

Quantifying Community Use of Pollutant Inventories

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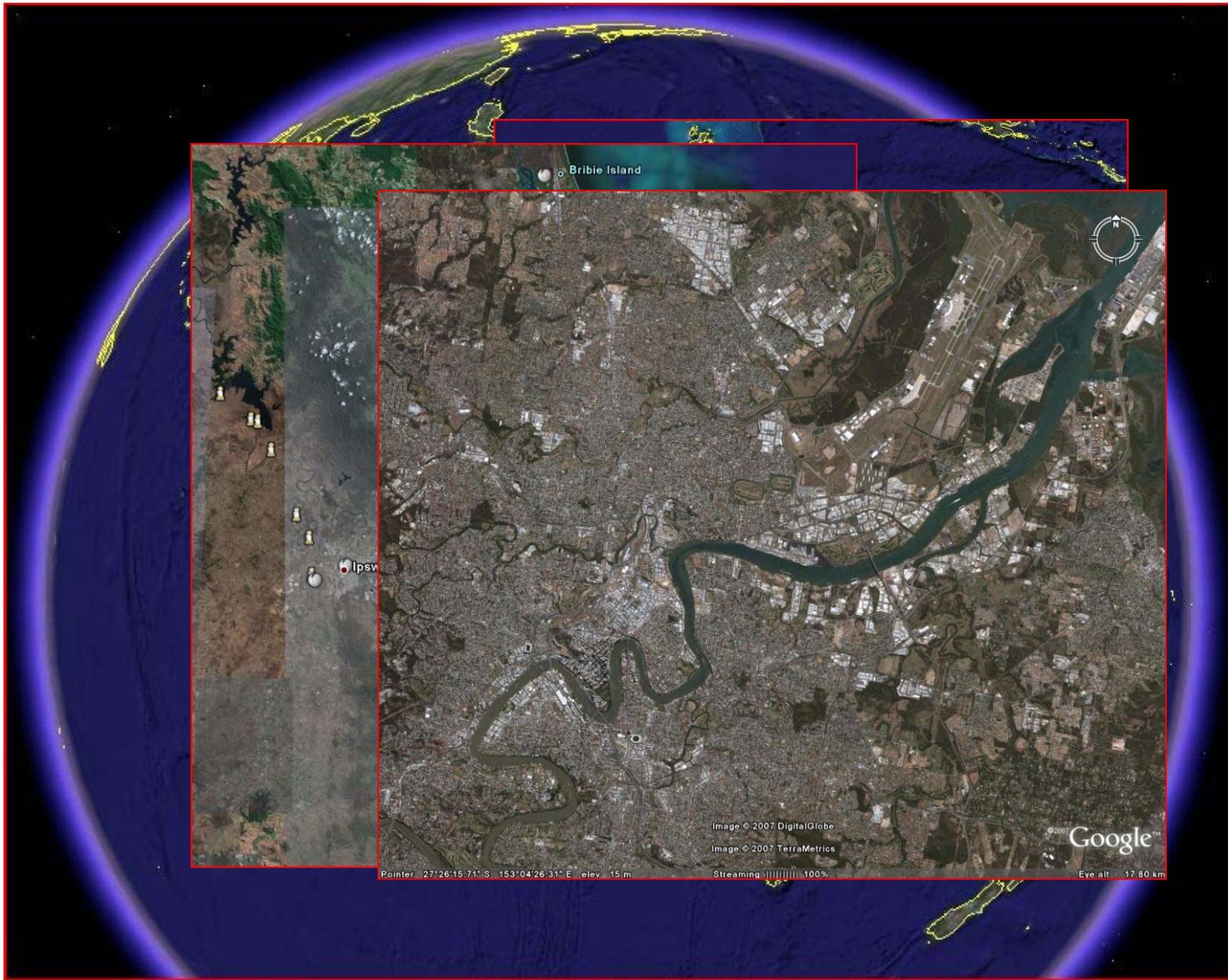
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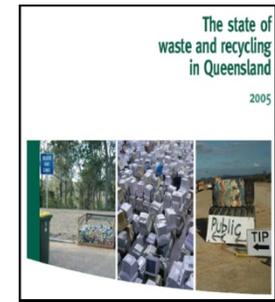
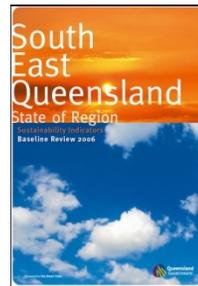
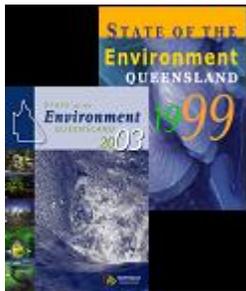
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Queensland Environmental Protection Agency

Greenhouse Sciences and Environmental Reporting

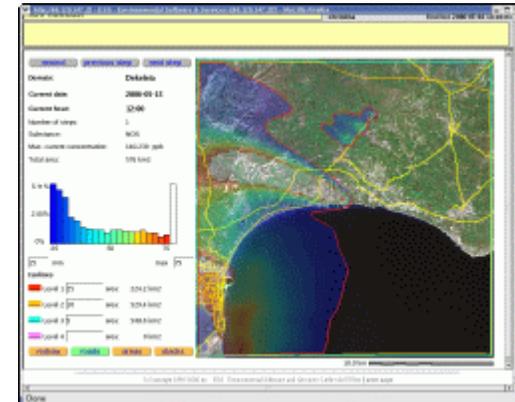


Environmental Sciences Division



Why have emission inventories?

