

Where are the youth audiences?

2026

verian 

Irirangi Te Motu
NZ On Air



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Research overview

Background

NZ On Air supports and invests in public media content that reflects Aotearoa New Zealand's stories, voices and culture. To do this effectively, NZ On Air requires a clear, up-to-date understanding of how New Zealanders are engaging with media across platforms, formats and delivery methods.

'Where are the audiences?' is NZ On Air's long-running audience tracking study, providing a consistent, single-source view of daily media behaviour among New Zealanders aged 15 and over.

Now in its latest wave, the study builds on previous years to show both a current snapshot of audience behaviour and how patterns of use are evolving over time. This wave continues to track reach and time spent across a broad range of media, and newly explores how New Zealanders experience and engage with NZ content specifically, including perceptions of quality and sentiments towards NZ shows.

Method



Target audience – Young New Zealanders aged 15 to 24.



Survey dates – 8 April to 7 May 2026.



Sample size – 360 people. This was part of the larger "Where are the audiences" 2026 sample of which we had booster samples of 15-24 year olds to allow for robust subgroup analyses.



Method – Online (n=318) and phone (n=42) interviews. Weighting uses the 'Where are the audiences' framework to maintain comparability across reports and account for the youth booster sample, based on 2023 Census data.

Important context for New Zealand in 2026: A more selective media environment

Cost-of-living pressures continue to shape household decisions

Many New Zealanders remain conscious of discretionary spending. As media subscriptions become increasingly fragmented, audiences are making more deliberate choices about which services they keep and use regularly.

The media ecosystem is entering a more mature phase

After a decade of rapid change driven by streaming, online video and digital audio, patterns of media use are becoming more settled. Established and emerging platforms increasingly coexist rather than replace one another.

Audiences have more choice than ever before

New Zealanders now navigate a media landscape spanning local and global services, free and subscription platforms, broadcast and on-demand content, and increasingly personalised discovery pathways.

This context helps explain the patterns that follow.

Some notes about this report.

This report focuses on the findings **for 15-24 year olds**. Companion reports provide deeper analysis of key audience groups. Subgroup results are included only where they add particular insight and have a reasonable base size.

Please see the companion reports for a deeper dive into the following audiences:

- Where are the audiences 2026 (national report)
- Māori
- Pacific peoples
- Asian peoples

Abbreviations and terminology

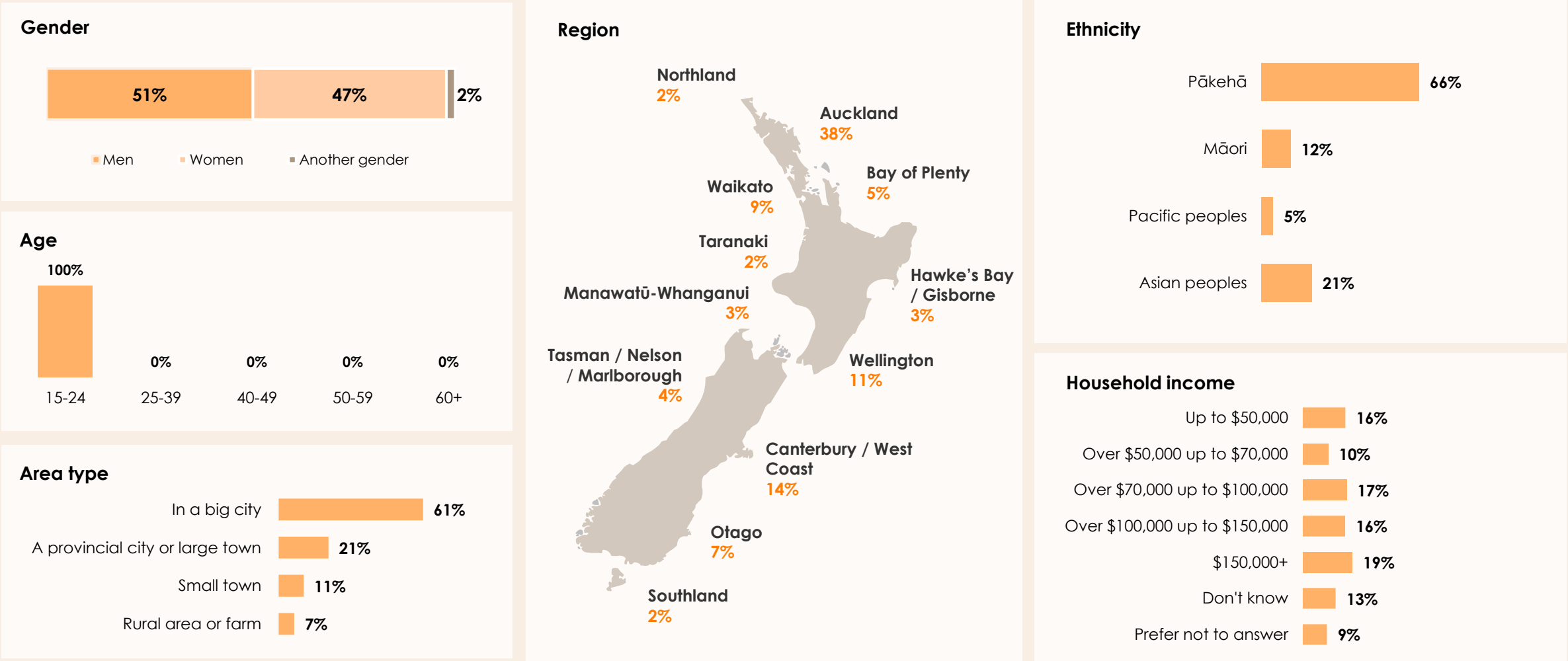
Relevant NET	Acronym/Platform	Example of channel, apps, sites
Total TV (linear TV and NZ BVOD NET)	Linear TV Note: Question changed to no longer differentiate between TV via Sky decoder or not.	TVNZ 1, TVNZ 2, Three, etc.
	NZ BVOD – NZ Broadcast Video On Demand	TVNZ+, ThreeNOW, Māori+ or SKY Go
	NZ online video platform	NZ Herald, Stuff, Radio NZ, etc.
	Global video sharing platform	YouTube (for video), Facebook (for video), Instagram
	SVOD – Subscription Video On Demand	Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime, etc.
Total radio (broadcast and online NET)	Radio broadcast	
	Online NZ radio	Including iHeartRadio or Rova
	Online music streaming	Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, etc.
	News articles (online or hard copy) Note: Wording broadened from “newspaper” to “news articles either online or in a hardcopy newspaper”	

Summary

Young audiences are globally oriented but continue to value NZ content.

01	02	03
Global platforms dominate youth media habits	Social media and streaming platforms drive content discovery	Young people value NZ content, even if content origin is not top of mind
Global video, music streaming, subscription video services and gaming account for most youth media consumption, while NZ BVOD continues to grow its youth audience.	Young people are most likely to discover shows and music through social feeds, recommendations and streaming services.	Most young people enjoy seeing NZ faces and places on screen, though many say they rarely think about whether content is NZ-made or overseas.

Youth survey sample



Source: A. Region, B. Gender, C. Age, D. Ethnicity, Q18a. Household Income, Q18b. Area Type.
Base: Youth respondents 2026 (n=360).
Note: Weights from "Where are the audiences 2026" data used.

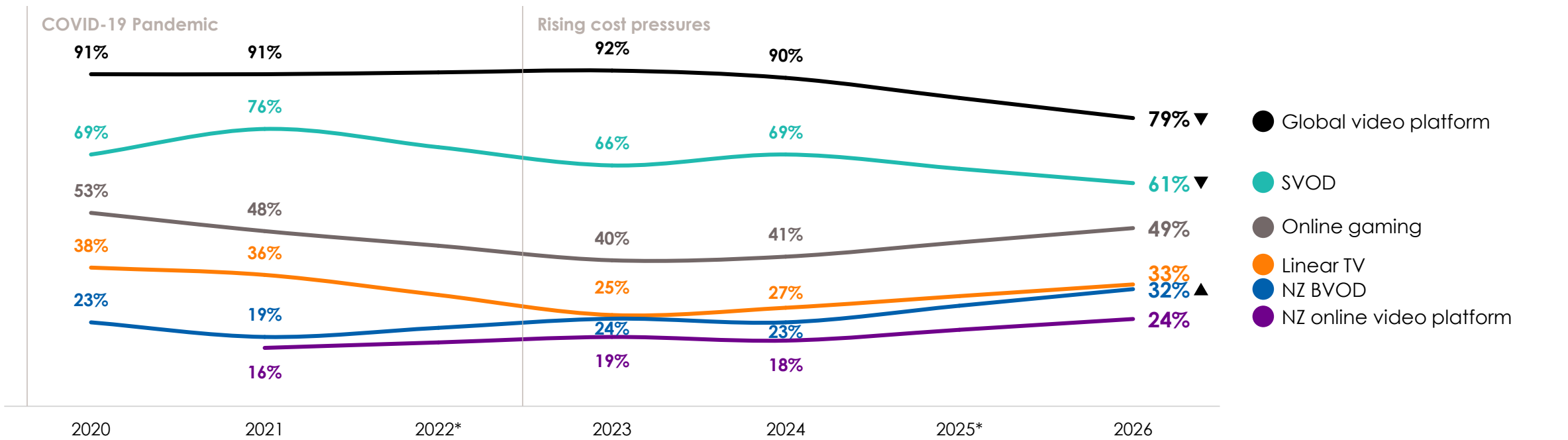
Global platforms sit at the centre of young people's media habits

How 15-24 year olds engage with different media day-to-day

The screen platform hierarchy for young people has stayed relatively consistent over the past 5 years with a slight softening in global video and SVOD reach, alongside growth in NZ BVOD.

Gaming reach has returned to levels last seen around the COVID-19 pandemic.

Screen and gaming reach over the past 5+ years

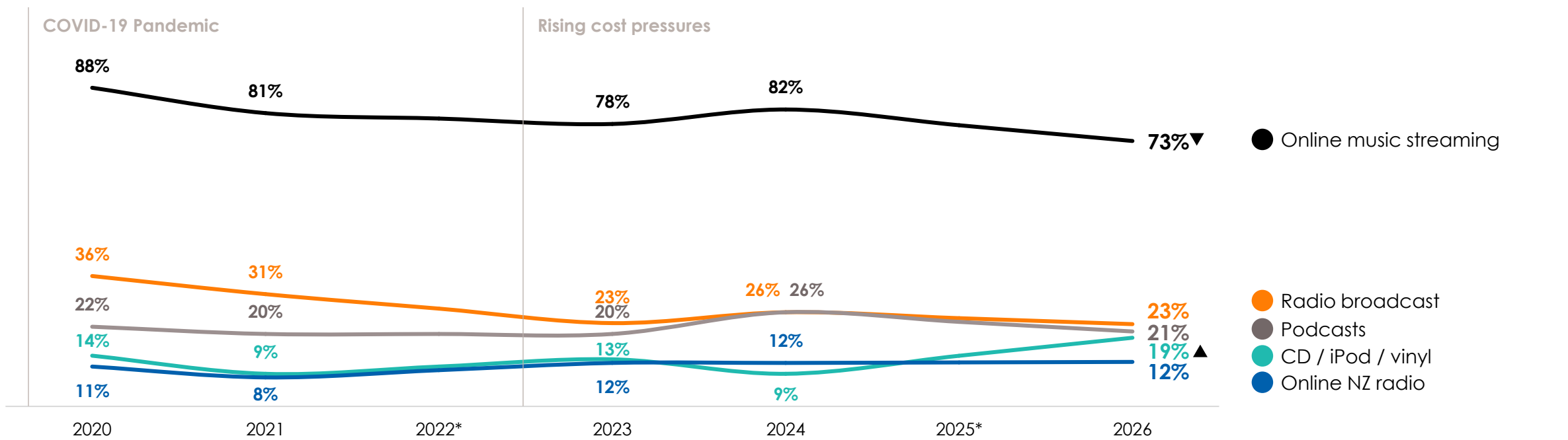


Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2020 (n=262), 2021 (n=251), 2023 (n=245), 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).
Note: *WATA not conducted in these years so trend points are indicatively only. NZ online video platforms measured from 2021. NZ BVOD wording changed from 2021 "Watch all or part of a TV show or other video content on TVNZ OnDemand, 3NOW, Prime OnDemand, Māori TV OnDemand or SKY OnDemand/SKY Go" to 2023 "Watch all or part of a TV show or other video content on TVNZ+/TVNZ OnDemand, 3NOW, Whakaata Māori TV OnDemand/ Māori + or SKY Go".

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Online music streaming remains the dominant audio platform for young audiences while the remaining platforms reach around 10%-20% of young people.

Sound and podcast reach over the past 5+ years



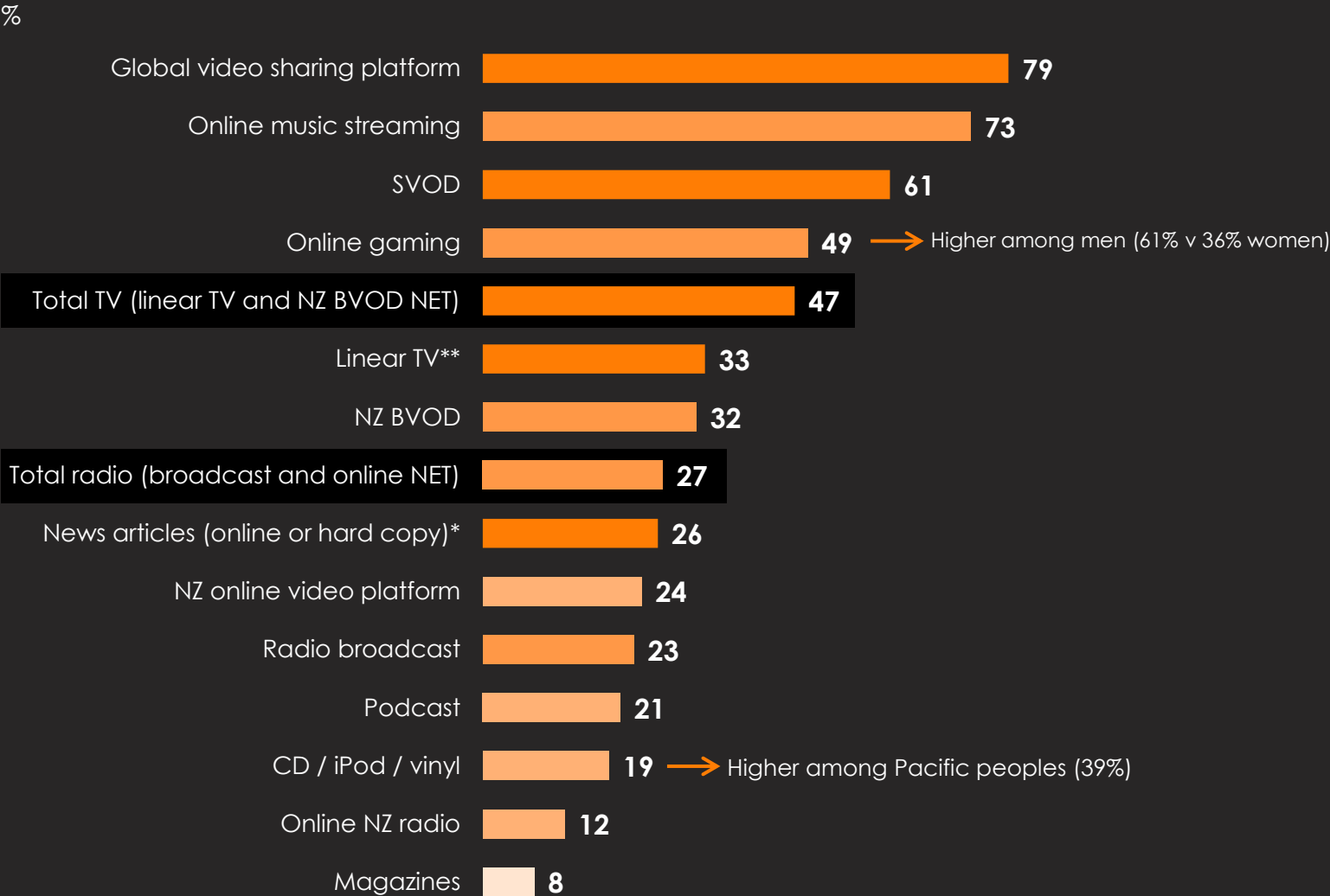
Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2020 (n=262), 2021 (n=251), 2023 (n=245), 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).
Note: *WATA not conducted in these years so trend points are indicatively only.

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Global video, music streaming and SVOD reach most young people every day.

