



Greater Wellington

Flood protection awareness and perceptions survey

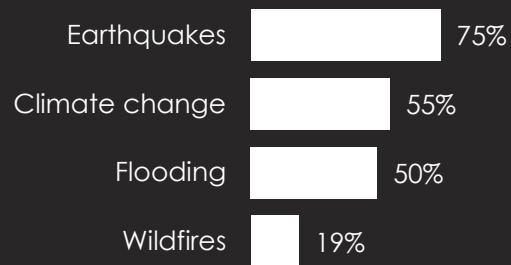
2024

Survey methodology



Summary

Half of residents feel there is a relatively high risk posed by flooding in the region in the next 10 years.



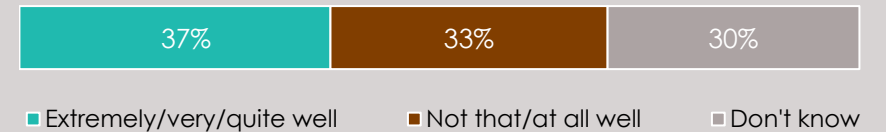
96%
of residents feel flood risk management is at least quite important.

Just 16% of residents feel they have a good understanding of flood risk management activities. However, when asked about specific activities, 29% were able to name river specific works they were aware of.

"Significant flood protection work along Te Awa Kairangi in Lower Hutt."

When asked who was responsible for managing flood risk. A third of residents specifically named Greater Wellington or said "Regional Council" (32%). A third attributed responsibility to their City, Local or District Council (32%). A quarter simply said "Council" (25%).

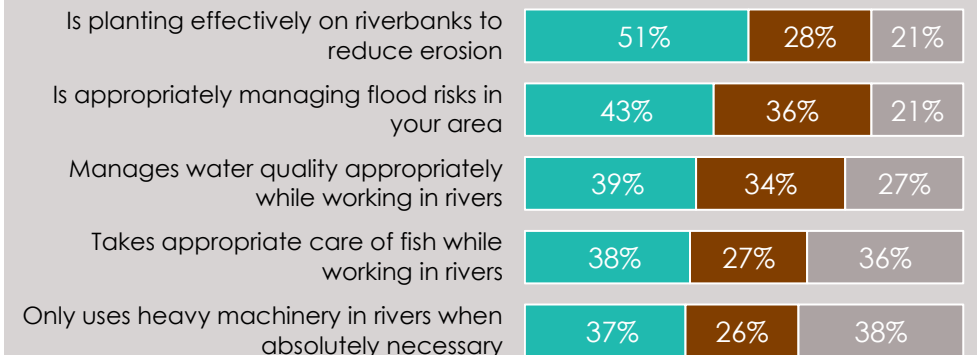
One in three residents feel flood risk management is being managed well in the region.



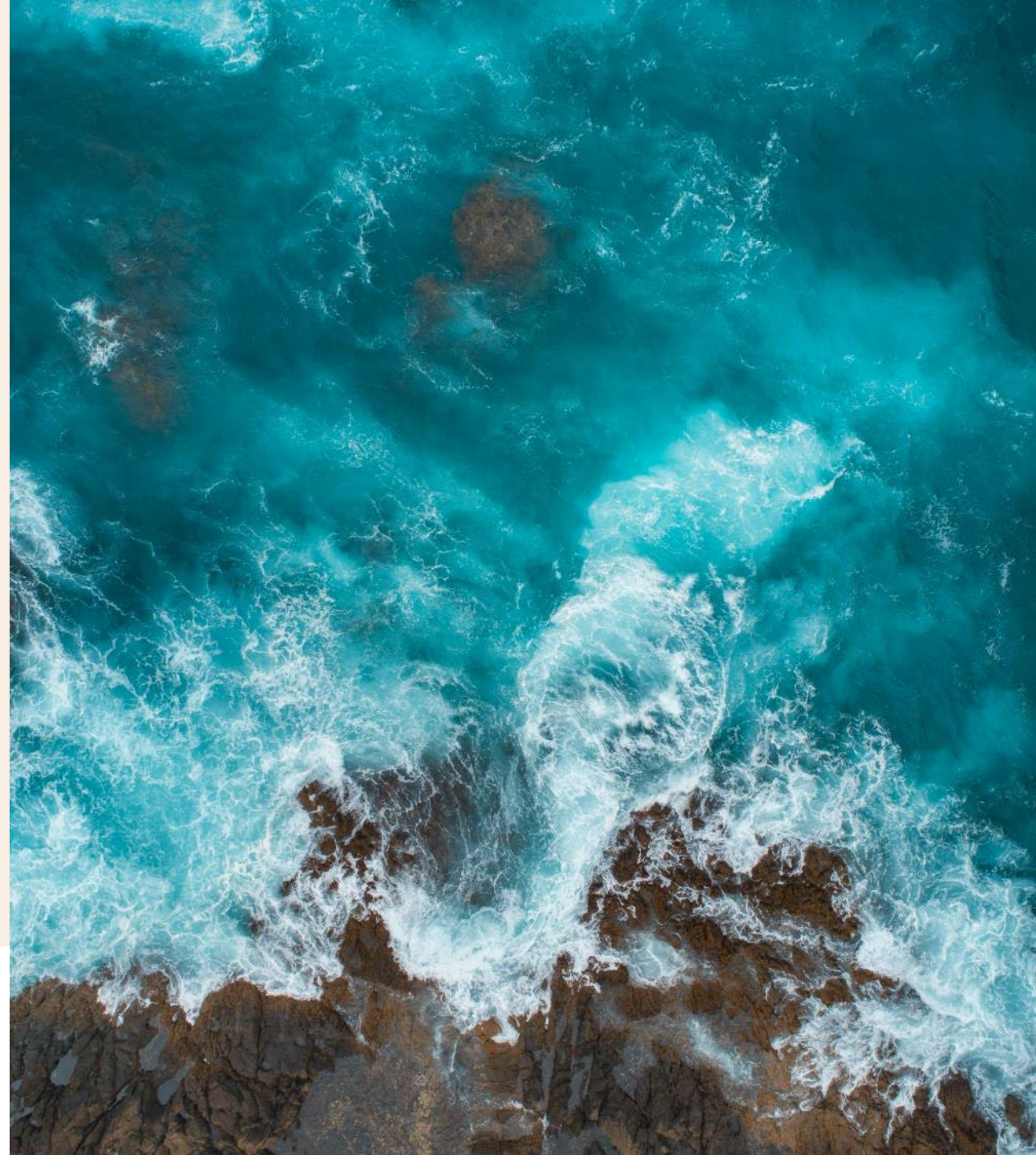
Opportunities exist to increase awareness and understanding of Greater Wellington's flood protection activities and management.



Greater Wellington...

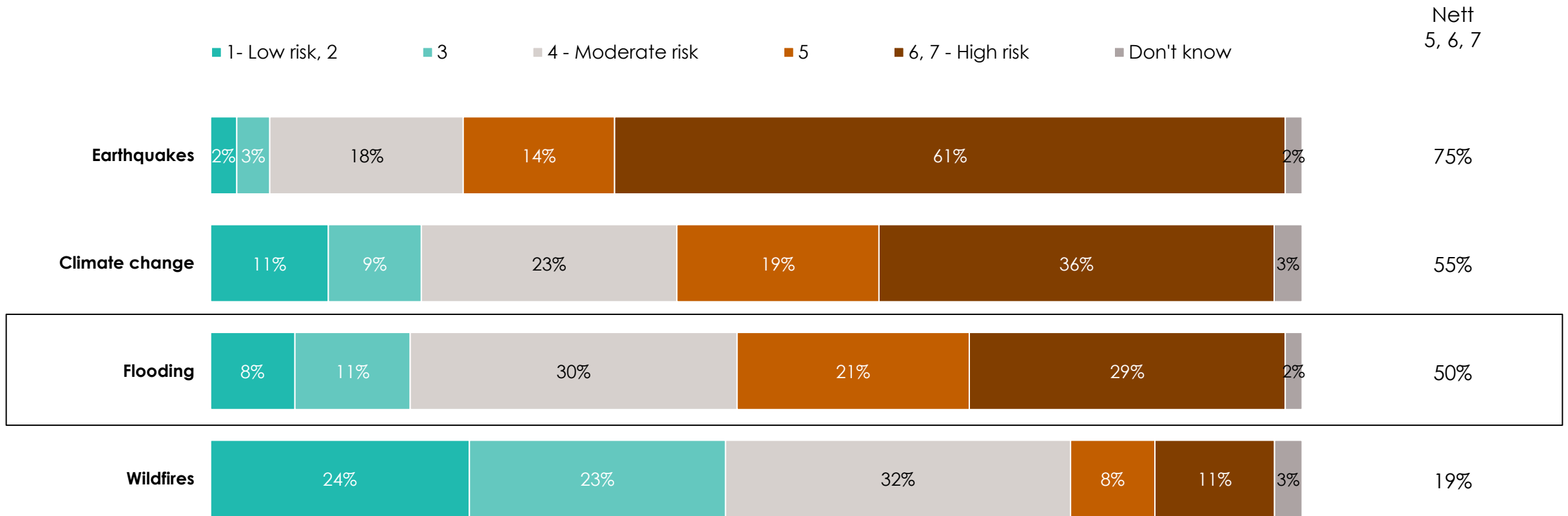


Awareness and perceptions



Half of Wellington Region residents feel there is a relatively high risk posed by flooding in the region in the next 10 years. Comparatively, three in four feel there is a relatively high risk posed by earthquakes.

