

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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# Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan community survey

Snapshot of results

March 2025





# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present, and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally, and economically.

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# 1 Background and purpose

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) will enable growth in western Sydney, delivering important development and biodiversity outcomes. The CPCP will contribute to western Sydney's future by supporting the delivery of housing, jobs, and infrastructure while protecting important biodiversity, including threatened plants and animals.

From 21 October 2024 to 11 November 2024, residents of the CPCP area could complete our social survey. We received 1,196 responses from people within the plan area (Figure 1). The survey was promoted through the CPCP mailing list, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's website and social media campaign, as well as the local Council's social media platforms.

The survey gave us valuable insights into how people use green spaces and how they feel about their local environment, health, wellbeing, and social connections. It also helped us better understand local biodiversity values and awareness of Aboriginal culture.

The aim of the survey is to help evaluate the CPCP by collecting information on:

- how people cope with heatwaves
- improvements in liveability
- residents' sense of wellbeing and belonging
- how residents use reserves for recreation, play, and social connection
- awareness of biodiversity and conservation
- residents' understanding of biodiversity's cultural significance to Aboriginal people
- residents' participation in nature-based activities and nature-related science
- their sense of inclusion and social connection
- the strength and resilience of their communities.

We will repeat the survey every 18 to 24 months at different times of the year to capture ongoing insights. The information collected will be used in the monitoring and evaluation of the plan and to inform ongoing and new programs.

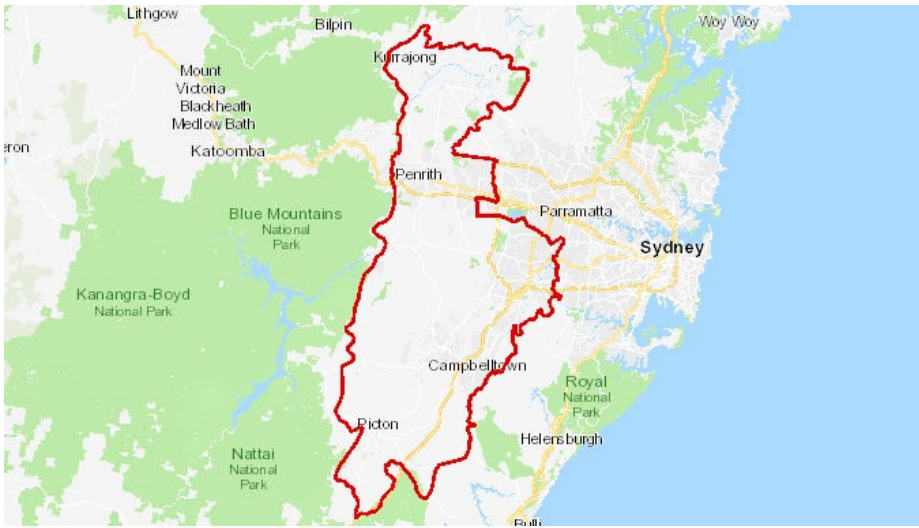


Figure 1. Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan area

# 2 Key findings

## 2.1 How residents feel about their local area

Figure 2 shows how residents feel about their local area and their attachment to it.

- Most participants feel their local area is pleasant and have an emotional attachment to it.
- Local government areas that residents rate as the most pleasant are Camden (84%), Hawkesbury (83%), and Wollondilly (83%).

