

An aerial photograph of a coastal area. A paved road runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the center. To the right of the road is a sandy beach and a rocky shoreline meeting a body of water. Several cars are parked along the road. The background is a deep teal color.

EECA | TRA
INSIGHTS

Exploring how New Zealanders relate to energy use and climate change

March 2022



EECA's purpose is to mobilise New Zealanders to be world leaders in clean and clever energy use.

An understanding of general attitudes and behaviours towards energy use and climate change, and where disconnect exists, will help EECA drive behaviour change.



Jo Bye

Group Manager, Marketing and Communications at EECA



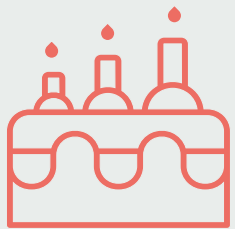
TRA is an insight agency that combines understanding of human behaviour with intelligent data capability to help clients navigate uncertainty and answer complex problems.

TRA has been partnering with EECA for nearly 4 years on this work.



Karin Glucina
Partner at TRA





Age



Gender



Region



Income

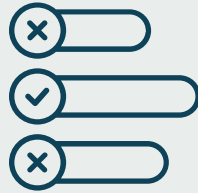


**Cultural
background**

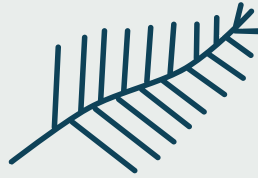
Our methodology spans:



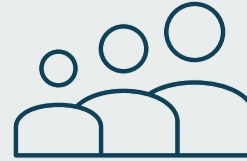
3.5 years
continuous data



750 surveys
every quarter



9,000+
New Zealanders



18+ years



Nationally
representative



Our beliefs

Our priorities

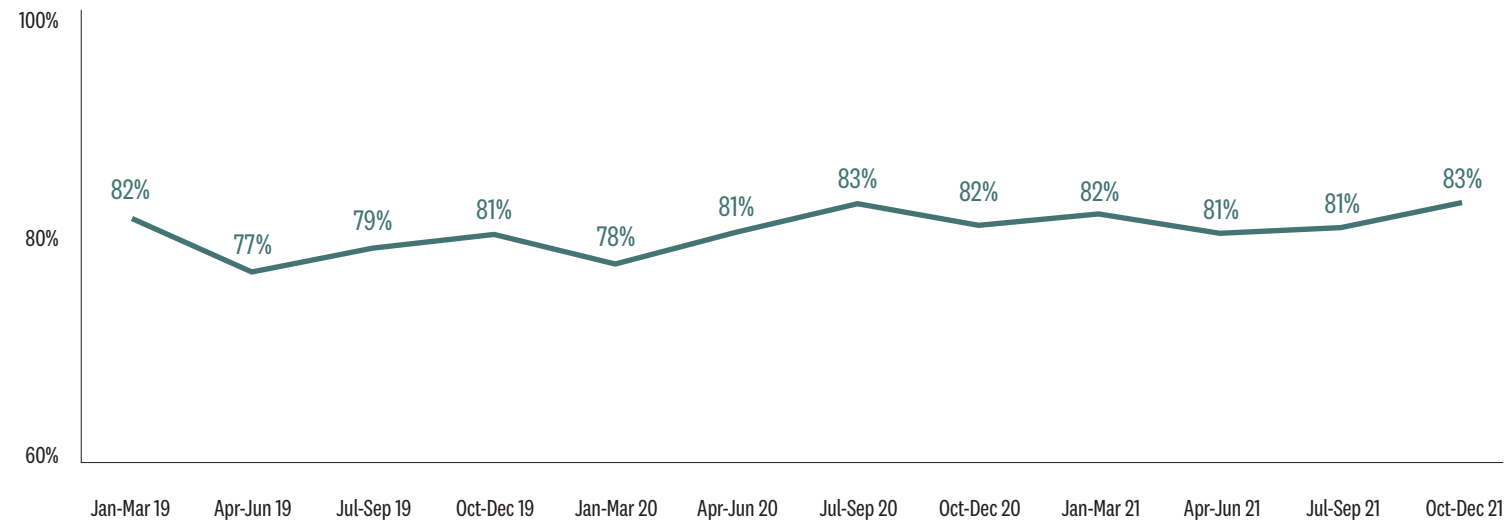
Our actions

Four out of five New Zealanders believe climate change is real. **We are more united than different.**

