

CRISIS LEADERSHIP:
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED
FROM THE FIRES?
A SURVEY OF ROSEDALE RESIDENTS

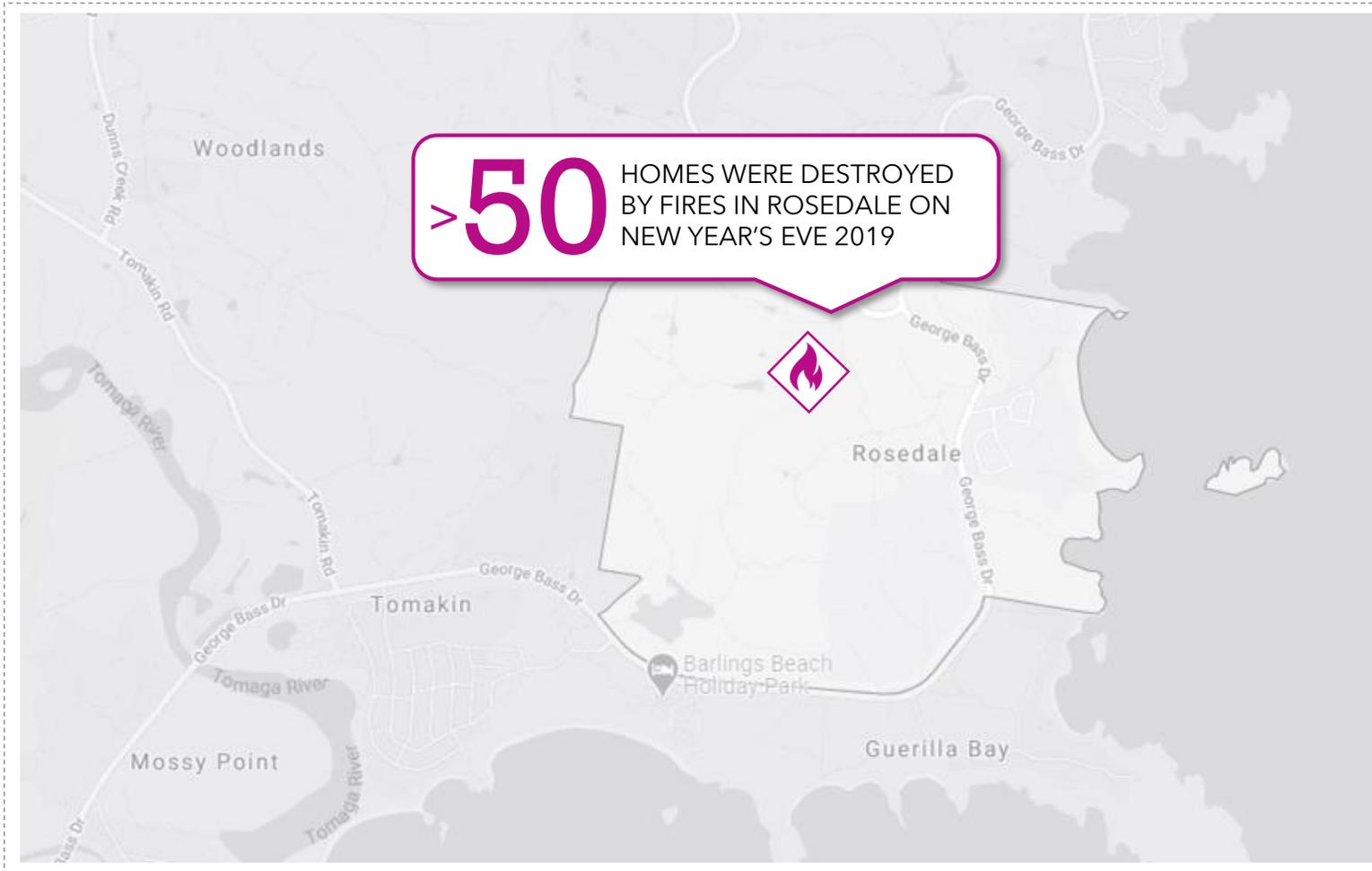
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ROSEDALE BACKGROUND

Rosedale was among the many towns affected by one of the worst bushfire seasons in Australian history which occurred during the end of 2019 and into 2020.