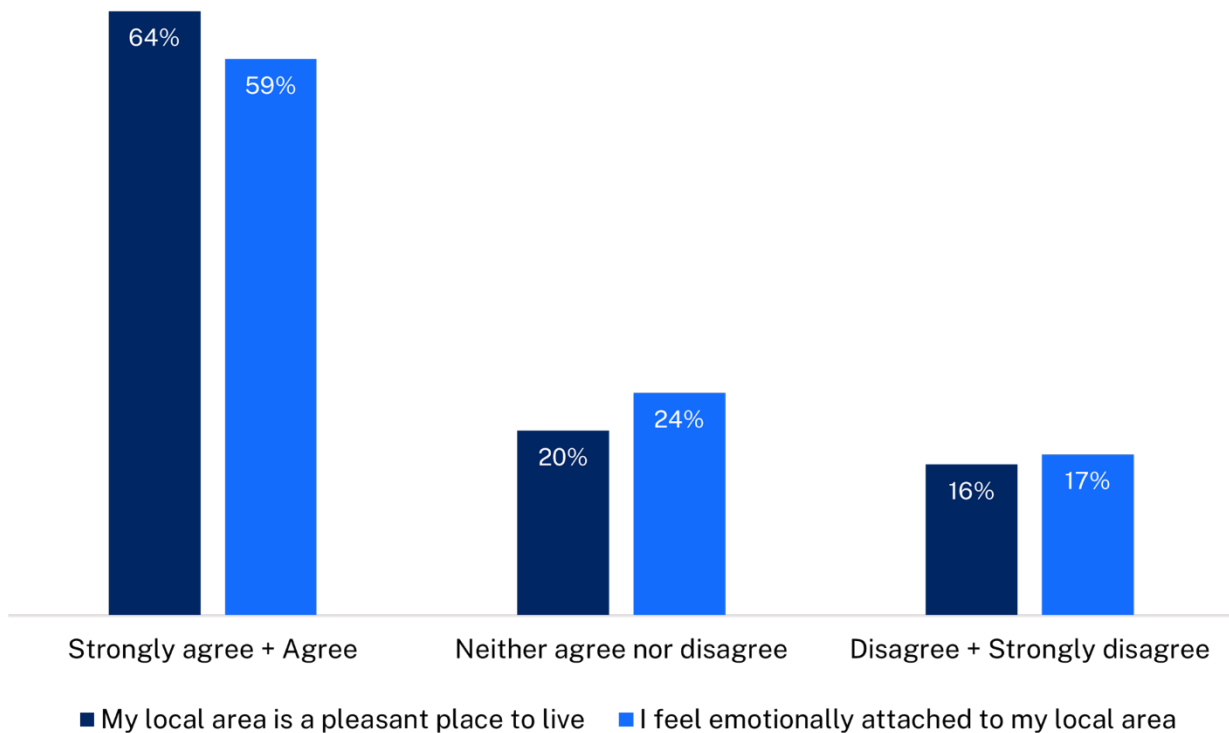


Figure 2. How residents feel about their local area and their attachment to it

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## 2.2 Community belonging and liveability



Young people from 18 to 34 years old in the plan area are less likely to feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community than those aged 65 and older - 22% versus 46%.



People with a very strong sense of belonging to their local community are more likely to be in excellent health, and those with no sense of belonging were more likely to report only fair health.



Residents in areas with enough tree canopy and green cover are more likely to feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community.



Those who feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community are also more than twice as likely to see their local area as a pleasant place to live.

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## 2.3 Opinions on local tree canopy cover

Figure 3 shows residents' opinions on local tree canopy cover.

- 17% of participants think their area has enough tree cover.
- 81% think their local tree canopy is lacking in some way.
- Residents in the Wollondilly and Hawkesbury local government areas are the most likely to say their tree canopy is sufficient or better.
- Residents in the Blacktown local government area are much less likely to see their tree cover as sufficient and more likely to say it is insufficient or worse.

Have you found the tree canopy and green cover in your local area to be:

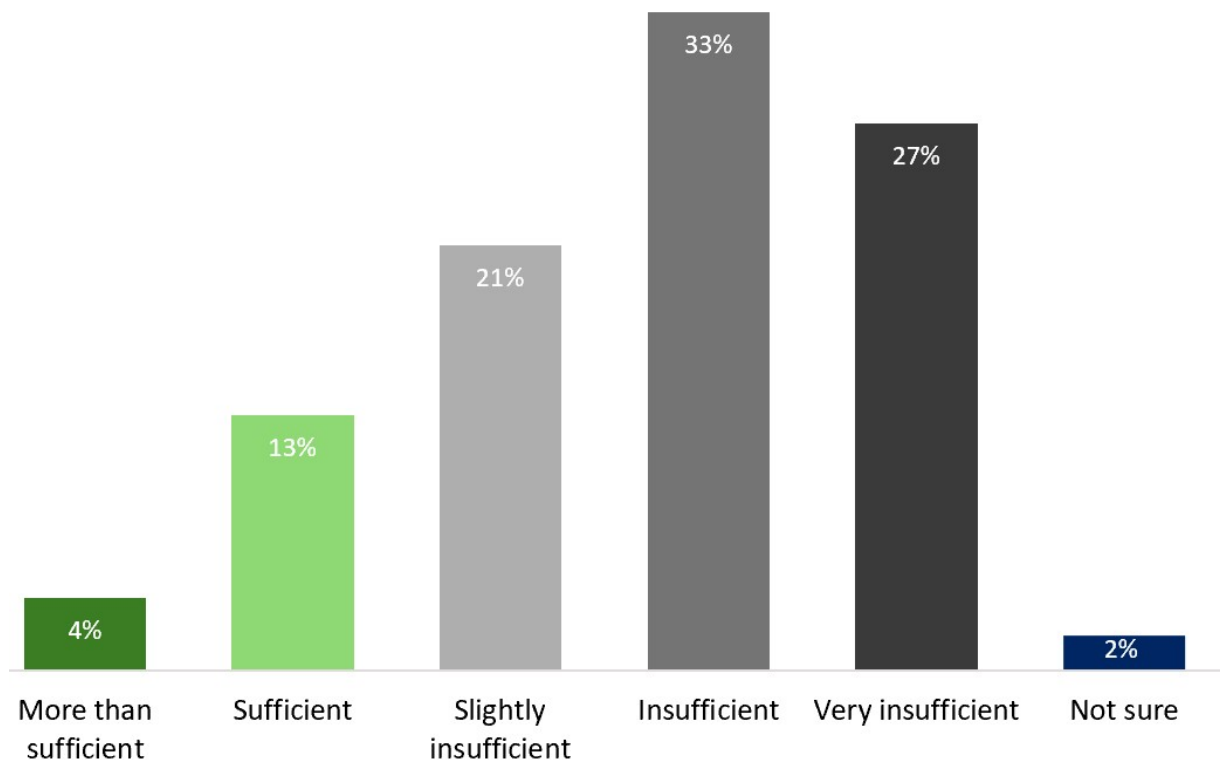


Figure 3. Opinions on local tree canopy cover



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## 2.4 Visiting parks and green spaces

Figure 4 shows how often residents visit parks and green spaces.

- Local parks are the most common green spaces people visit, with 72% of participants going in the last 3 months and 32% visiting daily, every few days, or weekly.
- 50% of participants have visited the coast, ocean, rivers, lakes, or dams in the last 3 months.
- Community gardens, zoos, wildlife parks, and botanical gardens are the least visited.
- More than 63% reported using 'other' types of green space in the last 3 months.

