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Title:

A snapshot of the lived values of Seaspray: results from a mail-out survey

Date:

2012

Citation:

Barnett, J., Fincher, R., Hurlimann, A., Graham, S., & Mortreux, C. (2012). A snapshot of the lived values of Seaspray: results from a mail-out survey. The University of Melbourne.

Publication Status:

Published

Persistent Link:

<https://hdl.handle.net/11343/39718>



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



A snapshot of the lived values of Seaspray

Results from a mail-out survey

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 52 residents of Seaspray who participated in the mail-out survey.

This project has been funded by a Linkage Grant (LP100100586) from the Australian Research Council. Our research partners on the linkage grant are the East Gippsland Shire Council, Wellington Shire Council, the Gippsland Coastal Board, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Planning and Community Development. We would like to acknowledge the support provided by these agencies.

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Printed: November 2012

Executive Summary

Introduction

- ⚓ Past research on sea-level rise in Gippsland East has focused on the potential physical impacts. None of the research has considered what it is about this area that *people* value and how these valued things may be at risk from sea-level rise.
- ⚓ This research aims to address this gap by examining the things people value, which can help to understand:
 - the risks sea-level rise poses to the things that are important to people
 - the goals of strategies to adapt to sea-level rise
 - ways to adapt that are fair and equitable
- ⚓ During April 2012 interviews were conducted with 17 households in Seaspray, McLoughlins Beach, Manns Beach and Port Albert. The aim of the interviews was to develop an in-depth understanding of the things people value about living in these communities, we refer to these as 'lived values'. The interviews revealed that there are at least 37 things that people value about living in Seaspray. The preliminary results of the interviews are available online:
<http://abp.unimelb.edu.au/research/GippslandEast>
- ⚓ The next stage of the research aimed to determine:
 - 1) Whether the list of lived values derived from the interviews was complete;
 - 2) Which of the lived values identified in the interviews are most shared by the broader Seaspray community; and
 - 3) Which lived values are clearly more important than others.
- ⚓ To achieve these aims a mail-out survey was conducted in Seaspray in mid 2012. This report provides a summary of the results of the mail-out survey.

Methods

- ⚓ A mail-out survey was distributed to 236 houses in Seaspray, many of which are holiday homes. 52 surveys were returned, fifteen of which were second home owners. We estimate that the returned surveys represent 30% of permanent households and 7% of second home owners.
- ⚓ The survey was developed by researchers at the University of Melbourne.
- ⚓ The survey comprised five sections on: background information; connection to the area; lived values; day-to-day activities; and social relationships.
- ⚓ This document presents a brief summary of the major findings of the survey. A detailed analysis of the data is not presented nor are final conclusions drawn. Further analysis will be conducted over the next six months.

Results

- ⚓ *Socio-economic characteristics.* Compared to the broader population of Seaspray, the survey respondents have similar levels of post-school education, participation in the workforce and household composition. They also tend to be older and there is a

bias towards women. These differences need to be taken into account when interpreting the results; a diversity of values have been captured here but the weighting given to these values may differ between the survey respondents and adult population of Seaspray.

- ⚓ *Connection to the area.* On average the respondents have lived, or holidayed, in the region for 21 years. Almost half have long-term family connections to the area. The majority of respondents intend to continue living and holidaying in Seaspray.
- ⚓ *Lived values.* There are 62 things that respondents independently mentioned that they value about living in Seaspray. Of these, 35 overlap with the list of most important lived values that were derived from the interviews. This means that an extra 27 lived values were identified through the mail-out survey. These included: having the family come to visit; lack of traffic; the rural life; animal ownership; block sizes; environmentally friendly living; access to decision-making; and open spaces.

The lived values identified by the greatest number of respondents and ranked as very important by a majority of respondents are the peacefulness, the scenery, being close to water, the relaxed lifestyle, and the natural environment.
- ⚓ *Frustrations.* The main thing that respondents identified as frustrating them about living in the Seaspray is the limited number of shops (i.e. only one), distance to medical services, and limited public transport services.
- ⚓ *Day-to-day activities.* The most popular outdoor activity that respondents engage in is going for walks. Visiting the local shops is also a regular activity. Visiting the beach and gardening are particularly popular in warmer months. Overall, the most frequent activities take place indoors. These include watching television, reading a newspaper or book and using the computer for leisure.
- ⚓ *Social relationships.* Almost half the respondents spend time with their family at least once a week and more than half spend time with friends every week. Almost one-fifth of respondents indicated that they do not have any close friends in Seaspray. More than half the respondents have a few close friends and are members of at least one group or organisation.

Concluding remarks

The results presented in this report indicate that there is much that respondents value about living in Seaspray. The greatest amount of agreement exists around features of the natural environment and the lifestyle it affords. There are also a range of values that appear to be specific to particular groups of people within the community, which relate to life stage and circumstance. Next, the project team will examine in more detail how particular values are distributed among the communities. In the interim these preliminary results provide a snapshot of what is important about people's lives in Seaspray, which will need to be taken into account when developing responses to adapt to sea-level rise.

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Introduction

The Gippsland East coast stretches between Port Albert in the west to Victoria's border with New South Wales in the east.

The coast is low lying and largely comprised of erodible sediments, raising concerns about the impact of sea-level rise and extreme events on the long narrow barrier of dunes that separate the lakes from the ocean.

Past research has focused on the potential physical impacts of sea-level rise in this area. None of the research has considered what it is about this area that *people* value and how these valued things may be at risk from sea-level rise.

This research aims to address this gap by examining the things people value, which can help to understand:

- the risks sea-level rise poses to the things that are important to people
- the goals of strategies to adapt to sea-level rise
- ways to adapt that are fair and equitable

The first step towards meeting these objectives was achieved through 17 interviews with residents of Seaspray, McLoughlins Beach, Manns Beach and Port Albert, conducted in April 2012. The preliminary results of the interviews are available online (<http://abp.unimelb.edu.au/research/GippslandEast>).

The second step involved conducting a mail-out survey in August and September 2012. This report provides the preliminary results from the survey conducted in Seaspray.

The next step will involve holding focus groups with community members to talk about what they see as the best adaptation options in view of the lived values that have been identified here.

