



Australian Government
Bureau of Rural Sciences

Aquaculture: What do people think?

Social Sciences Program

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

How can social science help?

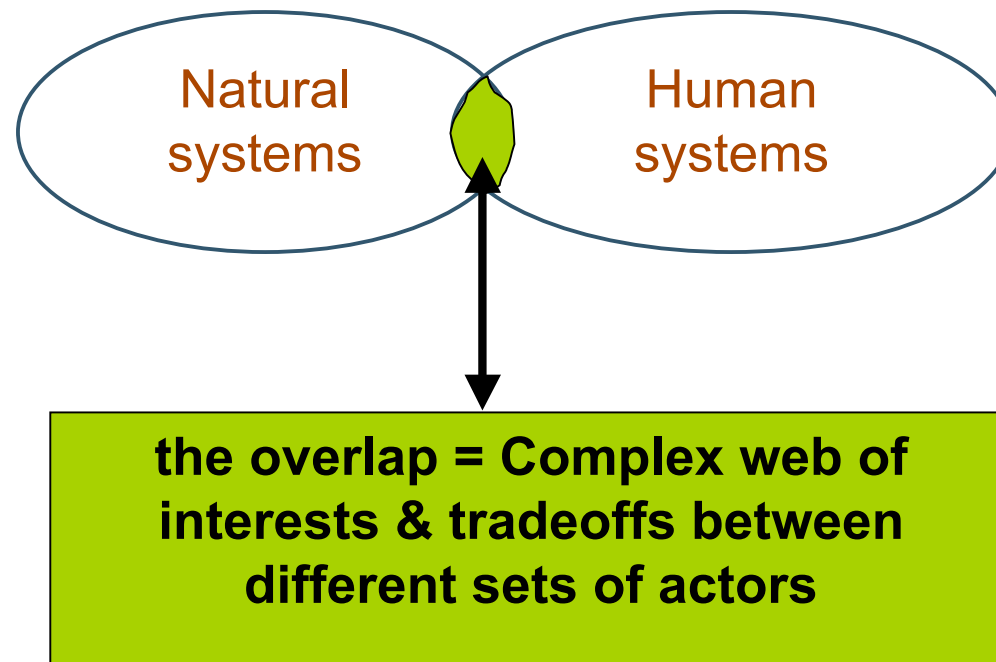
Strengthen decision-making & social acceptability of practices

- ❖ proactive versus reactive
- ❖ more accurately reflect social contexts
- ❖ more lasting decisions
- ❖ support public's 'right to know'
- ❖ mutual learning & recognition of interests



Australian Aquaculture

Key challenge = ecologically sustainable development of shared marine & coastal resources



Public perceptions are pertinent to industry viability

- **Strong support for environmental protection**
- **Varied knowledge & interest**
- **Balanced public information is valuable**
- **Declining public trust warrants consideration**
 - varied perceptions of environmental/health risks
 - inclusive, '2-way' communications required



Our approach

Key research questions

- Social and regulatory contexts
- Different perspectives held about aquaculture
- Ways to improve communications



Who did we talk to?

Place-based & interest-based communities

How did we 'talk' to them?

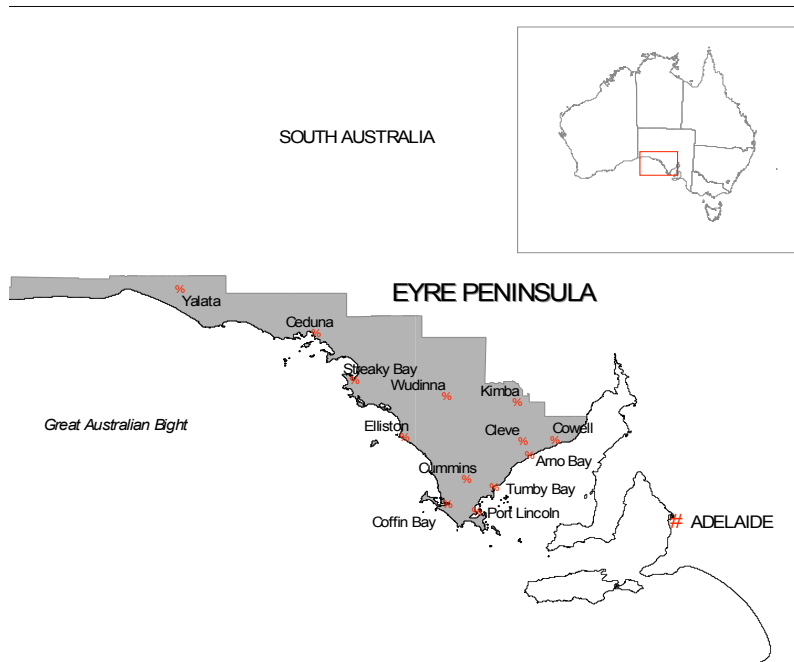
Semi-structured interviews

Mail surveys

What did we ask them?

