



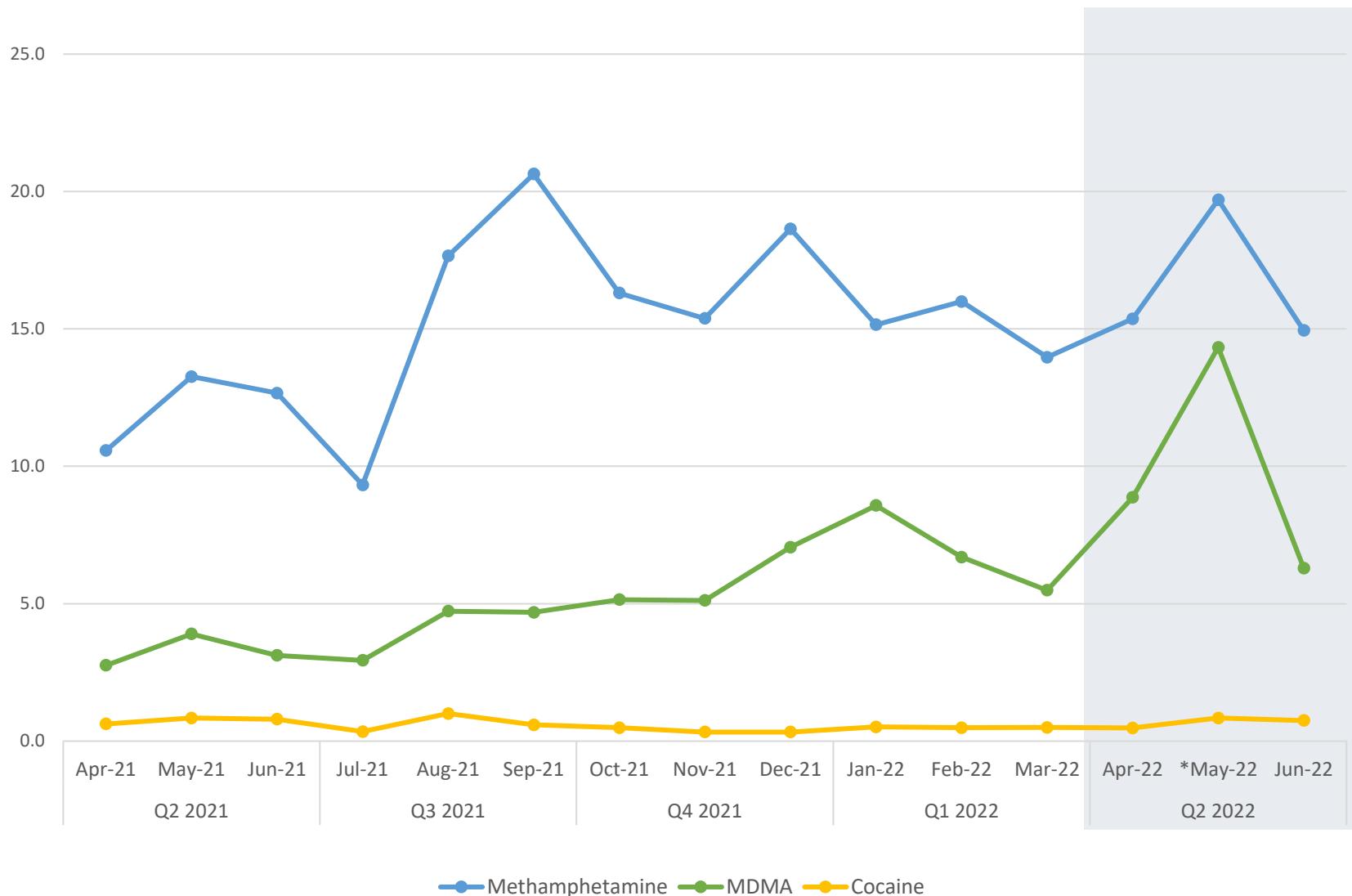
Wastewater Drug Testing in New Zealand: National Overview