Methods

During August and September 2012 a mail-out survey was conducted in Seaspray that was completed by approximately one-third of households of permanent residents and one-twentieth of second home owners.

In total, of the 236 surveys that were hand delivered, 52 returned the survey. On returning to Seaspray to deliver a reminder postcard it was noted that 47 surveys were still visible on door steps. This indicates that the response rate is in the vicinity of 27.5%. This is a standard response for a mail-out survey with a follow-up postcard (Dillman, 1978).

Of the 52 returned surveys, 37 were completed by permanent residents and 17 by second home owners. Based on data on occupied private dwellings from the 2011 Census, we believe that this represents 30% (37/123) of Seaspray's permanent households and 7% (15/214) of Seaspray's second home owners. A higher response rate may have been achieved if the survey was conducted in summer, given that is when many second home owners return to Seaspray.

Participants came across the suburb of Seaspray (Figure 1).

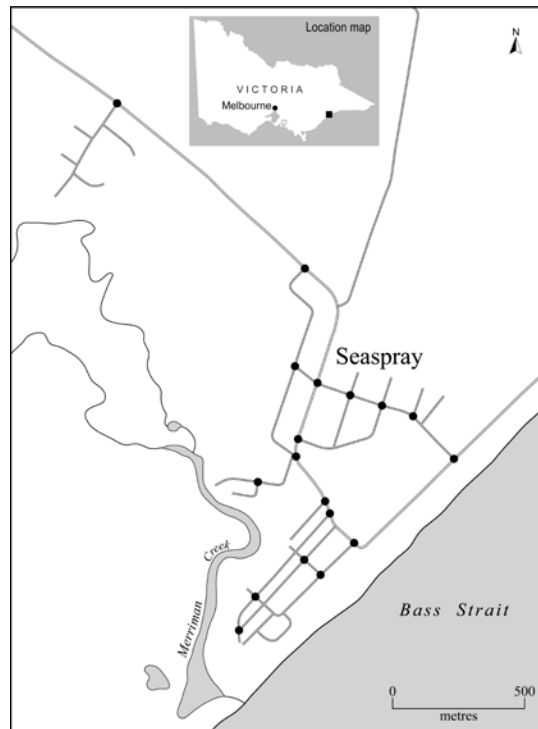


Figure 1. Nearest intersections (marked with dots) to where respondents lived or owned second homes.

Questions were designed to collect information on:

1. *Socio-economic characteristics.* This included: 1) personal characteristics of the respondent, such as gender, age and education; 2) household characteristics, such as number of people and relationship between people living in the household as well as household income; and 3) geographical information, specifically the nearest street intersection to where people live.
2. *Connection to the area.* This included questions about: whether the respondent lives in Seaspray on a permanent or temporary basis; the length of time they have been living in Seaspray; whether the respondent's family had a connection to the area before moving; and whether they intend to continue living in Seaspray.
3. *Lived values.* This section included questions that aimed to determine whether there were any things people valued about living in Seaspray that had not been identified in the interviews conducted in April 2012. It also asked respondents to rank how important 31 qualities of Seaspray are to them. These qualities were the 31 lived values that emerged as being most important in the interviews.
4. *Day-to-day activities.* This included questions about frequency of participation in a range of social and individual recreational activities.
5. *Social relationships.* This section included questions about: the frequency with which respondents spend time with family, friends and other members of the community; the number of close friends they have who live in Seaspray; and their involvement in community organisations.

The remainder of this report is divided into five sections, reflecting the survey structure. Each section provides a summary of responses to questions from the corresponding section of the survey.

Socio-economic characteristics

In order to gauge the representativeness of the people who responded to the mail-out survey, comparisons are made between the people who responded to the survey and the usual adult population of Seaspray. Data from the 2011 Census (ABS, 2012), which are based on 254 permanent residents, are used for comparison. We include all 52 permanent and non-permanent respondents in our comparison due to the small sample size, so as to protect the anonymity of all respondents. Also note that the ABS may adjust some values in small communities to protect confidentiality.

On average respondents' households contained 1.9 residents, which is slightly lower than the average of 2.4 residents per household in the broader Seaspray population (ABS, 2012). None of the respondents identified as being indigenous. This unsurprising given that the indigenous population of Seaspray is 1% (ABS, 2012), i.e. three people.

Gender

There were some differences between the proportion of female and male respondents compared to the adult population of Seaspray. Women made up 67.2% of respondents, while they only comprise 50% of the total adult population. This means that the results may reflect the views of women more than men.

Age distribution

Survey respondents covered a wide range of ages (Figure 2). However, there was some underrepresentation of people less than 44 years of age compared to the adult population of Seaspray (ABS, 2012). This was due to there being an overrepresentation of respondents in the 55-64, 65-74 and 75-84 age groups. This needs to be taken into account when interpreting the results; the results reflect the values of an older population than that of Seaspray.

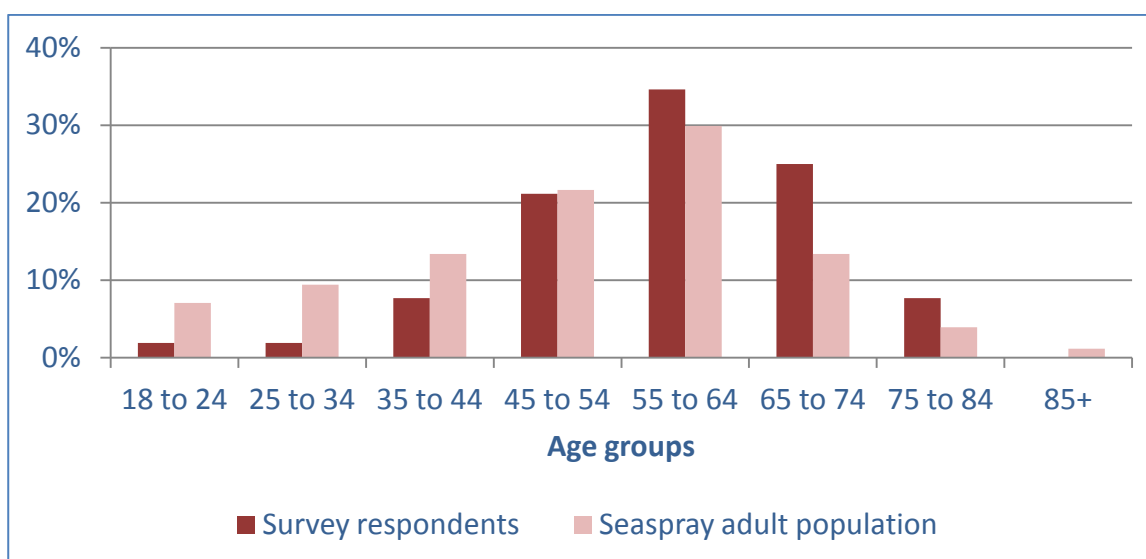


Figure 2. Age distribution of survey respondents and the adult population of Seaspray (ABS, 2012).

