HORIZON RESEARCH

BOOK READING IN NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND BOOK COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera Pukapuka o Aotearoa

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New Zealand Book Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the results of a survey of book reading in New Zealand.

Information about the research method can be found at the end of this document.

The full tables of data collected during this survey can be found on the New Zealand Book Council website: bookcouncil.org.nz/programmes/research

The survey was conducted by Horizon Research for the New Zealand Book Council to discover reading and book buying habits of New Zealanders.

The survey has confirmed that we are a nation that loves to read. 88% of Kiwis read, or started to read, at least one book over the last 12 months. Most of us read for relaxation and enjoyment, we read an average of 20.6 books a year, our favourite fiction genres are crime, thriller and adventure stories, and we enjoy reading our own stories – in the past year, 52% of us read books by New Zealand writers.

However, the survey also revealed that 394,000 Kiwi adults did not read a book in the past year. 31% of adults who had not read a book in the past 12 months said that it was because they had not had the time to read, and 24% said that it was because they didn't really like reading. 16% said they felt it was easier watching movies based on a book.

It is envisaged that the survey will be repeated in order to understand trends in sales and readership of New Zealand book buying and reading.



Some findings from the survey:

- 88% of adults, New Zealanders 18 years of age or over, had read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months.
- 52% of readers of all ages read books by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months.
- Enjoyment and relaxation/quiet time/time out were the main reasons for adults to read. There were few differences between those who read fiction, poetry or non-fiction.
- The 22% of adults who had read only one to three books in the past 12 months primarily cited "lack of time" for not reading more, although finding a book that interested readers was also a significant barrier.
- 31% of adults who had not read a book in the past 12 months said that it was because they had not had the time to read, but 24% said it was because they didn't really like reading. 16% said they felt it was easier watching movies based on a book.
- Crime, thriller and adventure books formed the dominant genre read in the past 12 months by adult fiction readers.
- Adult non-fiction readers read 4.3 different genres. Biographies and autobiographies formed the largest genre read, ahead of cookbooks.
- Of the fiction books that had been purchased, 58% came from bookstores while 42% were purchased online.
- 73% of online fiction purchasers had purchased offshore. 40% had used New Zealand websites such as Fishpond or Mighty Ape while 28% had used New Zealand bookstore websites.
- Of the non-fiction books that had been purchased, 60% came from bricks & mortar bookstores while 40% were purchased online.
- 32% of those purchasing non-fiction online had used New Zealand bookstore sites and 38% other New Zealand websites. 72% had used overseas websites.
- 74% of fiction books read by adults were printed books, 22% e-books and 4% audio books.
- 6% of adults used e-books for all their fiction reading.

REPORT

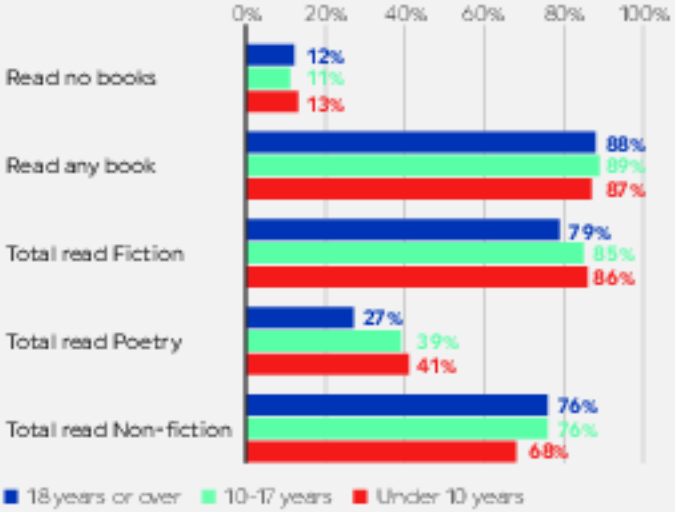
The survey is of the adult New Zealand population (i.e. 18 years of age or over). Questions were added to the survey to gain indications[1] of reading incidence and reading volume among 10–17 year olds and New Zealanders under 10 years of age.

1. Total readership in the past 12 months

Overall, 88% of adults had read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months.

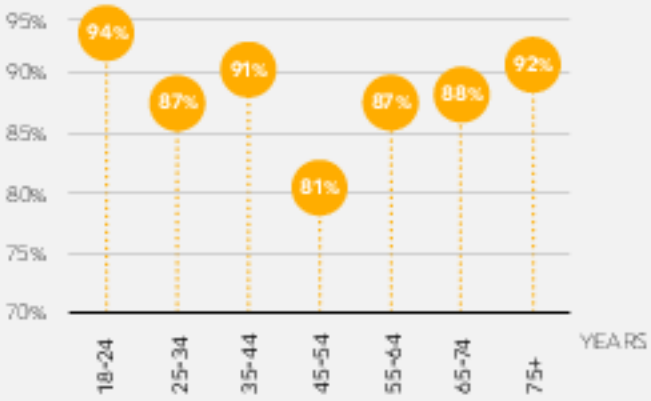
The percentage of readers was similar among adults, 10–17 year olds (89%) and those under 10 years of age (87%).

% READING AND NOT READING BOOKS



Women were more likely to read than men. 91% of adult women read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months, compared with 84% of adult men. With the exception of 45–54 year olds, the percentage of each age group reading books remained close to the average.

READ ANY BOOKS



1.1 Reader and non-reader profiles

The profile of readers was largely similar to the overall population demographics. There were some differences in the profiles of fiction readers, poetry readers and non-fiction readers: these are commented on in Section 3 under the respective genres.

62% of adults who had not read a book in the past 12 months were male. The average age of non-readers, at 48.3 years, was 5% higher than the average age of readers, at 45.8 years.

Non-readers had 6% lower average household income and 2% lower average personal income than readers. They were half as likely as readers to have education qualifications above NCEA Level 2 (including Sixth Form Certificate and University Entrance).

1.2 Total books read

The survey indicates that on average, New Zealand's adult readers each read 20.6 books in the past 12 months.

1.3 Books by New Zealand authors

Just under 50% of adult readers had read or started at least one book by a New Zealand author in the past 12 months.

- 45% of 10–17 year old readers reported reading books by New Zealand authors.
- Parents/caregivers reported that 71% of readers under 10 years of age had read at least one book by a New Zealand author in the past 12 months.

1 Refer to Appendix 1 for comments on the data for the 10–17 year old and under 10 year old groups.
Note that figures in charts may not add exactly to 100% because of rounding. Figures will add to more than 100% where respondents were able to select multiple responses to questions.

2. Reasons for reading and not reading

2.1 Readers

Enjoyment and relaxation/quiet time/time out were the main reasons given by adults for reading. There were few differences in the reasons given by readers of fiction, poetry and non-fiction, although poetry readers were more likely than others to be reading for spiritual enrichment and because they enjoyed the physical properties of books.

Exposure to other times/cultures/experience and the variety of topics available were more important to those over 35 years. Spiritual enrichment as a reason for reading peaked within the 35-44 age group and declined with increasing age after that.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN REASONS FOR READING?

