

Renewing Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Community Survey Report

November 2021



Purpose

The survey was undertaken as part of a project to strengthen the Sustainable Neighbourhoods program and increase opportunities for community members to get involved. The survey aimed to:

- Increase awareness of Sustainable Neighbourhoods program among Lake Macquarie residents
- Recruit new volunteers for existing groups
- Identify neighbourhood areas where there is a high level of community interest in joining a Sustainable Neighbourhood group (existing or new)
- Identify individuals interested in starting new Sustainable Neighbourhood groups and distinguish between likely leaders and supporters
- Inform decision about where best to start or renew Sustainable Neighbourhood groups

Results summary and discussion

New contacts

The survey identified individuals who agreed to be contacted further.

- 52 new subscribers to the Sustainable Neighbourhood News e-newsletter
- 46 new contacts who want to directly connect with the Sustainable Neighbourhood network
 - 27 live in a suburb with an existing Sustainable Neighbourhood group
 - 17 live in a suburb where there is not an existing Sustainable Neighbourhood group
 - 2 did not indicate their suburb of residence

Summary of new direct contacts and location

Existing Sustainable Neighbourhood group	Number of new contacts
Cardiff Area	7
Dudley	1
Five Bays	2
Greater Charlestown	5
Morisset and Peninsula	1
Pelican Area	1
Toronto Area	2
Valentine	2
Warners Bay Area	3
West Wallsend District	3
	27

Suburb (no existing group)	Number of new contacts	Ward
Belmont North	2	East ward
Belmont	1	
Jewells	1	
Swansea	1	
Caves Beach	2	
Murrays Beach	1	
Edgeworth	1	North ward
Argenton	1	
Speers Point	3	
New Lambton	1	
Arcadia Vale	1	West ward
Cooranbong	2	
	17	

Possible leaders

Of the new contacts, 29 potential volunteer leaders were identified. 14 live in suburbs where there is an existing Sustainable Neighbourhood group; and 12 live in suburbs where there is not an active group. 2 of these respondents did not indicate their suburb of residence.

The areas where potential leaders are located include:

- Speers Point Area, 4 – Argenton, Speers Point
- Belmont Area, 3 – Belmont, Belmont North and Jewells
- Swansea Area, 2 – Caves Beach, Swansea
- Arcadia Vale, 1
- Cooranbong, 1
- Edgeworth, 1

Values and interests

More generally, survey respondents indicated a high level of interest in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods program, including alignment with values, and interest in different activities, projects, and potential roles.

Several respondents identified project ideas to encourage sustainable living, protection of the natural environment, and community connection.

Methodology

The survey was conducted online using Survey Monkey and was promoted through newsletter and social media channels.

A total of 75 responses were received between 28 October – 15 November 2021.

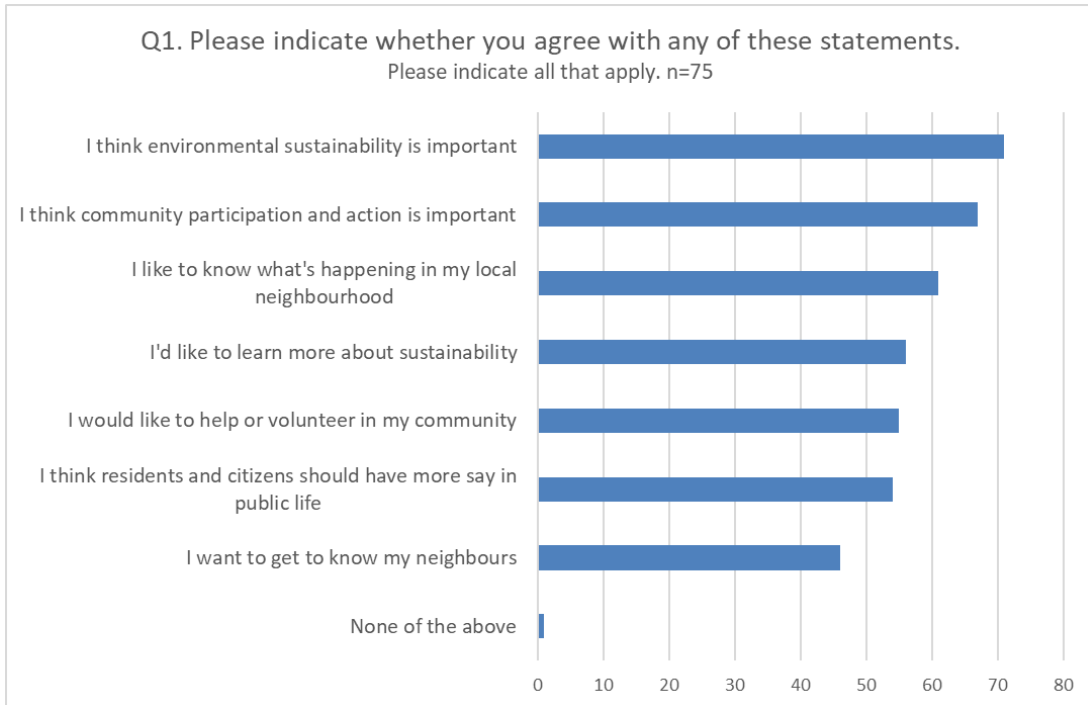
The survey promotions and introduction included a short explanation about Sustainable Neighbourhoods, and a link to more information about the program.

