

EECA Consumer Monitor

Quarterly Report Q4 FY23 (April – June 2023)

Insight into New Zealanders' climate change attitudes and actions

Background

EECA's market research programme monitors the mood of the nation relating to climate change, energy emissions and efficiency, and topics like electric vehicles.

We use insights from three key sources to track New Zealanders' response to key issues and initiatives relevant to EECA and to track how we're going vs our strategic focus areas.

1. CONSUMER MONITOR

Every quarter, we survey 750 adult New Zealanders to track their beliefs, behaviours and attitudes to climate change and energy. The representation of these respondents is ensured across age, gender and region.

3. BUSINESS MONITOR

Every quarter, we survey 500 New Zealand businesses, sampling business decision makers who are responsible for energy or transport decisions. This report is available separately.

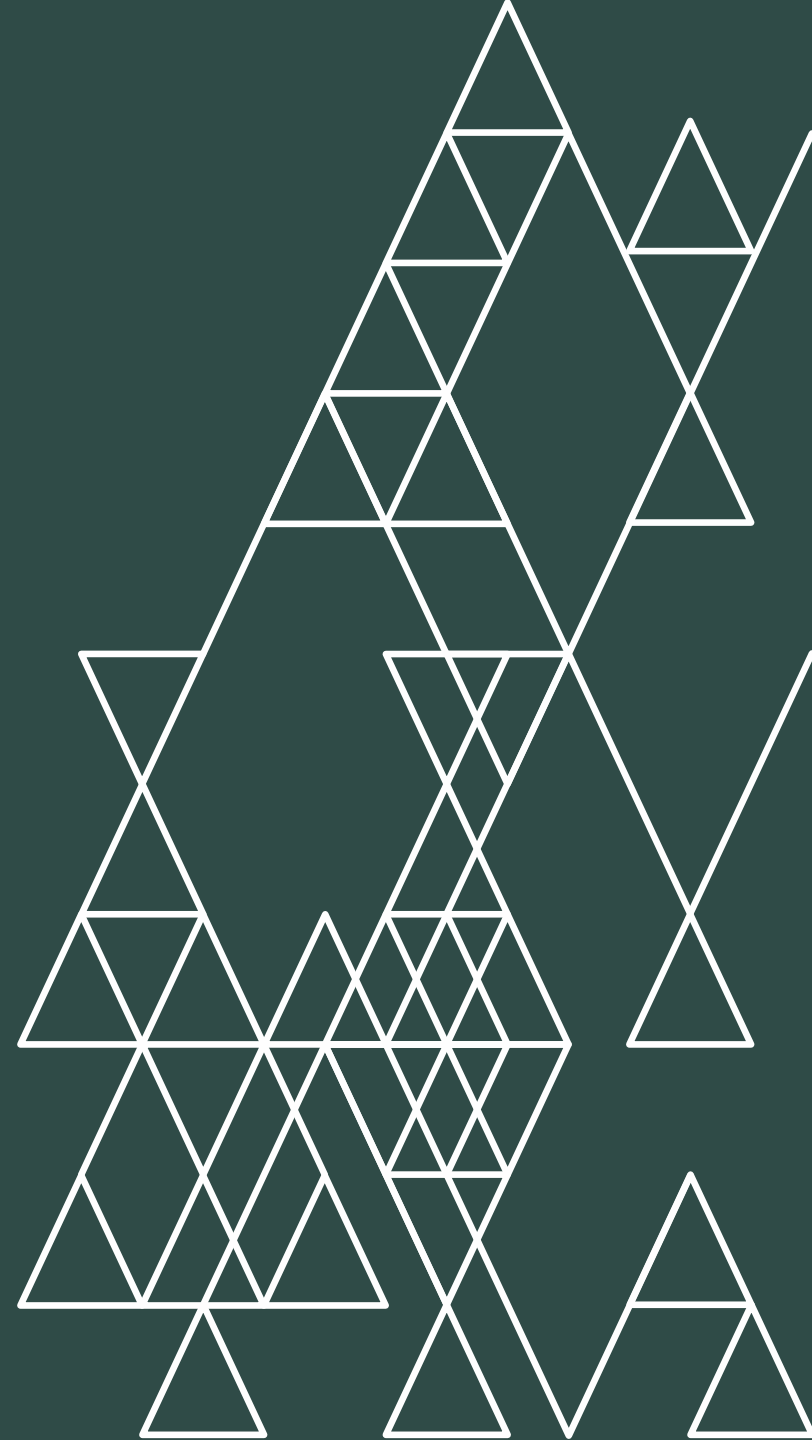
This research is conducted by TRA. TRA is an insights agency that combines understanding of human behaviour with intelligent data capability to help clients navigate uncertainty and answer complex problems.

Overview

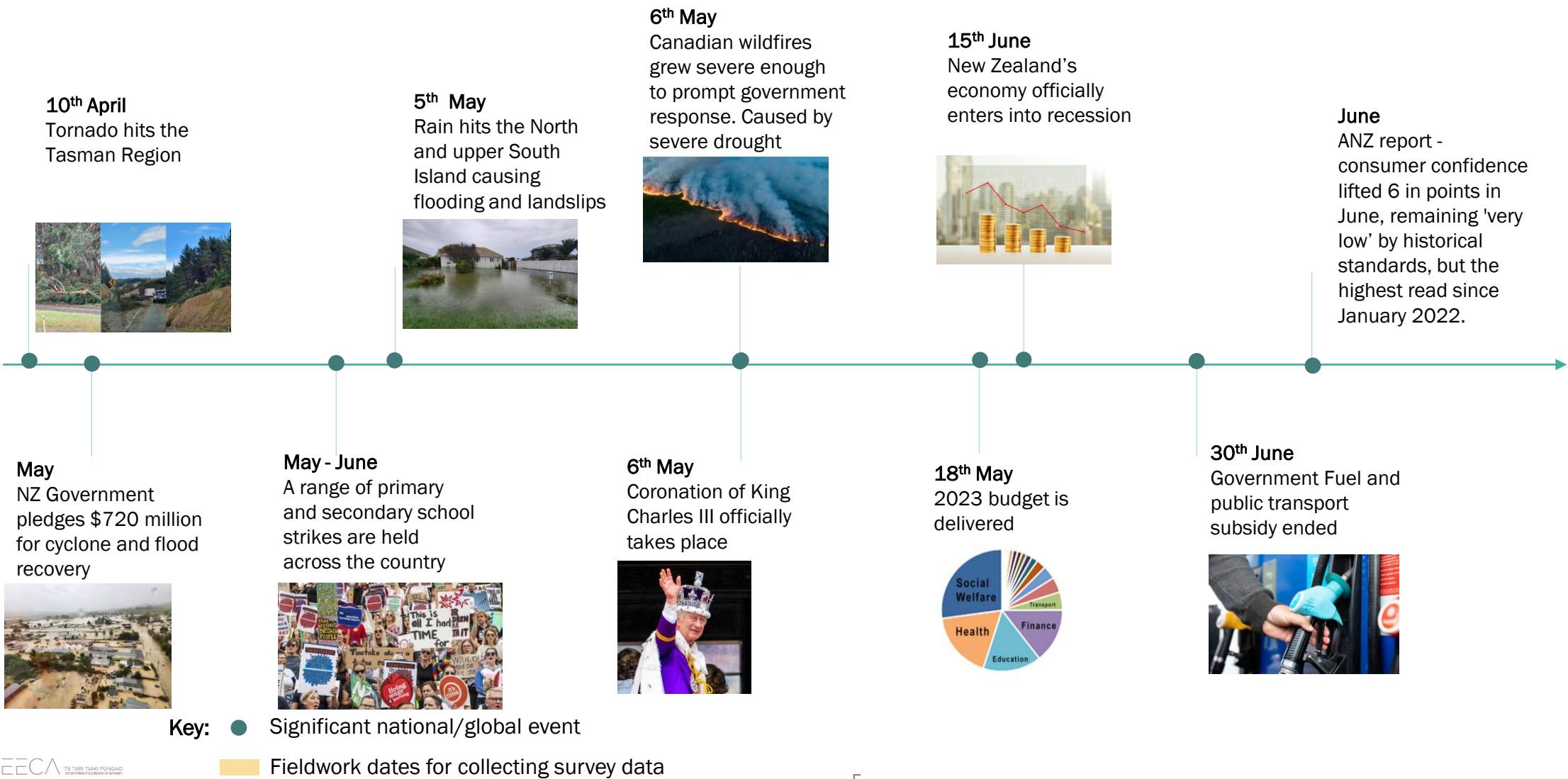
It's a time of uncertainty and worry and this is felt among all kinds of New Zealanders. Climate change is increasingly on our minds and cost of living pressures continue to build. We're united in these concerns and receptive to actions that help solve both problems.

