



WHY DO SOCIAL RESEARCH – WHO CARES?

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Outline

- **Social norms and the role of research in driving social change**
- **The *Who Cares?* research**
 - background and evolution
 - some 2009 findings
 - using the research
 - availability
- **So why should we care?**



Change – what are we aiming for?

Major challenges in moving to a low-carbon economy and a sustainable society

What do we need to do?

Change hearts? - is this enough?

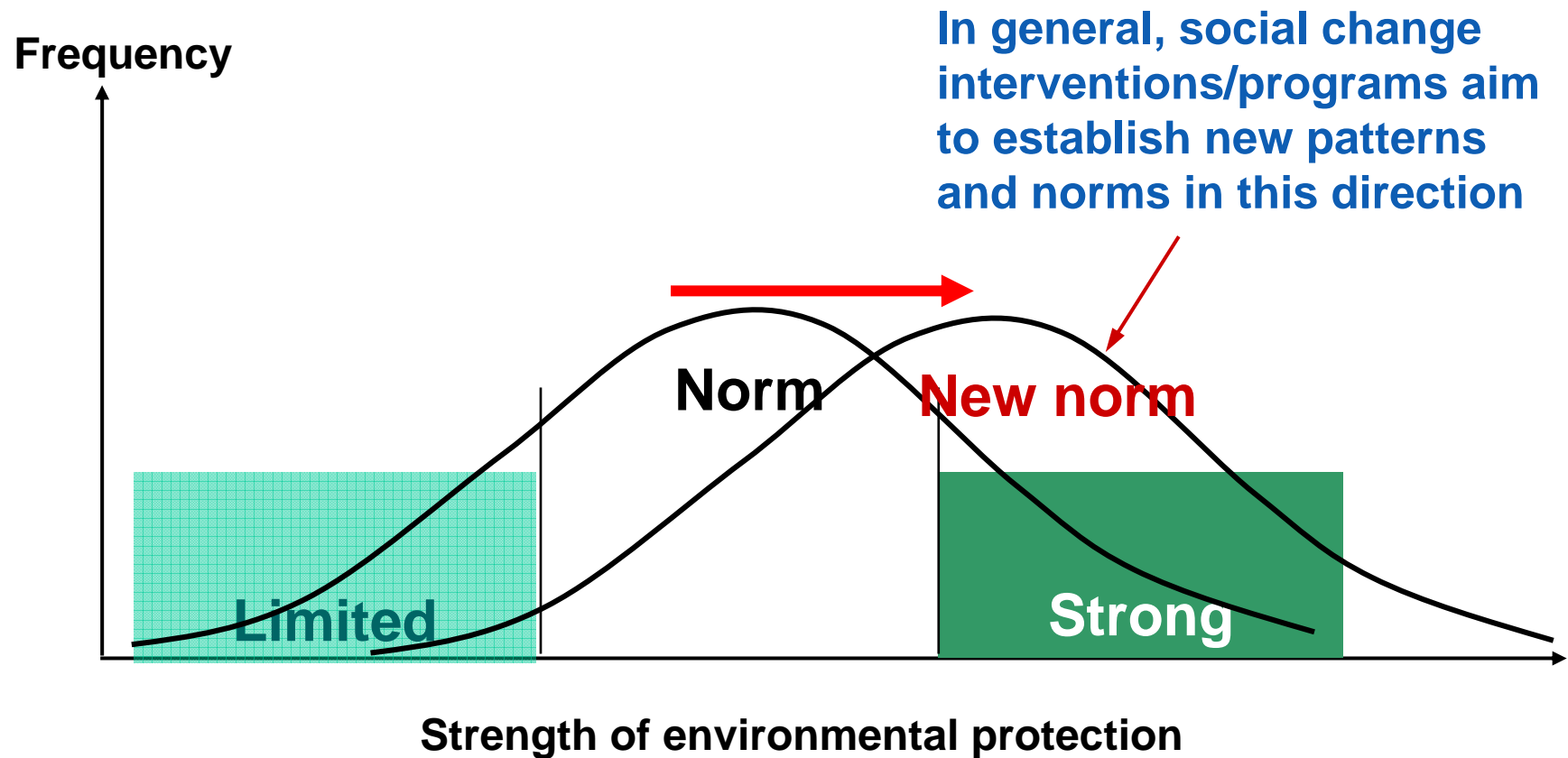
Change minds? - is this enough?

Change behaviours? - how?

Create social change? - how?

And how are all these linked?

Social change and social norms



Norms in perceptions/attitudes and norms in behaviours

What are social norms?

- the 'rules' a group uses to determine appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours
- may be explicit or implicit
- facilitate and coordinate our interactions with others
- vary and evolve through time, from one age group to another and between social classes and groups - what is acceptable in one social group may not be in another
- powerful because they regulate acceptance and popularity within a particular group:
 - we learn when, where, with whom it is (or is not) OK to say or do certain things, and discuss certain topics, in particular ways

Norms have changed in recent years

For example around...

- Acceptability of smoking
- Standards on discrimination
- Wearing of seatbelts
- Having a deep suntan
- Recycling
- Use of water eg for gardens and lawns

Importance of being seen as a general community/good citizen norm not just a 'green' norm

Some have changed broadly across the community and others have changed differentially between groups

To change norms we need to know

- **What they are now for different groups?**

What people know, think and do about target issues and why

- **What contributes to/influences those norms?**

- **What helps or hinders communities in evolving their norms - the barriers and motivators to change?**

If the ultimate goal is to change behaviours across community, we need to understand norms at a broad level and at the level of the individual behaviour

eg electricity consumption in general and all the specific behaviours involved in being energy efficient



So we have to care (a lot) about social research

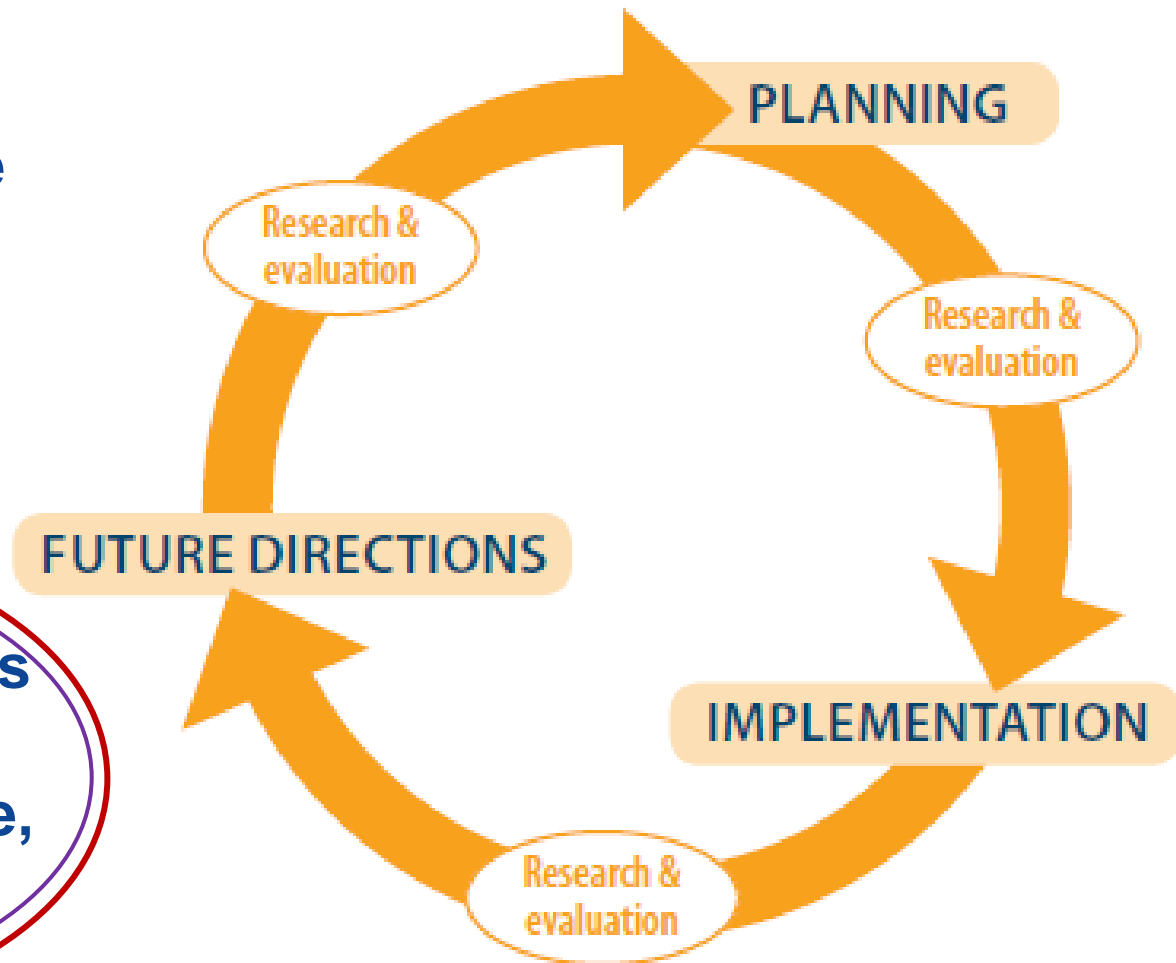
It provides our basic strategic information to design programs that will work and not waste our time and money