Survey respondents were self-selected, and promotions were targeted at those most likely to participate, so results are likely to reflect people with existing interest around concepts of sustainability and community.

SURVEY RESULTS

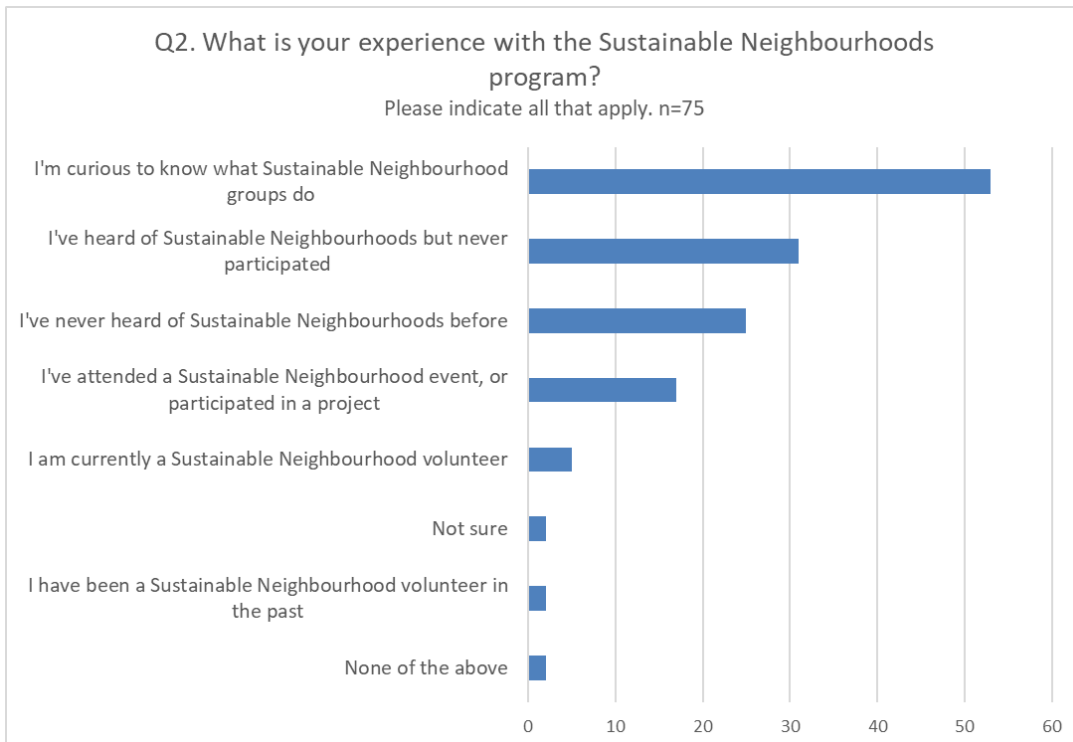
Q1. Value statements

Most respondents agreed with most of the value statements given, indicating an overall alignment with known Sustainable Neighbourhood motivations.



Q2. Sustainable Neighbourhoods experience

These responses were used to identify new contacts.



