

# Higher levels of cannabis purchasing from gangs and drug houses in East Coast and Central North Island regions

Chris Wilkins, Marta Rychert, Robin van der Sanden, Jose S. Romeo & Thomas Graydon-Guy  
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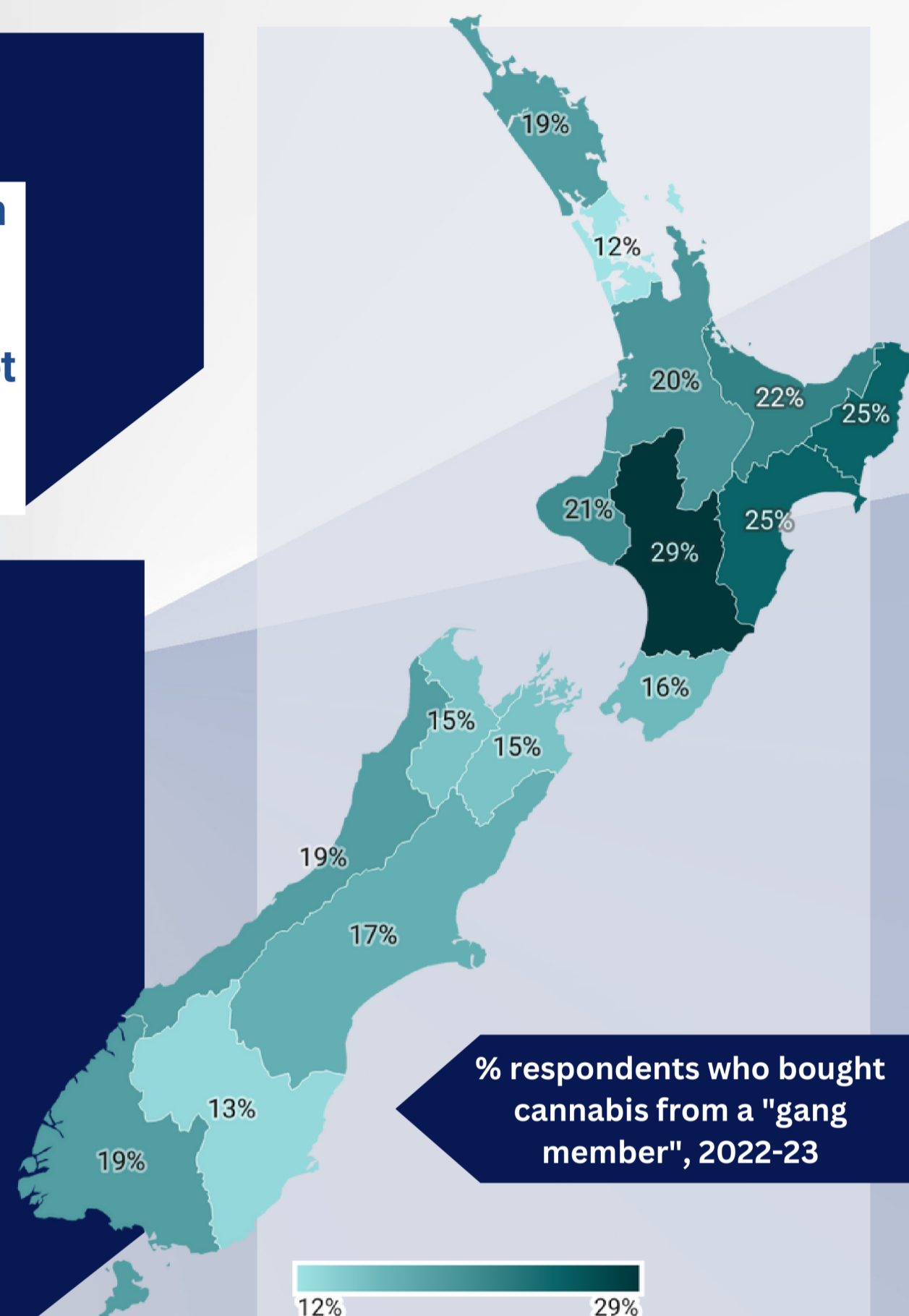
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## Key findings

