

What the public thinks – where do we want to go with rural NZ in the 21st century?

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38% of NZers have done, do, or want to experience, this!



‘Wetting the appetite’



Most people do not want something like this!

Outline

- Some principles, assumptions, fallacies or questions?
- The approach and the biennial environmental perceptions surveys
 - A.** Priorities for the government and for individual New Zealanders
 - B.** Pressures, state and responses – focused on the rural environment
 - C.** What sustainability would achieve
- What NZers don't want, and do want
- Conclusions and the challenge

Some principles, assumptions, fallacies or questions?

- Sustainability is the seat on a 3-legged stool – the economy, environment and society legs are all equally important
- There is only one bottom line – economic
- You can't be **green** if you're in the **red**
- You can only be **green** if you are in the **black**
- NZ's 'clean-green' reputation is valuable and will only be maintained if we are proactive about sustainability.

Reading the minds of NZers – making sense of the research mass

- Multiple surveys related to this topic area, undertaken by or on behalf of central government depts, local authorities, by NGOs, by business groups, and many by researchers.
- Many are descriptive and few truly analytical.
- Amongst the best known, relevant, surveys, are:
 - The Lincoln University biennial survey on peoples' perceptions of the NZ environment (5 surveys from 2000);
 - Environment Waikato's now triennial surveys;
 - Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004): national vs individual preferences for environment, growth, education, etc.

The approach and the biennial environmental perceptions surveys

The biennial environmental perceptions surveys

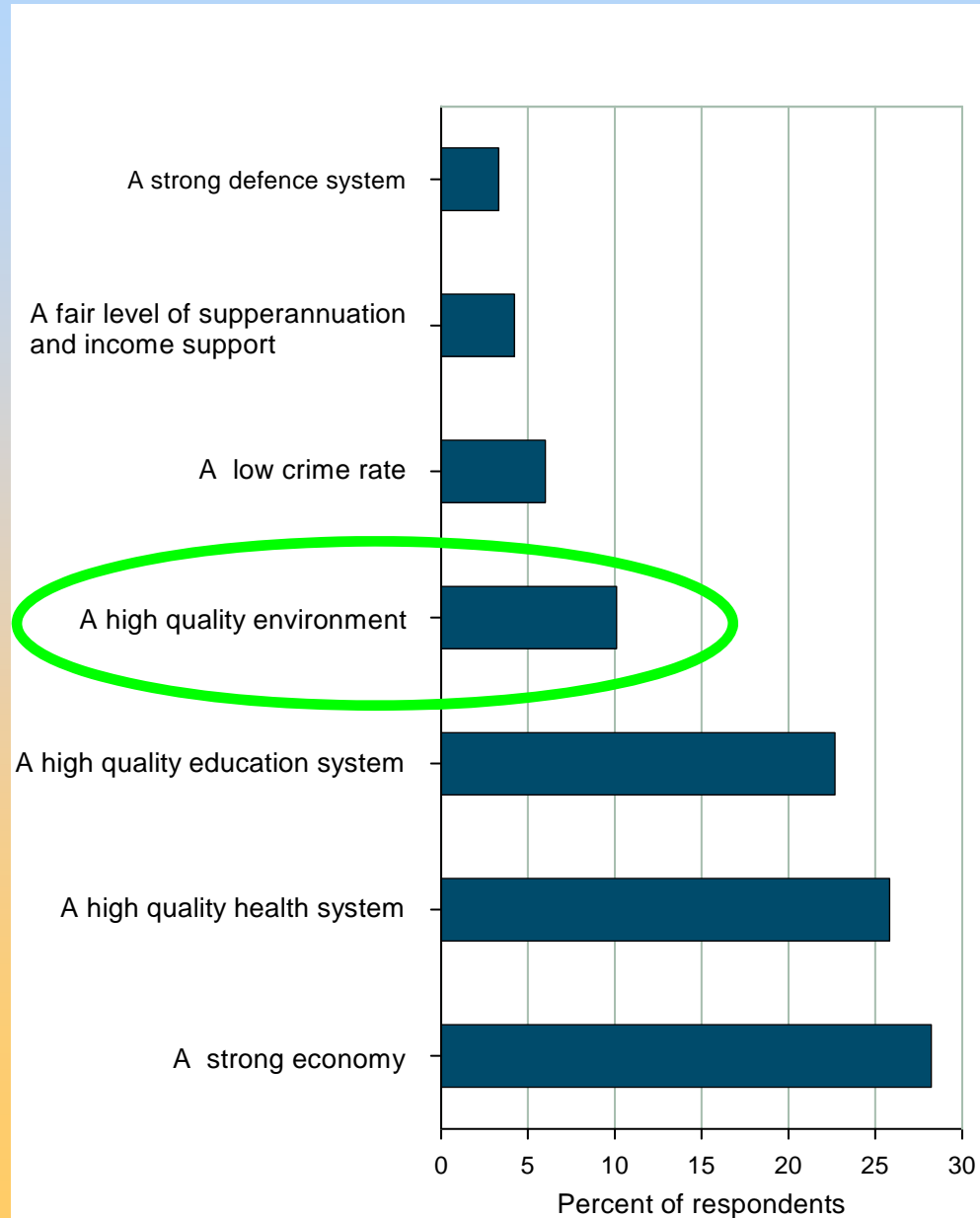
- Assesses people's perceptions of the state of the NZ environment – 11 natural resources, e.g., air, fisheries
- Built around the Pressure-State-Response (OECD) model
- Postal questionnaire
- 2,000 people aged 18 and over randomly selected from electoral roll
- Demographic variables include: age, gender, region, ethnicity, education, and employment sector
- Data analysed descriptively and, where applicable, the 2008 survey responses compared with 2006, 2004, 2002, 2000

Case studies

- Each survey asks an additional set of questions focused on one (and sometimes more) topic area:
 - 2000 natural hazards, and preparedness
 - 2002 coastal management and marine recreational fishing
 - 2004 freshwater management and recreational fishing
 - 2006 land transport and related externalities, priorities for NZers
 - 2008 conservation, recreation, freshwater
- We present general results from the 5 surveys and specific results from the 2004 and 2008 freshwater case studies.