Young men are more likely to play video games online than young women. Young Pacific peoples are most likely to listen physical music media.

Daily reach across all platforms 2026

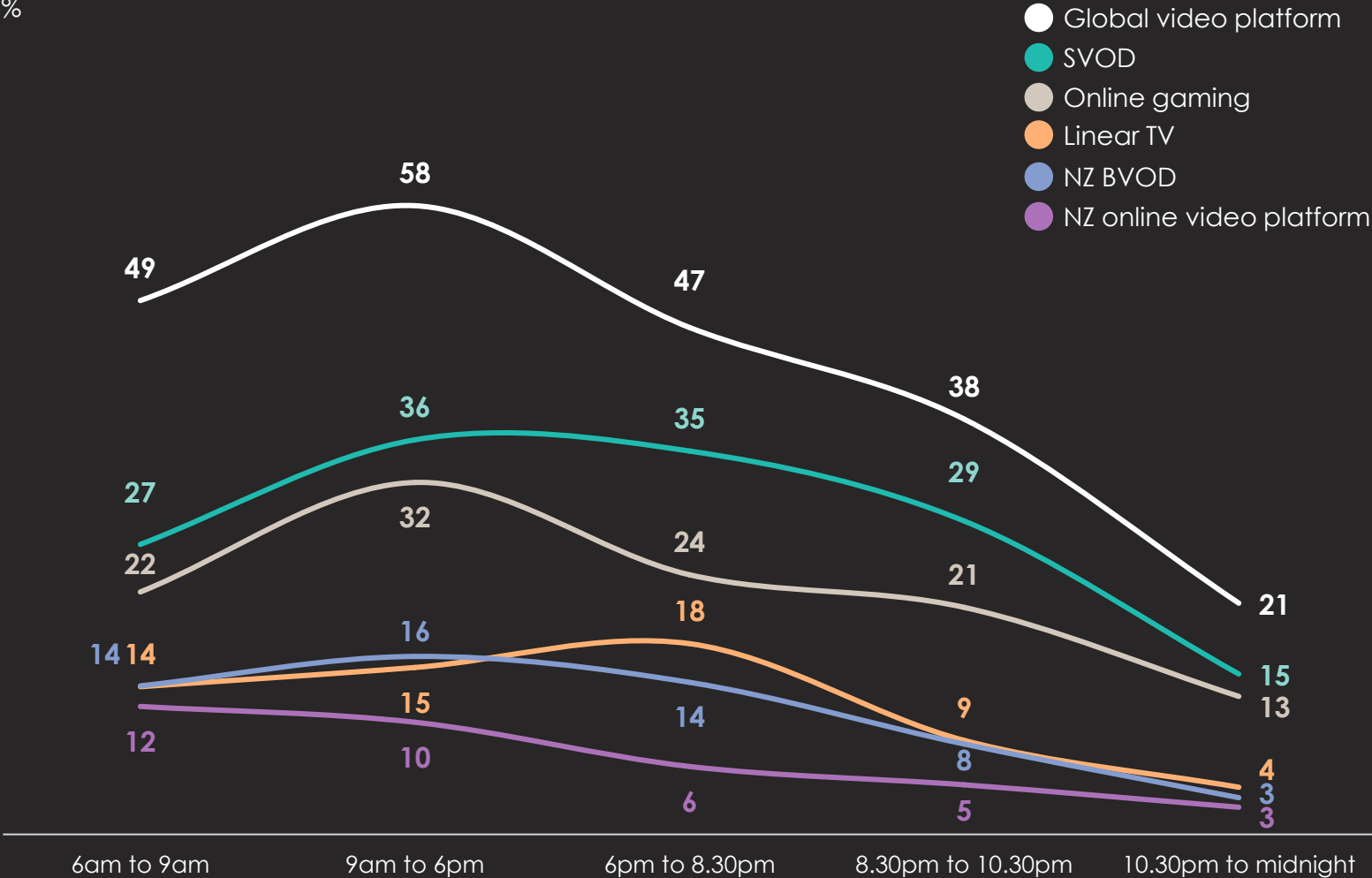


Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds 2026 (n=360).
Note: *Wording broadened from "newspaper" to "news articles either online or in a hardcopy newspaper".
**Question changed to no longer differentiate between TV via Sky decoder or not.

Global video platforms dominate throughout the day.

Gaming plays more of a role (and linear TV less of a role) during the day for young people than the wider population.

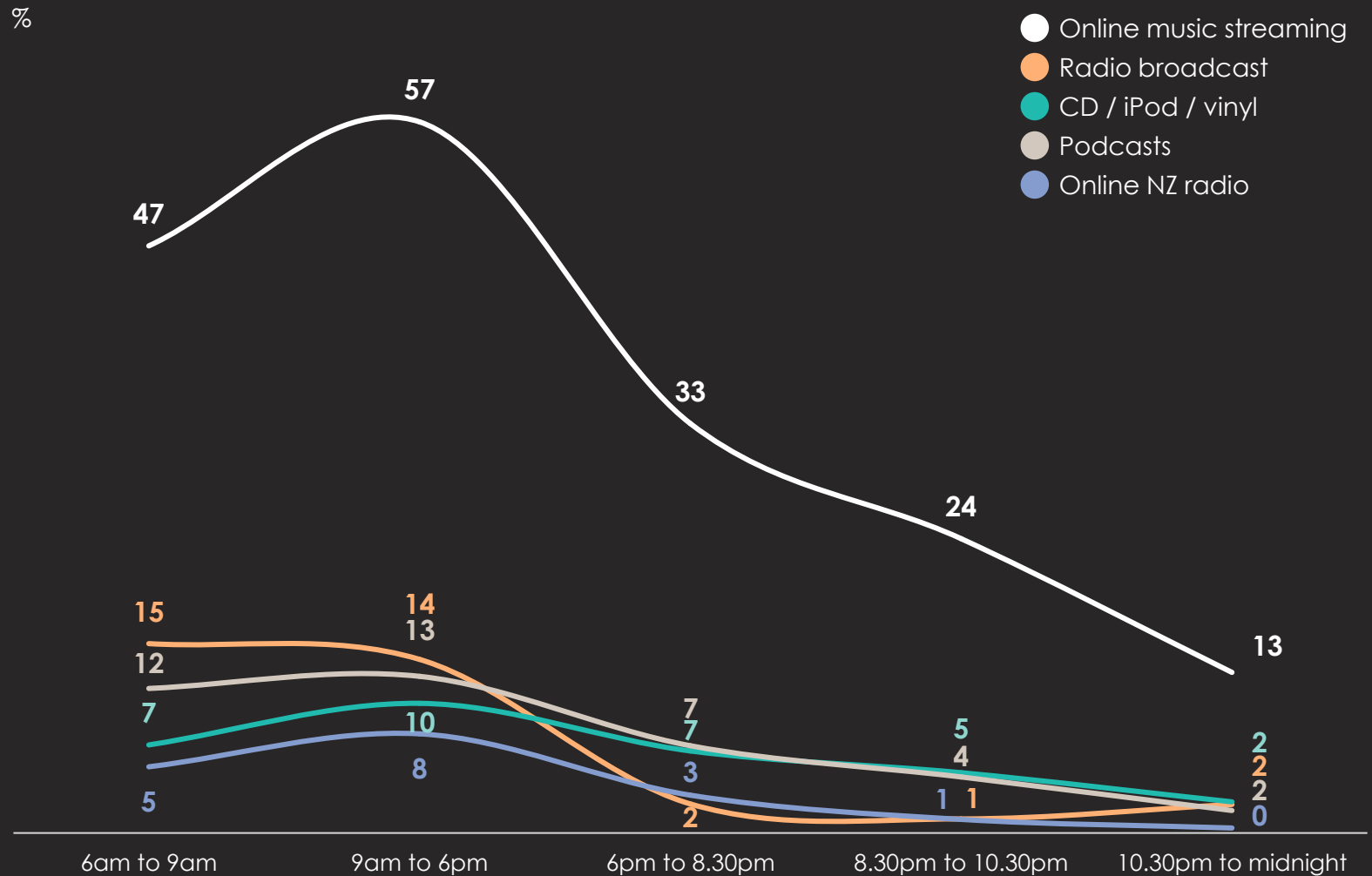
Daily screen and gaming reach across the day
%



Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds 2026 (n=360).

Online music streaming accompanies young people throughout the day, reaching a peak of nearly 6 in 10 during school and work hours.

Daily sound and podcast reach across the day



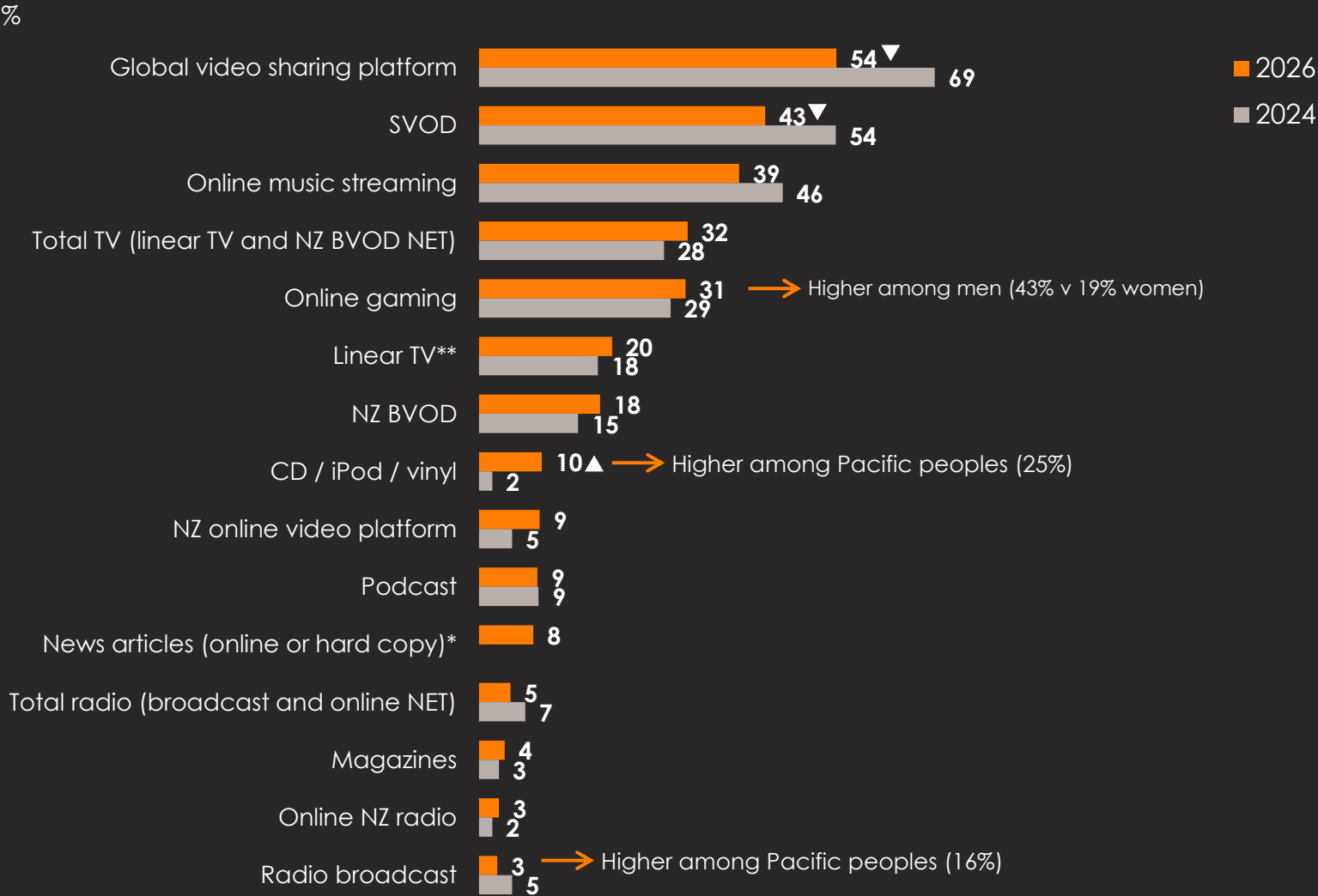
Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.

Base: All 15-24 year olds 2026 (n=360).

Global video and SVOD dominate peak-time viewing.

Young people still favour watching global videos and SVODs during peak time, despite softening reach compared to 2024.

Peak time (6pm-10:30pm) reach 2026 compared to 2024



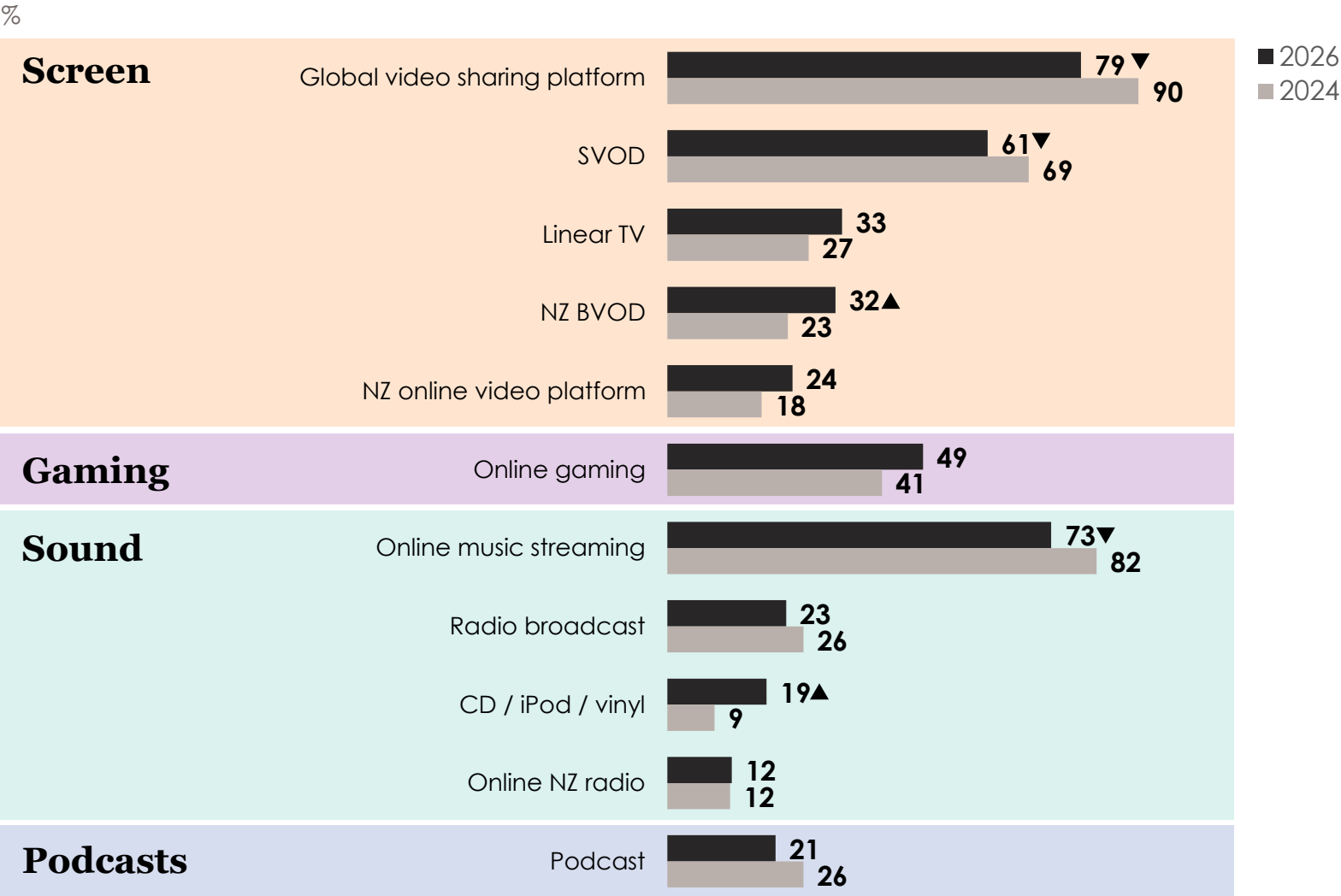
Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).
Note: *Wording broadened from "newspaper" to "news articles either online or in a hardcopy newspaper".
**Question changed to no longer differentiate between TV via Sky decoder or not.

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Youth media habits are evolving, but the platform hierarchy remains unchanged.

NZ BVOD and physical music media have gained audience reach since 2024, while global video, SVOD and music streaming platform use has softened.

Daily reach summarised and compared with 2024



Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).

