Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Volunteer Satisfaction Survey 2016

State Emergency Service
Brisbane Report

TNS

2016 **V**olunteer Survey

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Queensland Government

Contents

1

Background, Objectives and Methodology

Background and Objectives

- Volunteers are critical to the successful delivery of frontline services and are essential in building community capacity and enhancing community resilience. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has approximately 42,000 dedicated volunteers across the state in the State Emergency Service (SES), Rural Fire Service (RFS), Research and Scientific Branch network, and Technical Rescue Unit.

- The volunteer base is largely made up of the RFS and SES with approximately 36,000 and 6,200 volunteers respectively.

- Across both of these services, the contribution of volunteers is vital in ensuring positive community outcomes, and as such it is imperative that the views and opinions of the volunteer base is heard. Only in this way can QFES understand the satisfaction of its volunteers, how it is performing in supporting them in their volunteer role and what can be done to improve their volunteer experience.

- In 2016 TNS has been commissioned to follow up and build on the 2014 survey it conducted to ascertain current levels of satisfaction and opinion on the support provided and organisational practices and processes.

- The findings of the 2016 volunteer survey are contained within this report.

The overall aim of the research is to:	Provide Queensland Fire and Emergency Services with robust measures of volunteer satisfaction with the services provided in order to provide direction and understanding as to what, if any, issues exist and how volunteers can be better supported in the future.

Methodology

Who did we survey?	■ Volunteers in State Emergency Service (Brisbane)
How many responses did we receive	■ n=428 (maximum margin of error at 95% confidence level is $\pm$4.7%)
When did we interview?	■ 11 July – 23 August 2016
Sampling strategy	■ Contacts from the QFES Volunteer database were emailed with an invitation to complete the survey. The survey was also distributed via hard-copy on request and at SES training nights, and a link to the survey was also placed on the QFES website.
Interview methodology	■ Online, self-completed interview. Average questionnaire length 10 minutes.
Weighting	■ No weighting was applied

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This research was carried out in accordance with ISO 20252

Questionnaire Flow

■ The questionnaire covered the following content:

1 Screener questions	**7** Inclusion
2 General satisfaction	**8** Information and Communication
3 Perceptions of SES	**9** Recognition
4 Recruitment	**10** Training and development
5 Leadership	**11** Intention to continue volunteering
6 Workplace conduct policies and procedures	**12** Demographics

Reporting Notes

- While the online survey required a forced response for each question, some respondents who completed a hard copy of the survey skipped certain questions. As such, sample sizes may vary slightly throughout the report.

- Where a total satisfied score is reported, this is calculated as the sum of satisfied + very satisfied.

- Where a total dissatisfied score is reported this is calculated as the sum of dissatisfied + very dissatisfied.

- These aggregated scores may not always add exactly to the individual percentage scores reported due to rounding.

- For single response questions, the sum of responses may not always add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

- Where questions have more than one response allowed, the sum of responses may add to more than 100%.

2
Detailed Findings

2.1
General Satisfaction

General satisfaction with volunteering (%)
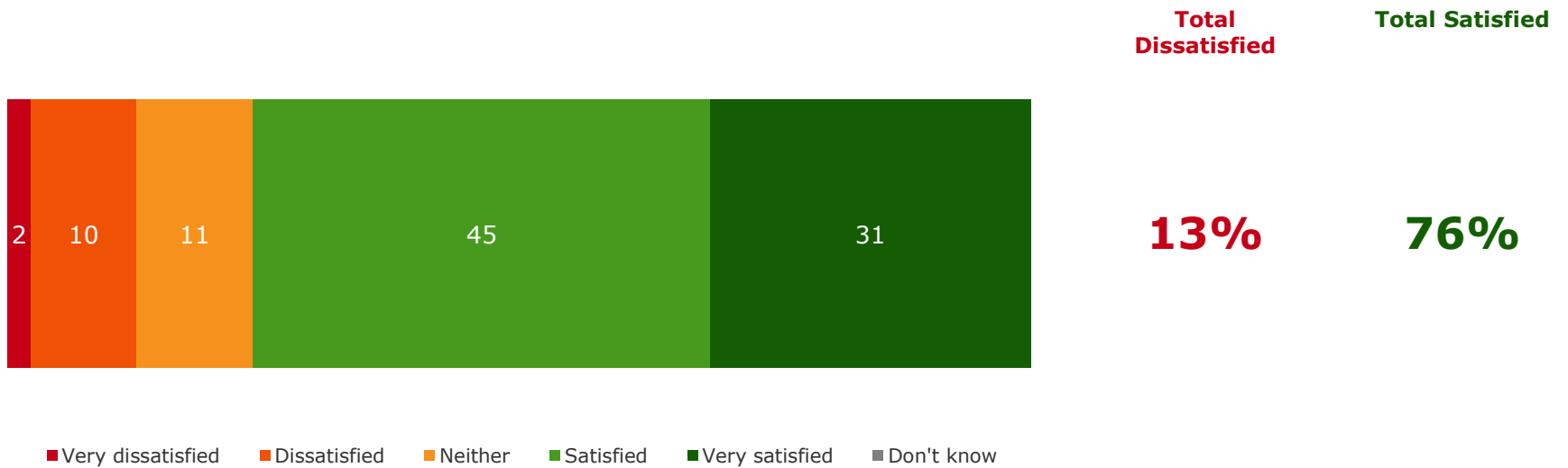
	Total Dissatisfied	**Total Satisfied**
2 · 10 · 11 · 45 · 31	**13%**	**76%**

- ■ Very dissatisfied
- ■ Dissatisfied
- ■ Neither
- ■ Satisfied
- ■ Very satisfied
- ■ Don't know

B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

Reasons for satisfaction with volunteering experience (%)

76% Satisfied

Stacked bar (left): 31, 45, 11, 10, 2

Reason	%
I feel I contribute to the community	83
I have learnt new skills	65
I meet great people	58
I am able to use my skills in a productive way	56
It is a challenging and new experience	48
I feel valued	38
It enhances my ability to gain paid employment	11
Other	2
Don't know	0
Refused	0

B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
B2. Why are you <insert satisfied or very satisfied as appropriate>?
BASE: Those satisfied with volunteering experience (n=325)

Reasons for dissatisfaction with volunteering experience (%)

I don't feel valued	50
My skills are under utilised	50
There is a lack of communication	48
There is too much time wasted	48
There is too much red tape	44
There is conflict within the environment	33
The unit is too unprofessional	22
I don't feel like I make a difference	19
There is not enough training	15
Other	31
Don't know	0
Refused	2

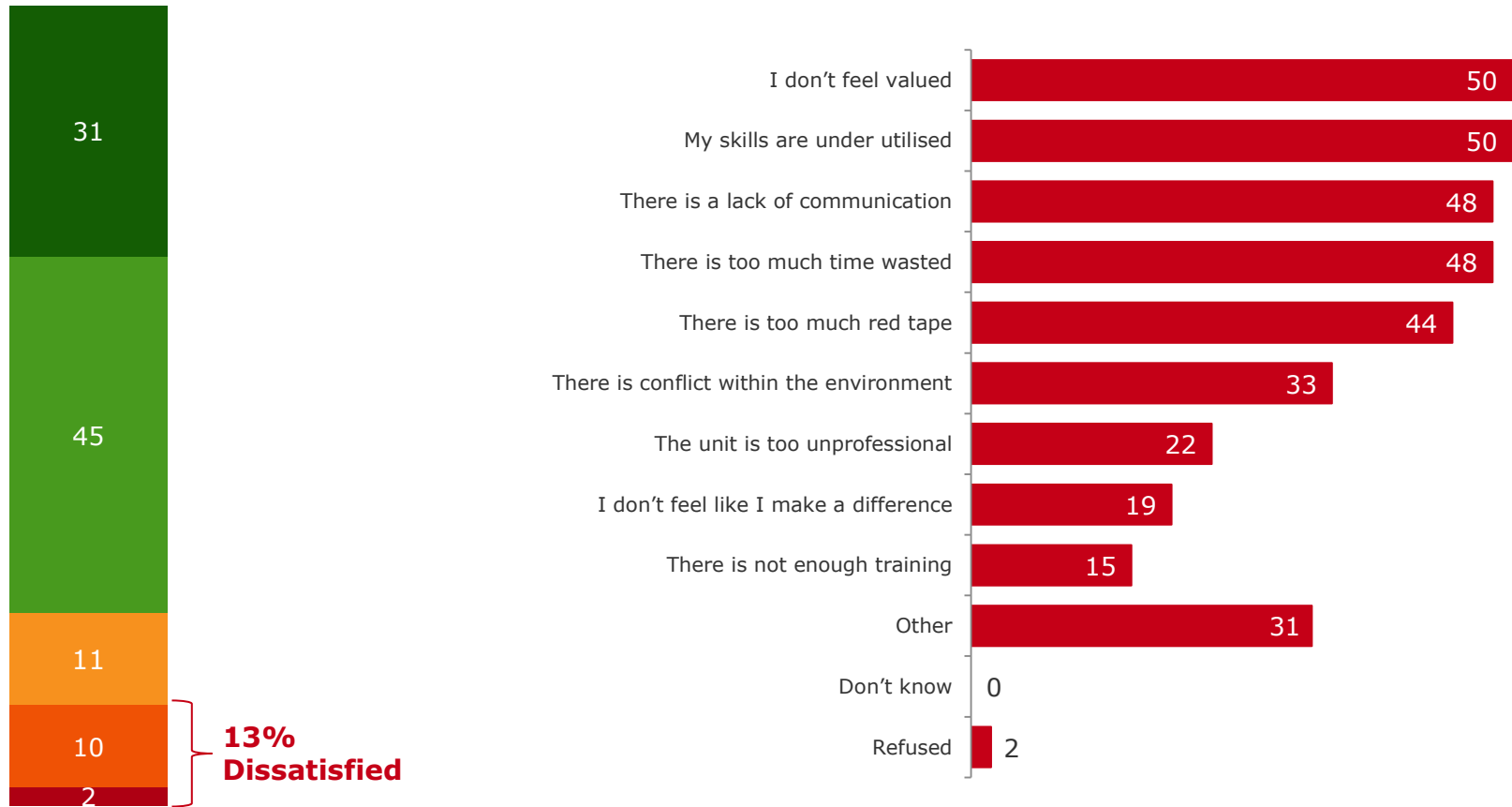Stacked bar values (top to bottom): 31, 45, 11, 10, 2

13% Dissatisfied

B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
B3. Why are you <insert dissatisfied or very dissatisfied as appropriate>?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with volunteering experience (n=54)

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2.2
Perceptions of SES

Perceptions of SES (%)

Left anchor		Neither		Right anchor	
Old fashioned / outdated	24	41		35	**Modern**
Not ready for change	21	34		45	**Ready for change**
Exclusive	17	28		55	**Inclusive**
Poor reputation with the community	3	8		89	**Good reputation with the community**
Diverse	48	32		20	Similar / alike
Innovative	23	35		42	**Traditional**
Reactive	42	20		38	Proactive
Relaxed	30	34		36	**Restrictive**
Professional	58	31		11	Unprofessional

■ Left anchor selected   ■ Neither selected   ■ Right anchor selected

G1. You will now be shown pairs of words / phrases that people have used to describe the State Emergency Service. For each pair, please select which word or phrase you feel best describes the State Emergency Service. You may also select 'neither' if you feel neither word is an appropriate description. BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Sample sizes from top to bottom: n=425;425;426;426;425;426;425;426;426)
NOTE: Bold text represents the word/phrase more often selected

Perceived level/s of government responsible for the SES (%)