Belief

Climate Beliefs: Climate change is real

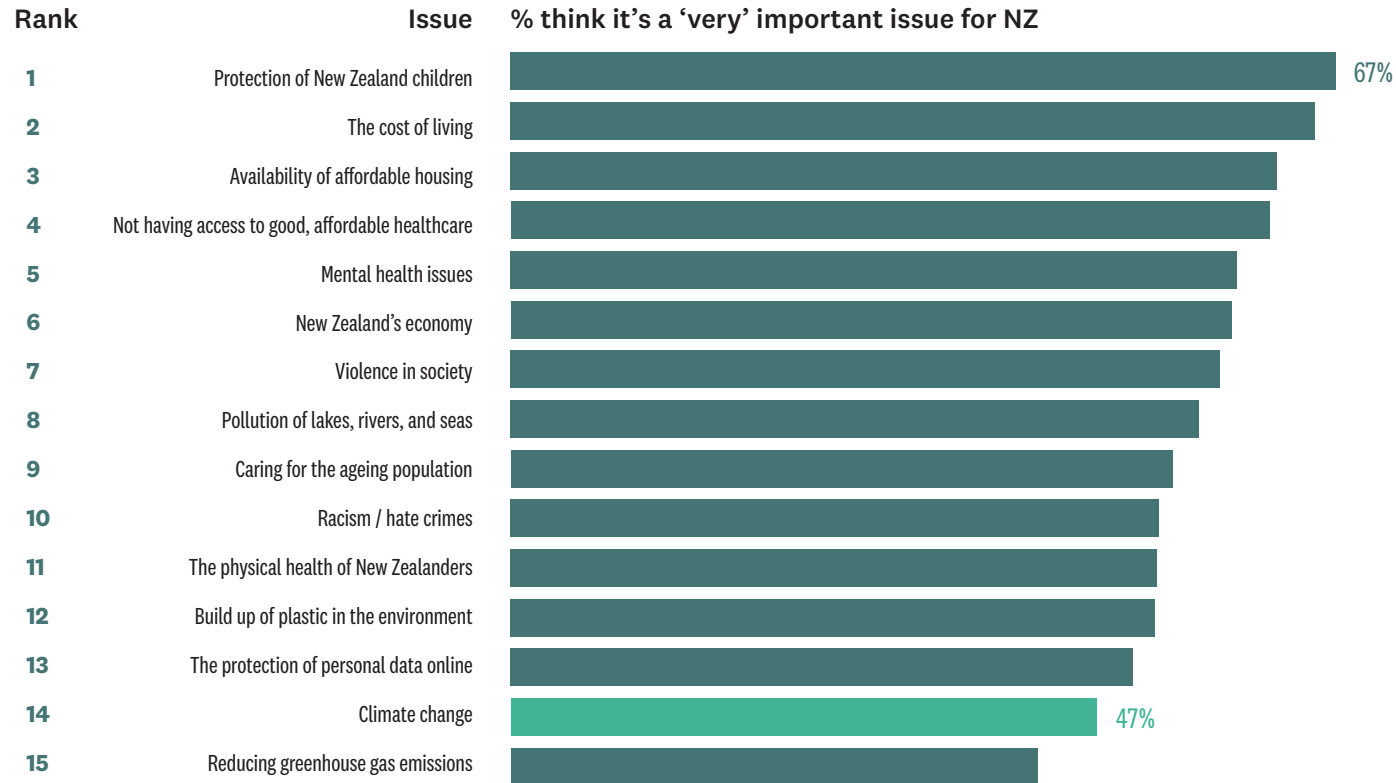
Agree/Strongly Agree



CLIMATE_BELIEFS Climate change is real. Base: Total Sample - 3MR (n=>750 per quarter).

Climate change ranks **14th on a list of 15** economic, societal and environmental issues

Belief



GENERAL_ISSUES How important do you consider each of the following issues to be for New Zealand? TOP BOX Very Important. Base: Total Sample, July 2020 – June 2021 n=3,104

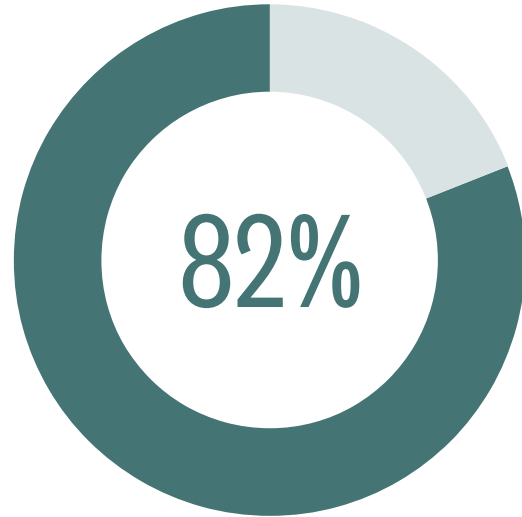
But there is a large gap between beliefs in climate change and willingness to take action

This is where we need collective and individual focus

Belief

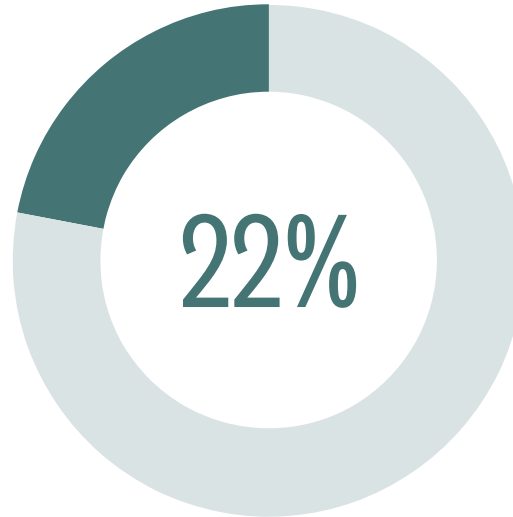
On board with the cause:

Agree that 'climate change is real'



Motivated to change:

Strongly Agree that 'I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change'



CLIMATE_BELIEFS Climate change is real. Base: Total Sample, July 2020 – June 2021 n=3,104

Actions are important – they lead to more individual actions and support for collective change

Actions

Recycling is a gateway but not the end game.

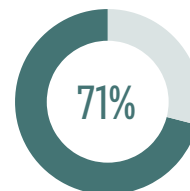
People start at recycling.

The more they do, typically the more impactful the actions taken – and the more support they have for system-level change.

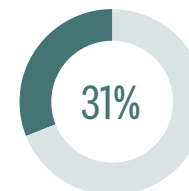
How do we encourage them down the pathway?

Those doing:

1-2 actions

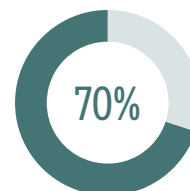


Choose to recycle

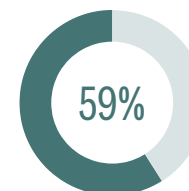


Choose energy efficient lights

3-5 actions

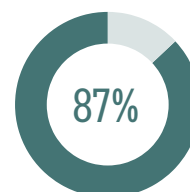


Choose energy efficient appliances

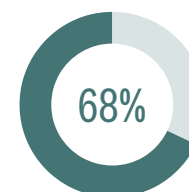


Reduce energy use at home

6+ actions



Avoid the use of plastic



Drive less

CLIMATE_ACTIONS. Which of the following actions do you take in order to reduce your climate change impact? Net Always/Almost always
Base: Total Sample, July 2020 – June 2021 n>2,324

We are a willing audience, we can talk broadly to everyone in the same way in terms of belief.