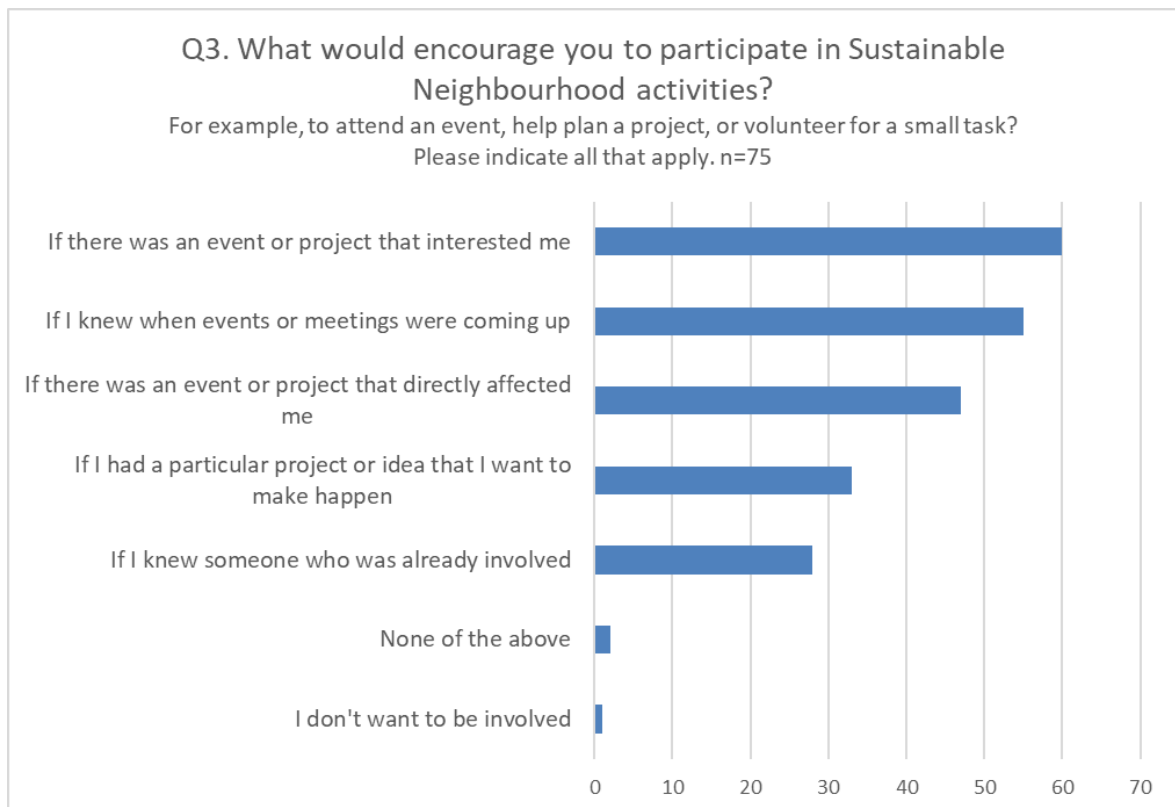
Q3. Encouraging participation

Most respondents indicated their interest in participating in relevant projects.

Note that 55 respondents indicated they are likely to participate if they knew when events were coming up, which is easily facilitated through existing email lists and other promotional avenues.

Four comments were also added:

- *We're a Preschool Service (Sustainable Play Preschool) and we have connected with the community garden at Holmesville. We'd like to offer more to the community and share about our 'bush kindy - Play Group' that we offer to the community*
- *Children friendly events*
- *If my whole family - including children - could be involved.*
- *More clarity about group culture, expectations, and governance. I get vibes that groups are run in an old fashioned, and cumbersome way and that is pretty off putting.*



