

JUNE 2021

F O L K L

HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Tainui, Tanner, Tauroa and Hikanui Reserves
Stage 1: Public Engagement and Information Gathering
Reserve User Report 2021

FOLKL: PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

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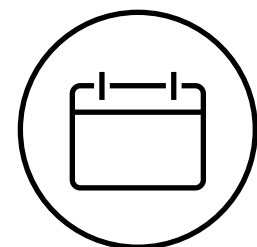
SUMMARY.

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Project purpose and objectives.

Purpose of the project:

This research project presents the data from the public engagement and information gathering phase on users in Tainui, Tanner, Tauroa and Hikanui Reserves (Reserves). This work has been completed prior to the Reserve Management Plan Review to better understand how people use and interact in these reserves and how they are valued.



Field research was undertaken between March and April 2021 using mixed methodology.

Background:

The Tainui, Tauroa, Tanner and Hikanui Reserve Management Plan (the Plan) was finalised in December 2015. This Plan is “*to provide Council with a clear framework for the day-to-day management and decision-making for the Havelock North reserves for the next 10 years*”. However, since the Plan was finalised, and management decisions have been made about the Reserves, concerns have been raised by members of the public. Council wish to understand the views of all reserve users to ensure the Plan reflects the reserves' purpose and diverse user needs.

A mixed methods approach included both qualitative and quantitative techniques to deeply understand the Park and its users. This included over **130** engagements through interviews, events, **9** public submissions, **1,898** data points for manual and digital observations, and **357** survey responses.

The public consultation period ran March 6 to April 23, 2021. All qualitative data was anonymised, digitised, and analysed using reflexive thematic Analysis.

Objectives:

To complete an independent public engagement process to understand the issues, needs and concerns regarding the Tainui, Tanner, Tauroa and Hikanui reserves, by inquiry into:

- How people use the reserves and who these people are.
- How often people use the reserves and their level of satisfaction with the reserve and amenities.
- Barriers to using the reserves.
- Reserve user perceptions and values.
- Issues and concerns with the way the Reserves are currently used.
- The opportunities to meet the needs of diverse user groups.

As Research Association New Zealand (RANZ) members, FOLKL uphold RANZ's Code of Practice, which ensures that data is validated and protected through appropriate means. In conjunction with this, we adopt additional ethical steps within our research approach.

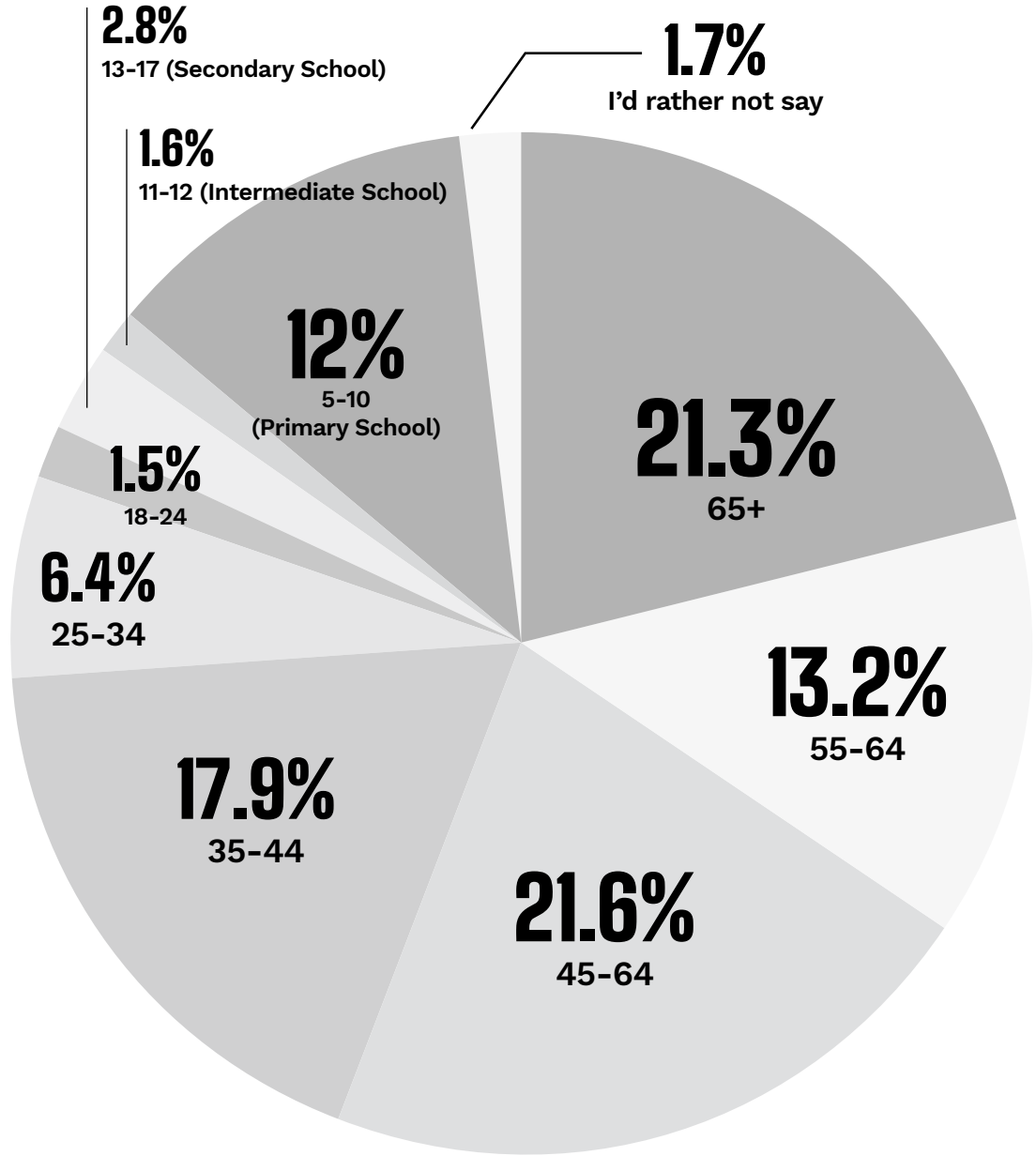
RESEARCH FINDINGS.

WHO USES THE RESERVES?

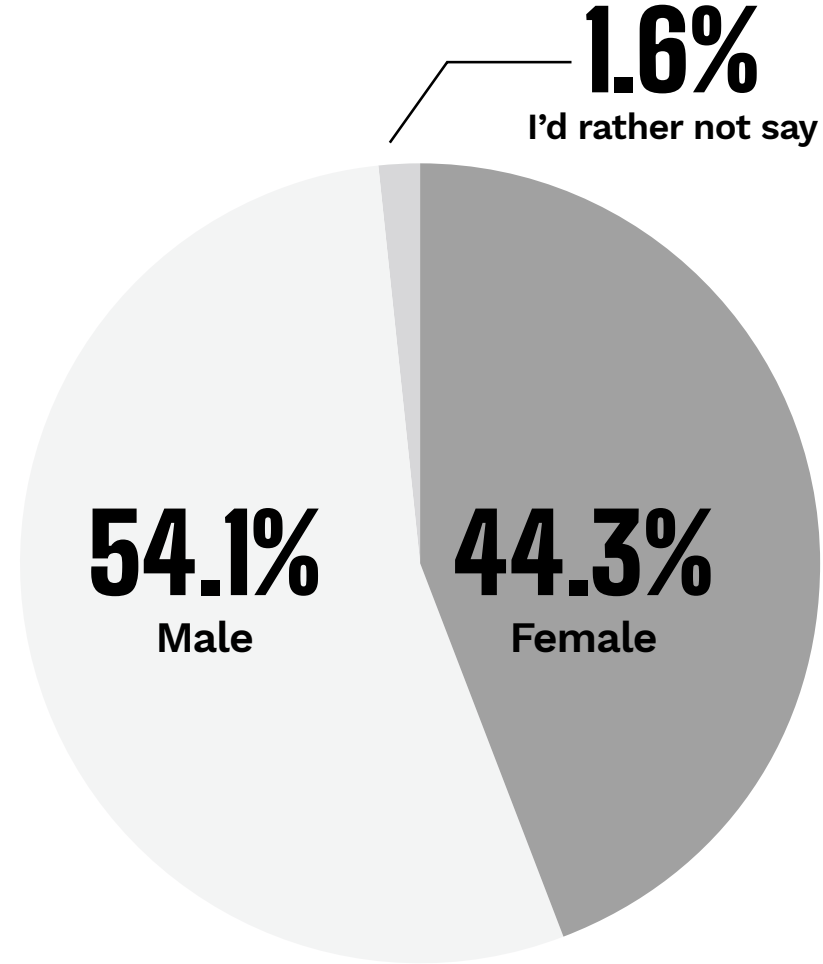
This section highlights who is using the reserves.
It covers key demographic information and where reserve users live.

It addresses the following research objective:
→ Who the reserve users are.

Age.



Gender.



Observation supported the survey findings. There were a **wide spread of age groups** from young children through to elderly who were using the Reserves. During the research period **usage data skewed slightly toward males**.

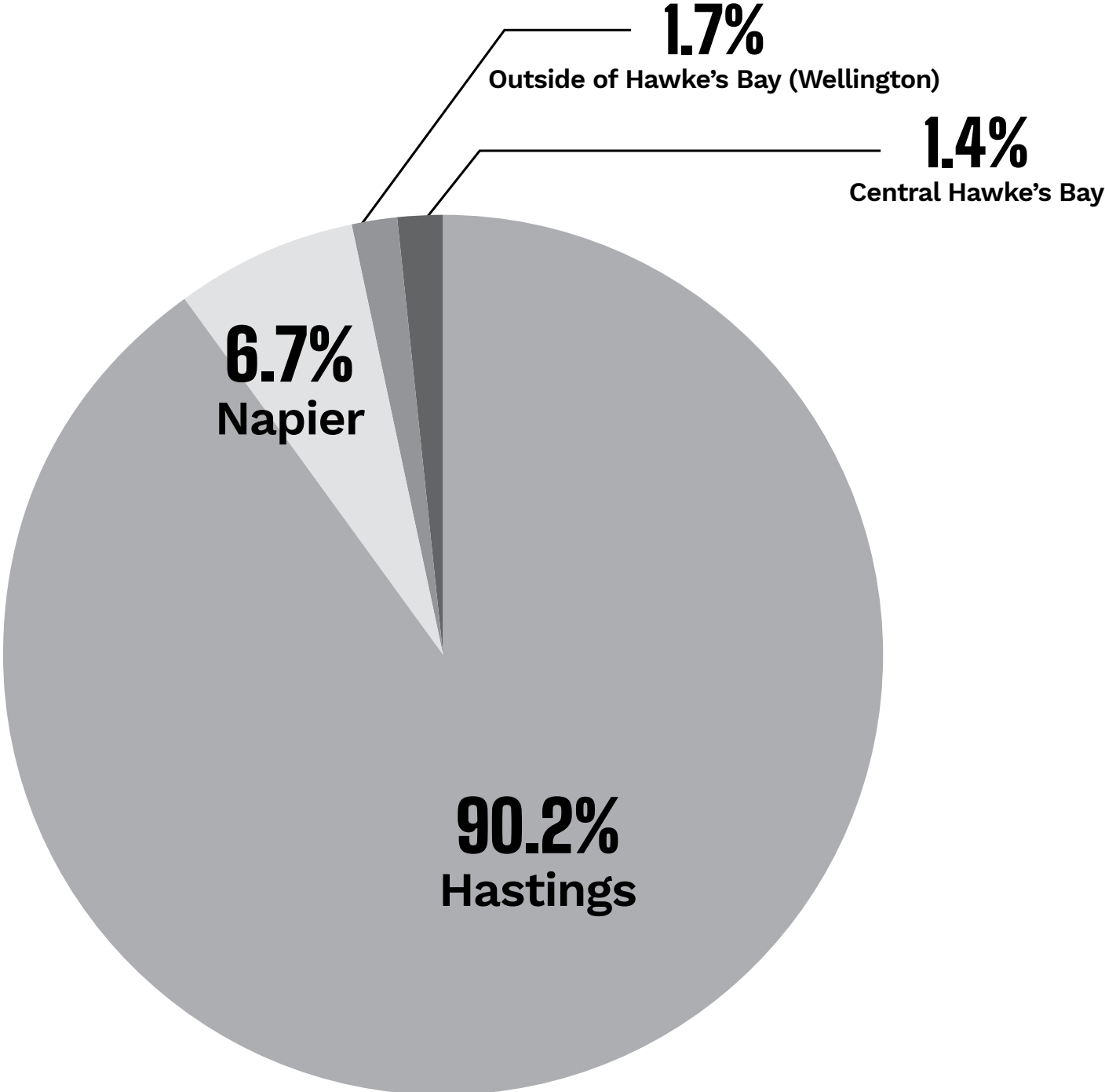
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Where reserve users live.

A number of people have a long history of living near to and using the Reserves. However, **researchers met people visiting for their first time and others who had recently discovered the Reserves.**

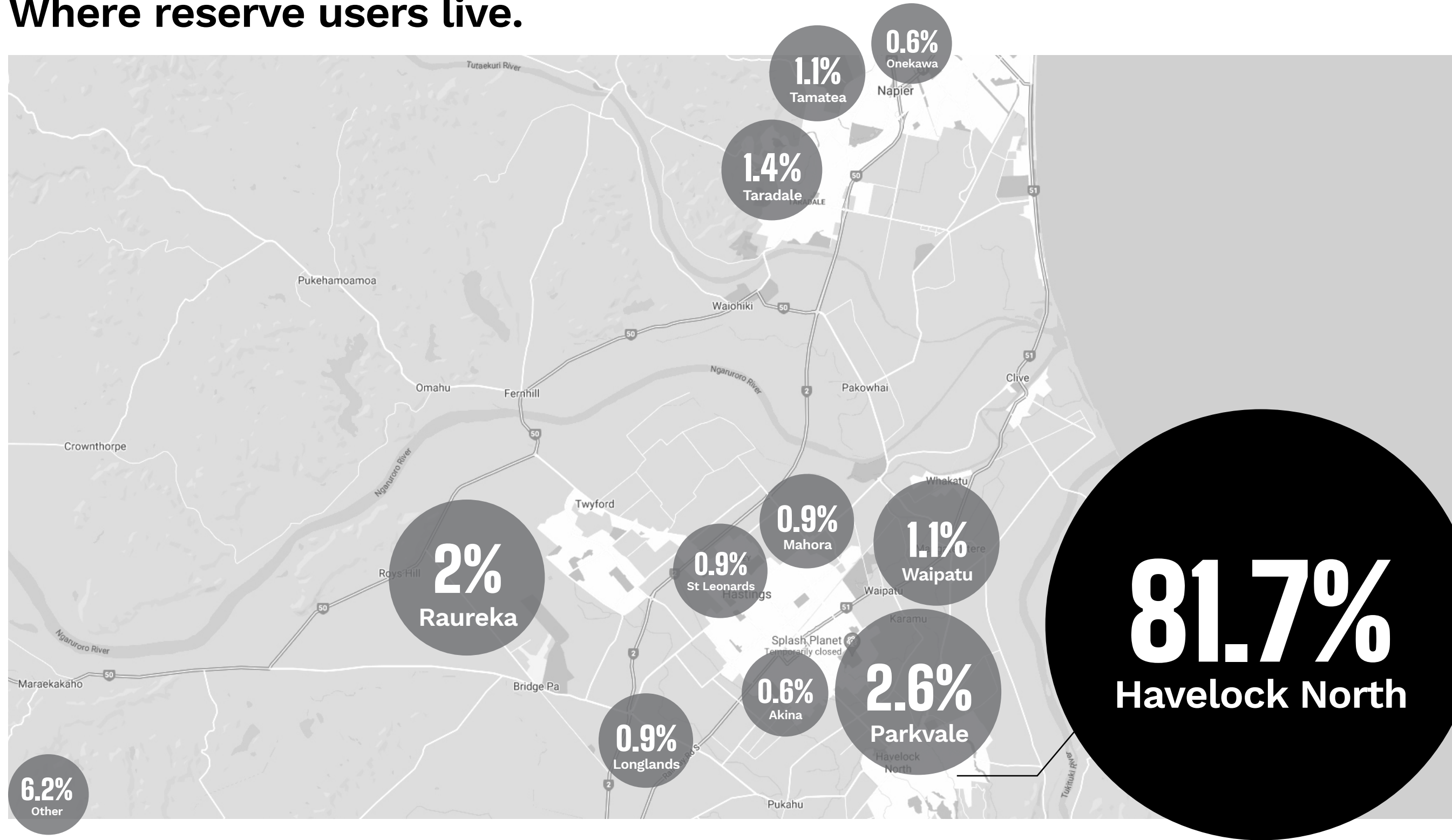
Many were locals, with over 50% of users walking to the reserves. However, some people travelled specifically from places further afield, such as Central Hawke's Bay and Napier.