Quarter Two: April – June 2022



- Wastewater testing occurs during one week each month, however the frequency of testing varies between sites. Nationwide testing started in November 2018, with current testing sites covering up to 75 percent of the total New Zealand population. While the nationwide programme tests for indicators of consumption of methamphetamine, MDMA, cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl, the three commodities routinely detected in sufficient quantities to accurately report on are methamphetamine, MDMA and cocaine.
- Q2 2022 covers the three month period between April and June 2022 (inclusive).
- All data is representative of the sites tested only. It is not possible to extrapolate this data to nearby communities that are not tested.
- **It is likely a notable quantity of MDMA was dumped into the sewer network, rather than consumed, at one Tāmaki Makaurau site in May 2022. Accordingly, an imputed estimate for MDMA consumption (derived from the average MDMA use at that site over the last 12 months) has been used to calculate MDMA total load averages over the quarter.*
- Drug use is calculated from the concentration of each drug biomarker detected in the wastewater. This is reflective of the amount of pure drug being consumed and does not include fillers, binders or adulterants.
- The estimated dollar value generated from illicit drug distribution takes into consideration the estimated national drug use and the typical street price (per gram) of each commodity.
- The social harm cost estimates are derived from the New Zealand Illicit Drug Harm Index 2020 (DHI 2020). The DHI 2020 provides a conservative measure of the harms associated with the use of illicit drugs in New Zealand and considers both personal and community harms.

Estimated National Drug Use (kilograms/week)



KEY FINDINGS

METHAMPHETAMINE

- An average of 16.7 kilograms of methamphetamine was consumed across sample sites per week in Q2 2022. This was above the average quantity detected over the previous four quarters (8 percent or 1.2 kilograms). Detected methamphetamine use over the last four quarters has settled at a higher level of consumption than previous years.
- Of the sites tested, Waikato district consumed the most methamphetamine per capita (1,013 mg/day/1000 people), above the national average of 690 mg/day/1000 people.
- The 16.7 kilograms of methamphetamine consumed per week in Q2 2022 equates to an estimated weekly cost of \$18.5 million in social harm.
- Approximately \$5.8 million per week was generated from methamphetamine distribution across New Zealand sample sites in Q2 2022.

*MDMA

- An average of 8.5 kilograms of MDMA was consumed across sample sites per week in Q2 2022. This was above the average quantity detected over the previous four quarters (59 percent or 3.1 kilograms). Detected MDMA use continues to increase across most districts after a period of low use and availability in 2021.
- Of the sites tested, Southern district consumed the most MDMA per capita (770 mg/day/1000 people), above the national average of 414 mg/day/1000 people.
- The 8.5 kilograms of MDMA consumed per week in Q2 2022 equates to an estimated weekly cost of \$1.2 million in social harm.
- Approximately \$2.5 million per week was generated from MDMA distribution across New Zealand sample sites in Q2 2022.

