



SURF COAST SHIRE AQUATIC CENTRE

RESEARCH REPORT

**PREPARED FOR THE
SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL
AUGUST 2015**

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BACKGROUND

The Surf Coast Shire is experiencing solid population growth; Torquay is one of the fastest growth areas in regional Victoria, while Winchelsea and other areas are also being slated for sustained levels of growth in the coming decades.

An iconic region for tourism, the Surf Coast Shire will need to cater not only to a growing population, but also to regional, national and international visitors. Current aquatic and wellness options are limited, as they are either private, located some kilometres away from main township areas, or outdoor, operating only in the summer months.

An aquatic centre with health and wellness facilities would also be a significant asset to improving health outcomes for the community. Though there is a lower level of sedentary living amongst Surf Coast residents, the two fastest growing groups in the region are young families and older persons, both of which would benefit from additional health and wellness options and who are identified as the primary target users of aquatic facilities.

Council is able to access debt funding in order to go ahead with the proposed development, and will need substantial additional funding from Commonwealth and State Governments to proceed. Council therefore needs to resolve its advocacy priorities in the lead-up to the next Federal Election, and to ensure that, if the aquatic centre is included as an advocacy priority, the reasons for its inclusion stand up to scrutiny in the community.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Surf Coast Shire needs to accurately assess residents' attitudes in relation to the proposed aquatic centre, including priority, support (both for the centre and for accessing funding), perceived benefits and concerns, and the information needs and expectations in relation to communications about the proposed development.

This research allows Surf Coast Shire to understand views of different communities across the Shire taking into account location, demographics, potential usage, and ratepayer propensity to pay extra or special rates in order to fund the proposed development.

Research results provide a comprehensive understanding about residents' views and perceptions of the proposed new aquatic centre, by including different subgroups such as various geographic, demographic and potential user groups.

Research has also specifically assessed the following:

- Views of different communities across the Shire, noting variance in potential usage;
- Propensity for different communities to pay additional rates or special charges to fund the Centre;
- Propensity for different communities to prioritise the Centre above other services or infrastructure;
- The community view about using debt to fund the Centre;
- Support to make application for a rate cap exemption based on the level of support for the Centre.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted as a 10 minute telephone survey, in the period of 6th to 13th of August, 2015.

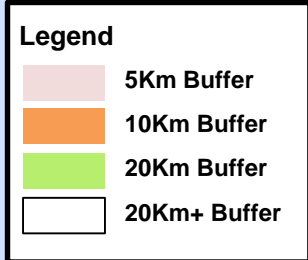
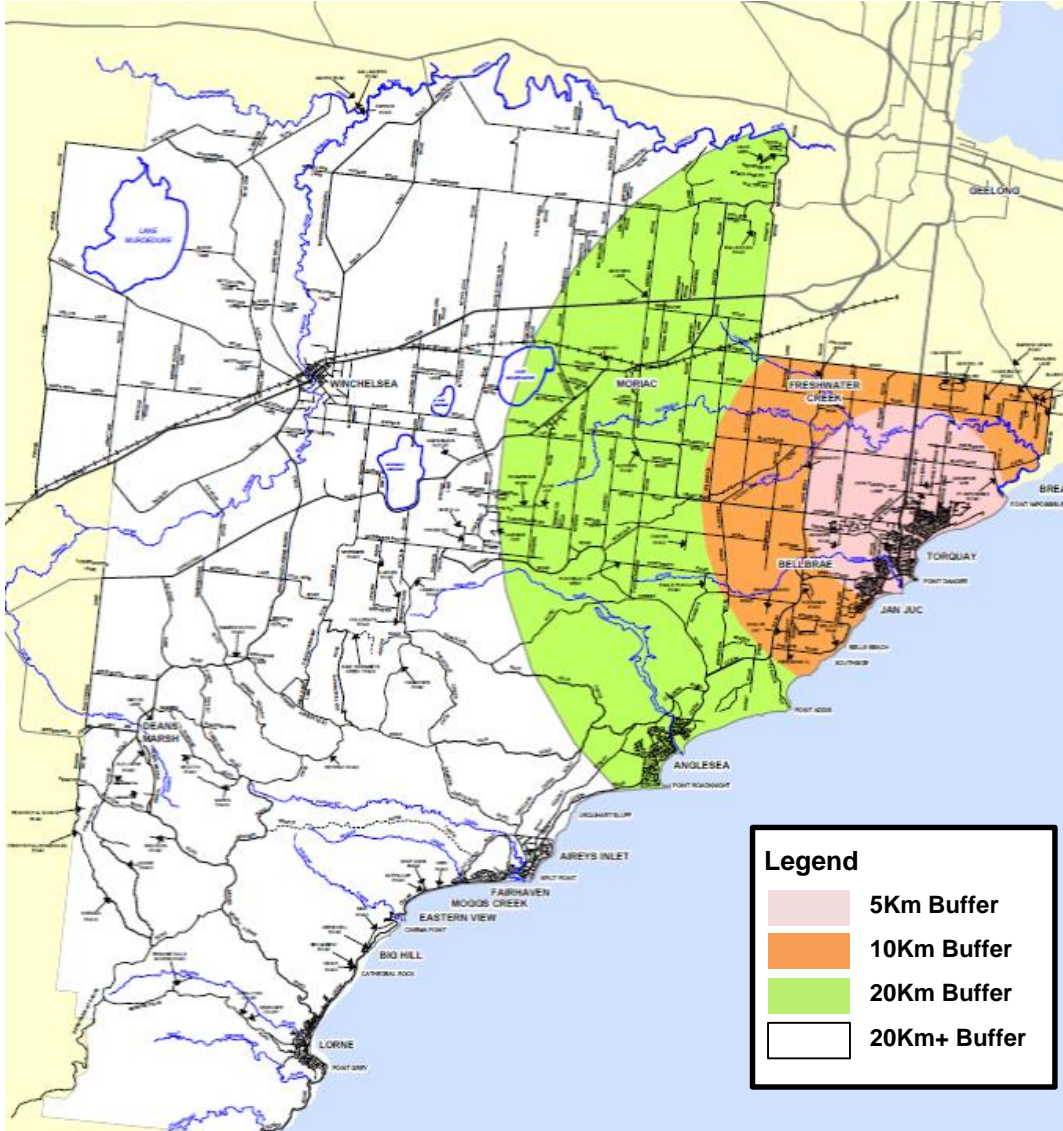
Sample comprises n=600 Surf Coast Shire ratepayers, including n=400 residents and n=200 non-residents. Residents: own a property and live in Surf Coast; Non-residents: own one or more rateable properties in Surf Coast but reside elsewhere.

Ratepayers were randomly selected from the Surf Coast Shire database and the sample interviewed and also weighted post-survey to the special charge zones.

The maximum margin of error on the total ratepayer database sample of n=600 is +/-3.9% at the 95% confidence level; differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding. Blue arrows on charts indicate significantly higher results when compared to the total.

Conducted in compliance with AS-ISO 20252.

RATEPAYER SAMPLE PROFILE



Radius	n=	%
Zone 0 - 5 km	250	43%
Zone 5 – 10 km	80	7%
Zone 10 – 20 km	118	19%
Zone 20+ km	152	31%

Ratepayers	n=	%
Residents	400	64%
Non-residents	200	36%
Under 55 years	184	30%
55+ years	416	70%

Ratepayers & age	%
Residents under 55+ years	35%
Residents 55+ years	65%
Non-residents under 55 years	21%
Non-residents 55+ years	79%



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings

- Initial support for the proposed aquatic and health centre is moderate, with 44% of Surf Coast Shire ratepayers saying they at least somewhat support the proposal and 35% opposed. As many are strongly against the proposed centre (24%) as are strongly supportive (23%).
- **Support for the proposed aquatic centre declines significantly upon in-principle consideration of increased rates** over a 20 year period to pay for the centre. Only 30% of ratepayers support the proposal based on this in-principle consideration, while opposition increases to 65%, with most (52%) strongly opposed.
- **Support declines even further when ratepayers are asked if they support the proposal based on the individualised amount of the special charge and rate increase calculated on their specific property location.** Only 25% of ratepayers supported the proposal based on their individualised charge, whilst 70% are opposed, 55% strongly so.
- Upon prompting with a range of potential benefits and concerns in relation to the proposed facility, support does recover somewhat, to 37%, but a majority (54%) continue to oppose it. On a considered basis, more (40%) strongly oppose the centre, than support it overall (37%), with ratepayers within a 0-5km radius of the location of the proposed centre delivering the only majority support (51%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [CONT'D]

Setting the scene

- Ratepayers rated the performance of Surf Coast Shire relatively well, with the majority giving Council at least good ratings on both community consultation and engagement (52%) and overall performance (51%).
 - Those that rated Council performance as good were more likely to support the building of the proposed centre.
- Awareness of the proposal to build an aquatic centre is high, with 77% of ratepayers saying they know something about the proposal, although most only know 'a little' (59%) rather than 'a lot' (18%).
 - Awareness is higher amongst residents (83%) than non-residents (66%) and also amongst those with properties within 10km of the proposed location.
- There is relatively low awareness of the recommended options for the proposed aquatic centre. The option for a 25 metre indoor pool is the only option with majority awareness.
 - However, awareness of recommended options does not make a significant difference to support for the centre.
- The major source of information about the proposal to build an aquatic and health centre in Torquay is from local newspapers (cited by 60%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [CONT'D]

Specific reactions to rate increases

- Based upon consideration of the individualised rate charge, support is higher amongst ratepayers that live within a 10km radius of the proposed centre, even though their rate increases are higher than those living further away.
- The majority (70%) of those that do not support the centre are not willing to pay anything to support the building of the centre. This was significantly higher amongst those in the 20+ km radius area from the proposed centre (84%).

Benefits and concerns

- People appreciate the water safety benefits of the proposed centre, with the centre's potential to promote water safety in the community achieving the highest agreement rate (64%). The role of the centre as a social hub is also received well (60%), whilst majorities also agree it will promote health and wellbeing (57%) and that the growth of Torquay demands that it have such a centre (53%).
- However, there are strong opinions amongst ratepayers that the centre will be an excessive drain on Council financial resources (69% agree with this proposition) and that there are more important financial priorities (63%). Further, most (63%) do not see any benefit for themselves in a new aquatic and health centre and 53% say there are already sufficient resources of this kind throughout the Shire and surrounds.



