

Christchurch City Council

Life in Christchurch

Climate Change 2024

Prepared by Monitoring and Research
November 2024

Life in Christchurch and the Ōtautahi-Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy

In 2021 the Christchurch City Council adopted the Ōtautahi Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy. The Strategy provides the Council with a high-level framework of climate related actions and reinforces emission reduction targets for both the District and the Council. Emissions reduction targets set by the Council are monitored through quantitative monitoring and the greenhouse gas inventory. The information collected through the Life in Christchurch survey series, specifically the climate change survey, investigates the qualitative aspects, exploring whether residents are taking action to reduce their emissions, whether they are committed to taking action to reduce their emissions, and whether there are any barriers to them acting. Information collected will inform longitudinal outcomes monitoring but will also provide information to support multiple streams of work being undertaken by units across the Council on emissions reduction.

Key Messages

Respondents told us that environmental issues relating to water, such as the pollution of lakes, rivers, and seas, and ground water contamination, are the most important issues facing Christchurch, with 93% and 92% of respondents seeing these as critical issues, respectively. This result aligns with Goal 4 of the Climate Resilience Strategy, which emphasises the protection of our natural environment and taonga.

When asked to describe their feelings about climate change using only one word, the most frequently used terms were *concerned/concerning*, and *worried/worrying*.

Generally, respondents are willing to engage in behaviours and actions that work to reduce carbon emissions where they feel achievable and are easily integrable into their lifestyle. Recycling as much as possible remains the action respondents take most frequently to reduce personal emissions.

A lack of alternatives and convenience were the top two barriers that respondents identified as preventing them from engaging in behaviours that are more sustainable. For high emissions reducing actions like driving less and eating plant-based meals, convenience is the biggest barrier. Cost also remains a large barrier for respondents, especially for actions such as generating solar energy at home and buying locally made products.

There are some discrepancies between the actions that respondents think will have the most impact on emissions, and the actions that research shows will have the biggest impact. For example, respondents tend to overestimate the effectiveness of actions that have a relatively lower impact such as recycling, and underestimate and/or are unwilling or unaware of the effectiveness of higher impact actions such as driving less or eating plant based or meat-free meals.

Respondents generally feel a sense of responsibility to reduce their personal emissions and negative social and environmental impacts. Younger respondents and respondents who identify as a woman are more likely to report they feel this sense of responsibility.

Gender and age also play a role in determining which climate actions respondents think have the biggest impact on reducing emissions and how prepared respondents are to change their personal behaviour in order to reduce emissions.

While the majority of respondents believe governments (central and local), businesses and individuals (residents and visitors) should be doing more with regards to reducing emissions and tackling climate action, the highest proportion of respondents feel that businesses should be doing more.

Confidence amongst respondents that Council is doing enough to reduce emissions or prepare for the local impacts of climate change is low. However, most commonly, respondents either feel ambivalent (*neither agree nor disagree*) or report not knowing what the Council is doing in these spaces.

Who did we hear from?

Age	Count	%
Under 24 years	63	1.4%
25–34 years	339	7.3%
35–49 years	896	19.3%
50–64 years	1525	32.8%
65 years and over	1823	39.2%
Total	4646	
Not specified	115	

Gender	Count	%
Male	1849	52.0%
Female	1677	47.2%
Non-binary/Another gender	30	0.8%
Total	3556	
Not specified	1205	

Ethnicity	Count	%
European	3301	92.8%
Māori	165	4.6%
Asian	118	3.3%
Pacific Peoples	39	1.1%
MELAA	36	1.0%
Other	339	9.5%
Not specified	1205	

We heard from **4761** residents in total

Community board	Count	%
Waihoru Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote	1087	25.9%
Waimāero Fendalton-Waimari-Harewood	786	18.7%
Waipapa Papanui-Innes-Central	776	18.5%
Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood	723	17.2%
Waipuna Halswell-Hornby-Riccarton	667	15.9%
Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula	163	3.9%
Total	4202	
Not specified	559	

Where statistical testing is presented in tables to examine statistically significant relationships between a respondent's age or gender and their response given, the following symbols have been used:

Key

- ^ ^ ^ The value is statistically higher than if there was no relationship
- ∨ ∨ ∨ The value is statistically lower than if there was no relationship

More arrows correspond to a higher degree of statistical significance

How important do you think each of the following issues are for Christchurch?

Issue	Very important/important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant/very unimportant
Pollution of lakes, rivers and seas	93%	5%	2%
Ground water contamination	92%	5%	2%
Violence in society	91%	6%	2%
The cost of living	90%	8%	2%
The economy	88%	10%	2%
Caring for our aging population	88%	10%	2%
Crime levels	87%	10%	3%
Safeguarding of children and their futures	87%	10%	3%
Availability of affordable housing	85%	12%	3%
Mental health issues	85%	11%	3%
Build-up of plastic in the environment	85%	11%	5%
Racism / hate crime	83%	11%	5%
Air pollution	78%	16%	6%
Extreme weather events	75%	18%	7%
Climate change	74%	15%	11%
Transport choice	72%	20%	7%
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	71%	16%	12%
Biodiversity loss	70%	19%	8%
Isolation and loneliness	68%	24%	7%
Urban sprawl	58%	29%	11%

Note: environmental issues are shown in **green**

Environmental issues relating to water are generally perceived as more important than other environmental issues

82% of New Zealanders feel improving water quality is very/extremely important
(MfE Environmental Attitudes Report, 2018)

The pollution of lakes, rivers and seas remains the most important issue for respondents with 93% considering it an important or very important issue for Christchurch. In 2022, 95% perceived it to be an important or very important issue.

