

# LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Attitudes Survey

**August 2010**

A report on the attitudes of the Blackalls Park, Fennell Bay, Fassifern community, prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council as part of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, September 2010.

## **BACKGROUND**

Council's Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program provides support to communities to plan and make changes that will reduce their ecological footprint at a neighbourhood scale.

In March 2010, the LT Creek Landcare Group and several interested residents joined forces to support the growth of an LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and develop a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for LT Creek (Blackalls Park, Fennell Bay, and Fassifern). The group embarked on a range of activities to engage neighbours, deepen their understanding of the neighbourhood, and discover what residents are most passionate about.

This report presents the results of the Community Attitudes Survey, undertaken in Blackalls Park, Fennell Bay, and Fassifern in August 2010. The survey aims to gauge community attitudes to the natural environment, sustainable living, and climate change issues in order to inform the development of a LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan.

The survey forms part of a program of community development and engagement activities to collect input from the broadest possible range of the neighbourhoods' residents. Public workshops, a high schools workshop, and information stalls have been used to gain input from residents. The survey results captured the values, attitudes, and concerns of residents who may not have participated in other engagement activities, and gives a broader perspective to guide local projects.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In August 2010, the survey was posted to approximately 1800 households in Blackalls Park, Fassifern, and Fennell Bay according to mailing addresses in Council's ratepayer database. The survey was a self-return format, with a prize draw promoted on the front cover as an incentive for residents to complete it.

Instructions on the front of the survey asked for respondents who:

- 1 have lived in Lake Macquarie City for more than six months
- 2 were over 18 years old; and
- 3 are one of the key decision makers in your household.

In total, 289 surveys were returned – a return rate of 15%

## **Key findings**

### **Local Sustainability Issues in LT Creek**

Respondents are most concerned about:

- 1 The health of the creek and the lake (siltation, water quality, weeds and urban runoff)
- 2 Litter
- 3 Air pollution
- 4 Expansion of mining operations

The issues rated of most importance are:

- 1 Protecting and improving the natural environment
- 2 Reducing waste
- 3 Improving our streetscape and stormwater systems through environmental design
- 4 Reducing energy use

### **Climate Change over the Next 20 Years**

A majority of respondents 'strongly agree' (28%) and 'agree' (30%) that climate change will directly impact their life over the next 20 years, with the main impacts being:

- 1 Changes in weather / extreme weather events
- 2 Increased temperatures / warmer weather
- 3 Rising sea levels

A majority of residents 'strongly agree' (16%) and 'agree' (45%) that the actions of the average person have a large impact on slowing climate change.

### **Your Sustainability Choices**

Most respondents (>70%) have the following items on the property:

- 1 Water efficient appliances and fittings
- 2 Insulation
- 3 Energy efficient appliances

Native gardens (66%) and vegetable gardens (53%) are also relatively common.

Over 90% of households use their recycling bin 'always' (88%) or 'often' (9%).

### ***GreenPower***

Only 14% of respondents purchase GreenPower.

The main reasons for not purchasing GreenPower are

- 1 Cost
- 2 Lack of understanding about what it is.

### ***Public Transport***

A relatively low number of respondents (36%) 'often' or 'always' catch public transport.

The main reasons for not using public transport are:

- 1 Timetable/route is inadequate
- 2 Prefer to use the car.

### ***Motivation***

Respondents ranked the most important motivators to improve their environmental behaviour as

- 1 A personal responsibility to do the right thing for the environment
- 2 Saving money
- 3 Rebates and incentives

### ***Recreation***

82% of respondents had visited a natural environment such as a beach, lake, river, creek, bushland or park in the past four weeks.

### ***Participation in environmental activities***

Activities that respondents indicated they are most likely to participate in include:

- 1 Neighbourhood clean-up
- 2 Home audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use
- 3 Monitoring the health of the local environment
- 4 Assisting in preparing a sustainability action plan for my neighbourhood

### ***The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program***

Fifty-six respondents (24%) have either heard of, or participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program.

The methods of hearing about the program were:

- 1 Flyers
- 2 Media (newspaper)
- 3 Through Council

One hundred and forty-nine respondents (over 60%) indicated that they are or might be interested in participating in the program.

### **About LT Creek**

Respondents have a high level of agreement that:

- 1 I can call on a neighbour if I need help
- 2 Natural features in my neighbourhood should be protected and improved by residents
- 3 I take measures to reduce my ecological footprint
- 4 There are adequate natural environments in my neighbourhood for me to pursue leisure time activities

The most common responses when asked what they liked about living in Blackalls Park, Fennel Bay and Fassifern were:

- 1 Peace and quiet
- 2 Proximity to the lake, creeks and bushland
- 3 Location – close to shops, sporting facilities, clubs
- 4 Having good neighbours

## **Implications for the LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Project**

The results of this survey highlight some important points relevant to the development of a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for the neighbourhood.

### **Values**

These values were consistent amongst survey respondents and participants from other activities:

- 1 Balance of natural environment and city facilities.
- 2 Natural beauty including creeks, bushland, wildlife, creeks, proximity to the lake, open space
- 3 Close location to services and facilities including; Blackalls Park shops, public transport, The Toronto / Fassifern Cycleway
- 4 A friendly community

### **Issues**

In general, the issues raised in the survey were consistent with existing input from the community. The survey results confirm the importance of a number of sustainability issues in the community:

- 1 The health of the creeks and Lake – in particular siltation and urban run off
- 2 Concern over mining expansion and health effects related to the mine – in particular air quality
- 3 Improved infrastructure for drainage and stormwater

Three additional issues that have not been previously raised, but rate highly in the survey include:

- 1 Waste - litter
- 2 Reducing energy consumption

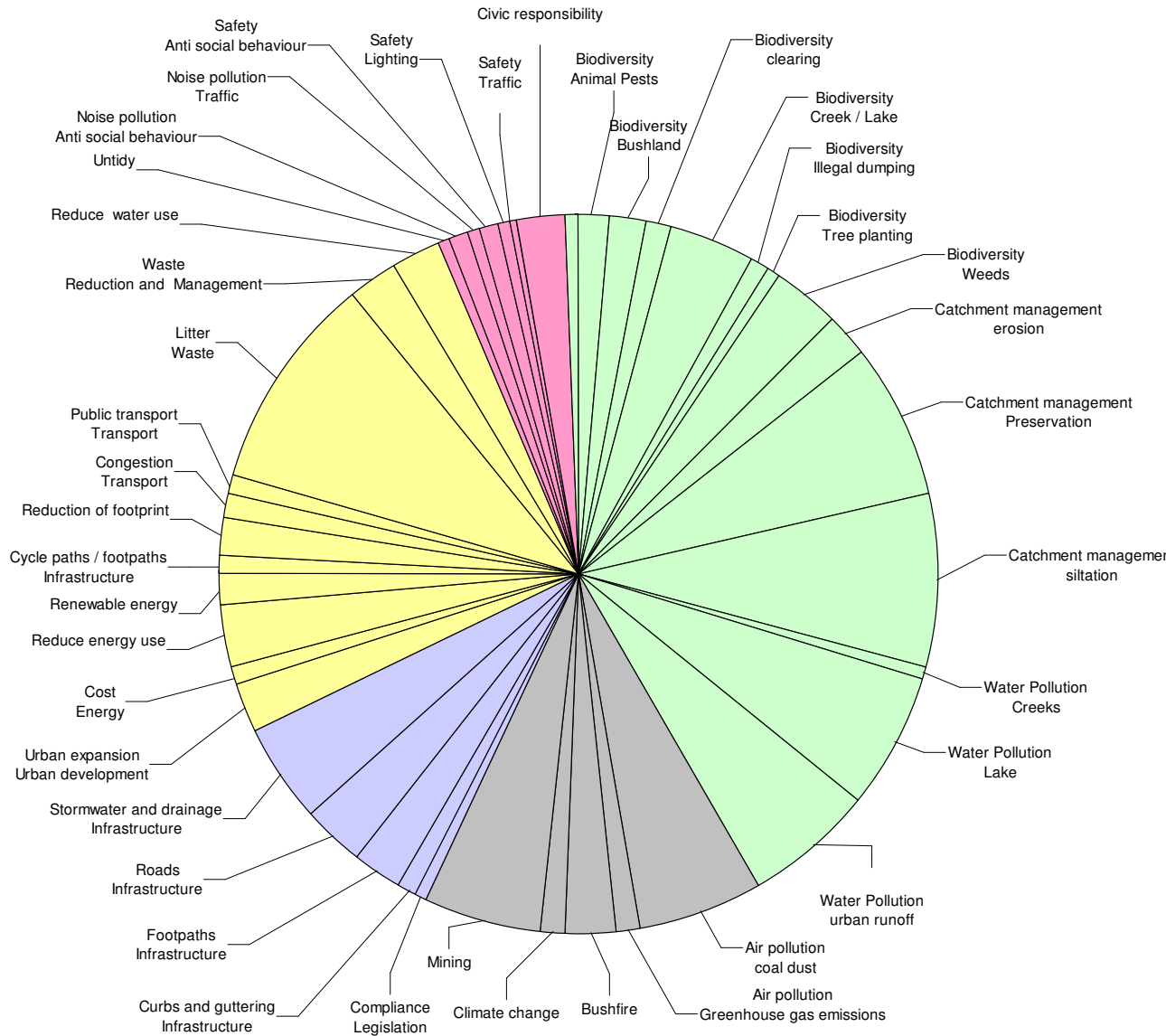
### **Actions**

The survey results highlight some potential neighbourhood actions and give an indication of activities that are likely to gain popular support from the LT Creek community. Actions highlighted by the survey include:

- 1 Widespread information and education about GreenPower – what it is, how it works, local providers, and that you can 'purchase' 10% for free (almost 60% of survey respondents indicated that they either don't understand GreenPower, or that it costs too much).
- 2 Activities which would be most likely to attract broad public participation include:
  - Neighbourhood clean-up
  - Monitoring the health of the natural environment
  - Sustainable living workshops
  - Home audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use
- Community picnic / BBQ with informative display and children's activity

