

**Zero Waste**  
Magnetic Island

# Zero Waste Online Survey **May 2020**



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IMAGE: © Beat Lehmann

# Acknowledgements

Funding for this survey was provided by a Townsville City Council community grant and delivered through Zero Waste Magnetic Island, a working group of the Magnetic Island Community Development Association. The Zero Waste team would like to acknowledge the strong on-going support we receive from TCC, especially from Alistair Baggott and Adam King.

Zero Waste Magnetic Island acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Magnetic Island, the Wulgurukaba People and their Elders, past, present and emerging. We strive to work with Magnetic Island's Traditional Owners at every opportunity.

We would also like to sincerely thank all of the residents who participated in the survey, which is critically important for shaping our future actions.



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# Background

Magnetic Island, located a quick 20 minute ferry ride from Townsville, supports a population of 2,335 people. Over 70% of the island is national park, and it is a haven for wildlife. Surrounding waters support a diversity of life including fishes, corals, dugong, turtles and dolphins. Island residents and visitors are keen to see the island, its waters and fringing reefs retain their outstanding natural and cultural features, which, as part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWA) are of international significance.

Zero Waste Magnetic Island (ZWMI) is a new working group of the Magnetic Island Community Development Association (MIDCA). The group has a small but growing membership and a Facebook page. It embraces a vision of preventing, reducing, reusing and recycling island waste.

Between December 2019 and March 2020, ZWMI implemented an online survey of island residents to (a) ascertain current levels of residents' awareness of local waste and how it is generated; (b) to see whether there is interest in learning more about how to reduce island waste; and (c) to understand what might motivate residents to reduce their waste.



IMAGE: [https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn%3AAND9GcS\\_DgOxrxt0ZyYUgokkWnovfYeKKXwDKar-kte\\_JmnrEz8PFf](https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn%3AAND9GcS_DgOxrxt0ZyYUgokkWnovfYeKKXwDKar-kte_JmnrEz8PFf)



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# Survey snapshot

- Twice as many females as males responded.
- Average respondent's age was 56, reflecting the high number of island retirees.
- Almost half of the respondents live in Nelly Bay.
- Many respondents identify with Magnetic Island as their home and community of friends and family. Others embrace its beauty, wildlife, wilderness values, beaches and bays. Many enjoy its laid back lifestyle, sense of safety and sanctuary.
- Respondents are keen recyclers and on average, 70% of respondents were aware of the different recycling options on the island.
- However, there is still confusion about what can be recycled, as well as where and when recycling happens on the island.
- Significantly, almost 80% respondents DISAGREE with the statement – “It’s not my responsibility to reduce island waste” reflecting residents’ desire to “do their bit” for waste reduction.
- Around 60% respondents compost food scraps. Over 40% are unsure of what to do with some organic waste items such as spent oil, meat scraps, seafood scraps and citrus peel.
- Only 38% respondents are satisfied that they are getting good composting results, and around the same number said they would be interested in receiving help and tips to get better composting results.
- Suggestions for ways to become a more active recycler were based on *convenience* and *access to more information, education and awareness* about recycling.
- After completing the survey, 70% respondents agreed that they were more inclined to improve their awareness about local waste and how it is generated.
- Respondents provided a wide range of suggestions for how they might improve their awareness, based on *direct actions; getting involved in Zero Waste activities; and/or getting better access to information.*



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# Methodology

Quantitative  
online &  
household  
survey



10 minute  
survey  
duration



175 Magnetic  
Island  
residents  
aged between  
18 and 90  
years  
responded

Sample recruited  
from Facebook  
notifications and ads  
in Magnetic Island  
community  
newsletters. Online  
surveys were  
supplemented with  
targeted household  
surveys... interrupted  
by COVID-19!

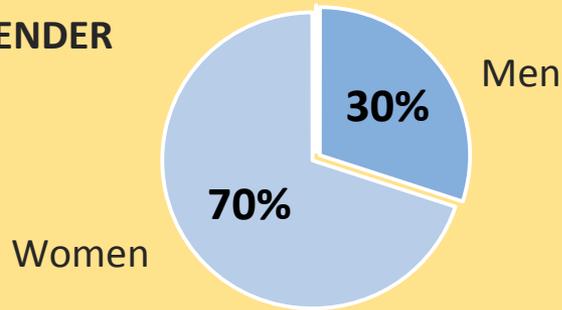
Survey was open  
between December  
2019 and March  
2020.



# Who responded?

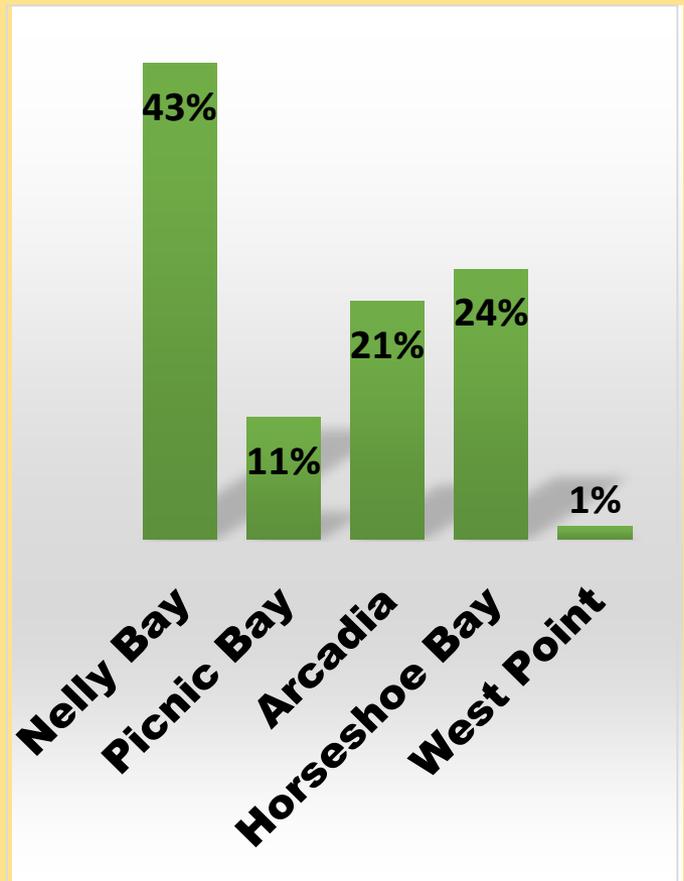
(All numbers shown are percentages unless otherwise stated)

## GENDER



We tried to correct the gender bias & location bias through follow-up household surveys, but these were interrupted by social distancing!