Education

Data collected on educational attainment in the survey and that collected by the 2011 Census (ABS, 2012) are not directly comparable. This is because the mail-out survey only asked one question about educational attainment. By comparison, the census asks two questions. The first is the highest level of schooling completed and the second is the highest level of educational qualification (vocational or university) completed. Thus it is not possible to determine from the census data the number of people who have a school education as their highest qualification. This is significant in Seaspray given that almost half (45.3%) of the respondents indicated that the highest level of education they attained was at school.

Comparing the 2011 Census data on highest level of education achieved against the survey indicates that the respondents tended to have more university qualifications, but less vocational qualifications, compared to the broader population (Figure 3). Overall, there are slightly more survey respondents who have post-school qualifications (53.8%) compared to the adult population (43.3%).

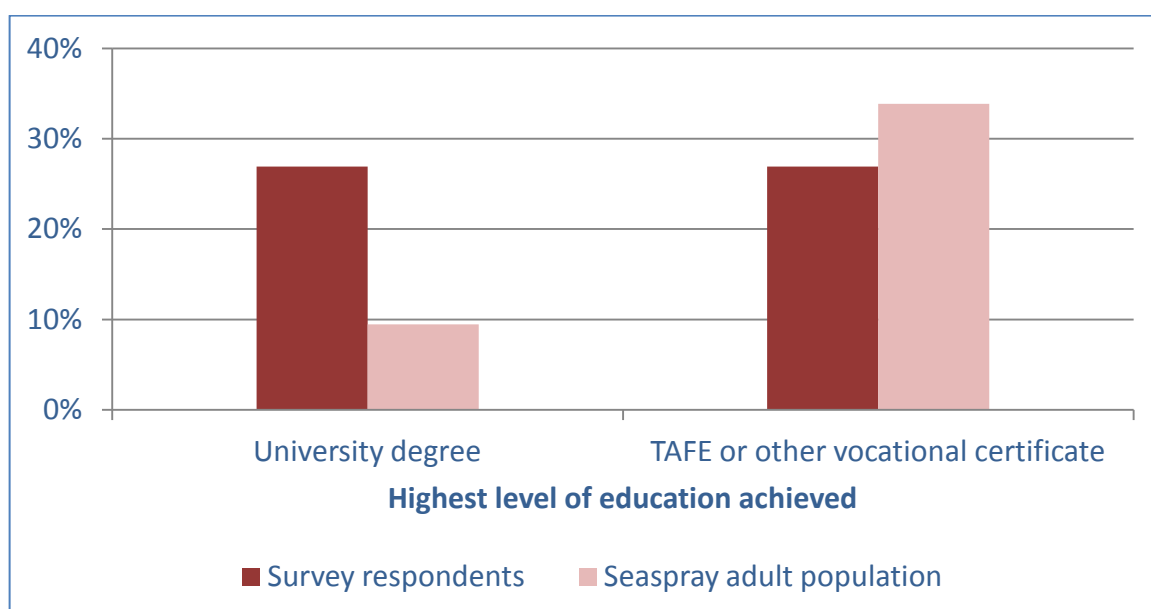


Figure 3. Highest level of education attained by survey respondents, who continued their education beyond high school, compared to the adult population of Seaspray (ABS, 2012).

Income

The household income of respondents was slightly lower than the broader population of the Seaspray (Figure 4). Three-fifths of the respondents are on gross household incomes of \$999 per week or less, compared to half of the Seaspray population.

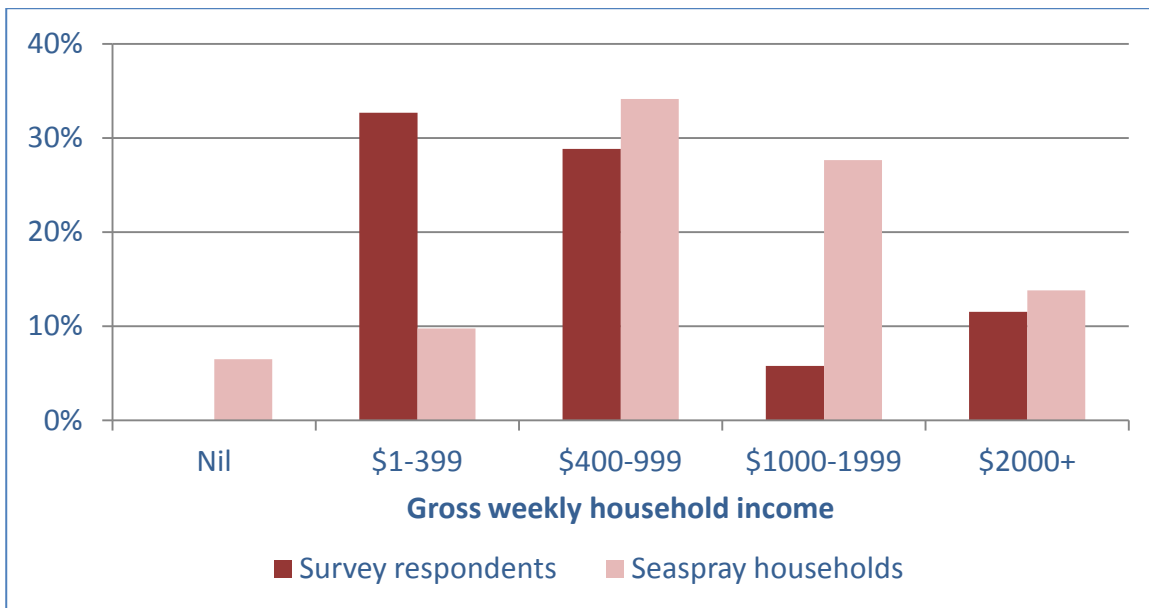


Figure 4. Gross weekly household incomes of survey respondents compared to Seaspray households (ABS, 2012).