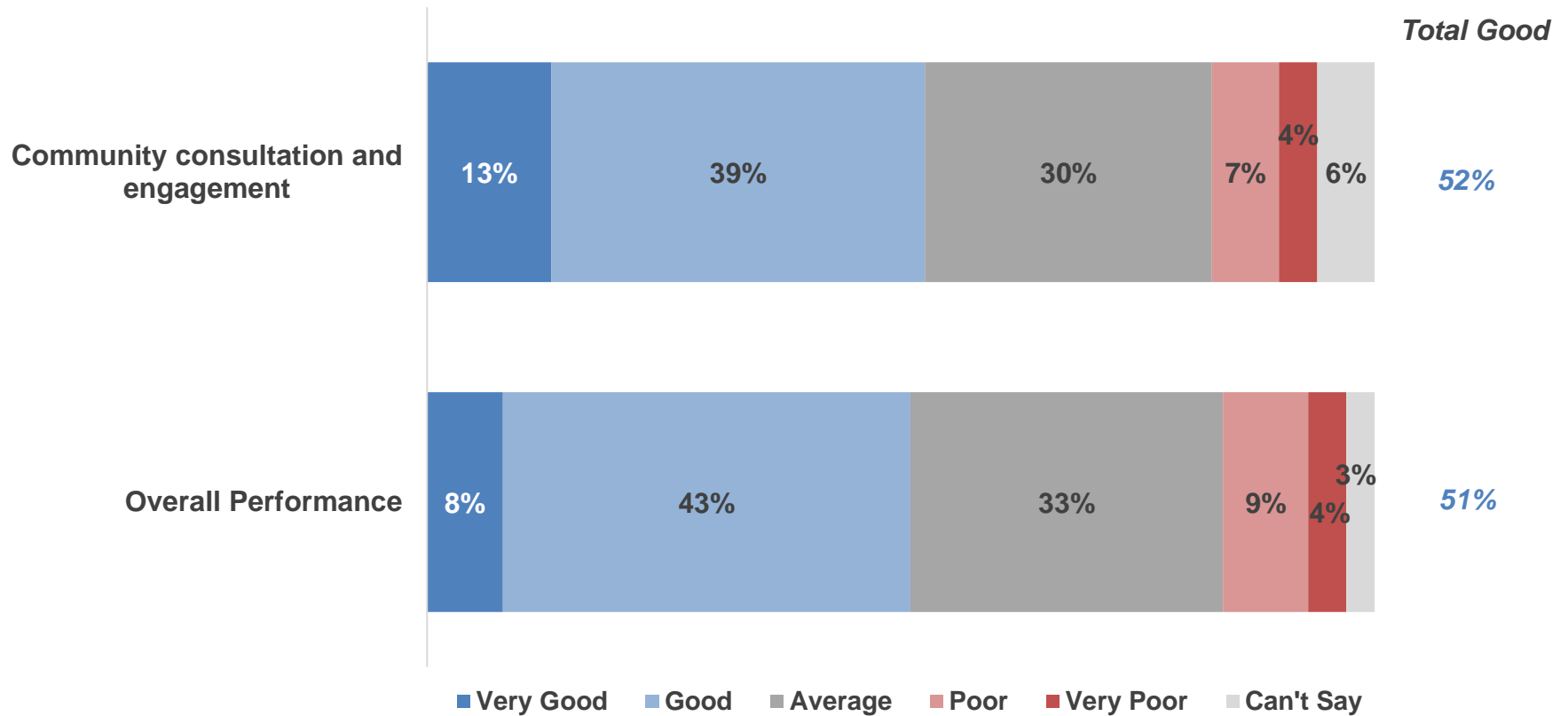
DETAILED FINDINGS

A satellite night view of the United States, showing a dense network of city lights and a complex road network. The lights are concentrated in the eastern half of the country, with a few major hubs in the west. The background is a dark, textured map of the landmass.

SETTING THE SCENE

MOST THINK SURF COAST IS PERFORMING WELL ON COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT AND ON OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Performance of Surf Coast Shire Council



Q1. I would now like you to RATE THE PERFORMANCE of Surf Coast Shire Council on several measures over the last 12 months.

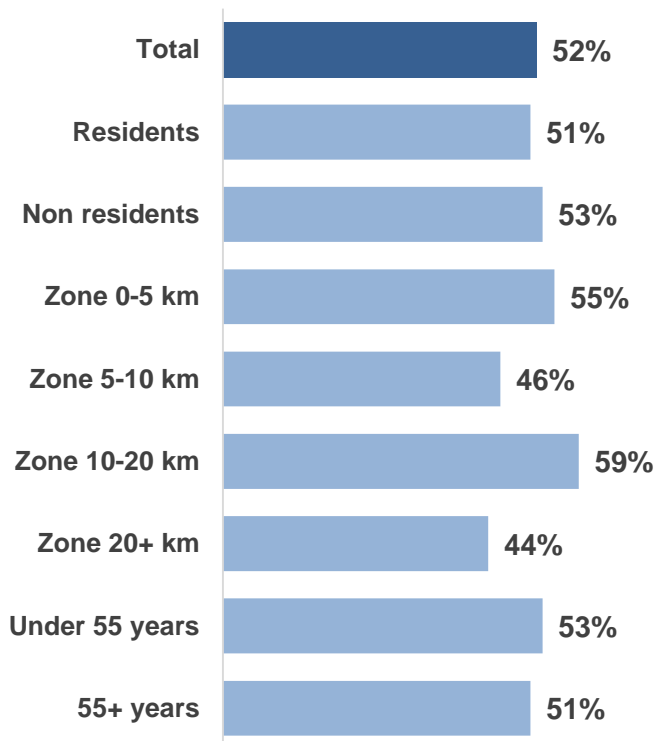
a) Firstly, how has Surf Coast Shire Council performed on community consultation and engagement over the last 12 months?

b) And ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Surf Coast Shire Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas?

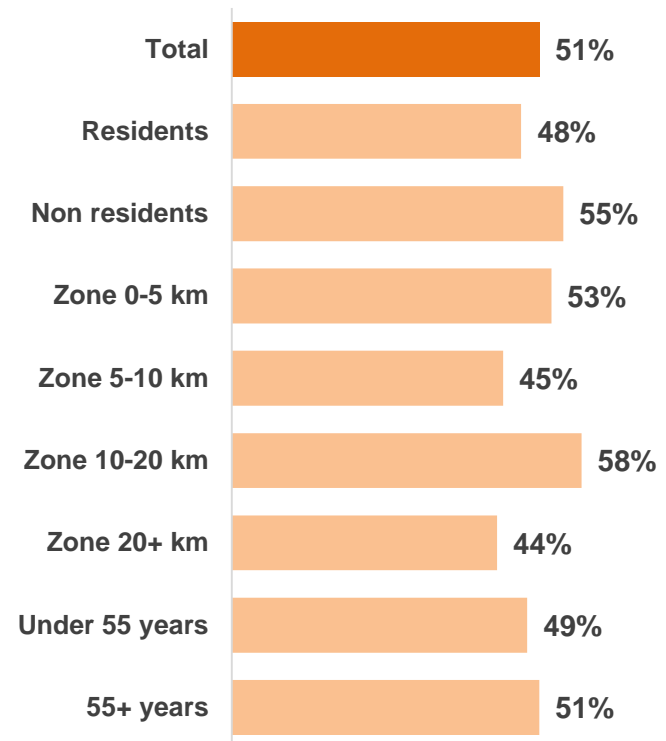
Base: All respondents, n=600

CONSULTATION AND PERFORMANCE IS RATED RELATIVELY CONSISTENTLY ACROSS RATEPAYER, LOCATION AND AGE GROUPS

Community consultation and engagement
Total good



Overall performance
Total good



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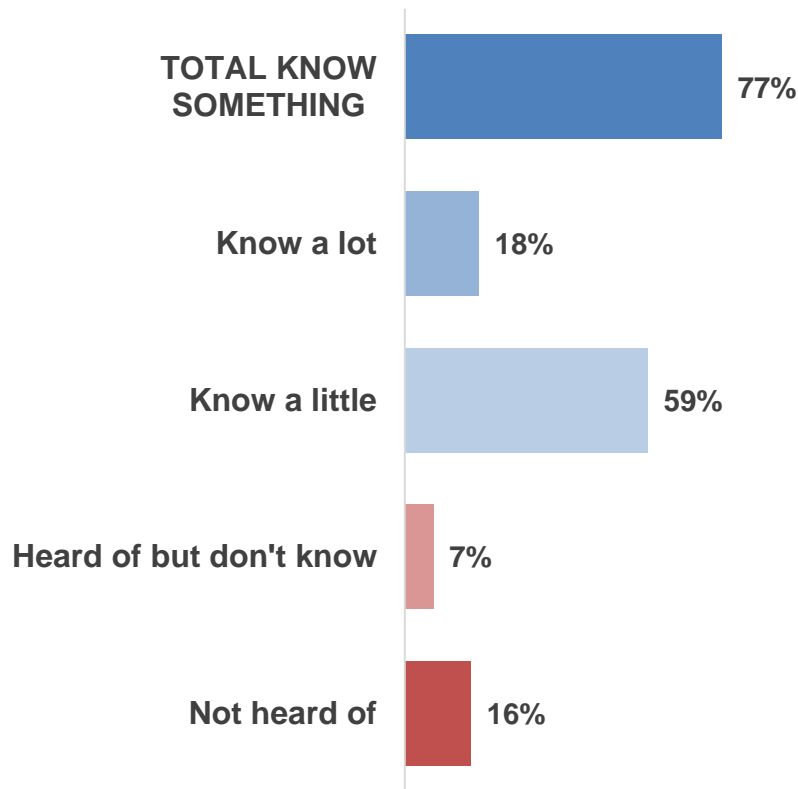
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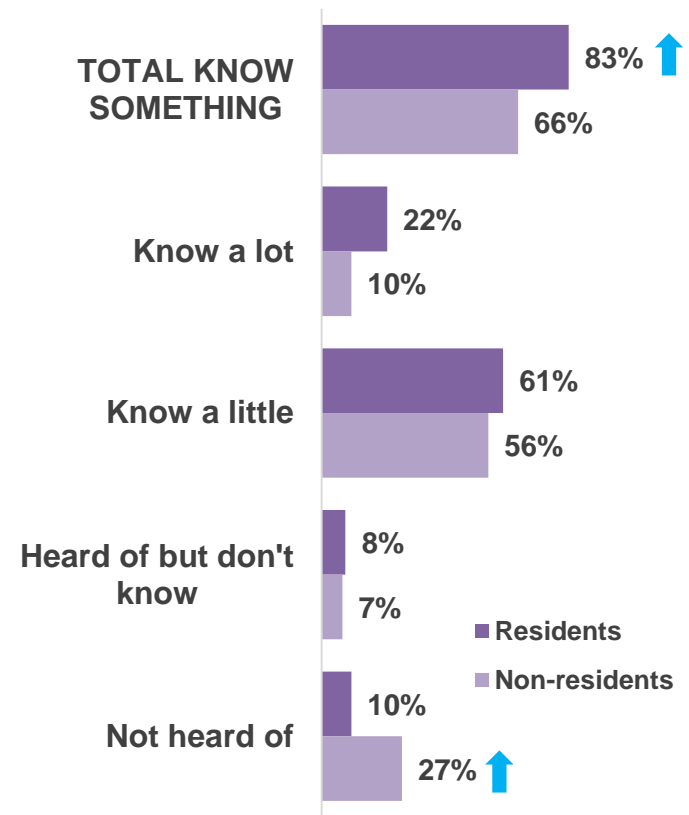
Base: All respondents, n=600

