Communication Link

DRAFT

Restoring Lake Tuggeranong

Community consultation report

Version 1

December 2025

Ask.
Listen.
Understand.
Achieve.

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Communication Link acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which our head office resides. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our community in Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of all land on which our work and connections may reach, and pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.

Contents

Key insights snapshot 4

1. Executive Summary 5

2. Introduction 6

3. Consultation methodology 7

3.1 Consultation objectives 7

3.2 Overview of communication and engagement activities 7

3.3 Promotion of consultation 8

4. What we heard 9

5. How people are currently using Lake Tuggeranong 10

5.1 Across activities 10

6. Community concerns and impacts on community use of the lake 11

6.1 Concerns raised 11

6.2 Impacts on community use 12

6.3 Summary of impacts 13

7. Household practices and willingness to act 14

7.1 Participation context 14

7.2 Key insights 14

8. Support required to implement activities at home 16

8.1 Participation context 16

8.2 What rankings reveal 17

8.3 Additional feedback 17

9. Potential actions to activate the community 18

9.1 Everyday household actions 18

9.2 Ways to encourage others 18

9.3 Incentives and supports 18

9.4 Common themes and next steps 19

Appendices 20

Appendix A – Survey participant demographics 21

Key insights snapshot

Engagement reach

303	48	90	5	2
YourSay survey responses	Quick Comments responses	Participants at pop-up events	Participants at information sessions	Written submission contributions

Top community priorities

- **Clear, accessible education** and awareness campaigns
- **Community programs** and events to build social ownership
- **Financial incentives and practical supports** for households
- **Improved public-space maintenance** (street sweeping, mowing, GPT servicing)
- **Investment in in-lake and stormwater system solutions** to complement household actions

Key barriers

- **Cost of installing new infrastructure**
- **Limited storage space for resources**
- **Lack of clear, simple guidance** on what to do and when
- **Perception that household actions alone will not solve the problem.**

Motivators for action

- **Financial incentives** (rebates for rainwater tanks, free/low-cost green bins)
- **Visible government leadership** and progress
- **Easy-to-follow instructions** and seasonal reminders
- Community events and social activities that make **participation enjoyable.**

Activation opportunities

- **Pair household guidance with visible government actions**
- **Provide practical resources and financial incentives**
- **Deliver education through multiple channels (schools, signage, letterbox drops)**
- **Activate community through events and programs**
- **Continue engagement with businesses and environmental stakeholders in early 2026.**

1. Executive Summary

Lake Tuggeranong has long faced water quality challenges, with frequent algal blooms and declining water quality affecting community use and environmental health. To address these issues, the ACT Government is developing a 10-year Healthy Waterways Plan focused on reducing nutrient pollution at its source and restoring the lake as a safe, vibrant community asset.

From 30 October to 11 December 2025, the government engaged the Tuggeranong and broader community through multiple consultation activities to inform this plan. The key focus of the engagement was to understand what would encourage or discourage people from taking action at the source (i.e. their homes) to reduce nutrient loads entering the lake. This report outlines what the community told us during this consultation process.

Engagement yielded 448 community contributions including an in-depth YourSay survey (303 responses) and Quick Comment feature (48 responses), face-to-face conversations via pop-up events (90 participants), information sessions (5 participants) and written submissions (two). Together, these activities provided detailed feedback to help shape the 10-year plan, highlighting community priorities, barriers, and ideas for action.

Residents expressed a clear desire to see Lake Tuggeranong restored as a safe, attractive, and usable community asset. Feedback consistently emphasised the importance of government leadership, practical household supports, and visible progress to build trust and participation. While willingness to act at home was evident, respondents suggested practical ways to turn intention into action focusing on combining simple household habits with visible, social opportunities for participation.

Community feedback across all engagement activities consistently raised five priorities:

- Clear, accessible education and awareness campaigns
- Community programs and events to build social ownership
- Financial incentives and practical supports for households
- Improved public-space maintenance (street sweeping, mowing, GPT servicing)
- Investment in in-lake and stormwater system solutions to complement household actions.

While these themes were common across channels, some nuances emerged. Voting at pop-up events highlighted financial incentives for rainwater tanks as the strongest motivator to behaviour change; information sessions raised concerns about signage and water testing; and Quick Comments emphasised simple, visible instructions for household actions.

Although this consultation focused on community-led actions to reduce pollution at its source, participants also made it clear that their willingness to act depends on seeing government leadership in parallel. Residents want assurance that systemic improvements, such as infrastructure upgrades and public-space maintenance, are happening alongside household efforts. Some participants noted that they are already using the green waste bins provided by the ACT Government but emphasised that further visible action and support is important.

2. Introduction

Lake Tuggeranong has been the focus of significant work over many years to improve water quality and reduce the impact of blue-green algal blooms. Previous efforts have largely concentrated on treating the symptoms, such as managing blooms within the lake, rather than addressing the causes at their source. This consultation represents a shift in approach, focusing on preventative action and community involvement to stop pollution before it enters the stormwater system.

The ACT Government's Healthy Waterways Program has already delivered:

- Wetlands and stormwater upgrades to reduce nutrient loads
- Research and monitoring to understand catchment processes
- Community education initiatives to promote waterway-friendly practices.

Research and modelling on a range of further management options found that the best way to improve Lake Tuggeranong's water quality is to stop pollution before it enters the lake. Most of the phosphorus that causes algal blooms comes from everyday urban sources, like leaves, grass clippings, fertilisers, soil, and sewage, rather than single, concentrated points. Tackling these pollutants at their origin is essential to reducing nutrient loads and preventing blue-green algal blooms.

Building on this foundation, the current consultation sought to:

- Inform residents about proposed strategies for reducing nutrient pollution at its source
- Gather insights on community priorities, readiness and ability to take action at home
- Ensure that local voices shape the development of the 10-year Lake Tuggeranong Healthy Waterways Plan.

This report summarises the consultation undertaken with community members between Thursday, 30 October 2025 and Thursday, 11 December 2025. An addendum will detail engagement with broader stakeholder networks, including businesses, community groups, and environmental organisations in early 2026.

