

Climate Change perceptions

December 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 15th November to the 3rd December 2023.
- 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 928 people completed the survey. The margin of error for a sample of this size at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.2\%$.
 - In total 2022 survey 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 2022 survey

- Across the board there were very few significant changes compared to the 2022 survey. This is somewhat expected given the relatively short period of time between the two surveys. Emission reductions and climate change adaption 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.

Key 2023 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; a third say it needs to start now and ramp up over time
 - Over half are not confident enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington; 25% somewhat confident, 9% more confident
 - Almost half are not confident enough is being done to reduce city emissions; 36% a little bit confident, 15% more confident
 - Very strong agreement (86%) that Wellington City Council has a responsibility to help residents in the adaption and emissions reduction space
- **Priority actions – improving public transport clearly favoured**
 - Actions rated ‘very important’ for the Council to prioritise were topped by “work with Greater Wellington Council and the NZ transport agency to deliver low cost, accessible modern public transport” (83% very important compared to 70% for the next highest action).
 - The next two top priorities were climate change mitigation related - “Infrastructure investment to adapt to extreme weather events” (70% very important) and “Extreme weather civil defence preparedness” (67% very important)
 - The remaining actions were seen as very important by between 46% and 56% of respondents.
- **Personal Actions – two of the top three actions transport related**
 - About half of respondents said they actively choose to only use wood or electricity for heating, cycle or walk or scoot as part of their daily commute or use public transport as part of their daily commute or compost their food waste.
 - 41% of respondents are actively choosing at least 5 of the actions asked about in total.

Key findings – demographic differences

Female respondents

- Tended to want more progress immediately, and a stronger belief that impacts were already being felt. Also more strongly believed that Council has a responsibility in the climate action space.
- Also tended to place higher importance than males on the range of emissions reductions activities asked about.

Differences by age

- Respondents under 30 tended to want more immediate action and were less confident enough was being done in the adaption and reduction space. More likely to agree that Council had a role in the climate action space.
- Respondents under 30 were less likely to think they had realistic and affordable options to reduce their waste and energy emissions.
- Respondents under 30 were generally more likely to say Council actions focused on emissions reductions were very important. However, there were no differences by age for the two adaption actions (infrastructure investment and extreme weather preparedness).
- Respondents 60+ tended to have inverse opinions to those under 30.

Differences by homeownership status

- Renters' views often reflected those of younger respondents, while homeowners reflected those of older respondents. This is often the case given the higher proportion of younger respondents in the renter category (and the reverse in the homeowner category).

Knowledge of climate change impacts

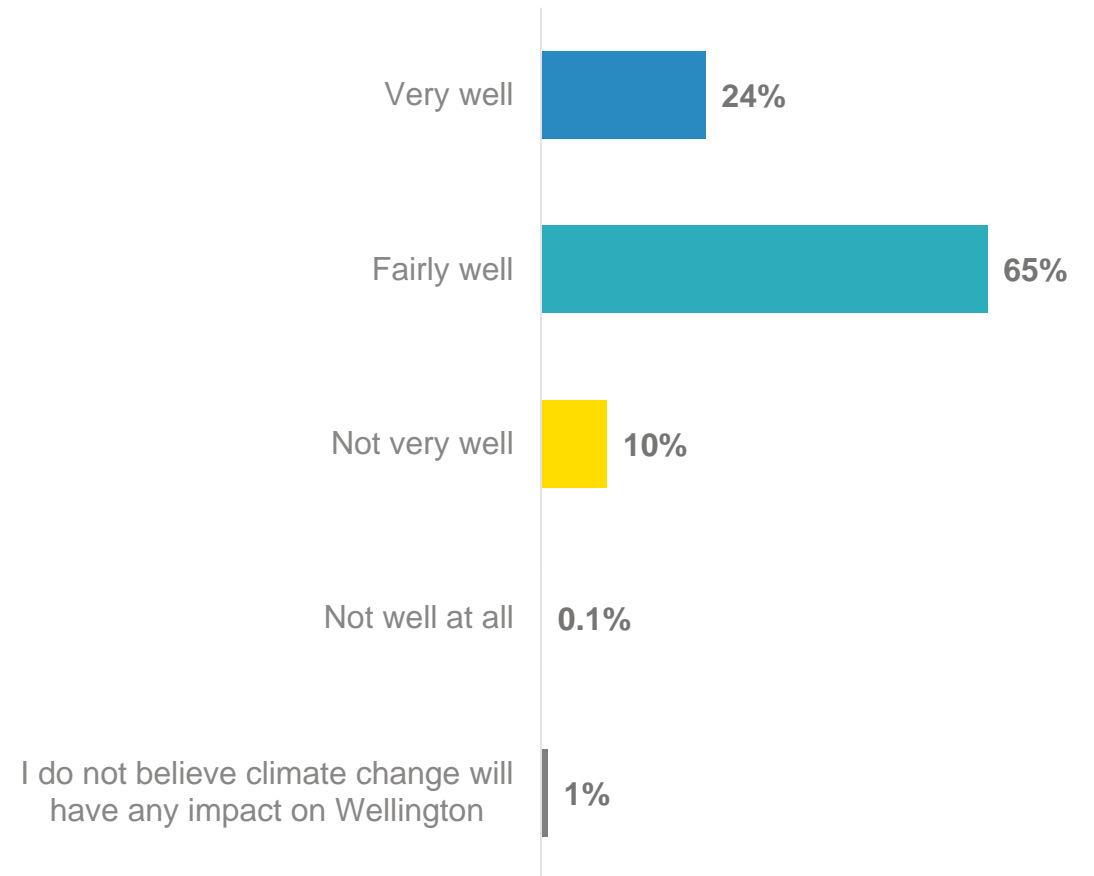
- Respondents to this survey claimed to have a good understanding of the impact climate change could have on Wellington.
- About one in four respondents claimed to understand the potential impacts of climate change very well, a further 65% said they understood them fairly well.
- Only one in ten said they did not understand the impacts very well or at all.
- The results have trended upwards over the life of the survey from 84% in 2021 to 89% this year saying they understand the impacts very well of fairly well.

Demographic differences

- Declared understanding of the impacts of climate change on Wellington were similarly high across all demographic groups.



