

# Upper Beaconsfield

## Green Initiatives Group (UBGIG)

### Community Survey Results and Analysis paper

A local community survey targeted principally at the Upper Beaconsfield, Guys Hill & Dewhurst communities was conducted by the UBGIG between February and April, 2023. Over 90% of the 69 surveys submitted were completed during the Upper Beaconsfield Village Festival on 18 Feb 2023

The UBGIG was started in October 2022 by local residents concerned about human-induced climate change and environmental sustainability. The intent of the questionnaire was to gauge the levels of concern in the community regarding some of these issues, the strength of community desire to address them and the ways to community would like to go about it.

The results of the survey are to be an informer and driver for future directions and actions of the UBGIG

#### Demographics:

Totals	Female	33
	Male	26
	Prefer not to say	10
	<20 yrs	1
	20s	4
	30s	10
	40s	19
	50s	13
	60s	12
	70s	5
	Prefer not to say	5

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#### Gender:

The survey included 69 responders, of whom 33 (48%) identified as female and 26 (39%) identified as male. A further 10 (14%) chose not to identify their gender. This observation should be kept in mind when interpreting the gender sub-analysis of each question.

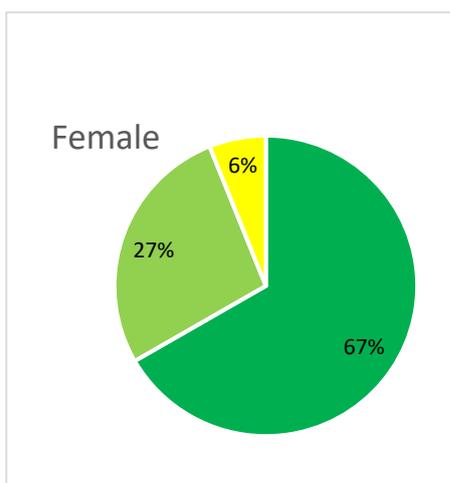
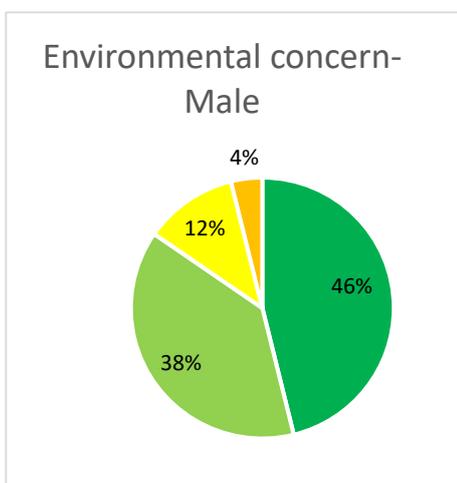
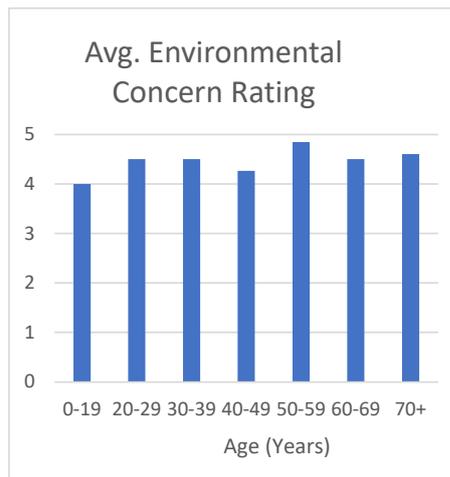
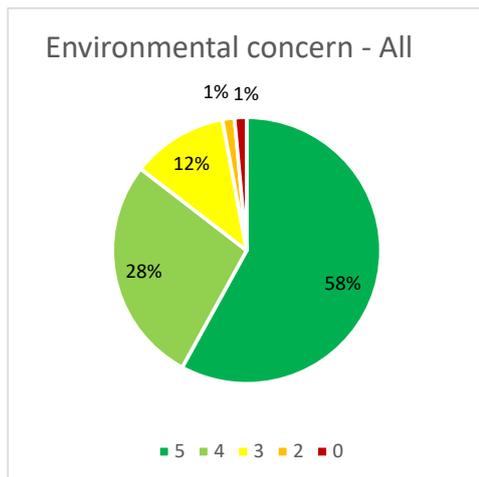
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#### Age:

The most common age range of the responders was in their 40s (n=19, 28%), with the 30s, 50s and 60s being approximately equal (n=10, 14%; n=13, 19%; n=12, 17%, respectively). There were only 5 responders in their 70s, 4 in their 20s and only one less than 20 years, with another 5 choosing not to reveal their age.

NB: Please be aware for the following analyses of each question, there may be some variation in trends that emerge; take note of the parts of the data set being included.

**Question 1. Rate your concern about the environment.  
(0 – 5 with 5 being extremely concerned)**

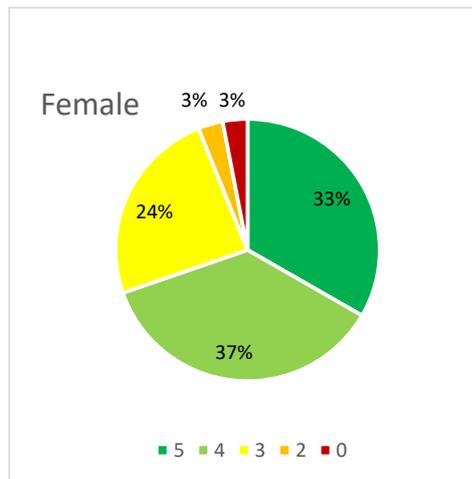
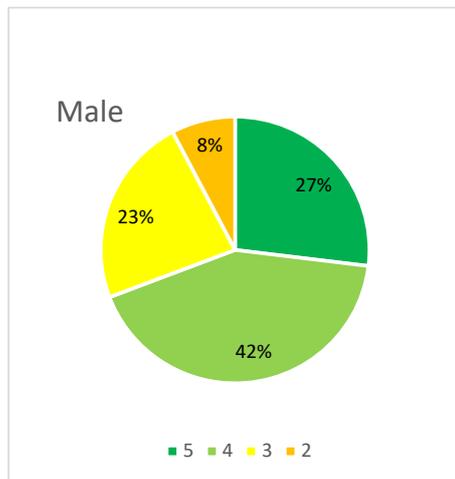
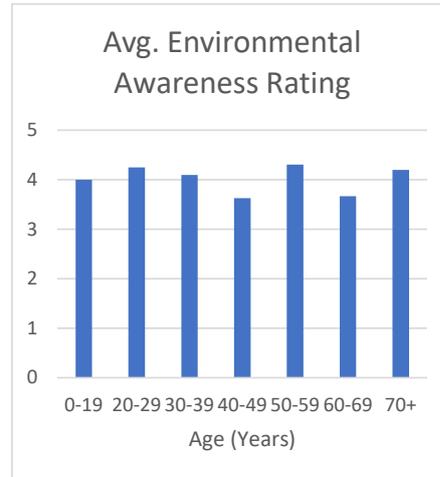
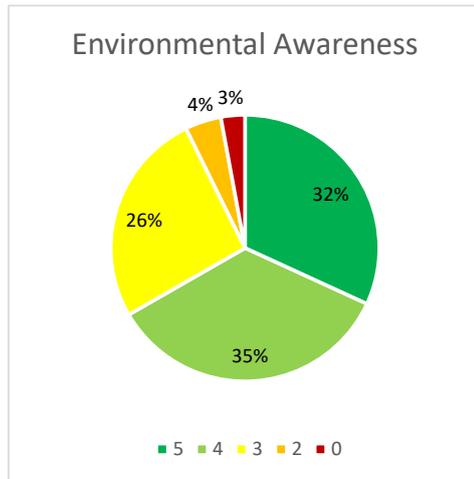


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Responses to this question were at the upper end of the range, with 59 (85%) of the total responses rating their concern as either 4 or 5, with 5 being 'extremely concerned'. Of those who revealed their gender, slightly more females (n=31, 94% of the females) expressed a higher level of concern (responses 4 or 5) than males (n=22, 85% of the males), however, both genders expressed a high level of concern about the environment.

An analysis of age showed that all responders rated their concern at equal or greater than 4 out of 5 with the average within each age range being roughly equal at approximately 4.5 on the 6-point scale.