Category	Value
Local and State	55
State only	24
Local only	11
Federal, State and Local	9
Federal and State	1
Federal only	0
Federal and Local	0
Don't know	1
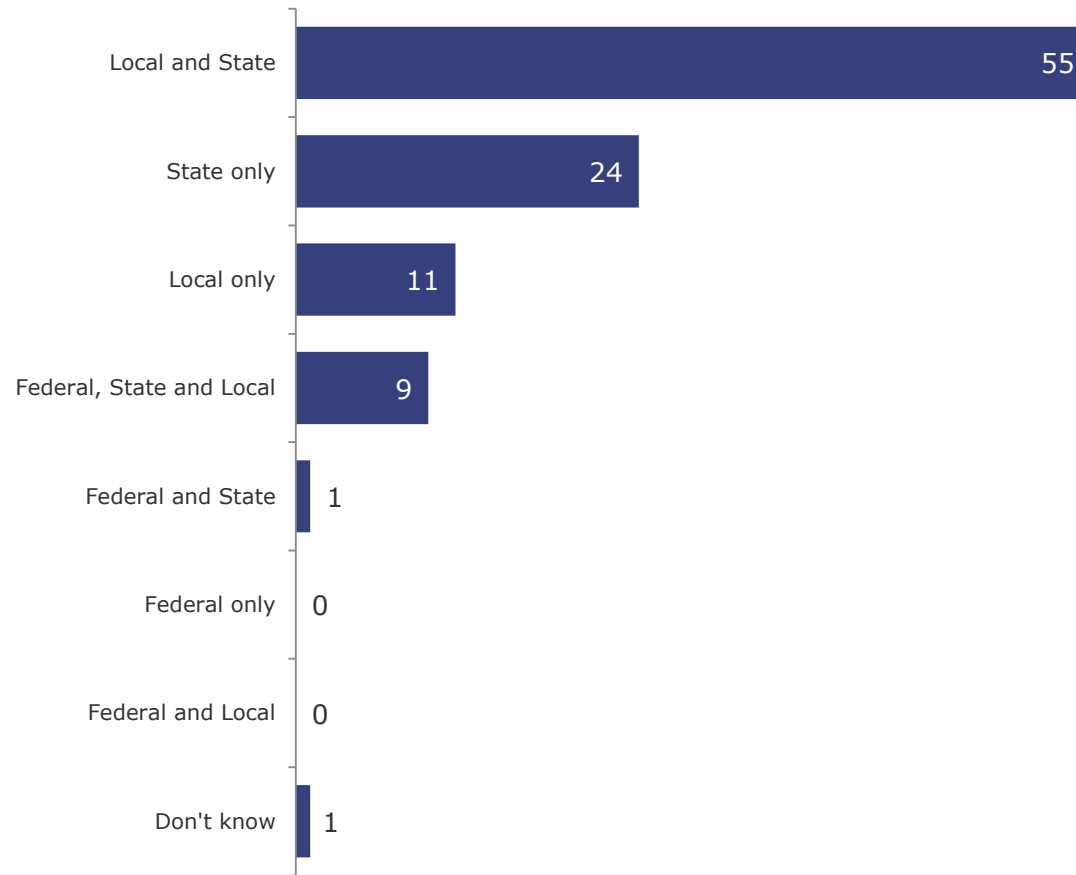
G2. Which level / levels of Government do you believe is / are responsible for the Queensland State Emergency Service?
BASE. SES respondents - Brisbane (n=427)

2.3
Leadership

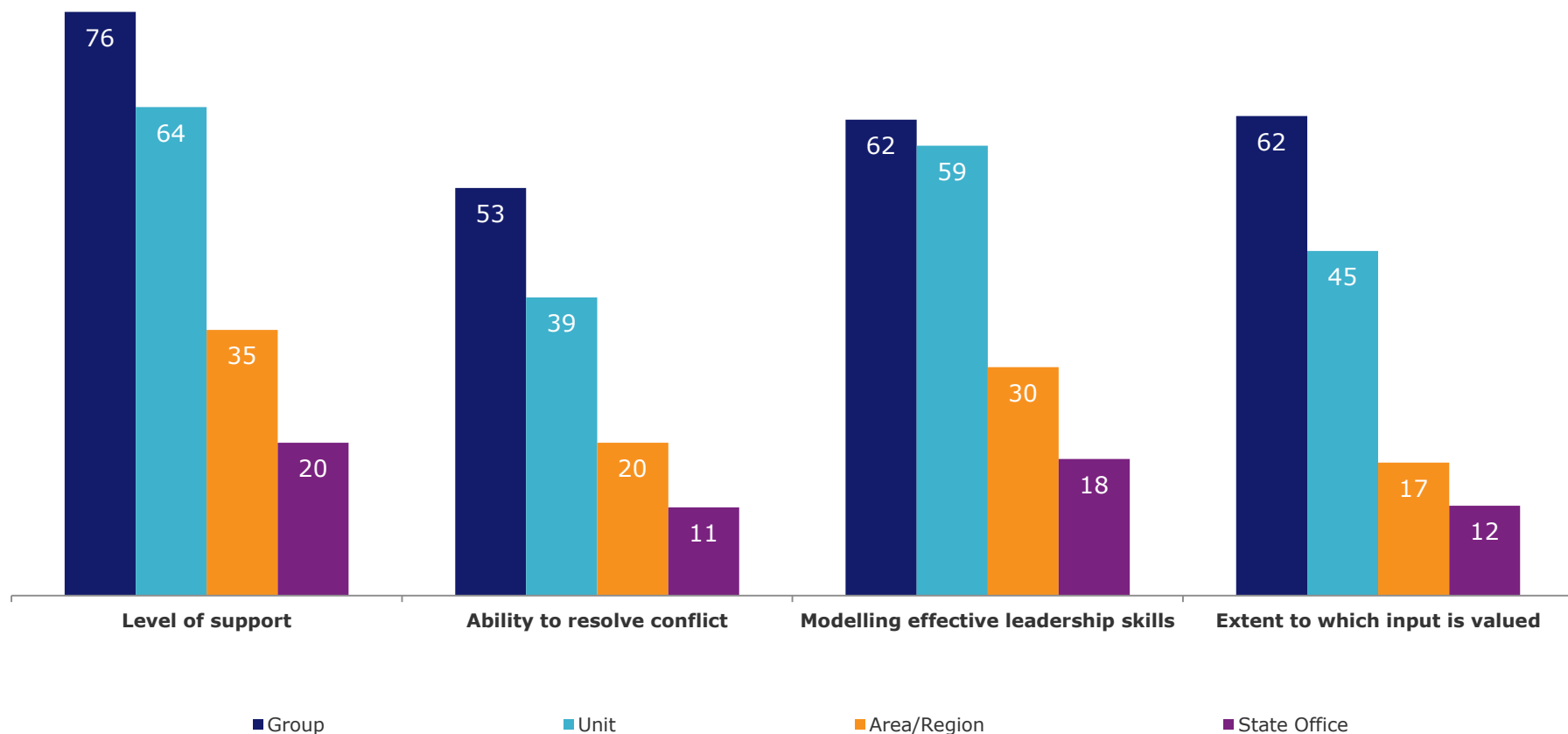# Perceptions of leadership in SES – Top 2 (rated "Quite a lot" or "A great deal") (%)

Level of support
- Group: 76
- Unit: 64
- Area/Region: 35
- State Office: 20

Ability to resolve conflict
- Group: 53
- Unit: 39
- Area/Region: 20
- State Office: 11

Modelling effective leadership skills
- Group: 62
- Unit: 59
- Area/Region: 30
- State Office: 18

Extent to which input is valued
- Group: 62
- Unit: 45
- Area/Region: 17
- State Office: 12

Legend: ■ Group ■ Unit ■ Area/Region ■ State Office

D1. To what extent do you feel supported in your volunteer role in the State Emergency Service by each of the following? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=428; State Office: n=427)
D2. And to what extent do you feel the following resolve conflict? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)
D3. And to what extent do you feel the following model effective leadership skills? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=427; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)
D4. And to what extent do you feel the following value your input? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)

Perceived level of support in volunteer role by… (%)

Top 2 (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)
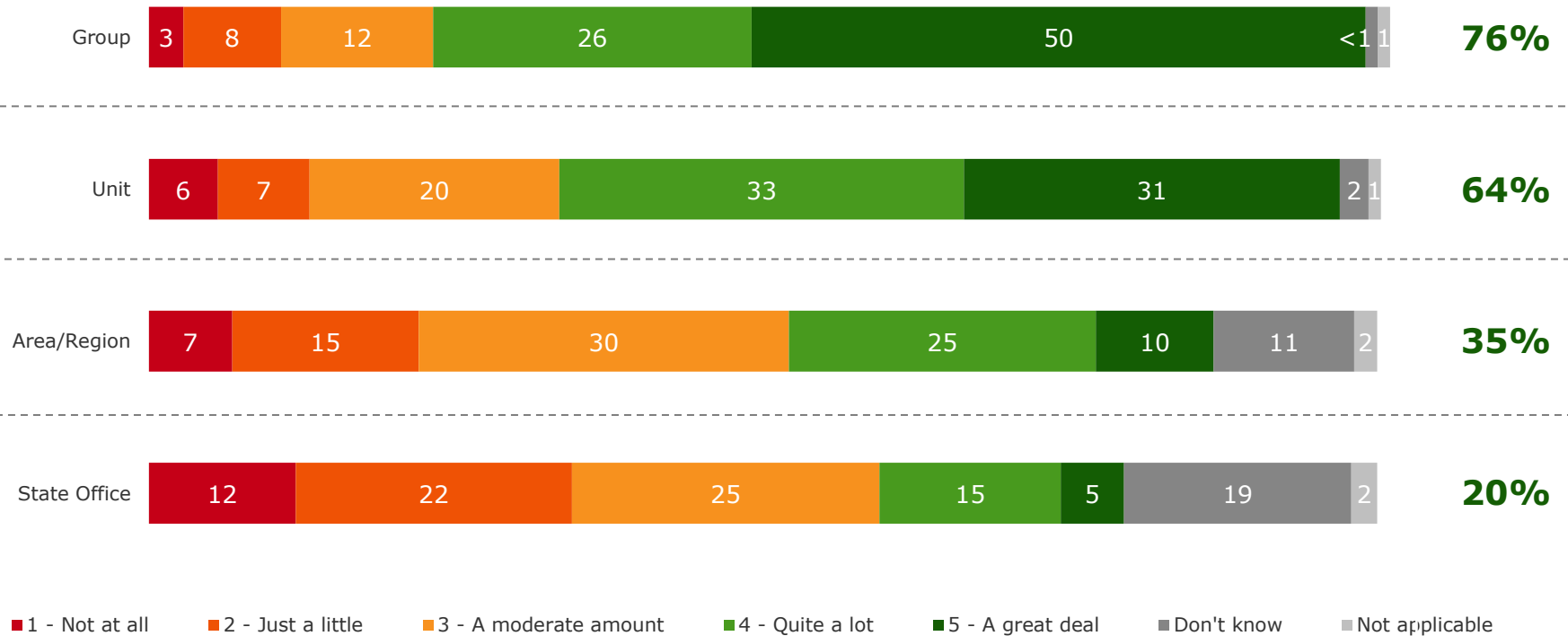
	1 - Not at all	2 - Just a little	3 - A moderate amount	4 - Quite a lot	5 - A great deal	Don't know	Not applicable	Top 2
Group	3	8	12	26	50	<1	1	**76%**
Unit	6	7	20	33	31	2	1	**64%**
Area/Region	7	15	30	25	10	11	2	**35%**
State Office	12	22	25	15	5	19	2	**20%**

- ■ 1 - Not at all
- ■ 2 - Just a little
- ■ 3 - A moderate amount
- ■ 4 - Quite a lot
- ■ 5 - A great deal
- ■ Don't know
- ■ Not applicable

D1. To what extent do you feel supported in your volunteer role in the State Emergency Service by each of the following?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=428; State Office: n=427)

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Perceived ability to resolve conflict by… (%)
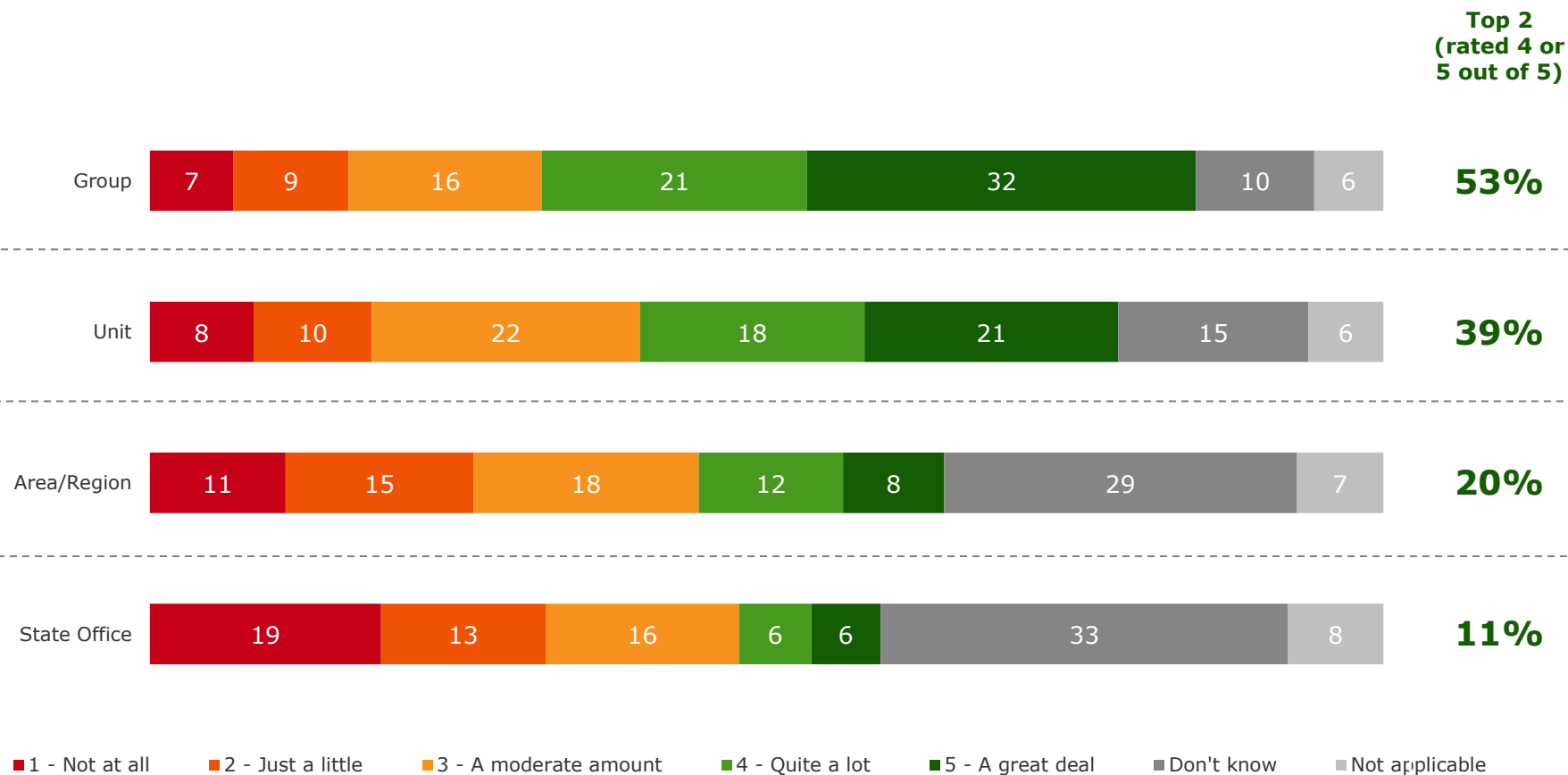
Top 2 (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)

