

# Climate Change perceptions

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November 2021

# 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 11<sup>th</sup> November to the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 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 **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

- Respondents made clear that they both understood the potential impacts of climate change on the city, and believed that those impacts have already begun.
- Given that, the vast majority of respondents felt that we needed to act now to reduce Wellington city's carbon emissions with close to two thirds believing significant reductions needed to be made right now and a further third saying reductions need to start now and ramp up over time.
- In contrast to this, two thirds of respondents were not confident at all that enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington for the impacts of Climate change, a further 21% were only somewhat confident.
- With respect to implementing responses to help Wellingtonians adapt to climate change, respondents believed local government had an important role to play, ranking them only just behind central government in order of responsibility.
- When it came to understanding what actions are necessary for Wellington to become a net zero carbon capital by 2050 respondents were split with a little under half saying they understood what was required very or fairly well and a little over half saying they did not understand what was required well, or at all.
- All respondents were asked if they thought we were on track to hit our 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction targets. Very few believed we were (5%), while about half did not think we were on track, and a significant minority were unsure (expected given than many we unsure of what is actually required to hit these targets).
  - The small number of respondents who thought we were on track mostly gave general mention to work already being done or progress being made and the raising awareness of the issue.
  - Those who did not think we were on track were most likely to say they felt this way because of slow progress or no clear response, public transport not being good enough and our reliance on cars.
  - Those who were unsure said they had not seen any reporting or data on plans or progress, or did not know enough about the plan to hit the targets.
- All of the proposed emission reduction actions were seen as important for Council to prioritise by respondents, however "*Provide low or zero carbon transport options in the city (walkways, bike paths, public transport, light rail)*" stood above the rest with 75% saying it was very important to prioritise and a further 18% saying it was somewhat important.
- Respondents were also asked what actions, if any, they have taken to reduce their own emissions on an ongoing basis in the past year. About three quarters said they had taken actions to reduce transport and waste actions, the remaining actions were less common.

# Key findings

- **Majority of respondents feel they understand the potential impacts of climate change on the city, and believe those impacts have already begun.**
  - 2/3 of respondents say significant reductions needed right now; 1/3 say it needs to start now and ramp up over time
  - 2/3 not confident enough action is being taken to prepare Wellington; 21% only somewhat confident
  - Believe Local Government is second only after Central Government in terms of responsibility
- **City Actions to meet targets:**
  - Split almost 50/50 on whether they understood what was required for Wellington to become a net zero city by 2050.
  - Very few (5%) believe we **ARE on track** to meet our 2030 and 2050 targets
    - “Highlighted current actions and proposals”
  - **50% do NOT think we are on track**
    - “Slow progress, no clear response, public transport not good enough and too much reliance on cars”
  - **Significant minority were unsure** (expected given than many we unsure of what is actually required to hit these targets).
    - “Have not seen reporting or data on plans or progress, or do not know enough about the plan”
  - 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**
    - 18% 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.

# Demographic differences

- **Māori respondents**
  - more likely to say they did not believe climate change would have any impact on Wellington (7% compared to 1% for others).
  - more likely to say that the negative effects of climate change will never happen in Wellington (7%)
- **Female respondents**
  - more likely to say the effects of climate change have already begun in Wellington (89% compared to 76% of males).
  - 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
- **Male respondents**
  - more likely than females to say that emissions should be reduced slowly over their lifetime (9% compared to 3%).
- **Younger respondents (18-29)**
  - more likely to say significant reductions should be made straight away (71%)
  - Younger respondents and renters were more likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport, creating a compact city and supporting people to make different food and purchasing decisions to be prioritised
- **Older respondents (60+)**
  - more likely to say that reductions should start now but ramp up in a few years (43%).
  - more likely to think we were on track to meet our targets (12%).
  - less likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised.
- Respondents from the **Lambton ward**
  - more likely to say it was very important to prioritise a compact city, those from the **Northern ward** were less likely to say the same

# Knowledge of climate change impacts

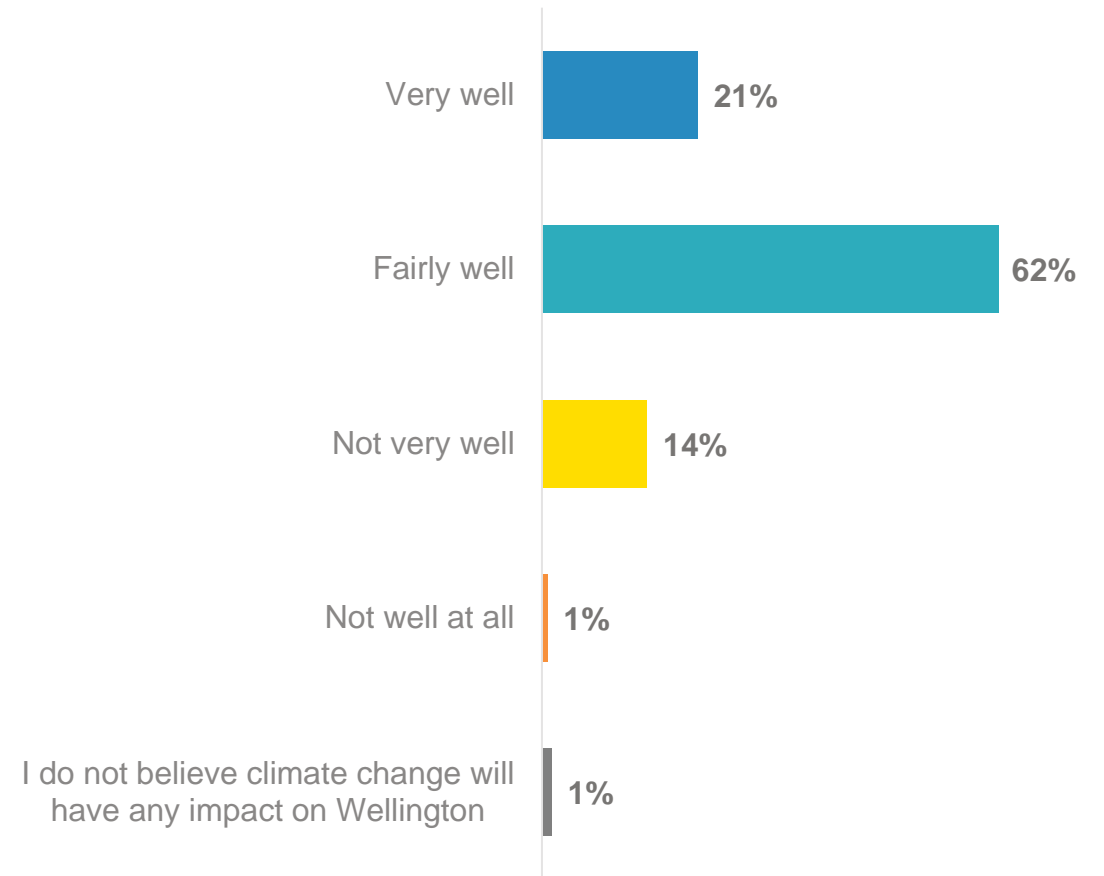
- Overall respondents to this survey claimed to have a good understanding of the impact climate change could have on Wellington.
- One in five respondents claimed to understand the potential impacts of climate change very well, a further 62% said they understood them fairly well.
- Less than one in five said they did not understand the impacts very well or at all.

