

4 PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

This section considers respondents' perceptions of changes of a range of environmental issues over the last few years. Respondents were asked to rate each issue using a five point scale, saying whether they feel the issue is much better, a little better, stayed the same, a little worse, or much worse than in the last few years.

Note: The question wording used in 2003, 2006 and 2013 for this section differs from the wording used in 1998 and 2000, therefore, comparisons over time should be interpreted with caution.

Key findings are:

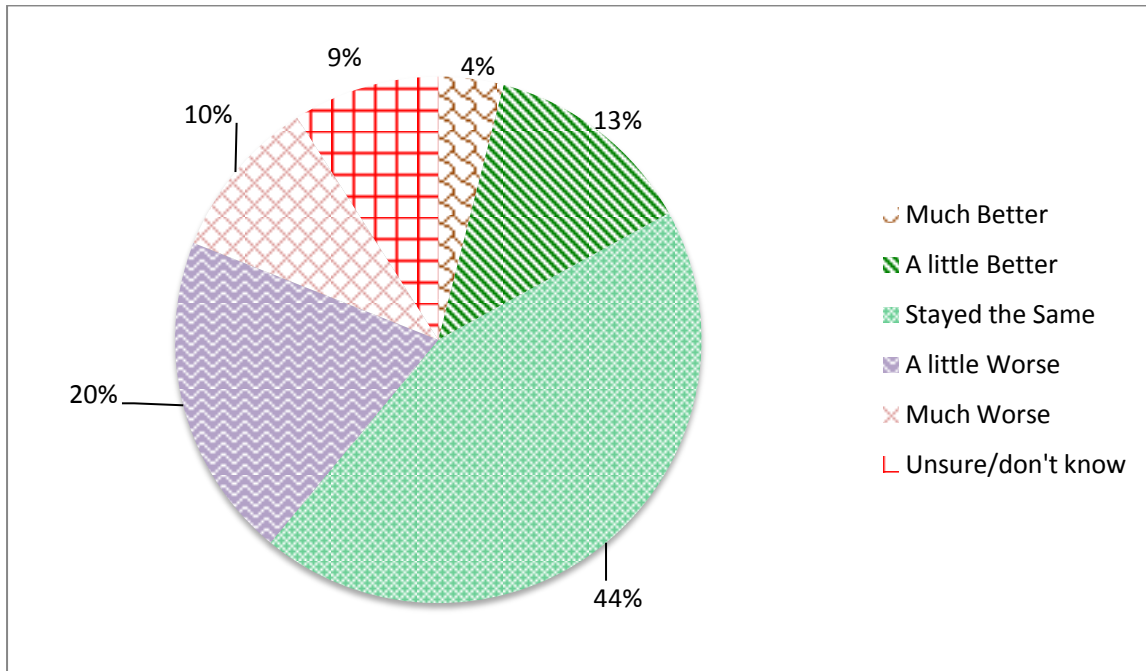
- Just over a half of respondents (53%) think the state of the local environment is the same, which is a larger proportion than in previous surveys (a range of 32% in 1998 to 43% in 2003). Fewer respondents feel that the overall state of the local environment has improved and a smaller proportion of respondents also comment that the overall state of the local environment has become worse. This general pattern is reflected across many of the findings in this report.
- The greatest proportion of respondents (44%) rate the water quality in their local streams, rivers and lakes as much the same as it was a few years ago. Māori respondents say the water quality had become worse (46%), as do urban respondents (33%).
- Likewise, a similar proportion of respondents (42%) rate the waste recycling services and facilities in their area as better than a few years ago. Māori respondents are most likely to say that the availability of waste and recycling services has become worse (19%), as are South Waikato respondents (25%).
- A larger proportion of respondents feel that air quality in the local area has stayed the same (75% compared with 70% in 1998), with fewer respondents stating it has improved or become worse. Respondents in South Waikato (18%) and urban respondents (10%) are most likely to feel it has become worse.
- Over one third of respondents (36%) think the amount of litter on our highways has stayed the same, while just under one third think it has improved, with a similar proportion stating it is worse.

4.1 WATER QUALITY IN LOCAL STREAMS, RIVERS AND LAKES

Respondents were asked whether they think *the water quality in their local streams, rivers, and lakes* has become better, worse or stayed the same in the last few years.

4.1.1 OVERALL RESULT

The greatest proportion of respondents (44%) rate the water quality in their local streams, rivers and lakes as much the same as it was a few years ago. Thirty per cent of all respondents think the water quality has deteriorated in the last few years (10% much worse, 20% a little worse), while 17 per cent of respondents state that water quality has improved over recent years (4% much better, 13% a little better).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 4-1: Perceptions of Change in Water Quality in Local Streams, Rivers and Lakes

4.1.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The 2013 results are similar to the findings of the 2006 survey. This year, a slightly smaller proportion of respondents state that the water quality in local streams, rivers, and lakes has become worse over recent years compared with 2006 (total worse down from 32% in 2006 to 30% in 2013). Slightly more respondents state that the water quality in local streams, rivers, and lakes has stayed the same (44% compared with 42% in 2006). The proportion of respondents who believe water quality had improved recently has remained relatively unchanged since the previous measure (17% in 2013 and 18% in 2006).

Table 4-1: Perceptions of Change in Water Quality in Local Streams, Rivers and Lakes 1998 to 2013

	1998	2000	2003	2006	2013	Change	Change
	%	%	%	%	%	98-13	06-13
Much better	4	4	5	5	4	-	-1
A little better	16	12	10	13	13	-3	-
Total better	20	16	15	18	17	-3	-1
Stayed the same	43	45	33	42	44	+1	+2
A little worse	19	21	27	18	20	+1	+2
Much worse	6	8	20	14	10	+4	-4
Total worse	25	29	47	32	30	+5	-2
Unsure/don't know	12	10	5	8	9	-3	+1
Base (respondents)	1037	1873	1822	1000	1005		

This trend is shown below (over page).