The contamination of ground water was included for the first time this year's survey and is perceived as an important or very important issue by a large proportion of respondents (92%).

Other environmental issues such as **air pollution, plastics, extreme weather events** and **biodiversity loss** are perceived by the majority of respondents to be important, although issues such as **the economy, violence** and **crime** feature more highly.

The perception that **climate change** is an important or very important issue has decreased 5% since 2022 (79%).

Similarly, **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** saw a 6% decrease in perception of importance amongst respondents from 2022 (78%).

Understanding of climate change contributors

Christchurch emissions

Consistent with past surveys, travel by fossil fuel vehicles (46%), waste production (45%), deforestation (35%) and agriculture (28%) remain top of mind for respondents when considering what they think the largest contributors to climate change are for Christchurch.

According to the Ministry for the Environment (2018), one in five New Zealanders (21%) recognise agriculture as the largest contributor to climate change.

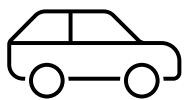
Household emissions



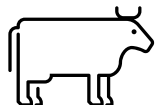
Buying less or avoiding plastic products or products wrapped in plastic (34%), recycling as much as possible (33%) and improving insulation (e.g. ceiling insulation or double glazing) (33%) are the most commonly reported actions respondents think would have the biggest impact on reducing household carbon emissions.



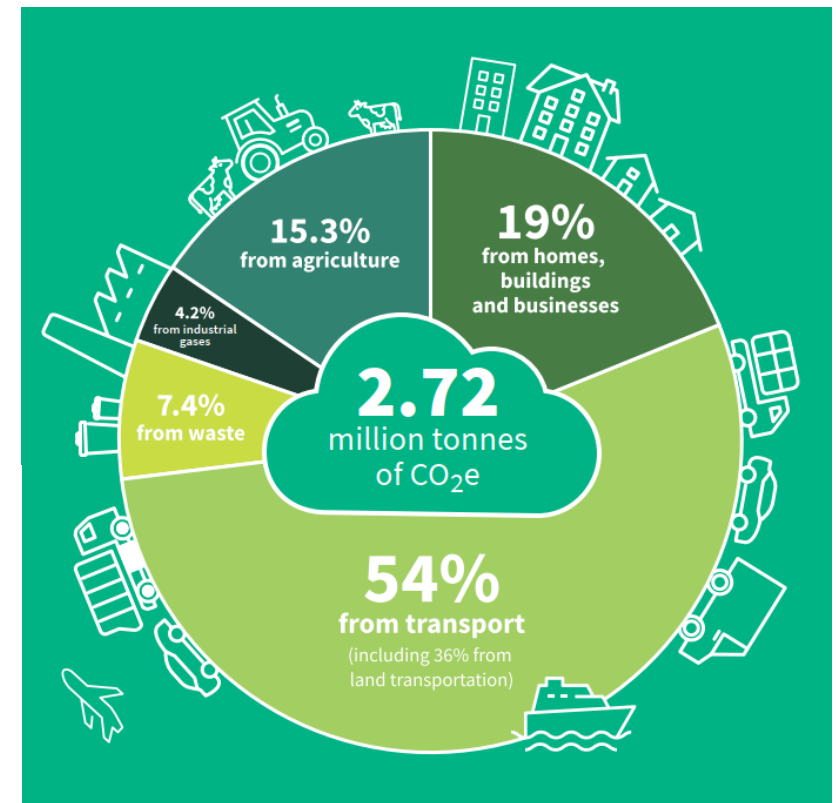
Eating plant-based or meat free meals are less likely to be considered by respondents as having a large impact on reducing household carbon emissions. Eating meat free or plant-based meals are also ranked low by respondents as actions they would like to take more often to reduce their personal emissions (6% and 5% respectively).



Driving less is generally considered by respondents to be an effective way of reducing emissions, however only 11% of respondents (n=460) would consider driving less more often to reduce emissions. Convenience is the most reported barrier (53%) to respondents opting to drive less. This is followed by the lack of alternatives (33%) and driving less not suiting their lifestyle (20%).



In 2022, **34%** of New Zealanders reported they would be likely to **eat fewer meat and/or dairy products** within the next year. The global averages for these actions sit higher at **44%** and **41%** respectively. - Ipsos Global Advisor



“Public understanding of what to do as individuals to reduce contribution to carbon emissions is low. Less packaging and recycling are incorrectly seen as priorities, whereas living car-free or changing to a vegan diet (which have a far higher impact) are not seen by most as having a major impact.”