## Demographic differences

- Māori respondents were more likely to say they did not believe climate change would have any impact on Wellington (7% compared to 1% for others).



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



# Views on when climate change impacts will be felt

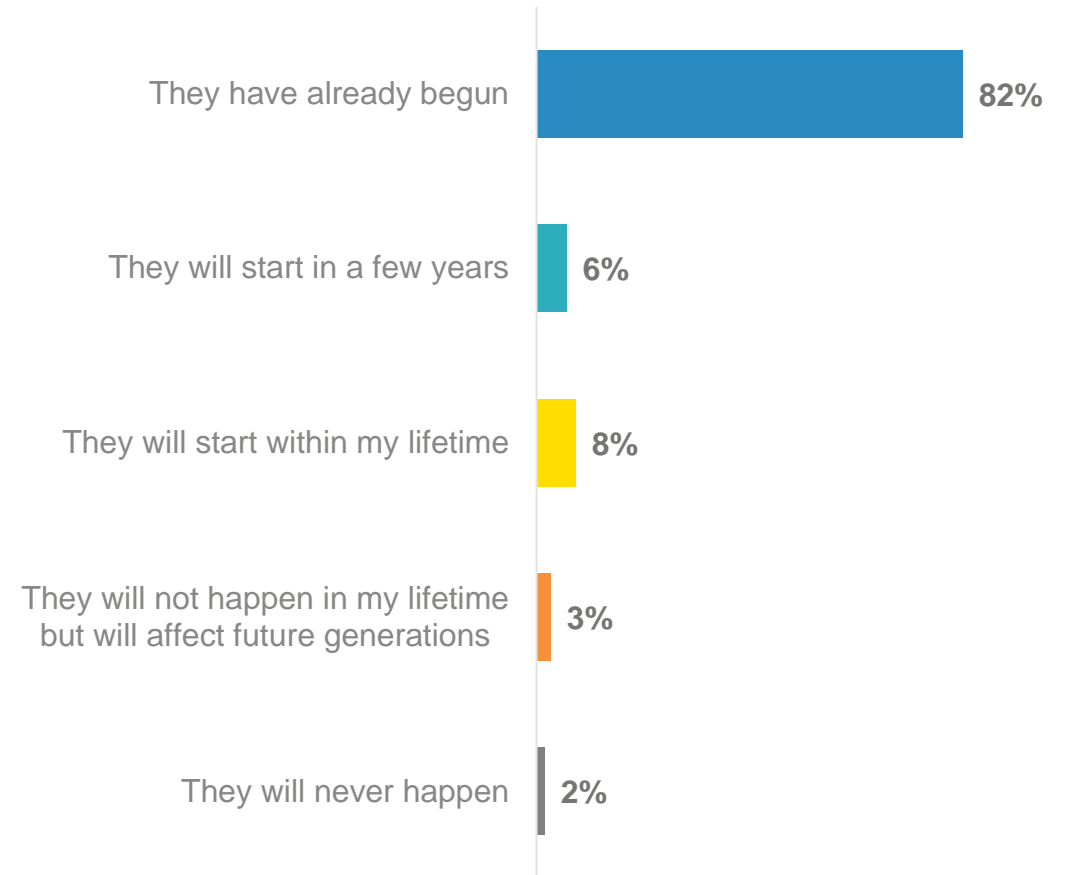
- The vast majority of respondents believed that the negative effects of climate change are already being felt in Wellington.
- While almost all the remaining respondents believed they would start in a few years or within their lifetime at least.

## Demographic differences

- Female respondents were more likely to say the effects of climate change have already begun in Wellington (89% compared to 76% of males).
- Māori respondents were more likely to say that the negative effects of climate change will never happen in Wellington (7%)