- air dispersion modelling
- regional strategy development
- regulation setting
- air toxics risk assessment
- tracking trends in emissions over time
- community right-to-know



→ Reduction in emissions and impacts

Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)

- a particular type of emissions inventory
- have been established in many countries
 - Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) – USA
 - National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) – Canada
 - European Pollutant Emission Register (EPER) – Europe
 - National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) – Australia
- CRTK is the foremost priority for these inventories



Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the community will access and use the information provided

Evidence for community use

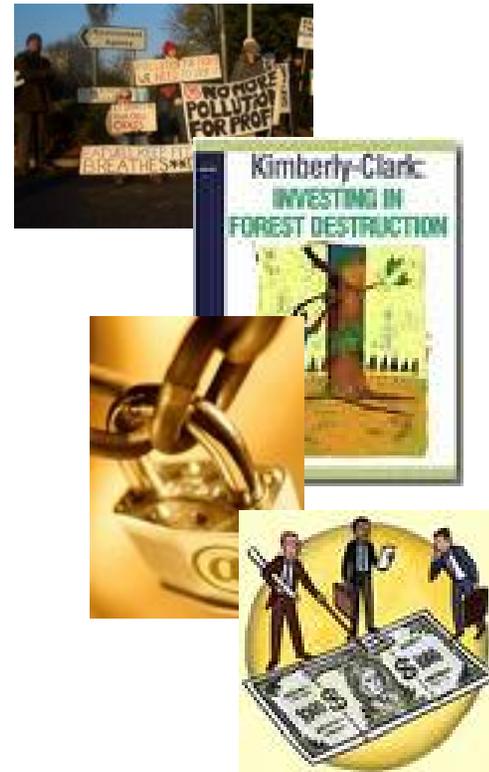
- Scorecard, RTKNET, Working Group on CRTK, Friends of the Earth (UK) website
- “Working Notes” by Working Group on CRTK
- Other anecdotal evidence



Community modes of influence

(from Scorse 2005)

- Political pressure
- Green consumerism
- Future liability
- Future expansion



What makes a community effective?

- Need to be able to access and understand the information
- Exceptional organisational skills
 - need defined goals and spokespersons
- High level of confidence
- Knowledge of government policy and legal processes
- Ability to establish a campaign and build media relationships



A need for well organised and informed community groups – not just individuals in a community

Australian community groups

- Pro-environment community groups more interested in “green” issues (nature conservation) rather than “brown” issues (toxics or pollution)
- Political culture which encourages green groups to focus on “green’ rather than “brown”
- Some evidence that this is changing



Vs



Australian community attitudes

- High level of concern for the environment
- High level of concern for pollution issues but this appears to be dropping
- Most people feel that pollution is well controlled

For most people, pollution is not a visible or obvious issue





The Australian PRTR: National Pollutant Inventory

- Commenced in 1998 with 36 mandatory substances (90 in total)
- 1200 facilities reported in the first year (1998/1999)
- First data published on the Internet in January 2000
- Now full 90 substances are mandatory
- 3890 facilities reported for 2005/06 and this data was published on the Internet in January 2007

www.npi.gov.au

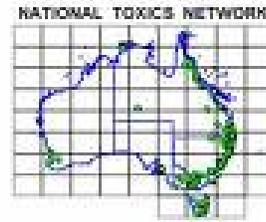
Community interest in the Australian NPI in 2001

- History of strong lobbying to create a PRTR
- Groups were disenchanted by the consultation process
- Perceived low level of interest by the public and by community groups
- Very limited publicity



Surveys of NPI awareness

- 2001 environment student survey found that 27% had heard of the NPI (33 respondents)
- 2002 telephone survey found 6% of people had heard of the NPI (582 respondents)
- 2006 telephone survey found 13% had heard of the NPI but less than 5% actually knew what it was (84 respondents)



Community Groups Survey 2001

Results



Community Groups Awareness

- Survey of 127 community groups in 2001
- 42 respondents (33%)
- 90% had heard of the NPI
- 48% had used the website
- 41.5 had been contacted by NPI staff
- 29% had attended an information session



Question asked

If the National Pollutant Inventory revealed that a local company was legally releasing large quantities of pollution, which of the following actions would your organization most likely adopt?



Figure 1. Contact the Prime Minister's Office?

