



# Our Coast, Our Waterways

Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons (mini report)

**Survey results**

SEPTEMBER 2021

Central Coast Council

Our Coast, Our Waterways: Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons mini report

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Version 1

## Introduction

Central Coast Council, in accordance with the NSW Government Coastal Management Framework are responsible for developing Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) for its waterways.

The Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons Coastal Management Program includes approximately 80 kilometres of open coastline from the southern end of Box Head (Killcare Beach) in Bouddi National Park to Snapper Point at the Northern end of the Budgewoi Beach embayment – including all<sup>1</sup> sandy beaches, several barrier beaches, numerous pocket beaches, intertidal rock platforms, high sandstone cliffs, sections of rocky coasts and coastal lagoons.

The CMP area includes the catchment and waterbodies of four of the five open coastal estuary/lagoon systems (Cockrone, Avoca, Terrigal and Wamberal), however does not include The Entrance Channel area and Tuggerah Lakes, which will be covered by the Tuggerah Lakes CMP being prepared by Council.

Here on the Central Coast it is difficult to go more than 2km without coming into very close proximity of a waterway. This means that the majority of the Central Coast's population play a role in the ongoing maintenance and health of waterways which is why we decided to take a regionwide approach to phase one consultation.

Between 30 March and 15 June 2021 Central Coast Council hosted the first phase of community consultation to inform the development of the Coastal Management Programs.

Key touchpoints in the first phase of engagement included:

- Key interest focus groups
- A dedicated project webpage
- An online waterways survey
- Community pop-up information stalls

This report provides an overview of the engagement approach and provides a summary of the **survey results from users of the waterways included in the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons CMP.**

A region-wide report is also available at: [yourvoiceourcoast.com/waterways](https://yourvoiceourcoast.com/waterways).

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes land under the jurisdiction of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

## Communications reach

Communications activity during the phase one consultation achieved:

- **3,918** visits to the Your Voice Our Coast project page
- **1,168** survey responses received
- **14** ads across Facebook and Instagram, reaching **62,011** unique users and achieving **263,341** impressions and **2,074** link clicks
- Snap chat ads, generating **128,212** paid impressions
- 8 Google display ads, generating **815,340** impressions and **819** clicks
- 2 e-news articles distributed, reaching more than **12,000** subscribers – generating **97** click throughs
- Over **350** respondents have entered the focus group candidate pool
- Over **220** stakeholder emails sent
- **3** focus groups hosted with over **20** participants
- Over **400** community members reached at pop up events
- Over **500** postcards distributed

## Key findings from survey

The phase one – Our Coast, Our Waterways – survey delivered some really important and encouraging results from users of our Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons:

- **84.7%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that Waterways are a significant reason they live on the Central Coast
- **92.9%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that Waterways contribute to their personal health and wellbeing (e.g. fitness, relaxation, happiness, lifestyle, sense of place, cultural heritage)
- **63.4%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that if waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly they would reduce the frequency they visit and use waterways
- **37.1%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that if waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly they would consider moving away from the Central Coast to another location
- **42%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that more should be done to protect and enhance the natural aspects of waterways such as the cleanliness of water, health of coastal vegetation, and the protection of wildlife
- **36.8%** of respondents that use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons strongly agree that they would support more resources being used for the management of our waterways and coast, even if it meant a very small increase in their property rates or rent a further **32.2%** somewhat agree and **13.6%** neither agreed or disagreed
- When asked what participants value about our waterways, the top three topics covered in these comments from users of our beaches and lagoons were:
  - Recreational opportunities **28.2%**
  - Beauty and aesthetics **15.8%**
  - Cleanliness of waterways **13.7%**

- When asked what the top three focus areas for Coastal Management Programs should be, respondents who use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons selected:
  - Reducing pollutant loads (sediment, nutrients and microbes) entering waterways **16.6%**
  - Improving and maintain water quality **15.2%**
  - Restoring and maintaining key habitats **12.4%**
- **343** comments were received when additional comments from users of the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons were requested, the top three topics covered in these comments were:
  - Wamberal Seawall **15%**
  - Management **2.8%**
  - Love waterways **2.6%**

### Sample participant commentary

The survey offered multiple opportunities for the community to share their thoughts. Below is an example of the comments received from users of the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons when asked what they value about waterways:

- Access, safety, cleanliness and water quality.
- I love that are not overcrowded...until recently!!!
- The peace & quiet, being able to use the water for sport & meditation.
- Public access to all beaches. The cleanliness and health of most shorelines (with obvious exceptions i.e. Wamberal to Terrigal shore).
- Clean and beautiful water ways which have a history of connecting our community.
- The Flora and Fauna, I wish more trees could be planted for the birds and just as a better flood reduction and natural beauty. It needs to be cleaner; a lot of people unfortunately don't care and it would be nice to have this monitored (maybe more bins would help).
- Their beauty, amenity & that they are a largely untouched part of our environment They should stay that way too.
- Their impact on our climate. Long Jetty is cooler in summer and warmer in winter because of the influence of the adjacent lake and beach.
- The environmental value including habitat and biodiversity as well as the social and cultural values including fresh air, water, blue carbon and aesthetic qualities.

Below is an example of the responses when asked what other comments participants had about our open coast and lagoons:

- Residents of the central coast love our natural environment, that is why we moved here. We are sick of overdevelopment and sick of our government ripping apart our environment to make this happen. No more development. If you get rid of Airbnb accommodation, you would have enough available housing for everyone without ruining our environment. A house with a family uses less resources and puts less strain on our infrastructure they an Airbnb that has 20 guests every weekend who don't care and don't give anything back to the local community.
- Prevent rezoning of environmentally sensitive land for housing and industrial development. Rangers to actively patrol neighbourhoods and industrial estates to identify and address pollution

of stormwater drains. Audit businesses to ensure they are not polluting stormwater and sewer systems.

- If you don't have a healthy water way environment then you will not have people wanting to visit the coast which will lead to economic issues. Keep the waterways in good condition and ensure the future of the environment.
- They are important ecologically and more value should be ascribed to them. A dollar value should be given to them and all the species they maintain and support.
- The Central Coast IS the waterways. Our tourism relies very heavily on our water bodies and the activities available.
- If the water is maintained to a high quality, bird and fish life will thrive, the ecosystem will thrive, and tourism will follow suit. Planning is the key - no unrealistic DA approval especially when considering climate change, tracing of pollutants back to the source and prevention of future contaminants by forward thinking.
- Transparency in the decision making process is also a biggie.....justice and fairness must not only be done; it must be seen to be done.
- Love living on the coast & always appreciate the work done to keep our waterways the way they are. The ecosystems are important as are the bird life.
- Decrease outrageous overpaid positions and put money into saving our waterways. Dead oceans, dead us!

## **Next steps**

Council will use the results and feedback provided to identify the community priorities for the management of our coastline and waterways. This information will be valuable for informing future consultation and collaboration through the development of the Coastal Management Programs and ultimately the development of management actions.

Phase two consultation – a series of focus groups with participants derived from survey respondents who indicated a desire to be further involved in the process of developing our CMPs – will see the further analysis and exploration of the survey results.

Our journey to develop the Coastal Management Programs is far from over and we look forward to continuing working closely with our community through this process.

## Open Coast and Coastal Lagoon user survey results

The Our Coast, Our Waterways survey was undertaken to understand the value our community places on waterways, their uses of them, opinions on them and their opinions on future management. We also obtained a demographic profile of each of the participants to better understand who we are hearing from to facilitate further analysis of the feedback collected.

We have prepared a regionwide report as well as *mini reports* for the four CMPs; this report – *Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons mini report* – explores the results garnered for participants that indicated they use our beaches and lagoons.

The survey was broken up into stages –

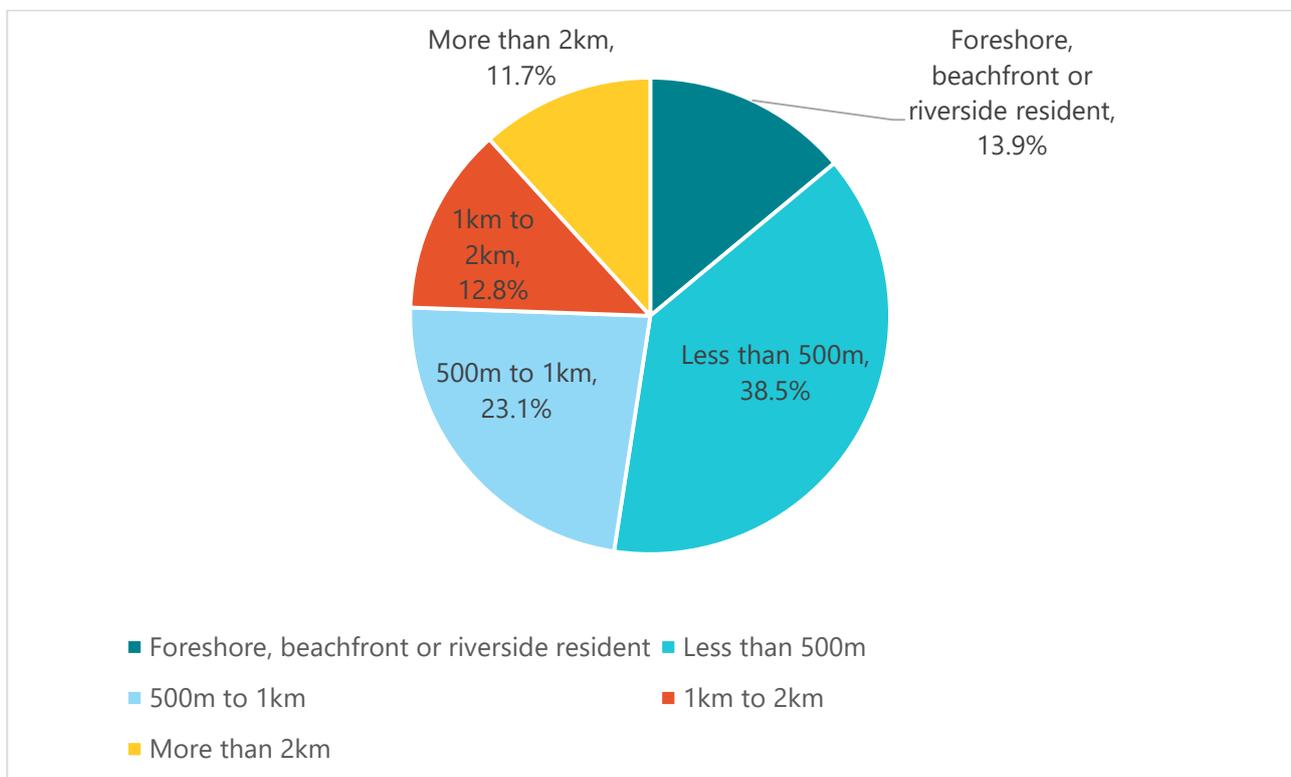
- Use of Central Coast Waterways
- Importance of Central Coast waterways to you
- Values and threats to Central Coast waterways
- About you and your household.

We have provided the results garnered from Beach and Lagoon users in this survey using these same headings.

### Use of Central Coast waterways

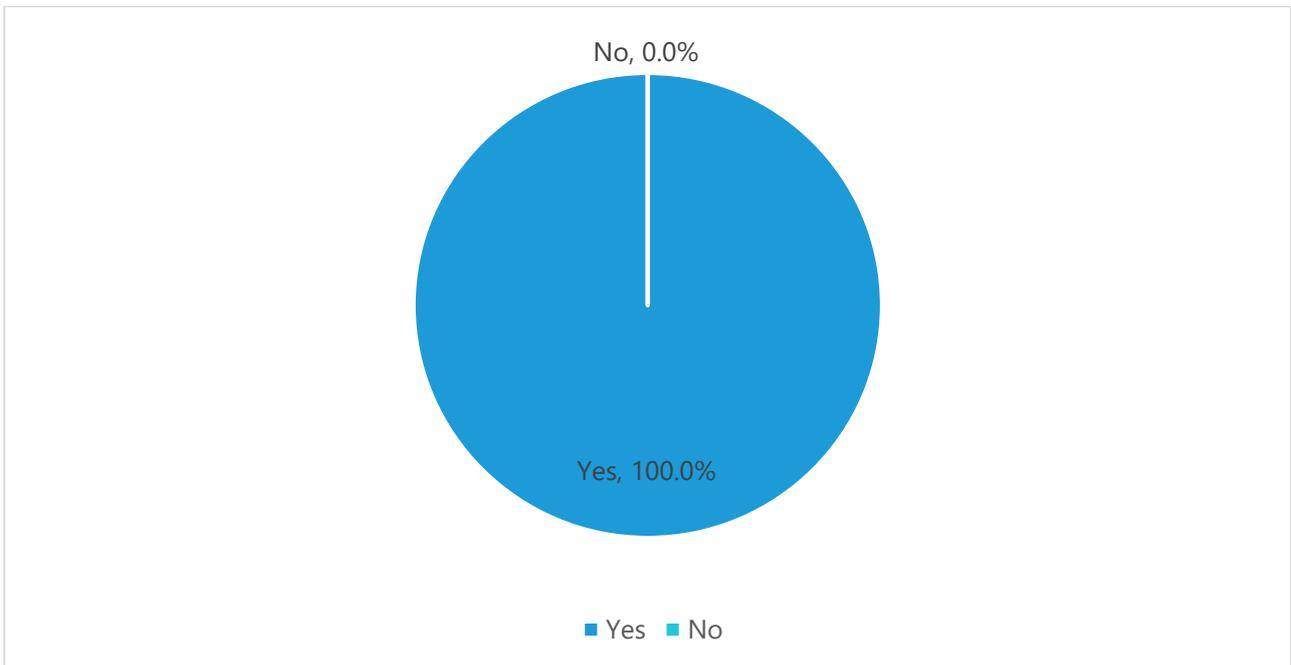
The following questions were designed to assist in understanding how the community uses Central Coast Waterways.

Figure 1: How close do you live to a Central Coast Waterway?



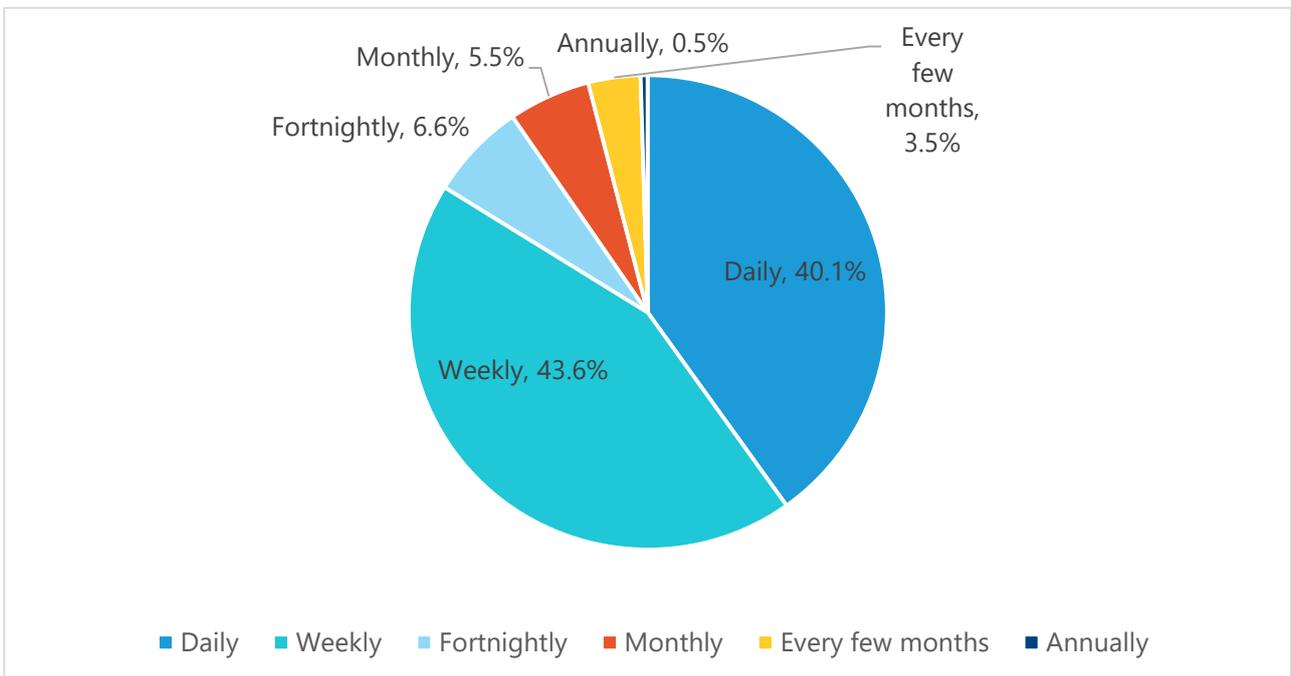
Total respondents=847

Figure 2: Do you currently use any of our Central Coast Waterways, including recreating in or around them?



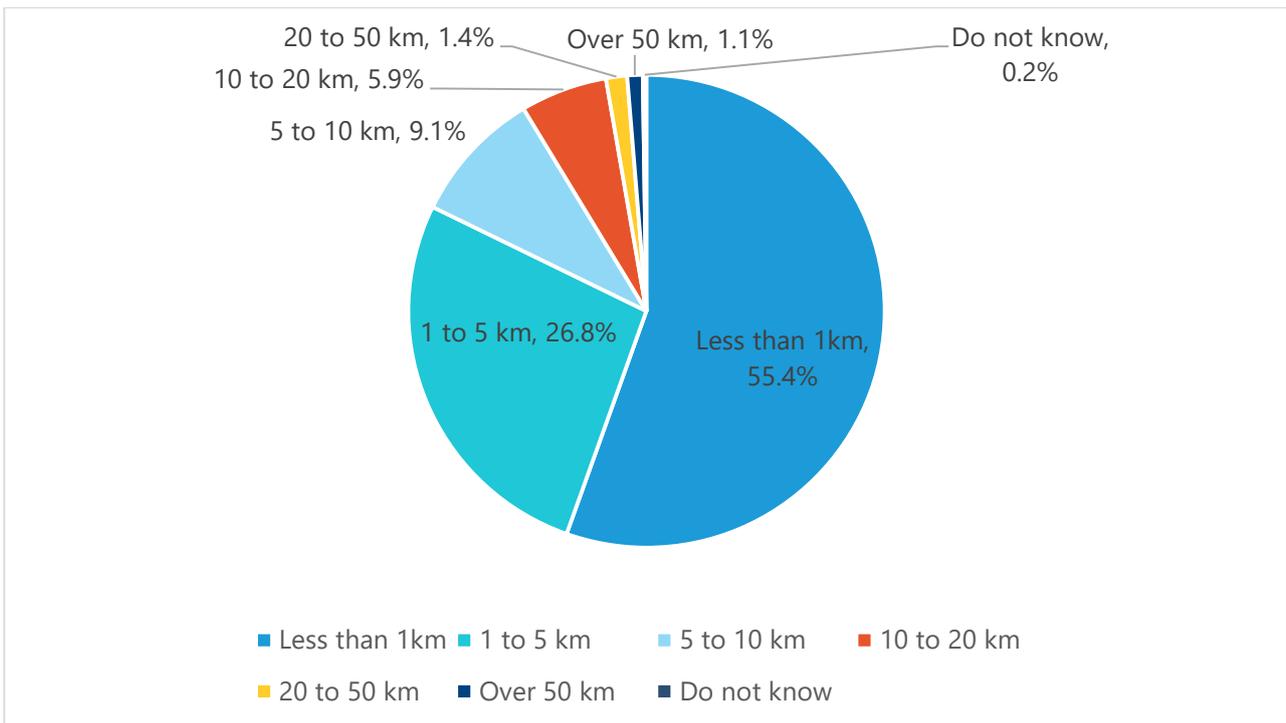
Total respondents=847

Figure 3: How often do you use them?



