

7 PERSONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

This section looks at actions Waikato region respondents have personally undertaken to protect the environment and their perceived effectiveness of their actions. This section also considers their views on public influence of environmental management and their ability to take personal responsibility for protecting the environment.

Key findings are:

- In comparison to 2003 and 2006, a greater proportion of respondents are recycling in general (64%), but fewer are recycling plastic (20%), paper (19%), tins/cans (12%) and glass (17%). A smaller proportion of respondents dispose of waste/rubbish properly (3%). More respondents plant trees/plants (16%) and save water (15%), compost garden waste (13%), grow their own vegetables (9%), pick up rubbish on roads/beaches (7%) and don't litter when out and about (7%).
- Urban respondents are significantly more likely to be recycling in general (66%), to use the car less (15%), and not litter when out and about/pick up dog poo (8%), while rural respondents are more likely to plant trees/plants/wetland/gully restoration (24%), and fence off native bush/rivers/streams (9%).
- Only 11 per cent of respondents say they have been involved in a public action, meeting, official hearing or consent process with the aim of protecting the environment, in the last year or so (also referred to as public actions). This result shows a consistent downward trend since 1998 (26%).
- Of those respondents involved in a public action, the top five are: joining a group (31%), taking environmentally friendly action— planting native trees/removing pests (20%), attending a meeting or hearing (20%), making a formal submission (12%), and participating in resource consent process (10%). There are very few demographic differences between the actions respondents take, however, rural respondents are more likely to follow council rules/undertake good practice on farm (16%).
- Regarding the perceived effectiveness of their actions, 68 per cent of respondents feel that their actions are effective. Twenty-three per cent of respondents feel that their public actions are not effective at all and 10 per cent feel that it is hard to tell how effective their actions are. Respondents' perceptions of effectiveness appear to be increasing over time; in 1998, 33 per cent of respondents felt that their actions were not effective while in 2013 this figure has decreased to 23 per cent.
- Forty-one per cent of respondents feel that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed, while 46 per cent feel that the public does not have enough say; these proportions have remained fairly stable since 1998.

7.1 ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were asked what actions they have taken in the previous 12 months to protect the environment.

7.1.1 OVERALL RESULT AND COMPARISON WITH 2003 TO 2013

Overall, recycling continues to be the most commonly recalled action taken to protect the environment with 64 per cent of respondents recycling in general, a further 20 per cent specifically recycling plastic, 19 per cent recycling paper and 17 per cent recycling glass. Interestingly, there has been a decrease in the number of respondents who mention recycling tins or cans (12% in 2013) although the general theme of recycling remains significant in respondents' answers.

Planting trees (16%) shows a similar level of action to those in 2003 and 2006, while there is an increase in the proportion of respondents who save water (15%), compost garden waste (13%), save electricity (8%), and/or pick up rubbish on beaches, while growing vegetables (9%) not littering (7%) are new activities for 2013.

All other mentions are of 5 per cent or less and further details of the activities mentioned are shown below. Please note that multiple responses to this question were permitted and as such the table may total more than 100 per cent.

Table 7-1: Actions Taken to Protect the Environment 2003 to 2013

	2003 %	2006 %	2013 %
Recycle – in general	-	1	64
Recycled plastic	38	43	20
Recycled paper	35	40	19
Recycled glass	35	37	17
Planted trees/plants	15	13	16
Saved water	4	4	15
Compost garden waste	9	9	13
Recycled tins/cans	28	31	12
Used car less often (walked, biked, used bus more)	7	10	11
Grow own vegetables	-	-	9
Save electricity	8	4	8
Don't litter when out and about/pick up dog poo	-	-	7
Pick up rubbish on roads/beaches	3	2	7
Bought 'green' products	4	4	4
Fence off native bush/rivers/streams	5	2	4
Reduced chemical use	< 0.5	4	4
Disposed of rubbish/waste properly	12	17	3
Reduced rubbish/waste	5	7	3
Refused supermarket plastic bags	1	2	3
All that I can do	-	-	2
Change to energy saving lightbulbs	-	-	2
Drive fuel efficient car/tune car	2	1	2
Got family into recycling	-	-	2
Good farming practices/shade for stock	-	-	2
Look after water course	< 0.5	1	2
Plant own garden	-	-	2
Protect/feed native birds/fish and animals	< 0.5	1	2

Table 7-1: Actions Taken to Protect the Environment 2003 to 2013 cont.