Relative risk

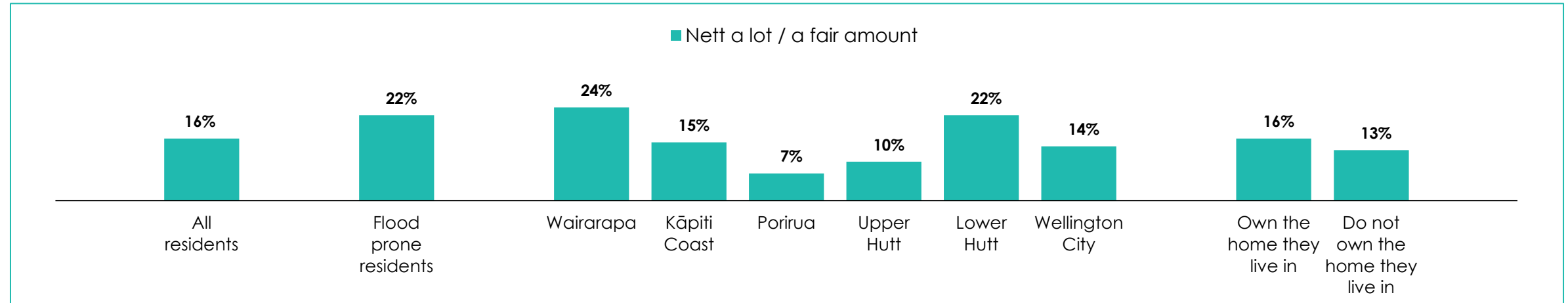
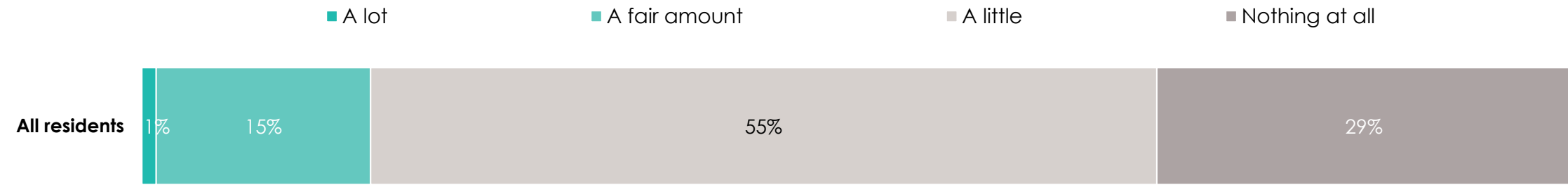


Source: Q1 – How much of a risk, to people and property, do you feel each of the following pose to the Wellington Region in the next 10 years?

Base: All residents (n=597).

Very few Wellington Region residents feel they have a good understanding of flood risk management activities. Those who live in flood prone areas, the Wairarapa, and Lower Hutt tend to have higher than average knowledge.

Knowledge of flood risk management activities

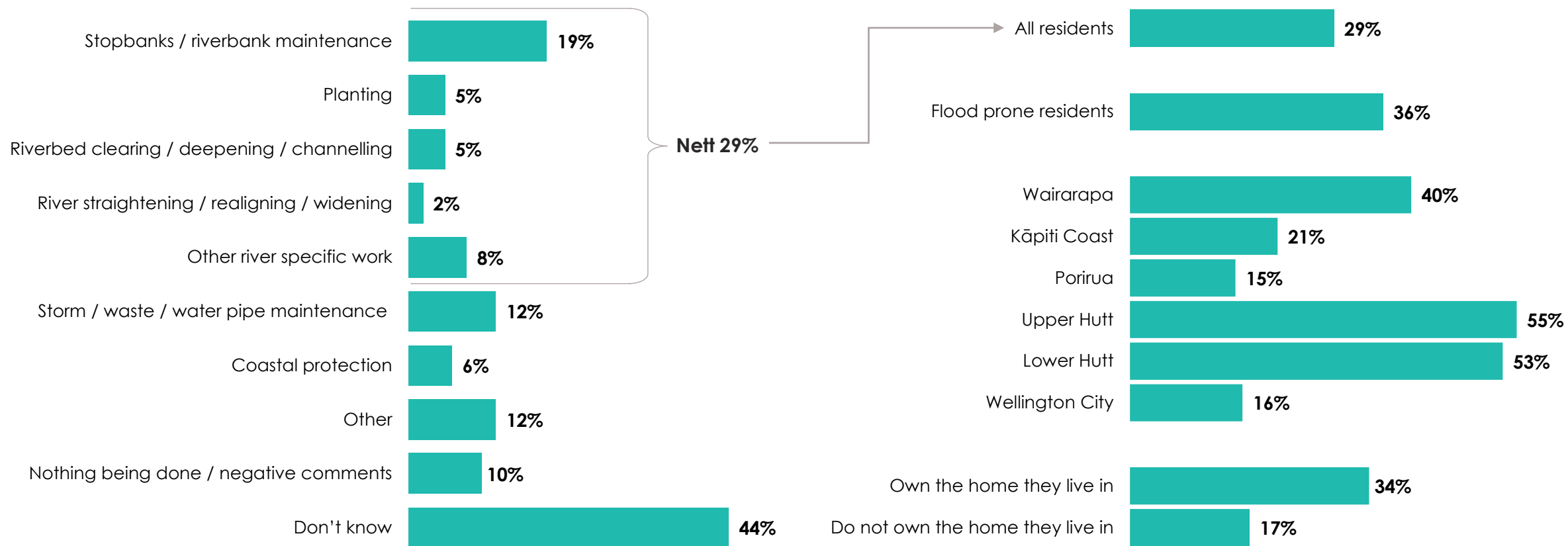


Source: Q2 – How much, if anything, do you know about flood risk management activities (also known as flood protection)?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 6

When we asked residents what flood protection activities they were aware of, just over a quarter (29%) mentioned river specific work (e.g. stopbanks), 12% mentioned drainage or pipe work, and 6% mentioned coastal protection. Those living in flood prone areas, the Wairarapa, and the Hutt Valley were most likely to mention river specific work.

Knowledge of works



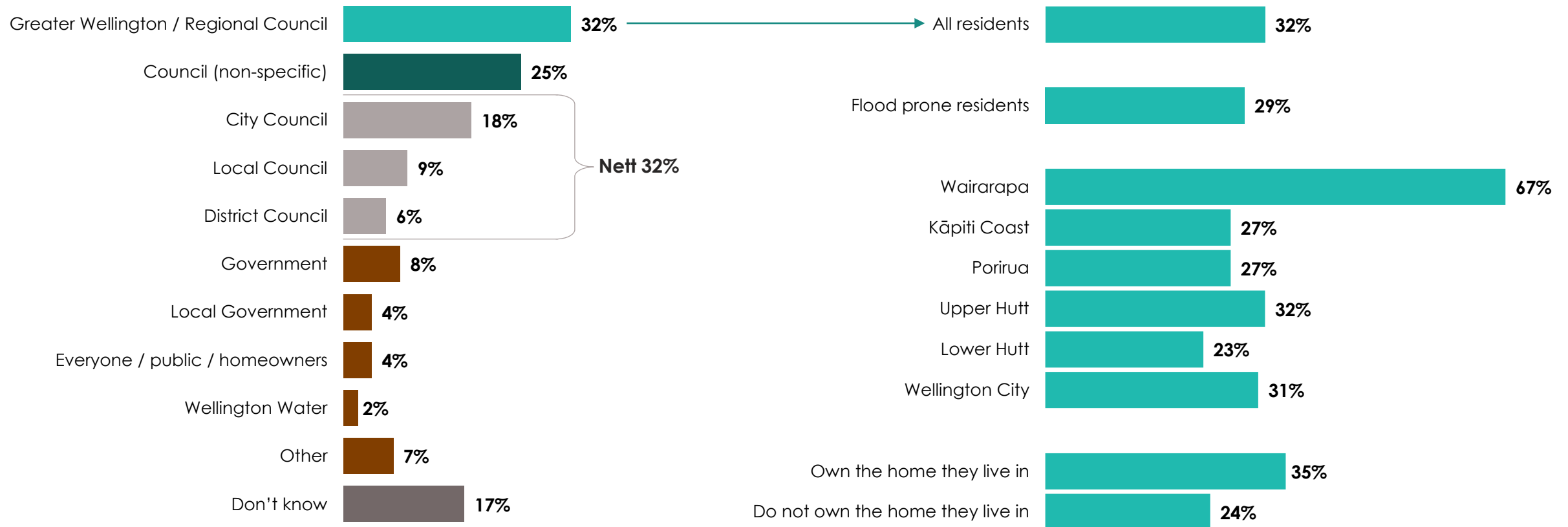
Source: Q3 – Thinking about your region, what do you think is being done to manage flood risk and prevent flooding?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116).

Note: This question was free text and responses were able to be coded to multiple responses.

We also asked residents who was responsible for managing flood risk in their area. A third specifically named Greater Wellington or said “Regional Council”. A third attributed responsibility to their City, Local or District Council. A quarter simply said “Council”. Wairarapa residents are by far the most likely to attribute responsibility to Greater Wellington / Regional Council.

