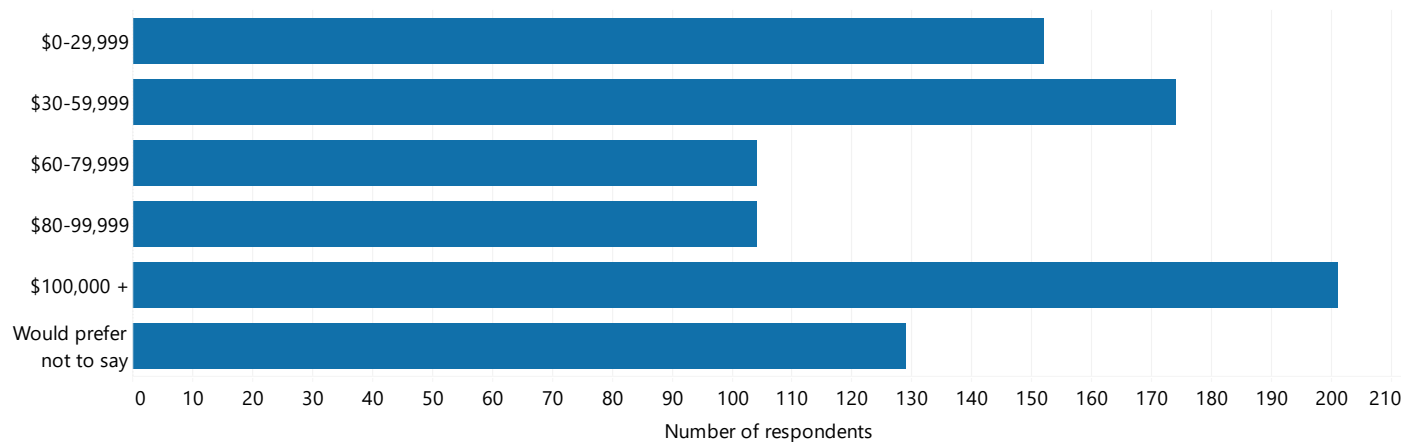
The survey received **864 responses from Tasmanians from all over the island**. The survey asked participants 25 questions relating to emissions reduction targets and strategies, ZEVs, active transport, and public transport. We believe this to be the most comprehensive survey of Tasmanians' attitudes and preferences in relation to transport emissions reduction to date.

Our sample is reasonably representative of the state as a whole and, where appropriate, the survey results have been weighted according to age, gender, and income to ensure they accurately represent the Tasmanian population.

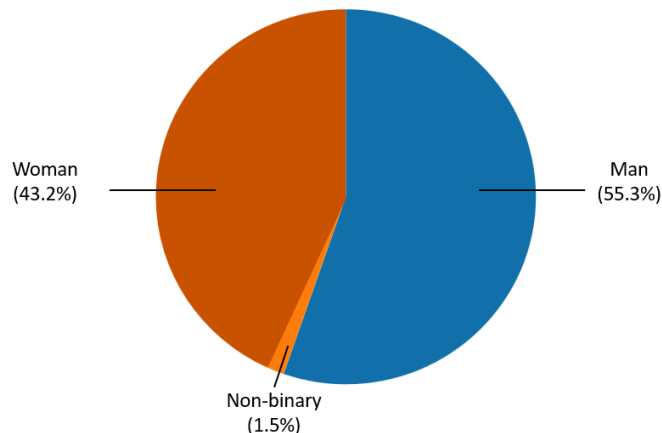
Respondents' age



Respondents' income



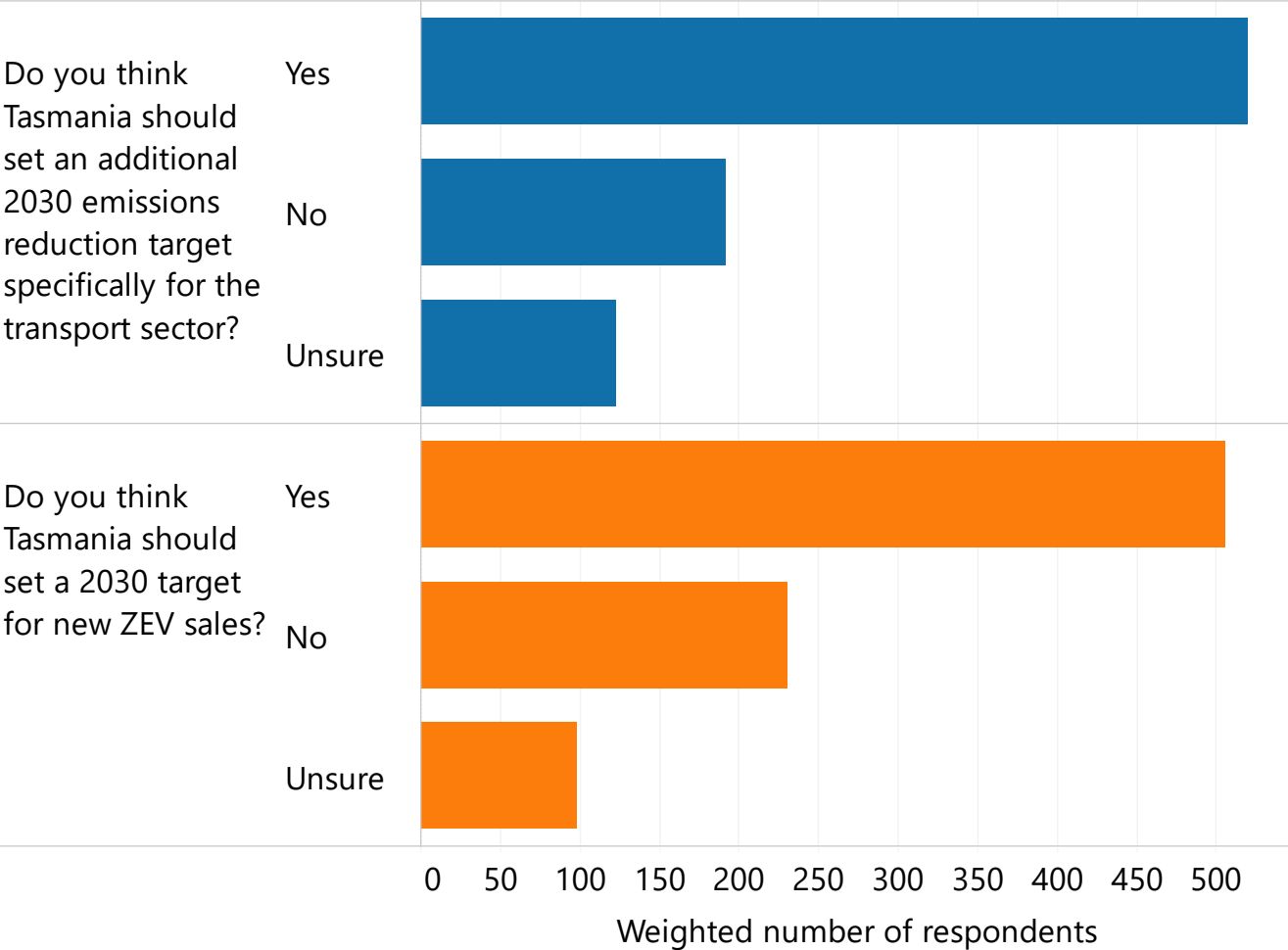
Gender identity of respondents



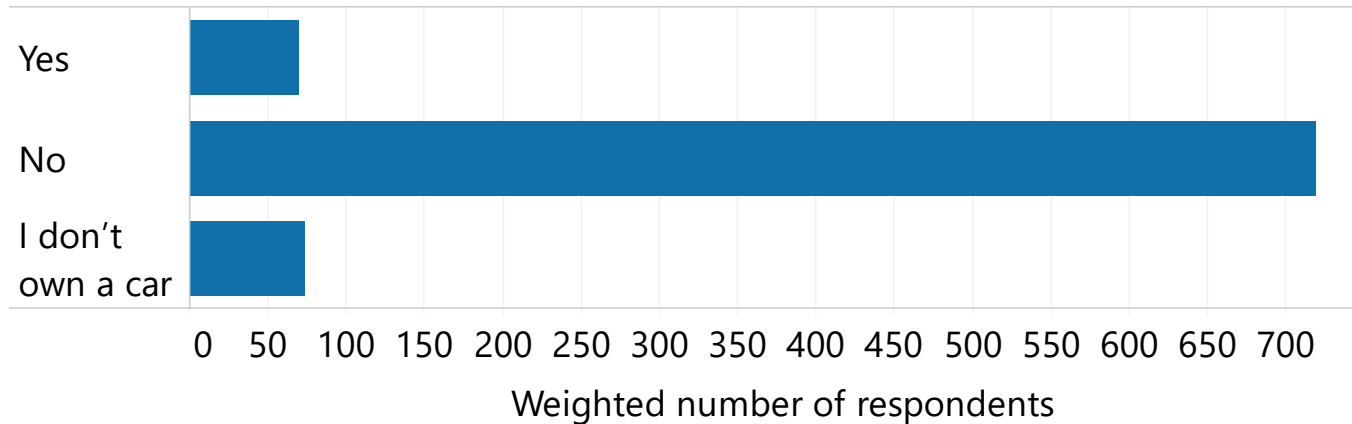
Most (62%) respondents want ambitious transport emissions reduction targets