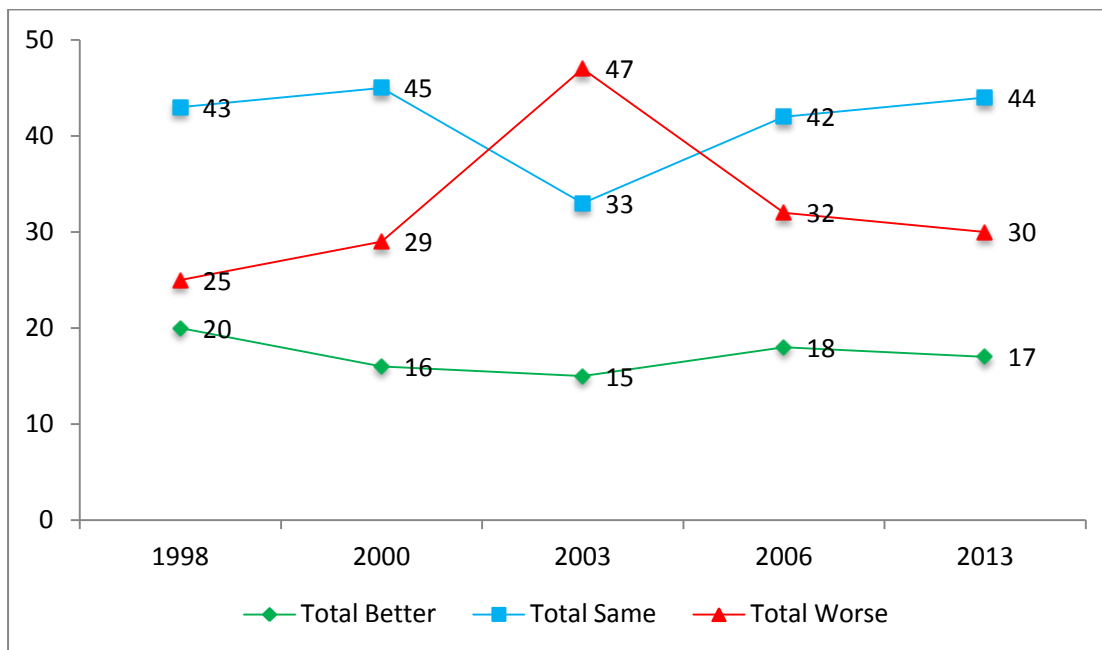


Figure 4-2: Perceptions of Changes in Water Quality in Local Streams, Rivers and Lakes 1998 to 2013

4.1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say the water quality in local streams, rivers and lakes is **better** than in recent years are those who are:

- male (21%)
- between the ages of 50 and 59 years and 60 and 64 years (23% and 27% respectively)
- working as farmers (33%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say the water quality in local streams, rivers and lakes remains the **same** as in recent years are those who are:

- between the ages of 30 and 39 years and 50 and 59 years (55% and 52% respectively)
- in a household with an income of between \$30,001 and 60,000 per annum (50%)
- in a family household with mainly school-aged children (50%)
- of no Māori ancestry (47%)
- working as farmers (55%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) say the water quality in local streams, rivers and lakes is **worse** than in recent years are those who are:

- of Māori ethnicity (46%)
- between the ages of 20 and 29 years (54%)
- currently unemployed/beneficiary, or currently a student (51% and 47% respectively)
- in a family household with mainly preschool children (41%).

4.1.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

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

- Respondents in Taupo are more likely to think the quality of local streams, rivers and lakes is **better** than in recent years (28%).
- Respondents in Thames-Coromandel (62%) and rural respondents (50%) are more likely to think the quality of local streams, rivers and lakes is the **same** as in recent years.
- Respondents in Hamilton (38%) and urban respondents (33%) are more likely to think the quality of local streams, rivers and lakes is **worse** than in recent years.

