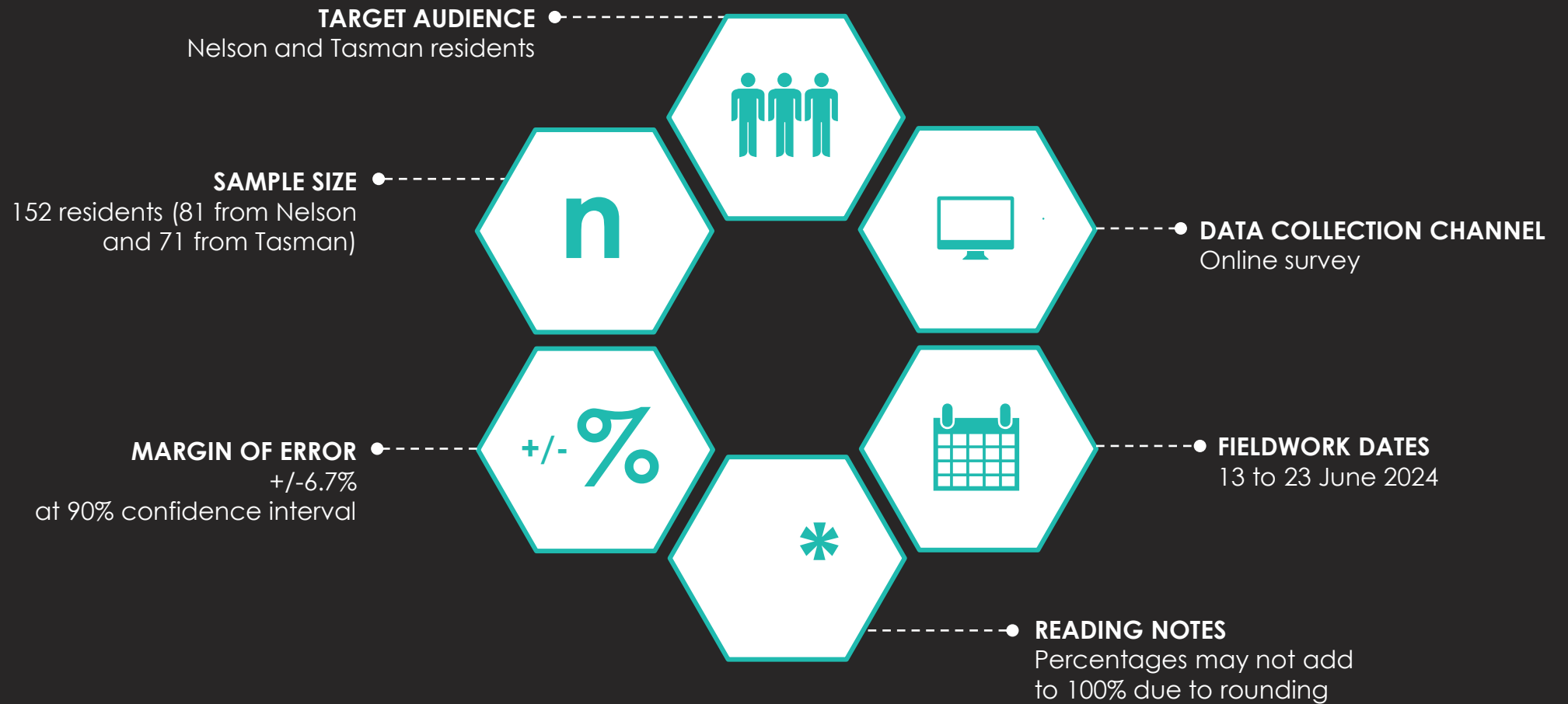




# Nelson City Council & Tasman District Council

2024 Rethink Recycling survey

# Survey methodology



# Summary insights

1

## Recycling attitudes

The vast majority of Nelson and Tasman residents are committed to recycling with nine in ten now believing it is worth taking the time to recycle. Additionally, more residents than ever find recycling easy.

However, residents are more likely to believe that if any non-recyclables are added to their recycling then it will all get dumped this year suggesting residents are increasingly knowledgeable of the importance of recycling correctly.

Residents are annoyed that they can't recycle all plastics and that there are items being sold in non-recyclable packaging.

2

## Recycling Knowledge

When tested on which items were recyclable, residents were able to correctly identify an item's recyclability 69% of the time compared to 66% in 2022.

Compostable items were the least correctly identified item with less than half of residents correctly identifying that these items are not recyclable.

Overall residents were able to identify which recycling symbols were accepted for recycling, the proportion of correct identification for each symbol was on par with previous years.

3

## Waste reduction responsibility

By in large, residents support the direction the region is heading in how it deals with waste reduction.

Around seven in ten believe that local councils have a high level of responsibility for reducing waste and most believe that local councils could be doing more to reduce waste.

Areas in which residents want to see improvements are in recycling options for a wider array of plastics including soft plastics and more education on the topic of waste reduction.

4

## Food waste and Batteries

Nelson / Tasman households report they waste about 1 litre of food per week on average. Most of this food waste is due to either leftovers not being eaten or the food going off in the fridge or freezer.

Most residents practice many food waste reduction behaviours such as using a shopping list when buying groceries and composting their food waste.

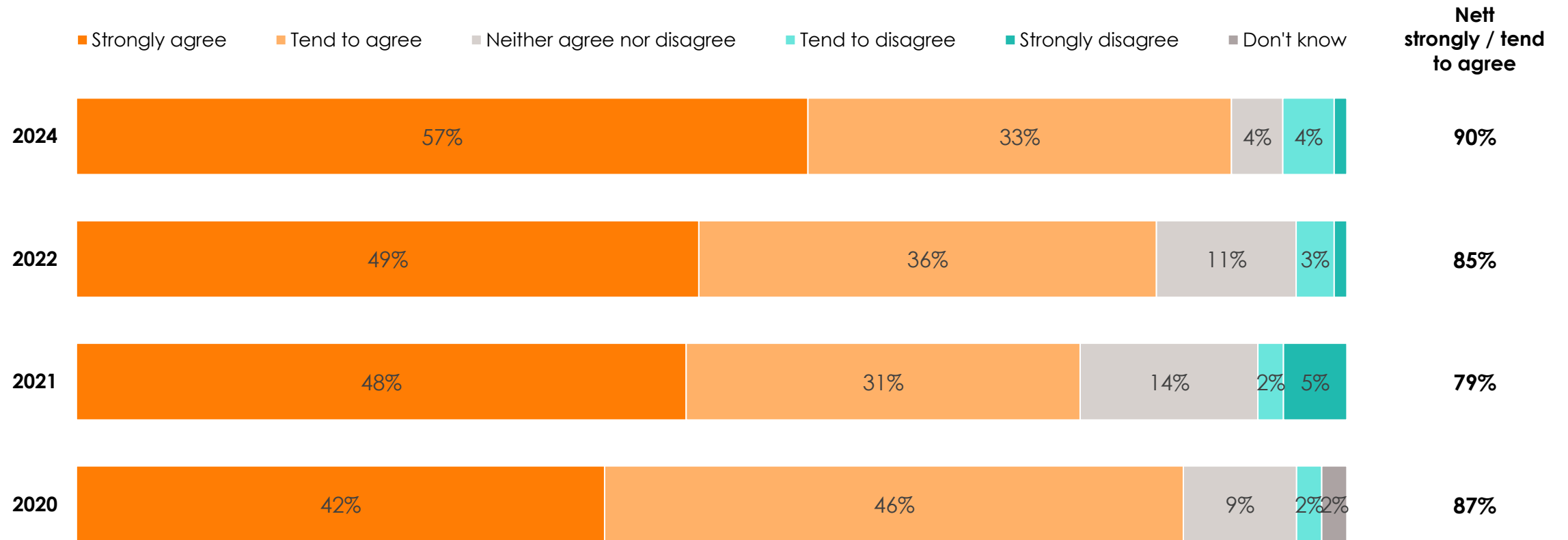
Most residents (78%) know that batteries are not to be put in the kerbside recycling and 75% of residents know they don't belong in the rubbish bins either with half of residents citing the fire risk this causes.

# Knowledge and attitudes around recycling



Nine in ten residents believe that it is worth taking the time to recycle correctly. This compares to 85% in 2022, albeit the increase is not statistically significant.

“I believe it’s worth taking the time to recycle right”

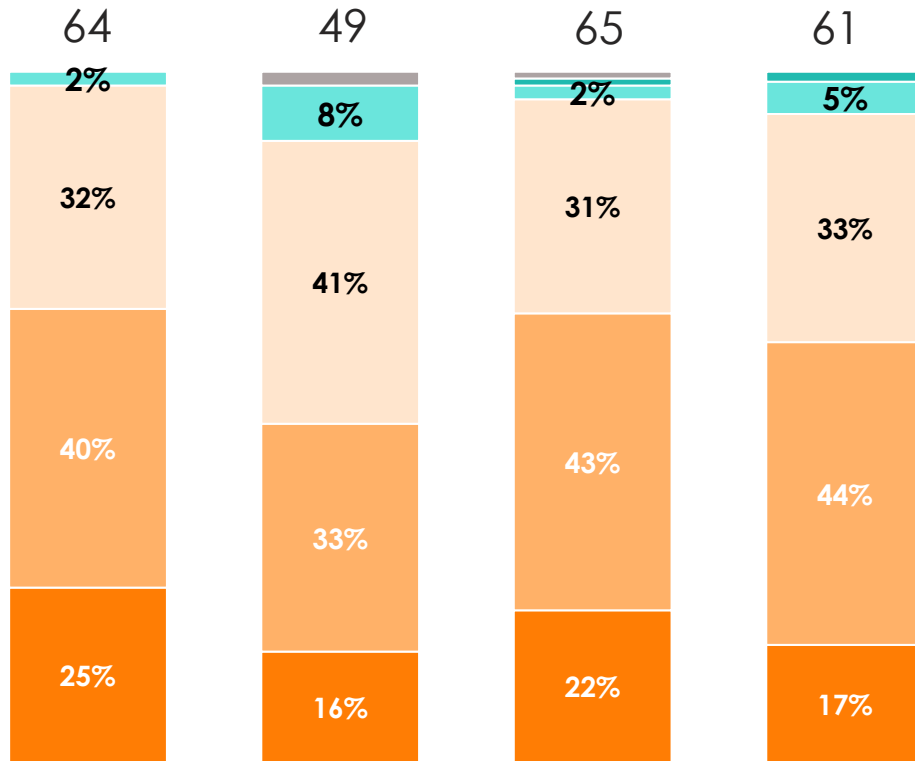


Source: E1 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements... I believe it's worth taking the time to recycle right

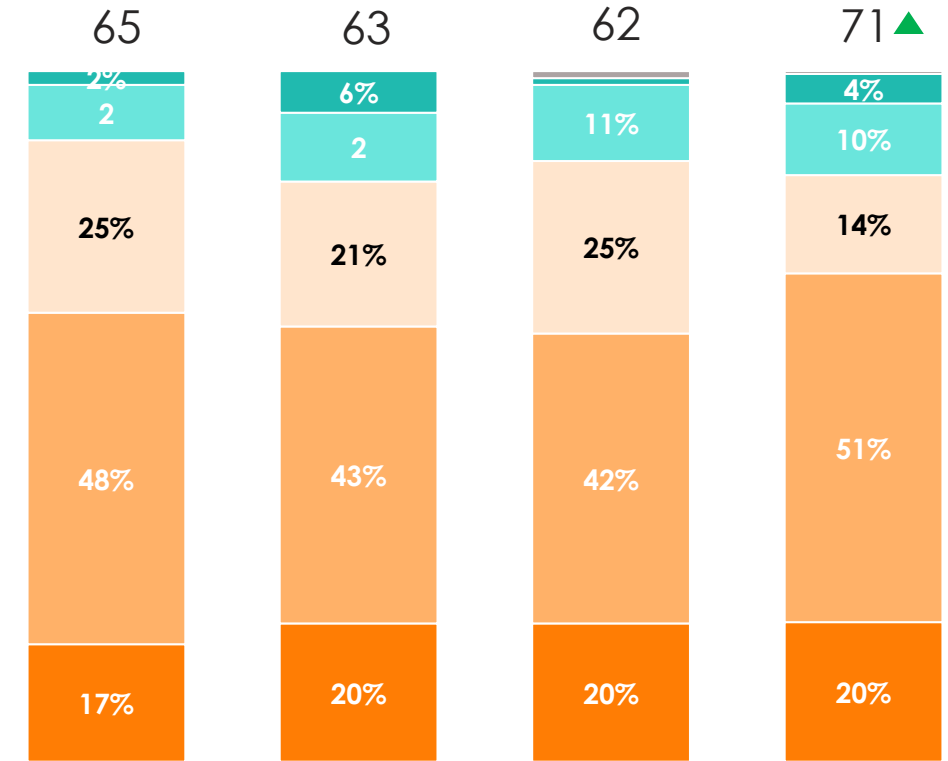
Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

The proportion who find recycling easy has increased this year. Meanwhile confidence in recycling ability has remained stable to 2022.