Responsibility



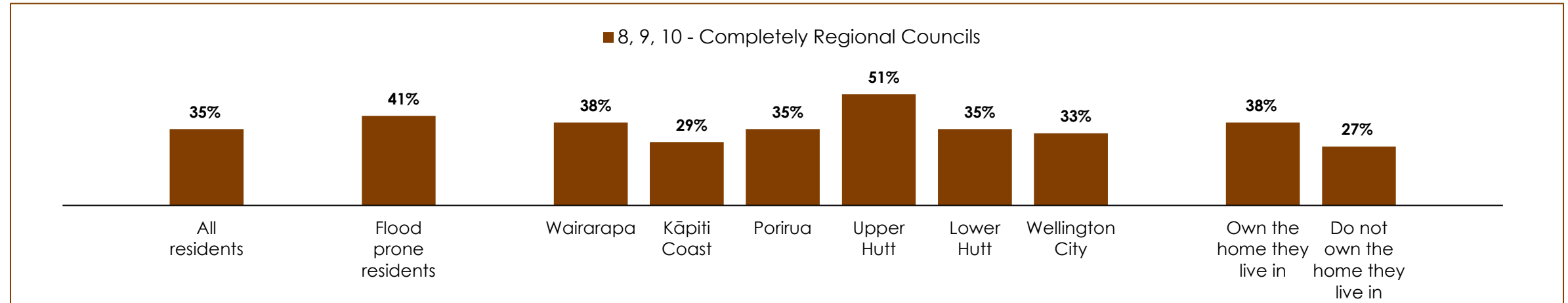
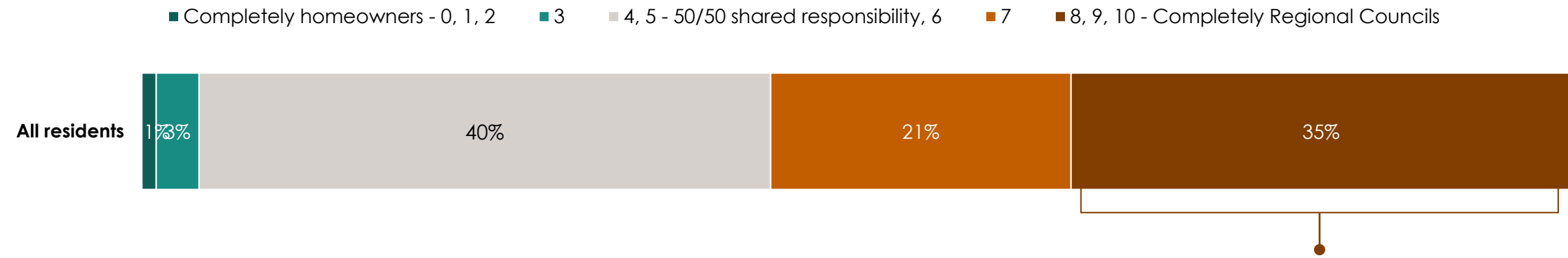
Source: Q4 – Who do you think is responsible for managing flood risk in your area?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116).

Note: This question was free text and responses were able to be coded to multiple responses.

When it comes to protecting homes against flooding, most residents feel the responsibility should largely sit with the Regional Council. However, 40% of residents do feel it should be shared 50/50 between homeowners and the Regional Council.

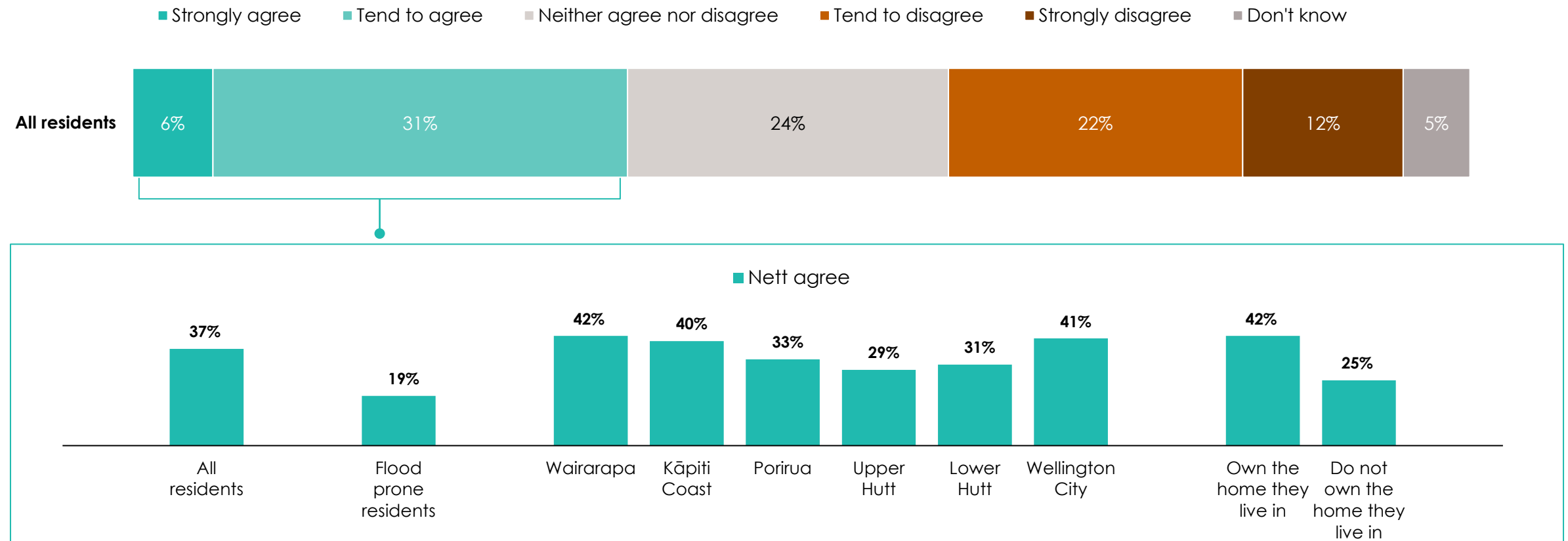
Responsibility: Regional Council vs homeowners



Source: Q5 - When it comes to protecting homes against flooding, how much responsibility do you feel homeowners should have and how much responsibility do you feel Regional Councils should have?

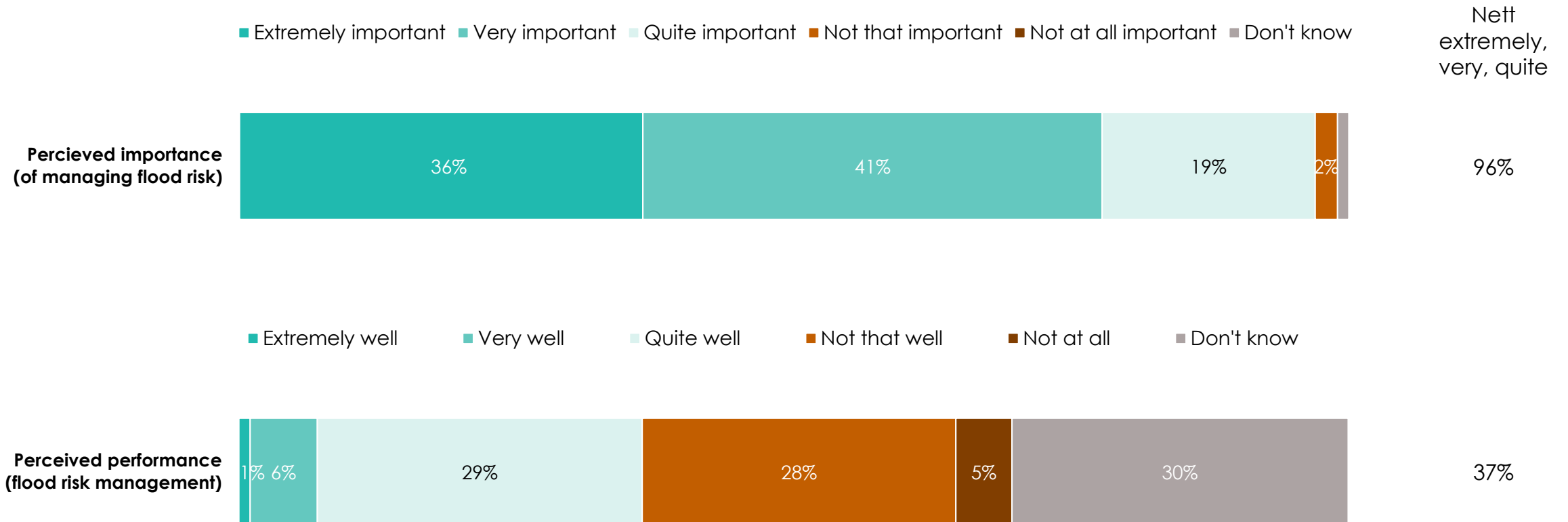
More than a third of residents feel those who own homes or businesses in flood zone areas should pay higher rates to help with flood protection. However, a similar proportion disagree.

