

Climate Change perceptions

October 2024

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 3rd September to the 20th September 2024.
- 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 827 people completed the survey. The margin of error for a sample of this size at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.4\%$.
 - In total 2023 survey 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 2023 survey

- There have been a few changes in the survey itself compared to previous years, so comparisons are not possible for every result. However, where comparisons are possible there has been minimal movement compared to 2023. 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.
- One result that has trended down since first asked back in 2021 is respondent beliefs about when emissions reductions need to happen – the proportion who said “significant reductions right away” or “start now and ramp up” has fallen from 91% in 2021 to 82% this year. This is still a very strong majority of respondents in favour of immediate action – but the trend is worth monitoring moving forward.

Key 2024 results

- **Climate change impacts**
 - Most respondents (86%) said they understood the impacts climate change could have on Wellington “very well” or “fairly well”.
 - Eight in ten respondents believe that the negative effects of climate change were already being felt in Wellington.
 - But only one in ten were very confident or confident enough action was being taken to prepare Wellington for the effects of climate change.
 - There was very strong agreement (86%) that WCC had a responsibility to help residents prepare for the impacts of climate change.
- **Emissions reduction**
 - As noted above, eight in ten respondents believed that significant emissions reductions needed to happen right away or needed to start now and ramp up.
 - Just under one in five said they were confident enough action was being taken to reduce carbon emissions in Wellington.
 - Eight in ten agreed that WCC has a responsibility to help residents reduce emissions.

Key findings

Key 2024 results cont.

- **Climate actions**

- All of the emissions reduction's actions asked about were seen to be very or somewhat important for the Council to prioritise by the large majority of respondents.
- Looking at the "very important" rating for each action – working with GWRC and Waka Kotahi to deliver low cost and accessible public transport was the clear favourite among respondents.
- When asked about personal climate actions, more than eight in ten respondents said they were doing at least one action that fell into each of the "shopping, "moving around" and “electrifying my home” categories.
- Between a half and two-thirds said they were doing at least one action that fell into each of the "eating", "being prepared" and "enabling change" categories.
- About four in five claimed to be doing actions covering between four and six categories.
- Between a half and a third of respondents believed they did have realistic and affordable options to reduce their emissions relating to eating, moving around and shopping.
- Less than half thought the same about their emissions in the “electrifying my home” category.

Climate Change impacts

Knowledge of climate change impacts

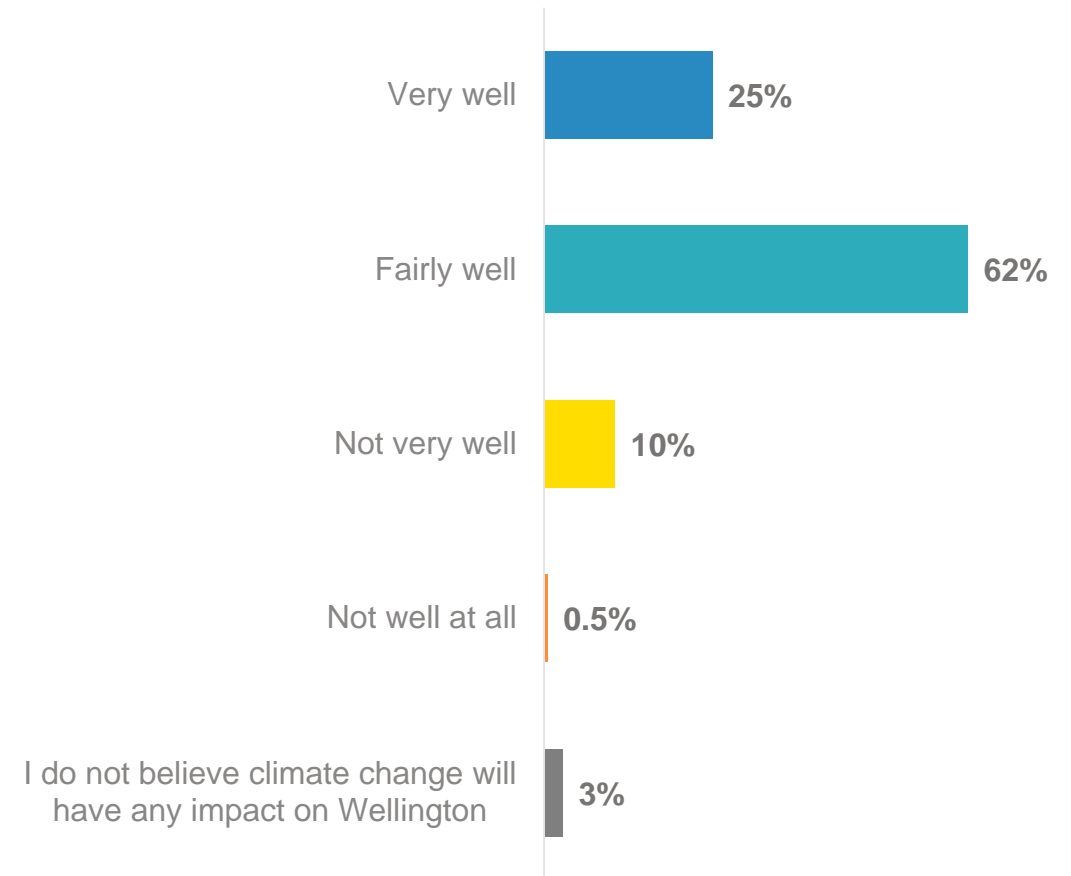
- Respondents to this survey claimed to have a good understanding of the impact climate change could have on Wellington.
- One in four respondents claimed to understand the potential impacts of climate change very well, a further 62% said they understood them fairly well.
- Only one in ten said they did not understand the impacts very well or at all.
- The results have been broadly similar overtime with between 84% and 89% saying they understand the climate change impacts very well or fairly well over the four editions of the survey.

Demographic differences

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



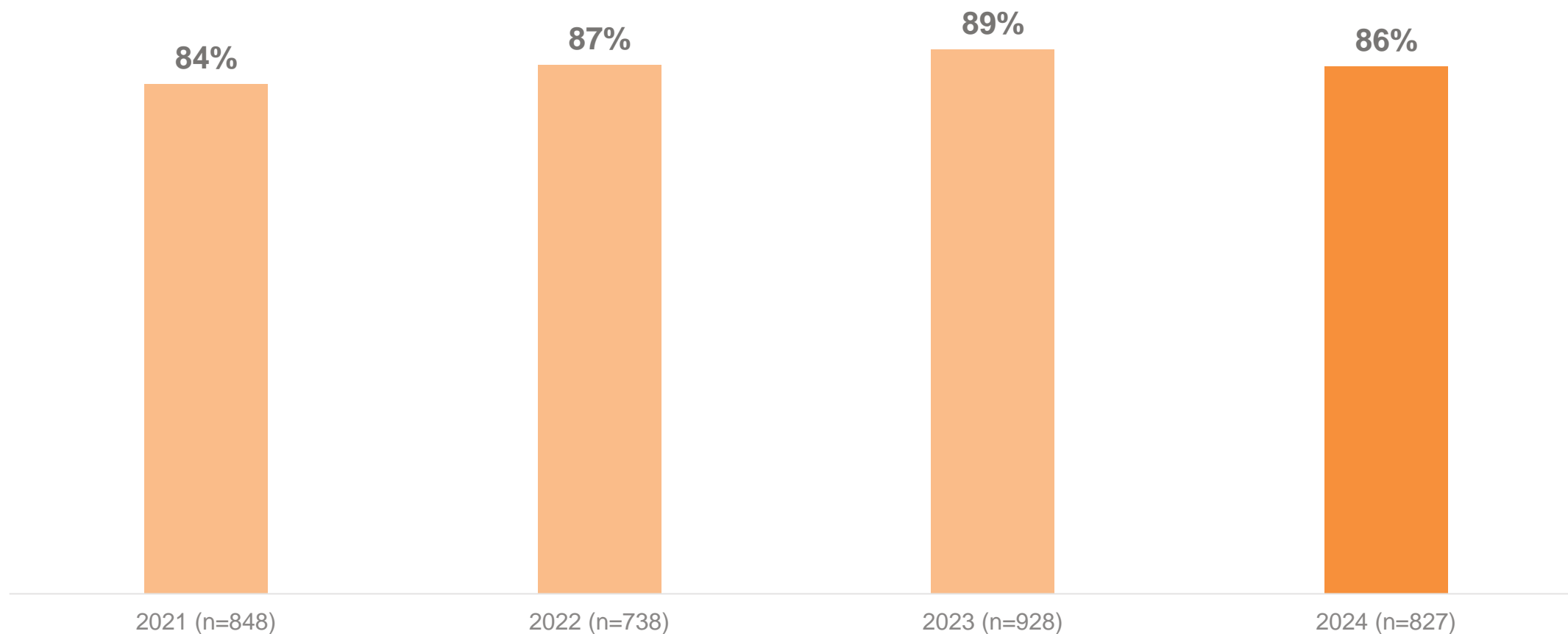
How well do you think you understand climate change and the impacts it could have on Wellington?



