

Climate Change perceptions

January 2023

Methodology

- Results in this report are based on a representative online survey of Wellington residents.
- The survey was open for people to complete from the 25th October to the 7th November 2022.
- The survey was distributed to our *Capital Views* panel. Distributions were managed in such a way to aim for a sample that was as close to representative of the city's population (by age, gender and ward).
- A weighting was applied to the final sample to ensure the overall results provided a representative view of Wellington City residents by age, gender and ward.
- In total 738 people completed the survey. The margin of error for a sample of this size at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.6\%$.
 - In total 2021 survey 848 people completed the survey. The margin of error for a sample of this size at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.4\%$.

Key findings

Movements since 2021 survey

- Across the board there were very few significant changes compared to the 2021 survey. This is somewhat expected given the relatively short period of time between the two surveys. Emission reductions and climate change adaptation are big (often slow moving) issues in which perceptions are unlikely to change drastically in a short period of time. Over a 5-10 year period, if significant gains have been made in the way the public views these issues and the progress we have made on them, we would expect to see this reflected in the results.
- The only change of note compared to 2021 was in the level of confidence respondents had that enough was being done to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change. The change was an increase in those that were 'somewhat confident' (21% up to 28%) and a corresponding decrease in those that were not confident at all (65% down to 59%). There was still relatively low levels of strong confidence (less than 10% 'confident' or 'very confident').

Key 2022 results

- **Majority of respondents feel they understand the potential impacts of climate change on the city, and believe those impacts have already begun.**
 - Over half of respondents say significant reductions needed right now; over a third say it needs to start now and ramp up over time
 - Over half not confident enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington; 28% only somewhat confident
 - Believe Local Government is second only after Central Government in terms of responsibility
- **City Actions to meet targets**
 - Slightly more did not understand than did about what was required for Wellington to become a net zero city by 2050.
 - Very few (6%) believe we ARE on track to meet our 2030 and 2050 targets
 - Highlighted "encouraging mode shift"
 - 44% do NOT think we are on track
 - Highlighted "slow progress, no clear response, public transport not good enough and too much reliance on cars"
 - Half were unsure (expected given than many we unsure of what is actually required to hit these targets).
 - Highlighted "Don't know enough about plans, targets, or not seen enough progress data"
 - Most important action to prioritise: "Provide low or zero carbon transport options in the city (walkways, bike paths, public transport, light rail)"
 - 75% ranked as very important
 - 17% said it was somewhat important
- **Personal Actions**
 - 3/4 said they had taken actions to reduce transport and waste emissions, the remaining actions were less common.

Key findings – demographic differences

Male respondents

- Tended to be more likely to claim higher levels of understanding about the issues (claimed higher level of knowledge of climate impacts and of actions required to meet targets).

Female respondents

- Tended to be more likely to ask for more significant actions to be undertaken (i.e. more likely to want significant emissions reductions immediately) and also more likely to claim they were taking actions themselves.
- Also more likely to say it was very important for supporting people to make different food and purchasing decisions, reducing organic waste to the landfill and planting more trees to be prioritised

Younger respondents (under 30s)

- Tended to want more significant actions immediately and be less confident that enough is being done currently and more likely to have taken actions themselves (particularly energy and transport).
- More likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised. BUT less likely to say supporting Wellingtonians to choose electric cars should be prioritised.

Older respondents (60+)

- Tended to be more confident in the currently level of actions being taken and agree that we are on target to meet 2050 targets (but also more likely to say that 2050 targets are not necessary).
- Less likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised.

Knowledge of climate change impacts

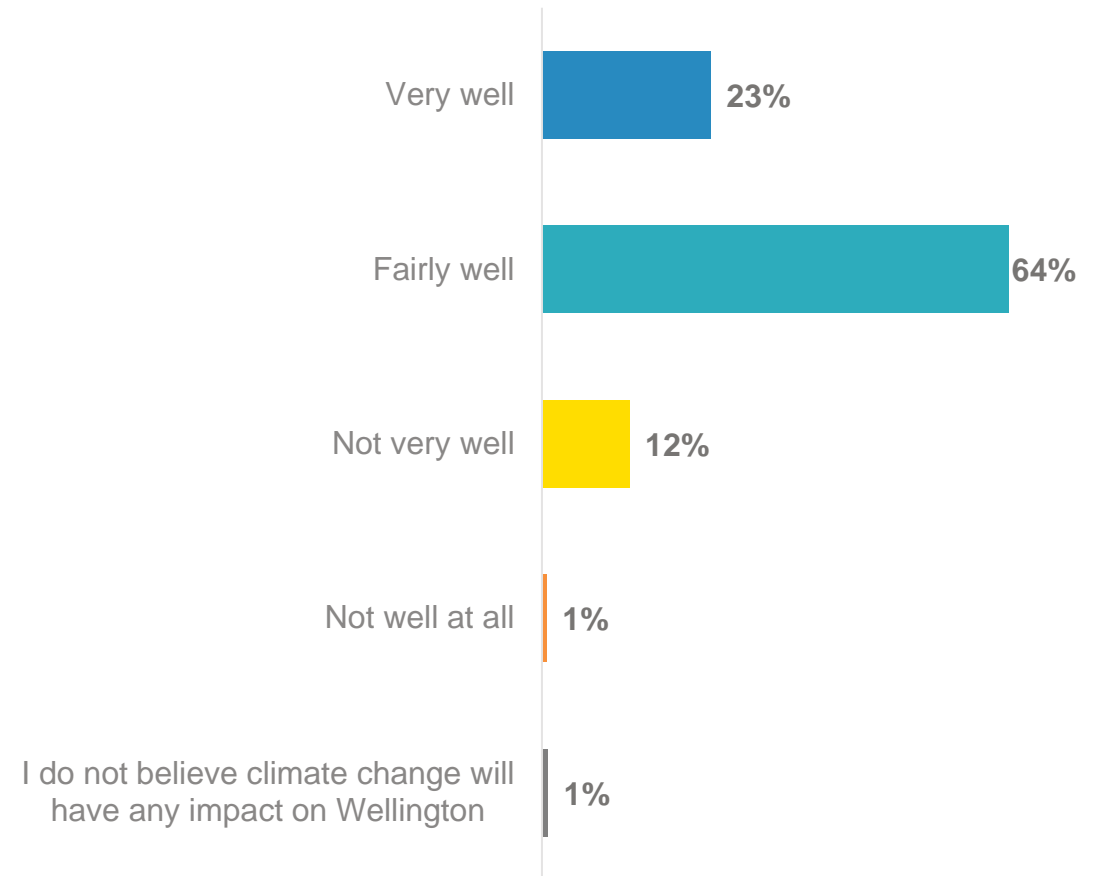
- Overall respondents to this survey claimed to have a good understanding of the impact climate change could have on Wellington.
- About one in five respondents claimed to understand the potential impacts of climate change very well, a further 64% said they understood them fairly well.
- Less than one in five said they did not understand the impacts very well or at all.
- The results were largely unchanged compared to 2021 where 84% said they understood the impacts very or fairly well (87% this year).

Demographic differences

- Male respondents were more likely to say they understood the impacts of climate change for Wellington very well (29% vs 17% for females).



How well do you think you understand climate change and the impacts it could have on Wellington?