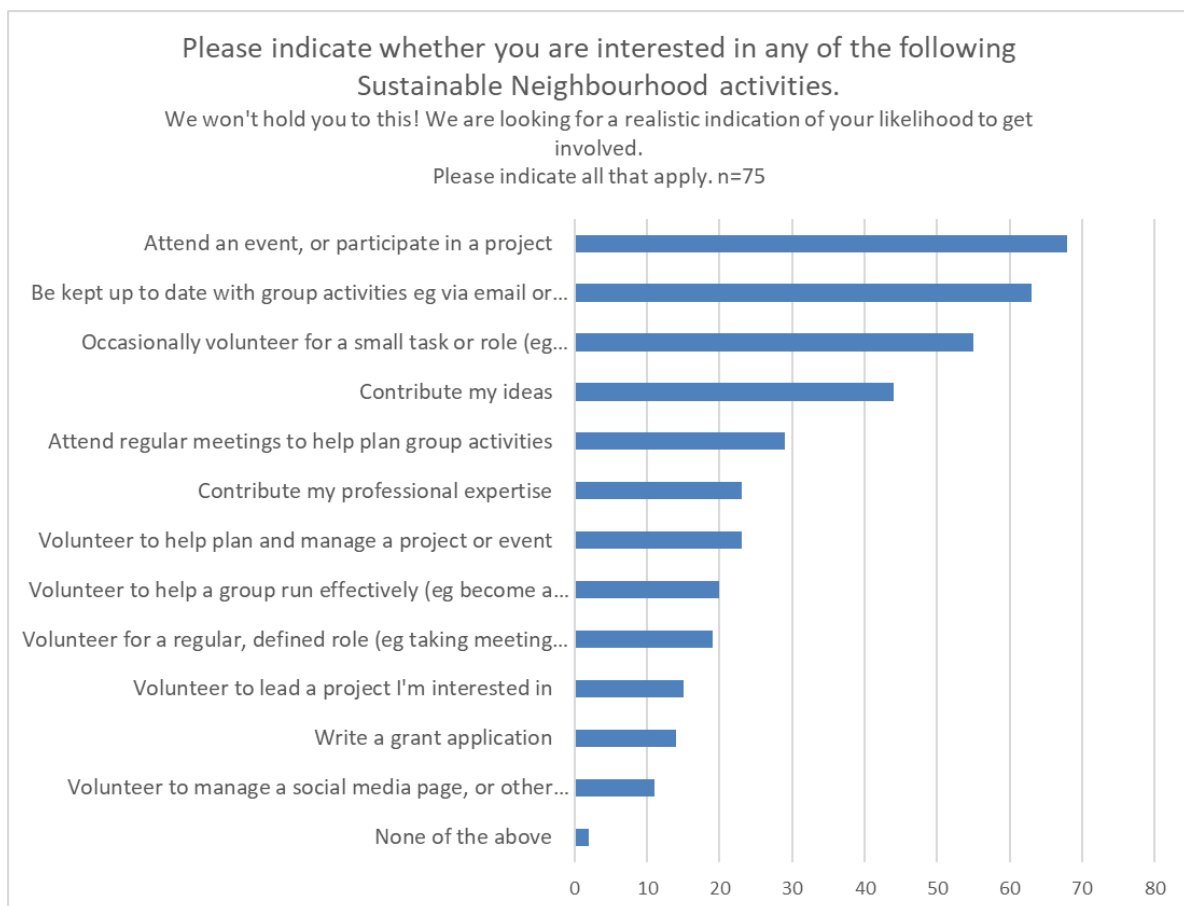
Q4. Interest in Sustainable Neighbourhood activities

Responses to this question reflect a well-known spectrum of participation, with interest decreasing as the level of commitment increases. Most respondents indicated they would like to attend an event, be kept up to date, volunteer for a small task, or contribute their ideas.

A smaller proportion, 10-29 respondents, indicated that they would be interested in taking on more formal or ongoing roles, such as attending meetings, or organising projects.