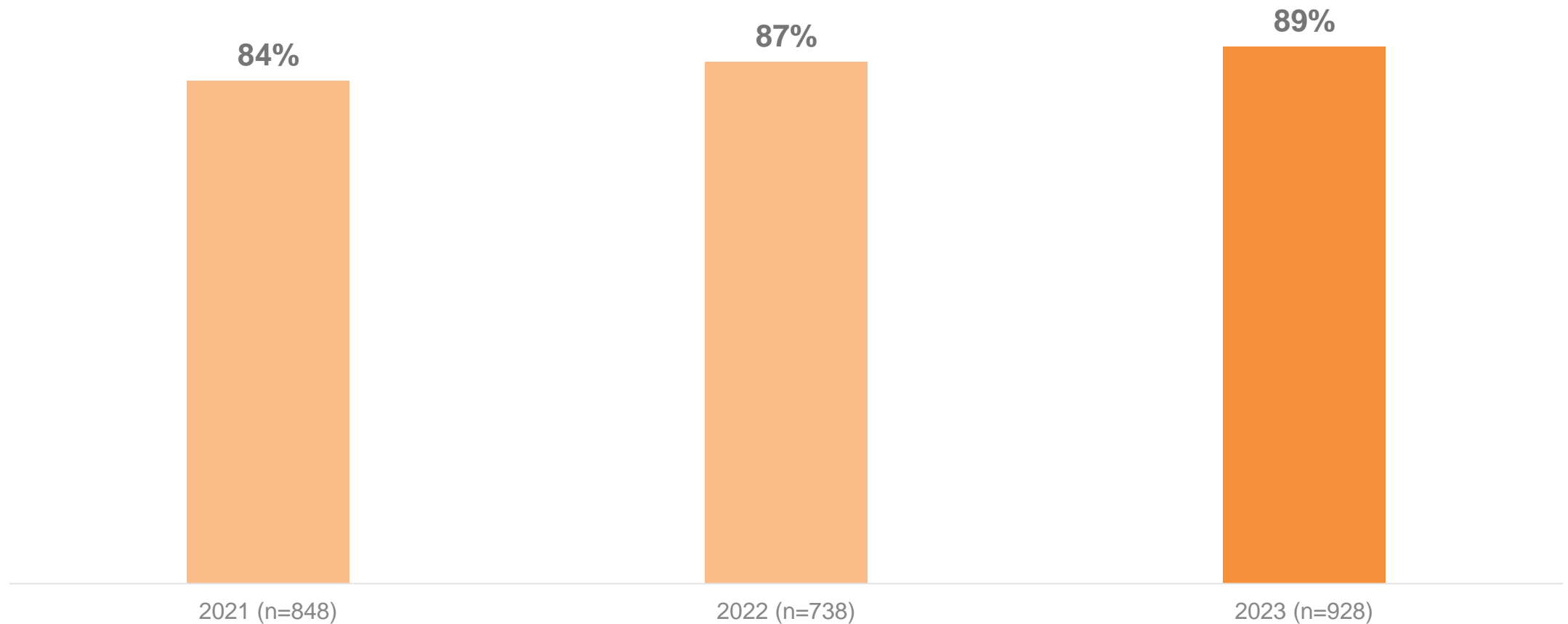
How well do you think you understand climate change and the impacts it could have on Wellington?



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



Base: all respondents

Views on when climate change impacts will be felt

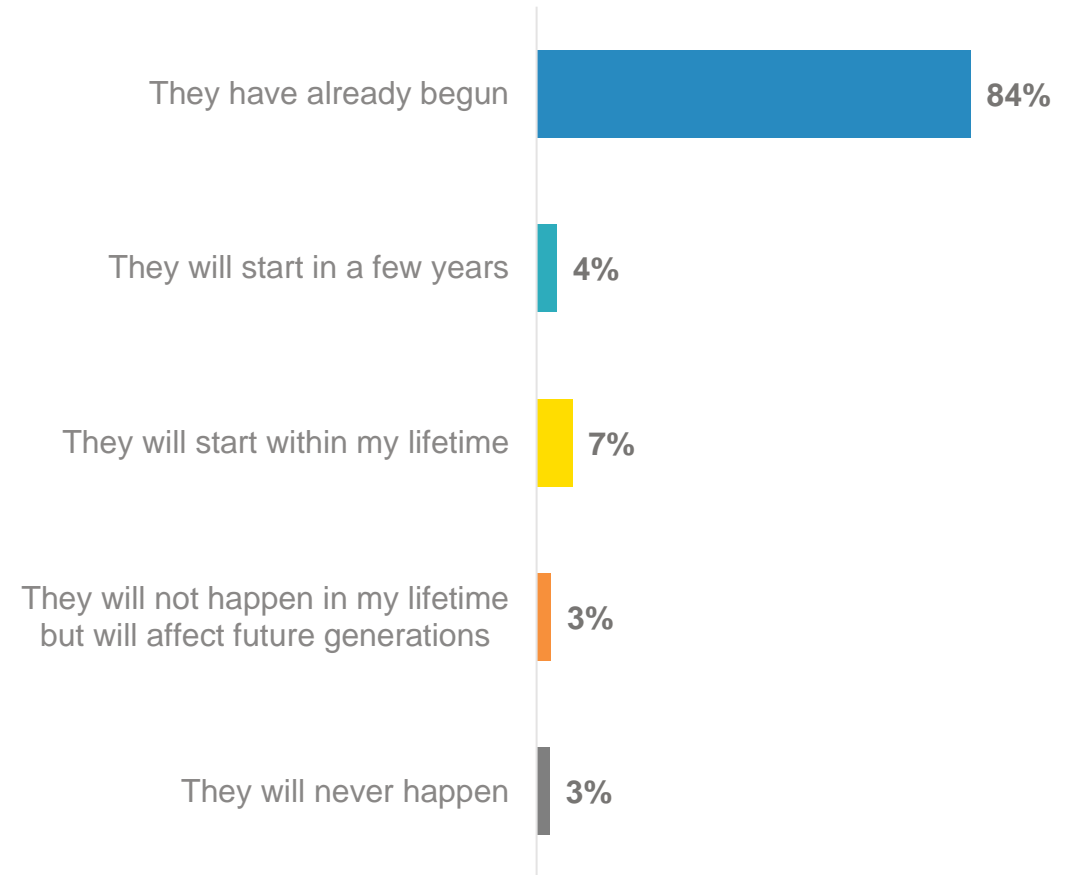
- The vast majority of respondents believed that the negative effects of climate change are already being felt in Wellington.
- While almost all the remaining respondents believed they would start in a few years or within their lifetime at least.
- These results were largely unchanged compared to last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

Demographic differences

- Female respondents were more likely than Males to say that the effects have already begun (91% vs 76%).



