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Building a culture for encouraging
regional youth into volunteering

2020

Key Aims

The objectives of the project are to develop a better understanding of the following:

- (i) who does volunteer and in what areas,**
- (ii) what volunteering needs are,**
- (iii) what are the barriers to and opportunities of volunteering for youth,**
- (iv) what areas would interest youth to participate in such activities?**

- This project focussed on the Goyder, Clare and Gilbert Valleys and Wakefield Regional Council communities**

Methods

- Literature Review
- Council / Regional Profile based on analysis of Census data
- Semi Structured interviews (38) with representative groups and volunteers from across the regions
- Delivery of two surveys – one survey for general perceptions (48 completed)
- One Youth Survey – 36 surveys completed.

Note on constraints

Economic Value of Volunteering

Table 7 - Estimated nominal value of volunteering in 2016 in Goyder, Wakefield and Clare and Gilbert Valleys (in 1997 dollars)

Age range	Goyder	Wakefield	Clare and Gilbert Valleys	Total
15 - 19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20 - 24	81,501	163,003	149,904	394,408
25 - 29	65,931	119,753	170,884	356,568
30 - 34	67,277	172,229	215,286	454,793
35 - 39	115,236	190,064	264,893	570,193
40 - 44	133,195	237,955	354,687	725,836
45 - 49	203,245	320,156	494,623	1,018,025
50 - 54	183,460	329,149	440,664	953,274
55 - 59	265,140	368,609	485,012	1,118,762
60 - 64	282,385	388,010	631,594	1,301,988
65 - 69	328,586	442,532	702,221	1,473,339
70 - 74	246,440	328,586	598,875	1,173,901
75 - 79	156,344	185,492	344,486	686,322
80 - 84	95,396	119,245	164,293	378,934

Formula: $(13.73 \times \text{hours worked by the given volunteer age group on average per capita in 2016} \times \text{number of volunteers of the relative age group in the given LGA}) = \text{estimated value of volunteering.}$

Sources: no. of hours worked by each volunteer age group on average per capita (Individuals: Volunteering Overview 2017); no. of volunteers in each region by age (ABS, 2016 Census).

Why volunteering matters – older volunteers

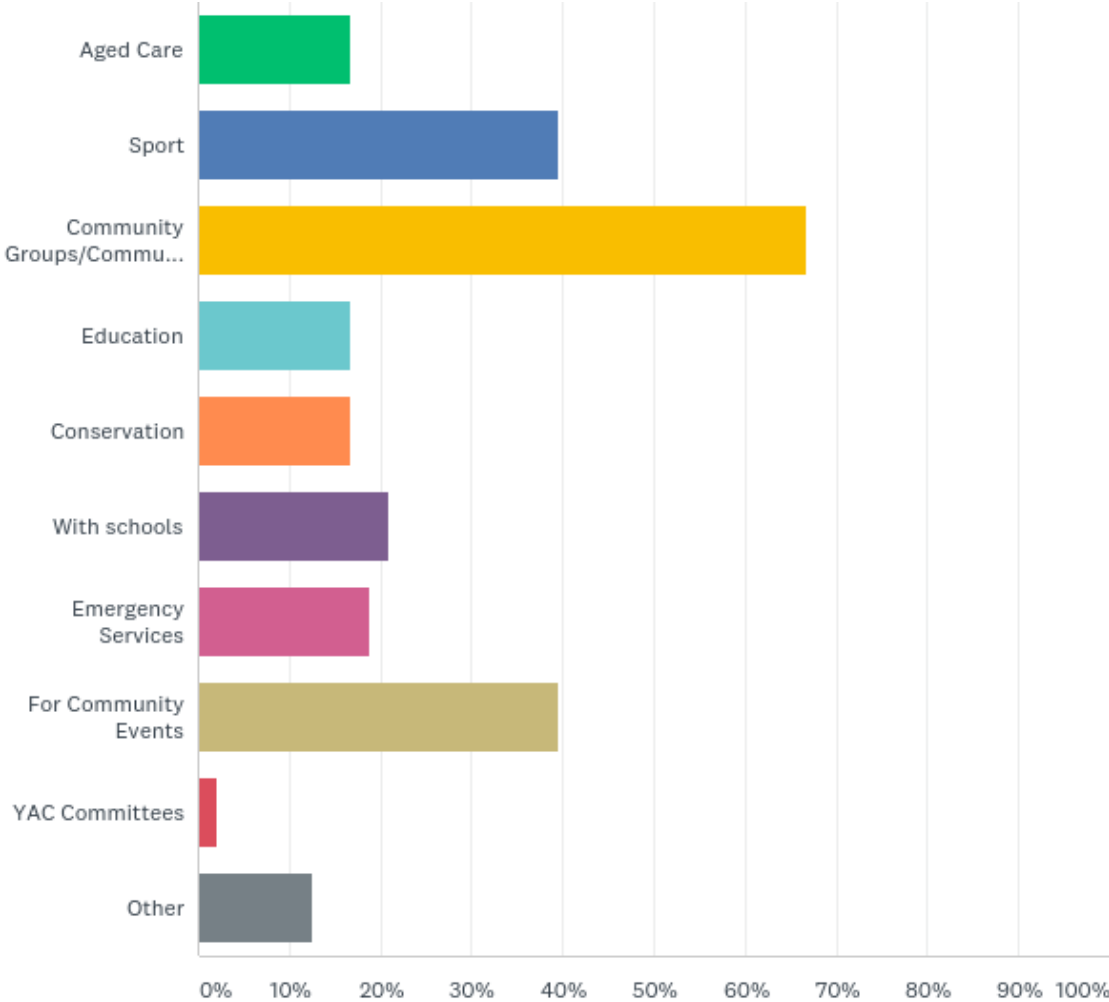
- I think it's very important, especially in a small country town. Money isn't always easy for people but we wouldn't have a lot of things if we didn't have a strong bond with everyone. Everything we do just starts off as an idea, then *volunteers* go look at the landscape and do measurements. And it goes on and on.(7)
- important to engage young people to help capture them for life. if they get involved in earlier life, they are probably more likely to volunteer throughout life and understand the benefits that come with it. A great way to meet new people, spend time in a supportive environment and looks good on a CV for when they are looking for work later down the track. Can also create networks and relationships that are important to gaining employment.
- Sense of belonging to the community. Service to others without expecting something in return is fundamental to positive mental health.(9)
- They represent generational change within organisations. Many organisations are "old heavy". Doesn't mean they're not valuable but they do have a life span(10)
- Because they are the volunteers of the future. They need to learn the skills now, otherwise we will be 'stuck' in the future (12)
- It really opens up my mindset to not always focus on myself, but to see the joy it brings to others
- Communities who support one another are much more resilient than those who don't. Places for people to gather are important. Places that appeal to different age groups are important and so are places that appeal to all. Older members of the community can mentor young volunteers if we can connect them (18)
- Without volunteers so many things in our community wouldn't exist - sporting clubs, emergency services, meals on wheels just to name a few. (22)
- Instills social identity; generates social capital - networks and contacts that will benefit youth in their job search; creates sense of social belonging and connectedness. Embeds the young person in their community. Adds to the pool of resources available to the community and fosters resilience. Slows down the exodus of youth to the city by creating a local focus/purpose.... (35)