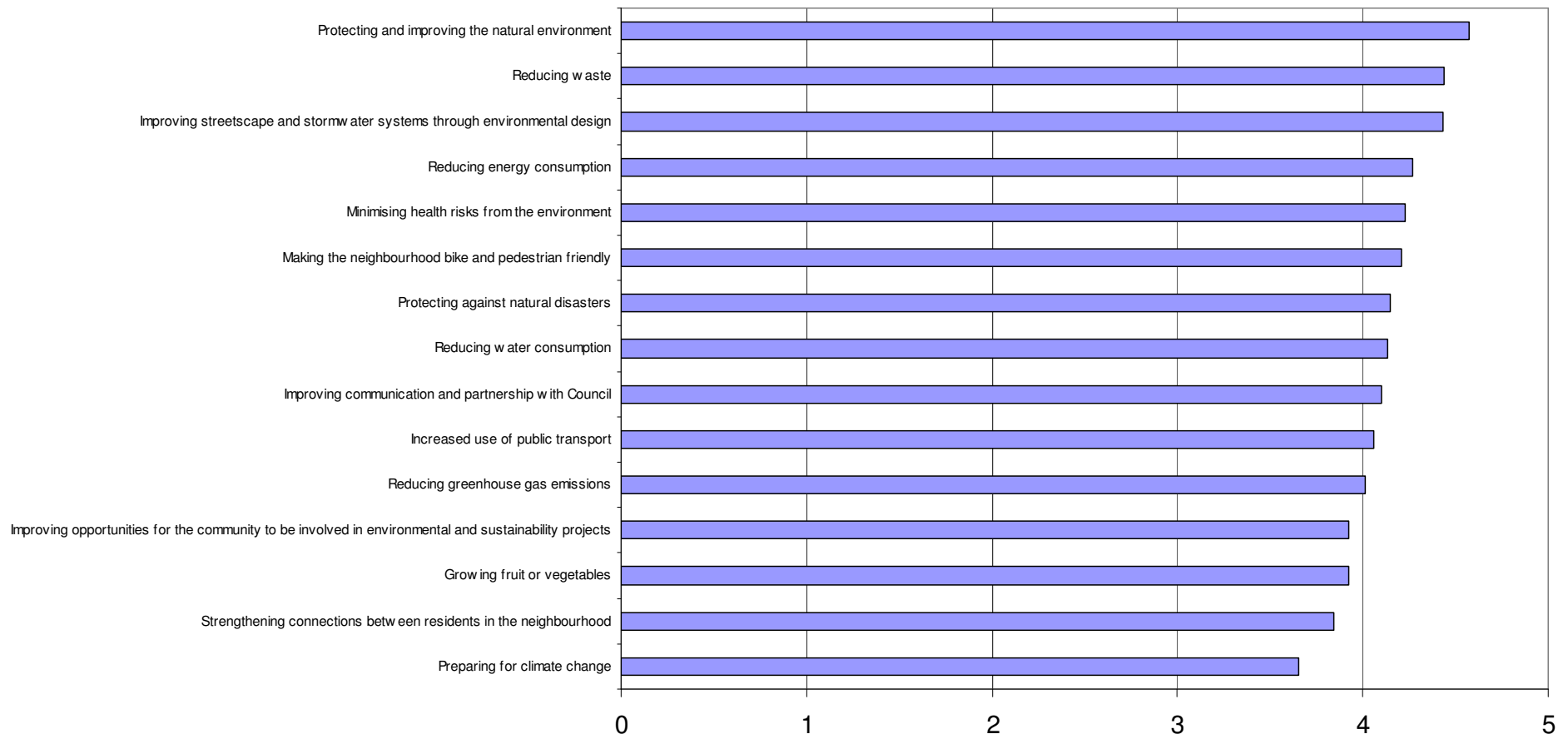
# Detailed results

## 1. Local sustainability issues Q1a. What is the single most important environmental issue in your neighbourhood today?





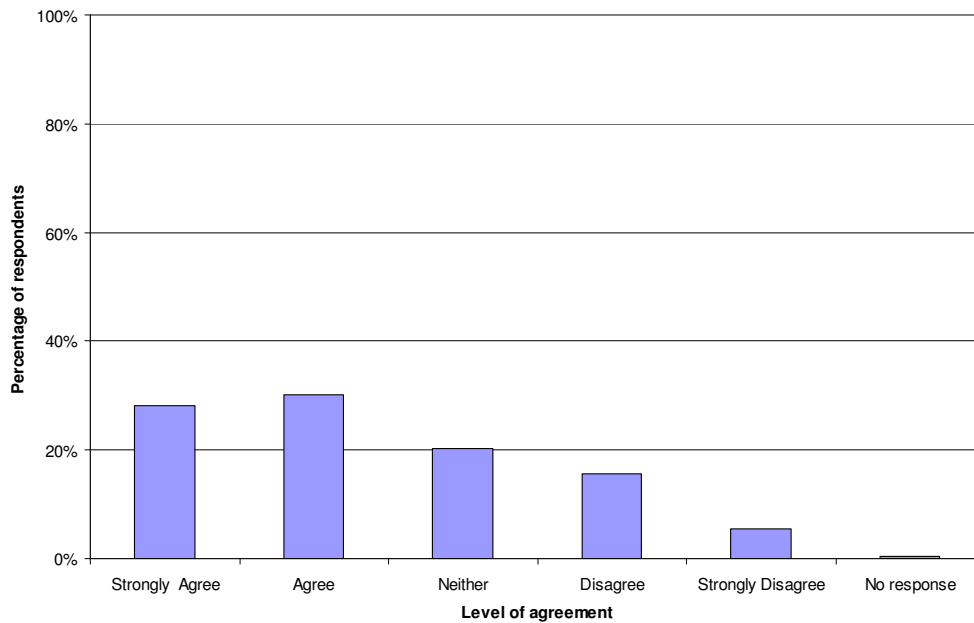
**Q1b Please rate how important the following are to your neighbourhood**  
**Scale (1) Not important – (5) important**





## 2. Climate change over the next 20 years

**Q2a. How strongly do you agree or disagree that climate change will have a direct impact on your life over the next 20 years.**

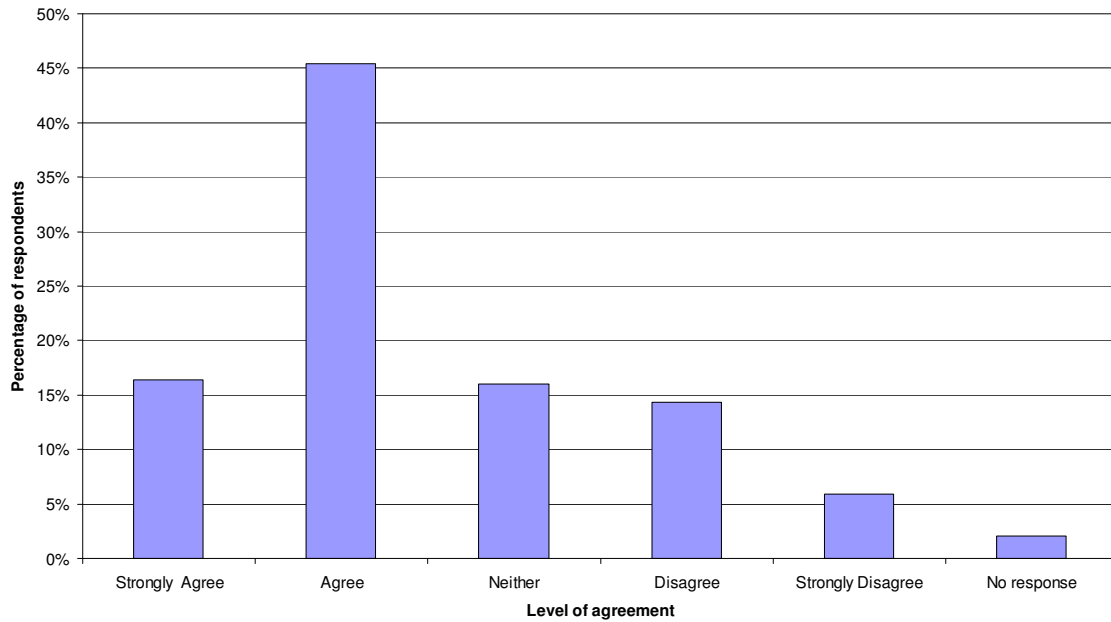


**Q2b. If you agree or strongly agree, what do you think will be the MAIN impact?**

Responses included:

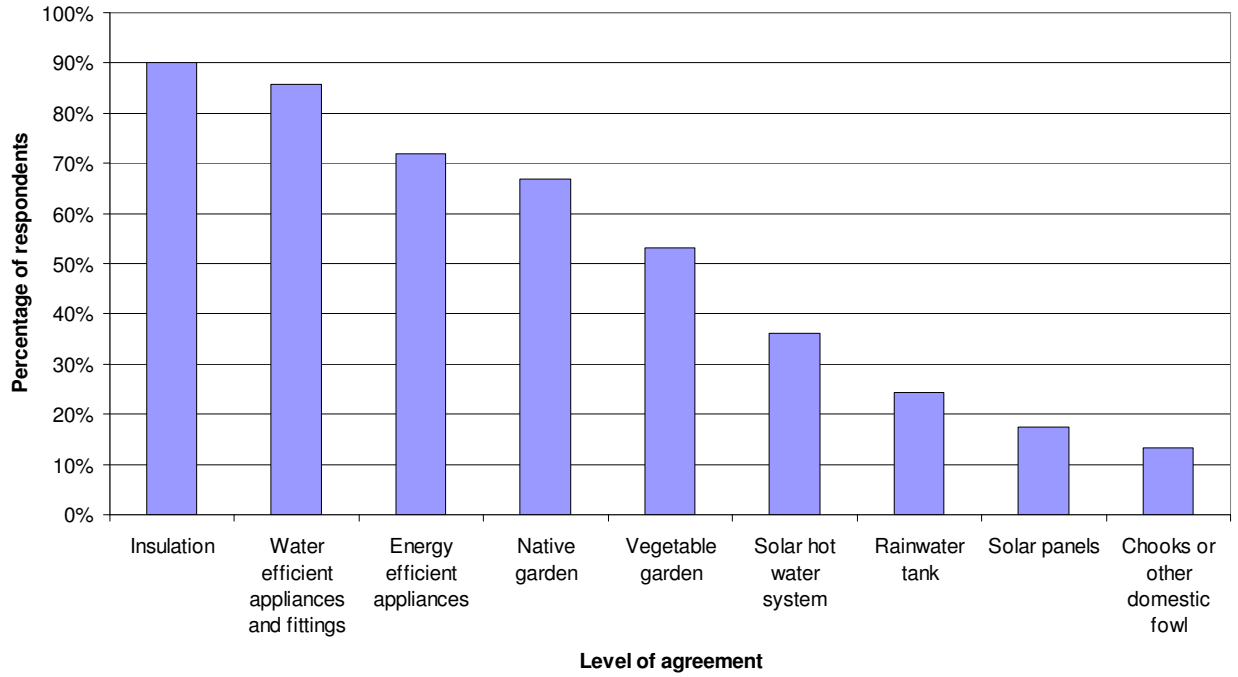
- 1 Rising sea levels
- 2 Increased temperatures / warmer weather
- 3 Changes in weather / extreme weather events

**Q2c. How strongly do you agree, or disagree, that the actions of the average person have a large impact on slowing climate change?**