Aquaculture values, challenges, information, communications

The regions

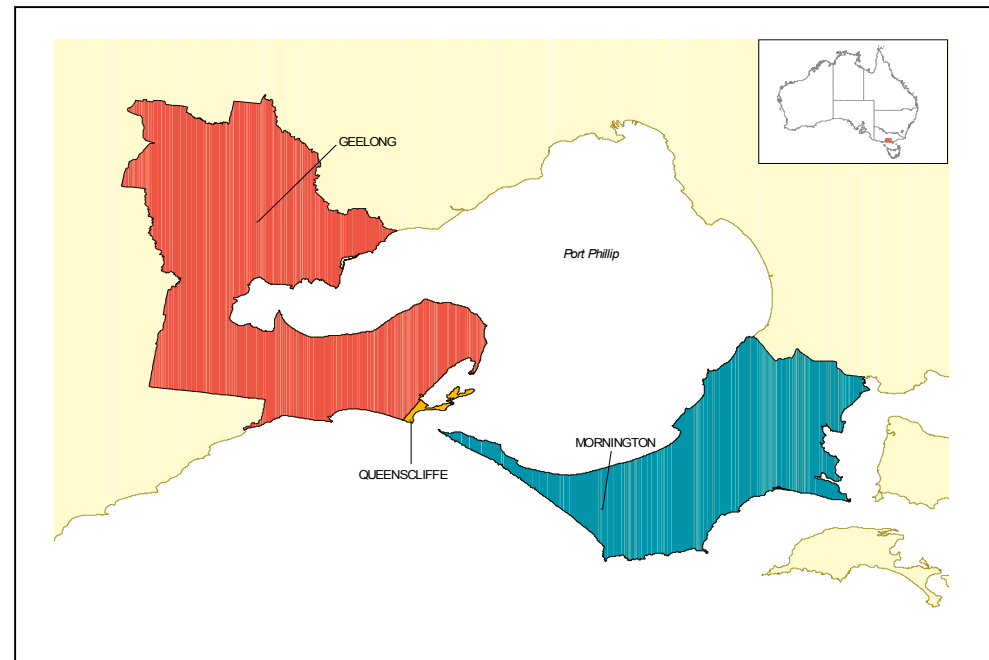


Eyre Peninsula

- Sparsely populated coastal region
- Key regional centre for aquaculture
- Low economic diversity