Knowledge of climate change impacts – tracking



How well do you think you understand climate change and the impacts it could have on Wellington? – Very well + Fairly well



Views on when climate change impacts will be felt

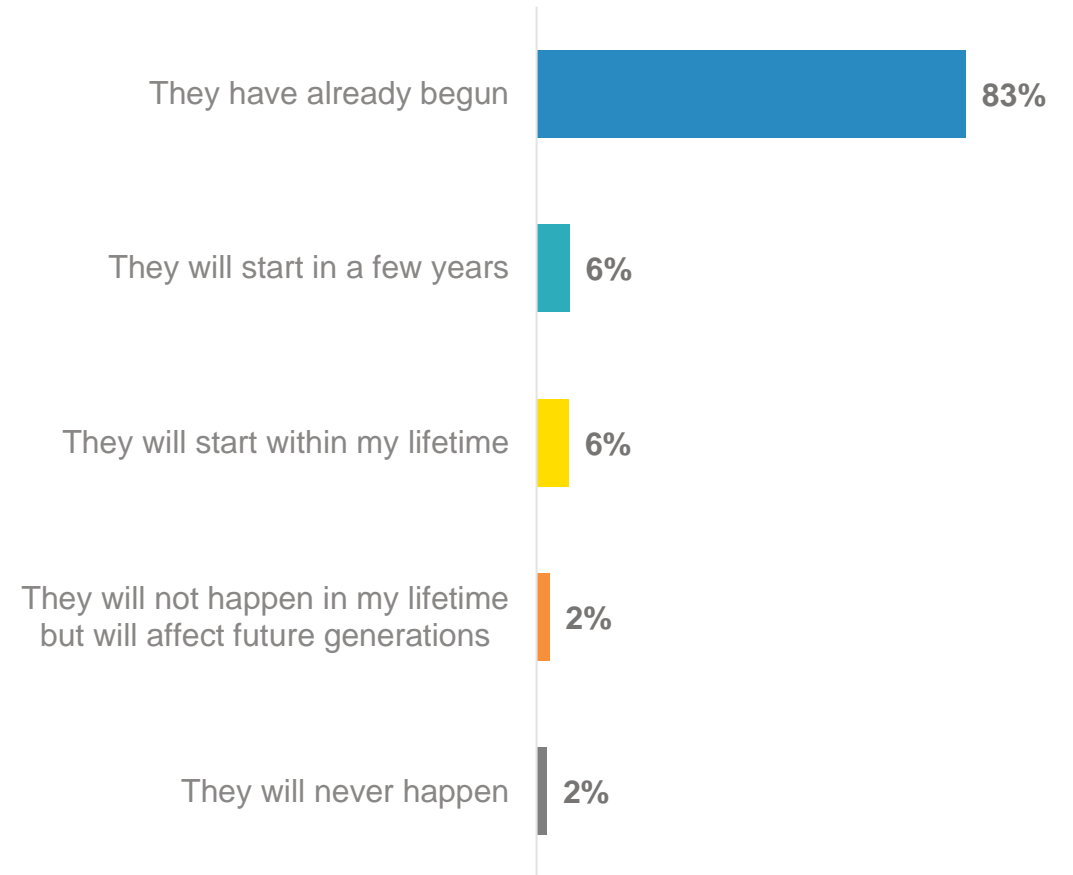
- The vast majority of respondents believed that the negative effects of climate change are already being felt in Wellington.
- While almost all the remaining respondents believed they would start in a few years or within their lifetime at least.
- These results were largely unchanged compared to last year.

Demographic differences

- There were no demographic difference of note for this question.



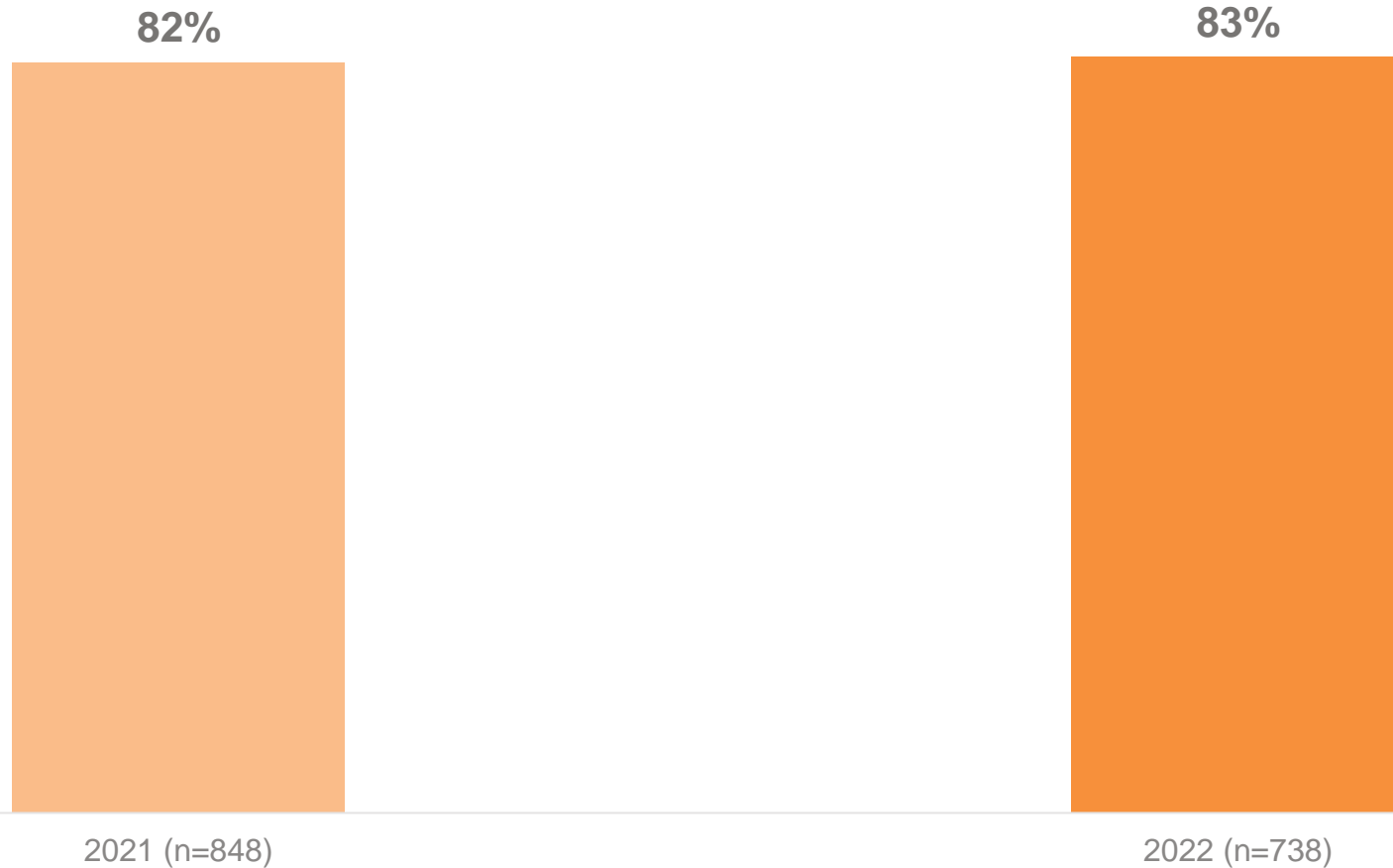
In your opinion, when will the negative effects of climate change happen in Wellington city?



Views on when climate change impacts will be felt - tracking



In your opinion, when will the negative effects of climate change happen in Wellington city? – They have already begun



