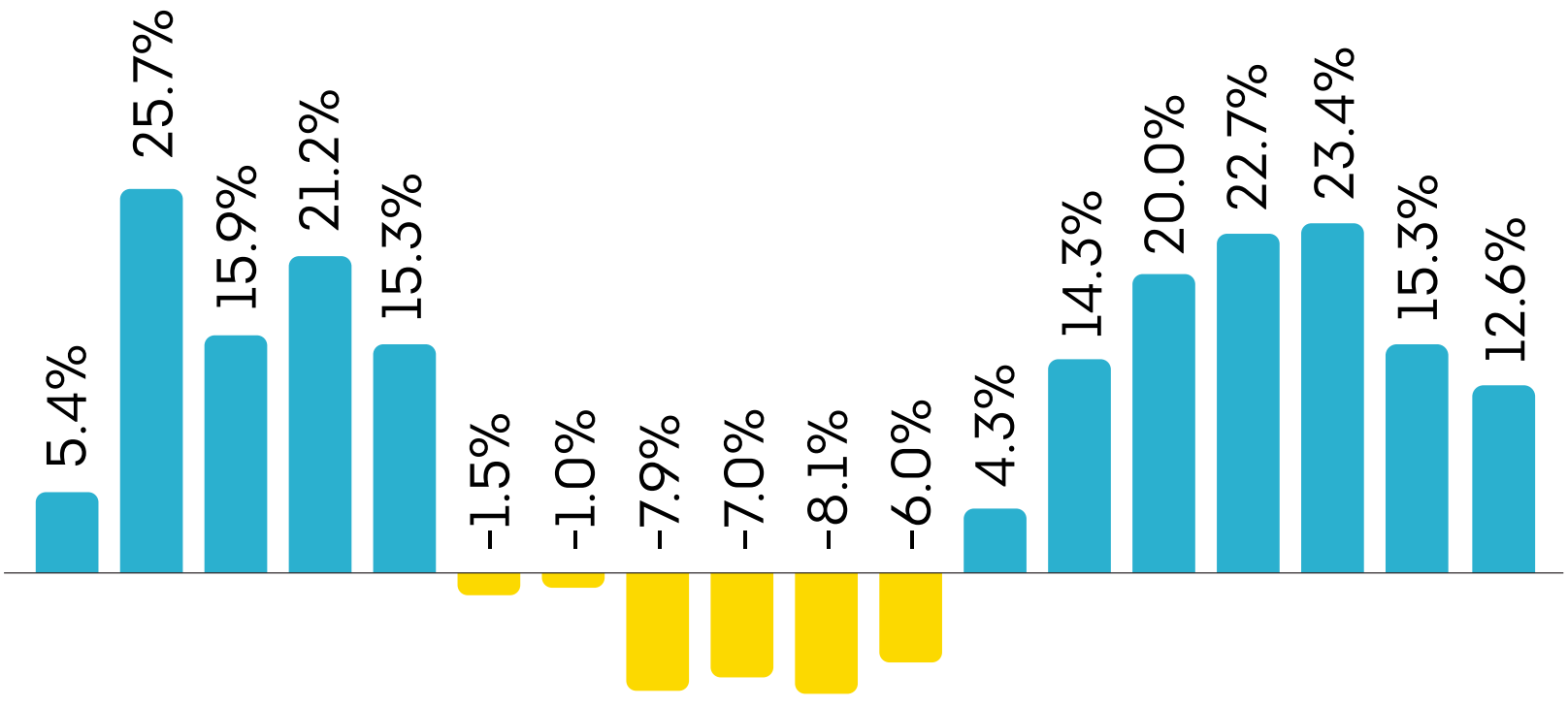
TransUnion Mobility Insights Report – Q1 2026