It informs but does not determine or replace program planning and decisions

The project cycle

Research, including evaluation, has to be a key part of effective project planning and development

This means it needs to be adequately planned, given time, and resourced





DECCW specific education programs are based on pre-project research and include evaluation:

- **Stormwater**
- **Litter**
- **Sustainability (Our Environment, It's a Living Thing)**
- **Clear the Air**
- **Energy Efficiency**

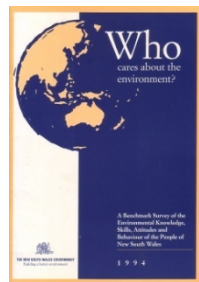
and DECCW conducts its triennial *Who Cares?* research to provide broad-based information across programs and for a range of sectors



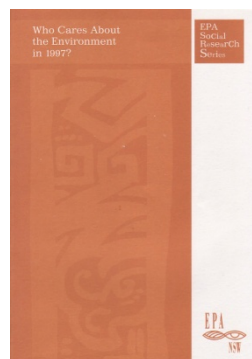
The *Who Cares?* research

What is the *Who Cares* research?

- Social research conducted triennially since 1994 - six full rounds of research (plus an interim in 2007)
- Quantitative survey and associated qualitative component each year
- Tracks core questions, as well as asking new ones



1994



1997



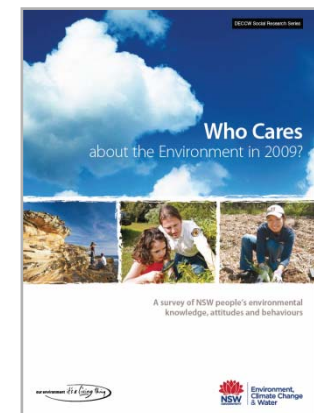
2000



2003



2006



2009

What and how?

Quantitative survey - evolution

- Face-face in 1994, telephone all subsequent years
- Conducted in Feb-March 1994, April-May 1997, October 2000, Aug-Sept 2003, June-July 2006 & 2009
- Random sample of NSW residents 15+ years, geographically stratified, by region in 2009 & by residential location type in all previous years
- Sample size:

1994, 1997 & 2000:	c.1100
2003:	1421
2006:	1724
2009:	2003

 } Progressively increased for better sub-group analysis
- Measures environmental knowledge, attitudes & behaviours

What and how? (cont)

Analysis

- Of change over time
- For each year by an extensive range of demographics
- In 2006 and 2009 by segments based on people's answers to behaviour questions

Focus group discussions (qualitative) - evolution

- 1994 (4) - to inform design of survey
- 2000 (4) & 2003 (4) – explore survey results
- 2006 (6) & 2009 (7) - help understand community segments and differences in their environmental conceptions, views, attitudes and behaviours

Why do we do it?

- **Measure and track environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in NSW....**
.... a point in time snapshot plus adding to our understanding of longer term changes
- **Provide information for all sectors that helps in identifying priorities, developing, targeting and evaluating policy and programs**
- **Promote discussion and awareness of social dimension of environmental protection and sustainability initiatives and the value of social research to underpin these**