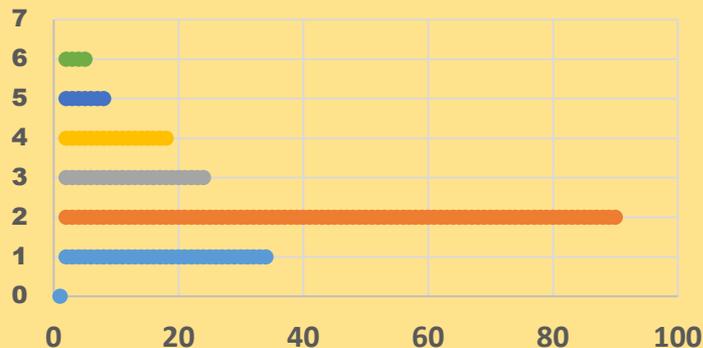
## LOCATION



## RESPONDENTS AGE

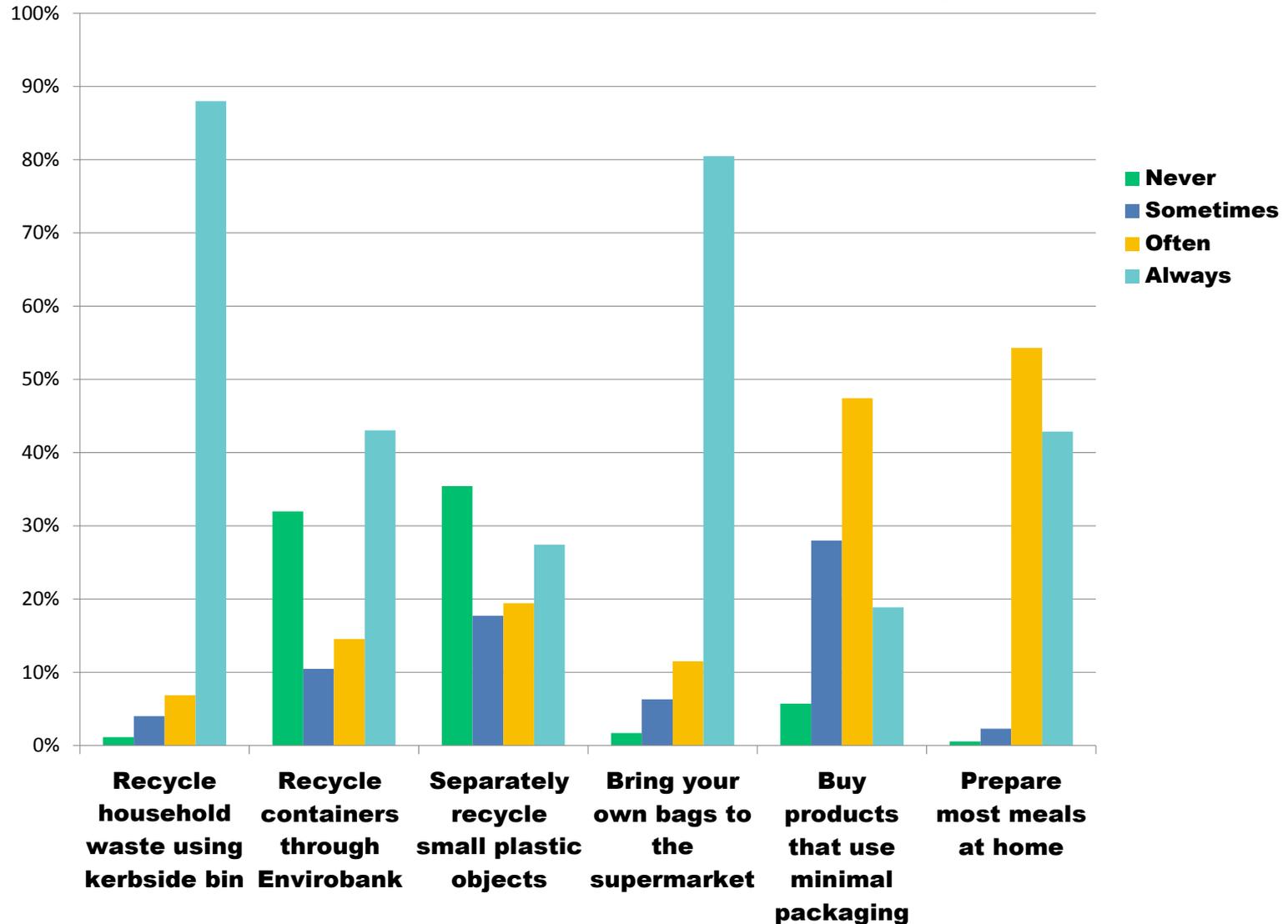
Average age is 56, reflecting the high number of island retirees

## PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD (2 is most common)

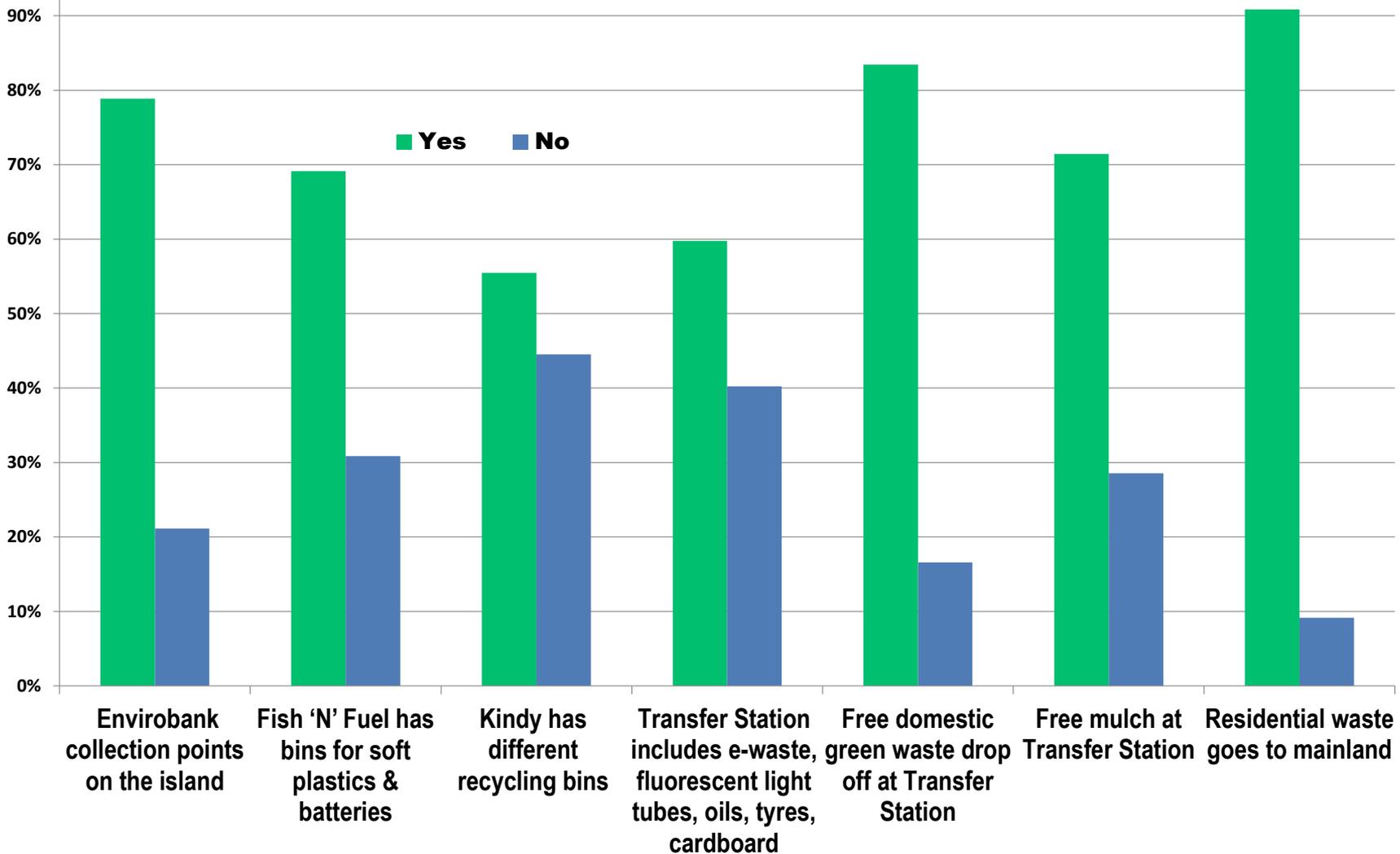




## How often do you do the following?



# Are you aware of the following options available on Magnetic Island?



# Comments about wastemanagement

## GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT RECYCLING

- This is an amazing initiative that should be mandatory all over the world.
- Keep doing great work, the island deserves it.
- Unsure what can be recycled/reused on the Island. Would like to know more.
- I separate as much of my waste as possible.
- Would like to see an overview of recycling on Maggie - where to go with what.
- Trying for zero waste.
- Would do it more if more available and not busy.
- Aware of not wasting resources. Don't know about Envirobank.
- I use very few of that type of container.
- Most machines are catching them rather than go to landfill. Plus we don't know what to do with them (bottles).
- Don't use small bottles.
- I often have queries re what can go in what recycling - E.g. water bottle lids etc., and assume others have these too. The web is a good source of info but sometimes has differing views.
- Are the plastic handles on disposable razors recyclable?
- Where should I take old AA & AAA size batteries for disposal?
- I prefer to donate items to local charities.
- Is difficult to know how to recycle many of the small plastics.



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# Comments about waste management

## **KERBSIDE RECYCLING**

- Why do we not have green waste bins supplied by TCC?
- “Household waste” question ... waste is too general... recycling in yellow obviously, others in red.
- Would like a kerbside collection of soft plastics.
- Council need to provide larger yellow bins at no cost. It saves them landfill charges.
- I have a green and a yellow bin. I have noticed some houses have a red? Should I have one and what is its purpose?
- Would happily separate rubbish further if we could cater for more waste streams.

## **PLASTIC LIDS, BREAD TAGS**

- Don't eat bread or drink milk - sorry! Do recycle plastic drink lids though.
- Where do I recycle bottle tops and bread tags?
- I have just learnt I can leave bottle tops and bread tags at the day care centre and will do so from now on.
- Not sure about process for recycling small objects such as bread tags.



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# Comments about wastemanagement

## PACKAGING/BAGS

- Product packaging is a problem.
- I refuse extra bags.
- It is hard to find stuff with minimal packaging.
- I object to things being over packaged.
- Hard to buy unpackaged foods - maybe this is something that IGA and Foodworks could be encouraged to consider - but, when pennies count for many people, 1 packaged 1kg bag of apples is cheaper than 1kg unpackaged apples.
- Non-packaged products not common - on island principally fruit and vegetables and on occasion these also are packaged.
- It is difficult to find products that have minimal packaging and easy accessible.
- Not all goods are available naked of packaging.

## FOOD SCRAPS

- Compost bin for most food scraps.
- All food scraps go to chooks.



# Comments about wastemanagement

## ENVIROBANK

- I think the Envirobank scheme is clunky. Everything should be done via council collections. There is no need to give me 10c to recycle anything.
- I would do Envirobank but I haven't really got a handle on it so I just put it in the yellow bin.
- Not sure where Enviroback is. Will start using it when I locate it.
- It's hard to catch them. A depot would be easier.
- Don't buy such products - if wine bottles were recyclable - yes we would collect for Envirobank.
- Our household doesn't use/buy any of the containers Envirobank recycles.

## SOFT PLASTICS

- I support Dale's efforts at the petrol station to collect alternative plastics that can't go in the recycling, but are clean and reusable.
- Our household also recycles all soft plastics via supermarket collection bins.