1 Market at a glance

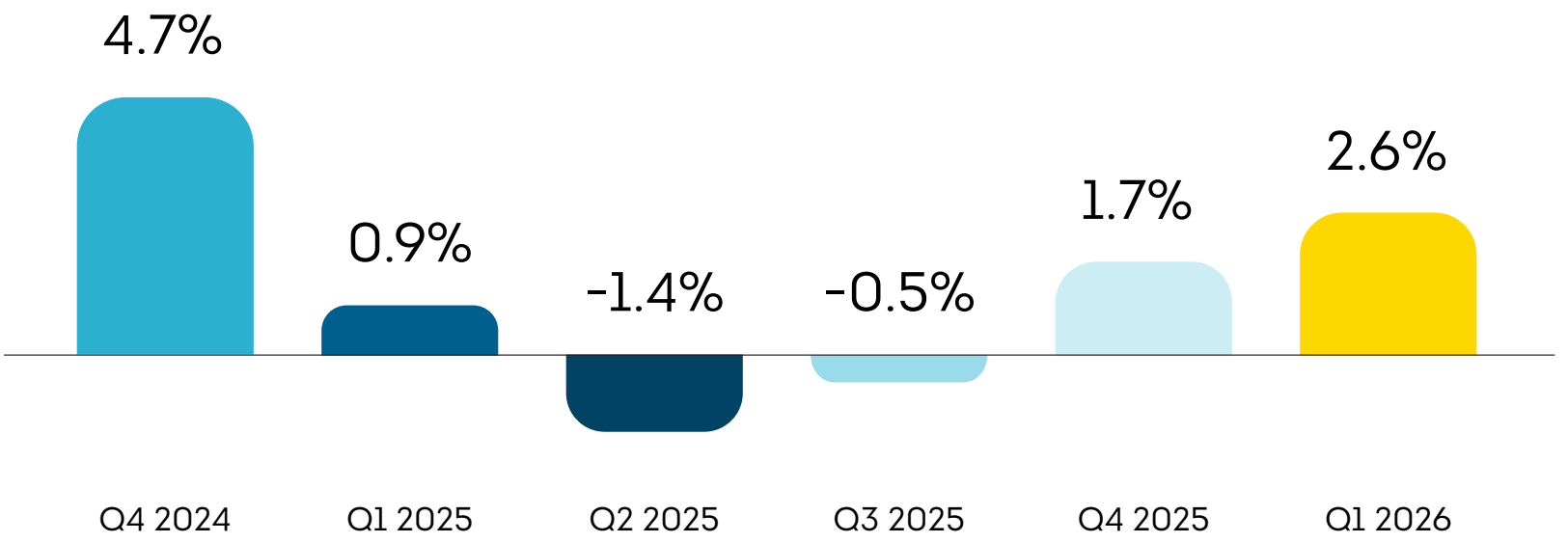
- Passenger car sales: **114,517 in Q1, up 12.6% YoY – highest quarterly volume since Q3 2014**
- Used-to-new ratio: **Fell to 2.3 (lowest recorded over the reporting period)**
- New vs. used registration: **New +11.6% YoY; used +2.6% YoY**
- New-vehicle inflation: **0.8% (decline slowing); used -1.3%**
- Market shift: **Chinese brands exceeded 19% share – almost one in five vehicles sold**

