

# Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Attitudes Survey

October 2010

A report on the attitudes of the Redhead community, prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council as part of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, October 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 2010, Council, the Redhead Bowling Club, and Citizens joined forces to support the growth of a Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and develop a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for Redhead. We have embarked on a range of activities to engage our neighbours, deepen our understanding of Redhead, and discover what Redhead residents are most passionate about.

This report presents the results of the Community Attitudes Survey, undertaken in Redhead in July 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 Redhead 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 Redhead residents. Information stalls, presentations and hands on activities have been used to gain input from residents. The survey results captured some of the values, attitudes, and concerns of residents who may not have participated in other engagement activities, and give a broader perspective for the development of a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for Redhead.

## METHODOLOGY

In July 2010, the survey hand delivered to approximately 1495 households in Redhead 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. The survey form is shown in Appendix 1.

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

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

In total, 140 surveys were returned – a return rate of 10.6%.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **1. Local Sustainability Issues in Redhead**

Respondents are most concerned about:

- Preservation and improvement of the natural environment, including bush, creeks & wetlands, beach & sand dunes ecosystems
- Pest animals and weeds
- The need for more sustainable households and behaviours
- Better community connectedness
- Climate change and related natural disasters

The issues rated of most importance are:

- Protecting and improving the natural environment
- Reducing energy consumption
- Reducing waste
- Making the neighbourhood bike and pedestrian friendly
- Improving streetscape and stormwater systems through environmental design
- Minimising health risk from the environment
- Reducing green house gas emissions

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

A majority of respondents ( 76.47%) agree that climate change will directly impact their life over the next 20 years: (34.56%) 'Strongly Agree'; and (41.91%) 'Agree'.

With the main impacts being:

- Changes in weather/ extreme weather events
- Rising temperatures
- Sea level rise

### **3. Your Sustainability Choices**

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

- Water efficient appliances and fittings
- Insulation
- Energy efficient appliances

Native gardens (61%) and vegetable gardens (50%) are also relatively common.

### **3. Your Sustainability Choices continued**

#### *Recycling*

Over 95% of households use their recycling bin: 'Always' (90.51%); or 'Often' (5.11%).

Over 55% of households use a compost: 'Always' (40.15%); or 'Often' (15.33%)

Over 78% of households seldom use a worm farm: 'Never' (71.53%); or 'Seldom' (7.30%)

#### *GreenPower*

Only 14.71% of respondents purchase GreenPower, with comments indicating some confusion about what it is. The main reasons for not purchasing GreenPower are the cost, lack of understanding, and no evidence or accountability as to how GreenPower funds are spent.

#### *Public Transport*

A relatively low number (<16.%) of respondents use public transport: 'Always' (2.92%); or 'Often' (13.14%). From those who don't, the main reasons for not using public transport are is a logistical nightmare and the existing service is inadequate.

#### *Motivation*

Respondents ranked 'a personal responsibility to do the right thing for the environment' as the most important motivator to improve their environmental behaviour, closely followed by 'saving money'.

#### *Participation in environmental activities*

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

- Growing native gardens
- Landcare
- Neighbourhood Clean Ups
- Home ecological footprint audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use
- Community picnic/BBQ with educational displays
- Sustainable living workshops

Activity that respondents indicate they are least likely to participate in include:

- Climate change adaptation workshops

#### *The Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program*

- Fifty respondents (36.50%) have heard of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program
- Fourteen respondents ( 22%) have participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program
- Forty-three respondents (31%) are interested in participating in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program
- Fifty-five respondents (40%) maybe interested in participating in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

## **About Redhead**

Respondents have a high level of agreement that:

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

The most popular things people like about living in Redhead are:

1. Beach lifestyle
2. Proximity to the natural environment (beach/ocean/lake/bushland/mountains)
3. Recreational facilities promoting healthy lifestyles
4. Village character
5. Convenient broad range of essential local services
6. Peacefulness

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REDHEAD SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT

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

### Values

The things that people value about Redhead are consistent amongst survey respondents, and participants from other activities:

- VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE AND STRONG COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS – secluded and tucked away but not isolated (close to major centres), safe homes and streets, close to everything, small, clean, friendly and chatty neighbours, quiet ambience, not too busy, largely undeveloped, relaxed, peaceful, limited traffic, easy walking and cycling. A range of people, ages, family dynamics, length of time in Redhead, income, housing, and people who visit the area. Redhead has numerous community organisations, a history of the community coming together to resolve neighbourhood issues, and a strong sense of place, pride and neighbourhood values
- BEACH CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE – relaxed, social spectacular views, a very strong Surf Life Saving and surfing community, fantastic community kiosk, lots of recreational opportunities such as beach walks, jogging, beachcombing, fitness training, attracts visitors from all over the world, “makes you feel you are on holidays all year round”
- MAGNIFICENT NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SETTING – stunning ocean surrounds, surf, beach & dunes, bushlands, creeks and wetlands, *The Bluff*, coastal heath, fresh air, beauty, good climate, Awabakal Nature Reserve, sea breeze, bird life
- CONVENIENT AND DIVERSE RANGE OF ESSENTIAL LOCAL SERVICES – doctors, pharmacy, newsagency, post office, bakery, cafes, school, community pre-school, community library, group fitness and dance, bowling club, buses, no franchises, plenty of sporting clubs
- THE IMPORTANCE OF REDUCING THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOTPRINT: Reducing energy and water consumption, growing local fruit and vegetables, planting native gardens, reducing waste and litter, finding local solutions
- RECREATIONAL FACILITIES THAT PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING – Fernleigh Track, parks, surf club, tennis courts, soccer fields, walking tracks and nature walks, open space, boardwalk, beaches, surf

## Issues

In general, the range of issues are consistent with input from the community so far. The survey results confirm the importance of a number of sustainability issues in the community:

- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Strengthening community connections
- Improving Webb Park
- Generating a Redhead community garden and growing veggies at home
- Reducing water and energy consumption
- Growing native gardens
- Developing infrastructure that supports footprint reductions (cycleways/footpaths, stormwater & drainage)
- Improving waste management (recycling, reduction, disposal and litter)
- Increasing citizen responsibility at the local level and creating a community voice to lobby governments in regards to local issues

## Actions

The survey results highlight some potential neighbourhood actions and give an indication of activities that are likely to gain popular support from the Redhead community.

Activities which would be most likely to attract broad public participation include:

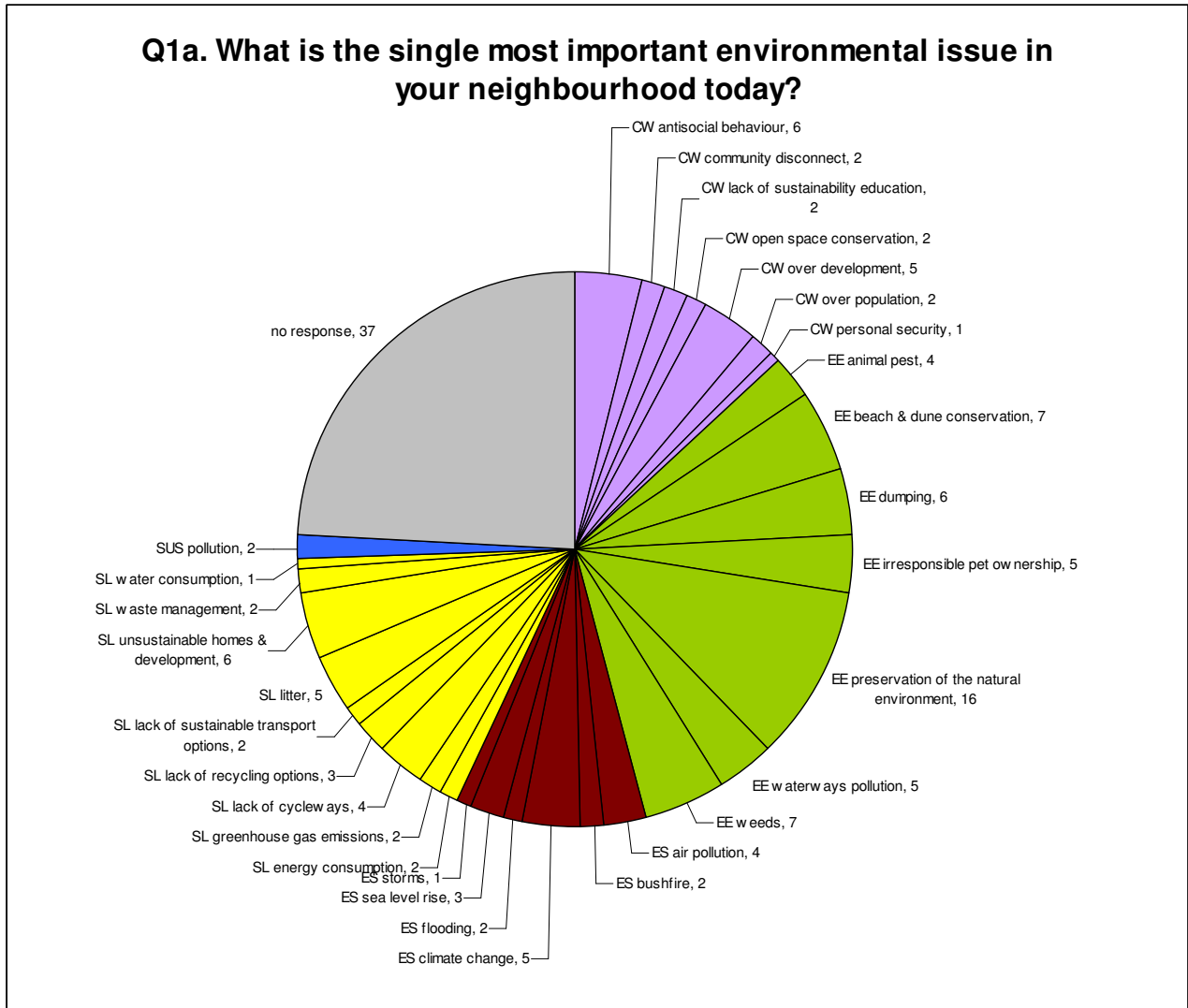
- **Growing vegetables**
- **Neighbourhood clean-up**
- **Landcare**
- **Home audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use**
- **Sustainable living workshops**
- **Community BBQs**