THREE QUARTERS OF RATEPAYERS ARE AWARE OF THE PROPOSED AQUATIC AND HEALTH CENTRE; MOST KNOW A LITTLE RATHER THAN A LOT

Awareness of proposed aquatic and health centre in Torquay



Awareness amongst residents versus non-residents



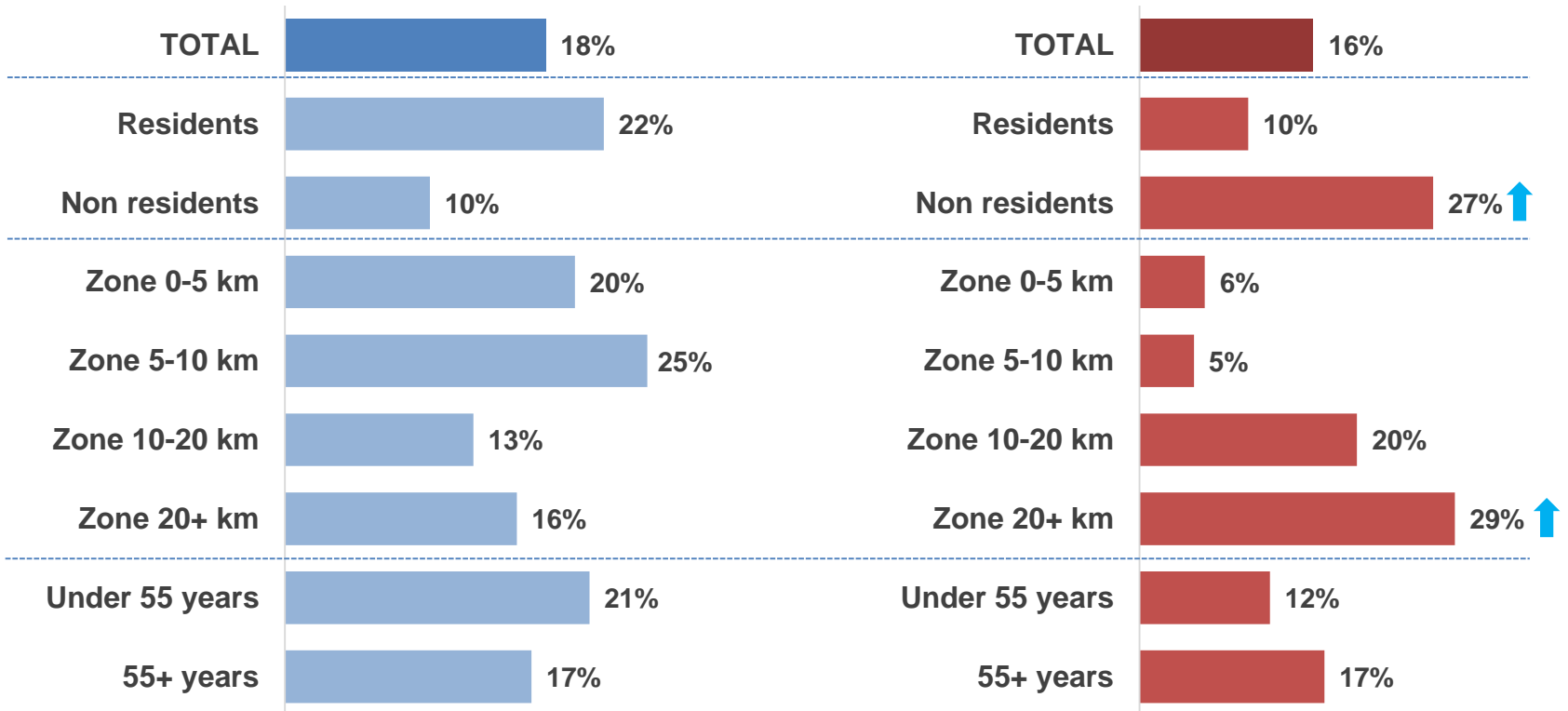
Q2. As you may know, Surf Coast Shire Council is considering a proposal to build an aquatic and health centre in Torquay. Would you say you know a lot, a little, or nothing about the proposed aquatic and health centre?
 Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than 'Total' at 95% confidence interval

RESIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT THE PROPOSAL THAN NON-RESIDENTS, AND THOSE WITHIN 10KM KNOW MORE

Those that know a lot about the proposed aquatic and health centre

Those that have not heard about the proposed aquatic and health centre



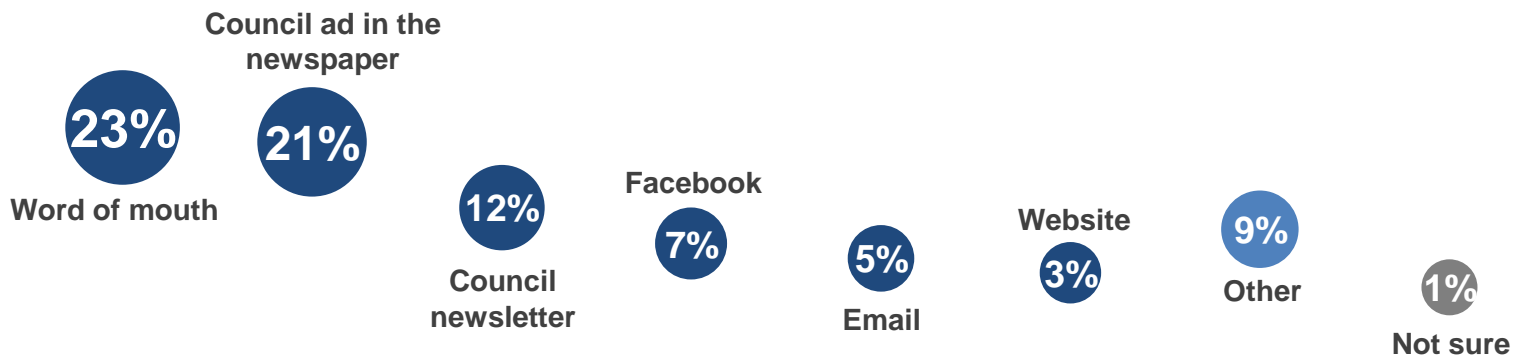
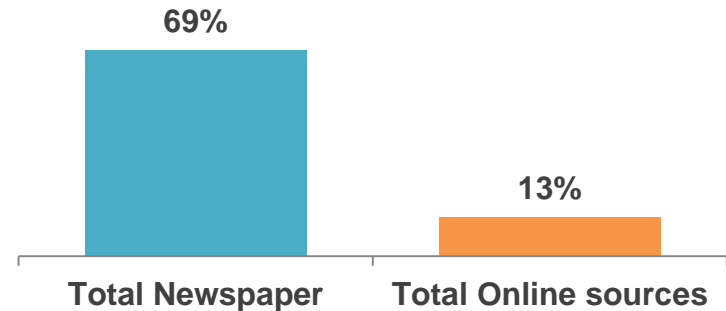
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 Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval

NEWSPAPERS ARE THE MOST COMMON SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO BUILD AN AQUATIC AND HEALTH CENTRE

Source of information about the proposed aquatic & health centre

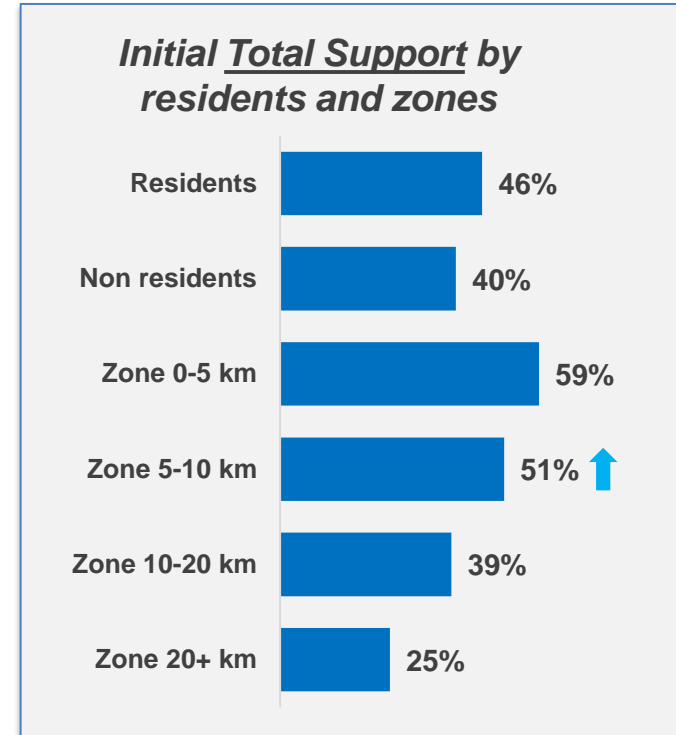
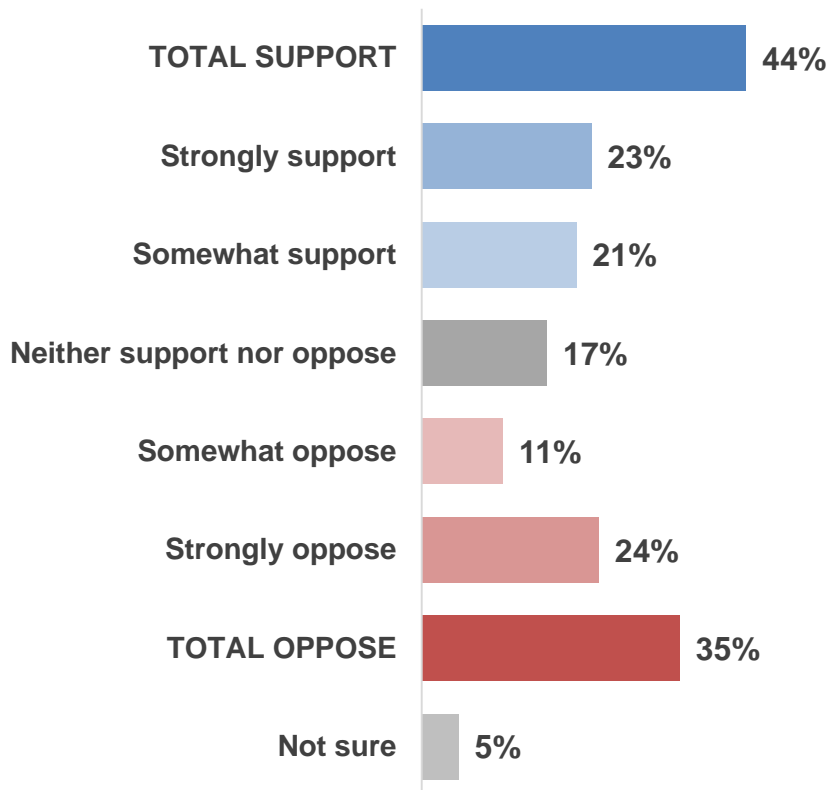
An article in the newspaper