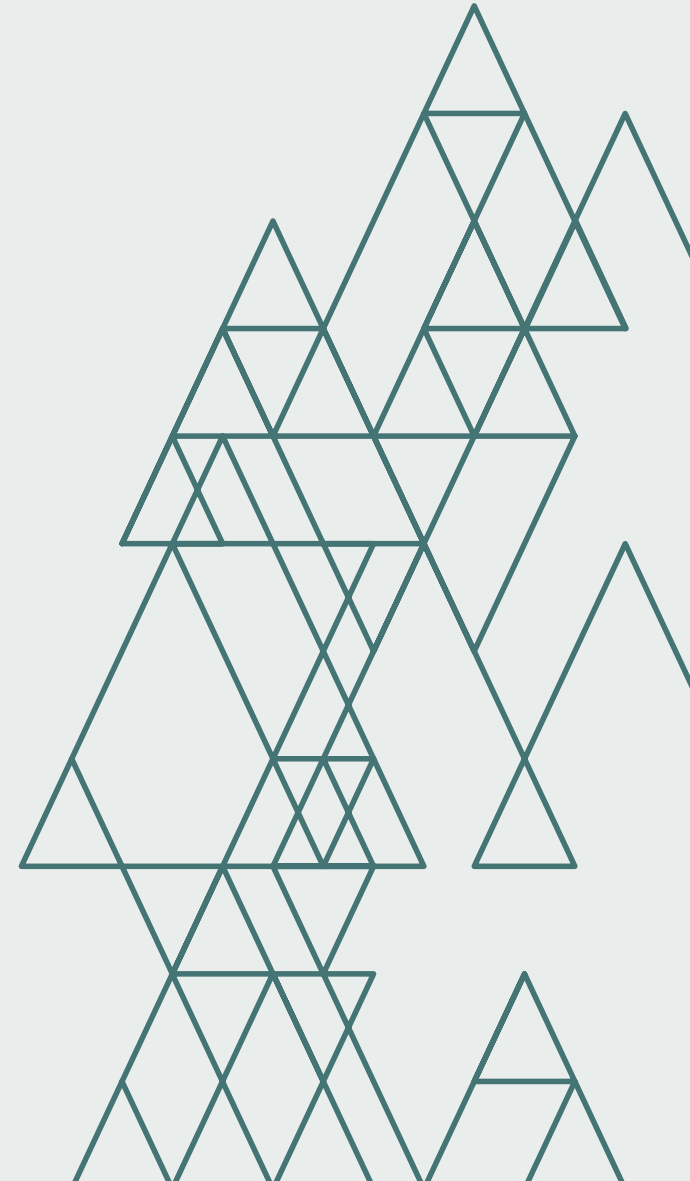
We don't need to spend time and resources in convincing people about the problem. But we do need to help them to act.

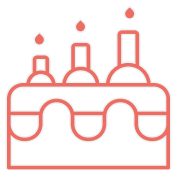
But everyone has different lives, and within that competing priorities for their time and attention, and what they want to focus on.

This is where we start to see divergence.



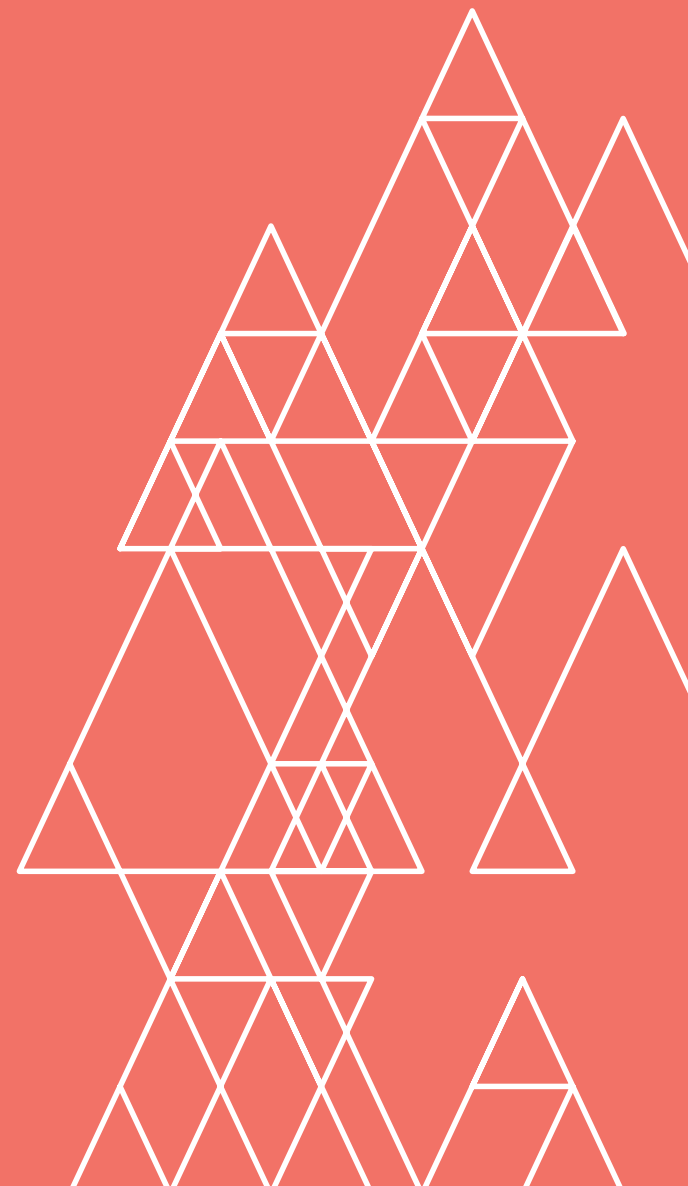
With climate actions we need to
meet people where they are –
actions are individual and fit into
current lifestyles



Priorities**How old we are****Our gender****Where we live****How much we earn****Our cultural references**

All help to determine
how we prioritise
climate change and
what we do about it

Age

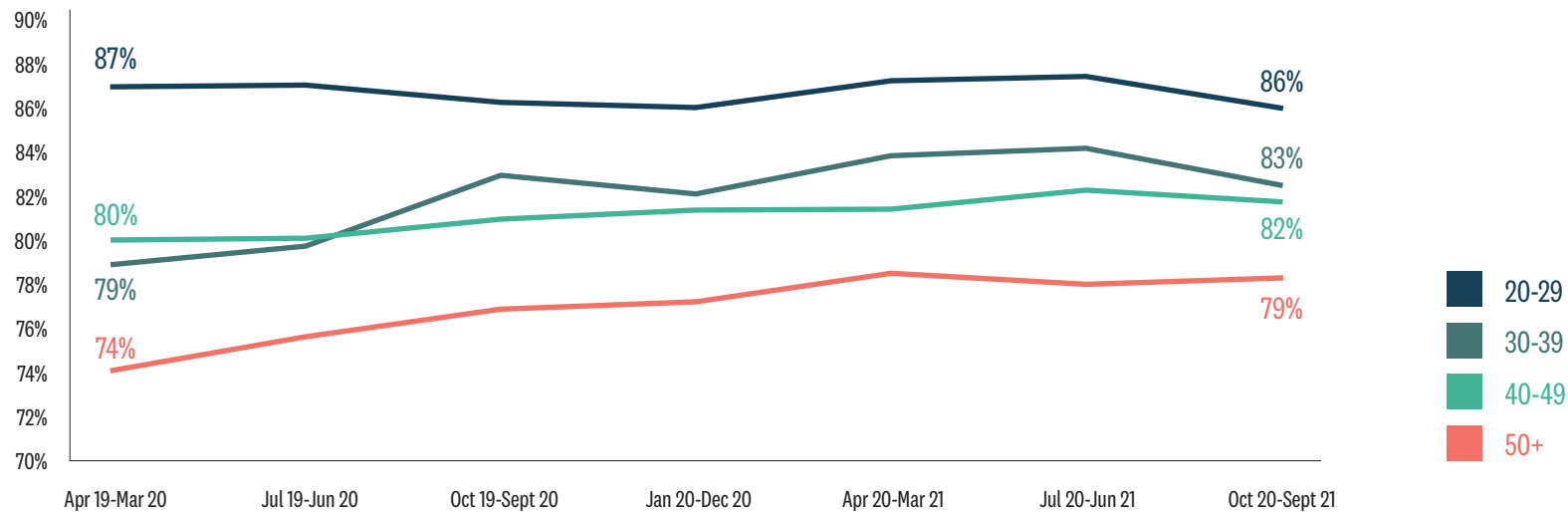


Different generations think about climate change, how it will impact them and what their role is very differently