New passenger car sales growth
% YoY growth

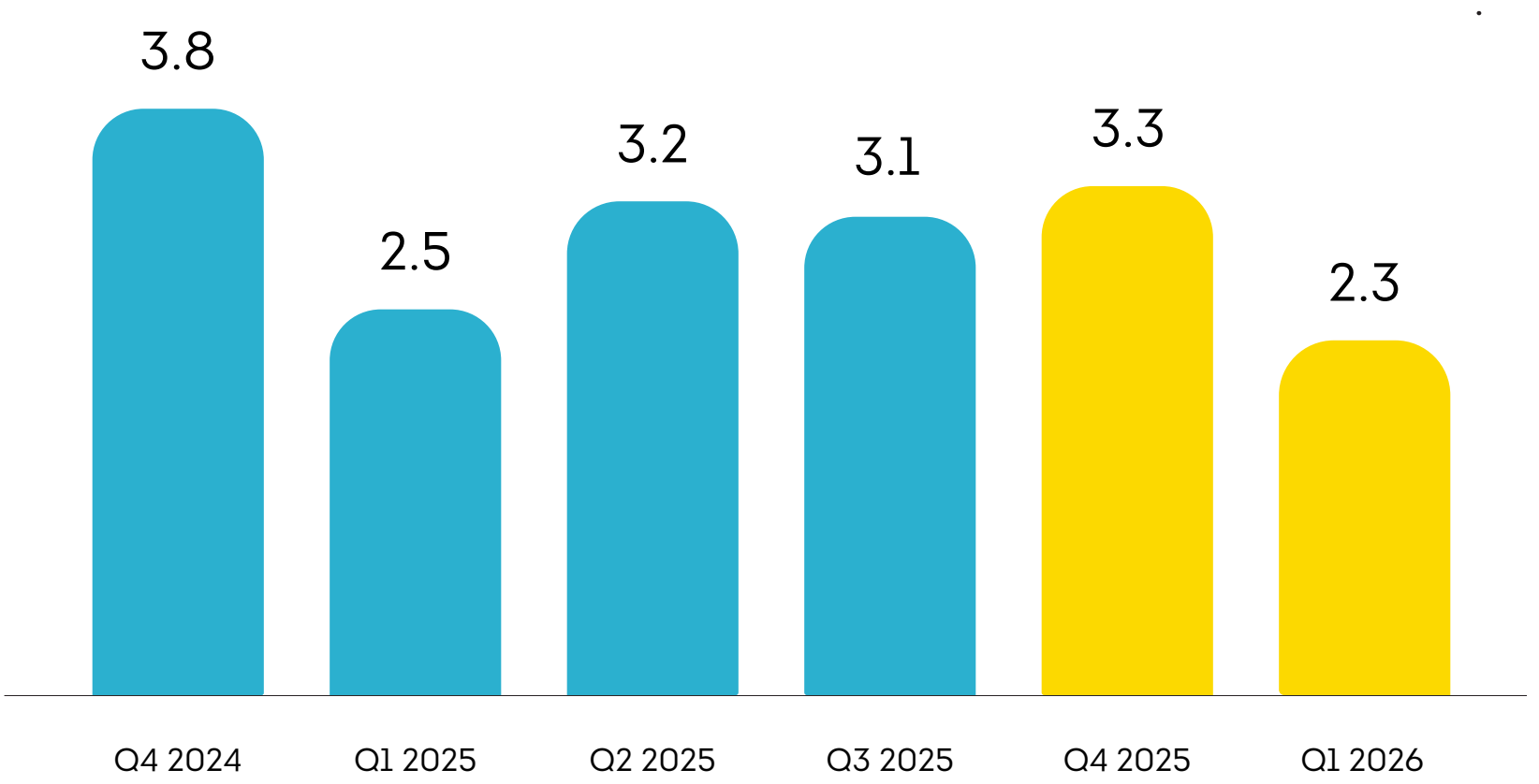


Q4 2021 Q1 2022 Q2 2022 Q3 2022 Q4 2022 Q1 2023 Q2 2023 Q3 2023 Q4 2023 Q1 2024 Q2 2024 Q3 2024 Q4 2024 Q1 2025 Q2 2025 Q3 2025 Q4 2025 Q1 2026