Employment status

The employment status of respondents was somewhat comparable to the adult population of Seaspray (Figure 5); four-tenths of the respondents were engaged in full-time or part-time work. The main difference in employment status came from the amount of work undertaken. There were fewer full-time and more part-time workers among the survey respondents than the broader population of Seaspray.

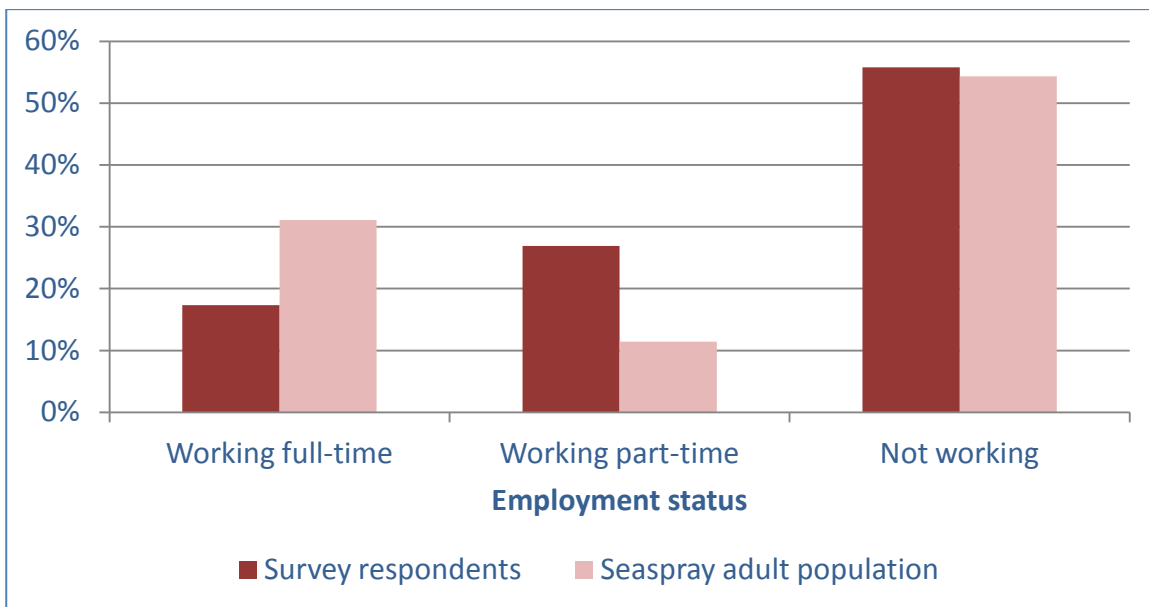


Figure 5. Proportion of respondents engaged in full-time work, part-time work or not working (including those who are looking for work, studying and retired) compared to the adult population of Seaspray (ABS, 2012).

Household composition

The relationship among members of households for survey respondents is somewhat comparable with the broader population (Figure 6). The main difference is that households with children are under-represented and 15% of respondents indicated that they live in extended family, sharehouse and other household types.

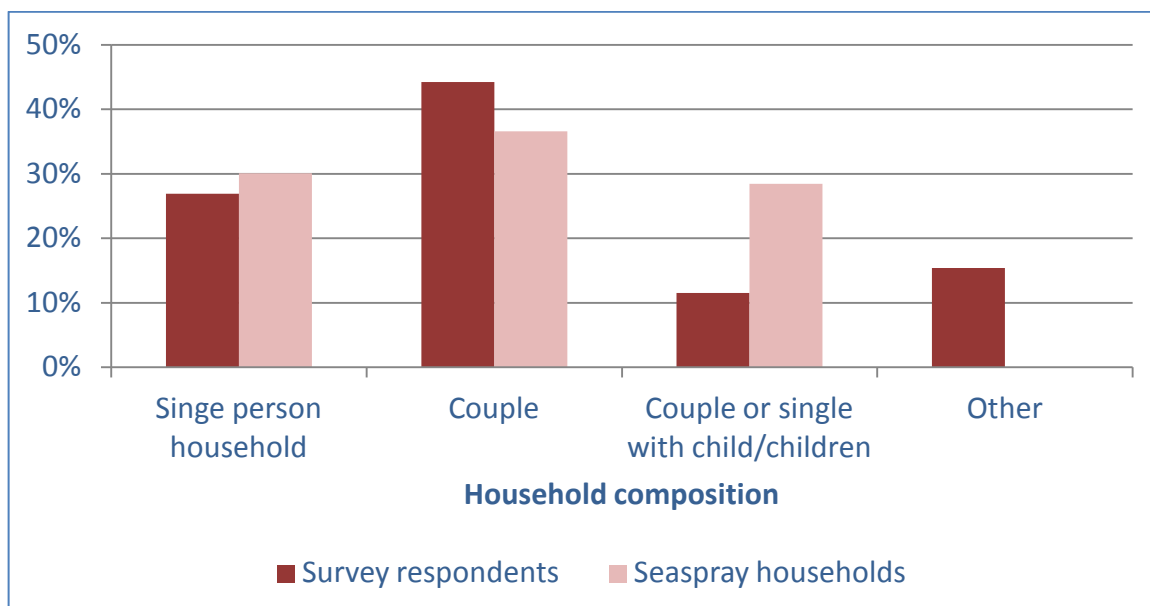


Figure 6. Relationship among members of the households among survey respondents and Seaspray households (ABS, 2012).

Overall, the socio-economic characteristics of the survey respondents have strong similarities with the broader population of Seaspray. The main differences are that the survey respondents are more likely to be older and be women than the adult population of Seaspray. These differences need to be taken into account when interpreting the results presented in the rest of this report.