Q2a. And what was the source of your information about the proposal to build an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?
 Base: Those that are aware of the proposal to build an aquatic and health centre, n=514

INITIAL SUPPORT FOR AN AQUATIC CENTRE IS MODERATE AND DECREASES WITH DISTANCE FROM THE PROPOSED LOCATION

Initial attitude to the proposed aquatic and health centre
 Total support – Total oppose = +9



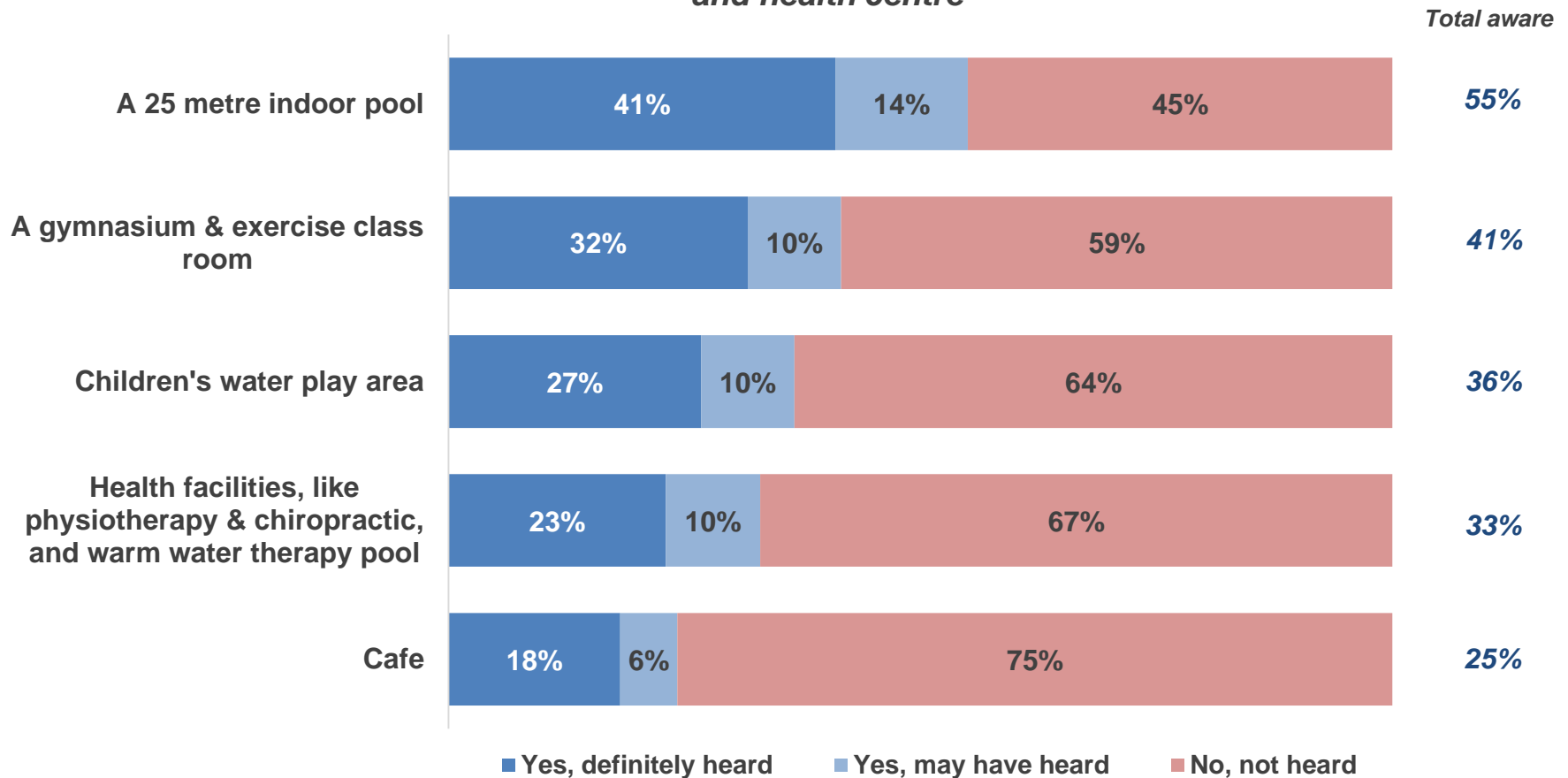
Q3. Based on what you know at this point in time, do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?

Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval

MAJORITY ARE AWARE OF 25M POOL OPTION, BUT MOST NOT AWARE OF PROPOSED ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

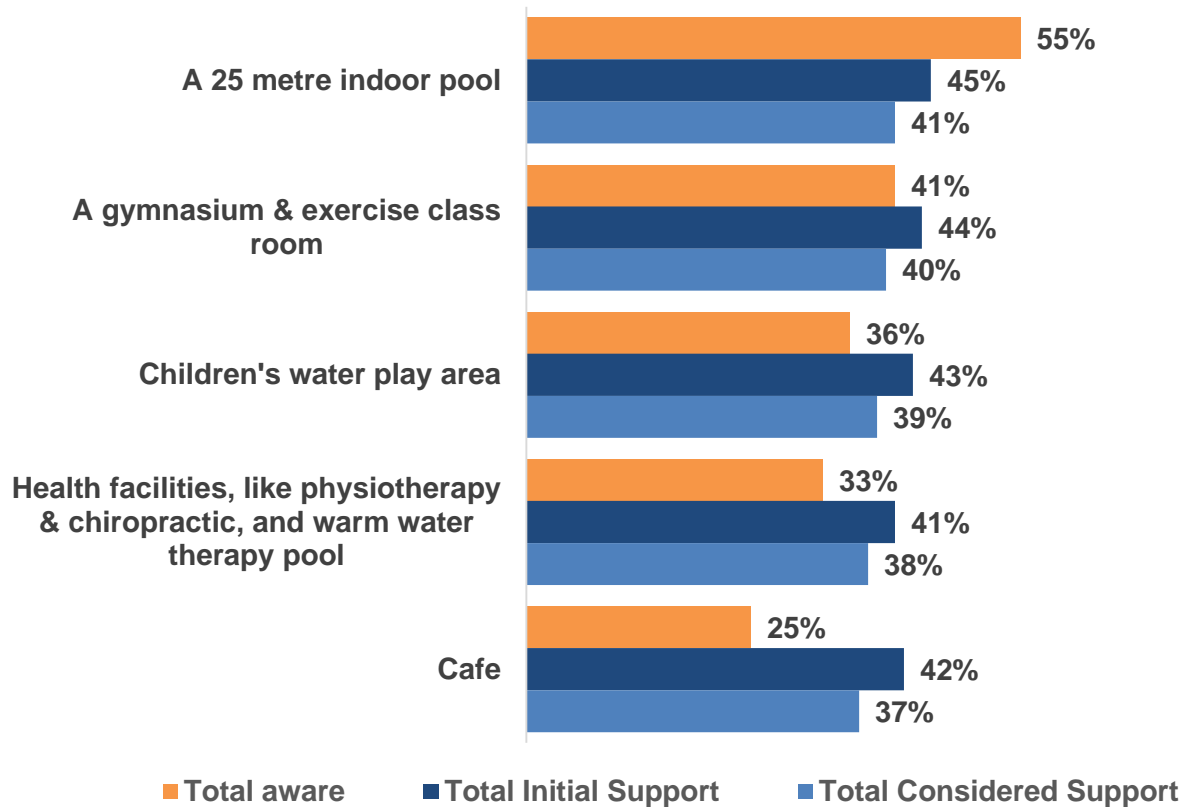
Awareness of recommended options for the proposed aquatic and health centre



Q4. Have you heard about each of the following recommended options for the proposed aquatic and health centre?
 Base: All respondents, n=600

AWARENESS OF RECOMMENDED OPTIONS DOES NOT MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO SUPPORT FOR THE AQUATIC AND HEALTH CENTRE

Awareness of recommended options and support



Q3. Based on what you know at this point in time, do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q4. Have you heard about each of the following recommended options for the proposed aquatic and health centre? / Q12. Having considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the centre, do you now strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?
 Base: All respondents, n=600

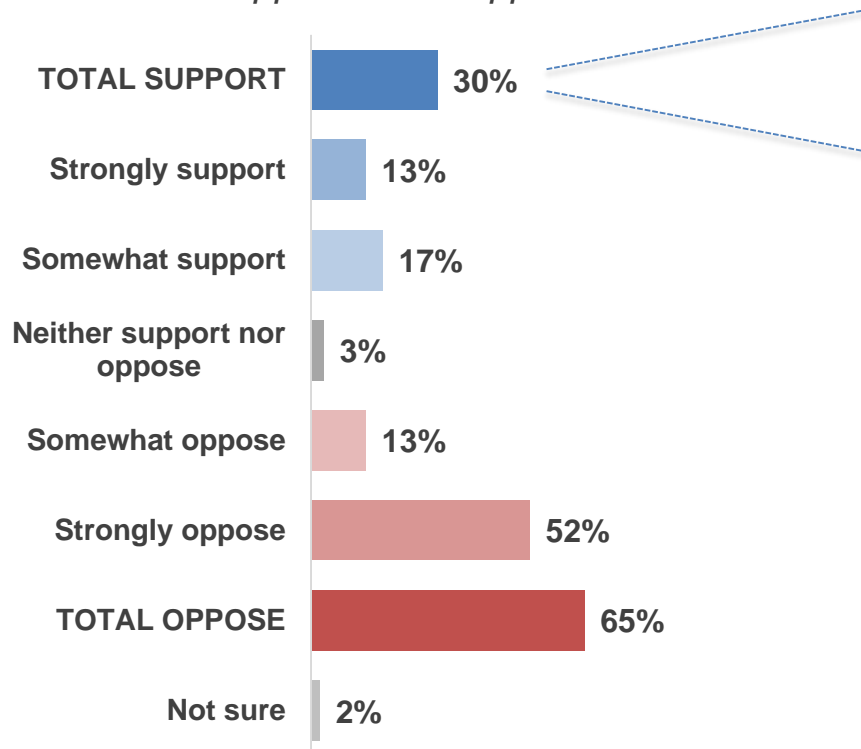
A satellite night view of the United States, showing city lights and a network of glowing lines representing a power grid. The text "REACTIONS TO RATE INCREASES" is overlaid in the center.