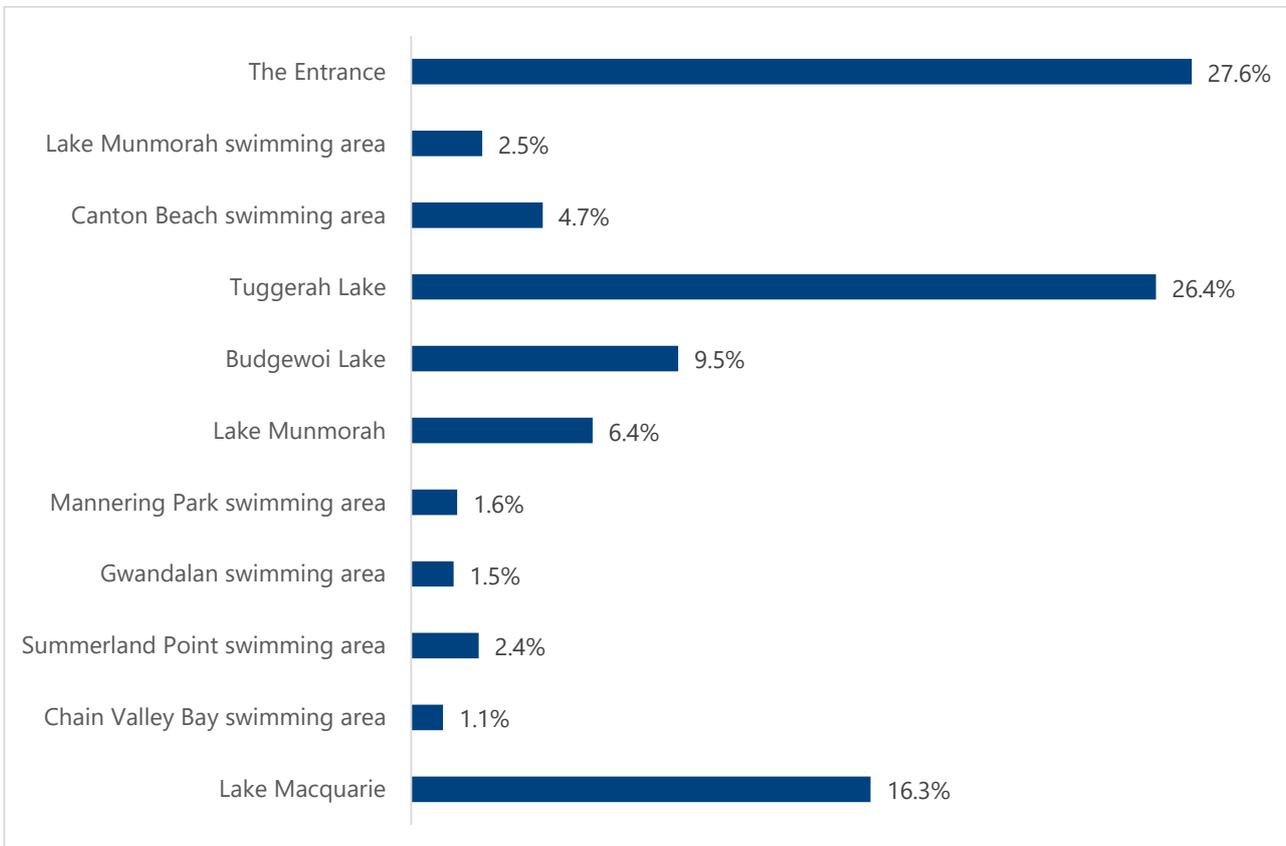
Total respondents=847

Figure 4: How far away from your home is the waterway that you visit most?



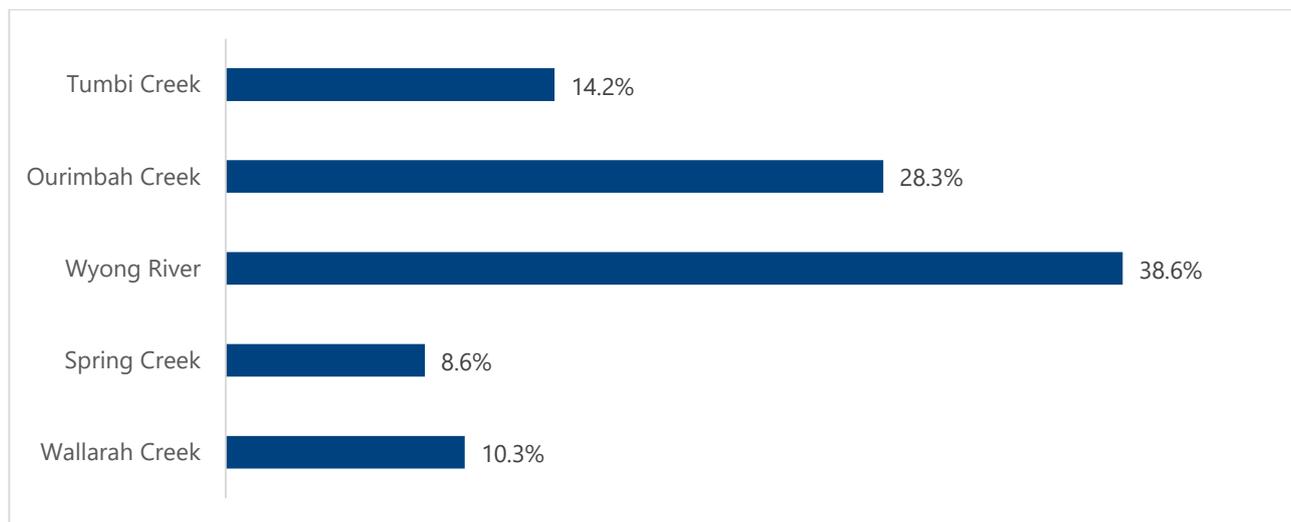
Total respondents=847

Figure 5: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Lakes)



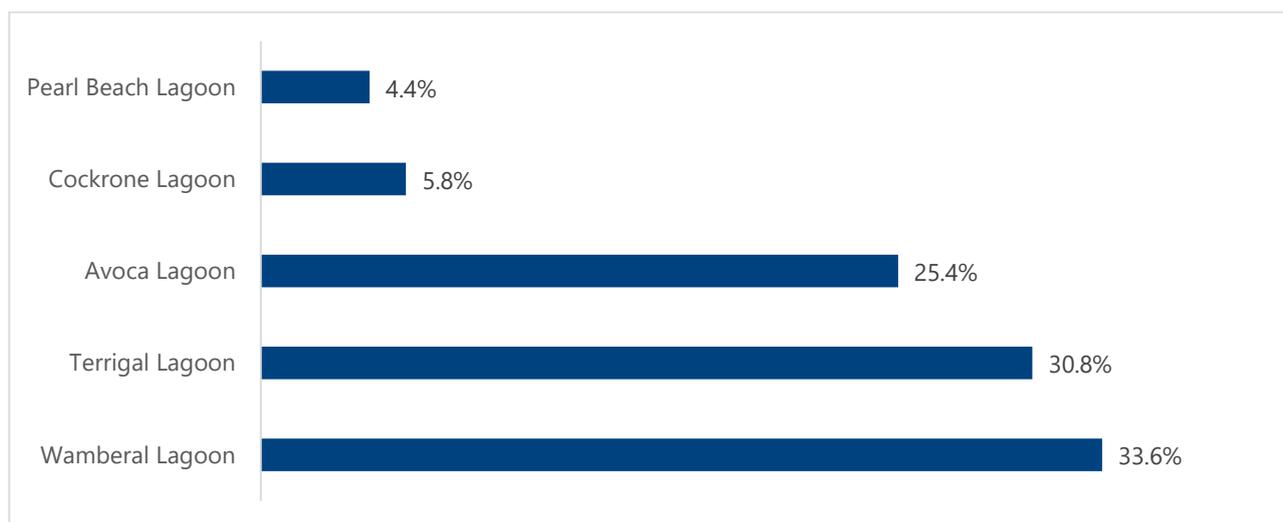
Total selections=793

Figure 6: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Creeks)



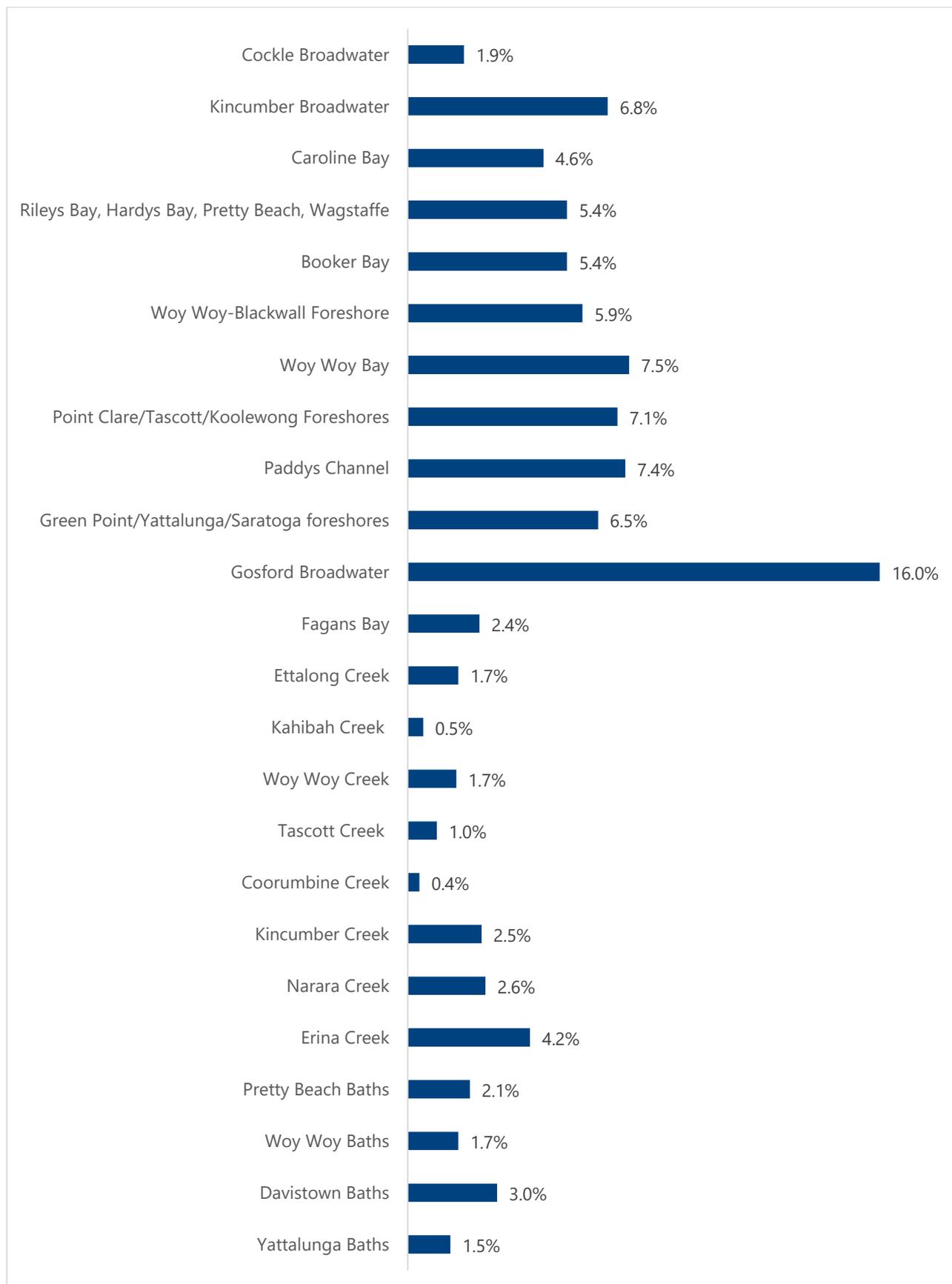
Total selections=233

Figure 7: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Lagoons)



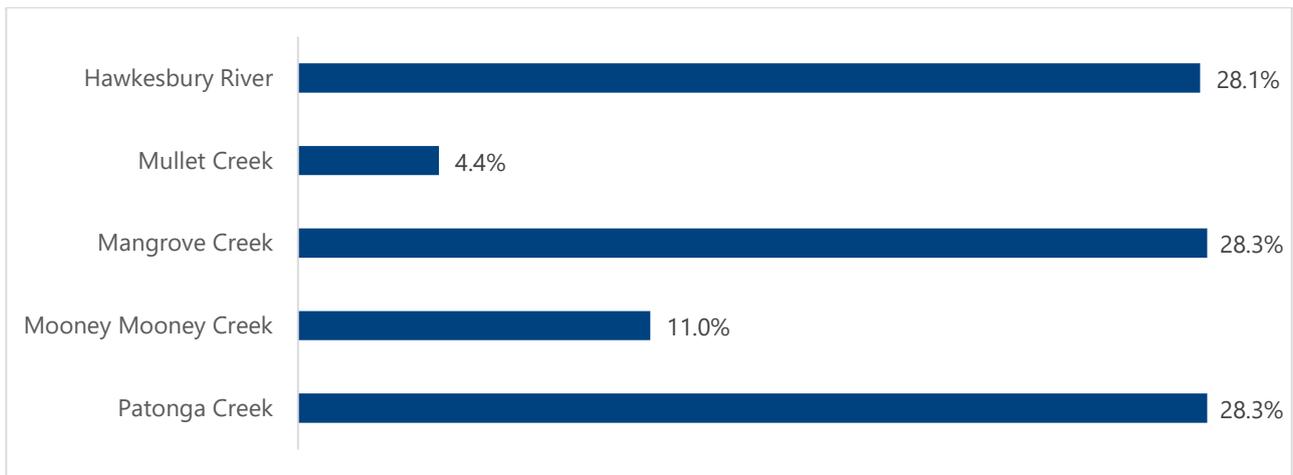
Total selections=896

Figure 8: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Brisbane Water & Broken Bay)



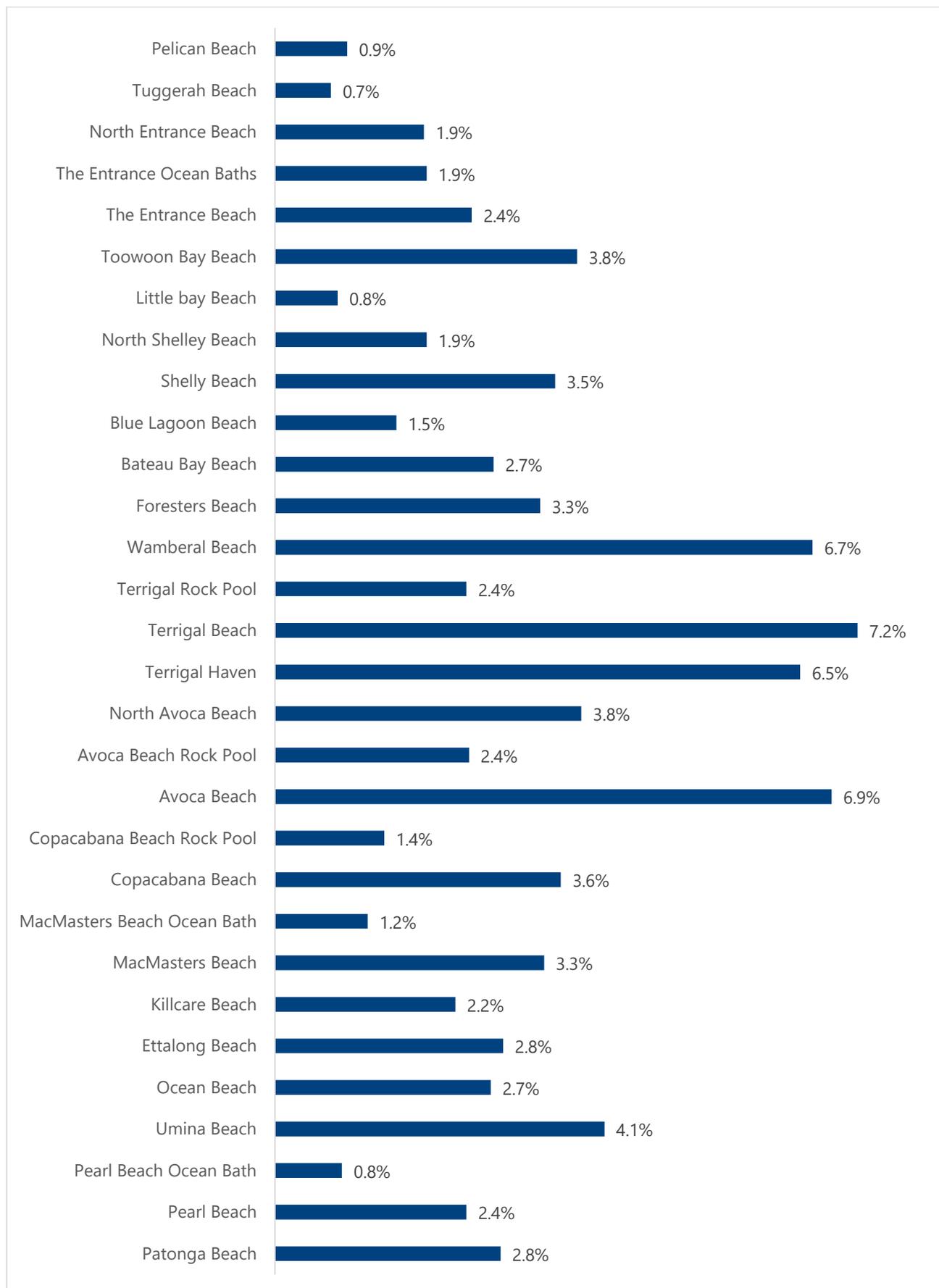
Total selections=1515

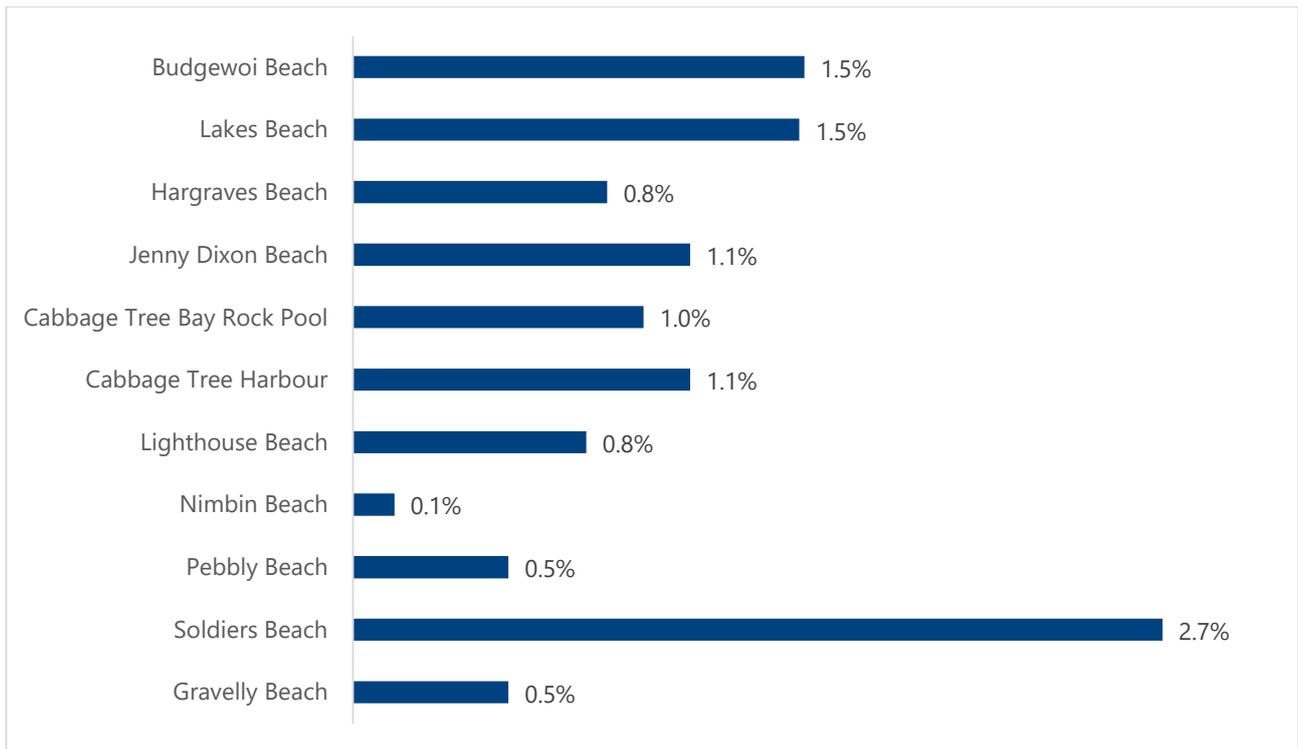
Figure 9: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Lower Hawkesbury River)