COCAINE

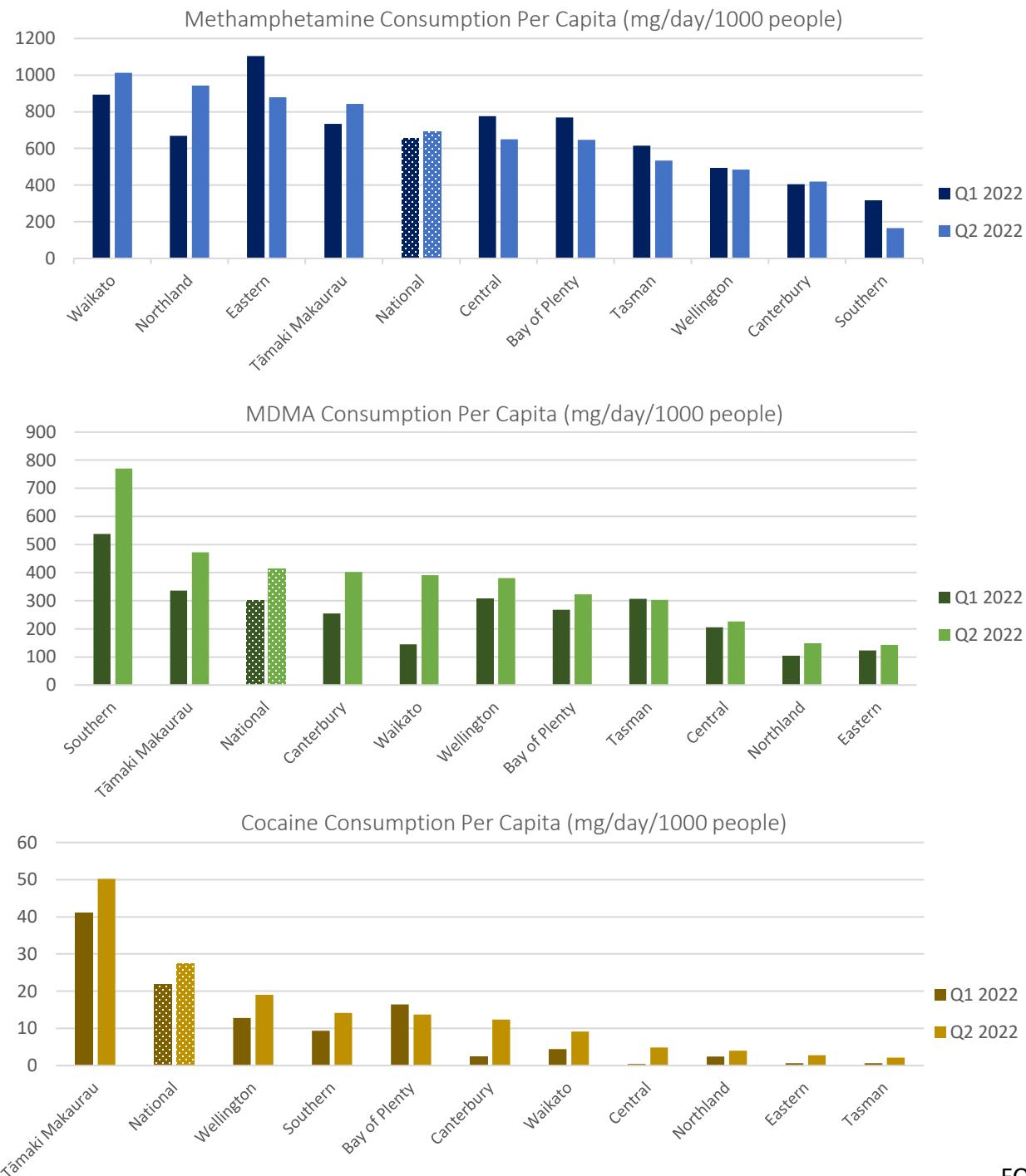
- An average of 0.7 kilograms of cocaine was consumed across sample sites per week in Q2 2022. This was above the average quantity detected over the previous four quarters (17 percent or 0.1 kilograms).
- Of the sites tested, Tāmaki Makaurau continued to consume the most cocaine per capita (50 mg/day/1000 people), above the national average of 27 mg/day/1000 people.
- The 0.7 kilograms of cocaine consumed per week in Q2 2022 equates to an estimated weekly cost of \$0.21 million in social harm.
- Approximately \$0.3 million per week was generated from cocaine distribution across New Zealand sample sites in Q2 2022.