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

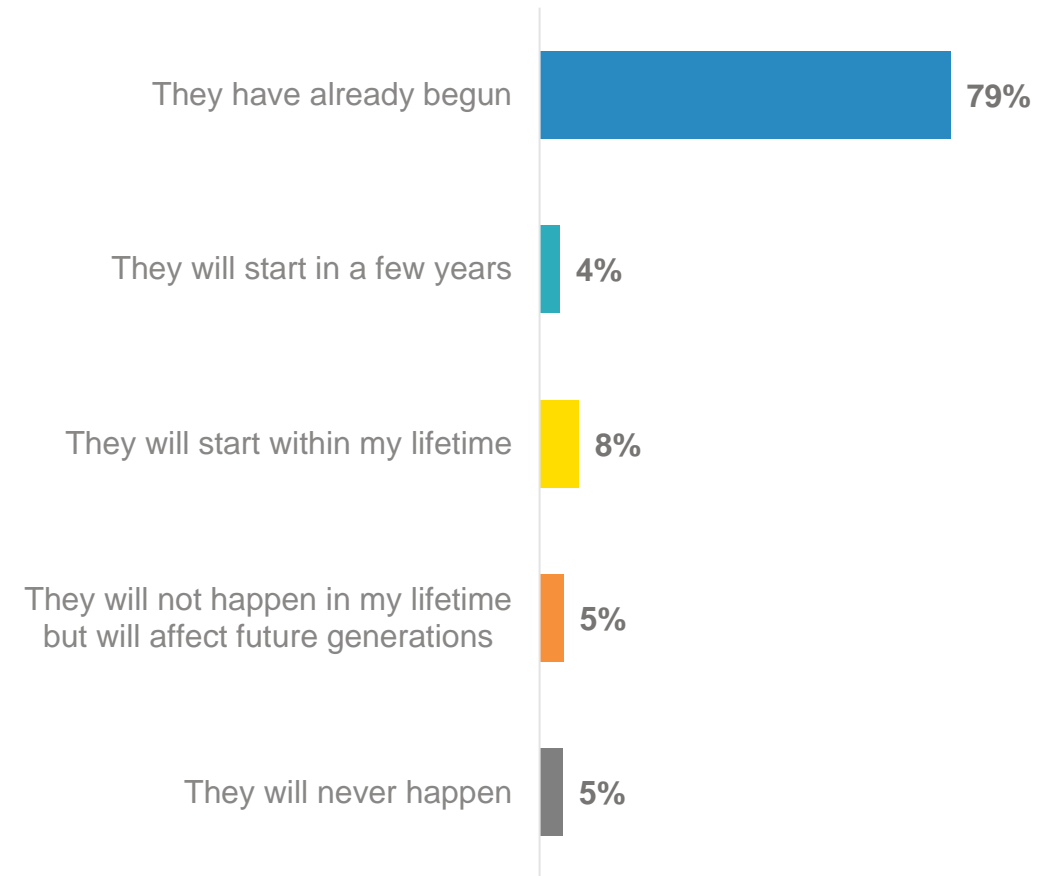
Views on when climate change impacts will be felt

- 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 have been largely unchanged over the four editions of the survey

Demographic differences

- Female respondents were more likely than Males to say that the effects have already begun (84% vs 74%).
- Respondents from Paekawakawa (Southern Ward) were more likely to say the effects has already begun.

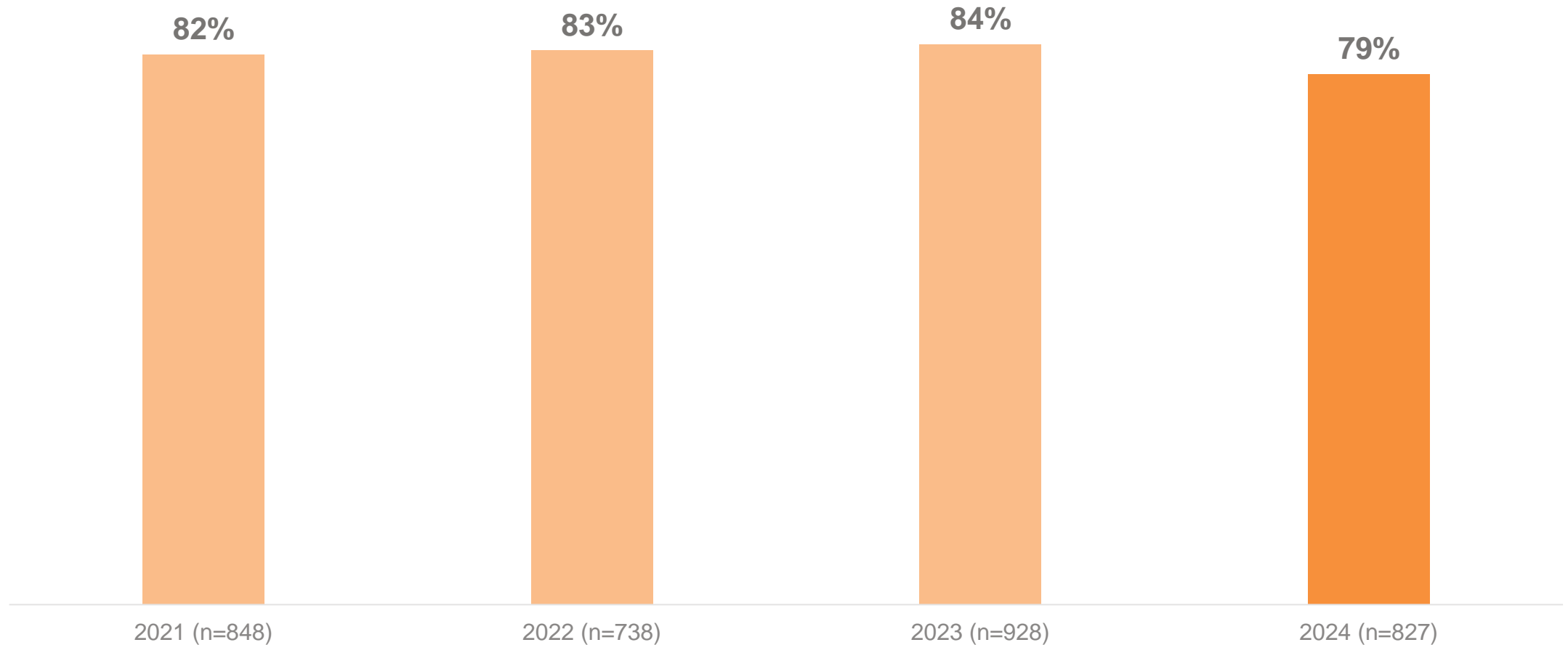
? | *In your opinion, when will the negative effects of climate change happen in Wellington city?*