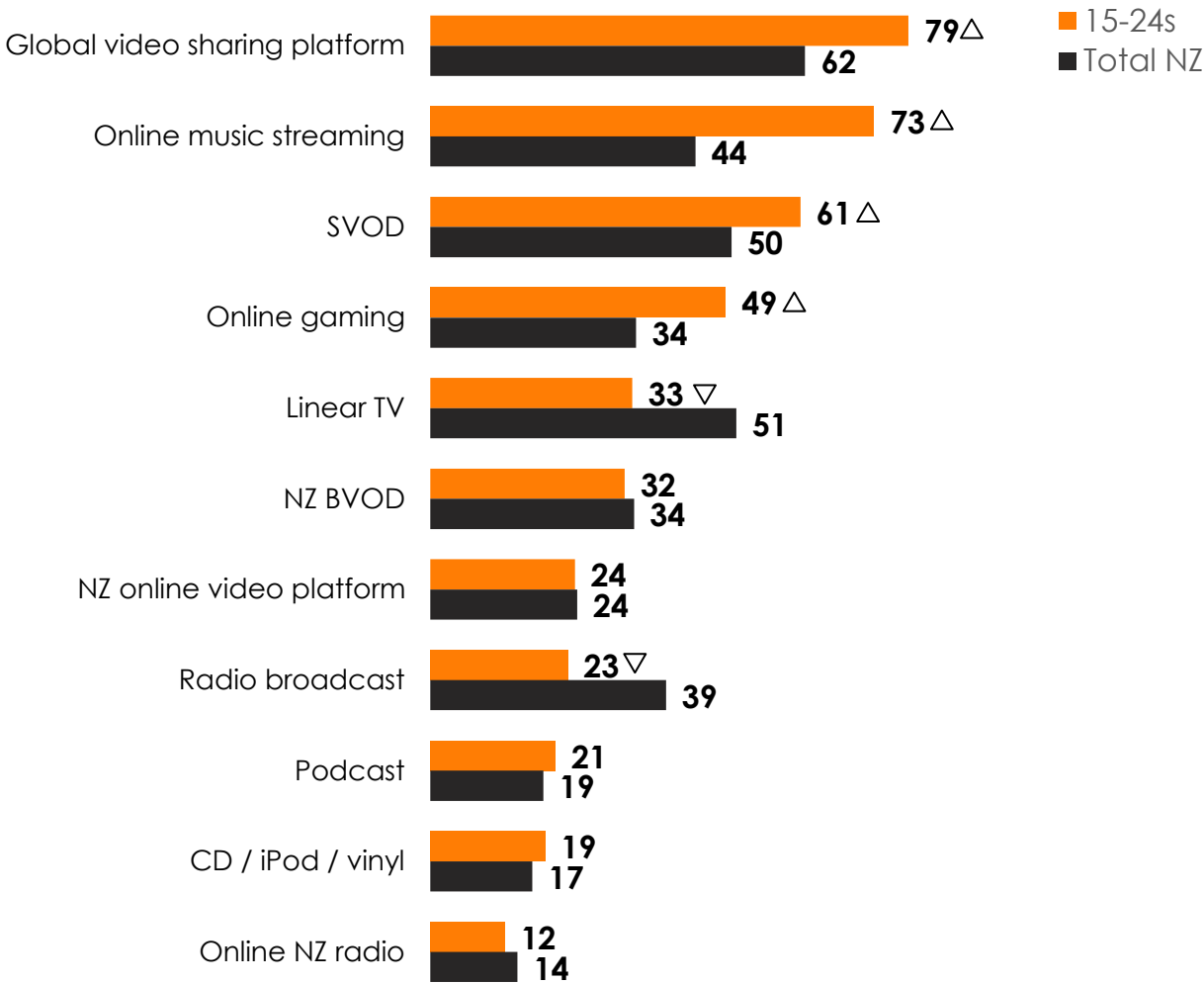
Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Young audiences are more likely to use digital media platforms.

Compared with New Zealanders overall, young people are much more likely to use global video, music streaming, SVOD and gaming, and less likely to watch TV or listen to broadcast radio.

Daily reach summarised and compared with total NZ

%



Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday.
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Young audiences spend most of their media time on global platforms

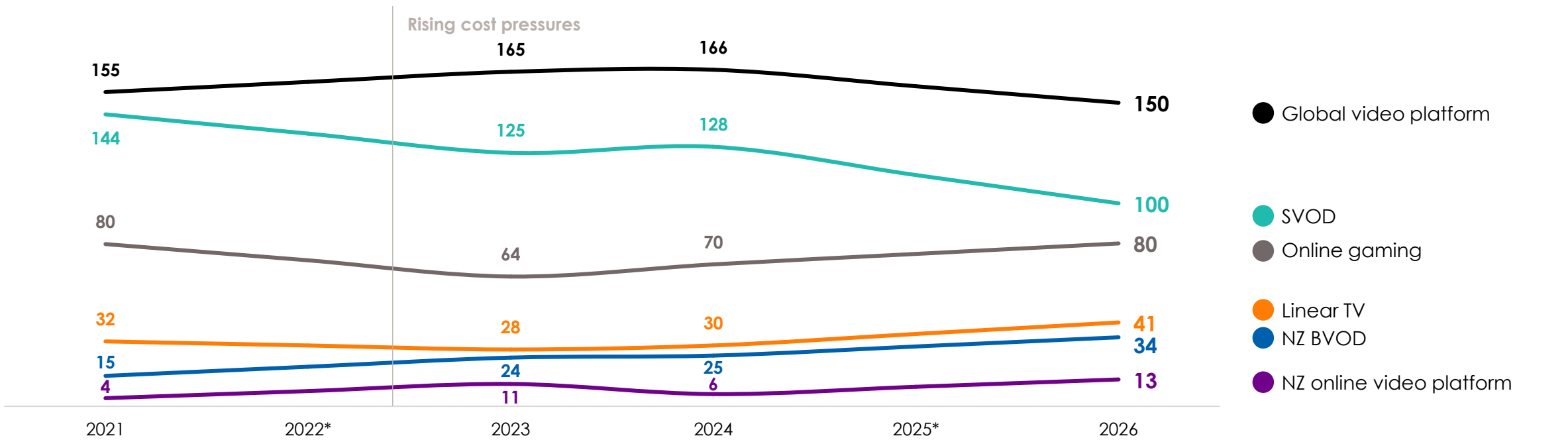
How long youth audiences spend with each platform

Global video remains dominant, while gaming now rivals SVOD for young people’s time.

Similar to reach, the amount of time young people spend gaming online has also returned to levels last seen around the COVID-19 pandemic.

Screen and gaming time spent over the past 5+ years

Minutes among all 15-24 year olds



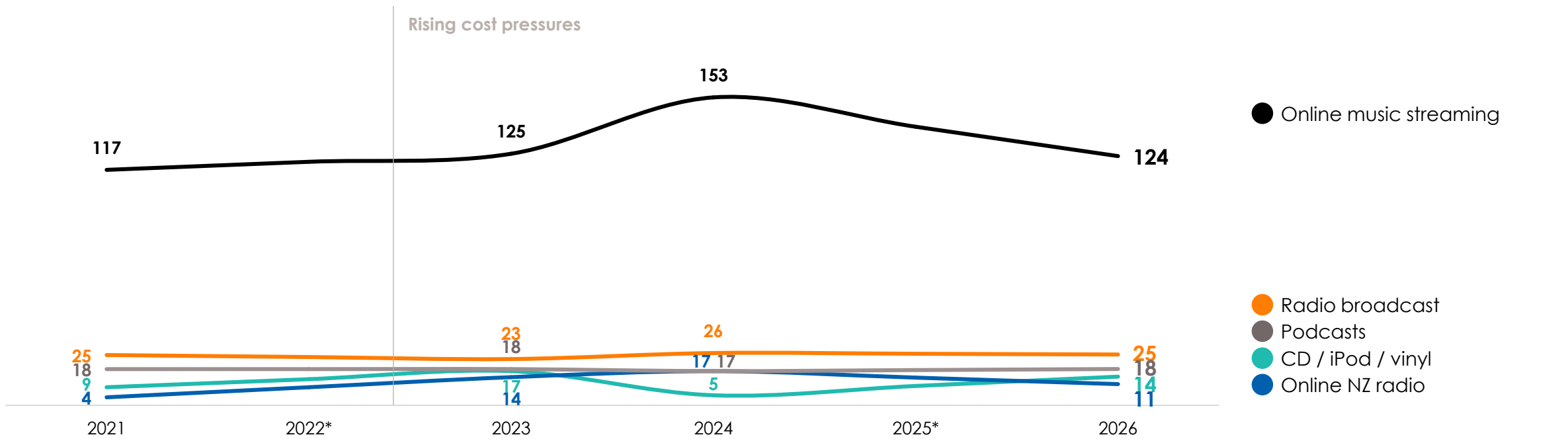
Source: Q2. Between [time period], please indicate about how long you [spent doing activity] for?
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2021 (n=251), 2023 (n=245), 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).
Note: *WATA not conducted in these years so trend points are indicatively only. Time spent for 15-24s and NZ online video platforms reported from 2021 onwards. NZ BVOD wording changed from 2021 "Watch all or part of a TV show or other video content on TVNZ Ondemand, 3NOW, Prime Ondemand, Māori TV OnDemand or SKY Ondemand/SKY Go" to 2023 "Watch all or part of a TV show or other video content on TVNZ+/TVNZ Ondemand, 3NOW, Whakaata Māori TV OnDemand/ Māori + or SKY Go".

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Online music streaming dominates young people's listening time, returning to levels seen in 2023.

Sound and podcast time spent over the past 5+ years

Minutes among all 15-24 year olds



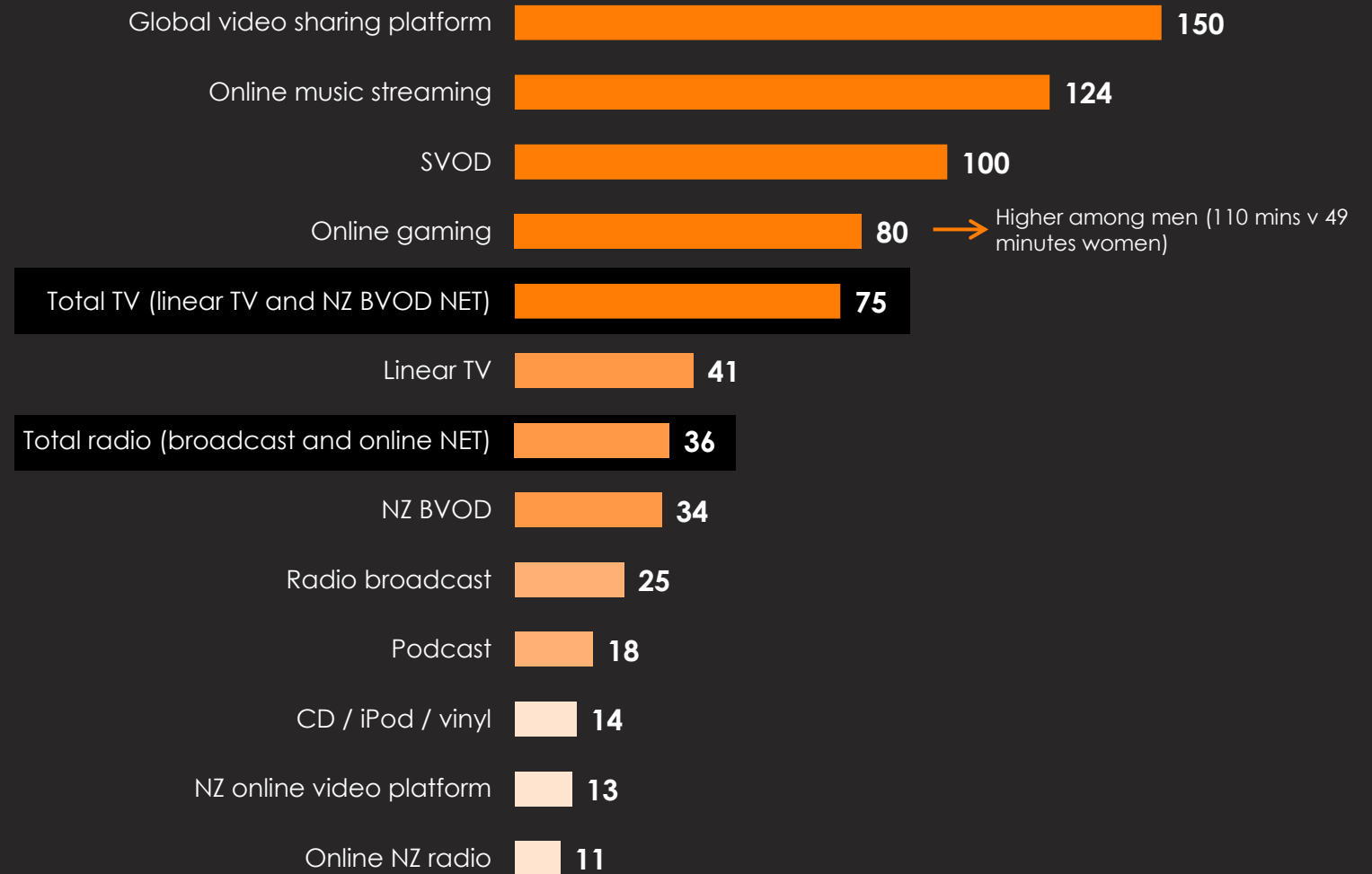
Source: Q2. Between [time period], please indicate about how long you [spent doing activity] for?
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2021 (n=251), 2023 (n=245), 2024 (n=219), 2026 (n=360).
Note: *WATA not conducted in these years so trend points are indicatively only. Time spent for 15-24s reported from 2021 onwards.

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Global video, music streaming, SVOD and gaming command the most time spent.

Daily average time spent across platforms among all 15-24 year olds 2026

Minutes

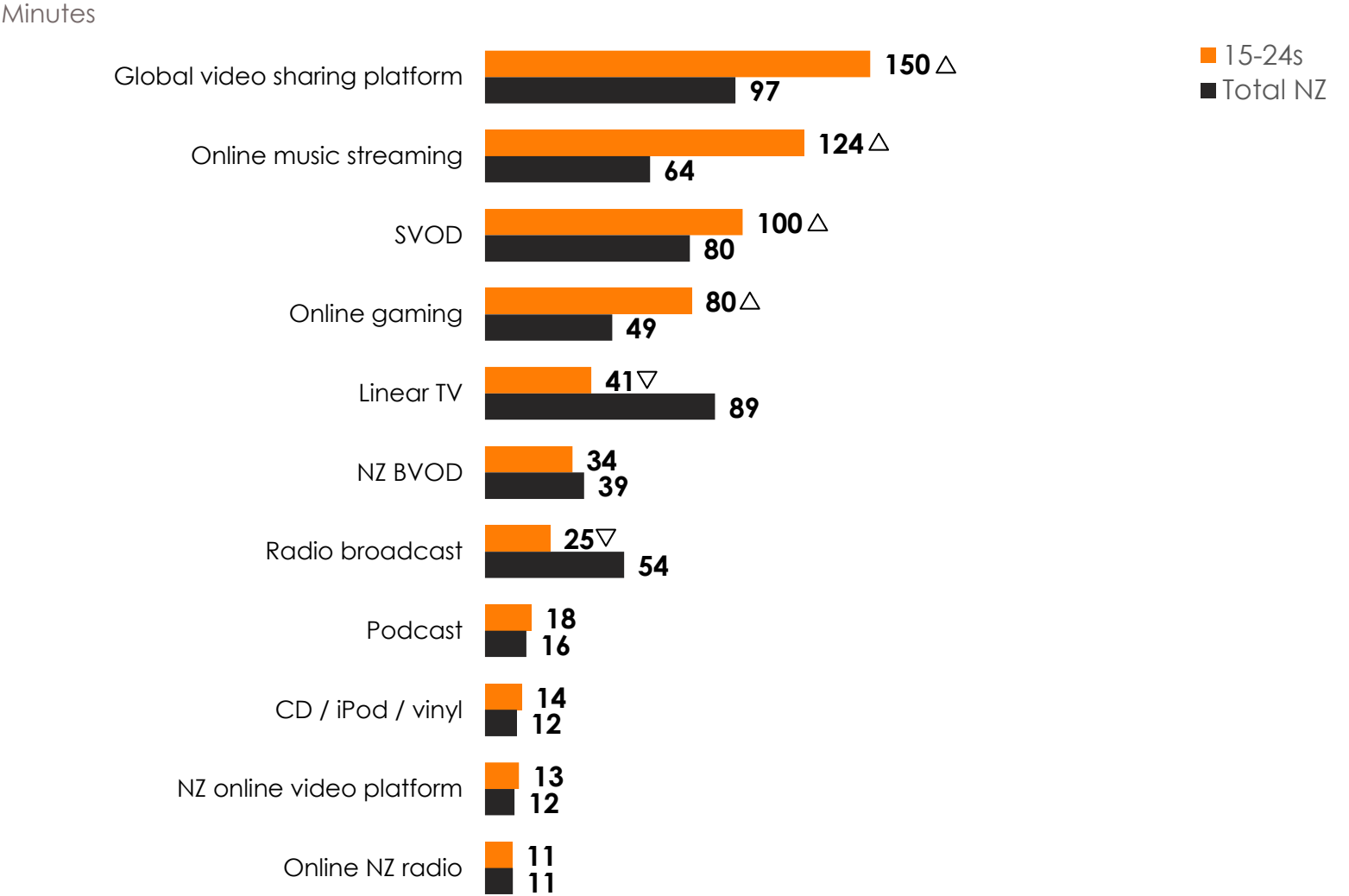


Source: Q2. Between [time period], please indicate about how long you [spent doing activity] for?