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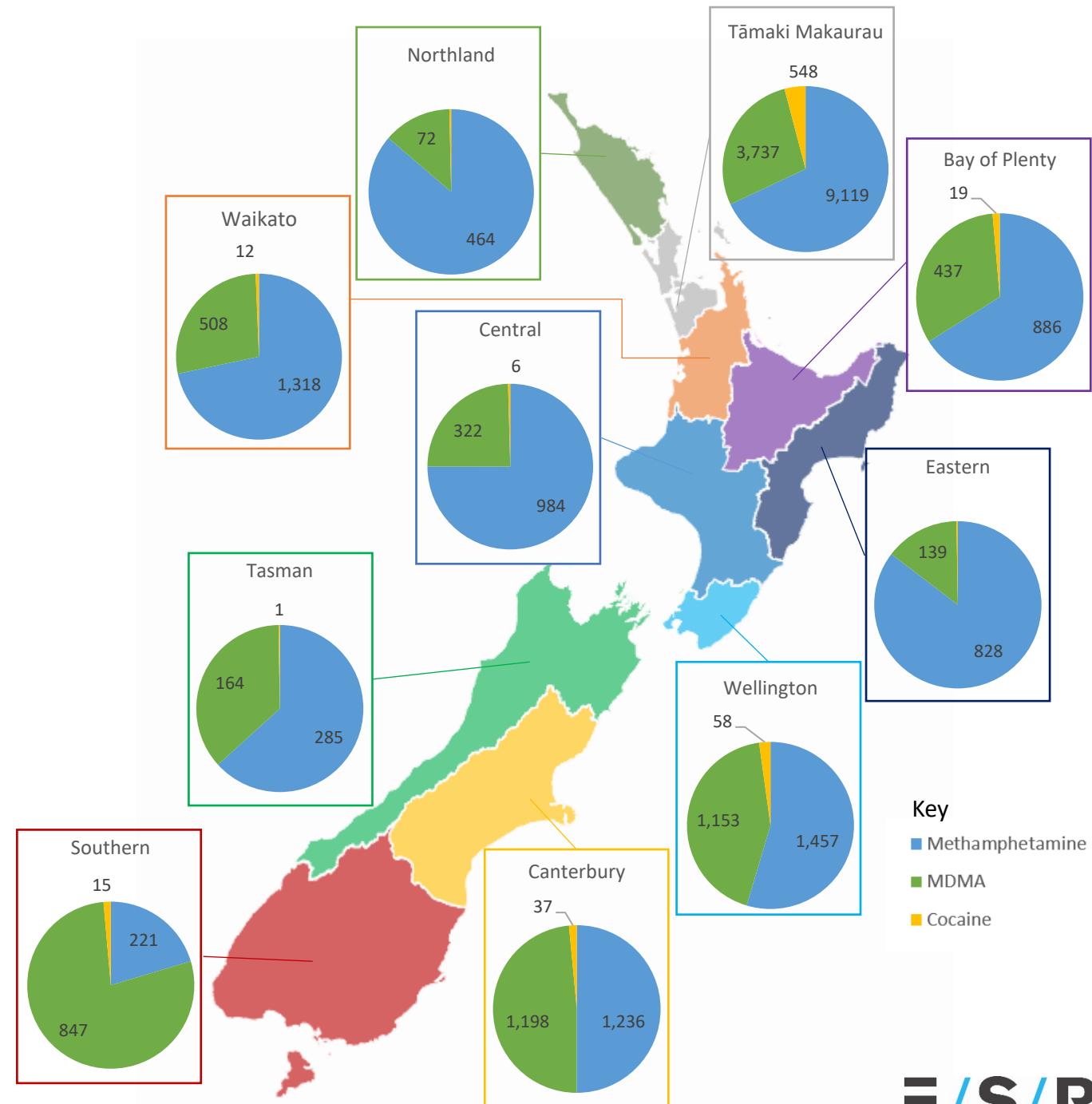
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- Per capita drug consumption is shown as milligrams consumed per day, per 1,000 people. As a number of locations are tested every second month, the presence or absence of data from some sites within a district will affect the total load and per capita consumption rates reported each quarter.
- The average weekly drug use pie charts show the average estimated drug use (in grams) for each commodity per district during Q2 2022. As this data is not adjusted for population, larger metropolitan areas record higher quantities of drug use per week due to the larger number of people in the catchment zone.
- Population updates were applied in January 2022, these have impacted the per capita data for some districts. Most notably, the population update for Northland district resulted in a 27 percent decrease in per capita consumption rates. This means the per capita results from Q1 and Q2 2022 cannot be directly compared with results from previous reports. Further information is available from the NDIB. Additionally, Kaitiāia was unable to be sampled during Q1. This has also impacted the per capita consumption rates for Northland.