Used vehicle registration
% YoY growth

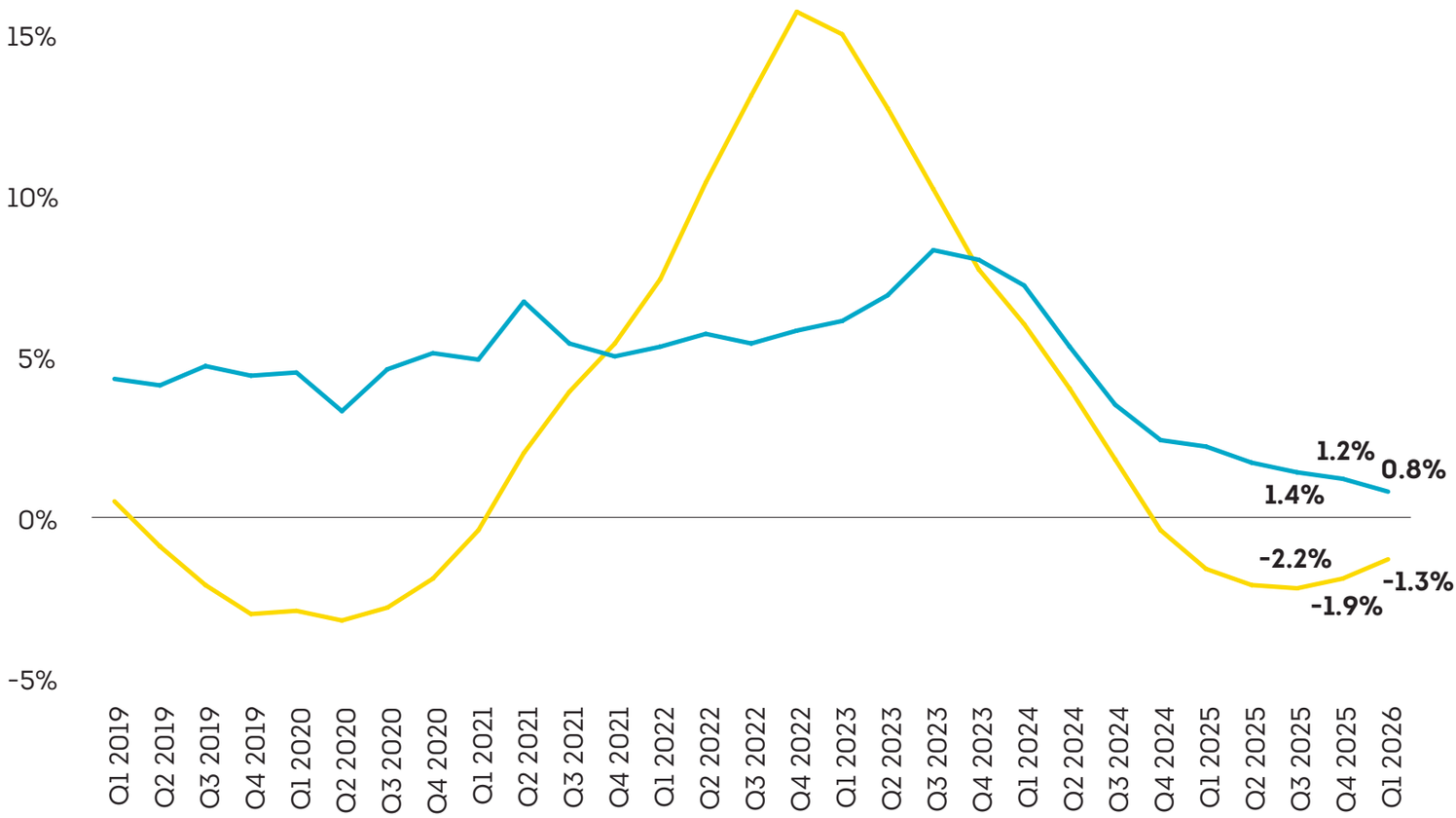


Used-to-new vehicle registration ratio



How the ratio works
Lower ratio: New vehicles take a bigger slice of the market
Higher ratio: Used vehicles take a bigger slice of the market

