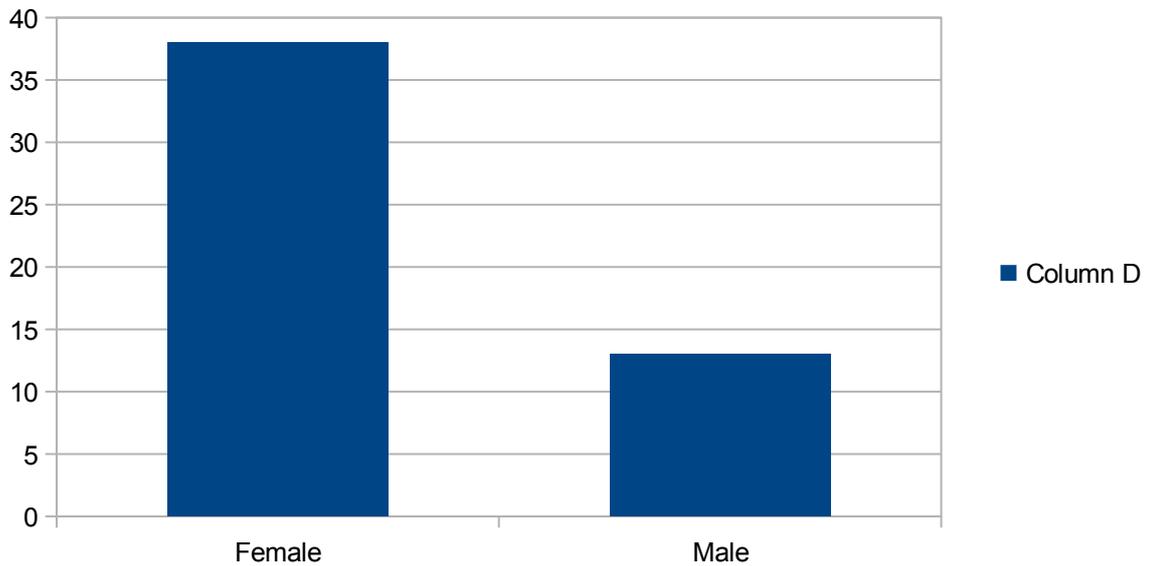


Member survey

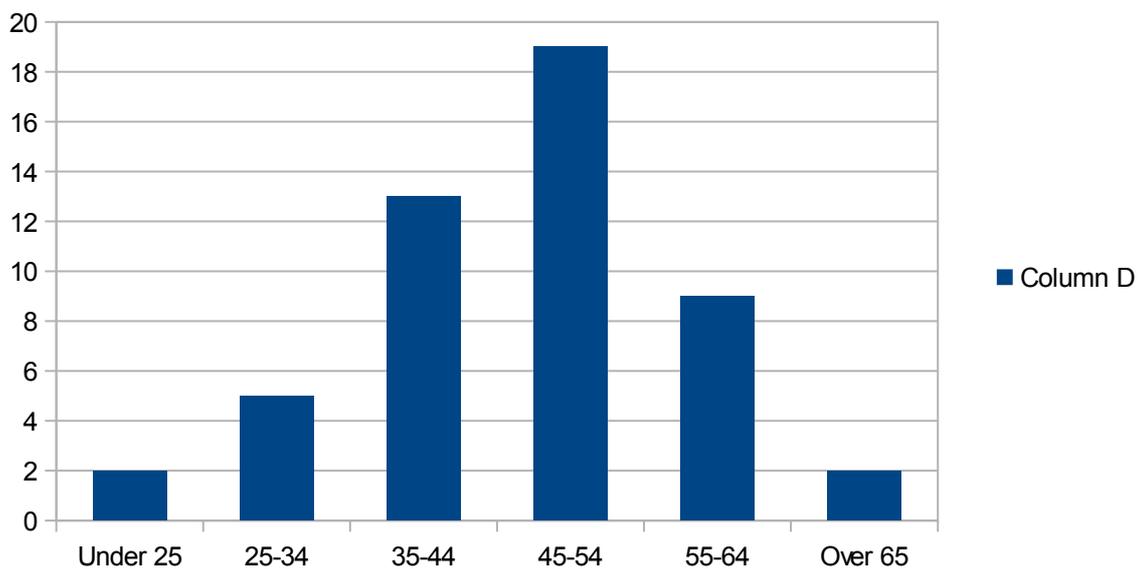
The member survey was placed in the Firewatch and Recovery group for three weeks. 53 responses were received from members.

Most respondents were women, with the majority being aged between 35 and 64.

