

s 9(2)(a)

20-D-00078

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email on 21 January 2020 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*"...the surveys and research that has been done regarding how the citizens of New Zealand feel towards the topics of climate change, global warming, values and awareness of the environment, and more following this environmental trend."*

The Ministry has identified three documents in scope of your request. Two items have been refused under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is publically available. A link to these documents has been provided in the table attached to this response.

The two documents relate to The Environmental Attitudes report which was commissioned by the Ministry to find out what New Zealanders think about climate change, water and waste. This information was used to identify focus areas of environmental issues that are important to New Zealanders. The research also helped identify who the public felt is responsible for addressing environmental issues and what issues New Zealanders felt they needed more information on.

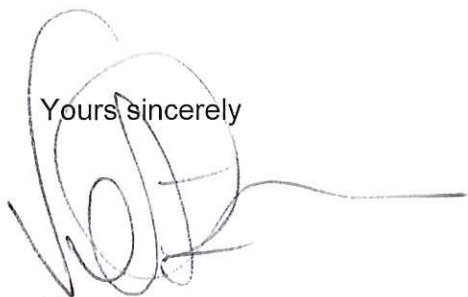
The remaining document has been released to you in full. The Environmental Consumer Research – EA2019 is the survey that was used to inform the communications approach for the release of the Environment Aotearoa 2019 report. The research helped the Ministry to better understand the information needs of consumers and stakeholders to ensure the content of the report aligned with the public's expectations and that the communications approach promoting the report was accurate and effective.

We also recommend that you review the [Better Futures](#) research conducted by Colmar Brunton and the [Public perceptions of New Zealand's environment](#) published by Lincoln University to inform your project.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Executive Relations team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Vicki Connor', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vicki Connor  
**Director Communications and Engagement**

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## Document schedule

Document no.	Document date	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied	Link to the documents
1	November 2018	Environmental Consumer Research – EA2019	Released in full.	N/A	
2	17 August 2018	Environmental Attitudes Baseline Research	Refused in full	s 18(d)	<a href="https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Extra%20downloads/Other%20documents/new-zealanders-environmental-attitudes.pdf">https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Extra%20downloads/Other%20documents/new-zealanders-environmental-attitudes.pdf</a>
3	8 November 2018	Environmental attitudes research	Refused in full	s 18(d)	<a href="https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/About/Environmental Attitudes SEP 2018.pdf">https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/About/Environmental Attitudes SEP 2018.pdf</a>

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**Environmental Consumer Research**  
**MfE**  
**Version 1**

**October 2018**

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## **Sample source**

**683** Respondents were sourced from Research Now/SSI– the largest New Zealand online panel.

## **Audience and weighting**

New Zealanders aged 18 and over. Sample had the following quotas: age, gender, location, and ethnicity, to align with Stats NZ population counts from the 2013 census.

## **Fieldwork**

Interviewing was carried out from the 14<sup>th</sup> October to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

## **Accuracy**

At a total sample level the results have a maximum margin of error (at the 95% confidence interval) of +/-4.9%.

## Key findings

8% involved in environmental actions on a regular basis

36% sometimes/50% not involved very much

47% care greatly

80% want to receive their environmental information in the news

Social media – 50% to their personal facebook page

Tools – 69% want simple actions that will make a difference/50% more local info

38% feel the environment is good but degrading

4% feel it is great

45% feel they have little or no ability to have an impact

51% feel they can have some impact

58% want a fb page or website with tips

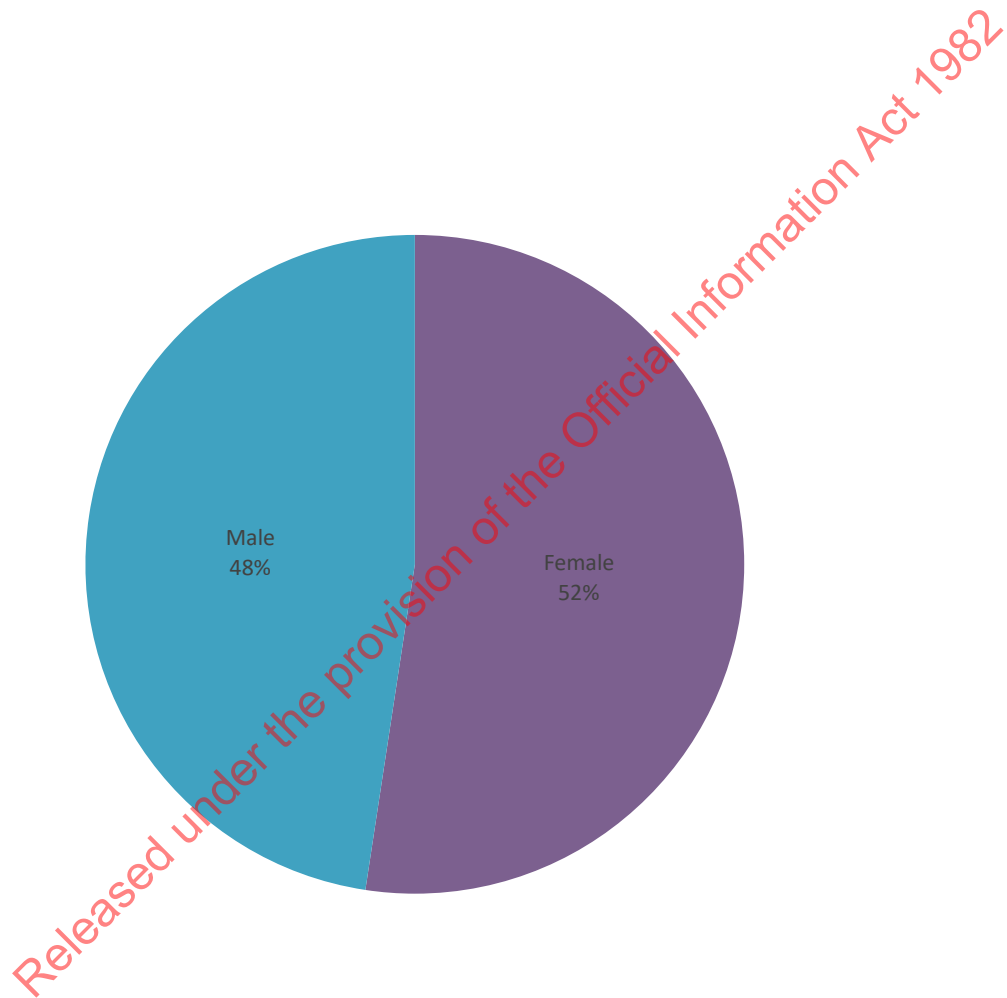
77% not aware of environment reports – 77% of these feel it would be a great idea

# Demographic Information

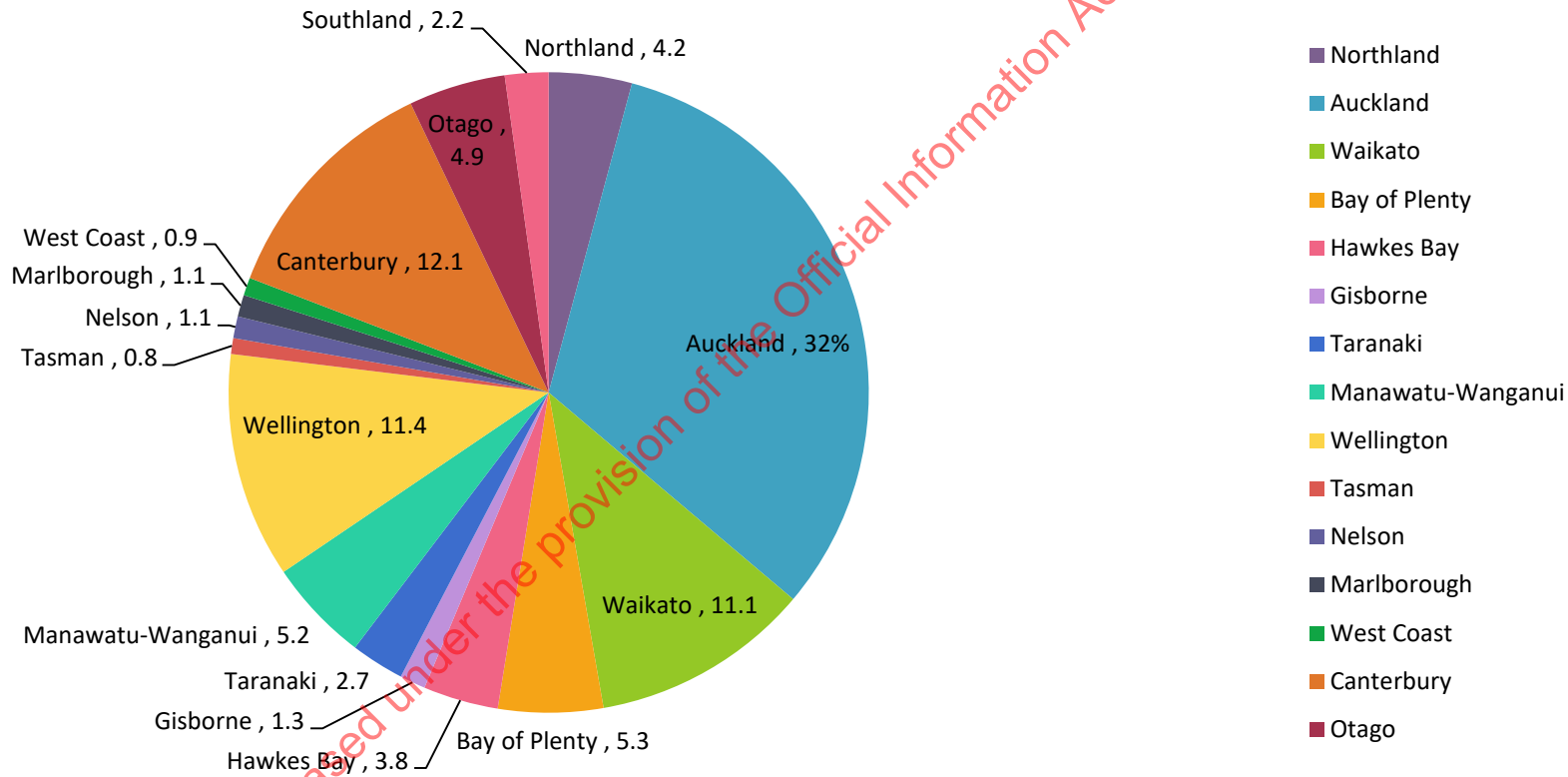
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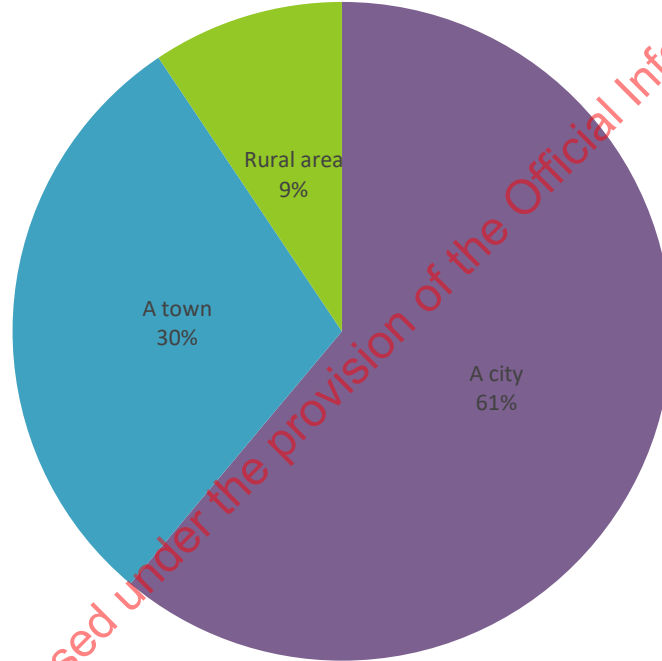
# Gender