Why volunteering matters - Youth

- Yes. Although sometimes when you have your own family members involved with the community volunteering over the years for more than 1 group you miss out on time with them and your house and yard needs many things done to it and your family misses out, meanwhile they're spending all their spare time when they aren't working doing community stuff! And then sometimes the family is relied upon to drop everything and do volunteering. (1)
- Yes and commitment to things and groups are also a huge part..... people these days are not committed to do things if they want their kids to play sport etc.... (3)
- I believe volunteering should be considered an important as I do believe it helps with connectivity of the community. Many businesses would thrive off of volunteers putting a hand up and to help. A few businesses do have that section of their enterprise which is made up of volunteers, and would struggle to continue; for example, Trees For Life. (8)
- Feeling of belonging, making an impact and being heard by other members (31)
- It's something to do when it gets boring (14)
- Yes, you get to experience more and you can get more skills (29)
- Yes, kills time, it's nice when people are grateful for what we've done, feel part of something (15)
- Yes, as you are rolling yourself into the community (30)
- Yes, gives young people the option to build on the skills and learn new skills (33)
- SACE credits (32)
- Because my mum makes me (27)
- Jobs after (22)

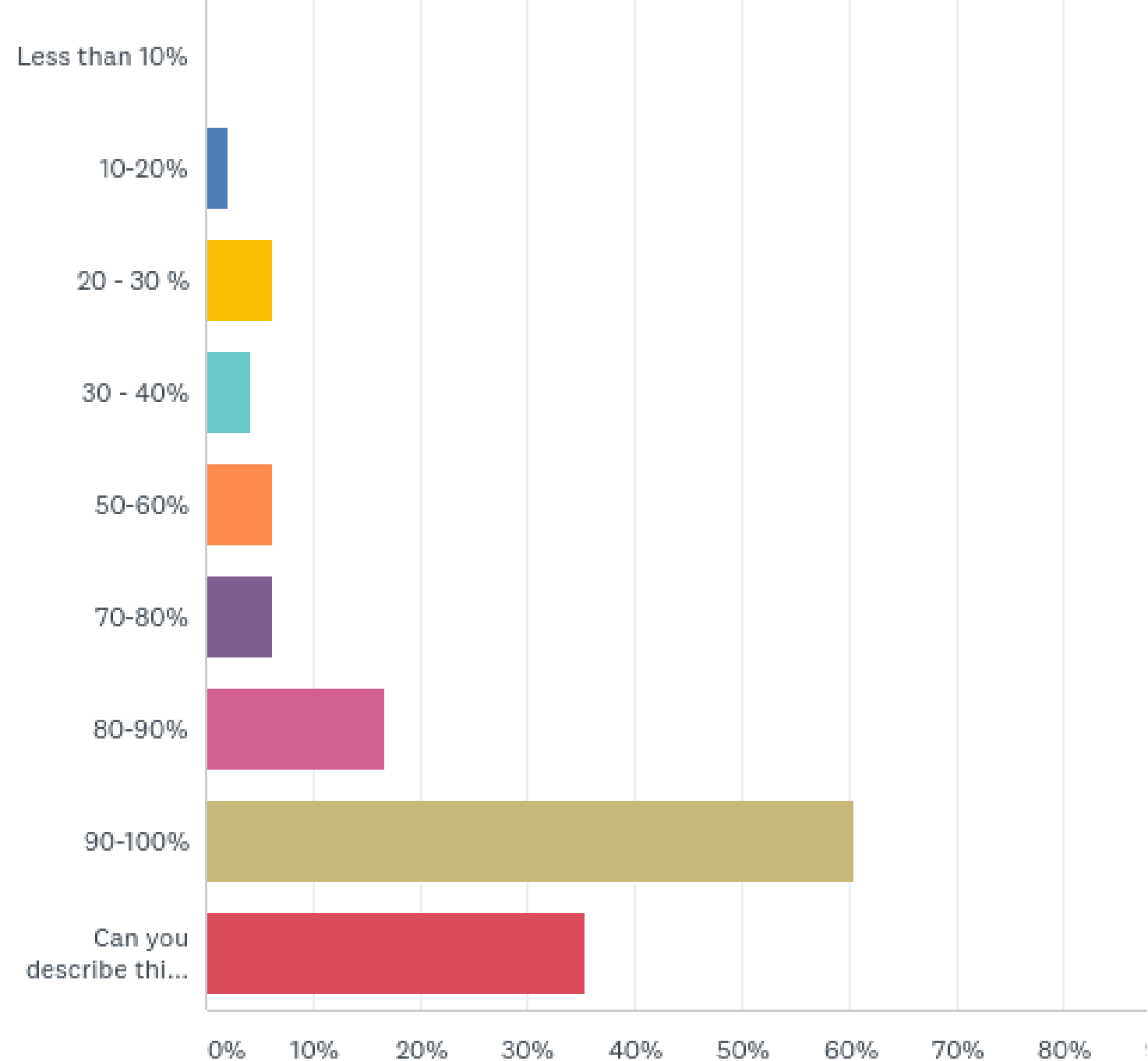
General Survey – some highlights

What areas do you work with volunteers?