Age

Climate change is real by age:

Agree/Strongly Agree



CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?
 Base: 20-29 n>468; 30-39 n>415; 40-49 n>433; 50+ n>1,015 (12MR data, by quarter)

These differing generational priorities reveal how climate change can be framed to encourage action

Age

20-29 years

Rank climate change

#5

Climate change is ranked the highest of the environmental issues

But is outranked by costs of living and mental health

25% Strongly agree I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change

4.4 actions

50+ years

Rank climate change

#14

Pollution and plastics rank higher than climate change in issues

Economy and healthcare are top issues

18% Strongly agree I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change

4.5 actions

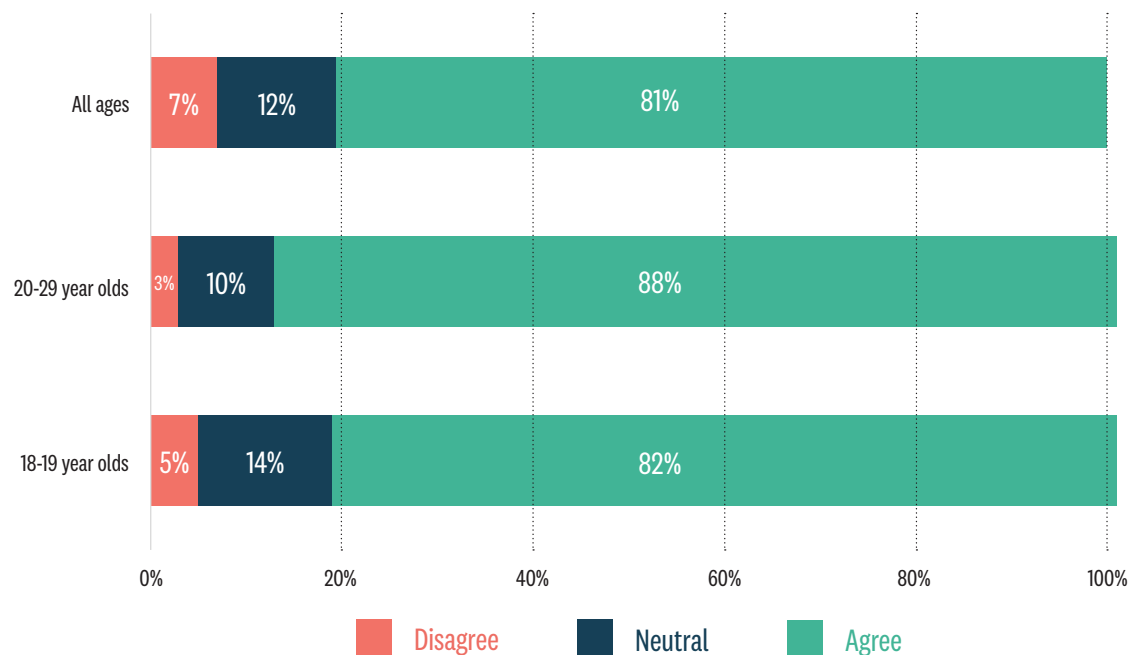
July 2020 – June 2021 data. Base: 20-29 n=565; 50+ n=1,363

Youth is a formative time for making up your mind on climate change

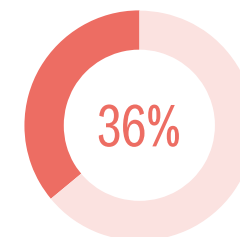
Age

Climate change is real by age:

Agree/Strongly Agree



They're self-aware and ready for guidance:



Just **36%** of 18 – 19 year olds think they're already doing all they can – the lowest of any age group

CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements? Climate change is real
Base: 18-19 years n=217, 20-29 years n=1,278 (July 2018 – June 2021)

For youth:

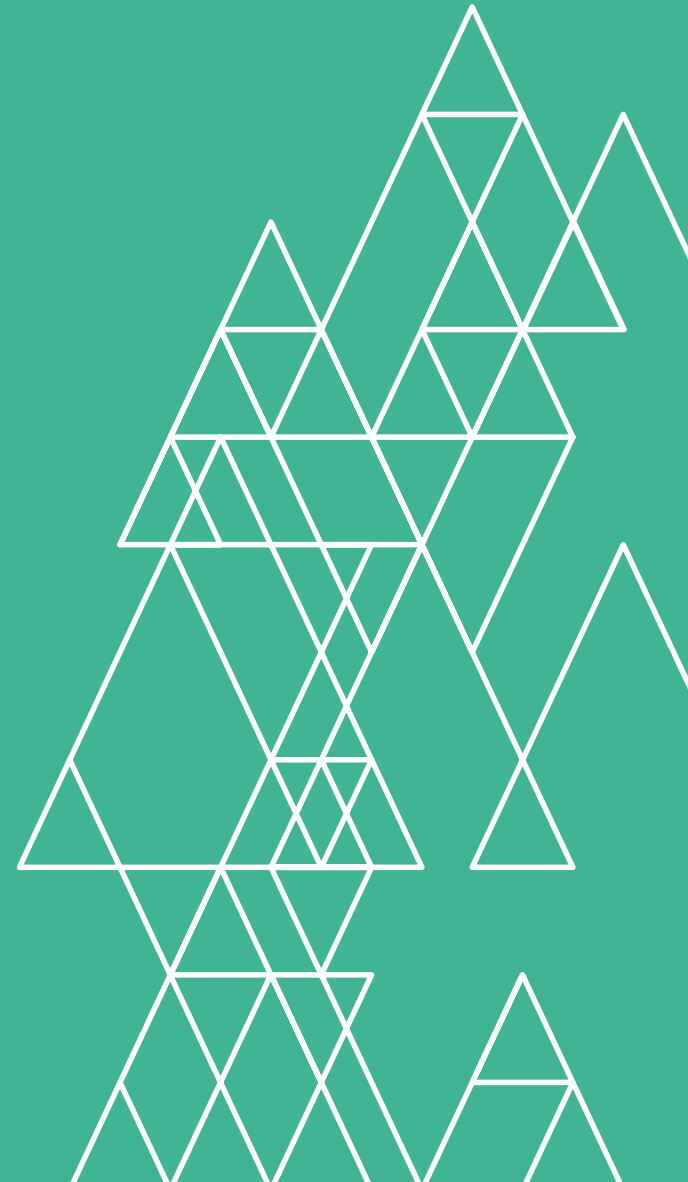
Focus on macro issues – climate change is a key hook. They know they can do more and want to know how to impact.