REACTIONS TO RATE INCREASES

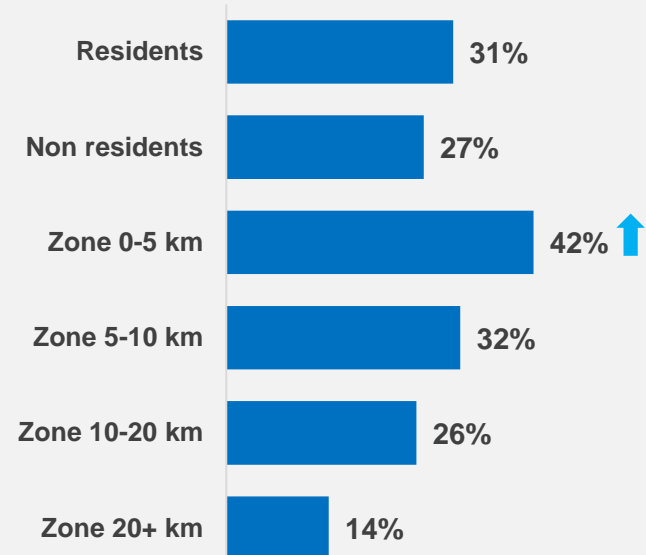
IN-PRINCIPLE OPPOSITION TO SPECIAL CHARGES IS HIGH; THOSE LIVING FURTHER AWAY FROM THE PROPOSED CENTRE LESS LIKELY TO SUPPORT IT

In-principle attitude to special charge & rate increase

Total support – Total oppose = -36



Special charge & rate increase – Total Support by residents and zones



Q5. A new aquatic and health centre in Torquay would promote health and wellbeing in our community, as well as providing social and educational benefits. The estimated cost of the centre is up to 29 million dollars to construct, with an ongoing operational cost of approximately one million dollars per annum. Surf Coast Shire Council would need to take out a loan to build the aquatic and health centre. Grants from Federal and State Governments would pay for some of the cost, but a special charge of between \$20 and \$150 would need to be added to rates bills each year for the next 20 years, set according to the ratepayer's proximity to the centre. Ongoing costs to operate and maintain the centre would require an additional rate increase of approximately \$50 for the average ratepayer. On principle, do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay if it involves a special charge to ratepayers to fund building the centre and an increase in rates to pay for ongoing operating and maintenance costs?

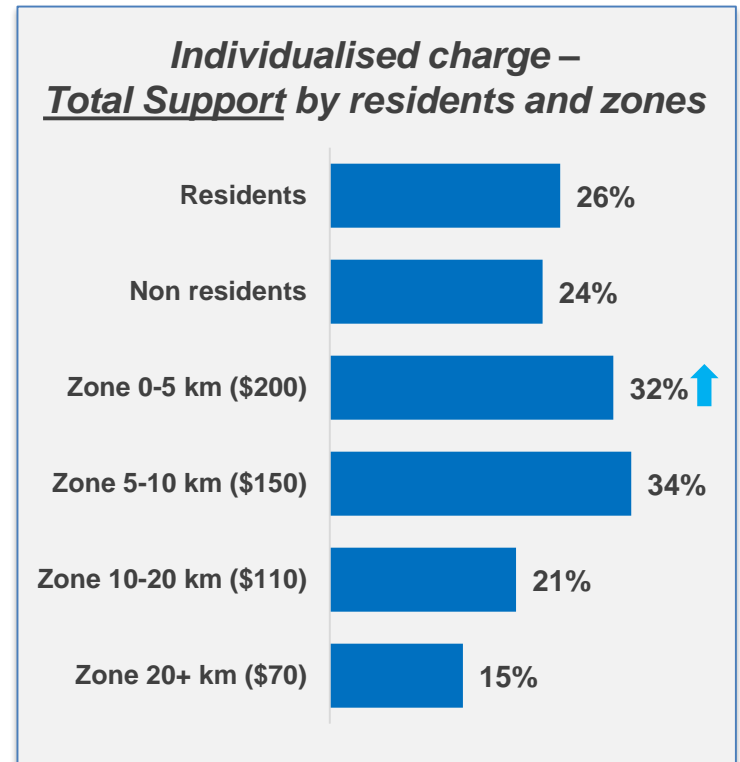
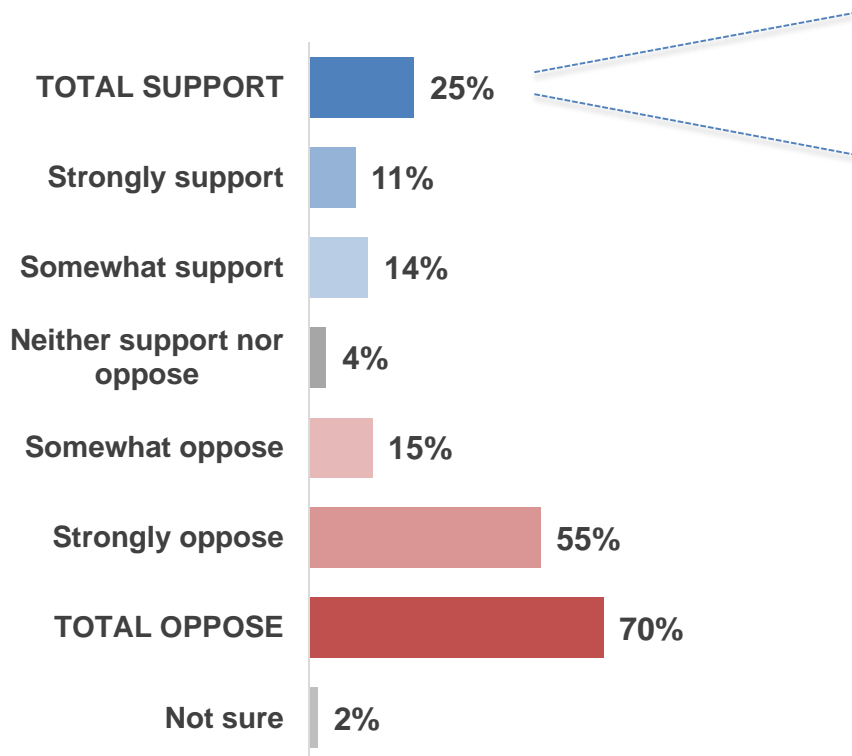
Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval

SUPPORT FALLS FURTHER FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUALISED SPECIAL CHARGE AMOUNTS; THOSE IN 0-5KM ZONE DROP 10 POINTS

Attitude to individualised charge & rate increase

Total support – Total oppose = -45



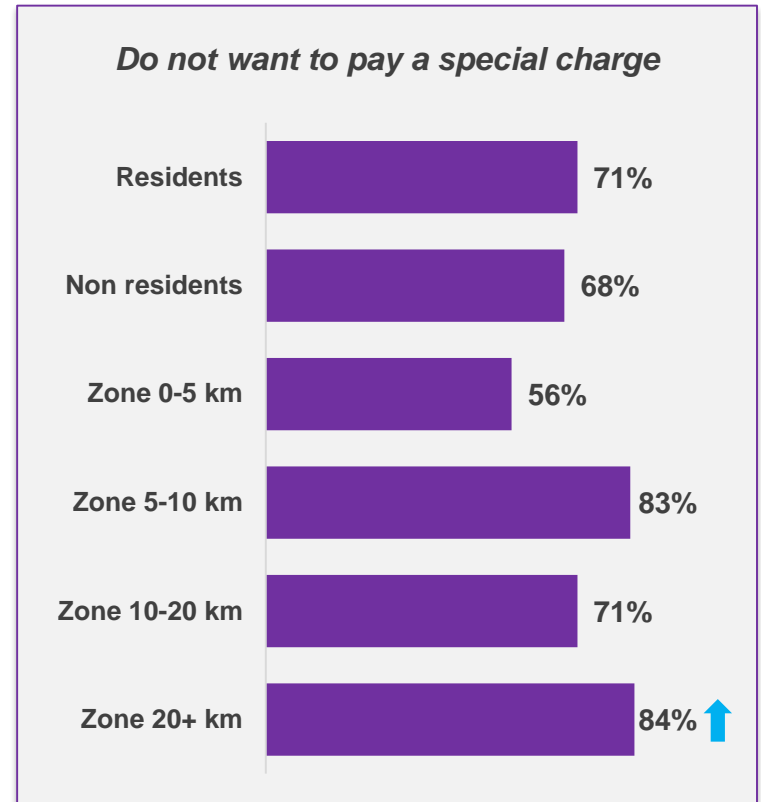
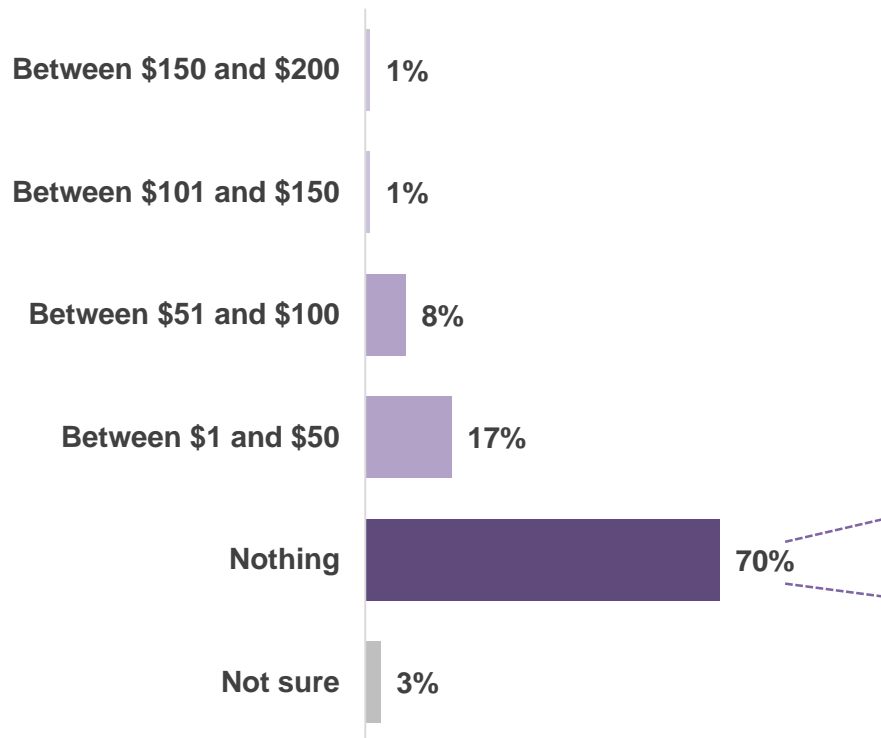
Q6. On the basis of a special charge & rate increase totalling [INSERT XCRGE FROM SAMPLE], based on your property location in [INSERT SUBURB FROM SAMPLE], do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?

Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval

AMONG THOSE WHO DO NOT SUPPORT AN AQUATIC CENTRE, A LARGE MAJORITY ARE NOT WILLING TO PAY ANY AMOUNT TOWARDS BUILDING IT

Ratepayer preparedness to pay a special charge



Q7. How much would you be prepared to pay as a special charge for you to support building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?
 Base: Those who do not support an annual cost, n=444

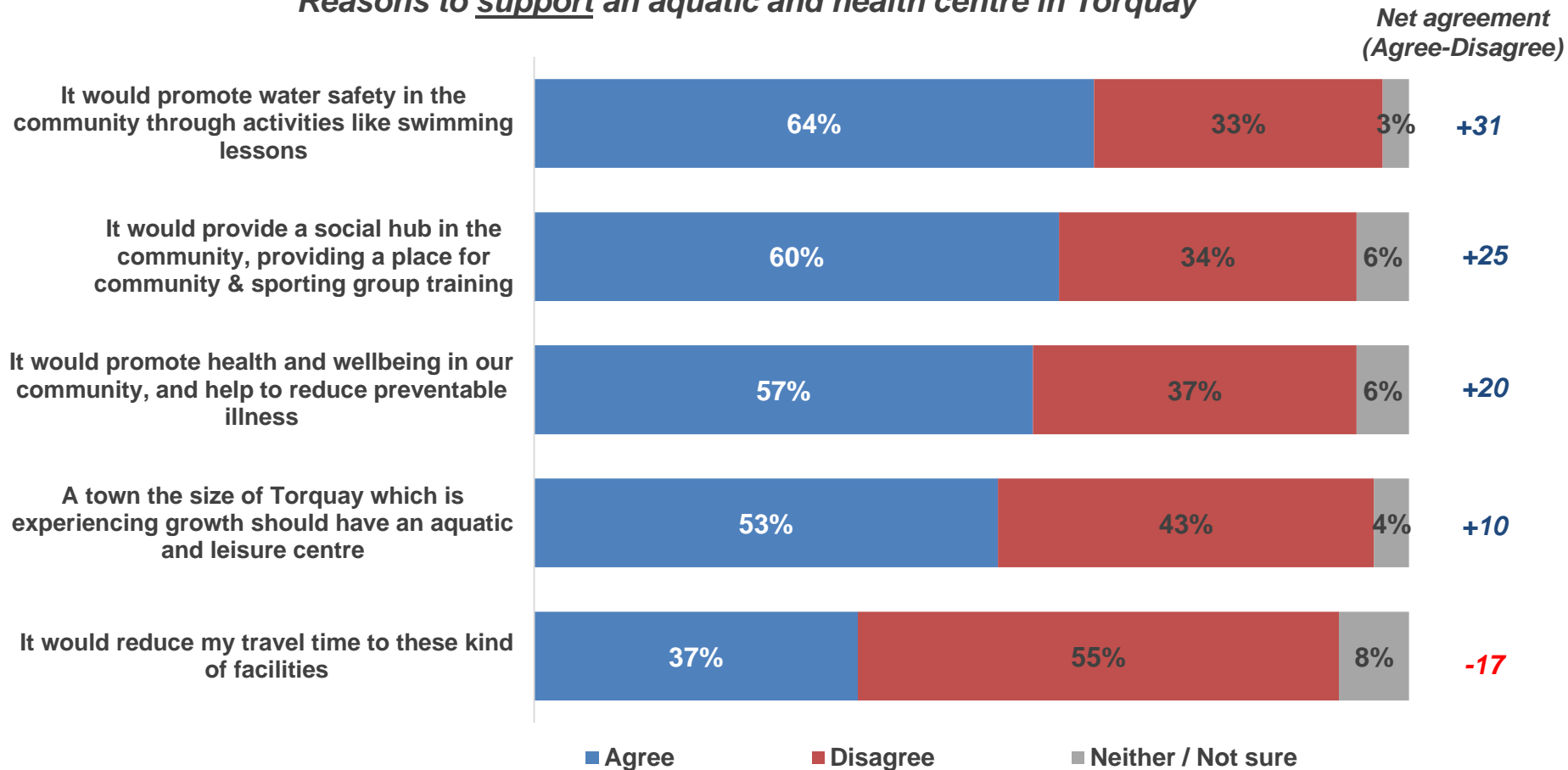
↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval



MESSAGING: BENEFITS & CONCERNS

MOST CAN APPRECIATE THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF AN AQUATIC CENTRE, ESPECIALLY WATER SAFETY AND AS A SOCIAL HUB

Reasons to support an aquatic and health centre in Torquay

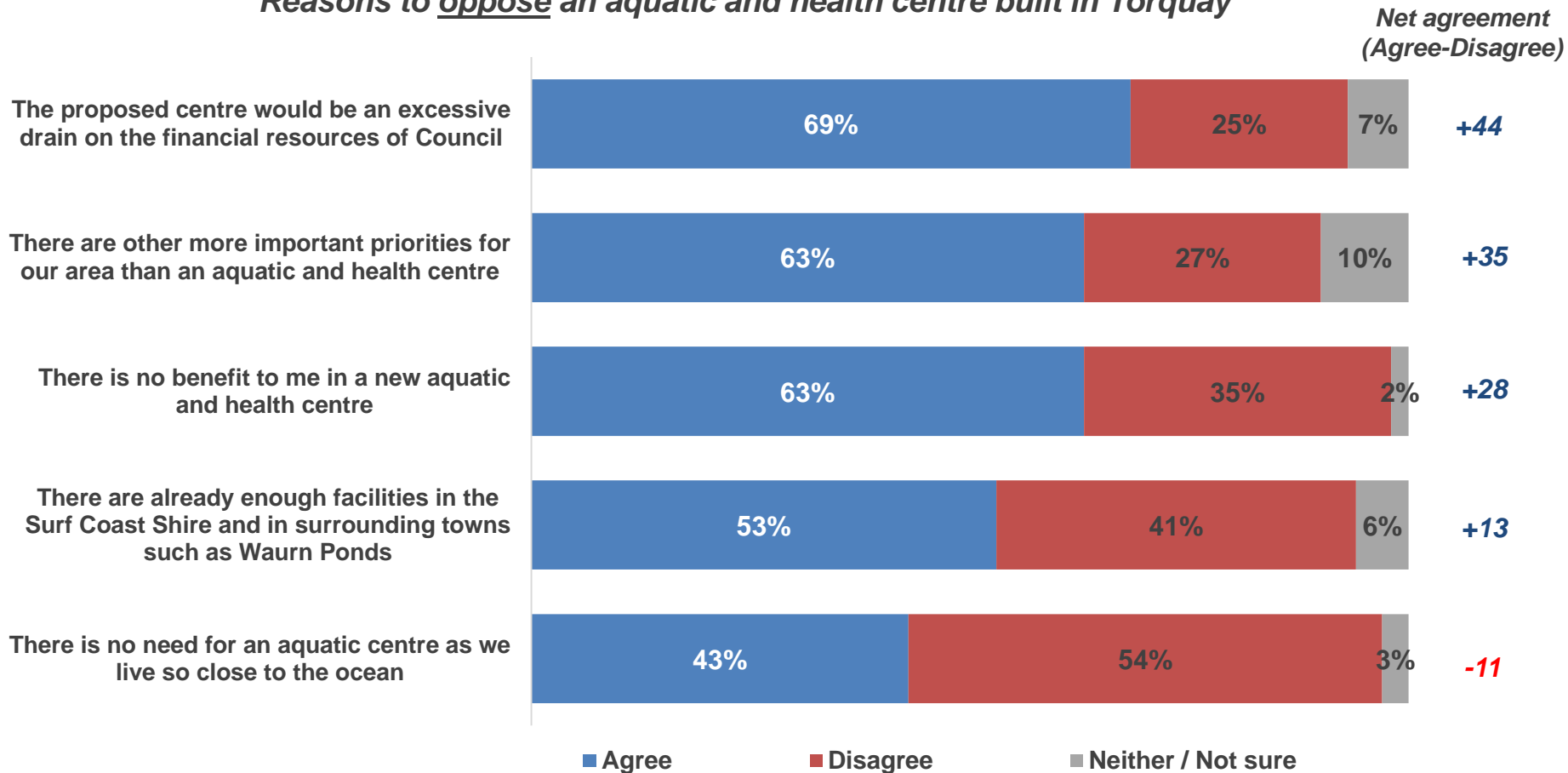


Q9. I am now going to read out a number of reasons why people have said they support an aquatic and health centre built in Torquay. I would like to know whether you agree or disagree with each as a reason to build the centre.

Base: All respondents, n=600

HOWEVER, MORE ARE CONCERNED THAT A CENTRE WOULD BE A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON COUNCIL'S RESOURCES AND DETRACT FROM OTHER PRIORITIES

Reasons to oppose an aquatic and health centre built in Torquay

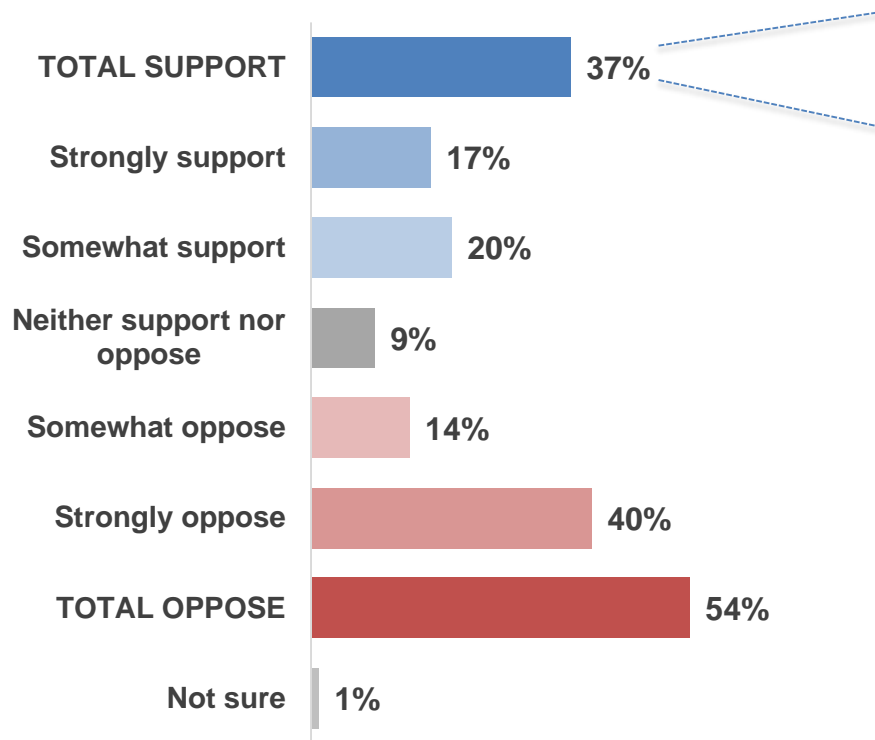


Q11. I am now going to read out a number of reasons why people have said they oppose an aquatic and health centre built in Torquay. I would like to know whether you agree or disagree with each as a reason not to build the centre.

