



Canada's Freshwater: Public Opinion Research

2026

Presented by



Prepared in collaboration with:





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Executive Summary

As Canada begins consultations on its first National Water Security Strategy, new polling shows a public that cares deeply about freshwater and believes there is an important opportunity for stronger federal leadership to protect it.

Ninety-three per cent of Canadians say water security should be a high priority for Canada. The development of a National Water Security Strategy therefore comes at an important moment and with a strong public mandate for action.

At the heart of Canadians' expectations is a desire to protect the basics of safe drinking water for everyone and healthy rivers and lakes. The polling also reveals a broader understanding of water security. Canadians recognize that reliable freshwater is essential not only to communities and ecosystems, but also to Canada's economy and future prosperity.



“Canadians see healthy lakes, rivers and groundwater as fundamental to their health and quality of life and overwhelmingly believe protecting these resources should be a priority for government.”





This is reflected in strong support for investments that can help Canada better understand, manage and use its freshwater, from long-term scientific research to new technologies that reduce water use, address contamination and strengthen the resilience of our water systems. Reliable water supply for economic growth ranks second of six elements for the Strategy, and 35% name a reliable water supply for the economy and jobs as a top federal priority.

Most Canadians feel this link in their household budgets. Almost 9 in 10 Canadian's expect water issues to affect their cost of living over the next five years. Across three studies since 2021, the economic value of water has gained ground in how Canadians rank what water matters for. Canadians appear ready for an approach in which environmental protection and economic growth reinforce one another rather than compete.

The polling also shows a gap between how much Canadians care about freshwater and how much they feel they know.

Half (51%) do not feel well informed about the state of freshwater in Canada, and more than a third (37%) do not know where their tap water comes from. Two in three (66%) think schools do not prepare young people well on water issues, and 86% say water literacy for young Canadians should be a high federal priority. This gap matters for the Strategy because knowledge and support tend to go together; Canadians who feel informed, know their water source or feel connected to a local water body tend to be more concerned and more supportive of action.

The results point to both an opportunity and an expectation for the National Water Security Strategy. Canadians want their freshwater protected, but they also want Canada to become better at understanding, managing and innovating around water. The Strategy offers an opportunity to build greater public awareness while advancing practical solutions that protect our waterways, strengthen our economy and safeguard a resource that Canadians see as fundamental to our way of life.



94%

of Canadians say it is important for Canada to invest in independent, long-term freshwater research.



37%

of Canadian's do not know the original source of their tap water.



90%

of Canadians say it is important for the federal government to follow through on its commitment to a \$100-million Water Security Technology Fund.



66%

do not think Canadian schools do a good job preparing young people to understand water issues and their role in protecting freshwater.



90%

of Canadians agree with the call for the Government of Canada to invest \$1 billion in freshwater and water security.



92%

of Canadians support the Government of Canada using Ecologically Significant Area designations to protect important fish habitat.



75%

of Canadians support a meaningful role for Indigenous governments in managing Canada's freshwater.



81%

of Canadians are concerned about the quality of freshwater in Canada.



Background and Objectives

In 2021, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) commissioned Environics Research to conduct The Value and State of Freshwater and Appropriate Responses to Freshwater Issues Survey, an online survey of 2,001 Canadians. It measured how Canadians value freshwater, how they rate its current state and which policy responses they support.

In August 2025, a follow-up study commissioned by AquaAction by Paige Evans through Cint Inc. repeated selected ECCC questions to measure change over four years. It found that freshwater had strengthened its position as Canada's most valued natural resource, and that concern about water quality was high and stable but moderate in intensity.

The 2026 study builds on both. It was fielded in August 2026, as the federal government prepared to consult on Canada's first National Water Security Strategy.

The study had four objectives:

1. Measure how Canadians value freshwater and how high a priority they want it to be for government.
2. Understand what Canadians know about freshwater, including their own water supply, and how they view water education.
3. Identify what Canadians expect from a National Water Security Strategy, including the priorities, tools and investments they support.
4. Track change since 2021 and 2025 where questions can be compared.

The report presents the findings in the order the questions were asked, covering 38 substantive questions across five sections, followed by what the results mean for the Strategy.



About AquaAction

At AquaAction, we develop leaders to protect and restore our most vital resource: freshwater. We empower people, from young innovators to community advocates, to protect and restore freshwater through innovation, advocacy, and conservation. By supporting entrepreneurship, advancing education and awareness, and driving policy change, we help communities build resilience and ensure access to clean water for generations to come. Our mission is simple yet profound: a generation of leaders safeguarding freshwater for the health of people and the planet.

Our Partners

Thank you to the following organizations for helping to sponsor this research: Fondation de Gaspé Beaubien, IISD Experimental Lakes Area, Forum on Leadership on Water (FLOW), Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER), and Ocean's North. These organizations contributed questions to the survey, bringing their organization's perspectives to help understand Canadian's knowledge and opinions on water-related topics.

About the Researcher

This study was designed, fielded and analyzed by Paige Evans, a research consultant with more than five years of experience running surveys, interviews and focus groups for companies across Canada. It is her second national study for AquaAction, the commissioning organization.



Methodology in Brief

The survey ran online in English and French from 20 to 31 August 2026. Respondents were Canadian residents aged 18 and over, recruited from an online research panel operated by Cint Inc. The questionnaire covered the importance of freshwater, personal connection and concern, knowledge and education, and governance, policy and investment. The median completion time was 12.5 minutes.

The analysis is based on 1,239 completed surveys, for which 1,000 were from English Canadians and 239 from French Canadians. Quotas for region, age and gender were set against the 2021 Census and closely met.

Results are percentages of all respondents unless another base is stated. Group differences are reported when they are statistically significant ($p < .01$). Smaller differences appear where they add context, and the text says when a difference is not significant. The extended methodology gives full details, including quality control and sample composition.



Respondent Profile

The survey set quotas for region, age and gender against the 2021 Census. The achieved sample matches those targets closely.

Region is within one point of the Census, and the three age bands are within three points. Women make up 52% of the sample, against 51% of the adult population.

A quarter of respondents (25%) were born outside Canada, matching the Census figure of 25.5% for immigrants and non-permanent residents combined. Nineteen per cent of respondents answered in French, and about four in five French-language respondents live in Quebec while about three in ten Quebec respondents answered in English.

Respondents described their own ethnic and cultural background and could select more than one option. Seventy per cent selected White or European, 27% selected at least one racialized category, and 3.8% (47 respondents) identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. The 2021 Census recorded 26.5% of the population as racialized and 5.0% as Indigenous. The 47 Indigenous respondents support a directional reading only, and no result is reported for that group on its own.

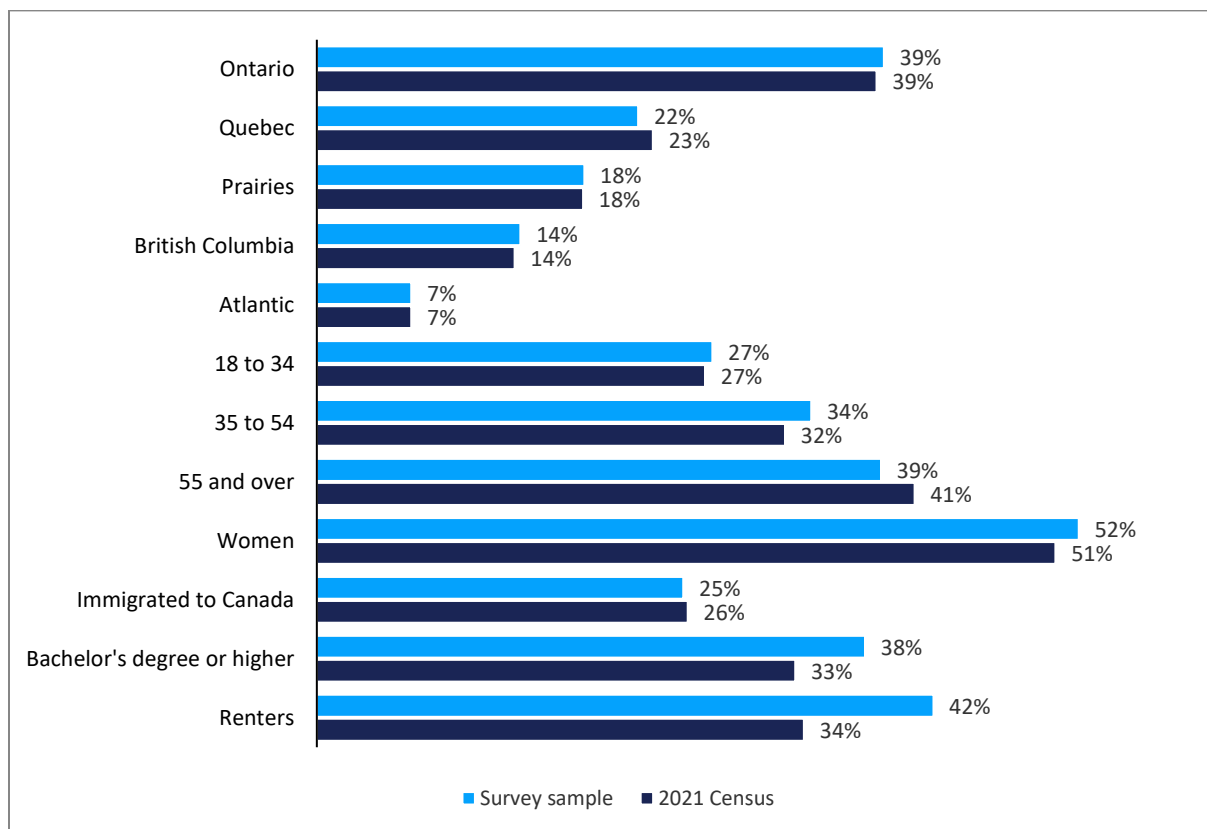
Respondents also described where they live: 56% in a large city, 23% in a mid-sized city and 20% in a small town or rural area. This is self-assessed rather than classified by geography, so it is not directly comparable with Census population centres.

Two differences from the Census are worth noting. The sample holds more people with a bachelor's degree or higher (38%, against 33%) and more renters (42%, against 34%). Both are common in online panel research.



The survey recorded seven further demographic variables, all reported in the extended methodology. Table A1 compares education (Q9) and housing tenure (Q12) with the Census. Table A2 gives community size (Q3), household income (Q11), parent or guardian status (Q13), survey language and employment (Q10). The notes below Table A2 give ethnic and cultural background in full (Q6), years in Canada for respondents who immigrated (Q8), and the ages and number of children in the household (Q14).

Figure 1. Survey sample compared with the 2021 Census



Base: All respondents ($n = 1,239$). Census figures cover adults 18 and over, except education, which covers adults aged 25 to 64, and housing tenure, which the Census measures by household.



Section 1: The Importance of Freshwater

Canadians ranked seven natural resources, ranked what freshwater matters to, and rated how high a priority protecting lakes and rivers should be.

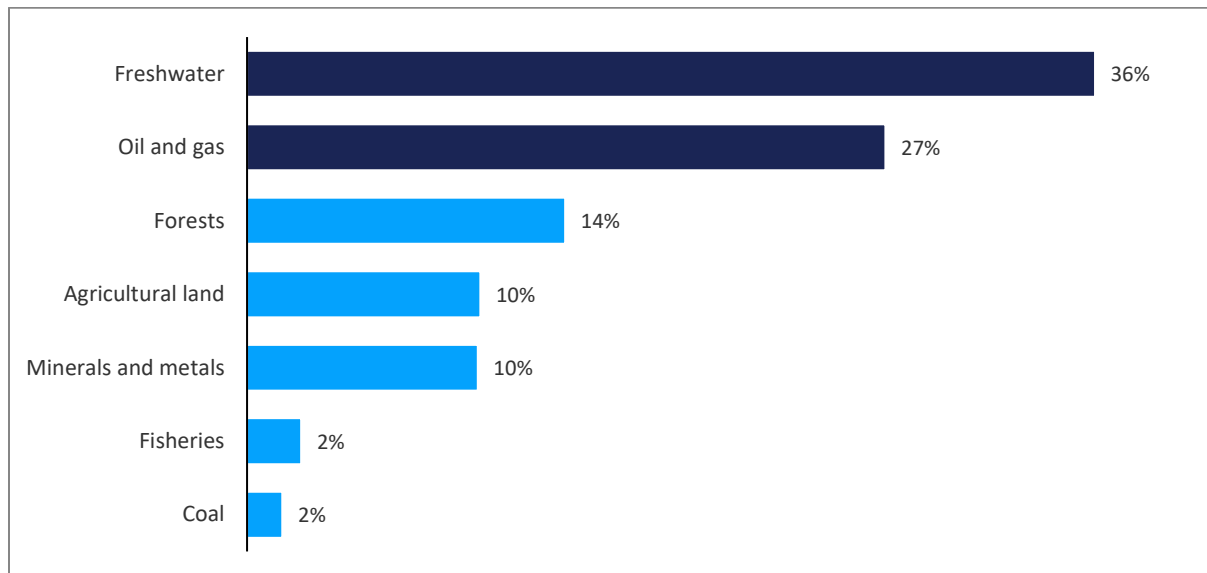
Freshwater still ranks first among natural resources, with narrower lead

Asked to rank seven natural resources, Canadians still place freshwater first. It has the highest average ranking, and 36% rank it first. Its lead has narrowed. The share ranking freshwater first was 46% in 2021 and 53% in 2025. The share ranking oil and gas first roughly doubled since 2025, from 14% to 27%. Both years used the same seven resources and ranking format, so the change is unlikely to reflect question design.

Support for protecting freshwater remains high throughout this survey. The shift more likely reflects Canadians weighing freshwater against economic resources. Regional differences are among the largest in the survey. Quebec respondents are the most likely to rank freshwater first (45%) and the least likely to rank oil and gas first (18%). In the Prairies, 42% rank oil and gas first and 28% rank freshwater first. It is the only region where freshwater is not the top-ranked resource.

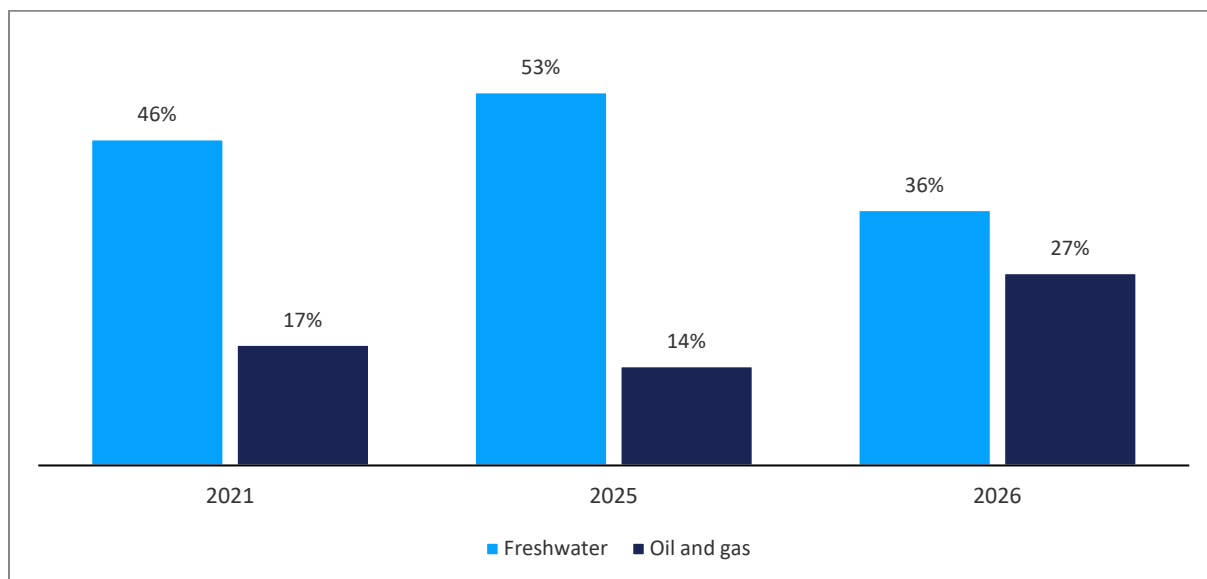


Figure 2. Canada's most important natural resources, % ranked first (Q16)



Base: All respondents ($n = 1,239$).

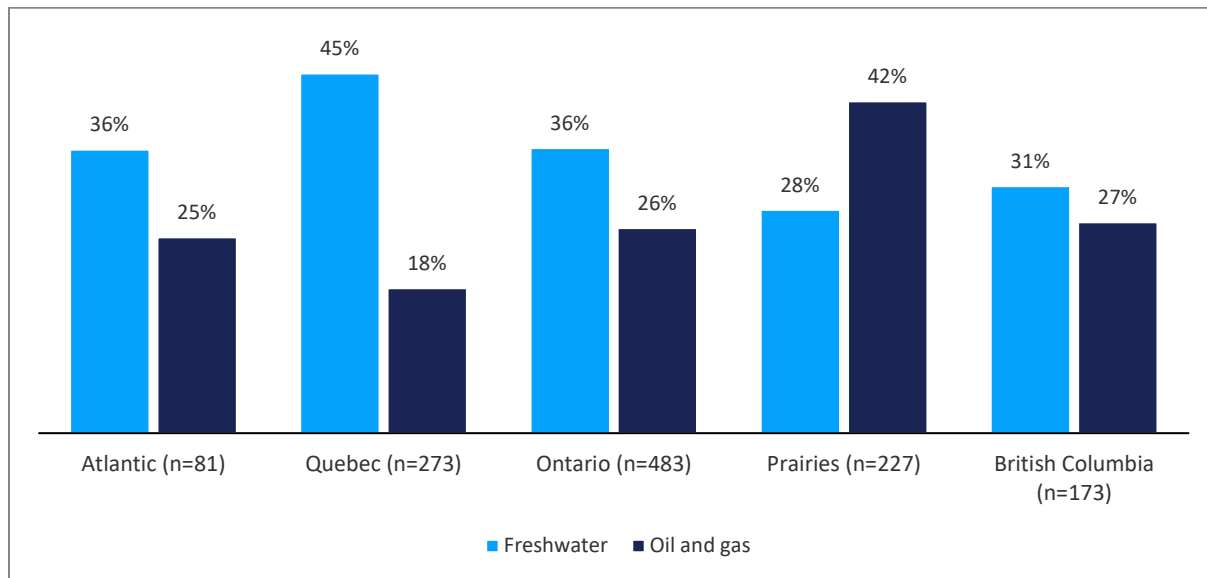
Figure 3. Freshwater ranked as Canada's most important natural resource, 2021, 2025 and 2026



Base: 2021 ECCC ($n = 2,001$), 2025 as published, 2026 ($n = 1,239$).



Figure 4. Ranked first by region: freshwater compared with oil and gas (Q16)



Base: All respondents, territories excluded.

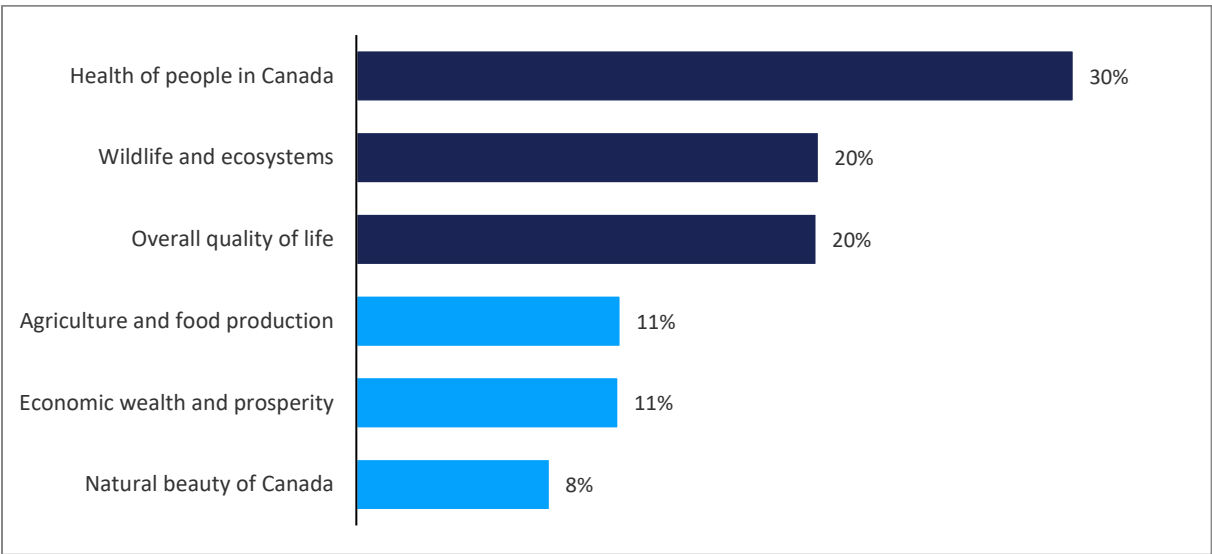


Canadians value water most for health, and increasingly for the economy

Asked what freshwater is most important to, Canadians rank the health of people in Canada first (30% rank it first). Quality of life, wildlife and ecosystems, and agriculture and food production form a second tier. This order has held across all three studies.