More than
50%
of people walked
to the reserves



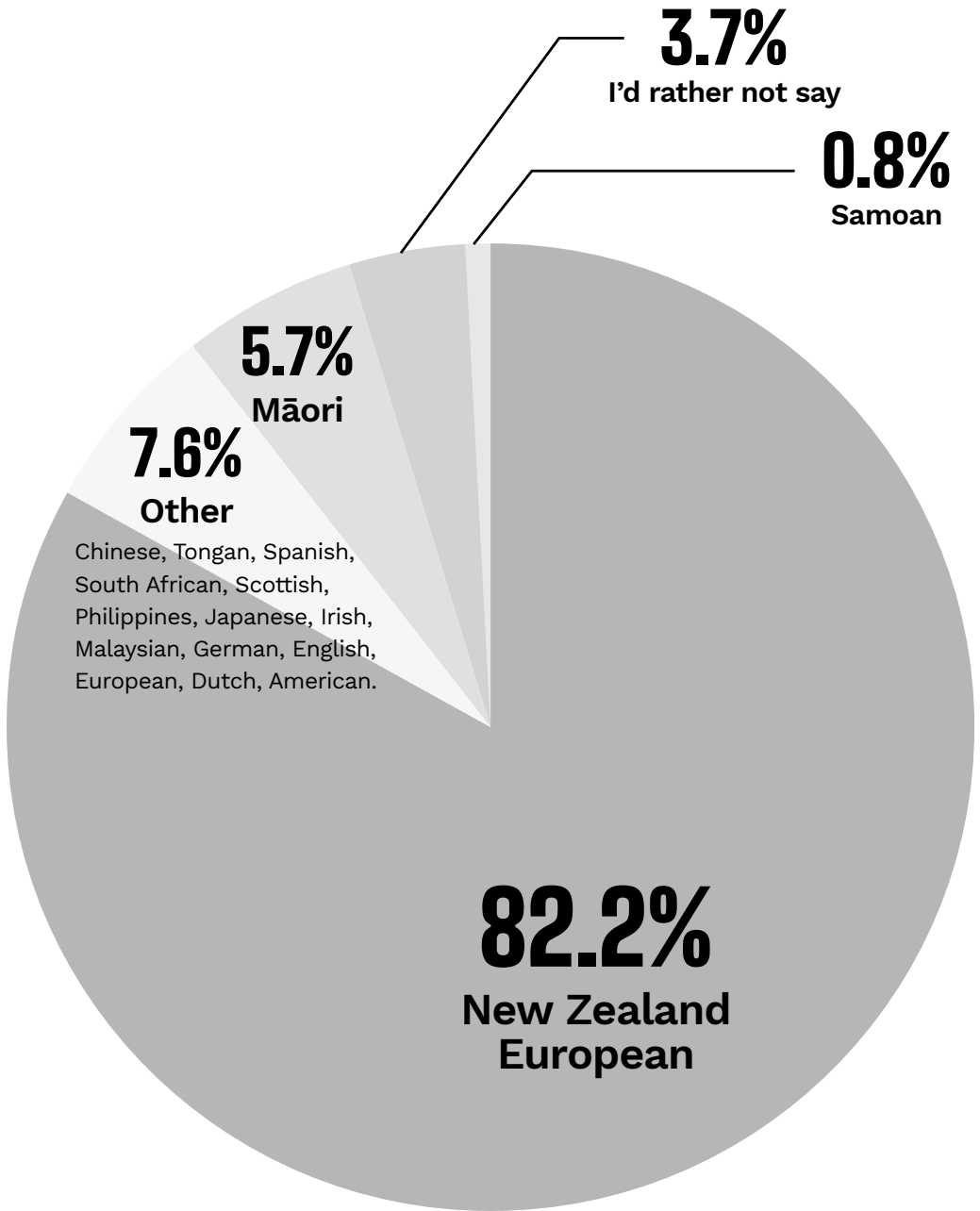
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Where reserve users live.



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Ethnicity.



Survey Demographic Representation with Reserves Community.

The survey was representative of the Havelock Hills demographic. Slight variations as compared to the 2018 Statistics New Zealand Census are detailed in the table below.

Location	European	Māori	Pacific peoples	Asian	Middle Eastern, Latin American, African	Other ethnicity
Survey Demographics	82.2%	5.7%	0.38%	0.55%	N/A	7.6%
Hawke's Bay	75%	27%	5.6%	5.0%	0.6%	1.1%
Hastings District	71.8%	27.3%	8.0%	5.6%	0.5%	1.1%
Havelock North Central	89.8%	10.9%	3.4%	3.4%	1.4%	2.2%
Havelock Hills	94.1%	5.9%	0.6%	2.7%	1.0%	1.6%

The Cultural Aspirations Report will be an important factor to understand the views and values of tangata whenua. This report is currently underway by Te Tai Whenua o Heretaunga during this research.

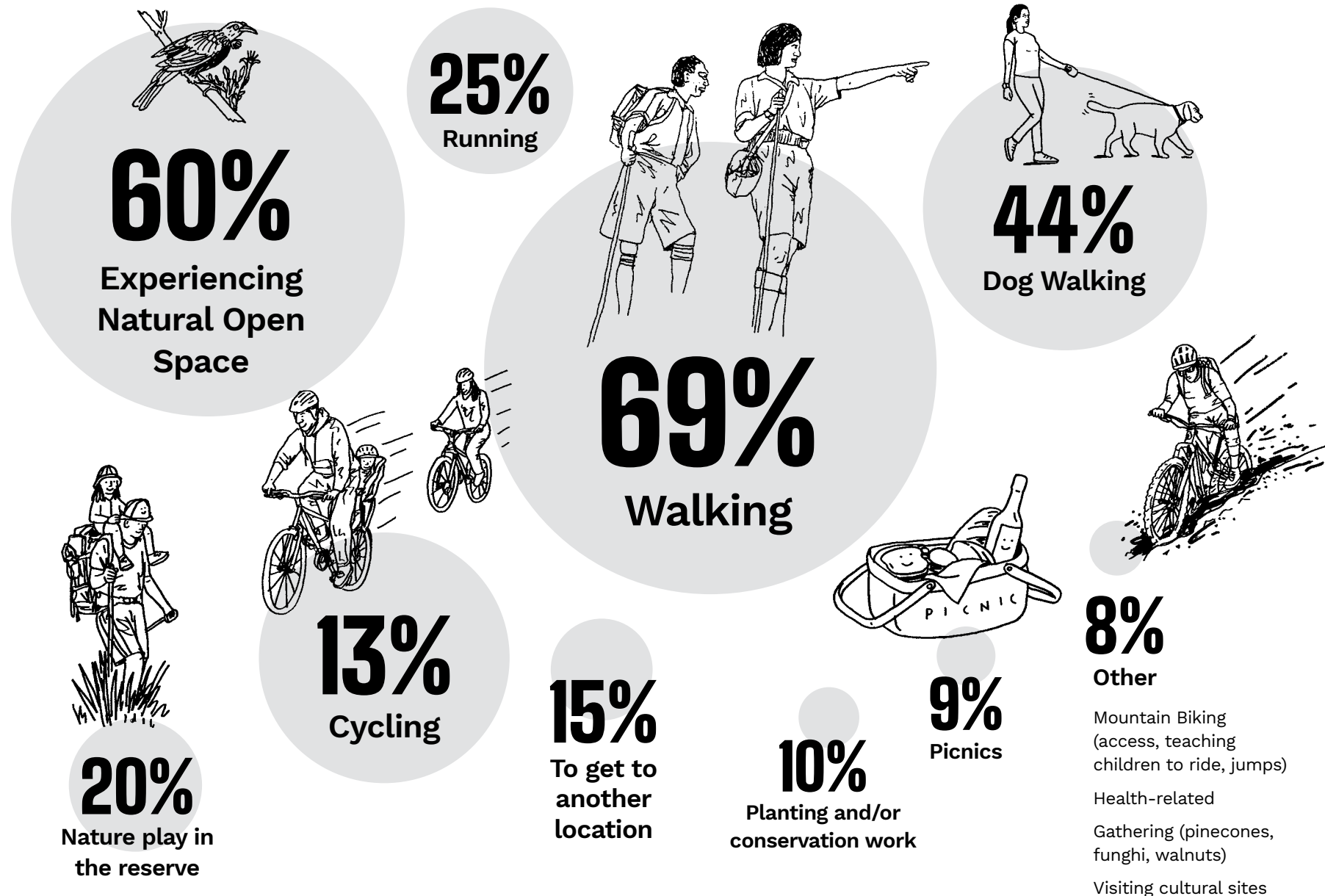
HOW DO PEOPLE USE THE RESERVES?


This section covers how people use the reserves and how they get there.

It addresses the following research objective:
→ How people use the reserves.

Why do people visit the reserves?

Walking was most popular in all reserves, followed by experiencing natural open space.

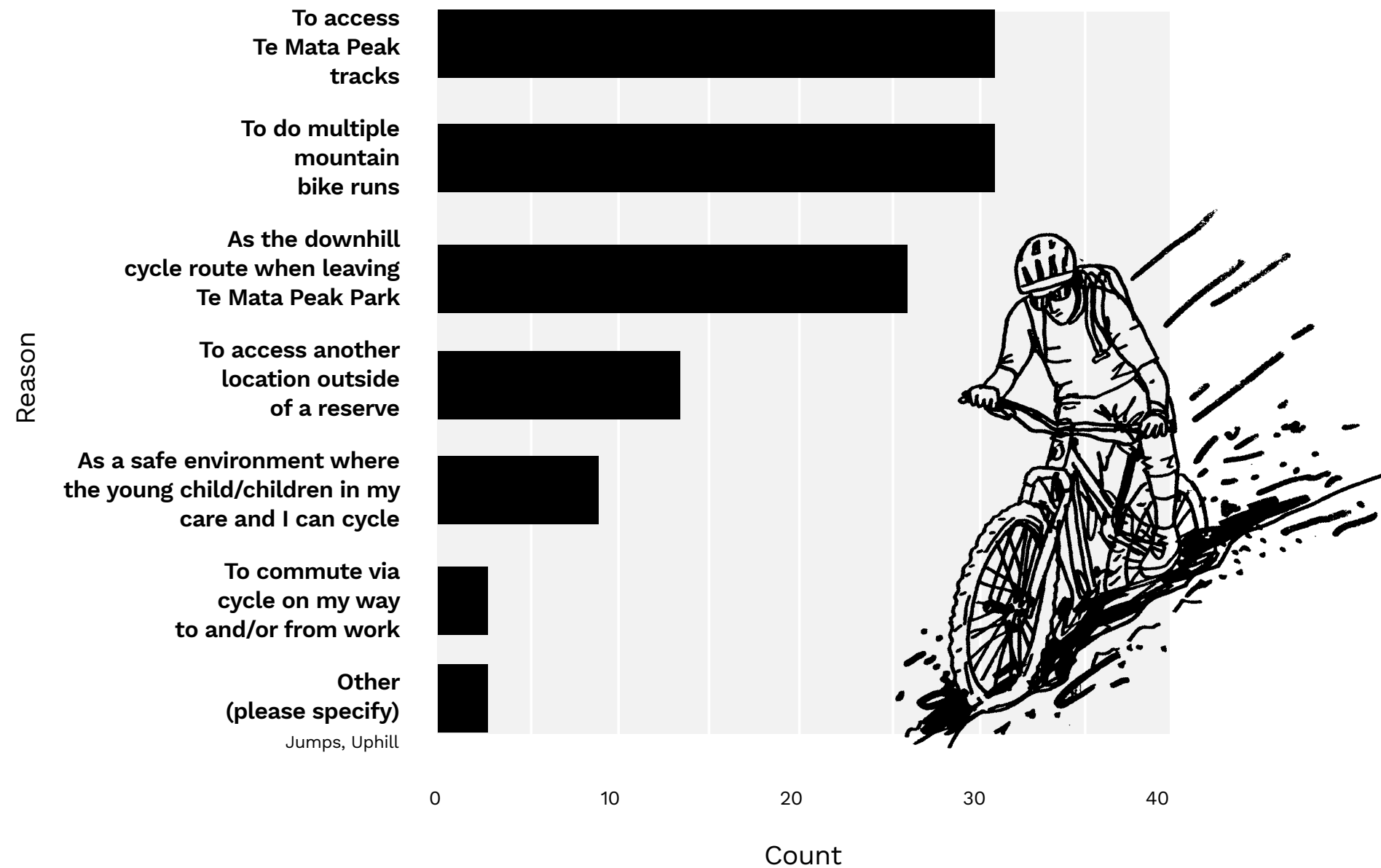


 The top 5 ways that people use each of the reserves are consistent. Tauroa was the only outlier where cycling use exceeds dog walking by 3%.

Qualitative research found the reserves provide the backdrop for communities to interact, connect and enjoy the company of one another. They are places to meet people. Reserve users often connected through activities, such as people with dogs, groups of mountain bikers or walkers who cross paths.