3. Consultation methodology

3.1 Consultation objectives

Consultation was designed to give local residents, as well as the broader ACT community, clear opportunities to learn about proposed strategies for improving Lake Tuggeranong's water quality and share their views on the options presented. Each activity aimed to create space for dialogue and gather insights that would inform the development of the 10-year plan. Figure 1 summarises these objectives.



Figure 1. Consultation objectives.

3.2 Overview of communication and engagement activities

The engagement program included:

- YourSay online platform – a central hub for project information, offering:
  - A detailed survey
  - Quick Comment feature
  - Written submission capability
- Information sessions, held in person and online to:
  - Enable direct engagement with project representatives
  - Provide opportunities for questions and feedback in a conversational setting
- Pop-up stalls, located in high-traffic areas across Tuggeranong to:
  - Reach people in their everyday environments
  - Capture spontaneous feedback and raise awareness
  - Ensure diverse perspectives were heard.

Together, these activities provided:

- Quantitative data – survey responses, dot voting at pop-ups, attendance figures
- Qualitative insights – themes from conversations and written submissions and long-form survey questions.

3.3 Promotion of consultation

Consultation activities were supported by promotional efforts including a dedicated YourSay project page circulated to registered distribution list members via email, along with posters, social media posts (see figure 2) and temporary signage around the lake.

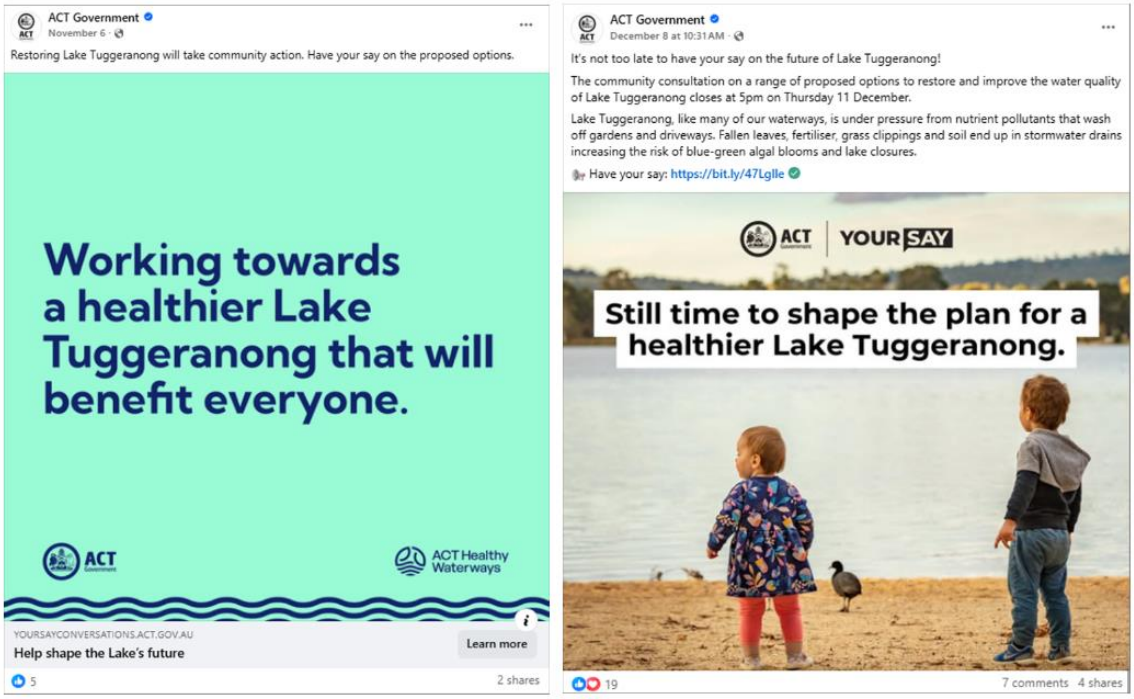


Figure 2. Social media content promoting the consultation program.

To further amplify engagement, a dedicated promotional installation was placed at Tuggeranong Library (see figure 3), chosen for its close proximity to Lake Tuggeranong and high foot traffic from students and community members. The display featured project branding and encouraged people to use the QR code linking to the YourSay platform to provide feedback.

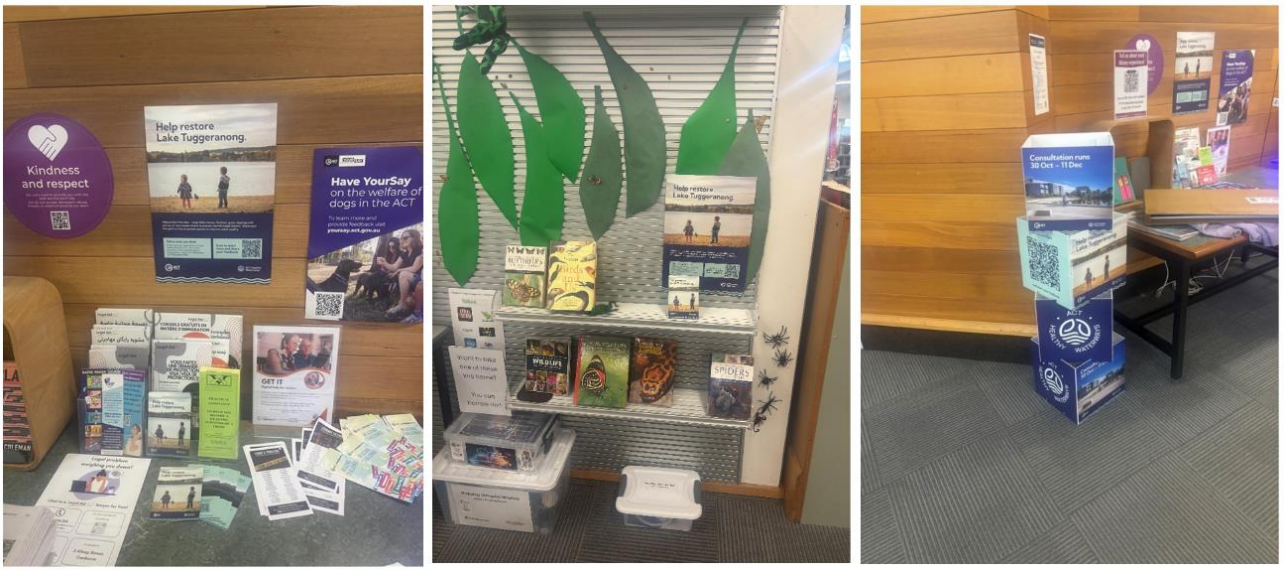


Figure 3. Promotion of consultation at Tuggeranong Library.