The economy has moved up in ranking. Economic wealth and prosperity ranked last in 2021 and now ranks ahead of natural beauty. The share ranking it first rose from 9% in 2025 to 11% in 2026. Natural beauty fell from fifth in 2021 to last. Each shift is small, though both have moved in the same direction over five years.

Figure 5. What Canada's freshwater is most important to, % ranked first (Q17)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

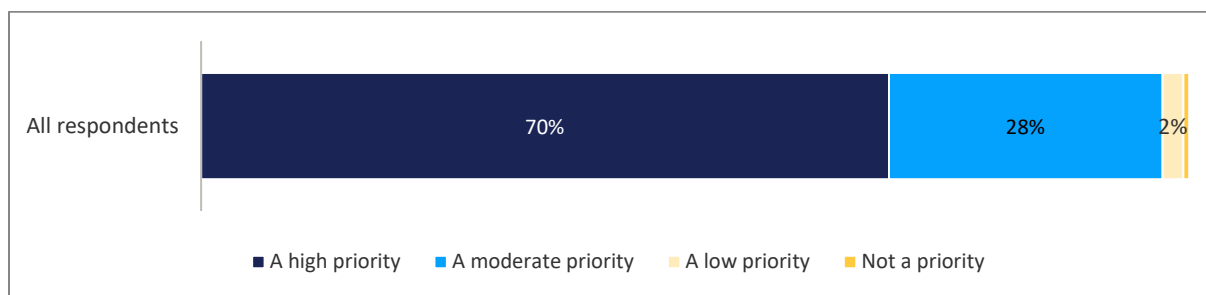


Lakes and rivers rank high against other environmental issues

A separate question asked respondents to compare protecting lakes and rivers with other environmental issues facing Canada. This sets a higher bar, since freshwater competes with climate, air, land and wildlife. Seventy per cent say it should be a high priority for government, 28% a moderate priority and 3% a low priority or none.

Older Canadians are the most likely to say high priority (79% of those 55 and over, compared with 63% of those aged 18 to 34). Regional differences are small and not statistically significant, from 66% in British Columbia and 67% in Quebec to 75% in Atlantic Canada.

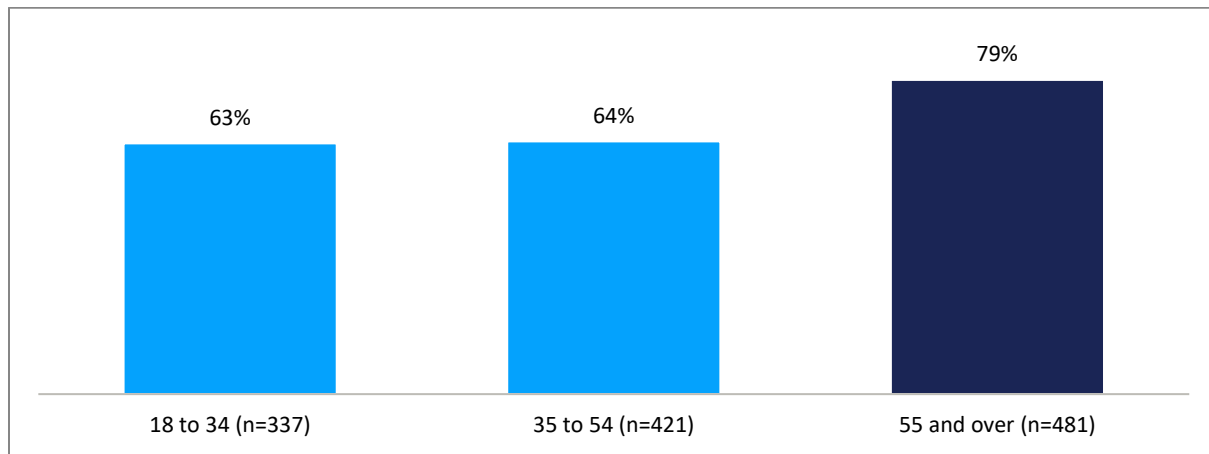
Figure 6. Priority of protecting freshwater lakes and rivers compared with other environmental issues (Q18)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 7. “High priority” by age (Q18)



Base: All respondents



Section 2: Personal Stake, Connection and Concern

These questions cover personal connection to water, concern about its quality, how informed Canadians feel, and the effects they expect on their own lives.

Most Canadians feel a personal connection to water

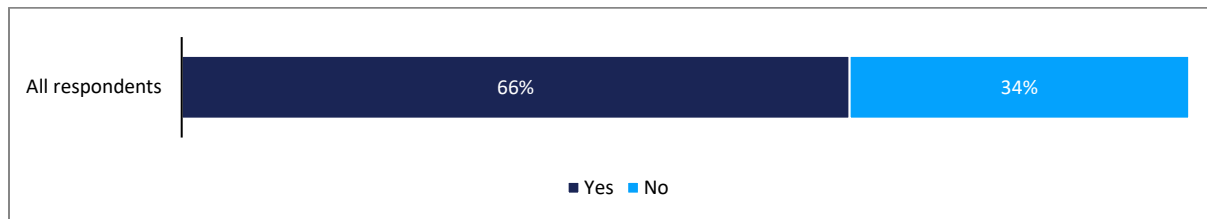
Two in three Canadians (66%) feel personally connected to at least one natural body of water, such as a lake, river, stream, pond or stretch of coast. For most, it is close to home: 63% say at least one is in their own community. The Prairies are the exception. Prairie respondents are about as likely as other Canadians to feel connected to water (64%), but only 44% say that water is in their own community, compared with 72% in Atlantic Canada and 69% in Quebec and British Columbia. Their connection is more often to water elsewhere in their province (55%) or elsewhere in Canada (35%). Local water is a strong point of connection across most of the country, but for fewer than half of Prairie residents.

Among those with a connection, attachment is strong. Ninety-three per cent would feel a personal loss if that water became polluted or degraded, and 60% agree strongly. Fewer strongly agree that they feel responsible for looking after it (38%). Canadians are more likely to say damage would hurt them than to say they share responsibility for the water.

The third of Canadians with no connection to a water body tend to be the least concerned, least informed and least supportive group across the survey.

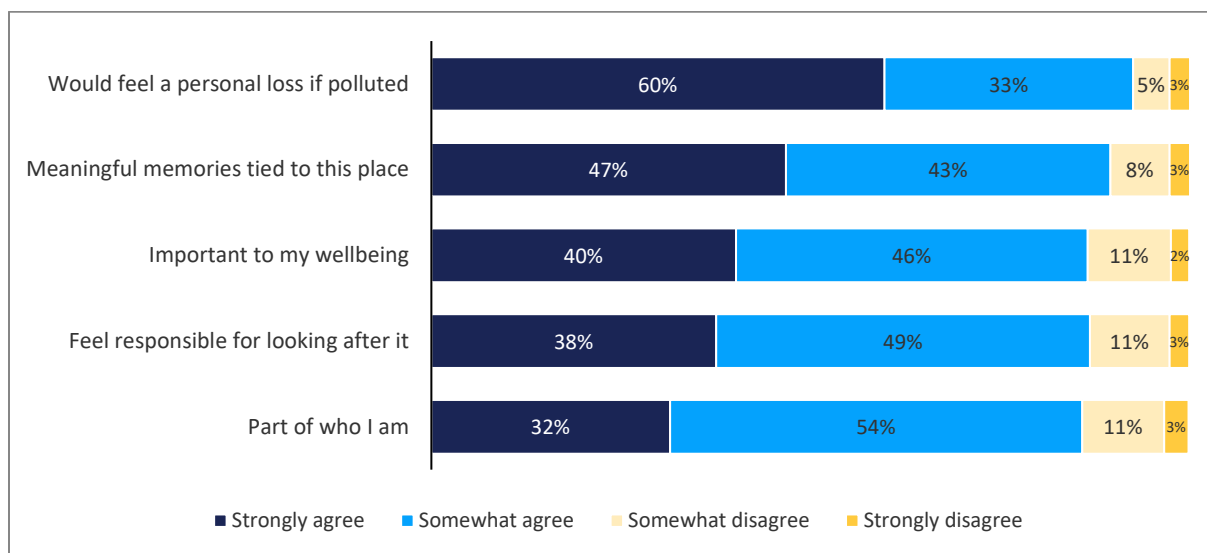


Figure 8. Connection to a natural body of water (Q20)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Figure 9. Attachment to the water body respondents feel most connected to (Q22)



Base: Respondents connected to a water body (n = 821).

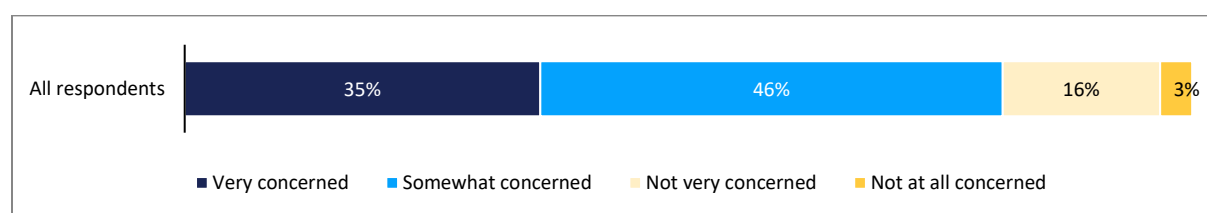


Concern about water quality is broad and has risen slightly

Four in five Canadians (81%) are concerned about freshwater quality in Canada, and 35% are very concerned. In 2021, ECCC found 30% very concerned and 77% concerned overall, excluding “not sure” responses. The 2025 study found 34% and 76% on the same basis. The 2026 questionnaire did not offer a “not sure” option, so the earlier totals are adjusted to exclude it and keep the three studies on the same footing. On that basis, the very concerned share has risen five points in five years.

Concern varies more with connection and knowledge than with region. Regional differences are small, from 30% very concerned in Quebec to 39% in British Columbia. Among Canadians connected to a water body in their own community, 45% are very concerned, compared with 21% of those with no connection. Among those who feel extremely informed, 61% are very concerned, compared with 21% of those who feel not at all informed.

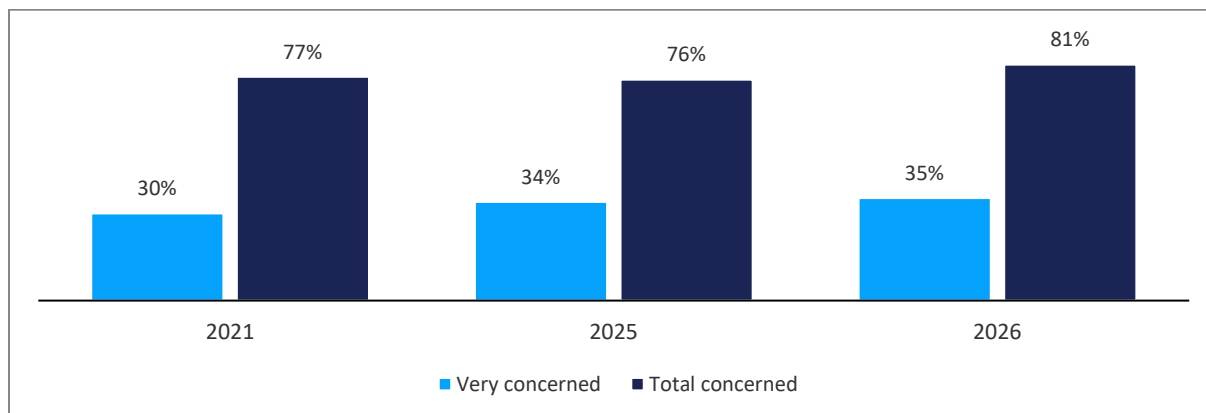
Figure 10. Concern about the quality of freshwater in Canada (Q23)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

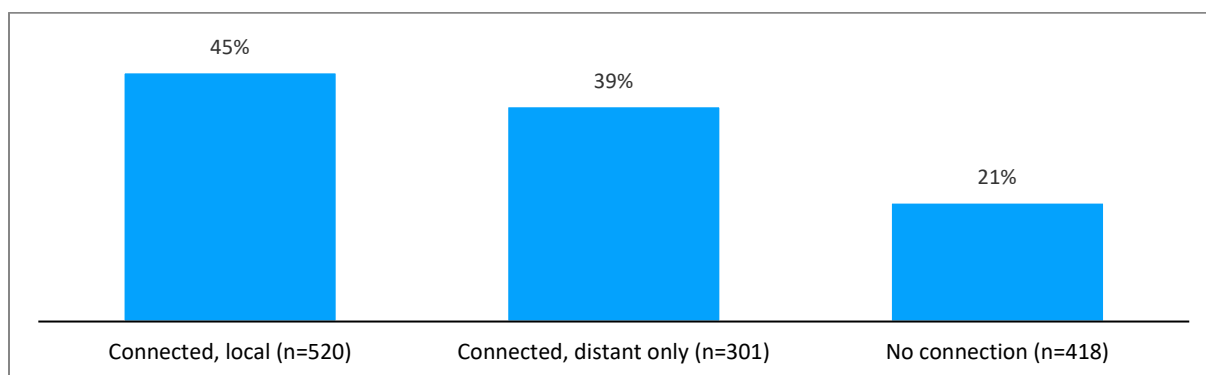


Figure 11. Concern about freshwater quality, 2021, 2025 and 2026



Base: 2021 ECCC ($n = 2,001$), 2025 ($n = 1,160$), 2026 ($n = 1,239$). 2021 and 2025 exclude "not sure"; 2026 did not offer it.

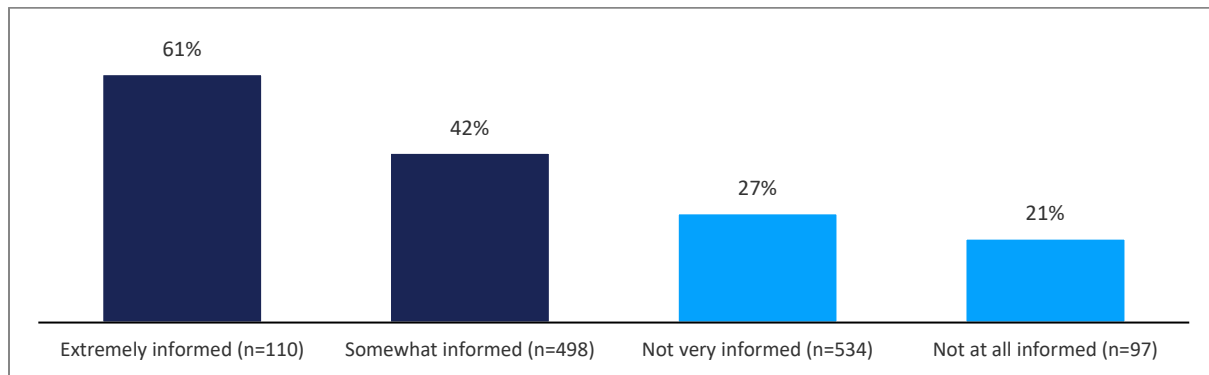
Figure 12. "Very concerned" by connection to water (Q23 by Q20 and Q21)



Base: All respondents.



Figure 13. “Very concerned” by how informed respondents feel (Q23 by Q24)



Base: All respondents.

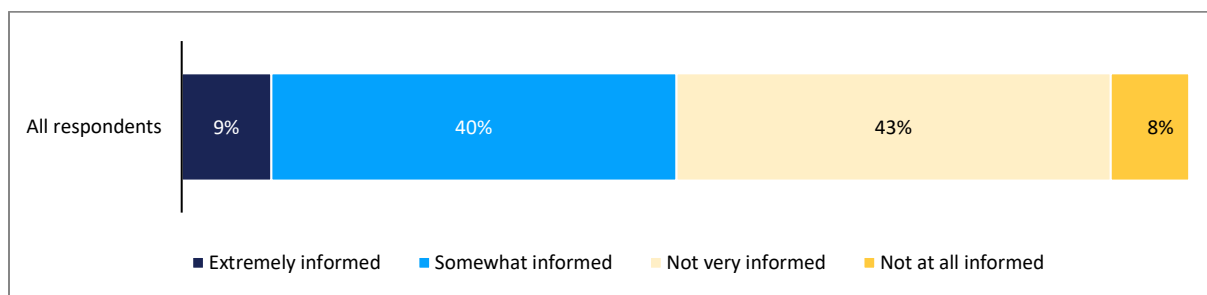


Half of Canadians do not feel informed about freshwater

Half of Canadians (51%) feel not very or not at all informed about the state of freshwater in Canada, and 9% feel extremely informed. The share who feel somewhat informed has held steady: 39% in 2021, 37% in 2025 and 40% in 2026.

Men rate themselves as more informed than women (53% compared with 45% extremely or somewhat informed). Canadians aged 18 to 34 rate themselves as more informed than older groups.

Figure 14. How informed Canadians feel about the state of freshwater in Canada (Q24)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

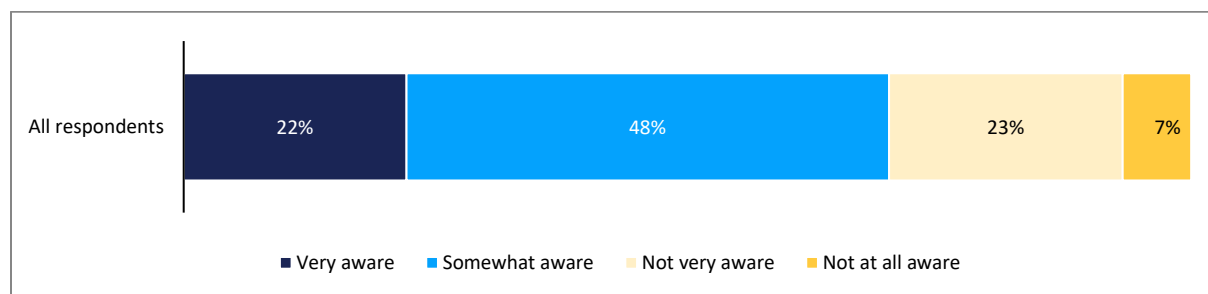


Awareness of the link between water and prosperity is limited

Respondents were told water security includes enough water for agriculture, food production and manufacturing. They were then asked how aware they had been of the link between freshwater and prosperity before the survey. Seventy per cent report at least some awareness, 22% were very aware and 30% were not very or not at all aware. Respondents heard the link before answering, so true prior awareness is likely lower.

Awareness is concentrated among people who know the water sector. Sixty-five per cent of those very familiar with water-sector careers were very aware of the link, compared with 9% of those not at all familiar.

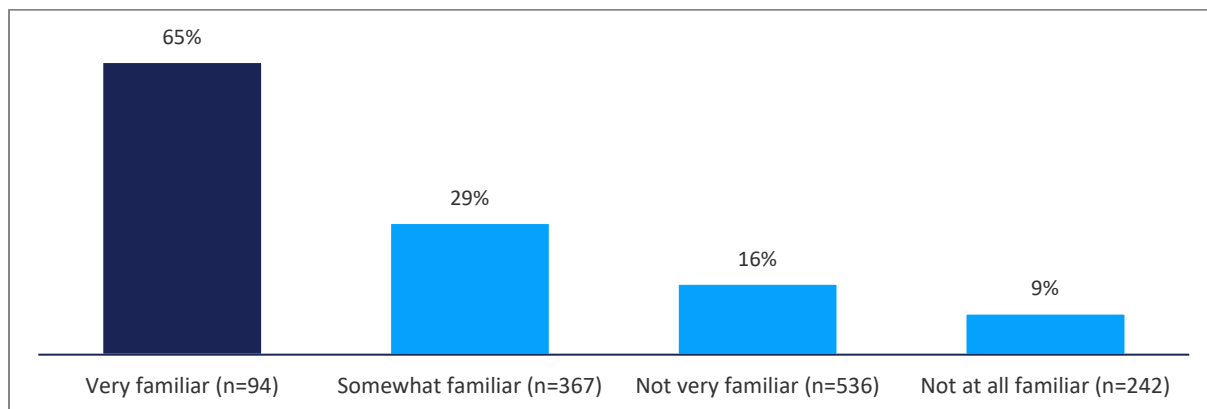
Figure 15. Prior awareness of the connection between freshwater and economic prosperity (Q26)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 16. “Very aware”, by familiarity with water-sector careers (Q26 by Q35)



Base: All respondents.