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

Preparing for impacts of climate change

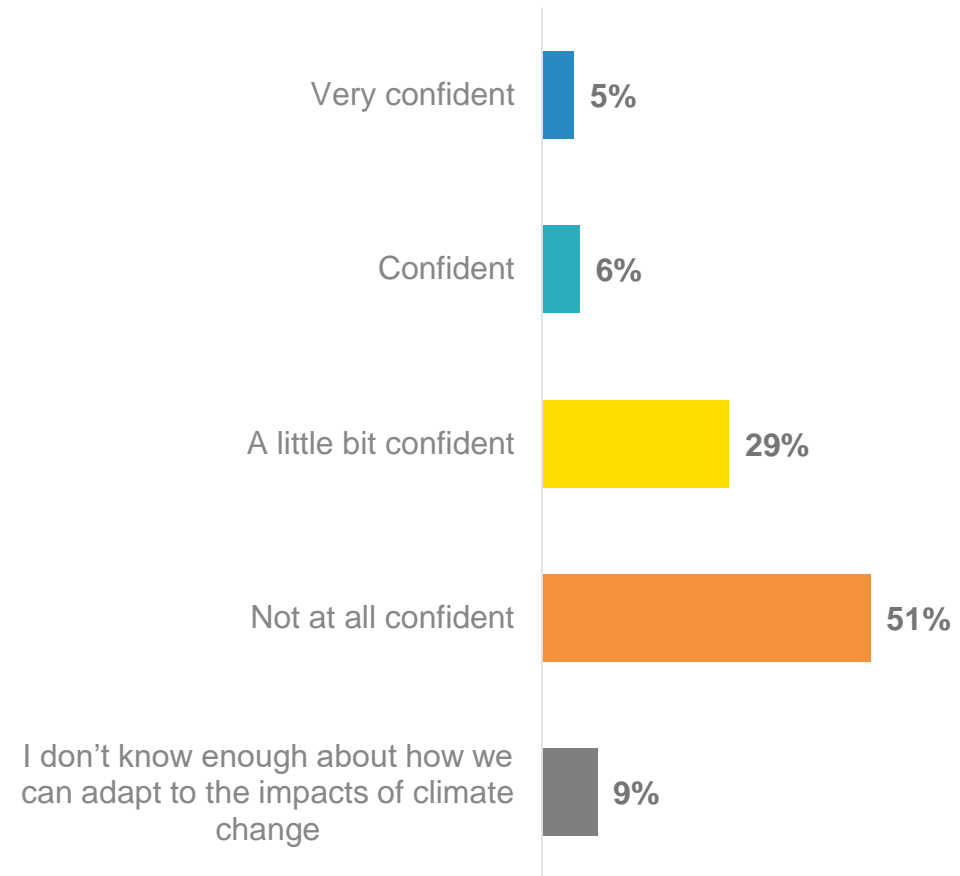
- There was very little confidence that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change (approximately one in 10 confident or very confident).
- However, over a quarter were a little bit confident,
- Half were not confident at all.
- Levels for “a little bit confident” increased compared to prior surveys, however in prior surveys the answer option was labelled “somewhat confident”. This was changed for consistency with a separate confidence question in the survey (in the emissions reduction section).

Demographic differences

- Female respondents were less likely to show at least a little bit of confidence (34% vs 47% for males). This was partially due to them being more likely to say they did not know enough about how we can adapt (12% vs 5% for males).
- Renters were less likely than homeowners to be very confident or confident (5% compared to 14%).



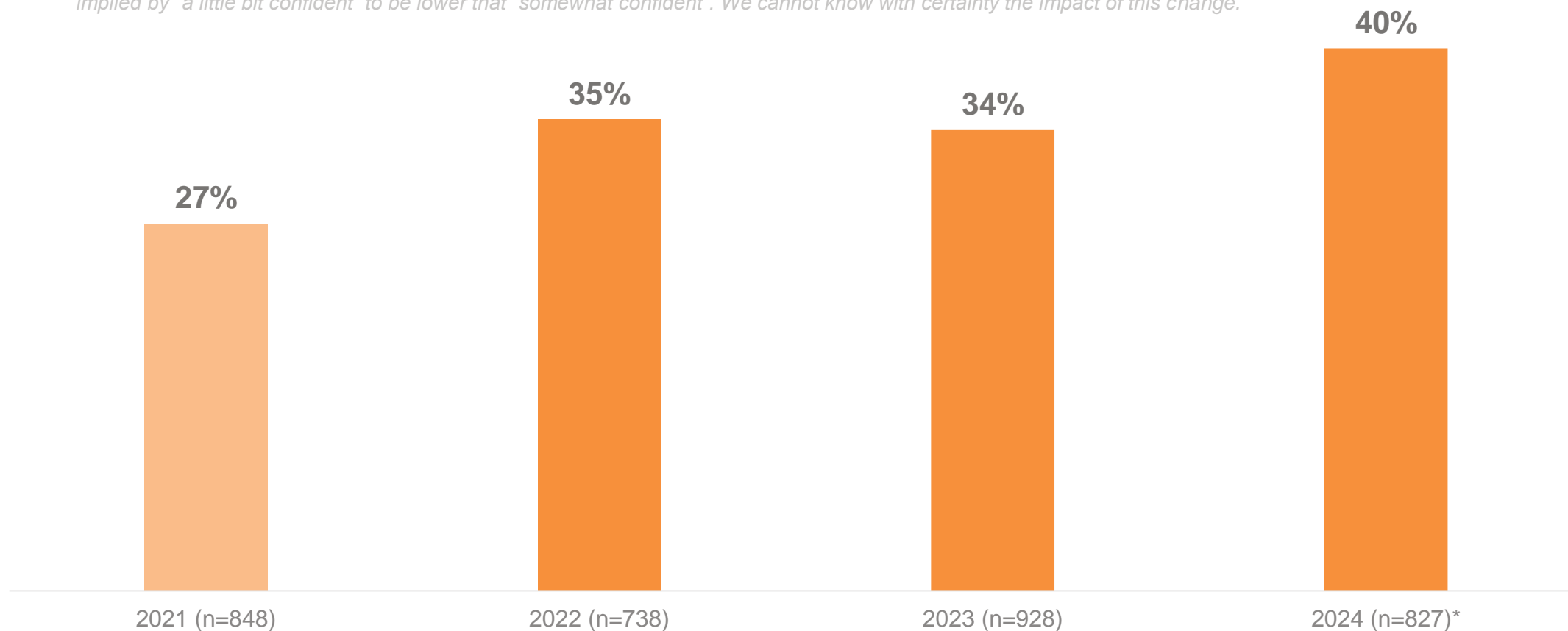
To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change?