PER CAPITA DRUG CONSUMPTION BY DISTRICT: Q2 2022



AVERAGE WEEKLY DRUG USE BY DISTRICT Q2 2022 (GRAMS)





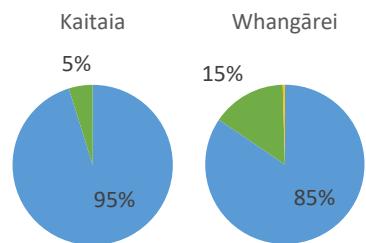
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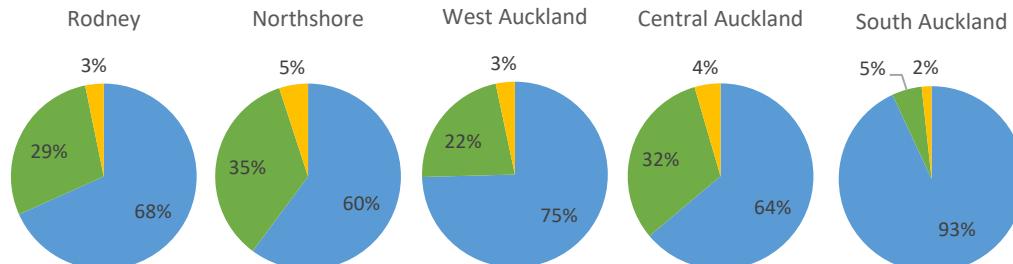


> The graphs below illustrate the proportion of drug use detected within catchment areas during Q2 2022. Tokoroa was unable to be sampled during Q2 2022 and therefore has been omitted from the chart.

