MONASH University

Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub

The 2017 Australian Weather Presenter Survey

Initial Findings, June 2017.

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Introduction:

This report documents the initial findings of the first Australian weather presenters survey. This study was conducted by the Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub - a newly established research grouping at Monash University.

The survey sought to understand the collective attitudes of the Australian weather presenting community in relation to climate change. Specifically, it aimed to gauge their interest in the possibility of including climate information in their weather presentations.

The survey also strove to understand the level of engagement that weather presenters currently have with climate change in both their personal and professional lives.

The survey was sent to every current Australian weather presenter and a selection of very recent former presenters (see inclusion and exclusion criteria for detail). This list was compiled using a combination of resources from within the Monash School of Media, Film & Journalism, the Isentia database and through extensive research on publicly available information such as social media and news articles. The database took four weeks to compile and covered categories such as network information and roles, organisational affiliations and public commentary on issues related to the environment.

It is hoped that the results of this survey will assist in partnering with television weather presenters to deliver a climate education program that will deliver well-designed, easy to understand climate graphics in their segments. To enable such a process, the Hub is seeking to partner with both commercial and publicly funded television networks.

a) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Weather presenters invited to participate in the survey included current and former presenters from free-to-air and pay-tv channels with a dedicated regional weather segment. Former presenters included in the survey had presented a television weather segment within the last six months. A weather presenter was defined as a professional who currently reads or has recently read a regular and detailed forecast for a district within Australia.

In order to capture as many views as possible, the study chose not to define weather presenters as those who solely present the weather full-time. Instead part-time presenters, news reporters with weather presenting segments and meteorologists with recent presenting experience were also included in the survey contact list.

b) Market Research

In Australia, there are 31 media markets. The commercial channels tended to employ one major presenter per network dedicated to each state and capital city. Many networks also had a selection of weekend or part-time presenters. In the regional markets, it was found that often a single presenter would present to many different regional areas within a state, and would sometimes present across multiple states. This distribution appears to be due to the relatively small size of the Australian media sphere, and the coastal nature of capital cities.

c) Methodology

The survey's main method of communication and distribution was via email. A total of 76 weather presenters were invited to participate, of which 35 participated. This resulted in the survey achieving an overall response rate of 46.05%.

The collection period ran for a total of four weeks and a total of seven emails were sent during this period. In the first week of the program, presenters were sent an email introducing them to the work and aims of The Hub and were informed that they would be receiving an invitation to participate in the survey the following week.

In the proceeding weeks, presenters were sent links to the Australian Weather Presenter Survey and encouraged to take part. Various send times and dates were trialled in order to maximise engagement and increase the overall return rate of the survey. Initially emails were personalised, and as the program progressed, presenters were sent collective group emails. While the messaging varied from week to week, the aims of the survey, the anonymity of the results, and the necessity of capturing the full spectrum of opinions through widespread participation was consistently emphasised.

In recognition of their participation, the Hub offered to make a small donation on behalf of each presenter to either the Australian Meteorological and Atmospheric Society (AMOS) or a charity of their

choice. At the conclusion of the survey a majority of donations were made to AMOS and individual donations were made to a variety of charities, including Variety SA, The Starlight Foundation, Shake It Up, The Climate Council, Fame, The CFS Foundation, WWF and Carrie's Beanies for Brain Cancer.

Executive Summary

46% of all Australian weather presenters responded to the survey.

97% of respondents thought that climate change is happening.

76% of respondents thought that climate change that has occurred over the last 50 years has been either 'largely or entirely' caused by human activity, or 'mostly by human activity'. A further 12% thought the cause was an equal mix of human and natural events.

97% of respondents thought that their audiences would be interested in learning about the impacts of climate change, with 48% believing they would be 'Very Interested' or 'Moderately interested'.

97% of respondents though that educational outreach about climate change was important, with 32% regarding it as 'very' or 'extremely' important.

Historical local climate statistics were by far the strongest category of information that respondents were comfortable with presenting at 91%.

Future local climate projections were also high at just under 70%. The next highest category was 'information about local climate change impacts' which had a 63% response rate.

The survey found that the more global the statistics, and less specific to particular media markets the less appealing it was to the presenters surveyed. Nevertheless, presenting globally historical (39%) projected (33%) and impact-related (30%) statistics were of interest to around one third of presenters.

A question asking whether reporting on the impacts of climate change will likely help or hurt the careers of respondents drew a largely neutral response. Nearly 76% of presenters thought it would neither help nor hurt their career. As many presenters thought it would help their career a little as much as hurt their career a little at 9%. However 6% did believe it could hurt their career a moderate amount.

Weather presenters surveyed detailed the channels in which they had informed viewers about the impact of climate change in the past 12 months.

50% listed their television role as a place where this has happened, with social media (41%) and personal communication with friends and family (37%) being the next highest means of communication.

71% of respondents reported being comfortable with using climate graphics in their reporting on television with a further 19% being neither comfortable or uncomfortable.

82% reported having worked at as their station presenter for more than 4 years, with 24% having been at their station for more than 16 years.

Only 9% of respondents reported that their TV station had engaged outside consultants for advice on updating their weather segments.

97% of respondents believed that viewers had either 'strong trust' or 'moderate trust' in them as a reliable source of weather information.

SURVEY QUESTIONS
Q1. How important are each of the following activities in your role delivering the weather?

a) Preparing the weather forecast
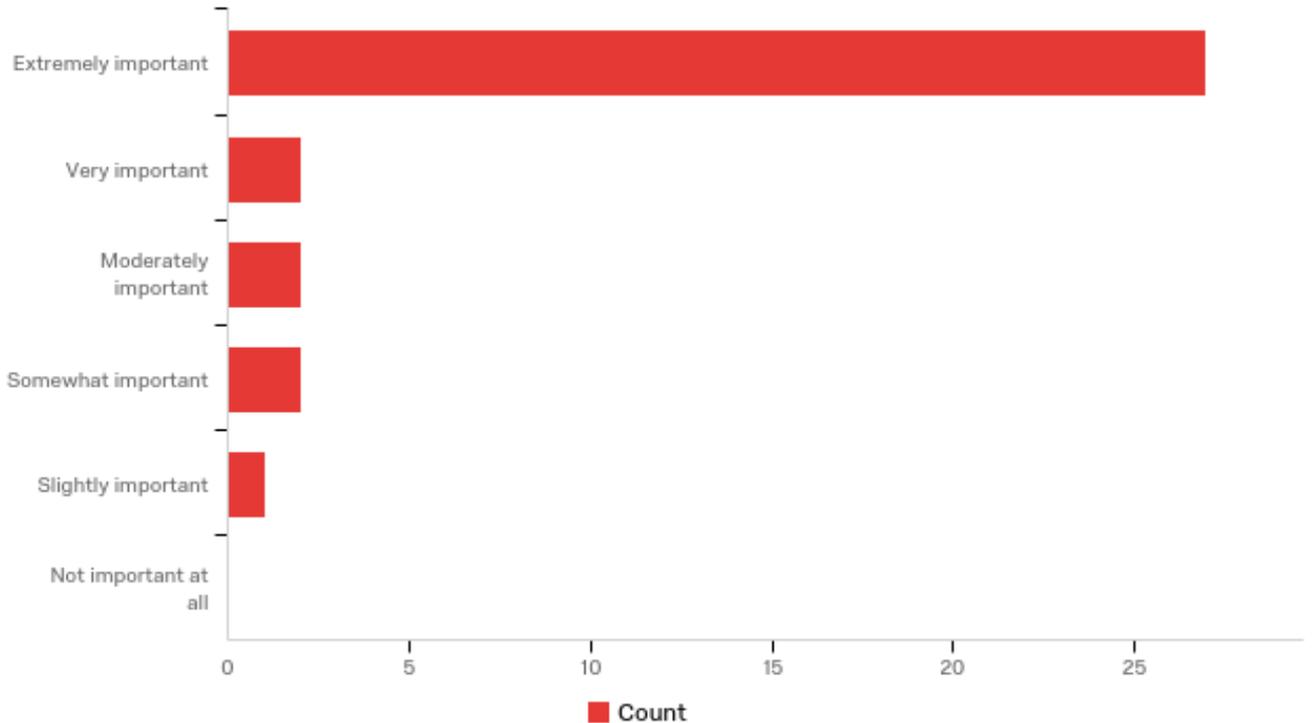
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely important	79.41%	27
2	Very important	5.88%	2
3	Moderately important	5.88%	2
4	Somewhat important	5.88%	2
5	Slightly important	2.94%	1
6	Not important at all	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

b) Reporting the weather forecast
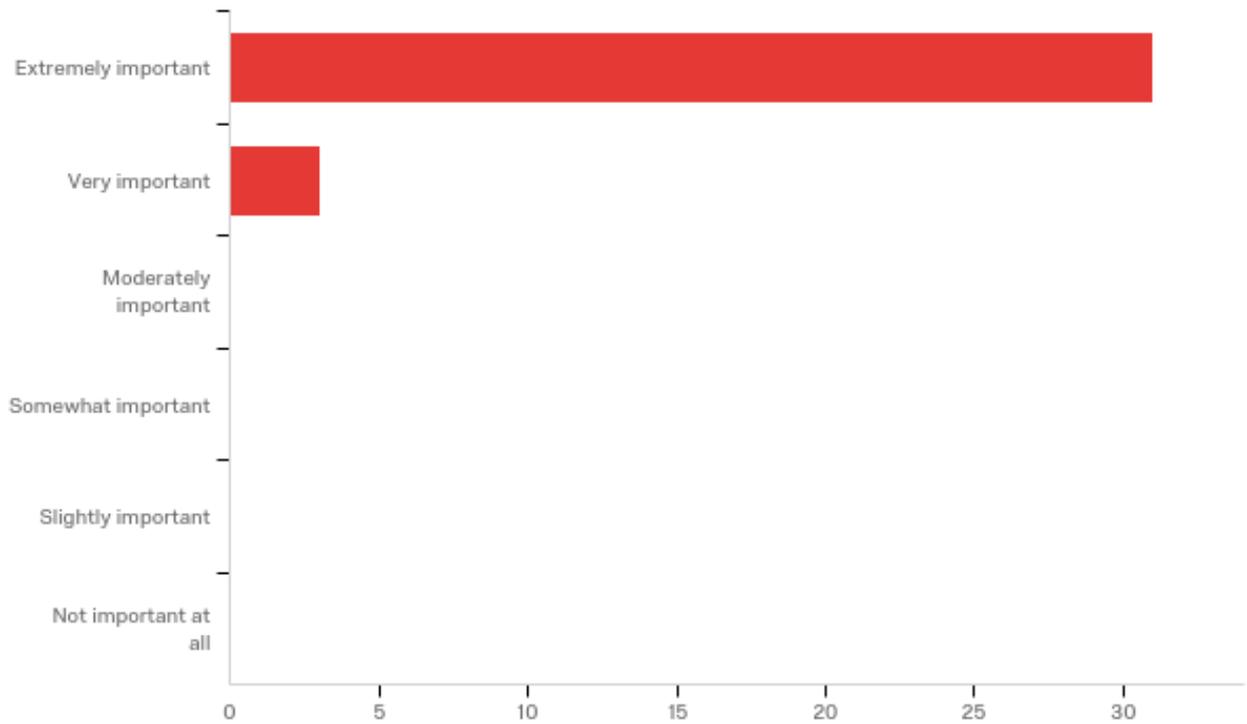
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely important	91.18%	31
2	Very important	8.82%	3
3	Moderately important	0.00%	0
4	Somewhat important	0.00%	0
5	Slightly important	0.00%	0
6	Not important at all	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