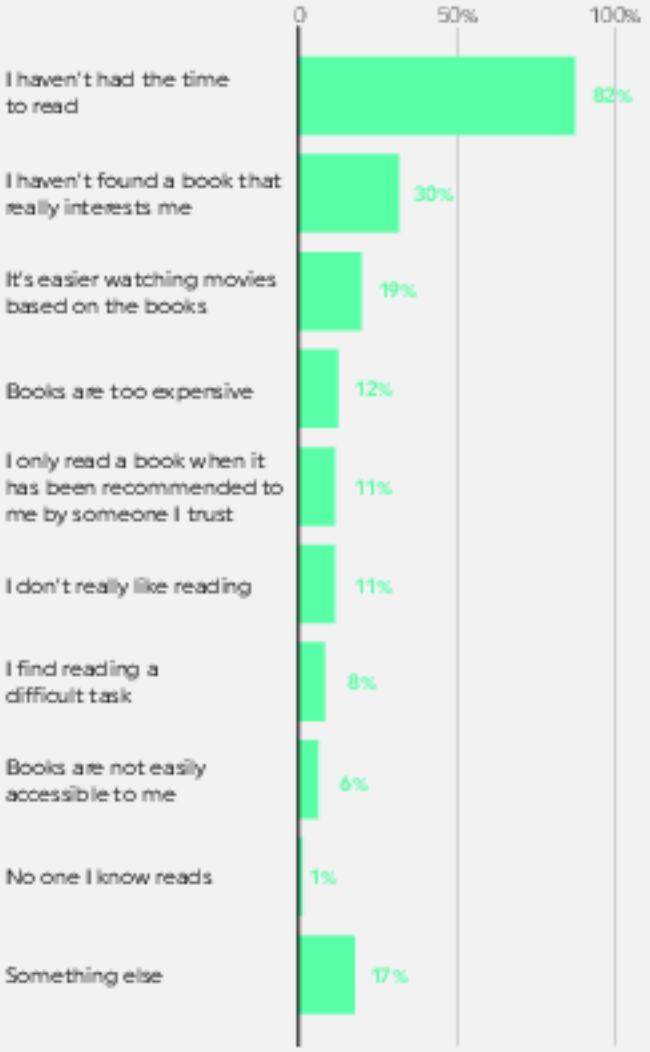


2.2 Low volume readers

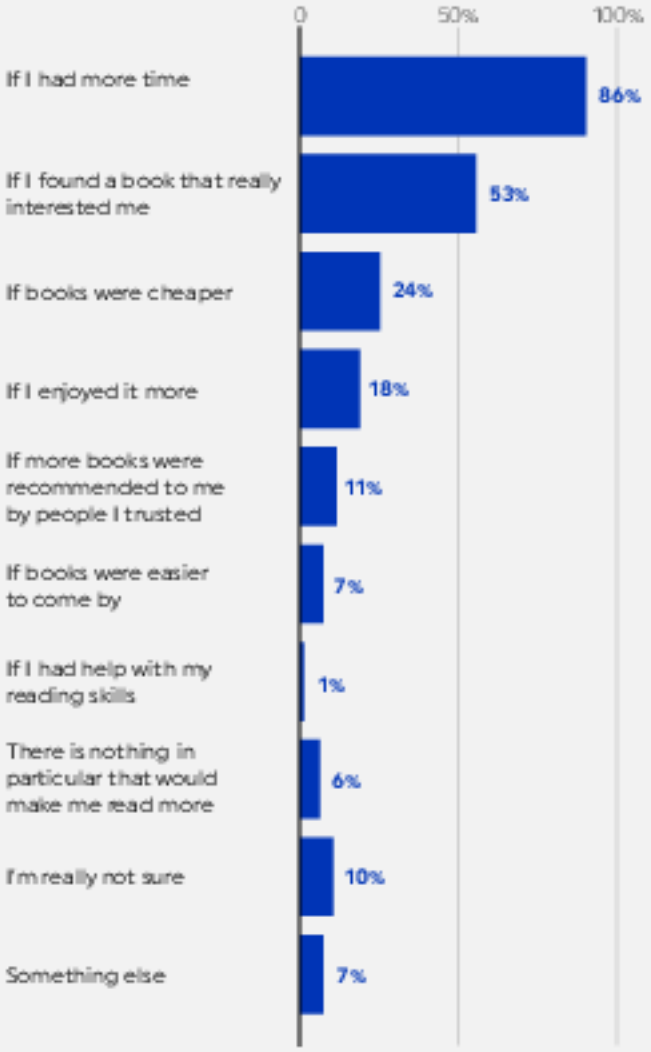
Adults who had read only one to three books in the past 12 months primarily cited lack of time as the main reason for not reading more.

This reason became more important when they were asked what would make them read more. 53% of low volume readers said they would read more, if they found a book that interested them.

YOU SAID YOU HAVE ONLY READ A FEW BOOKS IN THE PAST YEAR; COULD YOU TELL US WHY THAT IS?



WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DO YOU THINK WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO READ MORE? (READ 1-3 BOOKS IN PAST 12 MONTHS)



86% of low volume readers indicated that they would read more if they had more time.

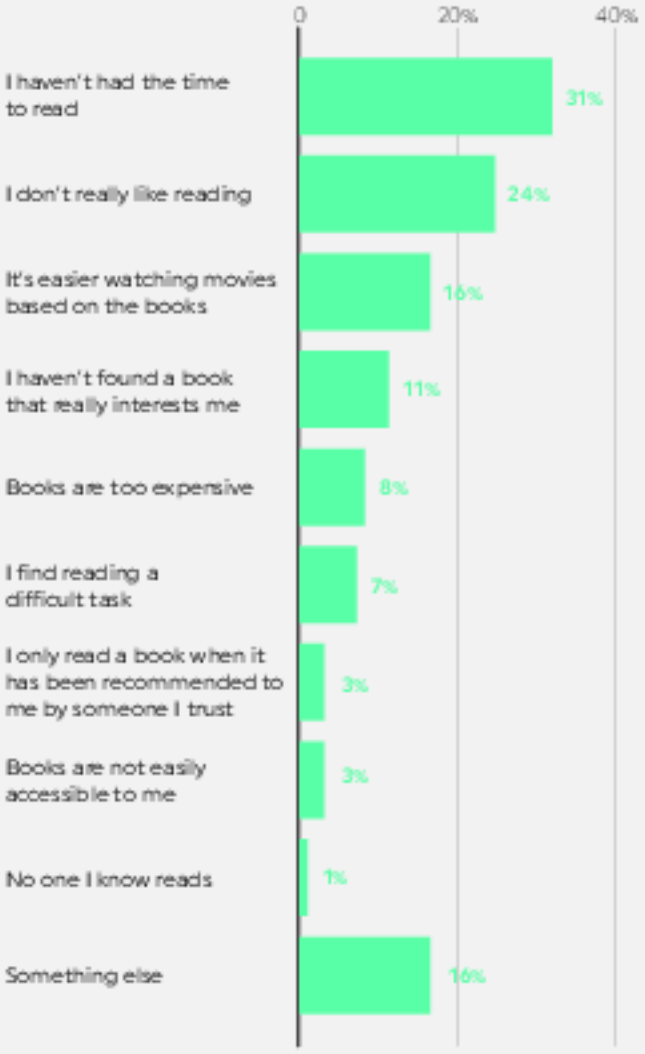
30% of low volume readers commented that they hadn't found a book that really interested them.

2.3 Non-readers

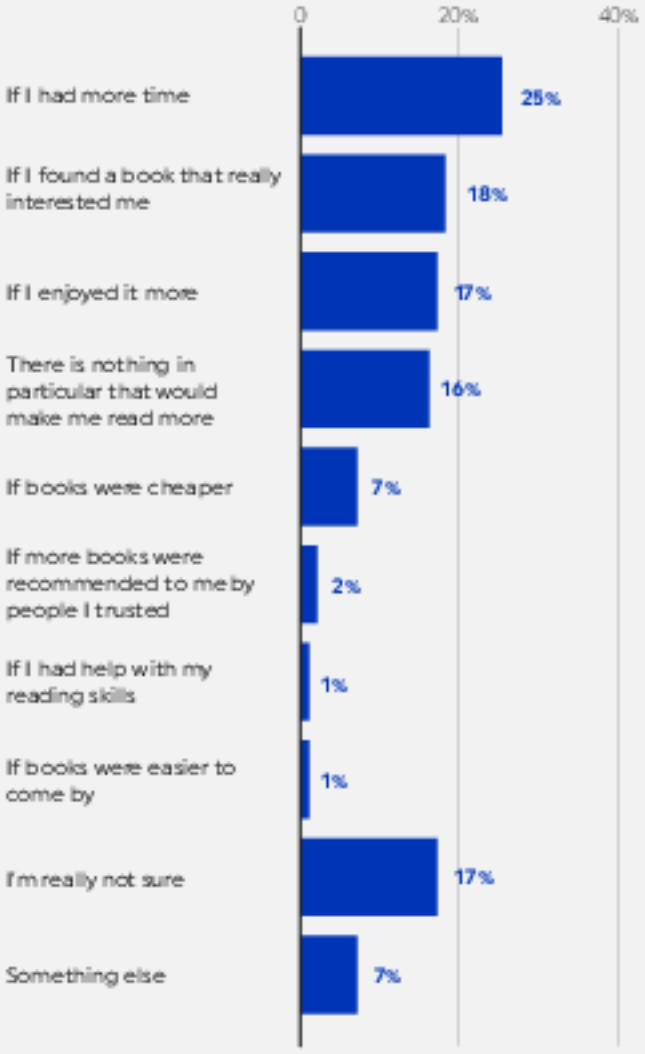
31% of adults who had not read a book in the past 12 months said that it was because they had not had the time to read, and 24% said that it was because they didn't really like reading. 16% said they felt it was easier watching movies based on a book.

For 16% of those adults who hadn't read a book in the past 12 months, nothing in particular would make them want to read.

YOU SAID YOU READ NO BOOKS IN THE PAST YEAR; COULD YOU TELL US WHY THAT IS?



WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DO YOU THINK WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO READ MORE? (READ NO BOOKS IN PAST 12 MONTHS)



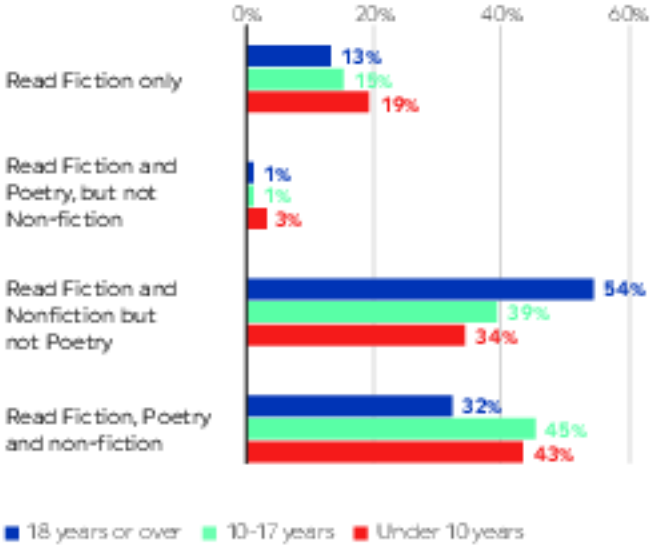
3. What New Zealanders are reading

3.1 Fiction

79% of New Zealand adults had read fiction in the past year, together with 85% of 10–17 year olds, and 86% of children under 10 years.

Just 14% of fiction readers read only fiction. 85% of fiction readers read non-fiction as well.

FICTION READERS



The average age of adult fiction readers was 45.5 years – the same as the average age for adult readers as a whole. 54% were female.

On average, adult fiction readers each read 14.4 fiction books in the past 12 months.

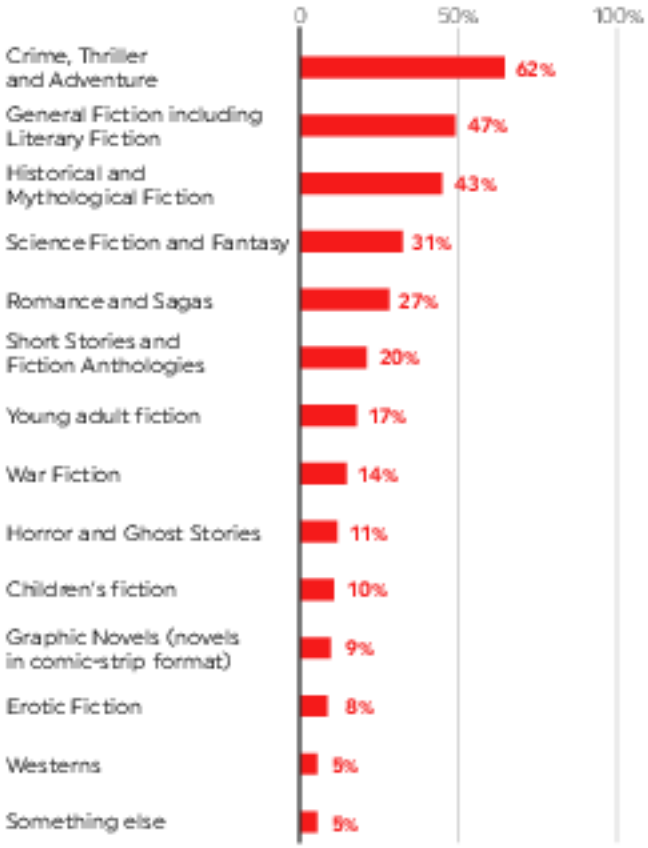
3.1.1 Fiction genres

Adults

On average, adult fiction readers read 3.1 different genres. "Crime, thriller and adventure", "General fiction" and "Historical and Mythological Fiction" books were the genres most frequently read in the past 12 months by adult fiction readers.

Readers who included erotic fiction in their genre mix read the highest number of other genres as well. They also read the most fiction books, on average.

THINKING ABOUT ALL THE FICTION BOOKS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GENRES DID YOU READ?



THINKING ABOUT ALL THE FICTION BOOKS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GENRES DID YOU READ? (10–17 YEAR OLDS)



3.1.2 Fiction formats

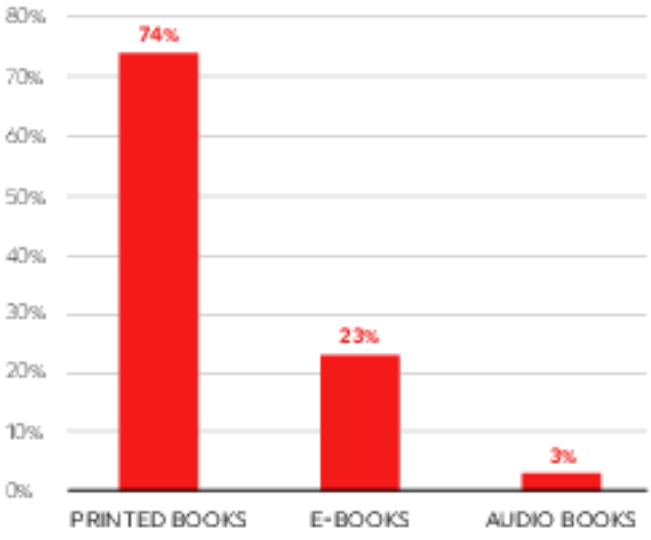
Printed books were the most popular format for reading fiction.

74% of fiction readers read print books, and 50% of fiction readers read only print books.

23% of fiction readers read e-books, and 6% of fiction readers read only e-Books.

E-Books had a greater share among those under 54 years, and 13.5% of books read by those aged over 75 years were e-Books.

FICTION BOOK TYPES (% OF BOOKS READ)



3% of fiction readers used audio books, and just 0.5% of fiction readers used only audio books.

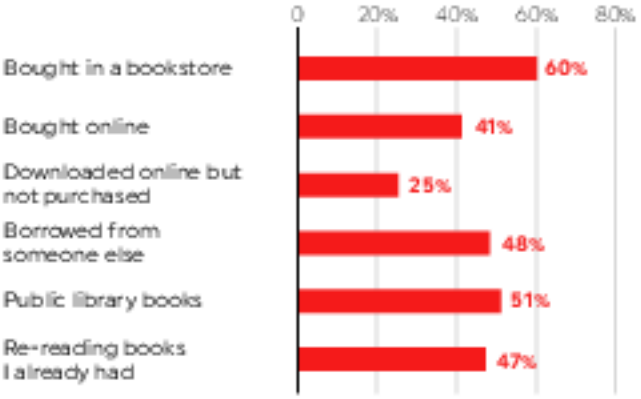
3.1.3 Reading for pleasure, work or study

95% of adult fiction readers read for pleasure. 43% of adult fiction readers read for work or study.

3.1.4 Fiction book sources

More adult fiction readers reported reading fiction books that had been bought in a bookstore (60%) than borrowed from a public library (51%).

FICTION BOOK SOURCE (% OF ADULTS USING SOURCE)



However, public library readers are high volume readers and as a result, the volume of fiction books read from public libraries was greater than the volume that had been purchased in a bookstore.

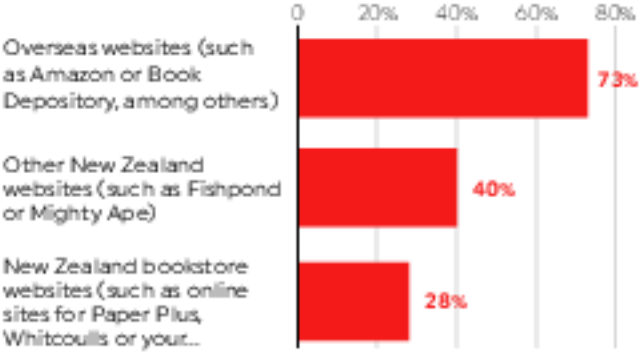
FICTION BOOK SOURCE (% OF BOOKS READ)



Of the fiction books that had been purchased, 51% came from bricks and mortar bookstores while 49% were purchased online.

73% of online fiction purchasers had purchased offshore. New Zealand bookstore websites had the lowest level of users for online purchasers.

ONLINE FICTION SOURCES



3.1.5 "Same household" readership

45% of adults reported someone else in the household reading the fiction books they read.