**A. Priorities for the
government and for individual
New Zealanders**

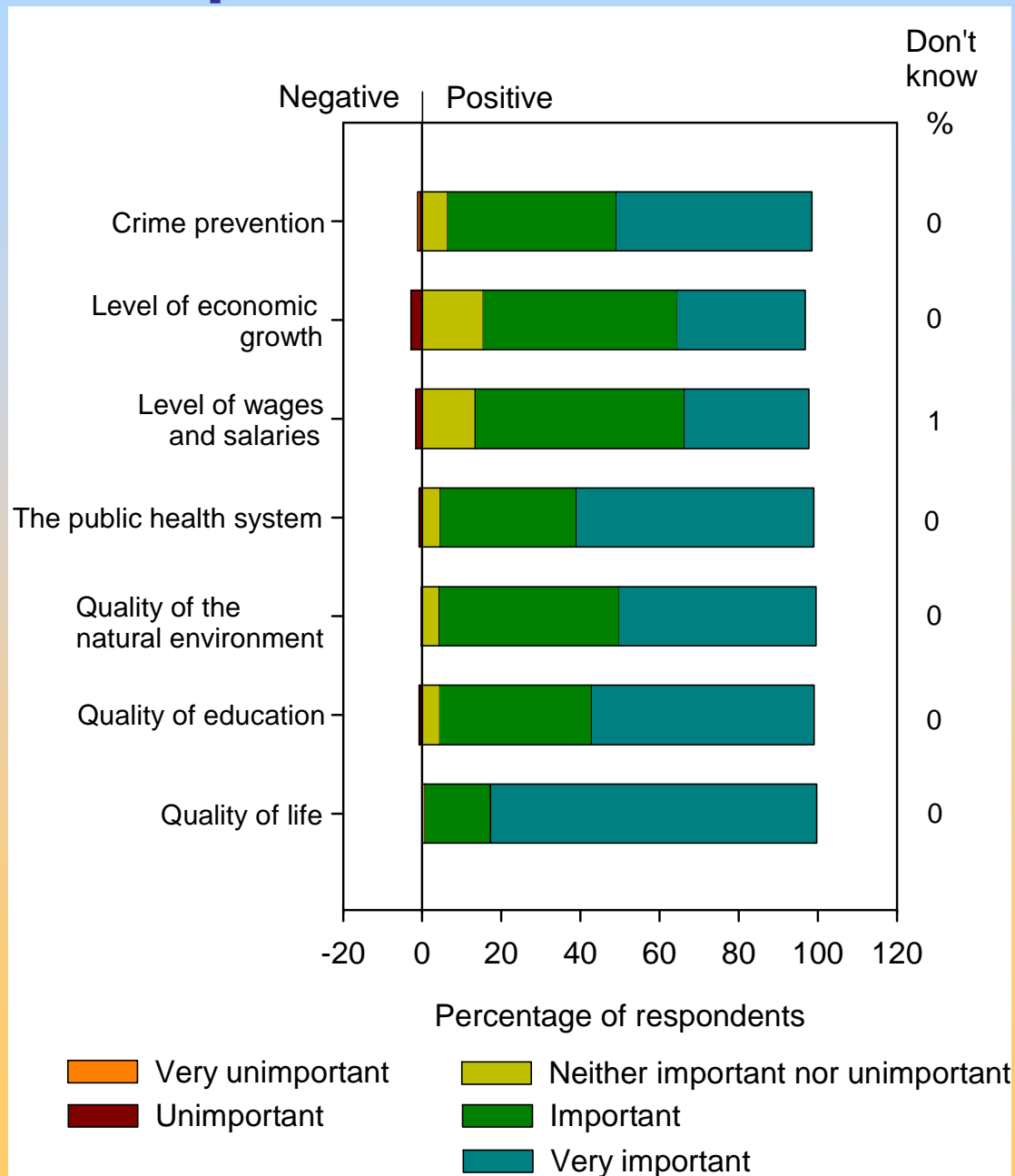
Highest priority for the NZ government - 2006



Priorities for NZ government - averaged

- Ordered average rankings, on a scale of 1 (highest priority) to 7 (lowest priority), are:
 - a high quality health system 2.29 = Highest priority
 - a high quality education system 2.67
 - **a strong economy** **3.14**
 - **a high quality environment** **3.97**
 - a low crime rate 4.43
 - a fair level of superannuation and income support 5.08
 - a strong defence system 6.17 = Lowest priority
- While a strong economy was the most commonly chosen top priority, when priority rankings are averaged the economy rates 3rd, with quality of the environment in 4th position.

Personal importance - 2006



Personal importance - averaged

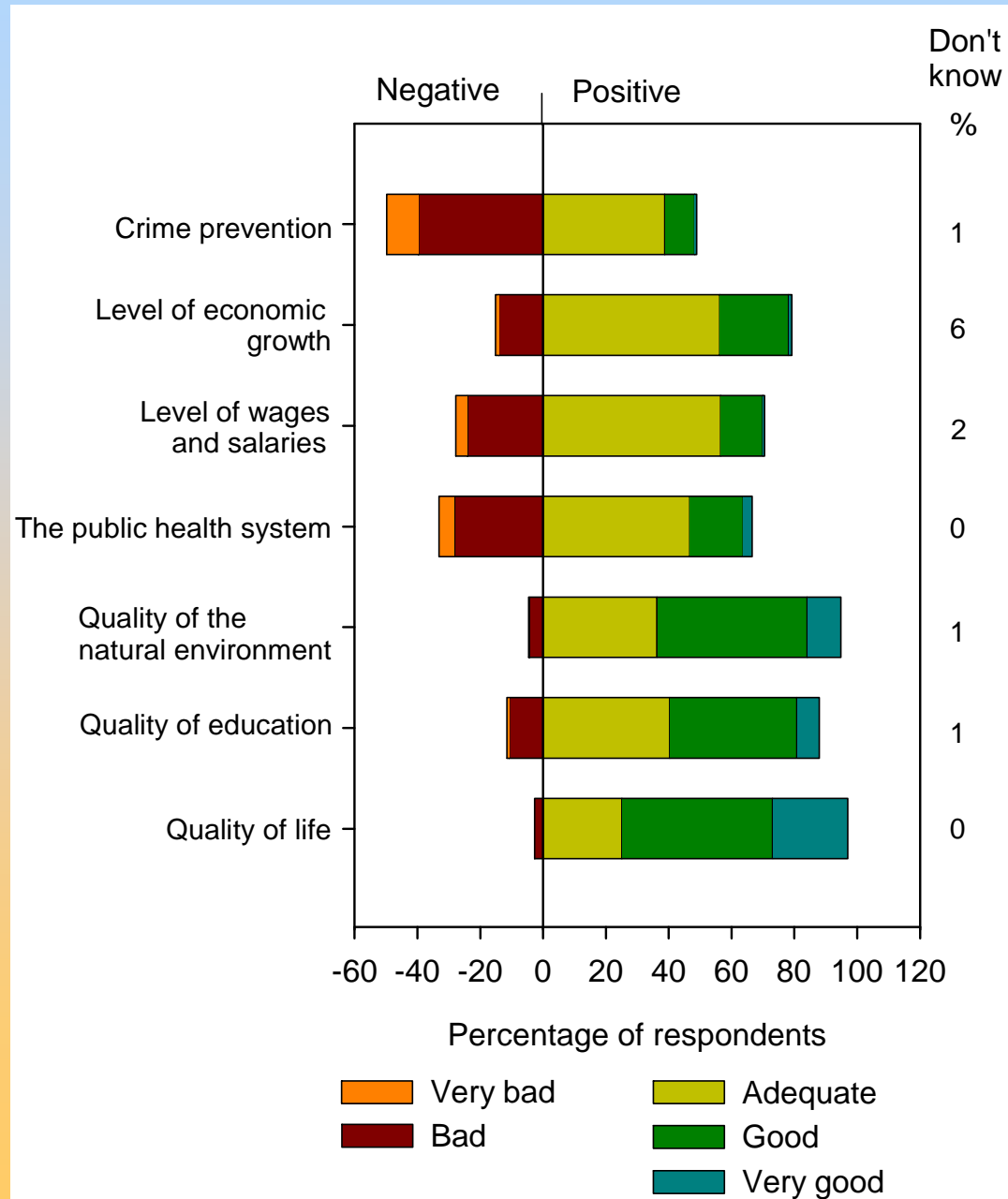
- Average Likert scores, on a scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (very unimportant), ranked from top to bottom are listed below:

– Quality of life	1.18 = Most important
– Public health system	1.46
– Quality of education	1.50
– Quality of the natural environment	1.55
– Crime prevention	1.60
– Level of wages and salaries	1.85
– Level of economic growth	1.89 = Least important
- As with the Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004), this survey shows that quality of life and quality of the natural environment are more important than either the level of wages and salaries, or the level of economic growth.
- Health and education outrank the environment.

Personal importance (combined 'very important' and 'important' ratings)

	Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004)	This survey
Quality of life	93%	99%
Quality of education	83%	95%
Quality of natural environment	87%	95%
The public health system	78%	94%
Level of wages and salaries	67%	84%
Level of economic growth	67%	81%

NZ's performance - 2006

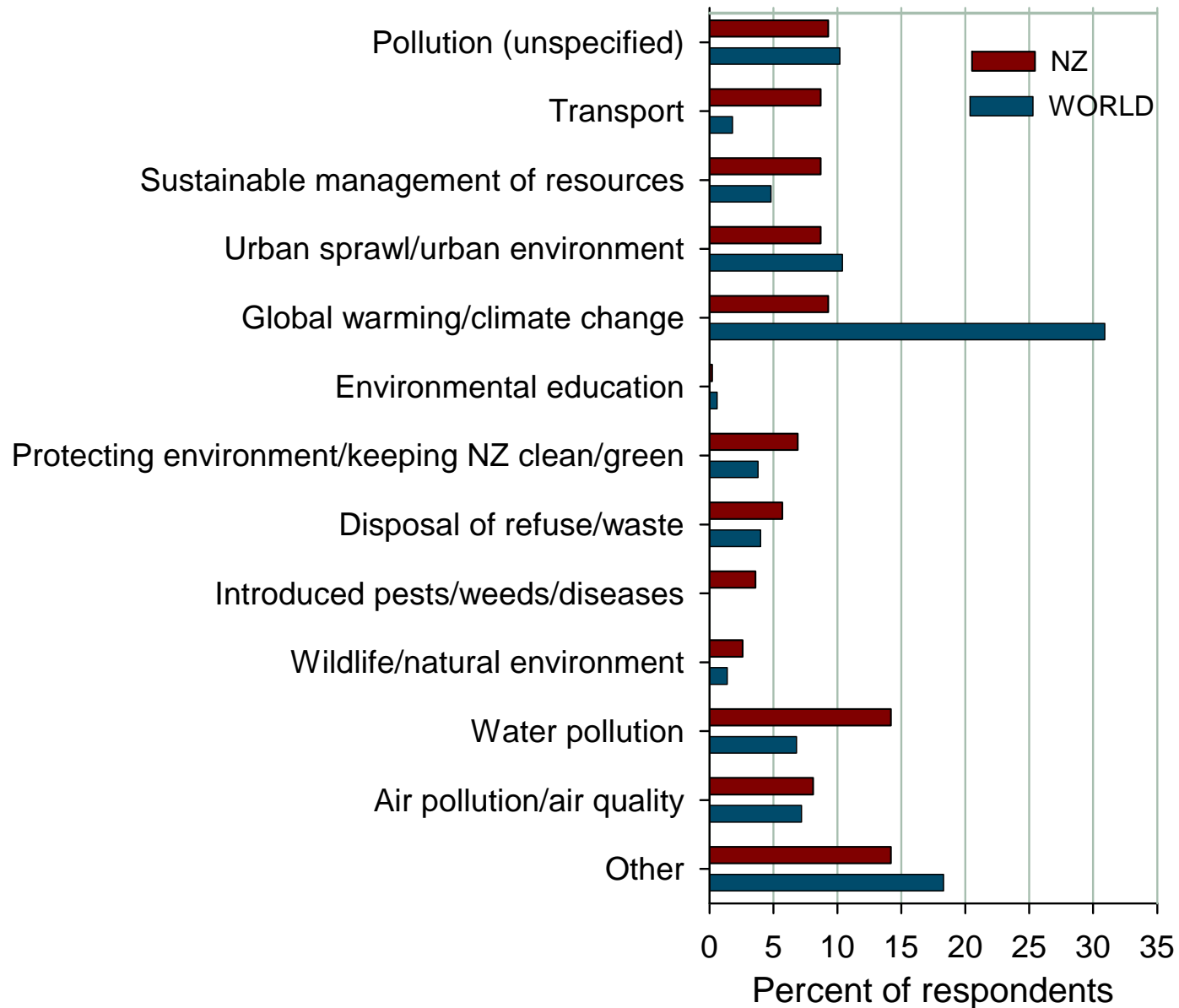


NZ's performance - averaged

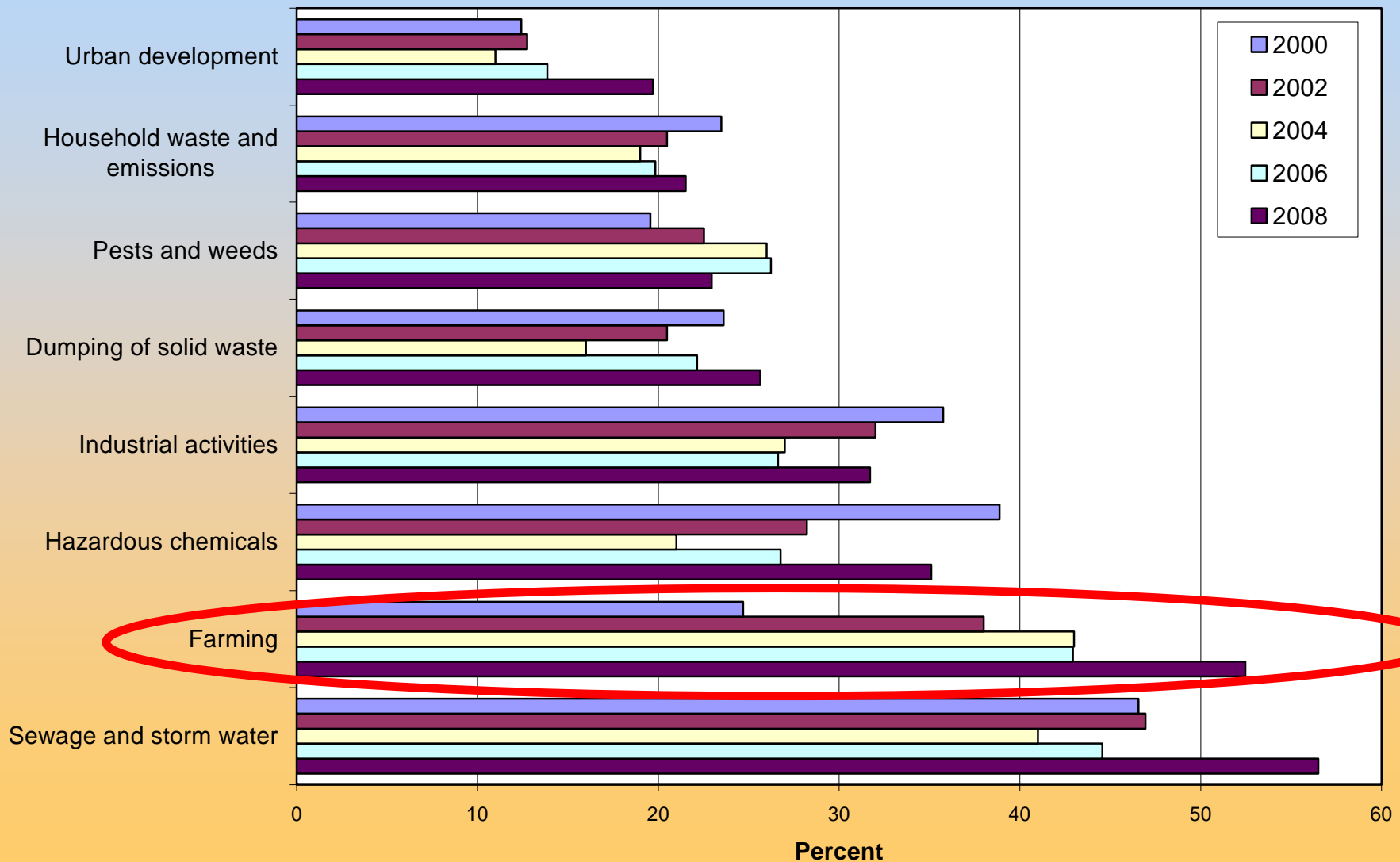
- Average Likert scores, on a scale of very good (1) to very bad (5), ranked from top to bottom, are listed below:
 - Quality of life 2.07 = Best performance
 - **Quality of the natural environment** **2.35**
 - Quality of education 2.57
 - Level of economic growth 2.92
 - Performance in the public health system 3.15
 - Level of wages and salaries 3.17
 - Crime prevention 3.50 = Worst performance
- Only crime prevention performance was considered overall to be less than adequate, with quality of the natural environment and quality of life both considered 'good'.

B. Pressures, states and responses – focused on the rural environment

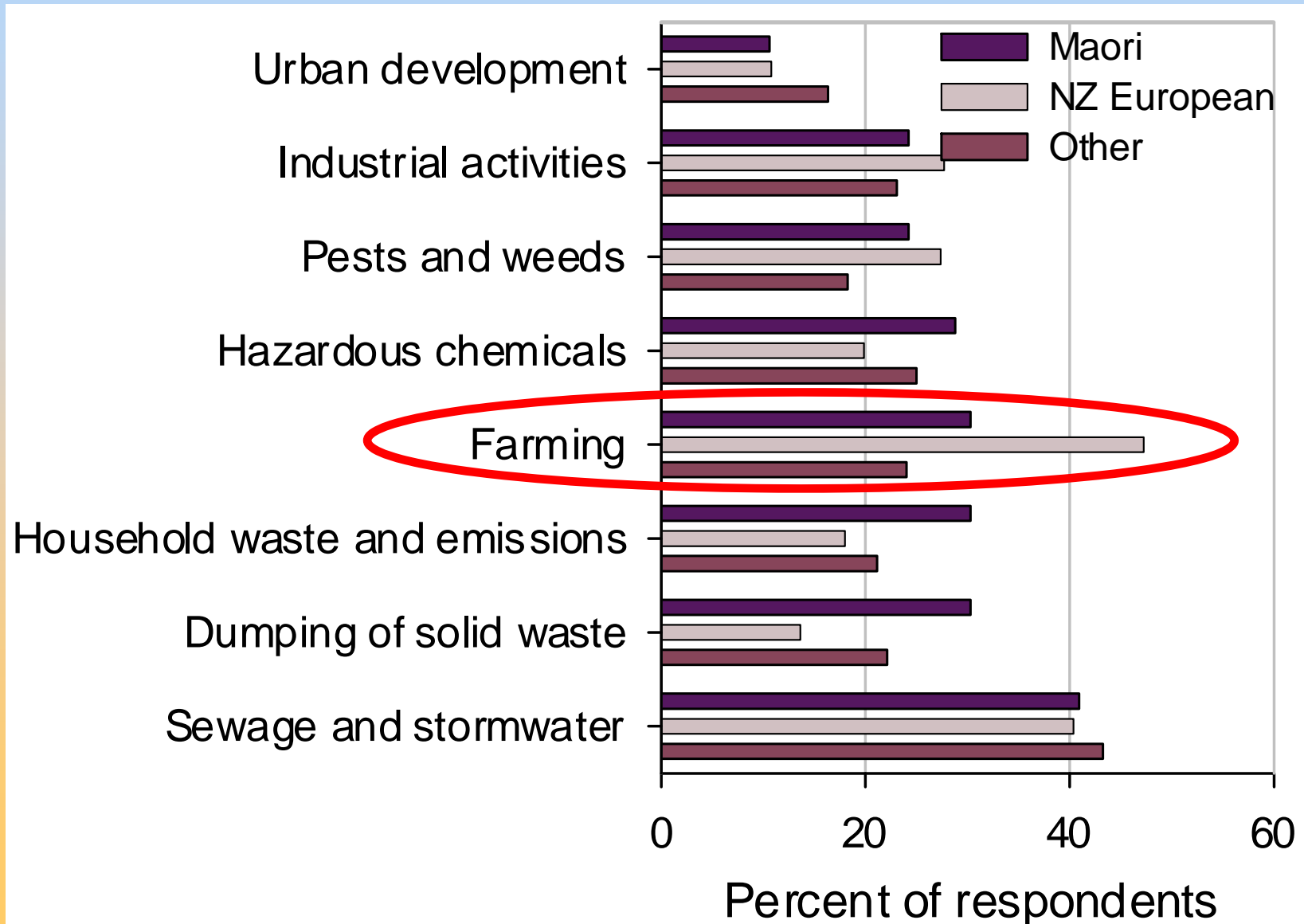
Pressures: Most important environmental issue in NZ and World - 2006