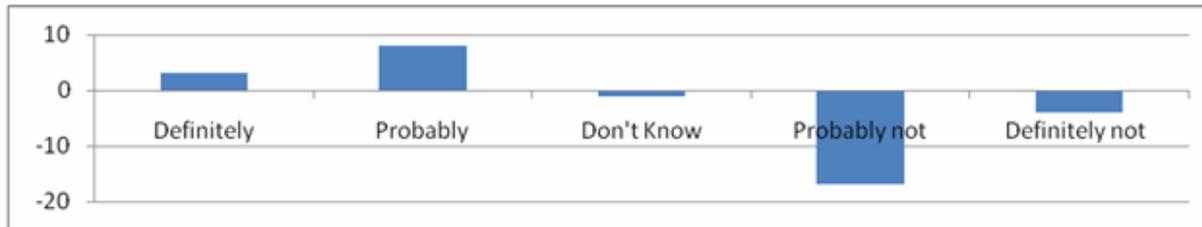


Figure 2. Contact the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment?

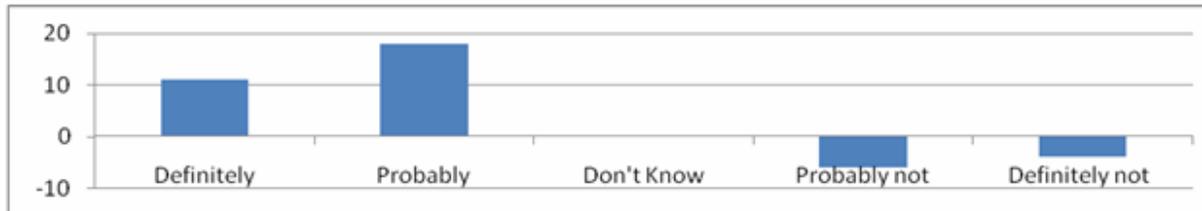


Figure 3. Contact your Commonwealth member of parliament?

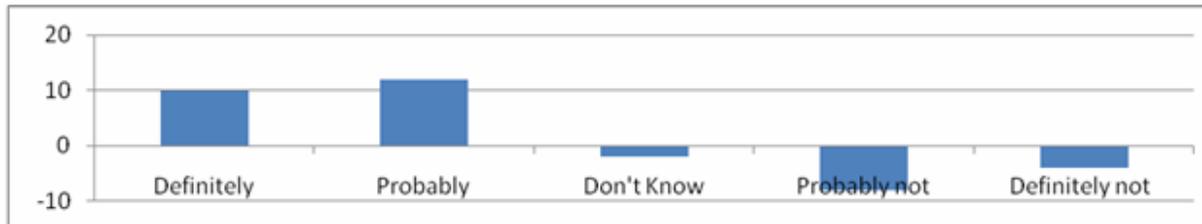
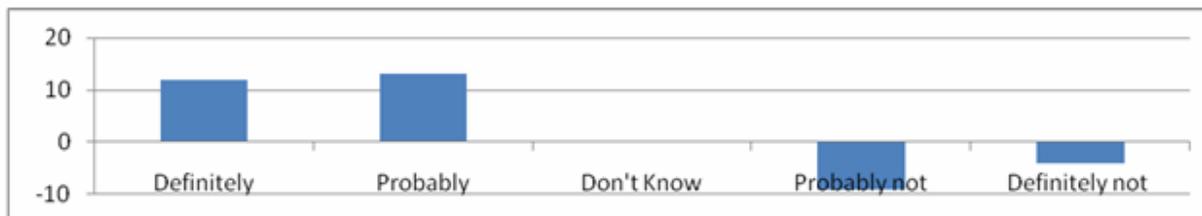


Figure 4. Contact the Commonwealth Department of the Environment?



Action at National Level

Demonstrates a preference to contact the Commonwealth Minister

State and Local Action

Figure 5. Contact the Premier's office?

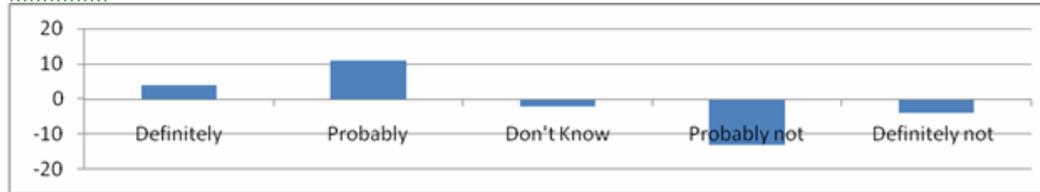


Figure 6. Contact the State Minister for the Environment?

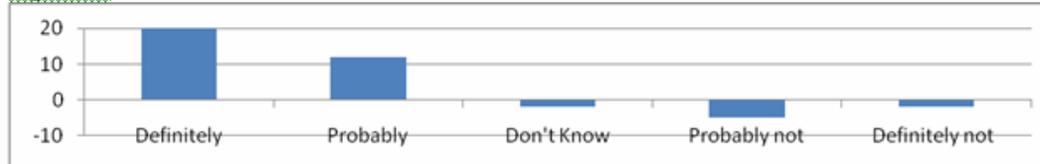


Figure 7. Contact your State member of parliament?

