



Council's wind
farm policy
position:
Community
research

Prepared for Moyne Shire Council

June 2022



Contents

<u>Background, objectives and methodology</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Executive summary</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Detailed findings</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Perceptions of wind farms</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Support for wind farms in the Shire</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Response to Council's revised position</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Appendix: Demographics</u>	<u>33</u>



Background, objectives and methodology



Background and research objectives

Moyne Shire is a major location for wind farm development in Victoria. This is due to the strong and steady winds, low population density and the location of electricity infrastructure such as large transmission lines and terminal stations.

To date, Council's position has been to oppose further development of wind farms in the Shire unless the State Government implements key recommendations of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner. Council is looking to reset its position, taking into account community views as part of the process.

Council has mechanisms for community feedback. It is important to hear from those residents who have an interest in Council's position on certain matters – this could include those with a genuine, general interest; those who are fully supportive of the further development of wind farms; and those who are vehemently opposed. Specifically, feedback often comes from those who have strong views.

To complement its community engagement activities, Moyne Shire Council commissioned JWS Research to undertake independent market research and obtain a representative view of community opinion.

The research will be used as a key input into strategic decisions around Council's position, taking into account the concerns of the community at large.

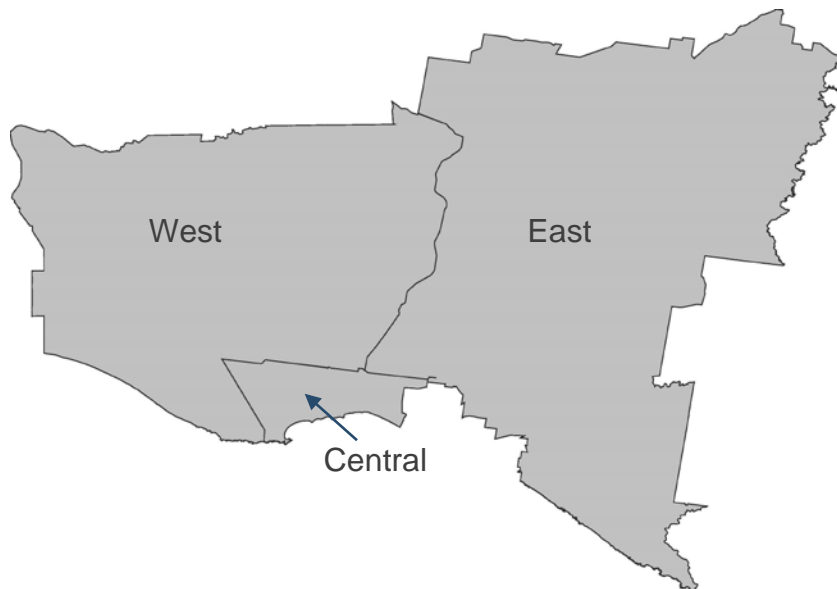
Research objectives

The objectives of the community research are to:

- Understand views of wind farms in the Moyne Shire (and whether there is a different view of onshore versus offshore wind farms).
- The level of support for the continued construction of wind farms in Moyne Shire.
- Measure community awareness and attitudes toward Council's revised policy position.
- Understand perceptions of the various elements of the policy position.
- Identify the elements driving support for or opposition to Council's policy position.
- Identify what further information is needed to improve awareness of wind farm development and Council's wind farm position.

Research methodology

Quantitative research: CATI survey



n=400 residents of Moyne Shire aged 18 years and over.

- Administered via Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI).
- Survey quotas on age, gender and location (Central, East and West), and weighting applied at the analysis stage to actual age/gender/location proportions based on ABS census data.
- The maximum margin of error on the total sample of n=400 is +/-4.8% at the 95% confidence level.
- Differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.
- 10 minutes in length.

Conducted 1st to the 12th June 2022.



Executive summary



Executive summary

Residents of Moyne Shire have favourable opinions of wind energy



Most Moyne Shire residents are favourable toward wind as an energy source (62% favourable, including 38% who are *strongly* favourable).

- In contrast, favourability of solar is much higher (81%). Wind is clearly preferred over coal (40% favourable).

There are, however, differences by region.

- Residents in the Central region (79%) have significantly higher levels of favourability toward wind energy.
- Those in the East region have significantly lower levels of favourability (50%) – noting that even here, the proportion who are favourable outweigh those who are unfavourable (35%).
- Residents in the West region (63% favourable) align with the average. Interestingly, this region has the highest proportion of residents who claim to live within five kilometres of a current or planned wind farm (40%).

In general, residents are positive about wind farms in the Shire

The majority of residents (54%) have a positive view toward wind farms in the Moyne Shire, and a further 17% are neutral. The remaining 29% feel negative about wind farms in Moyne Shire.

- Residents in the East region are most divided with 43% feeling positive about wind farms in Moyne Shire, and an equal proportion (43%) feeling negative.



When contrasting onshore and offshore wind farms, residents are more favourable toward offshore wind farms (63%) than onshore wind farms (56%). Again, results differ by region.

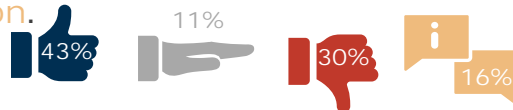
- Residents in the Central and West regions are more favourable toward onshore wind farms than those offshore.
- The converse is true for East region residents and views are more divergent – 65% are favourable toward offshore wind farms, compared to 41% favourable toward onshore wind farms.

Executive summary

Support for the continued construction of wind farms outweighs opposition

Prior to learning about Council's revised position on wind farms, more than two in five residents (43%) support the continued construction of wind farms in Moyne, 11% are neutral.

Three in 10 residents (30%) oppose more wind farms. The remainder (16%) would like more information.



Review of the position of residents demonstrate that there is not majority support for the continued construction of wind farms in the shire – at 43%, support falls just short of the majority. At the same time, opposition is well below majority (30%), meaning that most people do not oppose the continued construction of wind farms in the Shire.

- Opposition is highest among those in the East (42%).

16% of respondents would like more information to assist in forming their view. Key information-needs include:

- where future wind turbines will be located; and
- the impacts on the land, environment, wildlife and people.

There is support for Council's revised position on wind farms

Most residents (59%) are not aware of Council's current position on wind farm development in the region.

Following a brief description of Council's revised position:

More than two in five residents (44%) offer support for Council's revised position, 13% are neutral.

Opposition (12%) significantly reduces once Council's revised position is described. Nevertheless, there is *an increase in the need for more information* with 28% of respondents now stating a need for more information about council's wind farm position before they could for a view..



Residents in the East region, who had high levels of opposition to the continued construction of wind farms in the region, are in line with the rest of the region when it comes to Council's revised position. Their level of opposition is reduced to 10%.



Considerations

There is general support for Council's revised position

Many residents are unaware of Council's current position on wind farm development in the region and there would likely be little need to revisit this. Support for Council's revised position outweighs opposition. Information provision will be key to facilitate increased appreciation of the issues.

Council should continue to advocate for community benefits

There are high levels of agreement with considerations in respect to Council's position. Moyne Shire residents believe that they should benefit from the increasing number of wind farms in the region, including through discounted power and financial compensation for those within close proximity.

A need for information to assist in forming a view

A quarter of residents claim that they would like more information in order to be able to form a view on Council's revised position. There is a need for information to be provided to improve understanding of Council's position.

Pay particular attention to residents in the East region

A large segment of East region residents (although not the majority) are negative about wind farms in the Shire and do not support the continued construction of these. However, on hearing of Council's revised position, opposition reduces and openness to hearing more is evident.

Information provision is key

Residents are interested in where the new turbines will be located and the impacts of these on the environment and the community. Decommissioning of the turbines is also an area of concern and this information should be made available. Of higher priority are the community benefits and Council's advocacy efforts on its behalf.



Detailed findings



Perceptions of wind farms



Section summary: Perceptions of wind farms

Solar, followed by wind, are the favoured energy sources

Moyne Shire residents have high levels of favourability toward solar as an energy source (81% favourable, including 57% who are *strongly* favourable). This is followed by wind with 62% of residents favourable toward this energy source, far outweighing the 24% who are unfavourable. Residents in the East region (50%) are significantly less favourable than average toward wind as an energy source.

On balance, residents are more positive than negative about wind farms in the Shire

More than half of residents (54%) have a positive view toward wind farms in the Moyne Shire – this far outweighs the 29% of residents who have a negative view. Residents in the East region are divided in their opinion – 43% are positive toward wind farms in the Shire, but the same proportion (43%) feel negative.

