

# **Cardiff North Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Attitudes Survey**

**May-June 2010**

A report on the attitudes of the Cardiff North 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 late 2009, Council and the Cardiff North Public School Parents and Citizens Group joined forces to support the growth of a Cardiff North Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and develop a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for Cardiff North. We have embarked on a range of activities to engage our neighbours, deepen our understanding of Cardiff North, and discover what Cardiff North residents are most passionate about.

This report presents the results of the Community Attitudes Survey, undertaken in Cardiff North in May-June 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 Cardiff North 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 Cardiff North residents. Public workshops, information stalls, 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 Cardiff North.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In May 2010, the survey was posted to approximately 950 households in Cardiff North 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, 105 surveys were returned – a return rate of 11%.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. Local Sustainability Issues in Cardiff North

Respondents are most concerned about:

- Biodiversity & catchment management – pest animals and plants in particular
- Infrastructure (cycleways/footpaths)
- Waste (Recycling, reduction, disposal and litter)
- Water pollution (creeks, stormwater)

The issues rated of most importance are:

- Protecting and improving the natural environment
- Reducing waste
- Improving streetscape and stormwater systems through environmental design

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

A majority of respondents (37%) 'strongly agree' and (35%) 'agree' that climate change will directly impact their life over the next 20 years, with the main impacts being:

- Changes in weather/ extreme weather events
- Increased cost of living
- Less water available

### 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 (62%) and vegetable gardens (50%) are also relatively common.

Over 90% of households use their recycling bin 'always' (89%) or 'often' (10%).

#### *Food scraps/organic waste*

Just over 60% of respondents dispose of their food/organic scraps in either a compost, worm farm, chooks, or digging into the gardens. With some more information or resources, 16% would have a compost or worm farm, and the remaining 24% either can't have one, don't think they need one, or don't want one.

#### *GreenPower*

Only 14% of respondents purchase GreenPower, with comments indicating some confusion about what it is. The main reasons for not purchasing GreenPower are the cost and lack of understanding.

#### *Public Transport*

A relatively low number (27%) of respondents 'often' or 'always' catch public transport. From those who don't, the main reason is either that the timetable/route is inadequate, or that they prefer to use the car.

### *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:

- Home audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use
- Neighbourhood clean-up
- Landcare
- Sustainable living workshops

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

- Climate change adaptation workshops

### *The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program*

Twenty-three respondents (22%) have either heard of, or participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, with flyers, media (newspaper), and school the primary way they heard about it. Seventy (67%) indicated that they are or might be interested in participating in the program.

### **About Cardiff North**

Respondents have 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

The four most popular things people like about living in Cardiff North are:

- Location – close to shops, sporting facilities, clubs
- Natural environment – green, leafy neighbourhood
- Peaceful and quiet
- Friendly neighbours/community

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CARDIFF NORTH SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT**

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

### **Values**

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

- Balance of natural environment and city facilities (peaceful and quiet surrounds, country feeling away from city, valley aspect allows for great outlook/views)
- Natural beauty including bushland, wildlife, creeks, proximity to the lake and beaches, open space

- Close location to services and facilities including; Cardiff CBD, shops, library, public transport, industrial estate, pubs & clubs, school, sporting grounds
- Safe, friendly, family oriented community where children are able to play outside.

### 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:

- Biodiversity and catchment management – in particular pest animals and plants
- Infrastructure (cycleways/footpaths, stormwater & drainage)
- Waste (recycling, reduction, disposal and litter)
- Water pollution (creeks, stormwater)

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

- Air pollution
- Reducing energy consumption
- Reducing water 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 Cardiff North community. Some of these are reflected in the issues highlighted above.

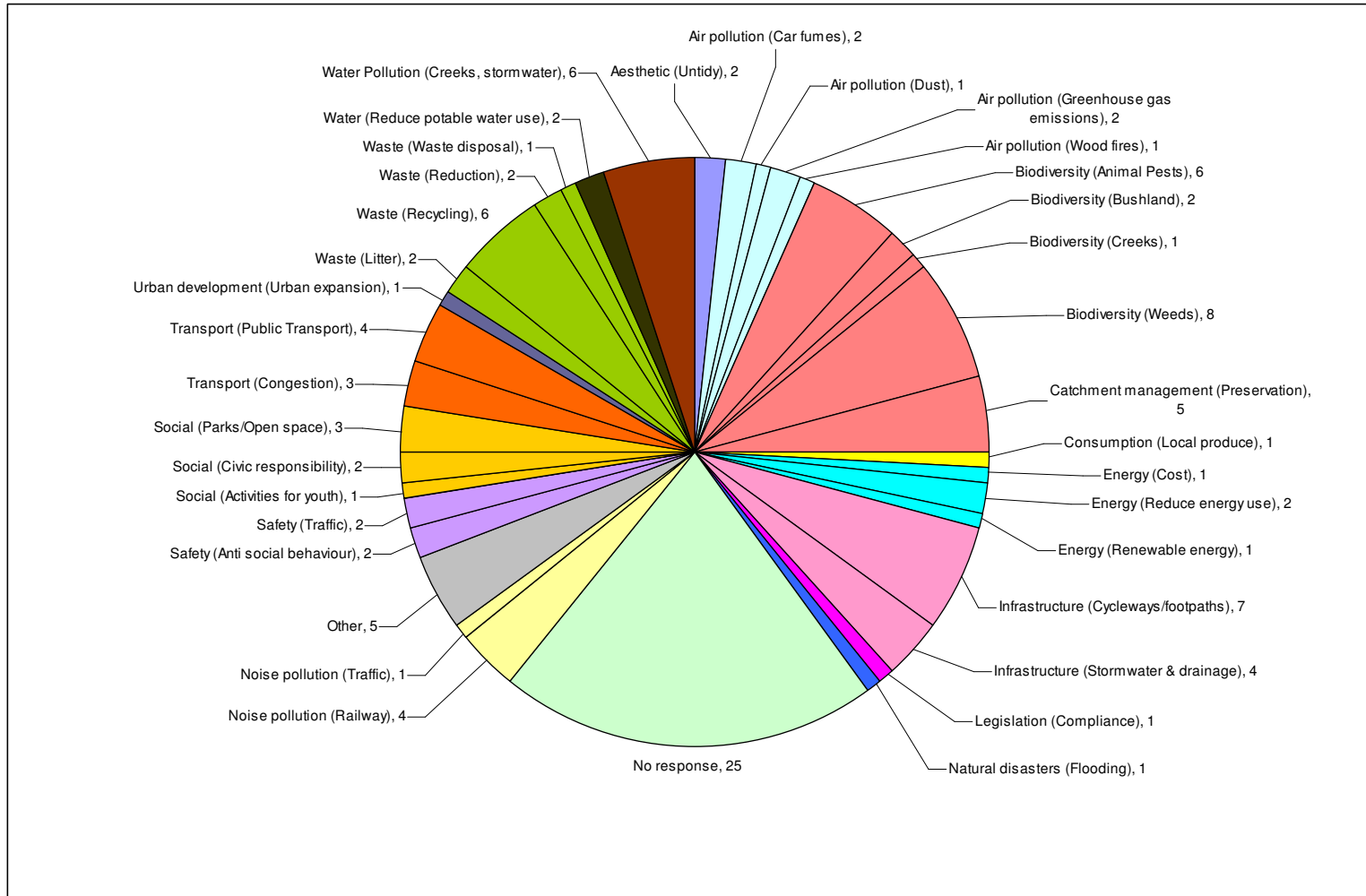
Actions highlighted by the survey include:

- **Encouraging worm farm or compost uptake by providing information, support, and resources** (16% of survey respondents indicated that they didn't have a worm farm or compost because they either need more information, are in the process of starting one, or don't have a compost bin/worm farm).
- **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).
- Activities which would be most likely to attract broad public participation include:
  - **Home audit of backyard, energy, waste, and water use**
  - **Neighbourhood clean-up**
  - **Sustainable living workshops**
  - **Landcare**
  - **Monitoring the health of the natural environment**