**Question 2. How aware are you of environmental issues such as: habitat loss, feral animal & weed threat, personal/household impact on the environment etc? (0 – 5 with 5 being extremely concerned)**

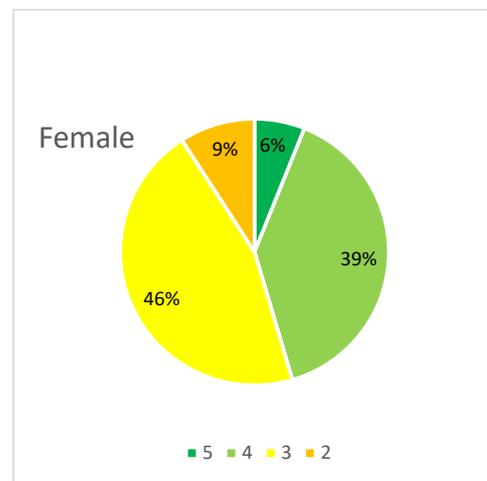
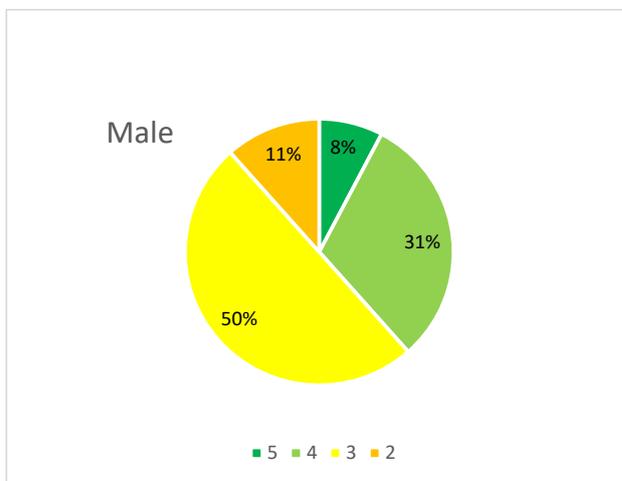
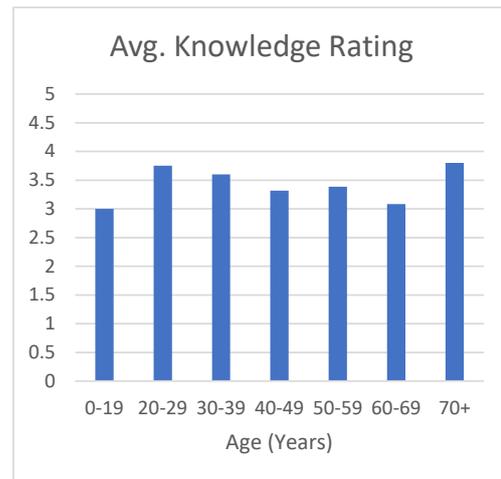
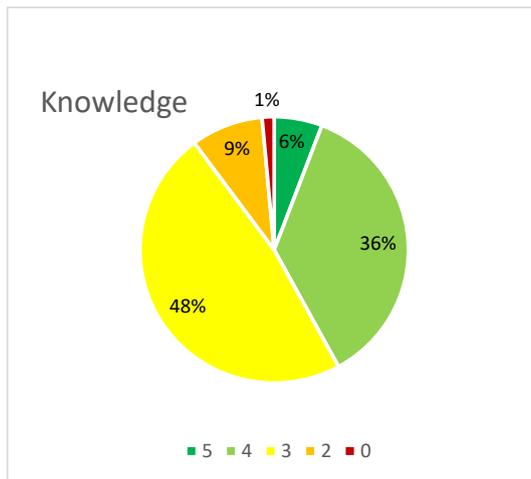


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Responses to this question were also at the upper end of the range, but about 20% lower than in question 1. In this question, only 42 (61%) of the total responses rated their awareness as either 4 or 5, with 5 being 'extremely aware, a further 22 responding with a rating of 3, ie mid-range. Of those who revealed their gender, markedly more females (n=31, 94% of females) expressed a higher level of awareness (responses 4 or 5) than males (n=17, 65% of males). Both genders expressed a high level of awareness of environmental issues, although females expressed a greater awareness than males.

An analysis of age was similar to that in question 1, with all responders rating their awareness at equal or greater than 4 out of 5 with the average within each age range being roughly equal at approximately 4.5 on the 6-point scale.

**Question 3. How do you rate your knowledge in addressing these environmental issues?  
(0 – 5 with 5 being extremely concerned)**



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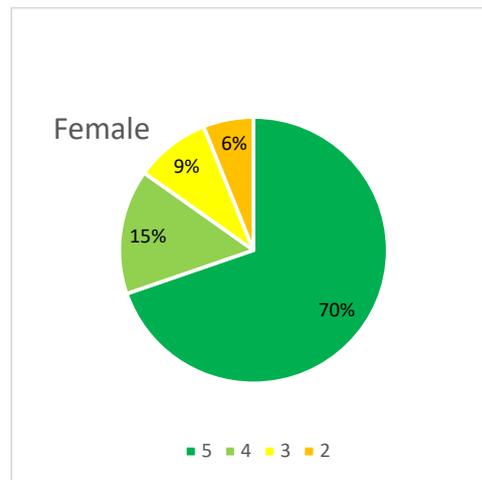
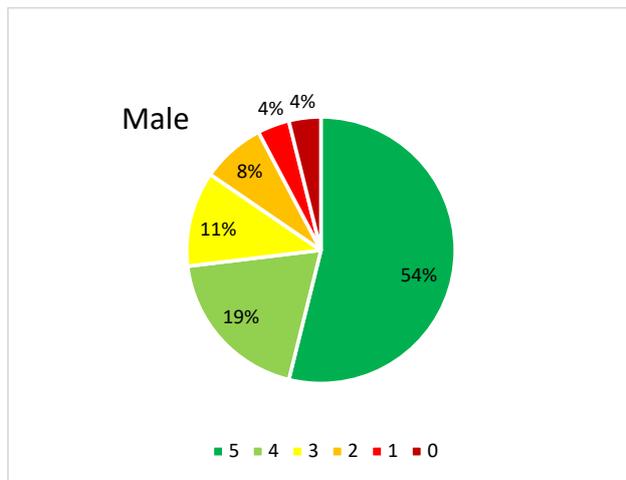
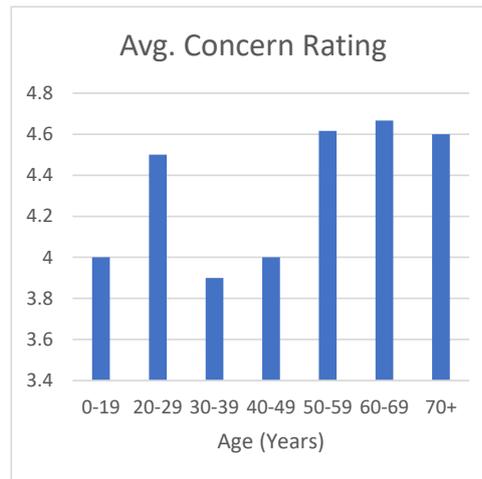
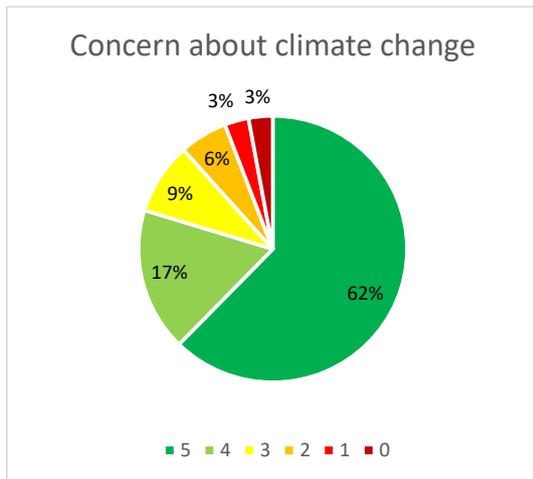
*Responses to this question were also at the upper end of the range, and were similar to the responses in question 1, with 58 (84%) of the total responses rating their knowledge as either 4 or 5, with 5 being 'extremely knowledgeable'. Of those who revealed their gender, both genders (females, n=28, 85% of the females, and, males n = 21, 81% of the males) expressed a high level of knowledge at about the same level.*