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



# Reducing the city's carbon emissions

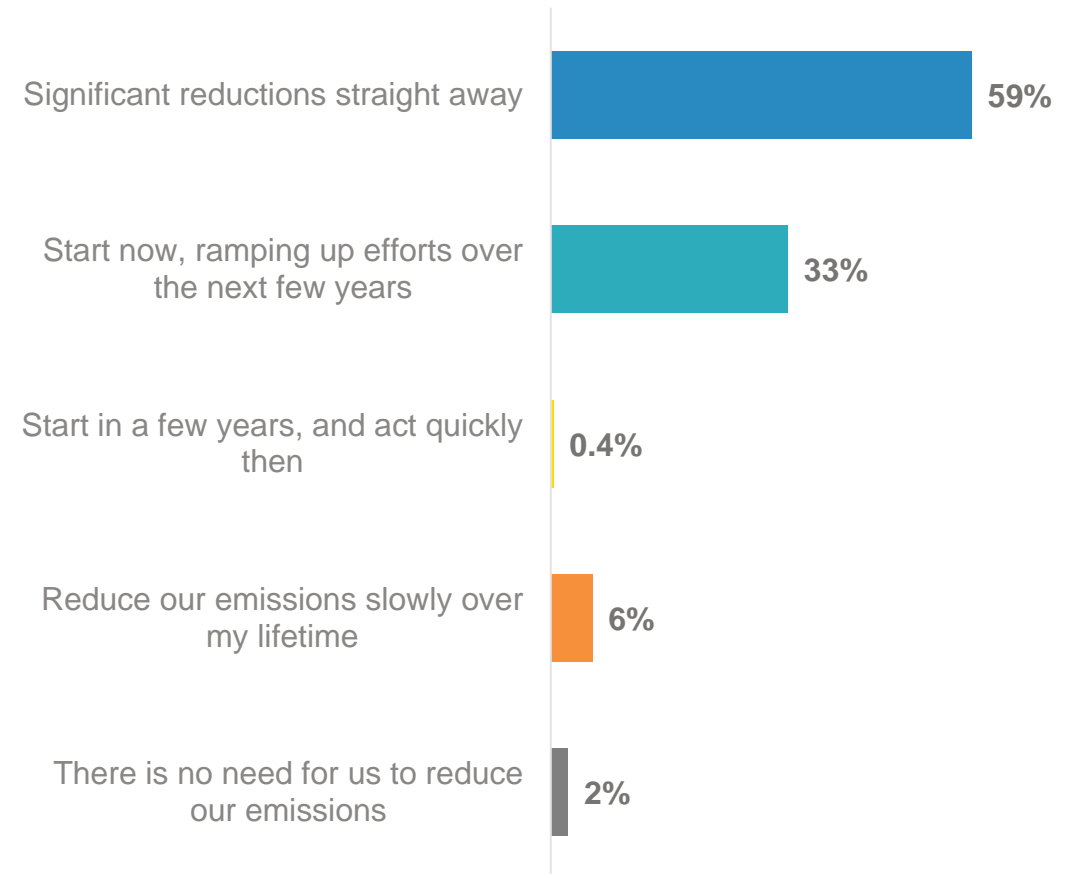
- Over 90% of respondents believed that we needed to act now to start reducing Wellington's carbon emissions.
  - Almost two thirds believed we should make significant reductions straight away
  - A third thought we should start now, but ramp up efforts over the next few years.

## Demographic differences

- Younger respondents (18-29) were more likely to say significant reductions should be made straight away (71%)
- Older respondents (60+) were more likely to say that reductions should start now but ramp up in a few years (43%).
- Males were more likely than females to say that emissions should be reduced slowly over their lifetime (9% compared to 3%).



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





# 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.
- Close to two thirds were not confident at all that enough was being done.

## Demographic differences

- There were no demographic differences for this question



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



# Responsibility for implementing climate change response

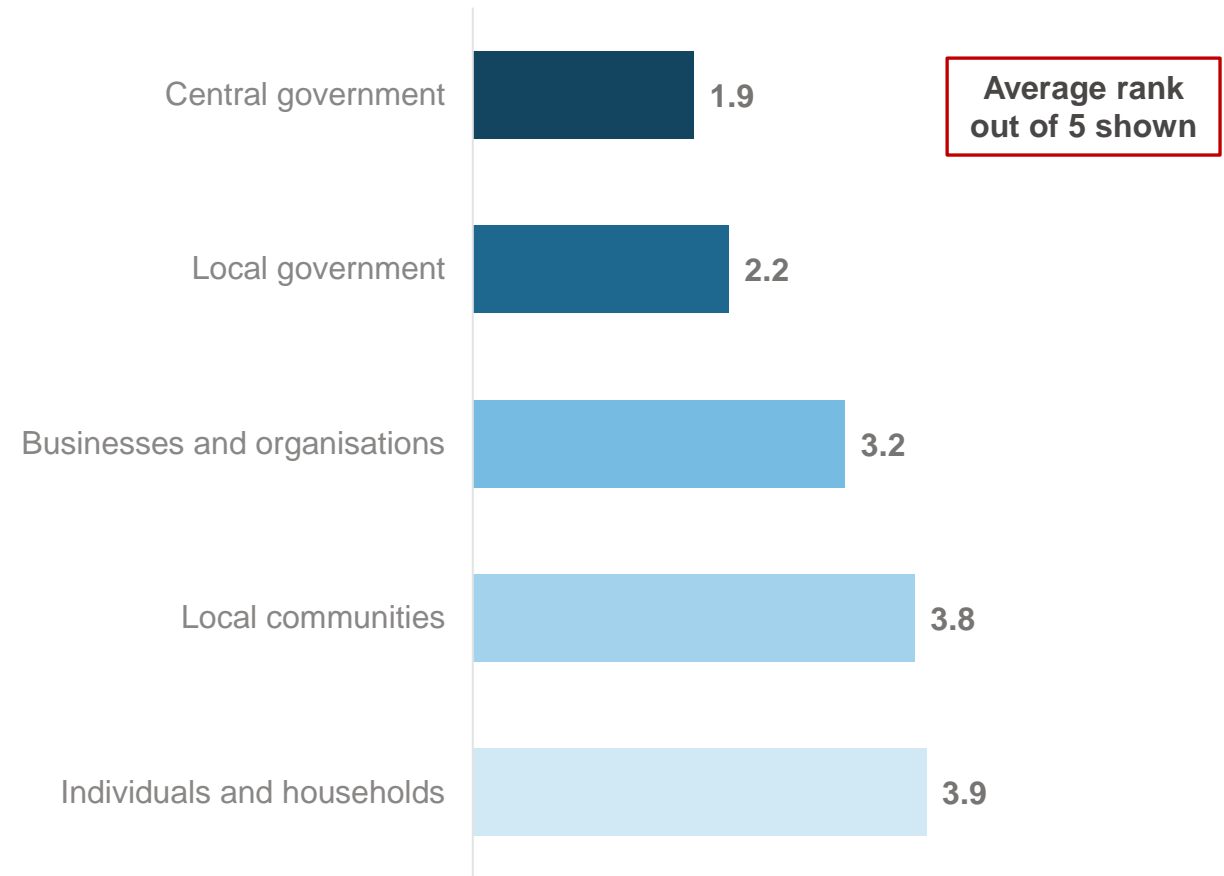
- Respondents felt that both local and central government shared the most responsibility for implementing responses to help Wellingtonians adapt to climate change impacts.
- Business, local communities and individuals were generally ranked lower by respondents.