*Total selections= 456*

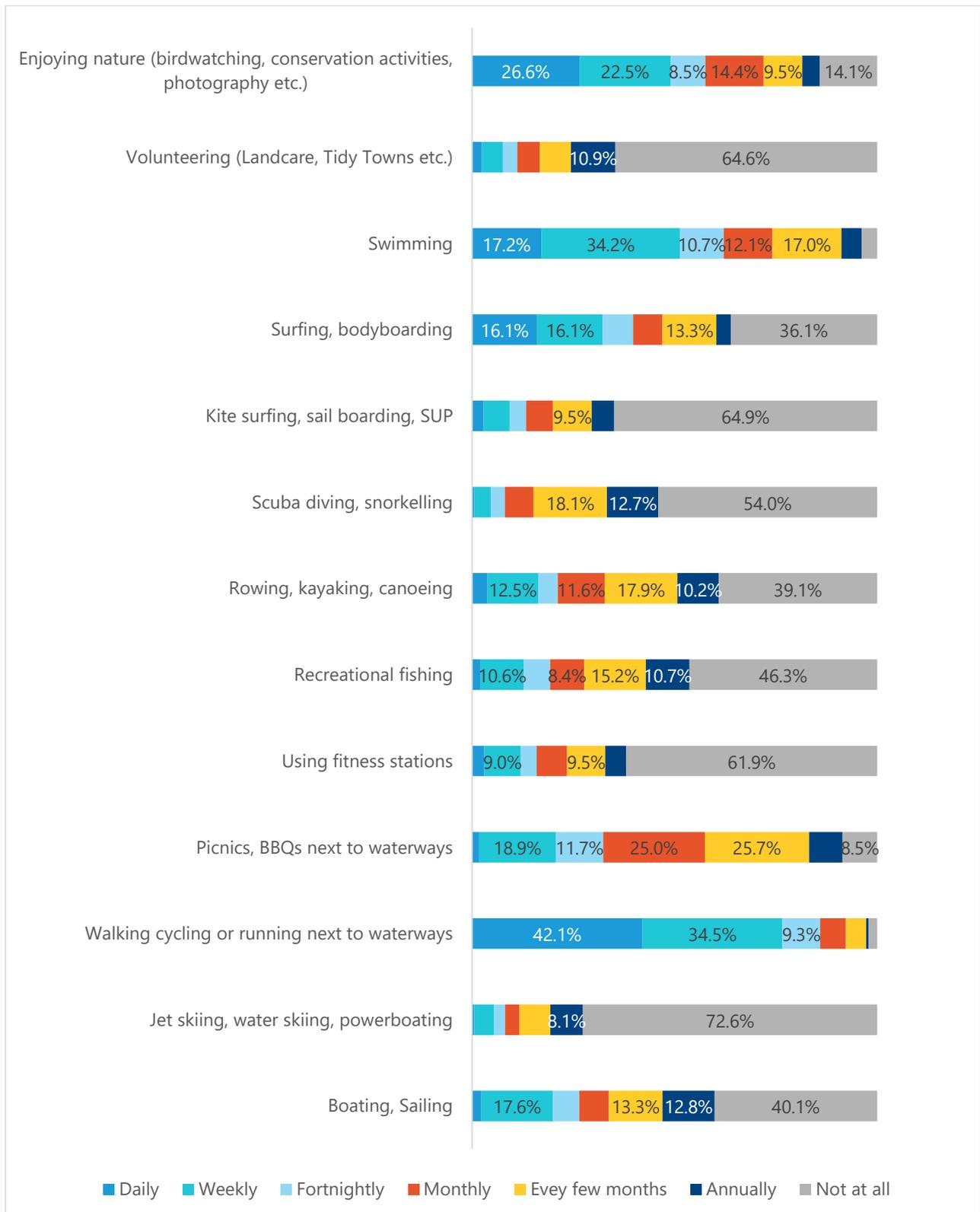
Figure 10: Which Central Coast Waterways do you use? (Beaches)





*Total selections= 5883*

Figure 11: There are many different recreational uses of waterways on the Central Coast, and different frequencies that these activities are undertaken. Please let us know how often you undertake the following activities:

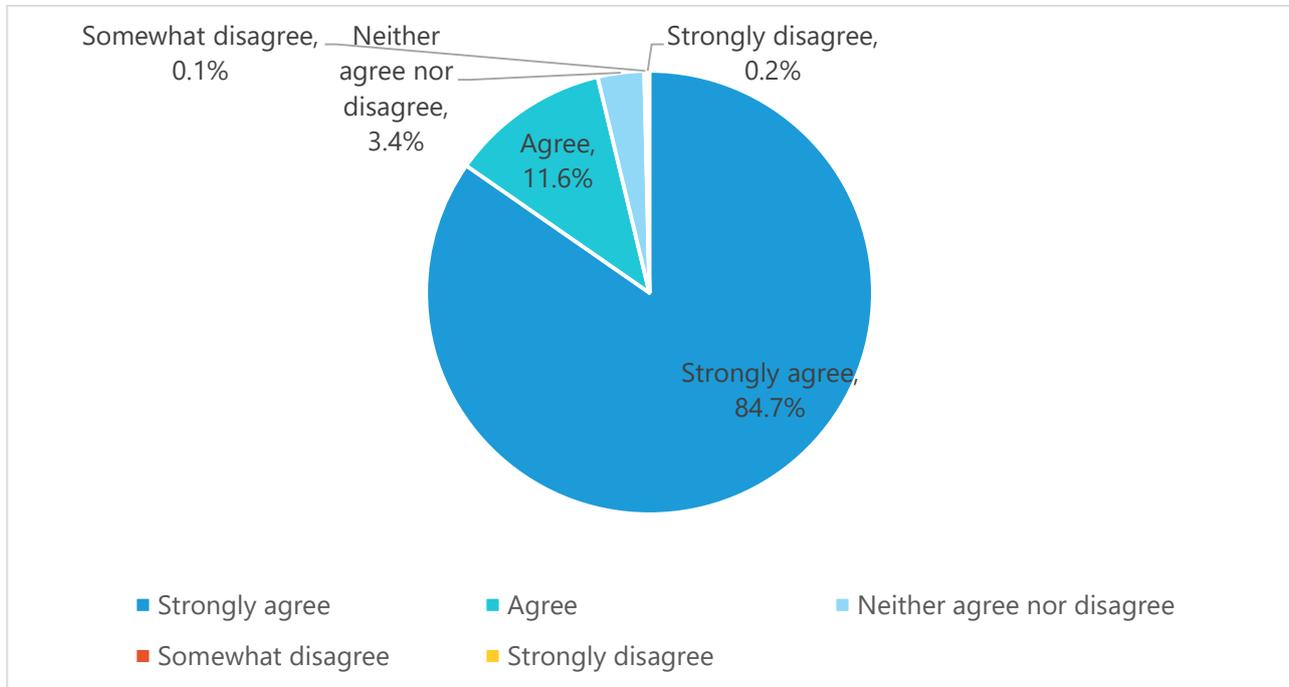


Maximum respondents= 776

## Importance of Central Coast Waterways to you

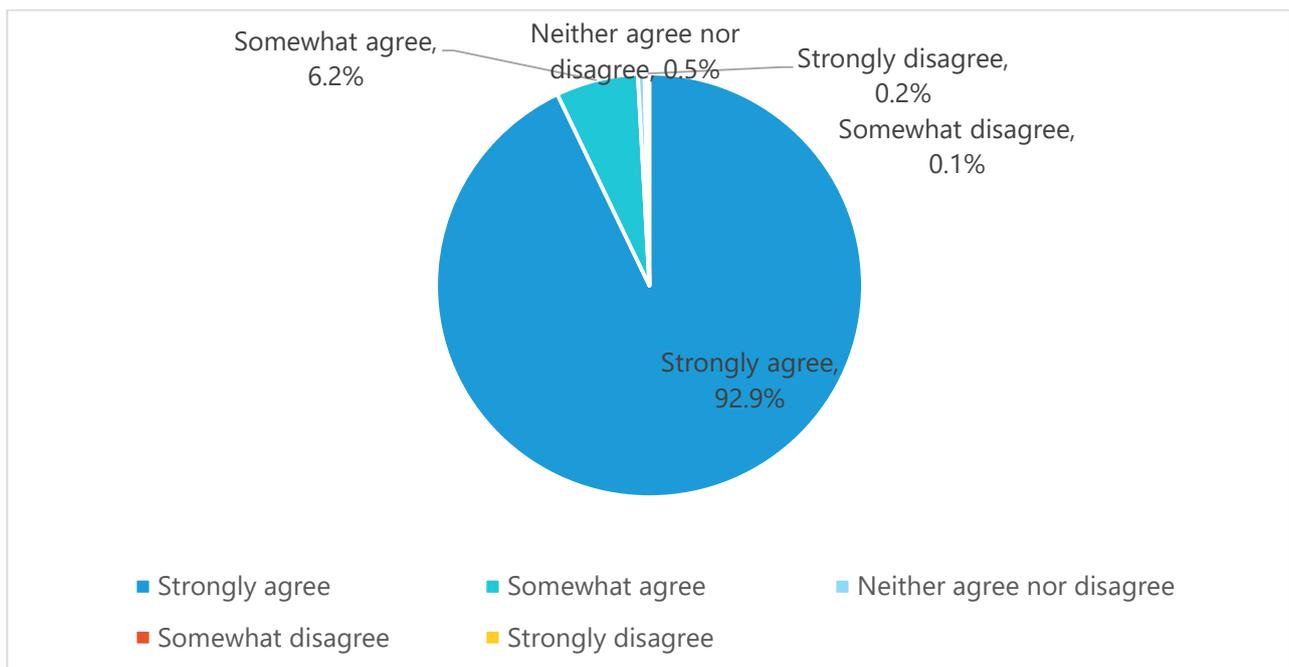
The statements presented in this section of the survey were designed to explore the communities views around the importance of Central Coast waterways both now and into the future.

Figure 12: Waterways are a significant reason I choose to live on the Central Coast.



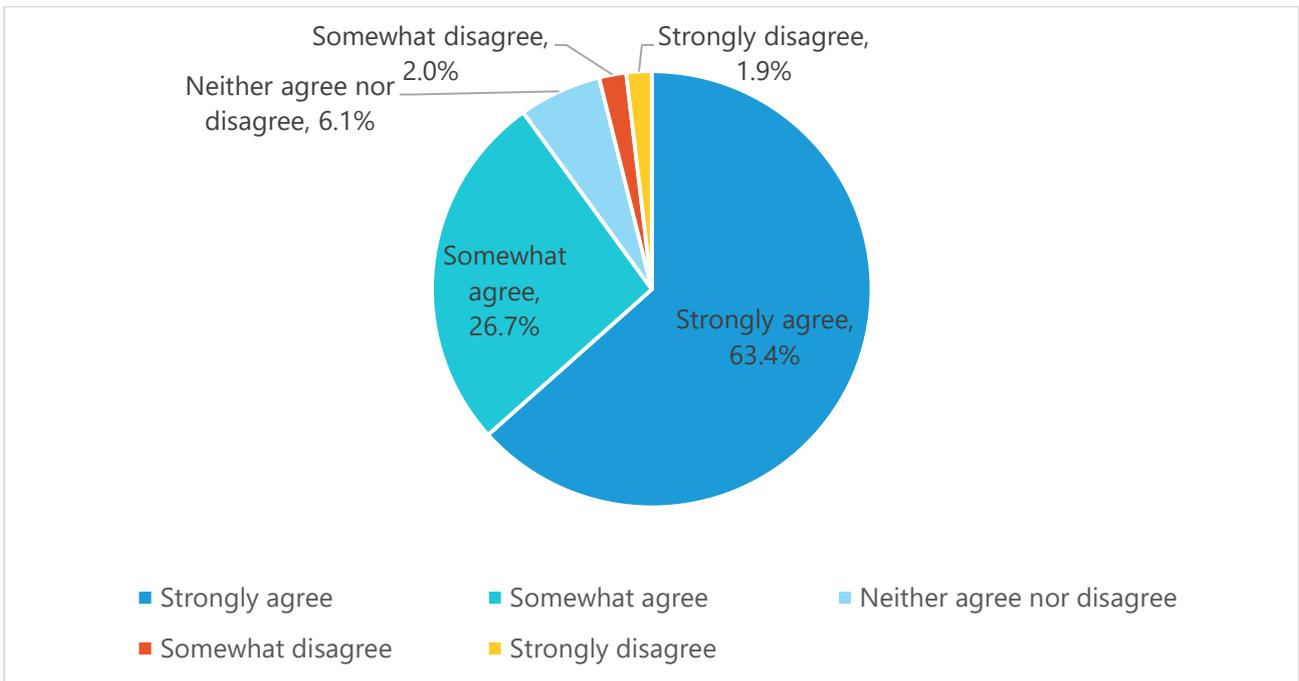
Total respondents=804

Figure 13: Waterways contribute to my personal health and wellbeing (e.g. fitness, relaxation, happiness, lifestyle, sense of place, cultural heritage).



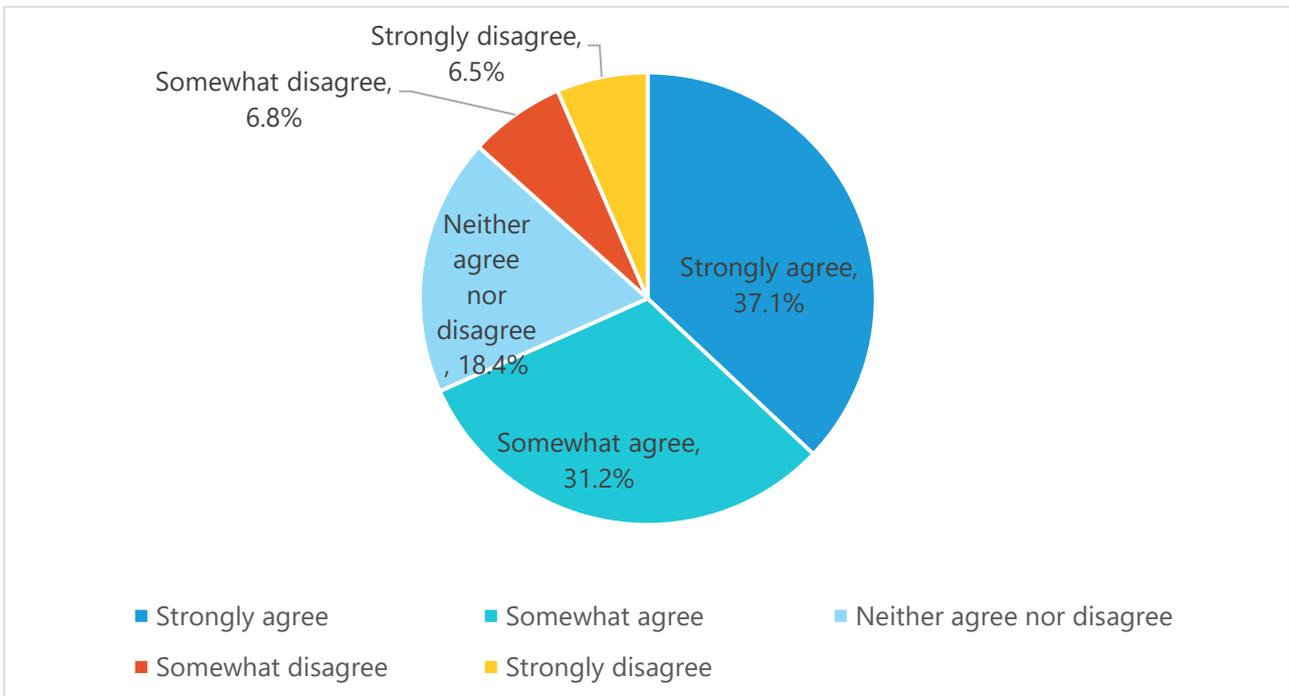
Total respondents=804

Figure 14: If waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly I would reduce the frequency I visit and use waterways.



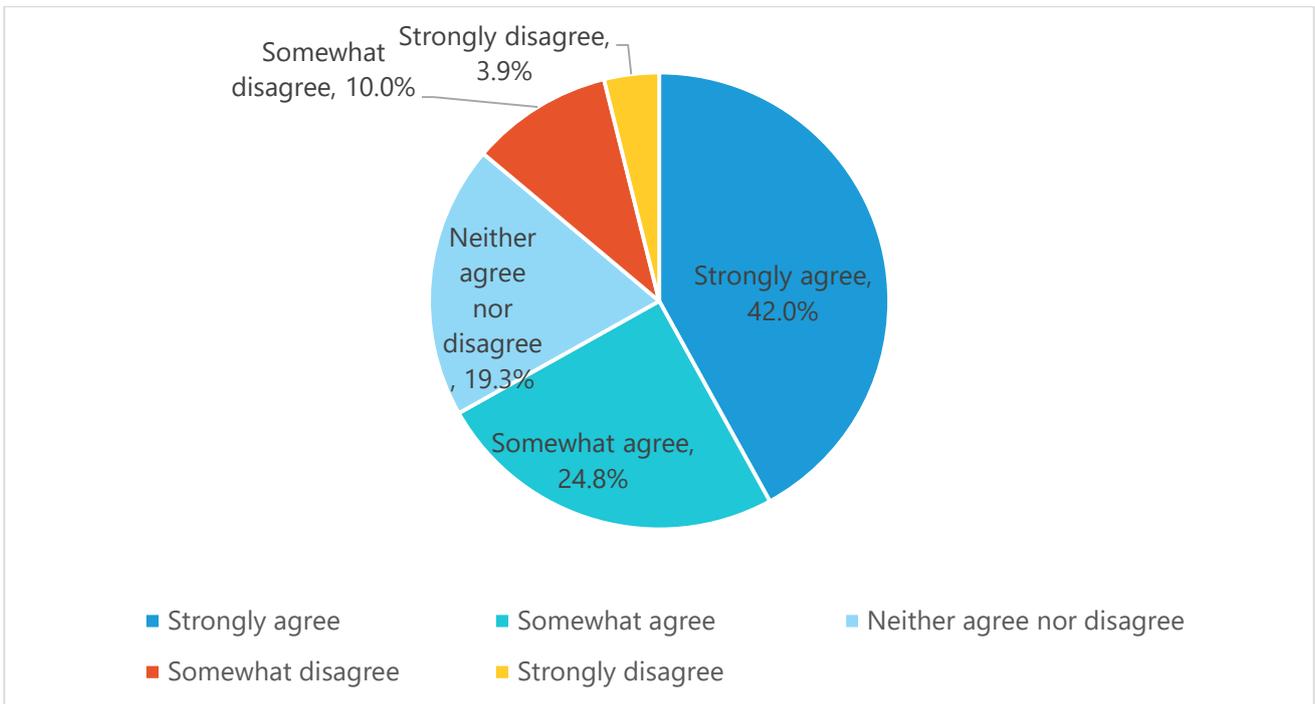
Total respondents=803

Figure 15: If waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly I would consider moving from the Central Coast to another location.