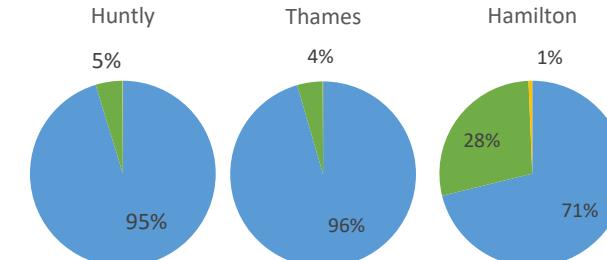
NORTHLAND



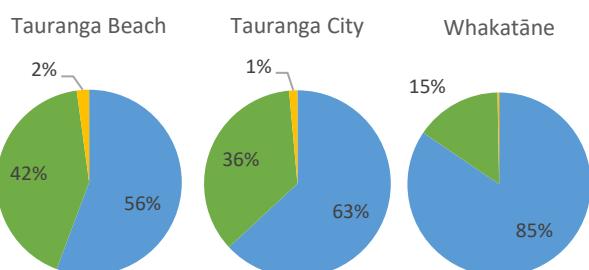
TĀMAKI MAKAUURAU



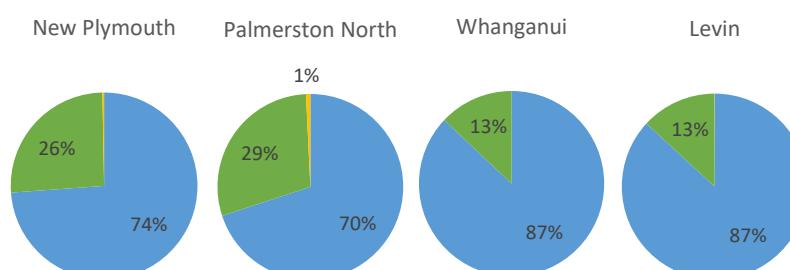
WAIKATO



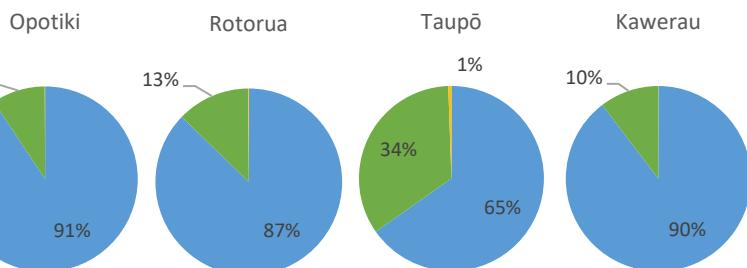
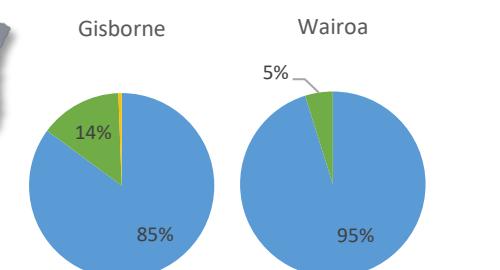
BAY OF PLENTY



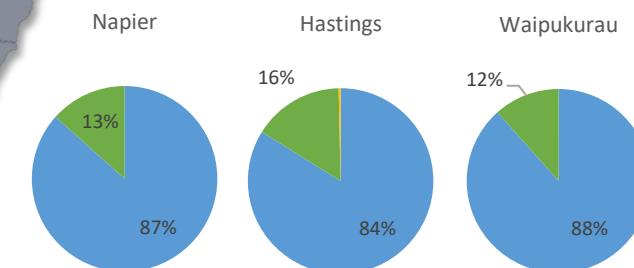
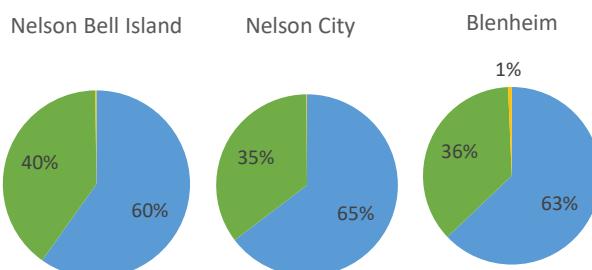
CENTRAL



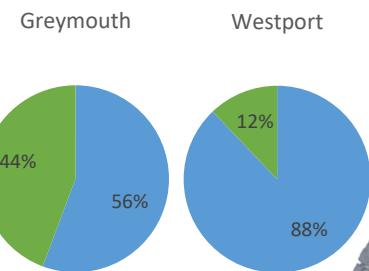
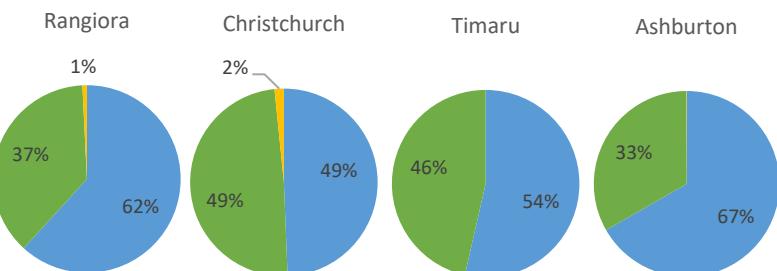
EASTERN



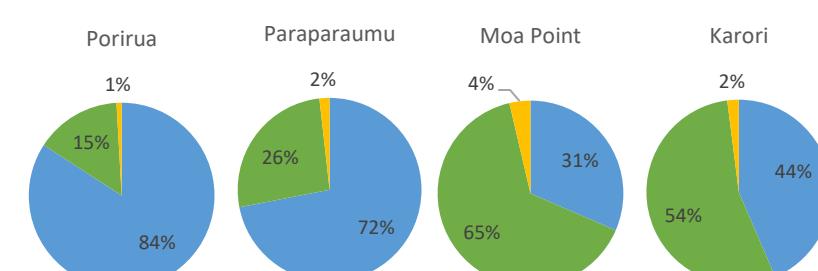
TASMAN



CANTERBURY



WELLINGTON



SOUTHERN