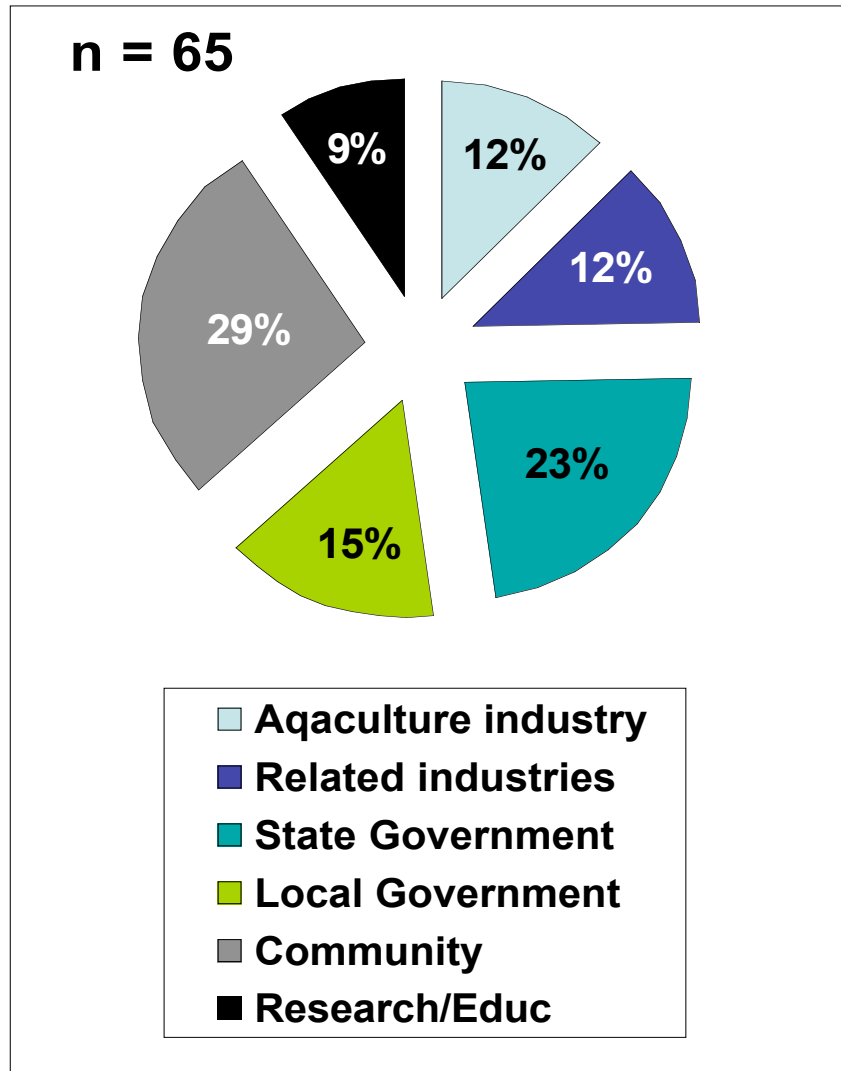
Port Phillip Bay

- Densely populated
- Smaller aquaculture industry
- Higher economic diversity



Who we spoke to

Interviews



Mail Survey

Adults living in LGAs near aquaculture

- 72% males in SA, 49% females in Vic
- Over _ 50+ years

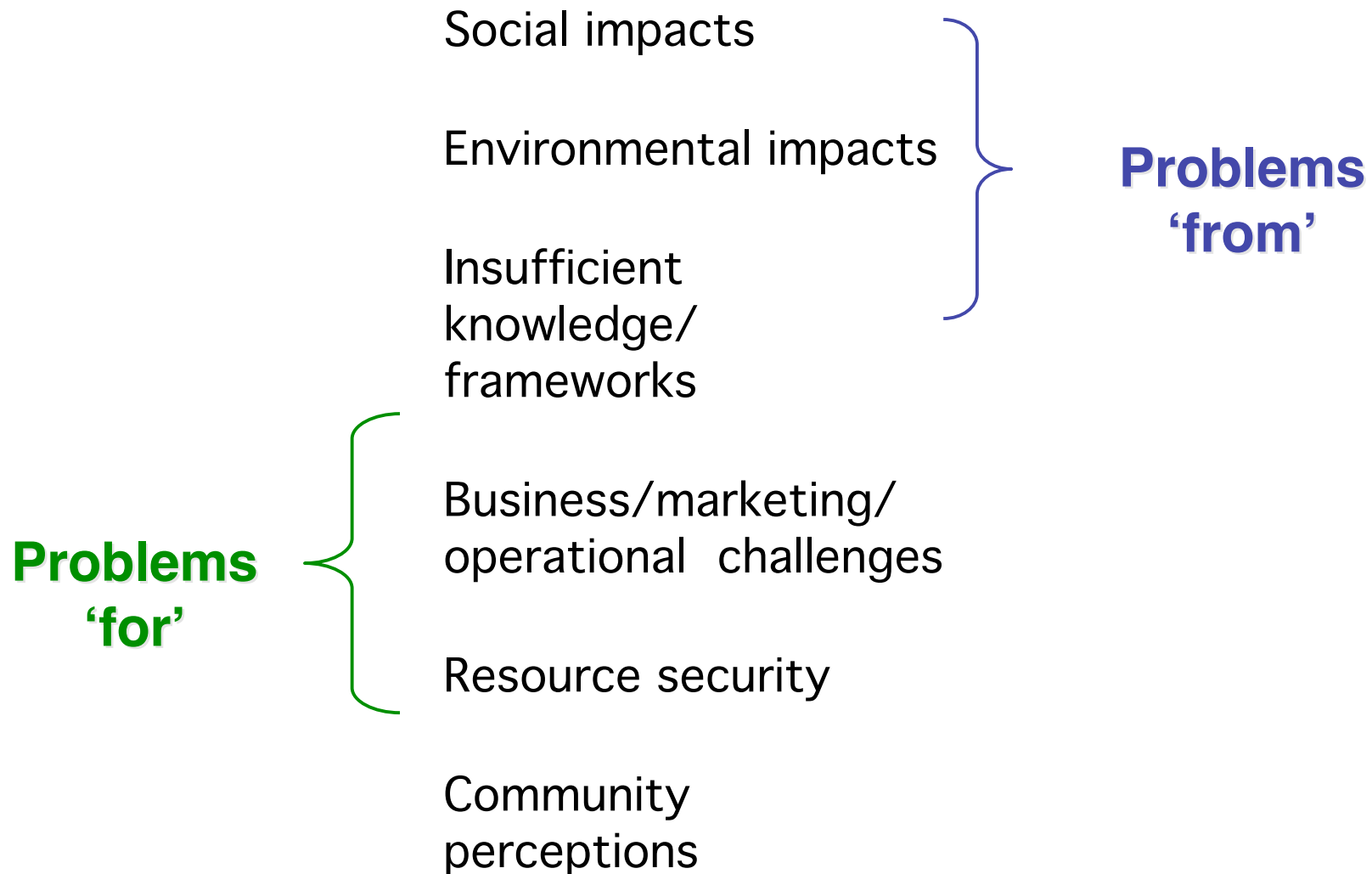
Been to aquaculture farm:

- 78% of SA respondents, 40% of Vic

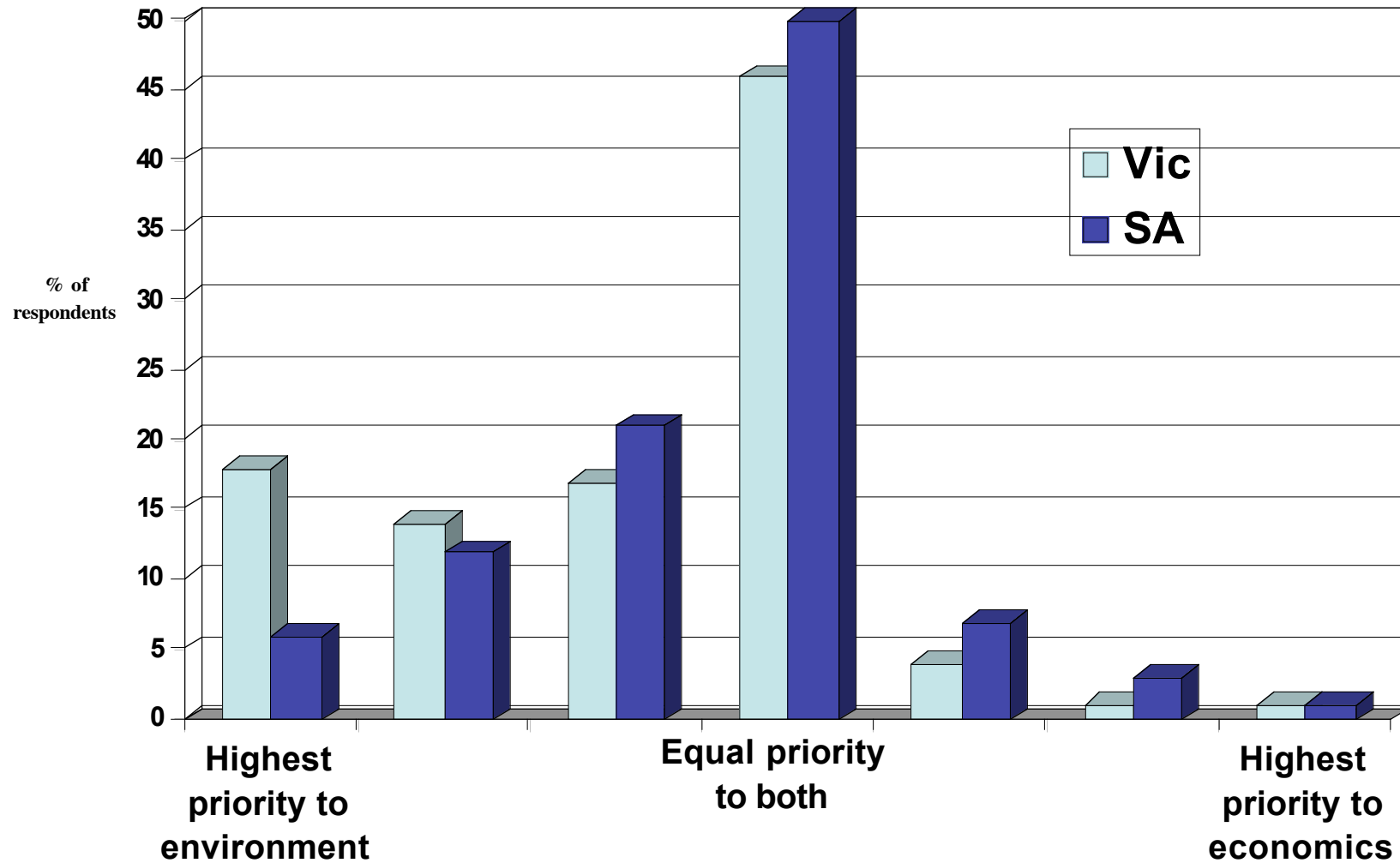
Social links to aquaculture:

- 85% of SA, 17% of Vic

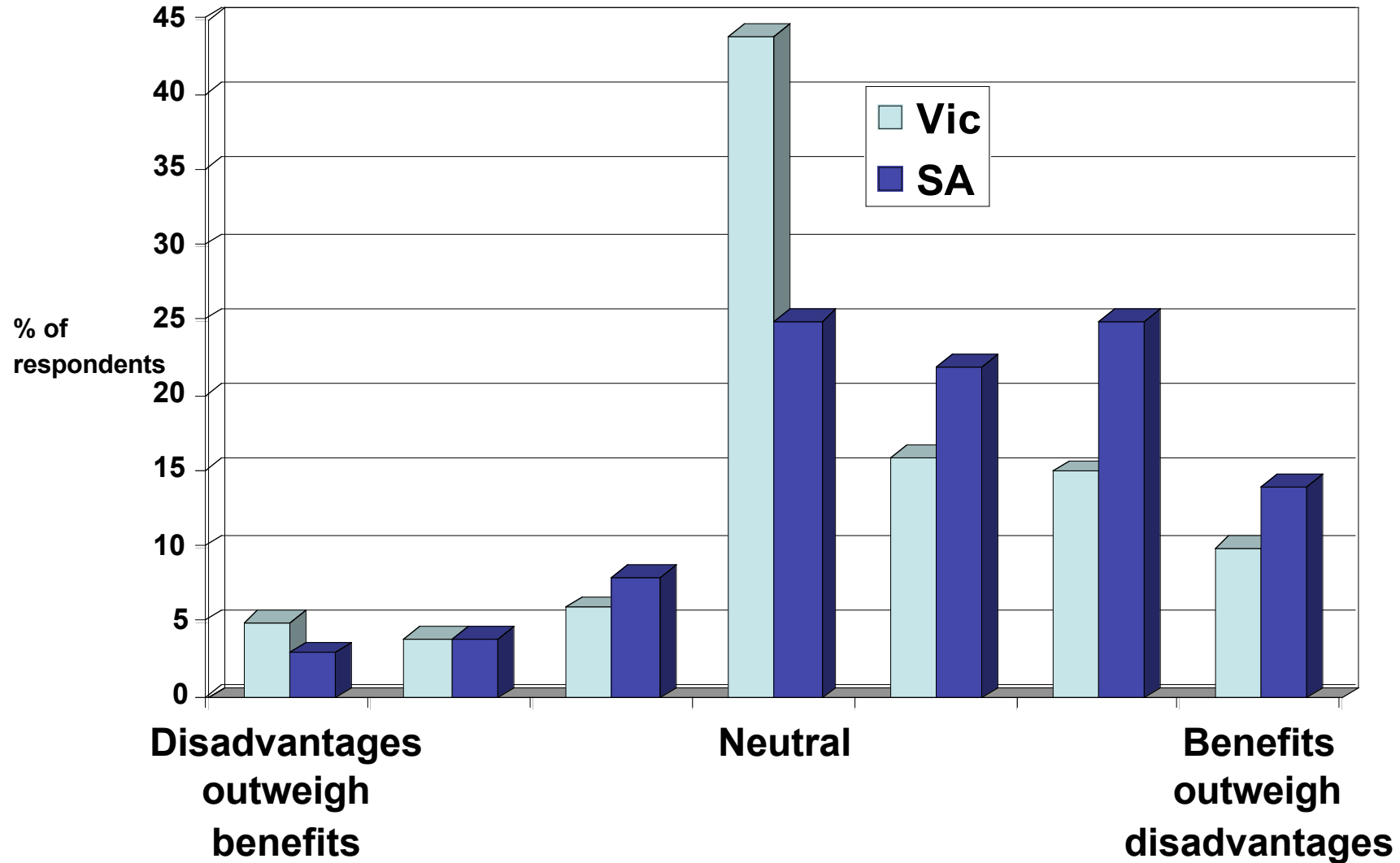
Perceived sustainability challenges - Interviews



Coastal management choices: economy or envt?