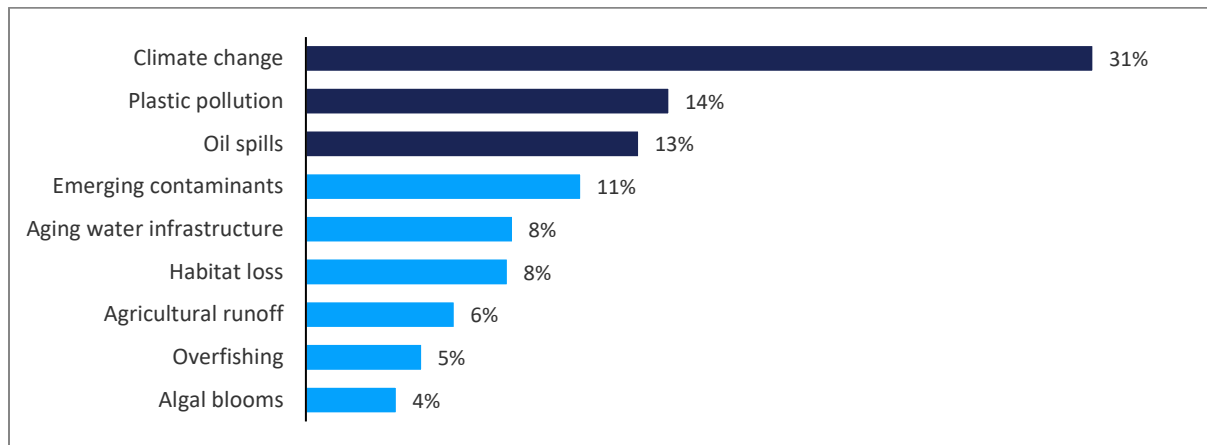
Climate change and pollution top water concerns

Respondents ranked nine water issues from most to least concerning. Climate change takes the most first-place votes (31%), ahead of plastic pollution (14%) and oil spills (13%). Emerging contaminants, aging water infrastructure and habitat loss follow. Aging water infrastructure ranks seventh on average, even though Canadians strongly support infrastructure investment when asked directly (see Figure 31). Plastic pollution has the highest average ranking, and climate change comes second on that measure. The two results differ because averages reward consistency and first-place votes reward intensity.

Climate change divides Canadians more than any other item on the list. Half (51%) place it in their top three, and 29% place it in their bottom three. Plastic pollution draws a narrower spread, with 50% in the top three and 18% in the bottom three. Canadians appear to agree that plastic is a problem and to disagree about where climate change belongs. Respondents had to rank every item, so low rankings for items such as algal blooms may reflect low familiarity as well as low concern.

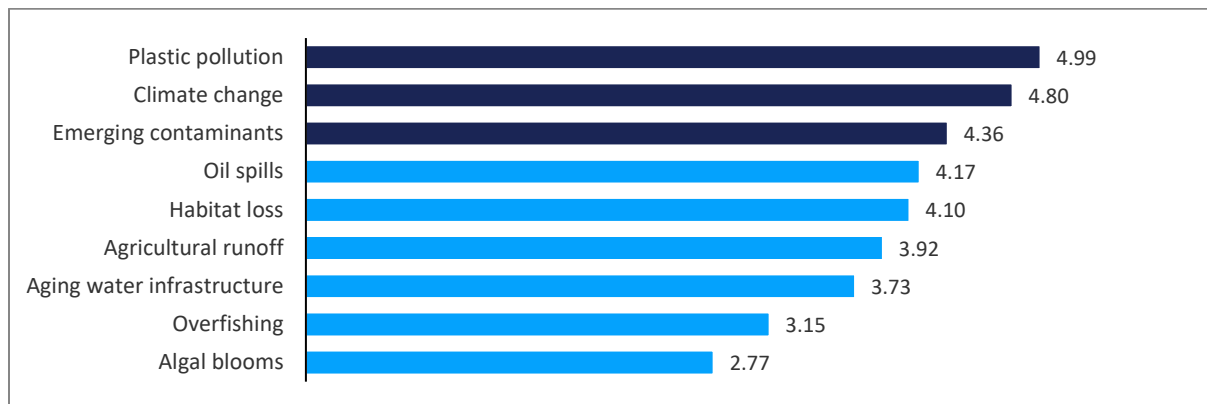


Figure 17. Water issues of most concern, % ranked first (Q27)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Figure 18. Water issues of most concern, average ranking score (Q27)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239). Score = 9 minus the mean rank, so a higher score means a higher ranking.

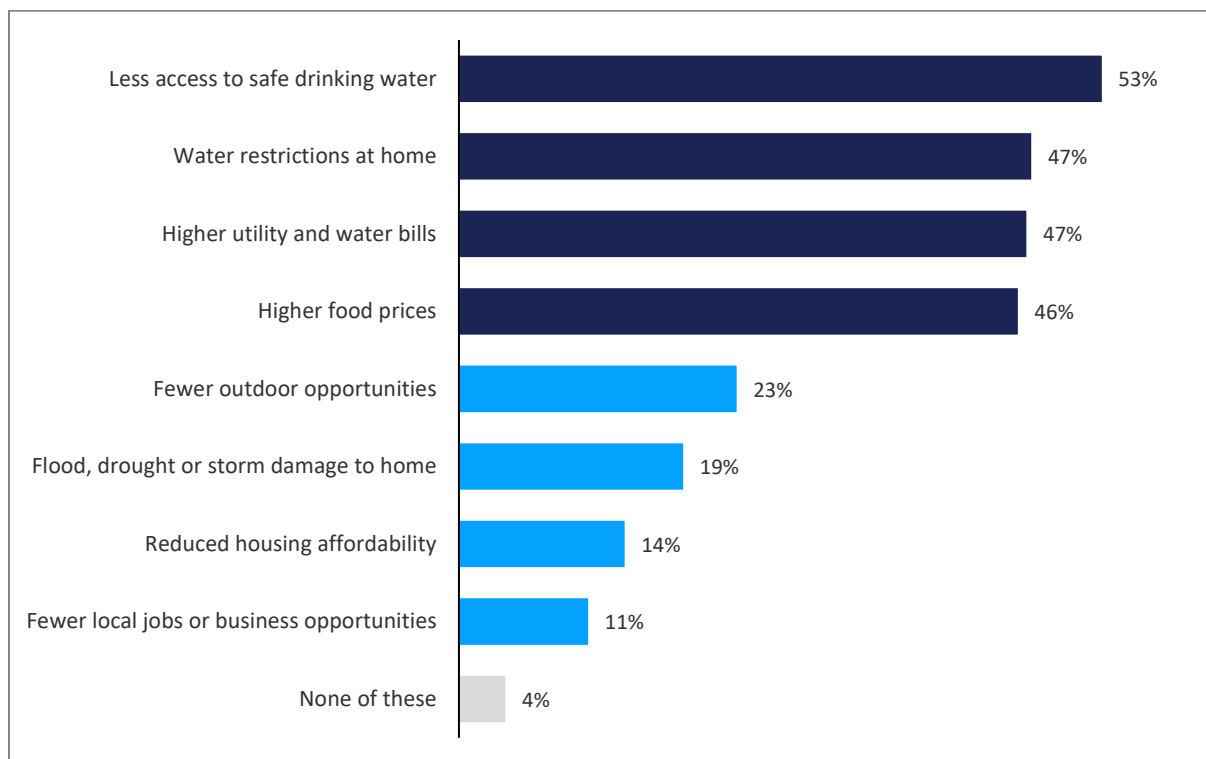
Plastic pollution in Canadian waterway. Credit: Vladimir Arndt/Shutterstock



Canadians expect water problems to reach the tap and the grocery bill

Asked how water issues could affect their household, Canadians most often choose less access to safe drinking water (53%), water restrictions at home (47%), higher water bills (47%) and higher food prices (46%). Four per cent expect no effect. Fewer local jobs (11%) and reduced housing affordability (14%) rank lowest. Younger Canadians choose both more often: 21% of those aged 18 to 34 choose housing affordability and 18% choose local jobs, compared with 5% and 6% of those 55 and over.

Figure 19. Ways water-related issues could affect the household, select up to three (Q28)



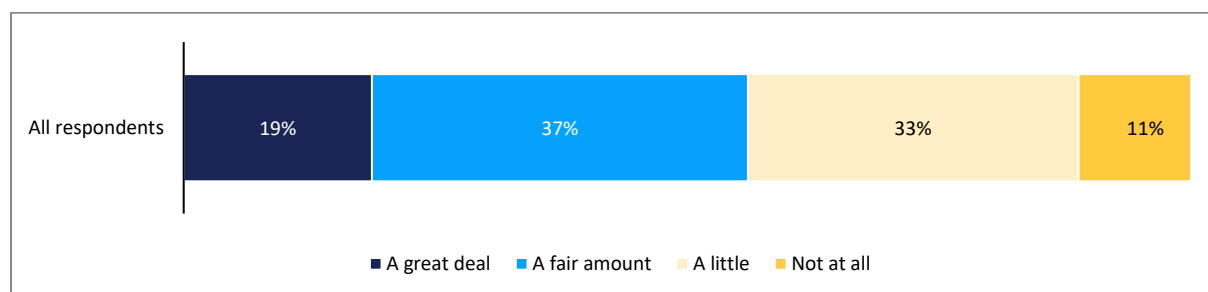
Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Most expect some effect on daily life, though few expect a large one

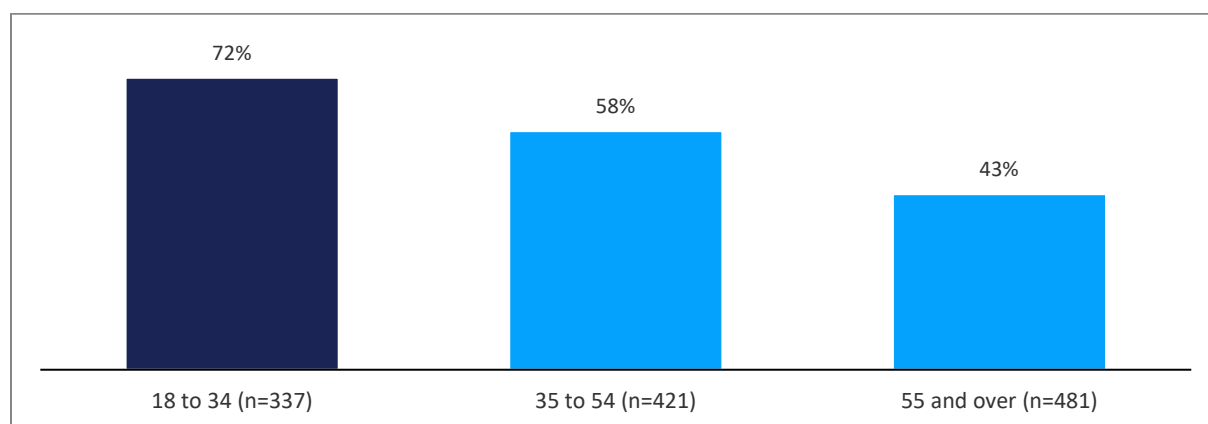
Eighty-nine per cent expect water issues to affect their everyday life in the next five years. Nineteen per cent say a great deal, and the largest group says a fair amount (37%). Younger Canadians expect more: 72% of those aged 18 to 34 say a great deal or a fair amount, compared with 43% of those 55 and over. Canadians anticipate water problems, though most do not expect them to be severe.

Figure 20. Expected effect of water-related issues on everyday life over the next five years (Q29)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Figure 21. "A great deal" or "a fair amount", by age (Q29)



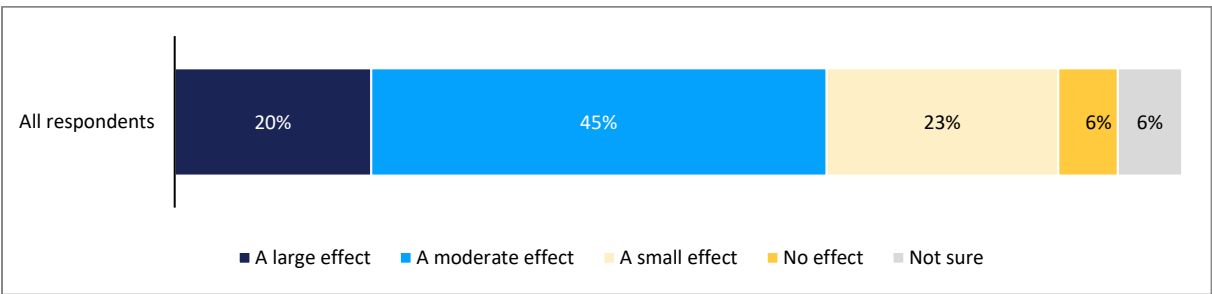
Base: All respondents.



Most expect water issues to affect their cost of living

Eighty-eight per cent expect water issues to affect their cost of living in the next five years, and 20% expect a large effect. The most common answer is a moderate effect (45%). Younger Canadians expect larger effects: 25% of those aged 18 to 34 expect a large effect, compared with 14% of those 55 and over.

Figure 22. Expected effect of water-related issues on cost of living over the next five years (Q30)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Section 3: Knowledge, Education and Careers

These questions cover what Canadians know about their own water supply, how they view water education in schools, and how familiar they are with water-sector careers.

Four in Ten Canadians know where their tap water comes from

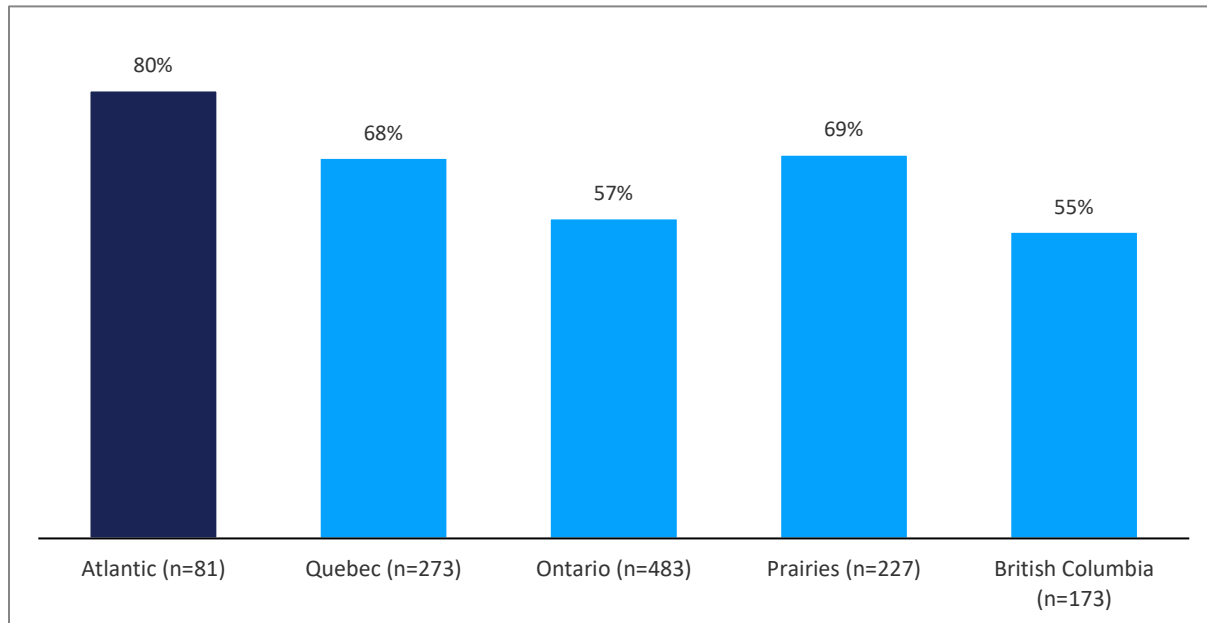
Sixty-three per cent of Canadians know the original source of their household water, such as a lake, river or well. This is a factual self-report, which makes it one of the most useful knowledge measures in the survey.

Knowledge is lowest where water is least visible: in cities, in rented homes and among younger adults. Fifty-five per cent know their source in British Columbia and 57% in Ontario, compared with 80% in Atlantic Canada. Fifty-five per cent of renters know their source, compared with 71% of homeowners. The share falls as age falls, from 76% of those 65 and over to 41% of those aged 18 to 24. Canadians in small towns and rural areas, many of whom rely on wells or small local systems, are the most likely to know (78%).

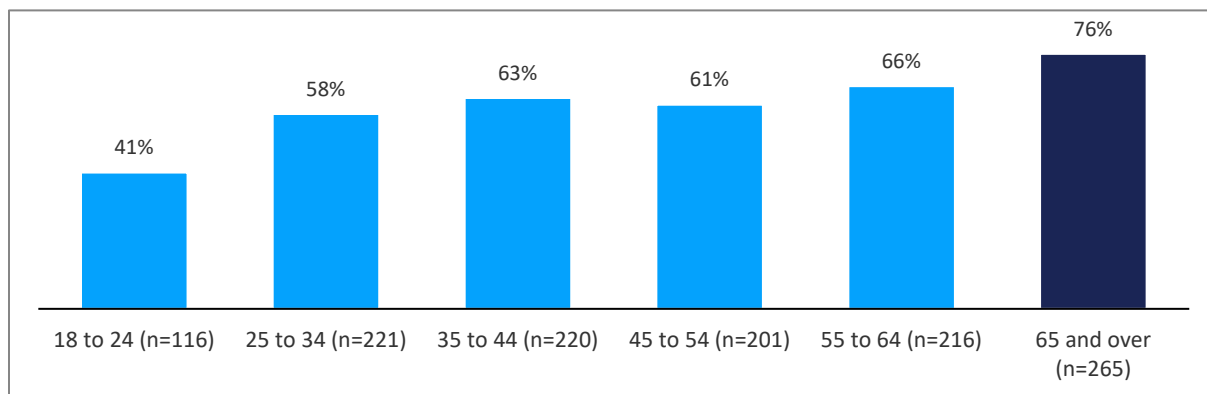


Figure 23. Know the original source of their household water (Q32), by region, age, housing tenure and community size

Know their water source, by region (Q32)

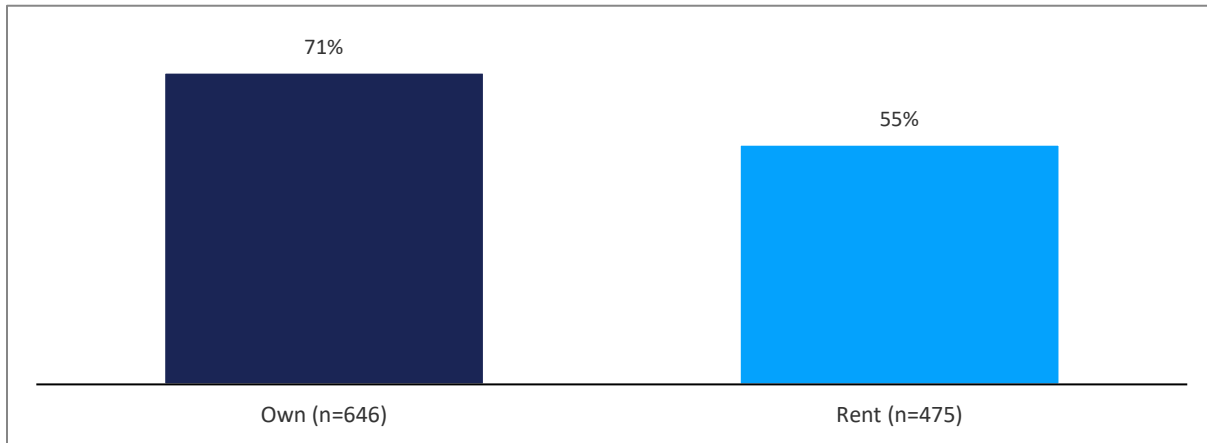


Know their water source, by age (Q32)

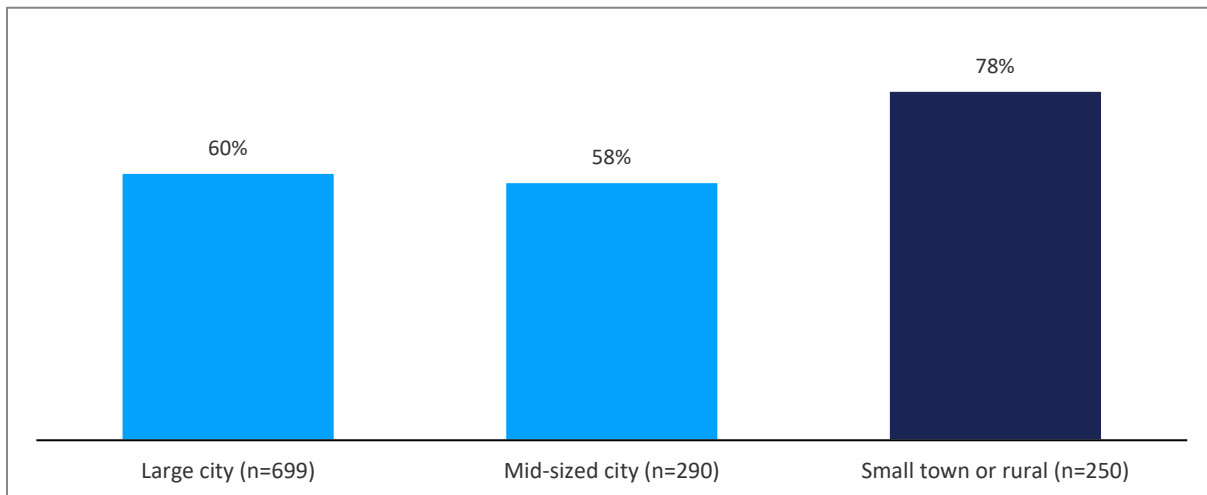




Know their water source, by housing tenure (Q32)



Know their water source, by community size (Q32)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239). The regional chart excludes the territories. The housing chart covers owners and renters (n = 1,121).