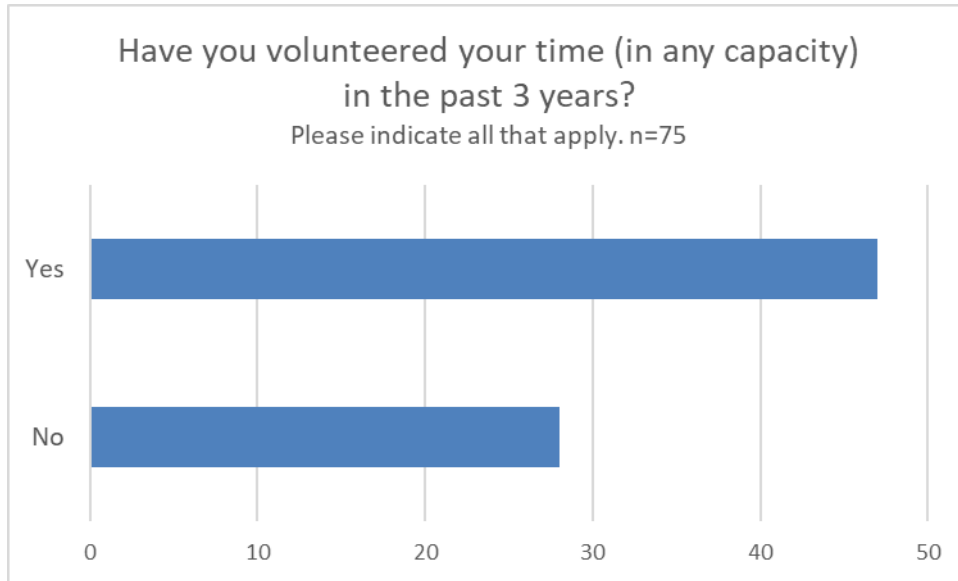
Four comments were also added:

- *I'm interested to volunteer in some way, but time is currently a limitation, so I'd like to help if a community project comes up that I'm able to do.*
- *Support children's connection to nature and nature play via our bush kindy program.*
- *I receive updates from the Rathmines group via email but haven't yet participated. The meeting times don't suit me with it clashing with kids dinner/ bed time etc*
- *The above is what I would enjoy helping with. In the real world, however, my time is currently taken up with my current commitments including volunteering in aged care and studying. These are my priorities for now. I would be happy to attend Sustainable Neighbour events.*



Q5. Previous volunteering

47 respondents indicated that they have previously volunteered in some capacity.



Q6. Project ideas

Project ideas were contributed by 26 respondents, and were summarised in the following categories:

Natural environment

Litter and illegal dumping
Managing invasive pests
Frog hotels
Bug hotels
Landcare and bush regeneration
Native gardening
Bird nest boxes
Plant street trees
Protection of bushland

Sustainable living

Community gardens
Sustainable living workshops
Edible plants on street verges
Mushroom growing
Vegetable gardening
Reduce overconsumption and waste
Community battery
Local soft plastics recycling collection
Permanent Repair Cafe

Community connections

Street library – building workshop
Parents’ climate action group
Schools and community education
30km/hr streets for safe walking and cycling
Assisting with garden maintenance

Detailed project ideas

- *Keeping litter away from the lake and waterways and streets is something I'd like to see develop. I've been impressed by items on tv about community gardens and would love to be involved. Valuing our bush and learning how to keep it in good condition - eg learning how to remove invasive pests without poisoning wildlife.*
- *Little street library building workshop.*
- *Frog hotel, bug hotel*
- *Clean up spaces, Landcare*
- *There is a very under-utilised plot of land in Caves Beach which would be lovely to turn into both native and edible community gardens. I'm also interested in running sustainable living workshops and have a fuzzy dream about creating a community group of parents who want to take more action on climate change.*
- *Start a project to raise funds to install artificial nesting sites for hollow nesting birds.*
- *Planting of street trees that are beneficial to native species, and edible plants for street verges and plantings.*
- *As mentioned above, continue to develop our bush kindy program, offer the program to a wider range of families and help to connect with nature and clean up the bush land in Barnsley.*
- *Just general sustainability in the community. Nothing in particular at this time.*
- *land care type projects*
- *Replacing lost vegetation in Styles Point Catalina Rathmines park.*
- *Provide education to kids at schools regarding mushroom growing and the lifecycle of fungi.*
- *Community gardens*
- *Establish community gardens in close proximity to every skatepark/outdoor activity area.*
- *Planning a vegetable garden.*
- *Educate the community about ecosystems, from the land to the water. And the importance of the environment to our psychological state.*
- *I inherited a home with a large yard, divided into two distinct areas. One area, with a Norfolk pine has a (RE1?) waterway boundary. I think my benefactor would agree with me that it could be valuable as a ecological school room. Conservation and observation are the extent of my primary school experiences but I imagine the current eco minded curriculum has deeper studies that could use a suburban site. There are Eastern water dragons, skinks, at least one frog and possum living in the area. There is a diverse plant collection, and I admit I need help sorting the significant from the pests before I have a yard maintenance crew destroy any of the essential (and historical) vegetation. If you have any use for such a project, I am open to discuss the feasibility.*
- *Reduce over consumption and Change people's throw away tendency particularly at council cleanups*
- *Tree planting Community batteries*
- *30km/hr streets*
- *I have been involved with a community garden and a street library.*
- *helping people who need it with garden maintenance*
- *Local Soft plastics recycling depository*
- *Turn current vacant land into a community garden.*
- *Removing cars & rubbish from bushland at end of Forest Lake Way. Preventing cars from accessing this bushland so stolen cars don't get burnt out here causing potential fire hazards and pollution*
- *permanent repair cafe operating regularly and tree lined streets, little micro forests as I walk to the shops.*