Actions described by residents through open-ended responses listed on pages 19 - 21.

# DETAILED RESULTS

## 1. LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN REDHEAD

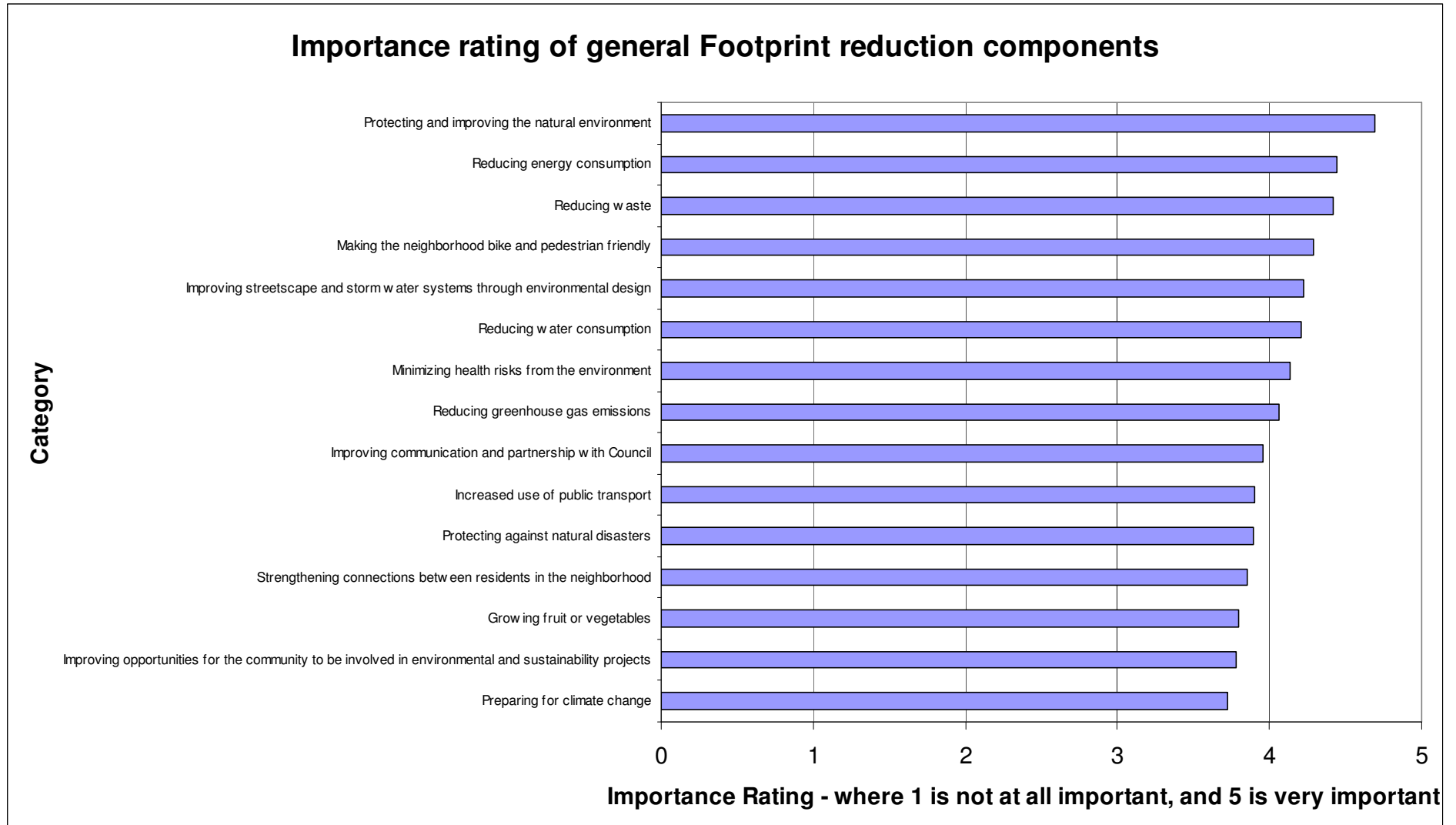
**Q1a. What is the single most important environmental issue in your neighbourhood today?**



### Priority rating

- 1 The natural environment
2. Not sure
3. Household footprints
4. Community wellbeing
- 5 Environmental security
6. Sustainability - general

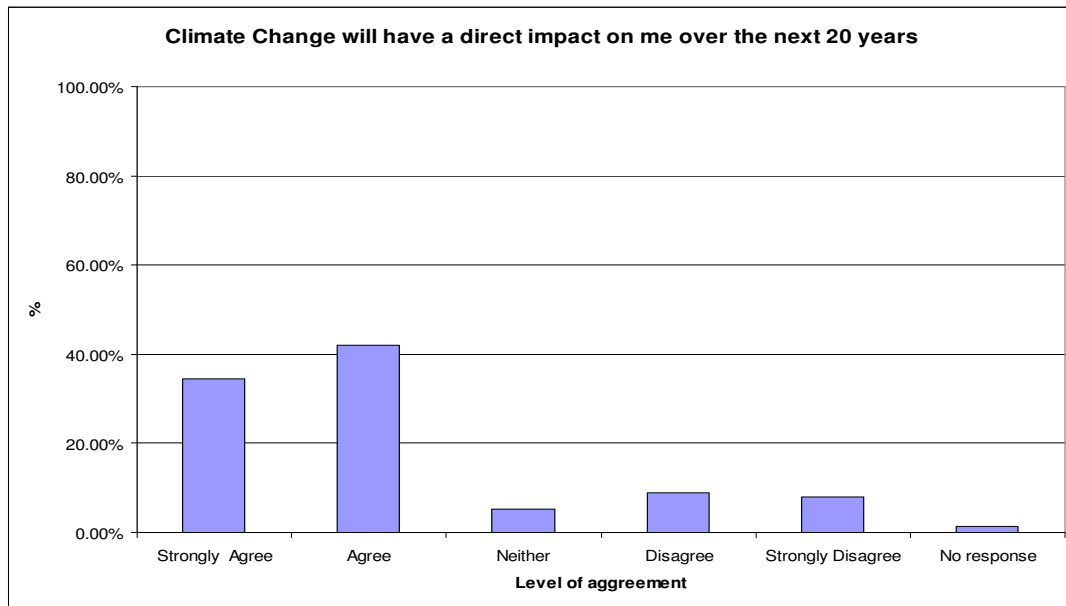
**Q1b Please rate how important the following are to your neighbourhood**