c) Relaying weather safety watches/ warnings
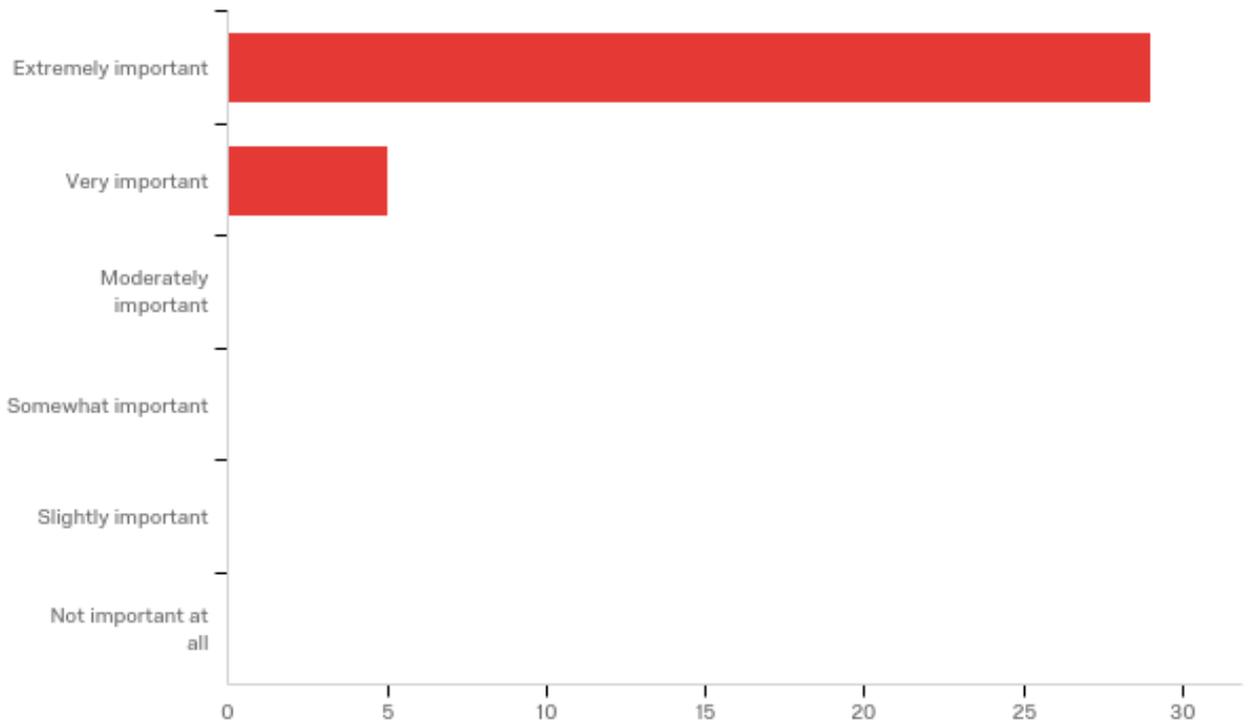
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely important	85.29%	29
2	Very important	14.71%	5
3	Moderately important	0.00%	0
4	Somewhat important	0.00%	0
5	Slightly important	0.00%	0
6	Not important at all	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

d) Educational outreach about weather
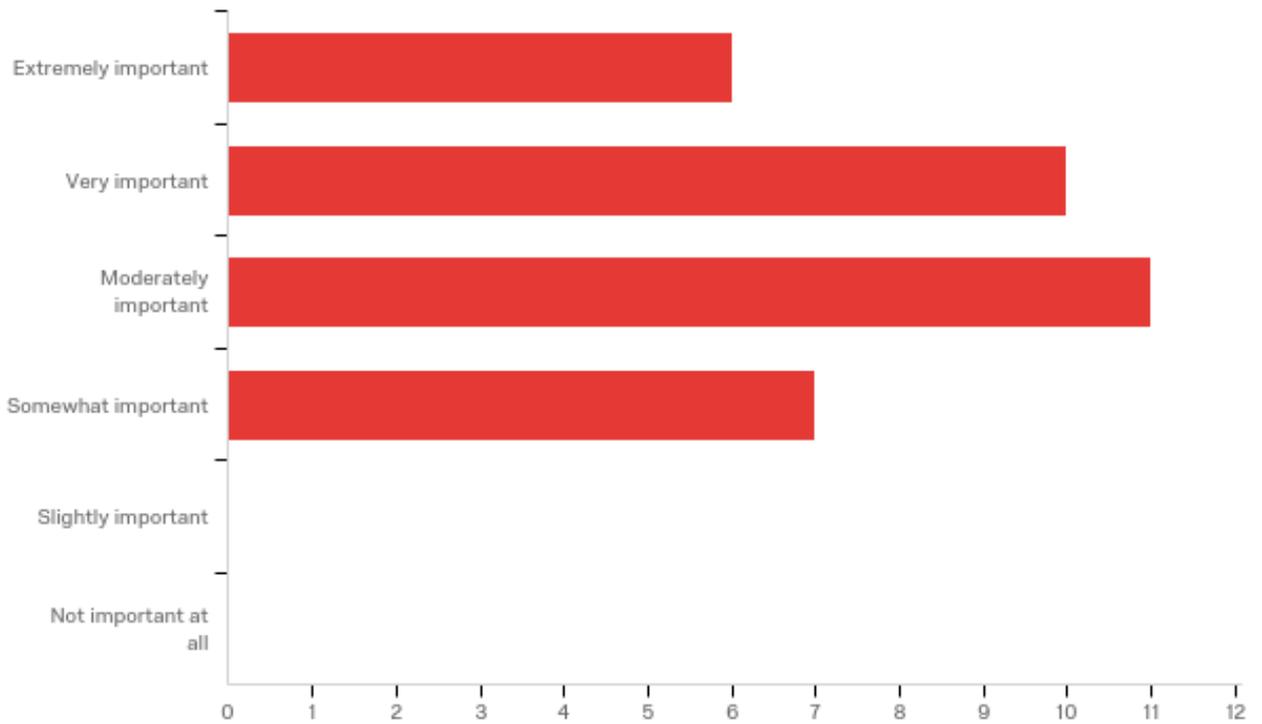
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely important	17.65%	6
2	Very important	29.41%	10
3	Moderately important	32.35%	11
4	Somewhat important	20.59%	7
5	Slightly important	0.00%	0
6	Not important at all	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

e) Educational outreach about climate change
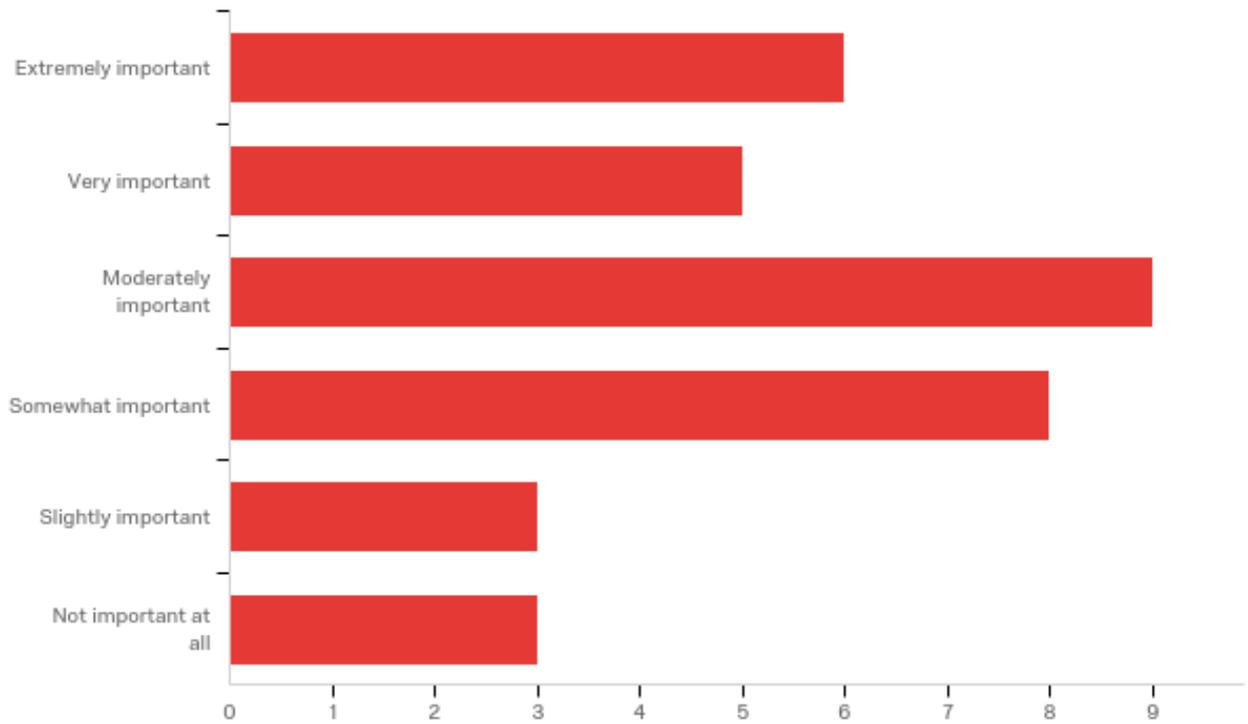
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely important	17.65%	6
2	Very important	14.71%	5
3	Moderately important	26.47%	9
4	Somewhat important	23.53%	8
5	Slightly important	8.82%	3
6	Not important at all	8.82%	3
	Total	100%	34