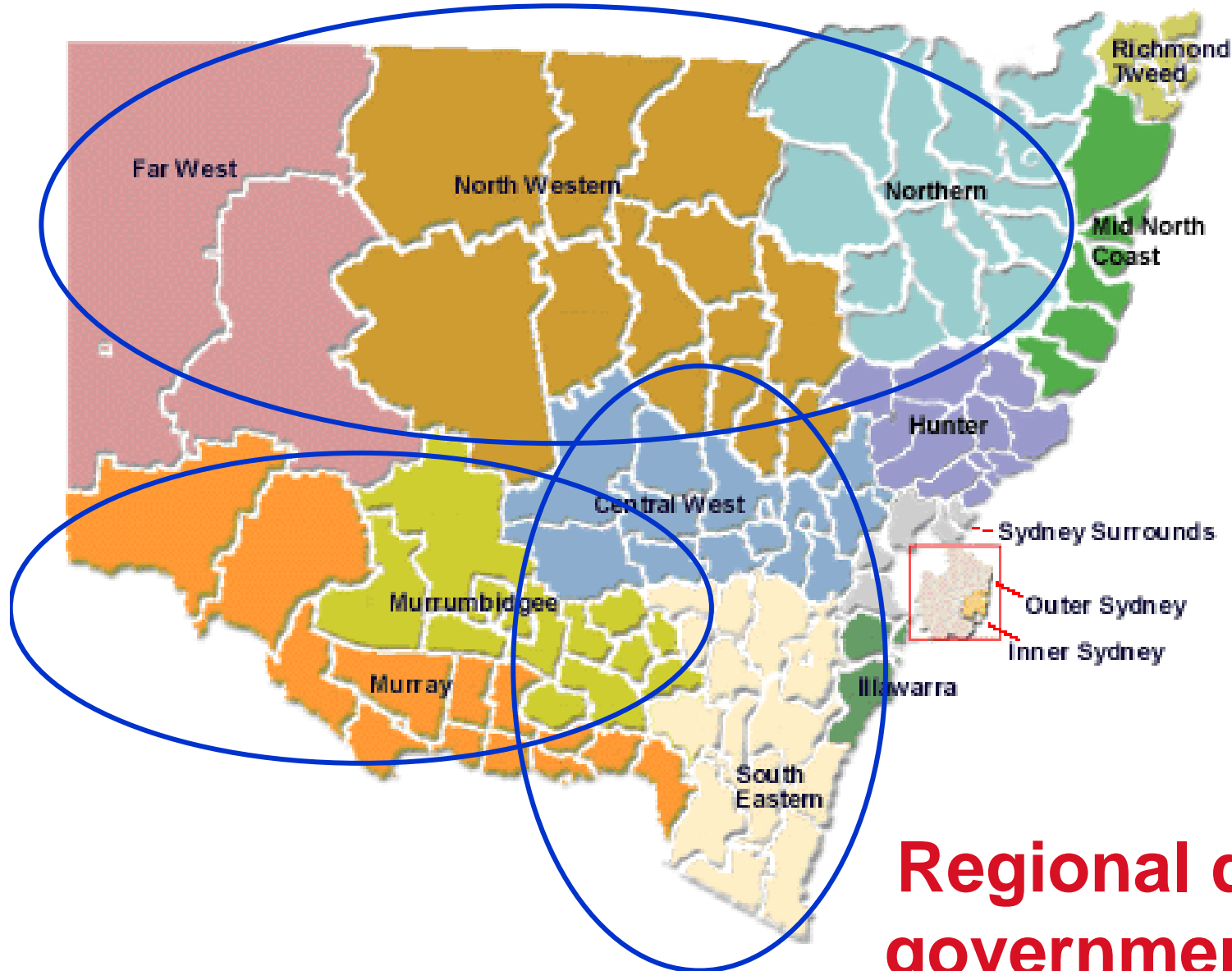


Demographics and community segments

**The basis for analysis of differences - more
detailed knowledge about the community**

Demographic characteristics

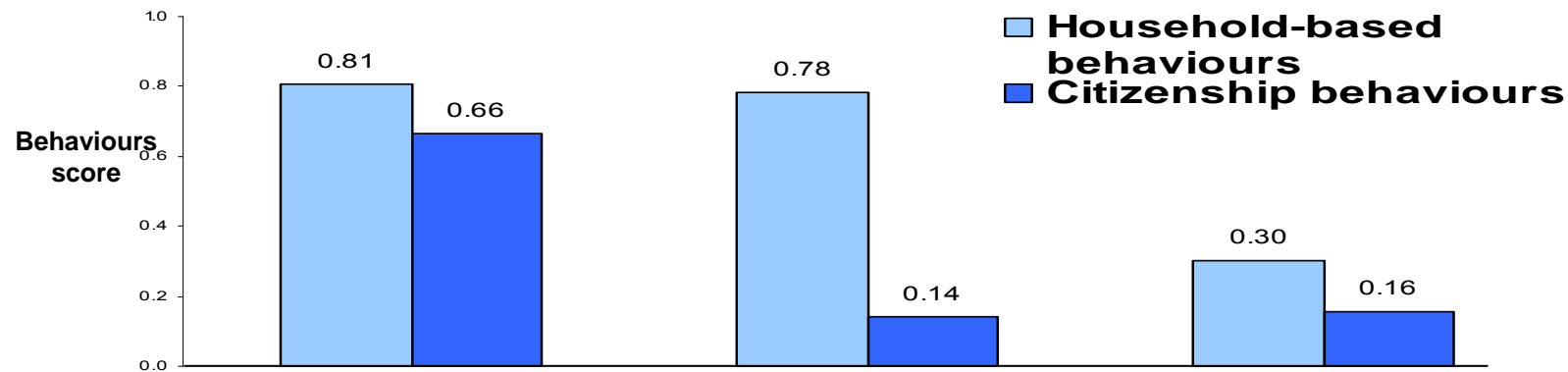
- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Location by settlement type**
- **Location by region (LG regions, some combined)**
- **Education level**
- **Language spoken at home**
- **Employment status**
- **Parental status**
- **Dwelling type**



Regional data: local government regions

Community segments

Three segments identified based on engagement in environmental behaviours



COMMITTEDS (38%)

High on both household & citizenship behaviours

More likely to be:

- female
- university graduates
- live in rural areas

PRIVATES (32%)

High on household but low on citizenship behaviours

More likely to be:

- female
- retired
- not completed Yr 12
- have children

RELUCTANTS (21%)

Low on both household & citizenship behaviours

More likely to be:

- male
- aged 15-24
- live in Sydney



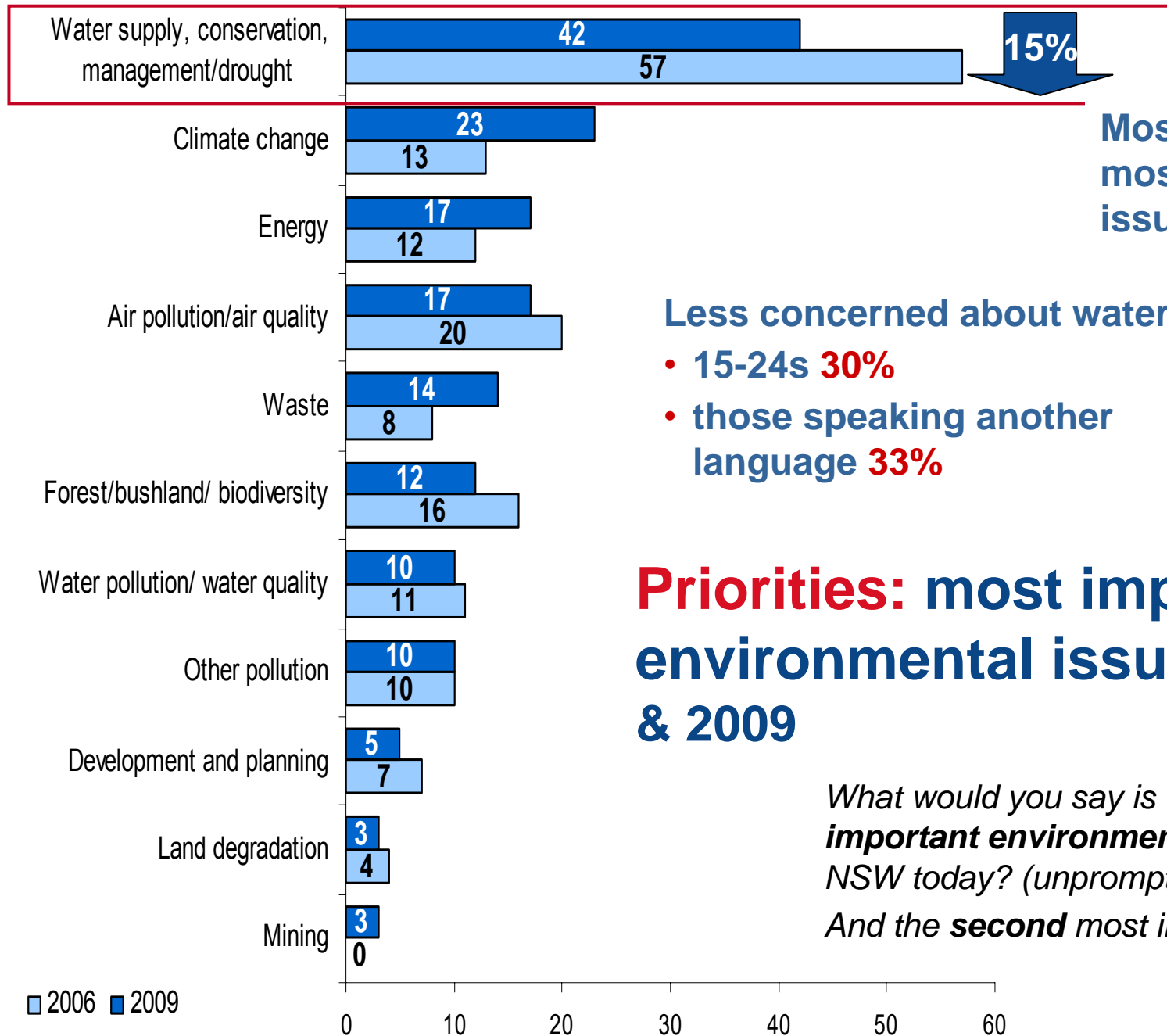
What does the research tell us?

Community priorities in environmental issues

Support for policies

Knowledge gaps for education programs

Behaviour differences, motivators and barriers to help identify norms and potential for change



Mostly as single most important issue **46% → 29%**

Less concerned about water:

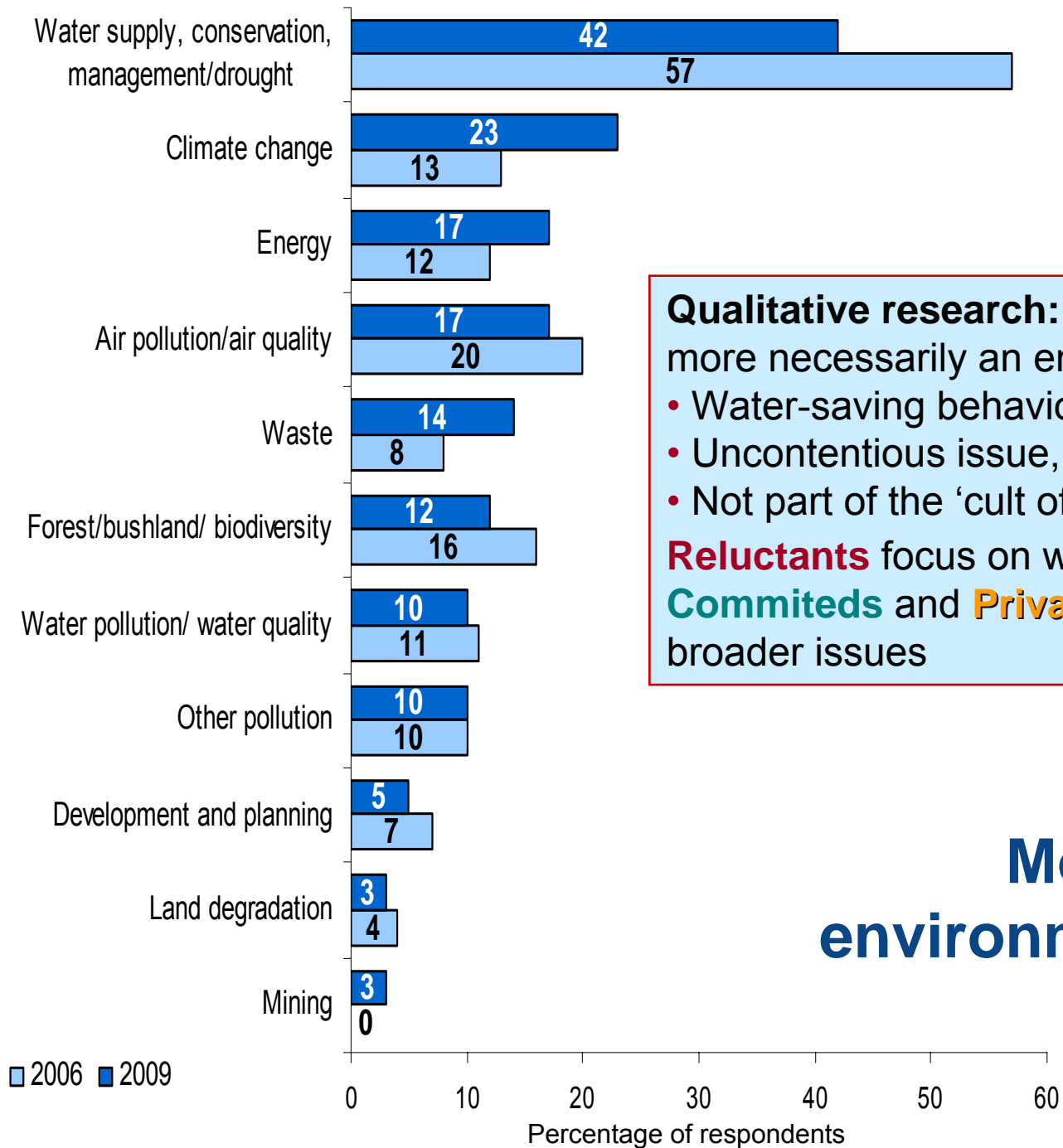
- 15-24s **30%**
- those speaking another language **33%**

Priorities: most important environmental issues 2006 & 2009

*What would you say is the **single most important environmental** issue facing NSW today? (unprompted)*

*And the **second** most important issue?*

Percentage of respondents

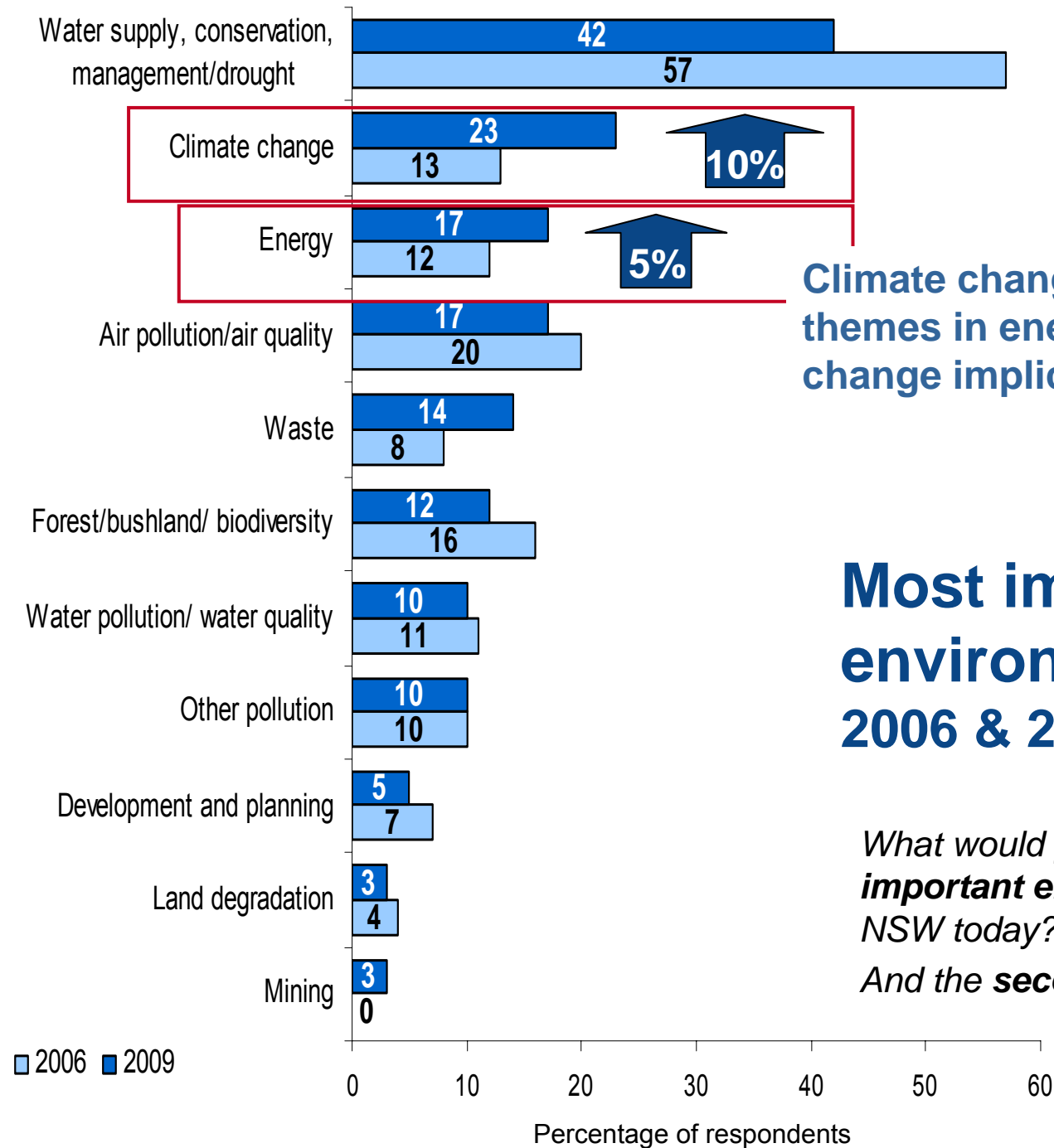


Qualitative research: WATER not any more necessarily an environmental issue :

- Water-saving behaviours normalised
- Uncontentious issue, clear benefits
- Not part of the 'cult of the environment'

Reluctants focus on water restrictions
Committeds and **Privates** more attuned to broader issues