Connection to the area

On average the respondents had lived, or holidayed, in the region for 21 years. Almost half (46.2%) definitely plan to continue living, or holidaying, in Seaspray and a further three-tenths (30.8%) probably will.

Permanent residents

The majority of respondents (71.2%) lives in Seaspray on a permanent basis and have done so for 17.1 years on average. Almost all of the respondents have moved to Seaspray; very few have lived in Seaspray all of their lives.

Almost half (46.2%) of respondents moved to Seaspray from a capital city (i.e. they can be considered to be sea-changers) and almost four-tenths (38.4%) had a family connection to the area before they moved.

Second home owners

Just over one-quarter (28.8%) of respondents are second home owners, who have holidayed in Seaspray for 31.2 years on average. This indicates that their length of connection to the area is almost double that of permanent residents.

One-quarter (4/15) of second home owners come from a capital city and just over half (8/15) had a family connection to the area before buying a house.

Lived values

Respondents were asked to specify what is most important to them about living in Seaspray. This resulted in a list of 62 things that they value about living in the region (Table 1). We refer to these things as their lived values because they reflect many aspects of people's lives. The two lived values that were mentioned much more frequently than the others were: the peace and quiet; and the beach.

We then asked respondents to rate the importance of 31 lived values that we had derived from existing scientific research and the interviews (Figure 7). When ordered according to importance the four lived values that had the highest number of 'very important' ratings were: peacefulness; the relaxed lifestyle; being close to water; and the natural environment.

There is considerable overlap between the lived values that appeared at the top of Table 1 and Figure 7. Specifically, peacefulness, the scenery, being close to water, relaxed lifestyle and the natural environment appeared in the top ten of both lists.

Comparing Table 1 with Figure 7 reveals that 23 lived values are present in both lists (those in italics). A further 10 lived values in Table 1 correspond with lived values that were identified in the interviews but not raised during the survey (those with an asterisk). There are also 5 lived values that can be considered to be subcategories of those identified in the interviews (those with a cross). Thus survey respondents identified an additional 22 lived values above and beyond what was identified in the interviews (those that are not in italics and do not have an asterisk or a cross).

In addition to outlining what they value about living in Seaspray, some respondents also identified things that frustrate them. This included:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - Limited shops | - The climate |
| - Limited medical services | - Difficult to get around |
| - Limited public transport services | - Petty crime |
| - Limited recreational opportunities | - Lack of a petrol station |
| - Limited business opportunities | - Lack of lighting |
| - Limited employment opportunities | - Dogs allowed on the whole beach |

Note that some of the things that some respondents valued were frustrations for others (Table 1 and Figure 7). Specifically, access to medical services, the climate, ease/difficult getting around and allowing dogs on the beach.

Table 1. List of lived values provided by respondents.

Lived values	Number of respondents	Lived values	Number of respondents
<i>Peace and quiet</i>	26	Environmentally friendly living	2
The beach (rarely busy) [†]	18	Freedom	2
<i>Beautiful/scenic area (beach)</i>	8	Gardening [†]	2
<i>Close to water (ocean, creek)</i>	8	Home*	2
Location (proximity to other places)*	8	Home ownership*	2
Clean environment and air (no pollution)*	7	No pub	2
<i>Lifestyle (relaxing)</i>	7	<i>Safe for children</i>	2
<i>(Natural) environment</i>	6	The sounds (waves, wildlife, silence) [†]	2
The fishing*	6	Able to pursue interests	1
<i>Close to friends</i>	5	Access to decision-making	1
<i>Community size</i>	5	Atmosphere	1
Family visits	5	Close to snowfields	1
<i>Feel safe</i>	5	Community feel*	1
The wildlife	5	Dogs allowed on the beach	1
<i>Weather/climate</i>	5	<i>Easy to get around</i>	1
<i>Affordability</i>	4	<i>Everybody knows everybody</i>	1
<i>Close to family</i>	4	<i>Family ties</i>	1
Facilities/services (e.g. Surf club, shop)*	4	Friend visits	1
Relaxed atmosphere [†]	4	Good holiday place for children	1
The (friendly) people*	4	Good neighbours	1
<i>Great place to retire</i>	3	<i>Great place to raise a family</i>	1
Healthy activities*	3	<i>Job satisfaction</i>	1
Lack of traffic	3	<i>Medical facilities/ services nearby</i>	2
<i>Opportunities for outdoor activities</i>	3	Nostalgia	1
<i>Remoteness/isolation</i>	3	Not developed	1
Rural life	3	Open spaces	1
<i>Slow pace of life</i>	3	Seasonal tourism	1
(Quaint) seaside hamlet	2	<i>Spending time with family</i>	1
Animal ownership	2	Therapeutic	1
<i>Away from the city</i>	2	Untouched/pristine [†]	1
Block size (e.g. for gardening)	2	Volunteer opportunities*	1