Q2 - Over the past 12 months, which if any of the following communication channels did you use as part of your job delivering the weather? Check all that apply.
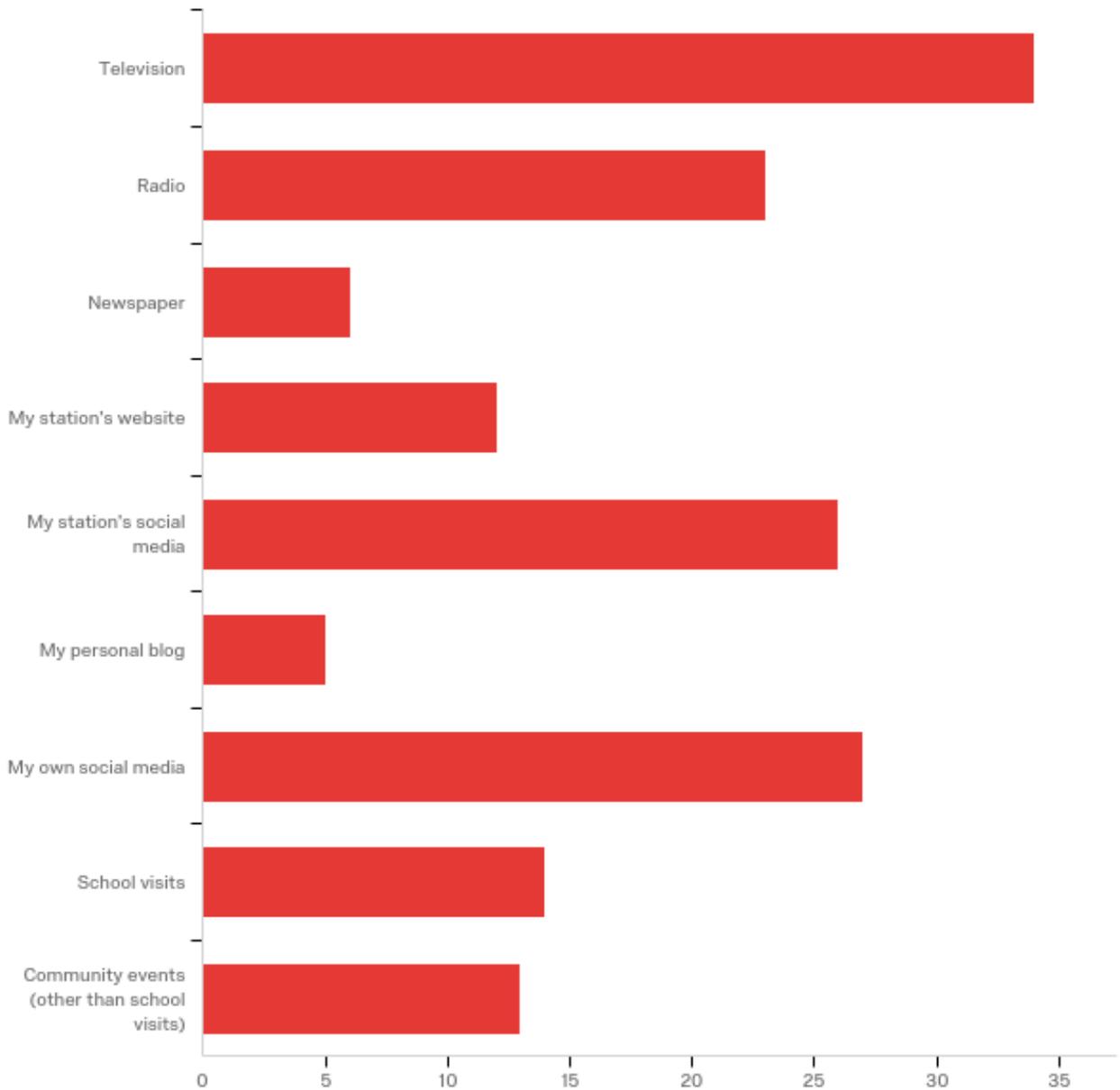
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Television	100.00%	34
2	Radio	67.65%	23
3	Newspaper	17.65%	6
4	My station's website	35.29%	12
5	My station's social media	76.47%	26
6	My personal blog	14.71%	5

7	My own social media	79.41%	27
8	School visits	41.18%	14
9	Community events (other than school visits)	38.24%	13
	Total	100%*	34

*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%.

Q3 - Over the past 12 months, which if any of the following online and social media tools did you use as part of your job delivering the weather? Check all that apply.
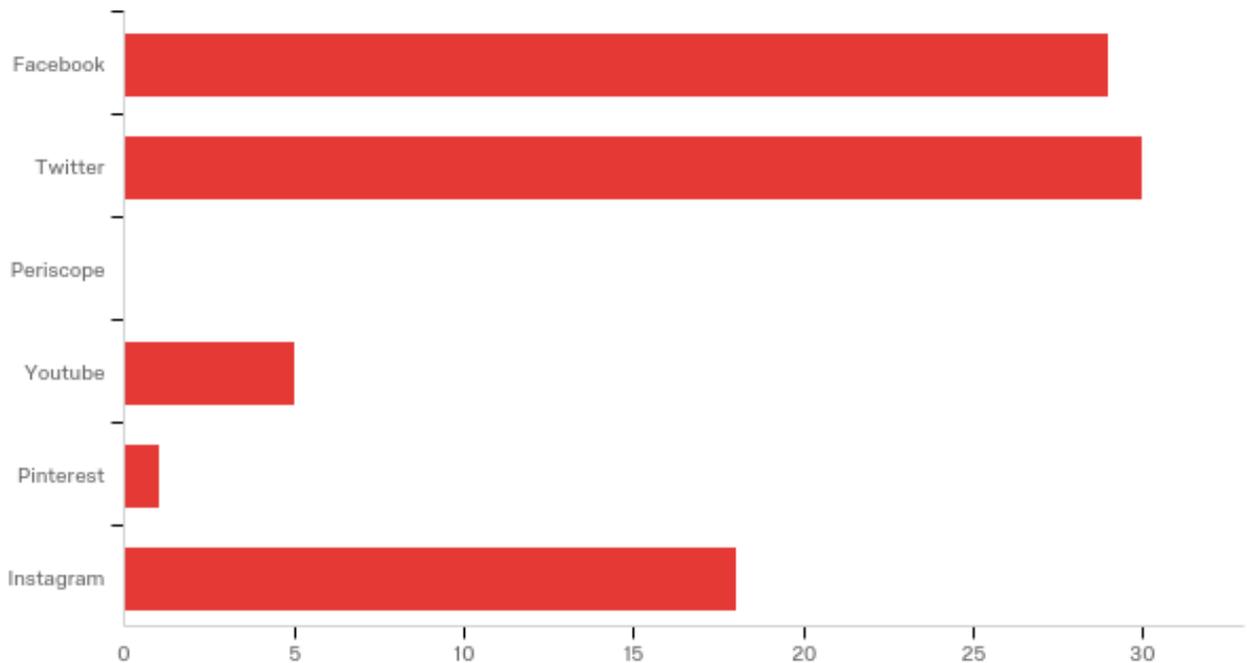

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Facebook	90.63%	29
2	Twitter	93.75%	30
3	Periscope	0.00%	0
4	Youtube	15.63%	5
5	Pinterest	3.13%	1
6	Instagram	56.25%	18
	Total	100%*	32

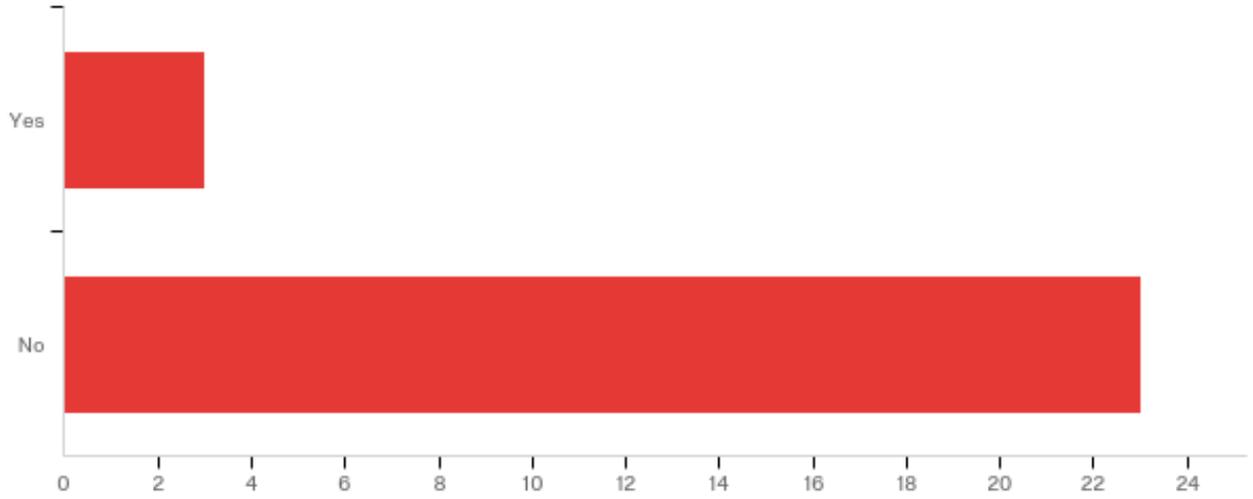*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%

Q4 - In the past 12 months, has your station worked with a consultant who gave suggestions on your station's weather segments?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	8.82%	3
2	No	67.65%	23
3	Don't know	23.53%	8
	Total	100%	34