- Currently, Tasmania’s overall emissions reduction target is to achieve net-zero emissions, or lower, from 2030. Most respondents (62%) believe Tasmania should set an additional 2030 emissions reduction target specifically for the transport sector. [In our recent report](#), we argue that this target should be to reduce transport emissions by 37% on 2020 levels by 2030.
- In the first six months of 2023, [around 9%](#) of new vehicles sold in Tasmania were ZEVs. Most respondents (60%) believe Tasmania should set a 2030 target for new ZEV sales. [We have argued](#) that this target should be for 67% of new vehicle sales in Tasmania to be ZEVs by 2020.
- Women are more supportive of both transport emissions reduction targets than men, with 70.4% in favour of an emissions reduction target and 60% in favour of a ZEV sales target, compared to 53% of men for both targets.
- Younger people are also more supportive of both transport emission reduction targets than older people, with around 70% of those aged under 45 in favour compared to only 50% of those over 45.

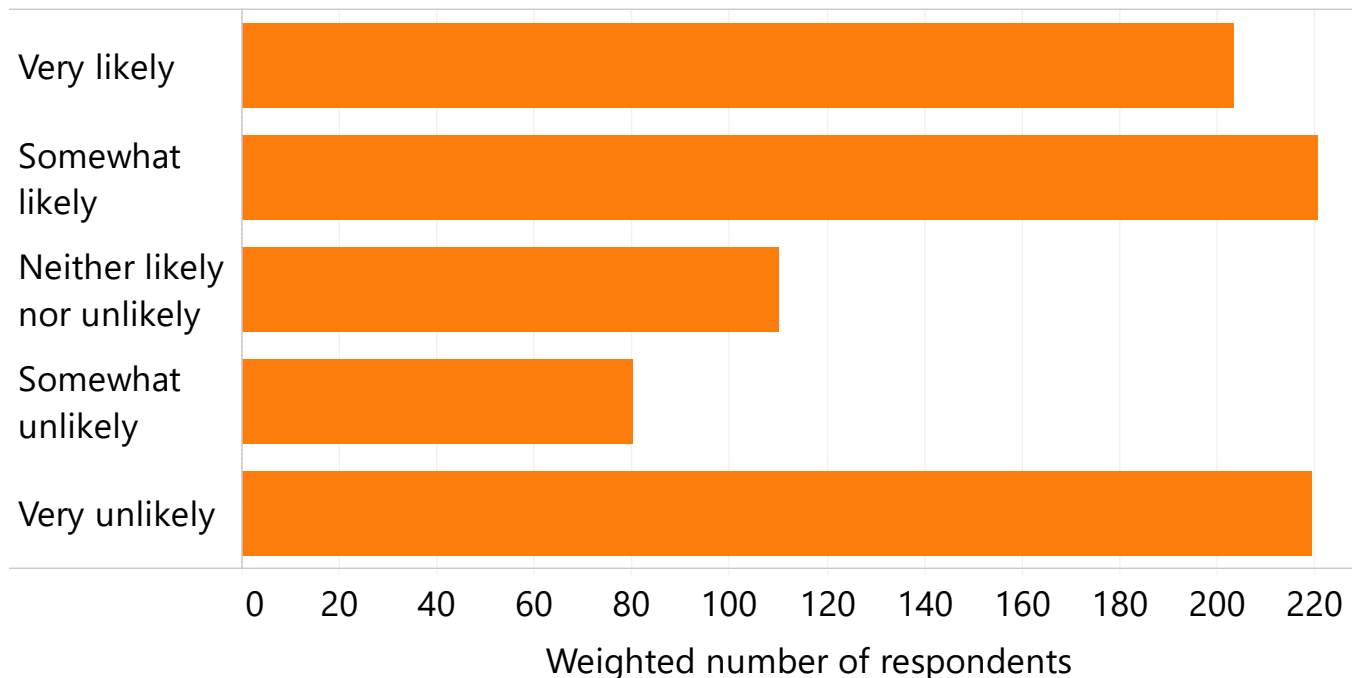
Response to the introduction of policy targets in Tasmania



Is your current primary vehicle a zero-emissions vehicle (ZEV)?



How likely are you to buy a ZEV as your next car purchase?



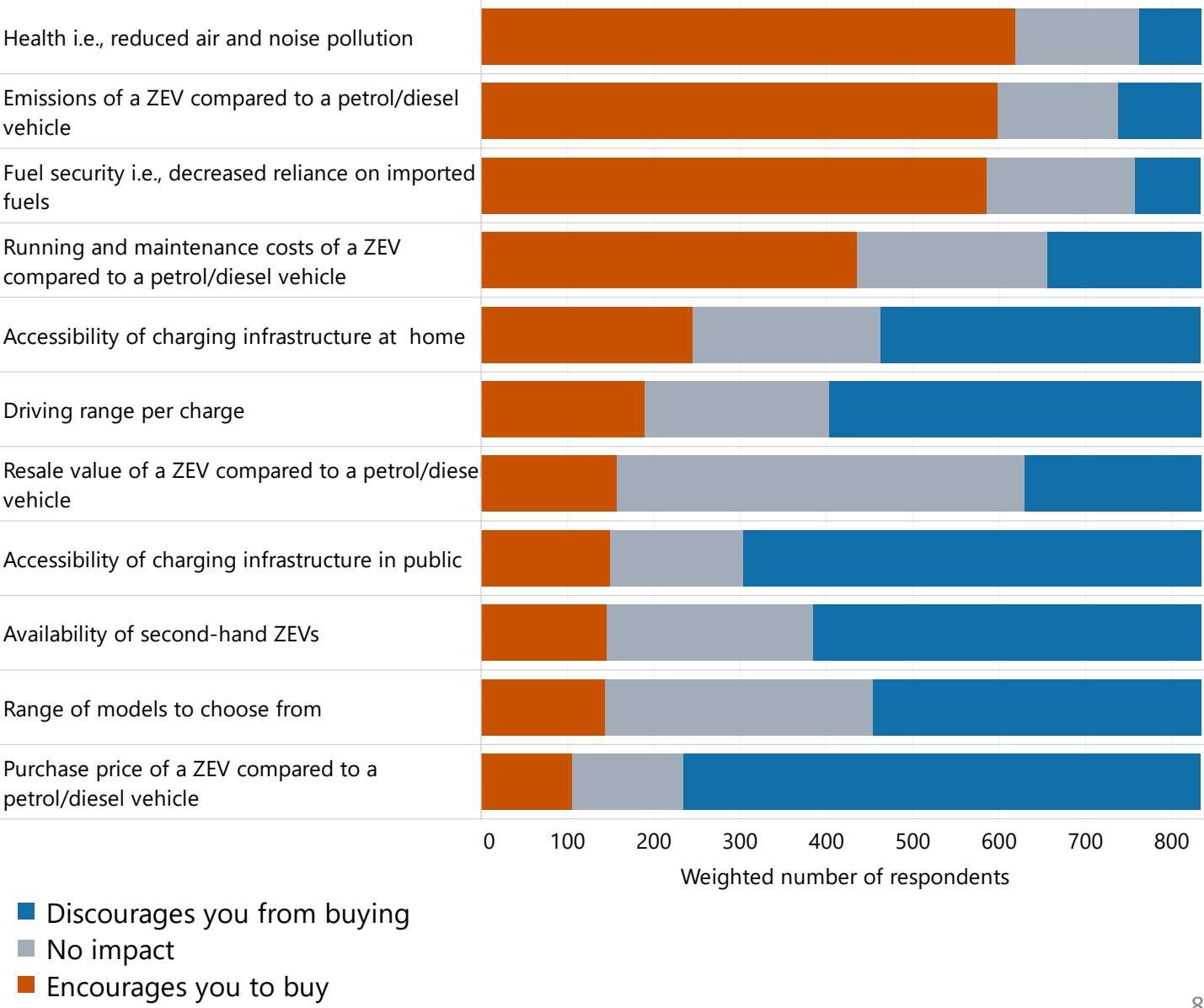
The majority of respondents (50.8%) are likely to purchase a ZEV as their next vehicle

- A large number (84.6%) of the Tasmanians surveyed do not currently own a ZEV as their primary vehicle. ZEV owners were overrepresented in this survey; [there are 2533 EVs](#) registered in Tasmania (around 0.4% of all registered vehicles), and around 5% of survey respondents owned a ZEV.
- Those who stated they were unlikely to purchase a ZEV as their next car were more likely to be a man; over 45; have an income less than \$60,000; or live rurally.
- Those who stated they were likely to purchase a ZEV as their next car were more likely to be a woman; aged between 25-44 and 55-64; have an income less than \$80,000; or live in urban (or suburban) locations.