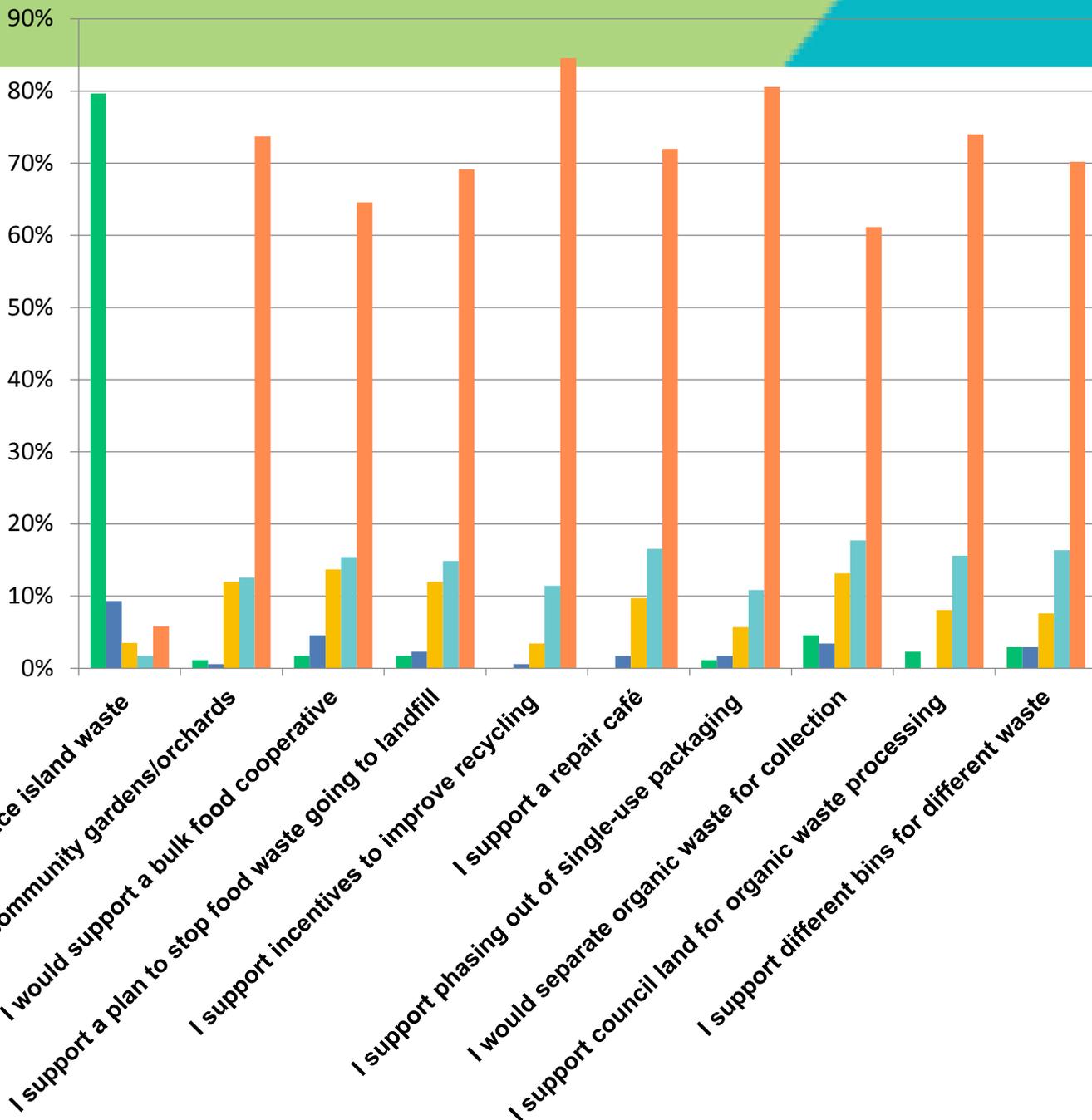


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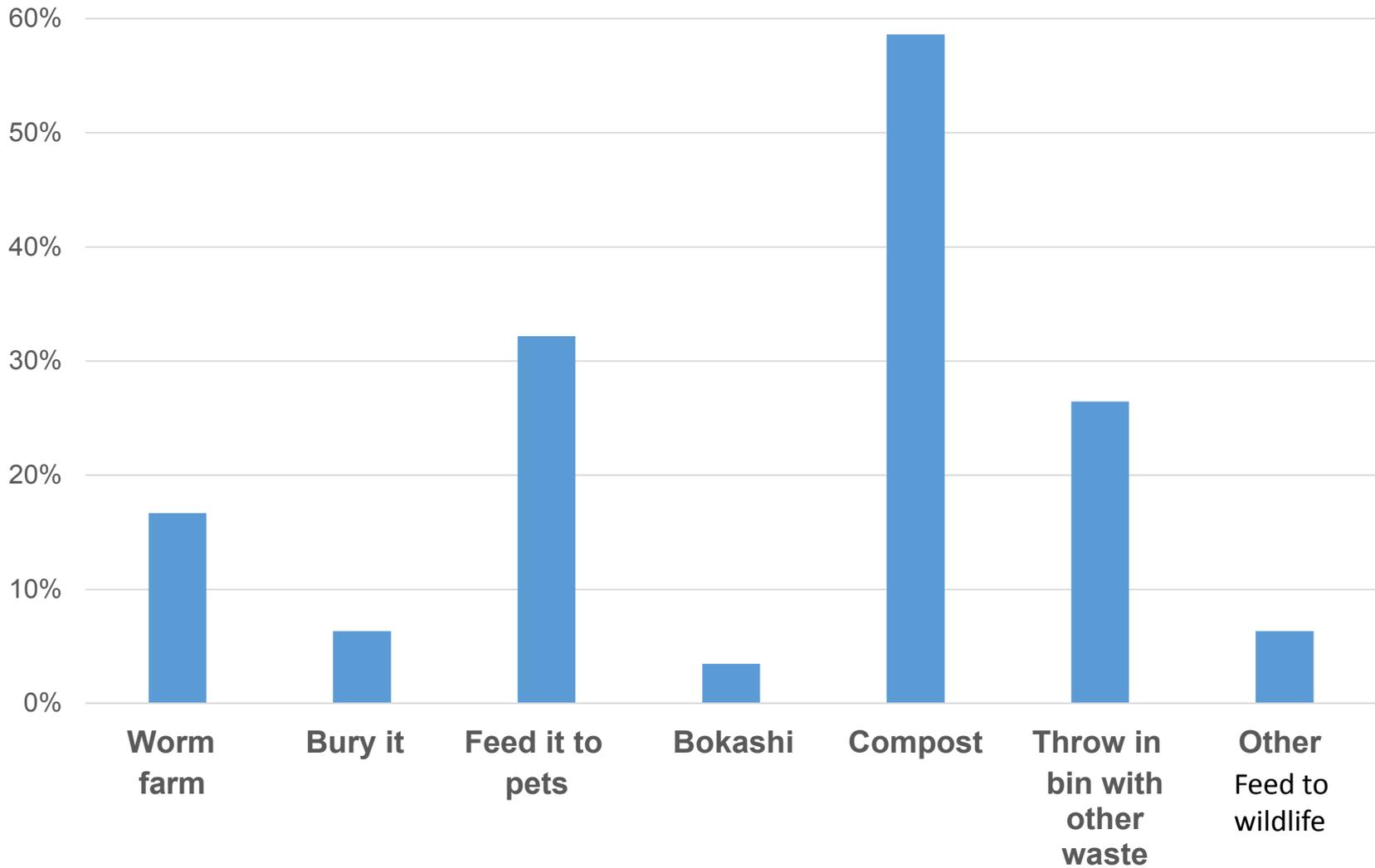