*An analysis of age showed a lower level of rating of their knowledge across all age ranges, with the ratings lower than in both questions 1 and 2. All ratings were between 3 and 4 on the 6-point range, with the average within each age range roughly equal at approximately 3.5 on the 6-point scale.*

*The analysis of these first 3 questions raise a little anomaly; namely: responders rated their concern about the environment (question 1) highly (85%), and rated their knowledge in addressing environmental issues (question 3) also highly (84%), but rated their awareness of environmental issues (question 2) a bit lower at 61%. This may suggest an issue in interpreting the respective questions, or that the UBGIG Steering Group should thoughtfully consider how it designs and delivers a range of education programs to our community to ensure they meet community needs.*

*Although not really 'an anomaly', a difference between females and males in their self-rating also has implications for targeting education programs to be offered by the UBGIG.*

**Question 4. Rate your concern about climate change.  
(5 very concerned – 1 not concerned)**



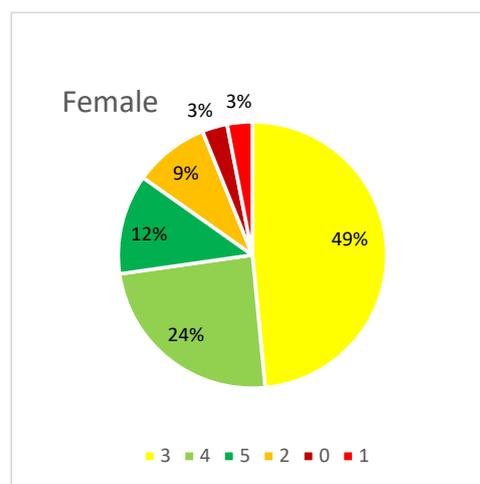
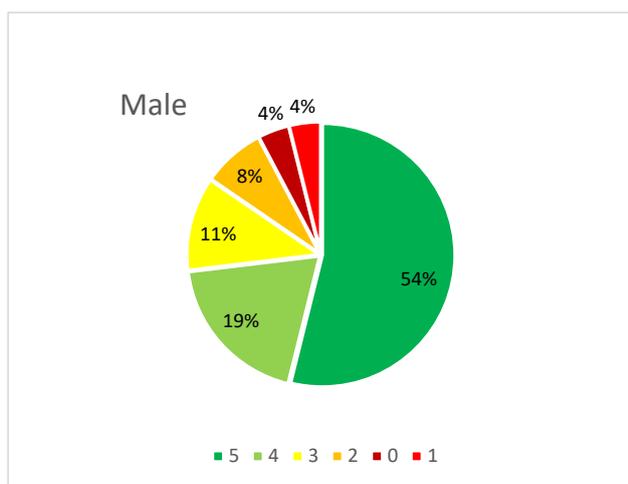
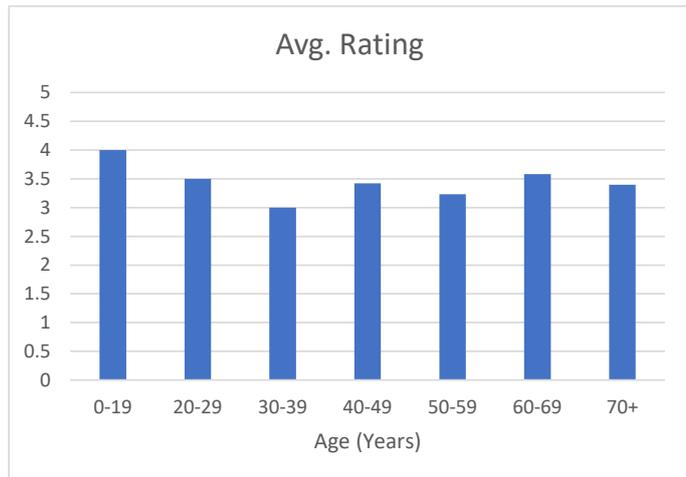
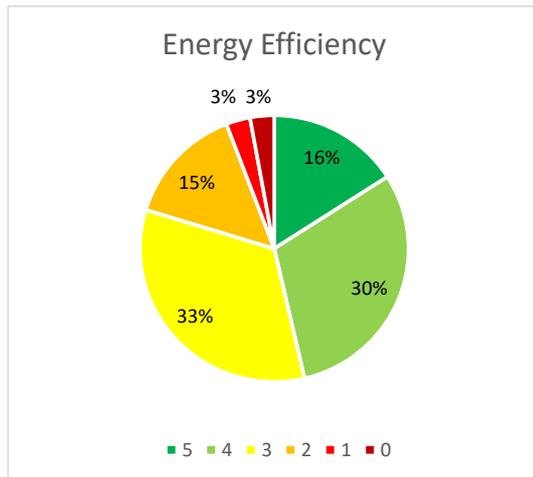
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Responses to this question were at the upper end of the range, but slightly lower than for questions 1 and 3, with 55 (80%) of the total responses rating their concern as either 4 or 5, with 5 being 'extremely concerned'. Of those who revealed their gender, slightly more females (n=28, 85% of females) expressed a higher level of concern (responses 4 or 5) than males (n=21, 81% of males), with both genders expressing a high level of concern about climate change. However, unlike questions 1 – 3 inclusive, the interesting observation in this question was the 'tail' in the responses with 6 responses being mid-range, ie 3 on the 6-point scale, and a further 8 responses in the lower end of the response range (0 – 2 inclusive) ie towards 'not concerned'.

Likewise, an analysis of age showed a wide variation between age groups, unlike previous questions. All responses were lower than in previous questions, with the average responses in all age ranges being between 3.9 and 4.7 on the 6-point scale, in general around 3.5, the averages being influenced by the 'tail' of the responses.

These responses provide another implication for the UBGIG Steering Group moving forward to appropriately target learning programs for different age ranges.

**Question 5. How would you rate the energy efficiency of your current home/premises? (5 high – 1 low)**



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*This question introduced a different theme to questions 1 – 4 inclusive, namely, home energy efficiency. Thus, not surprisingly, responses to this question, although at the upper end of the range, with 44 (64%) of the total responses rating the efficiency of their homes or premises as either 4 or 5, with 5 being ‘extremely concerned’, there was a long ‘tail’ with many responses scattered along the 0 – 3 continuum. Of those who revealed their gender, responses by females in the 4 – 5 range ie expressing a higher level of efficiency rating (n=24, 73% of females) were about the same as for males (n=19, 73% of males).*

