



Sustainable Behavioural Change Survey Results

Alexandra Vernal, Project Manager
Sustainable Taranaki



“Demand-side mitigation encompasses changes in infrastructure use, end-use technology adoption, and **socio-cultural and behavioural change.**”

This can “reduce global GHG emissions in end use sectors by 40-70% by 2050” and is “consistent with improving basic wellbeing for all.”

IPCC Report, 2022

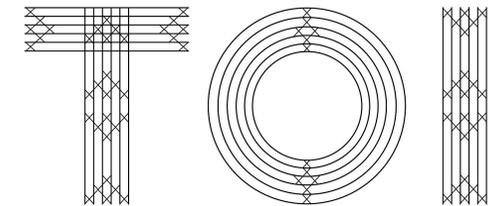
“Behavioural change” studies how people make choices and suggests how to improve the choices they make for their own good.

Richard Thaler & Cass Sunstein

With funding from TOI Foundation, Sustainable Taranaki engaged in this 3-year research project to gain a deeper understanding of what drives sustainable behaviour change in our community and how to support people along the journey.



SUSTAINABLE
TARANAKI



FOUNDATION

The survey's 8 Sustainable Behaviours

We selected these 8 behaviours to measure how importance our community considers them, how knowledgeable they think they are, and what motivates them most.



Energy efficiency /
saving measures



Clean energy



Clean transport



Environmentally
friendly products



Minimising waste



Food sustainability



Sustainable gardens



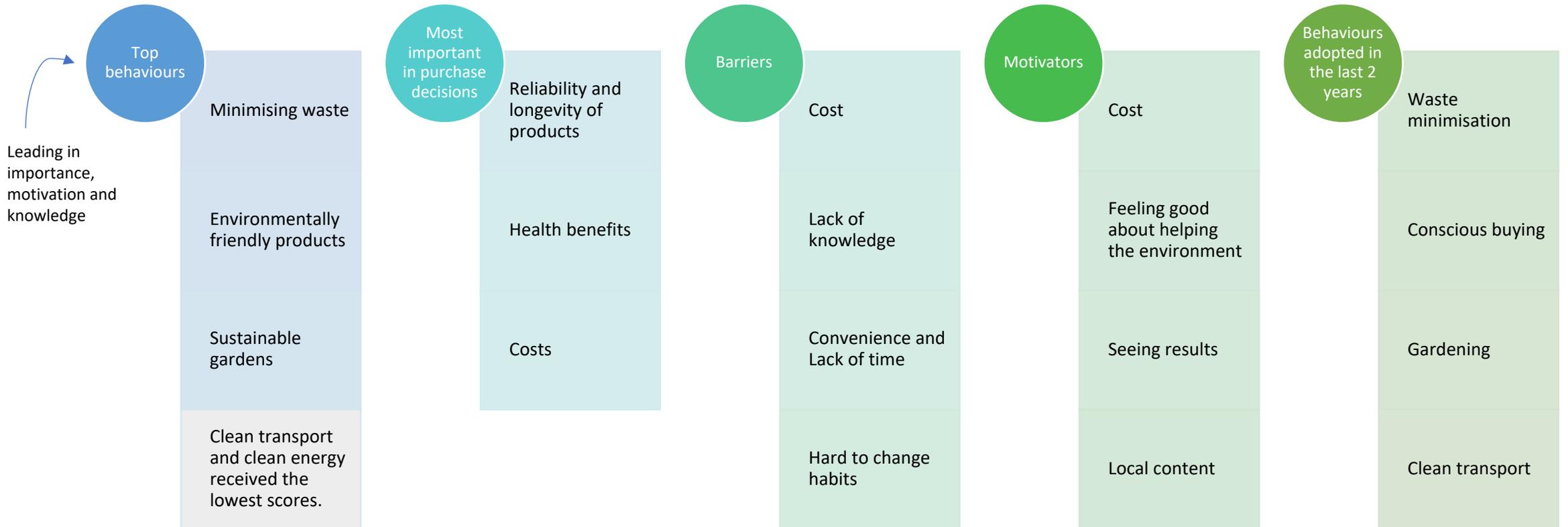
Water use and
efficiency



Executive summary

- **The community values sustainability** and wants to do more to be sustainable.
- **Women** tend to care more about sustainability initiatives than men; **Māori** more than other ethnic groups; **Older** people more than younger ones, and cost is a barrier that affects age groups differently.
- **We found a small impact of Covid-19** in people's confidence, motivation, and the importance given to sustainable behaviours in our follow-up results. This aligns with other national findings.*
- Some of the main **changes since 2020** include:
 - Growth in importance for Food sustainability, and Water use and efficiency.
 - Increase in the consideration of Costs and Reducing pollution in purchasing decisions.
 - Preference for social media tips and community Facebook group supporting sustainable behaviours.
- Most of the time, people's motivation and importance levels exceeded their confidence and knowledge level. We see this as an **opportunity to help motivated people with knowledge and opportunities to engage in sustainability.**

Main findings



We asked about our community's interests, motivation and knowledge around sustainable behaviours.

Minimising waste is most known, involves the highest motivation, is known the most and has the most importance.

Food sustainability and **Environmentally friendly** products are also highly rated behaviours.

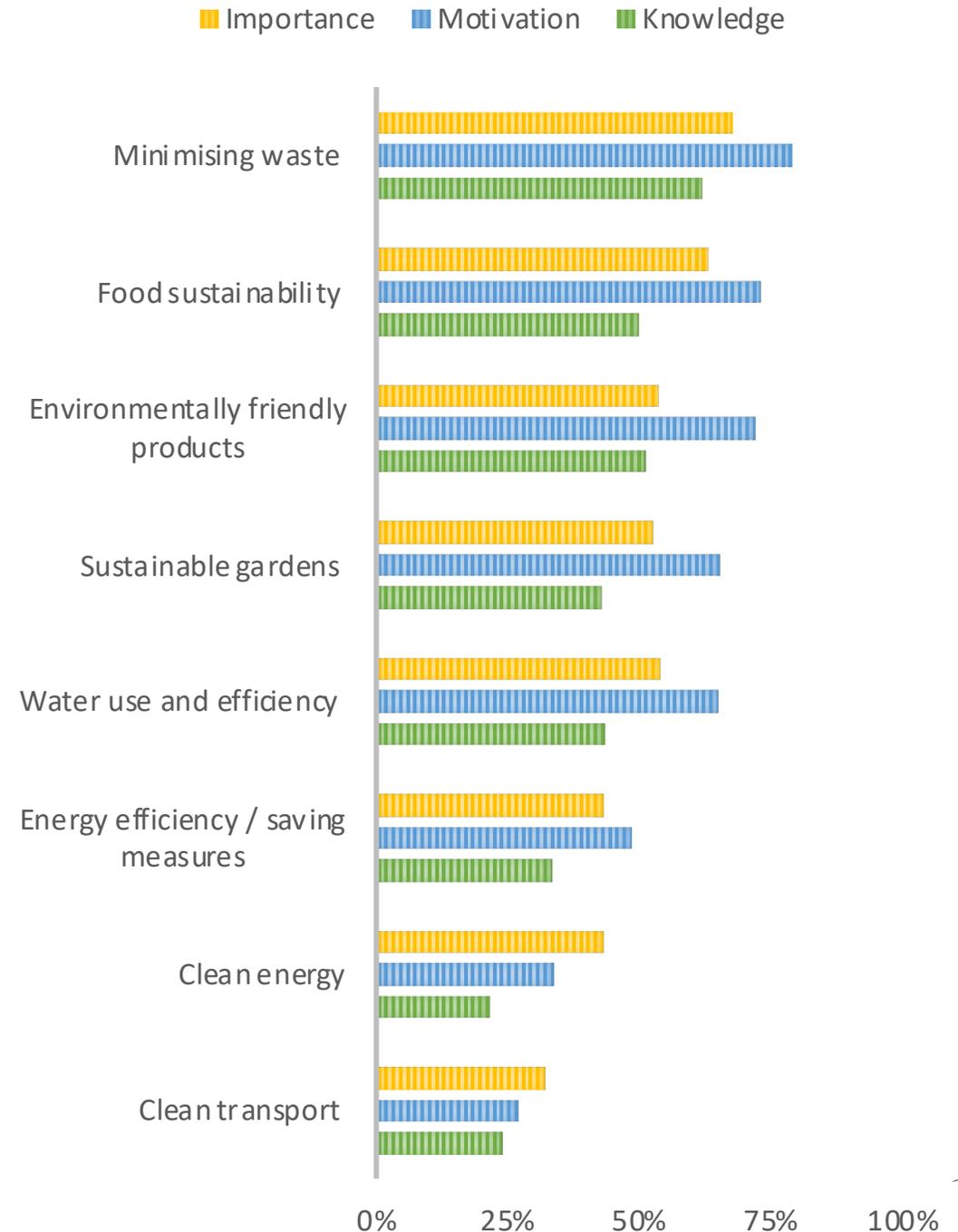
Clean transport has lowest perceived knowledge, importance and motivation.