4. What we heard

Feedback gathered during this consultation reveals:

1. How people are currently using Lake Tuggeranong
2. Community concerns and impacts on community use of the lake
3. Household practices and willingness to act
4. Support required to implement activities at home
5. Additional feedback on actions to address the health of Lake Tuggeranong.

What we heard for each of these areas is explored in more detail in sections 5-8 of this report.

The feedback received reflects strong community interest in improving lake health and a willingness to contribute to solutions that prevent pollution at its source. Community members were consistent on two fronts: they use and want to be able to use the lake and foreshore regularly for recreation, and its current health affects how and when they participate in activities in and around the Lake.

Across all engagement activities, participants described what they already do at home to manage green waste, the barriers they encounter to implementing new green waste management strategies at home and what would make it easier to do more.

Education, financial incentives, and community programs were common themes across all feedback received, reinforcing the importance of collective responsibility, with households and individuals keen to understand what they can do at home to reduce nutrient runoff.

5. How people are currently using Lake Tuggeranong

Participants shared how they currently use the Lake, both around the shorelines and on the water through both direct questions and responses to other engagement questions and general discussion. Use is strongest on weekends, and club and school activities (e.g. kayaking, Sea Scouts) are active when conditions allow.

5.1 Across activities

Insights across engagement activities reveal the following activities are popular amongst the local community, but are often paused when algae blooms occur:

- Walking (including with pets)
- Running (including Parkrun)
- On-water activities (incl. boating, paddling, sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, swimming)
- Social/recreational activities (incl. picnics, BBQs, time at beach area)
- Sea Scouts (personal participation and children participation)
- Cycling
- Fishing.

5.1.1 Participation context

Figure 4 summarises different activities that were mentioned when participants we asked about current use of Lake Tuggeranong and surrounding areas.

Engagement yielded 448 contributions overall. For this question, there were 91 mentions of activities across channels. The percentages shown reflect the share of these 91 mentions, not the share of all participants, because not everyone commented on this topic.

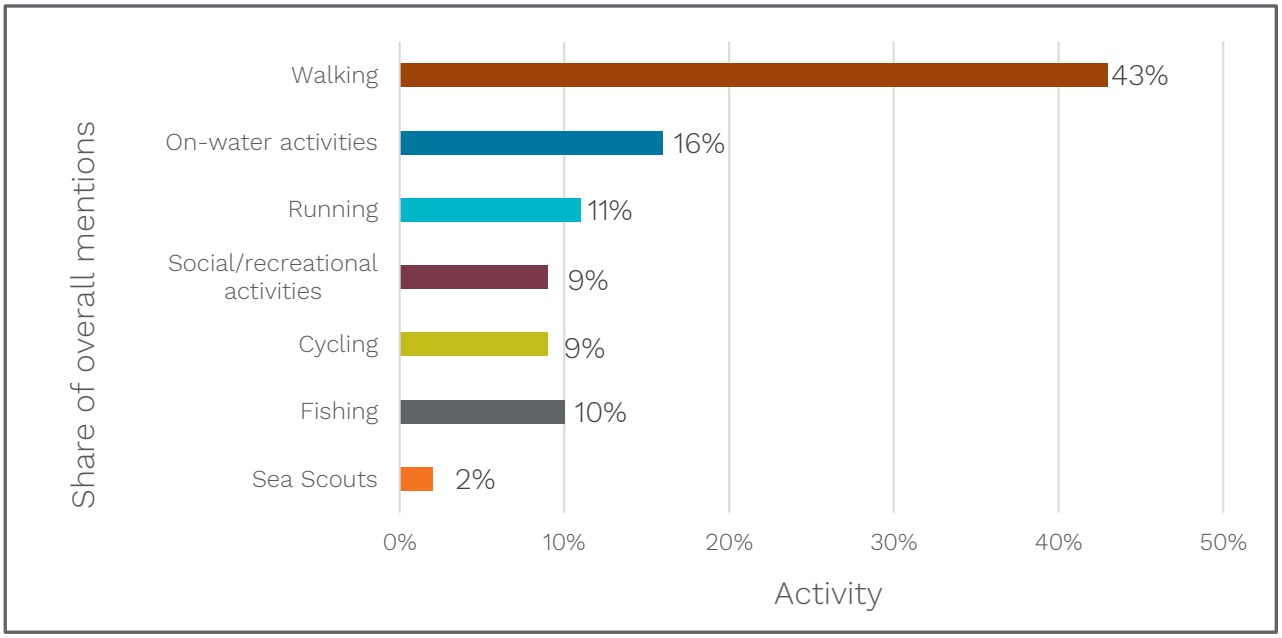


Figure 4. Current activities enjoyed by the community in and around Lake Tuggeranong.

6. Community concerns and impacts on community use of the lake

Community feedback highlighted both concerns about Lake Tuggeranong's health and the ways these concerns affect how people use the lake and surrounding areas. This section summarises what participants told us about their concerns and the resulting impacts on community activities.

6.1 Concerns raised

Insights across engagement activities reveal common concerns impacting people's use of Lake Tuggeranong and the surrounding areas including:

- Deterred by smell/odour, stopping participation in activities in or around the Lake
- Unhappy about pollution and rubbish, both human and home-based waste and green waste from maintenance of public areas making the lake and surrounding area unsafe for people and their pets.
- Frustration that Lake Tuggeranong is just one example of poor water quality across the ACT
- Concerns about the impact poor lake health has on public amenity with closures often stopping the community using the lake or accessing nearby locations
- Concerns about the impact algae and other bacteria may have on human and pet health

Figure 5 summarises how often different concerns were raised in response to the questions about Lake Tuggeranong's health and amenity.