Interviews and the Coffee in Tainui Reserve Event revealed concern by users that the reserves were also being used for unsavoury behaviour, particularly at night. For example, it was mentioned that cars park under the trees along Keith Sands Grove in Tainui Reserve and near the bridge on Keirunga Road to allegedly deal illegal drugs or drink alcohol.

Mountain bike specific use.

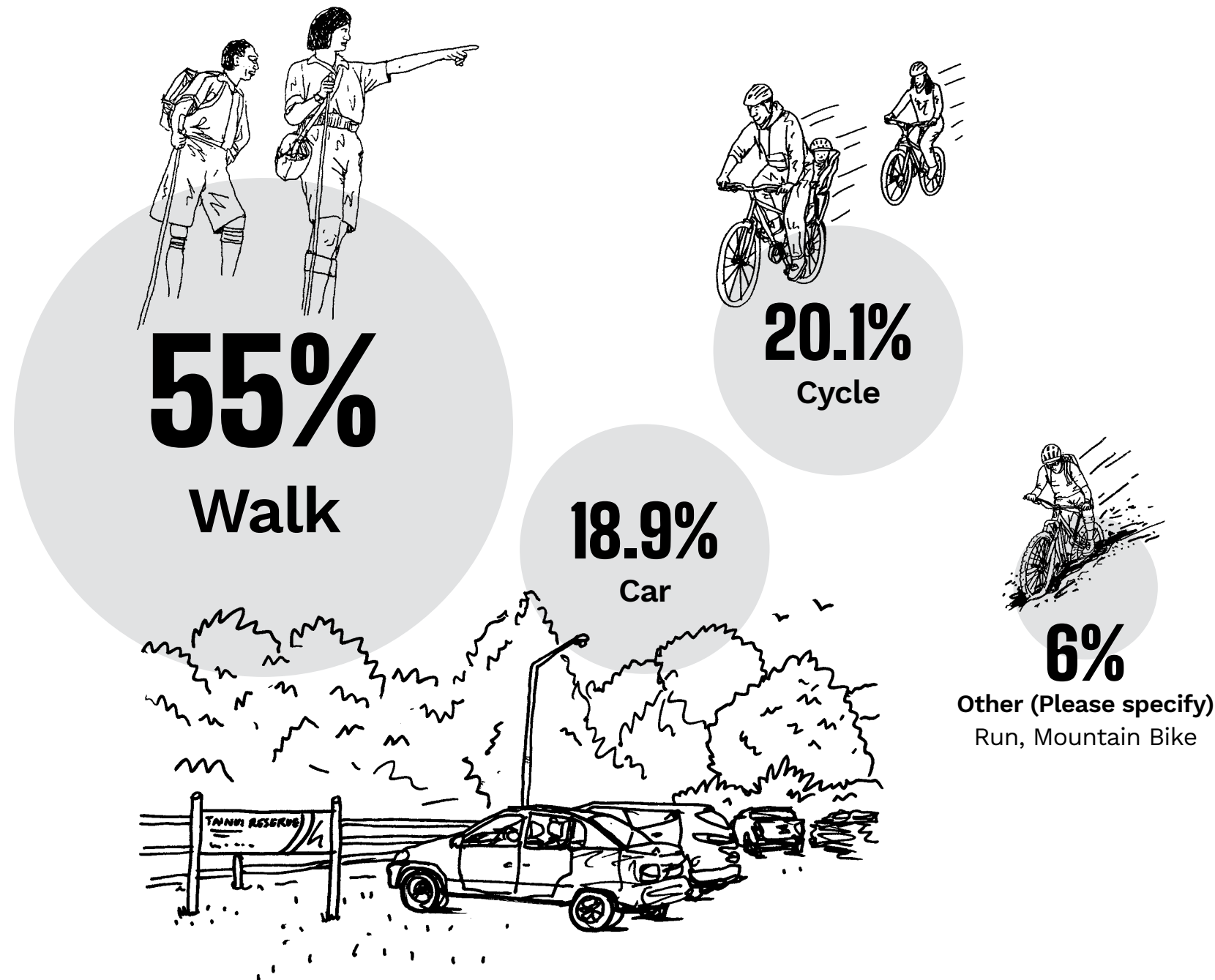


Tainui reserve is primarily used by mountain bikers as access to, and as a downhill route from, Te Mata Park. Tainui Reserve was also used by riders to do multiple mountain bike runs, but qualitative research found that this "gets boring fast". Young riders in particular, would spend most of their time in Tauroa Reserve or at the top of Tainui Reserve at purpose-made jumps/tracks.

Other riders expressed that "all legal tracks to ride, can be ridden within 1 hour". This was considered too short for a decent ride.

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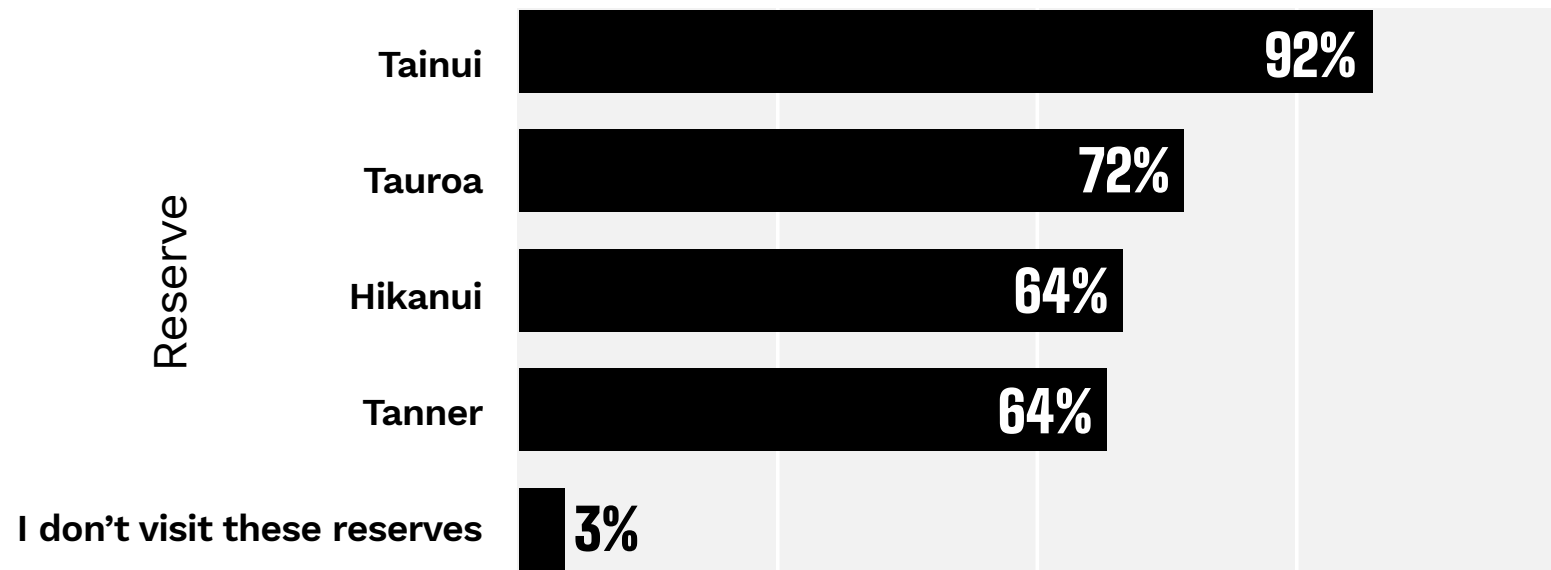
How do people get to the reserves?



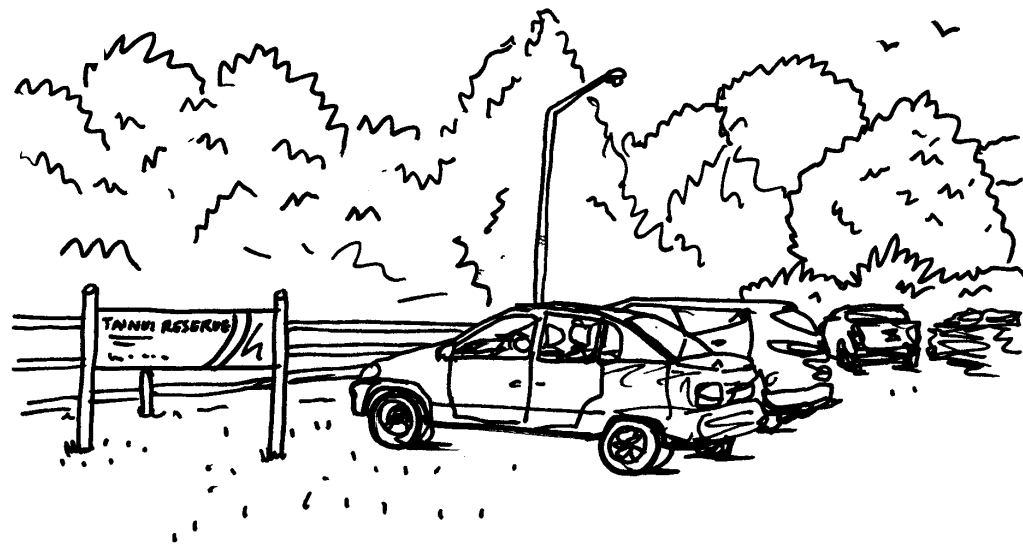
Over
80%
accessed via
active transport

80% of all people walked, ran or cycled to the Reserves. The vast majority of users live in the Havelock North suburb, therefore a focus on active transport infrastructure linking the reserves would further encourage and support users. The research showed the reserves played a critical role in the wider access and trail linkage network for off-road use by all user groups, e.g. commuters passing through on the way to work.

Which reserves do people visit?



Percentage of people visiting the reserves (respondents could select more than one option)



All reserves were visited to a similar degree, with Tainui Reserve being most popular to visit.

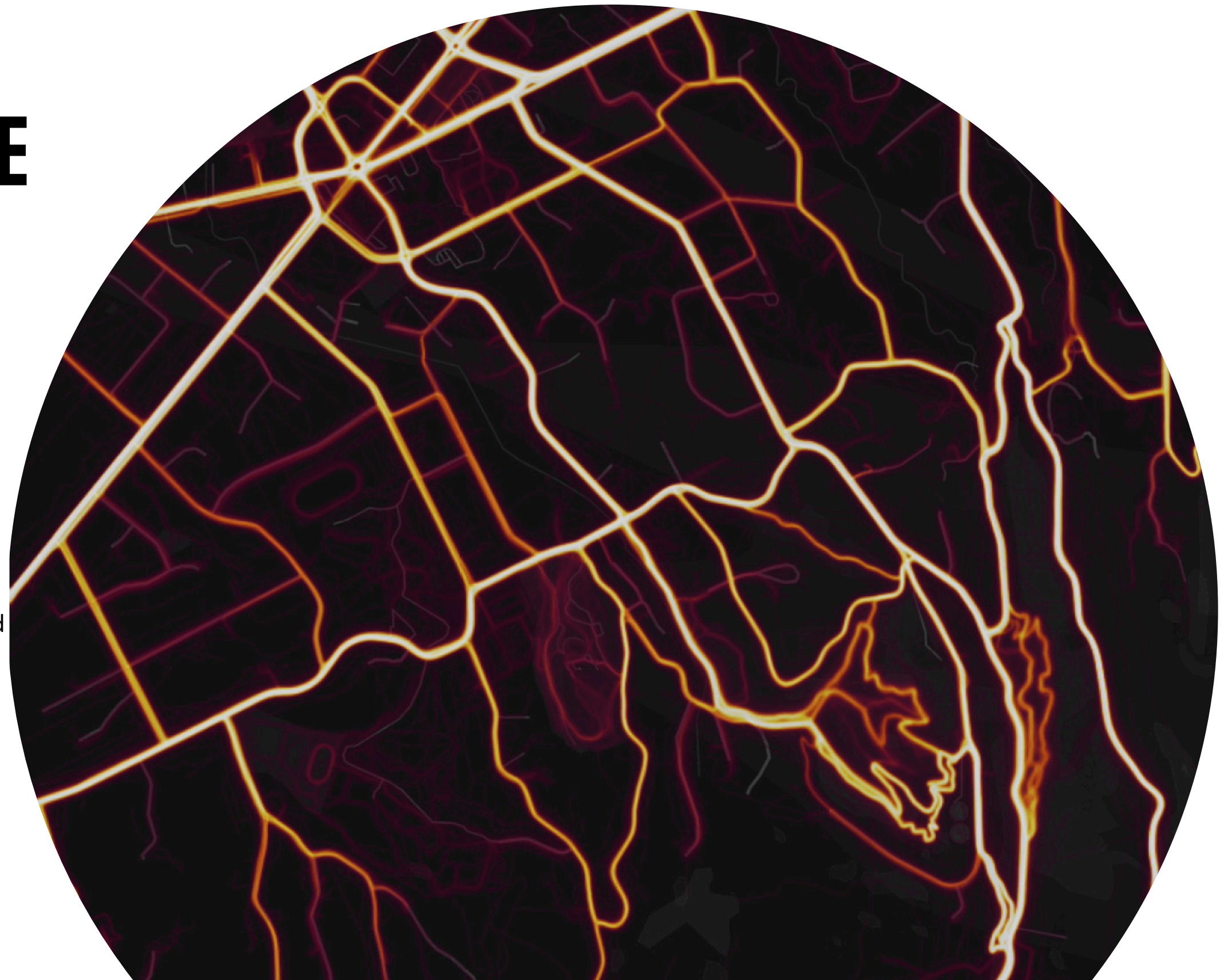
The four reserves are in close proximity, and close to other open spaces, providing a wider and more diverse network for users to access. For example, despite being the smallest reserve, Hikanui had a relatively high level of usage, indicating its critical linkage to other open space destinations such as Te Mata Park.

HOW OFTEN ARE PEOPLE USING THE RESERVES AND WHERE DO THEY GO?

