



## Survey Results

# Community Attitudes to Fireworks

Explosives Inspectorate

2020 | Version 1.1

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## The Survey

Fireworks in Queensland have been regulated since 2003 by means of legislation and the referenced Queensland Code of Practice - Control of Outdoor Fireworks Displays (the Code), which set the minimum safety standards and provides guidelines for licensed fireworks contractors and operators. In 2019 work commenced on updating the Code, and consultation commenced with the fireworks industry, government agencies and the community.

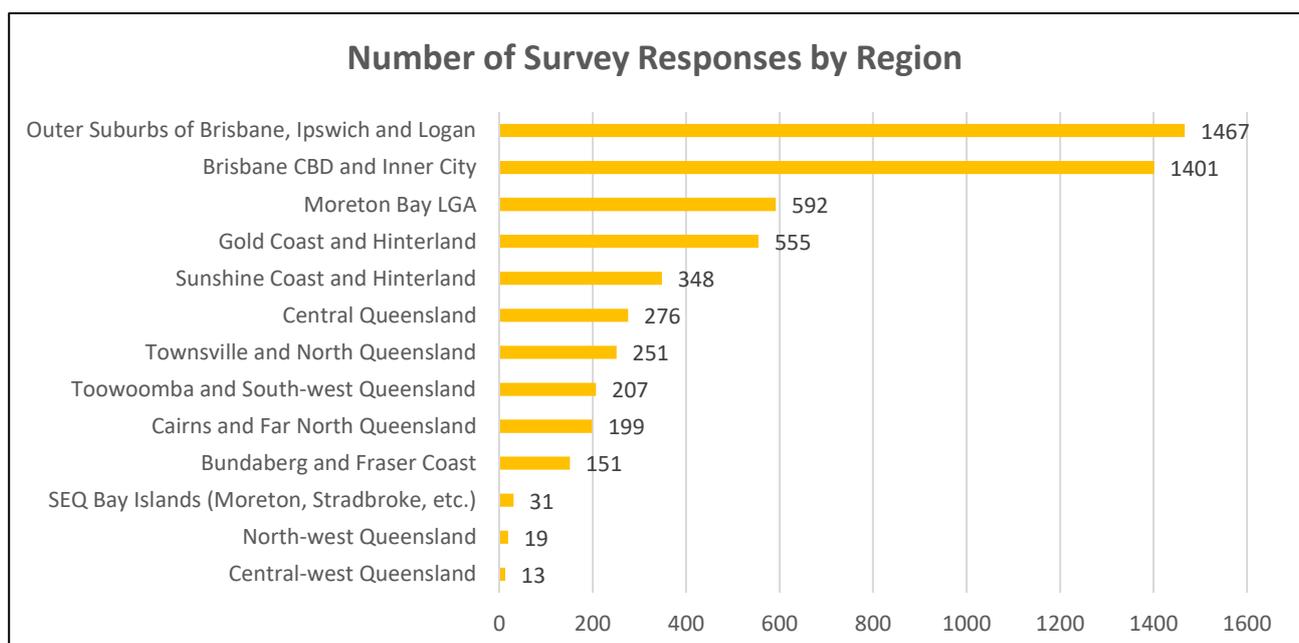
Earlier this year, a public survey was initiated to gauge community attitudes towards fireworks, and to provide community input to factors in the Code around the conduct of fireworks displays.

The survey was open during the period 19th May to 7th June and was publicised via the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy's (DNRME) Facebook page. The transition from Resources Safety and Health division of DNRME to the new statutory body Resources Safety and Health Queensland, and the impact of COVID-19 has delayed the publication of the survey results.

An analysis is presented in the attached report.

## Responses

5510 responses were received and a further 733 comments were made directly on Facebook. Approximately 10% (512) of respondents requested to be informed of further progress with the review of the Code of Practice. .