“Confidence in recycling ability”



“I find recycling easy”



Nett strongly / tend to agree %

■ Extremely confident   
 ■ Very confident   
 ■ Fairly confident  
■ Not very confident   
 ■ Not at all confident   
 ■ Don't know

■ Strongly agree   
 ■ Tend to agree  
■ Neither agree nor disagree   
■ Tend to disagree  
■ Strongly disagree   
■ Don't know

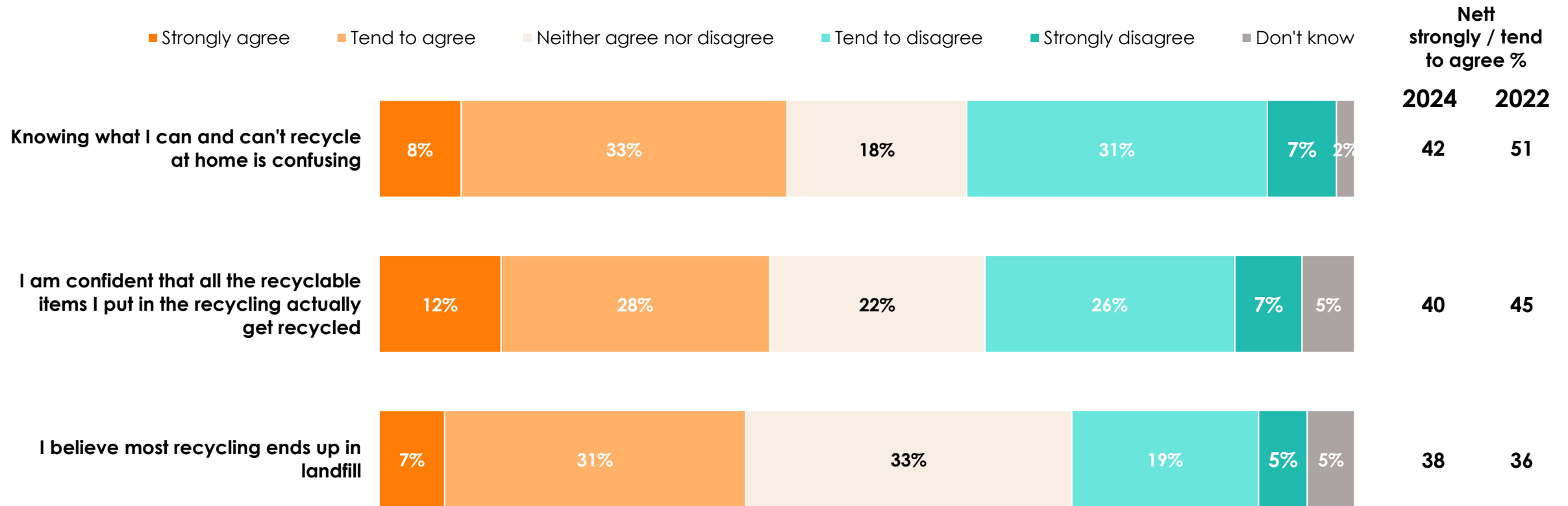
Source: E1 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements... I find recycling easy | D1 - How confident, or not, are you that you place the correct items in the recycling?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Confusion about what can be recycled at home has dropped slightly (but not statistically significant) compared to 2022. Confidence around what actually gets recycled has remained stable.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...”

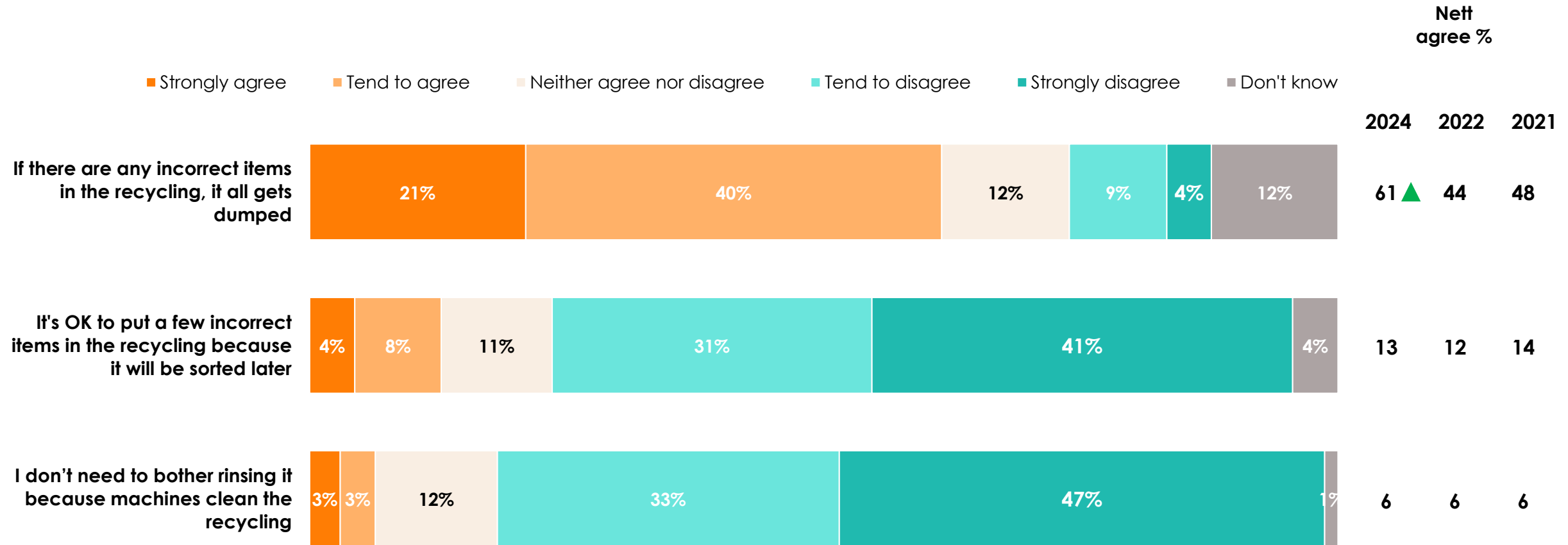


Source: E1 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

The proportion of residents who believe that recycling gets dumped (if it contains any non-recyclables) has increased from 2022, up to 61%. The low-level agreement of adding non-recyclable items to the recycling and not rinsing has remained stable over time.



Source: E1 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

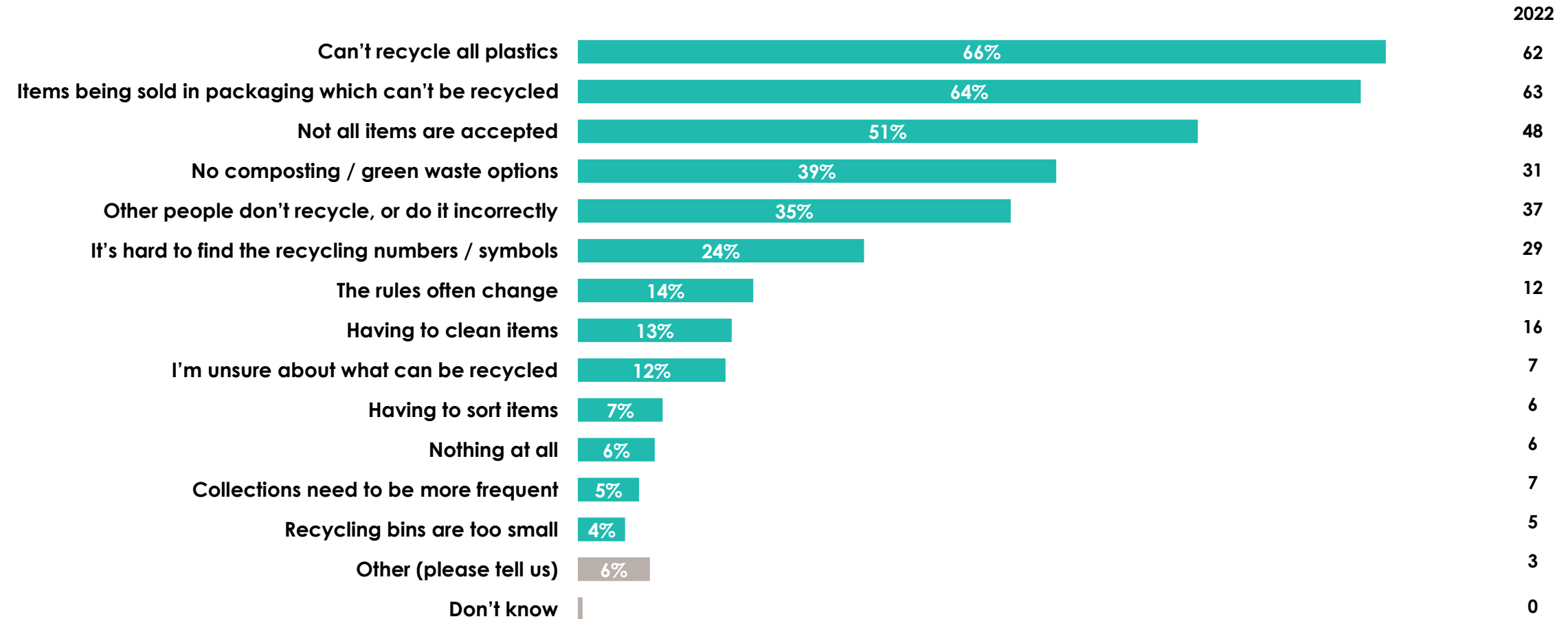
Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey



# Two thirds of Nelson / Tasman residents are annoyed that not all plastics can be recycled (66%) and that there are items being sold in packaging which can't be recycled (64%).

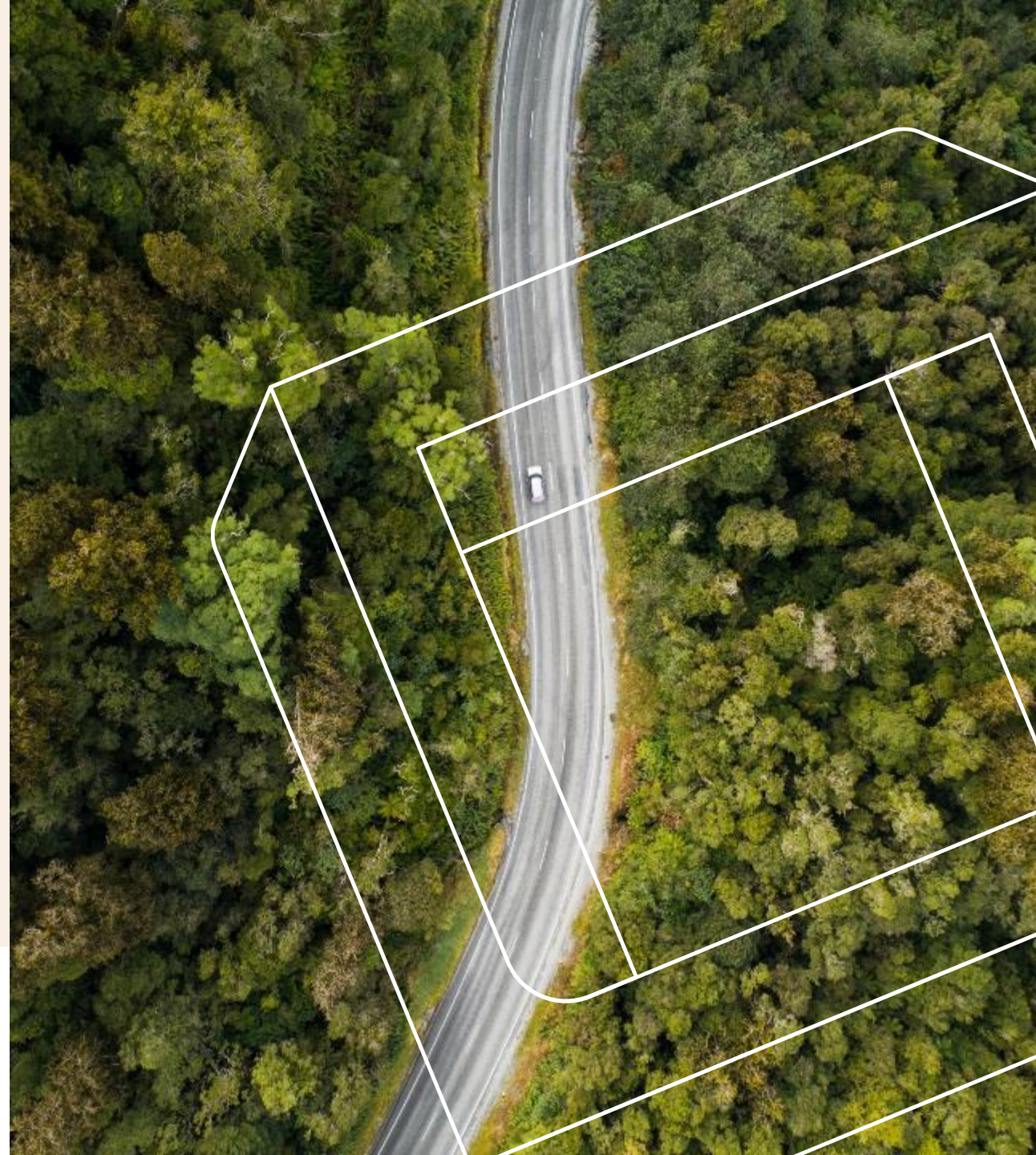
“What, if anything, annoys you about recycling?”



Source: C4 – What, if anything, annoys you about recycling?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