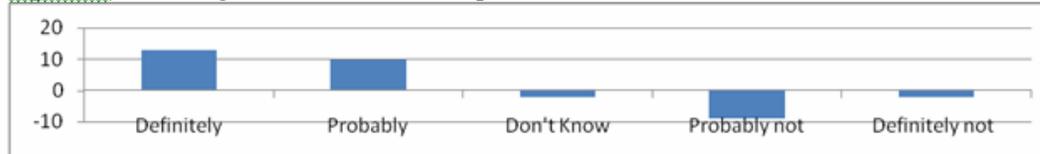


Figure 8. Contact your State Environment Protection Agency

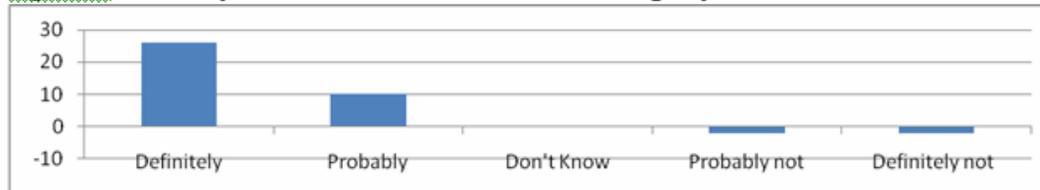
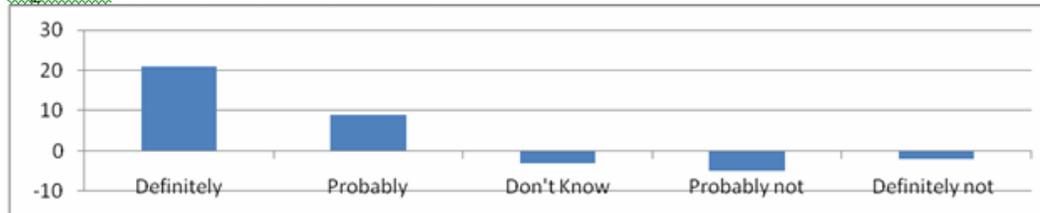


Figure 9. Contact the Local Council?



Indicates a preference to contact the State Minister, State EPA or local council.

Company Level Action

Figure 10. Contact the polluting company directly?

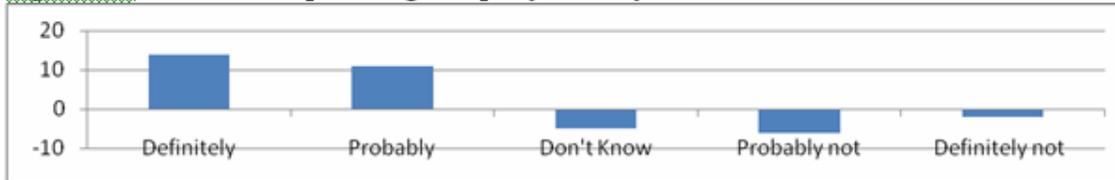


Figure 11. Publicise the polluting company's actions?

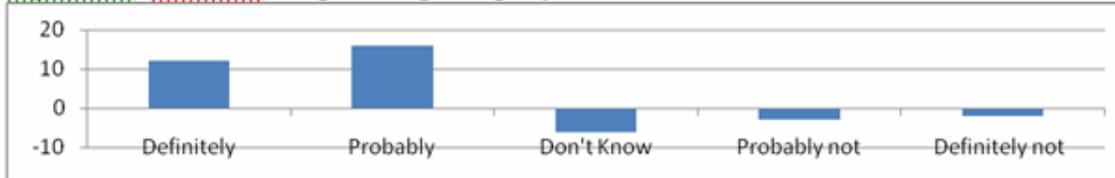


Figure 12. Organise a protest?

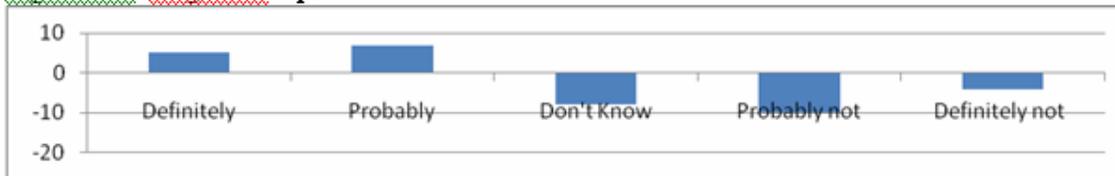


Figure 13. Call for a boycott of the company's products?