## 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

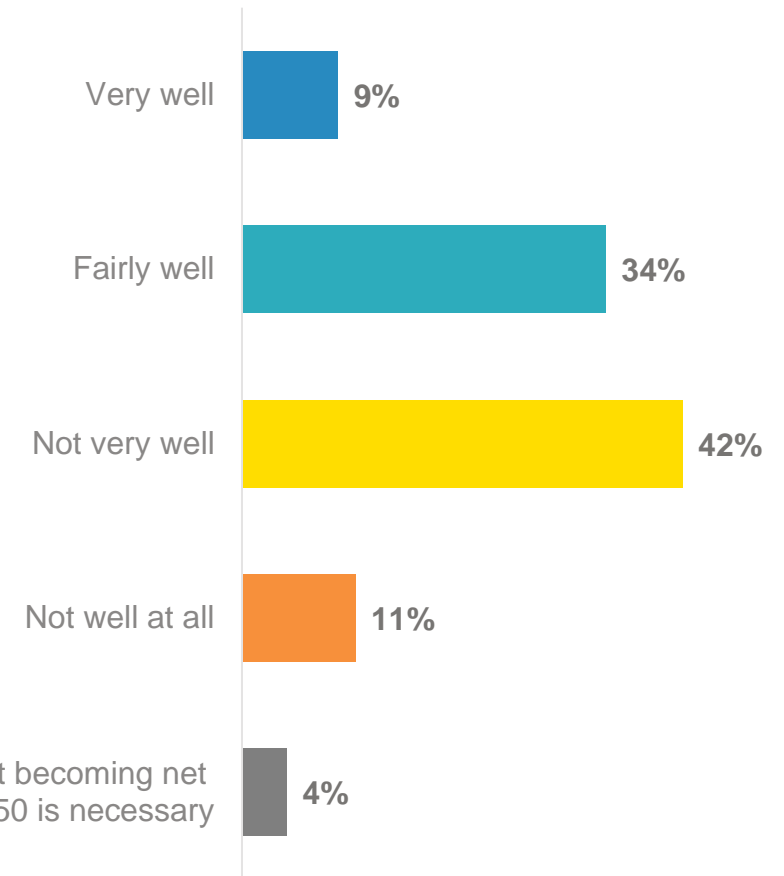
- Less than one in ten said they had a very good understanding of the actions required to become a net zero capital by 2050, a further third said they understood the requirements fairly well.
- Over half said they did not understanding the required actions very well, or at all.

## Demographic differences

- There we no demographic differences for this question.



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



# Achieving our emissions reduction targets



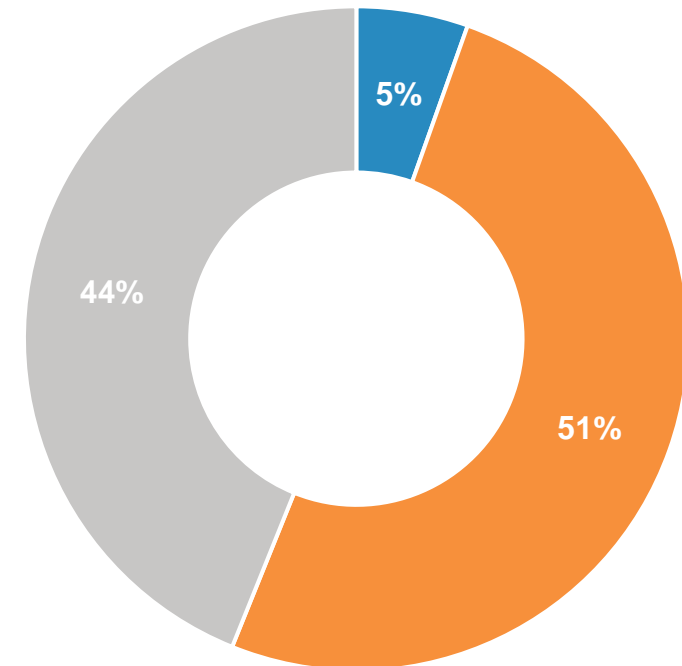
*Do you think Wellington city is currently on track to achieve its emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2050?*

- Very few respondents (5%) believed that the city is on track to achieve its emission reduction targets.
- About half did not think we were on track, while a significant minority simply did not know enough to answer.

## Demographic differences

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

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



# 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 they are seeing work being done or progress being made (15 out of 47 respondents).
- Nine out of 47 respondents believed we were on track because awareness of the issue was increasing.
- There were a wide range of other reasons noted by fewer respondents including encouraging mode shift, LTP planning, EVs and planting.

## Reasons for thinking we are not on track

- The largest proportion of respondents believed we were not on track. The dominant reason for this view (38% 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 public transport not being good enough (21%), our reliance on cars (17%) and more work needing to be done to facilitate mode shift (14%).
- There were a wide range of other reasons noted by 10% or fewer.