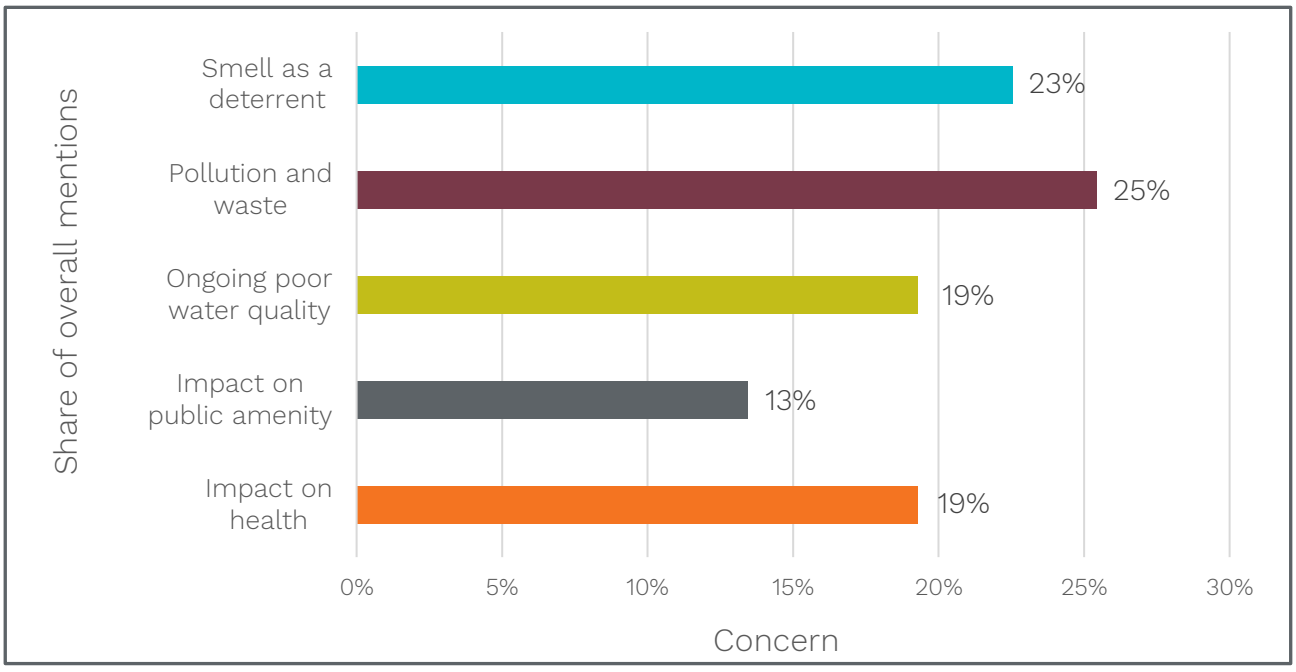


Figure 5. Community concerns related to the health of Lake Tuggeranong as shared via each engagement activity.

6.1.1 Participation context

Engagement yielded 448 contributions overall. For this question, there were 275 mentions of concerns across channels. The percentages shown reflect the share of these 275 mentions, not the share of all participants, because not everyone commented on this topic.

6.1.2 Key insights

- Pollution and waste accounts for the largest share of mentions, followed by smell as a deterrent, and the paired concerns of impact on health and ongoing poor water quality.
- Impact on public amenity is frequently raised, but less prominent relative to the other concerns.

Additional commentary provided when discussing the use of the lake includes:

- "We walk around it regularly... when the algae is in full bloom, the smell is very unpleasant."
- "Tuggeranong Parkrun is one of the loveliest parkrun courses... I love walking and running around the lake. I do not swim in the lake."

6.2 Impacts on community use

Feedback shows that poor water quality and general lake health significantly reduce participation in both land-based and water-based activities. Closures and health warnings limit community use, and concerns translate into changes in behaviour and reduced enjoyment of the lake.

These conditions translate into reduced participation in specific activities around Lake Tuggeranong. Figure 6 summarises which activities respondents most often said were noticeably impacted by lake health, presenting each activity's share of mentions recorded for this question across channels where they were asked (YourSay survey + information sessions).

Information sessions also highlighted that poor lake health often disrupts club and school activities, with community members sharing that on-water training is frequently impacted.

6.2.1 Participation context

For this specific question, there were 24 total mentions of impacted activities. Not every participant commented on this topic, so percentages reflect the distribution of mentions, not the distribution of all participants.

Bars show each activity's share of overall mentions. Higher percentages indicate activities that were more frequently cited as being affected.