# Recycling knowledge

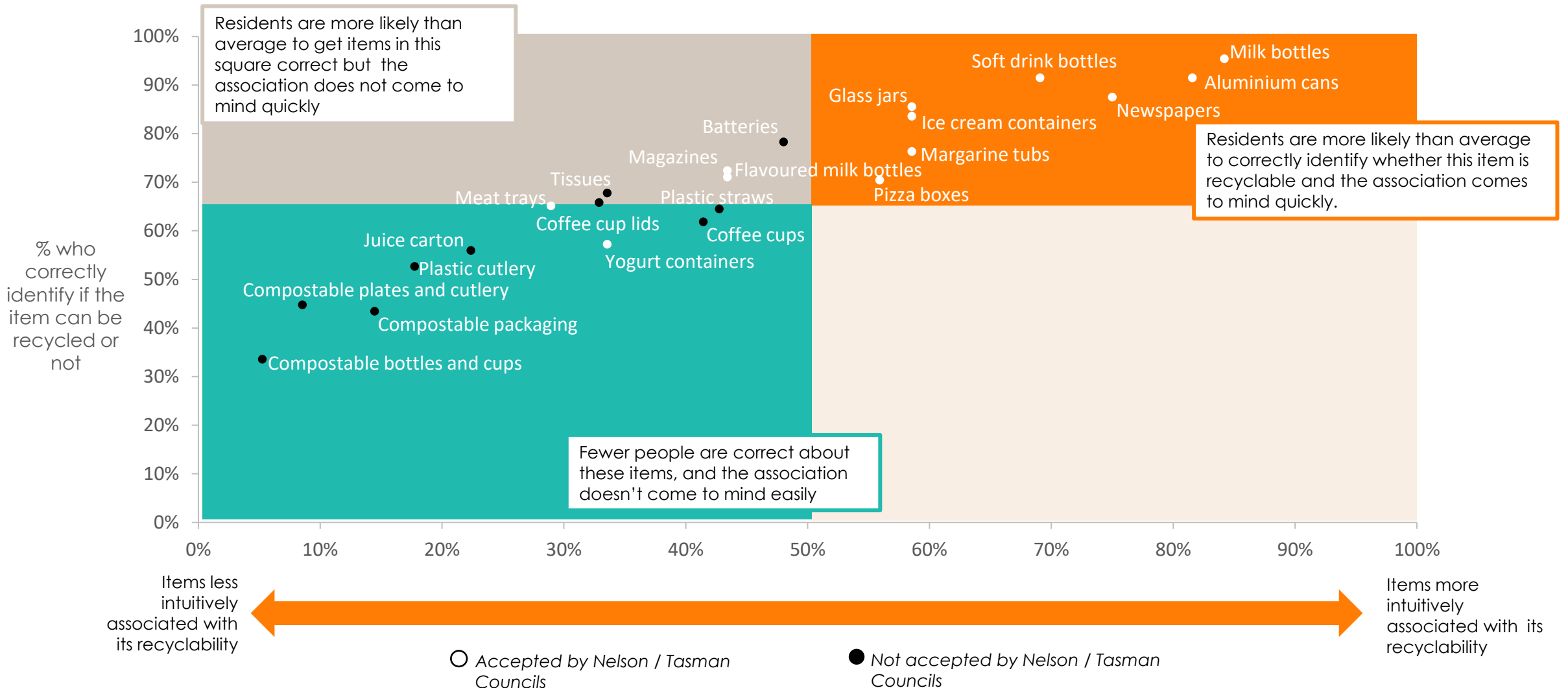


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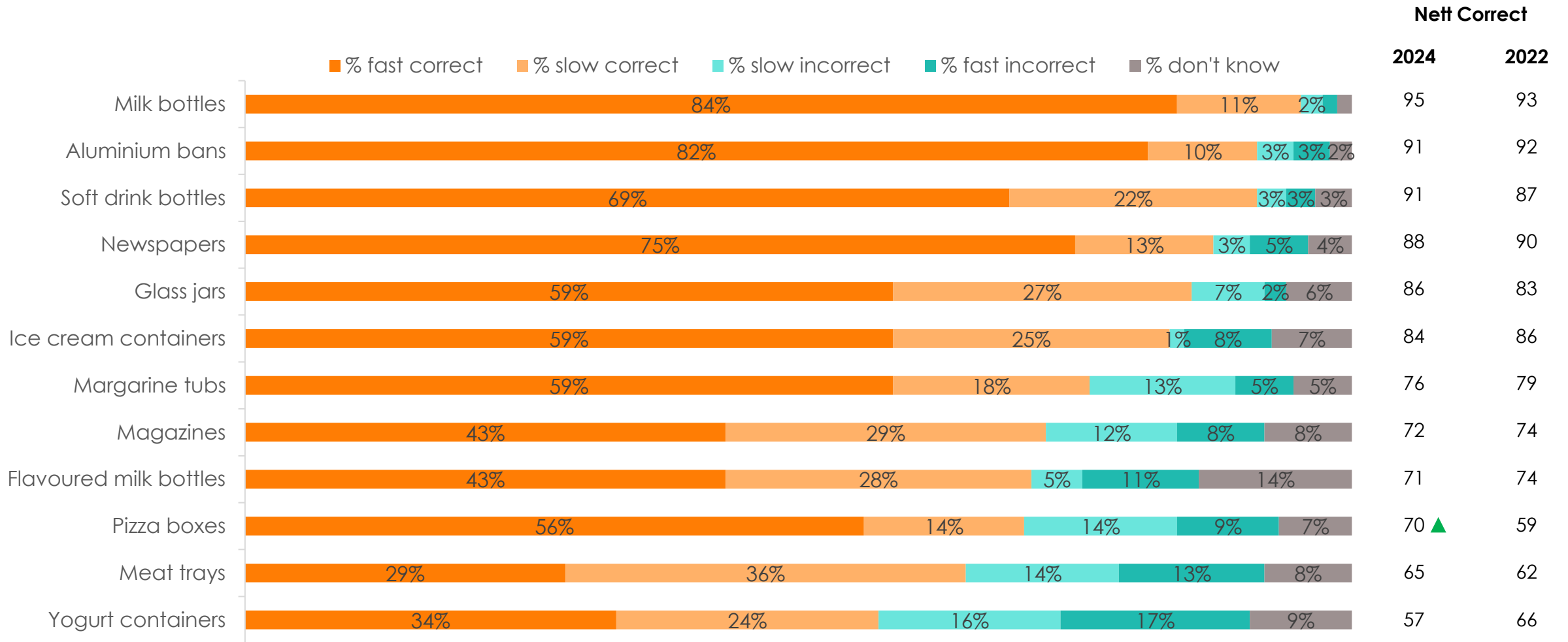
The next few slides look at people's knowledge of recycling, in two ways: (1) the percentage of people who can correctly identify whether, or not, an item can be recycled, and (2) how deeply embedded the knowledge is. How deeply embedded the knowledge is, is assessed using a reaction-time task – if someone knows immediately whether an item should (or shouldn't) be recycled then it is 'hard-wired' into their brains. If it takes them a while to decide then it isn't deeply embedded, and people are more prone to forgetting or making mistakes\*.

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The items in the teal quadrant below are those where people lack knowledge – i.e., they’re uncertain whether to recycle or not. The items in the grey quadrant are those most people get right but need to think about – meaning there is potential for error. The items in the orange quadrant are those ‘hard-wired’ in.



This chart and the next show the results of the knowledge questions in more detail. This chart shows residents can easily identify milk bottles, aluminium cans and soft drink bottles as recyclable. Awareness of the recyclability of pizza boxes has increased significantly this year.

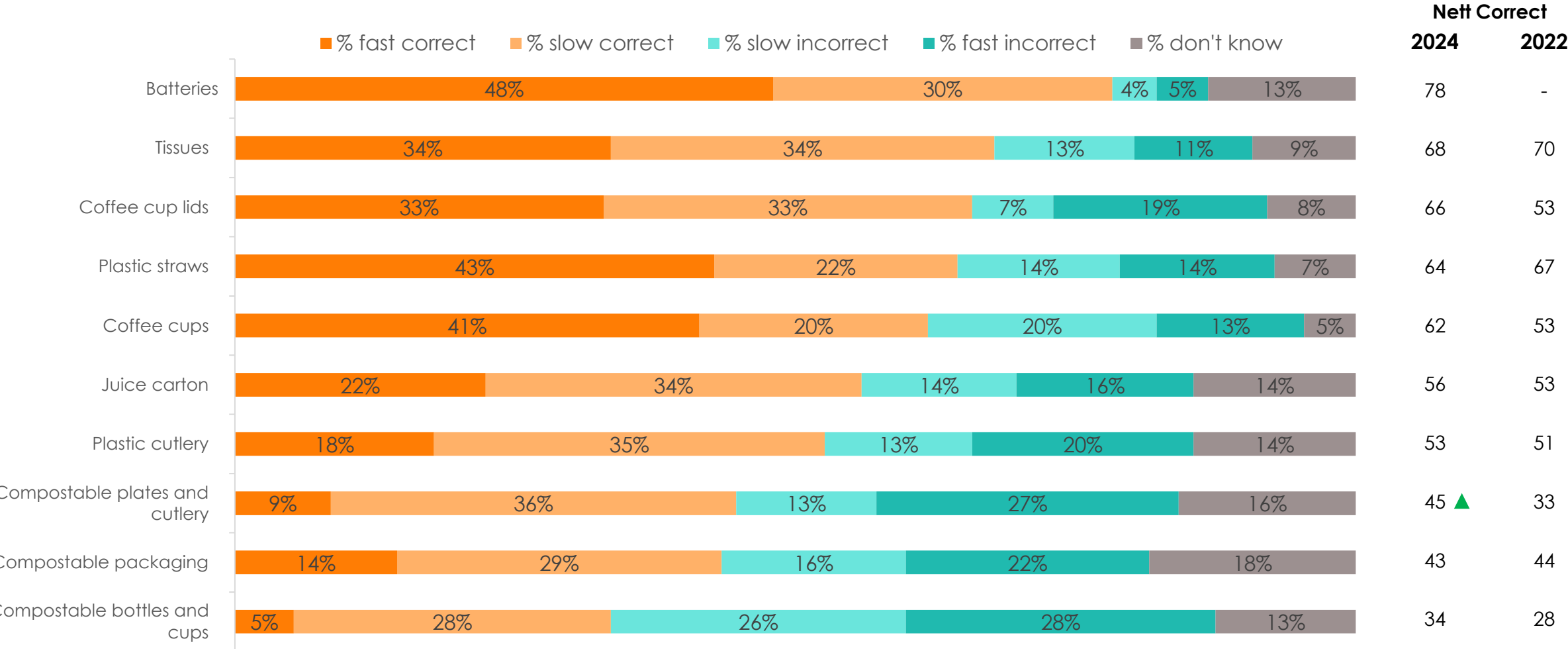


Source: D4 – Would you typically put these items in your recycling?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Residents continue to be less confident in being able to identify non-recyclable items than recyclable ones. This potentially represents a tendency towards recycling items rather than putting items in the rubbish. Batteries (added this year) were correctly labelled as non-recyclable by over three quarters of residents.

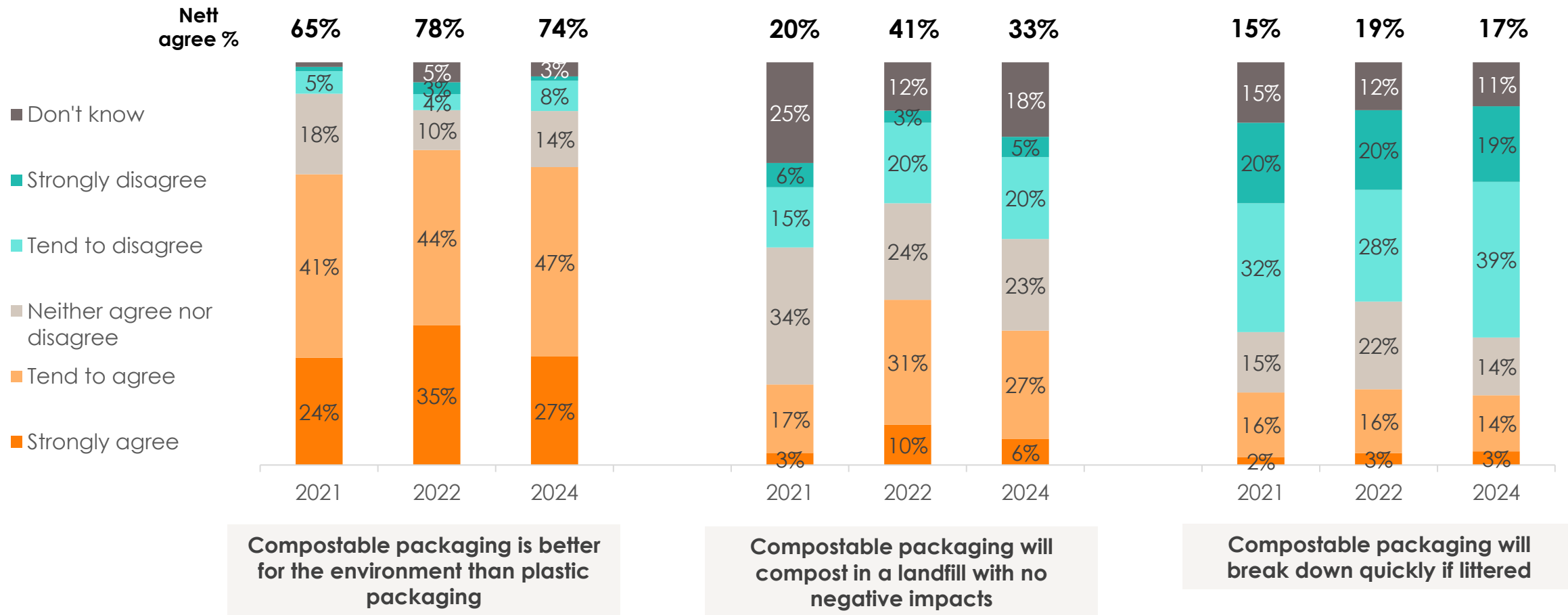


Source: D4 – Would you typically put these items in your recycling?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

# Positive sentiment towards compostable packaging has slightly fallen this year with slightly fewer residents agreeing that there are benefits for compostable packaging.

## Perceptions of compostable packaging



Source: E1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

# Self reported recycling behaviour



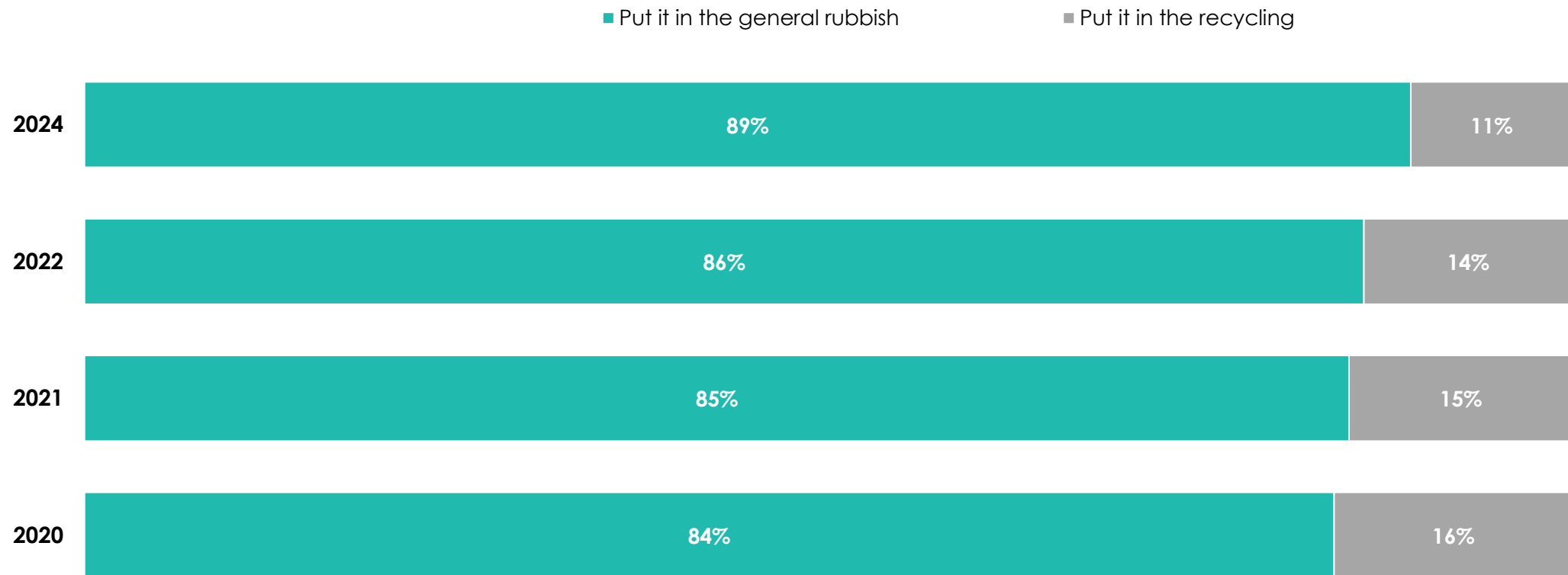


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This year, the tendency for Nelson / Tasman residents to put an item in the rubbish if they are not sure where it belongs has increased slightly.