## How often in the past 3 months have you visited each of the following?

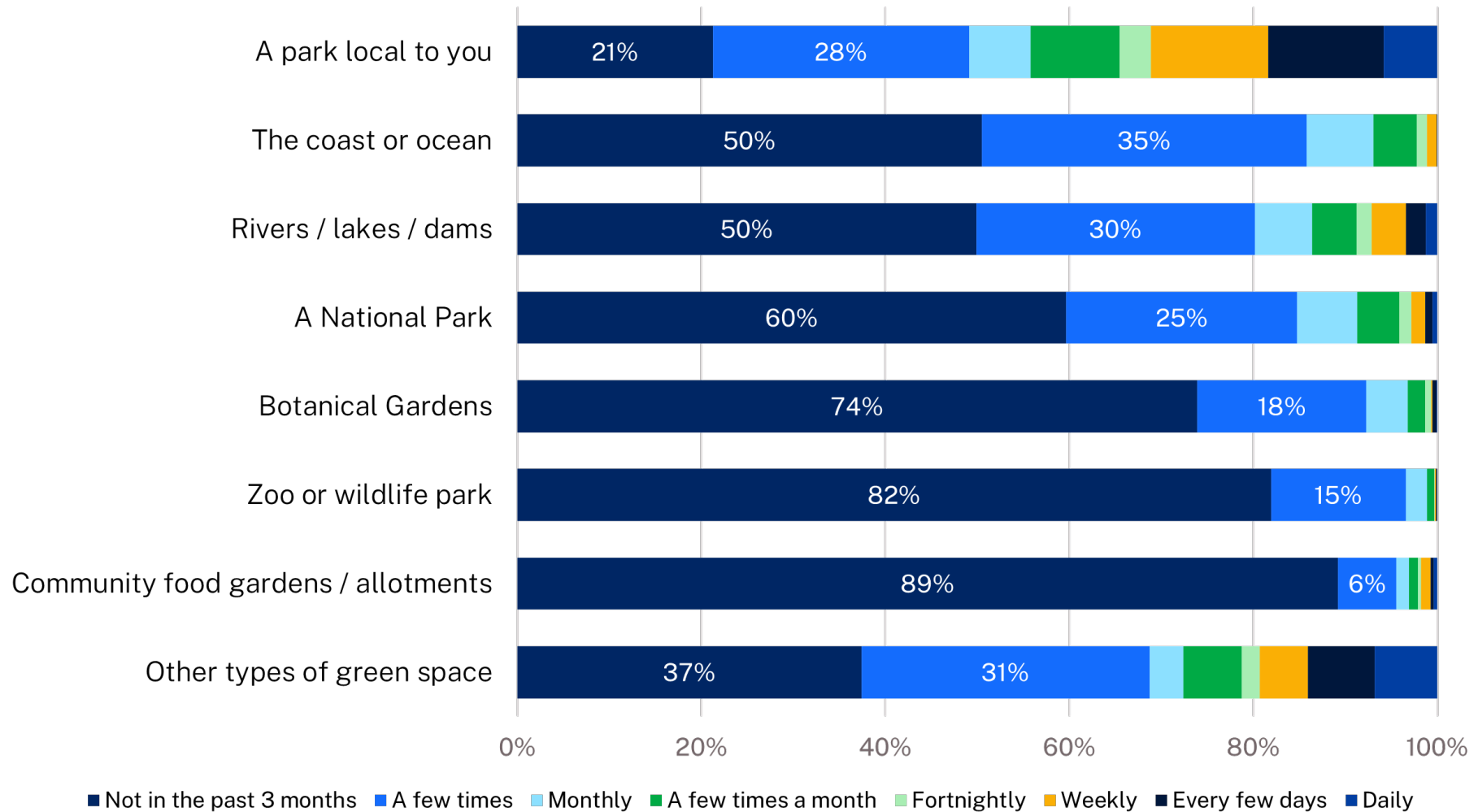


Figure 4. Visiting parks and green spaces

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## 2.5 Park activities

Figure 5 shows the activities that residents take part in when they visit parks and nature reserves.

- 78% of participants agree that their local area has a park or nature reserve that is easy to access.
- 63% say their area has pleasant natural features, but fewer believe that local parks are safe or encourage physical activity and social interactions.
- Walking is by far the most common activity undertaken in parks, with 87% of participants doing it.
- Nearly half (46%) of participants observe plants and wildlife, more than a third (35%) walk with a pet or have a picnic, and just under a third use playgrounds.

When you visit a park or nature reserve, what activities do you typically do? Select all that apply:

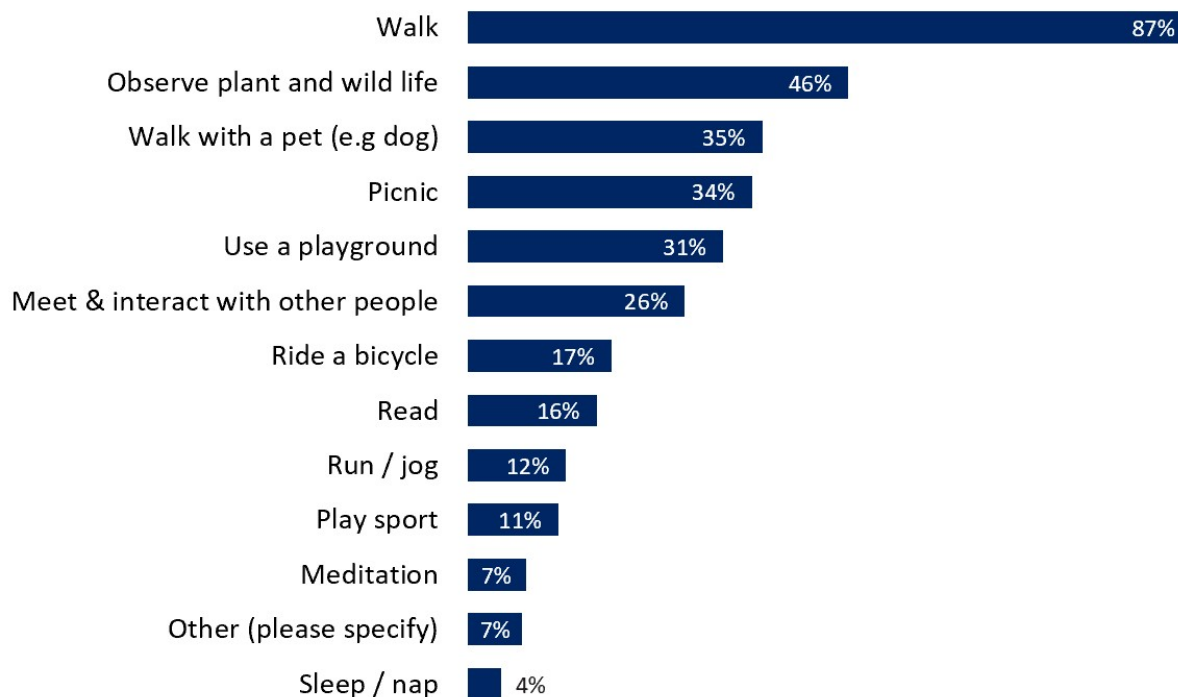


Figure 5. Park activities

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## 2.6 Thoughts on nature, biodiversity, and climate

Figure 6 shows residents' thoughts on nature, biodiversity and climate.

- 95% of participants believe we have a responsibility to protect nature and biodiversity for future generations.
- The majority of people also agree that nature and biodiversity are essential for the production of food, clean air and water, and medicines and in tackling climate change.
- Fewer people support the role of biodiversity in personal wellbeing compared with other statements.
- People aged 25 to 44 are more likely than people aged 65 and older to agree that nature and biodiversity are important for tackling climate change: 93% versus 74%. This result aligns with data from the [NSW Enviro Pulse Survey](#), which shows that younger people in NSW are generally more concerned about climate change than older people.
- Women are slightly more likely than men to agree that nature and biodiversity are important for tackling climate change: 73% versus 60%.