ROSEDALE IS A TINY TOWN 300KM SOUTH OF SYDNEY, WITH A PERMANENT POPULATION OF A LITTLE OVER 200.

A **BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY WARNING** WAS ISSUED TO RESIDENTS ON **NEW YEAR'S EVE, 2019** AND RESIDENTS WERE EVACUATED TO SHELTER ON THE BEACH.

THE FIRE HIT AT AROUND 10.30AM AND IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **OVER 50 PROPERTIES WERE DESTROYED**.



CATRIONA SPOKE WITH **15 RESIDENTS** WHO WERE AFFECTED BY THE NEW YEAR'S EVE BUSHFIRES FIRES IN ROSEDALE

RESIDENT EXPERIENCE WITH THE SUMMER 2019 FIRE

On New Years Eve morning residents evacuated to the beach. Many could not return to their properties for days, not knowing the state of their property.

ON **NEW YEARS EVE 2019, ROSEDALE RESIDENTS WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE** AT HOW QUICKLY THE FIRE REACHED THEM **& WERE EVACUATED TO THE BEACH**

MANY RESIDENTS WERE **NOT ABLE TO RETURN BACK TO THEIR HOMES FOR DAYS**, NOT KNOWING IF THEIR PROPERTIES WERE SAVED



ALERT ISSUED IN ROSEDALE

“Headland of Cooks Cr. South Rosedale. Received text messages and phone calls (to the landline) at 5:30-6AM 31 December advising us to leave. Neighbours honking car horns to wake us up. Evacuated to Hanging Rock evacuation centre at Bateman’s Bay. Spent the full day and evening there. Slept in the car.”

“Rosedale Fires - 31 January 2019. We weren’t at our Rosedale holiday home. Friends were using it. From 8am I started getting SMS from people on the coast that steadily became more terrifying, including the friends in our house. Then all went silent after comms died. ABC News was focussing on a fire in a different State (VIC). It was 24 hours of dread from afar.”



ALL RESIDENTS WERE **EVACUATED**

“Evacuated from house on Rosedale Parade to Rosedale beach during the fire storm on NYE.”

“Rosedale, South, NYE. My family (of 8) were present, and we decided to head to beach when embers appeared.”

“North Rosedale. Our house totally destroyed. Beautiful tenants lost all their possessions but saved their lives by escaping to the beach. Saved the lives of neighbours by alerting them to the alert to evacuate. Broulee. Our home and house. We evacuated twice over January. The fire came within 100 metres of our home on the 31 January. We stayed to defend and I wished I hadn’t. I wish I didn’t have the images in my head of that day. Our nation was unprepared. Our government was not able to keep us safe. We and our community had to do the worst of it ourselves.”



SOME PROPERTIES WERE **SAVED**

“Aside from the general impacts of sorrow about the loss of bush, fauna, homes and infrastructure, anxiety about climate change and anger/frustration at the lack of leadership about this, we own a house at Rosedale, and two of our adult daughters were staying there for NYE with a group of friends. They sheltered on the beach during the fire, contributed to putting out spot fires after the front had moved through, and it took them three days to get home due to lack of fuel and closed roads.”

“House at Rosedale, Eurobodalla, Currowan/Clyde fire risk. Family members at Rosedale NYE 2019. House saved by family members and neighbours working together, also saved neighbouring properties.”



...BUT UNFORTUNATELY MANY PROPERTIES WERE **DESTROYED**

“Lost our home away from home at Rosedale NSW.”

“We lost our beloved family home in North Rosedale on NYE. My parents, post war migrants, built this home in 1979. Even though it was not their permanent place of residence, it was their spiritual home. We (their 4 children and 7 grandchildren) also cherished the place. It was our special place where I felt closest to my deceased parents. How do you put that into words?”