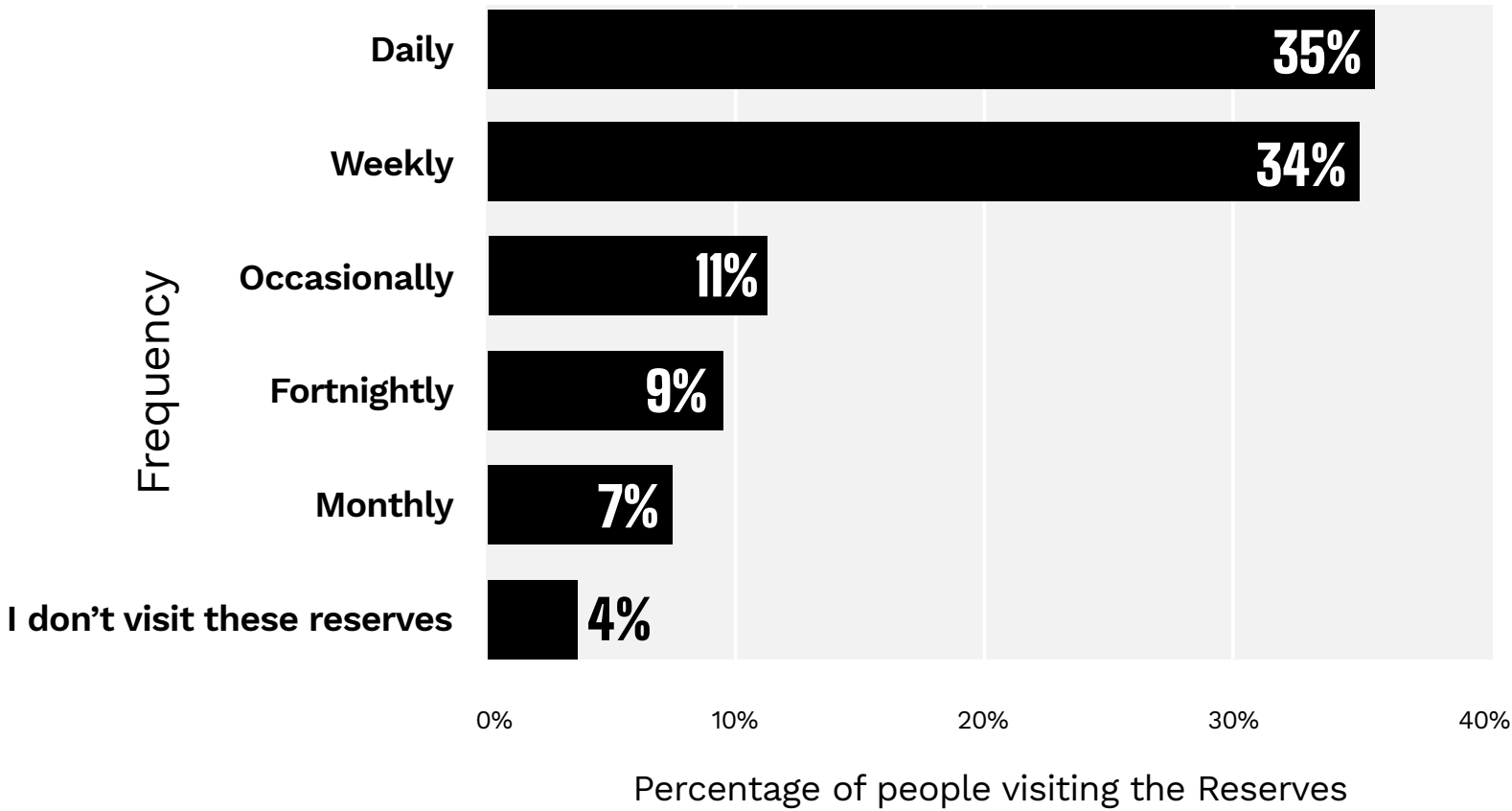
This section covers the volume and frequency of use across the reserves and provides detail on user access behaviour and barriers.


It addresses the following research objectives:

- How often people use the reserves
- Barriers to using the reserves



How often do people visit the Reserves?



 **The average frequency of reserve visits follows the same pattern across individual reserves. Tanner received the highest daily usage at 40%.**

69%

of people are using the reserves weekly or more.

Barriers to using the reserves:

- The majority of barriers noted in the survey were personal issues around not having enough time and physical fitness.
- A number of users noted that physical features such as gates, steps, fences and some tracks make areas difficult to access, for example, people with prams or walkers.
- A small number of users mentioned having to travel too far to get to the the reserves and feeling unsafe on the trails (user conflict).

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Reserve usage. Cyclists.

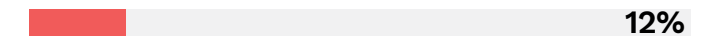


* Other key access points of interest can be analysed specifically on request

Sample statistic on cyclist use demographics.

The data below is a sample of cyclist use statistics at the access from the Keirunga Road entrance between January 1 and April 30, 2021. 290 people completed 1,060 cycle activities.

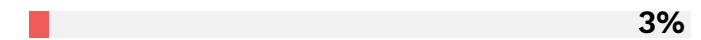
Female



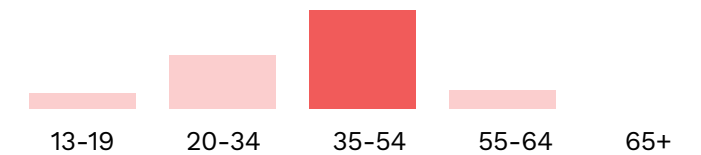
Male



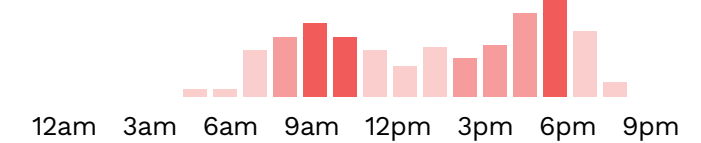
Other / Not Specified



People by age



People by hour



People by day of week



Reserve usage. Walkers and runners.

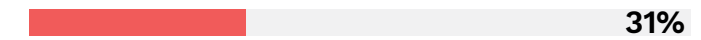


* Other key access points of interest can be analysed specifically on request

Sample statistic on walker/runner use demographics.

The data below is a sample of walker and runner use statistics at the access from Hikanui Drive entrance between January 1 and April 30, 2021. 255 people completed 605 walk or run activities.

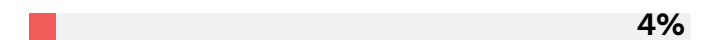
Female



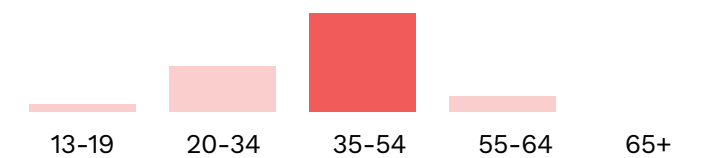
Male



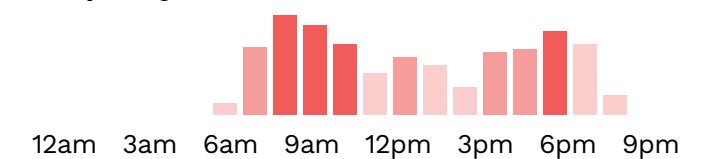
Other / Not Specified



People by age



People by hour



People by day of week



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Keirunga Road Car Park Access.



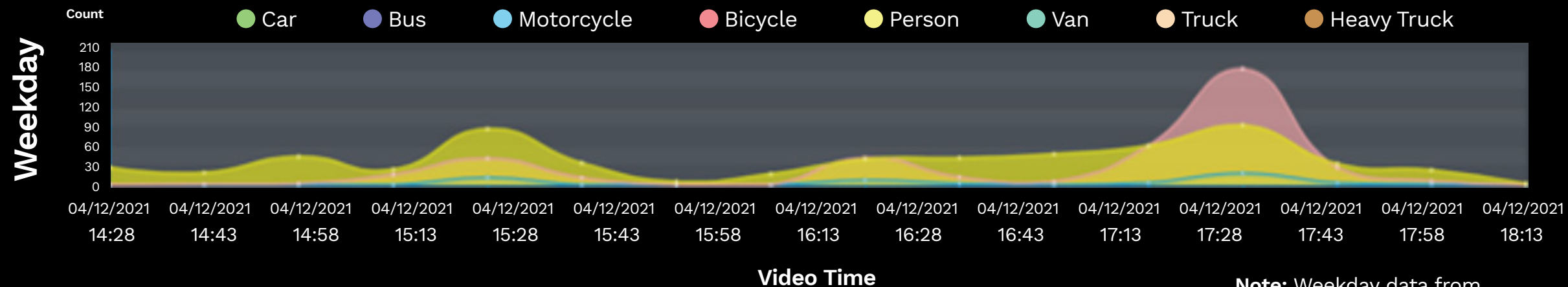
Tainui Reserve Car Park Entrance

Number Per Hour	Weekday	Weekend	% Change
Pedestrian (Yellow)	30.4	30.0	-1%
Cyclist (Red)	4.4	7.4	+68%

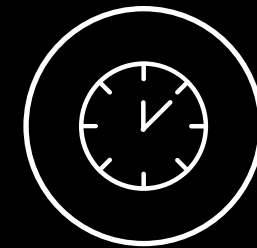
Pedestrian numbers did not significantly fluctuate between week and weekend days, this was the only location without an increase.

A compliance rate of 97% of cyclists using the shared path (on right), with 3% of cyclists using the walking only path (on left).

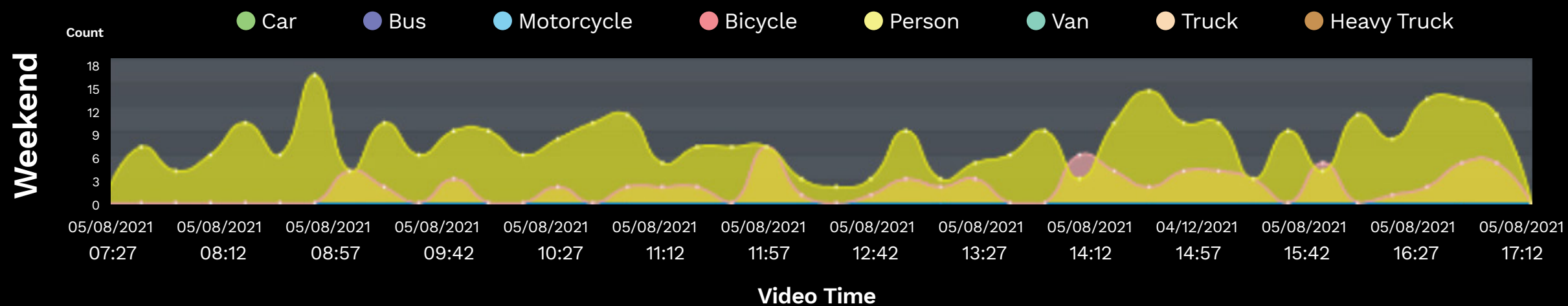
User distribution at Keirunga Road Car Park.



Note: Weekday data from 2:30pm due to camera issue.

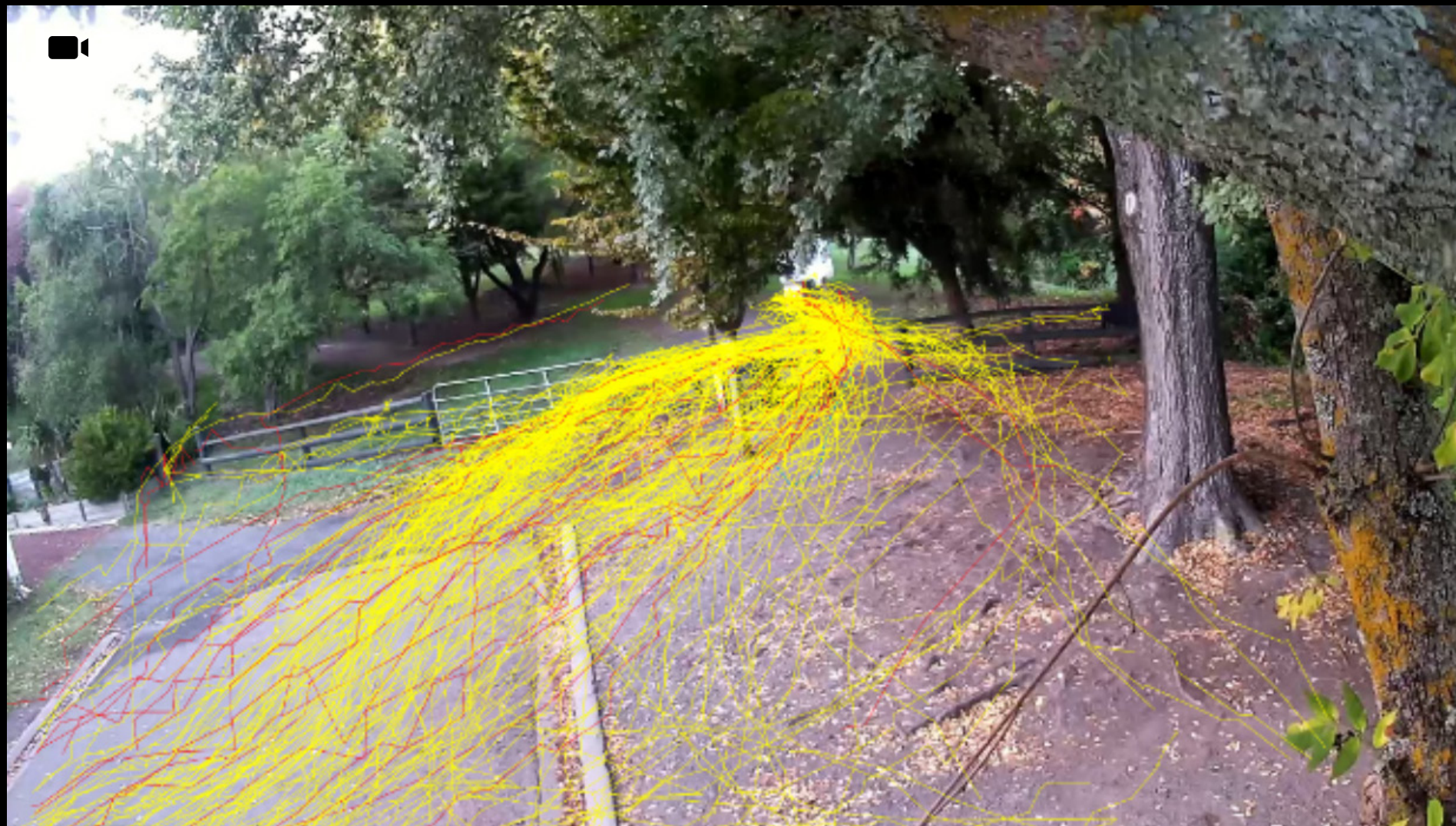


The greatest volume for mountain bikes was at 12:15pm and 2:30pm and foot traffic was at 9:00am and 5:00pm. This area was consistently used throughout the day by pedestrians.



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Keith Sands Grove Access.