# Agreement (or disagreement) with statements

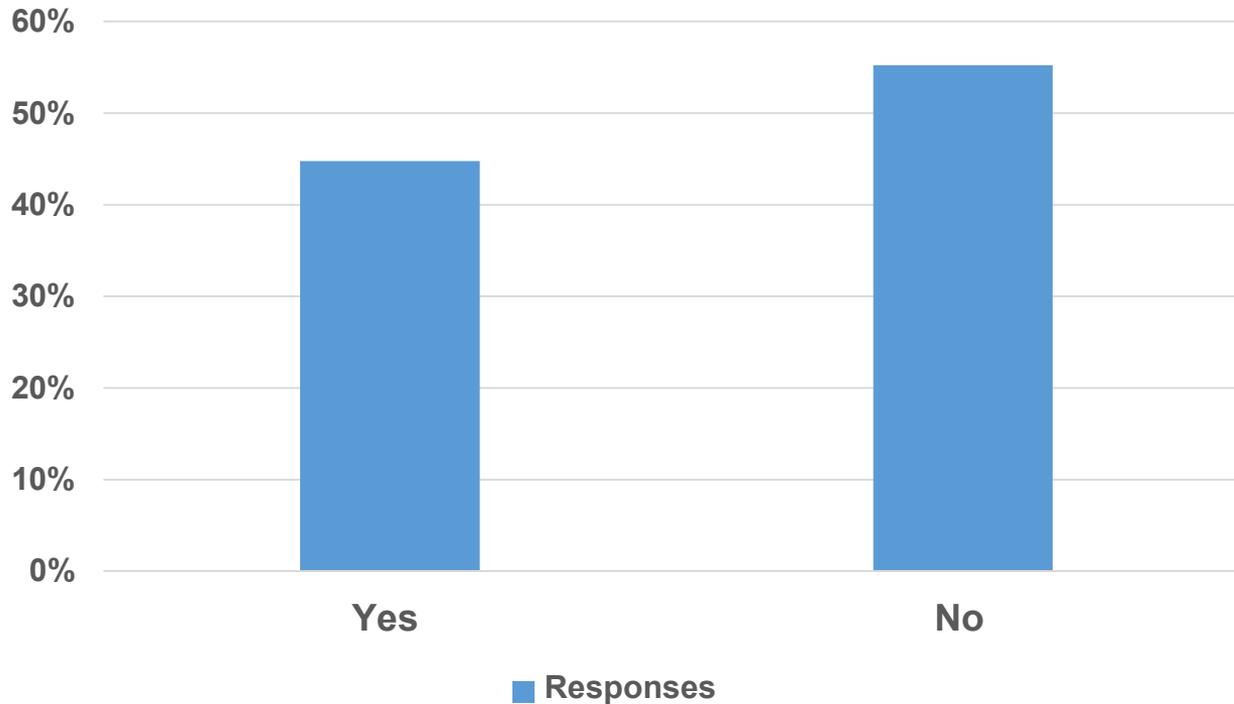
- 1 = Disagree Strongly
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 = Agree Strongly