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“If you are unsure whether an item can be recycled or not, what do you typically do?”



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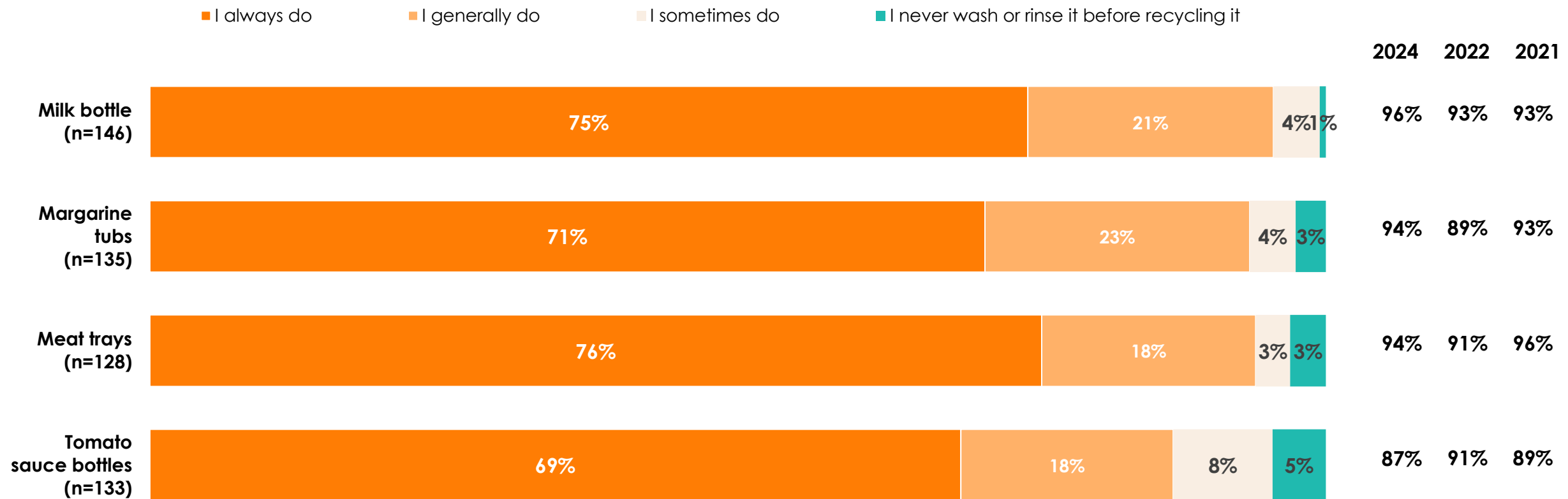
Source: D2 - If you are unsure whether an item can be recycled or not, what do you typically do?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

# About three quarters of residents will always rinse the following items before recycling. Rinsing behaviours remain stable over time.

“Do you wash or rinse the following items before putting them in your recycling?”



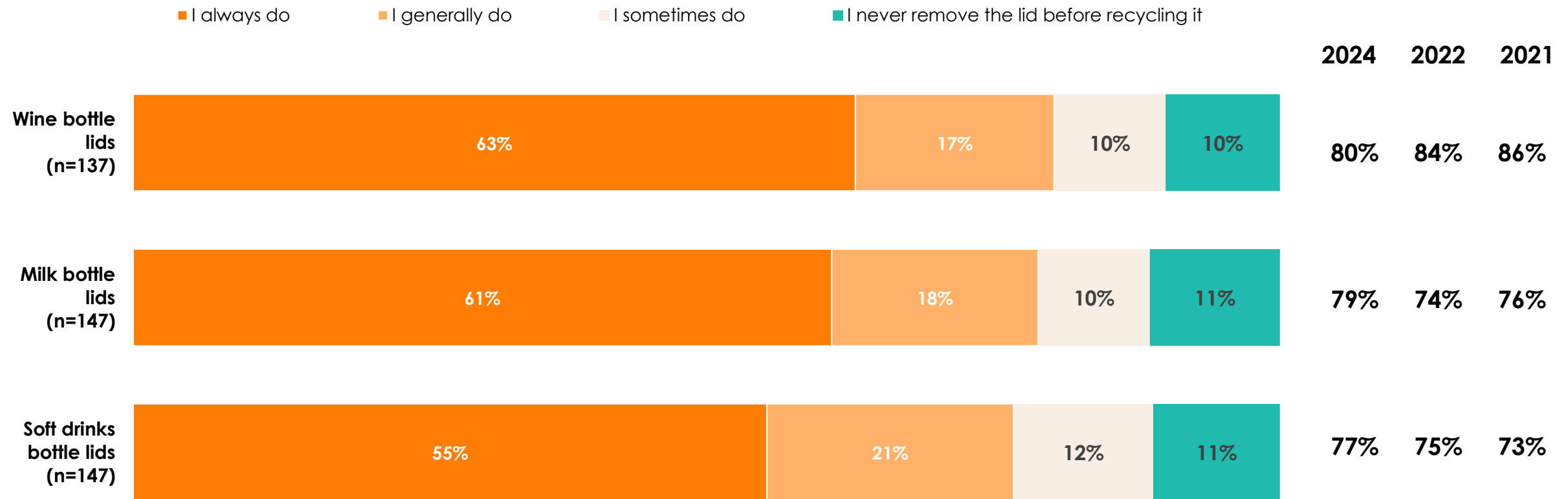
Source: D5 - Do you wash or rinse the following items before putting them in your recycling?

Base: All residents who use the item, bases on chart.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey   
 ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

# Removing lids continues to be a less common behaviour than rinsing amongst residents. The results are consistent with the previous two years.

“Do you remove the lid from the following items before putting them in your recycling?”

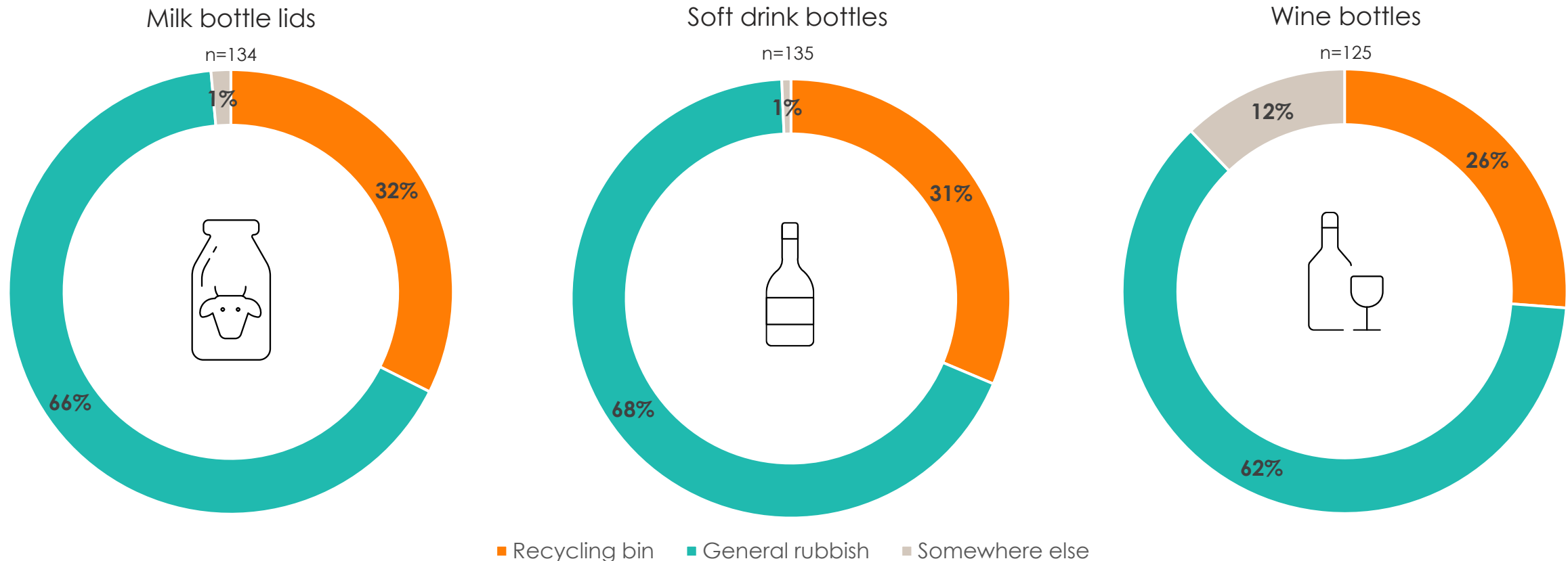


Source: D6 - Do you remove the lid from the following items before putting them in your recycling?

Base: All residents who use the listed items, bases sizes on the chart.

Residents who claimed to remove lids before recycling were asked what they did with the lids. The majority of residents put these lids in the general rubbish, while around one-third put them in the recycling.

“And where do you put the lids of each of these items once you remove them?”



Source: D6a - And where do you put the lids of each of these items once you remove them?

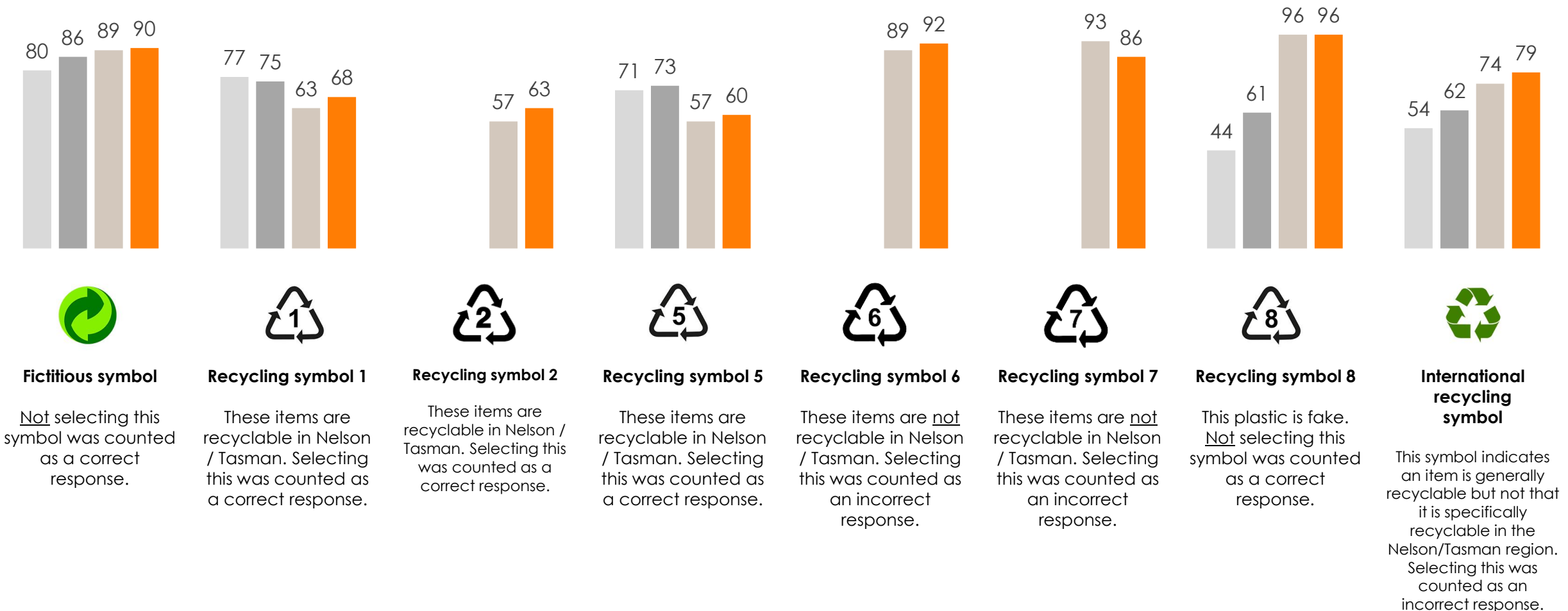
Base: All respondents who remove the lid prior to recycling (n=125-135)

# Recycling symbols



# Correct recycling habits of residents has remained stable this year. Correct identification of numbers that are recyclable (1,2,5) hover between 60%-68%.

■ % correct 2020 ■ % correct 2021 ■ % correct 2022 ■ % correct 2024

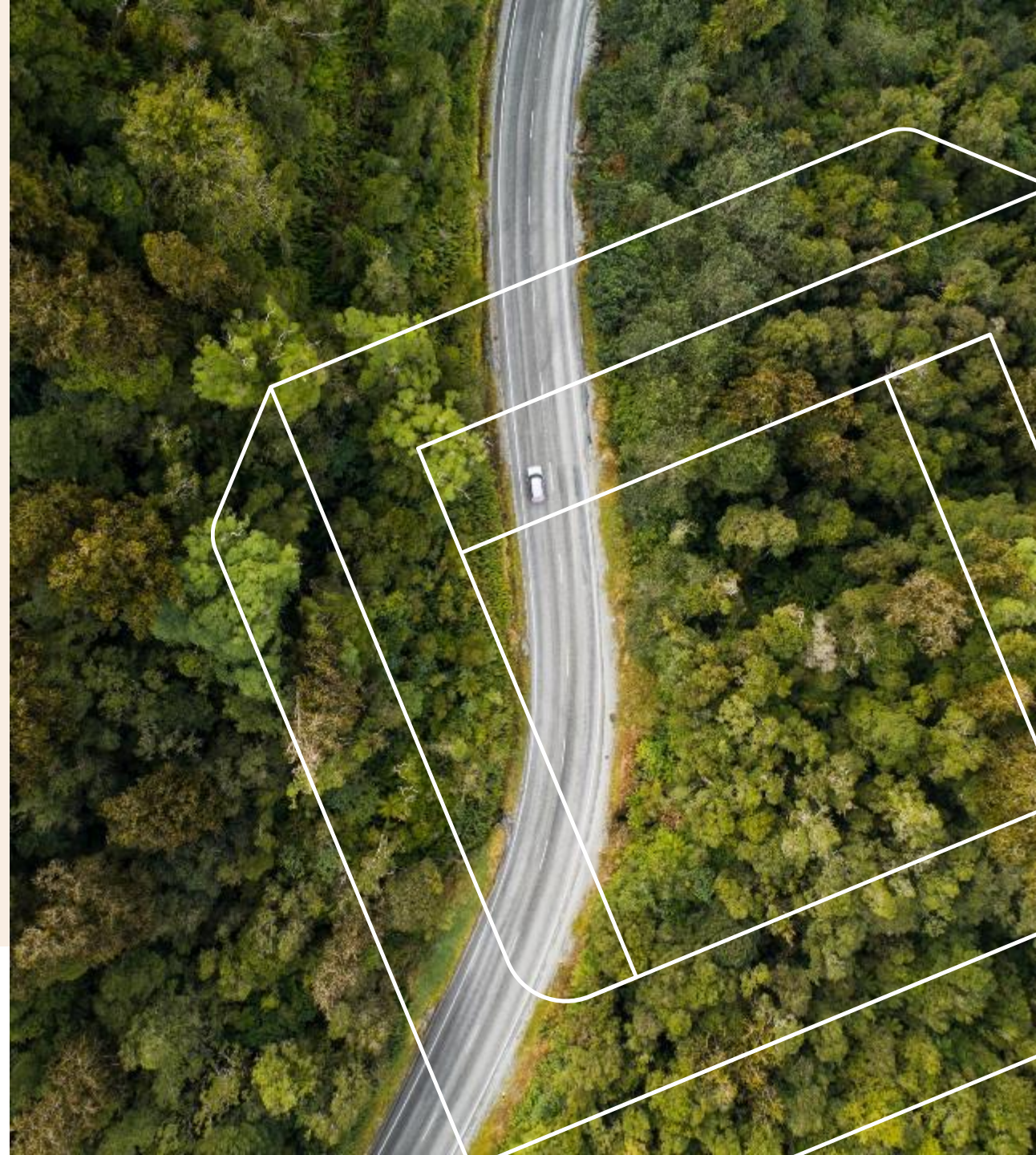


Source: B8 - Which of these symbols or numbers tell you that a plastic container is recyclable in Nelson/ Tasman district