For older generations:

Focus on micro issues – localised, tangible, environmental concerns and close to home actions.



Region/income



Rural and urban dwellers are united in their beliefs on climate change but neither group prioritises the issue

Region/income

Live in a city

Rank climate change

#14

82% believe in climate change

46% say climate change is a very important issue

23% Strongly agree I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change

4.5 actions

Live in a rural area

Rank climate change

#14

80% believe in climate change

44% say climate change is a very important issue

23% Strongly agree I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change

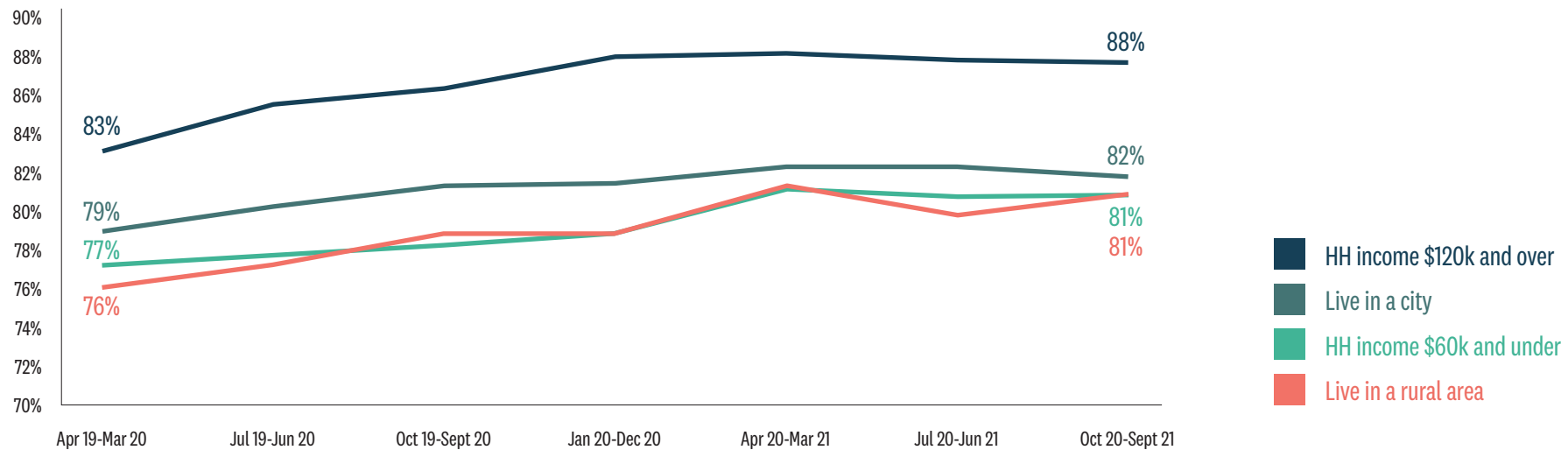
4.7 actions

July 2020 – June 2021 data. Base: live in a city n=1,883; live in a rural area n=339

Overall, income is a stronger determinant than where you live

Climate change is real by region/income:

Agree/Strongly Agree



CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?

Base: Live in a rural area n>342; Live in a city n>1,863; Household income under \$60k n>1,034; Household income over \$120k n>398 (12MR data, by quarter)

Income is a determinant of priority – bandwidth to think about climate change is a luxury

Region/income

Under \$60K household income

Rank climate change

#14

81% believe in climate change

50% say it's a very important issue

BUT

Ranked **#14**

4.4 actions

Over \$120K household income

Rank climate change

#12

88% believe in climate change – the highest of the demographic groups

47% say it's a very important issue

BUT

Ranked **#12**

4.6 actions

July 2020 – June 2021 data. Base: Under \$60k household income n=1,039; Over \$120k household income n=455

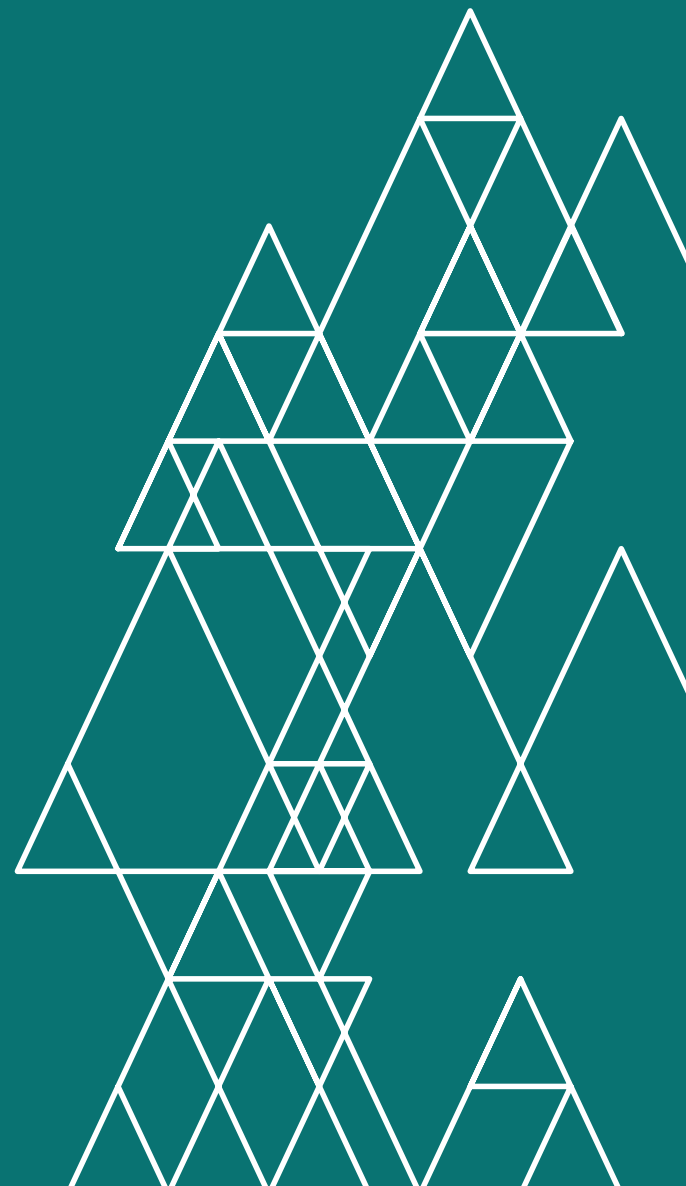
Think income levels over where people live to encourage actions

Higher earners: Are taking more actions but are likely to be higher emitters.
What is a fair share?