## To what extent do you agree with the following statements

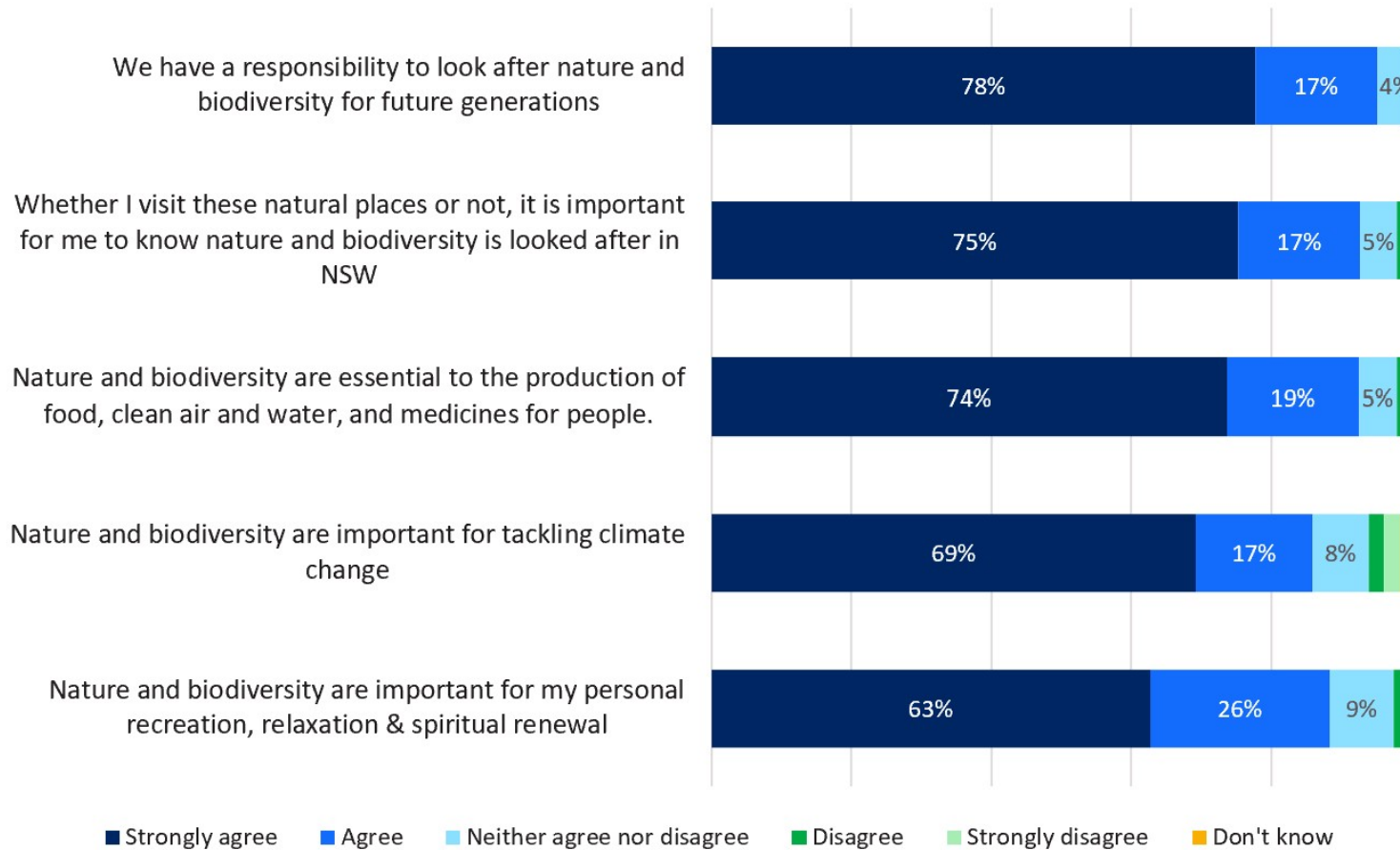


Figure 6. Thoughts on nature, biodiversity, and climate

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## 2.7 Understanding the risks to nature and Aboriginal cultural practices

Figure 7 shows how participants rated their knowledge of the risks to nature and Aboriginal cultural practices.

- Participants know the most about threats to koalas and how tree clearing affects threatened plants, animals, and their habitats.
- Participants know less about local threatened plant communities, environmental protection planning regulations and controls, and land management programs to protect biodiversity.
- Participants have some knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history, including the cultural significance of land, water, plants, and animals. They are less knowledgeable about traditional Caring for Country practices, truth-telling, and languages.