	2003 %	2006 %	2013 %
Abide by council rules	1	1	1
Bury rubbish/not burn	1	2	1
Buy New Zealand made/consume less/reduce carbon footprint	-	-	1
Controlled weeds	6	3	1
Disposed of chemicals properly	1	4	1
Don't light fires	-	-	1
Don't smoke	< 0.5	1	1
Don't use disposable nappies	-	-	1
Food scraps for animals/farms	-	-	1
Grow organically	2	1	1
Installed solar heating/power	-	1	1
Joined/supported environmental group/donated money to/donated land	3	1	1
Keep chickens, bees, eggs	-	-	1
Killed animal pests	5	2	1
Recycled clothes	3	9	1
Reduce/don't use/improve efficiency of fireplace for home heating	-	2	1
Reduce/recycle stock effluent/farms	2	1	1
Reducing/greater awareness of fertiliser types	-	-	1
Tidy/clean up property	2	2	1
Use rainwater	-	-	1
Wash car on grass	< 0.5	1	1
Watch what I burn	1	1	1
Worm farm	-	-	1
Compost kitchen waste	8	6	-
Education and awareness	2	1	-
Improved drainage	1	1	-
Inform organisations if something is wrong	1	1	-
Other	7	3	-
Use recycled materials – clothing, timber etc.	< 0.5	1	-
Don't know	3	3	-
No action	14	15	11
Base (respondents)	1882	1000	1005

7.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Significant demographic differences emerge in actions taken in the last 12 months to protect the environment. By action these are:

Reduce:

- Using a car less often: those in a family household with mainly preschool children (19%), or those who are currently a student (29%)
- Reducing water consumption: females (19%) or those aged between 40 and 49 years (20%)
- Reducing chemical use and sprays: females (5%)
- Save electricity: those who are currently unemployed (16%).

Reuse:

- Composting heap for the garden: females (17%), those who undertake home responsibilities (22%), or those in a household with an income of between \$60,001 and \$90,000 per annum (18%)
- Growing own vegetables: those undertaking home responsibilities (20%), those educated to a tertiary level (18%) or a secondary school level (12%), those in a household with income of between \$30,001 and \$60,000 per annum (14%), or females (11%).

Recycle:

- Recycling in general: females (71%), those aged between 40 and 49 years (71%), those in a family household with mainly preschool children (73%)
- Recycling plastic: those aged between 20 and 29 years (29%) or Māori (29%)
- Recycling paper/cardboard: females (22%), those aged between 20 and 29 years (29%), or Māori (25%)
- Recycling glass: those aged between 20 and 29 years (26%) or Māori (26%)
- Recycling tins/cans: those aged between 20 and 29 years (22%) or Māori (18%).

Protection and Restoration of Land:

- Planting trees/plants/natives: those educated to a tertiary level (19%), those in a family household with mainly preschool children (24%), or those of Māori ancestry (24%)
- Fencing off native bush/rivers/streams: those with no Māori ancestry (5%)
- Picking up rubbish from roads and beaches: those in a household with an income of \$30,000 or less per annum (11%), those who are currently a student (21%), males (9%), those aged between 18 and 19 years (24%), or Māori (12%).

Other:

- Buying 'green' or environmentally friendly products: females (7%), those aged between 20 and 29 years (11%), those in a household with an income of between \$60,001 and \$90,000 per annum (7%), those who undertake home responsibilities (15%), or those of New Zealand ethnicity (6%)
- Don't litter when out: those who are currently a student (17%) or female (9%).
- No action: males (14%), those aged 65 years or older (21%), those in an older household without children (16%).

7.1.3 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

When considered by territorial authority and by urban and rural location, respondents are more likely (than the regional average) to mention the following points in:

- Thames-Coromandel: planting trees/plants/natives (25%)
- Waikato: recycle plastic (36%), recycling paper (29%), recycling glass (27%), bought 'green' or environmentally friendly products (9%), look after water course (6%)
- Hamilton: use car less (18%)
- Matamata-Piako: bought 'green' or environmentally friendly products (13%)
- Waipā: recycle plastic (39%), recycle paper (39%), recycle glass (34%), saved water/turned off water (24%), or recycling tins (20%)
- South Waikato: don't litter when out (14%)
- Otorohanga: compost heap for garden waste (20%), fence off native bush/rivers/streams (11%), refuse supermarket plastic bags (1%)
- Waitomo: fencing off native bush/rivers/streams (8%)
- Rotorua: planting trees/plants/natives (28%) or fencing off native bush/rivers/streams (11%)
- Urban: recycling in general (66%), use car less (15%), don't litter when out and about/pick up dog poo (8%)
- Rural: planted trees/plants/wetland/gully restoration (24%) or fence off native bush/rivers/streams (9%)