Most important environmental issues 2006 and 2009

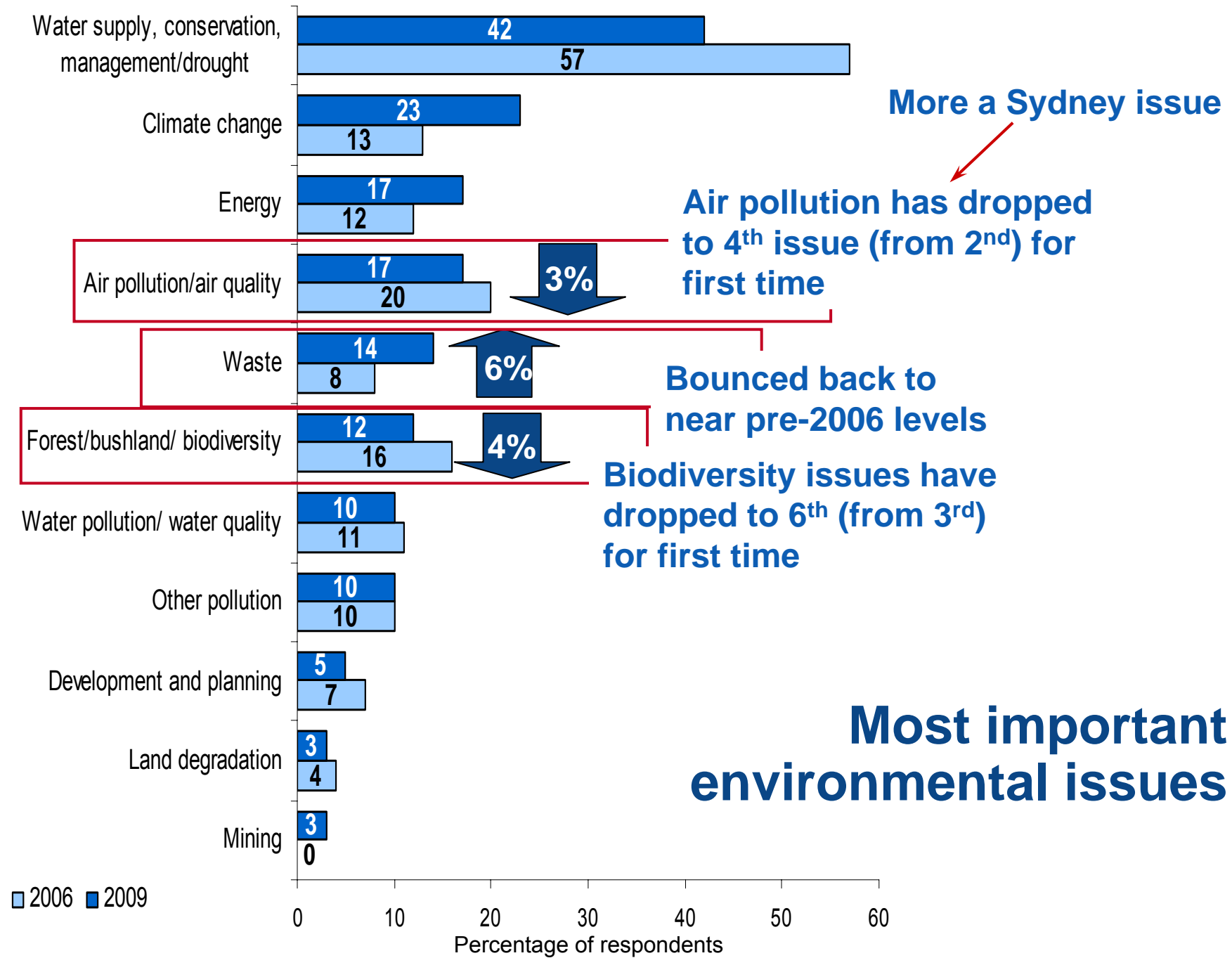


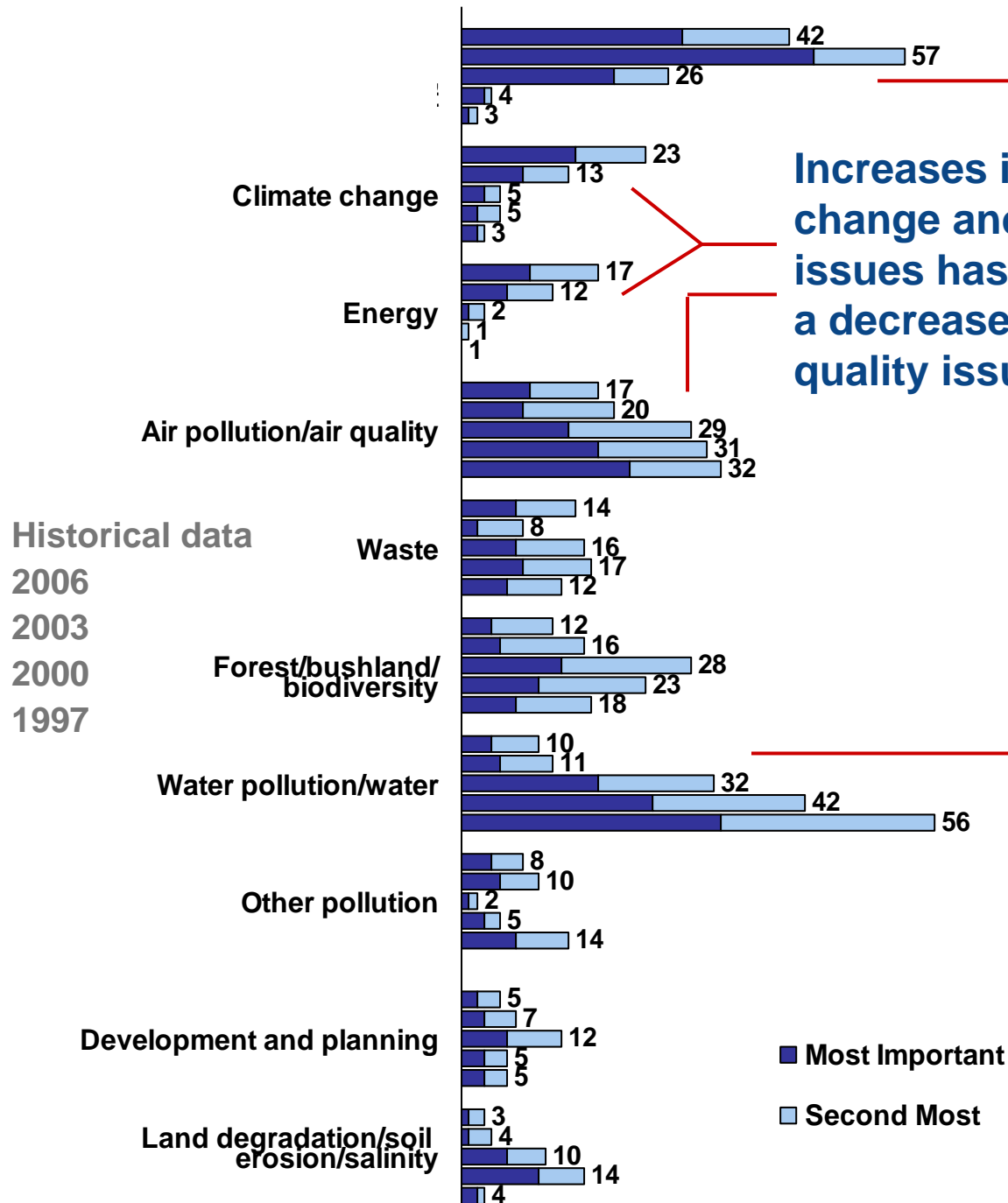
Climate change plus sub-themes in energy with climate change implications = **38%**

Most important environmental issues 2006 & 2009

*What would you say is the **single most important environmental** issue facing NSW today? (unprompted)*

*And the **second** most important issue?*





Increases in climate change and energy issues has mirrored a decrease in air quality issues

Increase in water conservation issues has mirrored decrease in water quality issues

Most important environmental issues – trends over time

■ Most Important
 □ Second Most



Informing policy: propositions with a trade-off

Some areas of the marine environment should be protected even if it means commercial and recreational fishing is excluded