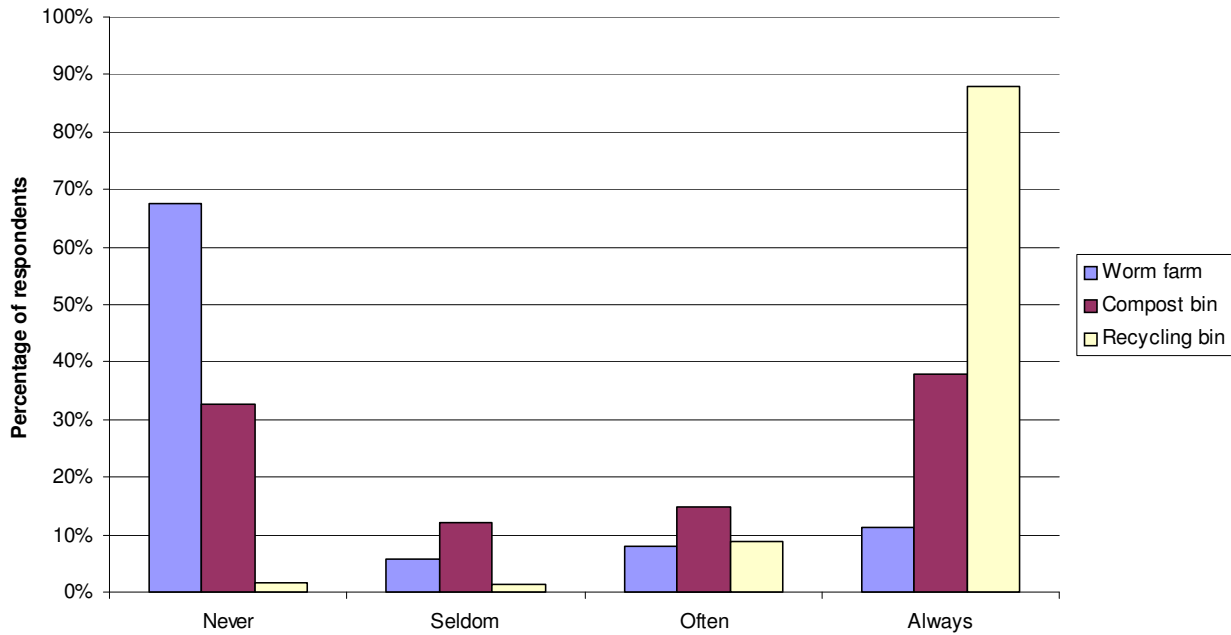


**3. Your sustainability choices**

**Q3a. Do you have any of the following items on your property?**

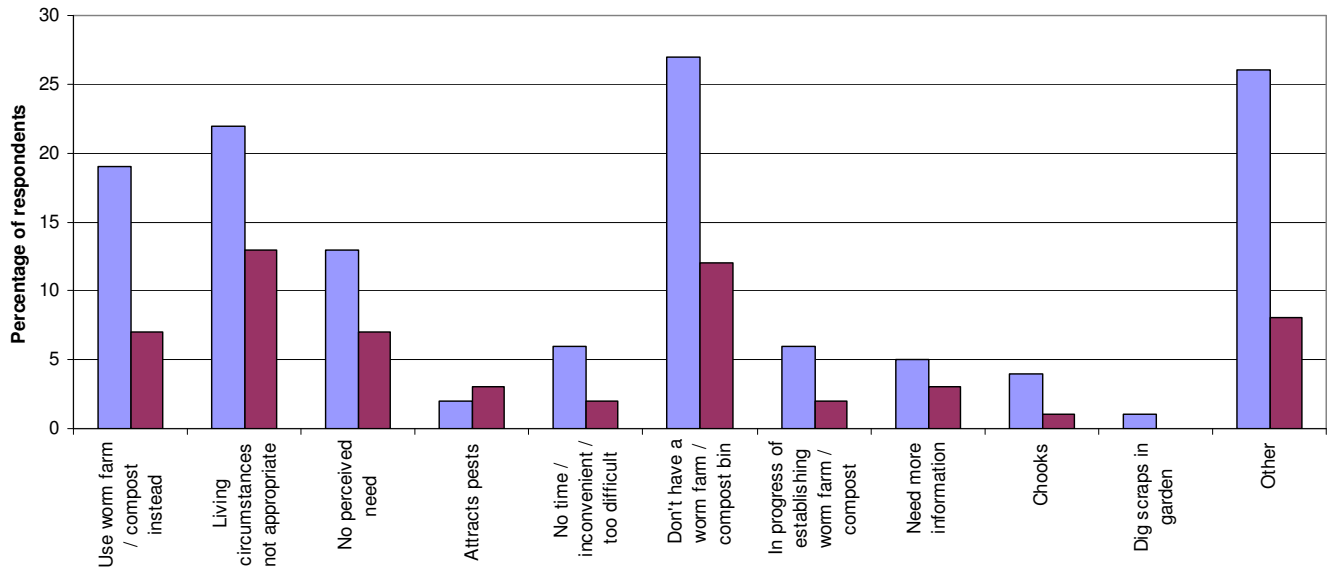


**Q3b. How often does your household make use of a worm farm, compost bin, and recycling bin?**



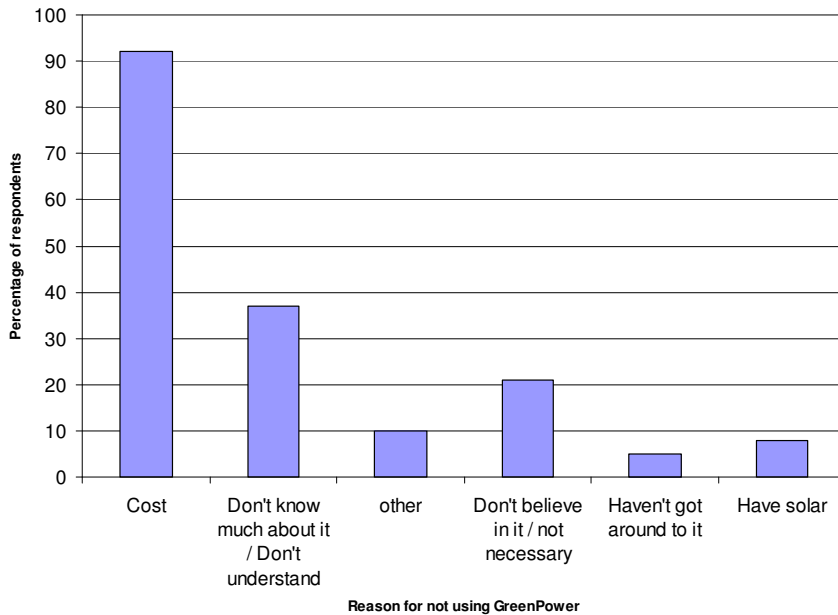
**Q3c. If you never or seldom use a worm farm or compost bin, could you please**

indicate why?



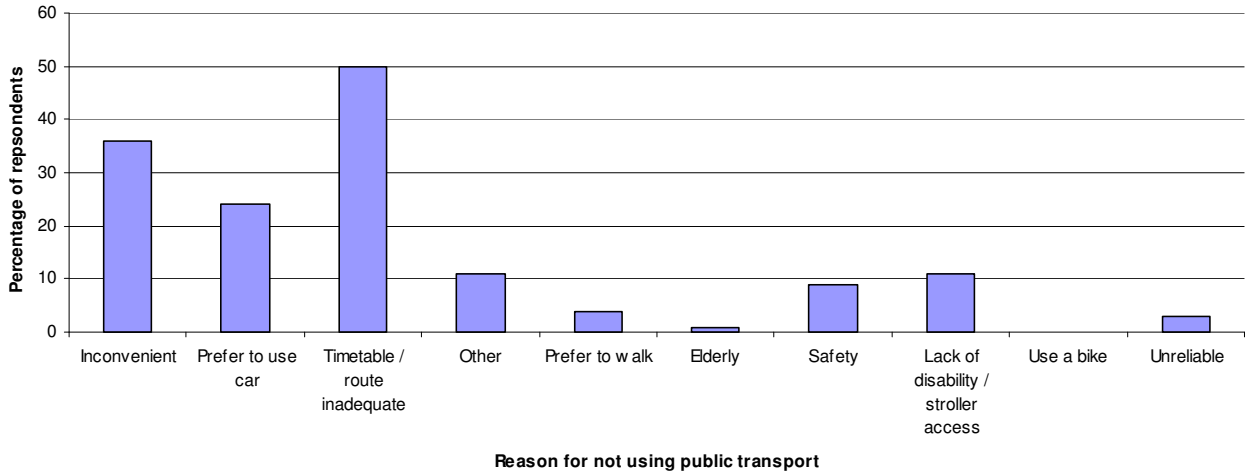
Q33 and 3f. If you do not use GreenPower please indicate why?