Question 1

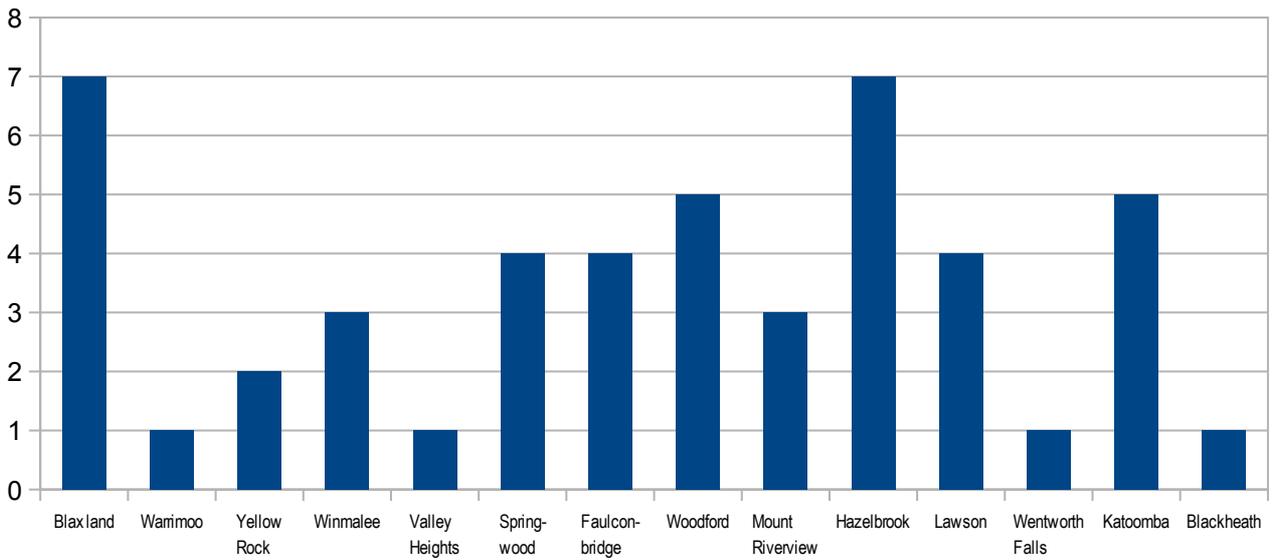


Question 2



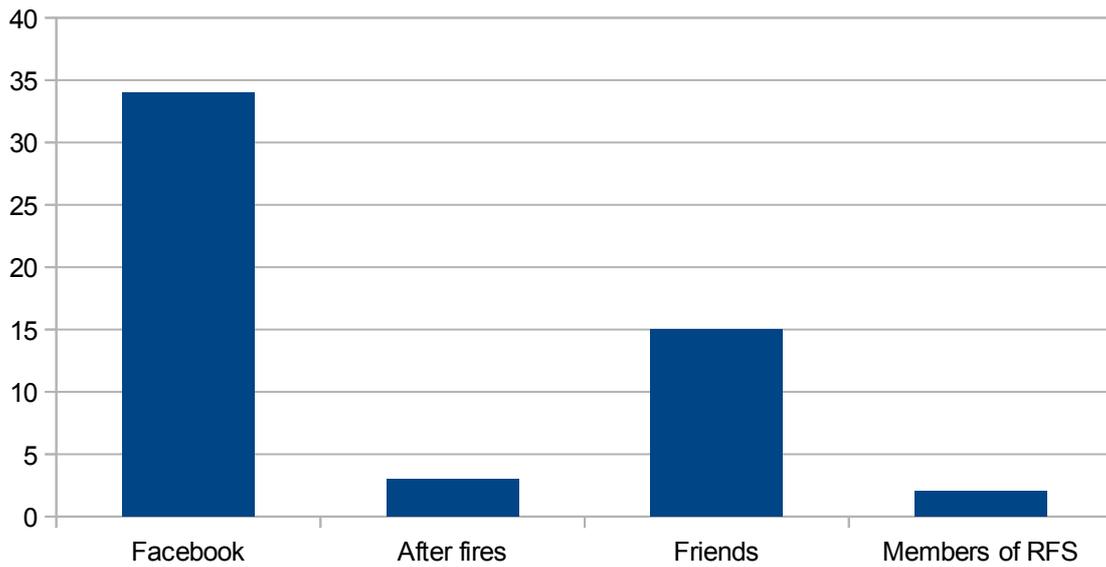
They came from a range of Mountain suburbs, showing that the group has a broad membership.

Question 3



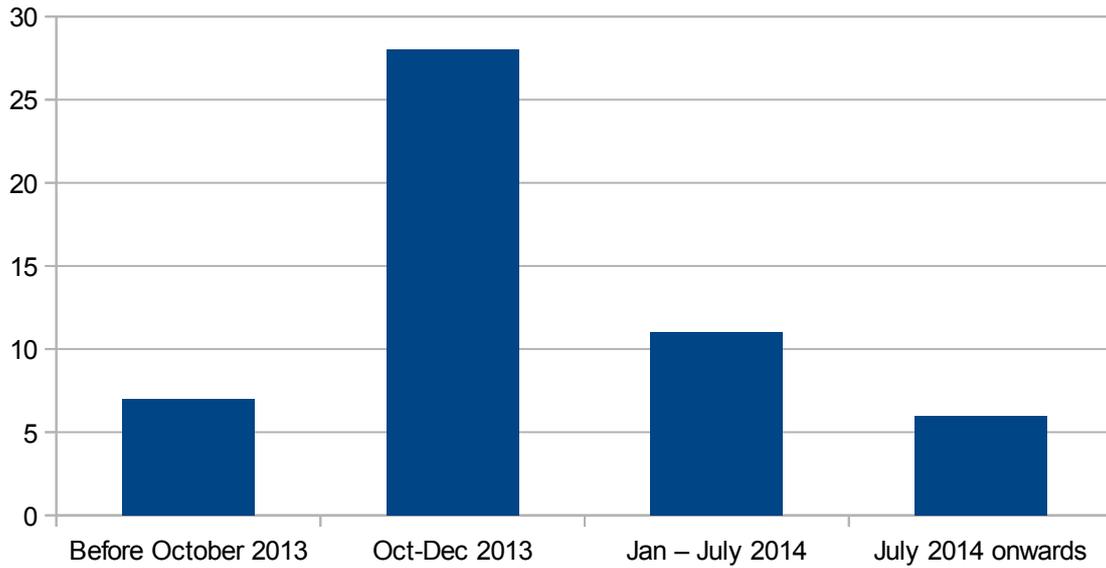
Members mostly found the group via Facebook, but were also likely to have learned of the group from friends.