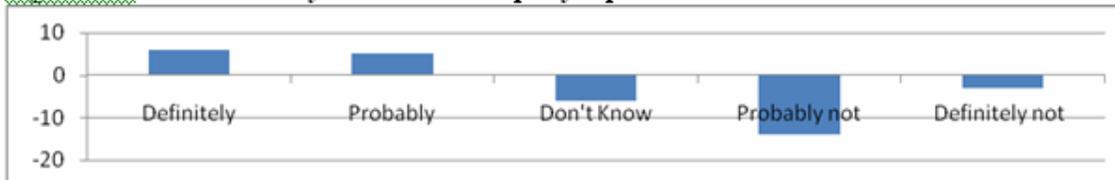
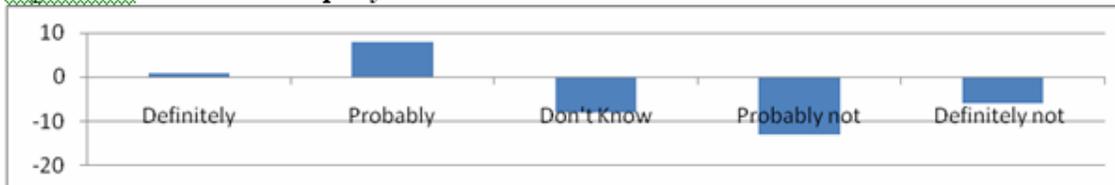
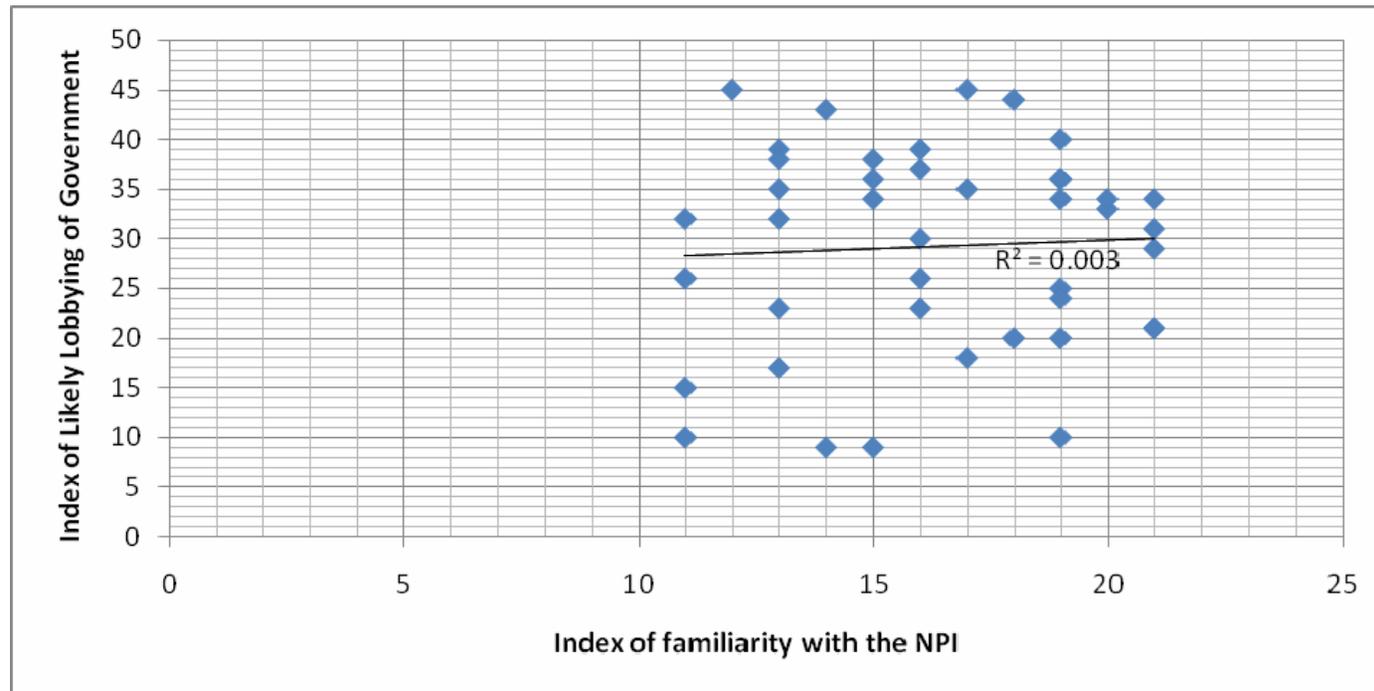


Figure 14. Take the company to court?