Base: Base: All respondents [Nelson / Tasman residents] (2020 n=100, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152)

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

# Path to reducing waste

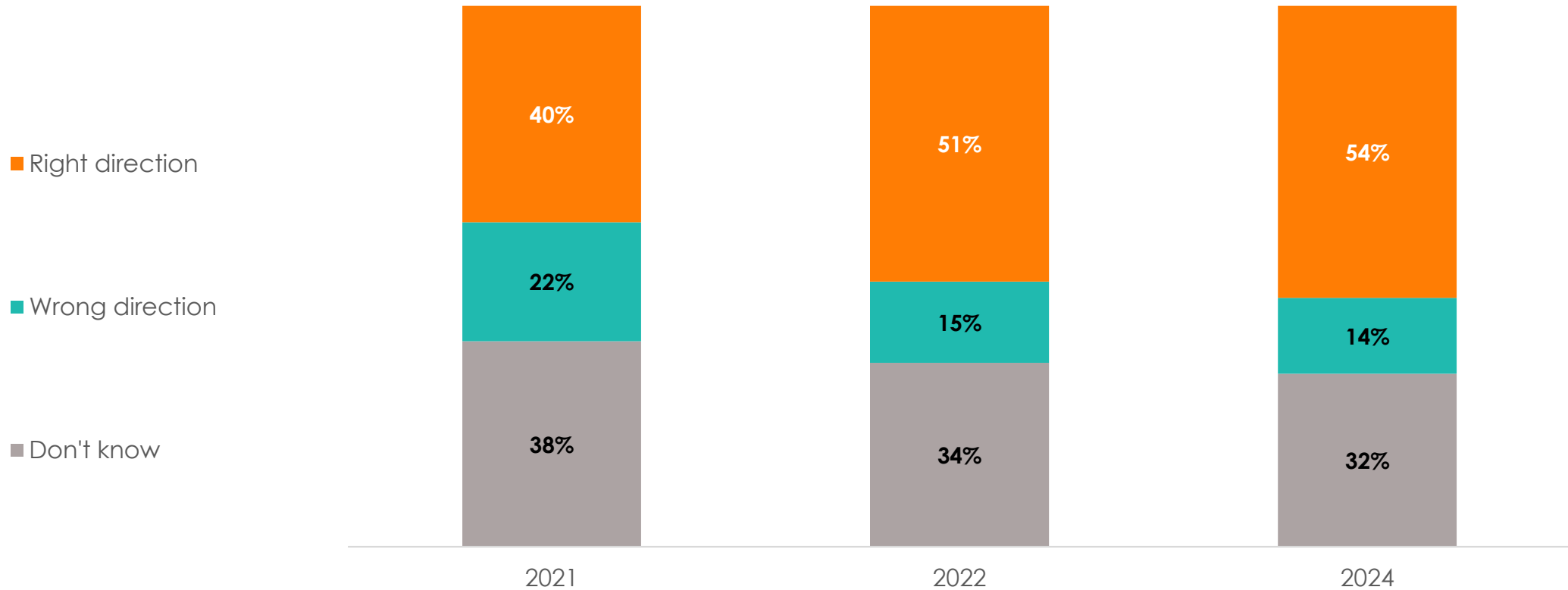


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# Most residents again believe that the Nelson and Tasman regions are heading in the right direction in how it approaches reducing waste, with support for the regions' approach increasing year on year.

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Is the region heading in the right or wrong direction in how it approaches reducing the amount of waste we produce



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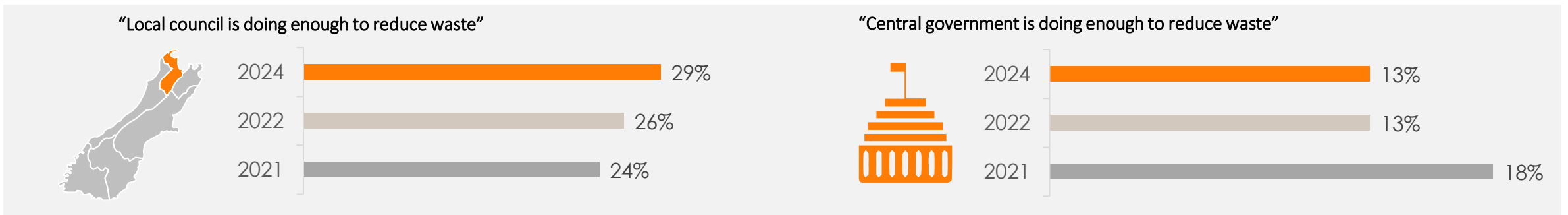
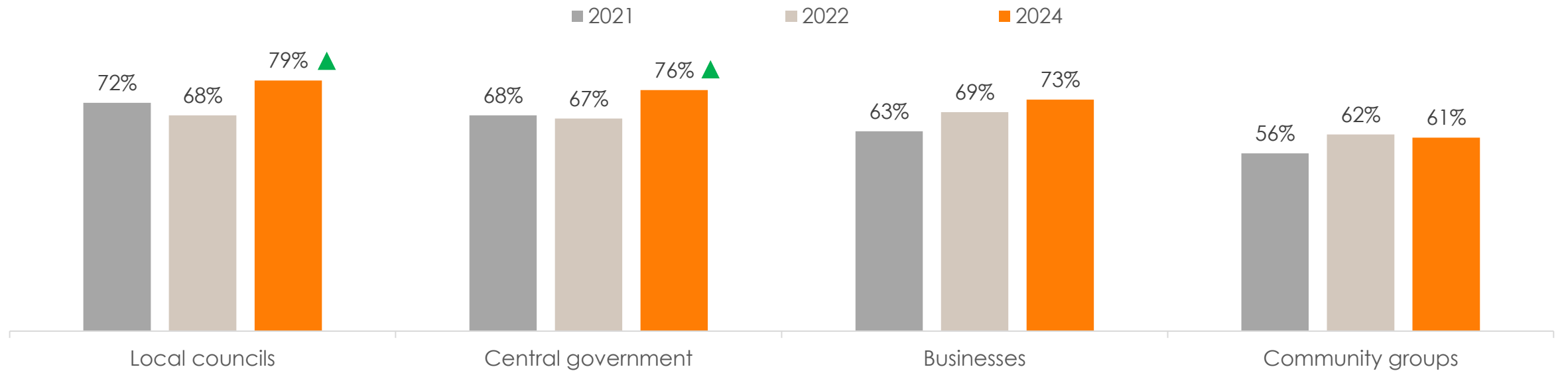
Source: B2 - Is the Tasman / Nelson region heading in the right direction or wrong direction in how it approaches reducing the amount of waste we produce?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.



Residents place a higher level of responsibility on central government and local councils this year. Only a minority of residents feel that the councils are doing enough to reduce waste, and fewer still believe the same for central government.

Proportion who agree that these groups have a high responsibility for reducing waste

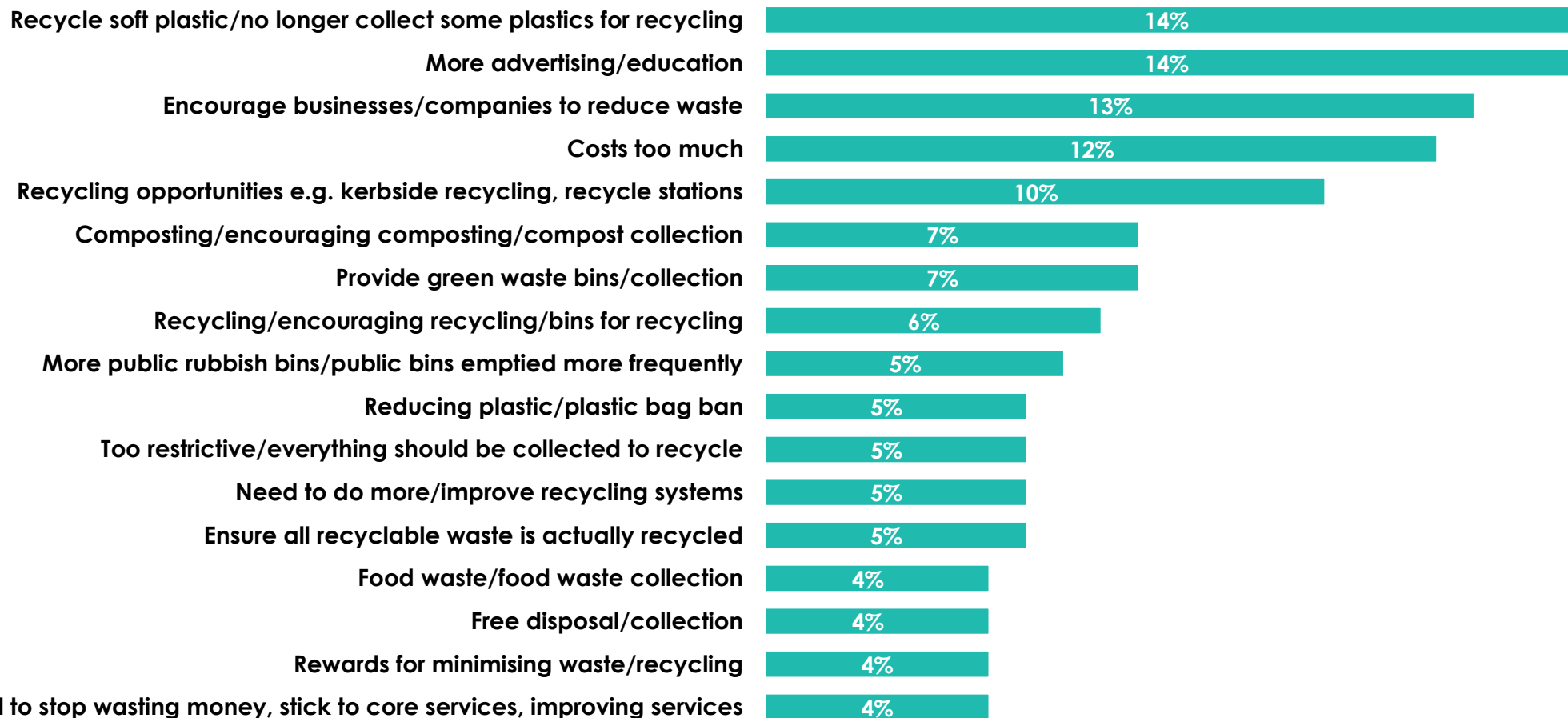


Source: F3 - How much responsibility do you think each of the following have for reducing waste? | F5 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

# Residents most commonly suggest the option of recycling all types of plastics and more advertising and education on the topic as ways the councils could reduce waste in the region.

What do you think the council should be doing to reduce waste in the region?

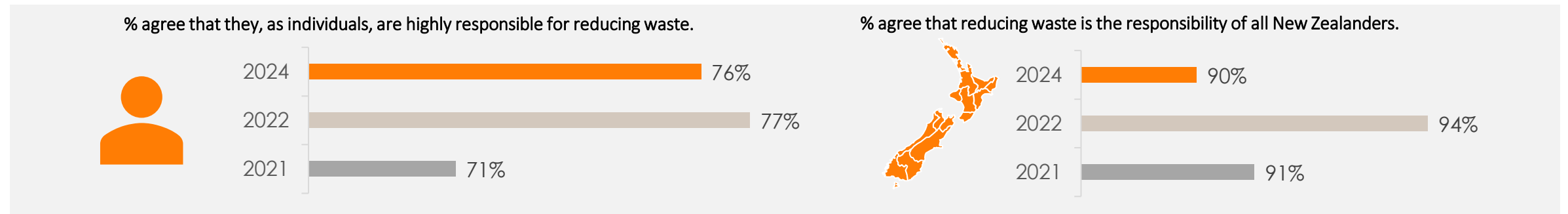
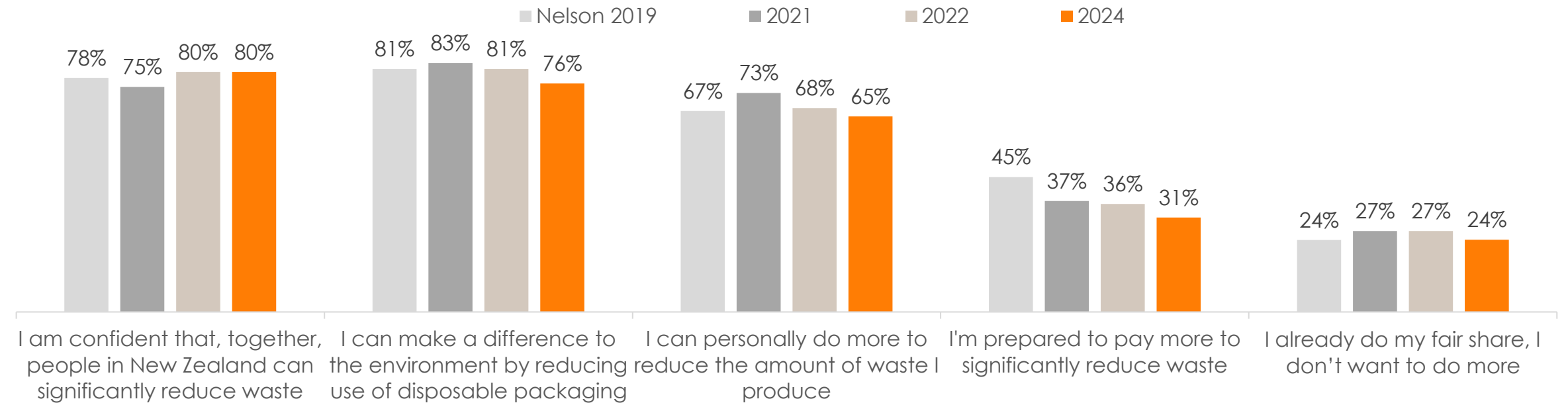


Source: B3 – What do you think [Nelson city / Tasman district] council should be doing to reduce waste in the region? \*Only showing responses above 3%

Base: All residents, 2024 n=152.