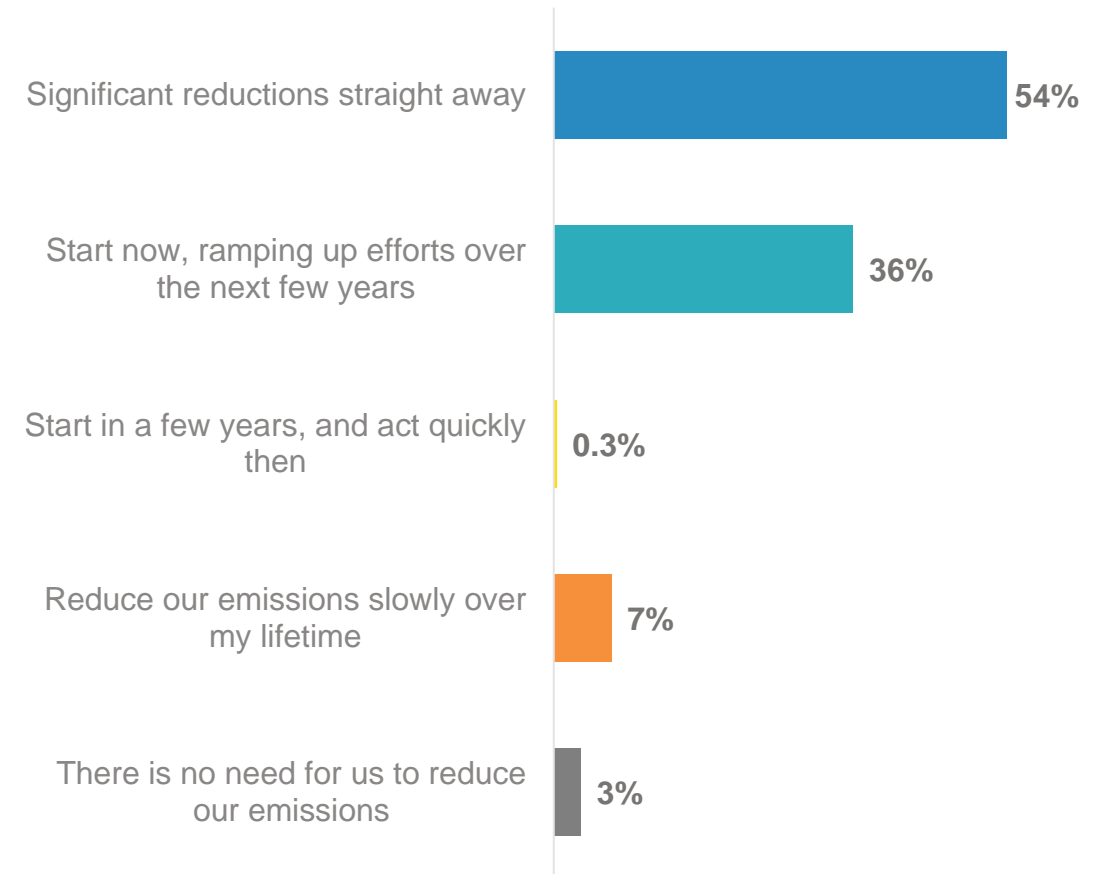
Reducing the city's carbon emissions

- 90% of respondents believed that we needed to act now to start reducing Wellington's carbon emissions.
 - Over half believed we should make significant reductions straight away
 - A third thought we should start now, but ramp up efforts over the next few years.

Demographic differences

- Females were more likely than males to say significant reductions should be made straight away (93% vs 86%)
- Younger respondents were also generally more likely to say significant reductions should be made straight away (18-29: 97%, 30-44: 92%, 45-60: 92%, 60+: 85%).

? | *In your opinion, how quickly do we need to act to reduce Wellington city's carbon emissions?*



Reducing the city's carbon emissions – tracking



In your opinion, how quickly do we need to act to reduce Wellington city's carbon emissions? – significant reductions right away + start now and ramp up

91%



2021 (n=848)

90%



2022 (n=738)

Preparing for impacts of climate change

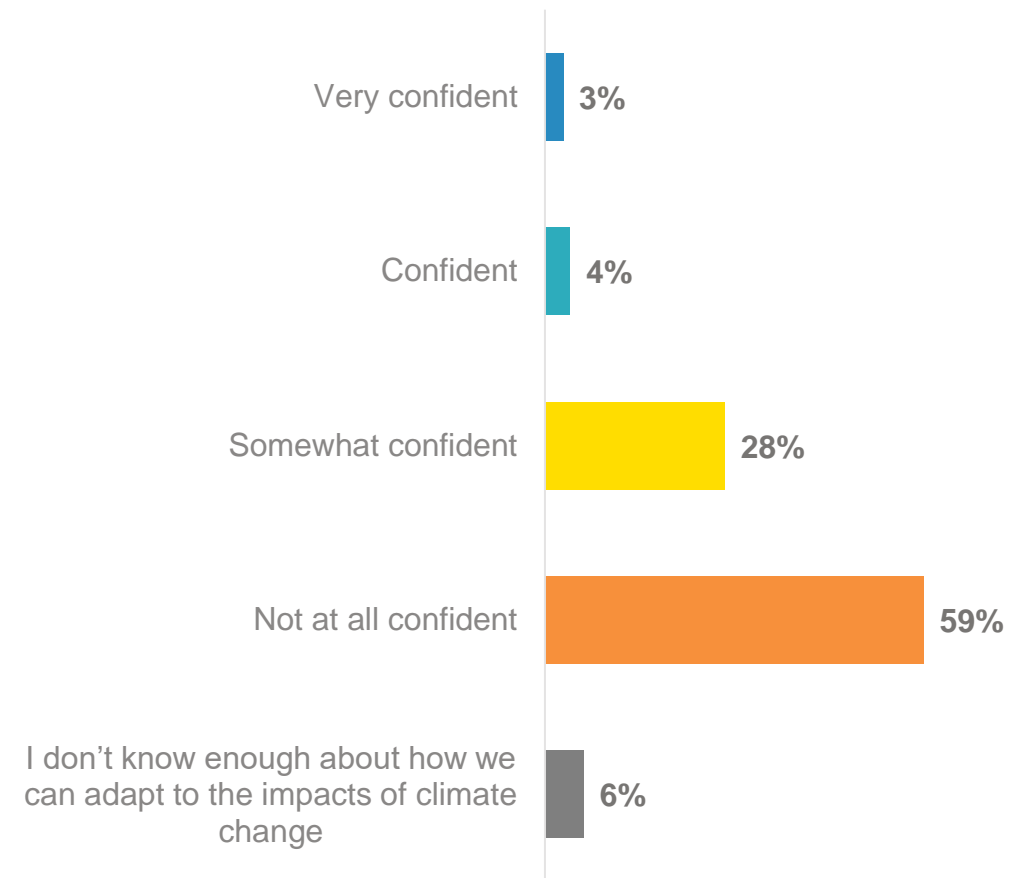
- There was very little confidence that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change (less than 10% confident or very confident).
- Close to a third were somewhat confident, while 59% were not confident at all.
- There has been a slight shift in these results compared to 2021 where only 21% were somewhat confident and 65% not confident at all.

Demographic differences

- Older respondents were generally more likely to be somewhat confident (18-29: 20%, 30-44: 27%, 45-60: 31%, 60+: 39%).
- While younger respondents were more likely to be not confident at all (18-29: 74%, 30-44: 58%, 45-60: 52%, 60+: 48%).



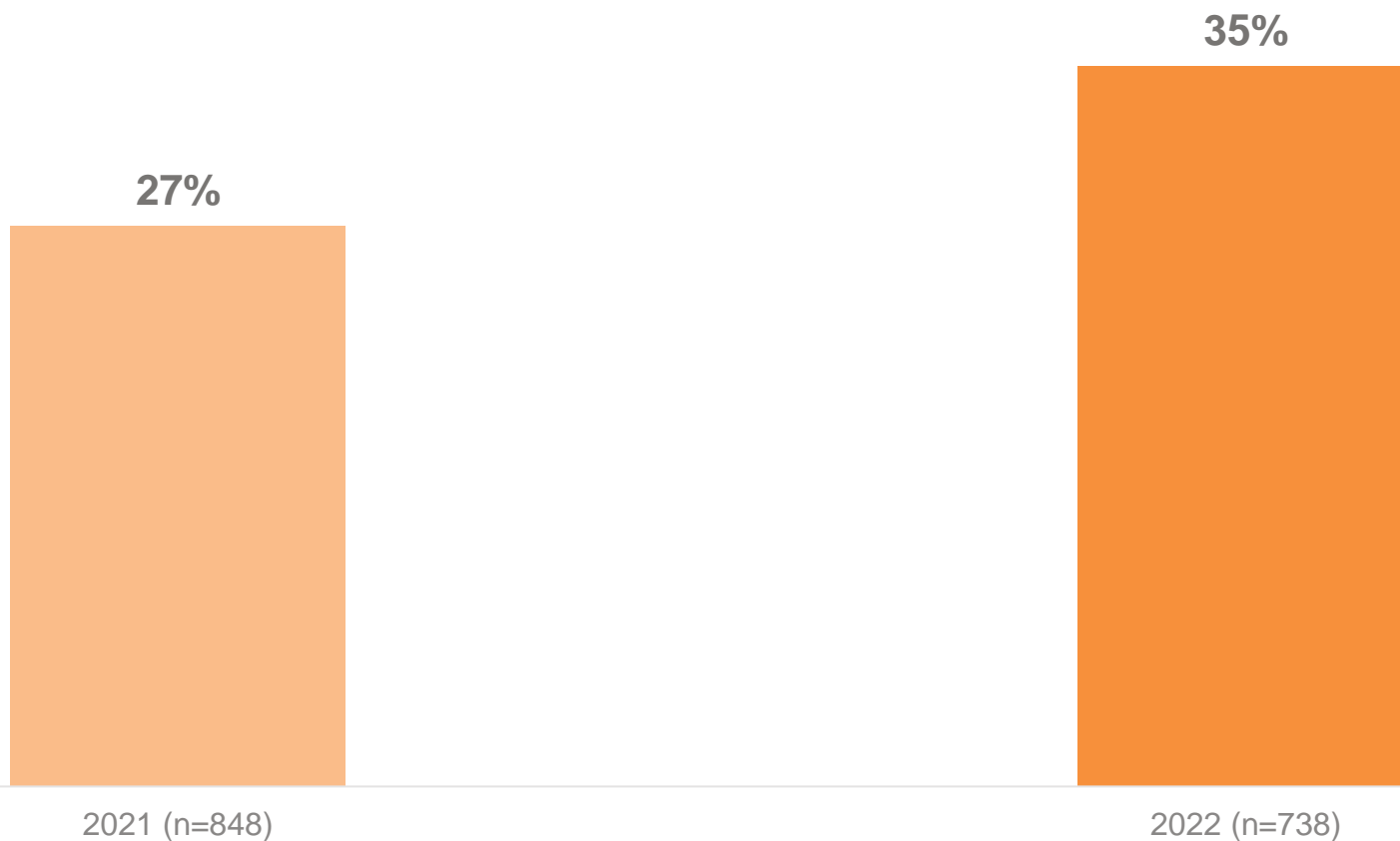
To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change?