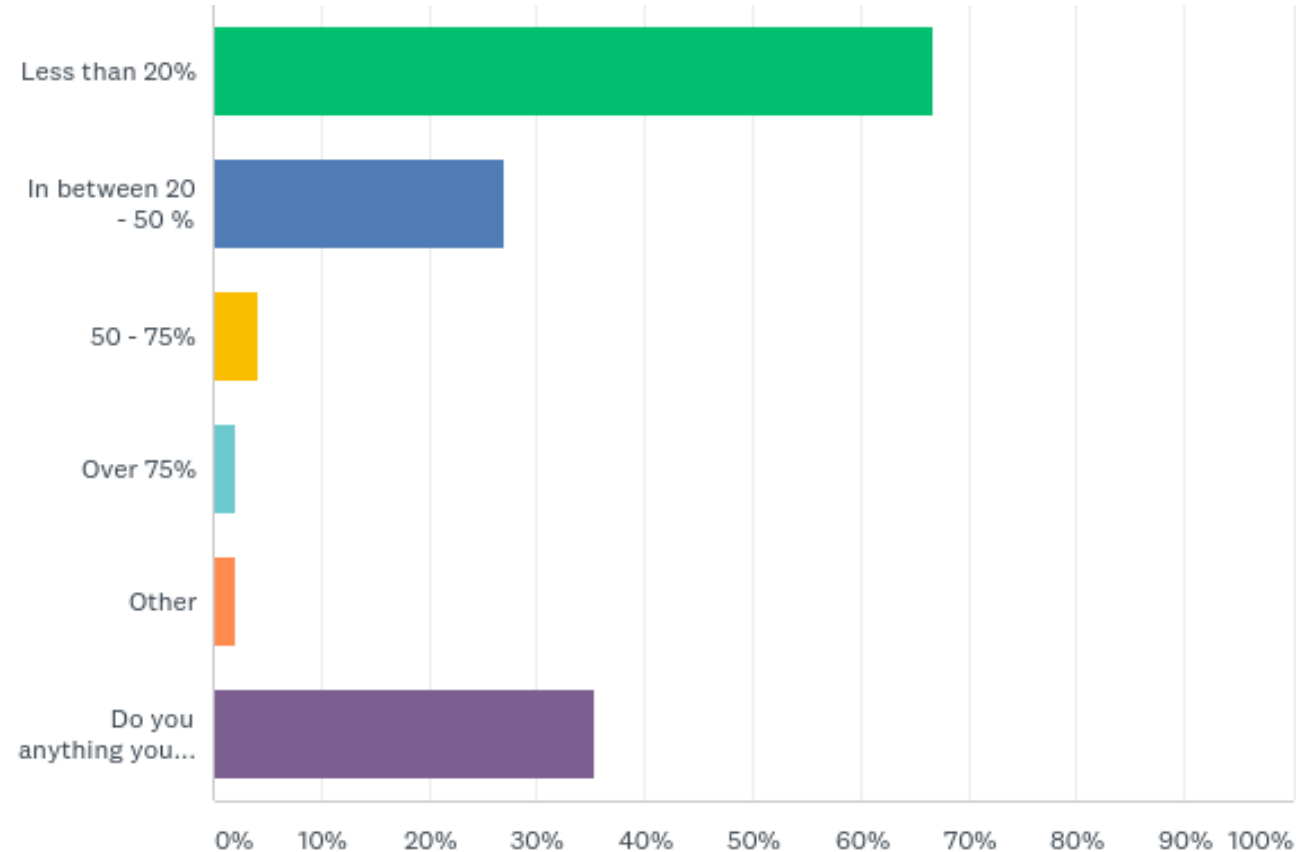




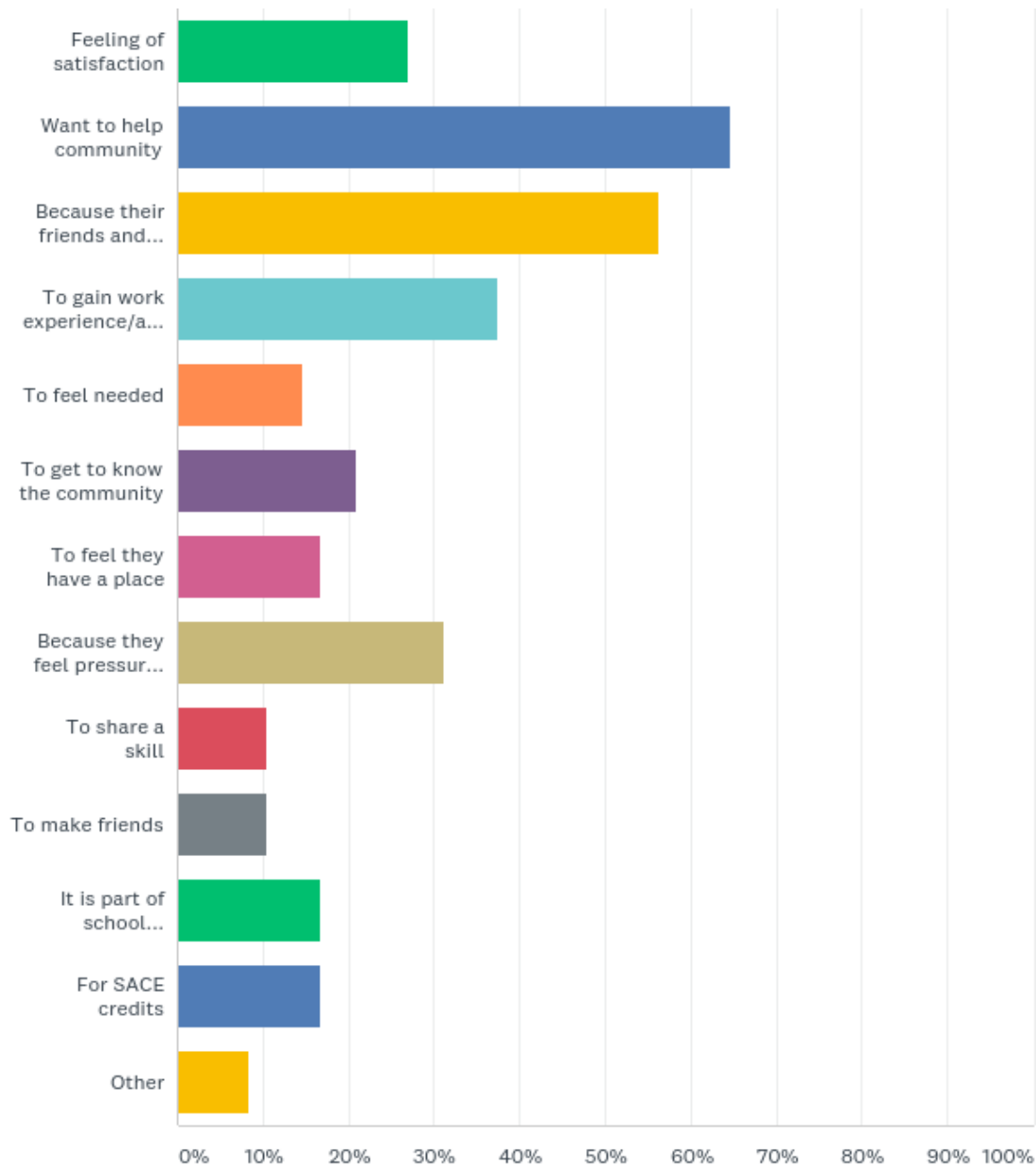
What percentage of activity do you undertake with volunteers?