Responsibility: Those who own homes or businesses in flood zone areas should pay higher rates to help with flood protection



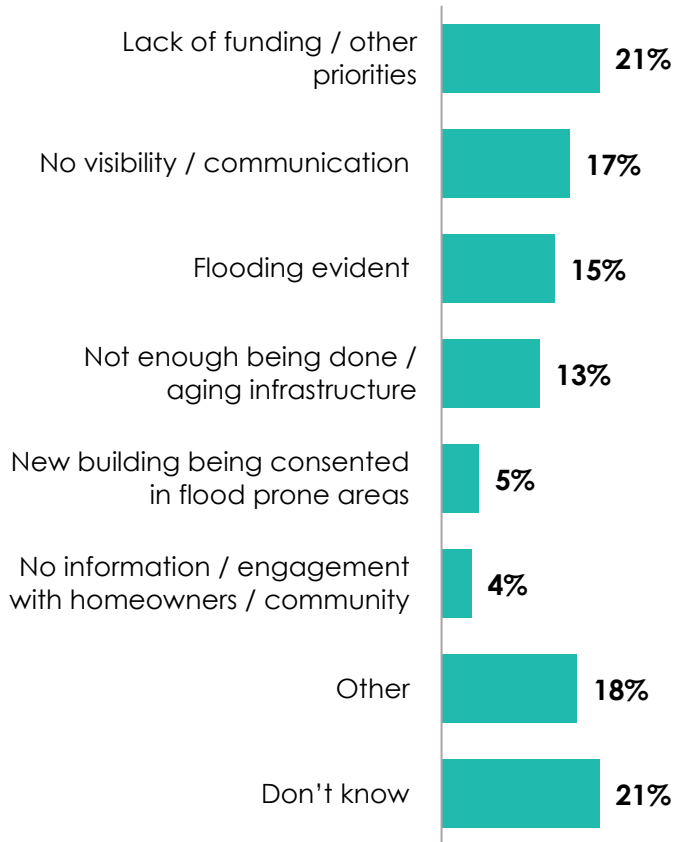
Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Those who own homes or businesses in flood zone areas should pay higher rates to help with flood protection.

Nearly all residents feel that managing flood risk in the region is important. Just a third feel that flood risk is currently being well managed, a similar proportion (33%) feel it is not well managed and 30% don't know.



Source: Q7 - Regional councils manage flood risk to protect people, houses and land from damaging flood waters and erosion. How important do you think it is for flood risk management to be carried out in the Wellington Region? Q8 - How well do you feel flood risk is being managed in the Wellington Region?

When we asked residents why they felt flood risk wasn't being managed well, four themes emerged. A lack of funding and or funds being used on other priorities (21%), a lack of visibility of works and or communications about works (17%), the continued reoccurrence of flooding (15%), and a general feeling that not enough was being done.



"Lack of sufficient funding, no clear plan for flooding events, insufficient education program for residents who live in areas prone to flooding."
[Wellington City resident]

"Heavy rain already exposes a lot of issues - let alone if there was to be a 'flood' amount of water."
[Wellington City resident]

"Petone will be uninsurable in a few years, developments are occurring close to flood planes and in flood areas."
[Upper Hutt resident]

"Nothing appears to be done. Everyone seems to think it will never flood and they keep building more houses in swamps and flood prone areas."
[Kāpiti Coast resident, lives in a flood prone area]

"Careless building of new houses."
[Lower Hutt resident, lives in a flood prone area]

"We are still building homes in at risk areas some focus/money should be on minimising or mitigating the risk."
[Upper Hutt resident, lives in a flood prone area]



Source: Q9 – Why do you feel flood risk management isn't being managed well in the Wellington Region?

Base: Those who feel flood risk management isn't being managed well in the Wellington Region (n=185).



We also asked survey respondents if they had any more general comments to make, here is a selection of their responses...

"There is plenty of talk, but the talk is not producing the required results. Of concern is that we know where the risk areas are, but we are continuing to build on them."

"GW should give regular media updates as to its activities, so the general public are aware of these activities. At the moment we hear next to nothing."

"There's some urgency with this so it's good to see that WRC are making it a priority."

"Over the last 20 years I have seen established trees removed from the Hutt River bank, I have never understood the logic for this. New trees are then often planted. recently the gravel under the Ewan bridge has been worked on by diggers removing all vegetation, I question whether this was necessary."

"It is good to see GW actively remediating risks to the Hutt Valley. Also heartening to see them working with others over RiverLink."

"Not that easy to obtain succinct and non-promotional information about work being carried out."

"Communicate with us better."

"GWRC needs to go back to the old measures for containing and controlling the course of the river, removing gravel etc."

"Unless I researched it, I realize I am ignorant and take these things for granted. Also working out a plan would be good for our household and after this I see we need a plan. Thank you."

"It would be very difficult as an outsider to judge the efficacy of the Greater Wellington flood protection activities (except perhaps in your immediate vicinity), from my view point it seems good but in the event of a major happening it may not have been good enough."

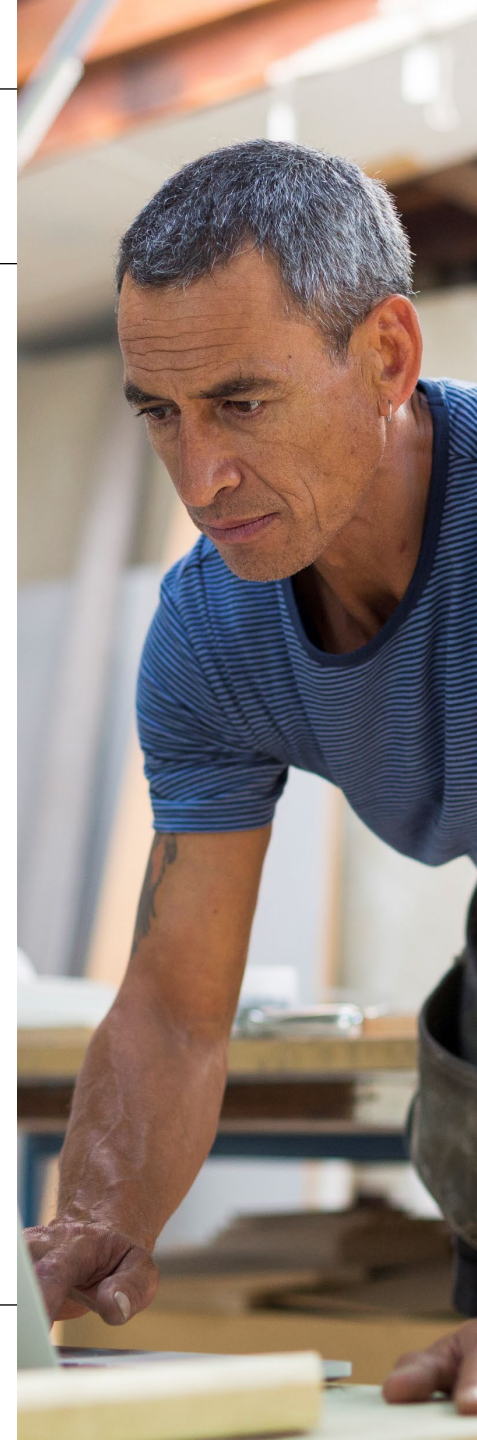
"The Regional Council's role and actual activities is very much unheralded and not at all well publicised. I didn't realise until this survey that they even had a role in any of the things you've asked about. I just assumed it was the local council as you never hear anything about what the regional council is doing."

"I think they are doing well for Wellington, but I firmly believe they have not done the same for The Wairarapa Region."

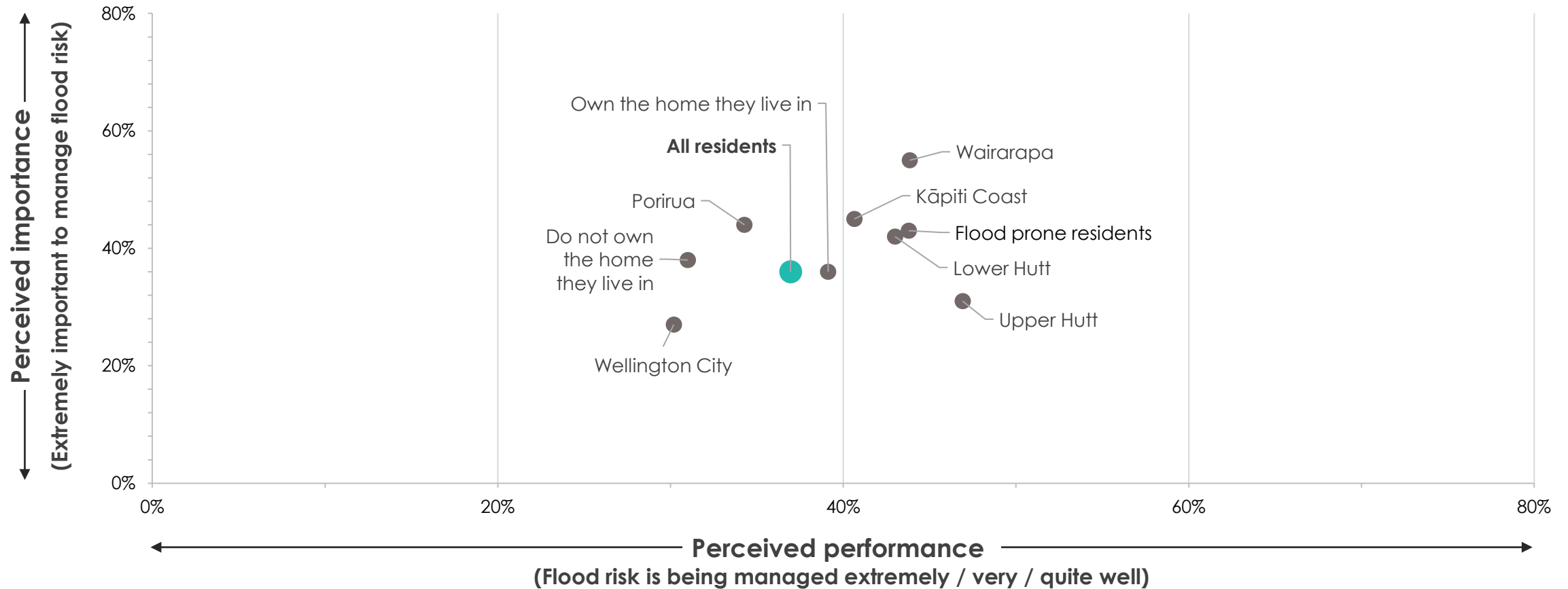
"More Information about what we can do within our homes to help with flood protection."