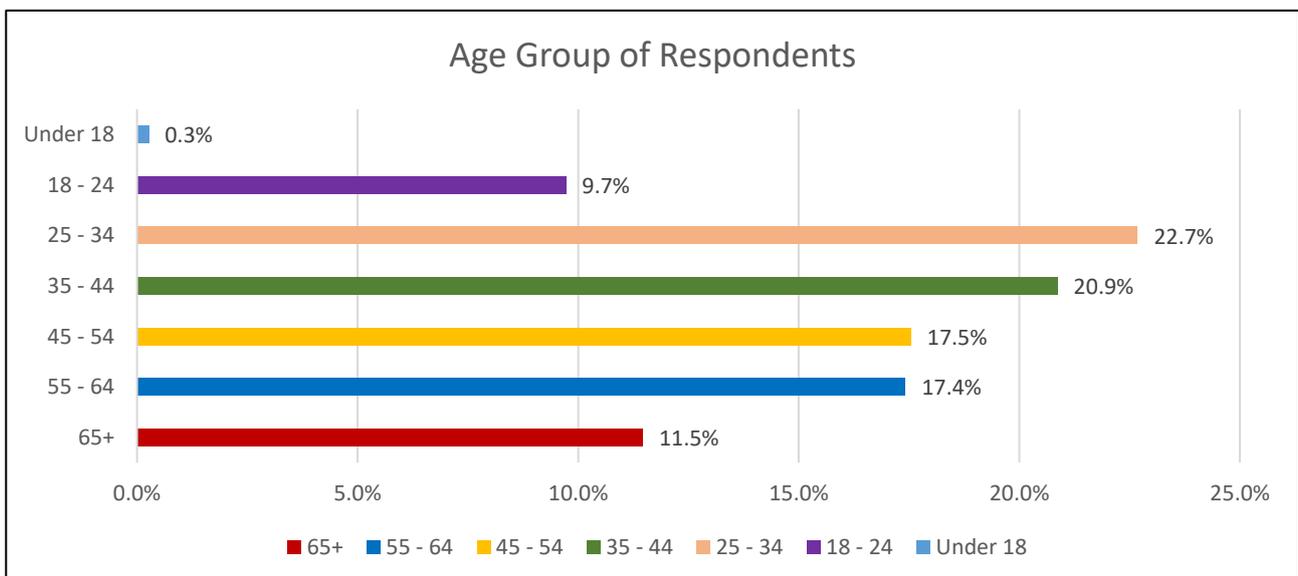
The distribution of responses correlates well with the geographical distribution of population, and the historical distribution and number of fireworks displays. Of interest is the number of responses from the Moreton Bay, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions where population increases have been followed by increasing numbers of fireworks displays.

## Participation by Age of Survey Respondent

Q2 - Please select your age range

The greatest response (23%) was from the 25-34 year old group. Respondent numbers progressively reduced with increasing age to 11% of respondents in the 65+ bracket.

Within the four groupings from 25-64 years, the results were relatively evenly divided and constituted 78.5%.



Age Group	Response %	Responses
65+	11.5%	632
55 - 64	17.4%	960
45 - 54	17.5%	967
35 - 44	20.9%	1150
25 - 34	22.7%	1250
18 - 24	9.7%	536
Under 18	0.3%	15
		<b>5510</b>

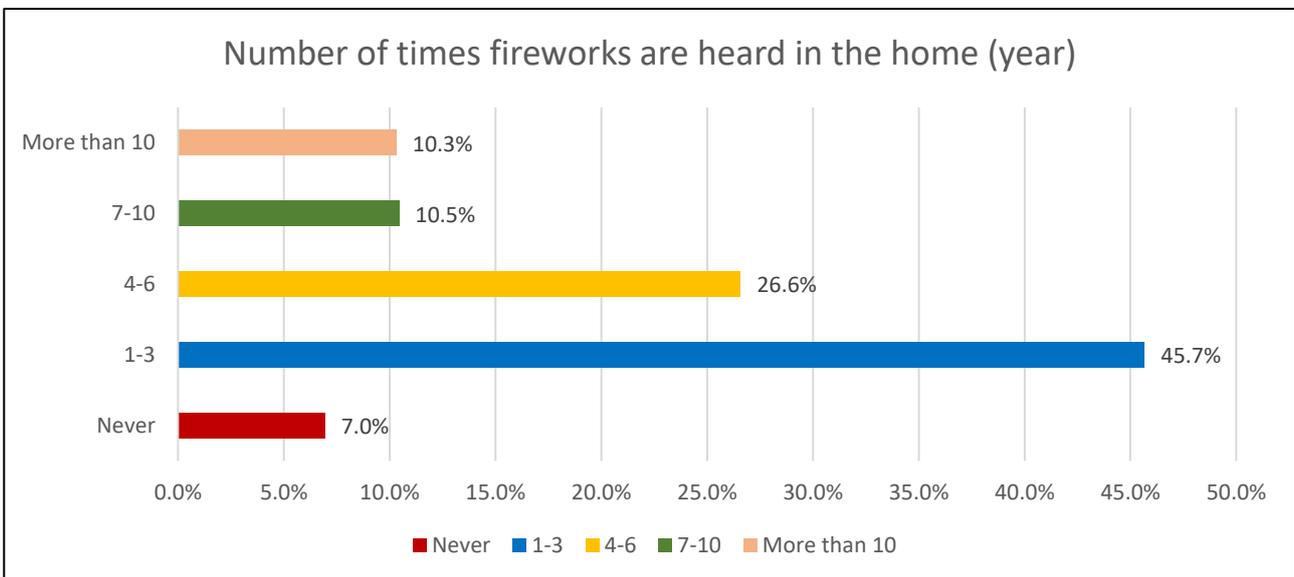
The responses to this question provide an indication that the impact of fireworks are experienced across the broad age range of respondents.