85% strongly agreed/agreed

25-34s 91%

University graduates 90%

Sydney residents 89%

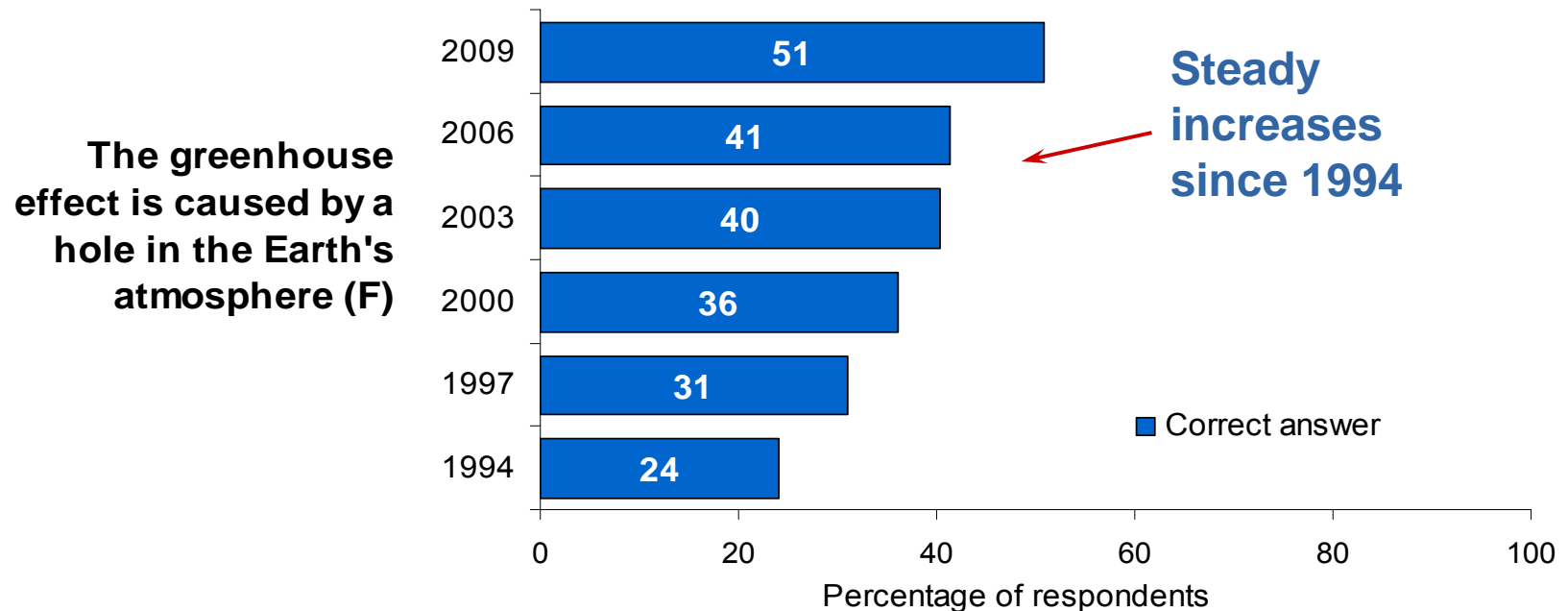
Committeds 89%



Informing policy and programs

Climate change

Climate change - knowledge



Half of NSW residents knew that greenhouse effect is not caused by a hole in the earth's atmosphere

But half did not



Climate change – beliefs

78% believe climate change is happening or will happen

Students, 15-34 year olds >85%

University graduates 83%

Committed 83%, but **Reluctants** 71%

17% don't believe climate change is happening or will happen

People in rural areas 29%

65+ 27%

There has been a lot of discussion in the community recently about global warming and climate change. Do you believe climate change is happening or going to happen?



Climate change - belief about action

(whole sample)

69% agree NSW should take urgent action on climate change, regardless of current economic and social conditions

Women 73%, men 66%

Those speaking another language 75% (vs 67%)

Students 79%

Committeds 78%

27% disagreed

Retirees 35%

Reluctants 41%



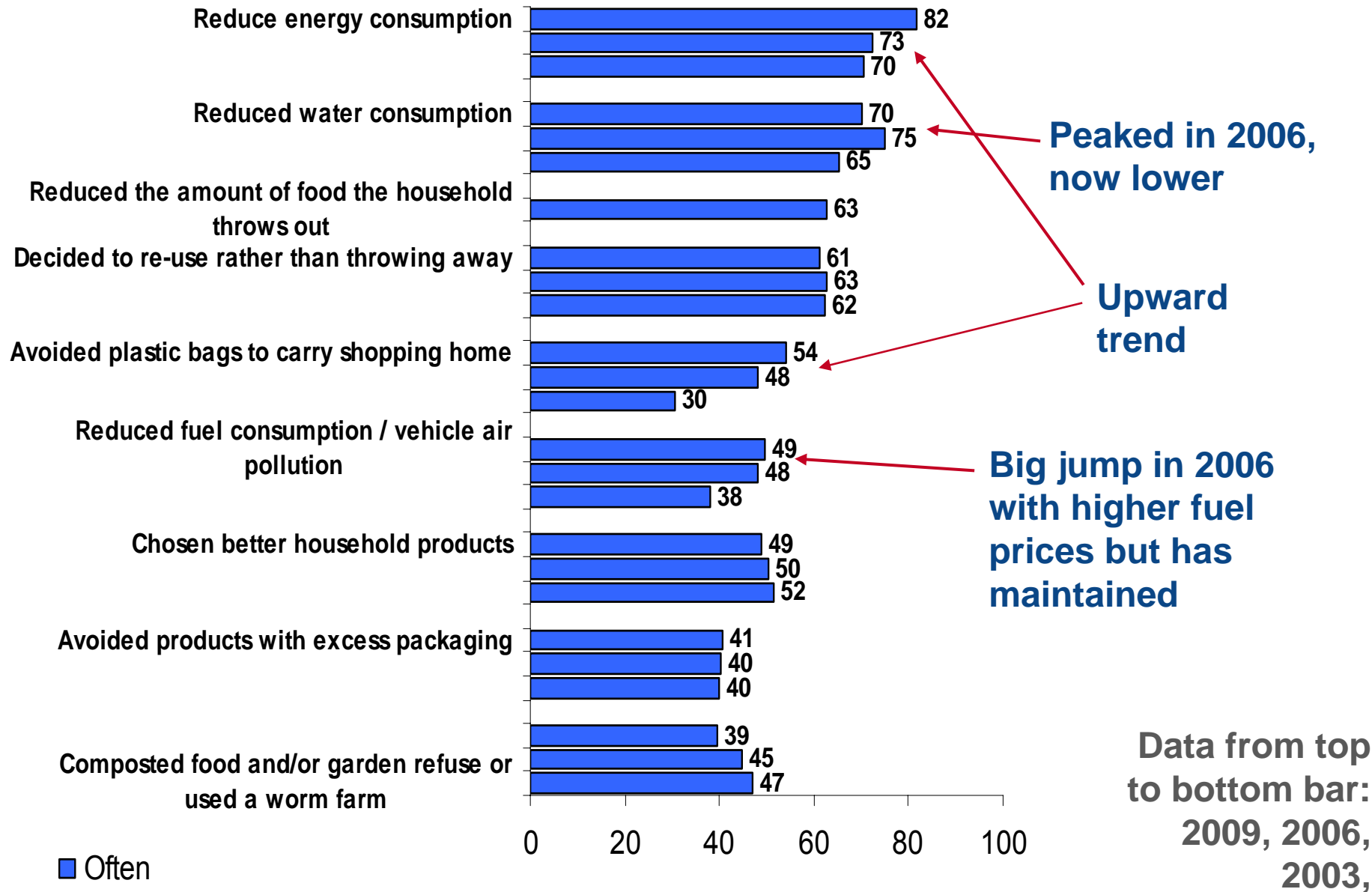
Behaviours

How/who/why changing?

