

# Blowing **hot** or cold?



## South African attitudes to climate change

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Response White Paper

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## Outline

- A brief introduction to the SA Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)
- The climate change module
- Attitudes to climate change
- Conclusions

# Point of departure

- There is irrefutable evidence that climate change is of largely human origin
- The need for action is urgent
  - **Mitigation** of the causes of global warming is needed, e.g. control of greenhouse gas emissions.
  - **But** we also have to **adapt**, i.e. change the way we live, because stabilisation of the climate will take a (very) long time.

# The key for the success of both mitigation and adaptation activities is human behaviour

- Knowledge

- facts



- Attitudes

- feelings



- Intention

- precursor to behaviour



- Behaviour

- action

- Perceptions

- modifier

- e.g. impression of risk

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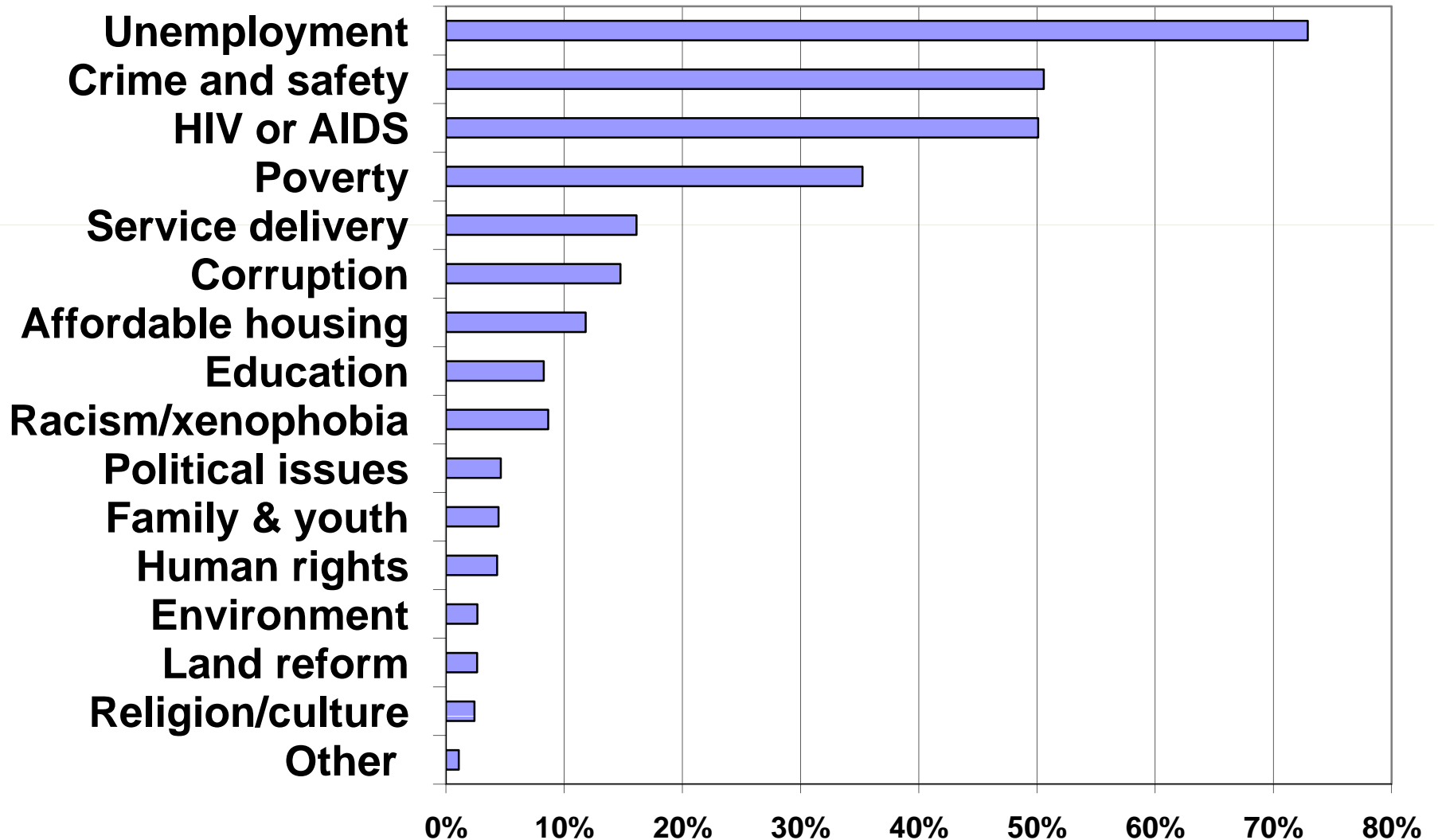
- modifier

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# What are South Africans' attitudes to climate change?