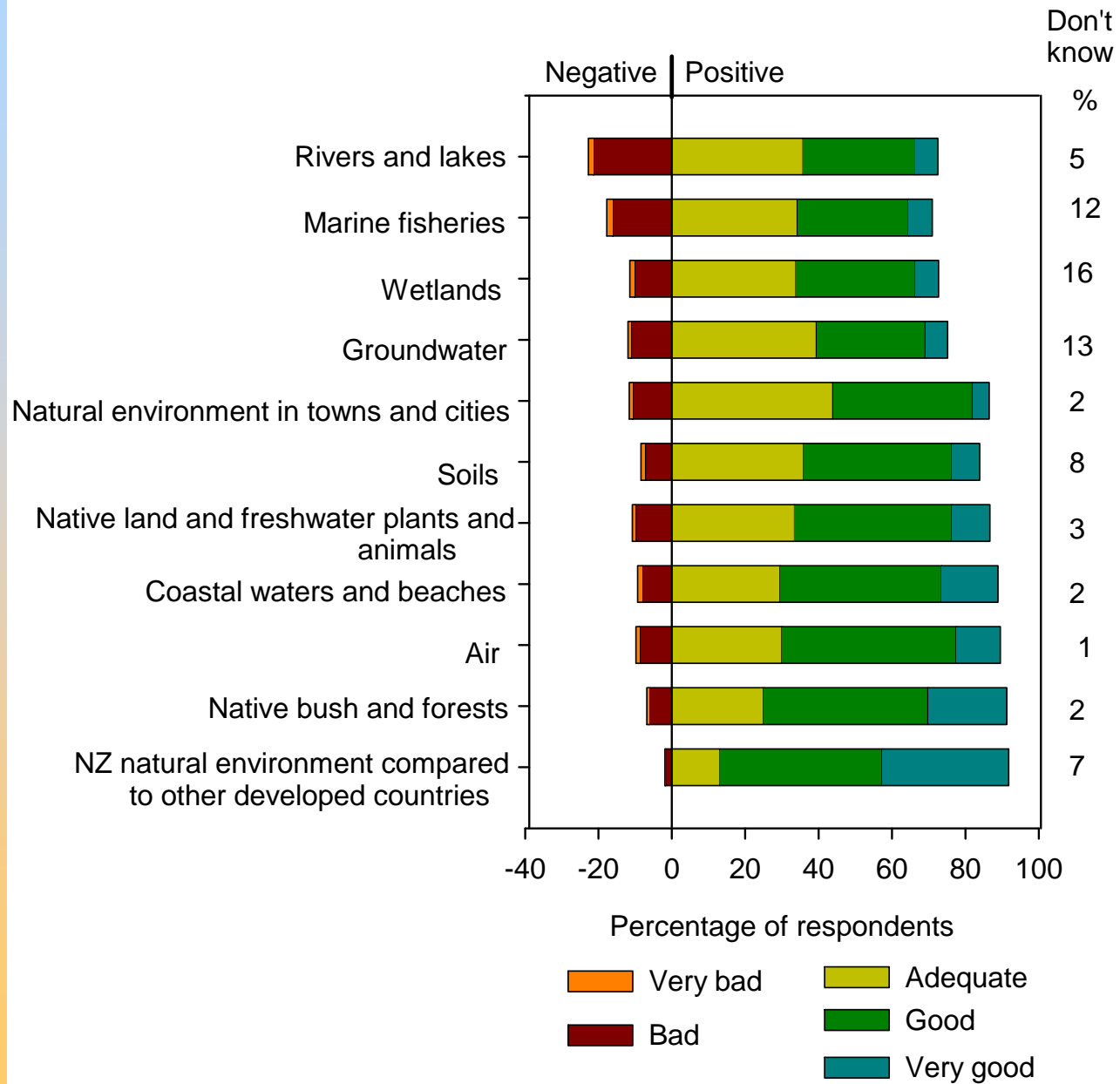
Pressures: Main causes of damage to water: 2000-2008



