

Wangi Area Sustainable Neighbourhood (Wangi Wangi, Arcadia Vale, Buttaba and Myuna Bay) Community Attitudes Survey June 2012

A report on the attitudes of the Wangi Wangi, Buttaba, Arcadia Vale and Myuna Bay resident community, prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council as part of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, June 2012.

BACKGROUND

Council's Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program provides support to communities who wish to plan for and implement changes that will reduce their ecological footprint at the neighbourhood level.

This report presents the results of the Community Attitudes Survey, undertaken in Wangi Wangi, Buttaba, Arcadia Vale and Myuna Bay (the "Wangi area") in April 2012. The survey aims to gauge community attitudes to the natural environment, sustainable living, and climate change issues.

The surveys are part of ongoing community development and engagement activities which aim to collect input from the broadest possible range of residents in the Wangi area. Other techniques to collect input include public workshops and personal approaches from community members or Council staff at shopping centres, schools and other community areas. We hope that the survey captures some of the values, attitudes, and concerns of residents who may not participate in other engagement activities.

METHODOLOGY

In April 2012, the survey was posted to approximately 2,080 households in the Wangi area. The survey was in self-return format, with a prize draw promoted on the front cover as an incentive for residents to complete it.

In total, 231 surveys were returned – a return rate of around 11%.

Key Findings

1. Local sustainability issues in the Wangi area

Respondents were most concerned about:

1. The lake, beaches and waterways – primarily lake pollution
2. The natural environment – primarily the large amount of non-native weeds in the area
3. Infrastructure – to better manage stormwater and drainage

2. Climate change over the next 20 years

45% of residents agreed that climate change will directly impact their life over the next 20 years. Of respondents who did answer this question, they believed the main impacts of climate change to be:

- Changes in weather / warmer weather
- Increased cost of living and
- Extreme weather events

* N.B. 49% of survey respondents didn't answer this question; 4% fell under the 'Other' category

3. Your sustainability choices

Most respondents (>51%) have one or more of these items on their property:

- Insulation (ceiling and/or walls) (85%)
- Water efficient appliances and fittings (84%)
- Energy efficient appliances (69%)
- Native garden (66%)
- Working compost for food scraps (52%)
- Vegetable garden (51%)

3 (a). Food scraps and organic waste

Over 71% of respondents have a compost, worm farm, or chooks.

The most common reasons for not having a compost or worm farm include:

- Living circumstances are not appropriate
- Don't need or want a compost or worm farm

3 (b). GreenPower

14% of respondents have purchased GreenPower. The main reasons for not purchasing GreenPower include:

- I cannot afford GreenPower (29%)
- I do not know much about GreenPower (23%)
- I have solar (19%)

3 (c). Public transport

Most respondents (84%) reported that they never or seldom use public transport. The most common reasons included:

- The route and timetables for public transport in my area is not convenient (64%)
- I prefer to use my car (36%)
- Public transport in my area is not reliable (36%)

10% prefer to walk or cycle rather than use public transport.

3 (d). Motivation

Respondents ranked 'A personal responsibility to do the right thing for the environment' as their primary motivation for improving their environmental behaviour, closely followed by 'Saving money' and 'Rebates and incentives'.

4. Sustainability actions in your neighbourhood

Participation

Respondents indicated they are most likely to participate in the following types of activities:

- Neighbourhood clean-ups
- Growing native gardens
- Information workshops
- Home audit of backyard, energy, waste and water use
- Education events specific to the local environment

The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

23% of respondents had heard of, and 3% had participated in, the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, with local advertising being the primary means they had heard about it.

5. About the Wangi area

Respondents had a high level of agreement that:

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

The top three things people like about living in the Wangi area include:

- The Lake (19%)
- Strong influence of the natural environment (16%)
- Quiet / peaceful (15%)

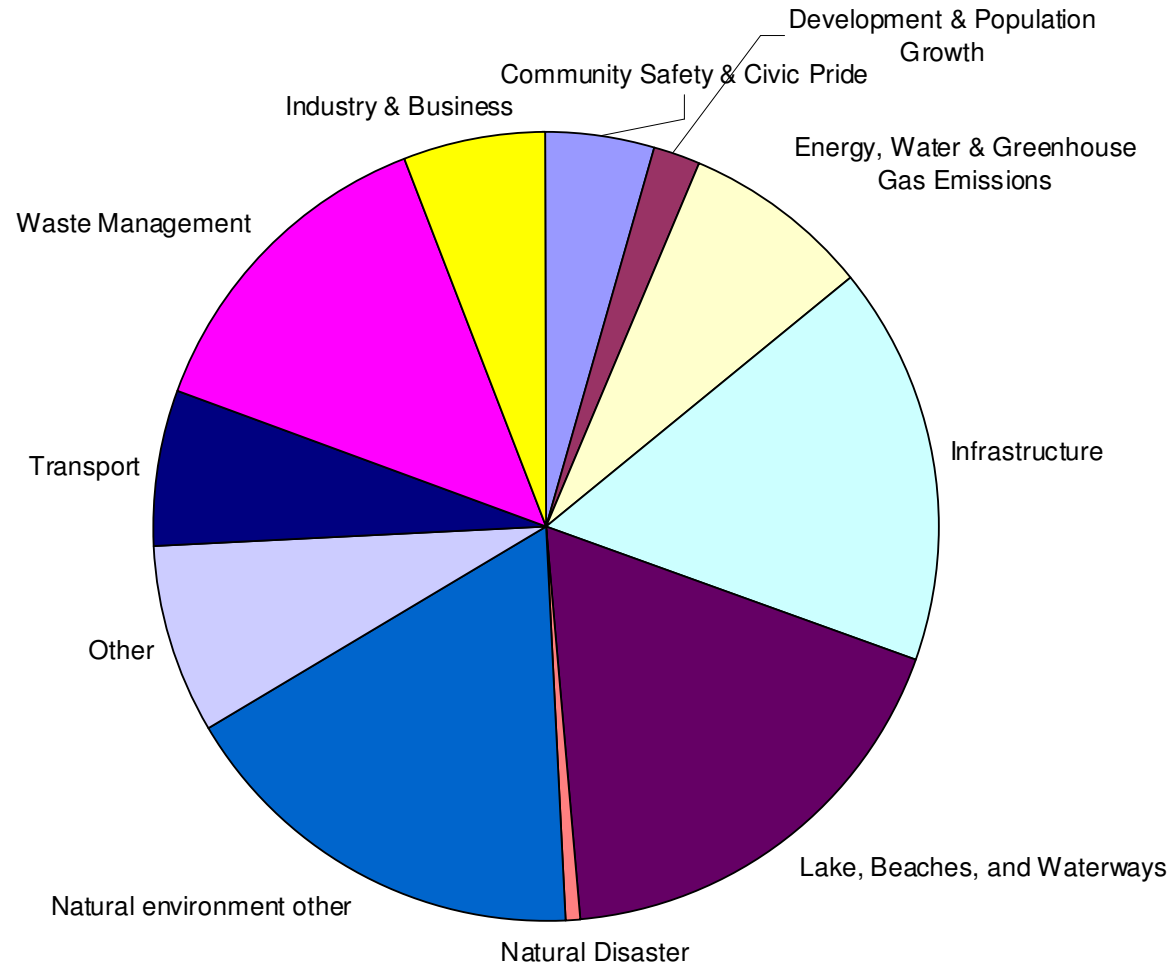
Implications for the Wangi Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Project

The results of this survey will be added to other information, gathered from a range of activities, to help develop the Wangi Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Detailed Results

1. LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Q1a. What are the three most important environmental issues in your neighbourhood today? (List no more than 3.)



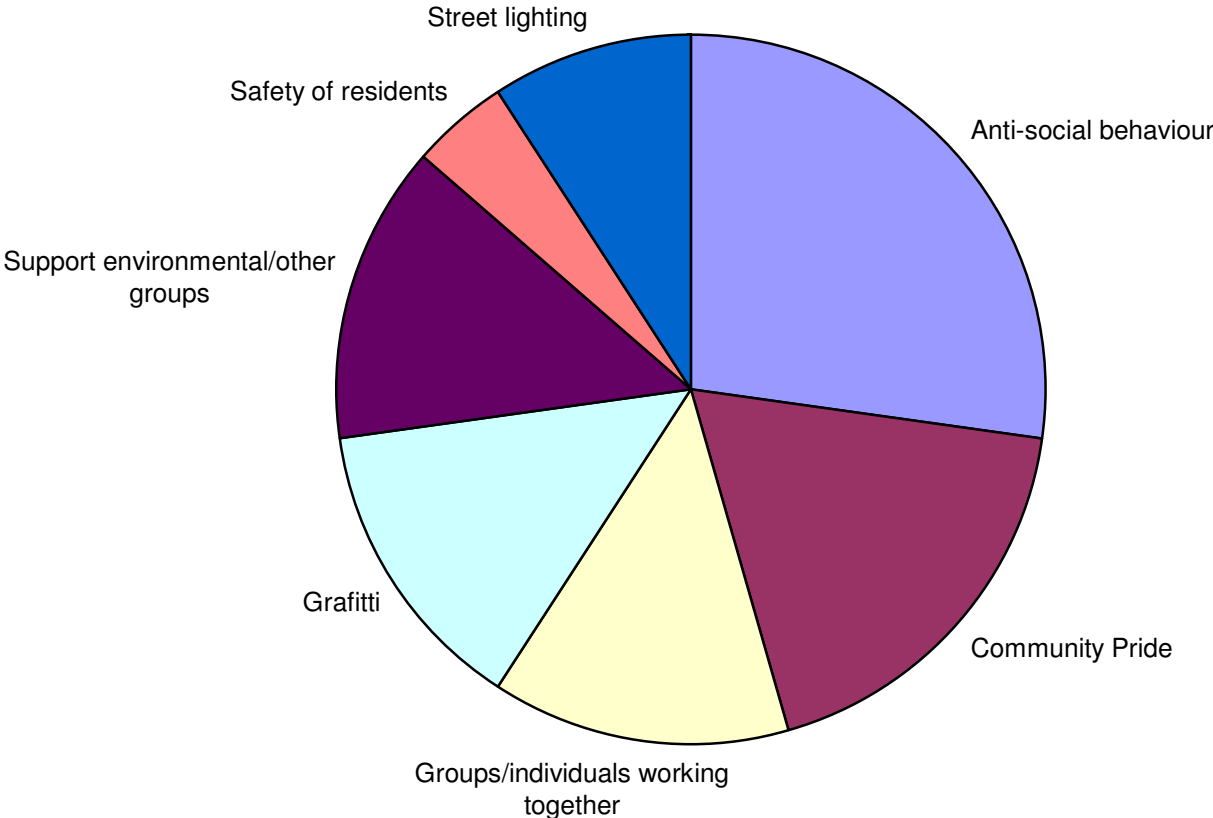
Other responses included:

Community garden
Noise pollution
Improve eco-tourism
Dangerous gum trees near houses
Back burning
No swimming enclosures in lakes (to provide shark-proof area)
Fund infrastructure, not consultants
Too many marine moorings
Park maintenance
Noise
Supporting respectful tourists
Education