# Location

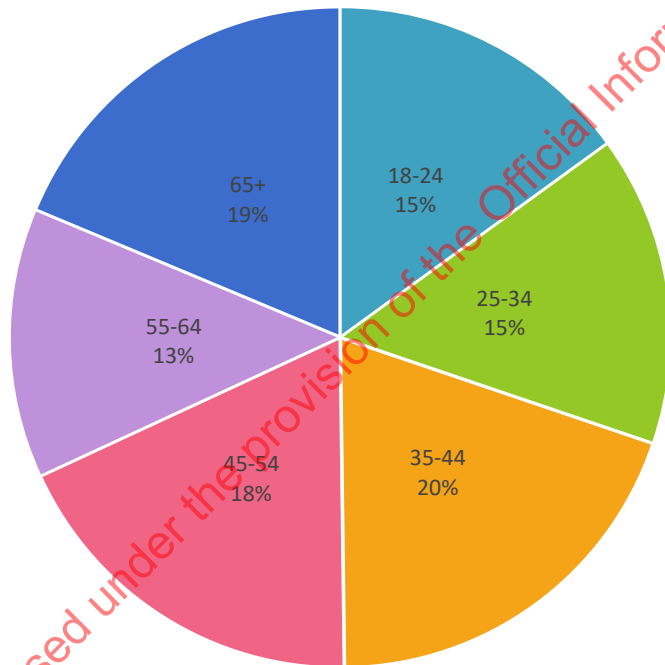


## City/rural breakdown



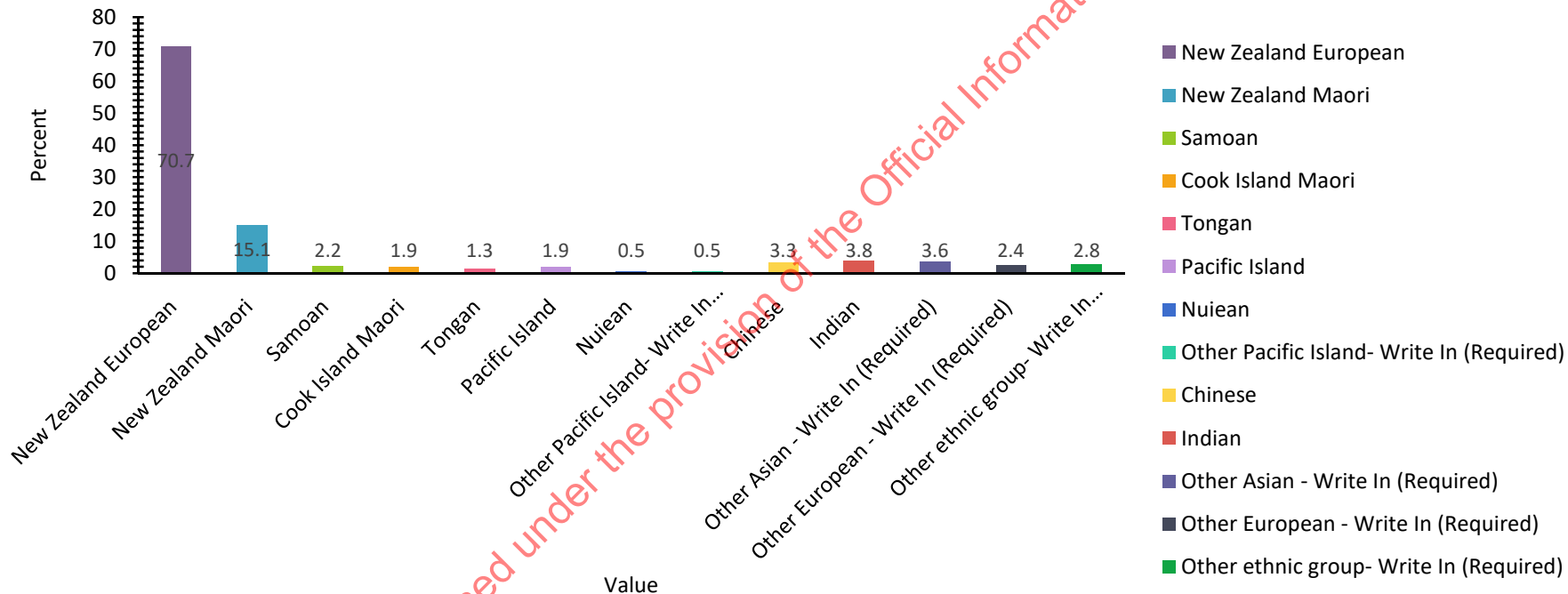
- A city
- A town
- Rural area

# Age



- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

# Ethnicity

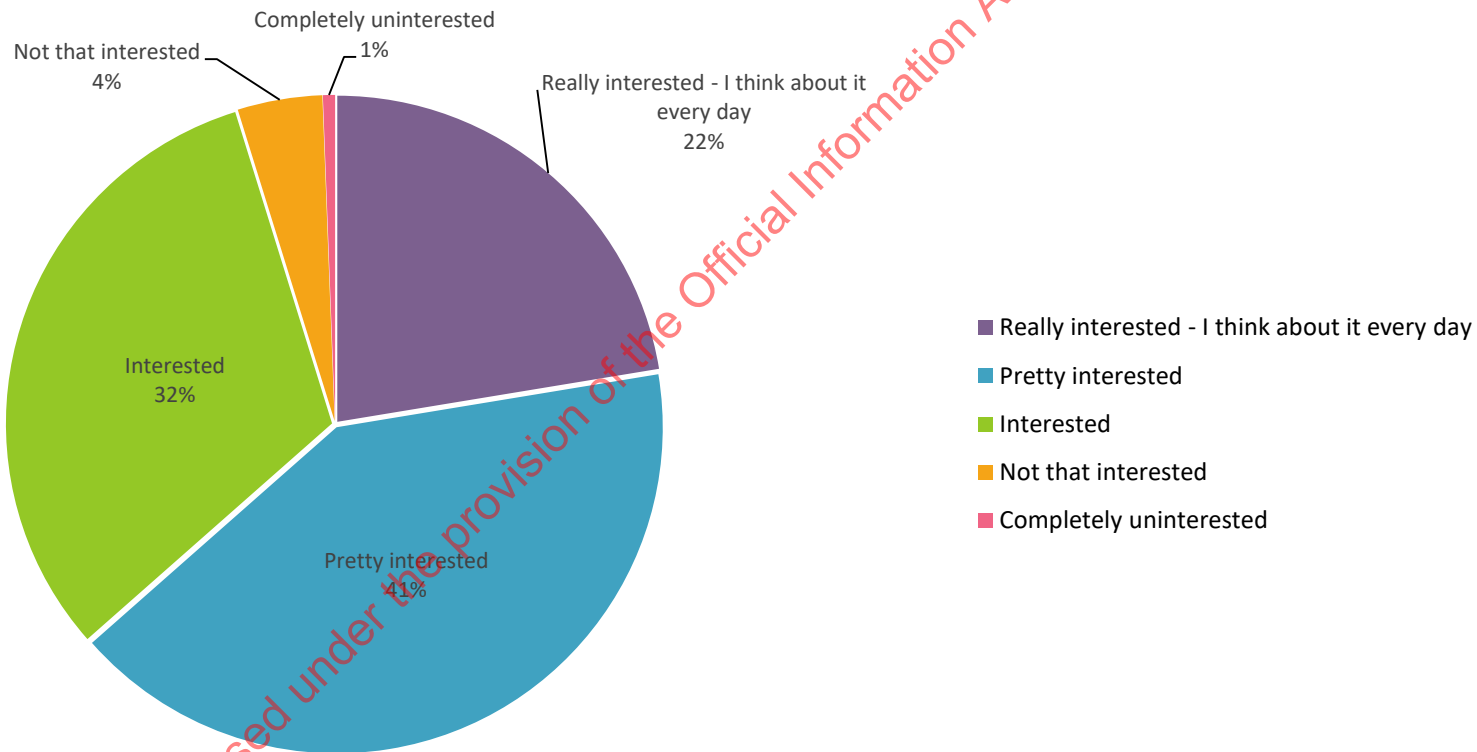


# Section 1

## Interest

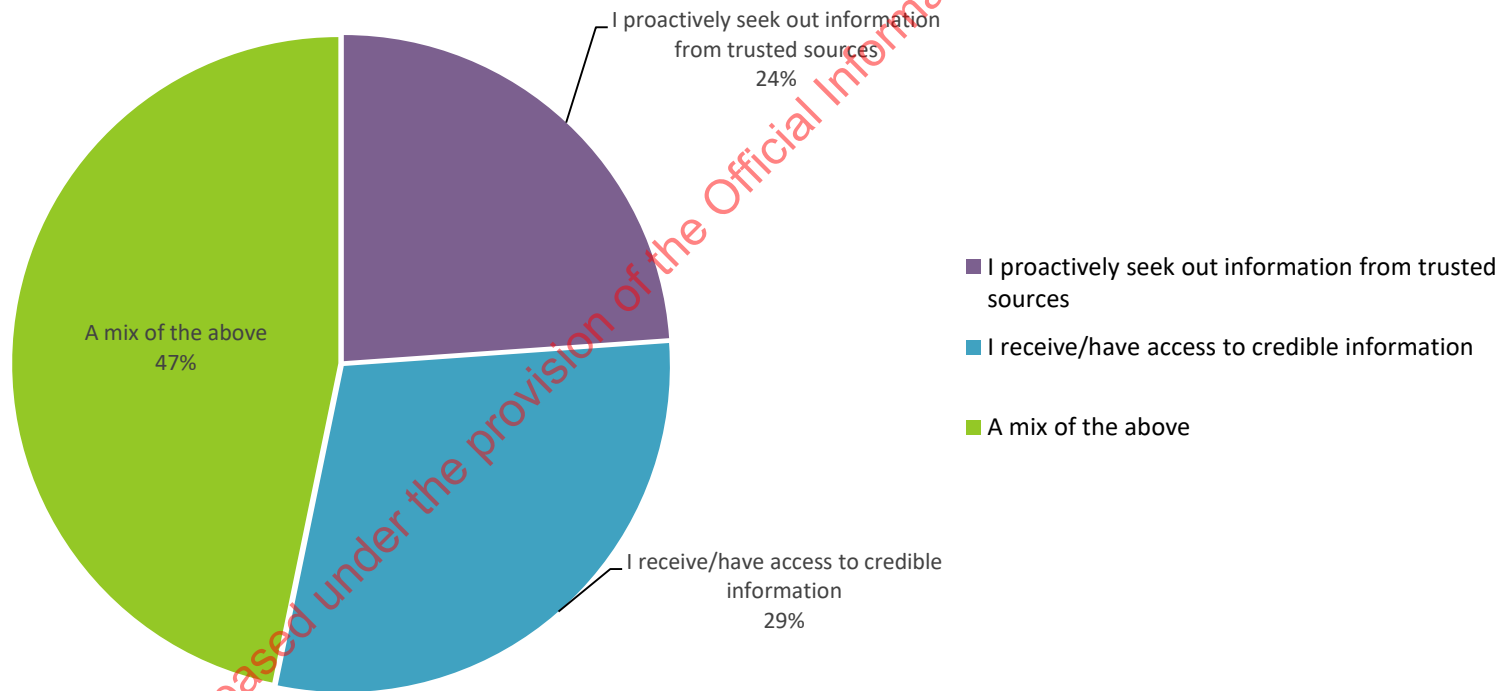
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# Interest in New Zealand's natural environmental



