

Product stewardship benefits assessment

Local government report

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KEY INSIGHTS: UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT

FOCUS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS ON THE POST-CONSUMPTION STAGE OF THE PRODUCT LIFECYCLE

Local Government staff who were surveyed are aware of the broad concept of product stewardship (PS), however their understanding tends to be filtered through the lens of the post-consumption product lifecycle stage, rather than having the full lifecycle in mind. This is aligned with the historical role that Local Government has played in communities, where the core focus has been on end-of-life management for packaging and products.

Local Government's role in encouraging community engagement is seen as an integral part of the post-consumption stage process.

HIGH ENGAGEMENT WITH PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVES AND A DESIRE TO DO MORE IN THIS SPACE

Local Government staff who were surveyed are well aware of the environmental, economic and social benefits of PS initiatives, so there is no strong need for messaging to convince most Councils to participate.

Engagement is high, with those surveyed participating in an average of seven PS initiatives, and the majority considering involvement with several more. Local Government staff surveyed see benefits to the introduction of new or improved initiatives for a range of products, with a strong focus on addressing **mattresses, tyres, photovoltaic systems and clothing textiles** as problem products.

KEY INSIGHTS: EXPERIENCES AND SUPPORT

OVERALL SATISFACTION, BUT SOME FRUSTRATIONS DUE TO NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OR GAPS IN SERVICES

Local Government staff who were surveyed expressed general satisfaction with existing PS initiatives. However, negative experiences with certain initiatives mean that some staff members are reluctant to engage with or promote them (see quote below).

The survey sample expressed frustration when initiatives that are in place are perceived as being ineffective, particularly where high hopes for community benefits are not met. There is also some discontent that initiatives are just not doing enough to combat problem products (i.e. mattresses, tyres, photovoltaic systems and clothing textiles). Although most respondents feel limited by initiative ineffectiveness and logistical barriers, there is a genuine appetite for Local Government to do more in the PS space.

“LG provide services to the community and cannot afford to promote something as a free service, if that is then going to change, leaving LG with the cost burden. This happened with the NTCRS over the initial years, so LG often still do not actively promote to the community.”
Participant from regional NSW

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF ARE TRUE ADVOCATES OF PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP BUT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THAT THEY FACE ENGAGING WITH INITIATIVES

Almost all Local Government staff who were surveyed have experienced challenges participating in initiatives and expressed frustration around barriers to engagement.

There are some internal challenges like resourcing and funding that Local Government staff need to overcome before being able to engage with initiatives. However, support is most needed with the external barriers when trying to engage with initiatives.

- *Access (i.e. geographical area access, initiatives not available, access to local processing) and the financial burden of disposal create fundamental obstacles for participation*
- *There is broad support for the implementation of government regulations for end-of-life disposal*

KEY INSIGHTS: PREFERRED ROLES FOR GOVERNMENTS

OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE TO ALL PRODUCT LIFECYCLE STAGES

The research highlights that there may be opportunities to increase the role of Local Governments in the production and consumption lifecycle stages. However it also shows that, at present, there is little impetus for expanding their roles across those stages. For example, sustainable procurement currently receives little consideration in formal processes.

However, there are potential areas of growth to strengthen Local Government's participation in the post-consumption stage, such as:

- *Promoting and facilitating consumer engagement with PS initiatives*
- *Repair/re-use/shared services*
- *Leveraging the existing relationships between Local Government and consumers to better promote and disseminate information about PS initiatives and how to engage with them*

A KEY ROLE IS SEEN FOR STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO INSTATE BUSINESS REGULATIONS FOR RESPONSIBILITY OF END-OF-LIFE IMPACTS

To make a true impact in the PS space, Local Governments surveyed tended to see that state and federal government influence is needed to instate regulation for businesses to be responsible for end-of-life product impacts.

Results show that legal mandates are perceived as the core action needed to drive businesses to consider end-of-life impacts.

Local Governments are keen to make a difference and be the advocates for PS initiatives, but more support is desired to drive engagement.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Background, objectives and methodology

1

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Background

This report is part of a larger project conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology Sydney along with the Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence to evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of product stewardship and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) activities across Australia. The current research focuses on the *Local government* audience to understand how Local Government collect data on PS activities and how benefits and challenges of participating in PS initiatives are understood across Local Governments.

Objective

The primary objective of this research is to assess *awareness and understanding* of PS and understand how Local Governments collect data on these activities. Additional areas of focus were established to drill down further into the nature of engagement to their relationship and perceptions of PS, understand drivers for Local Government to participate in PS initiatives, and to identify current gaps and future opportunities by product class. These priorities were used as a central part of the project's design and analysis throughout the report.

Primary Objectives	Key focus area	
	Awareness and understanding	Characterise awareness of product stewardship
	Collect data on activities	Which schemes do Local Government engage with?
		What is being collected from households, i.e. hazardous waste collection & bulky waste collection? Do Local Governments collect data relevant for measuring benefits of product stewardship? (e.g. landfill diversion)
	Additional focus area	
Engagement	Nature of engagement with product stewardship (positive vs negative) Open ended questions e.g. to understand positive & negative experience working with schemes Identify opportunities to enhance Local Government engagement with product stewardship	
Secondary Objectives	Secondary objectives	
	Drivers	What are the associated benefits/cost savings for councils? (e.g. costs for Local Government to participate in product stewardship could include: staff time, marketing)
	Identify future opportunities and gaps, by product class	Open ended questions - positive & negative experiences working with schemes What are the future opportunities or priority products for future focus (by product class)?

METHODOLOGY

Sampling method and approach

Data collection was completed between 18 April and 6 May 2022. The full survey length was 15 minutes.

A member of the Institute for Sustainable Futures project team liaised with the Australian Local Government Associations (ALGA) to send the survey to state members to disseminate the research to Local Government staff. Participants received an initial email invitation. Reminders targeted to states and territories with low response rates were sent out approximately two weeks into fieldwork.

The UTS project team also presented to Local Government staff at the Coffs Harbour Waste Conference on 5-May 2022 where they were invited to participate using a QR code.

Note regarding the approach used for the inclusion criteria of product stewardship initiatives: The initiatives list included in this survey is not an exhaustive sample of product stewardship initiatives. A mix of more commonly known collective and individual business initiatives were included in the sample to represent diversity of product classes as well as geographic scope. E-Cycle Solutions and TechCollect are a part of the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme, however they have been asked about separately within this survey to gauge familiarity with each initiative name.

Data

Insight Note: This report provides a valuable snapshot of how Local Government staff collect data on PS activities, experience PS initiatives and identify future opportunities to prioritise as new PS initiatives are developed. Due to the convenience sampling approach adopted to engage Councils, and the sample profile achieved in this survey, caution should be exercised when extrapolating these results to the population of Councils as a whole.

The sample of 89 is 17% of the total number of Councils (537). Overall, a sample size of 89 provides a margin of error of ± 10.39 . The sample profile achieved was biased due to the sampling approach.

The sample is skewed to the West Coast with high sample sizes in Western Australia (WA), so is not nationally representative based on these profile variables. To maintain statistical power with a low sample size, the data available in this report is unweighted.

Due to the heavy skew to WA, analysis was conducted for location based on East Coast vs. West Coast Australia*, however as there were few statistical differences noted, metropolitan vs. regional Australia was reported for location instead.

Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of 'don't know' categories.

▲ ▼ Arrows indicate when there is a significant difference higher or lower than the total population at 95% confidence level and above.

SAMPLE PROFILE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANTS

Target audience

Total sample of n=89 staff from Local Government achieved. The number of Local Government Councils within Australia is 537. The breakdown of sample achieved compared to actual number of Councils by location is shown in the tables below.

	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		NT		ACT		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Sample achieved	11	12%	16	18%	11	12%	6	7%	33	37%	7	8%	5	6%	0	0%	89	100%
No. of Councils	128	24%	79	17%	77	14%	68	13%	138	26%	29	5%	17	3%	1	0%	537	100%

	Sample achieved		Approximate actual distribution of Councils (as indicated by ALGA)
Metro	40	45%	45%
Regional	49	55%	55%

SAMPLE PROFILE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANTS

To ensure the sample had the adequate knowledge to address our research objectives, participants were required to meet two inclusion criteria:

- **Have been involved in at least one of the following four work areas to participate in the project:** waste management, disposal or recycling, environmental education, procurement of products and services and sustainability practices
- **Have been partially or fully responsible for Local Government activities** related to the management of the environmental or human health impacts of products by and/or disposed by residents to participate.

The tables below show the profile of the sample:

		%	n
Working areas/ functions	Waste management / disposal / recycling	97%	86
	Environment / environmental education	39%	35
	Procurement of products and services	30%	27
	Sustainability	28%	25
	Environmental Health	20%	18
	Parks / green spaces / playing fields / sporting facilities	19%	17
	Roads or footpaths	16%	14
	Policy development	16%	14
	General administration	13%	12
	Public health	12%	11
	Building regulations and development	8%	7
	Other community services	7%	6
	Libraries / services	4%	4
	Other [SPECIFY]	1%	1

		%	n
Responsible for the management of the environmental or human health impacts of products	Yes, I have overall responsibility	22%	20
	Yes, I have shared or partial responsibility	78%	69
	No, this is not within the remit of my role	0%	0
Local Government population size	Under 15,000 people	26%	23
	15,001 - 50,000 people	29%	26
	50,001 - 100,000 people	18%	16
	100,001 - 300,000 people	22%	20
	More than 300,000 people	4%	4
Willingness to be recontacted	Yes	70%	62
	No	30%	27
Consent to be listed in findings	Yes	80%	71
	No	20%	18

HOW TO READ THE PROFILE TABLES IN THIS REPORT

Purpose

The profile tables break down each question by areas of interest for the study. This way we can see what, if any, differences exist in the responses of different groups.

Profile variables are different for each audience in this study. For Local Government, we used the following variables: profiling by location (metro/regional), and LGA population size.

How do I read the table? Each profile section (separated by grey lines) is read and understood separately. For example, this table indicates column % is used, so reading down the Metro column indicates how the Metro audience responses differ to each of the statements in bold on the left-hand side. To see how Metro participants responded compared to Regional participants, look across the row

What does the text underneath 'Column %' mean? Questions can have more than one response option (e.g. yes or no), and this text specifies the option selected for analysis.

What is a sample size? The number of responses within each category. Each section will add up to the total number of responses, in this instance 89.

1

The triangles (▼ and ▲) indicate where a figure is statistically significantly lower or higher than the average of the rest of the categories in that section of the row.

We can say with 95% confidence, that there is a significant difference between the categories.

2

Comparing the responses of Metro and Regional participants, 24% of the 49 participants from Regional Australia selected 'no' to the response code on the left (i.e. they do not consider suppliers' sustainability practices). Whereas 0% of the sample from metro Australia (n=40) selected 'no'. These are significantly different when compared to each other.

3

Although there are some obvious differences in the data shown here, they are not statistically significant due to the low sample sizes. These observations may still be valuable but should be treated with caution.

4

This column indicates the total % for each response code. In this instance, 13% of all respondents selected 'No' for this response code.

Column % No	Metro	Regional	Under 15,000 people	15,001 - 50,000 people	50,001 - 100,000 people	100,001 - 300,000 people	More than 300,000 people	Total
Sample size	40	49	23	26	16	20	4	89
General sustainability practices of the supplier	0% ▼	24% ▲	30%	15%	6%	0%	0%	13%
Proportion of recycled content in products	18%	20%	26%	15%	25%	10%	25%	19%
Potential for recycling / reuse at end of life of a product	10%	20%	22%	15%	25%	5%	0%	16%
Sustainable design considerations during production of the product	25%	29%	35%	23%	31%	20%	25%	27%

5

The question asked and the base size are shown down here.