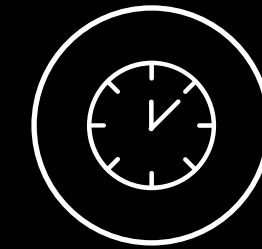
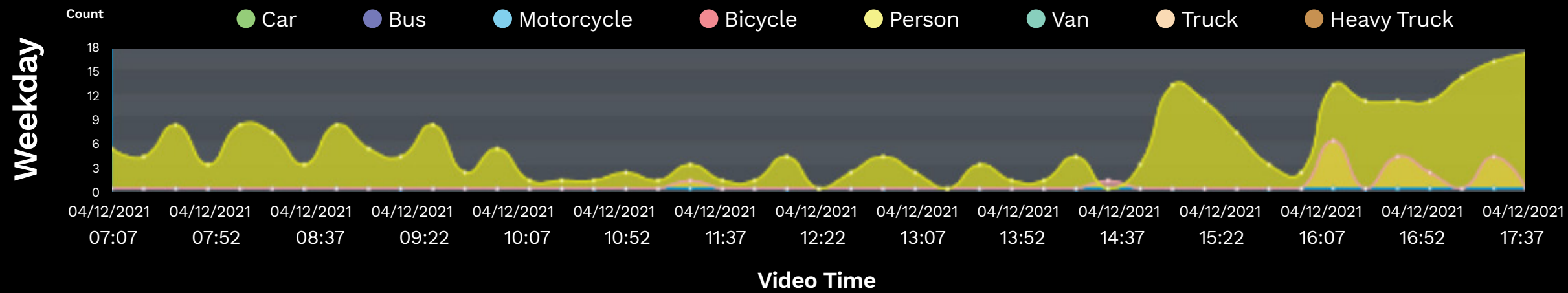


Keith Sands Grove Entrance

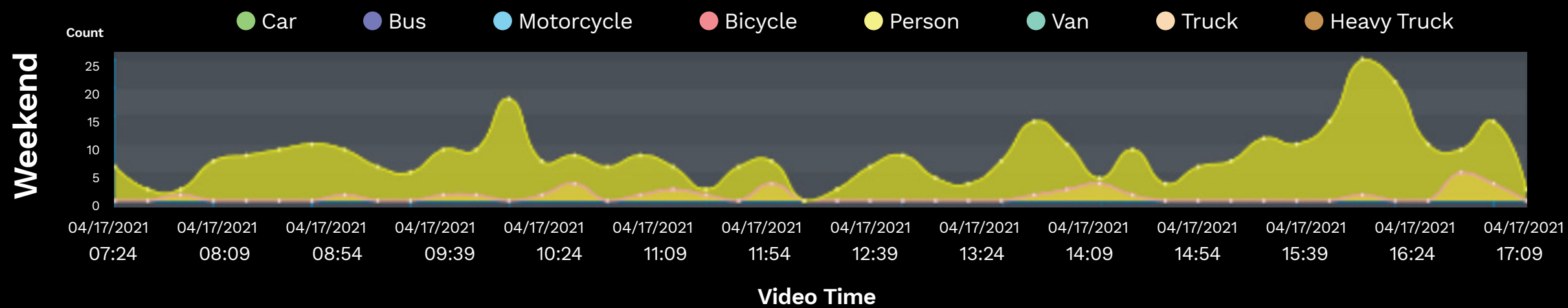
Number Per Hour	Weekday	Weekend	% Change
Pedestrian (Yellow)	21.0	32.3	+54%
Cyclist (Red)	1.6	3	+84%

This was the busiest area for pedestrians on a weekend day across the three camera sites. It was also the quietest area for cyclists of the three sites.

User distribution at Keith Sands Grove.

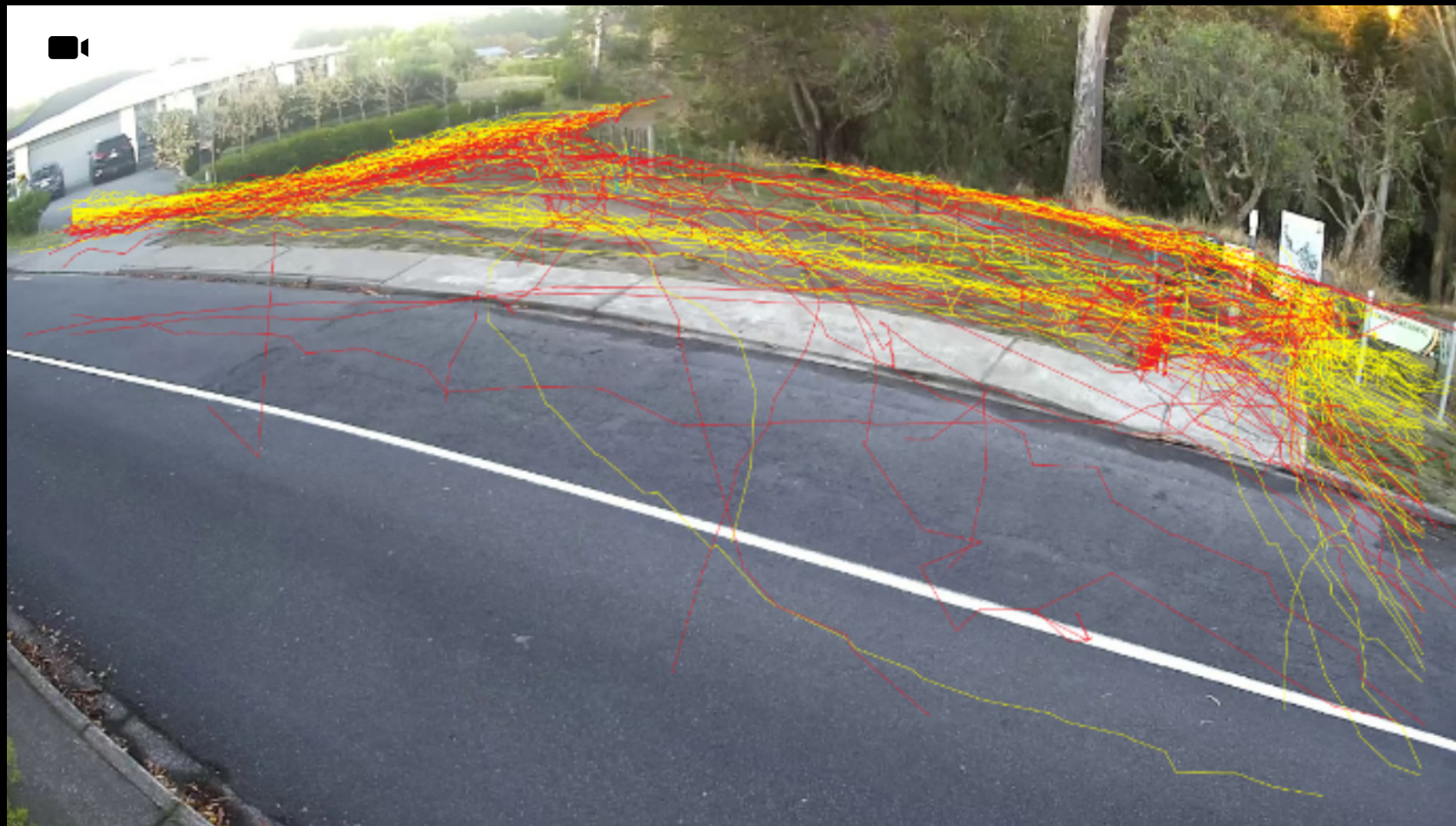


The busiest time for foot traffic was during the evening at 6:00pm on a weekday and 5:00pm on a weekend day.



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Hikanui Drive Access.



Hikanui Drive Entrance

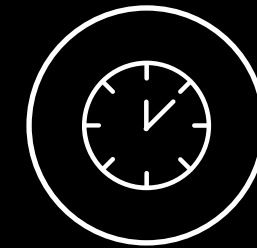
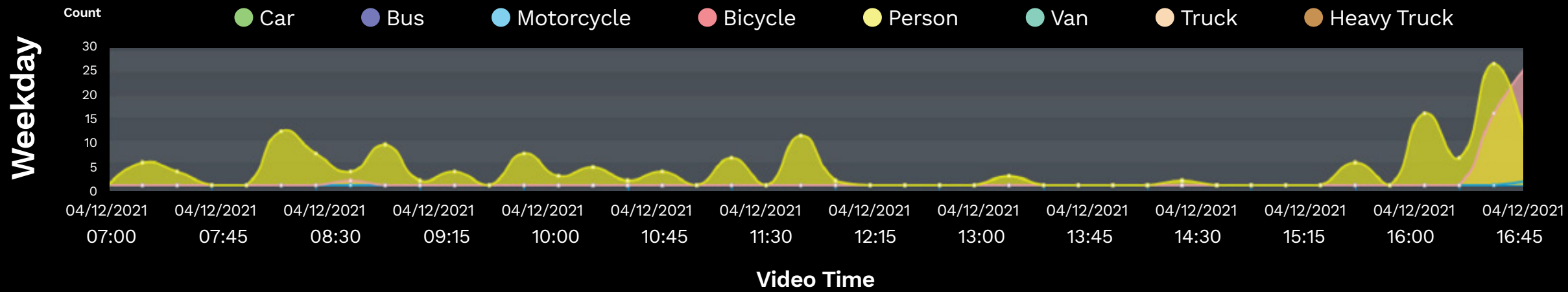
Number Per Hour	Weekday	Weekend	% Change
Pedestrian (Yellow)	13.5	25.9	+92%
Cyclist (Red)	4.3	17.4	+306%

This was the busiest area for cyclists on a weekend day across the three camera sites.

This area also experienced the greatest percentage increase for both pedestrians and cyclists between week and weekend days.

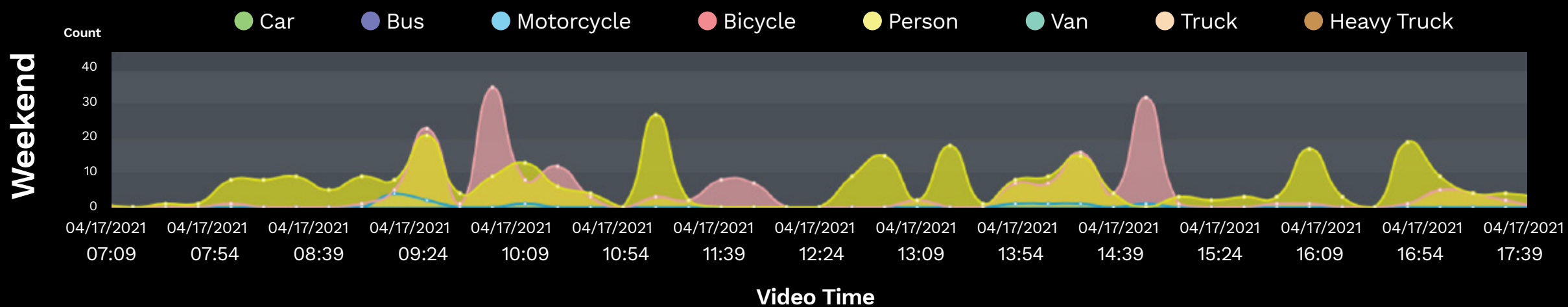
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User distribution at Hikanui Drive.



The busiest time for cyclists was on the weekend between 10:00am and 3:00pm.

Pedestrians use this area most frequently in the morning and evening on weekdays and consistently through the day on the weekend.



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HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THE RESERVES?

This section covers people's positive and negative experiences in the reserves and levels of satisfaction.

It addresses the following objectives:

- Reserve user perceptions and values
- Level of satisfaction with the reserve and amenities
- Issues and concerns with the way the reserve is currently being used

Key findings.

Positive experience.



Nature and Escape.

By far the most valued aspect of the reserves were their use as a natural escape and oasis from urban life. Users frequently linked **the enjoyment of nature to enhancing their physical and mental wellbeing.** The most commonly mentioned aspects were wildlife, the prevalence and shade of the trees, the views, access to fresh water for dogs, natural areas for children to play in and explore, and foraging.



Choice.

The variety of activities and terrain the reserves provide were cited as a key drawcard, with both relaxing and challenging experiences for them and their families. **Users saw the reserves as a natural gym, providing hills to climb and plenty of trails to discover, giving a “sense of adventure”.** Users also appreciated the linkages between the reserves.



Specific Activities.

Users strongly valued the opportunity to walk, run and mountain bike through the reserves. **Being able to tailor their visit by utilising combinations of different trails and avoid monotony was a strong theme.** Users frequently listed the many different ways their family members utilised the reserves.



Community Connector.

Users saw the reserves as **a place to socialise, meet friends, and interact with other users.** Encounters with other users in the Reserves has the power to shape attitudes towards the reserves and the wider community.

Key findings.

Positive experience.



Off-leash Dogs.

A strong theme came through from dog walkers who **appreciated the off-leash dog areas, and the rare sense of freedom this afforded their pets**. Dog-owners were glad to have dog bags provided, while other users saw these as being underutilised, or had noticed them strewn beside trails. Increased dog bins was a suggested remedy.



Peace and Tranquility.

Users strongly valued the chance to experience a tranquil environment, as a way to enhance their day. A strong theme was the **peaceful environment, which provided users with a sense of relaxation and calm away from traffic**. An interesting theme was the view of the reserves as an asset to be protected for their serenity, alongside a desire to see them shared and appreciated by the wider community.



Culture and History.

Passionate language was used when speaking about the Hikanui Pā site for its historical significance and irreplaceable character. **A frequent request was for additional signage with information about the pā site**. One user visited the site to teach their children about their whakapapa, while others saw the site as being threatened by neglect.

Sound bites. (Positive)

“I like being able to let my dog off lead and take my children to a safe place on their bikes. They enjoy going on their own at times too, to play. I also mountain bike and like using reserves to access Te Mata peak.”

“Having a communal piece of bush amongst suburban housing that everyone can enjoy. We are all very lucky to be able to use it.”

“I feel better all day when I commute to work through the reserves.”

“Off-lead areas for dog to chase pinecones. Quiet time with nature. The kids love the rope swing and fallen trees to explore in Tauroa Reserve.”

“I enjoy the variety of environment, the seclusion, and the variety of track terrain. I very much enjoy the addition of the mountain bike tracks.”

“Walking amongst the trees and experiencing the peace and quiet of nature, so being rejuvenated in spirit and energy.”

“Being able to enjoy walking my dog off-lead, within a shaded environment and having access to fresh clean water for my dog to cool down”.

“Beauty, birdsong, good walking with my dog with some rough terrain, shade and not too busy.”

“I come here every day with my friends and we socialise, have fun and get better at biking. It’s my happy place. I come here after I have a bad day at school and I can just let my heart out. I love it and all the fun jumps. It means a lot to me”.

“The birds singing and the good running paths.”

“A clear open space for the children to play and explore, teaching my children about the significance of different areas (the pā site) to our whakapapa.”

Key findings.

Negative experience.



Dog and Mountain Biking Issues.

The two most prevalent themes were the specific issues related to these two user groups. **The key issue in relation to dogs in the reserves was directed at negligent dog-owners.** There was a high level of disgruntlement with dog-owners who fail to clean up after their dogs, and those owners who lack control over their dogs when they are off-leash. The research found instances of dogs causing physical harm to people. For example, being hit by a dog in the reserves, being bitten, chased or taken off balance by a running or jumping dog.



In terms of mountain biking, the perceived issues are around the sharing of tracks (or an anticipation that people will find riders on Walking-Only Tracks).

People noted feeling scared and intimidated by encountering speeding mountain bikes on walking only trails. Experiences and stories of close calls were given as reasons for people not feeling they could relax and enjoy their experience in the reserves. **Ideally, users saw complete separation as the solution to these concerns, with other suggestions including planting to divide tracks.** There was a strong sub-theme around the potential of signage to clearly explain the activities allowed on each track, user group etiquette and expectations.