## Noise impacts on the community

### Q3 - How many times a year do you hear fireworks from your home?

The responses to questions 3 and 4 of the survey indicate that noise is one of the broad reaching impacts of fireworks. Nearly 50% of respondents indicated that they heard fireworks in their home every 2-3 months or more. More than 50% of respondents heard major events such as New Year’s Eve fireworks.

One of the areas of focus for the revised Code is the reduction of the impact of noise on the community. While this may not be possible for large public displays such as New Year’s Eve, there are potential opportunities for reducing the impact of “private” displays in densely populated areas.

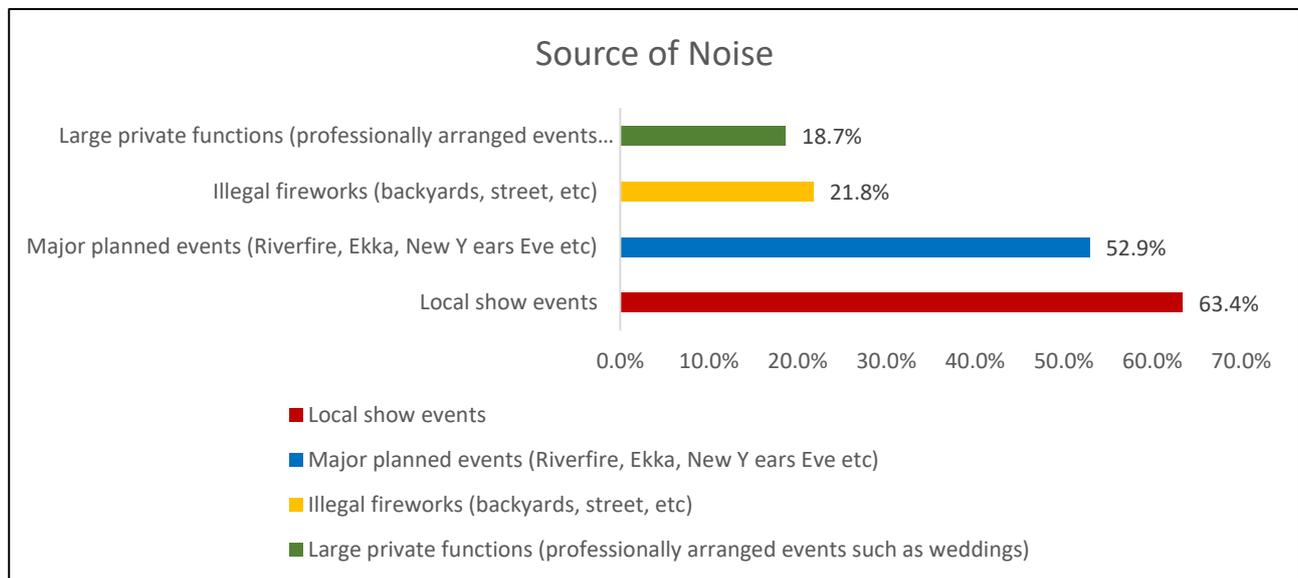


No. of times heard (year)	Response %	Responses
<b>Never</b>	7.0%	383
<b>1-3</b>	45.7%	2517
<b>4-6</b>	26.6%	1465
<b>7-10</b>	10.5%	576
<b>More than 10</b>	10.3%	569
		<b>5510</b>

### Q4 - Where do you believe the majority of fireworks you hear at home are held? (select up to 2 options)

Four choices of types of fireworks sources were offered to respondents. Unsurprisingly, most indicated that “local show events” were believed to be the source (noise diminishes over distance).