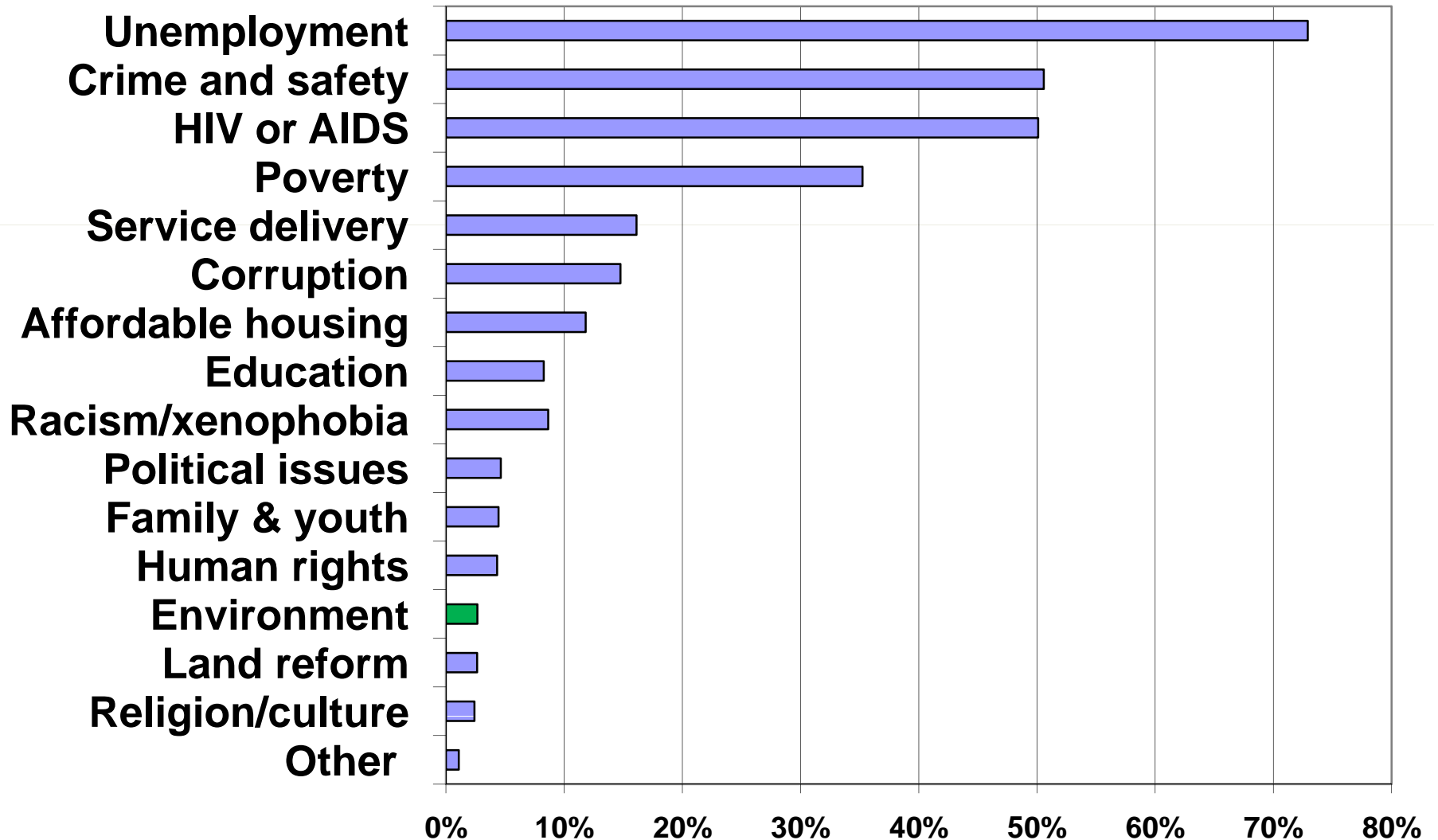
- SASAS 2007, included a module on climate change (20 questions).
- n=3164
- 16+ years, representative sample
- Awareness and concern about climate change; views on causes and impacts; responsibility for action (i.e. government, NGO, industry, individual); and support for interventions.