Motivation is often higher than knowledge and importance.

Knowledge is an aspect of sustainable practices that needs to be addressed.

Older people tend to value sustainable behaviours more: more motivation, importance and knowledge.

2022 Results



Changes since 2020

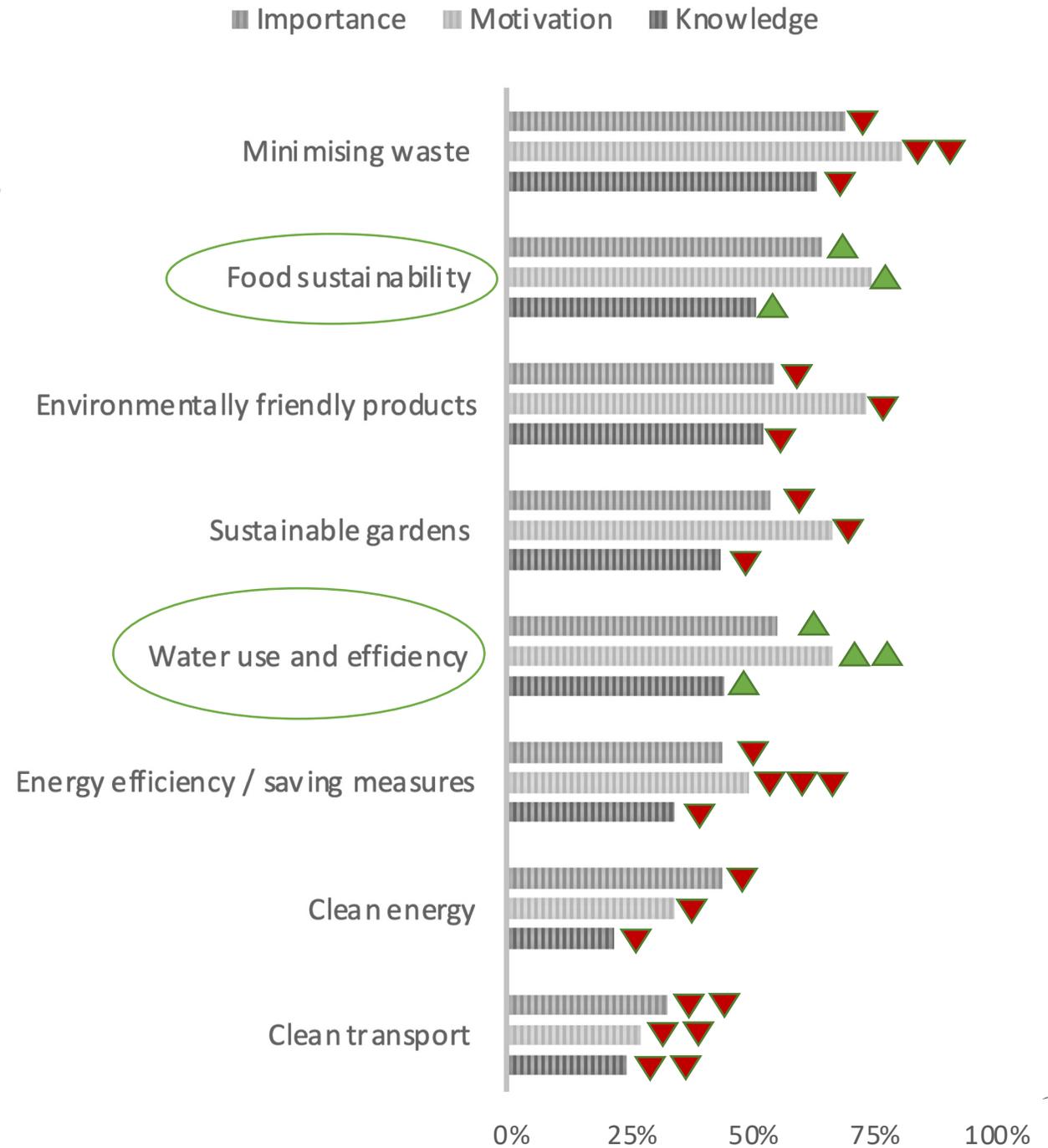
The 2022 survey results follow national and international trends showing the effects of Covid-19 in sustainability-related topics.

Between the Summers of 2020 and 2022, most behaviours have seen a decrease in motivation, importance and knowledge.

Water use and efficiency is the exception, with growth in all 3 aspects. Its relative position among all 8 behaviours is still similar to 2020.

Food sustainability is also an exception, with growing importance and knowledge for our community.

Most dramatic decreases are in the motivation for Energy efficiency and Minimising waste, and in Clean Transport in general.



People's value of sustainability and their motivation to engage in sustainable behaviours have decreased since 2020.

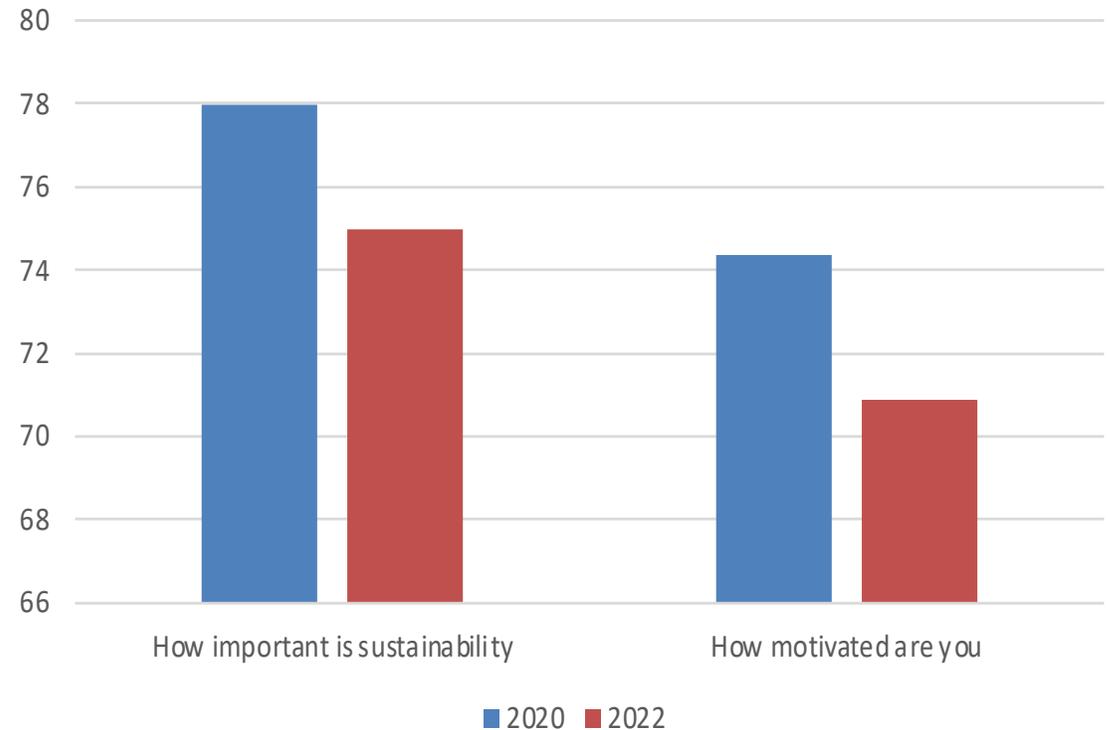
However, this is a slight decrease, and it continues to show a positive perception of sustainable topics, giving space for work in the sector to be well received.

Women tend to value sustainability more and have higher motivation to engage than men.

Māori also have higher number in both cases.

A recent report by EECA* had similar results:

76% of NZers want to change their behaviours to reduce their impact on climate change.



*EECA Consumer Monitor 2021

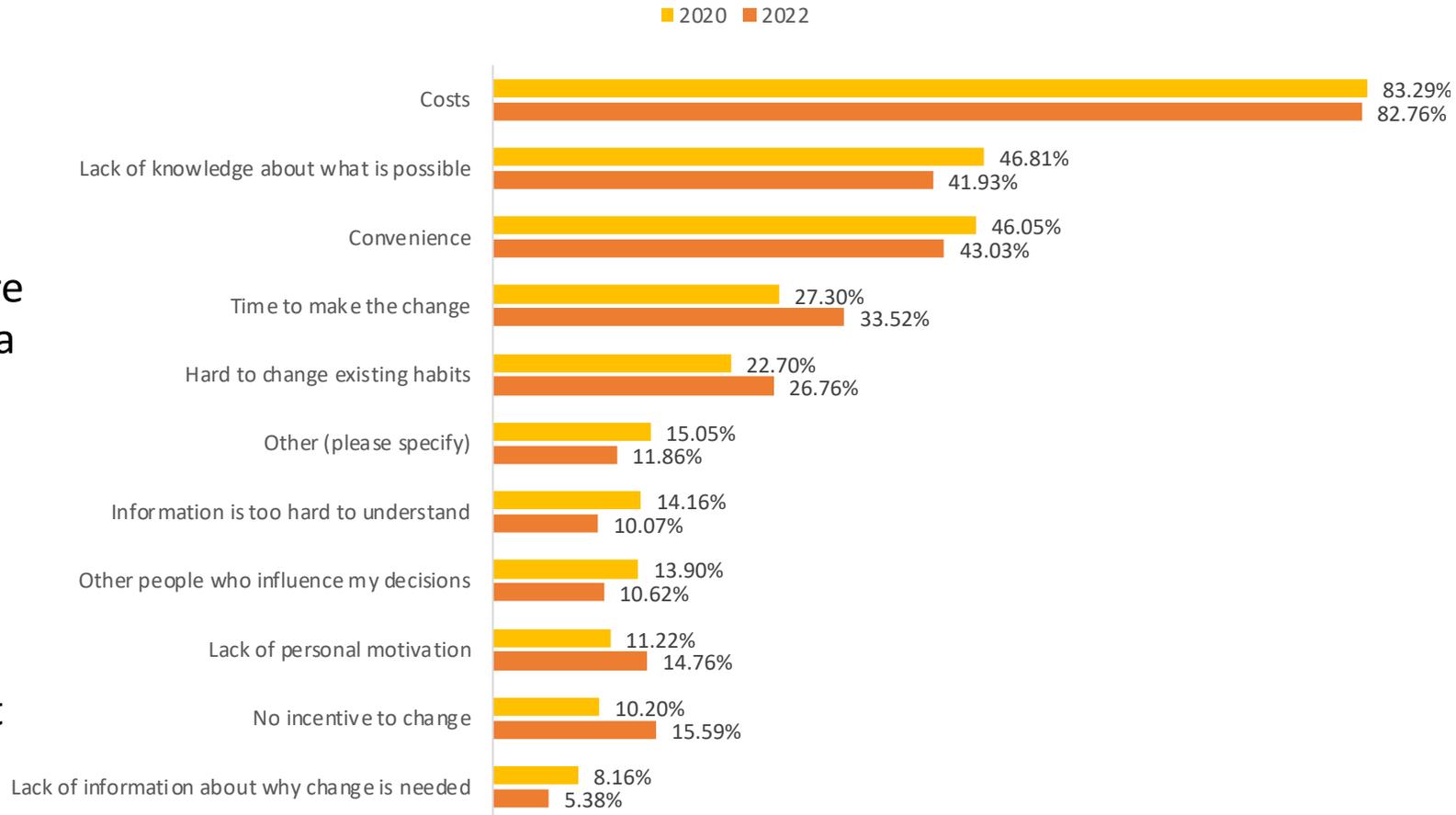
Cost is the biggest perceived barrier to consider when engaging in sustainability practices.

Convenience and lack of knowledge follow with over 40% of responses and are significantly ahead of other barriers, but a slight decrease since 2020.

Cost, convenience, and lack of time are important barriers for young people.

Lack of knowledge is highest among **Māori**. 15% of Māori also responded that information is too hard to understand.