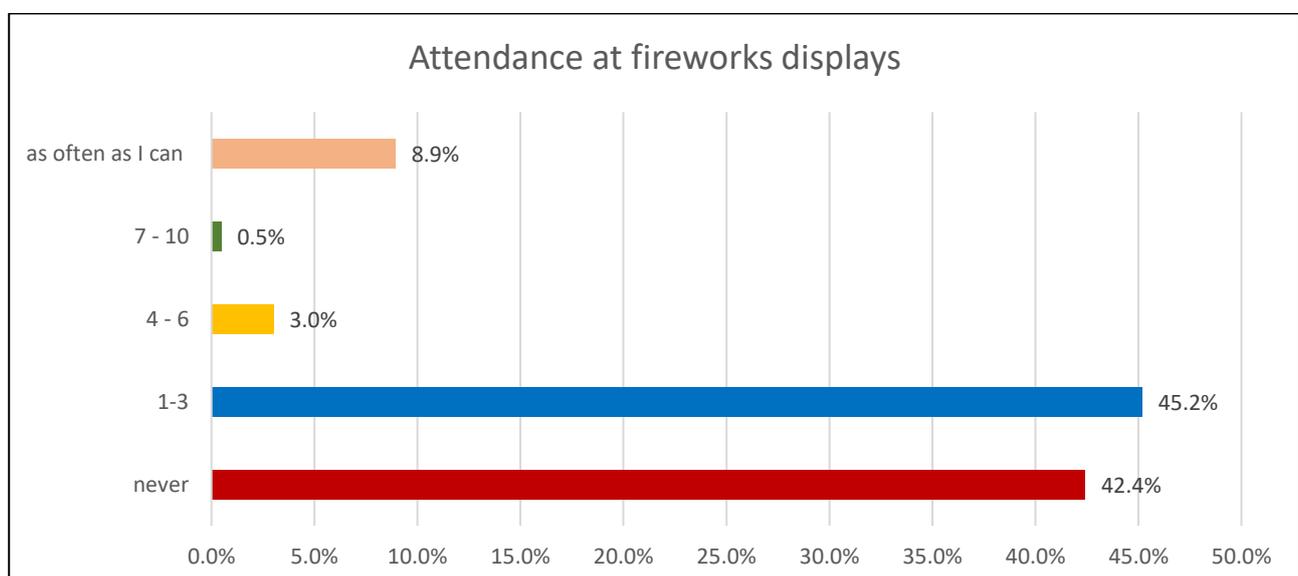
Of concern is that more than 20% of responses indicated that unplanned, potentially illegal use of fireworks was the source. This indicates an area in which the regulator is taking more concerted action.



Source of Noise	Response %	Responses
Local show events	63.4%	3,494
Major planned events (Riverfire, Ekka, New Years Eve etc)	52.9%	2,917
Illegal fireworks (backyards, street, etc)	21.8%	1,200
Large private functions (professionally arranged events such as weddings)	18.7%	1,029
		<b>5510</b>

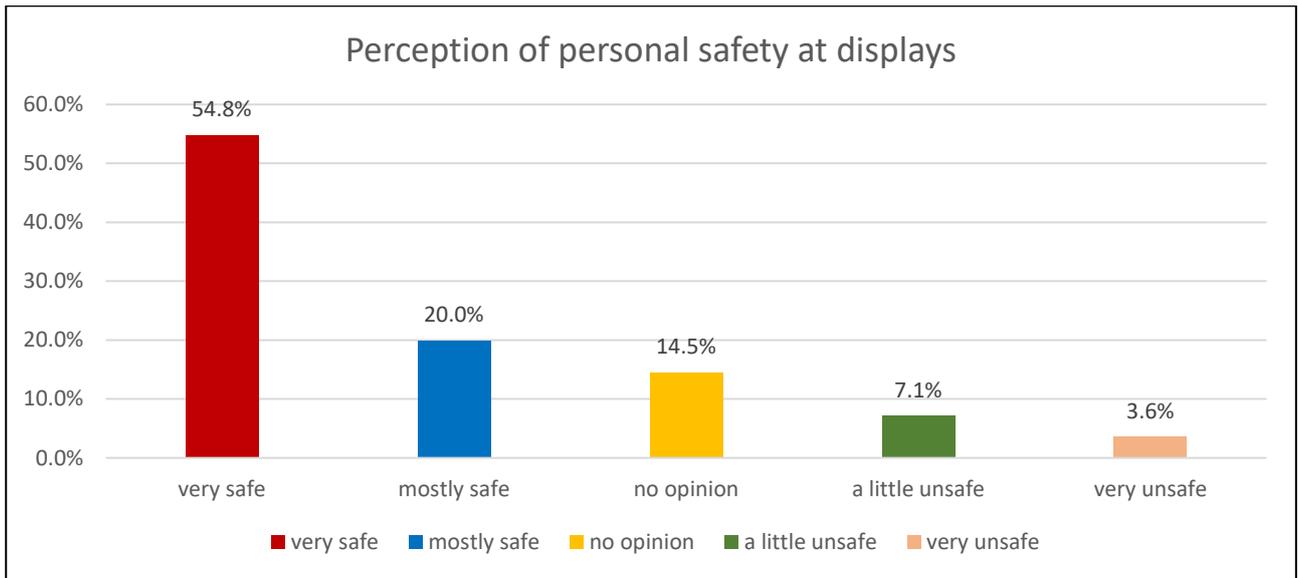
## Participation and Experience

Q5 - How often do you attend planned fireworks displays in a year?



Attendance at Displays	Response %	Responses
Never	42.4%	2,337
1-3	45.2%	2,489
4-6	3.0%	166
7-10	0.5%	26
As often as I can	8.9%	492
		<b>5510</b>

Q6 - Generally , how safe do you feel at planned fireworks displays?