Lower earners: Have many other competing concerns – they need empowering with smaller steps.



Gender

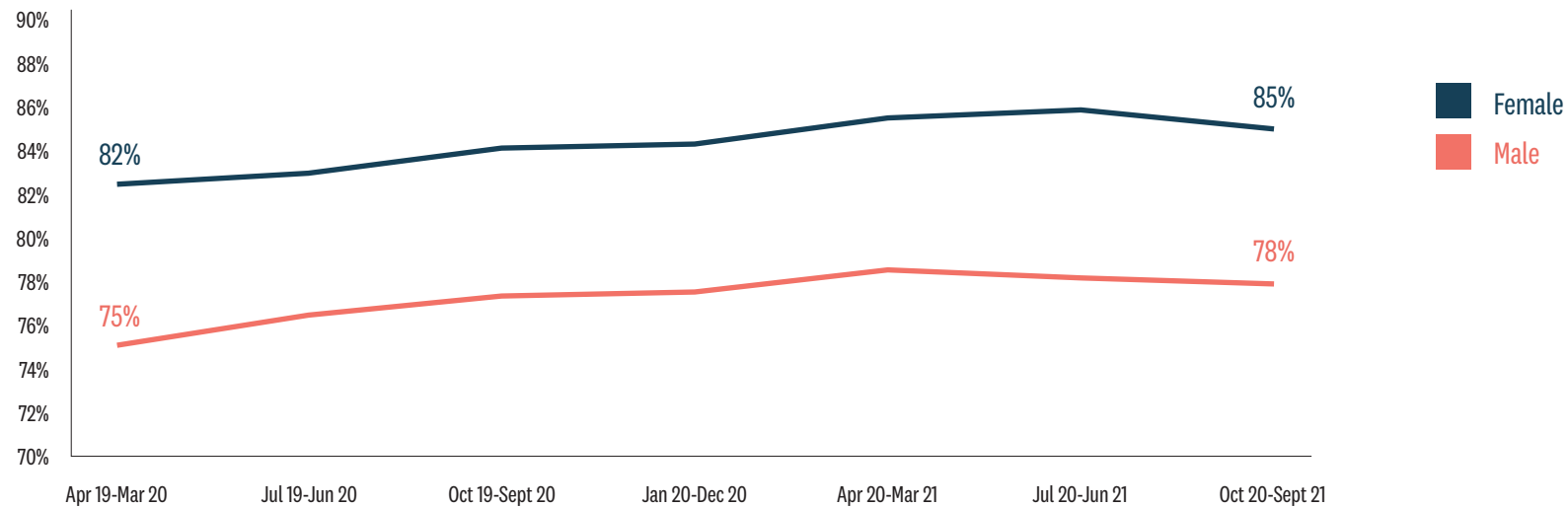


Gender

Women consistently hold stronger belief that climate change is real

Climate change is real by gender:

Agree/Strongly Agree



CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?

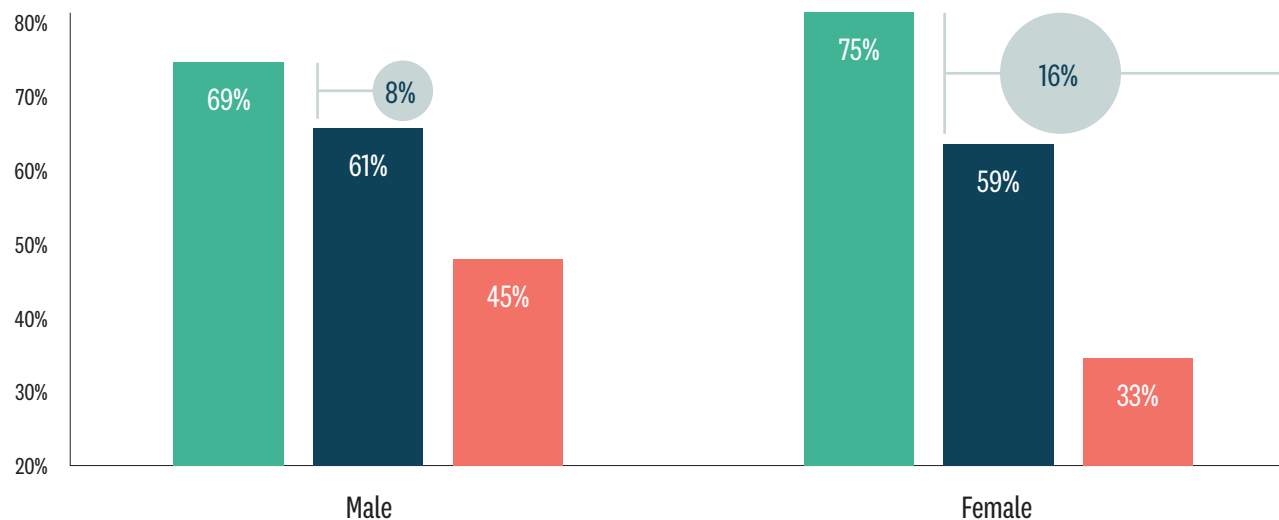
Base: Men n>1,460; Women n>1,537 (12MR data, by quarter)

Gender

Men are harder to galvanise into action

Climate beliefs:

Agree/Strongly Agree



The gap between openness to change and taking action is twice as big for women as it is for men.

- I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change
- I'm doing all I can to reduce my environmental impact
- It's hard to reduce your environmental impact without reducing your quality of life

CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?