There is a strong sense of personal responsibility for reducing waste, and this is in line with the previous research. That said, most residents continue to feel that reducing waste is a collective responsibility.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?



Source: E1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | F5 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

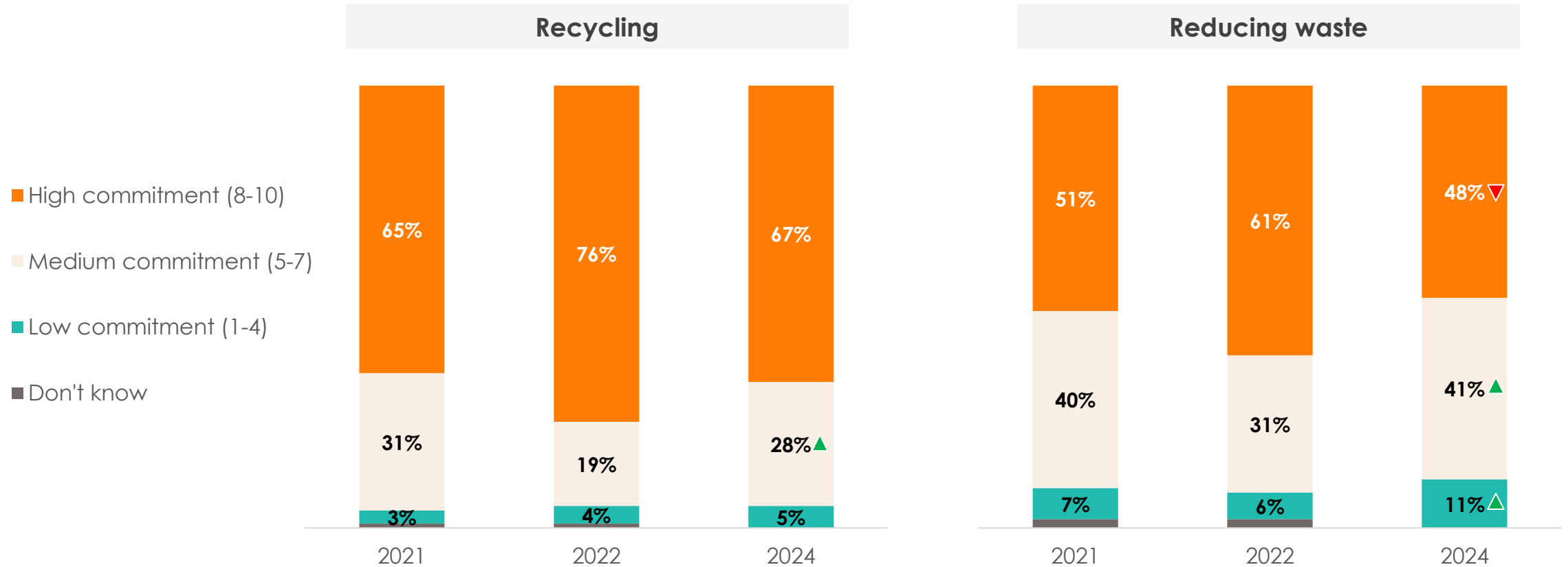
▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

# Recycling and reduction behaviours



# Nelson and Tasman residents are broadly committed to both recycling and reducing waste. However, levels of high commitment to these behaviours has fallen back to 2021 levels.

How would you rate your personal commitment to the following?

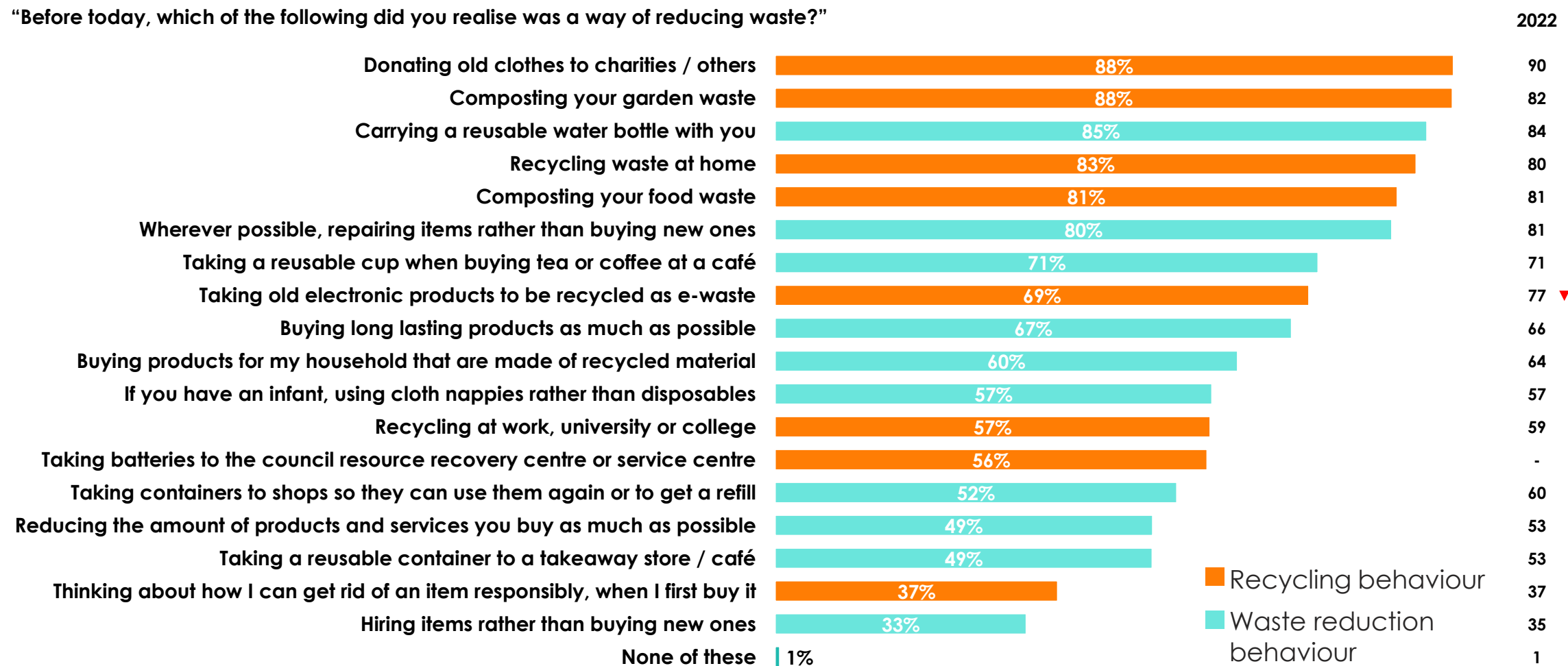


Source: B1 - How would you rate your personal commitment to each of the following?

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

There is strong awareness of most of the waste reduction and recycling behaviours, with over half of residents being aware of almost all behaviours.

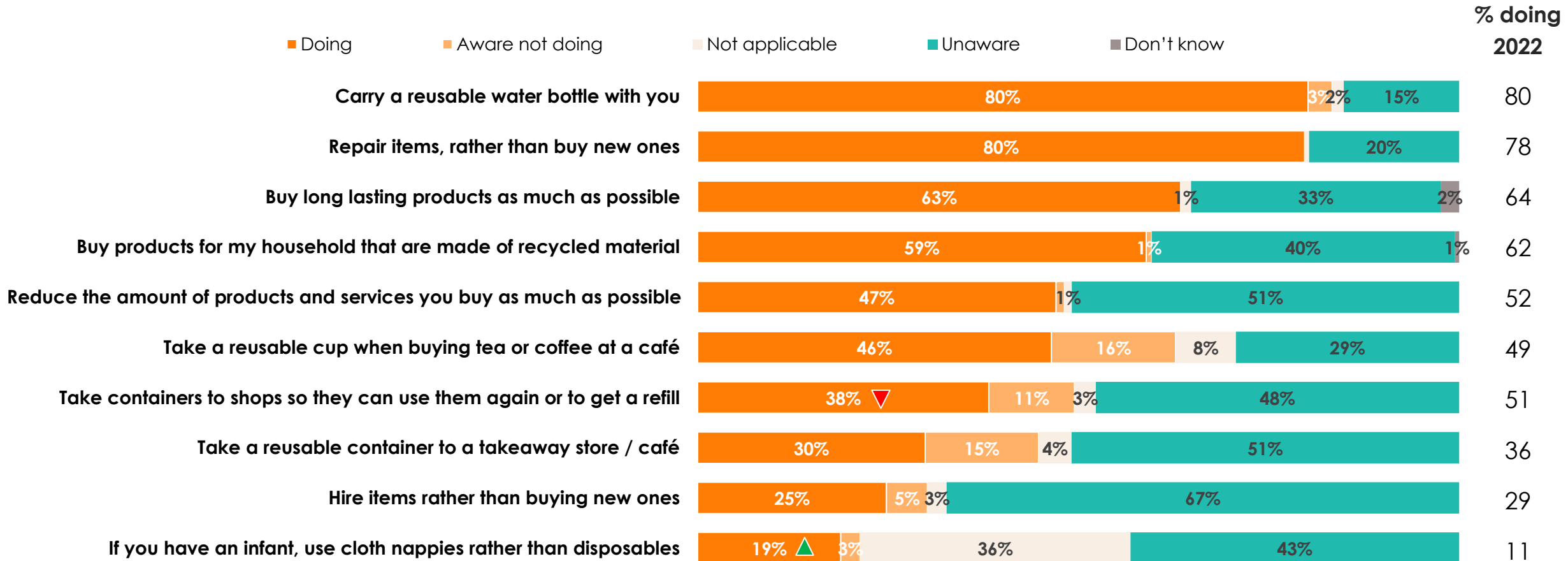


Source: C4 – There are numerous ways people can reduce the amount of waste we produce. Before today, which of the following did you realise was a way of reducing waste? Select all that apply.

Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

The proportion who are taking containers to shops, so they can be reused or refilled has decreased. Conversely, the proportion who are using cloth nappies has increased this year.

Performance on waste reduction behaviours



Source: F2 - How often, if at all, do you do each of the following actions?

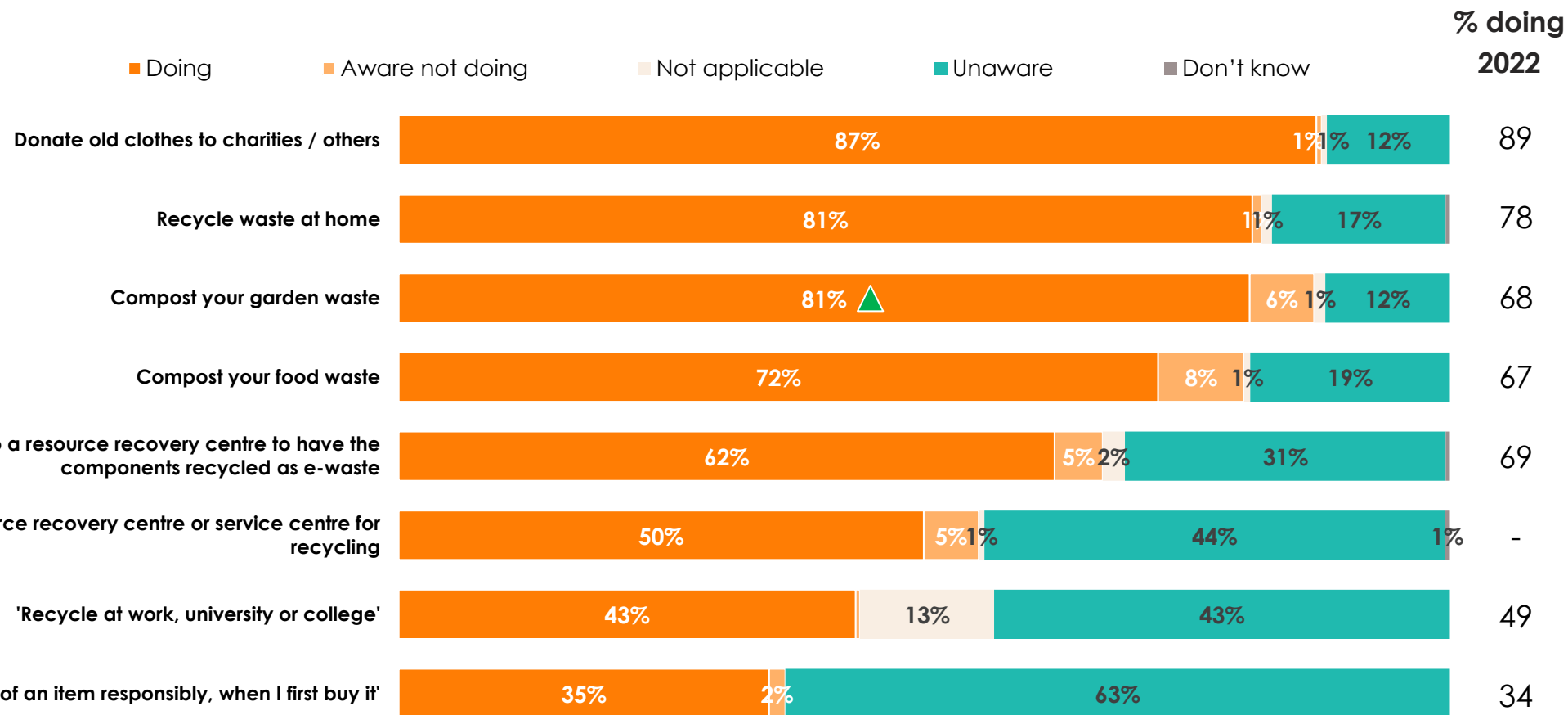
Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

In terms of recycling behaviours, residents are doing significantly more composting of their garden waste this year compared to last year. Half of residents are taking used batteries to the council e-waste centre.