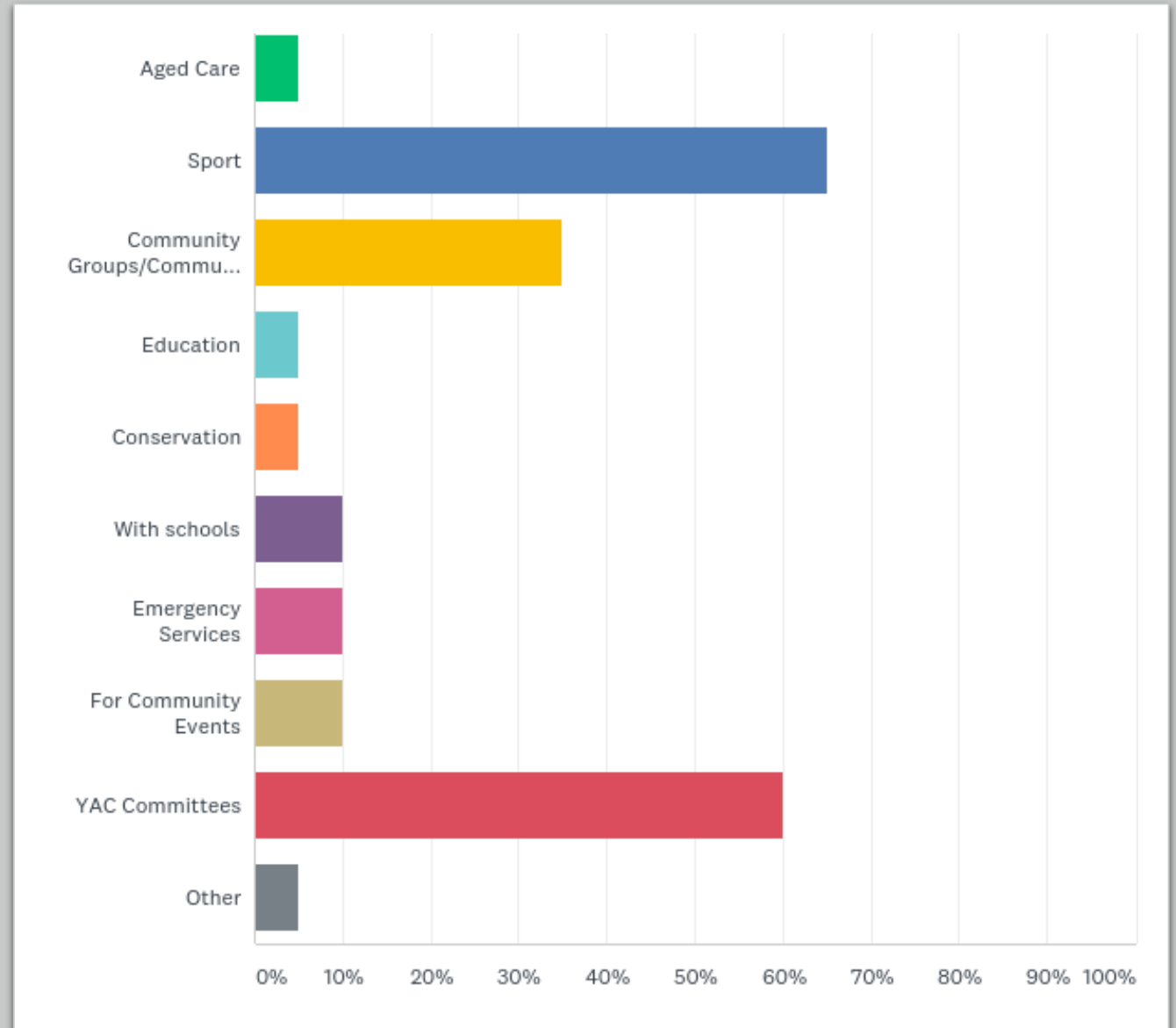
What proportion do you estimate are young people?