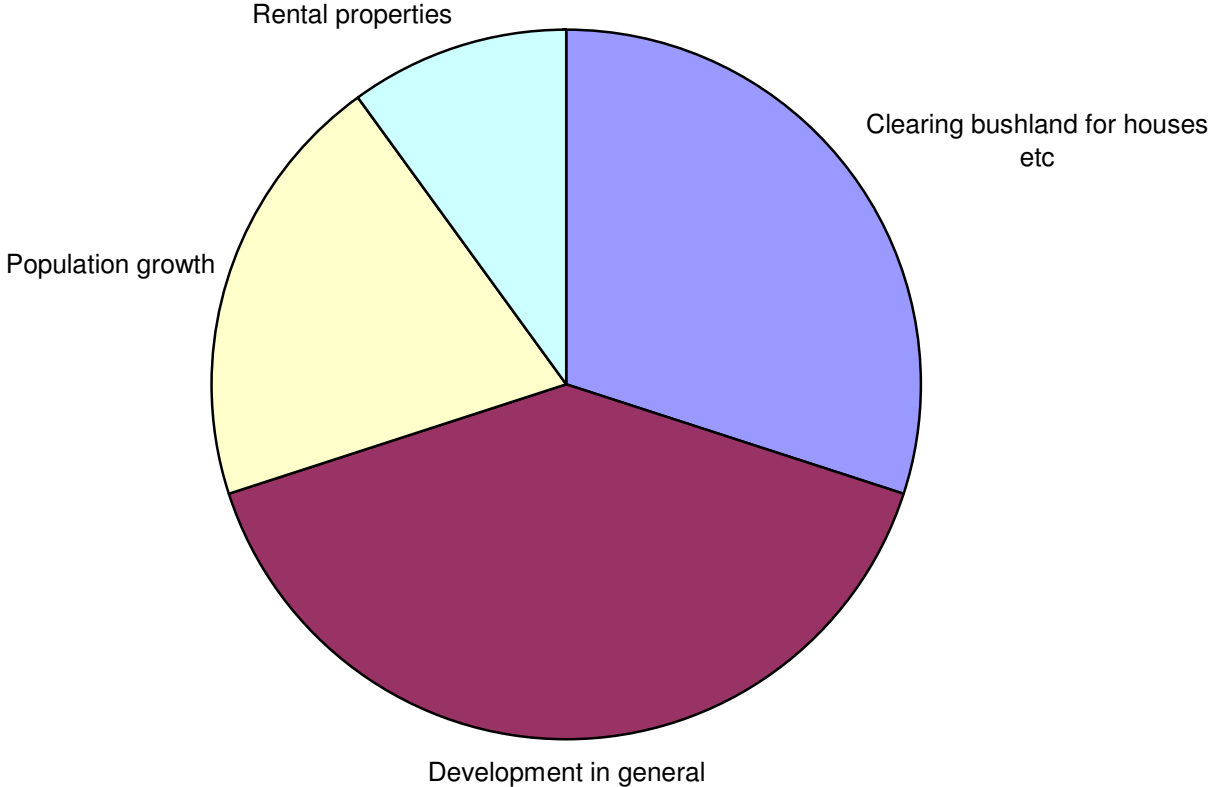
Air pollution - woodfire heating
Park facilities
Environmental Education
Library
Lower rates
Access to water front
More efficient council
Air pollution - woodfire smoke
Health care facilities
Too much packaging on goods

Further breakdown of answers to Q1a.:

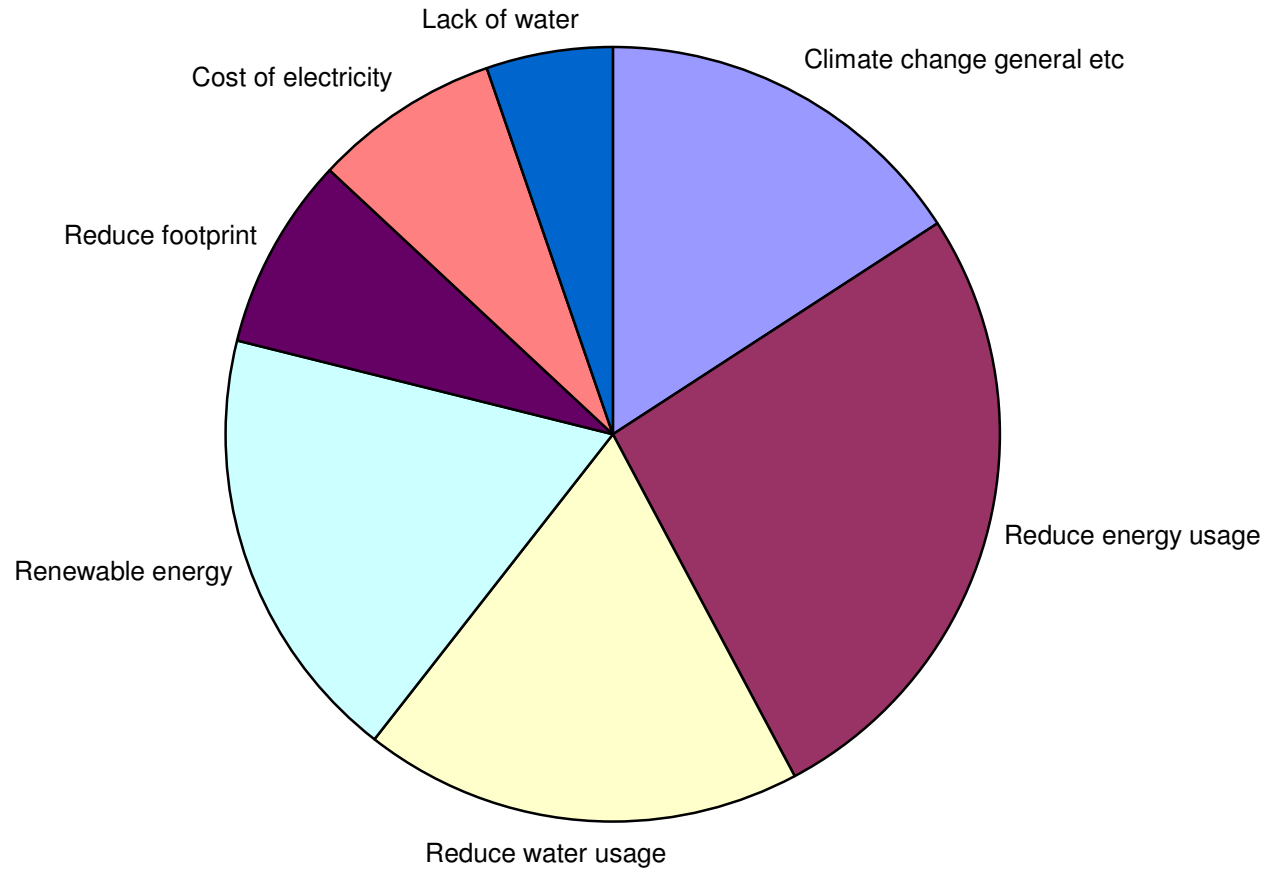
Community safety & civic pride



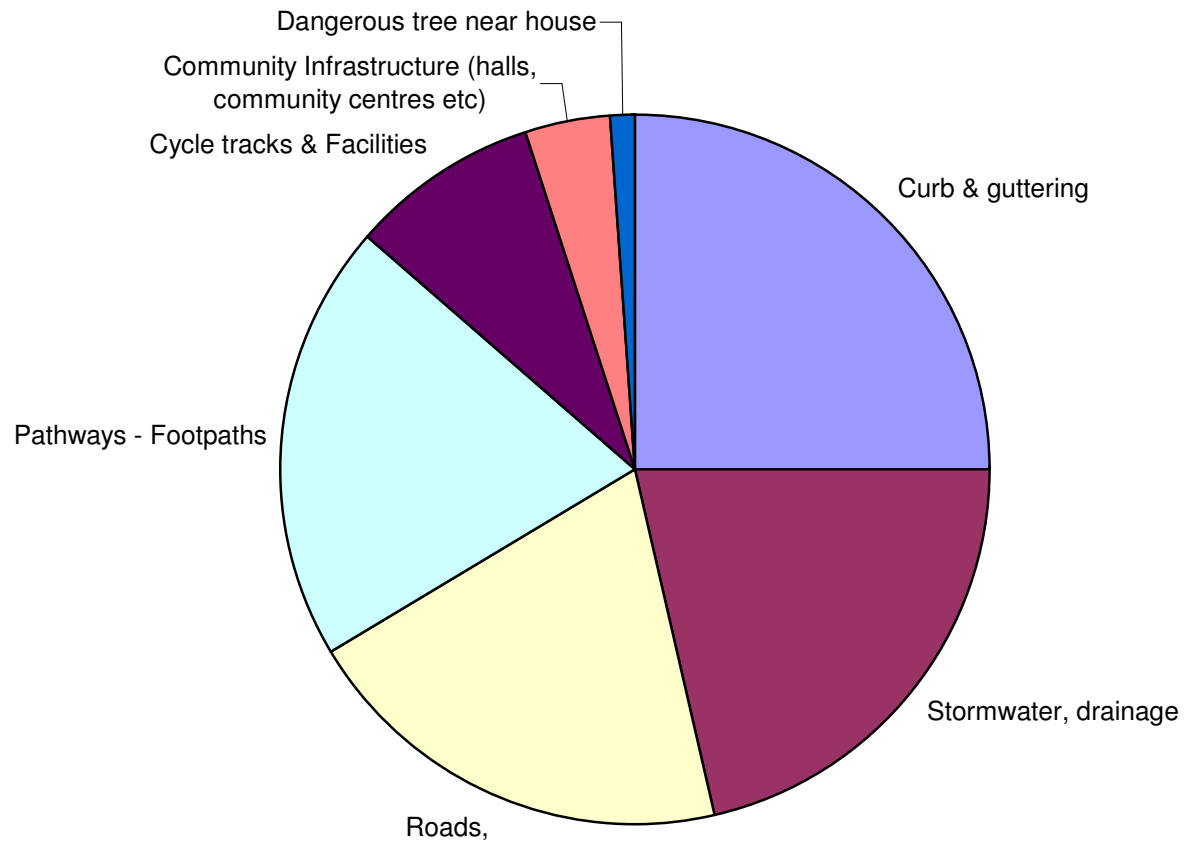
Development & population growth



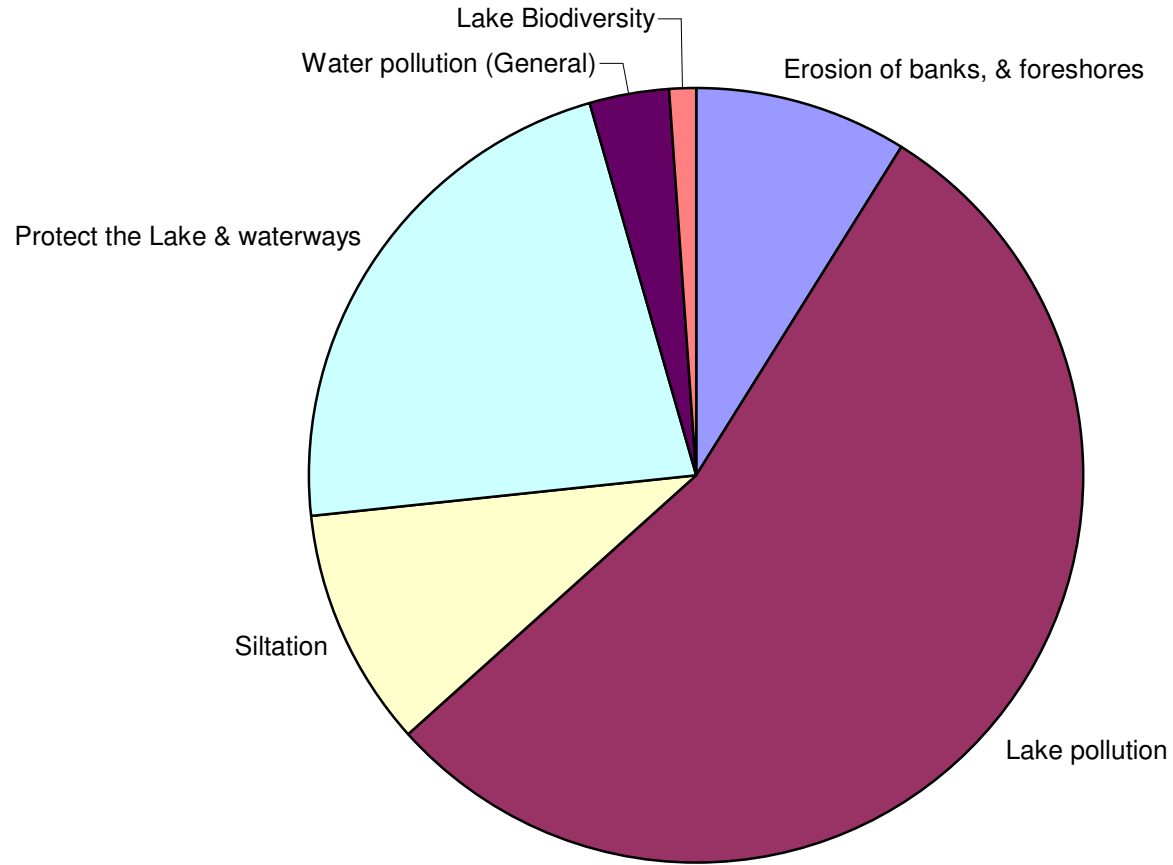
Energy, water & GHG emissions



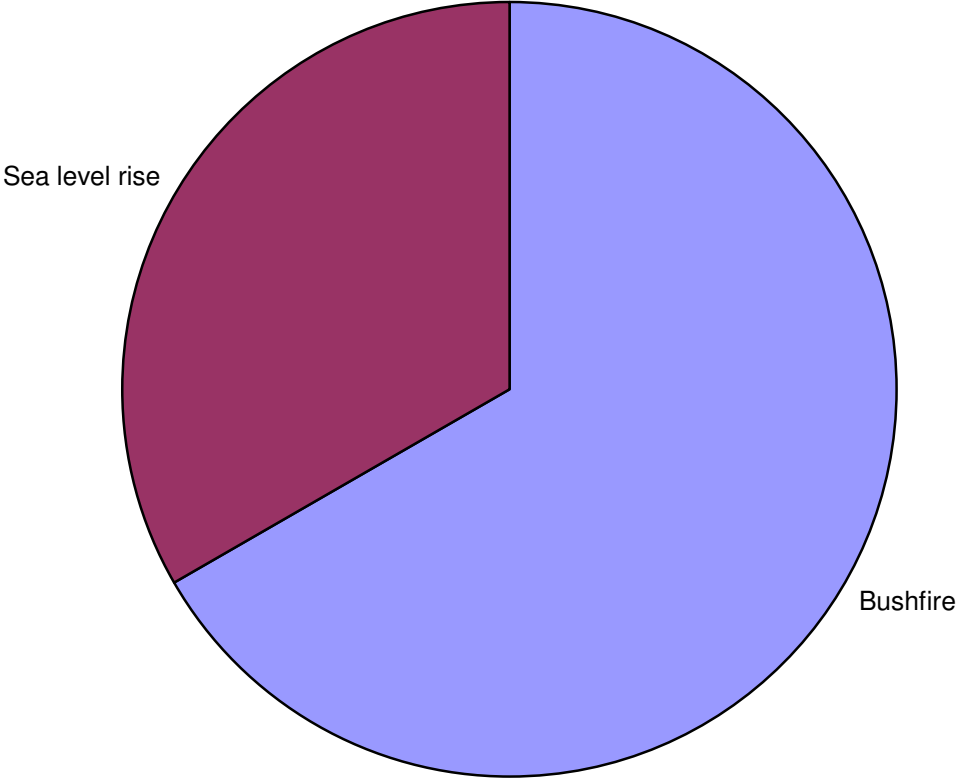
Infrastructure



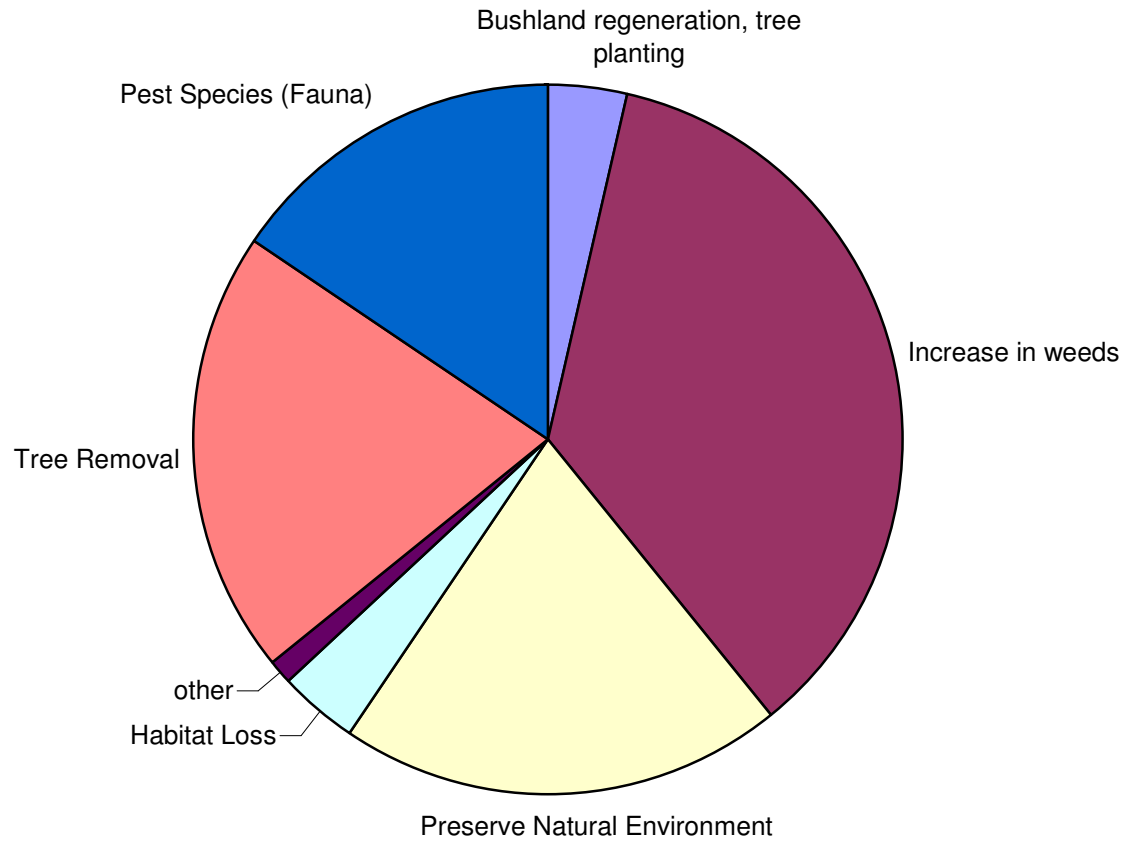
Lake, beaches & waterways



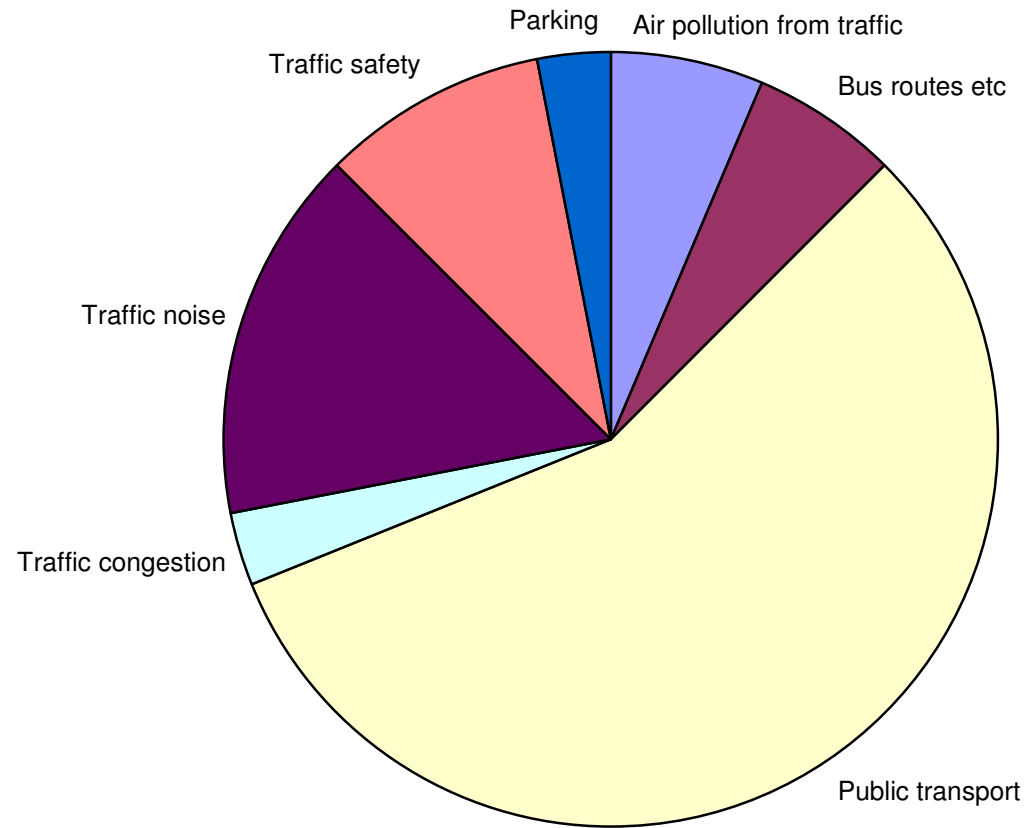
Natural disaster



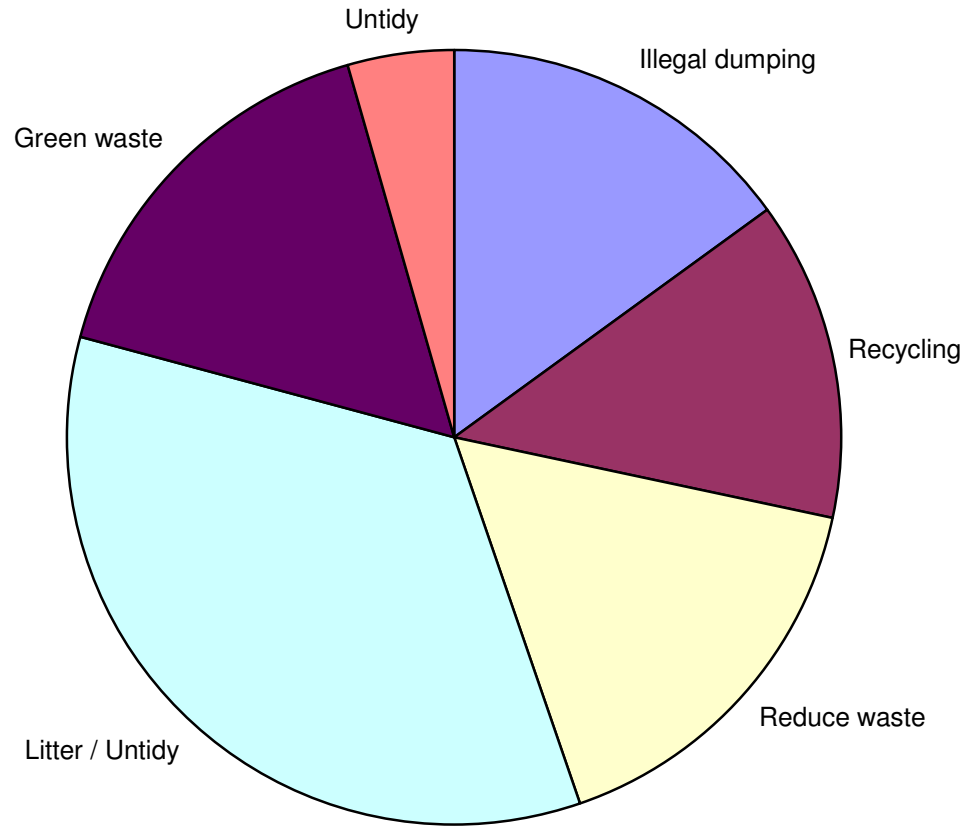
Natural environment (other)