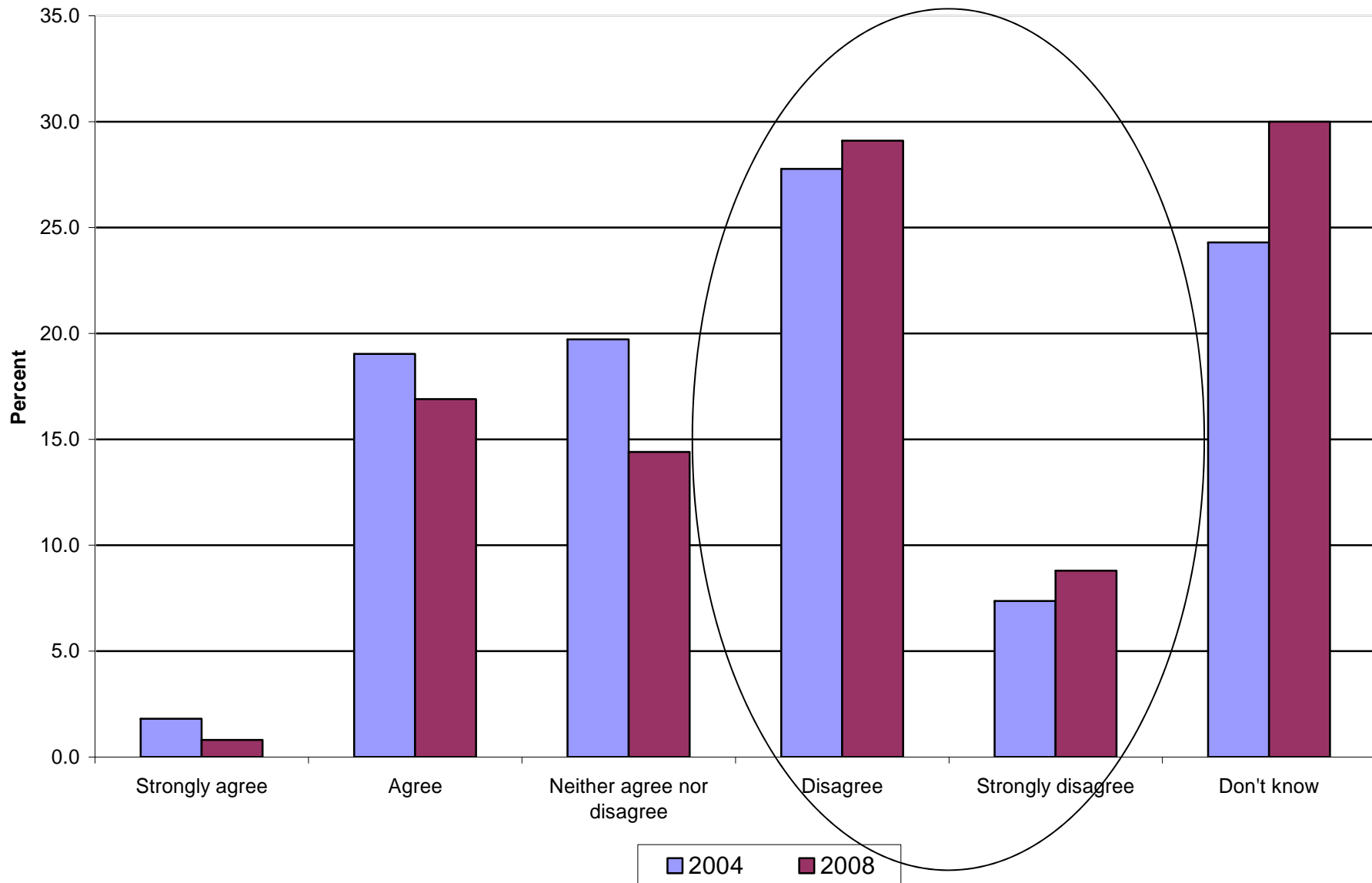
Pressures: Causes of damage to water in rivers and lakes (ethnic differences) - 2006