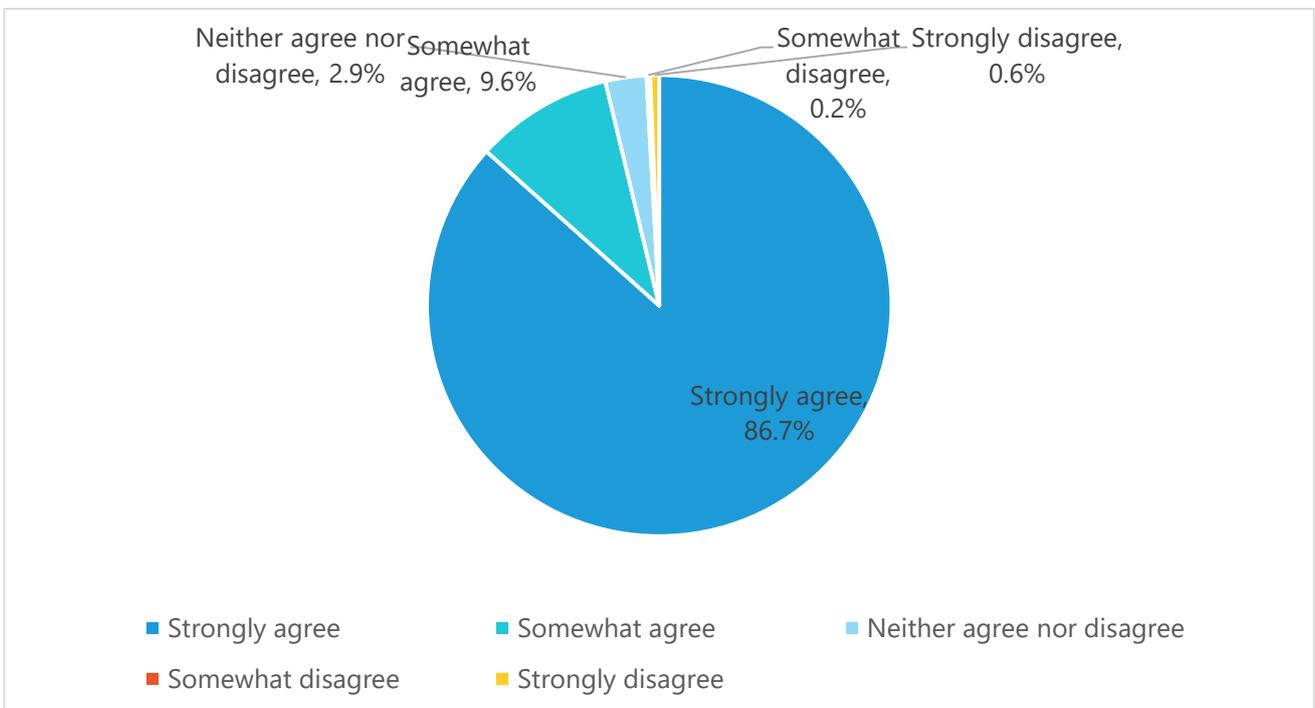
Total respondents=804

Figure 16: More should be done to enhance access to waterways (e.g. shared pathways, jetties, boat ramps etc).



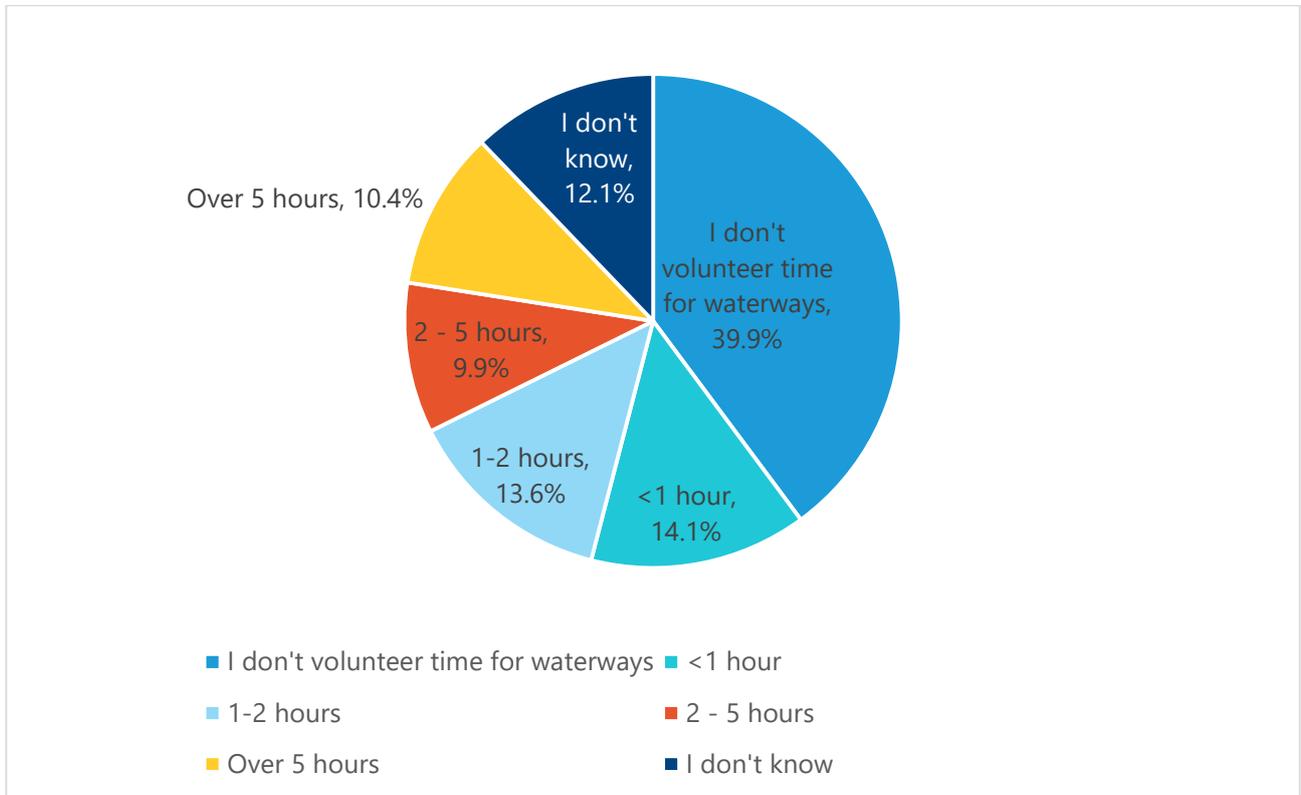
Total respondents=802

Figure 17: More should be done to protect and enhance the natural aspects of waterways such as the cleanliness of water, health of coastal vegetation, and the protection of wildlife.



Total respondents=802

Figure 18: Many people on the Central Coast volunteer time to help care for waterways or assist with events at waterways. What best describes the number of hours people from your household would undertake voluntary waterways work per month (this includes volunteer work done within the catchment e.g tidy towns, Landcare).

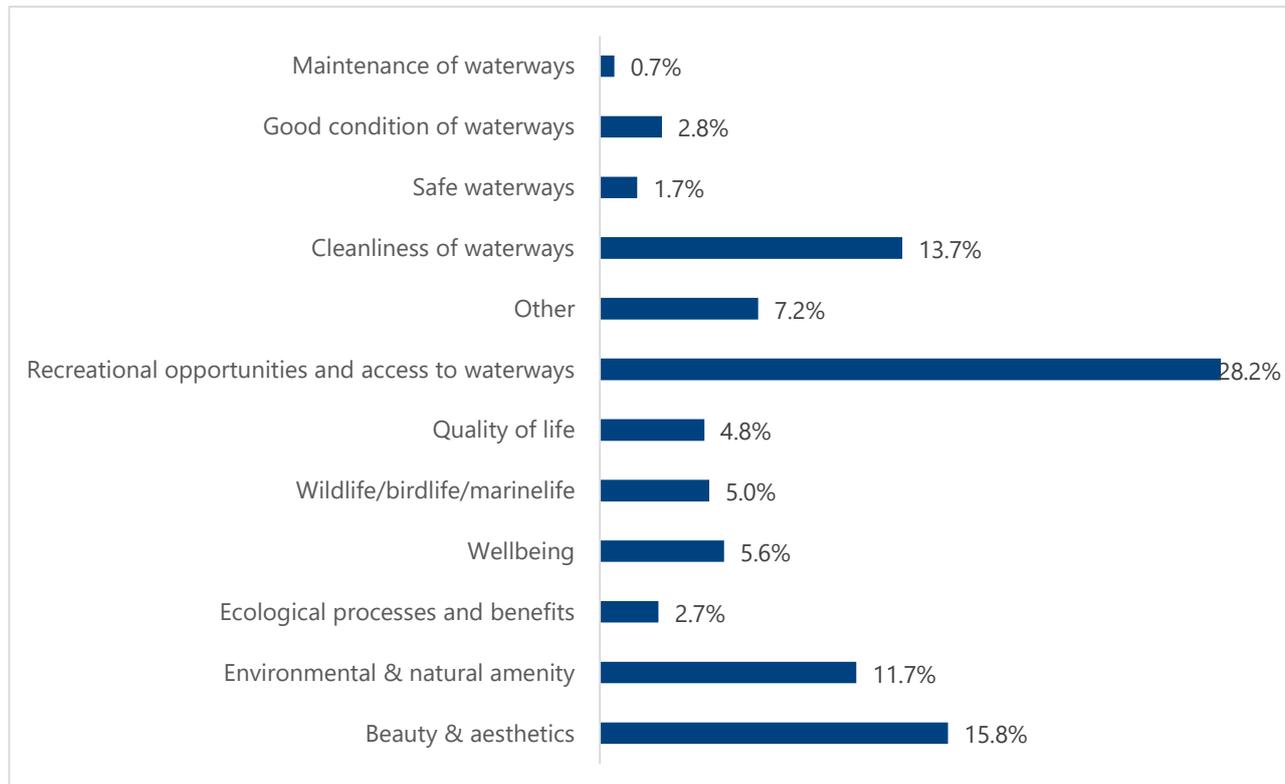


Total respondents=800

## Values and threats to Central Coast waterways

These questions were designed to understand what the community value about waterways, which threats they are aware of and what they think the most important focus areas for the Coastal Management Programs are.

Figure 19: What do you value most about Central Coast waterways? – coded information



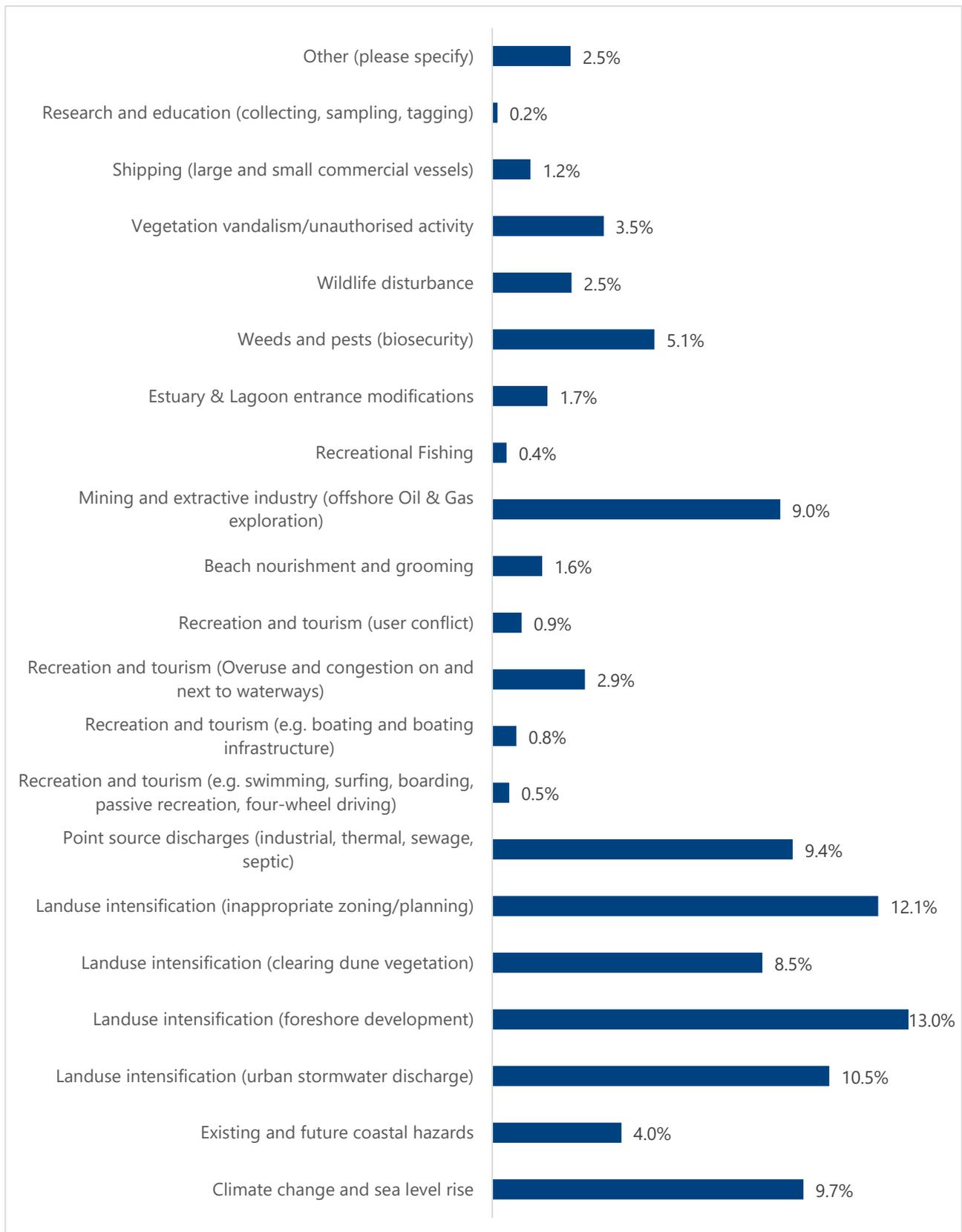
Codes applied=1346

This question provided participants with the option to provide further comments. Below is an example of some of the comments received from those who indicated that they use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons (comments are provided as verbatim):

- Cleanliness. Pollution to Terrigal beach for ocean swimming has had a negative impact on my health.
- The health and cleanliness of the water.
- The uniqueness of the Central Coast waterways.
- The flora and fauna biodiversity and ability to live in very close proximity to the natural environment.
- The health and condition of the waterways. Their integral part of the environmental ecosystem and maintaining them for future generations.
- The unspoilt sections, the birds, the sense of space.
- Freedom, less crowded in a more natural condition without the trappings of big cities.
- The small army of volunteers who try their best with limited funds to maintain a balanced and sustainable ecosystem that supports a healthy catchment.
- I value that it is free to all. I value that it is clean and protected. I value that I can use our waterways at all times.
- The brilliant surf!!

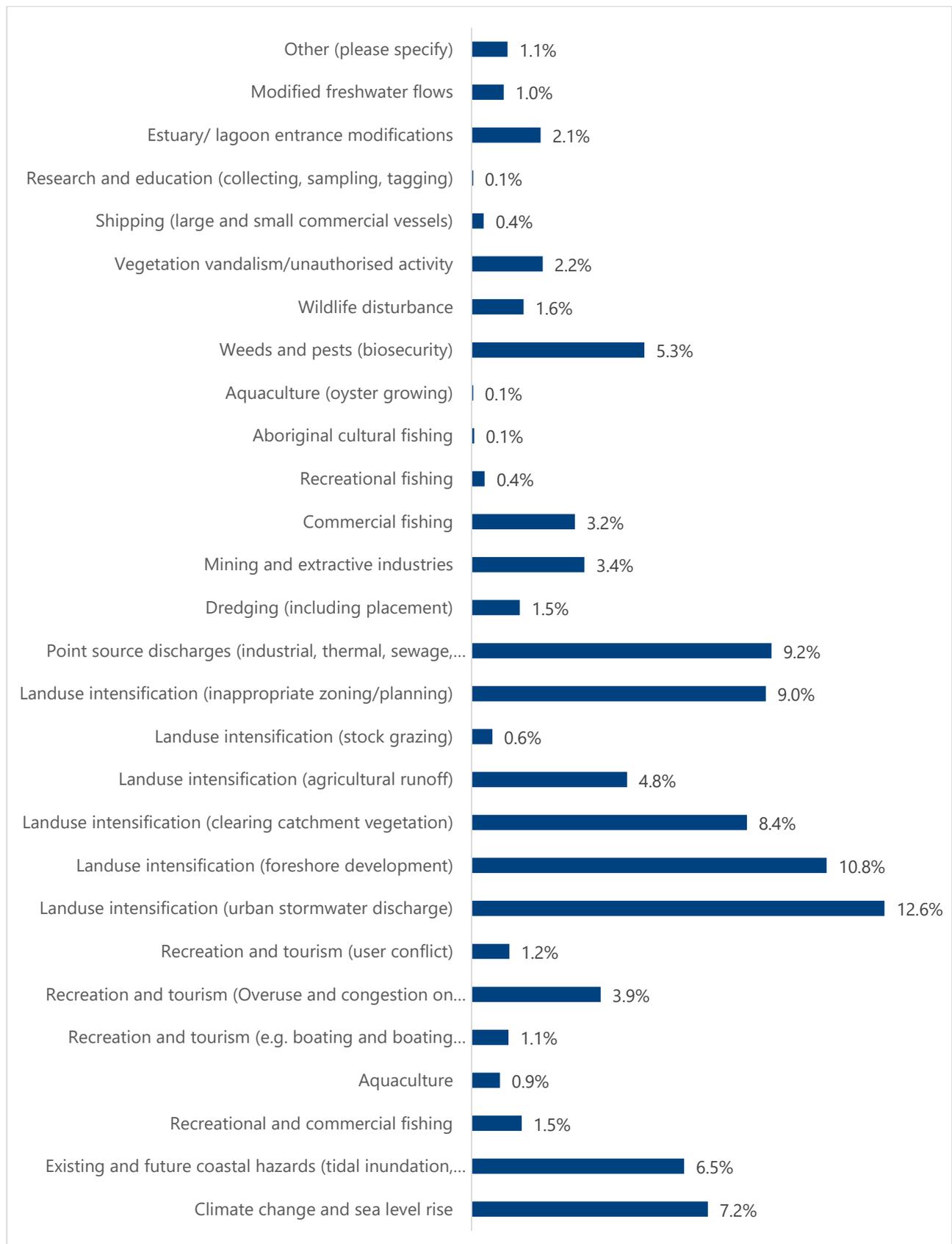
- Wide sandy beaches.