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 + a little bit confident***

**Note: scale wording change in 2024 to align with a similar confidence question within the survey (relating to emissions reduction) – the option “somewhat confident” changed to “a little bit confident”. This may have resulted in an artificial increase in the measure shown on this page if people perceived the level of confidence implied by “a little bit confident” to be lower than “somewhat confident”. We cannot know with certainty the impact of this change.*



WCC has a responsibility to help residents prepare for climate impacts

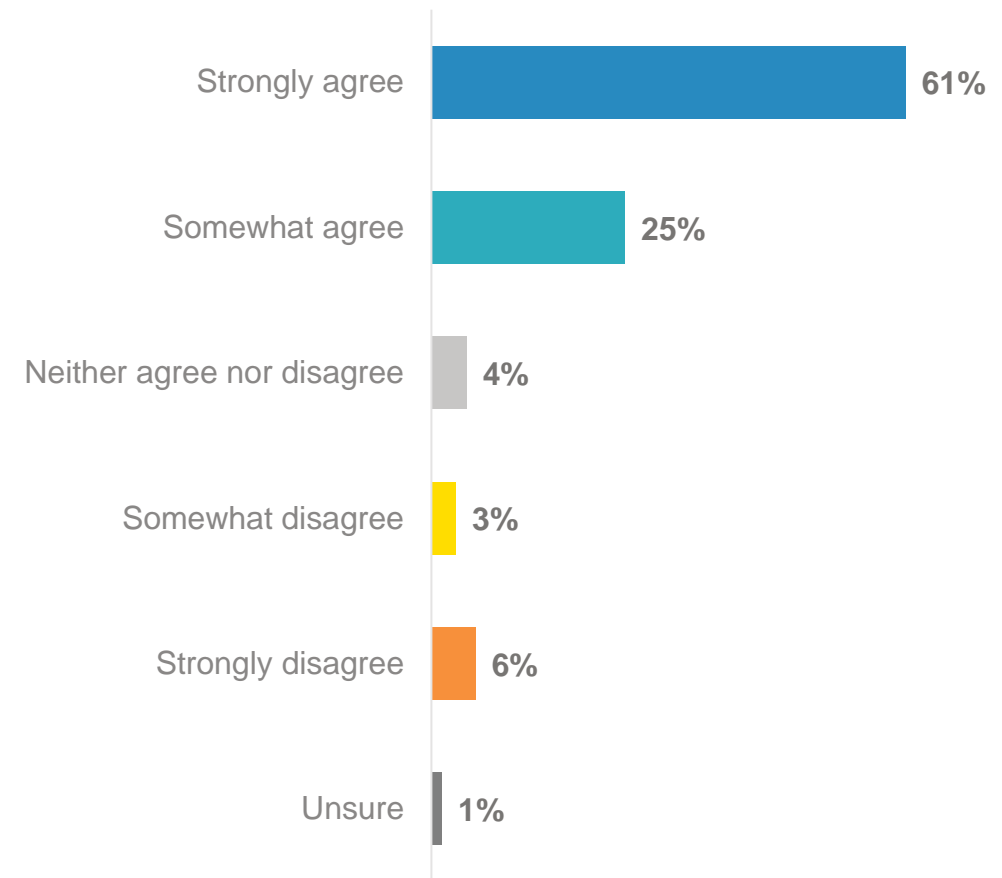
- There was very strong agreement that Wellington City Council has a responsibility to help residents prepare for the impacts of climate change.
- Almost two thirds strongly agreed with the statement and a further one in four somewhat agree, less than 10% disagreed.
- This question has not been asked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

Demographic differences

- Levels of strong agreement were higher among respondents aged 18-29 and renters (72% and 73% respectively).



How much do you agree or disagree that Wellington City Council has a responsibility to help residents prepare for the impacts of climate change?



Emissions reduction

Reducing the city's carbon emissions

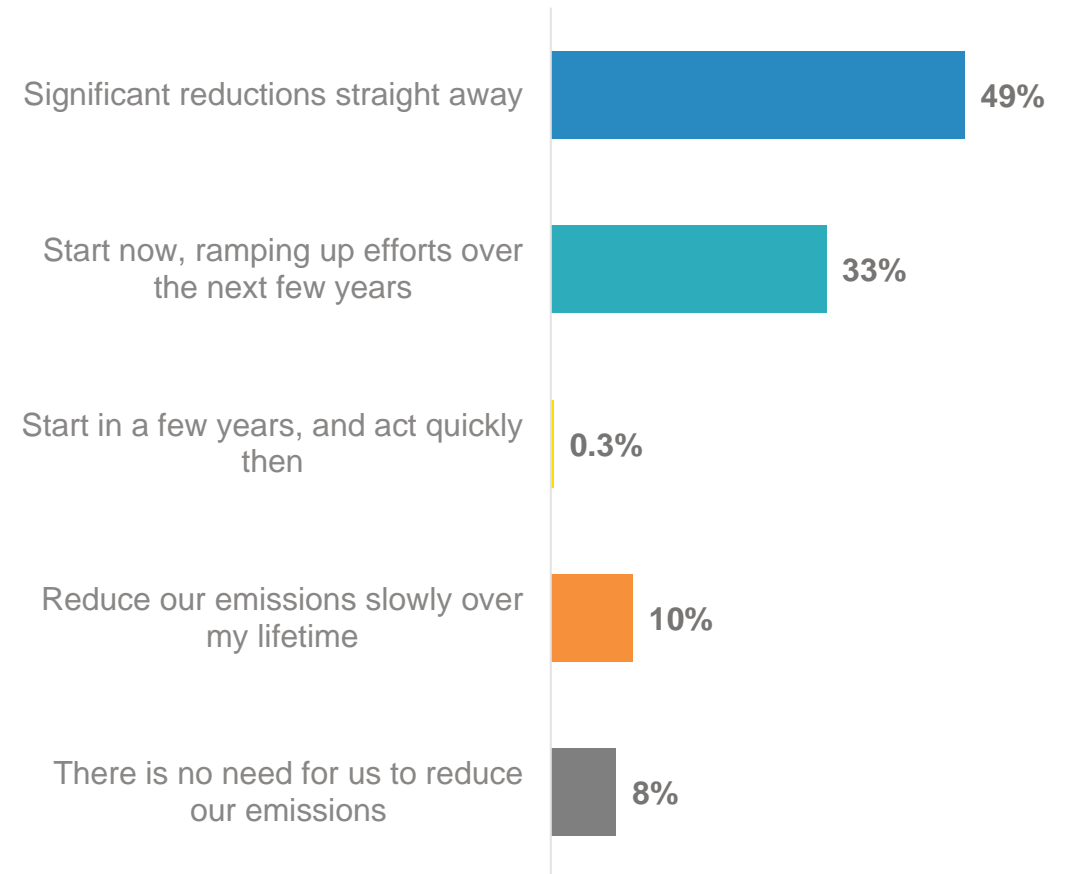
- 82% of respondents believed that we need to act now to start reducing Wellington's carbon emissions.
 - About half believed we should make significant reductions straight away
 - A third thought we should start now but ramp up efforts over the next few years.

Demographic differences

- Females were more likely than males to say significant reductions should be made straight away (88% vs 75%).
- Younger respondents were also generally more likely to say significant reductions should be made straight away (18-29: 91%, 30-44: 83%, 45-59: 76%, 60+: 78%).
- Renters were more likely than homeowners to say significant reductions should be made straight away (91% vs 79%).