"Planting willows just creates a weed problem in future years when those trees need to be controlled because they are tangled, have spread and are restricting flow."

"No comments to make but now that I see I am in a flood prone area I should educate myself further."



When we plot importance by performance we can see that flood prone residents, those who live in the Wairarapa, Kāpiti Coast, and Lower Hutt all tend to rank both importance of flood risk management and performance (flood risk being managed well) higher than average.

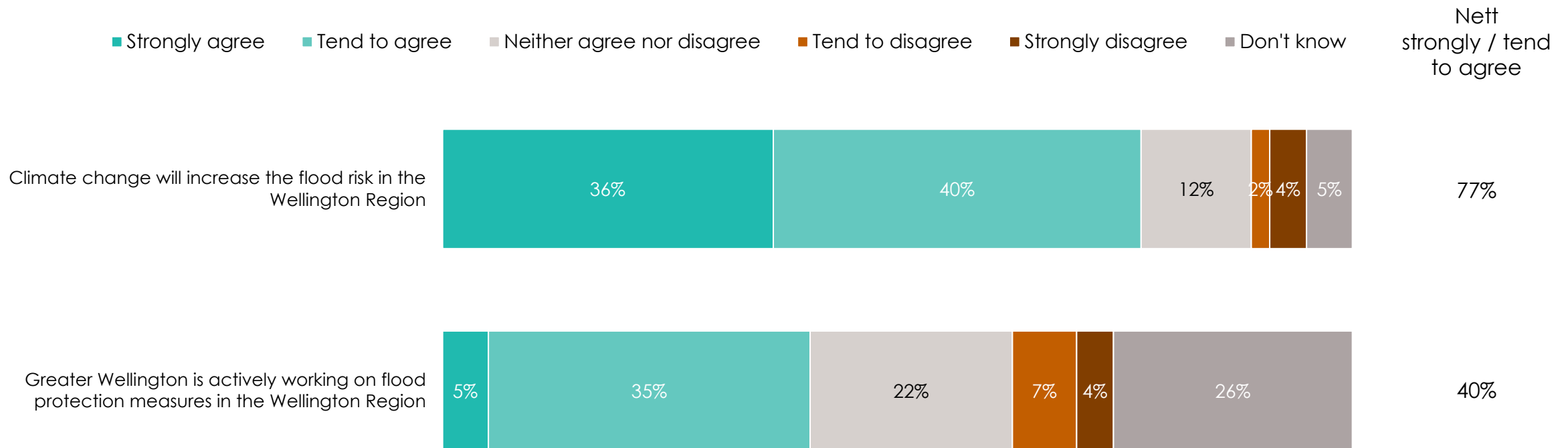


Source: Q7 - Regional councils manage flood risk to protect people, houses and land from damaging flood waters and erosion. How important do you think it is for flood risk management to be carried out in the Wellington Region? Q8 - How well do you feel flood risk is being managed in the Wellington Region?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116).

Similar to the findings for importance and performance, 77% of residents believe climate change will increase flood risk in the Wellington Region and 40% believe Greater Wellington is actively working on flood protection measures.

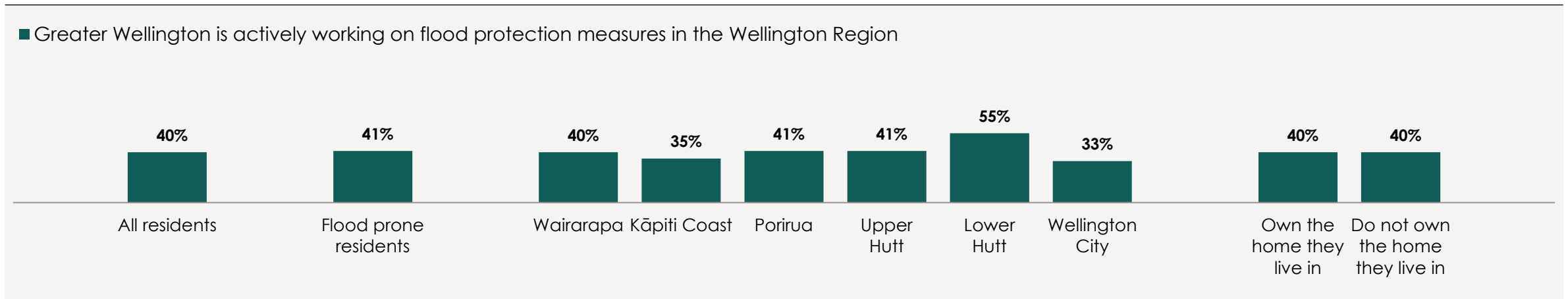
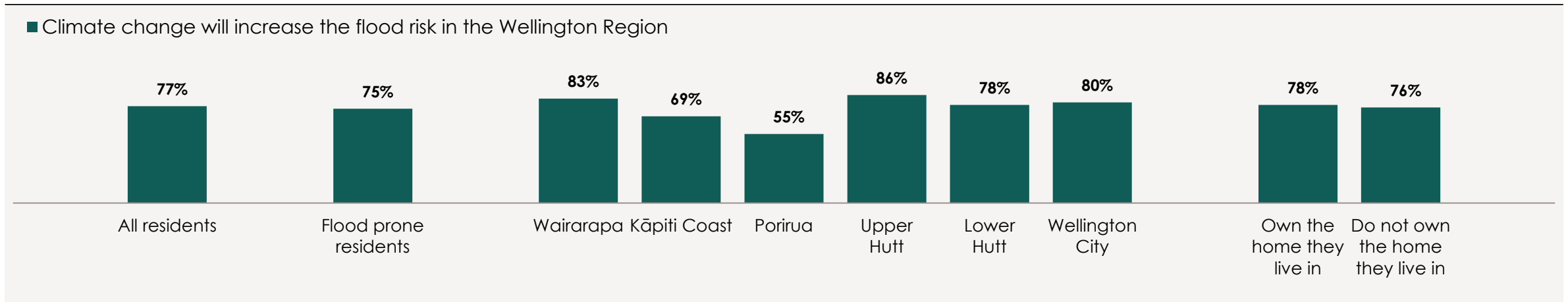
Perceptions



Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All residents (n=597).

These findings are broadly consistent across the different subgroups, the exceptions being: Upper Hutt residents are most likely to agree climate change will increase flood risk, and Lower Hutt residents are most likely to agree Greater Wellington is actively working on flood protection.



Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

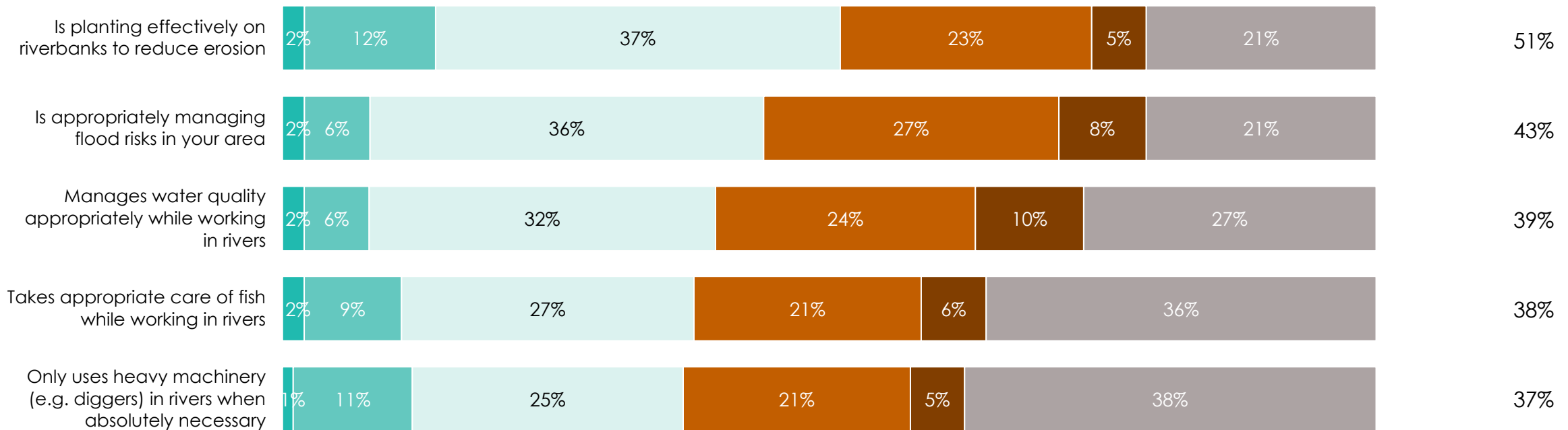
Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 16

Community confidence in Greater Wellington’s specific flood protection activities and management isn’t currently strong. Many residents either have no knowledge or little to no confidence in each area.