Figure 20: Please select what you believe are the top five greatest threats to Central Coast beaches.



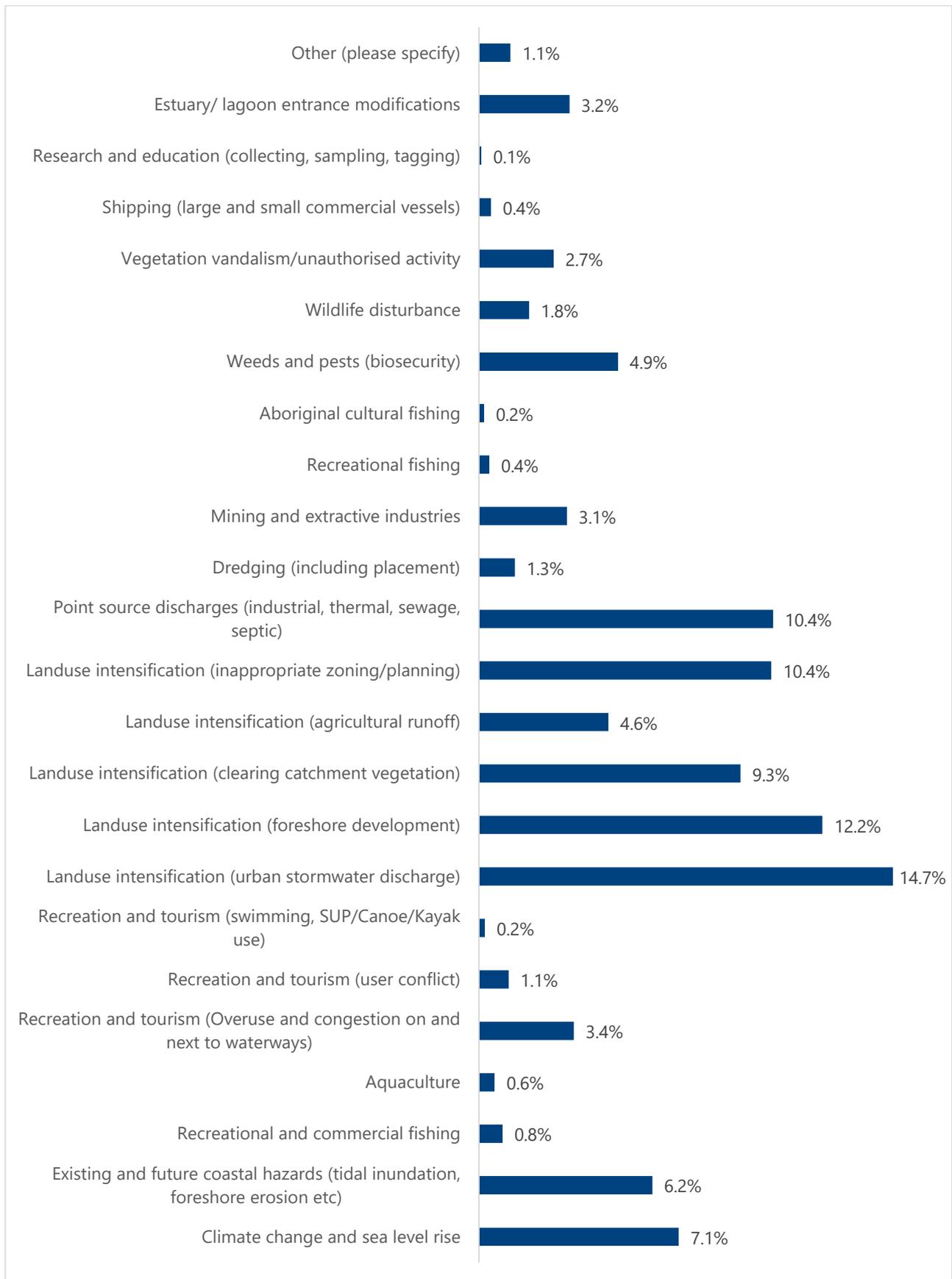
Total selections=3585

Figure 21: Please select what you believe are the top five greatest threats to Central Coast lakes & estuaries.



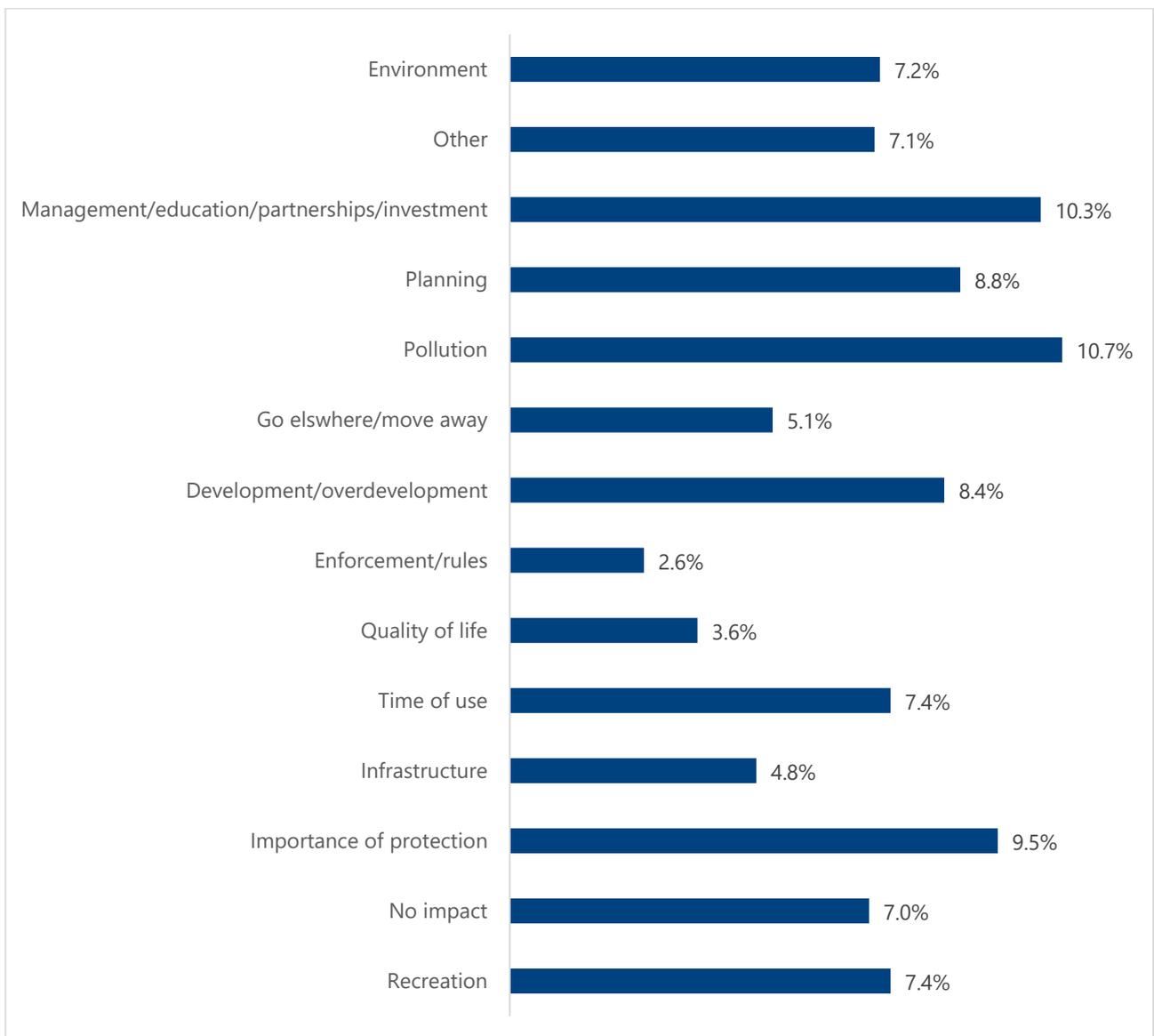
Total selections=3452

Figure 22: Please select what you believe are the top five greatest threats to Central Coast lagoons.



Total selections=3203

Figure 23: Given the projected population growth on the Central Coast (additional 75,500 residents by 2036) and greater risks associated with the threats listed above, how might this change your use of waterways and views on waterways? – coded information

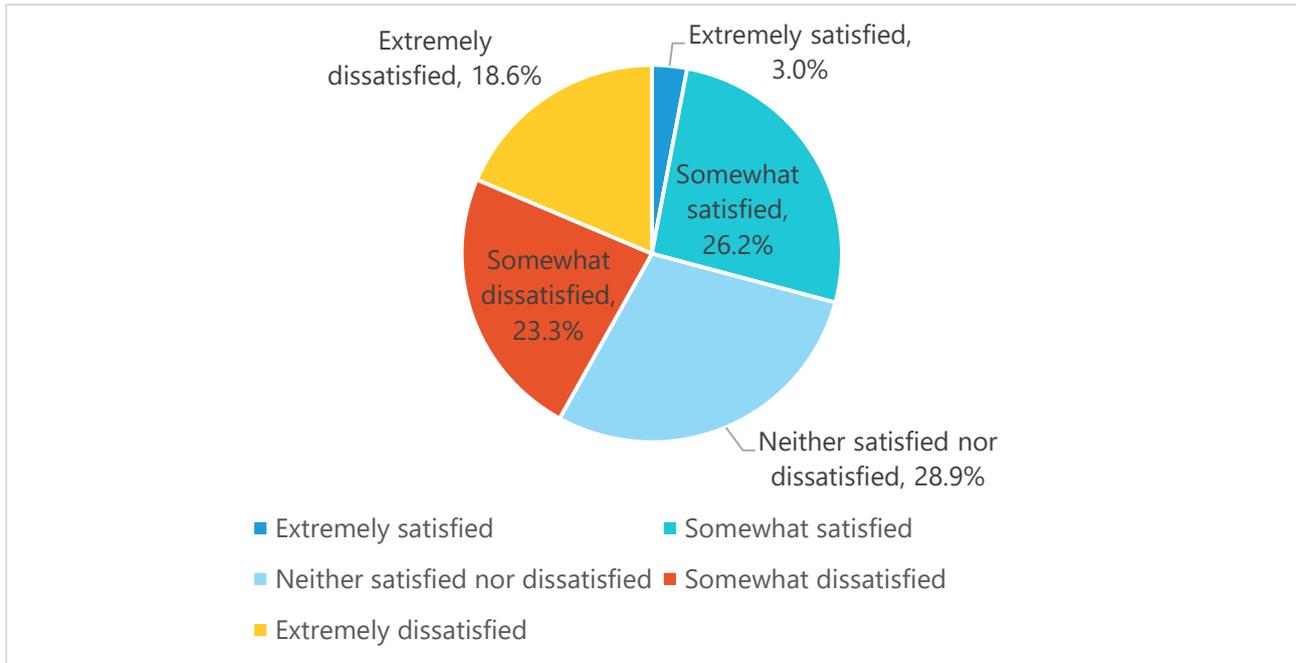


Codes applied=959

## Management of Central Coast waterways

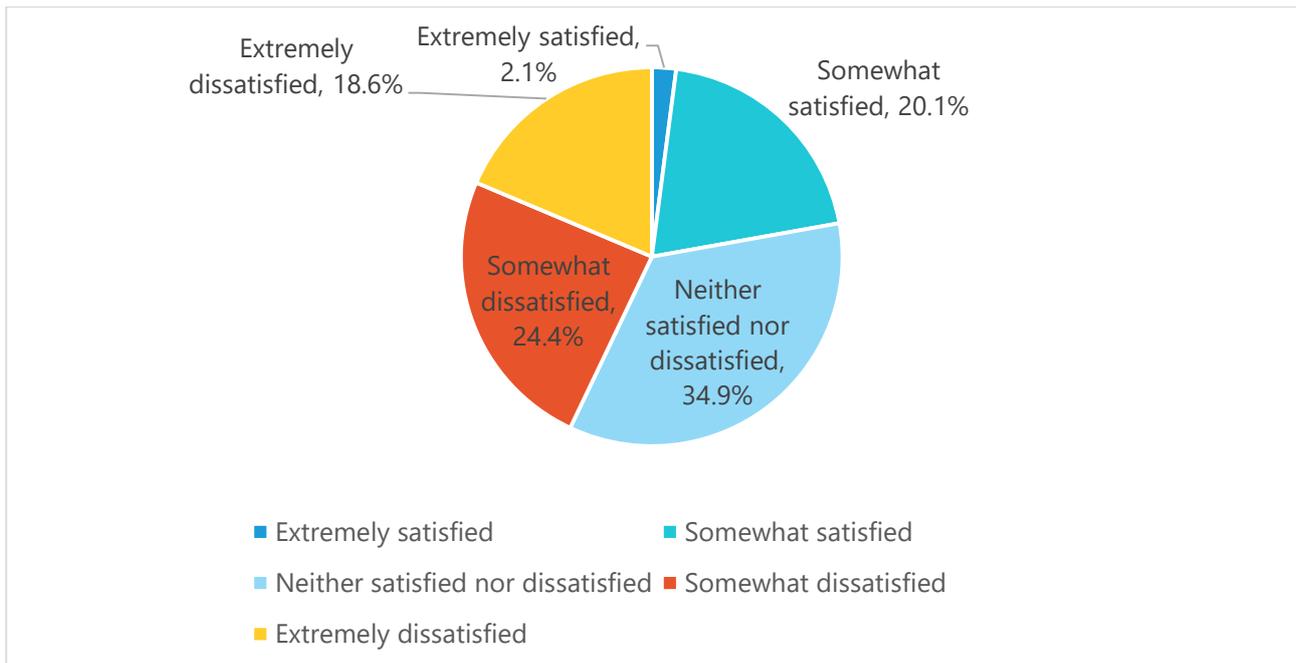
The statements presented in this section of the survey were designed to explore the level of satisfaction relating to the management of Central Coast waterways.

Figure 24: Over the last 3 years, how satisfied are you with the improvement of beaches (including the dunes, rocky shores and lagoons)?



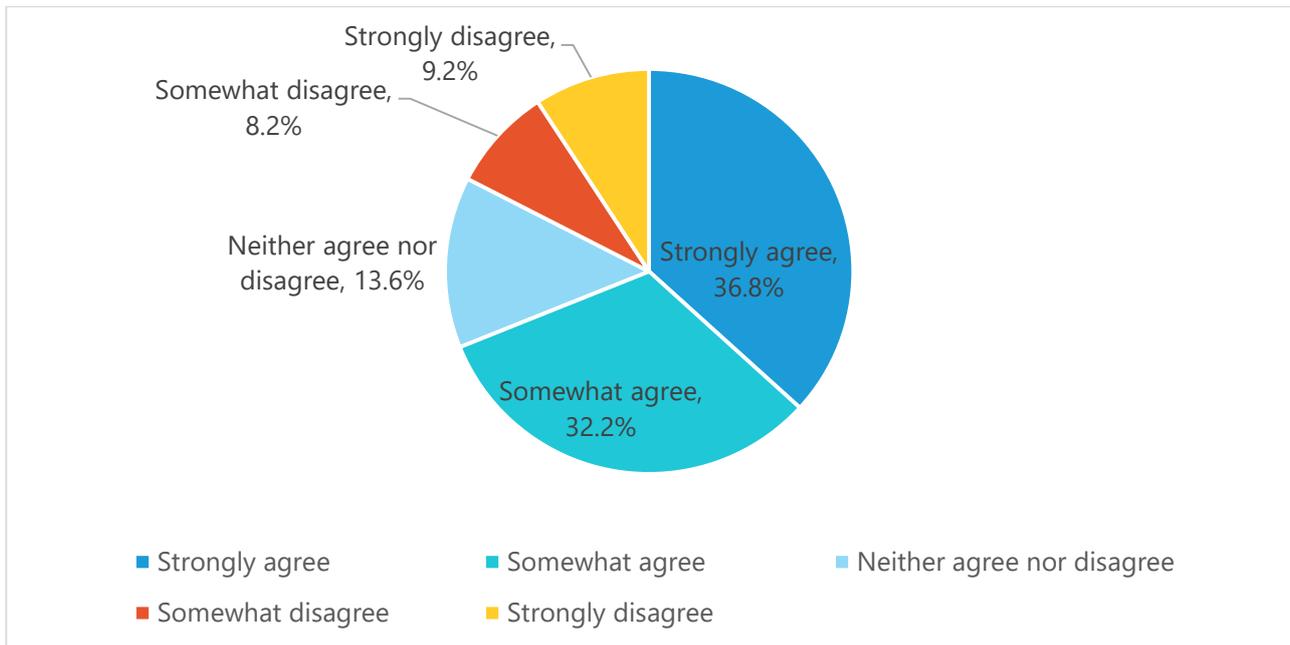
Total respondents=737

Figure 25: Over the last 3 years, how satisfied are you with the improvement of lakes, estuaries and lagoons (including foreshores, rivers, creeks and catchments)?



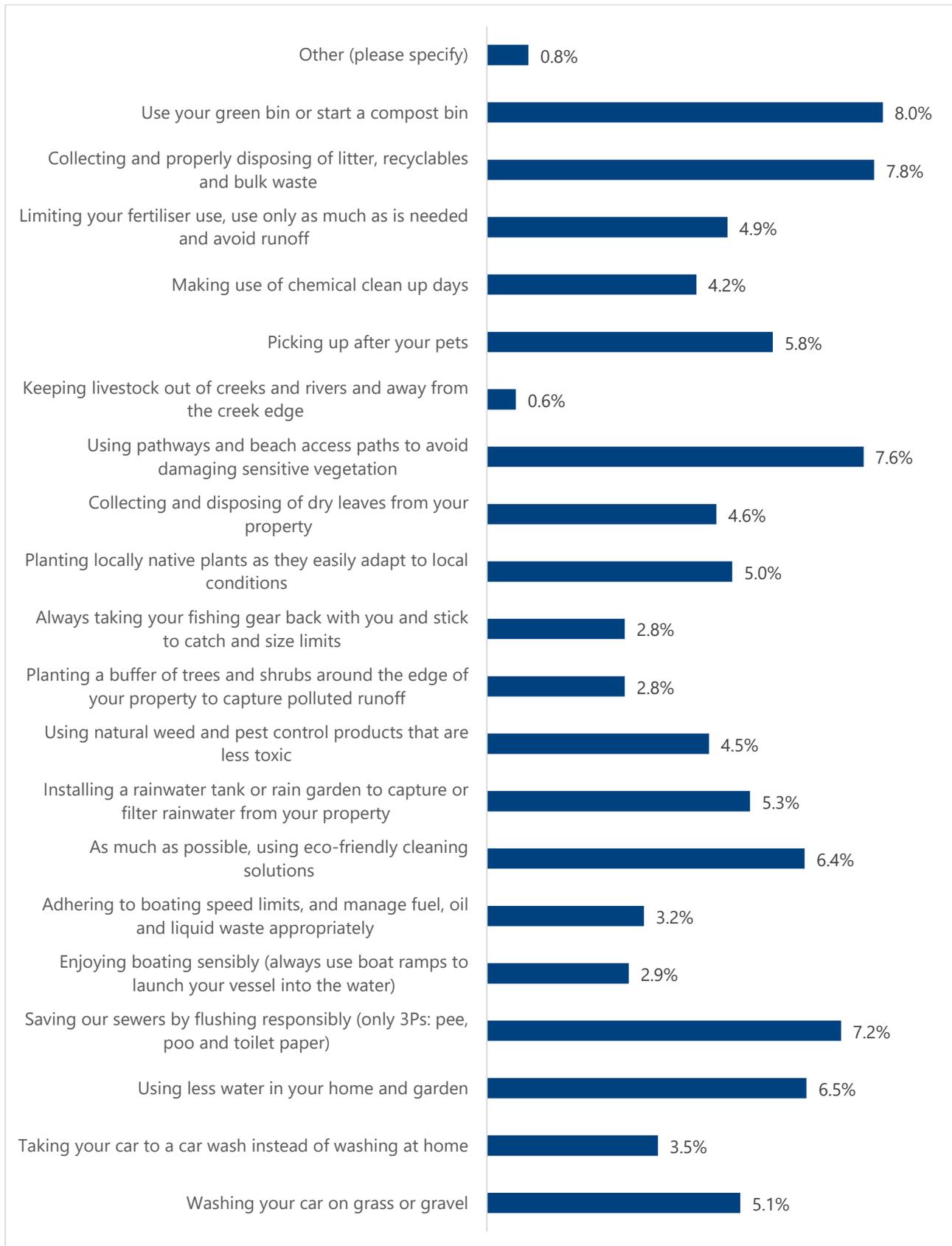
Total respondents=731

Figure 26: I would support more resources being used for the management of our waterways and coast, even if it meant a very small increase in my property rates or rent.