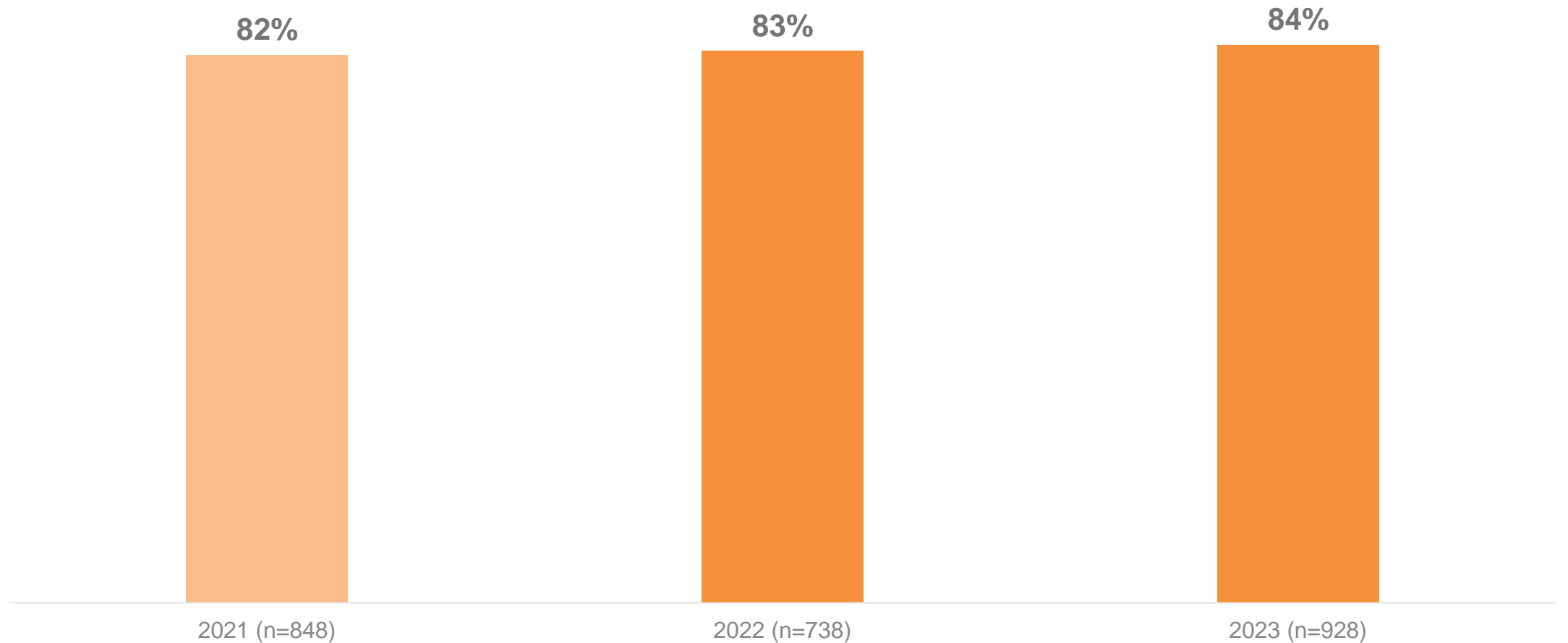
In your opinion, when will the negative effects of climate change happen in Wellington city?



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



Base: all respondents

Reducing the city's carbon emissions

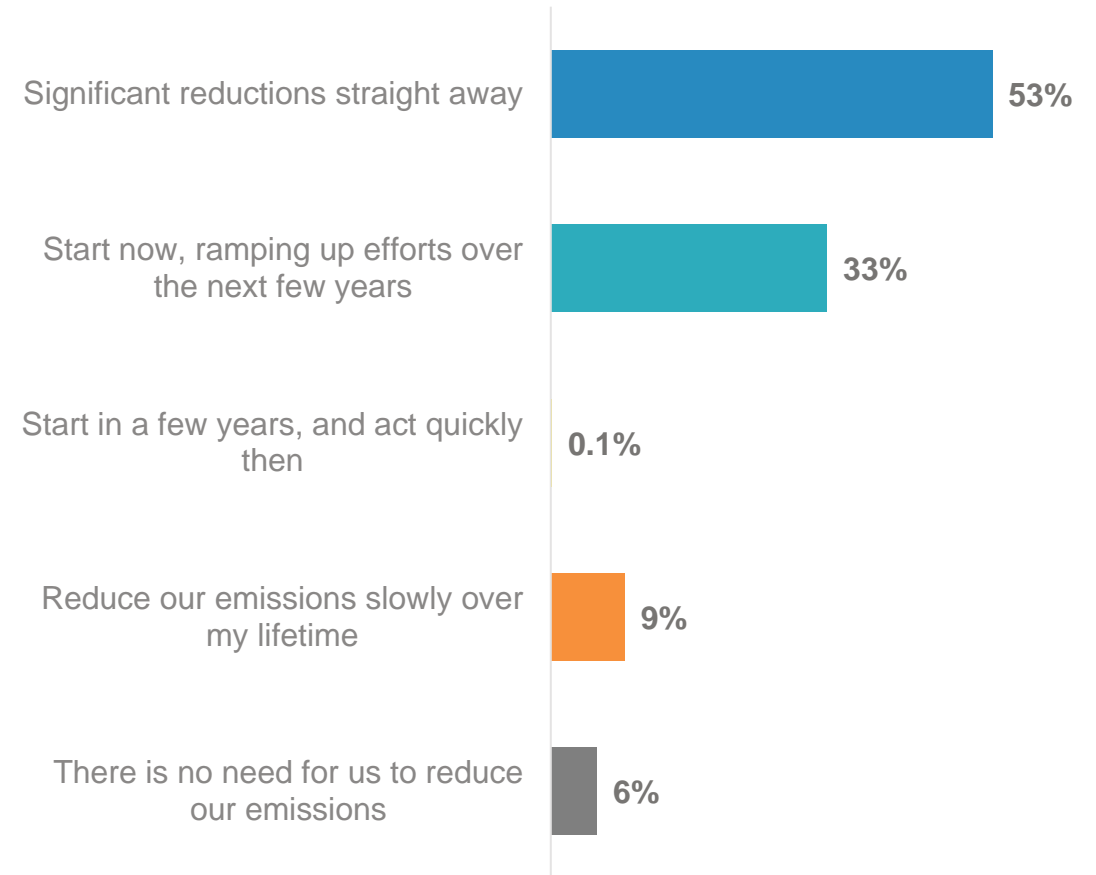
- 86% of respondents believed that we needed to act now to start reducing Wellington's carbon emissions.
 - Over half believed we should make significant reductions straight away
 - A third thought we should start now, but ramp up efforts over the next few years.

Demographic differences

- Females were more likely than males to say significant reductions should be made straight away (94% vs 77%)
- Younger respondents were also generally more likely to say significant reductions should be made straight away (18-29: 94%, 30-44: 87%, 45-60: 76%, 60+: 86%).