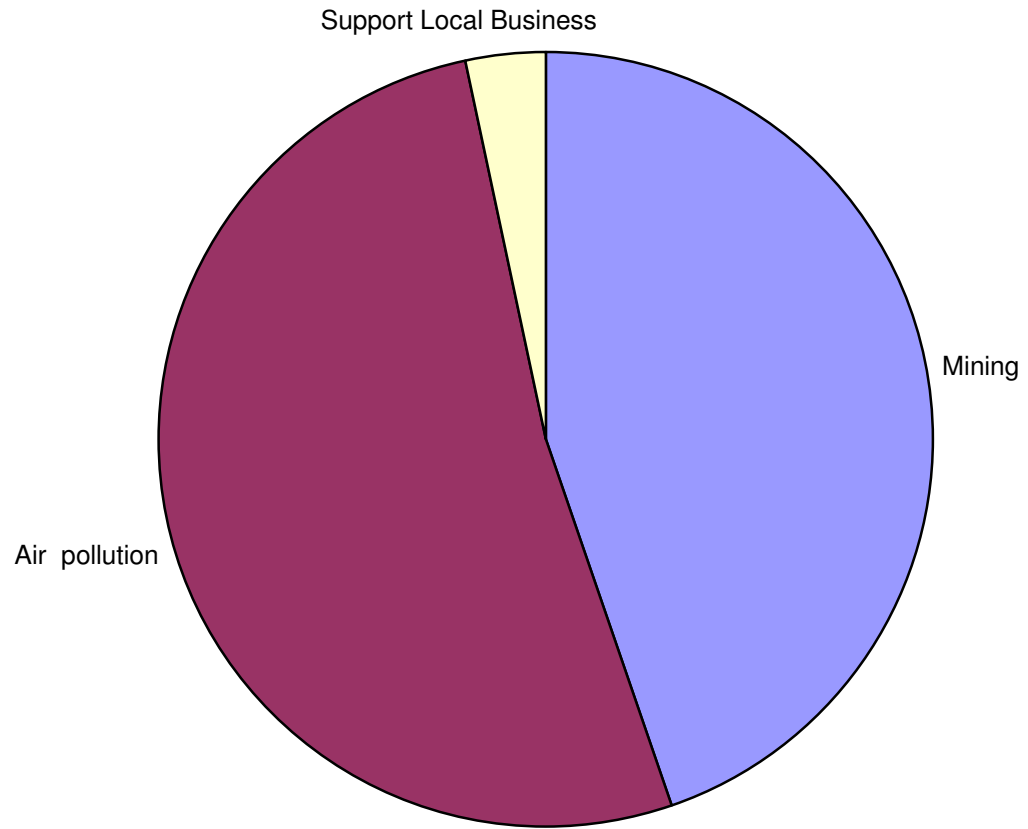
Transport



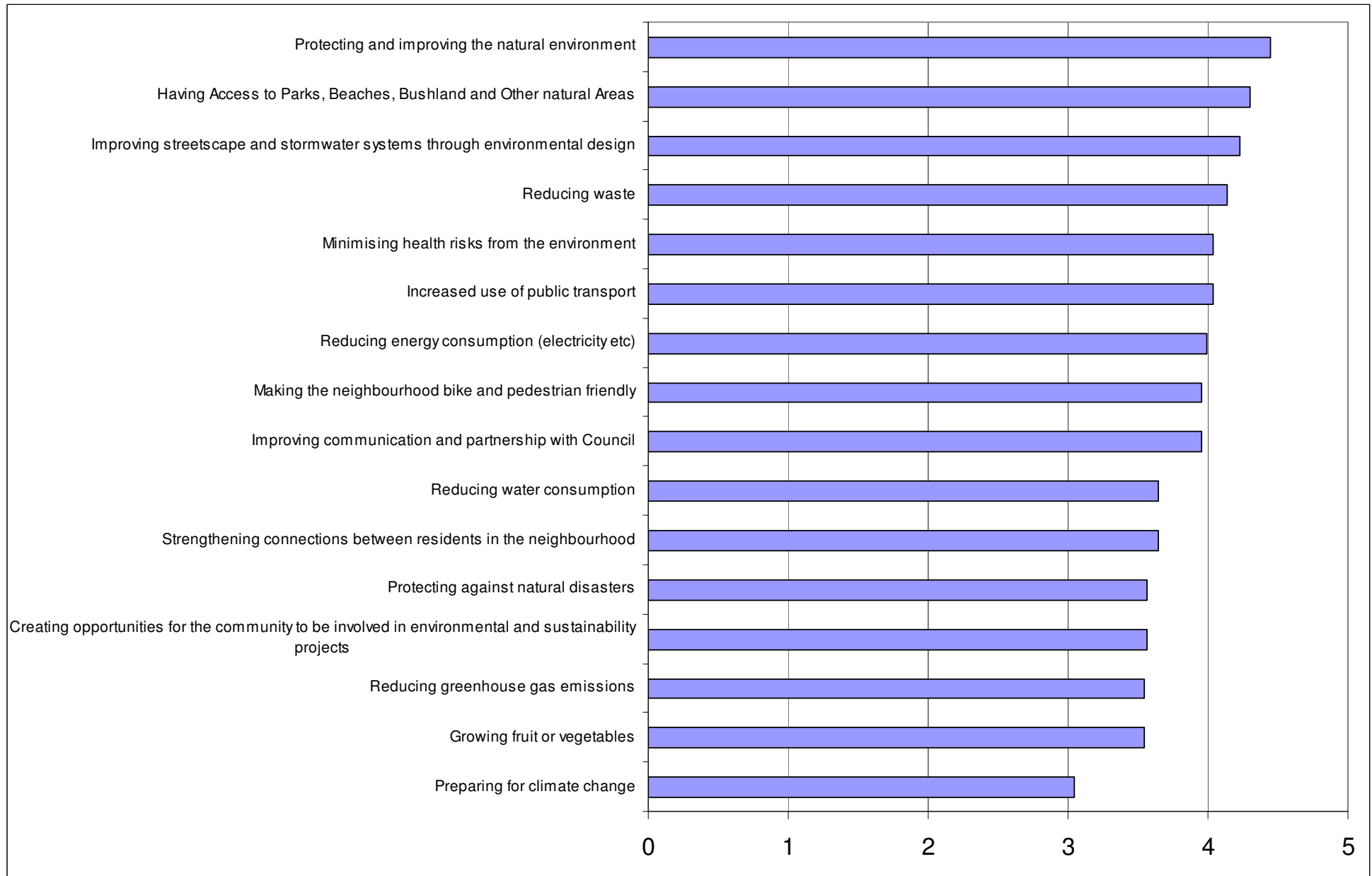
Waste management



Industry & business

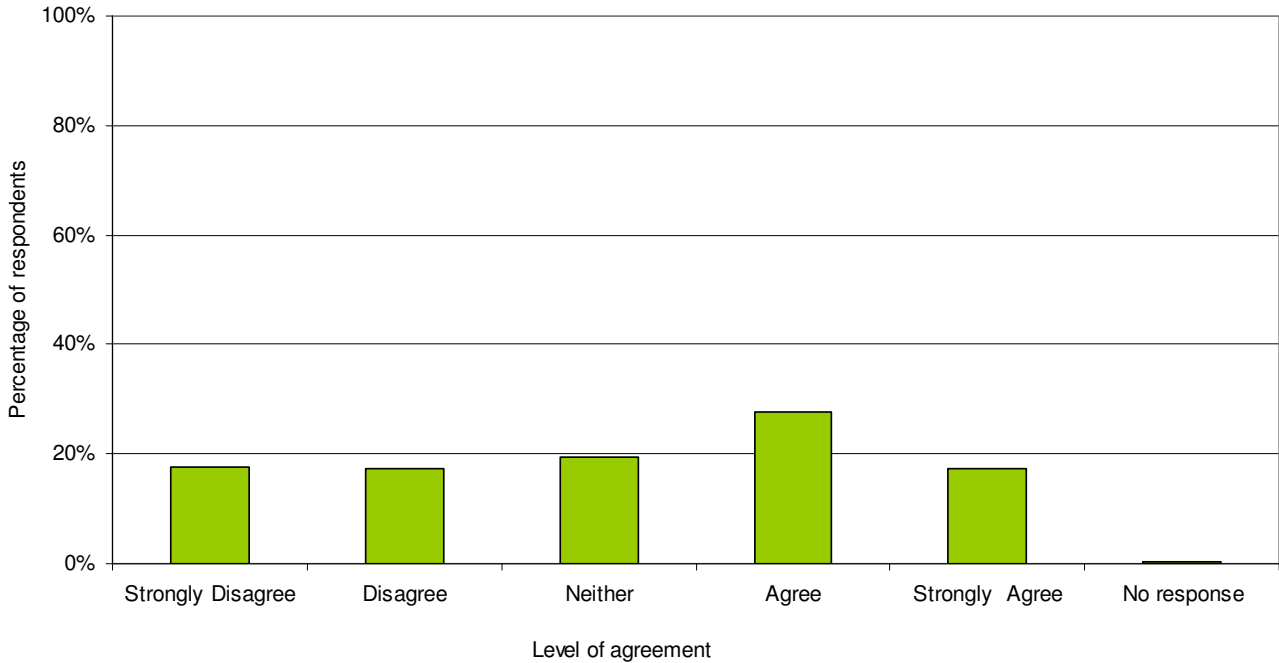


Q1b. Please rate how important you think the following are to your neighbourhood on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.



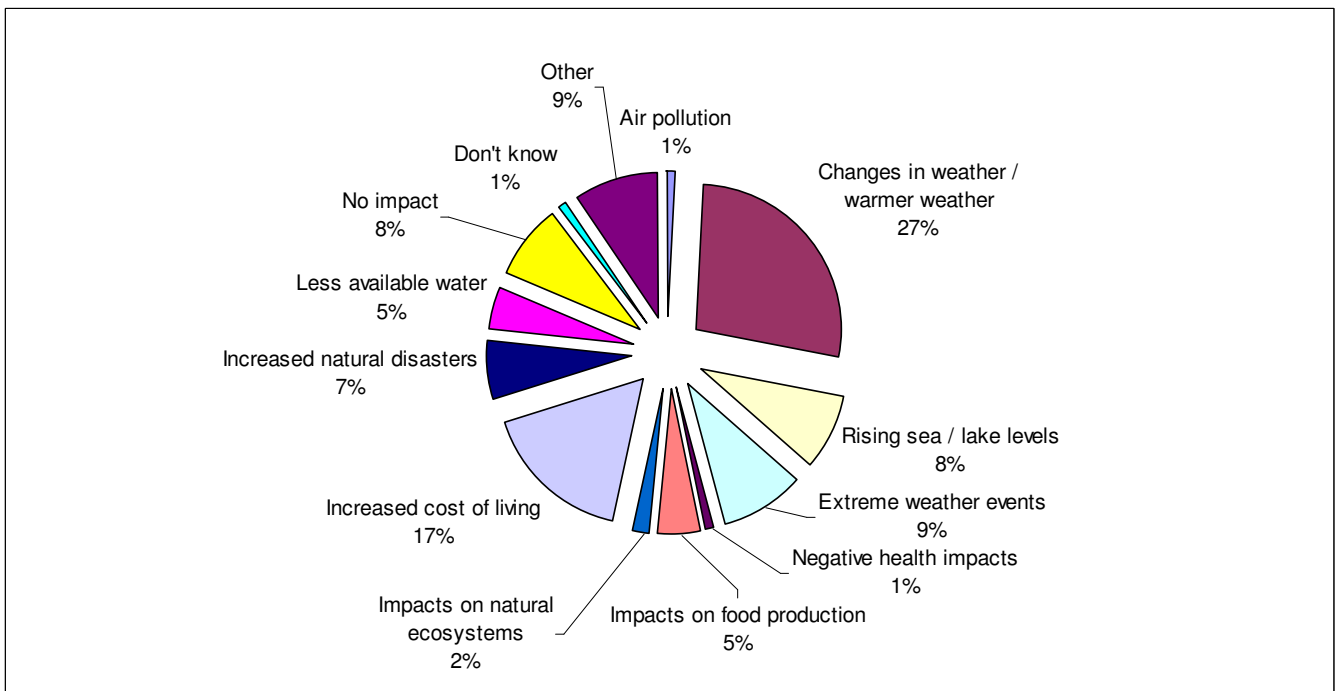
2. CLIMATE CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS

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 strongly agree or agree with the statement in Q2a, what do you think will be the MAIN impact of climate change in the next 20 years?