# Interested

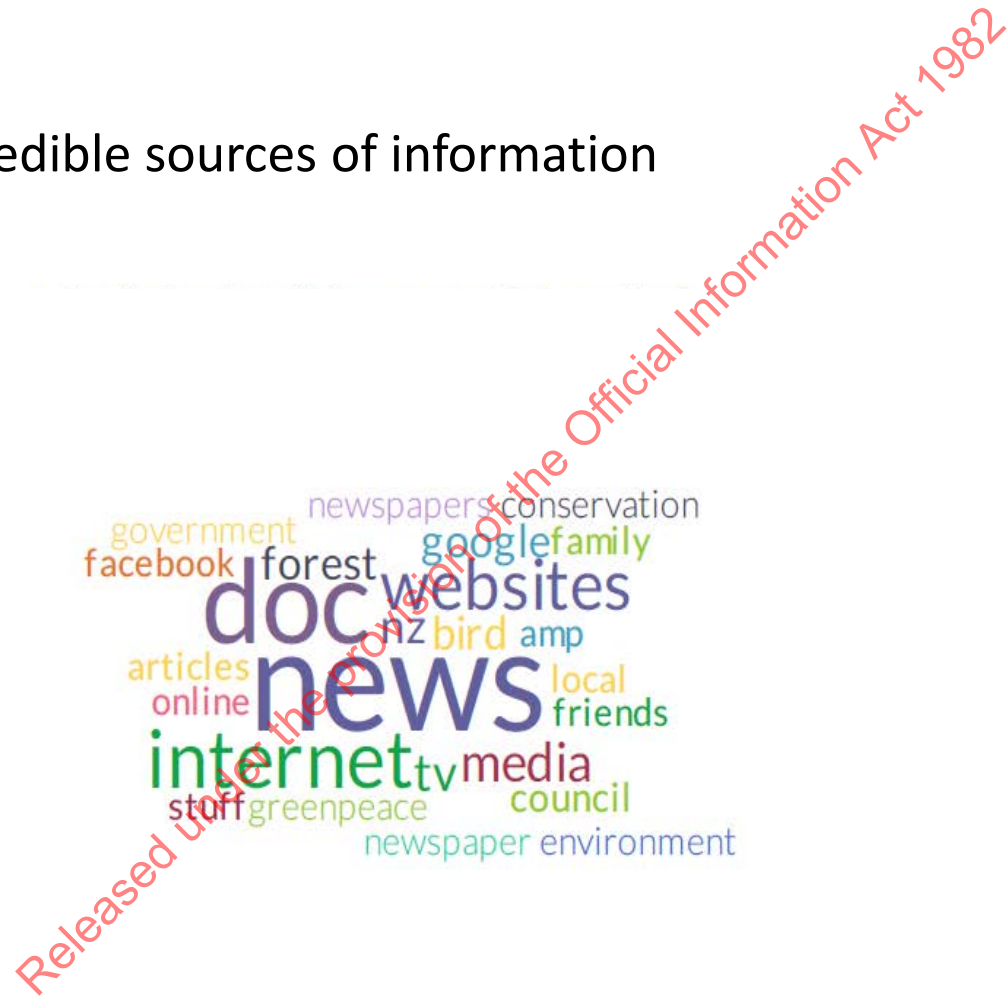
## How do you stay informed about environmental issues?



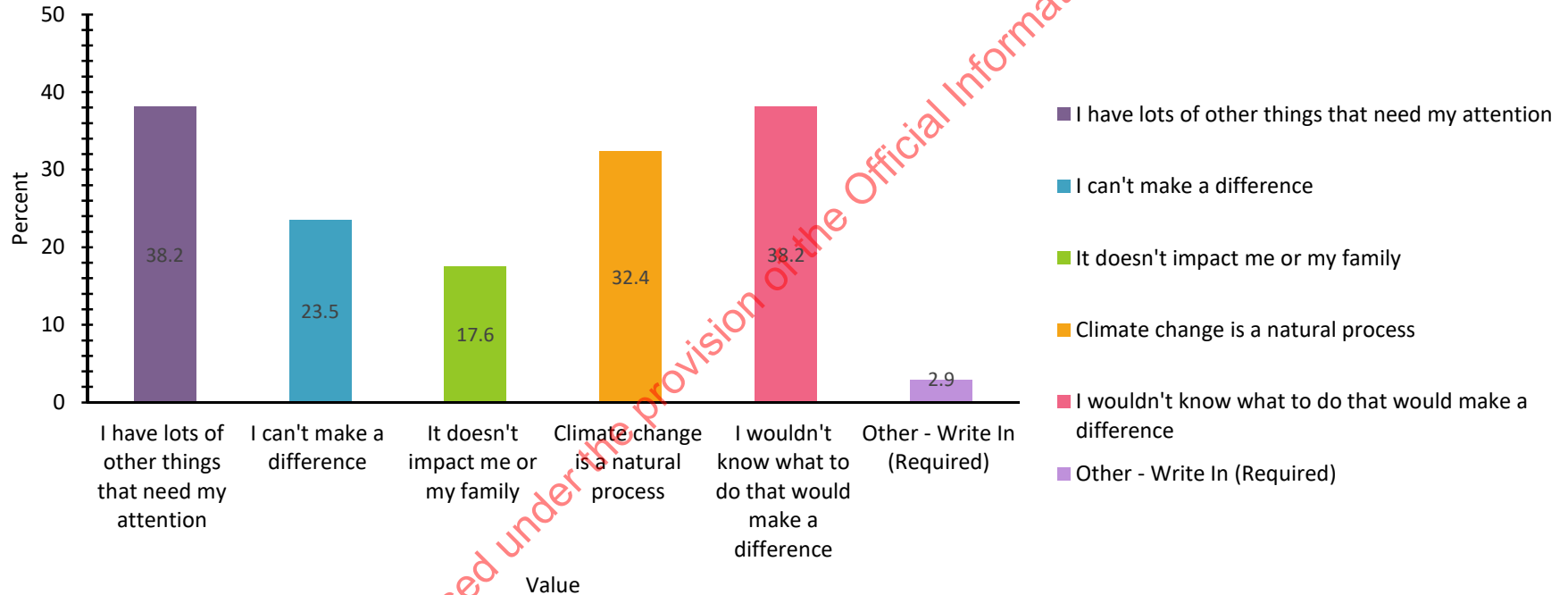


Interested

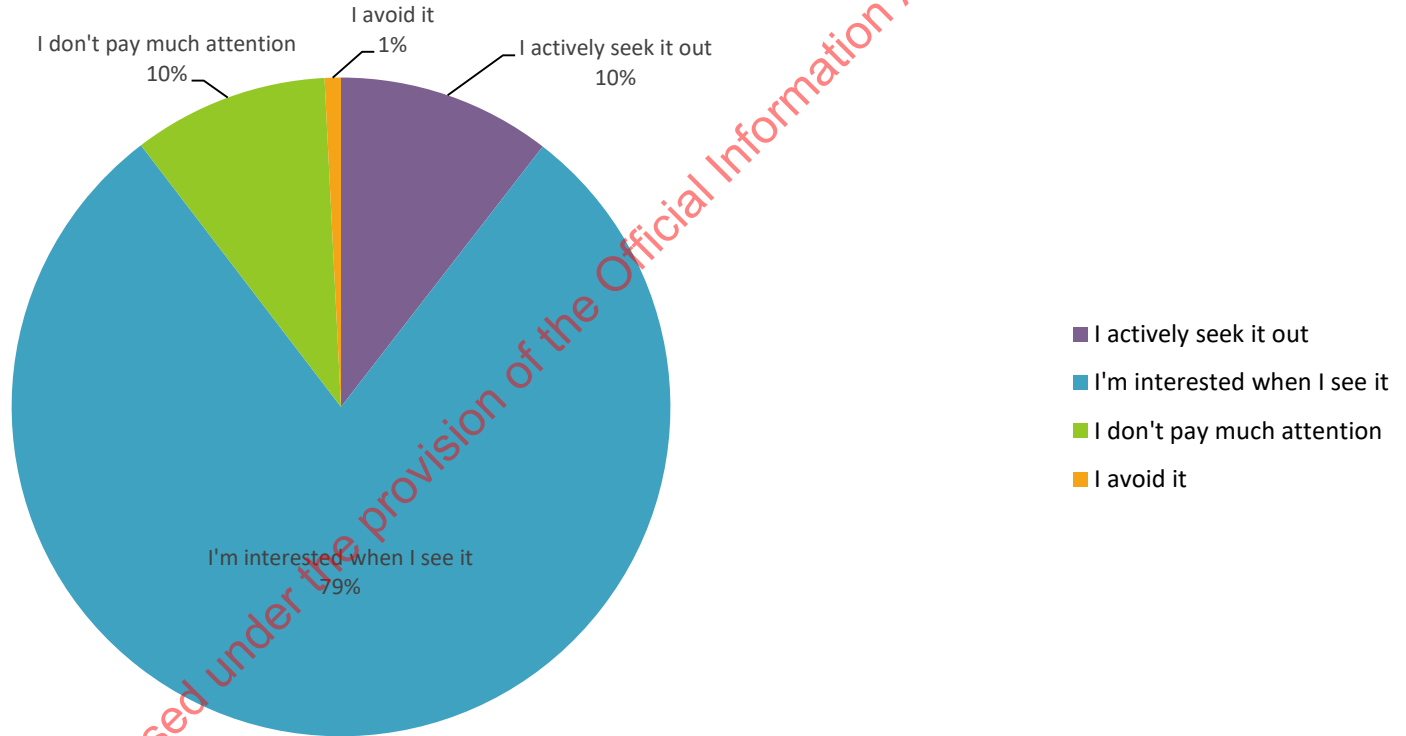
Trusted and credible sources of information



# Not really interested in environmental issues. Why is that?



# Approach to news and information about environmental issues

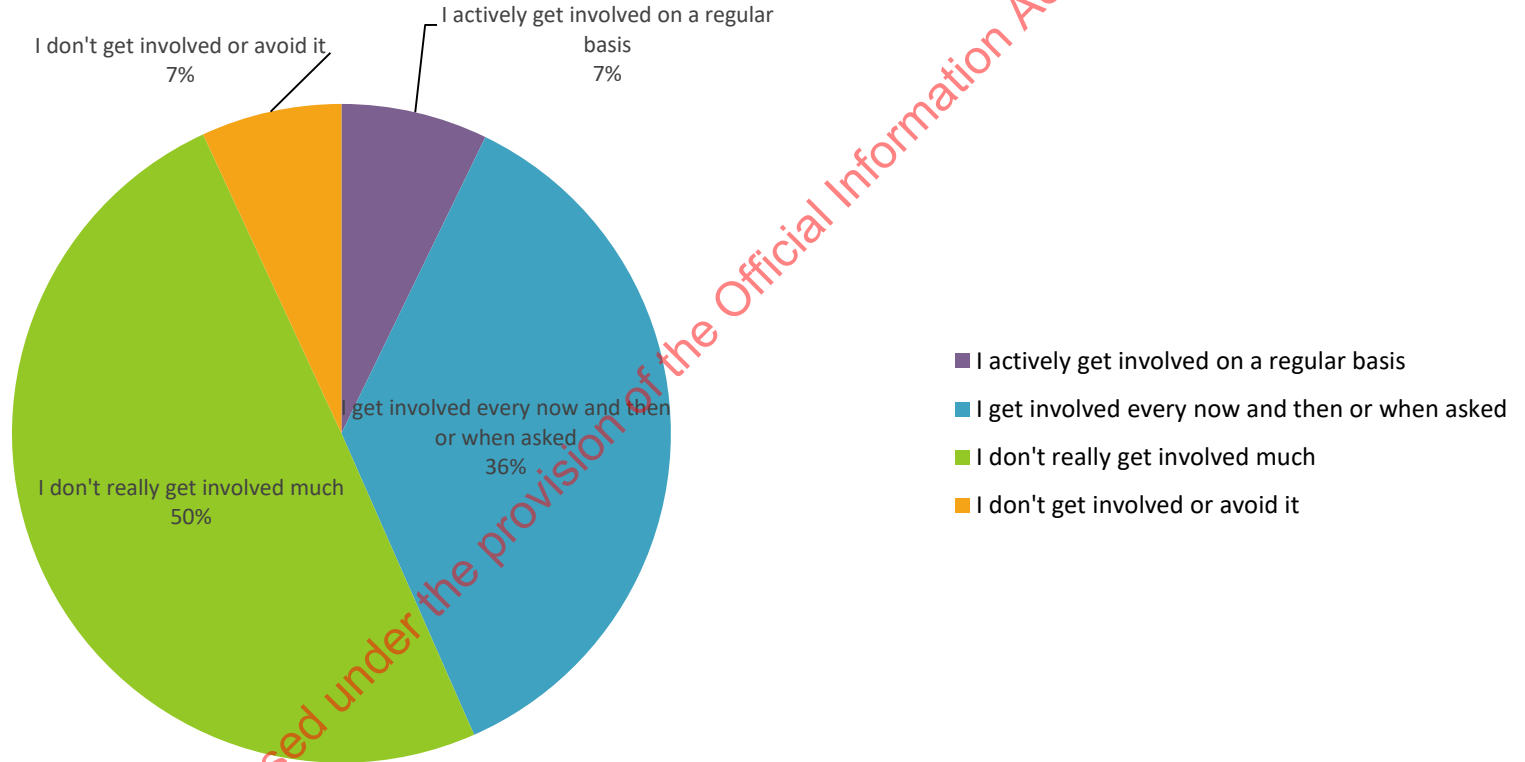


[illegible]

Don't pay much attention/avoid environmental information  
Why?