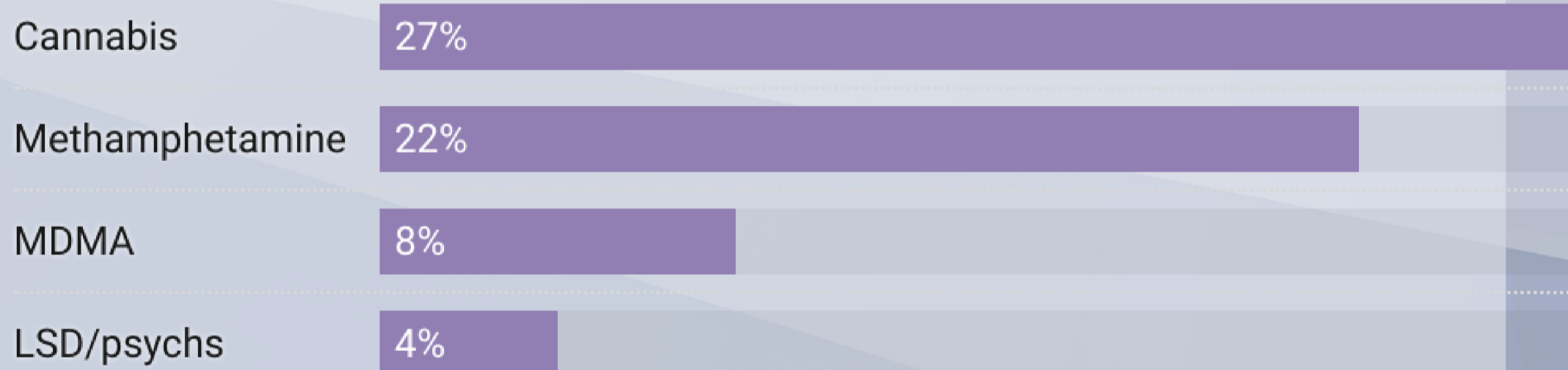
- Regions reporting the highest rates of purchasing cannabis from a gang member were Manawatu-Wanganui, Gisborne/Hawke's Bay, and Bay of Plenty
- The proportion who bought cannabis from a tinny house or street drug market was highest in Manawatu-Wanganui, Gisborne/Hawke's Bay, and Northland

## Methods

The New Zealand Drug Trends Survey (NZDTS) is an anonymous online convenience survey designed to provide an annual snapshot of drug market trends in Aotearoa New Zealand. It surveys a very large number of people with recent experience and knowledge of drug use and drug markets across the country (i.e., key experts). The NZDTS is promoted via a targeted Facebook advertising campaign over a period of several months. Completed surveys are audited based on the extent and quality of completion. The 2022/23 survey ran from August 2022 to February 2023 and achieved a final sample of 13,026. While the NZDTS is not intended to be a representative survey, it has a sample that broadly represents the demographic profile and regional population distribution of NZ (see Bulletin 6 for details). However, related to the aims of the survey, the NZDTS sample reports much higher levels of drug use (see Bulletin 7) and is younger than the general population. For more details on methods see, Wilkins et al. (2020) Determinants of the retail price of illegal drugs in New Zealand. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 79, 1-10.



Rates of purchasing from a "tinny house" for different drug types, 2022-23



## Discussion

Illegal cannabis markets are traditionally known for their low social impact, generally involving transactions conducted in private locations among people who know each other. The sale of cannabis by gangs via street drug markets and "tinny" houses, on the other hand, are more likely to create public nuisance, such as increased vehicle and foot traffic, create conditions for violent disputes between buyers and sellers, place buyers and drug sellers at risk of victimisation, become targets for inter-gang violence, and increase the availability of drugs in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Tinny houses are also more likely to attract adolescent buyers. Gangs are also more likely to adopt "business models" of drug dealing focused on expanding sales via lower prices and encouraging cannabis buyers to try more profitable drugs, such as methamphetamine.