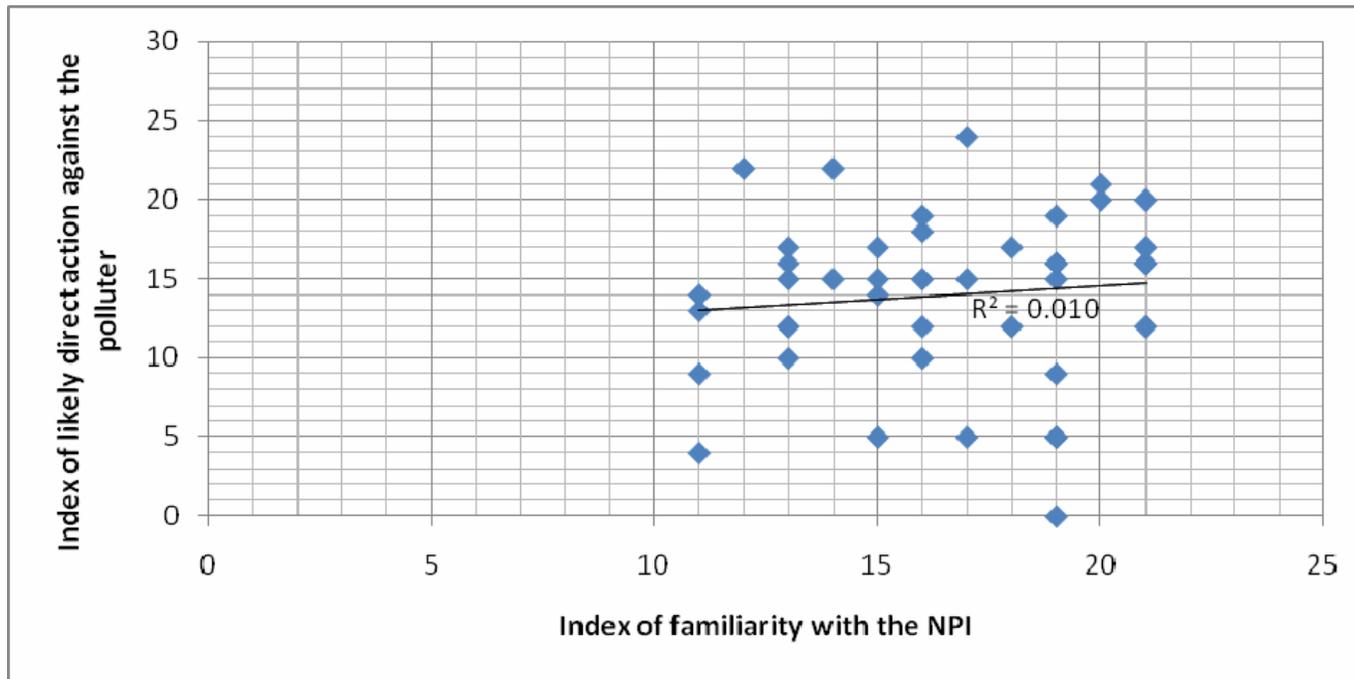
Indicates a preference for less public direct action

Figure 15. Familiarity with NPI vs. Likely Lobbying of Government



No correlation: Groups familiar with NPI are not more likely to lobby government

Figure 16. Familiarity with NPI vs. Likely Direct Action Against the Polluter



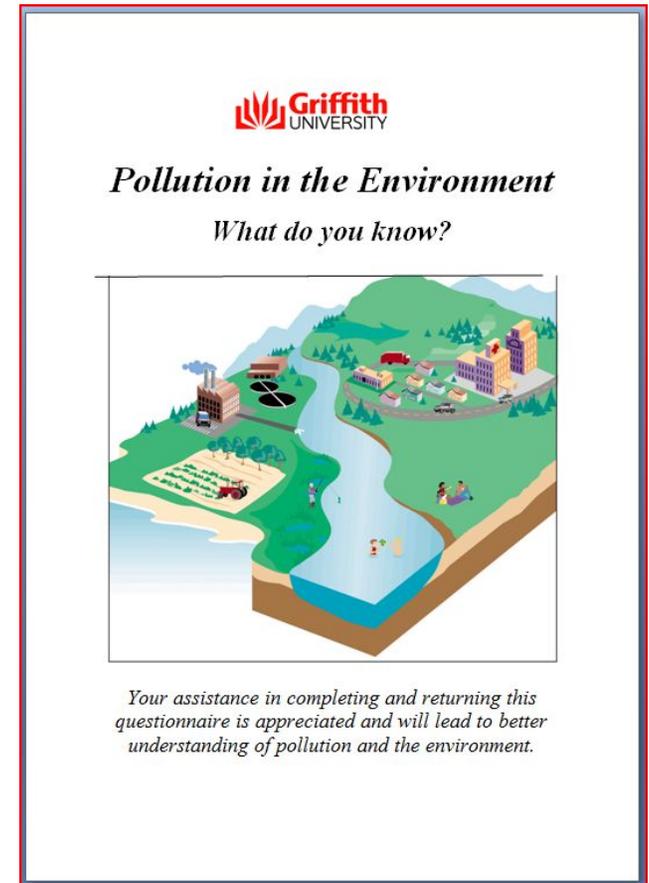
No correlation: Groups familiar with NPI are not more likely to take direct action against the polluter

Conclusions from 2001 Survey

- Level of awareness among environment groups is higher than for general population
- Actions tend to be directed to state and local government rather than direct action against the polluter
- More research is currently underway...