-Ipsos Global Advisor

The Ōtautahi-Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy

“Climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. It is already affecting our weather, health and wellbeing, natural environment, taonga species, mahinga kai, food production, biosecurity, infrastructure, and the economy.” - Ōtautahi-Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy

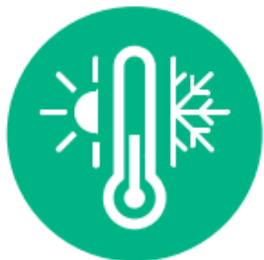
In 2021 the Council adopted the Ōtautahi-Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy. The Strategy provides a high-level framework for our climate related actions and reinforces emission reduction targets for both the Christchurch District and for the Council. The 2024 Climate Change survey was designed to provide resident perceptions on climate action and emissions, personal and Council preparedness, and commitment to taking emissions reducing climate actions. The remainder of the report sets out the results of the latest Life in Christchurch Climate Change Survey within the context of the Ōtautahi-Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy and the four main goals it has set.



Goal 1
Net zero emissions Christchurch



Goal 3
We have a just transition to an innovative low-emission economy



Goal 2
We understand and are preparing for the ongoing impacts of climate change



Goal 4
We are guardians of our natural environment and taonga

Goal 1: Christchurch has net zero emissions

Long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets are an important part of ensuring New Zealand can make a smooth transition to a low-emissions future (*Ministry for the Environment*). Our district's target is net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

For Christchurch residents, behaviour changes at a personal and household level are an effective tools to help reduce emissions.



Respondents are generally willing to engage in behaviours and actions that work to reduce household carbon emissions which they feel are achievable and can easily integrate into their lifestyle.



But there is still a range of barriers that prevent respondents from taking more action, including actions that have greater impacts on total emissions reductions.

Barriers to behaviour change

Convenience and lack of alternatives were the most commonly reported barriers to behaviour change for respondents.



Cost is the most common barrier to actions such as generating solar energy at home, buying locally made products, using an electric vehicle and choosing energy efficient appliances.



For high emissions reducing actions such as eating plant-based meals, driving less, and catching the bus, **convenience** is the highest barrier.



Consistent with 2018 New Zealand trends reported by the Ministry for the Environment, the lack of alternatives remains the main barrier to respondents feeling able to buy fewer plastic products or products wrapped in plastic.

Lack of alternatives

- Buy less / avoid plastic products or products wrapped in plastic (64%)
- Fly less (57%)
- Reduce general household waste (43%)
- Working from home (all or part of the time) (40%)
- Use less energy at home (39%)
- Recycle as much as possible (36%)
- Remote meetings or learning (reducing travel for work or education) (34%)

It is less convenient

- Catch the bus (69%)
- Shop at farmers markets or buy from local fruit and vegetable growers (57%)
- Drive less (53%)
- Consciously reduce your consumption (37%)
- Reduce food waste (36%)
- Choose seasonal fruit and vegetables (33%)
- Eat plant-based meals (e.g. vegan) (31%)
- Eat meat free meals (e.g. vegetarian) (27%)

It costs too much

- Use an electric vehicle (89%)
- Generate solar energy (e.g. solar panels on your home) (86%)
- Choose energy efficient appliances (60%)
- Buy locally made products (44%)

How much do respondents agree they are prepared to change their own personal behaviour in order to reduce emissions

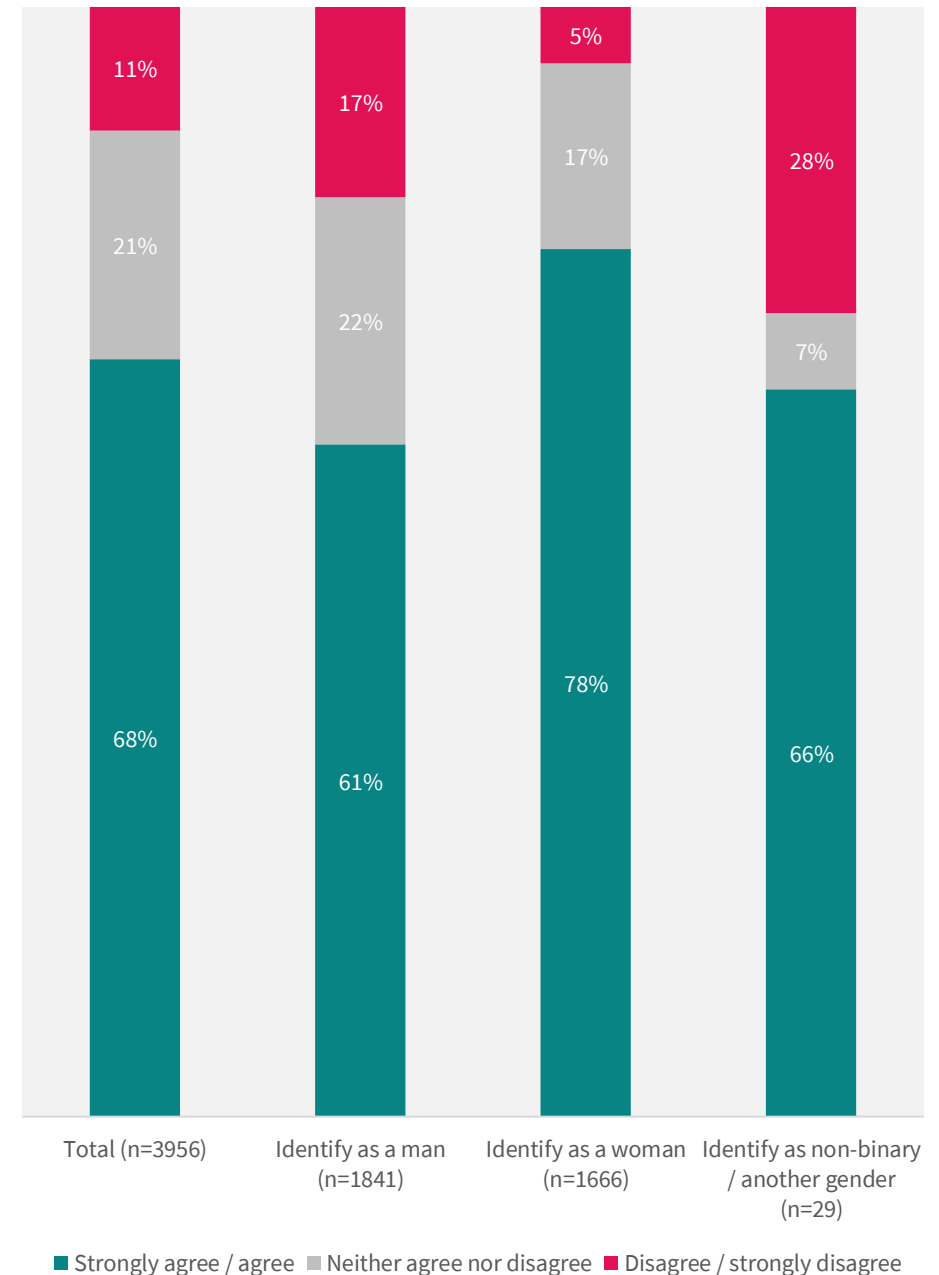
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Under 24 years	↑↑				
25 - 34 years	↑↑		↓↓		
35 - 49 years	↑↑↑		↓↓↓		
50 - 64 years			↓		
65 years and over	↓↓↓		↑↑↑	↑	↓