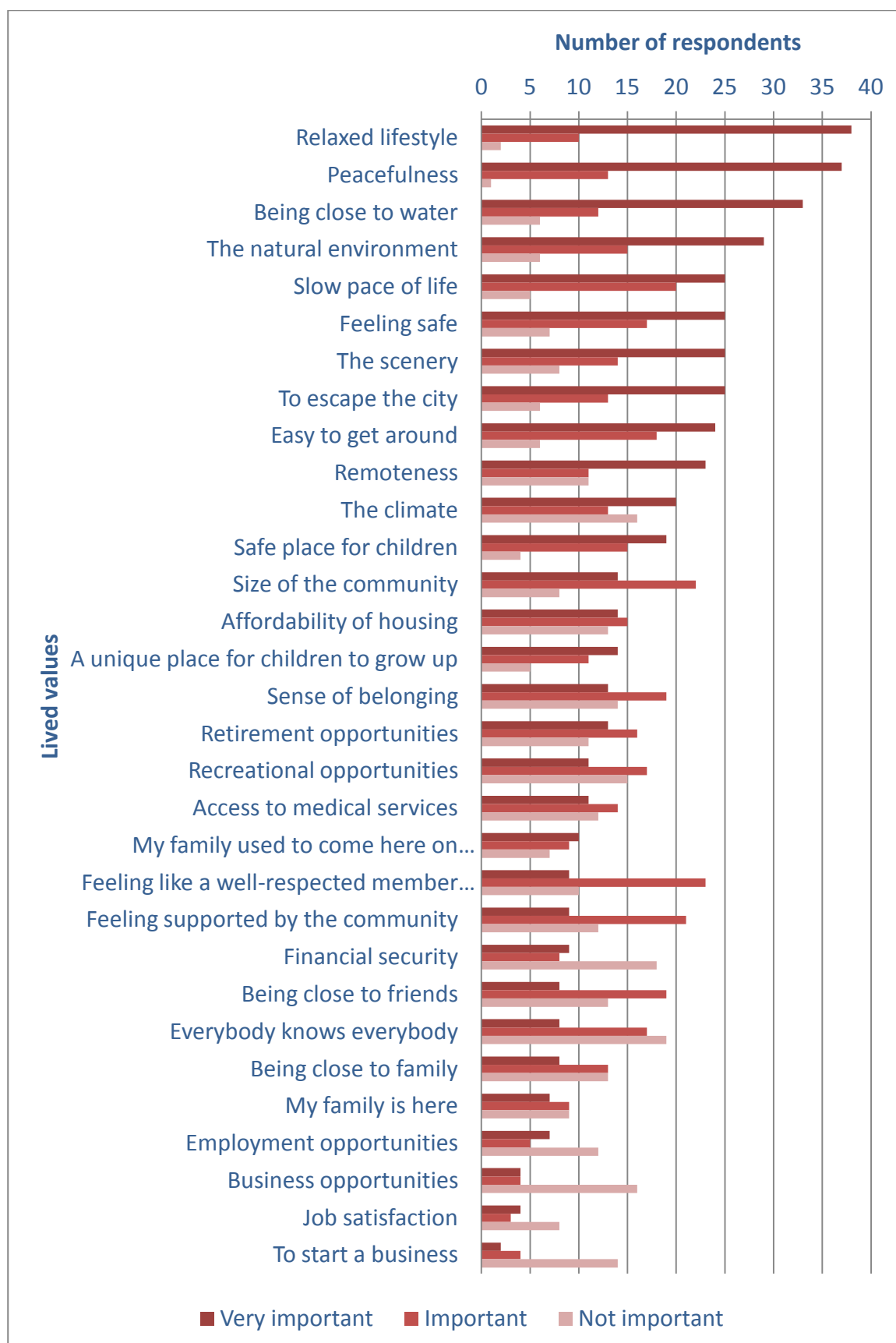


Figure 7. Importance of lived values. Bars refer to the number of respondents who ranked each lived value as ‘Very important’, ‘Important’ or ‘Not important’. Where bars for a lived value add to less than 52, this is because the remaining individuals stated that the lived value was not applicable or that they did not believe it exists in their community.

Day-to-day activities

We believe that lived values are not only expressed by what people say they like about living in a place but also by what they do. To that end we asked respondents about their daily, weekly and monthly activities.

There are a wide range of activities that survey respondents participate in (Figure 8 and Figure 9). The year-round activities that are undertaken the most frequently are passive activities such as watching television, reading a newspaper or book and using the computer for leisure (Figure 8). The exceptions to this are going for a walk and visiting the local shops. The activities that are participated in least frequently are going to the gym, playing golf, going for a jog and participating in a team sport.