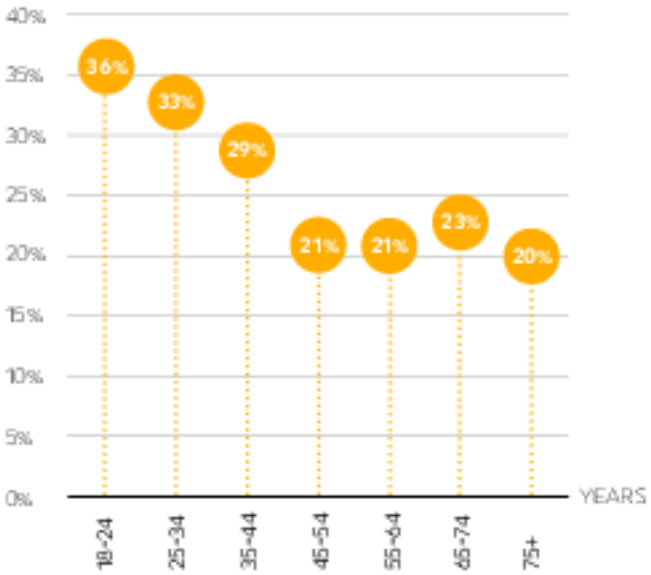
3.2 Poetry

27% of New Zealand adults read poetry books in the past year, as did 39% of 10–17 year olds and 41% of children under 10 years.

Only 1% of poetry readers (0.2% of the population) read only poetry.

The average age of adult poetry readers was 7% lower than the average age of readers overall – 42.7 years compared with an average age of 45.8 years for all readers. Adult poetry readers tended to have lower than average income levels. 60% were female.

READ POETRY



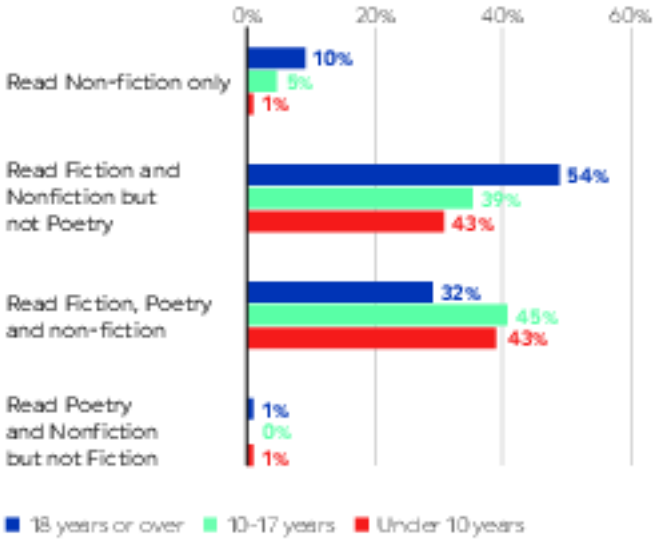
11% of adults reported that someone else in their household also had read the poetry books that they read.

3.3 Non-Fiction

76% of New Zealand adults read non-fiction in the past 12 months, as did 76% of 10–17 year olds and 68% of children under 10 years.

Overall, 8.5% of all non-fiction readers read only non-fiction.

NON-FICTION READERS



The average age of adult non-fiction readers was similar to the average age of all adult readers – 45.9 years – and they tended to have average income levels. 51% were female.

On average, adult non-fiction readers each read 7.5 non-fiction books in the past 12 months.

3.3.1 Non-fiction genres

On average,, adult readers of non-fiction read 4.3 different non-fiction genres. Biographies and autobiographies formed the largest genre read in the past 12 months by adult non-fiction readers.

As readers' age increased, the incidence of reading biographies and autobiographies, New Zealand history and books about sport increased as age increased.

Cookbooks had fairly consistent levels of readership from 25 years of age.

3.3.2 Non-fiction format

For adults, as with fiction, printed books were the most popular form of non-fiction format, forming 75% of non-fiction books read.

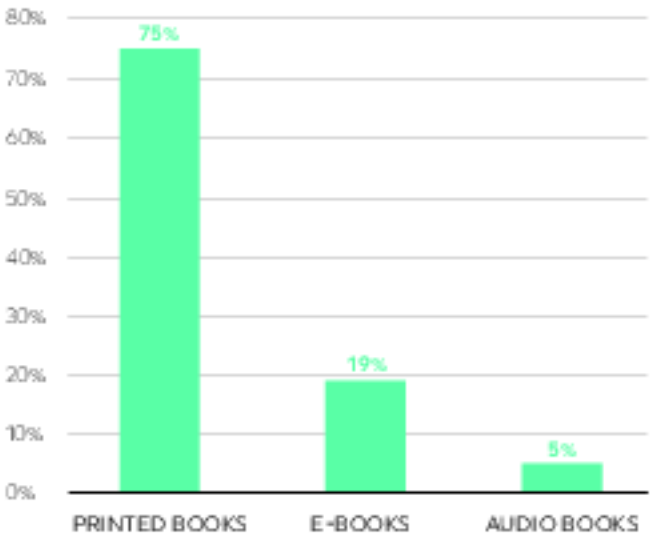
46% of non-fiction reader adults read only print format non-fiction books.

27% of non-fiction readers had read non-fiction in e-book format.

5% of non-fiction readers used e-books exclusively when they read non-fiction.

9% of adult non-fiction readers had read non-fiction using audio books in the past 12 months. 0.5% of adult non-fiction readers used only audio books.

NON-FICTION BOOK TYPES (% OF BOOKS READ)



3.3.3 Reading for pleasure, work or study

75% of adult non-fiction book readers read for pleasure. 40% read non-fiction for work or study.

3.3.4 Non-fiction book sources

Slightly more adult non-fiction readers (43%) reported reading non-fiction books bought in a bookstore than reading non-fiction public library books (38%).

NON-FICTION BOOK SOURCE (% OF ADULTS USING SOURCE)



Public library readers of non-fiction read 74% more books per person from that source than those reading books bought in a bookstore.

Overall, the source of non-fiction books was very similar to the source of fiction books.

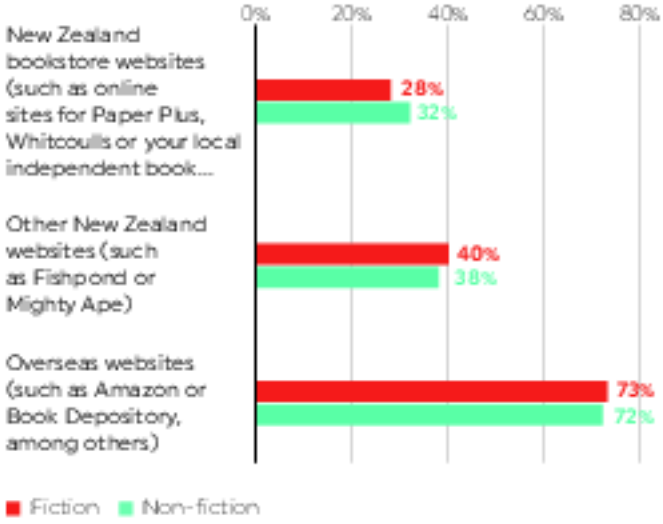
NON-FICTION BOOK SOURCE (% OF BOOKS READ)



Of the non-fiction books that had been purchased, 53% came from physical bookstores while 47% were purchased online.

The percentages of online purchasers buying offshore and within New Zealand were very similar to those for fiction. The following chart compares the results for fiction and non-fiction online purchasers.

FROM WHICH OF THESE ONLINE SOURCES DID YOU BUY BOOKS IN THE PAST YEAR?



3.3.5 "Same household" readership

32% of adults reported someone else in the household reading the non-fiction books they read – a lower level than for fiction.

4. Books by New Zealand authors

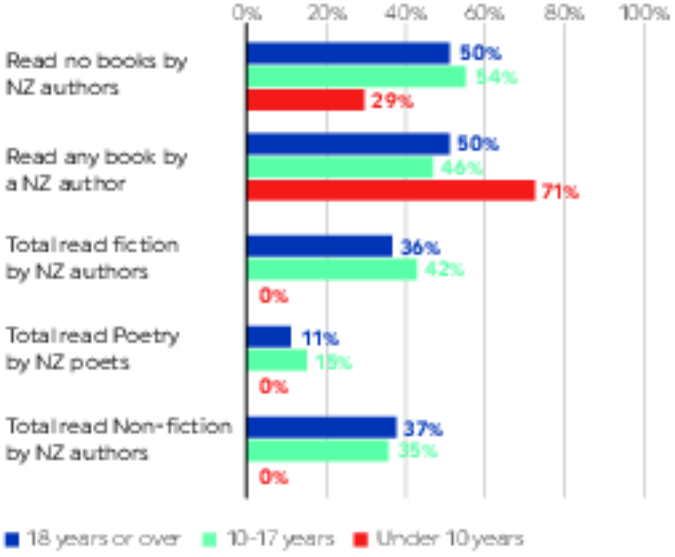
52% of those surveyed had read at least one book by a New Zealand author in the past 12 months.

The highest incidence was with the under 10 year olds, where 71% were reported as having read a book by a New Zealand author.