# How involved are you in environmental issues?



Involved - what do you do?



A word cloud of environmental and waste management terms. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with some words being larger and more prominent than others. The colors of the words vary, including shades of green, blue, orange, and purple. The words include: products, beaches, climate, change, picking, recycle, trees, environment, 0, beach, rubbish, issues, native, plastic, recycling, water, waste, planting, clean, bags, cleaning, work, environmental, tree, and pollution.

products beaches climate  
change picking recycle trees  
environment 0 beach  
rubbish issues native  
plastic recycling water  
waste planting  
clean bags cleaning  
work environmental tree pollution

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## Not involved very much or at all – why?



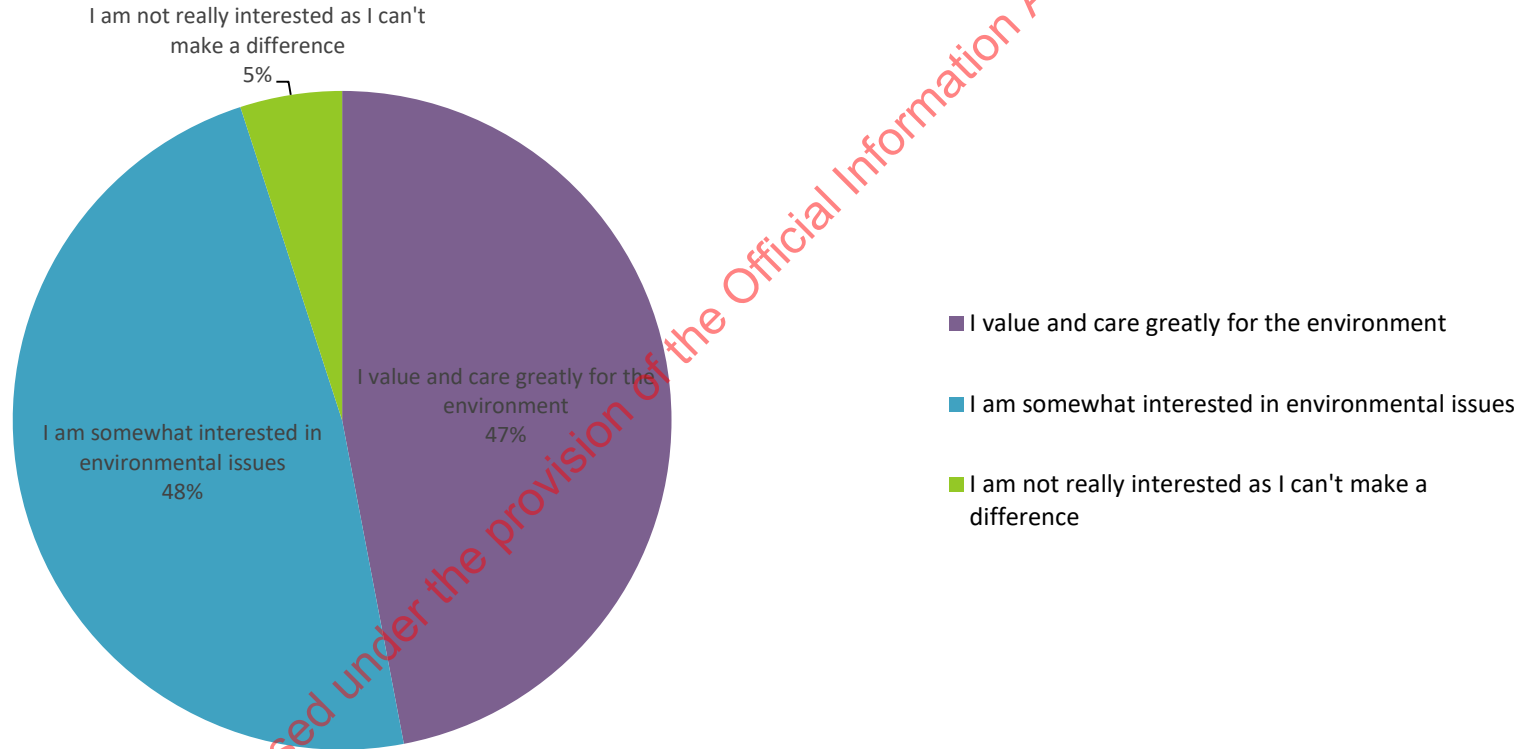
very much or at all – why?

A word cloud visualization showing various reasons people are busy. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central word "time". The words include: commitments, spare, difference, other issues, don't, home, or, lazy, bit, lot, involved, interested, work, change, unsure, information, age, feel, and lack. The word "time" is the largest and most prominent.

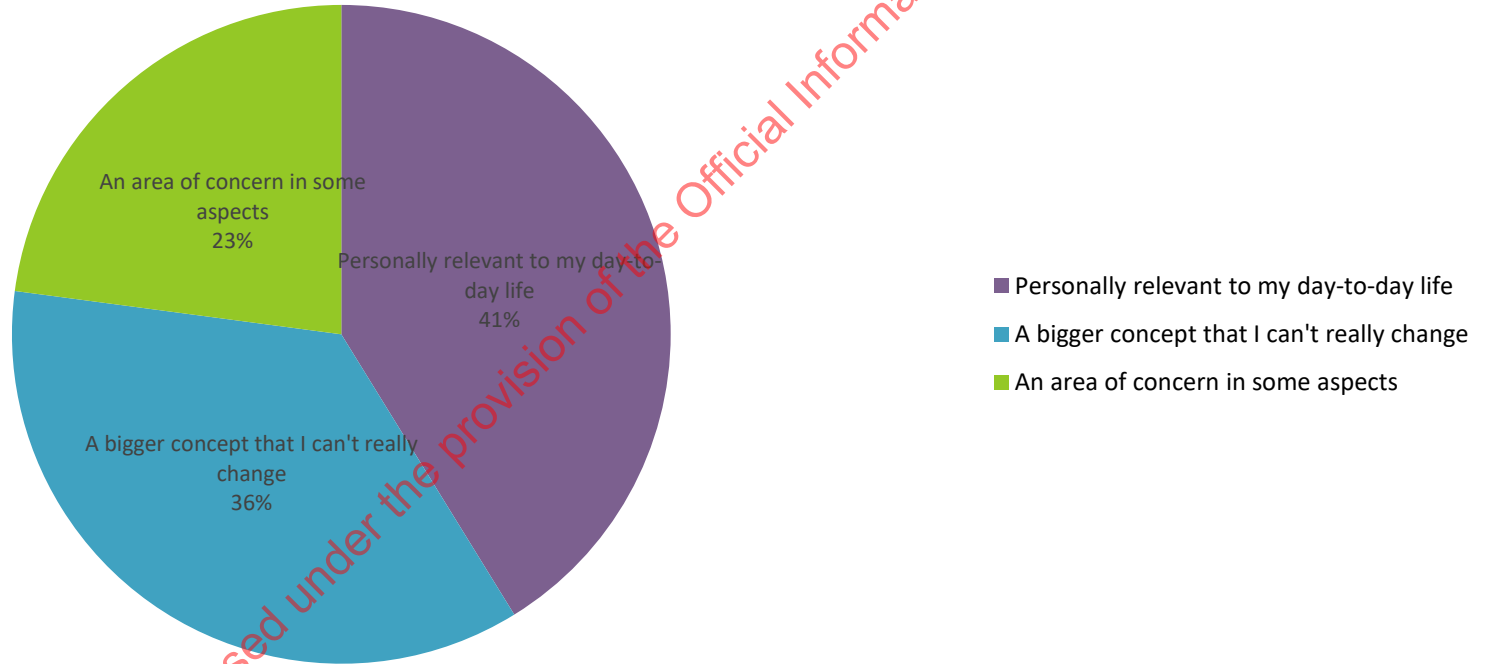
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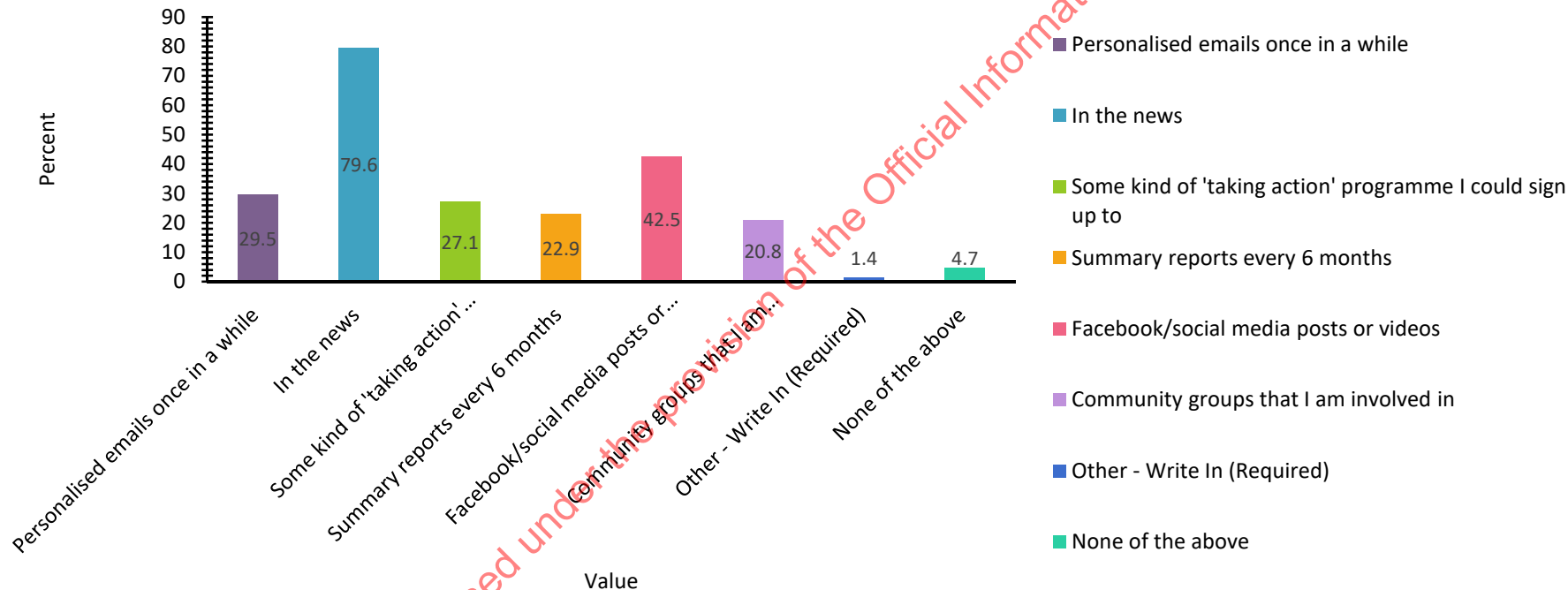
# How much do you value and care about the environment?