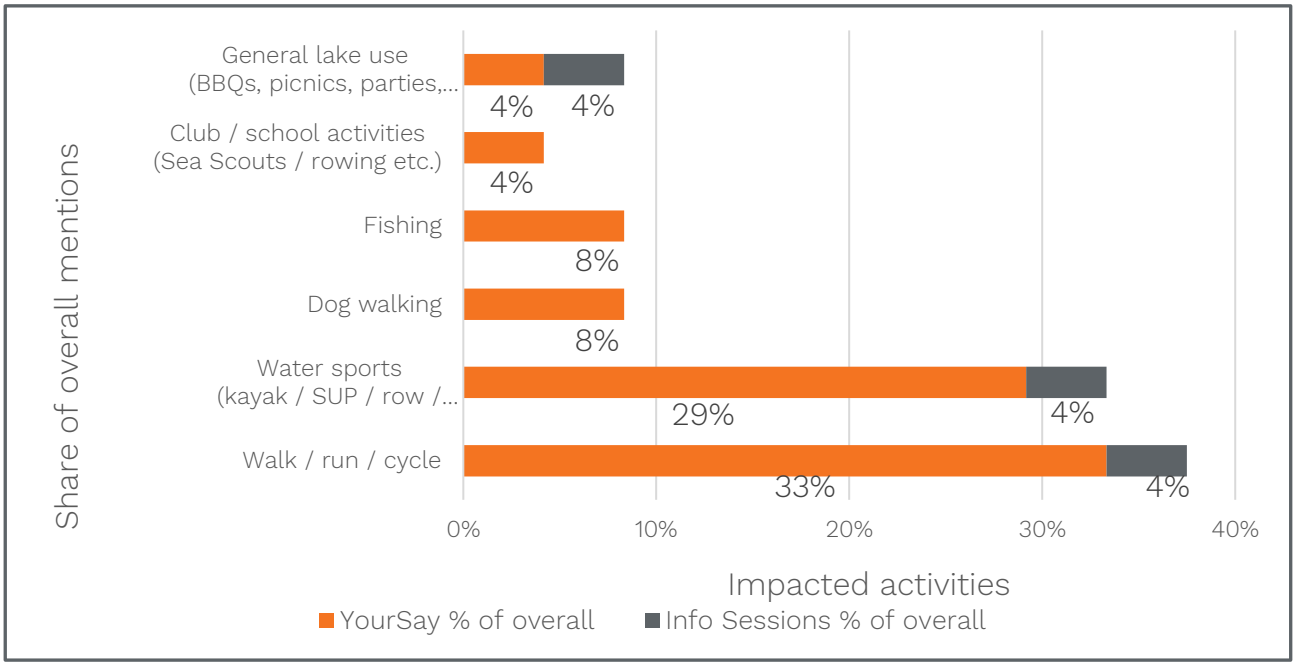


Figure 6. Activities raised by engagement participants as impacted by lake health.

6.3 Summary of impacts

- Health concerns for humans and pets lead to cancellations of sporting and recreational activities, particularly those involving direct contact with the lake.
- Loss of public amenity due to lake closures impacts social and recreational gatherings, reducing the lake's role as a community space.
- Visible pollution and waste create an unpleasant environment, discouraging visits and diminishing the lake's appeal.
- Strong odours from algal blooms and pollution deter walking and other outdoor activities, making the foreshore less attractive for recreation.

7. Household practices and willingness to act

Feedback revealed what residents are doing at home to manage green waste and reduce nutrient runoff, and how willing they are to adopt additional actions proposed through the consultation.

Many participants identified they already use green waste bins, compost, leaf bags/cages, and some avoid or minimise fertiliser use. A smaller cohort mentioned worm farms or rainwater tanks; others said they are already doing everything listed. Feedback from individuals who would potentially implement the proposed options, reveals that willingness to implement changes at home is strongest where cost and effort are manageable. Feedback across all activities suggests that managing leaf litter is the action most likely to be implemented willingly by the community.

Figure 7 summarises how willing respondents were to undertake proposed household actions to reduce nutrient pollution. It presents each action's % share of all mentions recorded for this question across channels.

7.1 Participation context

For this consultation topic, there were a total of 111 nominations for actions respondents were willing to undertake at home. Not every participant commented on this topic, so percentages reflect the distribution of mentions, not the distribution of all participants.

Figure 7 shows each action's proportion of these mentions. Higher percentages indicate actions more frequently cited as something respondents are willing to do.

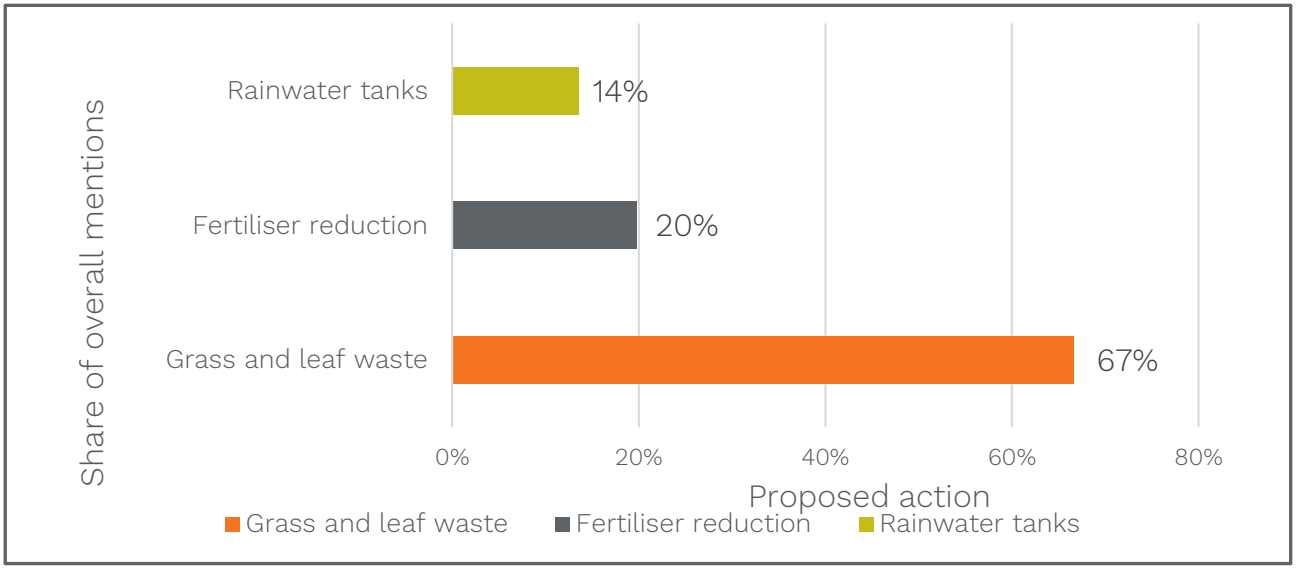


Figure 7. Percentage of respondents willing to implement proposed actions at home.

7.2 Key insights

- Grass and leaf waste management accounts for roughly two-thirds of mentions, indicating it is the most cited action respondents are willing to undertake.
- Fertiliser reduction and rainwater tanks also appear in responses, with smaller shares of mentions.

Participants shared practical examples of what works and what could help:

- “We use the green bin for lawn clippings... would definitely do with a second green bin.”
- “I compost and don’t use fertiliser; alternatives would help others to change.”