Confidence that Greater Wellington...

■ Extremely confident
 ■ Very confident
 ■ Quite confident
 ■ Not that confident
 ■ Not at all confident
 ■ Don't know

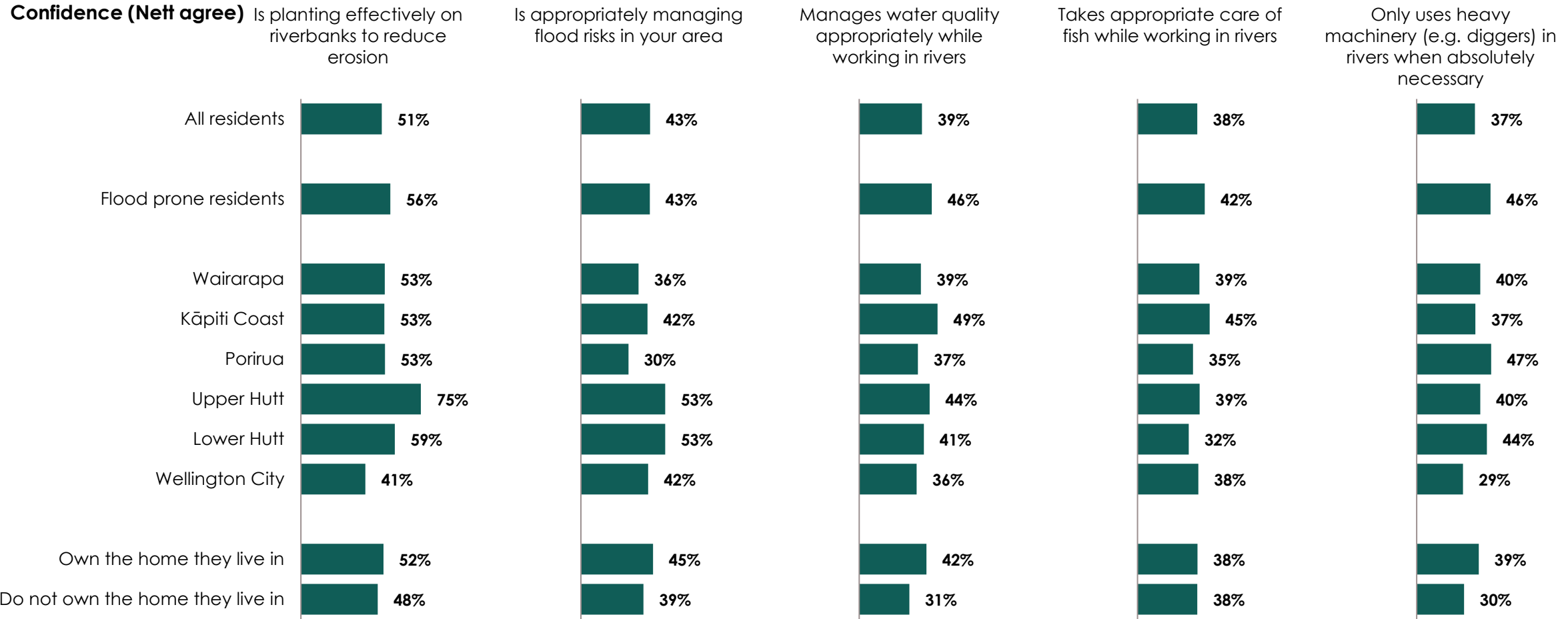
Nett extremely, very, quite



Source: Q10 – Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) is responsible for flood protection in the Wellington Region. How confident are you that Greater Wellington...

Base: All residents (n=597).

Those who live in flood prone areas and those who live in the Hutt Valley tend to be more positive about Greater Wellington’s riverbank planting and management of flood risks in their area.

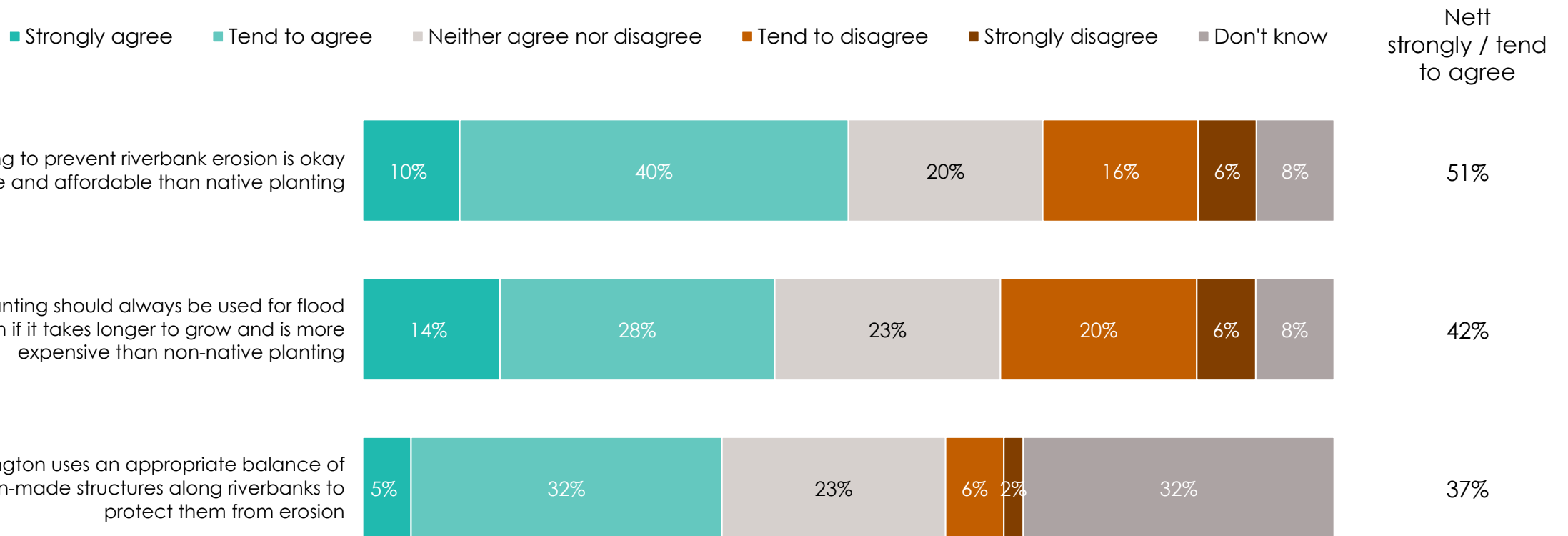


Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 18

Half of residents agree that non-native planting is okay if it is more effective and affordable than native planting. Conversely, 42% believe that native planting should always be used. A third of residents agree Greater Wellington currently uses an appropriate balance of trees and human-made structures.

Perceptions



Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All residents (n=597).

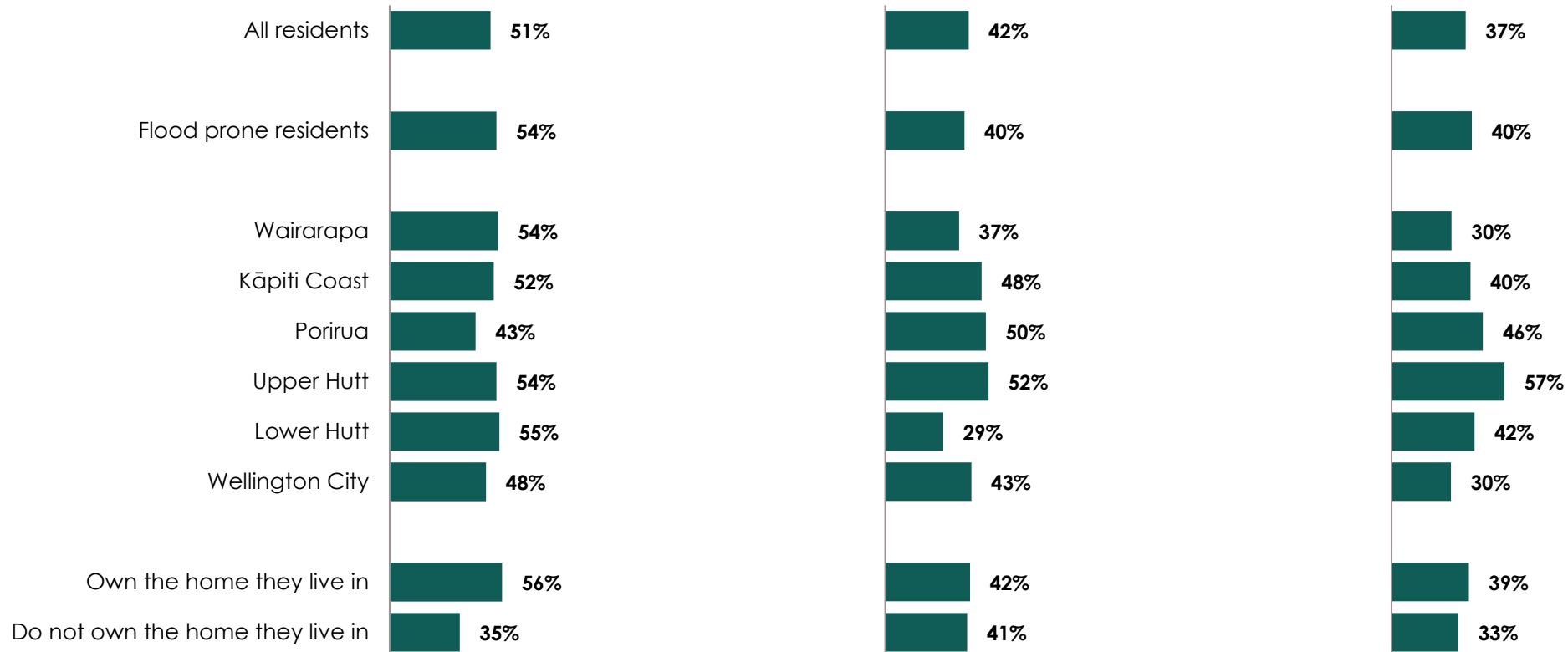
Lower Hutt residents and Wairarapa residents are least likely to believe native planting should always be used for flood protection purposes. Those who live in Upper Hutt are most likely to feel Greater Wellington is currently using an appropriate balance of trees and human-made structures.