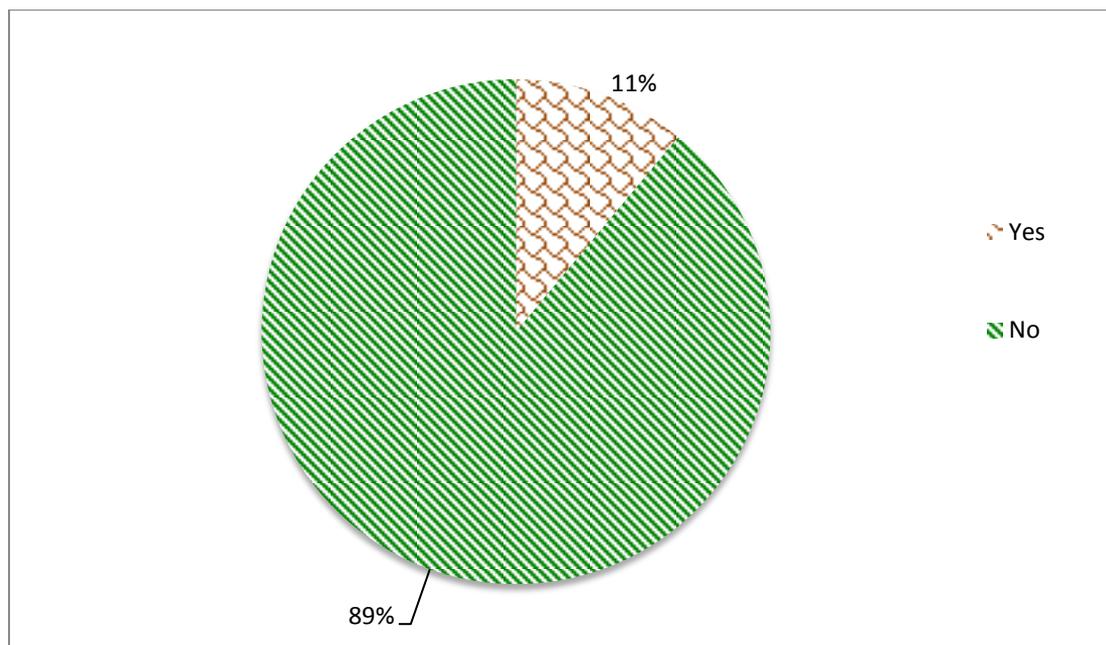
No respondents from Hauraki or Taupo are more likely to mention a particular action.

7.2 INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC ACTIONS/MEETINGS

Respondents were asked if in the last year or so they have been involved in any kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes with the aim of protecting the environment.

7.2.1 OVERALL RESULT

Eleven per cent of respondents say they have been involved in some kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes with the aim of protecting the environment in the last year. The remainder (89%) have not.



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 7-1: Involvement in Public Actions/Meetings

7.2.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

In 2013, a smaller proportion of respondents state that they had been involved in any kind of public meeting, official hearing or consent process with the aim of protecting the environment (11%, down from 16% in 2006). This continues a downward trend in respondents' involvement in public actions/meetings, first evident in 2000.

Table 7-2: Changes in Involvement in Public Actions/Meetings 1998 to 2013

	1998	2000	2003	2006	2013	Change	Change
	%	%	%	%	%	98-13	06-13
Yes – been involved	26	23	22	16	11	-15	-5
No – have not been involved	74	77	78	84	89	+15	+5
Base (respondents)	1037	1873	1822	1000	1005		

This trend is shown below (over the page).

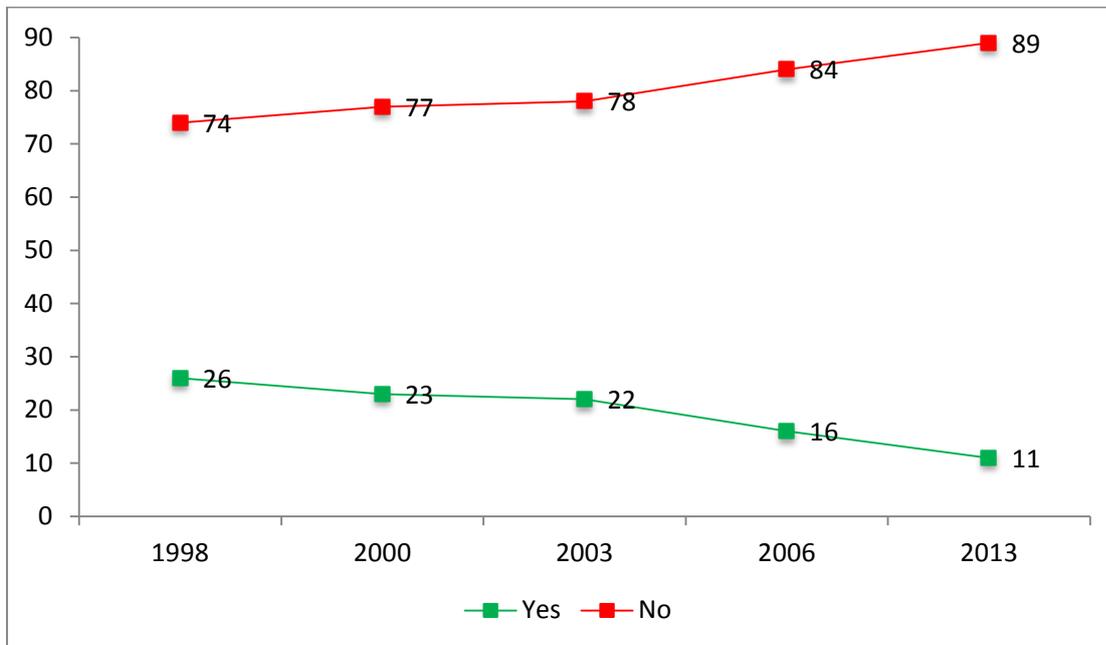


Figure 7-2: Involvement in Public Actions/Meetings 1998 to 2013

7.2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say they **are not involved** in some kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes are those who are:

- educated to a secondary school level (93%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say they **are involved** in some kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes are those who are:

- working as a farmer (19%).