Preparing for impacts of climate change – tracking



To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change? – **Very confident** + **Confident** + **Somewhat confident**



Responsibility for implementing climate change response

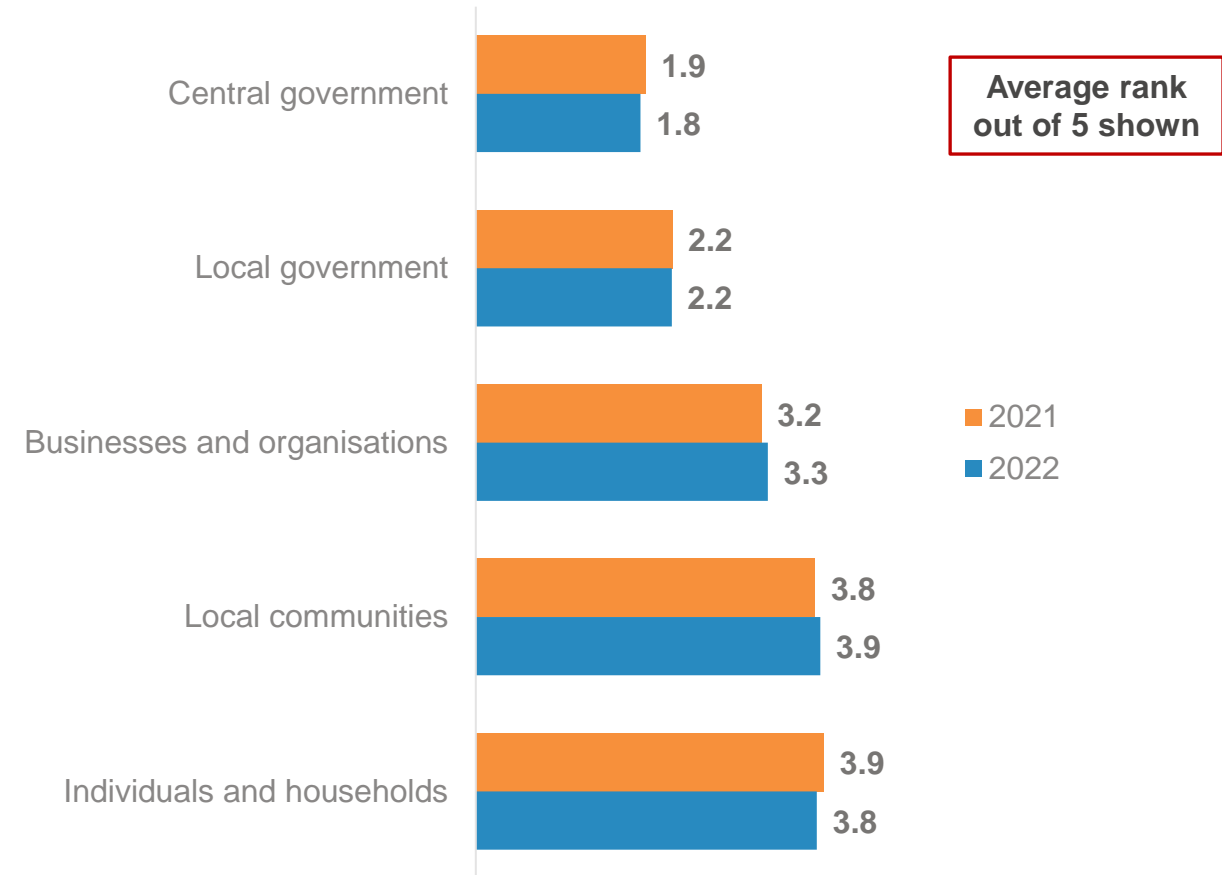
- Respondents felt that both local and central government shared the most responsibility for implementing responses to help Wellingtonians adapt to climate change impacts.
- Business, local communities and individuals were generally ranked lower by respondents.
- Ranking were very similar between the 2022 and 2021 surveys.

Demographic differences

- There were no demographic differences for this question



Who do you think should be mostly responsible for implementing responses to help Wellingtonians adapt to climate change impacts? Please rank the following in order of responsibility from 1 (most responsible) to 5 (least responsible)



Knowledge of actions needed to become net zero

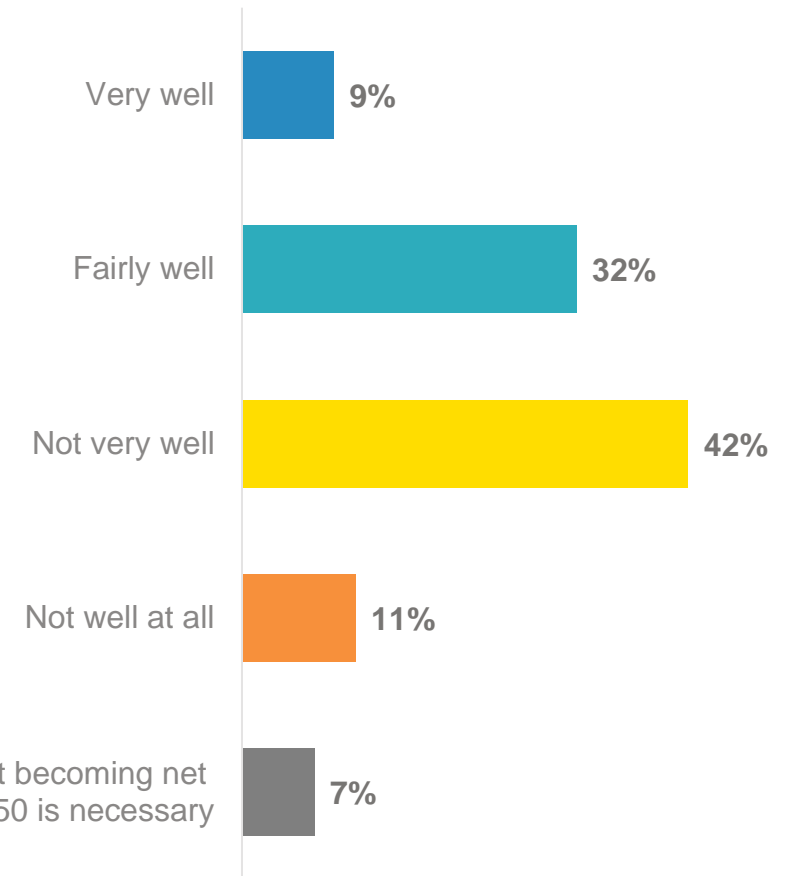
- About one in ten said they had a very good understanding of the actions required to become a net zero capital by 2050, a further third said they understood the requirements fairly well.
- Over half said they did not understand the required actions very well, or at all.
- These results are unchanged compared to 2021.