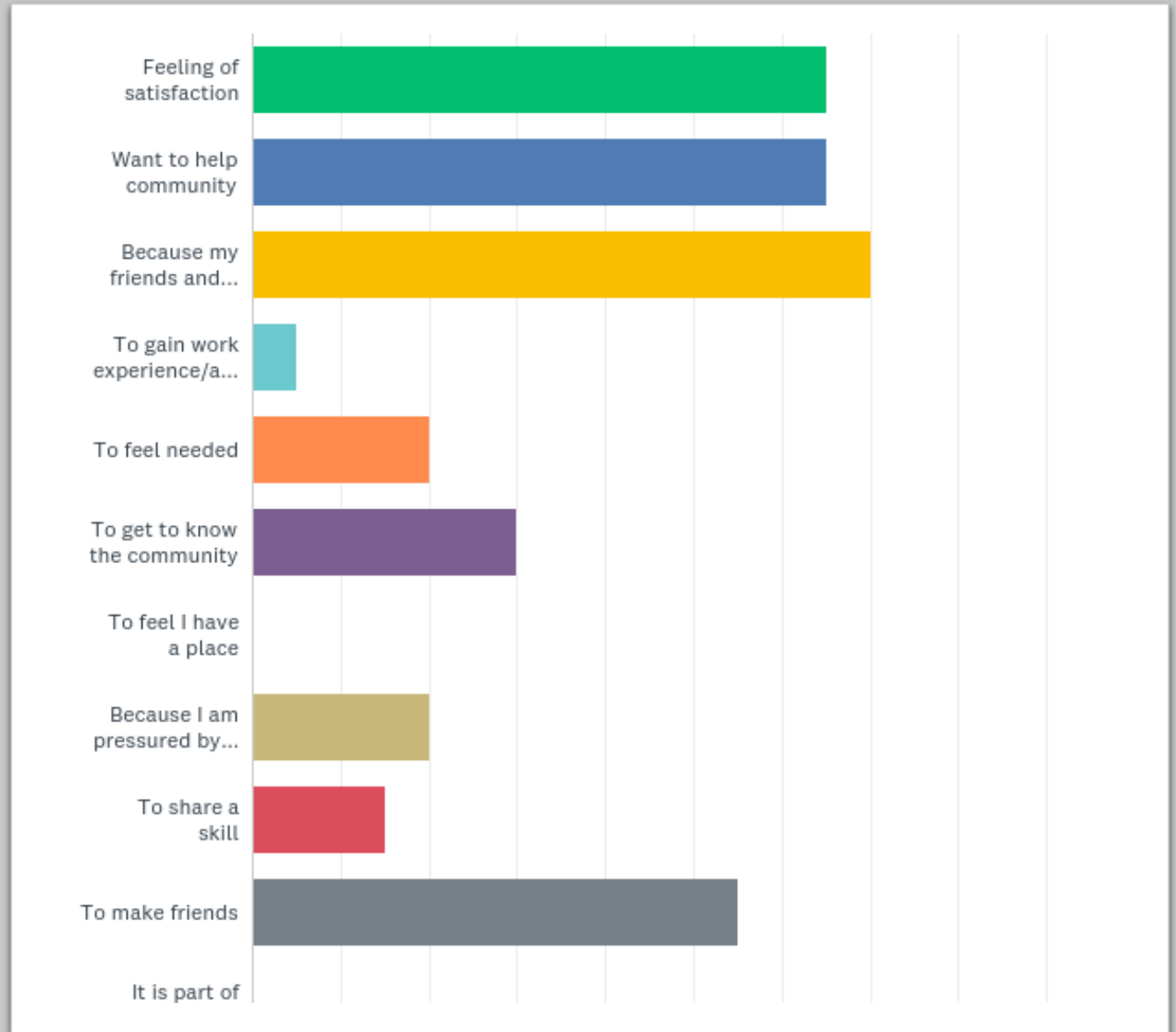
Why do you think young people volunteer?