Net agree

Non-native planting to prevent riverbank erosion is okay if it is more effective and affordable than native planting

Native planting should always be used for flood protection even if it takes longer to grow and is more expensive than non-native planting

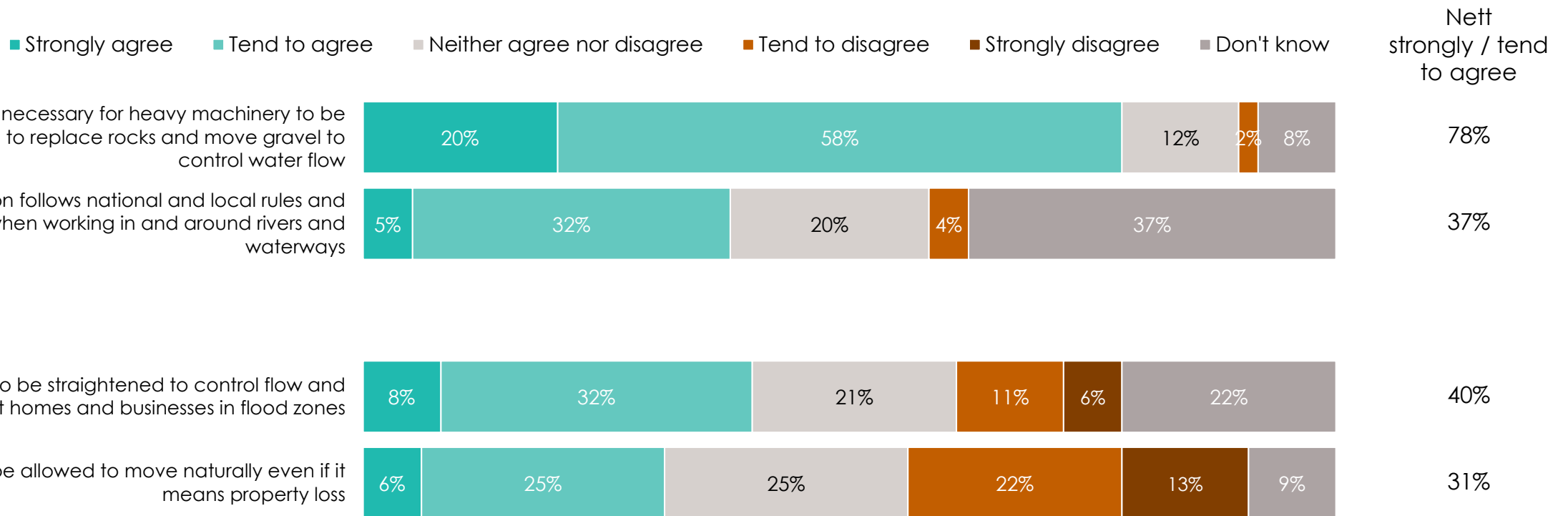
Greater Wellington uses an appropriate balance of trees and human-made structures along riverbanks to protect them from erosion



Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Most residents are aware that sometimes it's necessary to use heavy machinery in rivers. Knowledge that Greater Wellington follows national and local rules and regulations in these situations is relatively low (37% said don't know and a further 20% could neither agree nor disagree). 40% of residents believe it is sometimes necessary to straighten rivers to protect homes and businesses. A third believe rivers should be allowed to move naturally.

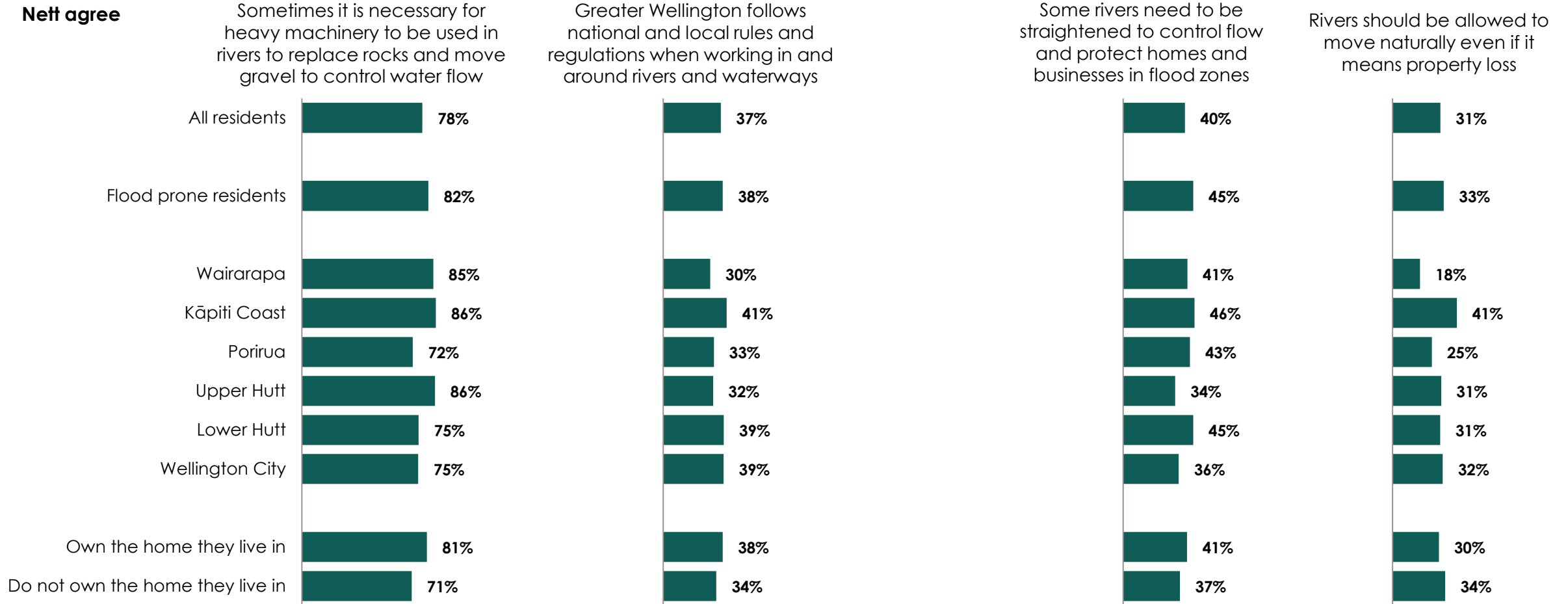
Perceptions



Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All residents (n=597).