Q7. Location

Respondents' suburbs of residence were spread across the city.

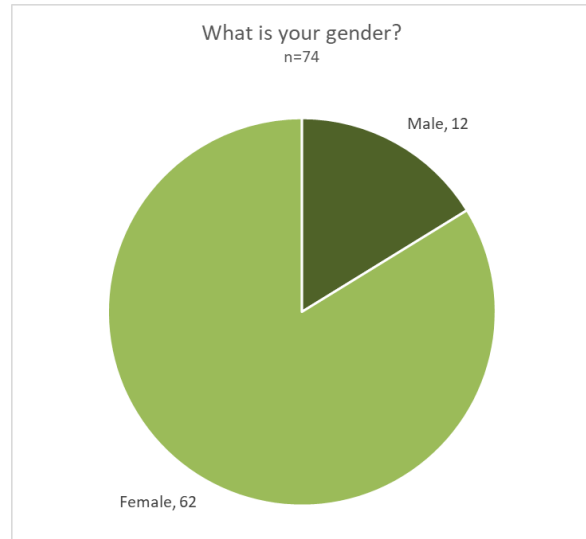
9 respondents provided their postcode only, which was estimated to the nearest town centre. One response was from Islington in the Newcastle LGA.

West ward	28	North ward	27	East ward	19
Arcadia Vale	1	Adamstown Heights	1	Belmont	3
Argenton	1	Barnsley	1	Belmont North	1
Balmoral	2	Cardiff	5	Blacksmiths	1
Bolton Point	3	Cardiff Heights	1	Caves Beach	2
Bonnells Bay	1	Charlestown	4	Eleebana	3
Cooranbong	2	Dudley	1	Jewells	1
Dora Creek	1	Edgeworth	2	Murrays Beach	2
Eraring	1	Garden suburb	1	Swansea	2
Killingworth	1	Glendale	1	Valentine	3
Morisset	2	Holmesville	1	Windale	1
Morisset Park	1	Kahibah	1		
Speers Point	3	New Lambton	2		
Teralba	3	Warners Bay	5		
Toronto	2	West Wallsend	1		
Wakefield	1				
Wangi Wangi	1				
Woodrising	1				
Yarrawonga park	1				

Q8. Gender

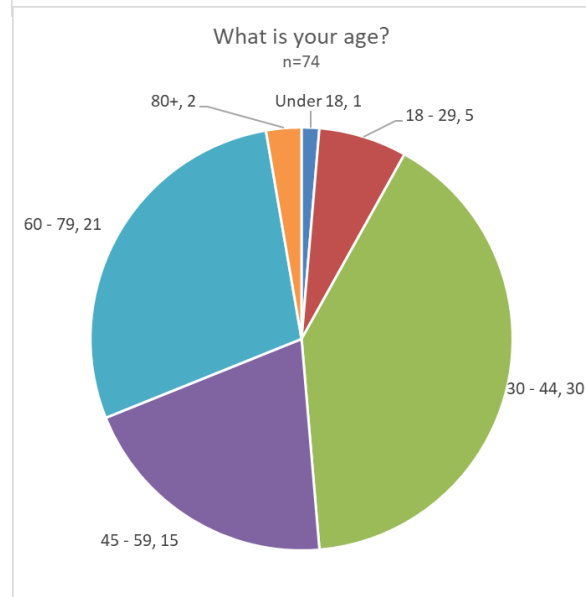
The majority 84% of respondents were female.

One response was not applicable – from an organisation.