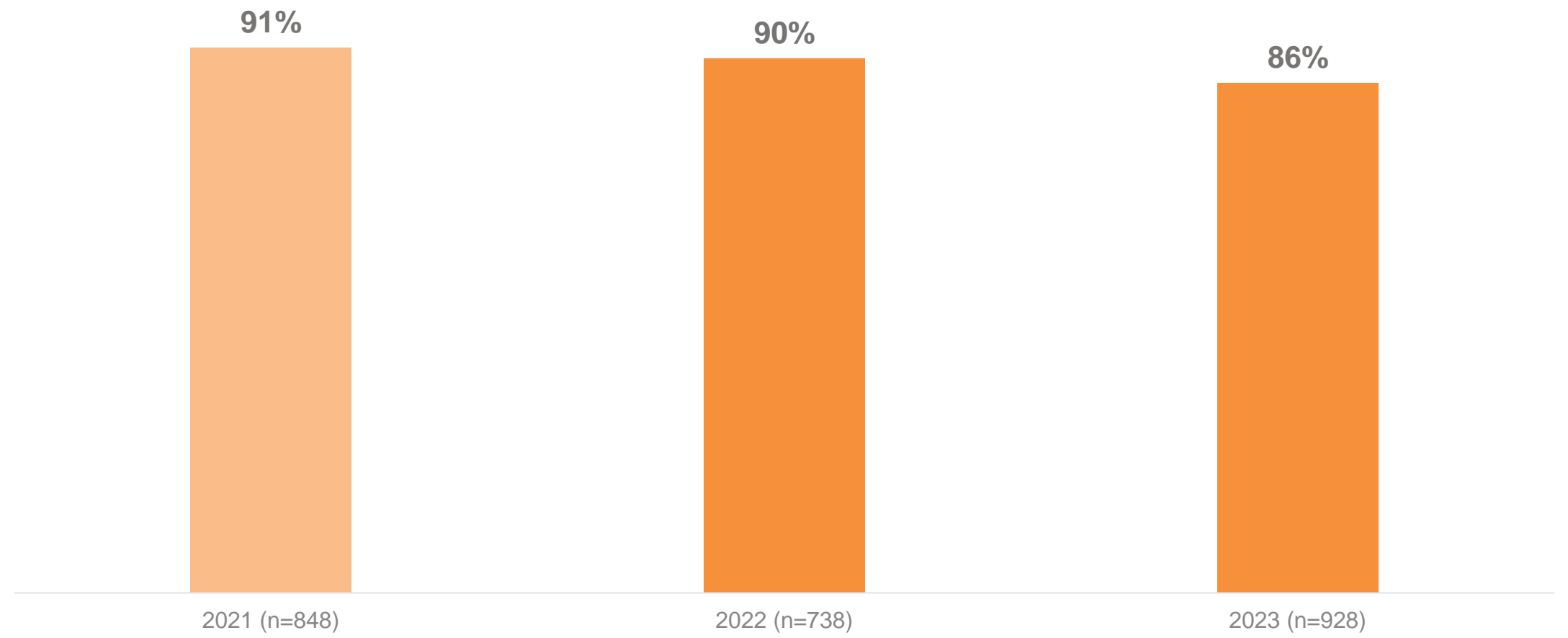
In your opinion, how quickly do we need to act to reduce Wellington city's carbon emissions?



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



Base: all respondents

Preparing for impacts of climate change

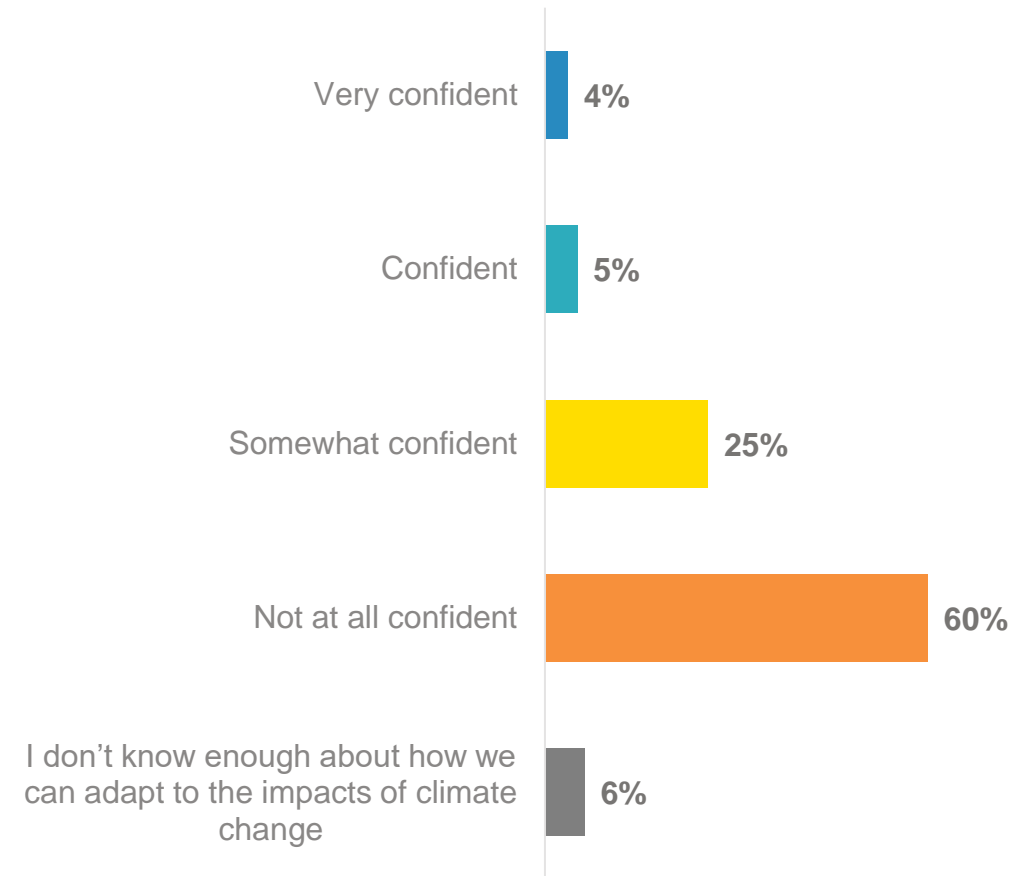
- There was very little confidence that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change (less than 10% confident or very confident).
- A quarter were somewhat confident, while 60% were not confident at all.
- Results were largely unchanged compared to 2022.

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%).



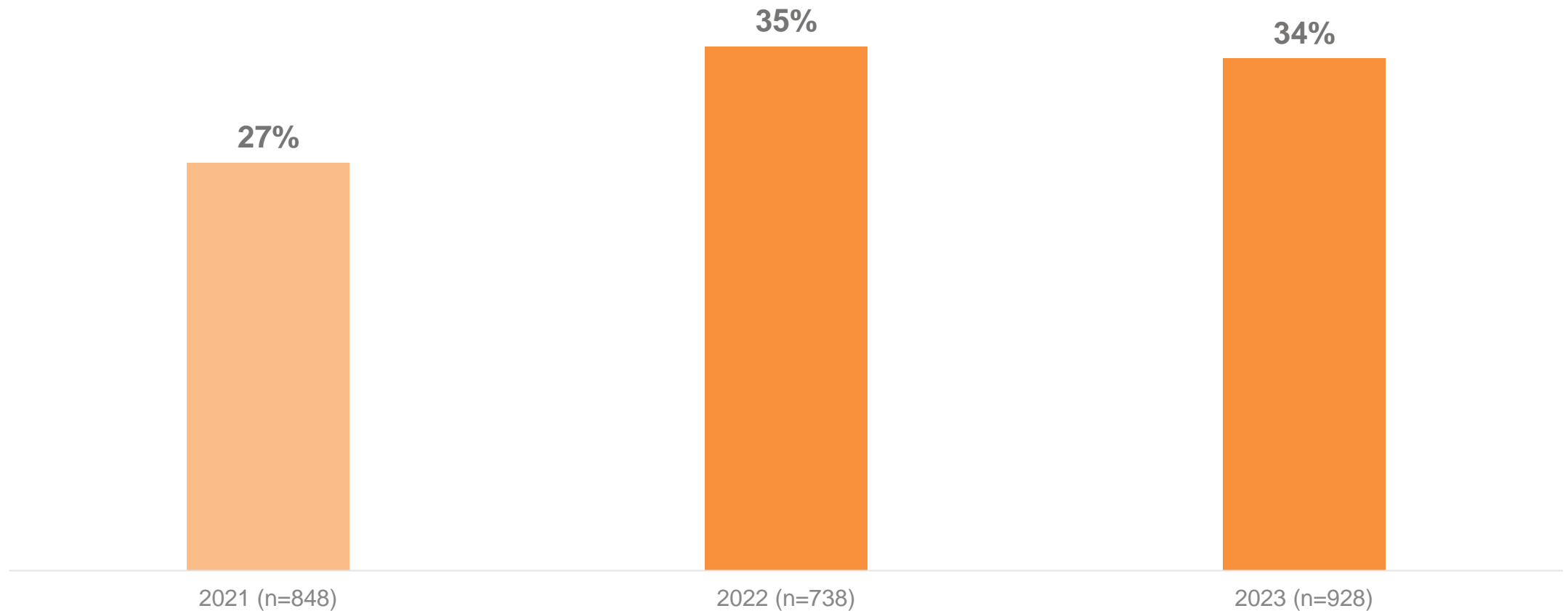
To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change?