### How would you rate your knowledge of the following:

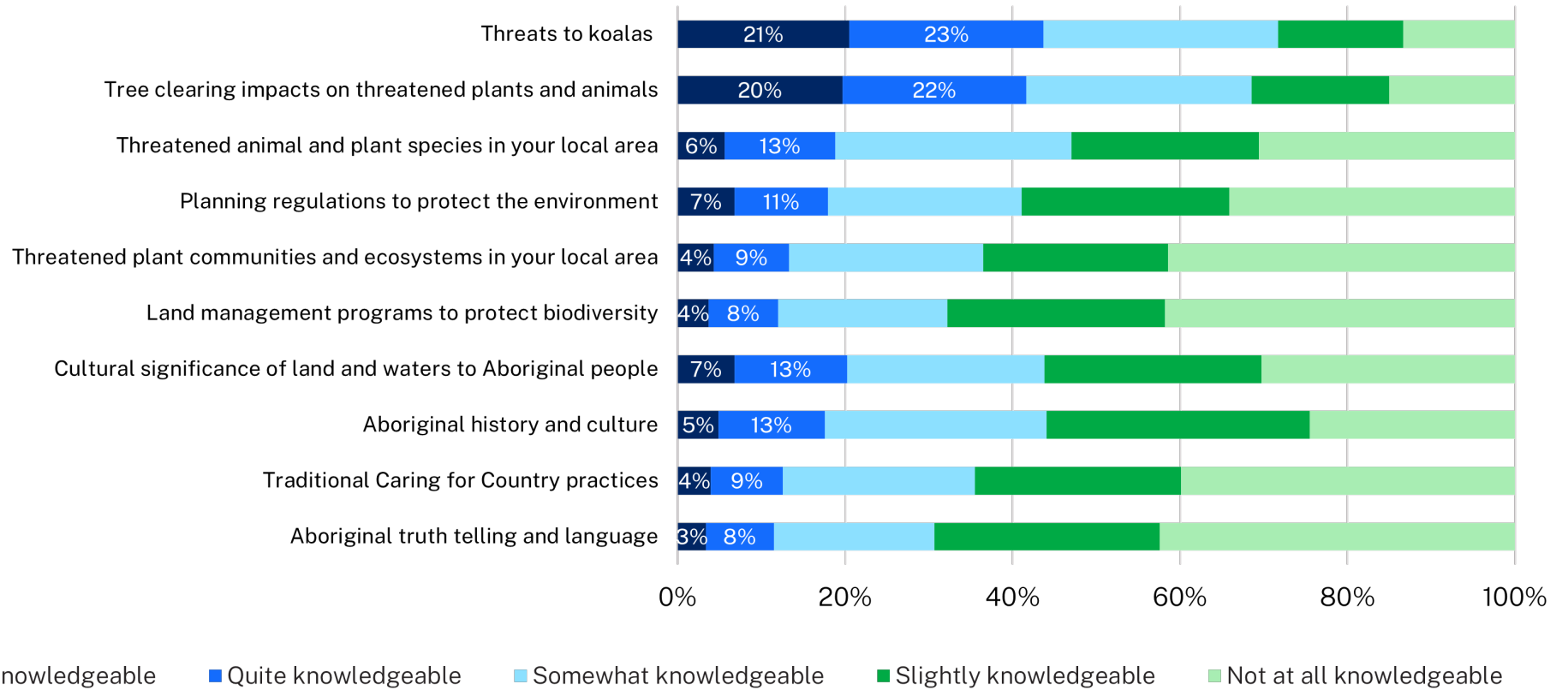


Figure 7. Understanding the risks to nature and Aboriginal cultural practices

## 2.8 Coping with heatwaves

Figure 8 shows how well individuals and communities cope with heatwaves.

- Participants generally find it easier to cope with cold weather than with heatwaves.
- Cumberland Plain residents feel more confident in their own ability to handle heatwaves than in their local area's resilience to heatwaves.
- Only 9% agree that their local areas are resilient to heatwaves, while 66% disagree.
- Participants in very good or excellent health are more likely to cope well with heatwaves than those in fair or poor health. This suggests that residents trust personal coping strategies for heatwaves, such as home air conditioning, more than community or environmental options, such as sufficient tree cover.