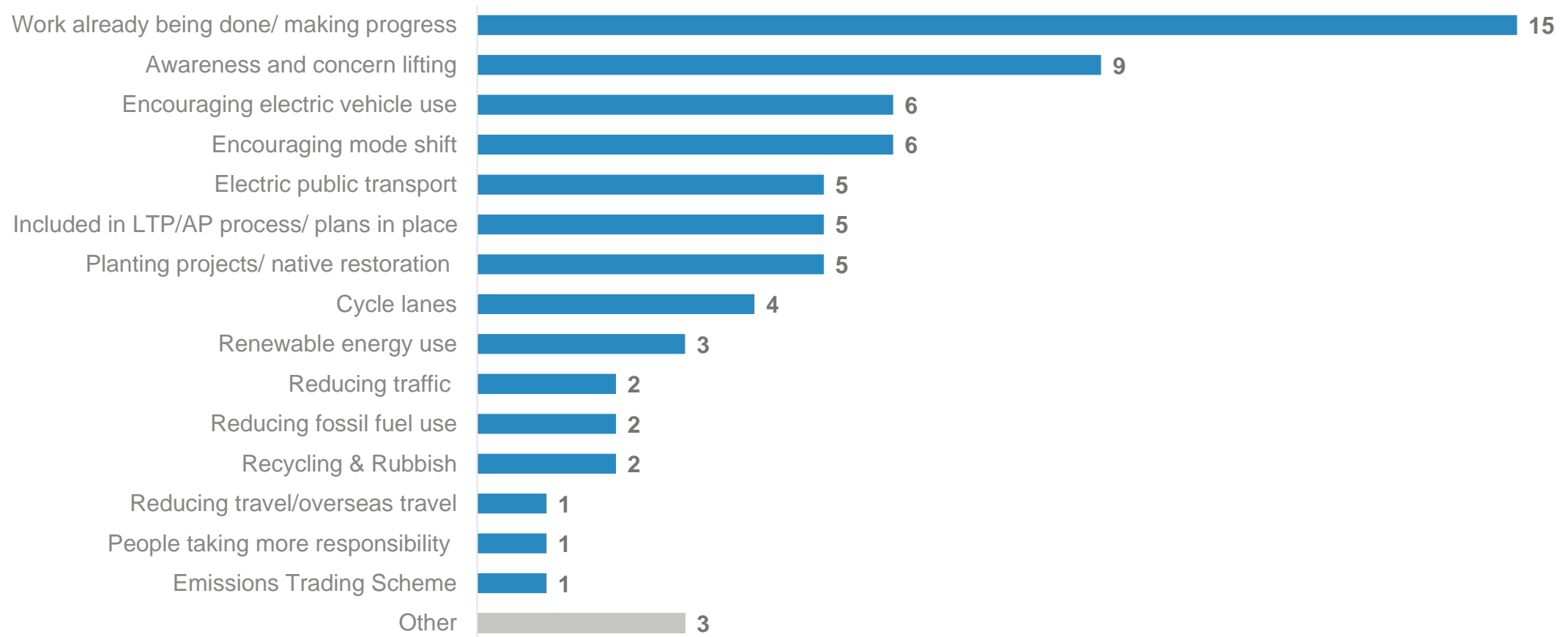
## Reasons for being unsure about how we are tracking

- A significant minority 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 third of these respondents said they either had not seen any reporting or data on plans or progress for the targets, or did not know enough about the plans or strategies to achieve the targets.

# Reasons for thinking we are on track



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



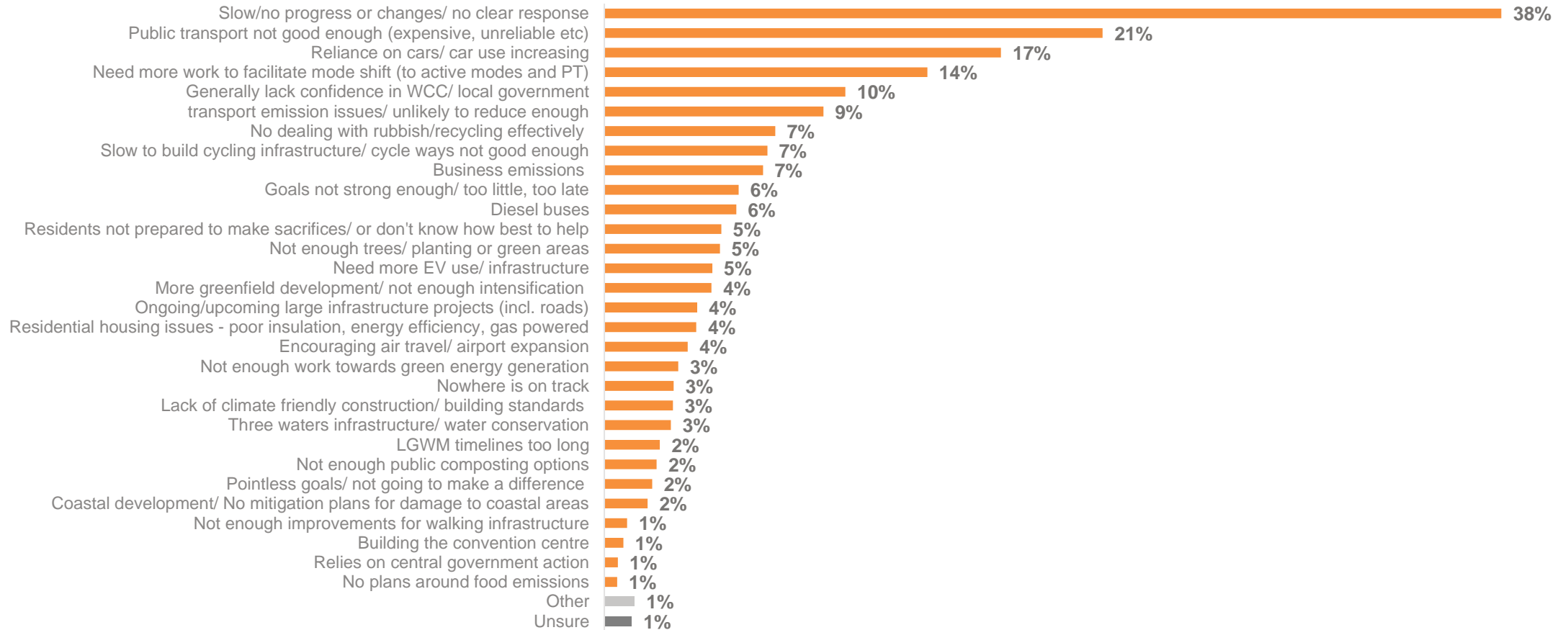
Base: Respondents who think Wellington City is on track to achieve its emissions reduction targets (n=47), multiple response question, numbers shown on graph add to greater than total base

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.