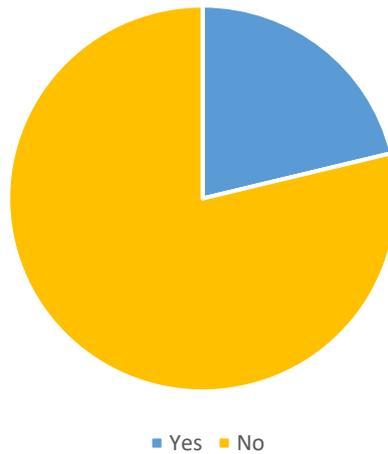
The community perception of safety is critical to the ongoing social licence of the fireworks industry in Queensland. People attend fireworks displays and if safety is perceived to be compromised, attendance may potentially decline.

Perception of Safety at Displays	Response %	Responses
very safe	54.8%	3,022
mostly safe	20.0%	1,100
no opinion	14.5%	800
a little unsafe	7.1%	392
very unsafe	3.6%	196
		<b>5510</b>

Q7 - Have you attended 'close proximity' displays (such as internal displays in theatres) and been unprepared for some of the impacts related to smoke, noise or strobing lights?

This question sought responses that would provide an indication as to whether displays designed to have lesser impacts would be more acceptable to the community in settings where the proximity to the effects was closer.

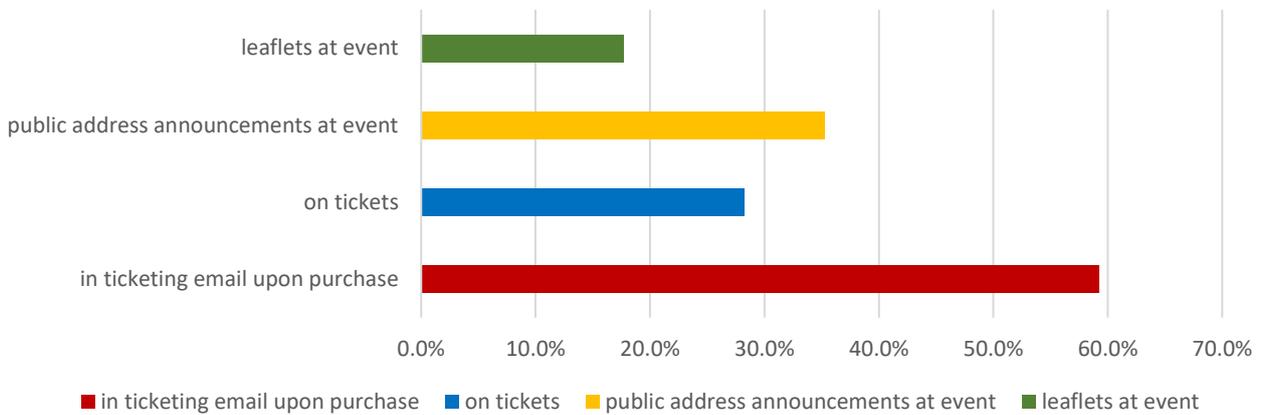
### Close proximity displays - experience of unexpected impacts



Unexpected impact experienceds – close proximity display	Response %	Responses
<b>Yes</b>	21.2%	1,161
<b>No</b>	78.8%	4,309
		<b>5,470</b>