What does this mean?

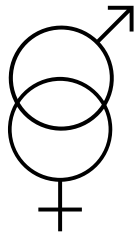
Respondents aged under 50 years are more likely to strongly agree that they are prepared to change their own personal behaviour to reduce their emissions

Those 65 years and over are significantly more likely to disagree or feel apathetic about their preparedness to change their personal behaviour to reduce emissions.

On average, respondents who identify as a woman are more prepared to change their personal behaviour to reduce personal emissions.



Differences between genders in actions considered to have the biggest impacts



What does this mean?

When asked which action respondents do that they think has the biggest impact on reducing emissions, results vary significantly between genders.

Respondents who identify as a man generally identify transport related actions as having the biggest impact on reducing personal emissions compared to other genders. Specifically, the use of electric vehicles and travel by bike.

Conversely, respondents who identify as a woman are significantly more likely to consider actions relating to consumption, waste, and diet/food as having a bigger impact on personal emissions reductions.

Respondents who identify as non-binary / another gender are more likely than other genders to consider actions such as reducing food waste and working from home as having the biggest impacts on personal emissions reductions.

*“Compared to those around the world, New Zealanders remain **less willing** to consume less meat & dairy or switch to more sustainable transport options” – Ipsos, New Zealanders’ Attitudes & Behaviours Towards Climate Change 2022*

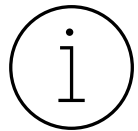
	Identify as a man	Identify as a woman	Identify as non-binary / another gender
Working from home (all of the time or part of the time)			^^
Eat plant-based meals (e.g. vegan)	vv	^^	
Shop at farmers markets or buy from local fruit and vegetable growers	vv	^^	
Use an electric vehicle	^^	v	
Travel by bike	^^	vvv	
Reduce general household waste		^	
Recycle as much as possible	^		
Eat meat free meals (e.g. vegetarian)	vvv	^^	
Reduce food waste			^
Buy less / avoid plastic products or products wrapped in plastic	vvv	^^	
Consciously reduce your consumption	vvv	^^	

Goal 2: We understand and are preparing for the ongoing impacts of climate change

In order to effectively understand and prepare for climate change and its ongoing impacts, we need to assess local climate risks, develop adaptation plans, and implement mitigating strategies to reduce emissions. Actions such as engaging with and educating Christchurch residents to raise awareness are crucial acts in this endeavour.

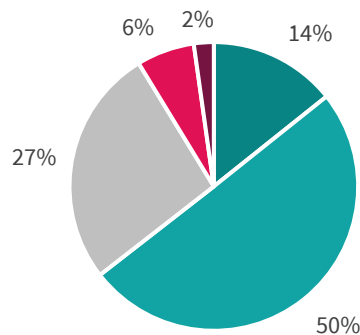
55% of respondents are aware that Christchurch City Council has set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for Christchurch

With just over half of respondents (55%) aware that Christchurch City Council has set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for Christchurch, there is a clear opportunity to enhance communication and education efforts. This will help communities better understand the local impacts of climate change and the importance of preparation and adaptation strategies.



Only 17% (n=651) of respondents normally get information about the things they can do to take climate action and reduce their emissions from the Council website.

How much do respondents agree they feel knowledgeable about the things they can do to take climate action and reduce emissions




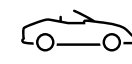
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree


“The public perceive many actions as having a far greater impact on reducing emission than they actually do” – Ipsos Global Advisor

This statement made by Ipsos in their 2022 report holds true globally, nationally, and is consistent with how Christchurch residents perceive some emissions reducing actions.