Performance on recycling behaviours

**10.1**  
 The average number of waste & recycling actions performed by residents in the last 12 months out of the 18 items presented



Source: F2 - How often, if at all, do you do each of the following actions?

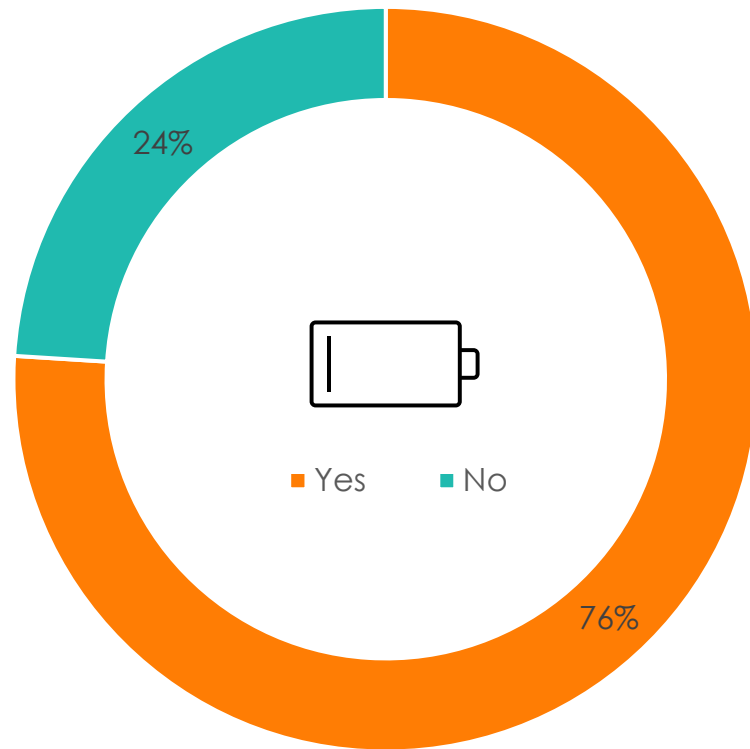
Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
 ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

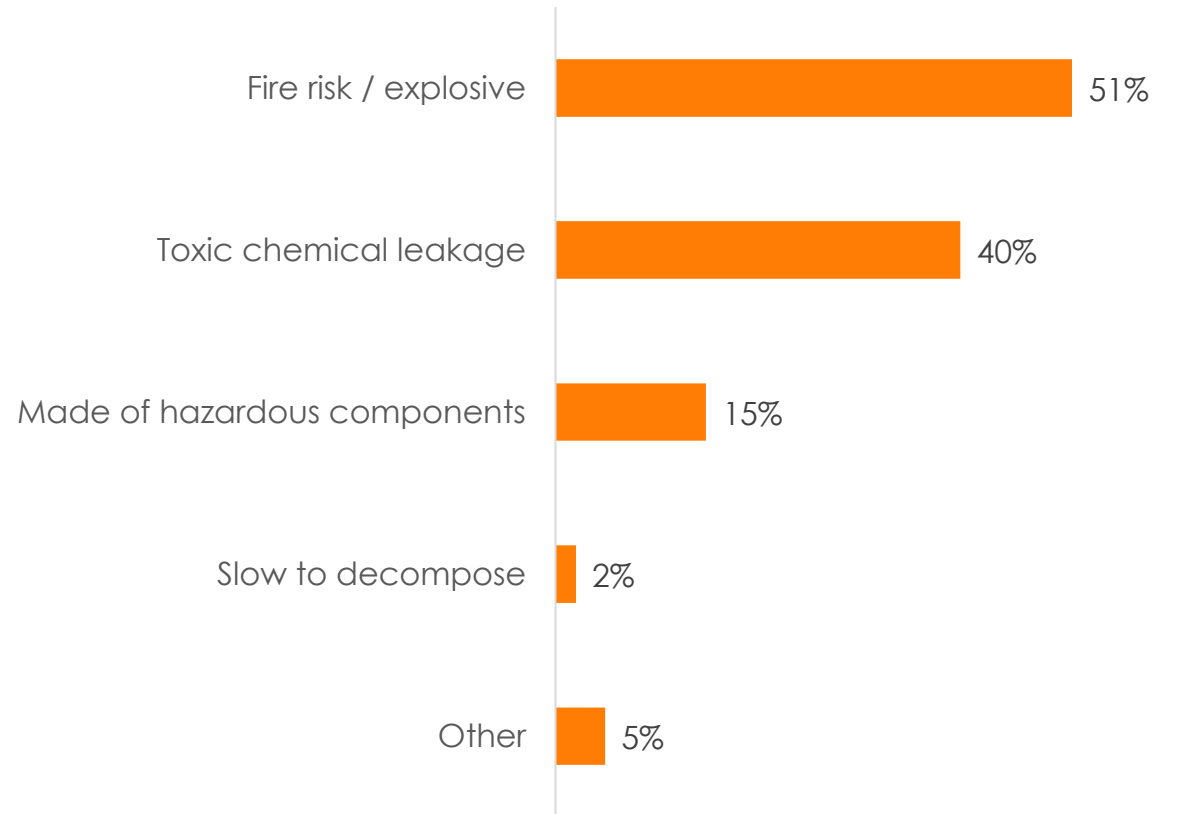


# Three quarters of residents are aware that batteries should not be put in the rubbish. Most cite the reason for this being due to the batteries being a fire or explosive risk.

Before today, were you aware that batteries should not be put in rubbish bins or the landfill?



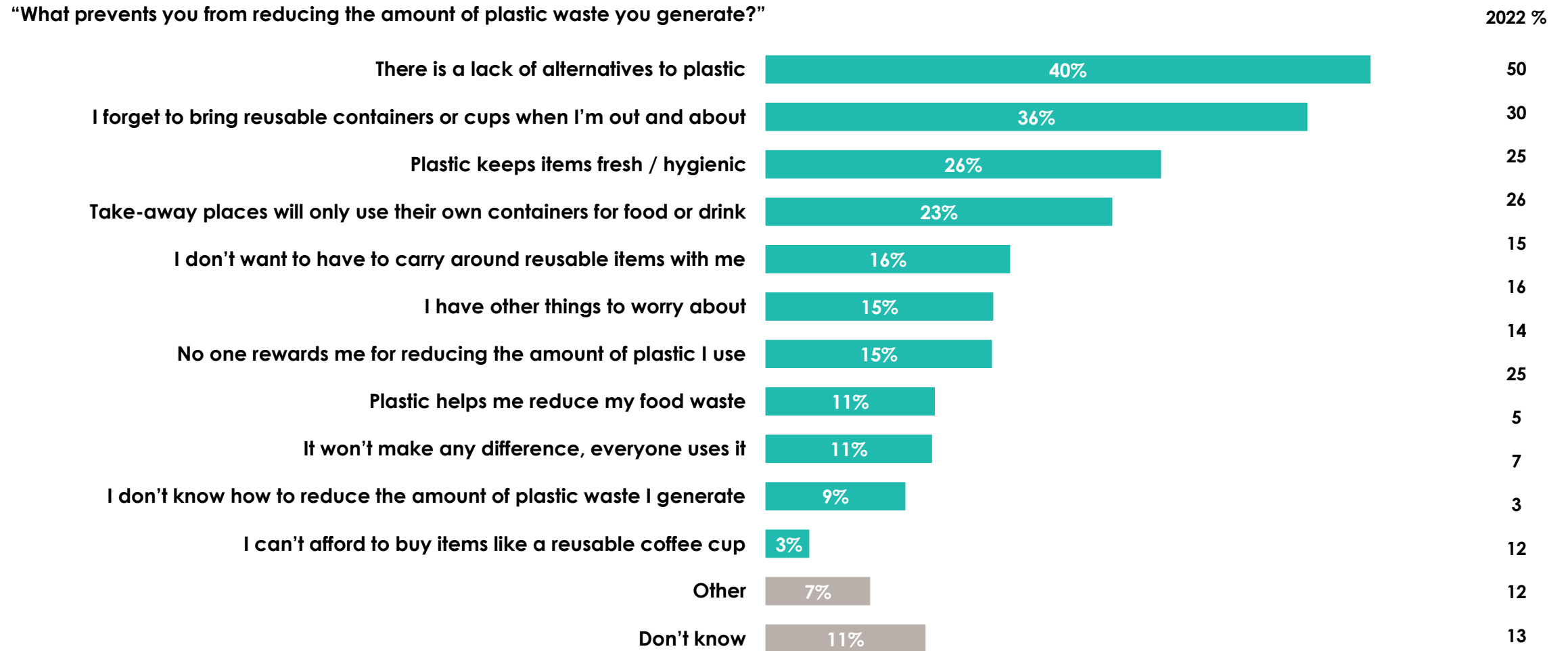
Batteries should not go into the landfill. What do you think are the reasons for this?



Source: F6 - Before today, were you aware that batteries should not be put in rubbish bins or the landfill? | F7 - Batteries should not go into the landfill. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Base: All residents, 2024 n=152.

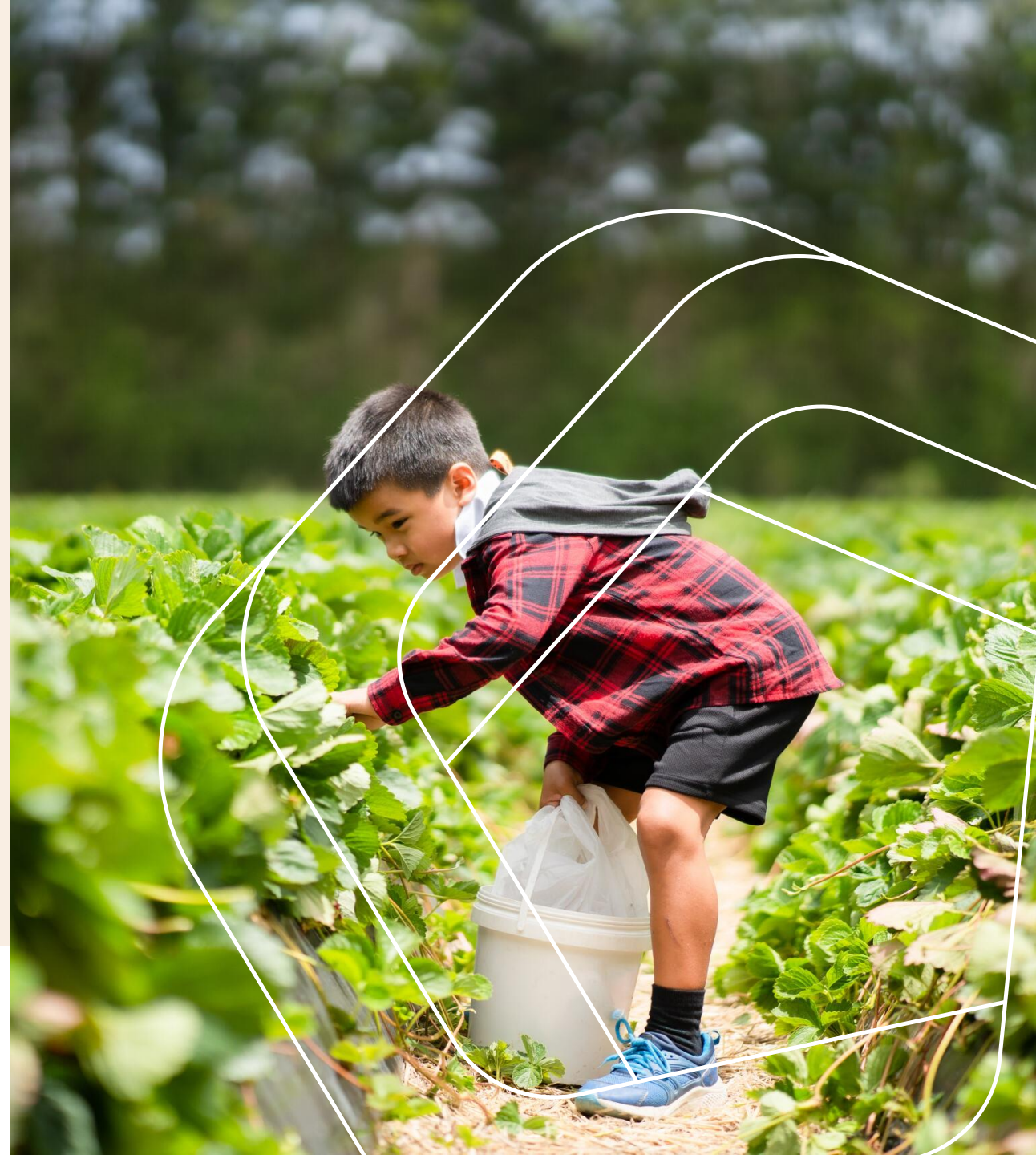
Consistent with 2022, the biggest barrier that prevents residents from reducing their plastic waste is that they believe there is a lack of alternatives to plastic.



Source: F4 – What, if anything, prevents you from reducing the amount of plastic waste you generate? Select all that apply.