“Other Users”

A more minor but still prevalent theme was the attitudes of other reserve users themselves. **People referenced instances of being made to feel unwelcome due to their chosen activity, or encountering other users in the midst of conflict.** The most common occurrence of these feelings came from mountain bikers feeling unfairly targeted by other users, having their trails tampered with, encountering walkers on Mountain-Biking-Only Tracks and having a lack of suitable terrain options.

Key findings.

Negative experience.



Nature Decline.

The driving force behind the concern was related to poor maintenance (primarily weed control) and the perceived lack of prevalence and prioritisation of native plants and trees. A conflicting sub-theme emerged which indicated some people viewed the felling of trees (pines/non-natives) negatively and others viewed it as a necessary procedure for safety and native bush preservation. Some users also raised concerns around muddy or polluted waterways.



Track Maintenance.

The theme of track maintenance was closely linked to weather and seasonal variance. **People cited muddy, slippery and wet tracks as contributing to a negative experience in the reserves.** Creating zig-zags to replace steep areas and surface quality improvements were cited as possible ways to help mitigate this.



Litter Issues.

People felt strongly about rubbish in the reserves and the negative impact this has on the the ecosystem and experience of the reserve. **Dog owners leaving the dog waste bags or not picking up the waste was the most common example given.**

Sound bites. (Negative).

“Track maintenance is lacking in some places, with water running across the track, and the track surface falling away on the sides. Weeds need clearing in some places”.

“Mountain bikes on walking tracks are dangerous.”

“Coming across bags of dog poo left behind on the tracks”

“When running having concerns about unpredictable dogs not well supervised by owners.”

“Many tracks not great for winter/wet walking. Some track conditions are poor.”

“The silent surprise of cyclists suddenly passing.”

“Lack of Reserve maintenance, weeds, dying plants from lack of watering, potential unrealised.”

“We still see walkers/runners using the designated MTB only track. Don't mind seeing others using the tracks if they are taking care and responsibility also.”

“Concerns about dogs not under control and people on bikes coming around bends and us not being able to get out of each other's way.”

“When there are mountain bikers on a walking track and they are going fast. I love the way Tauroa reserve is quiet, so I don't like it noisy.”

“The fact that there isn't a trail to go up in Tainui as it means I have ride up on the road which puts me off due to cars not always abiding speed limits. That some people think the reserve should just be for walkers.”

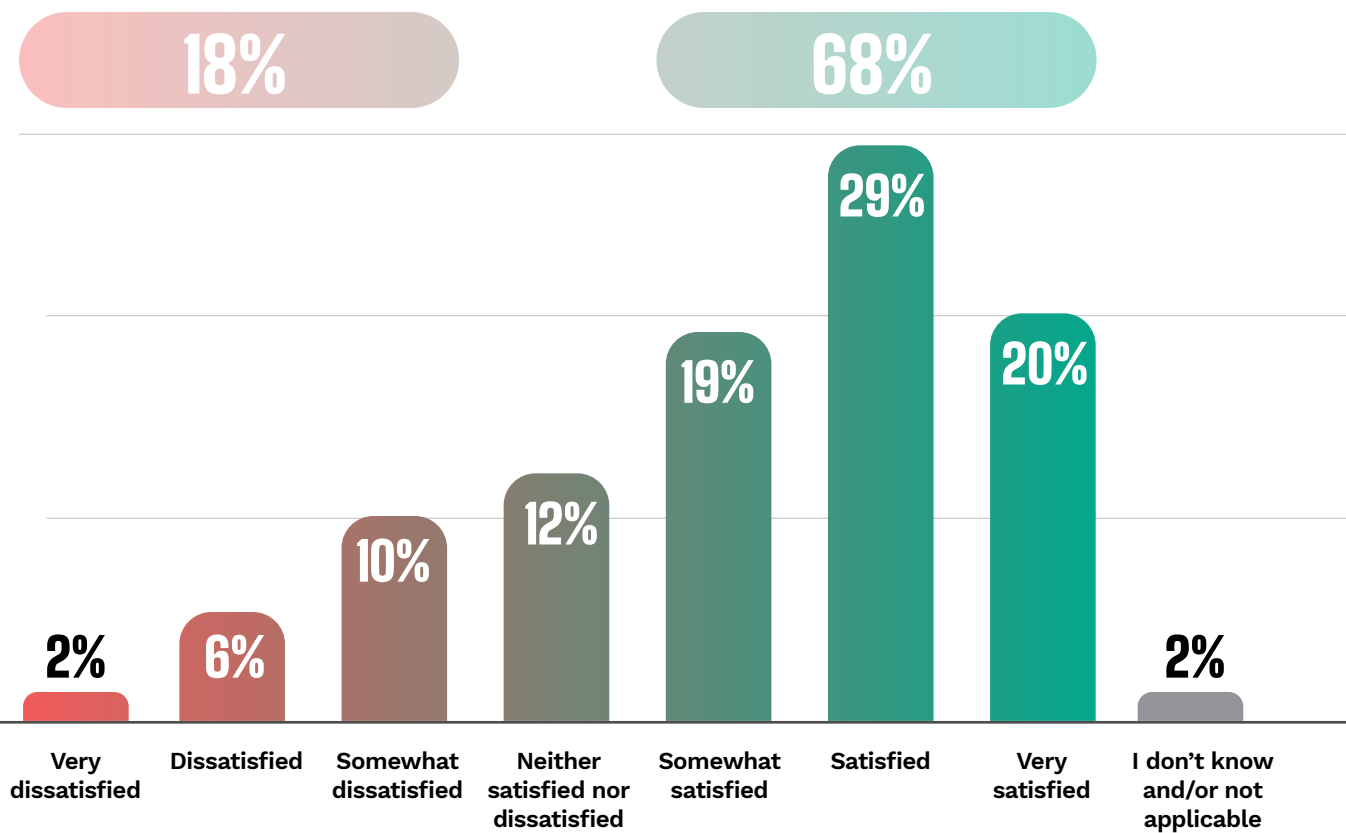
“Many of the old dangerous Pine trees, quite a few of which are in a condition accompanied by wind will kill someone unless they are felled.”

“Green dog poo bags thrown in bush (could they be orange?). Slippery muddy downward paths in the winter.”

Satisfaction Level.

All reserves.

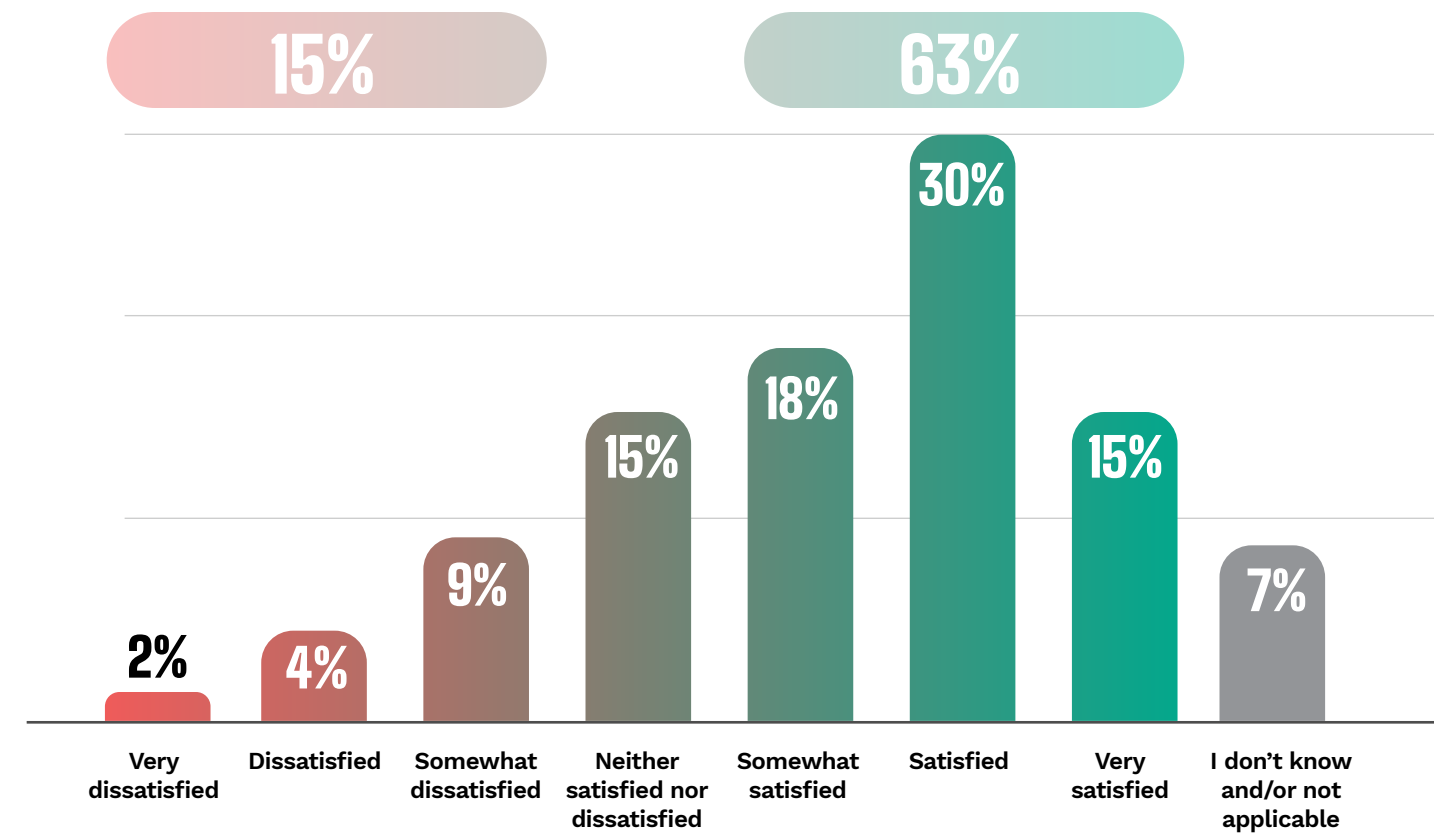
Way-finding and signage.
(Understanding where you are and can go in the Reserve(s))



On occasion there were issues with people getting lost and found the **signage in the reserve confusing or disorientating.**

The data shows people are satisfied with wayfinding, signage and linkages. **63% of people were satisfied with the linkages.** The data shows that users are visiting all reserves at a similar level (aside from an increase in Tainui). This indicates that many people are familiar with the network and are aware of how to use it.

Linkages within and between Reserves.



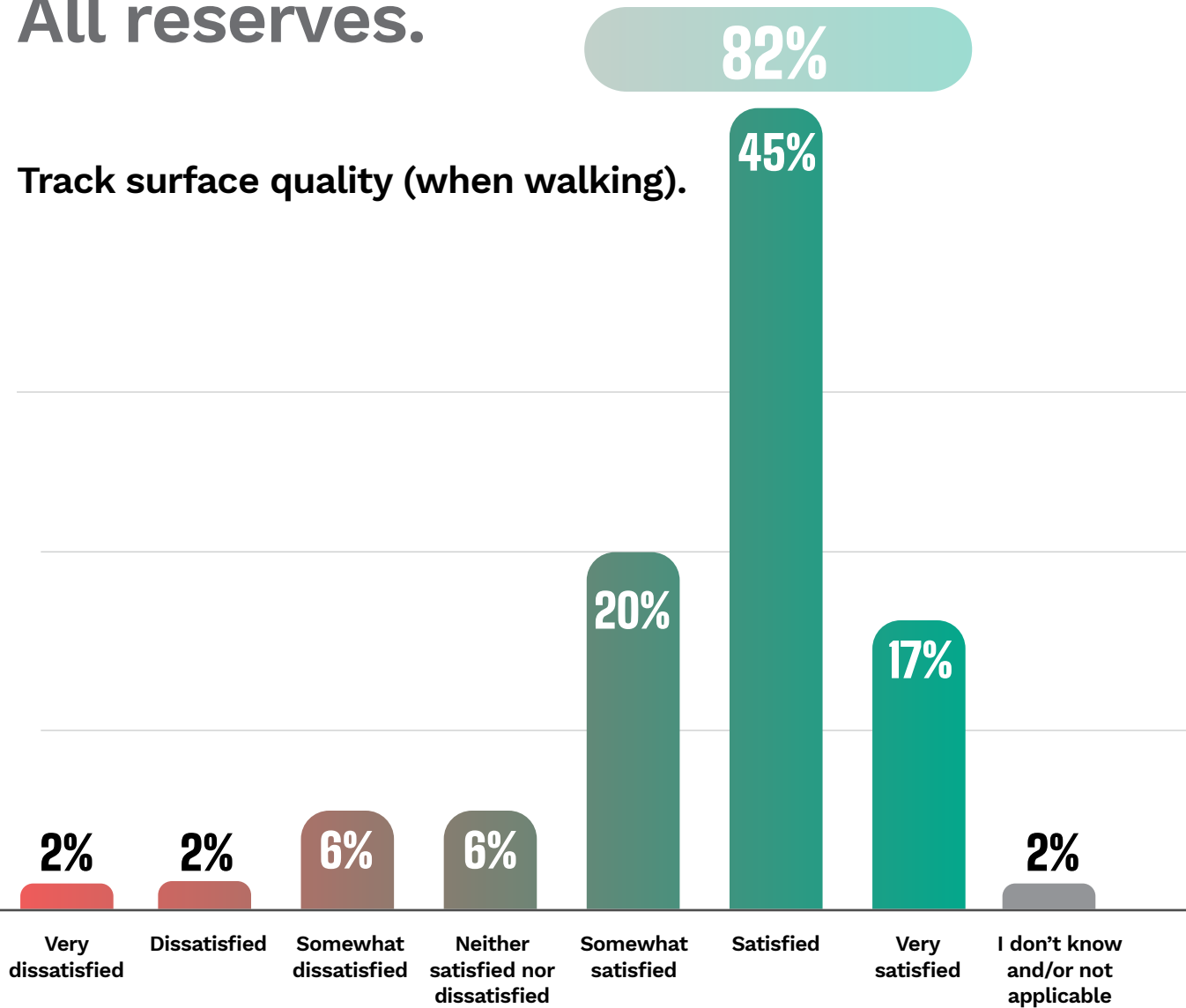
Outside of the reserves, narrow roading infrastructure and a lack of footpaths were seen as an issue. This theme was especially prevalent within the mountain bike user group relating to safety and the need to ride on roads with vehicle traffic.

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Satisfaction Level.

All reserves.