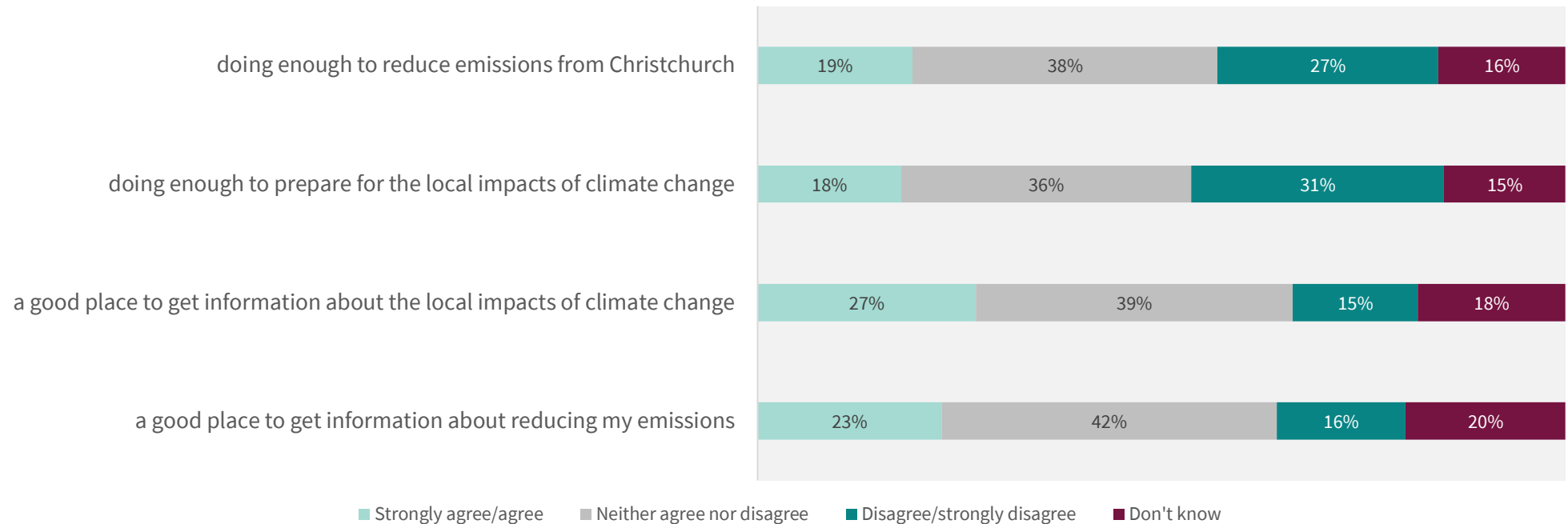
64% of respondents **agree** or **strongly agree** they feel knowledgeable about the things they can do to take climate action and reduce emissions. However, for actions such as **eating plant-based meals**, **driving less**, and **recycling**, actual and perceived emissions reducing effectiveness is misaligned.

 Plant-based meals/diet
Ipsos true ranking: 7th
LiC ranking: 19th

 Driving less/car free
Ipsos true ranking: 1st
LiC ranking: 8th

 Recycling
Ipsos true ranking: 60th
LiC ranking: 2nd

Christchurch City Council is...



Less than a third of respondents agree or strongly agree Christchurch City Council is a good place to get information about the local impacts of climate change (27%), or to get information about reducing their emissions (23%).



Less than a fifth of respondents agree or strongly agree Christchurch City Council is doing enough to prepare for the local impacts of climate change (18%) or is doing enough to reduce emissions from Christchurch (19%).