“We lost our much loved rental property/holiday house in Rosedale and many treasured possessions, a beautiful garden - it was our very special place.”

“Lost my house on the south coast of NSW. Stayed In an evacuation centre for 2 days before I could get out.”

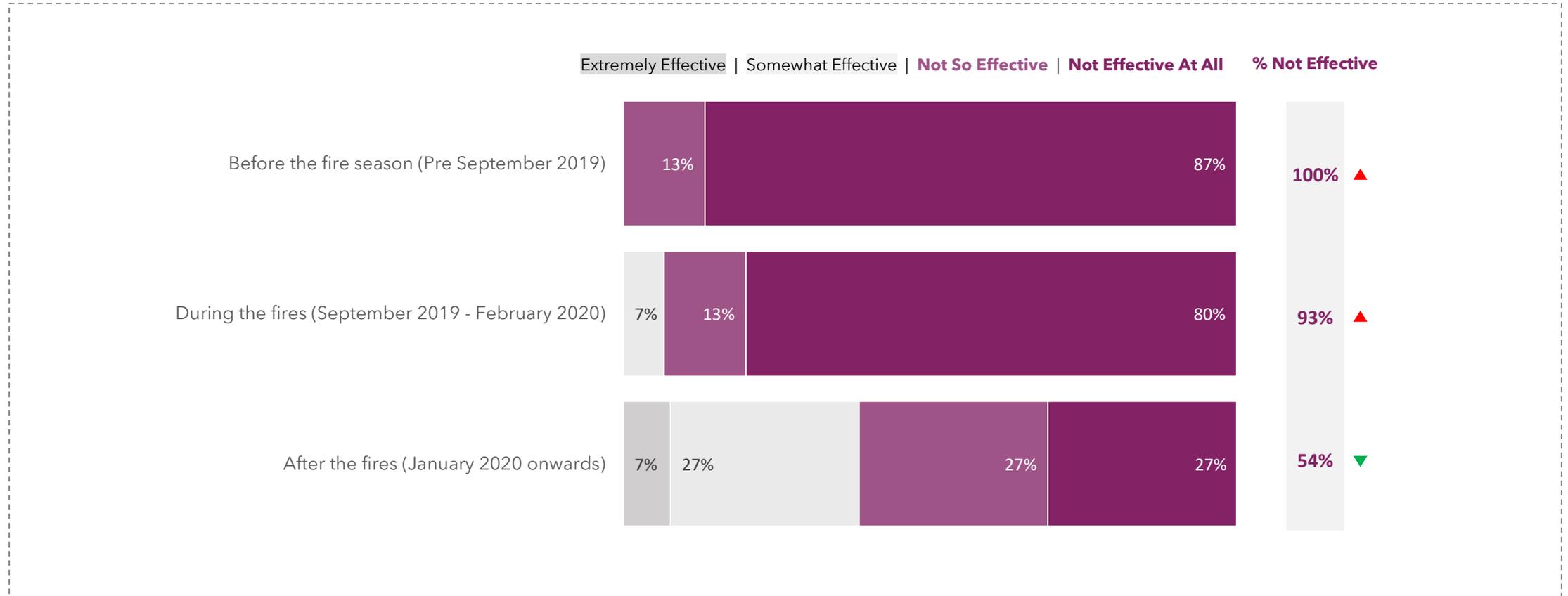
“Lost house at North Rosedale NSW. Loss of family holiday.”

“We found out later our renters got out ok which was a great relief, but it was very hard to find out what was happening in Rosedale at the time. We eventually made contact with our neighbours the next day who told us our house was destroyed.”

EFFECTIVENESS OF POLITICIANS IN MINIMISING IMPACT

Most residents believe that politicians were not effective in minimising the impact of the crisis before the fire season and during the fires, however, their response after the fires is seen in a more positive light.