But we're constrained. We're taking fewer climate-friendly actions. People are more likely to see taking action as costing them, rather than saving them. It's therefore no surprise that actions associated with an expense are increasingly likely to be rejected.

Current New Zealand Landscape



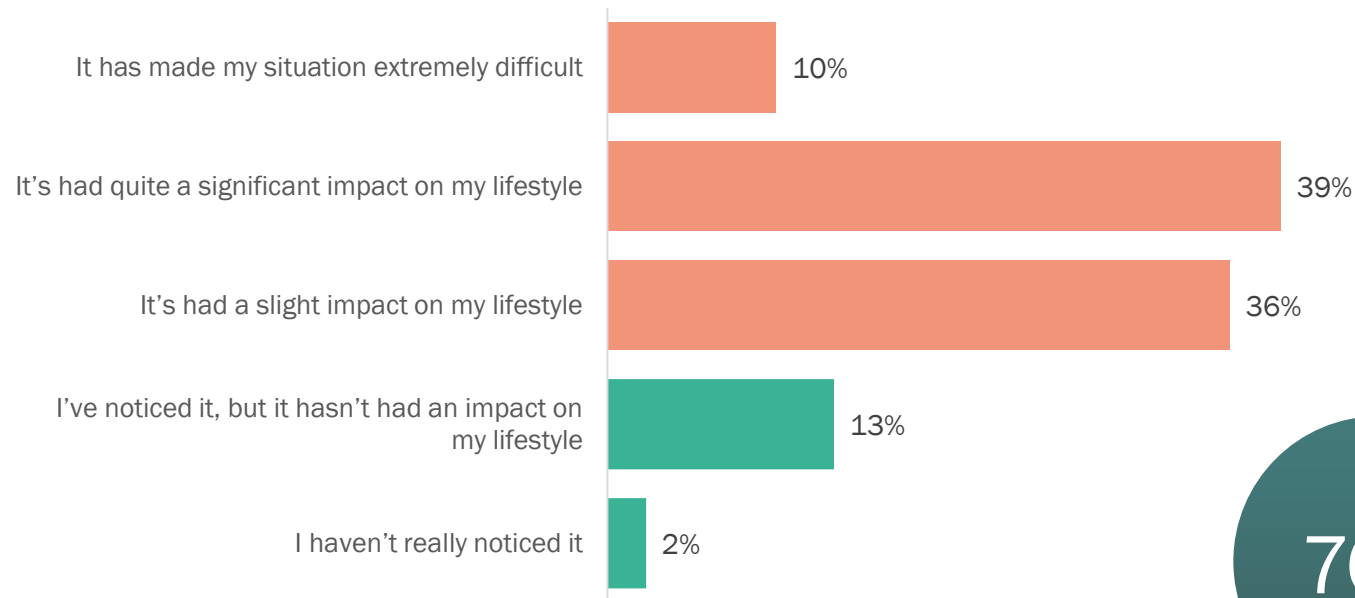
Significant events this quarter:



Nearly all New Zealanders are feeling the impact of the cost of living

This impact is felt universally across all ages, genders, geography and income

Impact of cost of living on households



85% are feeling effects of the cost of living increase to some degree.

The impact has been significant for around half of the population – and for 1 in 10 it's made their situation extremely difficult.

76%

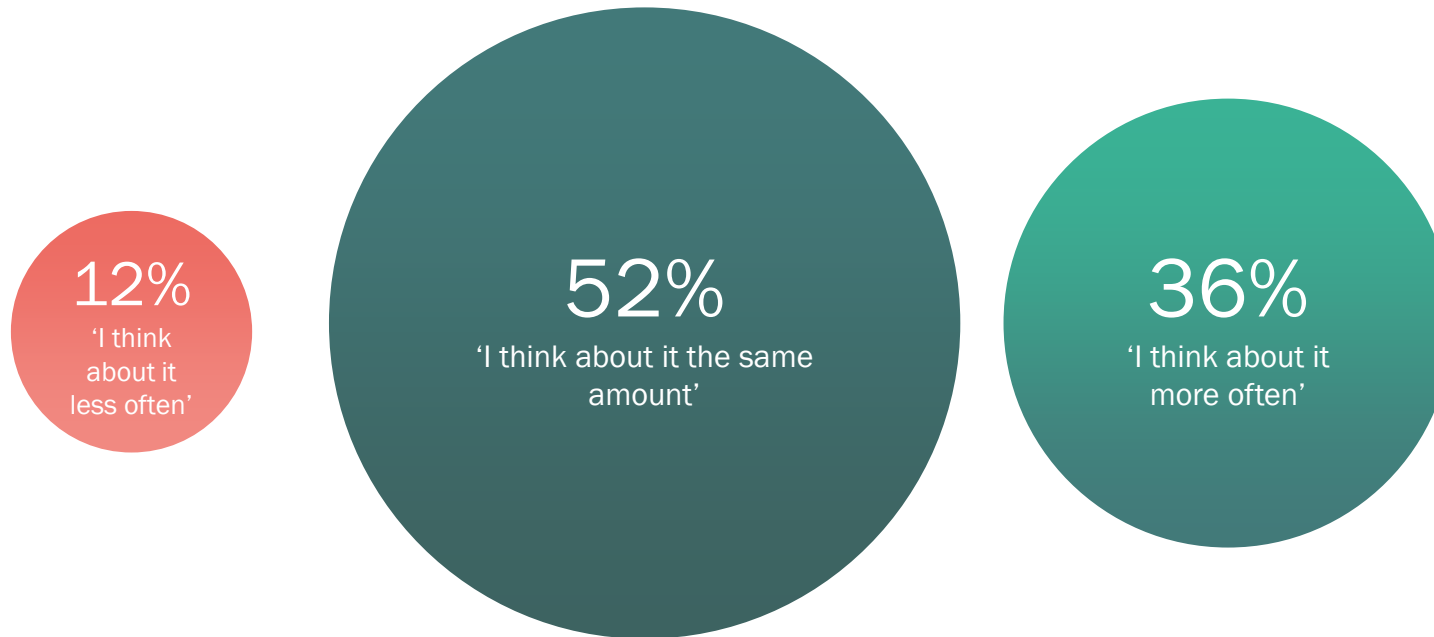
See the cost of living as a 'very' important issue for New Zealand – this has held the number one spot of 15 societal and environmental issues every quarter since Q3 FY21.