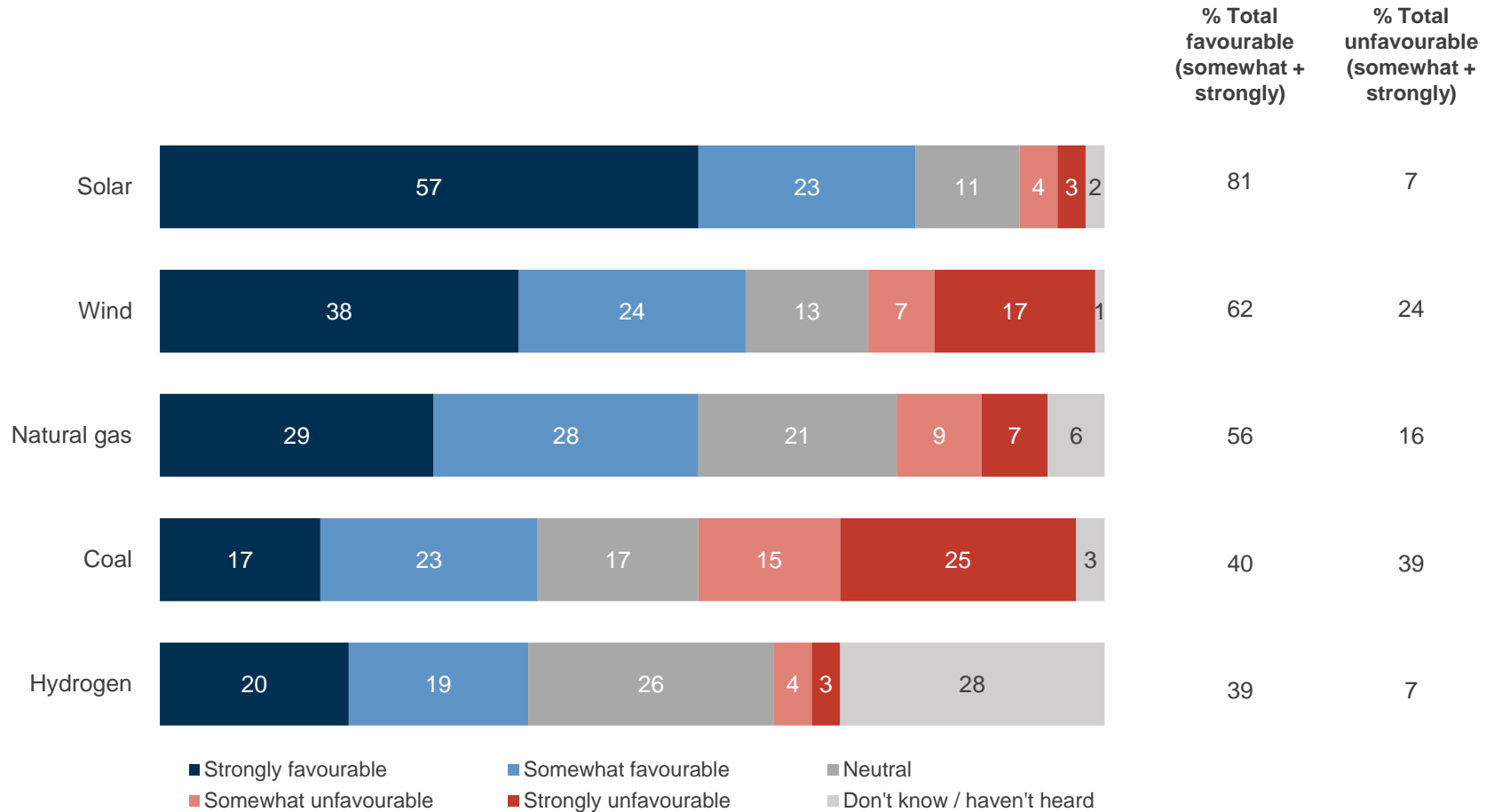
Views of offshore versus onshore wind farms differ by region

Across each of the three regions, residents are much more favourable (63%) than unfavourable (15%) toward offshore wind farms. When contrasted with onshore wind farms, residents in the Central and West regions are more favourable toward onshore wind farms than those offshore. The converse is true for East region residents.

Favourability is strongest toward solar as a fuel and an energy source, followed by wind



Favourability of fuel and energy sources (%)

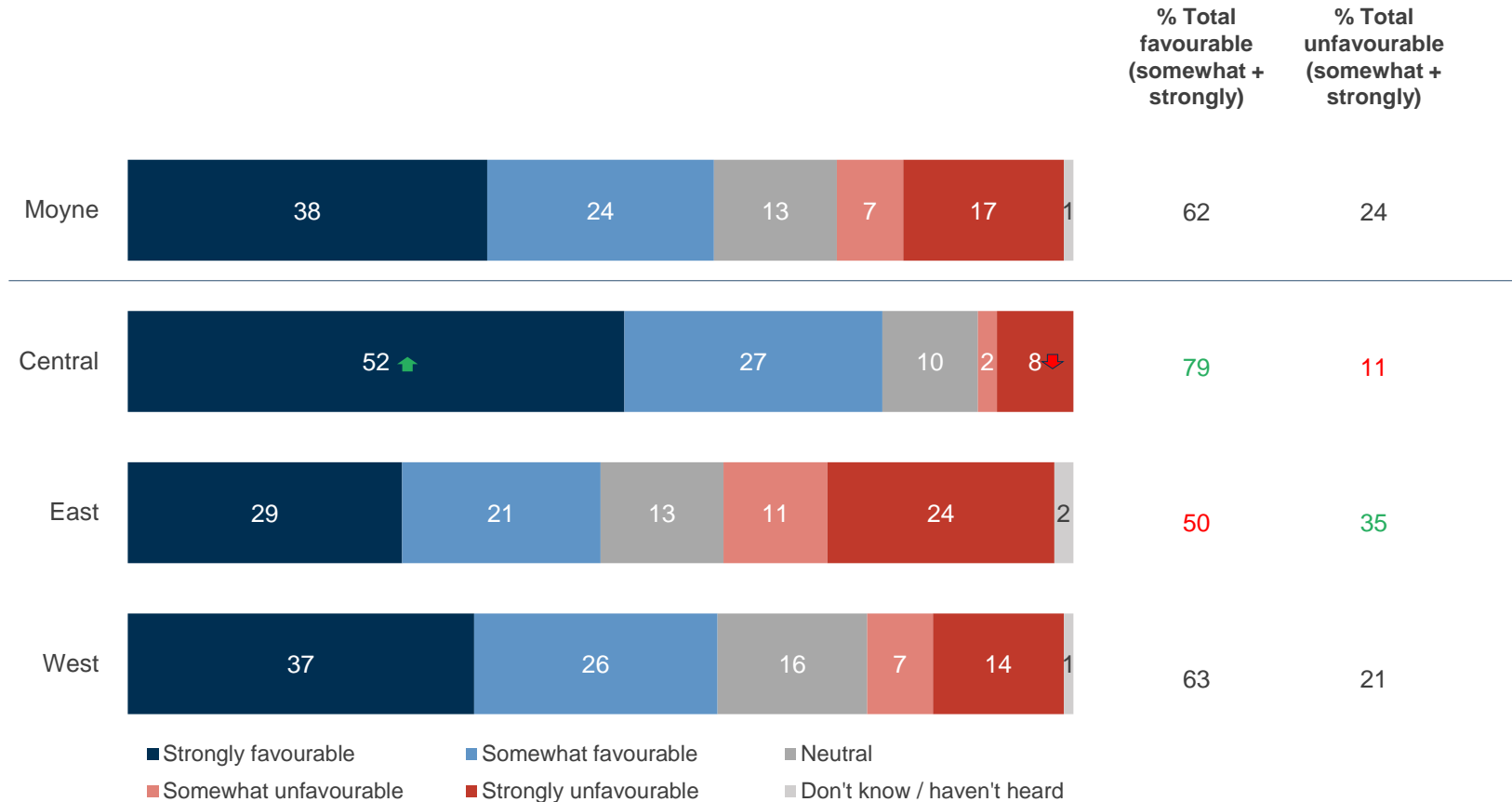


Q2. I'm going to start by reading out some fuel and energy sources. Taking into account the use of each source, e.g. for transport, electricity or heating for households, business and industry, please tell me whether you have a favourable or unfavourable impression of each.
Base: All respondents (n=400).