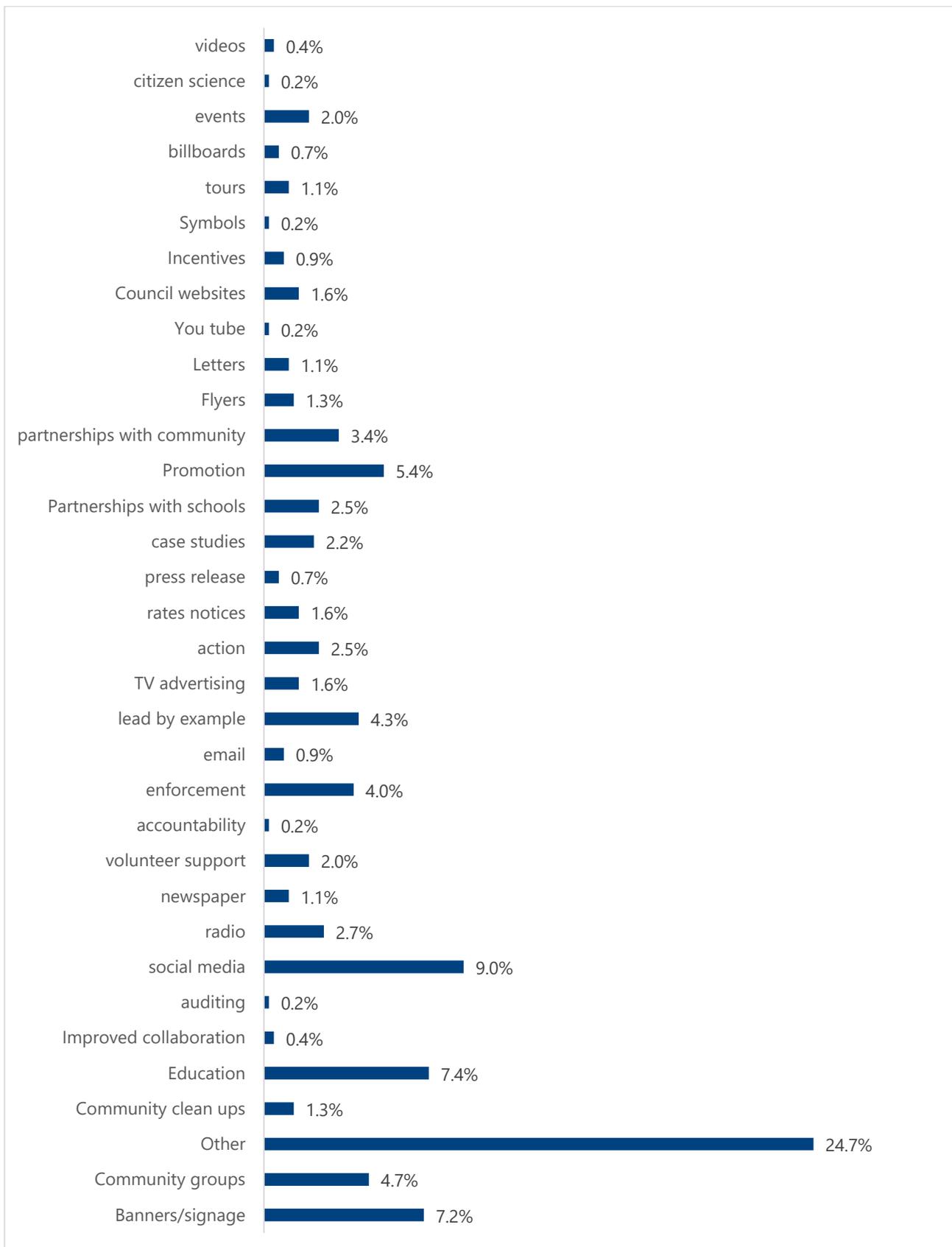
Total respondents=740

Figure 27: Many of the impacts to our waterways come from the areas surrounding them. Please select the actions you take at home or work to help protect our waterways:



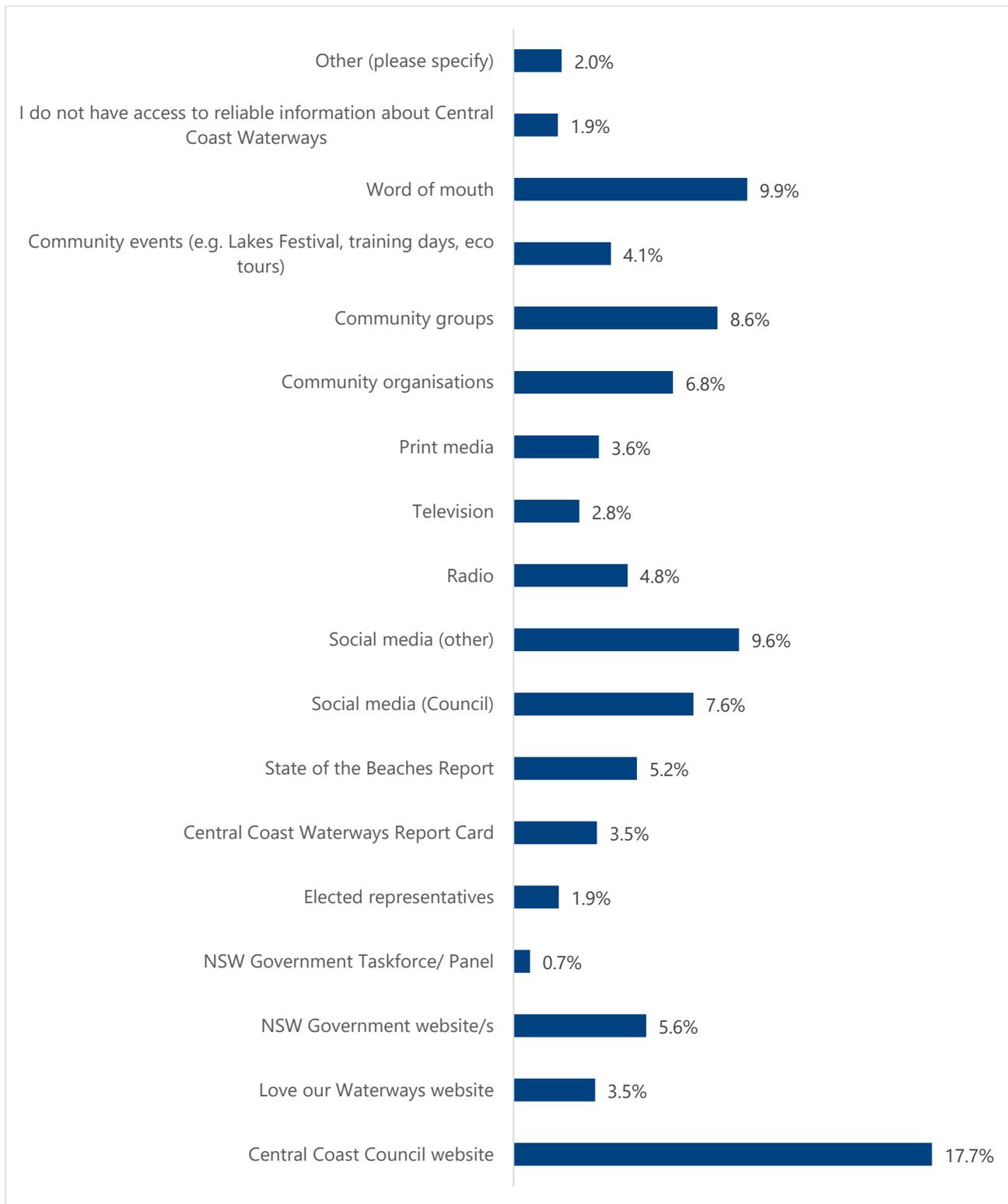
Total selections=7449

Figure 28: Tell us how you think Council can spread the word about the value of Central Coast Waterways and how we can all help to improve and protect them into the future: - coded information



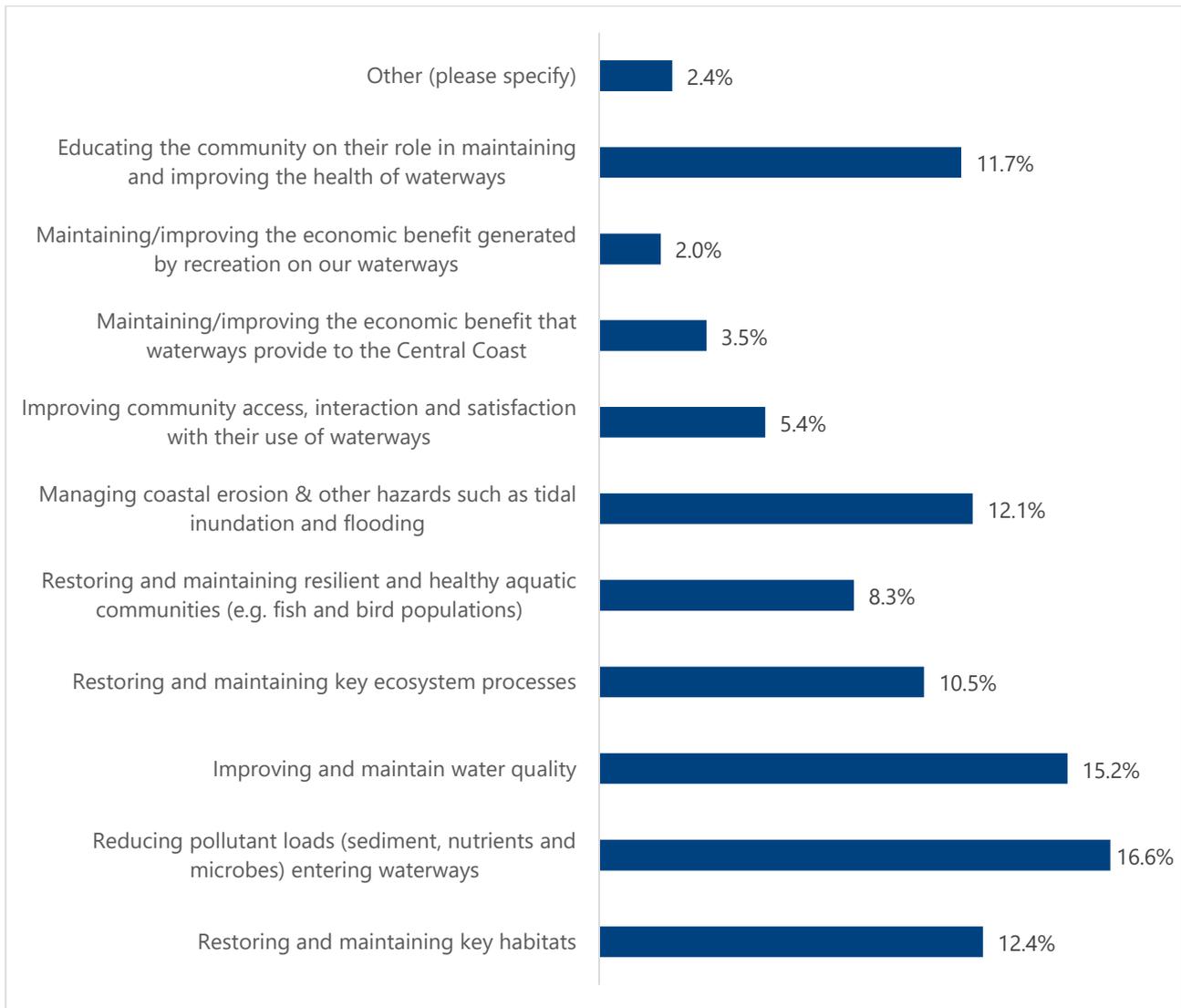
Codes applied=555

Figure 29: When looking for information about Central Coast Waterways, where do you look?



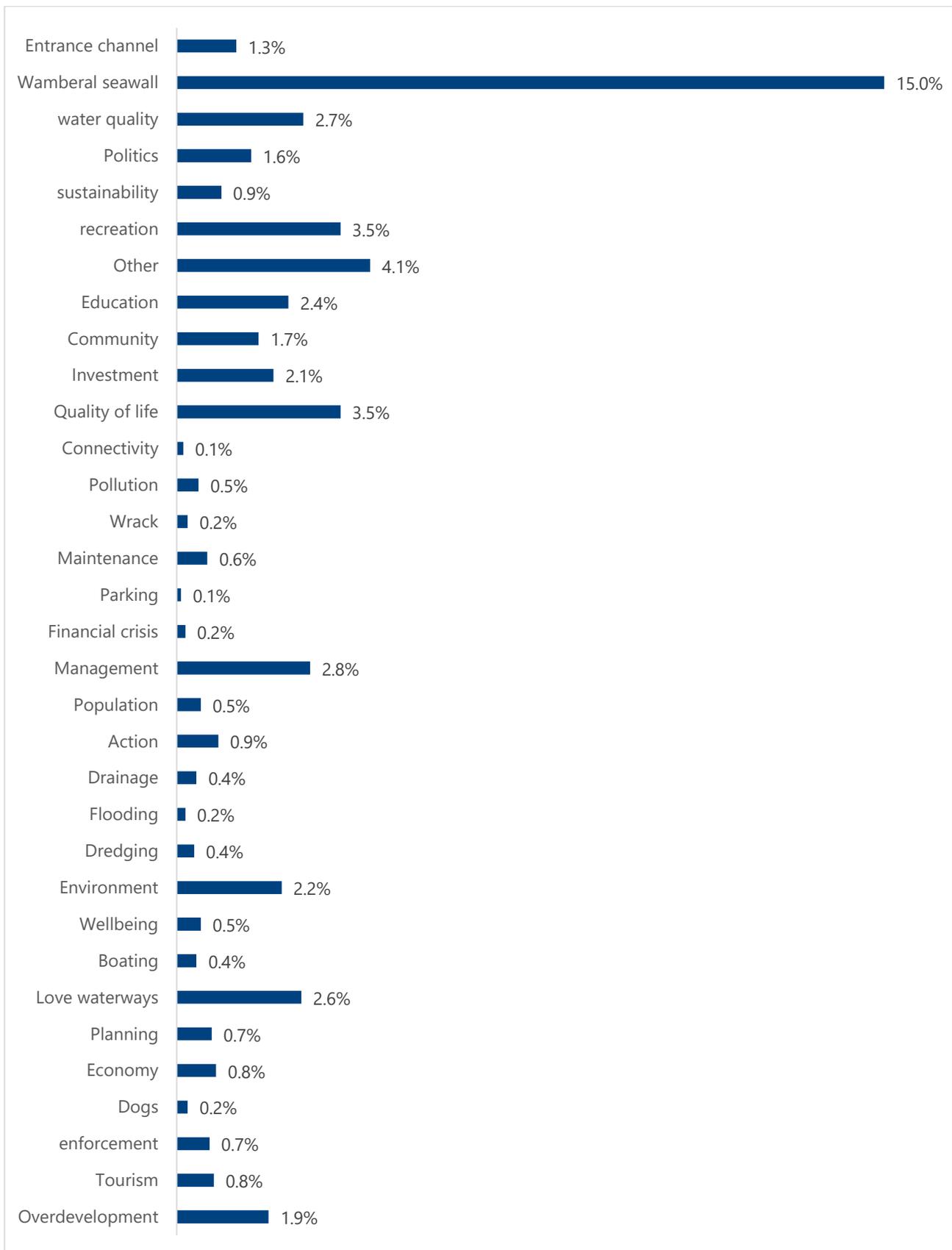
Total selections=2544

Figure 30: What should the focus areas for the Coastal Management Programs (CMP) be? *Participants could select up to 3.*



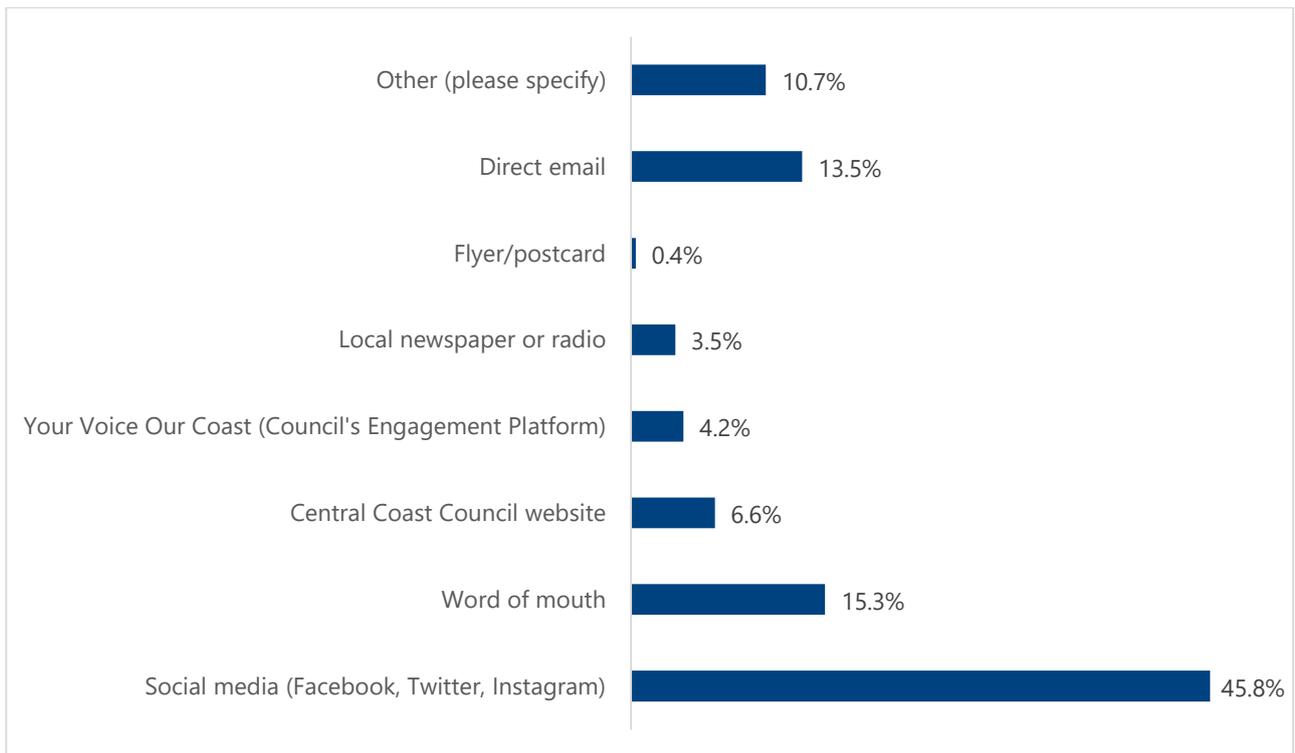
Total selections=2156

Figure 31: Do you have any further comments about the importance of waterways on the Central Coast? – coded information



Codes applied=633

Figure 32: How did you hear about this survey?