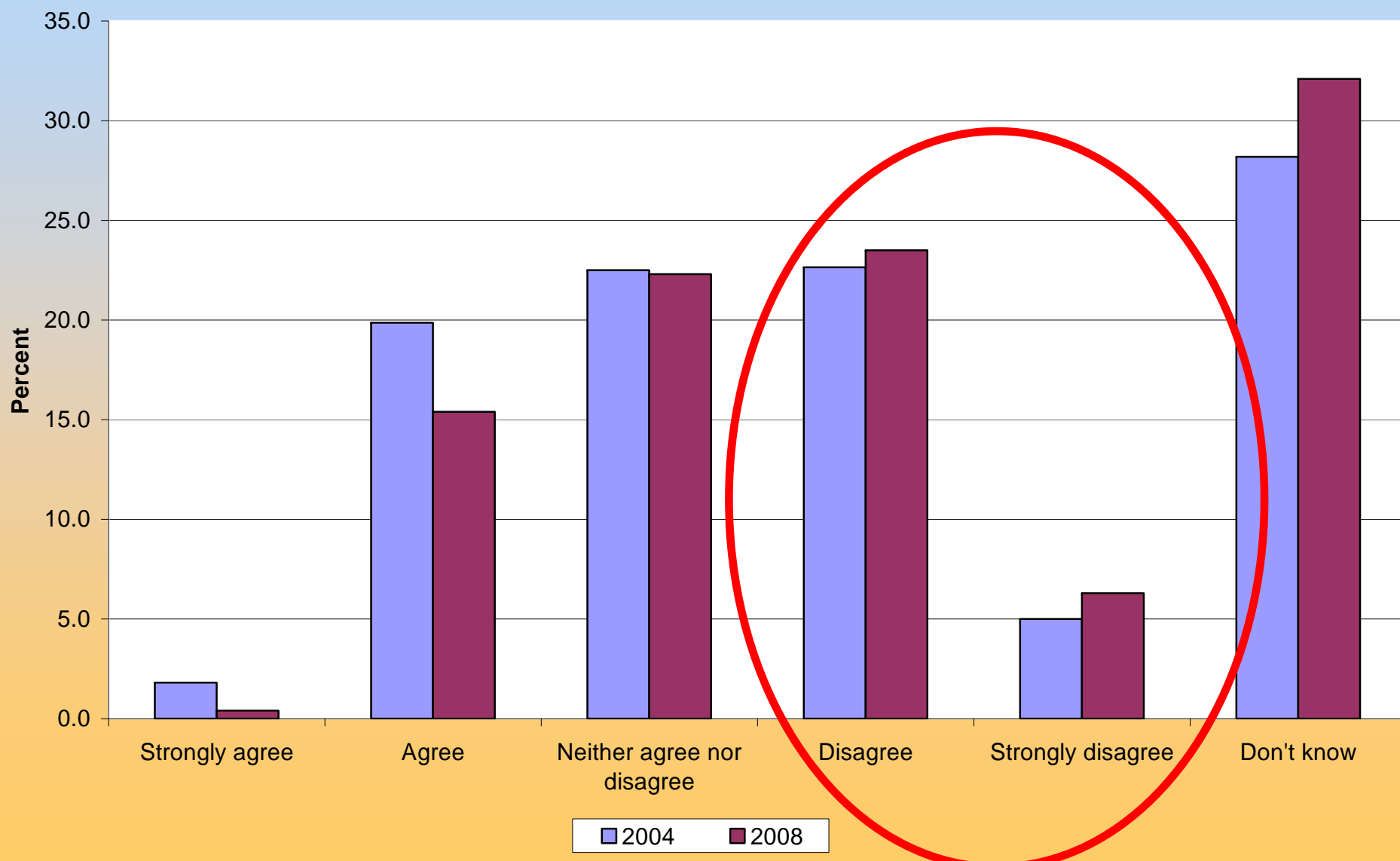
State: of the NZ environment 2006



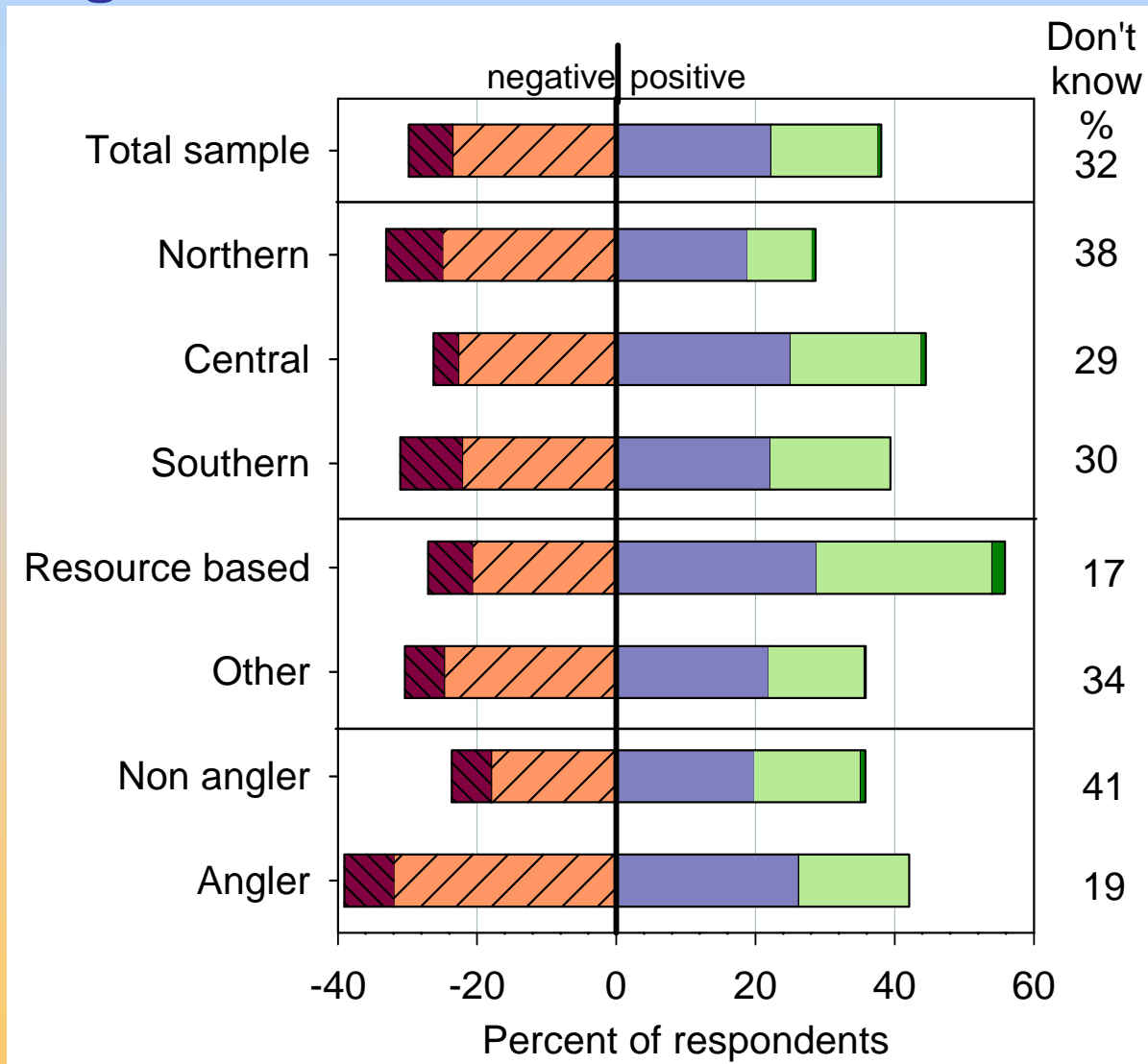
State: 'Small lowland streams in my region have high water quality' (2004 cf 2008)



Response: Small lowland streams in my region are well managed (2004 cf 2008)

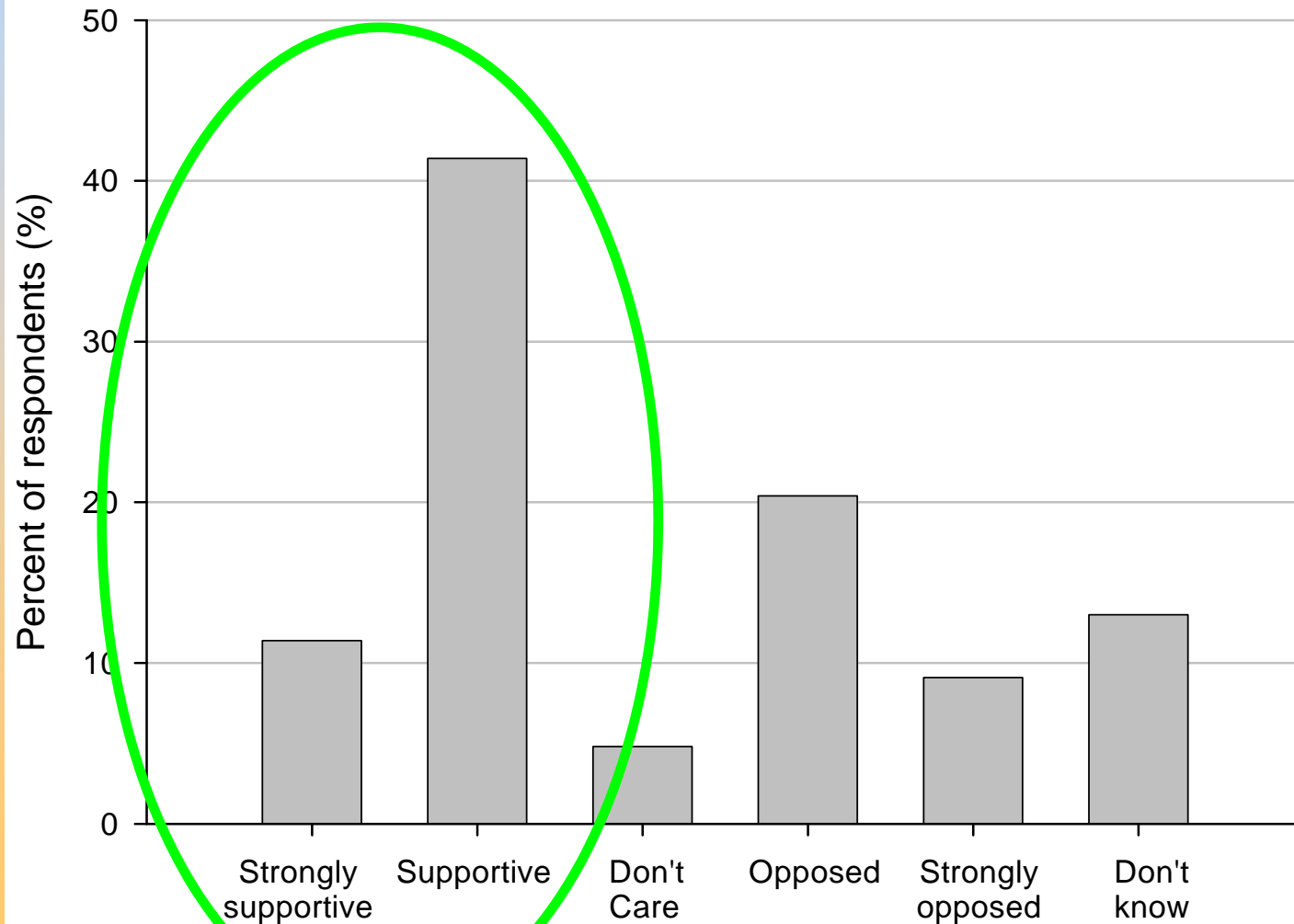


Response: 'Small lowland streams in my region are well managed' - 2004



Stongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither
 Agree
 Strongly agree