Aquaculture: benefits or disadvantages?



Environmental benefits & challenges

Mail Survey

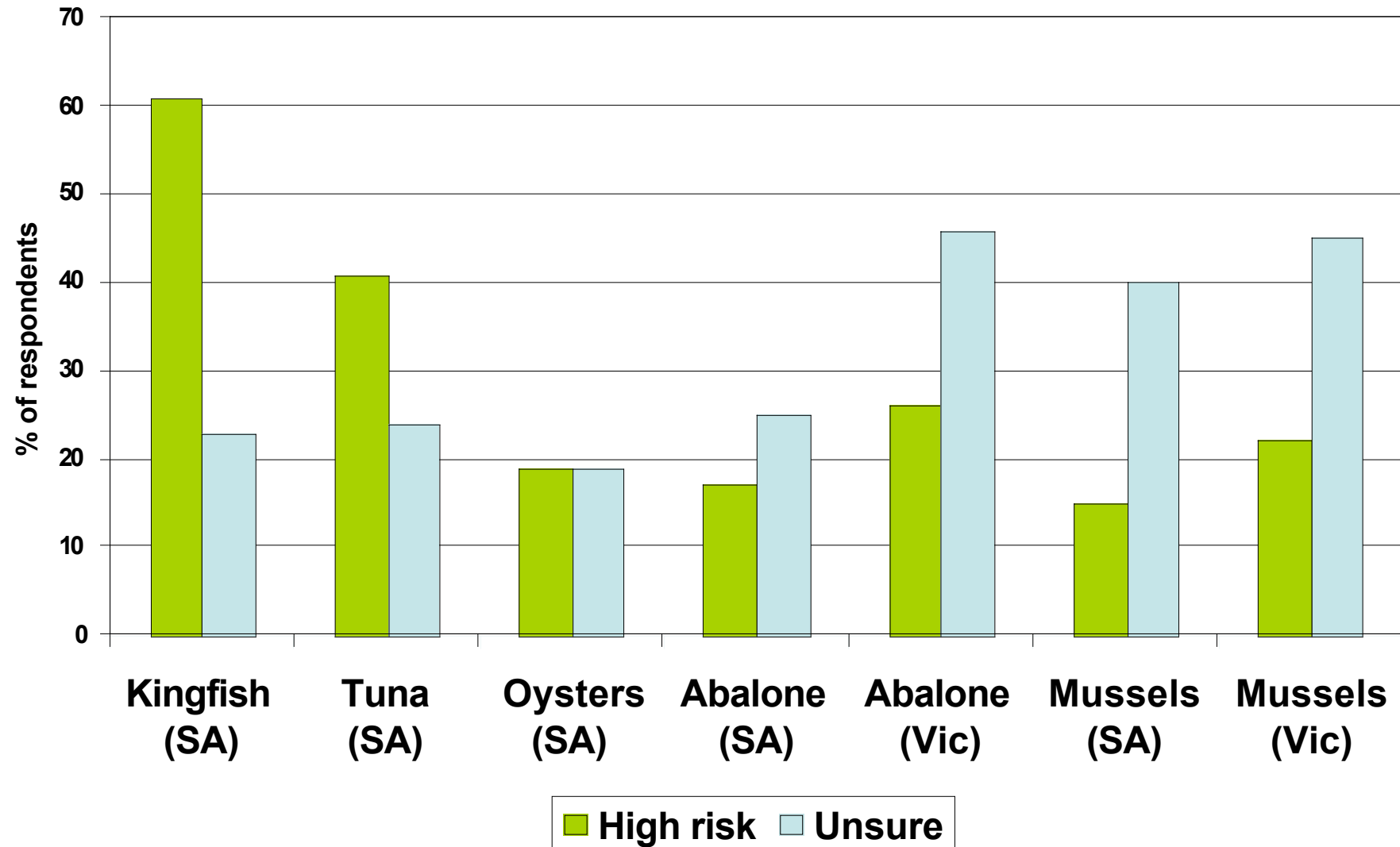
SA

Vic

Aquaculture good alternative to wild-catch fishing	72% agree	68% agree
Farming shellfish helps by removing nutrients*	10% agree	17% agree
Healthy stock indicates healthy environment	27% agree	40% agree
Sea-cage farming bigger impact than shellfish*	30% agree	19% agree
Aquaculture contributes to pollution*	21% agree	12% agree