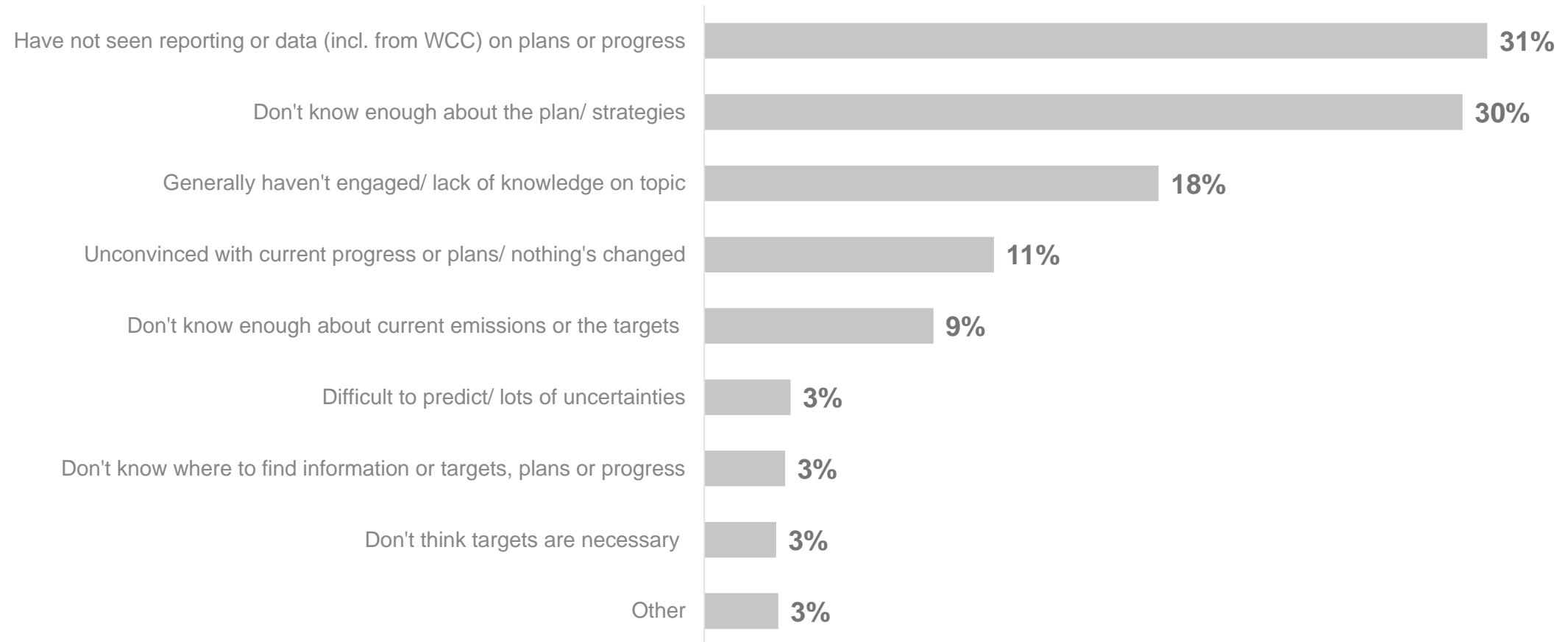
Base: Respondents who think Wellington City is not on track to achieve its emissions reduction targets (n=387), multiple response question, percentages add to more than 100%.

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=325), 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 listing 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 (58%-64%).
- 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.

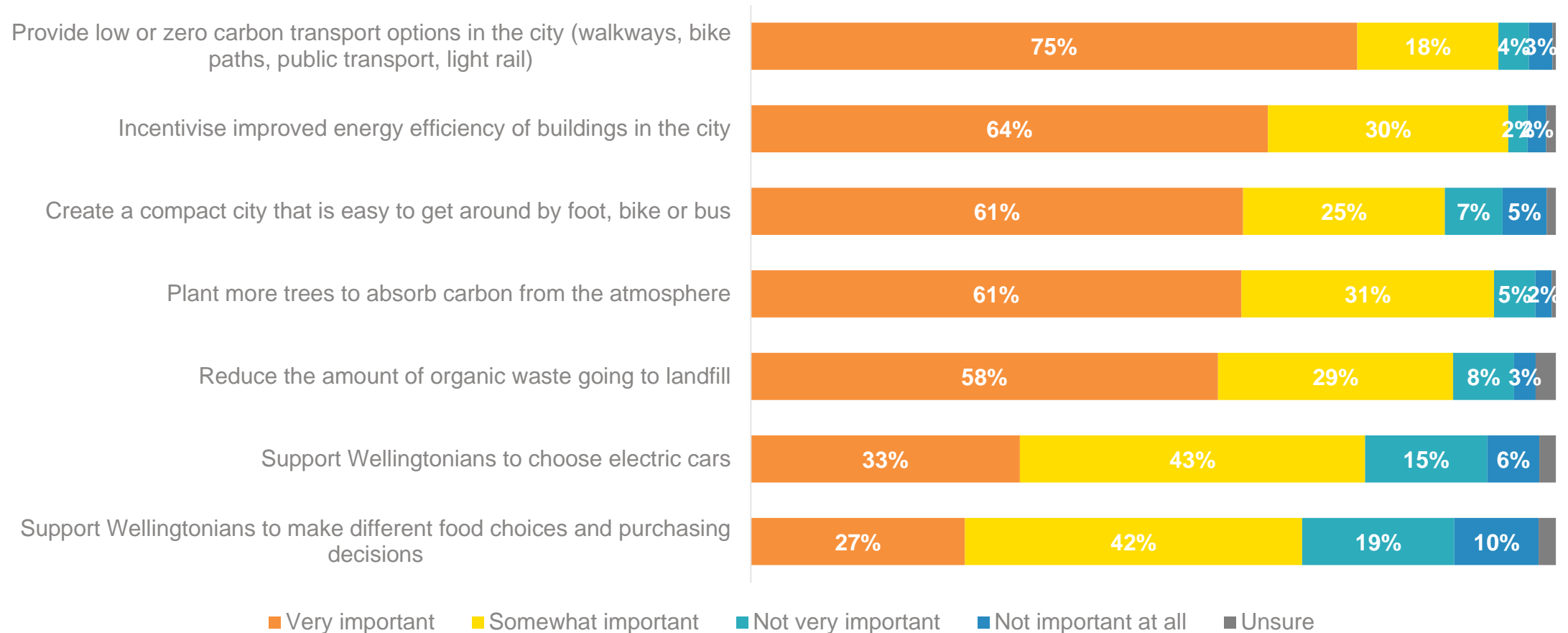
## Demographic differences

- Younger people (18-29s) and renters were more likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport, creating a compact city and supporting people to make different food and purchasing decisions 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 60 and over were less likely to say it was very important for zero carbon transport and creating a compact city to be prioritised.
- Respondents from the Lambton ward were more likely to say it was very important to prioritise a compact city, those from the Northern ward were less likely to say the same.