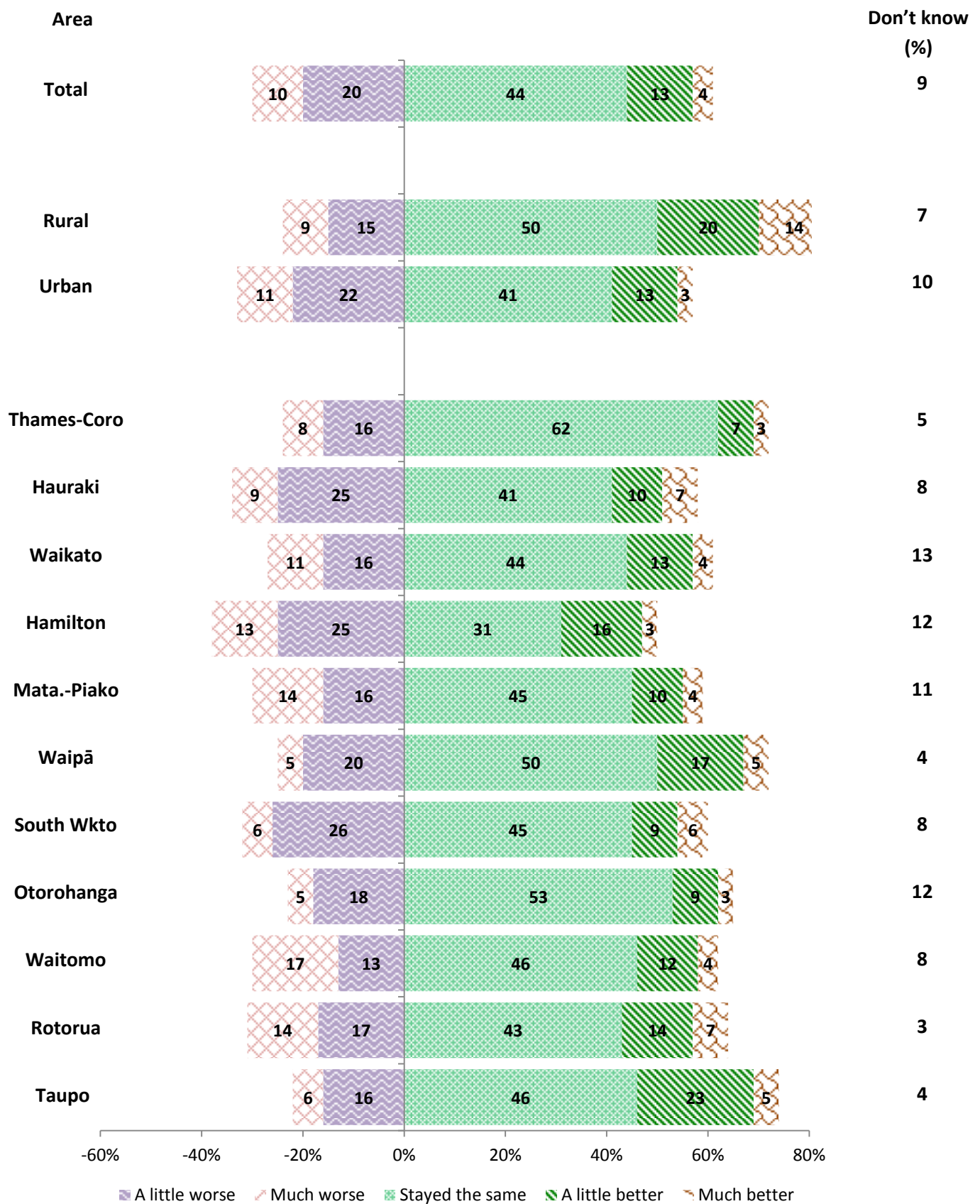


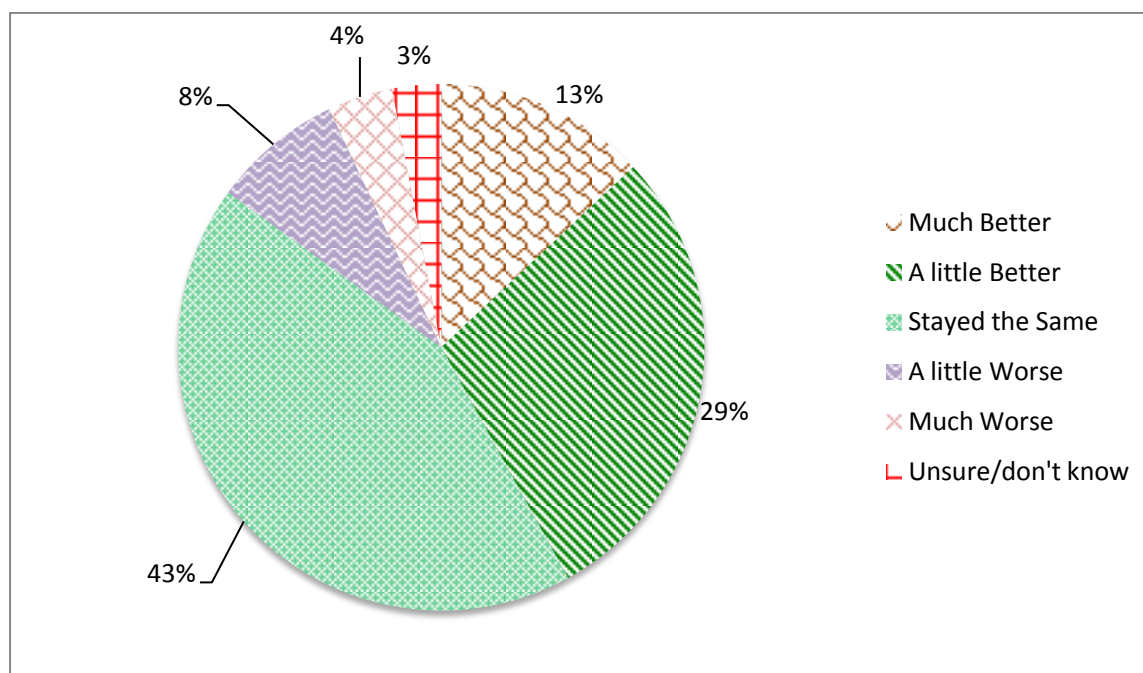
Figure 4-3: Perceptions of Changes in Water Quality in Local Streams, Rivers and Lakes by Area, Rural and Urban

4.2 AVAILABILITY OF WASTE RECYCLING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Respondents were asked if they think *the availability of waste recycling services and facilities in their area* has become better, worse or stayed the same in the last few years.

4.2.1 OVERALL RESULT

Forty-two per cent of respondents rate the waste recycling services and facilities in their area as better than a few years ago (13% much better, 29% a little better), while 43 per cent of respondents feel the waste recycling services are similar to a few years ago. Twelve per cent of respondents consider that recycling services have deteriorated over recent years (4% much worse, 8% a little worse).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 4-4: Perceptions of Change in Availability of Waste Recycling Services and Facilities

4.2.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

This year a significantly smaller proportion of respondents state that they feel waste recycling services have improved (total better down from 49% in 2006 to 39% in 2013). Interestingly, slightly fewer respondents also state that waste recycling services have become worse (down from 17% in 2006 to 12% in 2013). The proportion of respondents in 2013 who state that waste recycling services have stayed the same has significantly increased (up from 30% in 2006 to 43% in 2013).

Table 4-2: Perceptions of Change in Availability of Waste Recycling Services and Facilities 1998 to 2013

	1998 %	2000 %	2003 %	2006 %	2013 %	Change 98-13	Change 06-13
Much better	13	14	36	24	13	-	-11
A little better	28	25	25	25	29	+1	+4
Total Better	41	39	61	49	42	-2	-10
Stayed the same	29	33	23	30	43	+14	+13
A little worse	13	13	6	7	8	-5	+1
Much worse	8	12	7	10	4	-4	-6
Total Worse	21	25	14	17	12	-9	-5
Unsure/don't know	9	4	3	4	3	-6	-1
Base (all respondents)	1037	1873	1822	1000	1005		

This trend is shown below.

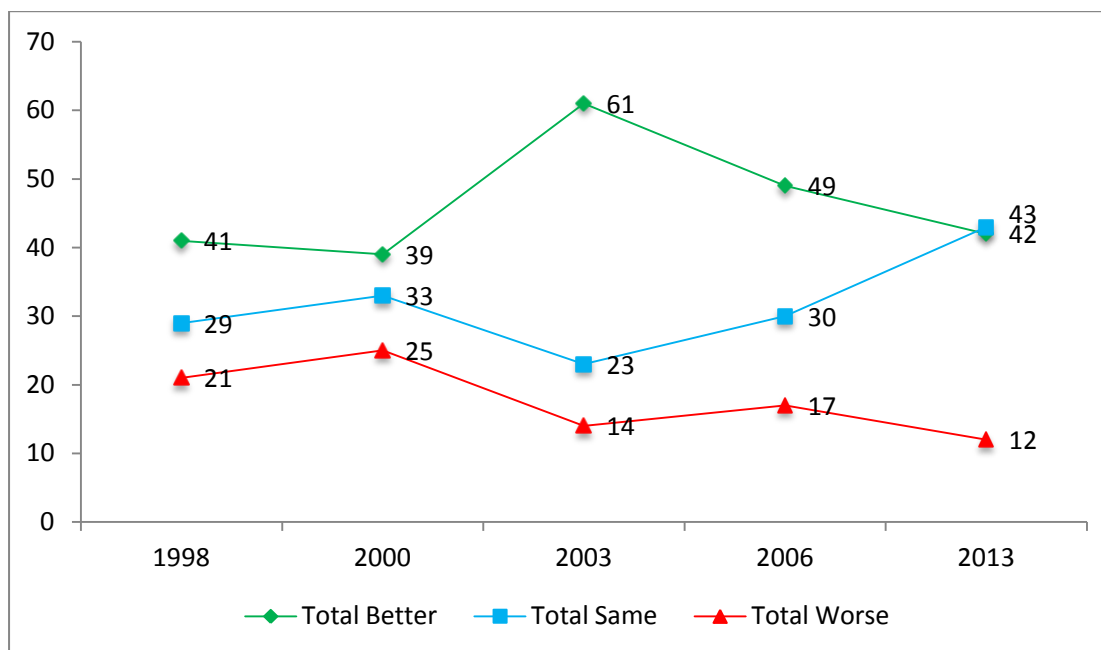


Figure 4-5: Perceptions of Change in Availability of Waste Recycling Services and Facilities 1998 to 2013

4.2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Those significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say the availability of waste and recycling services is **the same** as in recent years are those who are:

- of European ethnicity (46%)
- educated to a secondary school level (48%)
- undertaking home responsibilities (56%)
- of no Māori ancestry (45%).

Those significantly more likely (than the regional average) to say the availability of waste and recycling services is **worse** than in recent years are those who are:

- of Māori ethnicity (19%)
- aged between 20 and 29 years (19%).

No particular demographic subgroup is identified as being more likely to think that the availability of waste and recycling services is **better** than in recent years.