	1 - Not at all	2 - Just a little	3 - A moderate amount	4 - Quite a lot	5 - A great deal	Don't know	Not applicable	Top 2
Group	7	9	16	21	32	10	6	**53%**
Unit	8	10	22	18	21	15	6	**39%**
Area/Region	11	15	18	12	8	29	7	**20%**
State Office	19	13	16	6	6	33	8	**11%**

■ 1 - Not at all   ■ 2 - Just a little   ■ 3 - A moderate amount   ■ 4 - Quite a lot   ■ 5 - A great deal   ■ Don't know   ■ Not applicable

D2. And to what extent do you feel the following resolve conflict?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)

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Modelling of effective leadership skills by... (%)
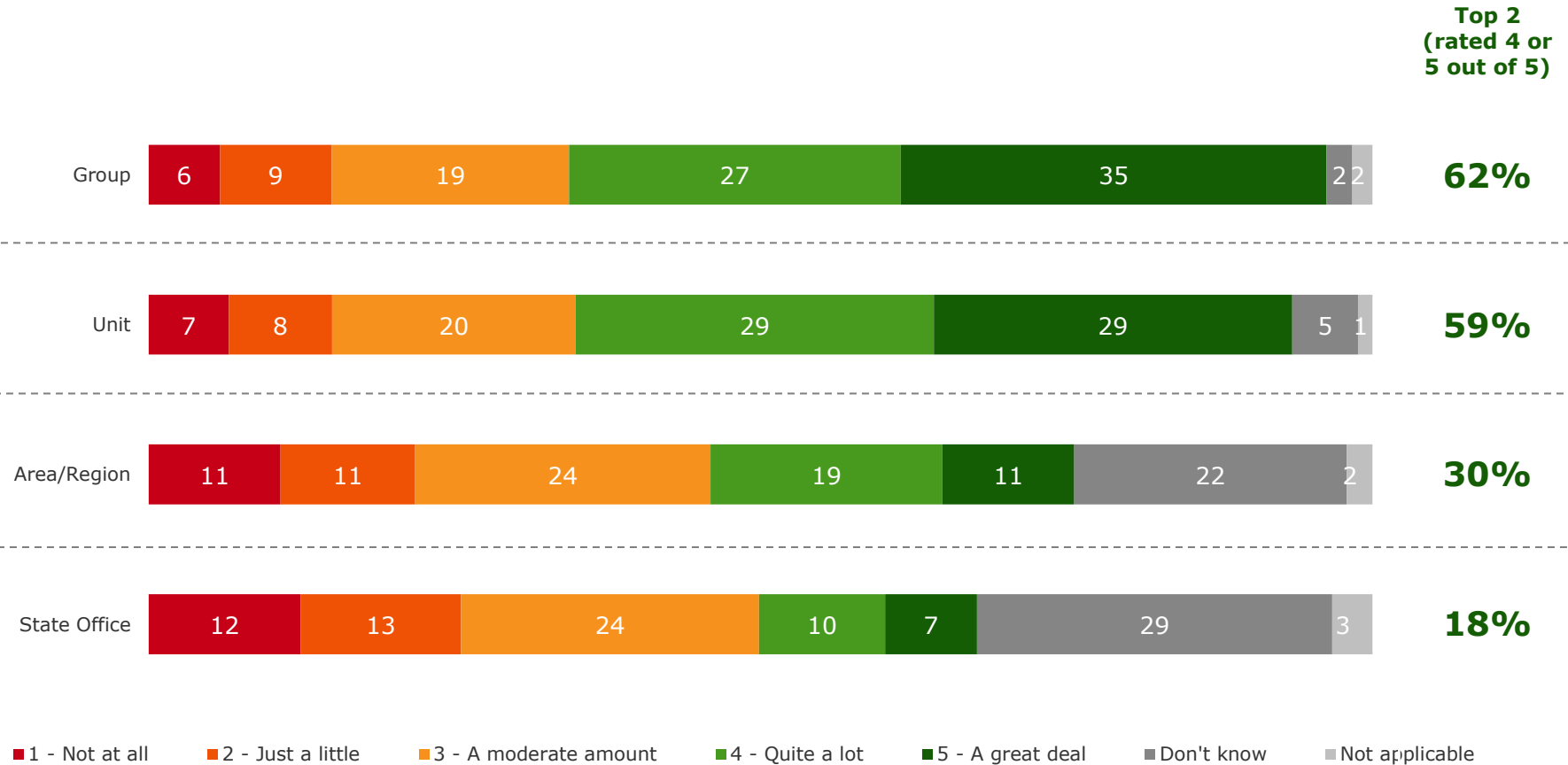
Top 2 (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)

	1 - Not at all	2 - Just a little	3 - A moderate amount	4 - Quite a lot	5 - A great deal	Don't know	Not applicable	Top 2
Group	6	9	19	27	35	2	2	**62%**
Unit	7	8	20	29	29	5	1	**59%**
Area/Region	11	11	24	19	11	22	2	**30%**
State Office	12	13	24	10	7	29	3	**18%**

■ 1 - Not at all   ■ 2 - Just a little   ■ 3 - A moderate amount   ■ 4 - Quite a lot   ■ 5 - A great deal   ■ Don't know   ■ Not applicable
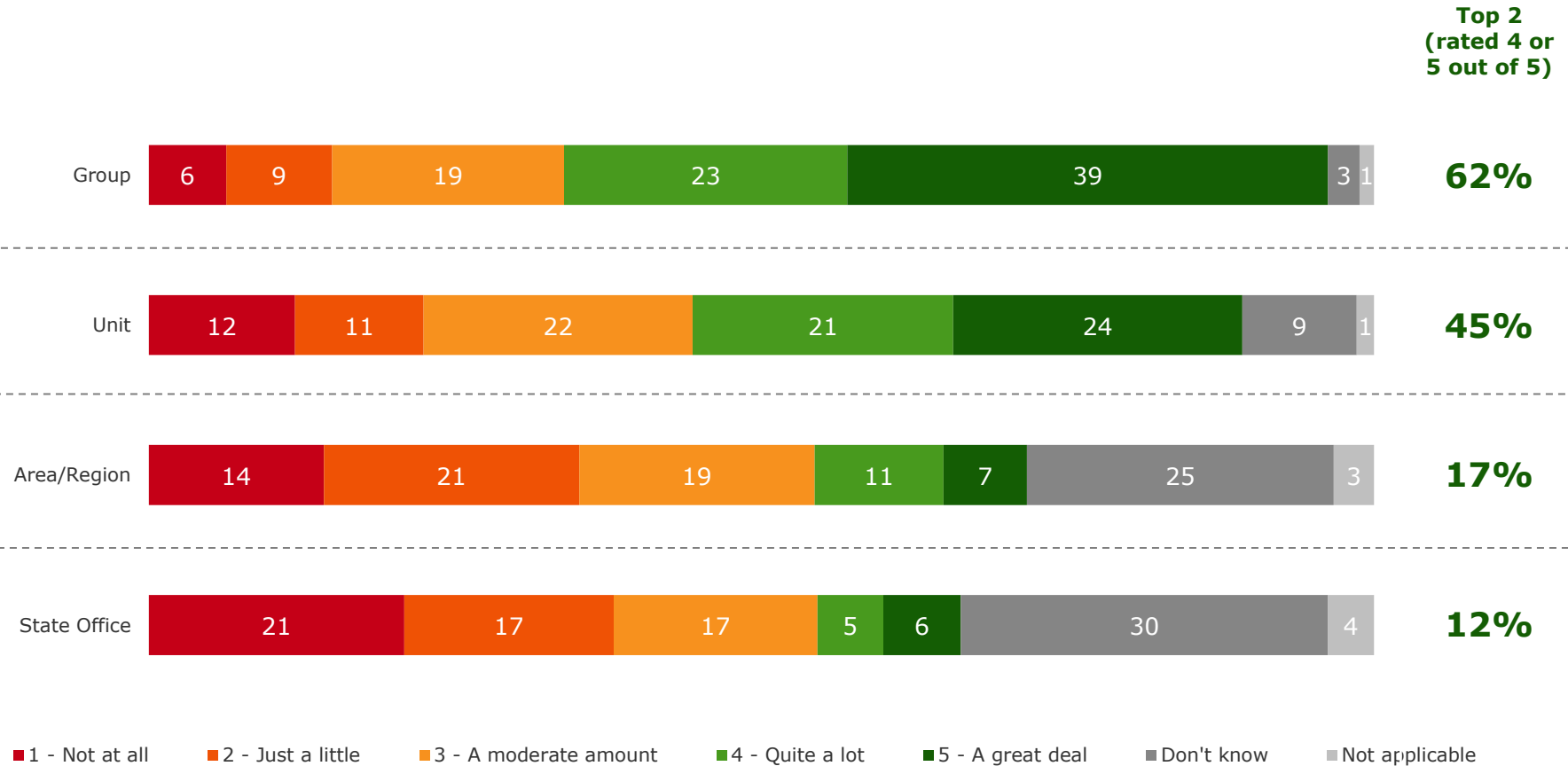
D3. And to what extent do you feel the following model effective leadership skills?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=427; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)

Extent to which input is valued by… (%)

Top 2 (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know	N/A	Top 2
Group	6	9	19	23	39	3	1	**62%**
Unit	12	11	22	21	24	9	1	**45%**
Area/Region	14	21	19	11	7	25	3	**17%**
State Office	21	17	17	5	6	30	4	**12%**