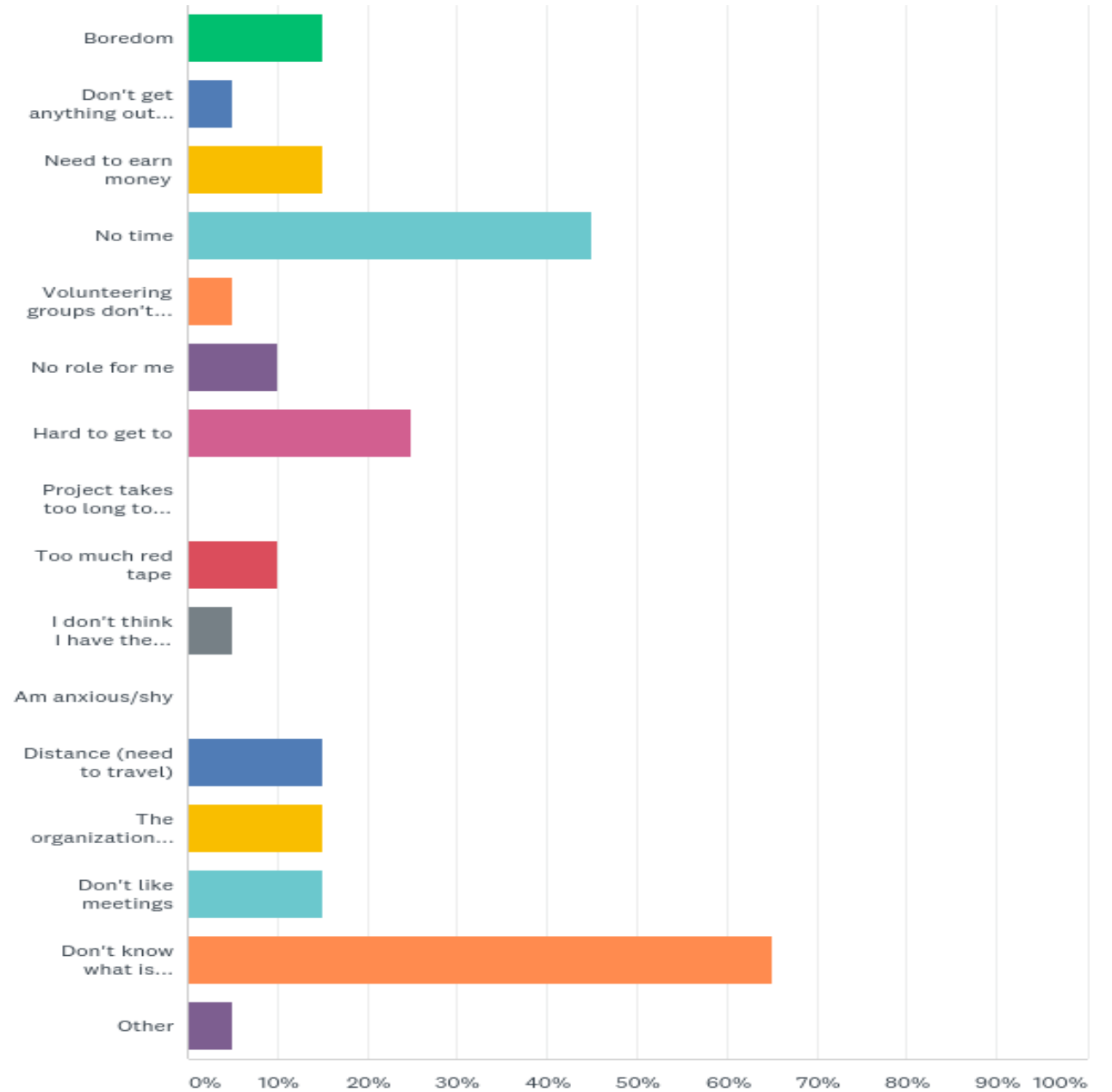
Youth Survey: where do they volunteer?