Key information for new change programs

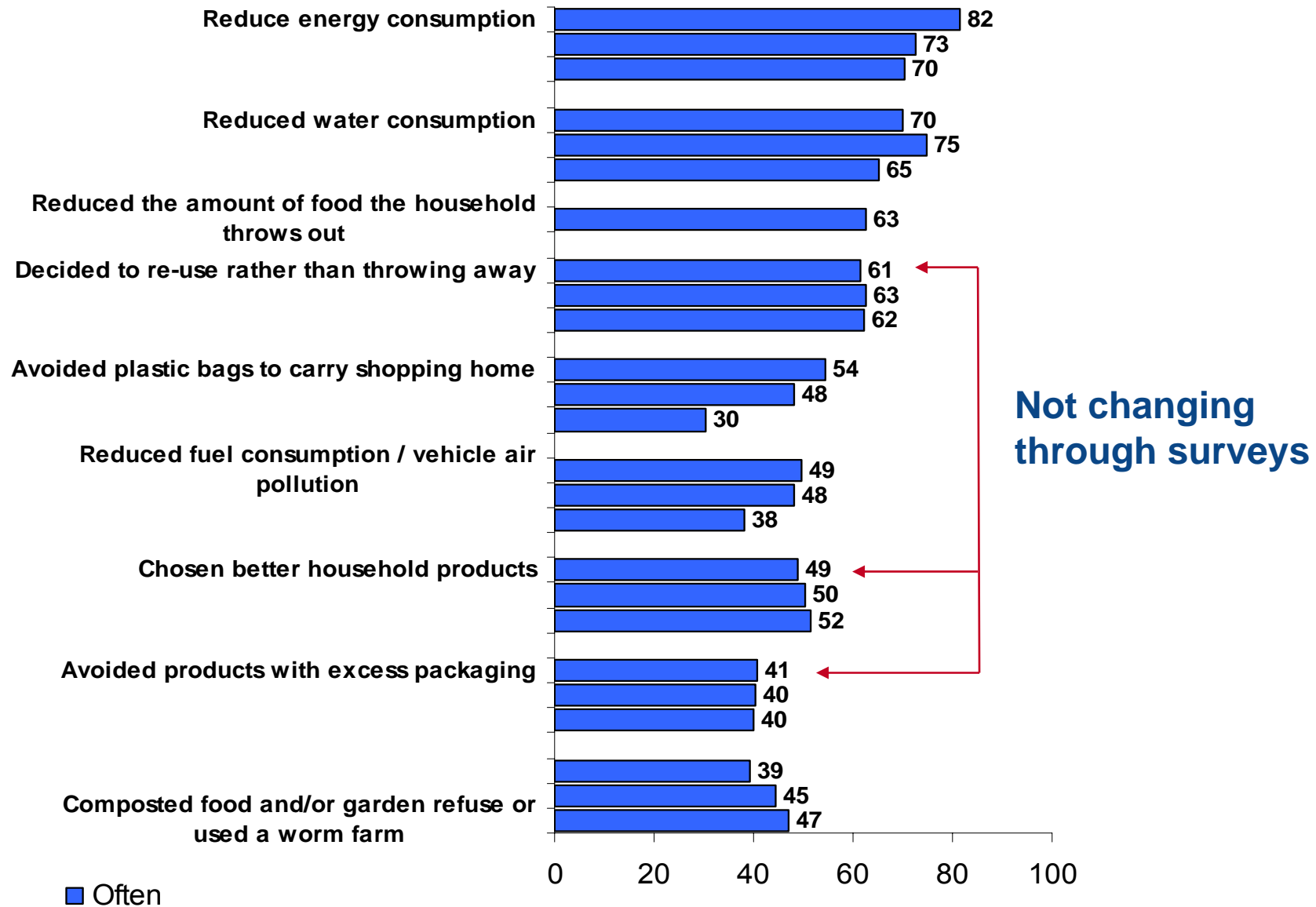


Everyday environmental behaviours - trends



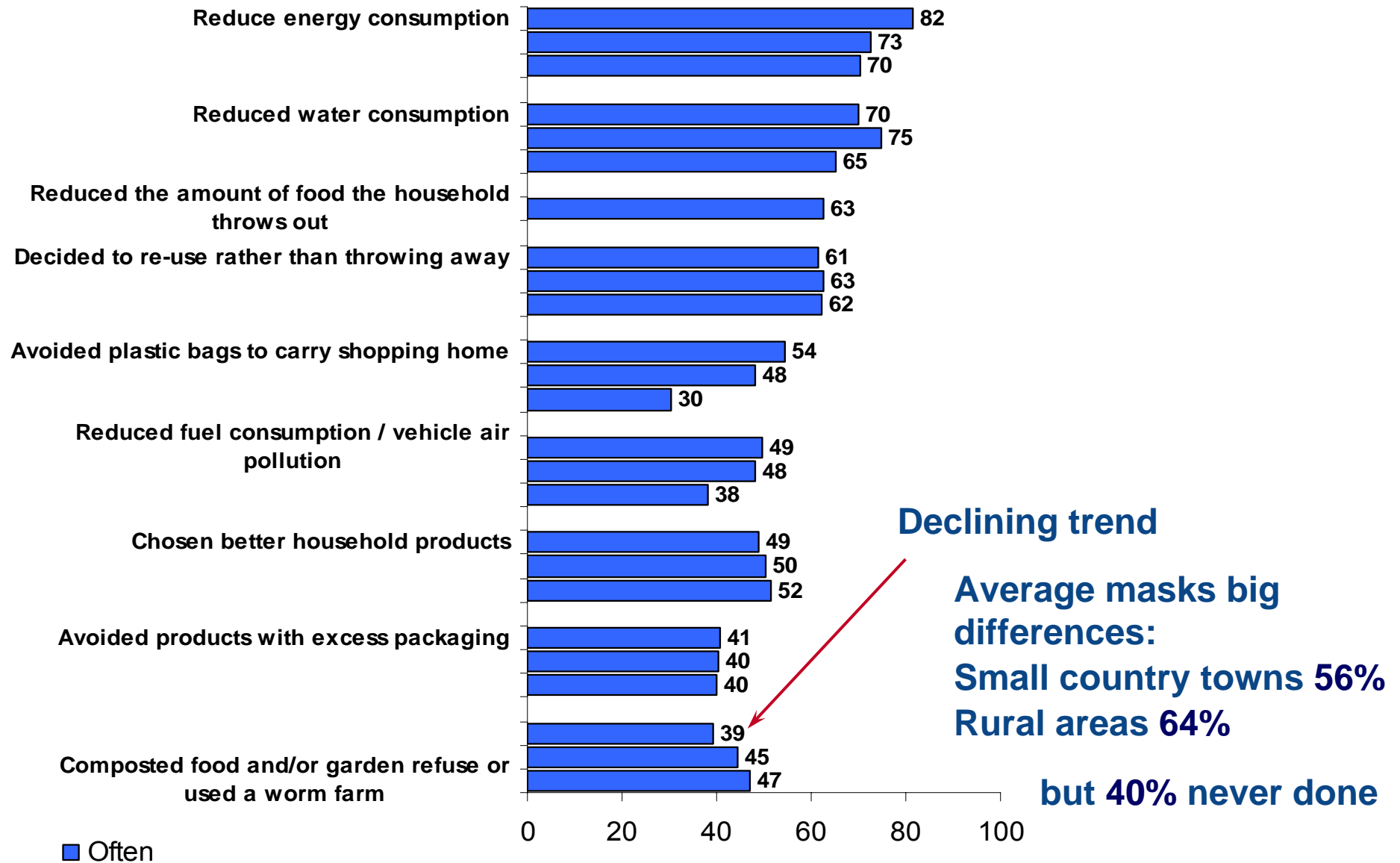


Everyday environmental behaviours - trends



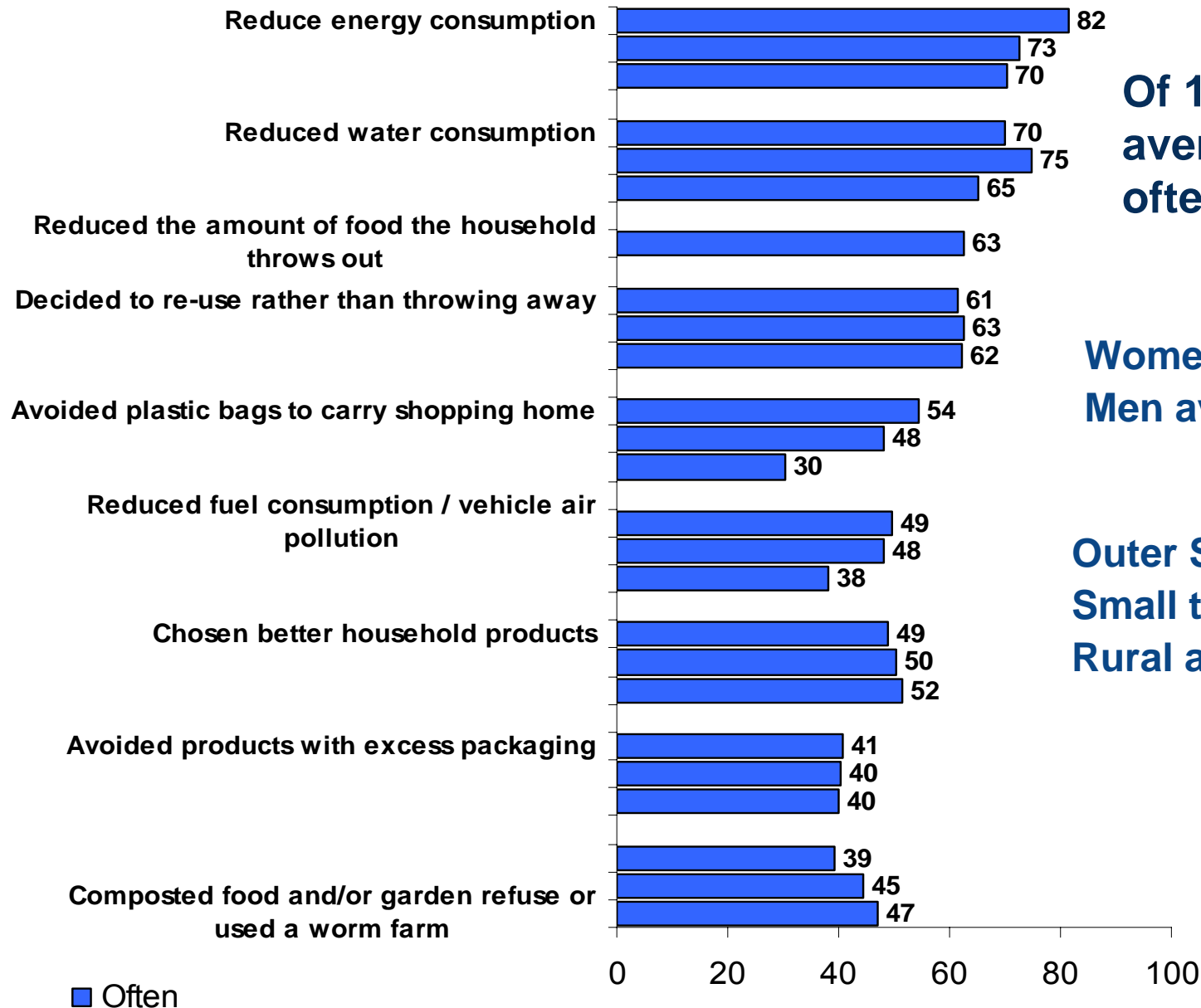


Everyday environmental behaviours - trends





Everyday environmental behaviours - differences



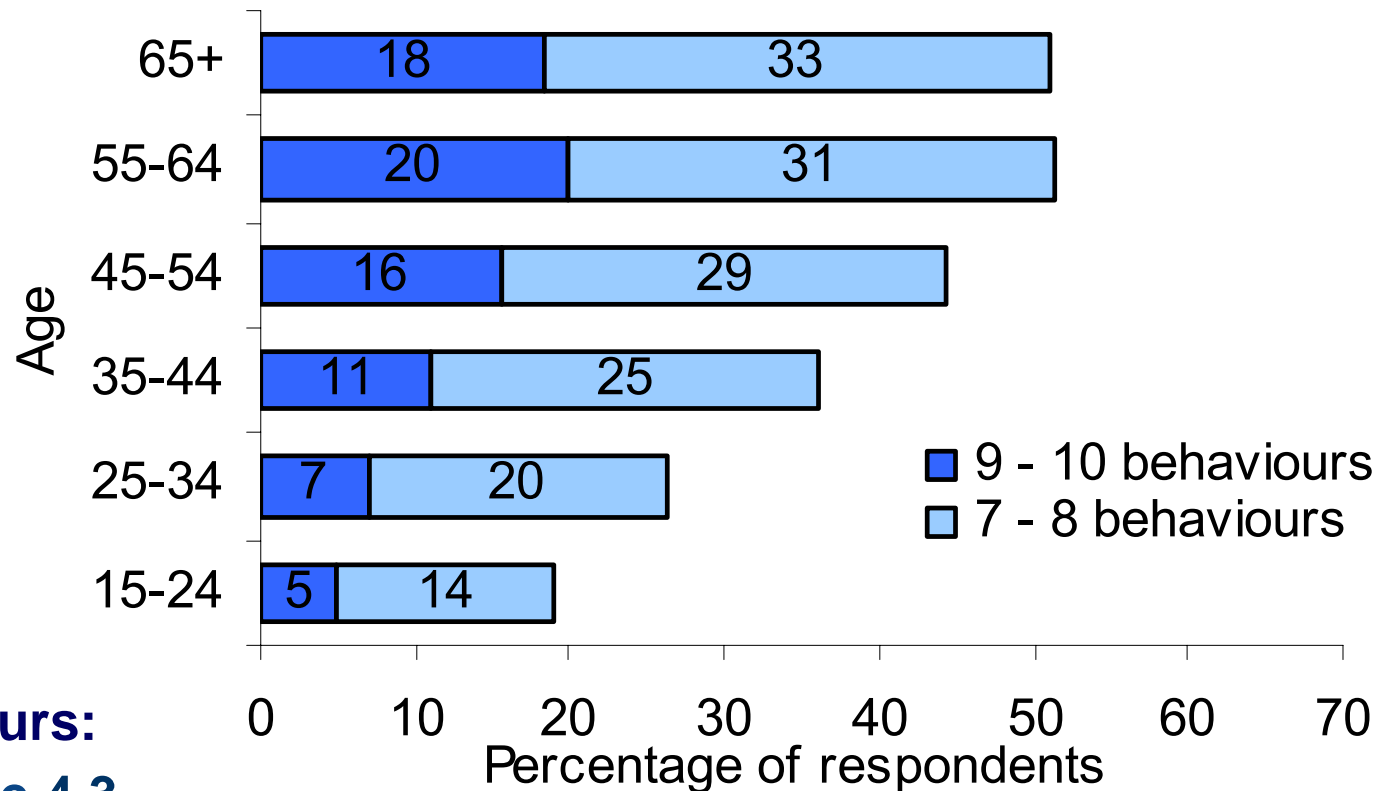
Of 10 behaviours
average done
often: 5.5

Women: average 5.8
Men average: 5.1

Outer Sydney: 5.1
Small towns: 6.0
Rural areas: 6.5

■ Often

Everyday behaviours (done often) by age





Summary of key differences

Gender: Women were more likely to be concerned, to engage in environmental behaviours and think environmental issues are improving. More men answered knowledge questions correctly.

Age: 15-24s do least environmental behaviours but are more likely to think environmental issues have improved. Older people do the most but are more likely to think issues have deteriorated.

Segment: Committeds do most, and are the most likely to: mention environment as issue for government, be concerned (and for biodiversity/ecosystems reasons), visit national parks and think regulation is still too lax for a range of industries.

Location: people in rural areas are more likely to participate in community environmental activities. There are also substantial differences in views of the state of environmental issues according to where people live



Using *Who Cares?*



Using *Who Cares?* in.... **planning**

- As a model, to research specific communities and for comparison to state-wide data
- Understanding community priorities - foundation for advocacy, policy and new initiatives e.g. environmental regulation, BASIX, water, climate change, marine protection
- Assessing gaps in knowledge - foundation for education programs e.g. stormwater, chemicals, climate change
- Views on specific issues inform specific program design
- Demographic differences enable targeting of appropriate programs e.g. for young people
- Segmentation enables a different style of targeting within the demographic groups eg:
 - new issue may target Committeds