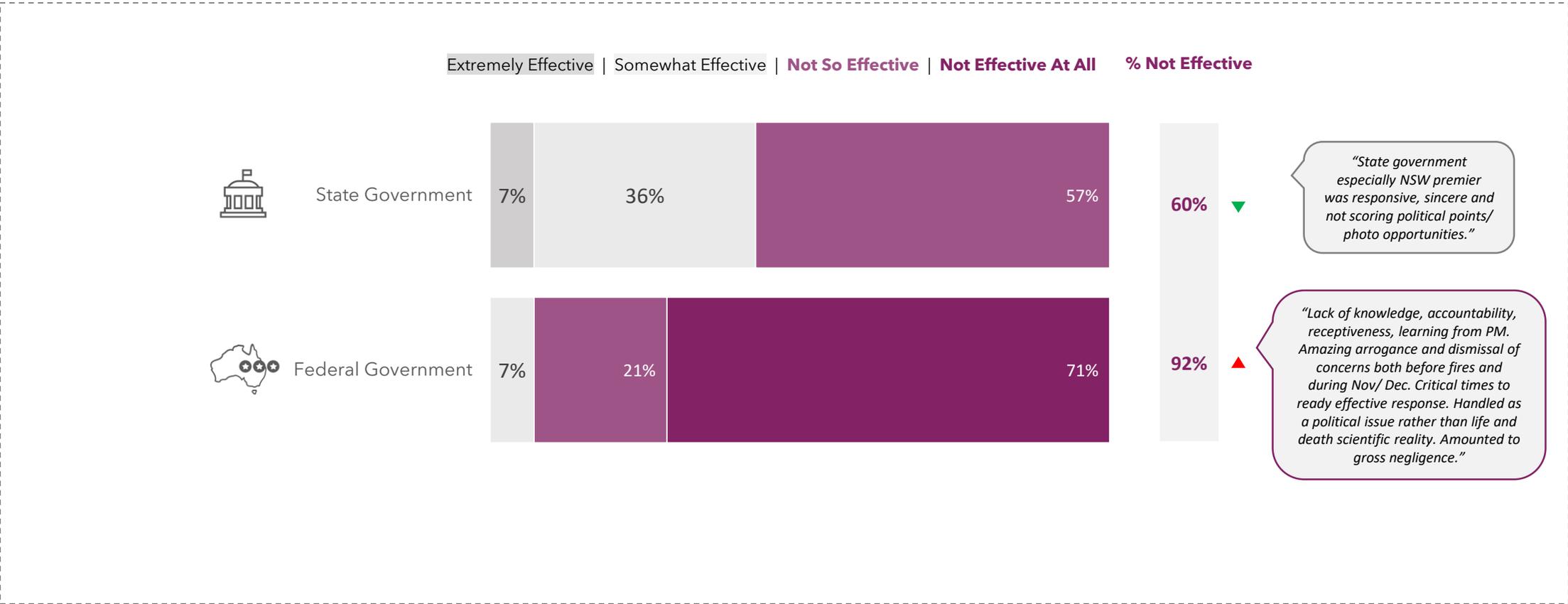
HOW DO YOU RATE THE **EFFECTIVENESS OF POLITICIANS IN MINIMISING THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS...?**



EFFECTIVENESS OF STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The State Government was seen as significantly more effective at minimising the impact of the fires compared to the Federal Government.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN MINIMISING THE IMPACT OF THE FIRES...?



BEST THING ABOUT LEADERSHIP RELATED TO THE FIRES

Residents were impressed with the State Government's responsive and sincere approach, especially from the NSW Premier.