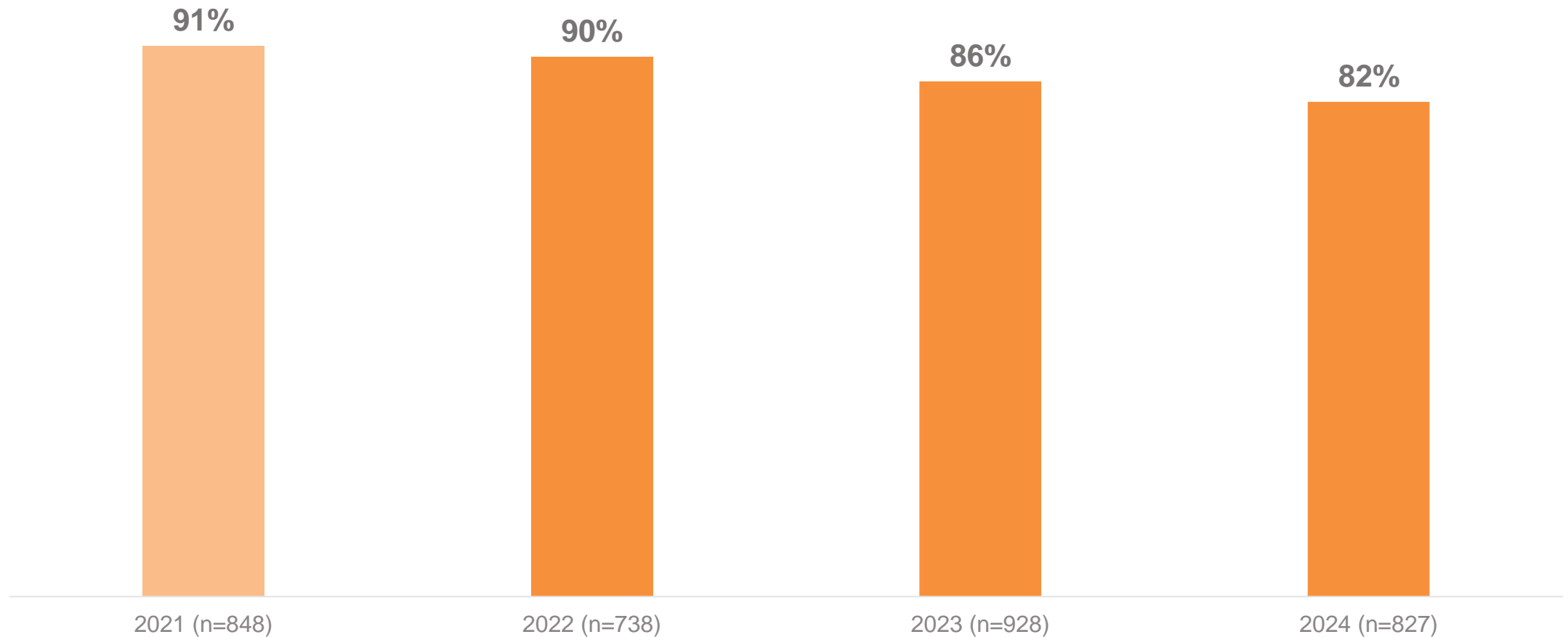
In your opinion, how quickly do we need to act to reduce Wellington city's carbon emissions?



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



Reducing carbon emission in Wellington

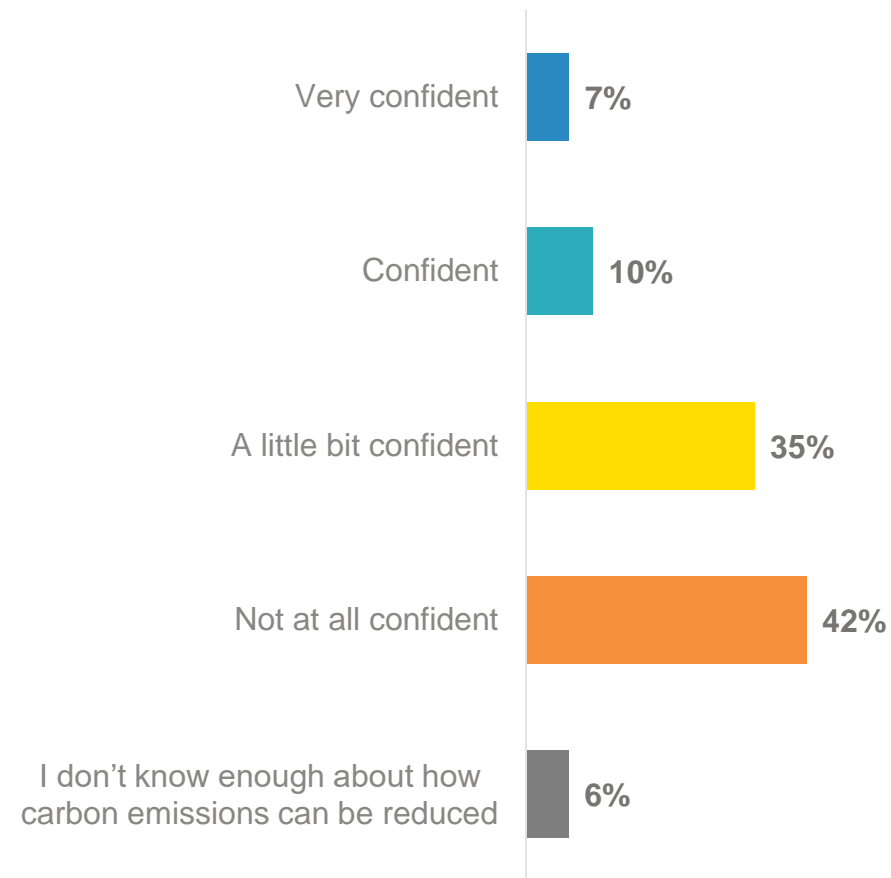
- There was low confidence that enough action is being taken reduce carbon emissions in Wellington (17% confident or very confident).
- About a third were a little bit confident, while 42% were not at all confident.
- Total confidence levels (combination of very confident, confident and a little bit confident) have remained steady at around 50% over the last three surveys.

Demographic differences

- Levels of “total confidence” were broadly similar across the demographic groups. However, males were more likely than females to say they were **very confident or somewhat confident** that enough emissions reduction action was being taken (25% vs 9%).

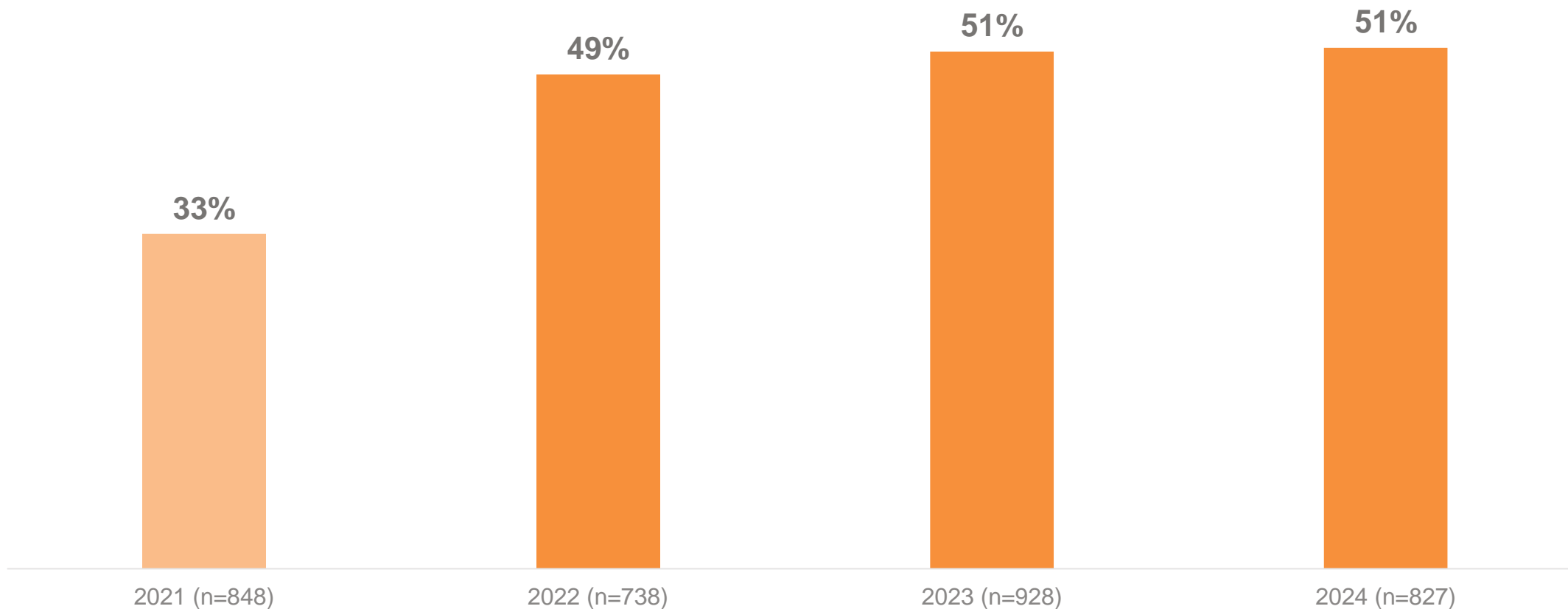


To what extent do you feel confident that enough action is being taken to reduce carbon emissions in Wellington