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**



Reducing carbon emission in Wellington

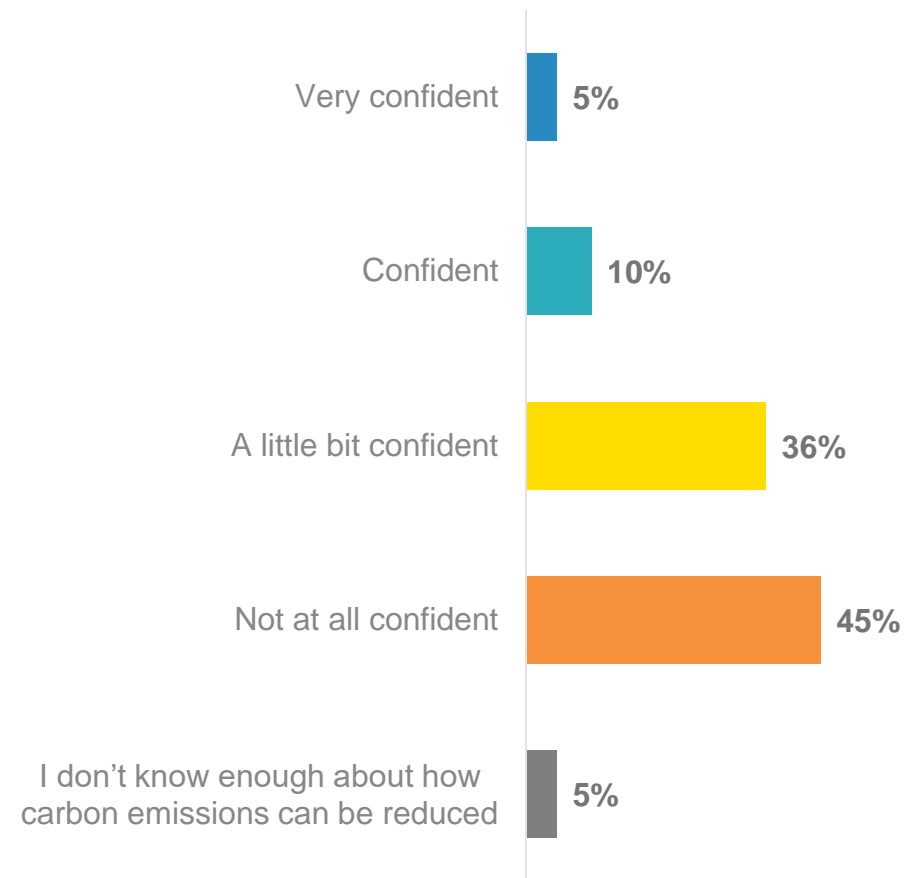
- There was low confidence that enough action is being taken reduce carbon emissions in Wellington (15% confident or very confident).
- A third were a little bit confident, while 45% were not at all confident.
- Total confidence levels (combination of very confident, confident and A little bit confident) have increased from 33% in 2021 to 51% this year.

Demographic differences

- Older respondents were generally more likely to have at least some level of confidence enough was being done (either very confident, confident or a little bit confident) – 18 to 29s 47%, 30 to 44s 43%, 45 to 59s 57% and 60+ 61%.

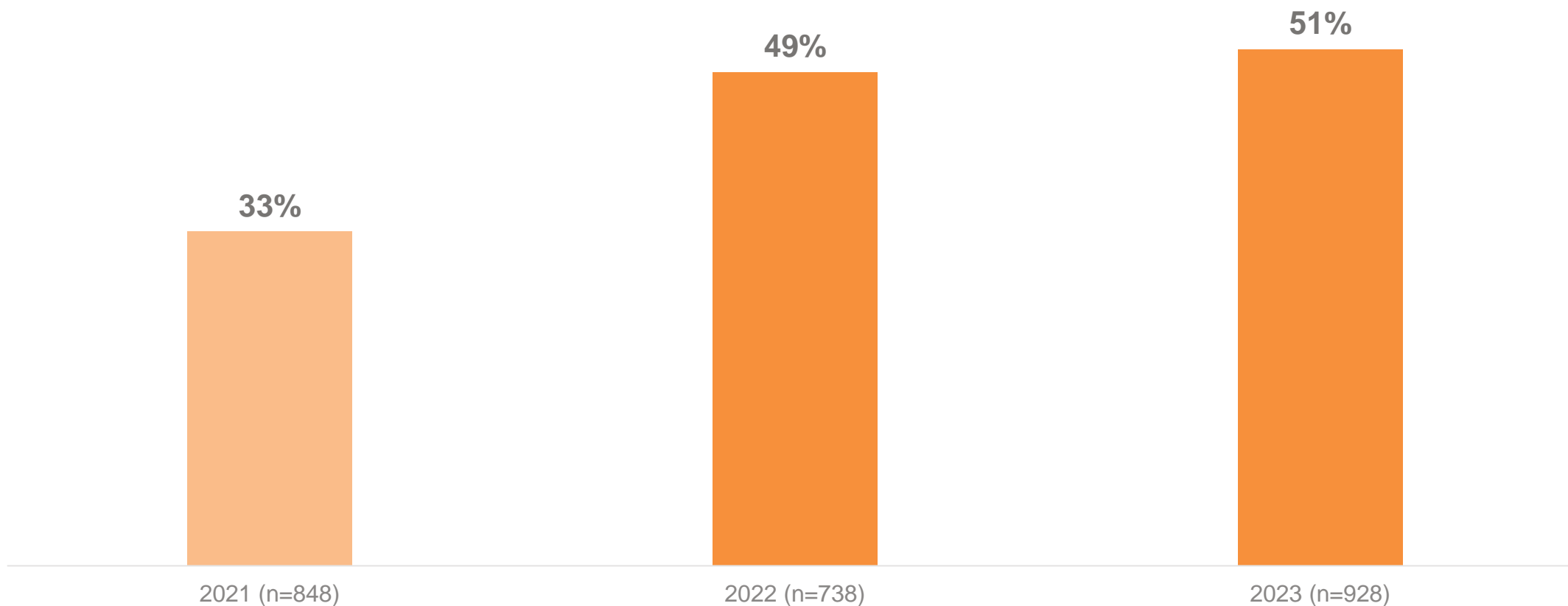


To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to reduce carbon emissions in Wellington