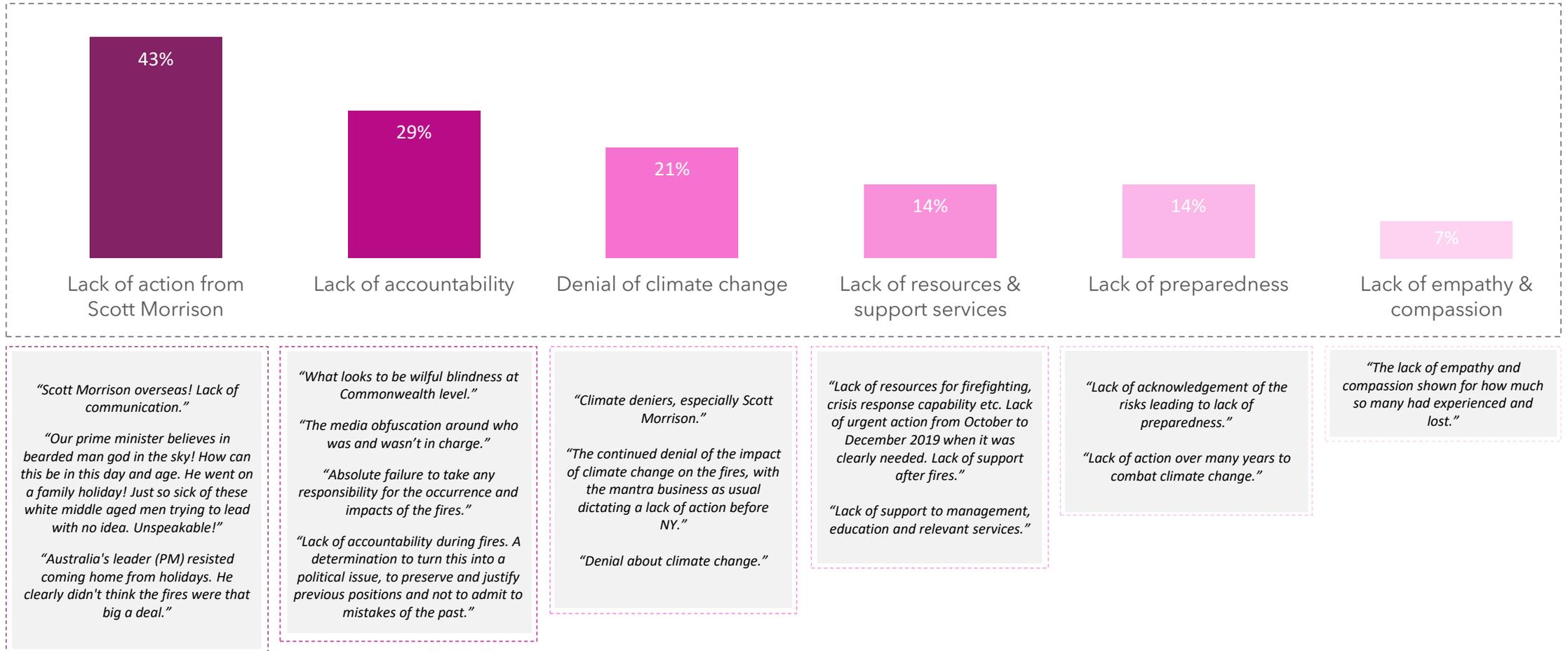
IN YOUR EXPERIENCE WHAT WAS THE **BEST THING ABOUT LEADERSHIP** THAT RELATED TO THE FIRES?



WORST THING ABOUT LEADERSHIP RELATED TO THE FIRES

While residents were angered by the lack of response, action and accountability from Scott Morrison and the Federal Government.