Base: All 15-24 year olds with valid time spent data for each platform post-data cleaning 2026 (n=359 to 360).

Youth spend significantly more time with global video, music streaming, SVOD and gaming than New Zealanders overall.

Daily average time spent among all 15-24 year olds compared with total NZ



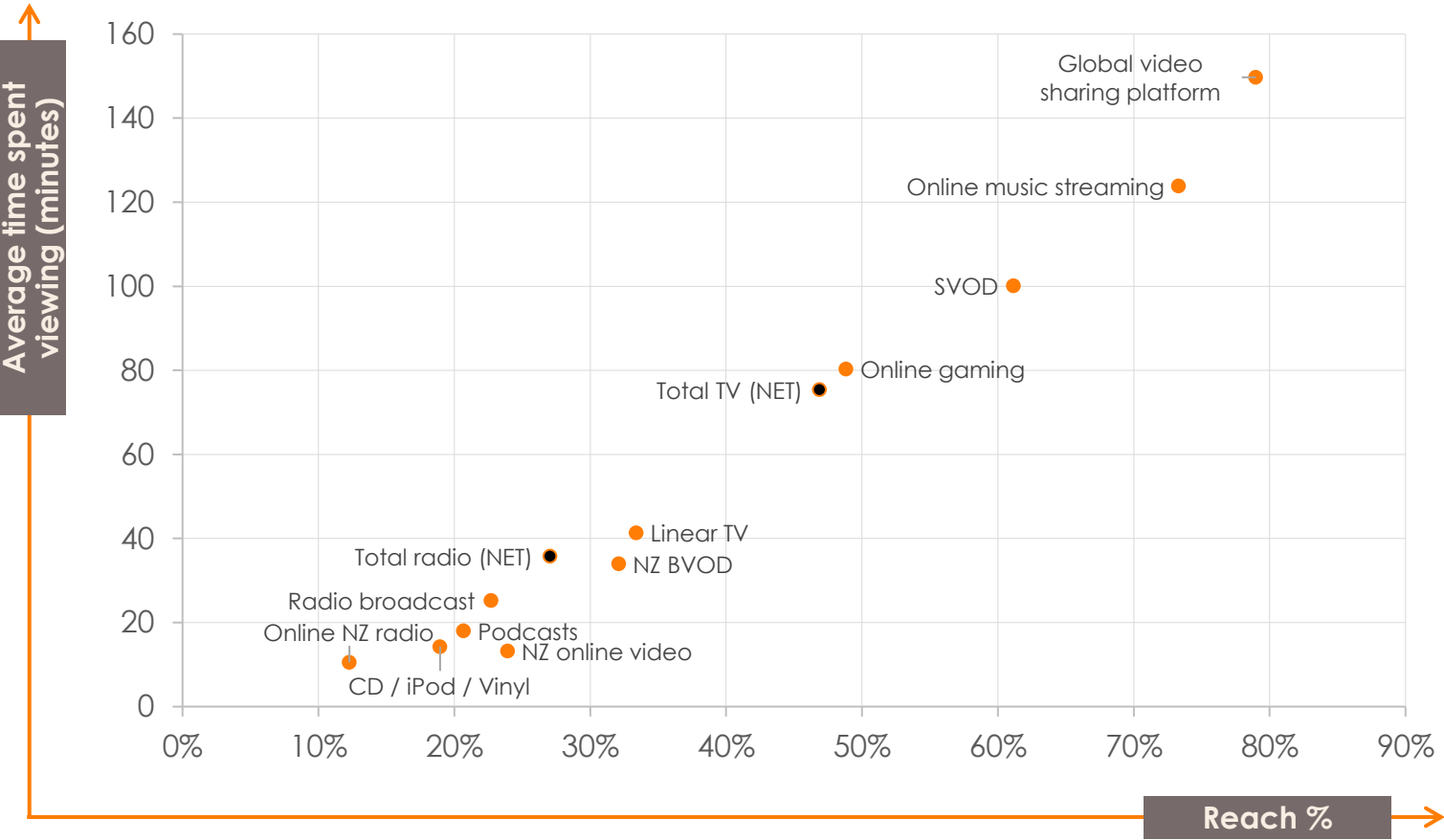
Source: Q2. Between [time period], please indicate about how long you [spent doing activity] for?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=~360), total NZ 2026 (n=~1701).

The platforms reaching the most young people also command the most time spent

How reach and time spent work together

Global videos and music streaming services combine high reach with heavy usage for youth audiences.

Daily reach and time spent among all 15-24 year olds



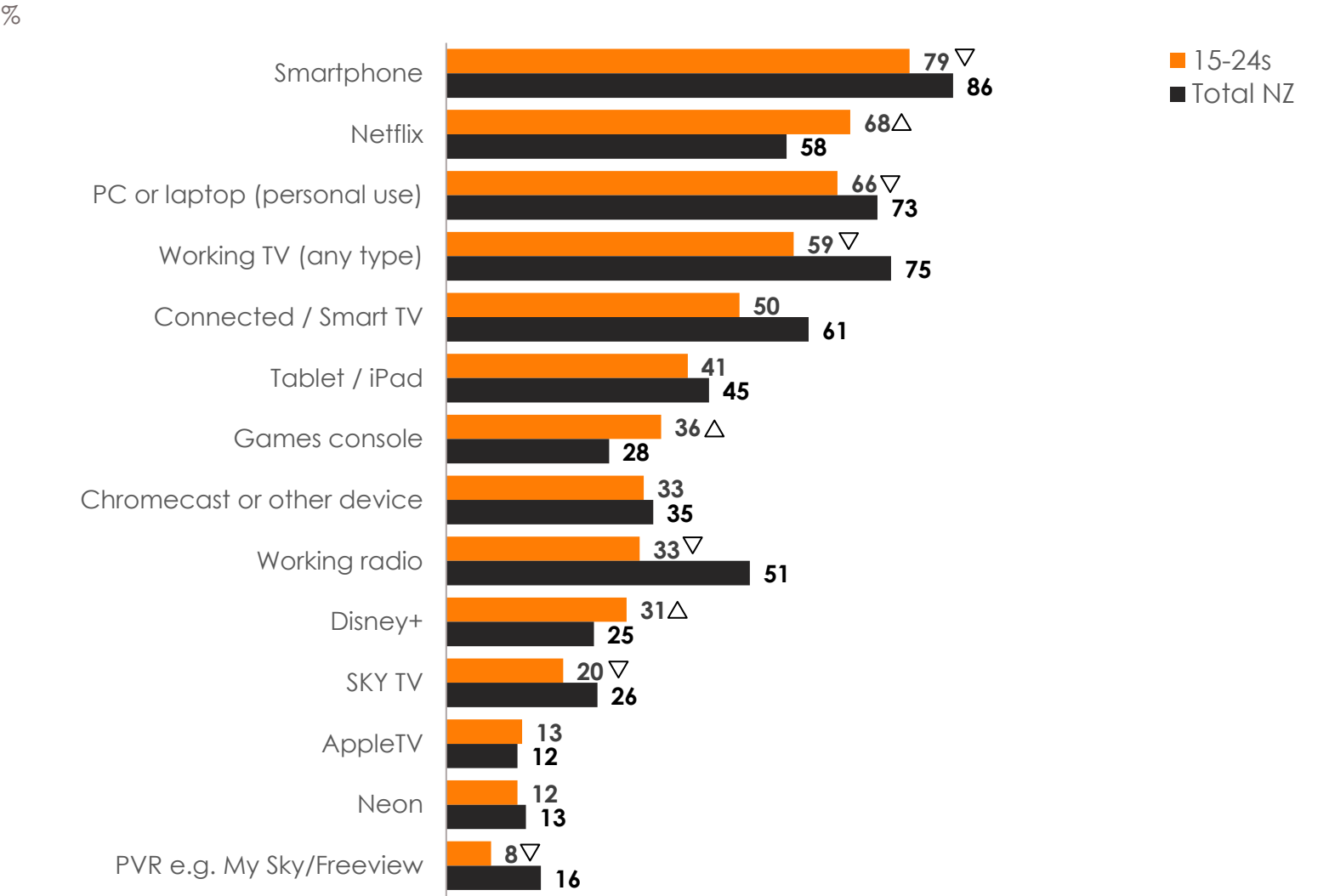
Source: Q1. First, we'd like to ask you about the different types of entertainment or media you used yesterday. Q2. Between [time period], please indicate about how long you [spent doing activity] for?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360).
Note: Total TV includes those who watched linear TV or NZ BVOD.

Young audiences have access to a wide range of media services

What people have access to, and how that influences behaviour

Higher access to Netflix, Disney+ and gaming consoles aligns with youth media habits.

Access to devices and services compared to total NZ



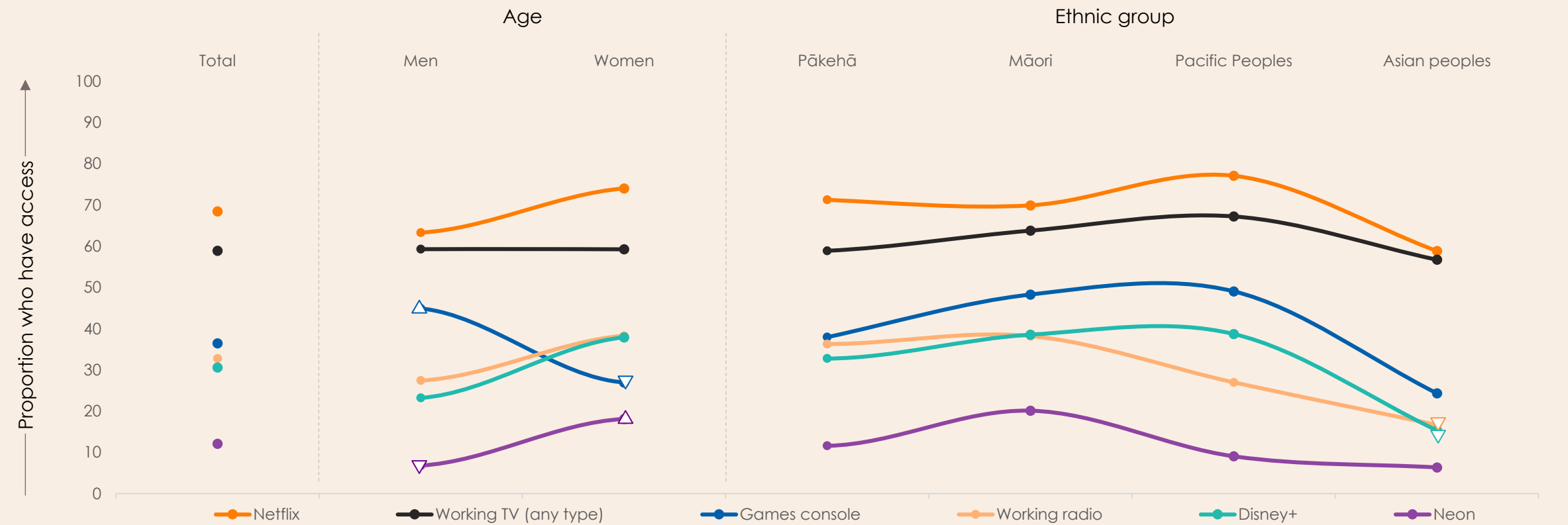
Source: Q14. Which of the following, if any, do you personally own or have daily access to? Q14. You mentioned you have a working TV. Is this a Smart TV that can connect to the Internet?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

Service and device patterns are largely consistent, though young men are more likely to have access to gaming consoles and young women are slightly more likely to have access to streaming services.

Access to devices and services – demographic breakdown

%



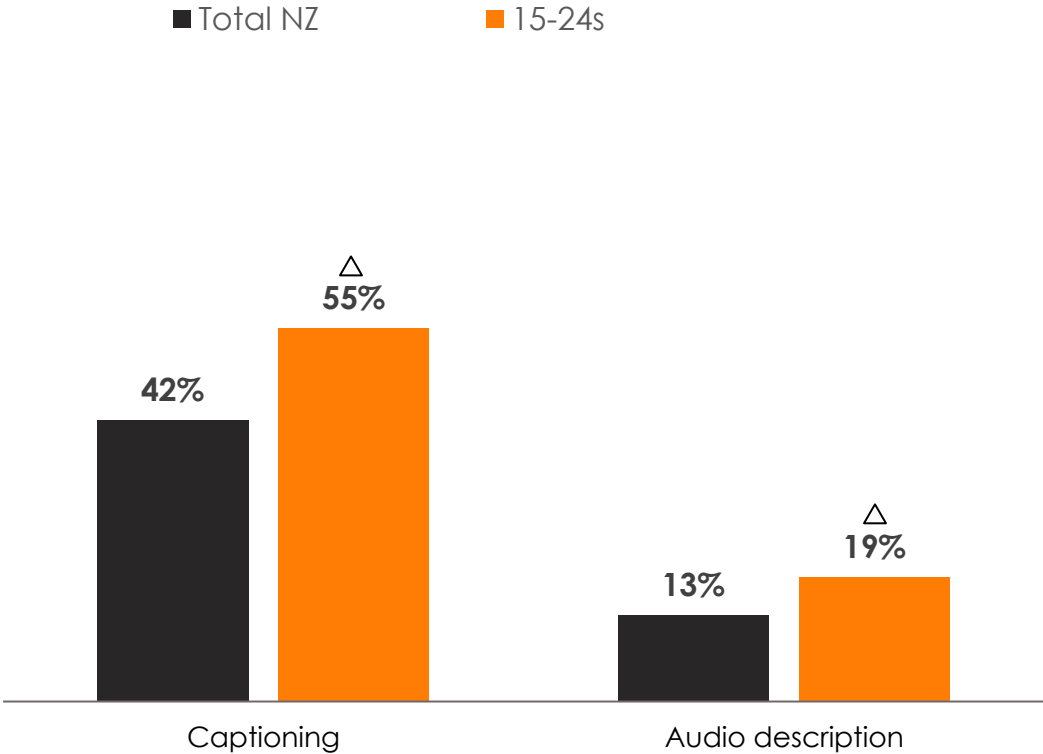
Source: Q14. Which of the following, if any, do you personally own or have daily access to? Q14. You mentioned you have a working TV. Is this a Smart TV that can connect to the Internet?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Young people are more likely than the wider population to use captions and audio description.

This was relatively consistent across gender and ethnicity.

Use of captions or audio description compared to total NZ



Source: Q11a. Do you ever use audio description while you are watching TV or streaming on demand video? Q11b. Do you ever use captioning while you are watching TV or streaming on demand video?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Young audiences concentrate their attention on a handful of major platforms

Where youth spend their viewing time within each platform ecosystem

YouTube, Spotify and Netflix form the core of young people's platform repertoires.

Results here are consistent across gender and ethnic group.