7.2.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

When considered by territorial authority and by urban and rural locations, the following differences emerge:

- Respondents from Thames-Coromandel are more likely (than the regional average) to say they **are involved** in some kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes with the aim of protecting the environment (20%).

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban or rural setting are more likely to say they have **not been involved** in some kind of public action, meetings, official hearings or consent processes with the aim of protecting the environment.

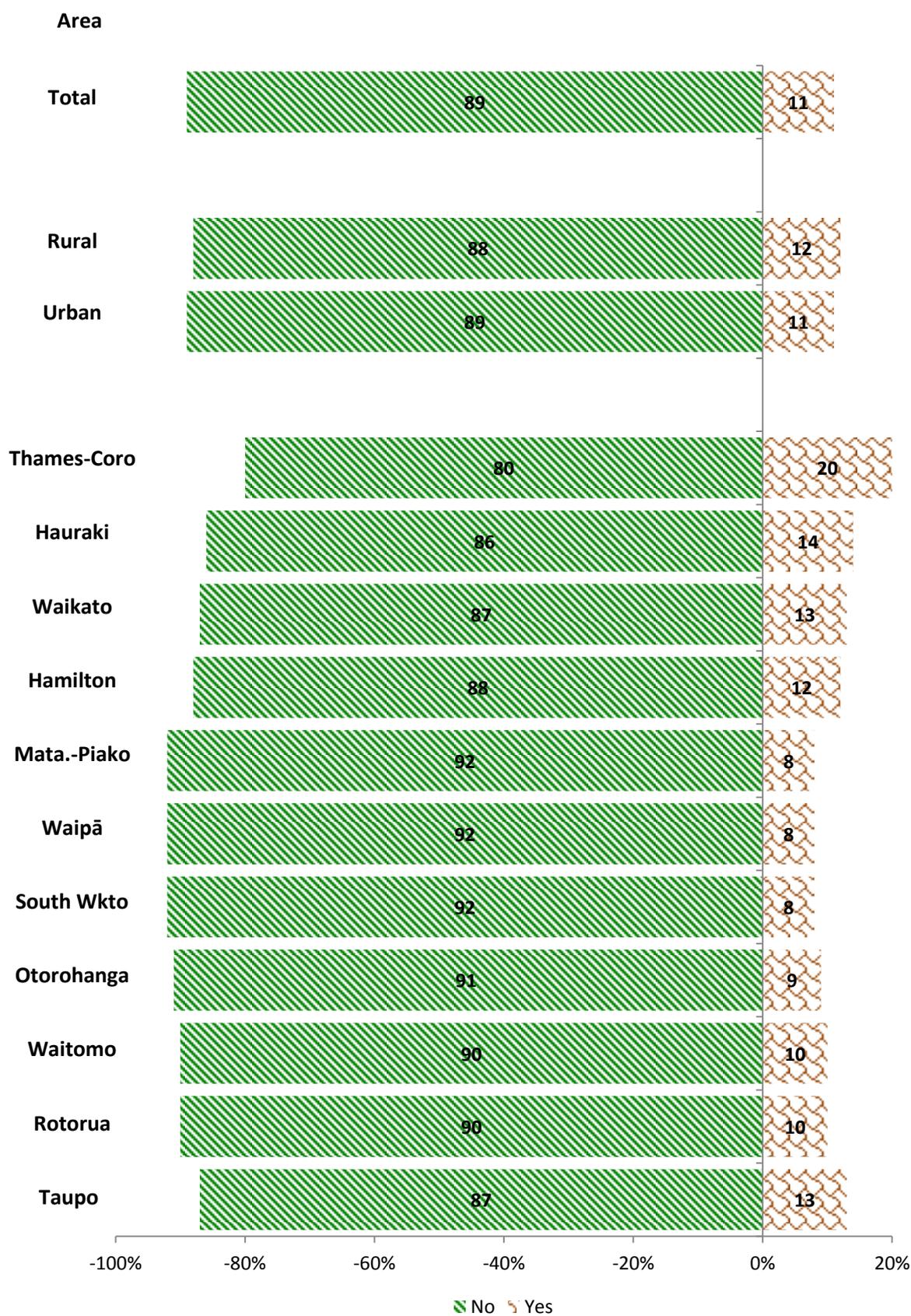


Figure 7-3: Involvement in Public Actions/Meetings by Area, Rural and Urban

7.3 ACTIONS TAKEN

Those who had been involved in any kind of public action, meeting, official hearing or consent process, with the aim of protecting the environment in the last year (n=120) were asked what specific action they have taken.

7.3.1 OVERALL RESULT AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

Joined/belong to/started an action group continues to be the most frequently reported action taken (31%). The proportion of respondents reporting that they took environmentally friendly action – planted trees, removed pests, has increased significantly since 2006 from 3% to 20%. Attended meeting on committee was introduced as a new code and is stated by 20% of respondents.