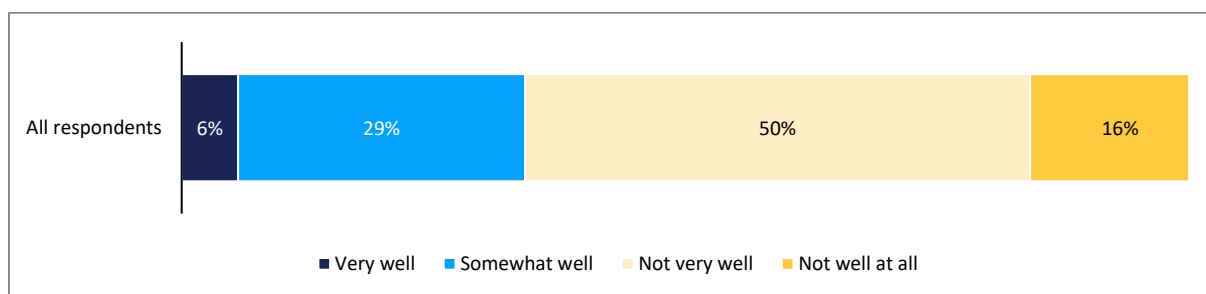


Two in three say schools do not prepare young people well

Two in three Canadians (66%) think schools do not prepare young people well to understand water issues and their role in protecting freshwater. Six per cent say schools do this very well. This view holds across regions, from 63% in Quebec to 69% in British Columbia. Older Canadians are the most critical (78% of those 55 and over, compared with 50% of those aged 18 to 34). Most respondents have not seen current curricula, so this measures perception of what is taught.

Eighty-six per cent say water literacy for young Canadians should be a high federal priority, and 33% say a very high priority. Support is similar among those with and without children under 18 at home (35% and 32% very high priority, a difference that is not statistically significant). Canadians appear to see water literacy as a public good for everyone.

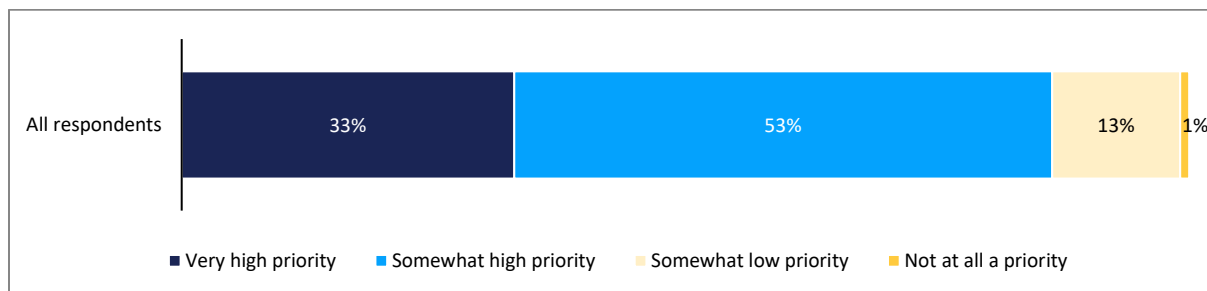
Figure 24. How well Canadian schools prepare young people to understand water issues (Q33)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 25. Priority of water literacy and education for young Canadians (Q34)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



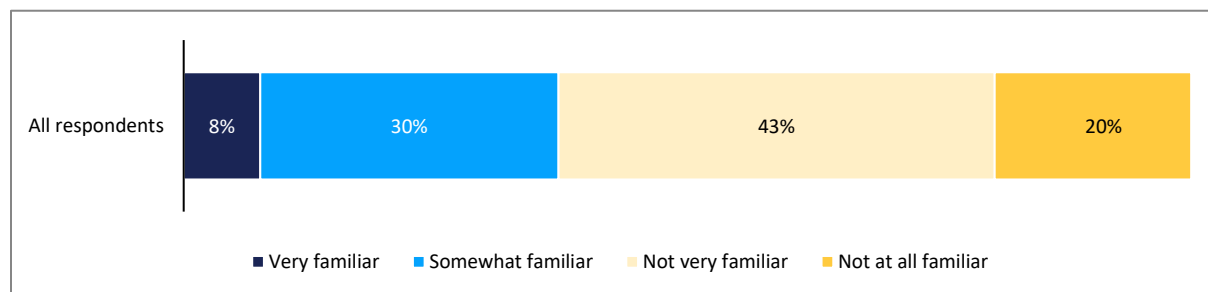
Water-sector careers are little known but appealing

Nearly two in three Canadians (63%) are not familiar with careers in Canada's water sector, and 8% are very familiar. Younger Canadians report more familiarity, which is unusual for a knowledge measure in this survey: 54% of those aged 18 to 34 are very or somewhat familiar, compared with 27% of those 55 and over.

After a description of the sector, from water treatment to monitoring, engineering, research and policy, three in four (75%) find working in it at least somewhat appealing, and 23% find it very appealing. Familiarity and appeal go together. Sixty-four per cent of those very familiar with water careers find the sector very appealing, compared with 13% of those not at all familiar. The description came just before the question, so this is a post-description reading and appeal is likely lower without it.

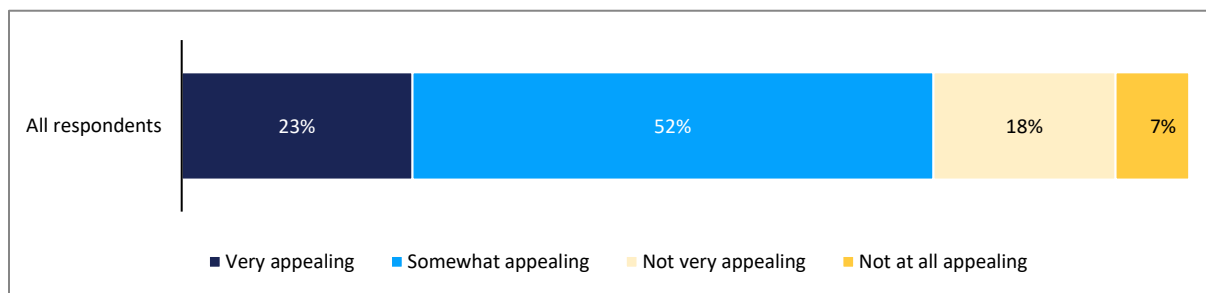
Figure 26. Familiarity with water-sector careers (Q35) and appeal of working in the sector (Q36)

Familiarity with water-sector careers (Q35)



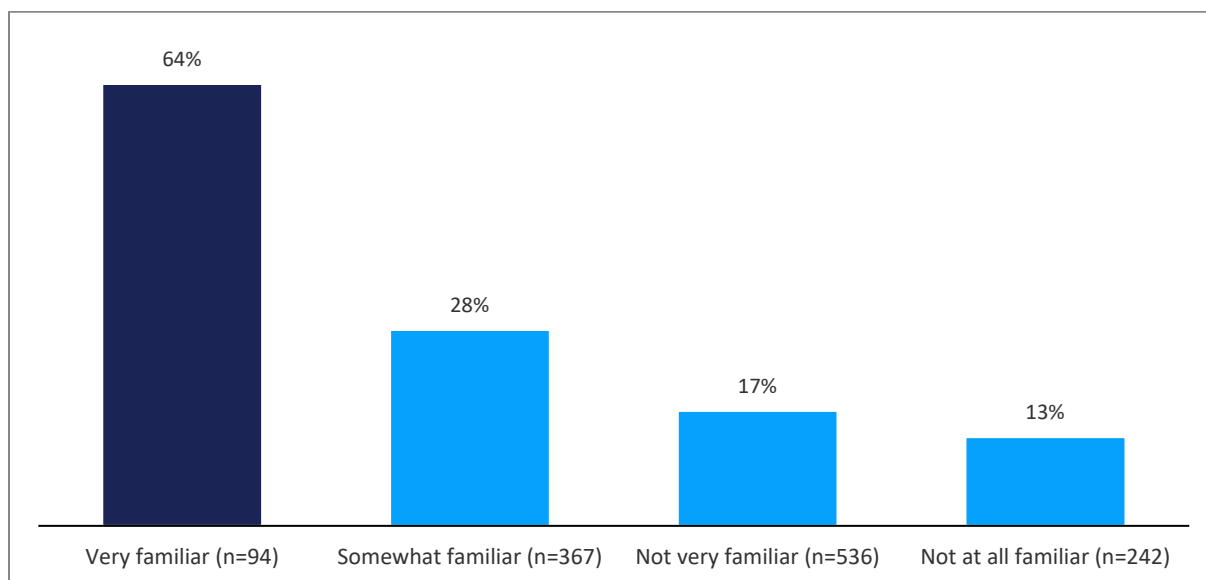


Appeal of working in the water sector (Q36)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Figure 27. “Very appealing”, by familiarity with water-sector careers (Q36 by Q35)



Base: All respondents.



Section 4: Governance, Policy and Investment

These questions cover views on current protection, the roles of different governments, priorities for the federal government and for the Strategy, and support for specific tools and investments.

Canadians are mildly positive about current protection

Three in four Canadians (76%) rate freshwater protection in Canada as somewhat or very good, and 14% say very good. The largest group (63%) says somewhat good. Quebec respondents are the most critical: 31% rate protection as poor, compared with 20% to 25% in other regions.

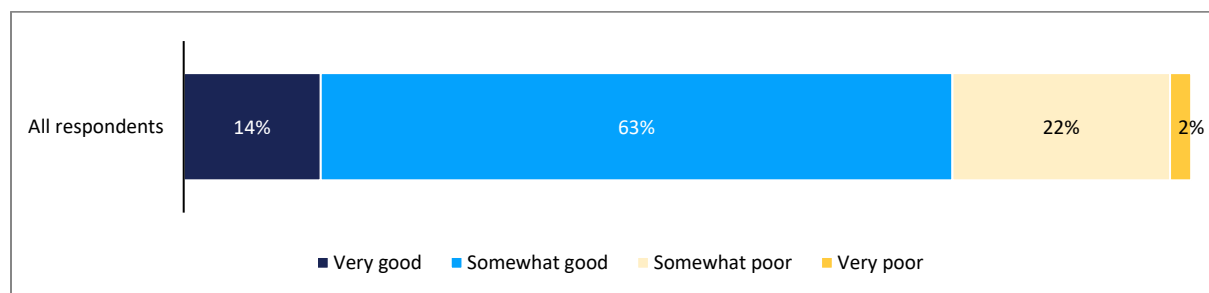
Comparisons with earlier studies need care. The 2021 and 2025 questions included a middle “fair” option, chosen by about a third of respondents, which the 2026 question dropped to force opinion. This change likely explains most of the rise in positive ratings, from 55% in 2021 to 66% in 2025 and 76% in 2026. The top rating changed little: 9% in 2021, 17% in 2025 and 14% in 2026.

Ratings of protection track how much Canadians know about water. Among those who feel extremely informed about freshwater, 41% rate protection very good, compared with 7% of those who feel not very informed. The pattern repeats with familiarity: 49% of Canadians very familiar with water-sector careers rate protection very good, against 8% of those who are not. Knowledge measures move together in this survey, so the same Canadians tend to know their own water source, recognize the water economy and follow the sector. There is one caution, which is that respondents who feel informed choose the strongest option more often on every question in this survey, so part of this gap may reflect how confidently people answer



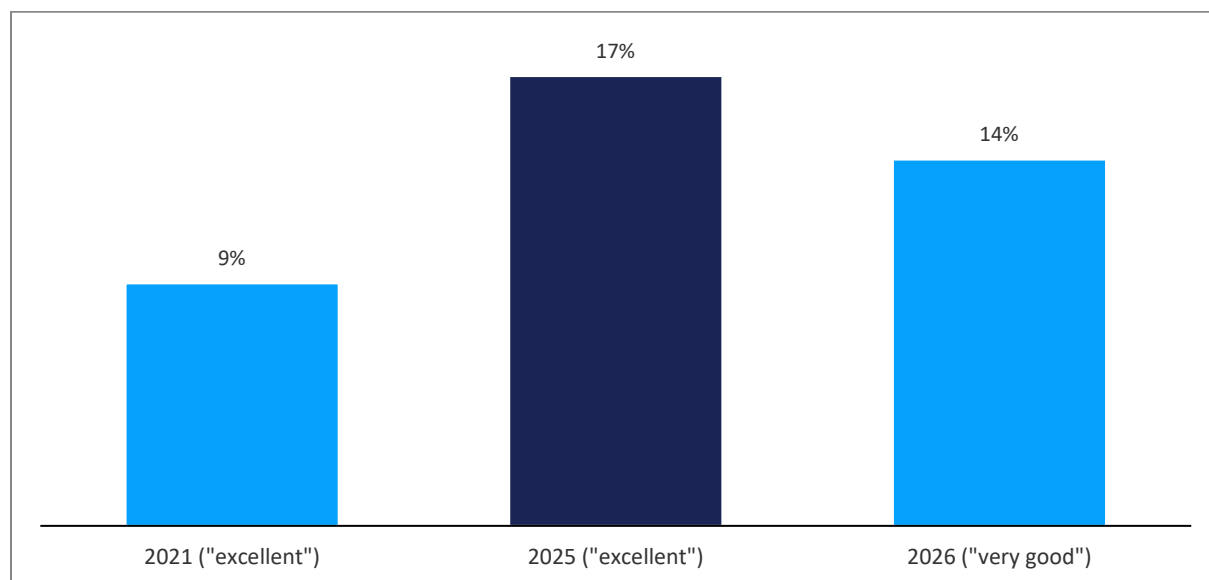
rather than what they think of protection. Most Canadians rate current protection as adequate, so their support for new action appears to rest on the value they place on water rather than on a sense of crisis.

Figure 28. Rating of freshwater protection in Canada (Q38)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Figure 29. Top rating for freshwater protection, 2021, 2025 and 2026



Base: Scales differ: 2021 and 2025 included a "fair" midpoint.

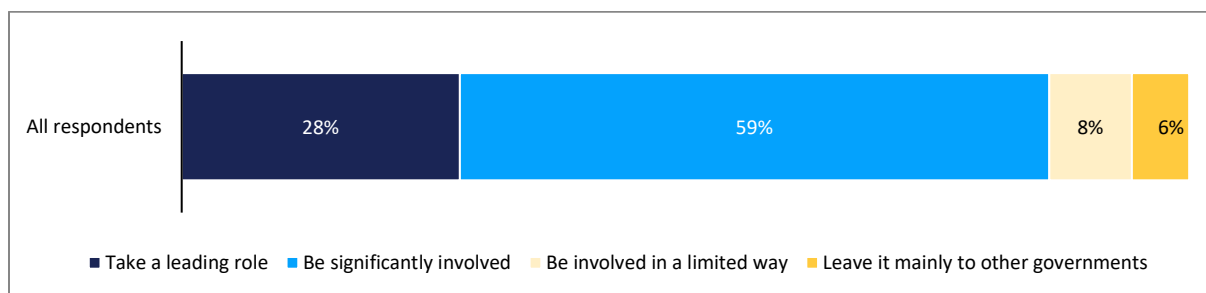


Canadians want federal coordination

Respondents were reminded that freshwater is mainly a provincial and territorial responsibility. They were then asked how much responsibility the federal government should take in coordinating a national approach. Eighty-six per cent want substantial federal involvement: 59% say it should be significantly involved alongside other governments, and 28% say it should take a leading role. Fourteen per cent want a limited federal role or none.

Quebec matches the rest of Canada, with 86% wanting the federal government to lead or be significantly involved. Support for a leading role ranges from 22% in the Prairies to 33% in Ontario.

Figure 30. Federal role in coordinating a national approach to freshwater (Q39)



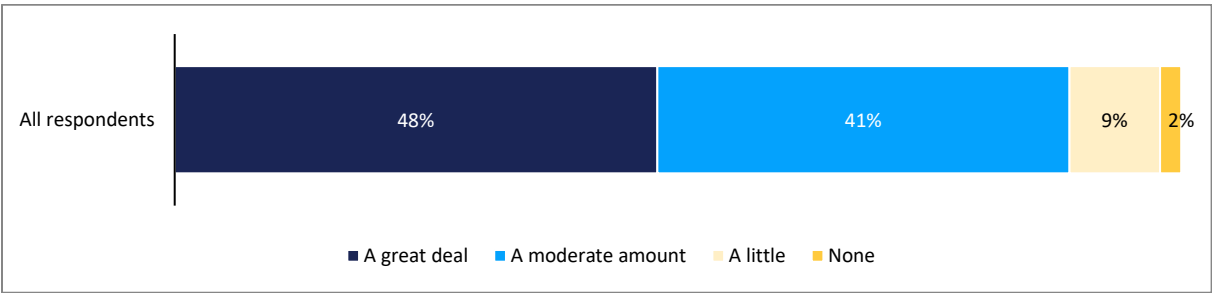
Base: All respondents ($n = 1,239$).



Nine in ten support major investment to leverage external support for freshwater

Respondents were told municipalities manage much of Canada's water infrastructure, such as pipes, treatment plants and sewage systems, often with limited budgets, staff and technical capacity. Eighty-nine per cent say other governments should provide a moderate amount or a great deal of support, and 48% say a great deal. Two per cent say this should remain a municipal responsibility alone. Results are similar across regions. Among Canadians who want a limited federal role or none, 67% still support a moderate amount or a great deal of help for municipalities. Many Canadians appear to treat infrastructure funding as separate from jurisdiction.

Figure 31. Support that other governments should provide to municipalities for water infrastructure (Q40)



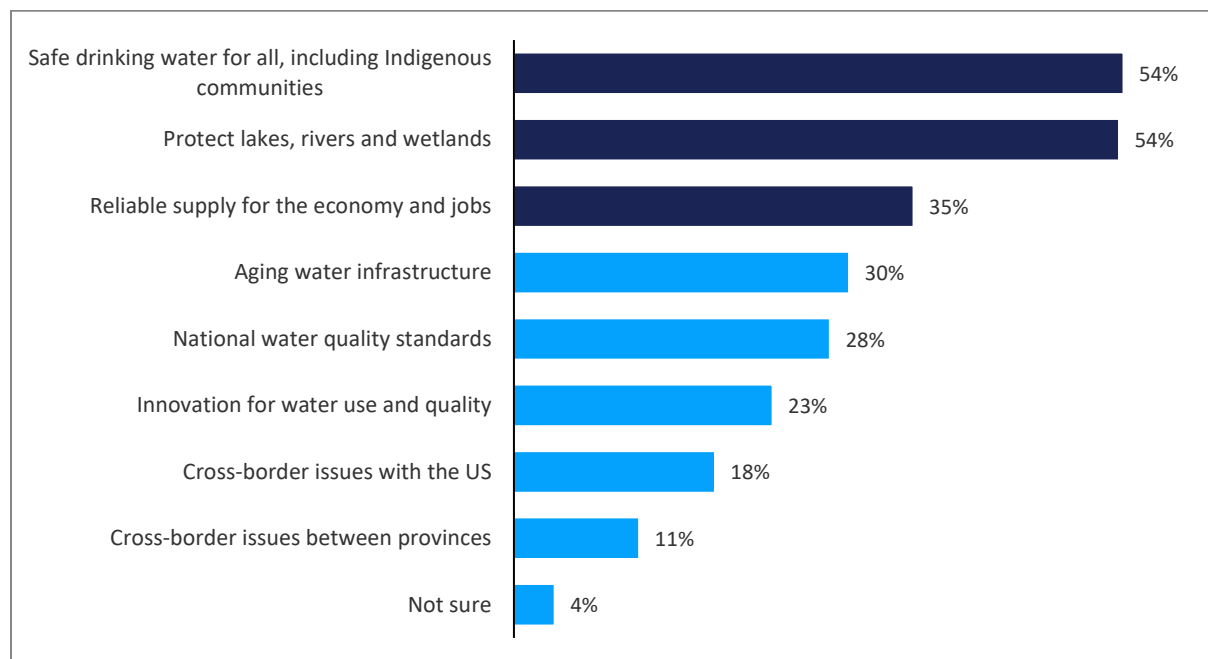
Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Drinking water and ecosystems lead federal priorities

Respondents chose up to three federal priorities for freshwater. Two options lead: safe drinking water for all Canadians, including Indigenous communities (54%), and protecting lakes, rivers and wetlands from pollution and development (54%). A reliable water supply for the economy and jobs is third (35%), followed by aging infrastructure (30%) and national water quality standards (28%). Innovation (23%), cross-border issues with the United States (18%) and cross-border issues between provinces and territories (11%) rank lowest.