Q5 - To what extent do you believe your viewers trust you as a reliable source of weather information?
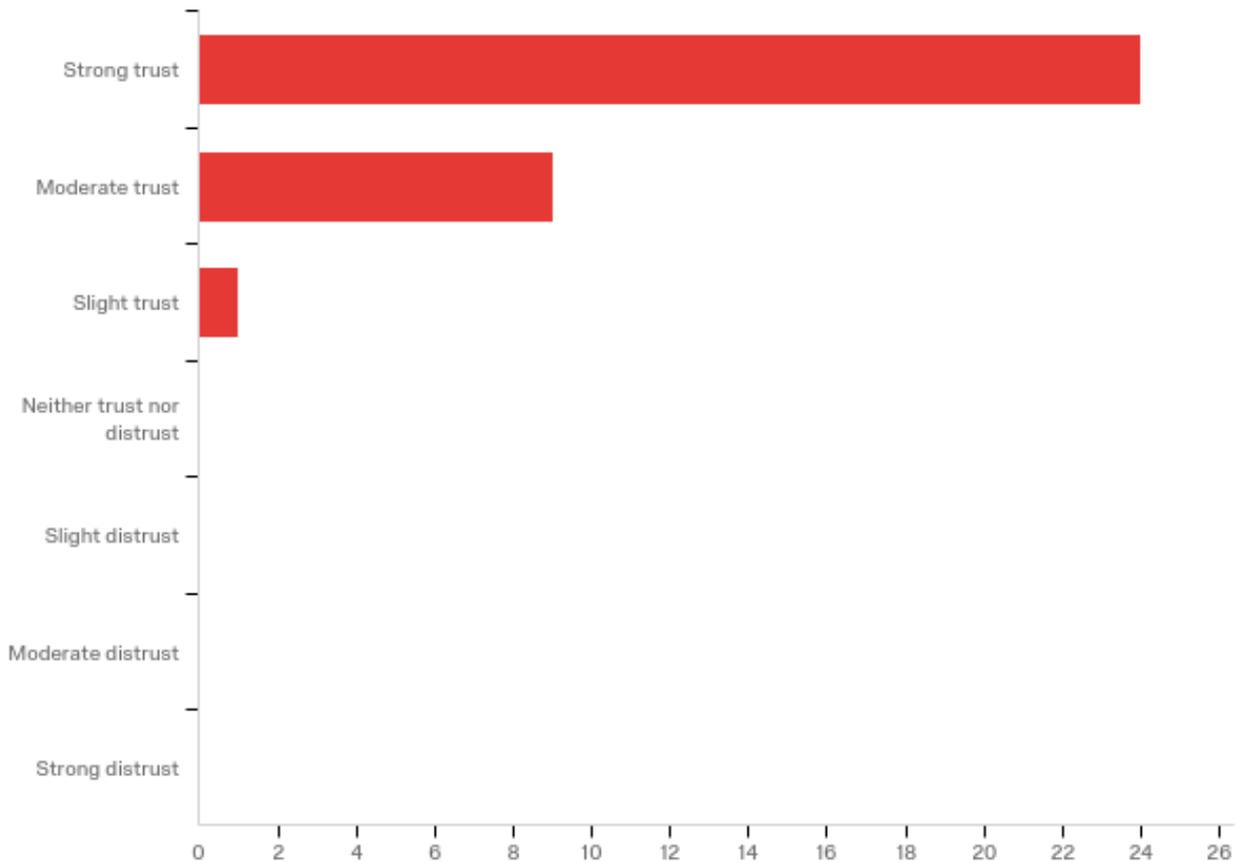
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strong trust	70.59%	24
2	Moderate trust	26.47%	9
3	Slight trust	2.94%	1
4	Neither trust nor distrust	0.00%	0
5	Slight distrust	0.00%	0
6	Moderate distrust	0.00%	0
7	Strong distrust	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

Q6 - Regardless of the cause, do you think climate change is happening?
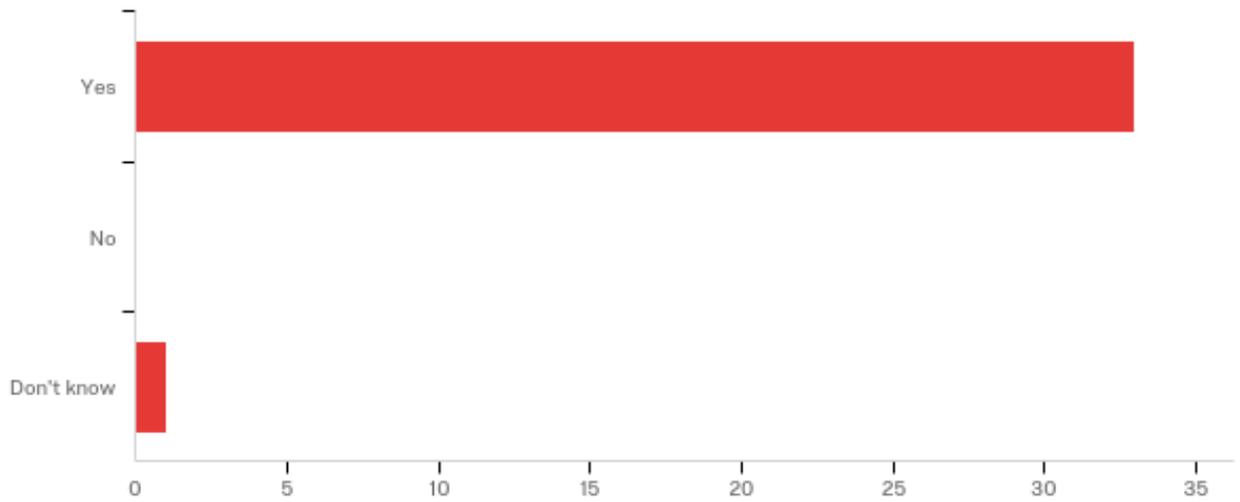
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	97.06%	33
2	No	0.00%	0
3	Don't know	2.94%	1
	Total	100%	34

Q7 - Do you think that the climate change that has occurred over the past 50 years has been caused...
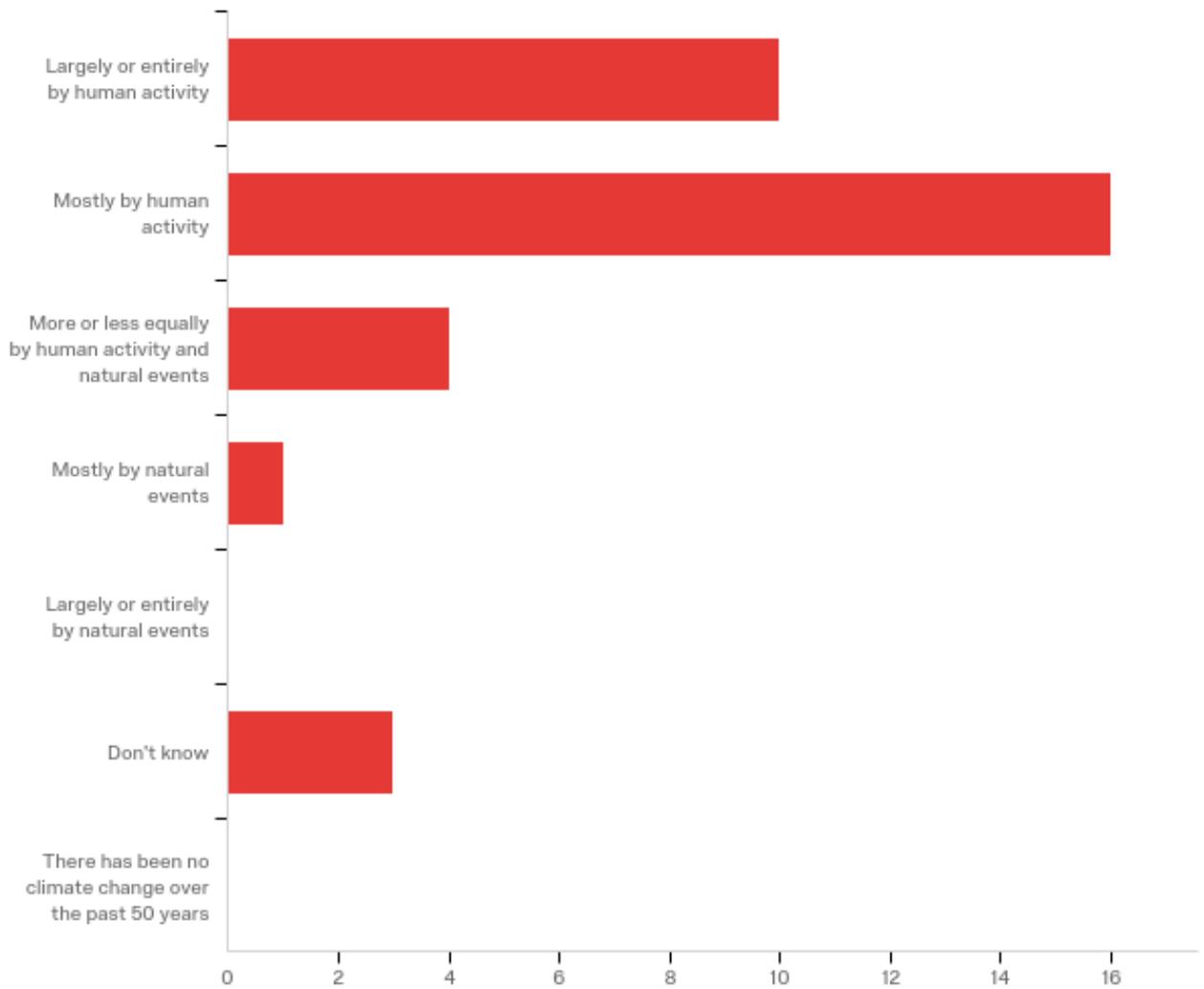
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Largely or entirely by human activity	29.41%	10
2	Mostly by human activity	47.06%	16
3	More or less equally by human activity and natural events	11.76%	4
4	Mostly by natural events	2.94%	1
5	Largely or entirely by natural events	0.00%	0
6	Don't know	8.82%	3
7	There has been no climate change over the past 50 years	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	34