A significantly smaller proportion of respondents attended a meeting/public hearing (from 42% in 2006 to only 7% in 2013). Fewer respondents also report writing to a newspaper, a council or organisation. Please note multiple responses to this question were permitted. Consequently the table may total more than 100 per cent.

Table 7-3: Actions Taken with Aim of Protecting Environment

	1998	2000	2003	2006	2013
	%	%	%	%	%
Joined/belong to/started an action group	5	18	15	25	31
Took environmentally friendly action – planted trees, removed pests	-	-	5	3	20
Attended meeting on committee	-	-	-	-	20
Made a formal submission	25	13	13	9	12
Participated in resource consent process	-	11	7	7	10
Following council rules/good farm practice	-	-	-	-	8
Complained to a council or organisation	14	8	6	8	7
Work for/consult to an agency with environmental responsibilities	-	-	3	3	7
Took part in a protest	11	2	10	6	7
Attended a meeting/public hearing	38	43	41	42	7
Read or sought information	6	12	2	5	6
Signed a petition	-	5	25	6	5
Māori environmental interests	-	-	-	-	5
Donate/raise money for groups	-	-	1	2	5
Educated people on issues	-	-	-	3	4
Filled out a survey	-	-	-	-	3
Telephoned a council or organisation	20	7	3	2	1
Complained to the company/person causing the damage	2	1	2	1	1
Wrote a letter to council or other organisation	13	6	10	11	1
Wrote a letter to the paper	2	3	3	5	-
Base (respondents)	270	431	402	158	120

7.3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Some respondents are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to take a specific action, as shown for the following:

- Joined/belong to/started an action group: those educated to a tertiary level (41%)
- Work for/consult to an agency with environmental responsibilities: those educated to a tertiary level (12%)
- Participated in resource consent process: those with no Māori ancestry (14%)

- Following council rules/good farm practice: those in a household with an income of between \$90,001 and \$150,000 per annum (15%)
- Took part in a protest: those in a family household with mainly adult children (19%).

7.3.3 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

When considered by territorial authority and by urban and rural location, some respondents are more likely (than the regional average) to take the following actions:

- Rural respondents: following council rules/good farm practice (16%).

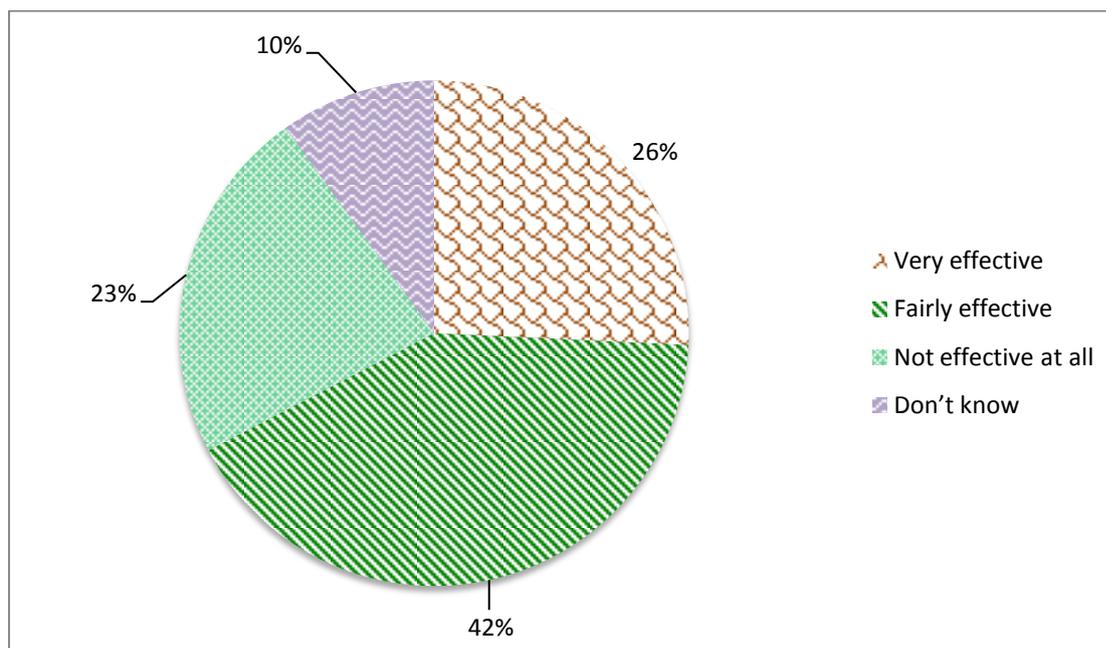
No respondents from a particular Territorial Authority are more likely (than the regional average) to mention taking a specific action.

7.4 EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC ACTIONS TAKEN

All respondents who have been involved in any kind of public action, meeting, official hearing or consent process (n=120) were asked generally how effective they think these actions were, using a scale of not effective at all, fairly effective and very effective.

7.4.1 OVERALL RESULT

Almost a quarter of respondents (26%) consider that the public actions they took have been very effective. A further 42 per cent say their public actions have been fairly effective. Twenty-three per cent of respondents think their actions have not been effective at all. The remainder (10%) do not know.