Residents in the east have lower than average levels of favourability toward wind energy



Favourability toward wind as an energy source by location (%)



Significantly higher ↑ / lower ↓ than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

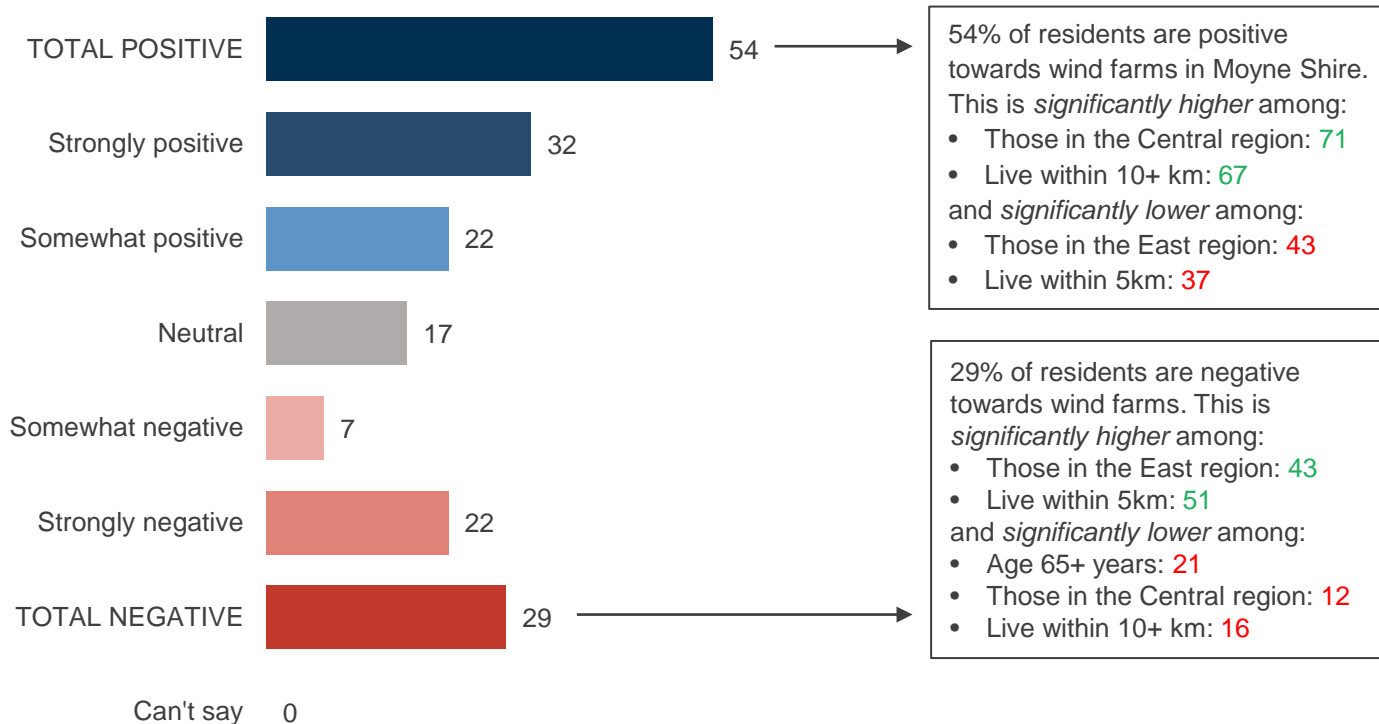
Q2. I'm going to start by reading out some fuel and energy sources. Taking into account the use of each source, e.g. for transport, electricity or heating for households, business and industry, please tell me whether you have a favourable or unfavourable impression of each.

Base: All respondents (n=400).

On balance, residents are more positive than negative toward wind farms in the Moyne Shire



View on wind farms in the Moyne Shire (%)



Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

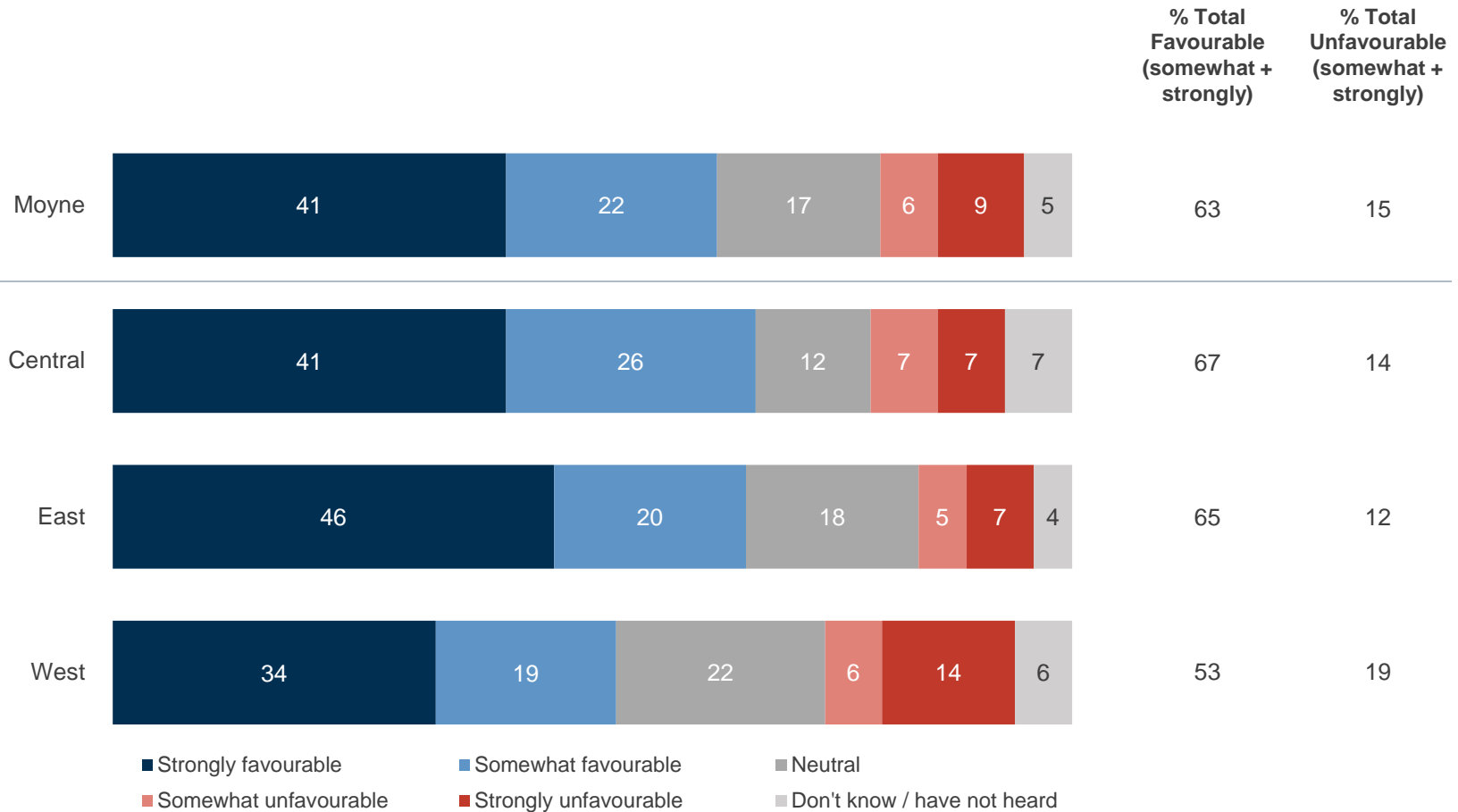
Q3. In general, do you have a positive, neutral or negative view of wind farms in the Moyne Shire? Is that strongly or somewhat positive/negative?

Base: All respondents (n=400).