# How do you see environmental issues?

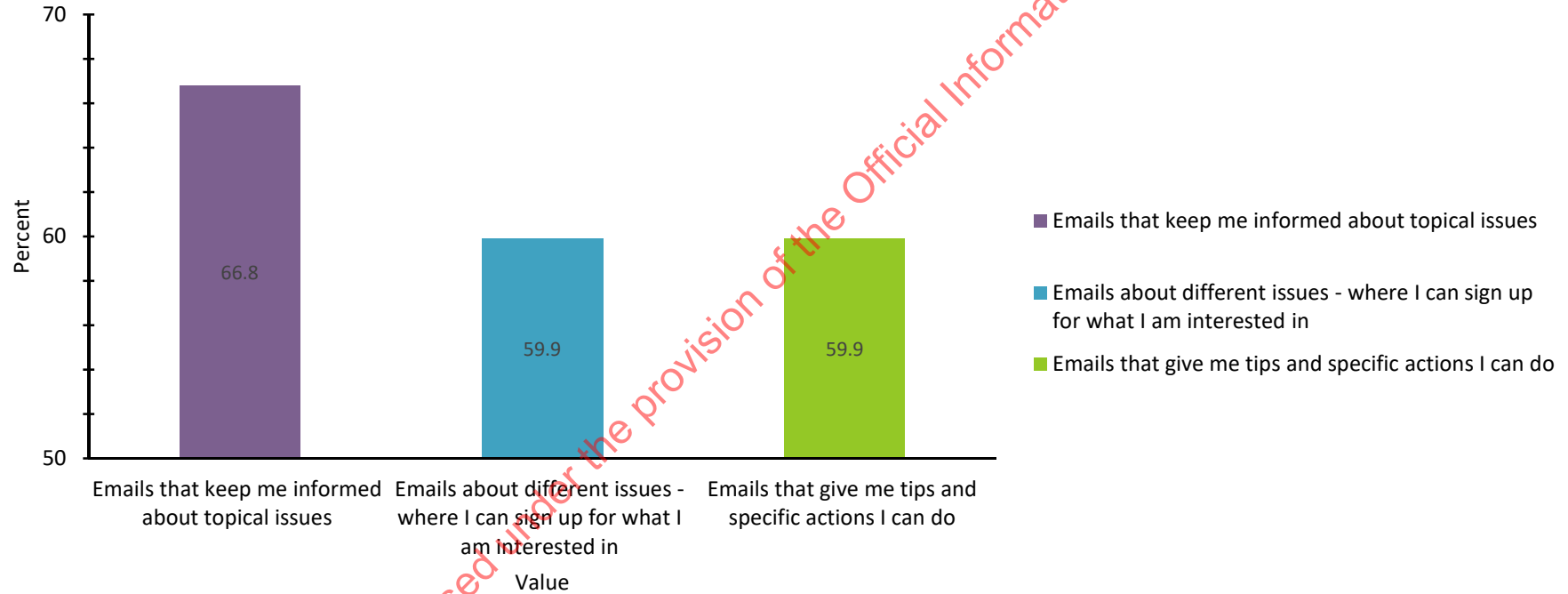


## Other useful sources of information about New Zealand's natural environment

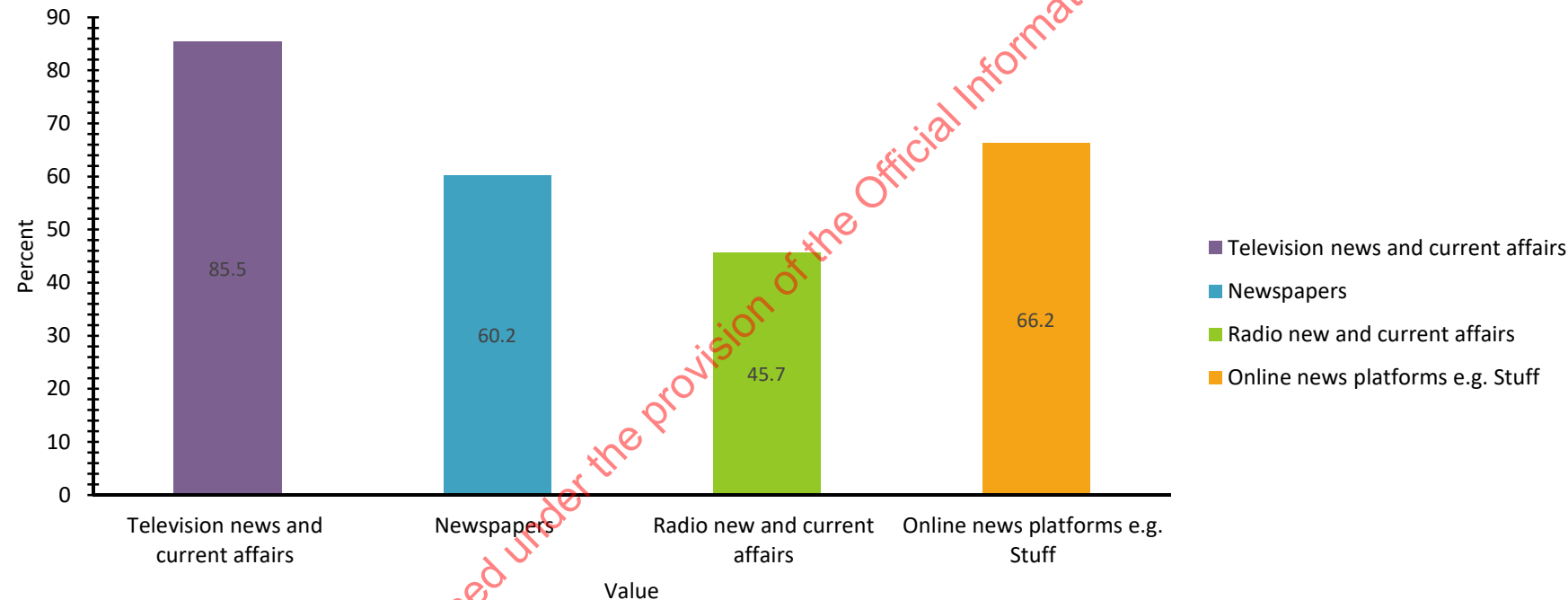


# Email

## What email content would you like?

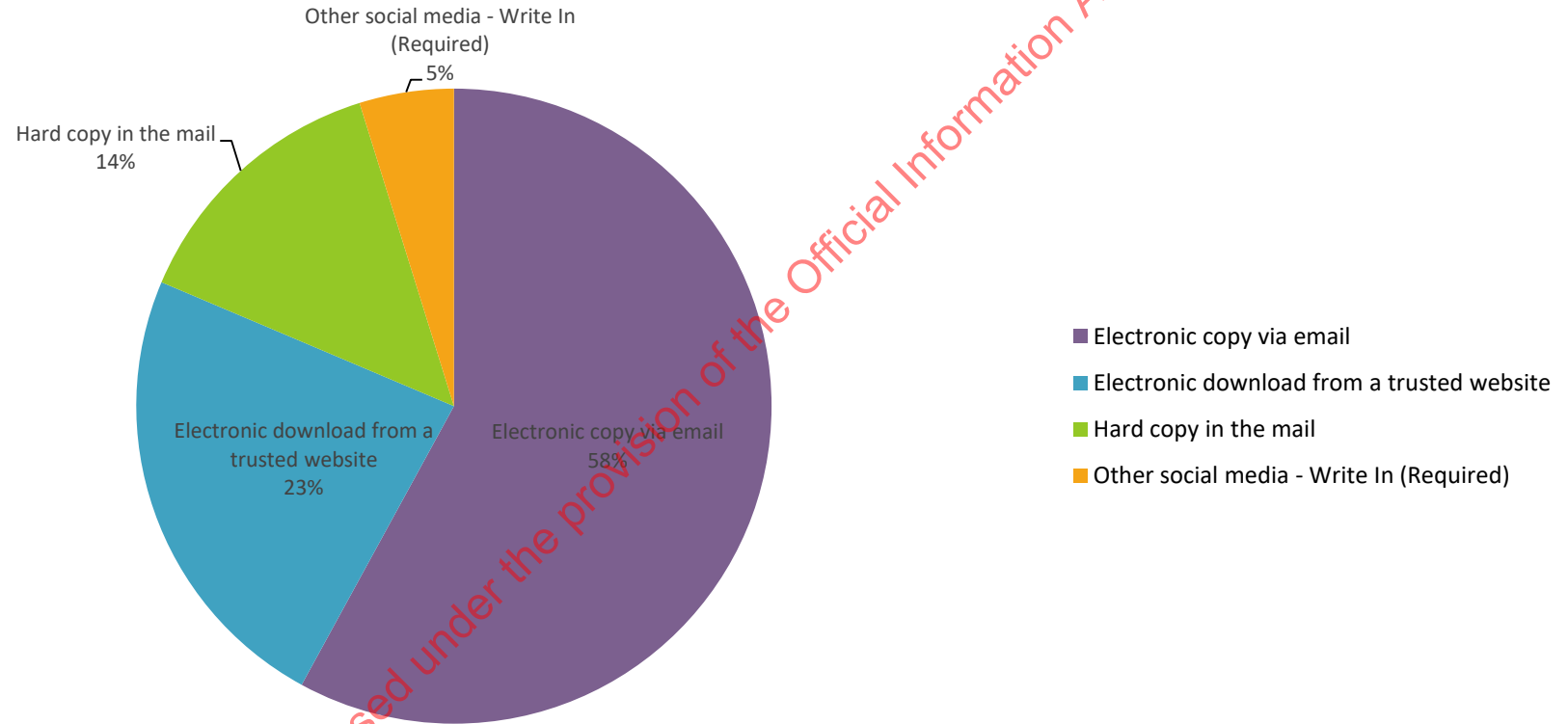


# News media: Where?

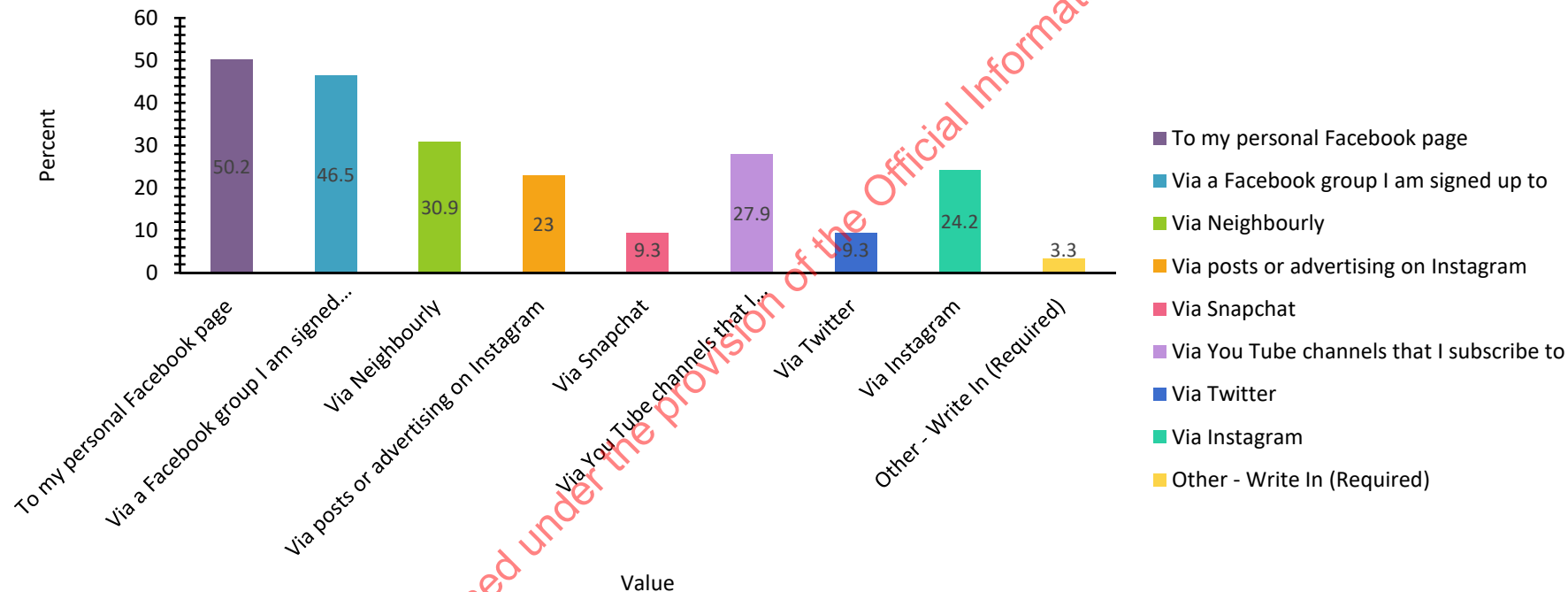


# Summary report

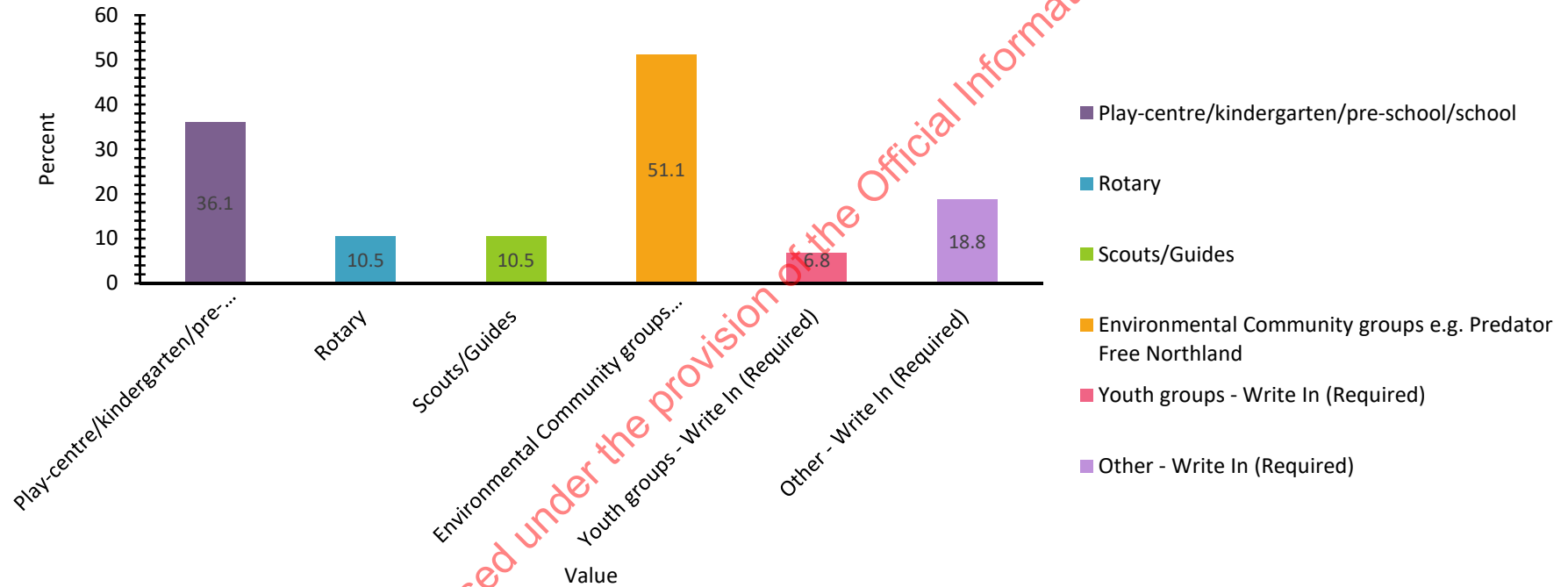
## What format



# Social media channels – which ones?



# Community or special interest groups – which ones?





# Issues, impact & current status

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# Impact and action statements

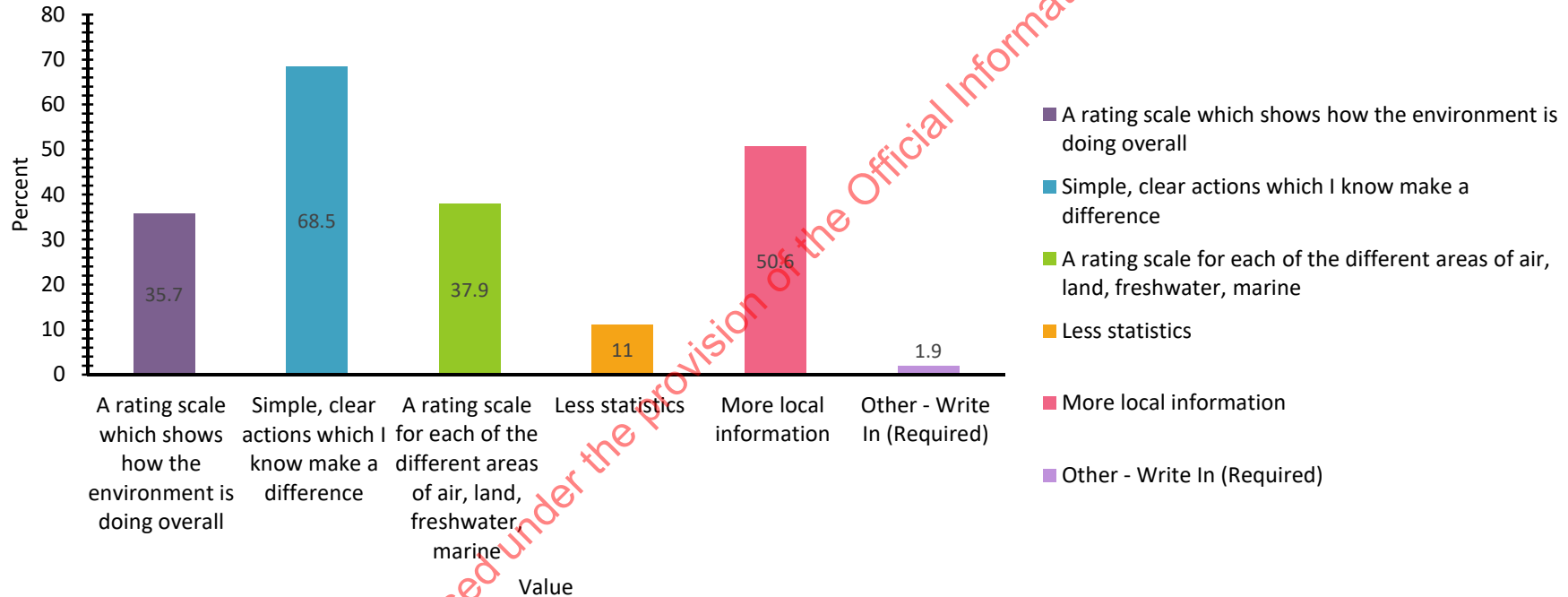
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	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Not applicable		Total Checks
