

Support for different cannabis law reform options among NZDTS respondents

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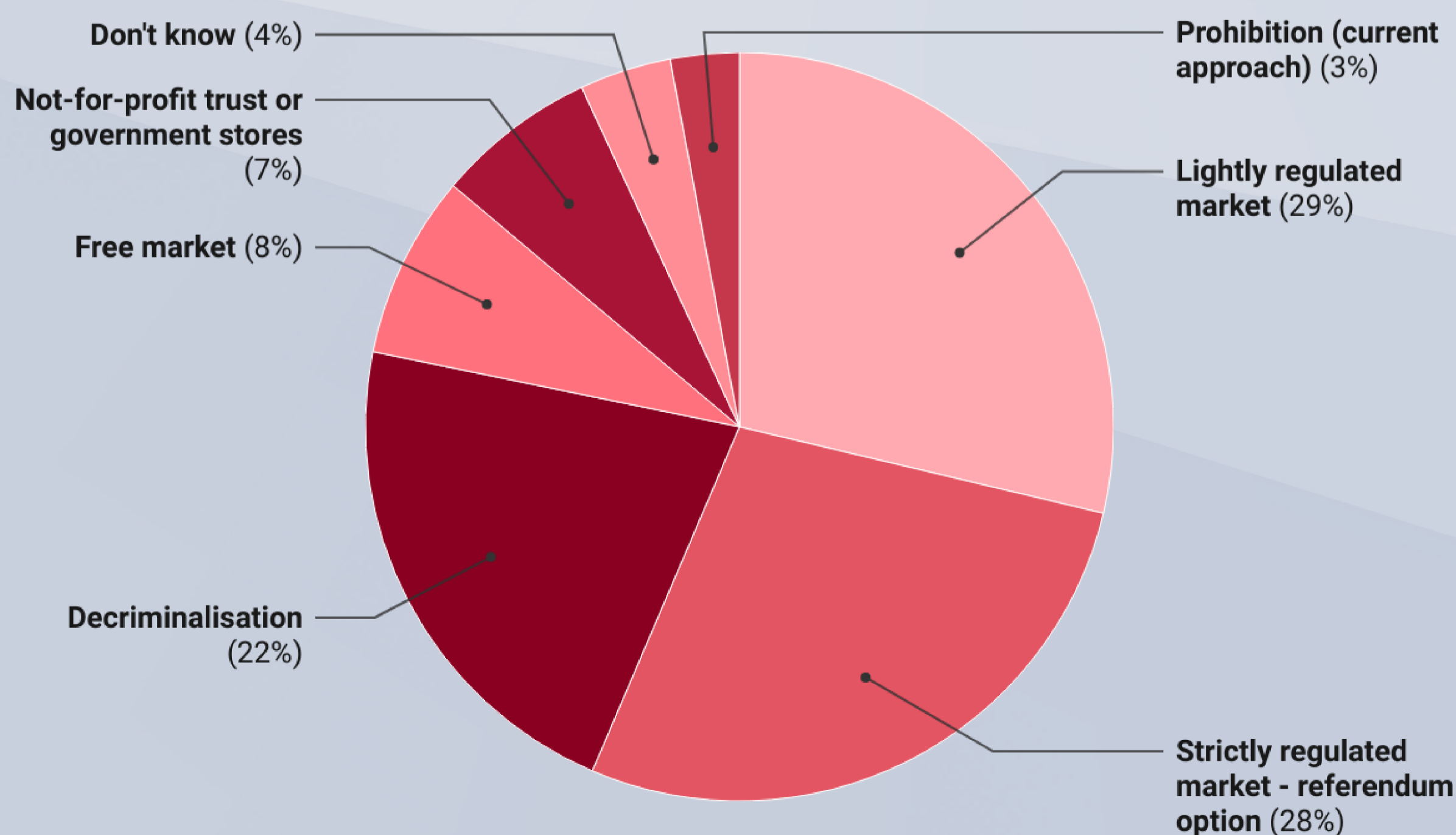
Key findings

- The cannabis law reform options with the highest support among NZDTS respondents were the legalisation options "lightly regulated market (like alcohol)" and "strictly regulated market (like tobacco)"
- 22% of respondents reported a preference for decriminalisation
- Support for decriminalisation was highest among respondents who supported NZ First, the Māori Party and National
- Support for a legalisation option was highest among survey respondents who supported the Greens and Labour
- Support for continuing prohibition was low even among survey respondents who supported National and NZ First