When it comes to offshore wind farms, favourability does not differ significantly by location



Favourability towards offshore wind farms (%)

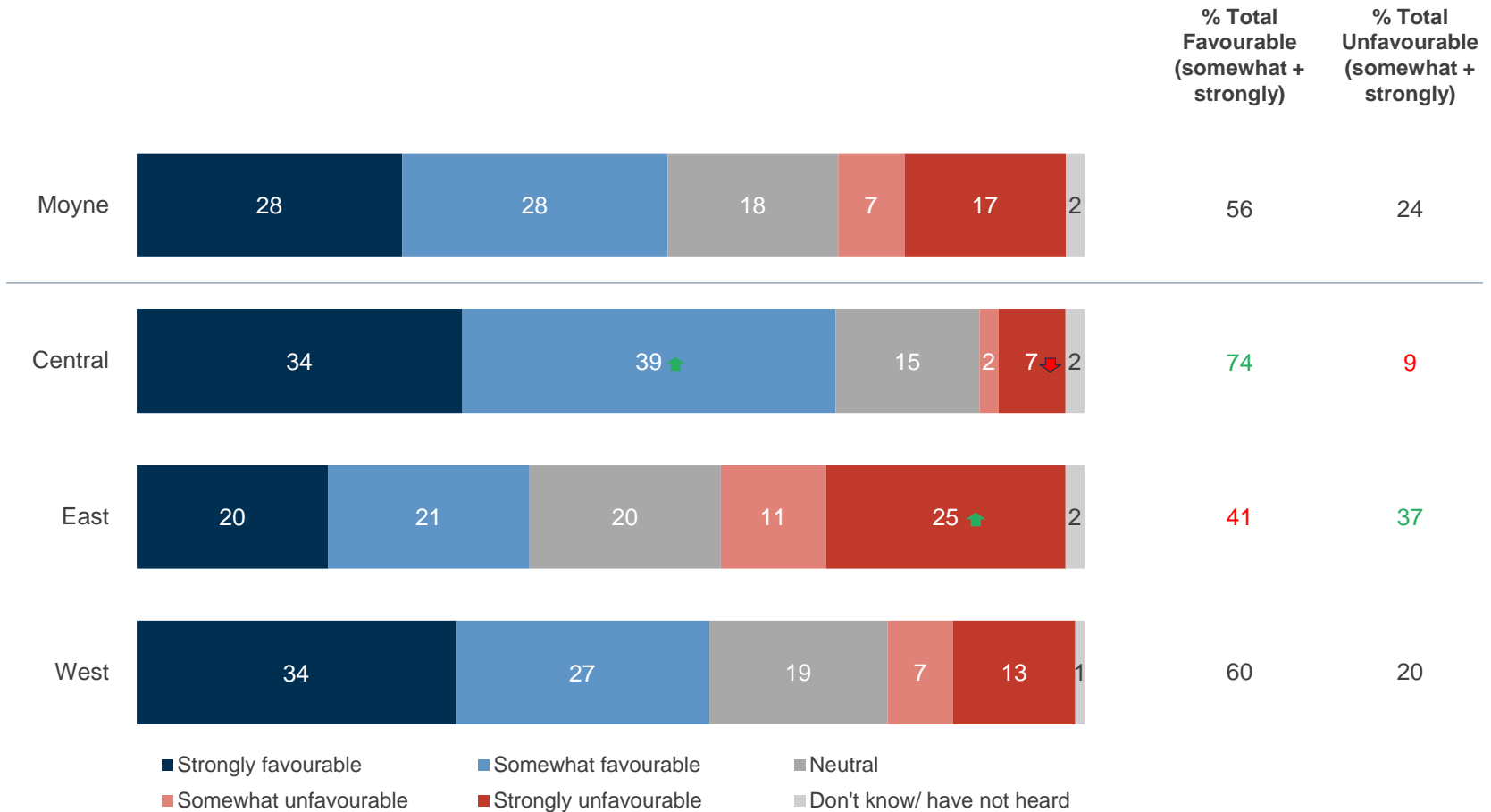


Q13. Finally, wind farms can be built onshore meaning they are on the land or offshore at sea. Please tell me whether you have a favourable or unfavourable impression of each.
 Base: All respondents (n=400).

Favourability toward onshore wind farms is lower than for offshore, and differs by location



Favourability towards onshore wind farms (%)



Significantly higher ▲ / lower ▼ than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

Q13. Finally, wind farms can be built onshore meaning they are on the land or offshore at sea. Please tell me whether you have a favourable or unfavourable impression of each.

Base: All respondents (n=400).



Support for wind
farms in the
Shire



Section summary: Support for wind farms in the Shire

The majority of residents claim awareness of the prevalence of wind turbines

Six in ten Moyne Shire residents (59%) claim to be ‘definitely’ (43%) or ‘maybe’ (16%) aware of the number of existing and planned wind turbines in the region. Residents in the West region (71%) have a significantly higher than average claimed level of awareness.

There is high, but less than majority support for more wind farms in Moyne Shire

Four in ten residents (43%) support the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire. Support is significantly higher (and reaches majority) among residents in the Central region (55%). Those who support the continued construction of wind farms do so because they believe renewable energy is the way of the future and the Shire presents an appropriate location.

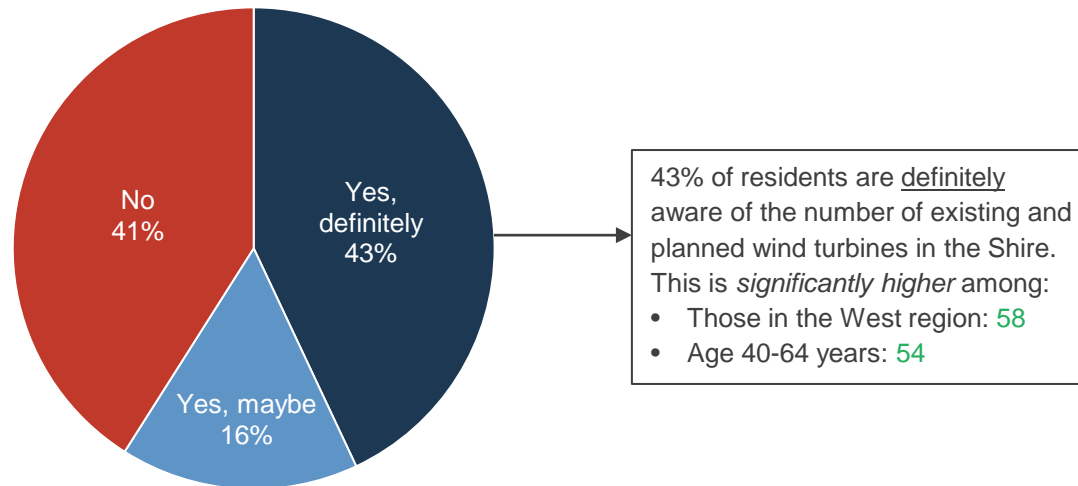
There is some opposition to the continued construction of wind farms

Three in 10 residents (30%) oppose the continued construction of wind farms in the Shire. Opposition is significantly higher among residents in the East region (42%) and outweighs support (30%). Reasons for opposing more wind farms are varied and include the impact on the visual amenity and people’s health, the noise, as well as concerns about whether it is an efficient form of energy generation.

More than half of residents claim they are aware of the number of wind turbines in the Shire



Awareness of the number of existing and planned wind turbines in the Moyne Shire (%)



43% of residents are definitely aware of the number of existing and planned wind turbines in the Shire. This is *significantly higher* among:

- Those in the West region: **58**
- Age 40-64 years: **54**

In total, **59%** of Moyne Shire residents claim to be aware (either definitely or maybe) of the number of existing and planned wind turbines in the region. This is *significantly higher* among those in the West region (71%).

Significantly *higher* / *lower* than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