Only 14% of respondents use GreenPower



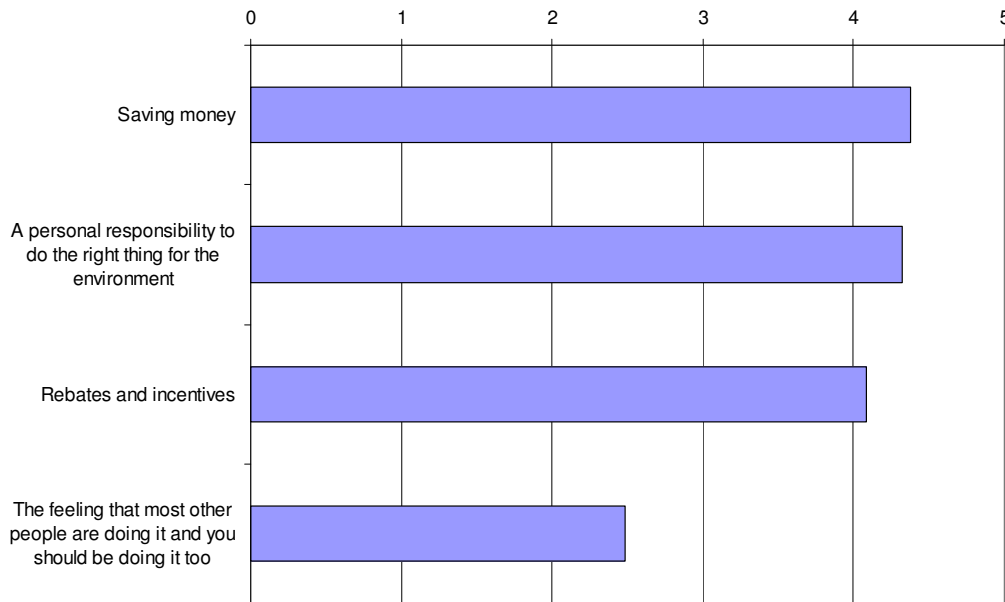
**Q3g and 3h. If your household seldom or never uses public transport, please indicate why?**

36% of respondents always or often use public transport.