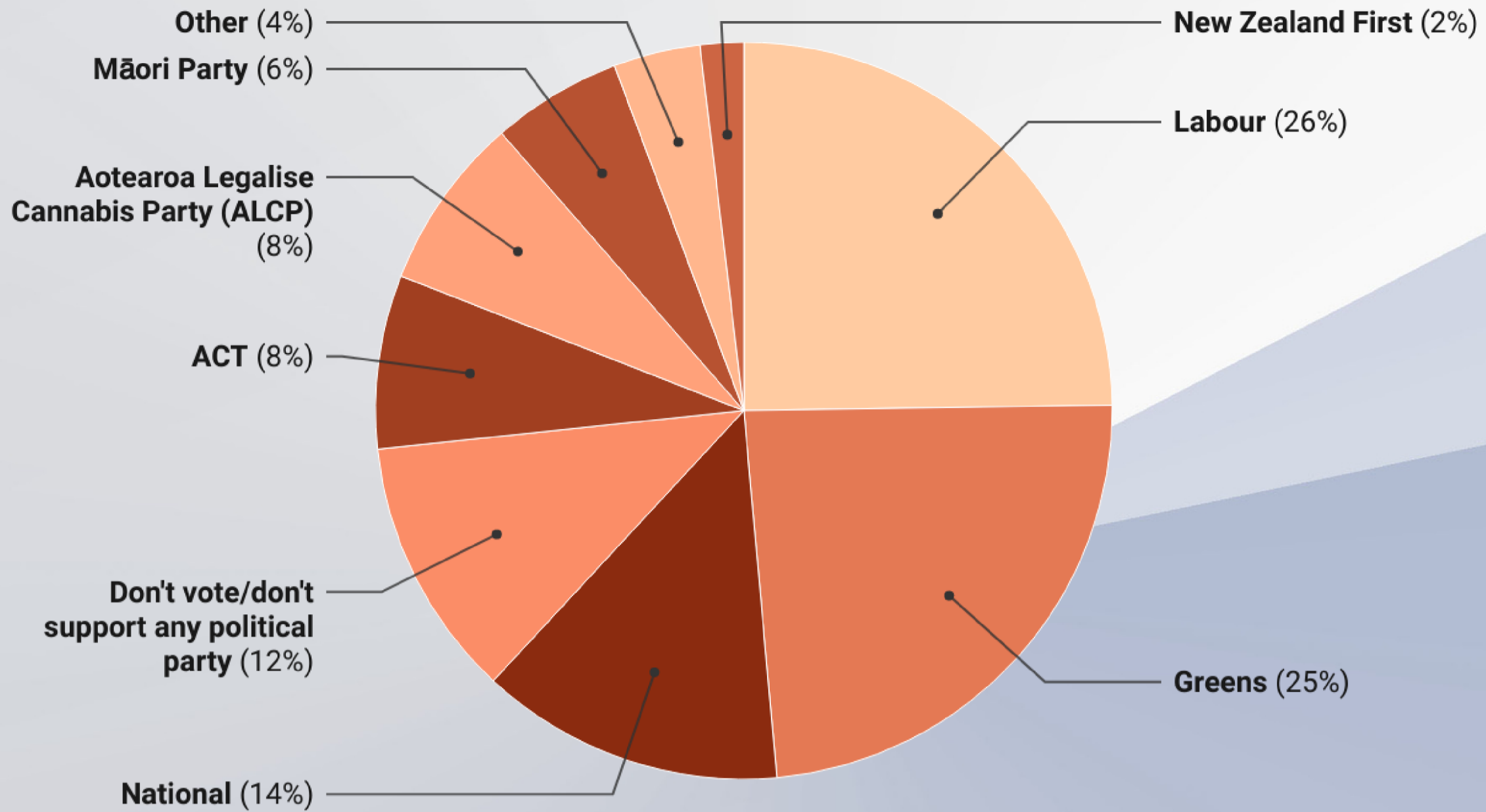
Methods

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). Each round of 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, the sample 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. In addition, support for the two centre political parties, National and Labour, is underrepresented in the survey sample. 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.

Support for different cannabis law reform policies among NZDTS respondents, 2022-23