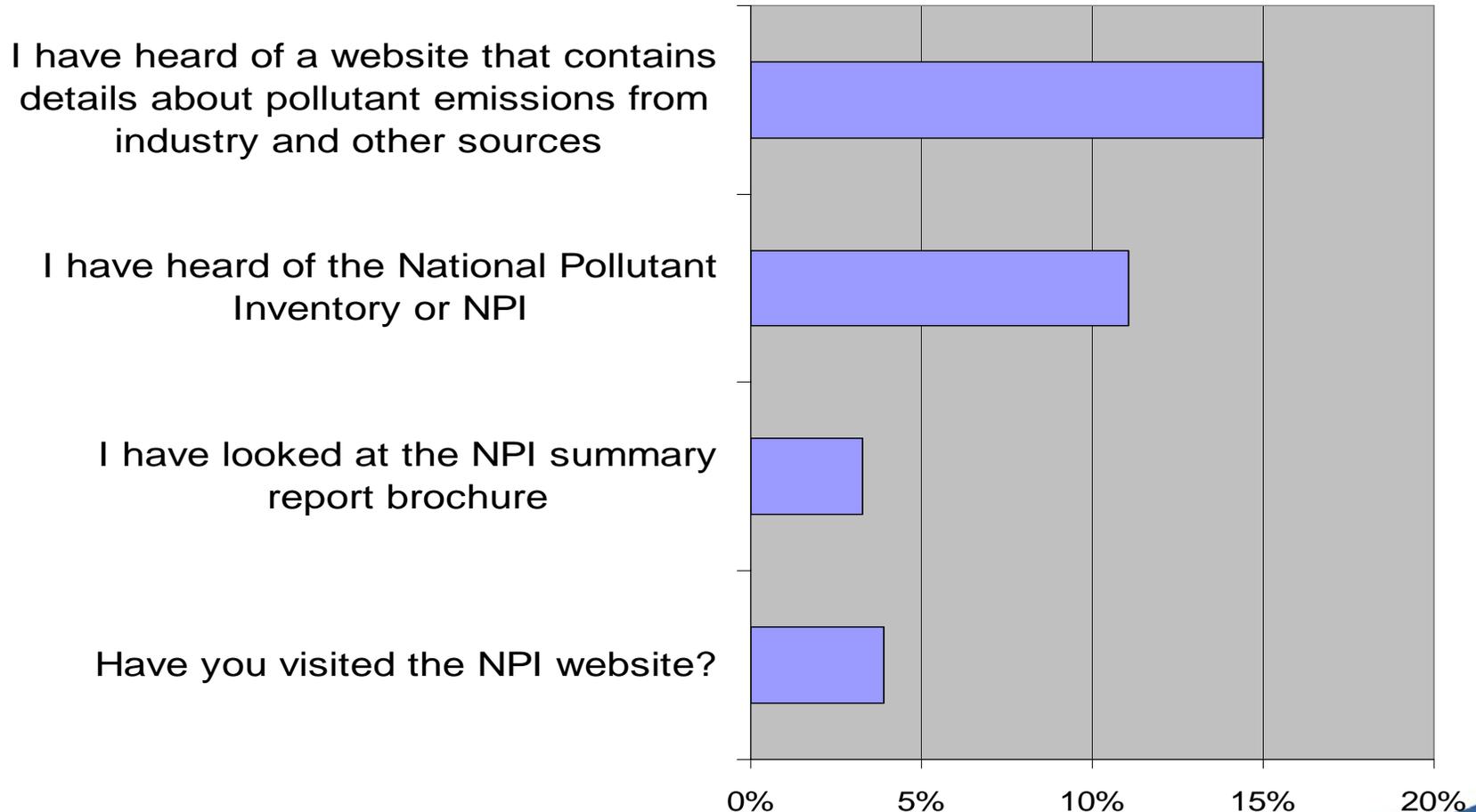
2007 Survey (in progress)

- 2000 households in Queensland, Australia
- 350 returned to date – follow-up in progress
- Questionnaire contained:
 - General questions about environmental attitudes
 - Questions about awareness of NPI
 - Questions about barriers to awareness
 - Questions about use (if they were aware)
 - Demographics



Preliminary results (307 respondents)

Awareness of NPI



Preliminary results (307 respondents)

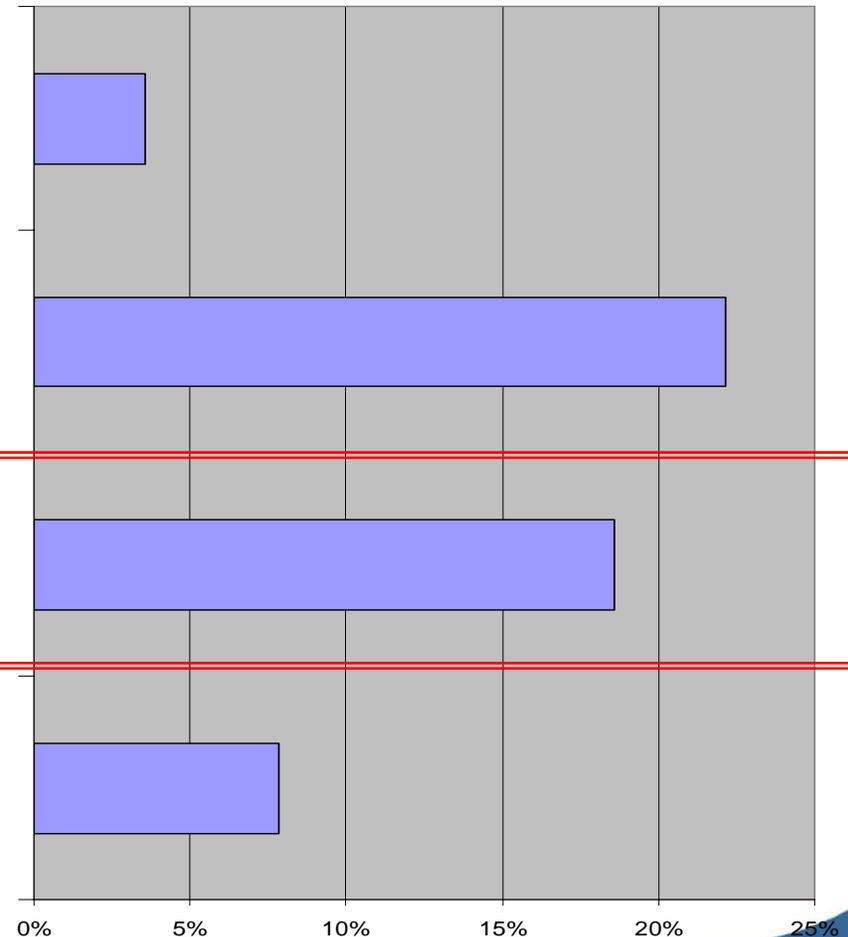
Correct Identification

The NPI is a responsible care program established by Australian industry that uses a website to disclose possible pollutants in their products