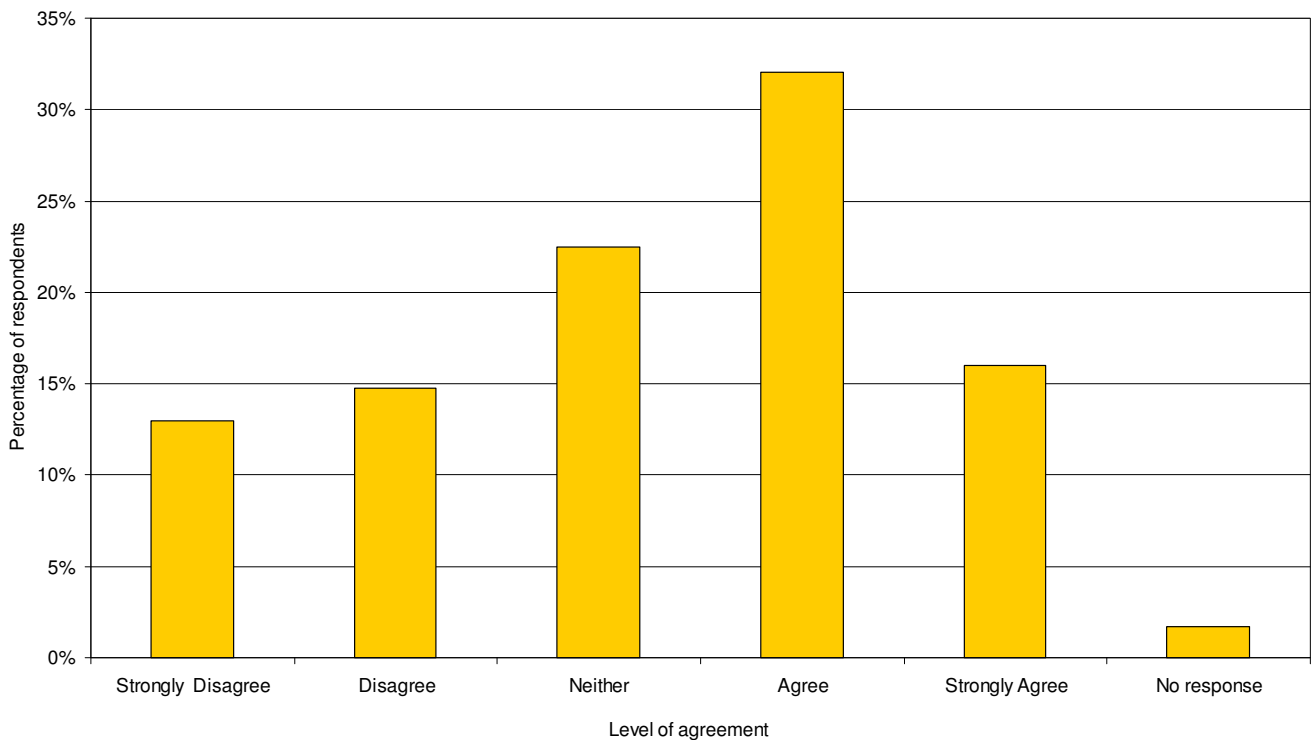
49% of survey respondents did not answer this question. These are the responses, not including “no response”:



“Other” responses included:

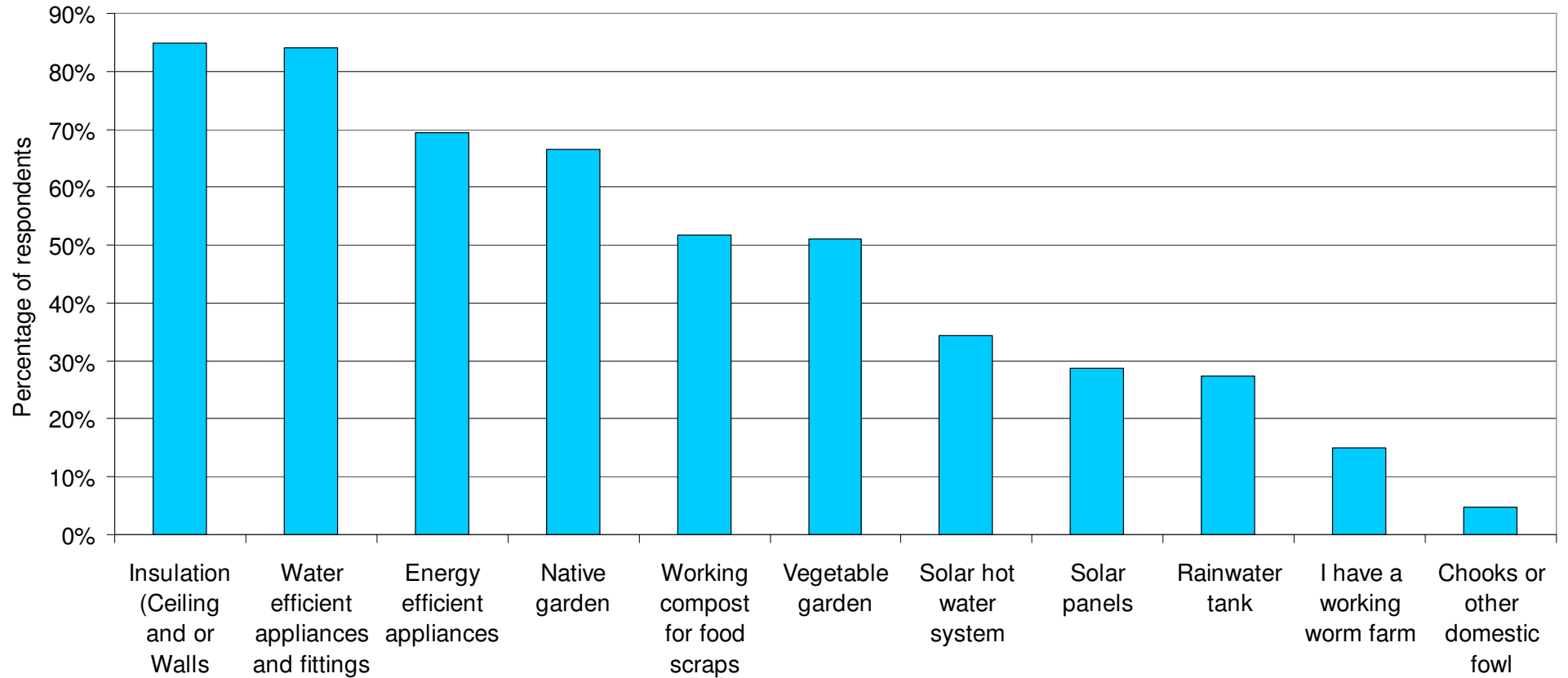
- Policy changes, impact of Carbon Taxation (of which I am in favour), pressure to change transport modes and solutions
- I am 90 years of age and do not expect to be still here in 20 years time
- Lifestyle/ ie village life without transport-everything should be local
- Increased greenhouse gases = climate change
- The amount of rubbish we create and not recycle
- We must be prepared to cope with what nature gives us
- Emissions
- Excessive population
- In God's hands
- Over population by humans

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

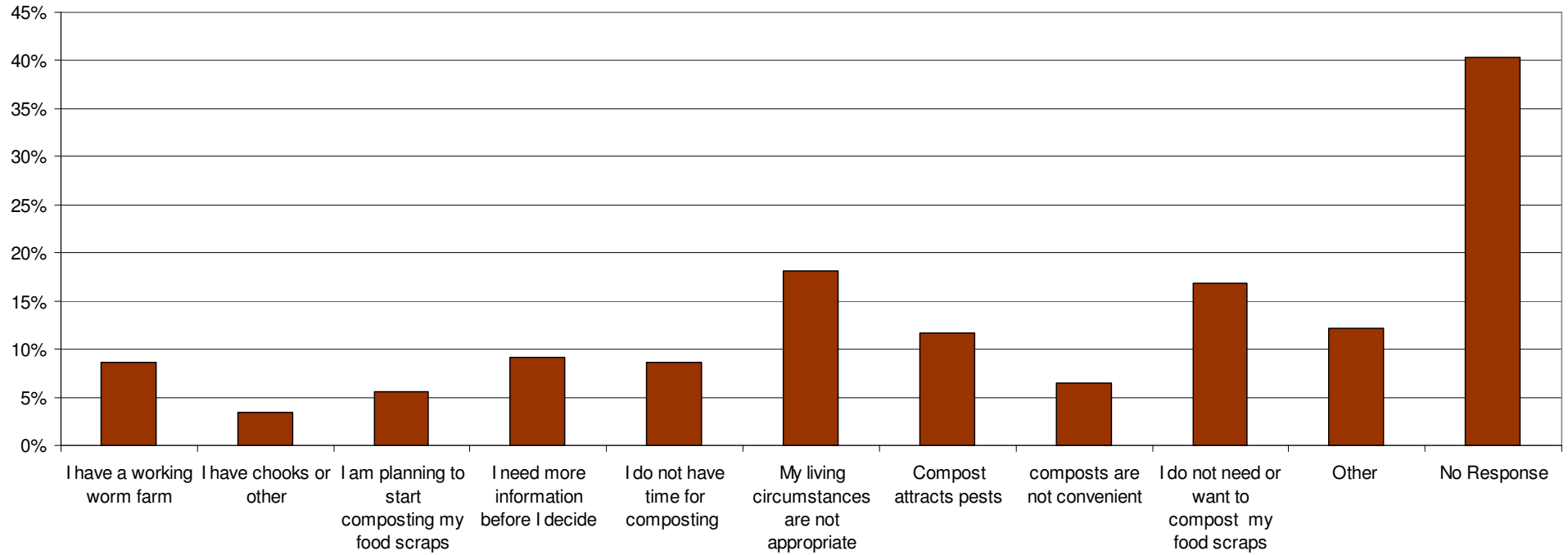


3. YOUR SUSTAINABILITY CHOICES

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



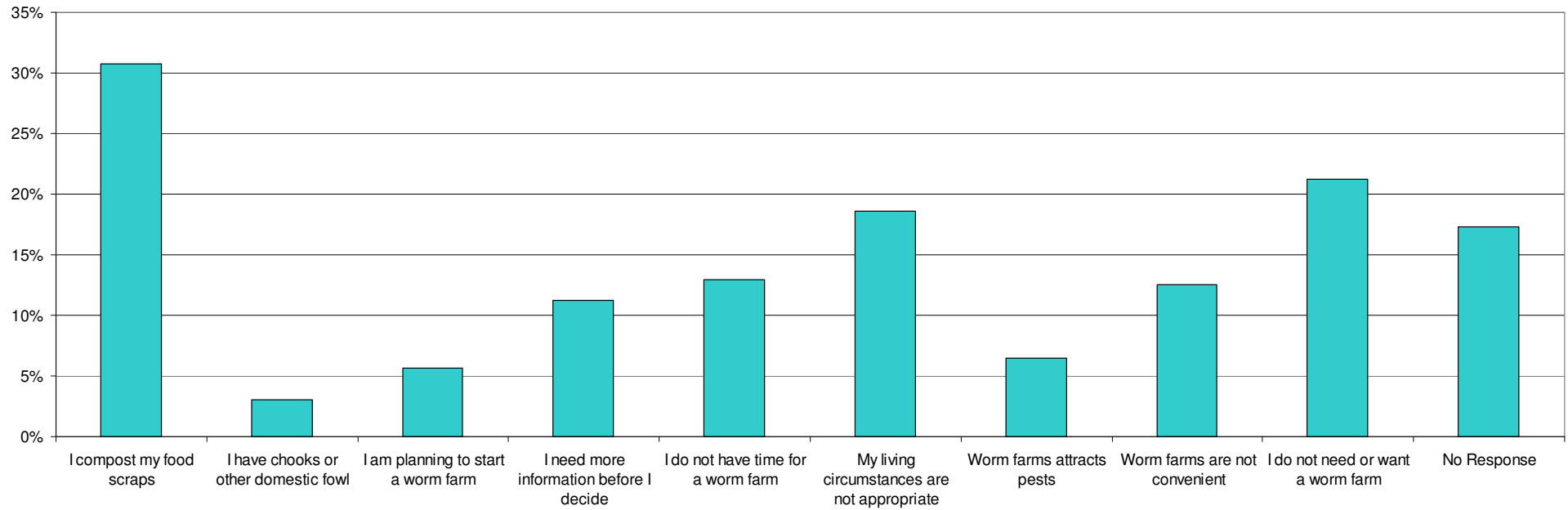
Q3b. If you do not compost food scraps, please indicate why. (List all reasons that apply.)