 - broadening adoption of behaviour may target Reluctants

Using *Who Cares?* in....**design and implementation**

- **Understanding your target community – using segments and/or demographics**
- **Understanding barriers and drivers key to program design**
 - **for the 10 everyday behaviours the 2006 & 2009 surveys found a different mix of motivators and barriers for each**
 - **Helps decide which tools (or mix of tools) to use for each environmental issue of:**
 - **regulation**
 - **infrastructure**
 - **economic incentives**
 - **education**



Using *Who Cares?* in.... evaluation

Repeat questions track issues and detect shifts in knowledge, views, behaviours – assess whether the policy settings or program delivery has been effective

e.g. views on environmental regulation, knowledge about cause of the greenhouse effect

Look for establishment of new norms around key issues

e.g. water conservation, climate change

Where do you find it?

Detailed main report and *At a Glance* brochure published in **hard copy** – main report has results of all questions with demographic and segment differences

Research products on DECCW website:

- Main report (survey only)
- Who Cares? at a Glance*
- Seminar and launch presentations

Research products coming to DECCW website:

- Who Cares?* - Qualitative report
- Demographic and thematic fact sheets
- Demographic and regional tables

Most of these also available for 2006 , report and brochure 2003, reports for previous years

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/whocares.htm

Who Cares...why should we careabout social research?

- **To move to a sustainable society we need social change on a scale that changes norms**
- **With the imperatives of climate change we need to work smarter and more effectively in developing programs that facilitate these changes**
- **Research is a critical foundation to change programs – it provides the strategic information for smart program development**
- **The *Who Cares?* research is a starting point and helps us understand much about the diversity in the community – but you may well need more research in your local community as well**