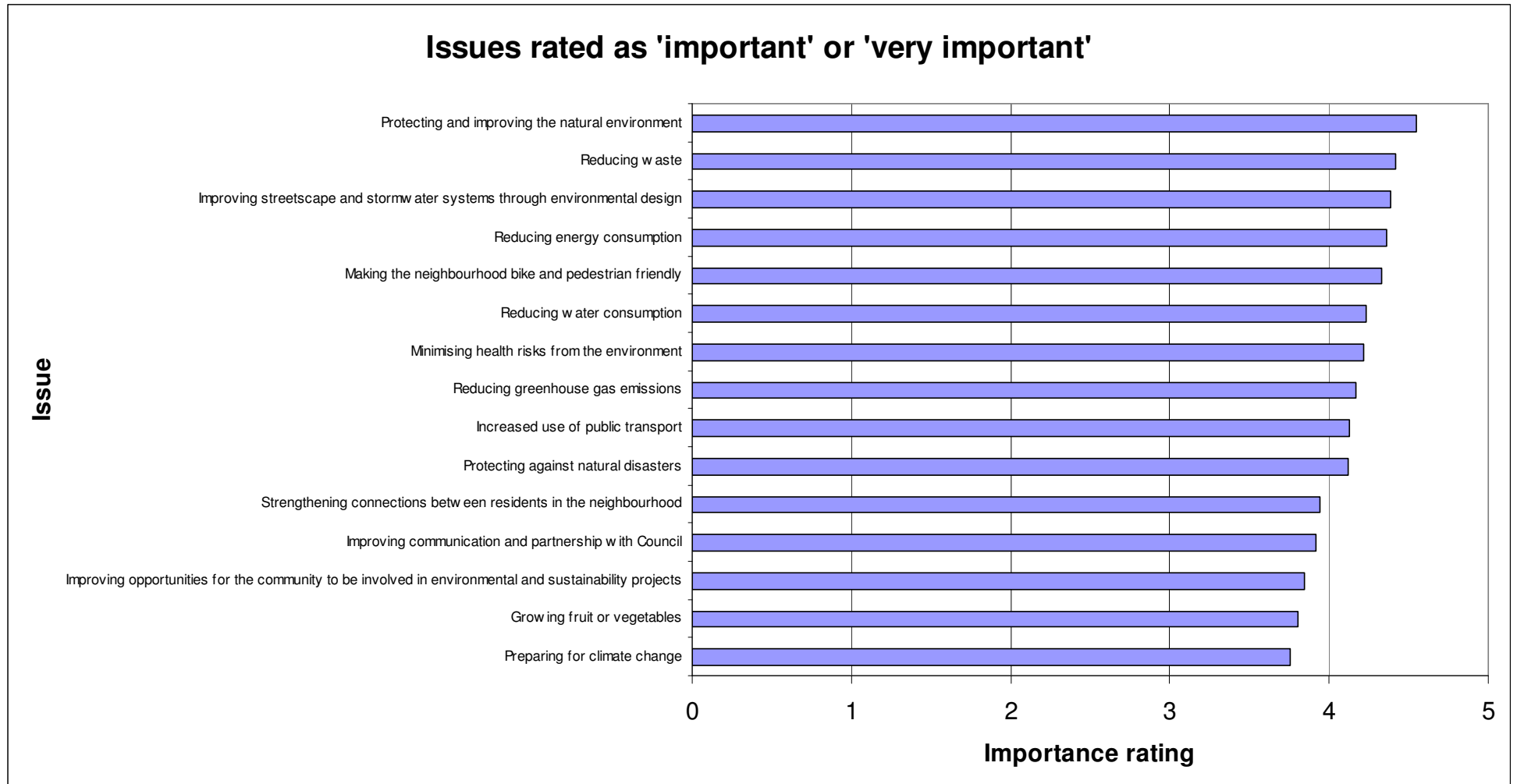
# DETAILED RESULTS

## 1. LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN CARDIFF NORTH

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

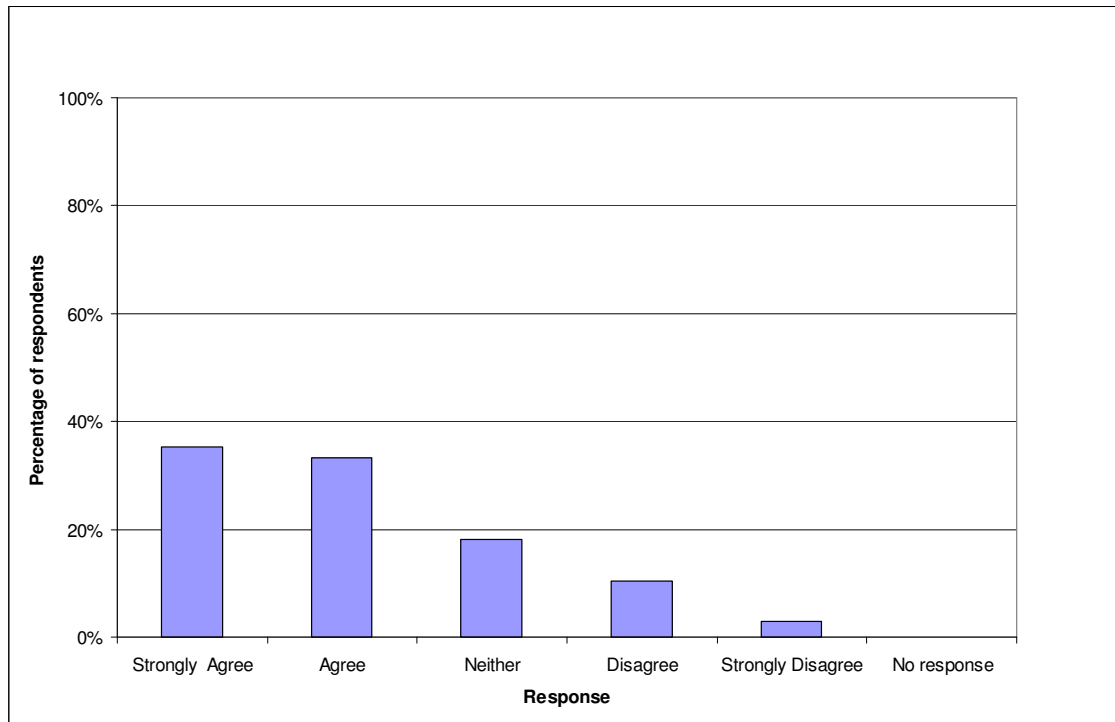


**Q1b Please rate how important the following are to your neighbourhood**

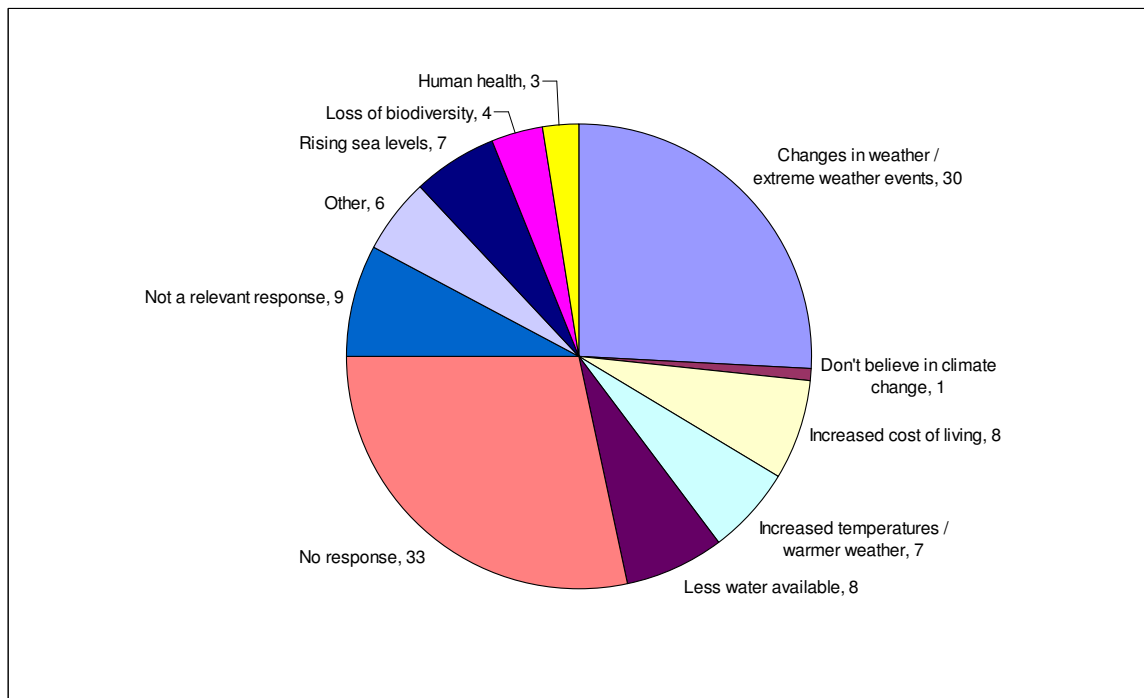


## 2. CLIMATE CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS

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



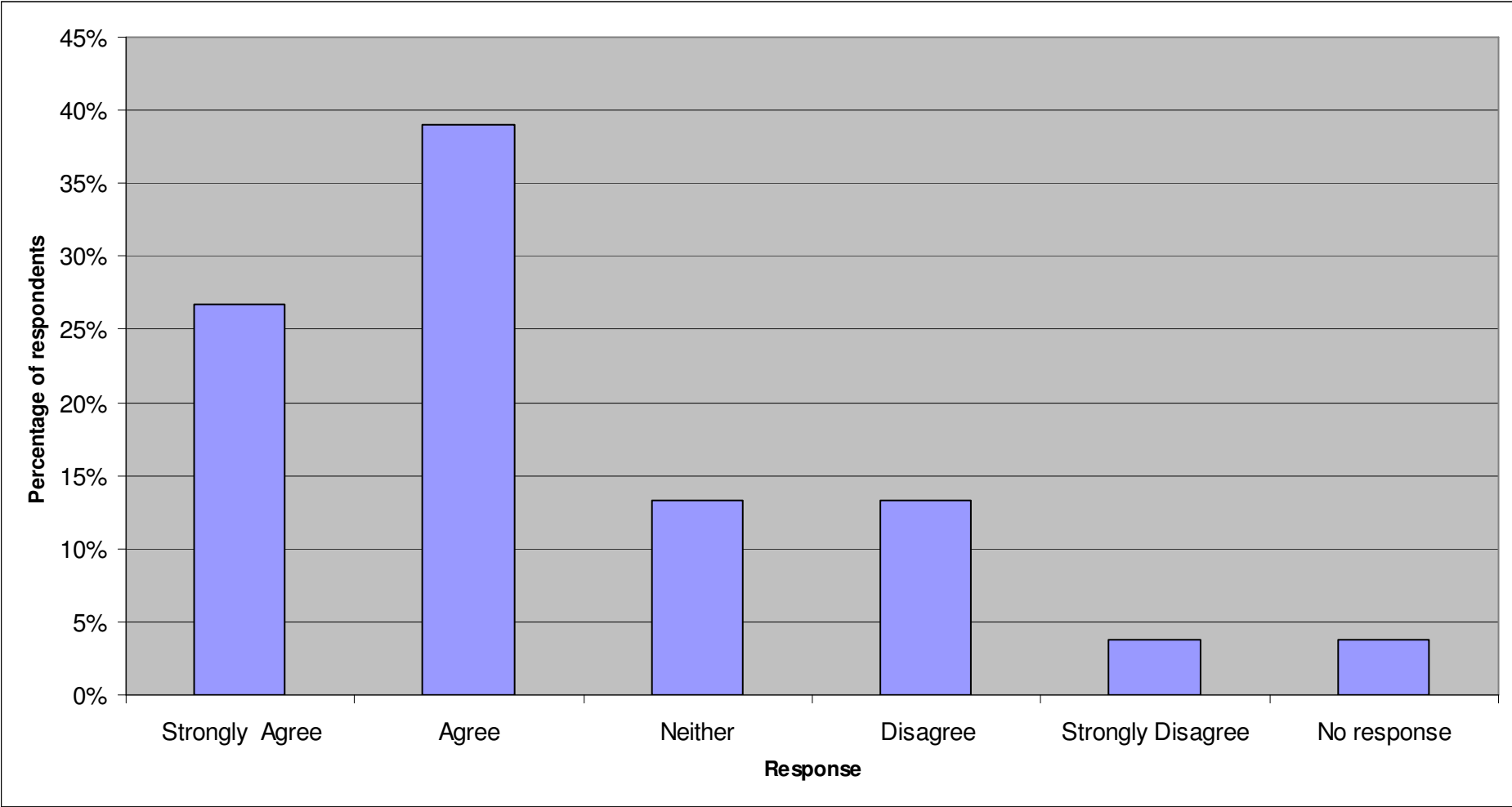
**Q2b. If you agree or strongly agree, what do you think will be the MAIN impact?**