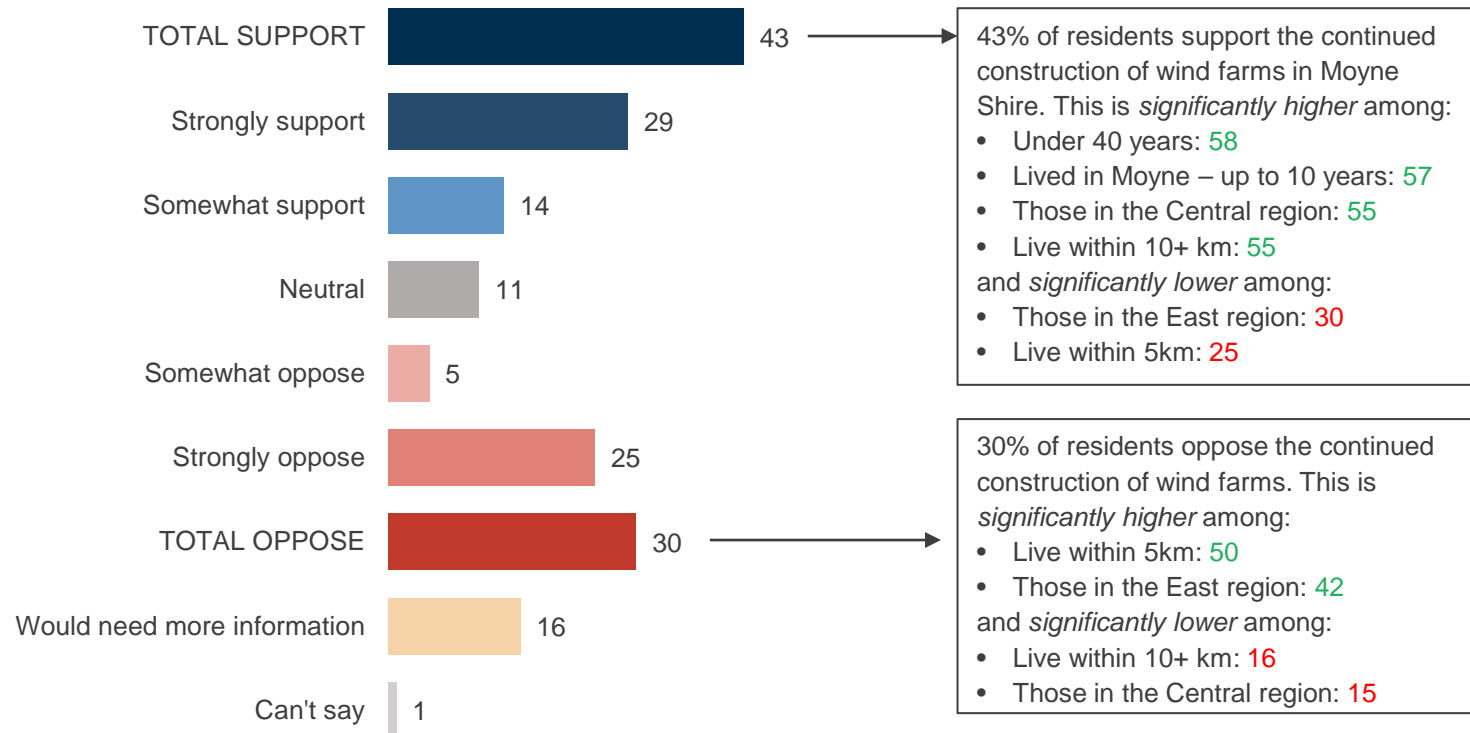
Q4. Moyne Shire currently hosts 310 wind turbines. Three wind farm permits are issued for another 95 turbines and there are four wind farm projects in the feasibility stage, which could result in more than 300 extra turbines being constructed. Before today, were you aware there are about this number of existing and planned wind turbines in the Moyne Shire?

Base: All respondents (n=400).

Support outweighs opposition among residents in the Central and West regions, but not in the East



Support towards continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire (%)



Significantly *higher* / *lower* than the total at the 95% confidence interval.

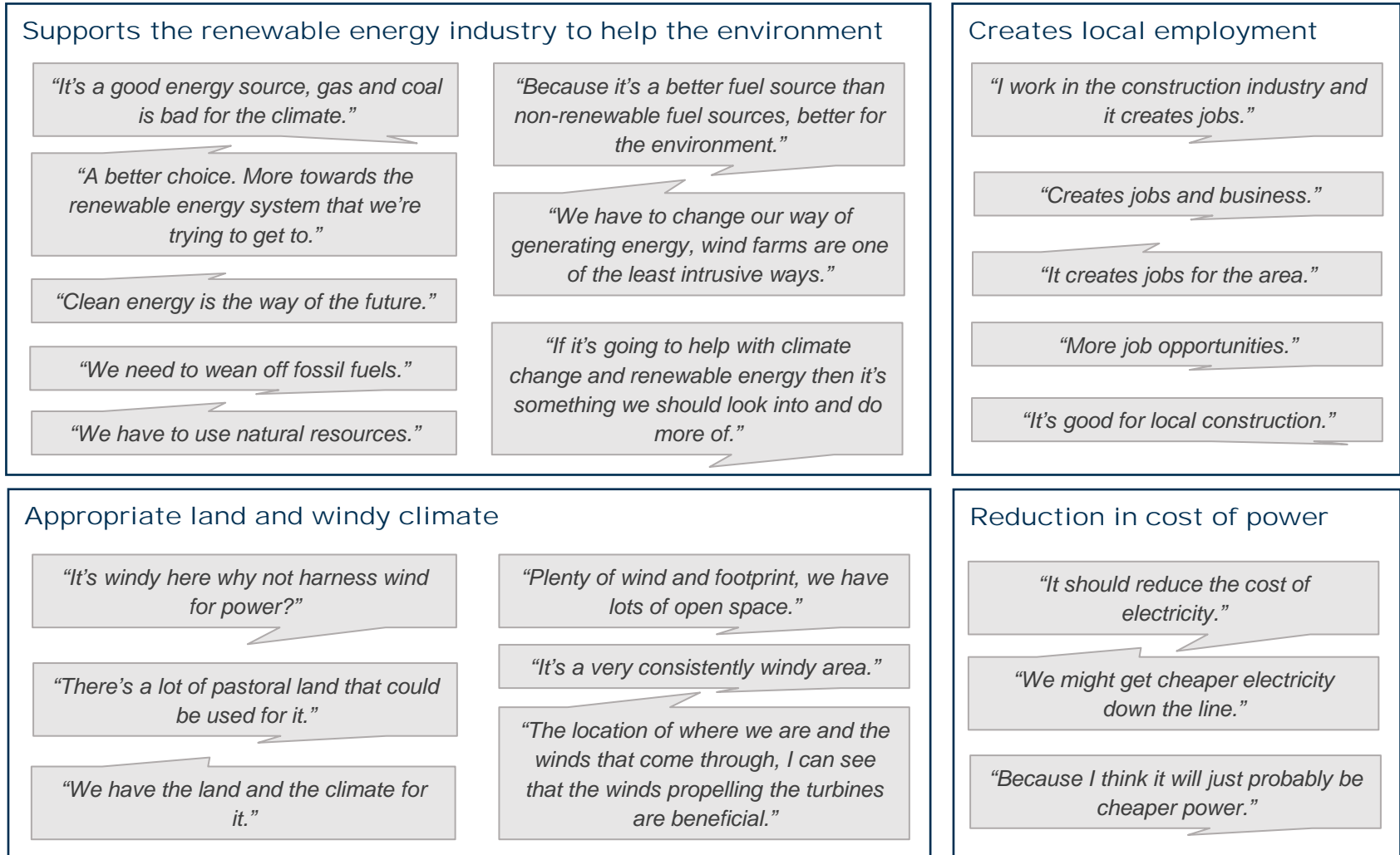
Q5. Do you support, oppose or are you neutral towards the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire, or would you need more information to decide?

Base: All respondents (n=400).

Support for wind farms is driven by perceptions of clean energy, the location, job creation and reduced power costs



Reasons for supporting the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire: 43% of residents Select verbatim comments



Those who oppose continued construction raise a number of concerns including aesthetics and efficiency



Reasons for opposing the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire: 30% of residents

Select verbatim comments

<p>Visually intrusive</p> <p><i>"It has ruined our beautiful landscape."</i></p> <p><i>"They are a blight on the landscape."</i></p> <p><i>"They are getting to be an eyesore."</i></p> <p><i>"I just think they are ugly, I think they look horrible."</i></p>	<p>Inefficiency of wind farms for energy</p> <p><i>"They only look like they are green but they are very inefficient."</i></p> <p><i>"They are not an efficient energy source and don't produce enough power for the land they take up."</i></p> <p><i>"They are not necessarily the most efficient form of energy production."</i></p>	<p>Health concerns, noise pollution</p> <p><i>"The noise from them, that's the reason I moved house last year (proposed windfarm in close proximity). We're worried about noise, sleep deprivation, sleep disturbance."</i></p> <p><i>"They flick the sunset, they keep my family awake at night."</i></p> <p><i>"I'm an epileptic and when they turn them on, they create seizures."</i></p> <p><i>"It affects your TV reception and you can hear them."</i></p> <p><i>"The noise is disturbing people's lives, and the flickering light is a constant annoyance."</i></p> <p><i>"There are too many people complaining about health issues relating to the windfarms."</i></p>
<p>Enough turbines in the area</p> <p><i>"I think there are enough wind farms in the Moyne Shire without ruining our landscape."</i></p> <p><i>"We have enough wind turbines in the Moyne Shire, put them somewhere else."</i></p> <p><i>"We have enough in the Shire already, additional turbines would be too many in one area."</i></p>	<p>End of life concerns (turbines)</p> <p><i>"In 30 years we will dismantle them and they will be a hunk of junk."</i></p> <p><i>"After 10 years there is a lot of waste, they don't have a long lifespan."</i></p> <p><i>"I just don't believe they're sustainable, a lifespan of 35 years is not sustainable."</i></p> <p><i>"I'm not sure there is adequate planning for them for their end of life."</i></p>	



Those who are neutral are torn between the benefits and the impact on others in their community

Reasons for feeling neutral about the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire:
11% of residents
Select verbatim comments

Torn between the benefits of wind farms and concern for others in the community

"We have the negative viewpoint from a friend that the impact on landholders will be financial as they're responsible for the maintenance of broken turbines and disposing of them. I actually think they are better than coal or gas though."