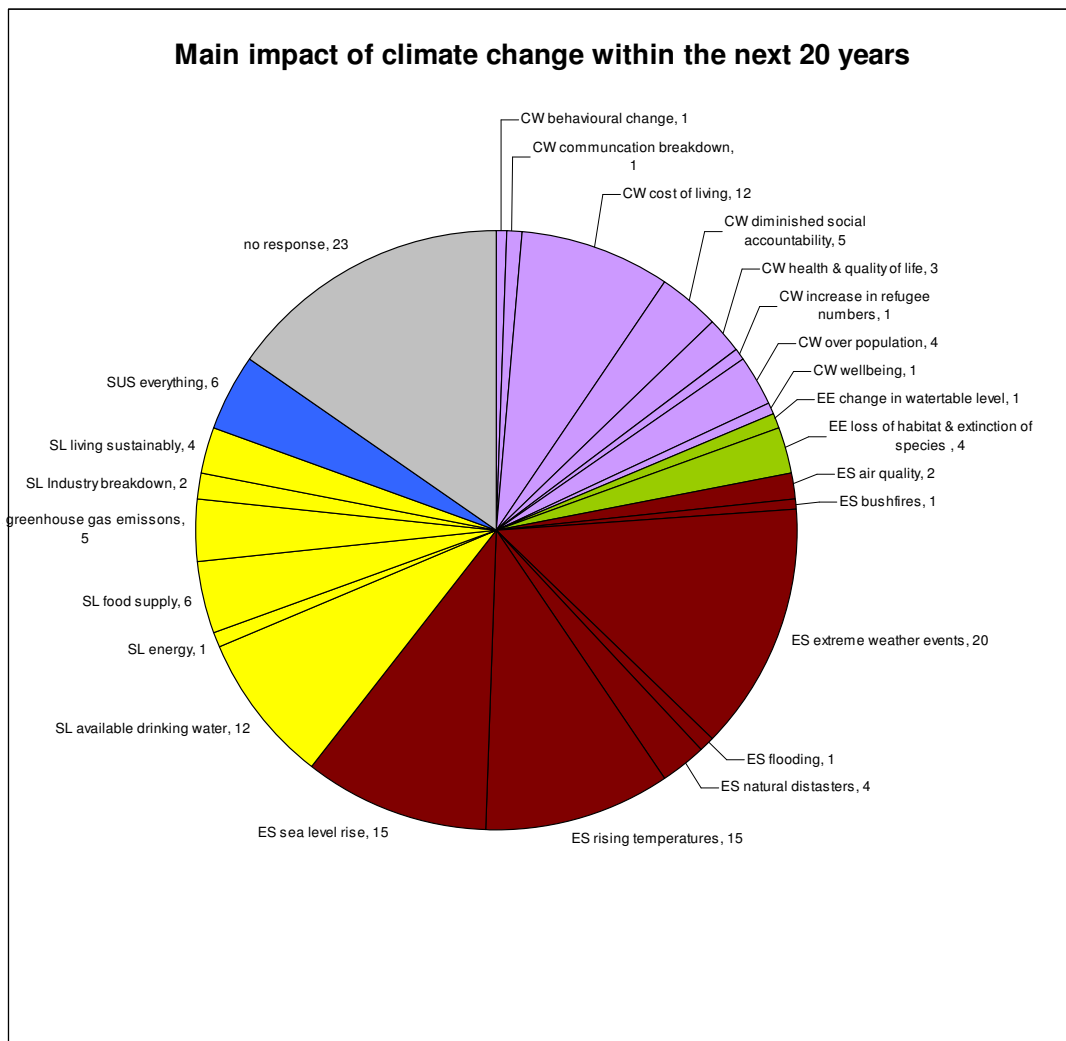


## 2. CLIMATE CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS

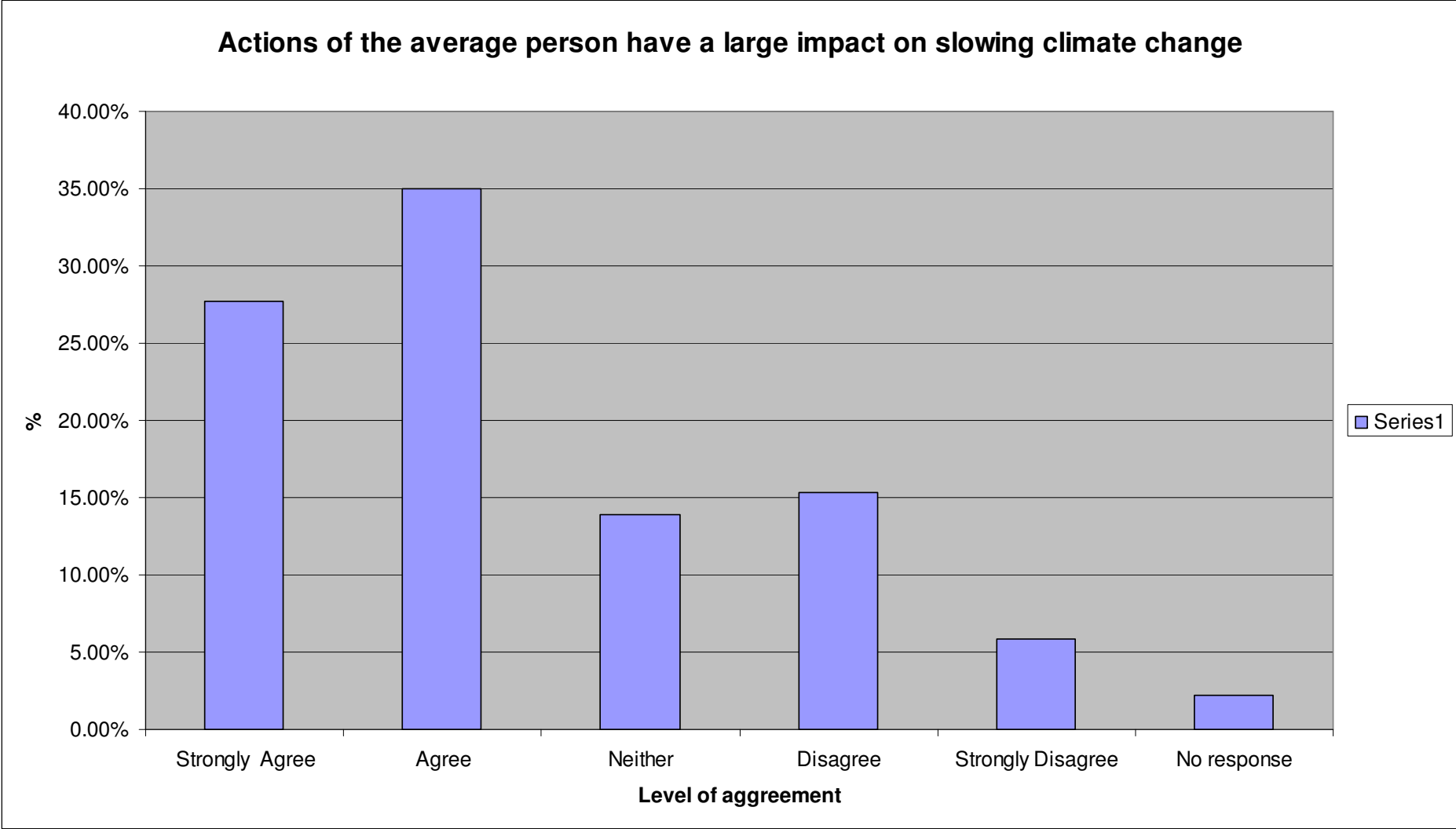
**Q2a. How strongly do you agree or disagree that climate change will have direct impact on you within the next 20 years?**