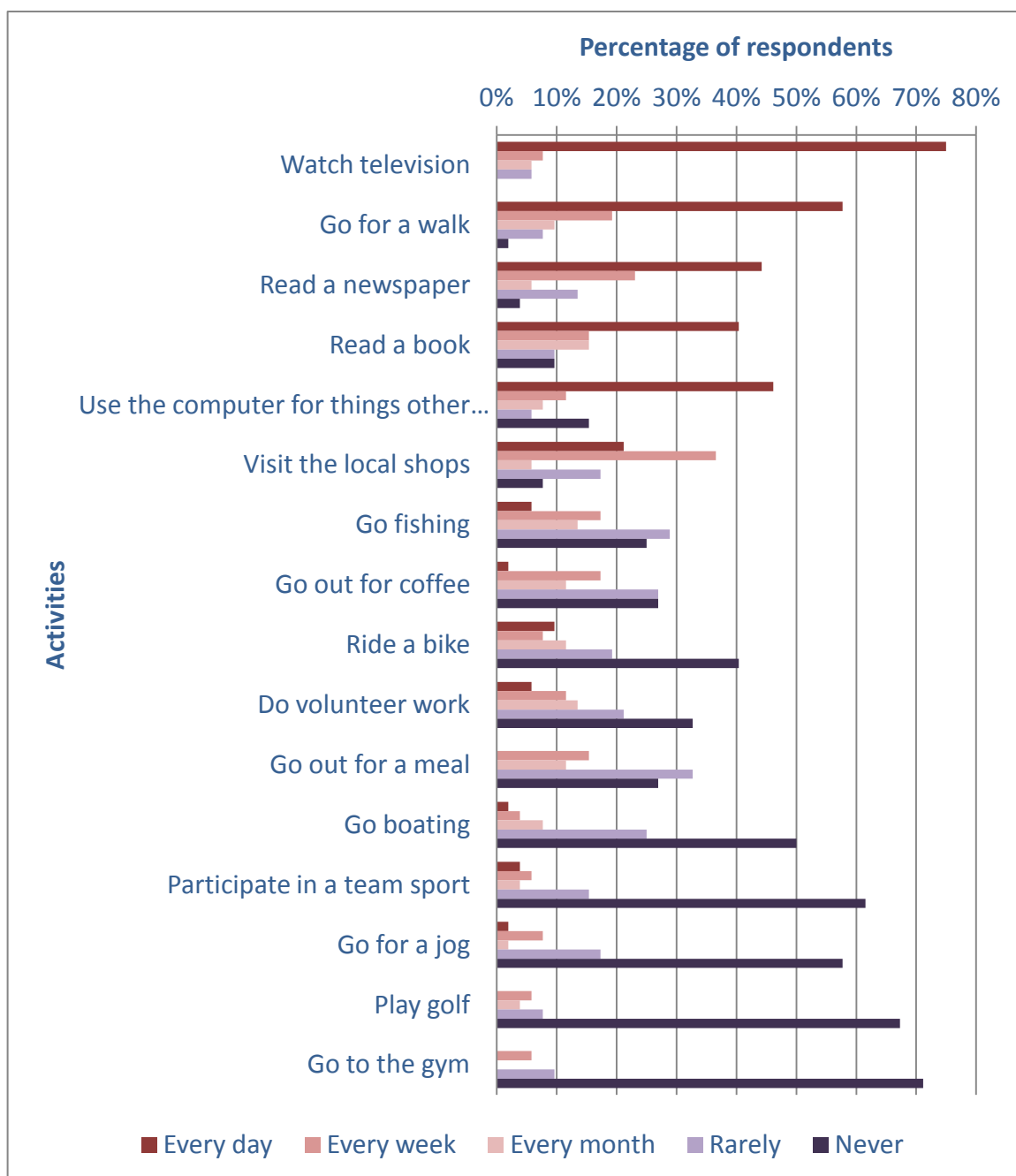


Figure 8. Frequency with which survey respondents participated in a range of year-round activities in Seaspray.

In warmer months, visiting the beach, gardening and swimming are common activities undertaken by survey respondents (Figure 9). Having a picnic and going surfing or body boarding are rarely undertaken by respondents.

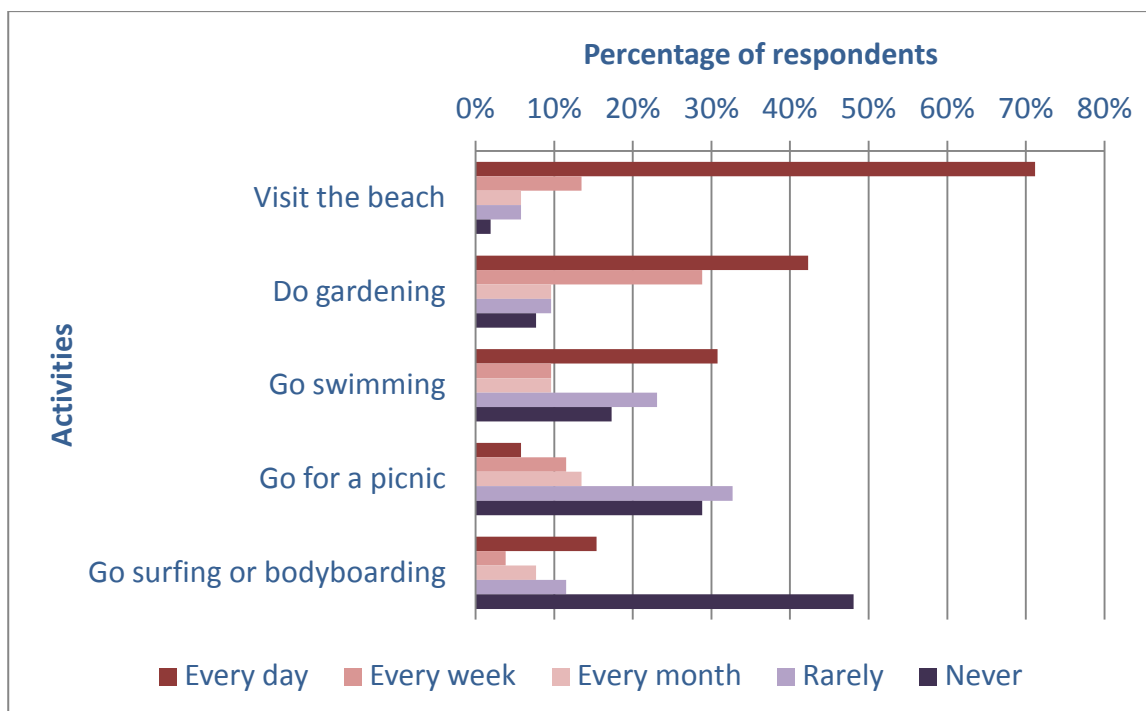


Figure 9. Frequency with which survey respondents participated in a range of activities in warmer months in Seaspray.

Social relationships

When survey respondents were asked what is most important to them about living in Seaspray, being close to friends and visits from family were equal tenth most frequently mentioned. Also important were being close to family and the friendly, local people (equal 17th in Table 1).

When respondents were asked to rank the importance of 31 lived values, 40.4% and 51.9% of respondents said that being close to family and friends, respectively, was important or very important. The lower figure for being close to families was partly because 21.2% of respondents indicated that they did not live close to their family. For respondents who do live close to family, 51.2% indicated that this was important or very important to them.

The similar levels of importance attached to friends and family is further reflected in the frequency with which respondents indicated that they spend time with various people (Figure 10).

After friends and family, respondents were more likely to spend time with neighbours and other members of the community than people who belong to groups or organisations that they belong to or work colleagues outside of a work environment.