CPI inflation: New and used vehicles



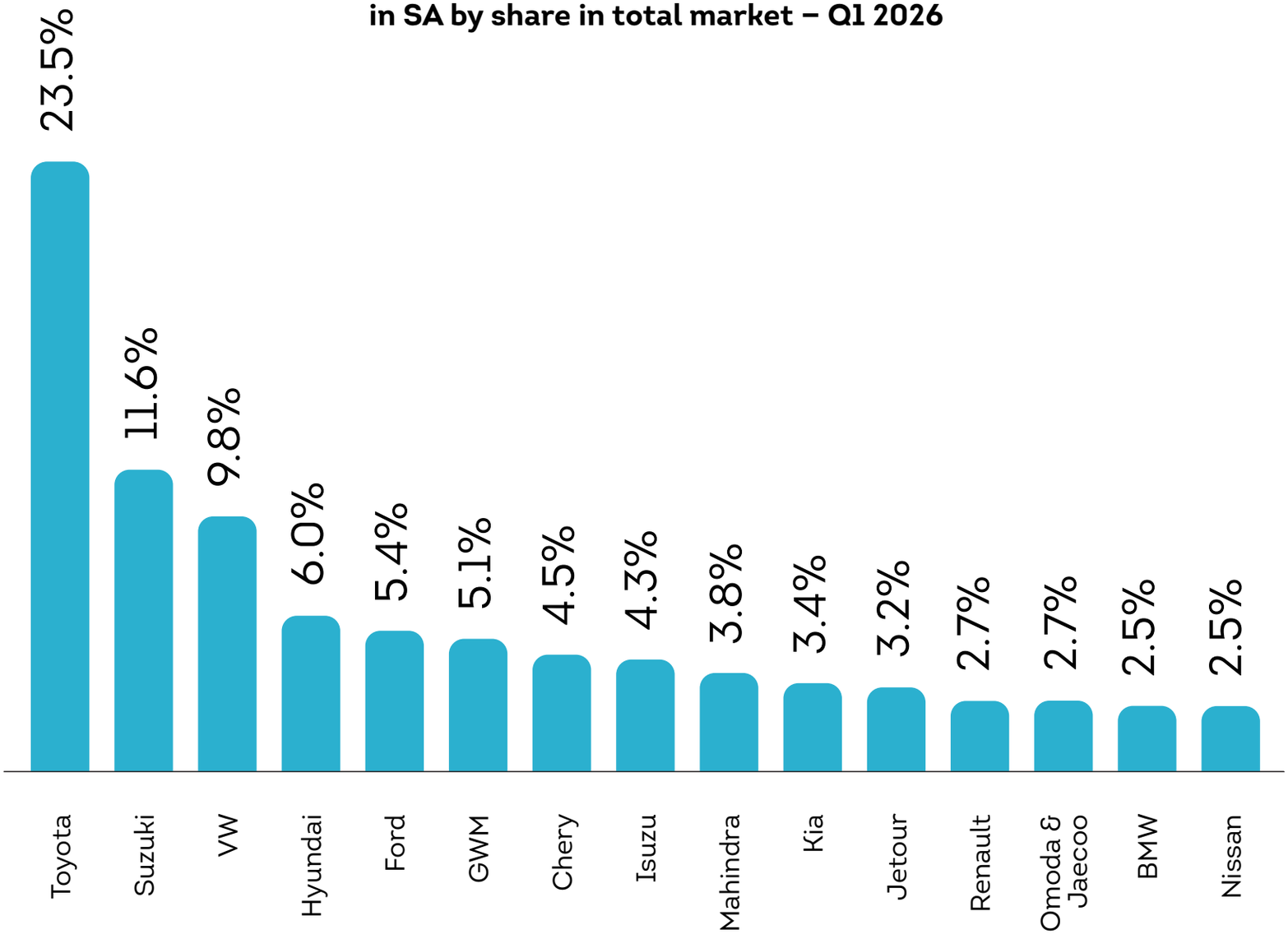
2 Macro backdrop

- GDP growth: **1.1% in 2025; 2026 forecasts remain around 1.1%**
- Dealer confidence: **Rose to 67 (up from 58 in Q4) – highest level in 13 years**
- Repo rate: **Unchanged at 10.25% in Q1 2026; subsequent MPC rate hike (+25bps) reflects rising inflation and fuel-price pressures**
- Inflation: **Increased to 4.0% in April, 4.5% in May (from 3.2% in Q1), risks skewed to the upside**
- Geopolitical risk: **Middle East energy price shock driving rising fuel and transport costs**
- Fuel cost pressure: **Inland petrol exceeded R23/litre in April 2026 – fifth-largest, single-month increase in 50 years**

3 Brands and mix shifts

- Chinese brands: **Above 19% combined share (up from 17.2% in Q4) vs OEM share of 48.9%**
- Established OEMs: **Combined share declined to 48.9%**
- Fastest-growing brands: **Jetour +249%, Foton +171%, Omoda/Jaecoo +79%**
- Structural shift: **Chery Group (Chery, Jetour, Omoda and Jaecoo – shown separately below) emerged as a top-three player at 16,094 combined units**

Top 15 best selling passenger and LCV vehicle brands in SA by share in total market – Q1 2026