**2b. What do you think will be the main impacts of climate change over the next 20 years?**

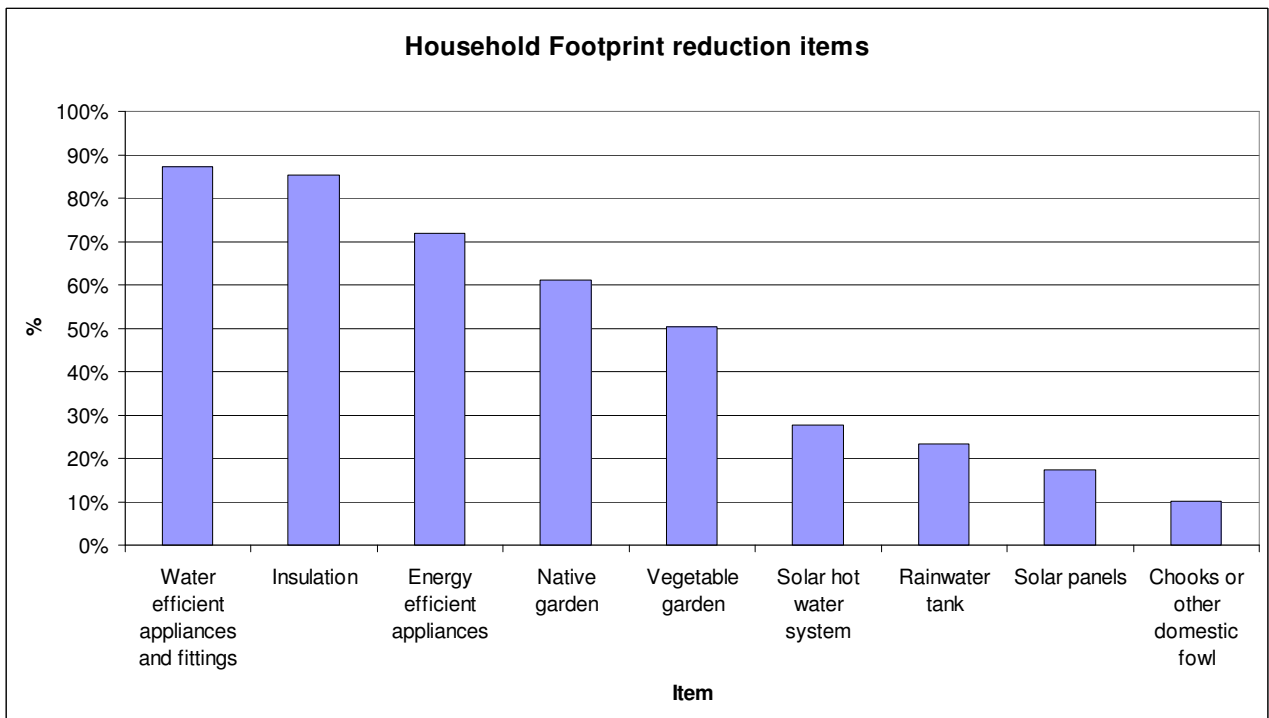


**Q2c. How strongly do you agree, or disagree, that the actions of the average person have a large impact on slowing climate change?**

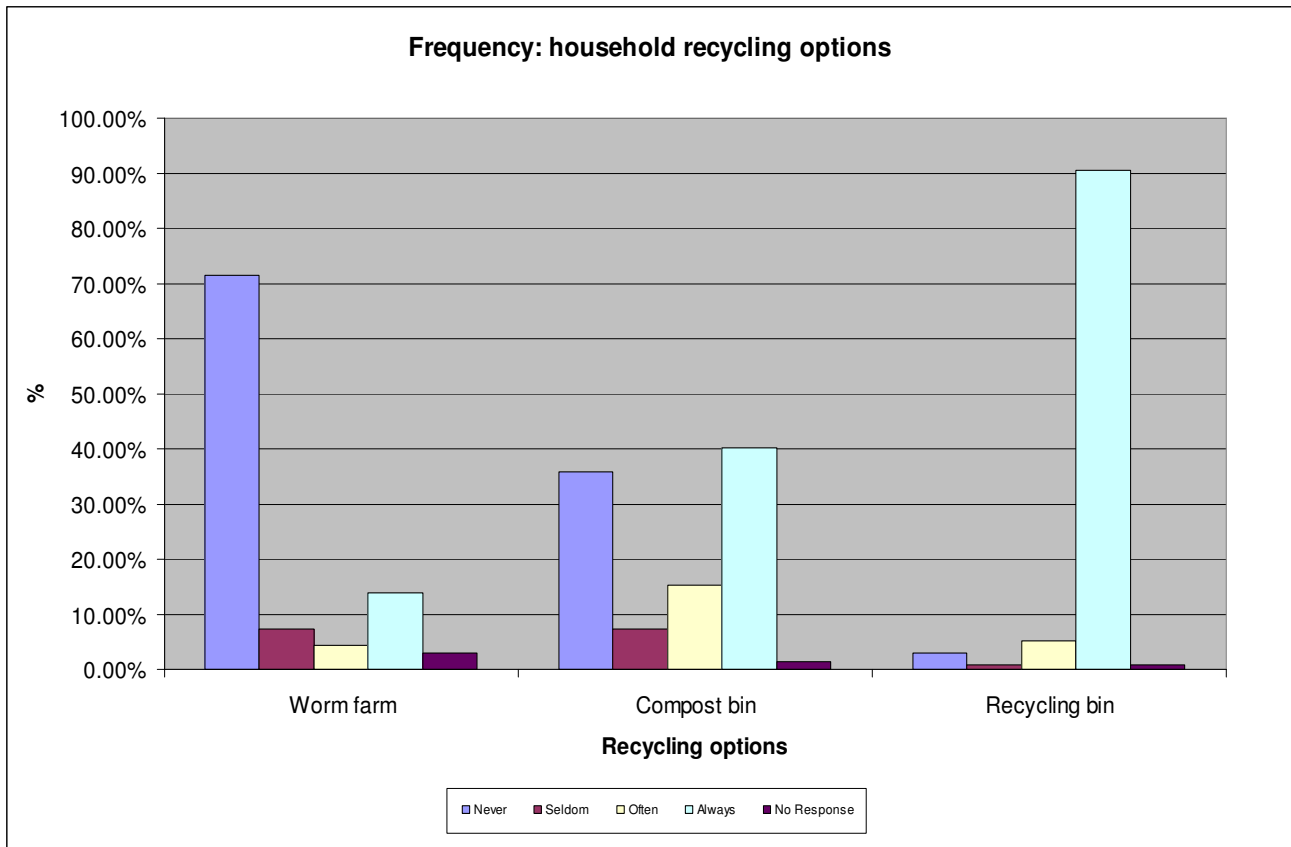


### 3. YOUR SUSTAINABILITY CHOICES

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



3b How often does you household make use of



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

- No bin
- No space
- No interest
- No time
- Didn't work
- No compost
- Attracts cockroaches

**Q3d. Does your household buy Greenpower?**

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	20	14.71%
No	112	82.35%
No response	4	2.94%

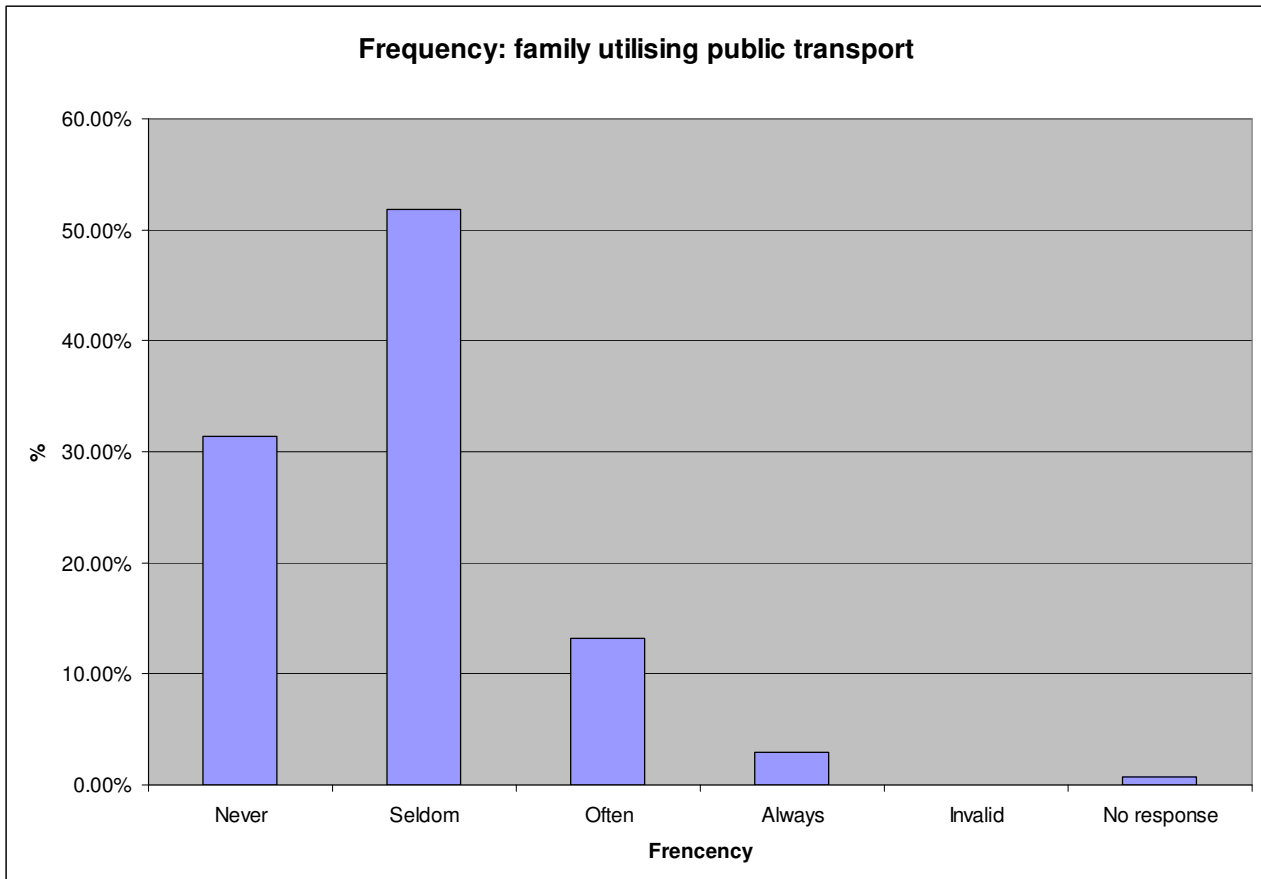
**Q3e. If yes, could you please indicate what percentage of GreenPower you purchase?**