"I really think it's the way forward but I'm mindful that people close to them are not happy."

"It doesn't affect me but it does affect farmers."

"I don't like them built too close to towns. They can impact people living there with noise."

"I live at least 20km away so they don't impact me but I do know people oppose them."

"I think they're a good source of energy and I also understand there are potential negative impacts that need more research."

Enough turbines already – at capacity

"I am just wondering when we have met capacity. I think we need to assess the amenity so there are not too many"

"There are probably enough already. It is reaching capacity in the area."

"I believe windfarms have their place but don't see the sense of having them everywhere."

"There are going to be too many of them."

"Probably been enough built in the area. They don't all need to be in this pocket of country."

An unreliable energy source

"Not reliable as they only work when the wind is blowing, unpredictable."

"When there's no wind you're not generating electricity."



Additional information needs include understanding the location of future turbines and potential Shire impacts

Additional information requirements about the continued construction of wind farms in the Moyne Shire:

16% of residents

Select verbatim comments

Location – where will the new turbines be placed?

“Where are they going to be? Proximity to towns, and size in height and numbers?”

“Where the planned wind farms are situated.”

“Location of where the wind farms will be built.”

“Where they are is the biggest issue.”

“Placement of wind turbines – where are they going?”

“Details on where they are specifically being built.”

“What is their proximity to anyone in the community?”

“Where are they going to be? Close to housing?”

“I’d be worried about them encroaching in my surrounding area.”

What are the impacts on land, environment, animals and local population?

“What damage will be done to our road? What’s the impact on people within proximity?”

“The impact it would have on the land it goes on, and people.”

“The impact it would have on the Shire.”

“Are they dangerous to humans or animals?”

“What impacts does it have on farming and on the people that live close by?”

“What impact would it have on the surrounding community? The noise? Environment?”

“I’d like to know the affect on people and animals.”

“Environmental impact, visual impact. Do they kill birds? Noise pollution?”

“Information about whether they are harmful in any way or not.”



Response to Council's revised position



Section summary: Response to Council's revised position

There is support for Council's revised position on wind farms

Most residents (59%) are not aware of Council's current position on wind farm development in the region. Following a brief description of Council's revised position, 44% of residents offer support for this new position – and this is consistent across the three regions. Opposition is much lower (at 12%). More than a quarter of residents (28%) would like more information in order to form a view.

Strong agreement with many of Council's position considerations

There is very high and strong agreement with many of Council's considerations. Four in five residents agree that Moyne Shire residents should receive discounted power (81% agree). A similar proportion (80%) agree that powerline infrastructure should be shared where possible with existing substations or that powerlines for new wind farms should be underground (76% agree).

Consideration needs to be given to those who are most impacted

Sixty percent of residents agree that communities near wind farms should receive greater benefits from development than other residents. This rises to 72% among West region residents (and is the only consideration in the list of eight evaluated where views differ by region). Most residents indicate that the buffer around towns should be increased from the current one kilometre.

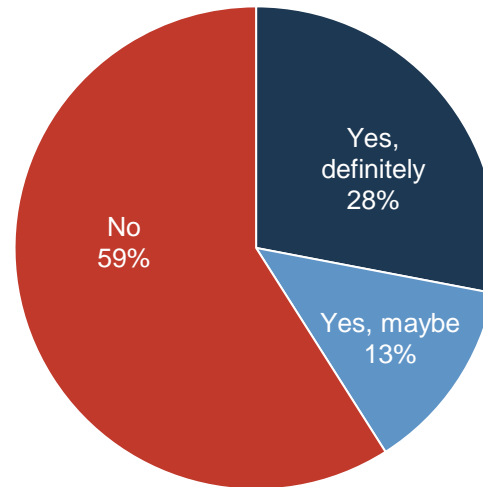
Decommissioning is also a key concern

Two thirds of residents (68%) are concerned about what happens to turbines when their operational life is over, including 39% who are 'very concerned'.

Three in five residents are not aware of Council's current position to oppose further development of wind farms



Aware of Council's position on wind farm development in the Moyne Shire (%)

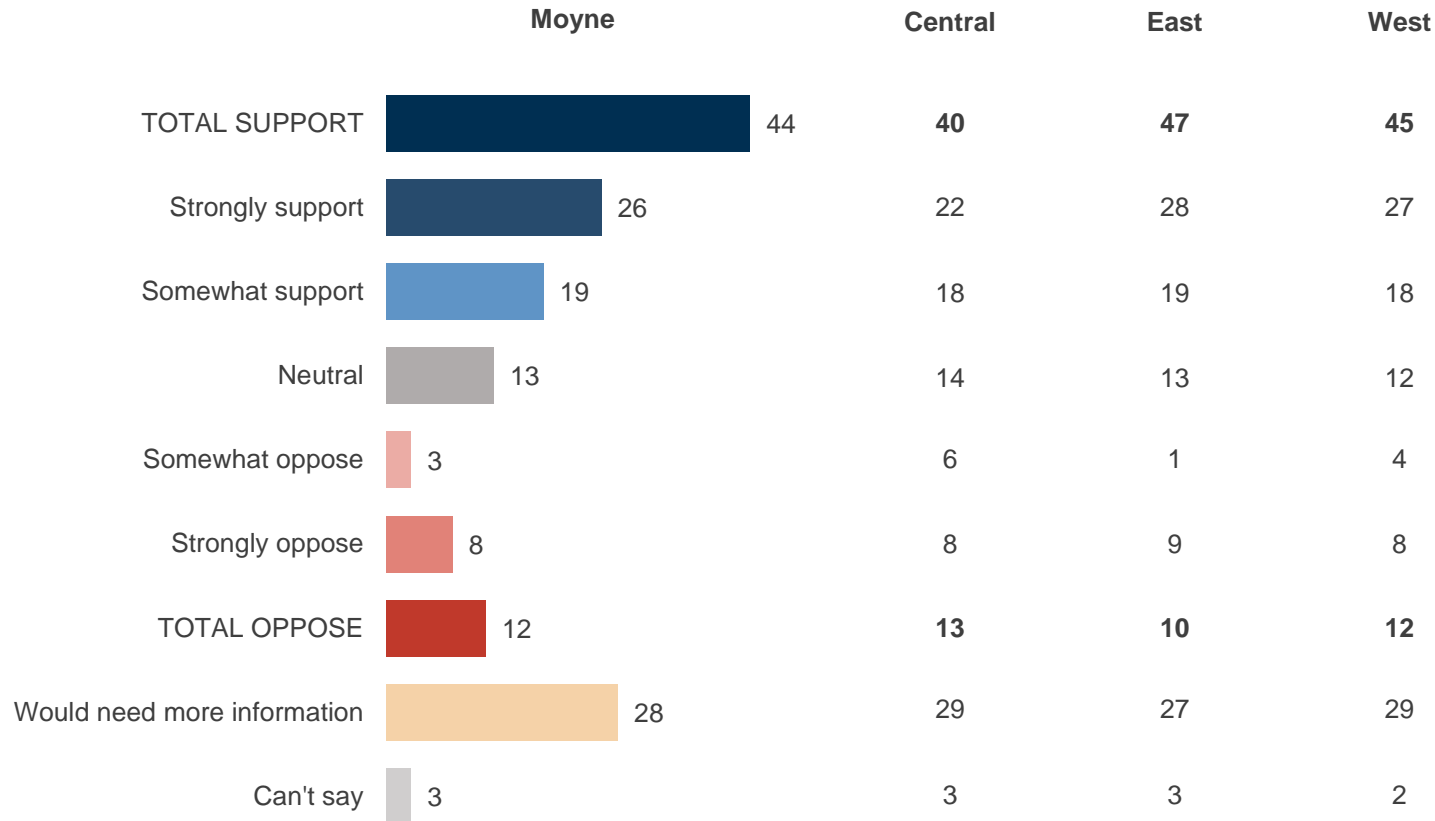


In total, **41%** of Moyne Shire residents claim to be aware (either definitely or maybe) of Council's current position on wind farm development in the region.