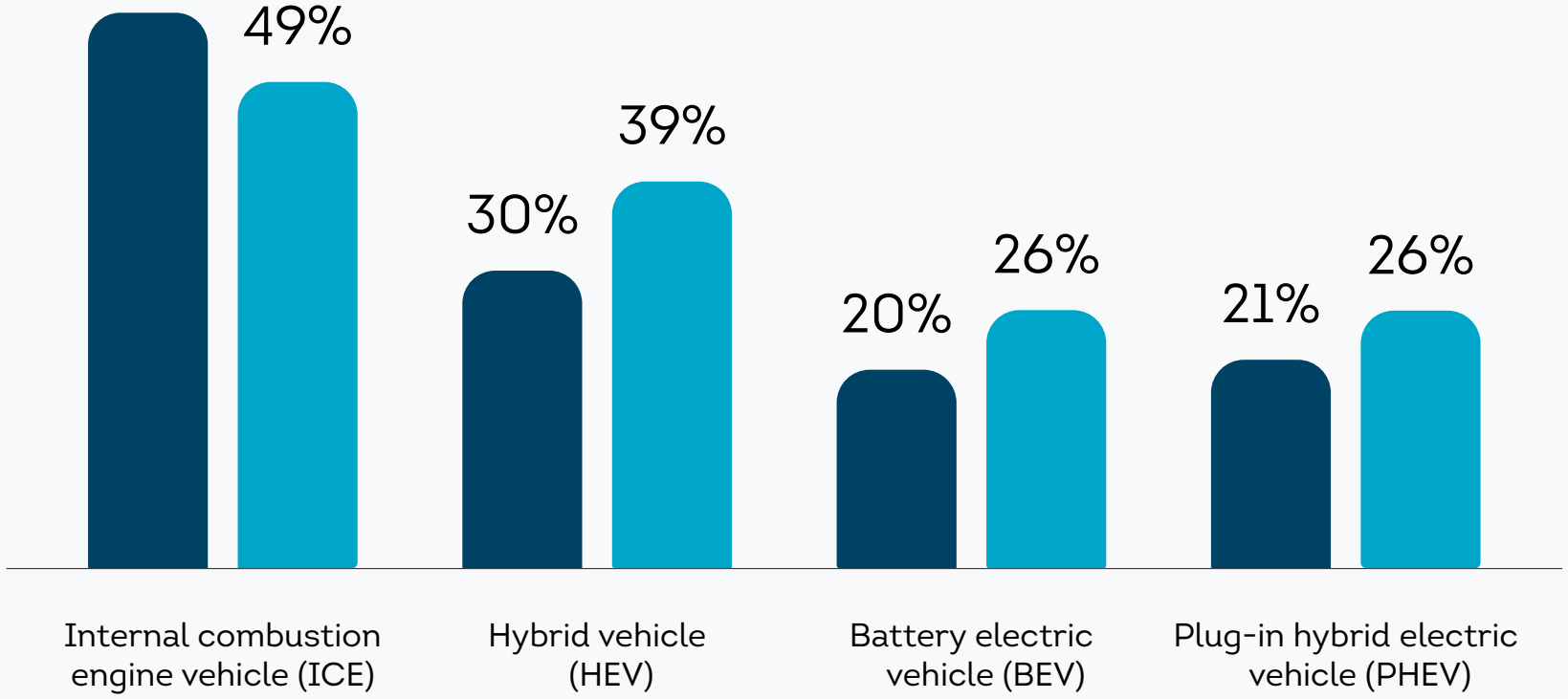


4 New energy vehicles (NEVs)

- NEV sales: **4,585 units in Q1 2026, up 31.5% year on year, driven by surging plug-in hybrid demand and a recovery in battery electric vehicle sales**
- Consumer preference (Q1 vs. Q4): **ICE 49% (from 56%), HEV 39% (from 30%), BEV 26% (from 20%), PHEV 26% (from 21%)**
- Gen Z: **HEV preference (45%) exceeded ICE (42%) for the first time**
- Energy cost per km: **At R23+/litre, ICE ~R1.50 vs. entry-level EV R0.34–R0.39**
- Five-year TCO (90,000 km) at R21.80/litre (weighted average): **Entry-level EV can save more than R150,000 over a comparable ICE hatchback**