Response: WTP \$20 per year in additional rates for 10 years to pay for lowland stream enhancement work



Response: Open-ended comments re WTP proposal

Those **supportive or strongly supportive** of a \$20 rate increase said:

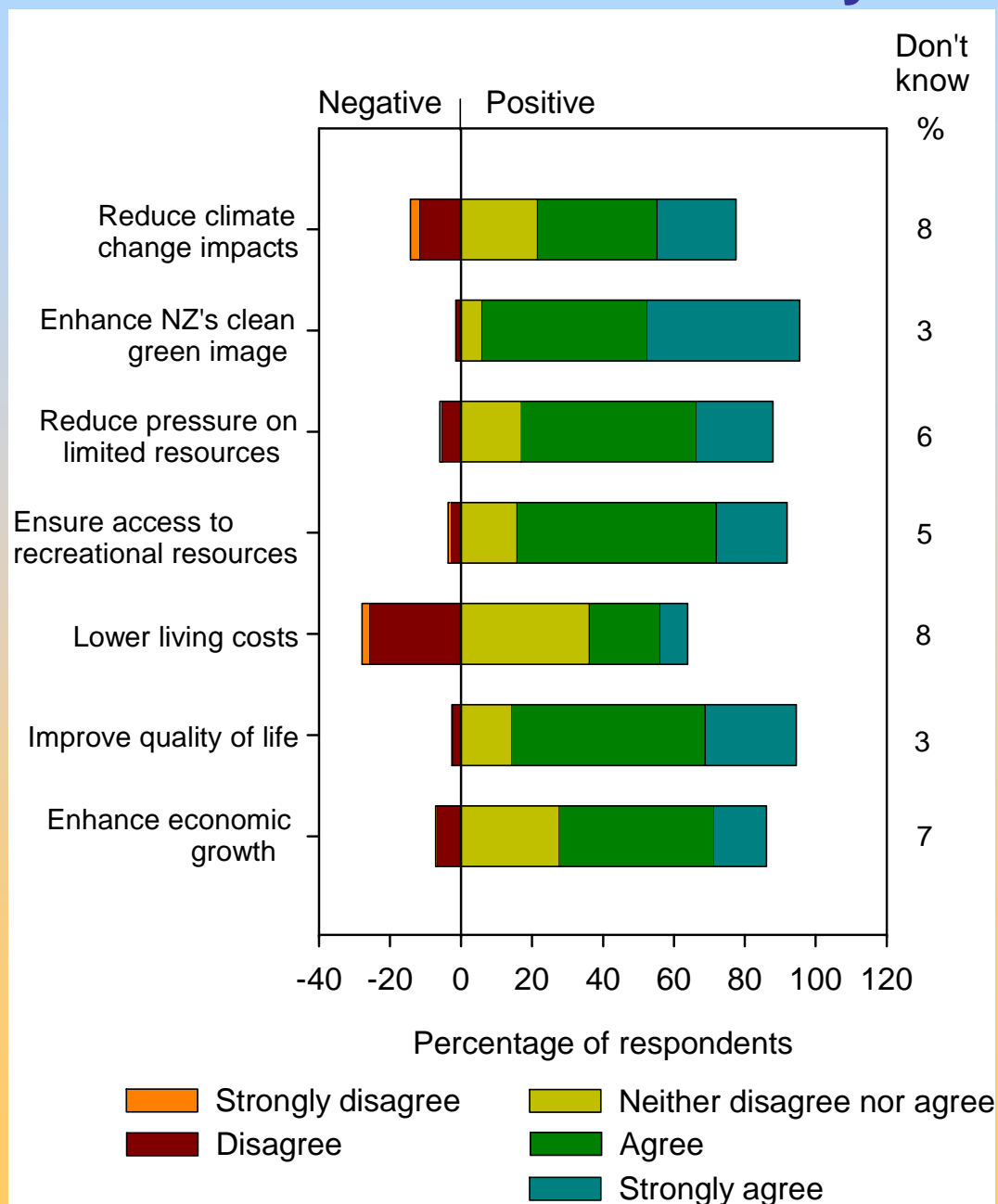
- ‘Small price to pay for the common good’ (43% of 484 responses) followed by:
- ‘Good to pass onto future generations’,
- ‘To clean up the water’, and
- ‘Better than cleaning it up later’.

Those **opposed or strongly opposed** said:

- ‘rates are too high already’ (23% of 484 responses),
- ‘industry or farmers should pay for this, not ratepayers’
- ‘no proof projects are being done efficiently’ and
- ‘on a low income’

C. What sustainability would achieve

Achieving environmental sustainability in NZ would ...



Achieving environmental sustainability in NZ would, on average ...

- Average Likert scores, on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), ranked from top to bottom, are listed below:

– Enhance NZ's clean green image	1.65 = Most likely
– Improve quality of life	1.94
– Ensure access to recreational resources	2.04
– Reduce pressure on limited resources	2.08
– Enhance economic growth	2.30
– Reduce climate change impacts	2.33
– Lower living costs	2.94 = Least likely
- Even for lower living costs, the lowest ranked of these implications, the average response remains positive.

Overall ...

What NZers don't want, and do want

- Don'ts:
 - Don't let development wreck rivers, streams, lakes, etc.
- Concerns:
 - Farming is increasingly a cause of damage to the environment
 - People worried about water, pollution, etc
- Priorities:
 - Quality of life & environment more important than economic growth
- Do's:
 - People willing to pay for improvements/ mitigation
 - Look after natural resources, including freshwater, biodiversity, etc
- Implications:
 - Rural land development/intensification needs to occur with sustainability as a focus, and not afterwards as a quick fix solution

Conclusions

- No overall vision of the future for rural NZ – surveys have not provided a united visualisation of the opportunities.
- We do know that there is growing concern among middle and upper NZ, Maori and anglers, about farming, water pollution, etc.
- We can infer from some of this work, that more effort needs to go into proactive efforts at protecting the environment that run in sync with development, and are not patch up jobs afterwards.
- A challenge then - how to match policy and political responses to the level of public concern about the future of the rural landscape and its component parts, and turn these concerns into proactive sustainable development policy.

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