

Jewells Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Community Attitudes Survey February/March 2015



This is a report on the attitudes of residents of Jewells Area including Jewells, Floraville and Belmont North, prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council as part of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods program, March 2015.

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 the Jewells Area in February/March 2015. The intent of the survey is to gauge community attitudes to the natural environment, sustainable living, and environmental threats such as natural disasters.

The survey is part of ongoing community development and engagement activities, which aim to collect input from the broadest possible range of residents in each neighbourhood area. Other techniques to collect input include public workshops, stalls and activities at public venues, schools and other community areas. We hope the survey captures some of the values, attitudes, and concerns of residents who may not participate in other engagement activities.

Methodology

In late February 2015, a hardcopy survey was posted to 3837 households in the Jewells Area. Hardcopy surveys were also left at the library and local businesses. The hardcopy survey was in self-return format, with a prize draw promoted on the front cover as an incentive for residents to complete it.

A digital version was also made available and was promoted via a link from the Sustainable Neighbourhoods website, through email to 105 local contacts of the Eoadvocate, and via cross promotion from internal and external sources (e.g. The Rotary Club of Belmont, Landcare, Belmont Neighbourhood Centre, What's On e-letter, etc.).

The survey was open for three weeks. Completed surveys continued to be submitted after the closing date and new data was entered for one week following this. An additional nine surveys have been received since the completion of this report, all with responses consistent to those analysed.

In total, 265 responses were received and analysed as part of this report. Of these, 39 online responses were submitted and 226 hardcopies were returned, a response rate of approximately 7% of those posted.

The results of this survey, and the ideas shared by respondents, will be added to other information gathered from a range of activities, to help develop the Jewells Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Key Findings

1. About the Jewells Area

The top aspects people value about the area included:

- Proximity to the lake, beach, ocean or bush (19%)
- Close to amenities, services and/or facilities (18%); and
- Peace and quiet (14%).

2. Local sustainability issues in Jewells Area

Respondents were most concerned about:

- Rubbish, litter, and waste management (20%);
- Reducing energy and water use (19%); and
- Health of the environment and biodiversity (16%).

3. Sustainability actions in your neighbourhood

Respondents indicated they are most likely to participate in or receive information on the activities relating to:

- Local plants, animals and natural environments; bush, coastal and ecosystem regeneration or growing native gardens (53%);
- Community building, cultural programs, street parties, community picnics, barbecues and historical talks (51%); and
- Preparing for environmental threats such as storms, bushfires and climate change (44%).

Respondents indicated they are least likely to welcome information on, or participate in activities relating to:

- Green cleaning, energy and water saving, reducing household waste and active transport i.e. walking and cycling (55%); and
- Programs to monitor the health of local ecosystems, flagship species and other plants/animals (38%).

Less than 15% of all respondents provided recommendations for workshops, educational events and/or community activities. The majority of these responses (12) related to community gardens and planting activities/training.

4. Ideas to improve the neighbourhood

Approximately 35% of participants shared ideas for improving their neighbourhood. Responses were diverse and ranged from suggestions for putting pamphlets around the neighbourhood to ideas about the installation of birdbaths for native birds to use. Many responses were specific and could not be generalized. These diverse responses make up one of the largest category of responses, listed as 'Other'. With the exception of 'Other' responses, the most common ideas related to land management, waste management/litter/illegal dumping, and raising awareness/education/advertising/communication.