Why do they volunteer?



Factors discouraging youth from volunteering



Future Projects – Ideas from Youth



Painting murals It all depends on location many towns are becoming too small and many younger people these days are too busy with social media!(1)



Just get active in your local **community or sports club** it all helps(5)



Work Experience. A way that more volunteer opportunities might lead into something more permanent employment wise.(8)



Creating little arcade **Event based things** like the Battle of the Bands (10)



Building things, like we did the park(11)



Make it **exciting,** make it **relevant** to us our interests (17)



Generally more promotion of positive mental health (30)

Future Projects – Other ideas

- Different workshops about anxiety, depression and suicide. Learning about the people you can talk to and how to approach it properly when you can tell there is something wrong. (7)
- The young people in our town desperately want a **skate park**. It would build volunteering capacity if they were fully involved in the fundraising, design, building, maintenance and running of it (18).
- Volunteer development programs in schools to build volunteering into our everyday culture. **Schools** to recognise the volunteer efforts of students at their school assemblies (18)
- Learning a **trade** such as fixing historic buildings. Stone work, rendering, painting, gardening (26)
- The Eudunda **Christmas Street Party** were looking for teenagers to dress as characters for the parade, I think they struggled. Definitely getting them involved with Christmas Street Parade and War Memorial Events held throughout the year. Encouraging **youth to help clean up the towns**, the rubbish and the weeds on footpaths are a HUGE problem in Eudunda. (27)
- What about considering a **collective of youth volunteers**? Volunteer jobs - getting enough talent to operate as a small team within themselves to do various support for a community, farming out their skills to community groups who need it, with enough flexibility to adjust to needs - of both the volunteer and the organisation. The volunteers could be the minutes secretaries (and learn about committees and their work - while using their school skills of english, maths, computer skills). (43)
- **Conservation!** I feel more projects need to be environment based, whether they would help attract young people to volunteer is another story. I definitely believe young people to gravitate to anything sport related. I guess sport is good way to get the community together. (48)
- Creating spaces on or giving young people training re being on committees (many)

Summary of findings

- It is unanimously agreed that volunteering is a really important part of a community.
- It is unanimously agreed that youth are poorly represented in volunteer activities and that they could be represented more
- It is not however considered that young people must be involved in volunteering *per se* – most respondents appeared to feel that volunteering in their community was in a healthy state, notwithstanding
- Statistical analysis showed that while young people have always been less represented in volunteering, the proportion of youth volunteering *per se* has not declined but actually increased.
- Another key finding is that there is actually a gap in volunteer activity by those who are between the 35 – 50 years old, people who currently are having families and working full time.
- Further, statistical analysis shows that the loss of older volunteers is considerably more expensive than the loss of young volunteer, to local communities, as their voluntary work every year, per volunteer, can be over twice as valuable as the work of the average young volunteer
- Lack of community autonomy and ownership as well as corporatisation of volunteering is compromising inclination to volunteer
- Role modelling plays a key role/motivation for why young people volunteer, and feeling part of, and giving back to the community a key motivation for all people

Findings

- Two different models of volunteering emerged:
- Volunteering is an activity involving participation on committees, or doing regular group based work (eg. emergency services, Rotary, conservation)
- Event based, one off, fun activities that require volunteer effort to expedite
- The formal model was largely held by older volunteers and based on a construction of volunteering as 'public good' work, whereas the second model was largely ascribed to by young people who see volunteering as more than just work they do that they don't get paid for, but should be fun and exciting.