Question 4



The spread of how long respondents had been members echoed the spread among all members, but had more respondents who joined during the October 2013 fires.

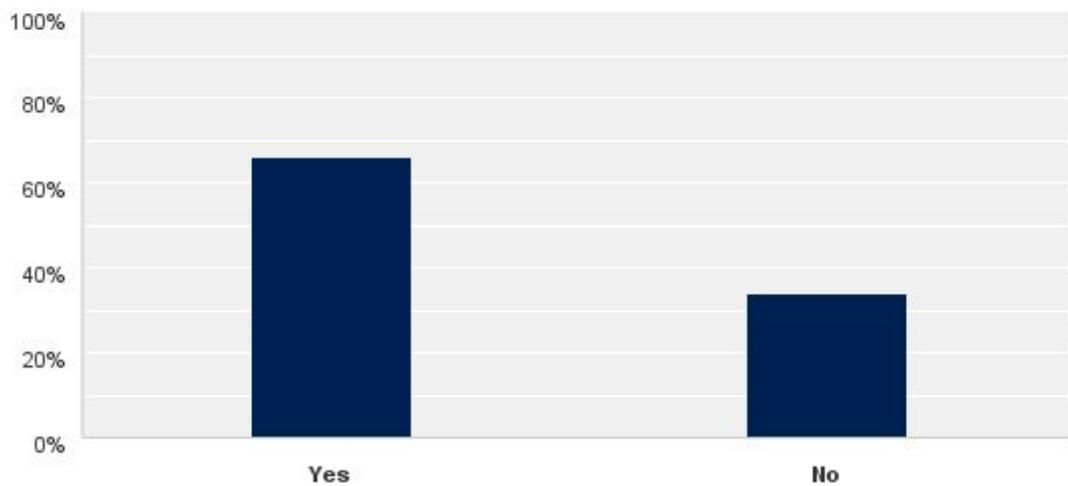
Question 5



This was confirmed by asking directly about membership during the October 2013 fires.

Q6 Were you a member of Firewatch during the October 2013 fires?

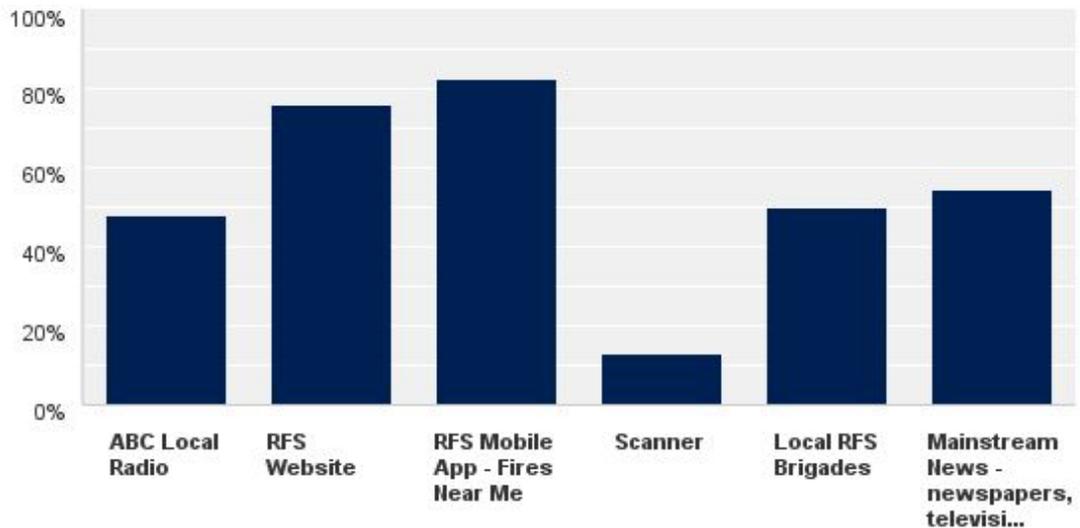
Answered: 53 Skipped: 0



Members were asked what other information they used during the October 2013 fires, showing that most members used a wide variety of information, with the RFS being the most popular.