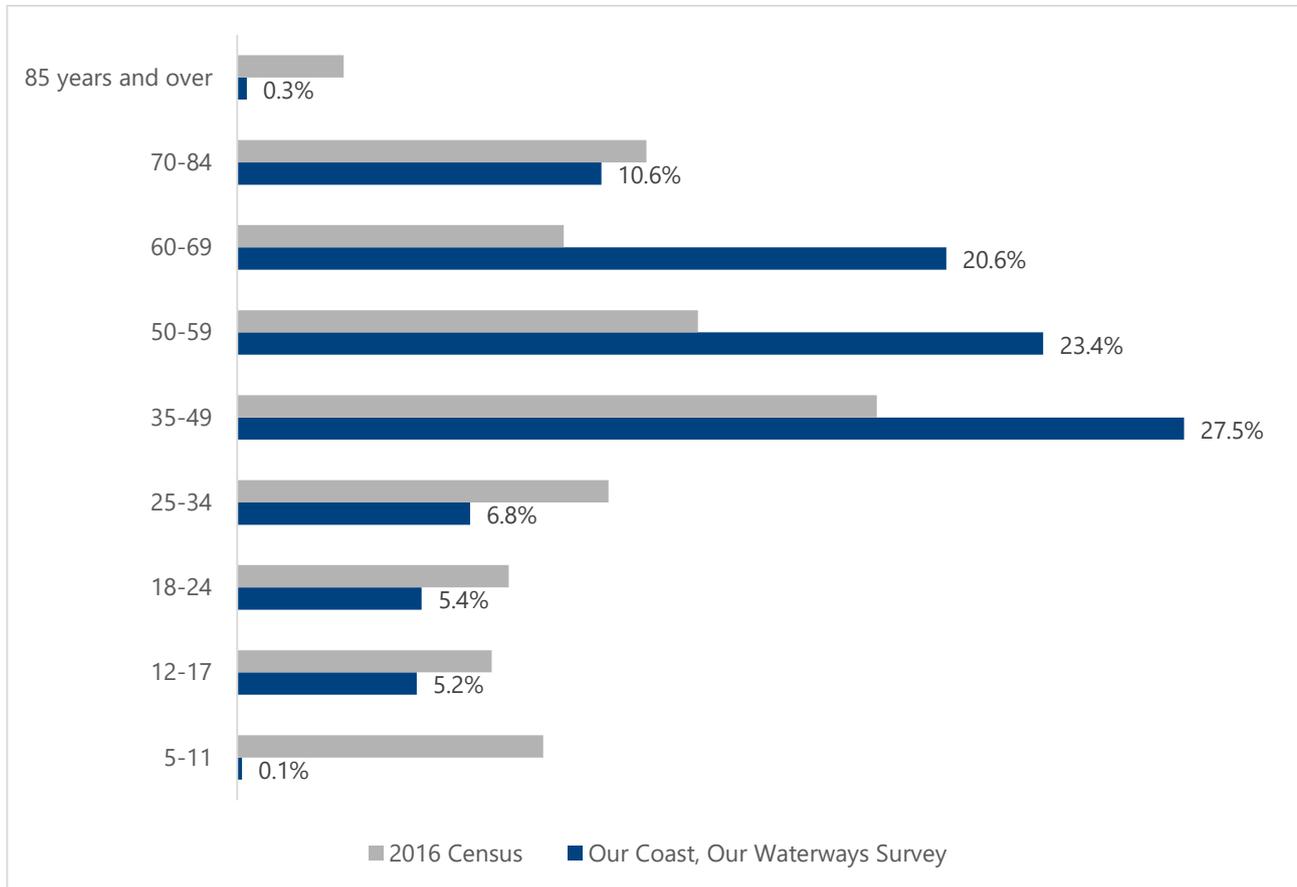


Total selections=769

## About you and your household!

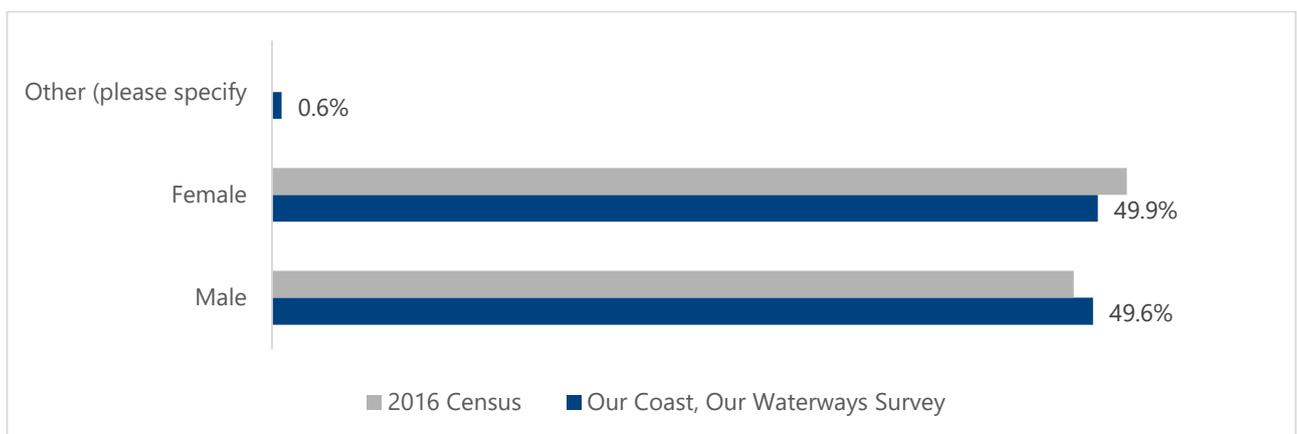
The questions asked in this section of the survey were not mandatory however responses to these questions allow us to further analyse the responses supplied by participants.

Figure 33: What is your age?



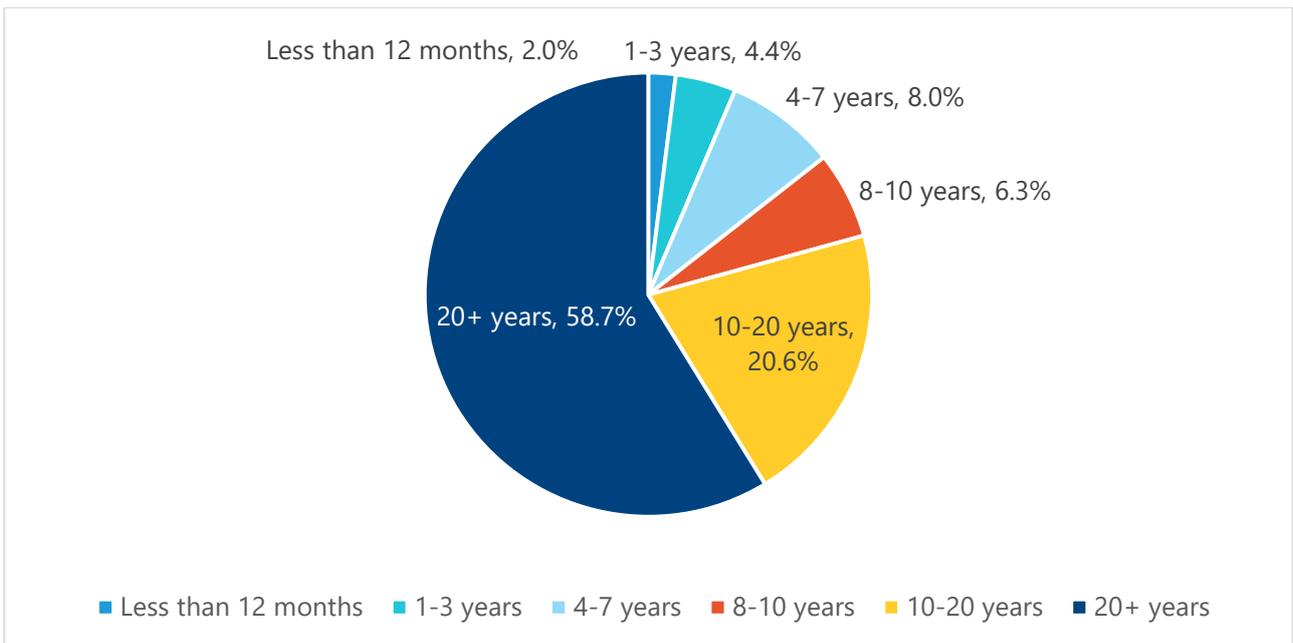
Total respondents=708

Figure 34: What is your gender?



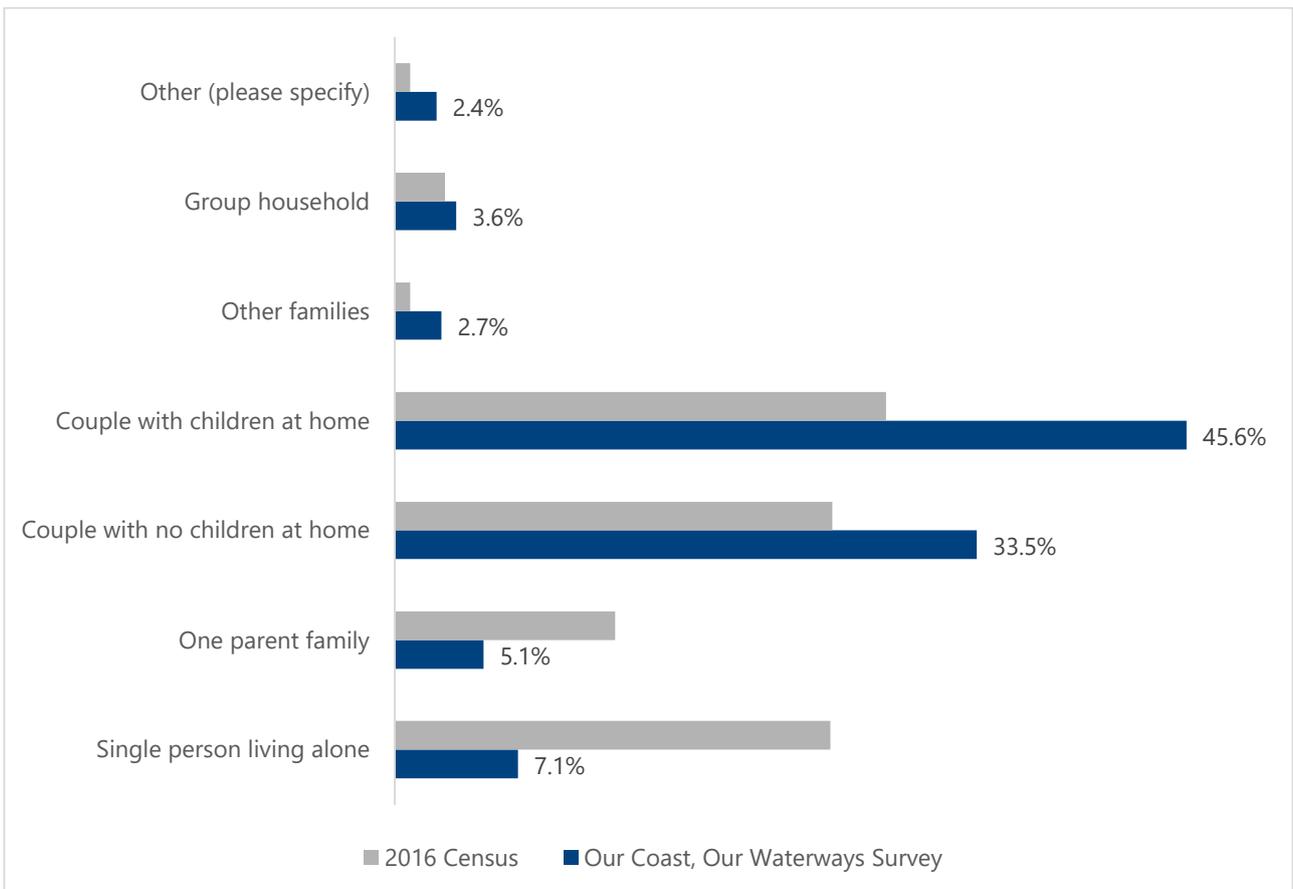
Total respondents=682

Figure 35: How long have you lived on the Central Coast?



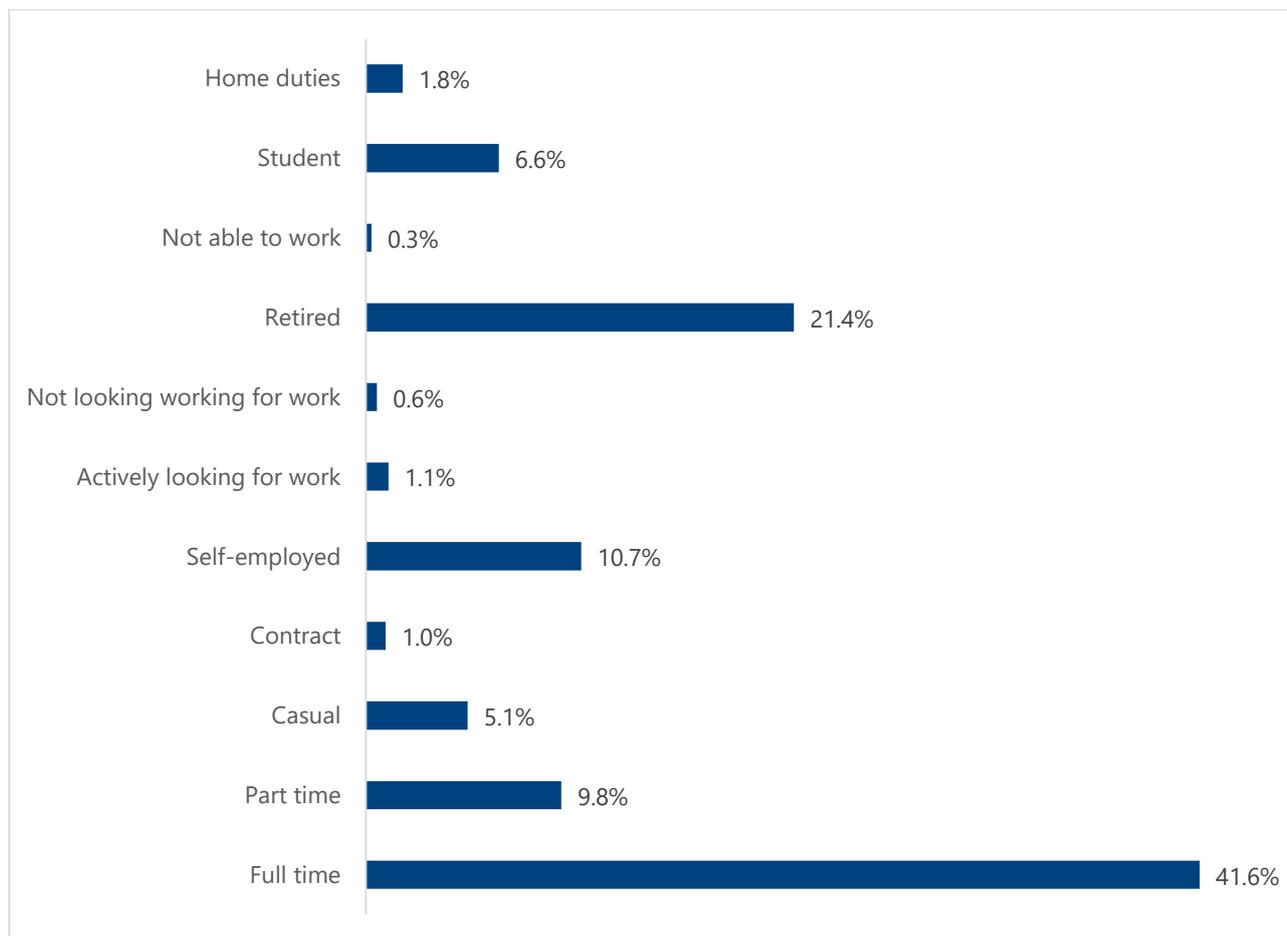
Total respondents=710

Figure 36: What is your household type?



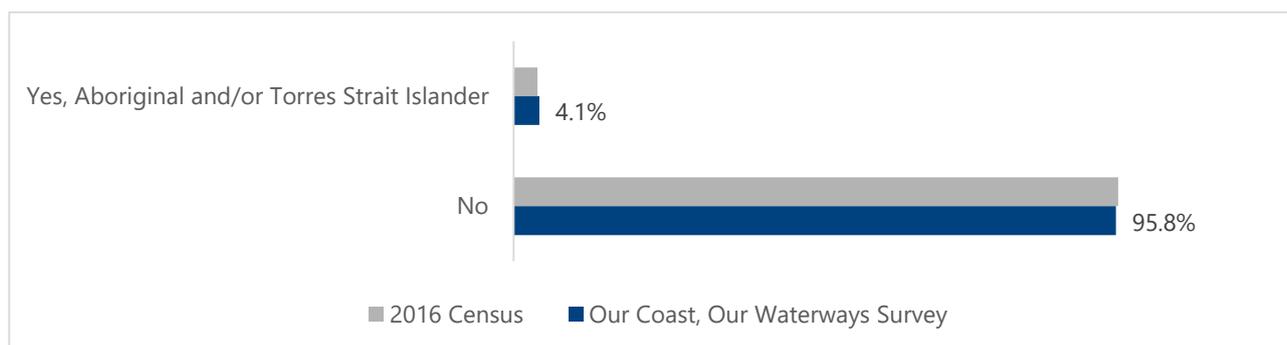
Total respondents=704

Figure 37: What is your employment type?