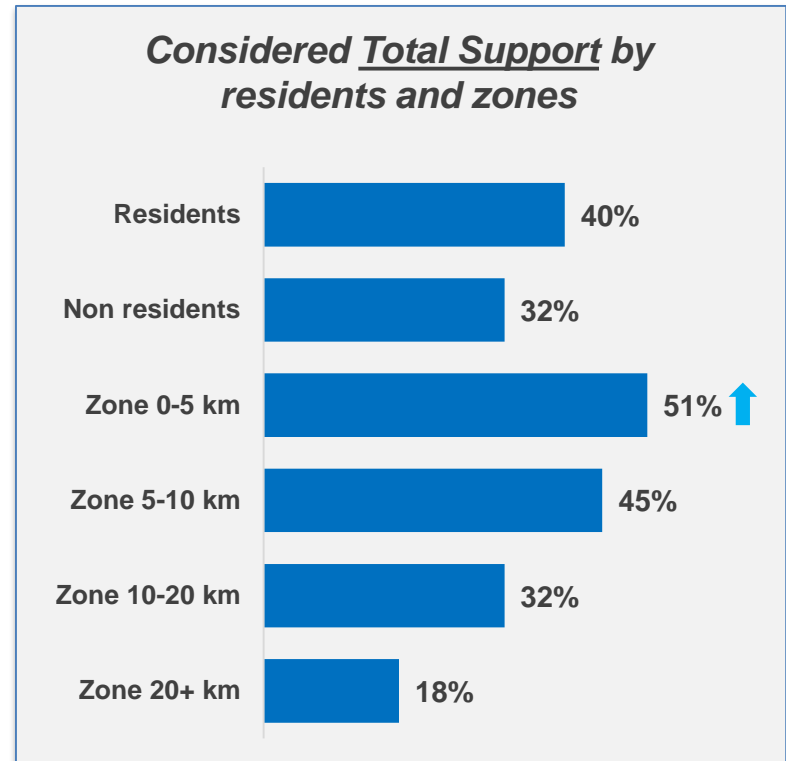
Base: All respondents, n=600

EXPOSURE TO PROMPTED MESSAGING LIFTS SUPPORT, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO OUTWEIGH CONCERNS OVER SPECIAL CHARGES AND RATE INCREASES

Considered attitude to the proposed aquatic and health centre
 Total support – Total oppose = -17



Considered Total Support by residents and zones



Q12. Having considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the centre, do you now strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?

Base: All respondents, n=600

↑ Significantly higher than Total at 95% confidence interval

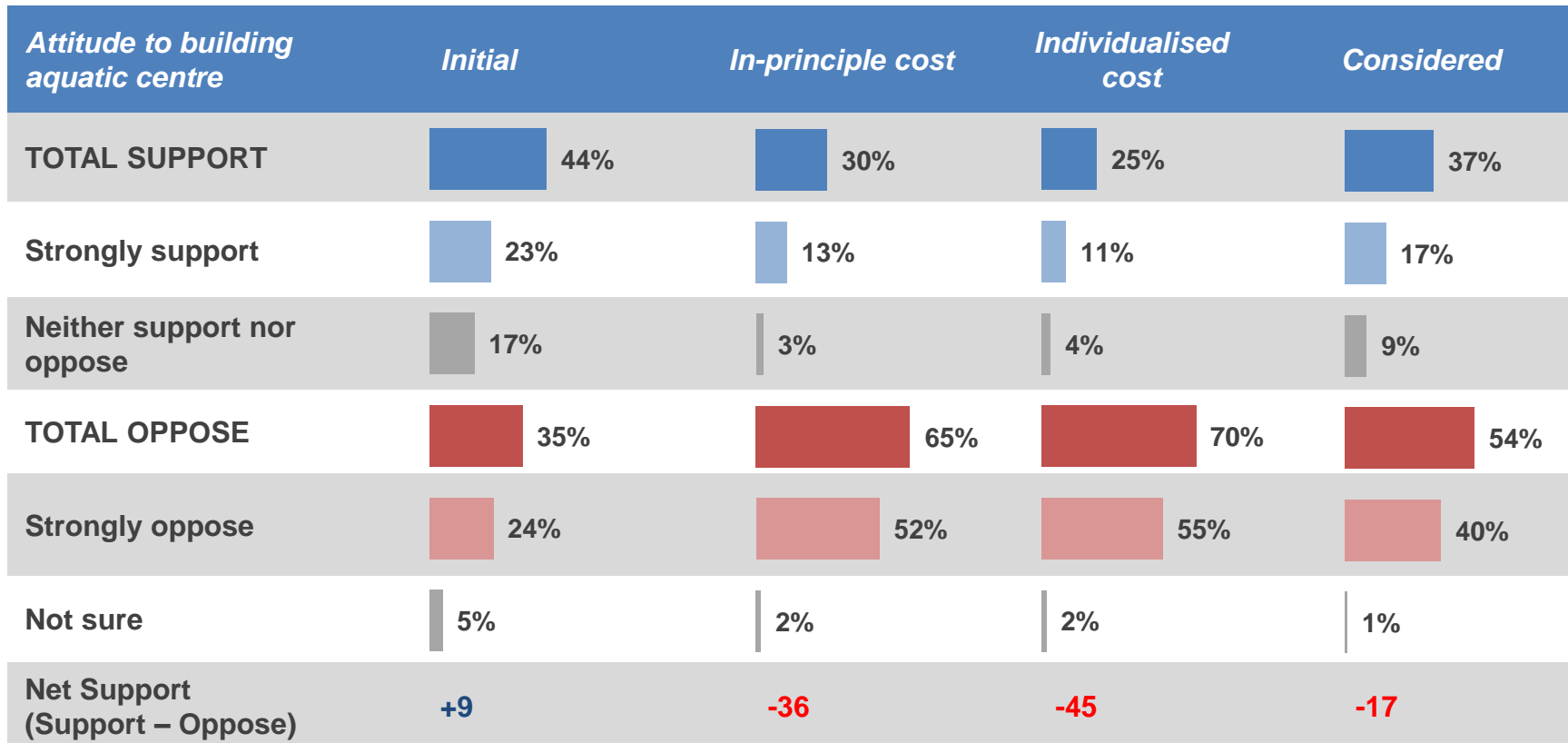
A satellite night view of North America, showing the continent illuminated by city lights and a dense network of roads. The lights are concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the continent, with a few scattered lights in the western and northern regions. The background is dark, representing the night sky and the unlit parts of the land.

SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES TO AQUATIC AND HEALTH CENTRE



JWS RESEARCH

OPPOSITION TO CENTRE IS AT ITS HIGHEST FOLLOWING EXPOSURE TO INDIVIDUALISED COSTS; MAJORITY OPPOSE AFTER PROMPTED MESSAGING

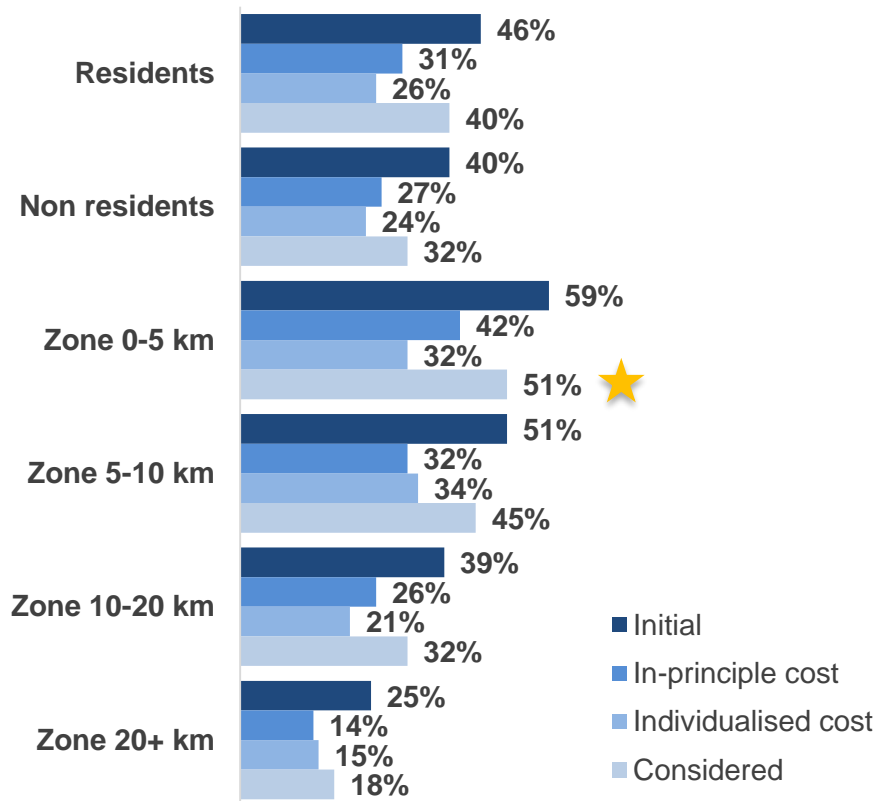


Q3. Based on what you know at this point in time, do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q5. A On principle, do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay if it involves a special charge to ratepayers to fund building the centre and an increase in rates to pay for ongoing operating and maintenance costs? / Q6. On the basis of a special charge & rate increase totalling [INSERT XCRGE FROM SAMPLE], based on your property location in [INSERT SUBURB FROM SAMPLE], do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q12. Having considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the centre, do you now strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?