Support for Council’s revised position on wind farms outweighs opposition across the Shire



Support towards Council’s revised position on wind farms (%)

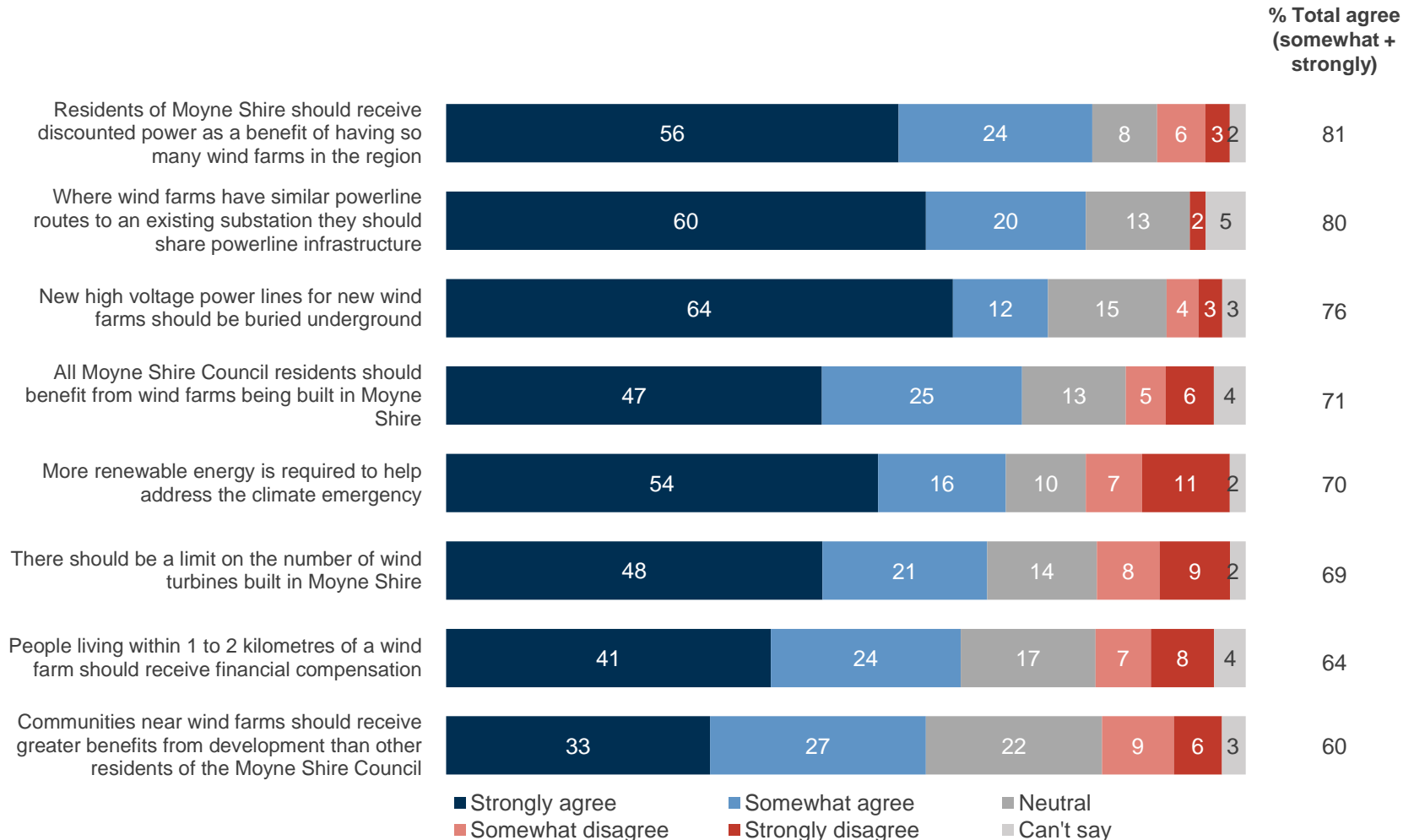


Q9. Council are considering changing their position on wind farms and have released a new draft wind farm position statement for consultation. The findings from consultation will be used by Council to set a revised position on wind farms, to advocate for a reduction in negative impacts and improved social and economic benefits for the Moyne community. Council's draft position calls for State Government to pause the issuing of all new wind farm planning permits in Moyne Shire until strategic land use planning for the area is completed, in consultation with local government and the community. Do you support, oppose or are you neutral towards this revised position by Council or would you need more information to decide?
 Base: All respondents (n=400).

There is strong agreement that residents should receive discounted power, new powerlines should be underground



Considerations regarding wind farms in the Moyne Shire (%)

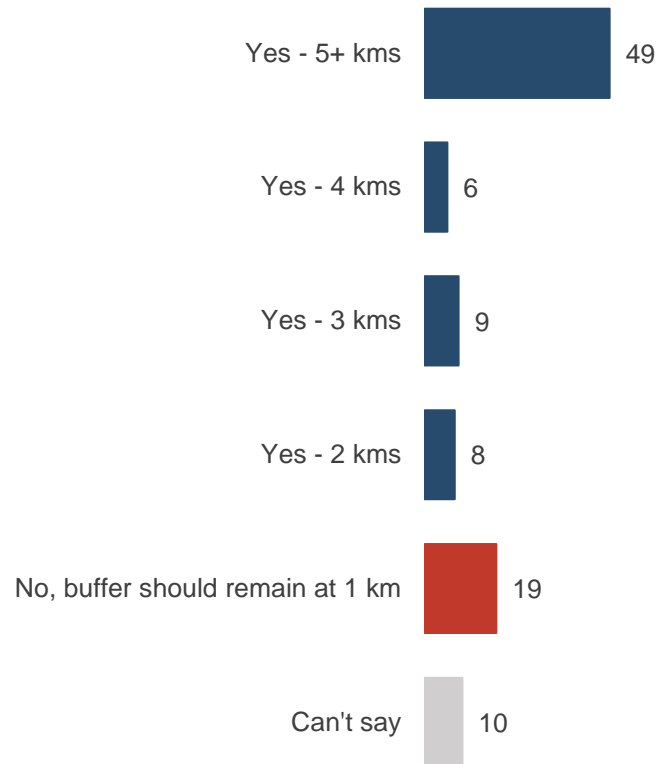


Q10. Please tell me if you agree, disagree or are neutral on each consideration. Firstly, do you agree or disagree that [INSERT FIRST REASON]. And how about [INSERT REMAINING REASONS IN TURN]...
 Base: All respondents (n=400).

Most residents would welcome a 5km+ buffer from wind turbines



Should buffers around towns change (%)

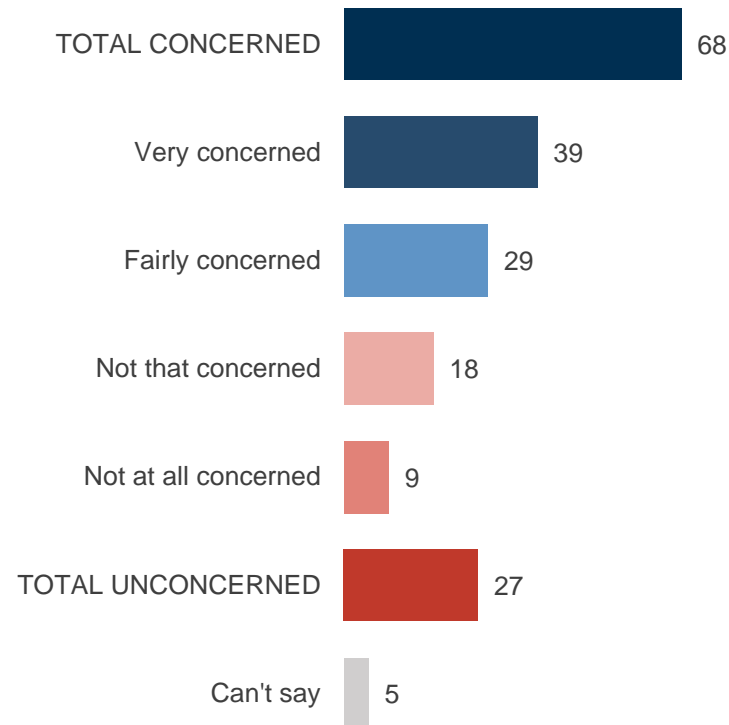


Q11. At present, a wind turbine cannot be built within 1 km of a house unless the owner gives consent. Do you believe there should be larger buffers around towns where wind turbines cannot be built? IF YES: And what should be the radius of that buffer around towns where wind farms cannot be built? Should it be 2 kilometres, 3 kilometres, 4 kilometres, or 5 or more kilometres?
Base: All respondents (n=400).