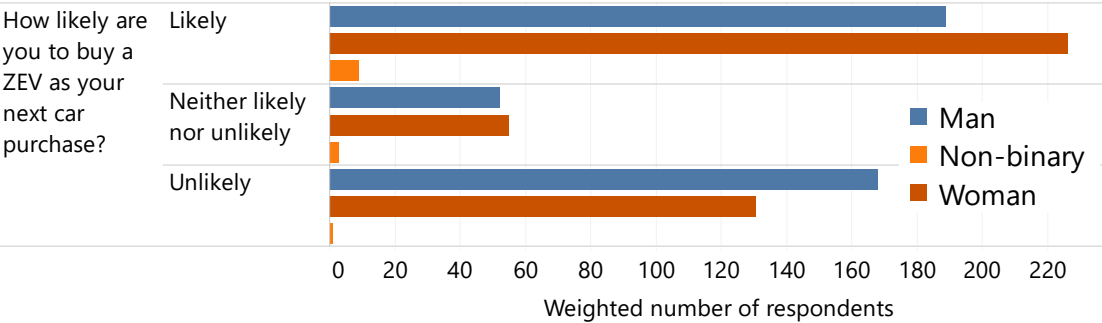
Price is the main barrier to purchasing a ZEV

- The most significant factors encouraging respondents to purchase a ZEV are health benefits (74%) and emissions reduction (72%).
- The primary barriers to respondents buying ZEVs are the purchase price (72% of respondents were discouraged), the accessibility of charging infrastructure in public (64%) and the home (44%), the availability of second-hand ZEVs (54%), the driving range per charge (52%), and the range of models available (46%).
- Comments indicated that in addition to these factors, some respondents are concerned about the safety of ZEVs, the sustainability of their manufacturing processes, and the longevity/replacement of batteries.

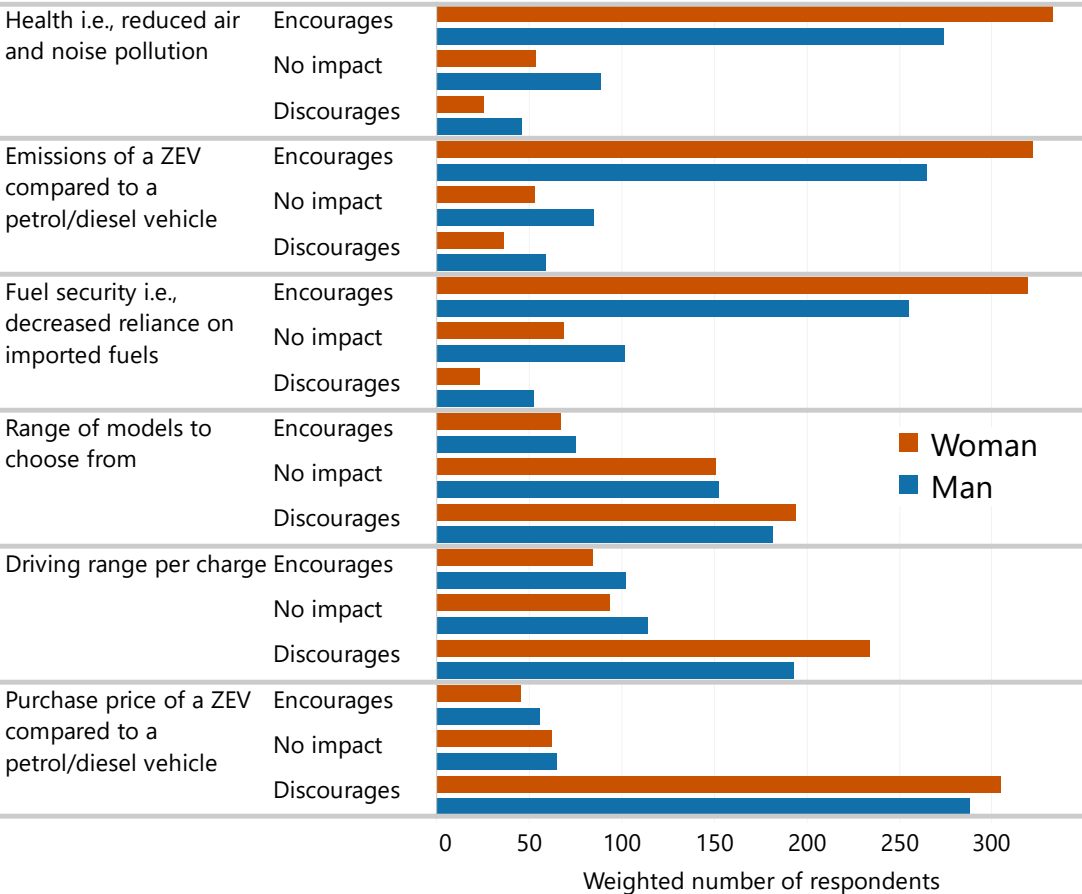
Factors impacting respondents' decision to purchase a ZEV



Women have more favourable attitudes towards ZEVs than men



To what degree do the following factors currently influence your decision to purchase a ZEV?



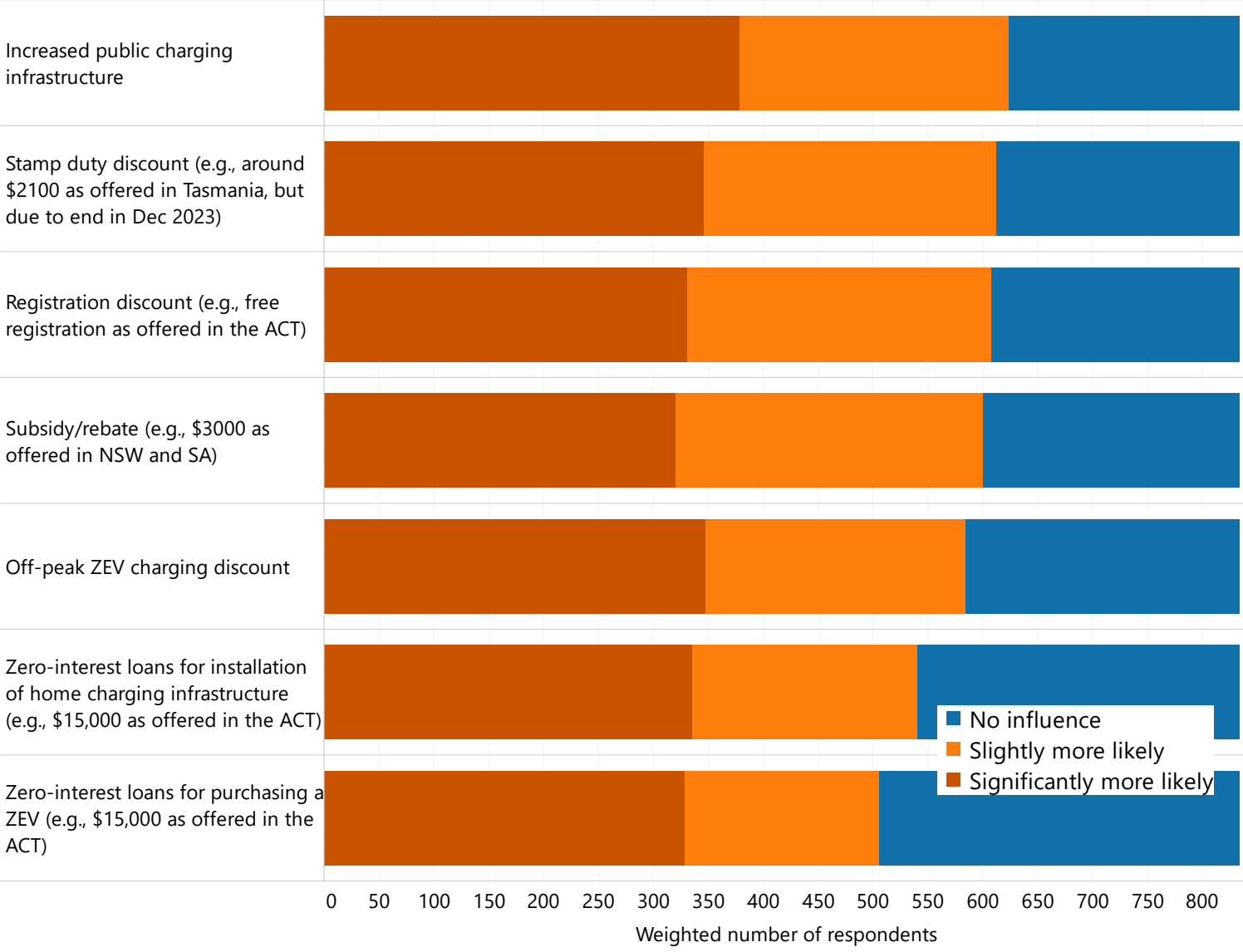
Women have more favourable attitudes towards ZEVs than men

- Women are more likely than men to purchase a ZEV because of the health benefits (i.e., reduced air and noise pollution), lower emissions, and fuel security. Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to be encouraged to purchase a ZEV by the price, driving range per charge, and range of models available.
- This indicates that women potentially prioritise environmental and communitarian concerns relative to men when it comes to considering purchasing a ZEV; lower emissions, health benefits, and fuel security are all factors that benefit broader society, whereas purchase price and more technical considerations like driving range and model availability are more individualistic.
- Despite the fact that women are more likely to be discouraged by material concerns like purchase price, they are overall more likely to purchase a ZEV as their next car than men, and their biggest motivators are altruistic.
- A number of [studies](#) have found that when it comes to ZEVs and climate change more generally, women are more likely to take climate change seriously and to believe that they can and should do something about it. [Other studies](#) have found that women tend to favour climate change policy arguments that focus on ethics and environmental justice, while men prefer arguments based on ‘science and business’.