Figure 32. Federal government's highest freshwater priorities, select up to three (Q41)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

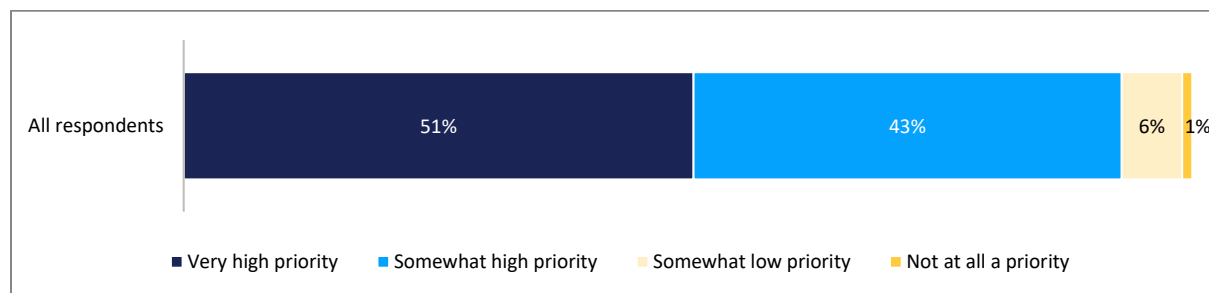


Nine in ten say water security should be a high priority

Respondents were told that water security means making sure Canada has enough clean, reliable freshwater for its people, environment and economy, now and in the future. Ninety-three per cent say it should be a high priority for Canada, and 51% say a very high priority. Seven per cent say a low priority or none.

Support for a very high priority is strongest in Atlantic Canada (65%) and among Canadians aged 55 and over (58%). It is lower in Quebec (45%), the Prairies (46%) and British Columbia (48%). In every region, more than nine in ten place water security in the high-priority range.

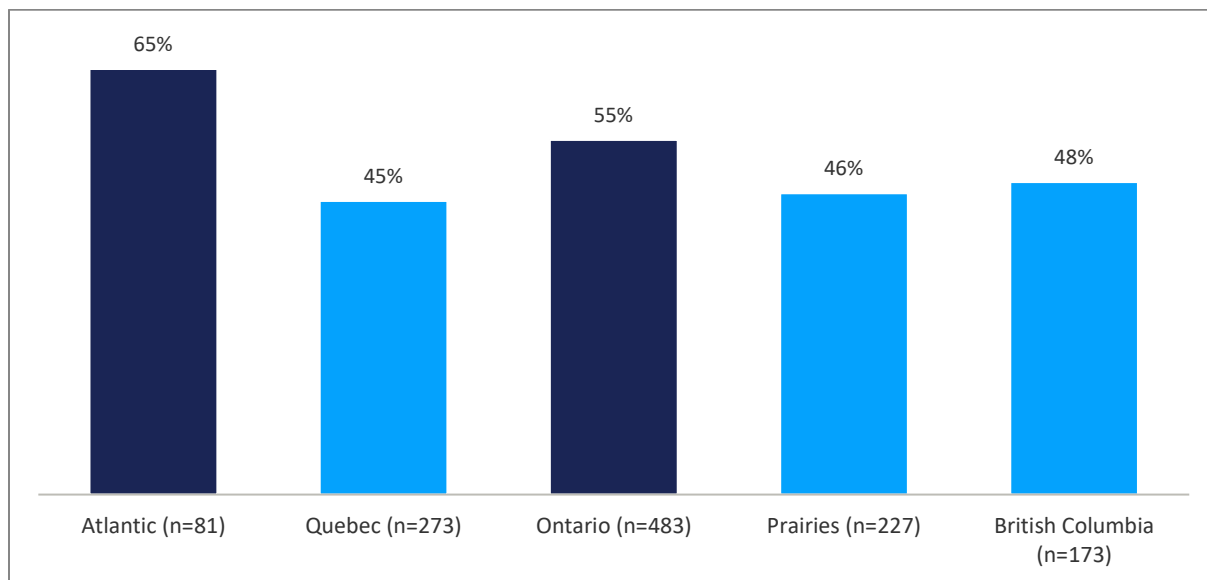
Figure 33. Priority of water security for Canada (Q42)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 34. “Very high priority” for water security, by region (Q42)



Base: All respondents.

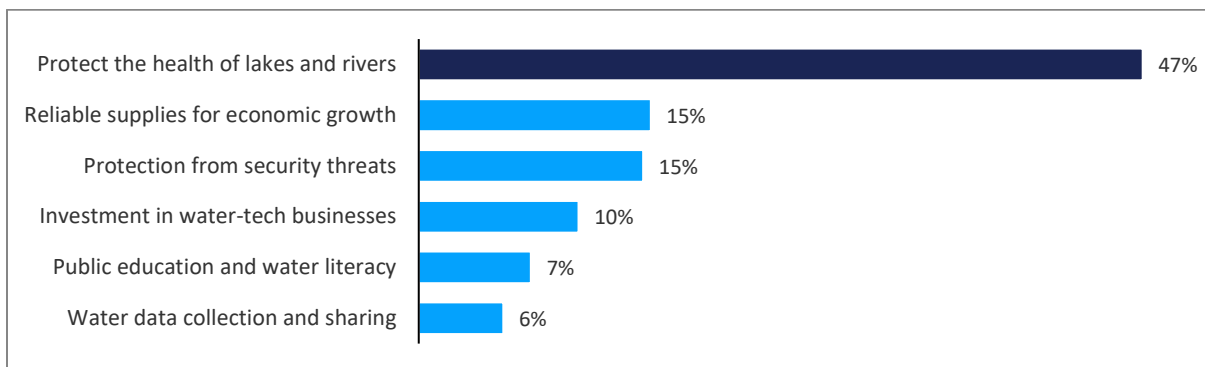


Protecting lakes and rivers is the top choice for the Strategy

Respondents ranked six possible elements of a National Water Security Strategy. Forty-seven per cent rank protecting the health of lakes and rivers first, and its average ranking is almost a full point ahead of the next item. Reliable water supplies for economic growth rank second on average, and investment in water-technology businesses third. Protection from security threats, public education and water literacy, and water data collection follow.

Ecosystem protection leads in every region, by different margins. Sixty per cent rank it first in British Columbia and 56% in the Prairies, compared with 33% in Quebec. Quebec respondents give more weight to security threats and public education, which suggests a different order of priorities.

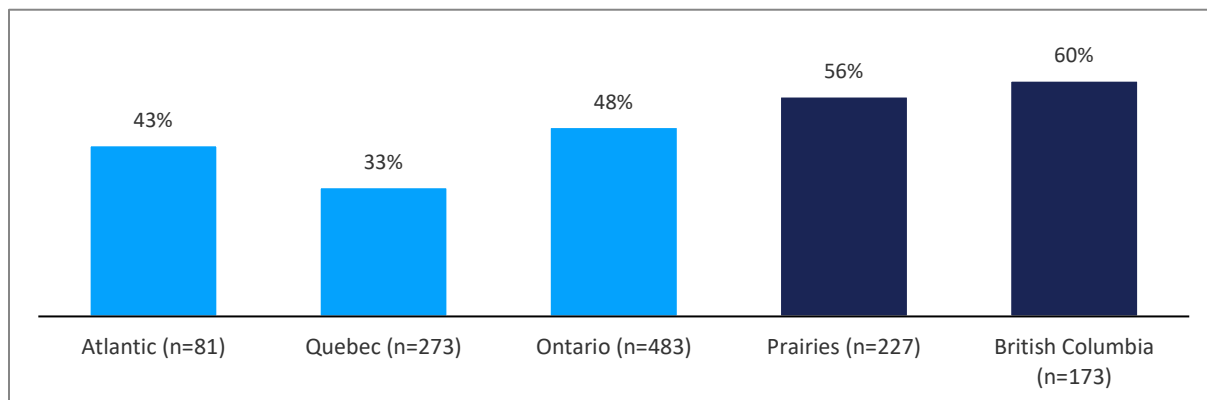
Figure 35. Elements of a National Water Security Strategy, % ranked first (Q43)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 36. Protecting the health of lakes and rivers ranked first, by region (Q43)



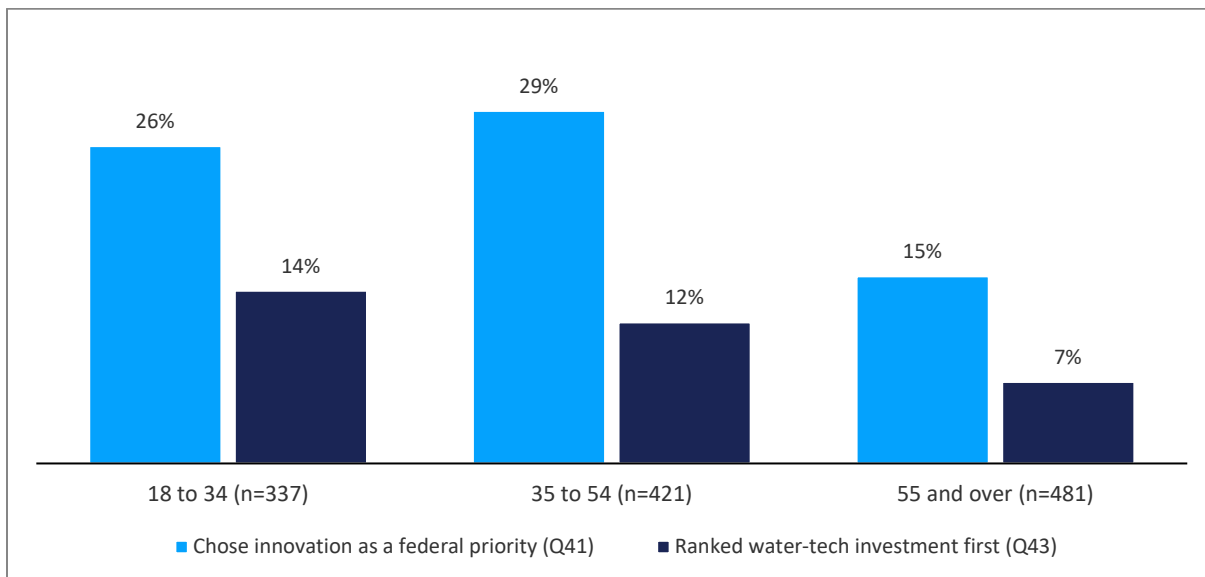
Base: All respondents, territories excluded.



Innovation has a younger base of support

Innovation receives broad support when linked to water security, as the Technology Fund result shows in Figure 46. It ranks lower when it competes with drinking water and ecosystems. Twenty-three per cent choose innovation as a top federal priority, and water-technology investment ranks third of six for the Strategy. Support is concentrated among working-age Canadians. Twenty-six per cent of those aged 18 to 34 and 29% of those aged 35 to 54 choose innovation as a federal priority, compared with 15% of those 55 and over. Fourteen per cent of the youngest group rank water-technology investment first for the Strategy, twice the share of the oldest group (7%).

Figure 37. Support for innovation by age: innovation chosen as a federal priority (Q41) and water-technology investment ranked first for the Strategy (Q43)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

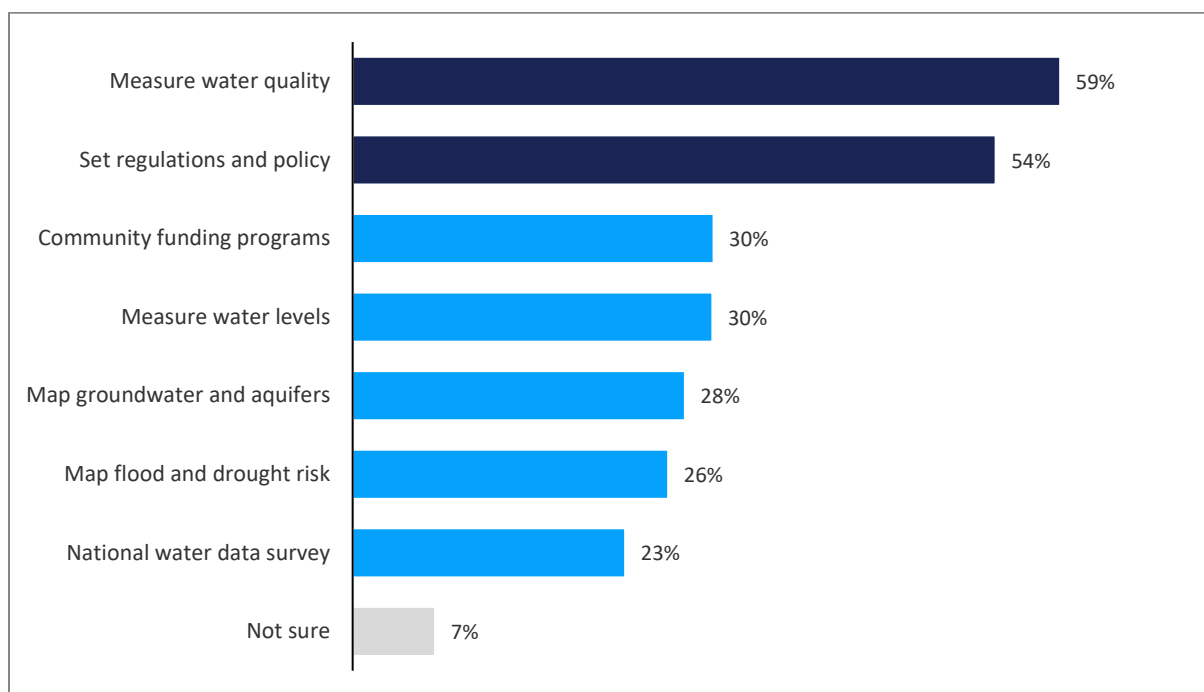


Canadians want the Canada Water Agency to measure and regulate

Respondents were told the Canada Water Agency is a federal agency that helps keep Canada's water safe, clean and well managed. Two functions lead: measuring water quality (59%) and setting regulations and policy (54%). Community funding programs (30%), measuring water levels (30%), mapping groundwater (28%) and mapping flood and drought risk (26%) form a middle group. Managing a national water data survey ranks last (23%), although data supports the other functions.

Personal exposure shifts priorities. Forty per cent of those who expect flooding, drought or extreme weather to affect their home choose flood and drought mapping, compared with 23% of others.

Figure 38. Most important functions for the Canada Water Agency, select up to three (Q44)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



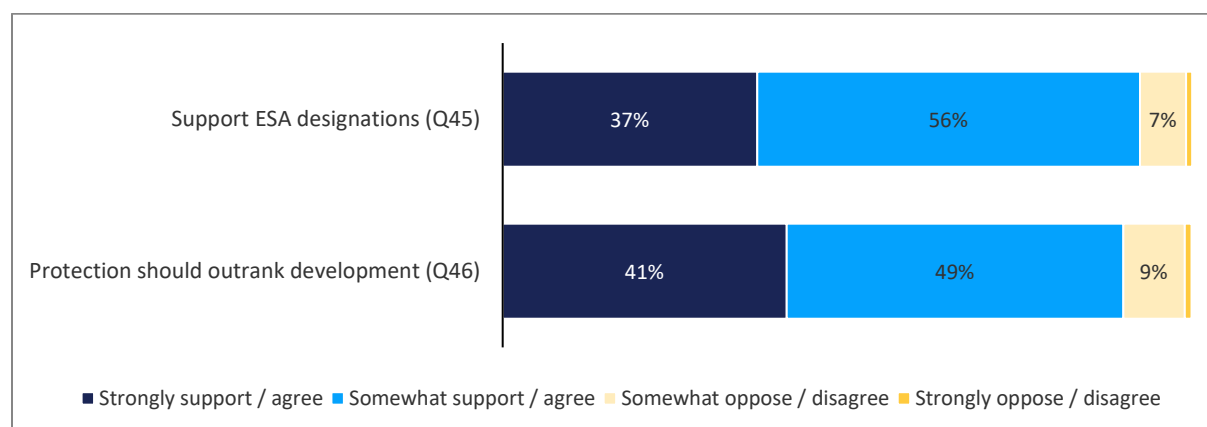
Support for protecting aquatic habitat holds when the cost is explicit

Respondents were told that the Fisheries Act allows the government to protect fish habitat by designating Ecologically Significant Areas. These can restrict some activities other than fishing, and the tool has not yet been used. Ninety-two per cent support its use, and 37% strongly support it. Fewer than 1% strongly oppose it.

Next, respondents were told protection can limit construction, resource extraction or industrial development. Ninety per cent still agree that protecting aquatic ecosystems should take priority, and strong agreement rises to 41%. On many survey questions, support tends to soften once a cost is introduced. Here it rose. This is one of the strongest signs in the survey that support for protection can hold under pressure.

Older Canadians are the most likely to strongly agree (47% of those 55 and over, compared with 36% of those aged 18 to 34).

Figure 39. Support for Ecologically Significant Area designations (Q45) and agreement that protection should take priority over development (Q46)



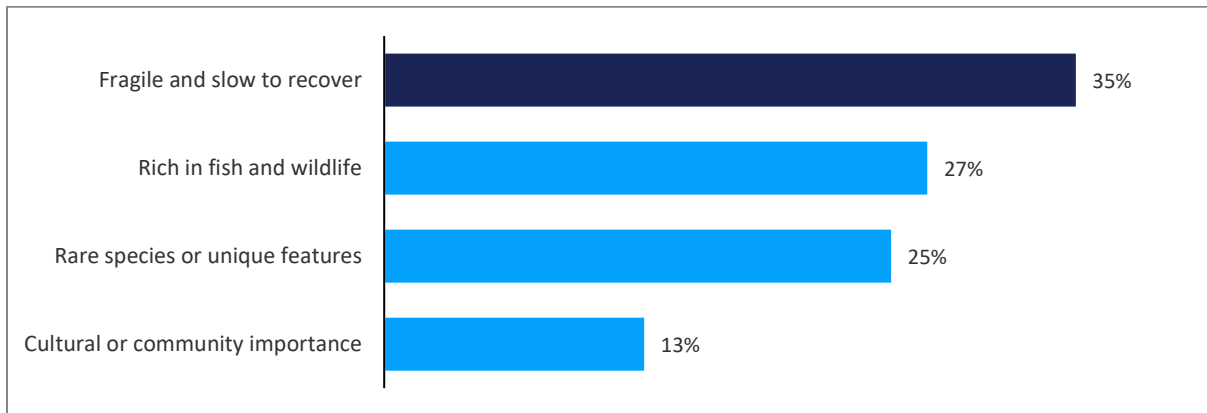
Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Fragility is the leading reason to protect an area

Asked how government should choose areas for stronger protection, Canadians rank three ecological reasons closely: fragile and slow to recover (35% rank it first), rich in fish and wildlife (27%) and rare species or unique features (25%). Thirteen per cent rank cultural or community importance first. Younger Canadians give it about twice the weight: 20% of those aged 18 to 34 rank it first, compared with 10% of those 55 and over.

Figure 40. Reasons to designate an area for stronger protection, % ranked first (Q47)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Most support independent, long-term research

Ninety-three per cent say it is important for Canada to invest in independent, long-term freshwater research, and 53% say extremely important. Fewer than 7% say it is not important, and results are similar across regions.

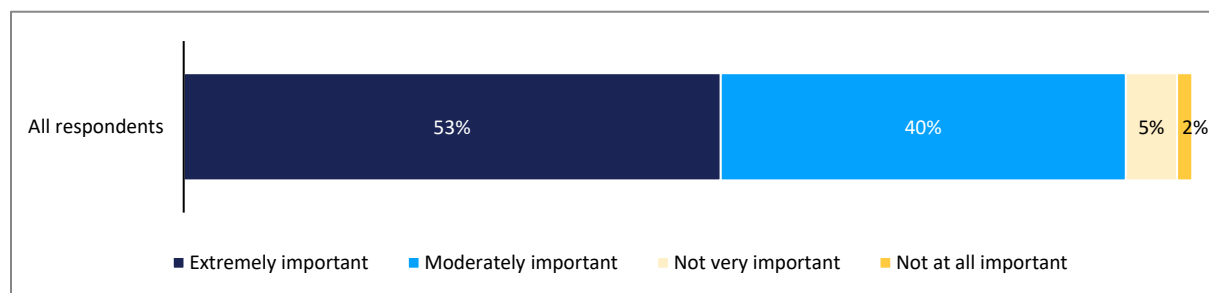
Canadians also value field science; respondents were told about an organization in northwestern Ontario that trains scientists through field research on real lakes.