'Other' responses included:

- Loss of food growing areas
- More emphasis on local produce and resources
- A combination of things
- Environmental sustainability, residents take for granted resources will always be there, supply by demand
- Air and drinking water quality/coal mines/large business
- Loss of food growing areas
- Reducing carbon omissions

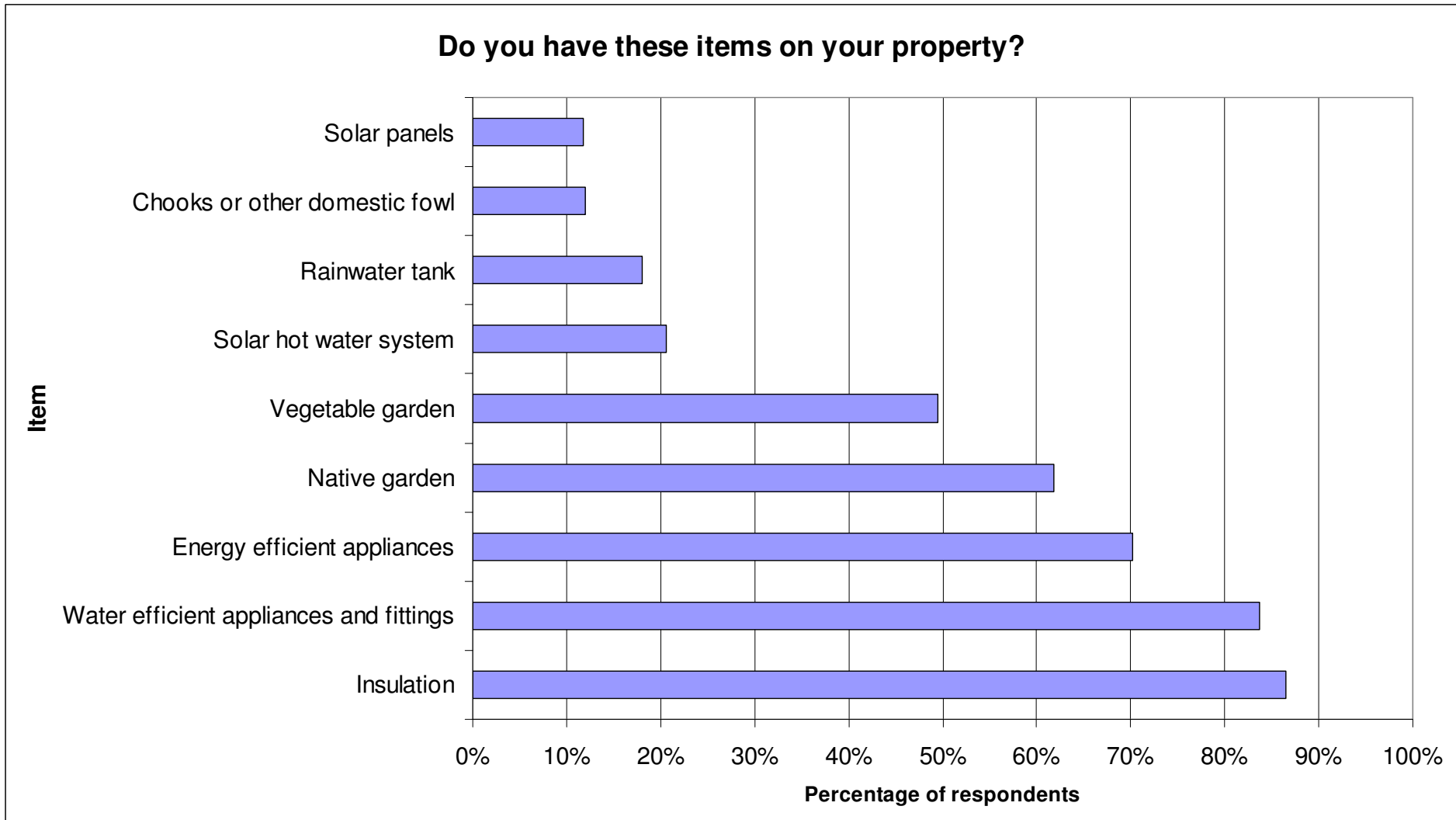
**Q2c. How strongly do you agree, or disagree, that the actions of the average person have a large impact on slowing climate change?**



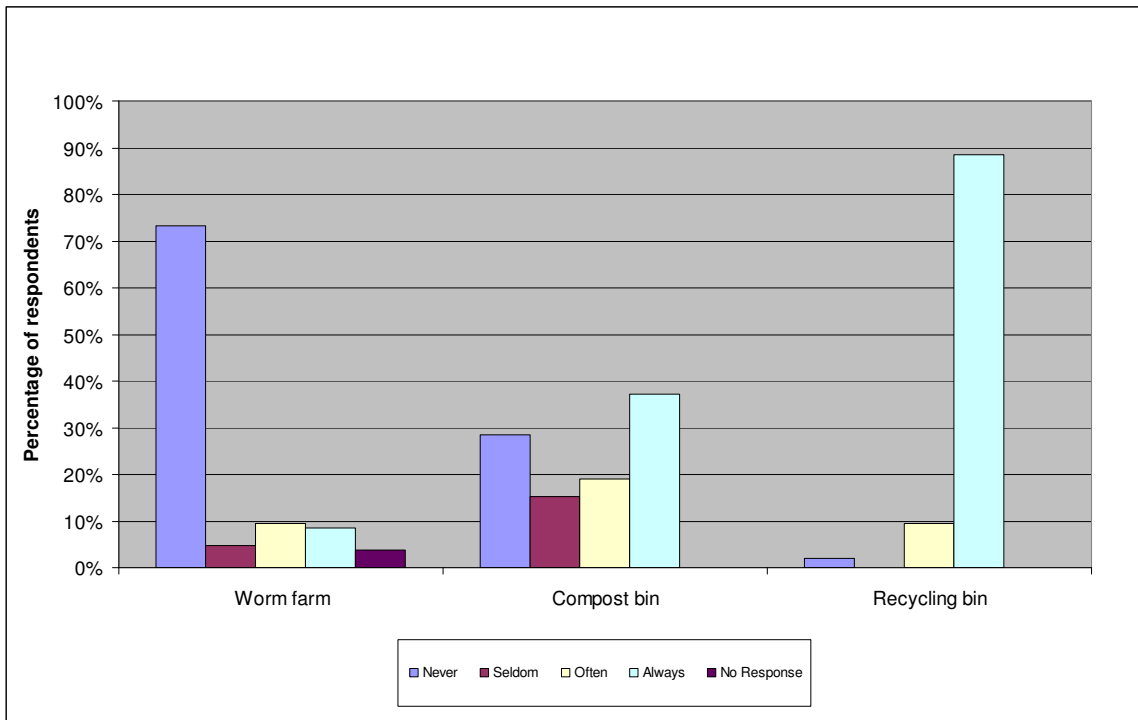


### 3. YOUR SUSTAINABILITY CHOICES

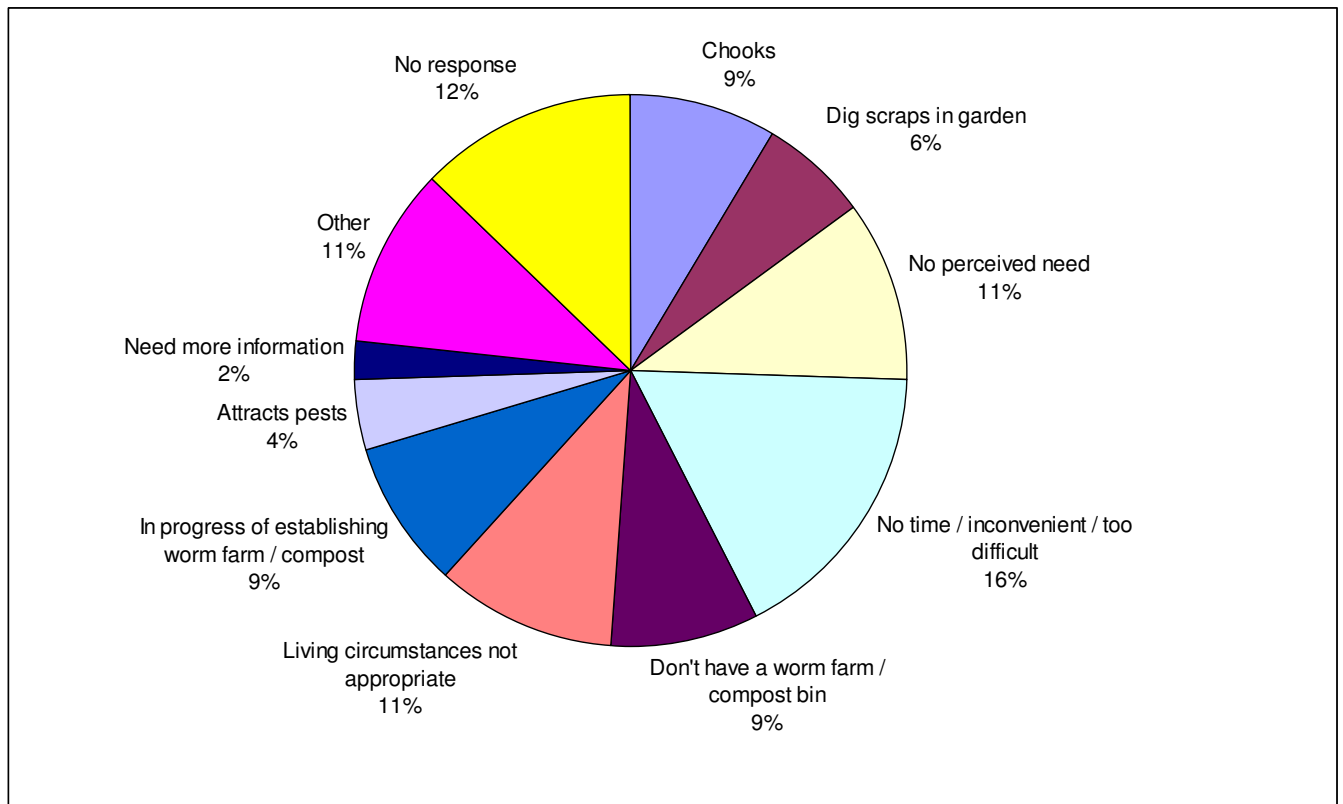
Q3a. Do you have any of the following items on your property?