Base: Respondents who had taken public action (n=113)

Figure 7-4: Effectiveness of Public Actions Taken

7.4.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The findings for 2013 are broadly similar to 2006 with a slightly smaller proportion of respondents rating the effectiveness of public actions taken as very effective (26% in 2013 compared with 31% in 2006).

Table 7-4: Changes in Effectiveness of Public Actions Taken 1998 to 2013

	1998	2000	2003	2006	2013	Change	Change
	%	%	%	%	%	98-13	06-13
Not effective at all	33	32	31	23	23	-10	0
Fairly effective	28	36	44	38	42	+14	+4
Very effective	24	19	13	31	26	+2	-5
Don't know/hard to tell	15	14	12	8	10	-5	+2
Base (respondents who had taken some action)	270	431	402	158	120		

This trend is shown below.

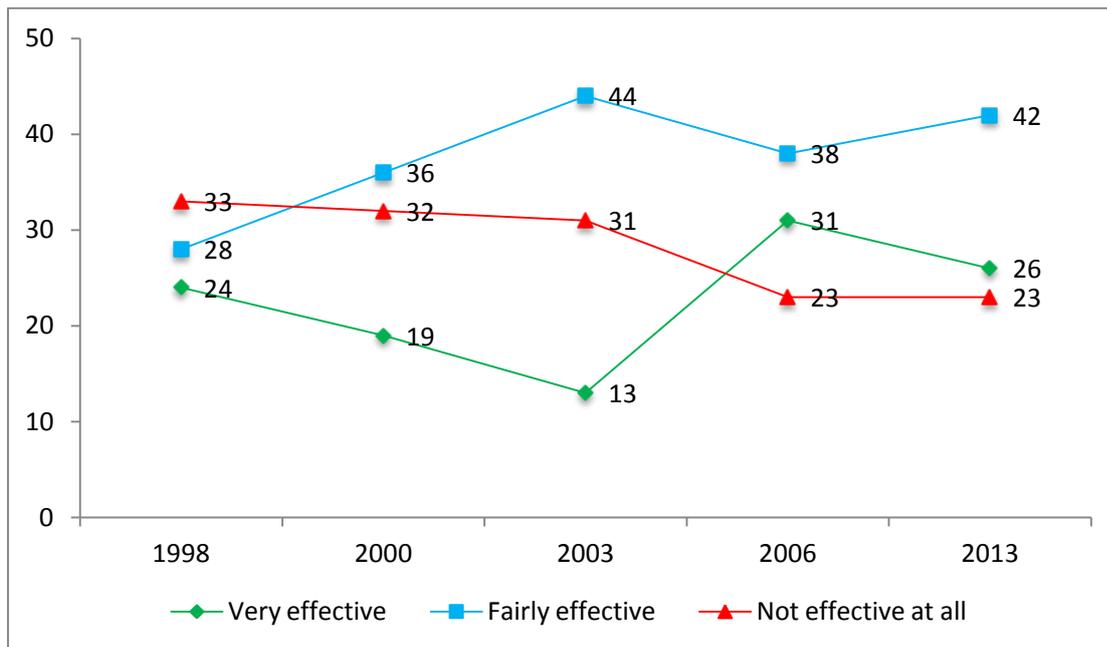


Figure 7-5: Effectiveness of Public Actions Taken 1998 to 2013

7.4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that their public actions are **fairly effective** are those who are:

- of New Zealand ethnicity (58%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to be **unsure** about the effectiveness of their public actions are those who are:

- of European ethnicity (16%).

No particular demographic groups are identified as being significantly more likely (than the regional average) to perceive that their public actions are **very effective** or **not effective**.

7.4.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban/rural setting are more likely (than the regional average) to think that their actions are **very effective**, **fairly effective**, **not effective** or **unknown**.

Please note that this data is not displayed graphically as the base sizes for individual territorial authorities are too small to draw meaningful conclusions.