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 reduce emissions

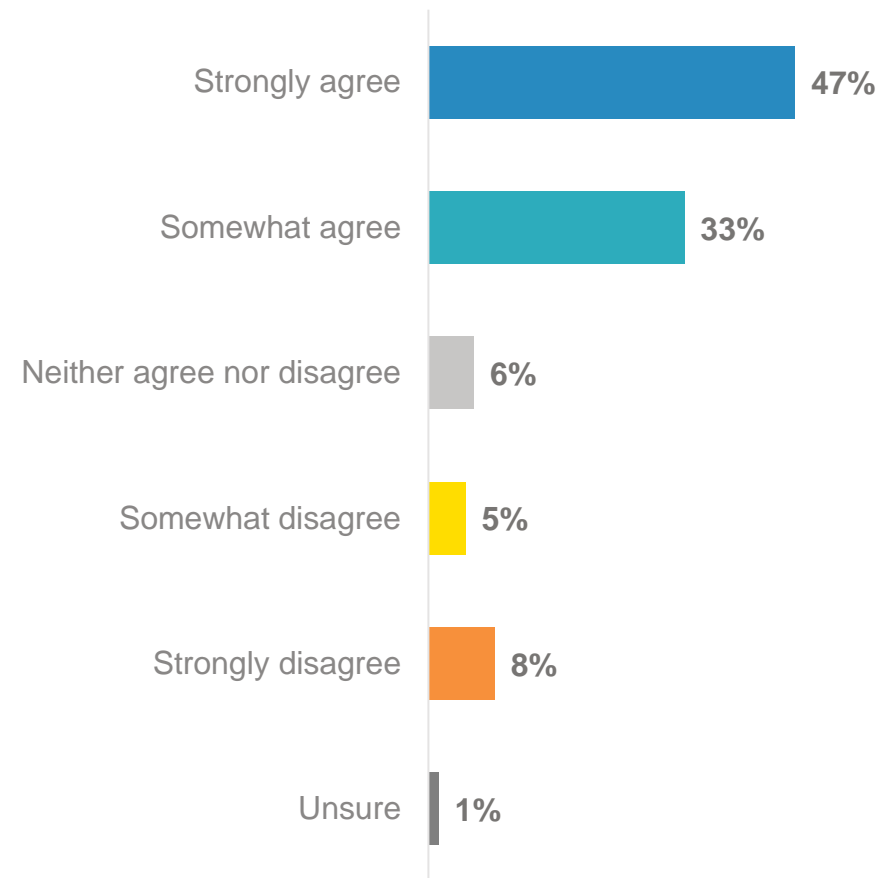
- There was very strong agreement that Wellington City Council has a responsibility to help residents reduce emissions, with eight in 10 strongly agreeing or agreeing.
 - Total agreement was similar to the question presented earlier that asked about WCC responsibility to help residents prepare for climate impacts – however the level of “strongly agree” was lower and “somewhat agree” higher.
- Just over one in 10 disagreed that WCC had a responsibility in this space.
- This question has not been asked in previous years, so no tracking results are available.

Demographic differences

- The question presented earlier about WCC responsibility to help residents prepare for climate impacts had broadly similar levels of total agreement across the demographic groups.
- For this question there was much more demographic variability with female respondents, respondents from Paekawakawa, aged 18-29 and renters all more likely to agree that WCC had a responsibility to help residents reduce emissions.
- Disagreement was higher for male respondents and homeowners.



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



Climate actions

Importance of emission reduction actions

- Overall respondents felt it was relatively important for the Council to be prioritising all of the actions listed.
- Around 8 in ten or more said all bar one of the actions were very or somewhat important. The exception was “providing more dedicated safe cycling and walking routes” – which over two thirds said was very or somewhat important to prioritise.
- If we look specifically at ‘very important’ ratings for each action “work with Greater Wellington Council and the NZ transport agency to deliver low cost, accessible modern public transport” was a clear favourite among respondents (84% 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” (68% very important)
- The remaining actions were seen as very important by between 38% and 52% of respondents.
- Compared to 2023, levels of “very important” ratings have remained mostly similar the main exception being an 11% drop in “education for Wellington about effective climate actions”.

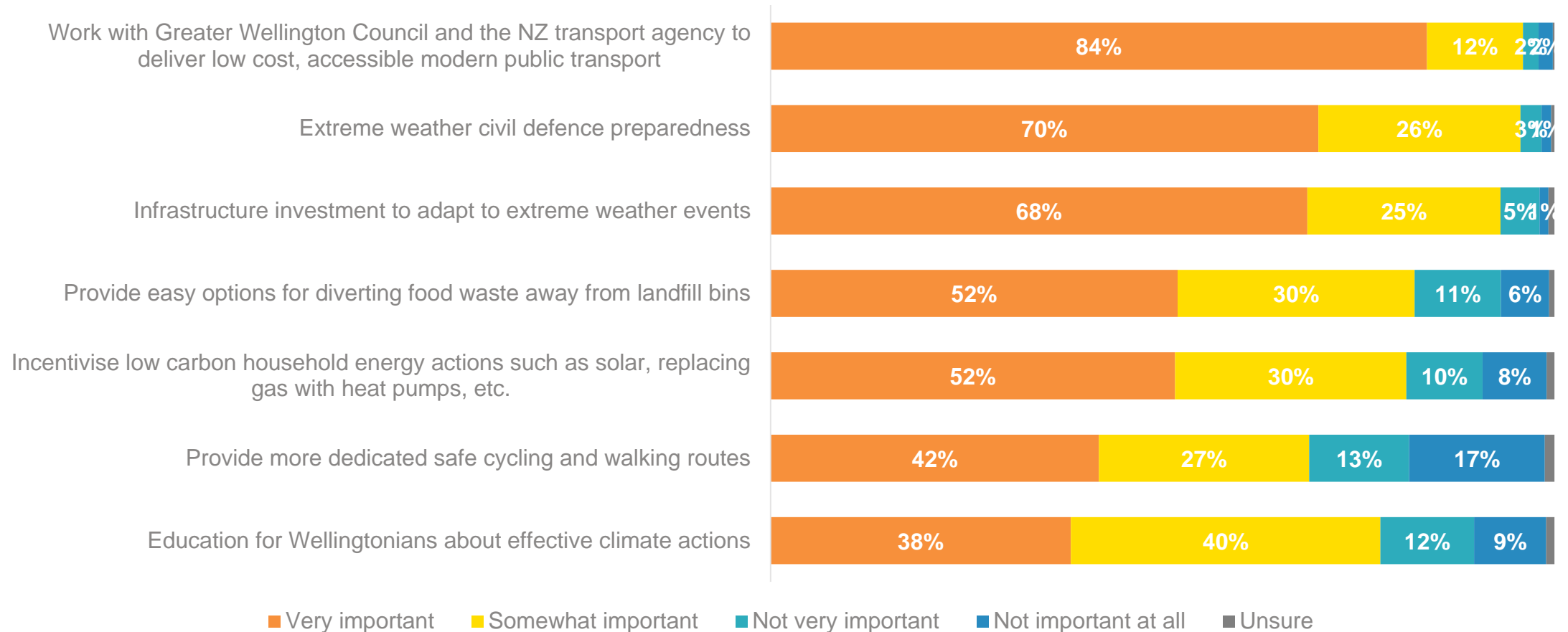
Demographic differences

- Females were generally more likely than males to think all the actions were very important. Their “very important” ratings were approximately 10-15 percentage point higher than males for all actions except “providing more dedicated safe cycling and walking routes” where the very important rating was similar for both groups (45% for females, 39% for males).
- “Very important” ratings were generally higher for younger respondents for delivering public transport, providing cycling and walking routes and diverting waste (renters were also had higher ratings than homeowners on these same three actions).
- The age differences did not exist for the mitigation actions like civil defence preparation and infrastructure investment to adapt to extreme weather. There were also no age differences for incentivising low carbon household energy actions and public education about effective actions.
- Respondents from Paekawakawa (Southern Ward) gave higher importance ratings across a few of the actions including providing cycling and walking routes, incentivising low carbon energy for households, diverting food waste and education.