There is clearly a level of concern among residents about the decommissioning of wind turbines



Extent to which residents are concerned about decommissioned wind turbines and farms (%)



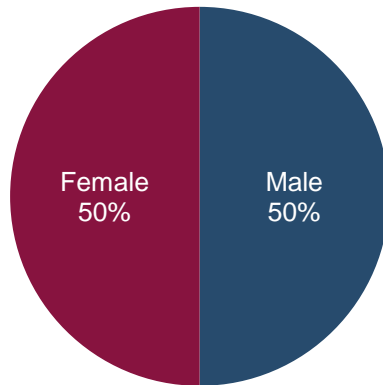


Appendix: Demographics



Demographics

Gender



Age

18 – 24 years	4%
25 – 39 years	24%
40 – 54 years	20%
55 – 64 years	28%
65+ years	25%

Location

Central (postcodes 3284, 3283, 3282, 3281, 3275)	31%
East (postcodes 3277, 3379, 3271, 3278, 3273, 3272, 3270, 3268, 3264, 3279, 3265)	43%
West (postcodes 3293, 3276, 3301, 3289, 3287, 3304, 3285, 3286)	26%

The data set has been weighted to reflect the demographic makeup (by age, gender and location) of the population of Moyne Shire.

For example, where we know from ABS figures that the population of Moyne Shire has an approximate 50/50 split for gender, we adjust accordingly to ensure that this is represented in the results.

S1. Record gender. S2. Could you please tell me how old you are?

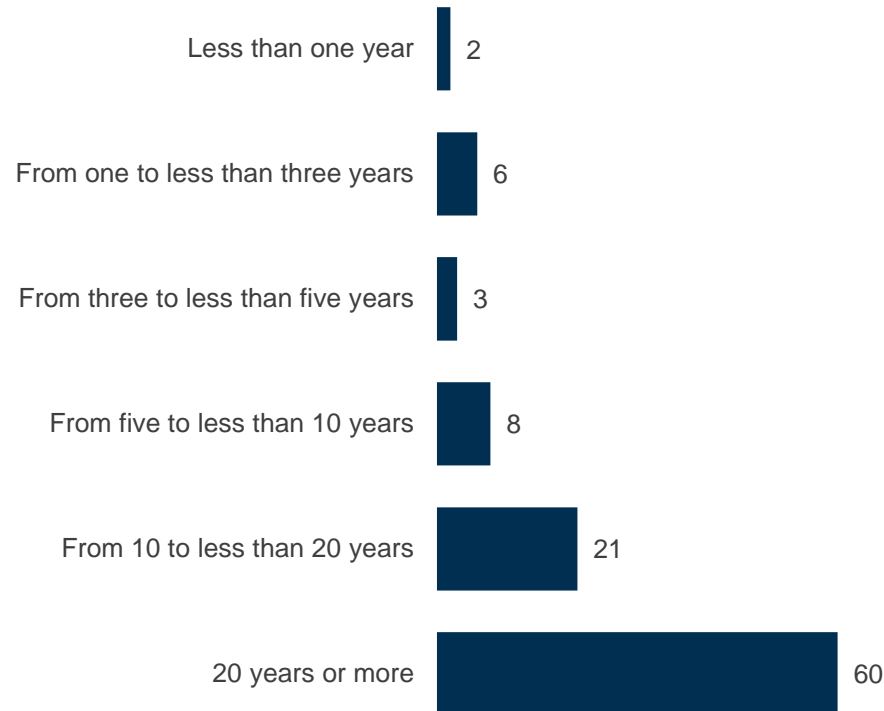
Location was defined using KLM maps – postcodes are provided as a guide to the area sampled, with only that part of the postcode within the Shire sampled from.

Base: All respondents (n=400).

Most residents have lived in the Moyne Shire more than 10 years



Years lived in the Moyne Shire (%)

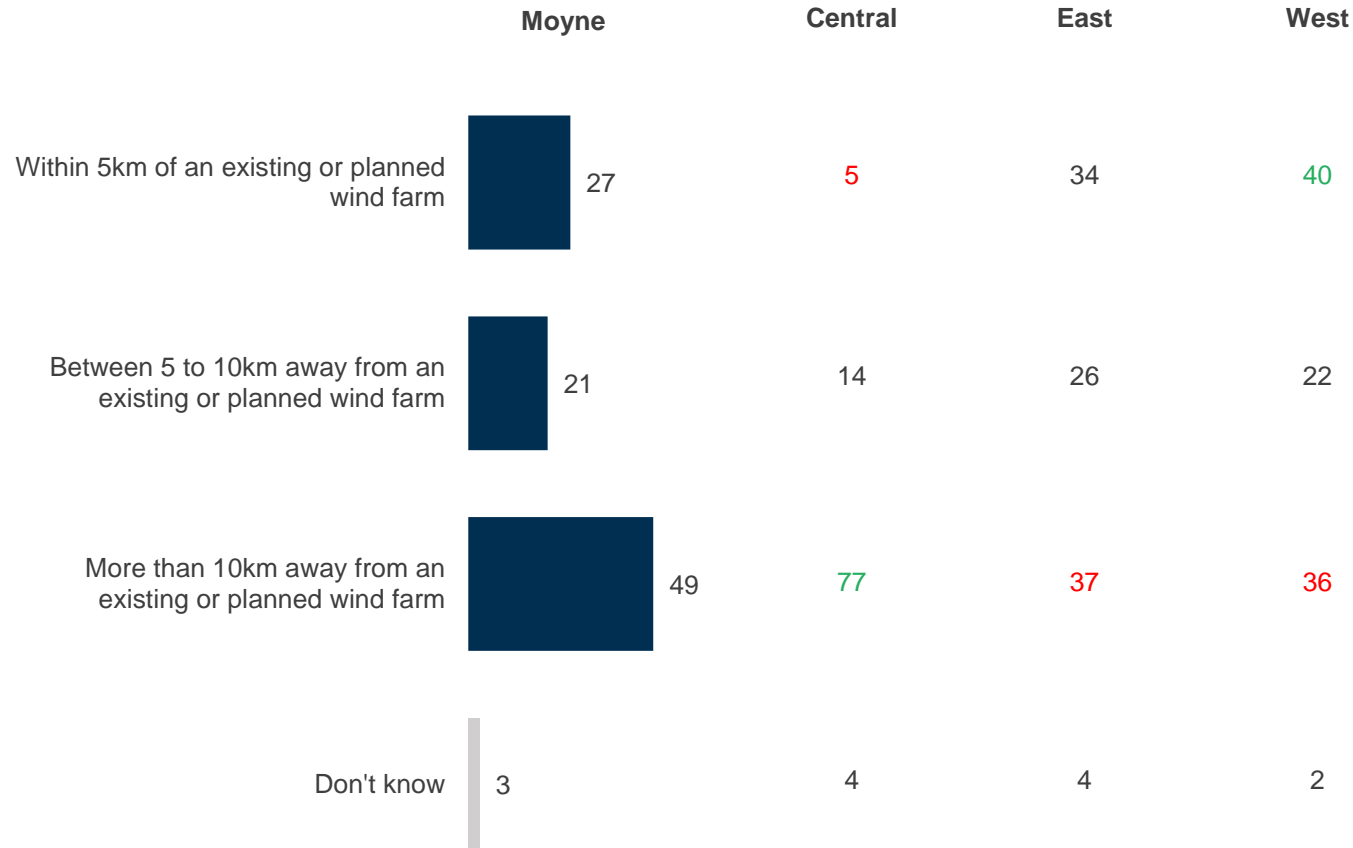


As to be expected, there is a *significantly higher* than average incidence of having lived in Moyne Shire for 20 years or more among residents aged 65 years and over (71%). Conversely, residents aged under 40 years have a *significantly higher* incidence of having lived in Moyne Shire for less than three years (19% compared to 8% on average).

Central region residents live further away from existing and planned wind farms than those in the East or West



Distance of residence from current or planned wind farms (%)



Significantly higher / lower than the total at the 95% confidence interval.
 Q7. How close would you say you live to existing or planned wind farms? Would you say you live within...
 Base: All respondents (n=400).

FIND OUT WHAT THEY'RE THINKING



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