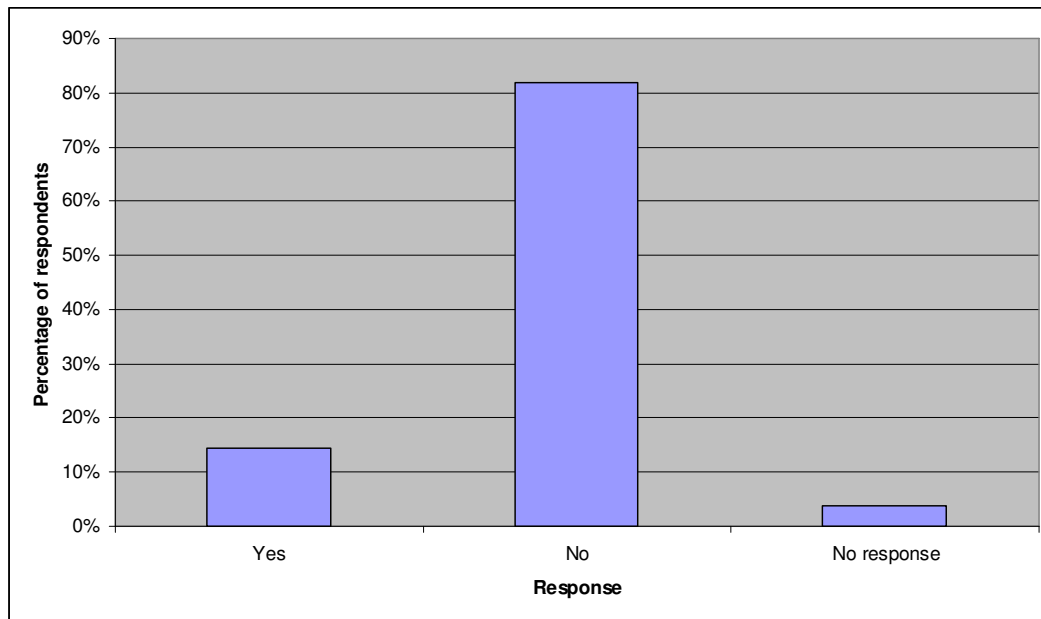
**Q3b. How often does your household make use of a worm farm, compost bin, and recycling bin?**



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



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

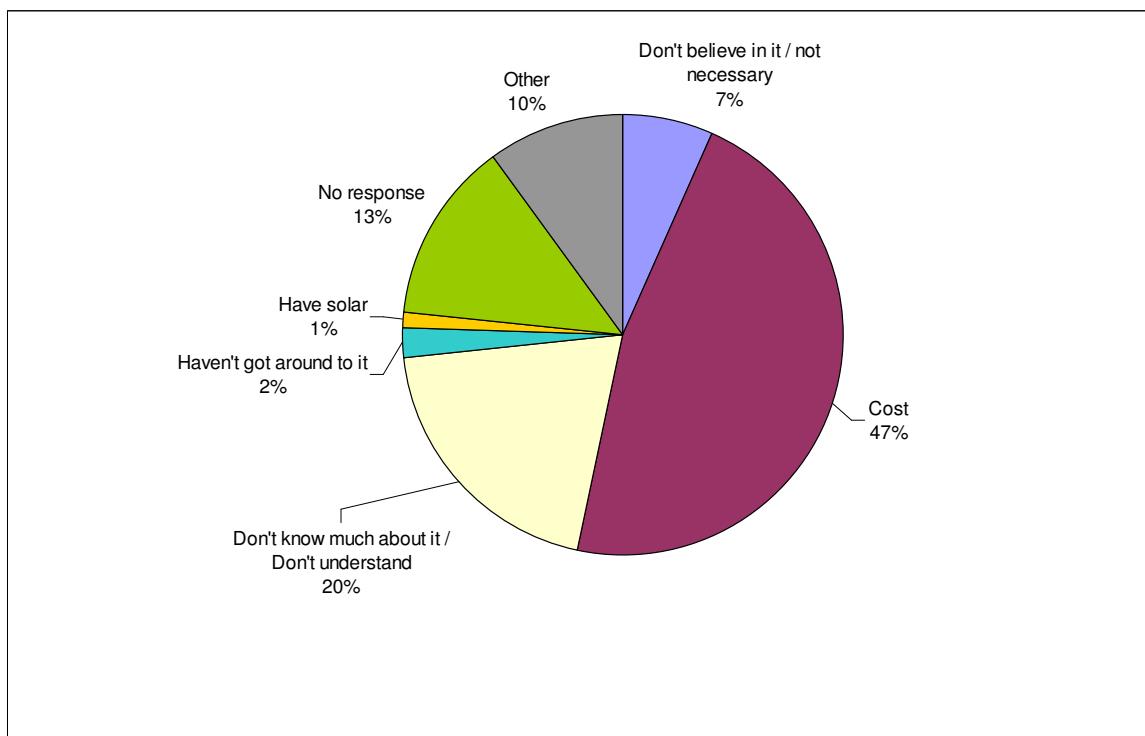


**Q3e. If yes, could you please indicate what percentage of GreenPower you purchase?**

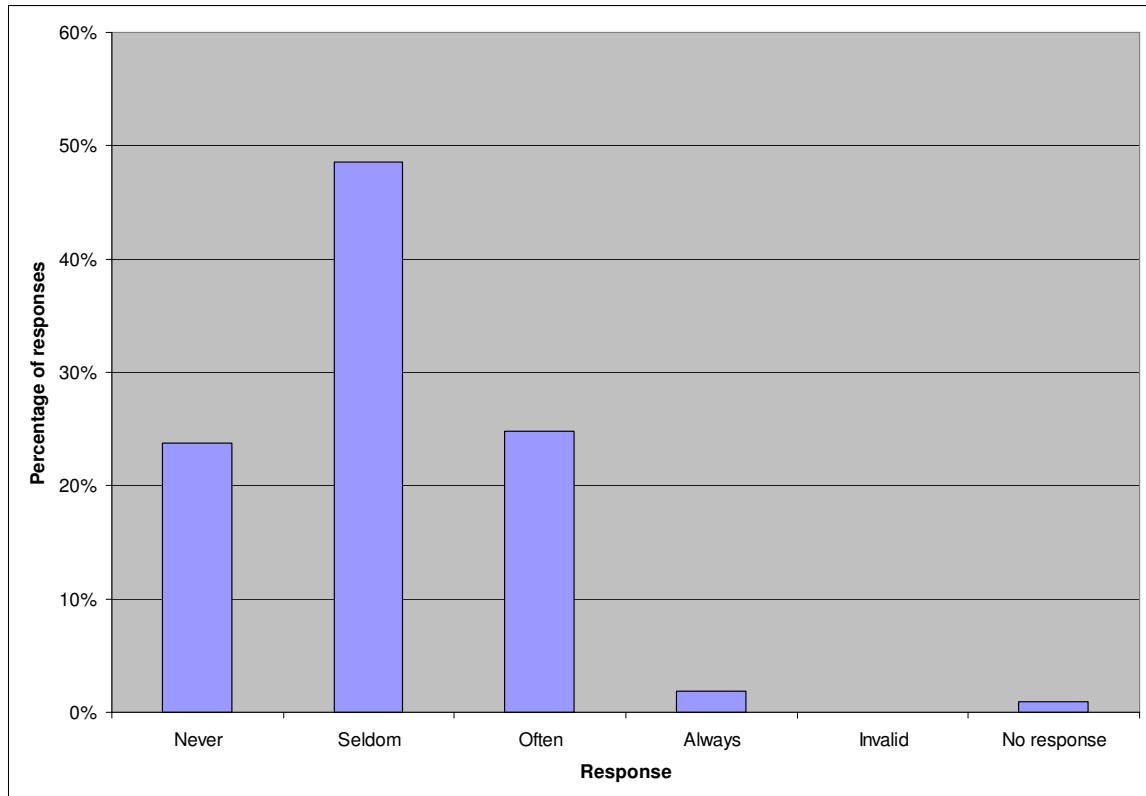
Response	Count
5%*	1
10%	3
15%*	1
25%	4
100%	2
Unsure	4