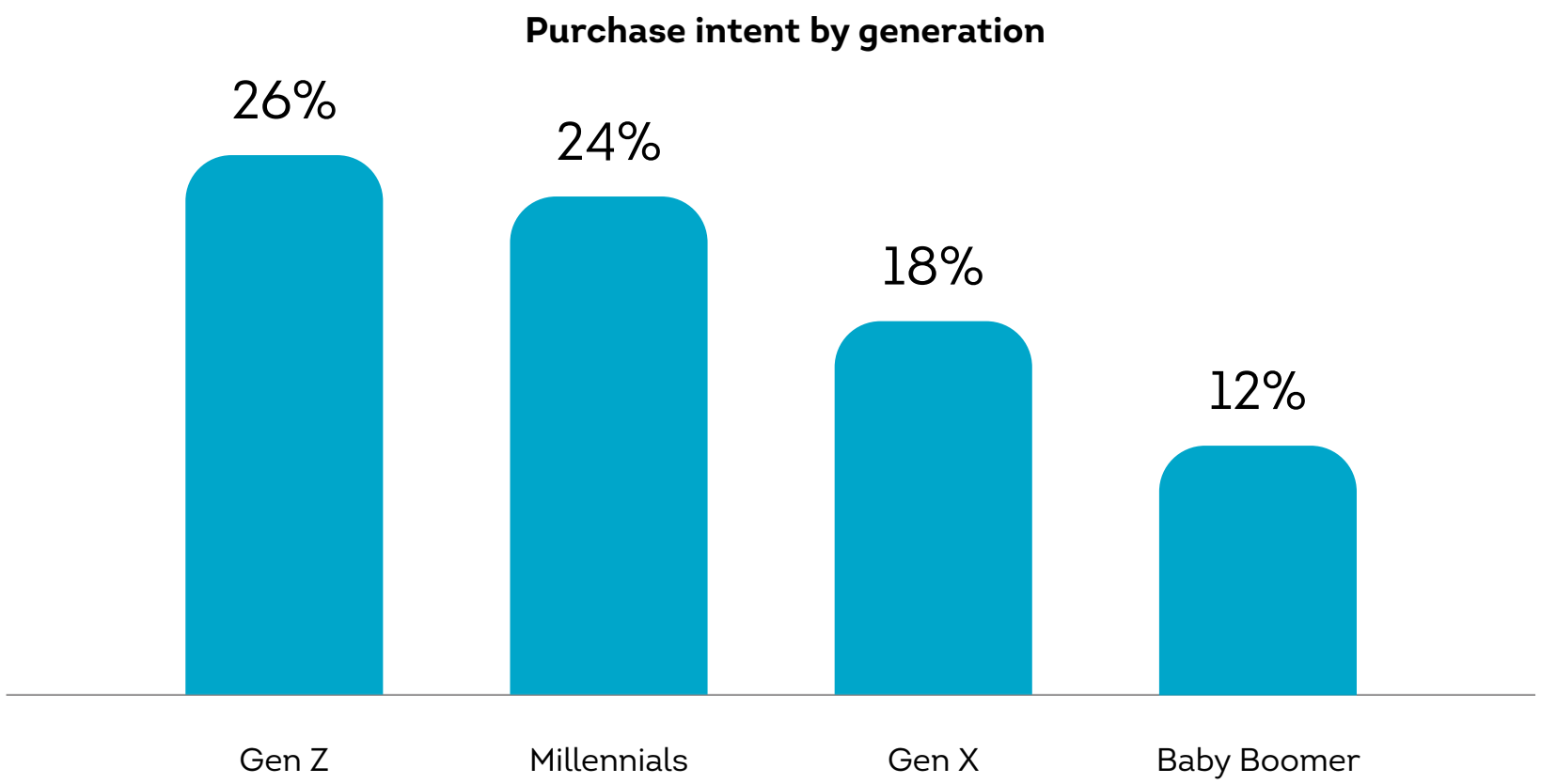
Consumer mobility preferences

56%



5 Who is buying

- Near-term purchase intent: **22% likely (up from 19% in Q4); unlikely fell to 64% from 66%**
- By generation: **Gen Z = 26%, Millennials = 24%, Gen X = 18%, Baby Boomers = 12%**
- By income: **High (R200K+) 24%, middle (R50K–R199K) 22%, low (<R50K) 20%**
- Demand signal: **Purchase appetite broadening across income groups; affordability constraints remain**



6 Export performance

- Q1 2026: **62,166 units, down 5.7% YoY**
- Q4 2025 to Q1 2026: **Up from 55,063 units in Q4 2025**
- Key risk: **Rising protectionism, geopolitical uncertainty and decarbonisation requirements in destination markets**

7 Industry implications

Opportunities

- Target Gen Z and Millennial buyers (primary near-term demand drivers) with value-oriented products and flexible financing
- Position hybrids as the optimal NEV pathway; HEV preference grew from 30% to 39%
- Leverage broader participation from middle- and lower-income households in vehicle demand
- Expand Chinese brand access through dealer networks, financing ecosystems and retail partnerships

Risks

- Rising fuel costs and inflation pressure placing renewed strain on affordability and operating costs
- Geopolitical disruption and energy price shock increasing downside risks to growth outlook
- Export concentration and protectionism leaving volumes vulnerable to external shocks
- Loan terms exceeding 72 months now account for 56.4% of new vehicle finance – increasing refinancing and residual value risk

Turn market intelligence into sharper decisions

Download the full **Q1 2026 Mobility Insights Report** or contact your TransUnion® representative to discuss how these insights can support your pricing, mix and finance decisions.

© 2026 TransUnion LLC. All Rights Reserved. | 4458329-260624