4.2.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

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

- Respondents in Waitomo are more likely (than the regional average) to say the availability of waste and recycling services is **better** than in recent years (54%).
- Respondents in Hamilton (48%) or Matamata-Piako (53%) are more likely (than the regional average) to say the availability of waste and recycling services is the **same** as in recent years.
- Respondents in South Waikato are more likely (than the regional average) to say the availability of waste and recycling services is **worse** than in recent years (25%).

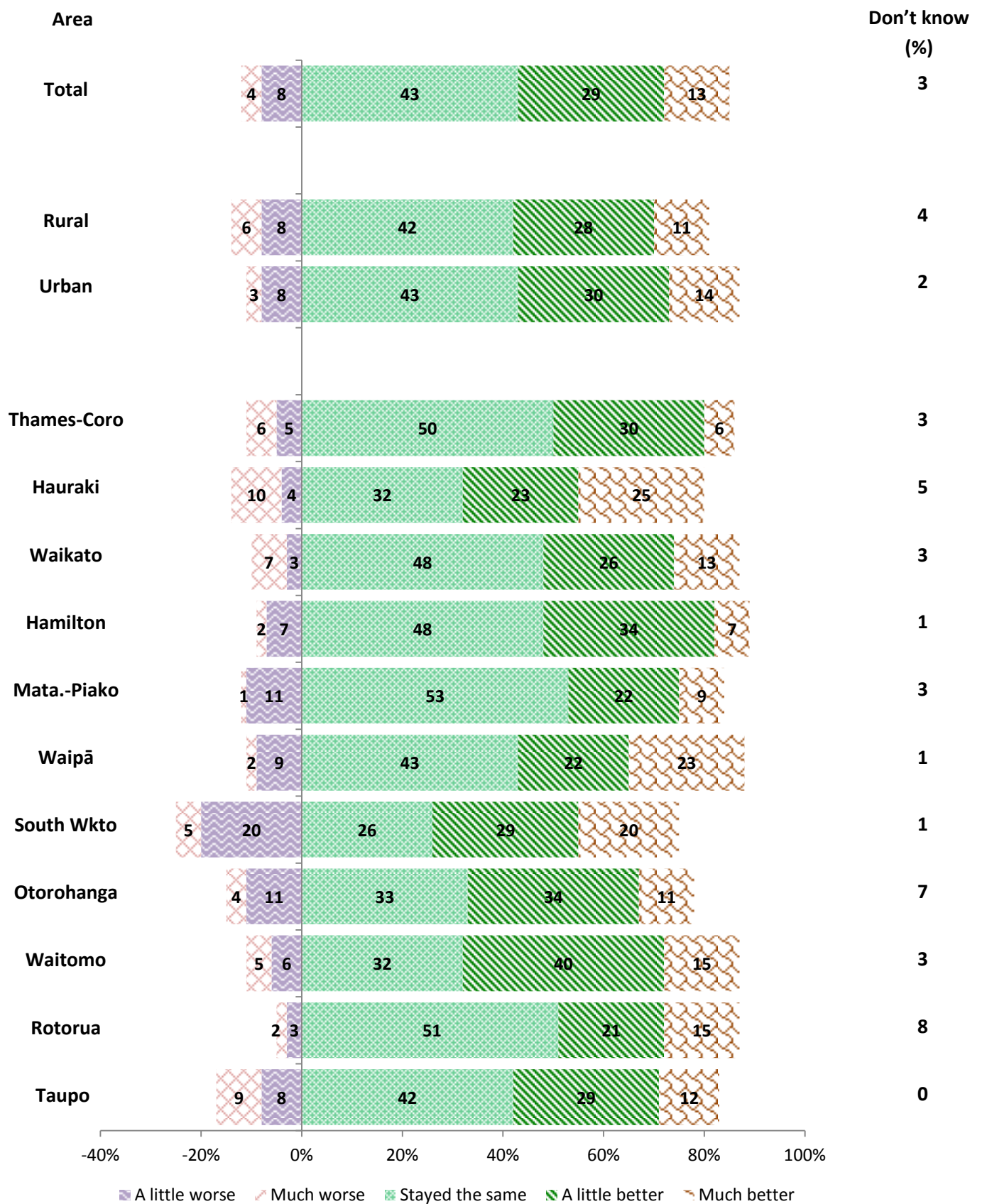


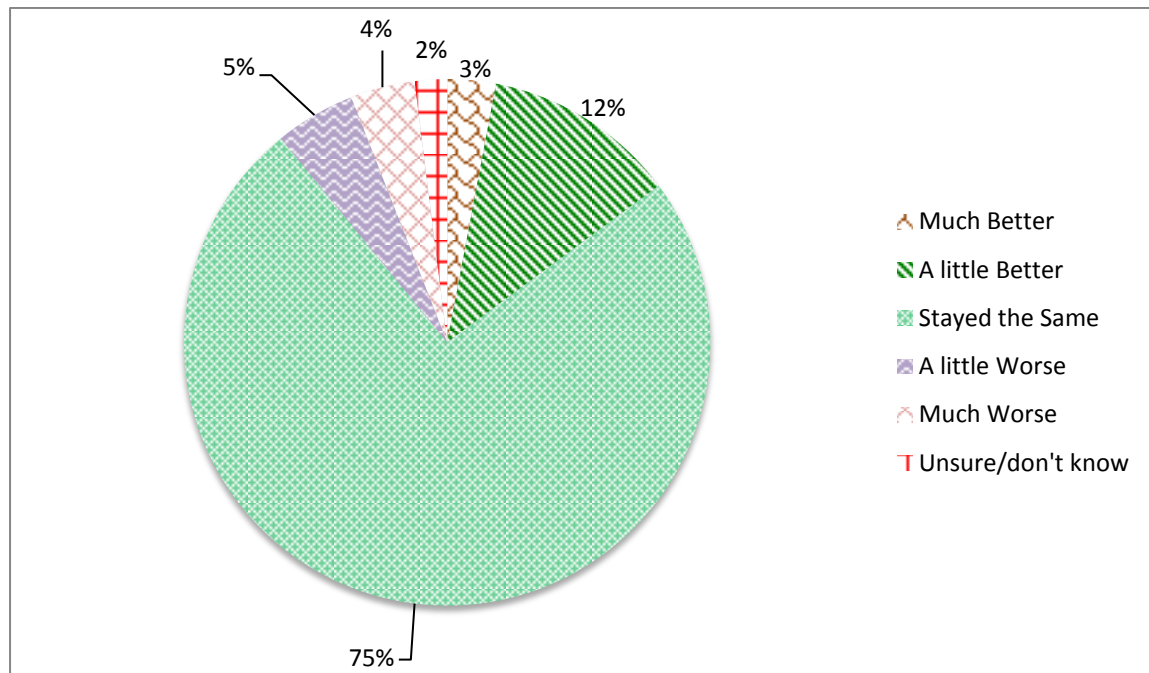
Figure 4-6: Perceptions of Change in Availability of Waste Recycling Services and Facilities by Area, Rural and Urban

4.3 THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR LOCAL AREA

Respondents were asked whether they think *the air quality in the local area* has generally become better, worse or stayed the same in the last few years.