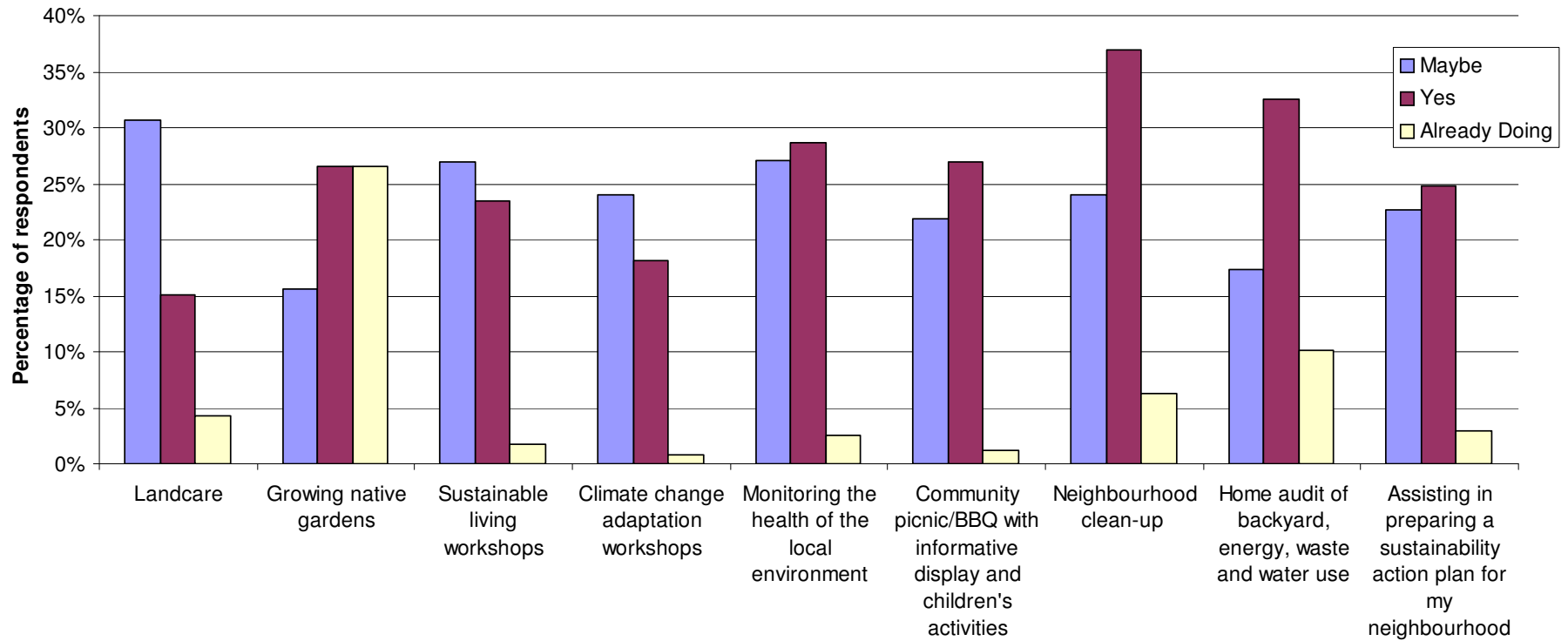


**Q3i. What motivates you to improve your environmental behaviour?**

Scale (1) Not important – (5) important



**Q4a. Which of the following activities/events would you consider participating in?**

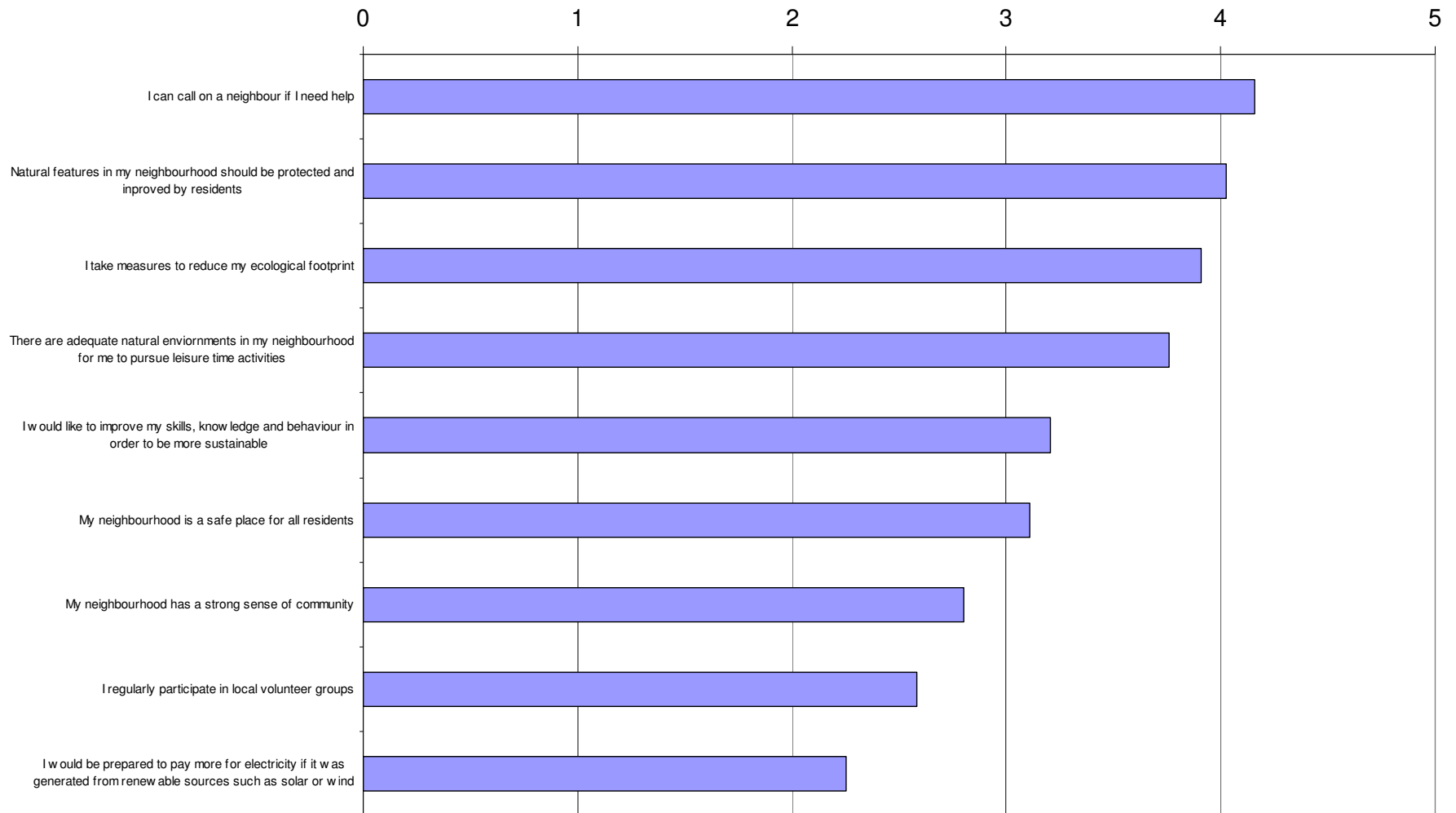




## About your neighbourhood

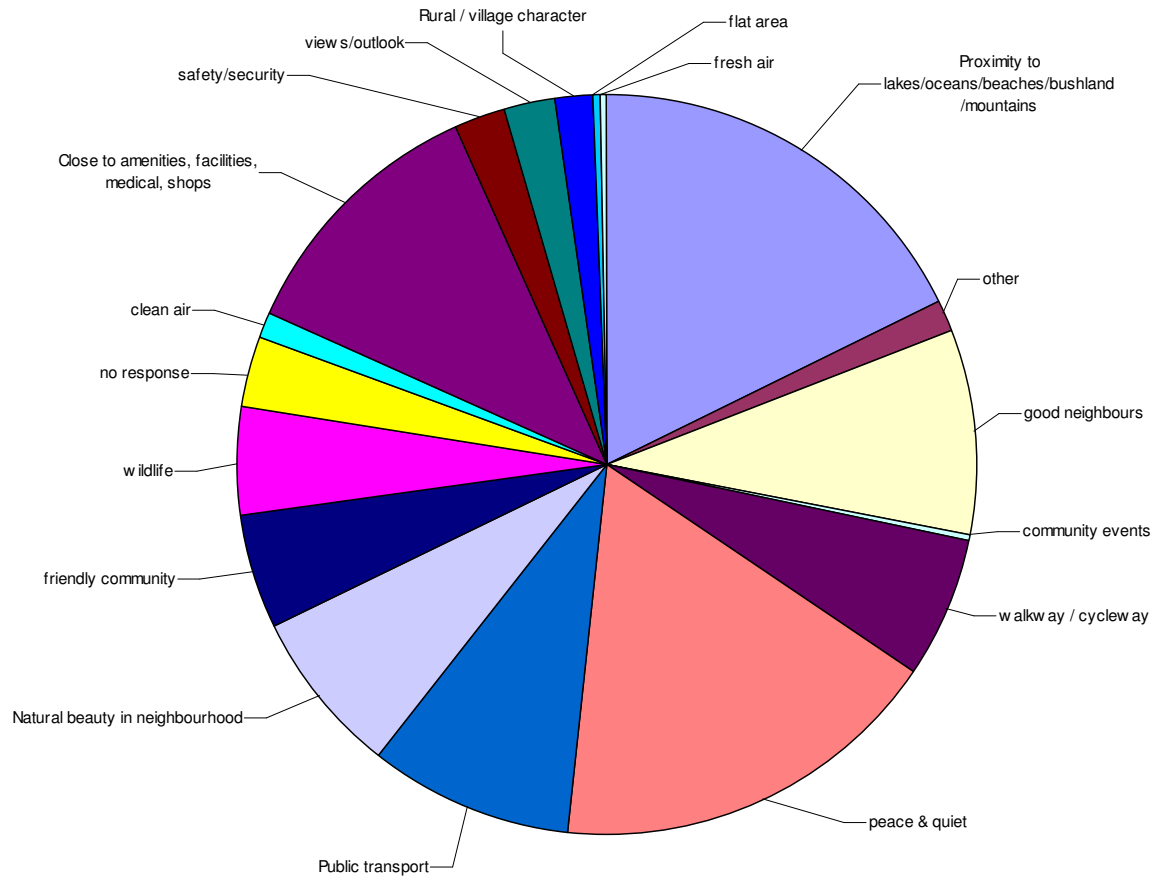
Q5a. Please rate your level of involvement with each of the following statements

Scale (1) Not important – (5) important





### Q5b. What do you like most about living in your neighbourhood?



## Your ideas

**Q6. Do you have any suggestions about how yourself, local business, and the people in your neighbourhood could improve the environment or community of your neighbourhood?**

### *Waste and rubbish reduction*

- 1 Community clean up days
- 2 Recycle more
- 3 Plastic bag free shopping
- 4 Clean up the cycleway