Demographic differences

- Males were more likely than females to say they understand the actions required to become net zero very well (12% vs 5%).
- Respondents over 60 were more likely to say they do not agree that becoming net zero by 2050 is necessary (12%).



How well do you think you understand what climate actions are needed for Wellington to become a net zero carbon capital by 2050?



Knowledge of actions needed to become net zero – tracking



How well do you think you understand what climate actions are needed for Wellington to become a net zero carbon capital by 2050? - **Very well**
+ **Fairly well**



Achieving our emissions reduction targets

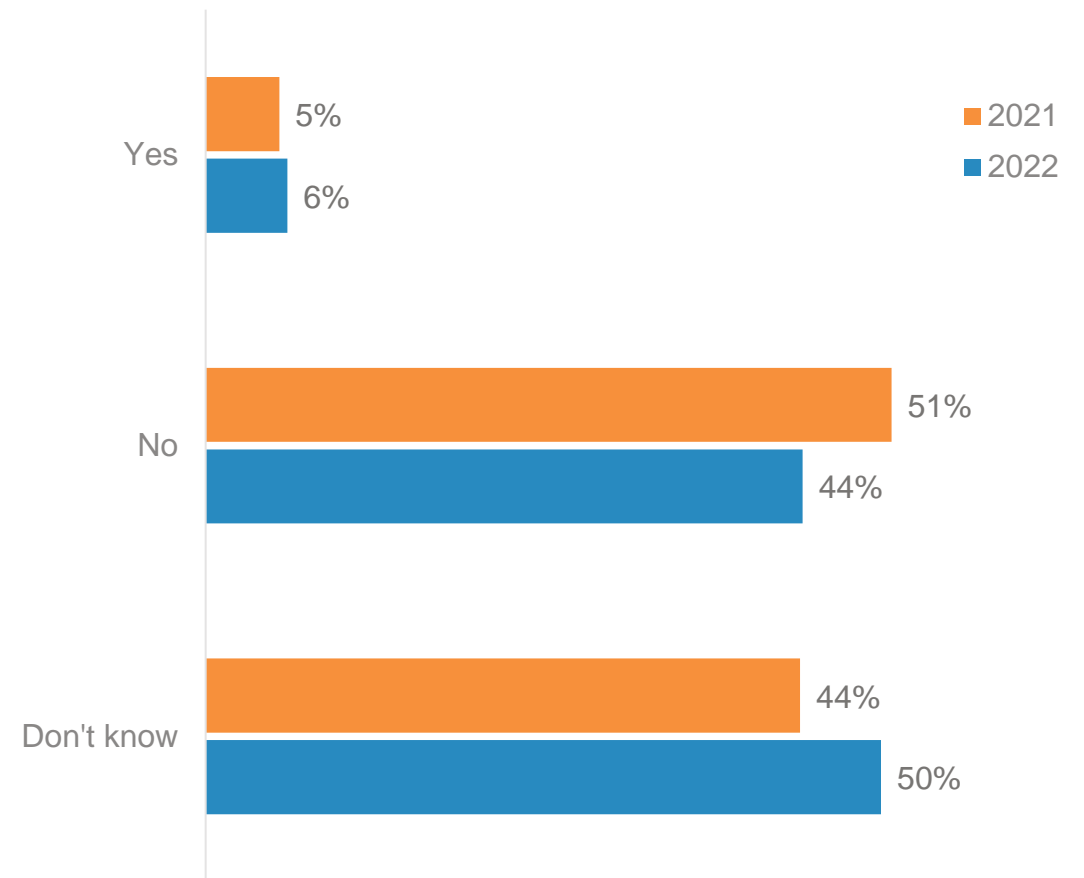
- Very few respondents (6%) believed that the city is on track to achieve its emission reduction targets.
- Less than half did not think we were on track, while half simply did not know enough to answer.
- Compared to 2021, there was a little more uncertainty in the answers from respondents (more 'don't knows').

Demographic differences

- Respondents 60 and over were more likely to think we were on track to meet our targets (12%).



Do you think Wellington city is currently on track to achieve its emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2050?



Reasons for thinking we are or are not on track

- All respondents were asked why they either thought we were on track to meet our emission targets, not on track, or unsure about how we are tracking.

Reasons for thinking we are on track

- As previously noted there were a very small number of respondents who believed we were on track, their main reasons being the encouragement they are seeing around mode shift (15 of 39 responses).
- Seven out of 39 respondents believed we were on track because of cycle lanes.
- There were a wide range of other reasons noted by fewer respondents including plantings, increased concerns, rubbish and recycling and more.

Reasons for thinking we are not on track

- Of respondents believed we were not on track the dominant reason for this view (47% of these respondents) was that they had seen no clear response or progress to address the issue.
- Other common reasons all related to transport including reliance on cars (25%), public transport not being good enough (24%), and more work needing to be done to facilitate mode shift (13%).
- There were a wide range of other reasons noted by 10% or fewer.

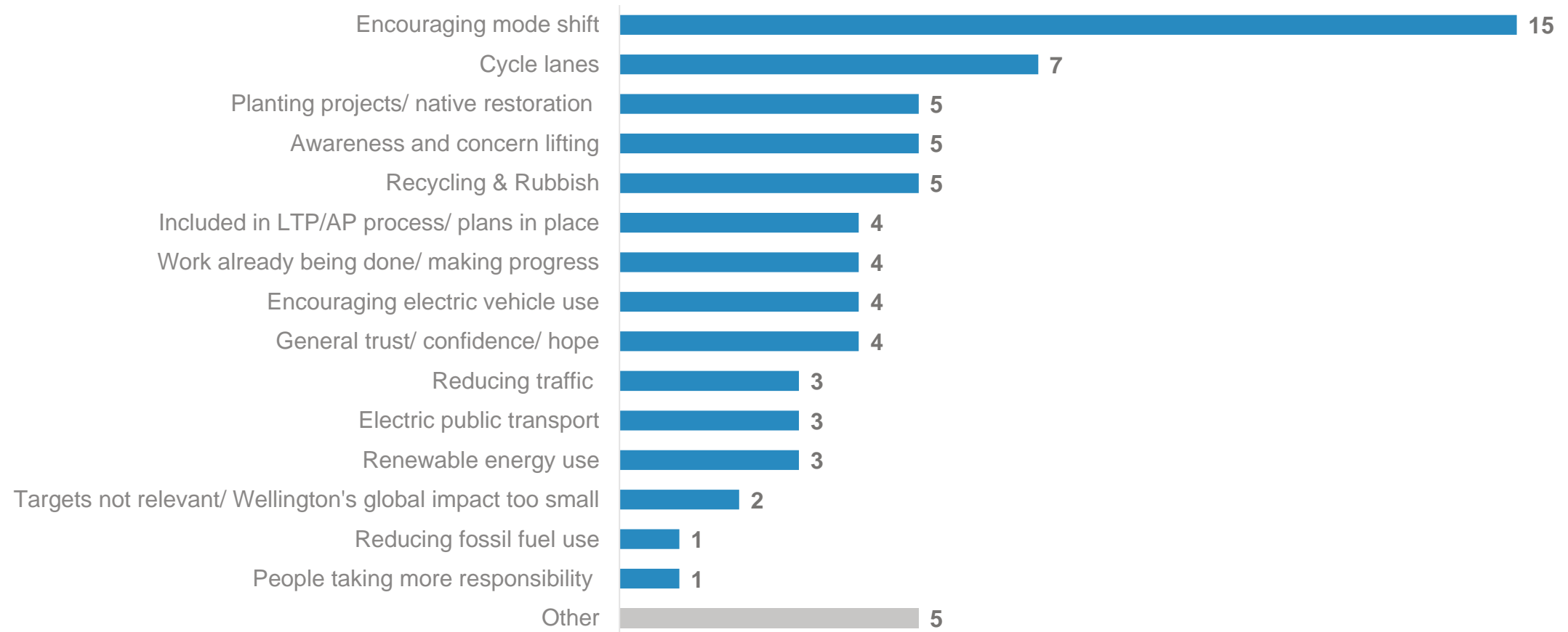
Reasons for being unsure about how we are tracking

- Half of respondents did not know enough to say if we were or were not on track. As we would expect reasons for this largely related to a lack of knowledge or information available on the topic. Specifically about a quarter to a third of these respondents said they did not know enough about the plans or strategies, don't know enough about the targets or have not seen any reporting on the topic from the Council.