The NPI is a website, produced and maintained by environment groups, that reports on pollutant emissions from industry and other sources

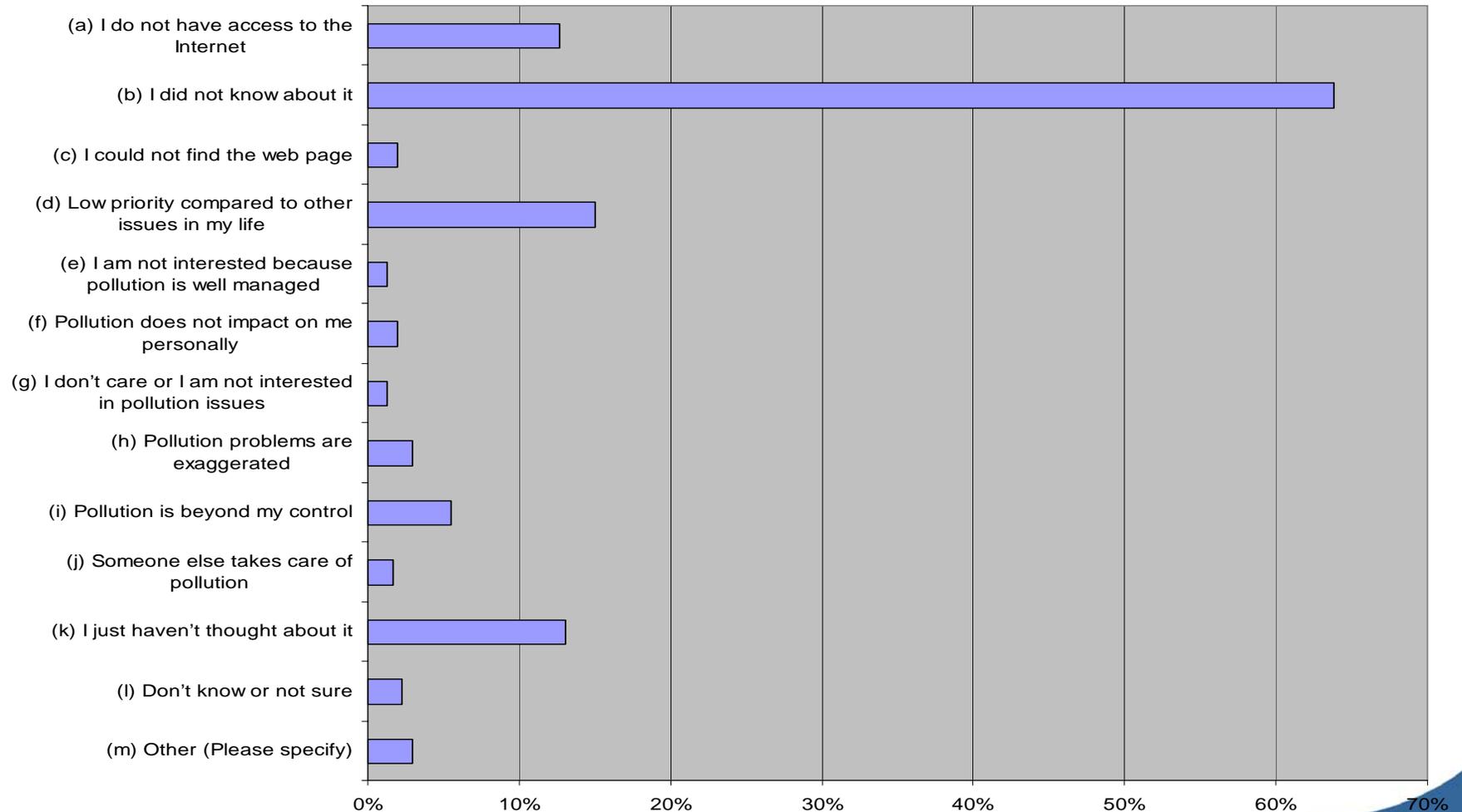
The NPI is a government program that collects information about pollutant emissions from industry and other sources for publishing on the Internet

The NPI is a government program which sets the amount of pollution that Australian industry is allowed to emit to the environment



Preliminary results (307 respondents)

Reasons for not visiting the NPI website



What next?

- Hoping to get response rate up to 30%
- 200 community group members will be sent surveys which will combine the 2001 community group survey with the 2007 general survey
- Analysis should be complete by Dec 2007



Questions?