Reducing carbon emission in Wellington – 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** + **A little bit confident**



Base: all respondents

WCC has a responsibility to help residents adapt and reduce emissions

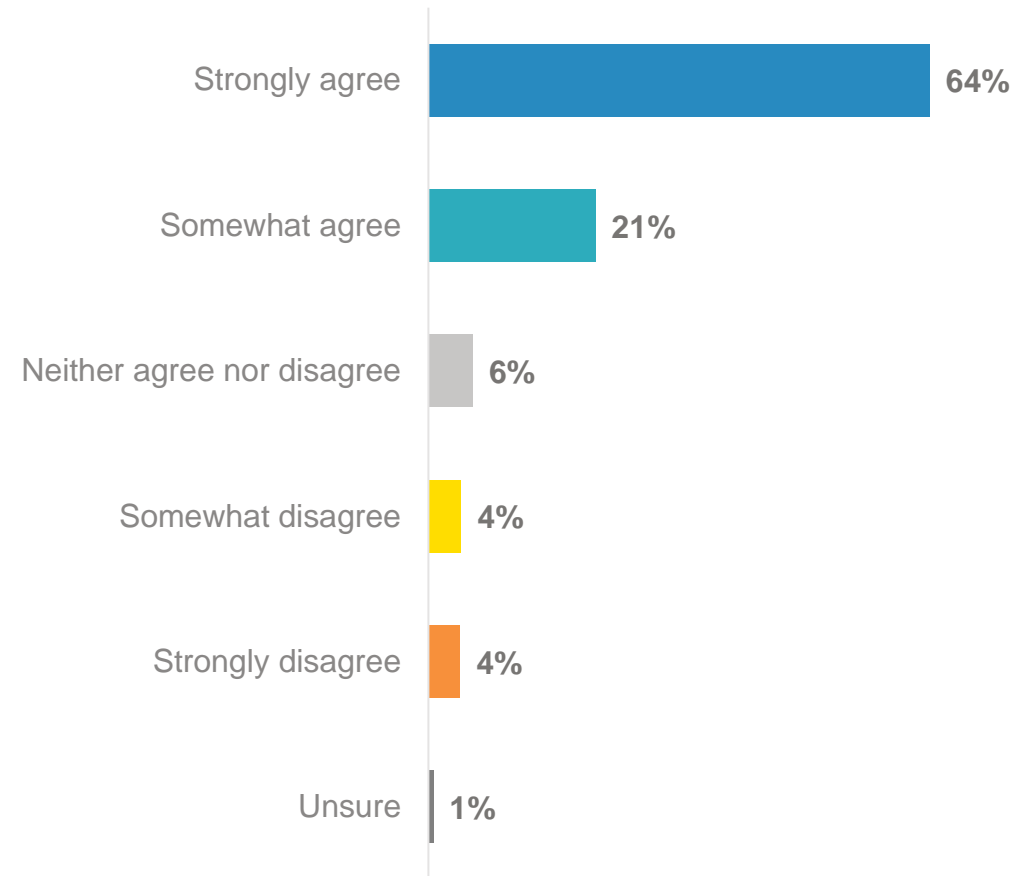
- There was very strong agreement that Wellington City Council has a responsibility to help residents both adapt to climate change and reduce emissions causing climate change.
- Almost two thirds strongly agreed with the statement and a further one in five somewhat agree, less than 10% disagreed.
- This question has not been asked in previous years so no tracking results are available.

Demographic differences

- Female respondents were more likely than Males to agree (either strongly or somewhat) – 91% vs 79%.
- Agreement tended to be higher for younger respondents – 18-29s 92%, 30-44s 87%, 45-59s 80%, 60+ 84%.



How much do you agree or disagree that Wellington City Councils has a responsibility to help residents both adapt to climate change and reduce emissions causing climate change?



Importance of emission reduction actions

- Overall respondents felt it was relatively important for the Council to be prioritising all of the actions listed.
- More than 8 in ten said all bar one of the actions were very or somewhat important. The exception was “providing more dedicated safe cycling and walking routes” – which almost three quarters still thought was very or somewhat important to prioritise.
- If we look specifically at actions rated ‘very important’ for the Council to prioritise “work with Greater Wellington Council and the NZ transport agency to deliver low cost, accessible modern public transport” was a clear favourite among respondents (83% very important compared to 70% for the next highest action).
- The next two top priorities were climate change mitigation related - “Infrastructure investment to adapt to extreme weather events” (70% very important) and “Extreme weather civil defence preparedness” (67% very important)
- The remaining actions were seen as very important by between 46% and 56% of respondents.