COL_IMPACT: What impact has the high cost of living had on your household?
Base: Total Sample, n=754

Alongside this, climate change is increasingly on New Zealanders' minds

Over one-third are thinking about climate change more than they were 12 months ago

People thinking about climate change compared to last year



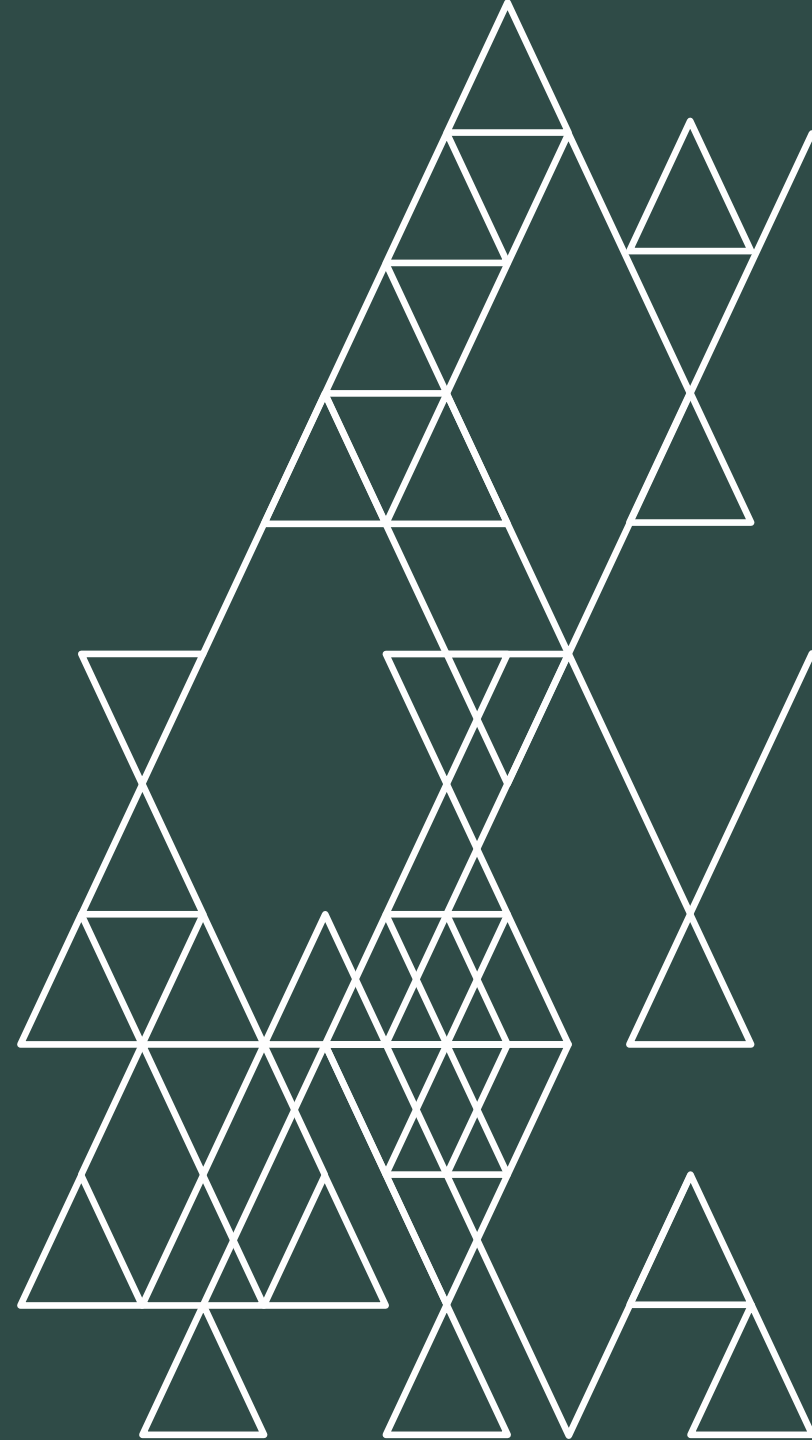
Just like with the cost of living impact, this finding transcends different demographic groups – it's universal across all ages, genders and incomes.

There are, however, some indicative variations with geography, with 'Upper North Island' seeing the largest increase and 'Other South Island' thinking about it the least.



Hearts and Minds

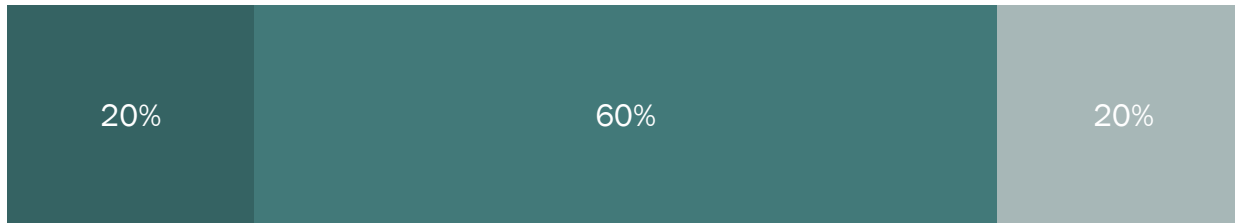
Understanding New Zealanders' climate change beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.



Most New Zealanders don't link the cost of living with their willingness to take climate action

For 6 in 10 New Zealanders, cost of living has no impact on their willingness to act.