Barriers to changing behaviours



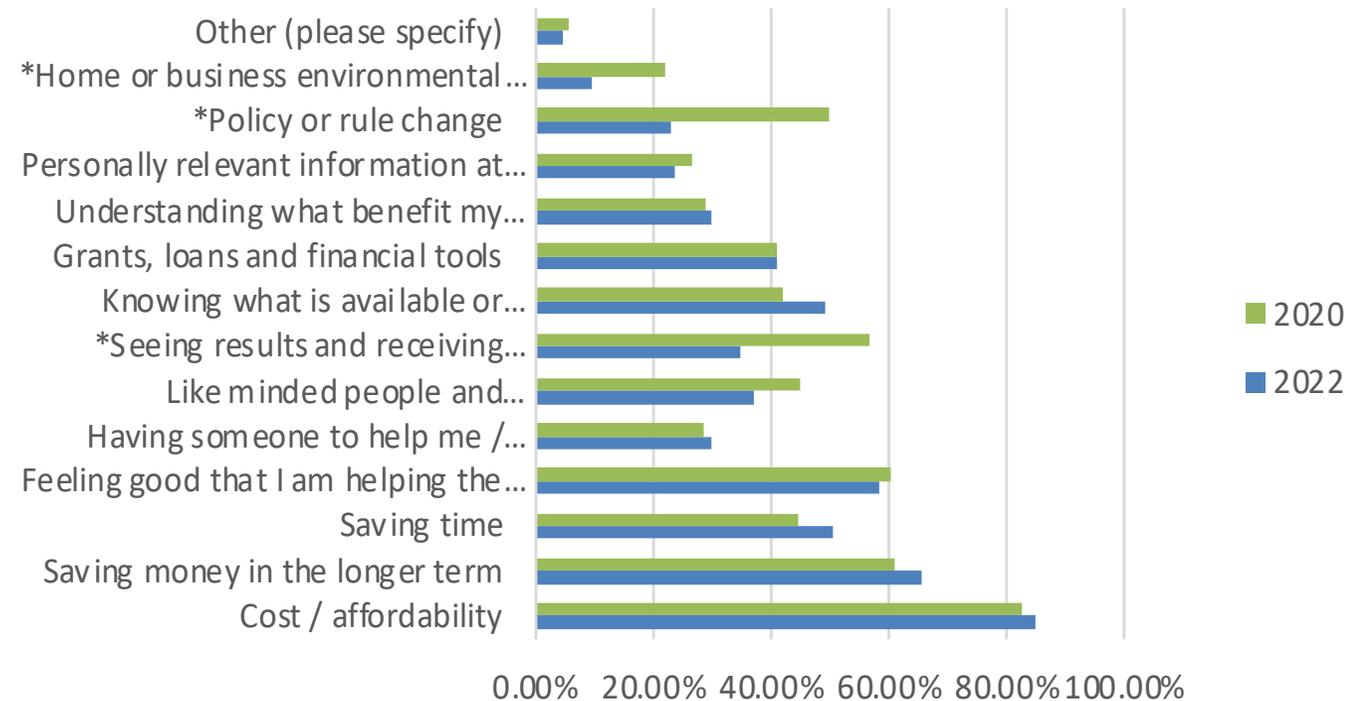
Cost and saving money in the long term are the most important motivators.

This is followed by “**feeling good that I am helping the environment**”, which is predominantly relevant for **women**.

For **Māori**, important motivators are having someone teach me, a like-minded community and knowing what is possible.

The most significant changes between 2020 and 2022 are **decreases in policy or rule change, seeing results and receiving feedback**.

Motivators for change



*Statistically significant differences

Reliability and longevity of the product is the most important consideration, followed by health benefits.

Reliability and longevity is an important factor especially for **women**.

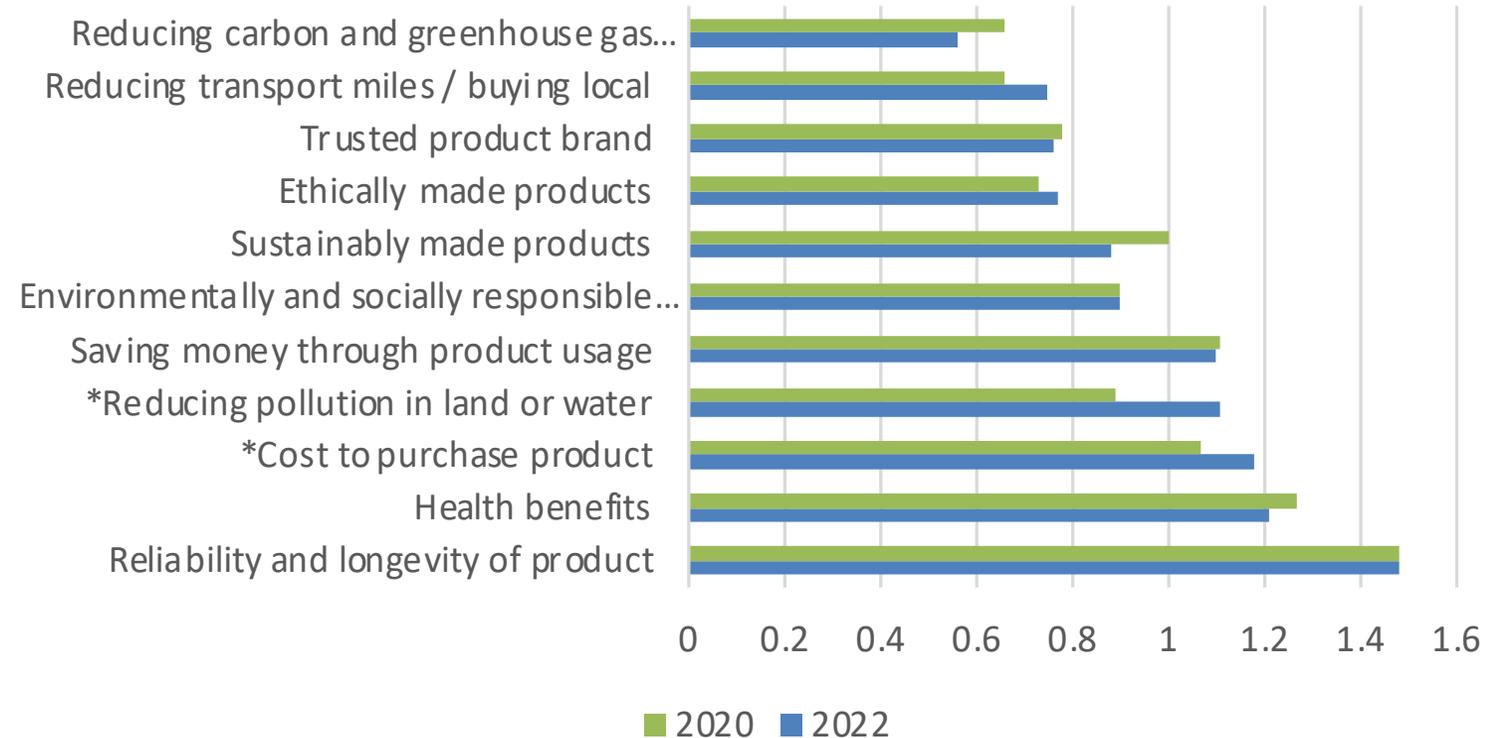
It is interesting to note that **cost** is not the most important factor, even when it was considered the biggest barrier and motivator to engage in sustainable behaviours.

There have been minimal significant changes since the baseline study.