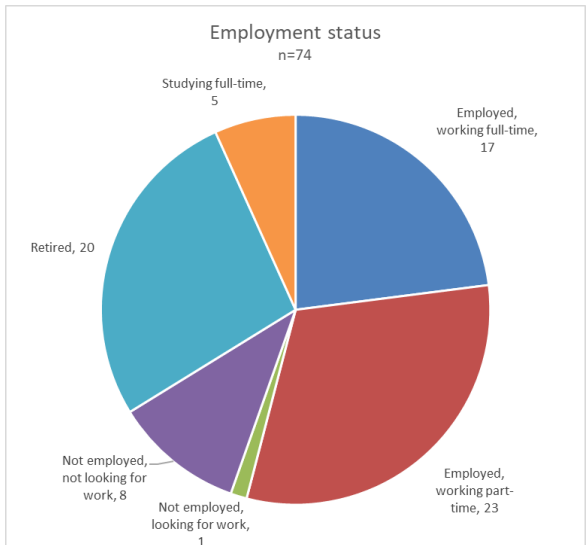
Q9. Age

The majority 41% of respondents were aged between 30-44, and 28% were aged between 60-79. 20% were aged 45-59, and 8% were aged under 29 years.



Q10. Employment status

Fifty-four percent of respondents were employed, including 31% part time, and 23% full time. 27% were retired, 12% were unemployed, and 7% studying full time.



Q11. Future contact

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether and how they wanted to be contacted in future, and were given the following options. Respondents could indicate all that applied. Thirteen respondents did not wish to be contacted further.

Email me the report about these survey results	38
Subscribe me to the Sustainable Neighbourhood News - a monthly email about upcoming Sustainable Neighbourhood events and opportunities	52
Email me directly if Sustainable Neighbourhoods comes to my area, or to put me in touch with my local Sustainable Neighbourhood Group	46

Connecting with existing groups

Of those who asked to be contacted directly, 27 come from a suburb with an existing SN group. These contacts will be emailed directly, and introduced via email to their local group members.

Ten people subscribed to the SN News newsletter but did not want to be contacted directly. Two of these people did not indicate their suburb of residence.

Existing SN group	Direct contact	SN News subscribers only
Cardiff Area	7	1
Dudley	1	
Five Bays	2	1
Greater Charlestown	5	
Morisset and Peninsula	1	2
Pelican Area	1	
Toronto Area	2	
Valentine	2	1
Warners Bay Area	3	2
West Wallsend District	3	1

Interest in new areas

Of those who asked to be contacted directly, 17 come from a suburb where there is not an existing SN group. There were also 2 people who subscribed to the SN News, but did not want to be contacted directly.

Suburb (no existing Sustainable Neighbourhood Group)	Number of new contacts	SN News subscribers only	Ward
Belmont North	2		East ward
Belmont	1		
Jewells	1		
Windale		1	
Swansea	1		
Caves Beach	2		
Murrays Beach	1		
Edgeworth	1		North ward
Argenton	1		
Glendale		1	
Speers Point	3		
New Lambton	1		
Arcadia Vale	1		West ward
Cooranbong	2		

Potential volunteer leaders

Survey responses were filtered according to respondents' answers to specific questions. These respondents are considered to be the most likely volunteer 'leaders.'

- Q2 - Current volunteers excluded
- Q4 - Only respondents who indicated at least one active role were included (that is, regular defined role, committee member, write a grant application, attend regular meetings, help plan/manage a project, lead a project, professional expertise, manage social media page)
- Q12 – Only respondents who asked to be contacted directly were included

Answers from 29 respondents met these conditions.

Of these, 14 live in suburbs where there is an existing SN group; and 12 live in suburbs where there is not an active SN group. 2 of these respondents did not indicate their suburb of residence.

Cardiff Area	5
Dudley	1
Five Bays	3
Greater Charlestown	3
Morisset and Peninsula	1
Pelican Area	1
Warners Bay Area	1

Locality	Total	Suburb	Count
Belmont area	3	Belmont	1
		Belmont north	1
		Jewells	1
Swansea area	2	Caves Beach	1
		Swansea	1
Cameron Park and Edgeworth area	1	Edgeworth	1
Speers Point area	4	Argenton	1
		Speers Point	3
Cooranbong	1	Cooranbong	1
Wangi area	1	Arcadia Vale	1

The presence of potential new volunteer leaders will contribute to the success of a new or renewing Sustainable Neighbourhood group.