46% of 10–17 year olds had read at least one book by a New Zealand author in the past 12 months.

The percentage reading books by New Zealand authors is illustrated in the following chart. Note that figures for fiction, poetry and non-fiction for under 10 year olds are not available from this survey[2].

% READING AND NOT READING BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS



4.1 Reader profiles (readers of New Zealand authored books)

In comparison with all adult readers:

- Readers of fiction by New Zealand authors were slightly more likely to be female and were more likely to be employed, but were of average age, income and educational level.
- 67% of readers of poetry books by New Zealand poets were female, compared with 60% for all poetry. They were 10% younger, on average, than all readers and had 7% lower personal incomes. The percentage of this group with tertiary educational qualifications was higher than for readers overall and for readers of poetry overall.
- Adult readers of non-fiction by New Zealand authors were 3% older than the average reader overall. Their average personal income was 4% above readers overall and they were more likely to be employed. They were slightly more likely than for readers overall to have educational qualifications at tertiary level.
- Those book readers who had not read any books by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months had personal income 5% below the average for readers, were less likely to have tertiary education qualifications and were less likely to be employed.

4.2 Fiction by New Zealand authors

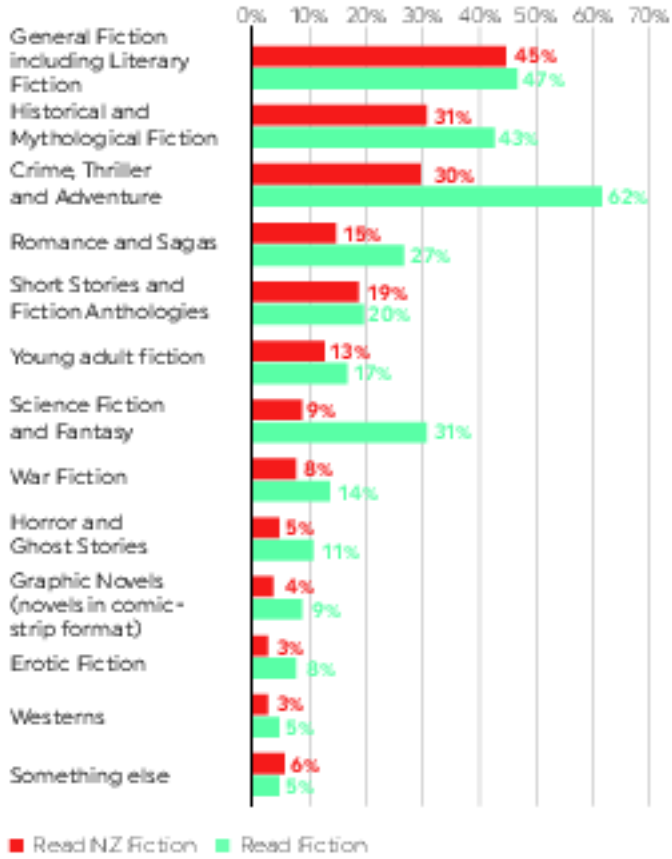
36% of adult readers reported reading fiction by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months.

42% of 10–17 year olds reported reading fiction by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months.

4.2.1 Fiction genres (adult readers)

The following chart shows the percentage reading each fiction genre for books by New Zealand authors, compared with the overall genre mix for fiction.

THINKING ABOUT ALL THE FICTION BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GENRES WERE THEY? (ADULTS)



2 Refer to Appendix 1 for comments on the data for the 10-17 year old and under 10 year old groups

4.3 Poetry by New Zealand poets

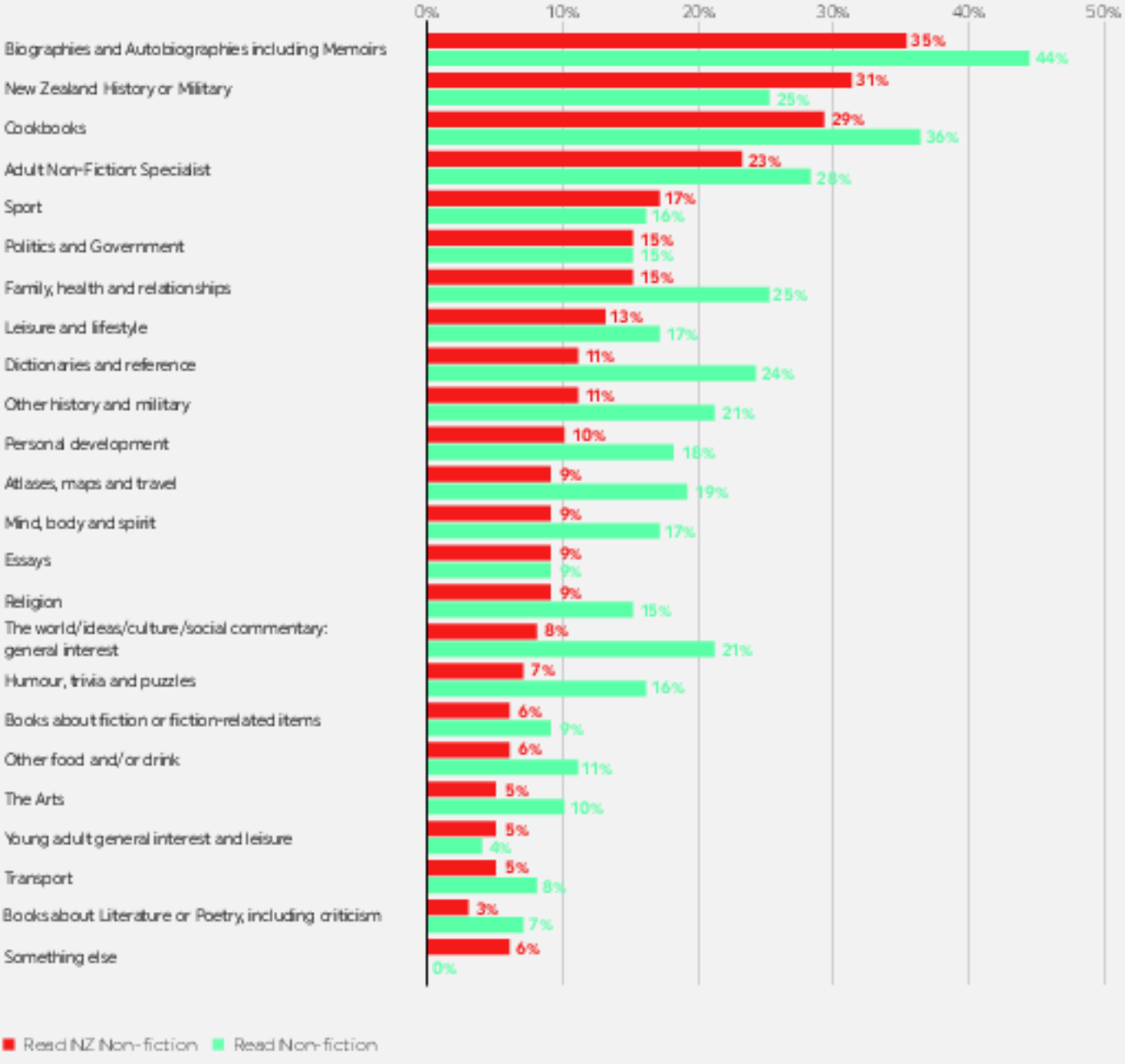
11% of adult readers reported reading poetry by New Zealand poets in the past 12 months.

4.4 Non-fiction by New Zealand authors

37% of adult readers reported reading non-fiction by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months.

On average, adult readers read 3.0 different genres of non-fiction by New Zealand authors, compared with 4.0 for all non-fiction.

THINKING ABOUT ALL THE NON-FICTION BOOKS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH OF THESE GENRES WERE THEY? (ADULTS)



4.5 Hearing about books by NZ authors

Readers of fiction books by New Zealand authors had initially heard about the books they read in an average of 6 out of a list of 25 different ways.

Similarly, readers of non-fiction by New Zealand authors had heard about the books in 5.3 different ways and readers of poetry books by New Zealand poets had heard about them in an average of 6.3 different ways.

The options presented have been broken down into groups of information sources for this report.

Recommendations or browsing were the top five ways in which adults who read fiction or non-fiction books by New Zealand authors or poets had heard about the books.

HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (ALL WHO READ BOOKS BY NZ AUTHORS)



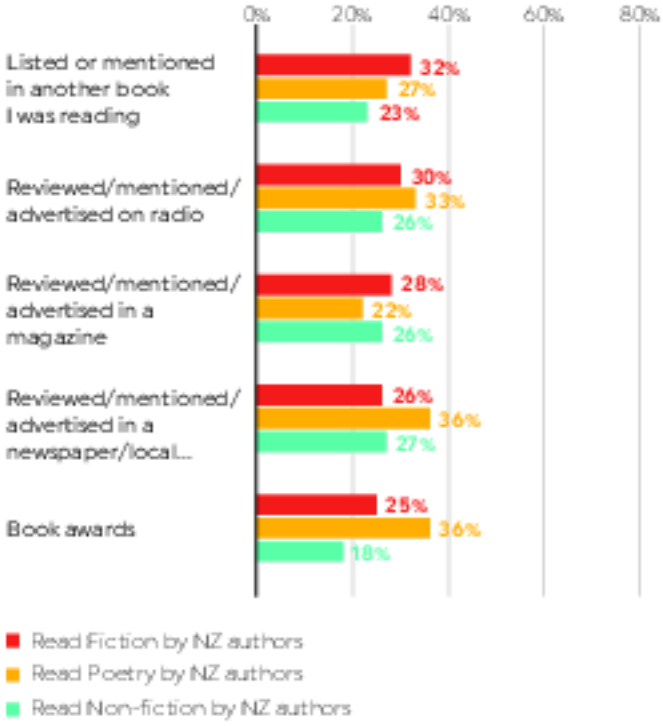
Browsing in store was much more important for readers of New Zealand poetry than for readers of New Zealand fiction or non-fiction.

Three of the next five sources of information were reviews, mentions or advertisements in media, but a more important factor for fiction was having books listed or mentioned in other books.

Note that book awards, while 10th in importance for fiction by New Zealand authors and 13th for non-fiction, was significantly more important – in fourth position – for those reading poetry by New Zealand poets.

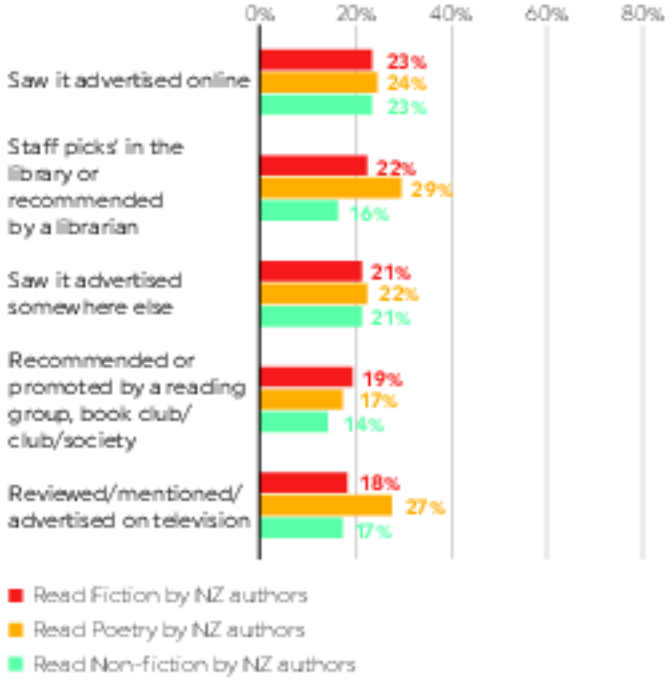
Similarly, reviews, mentions or advertising in a daily or local newspaper was significantly more important for readers of New Zealand poetry than for readers of New Zealand fiction or non-fiction.

HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (ALL WHO READ BOOKS BY NZ AUTHORS)

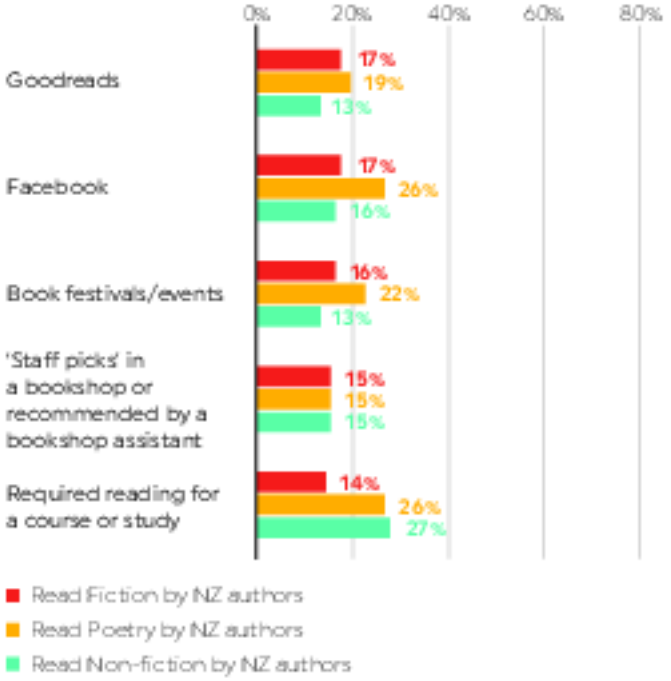


The middle group of sources included "staff picks" in a library or a recommendation by a librarian. This source was of more importance than "staff picks" in a bookshop or a recommendation from a bookshop assistant.

HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (ALL WHO READ BOOKS BY NZ AUTHORS)



HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (ALL WHO READ BOOKS BY NZ AUTHORS)



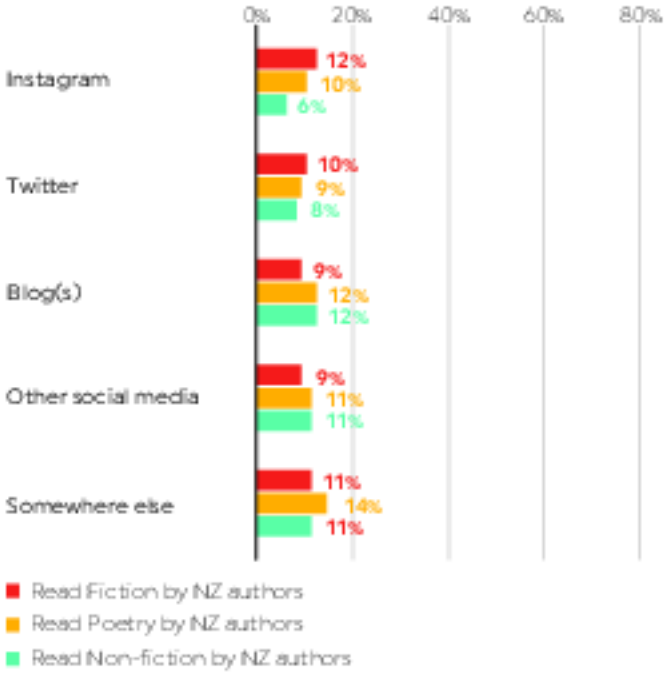
In the fourth group, Facebook and Goodreads were the most commonly cited social media sources of information about books by New Zealand authors. However they were rated well below personal recommendations or browsing in libraries, stores or online as a source of information.

Note that the importance of Facebook and book festivals/events is greater for New Zealand poetry than for fiction or non-fiction.

Required reading was less important for readers of fiction by New Zealand authors than for poetry or non-fiction.

Instagram, Twitter, blogs and other social media had relatively low rankings as a source of initial information about New Zealand authored books.