# Importance of emission reduction actions



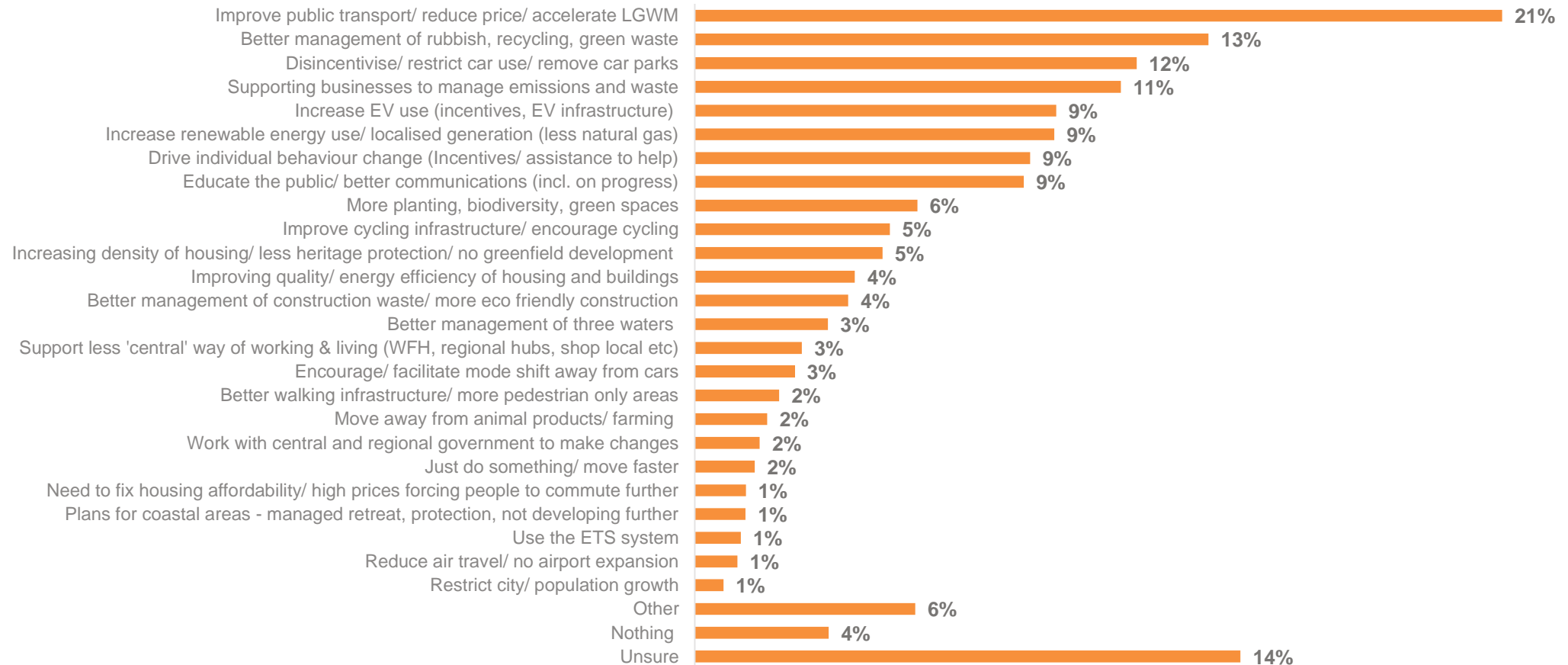
How important do you believe it is for the Council to prioritise the following actions to reduce emissions



# 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=741)

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

# Personal actions to reduce emissions

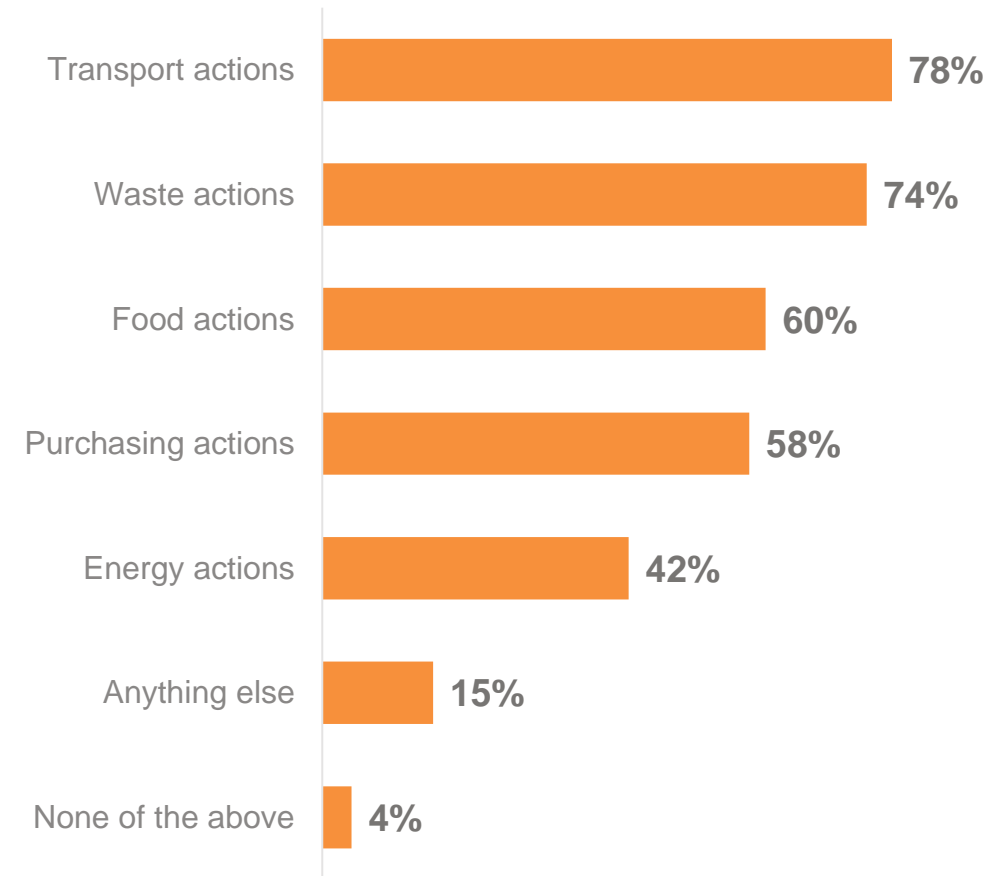
- About three quarters of respondents said they had taken actions to reduce their transport and waste emissions over the past 12 months.
- Similar proportions had undertaken actions to reduce their emissions related to food or other purchasing behaviour.
- Actions to reduce energy emissions were generally 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, food and purchasing emissions (87%, 70% and 69% respectively). While respondents 60 and over were less likely to say they had taken actions to reduced those same emissions types (69%, 52% and 48% respectively)
- Younger respondents (18-29) were less likely to say they had taken actions to reduce their energy emissions (28%). Respondents aged 45-60 were more likely to say they had take action to reduce their energy emissions (51%).
- Females respondents were more likely than males to say they had taken actions to reduce their food emissions (67% compared to 53%).
- Respondents from the Lambton ward were more likely to have taken actions to reduce transport emissions (88%), and less likely to have take action to reduce energy emissions (31%).
- Respondents from the Southern ward were more likely to have taken action to reduce food emissions (73%).