Response	Count
10%	3
15%	1*
20%	1*
25%	1*
50%	3
100%	4

**Q3f. If never or seldom, could you please indicate why?**

- No interest
- Cost
- Uncertain how money is spent. No evidence and no accountability 14.71%
- Don't know what it is
- It shouldn't cost more
- Jack Green folded
- Too confusing
- Why should families shoulder the cost when there is no government leadership and big polluters aren't taking responsibility
- Would rather invest in infrastructure, such as solar panels

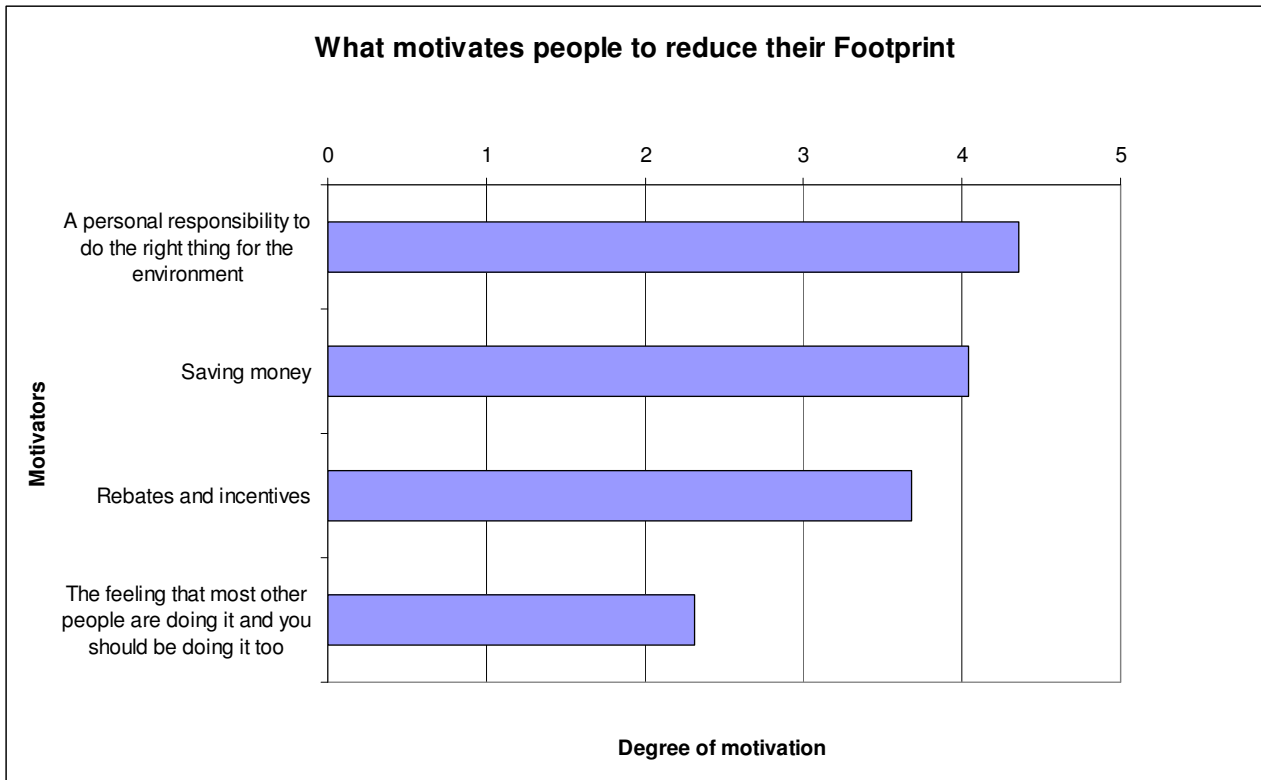
**Q3g. How often do people in your household catch public transport?**



**Q3h. If never or seldom, could you please indicate why?**

- Limited, inadequate, unreliable bus service
- Too slow
- Far from convenient
- Time table is not regular
- Existing transport routes do not match destination requirements
- Cars are convenient
- Logistical nightmare
- Why should families shoulder the cost when there is no government leadership and big polluters aren't taking responsibility
- Varying work schedules don't align with timetable
- Not user friendly for people with disabilities
- Cost
- Not user friendly in bad weather

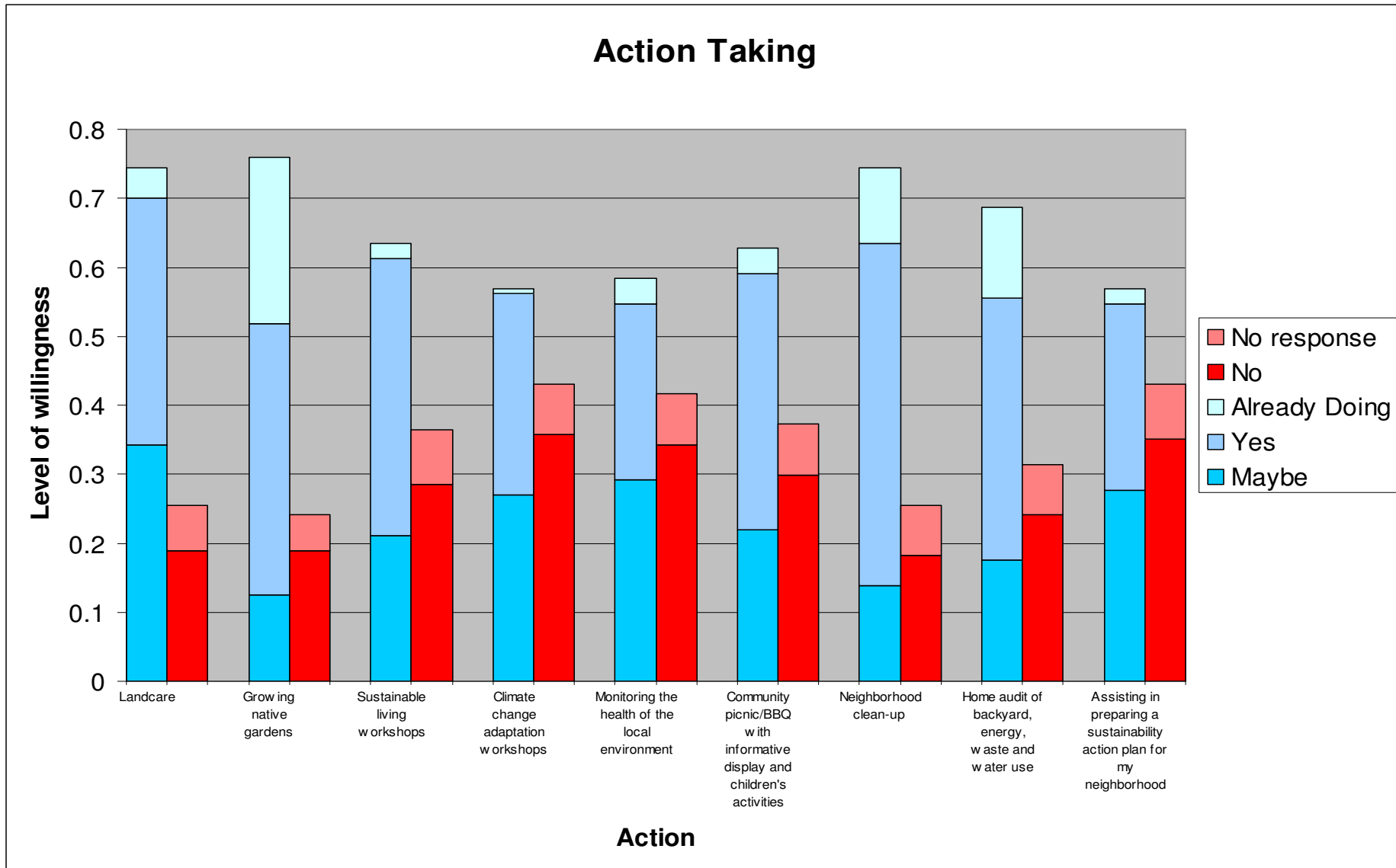
**Q3i. What motivates you to improve your environmental behaviour?**