Reasons for thinking we are on track



Please explain why you think we are on track to meet these targets.



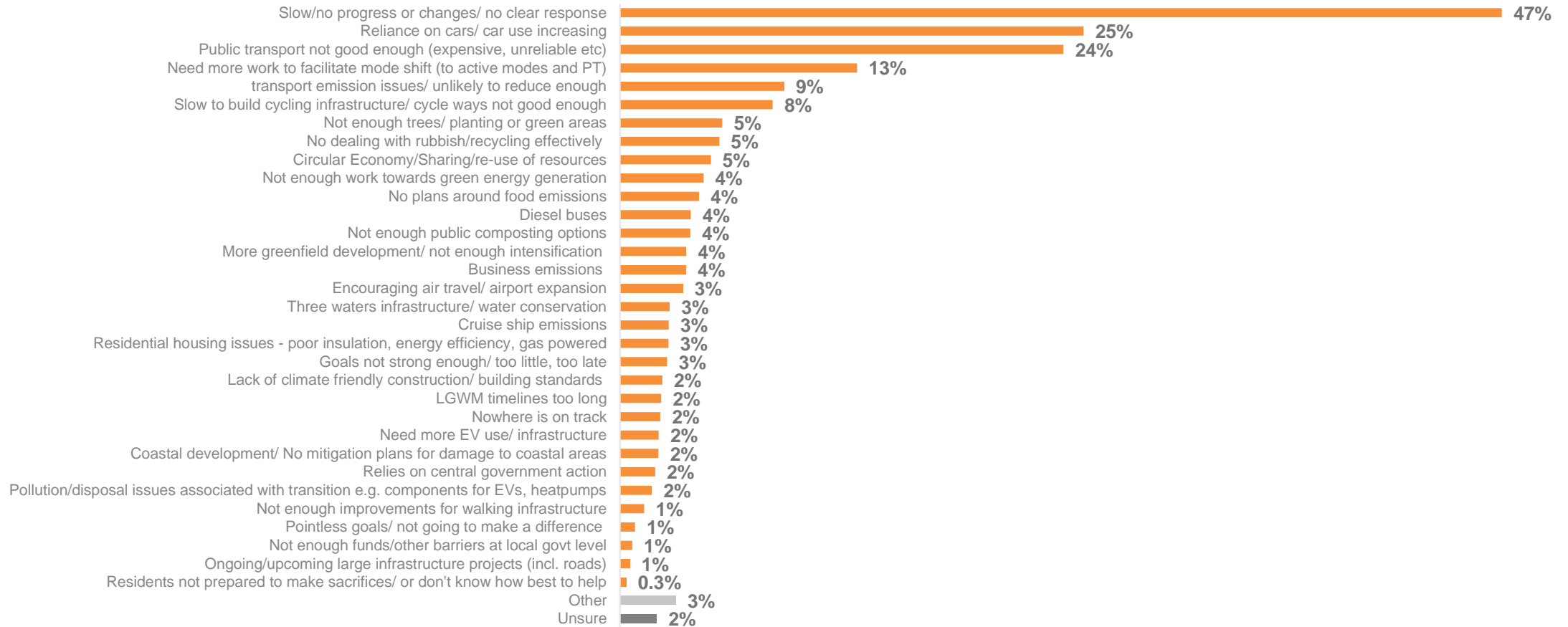
Base: Respondents who think Wellington City is on track to achieve its emissions reduction targets (n=39), multiple response question, numbers shown on graph add to greater than total base

Note: optional question, not all eligible respondents provided an answer

Reasons for thinking we are not on track



Please explain why you do not think we are on track to meet these targets.



Base: Respondents who think Wellington City is not on track to achieve its emissions reduction targets (n=293), multiple response question, percentages add to more than 100%.

Note: optional question, not all eligible respondents provided an answer

Reasons for being unsure about how we are tracking



Please explain why you are unsure if we are on track to meet these targets



Base: Respondents who did not know how Wellington City is tracking to achieve its emissions reduction targets (n=334), multiple response question, percentages add to more than 100%

Note: optional question, not all eligible respondents provided an answer

Importance of emission reduction actions

- Overall respondents felt it was relatively important for the Council to be prioritising all of the actions listed with three quarters or more saying prioritisation of all bar one of the actions was very important or somewhat important.
- If we look specifically at actions rated 'very important' for the Council to prioritise providing low or zero carbon transport options in the city was seen as a little more important than other actions (75% very important).
 - The importance of this was reiterated when respondents were asked for any other climate actions the Council should be taken to help meet targets – the most common response was to improve the public transport system.
- Similar levels believed it was 'very important' to prioritise incentivising improved building efficiency, creating a compact city, planting more trees and reducing organic waste to the landfill (52%-62%).
- About a third believed it was very important for the Council to prioritise supporting people to get EVs while about a quarter said the same about supporting Wellingtonians to make different food choices and purchasing decisions.
- Importance ratings have remained largely unchanged compared to 2021, the couple exceptions being slightly less support for prioritisation of tree planting and reducing organic waste to the landfill.

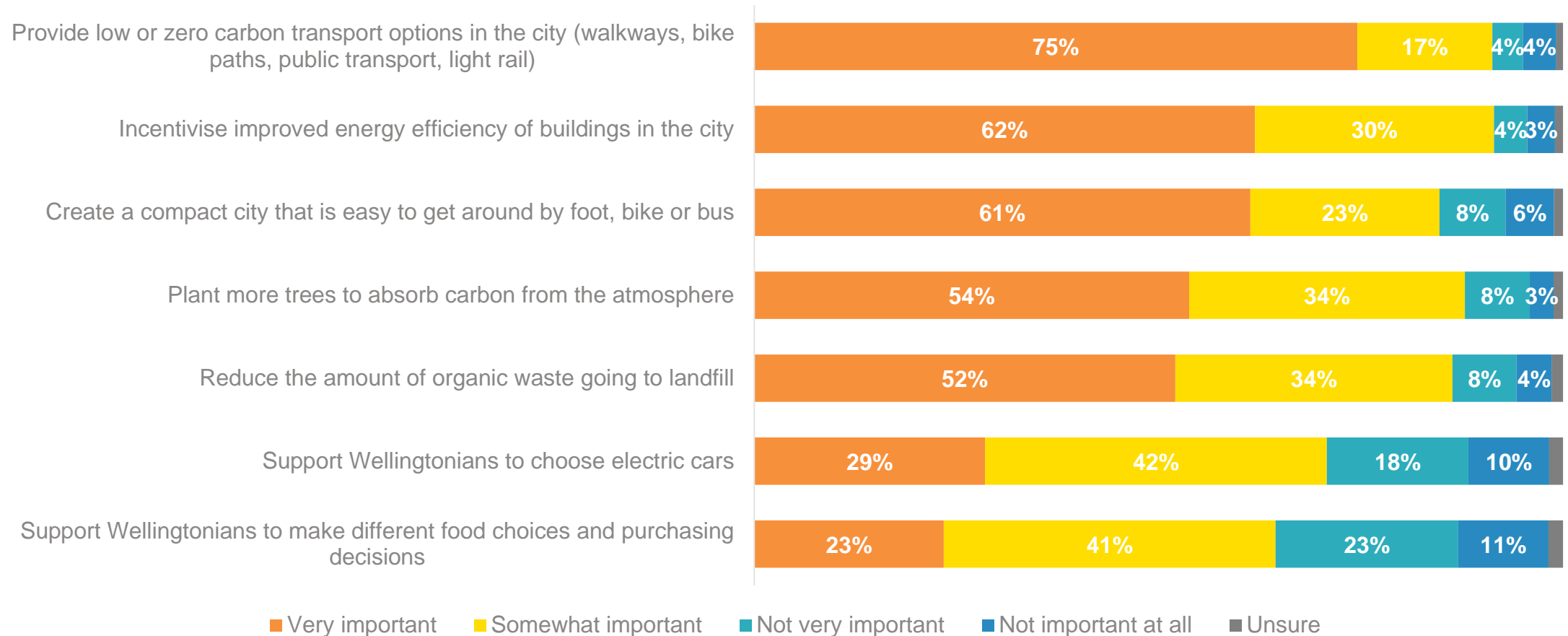
Demographic differences

- Younger people (18-29s) and renters were more likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised. Young people were less likely to say supporting Wellingtonians to choose electric cars should be prioritised.
- Respondents 60 and over were less likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised.
- Females were more likely to say it was very important for supporting people to make different food and purchasing decisions, reducing organic waste to the landfill and planting more trees to be prioritised
- Respondents from the Lambton ward were more likely to say it was very important to prioritise a compact city.