	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks
One person can't make a difference to these big environmental issues	176	27.4%	196	30.5%	268	41.7%	3	0.5%	643
Environmental issues cover so many things - I don't know where to start.	281	43.4%	215	33.2%	142	21.9%	9	1.4%	647
The information I do see doesn't help me take action	163	25.2%	267	41.3%	202	31.2%	15	2.3%	647
The environment is just one of a whole lot of things that I have an interest in	410	63.5%	183	28.3%	44	6.8%	9	1.4%	646
I don't know what action to take	201	31.1%	237	36.6%	185	28.6%	24	3.7%	647
Total Checks	1231		1098		841		60		3230

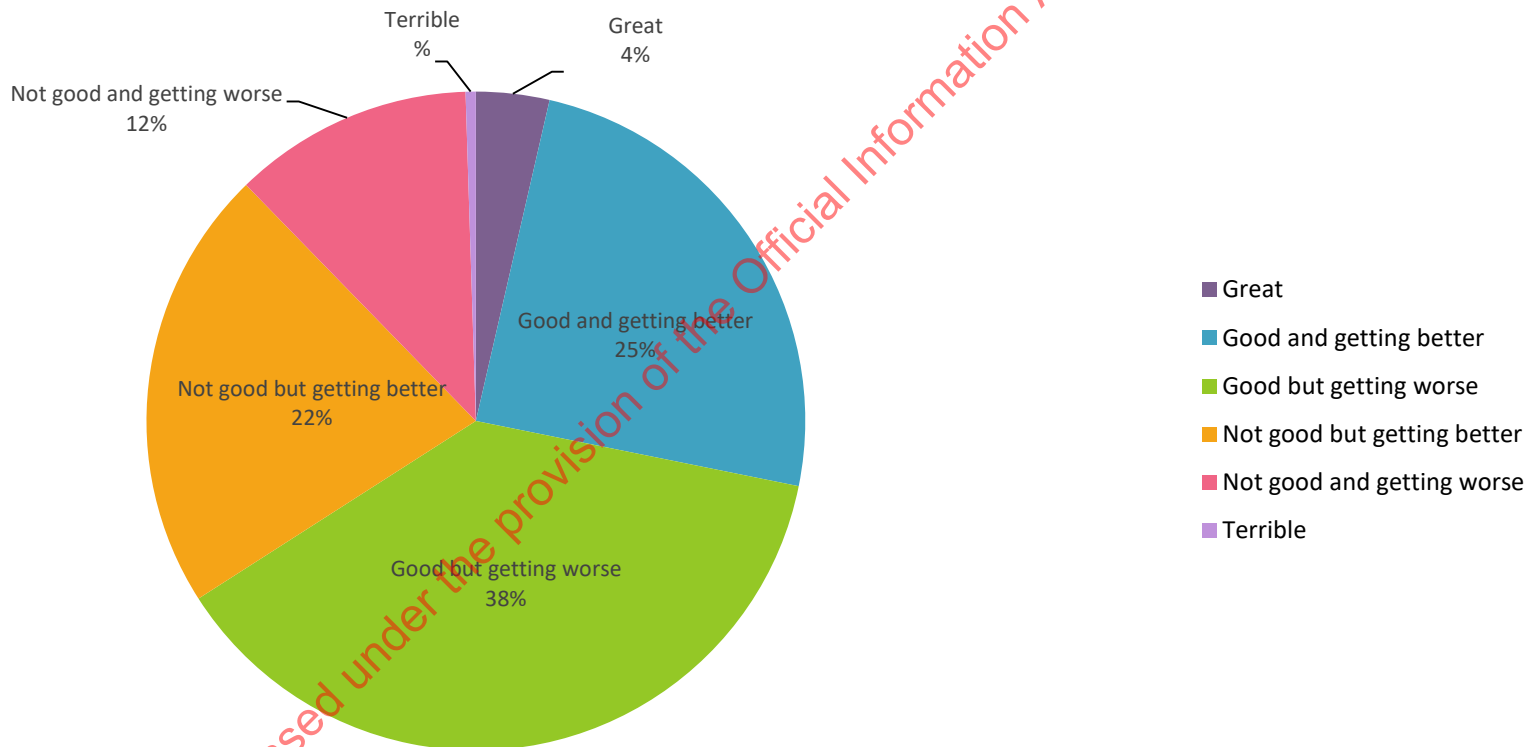
What would you consider a 'big' environment issue?