Q8 - Which of the following categories would you feel comfortable presenting to your viewers on air? Please check all that apply.
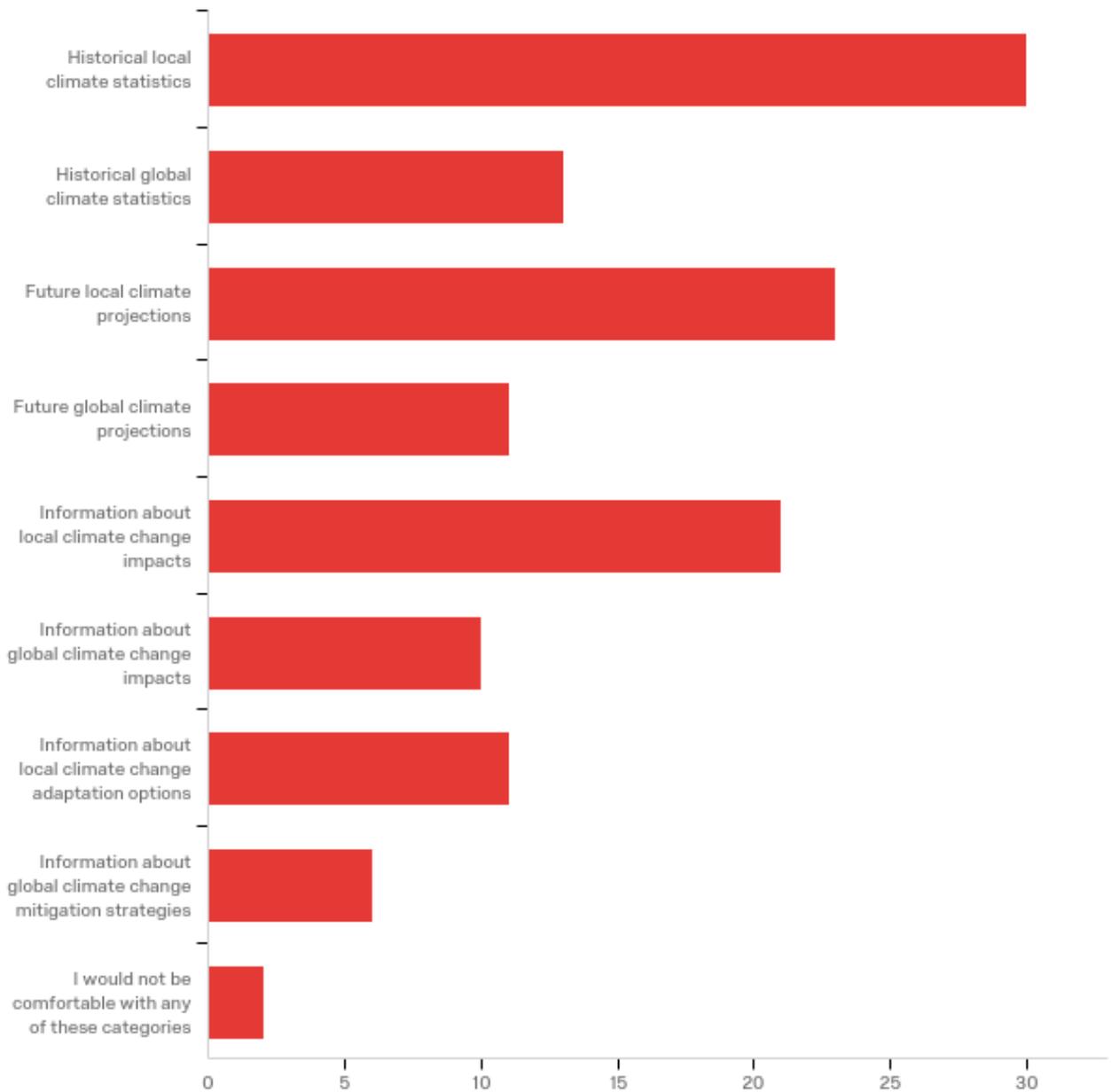
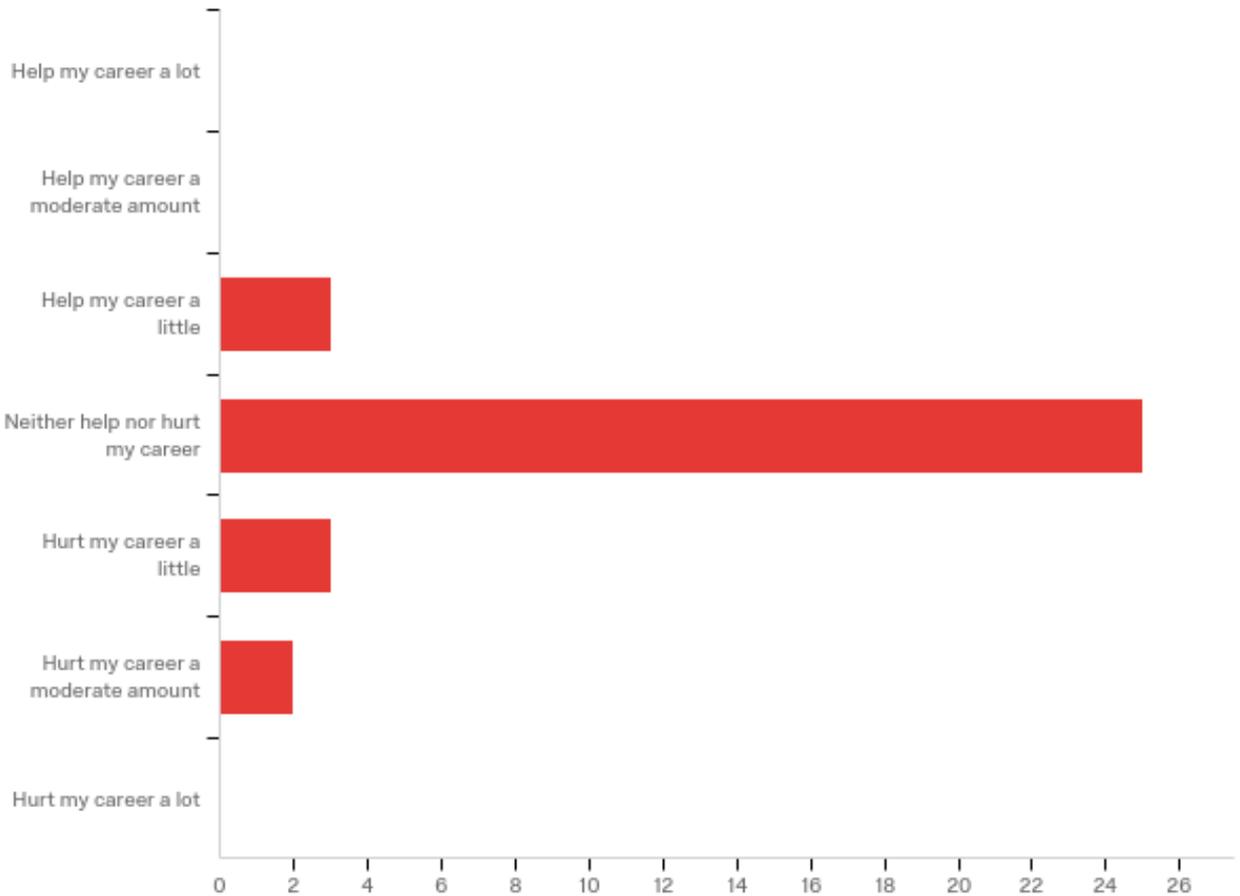| #	Answer	%	Count
1	Historical local climate statistics	90.91%	30
2	Historical global climate statistics	39.39%	13
3	Future local climate projections	69.70%	23
4	Future global climate projections	33.33%	11
5	Information about local climate change impacts	63.64%	21
6	Information about global climate change impacts	30.30%	10

|			
7	Information about local climate change adaptation options	33.33%	11
8	Information about global climate change mitigation strategies	18.18%	6
9	I would not be comfortable with any of these categories	6.06%	2
	Total	100%*	33

*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%.

Q9 - Please select the statement that best reflects your opinion: "Reporting on the impacts of climate change will likely..."

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Help my career a lot	0.00%	0
2	Help my career a moderate amount	0.00%	0
3	Help my career a little	9.09%	3
4	Neither help nor hurt my career	75.76%	25
5	Hurt my career a little	9.09%	3
6	Hurt my career a moderate amount	6.06%	2
7	Hurt my career a lot	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

Q10 - How interested do you think your audience is in learning about impacts of climate change?
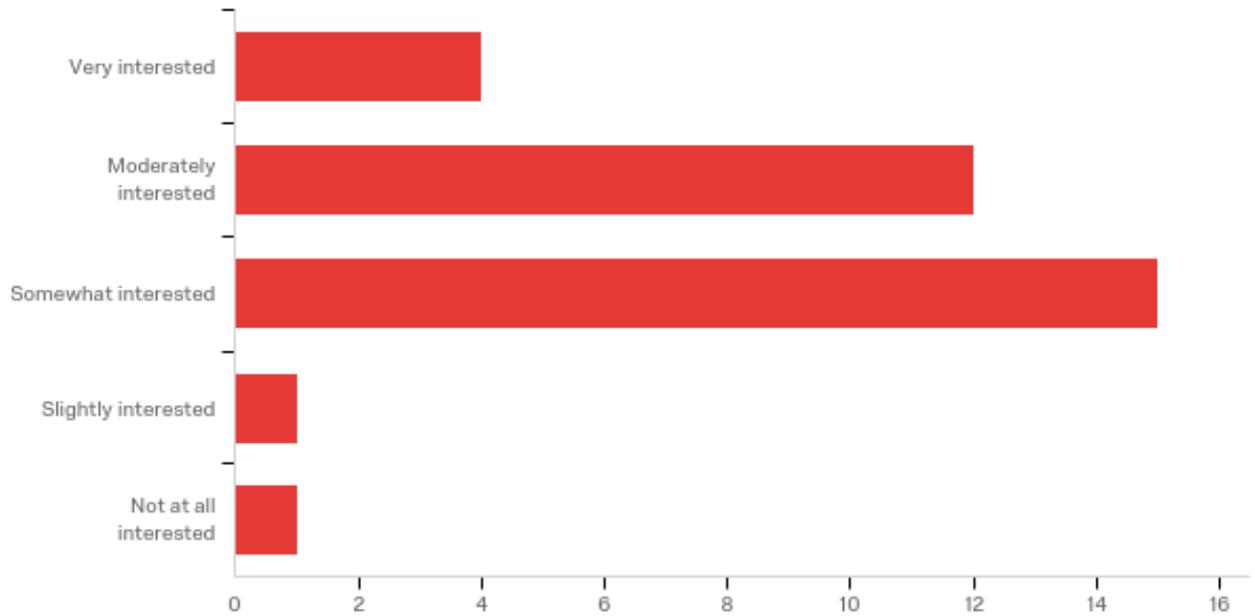
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very interested	12.12%	4
2	Moderately interested	36.36%	12
3	Somewhat interested	45.45%	15
4	Slightly interested	3.03%	1
5	Not at all interested	3.03%	1
	Total	100%	33