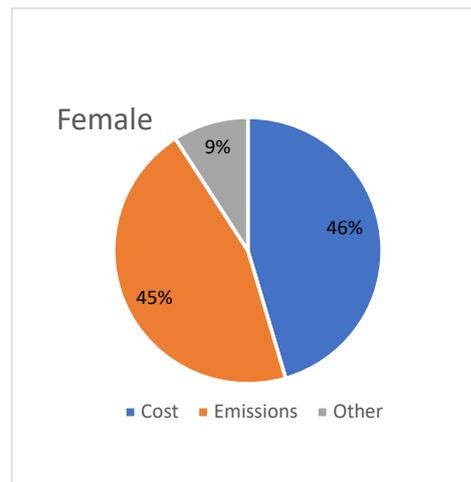
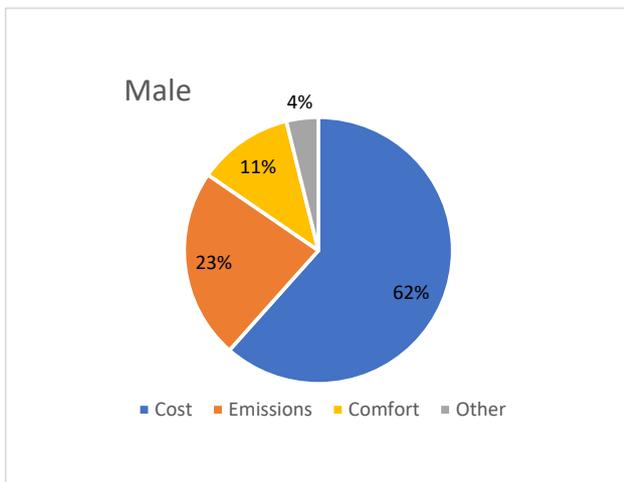
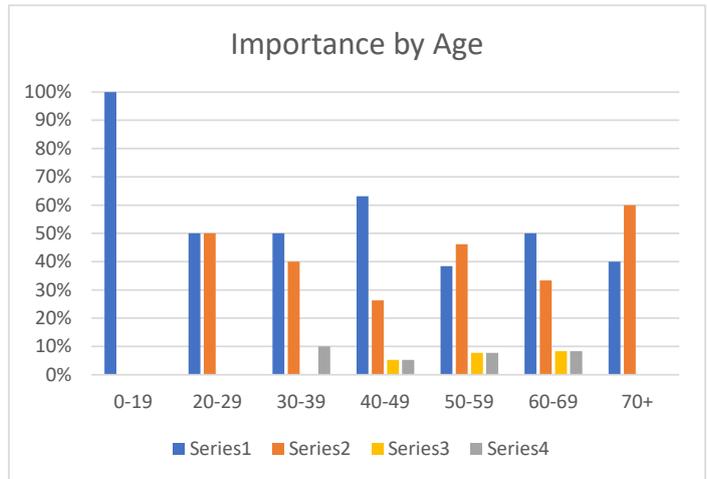
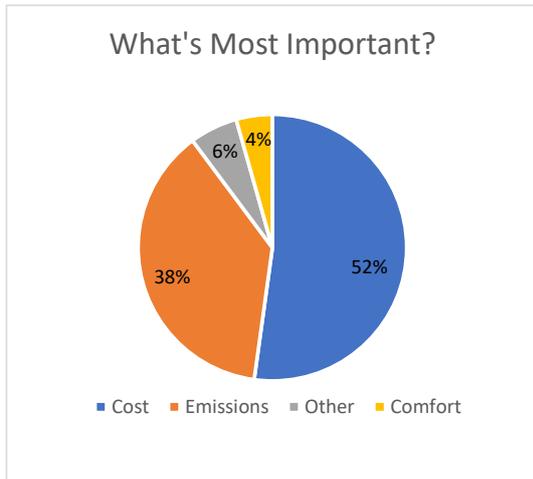
*An analysis of age showed a variation between the age ranges with the average within each age range being equal or greater than 3.5 on the 5-point scale, with the 30s age range being the lowest.*

*An analysis of age showed that all responders rated the energy efficiency of their homes/premises between 3 and 4, with the average within each age range being roughly equal at approximately 3.5 on the 6-point scale. The lowest response was in the 30s age range.*

*These responses also provide another implication for the UBGIG Steering Group moving forward to appropriately target learning programs on this theme for all age groups.*

## Question 6. Regarding your home/business energy efficiency, which would be most important to you? (Tick one.)

1. Reducing energy costs
2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
3. Making your home more comfortable



Other comments:

- Increasing community solar hubs
- Hopefully to reduce energy costs & make home more comfortable

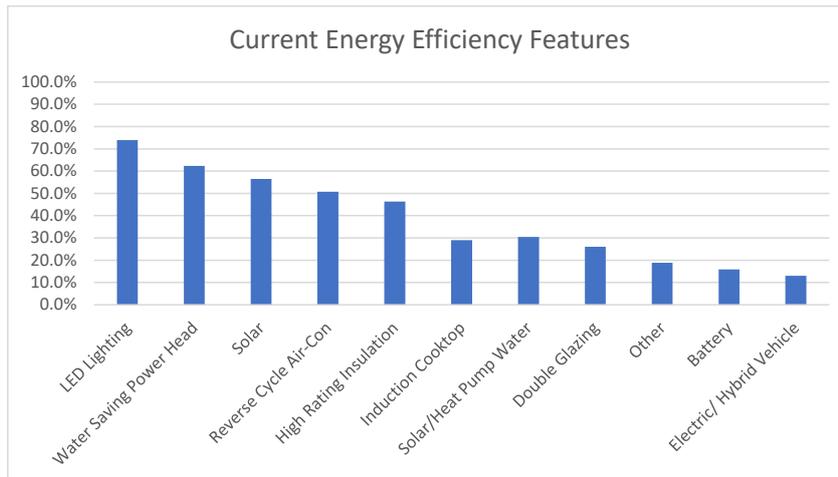
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*Overall, half of the respondents are most concerned about reducing their cost of energy, whilst just over one third consider reducing greenhouse emissions as most important. This gap points to some level of self over climate. From a gender perspective, males rate energy costs (62%) well above greenhouse issues (23%), whereas females are equally split between cost and climate.*

*By age, cost and emissions remain a concern, both with degrees of variability.*

*It appears that most people consider their homes to be temperature comfortable, rating this metric well below cost or emissions concerns.*

## Question 7. What energy efficiency features does your current house/premises have?



### Other comments:

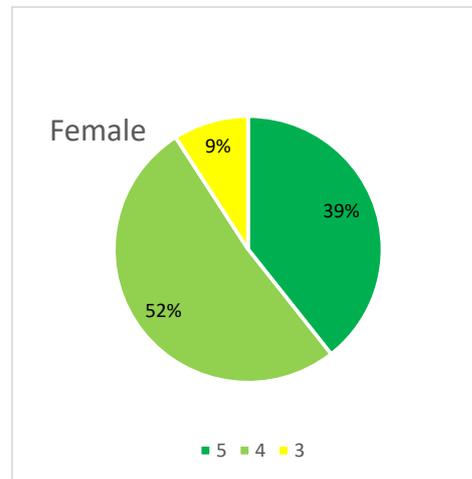
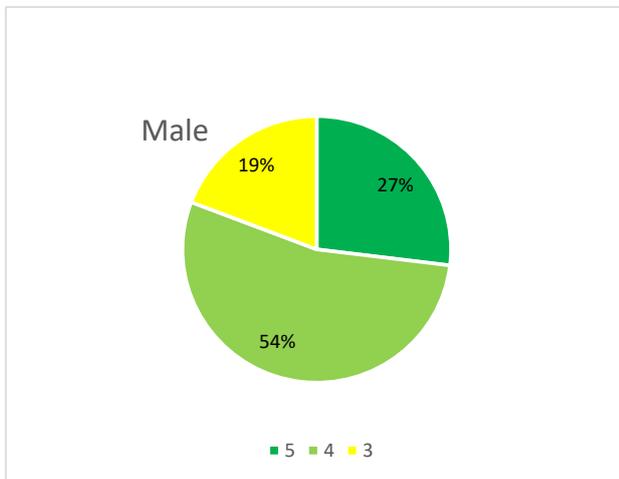
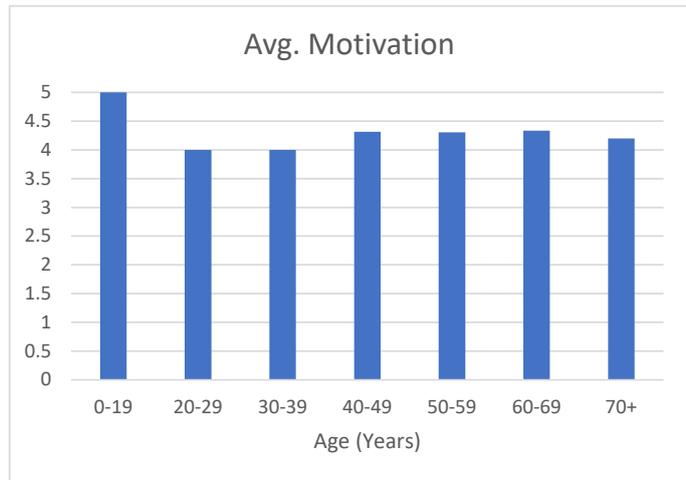
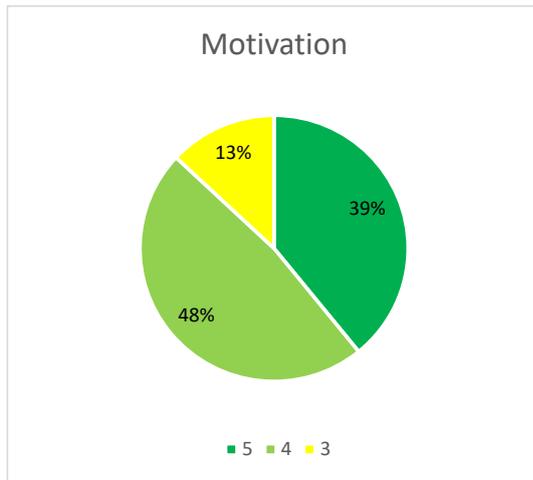
- honeycomb blinds
- tank water 3x
- passive solar design 2x
- blinds
- eaves, elec fans not air cons.
- shady eaves
- heat pump hydro heating
- using heater/aircon as last resort