Alongside these established behaviours, willingness to implement new actions was strongest where cost and effort were manageable.

Responses reinforced these points through comments including:

- “Rainwater tanks are expensive—provide subsidies.”
- “Make it easy—show exactly what to do and when.”

Pop-up activities generated ideas for voluntary household commitments, such as setting autumn leaf-fall reminders and helping neighbours who are less able to manage physical tasks.

8. Support required to implement activities at home

Participants consistently noted their willingness to act depends on clear guidance, practical resources, and financial incentives. Willingness alone is not enough. Support must make actions like managing leaf litter, reducing fertiliser use, or installing rainwater tanks easy, affordable, and well explained.

8.1 Participation context

Figure 8 shows how participants ranked different types of support, from most useful (Rank 1) to least (Rank 6). Percentages reflect relative usefulness within each support type (e.g., 57% of mentions for “Clear information” were Rank 1), not absolute preference. Bars represent each support type, segmented by rank. Larger Rank 1 segments indicate stronger perceived usefulness.

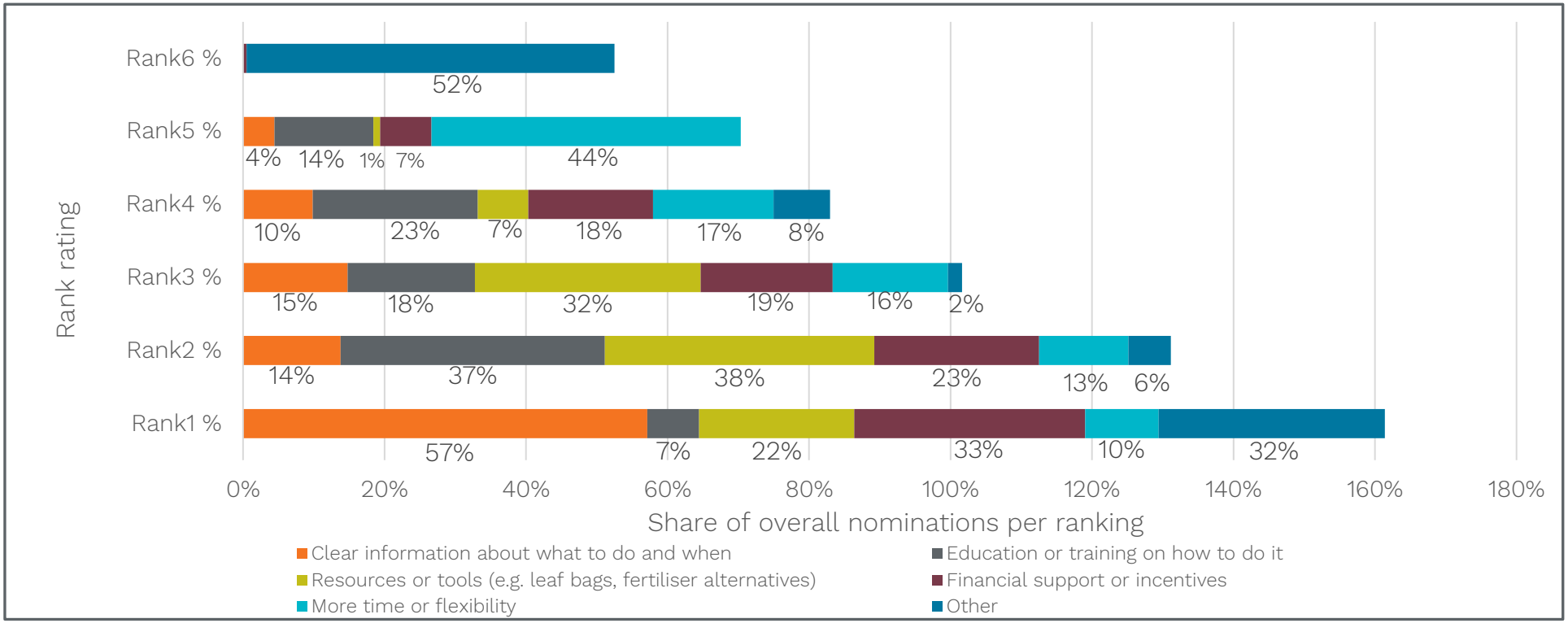


Figure 8. How suggested supports were rated by consultation participants.

8.2 What rankings reveal

- Clear information was most frequently ranked #1 (57%), highlighting the importance of clarity and timing.
- Resources or tools had the highest share of Rank 2 and Rank 3, suggesting practical aids are valued.
- Financial support was often ranked #1 or #2, indicating cost is a barrier for some.
- More time or flexibility skewed heavily toward Rank 5, suggesting it is less critical compared to other supports.
- “Other” responses were mostly Rank 6, indicating low relevance for most participants.

8.3 Additional feedback

Feedback across all engagement activities noted that Government-led actions and ensuring makes these actions are visible would further encourage individuals to act at home. Insights show that there is a strong appetite for a mix of operations and community activation with commentary noting that people want to see action, join in, and get simple updates that show progress.

Pop-ups uniquely generated creative community activation ideas such as carp competitions, clean-up days, and QR code signage for real-time updates, while written submissions and information sessions stood out for proposing system-level fixes like smoke-testing and detailed outreach strategies beyond social media, including pamphlets distributed through schools and retailers.

Suggested actions include:

- An increase in street sweeping cadence
- Better mowing practices across public spaces to eliminate grass cuttings
- Implementation of grates/drain socks, aeration/fountains,
- Re-naturalising stormwater.

Ideas to further build social ownership of actions to address lake health include:

- Carp-out competitions
- Citizen science activities
- School programs
- Frequently arranged community clean-ups
- More bins, with supporting infrastructure like lights, to support everyday use.

In nominating these additional actions, consultation participants shared:

- Clean out the trolleys—visible action signals that the lake is cared for.
- Use QR codes and clear signs—tell us what’s happening and what we can do.

9. Potential actions to activate the community

Community feedback suggested practical ways to turn intention into action. Many suggestions focused on combining simple household habits with visible, social opportunities for participation. These insights outline a potential pathway for activation for consideration, built on clarity, convenience, and connection.