***What are the three most important challenges facing South Africa today?  
(SASAS, 2007)***



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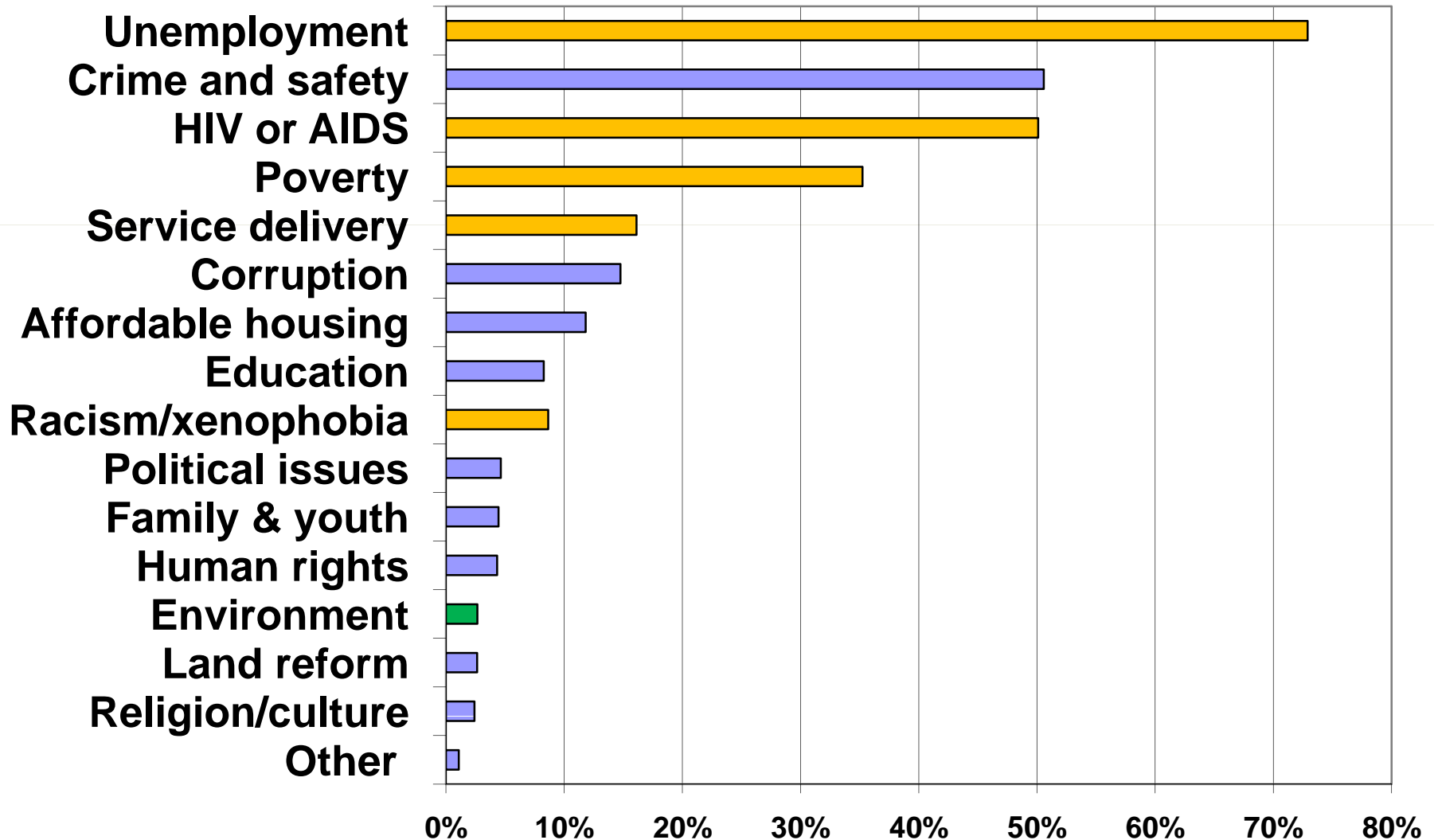
*(SASAS, 2007)*