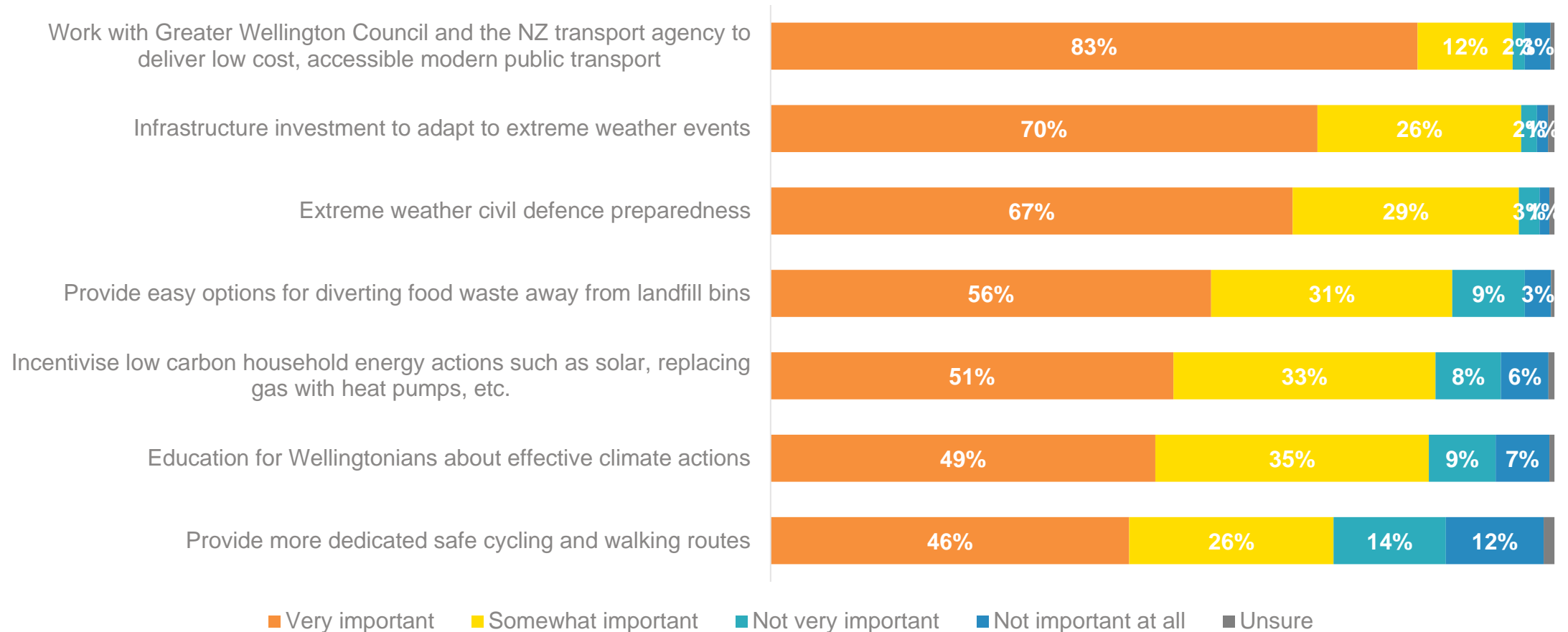
Demographic differences

- Females were generally more likely than males to think all the actions were very important. However the differences were more significant for the following actions:
 - Work with Greater Wellington Council and the NZ transport agency to deliver low cost, accessible modern public transport (89% vs 75%)
 - Extreme weather civil defence preparedness (73% vs 59%)
 - Provide easy options for diverting food waste away from landfill bins (68% vs 44%)
 - Education for Wellingtonians about effective climate actions (56% vs 41%)
- Respondents under 30 were generally more likely to say actions focused on emissions reductions were very important. However, there were no differences by age for the two adaptation actions (infrastructure investment and extreme weather preparedness). The same pattern was observed when comparing renters with homeowners.

Importance of emission reduction actions



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



Realistic options to reduce emissions

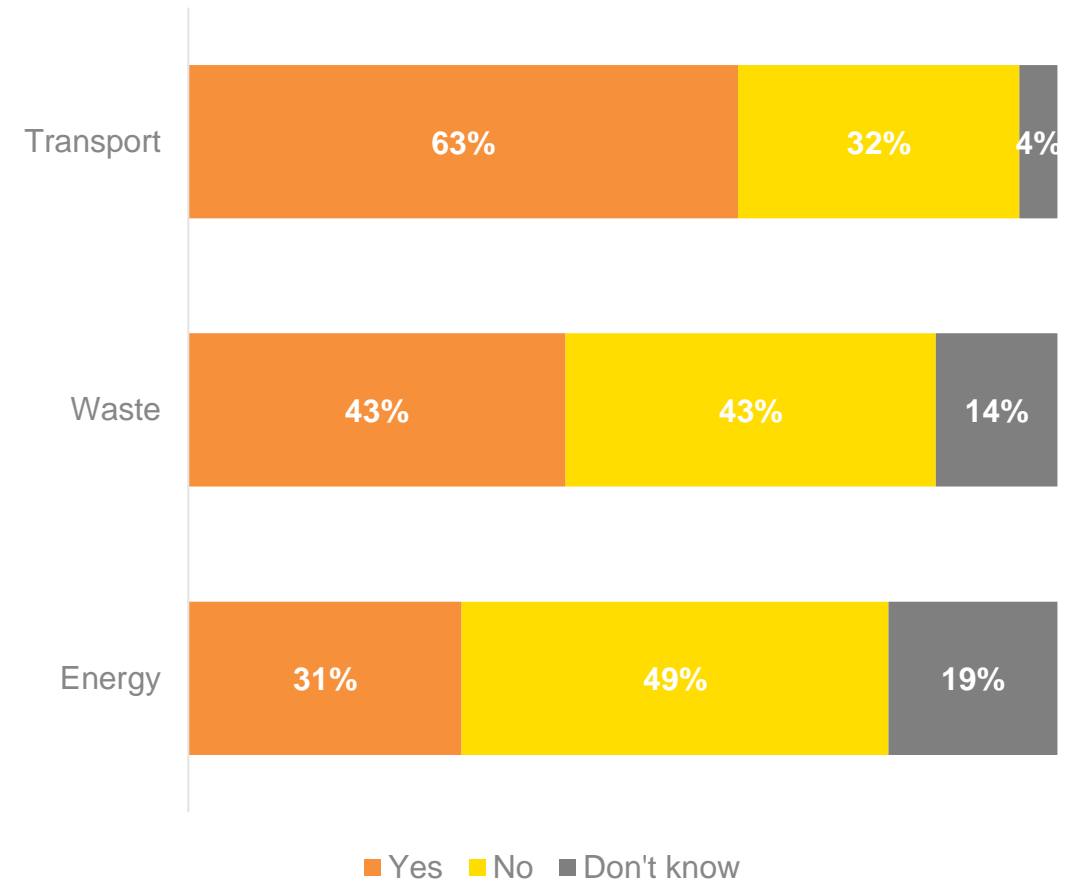
- The majority of respondents believed they did have realistic and affordable options to reduce their transport emissions (63%).
- Less than half thought the same about their waste emissions (43%) and less than a third thought the same about their energy emissions (31%).

Demographic differences

- Respondents who identified as disabled were less likely to say they had realistic and affordable options to reduce their transport emissions (44%).
- Respondents under 30 and renters were both less likely to think they had realistic and affordable options to reduce their waste emissions (24% and 28% respectively) and energy emissions (12% and 18% respectively).
- Respondents from the Lambton ward were less likely to think they had realistic and affordable options to reduce their waste emissions (29%).



Do you believe you have realistic and affordable options to help you reduce your own carbon emissions in the following areas



Personal actions to reduce emissions

- Effective climate change in Wellington can cover a range of areas and as such we have asked residents about their participation in a wide range of climate actions. These actions fit broadly into six categories: Move, Eat, Buy, Live, Advocate and Prepare*
- About half of respondents said they actively choose to only use wood or electricity for heating, cycle or walk or scoot as part of their daily commute or use public transport as part of their daily commute or compost their food waste.
- Further analysis of the question shows that 59% of respondents are actively choosing actions that covered three or more of the categories.