### Q8 - How and when would you have liked to receive health information about these impacts?

#### Method and timing of notification of health aspects of unexpected impacts

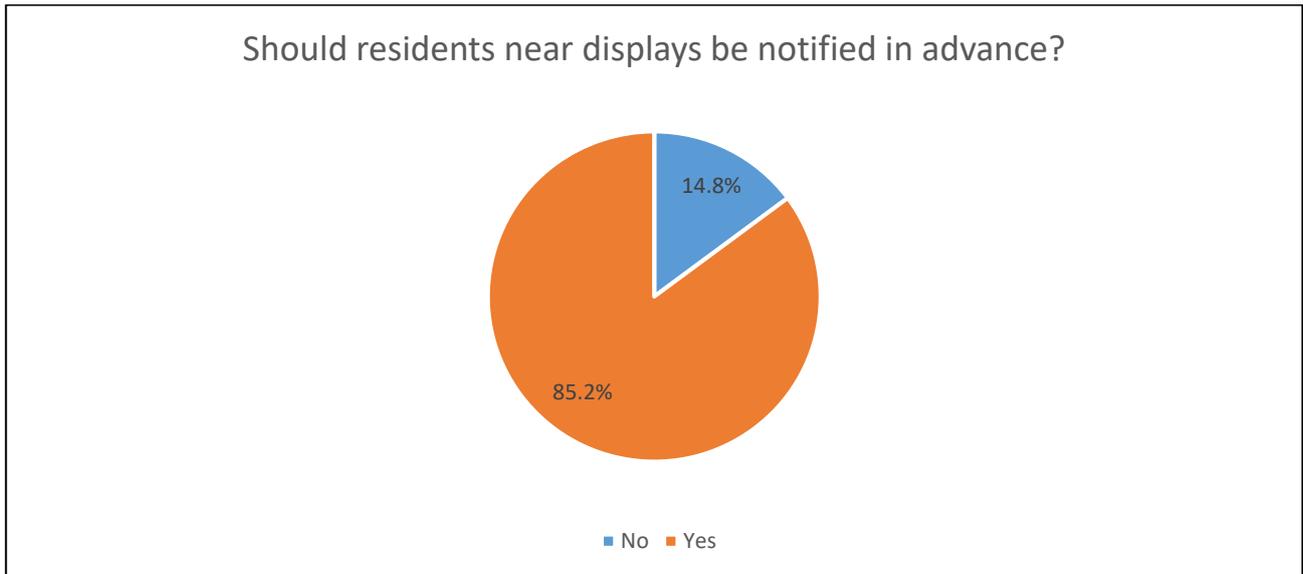


Method and timing of notification of health information	Response %	Responses
<b>in ticketing email upon purchase</b>	59.3%	677
<b>on tickets</b>	28.3%	323
<b>public address announcements at event</b>	35.3%	403
<b>leaflets at event</b>	17.7%	202
		<b>1,605</b>

## Notification of displays

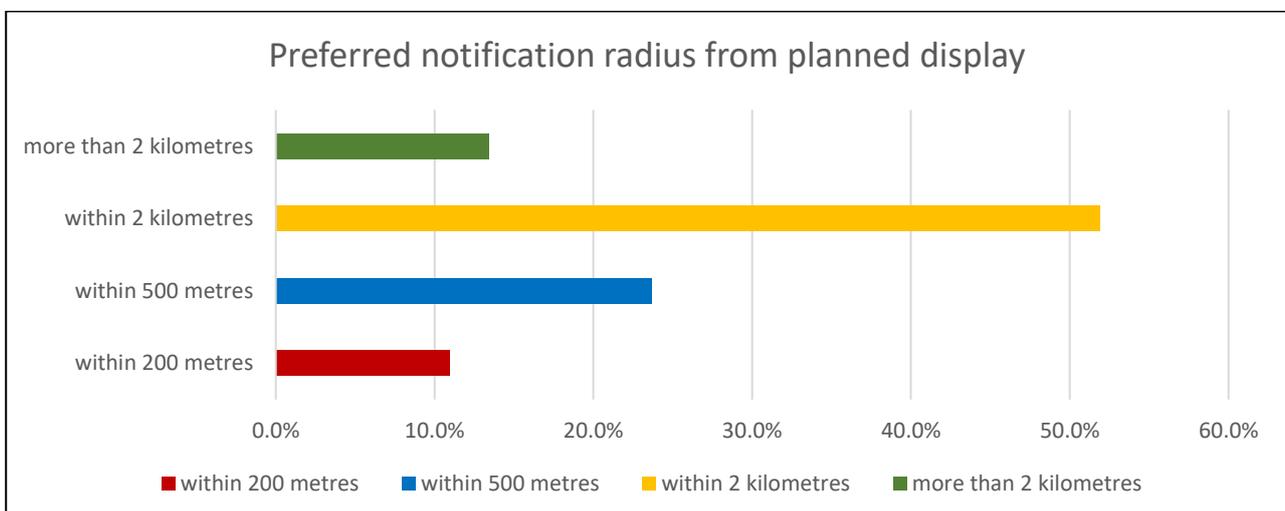
The questions on notification of displays were intended to provide an indication of whether the community believes current notification requirements are adequate and whether improvement opportunities exist.

Q9 - Where planned fireworks displays are to be held near residential areas, do you think residents should be notified in advance?