5. The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

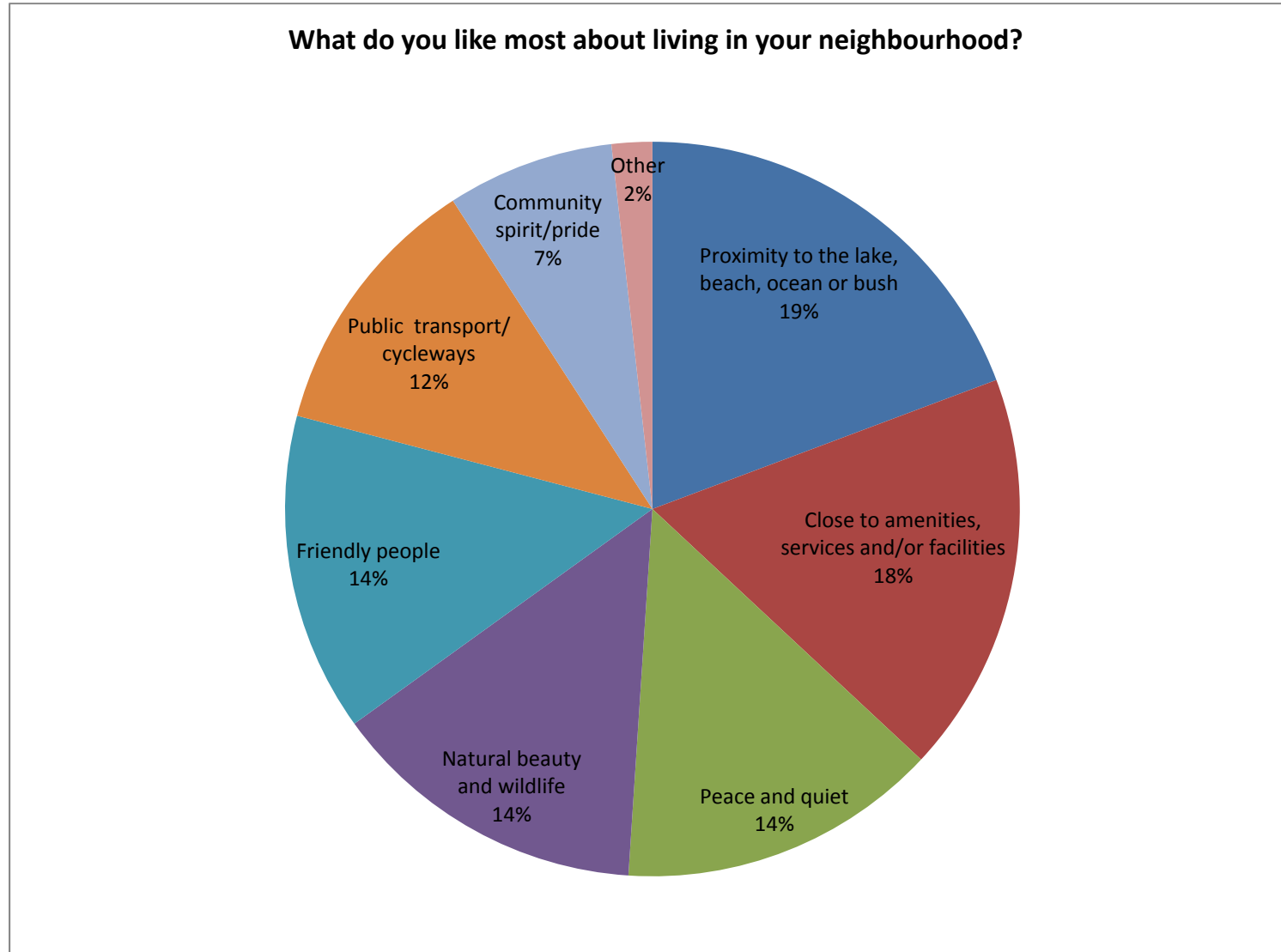
Seven respondents had previously participated in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, while an additional 71 had heard of it. The majority of respondents indicated that they had heard about the program through 'a Council newsletter'.

6. Demographics

The majority of respondents were long-term locals. The average respondent was 65+ years old, lives in a home with one other person, owns their home and has lived in the neighbourhood for over 10 years. Over half of all respondents have lived in the neighbourhood for over ten years.