“Other” responses included:

- Can't afford the start up costs.
- Had one - brought rodents, no longer wanted.
- As a single person household do not generate enough waste.
- Too old at 90 years for new projects.
- limited amount and have dog.
- I compost all my food scraps.
- At the age of 91 years I can't manage composting but I think it is a good thing.
- Recently moved.
- No room here. Possibility when I move. Front and backyard is concrete.
- Working family struggling to make ends meet/husband works two jobs and I also work.
- I am 71 and it's an extra labour intensive chore (job).
- 2 dogs get most scraps.
- Had composts in the past - more trouble than they are worth.
- Have tried before. Hard work to get the balance right in compost.
- Council should provide compost bins.
- No garden, so no use for compost.
- Neighbour has chooks. Save for them.
- Too old to turn and maintain compost heaps and/or tumbler.
- We give some scraps to the fish.
- The volume of food scraps in a 2 person household is negligible and hard to separate for composting.
- Attracts pests, rat, cockroaches.
- Feed scraps to dogs.
- Dogs eat leftovers.
- Planning to have chooks and worm farm.
- Currently a tenant, when our new home is completed we will have more choice.
- Want a worm farm, but too expensive.
- No green bins!
- Previous attempt failed.

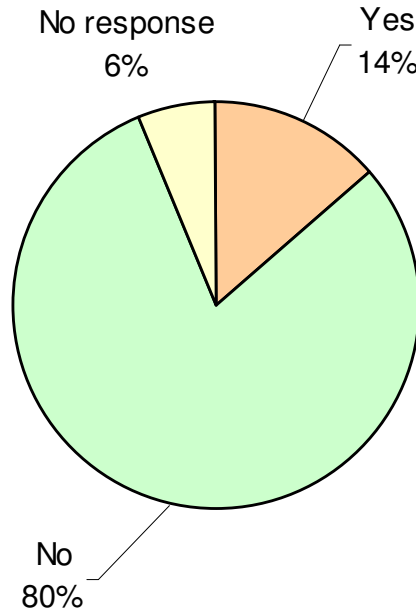
Q3c. If you do not have a working worm farm, please indicate why. (List all reasons that apply.)



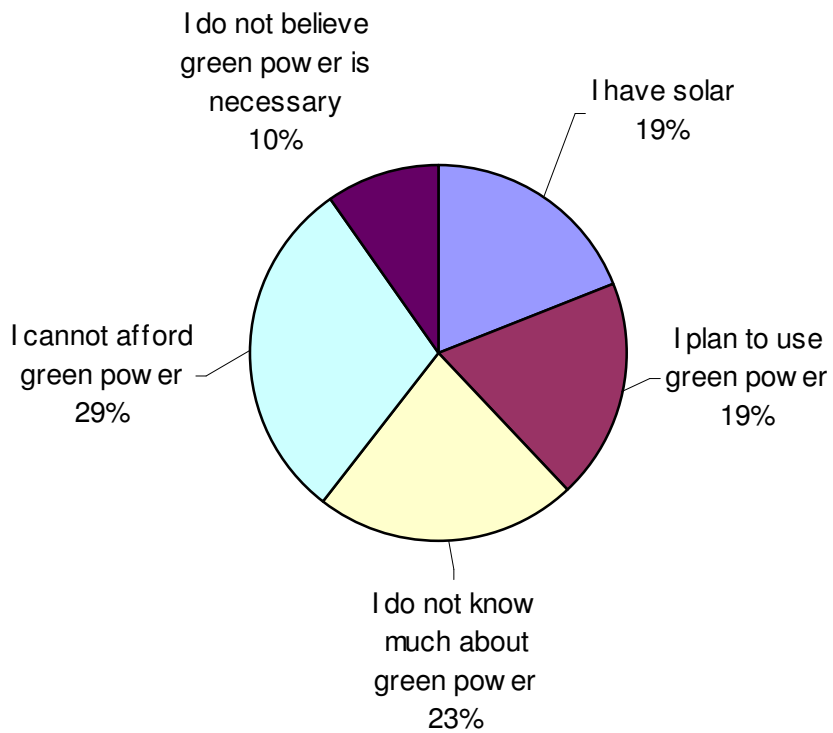
“Other” responses included:

- As a single person household I do not have many food scraps or waste.
- Content to let nature take its course.
- Some forms of compost attract pests and foxes.
- Have one but keep forgetting to take care of it.
- My compost attracts and houses plenty of worms.
- I use compost for vegetable garden.
- Time poor/low income.
- Had them
- Price?
- No garden, no use for worm castings.
- Too lazy.
- Neighbour has chooks for scraps.
- Had one previously (Very smelly!)
- It's cruel - worms bought and sold, then housed in plastic. Untended, on a hot day, thousands die.
- Worm farm starter kits by far TOO expensive.
- Time and maintain.
- Have had one previously, unsuccessful.
- Worm farms are too complicated to use for their net return and need too much looking after.
- No time.
- Composting is sufficient.
- Have a worm farm as per Q3a.
- Dogs eat leftovers.
- My amount of waste from food is miniscule. I mow my lawn in.
- Want a worm farm, but too expensive.
- Available at cost of worm farm.
- I go away from home at times.

Q3d. Do you use GreenPower (renewable energy accredited by the Federal Government)?



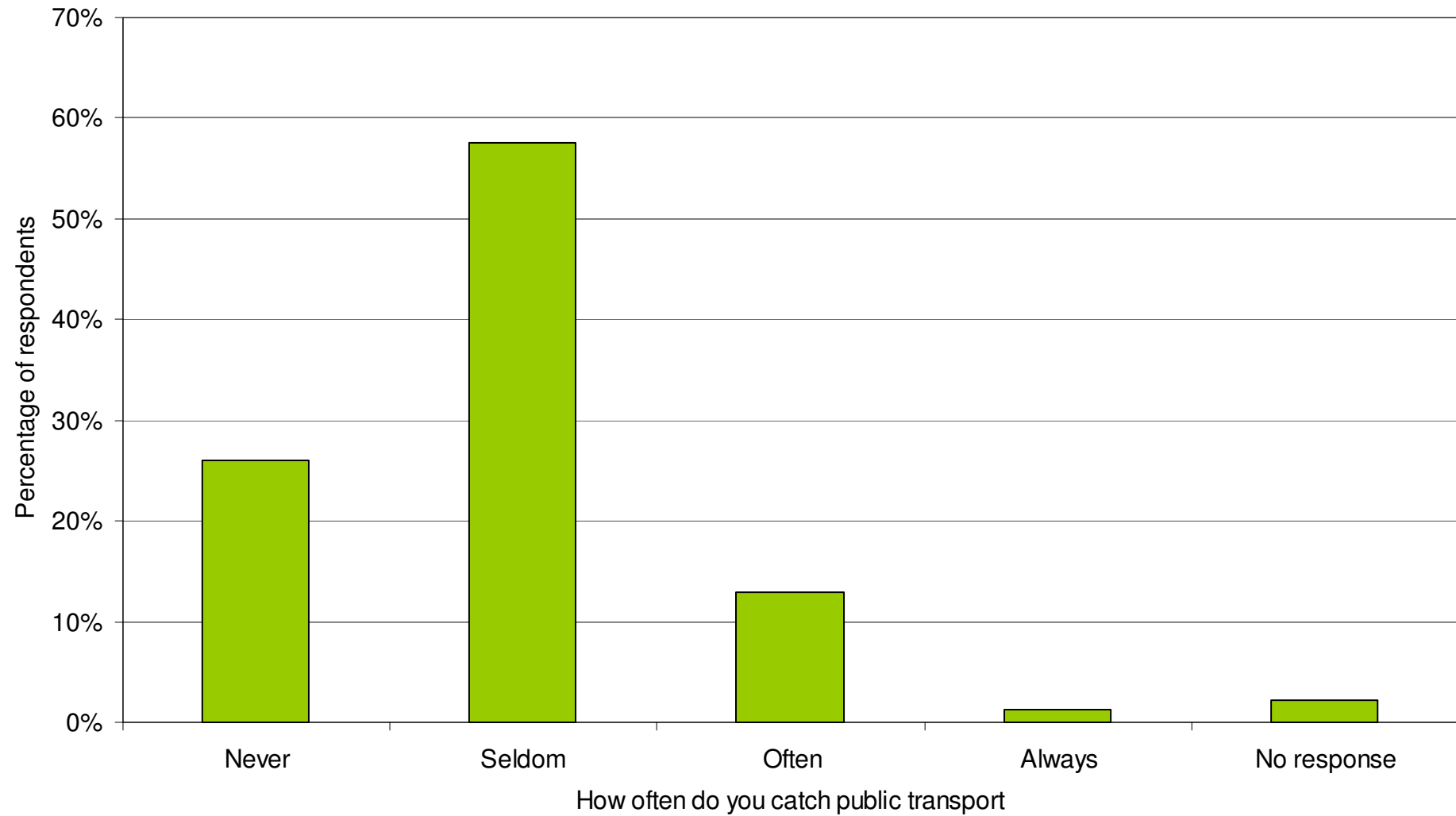
Q3e. If you do not use GreenPower, please indicate why. (List all reasons that apply.)



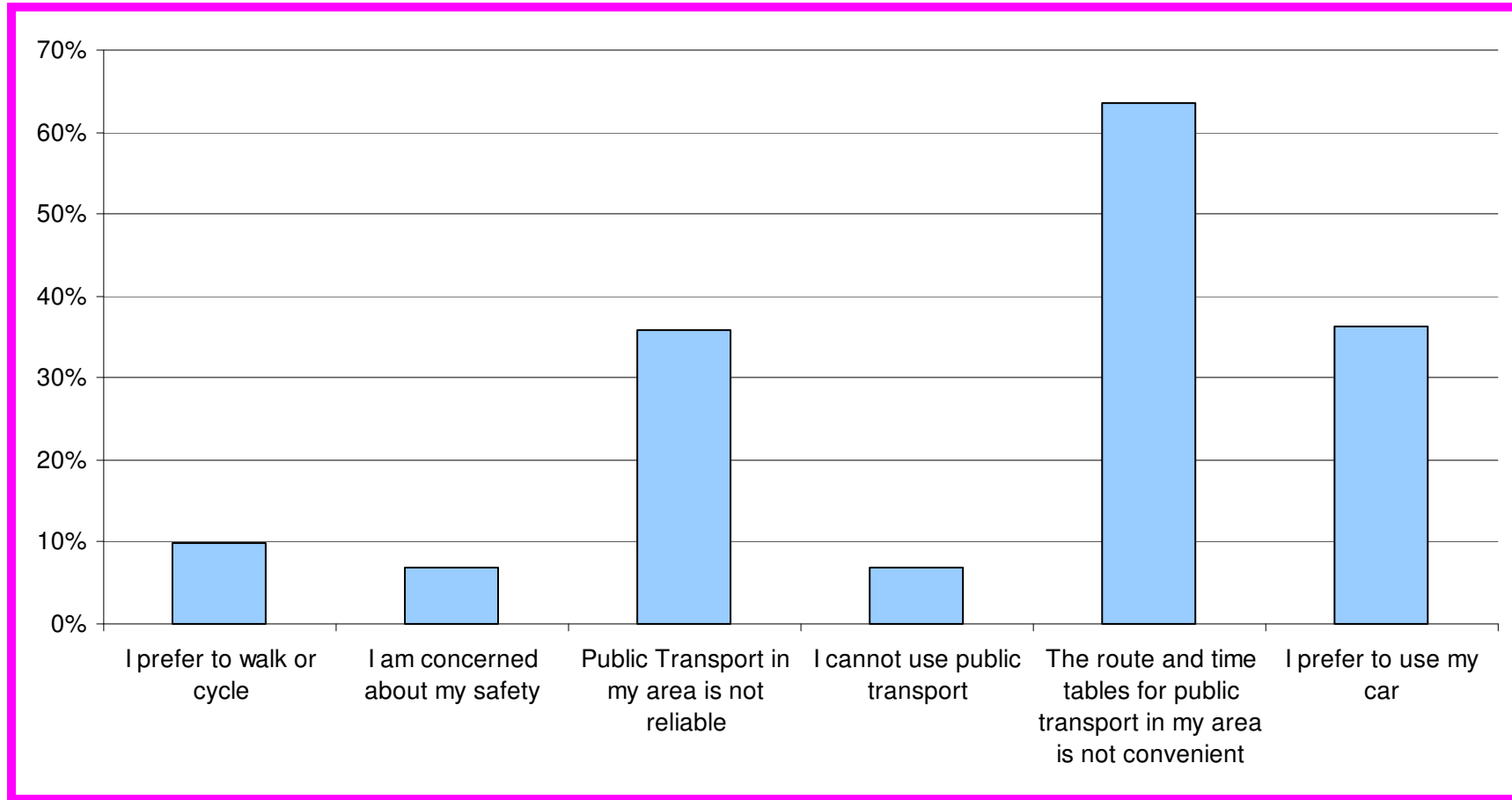
“Other” reasons and extra explanations included:

- I do not trust or understand the administration.
- My house is shaded by large trees and gas is not installed in our area.
- I have purchased a heat pump hot water service.
- Not enough sun.
- I don't know what green power is.
- I would like solar but I rent- when I move it will be different. Never again using GreenPower. But I believe my provider do give a portion of the metered amount to GP. I have tried it was expensive they went bankrupt and they stole a further \$300 when I was changing to a different company.
- I don't believe the extra cost goes to Green Power.
- Green Power is a con. If a thermal coal fired power station can get "Green" Credits for burning wood chip - what is the world coming to?
- If I pay extra for Green Power I would not be getting green power I would still be getting it from power station (rip off).
- Rebates are being phased out. Make it too expensive to switch despite the knowledge of the benefits of green power.
- Not convinced it makes a difference - how do I know it is legitimate?
- Don't feel confident that "Green Power" is "green". Eg burning woodchips or garbage described as "renewable/green". In 2000 we resisted a proposal to turn the old Wangi Power Station into an electricity producing waste Burning plant. Why? Too close to sacred Myuna Colliery.
- Green Power is the biggest environmental con. Base load power comes from coal or hydro.
- To expensive, I cannot afford.
- I rent, have no choice.
- I believe that the carbon tax will be sufficient.
- Too old to benefit cost of solar.
- Unclear of how the additional cost is used to provide alternative energy sources.
- it comes through Eneserve Power Lines.

Q3f. How often do people in your household use public transport?



Q3g. If your household never or seldom uses public transport, please indicate why. (List all that apply.)



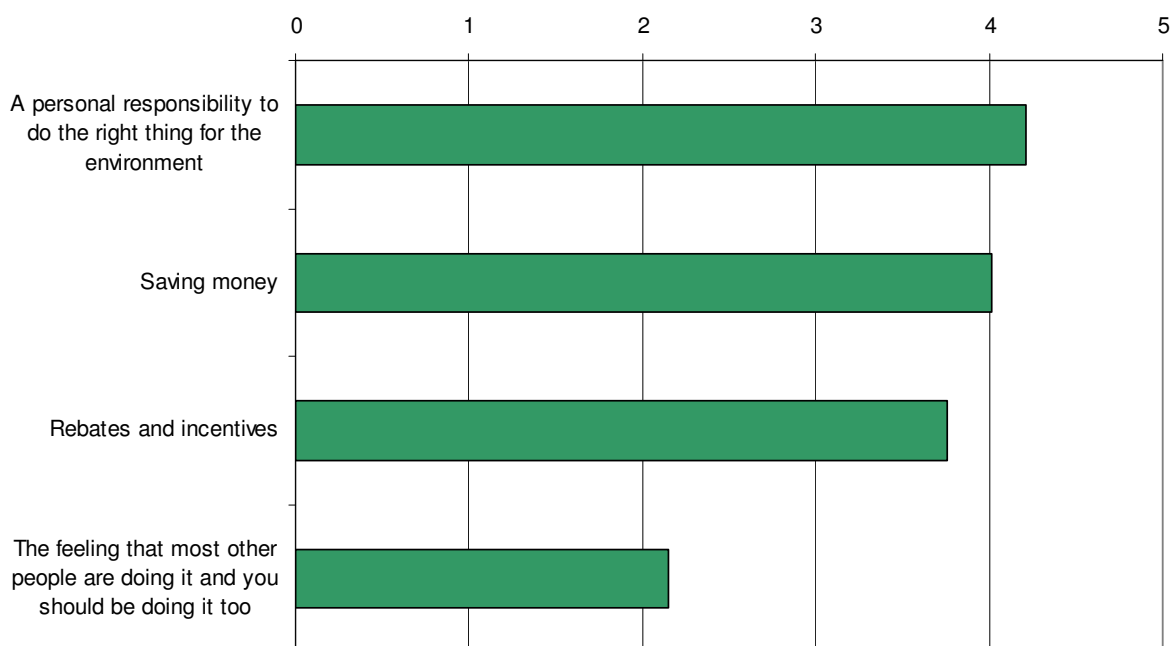
“Other” reasons and extra explanations included:

- Use public transport as often as it is convenient
- Work in remote area
- Public transport is virtually non-existent in my area.
- I am retired and therefore do not travel to and from work and when I catch a train I go to Morisset.
- You would almost need to start your journey yesterday to get anywhere.
- Public transport takes too long and there is none to Morisset. Use train to Sydney from Morisset or sometimes train to Newcastle from Fassifern.
- Public transport practically non-existent in Wangi.
- Public transport around the lake is not suitable.
- There is none that is practical in my area for anything I do.
- The buses run at too long time difference.
- No public transport between Wangi Wangi and Morisset train station.
- Bus service should connect Morisset to Wangi, Toronto, Warners Bay and Glendale services. No Changing buses.
- I am not well enough to use it although I have free passes.
- Service not close enough or frequent enough.
- We need transport to Morisset.
- I have to drive to a bus stop and it is easier to just keep going.
- I only use the train to go to Sydney.
- 2 buses/day, 1km walk to bus stop. 1 hour to train station by bus. 10 minutes by car.
- System is poor to non-existent.
- Use train when possible.
- Due to availability and distance to railway lines. (No buses to Morisset trains.)
- Rarely is conducive to outing timings.
- We have very poor public transport services in Wangi.
- Very poor public transport available.
- No public transport.
- Our public transport system (or lack thereof) is ABYSMAL!!
- Only 2km of usable cycleways. What public transport? 2-3 buses a day! If you don't have a reliable car you are not going anywhere. I love the area I live in but I would have thought a decent bus would be given by now.
- None available!
- Very few buses.

- Inadequate public transport between Wangi Wangi and Morisset.
- Previously always used public transportation, now less convenient.
- We usually travel with luggage or other gear.
- I locate myself in one place, avoid travelling!
- No reasonable service available - need connections to trains at Morisset.
- Only travel to Sydney on train if going to the centre where carparking costs are high, otherwise always car.
- No bus service from Wangi to Morisset.
- We need a bus service to Morisset Station to connect to Sydney-Fassifern is too inconvenient and time wasting.
- Sometime use public transport. Transport in my area is not convenient.
- Not available when needed.
- As bus is needed to Morisset Station to enable access to Newcastle and Sydney in their business hours.
- No regular bus service to Morisset (one day/week)
- Wangi needs buses direct to Morisset Station so that we can get to and from Sydney for business hours. THIS IS IMPORTANT> Morisset is the regional centre- NOT TORONTO.
- There is not public transport.
- No public transport.
- Transport almost non-existent.
- Inconvenient time wise to commute to work.
- Public transport practically non-existent.
- Wangi to Maitland (for work) is 45 minutes in car. Public transport does not do that.
- If there was a bus from Wangi to Morisset I would use it.
- There are not sufficient buses. None on Sundays.
- At Wangi, virtually none available. The occasional bus - no use to us.
- The bus service is deplorable so I am forced into my own car.
- As we age, this is becoming a real concern.
- There is not enough public transport and none on Sundays.
- One spouse requires a vehicle for work.
- Very few buses and only go to Toronto.
- Our only public transport usage is train travel to Newcastle and Sydney.
- Public transport is not available at frequent times.
- Minimal public transport here ie no buses - so need to cycle or drive to Wangi. We generally drive to train station 10-15km away.
- Retired.
- No public transport in my area.

- Public transport is non existant in my area.
- Not enough service in public transport.
- Not enough bus services to and from Wangi Wangi.

Q3 h. Please rate what motivates you to improve your environmental behaviour on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.



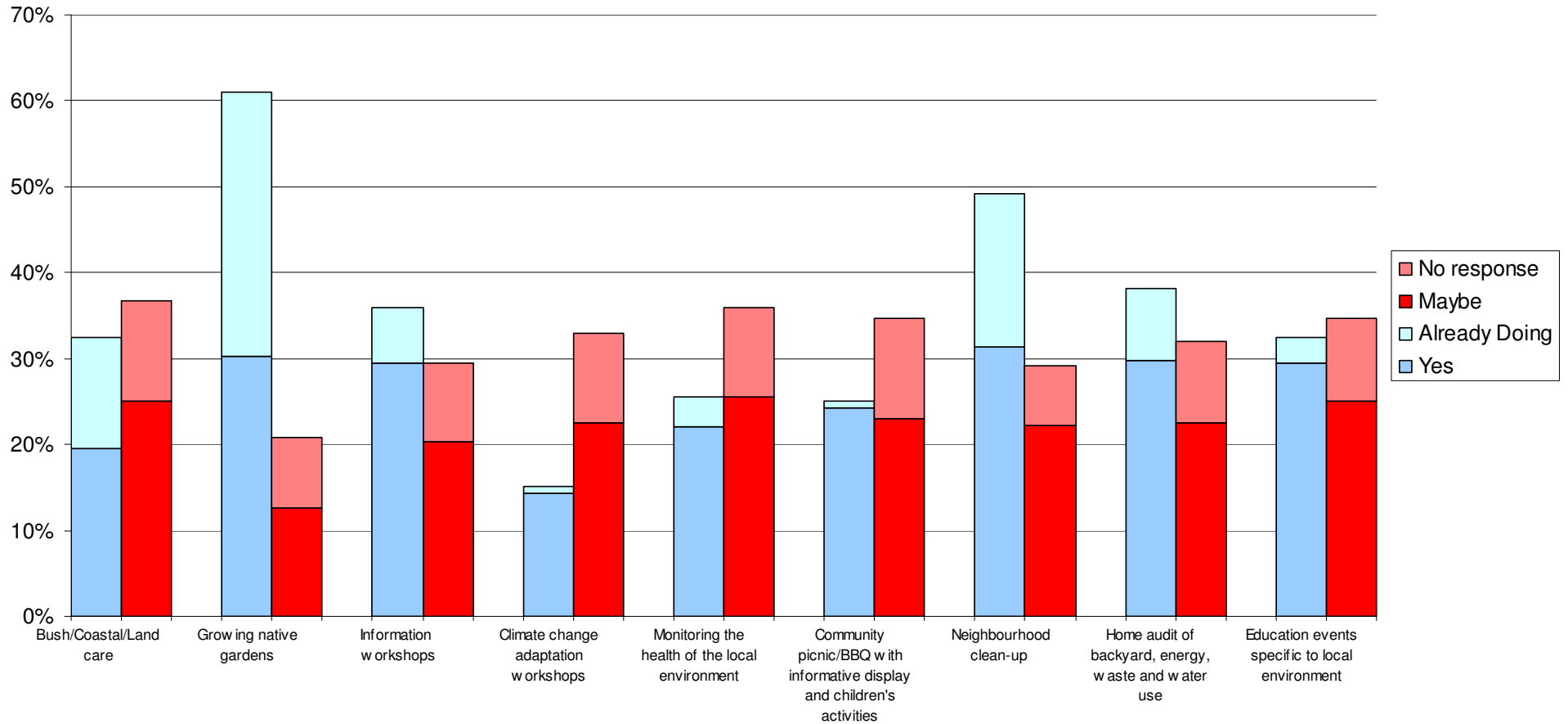
Other reasons and extra explanations included:

- Common sense decisions by Council IE Green waste bins most other Councils have had them for 20 years.
- As an engineer sensible use of the sun etc is natural to me.
- Have not got the funds to bother.
- Power scheme rebate is unsustainable.
- I am 85 years old.
- Care for, love of, the natural world.
- We've always done this, have not changed only recently.
- Lake Macquarie Council MADE me remove EnvroCycle, so why bother?
- I do the things I do as I am a responsible person.
- Equity for all (not used as measure by I.P.A.R.T.)
- I do everything in my power to cut down the cost.