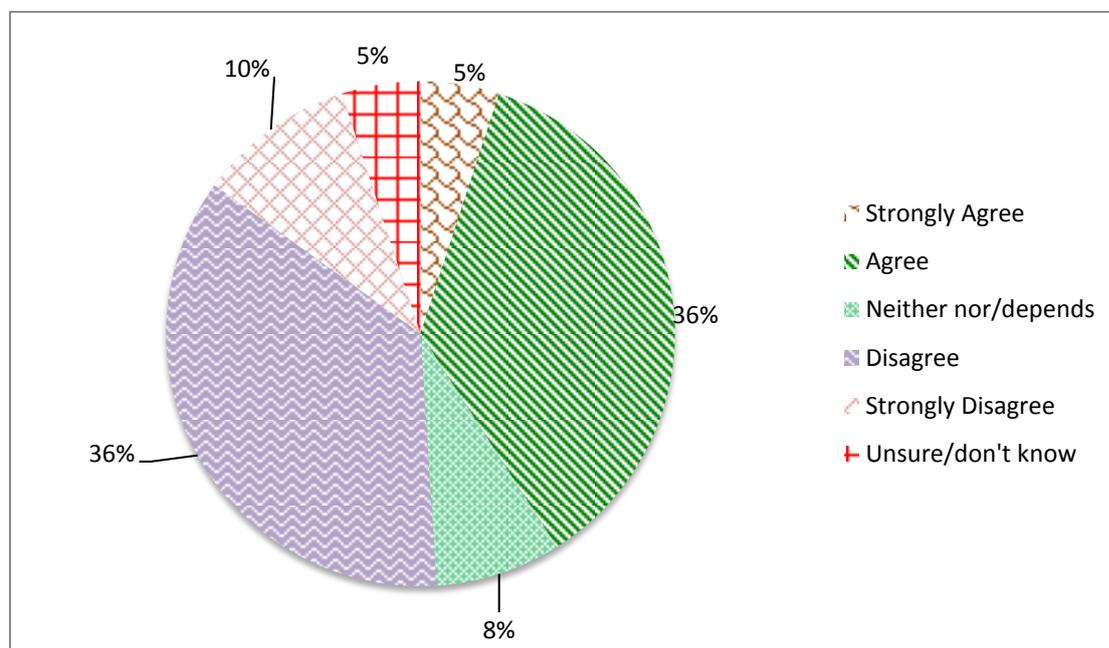
7.5 PUBLIC SAY IN THE WAY THE ENVIRONMENT IS MANAGED

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that the *public have enough say in the way the environment is managed*.

Note: The rating scale used in 2003, 2006 and 2013 for the questions in this section differs to the rating scale used in 1998 and 2000. In the two earliest surveys a three point scale was used (agree, disagree, depends), whereas in 2003, 2006 and 2013 a five point scale was used (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, neither agree nor disagree). Therefore, comparisons over time should be interpreted with caution.

7.5.1 OVERALL RESULT

Respondents' views on the extent to which the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed are split. Forty-one per cent of respondents agree with this statement (5% strongly agree, 36% agree), and 46% disagreed (10% strongly disagree, 36% disagree).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 7-6: Public Say in the Way the Environment is Managed

7.5.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

Levels of agreement with the statement that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed are lower in 2013 (total agree 41%) than in 2006 (48%).

Table 7-5: Changes in Agreement that the Public Have Enough Say in the Way the Environment is Managed 1998 to 2013

	1998 %	2000 %	2003 %	2006 %	2013 %	Change 98-13	Change 06-13
Strongly Agree	N/A	N/A	4	10	5	N/A	-5
Agree	N/A	N/A	36	38	36	N/A	-2
Total Agree	37	28	40	48	41	+4	-7
Neither agree nor disagree/depends	12	10	10	2	8	-4	+6
Disagree	N/A	N/A	38	32	36	N/A	+4
Strongly Disagree	N/A	N/A	9	14	10	N/A	-4
Total Disagree	47	56	47	46	46	-1	-
Unsure/don't know	3	5	3	4	5	+2	+1
Base (respondents)	1037	1873	1822	1000	1005		

N/A denotes code not used in previous years. This trend is shown below.

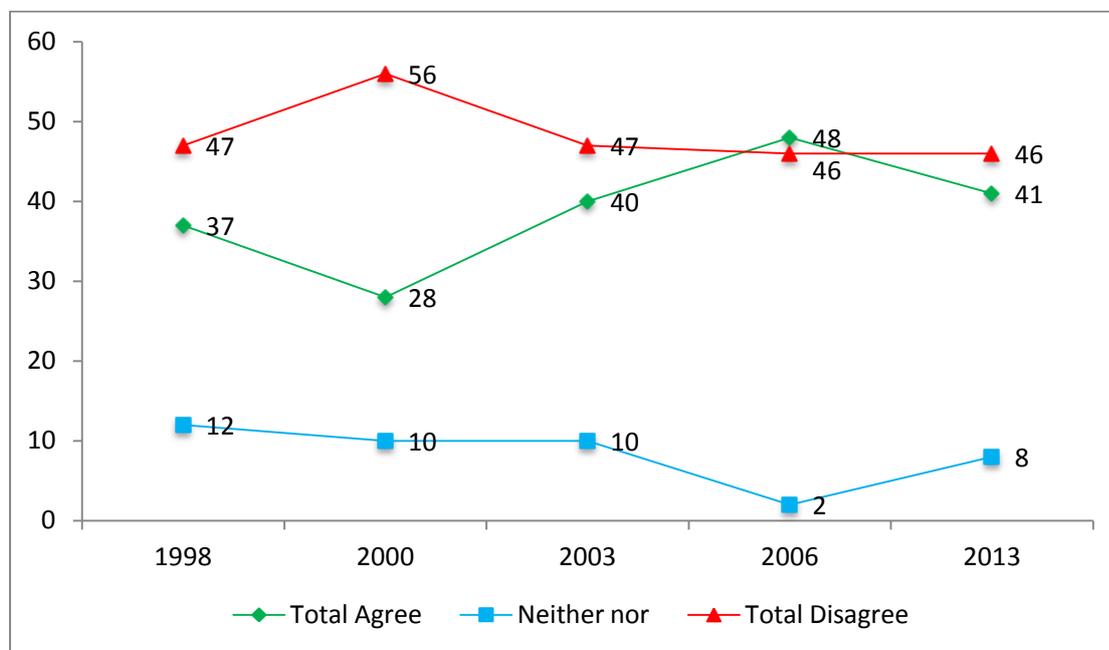


Figure 7-7: Agreement that the Public Have Enough Say in the Way the Environment is Managed 1998 to 2013