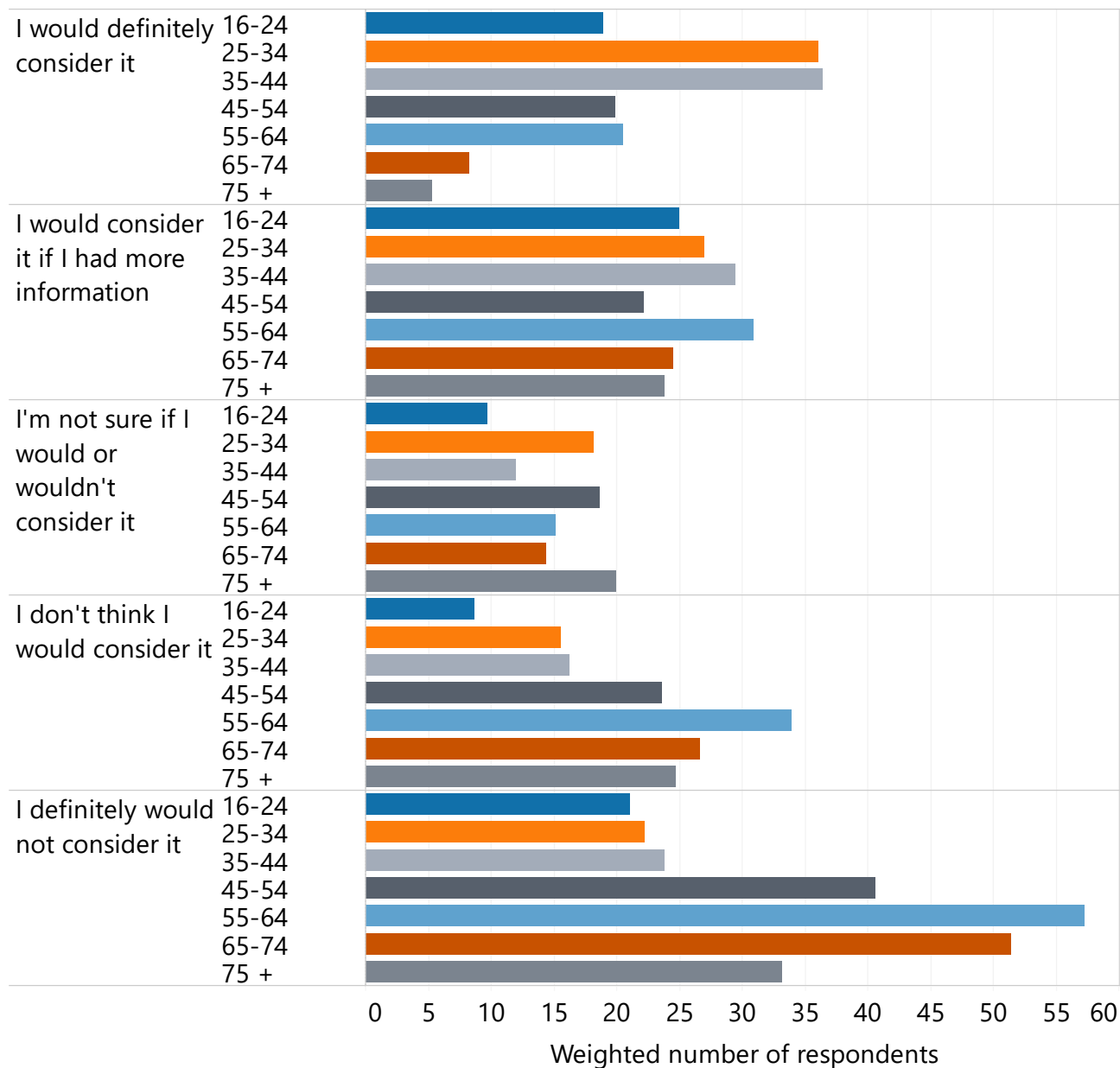
74% of respondents would be more likely to purchase a ZEV if there was increased public charging infrastructure

- Most of the suggested strategies were relatively popular, with the majority of respondents indicating they would be at least slightly more likely to purchase a ZEV if any of the listed policies were implemented.
- The least popular policies, although not by a significant margin, were zero-interest loans for the installation of home charging infrastructure and for purchasing a ZEV (35% and 39% responding it had no impact).
- Additionally, half of respondents (49%) support the introduction of a modest surcharge/tax on new petrol/diesel vehicles to help fund a subsidy for ZEVs (not pictured in the table).
- Women were generally more likely to be influenced by all strategies than men. Additionally, women tended to be ‘significantly’ more likely than men, although there were similar levels of ‘slightly’ more likely responses between both cohorts.
- Interestingly, discount strategies tended to be more influential on those with lower incomes (<\$30,000), but also on those with higher incomes (\$80,000+).

How likely is it that you would purchase a ZEV if the following strategies were introduced?



Would you consider using a ZEV car sharing program similar to the current Hobart e-scooter sharing program?



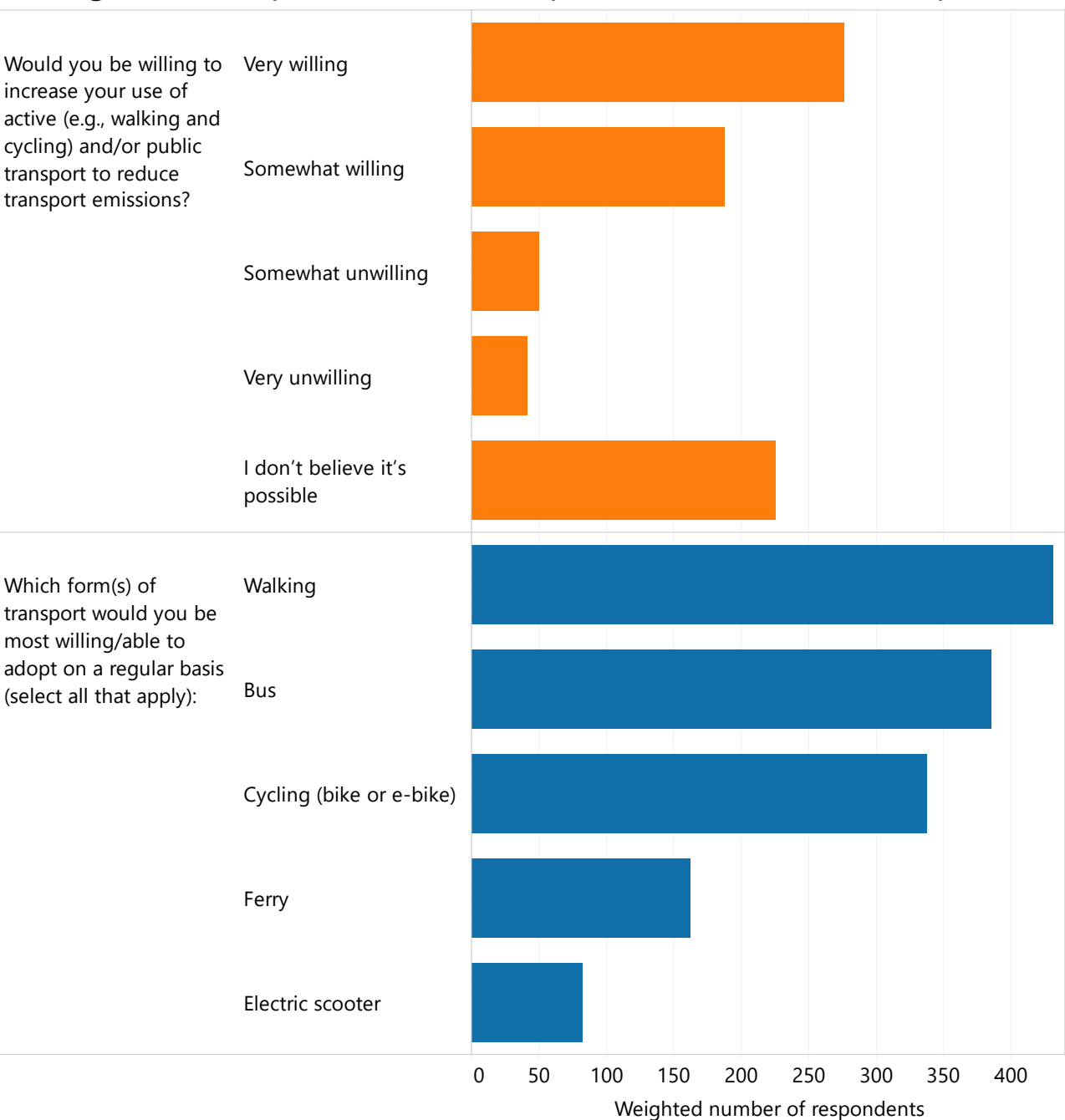
Car sharing programs could be a viable alternative for some cohorts