\*Note – It is not possible to buy 5% & 15% GreenPower

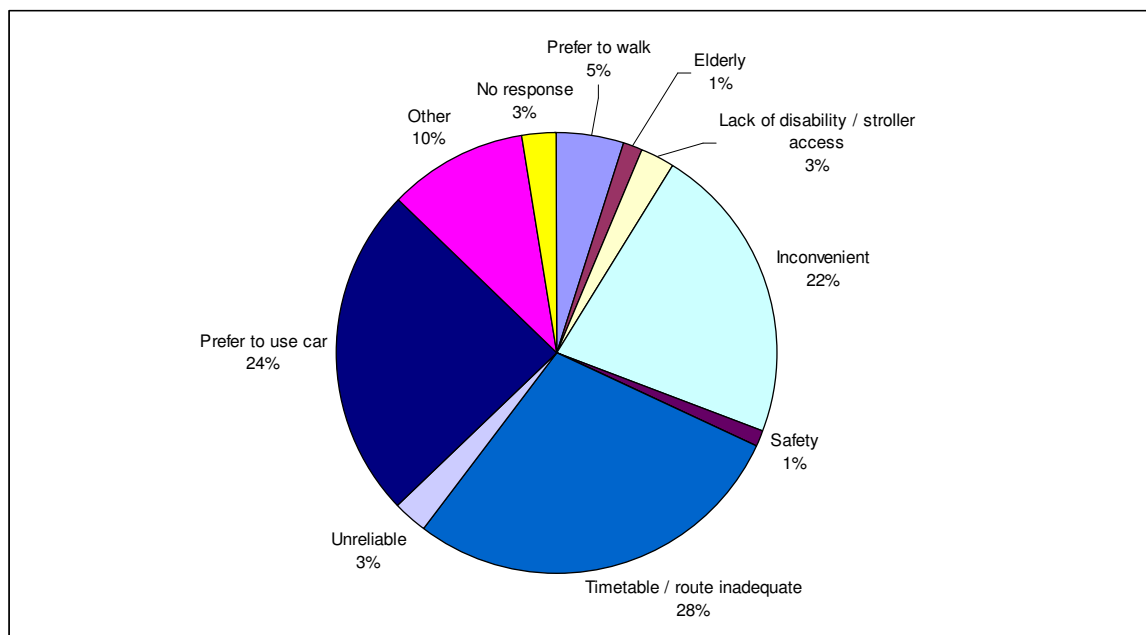
**Q3f. If never or seldom, could you please indicate why?**



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



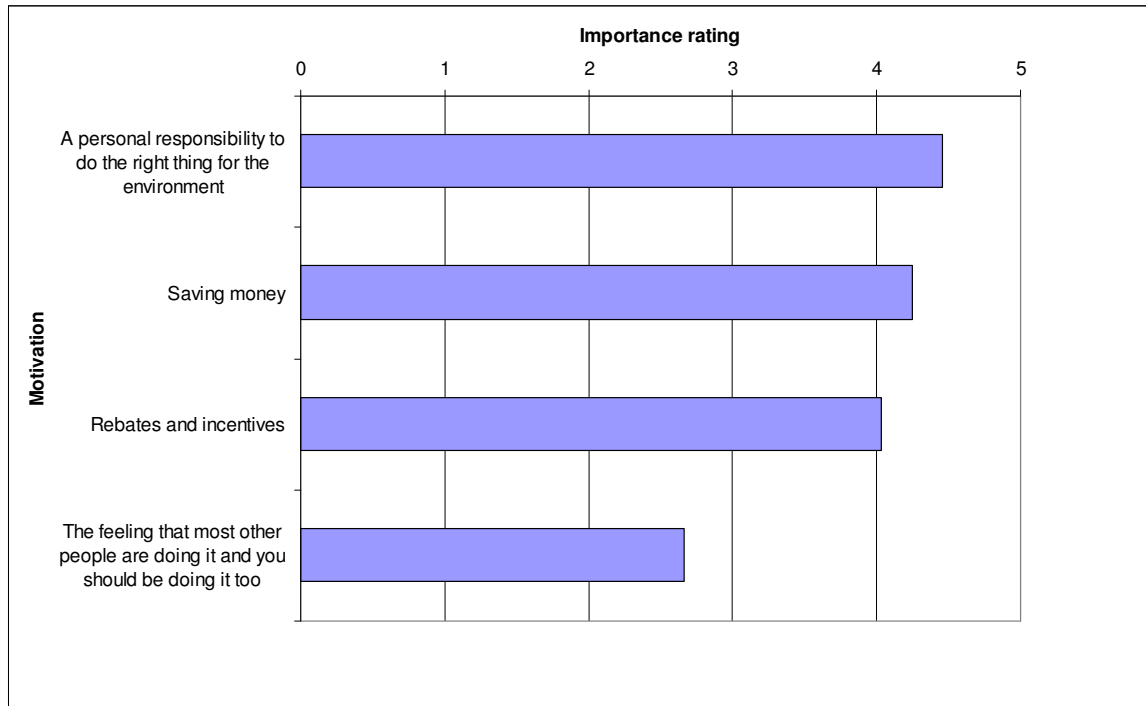
**Q3h. If never or seldom, could you please indicate why?**



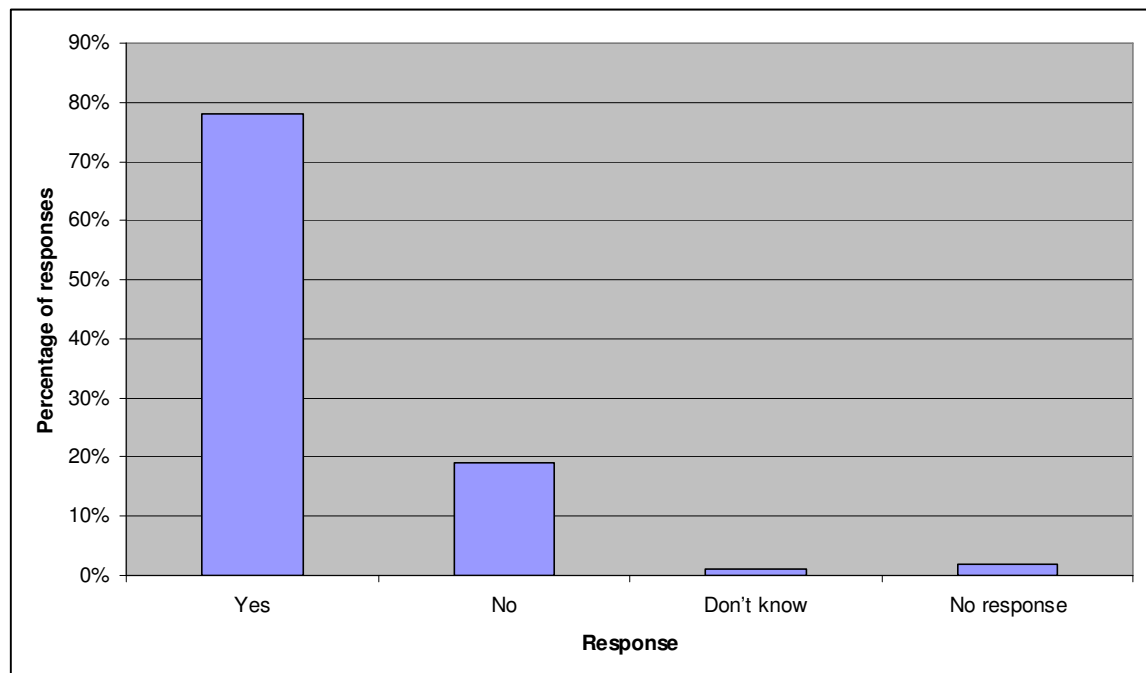
**Other:**

- no close public transport stops
- difficult to get to bus stops and station
- surrounding hills difficult access
- would like to use train more if more parking available at low cost
- only suitable for work occasionally
- too far from public transport
- poor health
- unable to walk, bus too far away, train too far, too many steps

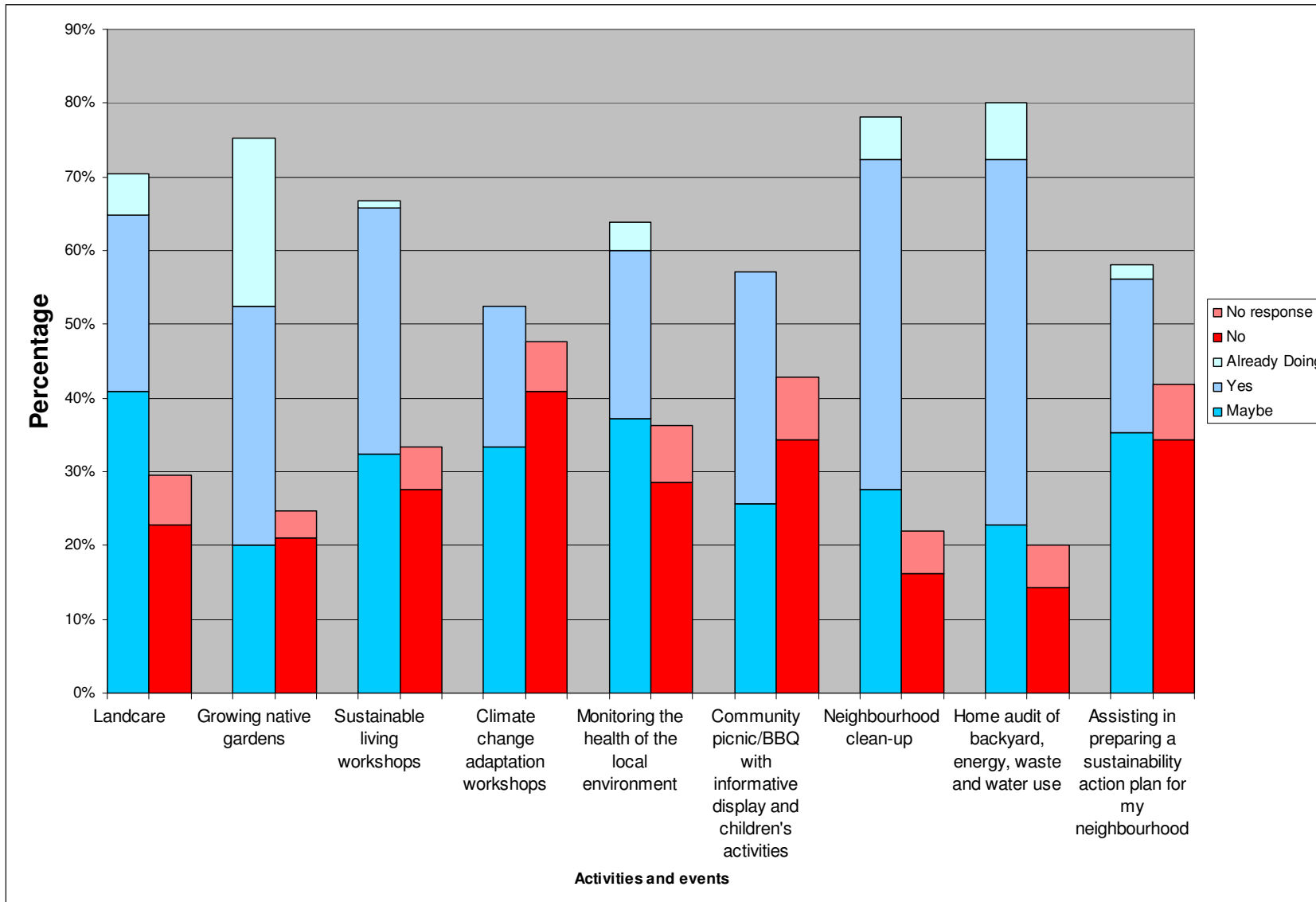
**Q3i. What motivates you to improve your environmental behaviour?**