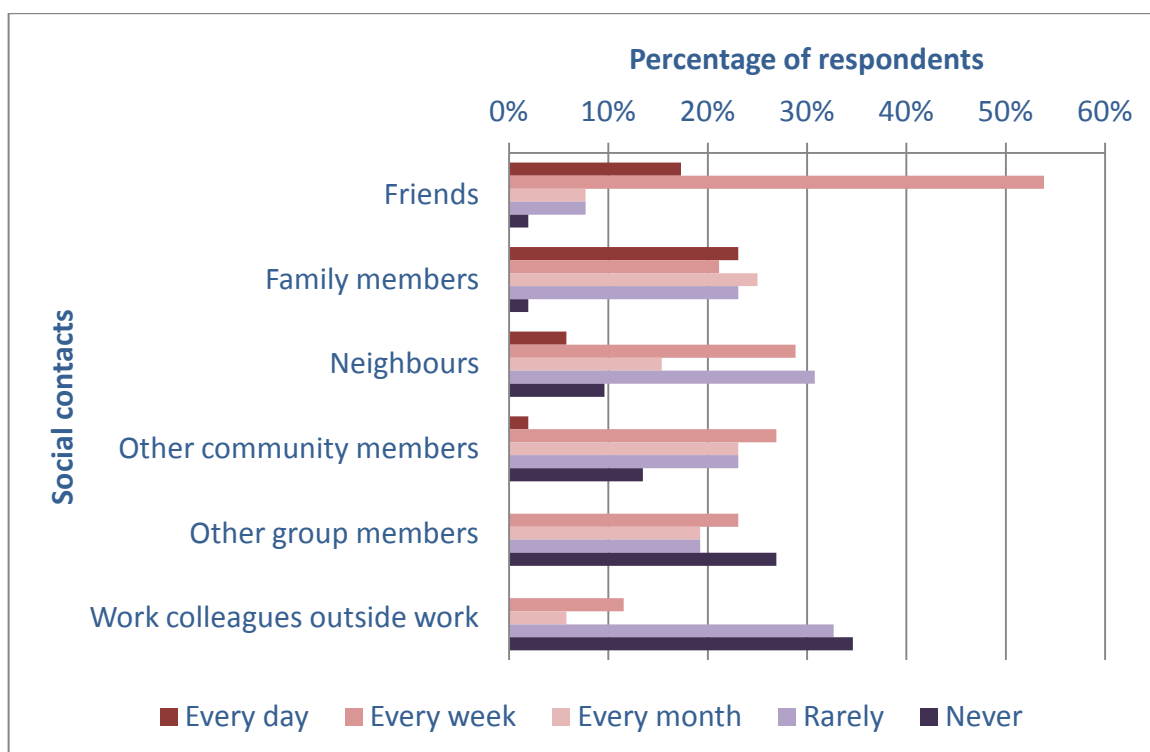


Figure 10. Frequency with which survey respondents spend time with family, friends and other social contacts.

Close friends

Given the importance of friends to respondents, it is important to note that 17.3% of respondents indicated that they do not have any close friends¹ and a further 13.5% of respondents indicated that they only have one close friend. The majority (57.7%) of respondents indicate that they have a few close friends and a minority (9.6%) indicated they have a lot (more than 10) of close friends.

Group membership

Just over half (53.8%) of respondents indicated that they are members of at least one group or organisation. Four-tenths (40.4%) of the respondents indicated that they were a member of at least two groups and one-fifth (21.2%) indicated that they were a member of four or more groups.

Sports and recreational groups are the most popular groups (Figure 11). This is followed by service organisations. Youth and education groups are the least subscribed to.

¹ Close friends are defined as people one feels at ease with, can talk to about private matters or can call on for help.

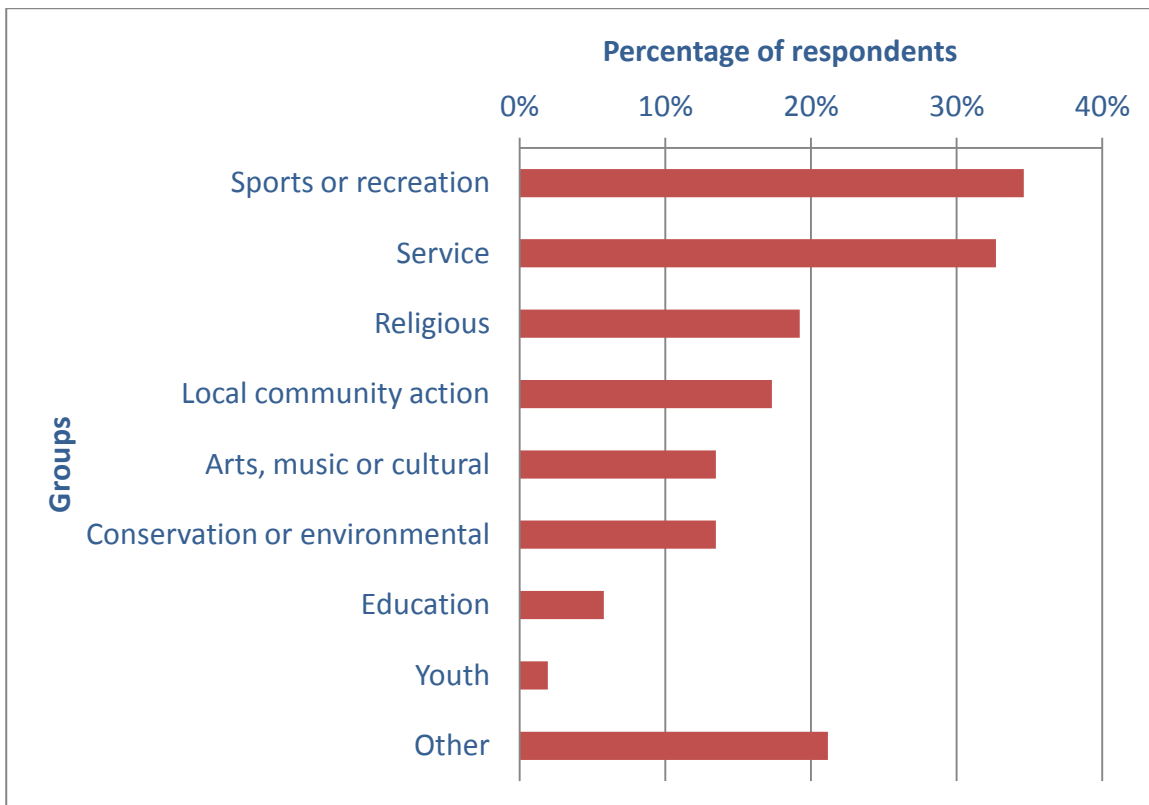


Figure 11. Percentage of survey respondents who belong to groups and organisations.

Concluding remarks

The results presented in this report indicate that there is much that people value about living in Seaspray. The greatest amount of agreement exists around features of the natural environment and the peace and quiet. There are also a range of values that appear to be specific to particular groups of people within the community, which relate to life stage and circumstance. Next, the project team will examine in more detail how particular values are distributed among the communities. In the interim these preliminary results provide a snapshot of what is important about people's lives in Seaspray, which will need to be taken into account when developing responses to adapt to sea-level rise.

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