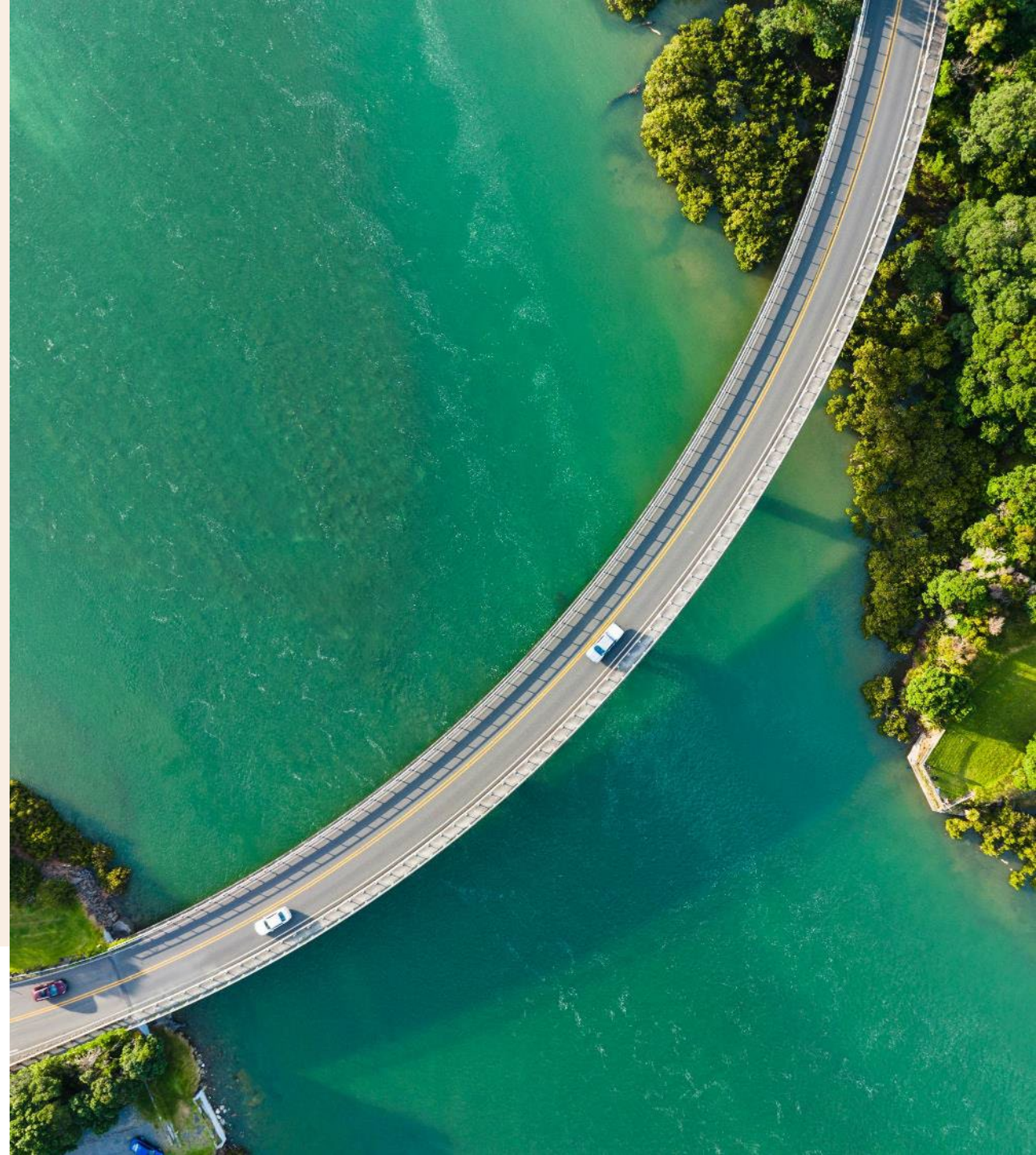
Findings are broadly consistent across the different subgroups, noticeably though, those who live in Kāpiti are most likely to feel rivers should be allowed to move naturally.



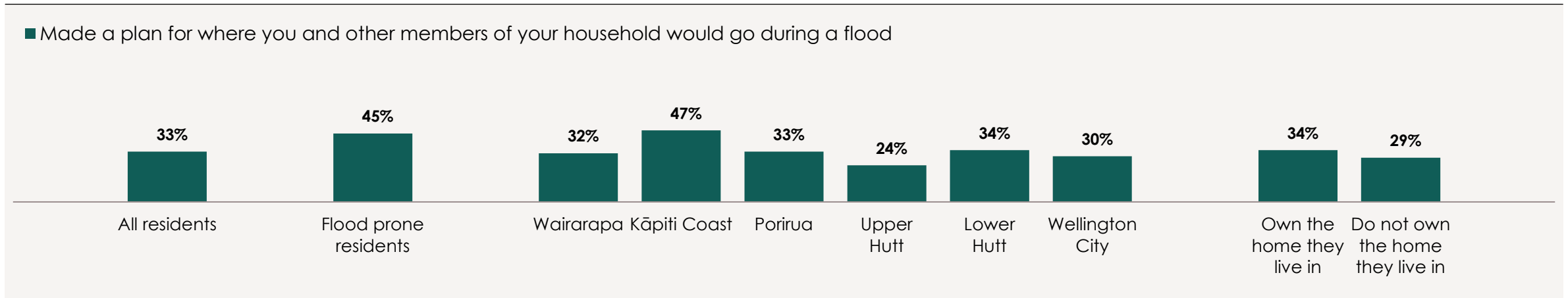
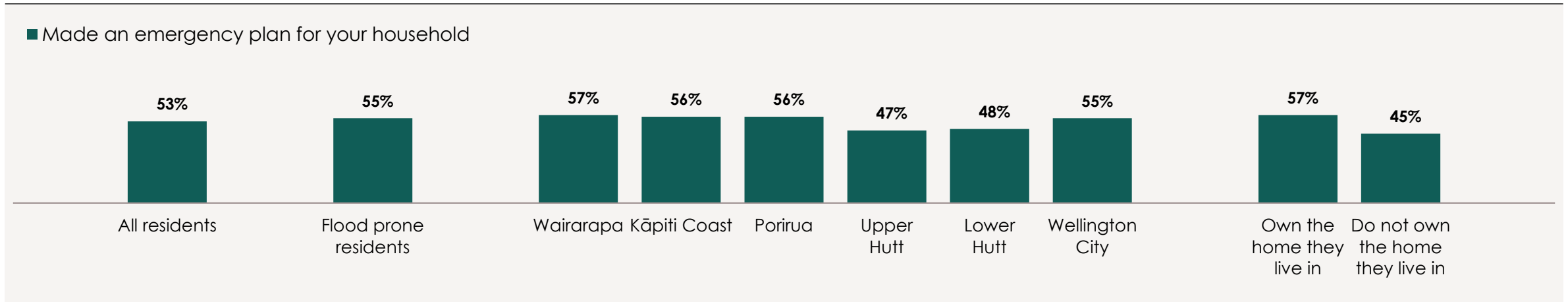
Source: Q11 – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 22

Personal responsibility



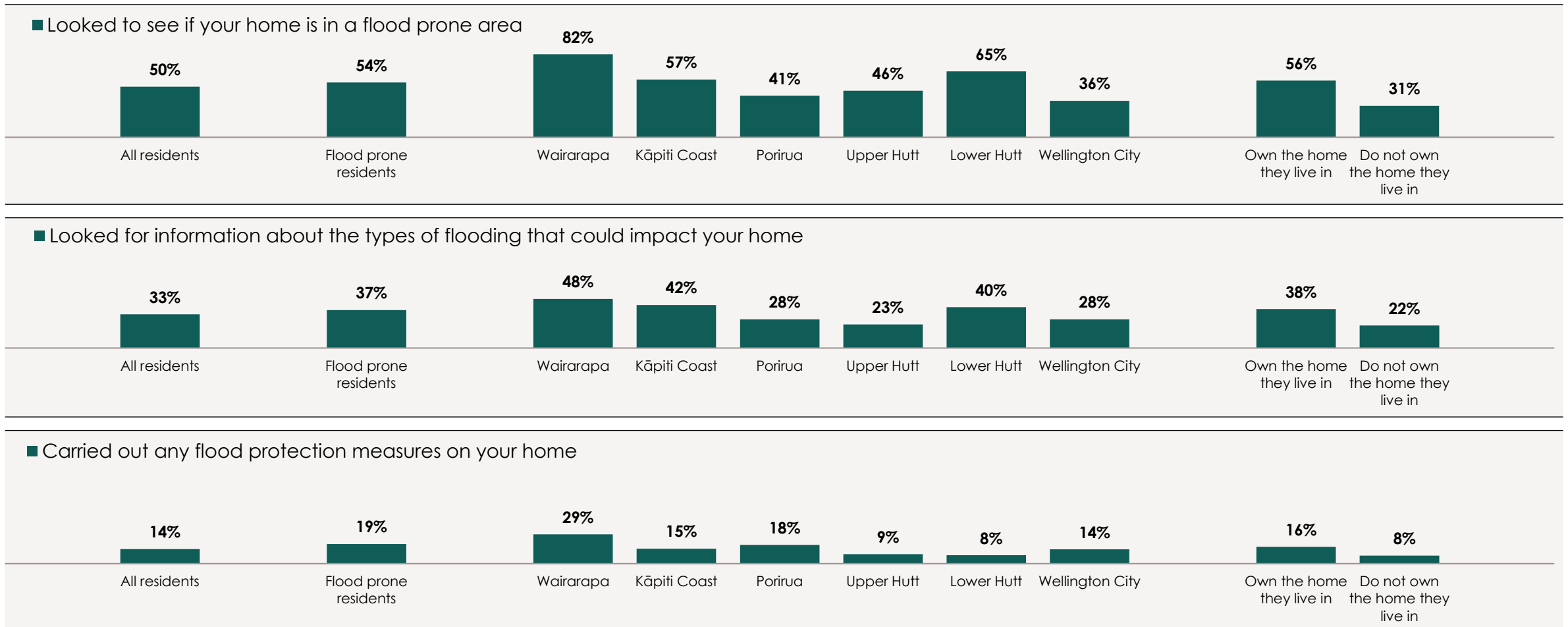
Half of residents say they have an emergency plan in place. A third say they have a plan specifically outlining where they would go during a flood. Those who live in flood prone areas do tend to be more likely than average to have a plan outlining where they would go during a flood.



Source: Q6 - Thinking about the home you currently live in, before today, have you or anyone in your household, done any of the following?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 24

Half of residents have looked to see if the house they live in is in a flood prone areas, a third have looked for information about the types of flooding that could impact their home, and 14% have carried out flood protection measures at home.



Source: Q6 - Thinking about the home you currently live in, before today, have you or anyone in your household, done any of the following?

Base: All residents (n=597), Flood prone (n=254), Wairarapa (n=56), Kāpiti Coast (n=123), Porirua (n=72), Upper Hutt (n=64), Lower Hutt (n=130), Wellington City (n=152), Homeowners (n=475), Non-homeowners (n=116). Verian | 25

Verian

Emma Stratton

Level 9, 101 Lambton Quay, Wellington
www.veriangroup.com/nz



Powering decisions
that shape the world.