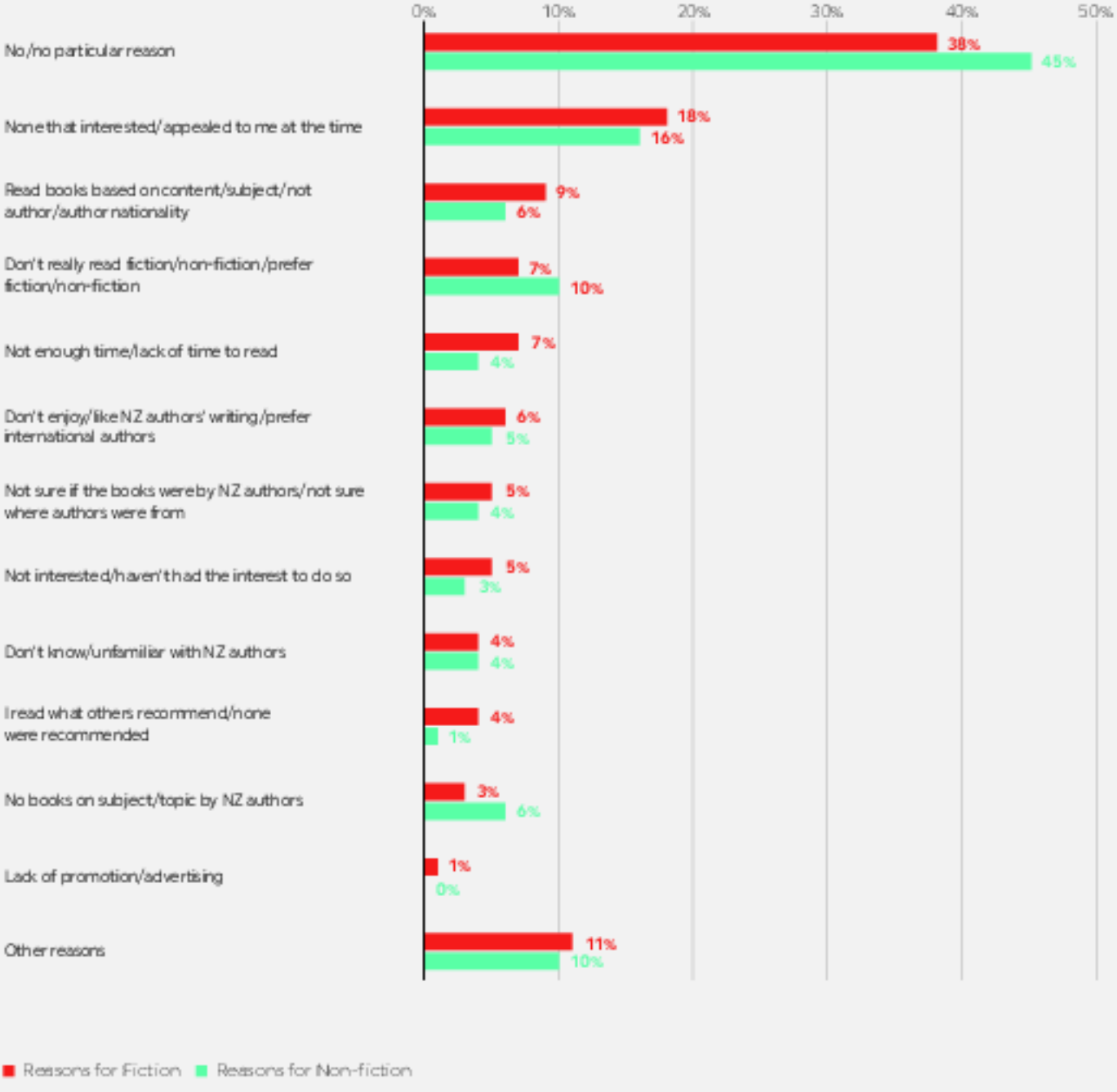
HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS YOU READ IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (ALL WHO READ BOOKS BY NZ AUTHORS)



4.6 Reasons for not reading books by NZ authors

Respondents who had not read fiction or non-fiction by New Zealand authors in the past 12 months were asked in open response questions whether there were any particular reasons why they had not done so.

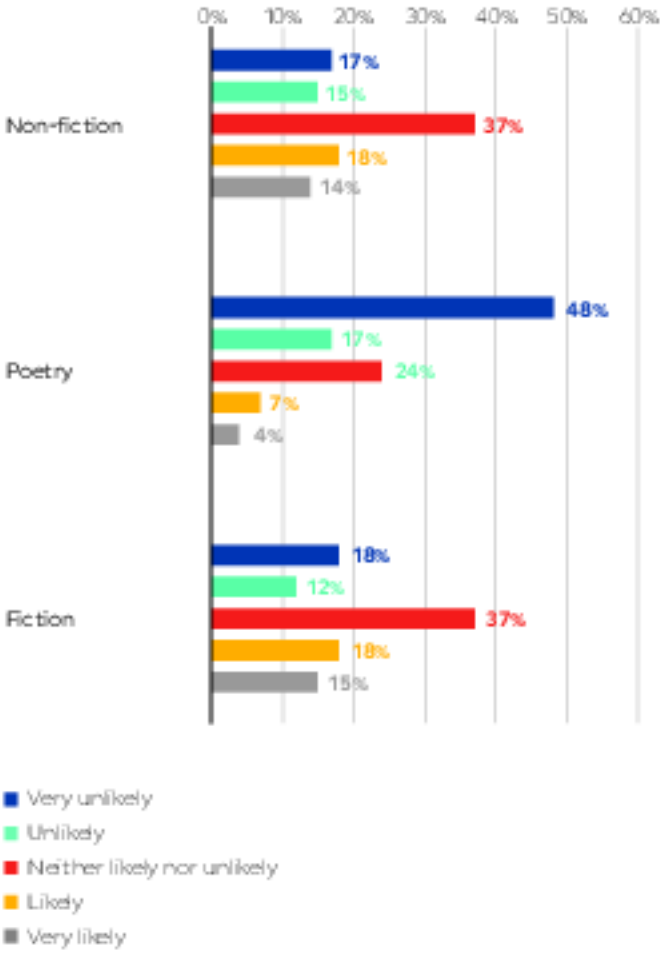
ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR REASONS WHY YOU DID NOT READ FICTION/NON-FICTION BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



4.7 Likelihood to read books by NZ authors

32% of all respondents said they were very likely or likely to look for and read a fiction book by a New Zealand author in the next 12 months. There was a similar result of 32% for the non-fiction category, and 11% of respondents indicated they were very likely or likely to look for and read a poetry book by a New Zealand author in the next 12 months.

IN GENERAL, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO LOOK FOR AND READ A BOOK BY A NEW ZEALAND AUTHOR IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?



5. Most likely source of books

Respondents were asked where they were most likely to go if they wanted a book to read for each of the categories: fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

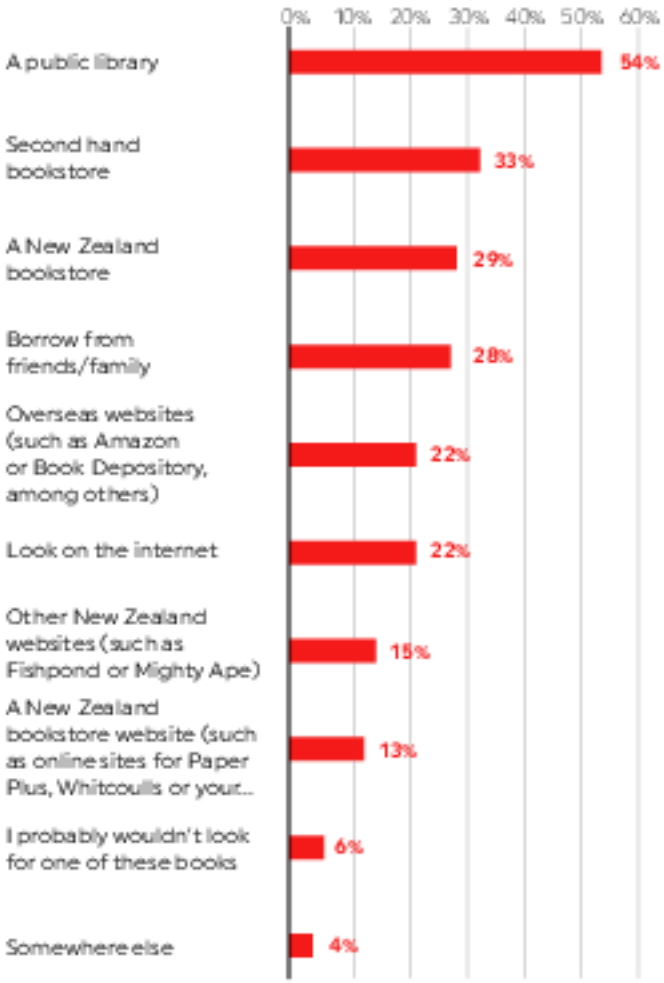
5.1 Fiction books

Respondents were most likely to think of sourcing fiction books from a public library (54%) or from a second hand bookstore (33%).

29% stated they would purchase fiction books from a New Zealand bookstore, and 28% would be most likely to borrow from friends/family.

Note that overseas websites such as Amazon or Book Depository were more popular than New Zealand websites such as Fishpond or Mighty Ape or New Zealand bookstore websites such as online sites for Paper Plus, Whitcoulls or local independent book stores.

IF YOU WANTED A BOOK TO READ, WHERE WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO GO TO GET ONE? (FICTION)



5.2 Non-fiction books

In a similar result to fiction books, more than half of respondents were most likely to source non-fiction books from a public library (53%) followed by a second hand bookstore (28%).

28% would look to source their non-fiction books from a New Zealand bookstore.

As with fiction, online purchases of non-fiction books were more likely to be made from overseas websites such as Amazon or Book Depository (21%) than from New Zealand bookstore websites such as online sites for Paper Plus, Whitcoulls or their local independent book store (14%) or New Zealand websites such as Fishpond or Mighty Ape (13%).