Detailed Results

1. About Your Neighbourhood

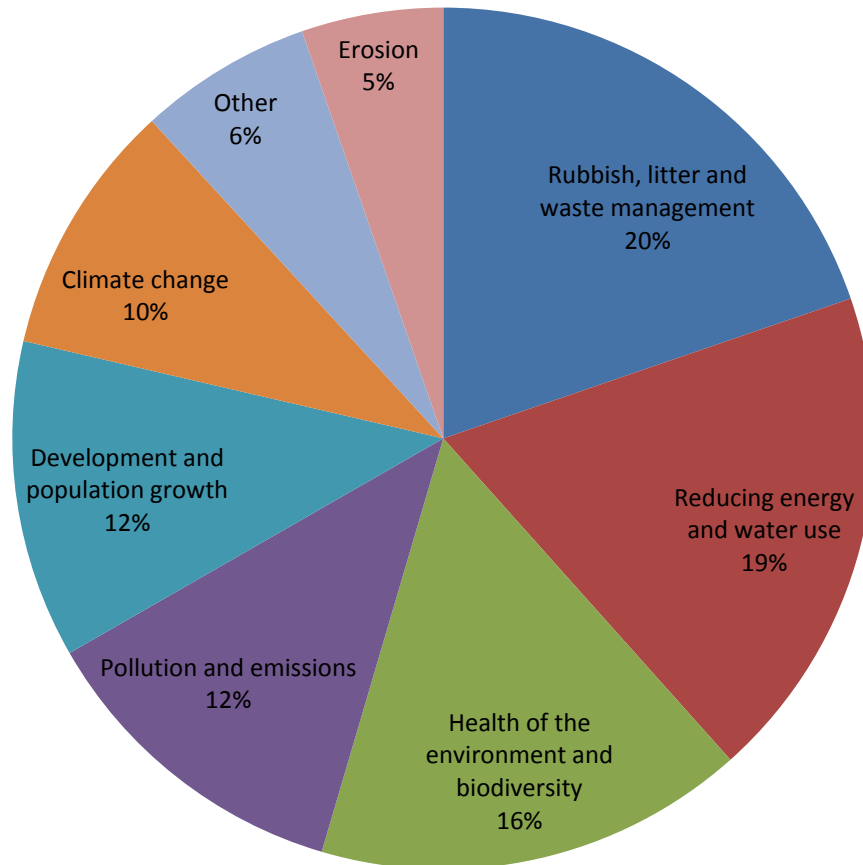


Examples of 'Other' responses:

- Request/complaint (0.38%)
- Climate/weather (0.30%)
- Affordability (0.15%)
- The views (0.15%)
- Proximity to Sydney (0.15%)
- Family (0.08%)

2. Sustainability Issues in Your Neighbourhood

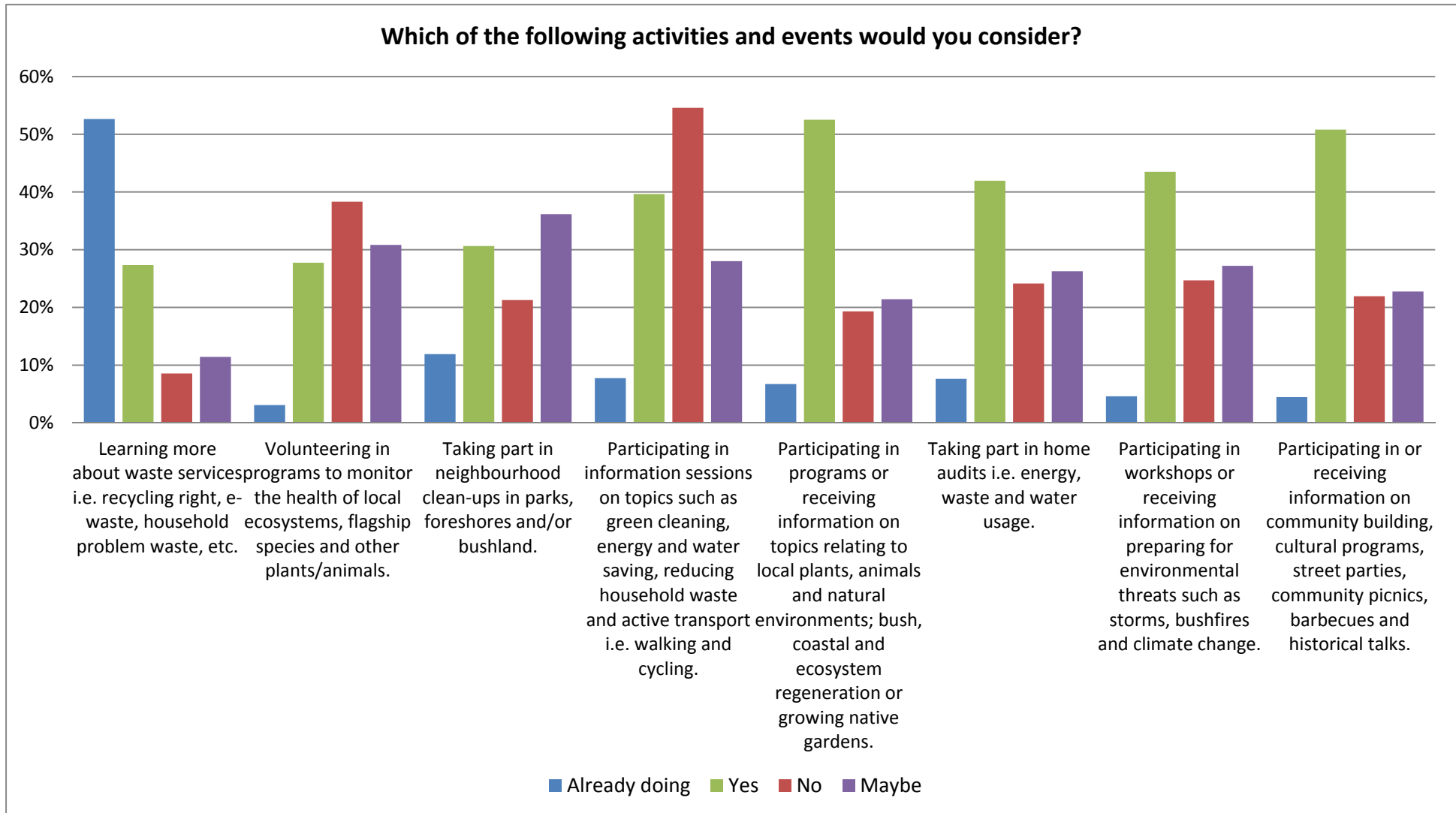
What are the most important issues in your neighbourhood today?