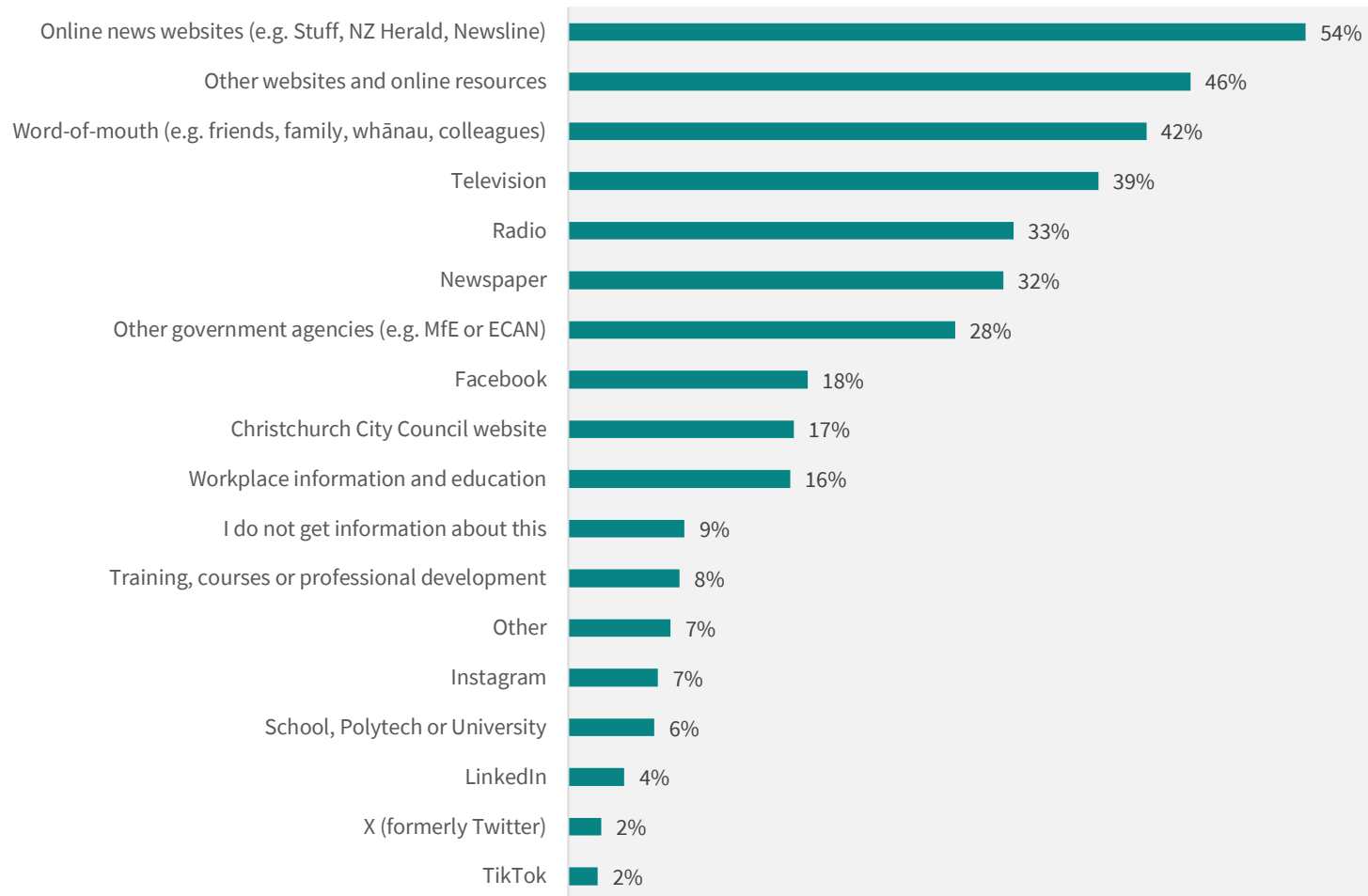


Most commonly, respondents feel ambivalent about if Christchurch City Council is doing enough or if it is a good place to get information regarding emissions reductions and climate change.

These sentiments are reflected nationally, with MfE reporting only 18% of New Zealanders agree that Central Government is doing enough to combat climate change

(MfE Environmental Attitudes, 2018)

Where respondents are getting information about the things they can do to take climate action and reduce emissions



Roughly the same number of respondents get information about the things they can do to take climate action and reduce emissions from Facebook (18%, n=691), and the Council's website (17%, n=651).

However, when considering the helpfulness and trustworthiness of these two information sources, 46% of respondents who utilise Facebook find it to be the least helpful or trustworthy.

Conversely, 46% of respondents who utilise the Council's website find it the most trustworthy source of climate related information.

43% of respondents who visit the Council website for information also find it the most helpful in supporting specific climate action.



Online news websites (54%, n=2130) and other websites and online resources (46%, n=1797) are the top two most reported places that respondents go to get information regarding what they can do to take climate action and reduce their emissions.



42% (n=1670) of respondents get this information by word-of-mouth from whānau, friends, family, and/or colleagues.



Amongst respondents who normally access other websites and online resources for information regarding climate action, 46% (n=717) find this information source to be the most helpful in supporting specific climate action.

Goal 3: We have a just transition to an innovative, low-emissions economy

To achieve a just transition to an innovative, low-emissions economy we must shift away from engaging in high greenhouse gas emitting economic activities and toward an economic system that produces minimal emissions. For this transition to be just, we must support equal access and opportunity for residents and Christchurch businesses alike to engage in sustainable practices.

Amongst respondents, support of environmentally friendly businesses and products is clear, with 80% (n=3017) indicating that a business's actions influence their purchasing decisions. However, salience varies across groups of respondents. For example:

- Respondents aged 25 -34 years old are *significantly more likely* to be influenced by a brand's environmental and social actions when making purchasing decisions, and those aged 65 years and over are *less likely* to be influenced by such actions.
- Similarly, women are *significantly more likely* to consider a brand's environmental and social actions compared to men and non-binary respondents.

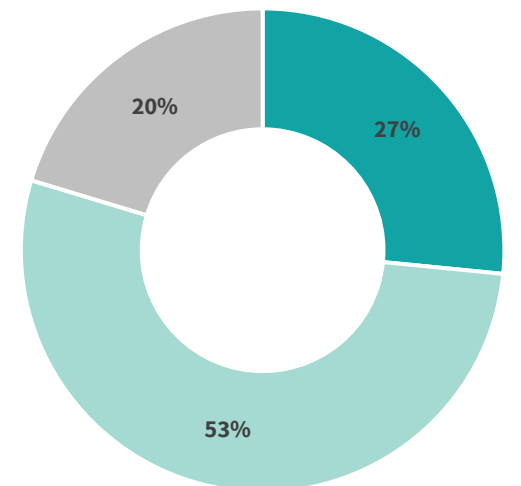
What are the barriers to embracing innovation and the low emissions economy for respondents?