Effect of rising costs on willingness to act



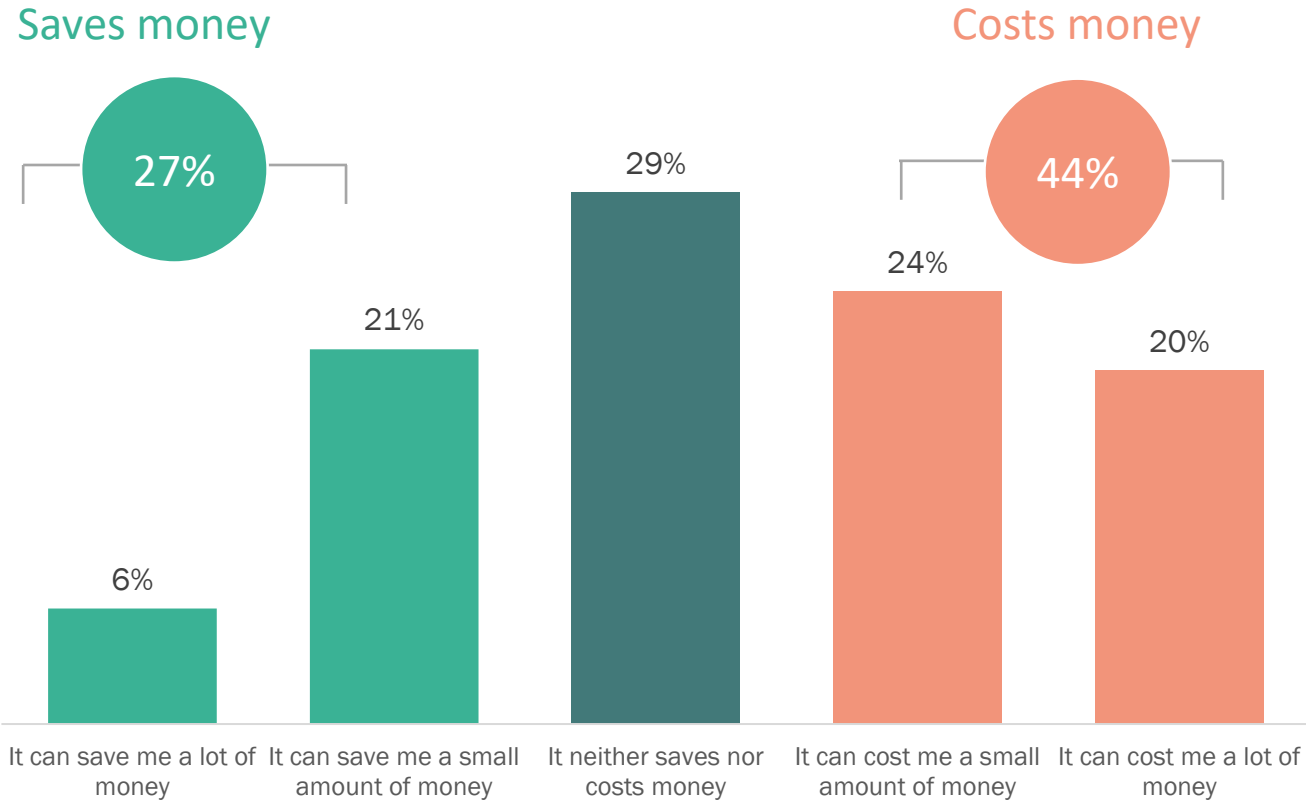
■ I'm more willing to act ■ I'm neither more or less willing to act ■ I'm less willing to act

WILLINGNESS: How has rising costs of living impacted your willingness to take climate action?
Base: Total Sample, n=754



And people more likely associate climate action as costing them, rather than an opportunity to save

Cost association with taking climate action

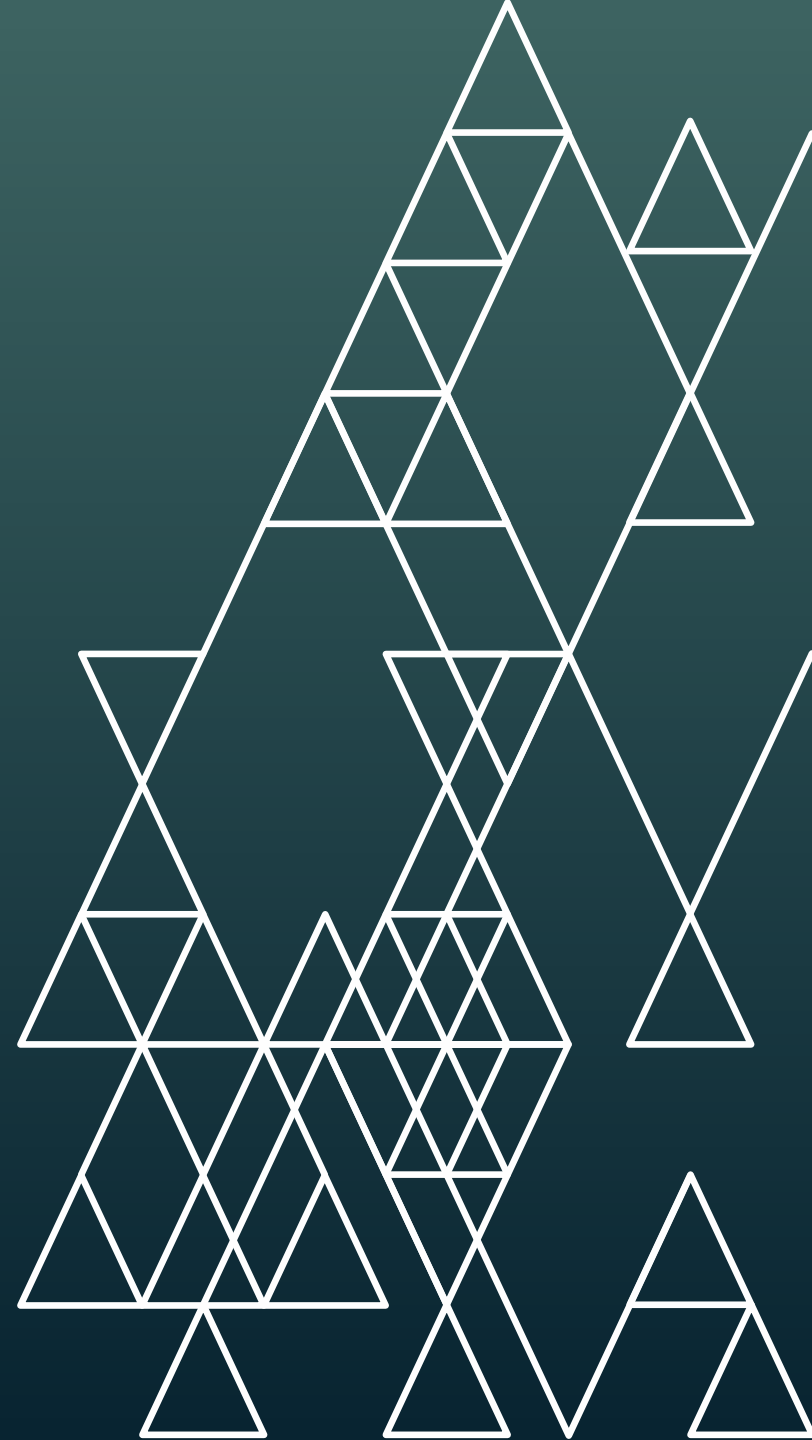


There is a trend among both age and income when associating actions with money:

- As age increases there is a stronger perception that taking action comes with a financial cost (younger New Zealanders aged under 35 are the least likely to think this).
- As income decreases so do the associations of taking action to save (those with annual household incomes under \$60k are least likely to see cost-saving benefits of taking action).