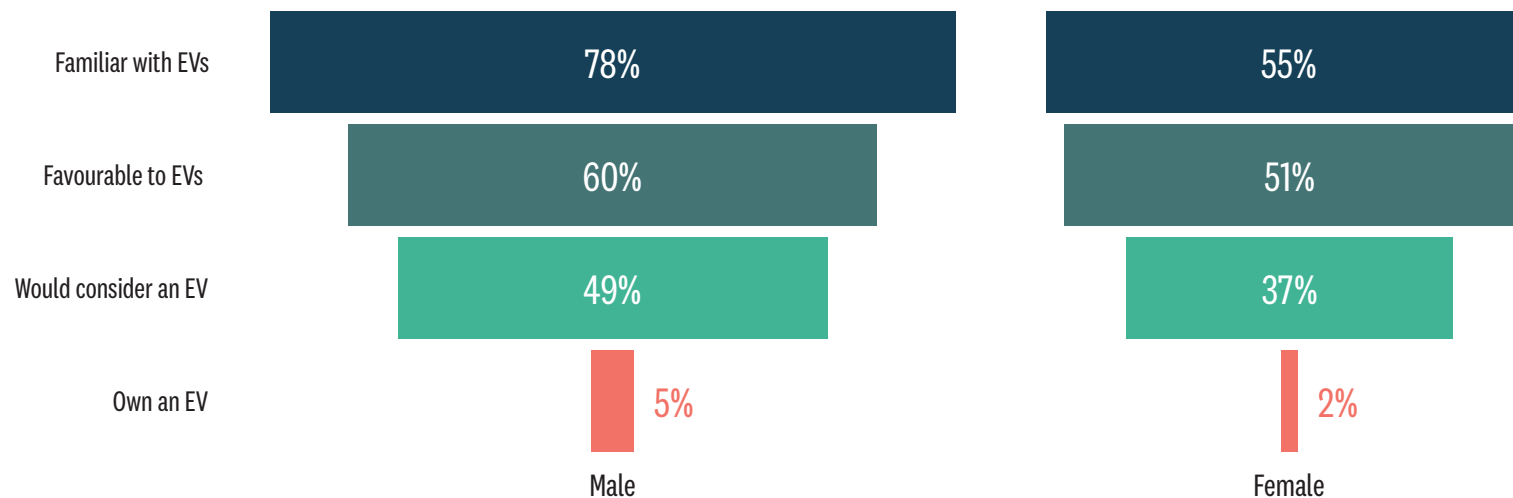
Base: Men n>1,460; Women n>1,537 (July 2020 – June 2021)

EVs are a focus area for men as they have greater familiarity, consideration and usage

Gender

Climate beliefs:

Agree/Strongly Agree



EV3 How would you rate your familiarity with Electric Vehicles? EV4 How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion or impression of Electric Vehicles? Q177.

There are a number of different types of vehicles currently being sold in New Zealand. Thinking about your next vehicle purchase, how likely are you to consider the following vehicles?

Q160c. What type of cars or other passenger vehicles (excluding motor bikes) do you currently own within your household?

Base: Men n=1,532; Women n=1,572; Filter: July 2020 – June 2021

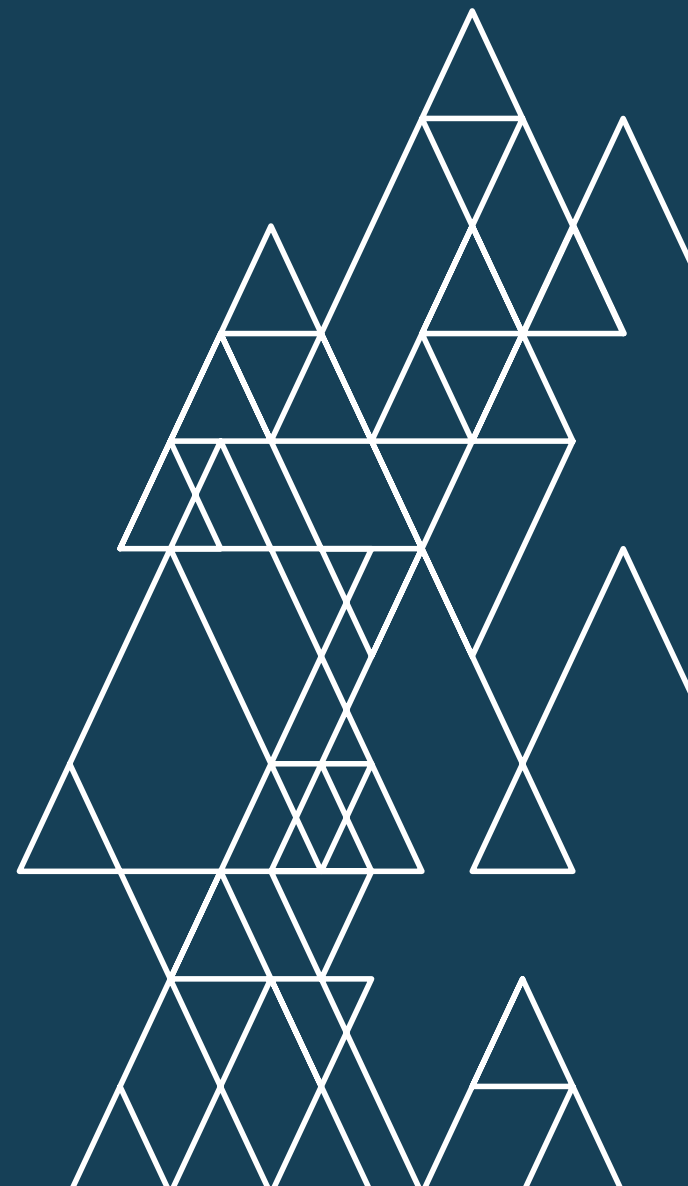
How could our approach to deepening engagement with the cause differ based on gender?

Men need convincing that action is urgent and action is worth it. Increasing links between travel choices and climate impact would increase momentum.

Women need reassurance that they can make a difference. We can do this by empowering them with knowledge of how they can make that difference.