Q11 - Over the past 12 months, which if any of the following channels did you use to inform your viewers, or other people in your community, about the impacts of climate change? Check all that apply.
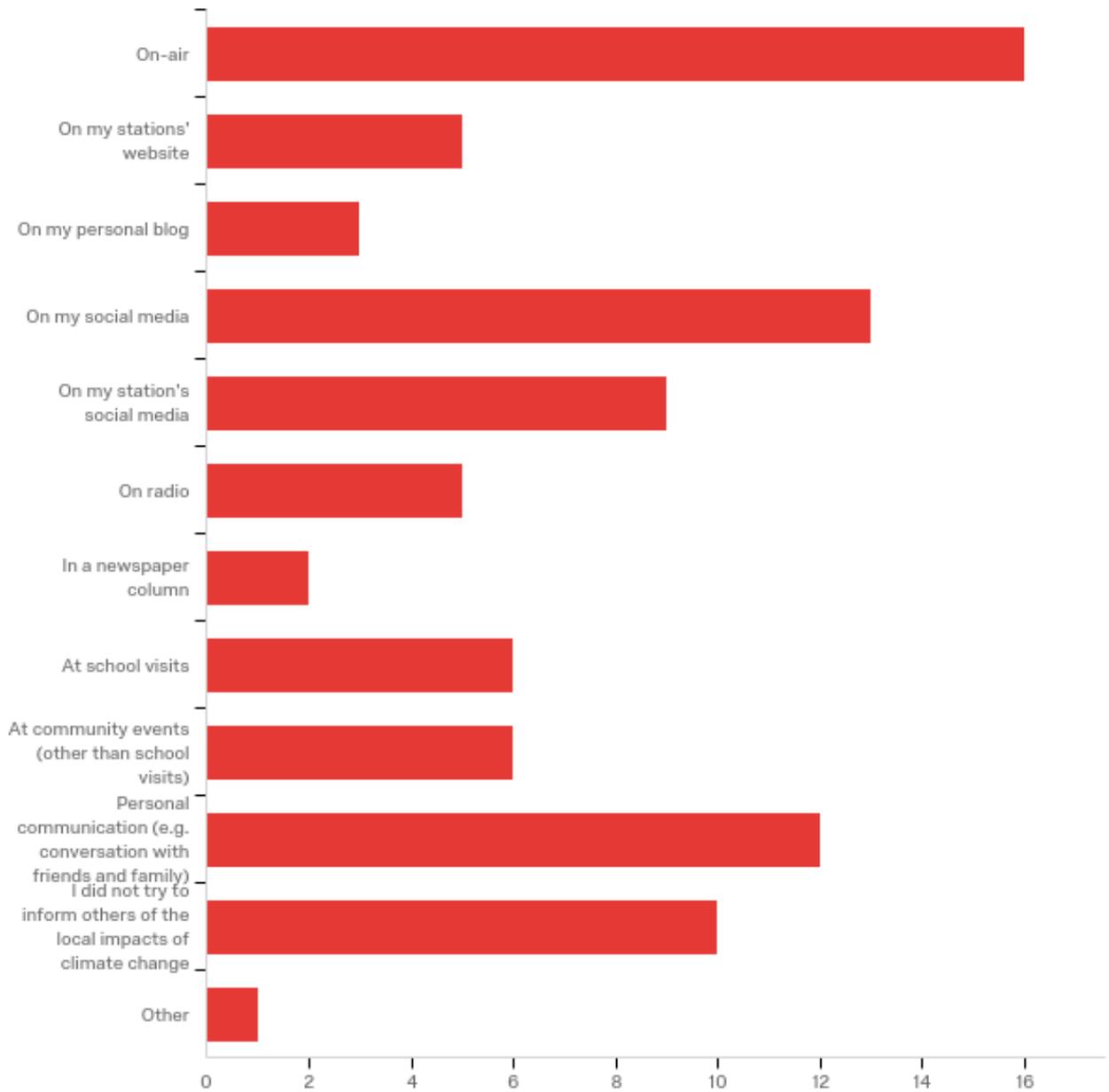
#	Answer	%	Count
1	On-air	50.00%	16
2	On my stations' website	15.63%	5
3	On my personal blog	9.38%	3
4	On my social media	40.63%	13
5	On my station's social media	28.13%	9
6	On radio	15.63%	5

|			
7	In a newspaper column	6.25%	2
8	At school visits	18.75%	6
9	At community events (other than school visits)	18.75%	6
11	Personal communication (e.g. conversation with friends and family)	37.50%	12
10	I did not try to inform others of the local impacts of climate change	31.25%	10
12	Other	3.13%	1
	Total	100%*	32

*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%.

**Q12 - Over the past 12 months, about how often did you report on the impacts of climate change on-air?**
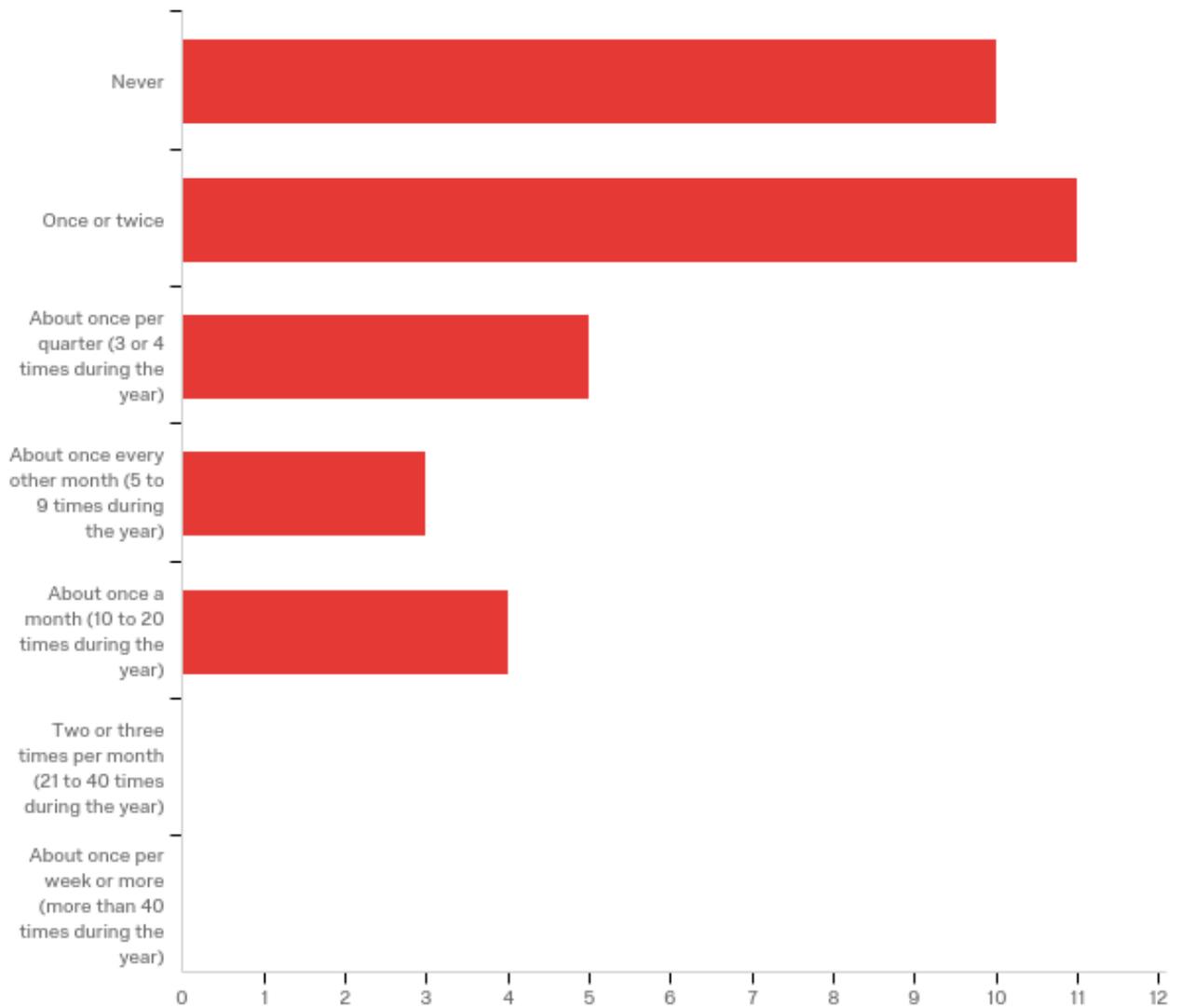
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	30.30%	10
2	Once or twice	33.33%	11
3	About once per quarter (3 or 4 times during the year)	15.15%	5
4	About once every other month (5 to 9 times during the year)	9.09%	3
5	About once a month (10 to 20 times during the year)	12.12%	4
6	Two or three times per month (21 to 40 times during the year)	0.00%	0
7	About once per week or more (more than 40 times during the year)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