- Attitudes towards a ZEV car sharing program are relatively split overall, with 22% of respondents stating they would consider it or consider it with more information, and 30% stating they didn't think they would or definitely wouldn't consider it.
- However, over half of those aged between 16-64 said they would consider using a car sharing program, compared to only 30% of those over 65.**
- The qualitative comments indicated that some respondents believed a car sharing program would not be suitable for their needs, primarily because they lived regionally. Others had questions/concerns about how the model would operate. More information is needed about who would run the scheme, costs, logistics of hiring, convenience, availability, and reliability for respondents to make an informed judgment.

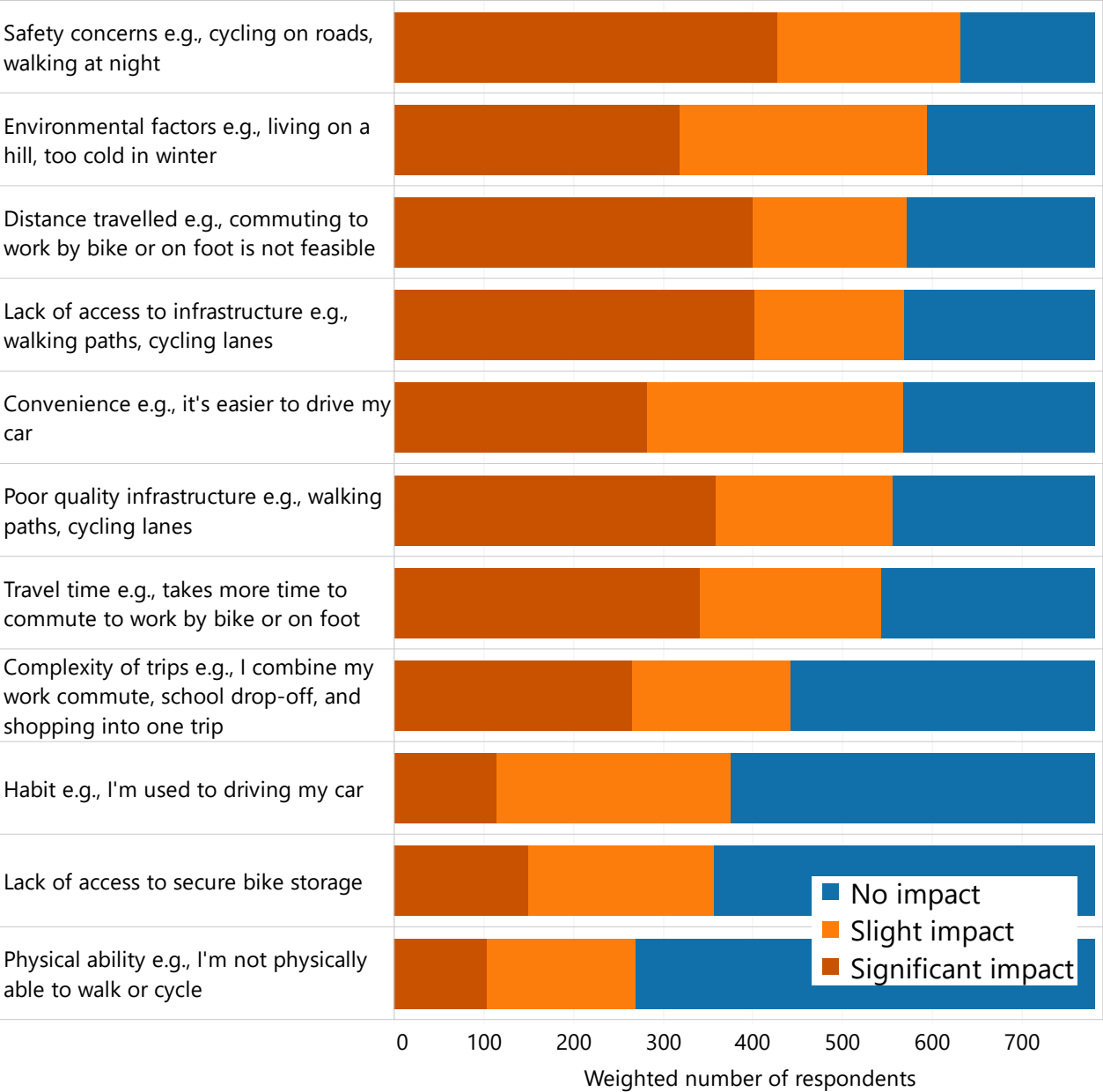
Over half of respondents (58%) are willing to increase their use of active and/or public transport

- However, around 29% of respondents did not think that increasing their use of active/public transport was possible given their current circumstances.
- Respondents were similarly willing to increase their use of walking (30.8%), buses (27.6%), and cycling (24.2%). Therefore, the implementation of strategies to reduce certain barriers could lead to increased uptake of these alternative modes of transport.
- In the ‘other’ category (not pictured), some respondents stated they would utilise small responsive bus services (if they were available), rail and light rail (if it was available), trams (if they were available), running, skating, ride-sharing, and even kayaking.
- Women tended to be more open than men to increasing their active/public transport usage (53% of women compared to 46% of men).

Willingness and options to increase public and/or active transport



How much do the following things discourage you from using active transport (e.g., walking, cycling)?



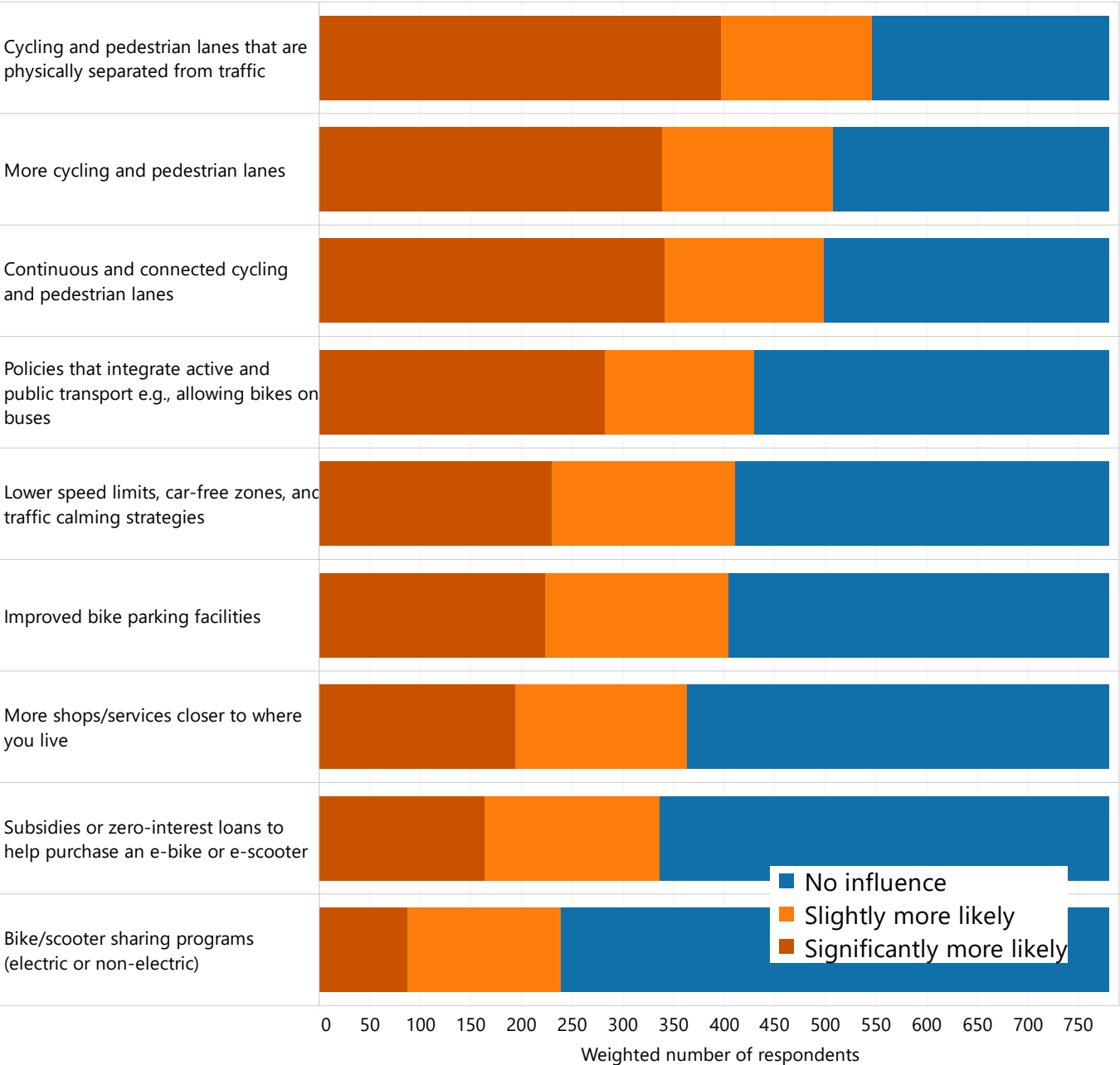
Safety concerns (81%) are the biggest barrier to increased use of active transport (particularly cycling)