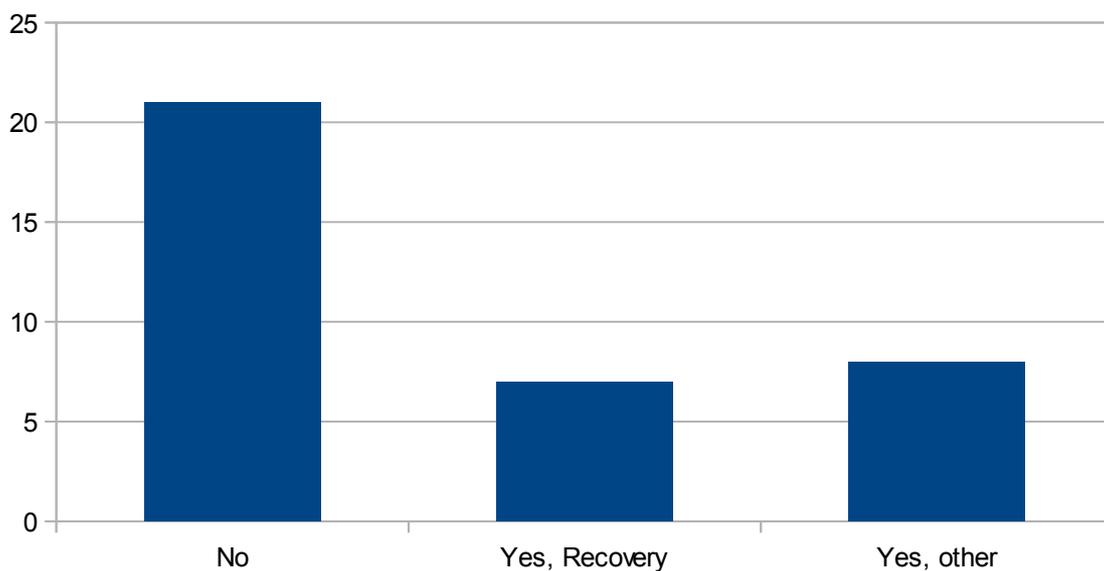
Q7 What other sources of information did you use during the October 2013 fires?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 7



Members were mostly not members of any other fire-related Facebook group. For those that were, Recovery and various RFS Facebook groups and pages were the most often cited.

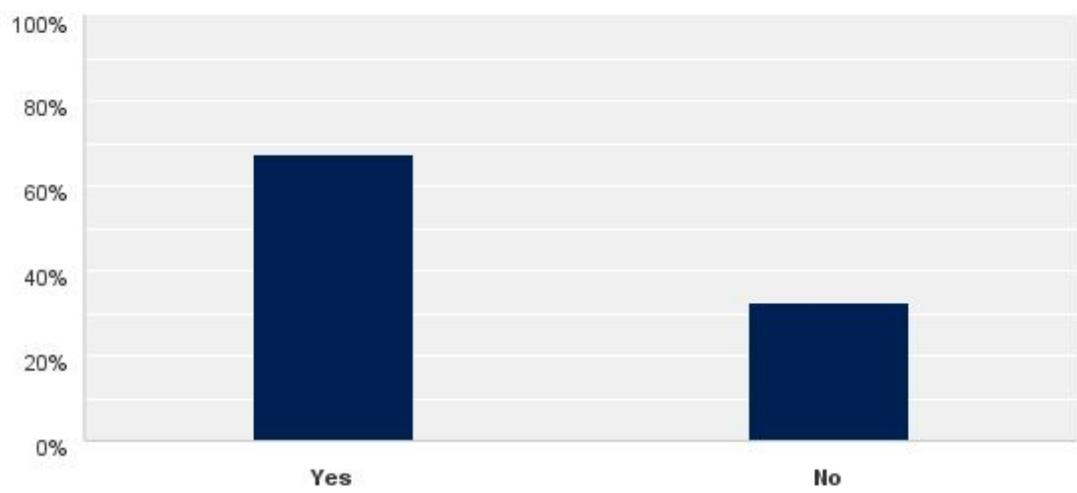
Question 8



This question clearly shows that recommendations from members was a key part of the growth of Firewatch and echoes the findings of question

Q9 Did you recommended Firewatch to friends or family during the fires?

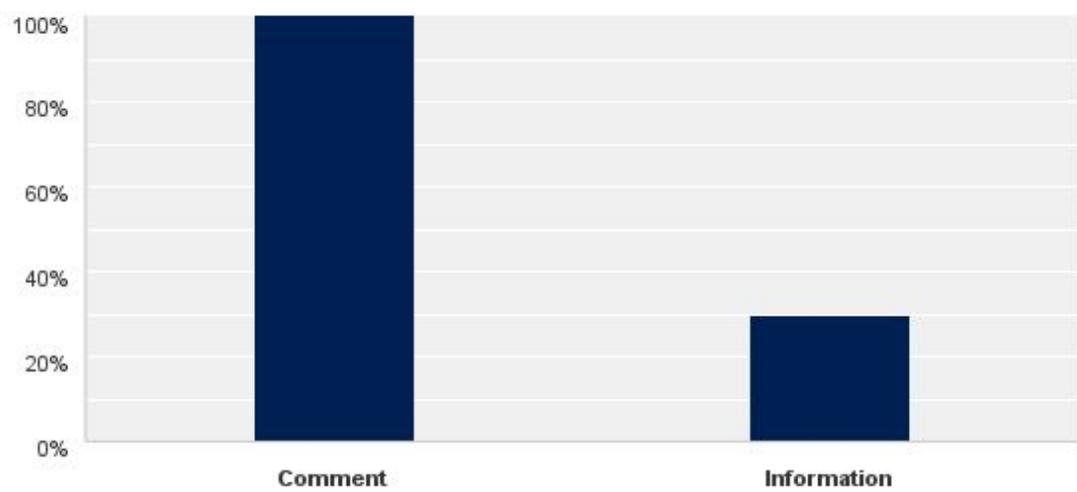
Answered: 46 Skipped: 7



This shows the level of activity by members in the group. All respondents posted comments, with a lower number posting information. This is reflective of the group activity, with many posts attracting over a hundred comments.