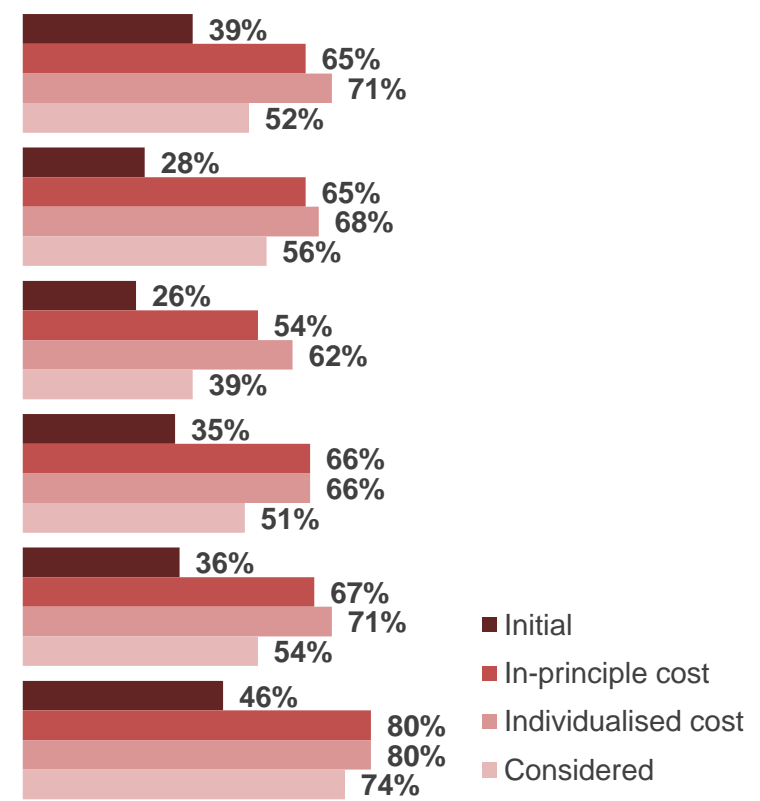
Base: All respondents, n=600

★ THERE IS CONSIDERED MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR THE AQUATIC CENTRE ONLY FROM THOSE WITH PROPERTIES WITHIN 0-5KM RADIUS OF LOCATION

Total Support by residents and zones



Total Oppose by residents and zones



Q3. Based on what you know at this point in time, do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q5. A On principle, do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay if it involves a special charge to ratepayers to fund building the centre and an increase in rates to pay for ongoing operating and maintenance costs? / Q6. On the basis of a special charge & rate increase totalling [INSERT XCRGE FROM SAMPLE], based on your property location in [INSERT SUBURB FROM SAMPLE], do you support or oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q12. Having considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the centre, do you now strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay?

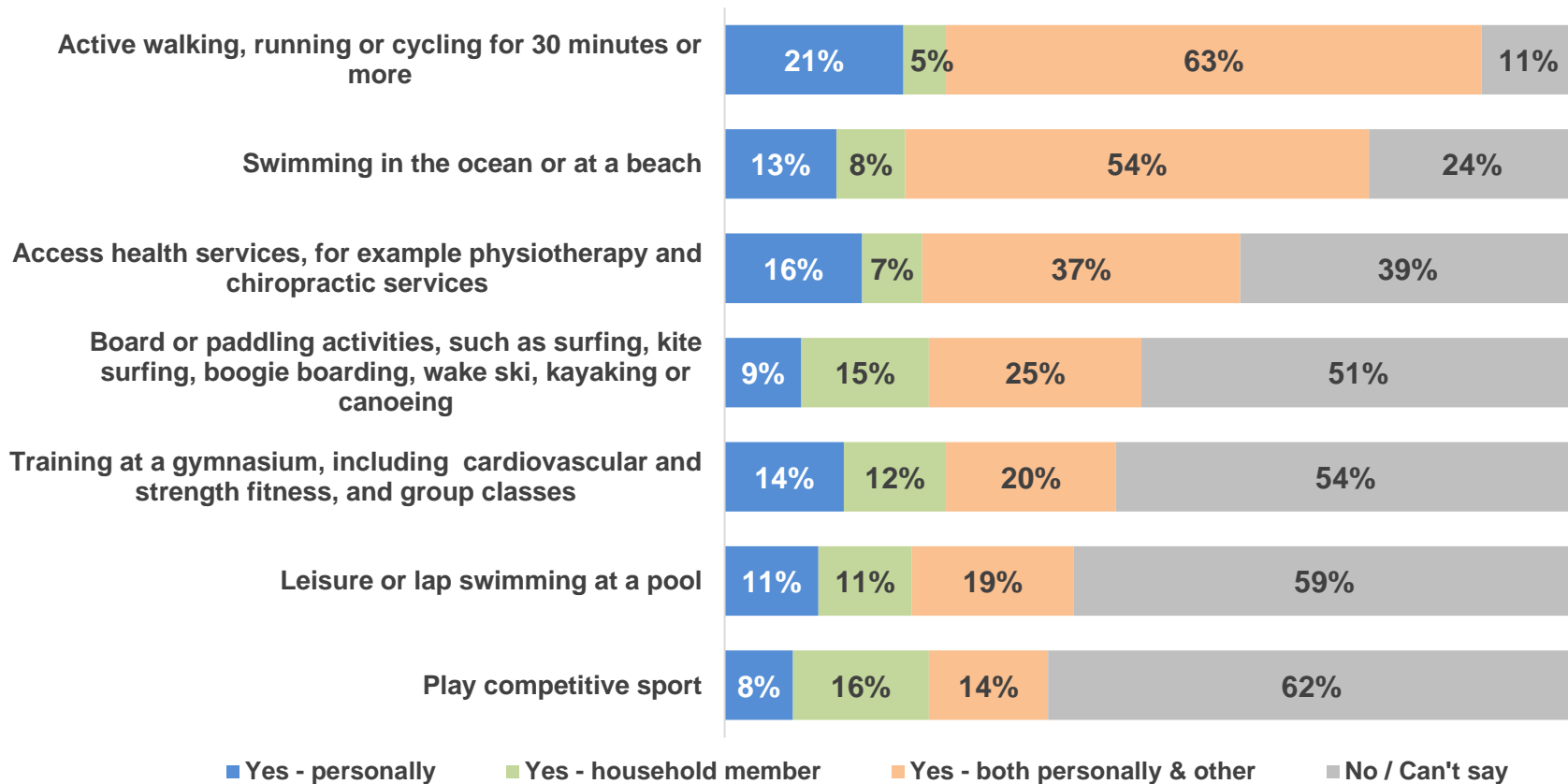
Base: All respondents, n=600



FURTHER ANALYSIS: ACTIVITIES

MAJORITY OF RATEPAYERS PARTICIPATE IN REGULAR ACTIVE WALKING, RUNNING OR CYCLING AND SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN

Participation in activities

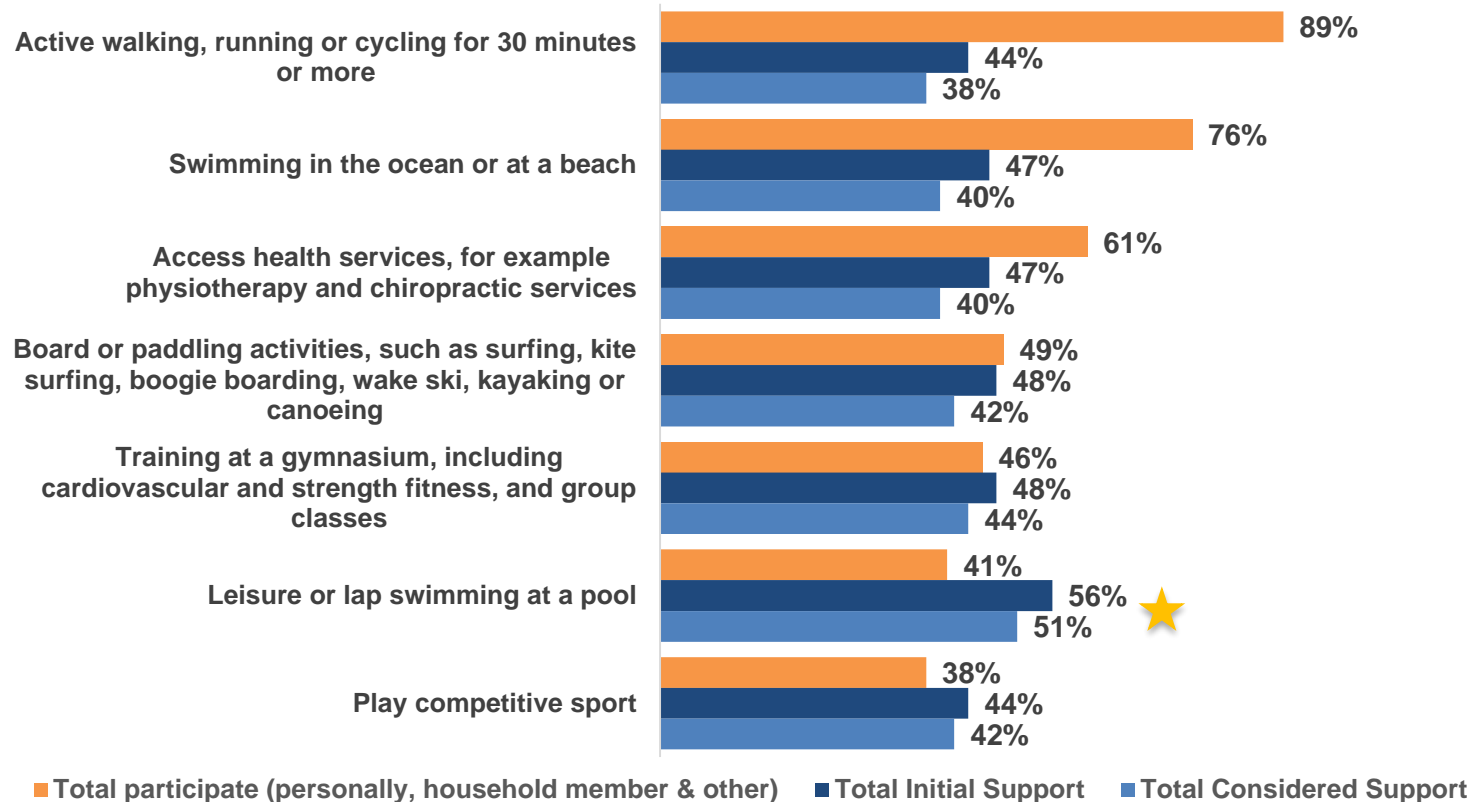


Q14. Which of the following activities do you or any member of your household participate in regularly? Please do include those activities that are more limited during the winter months but are regular activities during the rest of the year.

Base: All respondents, n=600

★ ONLY A MAJORITY OF RATEPAYERS THAT SWIM AT A POOL REGULARLY SUPPORT BUILDING THE AQUATIC AND HEALTH CENTRE

Regular participation in activities and support for aquatic and health centre



Q3. Based on what you know at this point in time, do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q12. Having considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the centre, do you now strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building an aquatic and health centre in Torquay? / Q14. Which of the following activities do you or any member of your household participate in regularly? Please do include those activities that are more limited during the winter months but are regular activities during the rest of the year.

Base: All respondents, n=600



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