**Q13 - Over the past 12 months, about how often did you report on the impacts of climate change online?**
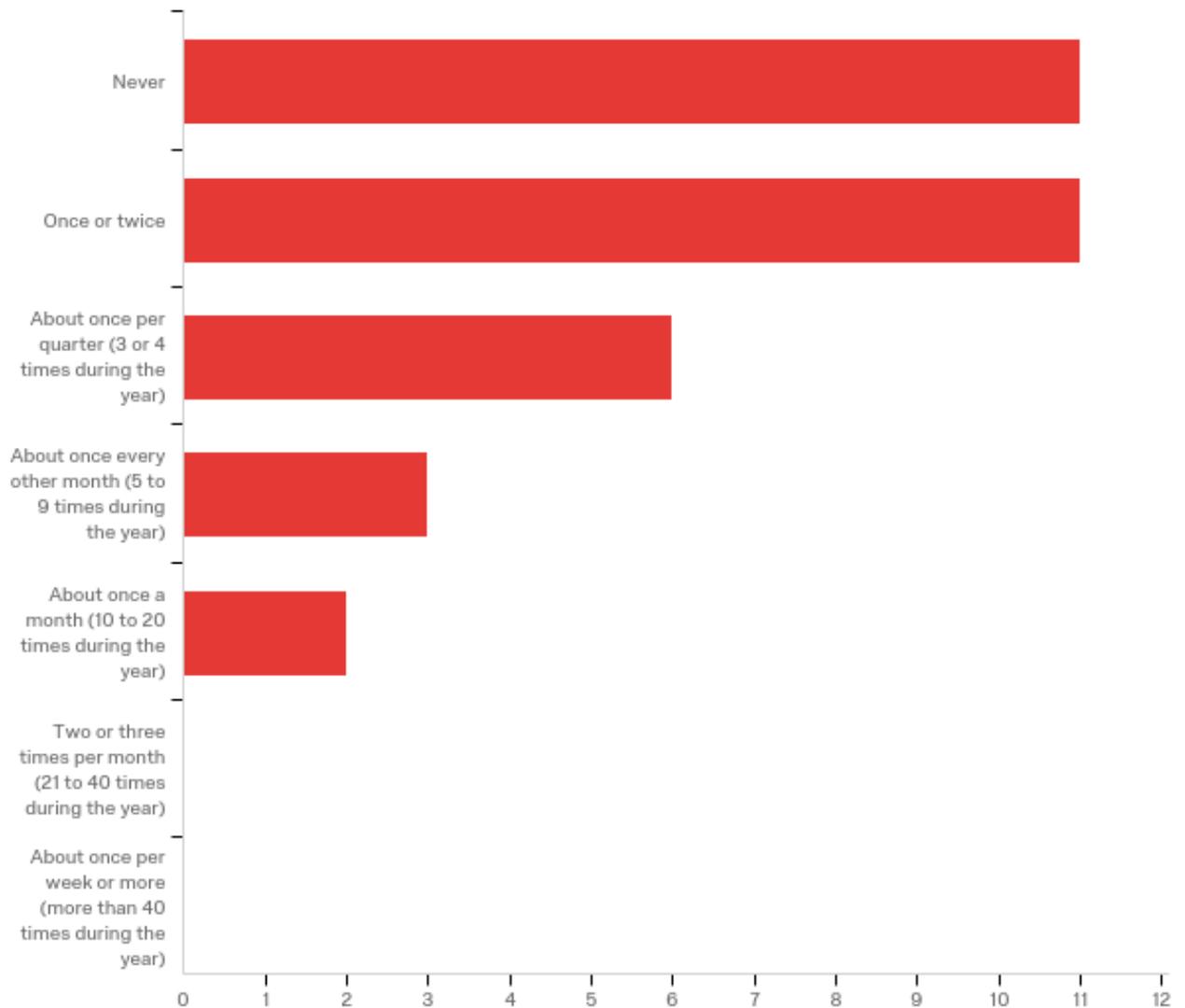
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	33.33%	11
2	Once or twice	33.33%	11
3	About once per quarter (3 or 4 times during the year)	18.18%	6
4	About once every other month (5 to 9 times during the year)	9.09%	3
5	About once a month (10 to 20 times during the year)	6.06%	2
6	Two or three times per month (21 to 40 times during the year)	0.00%	0
7	About once per week or more (more than 40 times during the year)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

Q14 How comfortable would you be in using climate graphics in your reporting?
a) On-air
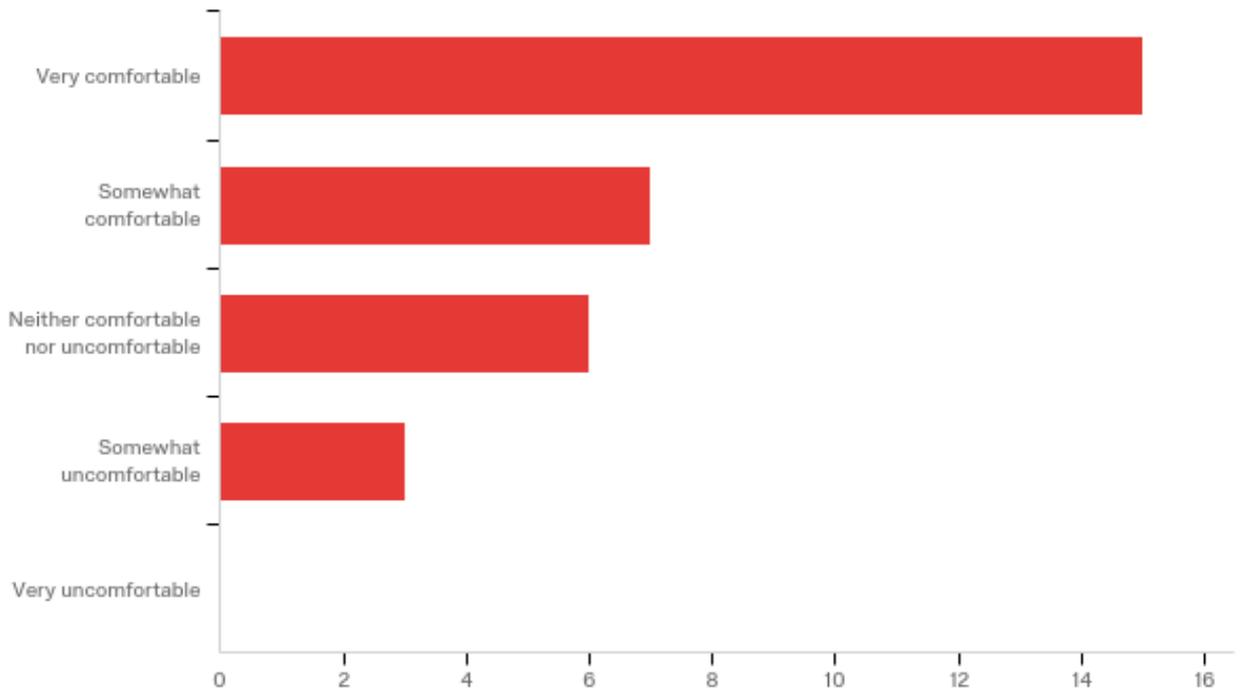
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very comfortable	48.39%	15
2	Somewhat comfortable	22.58%	7
3	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	19.35%	6
4	Somewhat uncomfortable	9.68%	3
5	Very uncomfortable	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	31

b) On my station's website
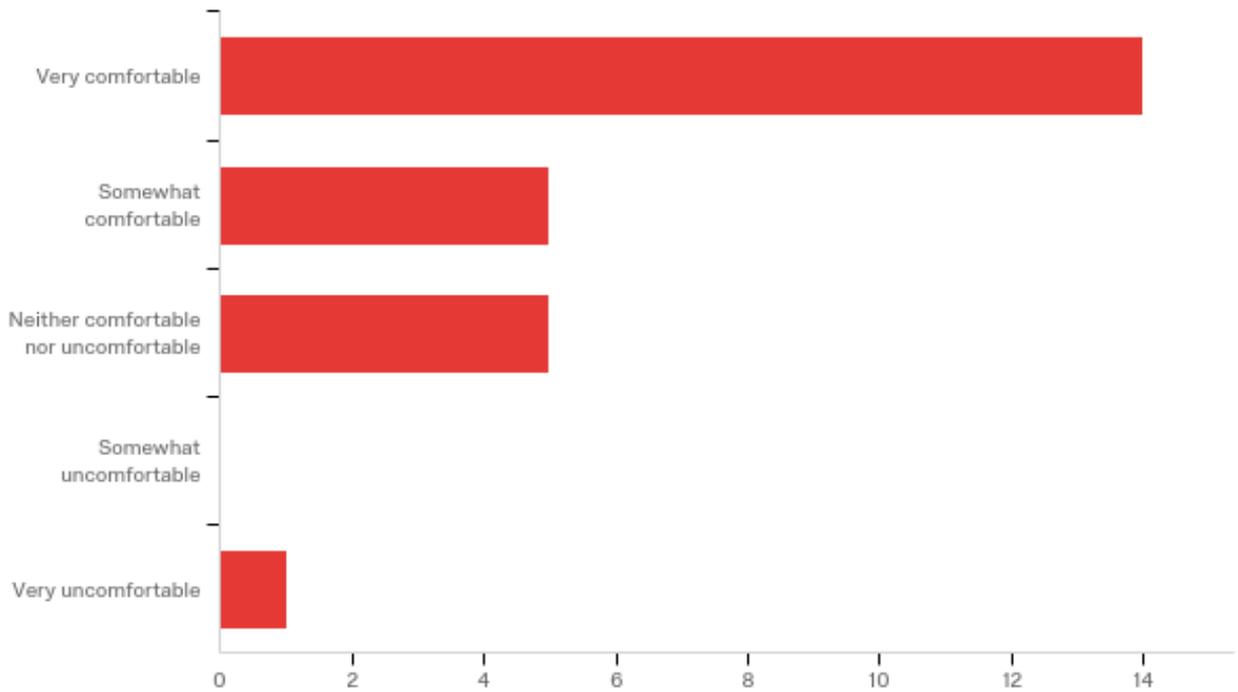
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very comfortable	56.00%	14
2	Somewhat comfortable	20.00%	5
3	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	20.00%	5
4	Somewhat uncomfortable	0.00%	0
5	Very uncomfortable	4.00%	1
	Total	100%	25

c) In social media
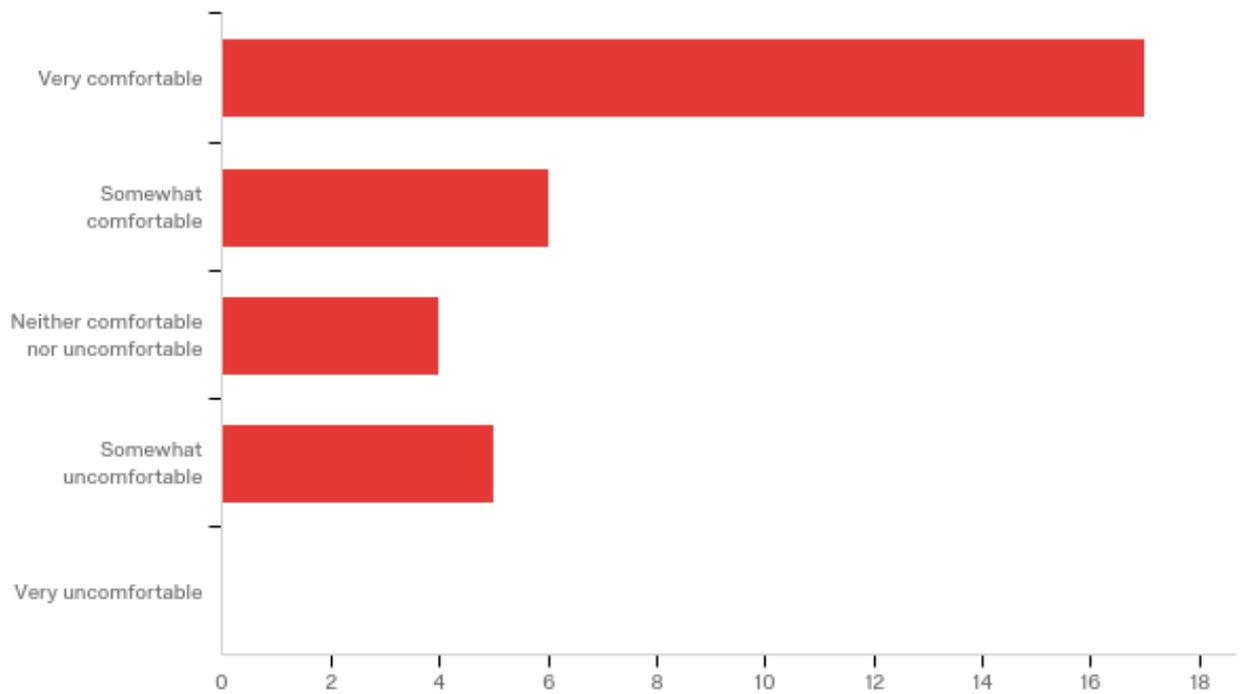
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very comfortable	53.13%	17
2	Somewhat comfortable	18.75%	6
3	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	12.50%	4
4	Somewhat uncomfortable	15.63%	5
5	Very uncomfortable	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	32