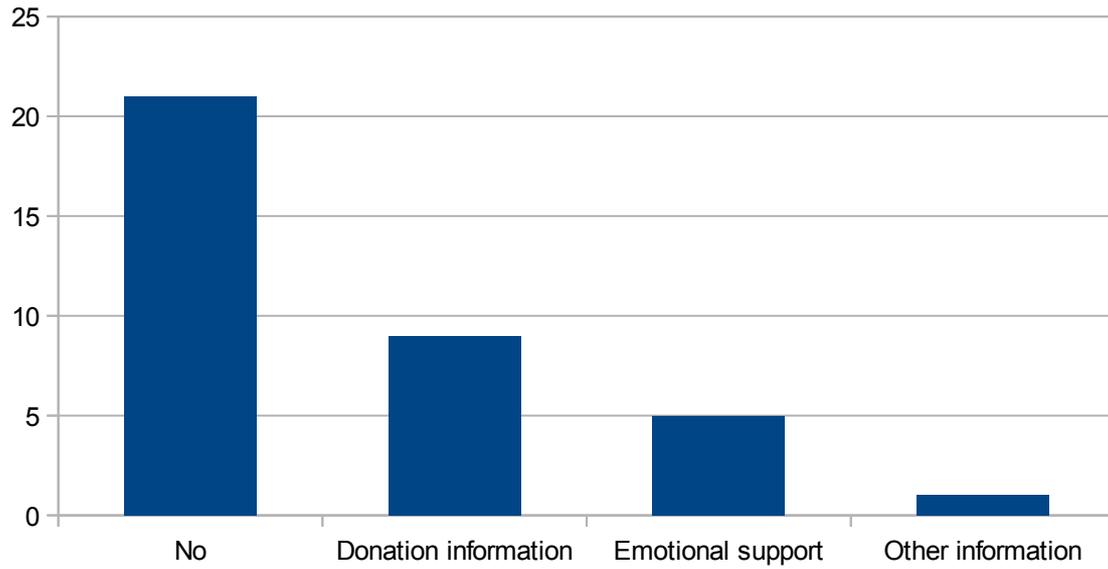
Q10 Did you ever make a comment or post information in Firewatch during the fires?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 26



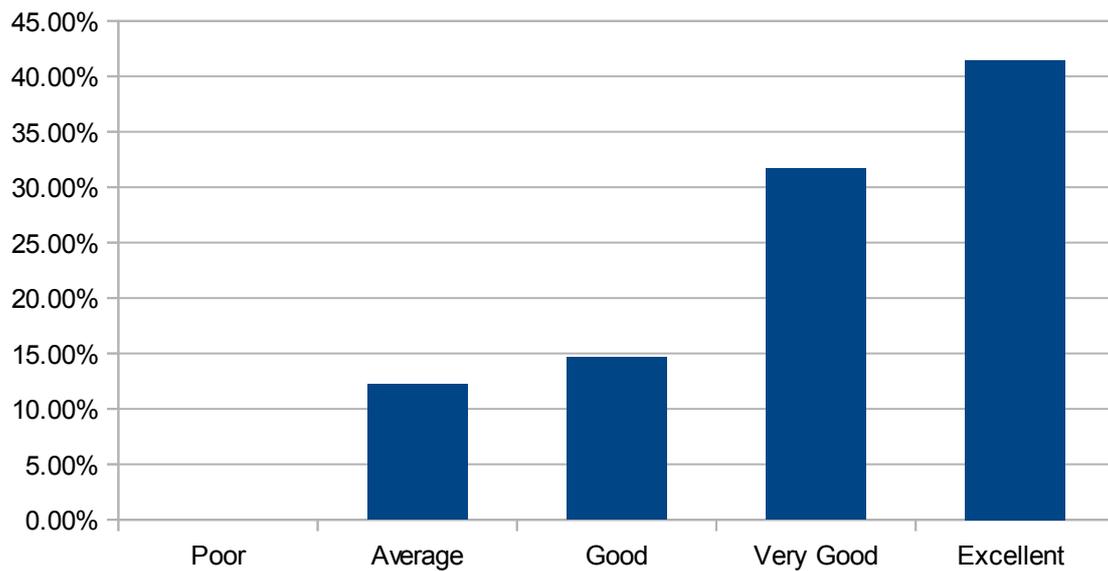
Only about half of respondents used the information about donations and emotional support provided by Firewatch.

Question 11



Firewatch members overwhelmingly rated the quality of information as Very Good, or Excellent.