TVNZ includes:

- TVNZ 1
- TVNZ 2
- Duke
- TVNZ+

Three includes:

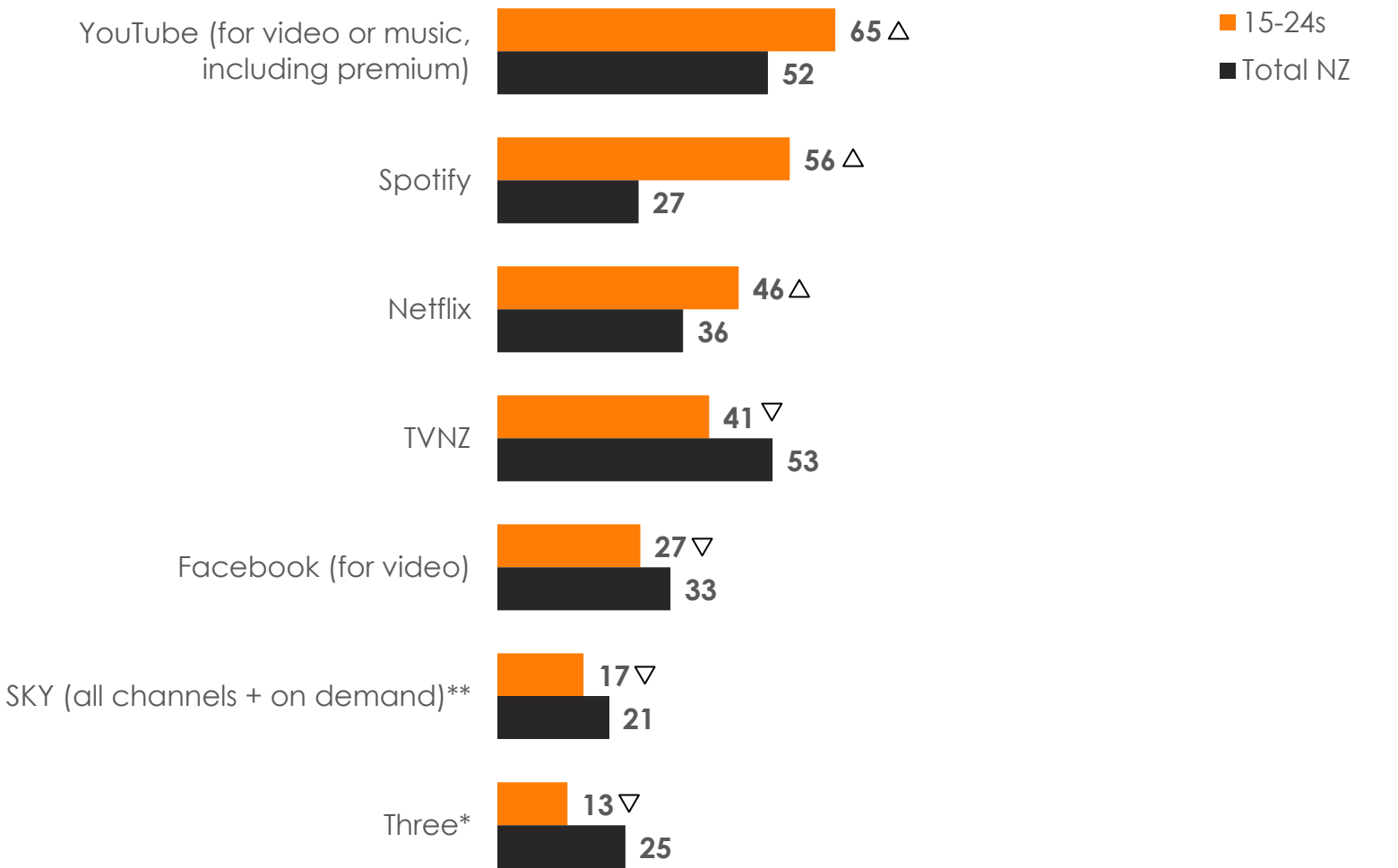
- Bravo
- Eden
- Rush
- Three
- ThreeNow

SKY includes:

- SKY Open (previously Prime)
- SKY Sport (any channel)
- SKY Movies (any channel)
- SKY Kids 101
- Any other SKY channels (excluding above)
- Neon

Daily audience by provider compared to total NZ

%



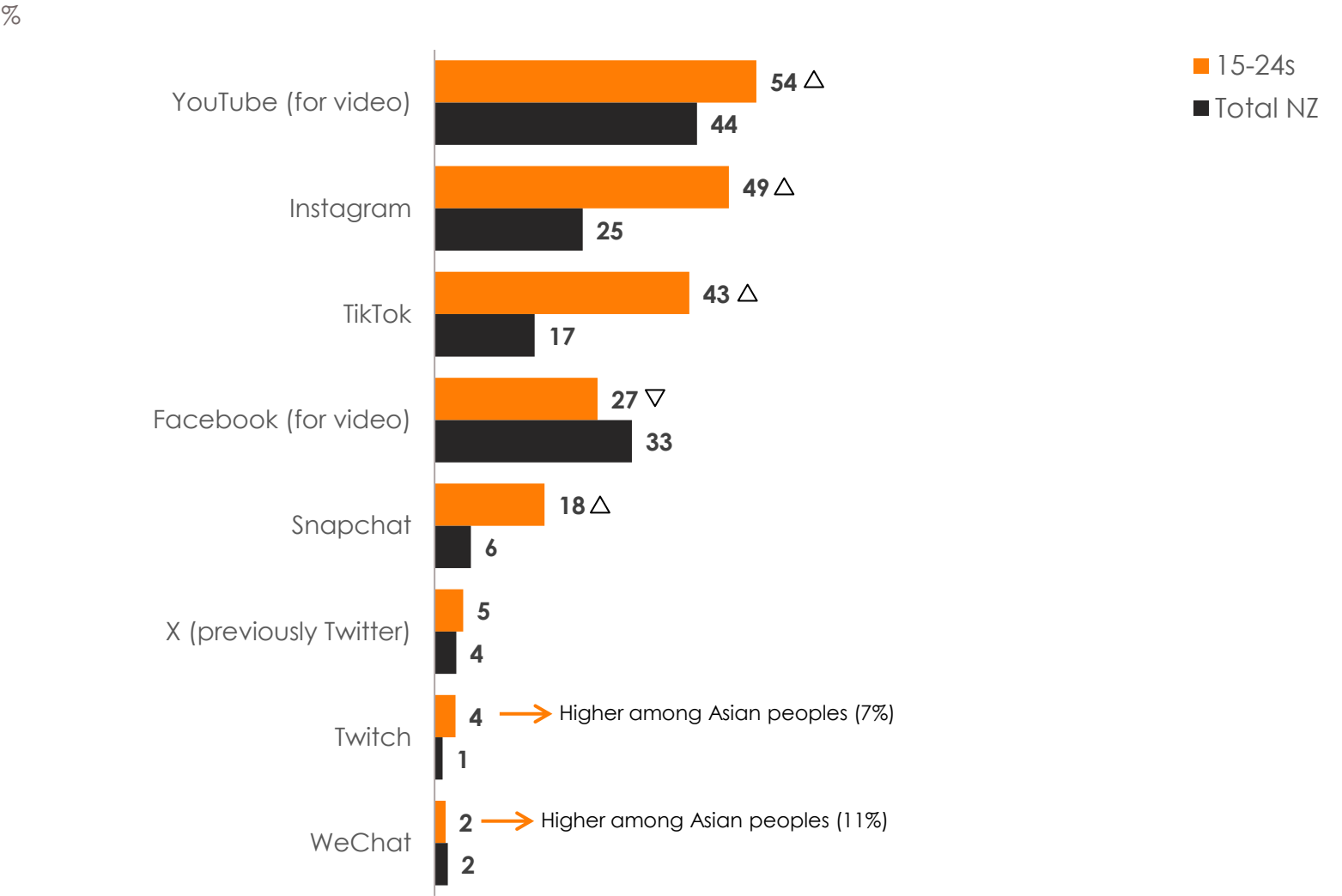
Source: Q3 TV channels, Q4a NZ BVODs, Q4b SVODs, Q4c global online video platforms, Q5b music streaming sites.

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

YouTube,
Instagram and
TikTok dominate
youth global video
consumption.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – Global video sharing platforms

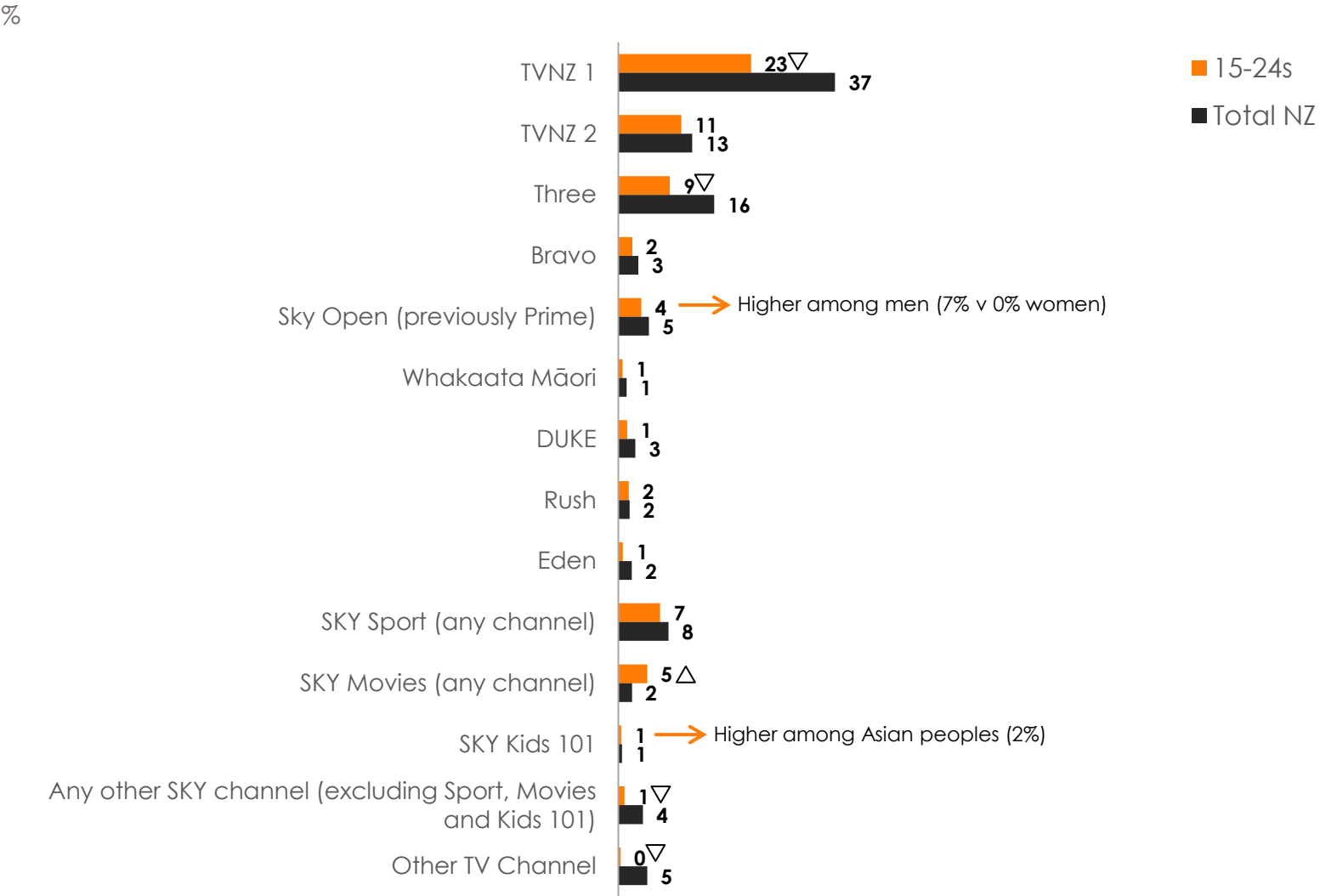


Source: Q4c. Thinking about yesterday overall, please indicate which of the following social media or video sharing platforms you used to watch video?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

TVNZ 1 remains the most watched linear channel among young audiences, despite being less likely to do so than the wider population.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – Linear TV channels



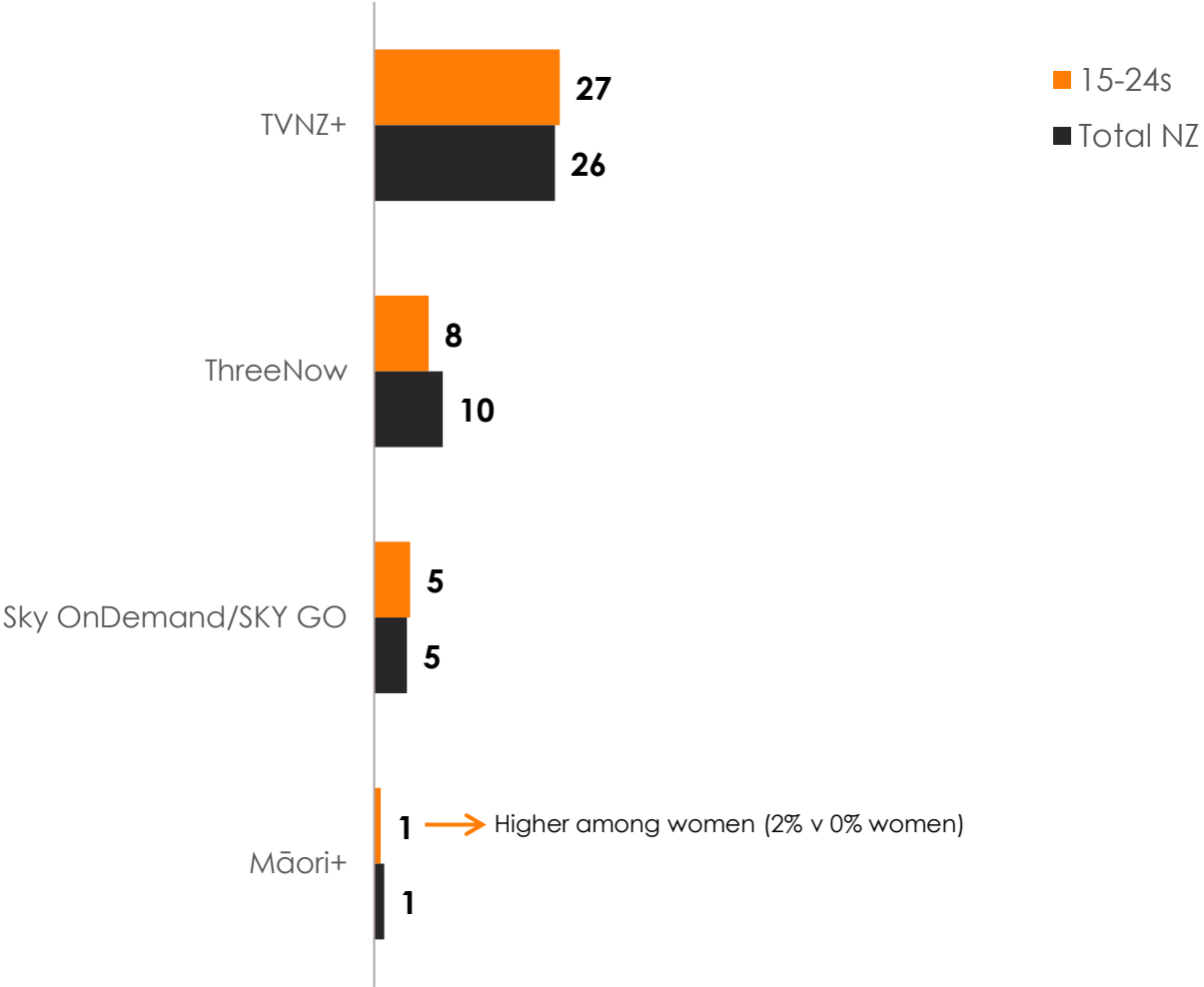
Source: Q3. Thinking about yesterday overall which of the following live TV channels did you watch?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

TVNZ+ accounts for most NZ BVOD viewing among young audiences.

Results here are consistent with wider population.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – NZ BVOD

%



Source: Q4a. Thinking about yesterday overall please indicate which of the following free websites or apps you used to stream content such as TV shows or movies?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

63% Can find NZ shows easily
-2pp than total NZ (65%)

Social media and friends and family are the main ways young people discover NZ shows.

This was consistent across subgroups.