## What do you currently do with your organic kitchen waste?



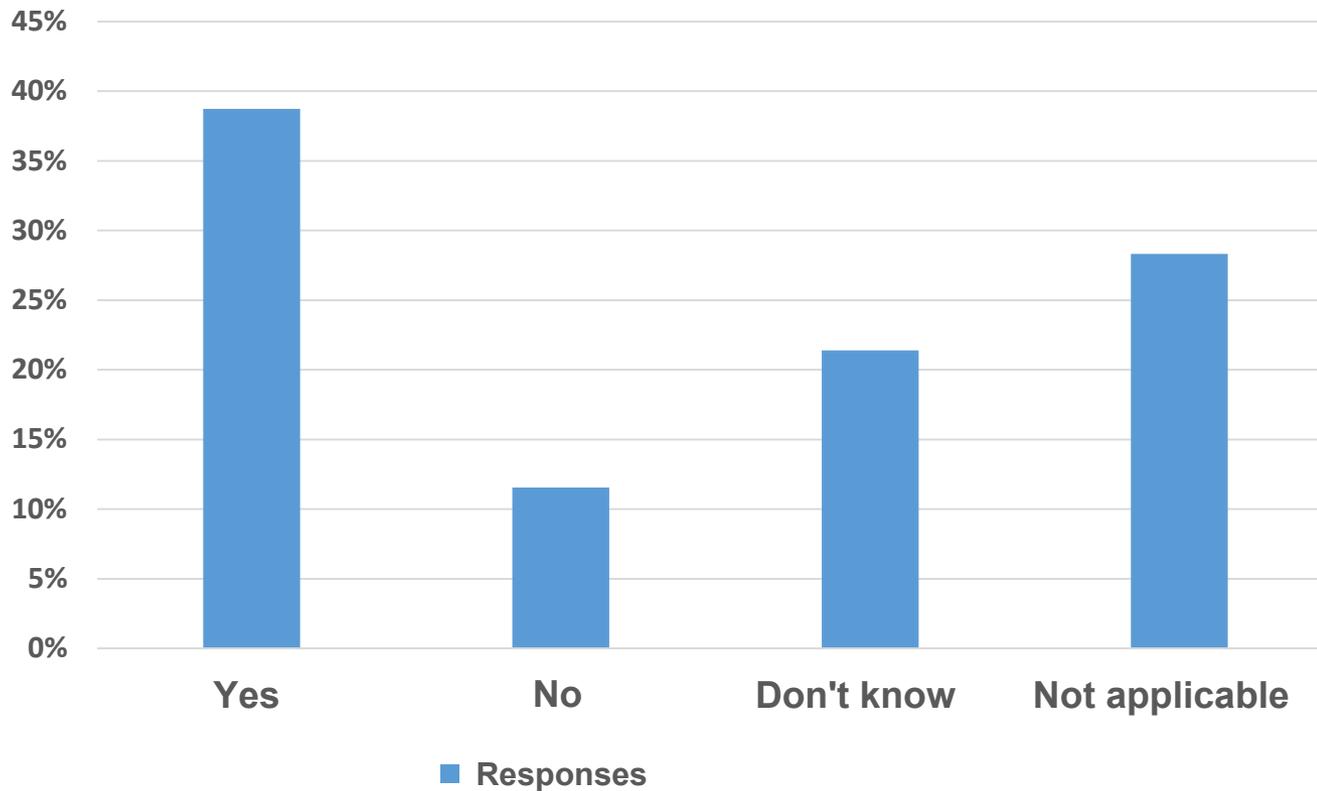
Do you ever have an excess of organic waste items  
you are not sure how to deal with?  
(E.g.: Spent oil, meat scraps, seafood scraps, citrus peel etc.)



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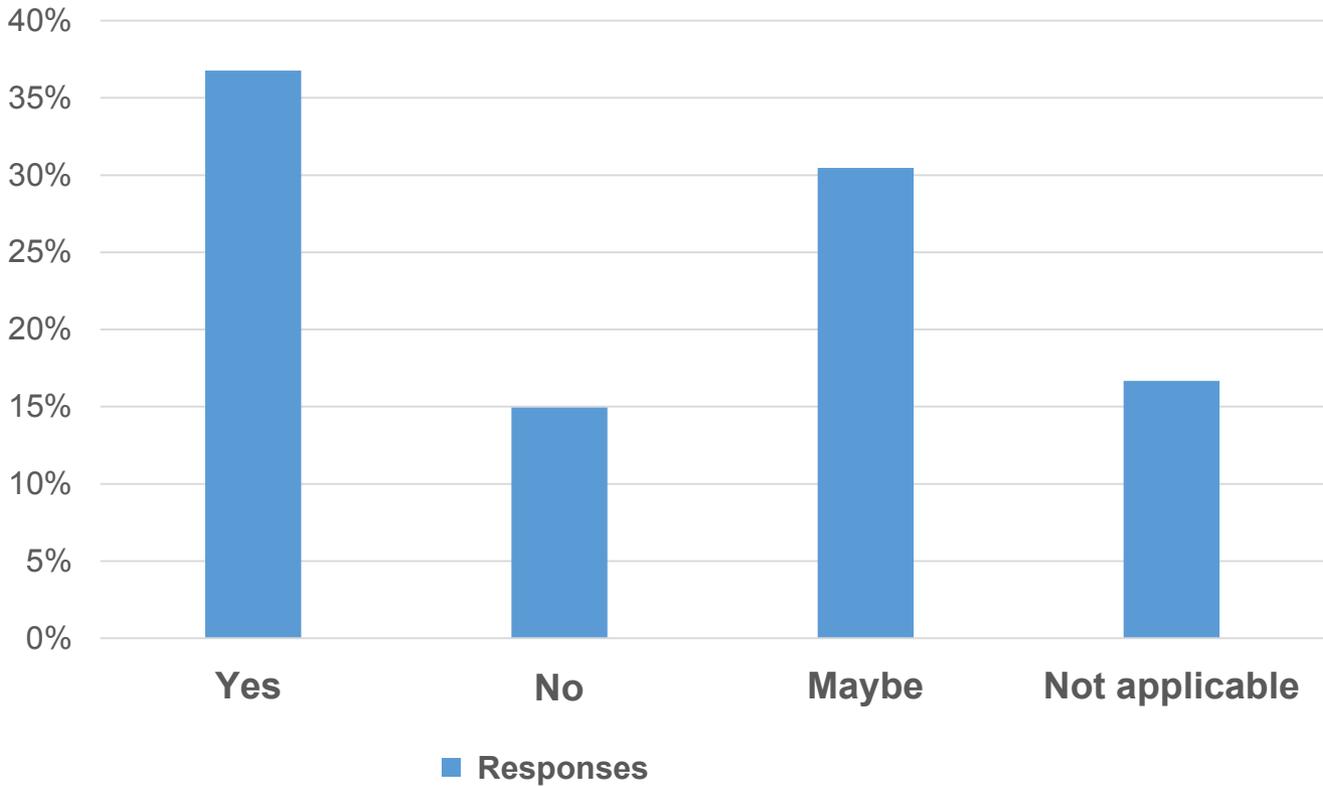
## If you do make compost, are you satisfied that you are getting good composting results?