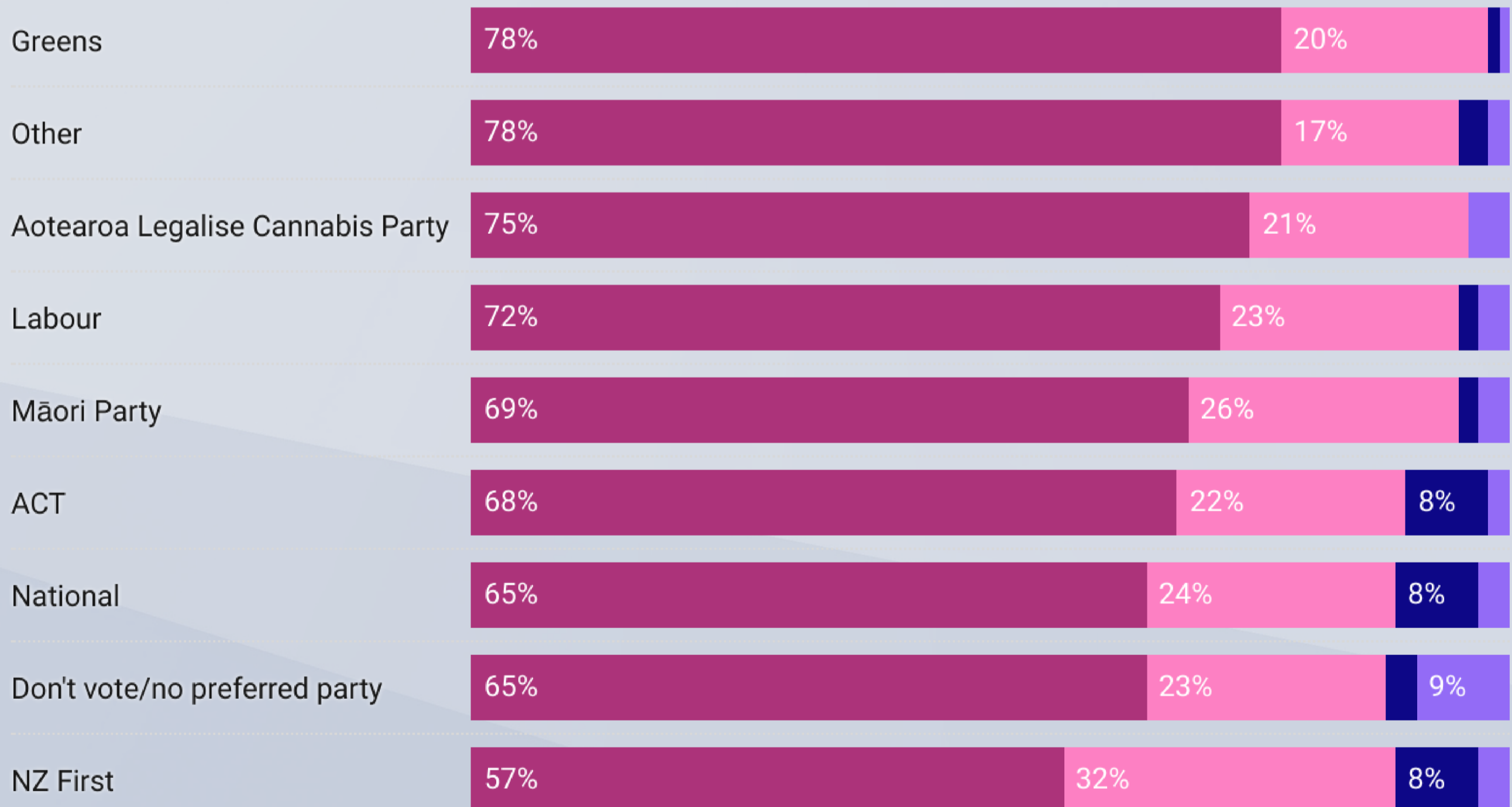


Support for different political parties among NZDTS respondents, 2022-23



Preferred cannabis law reform option by reported support for different political parties among NZDTS respondents, 2022-23

■ Decriminalisation
 ■ Prohibition
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Legalisation (Govt monopoly, strict, light, or free market regulation)



Discussion

This bulletin presents the cannabis law reform preferences of the NZDTS respondents who, it is important to note, are younger and have higher levels of cannabis and other drug use than the general population. While the NZDTS respondents are different from the general population, they are an important group in the cannabis law reform debate, as they are more likely to use cannabis and hence come into contact with the police and the criminal justice system, and also to suffer cannabis related health harms. Integrating the views of existing cannabis consumers in any cannabis law reform approach is important to their subsequent willingness to transition into the new policy. While the NZDTS respondents have different political affiliations from the wider population (e.g., National and Labour were underrepresented and Greens and Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party overrepresented based on political polls at time of survey), support for cannabis legalisation and decriminalisation was also strong among those with conservative right-wing affiliations (e.g., among NZDTS participants who supported National, 58% supported legalisation and 24% supported decriminalisation). Likewise, large proportions of NZDTS respondents who vote for New Zealand First and ACT supported legalisation and decriminalisation. While the NZDTS supporters of National, NZ First, and ACT will likely be different from the wider bases of these respective parties, this does illustrate the broad support for cannabis policy reform and the opportunities to forge cross party coalitions for change.