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*The switch to LED lighting is broad, but surprisingly a quarter of households have not yet implemented the change.*

*It is likely that the number of older homes in UB impinges on a wide range of energy efficient measures, some of which are difficult to retrospectively rectify. However, improvements such as insulation, water tanks and heat pumps are important and easy modifications that can be made to most homes. The barriers are likely to be a combination of cost, awareness and attitude.*

**Question 8. Please rate how motivated you are in improving your home energy efficiency? (5 very – 1 not)**

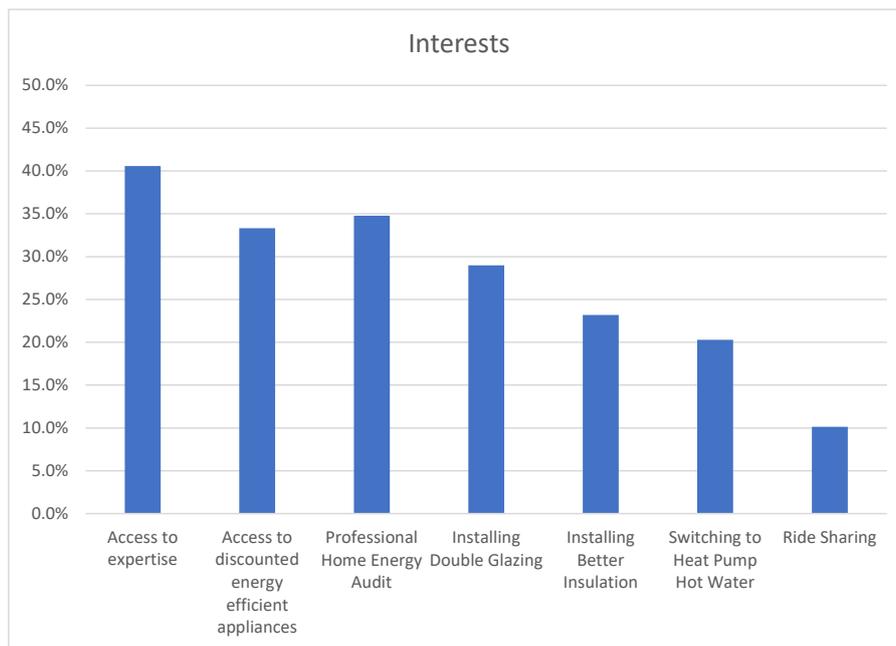


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*Majority of survey participants (86%) motivated to improve their home energy efficiency. Interestingly our younger community members (0-19yo) scored marginally higher than our older bill paying residents. Highlighting a drive by the younger members of the community for change.*

**Question 9. Regarding home energy efficiency, which of the following would interest you. (Tick all that apply.)**

- Professional home energy audit
- Access to expertise/sound advice on energy options
- Access to discounted energy efficient appliances
- Switching to heat pump hot water
- Installing better insulation
- Installing double glazing
- Ride/car sharing
- Other .....



Other comments:

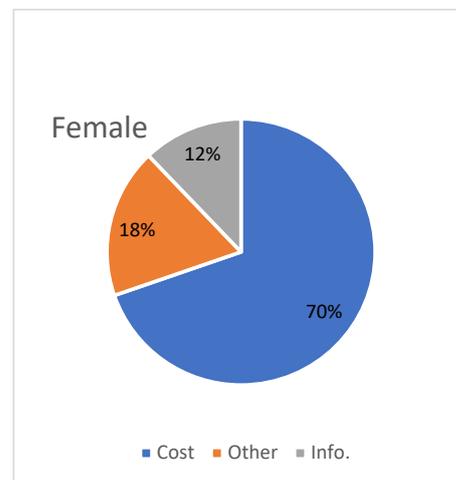
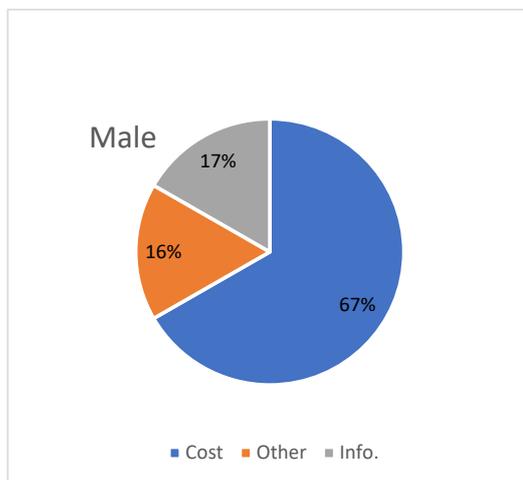
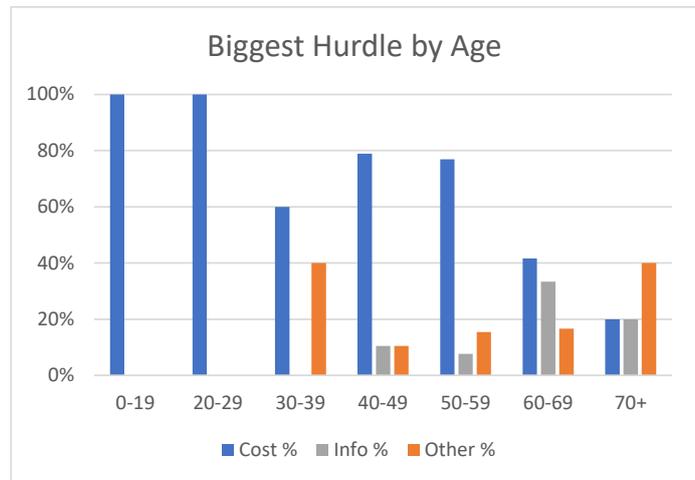
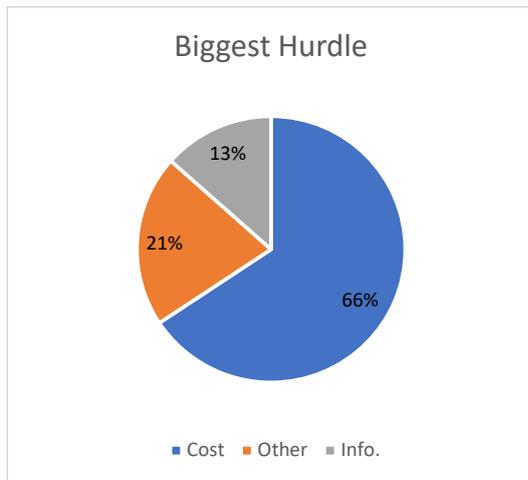
- time

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*The main areas where the UB community is interested in improving home energy efficiency is access to expertise, discounted energy efficient appliances and a home energy audit. While there was also some interest for better insulation (mostly from the male participants) and double glazing (mostly female participants).*

## Question 10. What is your current biggest hurdle to improving/accessing energy efficiency at home? (Tick one.)

- Cost
- Lack of information
- Other



### Other comments:

- Time to retrofit, repair
- Cost recovery
- Renter: really hard to make a difference when you don't own a property
- Discounted worm farms/compost bins
- Living in a rental 2x
- Lack of clear information
- price of batteries too high
- environmental impact on solar panel & turbine & lithium disposal

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Cost was way in front with a total of 66% surveyed [44 Rrsponses] indicated that it was the biggest problem, with Male and Female very similar (M 67% / F 70%, with R 16/23, respectively). Note that more females responded.