Question 12

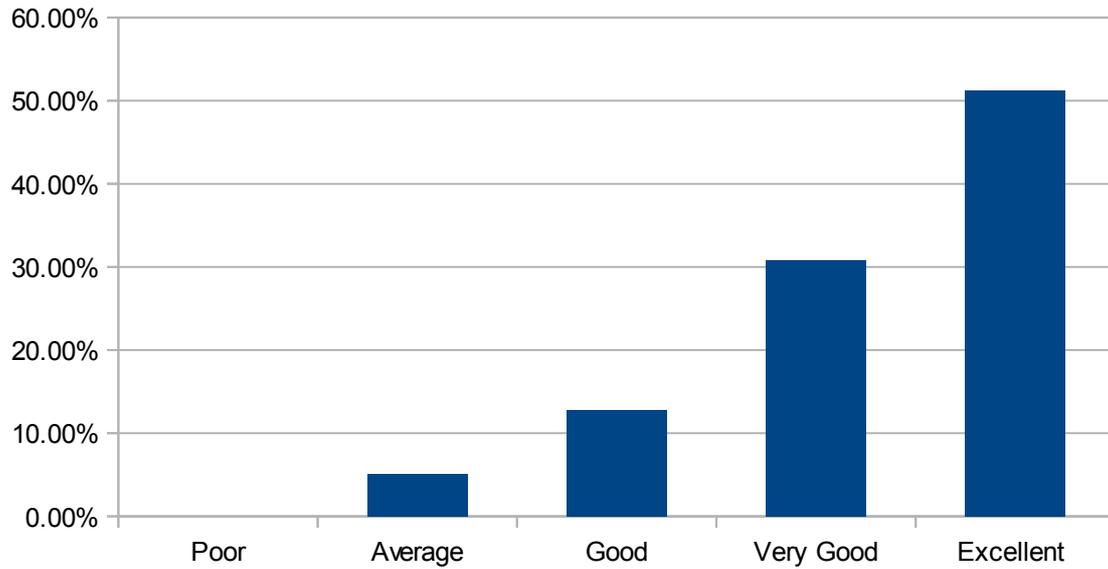


And equally, members found the Firewatch group very useful during the October 2013 fires.