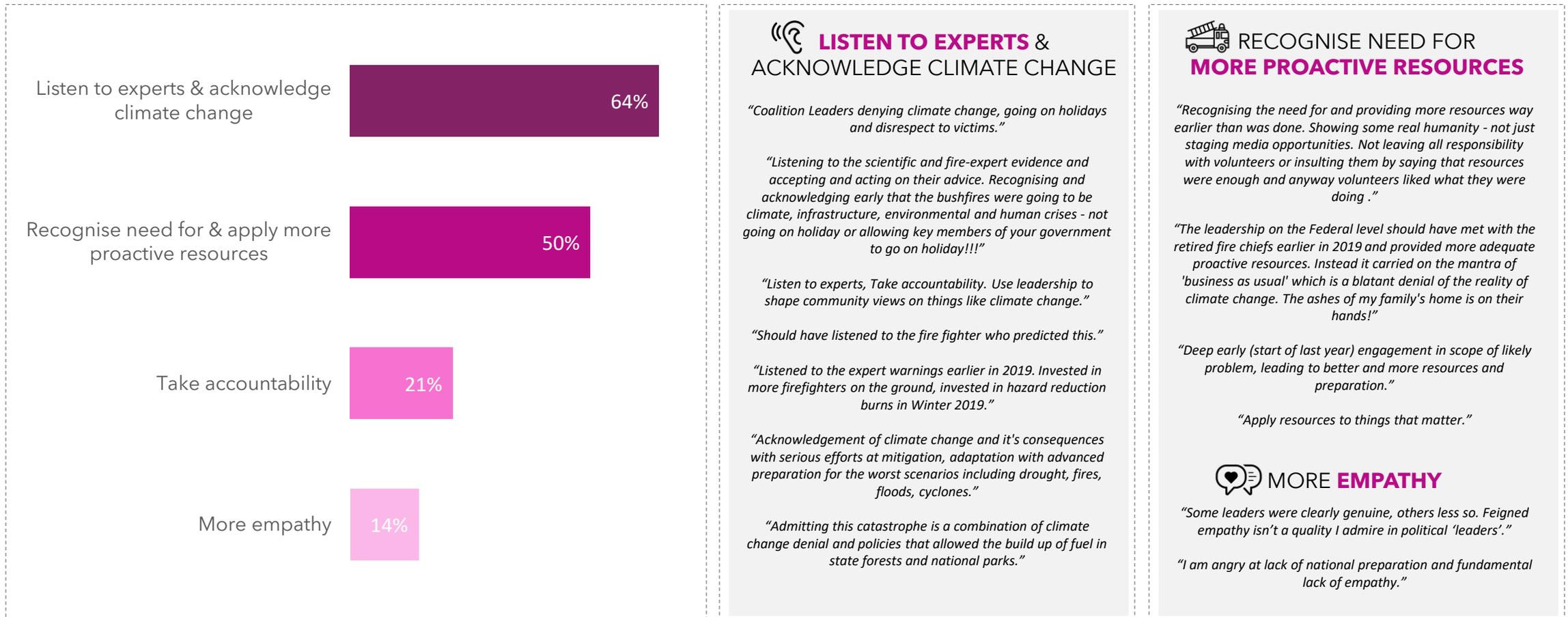
IN YOUR EXPERIENCE WHAT WAS THE **WORST THING ABOUT LEADERSHIP** THAT RELATED TO THE FIRES?



WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE BETTER?

Residents believe leaders could have done more by listening to experts and recognising the need to apply more resources earlier so everyone could have been more prepared.

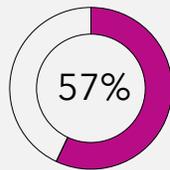
WHAT DO YOU THINK **COULD HAVE BEEN DONE BETTER IN LEADERSHIP** RELATED TO THE FIRES?



PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE FIRES

Residents have experienced significant emotional and psychological impact from the fires with many reporting trauma, anxiety and stress associated with witnessing the fires and the aftermath on own properties, their neighbours' properties and to surrounding nature.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE **PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE FIRES** HAS BEEN ON YOU?



OF RESIDENTS SUFFERED **PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA, ANXIETY & STRESS** FROM THE FIRES



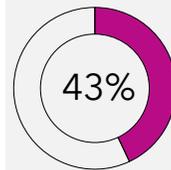
"Mental trauma. I had nightmares for a month and was sensitive to any hint of fires."

"I am traumatised by the visions and events. Tired because I didn't get a summer break. Saddened and devastated by the loss of billions of animals and that no one really got a break."