IF YOU WANTED A BOOK TO READ, WHERE WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO GO TO GET ONE? (NON-FICTION)

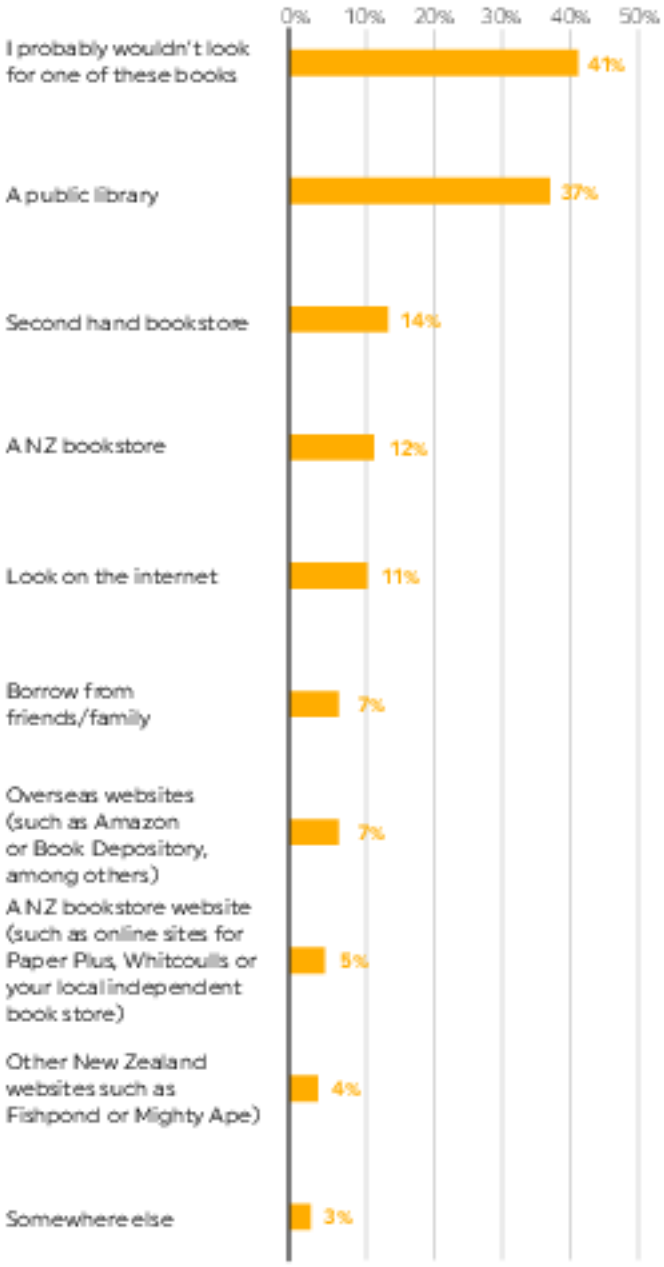


5.3 Poetry books

37% of respondents stated they would source poetry books from the public library while 14% said from a second hand bookstore.

12% would source poetry books from a New Zealand bookstore.

IF YOU WANTED A BOOK TO READ, WHERE WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO GO TO GET ONE? (POETRY)



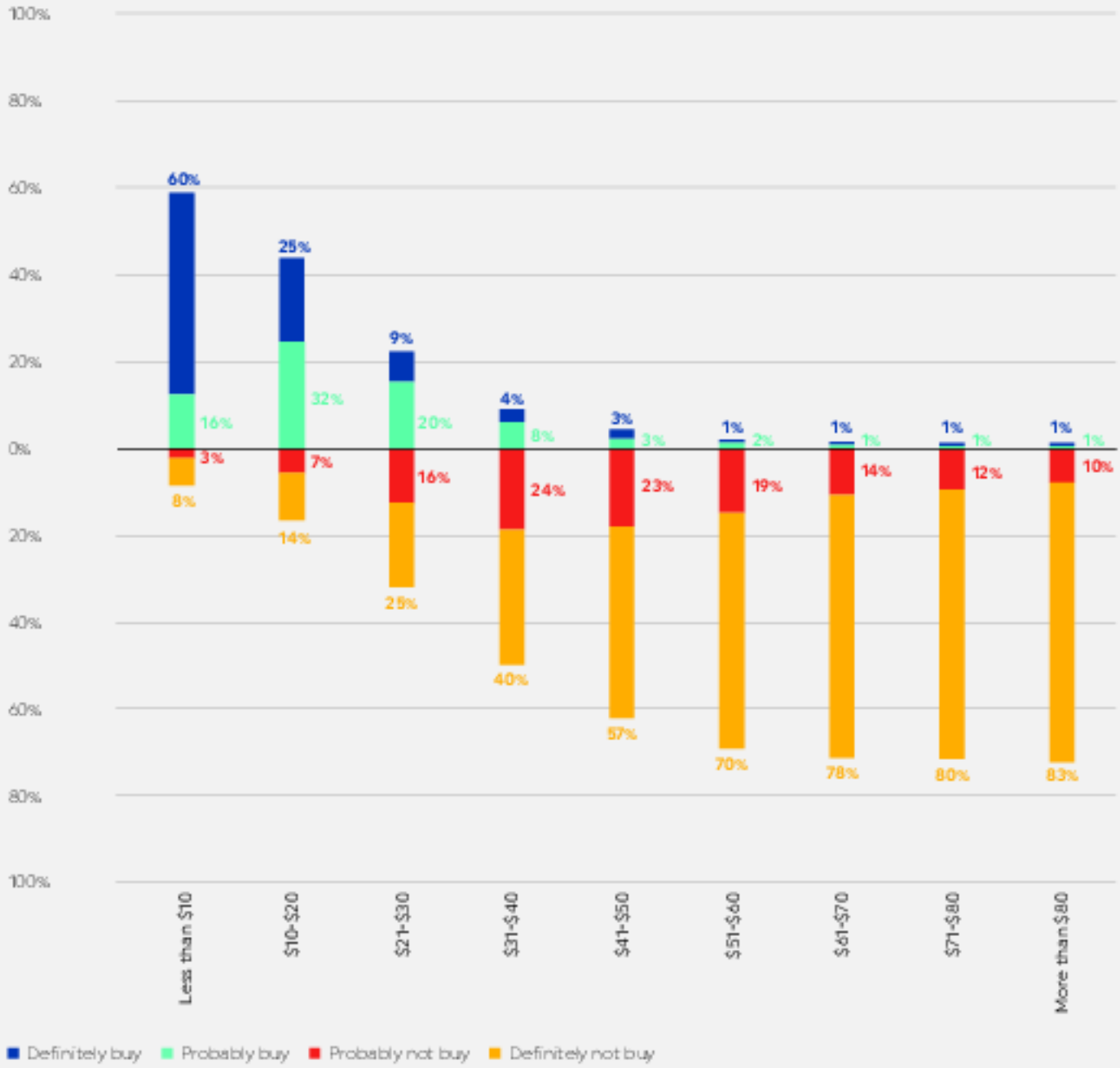
6. Fiction pricing

All respondents were asked how likely they would be to buy a fiction book at various price ranges.

Analysis indicates that $26.30 is the price at which the percentage of people who would buy and people who would not buy balanced.

This does not mean that people will stop buying above that price, just that the number of people prepared to buy (and therefore the potential volume sold) becomes more restricted.

HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO BUY A FICTION BOOK YOU WANTED TO READ IF IT WAS IN EACH OF THESE PRICE RANGES?



SURVEY SAMPLE



2,082 adult respondents responded to the survey between 3 and 16 March 2017.

The sample used source diversity, with a total of 2,082 respondents: 1,640 members of Horizon Research's national online research panels, plus 342 respondents provided by an online sampling and data collection company. Both Horizon's panels and the external panels have been recruited to represent the New Zealand population.

The sample was weighted to match national demographics for age, gender, personal income, education level, employment status and ethnicity and has an overall margin of error of ±2.1%.

To gain an understanding of younger people's reading, questions related to children under 10 years and young people aged 10–17 years were included in the survey.

Respondents with children under 10 years of age were asked questions about their children's reading. This yielded responses related to 313 children. Note that these questions give the parent or caregiver's understanding of what their children are reading and therefore, the results have been used as indicators of volume and types of books read. Because of the overall length of the survey, these questions were less detailed than those for adults.

Respondents with 10–17 year olds in their household were asked if they were prepared for their young people to complete a few questions on their reading. These questions were similar to the adult questions, but, again, with less detail. Not all adults with 10–17 year olds were prepared to let them answer the questions. Results should therefore be regarded as indicators. The total number of 10–17 year olds that completed the questions was 96.

Contact

For more information about this survey or additional analysis, please contact Grant McInman on 021 076 2040, email **gmcinman@horizonresearch.co.nz**



NEW ZEALAND BOOK COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera Pukapuka o Aotearoa