Ninety-two per cent say this work has value for Canada, and 52% say a great deal.

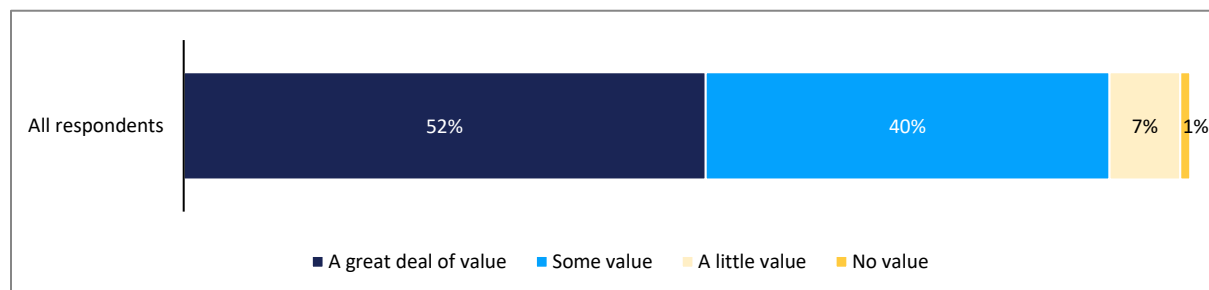
Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to say a great deal (68%).

Figure 42. Importance of investing in independent, long-term freshwater research (Q25), and value of field-based freshwater science training (Q48)

Importance of independent, long-term freshwater research (Q25)



Value of field-based freshwater science training (Q48)



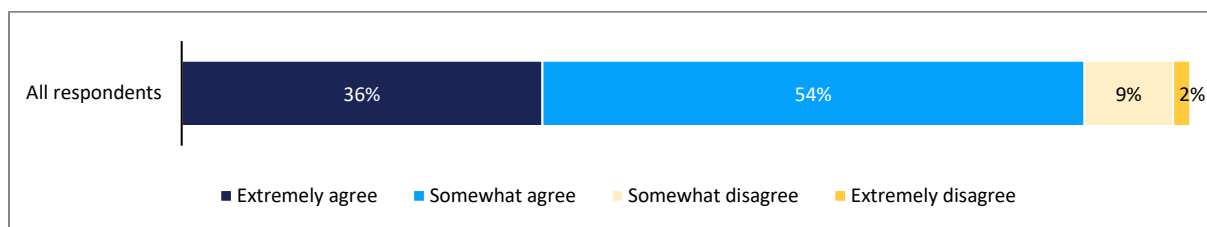
Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Nine in ten support a \$1 billion investment in freshwater

Respondents were told a group of philanthropic funders is calling on the Government of Canada to invest \$1 billion in freshwater and water security, and that provincial, philanthropic and private sources could add to it. Ninety per cent agree Canada should make this investment, and 36% agree extremely. Support is similar across income groups: 89% of those with household incomes under \$60,000 agree, as do 89% of those with incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Figure 45. Agreement that Canada should invest \$1 billion in freshwater and water security (Q51)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

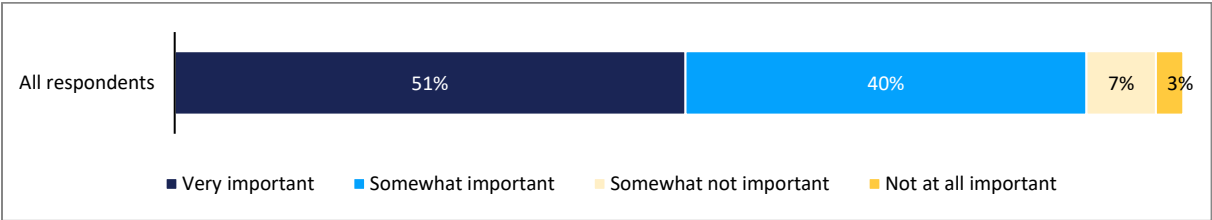


Canadians resoundingly want the Water Security Technology

Fund delivered

Respondents were told that, in the last election, the party now in government promised a \$100-million water security technology fund for Canadian research and development, artificial intelligence, monitoring and data tools. Ninety per cent say it is important for the government to follow through, and 51% say very important. Canadians 55 and over are the most likely to say very important (57%, compared with 45% of those aged 18 to 34).

Figure 46. Importance of following through on the \$100-million Water Security Technology Fund (Q52)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



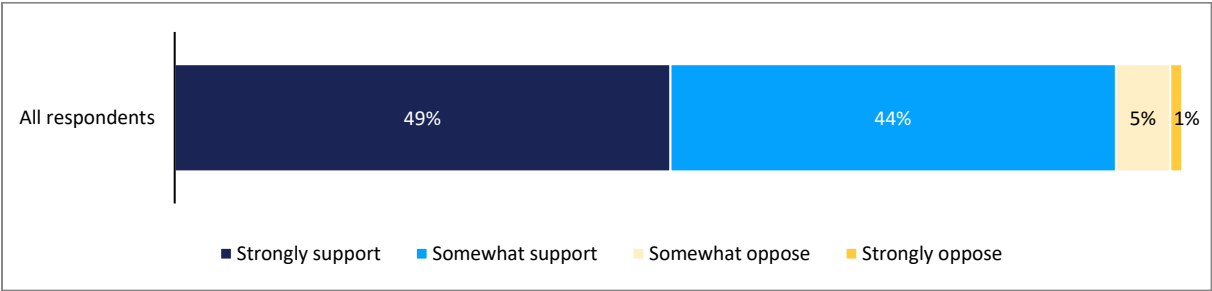
Section 5: Water Rights, Sovereignty and Resource Use

These questions cover minimum river flows, water and sovereignty, flood management, a legal right to water, and the role of Indigenous governments.

Nine in ten support minimum river flows

Respondents were told minimum water flows mean keeping enough water in rivers to sustain the wildlife and plants that depend on them. Ninety-three per cent support this requirement, and 49% strongly support it. Opposition is very low. The question did not mention possible limits on hydro generation, irrigation or municipal water use.

Figure 47. Support for a minimum water flow requirement (Q54)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Many Canadians see water as a matter of sovereignty

Respondents were told Canada's identity and sovereignty are tied to its lakes, rivers and coastal waters, as well as its land. Examples given were the Great Lakes, Arctic waters and waterways central to Indigenous rights. Ninety-three per cent say protecting Canada's water bodies is important to national sovereignty, and 60% say very important. Older Canadians hold this view most strongly (69% of those 55 and over, compared with 50% of those aged 18 to 34). Quebec is lowest (50%, compared with 65% in Ontario).

Views on sovereignty appear to be among the strongest predictors of support for action in the survey. Canadians who say water is very important to sovereignty are 40 to 54 percentage points more likely to give the strongest response on each policy question tested, compared with those who say it is not very important. The question supplied the sovereignty framing, so it measures how readily Canadians accept that framing.

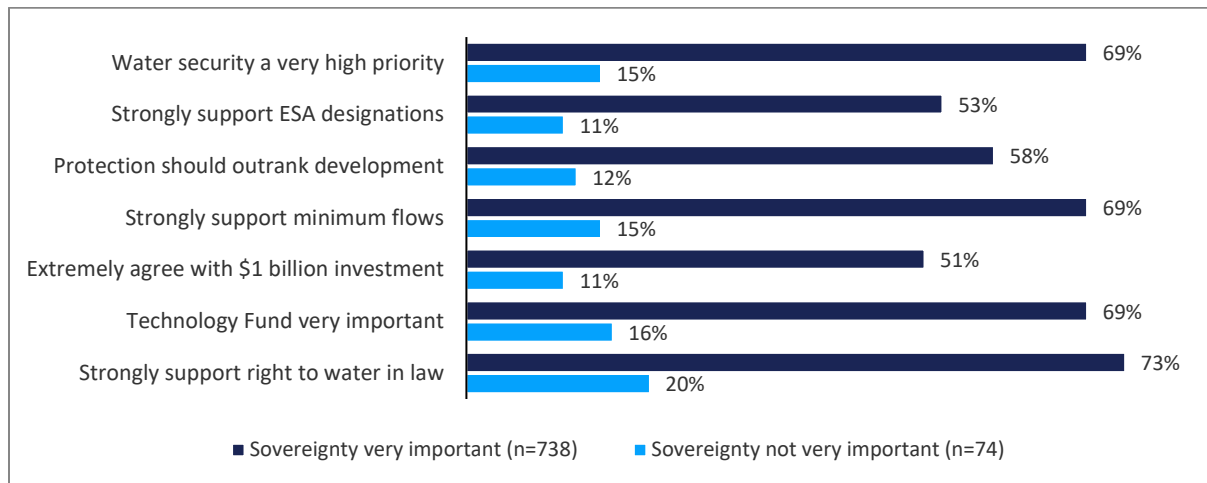
Figure 48. Importance of protecting Canada's water bodies as a matter of national sovereignty (Q55)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 49. Strongest support for policy measures, by view of water as sovereignty (Q55)



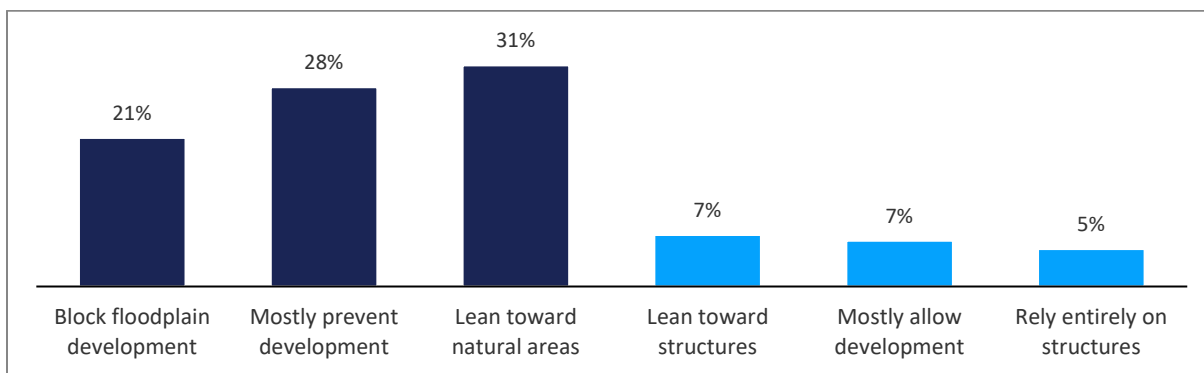
Base: Respondents who rated Q55 "very important" or "not very important".



Canadians favour natural approaches to flood protection

Respondents placed themselves on a six-point scale between two views on flood damage. One favours avoiding floodplain development and protecting natural areas, such as wetlands, that absorb floodwater. The other favours continued development protected by dams, dikes and barriers. Four in five (81%) lean toward natural areas. The most common position is the mildest one on that side, and 21% favour blocking floodplain development entirely. Canadians appear to prefer natural flood management without ruling out physical structures. Canadians 55 and over are the most likely to take the strongest position (27%, compared with 18% of those aged 18 to 34).

Figure 50. Preferred approach to reducing flood damage (Q56)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

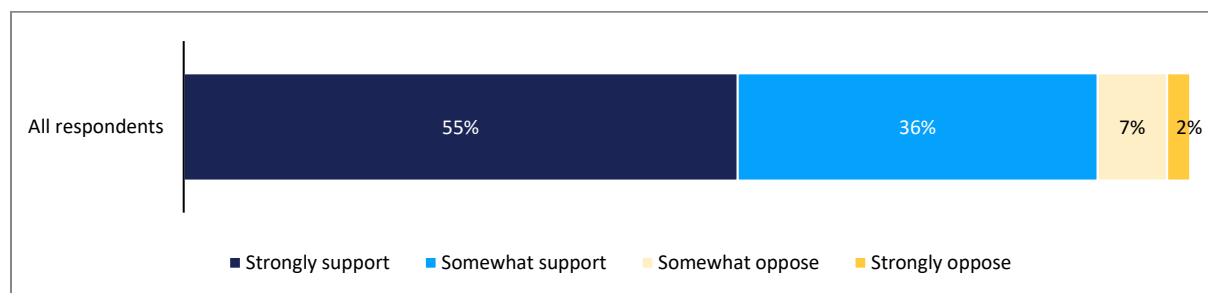


Most support a legal right to safe drinking water

Respondents were told Canada recognized the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation in 2012, and that Quebec is the only province to have written it into law. Ninety-one per cent would support other provinces and territories doing the same, and 55% strongly support it. This is among the highest strong-support results in the survey.

Support is high in every region. Strong support is lowest in Quebec (46%), where the right is already law. Quebec respondents may have read the question as being about other jurisdictions.

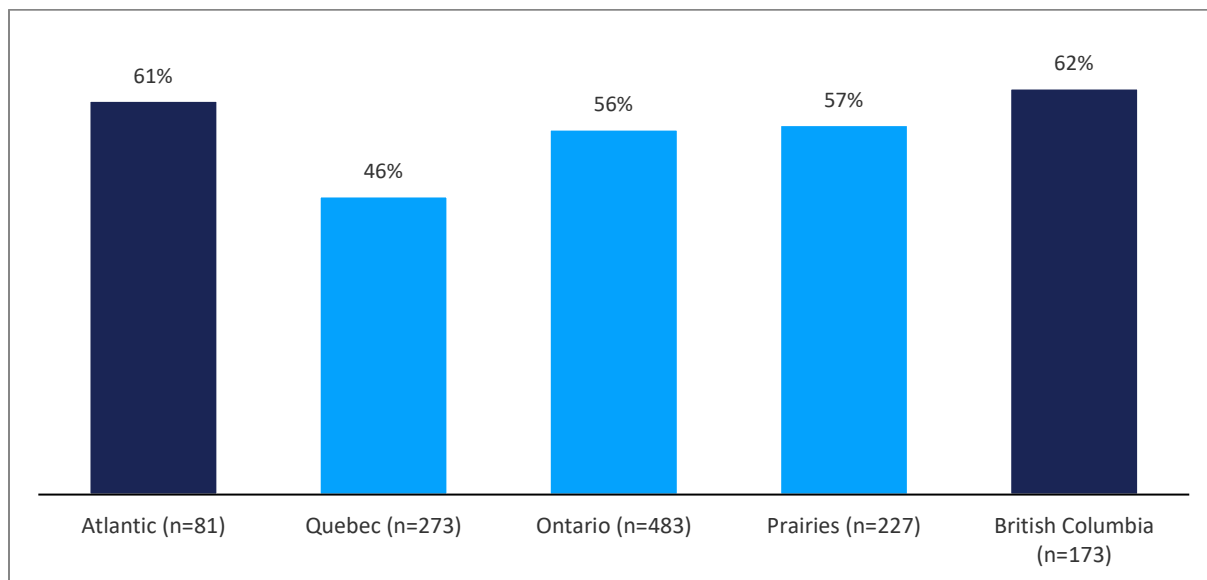
Figure 51. Support for other provinces and territories writing the right to safe drinking water into law (Q58)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 52. “Strongly support”, by region (Q58)



Base: All respondents, territories excluded.

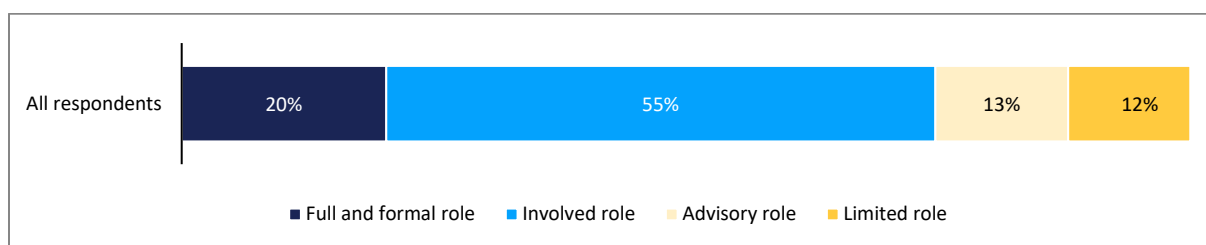


Three in four support a meaningful role for Indigenous governments

Fifty-four per cent favour an involved role for Indigenous governments in water management, alongside federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Twenty per cent favour a full and formal role with decision-making authority. Together, 75% support one of these two roles. A further 13% favour an advisory role, and 12% a limited role.

Younger Canadians are more likely to support a full and formal role: 29% of those aged 18 to 34, 21% of those 35 to 54 and 14% of those 55 and over. A similar age pattern appears in the weight given to cultural and community importance when choosing areas to protect (Figure 41) and to Indigenous stewardship as a reason for research (Figure 43). Support for a limited role is highest in the Prairies (20%).

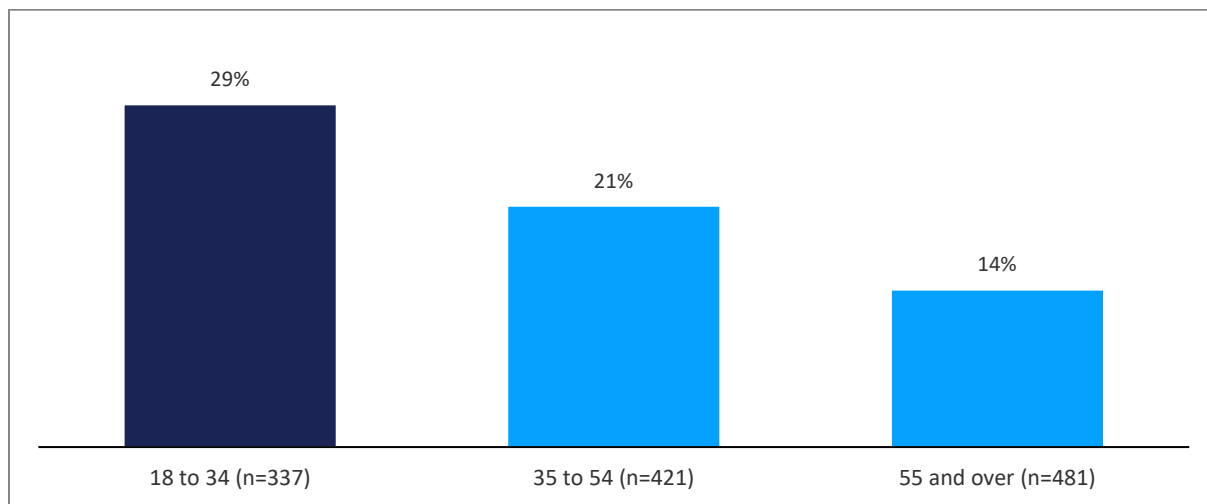
Figure 53. Role Indigenous governments should have in water management (Q59)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Figure 54. Support for a full and formal role, by age (Q59)



Base: All respondents. Note: the Indigenous subsample (n = 47) is too small to report separately.



Section 6: What This Means for the Strategy

This section reads the findings together, drawing on results from across the survey.

A public mandate for action

Ninety-three per cent of Canadians say water security should be a high priority for the Government of Canada, and nine in ten support major investments to secure and protect water, including the \$100-million Water Security Technology Fund. The public mandate for a National Water Security Strategy is broad and has held or grown over five years. It is widest when water security is defined by a comprehensive perspective of people, the environment and the economy. Together with the rising economic value Canadians place on water, this suggests that framing water security as part of economic security would match how many Canadians already see the issue. Personal connection to water is one of the strongest correlates of concern, so the Strategy may resonate most where it touches water Canadians know.



Protecting the basics: safe drinking water and healthy ecosystems

Safe drinking water and healthy lakes and rivers are at the core of what Canadians expect from water security. They lead the questions that ask Canadians to choose, across regions and age groups. Support for habitat designations, minimum flows and a legal right to water is very high, and it held when respondents were told protection may limit development. Canadians appear to expect the Strategy to use the protection tools governments already have, and show little resistance to the trade-offs involved.

Water security and the economy

Canadians accept that water security is an economic issue, mostly in household terms: bills, groceries, restrictions and access to safe water. The role of water in agriculture, manufacturing and employment is less visible, and awareness sits mainly with people close to the sector. Arguments about reliable supply are already understood. Arguments about jobs and industry may need more explanation to reach the general public. Support for major investment is broad and does not vary with income. Agreement with the \$1 billion investment runs at 89% among Canadians in households under \$60,000 and 89% among those at \$100,000 or more, and the same flat pattern holds for water security as a priority and for protecting lakes and rivers. Support is strongest when investment is tied to security and to commitments already made.