"Immediate impact was a little difficult - no power, no water, no food, no money, only a car to sleep in. Maybe a little bit of psychological trauma e.g. found myself obsessively checking fires near me app, all forms of social media (Facebook, Twitter), newspapers etc."

"Loss of confidence with anxiety and foreboding about the future in this governments hands."

"I was very anxious for my family members and friends and very upset to see impact on many people in local community including people I know directly. Family members still demonstrating signs of trauma."



OF RESIDENTS ARE DEVASTATED WITH THE **LOSS OF THEIR SENTIMENTAL HOME & VALUABLES**

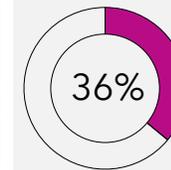


"I feel very sad. I have lost my special place and treasured things. The recovery has been extremely hard - dealing with a very difficult insurance company, trying to get information on clean-up, who to talk to, what is happening etc has been very time consuming and exhausting. And I have lost faith in the political system."

"I am grieving very, very deeply for the loss of my special place and for the future that it would have provided my children and grandchildren. I also grieve for my parents (now passed) who placed their hopes and dreams, their love in this home."

"Loss of annual family holiday with extended family, grandchildren, very important social glue/ support in our family. Loss of treasured coast house which was built by my father over 60 years ago, with associated items full of memories and family events over 4 generations."

"We are devastated by the loss of our house that meant so much to us. My children are upset about the circumstances and our contents weren't insured so there is a financial upset too."



OF RESIDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING **SADNESS, HEARTBREAK & GRIEF**



"A great deal of sadness for all the losses caused by the fires, present and future, including in our small coastal community around Rosedale. Increased awareness of fire risks and how inadequately we prepared for this fire season (even though we thought we had a 'plan'). Anxiety about the trauma impacts on neighbours, family and friends more directly affected by the fires."

"Concerned for family members who lost their house at Rosedale, New Years Eve."

"Just sad and a huge loss."

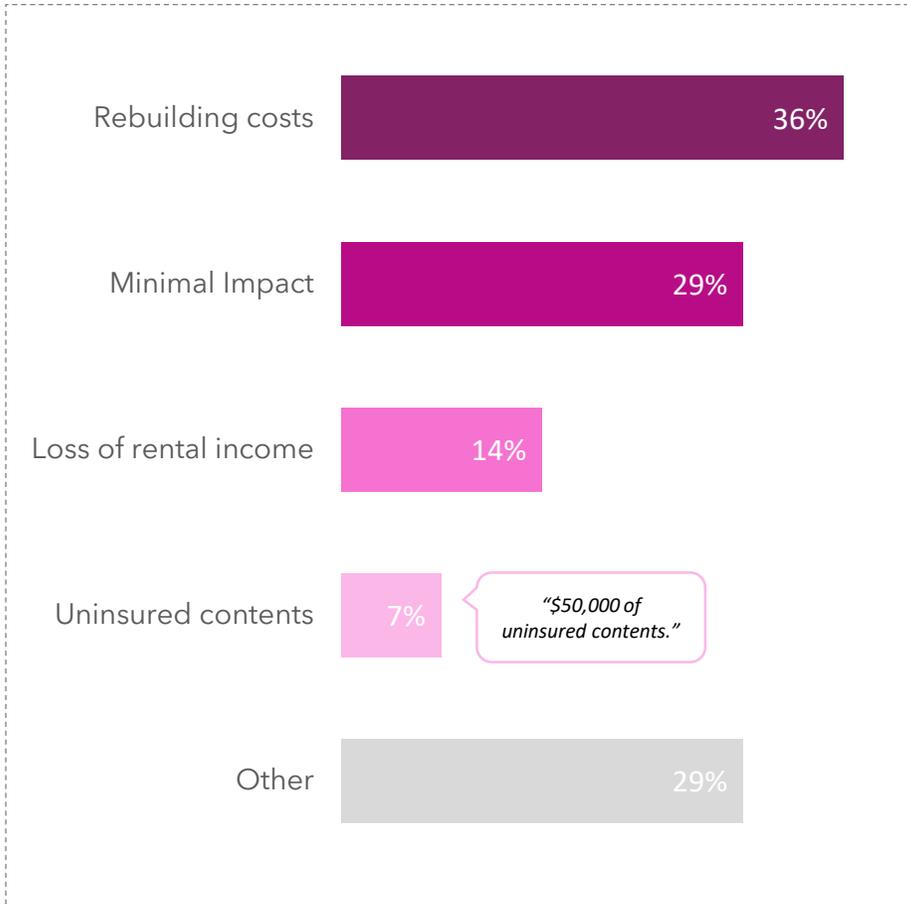
"Heartbreaking, stressful."