■ 1 - Not at all ■ 2 - Just a little ■ 3 - A moderate amount ■ 4 - Quite a lot ■ 5 - A great deal ■ Don't know ■ Not applicable
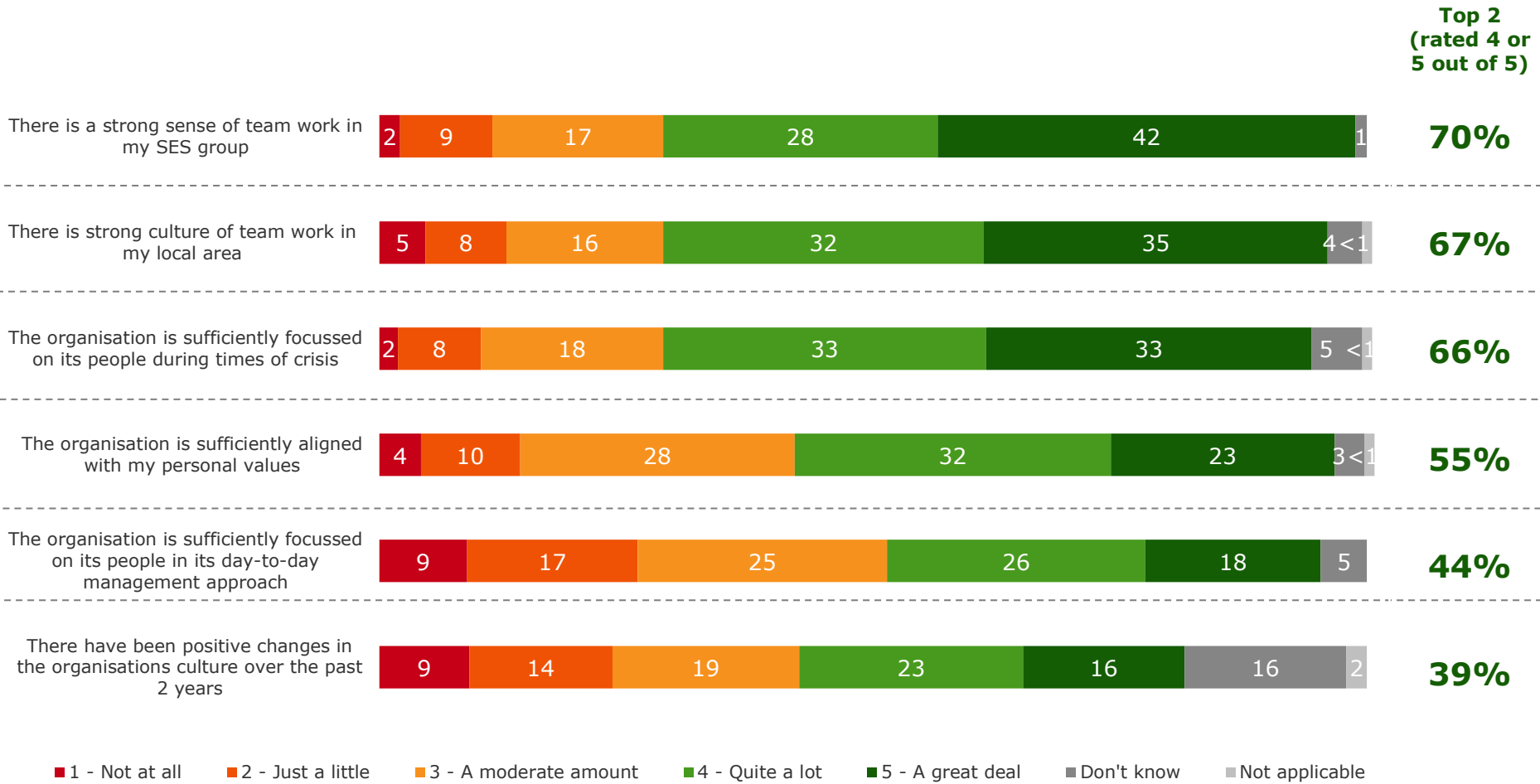
D4. And to what extent do you feel the following value your input?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (Group: n=428; Unit: n=428; Area/Region: n=427; State Office: n=427)

Perceptions of organisational culture (%)

Top 2 (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)

There is a strong sense of team work in my SES group
2 | 9 | 17 | 28 | 42 | 1
70%

There is strong culture of team work in my local area
5 | 8 | 16 | 32 | 35 | 4 <1
67%

The organisation is sufficiently focussed on its people during times of crisis
2 | 8 | 18 | 33 | 33 | 5 <1
66%

The organisation is sufficiently aligned with my personal values
4 | 10 | 28 | 32 | 23 | 3 <1
55%

The organisation is sufficiently focussed on its people in its day-to-day management approach
9 | 17 | 25 | 26 | 18 | 5
44%

There have been positive changes in the organisations culture over the past 2 years
9 | 14 | 19 | 23 | 16 | 16 | 2
39%

■ 1 - Not at all ■ 2 - Just a little ■ 3 - A moderate amount ■ 4 - Quite a lot ■ 5 - A great deal ■ Don't know ■ Not applicable

D5. Thinking about the organisational culture in the State Emergency Service, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?
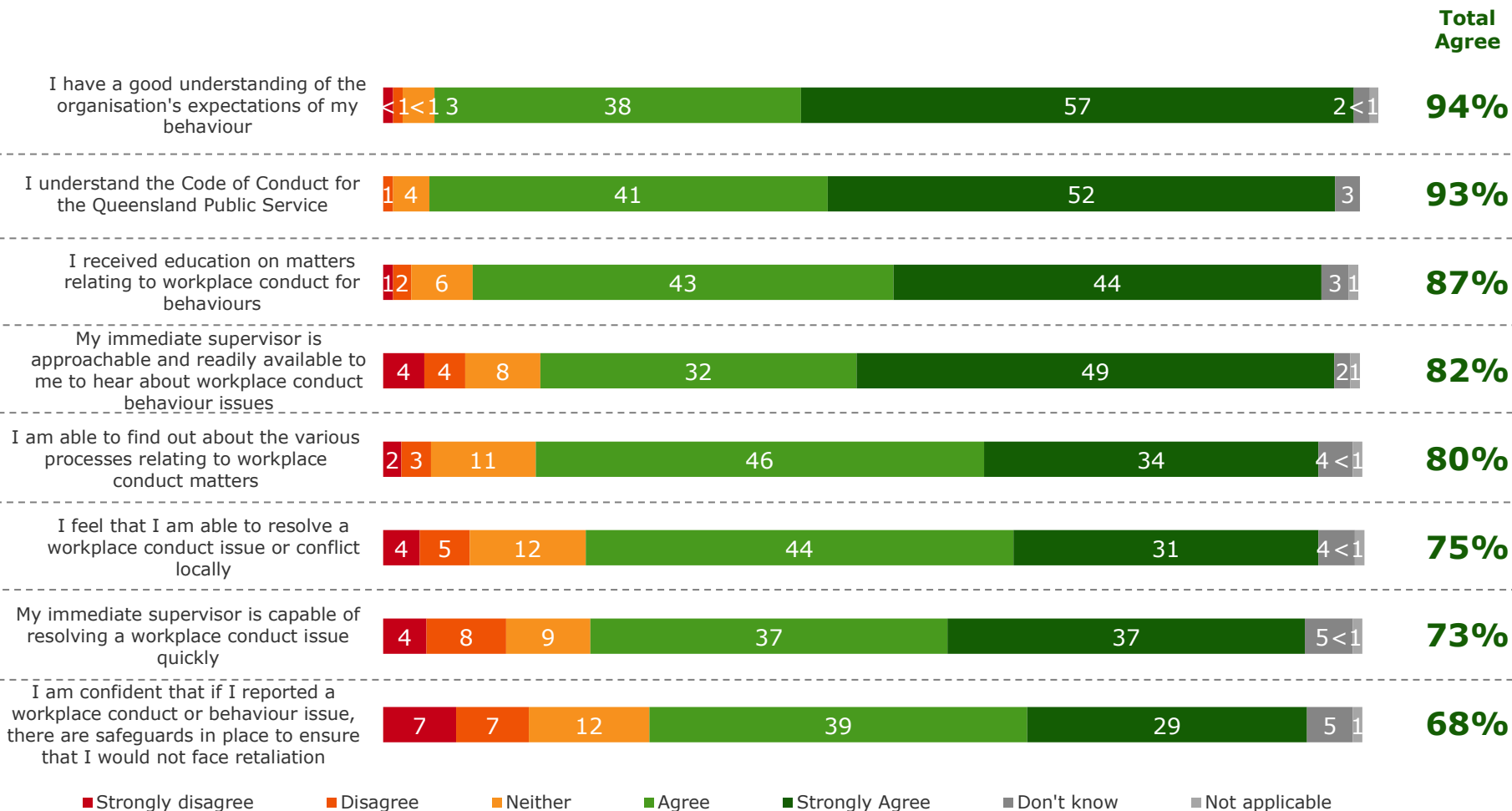BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428 for each)

2.4
Workplace Conduct Policies and Procedures

Perceptions and understanding of workplace conduct policies and procedures (%)

Total Agree

Statement		Total Agree
I have a good understanding of the organisation's expectations of my behaviour	<1 <1 3 | 38 | 57 | 2 <1	**94%**
I understand the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service	1 4 | 41 | 52 | 3	**93%**
I received education on matters relating to workplace conduct for behaviours	1 2 6 | 43 | 44 | 3 1	**87%**
My immediate supervisor is approachable and readily available to me to hear about workplace conduct behaviour issues	4 4 8 | 32 | 49 | 2 1	**82%**
I am able to find out about the various processes relating to workplace conduct matters	2 3 11 | 46 | 34 | 4 <1	**80%**
I feel that I am able to resolve a workplace conduct issue or conflict locally	4 5 12 | 44 | 31 | 4 <1	**75%**
My immediate supervisor is capable of resolving a workplace conduct issue quickly	4 8 9 | 37 | 37 | 5 <1	**73%**
I am confident that if I reported a workplace conduct or behaviour issue, there are safeguards in place to ensure that I would not face retaliation	7 7 12 | 39 | 29 | 5 1	**68%**

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Don't know ■ Not applicable
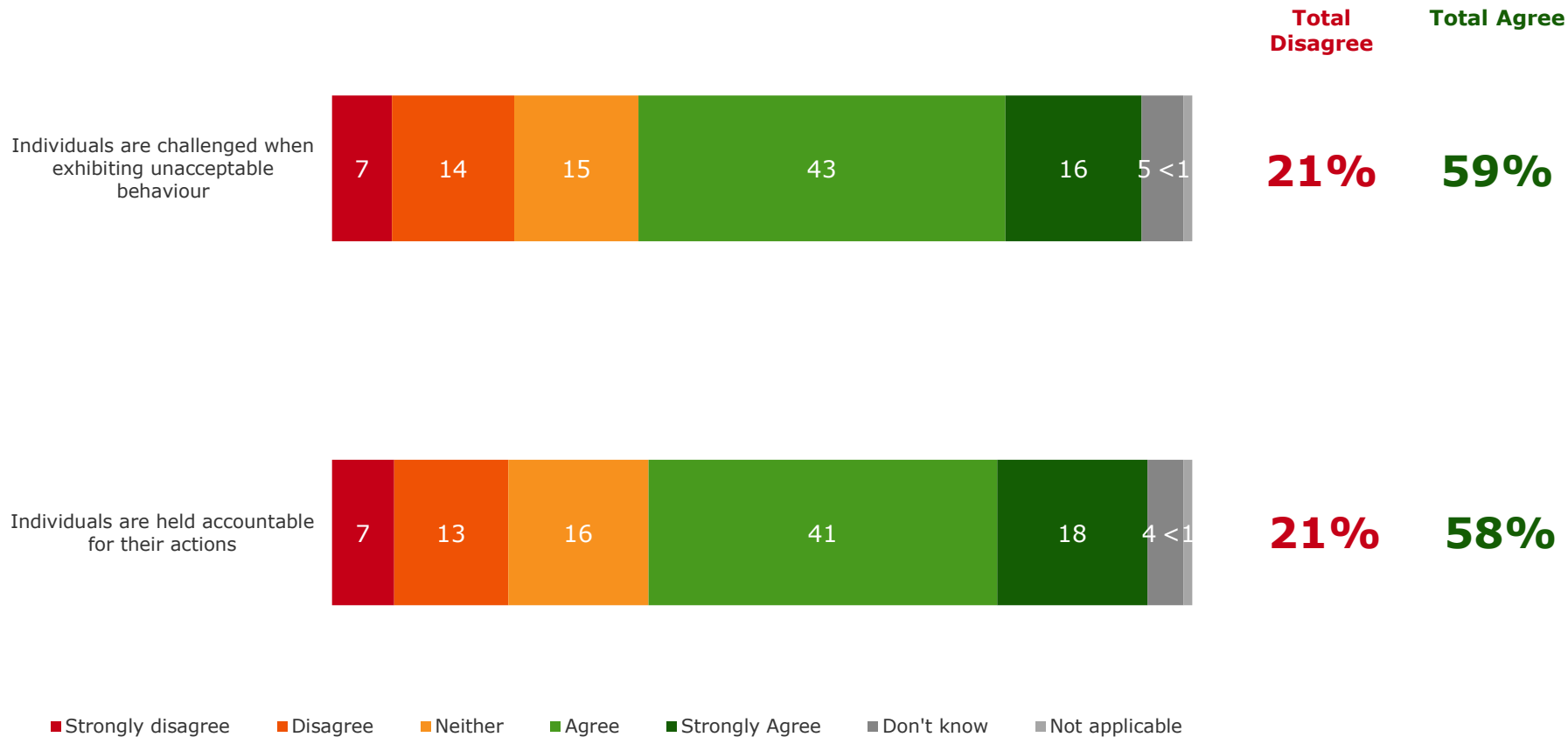
F1. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with these statements about the State Emergency Service policies and procedures. Please note for these questions your immediate supervisor refers to the next person in line through the chain of command.
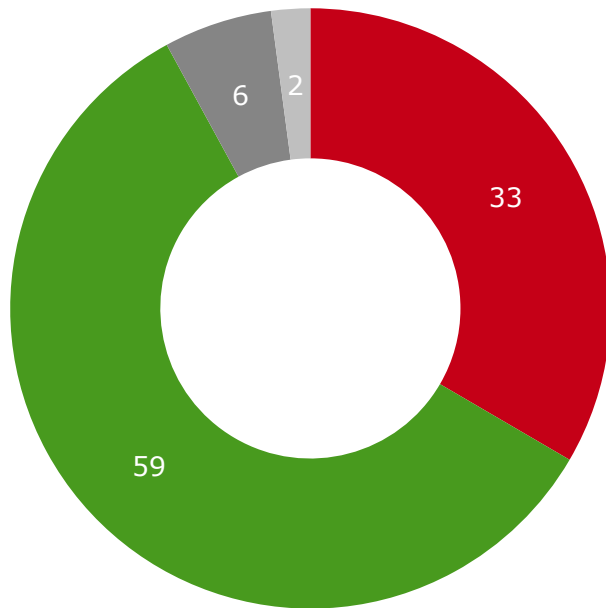BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428 for each)