* Over 1/2 of respondents neutral or didn't know

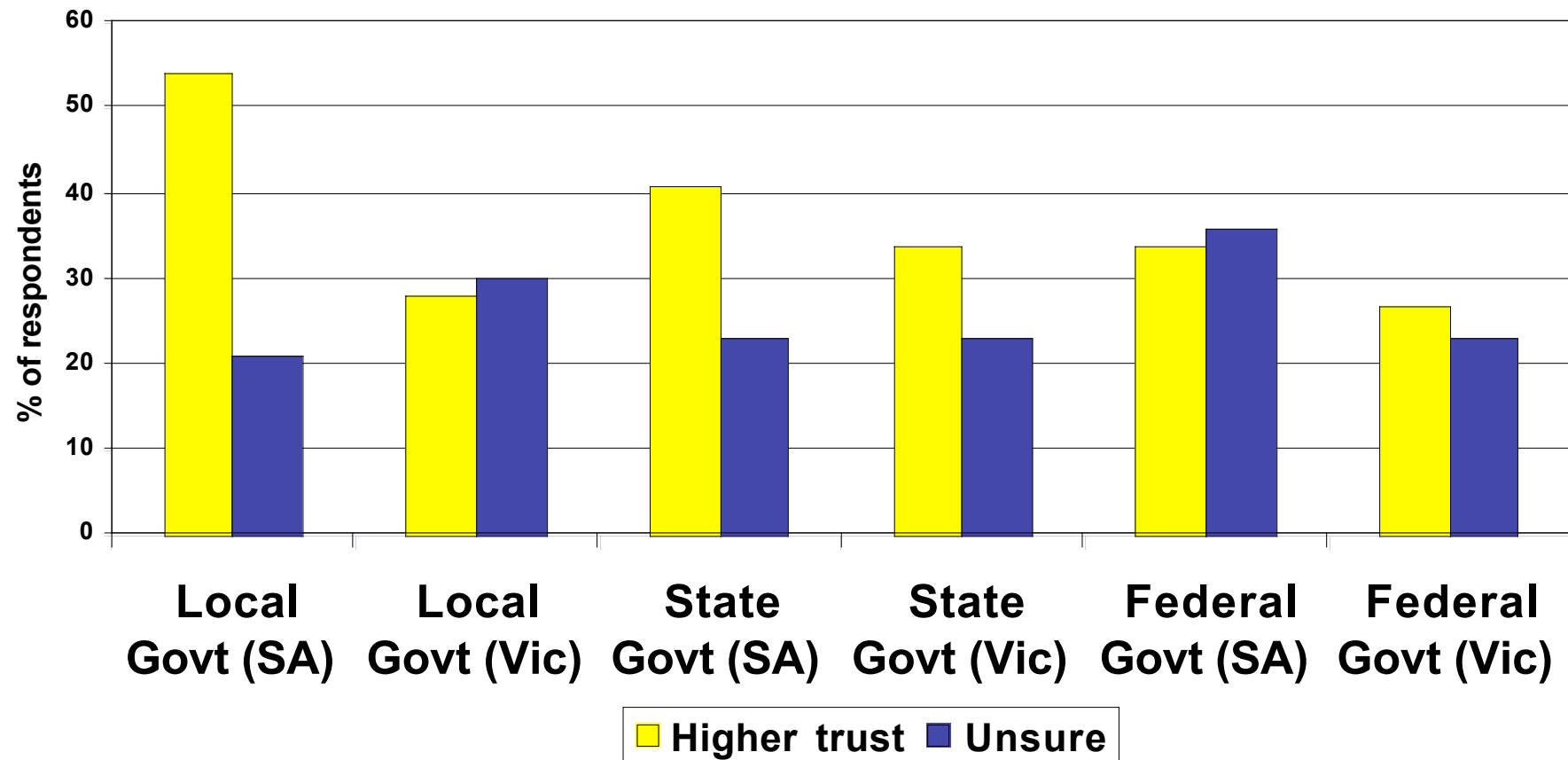
Perceived risk of future environmental impacts