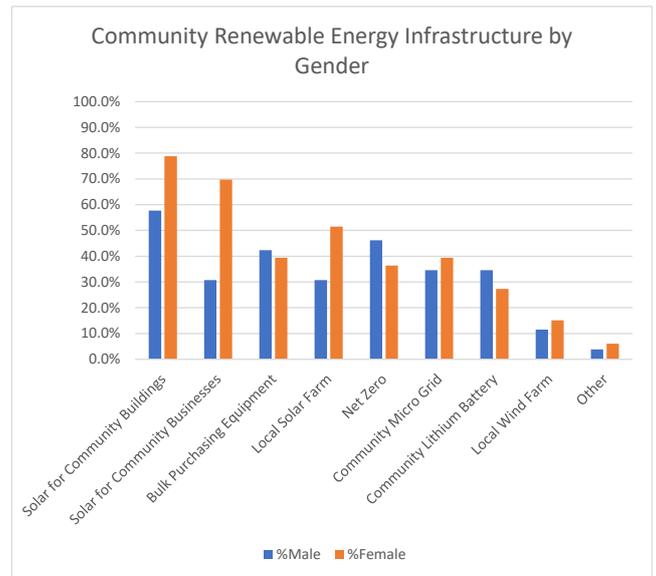
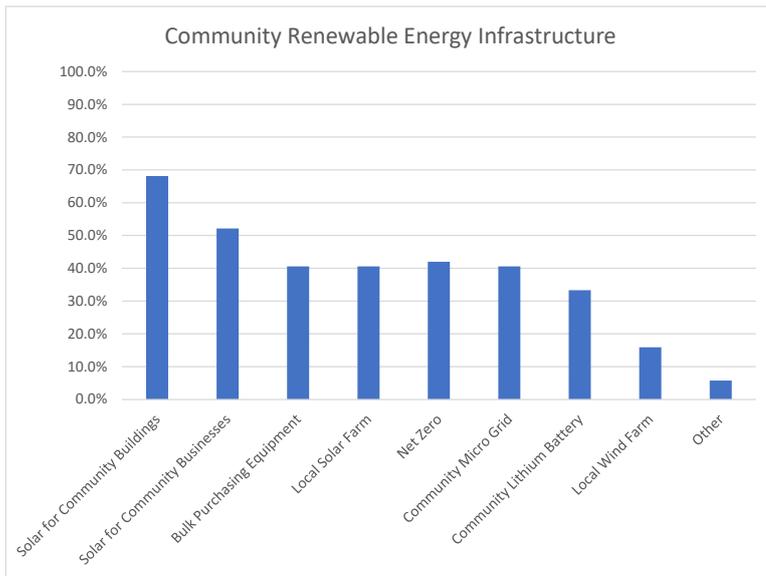
Fewer 21% [R 14] indicated that another reason than Cost was the primary hurdle, with females more so than males (M 17% F 18%, R 4/6, respectively). Again, more females responded.

A request for more information was only indicated by 13% [R 9] but males were more interested in this (M 17% F 12%, R 4/4).

Females seem more concerned than males, while the later would like more information made available.

The Other comments seem to suggest again that Cost is a major problem but also ask for more information and clarity on: what Renter options are available, environmental impacts of using such green initiatives, and time delays in implementing such changes.

## Question 11. Regarding community renewable energy production, which of the following would interest you? (Tick all that apply.)



### Other comments:

- Decommission gas appliances
- Yackandandah elec scheme
- Opportunity to improve local grid resilience through renewable energy infrastructure
- Hydrogen/vegetable oil conversion kits; info for automobile
- Disposal of energy efficient materials

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*Solar for Community Buildings had a total of 68% surveyed was most important followed by Solar for Community Businesses 52%, in both cases there were 20% and 30%, respectively, more female responses than males.*

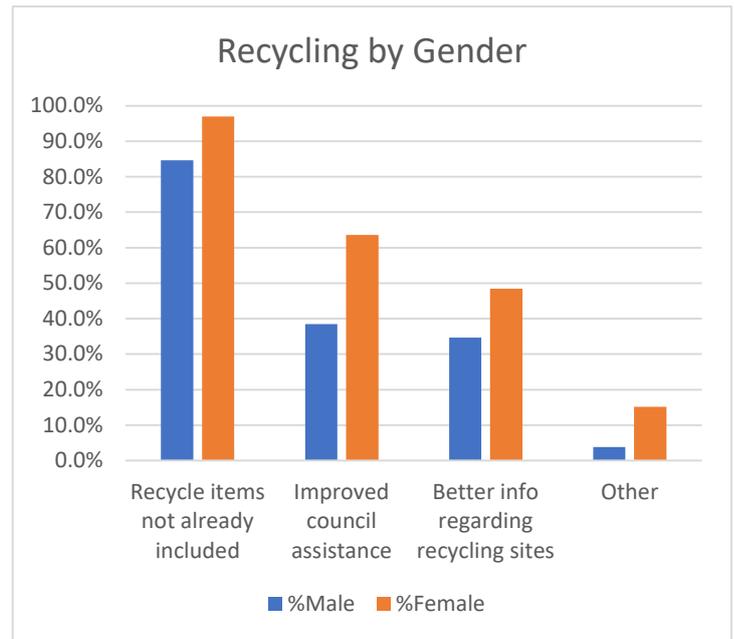
*The next four options Bulk Purchasing Equipment, Local Solar Farm, Net Zero and Community Micro Grid were all down at ~40%, with females similar to males, except for Local Solar Farms when females were 20% ahead.*

*The last three options Community Lithium Battery, Local Wind Farm, and Other dropped to 30%, 16% and 6%, respectively.*

*Note that the only options where there was more interest from males than females were in Bulk Purchasing of Equipment, Net Zero and Community Lithium Battery.*

*The Other comments suggest a need for more information on how to make practical changes in decommissioning or disposing of old appliances and installing new appliances and electricity sources.*

**Question 12. Regarding recycling, which of the following would interest you?  
(Tick all that apply.)**



**Other comments:**

- Extra bins for sorting, no waste to landfill, fines to those not doing the right thing
- Home processing of kerbside recyclables (low grade) to change them into high grade recyclables - then alternative collection strategies
- Better recycling of waste donated to church op shop
- Soft plastics x2
- Kitty litter disposal
- Regular hard rubbish
- Coffee cups
- Paper bag packaging
- Where does our recycling go?
- Need more awareness

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*All respondents wished to be able to recycle more items that are currently not collected in kerbside collection. Female respondents were slightly more interested in this.*

*Half the respondents wished that there was improved assistance by council, 2/3 of them females. Half the respondents would like to see better information regarding recycling sites.*

*Other issues that our survey discovered were a desire for no waste going to landfill, extra bins for sorting, better preparation of what individuals throw into the recycling bins, in order to create high grade recyclables, then alternative collection strategies to make use of the cleaner material.*

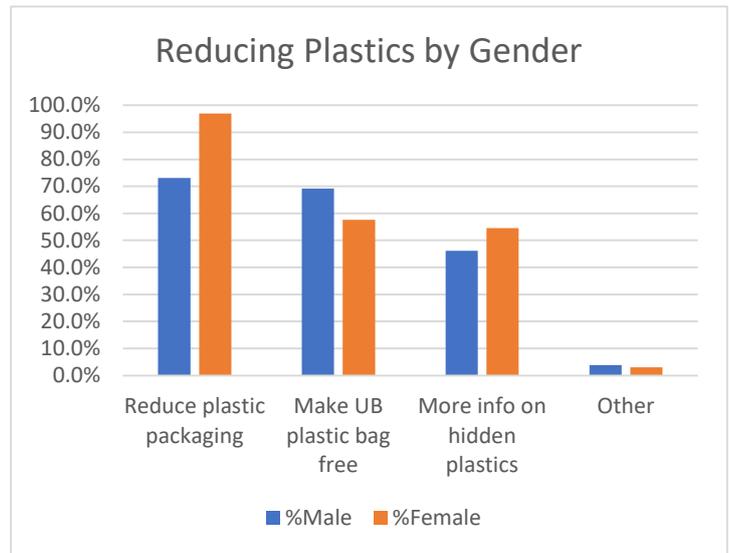
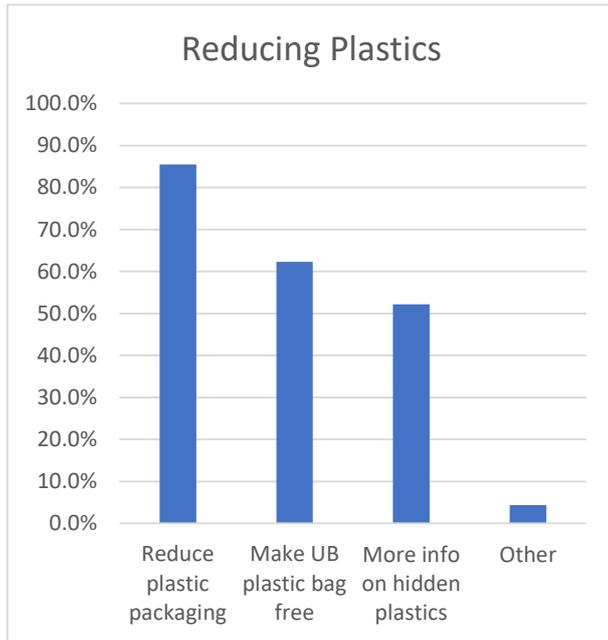
*People were interested to find out what happens to our recycling, and feel that more awareness is needed.*