Perceptions of … (%)

	Total Disagree	Total Agree

Individuals are challenged when exhibiting unacceptable behaviour

| 7 | 14 | 15 | 43 | 16 | 5 | <1 |

21%   **59%**

Individuals are held accountable for their actions

| 7 | 13 | 16 | 41 | 18 | 4 | <1 |

21%   **58%**

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Don't know ■ Not applicable

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Witnessed bullying in volunteer environment (%)

33 Yes
59 No
6 Don't know
2 Refused

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Refused

Been subject to bullying in volunteer environment (%)

18 Yes
78 No
2 Don't know
3 Refused
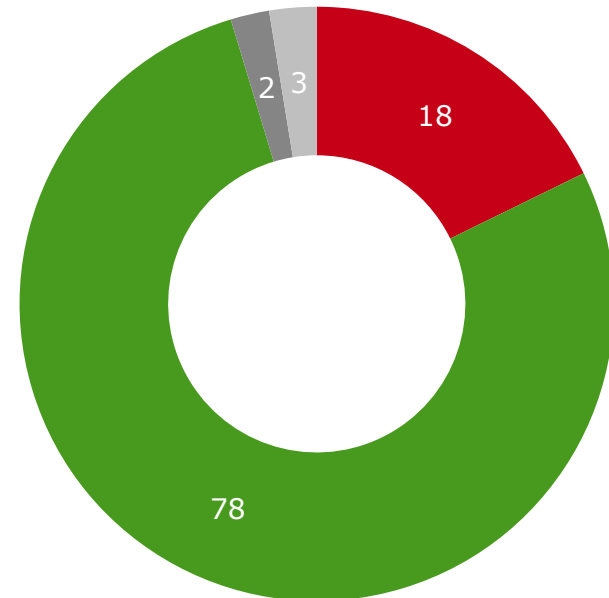
■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Refused

F3. During the last 2 years have you witnessed any such bullying in your State Emergency Service volunteer environment?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
F4. And during the last 2 years have you been subject to any such bullying in your State Emergency Service volunteer environment?
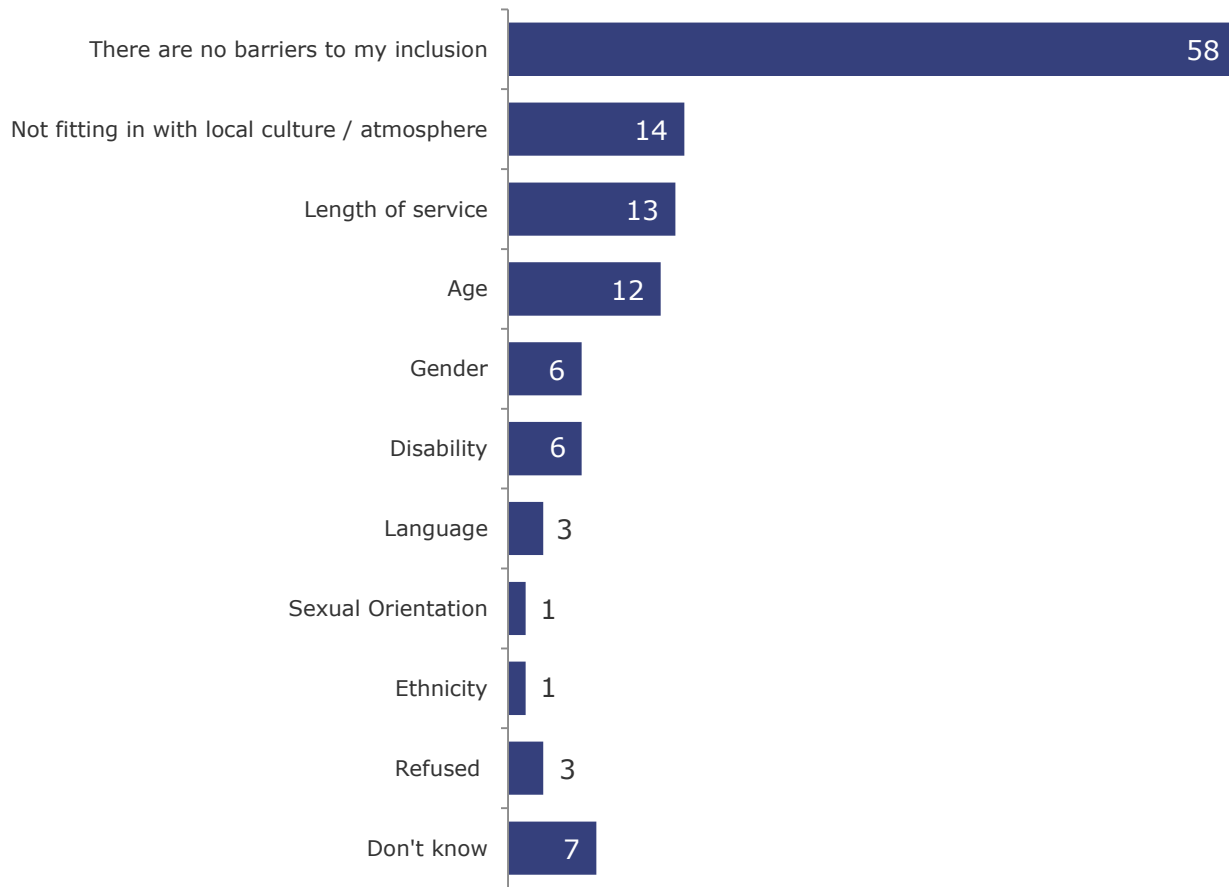BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

2.5
Inclusion

Barriers to inclusion (%)

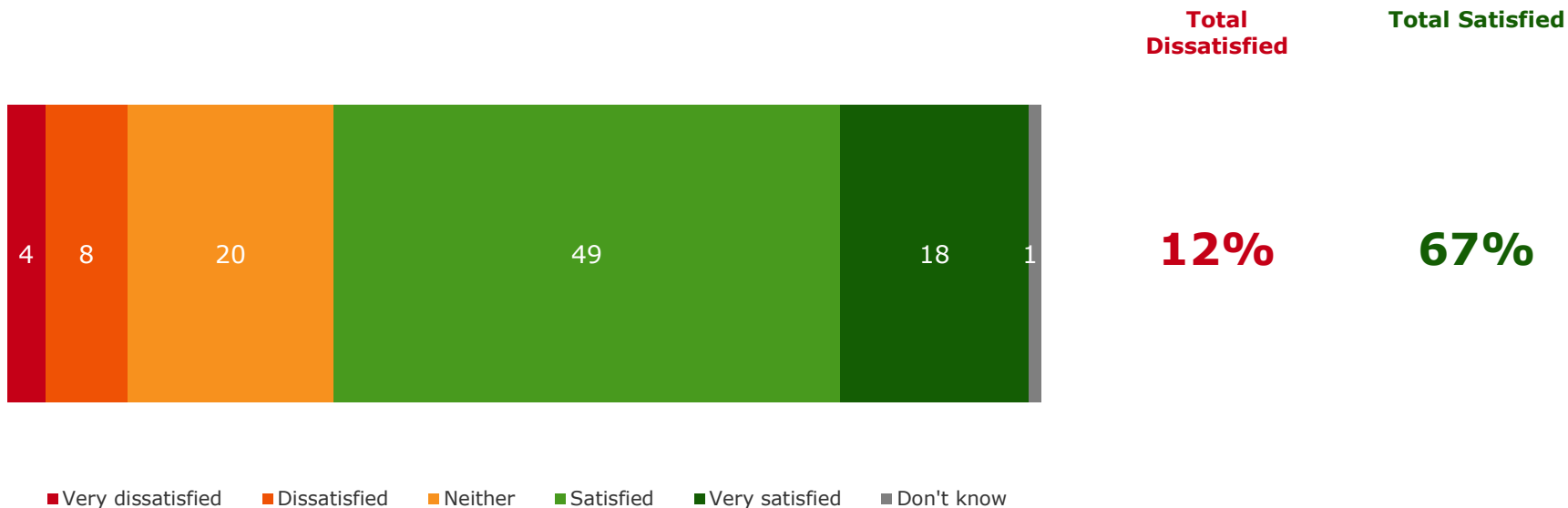| Barrier	%
There are no barriers to my inclusion	58
Not fitting in with local culture / atmosphere	14
Length of service	13
Age	12
Gender	6
Disability	6
Language	3
Sexual Orientation	1
Ethnicity	1
Refused	3
Don't know	7

E1. Thinking about possible barriers to inclusion within the State Emergency Service, which, if any, of the following have been barriers to your inclusion?
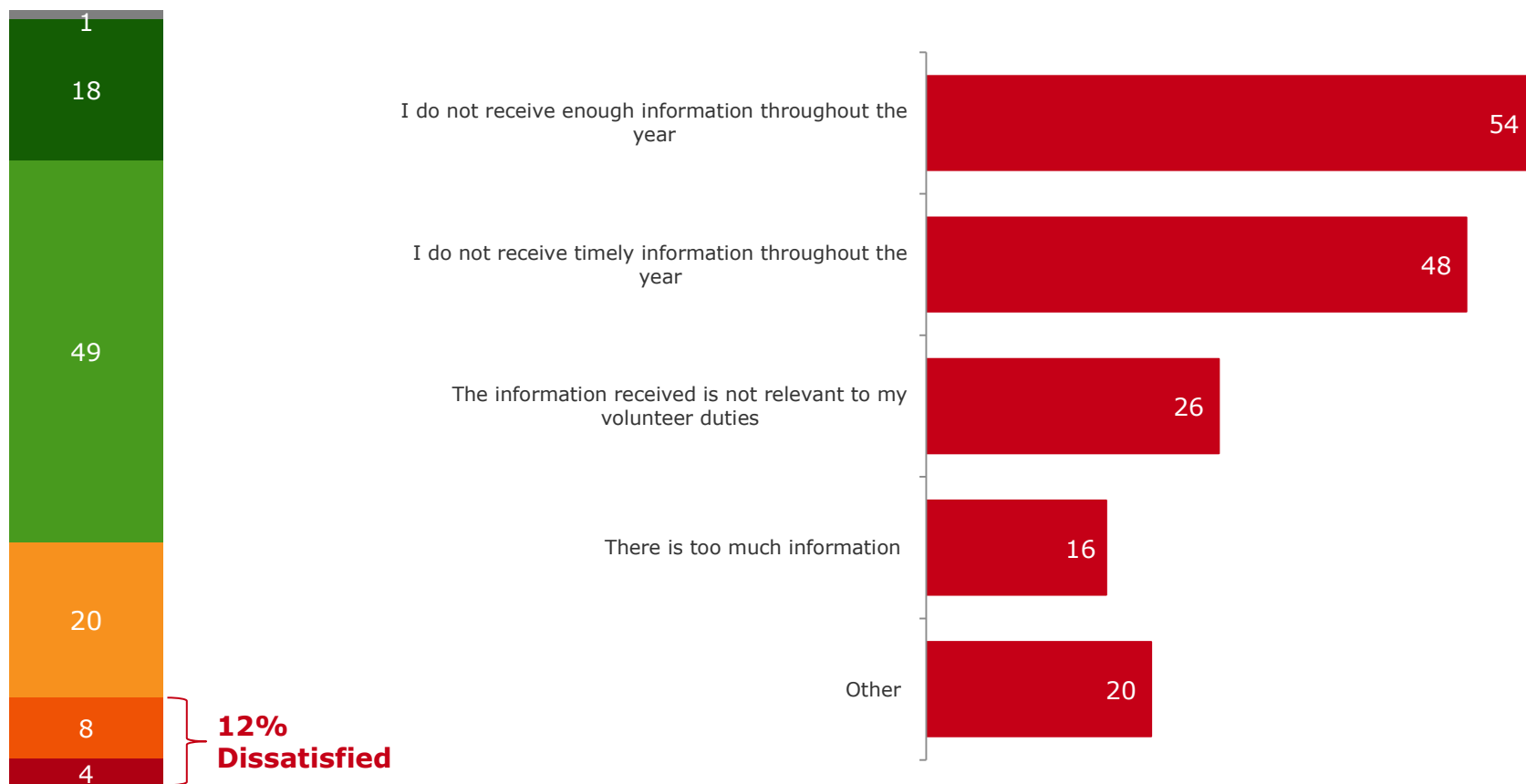BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=427)