- Safety concerns are interlinked with lack of access to infrastructure and poor-quality infrastructure. Some respondents highlighted the behaviour of road users and negative driver attitudes towards cyclists: *“Bike riding is my main form of urban transport. However I am increasingly feeling at risk from inattentive, unskilled and disrespectful drivers...”*
- This kind of hostility towards cyclists and bike lanes was evident in the survey response itself, through comments such as:
 - *“Why are roads being overtaken by bike lanes”*
 - *“Already too many bike lanes. Selfish cyclists still use roadways, often just a few metres away from a bike path.”*
- Women are more likely than men to report themselves as being significantly impacted by every one of these factors with the exception of physical ability, where they are equally impacted.

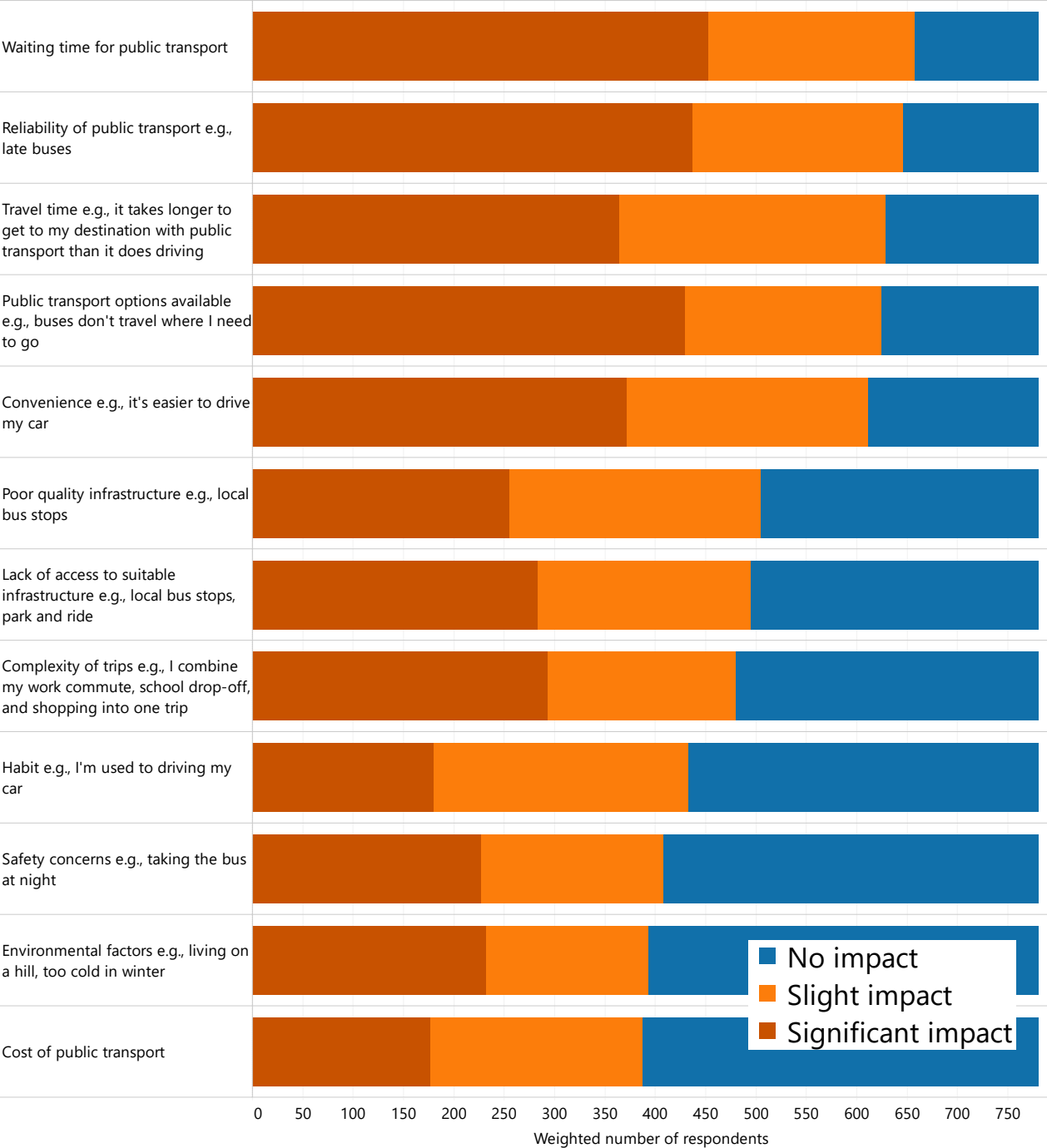
Tasmanians need improved access to safe, continuous, and connected cycling and pedestrian lanes

- Reflecting the safety concerns on the previous slide, the most popular initiative is creating more cycling and pedestrian lanes that are physically separated from traffic (70%), closely followed by increasing the number of cycling and pedestrian lanes in general (65%) and creating continuous and connected cycling and pedestrian lanes (64%).
- Some respondents noted the need for greater motorist education in relation to safely sharing the road. There were also suggestions that higher penalties be placed on motorists who are aggressive towards cyclists and other road users: *“Laws around safe driving need to be enforced to make cyclists safer- safe speed, safe passing, harassment of cyclists including throwing objects, parking in/across bike lanes, pulling out in our path”*
- Based on this information, it is clear that Tasmanians are willing to increase their use of walking and cycling. With greater access to safe, continuous, and connected cycling and pedestrian lanes which are physically separated from traffic, and with improved public awareness and education, we could greatly increase the uptake of active transport in the state, at least in urban areas.
- The safety concerns outlined above are especially prevalent among women

How likely is it that you would use active transport more if the following strategies were introduced?



How much do the following things discourage you from using public transport?



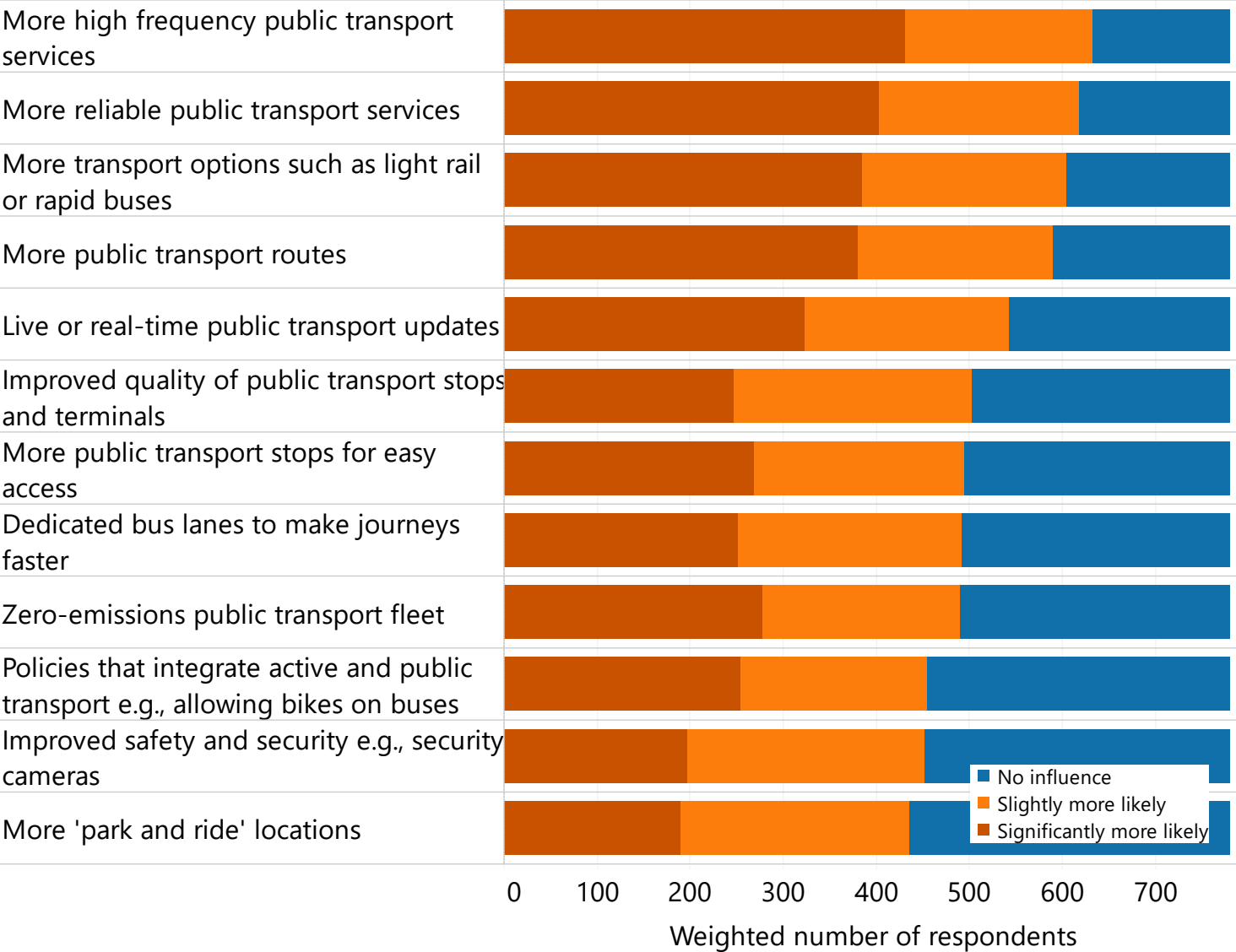
The majority of respondents find public transport in Tasmania to be unreliable, inaccessible, and inconvenient