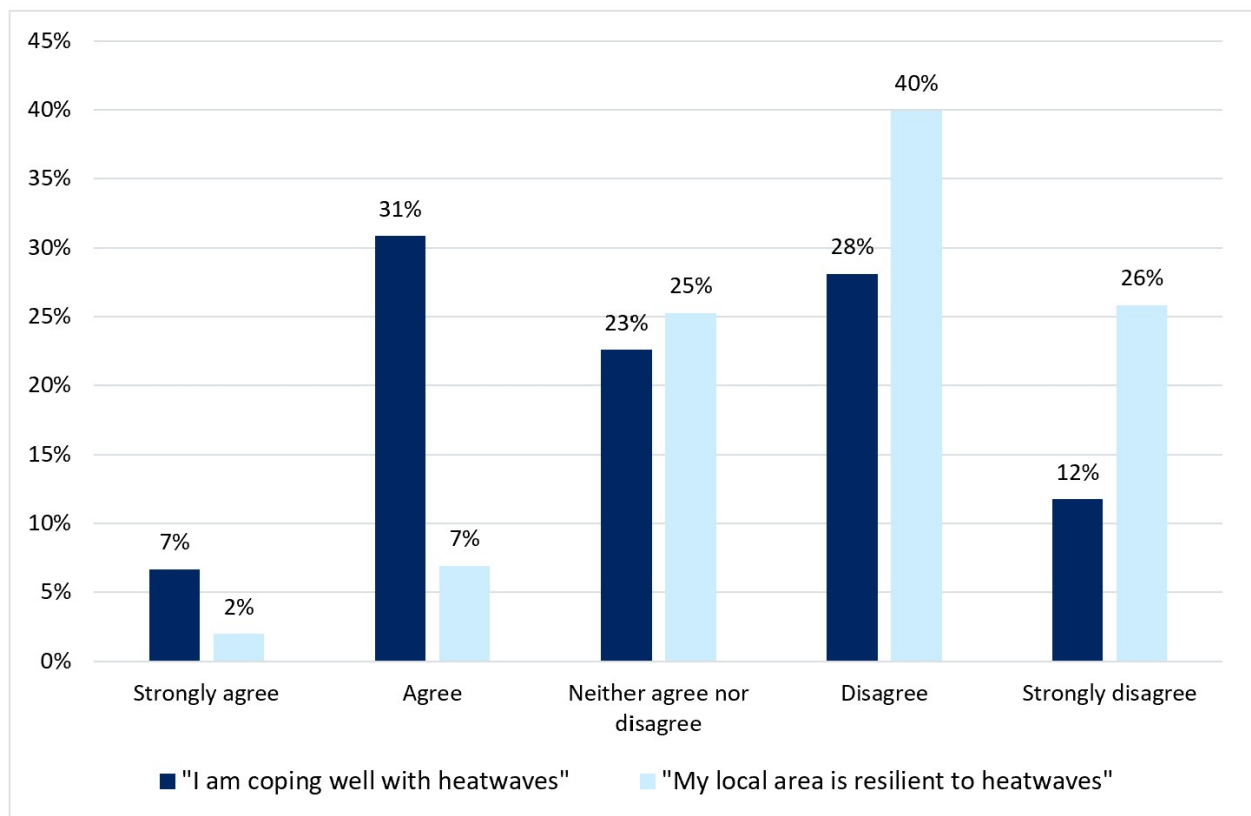


Figure 2. How individuals and communities cope with heatwaves



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## 2.9 Improving local resilience to heatwaves

We asked residents about the most effective ways to improve resilience to heatwaves.

Figure 9 shows their responses.

- A quarter of participants think increasing tree canopy and green cover is the best way to make their local area more resilient to heatwaves.
- More than half support a range of ways to improve heatwave resilience, including more tree canopy and green cover, better home designs, and cooler public places.
- Other suggestions include using fewer dark surfaces (such as roofs and roads), improving access to pools, insulating homes better, and reducing development density.

In your view, what would be the most effective method in making your local area more resilient to heatwaves?

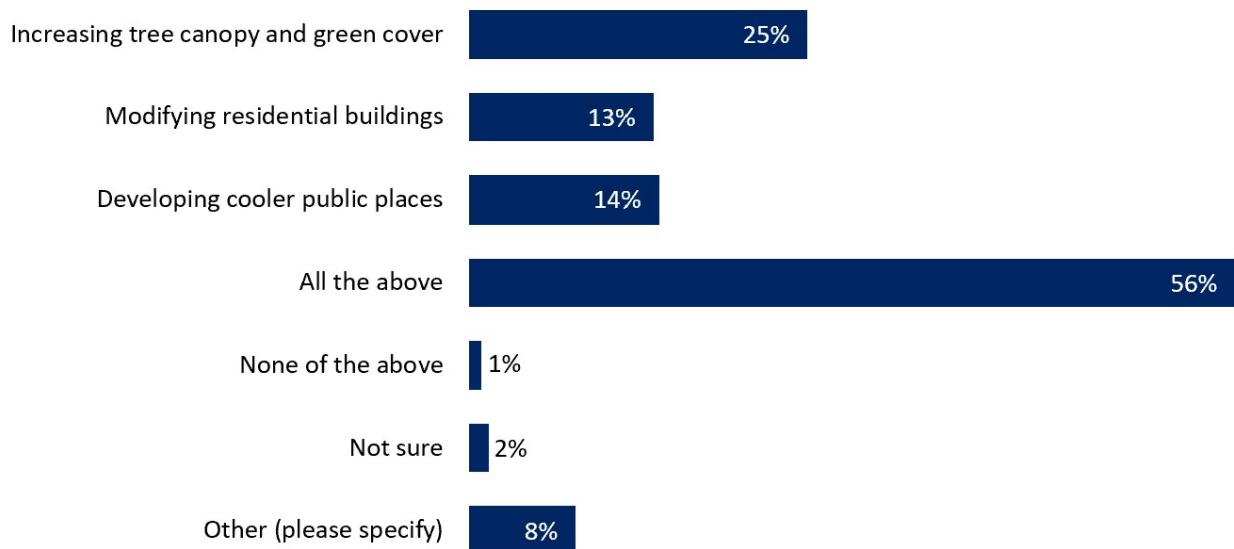


Figure 3. Improving local resilience to heatwaves

# 3 Implementing survey findings

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey. Your feedback is valuable in helping us deliver the plan.

We will use the information gathered – about the use of green space, local environmental knowledge, biodiversity, heatwave resilience, wellbeing, and Aboriginal cultural practices – to guide current and future programs under the plan.

We will also share the findings with our delivery partners, including the 8 local councils (Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith, and Wollondilly) that are within the plan area, as we work together on projects.

We will repeat the survey every 18 to 24 months, at different times of the year. This will help track trends over time, account for seasonal differences, and provide ongoing insights for monitoring and evaluating the plan's progress.

We will also compare the results with other NSW-wide data, including the NSW Enviro Pulse Survey, which tracks environmental and social indicators to support government climate change policies and programs.

If you have any questions about the survey report or want to be included in our mailing list for future surveys, please contact us at [CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au).