2.6
Information and Communication

Satisfaction with general information received (%)

	Total Dissatisfied	Total Satisfied
	12%	**67%**

Bar segments: 4 | 8 | 20 | 49 | 18 | 1

Legend: ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neither ■ Satisfied ■ Very satisfied ■ Don't know

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Reasons for dissatisfaction with general information received (%)

1	
18	
49	
20	
8	**12% Dissatisfied**
4	

I do not receive enough information throughout the year — 54

I do not receive timely information throughout the year — 48

The information received is not relevant to my volunteer duties — 26

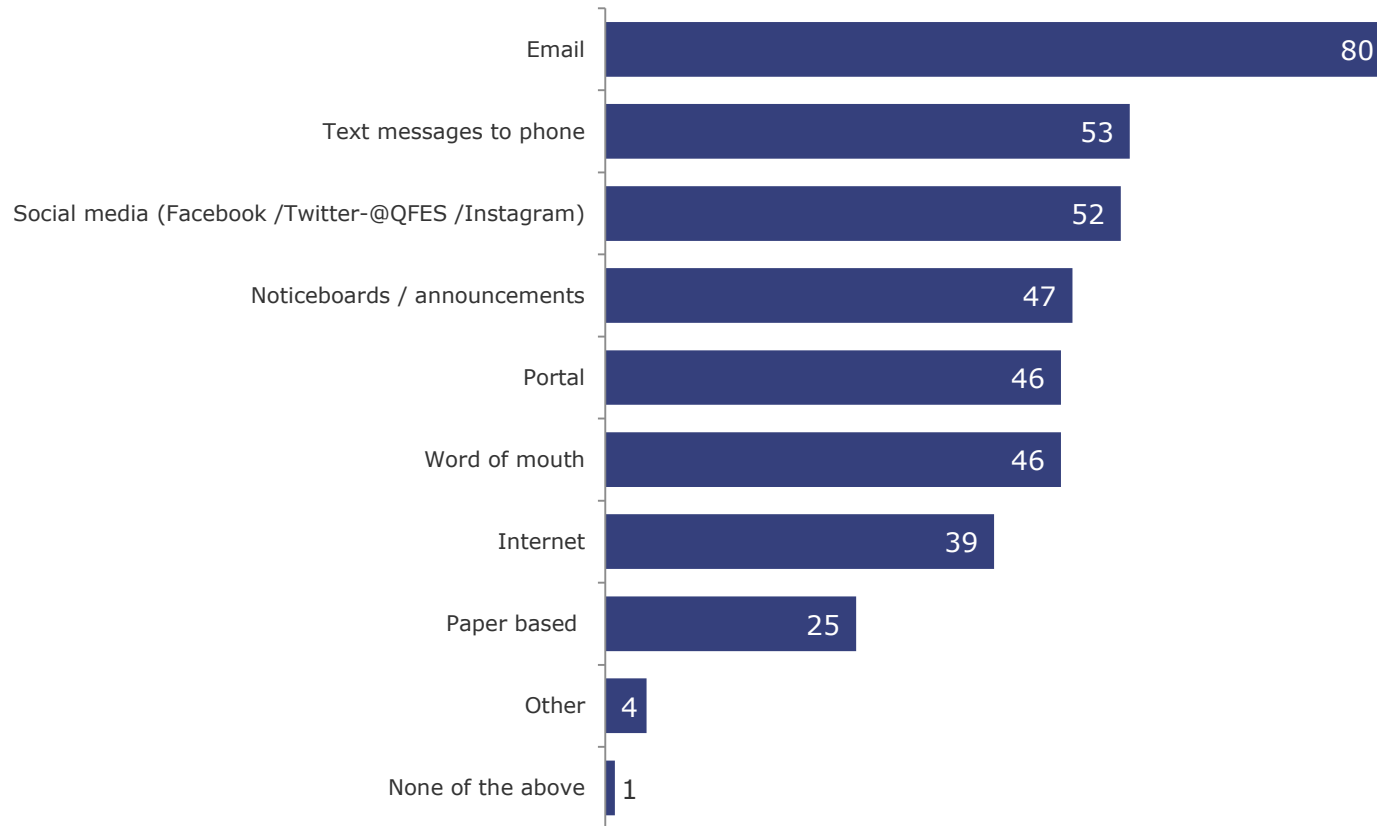**There is too much information** — 16

Other — 20

H1. How satisfied are you with the general information received from the State Emergency Service during the year? Note: This does not refer to in field communications or calls for service.
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
H2. What is the main reason for your dissatisfaction with general information received from the State Emergency Service during the year?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with general information received (n=50)

Current information access methods (%)

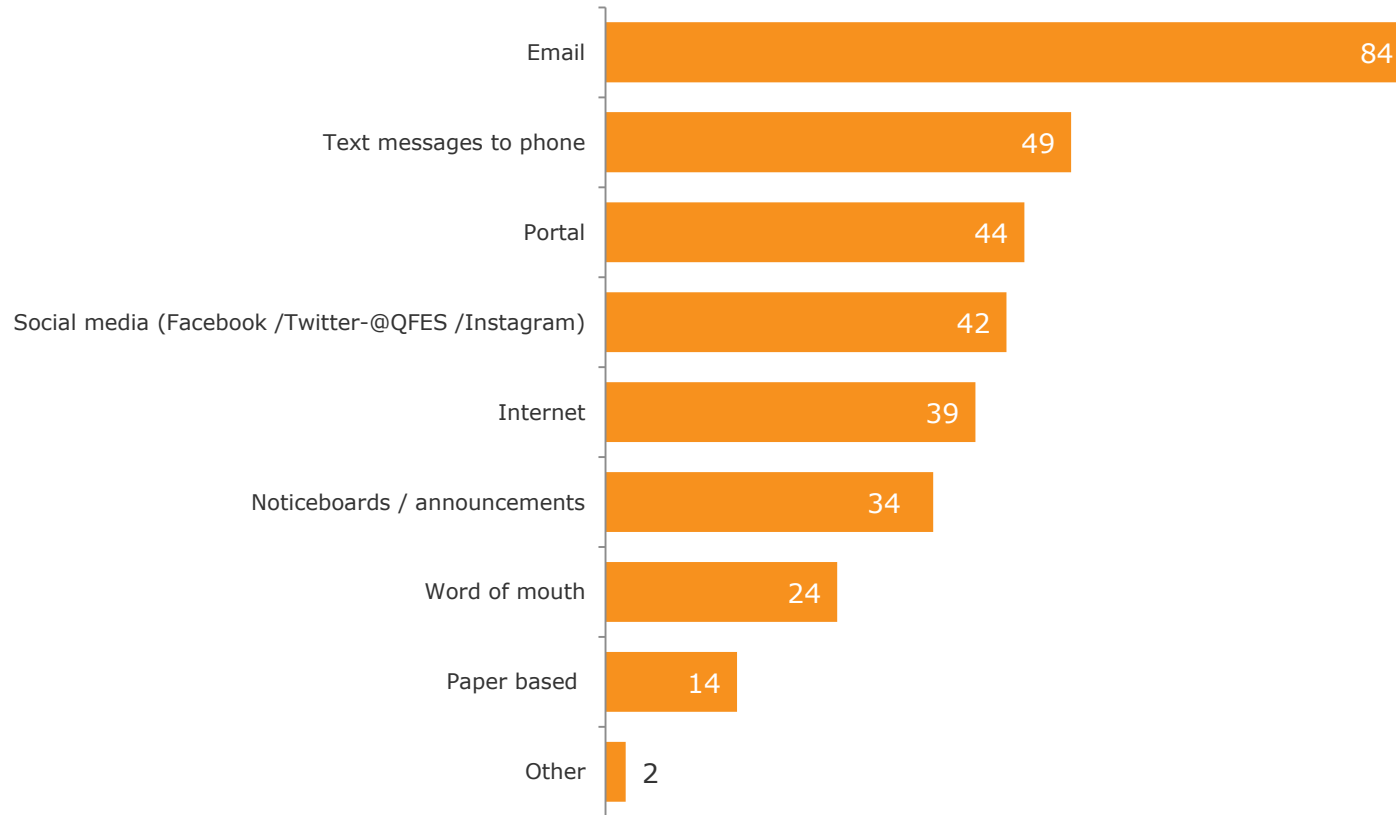| Method	%
Email	80
Text messages to phone	53
Social media (Facebook /Twitter-@QFES /Instagram)	52
Noticeboards / announcements	47
Portal	46
Word of mouth	46
Internet	39
Paper based	25
Other	4
None of the above	1

H3. What current methods do you use to access and keep up to date with information relating to the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

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Preferred information access method (%)

Method	%
Email	84
Text messages to phone	49
Portal	44
Social media (Facebook /Twitter-@QFES /Instagram)	42
Internet	39
Noticeboards / announcements	34
Word of mouth	24
Paper based	14
Other	2

H4. And what is your preferred methods to access and keep up to date with information relating to the State Emergency Service?
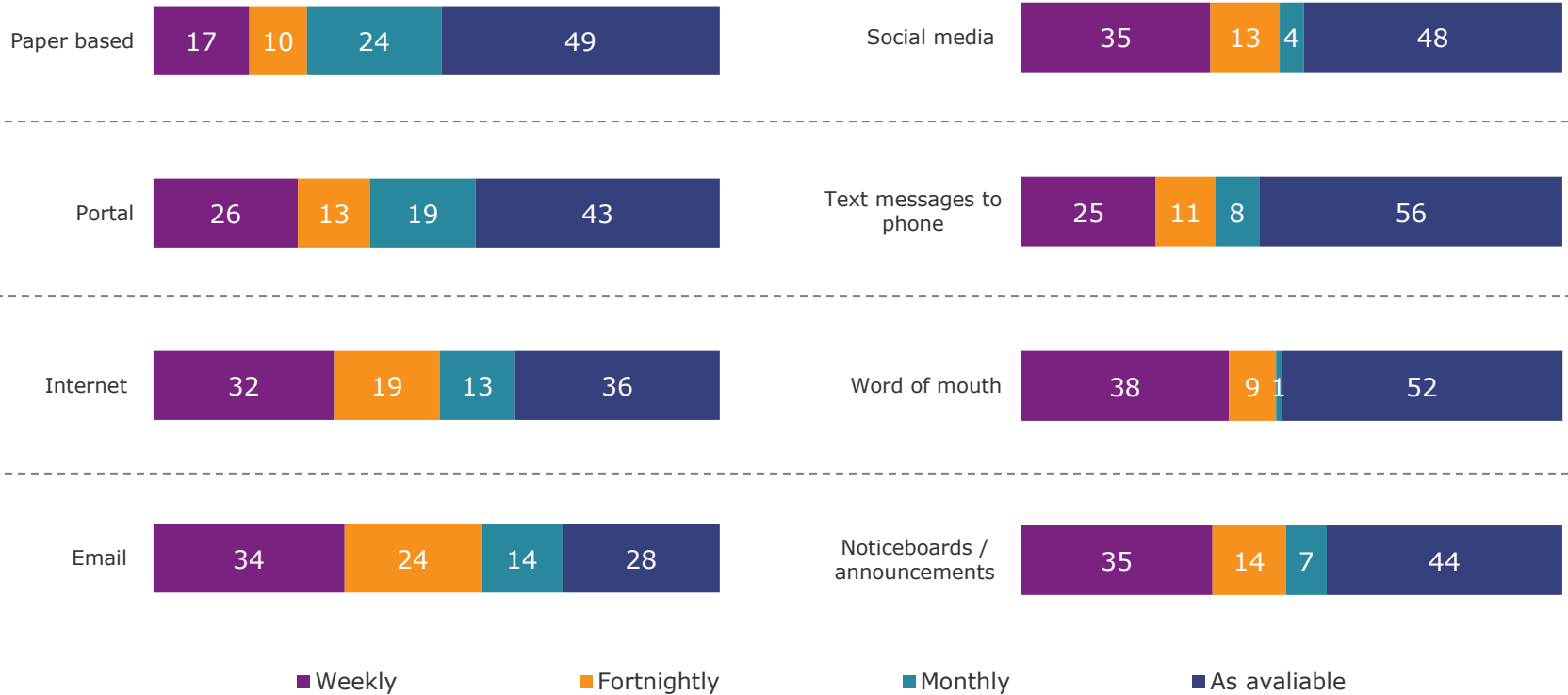BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

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Desired frequency of service updates via each method (%)

Method	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	As available
Paper based	17	10	24	49
Portal	26	13	19	43
Internet	32	19	13	36
Email	34	24	14	28
Social media	35	13	4	48
Text messages to phone	25	11	8	56
Word of mouth	38	9	1	52
Noticeboards / announcements	35	14	7	44