These are suggestions captured through consultation, not formal recommendations.

9.1 Everyday household actions

Residents indicated willingness to consider easy, repeatable actions that align with proposed measures, including:

- Putting leaves and grass clippings in green bins
- Sweeping gutters
- Composting lawn clippings
- Picking up dog waste
- Reducing fertiliser use

Additional commitments captured in participant feedback included setting seasonal reminders, building leaf cages, and helping neighbours manage leaf fall. A smaller group suggested nature-based solutions such as planting filtration plants or supporting wetland design.

9.2 Ways to encourage others

Participants suggested the following actions that could help enable community action:

- Practical guidance in schools
- Letterbox drops and lakeside signage
- Simple, visible instructions
- Regular updates on lake condition
- Social activities that make participation enjoyable

9.3 Incentives and supports

Respondents shared ideas for financial and practical supports that could make action easier, including:

- Rebates for rainwater tanks
- Provision of second green bins at low or no cost
- Reduced tip fees in peak seasons
- Tailored assistance for older residents and those in apartments or townhouses

9.4 Common themes and next steps

Insights point to four priorities:

- awareness and education
- public-space leaf management
- community programs
- strong support for household action.

These themes indicate that participants see value in a combined approach to encourage action—making participation easy and social, providing clear guidance and frequent updates, ensuring timely public-space maintenance, and investing in visible technical fixes alongside community efforts.

Further consultation with businesses and environmental stakeholders will occur in early 2026 to explore partnerships, technical input, and shared responsibility. Outcomes will be documented as an addendum to ensure the final plan reflects both community and industry perspectives.

Appendices

Appendix A – Survey participant demographics

The following figures break down the demographic characteristics of those who responded to the YourSay survey for this project.

Age of respondents

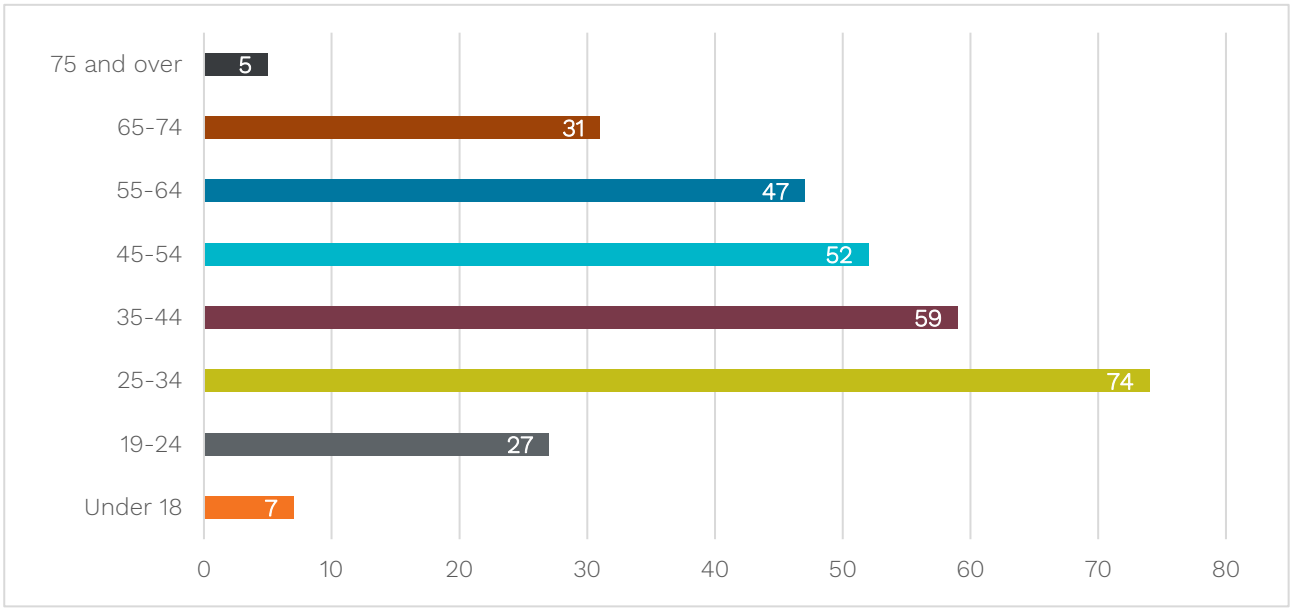


Figure 9. Most respondents were between the ages of 25-64 years.

How each respondent identifies

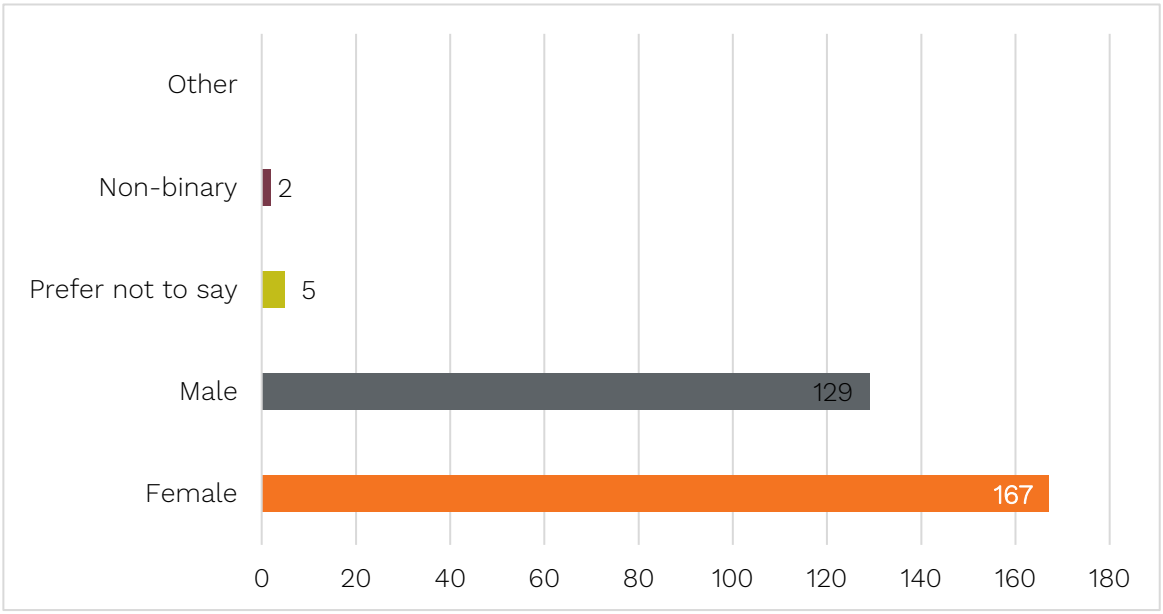


Figure 10. Males and females were represented relatively evenly.