“It **costs** too much” is the most reported barrier by respondents when asked what is preventing them from taking actions that align with an innovative and low emissions economy. Such actions include:

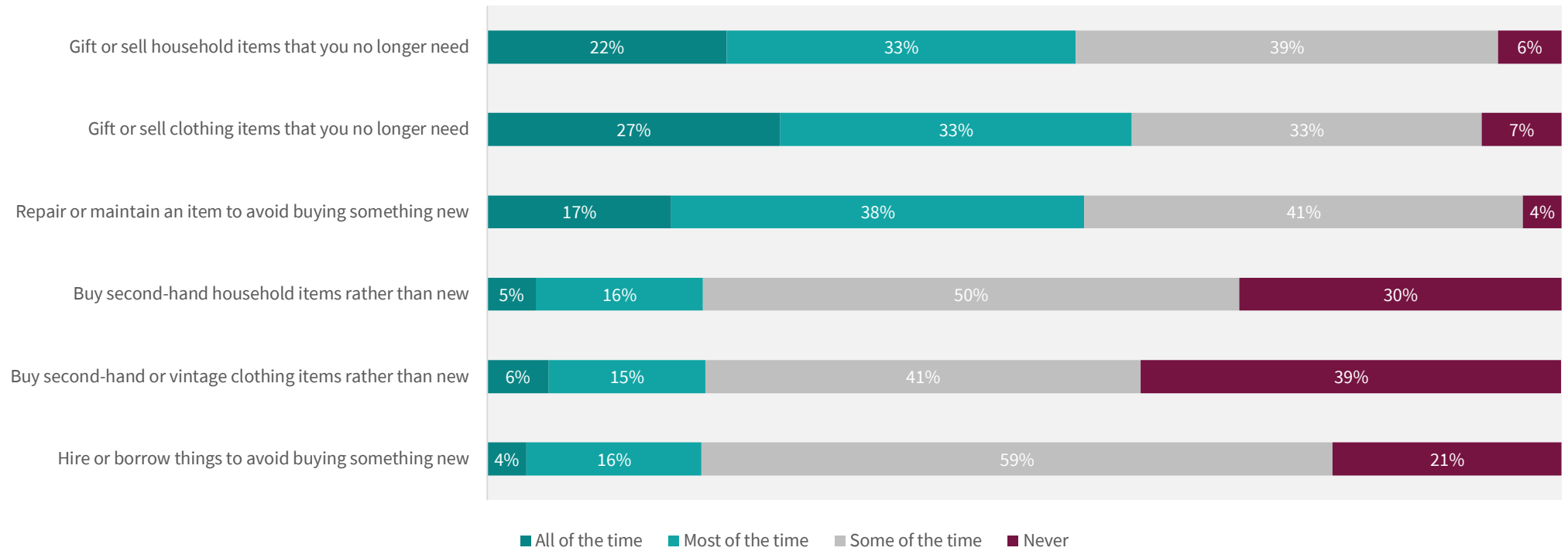
- Driving an electric vehicle
- Opting for energy efficient appliances
- Generating solar energy
- Buying locally made products

How much does a business or brand's environmental and social actions influence your purchasing decisions?



■ A great deal ■ A little bit ■ Not at all

How often are respondents taking the following actions?



Just under 40% (n=1556) of respondents report never opting to buy second-hand or vintage clothing items over new items.

93% (n=3713) of respondents report they gift or sell clothing items they no longer need at least some of the time.



Only 4% (n=143) of respondents have never repaired or maintained an item in order to avoid buying something new.



Over half of respondents gift or sell clothing items (60%, n=2406) and household items (55%, n=2196) that they no longer need, all of the time or most of the time.

Goal 4: We are guardians of our natural environment and taonga

Being guardians of our natural environment and taonga means taking on the responsibility to protect and preserve our natural environments for both current and future generations to enjoy. Guardianship requires us to adopt sustainable practices, engage in conservation efforts and foster a deep respect for the environment and its inherent values.

How often do respondents talk with friends or family about climate change?

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
Under 24 years	⋈		⋇	
25 – 34 years	⋈	⋈	⋇	
35 – 49 years				⋈
50 – 64 years				⋈
65 years and over			⋈	

What does this mean?

Generally, respondents aged under 35 years are more likely to frequently talk with their friends and/or family about climate change.

Conversely, those aged over 35 years, are more likely to infrequently or never have these conversations with friends and/or family.

The majority of respondents (65%) report they take **about the same amount** of climate action now as they did 12 months ago, with 31% taking **more** action.