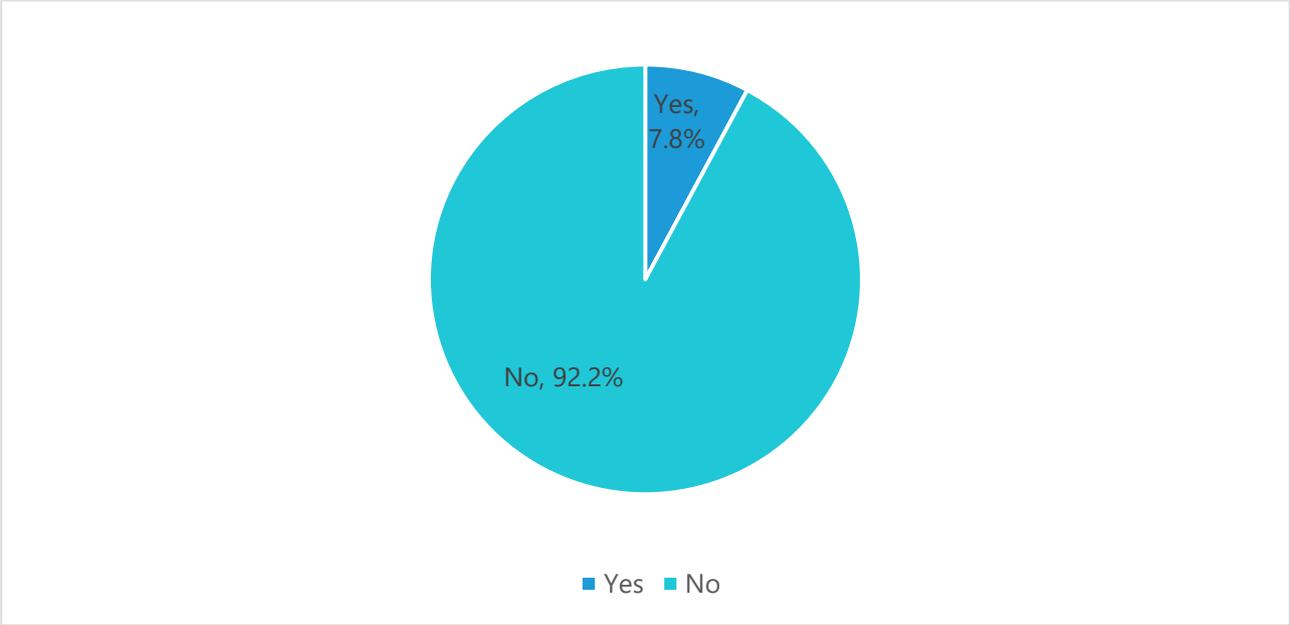
Total respondents=707

Figure 38: Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?



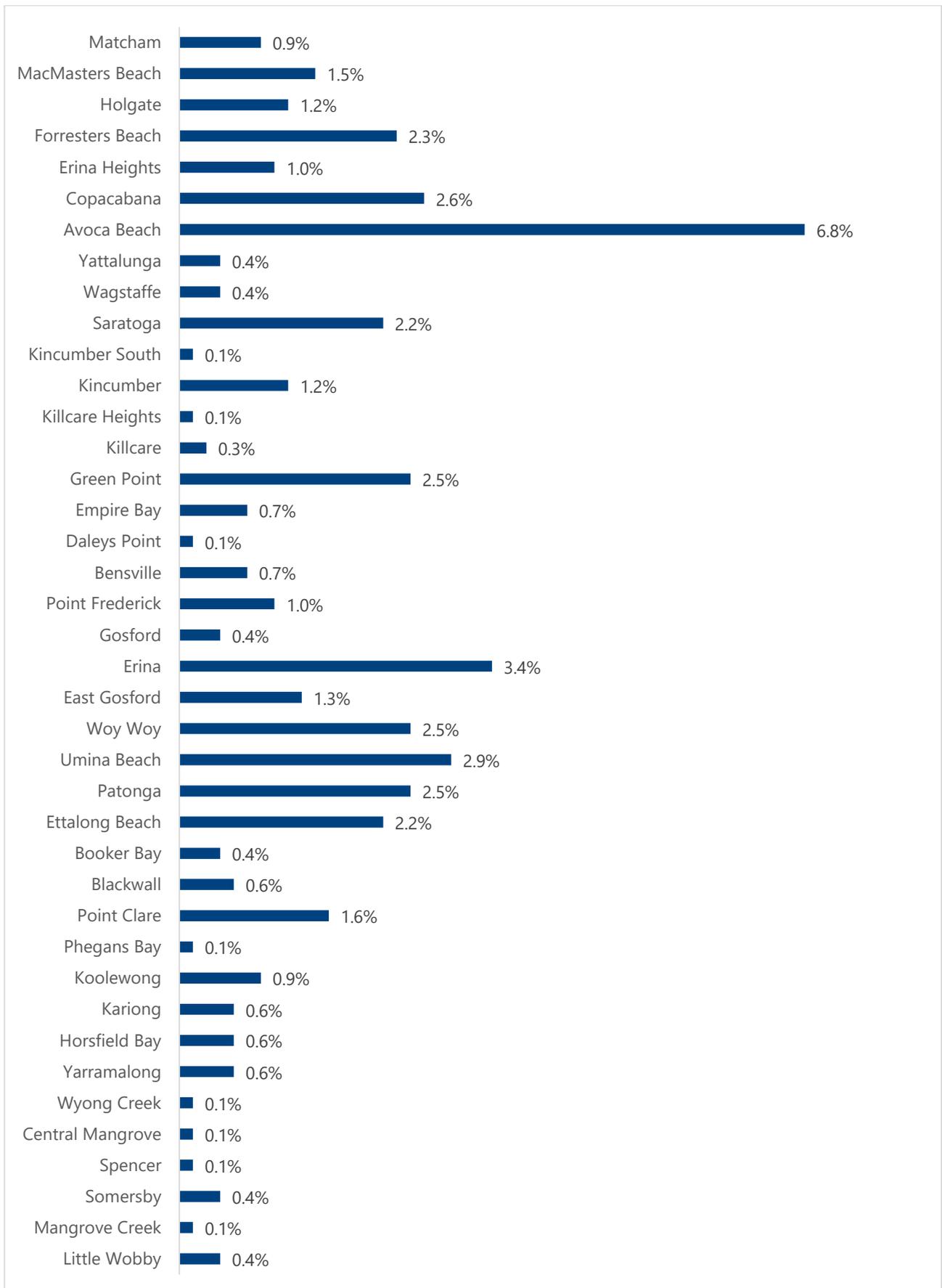
Total respondents=694

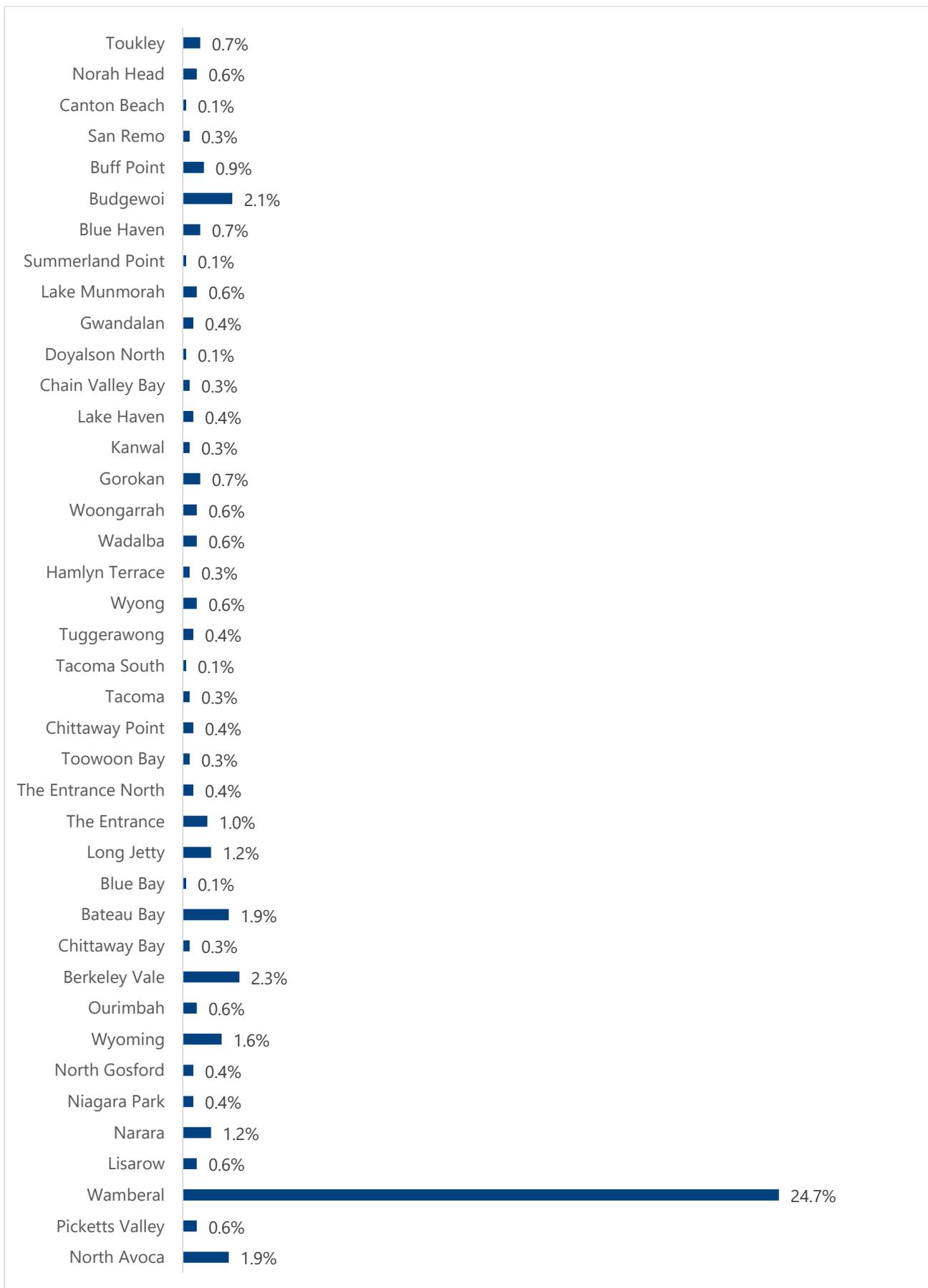
Figure 39: Do you speak a language other than English at home?



Total respondents=704

Figure 40: Suburb:





Total respondents=681

Figure 41: Former LGA (curated by suburb)

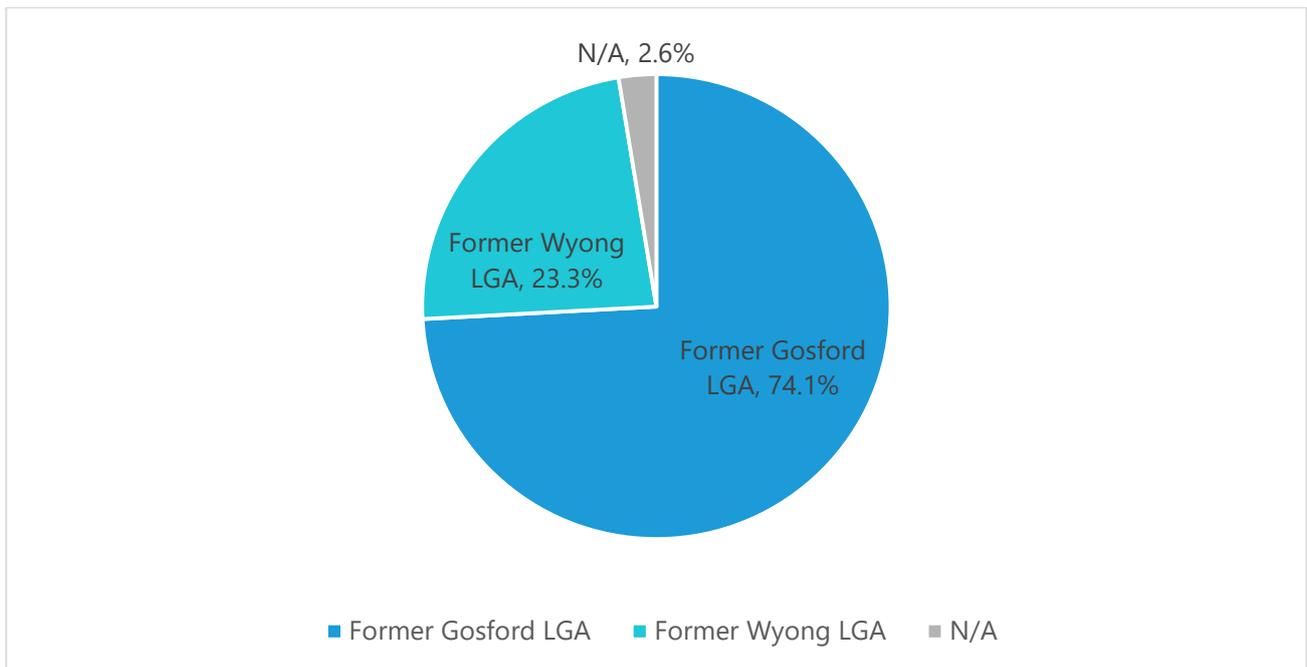
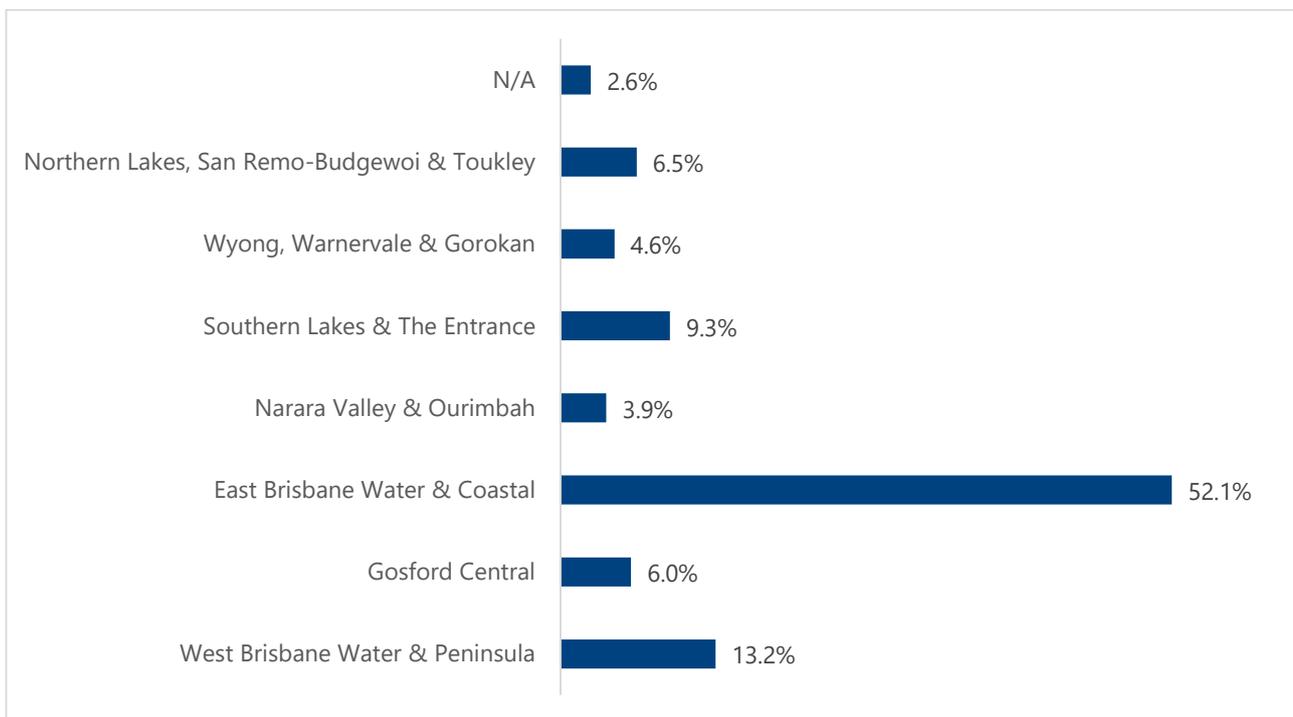


Figure 42: Planning area (curated by suburb)



## Comparisons table

Throughout the phase one consultation we collected demographic information, this information allows us to further analyse the feedback we are receiving and from who. The table below explores these differences (participants who use the Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons are displayed):

|  | Foreshore, beachfront or riverside resident | Residents living between 500m and 2km from a waterway | 34 years of age and under              | 35 years of age and over                | Lived on the Central Coast less than 7 years | Lived on the Central Coast more than 10 years | Former Wyong Shire Council area         | Former Gosford City area                |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Waterways are a significant reason I choose to live on the Central Coast   | 98.2%<br><i>Total respondents = 111</i>     | 94.8%<br><i>Total respondents = 286</i>               | 94.2%<br><i>Total respondents = 86</i> | 97.4%<br><i>Total respondents = 584</i> | 97.1%<br><i>Total respondents = 102</i>      | 96.4%<br><i>Total respondents = 608</i>       | 95.8%<br><i>Total respondents = 190</i> | 97%<br><i>Total respondents = 595</i>   |
| If waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly I would reduce the frequency I visit and use waterways. | 91.9%<br><i>Total respondents = 111</i>     | 87.8%<br><i>Total respondents = 286</i>               | 88.4%<br><i>Total respondents = 86</i> | 91.4%<br><i>Total respondents = 584</i> | 95.1%<br><i>Total respondents = 102</i>      | 90.1%<br><i>Total respondents = 607</i>       | 91.1%<br><i>Total respondents = 190</i> | 89.7%<br><i>Total respondents = 594</i> |

|  | Foreshore, beachfront or riverside resident    | Residents living between 500m and 2km from a waterway | 34 years of age and under                     | 35 years of age and over                       | Lived on the Central Coast less than 7 years   | Lived on the Central Coast more than 10 years  | Former Wyong Shire Council area                | Former Gosford City area                       |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| If waterway access, safety or condition declined significantly I would consider moving from the Central Coast to another location. | <b>75.7%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 111</i> | <b>67.5%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 286</i>        | <b>76.7%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 86</i> | <b>69.5%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 584</i> | <b>73.5%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 102</i> | <b>68.3%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 608</i> | <b>68.9%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 190</i> | <b>68.1%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 595</i> |
| More should be done to enhance access to waterways (e.g. shared pathways, jetties, boat ramps etc).                                | <b>73.9%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 111</i> | <b>61.8%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 285</i>        | <b>55.8%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 86</i> | <b>69.1%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 582</i> | <b>62.7%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 102</i> | <b>67.5%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 606</i> | <b>77.4%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 190</i> | <b>63.4%</b><br><i>Total respondents = 593</i> |

|   | Foreshore, beachfront or riverside resident               | Residents living between 500m and 2km from a waterway     | 34 years of age and under                                | 35 years of age and over                                  | Lived on the Central Coast less than 7 years              | Lived on the Central Coast more than 10 years             | Former Wyong Shire Council area                           | Former Gosford City area                                  |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| More should be done to protect and enhance the natural aspects of waterways such as the cleanliness of water, health of coastal vegetation, and the protection of wildlife. | <p><b>90%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 111</i></p>   | <p><b>96.9%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 286</i></p> | <p><b>100%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 86</i></p>  | <p><b>96%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 582</i></p>   | <p><b>98%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 102</i></p>   | <p><b>96.7%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 606</i></p> | <p><b>95.8%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 190</i></p> | <p><b>96.3%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 593</i></p> |
| I would support more resources being used for the management of our waterways and coast, even if it meant a very small increase in my property rates or rent.               | <p><b>71.3%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 101</i></p> | <p><b>65.4%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 263</i></p> | <p><b>74.4%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 86</i></p> | <p><b>69.1%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 583</i></p> | <p><b>85.3%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 102</i></p> | <p><b>67.1%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 607</i></p> | <p><b>71.9%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 171</i></p> | <p><b>67.9%</b></p> <p><i>Total respondents = 552</i></p> |

*Statistics provided are based on participants selecting "strongly agree" and "agree". Total respondents is based on responses within the demographic category selected*