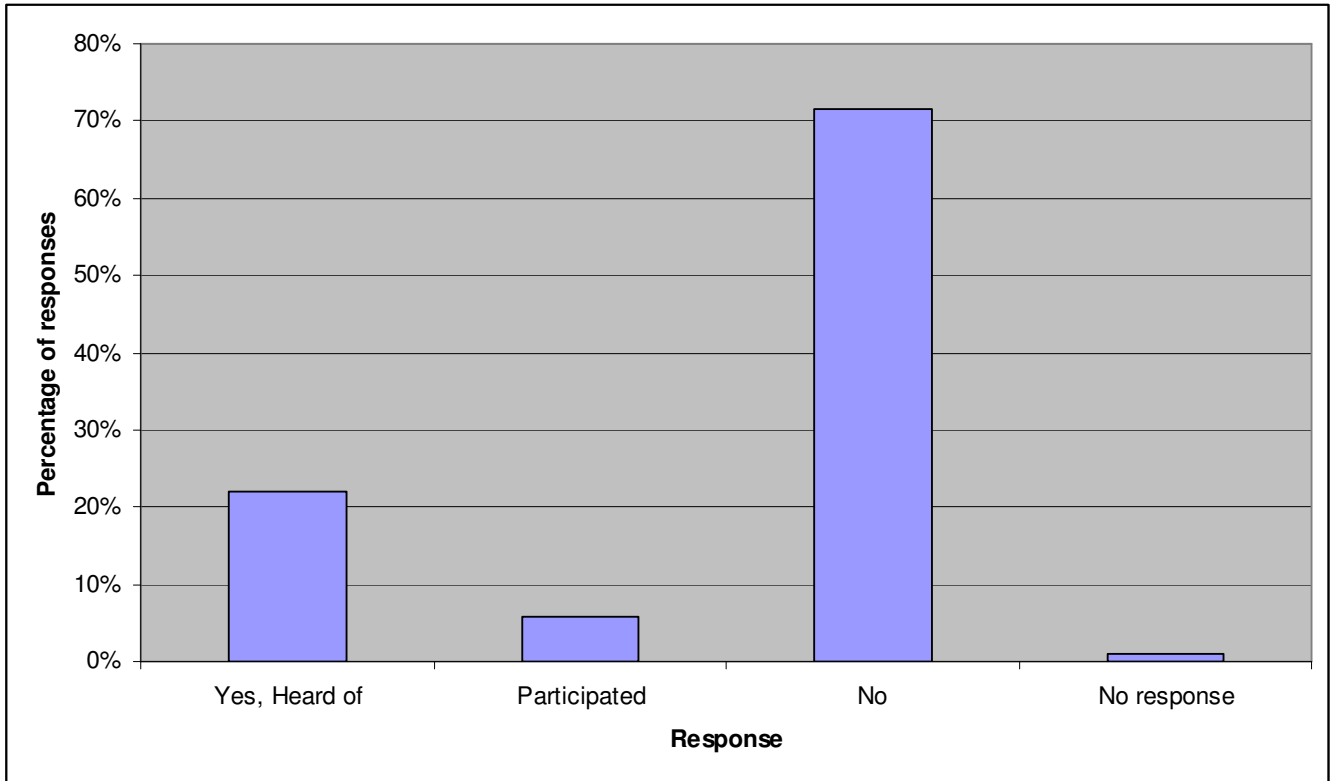
**Q3j. In the past 4 weeks, during your leisure and recreation time, have you visited any natural environments, such as a beach, lake, river, creek, bushland or park?**



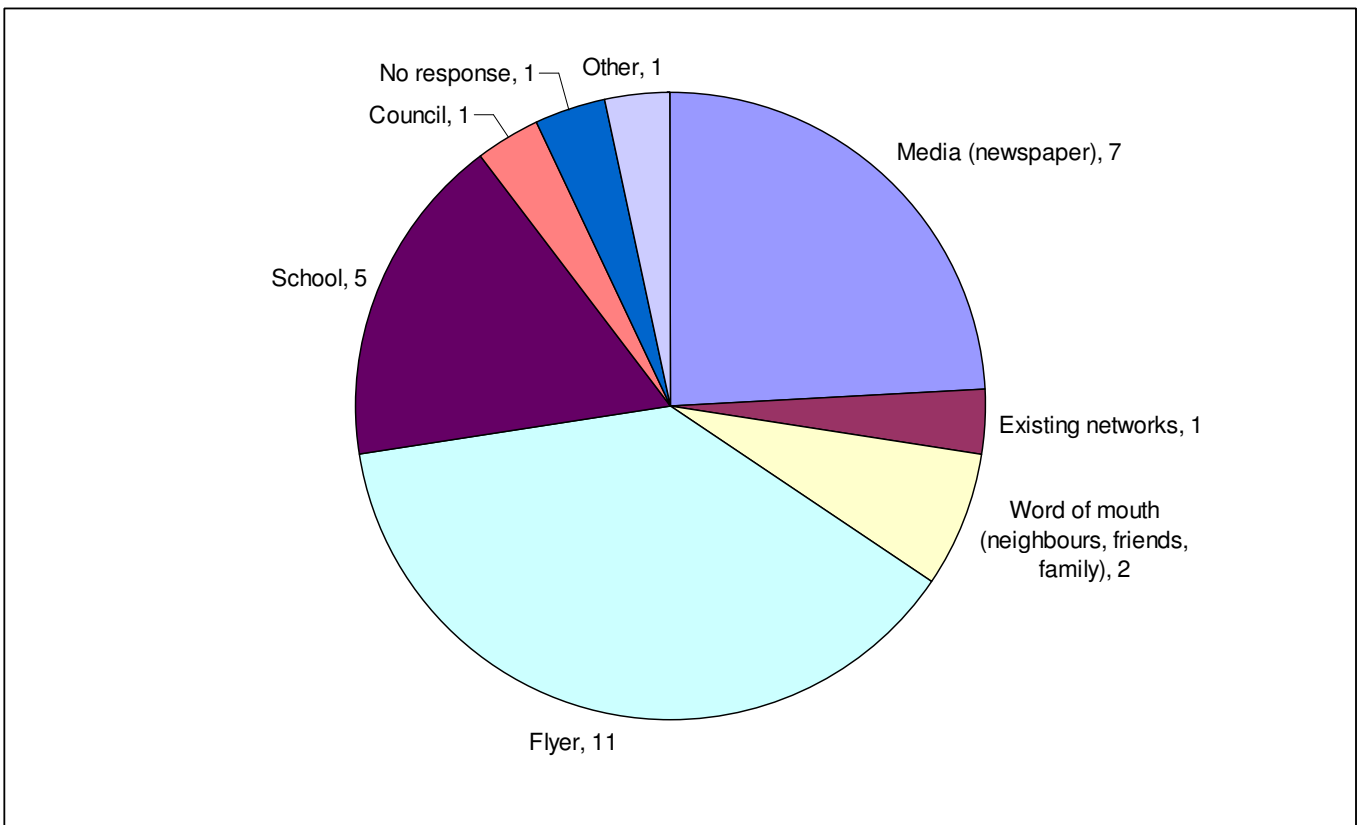
**Q4a. Which of the following activities/events would you consider participating in?**