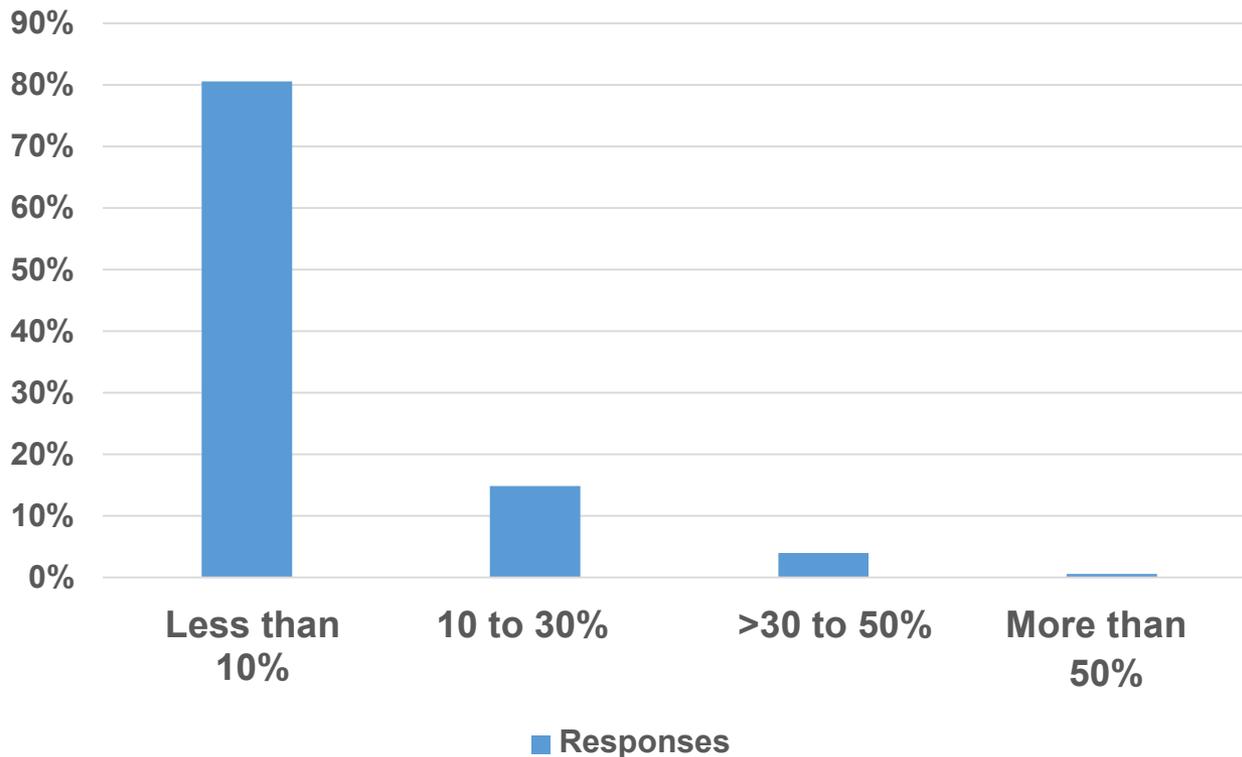
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# Would you be interested in receiving help and tips to get better composting results? (e.g. with the assistance of an experienced local composter)



## What proportion of your food do you estimate goes to spoil before you have time to eat it?



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## Comments about tips/help with composting

- Planning to take my compost to friend's compost bin.
- As I live alone I have little use for compost bin although I have one.
- Living alone I have very little to compost.
- It would be better for me if I could get it done elsewhere please.
- Already getting lots of help and advice from friends and family.
- I am from interstate, down south, and have noticed that worm farms and composting seem to have different requirements for success up here in the tropics.
- Worked in the green waste recycling industry- already have the knowledge.
- I'm now trying the tumbling bin, will see how that works.
- Although I'm quite happy there is always room to improve so tips are welcome.
- New to island, and setting up systems.
- Local compost pile has been brought up before, one location per Bay, so those who can't compost can bring it there.
- In a small household without grass, it is difficult to get a good balance for composting. Animal composting (hens/worms) is under consideration, but requires commitment and consideration. Only just heard of Bokashi! Sounds interesting and easily doable especially with the home-made bin!
- Any and all information gratefully received.



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## Comments about tips/help with composting

- Just obtained tumbler compost bin through Water Smart, reviewed my composting - an absolute failure to date and am starting post-Christmas to compost with online information guidance so as to product good compost.
- Not convenient at the moment.
- I don't have a garden.
- We are happy with ours.
- I've only had my composter for a couple of months so not sure how it should be looking.
- We compost to get rid of waste. We don't really need compost.
- I think we are doing ok but it would be good to get better at composting.
- I know how to compost - have done this for years but we don't personally have a bin on Maggie and animals would dig up other methods. We compost in Victoria with one of the turn over bins (to keep animals out).
- I recently received my Council provided new turning bin so am ready for better results.
- Have done it down south but just moved to MI and need to start up.
- Composting here is different to my original home in Victoria.
- I don't want to deal with rotting food scraps however I would support a community program that would bring me together with a neighbour who would want to take my food scraps.
- I can't have a compost where I live/rent.



# Can you suggest ways that you could be motivated to be a more active recycler?

## GENERAL COMMENTS

- Our pollution level is extremely minimal for the population we have here. Look at other big countries that do nothing. Look at the bigger polluters e.g. China, India, America push for them to change before a community of 2000.

## EDUCATION/AWARENESS

- More tips and hints on the zero waste site. Sharing of stories and ideas.
- More education and ideas. It helps to hear what others are doing that I may not have thought of.
- Information on what can be recycled and how.
- Seeing the community benefit.
- Community free workshops to upcycle.

## CONVENIENCE

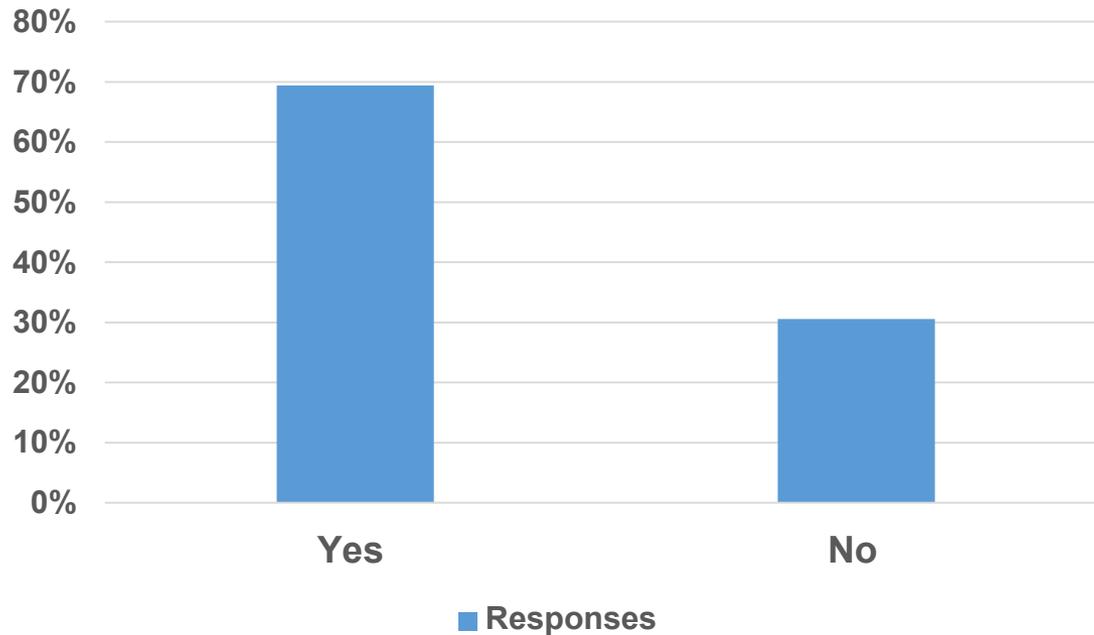
- Make it easier.
- Recycle collection every week.
- Dump shop.
- Recycling depots in each bay.