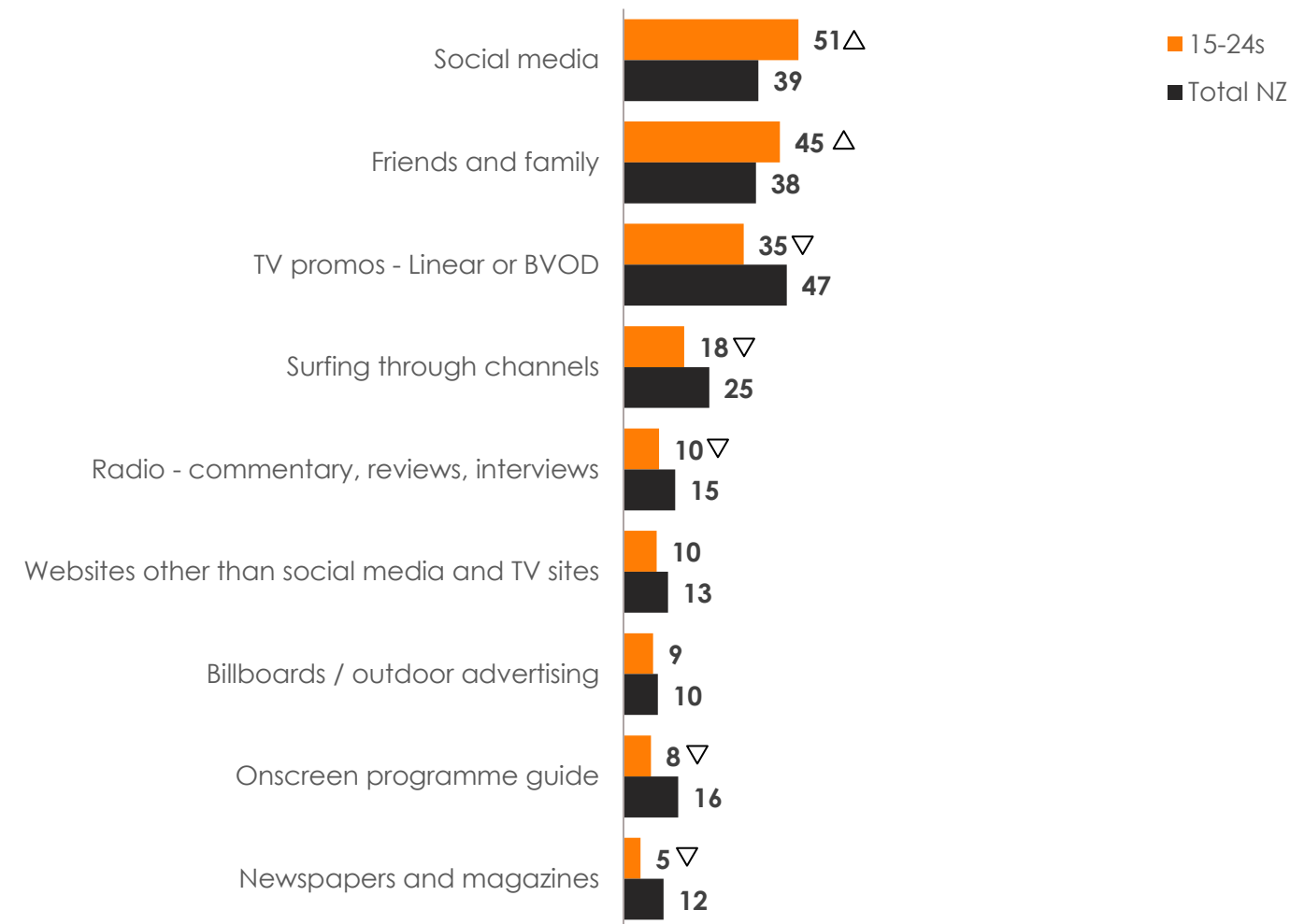
Source: Q13. Below are some things people have said about New Zealand TV shows or New Zealand music. For each one, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Note: *Those who responded slightly or strongly agree. Question is new to 2026.

Source of awareness of NZ made TV Shows compared to total NZ

%



Source: Q7. In which of the following ways do you usually become aware of New Zealand made TV shows?

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

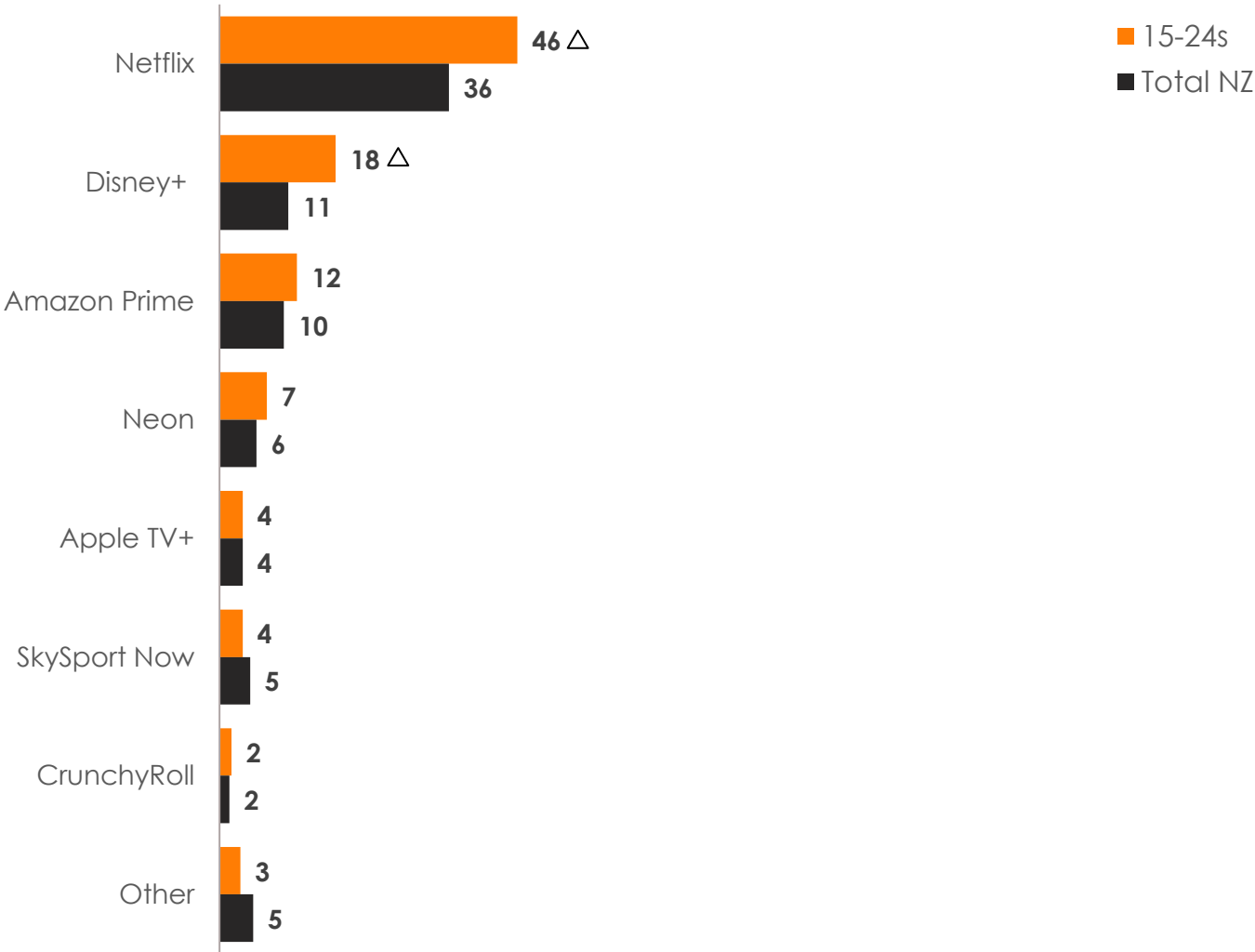
Significantly higher than rest of sample △
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

Young people are more likely to watch Netflix and Disney+ than the wider population.

Results were consistent across subgroups.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – SVOD

%



Source: Q4b. Thinking about yesterday overall please indicate which of the following subscription websites / services you used to stream content such as TV shows or movies?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

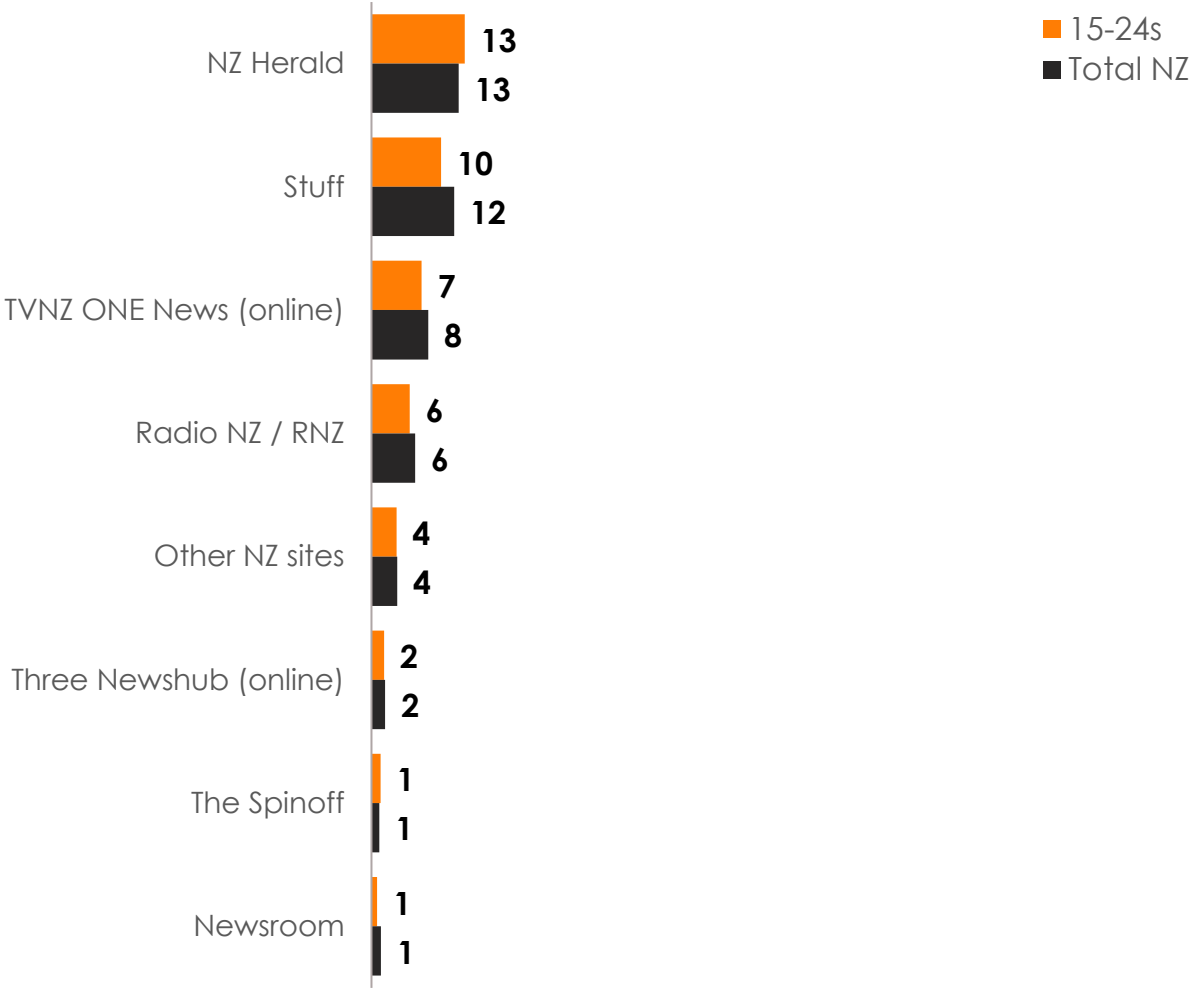
Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Youth engagement with NZ online video sites remains modest and broadly similar to the total population.

This was consistent across age, gender and ethnic groups.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – NZ online video sites

%



Source: Q4d. Thinking about yesterday overall, which of the following New Zealand sites did you use to watch video online?

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

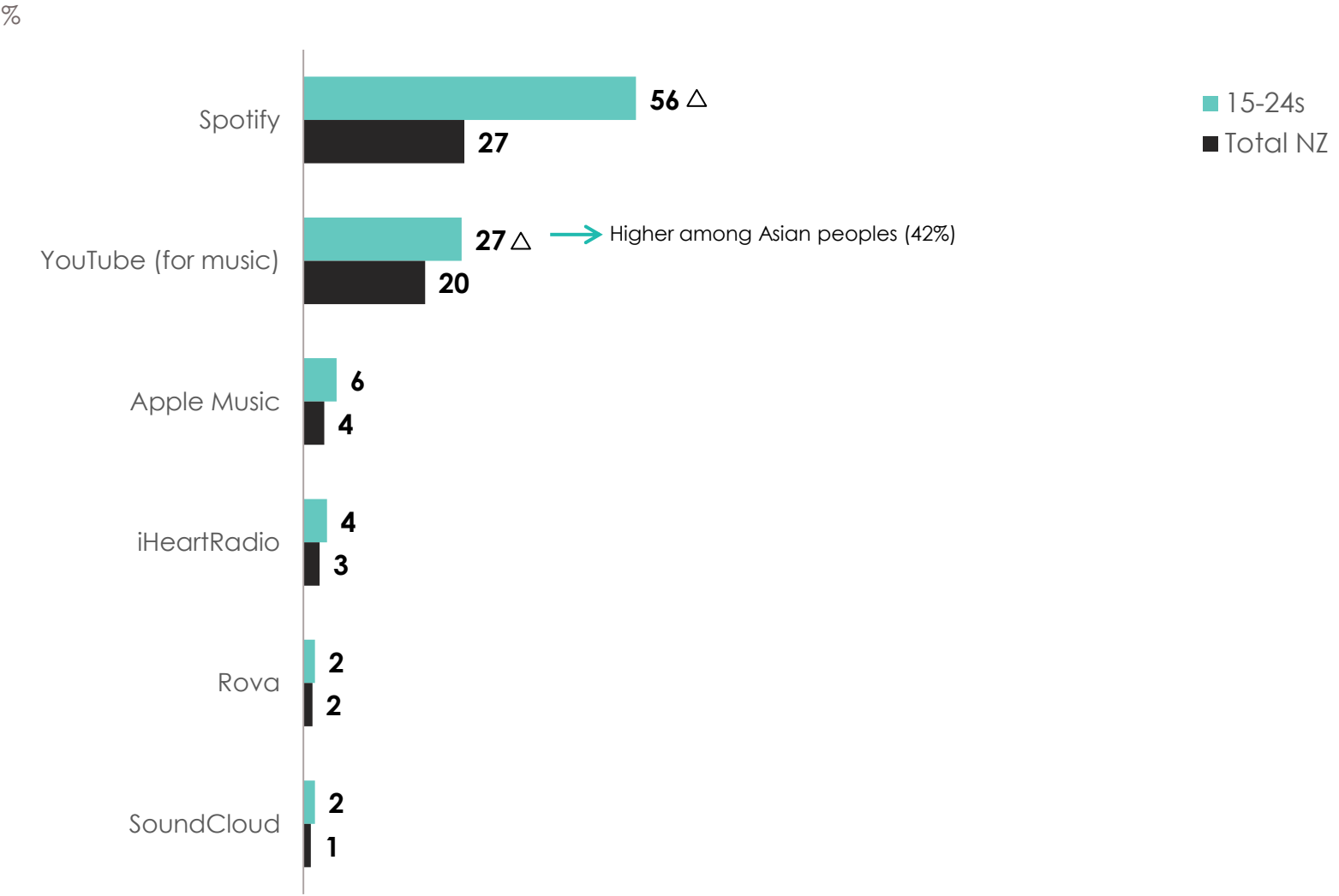
Streaming services and social media shape how young people engage with audio content

How young listeners engage with radio, music streaming and podcasts

Spotify dominates music streaming among young audiences.

Young people are more likely than the wider population to use YouTube for music, and this is even higher among young Asian peoples.

Daily youth audience compared to total NZ – Music streaming platforms



Source: Q5b. Thinking about yesterday overall, which of the following did you use to stream music online yesterday?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

53%▲

Of 15-24s would listen to **NZ music** more, if it came up on their music streaming service*
+12pp than total NZ (41%)

43%

Of 15-24s actively look for **NZ music** to listen to*
+6pp than total NZ (37%)

Streaming services and social media drive music discovery.