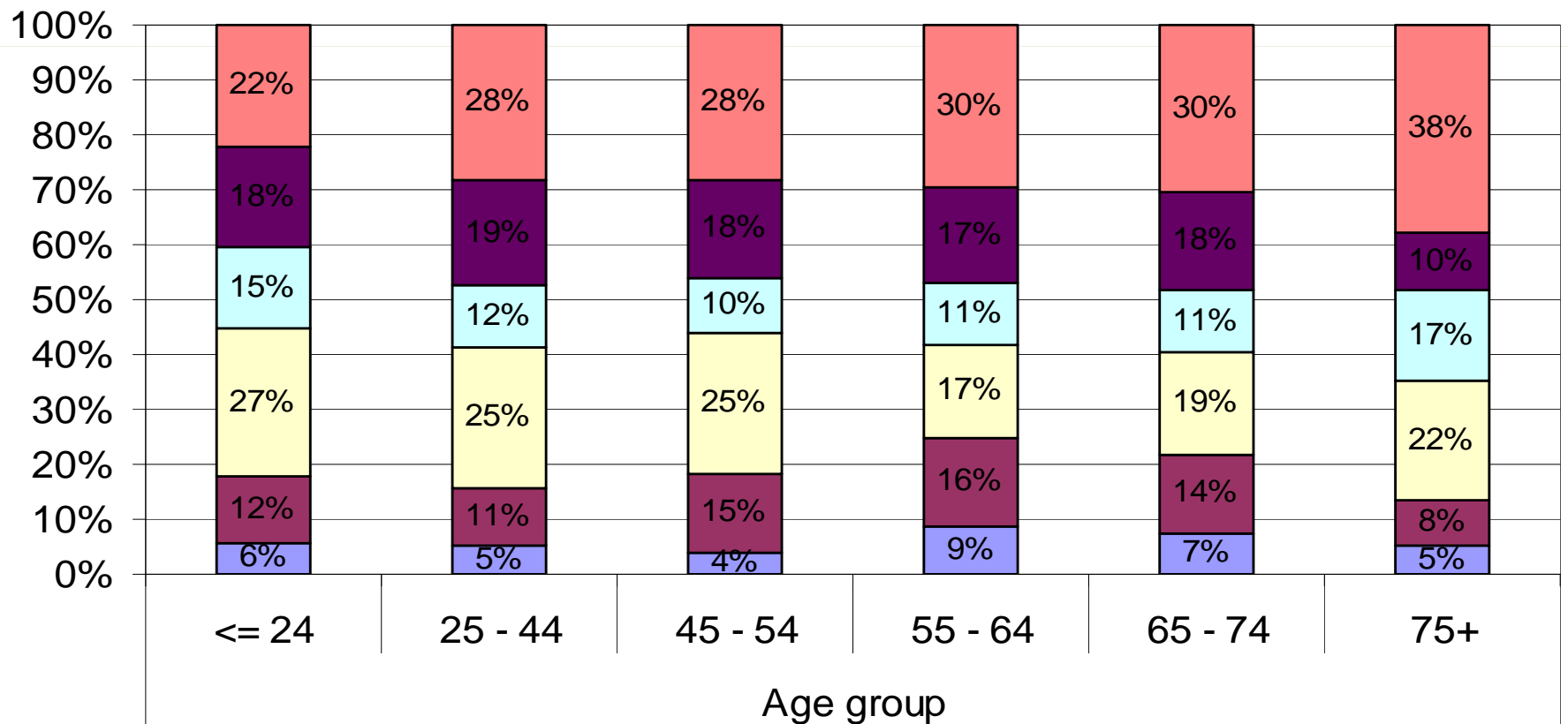


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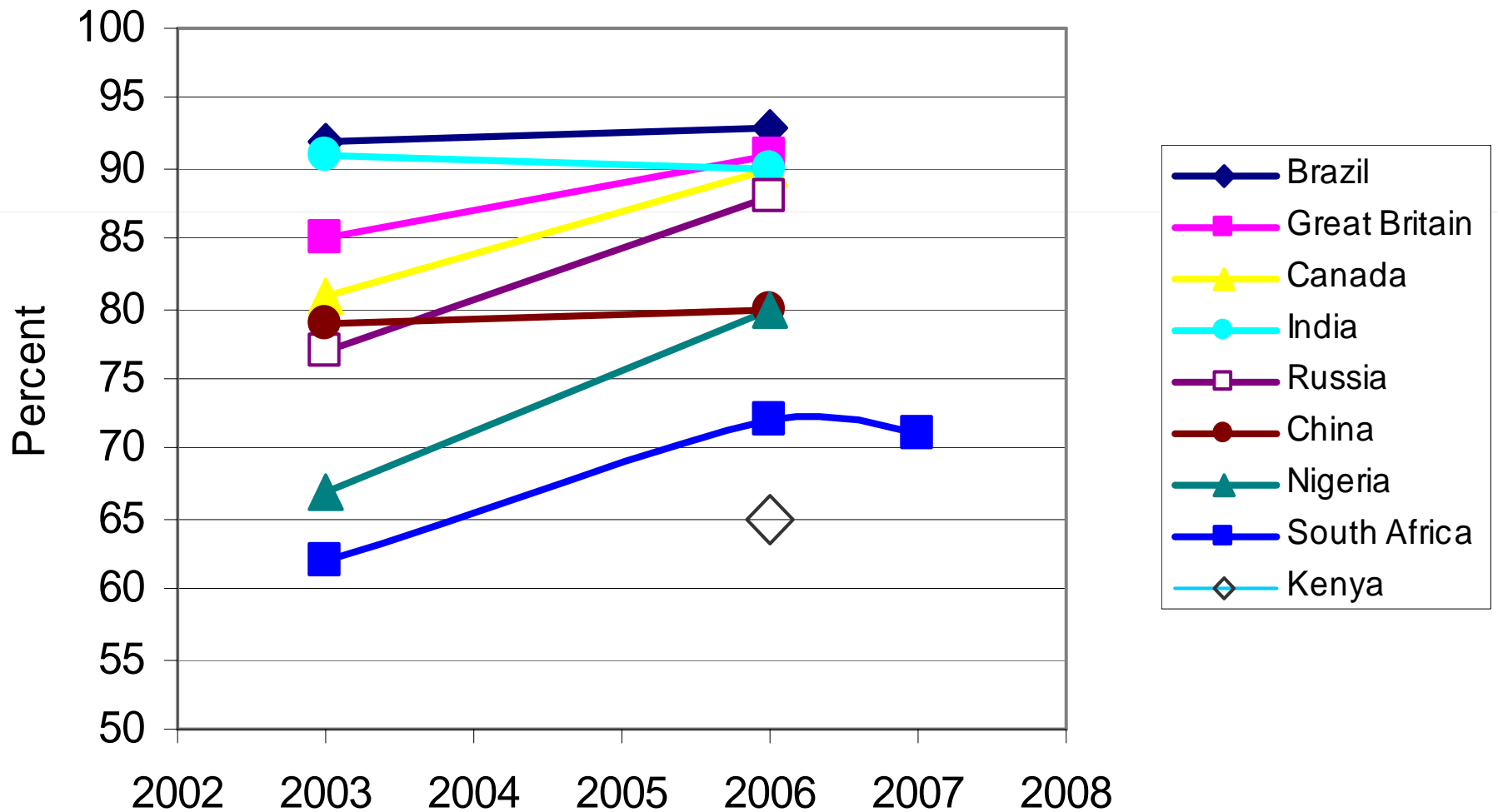
# How much, if anything, would you say you know about climate change or global warming? (SASAS, 2007)