### *Connected and active community*

- 1 Community garden
- 2 Improved communications with centennial coal
- 3 Involved young people in the community
- 4 Community produce / swap market
- 5 Support local shops
- 6 More community activities
- 7 Street party on Sandra St
- 8

### *Sustainable living*

- 1 Education about how to save energy and water
- 2 Education about native gardens and living sustainably

### *Services and urban planning*

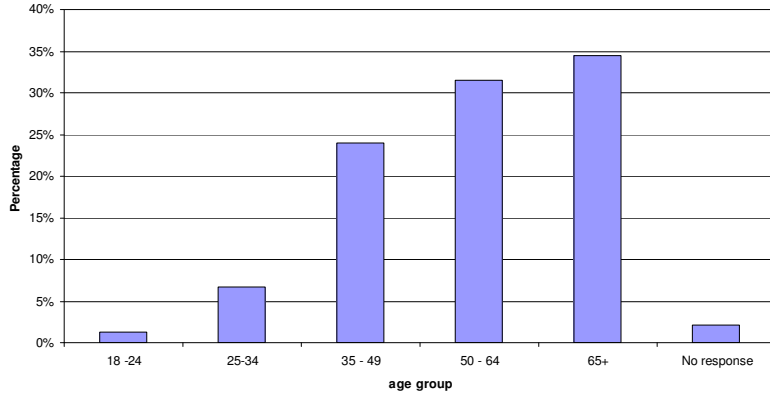
- 1 Improve stormwater management
- 2 Improved footpaths
- 3 Have a green waste bin
- 4

### *Protecting and improving our natural environment*

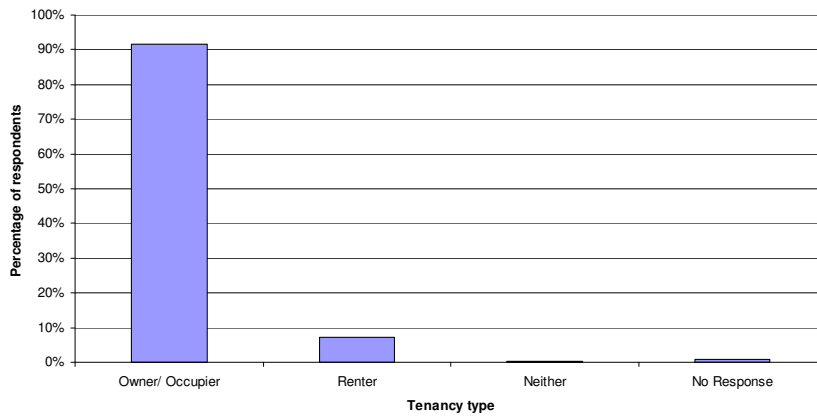
- 1 Education about ecosystems / environment
- 2 Increase involvement in Landcare
- 3 Interpretive signage
- 4 Control illegal dumping in bushland
- 5 Weed control
- 6 Control bikes in the bush
- 7 Improving the water quality in the creeks
- 8 Creek watch

## Demographics

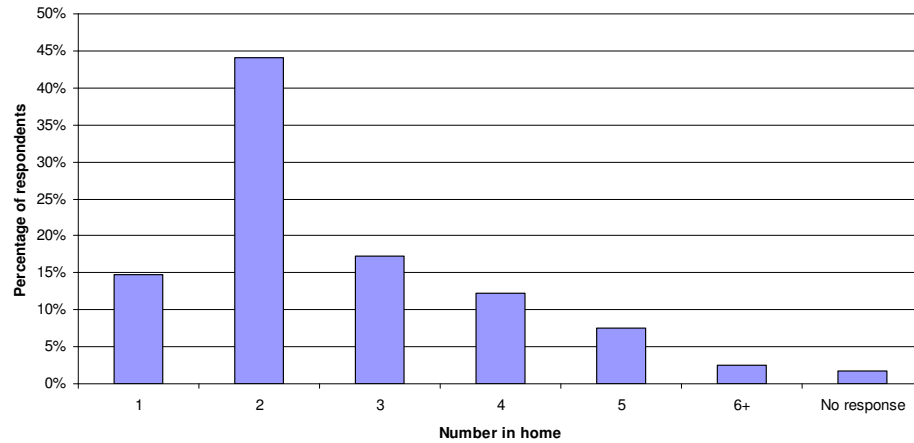
### Q7a. Age bracket



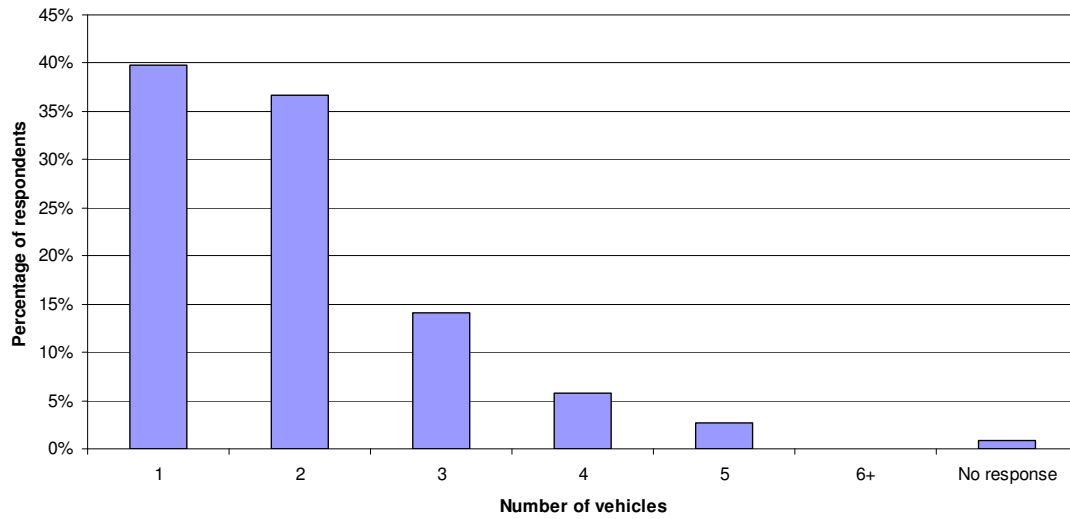
### Q7b. Tenancy Type



### Q7c. How many people currently reside in your home?



**Q7d. How many motor vehicles does your household have?**



**Q7e. How long have you lived in the neighbourhood?**