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# After completing this survey, do you feel more inclined to improve your awareness about local waste and how it is generated?



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## DIRECT ACTIONS

- Green waste disposal, citrus overload when cockies have finished, improved composting skills.
- I have items that need the repair cafe so they can free-cycle.
- Organising different containers for specified waste.
- Composting more effectively and staying across Zero Waste initiatives.
- Always room for us to improve.
- Be more proactive.
- Being careful with what goes into my bins.
- Better composting.
- Buy a Bokashi.
- Chase up where nearby container collection sites are.
- Check into local recycling.
- Collect small items and take to the Kindy.
- Composting.
- Do research into availability of places to recycle white goods in particular.
- Drop soft plastics, 10c bottles etc to Kindy.
- Find out about small items.
- Find out where recycle options are located on the island and use them.
- Finding location of nearest Envirobank.
- Google other waste solutions.
- Spread the work, the practice, and the motivation.



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## DIRECT ACTIONS

- I'll get more bottles to Envirobank and check out the Kindy option. Also am more inspired to get back into the veggie garden. Thanks for doing this!!!
- I'll collect bottle tops etc now I know where to take them.
- Look at starting a worm farm.
- Look for the recycling depots.
- Look into different bins at the Kindy.
- Maybe finding someone who owns chickens or similar to keep food scraps for.
- Mindful of business that supports recycling.
- More visits to Zero Waste Facebook/website.
- Read and learn more.
- Read more and mix with others who are doing innovative strategies.
- Research and plan how to improve the situation.
- Set up my compost bin.
- Soft plastics bin at home.
- Start taking things to the Kindy.
- Start the soft plastic option and take it to Fish N Fuel (?).
- Support any recycling things that may happen.
- Take bags shopping.
- Take more advantage of our local disposal facilities.
- Taking excess recycling to C&K.
- Recycle the lids and we are getting chooks in next few days.
- Visit the transfer station. I hardly go.



# After completing this survey, do you feel more inclined to improve your awareness about local waste and how it is generated?

## DIRECT ACTIONS

- Think before I throw.
- Use Envirobank collections stations on the island.
- To encourage people to recycle at work.
- Try and reduce my waste more.
- Use the Kindy recycling options.
- Using Envirobank recycling more.
- We are working on ways to reduce waste within our business.
- Will separate materials that can be taken to “Fishn N Fueln” for collection.

## GET INVOLVED

- Get to know what else is available. Getting to know my neighbours better, see if their chooks want some of my food scraps. See if anyone wants some of my worm juice. Share with people what I’m doing, find out what they’re doing.
- Becoming more involved in community initiatives to reduce waste.
- Attend Zero Waste meetings.
- Attend educational events to learn more about waste management and composting.
- Can’t wait for the workshop.
- Communicate with Zero Waste.
- Get involved in more initiatives.
- Join (or offer help to) Zero Waste committee.
- Join the Facebook group for further info.



# After completing this survey, do you feel more inclined to improve your awareness about local waste and how it is generated?

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Educate the tourists and “local visitors“ not to trash the things that they have come to enjoy.
- May be a household sheet could be issued with recycling places on it.
- Fridge magnets and other promo material giving info about current best practice.
- I tend to keep an eye on the media about environmentally appropriate articles.
- I will make an effort to be more informed.
- I would like to know what is really done with all the stuff we are recycling, especially e-waste and plastics. Is it still shipped to Asia? And how we can get TCC to switch to use more recycled materials?
- I'd like for the general public to be encouraged to visit recycling stations. For there to be regular guided tours and incentives put into place to encourage people to recycle responsibly. One of the questions, asked about concerns of food waste going into land fill? Since food decomposes, why is it a worry?
- I'd like to know more about these plans to enhance recycling on Maggie.
- Information please - I don't use social media.
- Just need to know more about where and when.
- Make it mainstream. Who we are. Not just for Greenies. What about energy too? Why can't we all be solar!!!!
- Make the signs and labels for our home.
- A print out of what, how and where to recycle.



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# After completing this survey, do you feel more inclined to improve your awareness about local waste and how it is generated?

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Need public confirmation regarding council recycling from yellow bins.
- Not only how waste is generated, but the systems currently in place by council to process waste and ways we can improve these systems.
- Patiently wait for the results of this survey to better improve the way Magnetic Island recycles its waste and jump on it.
- We need clearer information for this around the island. Concern people misuse what happens to rubbish. Mixing recycle with rubbish. Too much confusion.
- Wait for information to come out in the local newspaper.

## GENERAL COMMENT

I have an issue with the visual appearance of these recycling stations. It seems that mini dumps are popping up everywhere on the island at the Kindy, MI Golf Club etc. This is a beautiful island and on the major road the Kindy looks like a dump, there is no sign to encourage donations off to the side are where it can be concealed. I think we need to be proactive about specific drop off points that are concealed. Both of the examples I used and not in the keeping with island beauty more like island eye sore and this is why we have a transfer station in the first place so rubbish is contained to one area. Well meaning donations but it can quickly get out of hand and create a problem elsewhere if not handled properly and I think that is what's happening right now.



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