4.3.1 OVERALL RESULT

Three-quarters of respondents (75%) think the air quality in the local area has stayed the same, while 15 per cent of respondents consider that the air quality in the local area has improved over the last few years (3% much better, 12% a little better); 9 per cent of respondents perceive it has recently deteriorated (4% much worse, 5% a little worse).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 4-7: Perceptions of the Air Quality in the Local Area

4.3.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The only comparable data available for this question is in 1998 (measures for 2000, 2003, and 2006 utilise a three point scale). The results for air quality in 2013 show a similar pattern to the responses in 1998, with a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who feel the air quality in the local area has improved (total better up from 12% in 1998 to 15% in 2013). Slightly fewer respondents also state that the air quality in the local area has become worse (down from 15% in 1998 to 9% in 2013). The proportion of respondents in 2013 who state that the air quality in the local area has stayed the same has significantly increased (up from 70% in 1998 to 75% in 2013).

Table 4-3: Perceptions of Change in the Air Quality in the Local Area 1998 to 2013

	1998 %	2013 %	Change 98-13
Much better	2	3	+1
A little better	10	12	+2
Total Better	12	15	+3
Stayed the same	70	75	+5
A little worse	12	5	-7
Much worse	3	4	+1
Total Worse	15	9	-6
Unsure/don't know	5	2	-3
Base (respondents)	1037	1005	

This trend is shown below.

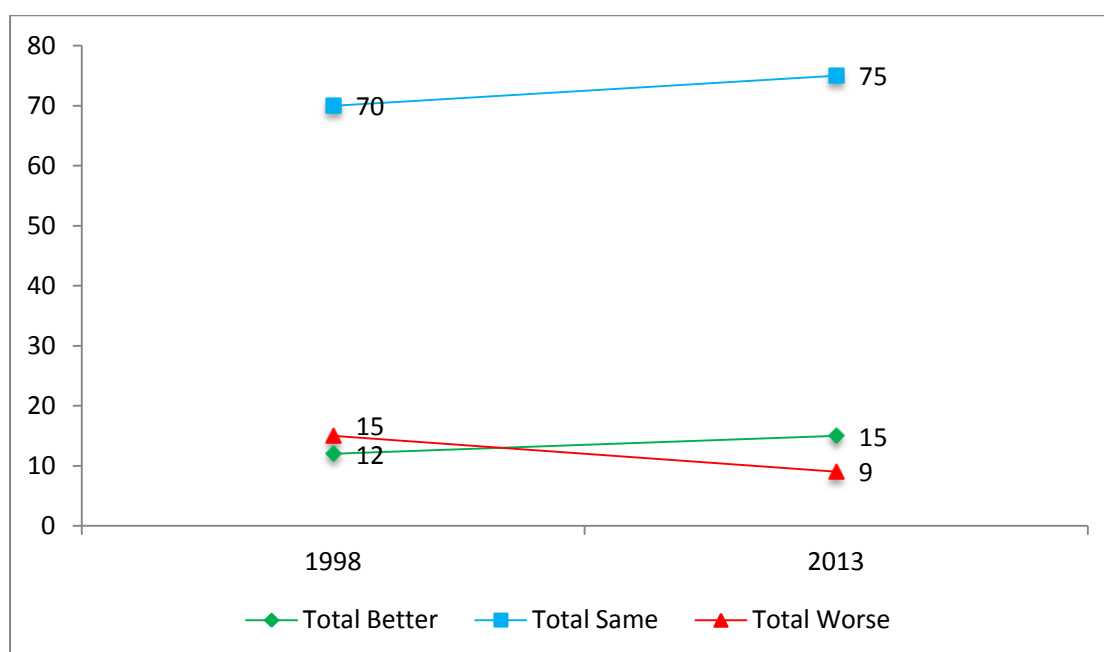


Figure 4-8: Perceptions of the Air Quality in the Local Area 1998 to 2013

4.3.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the air quality in the local area is **better** than the last few years are those who are:

- of Māori ethnicity (25%)
- aged between 60 and 64 years (23%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the air quality in the local area is **the same** as the last few years are those who are:

- of European (78%) or New Zealand (78%) ethnicity
- in a family household with mainly school-aged children (80%)
- in a household with an income of between \$90,001 and \$150,000 per annum (83%)
- working as farmers (85%)
- of no Māori ancestry (78%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the air quality in the local area is **worse** than the last few years are those who are:

- of Māori ethnicity (16%)
- aged between 20 and 29 years (19%)
- currently a student (18%)

- currently unemployed (15%)
- in a household with an income of \$30,000 or less per annum (15%).

4.3.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

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

- Respondents in South Waikato (18%) or in urban areas (10%) are more likely (than the regional average) to think that the air quality in their local area is **worse** than the last few years.

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban/rural setting are more likely to think that the air quality in their local area is the **same** or **better** than the last few years.