Location of respondents

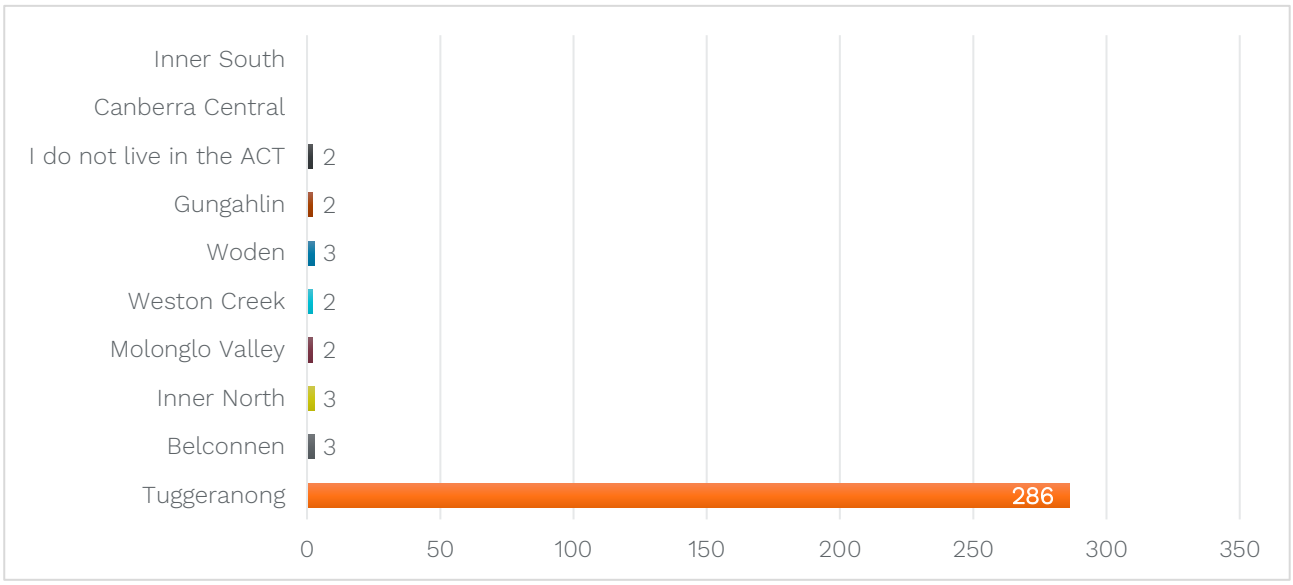


Figure 11. 147 survey respondents were from the Tuggeranong area.

Makeup of respondent's household

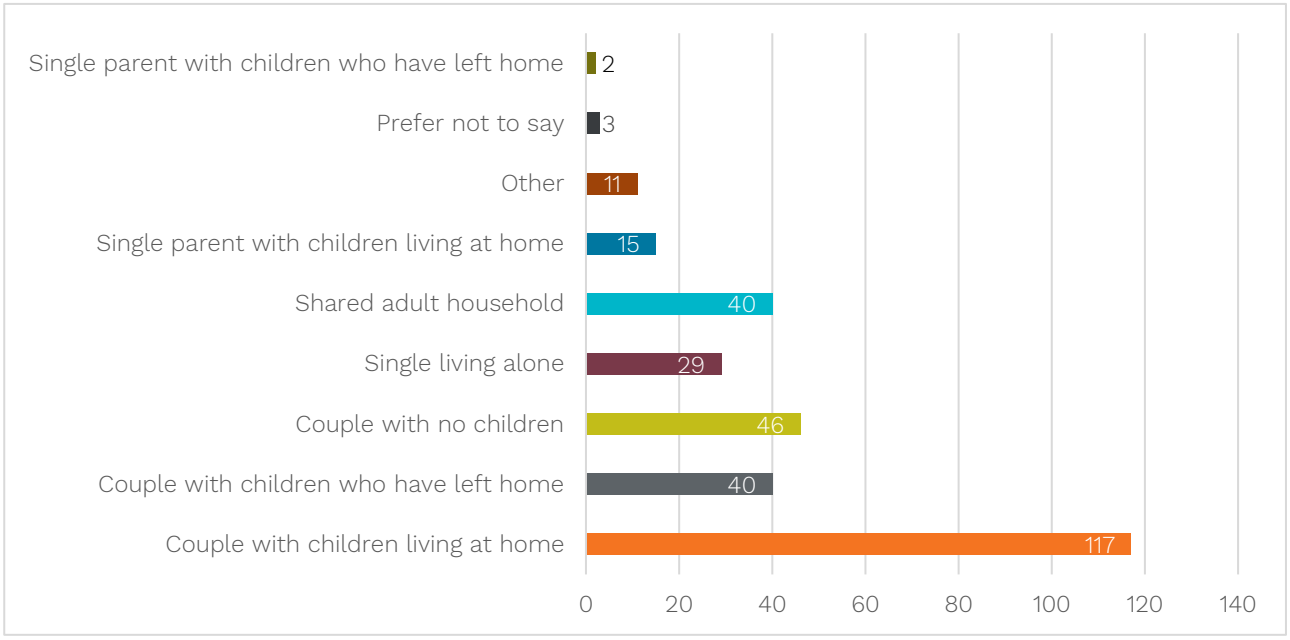


Figure 12. Couples with children living at home were the most represented across survey respondents.