**Q3j. In the past 4 weeks, during your leisure and recreation time, have you visited any natural environments, such as a beach, lake, river, creek, bushland or park?**

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	123	90%
No	11	8%
No response	3	2%

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



**Q4b. Have you heard of or participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhood program?**

Yes, Heard of	50	36.50%
Participated	14	10.22%
No	67	48.91%
No response	6	4.38%

**Q4c. If yes, how did you hear about this program?**

- Letterbox drop
- Information night
- Advertising through independent media
- Other organisations such as, Redhead Library, Singleton Council, Transition Towns,
- Word of mouth
- Newspaper article
- Friends
- Information stall at Charlestown Pool
- Members of Seed Group
- Public School and Pre-School
- Family member works at Council
- Contacted by Council

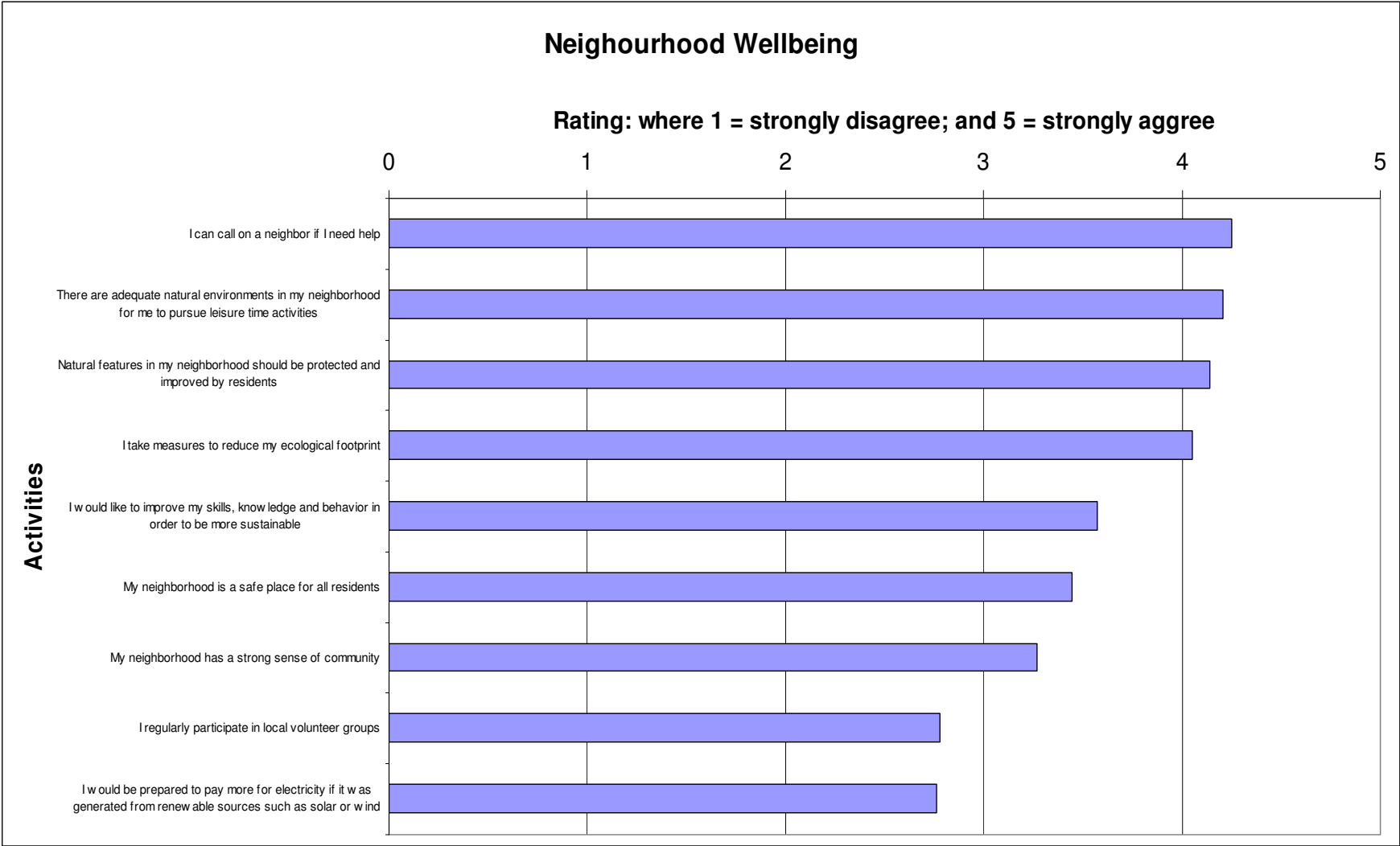
**4d. Would you be interested in participating in the Sustainable neighbourhood Program?**