Examples of 'Other' responses:

- Inadequate infrastructure (1.69%)
- Inadequate public transport / active transport avenues (1.29%)
- Maintenance of public spaces (1.09%)
- Health and use of wetlands/sand dunes (1.0%)
- Criminal activity and antisocial behaviour (1.0%)
- Use of trail bikes and 4WDs (0.9%)

3. Sustainability Actions in Your Neighbourhood



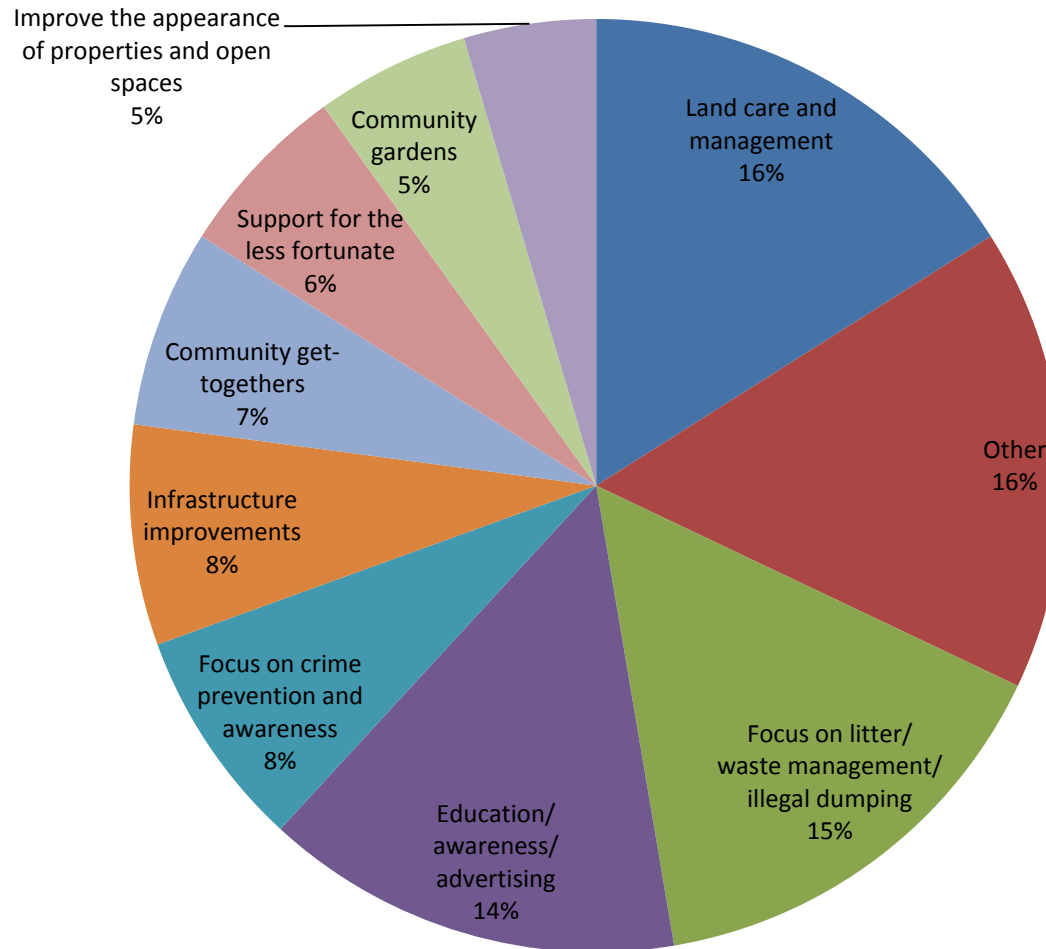
Examples of other suggestions:

- Community gardens and planting activities/workshops (12)
- More advertising/promotion of events (4)
- Activities to improve open spaces (4)
- Spreading awareness/providing education on eco-activities (10)
- Improved parks/playgrounds (4)
- Bee workshops (3)

4. Your Ideas

Responses to this open-ended question were generalized to create 10 categories.

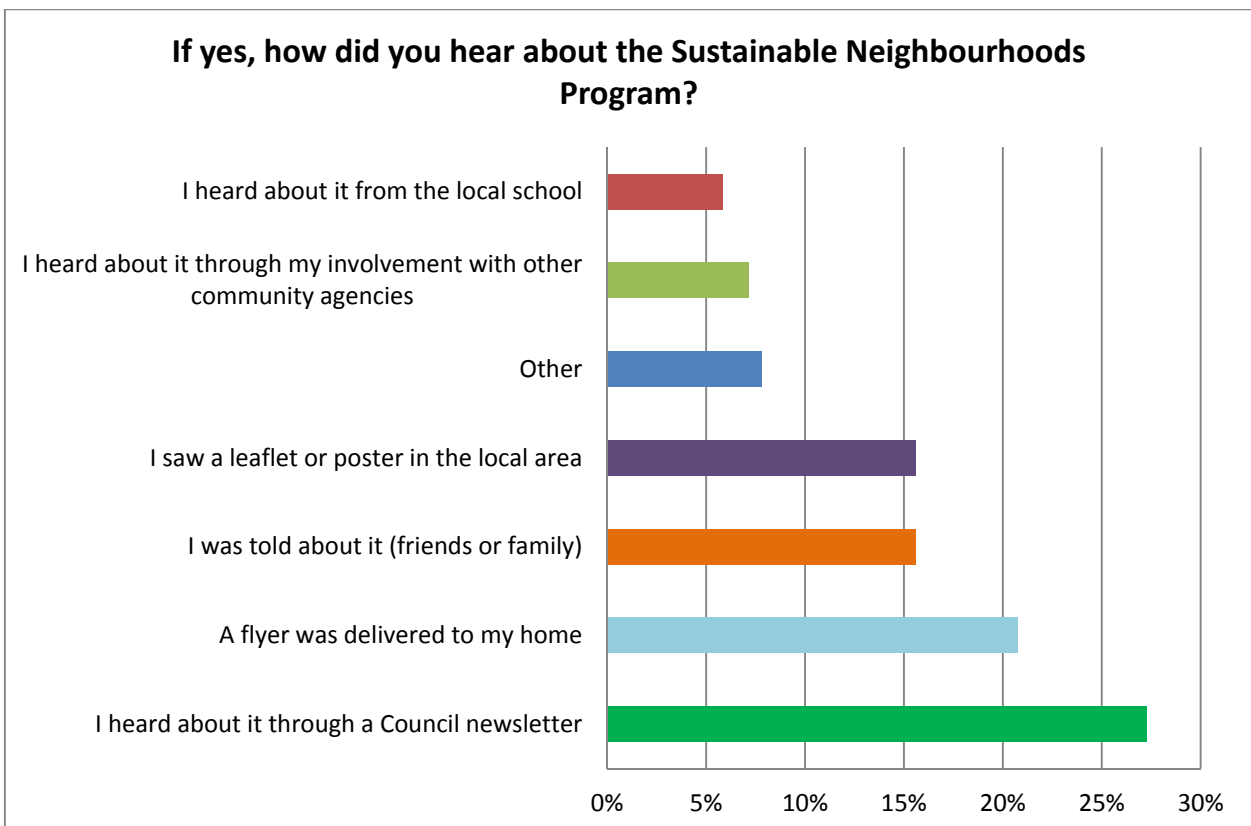
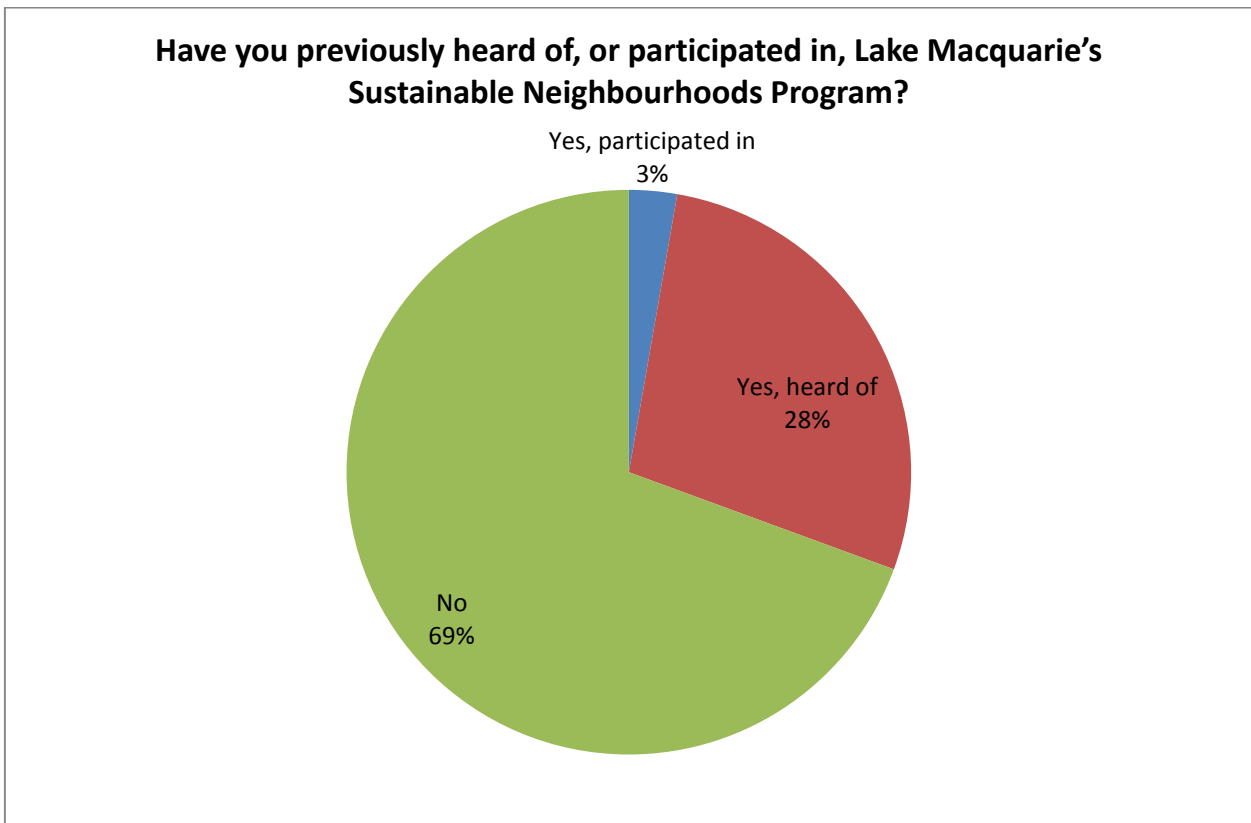
Do you have any suggestions about how you, the people in your neighbourhood, or local businesses could improve the environment or community spirit in your area?



Examples of responses:

- Provide a site to exchange things that you don't want or need.
- 'Do the right thing' campaign. Stop illegal dumping in the bush but don't 'lock' the bush off.
- Neighbours of elderly residents who can no longer do their mowing, set up a roster to take turns in mowing the lawn for them.
- Letterbox drop to residents to promote what we have and how we can work together.
- Focus on reducing illegal dumping/littering in bush areas.
- Organise a street garage sale.
- Volunteering in growing native gardens.
- Say hello to your neighbours.
- Take pride in your property and surrounds and be aware of the impact you have on it. Have a look around, we live in a beautiful area appreciate it and keep it that way.

5. The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program



6. Demographics