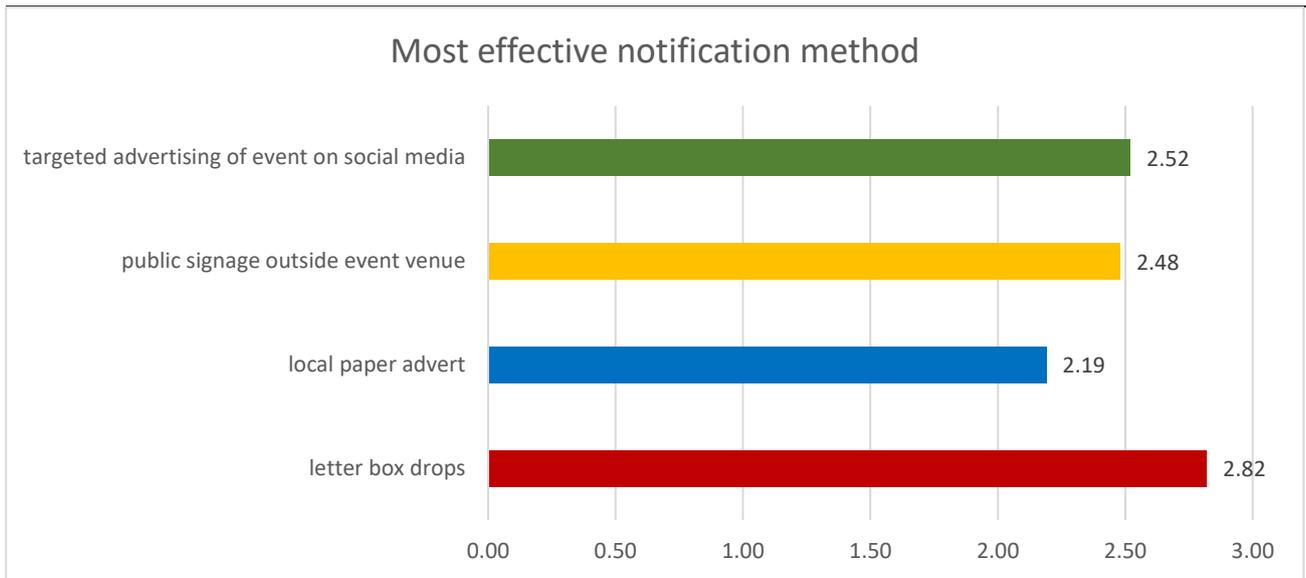
Advance notification of displays to nearby residents	Response %	Responses
Yes	14.8%	805
No	85.2%	4,626
		5,431

Q10 - The current requirements are for notifications to be issued within 200m of the event. Please select your preferred notification radius for a legal fireworks display.



Preferred notification radius from planned display	Response %	Responses
within 200 metres	11.0%	494
within 500 metres	23.7%	1,066
within 2 kilometres	51.9%	2,334
more than 2 kilometres	13.4%	605
		<b>4,499</b>

Q11 - Of the options below, please rank them from 1 to 4 in the order you believe would be the most effective to notify residents (4 being the most effective, 1 the least).



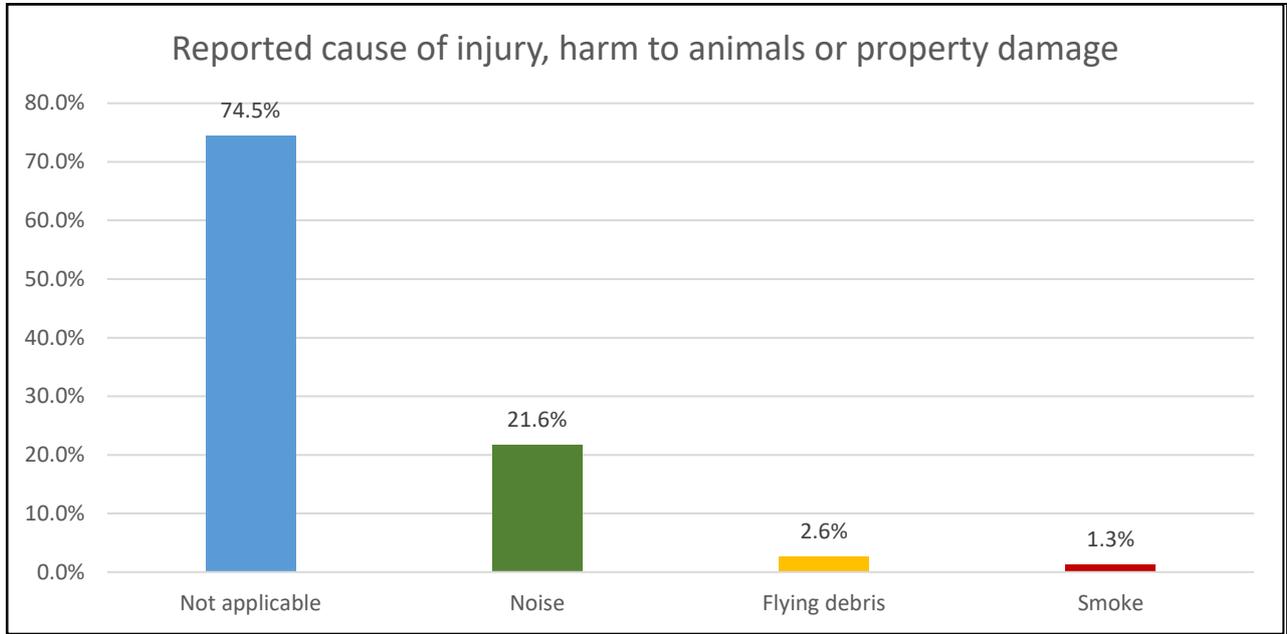
Ranking of method of notification of planned display	Score
letter box drops	2.82
local paper advert	2.19
public signage outside event venue	2.48
targeted advertising of event on social media	2.52

The answers to Q9-11 are significant because they provide a strong indication that the community believes that the radius of notification should be increased and that all methods of notification are effective in their own right. Interestingly, letterbox drops are seen as a more effective means of notification. This presents difficulties for the fireworks contractor in many urban situations where a letterbox drop may involve more than 5000 people.