Findings

- **Perceptions:** There is one view that young people are lazy, disinterested and bored, and another that they are prevented from participating in volunteer activities because they are not heard, do not have a voice and are prevented by gate keepers from joining various groups.
- Older volunteers suggested volunteer projects in the areas of conservation and emergency services while younger ones suggested event-based projects based on fun and excitement to facilitate future volunteering
- **Communications and Local Organisation:** The Youth Advisory Committees play a key role in organising youth activities in each Council region, and although they focus on 12 – 17 year olds, can be used as a focal point by which to embed volunteerism in youth and future activities. Many of the volunteer activities identified as fun and relevant to youth emerged from the YACs.
- The ways in which volunteering is communicated and advocated for in the communities needs to be reformed as many youth seem to be unaware of the diverse opportunities that exist.
- A remodelling of how volunteer groups work to take account of new social media and communication options is needed
- **Question:** What volunteering brings to a community or is needs revision – is it still valuable if it is structured around communal fun events rather than public good activities?

Final reflections

- **There is agreement in the community that volunteering is important**
- Volunteering in conservation, emergency services, health is dominated by older volunteers
- Volunteering in sports and recreation is where most young people volunteer
- The YAC Committees and associated activities provide a vital link between very young people and people in between 18 – 25 and on
- Youth volunteering has actually increased slightly over the last two Census periods but there is a gap in volunteer activity by those who are between the 35 – 50 years old, people who currently are having families and working full time. This represents an opportunity to build capacity in volunteering in this demographic
- Young people still perceive they will likely leave the community once they leave school
- Volunteering is linked to family commitments and being part of a friendships group not always about giving back per se 'just because'
- Results align with other work such as SAEFCOM and case studies elsewhere

Key Recommendations

- That Councils in the region strengthen and support the Youth Advisory Committees (YACs)
- That support is found to establish a Regional Community Development role to support and develop youth into volunteering.
- That Legatus supports a series of event- based volunteer activities.
- That Legatus investigate the opportunity to develop programs aimed at supporting the current 35 – 55 demographic to volunteer more.
- That volunteer groups are supported to use social media and communication options.
- That local councils act as a facilitator to (i) support emergency services and (ii) coordinate engagement with schools re volunteer programs.

Trial Projects – Creative Arts

- The use of art to promote revitalisation of local economies is one used world-wide, and in this case linking it to a specific public good activity like volunteering can help build social capital. The small town of Sheffield in Tasmania is a good example – a dying mining town it now hosts an annual international mural competition having re-invented itself by painting 100 murals and turning itself into a tourist destination.



Emergency Services – Youth into Governance



- Emergency services need volunteers now more than ever. Many respondents told us that it was becoming increasingly hard to get young people into activities such as the CFS and other emergency services. In this case, we suggest that the emergency services sector is an ideal one by which to engage slightly older volunteers, those in their twenties and early thirties who at present appear too busy to do this work. They nonetheless as a demographic, represent a bridge between youth and older people. We also heard many people tell us that they needed some succession planning for younger people to come in to help manage and run the governance systems for many organisation that rely on volunteer labour
- Hence we suggest that a project could be established that brings these two needs together and runs training workshops in community governance for people who are time poor but may be able to volunteer their time in /on a committee/ In turn these people could become advocates to lobby younger people to give their time and be trained in actual emergency service delivery.

Conservation Projects – Citizen Science

- Many volunteers reflected on the need to engage youth more in conservation projects. We suggest that this is therefore another area where a project could be established and trialled.
- In particular, picking up on the inclination of young people to favour things that are fun but also that use social media and other virtual means of communication, we suggest that the development of an online citizen science project focussed on conservation would be one interesting way of building youth volunteer effort.
- We suggest that a trial project may identify a threatened species or popular location in the Legatus region and then youth volunteers develop a citizen science tool to help protect it. This may be including development of a phone app, it may be a web site and even an ongoing event based activity collecting information and then uploading it to the preferred virtual media.



Event Based – “A Day Out”



GOYDER YAC PRESENTS

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

PERFORM LIVE ON STAGE
AT THE HISTORICAL
REDRUTH GAOL IN BURRA!

08
DECEMBER
2018

Are you a band, vocalist or musician between the ages of 12-25 years?
Want to be in the chance to win some great prizes and showcase your talent?
Expression of interests are now open!
For more information and to apply online go to www.goyder.sa.gov.au

- Event based activities appeal to young volunteers who are happy to give their time for free, but who prefer also to ‘get something back’.
- We suggest that one project that could be trialled is the coordination of an event-based activity. We also suggest this activity could be regional to enable a wide range of young people, and potentially multiple YAC groups to become involved.
- For example, a parade or event such as a musical event, market or competition could be held in any of the central regional towns, such as Burra, Clare or Port Wakefield, as a fund raiser supporting a community issue. Issues may include raising funds for bushfire recovery and support, mental health activities, aged care, conservation or education.
- We also suggest that it may be useful to tie in an event like this to an established ‘Day’ such as World Mental Health Day, or Daffodil day or World Environment Day etc – this would enable the event as trialled to secure a permanent and ongoing presence as it could be run every year

Questions?