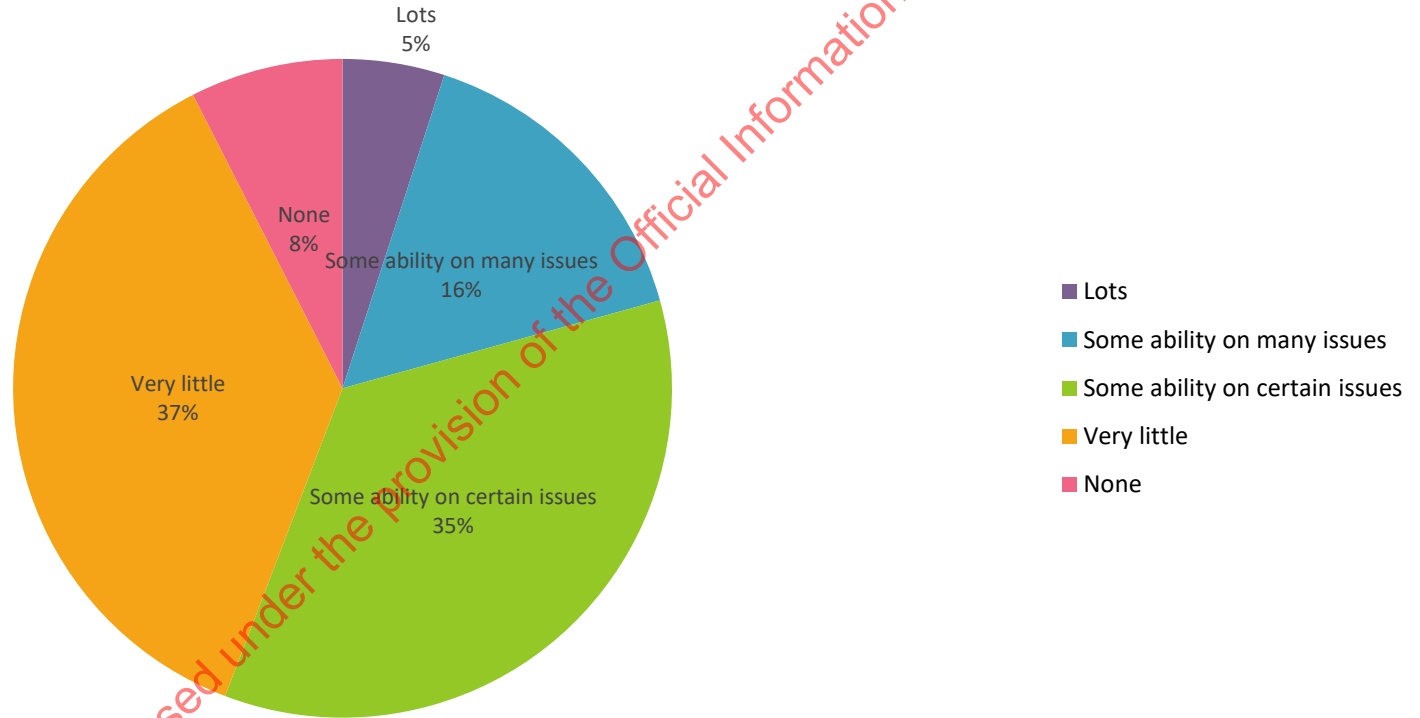
# What would be useful to help you understand environmental issues and what you can do?



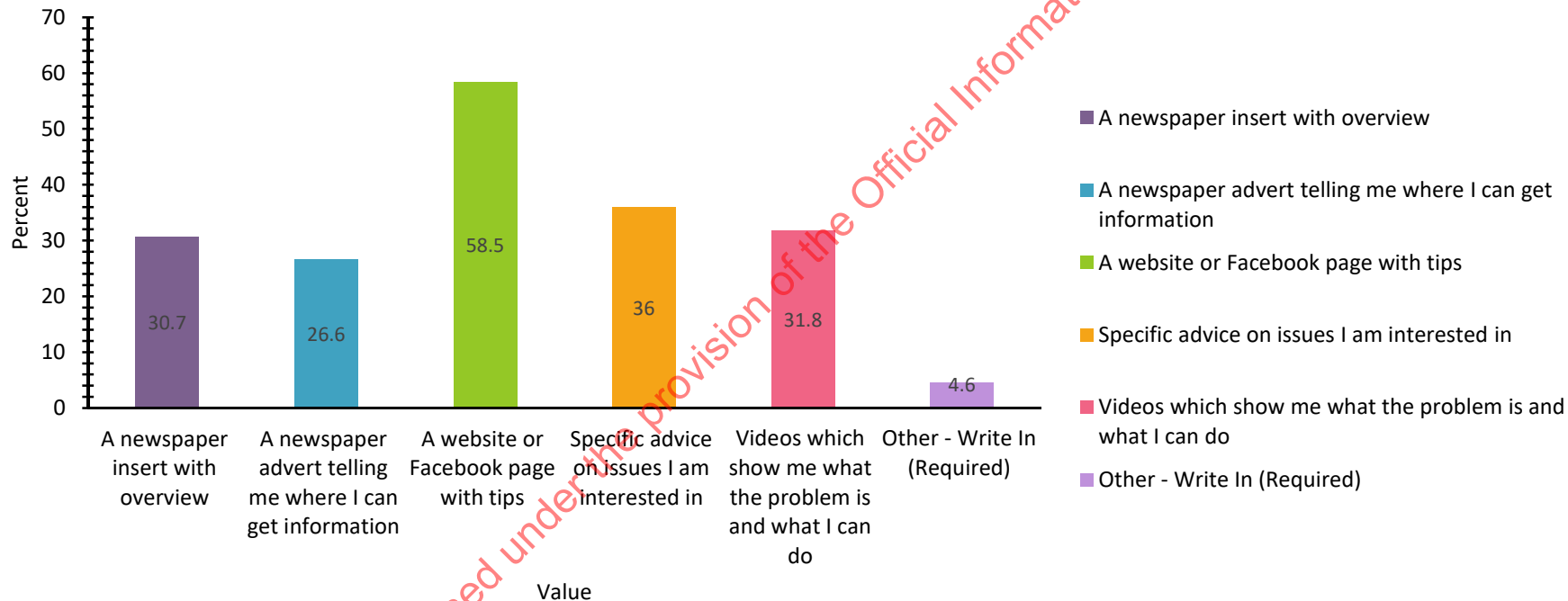
# Current status of New Zealand's environment



# Ability to influence change on environmental issues



# Tools to keep informed and help get involved in environmental issues



# New Zealand's main natural environmental issues



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## Top 3 environmental issues New Zealand needs to take action on?

	Water quality		High levels of air pollution from cars and fires		Adverse weather/flooding as a result of climate change:		Sea level rise		Land use		Plastic pollution in seas		Reducing waste		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
No.1 issue	304	47.6%	49	7.7%	67	10.5%	19	3.0%	23	3.6%	95	14.9%	81	12.7%	638
No. 2 issue	110	17.2%	80	12.5%	65	10.2%	45	7.1%	57	8.9%	152	23.8%	129	20.2%	638
No. 3 issue	82	12.9%	68	10.7%	90	14.1%	54	8.5%	75	11.8%	111	17.4%	158	24.8%	638

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# Marine issues

	Very important - I'm trying to do something about it		Important - I'm unsure what I can do about it though		The issue and the solutions needs to be explained in plain English		I don't understand what I can do about the issue		Not important/not applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Global greenhouse gases are causing ocean acidification and warming	109	17.1%	309	48.6%	110	17.3%	75	11.8%	33	5.2%	636
Native marine birds and mammals are threatened with extinction	95	14.9%	359	56.4%	101	15.9%	63	9.9%	18	2.8%	636
Coastal marine habitats and ecosystems are degraded	95	14.9%	363	57.1%	110	17.3%	53	8.3%	15	2.4%	636

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# Action on marine issues



# Air quality issues

	Very important - I'm trying to do something about it		Important - I'm unsure what I can do about it though		The issue and the solutions needs to be explained in plain English		Not important/not applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
On-road vehicle emissions are a source of pollution	140	22.0%	360	56.6%	84	13.2%	52	8.2%	636
Home heating emissions are a source of pollution	124	19.5%	257	40.4%	149	23.4%	106	16.7%	636
50% of areas around NZ have air pollution higher than allowed by the national standards	106	16.7%	340	53.5%	144	22.6%	46	7.2%	636

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# Action on air quality issues



A word cloud of terms related to air quality and transportation. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with 'Car' being the largest and most central word. Other prominent words include 'heating', 'burning', 'emissions', 'pollution', 'driving', 'wood', 'reduce', 'fires', 'public', 'vehicle', 'open', 'electric', 'walking', 'home', 'heat', 'drive', 'bike', 'air', 'burn', 'fire', 'or', 'pump', 'transport', and 'walking'. The words are in various colors including blue, green, red, yellow, and purple.

Car  
heating  
burning  
emissions  
pollution  
driving  
wood  
reduce  
fires  
public  
vehicle  
open  
electric  
walking  
home  
heat  
drive  
bike  
air  
burn  
fire  
or  
pump  
transport

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# Atmosphere and climate issues

	Very important - I'm trying to do something about it		Important - I'm unsure what I can do about it though		The issue and the solutions needs to be explained in plain English		I don't understand what I can do about the issue		Not important/not applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Climate change is already irreversibly affecting NZ's natural systems	89	14.0%	343	53.9%	107	16.8%	53	8.3%	44	6.9%	636
In 2016 concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere passed 400 parts per million - the highest level of carbon in the last 800,000 years	74	11.6%	320	50.3%	126	19.8%	80	12.6%	36	5.7%	636
NZ's annual average temperature has increased by 1 degree Celsius since 1909 - in line with gobal average increases	59	9.3%	333	52.4%	103	16.2%	88	13.8%	53	8.3%	636
Methane warming the air	59	9.3%	302	47.6%	116	18.3%	112	17.6%	46	7.2%	635
Sea level rise and coastal damage	63	9.9%	359	56.5%	82	12.9%	95	15.0%	36	5.7%	635

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# Action on atmosphere and climate issues

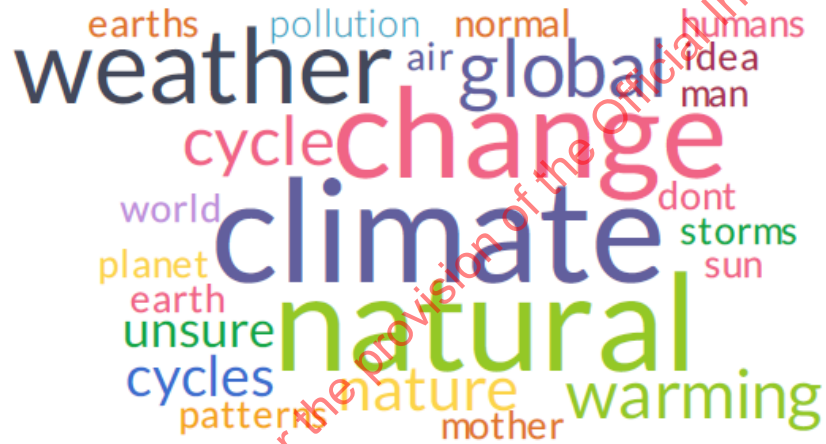


# Impact of climate change on our economy and weather

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Not applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Climate change may have a negative impact on New Zealand's economy over the next 5-10 years if we don't take action	39	6.1%	51	8.0%	139	21.9%	244	38.4%	154	24.3%	8	1.3%	635
Climate change may have a negative impact on New Zealand's economy over the next 20 years if we don't take action	29	4.6%	37	5.8%	128	20.2%	222	35.0%	210	33.1%	9	1.4%	635
Climate change is already having a negative impact on New Zealand's economy	26	4.1%	81	12.8%	213	33.5%	210	33.1%	94	14.8%	11	1.7%	635
Climate change won't have any negative impact on New Zealand's economy	147	23.1%	242	38.1%	135	21.3%	72	11.3%	28	4.4%	11	1.7%	635
Climate change may have a positive impact on New Zealand's economy	128	20.2%	171	26.9%	211	33.2%	75	11.8%	36	5.7%	14	2.2%	635
New Zealand's increased storms, flooding and hotter summers are caused by climate change	23	3.6%	36	5.7%	150	23.6%	264	41.6%	144	22.7%	18	2.8%	635



# Causes of increased storms, flooding and hotter summers



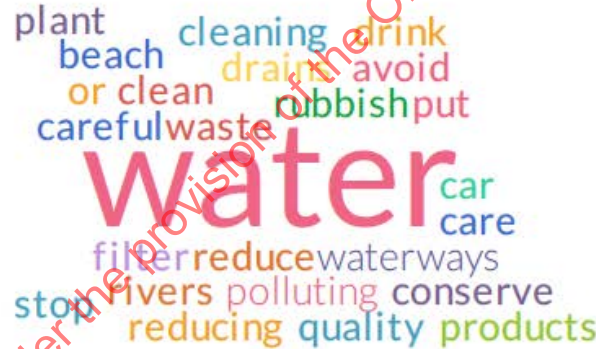
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# Water issues