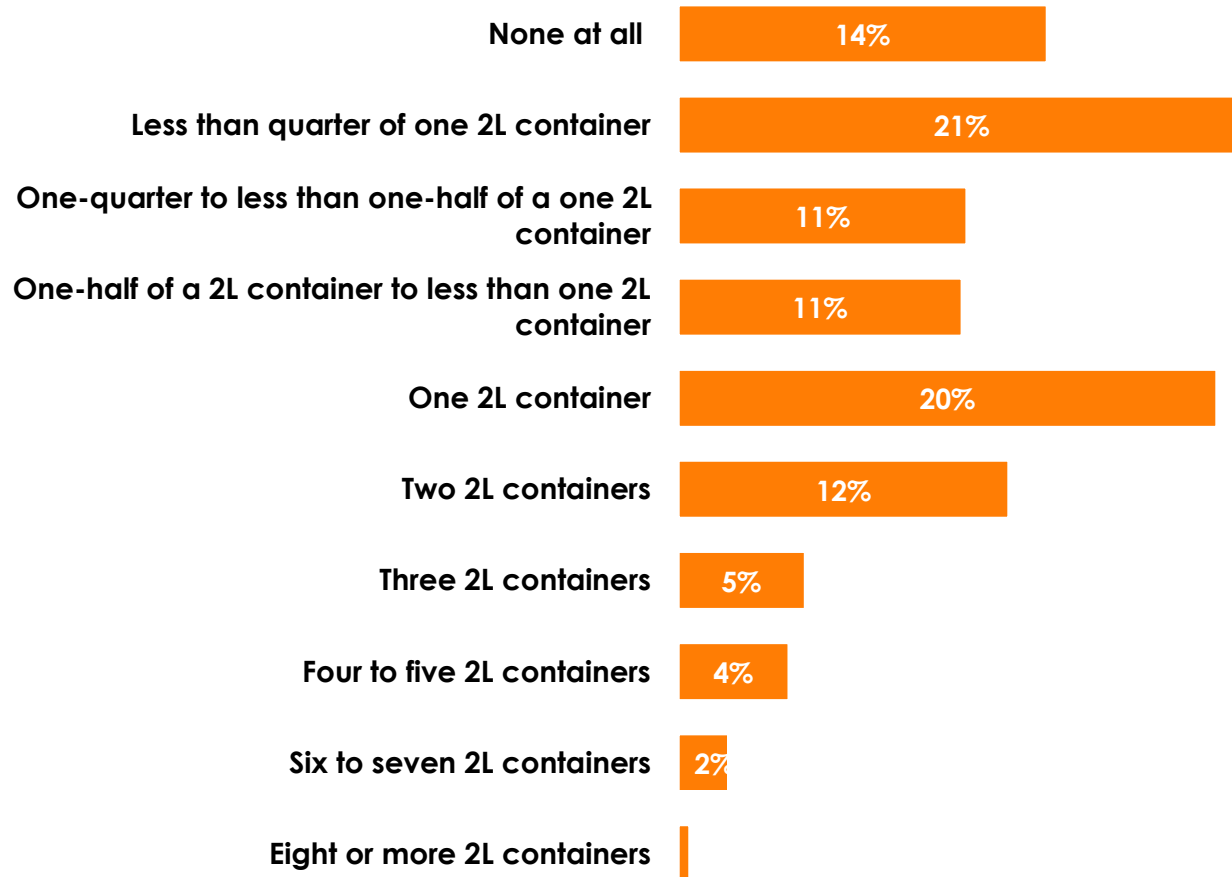
Base: All residents, 2021 n=150, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

# Food waste

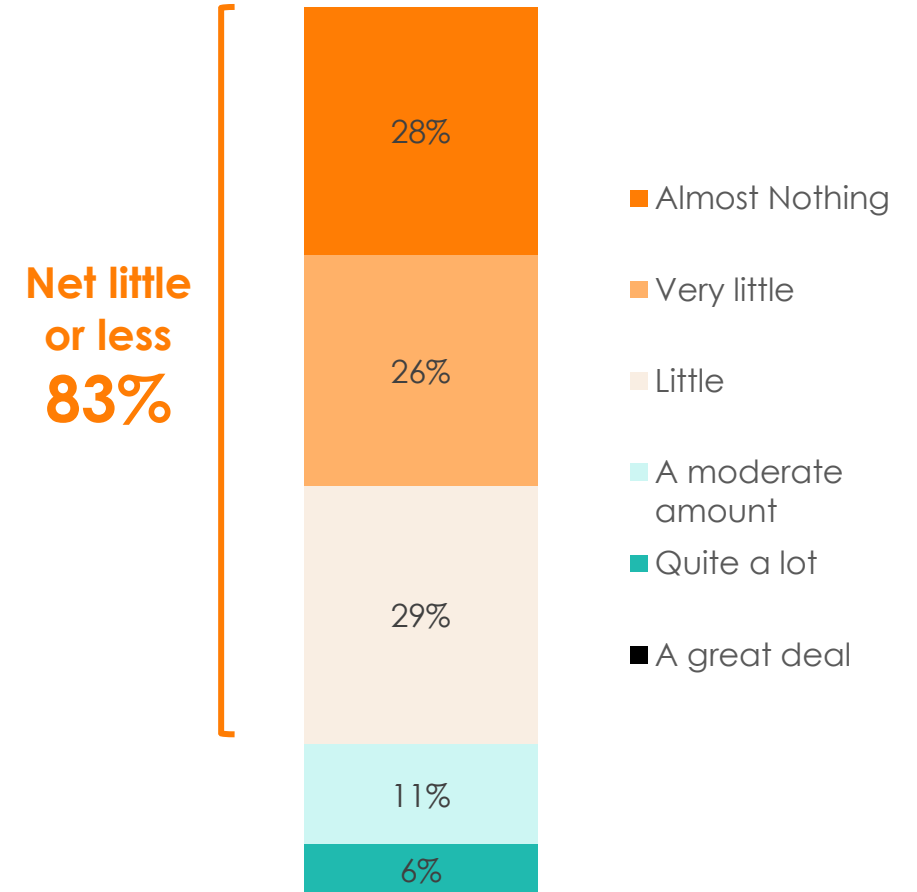


# Households discard, on average, up to one litre of food waste per week with 83% of residents reporting they throw away a little, very little, or almost nothing each week.

“Approximately how much food does your household throw away per week”



“Approximately how much food does your household throw away per week”



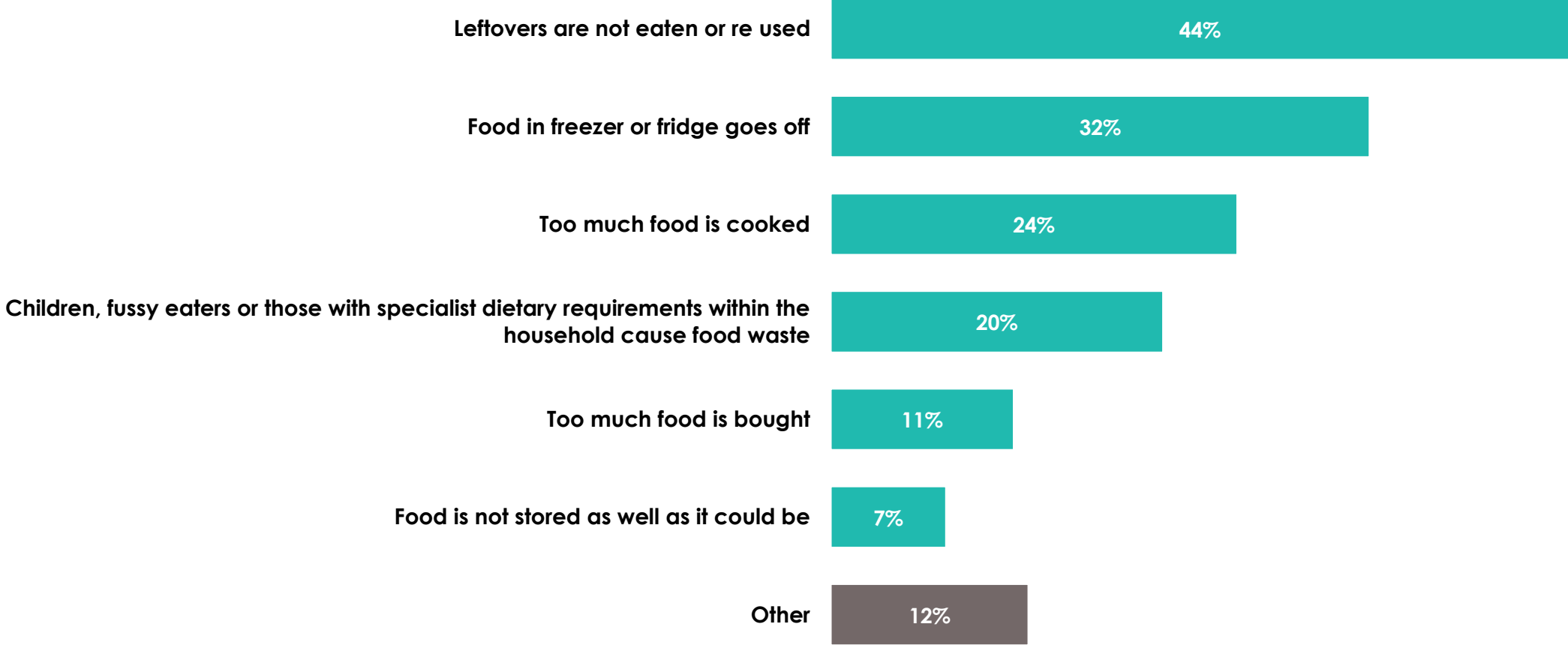
I1 - Using a 2L ice-cream container as a guide, approximately how much food does your household throw away that could have been eaten PER WEEK? This also includes any food that was fed to animals or composted  
 I2 - In general, how much uneaten food would you say your household usually throws away that could have been eaten? This also includes any food that was fed to animals or composted. For example, food and drink that was edible at some point before being thrown away.

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# Leftovers not being eaten and food in the fridge or freezer going off are the two main reasons why there is food wastage in residents' households.

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What are the main reasons your household is wasting food at home?



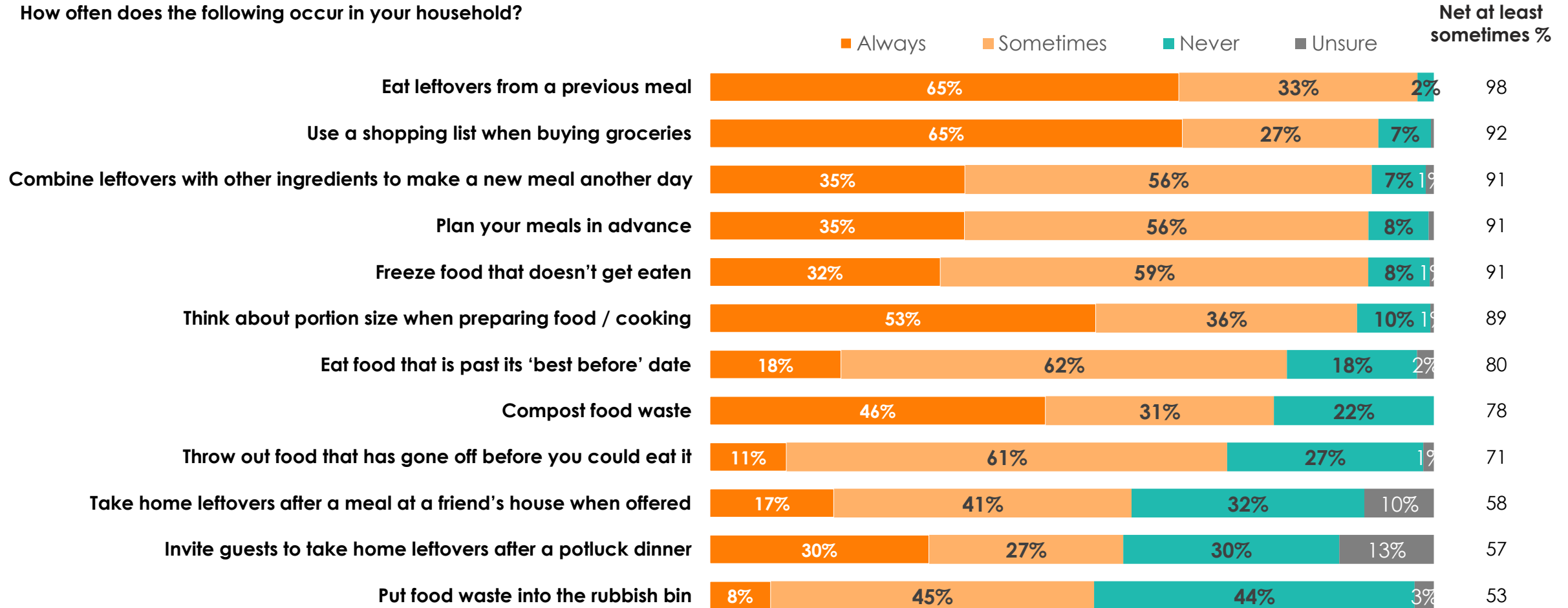
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Source: '13 - What are the main reasons your household is wasting food at home?

Base: 2024, those who waste at least very little food n=108.

Almost all residents eat leftovers and 92% of residents use a shopping list when buying groceries, 80% of residents compost their food with a similar proportion eating food that is past its 'best before' date.

How often does the following occur in your household?



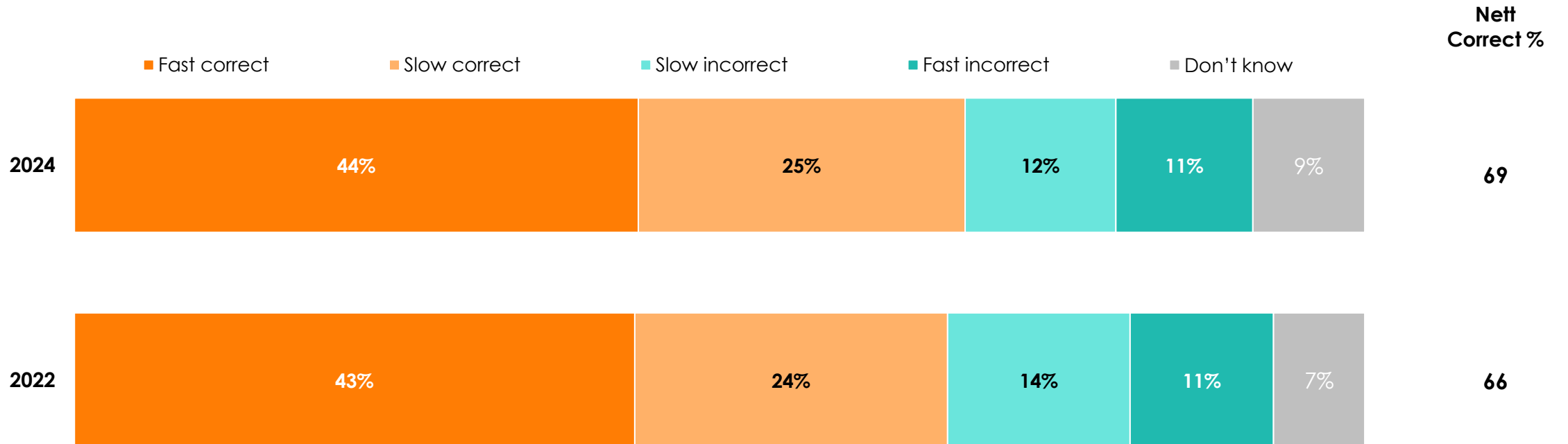
Source: I5 - How often does the following occur in your household?

Base: 2024 n=152.

# Appendix

Below is an overall breakdown of each response category. Overall, 69% of residents correctly identified which items were recyclable and non-recyclable, this is consistent with last year.

**Proportions of Implicit association response types**



Source: Source: D4 – Would you typically put these items in your recycling?

Base: All residents, 2022 n=150, 2024 n=152.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey  
▼ Significantly lower than previous survey



# Introducing Verian

Verian is the new name for Kantar Public (formerly Colmar Brunton).

Following our divestment from our former parent company, we are now an independent research and evaluation agency, providing evidence and advisory services to government and the public realm, across Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

Get in touch if you would like to know more.



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**Emma Stratton and Conor Bryant**

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