▲▼ significantly higher or lower than total at 95% confidence level and above



PRODUCT LIFECYCLE FRAMEWORK

2

THE PRODUCT LIFECYCLE STAGES

Product lifecycle stages refer to the key points of time within a product's life – production, consumption and post-consumption. Product stewardship initiatives and the actions to improve the environmental and human health impact of a product more broadly can be mapped back to the product lifecycle stages. Mapping these actions back to the product lifecycle allows us to identify, among other things, which stages are currently addressed with existing initiatives and where there are gaps.

We have used this framework consistently as a reference point throughout the report to map Local Government (LG) staff understanding, concerns and current practices by:

- Mapping LG knowledge of product stewardship to different stages of the product lifecycle (production, consumption or post-consumption indicators)
- Highlighting the key actions LG consider important to manage products responsibly (production, consumption or post-consumption actions)
- Identifying what factors are considered, formally or informally, in LG procurement processes (production, consumption or post-consumption considerations)
- Understanding the types of engagement LG has with PS initiatives and other diversion and circular economy initiatives (consumption and post-consumption activities)
- Recording the types of existing recycling, waste and disposal services currently offered by LGs (post-consumption)

Product lifecycle stage	Activities of each lifecycle stage	Actions
<i>Production</i>	Materials, design, manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible supply chain practices • Better material choices and/or design (including packaging) • Better product design • Efficient resource use including emissions management, reduction and/or use of renewable energy
<i>Consumption</i>	Retail, use and reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer information promoting better product use • Innovative business models, circular business models • Promoting high quality products • Product trade-in and/or repair services
<i>Post-consumption</i>	Logistics and collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing take-back services, improving access and convenience • Better logistics solutions • Material recovery (recycling and reprocessing) • New end-markets
	End of life	

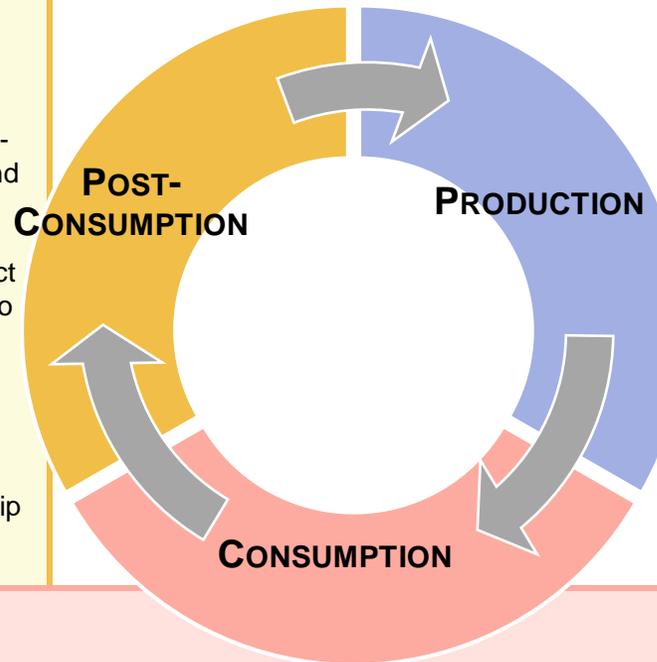
LIFECYCLE FRAMEWORK: Overview of key findings (Local Government)

The survey sample's focal point for product stewardship and circular economy is currently on Post-Consumption. Local Governments have long had a clear role here and support residents in providing a variety of end-of-life and recycling options for a variety of product classes. Respondents placed emphasis on increasing the level of responsibility that companies have in production and considering end-of-life impacts, although they see that this might only be the case when companies are required to do so (via being made legally responsible). Currently, the survey sample does not appear to see themselves as able to strongly influence production and end-of-life design.

Post-Consumption (End of life)

Local Governments are an active party in helping to address end-of-life activities of products. They support a number of key recycling and collection services offered directly to residents including large item collections, green services and some hazardous material handling (see [slide 41](#)). Further to this, when they are engaging with a product stewardship initiative this is largely to provide collection points and to promote participation in the initiative (see [slide 29](#)).

Local Government staff surveyed would support State and Federal governments providing legislative frameworks to make businesses legally responsible for end-of-life (see [slide 21](#)). In contrast, Local Governments surveyed consider formalisation of product stewardship principles in their own procurement processes to be a lower priority (see [slide 31](#)).



Production (Materials, Design, Manufacturing)

Local Governments surveyed are only lightly active in formally considering the production stage and influencing in this stage of the lifecycle, although at least half consider it informally (see [slide 31](#)).

However, they consider it quite important that companies actively consider end-of-life, recyclability and reduction of hazardous materials and would like to see this occurring more. So while there is currently not a lot of formal consideration of sustainable product design in council procurement policies, there is support for systematic frameworks to require businesses to take such issues into account. They see the Federal Government as having a key role in this (see [slide 21](#)).

Consumption (Use, Reuse, Retail)

The survey sample focused less upon this stage of the lifecycle. Broadly there is some support for reuse services offered by Local Governments, but these are primarily options such as tip shops and are not at the same level as post-consumption recycling options that are provided. Repair services and sharing services are least often provided by Local Governments to residents.

Local Governments that were surveyed take some role in information dissemination and education with residents, but most of it is tied to specific initiatives they engage in (and promotion of these initiatives, as options for residents to consider and access) (see [slide 29](#)).

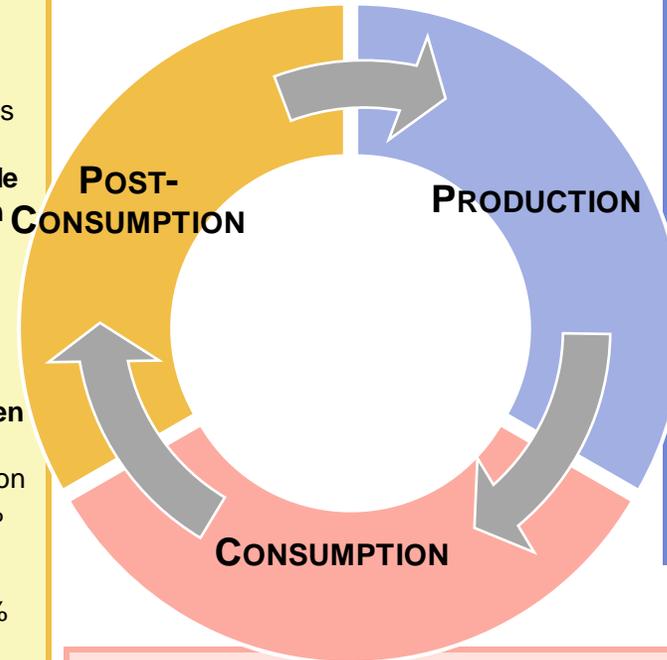
Life cycle stages are overlaid by colour throughout the report using this legend. There is a hyperlink embedded within the legend to return to this page for reference if required.

Lifecycle stages legend	Production (Materials, Design, Manufacturing)
	Consumption (Use, Reuse, Retail)
	Post-Consumption (End of life)

LIFECYCLE FRAMEWORK : Summary of evidence (Local Government)

This slide provides supporting data evidence from across the survey as relevant to each lifecycle stage.

- Local Government (LG) staff who were surveyed primarily associate the term 'product stewardship' with the post-consumption stage:
 - 52% link it to being **responsible for end-of-life disposal**
 - 51% consider it to be **manufacturers and producers taking responsibility for end-of-life management**
- LGs surveyed currently provide a wide array of end-of-life services including **kerbside recycling** (82%), **recycling and collection sites** (76%), **household green waste collection** (53%), **kerbside green waste collection** (51%) and **hazardous waste collection sites** (51%).
- 76% of LGs surveyed **host collection points** for initiatives.
- 67% of LGs surveyed **promote collection points** of initiatives to residents.
- 34% of LGs surveyed **fund collection points** for initiatives.
- Post-consumption and **end-of-life considerations are more often consisted in procurement processes** than other factors:
 - 20% of LG staff who were surveyed indicated that the proportion of recycled content in products is considered formally and 54% consider this informally.
 - 15% of LG staff surveyed indicated that the potential for recycling or reuse at end-of-life is formally considered and 58% consider it informally.
- LG staff surveyed placed a high priority on Governments of all levels in **legislating and making businesses legally responsible** for impacts at the end of the life of products and packaging.
- There is low priority placed by LGs on the role of their own purchase of products from **businesses that are responsible in their end-of-life disposal**.



- LG staff who were surveyed are less likely to relate the term 'product stewardship' with having a clear focus on the production stage. When prompted, 15% of LG staff described product stewardship to be related to **'responsibility for production'**.
- LG **sustainable procurement** processes in general are also less focused on criteria related to production of products purchased than on criteria related to end-of-life processes. 12% of LG staff who were surveyed indicate **sustainable design considerations** for products during production are assessed formally and another 49% consider this informally.
- However, LG staff who were surveyed emphasise that it is highly important that more be done to manage products responsibly right from the production and design stage:
 - 51% consider it important that **companies design products to last longer**.
 - 48% consider it important that **companies design their products for easier recycling**.
 - 47% consider it important that **companies limit hazardous material incorporation**.

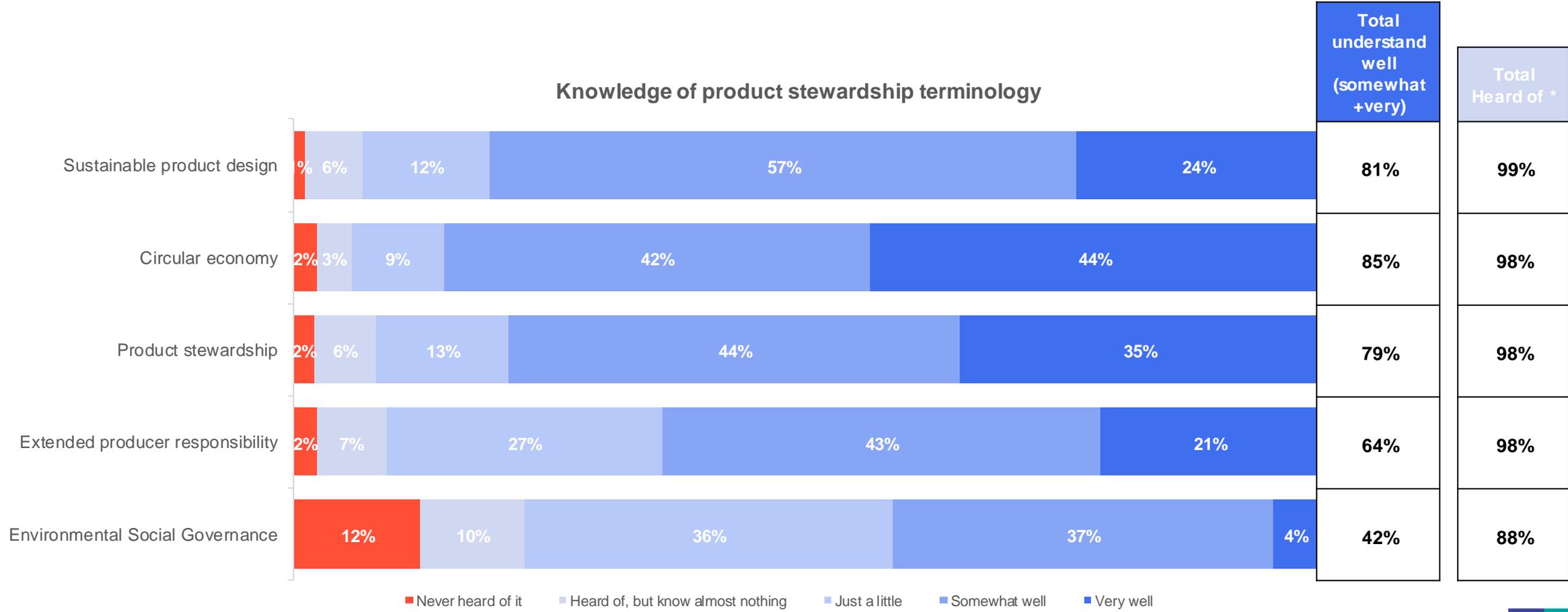
- 22% of LGs surveyed **support repair or reuse services for product stewardship initiatives** they specifically engage in.
- When speaking more broadly, **reuse** (61%) is well considered by LGs; with LG activities focused on **repair** (33%) and **sharing** (29%). 15% of LGs surveyed mentioned supporting repair cafes or repair labs.
- 12% consider it important that State and Federal governments assist LGs and businesses establish local repair, reuse and processing infrastructure and skills.
- LGs are playing a role in **consumer facing information provision**:
 - 69% support community awareness and education around product stewardship initiatives of those which they specifically engage in.
 - 45% develop or disseminate consumer information related to the initiatives they specifically engage in.

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

3

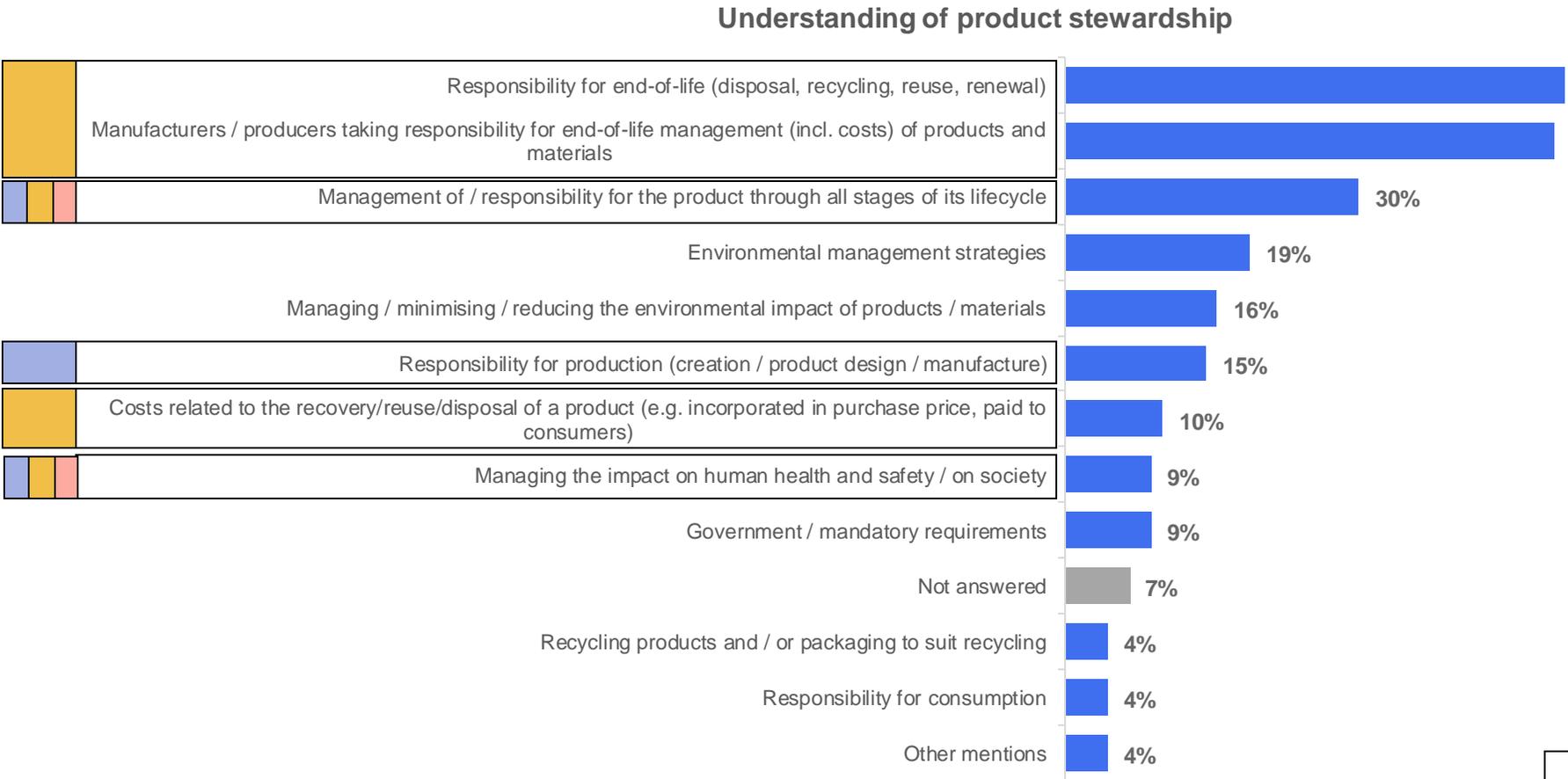
Product stewardship concepts and terminology are widely known amongst Local Government staff surveyed, although detailed knowledge is mixed

Almost all Local Government staff who were surveyed have at least heard of the product stewardship terms that were tested. Circular economy is the best-understood term, followed by product stewardship. Sustainable product design is well known but most staff only have a partial understanding. Respondents are the least familiar with the term Environmental Social Governance, although 4% know it very well, possibly indicating that it is in wider use in the business sector than in government.



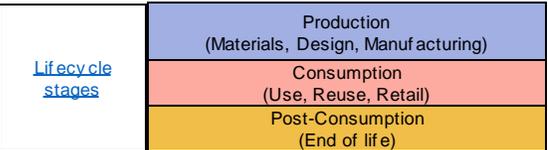
Local Government staff who were surveyed understand product stewardship mostly through the post-consumption lens

This is likely due to end-of-life being the main lifecycle stage that Local Governments currently engage with. There is also minimal consideration (4%) of responsibility for consumption. About a third (30%) of Local Government staff said that product stewardship is the management of a product through all stages of its lifecycle, indicating that a smaller but substantial proportion take a holistic view of product stewardship.



“Ensuring products created have a purchase cost that includes its end of life recycling or disposal. Its goal is to create a circular economy for products and for manufacturers to design in order to recover and reuse valuable and all materials.”
 – Participant from metro WA

“Places responsibility for the end of life management of a product by the manufacturer.”
 – Participant from metro VIC



PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE BEHAVIOURS AND INTENTIONS

4

- 4.1 Priority actions
- 4.2 Initiative awareness and engagement
- 4.3 Drivers of engagement with initiatives
- 4.4 Barriers
- 4.5 Opportunities

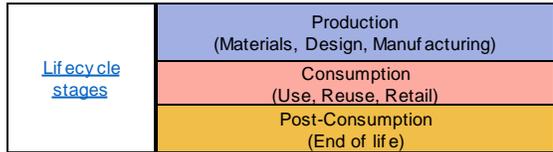
PRIORITY ACTIONS

4.1

Local Government staff who were surveyed support Governments legally mandating businesses to be responsible for the environmental and human health impacts of their products

While the majority of Local Government staff surveyed see a greater role for regulation, they also focus on producer responsibility which includes designing products to last longer. There is low responsibility assigned to consumers responsibly recycling, and low focus on incorporating product stewardship into Local Government procurement policies.

Top 3 most important actions to manage products responsibly



INITIATIVE AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

4.2

Almost all respondents engage with product stewardship initiatives and have an appetite to engage more in the future

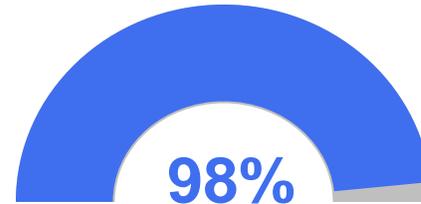
On average, Local Governments surveyed engage with seven initiatives from the prompted list of 26. This includes direct engagement and local utilisation of the initiative within their region.

Initiatives that are most commonly engaged with are:

- Container deposit schemes
- MobileMuster
- drumMUSTER
- Cartridges 4 Planet Ark
- Paintback
- National television and computer recycling scheme (NTCRS)

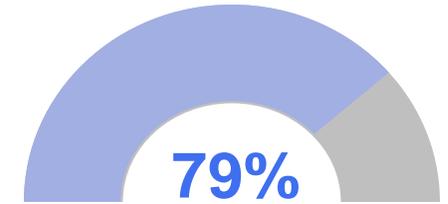
Those that are most commonly cited as being considered include:

- Recycle my mattress
- E-Cycle solutions (part of NTCRS)
- Tyre Stewardship Australia



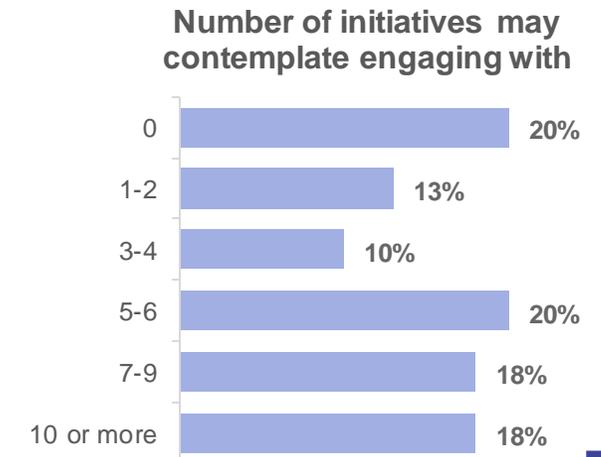
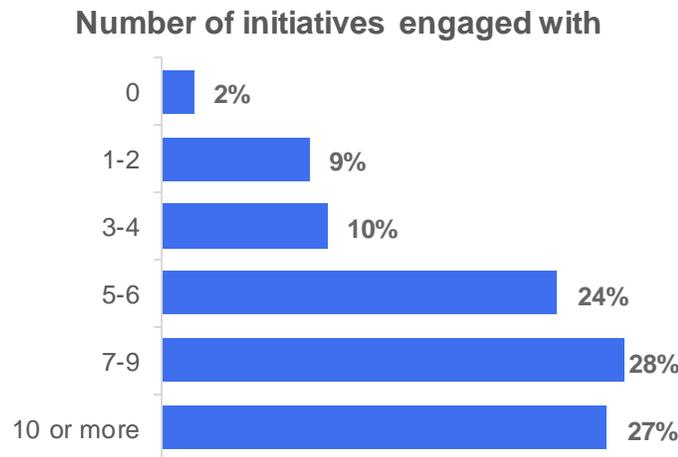
98%
of LG surveyed have engaged with an initiative

On average, Local Governments currently engage with 7 initiatives



79%
of LG surveyed consider they may engage in the future

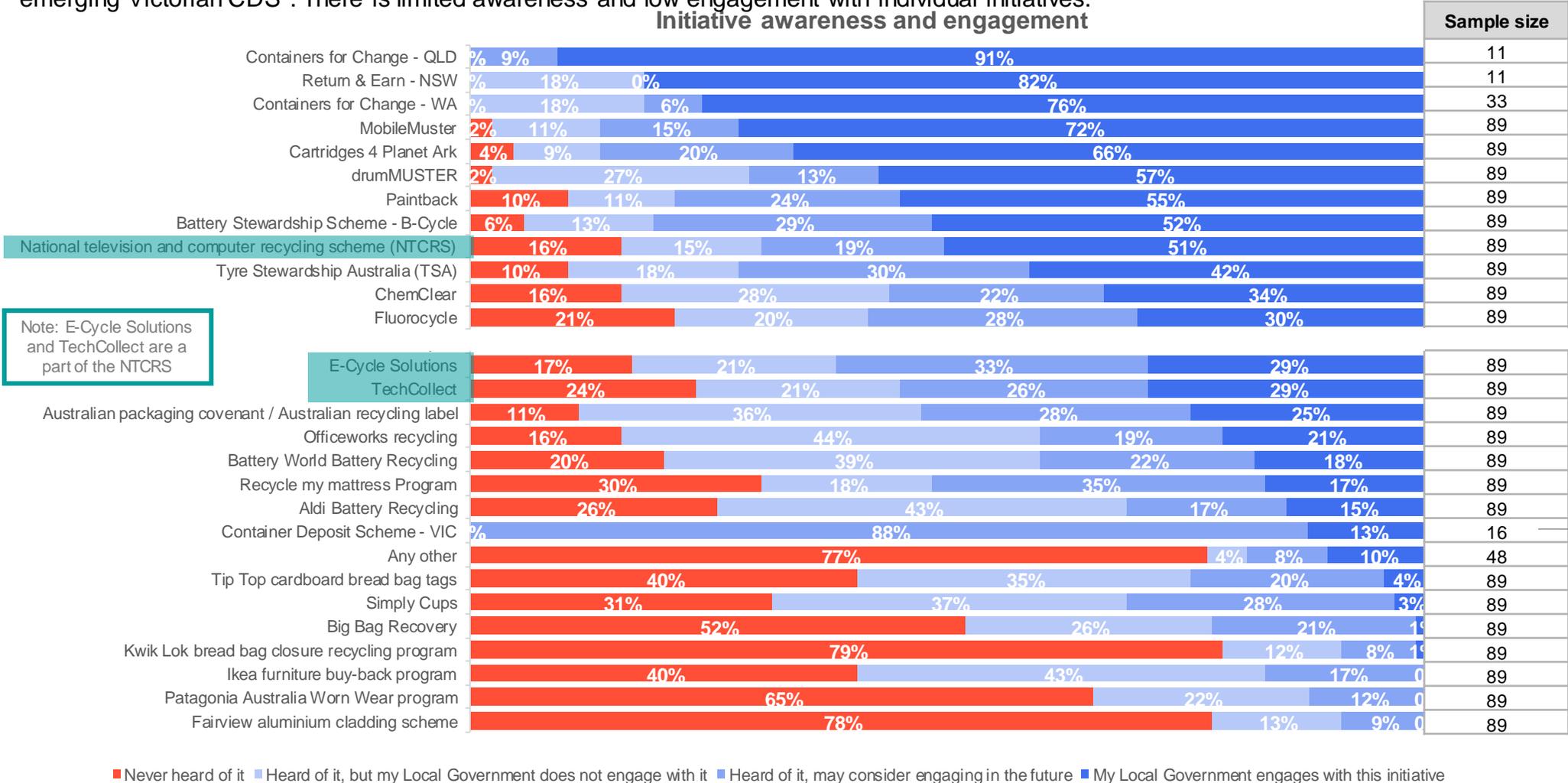
On average, Local Governments consider engaging with an additional 6 initiatives



Awareness and engagement with initiatives is relatively high among Local Governments

LG staff surveyed are most engaged with container deposit schemes (CDSs) and well-established initiatives, and there is a strong interest in participating with the emerging Victorian CDS*. There is limited awareness and low engagement with individual initiatives.

Initiative awareness and engagement



Note: E-Cycle Solutions and TechCollect are a part of the NTCRS

***Insight note:** Although the VIC Container Deposit Scheme is not yet up and running, the 13% indicating engagement could potentially represent Local Governments taking initial steps to engagement (including starting conversations about participating).

■ Never heard of it ■ Heard of it, but my Local Government does not engage with it ■ Heard of it, may consider engaging in the future ■ My Local Government engages with this initiative



FINDING OUT ABOUT INITIATIVES: INITIATIVE SPECIFIC (PART 1)

drumMUSTER and ChemClear are most proactive in directly approaching Local Governments. Networks through industry associations, conferences and government entities is also a common way for LG staff to find out about initiatives.

	Packaging (CDS) initiatives	Packaging initiatives	Battery initiatives	Other collective initiatives			
Only initiatives with sample sizes over 10 shown	Containers for Change - WA	drumMUSTER	Battery Stewardship Scheme - B-Cycle	Tyre Stewardship Australia (TSA)	Paintback	ChemClear	
Column %	Sample size	12	24	15	12	17	14
Direct approach from the initiative	17%	54% ↑	20%	8%	24%	50% ↑	
Industry association or peak body	33%	25%	33%	33%	24%	14%	
From someone internally within Local Government or a member	17%	21%	40%	17%	6%	21%	
From a state or federal government member or entity	33%	4%	7%	8%	35%	14%	
Conference or event	25%	8%	13%	25%	0%	0%	
Product packaging	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	
Product stewardship initiative website	0%	4%	0%	8%	12%	0%	
Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence website	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Government website	25%	4%	0%	8%	12%	7%	
Social media	8%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	
Other	8%	0%	7%	8%	6%	0%	
Don't know / Unsure	0%	8%	0%	8%	6%	7%	

FINDING OUT ABOUT INITIATIVES: ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS INITIATIVES (PART 2)

Among initiatives related to electrical and electronic products direct approaches, industry associations and from within Local Government are more commonly consistent sources.

Only initiatives with sample sizes over 10 shown	Column %	MobileMuster	Cartridges 4 Planet Ark	Fluorocycle	National television and computer recycling scheme (NCRS)	E-Cycle Solutions	TechCollect
	Sample size	22	32	13	20	12	12
Direct approach from the initiative		5%	25%	46%	10%	25%	8%
Industry association or peak body		27%	16%	0%	25%	17%	33%
From someone internally within Local Government or a member		27%	28%	23%	20%	33%	17%
From a state or federal government member or entity		9%	3%	8%	30%	0%	0%
Conference or event		5%	3%	0%	10%	17%	8%
Product packaging		0%	6%	0%	0%	8%	0%
Product stewardship initiative website		5%	3%	0%	5%	8%	8%
Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence website		5% ↑	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Government website		5%	3%	8%	15%	17%	8%
Social media		14%	13%	8%	0%	0%	8%
Other		5%	9%	0%	15%	8%	0%
Don't know / Unsure		18%	6%	23%	10%	8%	8%

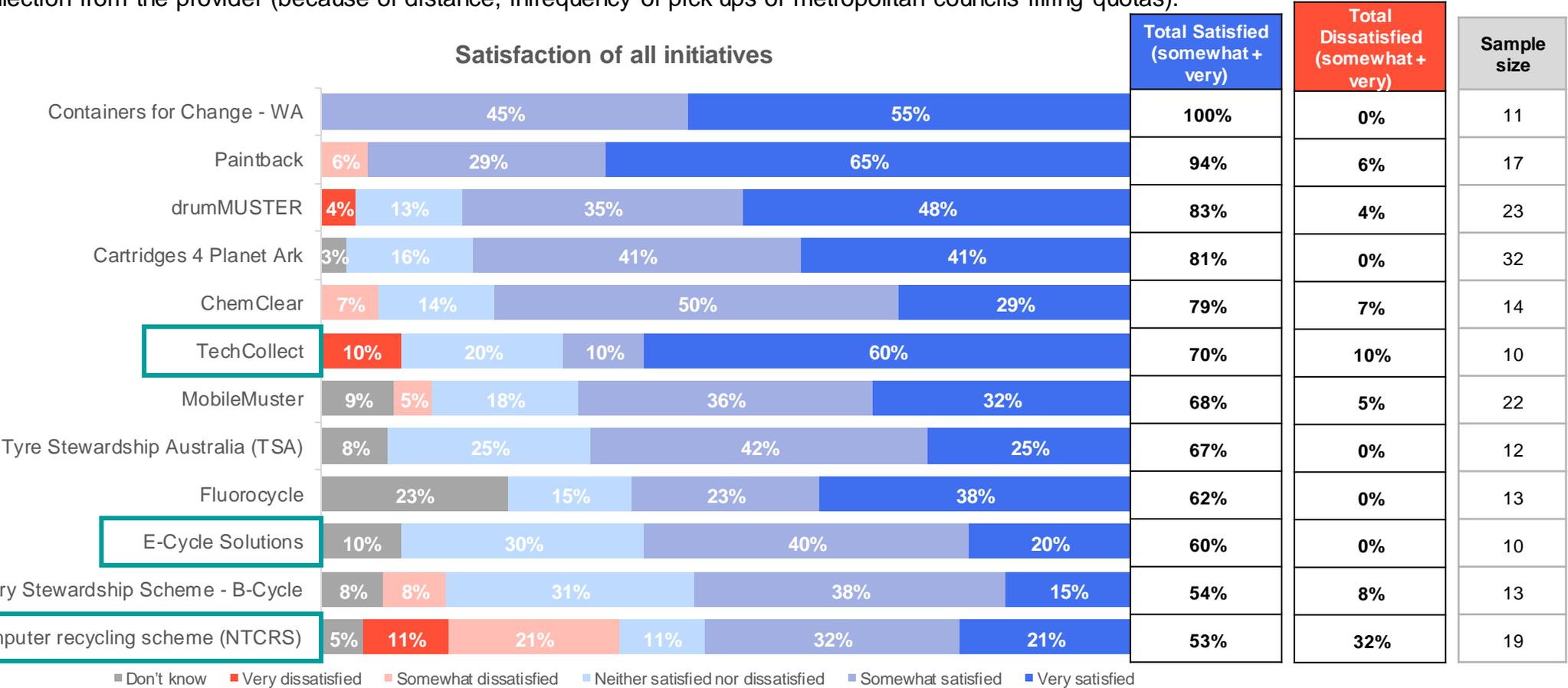
Note: E-Cycle Solutions and TechCollect are a part of the NCRS

▲ ▼ significantly higher or lower than total at 95% confidence level and above

Overall, Local Government staff who were surveyed are highly satisfied with the interactions they have had with product stewardship initiatives

However, 32% are dissatisfied with the National television and computer recycling scheme (NTCRS). Verbatim comments indicate that regional Local Governments struggle to organise collection from the provider (because of distance, infrequency of pick ups or metropolitan councils filling quotas).

“The NTCRS was very difficult to engage with. We do not own or operate a transfer station but we do coordinate drop off days. It was difficult to get anyone interested in recycling the materials we collected and we always end up paying a fee of some amount, which is increasing in recent years.”
 – Participant from metro VIC



Note: E-Cycle Solutions and TechCollect are a part of the NTCRS

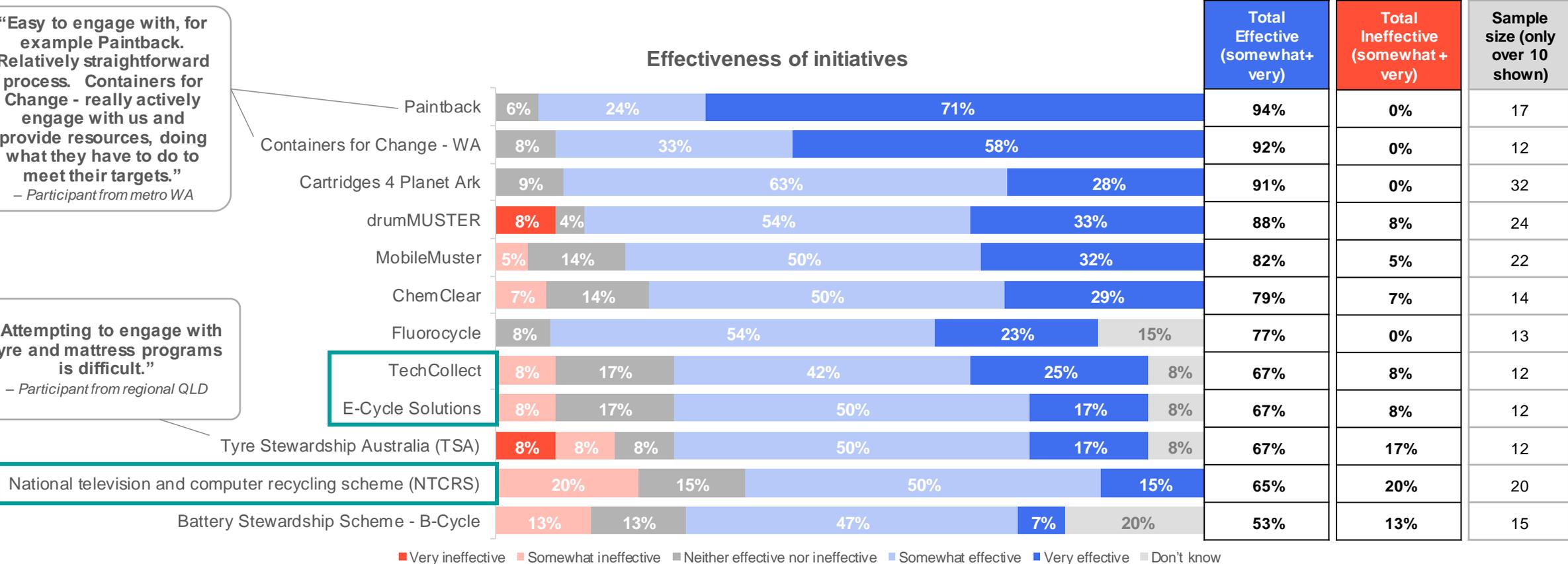


Most product stewardship initiatives are considered effective, especially Paintback and Containers for Change – WA.

Again, the NTCRS received some criticism from Local Government staff who were surveyed, who stated that the initiative was ineffective in managing product impacts. The Tyre Stewardship Australia program is also perceived to be ineffective by some Local Government staff.

“Easy to engage with, for example Paintback. Relatively straightforward process. Containers for Change - really actively engage with us and provide resources, doing what they have to do to meet their targets.”
– Participant from metro WA

“Attempting to engage with tyre and mattress programs is difficult.”
– Participant from regional QLD

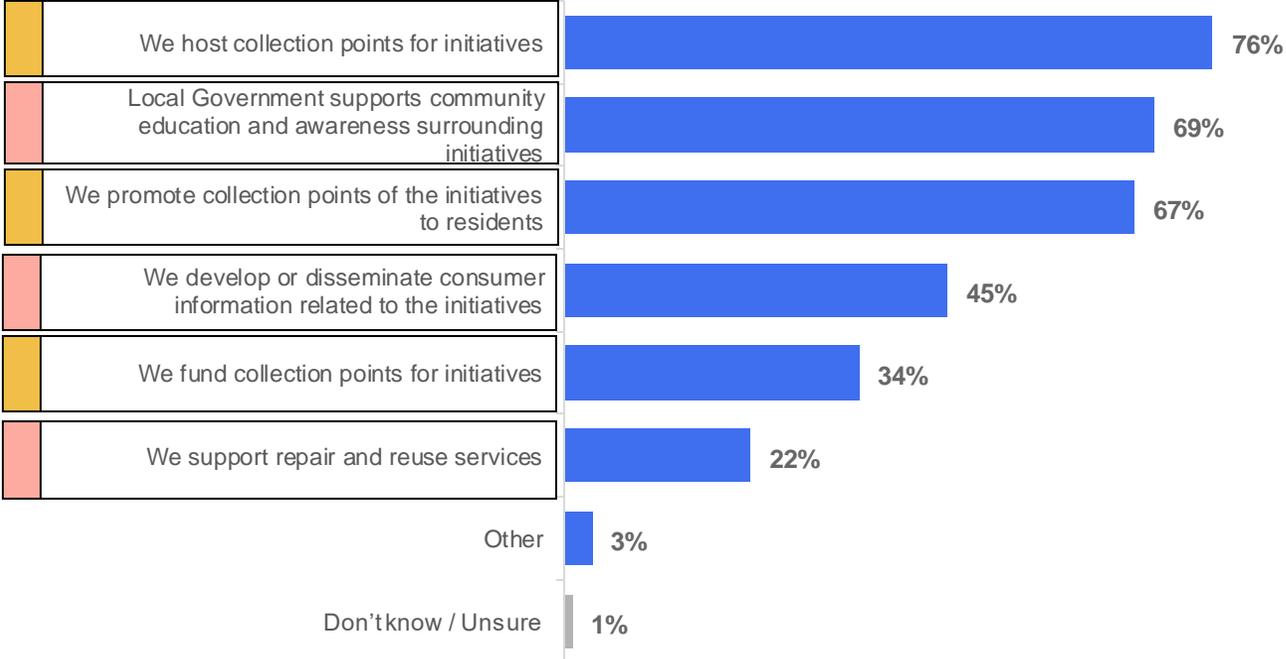


Note: E-Cycle Solutions and TechCollect are a part of the NTCRS

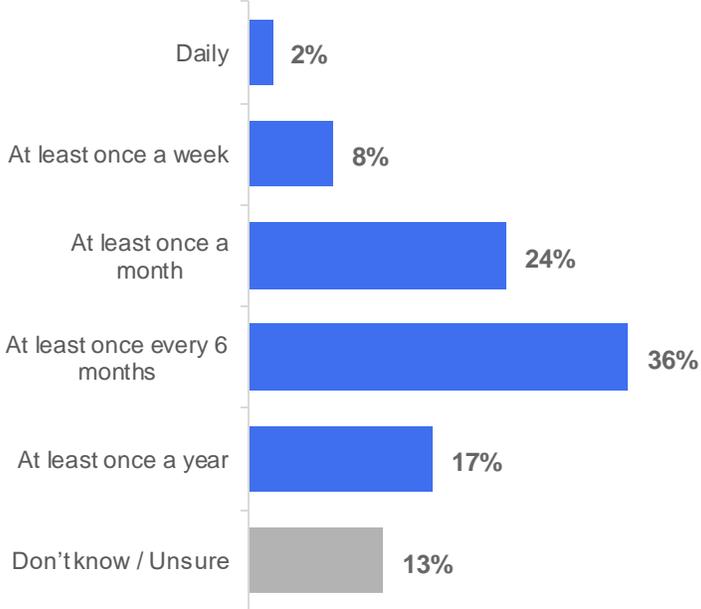
Local Governments that were surveyed are actively providing collection points and supporting community engagement

Local Governments surveyed are primarily supporting community engagement by supporting education and awareness and promoting collection points to residents rather than developing initiative-specific information. Only one third of Local Government staff indicated that their Local Government actively provides funds for collection points.

Local Government types of engagement



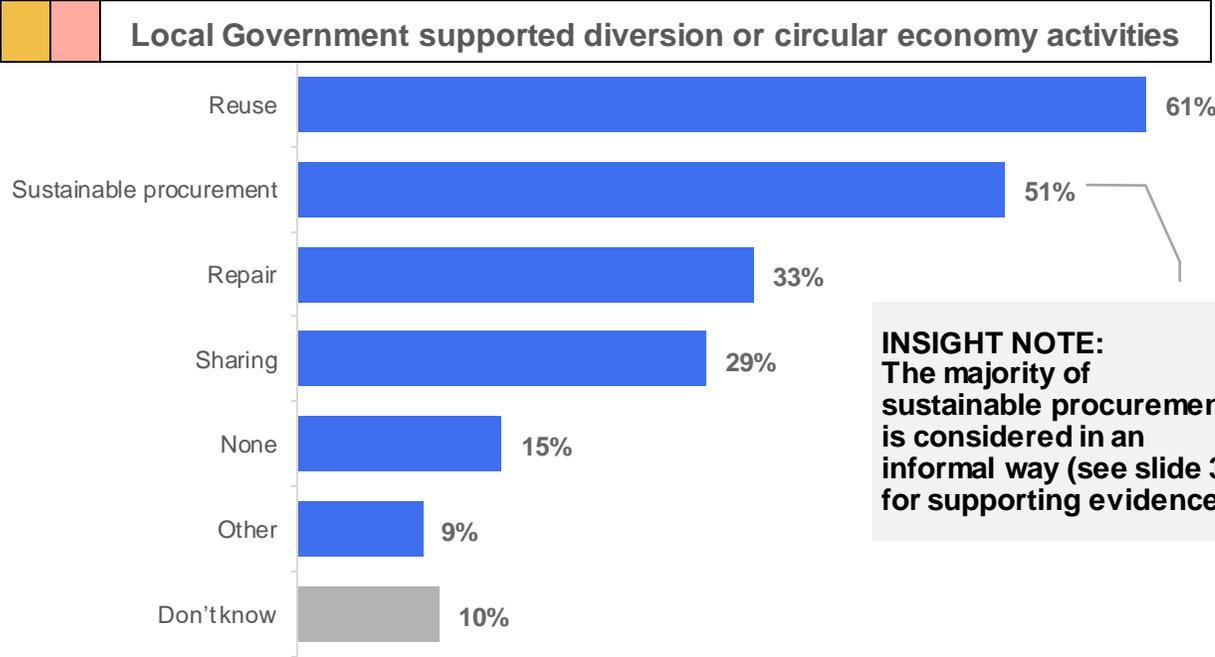
How often Local Government engages with product stewardship initiatives



Lifecycle stages	Production (Materials, Design, Manufacturing)
	Consumption (Use, Reuse, Retail)
	Post-Consumption (End of life)



Local Governments that were surveyed are supporting reuse and sustainable procurement as a part of their diversion and circular economy activities

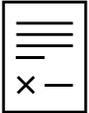


INSIGHT NOTE:
The majority of sustainable procurement is considered in an informal way (see slide 33 for supporting evidence).



Reuse

- “Host a second hand shop at one of our sites”
- “Tip shop for reusable items”
- “A tip shop located at our landfill and a few small scale ones at regional transfer stations”
- “Buy back shops”



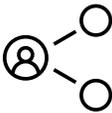
Sustainable procurement

- “Mandatory addition to procurement process”
- “Sustainability is included in our Procurement Policy”
- “Sustainable Procurement specified as a priority area for consideration in Council's Procurement Policy”



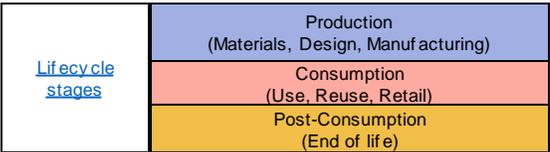
Repair

- “A local repair shop”
- “Mens shed programs”
- “Repair café” (15% mentioned)
- “Free repairable items at landfill office”



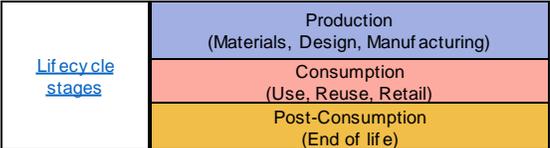
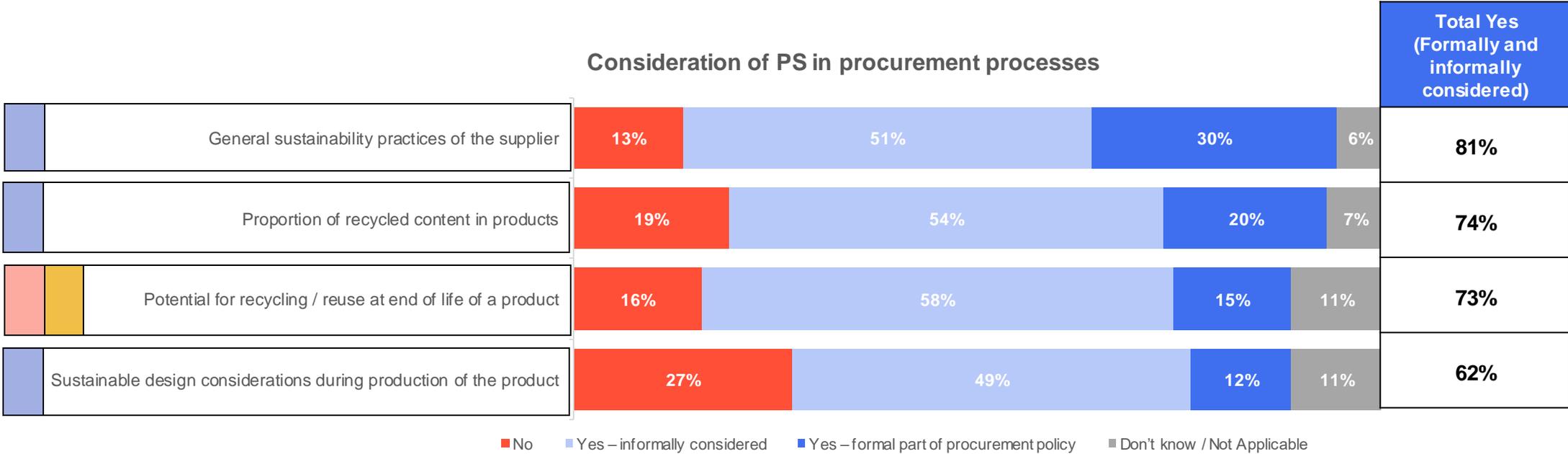
Sharing

- “Library of things, sewing machine library, 3D printer library, cake tin library”
- “Tool and toy libraries”
- “Seed library, community garden support”



Most Local Governments surveyed currently incorporate product stewardship principles into their procurement policies, but few do so formally

There is very little formal procurement consideration given to sustainable design and the end-of-life components of a supplier’s product.



**DRIVERS OF
ENGAGEMENT
WITH
INITIATIVES**

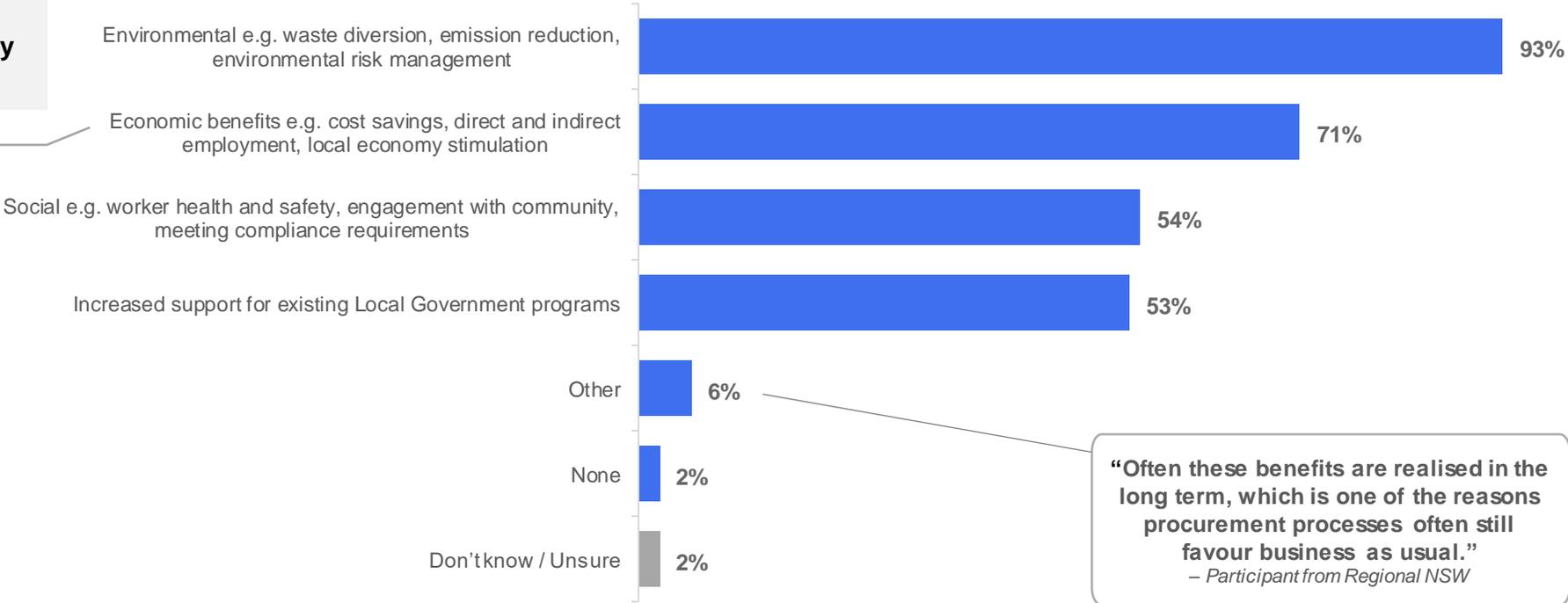
4.3

Most Local Government respondents see a range of benefits from engaging with product stewardship initiatives

Environmental outcomes are almost universally recognised as a benefit of product stewardship initiatives, but more than half of the LG respondents also see economic and social benefits flowing from engagement. This aligns with the high number of participants considering engaging with additional initiatives.

INSIGHT NOTE:
LGs who indicate there are economic benefits are more likely to measure benefits of any kind

Benefits for Local Government to engage in product stewardship initiatives



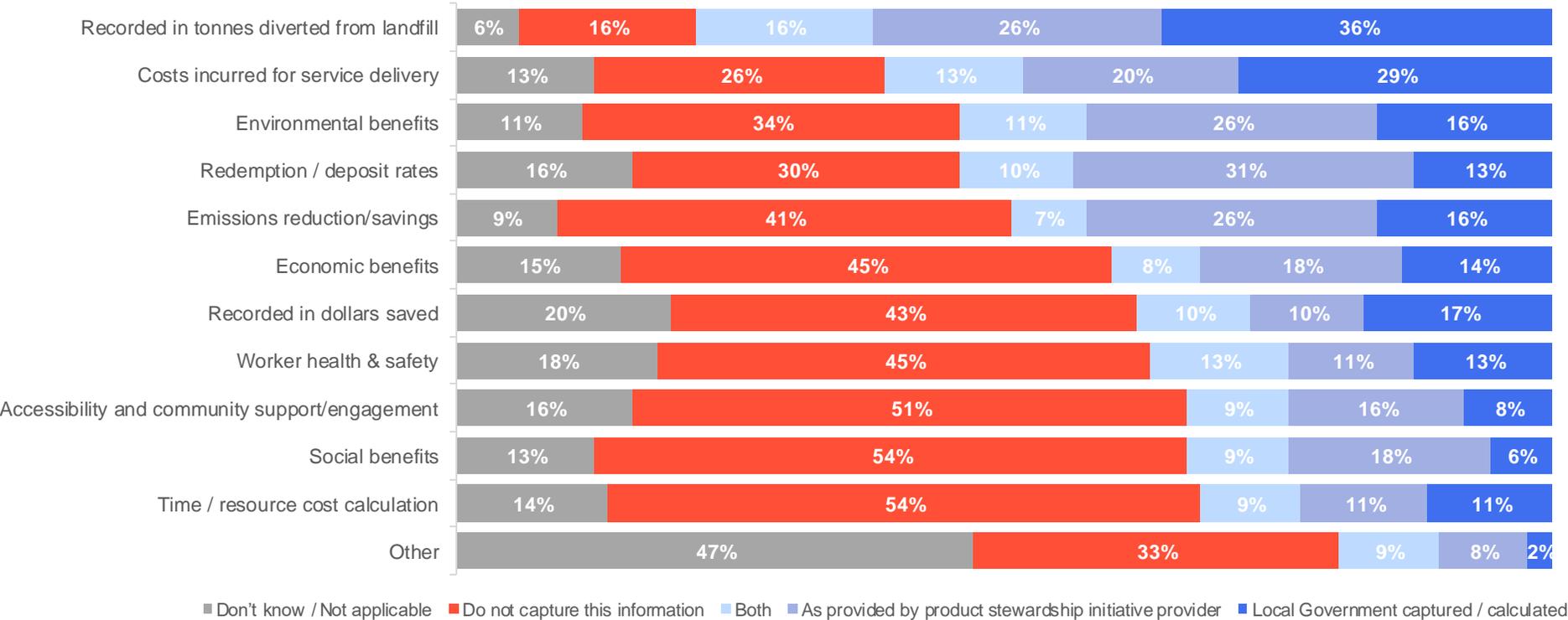
“Often these benefits are realised in the long term, which is one of the reasons procurement processes often still favour business as usual.”
– Participant from Regional NSW



There are few measures in place within Local Governments to capture information about the benefits of engaging with product stewardship initiatives

Financial measures and diversion rates from landfill are the two most common measures that assist the Local Governments that were surveyed in measuring the benefits of product stewardship initiatives. There is a clear opportunity to improve the diversity of indicators used to measure the performance of product stewardship initiatives by Local Governments.

How Local Government measures the benefits of engaging with product stewardship initiatives



All other comments are involved with waste management / disposal / recycling

“Community benefit or service delivered i.e. convenience.”
– Participant from regional VIC

“Customer satisfaction with diversion programs”
– Participant from metro WA

“Green Collect provide information”
– Participant from metro VIC

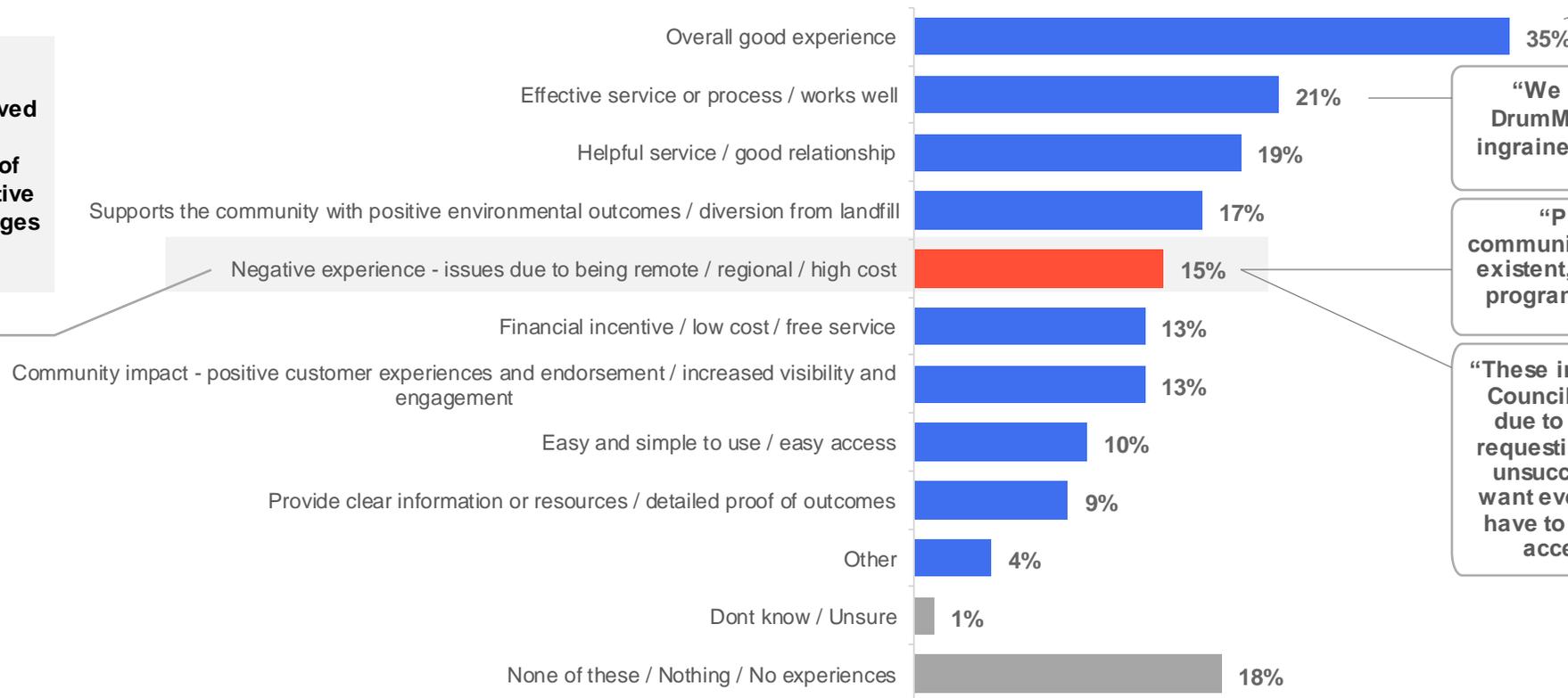
“Publicity for our portfolio Councillors”
– Participant from regional QLD



'Overall good experience' and 'effective service' stand out as the most often mentioned positive experiences with initiatives

Supporting the community with positive environmental outcomes is also a key element of good experiences. This aligns with Local Governments respondents identifying environmental outcomes as the top benefit from engaging with initiatives (see slide 40). The survey sample had the most positive experiences with drumMUSTER, which has almost double the overall positive mentions of any other initiative and has the highest mentions for 'overall good experience' and 'effective service'. Despite the question being asked about good experiences, 15% flagged negative issues, including high cost and remoteness (see slide 38 for more detail of negative experiences).