	Very important - I'm trying to do something about it		Important - I'm unsure what I can do about it though		The issue needs to be explained in plain English		I don't understand what I can do about the issue		Not important/not applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Water quality	138	21.7%	390	61.3%	64	10.1%	30	4.7%	14	2.2%	636
Water quantity and flows	90	14.2%	394	61.9%	81	12.7%	48	7.5%	23	3.6%	636
Ecosystems, habitats and species	102	16.0%	398	62.6%	85	13.4%	36	5.7%	15	2.4%	636

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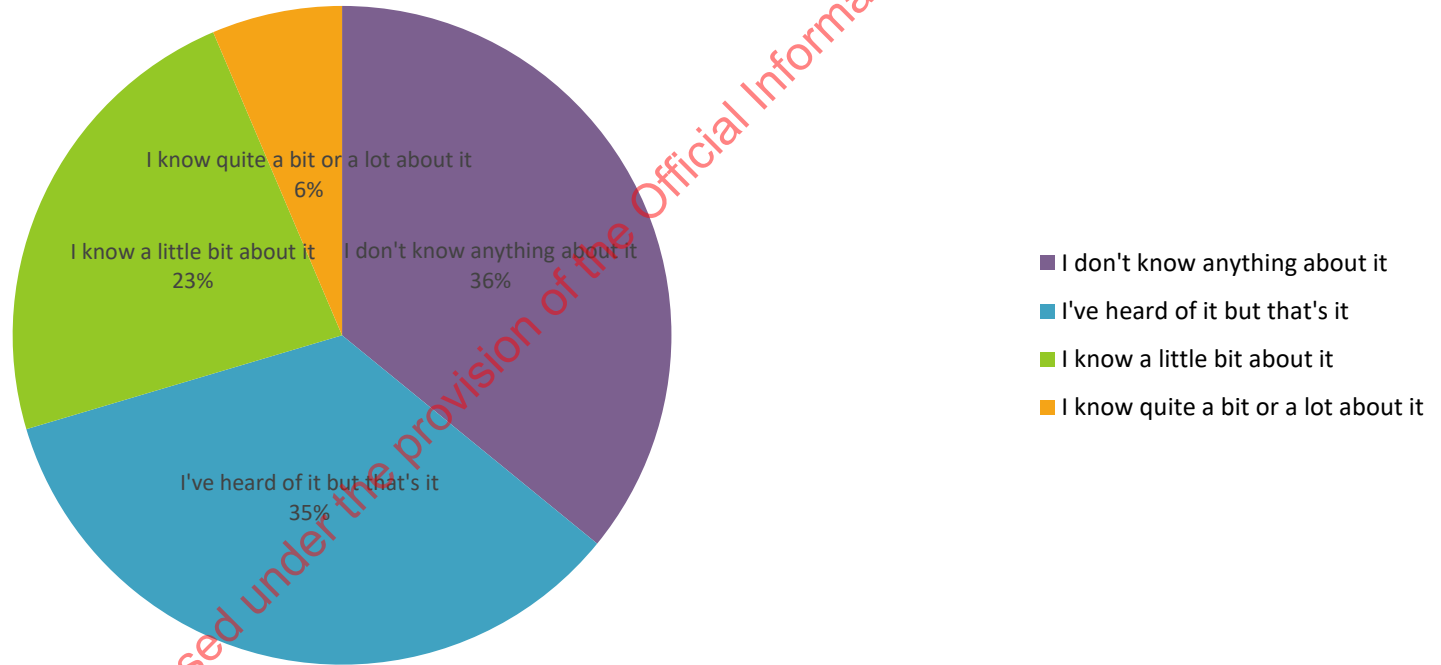
# Action on water quality issues



A word cloud centered around the word "water". The word "water" is the largest and most prominent, rendered in a dark red color. Surrounding it are various other words in different sizes and colors, including: "plant", "beach", "cleaning", "drink", "drains", "avoid", "or", "clean", "careful", "waste", "rubbish", "put", "car", "care", "filter", "reduce", "waterways", "stop", "rivers", "polluting", "conserve", "reducing", "quality", and "products". The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central word "water".

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# What do you know about increasing nitrogen levels.



# Land use issues

	Could be a problem		A good sign of economic growth		Don't understand what this means in terms of impact on the environment		I don't understand what I can do about the issue		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Soil quality being affected by erosion due to agriculture	367	57.7%	64	10.1%	122	19.2%	83	13.1%	636
Increase in the proportion of land used for dairy	333	52.4%	137	21.5%	89	14.0%	77	12.1%	636
Continued intensification of farming	338	53.1%	107	16.8%	112	17.6%	79	12.4%	636
Indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems continue to be under threat	343	53.9%	42	6.6%	137	21.5%	114	17.9%	636

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# Key land use issues for Maori



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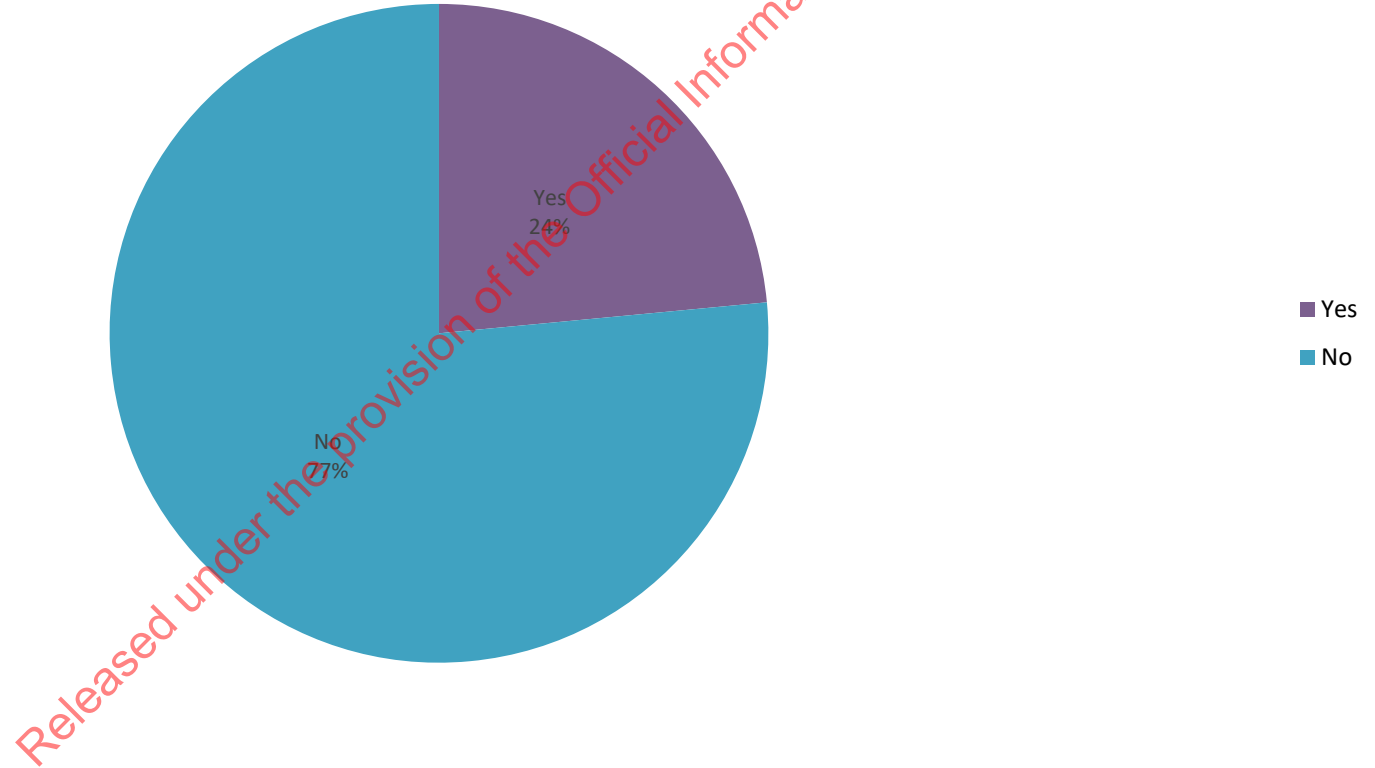
What main iwi you belong to?



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# Aware of regular Environment Reports that are published in New Zealand?



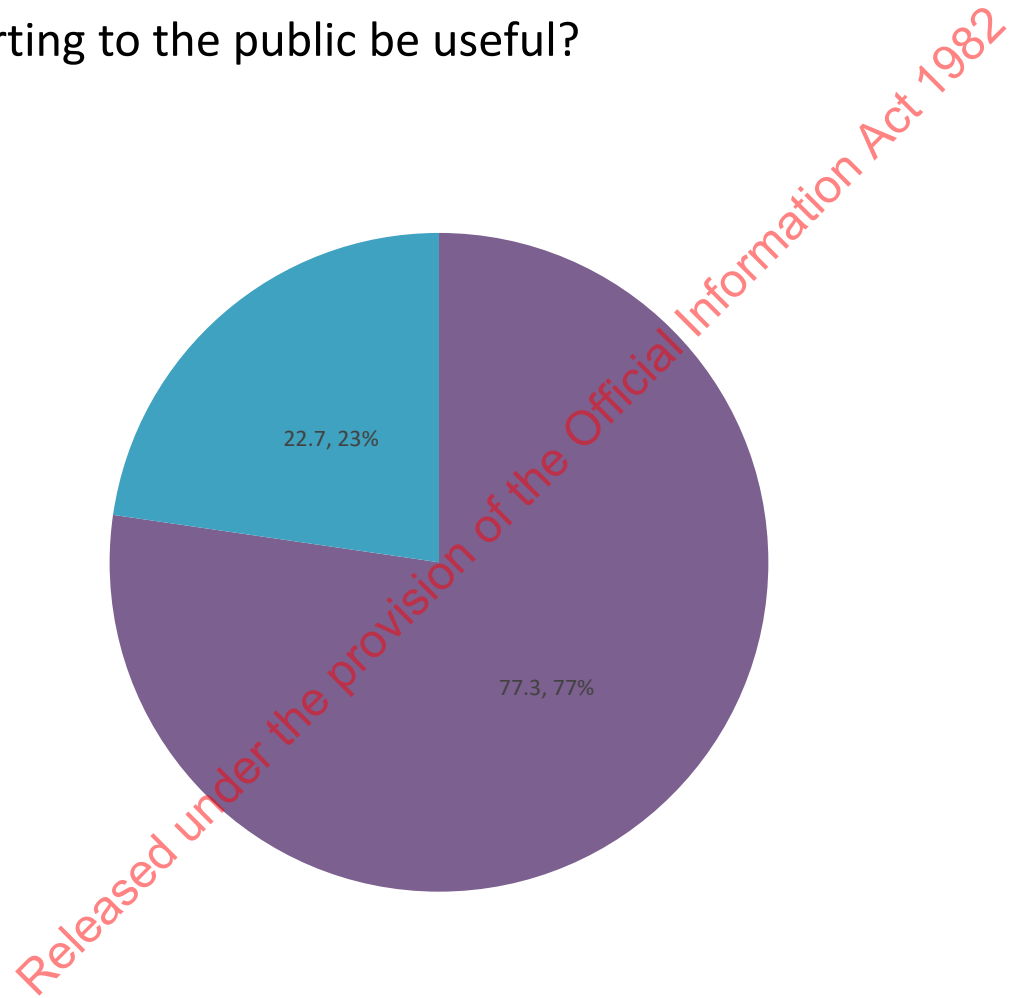
# What reports are you aware of?

	Have read		Aware, not read		Not aware		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Marine	40	26.8%	99	66.4%	10	6.7%	149
Land	54	36.2%	85	57.0%	10	6.7%	149
Freshwater	54	36.2%	86	57.7%	9	6.0%	149
Atmosphere and climate	50	33.8%	84	56.8%	14	9.5%	148
State of the Environment Report	43	28.9%	88	59.1%	18	12.1%	149

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Not aware

Would regular reporting to the public be useful?



■ Yes

■ No

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What should these reports look like and how often should they come out?



# Environmental reports' production