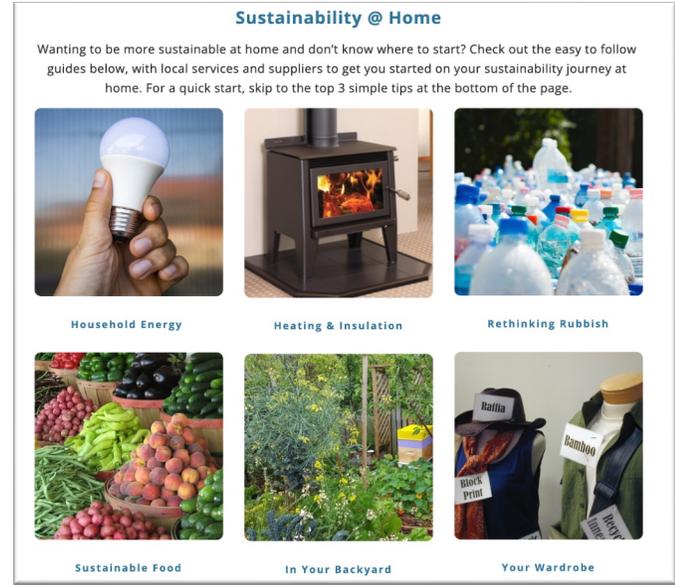
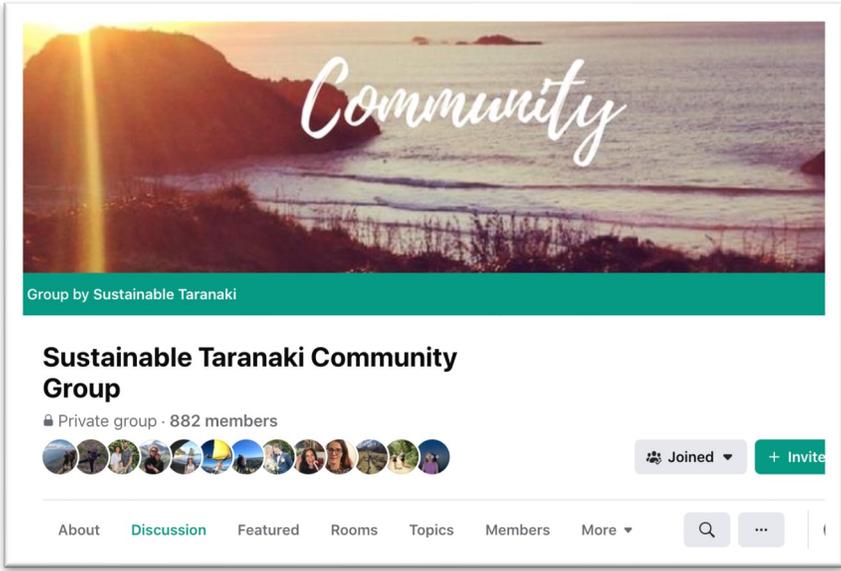
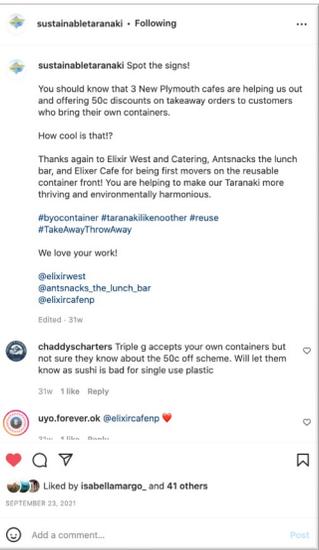
Reducing pollution in land or water has the highest increase since 2020. This is especially relevant for **Māori**.

Cost to purchase product has also increased in relevance.

Consideration in purchase decisions



*Statistically significant differences



Most important tools that supported our community's sustainable journeys

- Bite size tips on social media
- Hands-on workshops and expert events
- Community group on social media
- Website full of resources



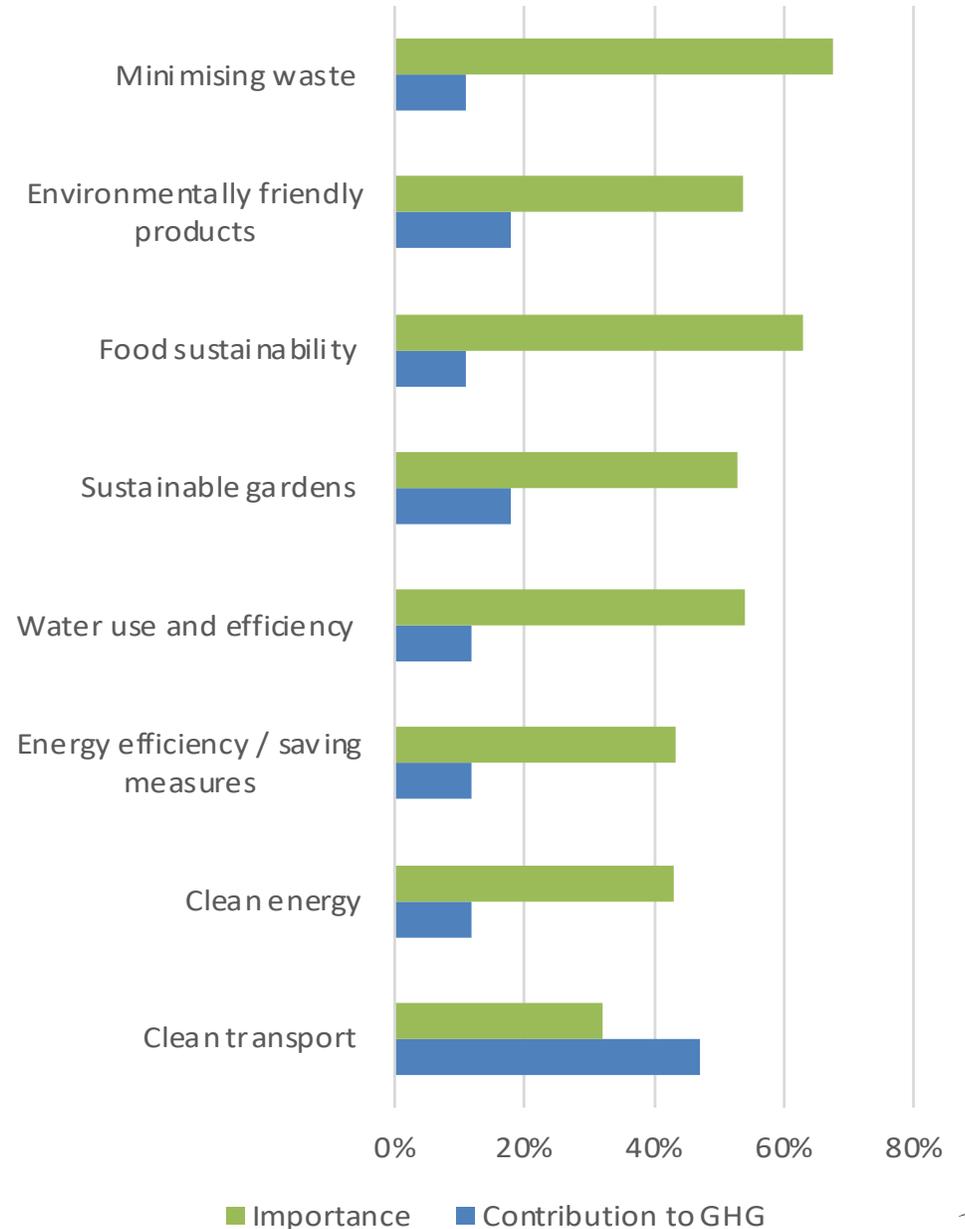
People’s focus is disconnected to the actual impact of their behaviours in reducing emissions.

The high value to minimising waste related to minimising methane emissions, but its contribution to NZ’s total GHG emissions is still under those from transport or manufacturing*

Table 1: The Seven Behaviors
Each behavior was evaluated for GHG emissions mitigation potential (“impact”), feasibility of behavior change, and momentum for a behavior change campaign. Three stars is the highest evaluation outcome.