48%

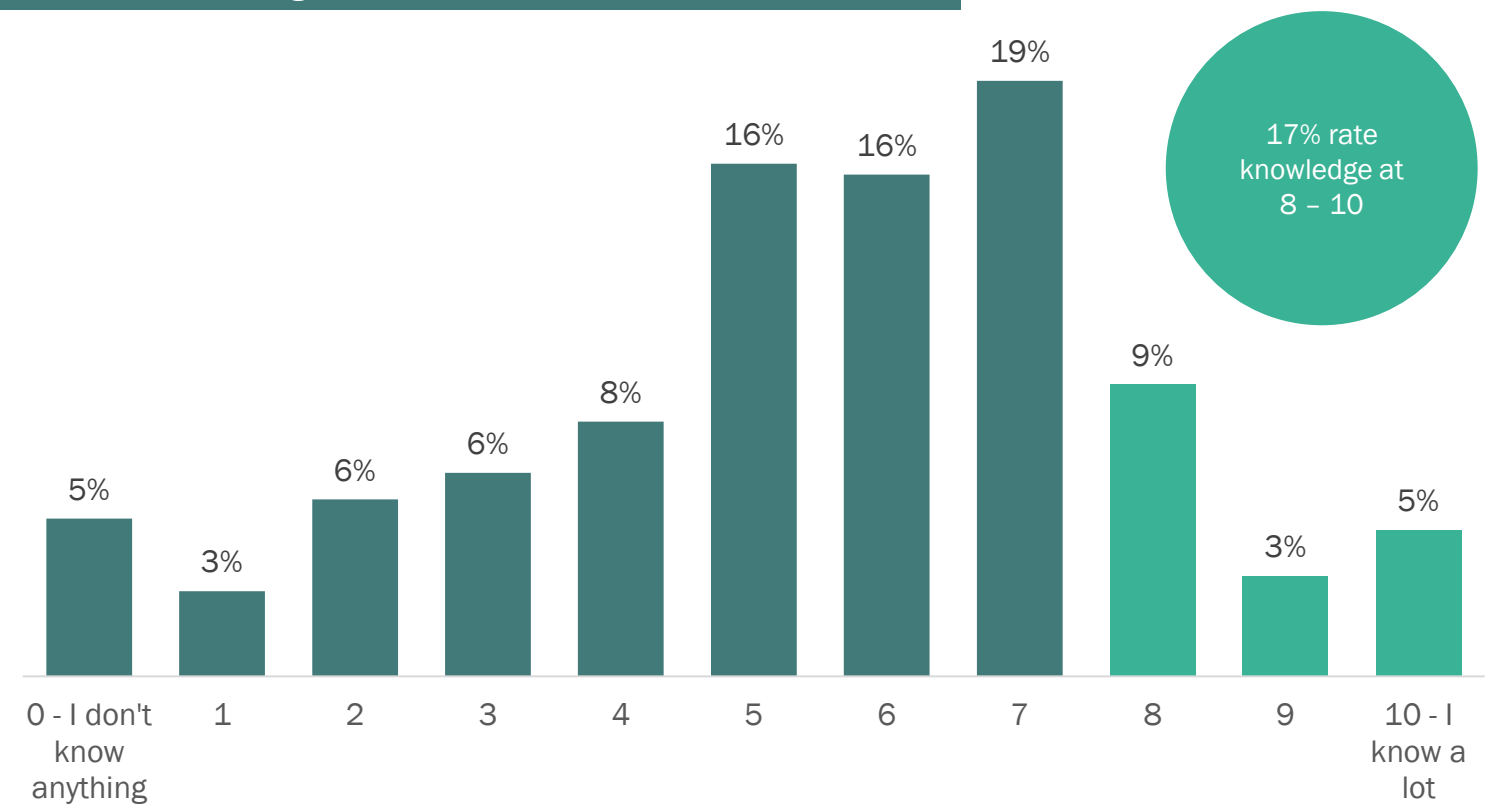
Would only take action if it
saved them money



Most people’s knowledge on how to reduce their carbon emissions is limited

Fewer than 1 in 5 rate their knowledge in this area highly (8-10). Results have been fairly stable over the past year.

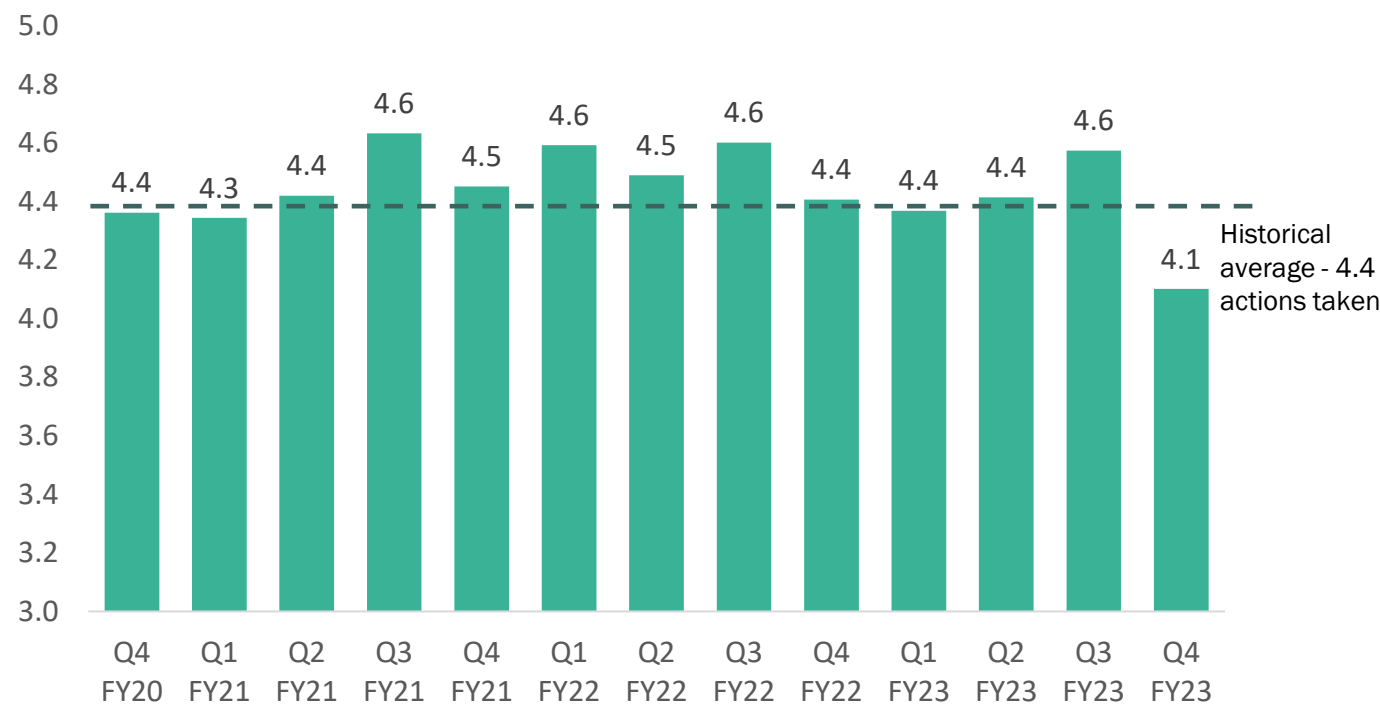
Level of knowledge – Jan-Mar 2023 results



The average number of climate-friendly actions consumers are taking regularly is at a record low

Young consumers aged 18-34s and women are where we've seen the steepest fall in actions, but all demographic groups are less active this quarter than they were three months ago.

Average number of actions taken over time



CLIMATE_ACTIONS. Which of the following actions do you take in order to reduce your climate change impact? (Always / Almost Always);
Base: n=577-772 Q4 n=703-885 New Zealanders.