Alternative means of notification are currently being examined including notifications through the use of local government and other community social media channels. It is noteworthy that these methods scored second on the community's ranking of most effective notification means.

## Personal injury, harm to animals and property damage

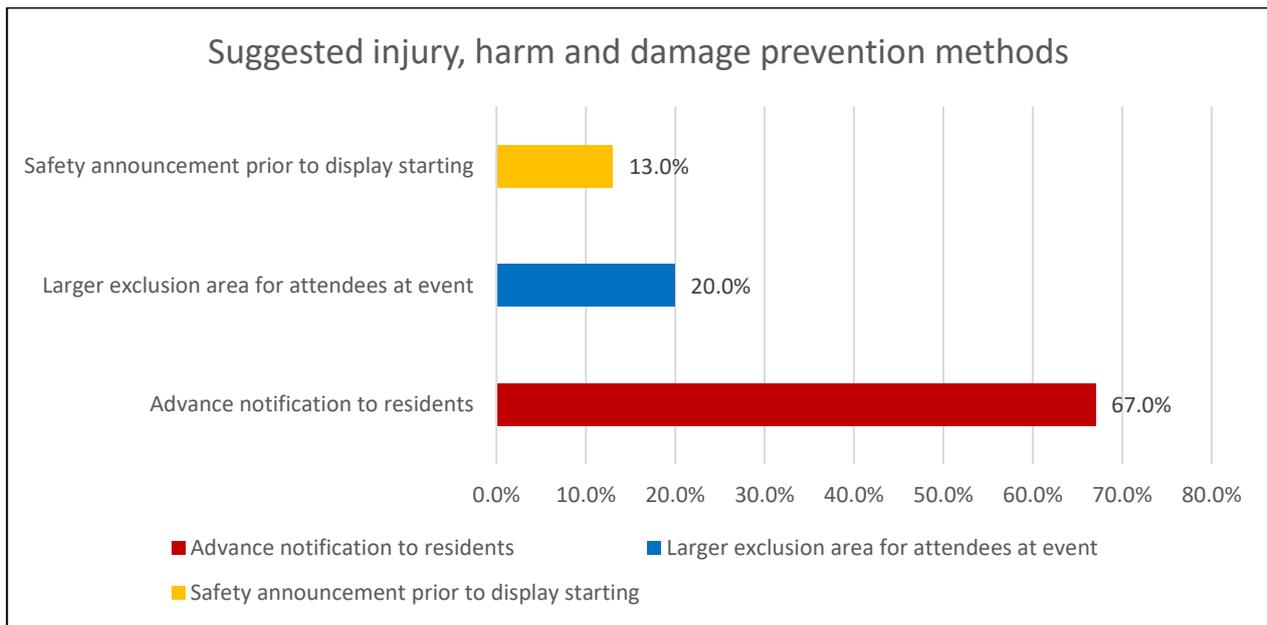
Q12 - If you have experienced an injury to yourself or your animals (pets or farmed animals), or damage to property as a result of planned fireworks displays, please select what you believe caused the issue.



Injury, harm to animals or property damage	Response %	Responses
<b>Not applicable</b>	74.5%	3,944
<b>Noise</b>	21.6%	1,146
<b>Flying debris</b>	2.6%	138
<b>Smoke</b>	1.3%	67
		<b>5,295</b>

Of the approximately 25% of respondents reporting adverse physical effects from fireworks, the majority nominated noise as the principal cause. It is significant that 138 people reported exposure to flying debris during displays held in Queensland.

Q13 - Please select which of the following could have prevented the issue?



Injury, harm to animals or property damage	Response %	Responses
<b>Advance notification to residents</b>	67.0%	853
<b>Larger exclusion area for attendees at event</b>	20.0%	254
<b>Safety announcement prior to display starting</b>	13.0%	166
		<b>1,273</b>

In order to prevent adverse physical effects from fireworks, the majority of respondents elected advanced notification as the preferred prevention arrangement. This ties in with the earlier responses that notification of displays is very important.

20% of respondents believed that a larger exclusion zone would be effective. This is far more than were affected by noise or flying debris in Q.12. Overall, these responses correlate with the generally held belief that the most significant, adverse effect from fireworks for the community, is noise.