7.5.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to **agree** that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed are those who are:

- male (43%)
- Māori (49%)
- in a household with an income of between \$150,001 and \$200,000 per annum (56%)
- working as a farmer (55%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to **disagree** that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed are those who are:

- of European ethnicity (52%)
- in a household with an income of between \$30,001 and \$60,000 per annum (51%).

No particular demographic subgroup is identified as being more likely (than the regional average) to **neither agree nor disagree (depends)** that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed.

7.5.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban or rural setting are more likely (than the regional average) to **agree, neither agree nor disagree (depends), or disagree** that the public have enough say in the way the environment is managed.

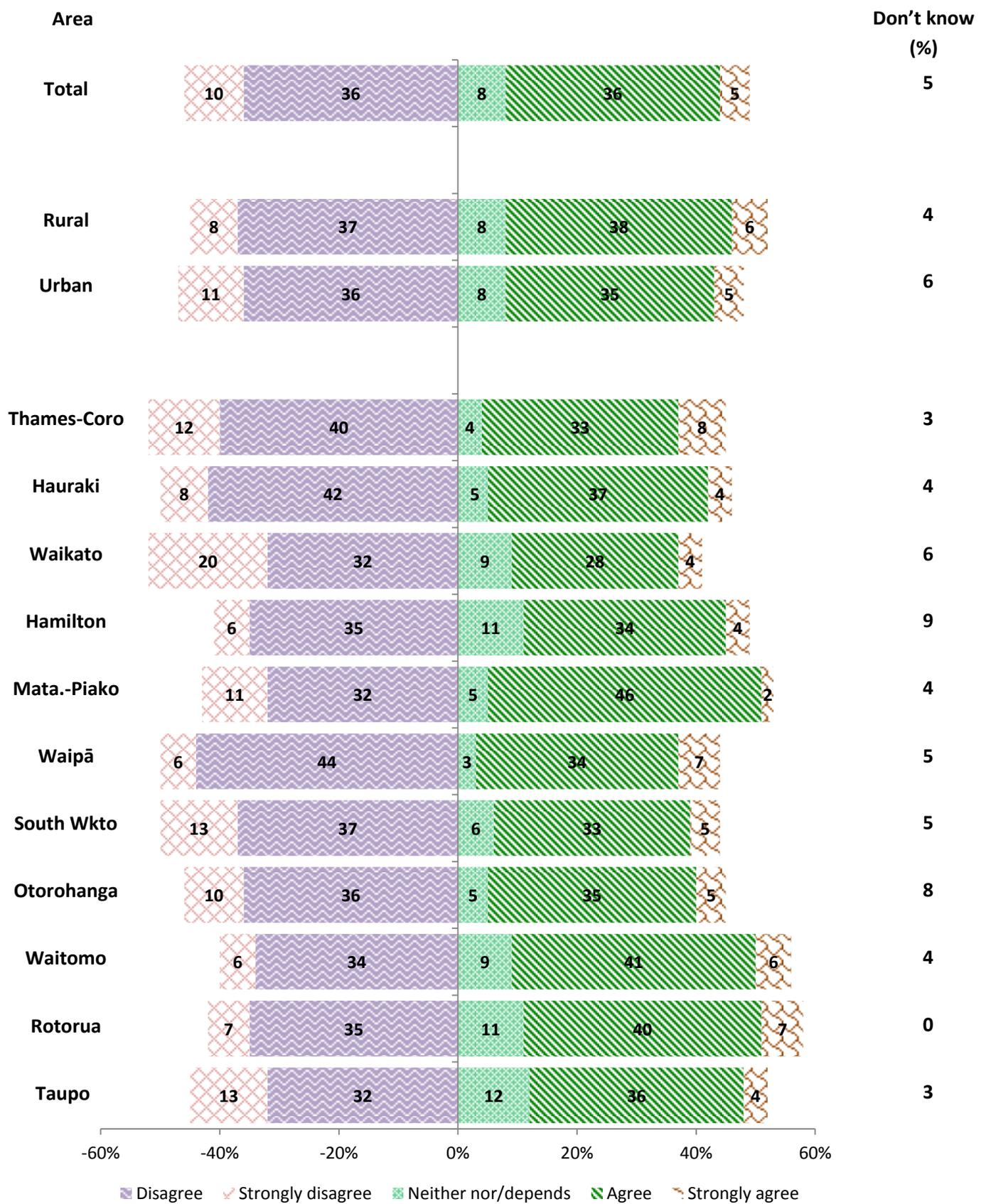


Figure 7-8: Agreement that the Public Have Enough Say in the way the Environment is Managed by Area, Rural and Urban