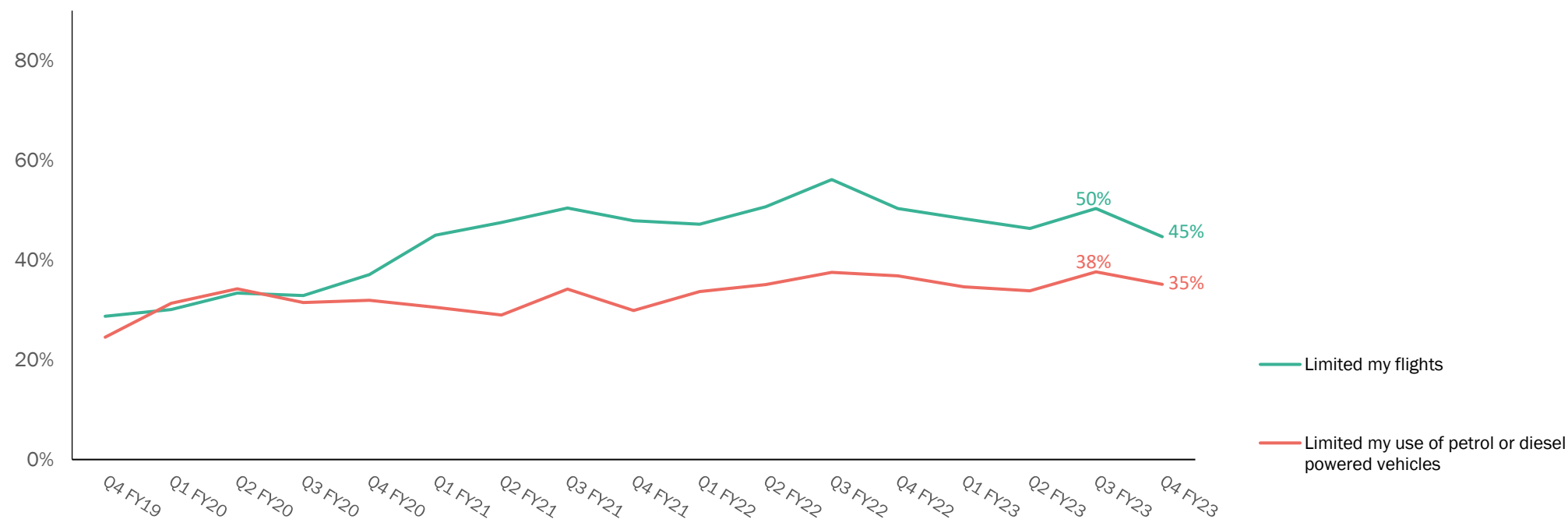
Statistically significant change compared to previous quarter



Transport actions have softened slightly

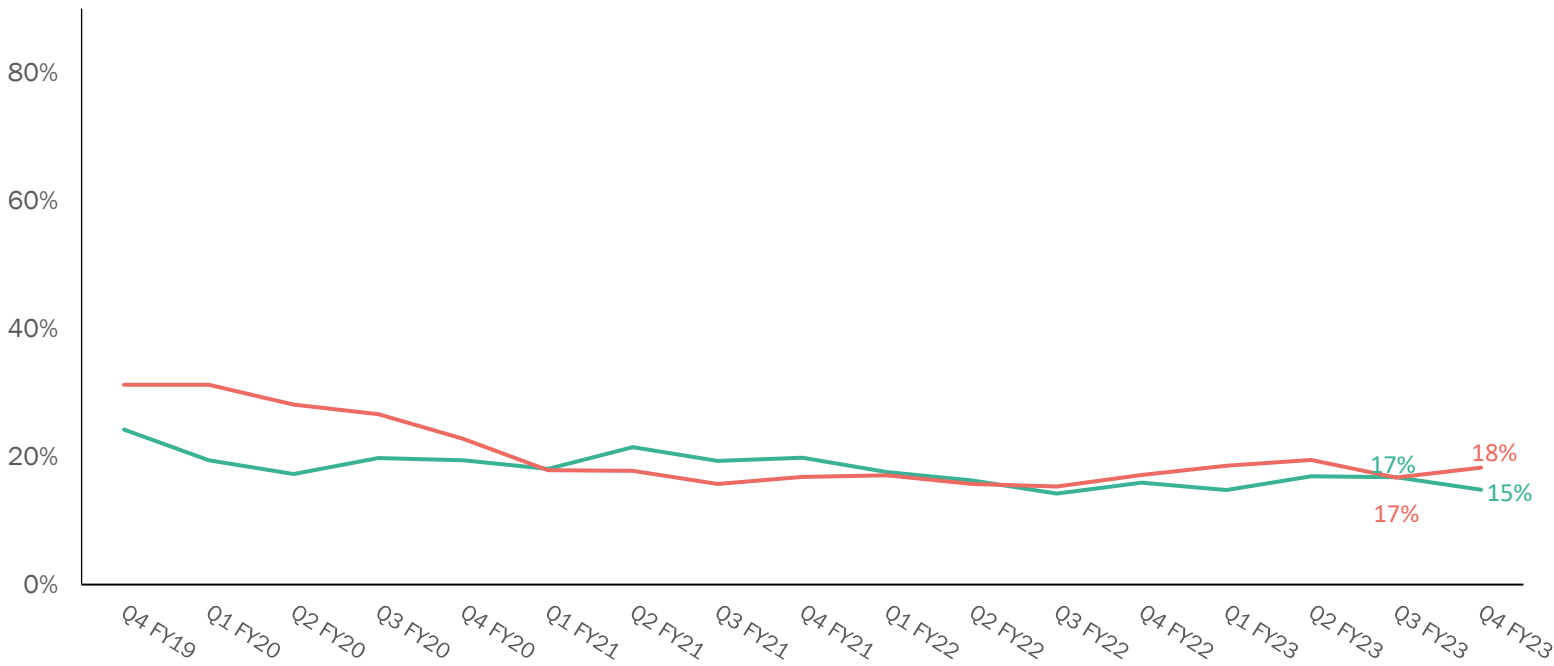
Results this quarter are in line with the historic average

Transport Actions taken always/almost always



But the number of people who *never* take transport action is in slow decline as more people adopt emissions-reducing transport behaviour

Transport Actions taken never



- 15% of consumers say they never limit their use of petrol / diesel vehicles compared to 24% 4 years ago pre-COVID in Q4 FY19)
- 18% say they never limit flying compared to 31% in Q4 FY19.

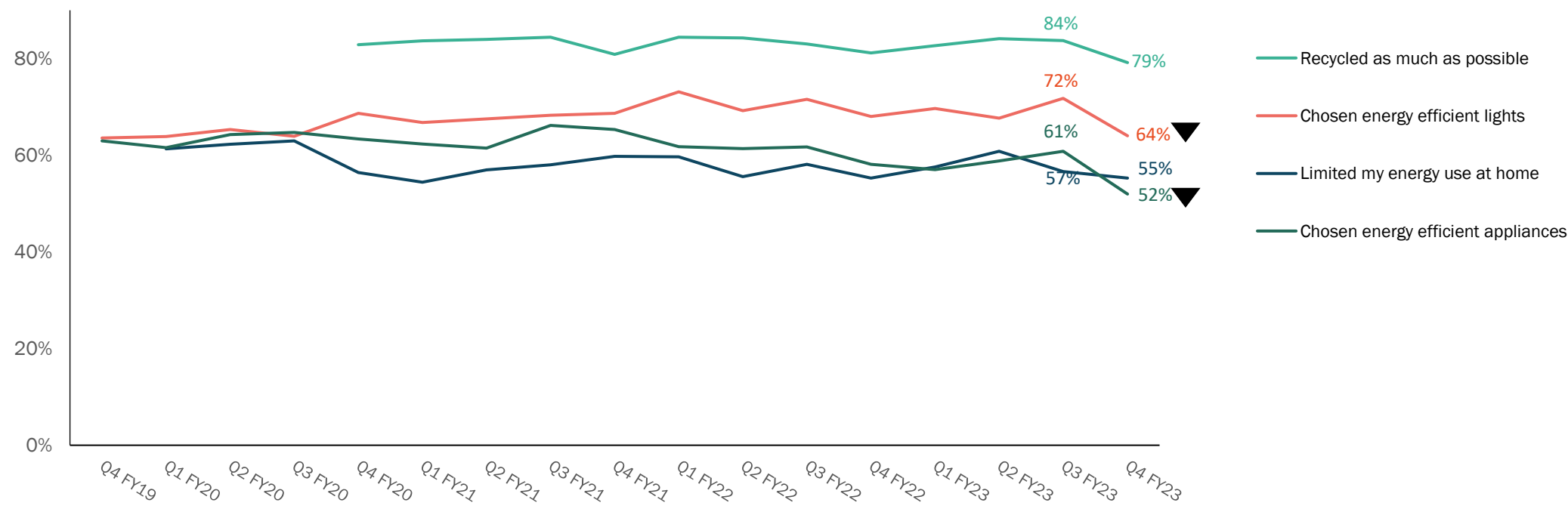
— Limited my use of petrol or diesel powered vehicles
— Limited my flights