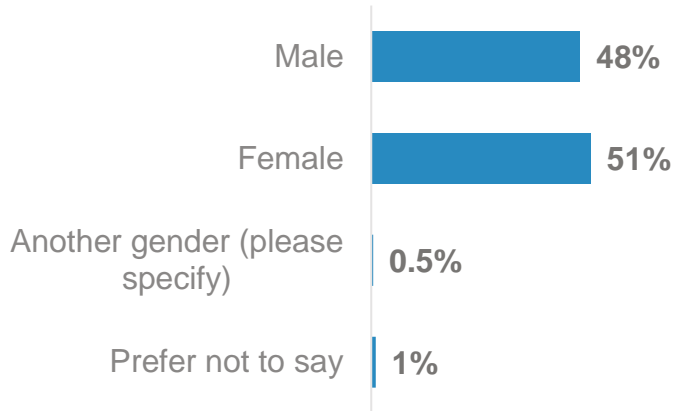


Over the last 12 months, what climate actions (if any) have you taken on an ongoing basis to reduce your emissions? Please select all that apply

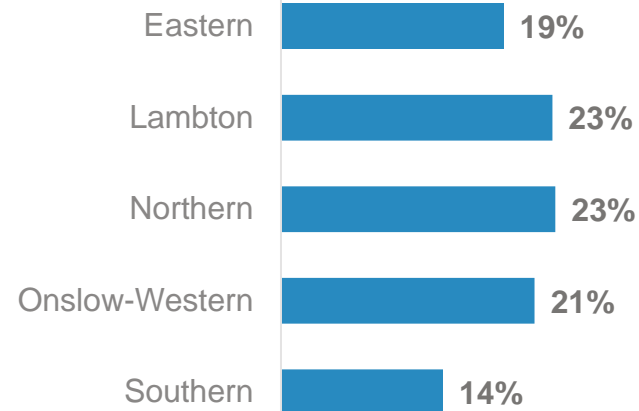


# Demographics

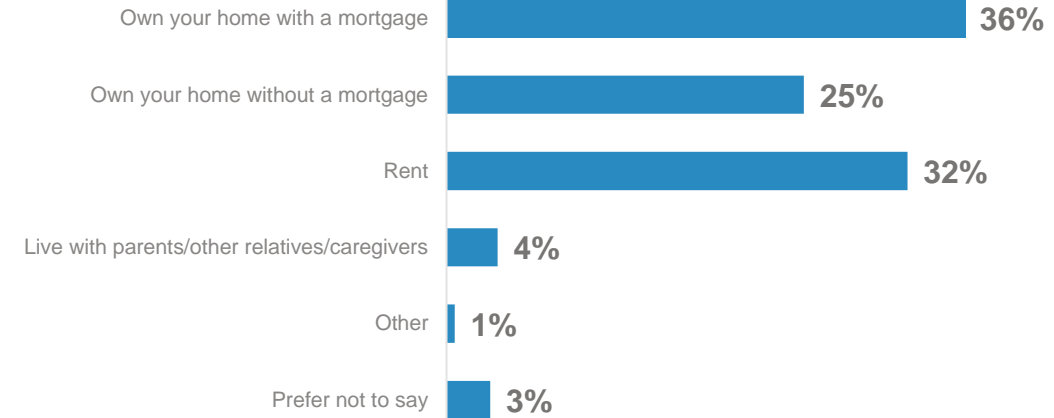
## Gender



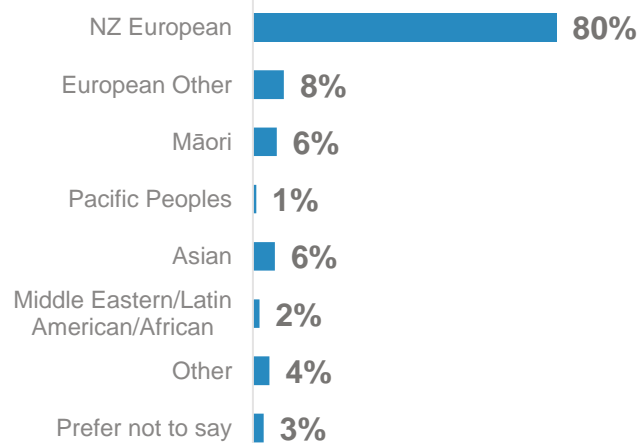
## Ward



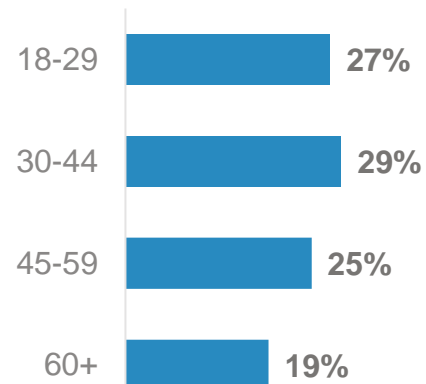
## Home ownership



## Ethnicity



## Age



## Identify as disabled