Yes	31.39%
No	21.89
Maybe	40.14%
No response	6.60%

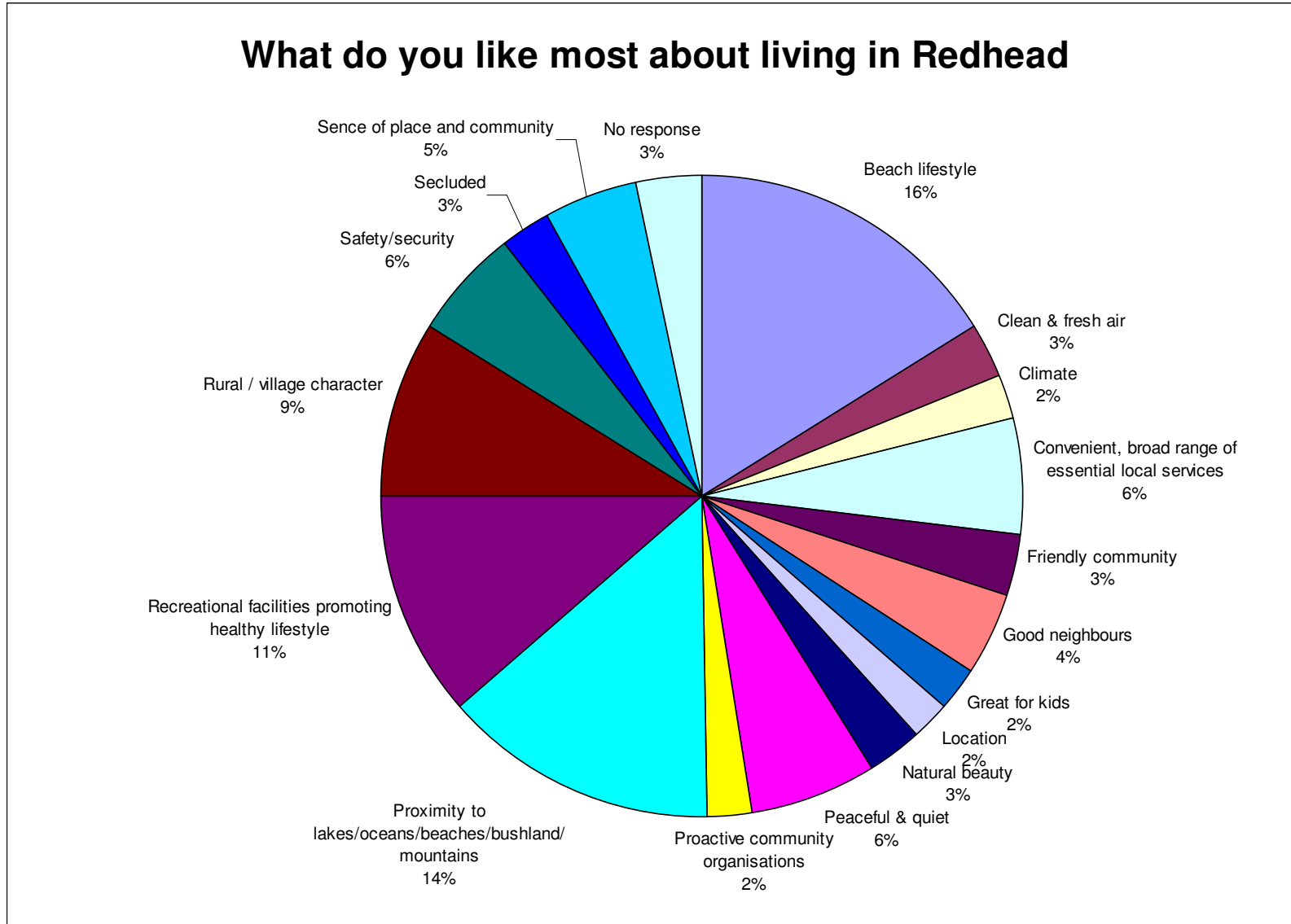


**ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**

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



**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?**

### ***Protecting and enhancing our village atmosphere and strong community connectedness***

- Support, assist and encourage local community groups to continue providing their important community services
- ‘Adopt a granny/poppy’ to help out with odd jobs and technology
- Create a neighbourhood voice and lobby all levels of government to maintain and improve neighbourhood facilities and infrastructure
- A community centre that caters for all demographics and interests of the community
- Plant community windbreaks to protect property and enhance amenity
- Run a Redhead community day to celebrate and promote service, groups and local creative artists (commercial, volunteer or otherwise)
- More opportunities for youth to be proactive
- Lobby to improve our community infrastructure – cycle ways (pedestrian free), footpaths, Lambton Colliery building, Webb Park
- More educational and directional signage along walking paths
- Work to keep the village feel – so it remains a great place to grow old
- More posters
- Create a Redhead Information booklet for residents and visitors, promoting community treasures, services, activities, cultural and environmental heritage and tips for reducing our footprint
- Develop laneway culture – eg monthly laneway get togethers for socialising , planning and sharing ideas – encourages pedestrian activity and could incorporate local business
- Find ways to make it easy for new people to get to know neighbours
- Create a fire plan for Redhead
- Organise and support pre-school and Redhead neighbourhood sustainability programs as a means to educate parents
- Encourage neighbourhood conversations to increase neighbourhood security and reduce crime that is sneaking into the neighbourhood
- Strengthen our abilities to lobby all governments – this includes Council - as a community. We are the government – we pay them to administer our affairs
- Run street parties
- More community activities
- Develop a stronger relationship with Council so that we are become aware of Council developments and prevent things like putting an industrial estate in a beachside suburb.
- Reduce speed limit and put a roundabout in at the intersection of Elsdon St and Cowlshaw St

### ***Preserving and enhancing our beach culture and lifestyle***

- Fewer dogs on Redhead Beach – have some the beach zoned for dogs and the rest for no dogs
- Dog owners scoop poop and dispose appropriately –
- More bins
- Patrols to stop speeding bikes and vehicles on the beach – fines imposed
- Better seating, umbrellas etc at beach kiosk
- Keep Redhead top car park of cigarette butts, McDonalds wrappers, beer and drink bottles – people throw their rubbish out car windows
- Lobby Council for lighting at night to stop vandalism, graffiti, car wheelies etc
- Run beach patrols to stop dumping (car bodies, furniture, broken bottles etc
- No camping on beach that results in littering beach and dumping
- Disabled access to top floor of surf club
- Develop surf club slightly to have a restaurant that overlooks the beach

### ***Actively reducing our neighbourhood's ecological footprint***

- Weekly recycling
- Lobby Council encourage the building of smaller homes
- Use clothe lines
- Grow veggies and sell excess locally
- To hold Redhead up as the most Greenhouse Gas Emissions efficient suburb in the region
- Subsidies for solar/wind energy/water tanks etc
- Lobby Council to be more scrupulous about partly renovated buildings and land clearing – to be in keeping with the environment
- Create a Redhead community garden with food and native plants– as a place to meet and learn skills from other people, a place where older people can mentor younger, a place to learn “hands on sustainability”, a focal point for the community – possibly funded/sponsored by local businesses. A special place for young people to learn. To support new homes with hardly any yard space and to encourage new builders to allow for more yard space.
- Work hard to reduce waste and energy consumption
- Be creative with native plants in front yards introducing nectar and seed rich food species
- Regular neighbourhood clean-ups
- Solar friendly roof-tops – households, businesses and community buildings (at least 1kilowatt on all roofs, solar hot water
- Weekly recycling
- Learn more about native foods
- Rainwater tanks with pumps use between 2-10 times the energy compared to our regional water supply!
- Keep homes, yards and streets clean and tidy
- More bins on bush tracks, in parks and picnic areas – More ranger patrols to police the problem
- Run a neighbourhood ‘Do the right thing’ campaign
- Run a ‘creating bins’ workshop to educate people on recycling
- Make it easy to connect to natural gas
- Households utilise grey water – flush toilets and water gardens
- Chooks for households
- Businesses model to the community how they save power and water
- Run workshop on *how to make a difference* (eg how to establish a veggie patch, regulations on owning chickens)
- Neighbourhood pledge to take up GreenPower
- Collect rainwater – water tanks for all dwellings
- Workshops on how to be ‘green’ eg Worm farming – children come home with one that’s good to go (charge a fee so they are sustainable)
- Lobby agencies for a more efficient bus service
- Better recycling system – like Germany has – more attention to sorting
- Run a neighbourhood information session: an easy introduction of how to get solar energy
- Eliminate, or reduce, lawns
- Bins at bus stops and on buses
- Partner with Council to enforce responsible pet ownership – cats are a big issue, especially given the variety of bird life in redhead
- Put natural gas pipes down Bentley Street
- Public transport made more affordable
- Heavier fines for not disposing of litter and cigarette butts
- Use bio-fuel from seed oil instead of diesel. Encourage hydro-fuel as developed by Stan Meyer

### ***Protecting and improving our magnificent natural environment setting***

- Clean up waterways and creeks
- Encourage all dog owners to scoop poop and dispose properly – not to droppings in plastic bags and leave the bags hanging on fences and trees
- Lobby Council to improve stormwater drainage
- Stop illegal dumping along roadsides – stop people using redhead road and Oakdale Road as a dump
- Native gardens in public areas
- Revamp street trees
- Use less pesticides
- Create a local environment newsletter of projects and little opportunities to get involved
- A long term plan to clean the coastal freshwater systems and eliminate ocean pollution once and for all - image crystal creeks and no more ocean sludge!
- Clean up nature strip behind houses which is being used as a storage area for bricks and other building waste/reserves
- More trees for new home
- More planting of native plants
- Restore and maintain wetlands and other ecosystems
- Plant along nature strip
- Stop illegal motorbike riding in the bush and on the sand hills
- Make redhead lantana free
- Return bush and waterways back to normal habitat
- Give more attention to freshwater creek that has become overgrown and stagnate in parts where fish, frogs and crawchies once lived
- Help clear wetland areas that are overgrown with noxious weeds
- Not allow the coastline, and Nine Mile Beach to be developed like the Gold Coast

### ***Supporting and enhancing our convenient and diverse range of essential local services***

- Neighbours grow fruit and veggies and sell to neighbours
- Markets moved from Kalaroo Rd to Webb Park
- Share resources
- Encourage shop owners to clean filthy footpaths in front of their shop
- Protect and preserve the old mine buildings and make them useful as a community café, toilets and museum
- Run an allotment co-operative with productive, secure site – walkable from homes – and bulk buy/group purchase non-gm seed-stock/small plants and garden implements/aids.
- Revamp shopfronts,
- Develop beach Kiosk into a cafeteria/bistro for non surf club users
- Open a restaurant perhaps?