Importance of emission reduction actions



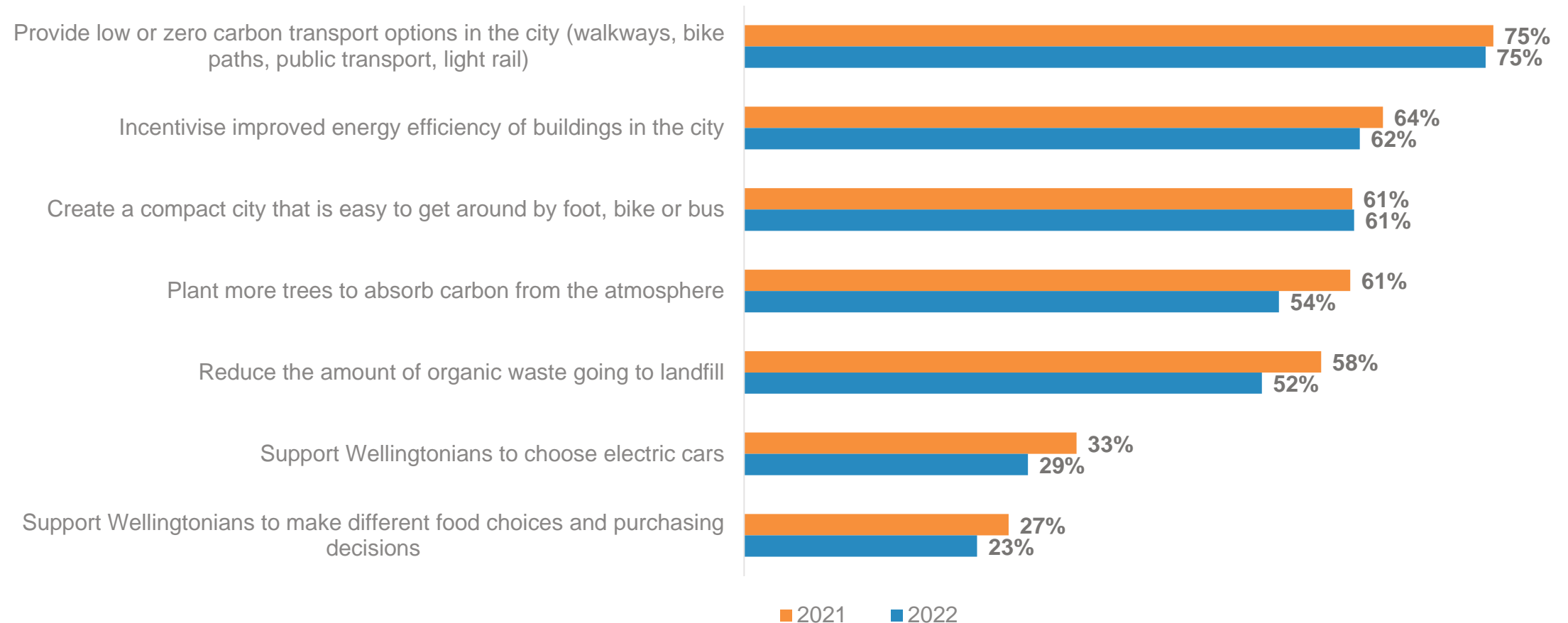
How important do you believe it is for the Council to prioritise the following actions to reduce emissions



Importance of emission reduction actions – tracking



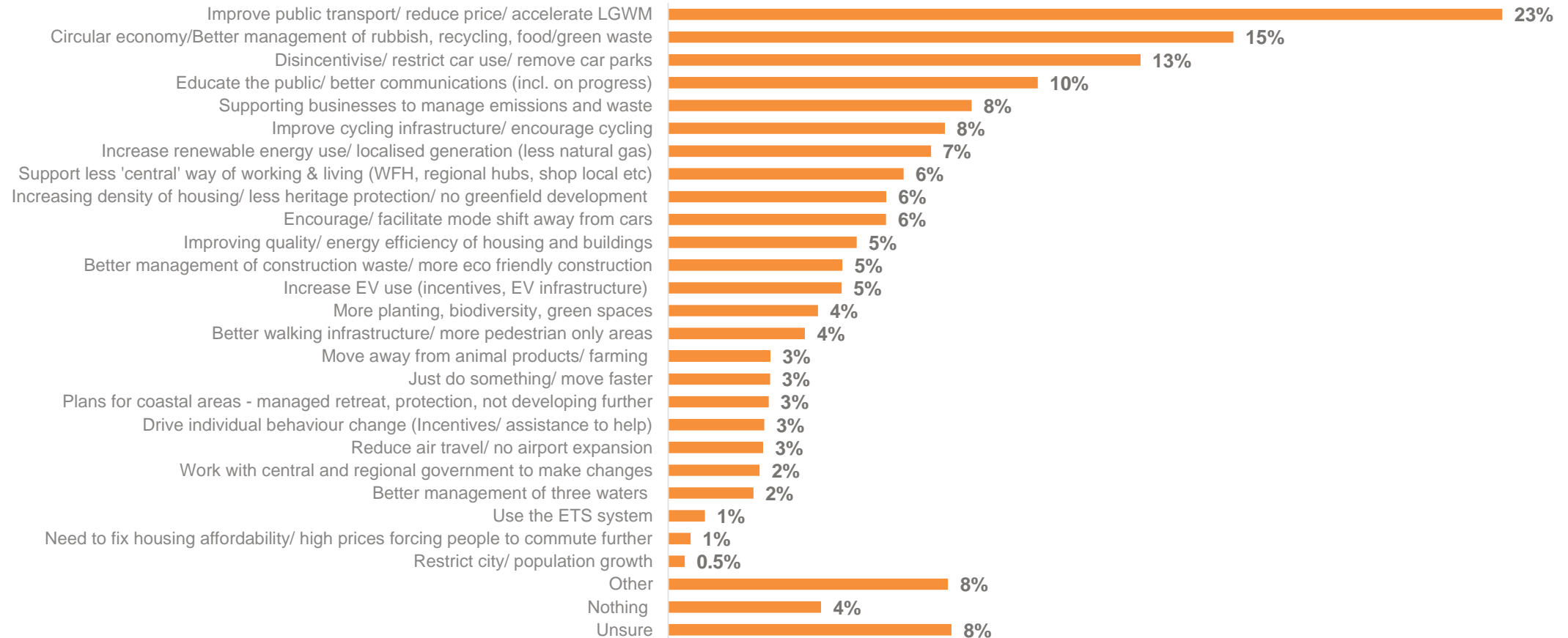
How important do you believe it is for the Council to prioritise the following actions to reduce emissions – *Very important*



Additional climate actions needed



In your view, what other climate actions need to be taken in Wellington (by the Council or others) to reduce emissions between now and 2030?