- Poor quality service is the biggest inhibitor to respondents using public transport, including waiting time (84%), reliability (83%), and travel time (80%).
- This response is not surprising, given that [only 13.5% of households in Hobart have access to public transport](#) (the lowest of all capital cities in Australia), and 5% of households in Launceston.
- Lack of suitable transport routes was another significant barrier: *"From New Town to Rosny there isn't a bus... I'd have to go to town and then over the bridge... [which would take] about an hour rather than 10 mins in a car".*
- The comments highlighted that there are systemic failures: *"For 12 months metro has cancelled my bus every morning. There is actually no way for me to get to work now... I'm having to ride my bike on a highway at 5am 20kms... I'm surely going to die very soon. Drivers are aggressive and abusive. Public transport is unreliable, and cycling is too dangerous. I don't drive. So what am I to do?"*
- While safety concerns ranked relatively low in the graph opposite, women were far more likely than men to report being impacted by safety concerns (63.8%) than men (42.6%), highlighting a gender gap. It was the lowest overall concern for men, while for women it ranked 7th of the 12 factors.

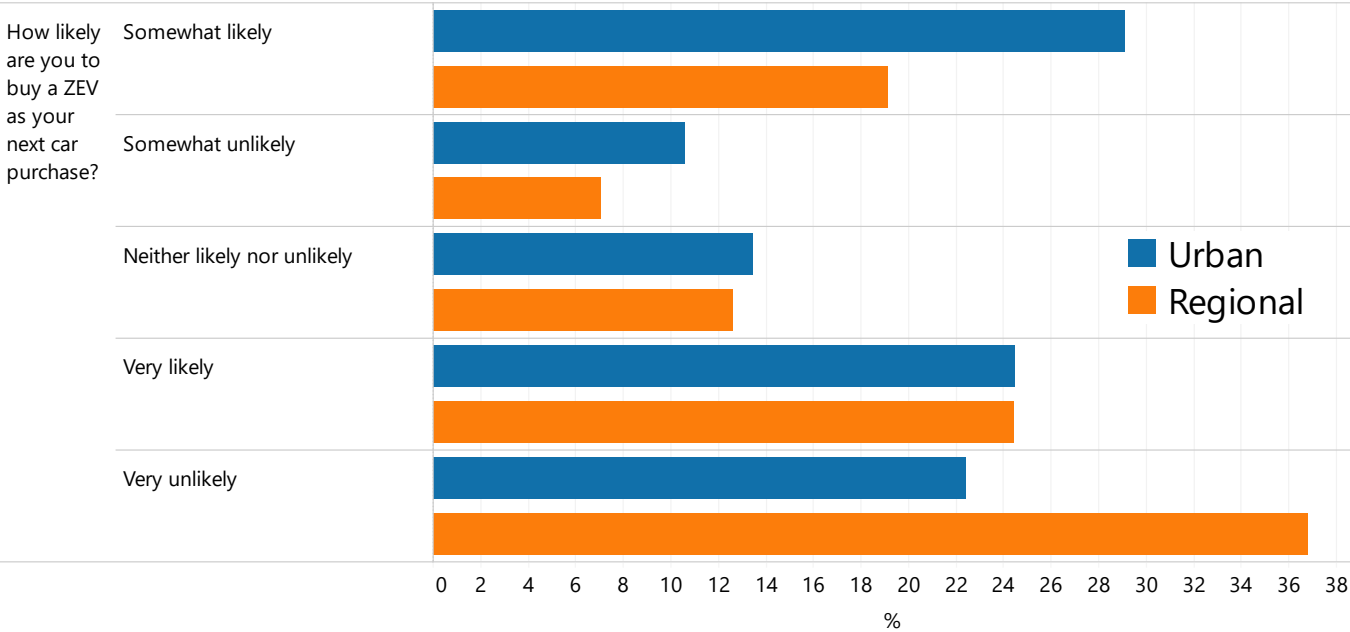
There is an urgent need to improve public transport services

- Unsurprisingly, the policies that are the most impactful in encouraging public transport usage are those that address some of the biggest barriers to its use – improving quality of service.
- This includes more high frequency public transport services (81%), greater reliability (79%), more options such as light rail or rapid buses (78%) and more routes (76%).
- It appears that policies focused on improving quality of service are more popular than improving infrastructure (i.e., park and ride locations, security cameras, bus stops, bike infrastructure).
- Additionally, while cost of public transport was the least discouraging factor on the previous page, some respondents noted that the lack of bank card or phone payment integration made it inconvenient to pay fares.
- For those above 65, improved safety appears to be one of the more influential strategies (ranked 5th), while for those under 34, dedicated bus lanes are more influential (ranked between 4th and 5th).
- Women were significantly more likely than men to increase their use of public transport if any of these strategies were introduced.

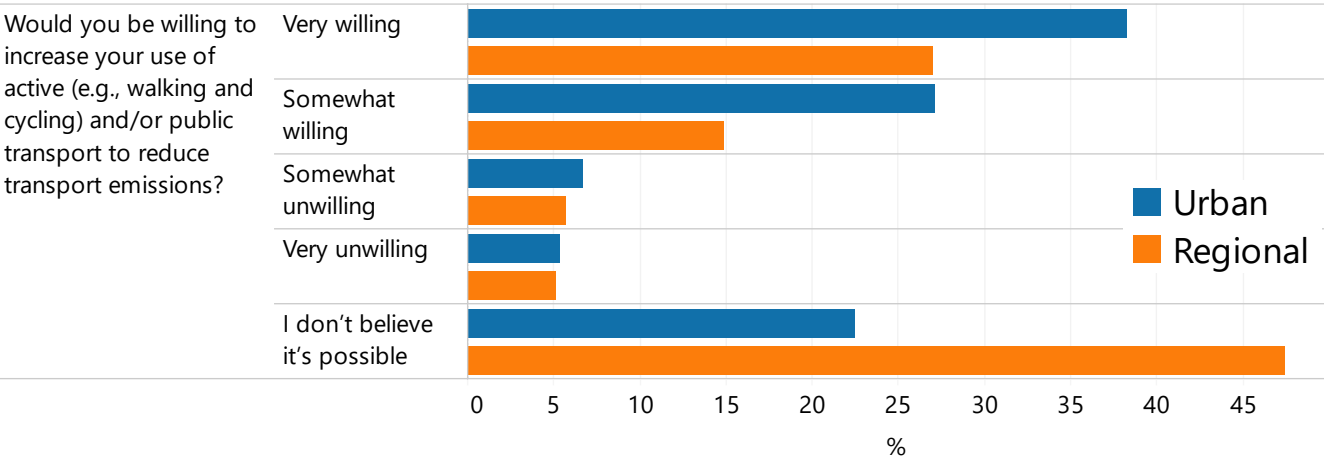
How likely is it that you would use public transport more if the following strategies were introduced?



Likelihood of purchasing a ZEV as your next vehicle - urban vs regional



Willingness to increase public and active transport - urban vs regional



Note: The location data in these graphs has not been weighted, however the data remains fairly representative of the Tasmanian population. The different locational cohorts equal 100% in these graphs.