### ***Utilising and enhancing our recreational facilities that promote healthy living***

- Signage on Fernleigh Track directing users to the village and the beach
- Bins for Fernleigh Track
- Bike hire like they have in Paris – great for the Fernleigh Track and around the Lake
- More play areas for children
- More cycleways
- Develop walkways for pedestrians and cycle ways for pushbikes
- Improve assess for people with disabilities: pathways from Redhead gardens, to shops and club.
- Finish Fernleigh Track cycleway from Newcastle all the way to the Lake
- Establish an aquatic centre. Communities use pools from cradle to grave – unlike footy fields that sit idle and vacant half the year.

### ***Other***

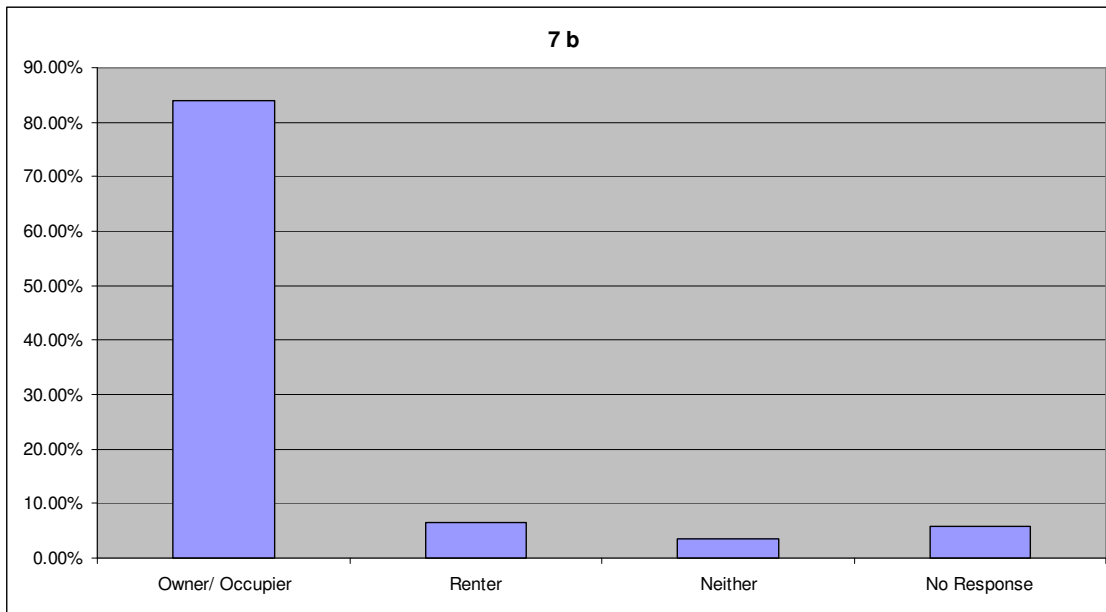
- Lobby Council to keep Public Land public
- Use the Kindy Patch building instead of it falling into a state of disrepair
- Lobby to lower top end government employee salaries in check
- Stop the use of log fires

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

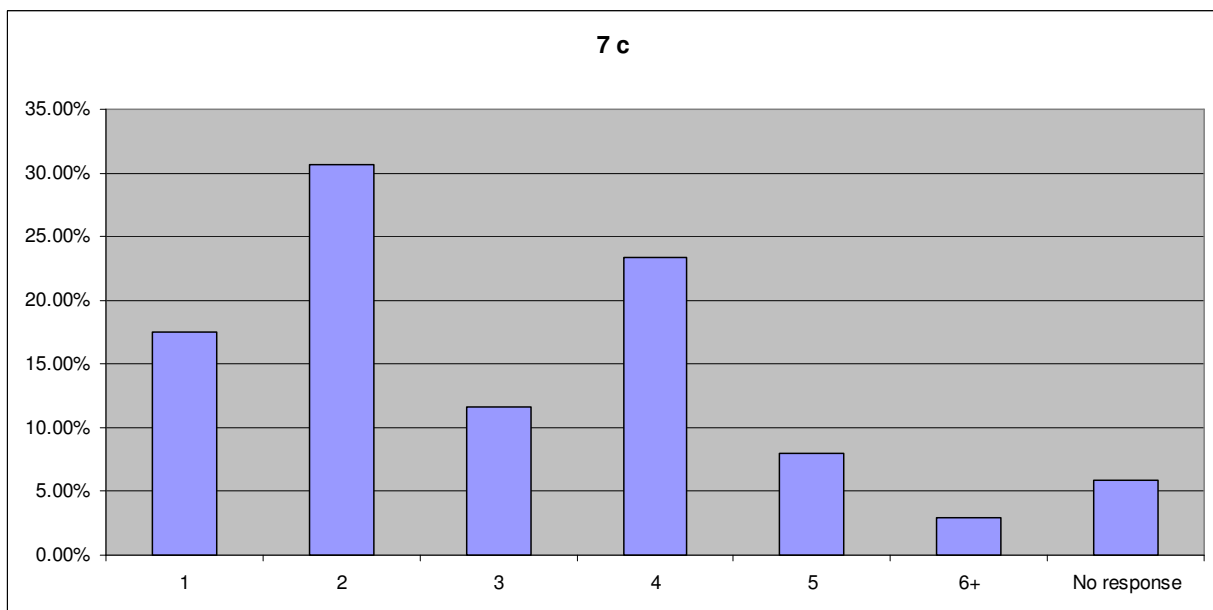
**Q7a. Age bracket**

Age bracket (years)		%
18 -24	2	1.46%
25-34	11	8.03%
35 - 49	43	31.39%
50 - 64	40	29.20%
65+	35	25.55%
	6	4.38%

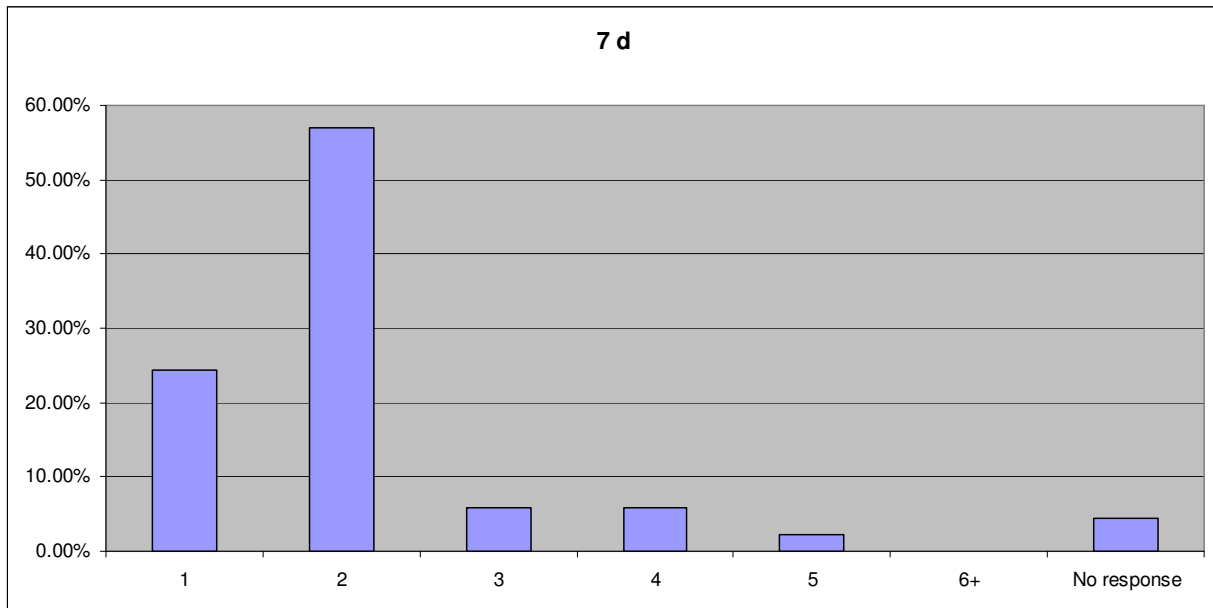
**Q7b. Tenancy Type**



**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 you neighbourhood?**