Base: all respondents (n=571)

Note: optional question, not all eligible respondents provided an answer

Personal actions to reduce emissions

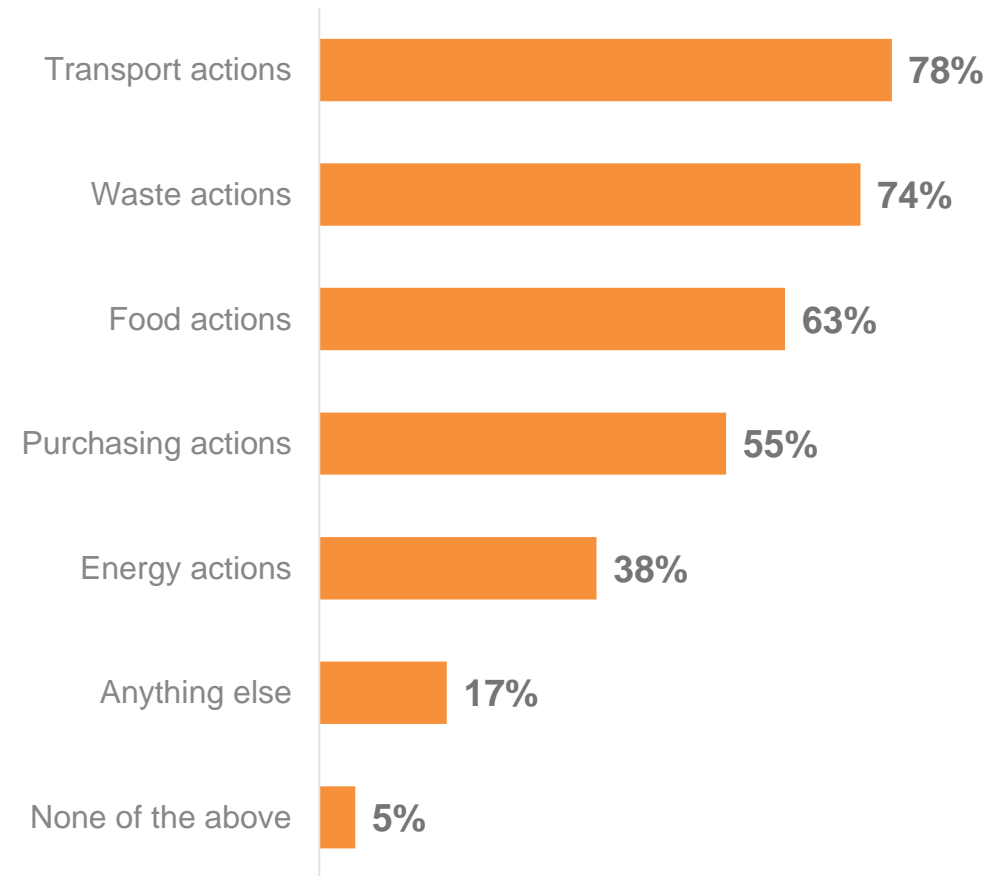
- About three quarters of respondents said they had taken actions to reduce their transport and waste emissions over the past 12 months.
- Similar proportions had undertaken actions to reduce their emissions related to food or other purchasing behaviour.
- Actions to reduce energy emissions were generally less common than the rest for respondents.

Demographic differences

- Younger respondents (18-29) were more likely to say they have taken actions to reduce their transport emissions (91%).
- Respondents 45 and over were less likely to say they had taken actions to reduce transport emissions and food emissions.
- Younger respondents (18-29) were less likely to say they had taken actions to reduce their energy emissions (22%). Respondents aged 45-60 were more likely to say they had take action to reduce their energy emissions (47%).
- Female respondents were more likely than males to say they had taken actions to reduce emissions their waste actions (79% vs 67%), food actions (72% vs 54%) and purchasing actions (65% vs 45%).
- Respondents from the Lambton ward were more likely to have taken actions to reduce transport emissions (88%).
- Respondents from the Southern ward were more likely to have taken action to reduce food emissions (76%).

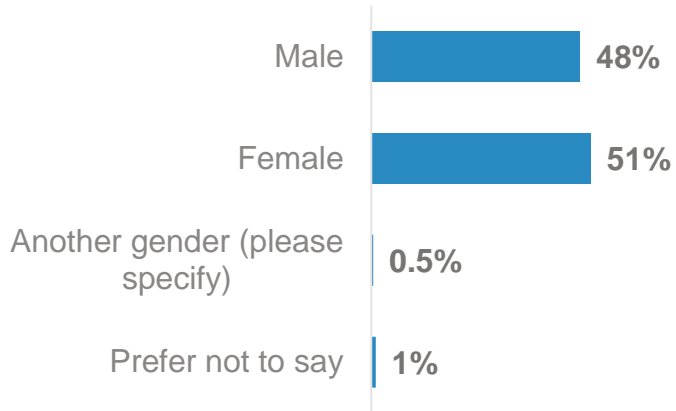


Over the last 12 months, what climate actions (if any) have you taken on an ongoing basis to reduce your emissions? Please select all that apply

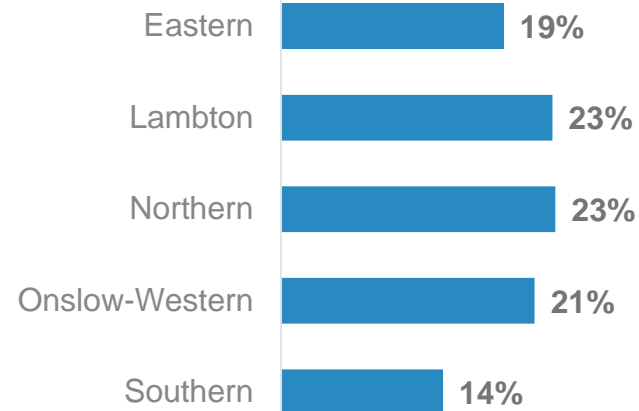


Demographics

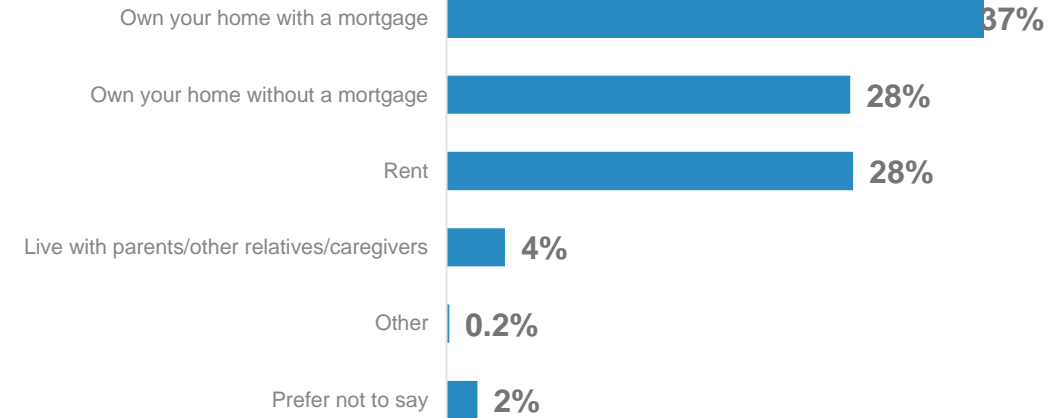
Gender



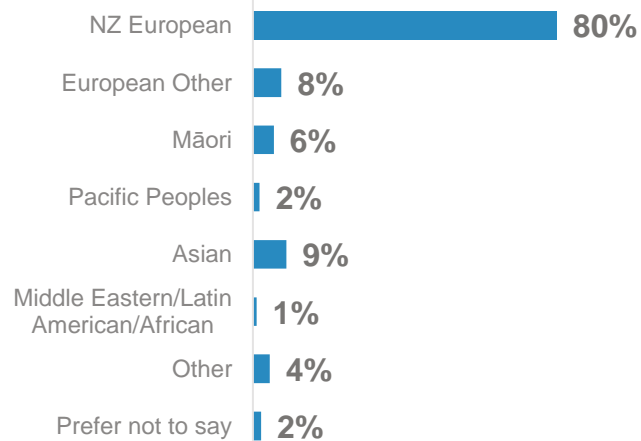
Ward



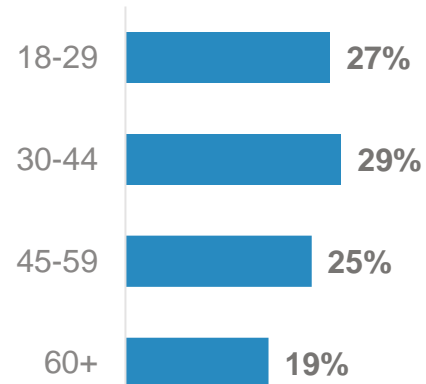
Home ownership



Ethnicity



Age



Identify as disabled