"I'm worried about how our beautiful neighbourhood will change. I fear the new buildings will be uglier, bush will take a long time to recover, people will leave and the smell of smoke in the air will trigger concern. All very sad outcomes."

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE FIRES

For those that lose their homes, they will need to cover rebuilding costs themselves; a cost that many are doubtful they can afford on top of mortgage repayments and loss of rental income.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE FIRES** WILL BE ON YOU?



36% OF RESIDENTS NEED TO COVER **REBUILDING COSTS**

"Very well insured but won't be able to rebuild in a flame zone. Loss of rental income after a year."

"Significant - we are probably underinsured by \$200,000-\$300,000. We didn't know how much it would cost to rebuild in a fire zone. That could be better explained. We still don't have any payout from our insurance company. If we rebuild it is likely to take a couple of years. Nothing yet has really happened almost two months after the fire."

"Probably not be able to afford to rebuild."

"Replacing the house is a shared expense with other family, my share after insurance refund is approx \$150K to meet new standards. Alternative holiday accommodation will cost a further 10K over approx. 2 summers and other holidays."

"Regarding replacing cars and contents of cars, I have had a good experience (initial inconvenience, but only minimally out of pocket). Regarding house insurance, that is still unresolved. We will definitely be negatively economically impacted, in fact we are not sure if we will end up not rebuilding and just selling."

14% OF RESIDENTS WILL **LOSE RENTAL INCOME**

"We already have a large mortgage with repayments of nearly \$4000 a month and no rental income to help pay it."

"Loss of rental income after a year."

29% OF RESIDENTS STATED **OTHER ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

"Not sure yet as we have not had our insurance claim settled."

"Time helping relatives back on the mainland."

"I am sure goods will increase and our insurance won't cover new fire related building regs in Rosedale."

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Although this crisis enabled communities to come together to support each other, residents are pleading for the Government to learn from their mistakes and to take proactive action against climate change so that this crisis won't happen again.

IS THERE **ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY** ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE FIRES?



THERE IS CONSENSUS THAT **FEDERAL LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES** NEED TO **CHANGE**

"Not enough words to capture what I want to express. Our federal leaders, Morrison and Dutton (national emergency service minister completely MIA) and others (Joyce, McCormack, Canavan, Kelly) who talked down to Australian people were disgraceful. That can't be allowed to happen again."

"Action by all levels of government is needed now to reduce carbon emissions and fuel build up in the Bush. World leadership."

"I shake my head at the corruption created by the mining industry."



HOWEVER, SOME WERE IMPRESSED WITH **INFORMATIVE NEWS & MEDIA COVERAGE** DURING THE FIRES

"Glad I wasn't there with my kids (decision I made on RFS advice) but along with the positive social media coverage during the fires I feel like I was there."

"Thanks to ABC news coverage. Very impressive, comprehensive and appreciated."



AND THE WAY THE **COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER** TO SUPPORT & HELP EACH OTHER

"The only positive was that many ordinary citizens showed so much courage and selflessness to help others and to help wildlife recovery."

"There were positive impacts in that people became closer to each other and really helped each other."

THANK YOU

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS!

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