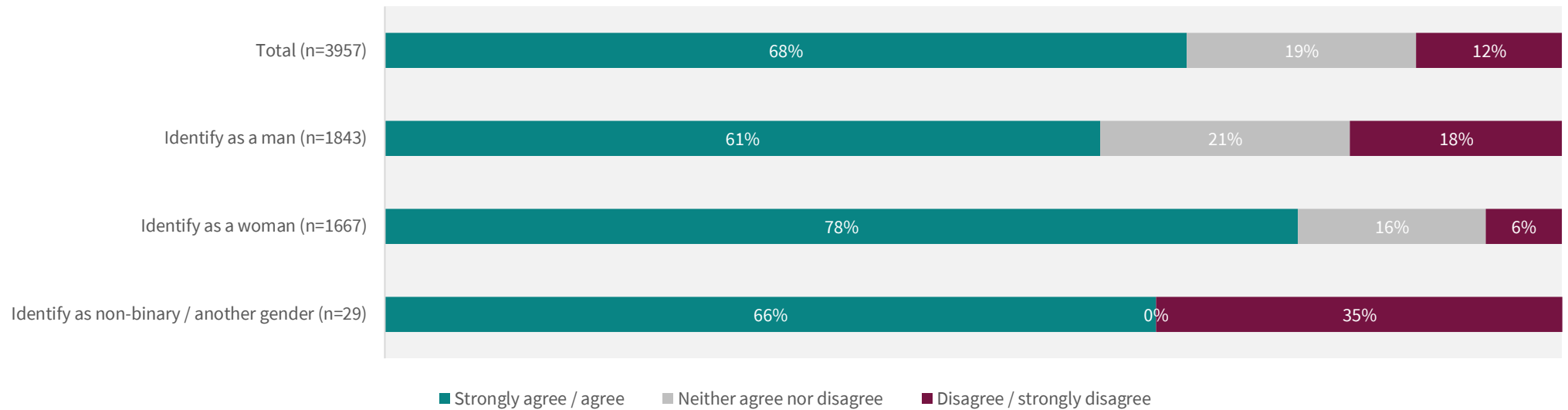
When considering how committed they are to living a sustainable lifestyle:

80% of respondents would place themselves at a six or above*

“Value nature – our community will understand, value and care for our indigenous plants, animals and ecosystems.” – Ōtautahi Christchurch Climate Resilience Strategy

*on a scale of 1-10 (1 being the least committed and 10 being the most committed)




I feel a sense of responsibility to reduce my personal emissions and negative environmental and societal impacts



68% of respondents agree or strongly agree they feel a sense of responsibility to reduce their personal emissions and negative environmental and societal impacts.

Respondents who identify as a woman are significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree they feel this sense of responsibility (77%), compared to other genders.

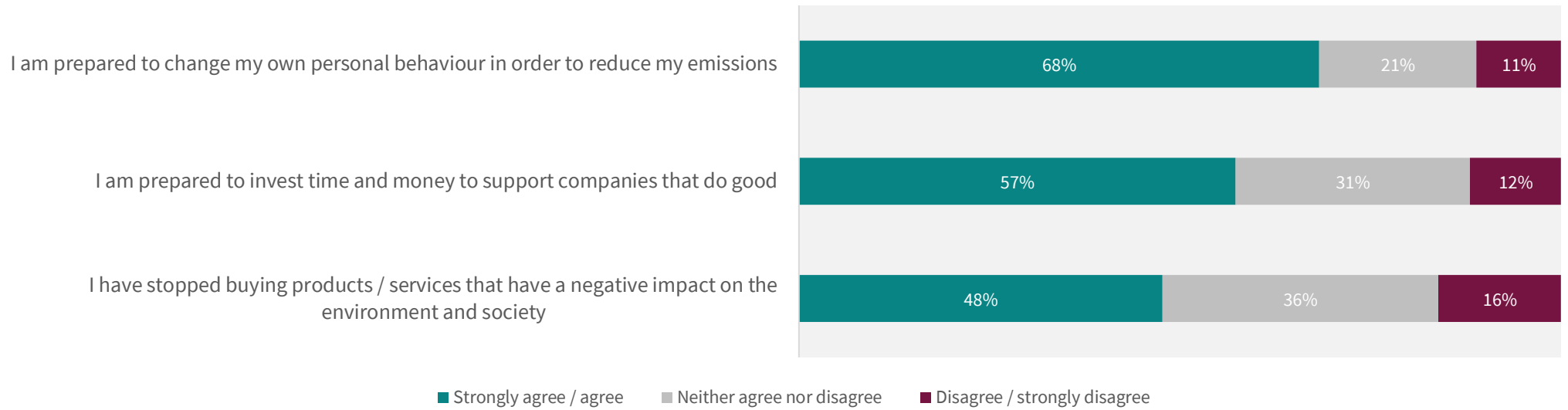
Conversely, those who identify as a man are significantly more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they feel a sense of responsibility to reduce their personal emissions and negative environmental and societal impacts. These results are consistent with national trends of those who identify as a man being less likely to report they feel worried about climate change.

-  Respondents aged 35 – 49 years
-  Respondents aged 65 years and over
-  Respondents aged 25 – 34 years

Younger respondents are more likely to strongly agree that they feel a sense of responsibility to reduce their personal emissions and negative environmental and societal impacts.

75% of New Zealanders think it is the responsibility of all New Zealanders to combat climate
(MfE Environmental Attitudes, 2018)

Mismatch between willingness to change behaviour and/or purchasing habits compared with current purchasing habits



68% (n=2701) of respondents strongly agree or agree they are prepared to change their own personal behaviour to reduce their emissions.

Preparedness to invest time and money to support companies that do good is still high amongst respondents with 57% (n=2244) strongly agreeing or agreeing they are prepared to do this.

However, when it comes to stopping buying products / services that have a negative environmental and/or societal impact, less than half of respondents (48%, n=1855) strongly agree or agree they are already taking this action.