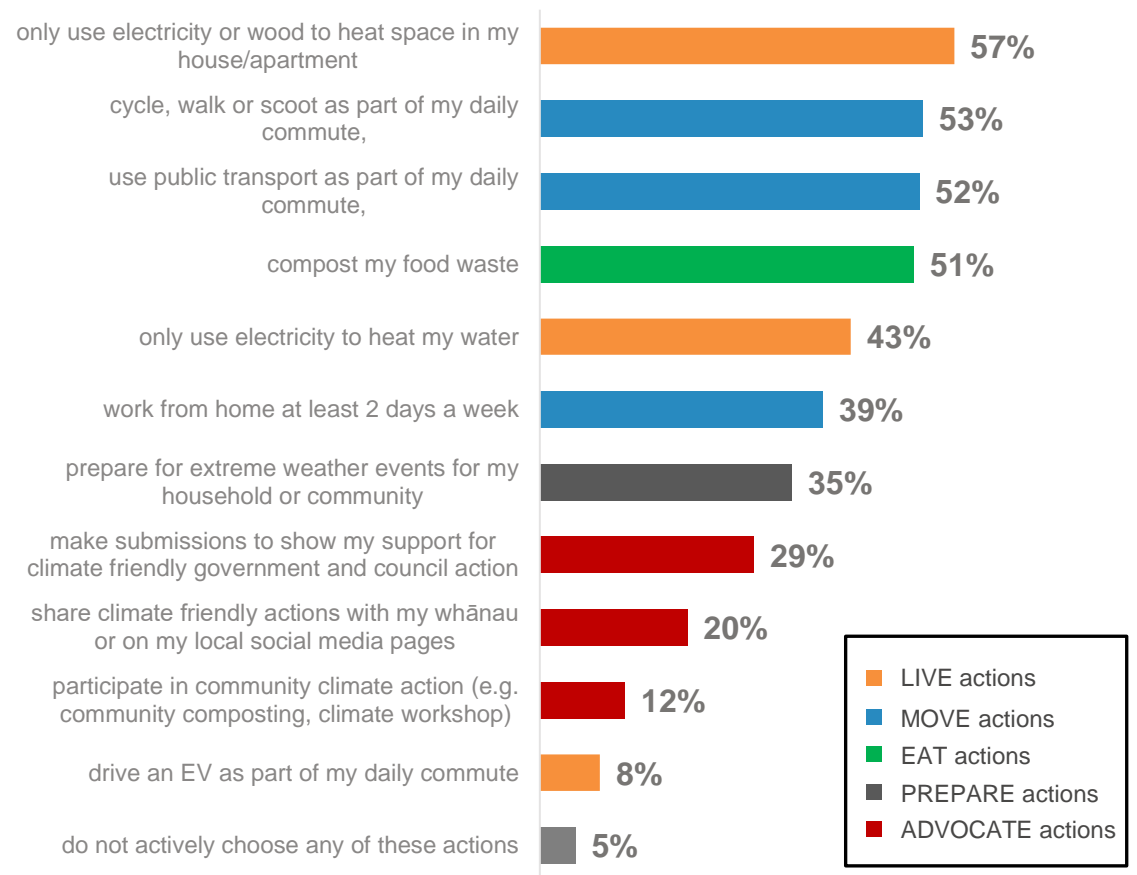
Demographic differences

- Younger respondents (18-29) were more likely to use active modes or public transport as part of their commute, more likely to make submissions or support climate friendly Government or Council action, share climate friendly actions with whānau or social media and participate in community climate action.
- Respondents 60+ were more likely to say they prepare for extreme weather events for their household or community
- Homeowners were more likely to say they compost their food waste and drive an EV as part of their daily commute
- Females were more likely to say they use public transport as part of their daily commute and participate in community climate action.

Note: Most of these categories are covered in the list shown in the graph, but future editions of the survey will have a more exhaustive list covering each of the most effective action in each categories

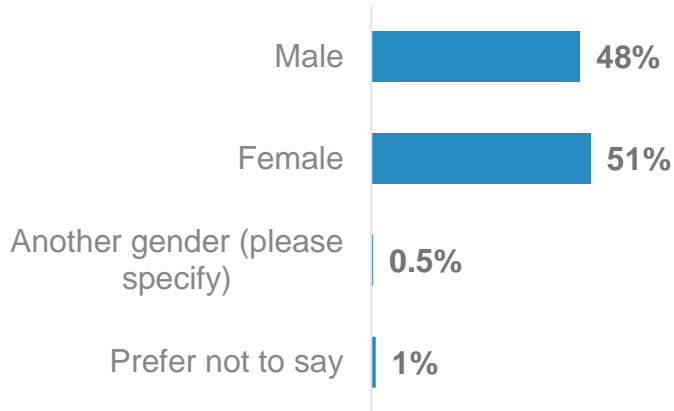


Which of the following climate change actions do you actively choose?
Select as many as relevant. I...

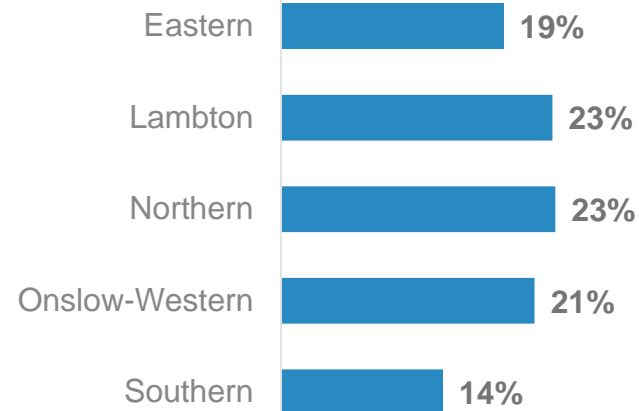


Demographics

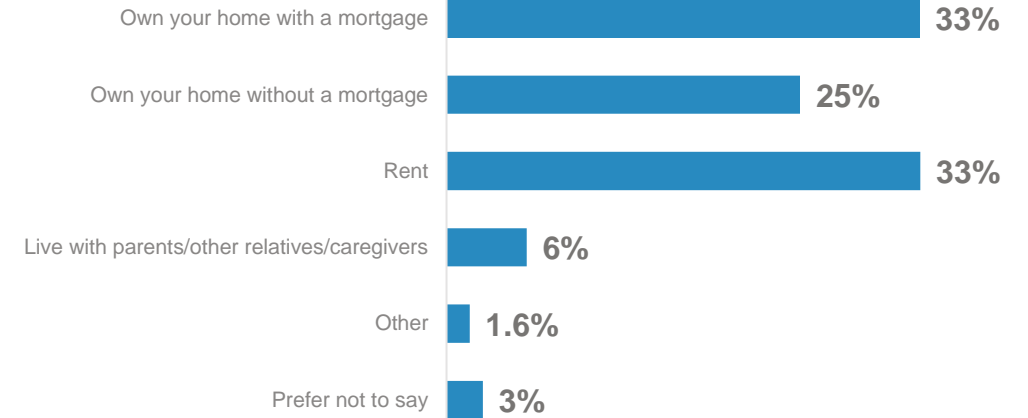
Gender



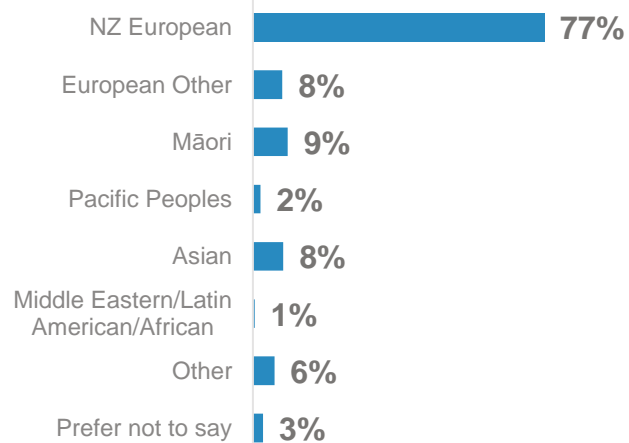
Ward



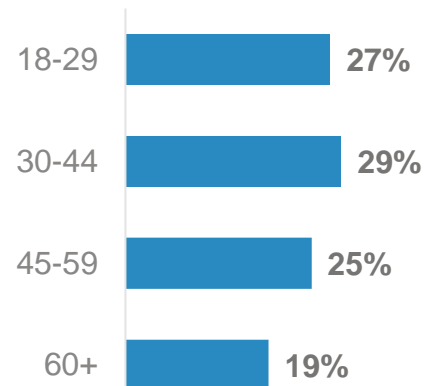
Home ownership



Ethnicity



Age



Identify as disabled