■ Weekly ■ Fortnightly ■ Monthly ■ As avaliable

H5. And how frequently would you like to receive updates / information via your preferred method of communication(s)?
BASE: Those who preferred each method (Paper based n=59; Portal n=188; Internet n=166; Email n=361; Social media n=180; Text messages to phone n=209; Word of mouth n=104; Noticeboards/announcements n=147)
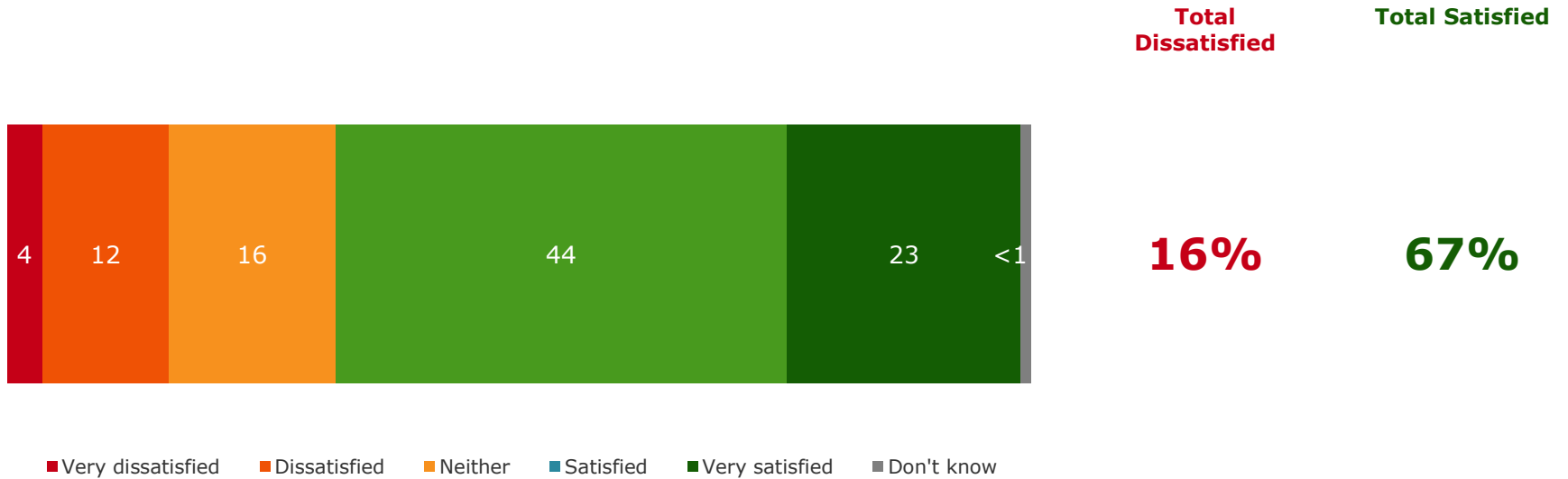
2.7
Recognition

Importance of recognition (%)

Category	Value
Being accepted as a valuable team member	44
Feedback about my contribution	14
Personal thank you	13
Certificate / gift of appreciation	3
Public award	3
Public acknowledgement by the organisation	3
Special gathering / celebration	1
None of these	2
Other	16

I1. Which of the following forms of recognition is most important to you?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

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2.8
Training and Development

Satisfaction with training over the past two years (%)

	Total Dissatisfied	**Total Satisfied**
	16%	**67%**

Bar chart values: 4 | 12 | 16 | 44 | 23 | <1

Legend: ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neither ■ Satisfied ■ Very satisfied ■ Don't know

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Reasons for dissatisfaction with training (%)

16% Dissatisfied

<1	
23	
44	
16	
12	
4	

Reason	%
There was not enough training	35
The trainer was not effective	29
The timing of the training conflicted with work and other commitments	19
The training was too long	12
The training was not necessary to undertake my volunteer role	7
The location of the training was not convenient	7
There was too much training	6
Other	46
Don't know	4

J1. How satisfied were you with the training provided for your volunteer work with the State Emergency Service over the past two years?
BASE: SES respondents- Brisbane (n=428)
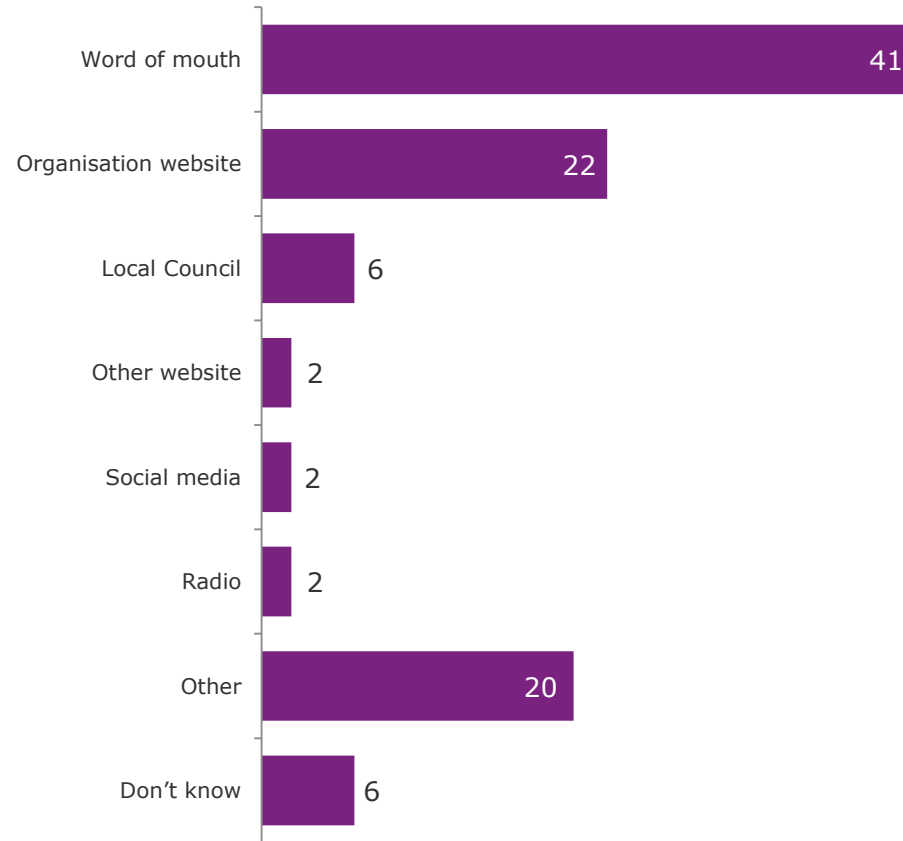J2. What are the main reason/s for you dissatisfaction with your training?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with training (n=68)
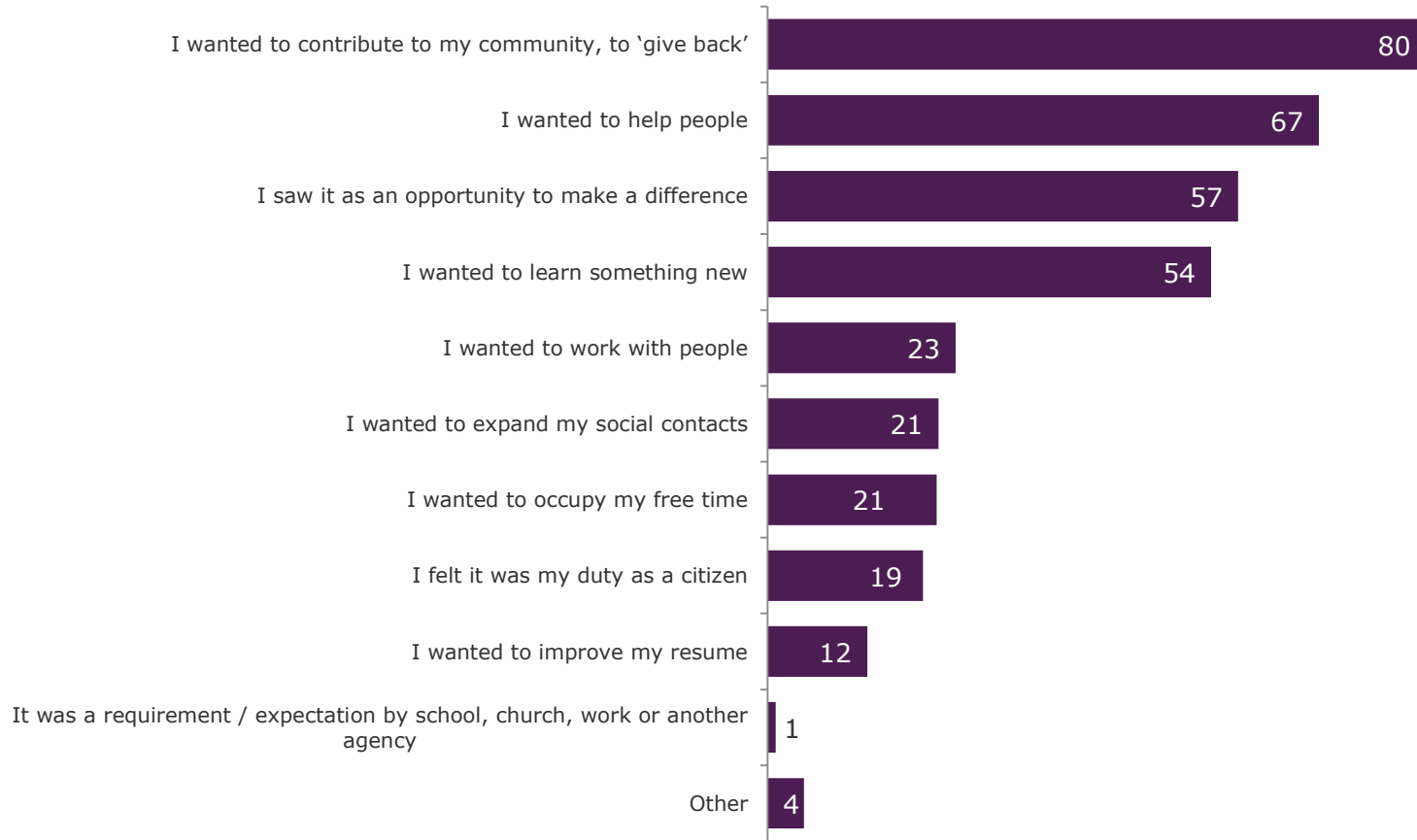
2.9

Recruitment and Intention to Continue Volunteering

First learnt about volunteering opportunities (%)

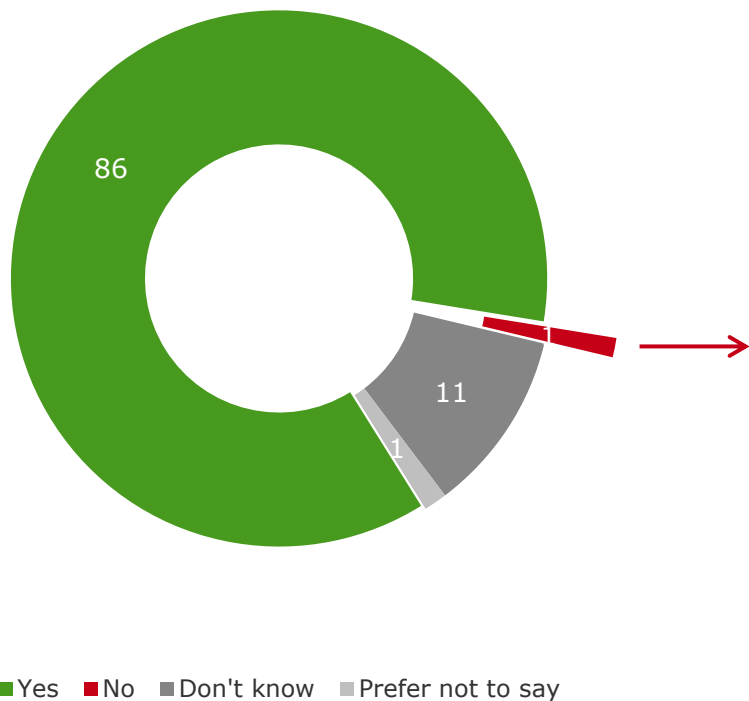| Source	%
Word of mouth	41
Organisation website	22
Local Council	6
Other website	2
Social media	2
Radio	2
Other	20
Don't know	6

C1. How did you first learn about volunteer opportunities with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

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Factors for motivation to volunteer (%)

Factor	%
I wanted to contribute to my community, to 'give back'	80
I wanted to help people	67
I saw it as an opportunity to make a difference	57
I wanted to learn something new	54
I wanted to work with people	23
I wanted to expand my social contacts	21
I wanted to occupy my free time	21
I felt it was my duty as a citizen	19
I wanted to improve my resume	12
It was a requirement / expectation by school, church, work or another agency	1
Other	4