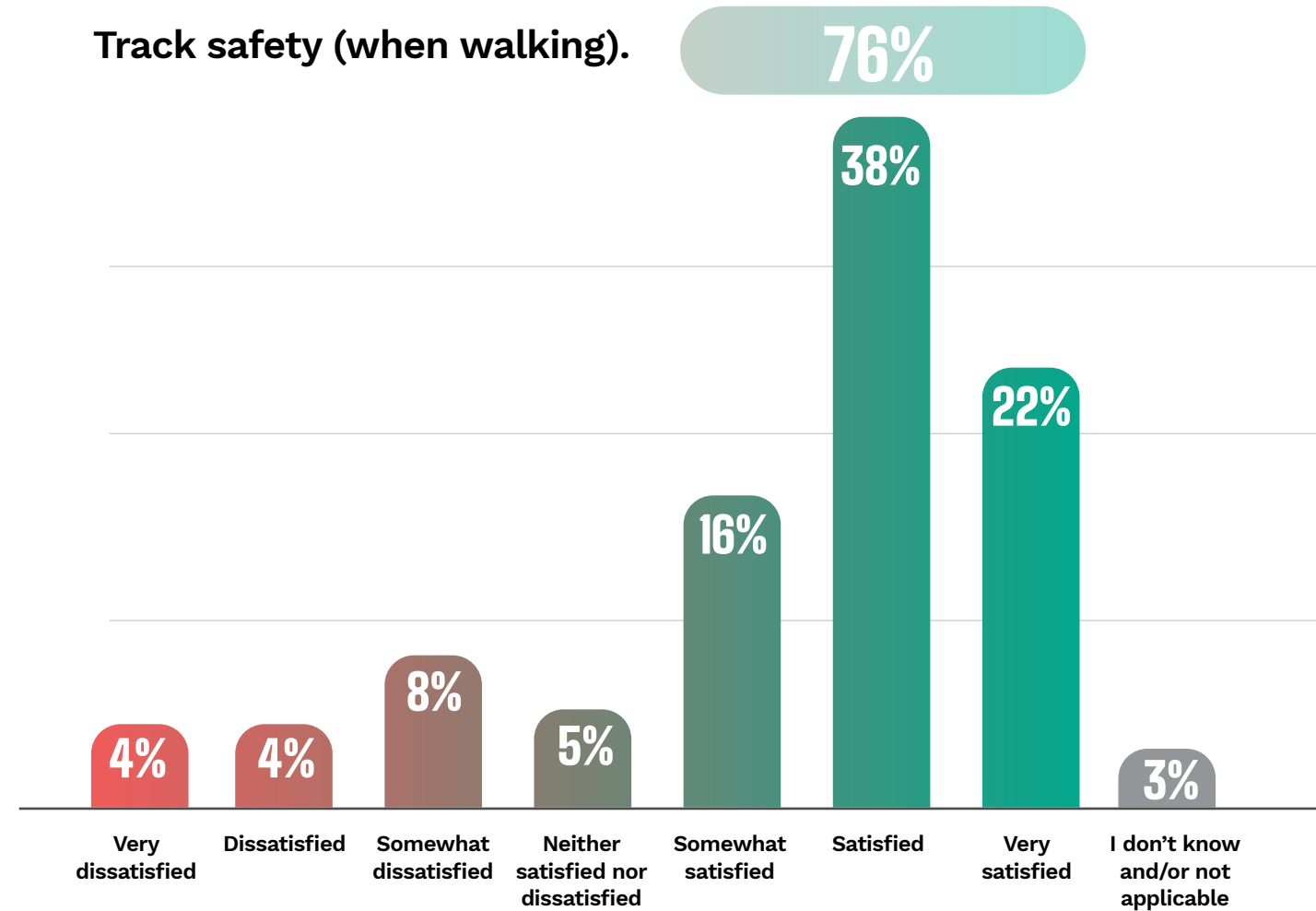
Track surface quality (when walking).



People indicated that they enjoyed the natural winding feel to the tracks. Dissatisfaction stemmed from narrow, shared paths with limited vision and blind corners making it difficult to see when mountain bikers and walkers were on the same track.

The lack of track maintenance was seen as an issue. The walking workshop revealed that overgrown vegetation made it difficult to see who might be approaching.

Track safety (when walking).



Dissatisfaction stemmed primarily from users experiencing safety issues on mountain bikes or on shared walking tracks. People expressed incidents where there were 'close calls' resulting in negative interactions with other user groups.

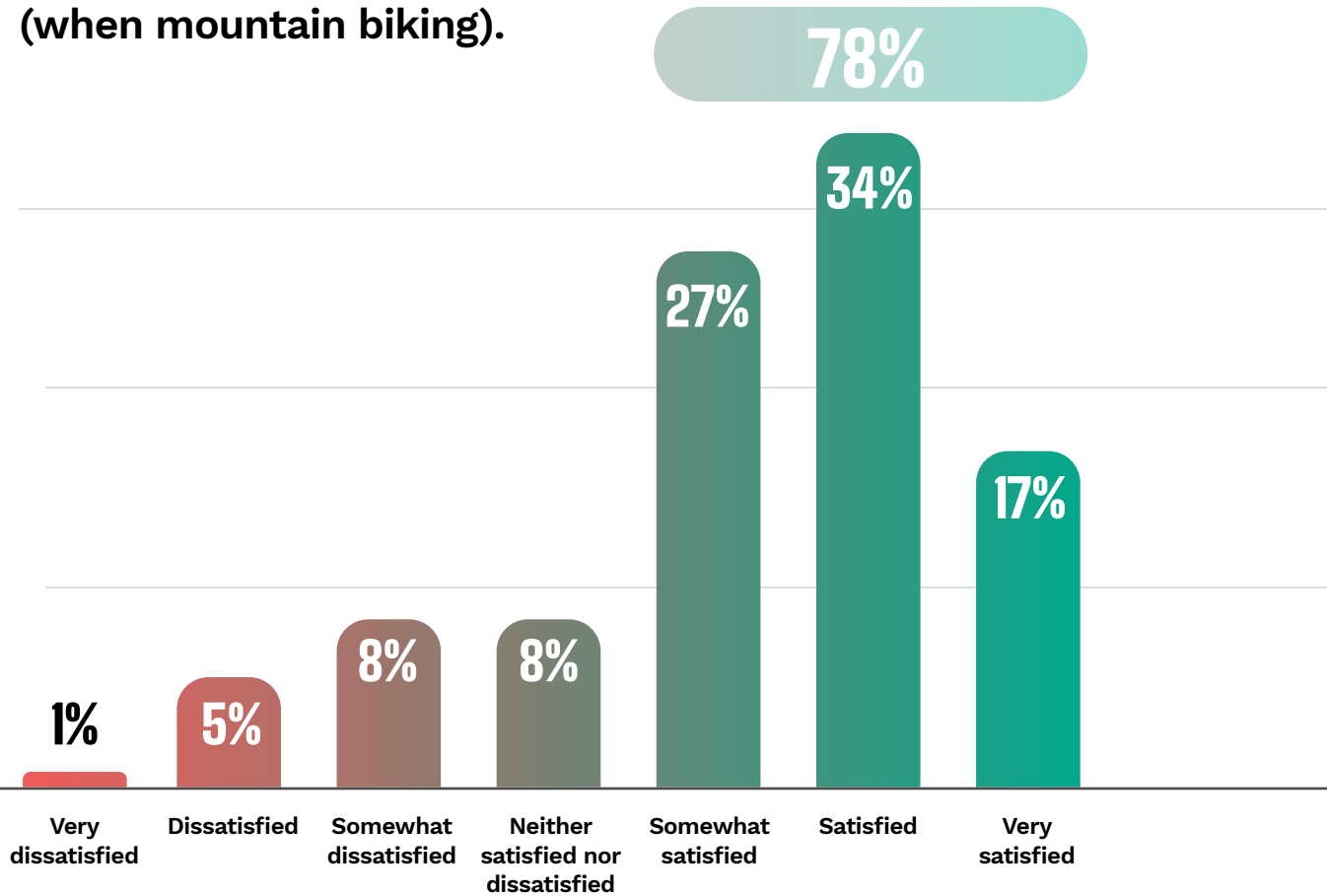
There was a negative flow-on effect from this with people feeling that the wider experience of the reserves such as the tranquillity and being with nature were impacted, especially in relation to experiencing mountain bikers.

FOLKL: PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

Satisfaction Level.

All reserves.

Track surface quality
(when mountain biking).

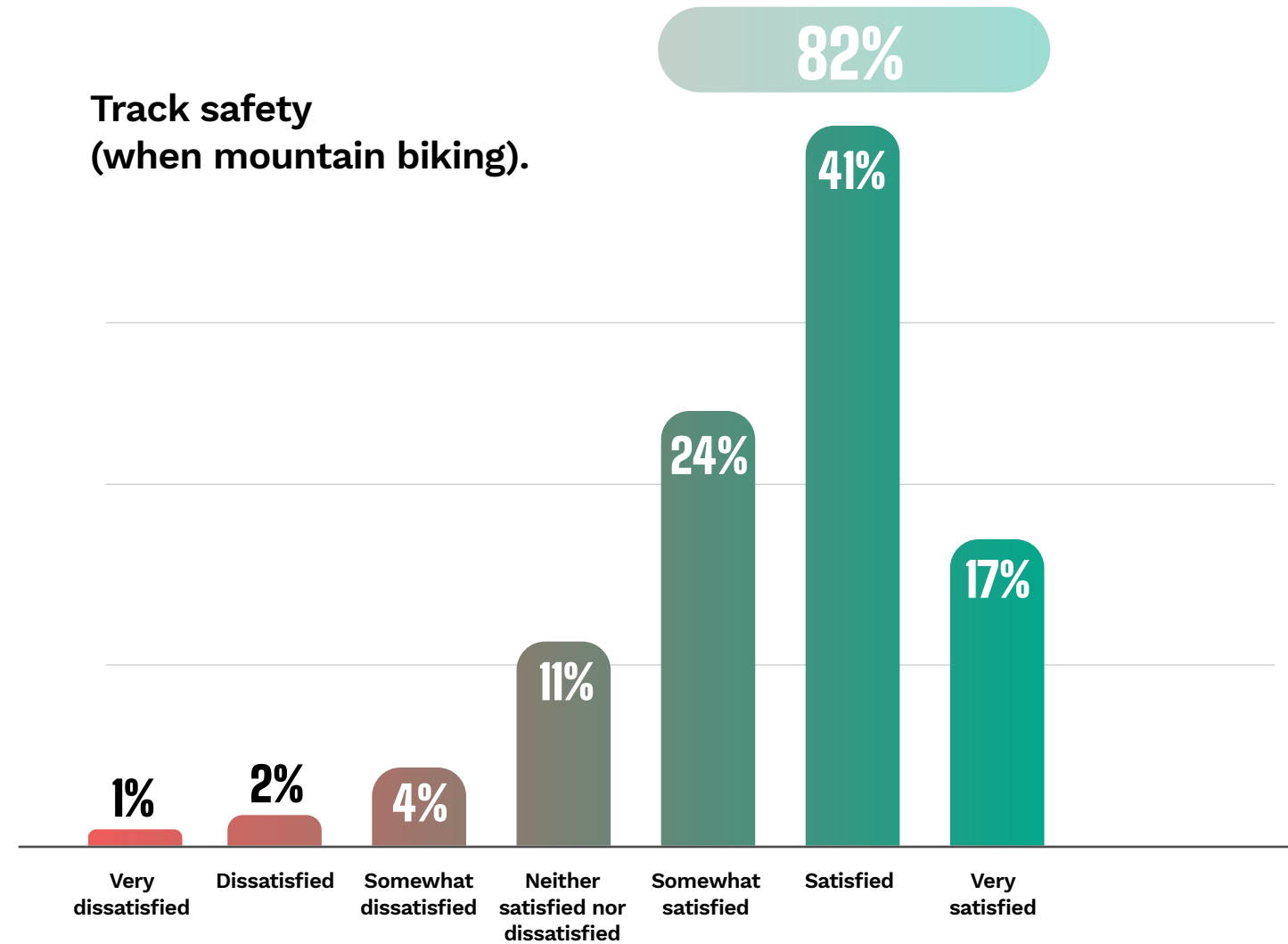


Mountain bikers found the track quality to be **satisfactory**. Qualitative data revealed that the mountain bike trails and jump development has very much been a community effort. **As volunteers constructed many mountain bike tracks there was a collective sense of ownership and personal connection to these tracks.**

The Walking Workshop and Interviews noted that the landings on some mountain bike surfaces had been damaged and not maintained.

SOURCE: FOLKL RESEARCH, PARK USER SURVEY 2021 N37, FOLKL INTERVIEWS, WALKING WORKSHOP, OBSERVATION

Track safety
(when mountain biking).



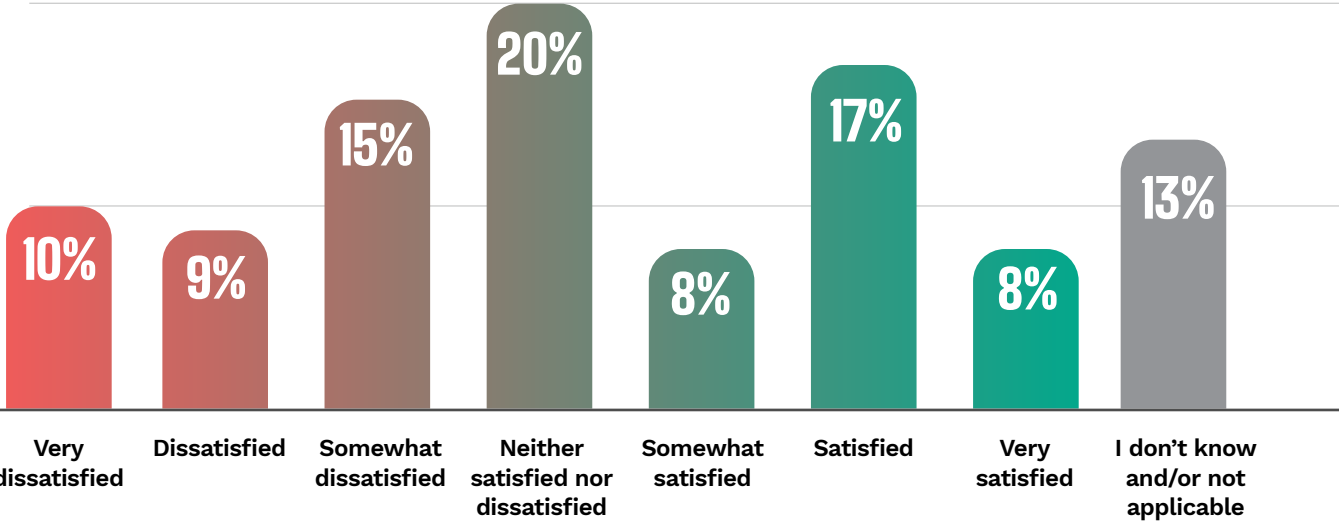
Overall, mountain bikers felt the tracks were **safe**. **Dissatisfaction primarily stemmed from vegetation creating hazards on trails.** Contrary to the chart, qualitative feedback from **younger mountain bikers felt that the tracks were 'boring' and 'too safe'**. They actively sought more challenging terrain which the area does not currently have.

During the research period there were no indications of any known physical contact or serious incidents that occurred on the tracks between riders undertaking their mountain bike activity and other users.

FOLKL: PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

Satisfaction Level. All reserves.

Cultural and historical information.



There was concern about the state of the Hikanui Pā. People wished to gain more knowledge about the Pā’s significance and history and to see it respected and protected from further denigration and erosion.