Cultural Background

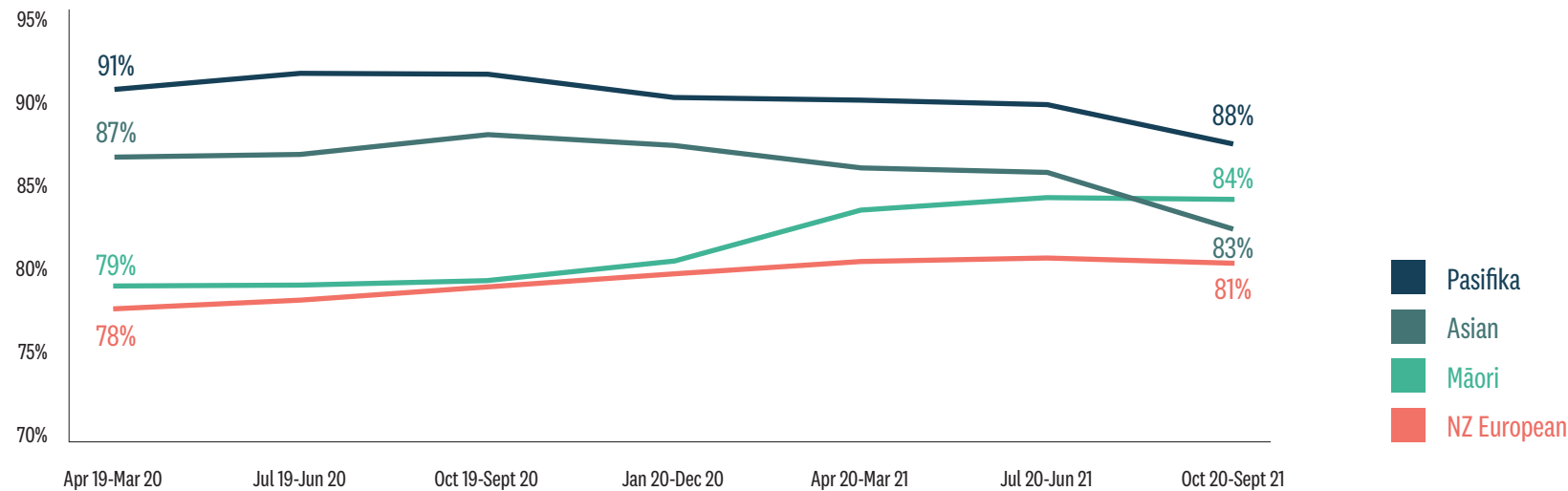


An increasingly aligned belief in climate change among different ethnicities over time

Cultural background

Climate change is real by ethnicity:

Agree/Strongly Agree



CLIMATE_BELIEFS. How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?

Base: NZ European n>2,103; Māori n>302; Pasifika n>86; Asian n>392 (12MR data, by quarter)

Cultural frames of reference are important when talking about climate change

Particularly around collective and individual references

Cultural background

Climate beliefs in New Zealand:

Agree/Strongly Agree

	Average	NZ European	Māori	Pasifika	Asian
We need to make changes to our energy use, even if it means a change to our current lifestyle	73%	71%	76%	77%	80%
I am prepared to change my own personal behaviour in order to reduce climate change	72%	70%	74%	77%	82%
I can make a personal difference to the environment	71%	70%	73%	77%	79%
It's hard to reduce your environmental impact without reducing your quality of life	39%	35%	43%	37%	58%

Red figures = significantly lower than overall average

Green figures = significantly higher than overall average

How much do you agree or disagree with below statements?

Base: NZ European n=2,052; Māori n=306; Pasifika n=94; Asian n=440; Filter: July 2020 – June 2021

And when we overlay cultural background and age, we see revealing differences

Cultural background

Among **Pasifika**, younger generations are more concerned about environmental issues than older generations

While among **Māori**, concern is stronger in the older 50+ generation than those in their 20s

Among **Asian** ethnicities, we generally see less variation across different demographic groups like age and gender

And among **New Zealand European**, there's a skew towards younger people showing heightened concern, but differences are not as pronounced as with Pasifika

Climate change is a 'very important' issue		
	20 - 29	50+
Pasifika	55%	39%
Māori	50%	57%
Asian	54%	56%
NZ European	50%	45%

GENERAL_ISSUES - How important do you consider each of the following issues to be for New Zealand? TOP BOX Very Important

Base: 20-29 (NZ European n=702; Māori n=160; Pasifika n=59; Asian n=248); 50+ (NZ European n=2,140; Māori n=177; Pasifika n=56; Asian n=196); Filter: July 2020 - December 2021

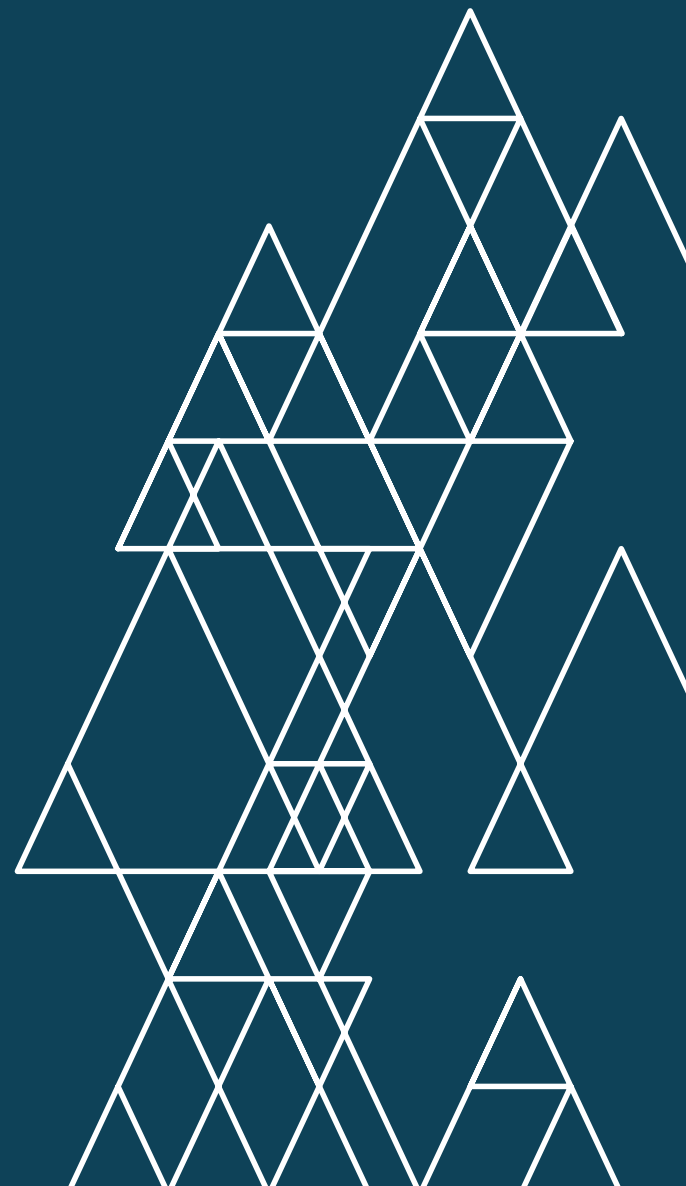
We are united in our beliefs

But getting people to take action means understanding where they're coming from, and tailoring accordingly.



Ngā mihi

Q&A



For more information, insights, and interactive tools that can help you make better decisions around energy and climate change visit:

www.eeca.govt.nz/insights/

For general questions contact:

info@eeca.govt.nz

For media questions contact:

media@eeca.govt.nz