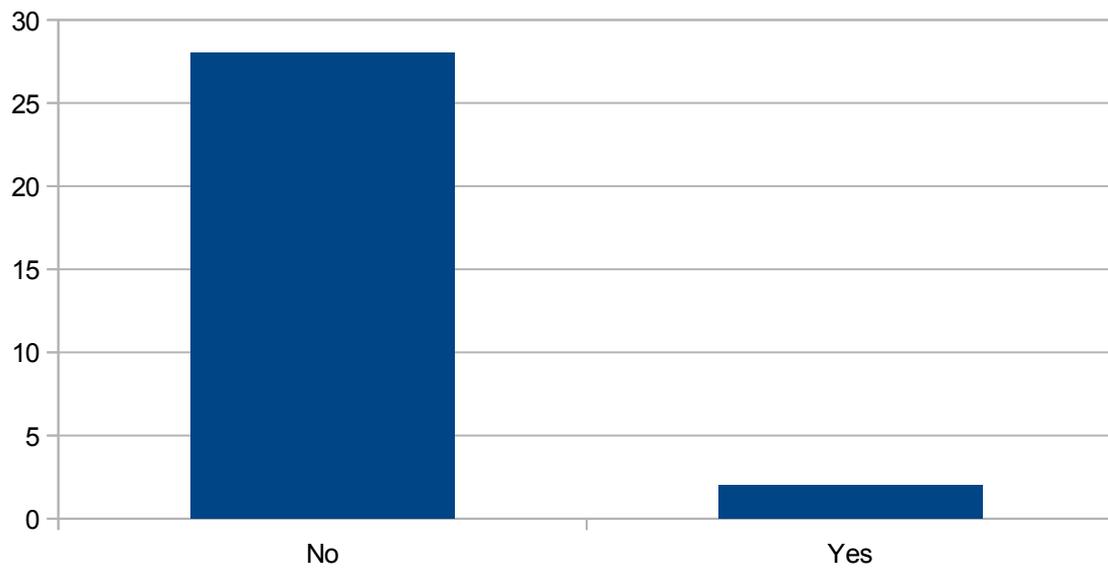
Question 13

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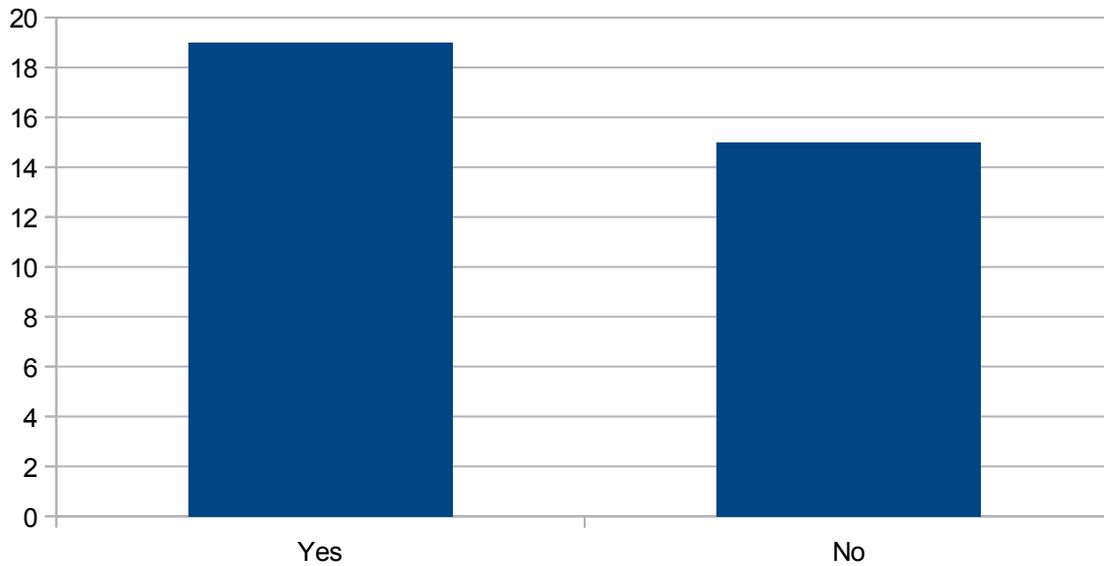
Question 14



Just over half of respondents said they had used information in Firewatch to do fire preparation work.

Question 15

Soi

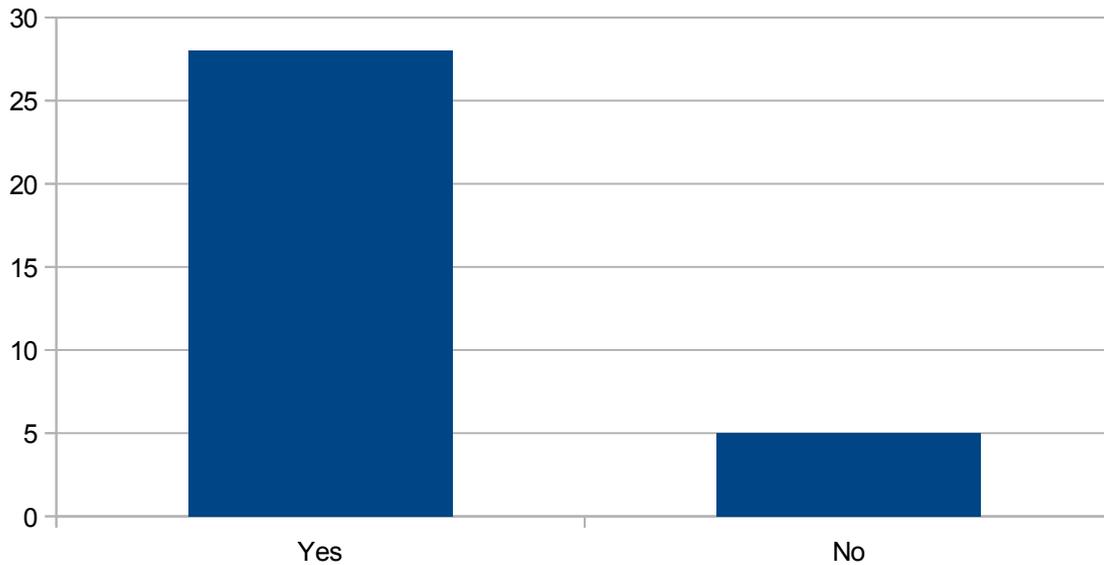


- ⤴ General info re weather patterns, understanding how fires might move and effect the area
- ⤴ Information about preparing house, what to have ready in case of evacuation
- ⤴ Pages posted have useful information re readiness
- ⤴ Reminders about having a fire plan
- ⤴ Helped to think through some issues I hadn't considered before (e.g. pets). Also helpful in just understanding fire behaviour.
- ⤴ Information and understanding of fire movement and the lay of the land around the Winmalee area
- ⤴ Followed some preparation information that was posted
- ⤴ We used the group to assess changes to our home insurance and update our evacuation plan for our pets
- ⤴ Links to local fire brigades, details of Fire Brigade meetings

Most respondents continued to follow and use the information in Firewatch during the non-fire period.

Question 16

So:



- ⤴ Fire in the Blue Mountains, patterns, past, what to expect. insurance.
- ⤴ About the recovery of bush since the fire
- ⤴ Just community spirit in a fire prone area - important part of redefining myself and my household as we came to terms with our new home.
- ⤴ Preparation and hazard reduction progress also some on the cost of re building and increasing insurance
- ⤴ Can't remember specifics but usually read all their info
- ⤴ Information about RFS activities.
- ⤴ Content about insurance and recovery after the fires
- ⤴ Primarily about how rebuilding was going for people, changes to insurance and such in fire prone areas.
- ⤴ Information on the recovery effort run in conjunction with the local neighbourhood centres etc.
- ⤴ Fire preparation and impacts and strategies related to hazard reduction burning operations.
- ⤴ When there were warnings also general articles about preparing property etc. If i had been directly impacted by the fires I would have found the government and council information and links very useful. Nowhere else to collate all of this in one relevant place
- ⤴ At times the file info for links
- ⤴ Preparedness and vigilance about wood fires being a danger in winter.