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

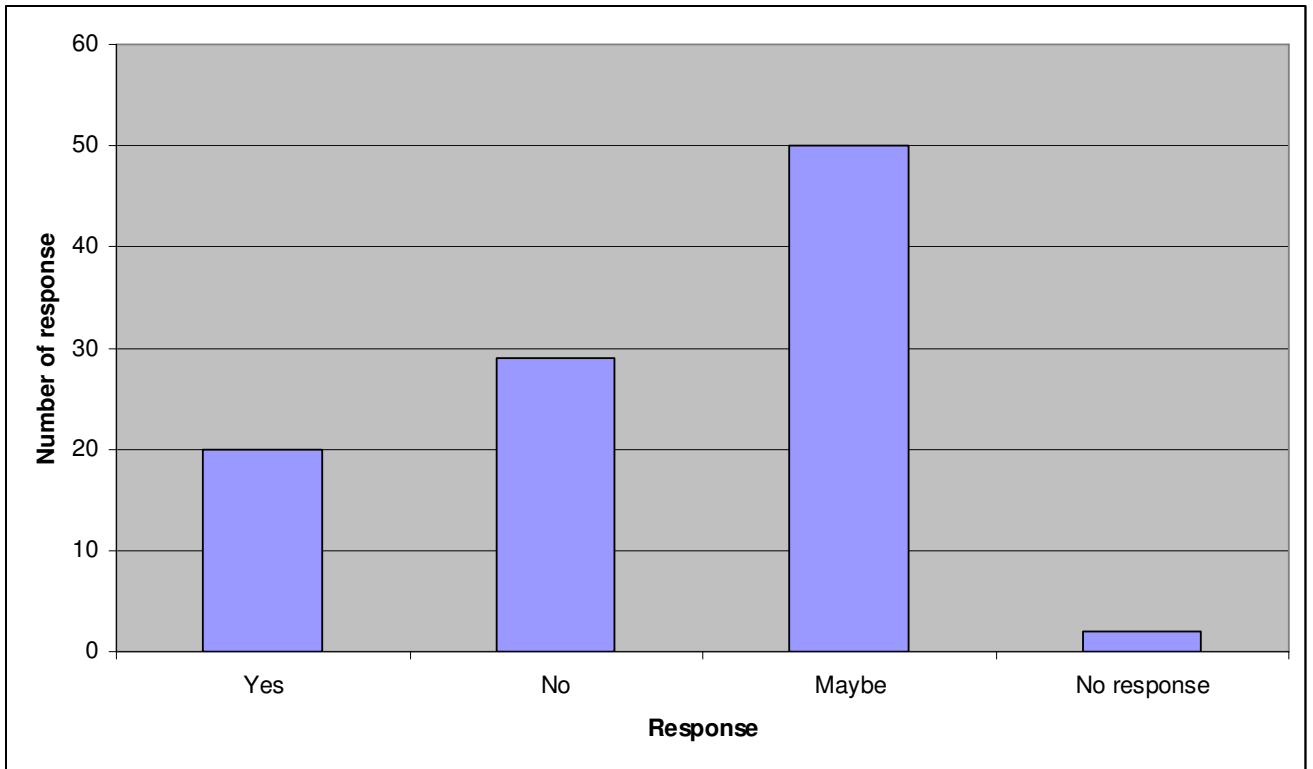


**Q4c. If yes, how did you hear about this program?**



Other: self motivated.

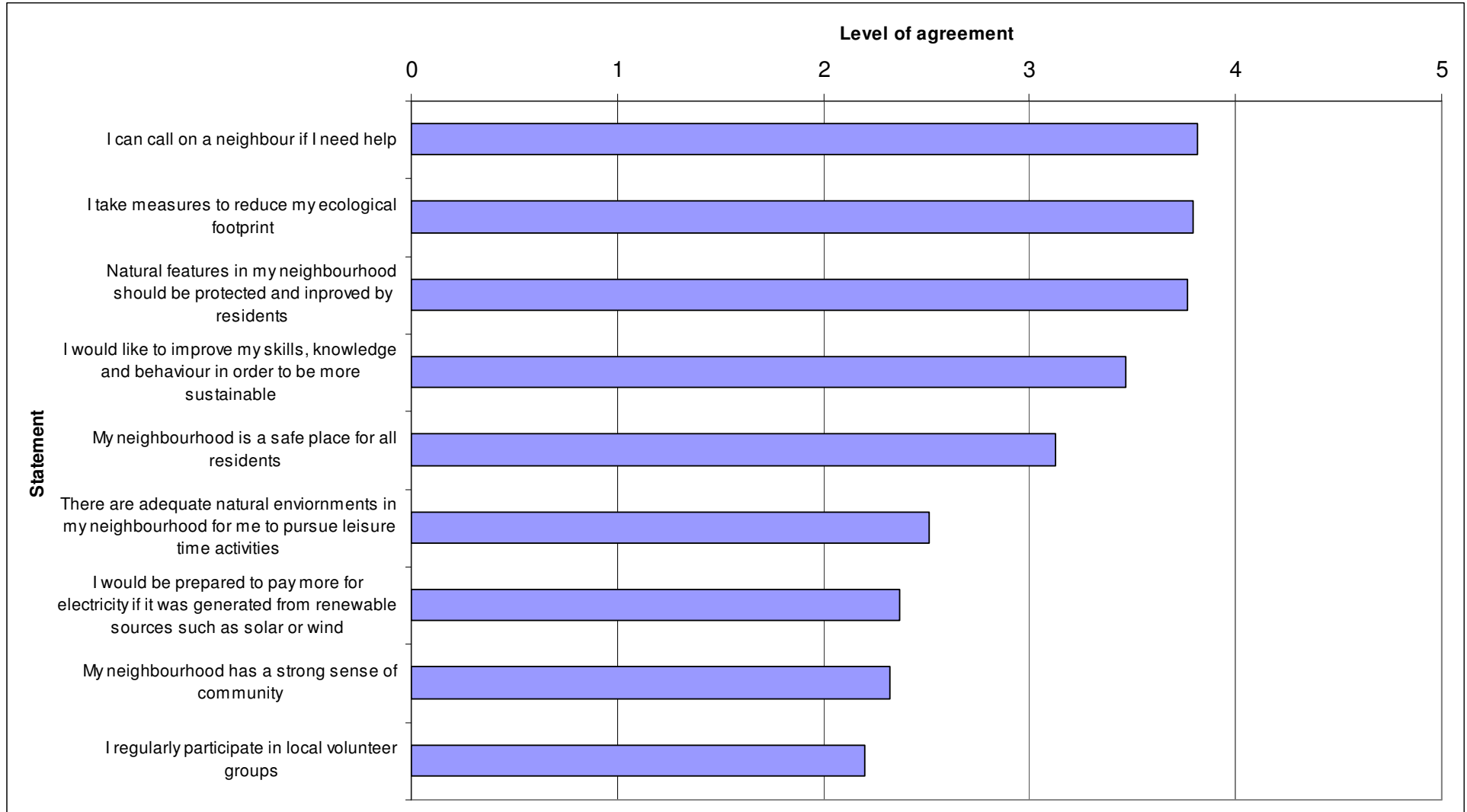
**Q4d. Would you be interested in participating in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program?**



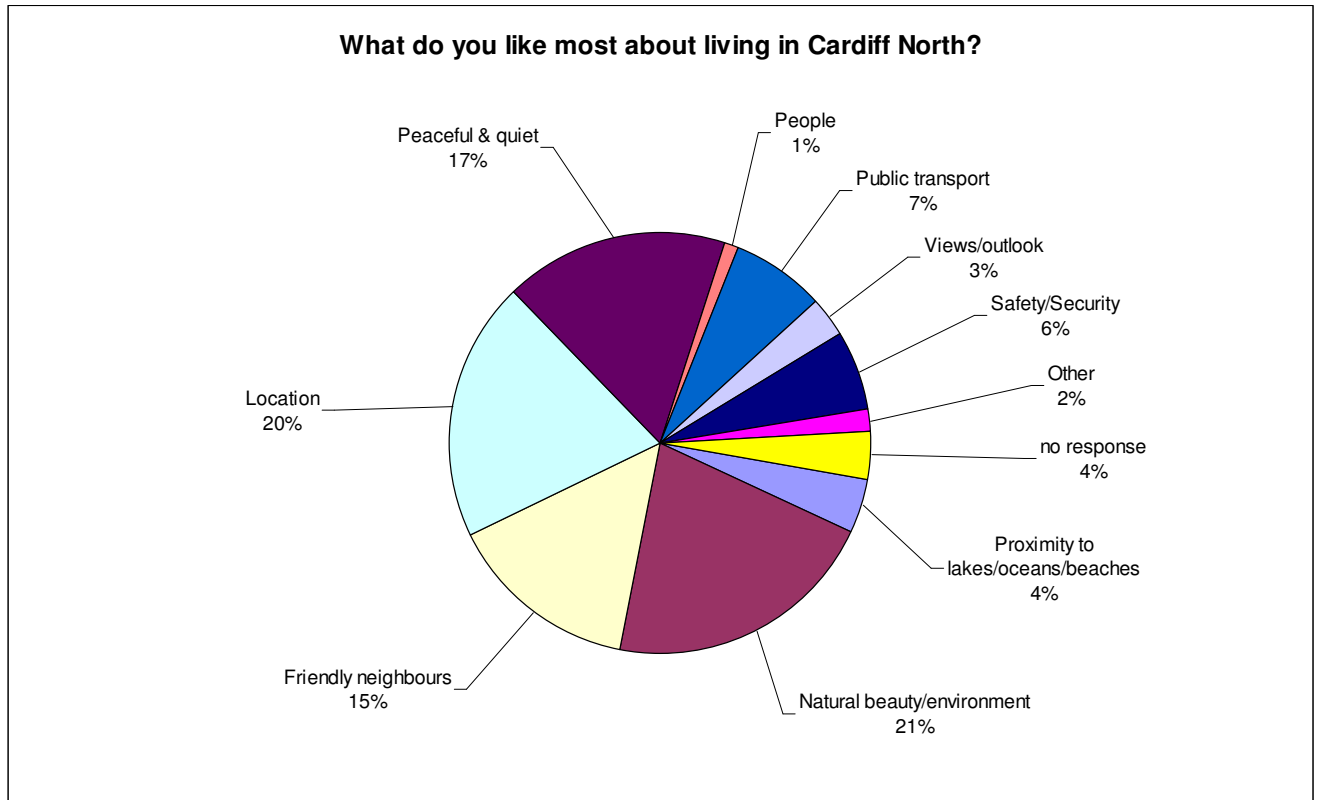


## ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

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



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



**Other:**

- Mature suburb with full range of services and most amenities
- Quality of life
- Close to Blackbutt reserve,

## 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*

- Picking up roadside litter on regular basis
- Designated clean-up day
- Recycling
- Compulsory recycling (fines)
- Small charge plastic bags at shops
- Weekly recycling service
- Green waste collection
- Provide designated green waste depot points in all suburbs
- Aluminium can recycling
- Reduce waste/Council support
- Fines for not picking up dog droppings
- Stop excessive consuming

### *Connected and active community*

- Group to maintain quarry block
- Walk to school program
- Community BBQ
- Incentives
- Install rainwater tanks
- Solar panels
- Community meetings
- Newsletter
- Monthly street clean-up day
- Workshops – vegie gardens, worm farms, energy efficient
- More communication within community
- Give young adults sense of belonging, mentoring, public graffiti artists
- Awareness campaigns, promotions for environmentally friendly ideas
- Exchange of ideas
- More community events
- Educating people to be less selfish
- Reduced rates for Landcare active residents
- Minimise electricity use
- System for wellbeing of residents alone
- More community notice boards
- Become more proactive
- Teach kids to respect land and people

### *Public spaces and facilities*

- Community garden
- User friendly park needed/garden/dog section/path
- Clean streets
- Improved walking paths
- Cars off footpaths
- More footpaths
- Cheaper, more accessible dump facility
- Older teens venue to hang out/PCYC?