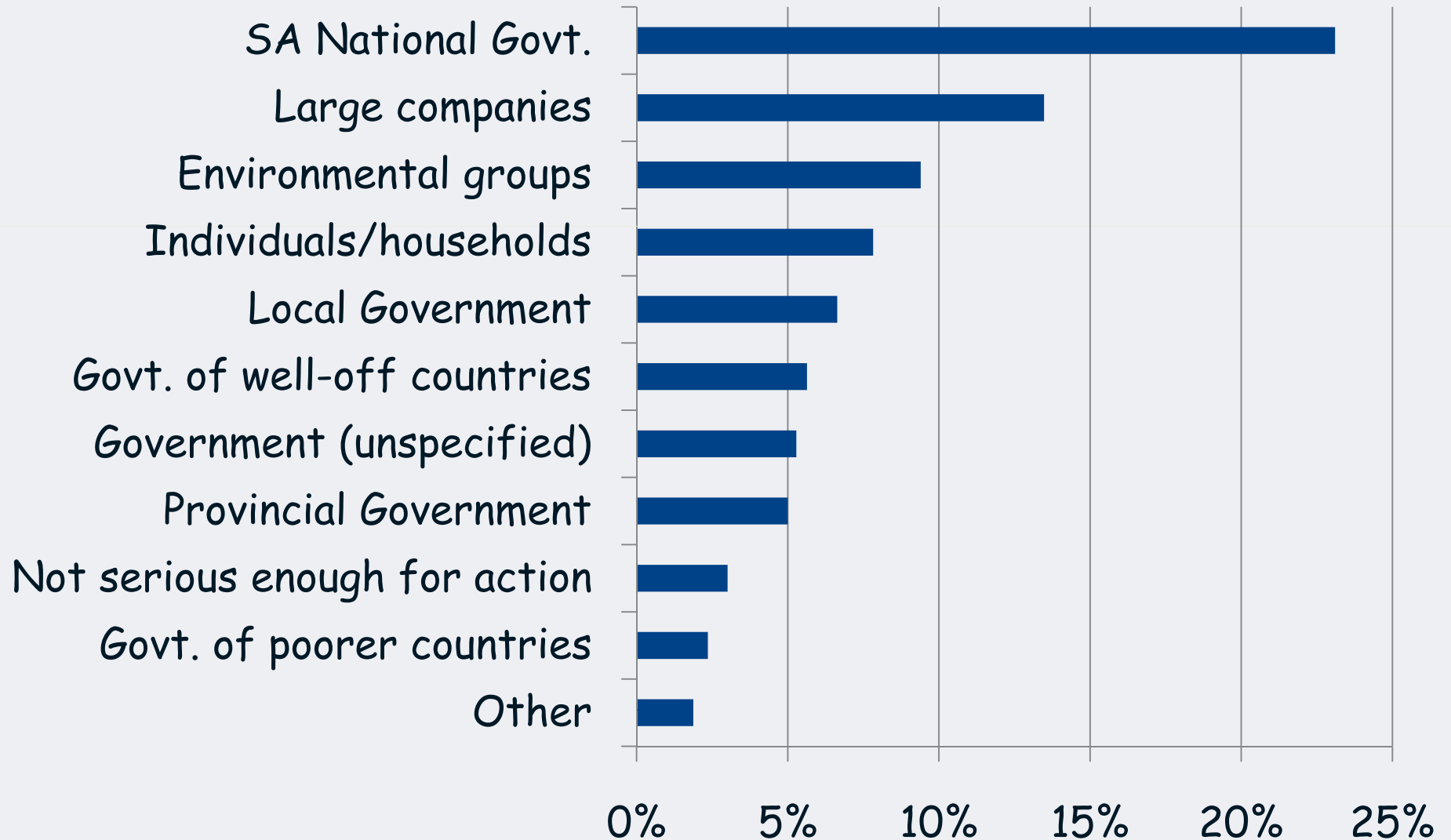
<i><b>What do you think are the causes of Climate Change? (unprompted)</b></i>	<b>%</b>
Cannot choose	17
Air pollution	17
Burning fossil fuels	14
Power station emissions	9
Greenhouse gases	8
Natural climate cycle	8
Business or industrial energy use	8
The Ozone hole	7
Destruction of forests	4
Domestic energy use	4
Other pollution	3
Other	1

# *Climate change is a "Very serious" or "Somewhat serious" problem*

*Source: 2003, 2006, GlobeScan Poll; 2007, SASAS*



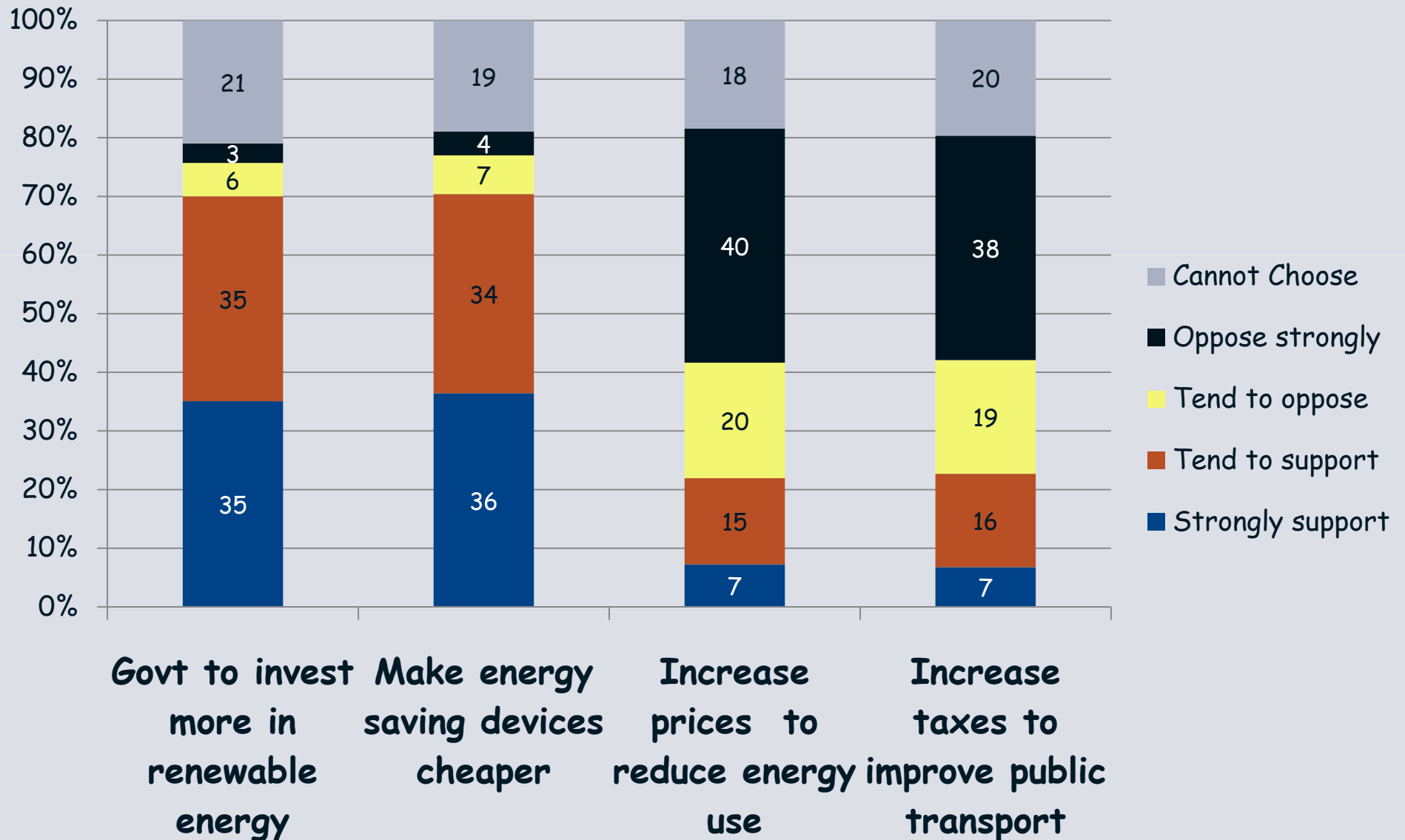
## *Who do you think bears responsibility for preventing climate change? (unprompted)*



# Satisfaction with SA Government's response to Climate Change

<i>Do you think enough is being done by SA government to take action on climate change?</i>	<i>%</i>
Cannot choose	40
Very satisfied with how much they are doing	15
Fairly satisfied	16
Fairly dissatisfied	25
Very dissatisfied	4

# Support for possible government actions



## Conclusions (1)

- People already know something about climate change.
- They are getting increasingly concerned about it (2003-2007).
- But we are playing 'catch up' compared to other countries



## Conclusions (2)

- Perceived distant threats tend to be given low priority, but we should monitor changing attitudes.
- People need practical guidelines for taking action.
- People appear aware that CC has to be addressed at many levels.

Act now and it  
may cost a lot...

...act too late  
and it could  
cost the earth.