C2. What factors motivated you to volunteer with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents -Brisbane (n=428)

Intention to continue volunteering (%)

Reasons for not intending to continue volunteering (%)

Intention to continue volunteering:
- 86
- 11
- 1

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Prefer not to say

Reasons for not intending to continue volunteering:

Reason	%
Lack of leadership / direction	80
Lack of communication	80
I don't like the culture	60
It is a waste of time	40
Lack of diversity of role	40
Changed jobs	20
Moved locations	20
Too much red tape	20
Lack of training	20
Not enough time / busy with other commitments	0
Life changes caused me to leave	0
Out of pocket expenses	0
Lack of equipment/uniform	0
Other	20

K1. Do you intend to continue volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
K2. What is the main reason/s why you do not intend to continue volunteering?
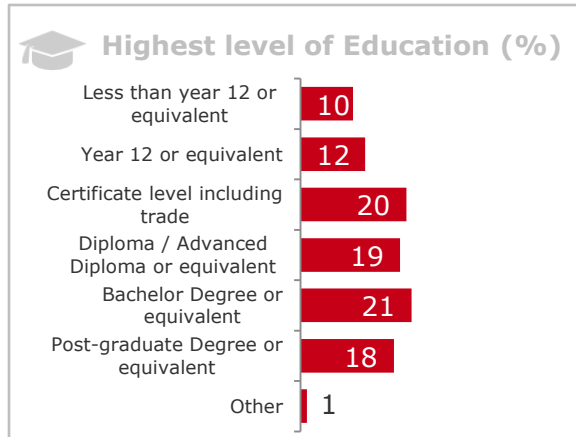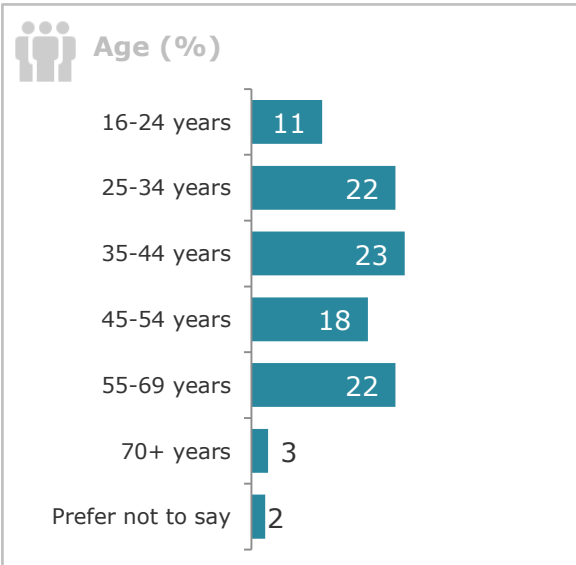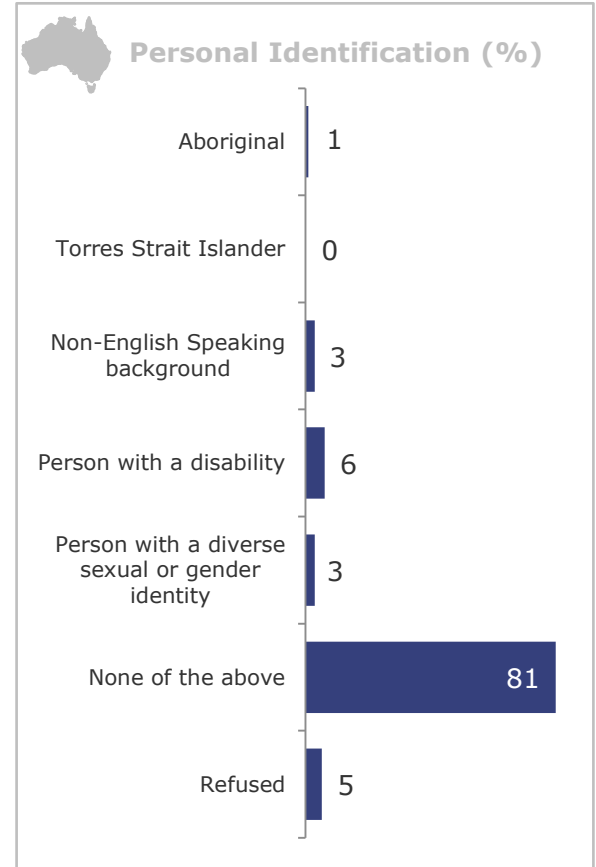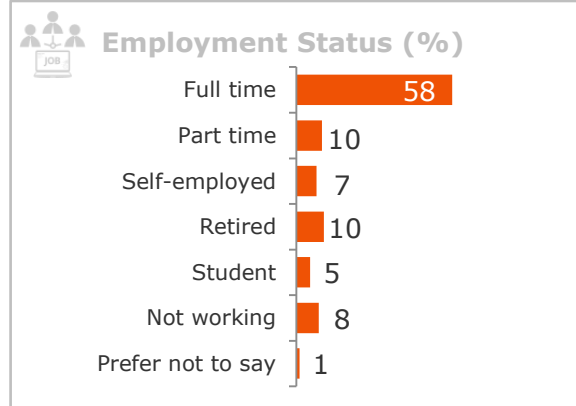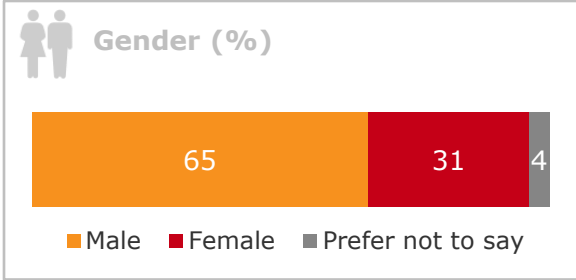BASE: Those who do not intend on continuing volunteering (n=5*)
*Caution: small sample size – results should be interpreted as indicative only

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3
Respondent profile

Respondent Profile (1)

Gender (%)

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
65	31	4

Age (%)

- 16-24 years: 11
- 25-34 years: 22
- 35-44 years: 23
- 45-54 years: 18
- 55-69 years: 22
- 70+ years: 3
- Prefer not to say: 2

Employment Status (%)

- Full time: 58
- Part time: 10
- Self-employed: 7
- Retired: 10
- Student: 5
- Not working: 8
- Prefer not to say: 1

Highest level of Education (%)

- Less than year 12 or equivalent: 10
- Year 12 or equivalent: 12
- Certificate level including trade: 20
- Diploma / Advanced Diploma or equivalent: 19
- Bachelor Degree or equivalent: 21
- Post-graduate Degree or equivalent: 18
- Other: 1

Personal Identification (%)

- Aboriginal: 1
- Torres Strait Islander: 0
- Non-English Speaking background: 3
- Person with a disability: 6
- Person with a diverse sexual or gender identity: 3
- None of the above: 81
- Refused: 5

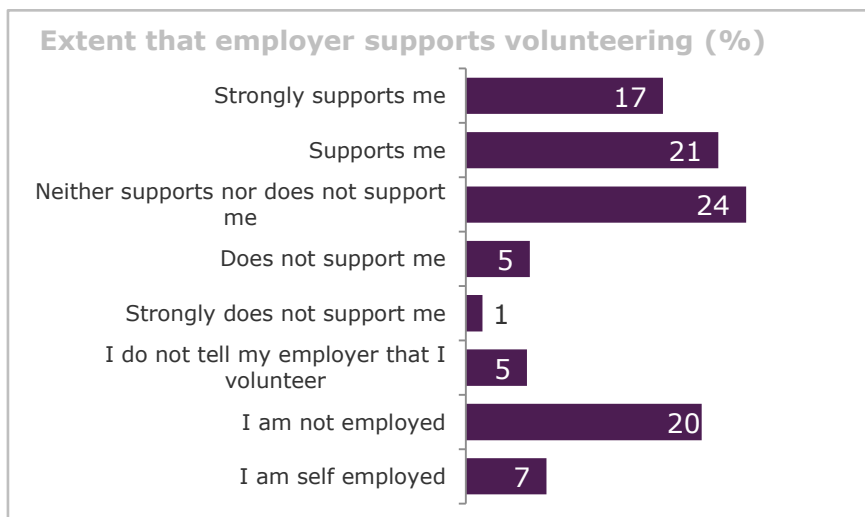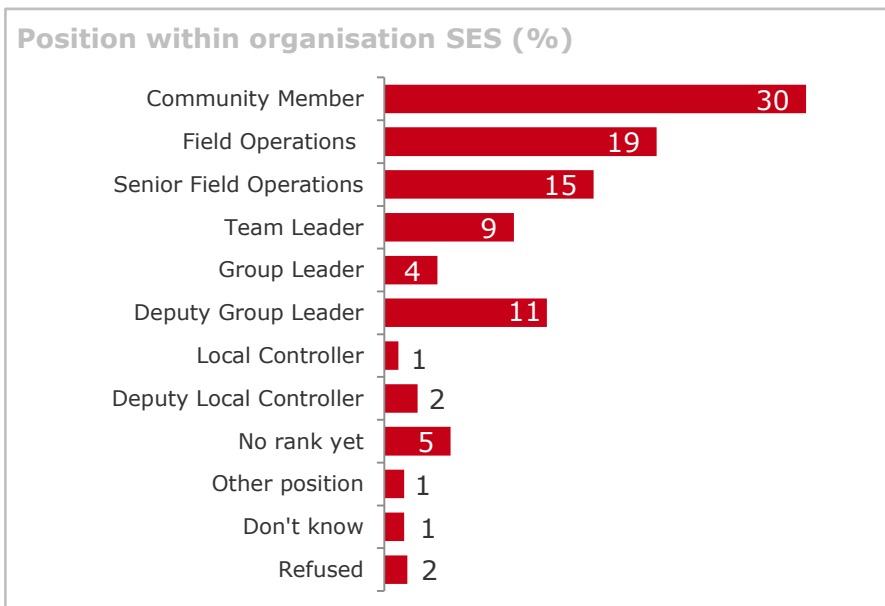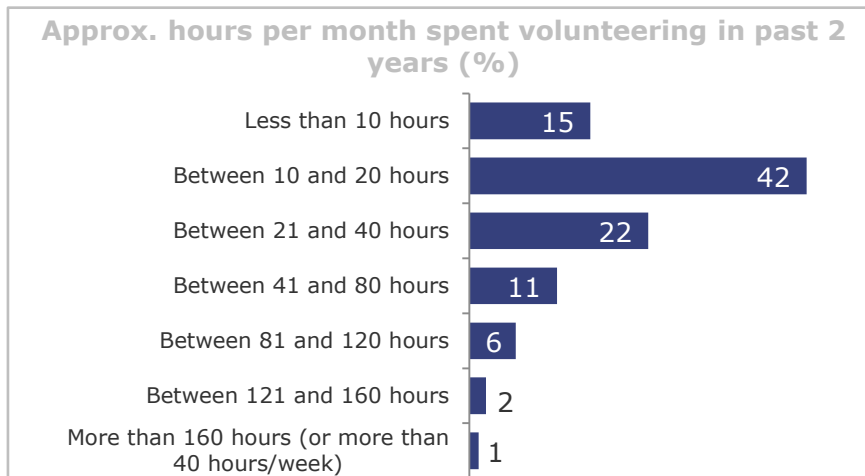Demo7. What is your gender? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
Demo5. What is your age? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
Demo1. What is your current employment status? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
Demo2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
Demo8. Do you identify as any of the following? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=427)

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Respondent Profile (2)

How long have you been volunteering with the SES (%)

Less than 6 months	6 - 12 months	1- 2 years	2 -5 years	5 - 10 years	10 - 15 years	15 - 20 years	20 + years
6	8	19	29	19	9	4	6

Position within organisation SES (%)

Community Member	30
Field Operations	19
Senior Field Operations	15
Team Leader	9
Group Leader	4
Deputy Group Leader	11
Local Controller	1
Deputy Local Controller	2
No rank yet	5
Other position	1
Don't know	1
Refused	2

Approx. hours per month spent volunteering in past 2 years (%)

Less than 10 hours	15
Between 10 and 20 hours	42
Between 21 and 40 hours	22
Between 41 and 80 hours	11
Between 81 and 120 hours	6
Between 121 and 160 hours	2
More than 160 hours (or more than 40 hours/week)	1

Extent that employer supports volunteering (%)

Strongly supports me	17
Supports me	21
Neither supports nor does not support me	24
Does not support me	5
Strongly does not support me	1
I do not tell my employer that I volunteer	5
I am not employed	20
I am self employed	7

Demo4. How long have you been volunteering with the SES? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
A3. And which position do you currently hold? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
A4. On average, across the last 2 years, approximately how many hours per months did you spend volunteering for the SES? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)
A5. To what extent does your employer support you volunteering? BASE: SES respondents - Brisbane (n=428)

Thank you

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