*Soft plastics, kitty litter and coffee cups were mentioned as items that they would like to find solutions for.*

*Also, to bring back regular hard rubbish collections, and a solution for the op shop to dispose of the donations that are not suitable for sale, without incurring costs.*

*Paper bag packaging was suggested, as well as fines for those not doing the right thing.*

**Question 13. Recycling reducing plastics, which of the following would interest you? (Tick all that apply.)**



Other comments:

- Bulk foods, Co-op, takeaway coffee cup free
- Full cost/benefit analysis of plastics versus other materials
- Soft plastic recycling

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*Nearly all respondents (85%) would like plastic packaging to be reduced, again female respondents were more concerned about this.*

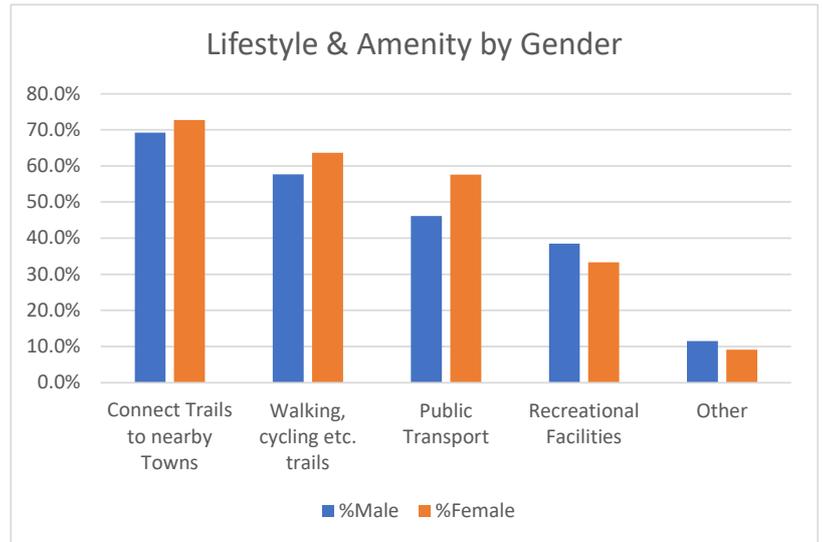
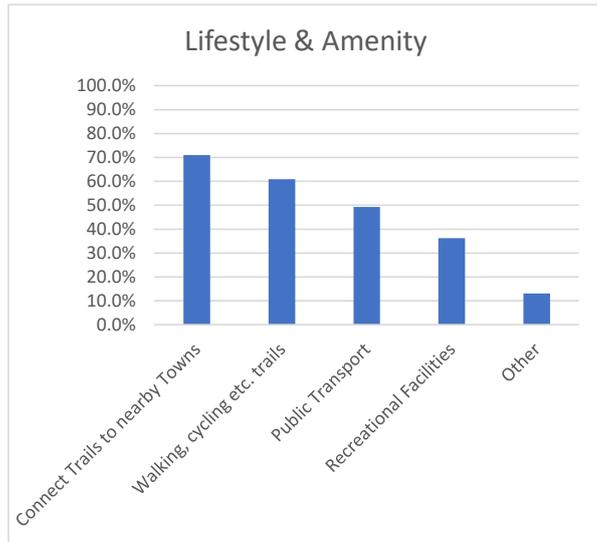
*Two thirds of respondents wished that UB was plastic bag free.*

*Just over half would like to get more information about hidden plastics (females were slightly more concerned than males).*

*Other concerns mentioned were lack of solutions for soft plastic recycling, a full cost/benefit analysis of plastics vs other materials.*

*One respondent would like to see a co-op and access to bulk foods, and having takeaway coffee cup free.*

## Question 14. Regarding lifestyle & amenity, which of the following would interest you? (Tick all that apply)



### Other comments:

- Protection of UB look and feel, ie trees, permeable fences, greater protection for wildlife and vegetation, improve biodiversity, feral animal control, enforce weed management
- Separation of bike and walking trails on main throughfares
- Improved / remove potholes
- Protected bike lanes
- Almost zero public transport in UB
- Outdoor gym
- Reduce weeds in Cardinia Reserve

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*Connection of trails (for walking, jogging, bike riding and horse riding) to neighbouring towns was well supported by respondents (71%), while 61% wanted to see better trails. Suggestions for better trails included protected bike lanes, improved surfaces and separation of walkers and cyclists.*

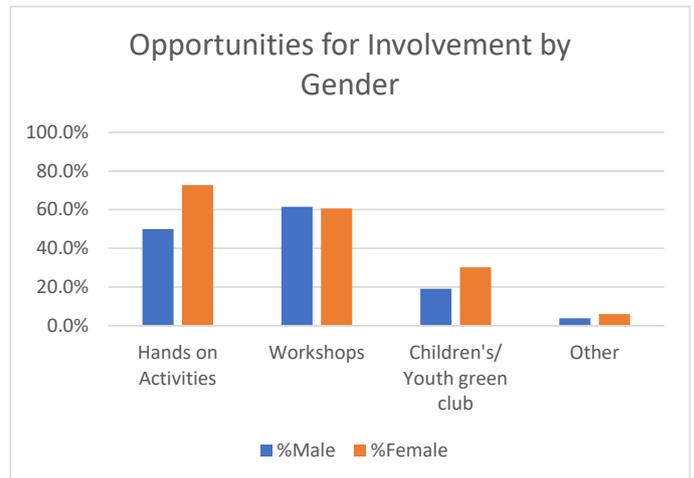
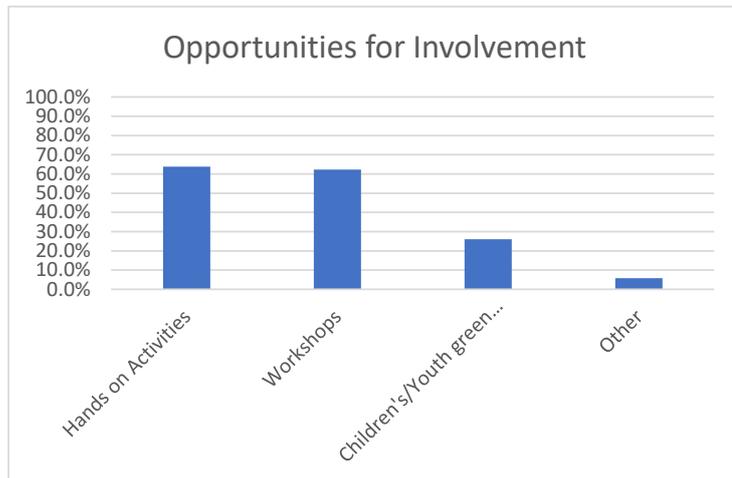
*Almost half of respondents would like to see better public transport, with a comment stating that it is almost non-existent, while more than a third were interested in better recreational facilities including a suggestion of an outdoor gym.*

*Very generally, female respondents indicated slightly to somewhat higher levels of concerns than male respondents, although this was reversed with respect to recreational facilities.*

*Comments reflected a desire to see maintained or enhanced aesthetics and atmosphere for the UB lifestyle and amenity with a strong sentiment of "green and relaxed" being conveyed among respondents (from Q18); this included caring or control of plant and animal species as needed, through to the desire for trails and concern regarding impact of human-made structures such as fences and actions such as recycling opportunities.*

**Question 15. Regarding opportunities (including for children) to participate in environmental projects and education, which of the following would interest you? (Tick all that apply.)**

- Opportunities to join in hands-on activities eg Clean-up Australia Days, local weed control programs, etc
- Workshops on topics such as native gardens, reducing water wastage, Cardinia Biolinks Plan
- Participation in a children’s/youth “green” club
- Other .....