- The desire and need to save our environment and our planet to live on, instead of seeking other planets to ruin as well.
- Human and animal wellbeing depends on a healthy environment.

4. SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

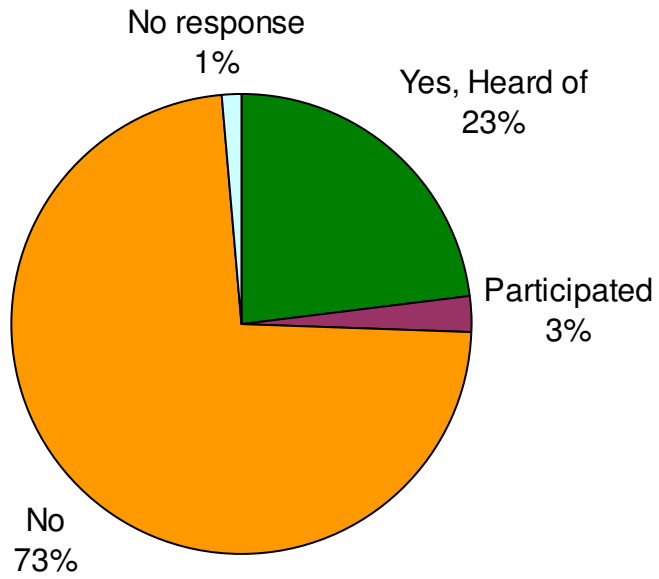
Q4a. Which of the following activities / events would you consider participating in?



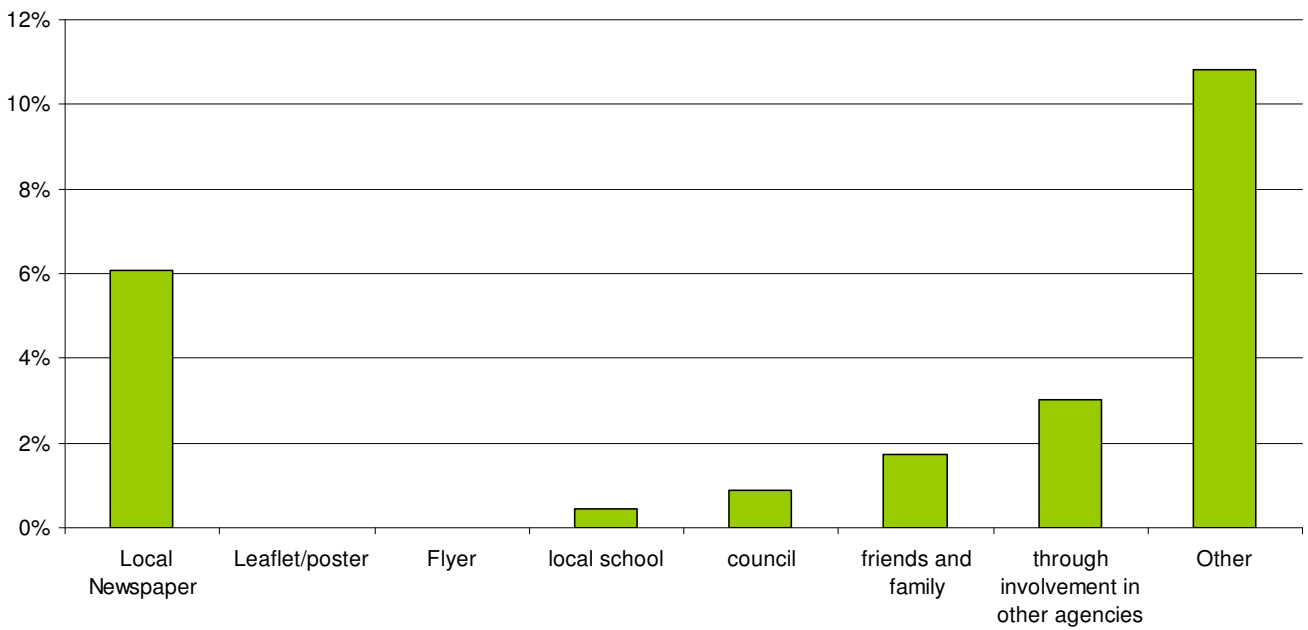
Suggestions for workshops / educational events / or other community activities included:

- Working bees to try and fix some of the unsafe footpaths-all walkers walk on the road.
- Support for citizens already involved eg council receives rubbish without cost.
- One on problems/areas of concern etc applicable to the 4 suburbs mentions.
- I would like Wangi Wangi to be included on the maps in the Newcastle phone book. It is not as far south as Cams Wharf.
- working family, not enough time.
- Look after the reserves.
- No climate change, happens naturally since creation.
- Done all this too old to help now.
- Resurrect "Do The Right Thing" campaign.
- Fresh fruit and vegetable market once a week in Wangi Wangi.
- At our ages we are not able to participate.
- More days like the Living Smart Expo.
- We both work full time and have a 5 year old so our spare time is 100% taken up with him.
- I regularly clean up rubbish from the waterfront and other areas. If everyone did this there would be no reason to hold a special day to clean up. Also, if dump fees were not so ridiculous people wouldn't dump rubbish in the bush.
- Monitoring power station. No pollution.
- More information on how waste in the lake can affect the marine life eg plastic bags kill turtles.
- Education from our local indigenous people as an annual event to get in touch would be both interesting and a great community project.
- Lots of locals don't know what lake and land are undermined and that huge amounts of portable water are used in excavating underground coal; Wangi Creek takes settling pond waters into the lake. Acid rain is high too. (Look at your colourbond roof)
- Lot Council set a good precedent - this is NOT happening in our street.
- By extending walking and bike paths.
- Go and have taken part in these activities and have now retired!
- I would like to see native gardens in Council parks.
- How about a Council audit (energy, waste, etc.)
- I believe, as we pay considerable rates, that it is the Councils' responsibility to remove weeds etc in reserve and not Landcare's. Most people, like myself, work full time and are time poor to participate in these activities.
- Regular music in a local park/building with charity focus.
- People should clean up after themselves, it is not up to others in the community to do it for them.
- Ban all household fuel fired heaters.
- Community gardens.

Q4b. Have you heard of or participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program?



Q4c. If yes, how did you hear about this Program? (List all methods that apply.)

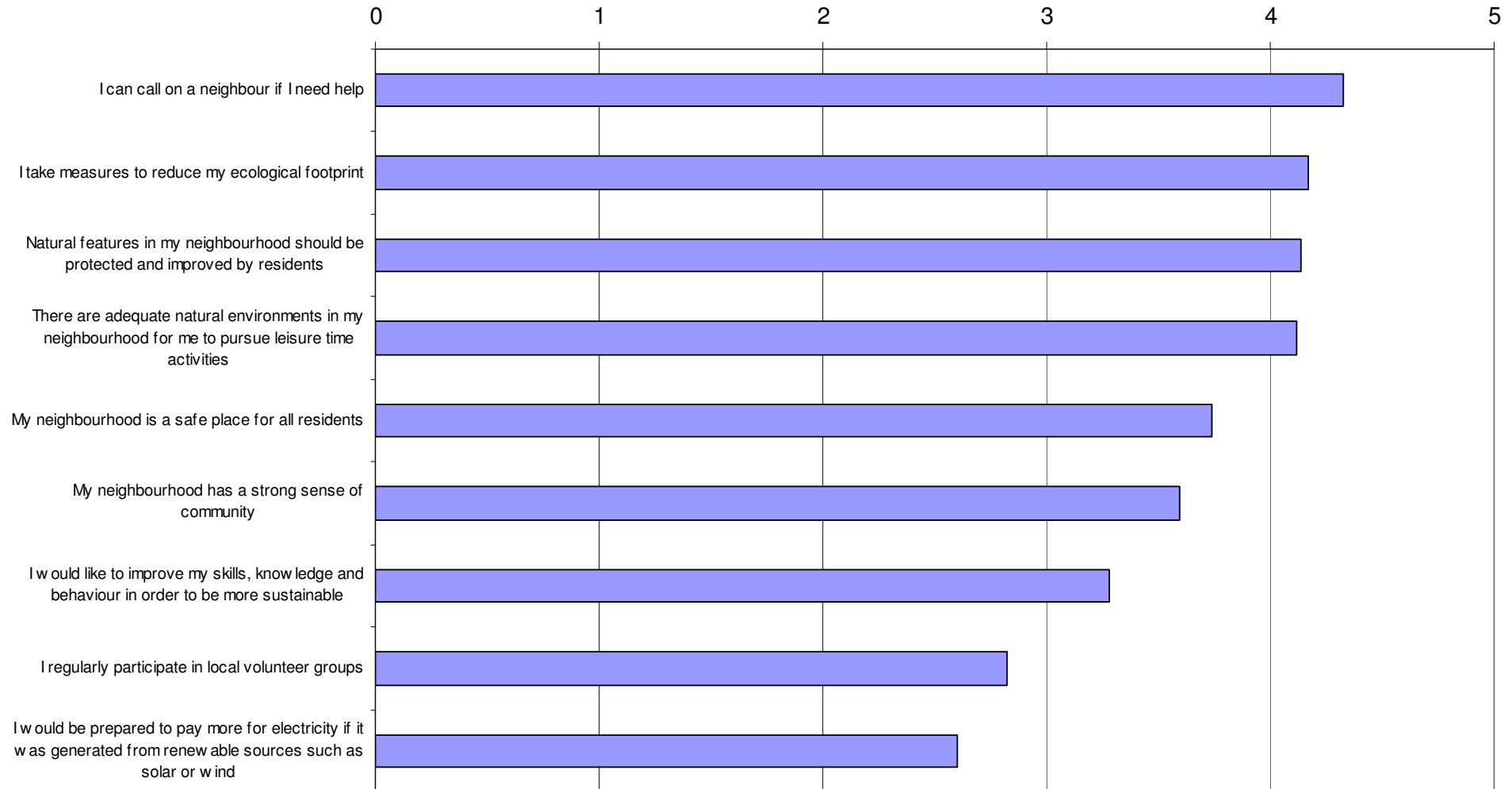


Other responses included:

- My late husband was president of the neighbour watch program and we were both very active in Wangi former Red Cross.
- Advertising.
- Heard about the ridiculous cost of program.
- Always keep up with the news on Wangi and have many garden friends.
- Word of mouth.
- Lions Club
- Through media.
- Advertising on the TV and radio.
- Media/publications.
- Advertisements.
- Rotary club.
- Permacultur/organic/diodynamic movements over the decades. La via campensina is the way to go - not that the plutocratic state and Fed Govts care about food govereignty etc.
- local library at Wangi Wangi.
- media
- Landcare.
- Local press and radio programs.
- Lake Macquarie Landcare
- I am an intelligent environmentally aware person and don't need to be taught, thank you.
- Rang Landcare in 2004 and asked for help which is now on going.
- Advertised at local library.
- Radio.
- Television
- Newsletter.
- I am a member of Native Animal Trust Fund.
- Newsletter. Email subscriptions. Regular participant in educational events.
- TV
- Through LMCC communications.
- Through internet websites ie Landcare and Eoadvocate.
- On the landline (phone).
- Through neighbours, national parks, comments in local press.
- Email.

5. ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

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



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

5% of survey respondents did not answer this question. Out of those who did respond, these were the responses:

