

Whangamata Beach User Survey : Public Awareness and Attitudes to Dune Management

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The objective of this study is to provide information to Environment Waikato as part of its research programme that informs the development of strategies that:

- promote individual behaviour change with respect to targeted coastal issues
- lifts awareness of coastal hazards and natural character
- increases knowledge of coastal processes so that communities can engage with the coastal planning issues.

Other research projects will inform these strategies and should also be taken into account, including the GNS study of coastal communities in the Waikato Region¹.

On advice from the Beachcare facilitators, Whangamata was selected as a focus for this study. Environment Waikato has been working with the Whangamata Beachcare community since it formed in 1994 to improve the health of the dune systems. In addition, research undertaken by Joanne Fagan in 1997 as part of a Masters thesis on Beachcare at Whangamata offered the opportunity to repeat some questions in this survey and gain comparative data to assess any changes in attitudes and levels of awareness².

The focus of this research was further narrowed to include information on the largest population of beach users at Whangamata; those domestic visitors that holiday occasionally or regularly, particularly over the summer months. This approach was also taken by Fagan, who states that “it is probable that more damage to the sand dunes is accomplished by visitors in the short three month intensive summer holiday period than is accomplished by residents during the rest of the year, particularly in terms of vegetation degradation through pedestrian traffic over the dunes” (Fagan, 1998, p198). As Fagan pointed out, since visitors form the largest population of beach users, any dune management strategy involving beach user education and behaviour change must include the visiting population.

Method

Whangamata's population swells five fold during the summer months with peak populations between Christmas and New Year's Day (on New Year's Eve 2004, Whangamata's population peaked at 48,385, falling rapidly in the days following so that by January 4th the population numbered around 20,000, still a five fold increase from the usual resident base). However, owing to time constraints for this study Anniversary Weekend at the end of January was seen as the next best time to interview a reasonably representative sample of summer beach users.

The usual resident population of Whangamata was 3,861 in 2001, with a projected population growth of 21% by 2021³. Absentee ratepayers make up approximately 61% of ratepayers in the Whangamata Community Board area with 44% of these coming from the Auckland urban area and peripheries, 21% from Hamilton, 19% from Waikato, Hauraki and the Bay of Plenty areas combined and 15% from the rest of New Zealand (TCDC, 2004).

The relative investment of visitors, in terms of property ownership or visiting patterns, was considered an important determinant of visitor knowledge and potentially of behaviour.

¹ The 2003 National Coastal Community Survey: results for Waikato beach communities.

² The visitor survey was undertaken between January 2, and January 5, 1997.

³ That is, about 4670 usually resident population.

With this mix of beach users in mind and the findings of Thomson's (2003) Beach Observations Survey of Pauanui and Whangamata in terms of when local residents were more likely to be on the beach, the sampling methodology took into account the likely times that these different groups would be on the beach, with interviews held between 8:30 am and 5 pm on all three days and interviews extending to 8:30 pm on the Friday. To randomise the sample the interviewers used the next person method (see section 2) and the beach was divided into three sectors to be covered by the interviewers (based on density of use by beach users).

The survey construction was informed by a literature review of coastal values⁴ and Fagan's research (including incorporating relevant questions from that study). In particular, the survey sought to identify barriers and benefits of beach accessways and attitudes to, and knowledge of, dune systems and related issues as seen by segments within the Whangamata beach user population.

Limitations

This research is indicative of the summer population of beach users at Whangamata and in particular those that visit outside the peak period, but within the school holiday period⁵. Repeating the survey over the peak period of Christmas to New Year may yield different proportions of domestic to international visitors as Tourism Coromandel tracking surveys indicate that international visitors visit in January through to April. It is likely that seasonal variations would be found if surveys were repeated in the autumn and winter months, with a likely drop off in first time visitors and possibly regular visitors that are not holiday home owners. There may also be an increase in domestic visitors without children that are seeking to avoid the peak times through the school holidays, preferring to holiday in February, and who may hold different values and attitudes to those expressed in this survey. In addition, sampling bias is likely present as interviews were not conducted later than 5pm on two of the three days, owing to resource constraints.

Analysis

The data is presented as descriptive statistics with significance testing undertaken on sub-groups of sufficient size. Some relationships in the data have not been able to be tested for significance. However, the differences between sub-groups have been reported as they give some interesting insights into the likely variation between sub-groups.

Discussion of Results

Who Was Interviewed?

In total 229 people took part in this survey, with a further 28 people declining to be interviewed. Fifty-one percent were men and forty-eight percent were women. The majority of respondents gave their ethnicity as either New Zealand European, Kiwi, New Zealander or Pakeha (85%). Only 4% gave their ethnicity as Maori (see section 3 for a full description of the sample characteristics).

Only 8% of respondents lived in Whangamata. The majority (85%) were occasional or regular visitors to Whangamata (51% of these owned a holiday home in Whangamata) and 7% were visiting Whangamata for the first time (nearly half of these were from overseas).

This mix is similar to that found by Fagan (1998) who while interviewing visitors only (local residents were screened from the survey) found that 89% were occasional or

⁴ The primary sources of this review were Dahm, C. 2002. *Beach User Values and Perceptions or Coastal Erosion*. Technical Report 2003/03. Environment Waikato, Hamilton and Thomson, J. 2003: *Coastal Values and Beach Use Survey Report*. Environment Waikato, Hamilton.

⁵ Non-probability sampling methodologies are not generalisable to the population as a whole.

regular visitors to Whangamata (92% of visitors in 2005) and 11% were first time visitors (8% of visitors in 2005).⁶

Of the visitors, the vast majority were domestic (92%) with just 8% being international visitors. Similar proportions of domestic to international visitors are recorded by Tourism Coromandel's (2003) Visitor Expenditure Survey with 85% being domestic and 15% being international visitors to Whangamata⁷.

The largest proportion of visitors came from the Waikato Region (43%), followed by the Auckland Region (36%), with smaller proportions visiting from the Bay of Plenty (9%), the rest of New Zealand (3%) and from overseas (3%). A few (2%) did not answer this question.

The large proportions of visitors hailing from the Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions is consistent with the absentee ownership in the Whangamata Community Board area of 61% and with Tourism Coromandel's trend data for domestic visitors to the Coromandel Peninsula as a whole, which shows domestic visitors from Auckland make up around 40%, while visitors from the Waikato Region make up around 15%, and from the Bay of Plenty around 8% (Tourism Coromandel, 2003).

Almost two thirds (62%) of those who owned a holiday home in Whangamata were from the Waikato Region while 34% were from Auckland and 4% were from the Bay of Plenty.

What People Enjoy About Spending Time at the Beach

Respondents were asked the following: "*Can you tell me about the kinds of things that you enjoy most about spending time at the beach?*".

In total, 59% of the sample mentioned swimming, surfing or other water activities as the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. This was followed by a third of the respondents who said they most enjoyed relaxing (30%), while 25% made general comments about enjoying the beach.

Almost a quarter of respondents mentioned walking, running or riding a bike as the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach (22%). Others mentioned the sun (17%), boating or fishing (15%), activities for the children (13%) and socialising (11%).

The environment was mentioned by 11% while 7% mentioned a clean beach or water and a similar number mentioned the scenery. Smaller numbers mentioned the shops, fresh air, the girls or that Whangamata was a safe beach.

Those more likely to enjoy swimming, surfing or other water activities and sun were aged 25 years and under, while those who enjoyed the beach for activities for kids, socialising and family were more likely to be aged 26-45 and those that enjoyed activities like walking, running, biking, boating or being in the fresh air and the environment were more likely to be aged 46-60.

The activities mentioned by the respondents in this survey are consistent with those in Thomson's (2003) research where water activities, using the beach for walking or running and sunbathing or relaxing dominated all three studies. However, the wording of this question was not purely activity-based and sought to explore other values associated with being at the beach. The results show that many people take pleasure in being in the natural environment (nature, clean beach and water, scenery, sun, fresh air) and the social environment (socialising, being with friends and family) of beach communities.

⁶ Comparative percentages calculated from a base of 210 visitors in this survey.

⁷ The report is based upon data collected from the period December 2002 to April 2003.

Type of Beach Visited Most Often

Respondents were asked, “Thinking about the beach you go to most often, which of these statements best describes it? ‘a beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all’, ‘a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and car park’ or ‘a beach in a coastal community with shops’.

The majority of the respondents (87%) most often went to a beach in a coastal community with shops, 11% most often went to a beach with only a few facilities like a toilet and a car park, while 2% most often went to a beach with no houses or facilities for visitors at all. Given that 88% of visiting respondents usually lived in the Auckland, Waikato or Bay of Plenty regions it is not surprising that many people most often went to a developed beach.

Those respondents who said they most often go to a beach in a coastal community with shops were more likely to have household incomes of over \$60,000.

There is some difference among the three beach styles in the reasons that respondents choose the beach they go to most often:

- For those who most often go to a beach in a coastal community; the shops, proximity to their home, having a beach house or that their family home is closest to that type of beach were the main reasons.
- For those who most often go to a beach with only a few facilities, the main reasons are the general atmosphere and a scenic or nice beach, a beach house or home, surf and remoteness.
- Only four people said they most often go to a beach with no facilities, reasons given were that it was in close proximity to where they lived and that it was unpopulated.

Those owning a holiday home in Whangamata were more likely to specify a ‘tradition’ of going or that there are ‘things to do’ as reasons for choosing this type of beach. While those visiting on an occasional or regular basis who do not own a holiday home were more likely to say the needs of ‘family’ was a reason for choosing this type of beach.

Type of Beach Preferred to Visit

Respondents were then asked; ‘For the types of beaches I’ve just described what type of beach do you prefer to visit?’

Not surprisingly, nearly two thirds of the respondents (59%) preferred to visit a beach in a coastal community with shops. However, a third of respondents (33%) preferred a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and a car park (18%) or a beach with no houses or facilities for visitors at all (11%), or a beach with no or few facilities (4%). A few respondents (4%) preferred a mix of two types of beach while 4% preferred all three types of beaches read out. The other 4% provided other comments while not nominating a particular type of beach.

Those preferring to visit a beach in a coastal community with shops were more likely to be women⁸ and those who own a holiday home at Whangamata. While those preferring to visit the least developed beach type were more likely to have household incomes of less than \$60,000 and to be aged 26-45 years. Those preferring a beach with only a few facilities were more likely to have household incomes of more than \$150,000.

Interestingly, most respondents from overseas and most first time visitors⁹ preferred a beach with few or no facilities.

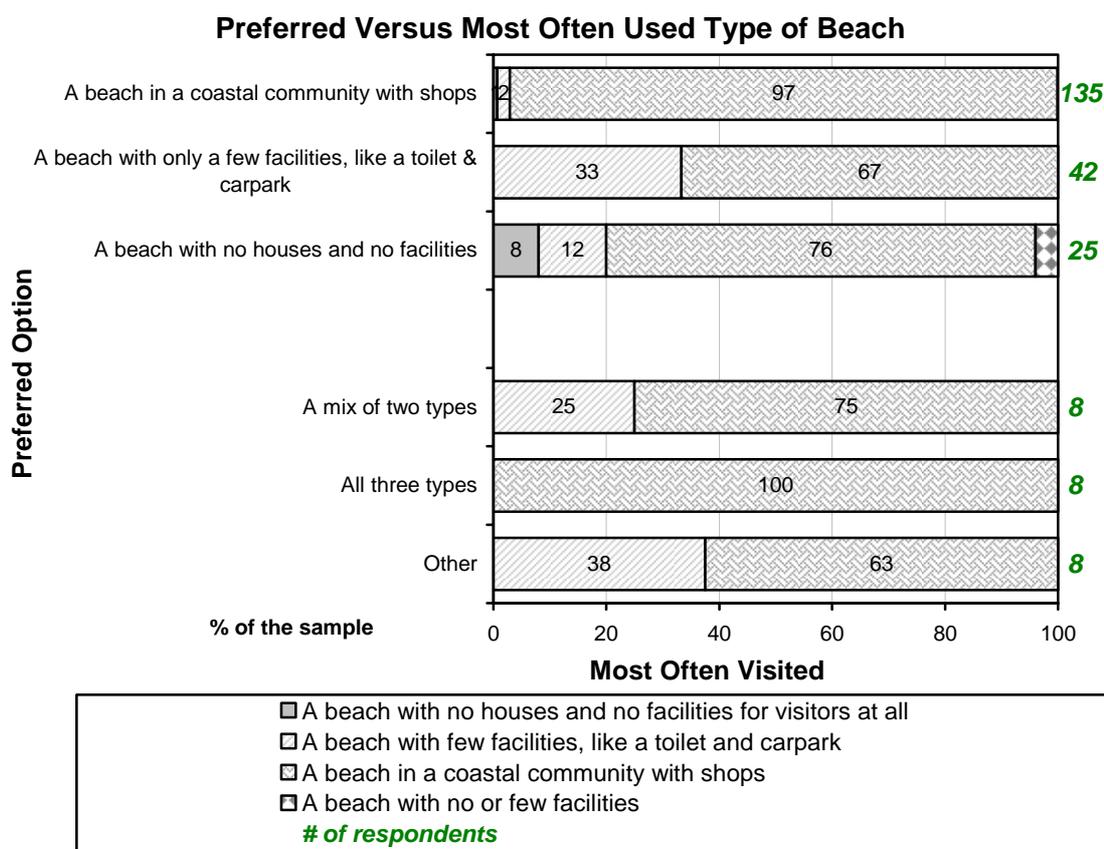
⁸ This maybe because choice is mediated by family needs.

⁹ Nearly half (46%) of first time visitors were from overseas.

There is some difference among the three beach styles in the reasons that respondents prefer the beach they do:

- For those who prefer to visit a beach with a coastal community, the shops, facilities and friends and family were the main reasons.
- For those who prefer to visit a beach with only a few facilities, the main reasons are a quiet, relaxing atmosphere and isolation.
- For those that prefer a beach with no facilities, the main reasons offered are because it is isolated with few people, its unspoilt nature and because it has a quiet, relaxing atmosphere.

The following chart compares the respondents' preferred type of beach against the type of beach they use most often. This shows that the majority of each group most often go to a beach in a coastal community with shops regardless of which beach they prefer to go to. In addition, the majority who prefer a beach in a coastal community with shops also get to go to this type of beach most often (97%).



However, only a third of those who prefer a beach with few facilities get to use that type of beach most often and only 8% of those who prefer a beach with no houses and no facilities get to visit this type of beach most often.

The reasons given for choosing a beach in a coastal community with shops are consistent with Thomson's findings that distance, accommodating family needs including the provision of facilities or a tradition of visiting a particular beach all impact on which beach is visited most often (Thomson, 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that those preferring a more remote, isolated experience are often visiting a comparatively developed beach.

These results pose some interesting questions about the level of development that people prefer at the beach community of their choice. In the case of Whangamata it seems that people prefer a beach community that has well developed facilities such as cinema, cafes, golf courses and shops while appreciating the physical environment that makes Whangamata the beach of their choice - a beach with a harbour, generally safe

swimming and an estuary all offering a variety of beach experiences and opportunities combining for recreational activities for all ages in their family structures.

Thomson's survey of Regional ratepayers found that by contrast, people's preferred beach of choice was a natural beach (80.2%). Reasons for preferring to visit this beach included the clean sand and water, the isolation, and the naturalness of the beach surroundings. However, almost 20% of people preferred beaches with some form of development – 17.5% preferred a grass verge beach, 3.3% a city beach, and 2.5% a rip-rap beach¹⁰.

When asked to rate the importance of a number of aspects of beaches retaining some undeveloped, natural beaches around the coast rated as people's most important value, with 84.4% rating this as 'Very Important'. The appearance of the beach and dunes (whether they are natural or not) was also ranked as very important by many people (66%).

It could be that Whangamata retains enough natural state with its relatively intact dune system to meet the desired environmental experience of its beach users. Dahm quotes English beach research, which found that "even at the more highly developed sites, the coastal scenery was an important attractor. It appears that even at these sites, the seemingly natural appearance of the coastal landscape – the sea and the shore – is highly appreciated and significant in guiding people's choices" (Dahm, 2002, 10). In contrast, Thomson's research highlights the need to retain natural state beaches, possibly for existence rather than utilitarian values. For although most people prefer to visit a 'natural beach' and say retention of some underdeveloped, natural beaches is very important, in fact many developed beaches are much more frequently utilised. The pattern of beach use and the high value placed on the appearance of beaches and dunes suggests they place significant value on the recreational and the 'natural features' of developed beaches also.

This preference for natural beaches and the high value placed on the appearance of dunes and beaches suggests that maintaining natural features at utilised beaches is important.

Usage of Sand Dunes

Respondents were asked, '*Thinking about this beach or other beaches you go to, do you use the dune area behind the beach for anything e.g. sunbathing, off-roading?*'

The majority of the respondents (84%) said they did not use the dune area behind the beach for anything. A further 3% said they did not really use this area. However, 13% of respondents said they did use the dune area behind the beach. There were no groups that were significantly more likely to use this area, but looking at the distributions it appears some of those from overseas (27% of this sub-group), living in Whangamata (26% of this sub-group), who prefer making their own way through the dunes (50%, just for access) or were categorised as least knowledgeable about dune systems (31% of this sub-group) may be inclined to do so, though numbers are small.

Among the 13% of respondents who said they did use the dunes the main comments were walking (17%), some other activity like bike riding or sand boarding (13%), for shelter (10%) or the children play in them (10%). Seven respondents who said they don't really use the dune areas said they used them for access. A small number of respondents (4%) said they did not use them now, but had used the dune area in the past.

People can tend to give more socially acceptable answers on questions about self-reported behaviour. However, it is likely that the proportion of people using the dune area is relatively low as observations over the three days of interviewing recorded less

¹⁰ People were asked to rank four photographs of the different styles of beaches.

than 20 people in the dunes over that period. These people were either sitting or walking through the dune area i.e. not using an accessway or they were children playing in the dune area. However, people were observed sitting on the toe of the dune on all three days. On the Saturday morning the width of the dry beach was severely limited owing to the high seas and on-shore wind, which meant that more people sat in the dune toe area than on the previous two days, moving down onto the beach once the tide turned. On the Saturday, many people observed the surf competition from the top of the dune on The Esplanade, with a few further along seated in the dunes. A small group were asked to get out of the fenced-off dune area at The Esplanade by the Lifeguards (over the loudspeaker), which they did.

Accessways at Whangamata are well signposted both in the town and on the beach. However, it was not possible to watch all of the dune system between the town and the beach to see if those entering the beach always used dedicated accessways.

Importance of Sand Dunes

Respondents were asked, '*Do you think that sand dunes are important on a beach?*'. The majority of the respondents (94%) think that sand dunes are important on a beach. Only 1% said they were not important while 2% said they were not really important. The remaining 3% did not know if they were important or not. This is a similar result to when this question was asked of visitors in 1997, where 97% thought sand dunes were important compared to 95% of 'visitors only' in 2005.

It is interesting to note that three of the respondents categorised as most knowledgeable about dune systems thought that sand dunes were not important.

Why sand dunes are important on a beach

The respondents gave a variety of answers as to why sand dunes were important, with a small number (2%) giving reasons as to why they were not important. The most common reasons given were: that they help to prevent erosion or to protect the properties behind them (59%) and their aesthetic and natural values including providing a visual and physical separation from the development behind the beach (47%). Other respondents mentioned that they protected the wildlife (10%) or were important for privacy or shelter (5%). Of those who said sand dunes are important to help erosion or to protect the properties behind them, respondents owning a holiday home in Whangamata, who had heard of Beachcare or who were aged 46-60 were more likely to mention this reason.

Similar themes emerged in Fagan's 1997 survey where visitors were asked why dunes were important - the strongest theme being natural hazards issues, with comments including protection from inundation and describing dunes as an erosion buffer. A smaller number mentioned natural character and aesthetic values, while some mentioned recreational and amenity values (Fagan, 1998).

Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata

Respondents were asked if they thought there were any problems with the dunes at Whangamata. Two fifths (39%) of respondents thought there were no problems, while a similar proportion (37%) thought there were problems, with a further 1% saying there were 'probably' problems. The remaining 23% were split between those: who did not know (6%), were not aware of any (3%), said there were not really any problems (1%), offered another view point (9%) or did not answer this question (4%).

Those saying that there were no problems¹¹ with the dunes were more likely to have been interviewed in the area by the Surf Club (47%) i.e. by The Esplanade, where large plantings are well established. They were also more likely to be aged 25 years and under (67%).

¹¹ This analysis includes those saying there were not or there were not really any problems with the dunes.

Those with holiday homes at Whangamata (45%), those from the Waikato Region (44%) and those classed as most knowledgeable (45%) were significantly more likely to say there were problems with the Whangamata dunes.

Problems identified were erosion (28%) or that people walking on the dunes caused problems (21%). Some made general positive comments about the dunes (12%). Those saying that people walking on the dunes created problems were more likely to have been interviewed between the harbour and north of The Esplanade (locators 0-8) where the dunes are noticeably less vegetated and towards the harbour end there are multiple sand tracks through that dune area.

Slightly higher proportions of visitors in 1997 considered there to be problems with the dunes at Whangamata (48%) than in 2005 (39% of visitors), while 41% said there were no problems in 1997 compared to 39% of visitors in 2005. This could reflect the observable changes over that time in the dune vegetation.

What They Think of Built Accessways

Respondents were asked, *'What do you think of the built accessways at Whangamata?'*

Four fifths (81%) of the respondents made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata. Other respondents made positive comments about the built accessways protecting the dunes (13%), making access easy (11%), there being plenty of built accessways (7%) or positively commented about the signage / numbering of the accessways (7%). A few others, said the accessways were okay (5%) or commented on these being aesthetically pleasant (2%).

Conversely, 9% of the respondents made negative comments about the built accessways. These were generally in relation to maintenance (4%) or to do with safety (2%) or design concerns (3%). Other respondents did not know about the built accessways (3%).

These results are similar to those found by Fagan in 1997, when 92% of visitors showed support for the provision of accessways (Fagan, 1998).

In 2000, the area alongside the Surf Club on The Esplanade reserve was fenced and planted, with multiple closely spaced accessways built. This work was a topic of discussion in the Whangamata community; the local newspaper (the Coastal News) ran a series of articles reporting the work as described as "totem poles" and "cattle yards"¹². Views were also canvassed through the Coastal News website using a web survey that asked people to vote on whether they considered the new look to be favourable or un-favourable¹³.

There appears to be continued support for the accessways at Whangamata. The small proportion of negative comments reflect people's concerns regarding the need for on-going maintenance and issues relating to safety and design (especially for the elderly, less mobile and those with children and pushchairs). Two respondents specifically commented on the 'cattle yards' positively, now that the area is well established.

Why Wooden Accessways Were Built

Respondents were asked why they thought the accessways were built. Just over half of the respondents (59%) said they were built to protect the dunes or to prevent erosion, with Whangamata holiday home owners significantly more likely to say this (66%). This was followed by 38% who said the accessways were built to control people's access, with those aged 46-60 significantly more likely to say this (48%).

¹² Coastal News 19 October 2000: Totem poles? Cattleyards .

¹³ Poll results were unavailable on the Coastal News website.

A quarter of the sample (24%) said the accessways were built to make access to the beach easy, with over half mentioning only this one reason (14% of the total sample). Of those significantly more likely to mention making access easier were those who had not heard of Beachcare (33%) or were in younger age groups¹⁴ or visited Whangamata occasionally or regularly but did not own a holiday home there (32%).

A small number commented these were built to protect the plants (10%) or wildlife (1%).

In 1997, when Fagan asked visitors "Why were the wooden accessways built?" the main theme to emerge was that 'they were there to protect the dunes' (66%).

Preferred Accessways

Respondents were asked to indicate the type(s) of accessways they preferred from a set list and were then asked the reasons they preferred that type(s). This question was designed to uncover the general advantages beach users saw in the various forms of accessways available. Some respondents also commented on the disadvantages they saw in the type(s) of accessways they did not prefer.

The largest group of respondents said they preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes (47%) or a sand ladder or plank and chain (43%). A quarter of the respondents (23%) preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone, while 11% preferred a set of built steps. A few respondents (2%) preferred making their own way through the dunes. There were also a few respondents (3%) who had no preference or who made other comments.

Boardwalks or tracks built through the dunes were popular because they were considered to be easier to use, better to walk on or safer (62% of this sub group). Women were more likely to prefer this type of accessway than men. Disadvantages mentioned about boardwalks were that sometimes they can be slippery and that they can be more intrusive in the environment.

Among those who preferred a sand ladder or plank and chain (n=98), the main reasons were because they were easier (19% of the sub-group), provided good footing and were safer (9%). People also commented that they were more flexible and moved with the beach (8%). Those aged 46-60 years were more likely to prefer this type of accessway (56%). Disadvantages mentioned about sand ladders were that they were hard to negotiate, particularly for older people, children or those with disabilities, were uncomfortable and hard on the feet and had potential for toe stubbing (you have to watch where you put your feet) and were sometimes unstable or in disrepair.

Among those who preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone (n=53), the main reasons given were because these were more natural (30% of the sub-group), easier (19%) and safer (11%). Disadvantages mentioned about a sand track were that loose sand is hard to walk through, or up, and that you get hot feet.

Among those who preferred a set of built steps (n=25) the main reasons given were because these were easier (36% of the sub group) and because these are best for the dunes by keeping people off them (20%). Disadvantages mentioned about built steps were that they are less natural, are not always easy for older people and children to use and are difficult to negotiate if you have a pushchair or other beach equipment. This is also seen as a more expensive option by some.

A few people (n=4) preferred to make their own way through the dunes and these people commented that this was a more natural experience.

¹⁴ Less than 26 years old, (39%) or 26-45 years old (31%).

A number of people said that the type of accessway was dependant on the situation it was needed for, e.g. a boardwalk was more suited to flat terrain and a sand ladder more suited to mobile areas that are damaged by storms and steeper areas.

Why people would not use the built accessways

Respondents were asked, 'Are there any reasons why you wouldn't use a built accessway?'. The majority (79%) of respondents said there were no reasons they would not use a built accessway. Among those who said there was a reason for not using a built accessway, the main reasons were because of distance (9%) or if they thought they were unsafe (4%) or because the accessway was difficult to use (4%).

Distance People Would Walk to Use Accessway

Respondents were asked, 'In general, if there's no built access at the point you're entering the beach, how far would you walk to use a built accessway?'

Shorter distances were most often mentioned, with 39% saying they would not walk far, or would walk up to 100 metres. Among those who mentioned a distance, the most common response was in the range from 0 – 50 metres (20%) with a further 11% stating they would walk between 51 and 100 metres while 11% said they would walk between 101 and 200 metres and 7% would walk between 201 and 500 metres.

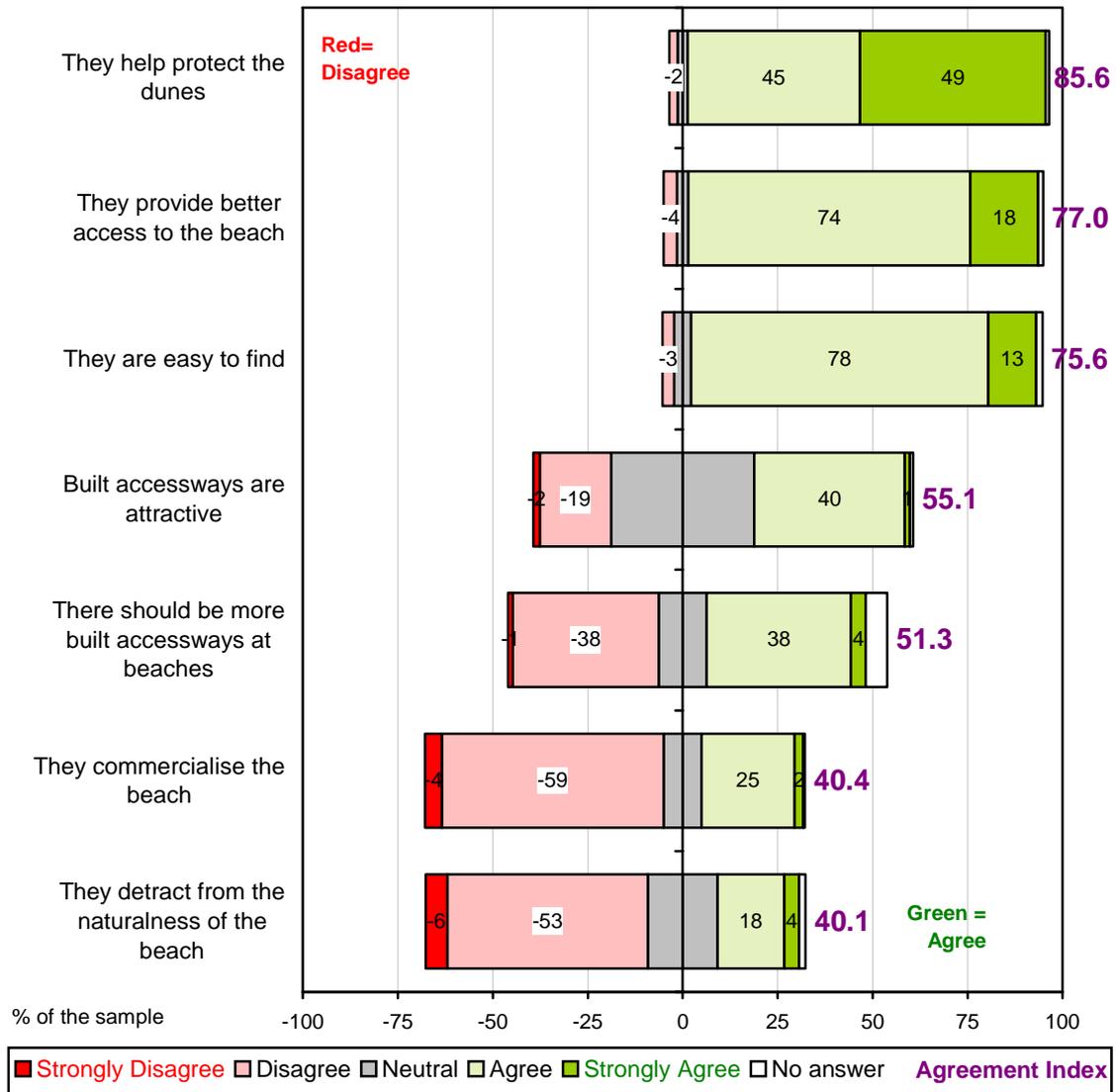
A number of respondents (16%) said they would walk as far as necessary while 8% said they would not walk very far. A number of respondents (13%) said that if there was no track that they would walk through the dunes if there were no accessways at the point they were entering the beach.

Attitudes towards Built Accessways

The respondents were read out seven different statements about built accessways. The level of agreement for each of these statements varies by statement. The majority of the sample, 94% agreed with the statement that built accessways 'help protect the dunes' while only a fifth of the sample (22%) agreed with the statement that built accessways 'detract from the naturalness of the beach'. Conversely, 59% disagreed with this statement while only 2% disagreed with the previous statement.

The chart shows the Agreement Index¹⁵, (a weighted score across the agreement scale) ranges from agreement with the statement, the built accessways 'help protect the dunes' (Agreement Index = 85.6) down to mild disagreement with the statement, the built accessways 'detract from the naturalness of the beach' (Agreement Index = 40.1).

¹⁵ The Agreement Index (AI) converts each respondents' answer across the agreement scale to a score out of 100. The conversion is as follows; Strongly Disagree = 0, Disagree = 25, Neutral = 50, Agree = 75 and Strongly Agree = 100



Overall people held positive attitudes towards built accessways, agreeing with statements *'they help protect the dunes'* (49% Strongly Agree), *'they provide better access to the beach'* (74% Agree) and *'they are easy to find'* (78% Agree) and disagreeing with the statements *'they commercialise the beach'* (59% Disagree) and *'they detract from the naturalness of the beach'* (53% Disagree). They were in less agreement over whether they are attractive or whether there should be more of them at beaches (some felt there were enough at Whangamata).

There was limited variation noted between the genders in the level of agreement with the statements about built accessways.

The type of beach user tends to have an impact on the level of agreement with the statements in relation to the built accessways. Some of those who lived locally tended to disagree with the statement *'built accessways are attractive'*, but held a more positive attitude towards the statement that built accessways *'commercialise the beach'* (i.e. they disagreed) as did those with holiday homes in Whangamata. Conversely, more occasional or regular visitors who did not own a holiday home and first time visitors were in agreement that built accessways *'commercialise the beach'*.

Comparing the agreement ratings for the statements in relation to the built accessways based on the preference for accessways shows some interesting variations. The respondents who liked *'following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone'* tended to have quite different views from those preferring steps, boardwalks or sand ladders. Those preferring a sand track were significantly more likely to disagree that built accessways provide *'better access to the beach'* or that

'they are attractive' and were significantly more likely to agree with the statements that built accessways *'commercialise the beach'* and that *'they detract from the naturalness of the beach'*. Whereas those that preferred sand ladders were significantly more likely to agree that built accessways *'help protect the dunes'*, provide *'better access to the beach'* and are *'easy to find'*. Conversely, they are more likely to disagree that they *'commercialise the beach'* and that they *'detract from the naturalness of the beach'*.

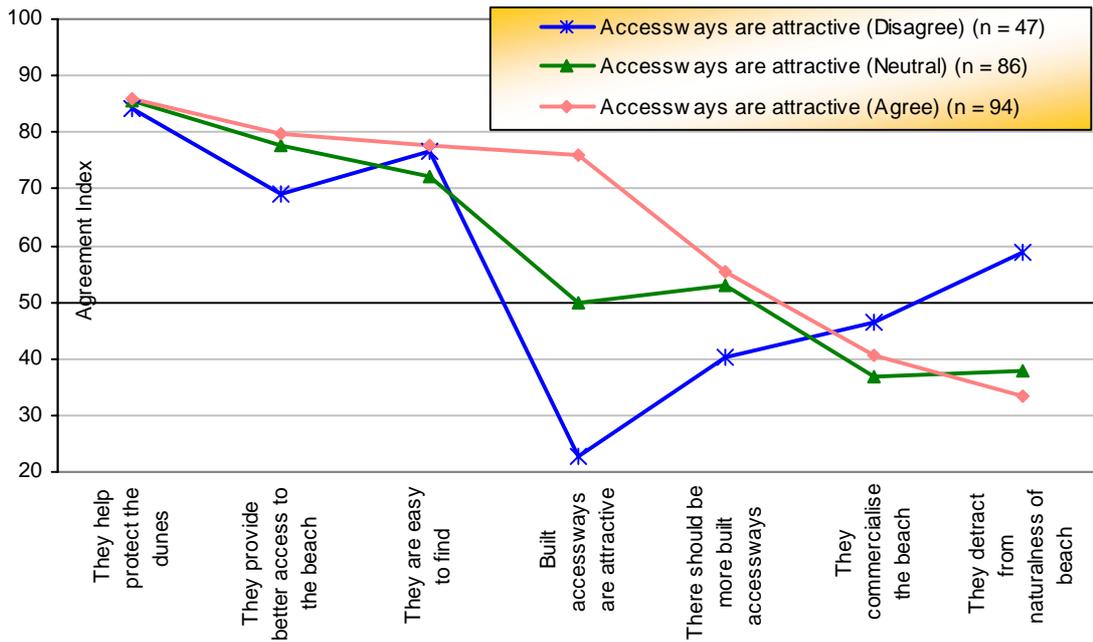
Comparing the agreement ratings for the statements about built accessways shows there are limited variations in the level of agreement based on their awareness of Beachcare. The largest difference is 10.9 points in the Agreement Index for the statement *'they commercialise the beach'* with those that are significantly more likely to be aware of Beachcare disagreeing with this statement.

The level of knowledge of the respondent (based on the knowledge scale about dune systems) appears to have limited impact on the level of agreement with the statements in relation to the built accessways. Apart from the variation on the level of agreement with the statement, *'they help protect the dunes'* where only 50% of those classed as least knowledgeable agreed with this statement¹⁶, the greatest variation is on the statement they *'commercialise the beach'*.

Comparing the agreement ratings for the statements about built accessways based on the level of agreement with the statement *'built accessways are attractive'* shows some variation in some factors, but little in most of the key statements. Disliking the look of the accessways appears to affect whether people feel they *'detract from the naturalness of the beach'*, but has little impact on people's understanding of the role of accessways in protecting the sand dunes i.e. there is very little variation on the statement *'they help protect the dunes'*.

¹⁶ This statement is one of the statements about sand dunes that comprise the knowledge scale, hence the variation.

Attitudes towards Built Accessways by Agreement with 'built accessways are attractive'



Attitudes towards Sand Dunes

The respondents were read eight different statements about the sand dunes. The level of agreement for each of these statements varies considerably by statement. This is partly because the three lowest scoring statements are negatively framed, which means a person disagreeing with the statement holds a positive attitude to that issue.

The chart shows the Agreement Index ranges from agreement with the statement, *'dunes are important, they're our natural heritage'* (Agreement Index = 86.3) down to strong disagreement with the statement, *'dunes recover quickly from four-wheel drives or motorbikes being driven on them'* (Agreement Index = 14.0).

The majority of the sample, 94% agreed with the statement, *'dunes are important, they're our natural heritage'* while none of the sample (0%) agreed with the statement, *'dunes recover quickly from four-wheel drives or motorbikes being driven on them'*. Conversely, 94% disagreed with this statement while only 1% disagreed with the previous statement.



These questions were designed to find out beach users' knowledge about dune processes. A knowledge scale was developed using seven of these statements (not included was 'when I'm on the beach I like the fact that dunes screen any development behind') and the statement built accessways 'help protect the dunes'. The negatively framed questions were inverted and correct answers were given one mark.

Grouping the respondents based on the knowledge scale shows that over half of the sample (59%) were in the most knowledgeable category – 42% got 7 questions correct while 18% got all 8 questions correct. A third of the sample (33%) were in the medium knowledge level group – 28% got 6 questions and 6% got 5 questions correct. Only 7% of the respondents got less than 5 questions correct.

Those significantly more likely to be the 'most knowledgeable' were aged 46–60 (72%), who have heard of Beachcare (69%), who live in their own home in Whangamata (87%), have a holiday home in Whangamata (66%) or were interviewed from the geographic locator 13 – 18 to the estuary (78%). Recent erosion events are still clearly visible on the section of the beach '13-18 to the estuary'.

Almost all respondents knew that dunes act as a buffer between the land and the sea (95%), that plants help to build up sand reserves (92%) and that dunes don't recover quickly from four-wheel drives or motorbikes being driven on them (94%). However,

fewer respondents thought that walking on dunes is a problem and increases erosion (85%) with 5% saying disagree and 6% neutral on this statement.

The two questions where less knowledge of dune systems was noticeable were: *'once a dune is destroyed there's no way to bring it back'* with only 31% disagreeing with this statement and *'the width of the dunes changes during the year'* with 64% agreeing with this statement. A quarter of respondents said 'don't know' on this question (44% of those aged 25 years and under).

There is little variation in the level of agreement on the statements about sand dunes between genders, while younger respondents tended to be more neutral.

The type of beach user tends to impact on the level of agreement with the statements about sand dunes. Visitors with a holiday home in Whangamata were significantly more likely to agree with the statement *'when I'm on the beach I like the fact that dunes screen any development behind'* (88%). Those with holiday homes were also more likely to agree that *'the width of the dune changes during the year'* (72%), while occasional or regular visitors without a holiday home in Whangamata were significantly more likely to say they did not know on this question (32%). However, a small percentage of holiday home owners (9%) were more likely to think that walking on dunes does not cause erosion. Those without a holiday home were also significantly more likely to agree that *'once a dune is destroyed there is no way to bring it back'* (50%). First time visitors agreed less strongly with the statement *'dunes are important, they're our natural heritage'*.

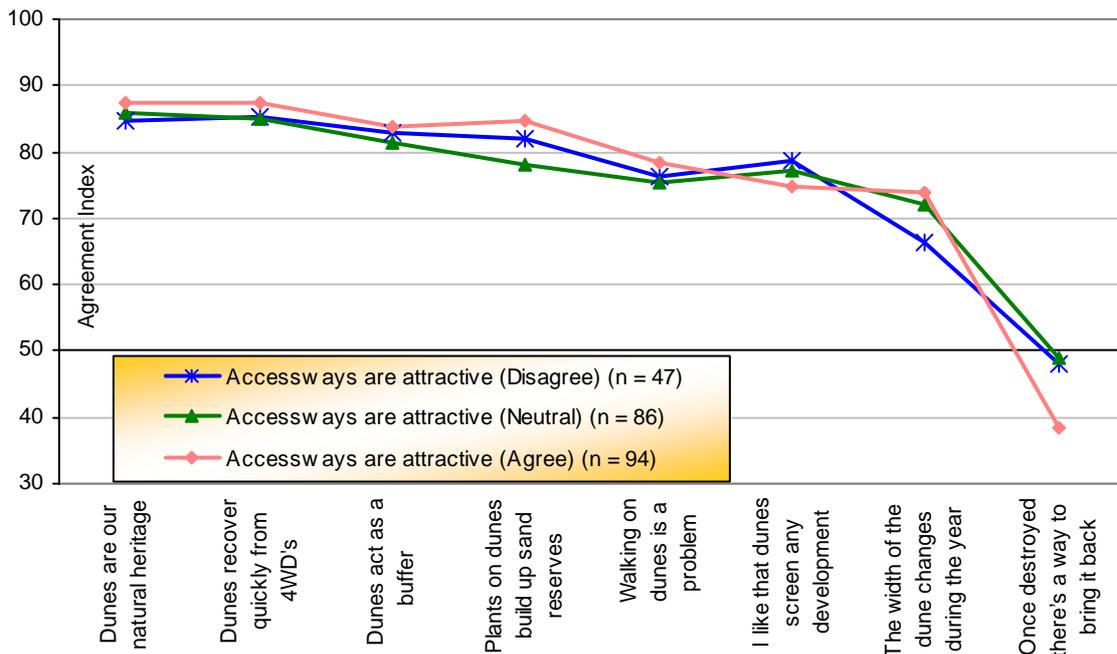
Comparing the agreement ratings for the statements about sand dunes shows there are some variations in the level of agreement based on whether the respondent was aware of Beachcare or not. In particular, those who were aware of Beachcare were significantly more likely to agree that the width of the dunes changes during the year and disagree with the statement *'once a dune is destroyed there's no way to bring it back'*. Those that had not heard of Beachcare were more likely to say 'don't know' or not answer on these statements.

Preference for a type of access to the beach shows some interesting variation with those preferring to 'follow a track through the sand where they can see others have gone' significantly more likely to be neutral on the statement *'walking on dunes isn't a problem as it doesn't increase erosion of dunes'* (13%) and a further 6% agreeing with this statement. Those who prefer steps appear more likely to disagree with the statement *'once a dune is destroyed there is a way to bring it back'*.

Comparing the agreement ratings for the statements about sand dunes based on the level of agreement with the statement built accessways *'help protect the dunes'* shows that those respondents who strongly agree with this statement tend to have a more favourable attitude to most statements.

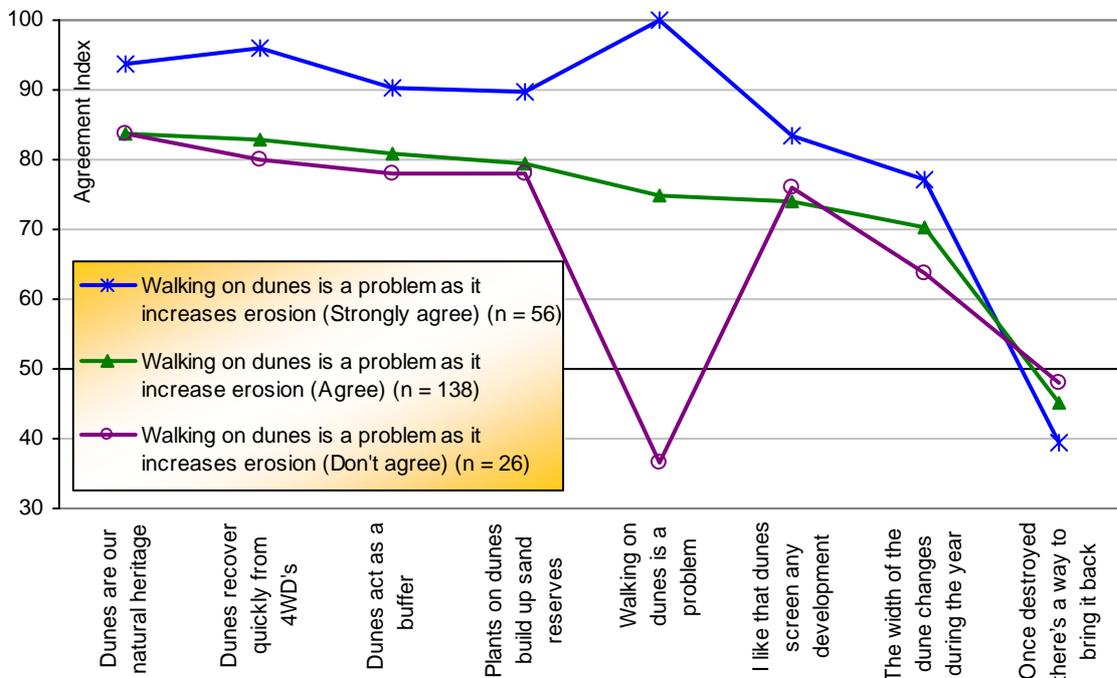
By looking at the agreement ratings for the statements about sand dunes based on the level of agreement with the statement 'built accessways are attractive' it appears that disliking the look of the accessways has little impact on people's understanding of the role of sand dunes.

Attitudes towards Sand Dunes – by Agreement with ‘built accessways are attractive’



Comparing the agreement ratings for the statement ‘walking on dunes is a problem as it increases erosion’ shows some interesting variation. Respondents who think it's okay to walk on the dunes tend to have a similar attitude on most other statements. This infers this small sub-group does not see walking on the dunes is part of the problem.

Attitudes towards Sand Dunes – by Agreement with ‘walking on dunes is a problem as it increases erosion’



Awareness of Beachcare

Respondents were asked, ‘have you ever heard of Beachcare?’ Almost half of respondents (49%) had heard of Beachcare. Conversely just over half of the sample, 51% said they had not heard of Beachcare. In 1997, Fagan found that 24% of visitors surveyed had heard of Beachcare compared to 46% of visitors in 2005.

Those significantly more likely to 'have heard of Beachcare' were those who owned a holiday home in Whangamata, those aged 46 – 60 years and those categorised as most knowledgeable on the knowledge scale. It is likely that those who live in Whangamata are also more likely to have heard of Beachcare (74%), but that this sub-group is too small to allow significance testing.

The respondents who were aware of Beachcare (n=111) were asked 'are you, or have you ever been, a member of Beachcare or do you receive the Beachcare newsletter?'

Most of those who were aware of Beachcare had never been a member (87%). Only one respondent was a member of Beachcare, one other had been a member previously and 11% percent did not answer this question.

Those aware of Beachcare were also asked 'What do you think Beachcare does?' Three quarters of this sub-group said they monitored or protected the dunes. This was followed by a third of the respondents who said Beachcare was involved in the plants or wildlife. A tenth of the respondents mentioned keeping the dunes clean and tidy, building and maintaining walkways and creating public awareness.

Conclusions

Beach users

The sampling process highlights the fact that Whangamata beach is used by a diverse range of people, with many users coming from various parts of New Zealand for their holidays and many owning holiday homes at Whangamata. Whangamata attracts proportionally more domestic visitors than international. Whangamata is also home to many residents, whether they reside in their own home or rent. The analysis shows that the type of beach user has a significant impact on their practices and attitudes to both accessways and sand dunes and their knowledge of dune systems.

As would be expected with interviews of respondents on a beach in a coastal community with shops, most users prefer to go to this type of beach. However, there were still many who prefer to seek recreational experiences at less developed beaches.

Accessways - use and attitudes

Most respondents were positive about the built accessways at Whangamata and said they were put there to protect the dunes or to control people's access. However, 14% mentioned that accessways were there to facilitate easy access to the beach and these people made no reference to their role in maintaining dune systems.

Most respondents preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes (47%) or a sand ladder or plank and chain (43%). A number of disadvantages were recorded for each of the common types of accessways in place. However, the majority (79%) of respondents said they would always use a built accessway. A fifth (21%) said there were reasons they would not use one. Distance to an accessway also appears to be a factor in whether people will use an accessway or will make their own way through the dunes.

Most respondents have positive attitudes to the built accessways in general although there are some who think that built accessways are not attractive. However, even these people tend to agree that the accessways help protect the dunes. Whangamata residents and those with holiday homes generally held positive attitudes to accessways as did those that are aware of Beachcare.

Lack of knowledge of dune systems did not appear to influence people's attitudes to built accessways, though those that had least knowledge were in more agreement that accessways '*commercialise the beach*'. Interestingly, those who preferred to use a

sand track through the dunes where you can see others have been had less favourable attitudes to built accessways, seeing them as detracting from the naturalness of the beach and commercialising the beach. For those preferring to use a sand track the main reason given was that they are more natural.

Knowledge of dune systems

Many of those who were first time visitors (half were overseas visitors) were less knowledgeable about sand dunes (with only 41% categorised as most knowledgeable). Conversely, those who live in their own home in Whangamata or who have a holiday home there appear the most knowledgeable about dune processes. This probably reflects their awareness of dune processes from a longer-term association with the beach, experiencing erosion events and observing changes in the amount of dune vegetation. This survey did not quantify visitors' frequency of visits to Whangamata or the length of association with the beach. However, the results suggest that those occasional or regular visitors who do not own holiday homes may visit less frequently than holiday home owners and therefore have less experience of erosion events and less knowledge of dune processes¹⁷.

Most respondents consider the sand dunes to be important¹⁸ and are aware that they help protect development behind from erosion events. However, almost two-fifths (37%) of the respondents thought there were problems with the dunes at Whangamata. Conversely, 39% said there were no problems with the dunes.

Most respondents agreed with the statements about the sand dunes (or disagreed with the negatively framed questions). Younger respondents and first time visitors are less knowledgeable on many of these questions and these respondents tended to agree less strongly or reply with 'don't know'. The inference is that there is an on-going need to raise the awareness and understanding of the young and first time visitors about the role of sand dunes.

There is a need to develop people's understanding of dune systems and their part in managing coastal erosion, in particular people were less aware that there are ways to restore dunes and that the width of the dune changes during the year.

It is also interesting to note that there are a small (5%), but significant, proportion of people who have a very favourable attitude to the sand dunes, but think that walking on the dunes is not a problem. This may infer that many people do not see their walking on the dunes being an issue and that messages need to be more specific about the negative impacts that walking on dunes.

Awareness of Beachcare

It appears awareness of Beachcare among visitors has grown since 1997. However, half of all the respondents had not heard of Beachcare. Awareness was significantly higher among older respondents and those who lived in (74%) or owned a holiday home in Whangamata (65%)¹⁹.

It appears that those who are aware of Beachcare tended to agree more strongly with most of the attitudinal questions on access ways and sand dunes. However, given that only half of respondents had heard of Beachcare it is unlikely that awareness of this group alone is responsible for generally positive responses in this survey. It could be that responses are positive as more people have become aware of the changes on the ground - that Beachcare has initiated through accessways and plantings - which are highly visible, but that the brand Beachcare has not been well communicated.

¹⁷ It would be useful for future surveys of this type to quantify the regularity and length of association with a beach.

¹⁸ Note this was only asked as a yes / no question. For future surveys it could be beneficial to ascertain how important people think sand dunes are.

¹⁹ This is to be expected as Beachcare has been reported in the local paper and ratepayers may have read articles in the Envirocare.

In summary

To summarise, this research has increased the level of understanding of summer beach users in Whangamata and their attitudes to sand dunes and accessways. This analysis shows that many people have very favourable attitudes and there is a sound level of knowledge about sand dunes.

However, it appears that a key component of functioning dune systems is not well understood by many beach users and that messages need to be designed to communicate the fact that dunes are mobile and will change their width.

In addition, some people remain to be convinced, or do not know, that walking on dunes is a problem and contributes to erosion of dunes. Included in this group are likely to be those that have a preference for a more natural style of accessway.

Those with a preference for this style of accessway may need messages that explain why different styles of accessways are appropriate at different locations. However, it is likely that well defined sand tracks will be utilised by this group without straying off the path as very few people prefer to make their own way through the dunes.

Other target audiences include younger people who tended to be less informed about dune systems (this is a trend seen across broader environmental surveys).

More people were aware of Beachcare than in the previous survey. It is likely that the work achieved by Beachcare since 1994 has contributed to people's awareness of the need to protect dunes and acceptance of accessways.

1 Background

The focus of the research is the summer beach user population of Whangamata. The survey seeks to provide information to Environment Waikato to enable the targeting of messages and provision of relevant and salient information to this population.

The focus of this research was further narrowed to provide information on the largest population of beach users at Whangamata, which are those domestic visitors that holiday occasionally or regularly, particularly over the summer months. This approach was also taken by Fagan (1998) who states that it is probable that more damage to the sand dunes is accomplished by visitors in the short three month intensive summer holiday period than is accomplished by residents during the rest of the year, particularly in terms of vegetation degradation through pedestrian traffic over the dunes. Since visitors form the largest population of beach users, any dune management strategy involving beach user education and behaviour change must include the visiting population.

A review of literature on beach users' values, perceptions of coastal erosion and perceptions of natural character as well as insights from the literature on environmental attitudes and behaviour informed the theoretical construction of this research²⁰.

In 1997, Fagan (1998) undertook surveys of Whangamata beach visitors and Whangamata residents as part of a Masters thesis on Whangamata Beachcare. Some of the questions from that research were included to allow for some (limited) comparison between time periods.

2 Methodology

Interviewing method

Face to face interviews were conducted using a structured questionnaire. Previous research studies on beaches have shown that people are generally willing to take part in interviews as they are relaxed, have time, are interested in the subject matter and can see from others the length of time taken for an interview and the lack of refusals.

The sample: who to interview, and how many

The focus of this research is the beach user population of Whangamata. In particular, this research was timed (within constraints) to capture the summer population of Whangamata beach users, a large proportion of whom are known to be made up of domestic visitors from the Auckland region who owned holiday homes in Whangamata or who regularly visit there. The interviews were carried out with respondents on the beach to increase the salience of the questions.

The non-probability next-encounter sampling technique was adopted. The aim of this method is randomise interviews. The beach was divided into three sectors based on density of use by beach users, to be covered by the interviewers. Previous research has shown that different groups of people (locals, regulars, first time visitors, swimmers, walkers etc) use the beach at different times of day so interviews were conducted between 8:30am and 5pm on all three days, with interviews extending to 8:30pm on the Friday to increase the representativeness of the sample.

On the Saturday, younger age groups were targeted as numbers had been lower for this group in the previous two days.

²⁰ The primary sources of this review were Dahm, C. 2002. *Beach User Values and Perceptions of Coastal Erosion*. Technical Report 2003/03. Environment Waikato, Hamilton and Thomson, J. 2003: *Coastal Values and Beach Use Survey Report*. Environment Waikato, Hamilton.

Refusal rate

In total 214 people took part in the survey. Twenty-eight people declined to be interviewed (15 women and 13 men) – a 13% refusal rate. The most common reason was because people were taking a walk and did not want to be interrupted.

Limitations

This research is indicative of the summer population of beach users at Whangamata and in particular those that visit outside the peak period, but within the school holiday period²¹. Repeating the survey over the peak period of Christmas to New Year may yield different proportions of domestic to international visitors as the Tourism Coromandel tracking surveys indicate that international visitors visit in January through to April. It is likely that seasonal variations would be found if surveys were repeated in the autumn and winter months, with a likely drop off in first time visitors and possibly regular visitors that are not holiday home owners. There may also be an increase in domestic visitors without children that are seeking to avoid the peak times through the school holidays, preferring to holiday in February, and who may hold different values and attitudes to those expressed in this survey. In addition, sampling bias is likely present as interviews were not conducted later than 5pm on two of the three days, due to resource constraints.

The data is presented as descriptive statistics with significance testing undertaken on sub-groups. Some relationships in the data have not been able to be tested for significance because sub-groups were too small, but the differences between sub-groups has been included as they give some insights into the likely variation that may exist between sub-groups.

2.1 Questionnaire

Environment Waikato developed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested within Environment Waikato and piloted on people in the community and adjustments were made.

2.2 Conducting the Interviews

Interview timings

The interviews were conducted over three days, from Thursday 27th January to Saturday 29th January. This time period took in the end of the school holidays and the start of the Anniversary Weekend.

The interviews were conducted between 8:30am and 5pm on Thursday, between 8:30am and 8:30pm on Friday and between 8:30am and 4pm on Saturday.

The average interview length was eight minutes.

Conditions

Over the three days, high tide was in the morning at 9:27 am, 10:34 m and 11:41 am respectively. Low tide was at 3:42 pm, 4:49 pm and 5:56 pm respectively. The sea was choppy on all three days with wave heights of 2.5 – 3 metres on Thursday and Friday and over 4 metres on Saturday. The weather was overcast and cool in the mornings and clearing in the afternoons to become sunny and hot.

Peak head counts recorded by Surf Life Saving Whangamata were 2300 on Thursday, 3100 on Friday and 2250 on Saturday. The pattern of beach use observed during the three days showed lower numbers on the beach before 11am with peak numbers in the mid-to-late afternoon.

The proximity to the Surf Club and the town centre reflected the distribution of beach users along the length of Whangamata beach. Most people were observed using the

²¹ Non-probability sampling methodologies are not generalisable to the population as a whole.

area around the Surf Club. The stretch of beach between the harbour and to the left of the Surf Club was the next most popular (this area is fed by a number of accessways leading from the town centre). The southern stretch of beach, past the point by Pipi Rd to the Otahu estuary was the least populated, with beach users widely dispersed by comparison (this dispersion is reflected in the number of interviews undertaken in this area).

Patterns of beach use

Recreation patterns observed over the three days were influenced by the Dog Control Bylaw and conditions to some extent. The Bylaw bans dog owners from taking their dogs on to the beach between 9am and 7pm between Dec 15th to Feb 8th. The most frequent activities observed before 11am were walking, walking the dog and running.

By the afternoon people were observed swimming, surfing, boogie boarding, sunbathing, playing with, or watching their children in the water, sitting or reading. On the Friday evening people were observed to be surfing, boogie boarding, sitting, reading, walking, walking with dogs and running. On Saturday the wave height and sea conditions made the beach unsafe for swimming with Lifeguards recommending that people did not swim, though a surfing competition was run.

A few people were observed using the dune area over the three days (less than 20 in that period). These people were either sitting or walking through the dune area i.e. not using an accessway or they were children playing in the dune area. However, people were observed sitting in the toe of the dune on all three days. On the Saturday morning the width of the dry beach was limited due to the high seas and on-shore wind, which meant that more people sat in the dune toe area than on the previous two days, moving down onto the beach once the tide turned. On the Saturday, many people observed the surf competition from the top of the dune on The Esplanade, with a few further along seated in the dunes. A small group were asked to get out of the dune area at The Esplanade by the Lifeguards (over the loudspeaker), which they did.

Accessways at Whangamata are well signposted both in the town and on the beach. However, it was not possible to watch all accessways to see if those entering the beach always used dedicated accessways.

2.3 Processing the Information

The detailed data processing was completed by International Research Consultants. Open-ended questions - where the interviewer records what the respondent says instead of circling a pre-coded answer - were read and coded by our team of experienced coders. The coding was then checked and amended where necessary by Environment Waikato.

Cross-tabulations formed the basis of the survey analysis.

2.4 Scales and Their Interpretation

Indexes

This report uses indexes to allow meaningful comparisons across the various demographic sub groups. An index is a weighted average score across the scale range. These include:

- **The Agreement Index (AI)**²² - a weighted score across the agreement scale that converts each respondents answer across the agreement scale to a score out of 100.

²² The Agreement Index (AI) converts each respondents' answer across the agreement scale to a score out of 100. The conversion is as follows; Strongly Disagree = 0, Disagree = 25, Neutral = 50, Agree = 75 and Strongly Agree = 100

For the purposes of calculating an Index the results of such questions are presented as a weighted average (a score out of 100) with the following weights applied.

Index	Agreement Scale
100	Strongly Agree 10
75	Agree
50	Neutral 5
25	Disagree
0	Strongly Disagree 0

The Agreement Index allows at a glance comparison of strength of agreement with a statement where a low score of 1-25 shows stronger disagreement and a high score of 75 – 100 shows stronger agreement.

- **The Knowledge Scale** – a scale was developed based on the respondents’ replies regarding dune systems to allow comparisons between those with the least, mid or most knowledge of dune systems. This approach has been taken before by Environment Waikato when reporting on the Environmental Awareness, Attitudes and Actions survey, to allow comparison of people’s general knowledge of environmental issues.

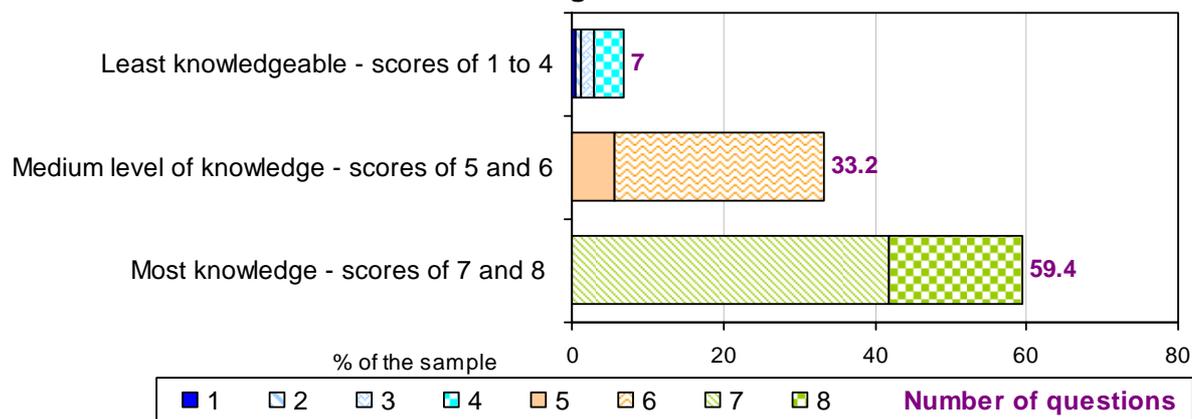
The method used for this data is as follows:

1. Only the 8 valid statements from the attitudinal section of the report were used:
 - a. They (built accessways) help protect the dunes
 - b. Dunes are important, they’re our natural heritage
 - c. Dunes act as a buffer between land and the sea
 - d. Once a dune is destroyed there’s no way to bring it back
 - e. Walking on dunes isn’t a problem as it doesn’t increase erosion of dunes
 - f. Dunes recover quickly from four-wheel drives or motorbikes being driven on them
 - g. Plants on dunes build up sand reserves by stopping it from blowing away, making a store of sand for erosion periods
 - h. The width of the dune changes during the year
2. The negative statements’ (highlighted in blue above) polarity was reversed to allow meaningful comparisons.
3. Each correct ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’ answer is given one mark. ‘Don’t Know’, ‘Strongly Disagree’ ‘Disagree’ and ‘Neutral’ are all coded as a ‘Disagree’ answer on the scale.
4. The number of correct answers was totalled for each respondent to give a score out of 8.
5. The scores were then grouped together into a knowledge scale for analysis purposes. The knowledge scale score that we have allocated is:
 - a. Least knowledgeable; Scores of 1 to 4
 - b. Medium level of knowledge; Scores of 5 and 6
 - c. Most knowledge; Scores of 7 and 8

Grouping the respondents based on the knowledge scale results shows that over half of the sample (59%) were in the most knowledgeable category – 42% got 7 questions rights while 18% got all 8 questions right.

A third of the sample (33%) were in the medium knowledge level group – 28% got 6 questions and 6% got 5 questions right. Only 7% of the respondents got less than 5 questions right. One respondent did not complete this series of questions as the interview was interrupted.

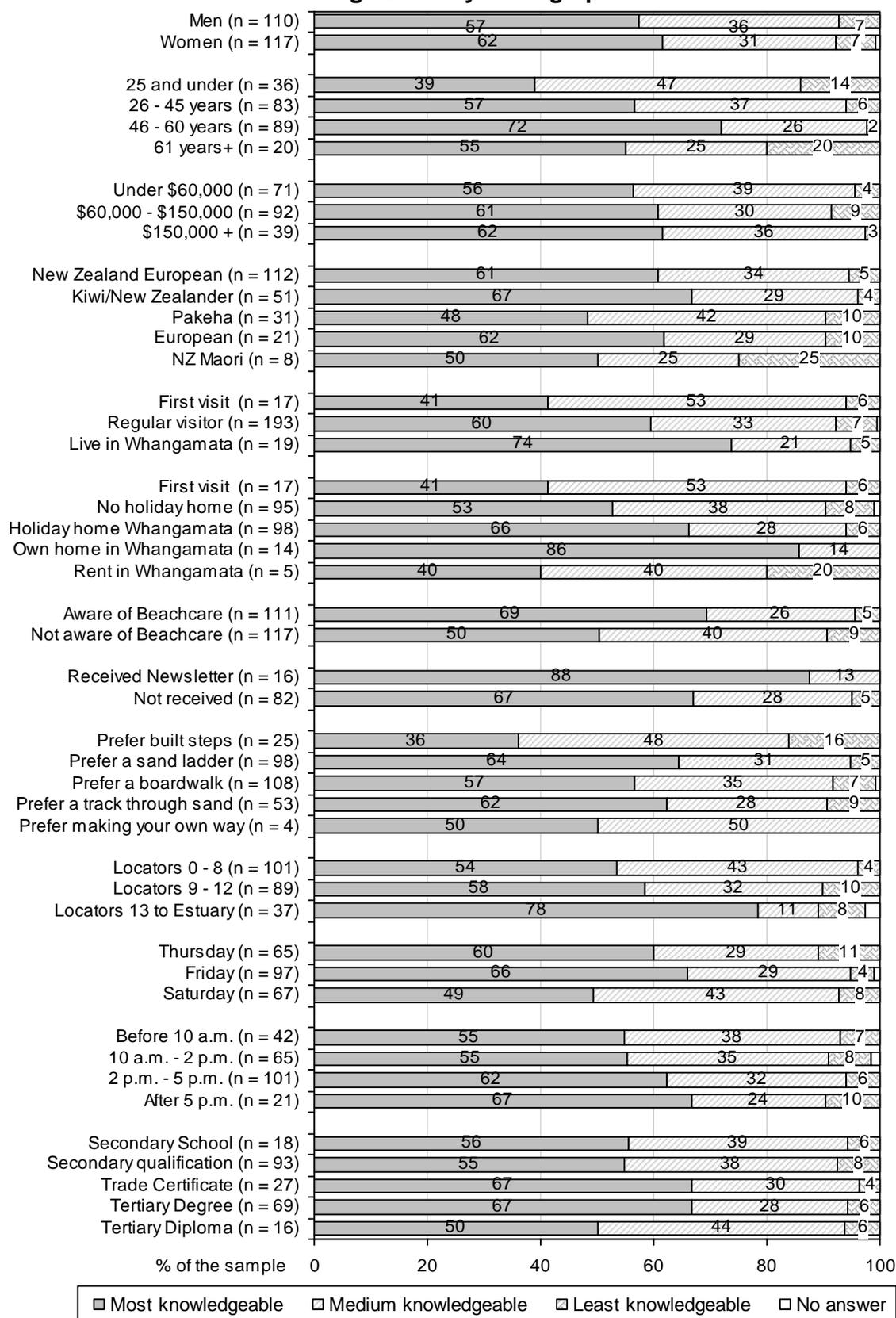
Knowledge Scale



Those significantly **more likely** to ‘be the most knowledgeable about dunes’ included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 72% (99% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 69% (99% confidence level).
- Were recruited from the geographic locator 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 78% (95% confidence level).
- Who live in their own home in Whangamata, 86% or have a holiday home in Whangamata, 66%.

Knowledge Scale by Demographics



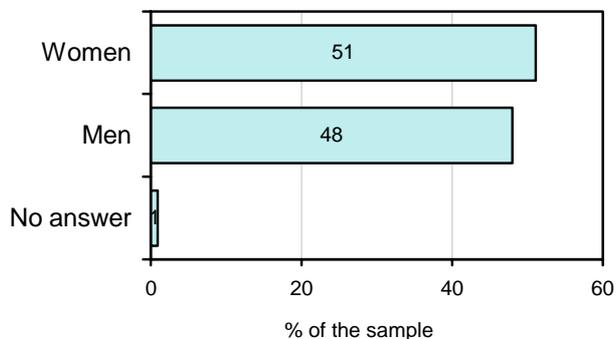
Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Sample Characteristics

This survey represents a summary of the views of the respondents interviewed on Whangamata beach.

3.1 Gender

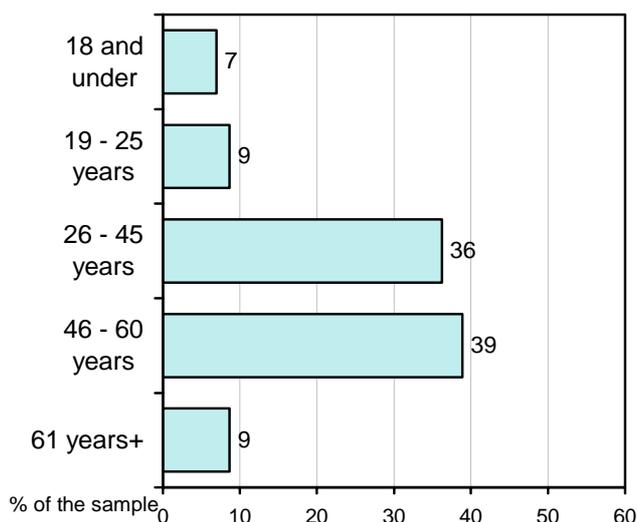
There was a balanced mix of women and men interviewed, 51% and 48% respectively.



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.2 Age

The sample was split between 16% aged 25 years and under, those aged 26 – 45 years (36%), those aged 46 – 60 years (39%) and those aged over 60 years, (9%).

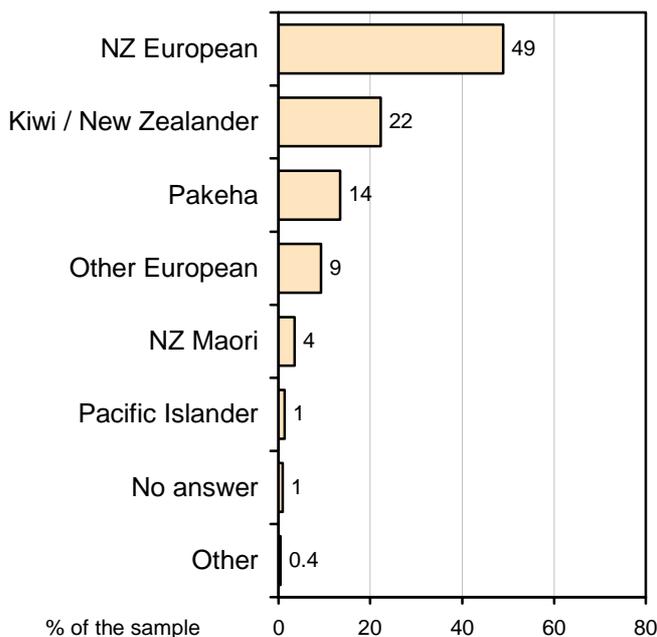


Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.3 Ethnic Group

The majority (85%) of respondents in the sample said they were NZ European (49%), Kiwi or New Zealander (22%) or Pakeha (14%), with a further 9% describing themselves European.

Just 4% of the sample stated their ethnicity as Maori. The remaining 2% gave other ethnic groups or did not answer this question.



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

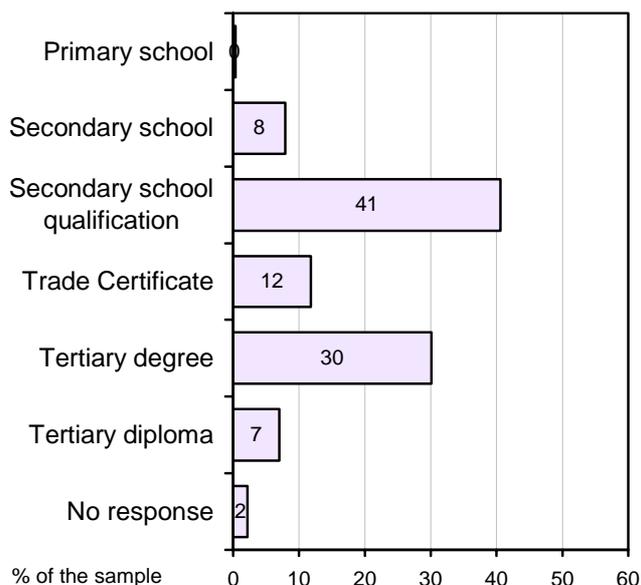
3.4 Education

Respondents were asked what was their highest educational qualification.

Half (49%) of the sample was tertiary qualified .

Two fifths of the sample (41%) had a secondary school qualification.

Only 8% of the sample's highest qualification was attending secondary school with one respondent stating primary school was her highest qualification.



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.5 Occupation

The sample encompasses a wide cross-section of occupations.

The largest grouping is of people who are not currently working (retirees, students, beneficiaries, home makers) that account for 24% of the sample.

The second largest groupings were of professional people (13%), farmers (11%), and then tradesmen (11%) and teachers and nurses (7%).



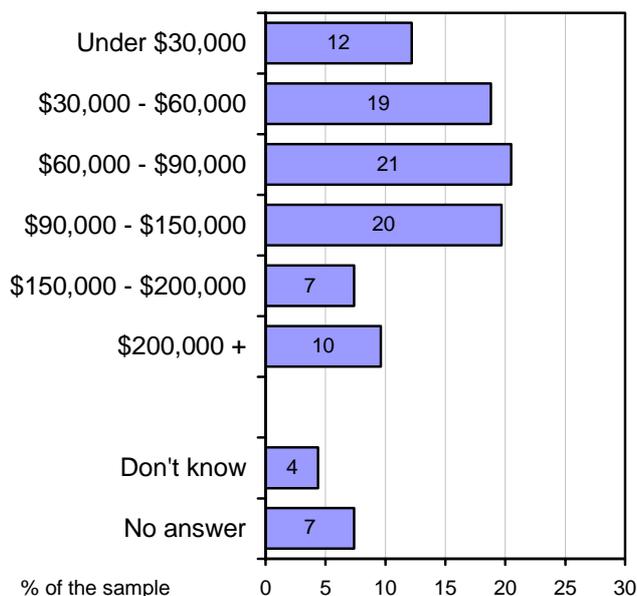
3.6 Household Income

There is a fairly even spread of respondents across the different levels of household income.

An eighth of the sample (12%) had a household income of less than \$30,000. A further 39% had an income between \$30,000 and \$90,000.

A fifth of the sample (20%) had a household income of \$90,000 to \$150,000. A further 17% had incomes over \$150,000.

A tenth of the respondents (11%) did not disclose their income.



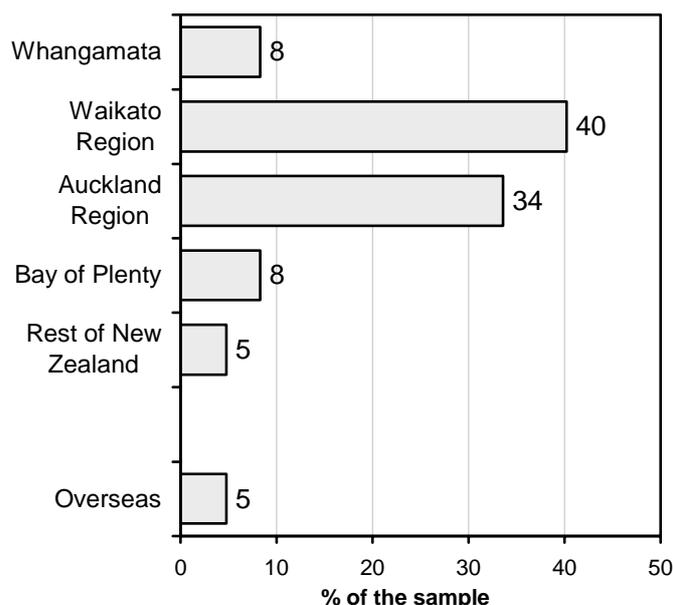
Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.7 Where Usually Live

The largest proportion of the respondents, (40%) usually lived in the Waikato Region (excludes those living in Whangamata) with a further 34% normally residing in the Auckland Region.

Only 8% of the respondents lived in Whangamata.

The balance was split between 8% from the Bay of Plenty, 5% from the rest of New Zealand and 5% from overseas.

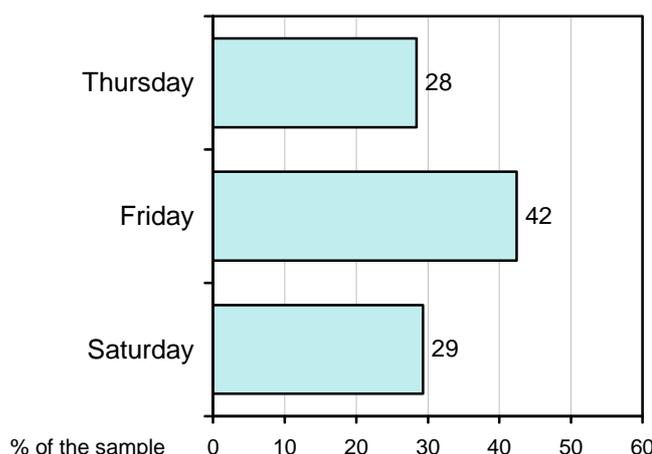


Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.8 Day of Interview

The interviews were conducted over three days, from Thursday 27th January to Saturday 29th January. This time period took in the end of the school holidays and the start of the Anniversary Weekend.

The majority of interviews were conducted on Friday (42%) with 28% on Thursday and 29% on Saturday.



It is important to note the sample methods have not tried to reflect the variation in the timing of visits (i.e. it's possible that more first time visitors or occasional or regular visitors without holiday homes visit over the weekend and interviews were not conducted on Sunday). Therefore, these results cannot be assumed to reflect the patterns and opinions of summer beach users, though they may do so.

Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed on Thursday included those:

- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 37% (90% confidence level)

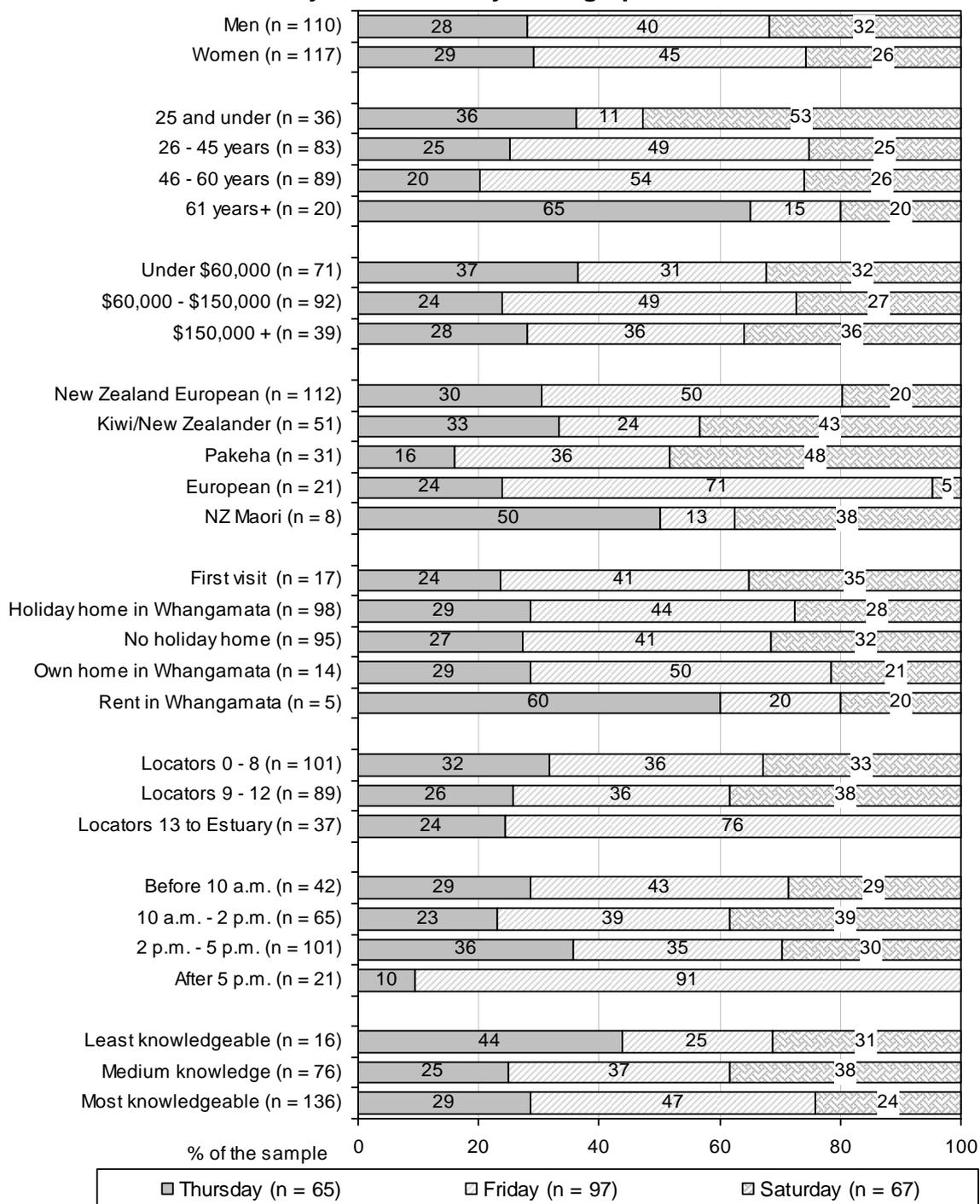
Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed on Friday included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 54% (99% confidence level).
- Of NZ European descent, 50% (95% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed on Saturday included those:

- Aged 18 – 25, 53% (99% confidence level).
- Who defined themselves as New Zealanders, 43% or Pakeha 48% (95% confidence level).
- Recruited between the geographic locator 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 38% (95% confidence level).

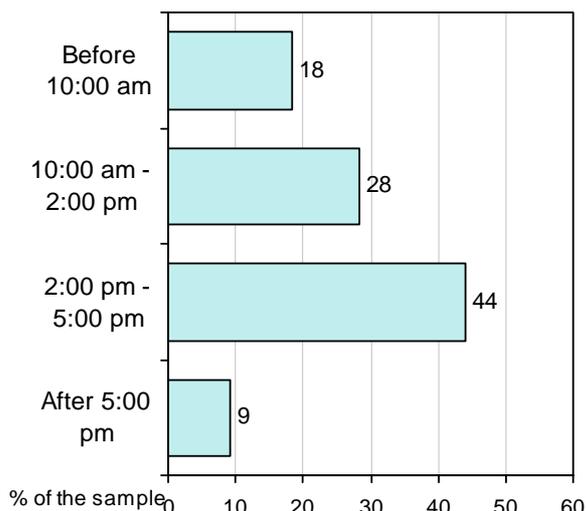
Day of Interview by Demographics



3.9 Time of Interview

The time of each interview was recorded. Interview times were then categorised as occurring: up to 10 am; from 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock; from 2 o'clock to 5 o'clock and from 5 o'clock onwards.

The largest number of interviews were conducted between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm (44%) with a further 28% between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. A fifth of the sample was drawn before 10:00 am while 9% were interviewed after 5:00 pm.



Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed before 10:00 am included those:

- Aged 46-60, 26% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of over than \$150,000 p.a., 28% (90% confidence level)
- Who defined themselves as Pakeha 29% (90% confidence level).

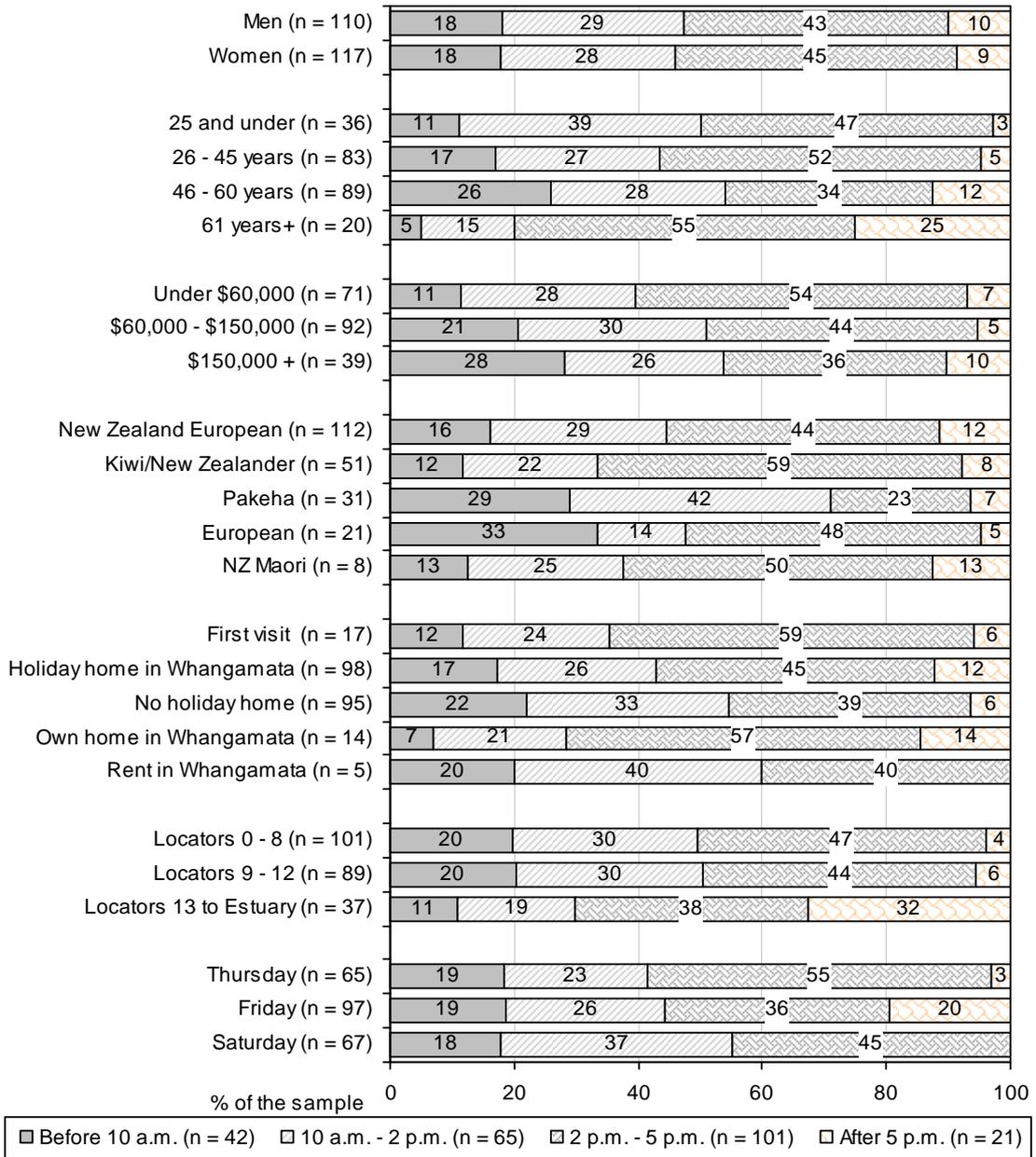
Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha 42% (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm included those:

- Who defined themselves as New Zealanders, 59% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Thursday, 55% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 26 – 45, 52% (90% confidence level).

Time of Interview by Demographics



3.10 Location of Interview

The length of Whangamata ocean beach has numbered access signs. These signs were used to determine at which sections of the beach interviews were conducted.

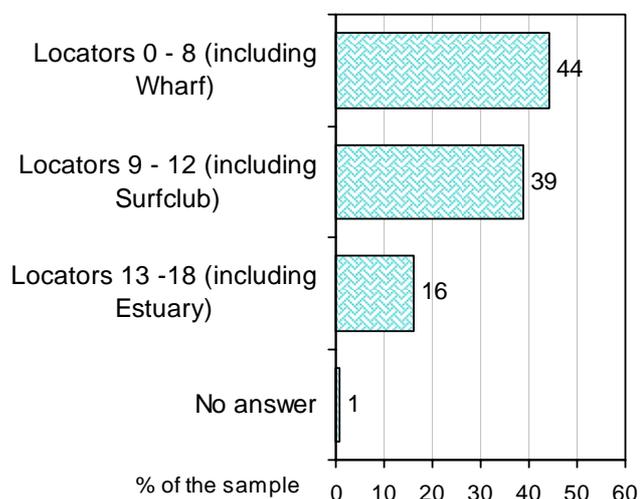
The interviews have been analysed by three locator categories – the Harbour entrance to Accessway 8; Accessway 8 to Accessway 12 (by Pipi Rd) and the southern stretch of the beach from Accessway 12 to the Otahu Estuary.



The interviewing was conducted at various points along the beach to ensure that the breadth of beach visitors were included in the survey.

The locations of the interviews have been grouped into 3 areas with 44% of interviews being conducted from locator numbers 0 – 8 which includes the wharf area. The second main area was the locators 9 – 12 which included the surf club area (39%).

A sixth of the interviews were conducted in the area of locators 13 – 18 including the Estuary (16%).



Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed between Geographic Numbers 0 – 8 included those:

- Who had **not** heard of Beachcare, 51% (95% confidence level).

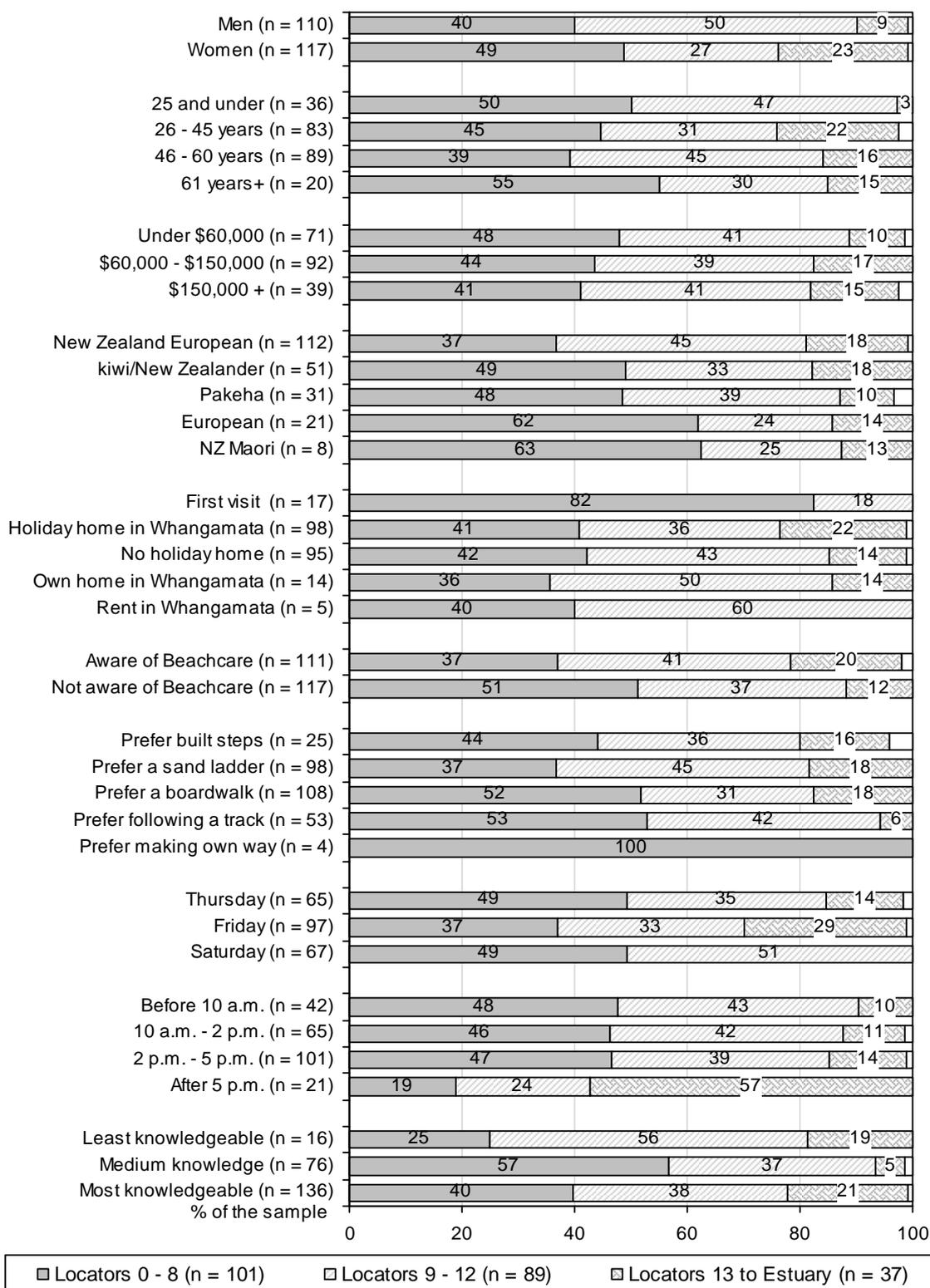
Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed between Geographic Numbers 9 – 12 included those:

- Men, 50% (99% confidence level).
- Of NZ European descent, 45% (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to be interviewed between Geographic Numbers 13 – 18 included those:

- Women, 23% (99% confidence level).
- Who have a holiday home in Whangamata, 22% (95% confidence level)..
- Aged 26-45, 22% (90% confidence level).

Location of Interview by Demographics



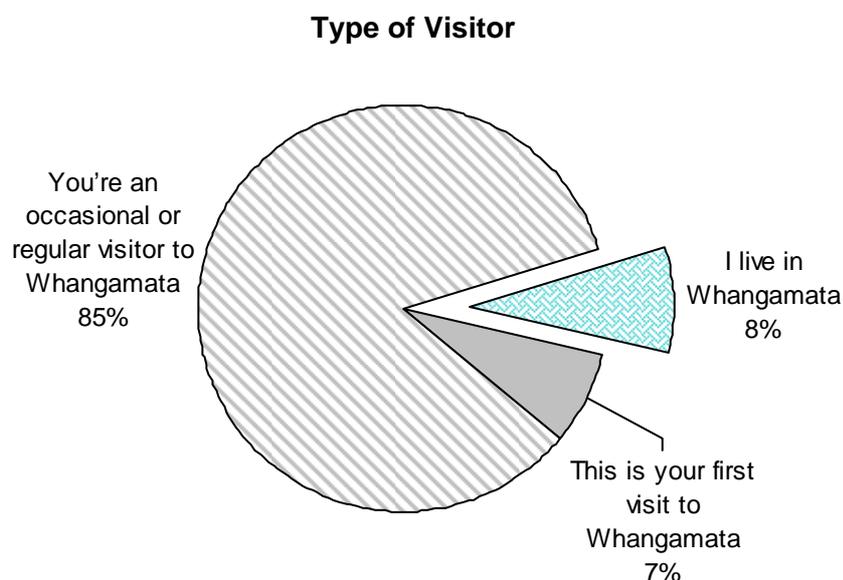
4 Beach User Information

4.1 Type of Beach User

Respondents were asked, "Can you tell me which best describes you? 'this is your first visit to Whangamata', 'you're an occasional or regular visitor to Whangamata' or 'I live in Whangamata'.

The graph below shows the majority of the respondents (85%) were an occasional or regular visitor to Whangamata, a small proportion (7%) were first time visitors to Whangamata and 8% were local residents. This reflects the timing of this survey to coincide with the end of the school holidays and beginning of an Anniversary weekend when beach patronage is normally swelled by domestic visitors.

This result is similar to that of Fagan (1998), who interviewing visitors only, with local residents being screened from the survey, found that 89% were occasional or regular visitors to Whangamata (92% in 2005) and 11% were first time visitors (8% in 2005)²³.



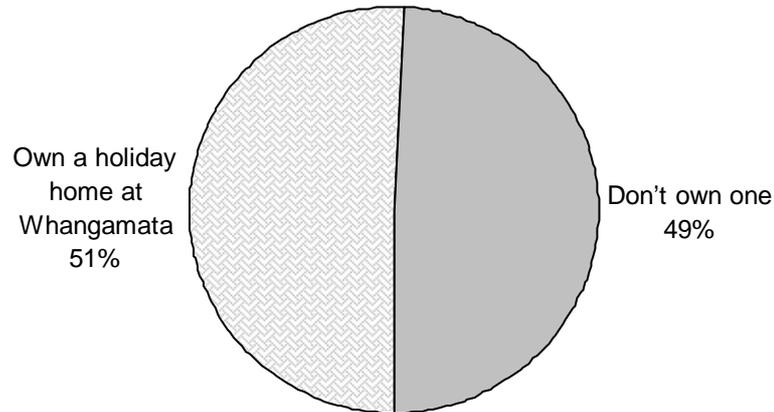
Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

²³ Comparative percentages calculated from a base of 210 visitors in this sample.

4.2 Regular Visitors - Holiday Home Ownership

Respondents who visited Whangamata on an occasional or regular basis (n=193) were asked if they owned a holiday home in Whangamata. The graph below shows half of the respondents who visited Whangamata on an occasional or regular basis owned a holiday home there, 51%. Conversely, 49% did not own a holiday home in Whangamata.

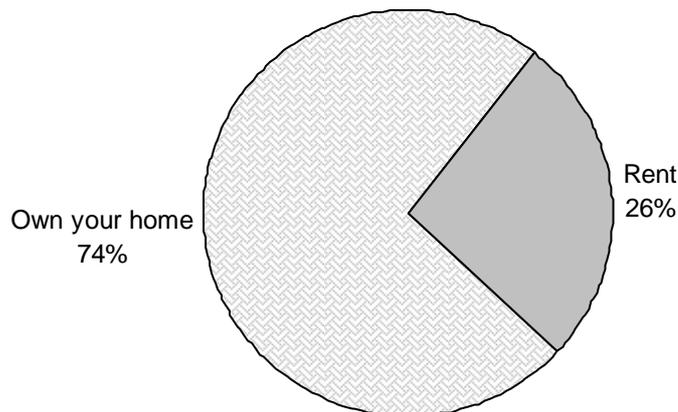
Occasional or Regular Visitors – Holiday Home Ownership



4.3 Whangamata Residents - Home Ownership

Respondents who lived in Whangamata (n=19) were asked if they owned their own home or rented. The graph below shows the majority of the respondents who lived in Whangamata owned their own home, 74%. The other 5 respondents (26%) rented in Whangamata.

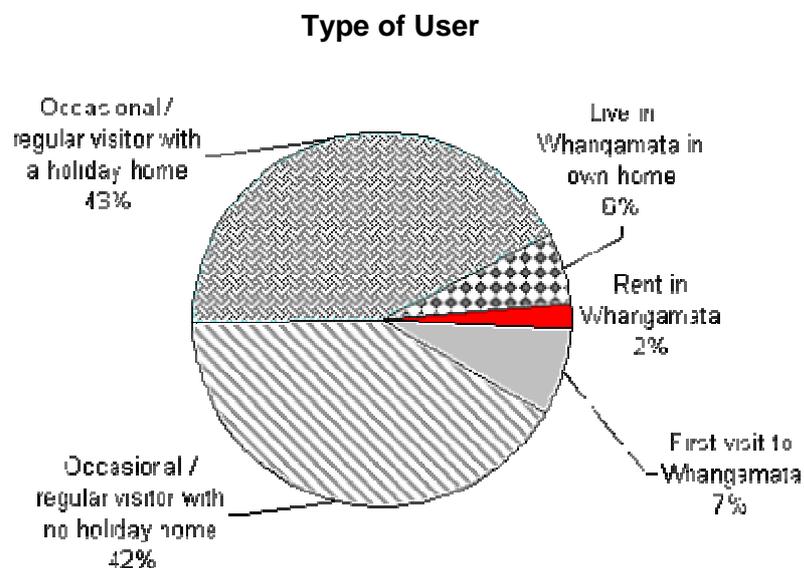
Whangamata Residents – Home Ownership



4.4 Visitors, Holiday Home Owners and Residents

The graph below shows that while only 8% actually lived in Whangamata, a further 43% owned a holiday home - that is 51% of the respondents had a property tie with Whangamata.

A further 42% said they were occasional or regular visitors, but they did not own a holiday home and the remaining 7% were first time visitors.



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Those significantly **more likely** to 'be on their first visit to Whangamata' included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 22% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 16% (99% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to 'be an occasional or regular visitor with **no** holiday home in Whangamata' included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 56% (90% confidence level).

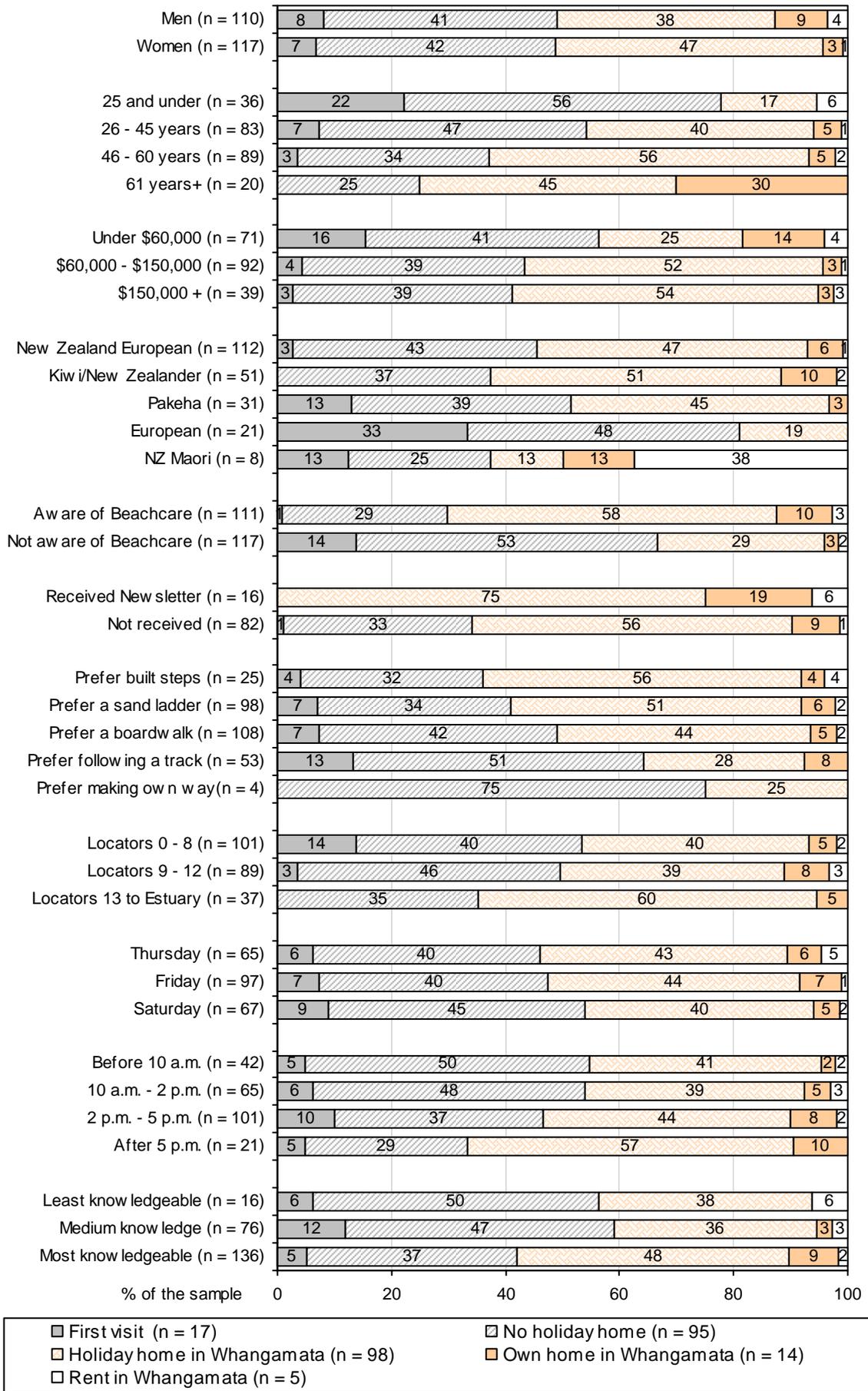
Those significantly **more likely** to 'be an occasional or regular visitor and own a holiday home in Whangamata' included those:

- Who had heard of Beachcare, 58% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 52% (99% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 56% (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to 'live in their own home in Whangamata' included those:

- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 14% (99% confidence level).
- Men, 9% (90% confidence level).

Visitors, Holiday Home Owners and Residents by Demographics



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.5 Where Visitors Usually Live

Of the respondents who said that they were either first time, occasional or regular visitors to Whangamata (n=210), 92% were domestic visitors and 8% were international visitors. Similar proportions of domestic to international visitors are recorded by Tourism Coromandel's Visitor Expenditure Survey (2003) with 85% being domestic and 15% being international visitors to Whangamata²⁴.

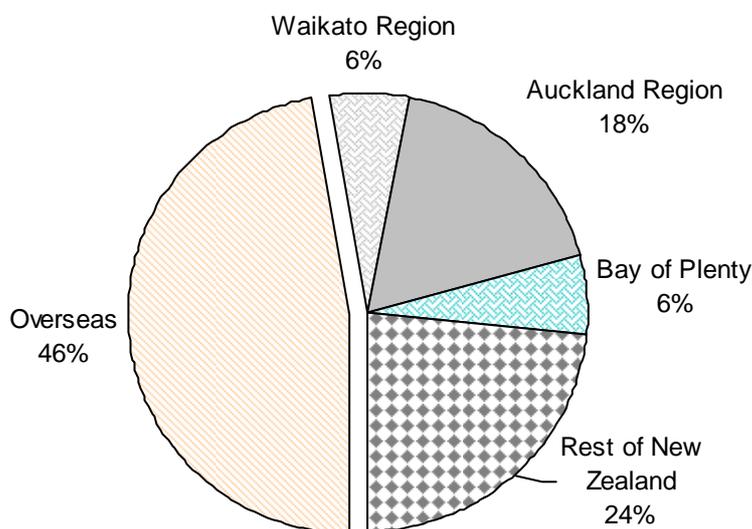
The largest group of visitors came from the Waikato Region (43%), followed by the Auckland region (36%), with smaller proportions visiting from the Bay of Plenty (9%), the rest of New Zealand (3%), from overseas (3%). A few (2%) did not answer this question.

The large proportions of visitors hailing from the Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions is consistent with the absentee ownership in the Whangamata Community Board area of 61% which is made up approximately of 44% from the Auckland urban area and peripheries, 21% from Hamilton, 19% from Waikato, Hauraki and the Bay of Plenty areas and 15% from the rest of New Zealand (TCDC, 2004) and with Tourism Coromandel's trend data for domestic visitors to the Coromandel Peninsula as a whole, which shows domestic visitors from Auckland make up around 40%, while visitors from the Waikato Region make up around 15%, and from the Bay of Plenty around 8% (Tourism Coromandel, 2003).

4.5.1 First Time Visitors - Where They Usually Live

The respondents who were visiting Whangamata beach for the first time (n=17) were asked where they usually lived.

Eight respondents (46%) were visitors from overseas. A further 18% of the first time visitors were from the Auckland region, while 6% were from the Waikato Region and 6% from the Bay of Plenty. The balance were from the rest of New Zealand, 24%.



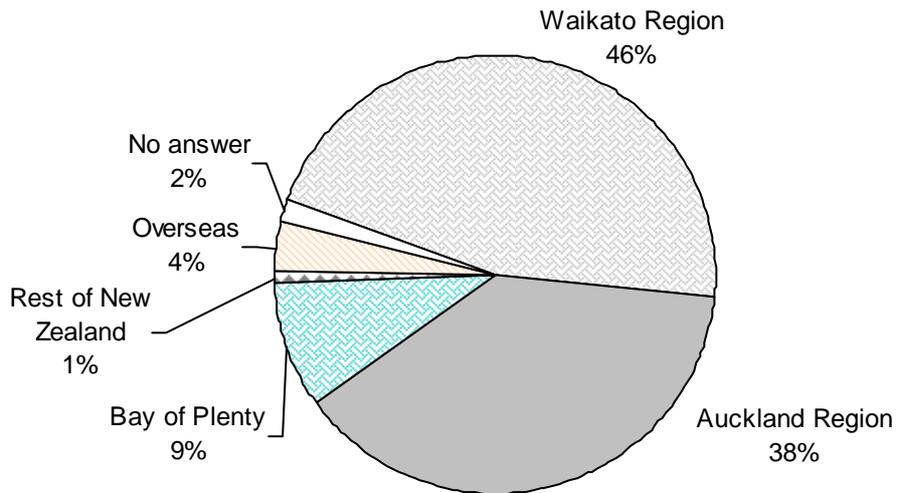
4.5.2 Regular Visitors - Where They Usually Live

Respondents who visited Whangamata on an occasional or regular basis (n=193) were asked where they usually lived.

Almost half of these respondents were visitors from the Waikato Region 46% with a further 38% of the occasional or regular visitors being from the Auckland region. A

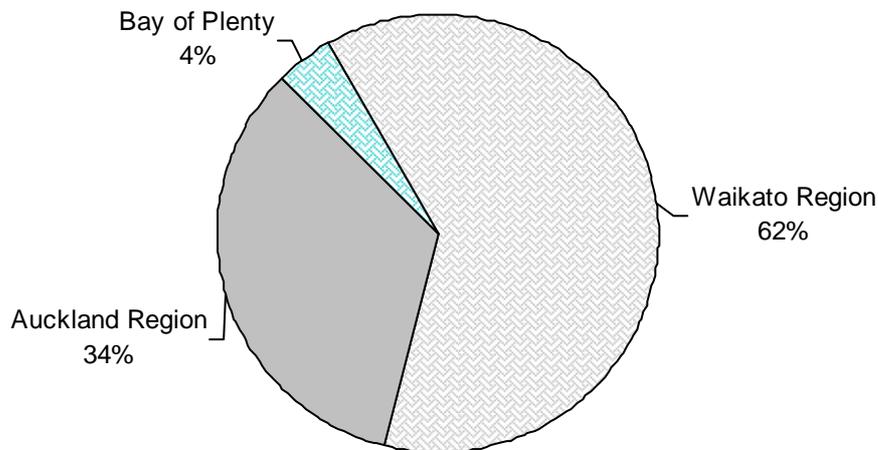
²⁴ The report is based upon data collected from the period December 2002 to April 2003.

further 9% were from the Bay of Plenty while 4% were from overseas. The balance was from the rest of New Zealand, 1% or did not answer this question 2%.



4.5.3 Holiday Home Owners - Where They Usually Live

Almost two thirds (62%) of those who owned a holiday home in Whangamata were from the Waikato Region while 34% were from Auckland and 4% were from the Bay of Plenty.



5 What People Enjoy About the Beach

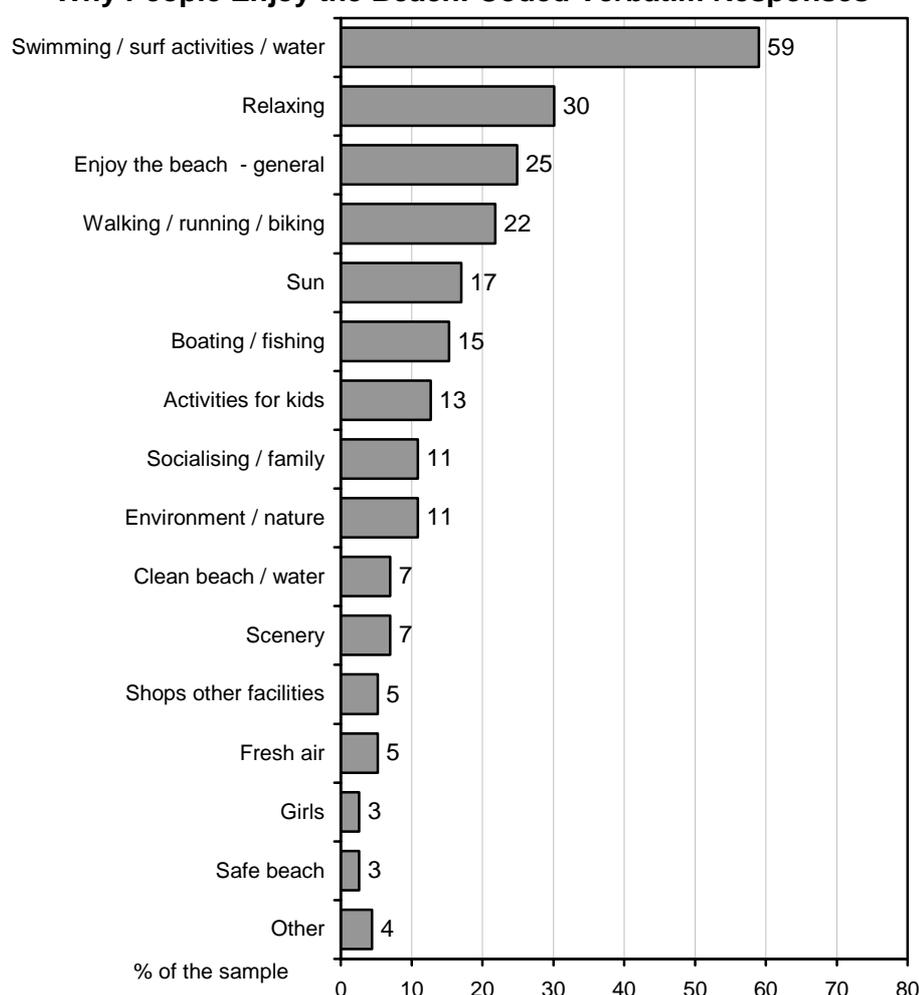
Respondents were asked the following: “Can you tell me about the kinds of things that you enjoy most about spending time at the beach?”.

In total, 59% of the sample mentioned swimming, surfing or other water activities as the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. This was followed by a third of the respondents who said they most enjoyed relaxing (30%) while 25% made general comments about enjoying the beach. Nearly a quarter of the respondents mentioned walking, running or riding a bike as the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach (22%). Others mentioned the sun (17%), boating or fishing (15%), activities for the children (13%) and socialising (11%).

The environment was mentioned by 11% while 7% mentioned the clean beach or water and a similar number mentioned the scenery. Smaller groups mentioned the shops, fresh air, the girls or that Whangamata was a safe beach and there were also a range of other comments. A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 1.

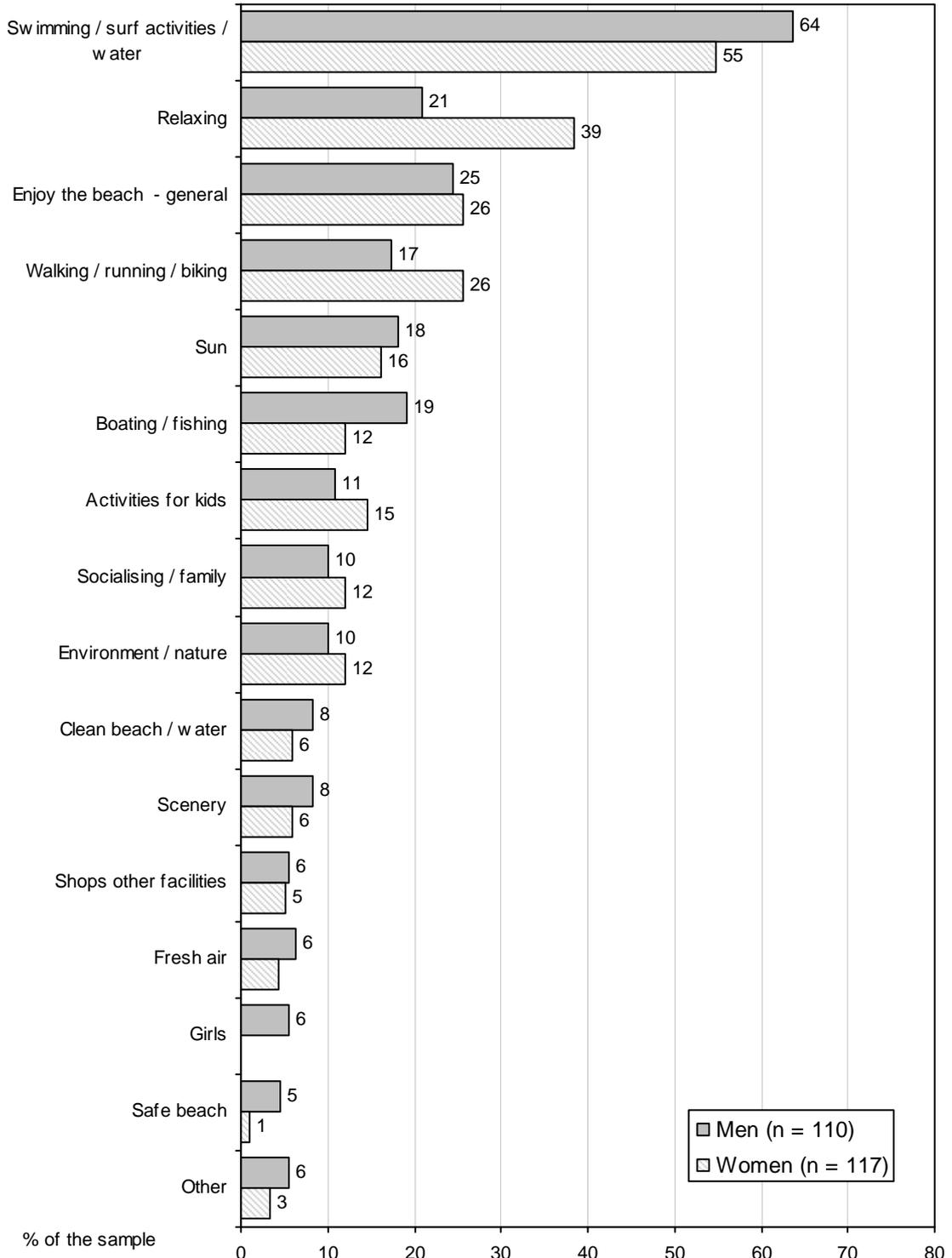
The activities mentioned by the respondents in this survey are consistent with those in Thomson’s research where water activities, using the beach for walking or running and sunbathing or relaxing dominated all three studies. However, the wording of this question was not purely activity based and sought to explore other values associated with being at the beach. The results show that many people take pleasure in being in the natural environment (nature, clean beach and water, scenery, sun, fresh air) and the social environment (socialising, being with friends and family, girls) of beach communities.

Why People Enjoy the Beach: Coded Verbatim Responses

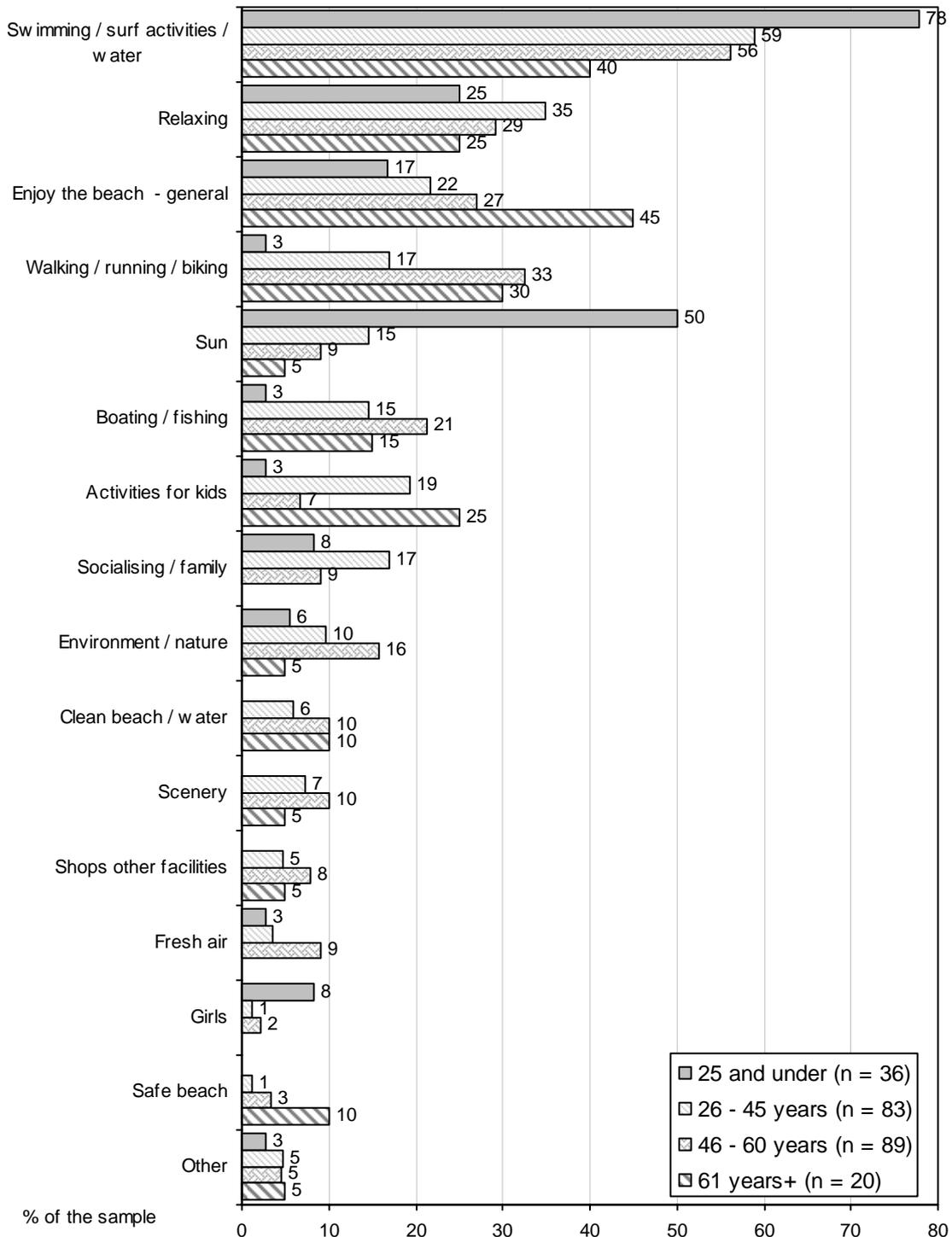


Note: Respondents gave more than reason so percentages add to more than 100%.

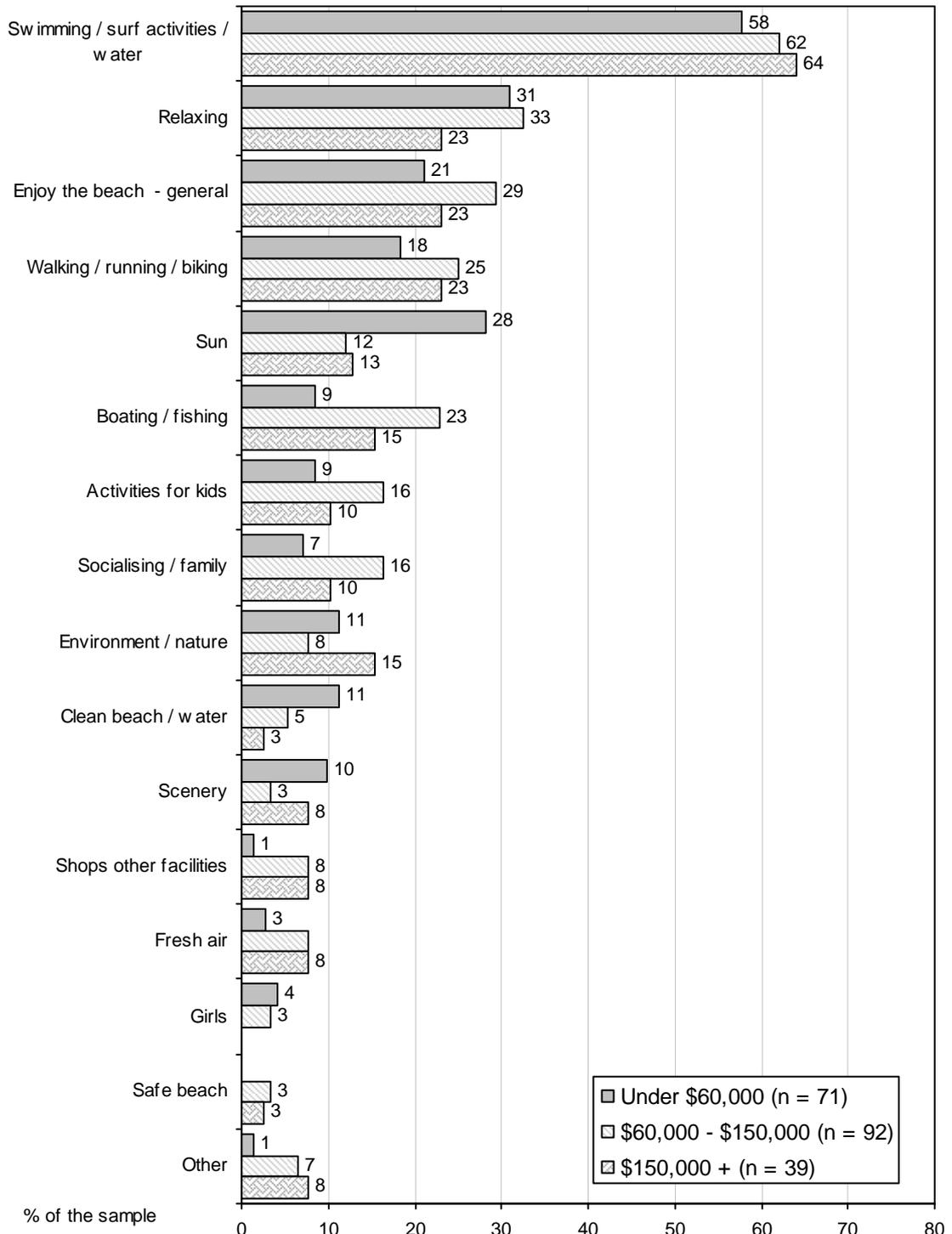
Why People Enjoy the Beach by Gender



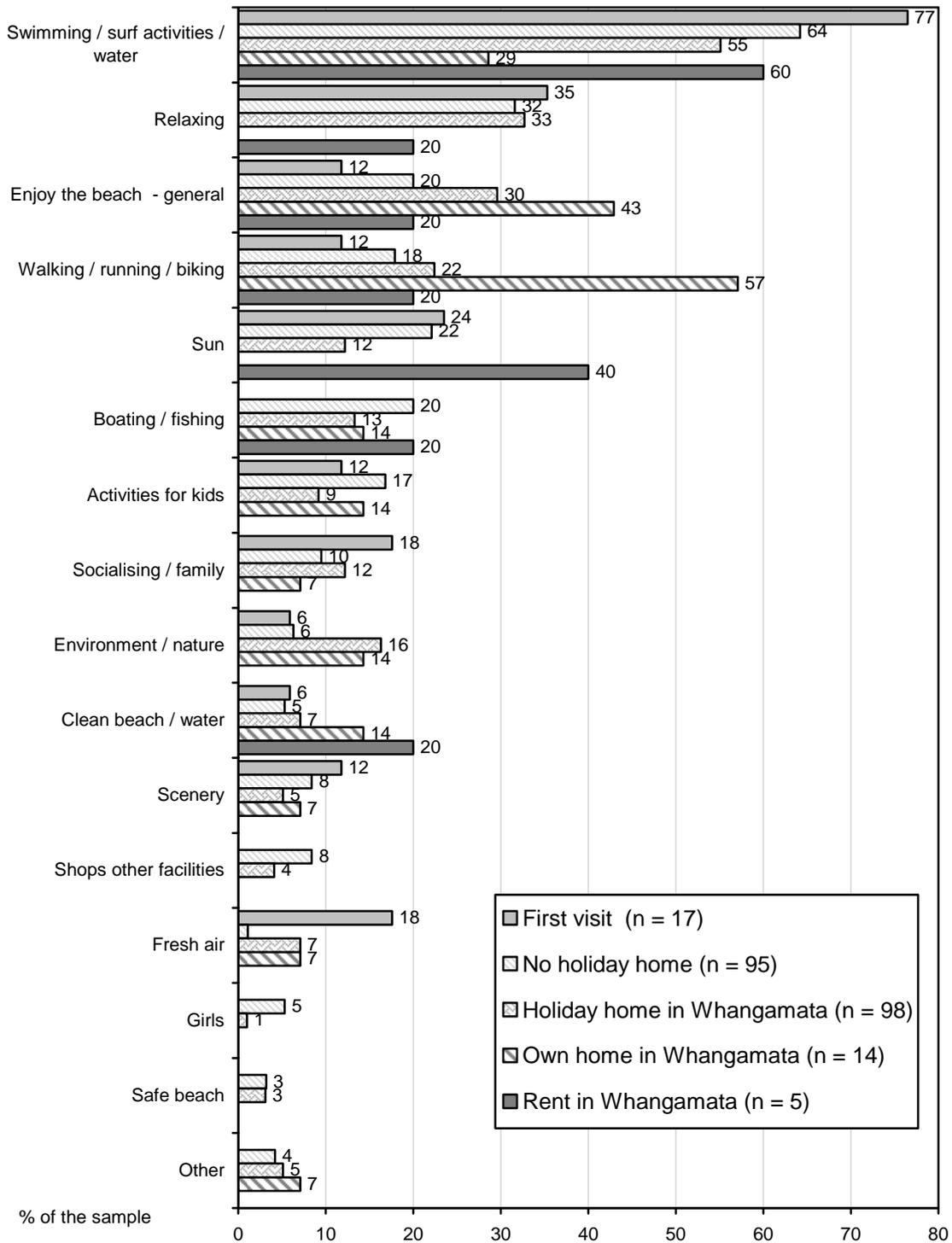
Why People Enjoy the Beach by Age



Why People Enjoy the Beach by Household Income



Why People Enjoy the Beach by Visitor Type



Sun

Slightly fewer respondents (17%) mentioned the sun. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 50% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 28% (99% confidence level).
- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 25% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Thursday, 29% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 23% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Sun, surf, fishing, relaxing, not working, surf casting, general beach life'

'Relaxing, water, swimming, sunbathing'

'Getting tan, waves and stuff'

Boating / fishing

A similar number of respondents (17%) mentioned boating or fishing. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a., 23% (99% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 21% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 21% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and don't own a holiday home, 20% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Sun, fishing, boating'

'Hanging out, swimming, going for a dive, eating all the kai moana that's out there'

'Walking, swimming, boating'

Activities for kids

An eighth of the respondents (13%) mentioned activities for the children as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 30% (99% confidence level).
- Aged 26 – 45, 19% (95% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Swimming, the kids playing quietly, relaxing time really'

'It's really that the kids can play for hours, can do everything'

'Spend time with the kids'

Socialising / family

Other respondents (11%) mentioned socialising as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a., 16% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 26 – 45, 17% (95% confidence level).
- Who described their ethnicity as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 18% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the wharf) 65% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Peace, environment, sea air, company of friends, lack of pressure'

'Drinking wine with friends and family, swimming, walking, running, playing with kids'

'Swimming, fishing, walking, eating, being with family'

Environment / nature

A tenth of the respondents (11%) mentioned they most enjoyed the environment or natural features of the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 23% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 16% (95% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 15% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Saturday, 16% (90% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 16% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Peacefulness, natural beauty'

'Enjoying the scenery, swimming, getting in touch with nature'

'Solitude, being able to watch the sea, can grow plant material down here that can't grow at home - for floral art'

Scenery

A similar number of respondents (7%) mentioned the scenery as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 11% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Enjoying the scenery, swimming, getting in touch with nature'

'Scenery, walking the dog'

'Water (when warm), beach (clean), beautiful, coming for 30 yrs'

Clean beach / water

Others (7%) mentioned the clean beach or water as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. These respondents commented:

'Water, sun, quality of the beach, cleanliness, surf, outlook with the islands and headlands and choice of estuary, and harbour to go to as well'

'Relaxation, water view, water full, clear, clean, natural'

'Surf, cleanliness of water, proximity to home, safety of beach for family needs'

Shops or other facilities

Other respondents (5%) mentioned the shops, other facilities or having things to do as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 9% (99% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Sun, shops and beer'

'Shops'

'Enjoy the infrastructure, enjoy the beach itself'

Fresh air

A few respondents (5%) mentioned the fresh air as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 9% (95% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Fresh air, relaxing, walks, swimming'

'View, salt, sea air, walks'

'Sea, like the outdoors, fresh air, it's healthy, except for two days over New Year – people'

Girls

A few respondents (2.6%) mentioned the girls as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 10% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 7% (99% confidence level).
- Men, 6% (99% confidence level).
- Aged 25 years and under, 8% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis without a holiday home, 5% (95% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Swimming, girls, sunbathing'

'Diving, fishing ,bird watching - 2 legged variety'

'Surfing, fishing, girls'

Safe beach

A similar number (2.6%) mentioned safety as one of the things they most enjoy about spending time at the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Men, 5% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Relaxation, holiday, not stressed, this is a lovely, safe beach, lifeguards'

'Love this beach, beautiful, lovely white sands, good safe swimming'

'Nice and tranquil, usually safe, good swimming, good atmosphere, 5 min walk to beach'

Other

There were a range of other thoughts in regard to the things the respondents most enjoy about spending time at the beach. These included:

'Not being at work'

'Surfing, the water, the sea, all free'

'The beach, estuary, harbour, beach options, can walk most places especially down town'

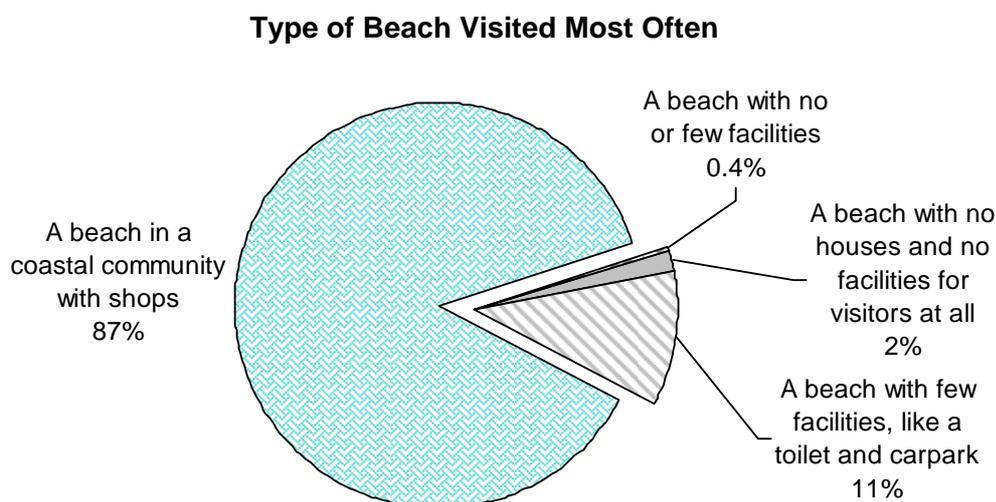
6 Type of Beach

6.1 Type of Beach Visited Most Often

Respondents were asked, "Thinking about the beach you go to most often, which of these statements best describes it? 'a beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all', 'a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and car park' or 'a beach in a coastal community with shops'.

The graph below shows the majority of respondents (87%) most often visited a beach in a coastal community with shops, 11% of respondents most often visited a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and a car park, while 2% most often visited a beach with no houses or facilities for visitors at all.

Given that 88% of visiting respondents usually lived in the Auckland, Waikato or Bay of Plenty regions it is not surprising that many people most often visited developed beaches, for example Piha or Auckland City beaches, Raglan or Mt Maunganui, (although some stated that Whangamata was the beach they visited most often this was not recorded).



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Those significantly **more likely** to visit 'a beach in a coastal community with shops' most often included those:

- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a., 94% or over \$150,000 p.a. 90% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis, 89% or those who live in Whangamata, 100%, (95% confidence level).

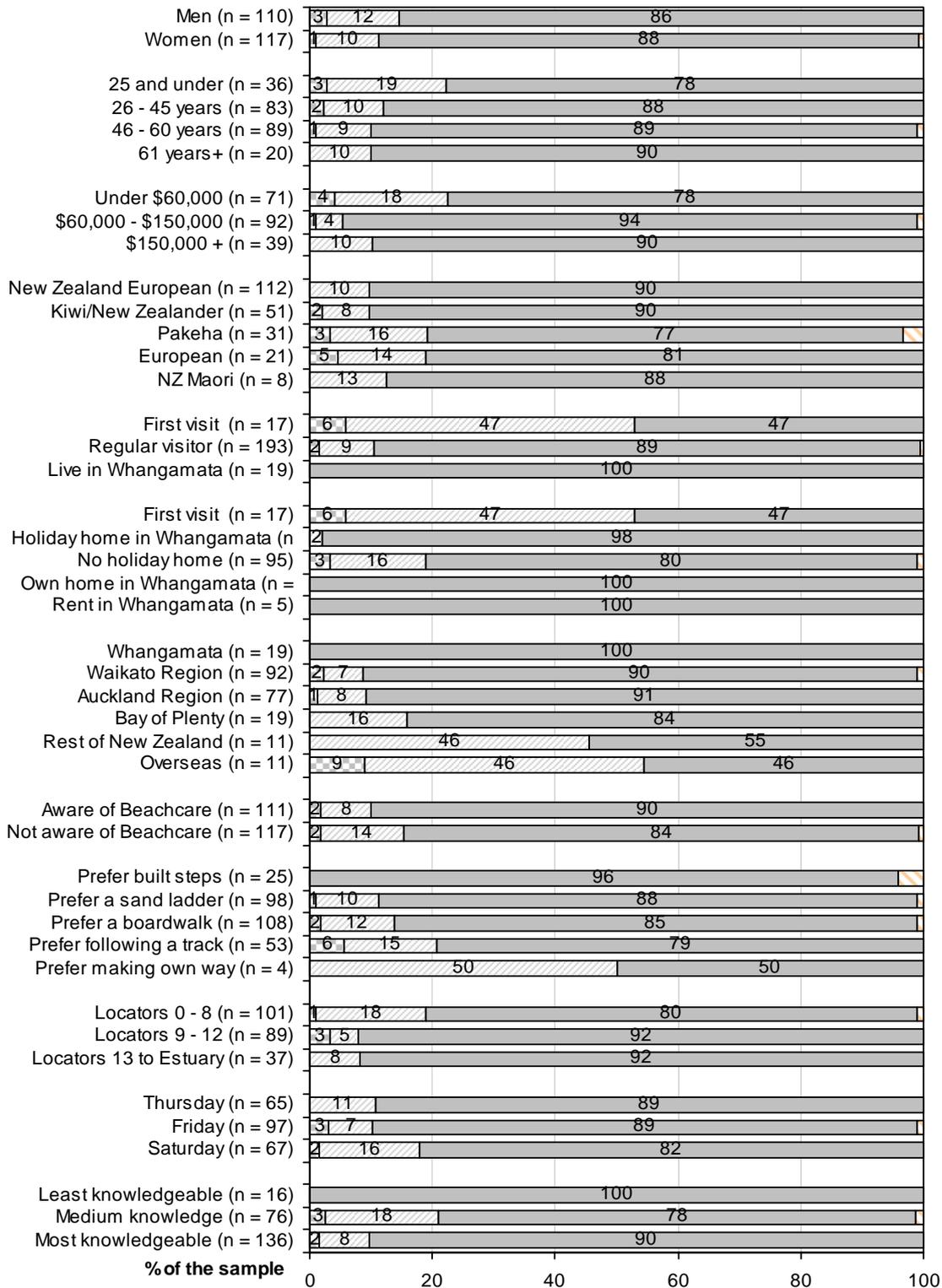
Those significantly **more likely** to visit 'a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and car park' most often included those:

- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 18% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 25 years and under, 19% (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to visit 'a beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all' most often included those:

- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 4% (90% confidence level).

Most Often Visited Type of Beach by Demographics



- A beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all (n=4)
- A beach with few facilities, like a toilet and carpark (n=25)
- A beach in a coastal community with shops (n=199)
- A beach with no, or few facilities (n=1)

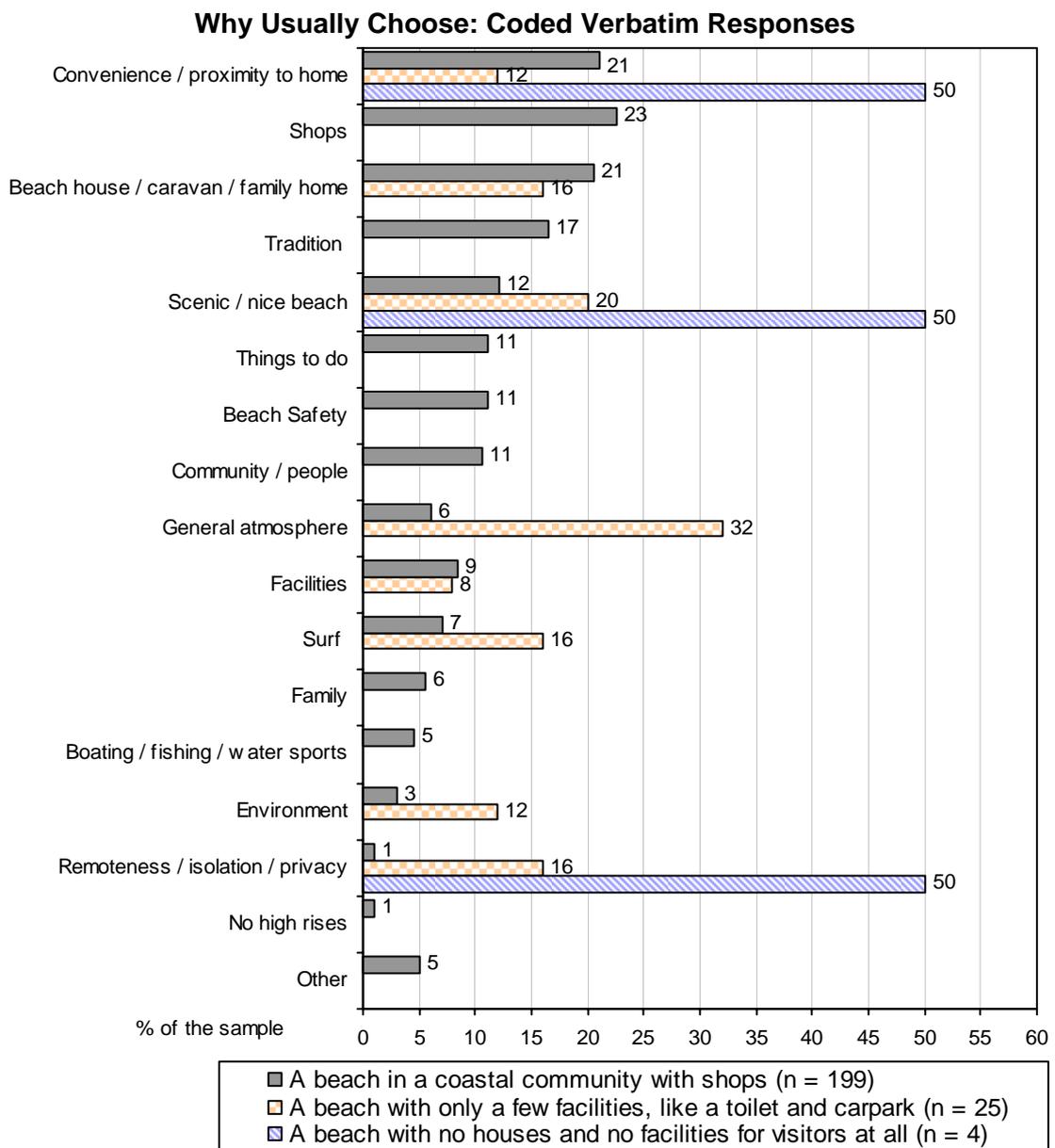
Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

6.1.1 Why Usually Choose that Beach

Respondents were asked for the reasons why they choose the type of beach they most often visit. There is some difference among the three beach styles in the reasons that respondents choose the beach they most often use:

- For those who most often visit a beach in a coastal community; the shops, proximity to home, shops or a beach house or family home near that type of beach were the main reasons.
- For those who most often visit a beach with only a few facilities, the main reasons are the general atmosphere and a scenic or nice beach, a beach house or home, surf and remoteness.
- Only four people said they most often visit a beach with no facilities, reasons given were that it was in close proximity to where they lived and that it was unpopulated.
- One person choose to visit a beach that was a mix of a beach with no facilities and one with a only a few facilities who stated that these types of beaches were accessible.

A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 2.



Note: Respondents gave more than reason so percentages add to more than 100%.

Can you tell me the reasons why you usually choose that beach	A beach in a coastal community with shops (n = 199)		A beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and car park (n = 25)		A beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all (n = 4)	
Convenience / proximity to home	42	21%	3	12%	2	50%
Shops	46	23%				
Beach house / caravan / family home	42	21%	4	16%		
Tradition	34	17%				
Scenic / nice beach	24	12%	5	20%	2	50%
Things to do	22	11%				
Safe beach	22	11%				
Community / people	22	11%				
General atmosphere	12	6%	8	32%		
Facilities	18	9%	2	8%		
Surf	14	7%	4	16%		
Family	12	6%				
Boating / fishing / water sports	10	5%				
Environment	6	3%	3	12%		
Remoteness / isolation / privacy	2	1%	4	16%	2	50%
No high rises	2	1%				
Other	10	5%				

Convenience / proximity to home

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 31% (95% confidence level).

Shops

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed on Thursday, 28% (90% confidence level).

Beach house / caravan / family home

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Men, 26% (95% confidence level).

Tradition

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Visiting on an occasional or regular basis who own a holiday home, 24% (99% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 24% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 19% (99% confidence level).

Scenic / nice beach

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 19% (95% confidence level).

Things to do

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Women, 15% (99% confidence level).
- Who defined themselves as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 18% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 16% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 15% (95% confidence level).

Safe beach

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 19% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Friday, 13% (90% confidence level).

Community / people

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 17% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 15% (95% confidence level).
- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 13% (90% confidence level).

General atmosphere

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 19% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and don't own a holiday home, 13% (90% confidence level).

Surf

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 16% (90% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and don't own a holiday home, 12% (90% confidence level).

Family

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and don't own a holiday home, 8% (95% confidence level).

Boating / fishing / water sports

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 7% (90% confidence level).
- Who define themselves as a New Zealand European, 6% (90% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 6% (90% confidence level).

Environment

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Women, 7% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and don't own a holiday home, 7% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Thursday, 8% (90% confidence level).

Remoteness/isolation/privacy

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 11% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 7% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 8% (95% confidence level).

No high rises

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed on Friday, 2% (90% confidence level).

A beach in a coastal community with shops (n = 199)

Convenience/proximity to home (21%)	<i>'Not far from Auckland and it's got shops, more convenient than others on the Coromandel'</i>
Shops (23%)	<i>'Ease of getting from Hamilton, bought holiday home' 'Always something to do - town, movies, library, shops' 'Because it's the best beach, surfing is important, everybody likes their mochachinos and hot chocs'</i>
Beach house/caravan/family home (21%)	<i>'Bach here, estuaries, beach, shops' 'All of above. Holidayed here since a child, when came back as a family, decided to buy a property here'</i>
Tradition (17%)	<i>'Wife's mother bought land to live on in 1940's - been here since 1950's - children visiting' 'Traditional - 40 yrs at Whangamata. Good beach, safe, handy to Hamilton. Shops and amenities are important, especially with family'</i>
Scenic/nice beach (12%)	<i>'First came here and loved the beach - not as much here then, kept coming back, surf, harbour, boating' 'Scenery, walks'</i>
Things to do (11%)	<i>'Always something to do - town, movies, library, shops' 'Because it had more than just a beach, golf course, tennis, other activities''</i>
Safe beach (11%)	<i>'Convenience, safety of the beach, patrolled for little kids' 'Tidal estuary, waves, nice surf, safe, doesn't drop away, nice mix of beaches'</i>
Community /people (11%)	<i>'More people, better atmosphere, more things to do'' 'Like something to eat and enjoy the company of all the people'</i>
General atmosphere (6%)	<i>'Where bach is and a bit quieter than here' 'Atmosphere of it, lively and good beach. Everything you want to do is here, short drive from home'</i>
Facilities (9%)	<i>'Facilities, shops, family beach, surf club, safety, clubs' 'Got everything, shops, facilities, can be secluded if you want, some beaches can be either too busy or too isolated, getting away not just a city beach'</i>
Surf (7%)	<i>'Best beach, surf, beach itself, facilities, clubs' 'Bach is there, good surf''</i>
Family (6%)	<i>'Because of all the facilities and because have children' 'For children, teenagers, compromise, happy here'</i>
Boating/fishing/water sports (5%)	<i>'Facilities, go fishing and diving and accommodation is there' 'Good for diving and fishing'</i>
Environment (3%)	<i>'Closest, cleanest, sewerage facilities' 'Rural, different environment'</i>
Remoteness/isolation/privacy (1%)	<i>'Because all facilities are there, wide open enough that can get away if want to'</i>
No high rises (1%)	<i>'Cos best beach while it is still not overdeveloped, no high-rises' 'Handy, not built out like the Mount'</i>
Other (5%)	<i>'Attract more people' 'Well known'</i>

A beach with few facilities, like a toilet and car park (n = 25)	
Convenience/proximity to home (12%)	<i>'Good surf, closest to home'</i>
Beach house/caravan/family home (16%)	<i>'Wife's parents live there and close to Auckland and West Coast'</i>
Scenic/nice beach (20%)	<i>'Beauty, fresh air, cleanness. Enough to stay for short while but not overcrowded'</i> <i>'Like to see things in a natural state - not like something overly developed'</i>
General atmosphere (32%)	<i>'Beach house right here, peacefulness, away from the surf club'</i> <i>'Peace, relaxation'</i>
Facilities (8%)	<i>'One close to facilities, quite quiet, private'</i>
Surf (16%)	<i>'Better surf'</i> <i>'Where you go surfing'</i>
Environment (12%)	<i>'Closer to nature'</i> <i>'Private, cleaner'</i>
Remoteness/isolation/privacy (16%)	<i>'Because of remoteness and has basic facilities that need'</i>

A beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all (n = 4);	
Convenience/proximity to home (50%)	<i>'Just down the road, gorgeous beach, never anyone on it'</i>
Scenic/nice beach (50%)	<i>'Unspoilt, no houses, just nature'</i>
Remoteness/isolation/privacy (50%)	<i>'Unspoilt, no houses, just nature'</i>

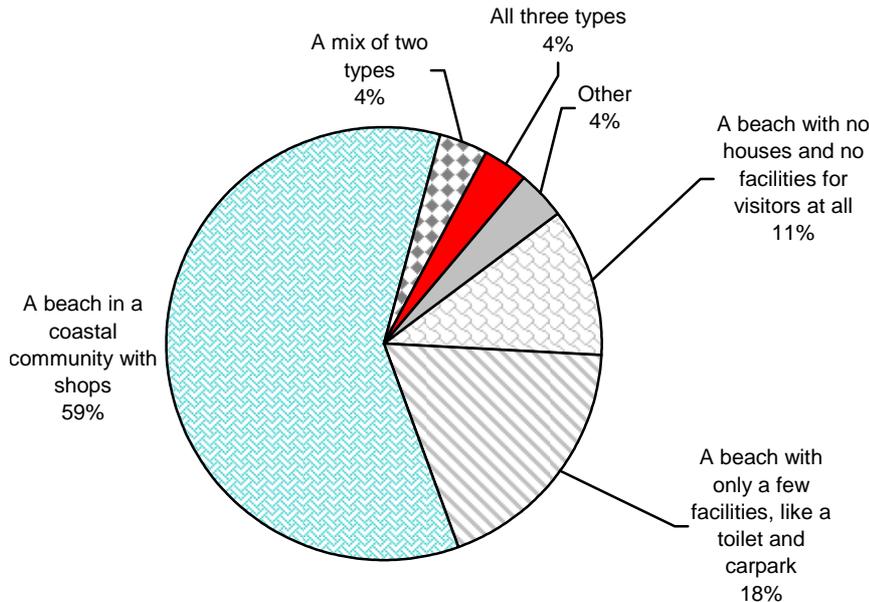
A beach with no or few facilities (n=1)	
Convenience/proximity to home (100%)	<i>'Accessibility'</i>

6.2 Type of Beach Preferred

Respondents were asked; *'For the types of beaches I've just described what type of beach do you prefer to visit?'*

Not surprisingly the graph shows that nearly two thirds of the respondents (59%) preferred to visit a beach in a coastal community with shops. However, a third of respondents (33%) preferred a beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and a car park (18%) or a beach with no houses or facilities for visitors at all (11%). A few respondents (4%) preferred a mix of two types of beach, while 4% preferred all three types of beaches read out. The other 4% provided other comments while not nominating a particular type of beach.

Type of Beach Preferred



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Note: the 8 respondents who preferred a mix of two types of beach (4%) were split with 4 of these 8 respondents preferring a beach with no facilities or a beach in a coastal community, while 2 preferred a beach with only a few facilities or a beach in a coastal community. One respondent preferred a beach with only a few facilities or a beach with no houses or facilities and one just preferred a 'mix of the two'.

Those significantly **more likely** to prefer 'a beach in a coastal community with shops' included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 69% (99% confidence level).
- Women, 67%, (95% confidence level).

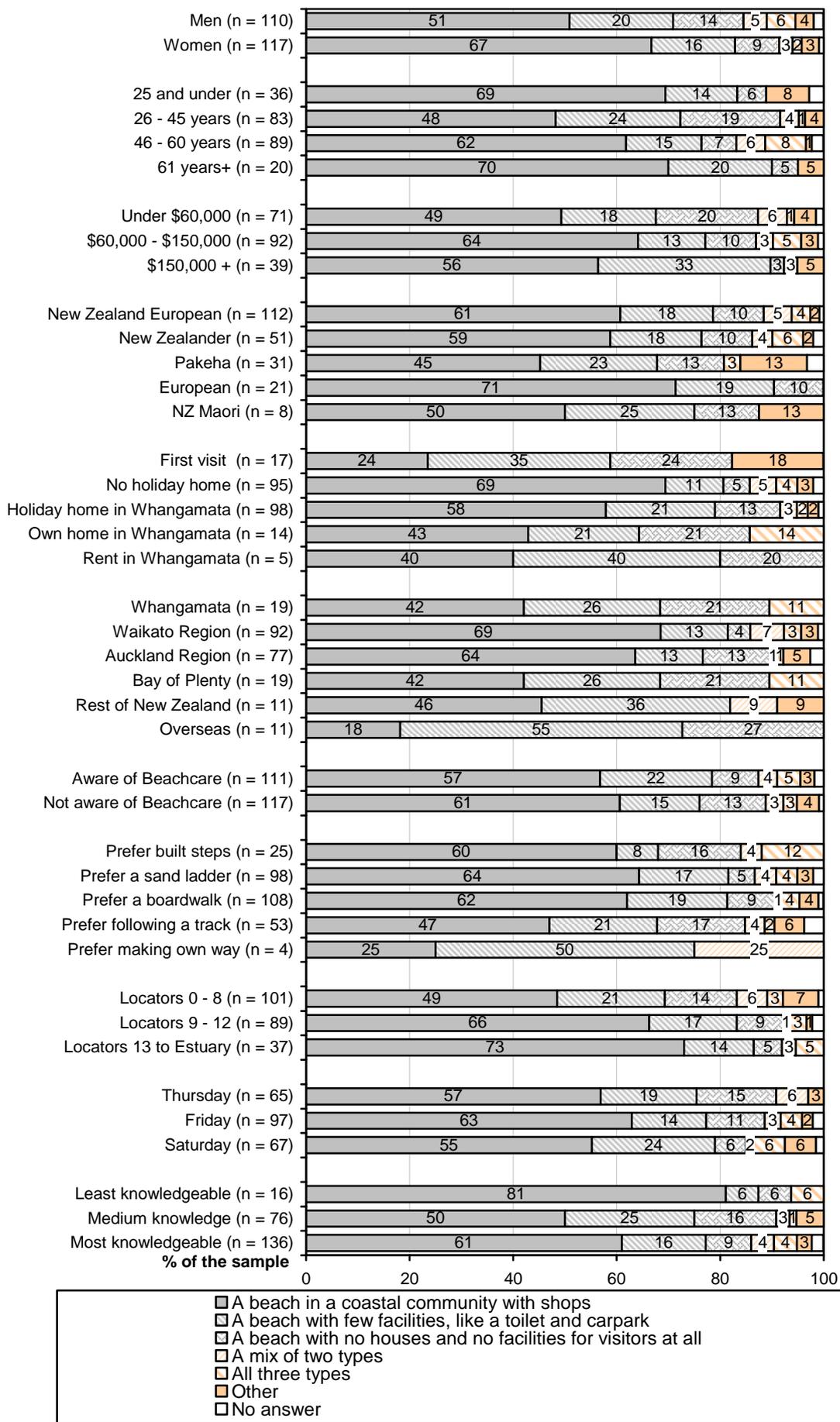
Those significantly **more likely** to prefer 'a beach with few facilities, like a toilet and car park' included those:

- With a household income of more than \$150,000 p.a., 33% (99% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to prefer 'a beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all' included those:

- Aged 26 – 45, 19% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of less than \$60,000 p.a., 20% (99% confidence level).

Preferred Type of Beach by Demographics



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

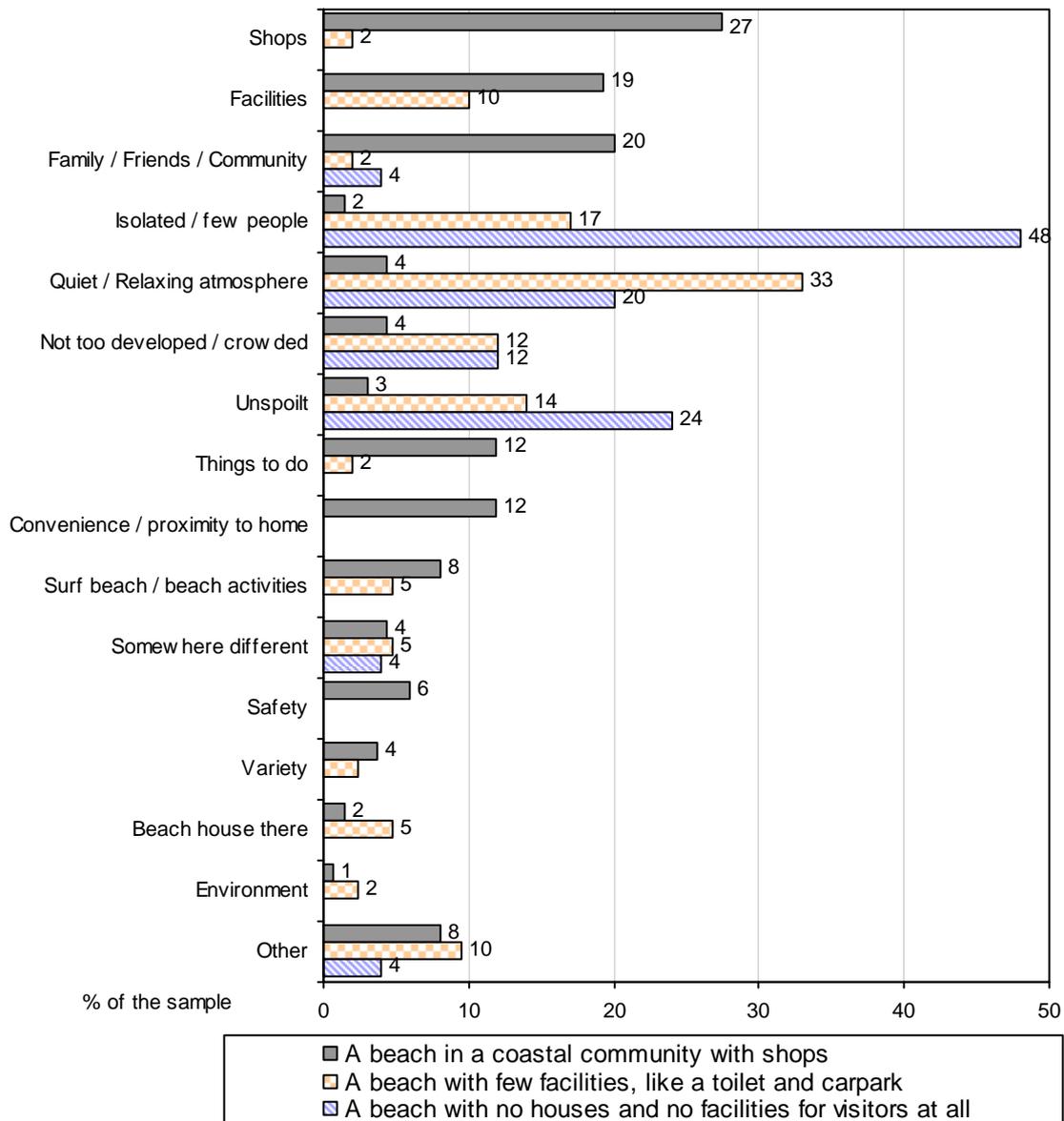
6.2.1 Reasons Why Prefer that Type of Beach

Respondents were asked for the reasons why they preferred that type of beach. There is some difference among the three beach styles in the reasons that respondents prefer the beach they do:

- For those who prefer to visit a beach with a coastal community, the shops, facilities and friends and family were the main reasons.
- For those who prefer to visit a beach with only a few facilities, the main reasons are a quiet, relaxing atmosphere and isolation.
- For those that prefer a beach with no facilities, the main reasons offered are because it is isolated with few people, the unspoilt nature and because it has a quiet, relaxing atmosphere.

A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 3.

Why Prefer that Type of Beach: Coded Verbatim Responses



Can you tell me the reasons why you prefer that beach	A beach in a coastal community with shops (n = 135)		A beach with few facilities, like a toilet and car park (n = 42)		A beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all (n = 25)	
Shops	36	27%	1	2%		
Facilities	26	19%	4	10%		
Family / Friends / Community	27	20%	1	2%	1	4%
Isolated / few people	3	2%	7	17%	12	48%
Quiet / Relaxing atmosphere	5	4%	14	33%	5	20%
Not too developed / crowded	5	4%	5	12%	3	12%
Things to do	16	12%	1	2%		
Convenience / proximity to home	16	12%				
Unspoilt	4	3%	6	14%	6	24%
Surf beach / beach activities	11	8%	2	5%		
Somewhere different	5	4%	2	5%	1	4%
Safe beach	8	6%				
Variety	5	4%	1	2%		
Beach house there	3	2%	2	5%		
Environment	1	1%	1	2%		
Other	11	8%	4	10%	1	4%

Shops

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Women, 15% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 29% (95% confidence level).

Facilities

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 24% (99% confidence level).

Friends, Family and the Community

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 28% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 20% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Thursday, 23% (95% confidence level).

Isolation / few people

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Men, 16% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 26-45, 17% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locator 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 16% (90% confidence level)²⁶.

Quiet, relaxing

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income of over than \$150,000 p.a., 23% (95% confidence level).

²⁶ On Saturday, several people who gave this reason for preferring a beach were interviewed, as they were attending the surfing competition.

Not too developed / not over crowded

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the wharf) 15% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 17% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 16% (95% confidence level).

Things to do

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis, 9% (90% confidence level).

Convenience / proximity to home

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the wharf) 12% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 14% (95% confidence level).

Unspoilt nature

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 16% (95% confidence level).
- Men, 11% (90% confidence level).

Somewhere different

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 7% (90% confidence level).

Safe beach

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 9% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 7% (95% confidence level).

Variety

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 7% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 7% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 8% (90% confidence level).

Beach house / caravan / family home

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 5% (90% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 4% (95% confidence level).

Environment

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 4% (99% confidence level).

Other

Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 19% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Friday, 16% (90% confidence level).

A beach in a coastal community with shops (n = 135)

Shops (27%)	<i>'Because we're city people at heart but like the beach but like to wander around shops or have lunch' 'Enjoy going to cafes, shop local - not having to bring food in, like to support the local community, range of activities'</i>
Facilities (19%)	<i>'Got to have facilities, ice-creams' 'Facilities, shops, family beach, surf club, safety, clubs'</i>
Friends, family and the community (20%)	<i>'Because of all the facilities and because have children' 'Social really'</i>
Quiet and relaxing (4%)	<i>'Relaxed but like a few comforts, power etc' 'Relaxation'</i>
Isolated / few people (2%)	<i>'But also go to more isolated beaches' 'Visit No. 1²⁷ or No.2 day or overnight - rough it'</i>
Not too developed / not over crowded (4%)	<i>'Prefer smaller sized beach community (i.e. Smaller than Mt Maunganui)'</i>
Things to do (12%)	<i>'Mostly because have 4 grandchildren regardless of what direction harbour, surf, estuary. Can go out to brunch, long walks, movies' 'Pubs, activities, people'</i>
Convenience / proximity to home (12%)	<i>'Proximity - within 1 1/2 hrs of Hamilton, good fishing, appeals to everyone in family, plus if wet, can go do something else, not such in wet camping' 'Ease of getting from Hamilton, bought holiday home'</i>
Unspoilt nature (3%)	<i>'Advantages of doing what shopping you want and have an unspoilt beach'</i>
Surf beach or beach activities (8%)	<i>'Love the beach, swimming, calming effect for us, de-stressing. Second home - been coming here since 7, love way town developed with shops and not become commercialised. Know a lot of people like to get away, enjoy having people around, evolved with it' 'Surf beach, love the sound of it'</i>
Somewhere different (4%)	<i>'Different environment in rural - no shops at home' 'Enjoy the mixture, we're remote all the time on a farm'</i>
Safe beach (6%)	<i>'Safer for kids and that's got options, estuary, harbour, waves, ocean-side' 'Life savers, feel safe'</i>
Variety (4%)	<i>'The variety, so many different walks, the estuary, wharf, town, Onemana ,walks at beaches, Wentworth Valley, the type of beach, the sand is firm, good for my bad back.' 'Probably more, got a bit of everything, more options'</i>
Beach house / caravan / family home (2%)	<i>'Basically because have bach here. Visit - go to no. 1 - like rugged atmosphere' 'Because family has a bach here'</i>
Environment (1%)	<i>'More people, better environment'</i>

²⁷ Note: some respondents referred to the types of beaches as read out in the questionnaire by number as either: 1 = a beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all; 2 = A beach with only a few facilities, like a toilet and car park; 3 = a beach in a coastal community with shops.

Other (8%)	<p><i>'Beauty, fresh air, cleanness. Enough to stay for short while but not overcrowded'</i></p> <p><i>'A beachfront developed properly is really neat, like the Australians do it, professional, controlled, developed beachfronts'</i></p> <p><i>'Not for everyone to go bush'</i></p>
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A beach with few facilities, like a toilet and car park (n = 42)	
Shops (2%)	
Facilities (10%)	<i>'Somewhere can wash up and go to loo, not too commercialised and inhabited, more natural'</i>
Friends / Family / Community (2%)	<i>'Got plenty of shops in Hamilton. Had house at Whangamata. Got children here and grandchildren'</i>
Isolation / few people (17%)	<i>'Sit out on ocean and look at land with no development - aesthetics, freedom of fewer people around'</i> <i>'This isn't getting away from it whereas that would be'</i>
Quiet, relaxing (33%)	<i>'Nice and quiet'</i> <i>'Because like wide open spaces and escape from busy-ness of life'</i>
Not too developed / not over crowded (12%)	<i>'Not built out, not over crowded'</i>
Things to do (2%)	<i>'Kids playground for the children's sake, relax and not be in the city or too commercialised'</i>
Unspoilt nature (14%)	<i>'When at beach I want to be amongst nature'</i>
Surf beach or beach activities (5%)	<i>'Surf casting, fishing'</i>
Somewhere different (5%)	<i>'Basically it's good to have them for kids, nice to get away from houses and shops'</i>
Variety (2%)	<i>'Wave action, interesting swimming'</i>
Beach house / caravan / family home (5%)	<i>'Beach house right here, peacefulness, away from the surf club'</i>
Other (10%)	<i>'Whangamata going too much like the Mount - 12m (high apartment block) built next to their bach, no protected trees, no minimum section size'</i> <i>'This isn't getting away from it whereas that would be'</i>

A beach with no houses and no facilities for visitors at all (n = 25);	
Friends, family and the community (4%)	<i>'Because like being alone sometime - go with friends. Drinking mates'</i>
Isolation / few people (48%)	<i>'Quiet, undisturbed, don't like crowds'</i> <i>'Nice and private, not so many people like to go there'</i>
Quiet, relaxing (20%)	<i>'Peaceful, opportunity to get away from rat-race and suburbia'</i>
Not too developed / not over crowded (12%)	<i>'Because it's uncrowded'</i>
Unspoilt nature (24%)	<i>'Way nature intended'</i> <i>'Remote, not populated, closer to nature without housing and all facilities'</i>
Somewhere different (4%)	<i>'More remote, different to where we live, somewhere quiet'</i>
Other (4%)	<i>'Like it for camping but different if have kids - need facilities'</i>

A mix of two types (n=8)	
Friends, family and the community (38%)	<i>'No. 1 is without too many people. 3 – good for kids' '1 – get away from is occasionally. 3 – people around you'</i>
Isolated / few people (38%)	<i>'1 - Solitude, never any litter. 3 - convenience' 'If have kids need 3 - with no kids, privacy good, so would prefer 2'</i>
Not too developed / not over crowded (13%)	<i>'Just not too crowded, nice beach'</i>
Things to do (13%)	<i>'3 – more things to do, more variety'</i>
Convenience / proximity to home (13%)	<i>'1 – Solitude, never any litter. 3 – convenience'</i>
Unspoilt / nature (13%)	<i>'Remote, not populated, closer to nature without housing and all facilities'</i>
Somewhere different (13%)	<i>'1 – get away from is occasionally. 3 – people around you'</i>
Variety (13%)	<i>'3 – more things to do, more variety'</i>
Environment (13%)	<i>'1 – Solitude, never any litter. 3 – convenience'</i>

A three types (n=8)	
Facilities (25%)	<i>'Came for kids, like all 3 family facilities, absolutely marvellous' 'Love solitude of isolated beach but also love amenities at Whangamata'</i>
Friends, family and community (13%)	<i>'Came for kids, like all 3 family facilities, absolutely marvellous'</i>
Isolated / few people (25%)	
Not too developed / not over crowded (13%)	<i>'Any beach will do, not like city beaches'</i>
Other (50%)	<i>'Beautiful beaches no matter whether inhabited or not' 'Visit 1&2 - not stay as boring' 'Visit 1&2'</i>

Other (n= 8)	
Shops (13%)	<i>'Few shops, few, not a Mount. Houses, not high-rises (are a real no no)'</i>
Facilities (13%)	<i>'Park car, use bathroom, still slightly personal'</i>
Quiet, relaxing (13%)	<i>'Because it's just relaxing'</i>
Not too developed / no overcrowded (25%)	<i>'One that's not so packed, beautiful, not so many people. Mount so packed' 'Few shops, few, not a Mount. Houses, not high-rises (are a real no no)'</i>
Convenience / proximity to home (13%)	<i>'Probably more important that close enough to where we come from and that it's safe'</i>
Surf beach or beach activities (13%)	<i>'Because of surf'</i>
Beach safety (13%)	<i>'Probably more important that close enough to where we come from and that it's safe'</i>
Variety (13%)	<i>'Sometimes – mainly water, quiet walks – different experiences'</i>
Other (25%)	<i>'For a community, get revenue from shops, community needs dollars to survive and gives tourist attractions apart from beach. There are many places that are like basic - toilet and car park - because people need to live.'</i>

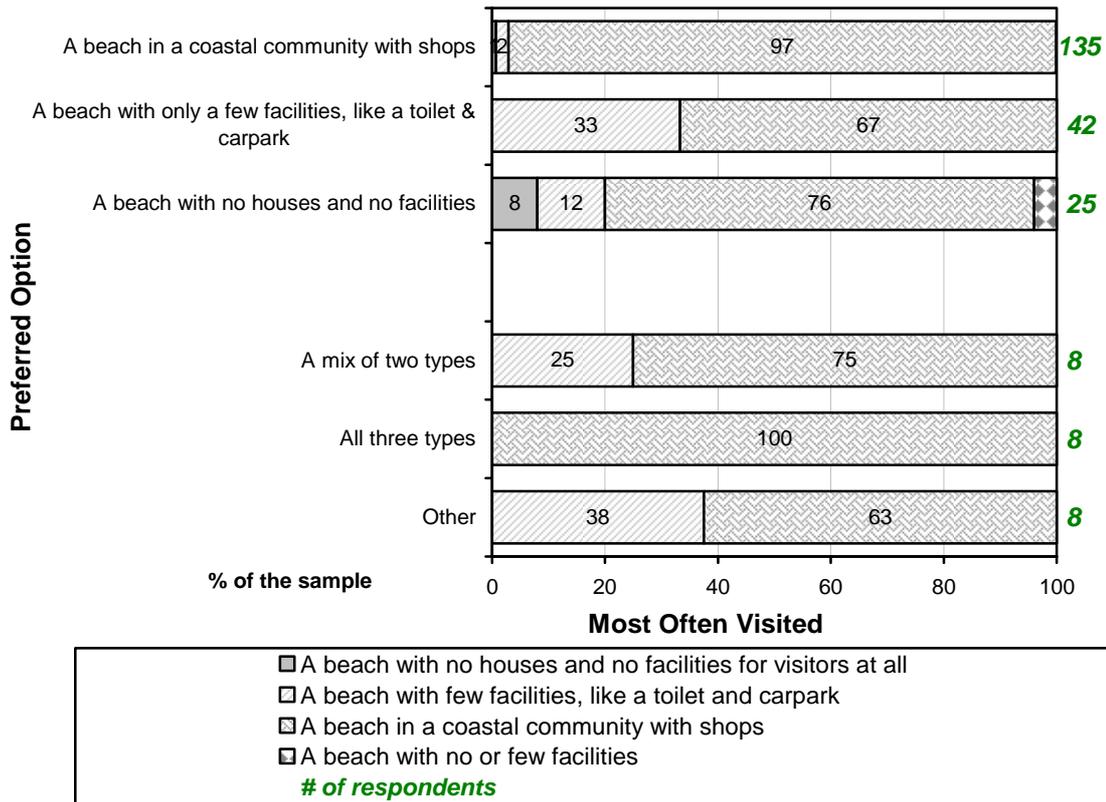
Type of Beach Preferred Versus Most Visited

The following chart compares the respondents preferred type of beach against the type of beach they use most often. This shows that the majority of each group visit a beach in a coastal community with shops most often regardless of what they prefer. However, the majority who prefer a beach in a coastal community with shops also get to visit this most often, 97%.

Conversely, a third of those who prefer a beach with only a few facilities get to use that type of beach most often, but only 8% of those who prefer a beach with no houses and no facilities get to visit this type of beach most often.

The reasons given for choosing a beach in a coastal community with shops are consistent with Thomson's findings that distance, accommodating family needs including the provision of facilities or a tradition of visiting a particular beach all impact on which beach is visited most often. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that those preferring a more remote, isolated experience are most often visiting a comparatively developed beach.

Preferred Versus Most Often Used Type of Beach



These results pose some interesting questions about the level of development that people prefer at the beach community of their choice. In the case of Whangamata it seems that people prefer a beach community that has well developed facilities such as cinema, cafes, golf courses and shops while appreciating the physical environment that makes Whangamata the beach of their choice - a beach with a harbour, generally safe swimming and an estuary all offering a variety of beach experiences and opportunities combining for recreational activities for all ages in their family structures.

Thomson’s survey of Regional ratepayers found that by contrast people’s preferred beach of choice was a natural beach (80.2%). Reasons for preferring to visit this beach included the clean sand and water, the isolation, and the naturalness of the beach surroundings. However, almost 20% of people preferred beaches with some form of development – 17.5% preferred the grass verge beach, 3.3% the city beach, and 2.5% the rip-rap beach.

When asked to rate the importance of a number of aspects of beaches retaining some undeveloped, natural beaches around the coast rated as people’s most important value, with 84.4% rating this as ‘Very Important’. The appearance of the beach and dunes (whether they are natural or not) was also ranked as very important by many people 66%.

It could be that Whangamata retains enough natural state with its relatively intact dune system to meet the desired environmental experience of its beach users. Dahm quotes English beach research, which found that “even at the more highly developed sites, the coastal scenery was an important attractor. It appears that even at these sites, the seemingly natural appearance of the coastal landscape – the sea and the shore – is highly appreciated and significant in guiding people’s choices” (Dahm, 2002, 10). In contrast Thomson’s research highlights the need to retain natural state beaches, possibly for existence rather than utilitarian values. For although most people prefer to visit a ‘natural beach’ and say retention of some underdeveloped, natural beaches is very important, in fact many developed beaches are much more frequently utilised. The pattern of beach use and the high value placed on the appearance of beaches and dunes suggests they place significant value on the recreational and the ‘natural

features' of developed beaches also - as expressed by the Whangamata community in their Community Plan:

“Vistas of hills, harbour and beach will be protected to maintain the “beachy/bachy” spirit of Whangamata - “Te wairua o to tatoa Papakainga” (TCDC, 2001).

However, it seems there's a limit to how developed people prefer their beaches to be - if offered a choice very few people choose to visit a city beach or a beach armoured with rip-rap. This preference for natural beaches and high value placed on the appearance of dunes and beaches suggests that maintaining natural features at utilised beaches is important.

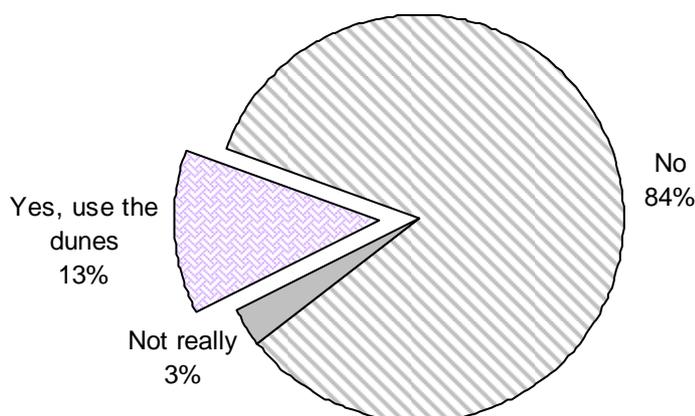
7 Sand Dunes

7.1 Usage of Sand Dunes

Respondents were asked, ‘Thinking about this beach or other beaches you go to, do you use the dune area behind the beach for anything e.g. sunbathing, off-roading?’

The graph below shows the majority of the respondents (84%) do not use the dune area behind the beach for anything. A further 3% said they did not really use this area. However, 13% of the respondents said they did use the dune area behind the beach for something.

Do You Use the Dune Area behind the Beach



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

There were **no groups** that were significantly more likely to say they do use the dune area behind the beach for anything. **However, it appears there may be a few subgroups that may be inclined to do so²⁸.** These included those:

- From overseas, 27%
- Who live in Whangamata, 26%
- Men, 16%

Those significantly **more likely** to say they **do not** use the dune area behind the beach for anything included those:

- Women, 88% versus 78% for men (95% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to say they **do not really** use dune area behind the beach for anything included those:

²⁸ The numbers in many of the subgroups are too small to allow significance testing on this question.

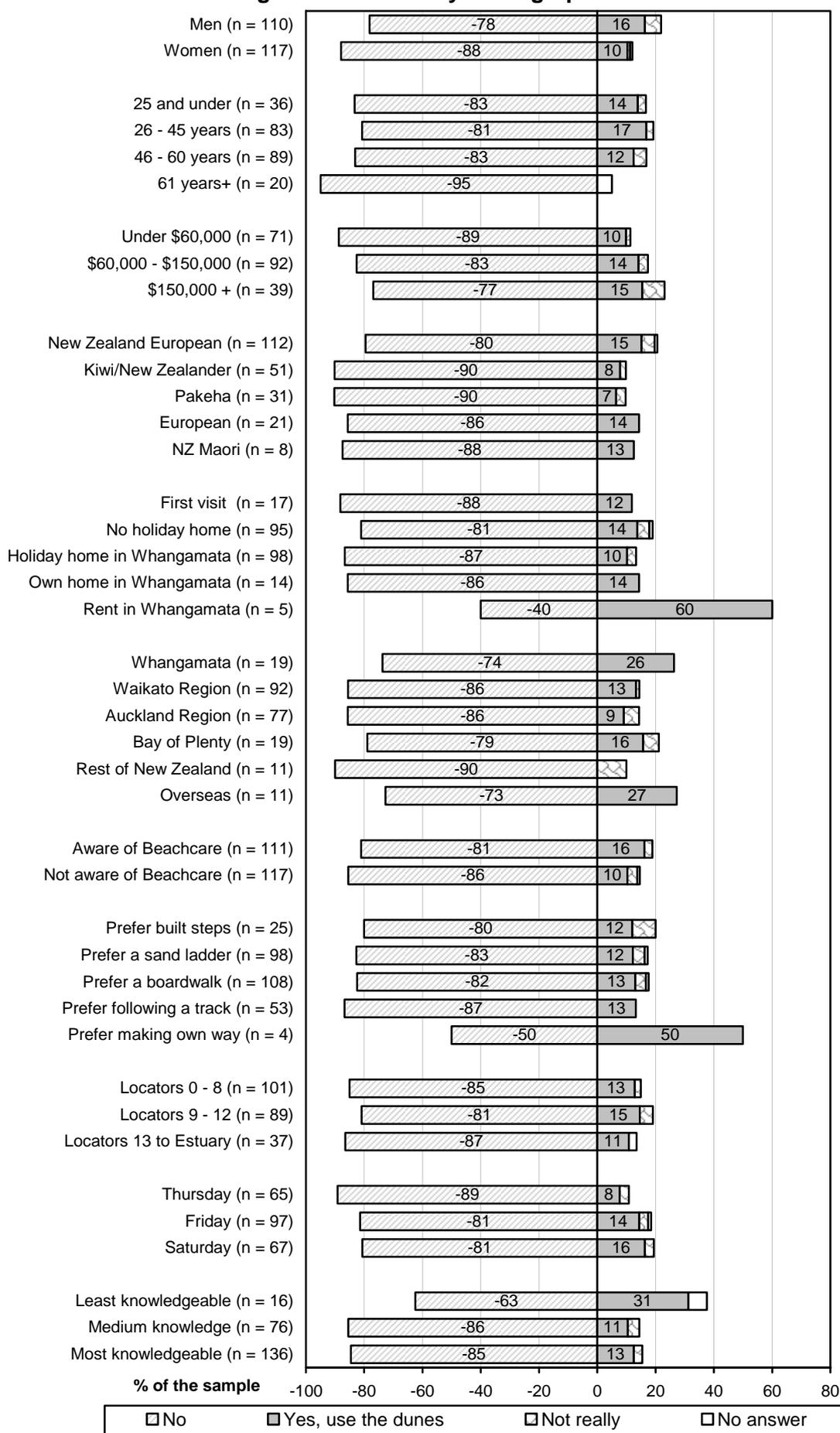
- Men, 6% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of more than \$150,000 p.a., 8% (90% confidence level).

Observations

A few people were observed using the dune area over the three days (less than 20 in that period). These people were either sitting or walking through the dune area i.e. not using an accessway or they were children playing in the dune area. However, people were observed sitting in the toe of the dune on all three days. On the Saturday morning the width of the dry beach was limited due to the high seas and on-shore wind, which meant that more people sat in the dune toe area than on the previous two days, moving down onto the beach once the tide turned. On the Saturday, many people observed the surf competition from the top of the dune on The Esplanade, with a few further along seated in the dunes. A small group were asked to get out of the dune area at The Esplanade by the Lifeguards (over the loudspeaker), which they did.

Accessways at Whangamata are well signposted both in the town and on the beach. However, it was not possible to watch all accessways to see if those entering the beach always used dedicated accessways.

Usage of the Dunes by Demographics



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

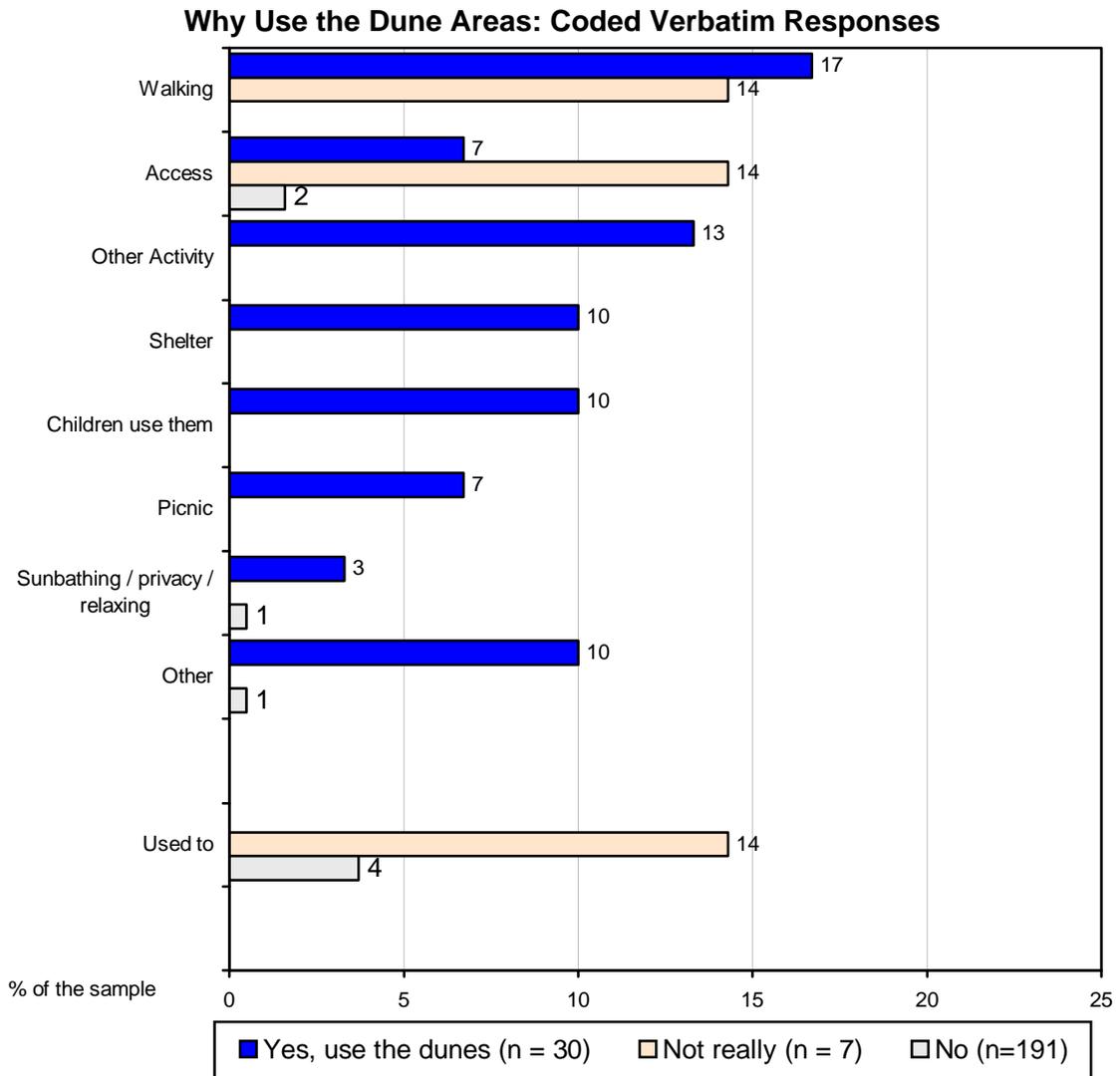
7.1.1 Reasons Why Use the Dune Area behind the Beach

Those respondents that said they used the dune area were then asked ‘can you tell me what you do?’.

Among the respondents who said they did use the dunes (n = 30) the main comments were walking (17%), some other activity like bike riding or sand boarding (13%), for shelter (10%) or the children play in them (10%). A number of those who said they do not really use the dune area (n=7) said they used them for access.

Three respondents who said they did not use the dune areas (n = 191) said they only used them for access .

A small number of respondents (4%) said they did not use them now, but used the dune area in the past.



Why use the dune area²⁹

Use the dune area (n = 30)	
Walking	<i>'Walk through, look at them' 'No, but do appreciate them, enjoy walking in them and that there'</i>
Other activity	<i>'Exercise, run up and down the dunes' 'Live on dunes' 'Not much, sand boarding'</i>
Shelter	<i>'Shade sometimes' 'Not much, lie in dune to get out of wind occasionally'</i>
Children use them	<i>'Children play in them quite a lot. Had picnic in them, not where plants protected' 'Daughter plays'</i>
Picnic	<i>'Sometimes have a picnic, everything has changed in the last 10 years, but more aware, used to slide down but now rather have beach for my grandchildren'</i>
Access	<i>'Access way' 'Yes, because sister lives over the dunes so use them to go there'</i>
Sunbathing / privacy / sitting	<i>'Yes. For bit of privacy, relaxing' 'Yes, just sitting, chilling, having a sleep'</i>
Other	<i>'I put seaweed in them to preserve them, take the rubbish out of them' 'No, grow my plants there'</i>

Don't use the dune area (n = 191)	
Access	<i>'No, access' 'No, just access'</i>
Sunbathing / privacy / sitting	<i>'No, first time sat up here for ages'</i>
Used to	<i>'Not now, did when younger - especially with quite big dune areas' 'No, did when a kid 40 yrs ago'</i>

Not really (n = 7)	
Walking	<i>'Not usually but walked on dunes this morning'</i>
Access	<i>'Not generally, sometimes for access for beach'</i>
Used to	<i>'Not really, did as kids playing'</i>

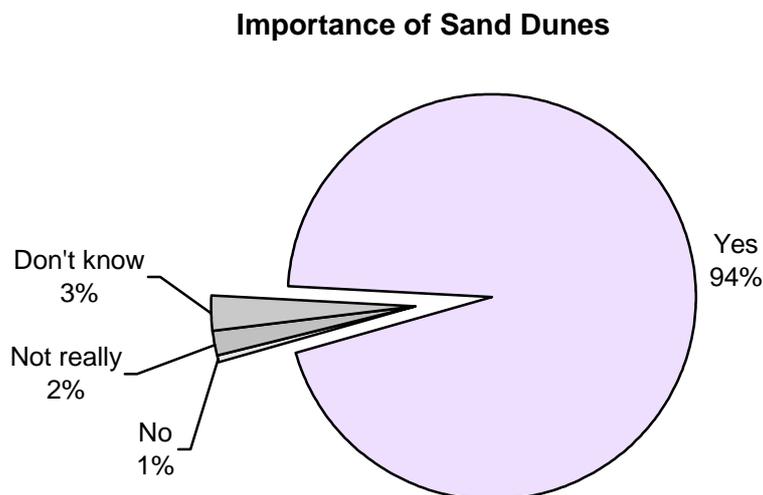
²⁹ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

7.2 Importance of Sand Dunes

Respondents were asked, 'Do you think that sand dunes are important on a beach'.

The graph below shows the majority of the respondents, 94% think that sand dunes are important on a beach. Only 1% said they were not important while 2% said they were not really important. The remaining 3% did not know if they were important or not.

This is a similar result to when this question was asked of visitors in 1997, where 97% thought sand dunes were important compared to 95% of 'visitors only' in 2005.



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Those significantly **more likely** to say that sand dunes on a beach are important included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis, 96% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 98% (90% confidence level).
- With a household income of over than \$150,000 p.a., 98% (90% confidence)

Those significantly **more likely** to say that sand dunes on a beach are **not** important included those:

- Who described their ethnicity as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 4% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 3% (95% confidence level).

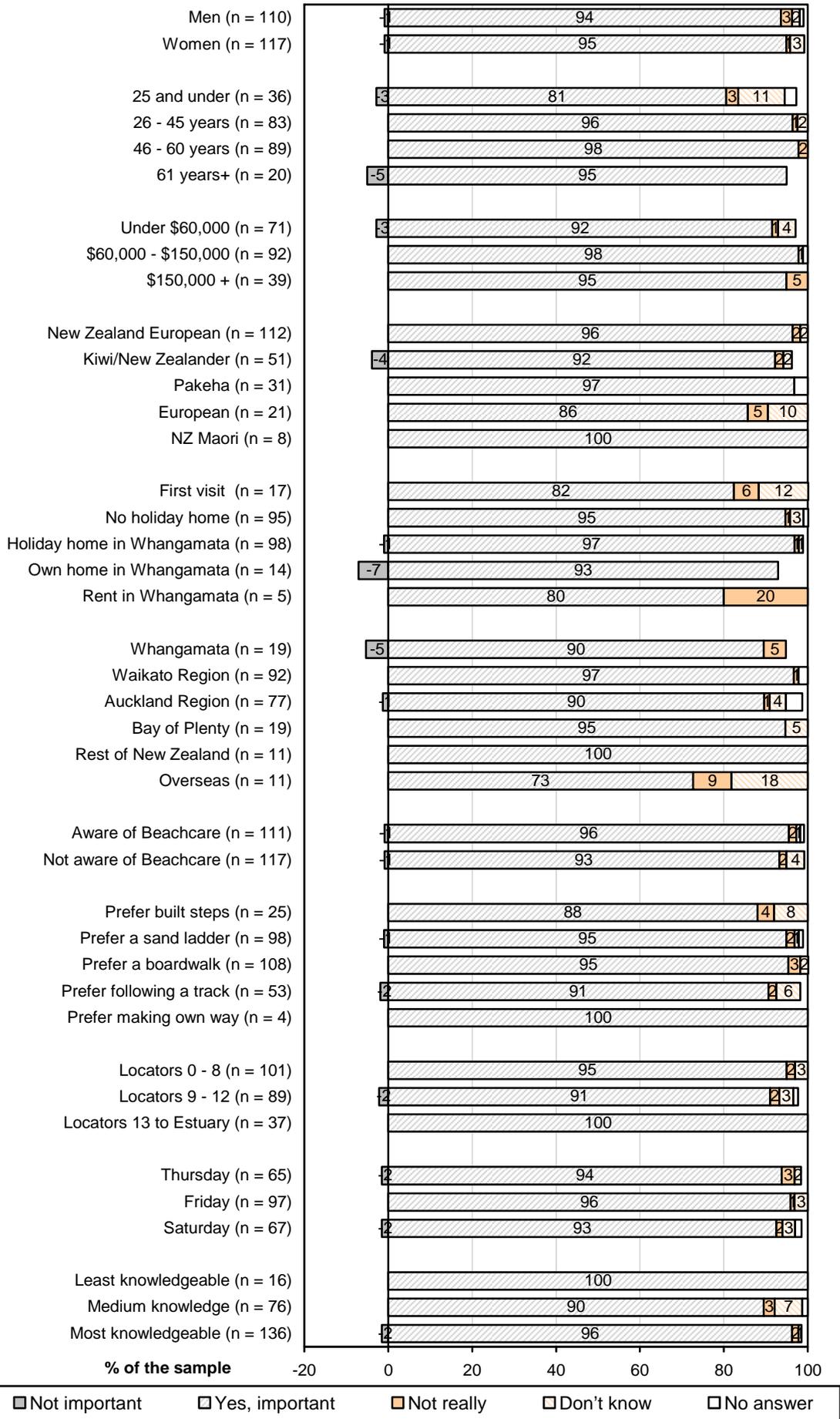
Those significantly **more likely** to say they **don't know** if sand dunes on a beach are important or not included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 11% (99% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to not answer this question included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 3% (95% confidence level).

Importance of the Sand Dunes by Demographics



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

7.2.1 Why Sand Dunes are Important on a Beach

Respondents were asked, 'Do you think that sand dunes are important on a beach?'. They were then asked 'Can you tell me why or why not?'

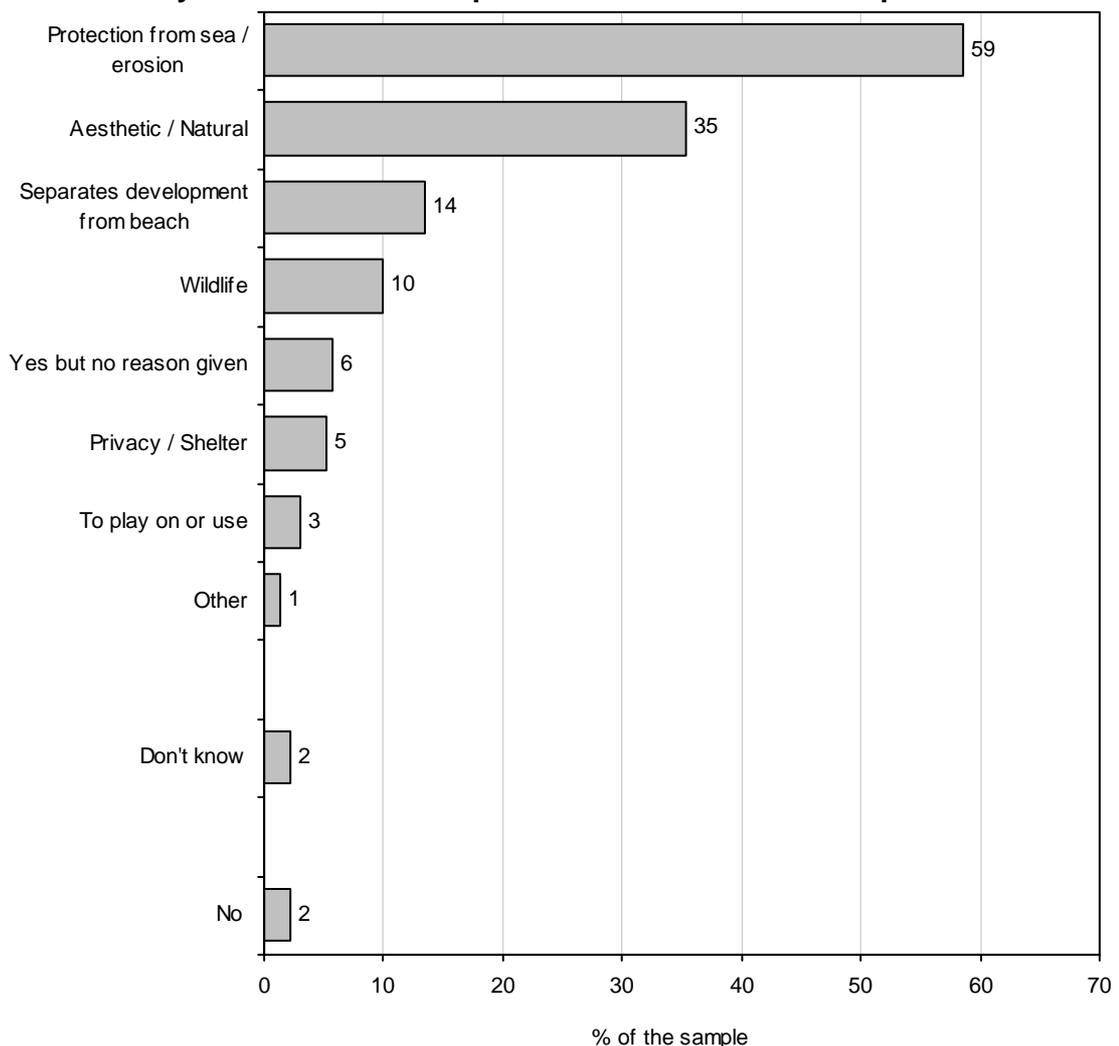
The respondents gave a variety of answers as to why sand dunes were important, with a few (2%) giving reasons as to why they were not important. The main reasons for thinking that the dunes were important were to prevent erosion or for protection from the sea for the properties behind (59%) and for their aesthetic and natural values (49%) including providing a visual and physical separation from the development behind the beach.

Other respondents mentioned that they protected the wildlife (10%) or for privacy or shelter (5%).

A number of respondents did not know why they thought the dunes were important while others did not know if they were important or not. A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 4.

Similar themes emerged in Fagan's 1997 survey where visitors were asked why dunes were important - the strongest theme being natural hazards issues, with comments including protection from inundation and describing dunes as an erosion buffer. A smaller number mentioned natural character and aesthetic values, while some mentioned recreational and amenity values (Fagan, 1998).

Why Sand Dunes Are Important: Coded Verbatim Responses



Protection from sea / erosion³⁰

The main reasons for thinking that the dunes were important were that they prevent erosion or for protection from the sea, 59%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 71% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 65% (90% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 64% (90% confidence level).

Think they are important	<i>'Keep the beach, stop it from being eroded' 'Yes, stops erosion'</i>
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Aesthetic / Natural

This was followed by a third of the respondents who mentioned because this looked more natural or for aesthetic reasons, 35%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 43% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 50% (95% confidence level).

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, protect houses, give beach character' 'Yes, gives them a natural feeling, gives it a beach feeling'</i>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Other, Don't know, Not really or No Answer	<i>'Not so much important, but they can add extra to atmosphere, or create good vantage points / character'</i>
---------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Separates development from beach

A seventh of the respondents said the dunes were important because it separated the development from the beach, 14%.

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, probably - gives a backdrop, nice to have, stops sea getting into land - stops erosion' 'Yes, limit between development and sea - good for view and for environment - part of the beach'</i>
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Wildlife

A tenth of the respondents (10%) mentioned wildlife. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 16% (95% confidence level).
- Who described their ethnicity as a New Zealand European, 13% (90% confidence level).

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, birdlife, vegetation so beach does not erode away, more natural feel - not have houses right up on beach' 'Yes, for stability of the land and for dotterels etc.'</i>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Other, Don't know, Not really or No Answer	<i>'Birds'</i>
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Yes but no reason given

A number of respondents said they thought the dunes were important but offered no explanation, 6%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 14% (95% confidence level).

³⁰ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, definitely, have heard they are important and have heard to protect them so one of the reasons we stay off them'</i>
	<i>'Yes, don't know why'</i>

Privacy / Shelter

Other respondents said they thought the dunes were important because they provided shelter or privacy, 5%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 14% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis without a holiday home, 8% (90% confidence level).

Think they are important	<i>'Nice to snuggle up by the dunes on windy days and for the katipo spider, ecological side of it'</i>
	<i>'Yeah, give a bit of privacy from the road'</i>
	<i>'Shelter from wind and sun'</i>
Other, Don't know, Not really or No Answer	<i>'Not really thought about it. Don't know. Wind break'</i>

To play on or use

A few respondents said they thought the dunes were important to play on or to use, 5%.

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, they are good for kids to play hide and seek'</i>
	<i>'Don't know, yes good for kids to play in'</i>

Other

Those significantly **more likely** to make some other comment included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 3% (95% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 3% (99% confidence level).

Think they are important	<i>'Yes, how you read the signs and stuff and all the vegetation and stuff'</i>
Other, Don't know, Not really or No Answer	<i>'Depends - whether to look pretty or to use without destroying. Should be protected with unobtrusive means i.e. not yellow ribbon to keep people off. No signage wanted'</i>

Don't know

A few respondents said they did not know if the dunes were important, 2%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 11% (90% confidence level).

Other, Don't know, Not really or No Answer	<i>'Not really'</i>
	<i>'Don't know, wouldn't worry me either way'</i>

No

A few respondents said they thought the dunes were not important. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locator 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 5% (90% confidence level).
- Who defined their ethnicity as Kiwis or New Zealanders, 6% (95% confidence level).

Not important

"What's the point of them, all those dollars spent, it's a waste of dollars, they grow themselves"

'Nice seawall. Sand dunes are over rated. Dunes fluctuate with the storms and these dunes were cut back last winter and have rebuilt so it's a natural cyclical thing. A boardwalk in the back for less mobile people, older people, people with disabilities'

7.3 Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata

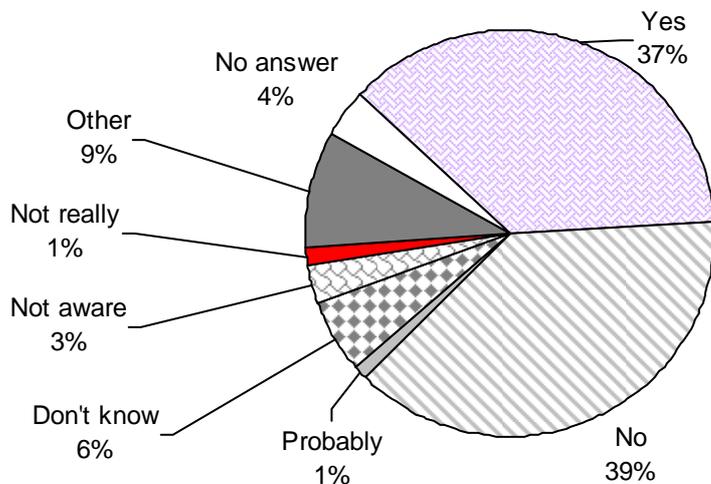
Respondents were asked, 'Do you think there are any problems with the dunes at Whangamata?'.

The graph below shows that 39% of respondents thought there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata. While over a third (37%) of the respondents thought there were problems, with a further 1% saying there were 'probably' problems.

The remaining 23% were split between those who did not know (6%), were not aware of any (3%), said there were not really any problems (1%), offered another view point (9%) or did not answer this question (4%).

Slightly higher proportions of visitors in 1997 considered there to be problems with the dunes at Whangamata (48%) than in 2005 (39%) while 41% said there were no problems in 1997 compared to 39% of visitors in 2005. This could reflect the changes over that time in the dune vegetation.

Any Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

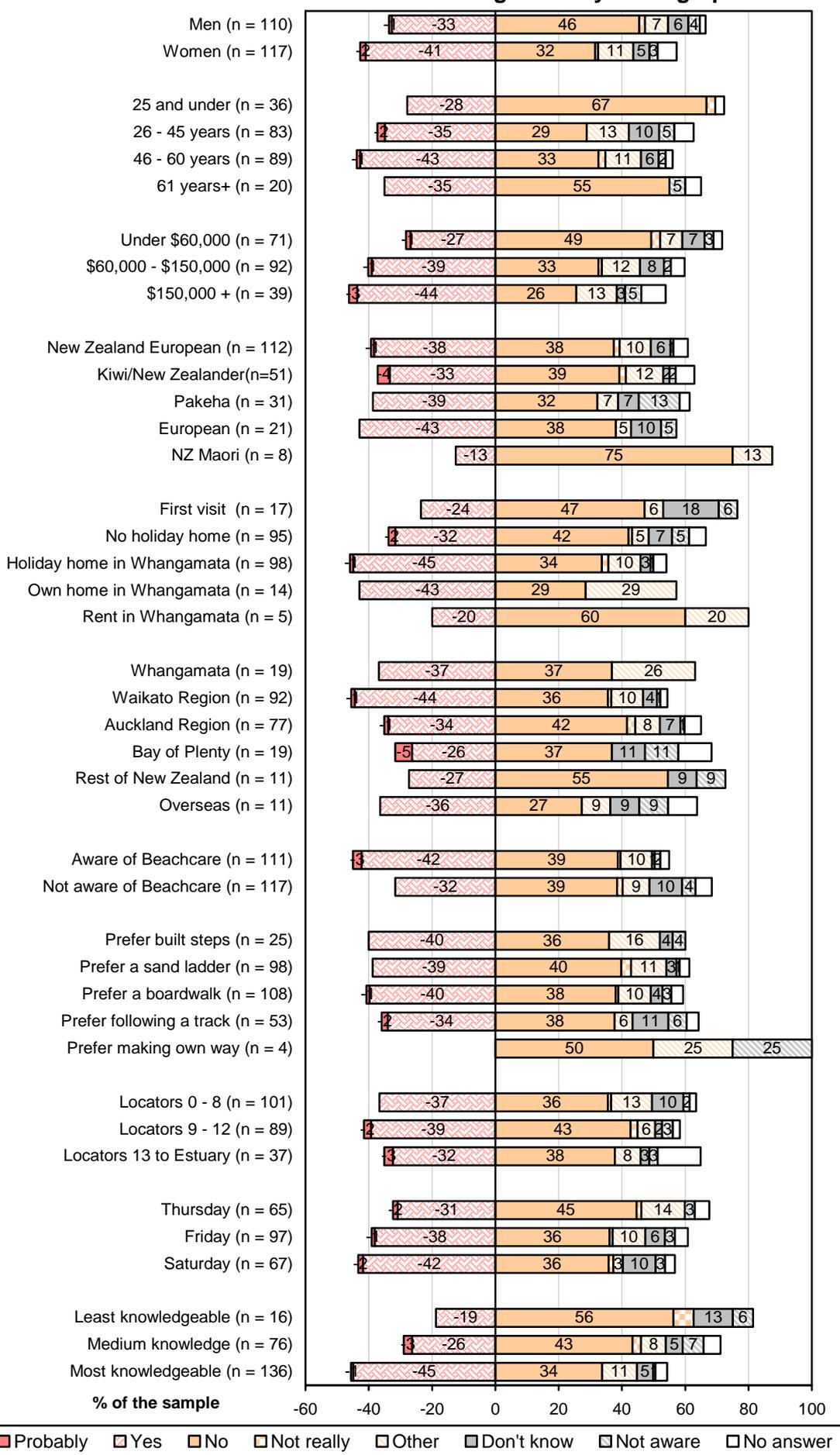
Those significantly **more likely** to say that there **are problems** with the dunes at Whangamata included those:

- Who are classified as the most knowledgeable about dunes, 45%, (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 45% (95% confidence level).
- From the Waikato Region, 44%, (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to say that there are **no problems** with the dunes at Whangamata included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 67% (99% confidence level).
- Men, 46% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income under \$60,000 p.a., 49% (95% confidence level).

Problems with the Sand Dunes at Whangamata by Demographics



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

7.3.1 What Are the Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata

Respondents were asked, 'Do you think there are any problems with the dunes at Whangamata'. They were then asked 'can you tell me what they are'.

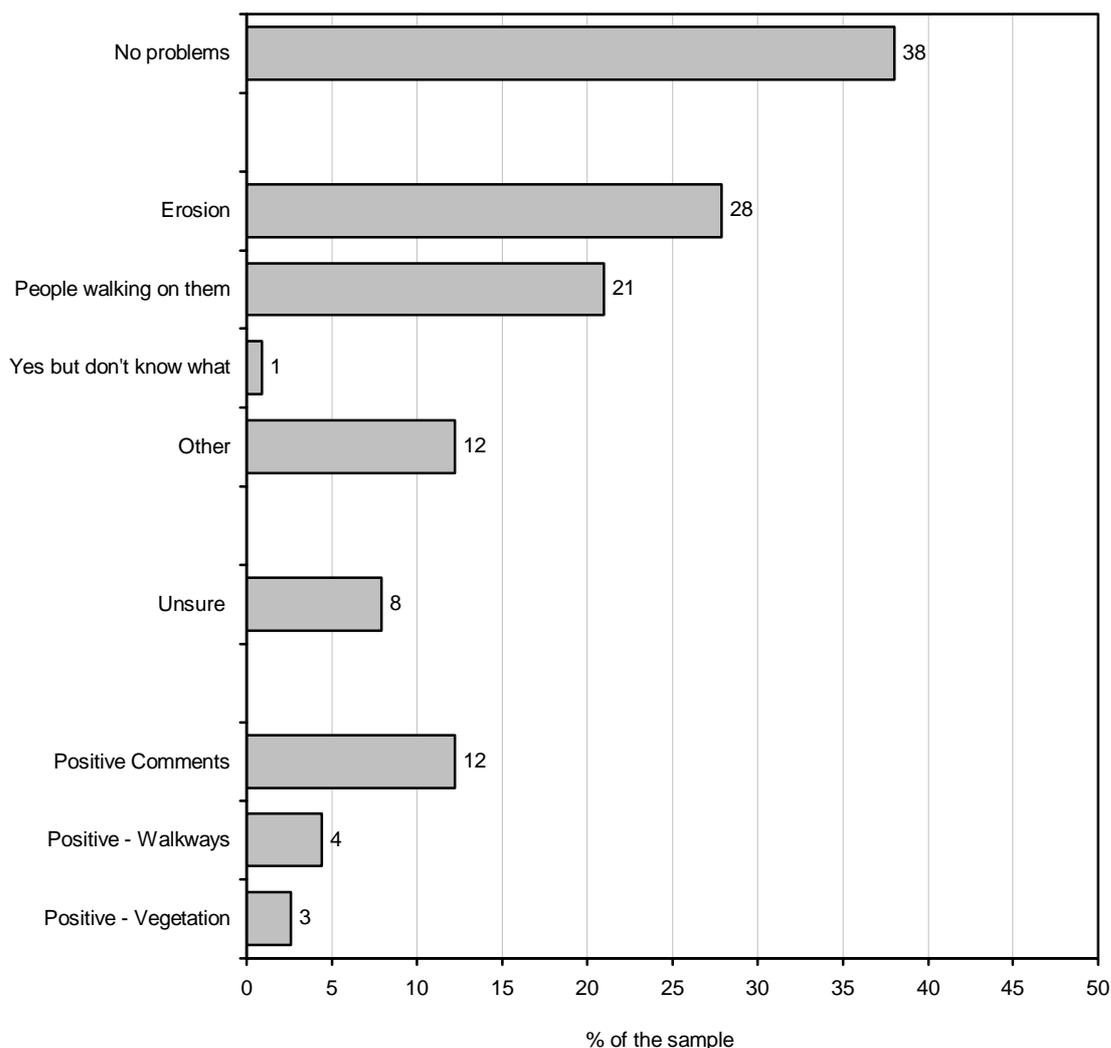
The largest group of respondents said there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata (38%). The respondents who thought there were problems with the dunes made a variety of comments. The main themes were erosion (28%) and people walking on the dunes (21%).

Other respondents were not sure if there were any problems with the dunes at Whangamata, while 12% made positive comments about the dunes.

Those saying that there were no problems with the dunes were more likely to have been interviewed in the area by the Surf Club i.e. by The Esplanade where large plantings are well established. Those saying that people walking on the dunes was creating problems were more likely to have been interviewed between the harbour and south of The Esplanade (locators 0-8) where the dunes are noticeably less vegetated and towards the harbour end there a multiple sand tracks through that dune area.

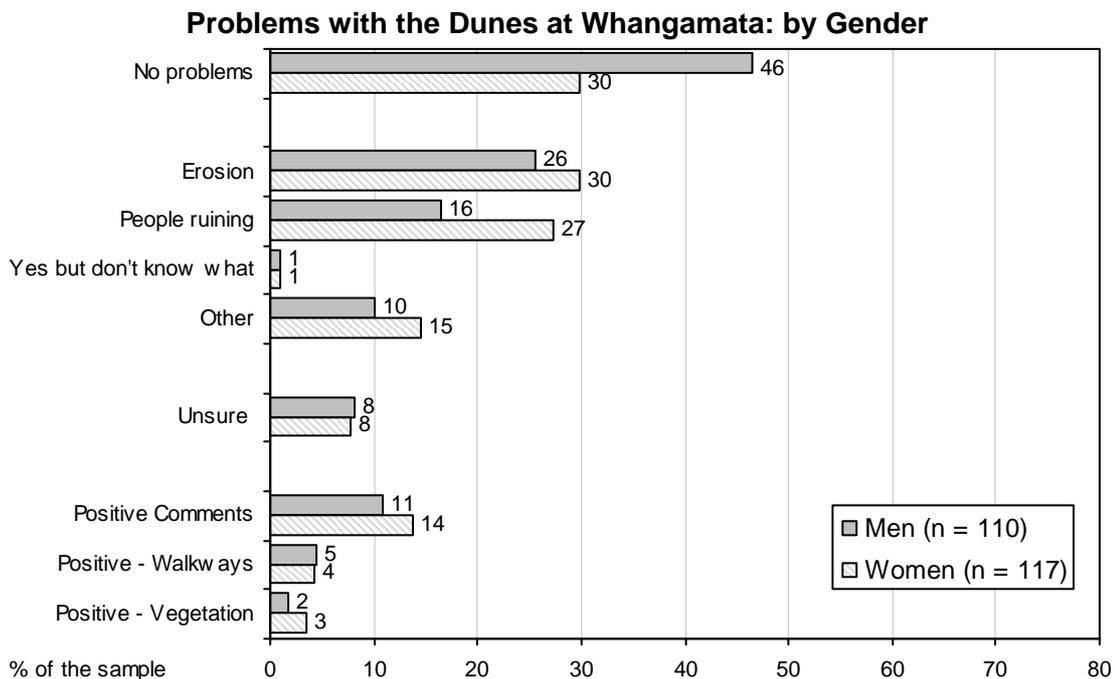
A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 5.

Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata: Coded Verbatim Responses



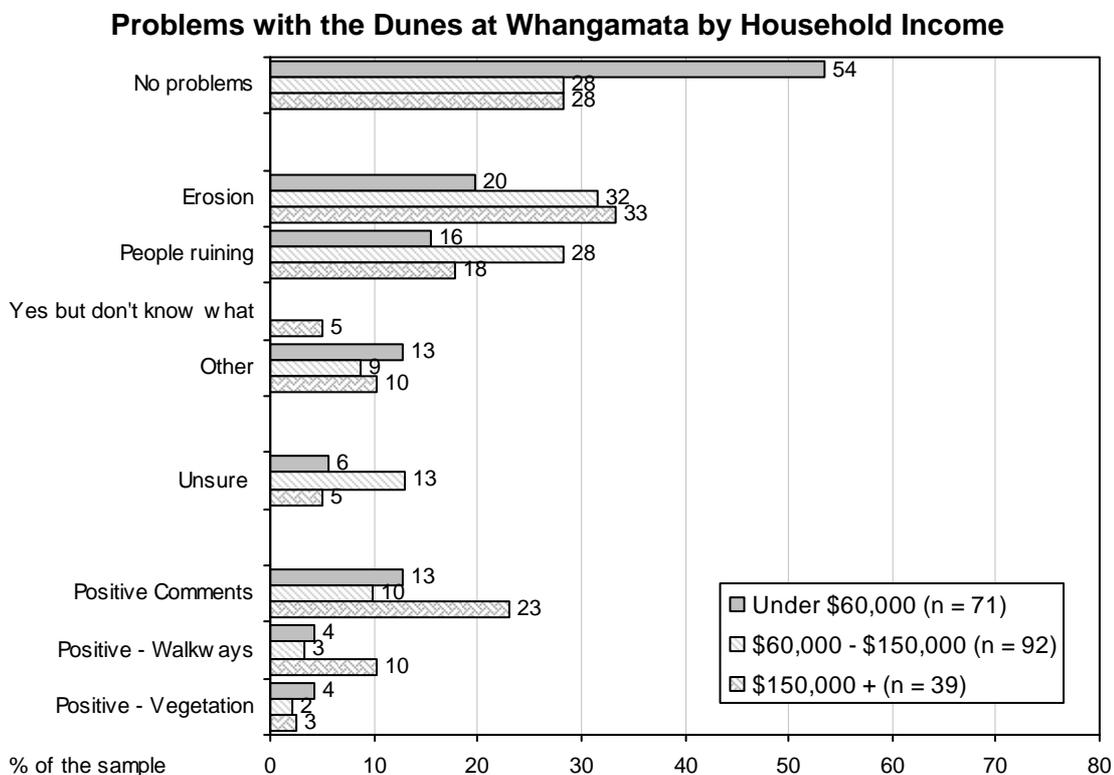
Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Gender

Men (46%) were significantly more likely than women (30%) to say there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata. Conversely women were significantly more likely to mention that people walking on the dunes was a problem (27% versus 16%).



Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Income

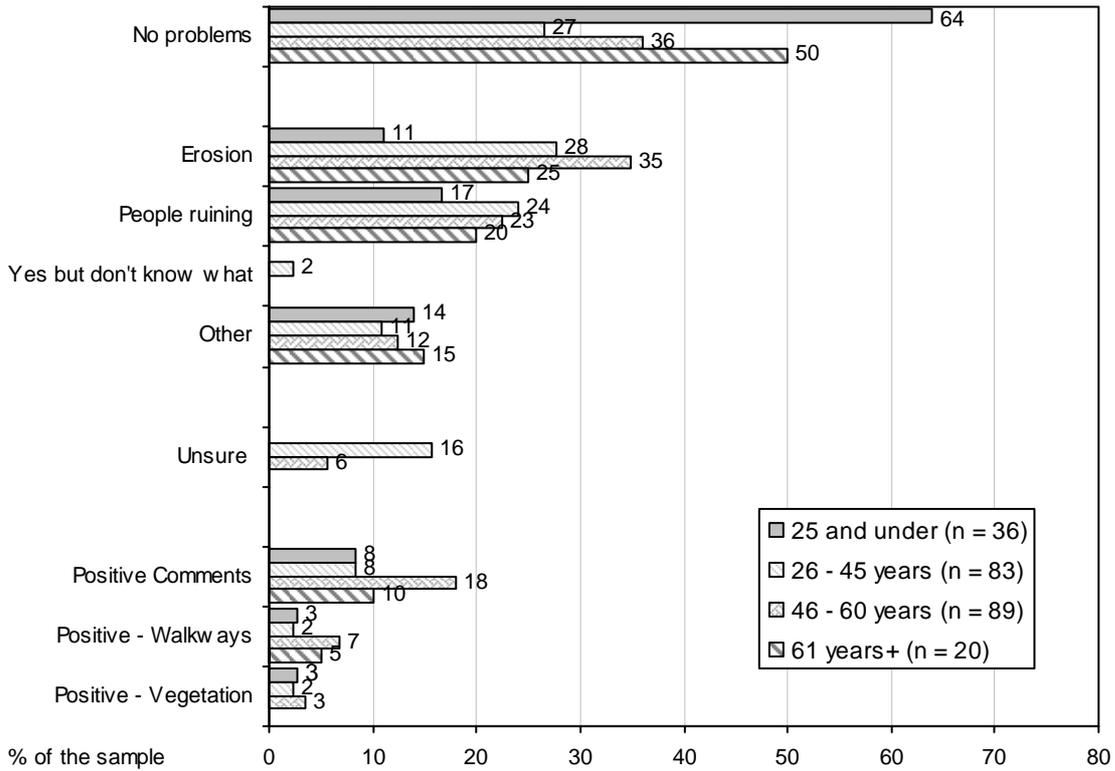
Respondents from the lowest household income bracket (54%) were significantly more likely to say there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata.



Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Age

Respondents aged 25 years and under were significantly more likely to say there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata (64%).

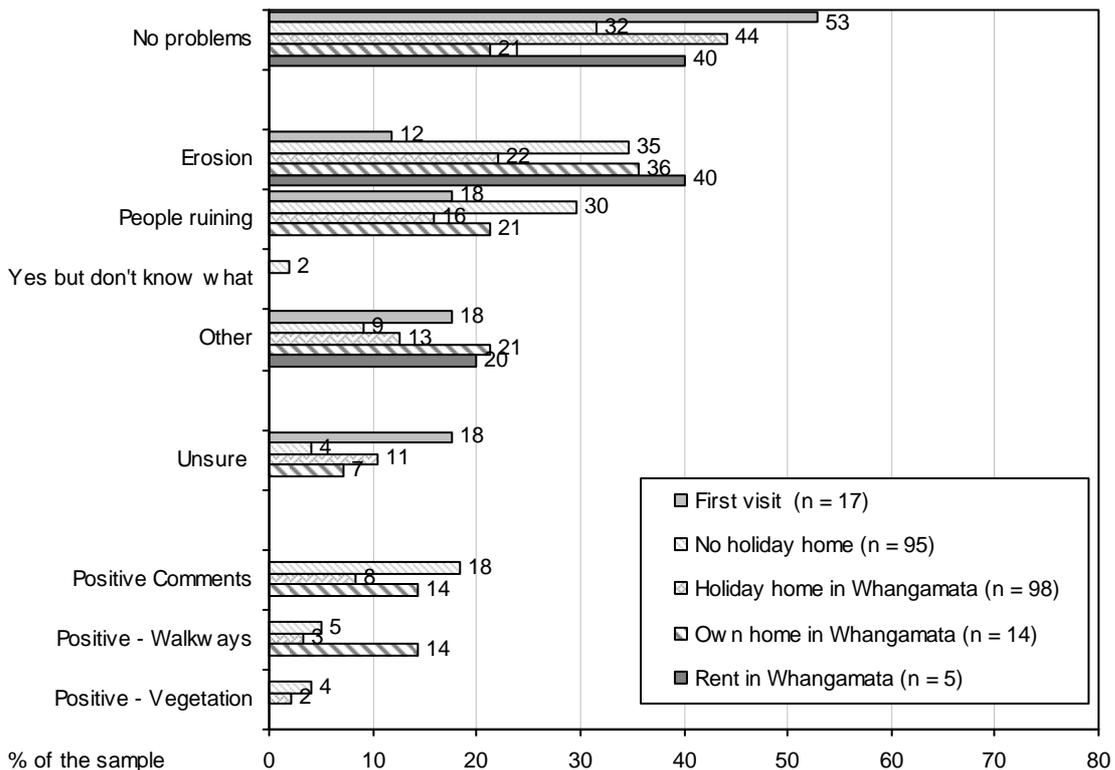
Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Age



Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Type

More first time visitors to Whangamata than other respondents said there were no problems with the dunes at Whangamata.

Problems with the Dunes at Whangamata by Type of Respondent



No problems

The largest group of respondents said there were not any problems or there were not really any problems with the dunes at Whangamata (38%). Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 25 years and under, 64% (99% confidence level).
- Men, 46% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 54% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locator 9 – 12 (including the Surf Club) 47% (95% confidence level).

Comments included:³¹

'No, never been a problem to me'

'Not that I'm aware of'

'Probably ok as are'

Erosion

The respondents who thought there were problems with the dunes made a variety of comments but the main theme was erosion, 28%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who are classified as the most knowledgeable about dunes, 36%, (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 35% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 7% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 41% (95% confidence level).

Comments included:

'Erosion is a problem'

'Yep, erosion problems up and down the coast'

'Yes, probably are, probably disappearing like most beaches'

People walking on them

The second theme covered people ruining the dunes, 22%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm, 31% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 30% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 30% (95% confidence level).
- Women, 27% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 28% (90% confidence level).

Comments included:

'Think have a few, bit of erosion and people don't use proper paths all the time, should have better chance to grow stuff on them'

'Yes, behind us didn't used to be cordoned off. Breaking up dunes - eroding. No good for spinifex to be trampled'

'Yes, access destroying plants'

Other

Comments included:

'Broken glass where we stay'

'Too many rabbits, not enough re-vegetation. Too many horrible little brats and dogs that roam at will that knock vegetation around'

'No, bit of rubbish in them'

³¹ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

Yes, but don't know what

Those significantly **more likely** to say there was a problem but not specify what this was included those:

- With a household income over \$150,000 p.a. 5% (99% confidence level).
- Who defined themselves as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 4% (99% confidence level).

Comments included:

'Yes, from what you read and the time and money being spent on them'

'Know has been as often been signs'

Unsure

A number of respondents were unsure, not aware or did not know if there were problems or not. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 26 – 45, 16% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 13% (95% confidence level).
- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 12% (95% confidence level).
- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 16% (90% confidence level).

Comments included:

'No, don't know them'

'Might be disappearing a bit - don't know'

'Just trying to stop people walking on them, don't know how they're doing.'

Really well sign posted'

Positive comments - walkways

Other respondents made positive comments about the dunes, 12% with the main positive theme covering the walkways, 4%. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- With a household income over \$150,000 p.a. 10% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Saturday, 13% (90% confidence level).

Comments included:

'Being eroded from time to time. Good that put down walkways'

'No, don't think so, done wonderful walkways. Seen kids sliding down them and told them to respect the dunes. Seen them deteriorate in 21 years, that's nature'

'No, plenty of walkways'

Positive comments – vegetation

A few respondents, 3% made positive comments about the vegetation. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who have heard of Beachcare, 5% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 71% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 65% (90% confidence level).

Comments included:

'No, looking very healthy. Improved a great deal'

'No, look good grasses are all growing'

'Vegetation starting to grow more for stability'

Positive comments – other

Comments included:

'Think improved heaps; most people keep off them but still lack of respect, kids and families playing in them. But improved and more education'

'Yes, but compliment people for work over the years that has been done on them - planting, improved immensely. Still problems - area around surf club which was fenced off for many years now damaged'

'No, but been a lot of work to keep them from being destroyed'

8 Built Accessways

8.1 What People Think of Built Accessways

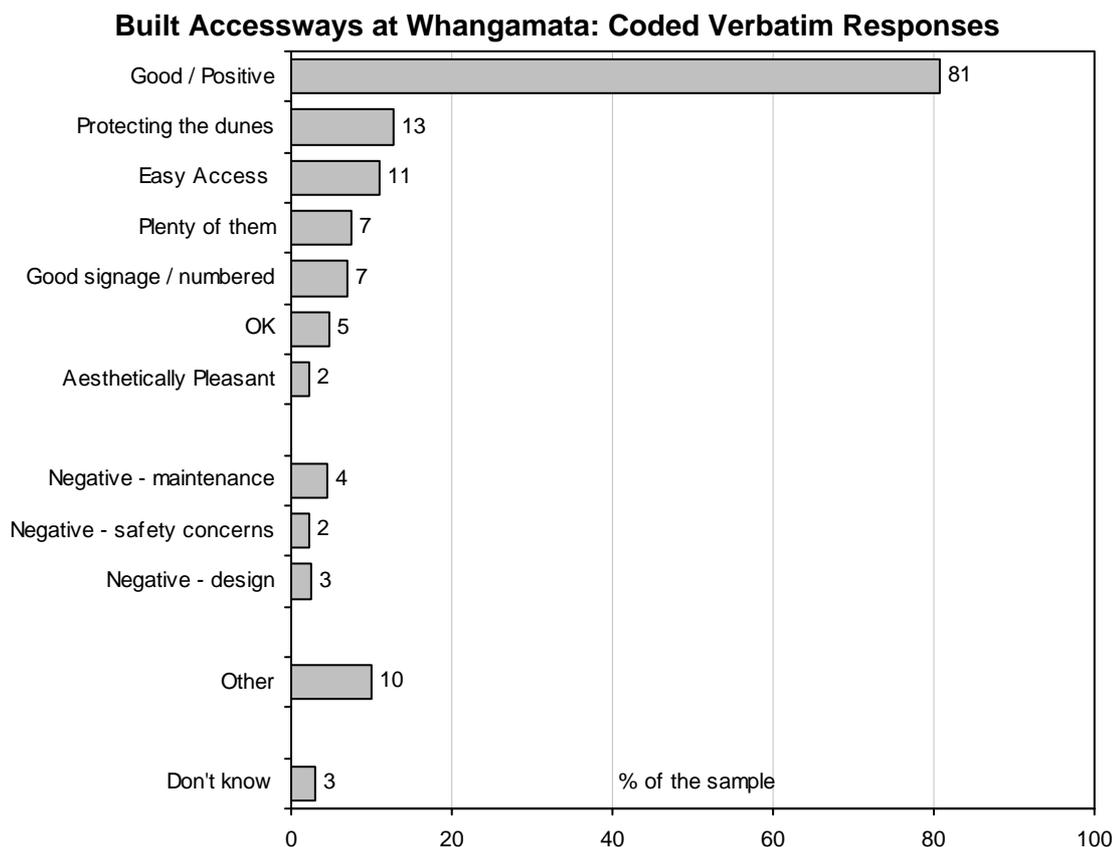
Respondents were asked, 'What do you think of the built accessways at Whangamata?'

Four fifths (81%) of the respondents made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata. Other respondents made positive comments about the built accessways protecting the dunes (13%), making access easy (11%), there being plenty of built accessways (7%) or positively commented about the signage / numbering of the accessways (7%). A few others, said the accessways were okay (5%) or commented on these being aesthetically pleasant (2%).

Conversely, 9% of the respondents made negative comments about the built accessways. This was generally in relation to maintenance (4%) or to do with safety concerns (2%) or design concerns (3%).

Other respondents did not know about the built accessways, 3%.

.A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 6.



These results are similar to those found by Fagan in 1997, when 92% of visitors showed support for the provision of accessways.

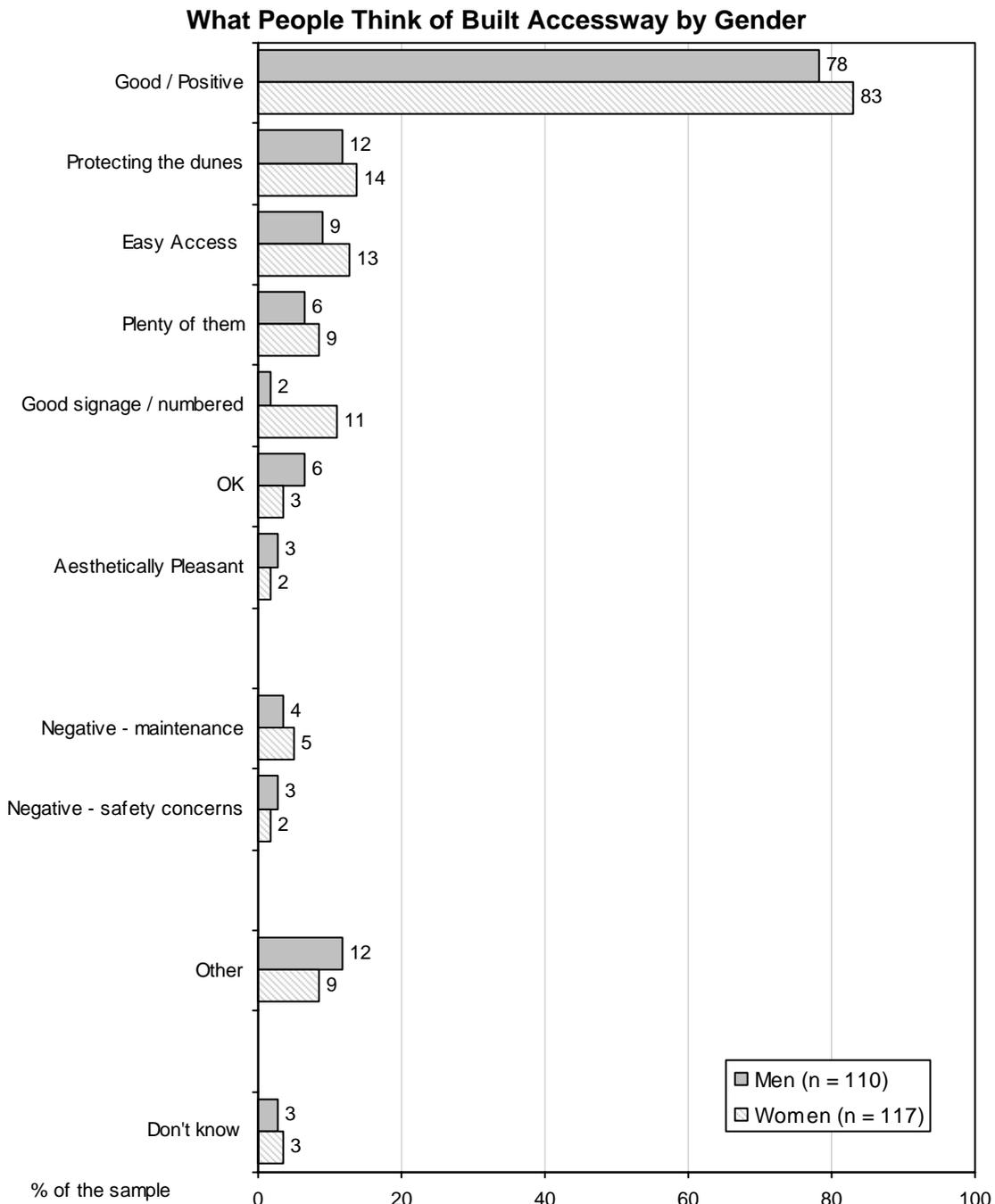
In 2000, the area alongside the Surf Club on The Esplanade reserve was fenced and planted, with multiple closely spaced accessways built. This work was a topic of discussion in the Whangamata community; the local newspaper (the Coastal News) ran a series of articles reporting the work as being described as "totem poles" and

“cattle yards”³². Views were also canvassed through the Coastal News website using a web survey that asked people to vote on whether they considered the new look to be favourable or un-favourable.

There appears to be continued support for the accessways at Whangamata. The small proportion of negative comments reflect people’s concerns regarding the need of on-going maintenance and issues relating to safety and design (especially for the elderly, less mobile and those with children and pushchairs). Two respondents commented on the ‘cattle yards’ positively now that the area is well established.

What People Think of Built Accessway by Gender

The majority of both men (78%) and women (83%) made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata.



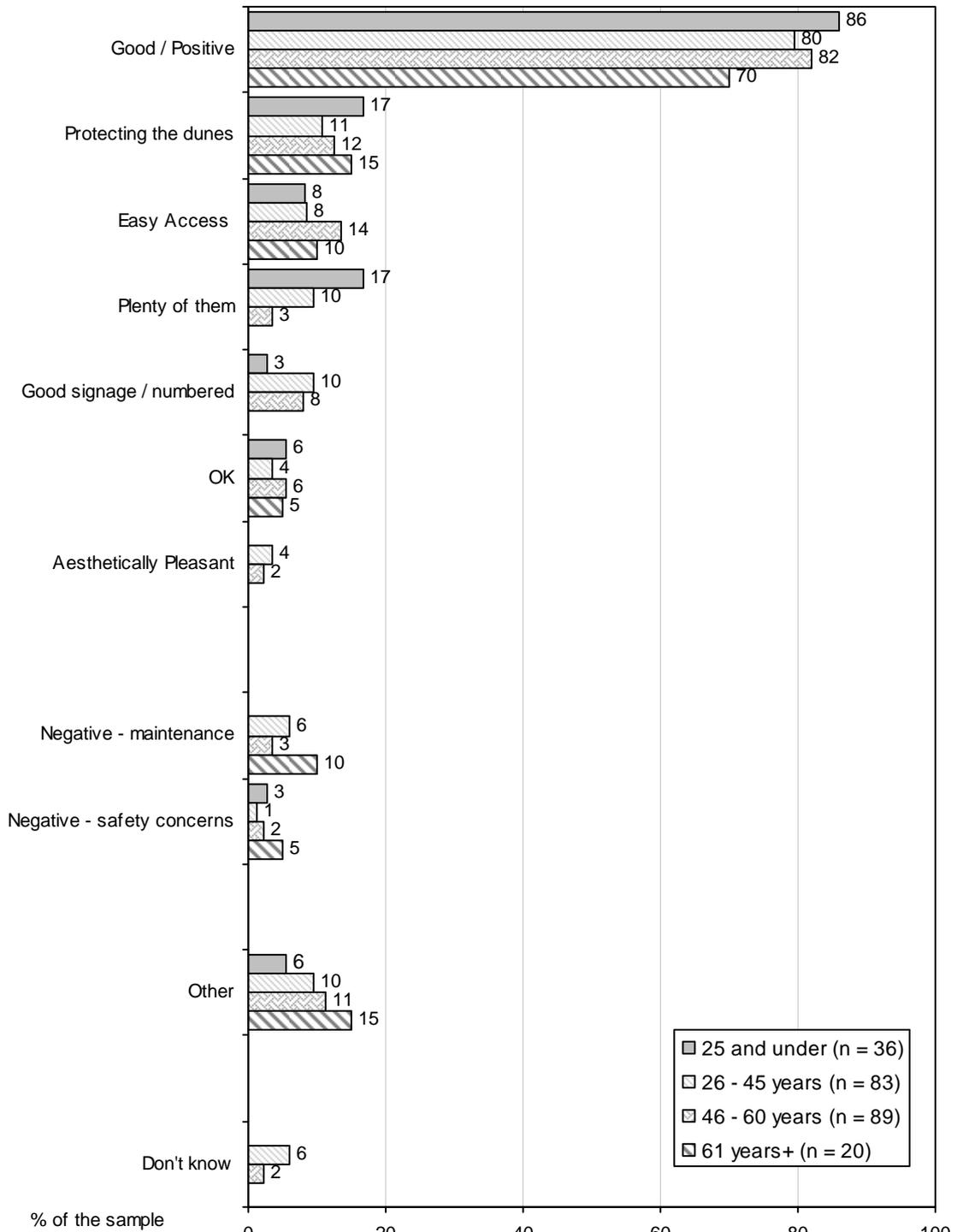
³² Coastal News 19 October 2000: Totem poles? Cattleyards.

What People Think of Built Accessway by Age

Respondents were asked, 'What do you think of the built accessways at Whangamata?'

Between 70% and 90% of the respondents from each age bracket made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata. More respondents aged over 60 years made negative comments about maintenance or safety concerns.

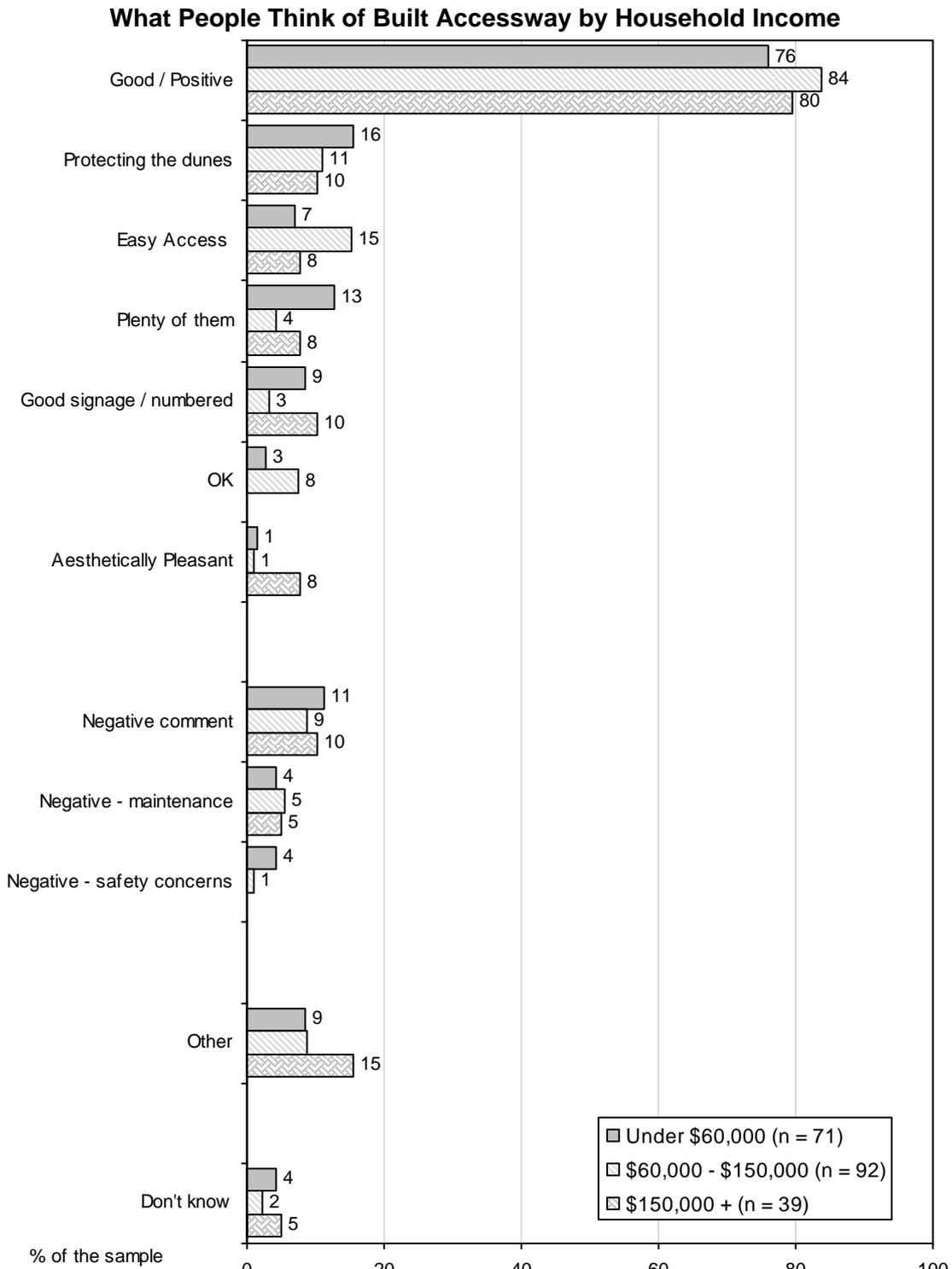
What People Think of Built Accessway by Age



What People Think of Built Accessway by Household Income

Respondents were asked, 'What do you think of the built accessways at Whangamata?'

Over three quarters of the respondents in each household income bracket made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata.

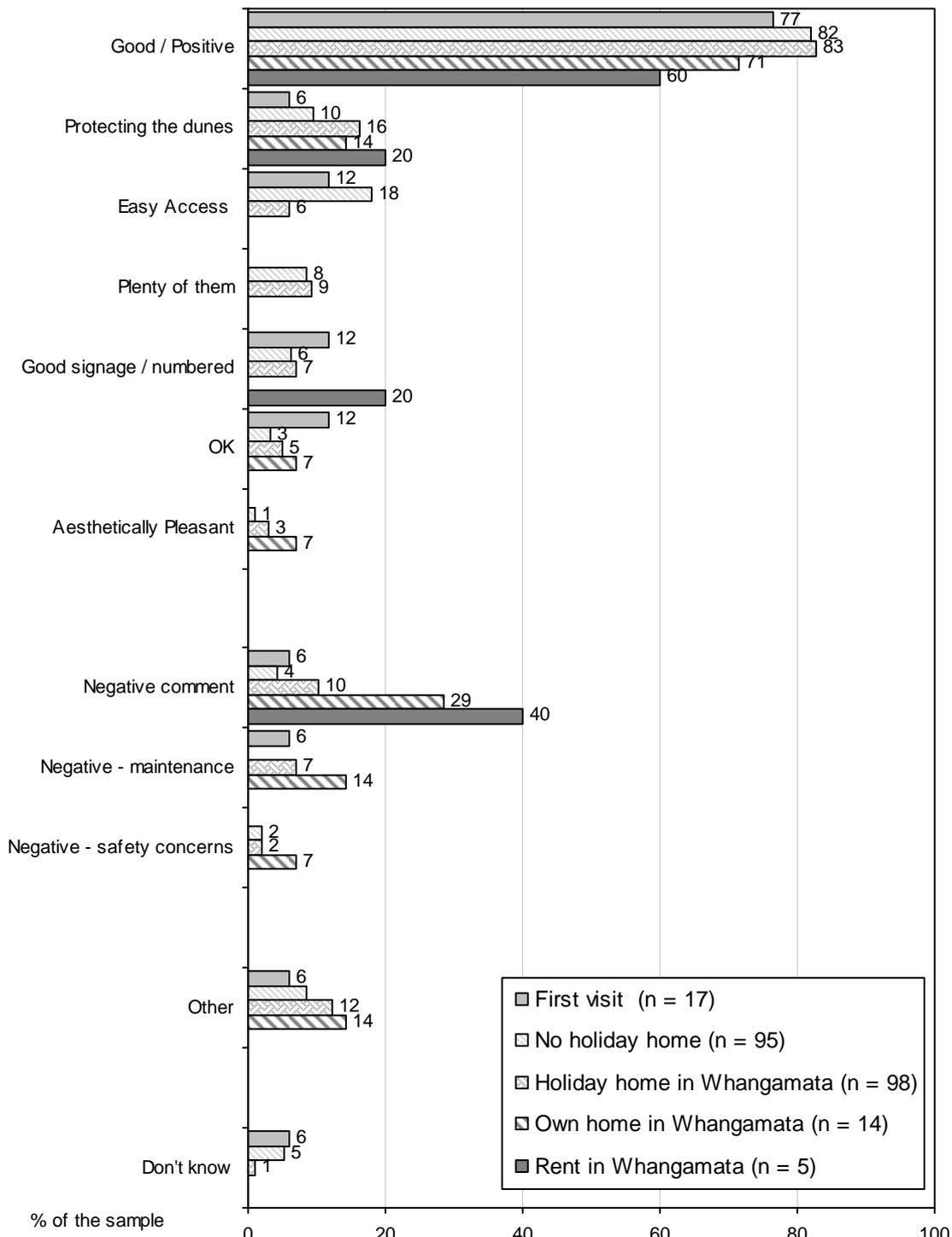


What People Think of Built Accessway by Type of respondents

Respondents were asked, 'What do you think of the built accessways at Whangamata?'

The majority of the respondents, regardless whether they were from Whangamata, or how frequently they visited made general positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata. However, the few who rented and those who owned their own home in Whangamata made more negative comments about the built accessways.

What People Think of Built Accessway by Visitor Type



Good / Positive³³

The largest group of respondents made positive comments about the built accessways at Whangamata, 81%. These respondents commented:

'Pretty good in general. Serve a good purpose'

'Good, well numbered'

'They're sweet'

Protecting the dunes

The second largest group of respondents mentioned the built accessways protected the dunes, 13%. These respondents commented:

'Great, doing a fabulous job, grasses looking great'

'Good - keeps people off dunes'

'Good, because people tend to be directed through there rather than every which way'

Easy access

A tenth of the respondents mentioned the built accessways made access to the beach easy, 11%. These respondents commented:

'I think they are great, needed for elderly or disabled, most got access for emergency services.'

Just along here, if there was access for trailer sailors etc that would stop people abusing and making their own way and wrecking the banks'

'Very good access Good - good there are a lot. Easy to use.'

Prefer to clambering down over dunes'

'Good. Important to have disabled facilities. Beach of this beauty should be accessible to everybody'

Plenty of them

Slightly fewer respondents mentioned there were plenty of built accessways, 7%. These respondents commented:

'They're ok, plenty of them, if there were only a few that would be a problem'

'Good - good there are a lot. Easy to use. Good, don't have to walk far'

'Very good - easy on feet - lots of them'

Good signage / numbered

A number of the respondents mentioned the signage or numbering of the built accessways, 7%. These respondents commented:

'Brilliant, know where sitting. Walkways are good, signs tell you how many metres'

'Good ideas for the numbered signs for emergency services'

'Good - obvious, well signposted. Wharf end not so well signposted'

OK, all right

A number of the respondents mentioned the built accessways were okay or all right, 5%. These respondents commented:

'A necessary evil I suppose'

'They're all right'

'Seem all right'

Aesthetically pleasant

A few respondents mentioned the built accessways were aesthetically pleasant, 2%. These respondents commented:

'Great, looked like cattle yards at first, now good. Sand has built well - bottom posts were bloody high to begin with. Now almost buried'

'They're good, protecting the rest obviously, easy to walk down, blend in with environment, not like a metal structure'

'Good, look good, function well, fit in with environment'

³³ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

Negative comments

There were also a number of respondents who made negative comments.

Negative - maintenance

The main negative theme revolved around maintenance, mentioned by 4% of the respondents with comments like:

'Absolute waste of money - been washed away several times'

'Most of them are really good, a couple need work where sand shifting is changing them. Why improved so much - need a bit of maintenance. In some places, hard to find'

'Fine, do wash away quite frequently'

Negative - safety concerns

A few respondents (3%) mentioned concerns about the safety of the built accessways, 2%. These respondents commented:

'Has seen people slip on sand ladder accessways. No good for people with wheelchairs, Australia - boardwalks. Hard to get close to beach'

'Horrible to walk down, surprised OSH hasn't charged someone for ankle breaking'

Negative - design

A few respondents mentioned concerns about design which included:

'Pretty good in general. Serve a good purpose. Certainly encourage people to use them, not a lot of signage encouraging people to use them, should be encouraged'

'Need to be a bit more - easier access as some are too steep'

'We only use the one by the surf club - others are not user friendly on feet. Would be better if solid, smooth. At Whangamata, access by surf club is a smooth, boardwalk type structure.'

'Other access ways use sand ladders'

Other

Other respondents made a range of comments which included:

'Pretty good, needed at regular spacings'

'Excellent. Need more facilities at the accessways'

'Brilliant - well it's done away with rubbish bins. No litter on this beach'

Don't know

'Haven't seen them yet'

'Not really seen them'

'Not seen them yet'

8.2 Why Were Wooden Accessways Built

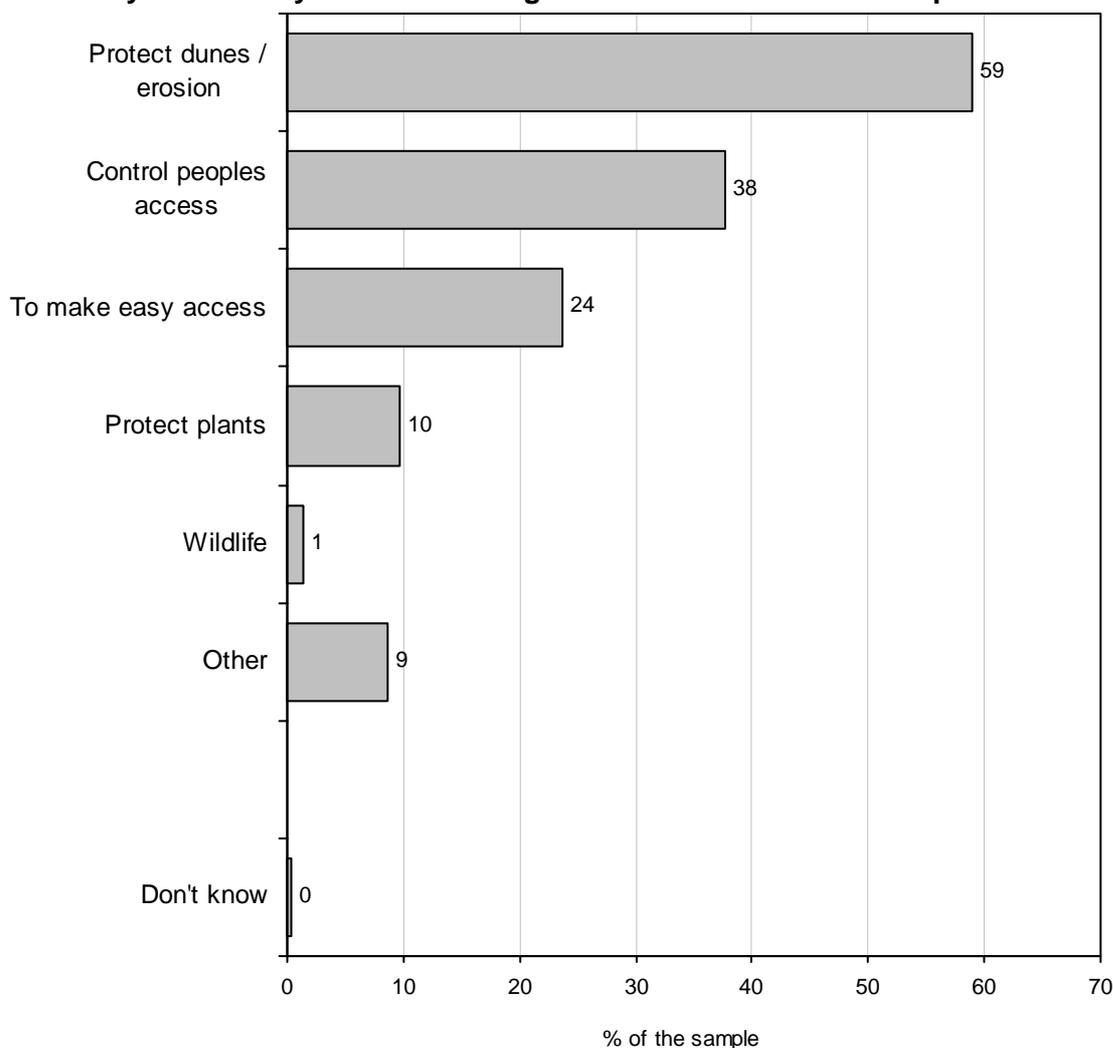
Respondents were asked, *'Why do you think the wooden accessways were built'*.

Just over half of the respondents, 59% said the wooden accessways were built to protect the dunes or to prevent erosion. This was followed by 38% who said the accessways were built to control people's access. A quarter of the sample, 24% said the accessways were built to make access to the beach easy. A small number commented these were built to protect the plants (10%) or wildlife (1%).

In 1997, when Fagan asked visitors "Why were the wooden accessways built?" the main theme to emerge was that 'they were there to protect the dunes' (66%) (Fagan, 1998).

A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 7.

Why Accessways Built at Whangamata: Coded Verbatim Responses



To protect dunes / erosion

Just over half of the respondents, 59% said the wooden accessways were built to protect the dunes or to prevent erosion. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 66% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000, 65% p.a. 52% or over \$150,000 p.a., 72% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed on Saturday, 70% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:³⁴

'To protect the dunes'
'Stop the erosion and stop the wearing down'
'Stop erosion, keep people to tracks'

³⁴ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

Control people's access

A third of the respondents, 38% said the wooden accessways were built to control people's access through the dunes. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 48% (99% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Keeping people from walking all over them'
'To stop people walking on the sand dunes'
*'Stop people wandering off them all over the dunes,
safety, keep in designated area'*

To make easy access

A quarter of the respondents, 24% said the wooden accessways were built to make access to the beach easier. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 33% (99% confidence level).
- Aged under 25, 39% or aged 26 – 45, 31% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 31% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis without a holiday home, 32% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'Easier access'
'To stop people from running through sand dunes and for ease to get on beach'
'To get better, easier access to beach'
'To protect the dunes, to provide clearer access'

Protect plants

A tenth of the respondents, 10% said the wooden accessways were built to protect the plants growing on the dunes. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed on Thursday, 15% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'We were losing all vegetation - therefore getting erosion, losing banks'
'Protect sand dune planting'
'Keep people off dunes for grasses to grow'

Wildlife

A few respondents, 1% said the wooden accessways were built to protect the wildlife. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 7% (99% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

'To keep people off the sand dunes to have a chance to grow and to protect bird life'
'Protect sand dunes originally, and native flora'
'To keep you off everywhere else – wildlife'

Other

There were a range of other comments which included:

'So people can get in and out easily, stop sand from burning their feet'
'To protect the dunes and the buffer zone between the beach and the town'
'Tourist attraction, get more people onto the beach'

Don't know

A few respondents said they did not know what the wooden accessways were built for. Those significantly **more likely** to mention this included those:

- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 5% (95% confidence level).

8.3 Preferred Accessways

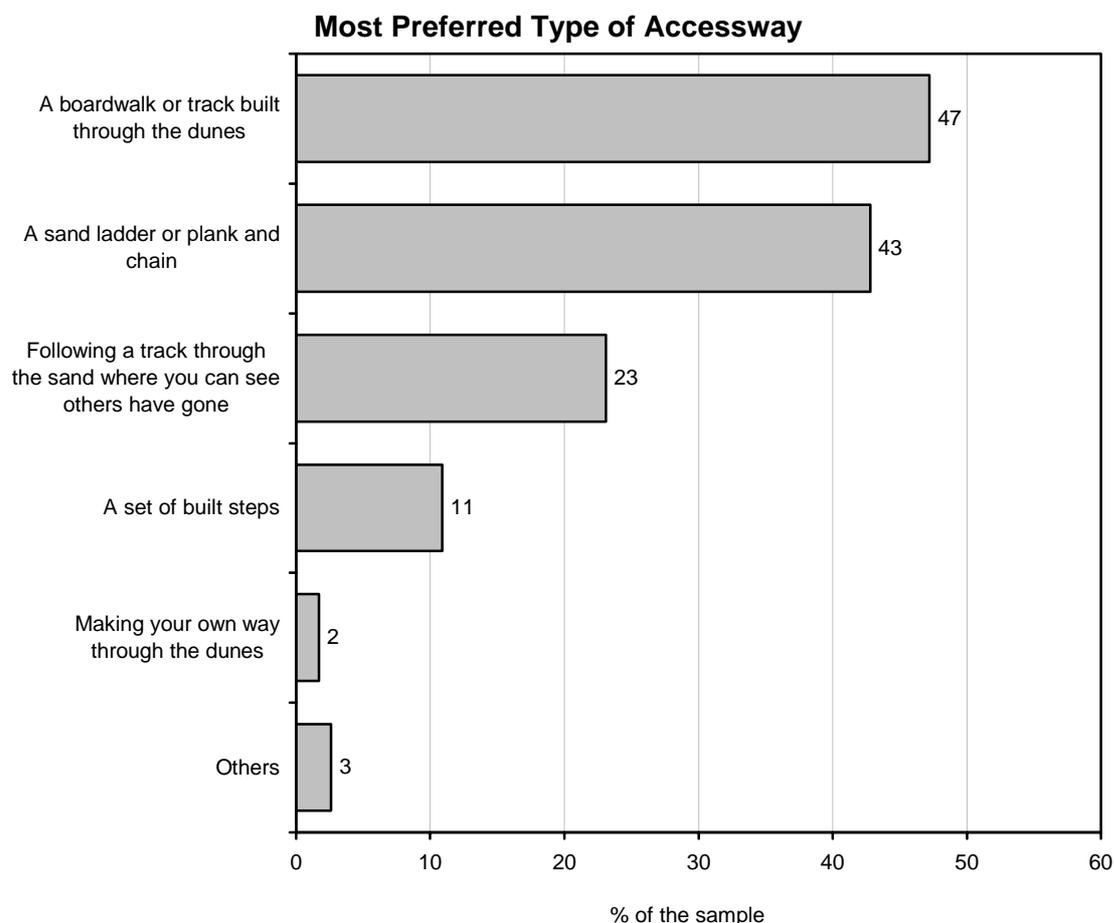
Respondents were asked, 'From the types of accessways I read out, can you tell me which ones you prefer?' (see the questionnaire in Appendix 10 for the list of accessways). They were then asked why they preferred those types of accessways.

The question allowed for respondents to choose more than one type of accessway from the list. This question was designed to uncover the advantages beach users saw in the various forms of accessways generally available. Some respondents also commented on the disadvantages they saw in the types of accessways they did not prefer.

The largest group of respondents said they preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes (47%) or a sand ladder or plank and chain (43%).

A quarter of the respondents (23%) preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone, while 11% preferred a set of built steps. A few respondents (2%) preferred making their own way through the dunes. There were also a few respondents (3%) who had no preference or who made other comments.

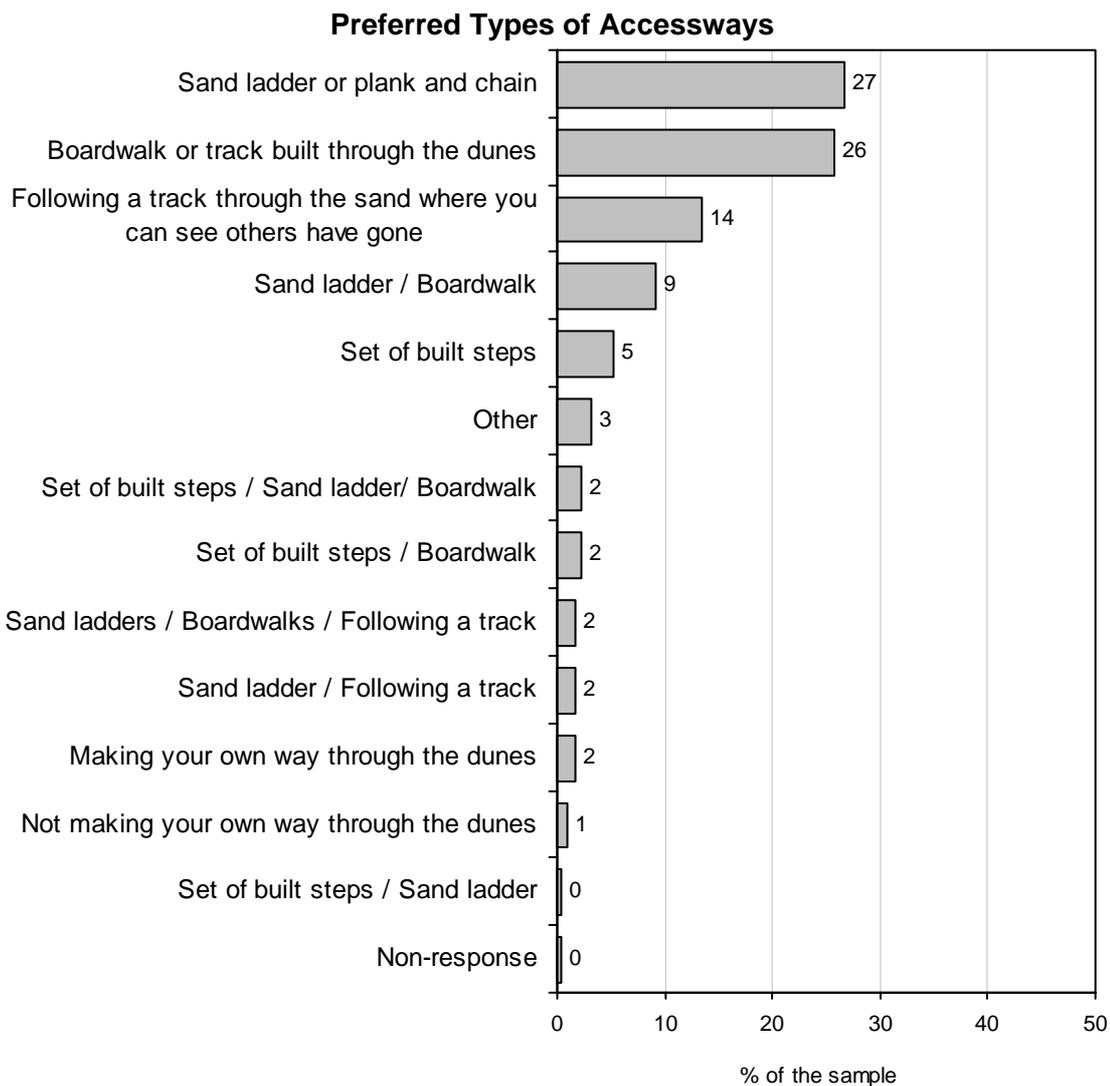
A full list of verbatim comments is in Appendix 8.



The graph below shows where respondents indicated only one preferred type of accessway or where more than one accessway type was preferred.

For the 2% of respondents that said they preferred *making your own way through the dunes* this was the only accessway they preferred.

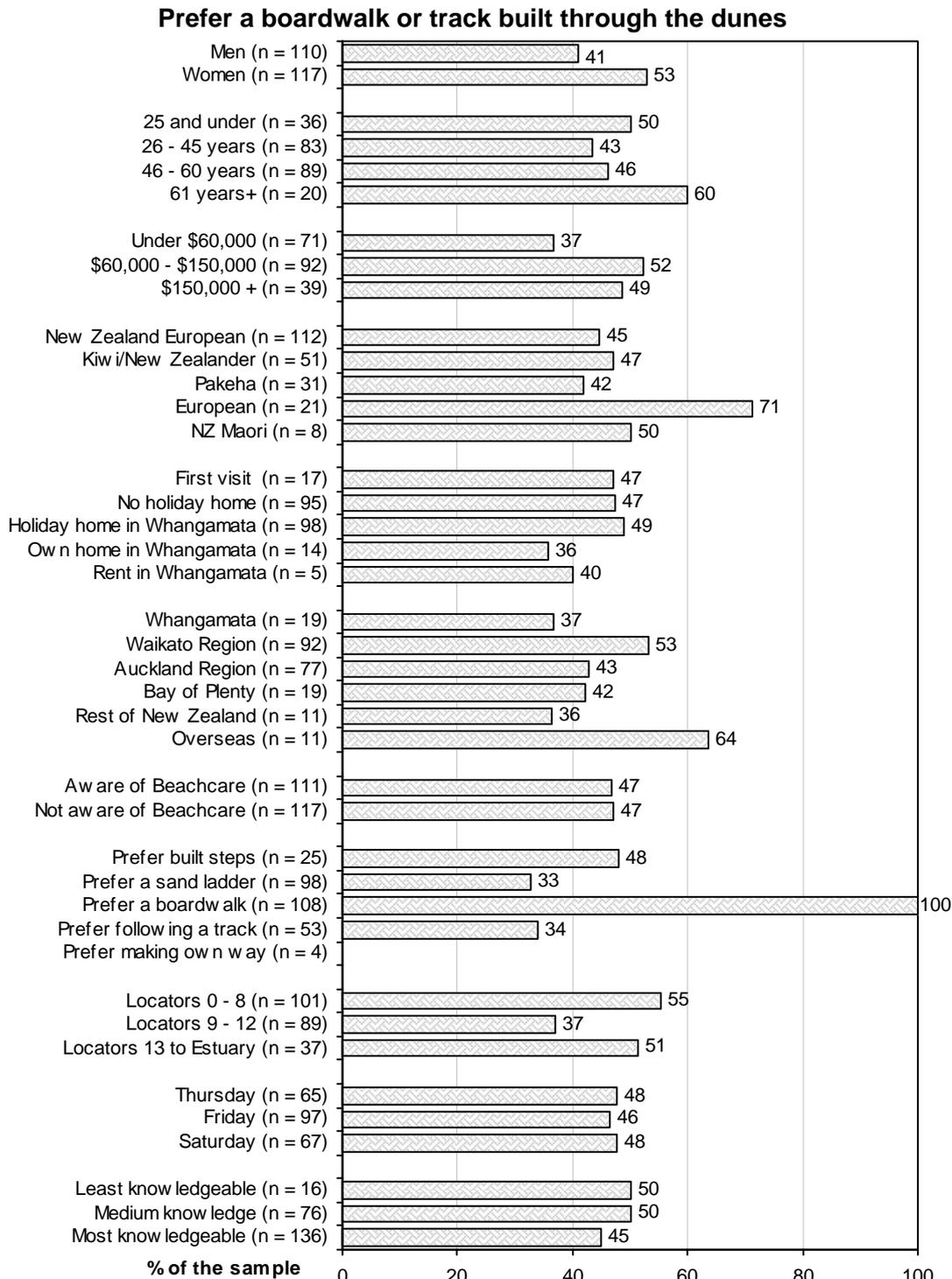
For each of the other types of accessways read out, around half of respondents indicated they preferred only the one type (e.g. 27% preferred only a *sand ladder or plank and chain* compared to a total of 43% indicating a preference for this type), while others preferred more than one type of accessway, with the most commonly indicated being a the preferred types: a *sandladder or plank and chain* and a *boardwalk or track built through the dunes* (9% of the sample).



A boardwalk or track built through the dunes

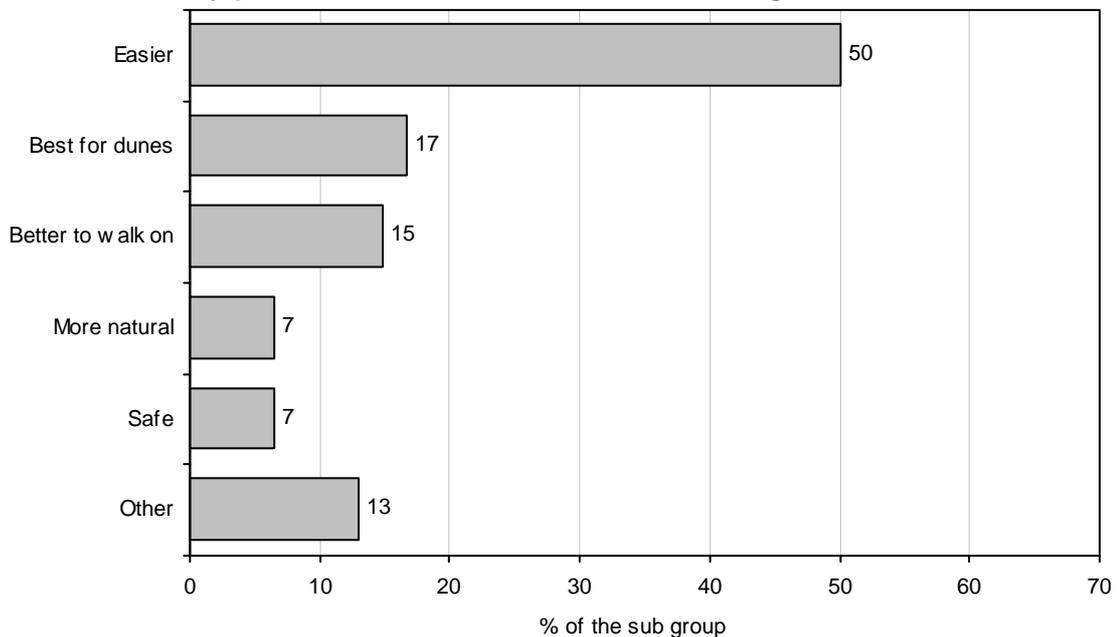
Those significantly **more likely** to say they prefer a **boardwalk or track built through the dunes** included those:

- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a. 52% (95% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 55% (95% confidence level).
- Women, 53% (90% confidence level).



For those who preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes (n=108) the main reasons given were because these were easier, better to walk on or safe (62% of this sub group), or caused the least damage to the dunes (17% of the sub group).

Why prefer a boardwalk or track built through the dunes



NOTE: The comments below relate largely to the advantages of this type of accessway. Some respondents gave the disadvantages of other types of accessways to explain their preference. These comments are included in this coding as they provide context to the respondents choice (see Appendix 6 for the full list of comments).

Easier

'These are really good, user friendly, good with kids, don't really need stairs. Need more wooden structures where sand moves a bit more, not just a track. Sand ladders are hard to negotiate.'

'Suits me because of two bung knees, steps too awkward, sloping boardwalk down. 2 inches of sand no big deal. More elderly people would like boardwalks'

'Quicker, easier, doesn't destroy the dunes'

Best for the dunes

'Wouldn't damage dunes and tend to wander if not on a set path'

'Protects plants and dunes'

'Cause less damage than the others'

More natural

'Looks nice'

'it gets covered and you don't know it's there'

'Because keeps natural coastline more than concrete. More beachy. Other things would take away from that. Lucky that do have all facilities plus natural beach. Like ruggedness of them, pleased not concrete, sand dunes not on each side city look'

Better to walk on

'Stable to walk on, knees are bugged and for older people, nice and smooth'

'Nicer to walk on'

'Boards better than steps, better for children. Find it difficult on the sand ladder'

Safe

'For stability for people with disabilities, elderly, children and pushchairs.'

'Feel safe'

'Sand ladders quite unstable, have to watch yourself as you get older.'

Other

'I need to know which walkway to use to get home'

'Obvious and with chain be go into disrepair quite quickly.'

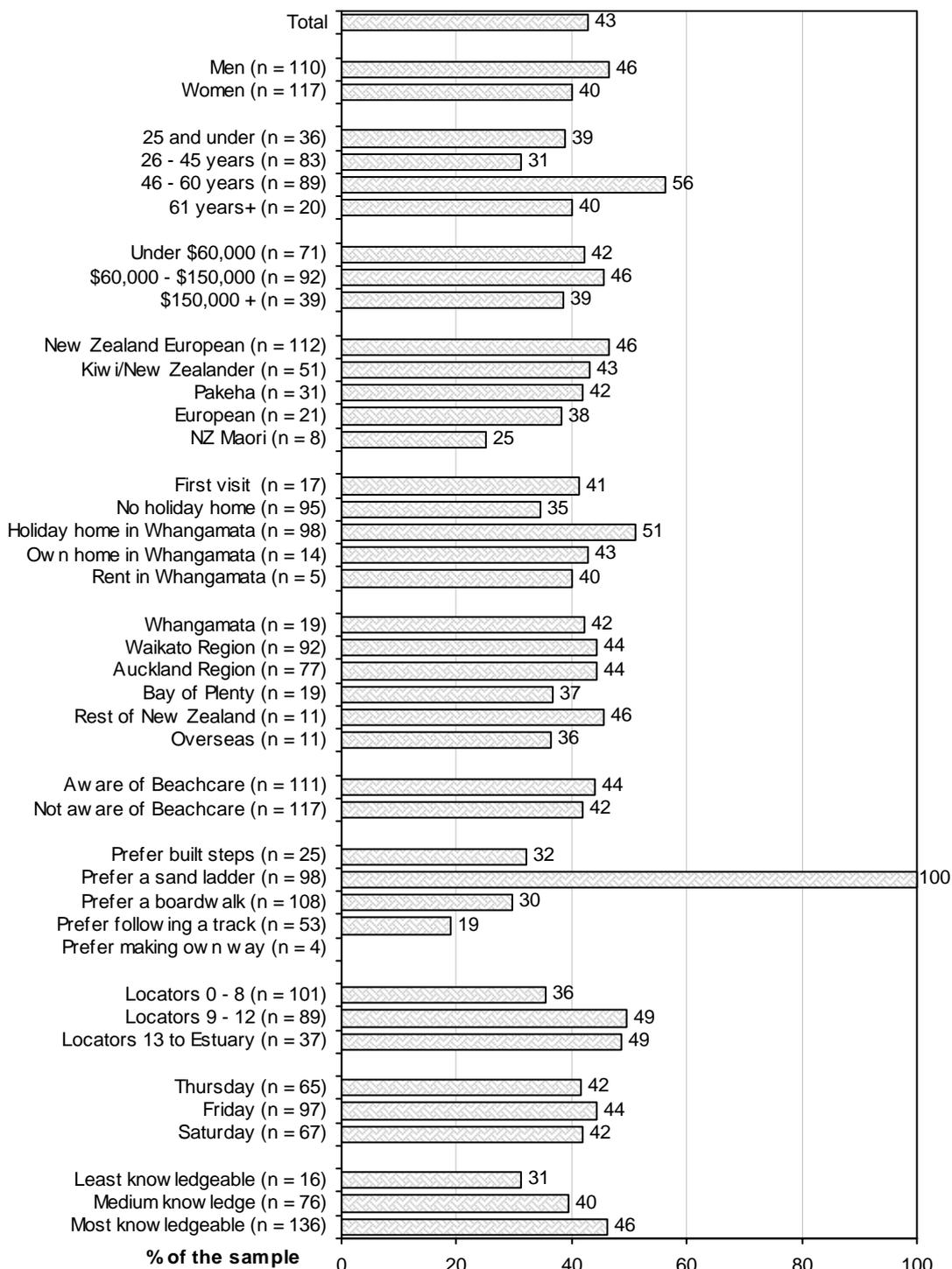
'Wooden slats - most economical to build, steps cost more'

A sand ladder or plank and chain

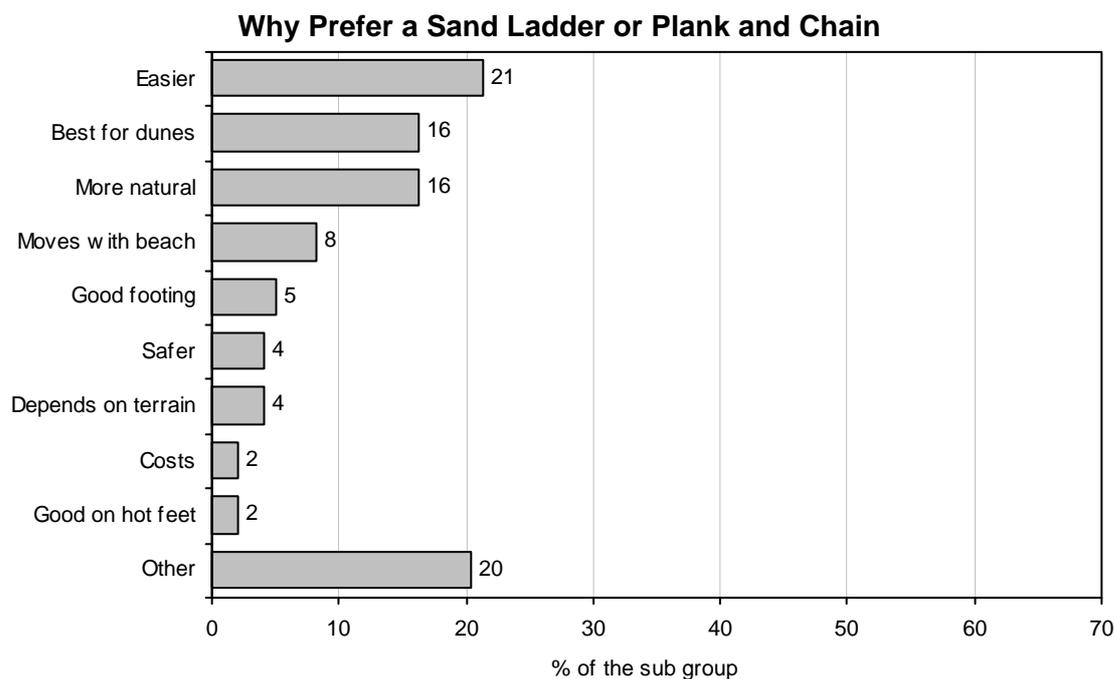
Those significantly **more likely** to say they prefer a **sand ladder or plank and chain** included those:

- Aged 46 – 60, 56% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 51% (95% confidence level).

Prefer a Sand Ladder or Plank and Chain



Among those who preferred a sand ladder or plank and chain (n=98), the main reasons given were because these were easier, 21% of the sub group, and this caused the least damage to the dunes, 16% or because these were more natural, 16%.



NOTE: The comments below relate largely to the advantages of this type of accessway. Some respondents gave the disadvantages of other types of accessways to explain their preference. These comments are included in this coding as they provide context to the respondents choice (see Appendix 6 for the full list of comments).

Easier

‘It’s easy to grip on’

‘Easy to walk down it, gets washed away least’

‘Easy to use. Don’t impact on dunes’

Best for the dunes

‘Don’t feel like you’re damaging the dunes, whatever is put in seems to last a couple of years, storms damage’

‘Does least, help you get to the beach

or wear down environment if everyone walking in different places’

‘Cause less damage than the others’

More natural

‘Sand ladder is more natural, more for beach’

‘More beachy, don’t want concrete on a beach. This still a town and don’t want it to become like Surfers Paradise or Wellington. Don’t want to lose image Whangamata has got’

‘It’s there and it’s stopping you walking through the dunes, but not as intrusive as built steps or boardwalks. Dunes should look natural when walking through them’

Moves with beach

‘Steps good because flexible when sand level changes. Need the number of accessways we have or people would walk through dunes’

‘If sea lifts up, sit back down again, stay there and cheaper to put back’

‘Follow contour of the sand and if washed away, easy to do something about, easy to replace, most durable, can manipulate round to where need to get people on beach. Prams and pushchairs easier than on steps’

Good footing

'Sand ladder - traction on a steeper dune'

'Need something to grip as you walk up (i.e. Not sand when can't get up hill as in no.4) and platforms further down beach'

'More traction'

Safer

'Safe, good for kids, easy for elderly'

'Gives stability going up, grip, rather than walking on sand. Steps ok but higher cost than sand ladders'

'Best - steps could fall down. Good for kids'

Costs

'Don't want anything too elaborate, waste of our money, storm comes through and they're gone. Might last 2 yrs, might last 5'

'Don't cost so much, waste of our money'

Other

'Walkways - again make it very clear that there are access areas, gives wildlife an opportunity'

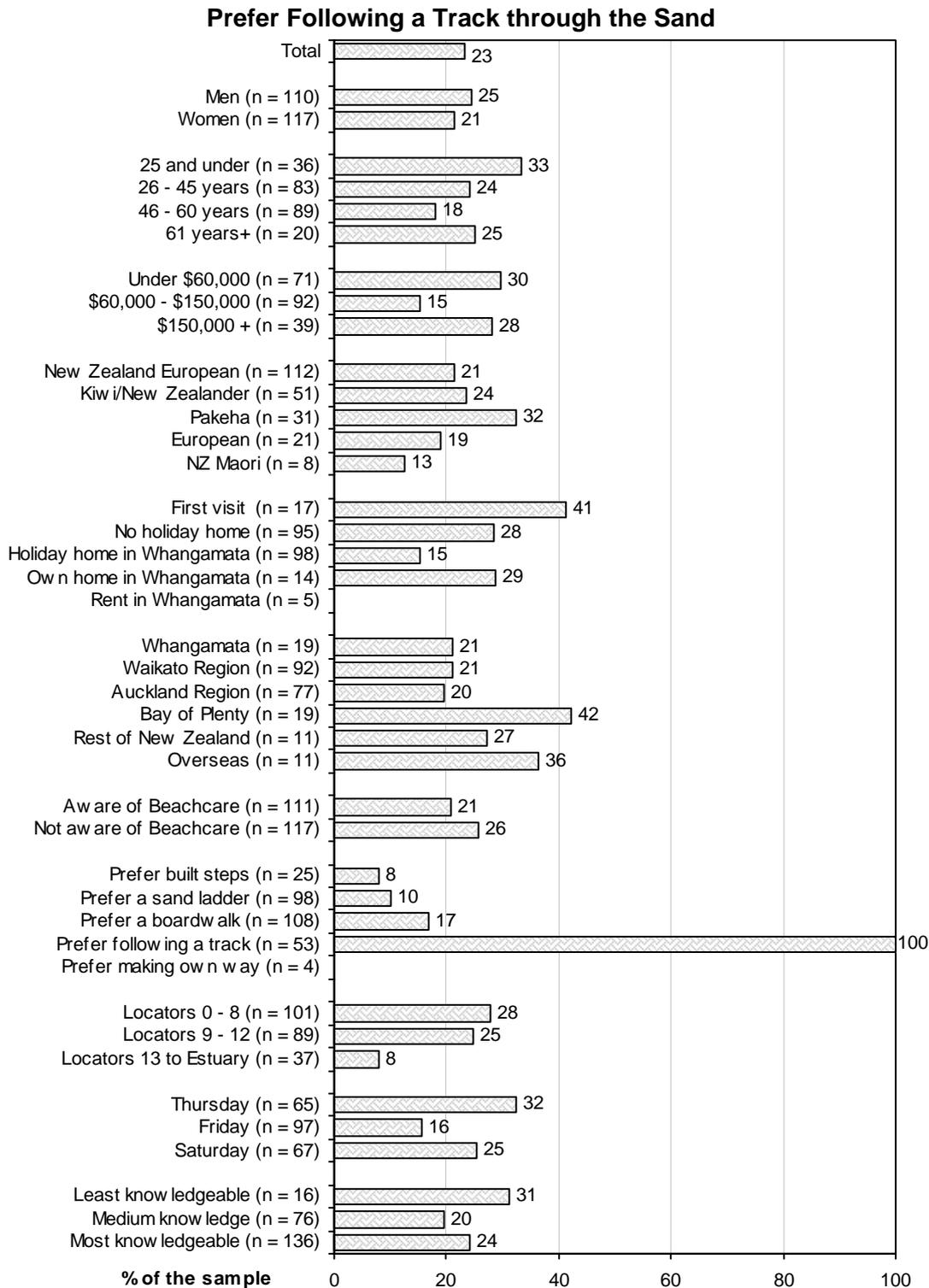
'Should be more access for people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters e.g. A plank down to beach. At moment, no access for them'

'Ok'

Following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone

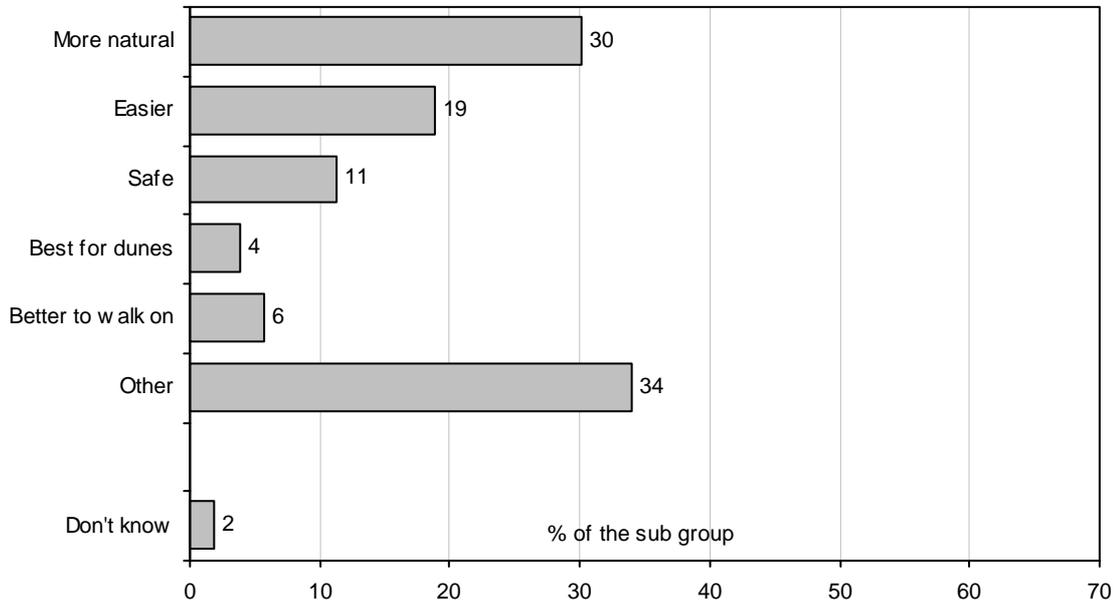
Those significantly **more likely** to say they prefer **following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone** included those:

- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., 30% and 28% for those with a household income over \$150,000 p.a. (95% confidence level).



Among those who preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone (n=53), the main reasons given were because these were more natural, 30% of the sub group, easier, 19% and safe, 11%.

Why Prefer Following a Track through the Sand Where Others Have Gone



NOTE: The comments below relate largely to the advantages of this type of accessway. Some respondents gave the disadvantages of other types of accessways to explain their preference. These comments are included in this coding as they provide context to the respondents choice (see Appendix 6 for the full list of comments).

More natural

'Part of the natural ecosystem, don't have to alter the landscape in any way, takes away from the naturalness of the beach'

'Others take away the natural beauty'

'Most in tune with the environment. Really don't like the wooden ones, harder on feet, never going to be supported by level ground underneath, always uncomfortable, not attractive'

Easier

'Kind of easiest way physically'

'Easy on feet is most important'

'Easier sometimes - boardwalks can be a bit slippery'

Safe

'Stub my toe on sand ladders sometimes'

'Slip on others, probably do more harm than good'

'Sand ladders can be slippery, less obstructive to the view, sometimes built accessways can be a bit ugly'

Best for the dunes

'Stop dunes from eroding down. Boardwalk prevents hot sand. From a private bach'

'So that not damaging dunes by everyone walking all over them.'

Instruct family to keep off the dunes'

Better to walk on

'Sand ladders hurt my feet'

'Cos if I walk on ladder things, hard to put your feet and stuff and because a track means you're not trampling over bush'

Other

'But engineered, in keeping with the natural environment, saves the ratepayers money'

'Worn track indicates a good beach spot. Easy for kids'

'Saves me getting lost'

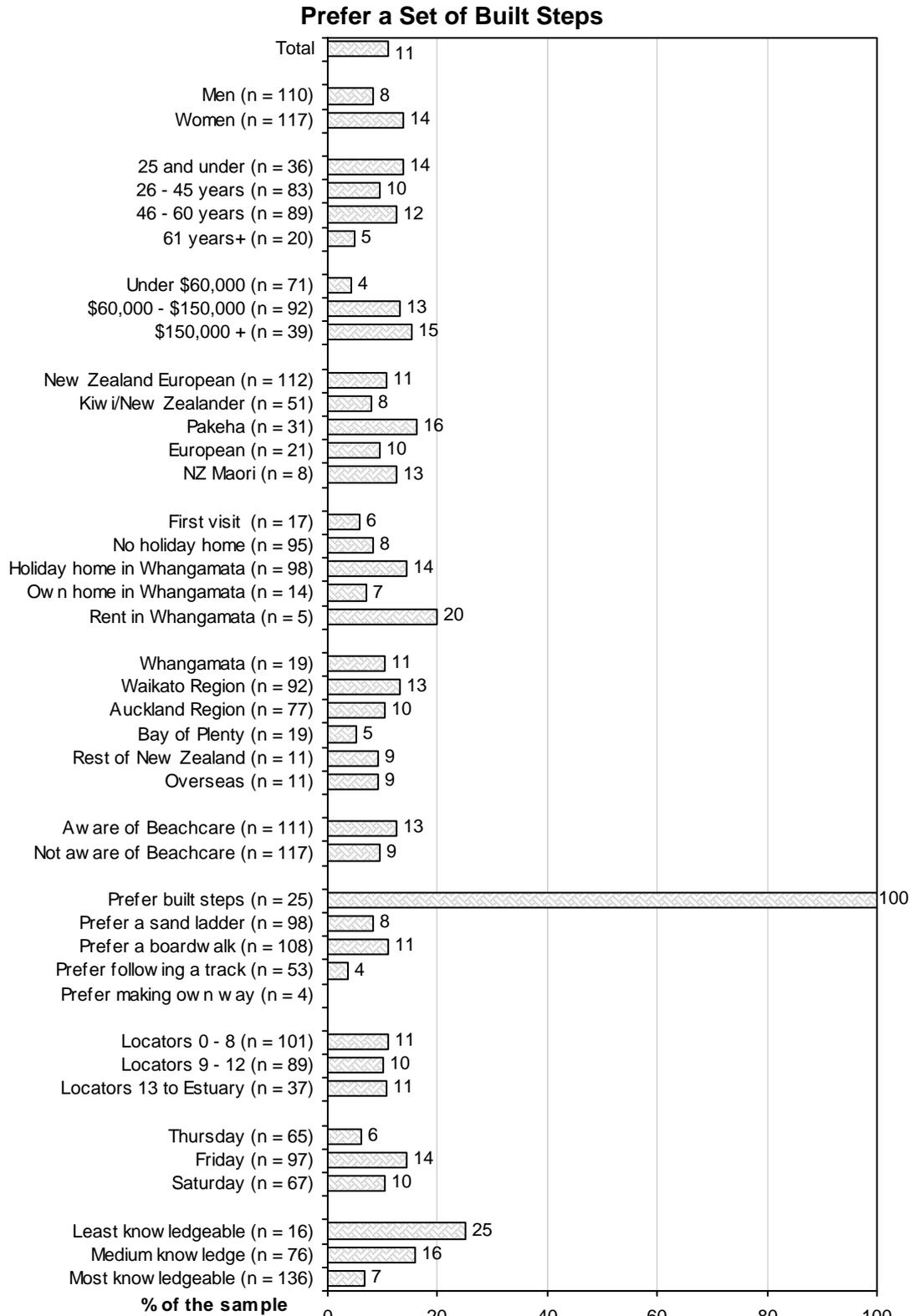
Don't know

Don't know

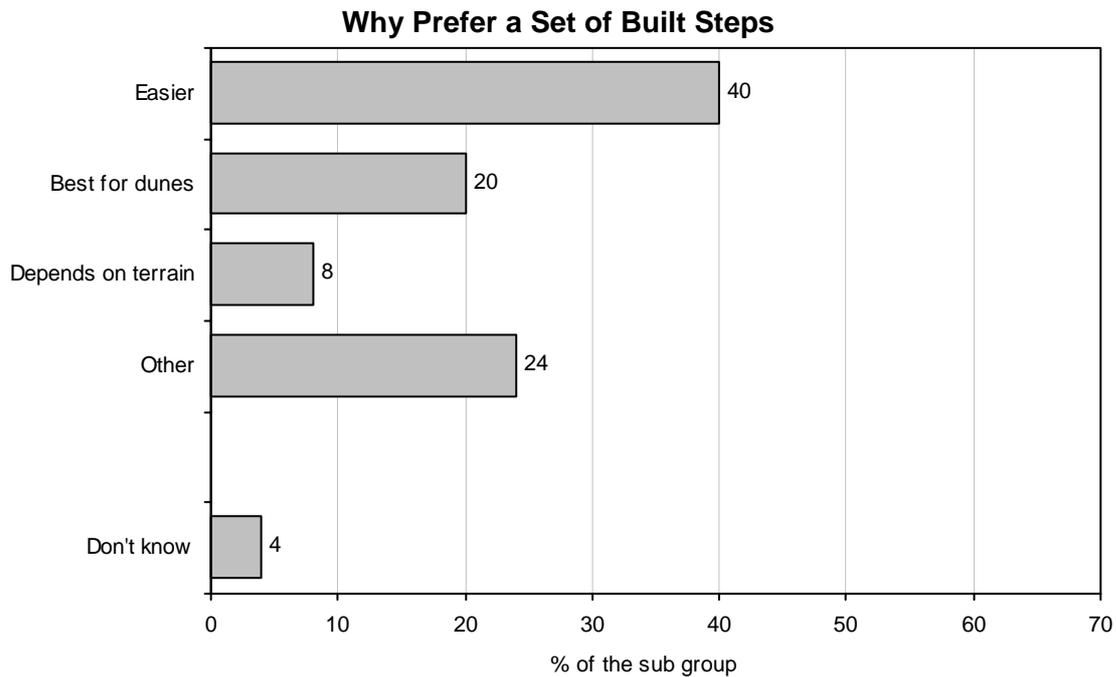
A set of built steps

Those significantly **more likely** to say they prefer a **set of built steps** included those:

- With a household income of over \$150,000 p.a., 15% (95% confidence level).



Among those who preferred a set of built steps (n=25) the main reasons given were because these were easier, 40% of the sub group, and because these are best for the dunes, 20%.



NOTE: The comments below relate largely to the advantages of this type of accessway. Some respondents gave the disadvantages of other types of accessways to explain their preference. These comments are included in this coding as they provide context to the respondents choice (see Appendix 6 for the full list of comments).

Easier

- 'Easiest with hand rail. Sand ladder probably hard for elderly and small children - difficult to balance.'*
- 'Easy to walk on - loose sand is hard to walk through especially when carrying a lot of stuff and with kids'*
- 'On chain ones, have problems with kids, steps are easier for my kids'*

Best for the dunes

- 'Because save the dunes a bit if you use proper walkways - not destroying the dunes'*
- 'Don't feel like you're damaging the dunes, whatever is put in seems to last a couple of years, storms damage'*
- 'Not wear sand dunes away or walk through the plants that are there'*

Other

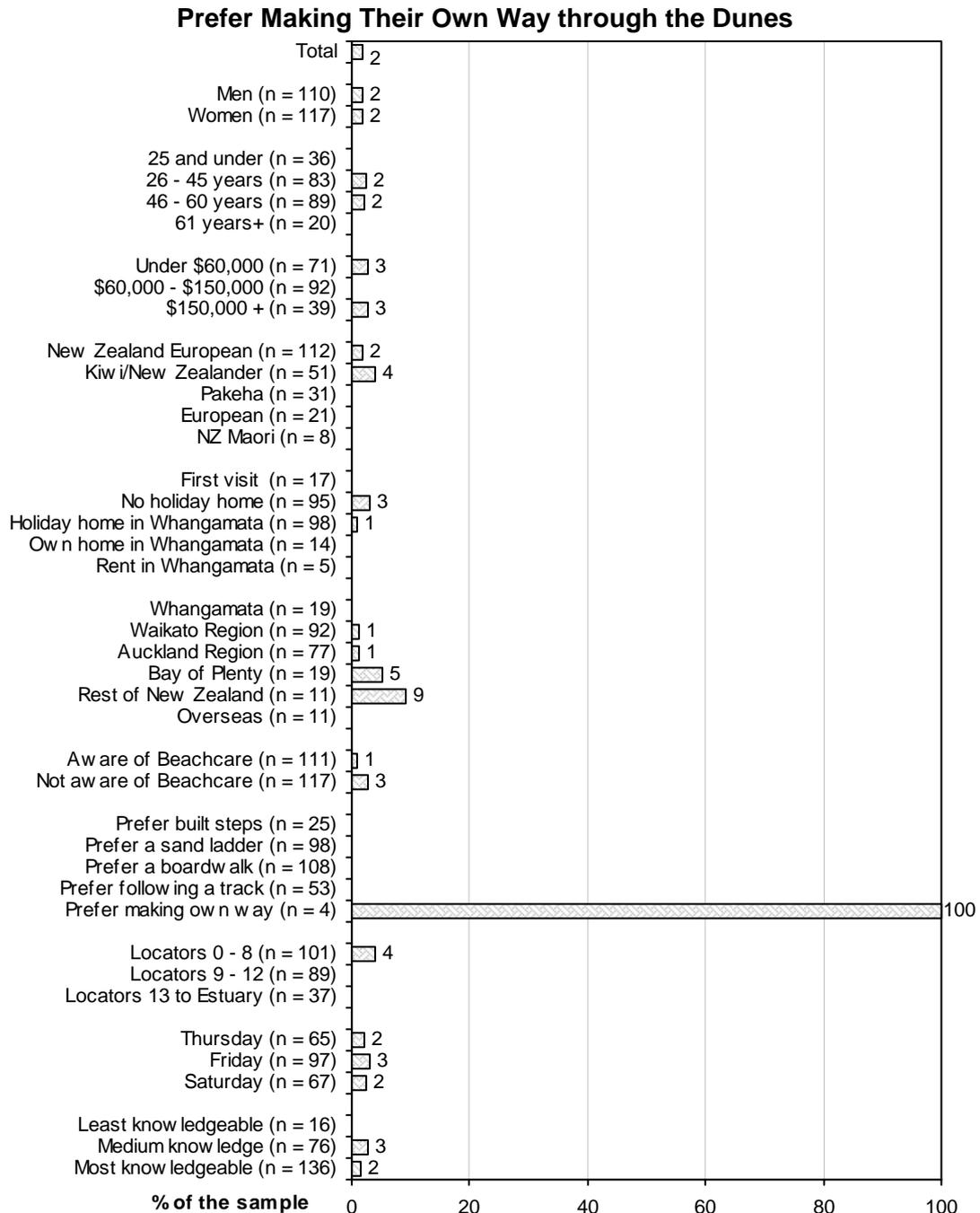
- 'Depends on access, don't need built steps if flat access way'*
- 'People can see what the access is'*
- 'Steps and ramps, ladders get the sand taken out after a storm and can't walk up them, too dangerous'*

Don't know

Don't know

Making your own way through the dunes

No groups were significantly more likely to say they prefer making their own way through the dunes:



These respondents commented (n=4):

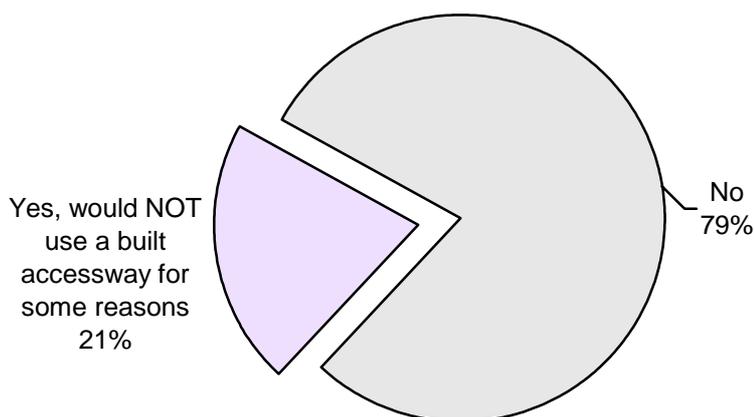
- Because it's natural*
- Came straight through - no trouble finding your way down*
- Making your own way through dunes - more natural.*
- Seems more natural*

8.4 Reasons for Not Using Built Accessways

Respondents were asked, 'Are there any reasons why you wouldn't use a built accessway?'

The graph below shows that four fifths of the respondents (79%) said there were no reasons why you wouldn't use a built accessway. However, a fifth of the respondents, (21%) said there were some reasons that they would not use a built accessway.

Any Reasons That You Would Not Use a Built Accessway



Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

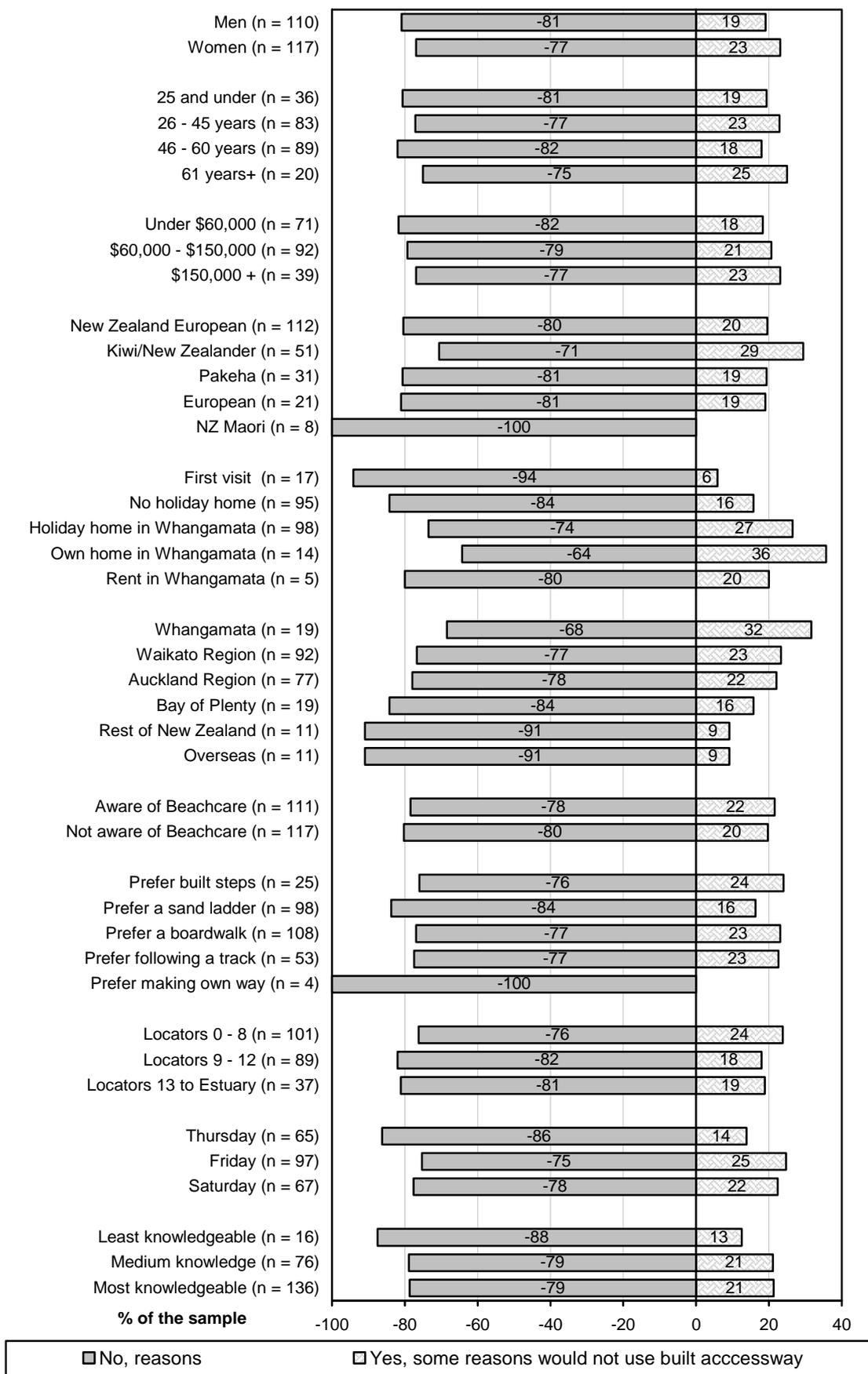
Those significantly **more likely** to say that there were some reasons that **they would not use** a built accessway included those:

- Who described their ethnicity as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 29% (90% confidence level).
- Who live in their own home in Whangamata, 36% or have a holiday home in Whangamata, 27% (90% confidence level).

While some of the sub-groups are too small to measure significant differences, there are some other variances between the sub-groups.

- With a household income over \$150,000 p.a. 23%.
- Who live in Whangamata, 32%

Reasons Why Would Not Use a Built Accessway by Demographics



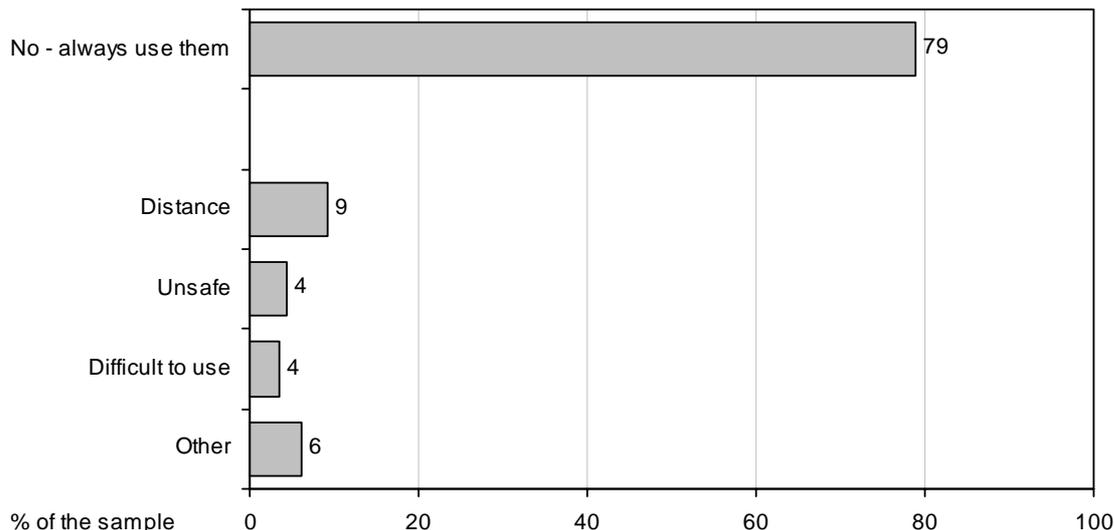
Note: Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

8.4.1 Why Would Not Use the Built Accessways

When asked for the reasons why people said they wouldn't use a built accessway, the main reasons given were distance to an accessway (9%, with 3% saying that if they were staying in a beach front property they would go straight down to the beach), if they looked unsafe (4%) or because the accessways are difficult to use (4%).

A number of people also made comments on why they had no reasons for not using a built accessway and these are recorded below.

Why Would Not Use Built Accessways: Coded Verbatim Responses



Distance

Among those who said there was a reason for not using a built accessway the main reasons were because of inconvenience (9%). These respondents commented:

Distance

If few and far between

If had to walk

If it is not convenient. Not many of them - quite far away

If it was positioned in a really inconvenient place, to gain access to the beach

If it was too far to get to

If not situated properly - close enough to where I want to access the beach

If they're in the right places

If too far away

If I'm in a remote part of the beach or there is a defined sand track

Laziness

No, not any close enough

No, wouldn't avoid them unless at inappropriate place

Would walk straight through dune if I had to walk a long way

If had house right on beach, not near an access way

Only if staying on a beachfront property with it's own access

No, unless you had a place on the front

No, only if you owned a beachfront would sneak across

No, but if directly behind beach where no access way

If we had a bach right on the beach

Unsafe

Other respondents mentioned concerns with the safety of the built accessways as a reason for not using them, 4%. These respondents commented:

Dangerous

If it looked unsafe

If it was in bad repair, won't use it

No, but haven't felt happy about it if worried about them

Not really, last year, access washed out so couldn't use it

Probably cos not maintained. Consider them dangerous

Unless it was dangerous - no

Yes a few, one or two have splinters, have warped, not in good state of repair. Need good state

No, if there, use it. Has been times when couldn't use them - not maintained. High tides

Difficult to use

Others inferred they would not use the built accessways if these were difficult to use (4%). These respondents commented:

If old and doddery or young and pram - not use steps

If too steep or if with someone elderly - easier to use sand track

No, if there's one with steps, sand is too soft with the buggy

Only if could not get wheelchair down it

Sometimes can be difficult - ladder

Sometimes can be difficult - ladder

With grandchildren to get buggies down - may not be able to use, need ramp

Other

There were also a range of other reasons for not using the built accessways. These included:

Don't need them here

Emergency only

Emergency or if a woman lying in dune

Erosion

If had to get down go through sand dunes, but if a built one, prefer to use that

If wasn't one

In an emergency

Not that know of - takes away from a beach environment as such - not part of it

Wouldn't have one in beaches go to. In more populated area - would use them

Yes, if don't feel like using it

No reason why not, some of ones built here covered with sand, nature's got to them

No, if there, we use it. One at far end of Bowentown

was really steep because washed out under it

No. A habit that come and use access way. If none provided, then go where feel like

No - always use them

The majority (79%) of respondents said there were no reasons they would not use a built accessway. Most of these people did not make any further comments, but there were also a range of comments which included: ³⁵

³⁵ Please note that when verbatim comments cover more than one point these are reported in total to keep comments in perspective. The comments with multiple themes are repeated under each relevant section.

*Always do use them.
If I was in a wheelchair
If it was there, would use it
No
No reason why not, some of ones built here covered with sand, nature's got to them*

*No, as long as is one would use it
No, got used to them
No, if accessways were there you would just use them
No, if there would use it
No, if there, use it. Has been times when couldn't use them - not maintained. High tides*

*No, if there, we use it. One at far end of Bowentown was really steep
because washed out under it
No, if wasn't one
No, never walk through dunes
No, there are enough here
No, try to use them at all times
No. A habit that come and use access way. If none provided, then go where feel like*

*No. If there, use it
Not really
Not that I can think of*

*Pretty bad if you walk through dunes, there to be preserved
Use them anyway
Would use if available*

8.5 Distance People Would Walk to Use an Accessway

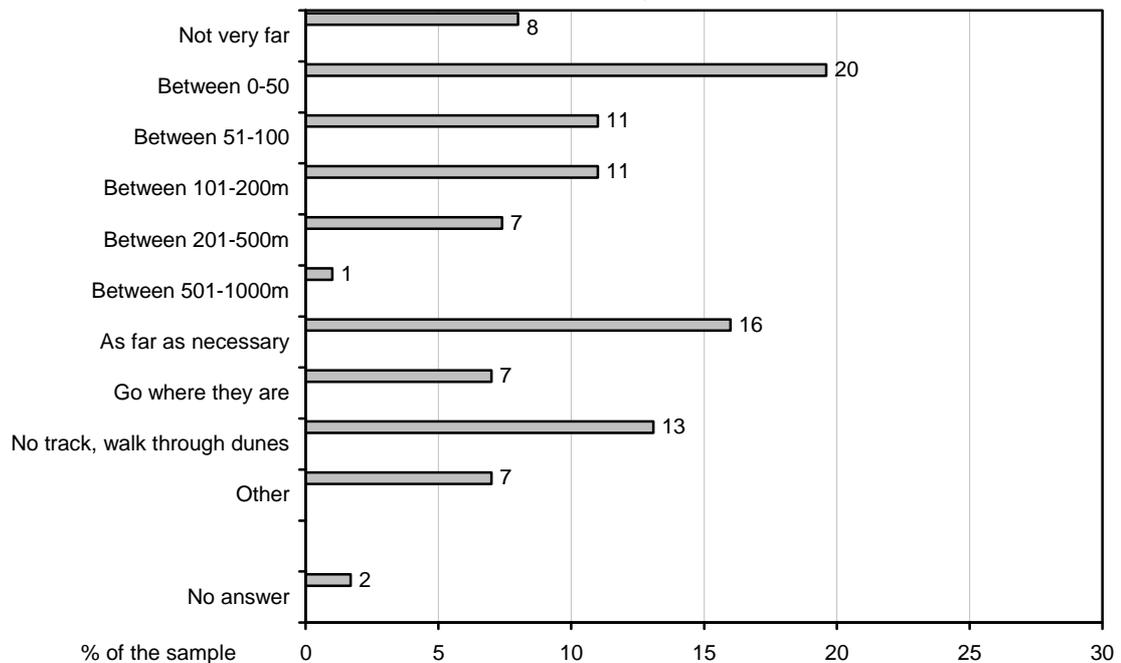
Respondents were asked, '*In general, if there's no built access at the point you're entering the beach, how far would you walk to use a built accessway?*'.

The question was asked as an open question so some respondents have replied with a distance e.g. 100 metres, while others have described a concept e.g. not very far.

Among those who mentioned a distance, the most common response was in the range from 0 – 50 metres (20%) with a further 11% stating they would walk between 51 and 100 metres while 11% said they would walk between 101 and 200 metres and 7% would walk between 201 and 500 metres.

A number of respondents (16%) said they would walk as far as necessary while 8% said they would not walk very far. A number of respondents (13%) said that if there was no track that they would walk through the dunes. There were also a variety of other responses.

Distance Would Walk to Use an Accessway: Coded Verbatim Responses



Not very far

A tenth of the respondents (8%) said they would not walk very far if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to say that they would not walk very far if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach included:

- Women, 14% (95% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

Not too far - just walk through dunes. If expected to walk through access way 50m-100

Not far, wouldn't walk 100m but be careful where walking, just stick to sand track

Not very far - 10 minutes

Not too far especially if it's hot

Not far, 5 minutes is too much

Not very far, would use a sand track

Not very far

Not that far

Not too far with little children

Not far, would walk through the ones that have been made by others

Not very far, get a bit lazy but plenty of them here all well marked

Not far, I have a bad hip so can't walk .Would choose a track through dunes without disturbing flora

Probably not far, make way down through dunes

Not too far - depend on what access was like where you're going. At home, some need steps

If I knew one was there, would walk to it - 2 minutes approx

2 minutes

Within reason, within next 5 minutes

Couple of minutes

Depend who with. If with little children and lots of gear would not walk far

Between 0-50 metres

A fifth of the respondents (20%) said they would walk between 0 – 50 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to say that they would walk 0 – 50 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach included those:

- Who have **not** heard of Beachcare, 24% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

Yes, a few metres

*Wouldn't walk far, would walk carefully through the sand - 20m
Not too far - would just go down track. Maybe 50m – accessways
need to be conveniently placed*

Depends on parking and access to it - 4m

Probably walk 5 metres - if could see it in visible distance

Not too much - 5m

10m

Not far - 10m or less

Very short distance - 10-20m

10-20m

If it's 10-20m, otherwise make own way down

20ms

Not far - 20m

Not very far - 20

Carry everything - 20m

Needs to be conveniently close - 20 m

25m

20 - 30 metres

Only if in close proximity, 20-30m otherwise go through the dunes

30m

50 yds / m

Not far 50m

50m

50m if in sight

If there's a track go down there but if the walkway was more than 50m especially with kids

Not very far - 50m

50m, if can see sign

Depends on purpose - if walk, not mind walking a long way.

Probably about 50m if got kids and boards

Not too far - would just go down track.

Maybe 50m - accessways need to be conveniently placed

Not too far - 50m maybe

Not very far - 50m. If worn track through sand would use it

In general, 50 mtrs

Between 51-100 metres

An eighth of the respondents (11%) said they would walk between 51 – 100 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to say that they would walk 51 – 100 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach included those:

- Men, 17% (95% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

70m
50-100m

100 m

Within 100m intervals otherwise people not use them. Walking would not bother me

Visually - say max 100m

No more than 100m

Less than 100m

Not very far at all - 100m

*Has to be convenient and especially with older people and younger children,
100m - needs to be convenient enough*

About 100m

Wouldn't walk up to where built ones are as bach close to a sand access way - 100 metres

100m or so

Not too far - just walk through dunes. If expected to walk through access way 50m-100

Within 100m intervals otherwise people not use them. Walking would not bother me

Don't walk over dunes. Always go to where one is but there is point where not used - 100m

Depends how far it is. 100m - wouldn't go far if safe way where I was

Between 101-200 metres

A tenth of the respondents (11%) said they would walk between 101 – 200 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. No sub groups were significantly **more likely** to say that they would walk 101 – 200 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach.

100yds

*Assuming it was obvious where it was - 100yds or so. Need signage. Might go
straight down if others did*

100m, maybe a couple of 100

150 -200m

Would find one, 100m-200m

200m

Up to 200m but depends on how much I'm carrying

Depends on general access, if inaccessible, however long the distance. If accessible, 200m

200m if you can see it

200m would walk to nearest one

200m

Quite a way - quite aware. 200m

Up to 200 ms

200m - wouldn't create my own path. Everybody has a car or a bike

Probably up to a couple of 100 m

Don't know. At this beach and at Mount would walk some distance.

A couple of hundred metres - any distance

Walk to closest one, but depends how far it is - 200m

Between 201-500 metres

A few respondents (7%) said they would walk between 200 – 500 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to say that they would walk 200 – 500 metres if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 15% (99% confidence level).
- Aged 26 – 45, 12% (95% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis and own a holiday home, 11% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

No more than 300m but depends how easy it is to get to the beach through the dune

Probably 2-300m would not be a problem

2-300m

Might need to look at some more to preserve sand dunes and growth. 200-300yds. Are a few along here really

If on roadside - 300m

300m

No more than 400m

Not too far - 400m

Half a kilometre

Cut through the dunes - half a km

500m or so

Depends 500m

500m

500 metres

Would come through the dunes, always use the accessways - 500m

501m to 1km

A few respondents (1%) said they would walk between 501m – 1km if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach.

As far as need be but no more than 1km

500-600m - we don't mind walking you see

500-600m

As far as necessary

A sixth of the respondents (16%) said they would walk as far as necessary if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach. Those significantly **more likely** to say that they would walk as far as necessary if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach included:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 24% (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

As far as it took

Walk to nearest one usually

To the closest one

Always use them, walk as far as need to. If you miss one, always another

As far as you need to

I would walk to find one, there's a lot of them

Don't mind walking

If I knew where one was I would use a walking track

*Just go to the next one here. Plenty of signs.
There's nowhere in Whangamata that's not a few hundred metres
Walk a long way, not keen on large sand dunes*

*Walk till I find one
Wouldn't bother me, would walk to find one
Would not cut across the dunes, there's heaps of signs with numbers
Always look for an access to walk to*

*To closest one - as far as I had to
Until we got to one. At Whangamata are close. (Wouldn't be drawn further into distance)
Always go to a point where an access way is*

*Would walk to access way - would walk quite a way
Whatever it takes to get to nearest access way
Will walk to use it
As far as it would take
As far as it takes. Fences force everyone to use accessway.
Most accessways near where you park your car*

*As far as you had to
Probably wouldn't attempt to get to beach any other way
Don't know, as far as you have to go. Good access here
Try to. Don't know. Don't mind walking, would find one*

*Hard to say, with camp - natural to use access way.
Most are well signposted, drive till you find one
Are sufficient number to go to next one - are beaches that don't have one
As far as it took
Up to about - don't know - depends if had to use it then would go as far as had to go
So many, we go as far until we get tired, we gauge it on where the signs are*

No track, walk through dunes

An eighth of the respondents (13%) said if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach they would walk through the sand dunes. The sub groups that were significantly **more likely** to say that if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach they would walk through the sand dunes included those:

- With a household income under \$60,000 p.a. (90% confidence level).

These respondents commented:

*Not too far - would just go down track.
Not far, would walk through the ones that have been made by others*

*Would choose a track through dunes without disturbing flora
Not too far. Would walk over the dunes if easier. Happened to walk straight to an access way
Assuming it was obvious where it was - 100yds or so. Need signage.
Might go straight down if others did*

*Not very far - 50m. If worn track through sand would use it
Depending on how steep dunes, and depending on access over,
would probably go over the dune
Wouldn't if not here and out of the way. Might if had a pushchair etc
Usually use a track previously made if reasonably accessible*

*If you can see one, if you can't see one would just go through
Just go straight through
Just go through the sand track
Just go straight through
Just walk over*

*Look for a well used track
Wouldn't bother me, just use whatever's there, depends where you want to go on the beach
Doesn't worry me, go whichever way is available - would use just a track if that's all that's there*

*No. Go through dunes
Normally a pathway, or walk straight over dune
Would make my own track if couldn't see one
Wouldn't walk - would just walk down where it suited me - i.e. would walk through the dunes
Maybe if this beach only had one entrance way a long way away, would cut through dunes*

*If I had to walk a long way and no barriers, I would definitely walk through dunes
Walk over the dunes - walk on sand path. Not be one near
Walk over the dunes - take shortest route*

*Don't know, just look for a natural path anyway
Where come down isn't one, so always use track there, so use both
Don't know. If too far, walk over the dunes
No, wouldn't, just track my way along the dunes
Depends from what you're going from. Staying at bach and walk through sand path straight out
in front but would normally try to use built access way
Not too far. Would walk over the dunes if easier. Happened to walk straight to an access way*

Go where they are

A few respondents (7%) said they would go to where they are if there's no built access at the point they were entering the beach.

*Know where they are here
We know where they are , the signs tell you
Know where they are, the signs tell you
Go to next one, just drive to it
Generally use the ones that are there, know where they are
Go where there is one normally
Would make sure parked close to access way. Depend on situation. Need signage to know
where accessways are. Access ways should be close to parking
Just head for them at end of a street
There's plenty of opportunity
Tend to park at them
Don't know. Make sure park near it. I'm not that into roughing it. Teach children to 'do the right
thing' and use the access way
Make sure enter beach from accessways.
Not handy to beach anyway, so walk or drive to access way
Is an access where goes, so not have to deal with this.
Enough accesses without them having to take shortcuts
Where find one - wherever. If go to strange beach, and go to access way that's provided.
Choose to enter the beach where there is one - on post as know the beach well - aim to walk to
beach where was one
Doesn't affect me, near an access, so always use*

Other

There were a range of other comments (7%) that included:

*If I could see one I would walk or drive the car to it
Depends on purpose - if walk, not mind walking a long way.
Probably about 50m if got kids and boards*

*Convenience of getting down, that's where you should go
Probably would look for one
Within sight
At least 5 - 10 minutes*

Wouldn't like to say, comes down to convenience from where you're staying. Live at quite a commercialised beach

*If sign saying not walk on it, would walk to next access
If directed, and told that right way to go - would follow it.
If everyone on dunes, follow. Where park car is where access, so use it*

*Usually go down the streets and come in off that. As long as you can get off the beach
Lazy and go quickest way between A & B so need to be reasonable amount to use one
Depend on where situated in relation to street behind it - some worn paths that follow*

*No idea
Don't know*

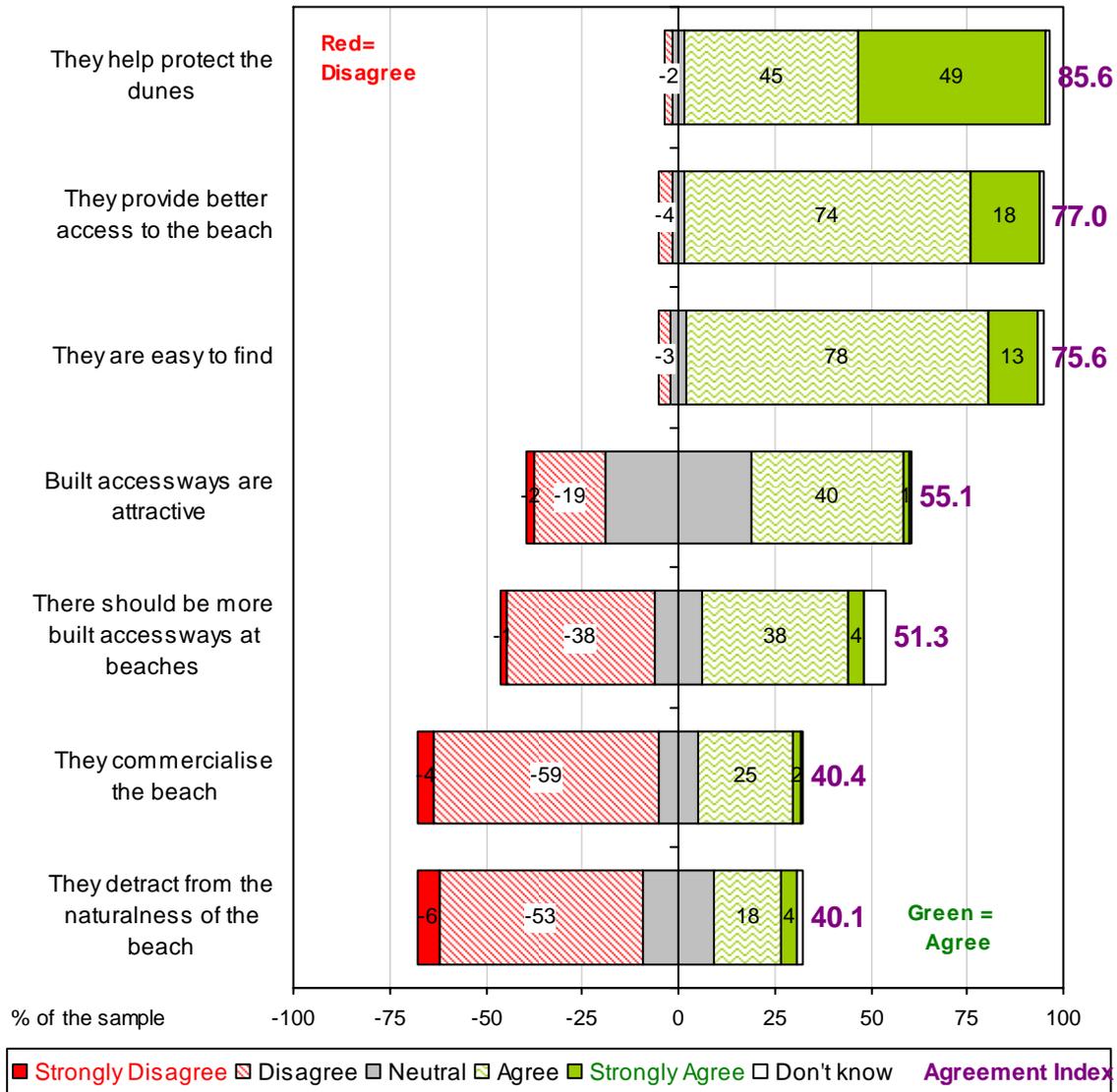
9 Attitudes towards Built Accessways

Respondents were read out seven different statements about built accessways and for each they were asked if they agreed or disagreed using a 5 point scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree with the option of Don't know).

The graph below shows that the level of agreement for each of these statements varies considerably by statement. The majority of the sample, 94% agreed with the statement that built accessways '*help protect the dunes*' while only a fifth of the sample (22%) agreed with the statement that built accessways '*detract from the naturalness of the beach*'. Conversely, 59% disagreed with this statement while only 2% disagreed with the previous statement.

The chart shows the Agreement Index³⁶, (a weighted score across the agreement scale) ranges from strong agreement with the statement, the built accessways '*help protect the dunes*' (Agreement Index = 85.6, with 49% saying strongly agree) down to mild disagreement with the statement, the built accessways '*detract from the naturalness of the beach*' (Agreement Index = 40.1, with only 6% saying strongly disagree).

³⁶ The Agreement Index (AI) converts each respondents' answer across the agreement scale to a score out of 100. The conversion is as follows; Strongly Disagree = 0, Disagree = 25, Neutral = 50, Agree = 75 and Strongly Agree = 100



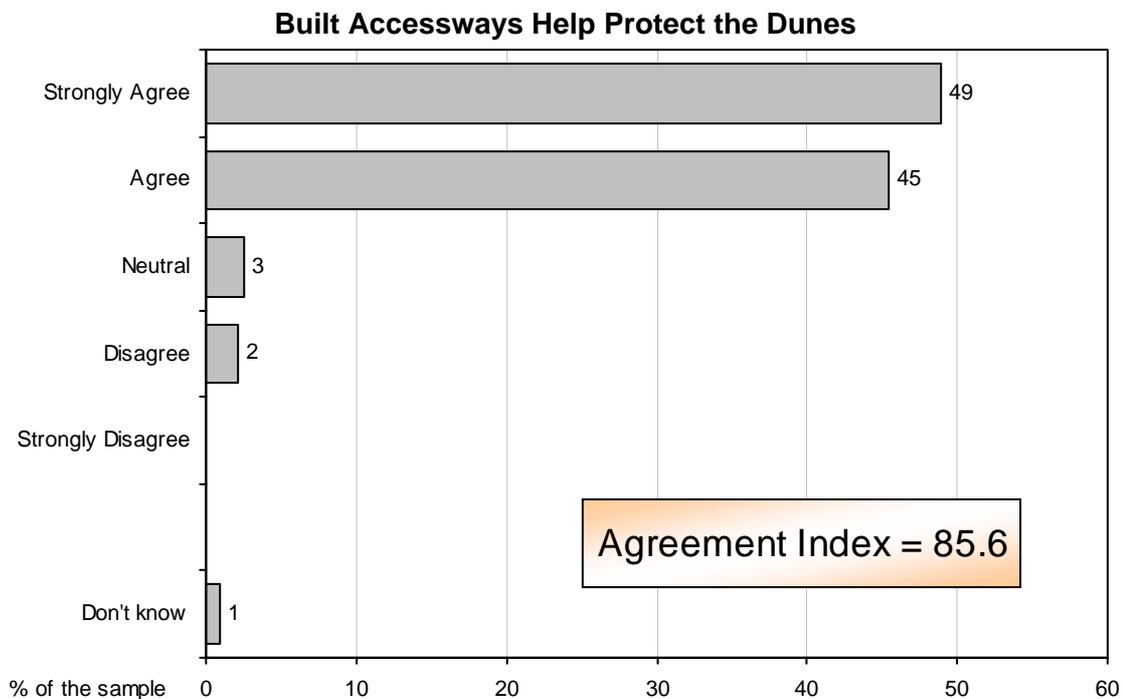
9.1 They Help Protect the Dunes

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement that built accessways ‘*help protect the dunes*’.

The majority of the sample, 94% agreed with the statement that the built accessways ‘*help protect the dunes*’. Almost half of the respondents, 49% strongly agreed with this statement with a further 45% agreeing. Only 3% of the respondents were neutral and 2% disagreed while no respondents strongly disagreed.

The Agreement Index³⁷, (a weighted score across the agreement scale) for the statement, the built accessways ‘*help protect the dunes*’ is 85.6.

³⁷ The Agreement Index (AI) converts each respondents’ answer across the agreement scale to a score out of 100. The conversion is as follows; Strongly Disagree = 0, Disagree = 25, Neutral = 50, Agree = 75 and Strongly Agree = 100



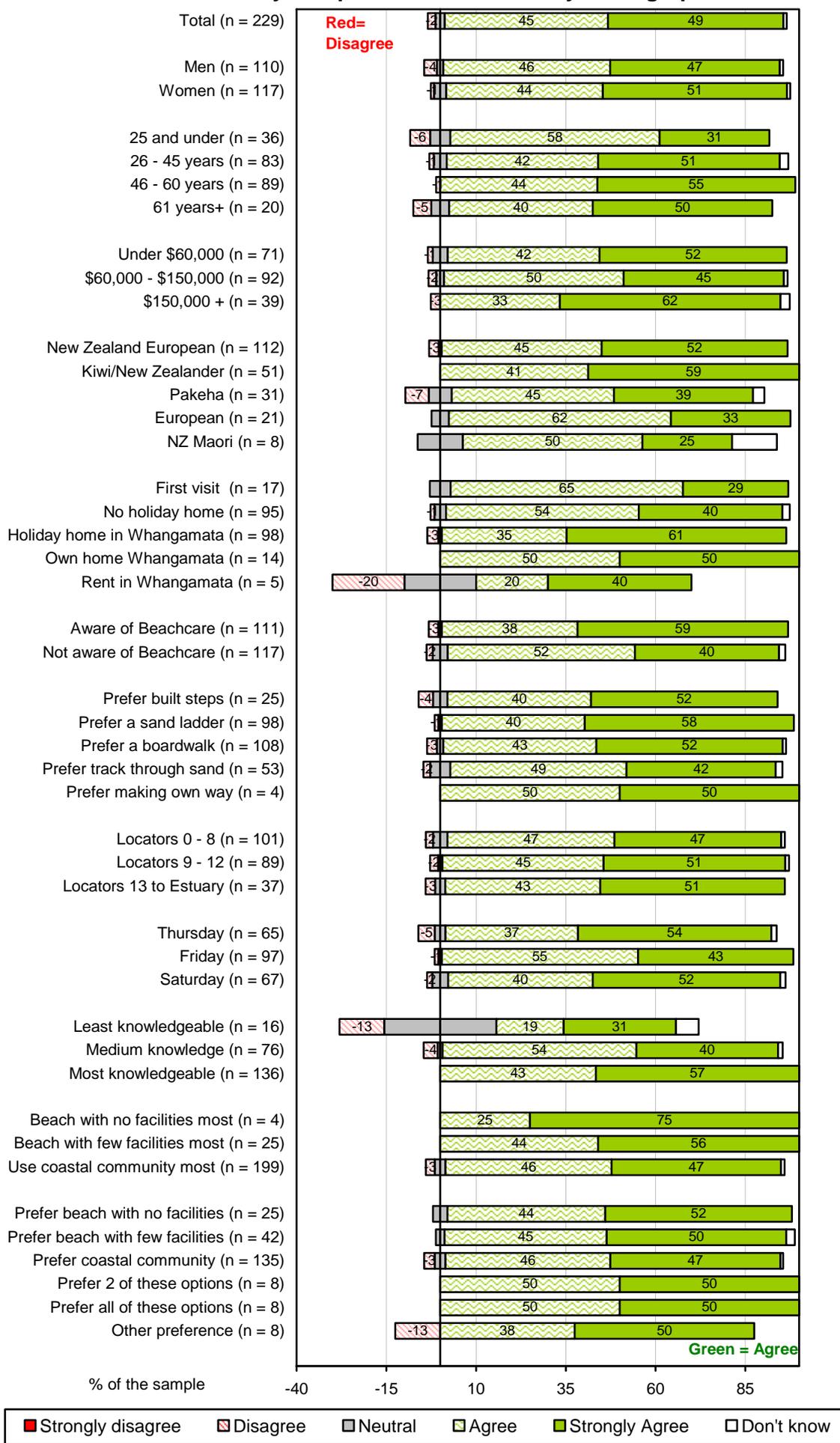
Those significantly **more likely** to show **agreement** (agree and strongly agree) with the statement, the built accessways *'help protect the dunes'* included those:

- Who are classified as the most knowledgeable about dunes, 100%, (99% confidence level).
- Who described their ethnicity as a Kiwi or New Zealander, 100% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 99% (95% confidence level).
- Who preferred a sand ladder or plank and chain, 98% (95% confidence level).

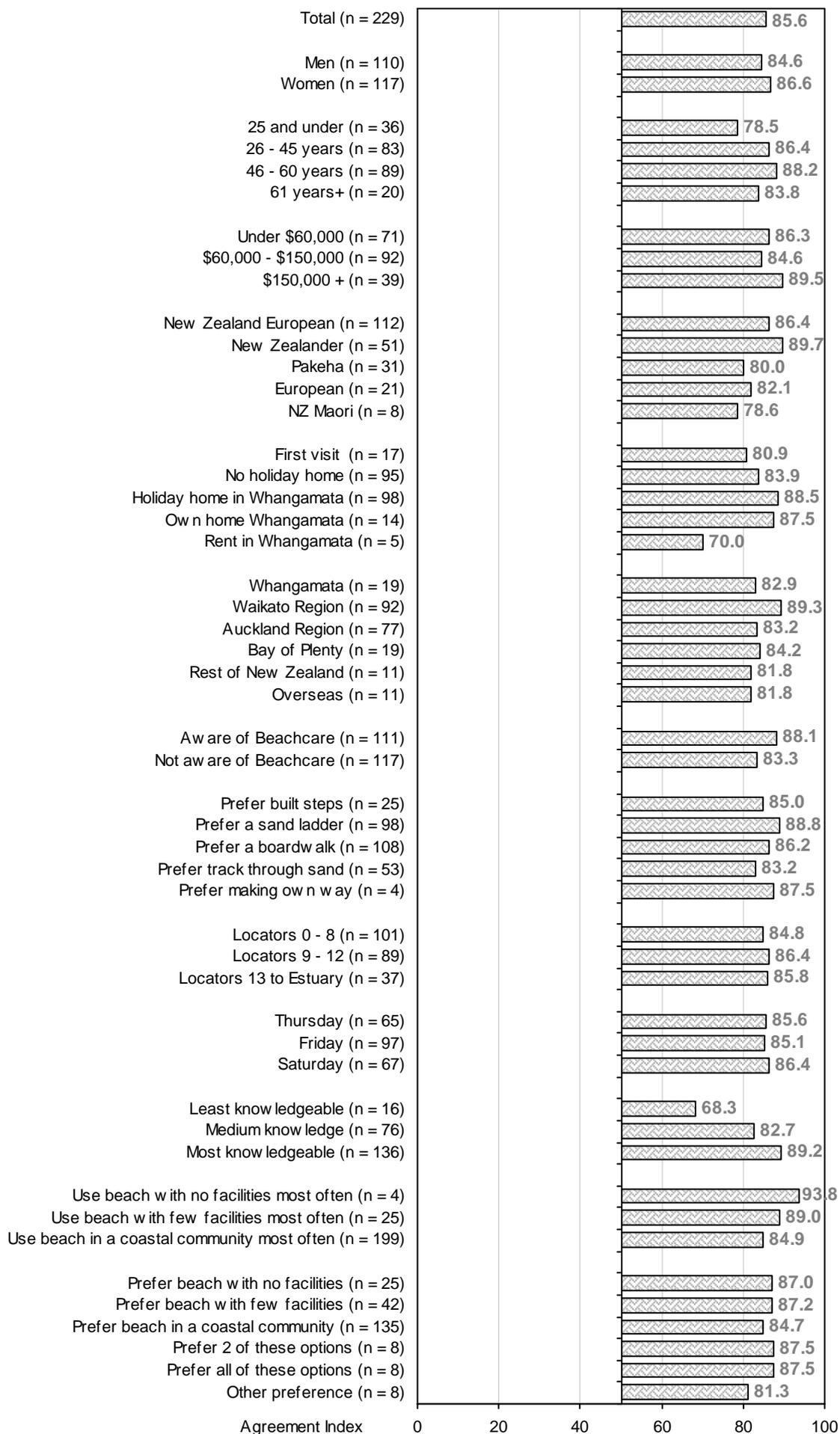
Those significantly **more likely** to show **disagreement** (disagree and strongly disagree) with the statement the built accessways *'help protect the dunes'* included those:

- Who defined themselves as Pakeha, 7% (90% confidence level).

Built Accessways Help Protect the Dunes by Demographics



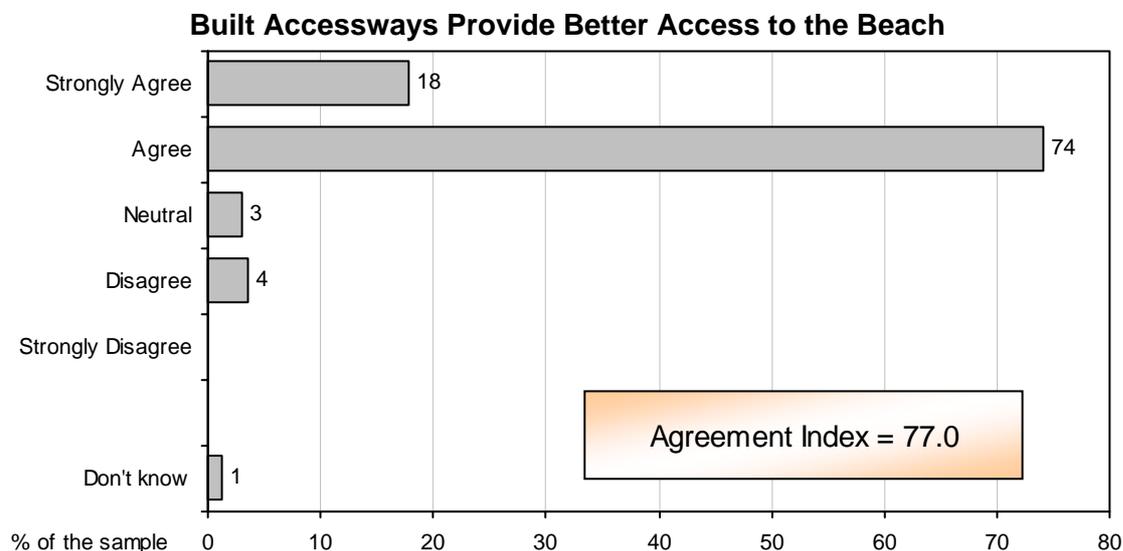
Built Accessways Help Protect the Dunes: Index by Demographics



9.2 They Provide Better Access to the Beach

The majority of the sample, 92% agreed with the statement that the built accessways *'provide better access to the beach'*. However, only a fifth of the respondents (18%) strongly agreed with this statement with a further 74% agreeing. Only 3% of the respondents were neutral and 4% disagreed while no respondents strongly disagreed.

The Agreement Index for the statement, the built accessways *'provide better access to the beach'* is 77.0.



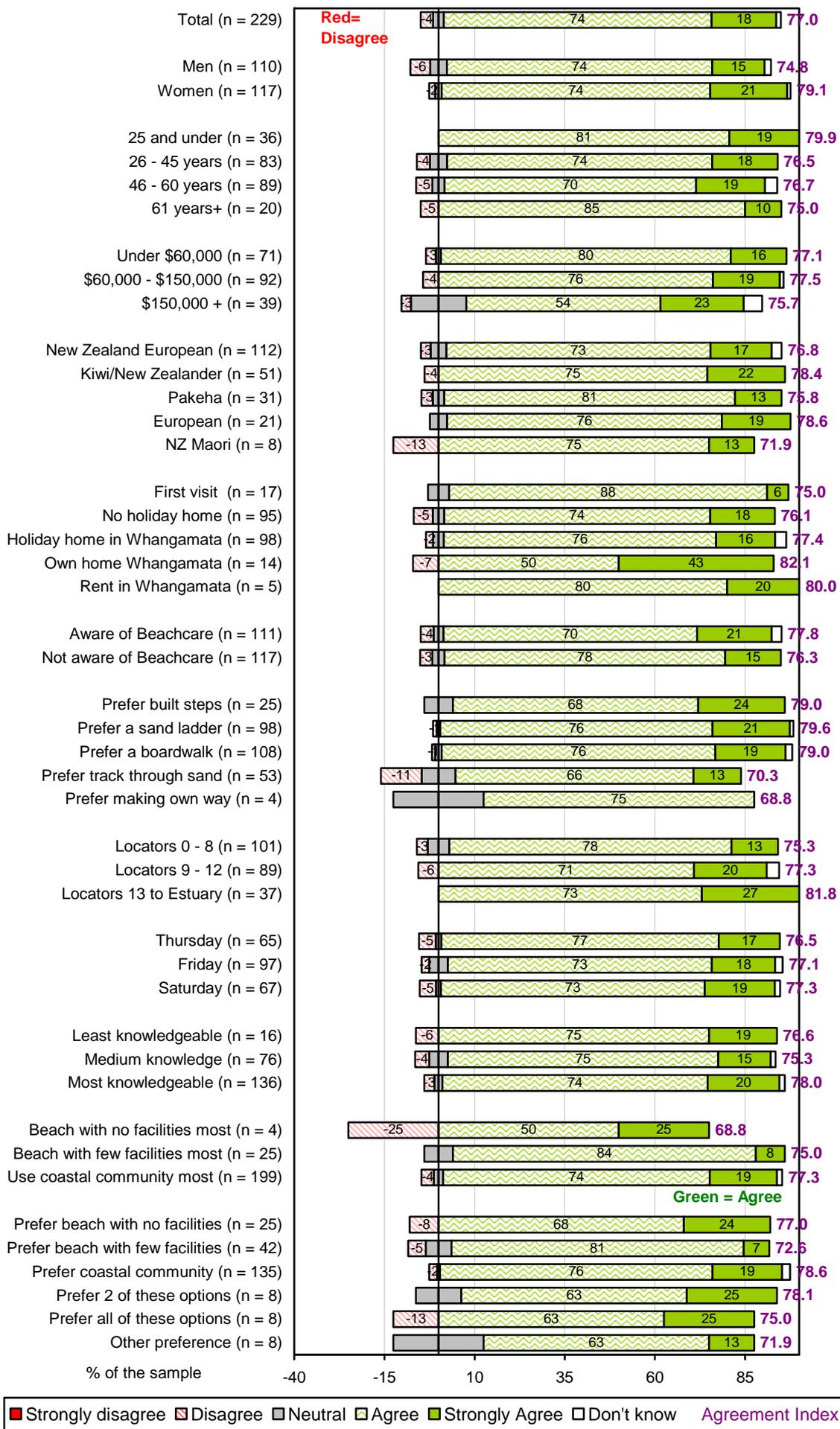
Those significantly **more likely** to show **agreement** (agree and strongly agree) with the statement, the built accessways *'provide better access to the beach'* included those:

- Women, 96% (95% confidence level).
- Aged 25 years and under, 100% (95% confidence level).
- Who preferred a sand ladder or plank and chain, 97% (95% confidence level).
- Who preferred a beach in a coastal community, 95% (90% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 100% (90% confidence level).

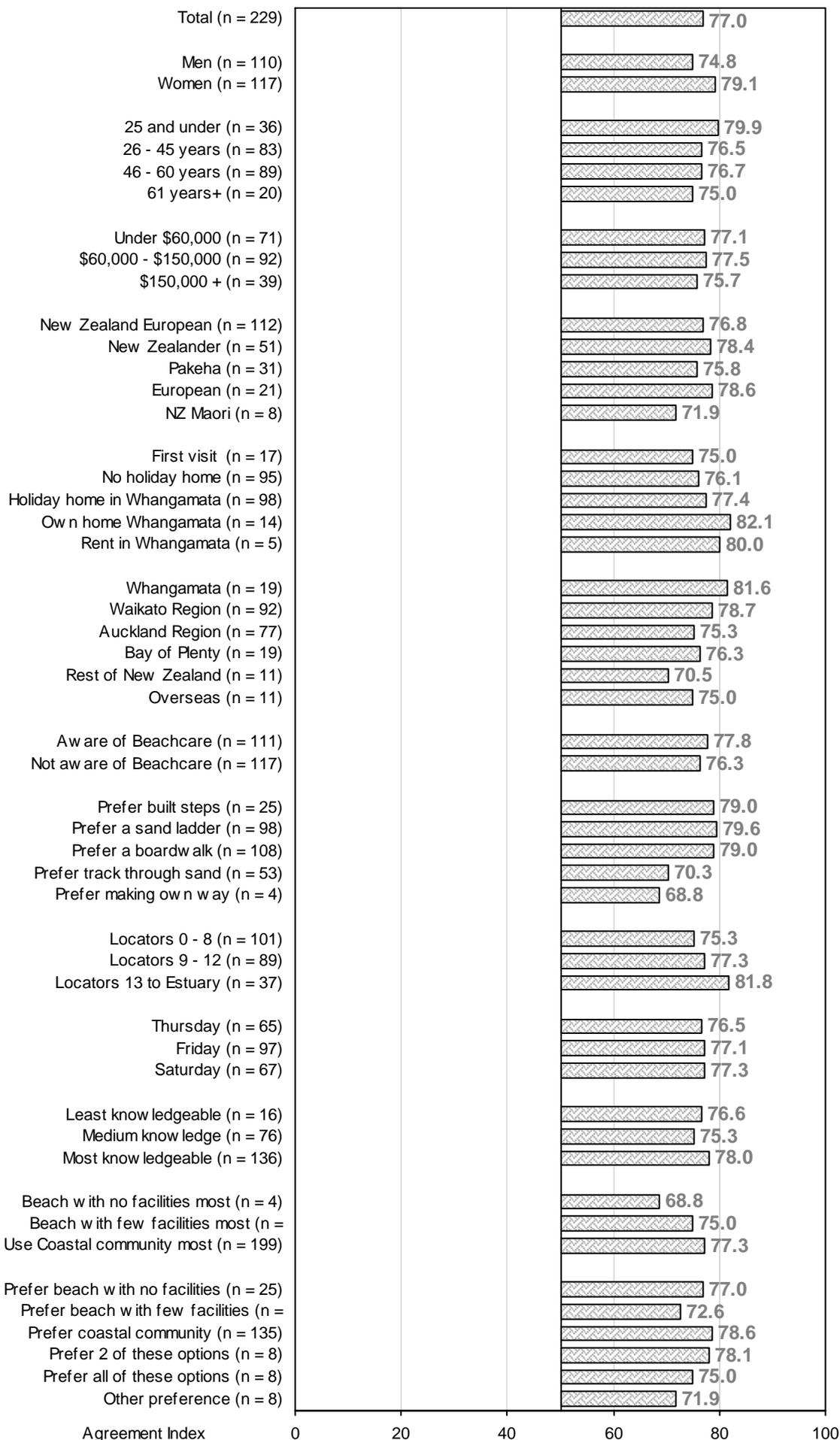
Those significantly **more likely** to show **disagreement** (disagree and strongly disagree) with the statement, the built accessways *'provide better access to the beach'* included those:

- Who preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone, 11% (99% confidence level).

Accessways Provide Better Access to the Beach by Demographics



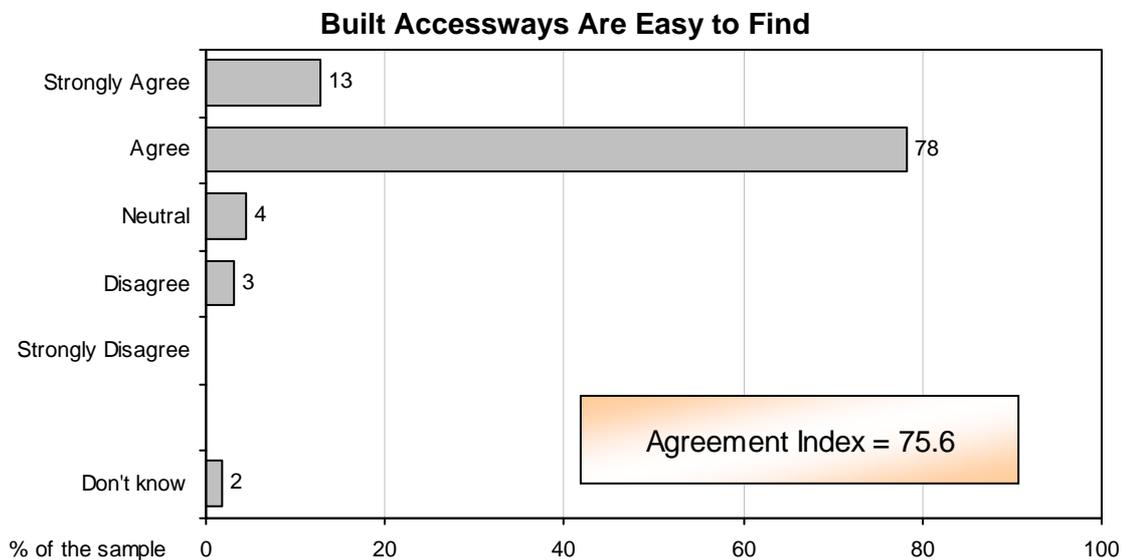
The Accessways Provide Better Access to the Beach: Index by Demographics



9.3 They Are Easy to Find

The majority of the sample, 91% agreed with the statement that the built accessways 'are easy to find'. Only an eighth of the respondents, 13% strongly agreed with this statement while a further 78% agreed. Only 4% of the respondents were neutral and 3% disagreed while no respondents strongly disagreed.

The Agreement Index for the statement, the built accessways 'are easy to find' is 75.6.



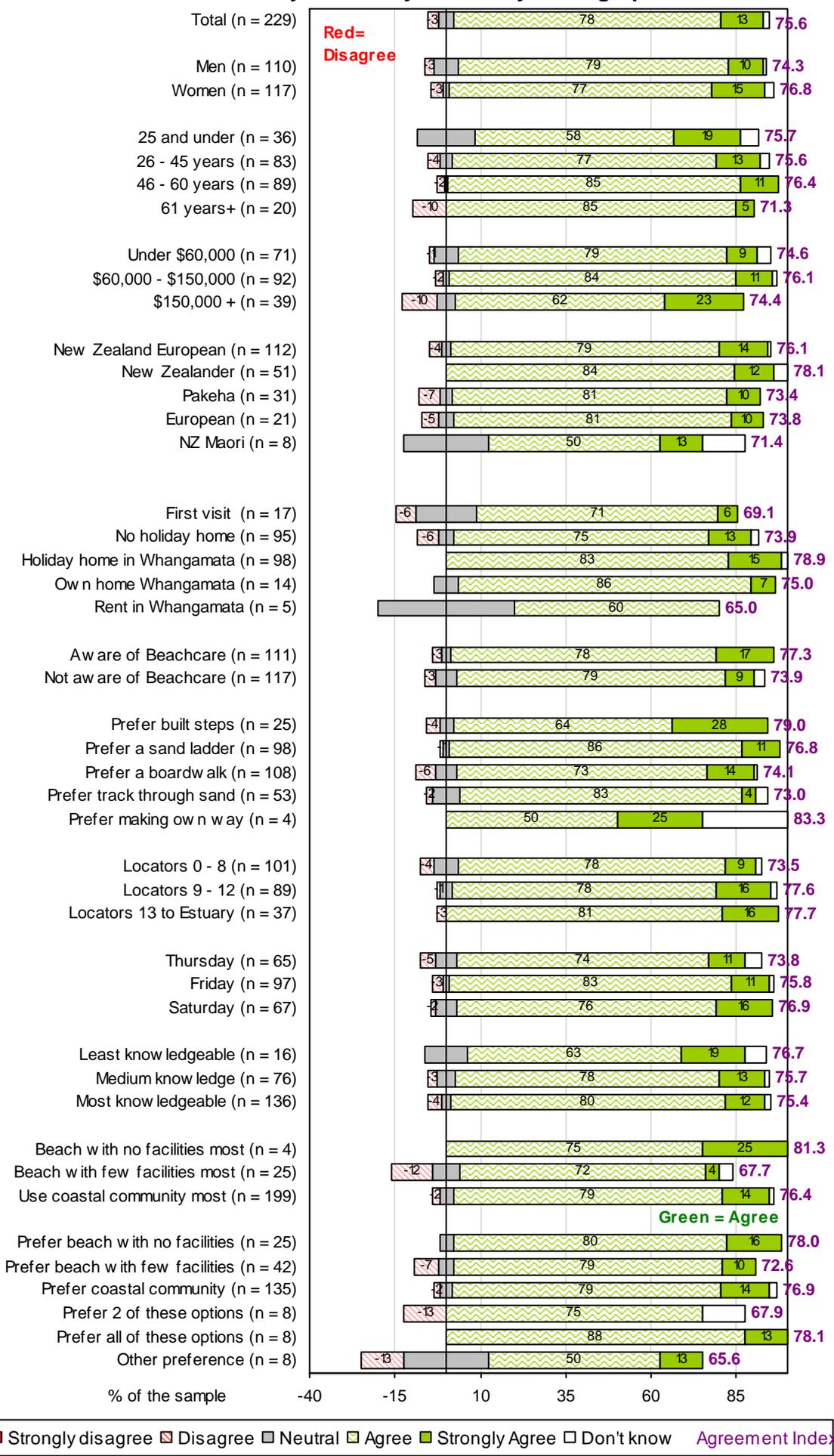
Those significantly **more likely** to show **agreement** (agree and strongly agree) with the statement, the built accessways 'are easy to find' included those:

- Who are occasional or regular visitors and own a holiday home in Whangamata, 98% (99% confidence level).
- Who preferred a sand ladder or plank and chain, 97% (99% confidence level).
- Aged 46 – 60, 96% (95% confidence level).
- Who most often visit a beach in a coastal community, 93% (95% confidence level).
- Who have heard of Beachcare, 95% (90% confidence level).

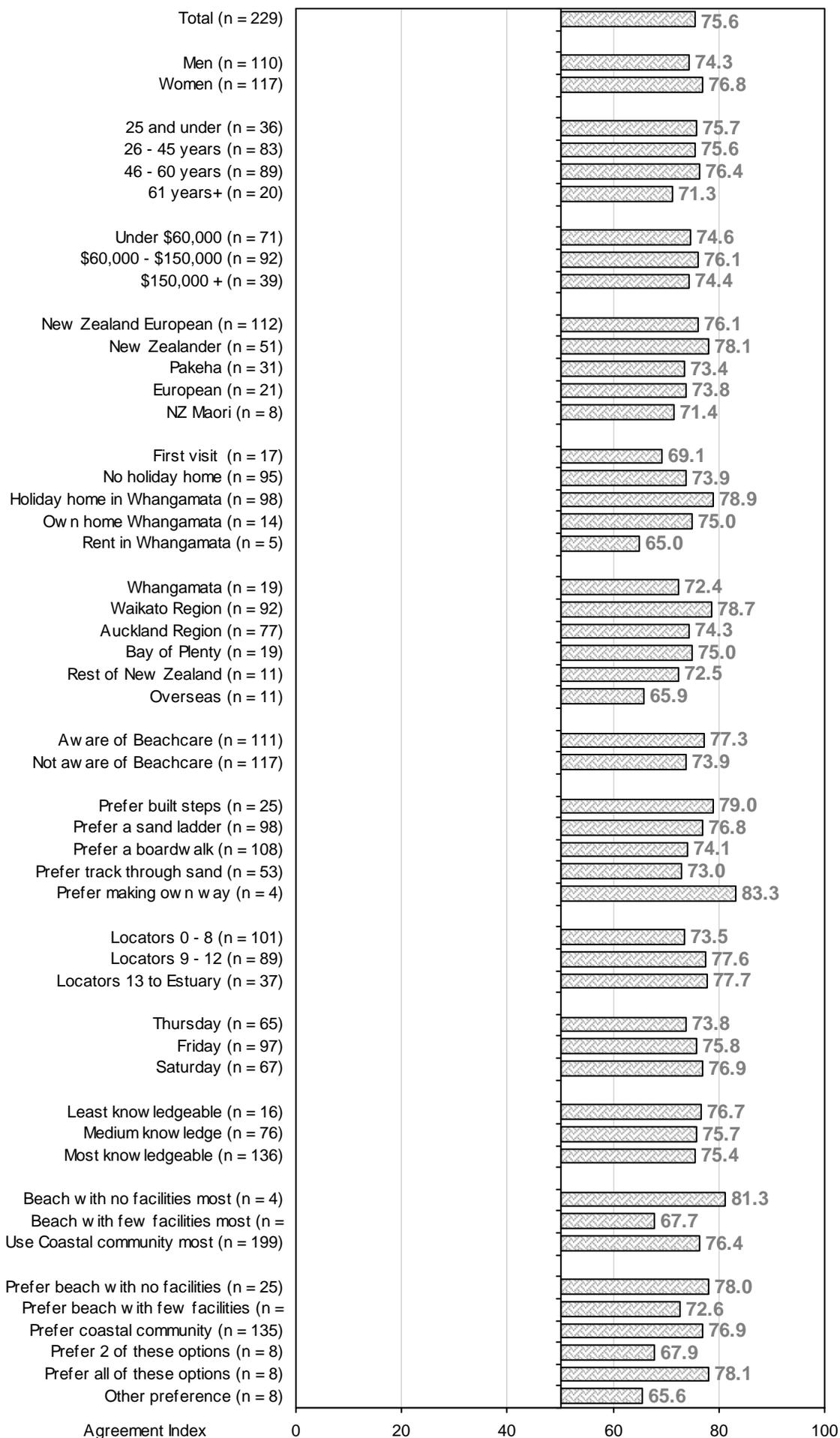
Those significantly **more likely** to show **disagreement** (disagree and strongly disagree) with the statement, the built accessways 'are easy to find' included those:

- With a household income over \$150,000 p.a. 10% (99% confidence level).
- Who visit on an occasional or regular basis without a holiday home, 6% (95% confidence level).
- Who preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes, 6% (95% confidence level).
- Who preferred a beach with few facilities, like a toilet and carpark, 7% (90% confidence level).

Built Accessways Are Easy to Find by Demographics



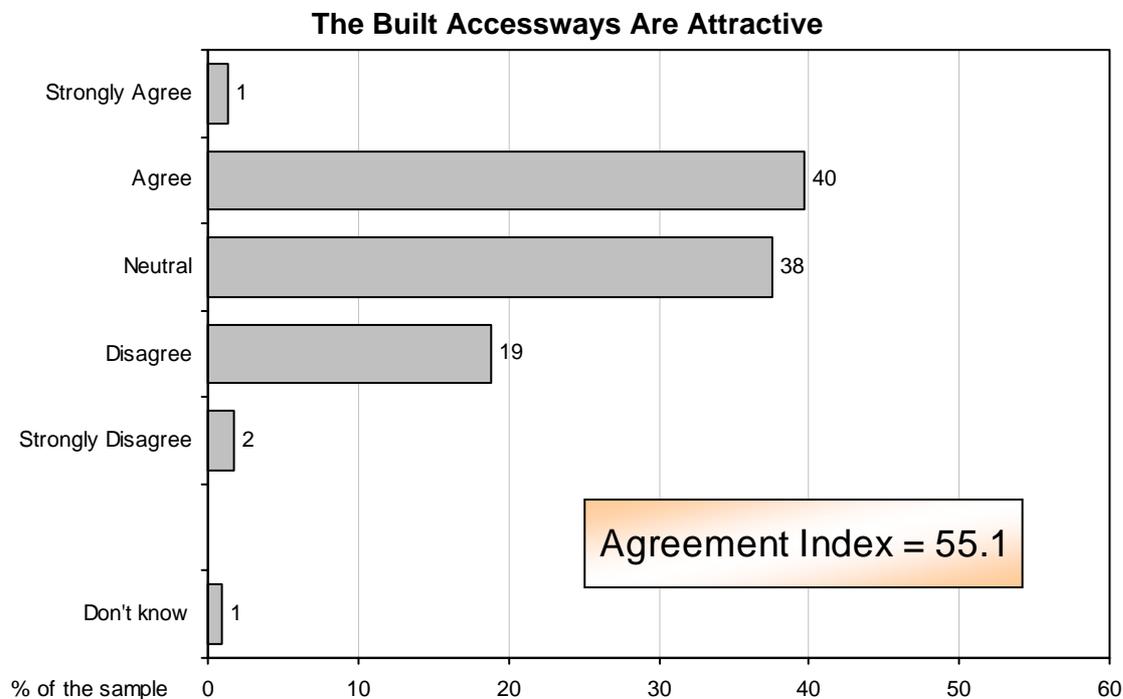
Built Accessways Are Easy to Find: Index by Demographics



9.4 Built Accessways Are Attractive

The sample is split in their level of agreement with the statement that the *'built accessways are attractive'*. Less than half of the respondents, 41% agreed with this statement although only 1% strongly agreed. Nearly two-fifths of the respondents were neutral while a fifth of the respondents disagreed, 21%.

The Agreement Index for the statement, the *'built accessways are attractive'* is 55.1.



Those significantly **more likely** to show **agreement** (agree and strongly agree) with the statement, the *'built accessways are attractive'* included those:

- Interviewed between the geographic locators 13 – 18 (including the Estuary) 65% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed before 10:00 am, 55% (95% confidence level).
- Women, 47% (90% confidence level).

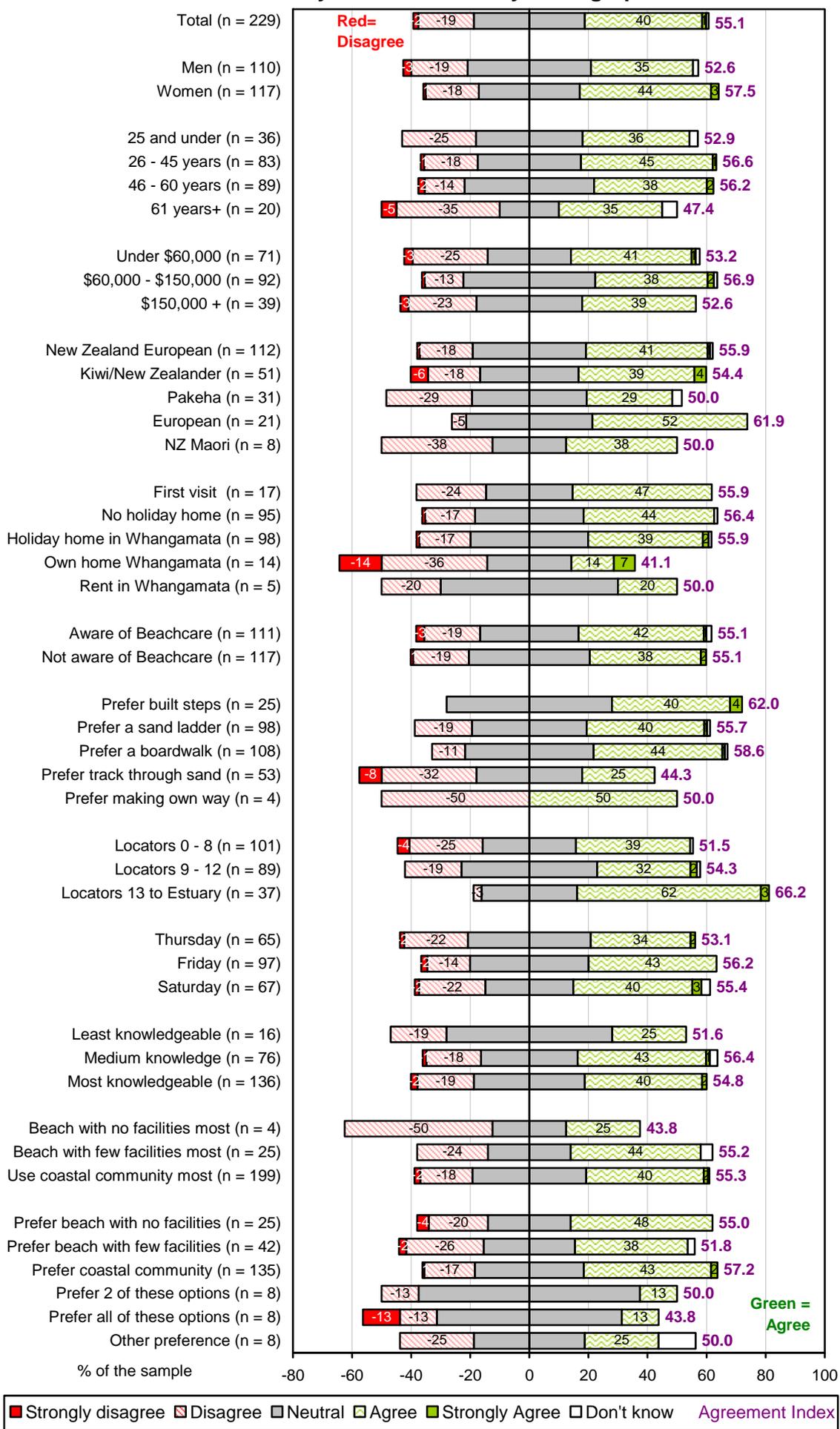
Those significantly **more likely** to show neither **agreement nor disagreement** (neutral) with the statement, the *'built accessways are attractive'* included those:

- Interviewed between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, 51% (99% confidence level).
- With a household income of \$60,000 - \$150,000 p.a., (90% confidence level).
- Who preferred a boardwalk or track built through the dunes, 44% (90% confidence level).

Those significantly **more likely** to show **disagreement** (disagree and strongly disagree) with the statement, the *'built accessways are attractive'* included those:

- Who preferred following a track through the sand where you can see others have gone, 40% (99% confidence level).
- Interviewed between the geographic locators 0 – 8 (including the Wharf) 29% (99% confidence level).
- Who live in Whangamata, 42% (95% confidence level).
- With a household income of under \$60,000 p.a., (90% confidence level).

Built Accessways Are Attractive by Demographics



Built Accessways Are Attractive: Index by Demographics