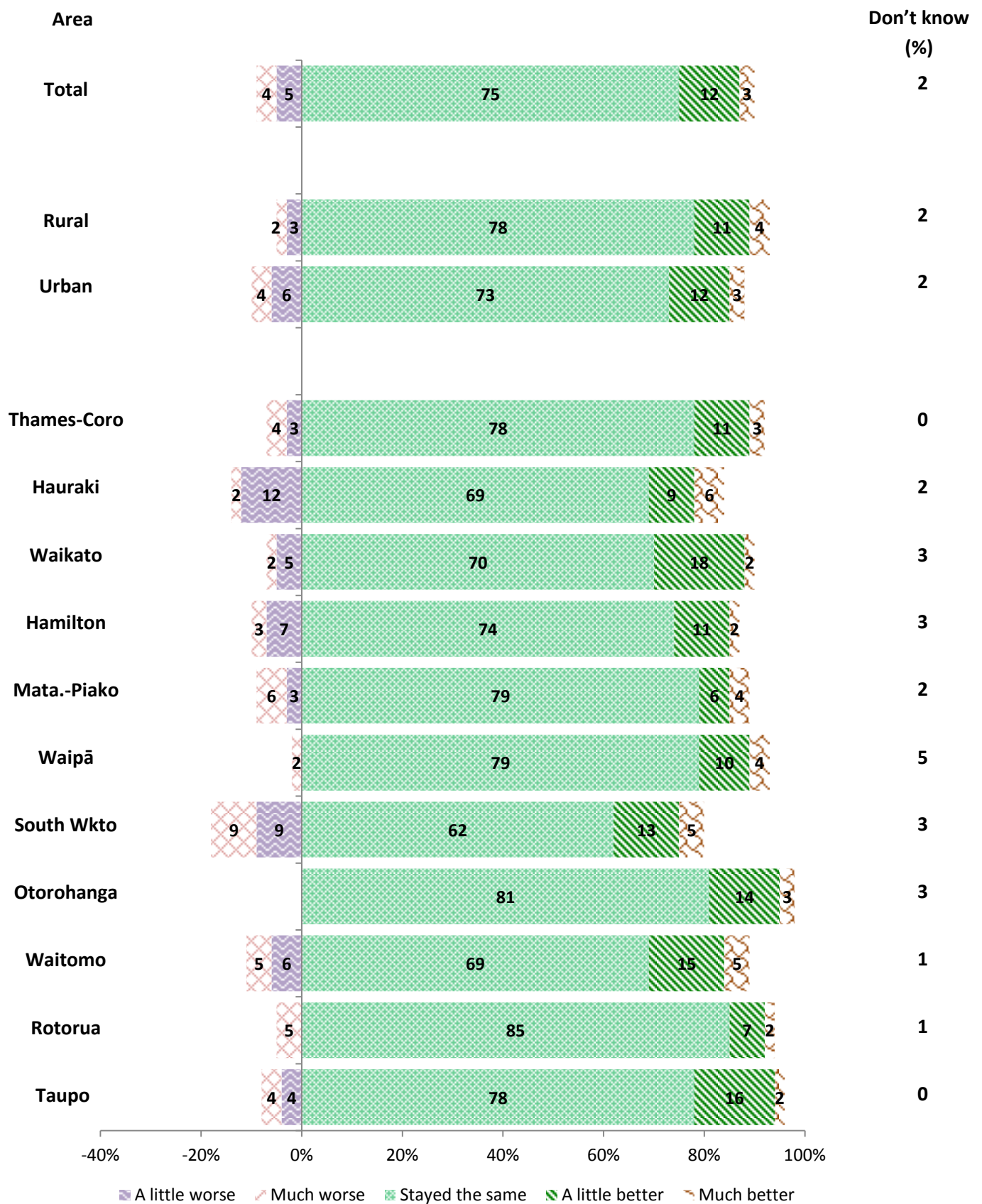


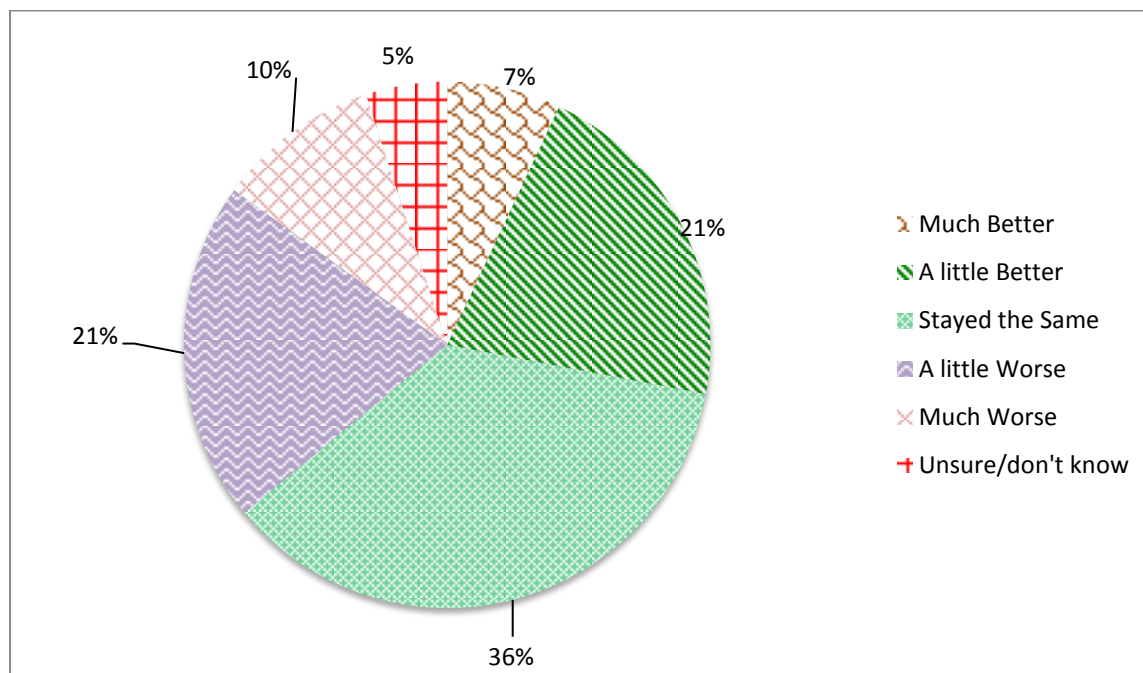
Figure 4-9: Perceptions of the Air Quality in the Local Area by Area, Rural and Urban

4.4 THE AMOUNT OF LITTER ON OUR HIGHWAYS

Respondents were asked whether they think *the amount of litter on highways* has generally become better, worse or stayed the same in the last few years.

4.4.1 OVERALL RESULT

Over a third of respondents (36%) think the amount of litter on our highways has stayed the same, while 28 per cent of respondents consider that the amount of litter on our highways has improved over the last few years (7% much better, 21% a little better); 31 per cent of respondents perceive it has recently deteriorated (10% much worse, 21% a little worse).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 4-10: Perceptions of the Amount of Litter on our Highways

4.4.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

This question was asked for the first time in 2013 and as such, no comparative results are available.

4.4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the amount of litter on the highways is **better** than in previous years are those who are:

- aged between 60 and 64 years (38%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the amount of litter on the highways is the **same** as in previous years are those who are:

- aged between 50 and 59 years (43%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the amount of litter on the highways is **worse** than in previous years are those who are:

- over the age of 65 years (37%)
- in an older household with no children at home (36%).

4.4.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

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

- Respondents in Hauraki are more likely (than the regional average) to think that the amount of litter on the highways is **worse** than in previous years (49%).

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban/rural setting are more likely to think that the amount of litter on the highways is the **same** or **better** than in recent years.