Water literacy: an untapped workforce and a public that wants to learn

The water sector has a workforce opportunity that most Canadians cannot see. Nearly two in three (63%) are unfamiliar with the careers that exist in Canada's water sector, and 8% are very familiar. Once the work is described, from drinking water and wastewater treatment to monitoring, engineering, research and policy, three in four (75%) find it at least somewhat appealing. Appeal rises sharply with familiarity: 64% of those who already know the sector find it very appealing, compared with 13% of those who do not. Interest in the work appears to be widespread. Knowledge of it is not. The survey measured awareness and appeal rather than hiring needs or labour supply, so it shows where public understanding is thin rather than how many workers the sector requires.

The same gap runs through how Canadians understand water and the economy. Only 22% were very aware of the link between freshwater and Canada's prosperity before the survey, rising to 65% among Canadians familiar with water careers and falling to 9% among those who are not. Eleven per cent expect water issues to affect local jobs, and 17% choose protecting jobs and industries as a reason to invest in research. Canadians who know the sector understand its economic role. Everyone else tends not to.

Canadians describe the shortfall in their own knowledge in similar terms. Half (51%) do not feel well informed about the state of freshwater in Canada. More than a third (37%) do not know where their own tap water comes from, rising to 45% of renters and 59% of adults aged 18 to 24. The gap is largest among urban, younger and



renting Canadians, for whom water arrives and leaves out of sight. Self-rated knowledge has changed little since 2021.

Canadians want this addressed through schools. Two in three (66%) think schools do not prepare young people well to understand water issues and their role in protecting freshwater, and 6% say schools do this very well. Eighty-six per cent say water literacy for young Canadians should be a high federal priority. Parents of children under 18 are more engaged with water on adjacent measures, being more familiar with water-sector careers (51%, compared with 31%) and more likely to choose innovation and water data as federal priorities. They are no more likely than other Canadians to want water education prioritized. Canadians appear to treat water literacy as a public good rather than a parental concern.

Water education ranks lower when it competes directly with protection and supply, placing fifth of six elements for the Strategy. Canadians appear to treat education as a way to secure water rather than as an end in itself. Better-informed Canadians are consistently more concerned and more supportive of protection and investment, so water literacy may be one of the conditions that sustains public support for everything else in the Strategy. It also has a measurable audience. Canadians under 35 report the most familiarity with water careers (54%, compared with 27% of those 55 and over) and give the most weight to water-technology investment, while knowing the least about their own water supply.

Research, data and innovation

Canadians strongly support investment in knowledge about water. Ninety-three per cent say independent, long-term freshwater research is important, and 92% see



value in field-based science training. Data and monitoring rank low as standalone choices, with a national water data survey last of the Canada Water Agency's functions, so Canadians may understand their value best through the protection and safety outcomes they support. Innovation performs the same way. It draws wide support when tied to water security and to commitments already made, and ranks lower when set against drinking water and ecosystems.

Governance and partnership

Canadians want shared, coordinated water governance, with the federal government bringing other governments together. Most agree that municipalities need help to maintain water infrastructure, and most support a meaningful Indigenous role. Support for full Indigenous decision-making authority is higher in each younger age group. Sovereignty is the frame most strongly linked to support for specific measures.

Differences by age

Age is the clearest line of difference in the survey, and it runs in two directions. Older Canadians know more about water and are more protective of it. Seventy-two per cent of those 55 and over know the source of their household water, compared with 52% of those aged 18 to 34; 79% call protecting lakes and rivers a high priority, compared with 63%; and 69% call water central to national sovereignty, compared with 50%. Younger Canadians are more open to new arrangements. Twenty-nine per cent of those aged 18 to 34 support a full and formal role for Indigenous governments, compared with 14% of those 55 and over; 26% choose innovation as a federal priority, compared with 15%; and 20% rank cultural or community importance



first when choosing areas to protect, compared with 10%. A Strategy that speaks to both groups would pair protection with the newer commitments younger Canadians favour.

Differences by region

Quebec differs from the rest of Canada in a consistent way. It ranks freshwater highest among natural resources and oil and gas lowest: 45% place freshwater first, the highest share of any region, and 18% place oil and gas first, the lowest. It is also the most critical of current protection, with 31% rating it poor, compared with 20% to 25% elsewhere. Quebec is lowest on the sovereignty framing, at 50% very important against 58% to 65% elsewhere. It also orders the Strategy differently, ranking protection of lakes and rivers first least often (33%, compared with 60% in British Columbia) and giving more weight to economic supply, security threats and public education. Quebec appears to treat water as a resource to be managed rather than a national symbol.



Appendix A: Extended Methodology

Survey design

The questionnaire builds on earlier Canadian freshwater research, including the 2021 ECCC study and the 2025 follow-up commissioned by AquaAction. It has 54 questions in six parts: respondent profile; importance of freshwater; personal stake, connection and concern; knowledge, education and careers; governance, policy and investment; and water rights, sovereignty and resource use. It included an attention check. Five questions use drag-to-rank, four allow up to three choices, and the rest are single-choice scales. The survey was available in English and French. The respondent panel was contracted through Cint Inc.

Fieldwork

The survey ran online from 20 to 31 August 2026. Respondents were Canadian residents aged 18 and over, recruited from an online research panel operated by Cint Inc. Quotas for region, age and gender were set against the 2021 Census. The median completion time was 12.5 minutes.

Sample and data cleaning

Of 1,500 surveys started, 1,239 were completed. The 261 partial responses are excluded. Of the completes, 1,000 were in English and 239 in French. About four in five French-language respondents live in Quebec, and about three in ten Quebec respondents answered in English.

Quality control

Completed responses were screened with four quality rules:



- speeding (completion time well below the median)
- straight-lining (the same answer across a grid of questions)
- low variation across a grid combined with a fast completion time
- leaving two or more ranking questions in their default order

There was also an attention check, which asked respondents to type a word in capital letters. Respondents who did not complete it accurately exited the survey immediately, and their responses were not recorded.

Weighting

Results are unweighted. The sample closely matches the population on the quota variables (Table A1). Weighting was tested directly. Raking on region, age and gender across twelve sets of population targets moved each headline figure by less than 1.5 percentage points, and most by less than 0.5 points. Adding education moved no figure by more than about 1.2 points. Thus, weighting would not change the conclusions of this report.

Margin of error and statistical testing

Respondents came from an opt-in online panel, so a margin of sampling error cannot be calculated. For comparison, a probability sample of 1,239 would carry a margin of error of plus or minus 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Group differences are reported when they are statistically significant at $p < .01$. Most of those reported are also large: at least 12 percentage points on categorical questions, or at least 0.35 on the average ranking score for ranking questions. Smaller differences are reported where they add context to a result, and the text says when a difference is not statistically significant.



Reporting conventions

- Percentages use all 1,239 respondents unless another base is shown. Q22 was asked only of the 821 respondents with a connection to a water body.
- Text and charts round to the nearest whole number. Combined figures, such as “very” plus “somewhat”, use the underlying counts and may differ by a point from the sum of rounded parts.
- Ranking questions show the share ranking each item first. The average ranking score is reported where useful. It equals the number of items minus the mean rank, so a higher score means a higher ranking.
- Regions are Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia. National results include the two respondents from the territories. Regional comparisons exclude them, because the sample size was not large enough to draw conclusions for those areas.

Limitations

- Opt-in panels may under-represent people who are less active online or less interested in the topic.
- Self-rated knowledge (Q24) measures confidence, not tested knowledge.
- The Atlantic sample ($n = 81$) supports indicative comparisons only.
- The Prairie sample is 67% large urban and may not reflect rural Prairie opinion.
- The Indigenous subsample ($n = 47$) is too small to report separately. The survey did not ask whether respondents live in an Indigenous community.
- The territories are not represented ($n = 2$).
- Some questions supplied context before asking for a view (see Survey design). Results on those questions reflect the question as framed.



Table A1. Sample composition compared with the 2021 Census

Region (territories excluded): Ontario 39.0% (Census 38.5%); Quebec 22.1% (23.1%); Prairies 18.4% (18.3%); British Columbia 14.0% (13.6%); Atlantic 6.5% (6.5%).

Age: 18 to 24, 9.4% (10.1%); 25 to 34, 17.8% (16.6%); 35 to 44, 17.8% (16.5%); 45 to 54, 16.2% (15.7%); 55 to 64, 17.4% (17.5%); 65 and over, 21.4% (23.6%).

Gender: Female 52.4% (50.8%); Male 47.6% (49.2%). Five respondents who chose another option are excluded from this comparison.

Born in Canada 74.8% (74.5%); immigrated 25.2% (25.5%, including non-permanent residents).

Bachelor's degree or higher 37.7% (32.9% of adults aged 25 to 64).

Owns home 57.6% (66.5% of households); rents 42.4% (33.5%). The Census measures households, while the survey measures individuals.



Table A2. Other respondent characteristics (no comparable Census figure)

Community size: large city (100,000+) 56%; mid-sized city 23%; small town or rural 20%.

Household income: under \$60,000 41%; \$60,000 to \$99,999 28%; \$100,000 or more 30%.

Parent status: not a parent 55%; parent of a child under 18 30%; parent of adult children only 15%.

Survey language: English 81%; French 19%.

Employment: working 61%; retired 23%; student 3%; other or not working 13%.

Ethnic and cultural background (select all that apply): White or European 70%; Black 9%; East Asian 6%; South Asian 5%; Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) 4%; Southeast Asian 4%; Arab 2%; Latin American 2%; West Asian 1%; another background 2%. Three per cent selected more than one category.

Years in Canada (respondents who immigrated, n = 312): 20 years or more 45%; 10 to 19 years 19%; 5 to 9 years 19%; 1 to 4 years 16%; less than 1 year 1%.

Children in the household (parents and guardians, n = 556): under 5, 17%; 5 to 8, 18%; 9 to 12, 21%; 13 to 17, 29%; 18 and over, 41%. Number of children: one 20%; two 17%; three 7%; four or more 2%.

Every demographic question is reported here or in the respondent profile: province or territory (Q2), community size (Q3), age (Q4), gender (Q5), ethnic and cultural background (Q6), immigration (Q7), years in Canada (Q8), education (Q9),

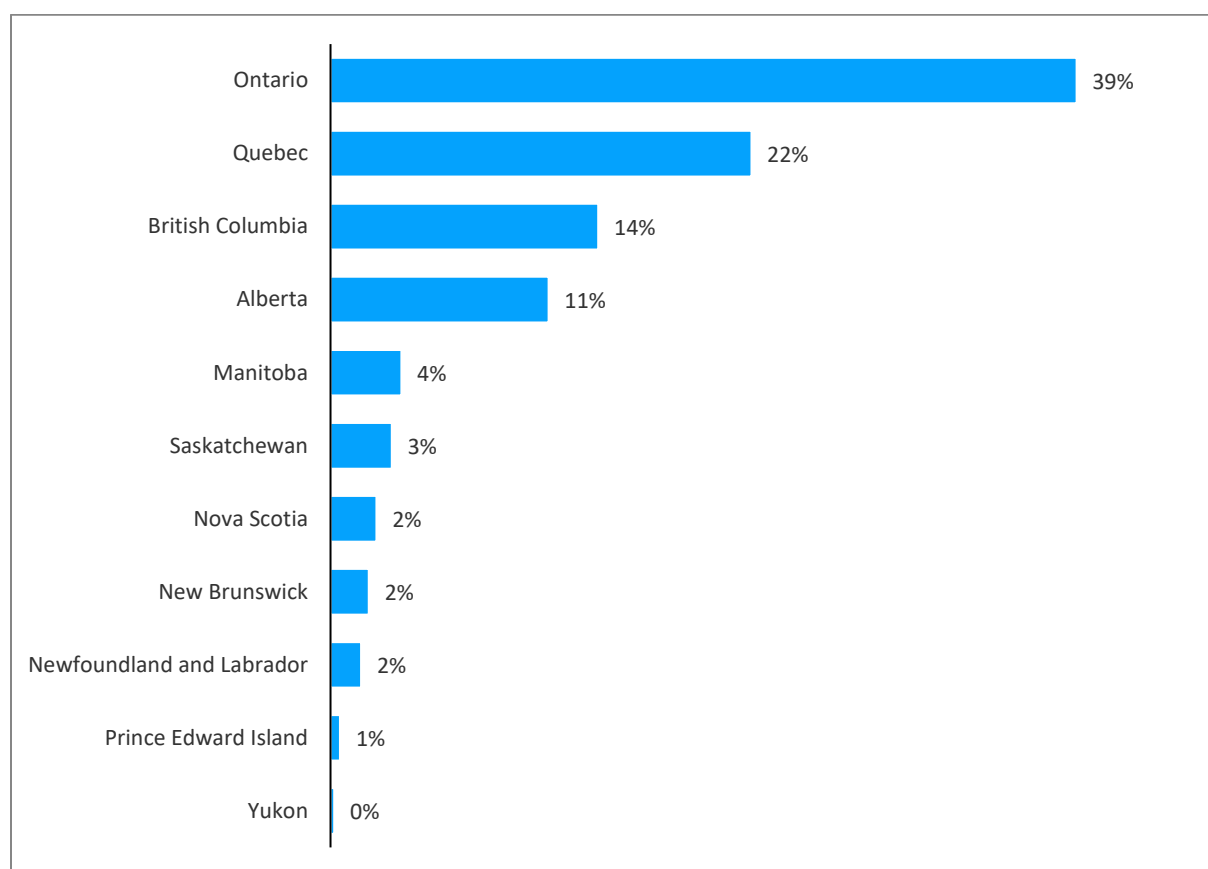


employment (Q10), household income (Q11), housing (Q12), parent or guardian status (Q13) and ages of children (Q14).

Sample composition in detail

The charts below give the full distribution for each demographic question, with the notes that apply to the analysis.

Figure 55. Province or territory (Q2)

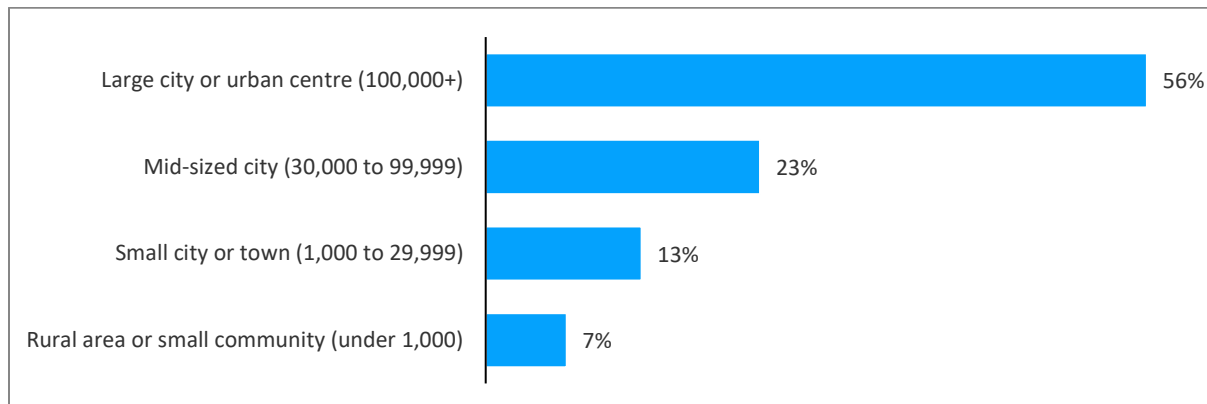


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Provinces are grouped into five regions for analysis: Ontario, Quebec, the Prairies, British Columbia and Atlantic Canada. The two Yukon respondents are included in national results and excluded from regional comparisons.



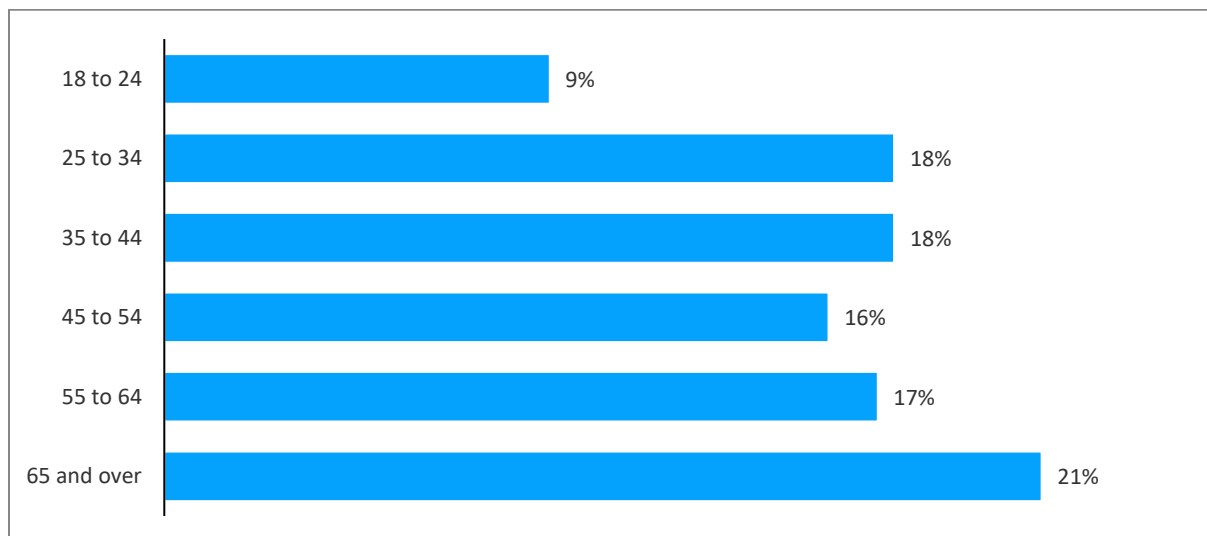
Figure 56. Description of the area where respondents live (Q3)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

One in five respondents lives in a small town or rural area. The two smallest categories are combined for analysis, since each is too small on its own to carry stable estimates. This measure is self-assessed, so it is not comparable with Census population centres.

Figure 57. Age (Q4)

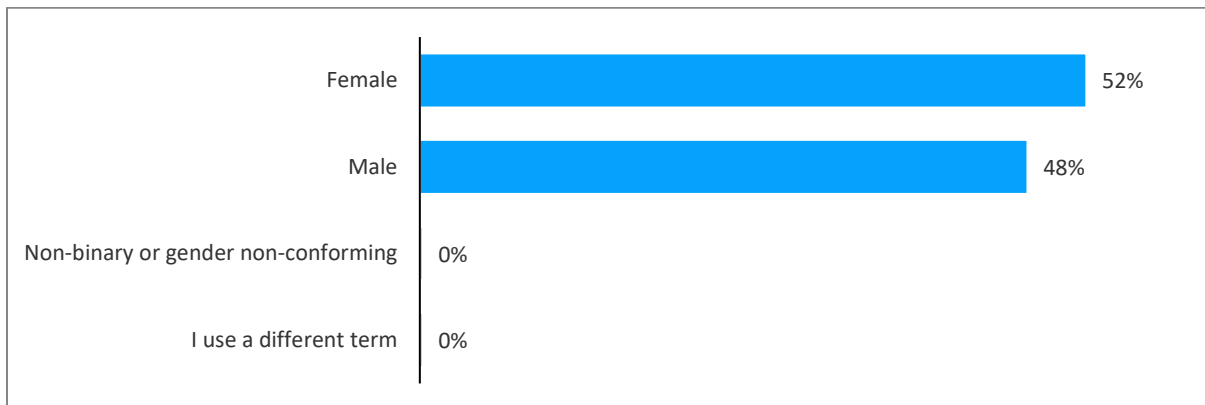


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Age is grouped into three bands for analysis: 18 to 34, 35 to 54, and 55 and over. The 18 to 24 group (n = 116) is small, so the three-band grouping carries the age comparisons in this report.