Members were asked for ideas about what additional information the Firewatch Recovery group could provide:

Question 17

- ⤴ Like the regular fire ratings during fire season.
- ⤴ The fire maps during the 2014 Warrimoo fire were helpful, especially when the mainstream media that didn't know the geography of the place had the fire threatening all sorts of localities that weren't actually affected.
- ⤴ Bushfire preparation/ prevention
- ⤴ Include storms major traffic accident (help with traffic flow.) Major road closures especially in times of fire eg Mitchell pass
- ⤴ Regular forums
- ⤴ Perhaps info for high school kids to use themselves and something for primary schools that teachers can implement.
- ⤴ Maybe intentionally posting things to think about in order to be prepared, once a month? I assume it is difficult to get people thinking and preparing for possible fires in Winter!
- ⤴ Information about where the fires are and helpful advice
- ⤴ More of what was there, local information sharing particularly from fireies and members of the public with specific information and knowledge
- ⤴ Good as it is. Democratic and well monitored by admins
- ⤴ Official posts from official sources
- ⤴ Preparation material
- ⤴ A format for detailed posts would be good. Some people would post information or questions to the group, and through poor spelling and grammar, it was hard to understand what they were saying. Regular forums on interesting items would be nice.
- ⤴ More guest posts from fire brigade experts.
- ⤴ Further promotional and information materials, Especially on community resilience and self sufficiency. For example: application processes for CFU units
- ⤴ Details about local fire situations, including boundaries of fire, direction and possible threats so that local residents can be prepared and informed. RFS does not give enough detail nor is it updated quickly enough in emergency situations. This group was able to pass accurate information quickly
- ⤴ I find it a useful place to find out what is really happening and what the real threat and movement of fire is . Very handy when not in BM. I don't think regular anything is needed. It was useful in the fires season, to have Firewatch separate from Recovery, and suggest that they split again if another crisis arises, different needs by the people.
- ⤴ Content ideas, more info around resources for vulnerable community members who cannot or are unable to access social media or the internet.

Respondents were asked for general feedback about Firewatch:

Question 18

- ✧ I like knowing there is a source of info in case of fires. Feels more local and more relevant than the mainstream info I relied on during Oct 2013. I feel better knowing other people are thinking about the risk of fire, like I am. A sense of "we'll all help each other through if it goes wrong again". But also gives the message that we are each responsible to prepare ourselves.
- ✧ Got sick of everyone always reporting fires and asking stupid questions and administrators not considering people that lost homes and always putting most fires or a helicopter out of all proportion. This just made people panic. After the fires were all over people reporting smoke everywhere was just annoying.
- ✧ I think it would be good to keep some sort of activity going on the group out of the fire season. The fact that this fire started outside the fire season and very suddenly, shows the importance of constant vigilance and keeping fire readiness in peoples' minds at all times.
- ✧ Very helpful
- ✧ Thank you SOOOOO much. Social media is THE way to go and you did so well. Couldn't believe your bravery at the time, and calm in the face of panic (well I was panicked) I would have been so lost in this without the page.
- ✧ Twitter during the emergency was so much easier to get authoritative timely advice.
- ✧ Thank you to everyone involved with the group you all make our community safer.
- ✧ Keep it honest. If you don't know say so.
- ✧ I didn't live in the mountains during the 2013 fires, but I'm glad I found this Facebook page. I will refer to it in the event of future fires, and have already seen material / comment on it that has improved my level of awareness of how to prepare etc.
- ✧ Have so appreciated the work of those behind the Facebook page. Providing regular updates and keeping on top of questions requires commitment and it's obvious these guys are committed! Thank you!
- ✧ I think the Firewatch group is great for info , it makes me feel informed and not as worried. Also connects with people who have lost homes and we can directly help them.
- ✧ The sharing of information by the community and monitoring of fire movement was so valuable and far more specific and timely than provided by the media, really helped me to know just how close my family and friends in the area were. The mainstream media made it sound like every house in the mountains was on fire so this group helped put things in perspective and helped people feel a part of the community and be able to come together and communicate through a challenging time. Easily the most valuable Facebook group I am a member of.
- ✧ Prob getting a bit over the regular "I hear sirens, I smell smoke" posts. Some people never seem to be able to take the leads and info provided about using the info tools available if they are worried about what's going on around them.
- ✧ The RFS is very cautious in releasing information they should just release FACTS and let the individual decide what is happening for themselves. During the Warrimoo fires this FB group was most useful. RFS was less useful. ABC are pretty good too
- ✧ Less "panic induced" posts from people about minor/unrelated content.
- ✧ It's an excellent site
- ✧ The admins have done a fantastic job. Moderating a diverse group, combined with the stress of emergency situations, is a very difficult job. They have done exceptionally well.
- ✧ Well done

- ⤴ The group at times seems dominated by people with little empathy for others feelings and people who are not very good at listening to others views. This makes me feel less like engaging in conversations with people
- ⤴ An excellent resource. Well run and the "go-to" site for information during times when details are constantly changing (say in the midst of a major bushfire).
- ⤴ Keep it going, particularly speed, accuracy and precise details during fire situations
- ⤴ Excellent groups. Both. Please split again during an event as the needs are different. We need a watch place. The creation of the community watch excellent so that fire info is the focus
- ⤴ Great work. Keep it up.