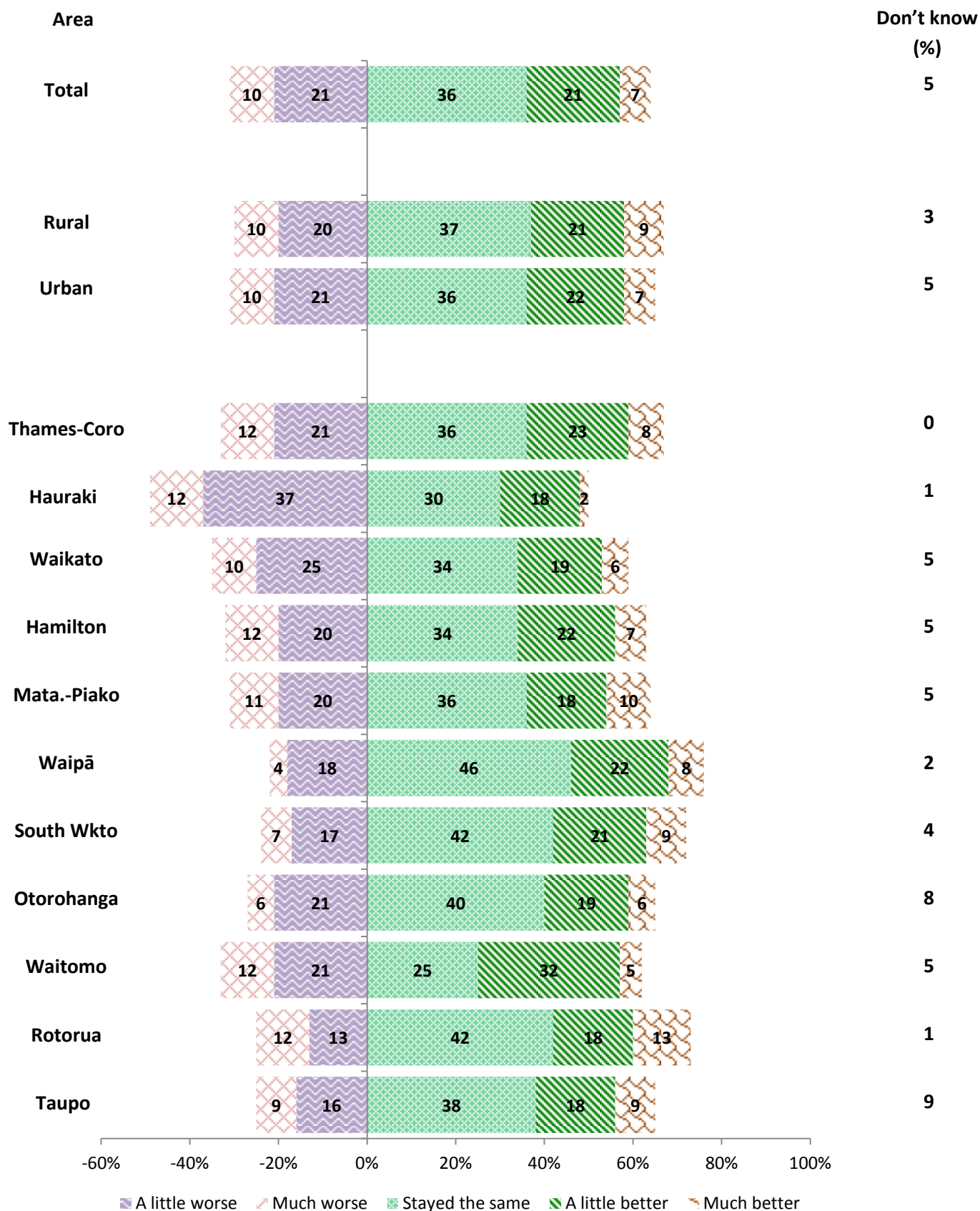


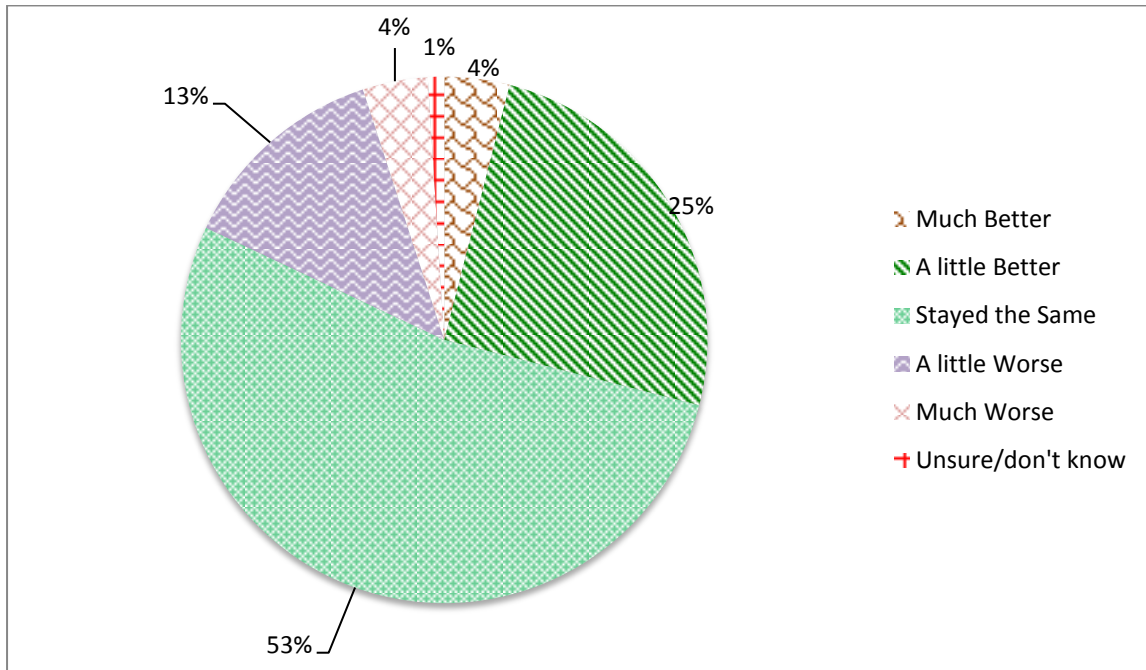
Figure 4-11: Perceptions of the Amount of Litter on our Highways by Area, Rural and Urban

4.5 OVERALL STATE OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were asked whether they think *the overall state of their local environment* has generally become better, worse or stayed the same in the last few years.

4.5.1 OVERALL RESULT

Just over a half of respondents (53%) think the state of the local environment has stayed the same, while 29 per cent of respondents consider that the overall state of the local environment has improved over the last few years (4% much better, 25% a little better); 17 per cent of respondents perceive it has recently deteriorated (4% much worse, 13% a little worse).



Base: All respondents (n=1005)

Figure 4-12: Perceptions of Changes in Overall State of Local Environment

4.5.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

This year, a larger proportion of respondents than in the 2006 survey and in all previous surveys state that the overall state of the local environment has stayed the same (a significant increase from 38% in 2006 to 53% in 2013). Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents feel that the overall state of the local environment has improved (down from 39% in 2006 to 29% in 2013) and a smaller proportion of respondents also state that that the overall state of the local environment has become worse (down from 22% in 2006 to 17% in 2013).

Table 4-4: Perceptions of Change in the Overall State of Local Environment 1998 to 2013

	1998	2000	2003	2006	2013	Change	Change
	%	%	%	%	%	98-13	06-13
Much better	7	7	7	9	4	-3	-5
A little better	48	38	26	30	25	-23	-5
Total Better	55	45	33	39	29	-26	-10
Stayed the same	32	38	43	38	53	+21	+15
A little worse	10	13	14	14	13	+3	-1
Much worse	2	3	7	8	4	+2	-4
Total Worse	12	16	21	22	17	+5	-5
Unsure/don't know	1	1	3	1	1	-	-
Base (respondents)	1037	1873	359	1000	1005		

This trend is shown below.