But home-based actions are all reaching their lowest points ever

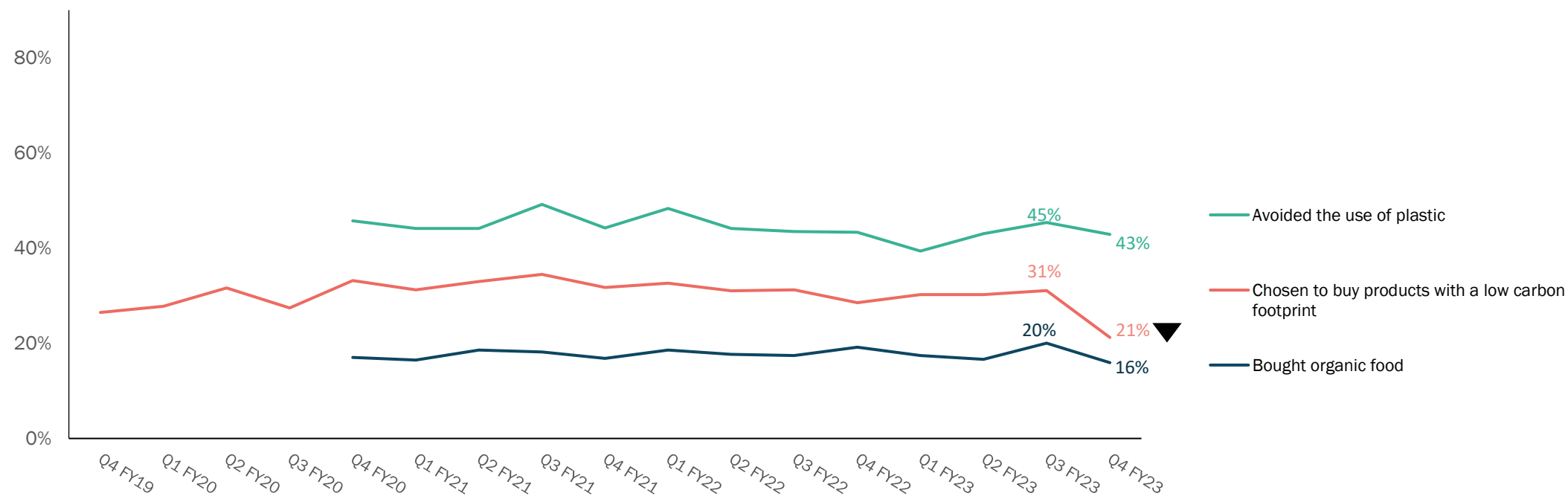
Although the majority of consumers still do each of these actions regularly, we've seen a sharp decline, and this is most pronounced among actions with a cost outlay to the consumer: opting for energy efficient lights and appliances.

Home-based Actions taken always/almost always



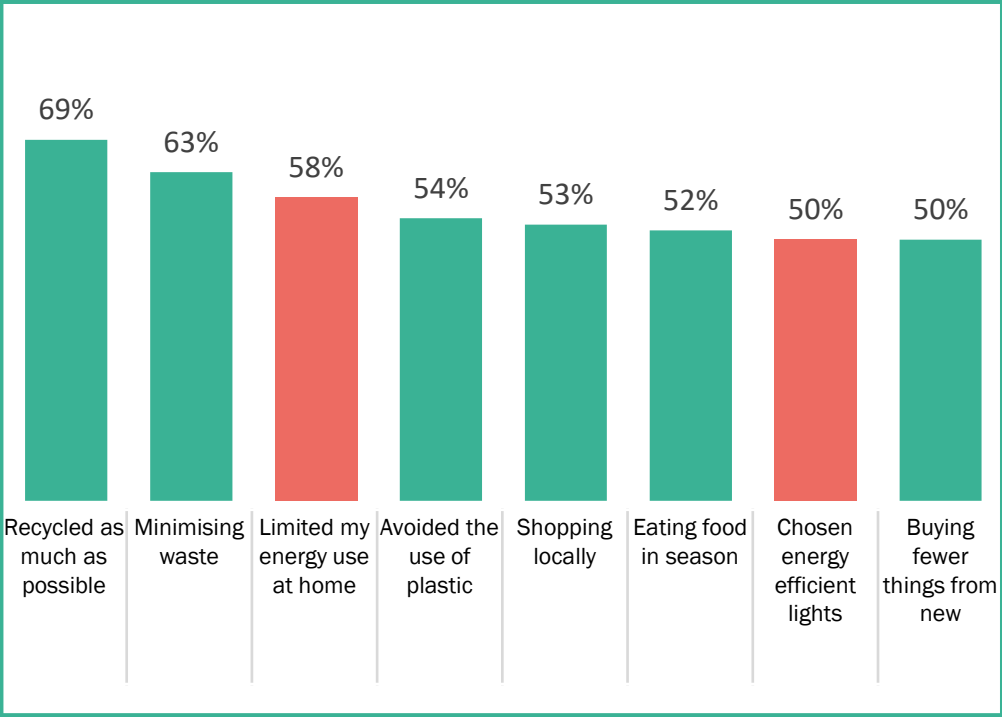
And other purchase-based actions are either at their lowest point ever, or have dropped back to where we were two years ago

Actions taken always/almost always

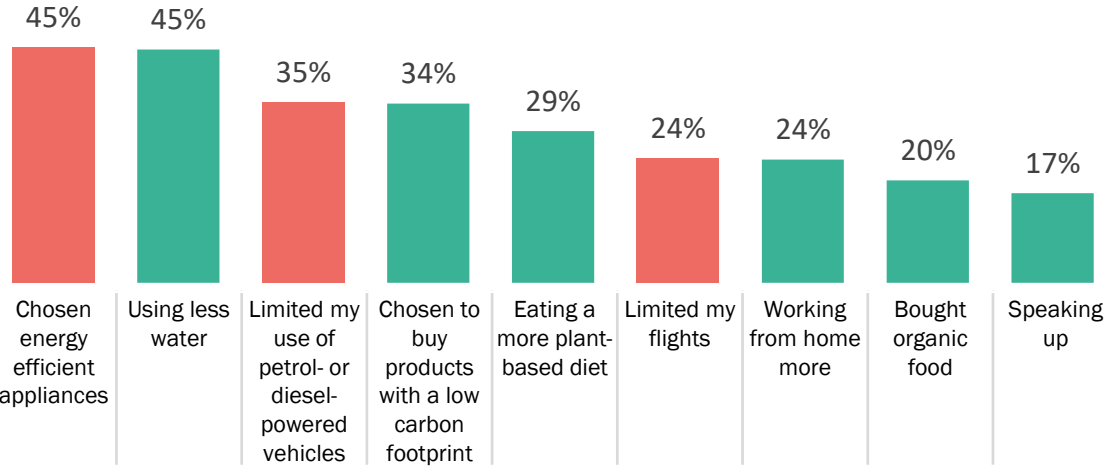


There are a number of actions that at least half of New Zealanders think they could realistically do more often