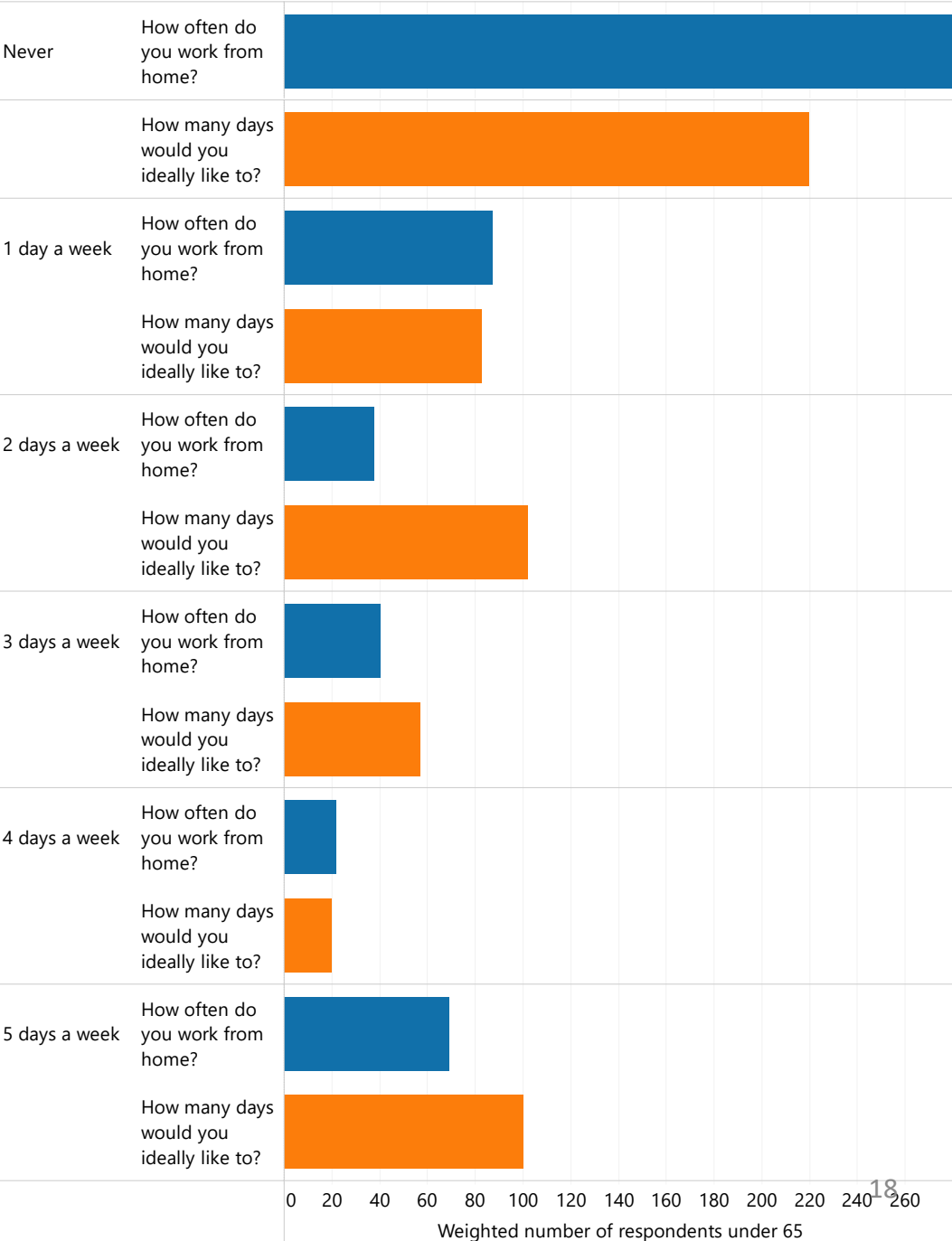
There remain a lack of viable options for those in regional communities to reduce their transport emissions

- Long distances and insufficient infrastructure are impediments to regional residents using active transport: *“I would cycle/walk/scooter/ferry places if it was convenient, but I can’t be walking 25km to get education/shopping etc!”*
- At the same time, public transport services are often extremely limited: *“The public transport needs to be improved... as there are just not enough services for rural areas...”*
- Suitable ZEV models aren’t necessarily widely available yet for those with regional/rural lifestyles: *“At this stage [the] main barrier is cost... [there are] large numbers of rural residents for whom utility vehicles are necessary. I hate my diesel twin cab ute but [I] have no choice – I don’t have money for multiple cars/registration...”*.
- Furthermore, public charging stations are not yet widely available in all regional areas: *“I live rurally and could not travel without a significant improvement in charging locations”*.

Respondents showed an interest in increasing the number of days they work from home

- Many working aged Tasmanians are interested in increasing the number of days they work from home.
- It should be noted that for a significant portion of the ‘never’ category, it’s possible that they either work in an industry where working from home is not possible, or they do not work and therefore the question is not applicable to them.
- We have applied the ABS definition of working age to this graph, while acknowledging that many Tasmanians over the age of 65 may continue to work.
- [Our previous research](#) indicated that if Tasmanians in suitable occupations undertook remote work an average of two days a week, it could result in a 14.5% reduction in the State’s transport emissions. This hybrid model balances the benefits of working in the office with the flexibility and lack of commuting associated with working from home.

Work from home preferences for under 65s



Income can be a significant barrier to transitioning to low- or zero-emissions transport options

Many respondents commented that the cost of a ZEV is the most significant barrier to uptake, and while second-hand ZEVs remain limited in their availability, purchasing a ZEV simply remains out of reach for many Tasmanians - particularly those on lower incomes: *“For people on low-income eating is more important than emissions or buying new cars”.*

Furthermore, some respondents noted that subsidies and rebates unevenly benefit those who can afford to purchase a new car, highlighting the need to provide targeted support for lower income households: *“Incentives will tend to disproportionately benefit the non-poor so governments should focus on increasing the supply of second-hand ZEVs through government purchasing policies, NOT subsidising the rich...”.*





Those who are disabled, older, or have limited mobility experience disproportionate transport disadvantage

Some Tasmanians with reduced mobility, namely people with disabilities and older people, face additional challenges when it comes to utilising active or public transport: *“Buses are not user friendly for disabled. Mum is 90 and cannot climb the steep bus stairs. Ageing means reduced mobility through no fault of our own”*.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that public transport accessibility is not only about physically walking onto the bus, but also walking to/from bus stops. One respondent suggested the implementation of more *“modes of transport that are disability accessible and don’t rely on walking e.g., mini mass transit, mini buses that pick up people from houses...”*.

[Recently published research](#) has demonstrated that transport disadvantage is experienced by disabled people of all ages in Tasmania, with participants reporting that the inaccessibility of public transport contributed to feelings of isolation and loneliness, limited their employment and education options, and negatively impacted their ability to access health appointments and treatment.

It is clear that [“disabled people’s needs and voices are not centred in transport planning and decision making in Tasmania”](#) and engagement and consultation with older Tasmanians and people with disabilities is essential to co-designing effective and accessible public and active transport options that suit their needs.

Some comments highlight the need for more information about the sustainability of production processes and safety of ZEVs

We received a range of comments in which respondents appeared to raise sincere concerns about the sustainability of ZEV production and the safety of their operation. These comments tended to argue that ZEVs are not truly 'zero-emissions' and, due to their production, are less sustainable than petrol/diesel vehicles; that the electricity grid cannot support ZEV charging; that ZEV batteries are dangerous, have a short life span and cannot be recycled; and that ZEVs are more likely to catch fire than petrol/diesel vehicles, among other concerns. These kinds of beliefs could be mitigated through greater education and information about ZEVs and their operation.

We also received a handful of comments from respondents who were worried that the promotion of ZEVs is part of a nefarious agenda propagated by governments and media intentionally spreading false and/or misleading information: *"This is a World Economic Forum promotion to lock us into 15-minute cities. Climate change is a hoax, stop trying to enforce this upon us".*





Conclusion

This survey demonstrates that Tasmanians have a strong desire to reduce their transport emissions and take action on climate change but barriers including infrastructure, cost, and social attitudes stand in their way.

The Tasmanian ERRP for the transport sector needs to focus, among other things, on improving the safety of active transport options, increasing the quality of public transport services, and reducing the cost of ZEVs.

As the uptake of ZEVs accelerates over the next decade there will have to be rapid scaling up of public charging infrastructure, especially on major highway routes, and well as a review of road used charges.

Innovative interventions such as car sharing models, demand-driven public transport, and flexible remote working arrangements should all be considered, particularly to cater to the unique needs of different cohorts within our community.

The establishment of ambitious transport emissions reduction and ZEV uptake targets will set a vision for what we want to achieve as a state and a community by the end of the decade and beyond.

As we have outlined [previously](#), transport is the ‘low-hanging fruit’ of decarbonisation opportunities in terms of abatement potential, economic feasibility, and technological readiness, and the results of this survey consultation highlight that the Tasmanian community are ready for more ambitious action.