Good experiences engaging with initiatives



“DrumMUSTER has been a great experience, really helpful in supporting our local council.” – Participant from regional QLD

“We have a great relationship with DrumMUSTER and the process is well ingrained and works well.” – Participant from regional VIC

“Product stewardship remote communities Central Aust is basically non existent, drumMUSTER only stewardship program, but not operating.” – Participant from metro NT

“These initiatives are great, however rural Council's struggle to get them in place due to transport costs etc. Have been requesting Paintback for 5 years and still unsuccessful. Unfortunately residents want everything within their shire, not to have to travel to neighbouring shires to access.” – Participant from regional VIC

INSIGHT NOTE:
LGs are keen to be involved with initiatives and understand the benefits of doing so, but their negative experiences and challenges are making it difficult.

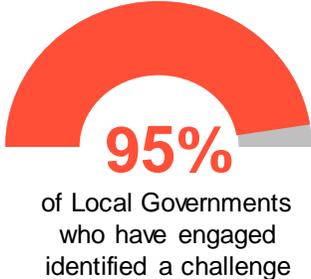
BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT WITH INITIATIVES

4.4

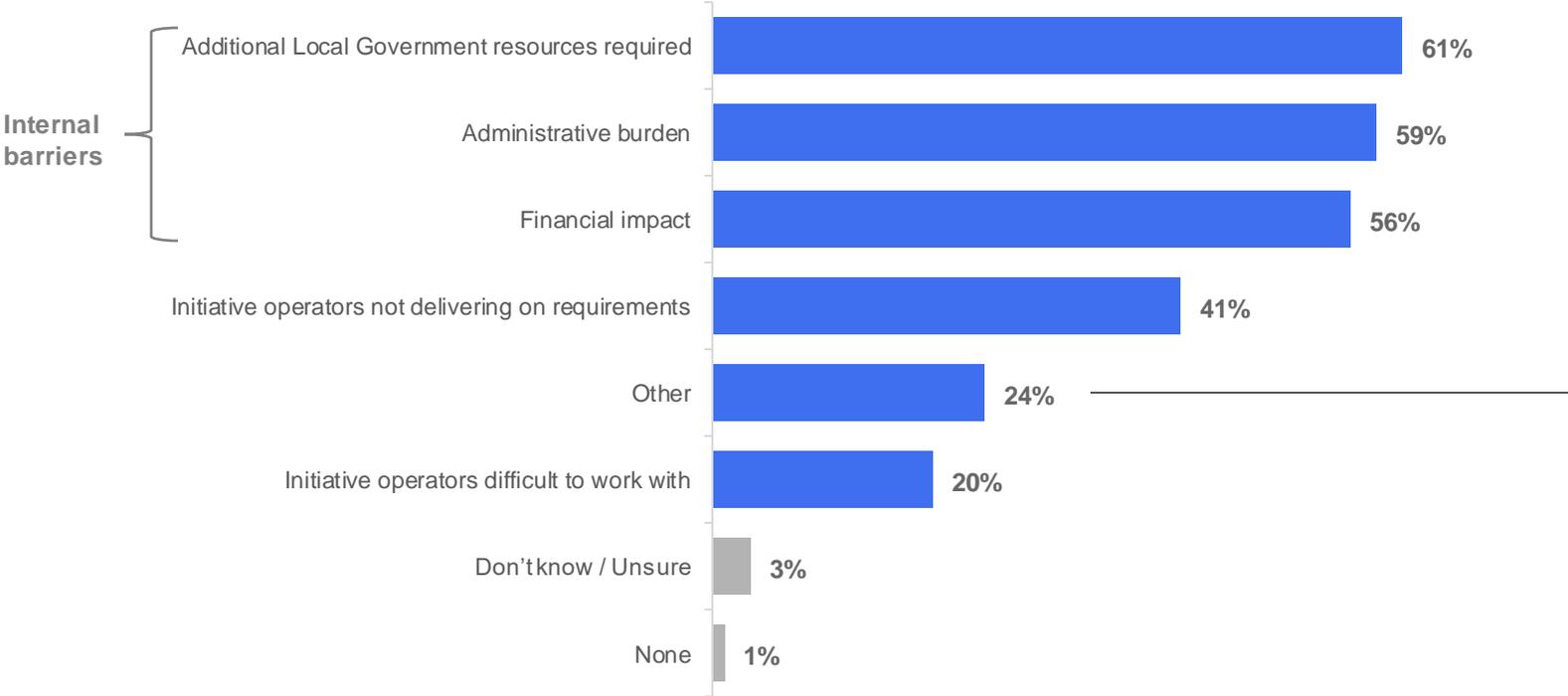
The main barriers that Local Government staff face engaging with initiatives are internal to their Local Governments

Almost all (95%) of Local Government staff who were surveyed identified challenges to engaging with product stewardship initiatives.

Resourcing, administration and costs are all barriers to engagement for more than half of the Local Governments surveyed. Under-delivery by (41%) and difficulty working with (20%) initiative operators are also noted as concerns by a substantial number of Local Governments, indicating that initiatives do not always run smoothly.



Challenges engaging with product stewardship initiatives



“LG provide services to the community and cannot afford to promote something as a free service, if that is then going to change, leaving LG with the cost burden. This happened with the NTCRS over the initial years, so LG often still do not actively promote to the community” – Participant from regional NSW

“The operators don’t like to service regional and remote areas. Financial incentives do not match the additional costs.” – Participant from regional QLD

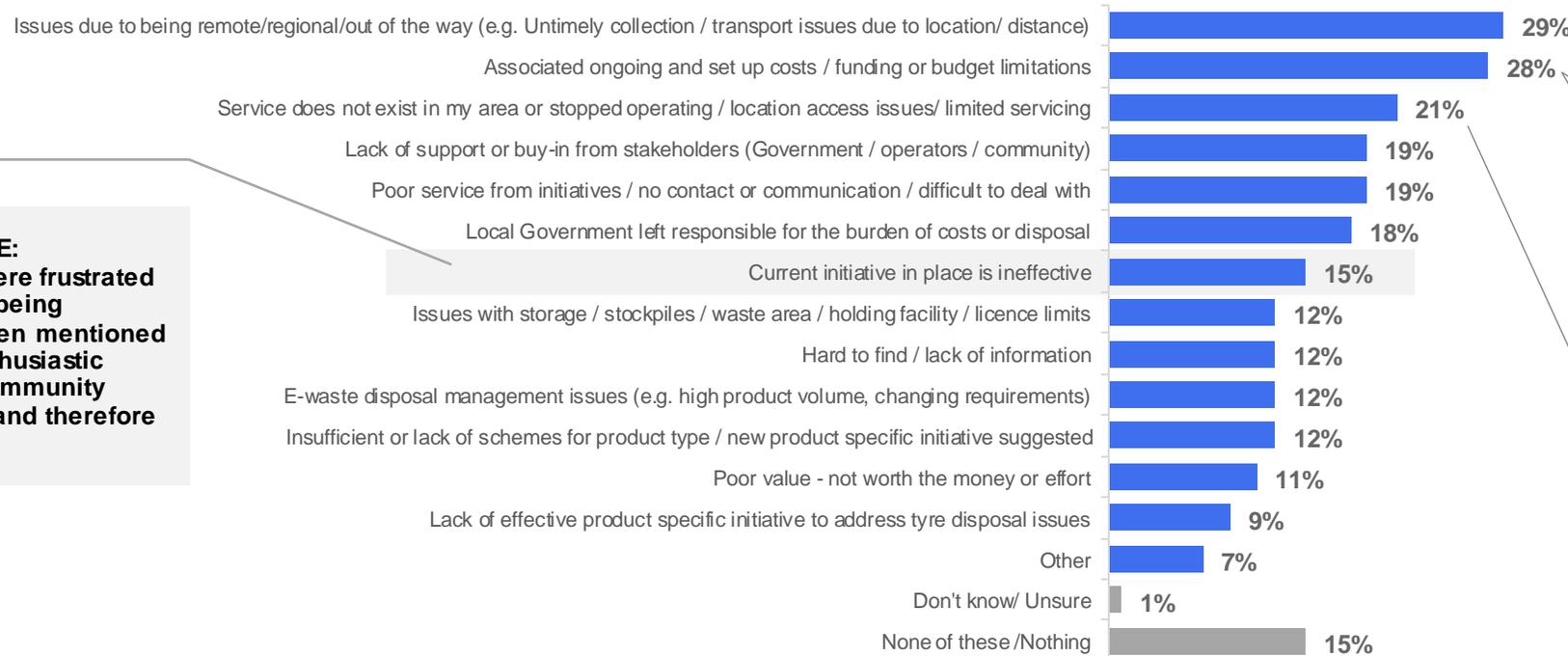
“Cost of new services and when they are not legislated participation requirements.” – Participant from regional VIC

“Changes to the acceptance criteria (such as NCTRS) has made it more costly to the local government (and therefore the ratepayer) to be able to recycle affiliated electronic waste items. Consumers need to have access to product stewardship schemes that are cheap, easy and close to home.” – Participant from metro WA

Geographical remoteness, service coverage and financial costs are the challenging experiences most raised by the LG respondents

19% also mentioned poor service from the initiative operators.

Challenging experiences with product stewardship initiatives



INSIGHT NOTE:
Those who were frustrated by initiatives being ineffective often mentioned they were enthusiastic about their community participating and therefore felt let down.

“The most challenging part is organising materials to be delivered from remote regions and finding suitable courier partners both in the region and then in Darwin to link up to for collection.”
– Participant from metro NT

“As not all costs are borne by stewardships, LG's suffer the impacts of disposal which ultimately increases costs for residents.”
– Participant from metro WA

“Local government is left holding the can on a lot of recycling initiatives and it costs money to participate in recycling schemes.
The state and federal governments need to stump up more money especially in the transport of materials to the recycler and set up markets and processors of the materials collected.”
– Participant from regional WA

“Tyres. Lack of recycling processors has meant the small aggregators are dumping them and when we collect them we are stockpiling hundreds because our contractors have nowhere to take them” – Participant from regional VIC

OPPORTUNITIES

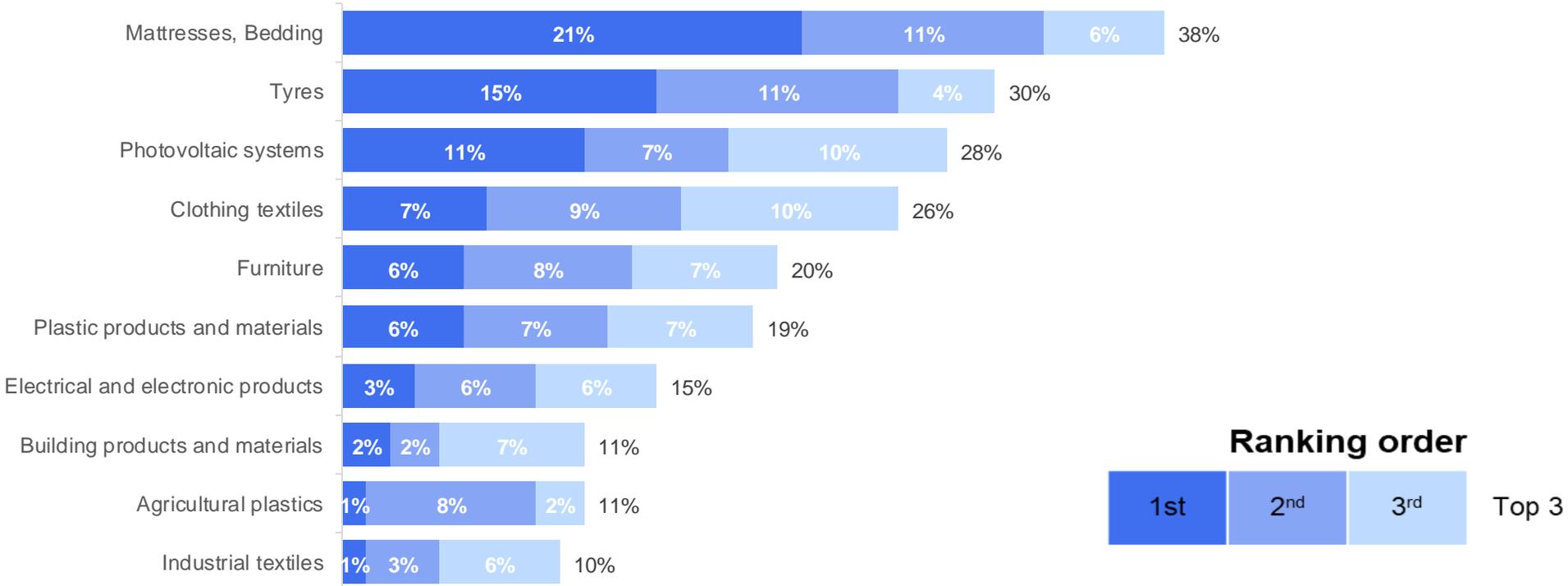
4.5

Local Government staff who were surveyed see mattresses and tyres as the product classes that could most benefit from the implementation of an initiative

Although there are initiatives already in place for mattresses and tyres, it is clear that the survey sample felt there was more to be done to combat the disposal problem of these products. This is reflected in other findings where disposal of mattresses and tyres has been raised by Local Government staff as a continuous challenge.