	IMPACT	FEASIBILITY	MOMENTUM
 Purchase Electric Vehicle New car buyers opt for an electric vehicle ⁴	★★★★	★★	★★★★
 Reduce Air Travel High-frequency fliers fly one fewer time per year	★	★	★
 Eat a Plant-Rich Diet Anyone who isn’t already vegetarian eats a bit less meat	★	★★	★★
 Offset Carbon Individuals offset their full annual emissions with verified carbon credits	★★★★	★★	★
 Reduce Food Waste Households waste a bit less from their plates, and compost the rest	★	★★★★	★
 Tend Carbon-Sequestering Soil Soy and corn farmers practice no-till agriculture	★	★★★★	★★
 Purchase Green Energy Households install solar and meet any additional energy needs with renewable energy	★★★★	★	★★★★

RARE, 2022



*Ministry for the Environment

A note on methodology and how we're reporting

Baseline sample: n= 567

- *Additional Covid-19 Lockdown sample (15- 31/03/2020): n= 218*

Year 3 sample: n= 733

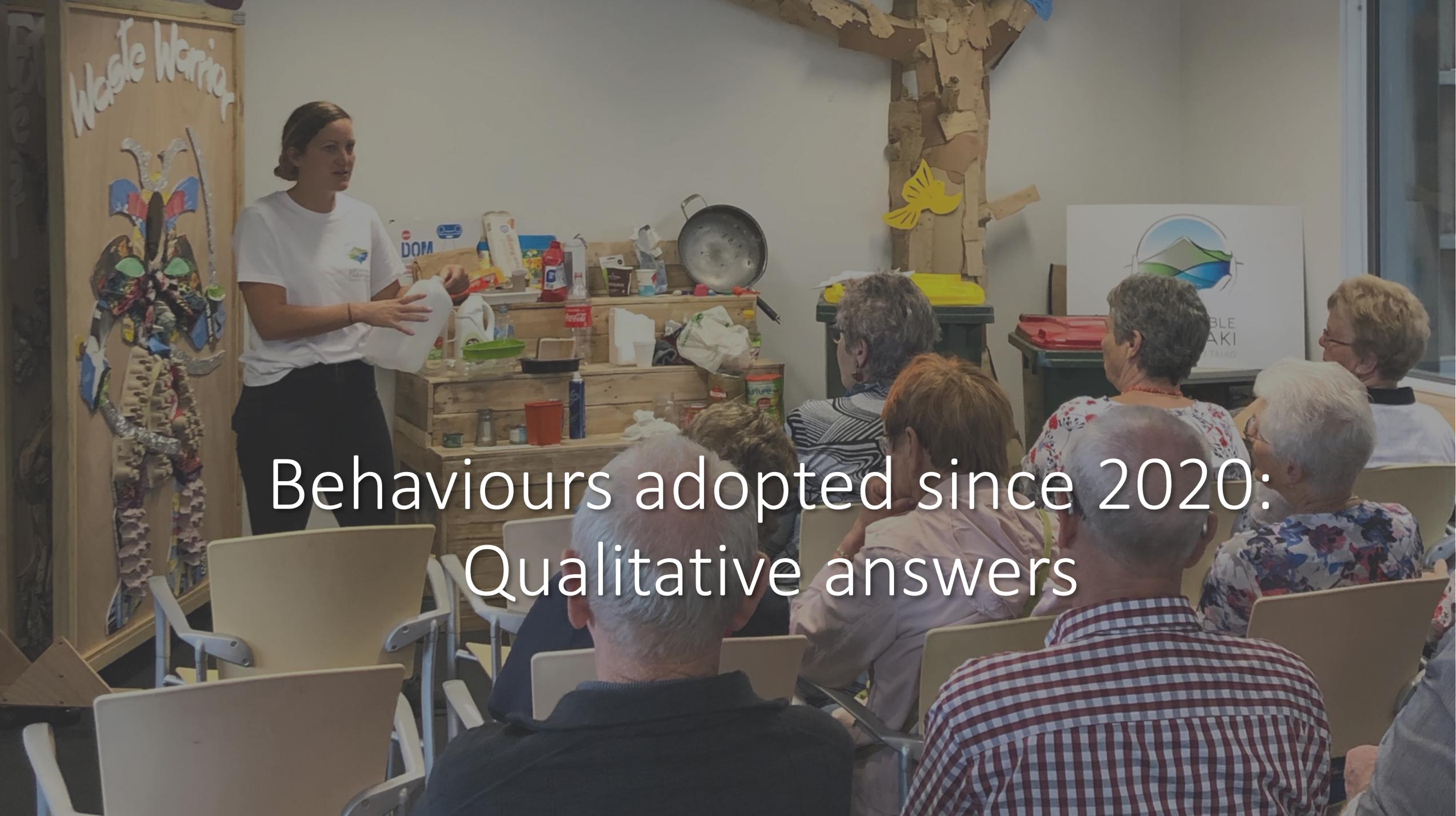
Comparisons are made between baseline and Year 3 samples. Lockdown sample was used only to analyse trends. In all cases, Lockdown trends aligned with Year 3 results.

(*) shows statistically significant differences.

The samples are representative of Taranaki demographics, however skewed to New Plymouth District (74%) and women (68%).

Results for each question were also analysed by demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, place of residence).

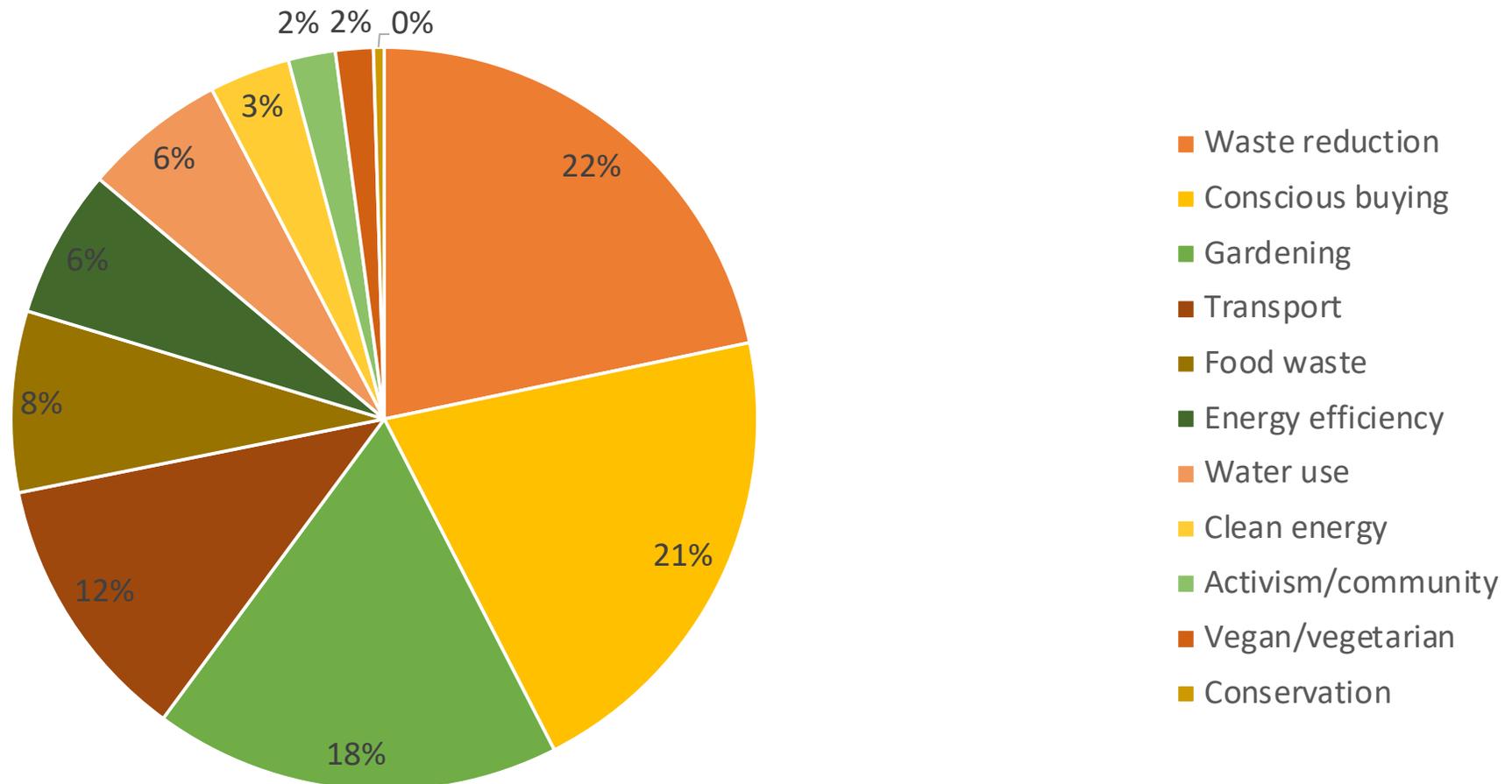
Since both samples had different distribution of age groups, the age variable was controlled to see if it affected the pre-post results. We still got the same differences between the two samples.