### *Services and urban planning*

- Transport interchange at Glendale
- Lift at Cardiff Railway station
- Traffic lights at congested areas
- Stronger police presence
- More transport systems
- More parking
- Closer bus service
- More street lighting
- Resist medium density development
- Drains surrounding BiLo cleared
- Free community bus to health appointments/Cardiff shops
- CBD upgraded, gardens planted
- Improve rainwater runoff
- Upgrade Cardiff railway station
- Remove overhead powerlines
- Improve bus availability
- Roundabout Reservoir Rd & Main Rd needed

### *Protecting and improving our natural environment*

- Plant more native trees
- Reduce chemical pesticide use
- Regular creek cleanups
- Improve creek water flow
- Clear up reserve
- Remove weeds in the creeks

- Cats wildlife threat
- More Landcare
- Stop dumping grass in bushland

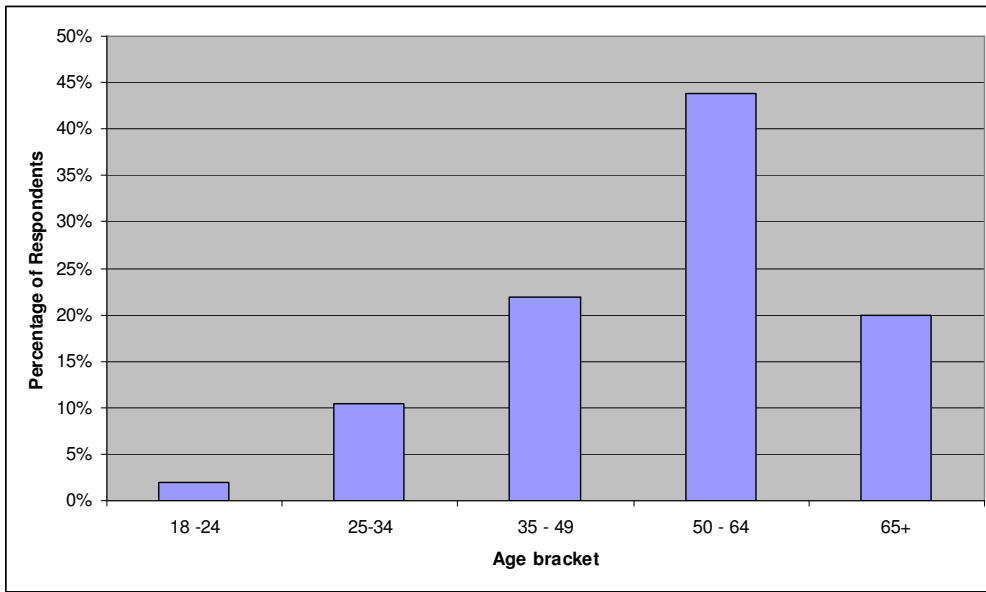
- Get rid of myna birds threatening natives
- Clear bushland overgrowth

*Other*

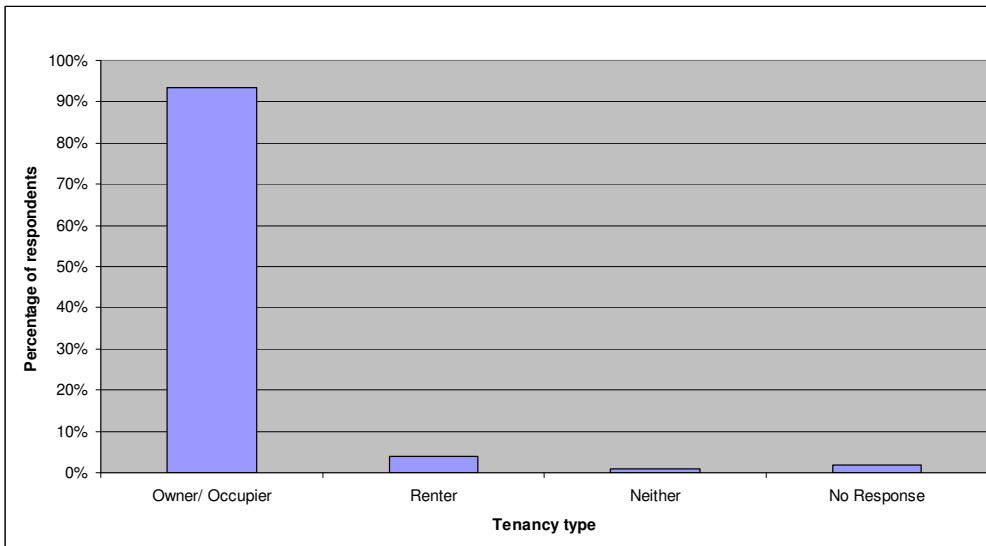
- Suburb signage environmental choices
- Take charge of Lake Macquarie Council
- Banning spray cans (graffiti)
- Some households have too many dogs and cat litters constant
- Rebates for insulation, solar, water tanks etc.
- Dept Housing tenants maintain properties
- Reduction of noise – particularly road traffic
- Dumpers and anti-social behaviour dealt with
- Reduce heavy rail noise – hurts eardrums
- New clothes shops
- Residential yards kept tidy

## DEMOGRAPHICS

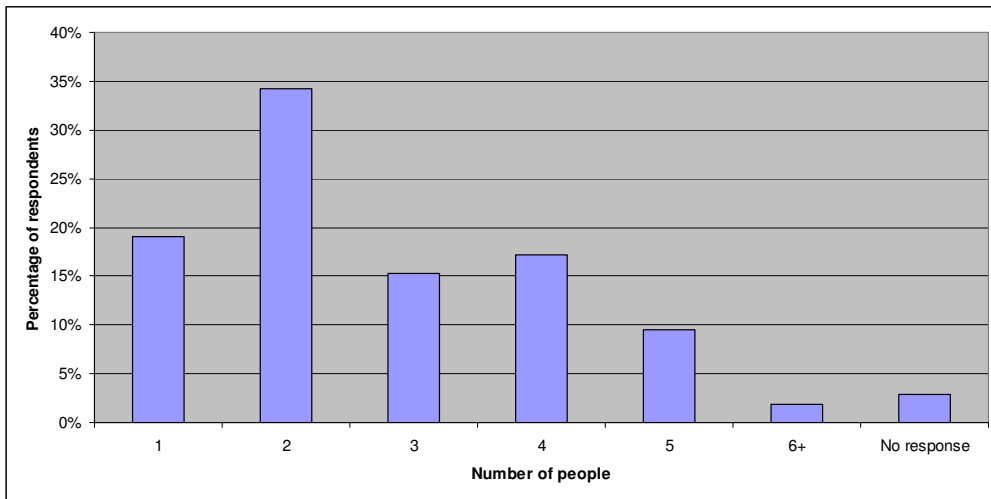
### Q7a. Age bracket



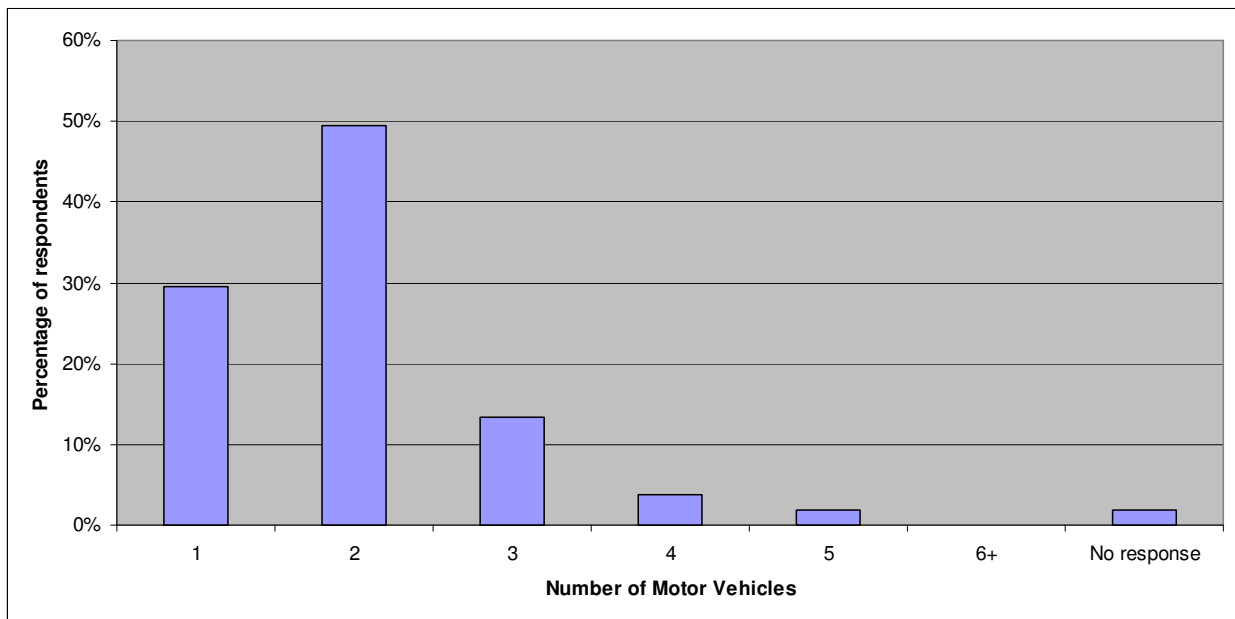
### Q7b. Tenancy Type



### 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 you neighbourhood?**