Importance of emission reduction actions



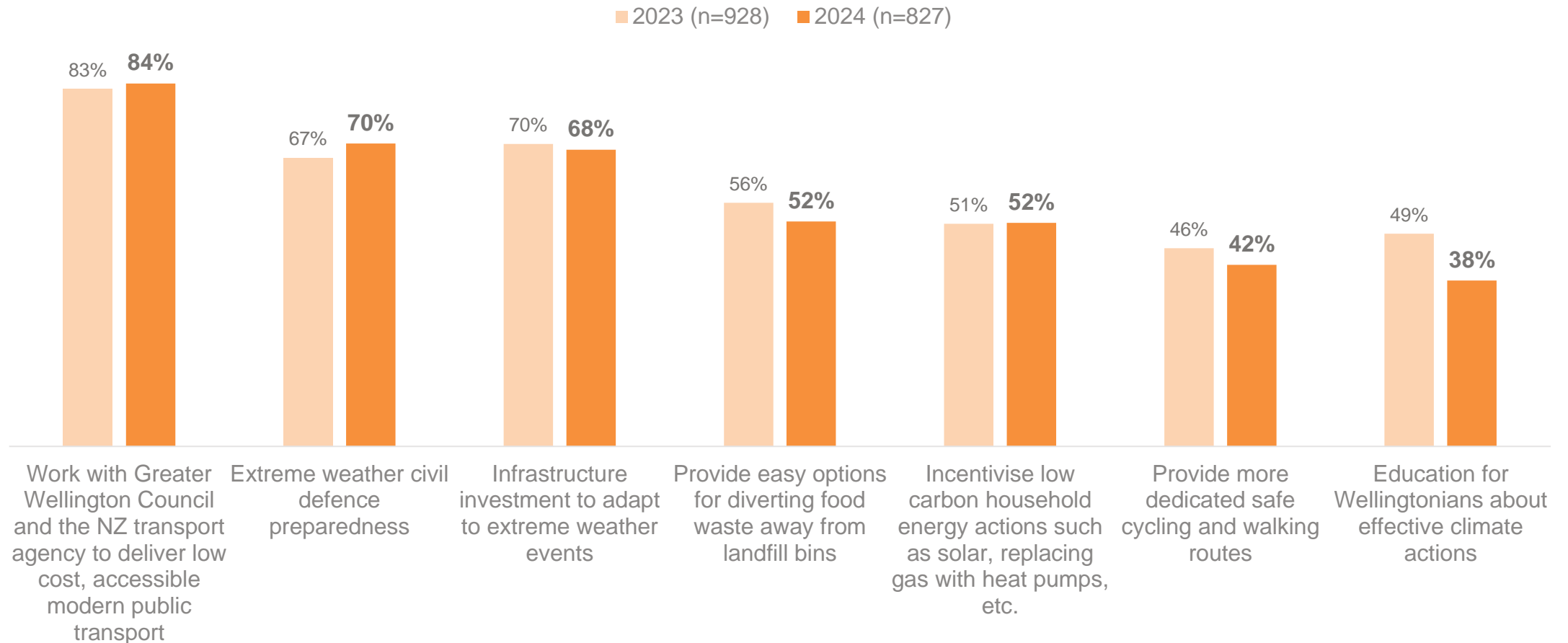
How important do you believe it is for the Council to prioritise the following actions



Importance of emission reduction actions



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

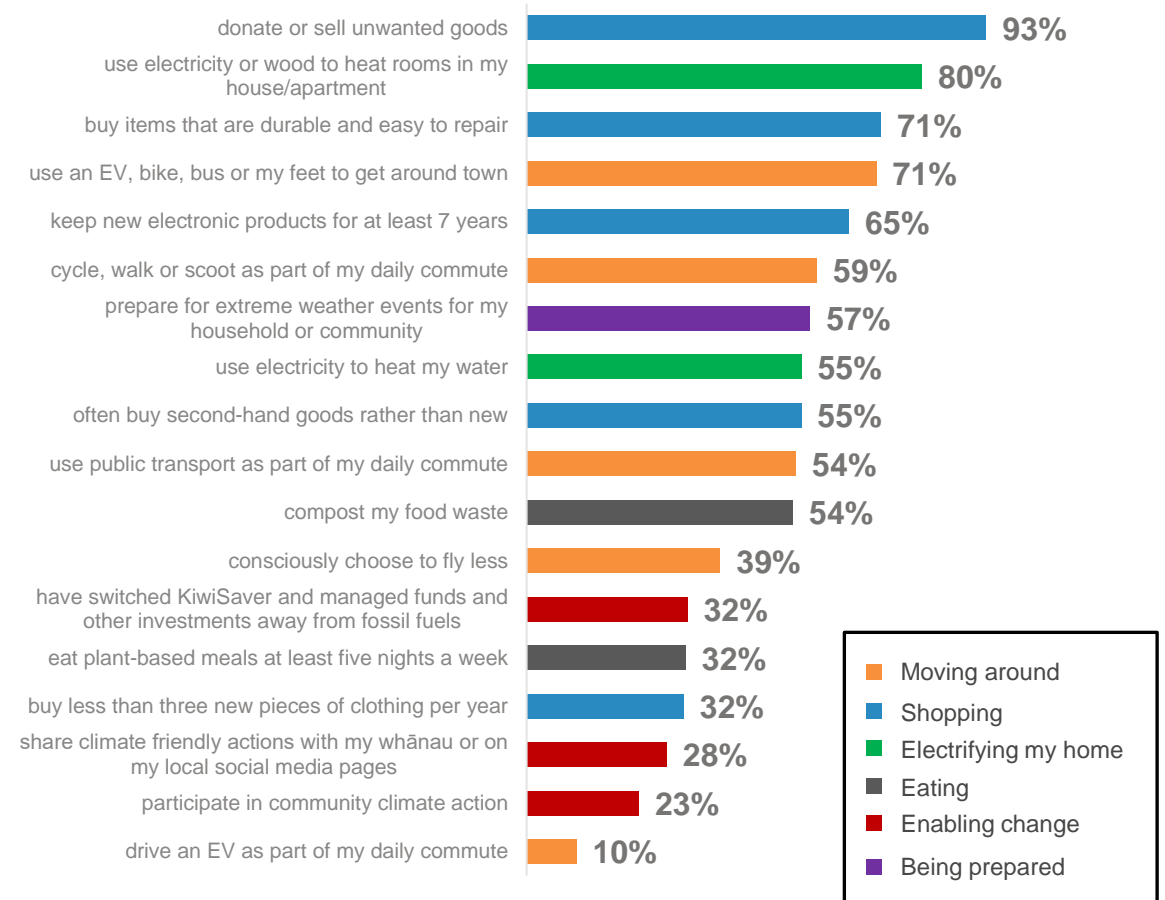


Personal actions to reduce emissions

- 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:
 - moving around
 - shopping
 - electrifying homes
 - eating
 - enabling change
 - being prepared.
- Around 7 in ten or more claimed to do a range of actions falling into the move, shopping and electrifying their home categories.
- Over half of respondents claimed to be actively choosing to do 11 of the 18 actions – these eleven actions covered all six of the climate action categories.
- The next slide presents the proportions of respondents who have done at least one action within each of the action categories.



Which of the following climate change actions do you actively choose?
YES



Personal actions to reduce emissions – grouped by categories

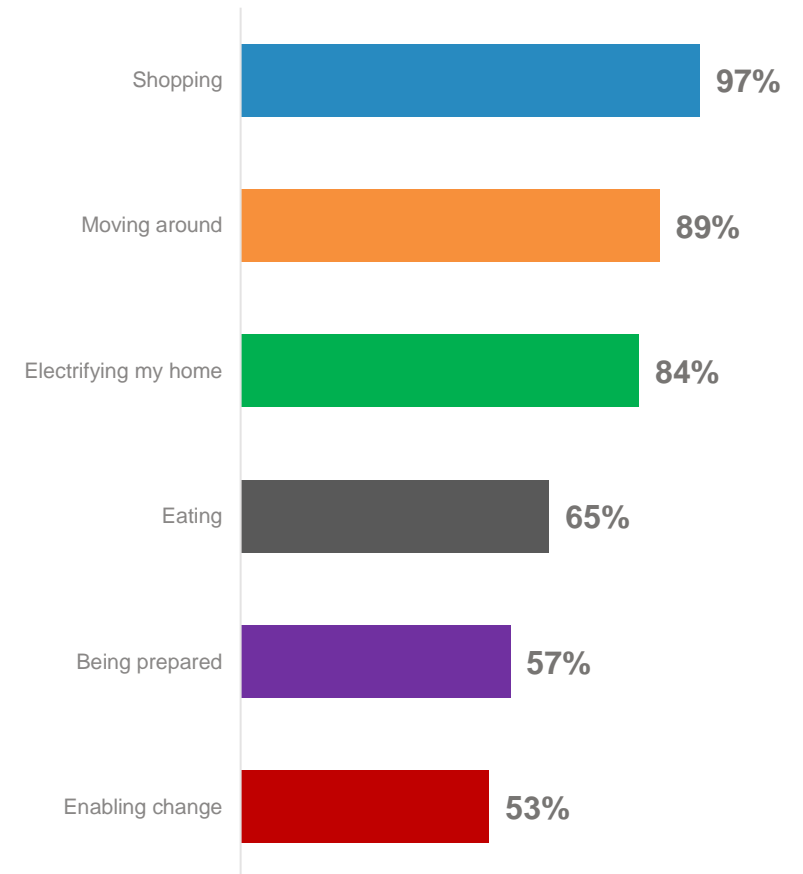
- Almost all respondents claimed to actively choose at least one action under the “shopping” category (blue bars on the previous slides).
- A large majority of respondents also claimed to choose at least one action under the “moving around” and “electrifying my home” categories.
- The “eating”, “being prepared” and “enabling change” categories were less actively chosen by respondents, however more than half claimed to do at least one action under each of the categories.
- Further analysis of these claimed actions by respondents showed that almost all respondents (barring two people) claimed to be doing actions in at least one of the six categories.
- About one in five claimed to be doing actions covering between one and three categories.
- About four in five claimed to be doing actions covering between four and six categories.

Demographic differences

- Respondents from Pukehīnau (Lambton Ward) were more likely to claim to be doing at least one action under the “moving around” category. The same was also true for respondents aged 18-29 and renters.
 - These same three groups were less likely to claim to be doing the “being prepared” action.
- Homeowners were more likely to claim to be doing the “being prepared” action.
- Respondents from Paekawakawa (Southern Ward) were more likely to claim to be doing at least one action under the “enabling change” category. This was also true for respondents who are renters.



Which of the following climate change actions do you actively choose?
% choosing at least one action under each category



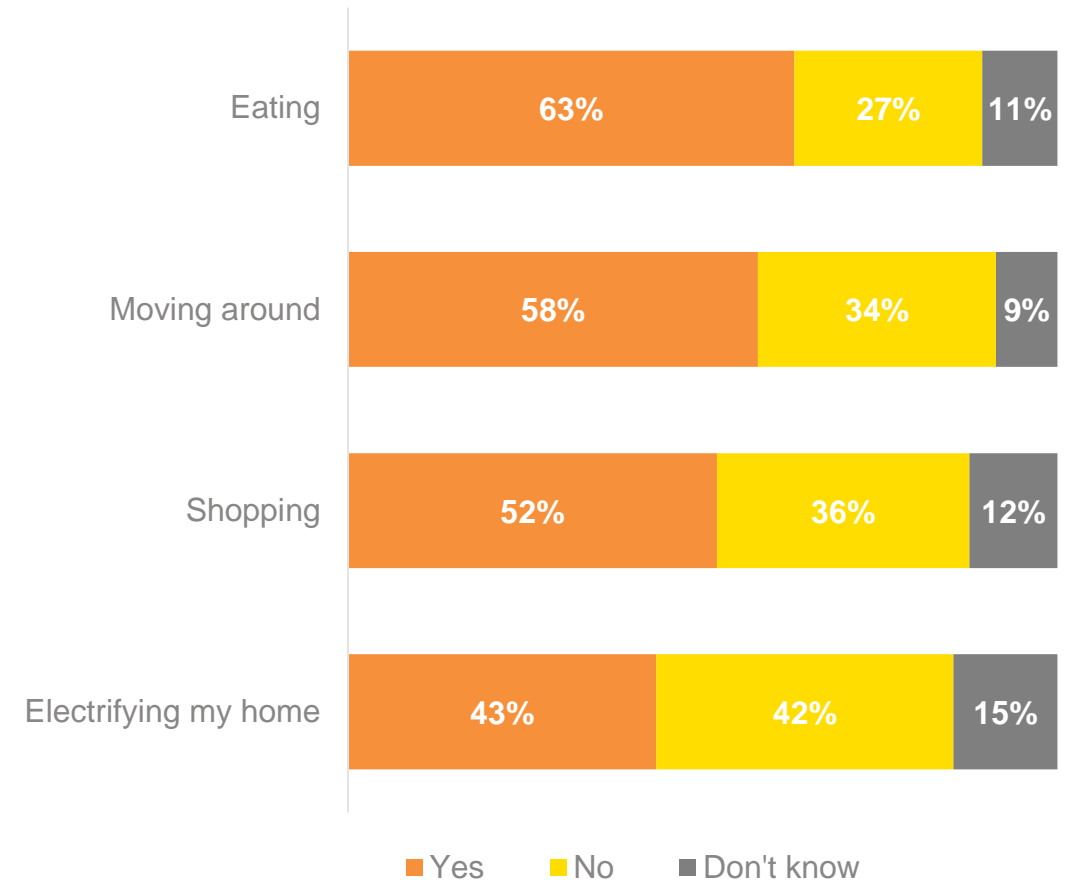
Realistic options to reduce emissions

- Between a half and two-thirds of respondents believed they did have realistic and affordable options to reduce their emissions relating to eating, moving around and shopping.
- Less than half thought the same about their emissions in the “electrifying my home” category.

Demographic differences

- Older respondents were more likely to say they had realistic options to reduce their emissions in the “electrifying my home” category (18-29s: 34%, 30-44: 39%, 45-59: 46%, 60+: 59%).
- Similarly, homeownership respondents were more likely than renters to say they have realistic options to reduce their emissions in the “electrifying my home” category (53% compared to 31%).

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



Demographics