Behaviours adopted since 2020:
Qualitative answers

The most popular behaviours adopted since 2020 are related to waste reduction, conscious buying and gardening.

Behaviours adopted in the last 2 years



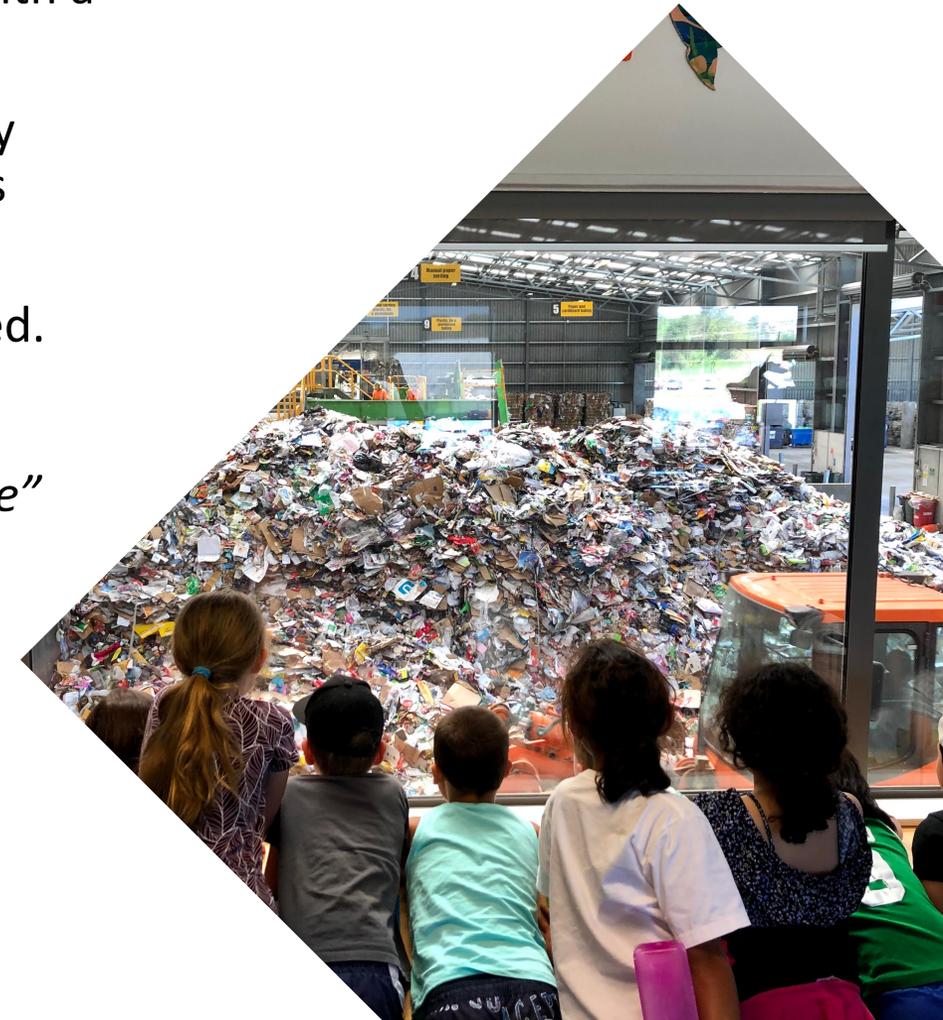
Minimising waste

Most relevant behaviour the community is engaging with, even with a slight decrease in 2022.

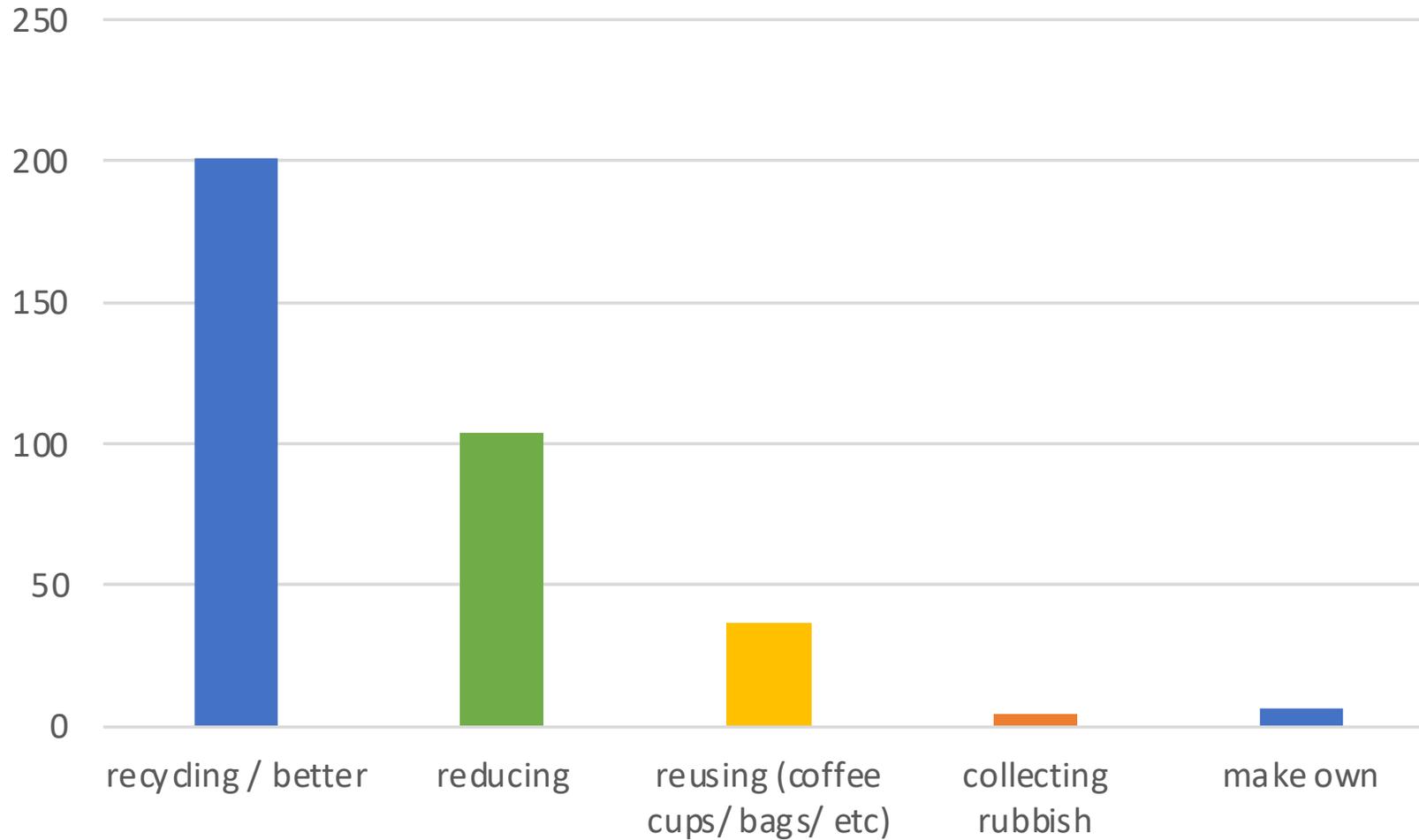
Adopting new habits in the last two years, people reported mostly **recycling better, and reusing and reducing more**. Food waste was separated into its own category.