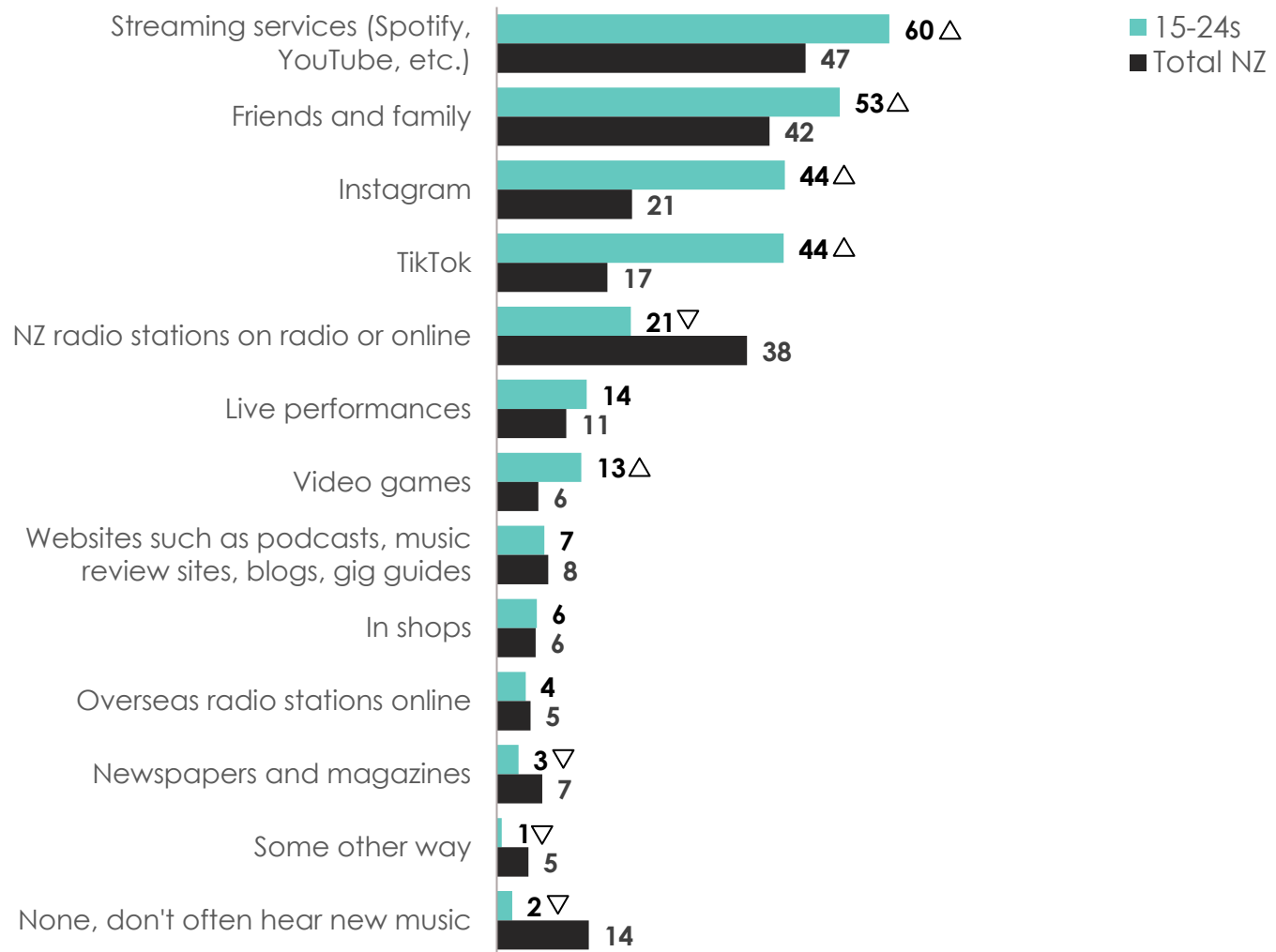
Over half of young people would listen to NZ music more if it came up on their streaming service. Streaming services, friends, family, social media and video games play a larger role in music discovery for youth than the wider population.

Source: Q13. Below are some things people have said about New Zealand TV shows or New Zealand music. For each one, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Note: *Those who responded slightly or strongly agree. Question is new to 2026.

Source of awareness of new music (in general) compared to total NZ



Source: Q12. In which of the following ways, if any, do you usually find out about new music?

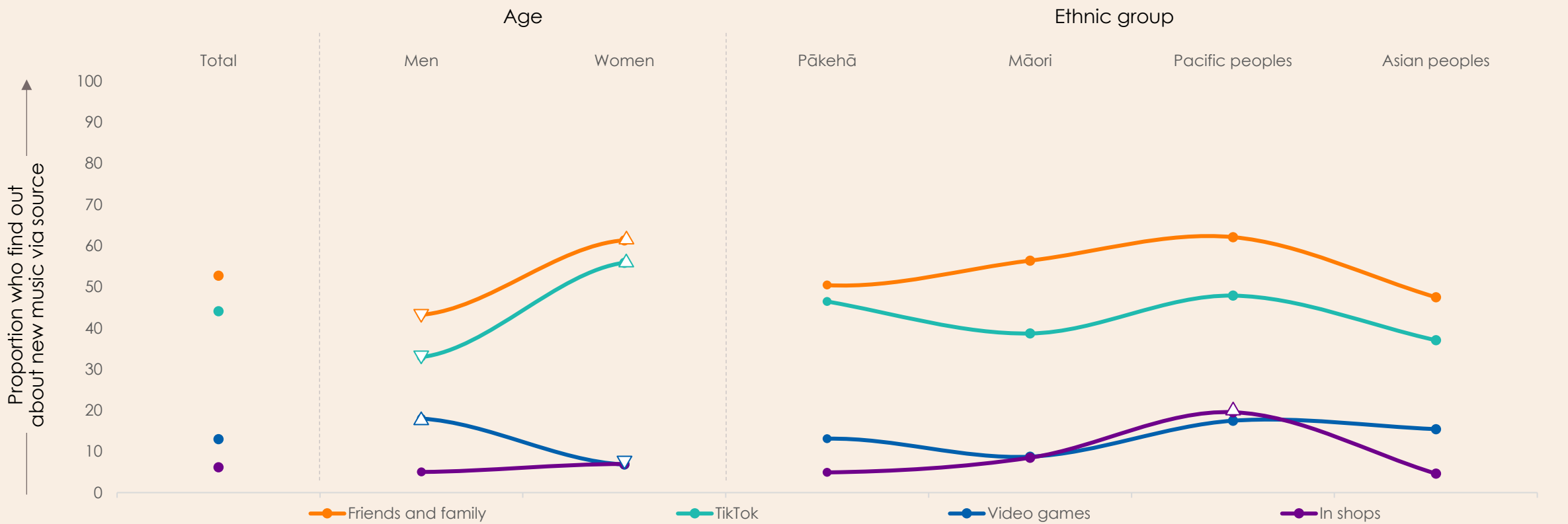
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample ▲
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▼

Music discovery is more social for young women (both personal networks and media), and via games for young men. Pacific youth discover new music in stores.

Source of awareness of new music – demographic breakdown

%



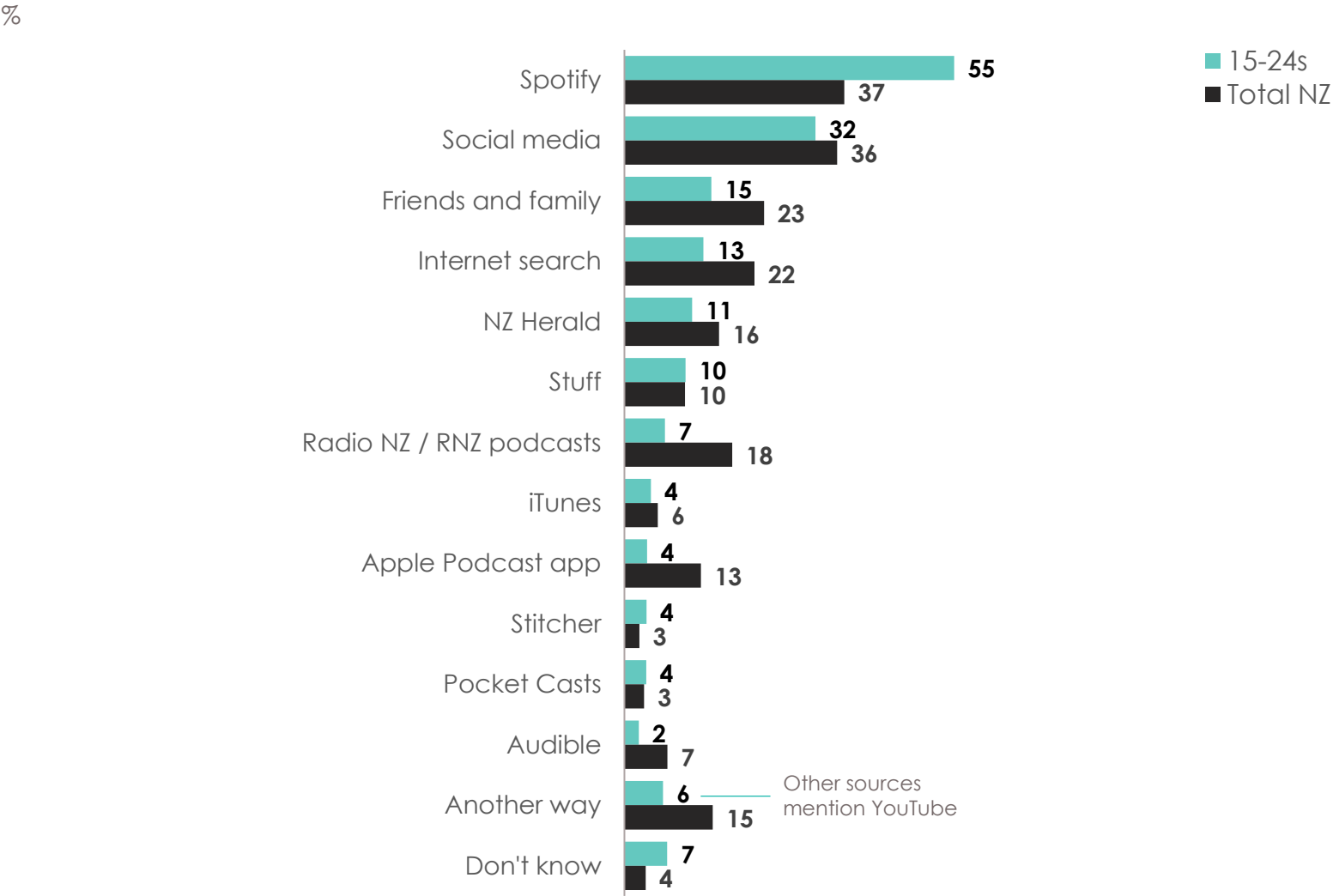
Source: Q12. In which of the following ways, if any, do you usually find out about new music?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360).

Significantly higher than rest of sample $\triangle$
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Podcast discovery revolves around Spotify and social media.

This is relatively consistent with the wider population and across subgroups.

Source of awareness of new podcasts compared to total NZ



Source: Q6. In which of the following ways do you find new podcasts?
Base: All podcast listeners, 15-24 year olds (n=80), total NZ 2026 (n=328).

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Despite living in a global media environment, young people continue to engage with NZ content

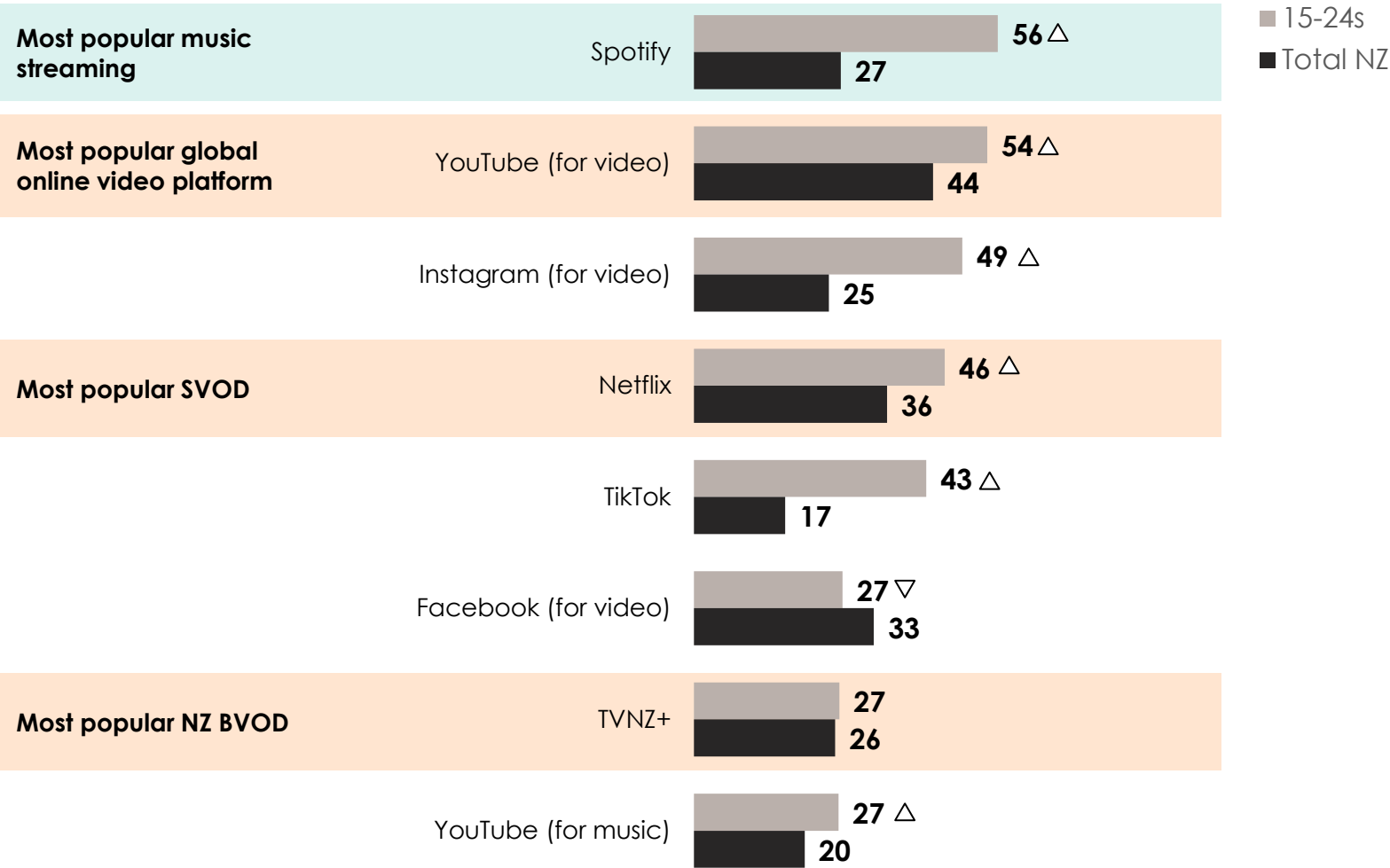
Which platforms, channels and sites reach the most 15-24 year olds

Global platforms dominate the sites and services most used by young people.

Streaming music on Spotify takes the top spot for 15-24 year olds, while watching NZ BVOD via TVNZ+ is 7th.

Top 8 platforms, channels or sites reach compared to total NZ

%



Source: Q3 TV channels, Q4a NZ BVODs, Q4b SVODs, Q4c global online video platforms, Q4d NZ online video platforms, Q5b music streaming sites.
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

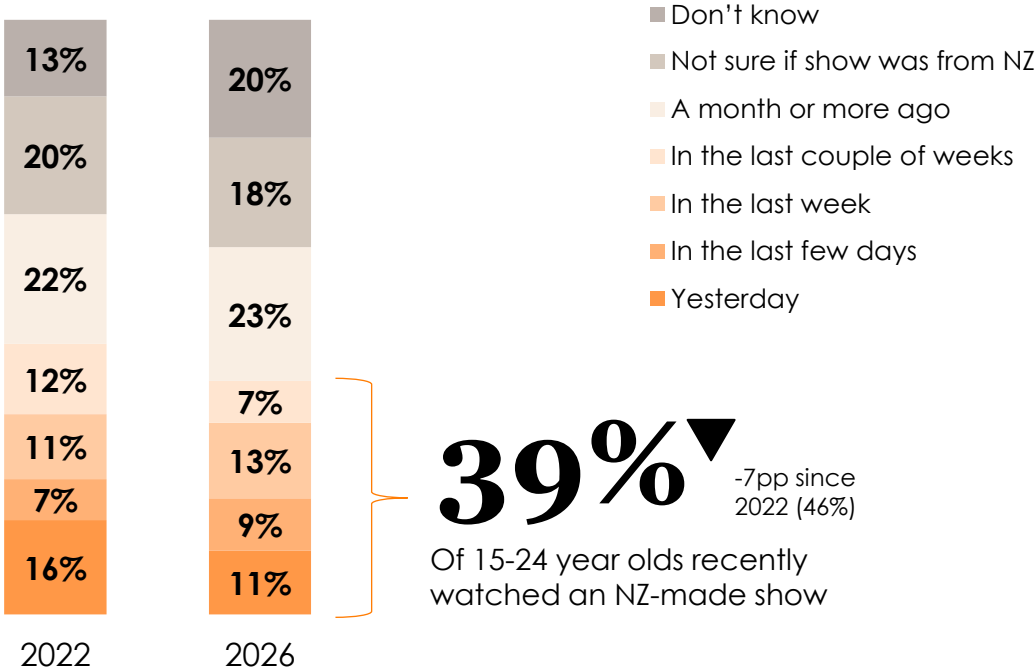
Significantly higher than rest of sample △
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

Young people value NZ content, even when content origin is not top of mind

New questions in 2026 explore how New Zealanders feel about NZ shows and music, including quality, pride, relevance and cultural connection.