Implementing product stewardship initiatives for photovoltaic systems and clothing textiles would also be seen as beneficial by at least a quarter of the Local Government staff who were surveyed.

Top 3 product class opportunities to implement a product stewardship initiative



Ranking order

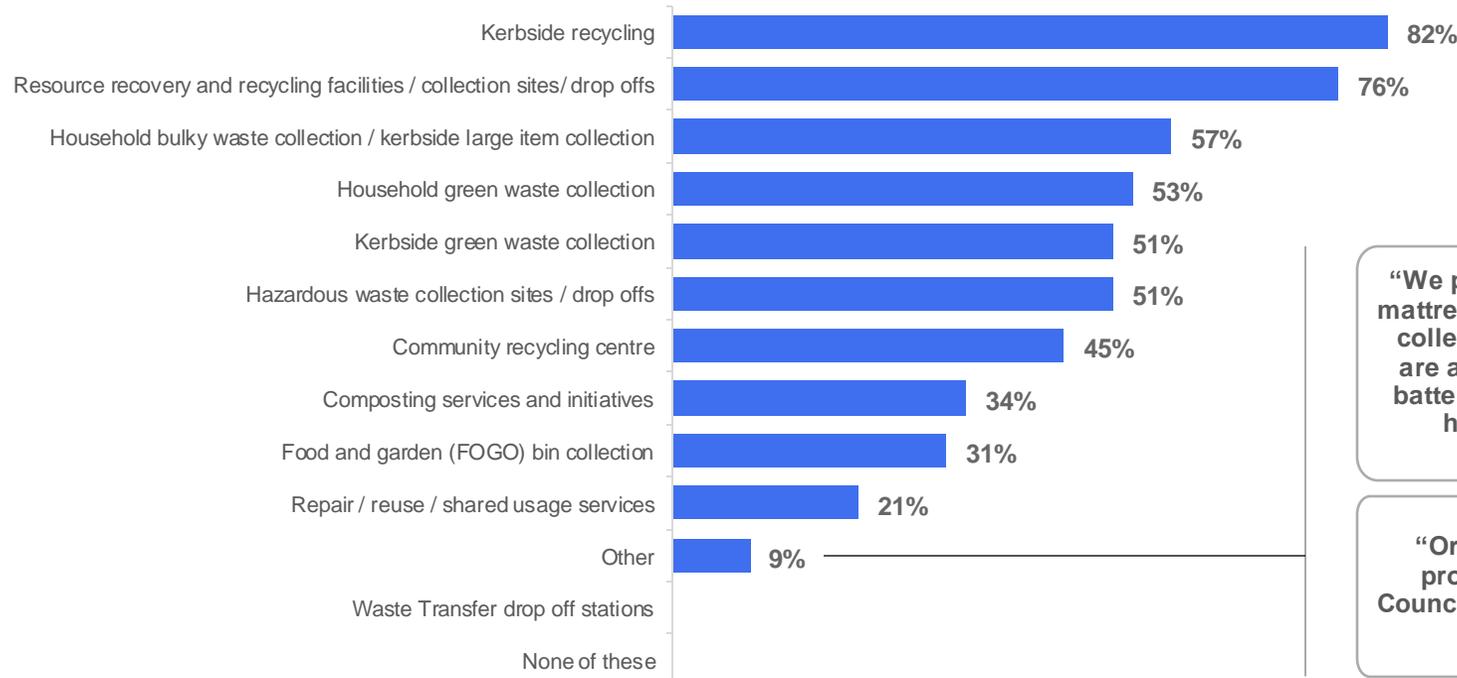
1st 2nd 3rd Top 3



Kerbside recycling and resource recovery / recycling facilities are widely offered by the Local Governments surveyed

Repair/reuse/shared usage services are less likely to be offered consistently by the Local Governments surveyed. There is potential scope for Local Governments to play more of an active role in providing communities with repair/reuse/shared services, green/composting services and hazardous waste pending other consideration factors such as the appropriateness of the service being delivered by Local Governments, consumer interest, budgetary considerations, size of population and availability of cost-effective solutions.

Offered recycling and waste collection or disposal services



INSIGHT NOTE: Capability to offer services is related to size of LGA.
 LGAs under 15k people are less likely to offer all services, and LGAs with more than 100k people are more likely to offer most services.

“We provide Waste Oil (motor oil) facilities; skip bins for old tyres and old mattresses; green waste can be put through normal kerbside general waste collection or people can bring it to the landfill site; at landfills sites there are areas for people to drop-off old car/vehicle bodies, scrap metals, car batteries, gas cylinders, cardboard; and containers for old paint tins. We have collection of all of these waste except for the old paint tins.”
 – Participant from regional WA

“Organic material in general waste bin is processed through ARRF into compost. Council operates a Buy Back Shop (tip shop).”
 – Participant from regional QLD

Lifecycle stages	Production (Materials, Design, Manufacturing)
	Consumption (Use, Reuse, Retail)
	Post-Consumption (End of life)



INFORMATION

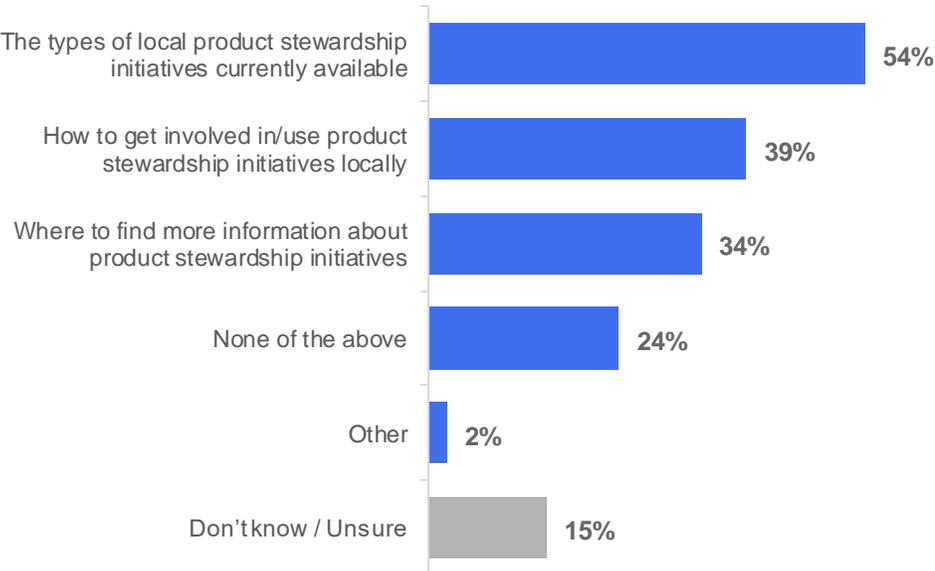
5

At least a quarter of the Local Governments surveyed do not provide information about product stewardship initiatives to their residents

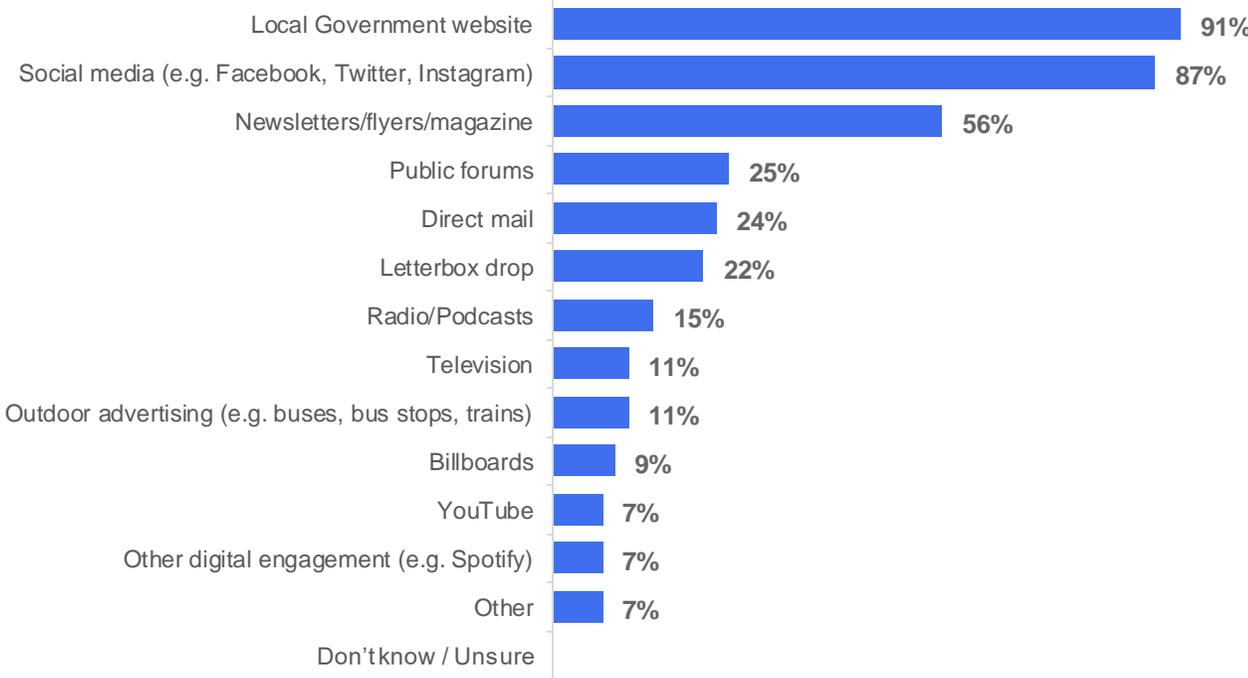
More than half share information about the types of product stewardship initiatives currently available, with one in four sharing how to get involved or where to find information.

Local Government websites and social media are the channels most used by the respondents to distribute any information around product stewardship initiatives. A quarter of the Local Governments surveyed do not provide any information at all regarding product stewardship initiatives, and 15% do not know if their Local Government does. So, there is a big opportunity to increase awareness and knowledge through Local Government channels.

Information provided by Local Government



Information channels



Q20. When thinking about how information specifically around product stewardship initiatives is shared with residents in your LGA, does your Local Government provide information about ... (All participants. Base n=89) Q21. And, what channels does your Local Government use to provide this information? (Asked of those who did not select 'Other' or 'Don't know/unsure' in Q20 n=55).



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