Bringing their own cups, bags, and containers was also mentioned.

- *“Greatly reducing the amount of plastic/non-compostable waste”*
- *“More diligent about recycling (sorting properly, washing etc.)”*
- *“Taking containers for take aways”*



Detail: changes in waste habits



n= 372

Environmentally friendly products and conscious buying

Second most mentioned behaviour to have been adopted in the last 2 years.

Includes **second-hand shopping, making your own, buying less in general, and buying organic, local, bulk or ethical products.**

Researching about products and making conscious choices was also mentioned, such as buying products with compostable or recycled instead of plastic packaging.

- *“Going to farmers markets to buy locally grown food that doesn’t have miles attached to it.”*
- *“More mindful when it comes to buying food, e.g. how the product is packaged, was it locally made?”*
- *“I do not use plastic bags for produce and shop at bulk stores where possible.”*



Sustainable gardens / food sustainability

Food sustainability grew in importance and knowledge since 2020.

Generally more important for women.

Third most mentioned behaviour to have been adopted in the last 2 years (18% of responses)

- *“Developed a large terrace veggie garden and food forest including compost system and chickens”*
- *“Extending my vege garden, using 2nd hand resources in the garden to support the garden, eg an old gate to grown beans up.”*



Clean transport

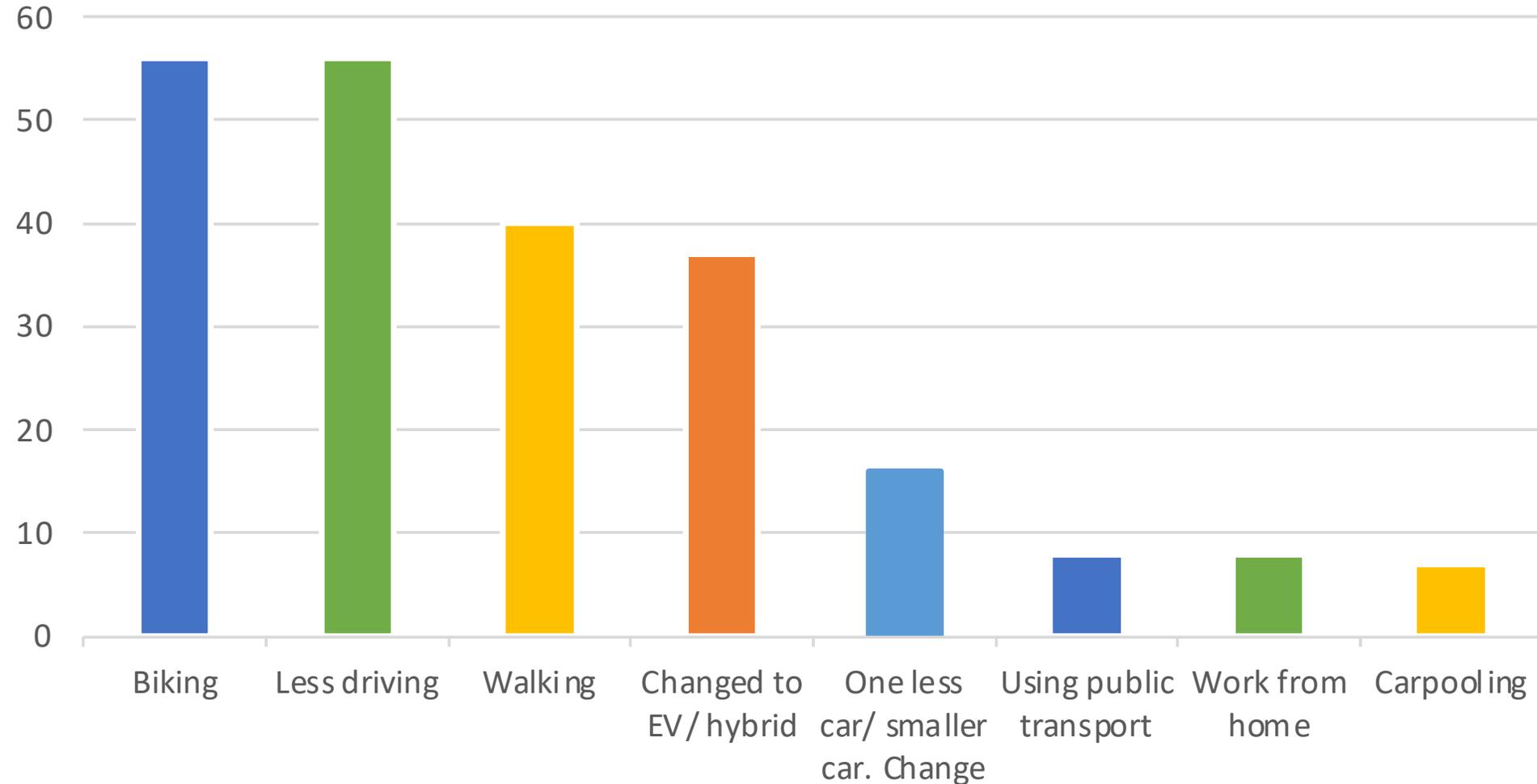
Interestingly, biggest drop in importance, knowledge and motivation from all 8 behaviours included in the survey, but 4th behaviour adopted by the community since 2020.

Specifically **biking, using the car less and walking**. Others reported changing to EV/hybrid cars, having one less/more efficient car, and using public transport.

- *“Got rid of my car. I walk and cycle everywhere (except the occasional airport taxi).”*
- *“Riding bicycles to work, grocery store and meetings”*
- *“Planning trips to town to make better use of the petrol I do have to use”*
- *“Taking the bus 1x per week”*



Detail: changes in transport habits



n= 201

Energy efficiency

6th most adopted behaviour since 2020.

- *“Cold showers and cold cycle only on the washing machine, with shorter cycles for everything except stubborn stains.”*
- *“Upgraded laundry appliances for more energy efficient brand/models”*
- *“Recent renovation of our house - improved insulation, some double glazing and LED lighting”*
- *“Reducing the length of my showers, ensuring nothing is leaking”*

Water use and efficiency

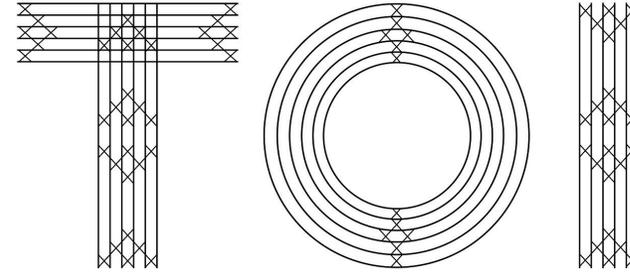
Most marked improvement in knowledge, motivation and importance since 2020.

Most important for Māori and older people.





SUSTAINABLE
TARANAKI



FOUNDATION

Behavioural Change Project 2019- 2022

Contact: Alexandra Vernal

alexandra@sustainabletaranaki.org.nz

info@sustainabletaranaki.org.nz

www.sustainabletaranaki.org.nz