Actions consumers think they could do more of

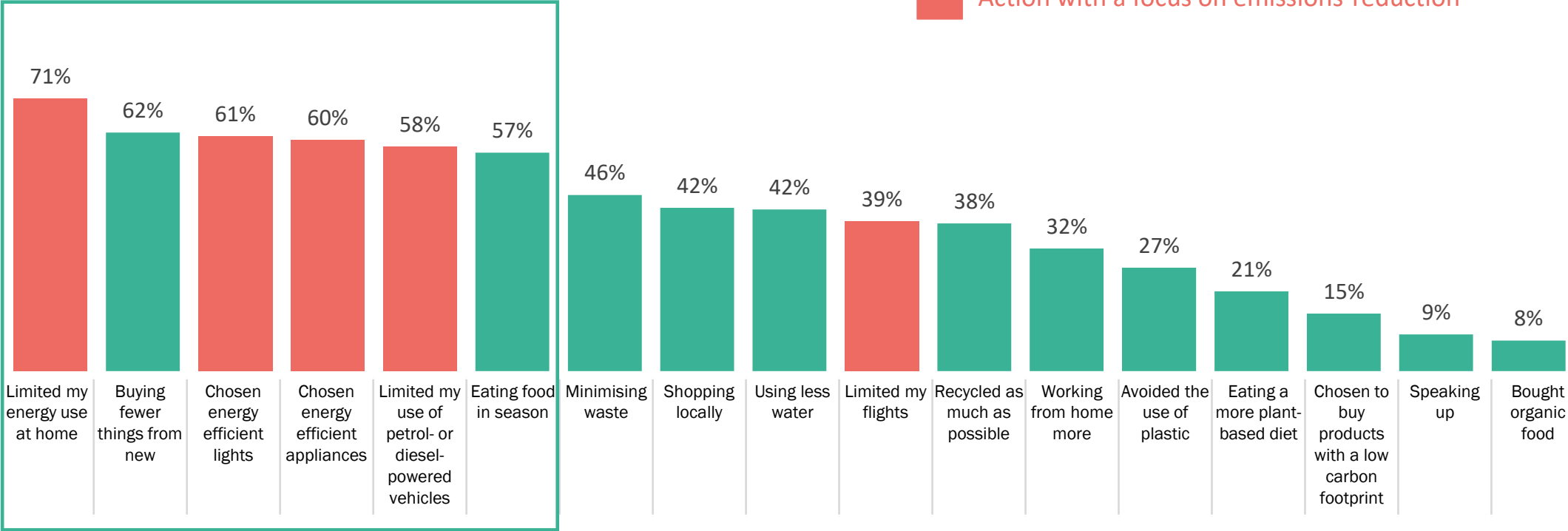


Action with a focus on emissions-reduction



And most consumers see those actions which focus on emissions reduction as cost-saving

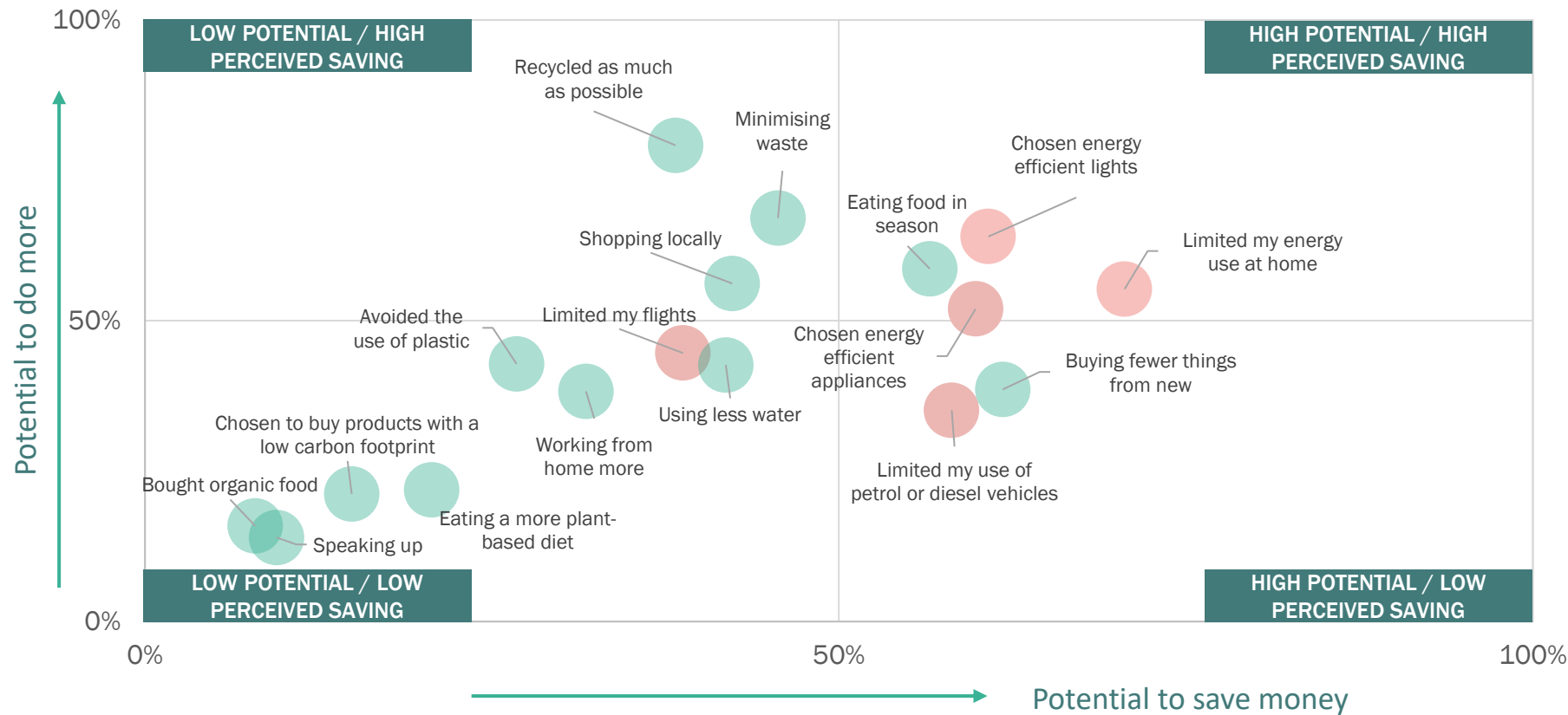
Actions perceived as cost effective



When we overlay doable actions with cost-saving perceptions we gain insights into what actions people are more likely to take up

Saving actions by potential actions – May 2023

Action with a focus on emissions-reduction



Thank you