**Other comments:**

- strong environmental protection, awareness of the unique and special place we live
- Courses that assist residents to implement the Upper Beac Bushfire and Biodiversity tool. Teaching ‘low smoke’ burning off
- Rubbish cleaning club every Sunday & grow your own plants
- Community gardens

*Workshops interested 60% of the public, and hands-on-activities attracted a very similar number. 25% showed interest in a Children’s/Youth Green Club. (This lower figure would have to be compared with a survey of children on this topic).*

*For hands-on activities half of males showed an interest, whereas three quarters of women did. For workshops the interest was even at 60% for both men and women. One fifth of men showed interest for the Children’s/ Youth Green Club, compared to one third of women.*

*In the other category: one person wanted the finding of ways to promote strong environmental awareness and protection. Another thought of us providing a workshop on low smoke burning off. Courses on how to personally implement the Bushfire and Biodiversity Tool also raised a mention. A hands-on-activity of cleaning up rubbish outside the ‘Clean up Australia’ campaign was talked about. Gardening/plant growing workshops was another, and lastly participation in community gardens.*

**Question 16. In reflection on Q.7 – Q.15, rank these topics in order of importance to you from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important.)**

- Improving household energy efficiency
- Increasing renewable energy production
- Waste management and recycling
- Reducing plastics in the community
- Sustainable lifestyle
- Opportunities for participation in environmental projects and education

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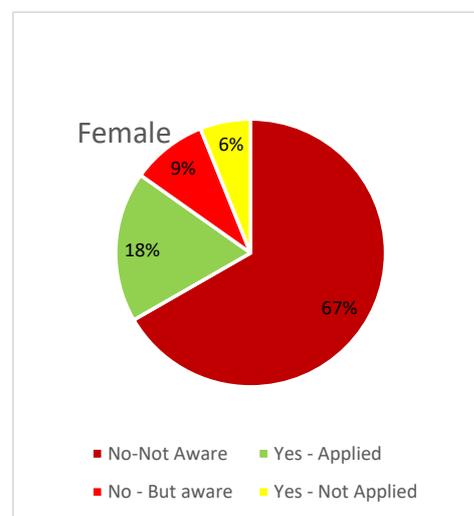
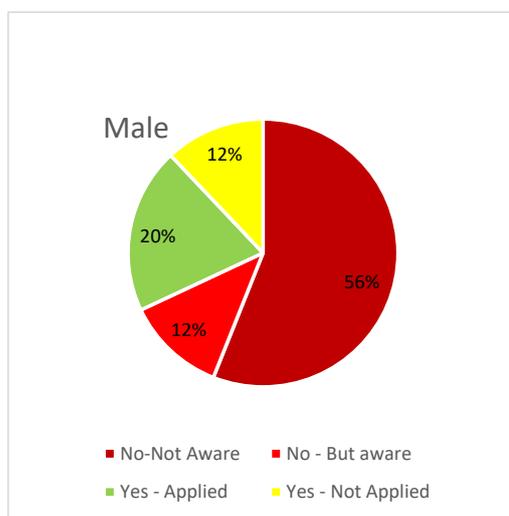
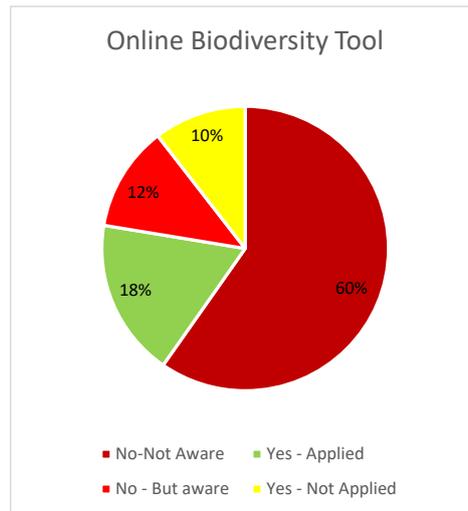
*When considering the ranking of only those that were ranked as most important, almost one third of respondents nominated 'sustainable lifestyle', with a comment (at Q 18) that if sustainable lifestyle is implemented, then all other topic areas are also addressed.*

*Approximately one quarter of respondents nominated 'improving household energy efficiency' first, however, when considering first & second or these & third nominations together, this was ranked the most highly, giving the impression that 'improving household energy efficiency' is a very important topic to respondents.*

*'Increasing renewable energy generation' together with 'waste management and recycling' and 'reducing plastics in the community' tended to be in the top three nominations depending on the data set considered, indicating a significant level of importance of the topic to the respondents involved in the survey.*

*Interestingly, 'opportunities for participation in environmental projects and/or education' was nominated last regardless of the data set considered; this is a bit of an anomaly when observing results from question 15, which showed 60% of the public indicated an interest in both areas of 'workshops' on various topics and 'hands-on' opportunities.*

## Question 17. Regarding the management of your whole property, have you made use of the online Bushfire & Biodiversity Tool?



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Disappointingly, 60% of respondents answered they were unaware of this on-line tool. There were another 12% who had heard of the tool, but had not explored it. So together nearly three quarters of people surveyed had not even explored the tool. Effective promotion of the tool appears to be lacking.

About one half of men had not heard about it, whereas two thirds of females had not. So, some promotion messages would need to be aimed with women in mind. For those who had heard of it, but not explored it, the figures came in at 12% for males and 9% for females – not much difference there.

Of the one quarter surveyed, who had explored the tool, 60% of them had applied it. This means that if many more people were to explore the tool, then we could expect a significant number of people in the village would apply it in some way.

Close to one third of men responded that they had explored the tool online, whereas only one quarter of women had explored it. Of the men who had explored, 60% had gone on to apply it, whereas for the women who had explored it, 75% had gone on to apply it.

I.e. Women respondents, in percentage terms, knew less of the on-line tool's existence, but when they did explore it, applied it more often than their male counterparts. This re-iterates that promotional messaging aimed at women will probably result in more overall community action being applied from the tool.

The online tool is less dictatorial than other forms of messaging have been in the past. Getting more people to explore the tool could yield some interesting results on how successful offering more personal choice is, when it comes to mitigating bushfire and protecting bio-diversity. Keeping track of gender reactions to the on-line tool, like we have on this occasion, may shape future policy.

## Question 18. General comments/feedback

- Upper Beaconsfield should be a place valued for its nature and biodiversity. All residents should be well informed of the impact of pollution, clearing native vegetation, protecting the environment, the importance of rehabilitation, the impact of fossil fuels on climate change, reducing waste, reducing pollution, laws should be in place to protect UB - its the wild west. We need to encourage people to move here who value these principles, not people who want to clear blocks to make way for bulldozers. What does out town speak of? What draws people to UB? It should be known as a place were people care deeply about their environment and look after it, and place were there is movement and groundswell for initiatives like renewable community owned energy and more.
- On Q. 16. All of the alternative options to - environmentally sustainable lifestyle - do create an environmentally sustainable lifestyle.
- Note re glass crushing machine donated to remote community (See survey 2303-04)
- It would be great to see recycling bins around the UB shops to be used by the public.
- Community microgrid
- Recycling bins get very full every 2 weeks even when trying to reduce items that have packaging, looking at ways to deal with the excess as others are putting this into rubbish bins
- Business opportunities
- Thankyou for your efforts. I am focused on what individuals can do to make a difference
- Pedestrian/bike path on Beaconsfield-Emerald Road from Montuna Golf Course to Cardinia pub
- Too many fences restricting animal movement
- Just wondering what renters can do to push rental houses/units to be more energy efficient

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*Comments reflect a strong commitment to the environment generally and specifically in relation to Upper Beaconsfield and surrounds; these conveyed a sense of upholding environmental (wildlife) & community & amenity values AND for UB to be upheld as an example of these.*

*There was a desire for residents to be informed and involved, with potential introduction of laws to assist initiatives. Specific comments related to the broader impact on/of climate change and energy initiatives such as microgrids.*

*Some respondents questioned the opportunities for businesses and renters (to be involved/implement practices etc) and what individuals can do to make a difference.*

*Suggestions were many & varied and included; recycle bins at the UB shops, more collection of recyclables (including volume of collection) and consideration of utilities such as a glass crushing machine through to addressing fencing issues (including aesthetics and impact on wildlife movement) and trails for recreational use.*