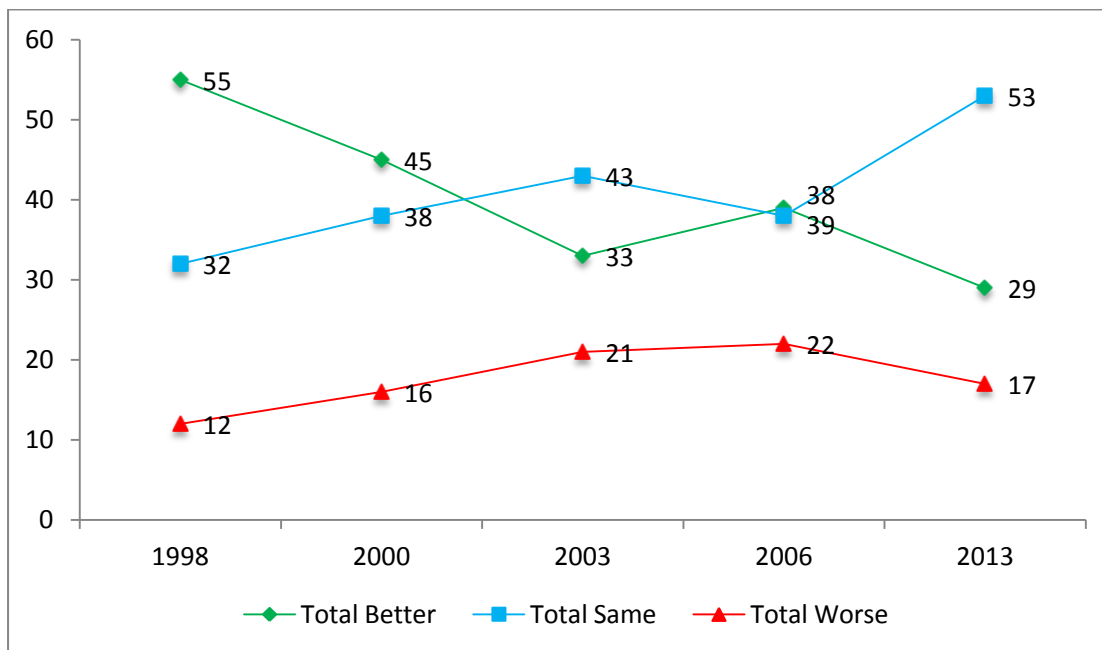


Figure 4-13: Perceptions of Changes in Overall State of Local Environment 1998 to 2013

4.5.3 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATION

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the overall state of the local environment is **better** are those who are:

- aged between 50 and 59 years (25%)
- working as farmers (46%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the overall state of the local environment is the **same** are those who are:

- working part time (60%)
- educated to a secondary school level (61%)
- female (56%).

Respondents who are significantly more likely (than the regional average) to think that the overall state of the local environment is **worse** are those who are:

- aged between 20 and 29 years (25%)
- currently a student (30%)
- in a family household with mainly preschool children (28%).

4.5.4 GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION

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

- Respondents in Otorohanga are more likely (than the regional average) to think that the overall state of the local environment is the **same** (66%).
- Respondents in Waikato (25%) or in an urban area (25%) are more likely (than the regional average) to think that the overall state of the local environment is **worse**.

No respondents from a particular territorial authority or urban/rural setting are more likely to think that the overall state of their local environment is **better** than in previous years.

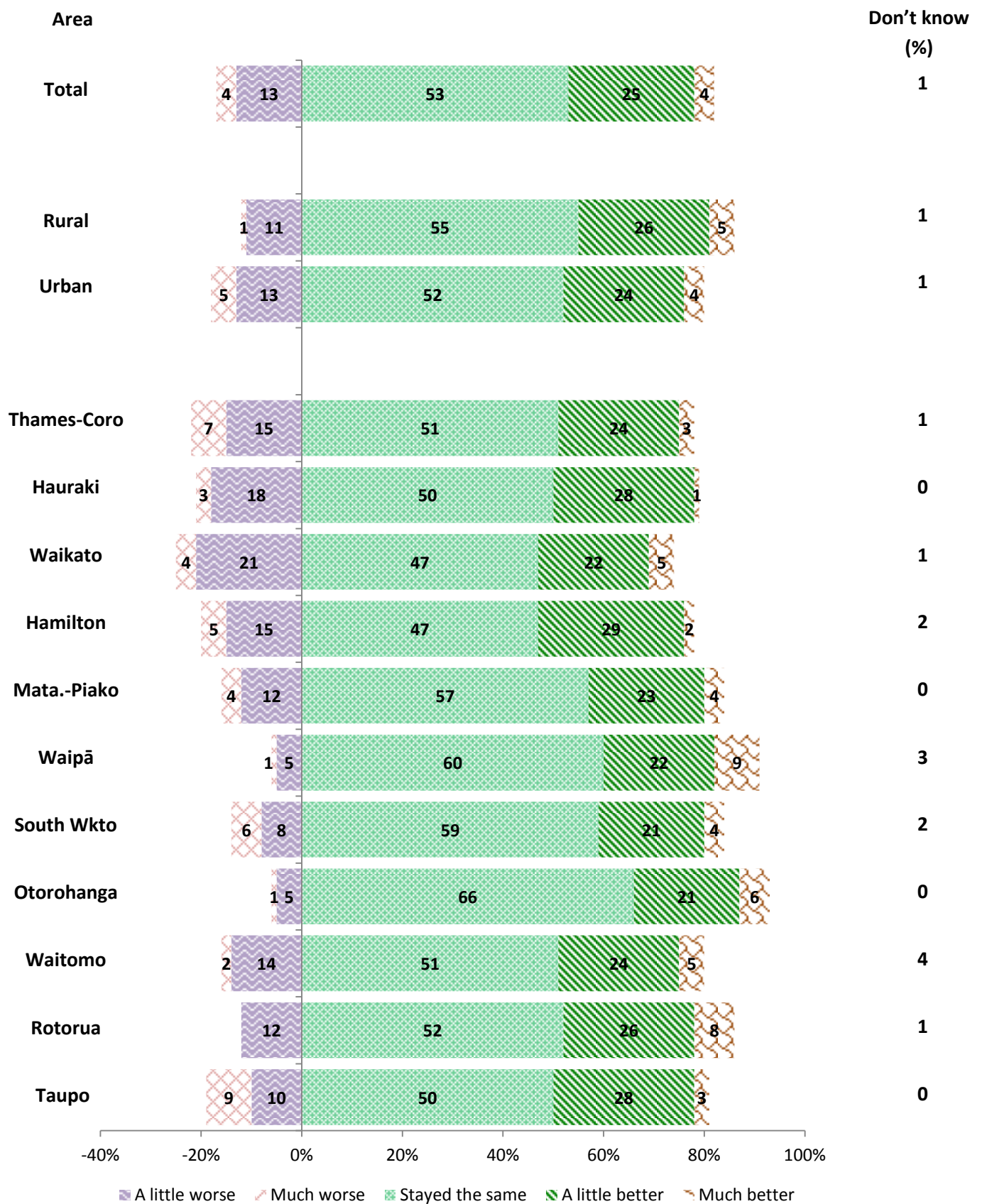


Figure 4-14: Perceptions of Changes in Overall State of Local Environment by Area, Rural and Urban