Four in ten 15-24 year olds watched an NZ-made show recently, down slightly since 2022.

Recent viewing of NZ-made shows compared to total NZ



Source: Q7a. When was the last time you watched a New Zealand made show?
Base: All 15-24 year olds 2022 (n=706), 2026 (n=360).
Note: A new question to 2026 reflects recency among those able to recall NZ-made viewing, rather than establishing whether people have ever watched NZ content. Compared to "Where are the youth audiences 2022" report.

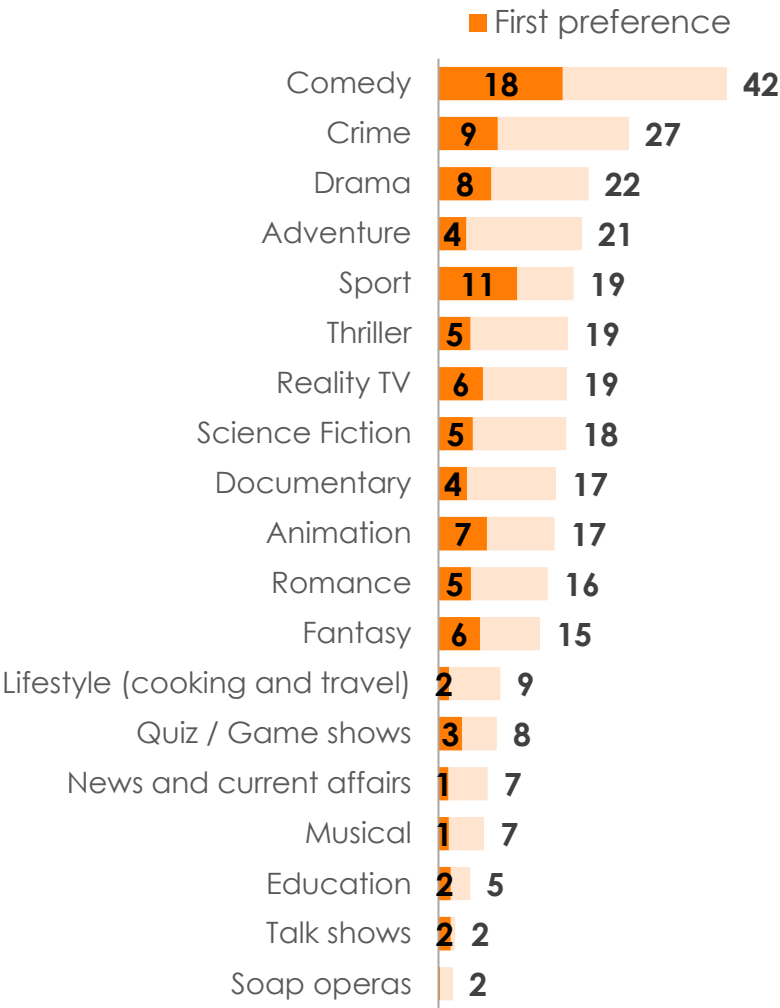
Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Comedy is the genre most likely to appeal to young audiences.

Crime, drama and adventure also feature prominently, while sport, reality TV, animation and fantasy show more niche preference patterns.

Genre preferences, including primary preferences

%

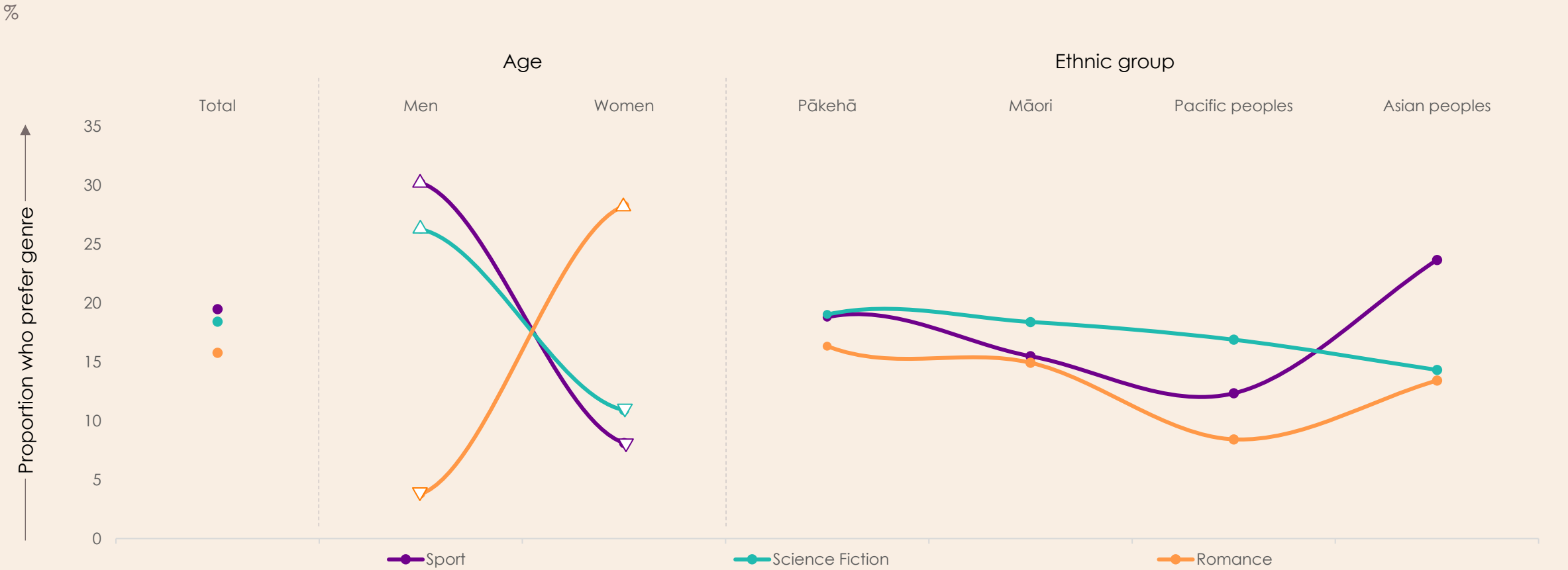


Source: Q13b. Of the list below, what are your top three most preferred genres?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360).
Note: Unlabelled segments had less than 1% responses.

Significantly higher than rest of sample
Significantly lower than rest of sample

Genre preferences are relatively consistent across subgroups though with some gender differences where men are drawn to sport and sci-fi, women prefer romance.

Genre preferences – demographic breakdown



Source: Q13b. Of the list below, what are your top three most preferred genres?
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360).

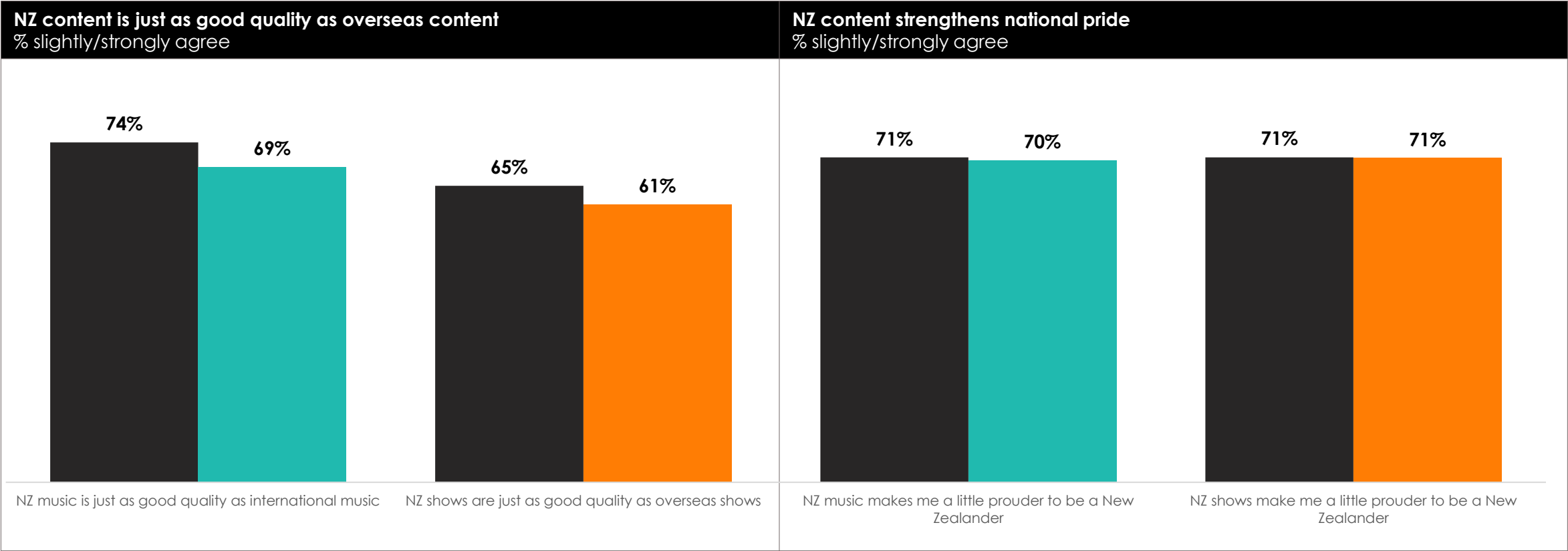
Significantly higher than rest of sample $\triangle$
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Young people rate NZ content positively and say it strengthens national pride.

These findings are consistent with the wider population.

Agreement with statements about NZ content compared to total NZ

■ Total NZ ■ 15-24s



Source: Q13. Below are some things people have said about New Zealand TV shows or New Zealand music. For each one, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Significantly higher than rest of sample 
Significantly lower than rest of sample 

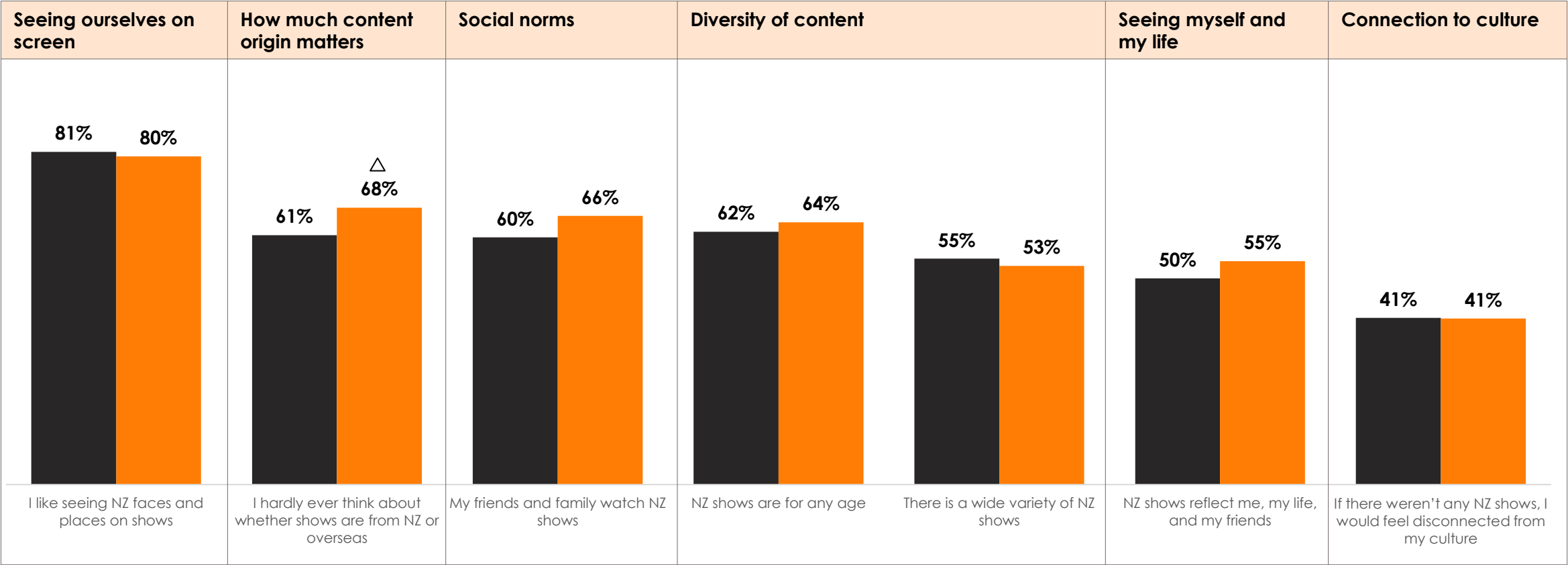
Young people enjoy seeing NZ stories, despite rarely thinking about content origin.

Otherwise, young audiences views on NZ shows align relatively closely with the wider population.

Agreement with statements about NZ shows compared to total NZ

% slightly/strongly agree

■ Total NZ ■ 15-24s



Source: Q13. Below are some things people have said about New Zealand TV shows or New Zealand music. For each one, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.
Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

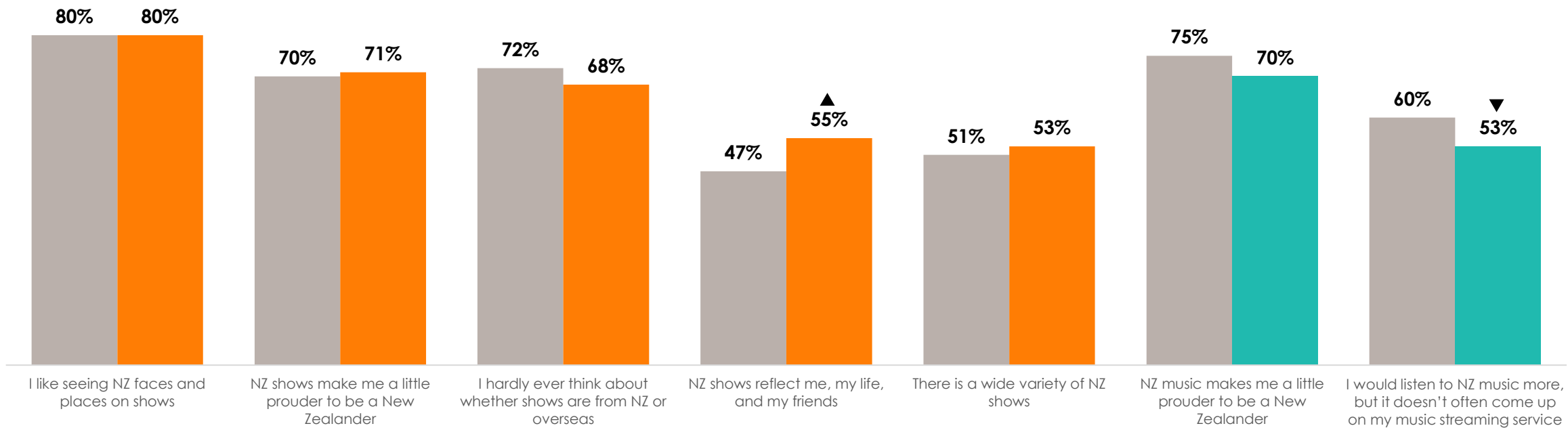
Significantly higher than rest of sample △
Significantly lower than rest of sample ▽

Attitudes towards NZ content have remained broadly stable since 2022, while more young people now feel NZ shows reflect them and their friends.

Agreement with statements about NZ shows compared to “Where are the youth audiences 2022”

% slightly/strongly agree

■ 2024 ■ 2026



Source: Q13. Below are some things people have said about New Zealand TV shows or New Zealand music. For each one, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree.
Base: All 15-24 year olds, 2024 (n=522 to 577), 2026 (n=360).
Note: Compared to “Where are the youth audiences 2022” report.

Significantly higher than 2024 ▲
Significantly lower than 2024 ▼

Similar to the wider NZ audience - storytelling, production quality and strong performances define a quality show for young audiences.

Themes of good storylines, acting and interesting or funny content seen in the 2022 youth report, feature in 2026.

What 15-24s say makes a good quality show – coded open-ended question

%



Source: Q13A. What makes a show good quality?

Base: All 15-24 year olds (n=360), total NZ 2026 (n=1701).

Note: Responses with less than 5% not shown. Question is new to 2026.

Significantly higher than rest of sample Δ
Significantly lower than rest of sample ∇

Ngā mihi nui



Correna Matika

Ngāti Kuri, Tainui



Andrew Robertson