Figure 58. Gender (Q5)

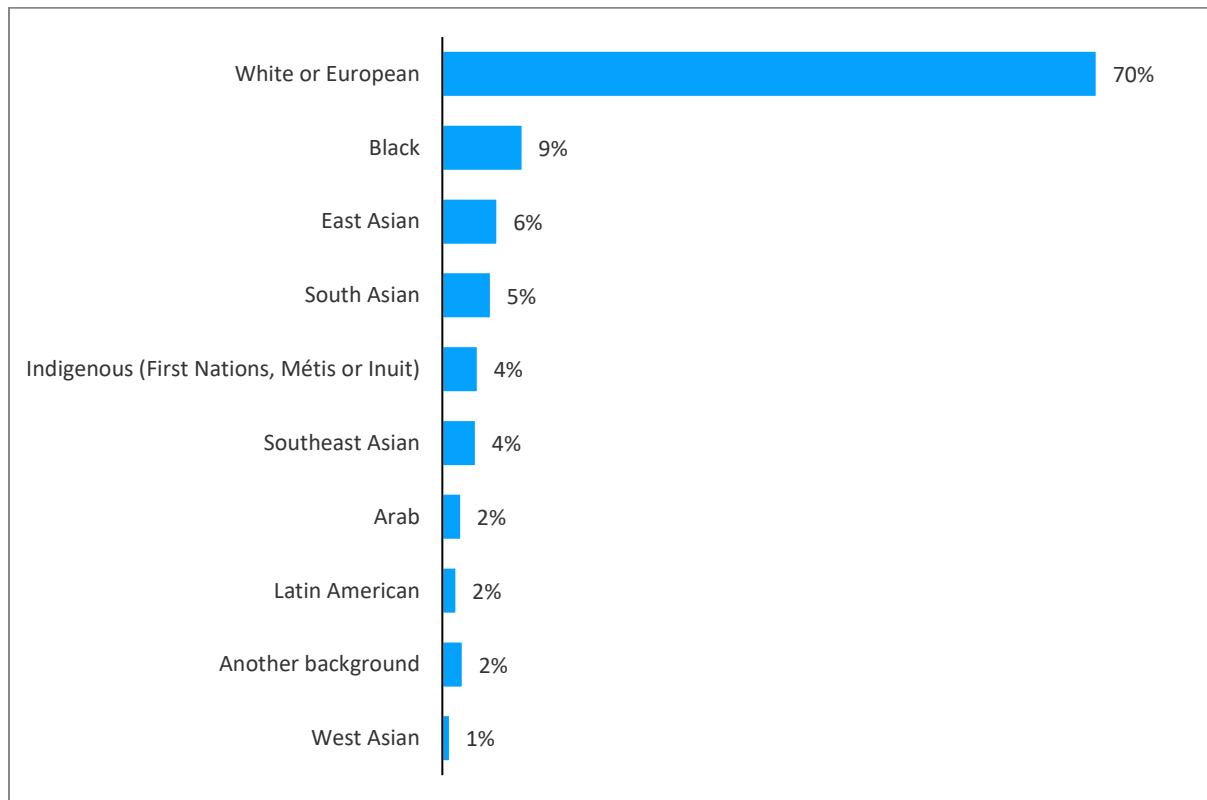


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Five respondents selected an option outside female and male, too few to report separately.



Figure 59. Ethnic and cultural background (Q6)

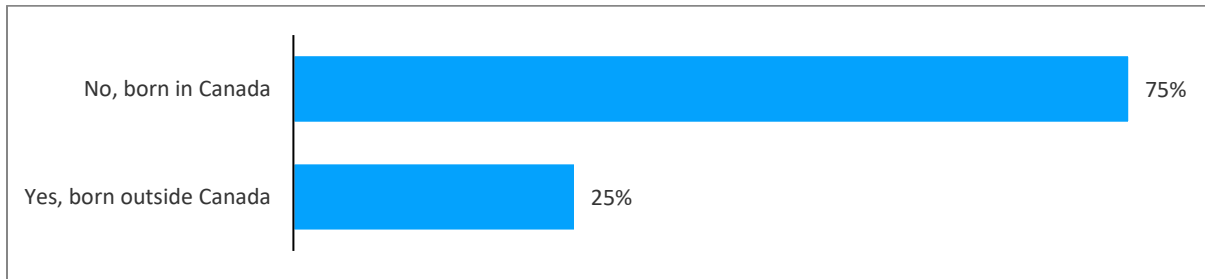


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239). Respondents could select more than one option, so shares total more than 100%.

Three per cent of respondents selected more than one category. The survey used its own categories, which do not map onto Census groupings, so these shares show coverage rather than a Census-matched comparison. The Indigenous subsample (n = 47) supports a directional reading only. The survey did not ask whether respondents live in an Indigenous community, which limits what can be said about drinking water access for those communities.



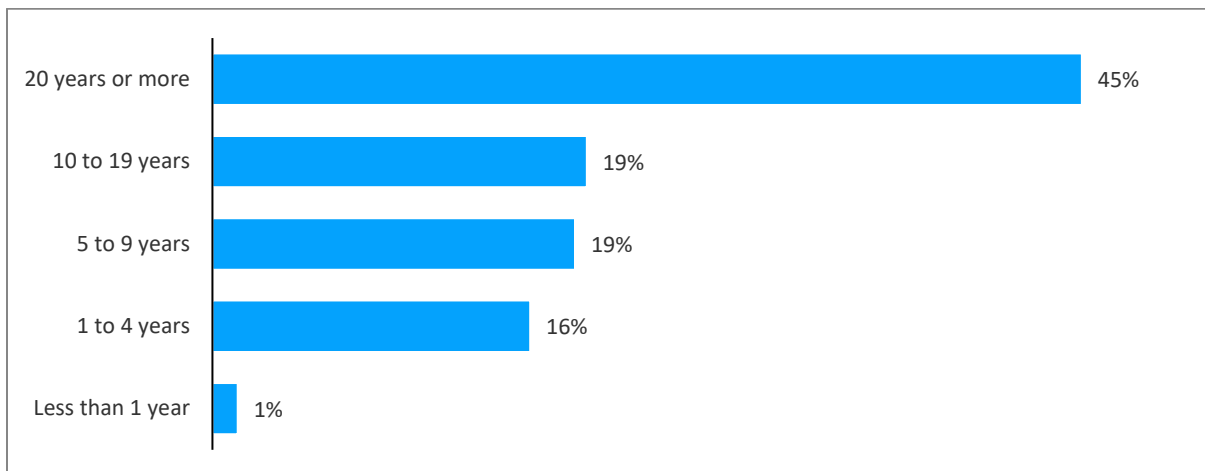
Figure 60. Immigrant to Canada (Q7)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

A quarter of the sample was born outside Canada, close to the Census figure of 25.5% for immigrants and non-permanent residents combined.

Figure 61. Years in Canada (Q8)

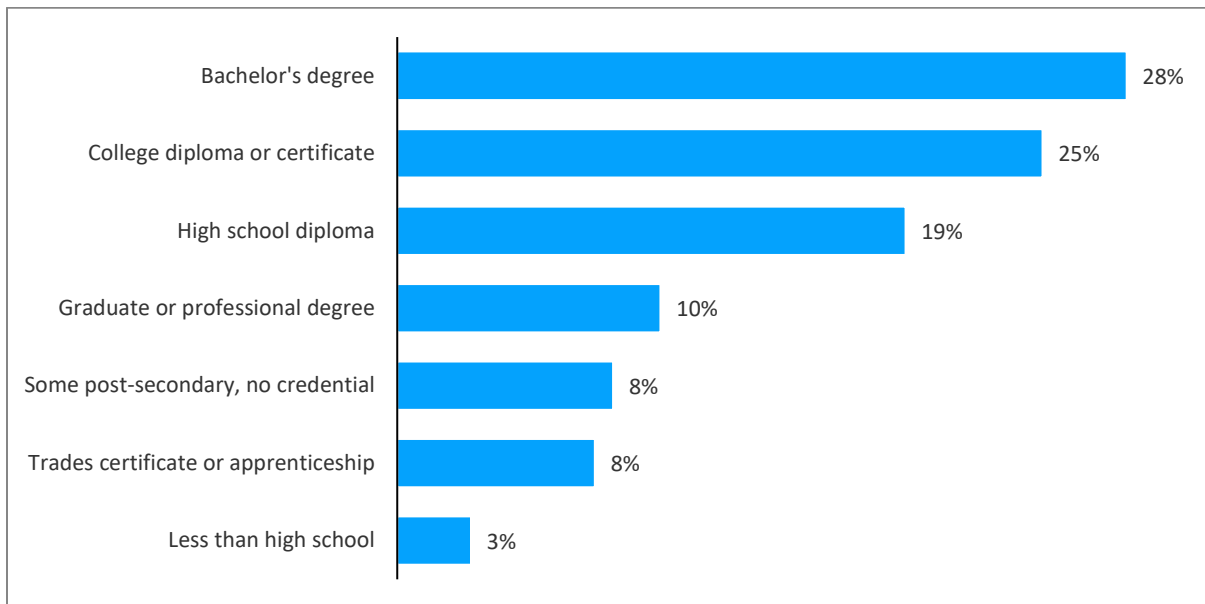


Base: Respondents who immigrated to Canada (n = 312).

The immigrant subsample skews to the long settled, with nearly two-thirds in Canada for a decade or more. Recent arrivals (n = 55 for those under five years) are too few for separate analysis.



Figure 62. Highest level of education completed (Q9)

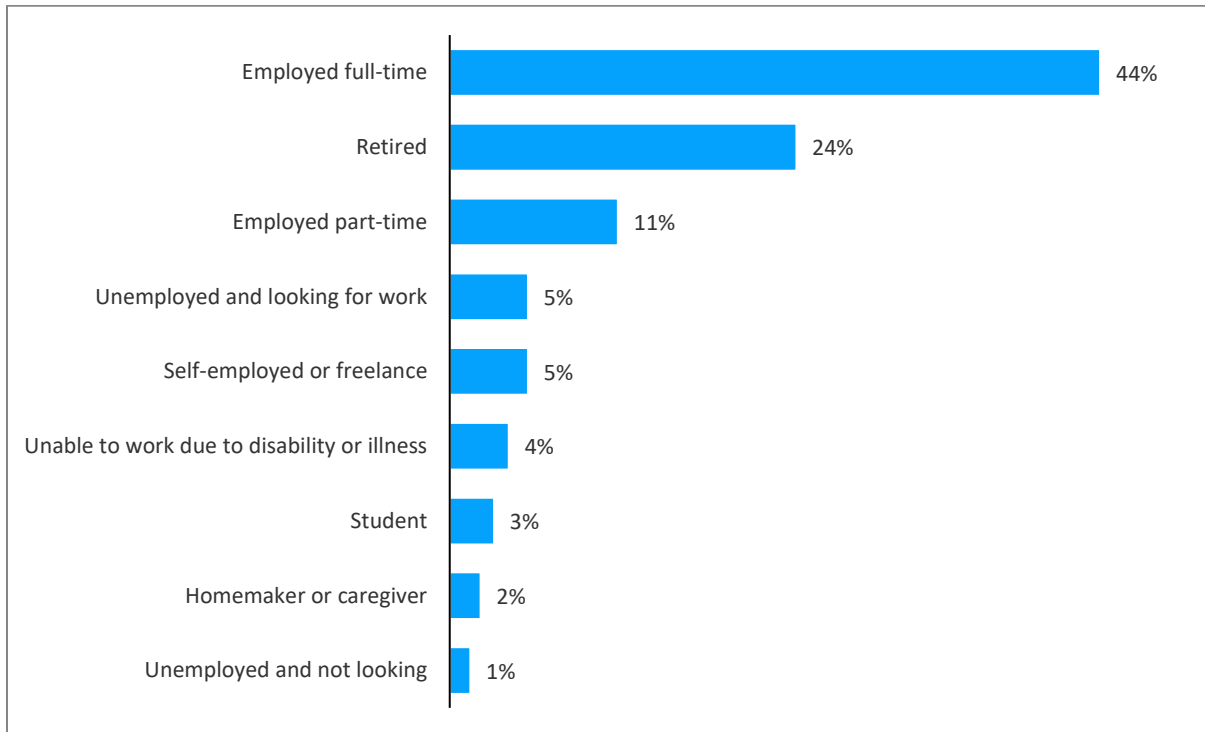


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Education is grouped into three bands for analysis: bachelor's degree or higher (38%), college or trades (40%), and high school or less (22%). Degree holders are over-represented against the Census, which is typical of online panel research. Adding education to the weighting test (see Weighting) moved no result by more than about 1.2 percentage points.



Figure 63. Employment status (Q10)

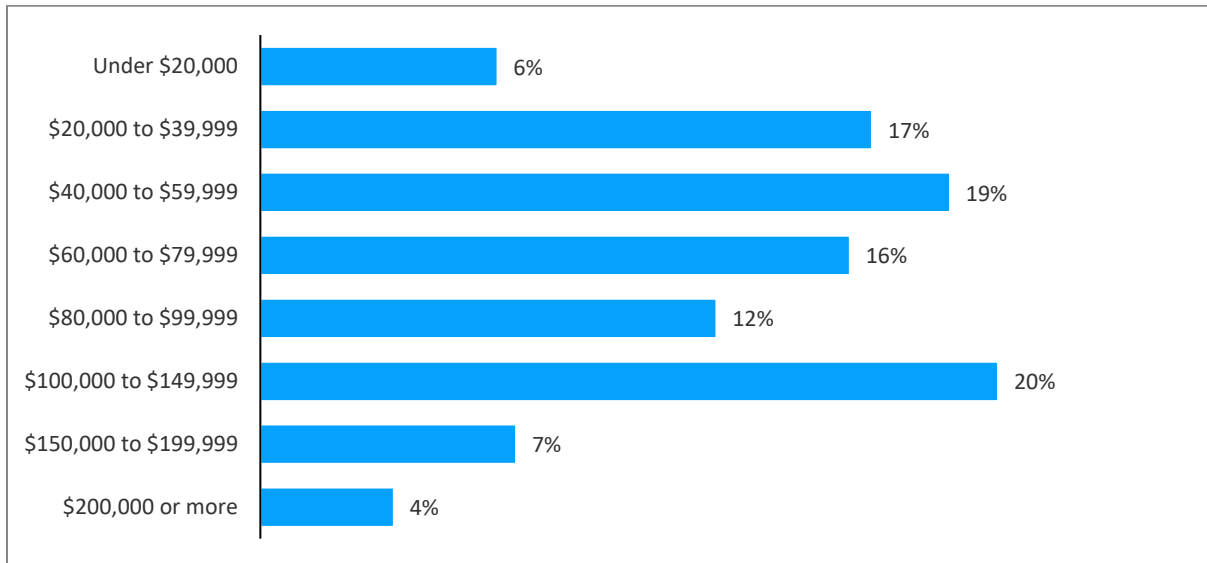


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Employment status is self-reported and does not follow the Labour Force Survey definition, so it is not compared with official statistics. Employment and age overlap heavily, so differences involving retired respondents usually restate an age effect. The student subsample (n = 37) is too small to report separately.



Figure 64. Household income before taxes (Q11)

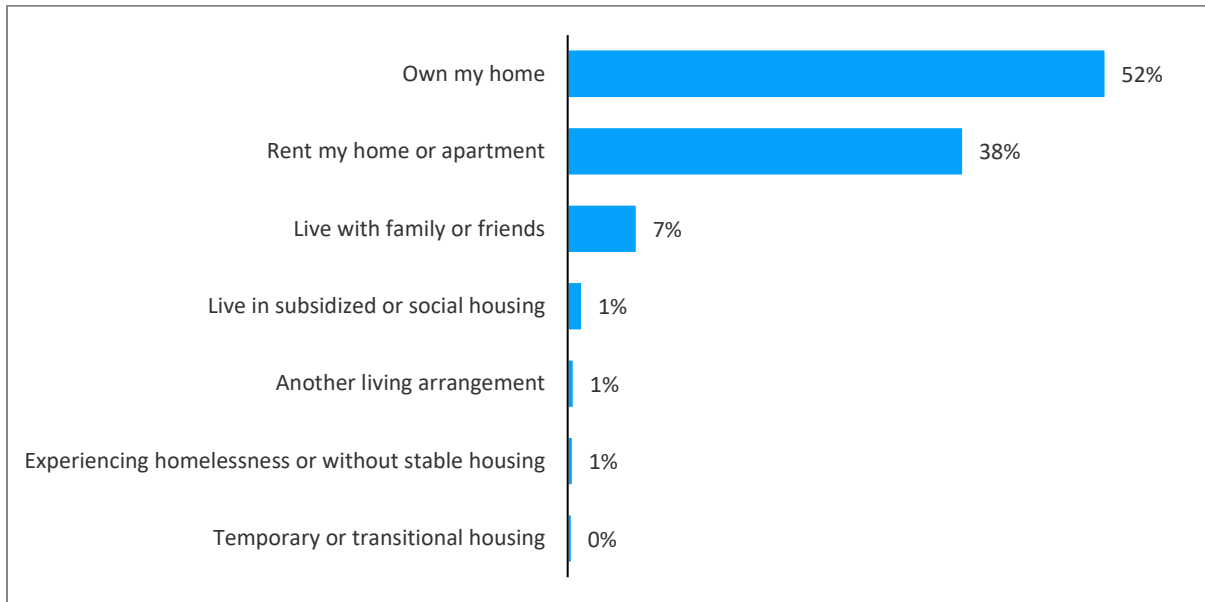


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Income is grouped into three bands for analysis: under \$60,000 (42%), \$60,000 to \$99,999 (28%) and \$100,000 or more (30%). The survey brackets do not align with published income groupings, so no Census comparison is shown.



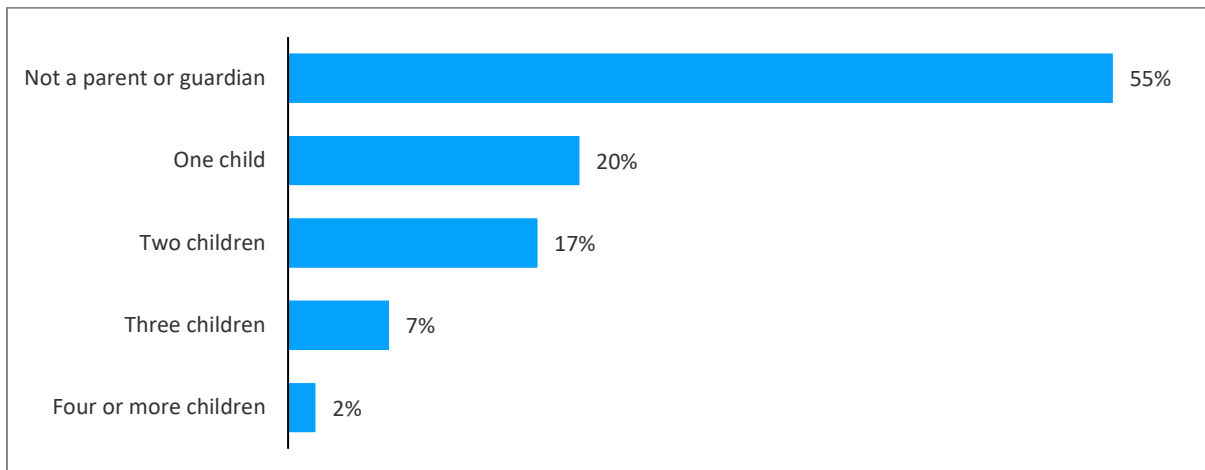
Figure 65. Housing situation (Q12)



Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).

Owners (n = 646) and renters (n = 475) are used in the analysis. Renters are over-represented against the Census, which measures households rather than individuals.

Figure 66. Parent or guardian status (Q13)

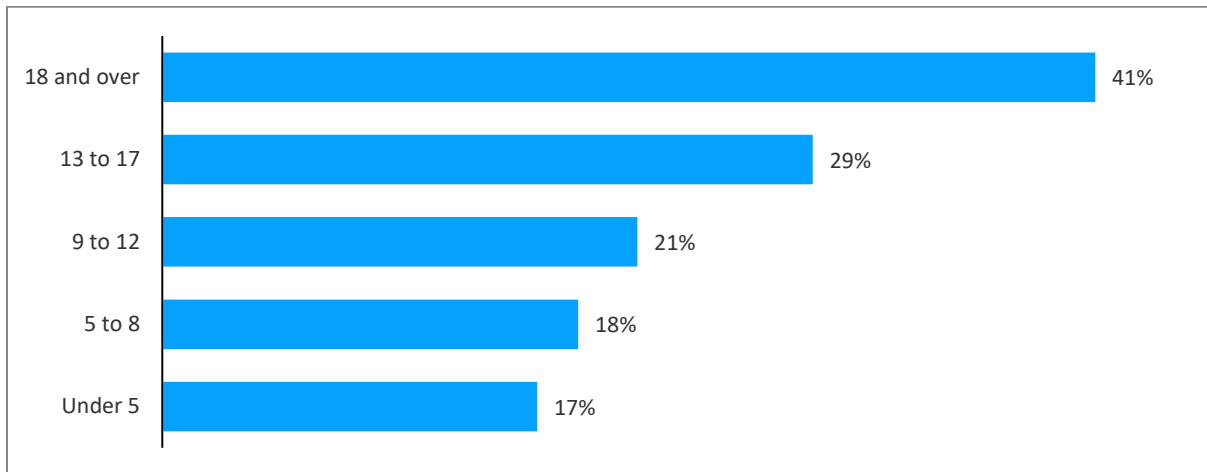


Base: All respondents (n = 1,239).



Just under three in ten respondents have a child under 18 at home. Parent effects in this report are reported only where they hold once age is controlled for.

Figure 67. Ages of children in the household (Q14)



Base: Parents and guardians (n = 556). Respondents could select more than one age group.

Among parents with a child under 18 at home (n = 366), 47% have a child aged 5 to 12, 28% a child aged 13 to 17 and 25% a child under 5.

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