Trust in Governments

Interviewees: impartiality, access, responsiveness

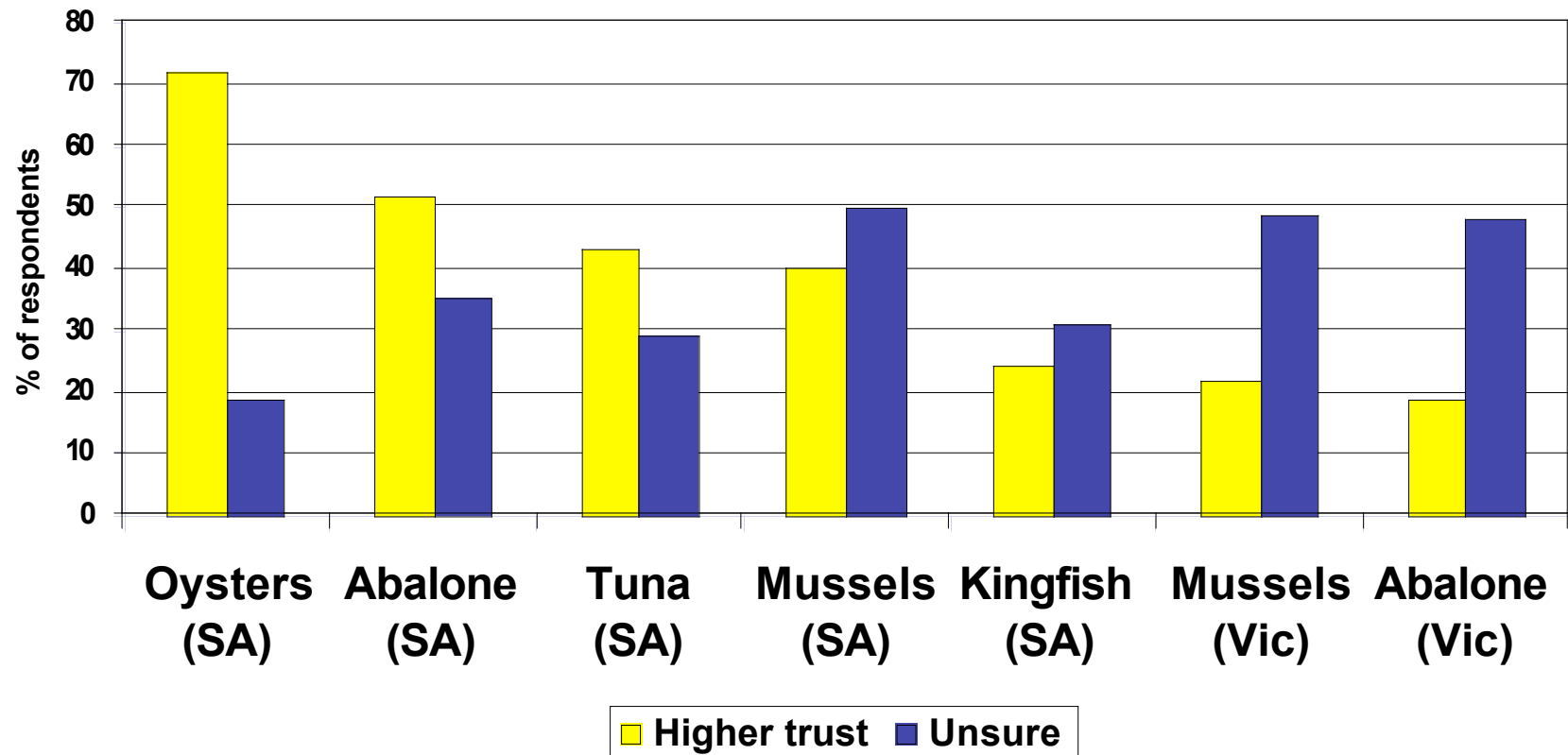
Mail survey



Trust in Aquaculture Industry

Interviewees: ratings by performance, priorities, awareness, regulations

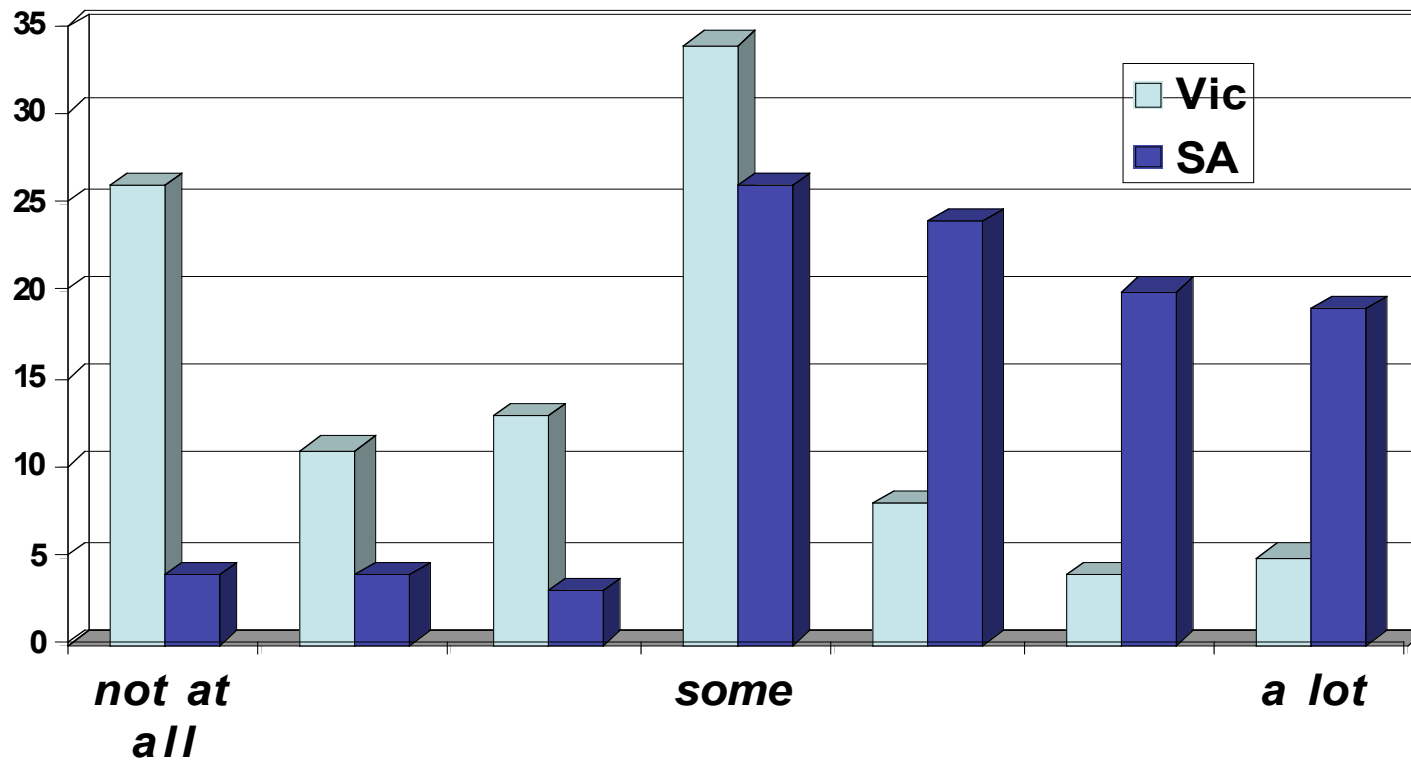
Mail survey



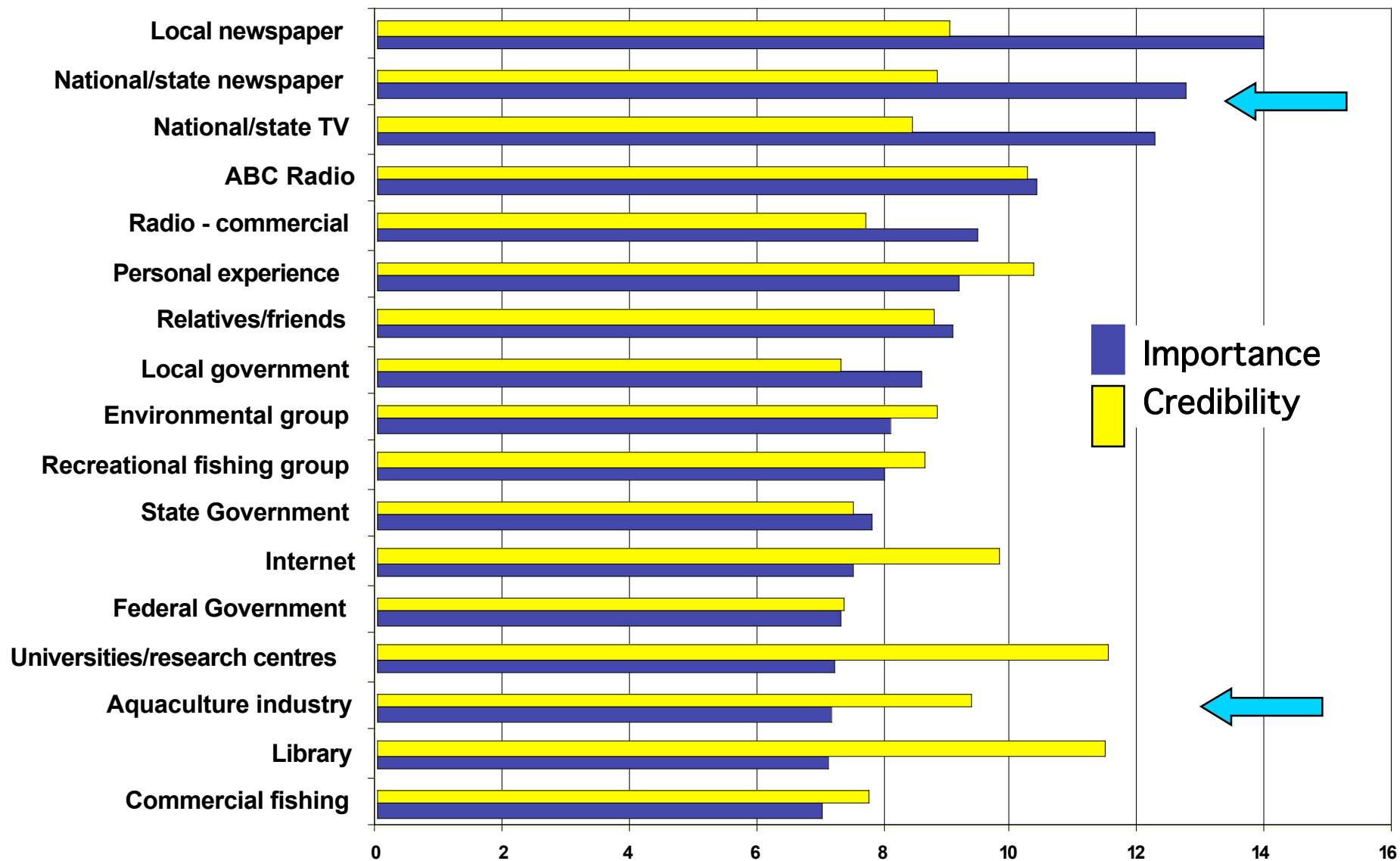
Knowledge & Awareness of Aquaculture

Several measures in mail survey

How much have you thought about aquaculture?



Information sources & credibility



Interviewees: Working w/ different interests

- ✓ **More timely, inclusive & deliberative dialogues to build trust & meet range of needs/interests**
- ✓ **Challenge of inter & intra-governmental communication, coordination**
- ✓ **Greater transparency re: governmental decisions**
- ✓ **More, clearer information on different topics**
- ✓ **Industry liaison/extension services**



Implications

- ***'The'* community does not exist**
- **Support for aquaculture & environmental protection**
- ***'More'* information is not always *'better'***
- **Perceptions drive reality**
- **Mixed opinions suggests need for layered approach to *'communications'***



Acknowledgements



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BRS Seminar Next Week – Friday 27 February

Investing in change in Natural Resource Management

**Findings from the TARGET project in the
Central West of NSW**

**Lester Lynch – Dept. of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural resources
Allan Curtis - BRS**

□

11:00am - 12:00noon, Friday 27 February 2004

EBB Conference Centre (in the courtyard)
Edmund Barton Building
Kings Avenue, Canberra