Any other comments (key themes):



Mountain Bike track development:

- Further development (uphill tracks in Tainui and more options for different skill levels)
- Increased level of maintenance

Tracks (General):

- More maintenance, designated tracks and fewer shared tracks.

Signage:

- Hikanui Pā site information, more historical information, and information on wildlife, trees and plants.
- Track signage maintained (vandalism issue) and further clarity.

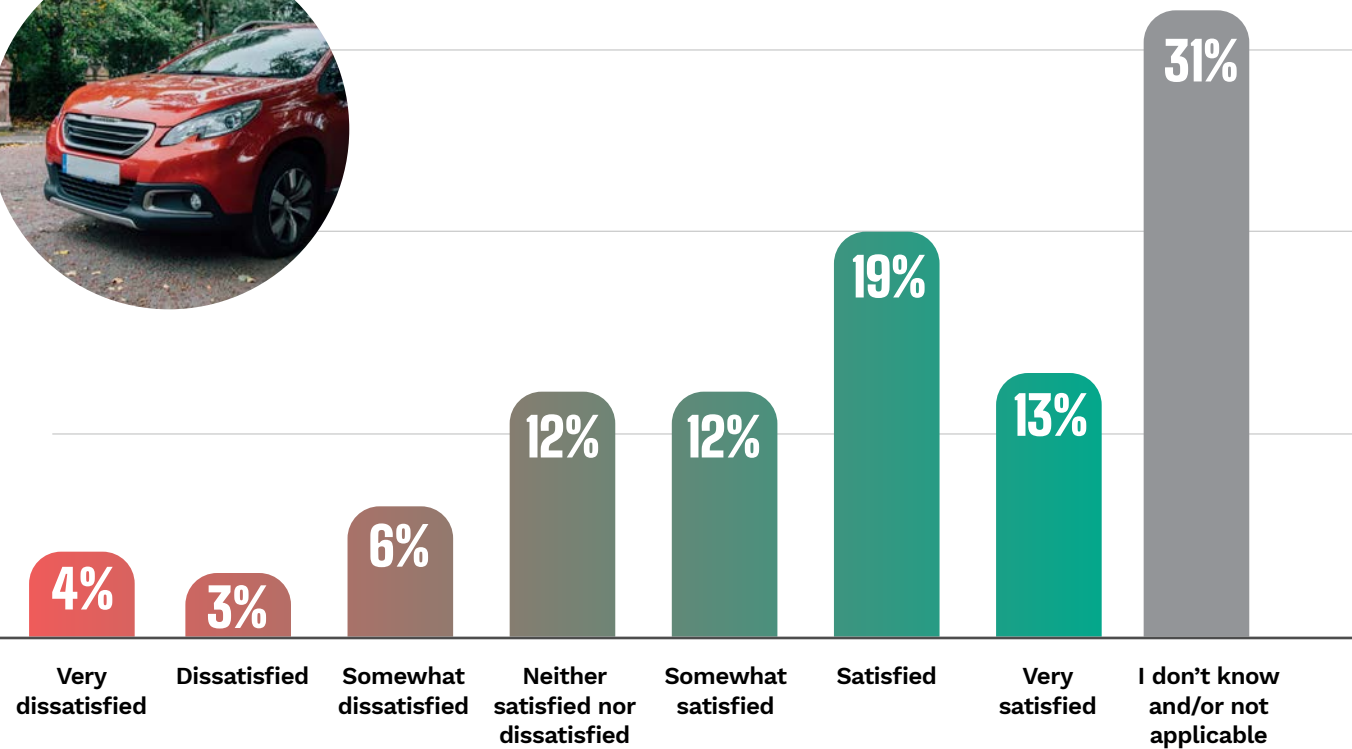
“I would like to see some research being done on the Hikanui Pā site, restoration and relevant signage.”

“The Pā site needs signage and please provide information about it. It is a treasure that we are not celebrating - so disappointing.”

Satisfaction Level.

All reserves.

Car parking.



45% of users were at least somewhat satisfied with car parking, while car parking was not applicable to over 30% of users.

During the research observation periods, the car park areas did not reach full capacity. Participants indicated that **the only time there was insufficient parking was during the Triple Peaks Event, which utilises nearby Te Mata Park.**

Car parking issues are understood to be a more isolated to the residents of Keith Sands Grove who live with the day-to-day impact of this. Residents expressed distress about being tooted at or verbally abused when accessing their driveways. Other concerns were vehicle speeds and cars parking on the grass, causing very muddy berms in winter, or very dusty berms in summer. Residents were upset that their specific needs were part of this wider review process, as they felt these deserved urgent attention.

Sound bites.

Changes and/or improvements.

“Separate bike and walk tracks so it was safer and easier to commute using my bike, to work. One track often gets crowded on the way to school.”

“Keep the natural paths but repair where boards are broken and netting bunched up. Some edges of paths have slipped away. Some water leaks make track slippery.”

“Need to start looking at urban areas as part of nature and planting more natives and restoring our streams.”

“Better tracks. Better access points. Better flow and linking parks together. Make it an experience.”

“I would like to see better access for people with less mobility (wheelchair, walking frame, and pushchair users) in our parks. A concrete path beside the stream along Keith Sands Grove and across the bottom of Tainui reserve would assist with this. Would also like to see some parking at the Tanner St end of Keith Sands.”

“Have full separation of cycling and walking tracks. Better signage on the difficulty of tracks. Track map at each end, as on Te Mata Peak.”

“Pā site education.”

“Separate walkers from cyclists and clamp down on unofficial cycle tracks. Enable cyclists to safely access the start of the downhill cycle track.”

“Should be an information board about Hikanui Pā site and other historical information regarding the history of the respective reserves.”

“I love our reserves and would like to see more emphasis on returning them to their natural flora and fauna. Some reserves should encourage more relaxed walking free from high speed off-road cyclists.”

“As a walker, pet-owner and mountain biker, I feel that the Tainui Reserve is too small to allow mountain biking. Cycling covers ground rapidly and it's far too tempting for a cyclist to “stray” onto walking-only areas. This speed difference between walking and cycling feels incompatible within the tight confines of the Tainui Reserve. This, combined with the unpredictable movements of off-lead dogs, is an accident waiting to happen. This peaceful and rare off-lead area needs to be preserved for the dogs and their owners.”



**RESERVE USER
NEEDS AND
OPPORTUNITIES.**

1

Highlight that the reserves are for all people.

There is a sense of disharmony stemming from issues such as the physical danger posed by off-leash dogs and a perceived sense of 'aggressive' behaviour from mountain bikers. Designated tracks and signage have altered behaviour in the reserves. For example, mountain bikers previously rode to anticipate walkers however, this is less so now that the designated tracks have gone in. Meanwhile, some non-mountain bikers have taken to 'policing' walking only tracks.

There is an opportunity to shift the focus beyond stereotypical 'user groups' to create a positive, objective narrative which emphasises that the reserves are for everyone. Mechanisms for achieving this could include opportunities for user groups to meet and interact in order to breakdown barriers. Events, informative sessions or signage and the formation of a Havelock Reserves Management Group comprising different reserves users who come together towards a shared goal are also options to explore.



2

Look at options to connect the reserves network and separate user activities on tracks.

The conflicts between user groups largely occur on shared tracks or when a user is on the incorrect trail. There was some evidence that user groups are using each others' designated tracks. This issue in part has been intensified as no uphill mountain bike track for riders has been formed to access the top of the Tainui downhill track. This has forced riders out onto the road, or up illegal walking only tracks. **This was seen by users as a critically important 'missing link' to the mountain bike network.**

User groups have stated they would prefer separate tracks to avoid conflict. Building an uphill mountain bike route and exploring surrounding land opportunities to redirect mountain bikers to alternative locations could reduce user conflict and safety issues. The development of a trails network strategy could provide further management opportunities for the wider user network.



3

Schedule and undertake basic maintenance requirements for the reserves.

There is concern about the physical state of the reserves. For example, **the vegetation, weed control and track maintenance were commented on as being in poor condition, and littering was an issue.** There is a regular group of reserve users who care for and maintain aspects of the reserves and residents living nearby who note key maintenance issues, such as fallen branches and muddy berms. Frustration was expressed at a lack of basic maintenance.

This issue can be mitigated by undertaking basic maintenance and improvements more regularly, such as improved track surfaces, tree maintenance as well as plant more native species in the reserve as ways to upkeep the reserves amenities and safety.



4

Improve directional signage and historical information.

On occasion, it was observed that users became confused about where they were and which tracks they were permitted to be on. In addition, the official entrance to Tainui Reserve appeared to be confusing for some reserve users who opted to park at Keith Sands Grove instead of the formalised car park area at the end of Keirunga Road. Improvements around directional signage is an opportunity.

Highlighting historical and cultural information, for example the Hikanui Pā and the Peace Plaque, were seen as ways to improve the reserves.



5

Continue to communicate with the Reserves community.

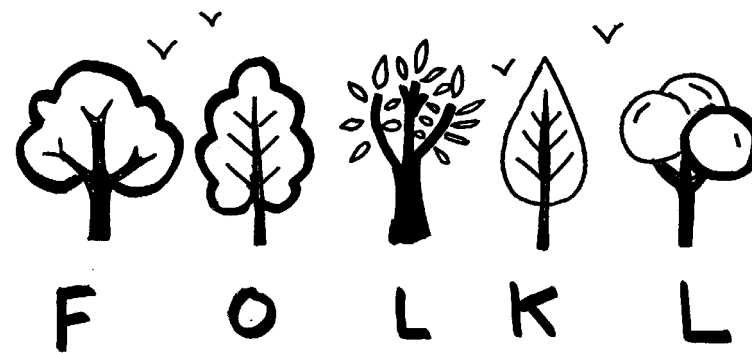
People felt a close connection with the reserves, especially those that lived nearby or helped to care for them. As a result, some users expressed that they felt upset and frustrated when they were not aware of management decisions.

During this engagement process, reserve users varied from being thankful for the chance to have their views considered in-depth, through to a feelings of consultation fatigue or frustration with how the Council had communicated around some reserve decisions. Others did not see the point in engaging as they did not see how their views would make a difference. In particular, this was expressed by youth who participated in this public engagement process.

There is an opportunity to foster and build on the current engagement that users have had with this reserve management process. Informing users in advance or consulting with user groups on key changes would be a positive step. Following through on promises to the community was also a subtheme that would strengthen communication and trust.



Summary.



The reserves hold a special place in peoples' hearts. Many users have shared their feelings of connection as kaitiaki, neighbours and long-term users of the reserves, sometimes stating they are like an extension of their own backyards. They feel lucky to have such a selection of green spaces to enjoy near their homes.

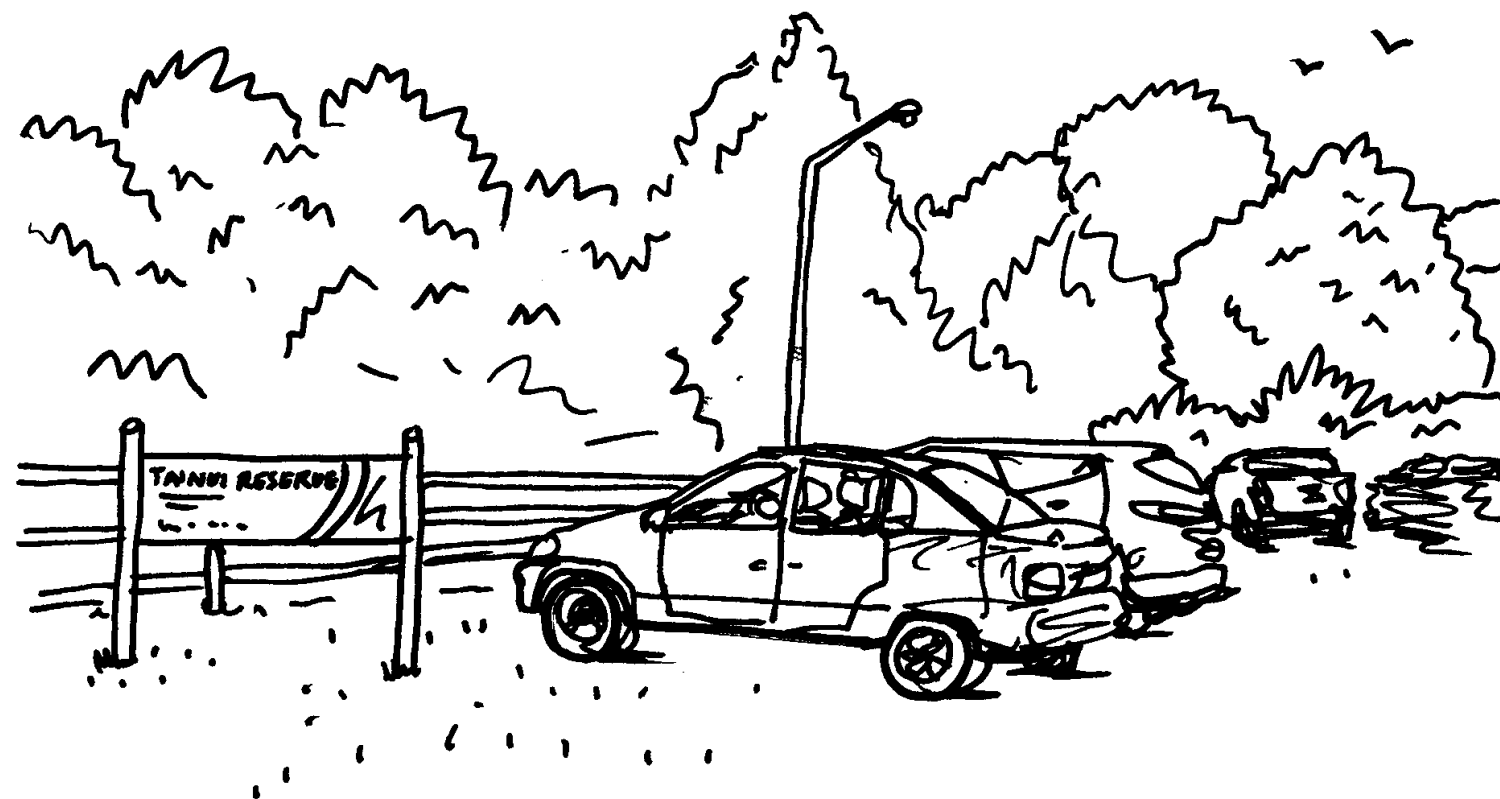
This has meant that users quickly become concerned about the state of the reserves or the ways they are being used, especially if behaviour is considered to be disrespectful. People can feel personally aggrieved if action is not taken or the level of care does not meet expectations in a place that holds such a high level of personal and community value.

Providing a clear set of expectations around how the reserves will be used and managed is important.

Communication will play a key role in fostering the relationships between Council and the users to ensure a cohesive shared enjoyment of the Reserves.

It has been a pleasure to meet and listen to such an engaged and caring group of people and FOLKL thank you for your time.

Ngā mihi | Thank you.





F O L K L