d) On my personal blog
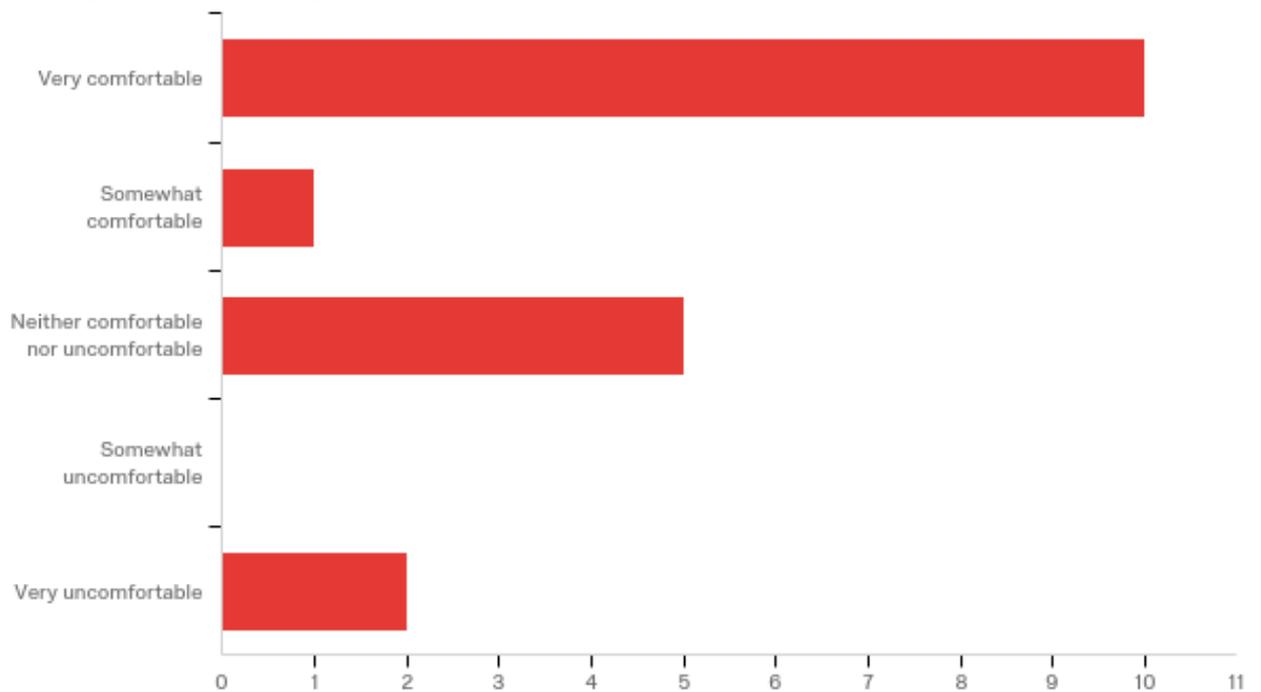
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very comfortable	55.56%	10
2	Somewhat comfortable	5.56%	1
3	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	27.78%	5
4	Somewhat uncomfortable	0.00%	0
5	Very uncomfortable	11.11%	2
	Total	100%	18

Q15 - Do you have a preference for where you receive climate graphics from?
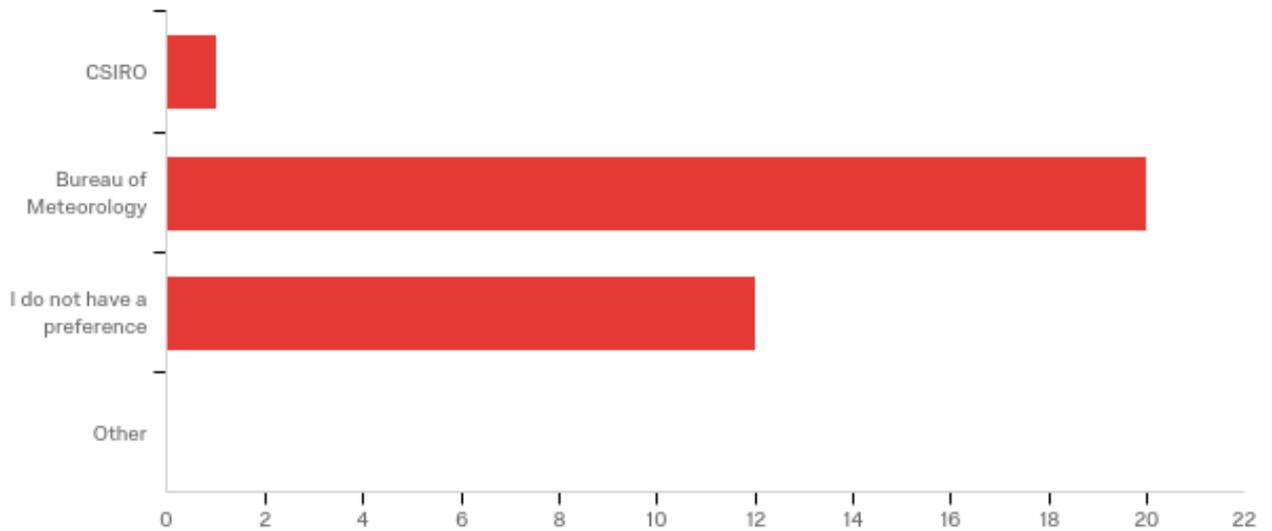
#	Answer	%	Count
1	CSIRO	3.03%	1
2	Bureau of Meteorology	60.61%	20
3	I do not have a preference	36.36%	12
4	Other	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

Q16 - How long have you worked at your current news station?
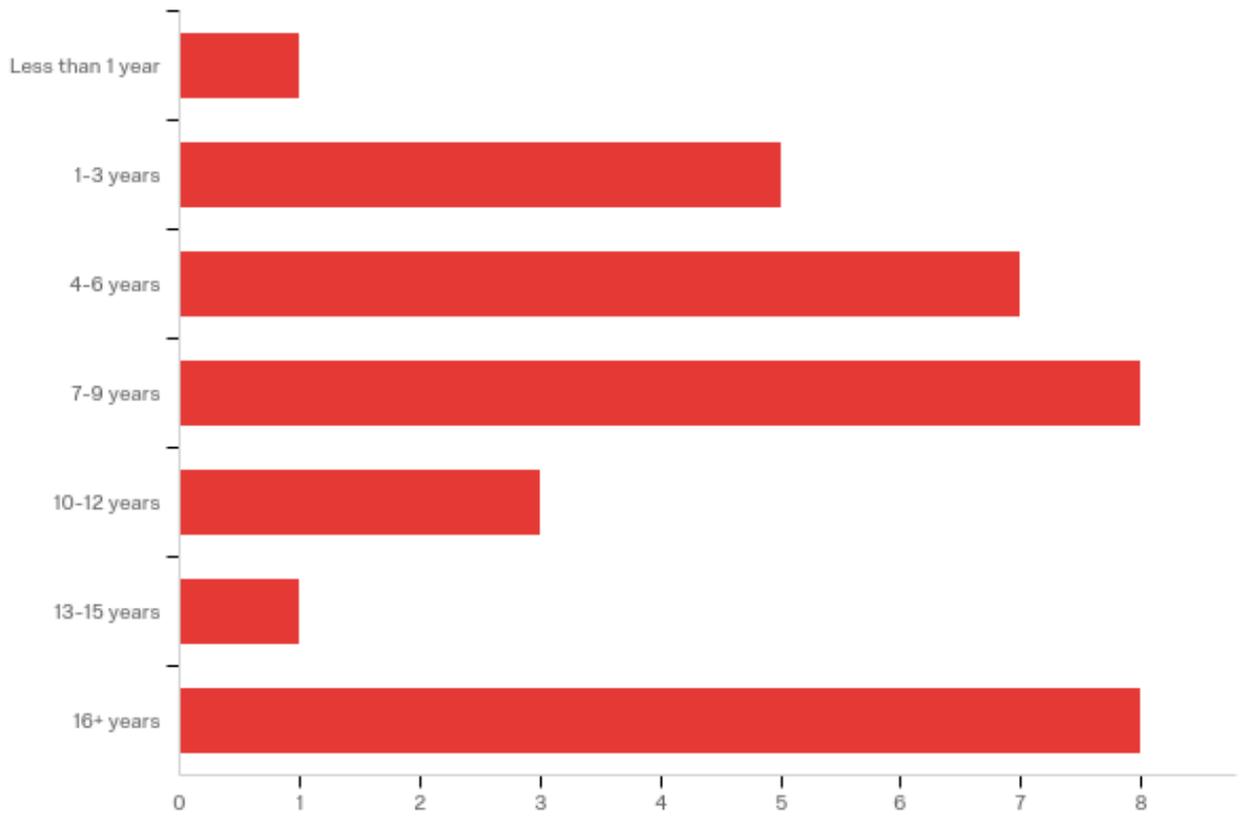
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than 1 year	3.03%	1
2	1-3 years	15.15%	5
3	4-6 years	21.21%	7
4	7-9 years	24.24%	8
5	10-12 years	9.09%	3
6	13-15 years	3.03%	1
7	16+ years	24.24%	8
	Total	100%	33

Q17 - Which best describes your current position(s)? Please check all that apply
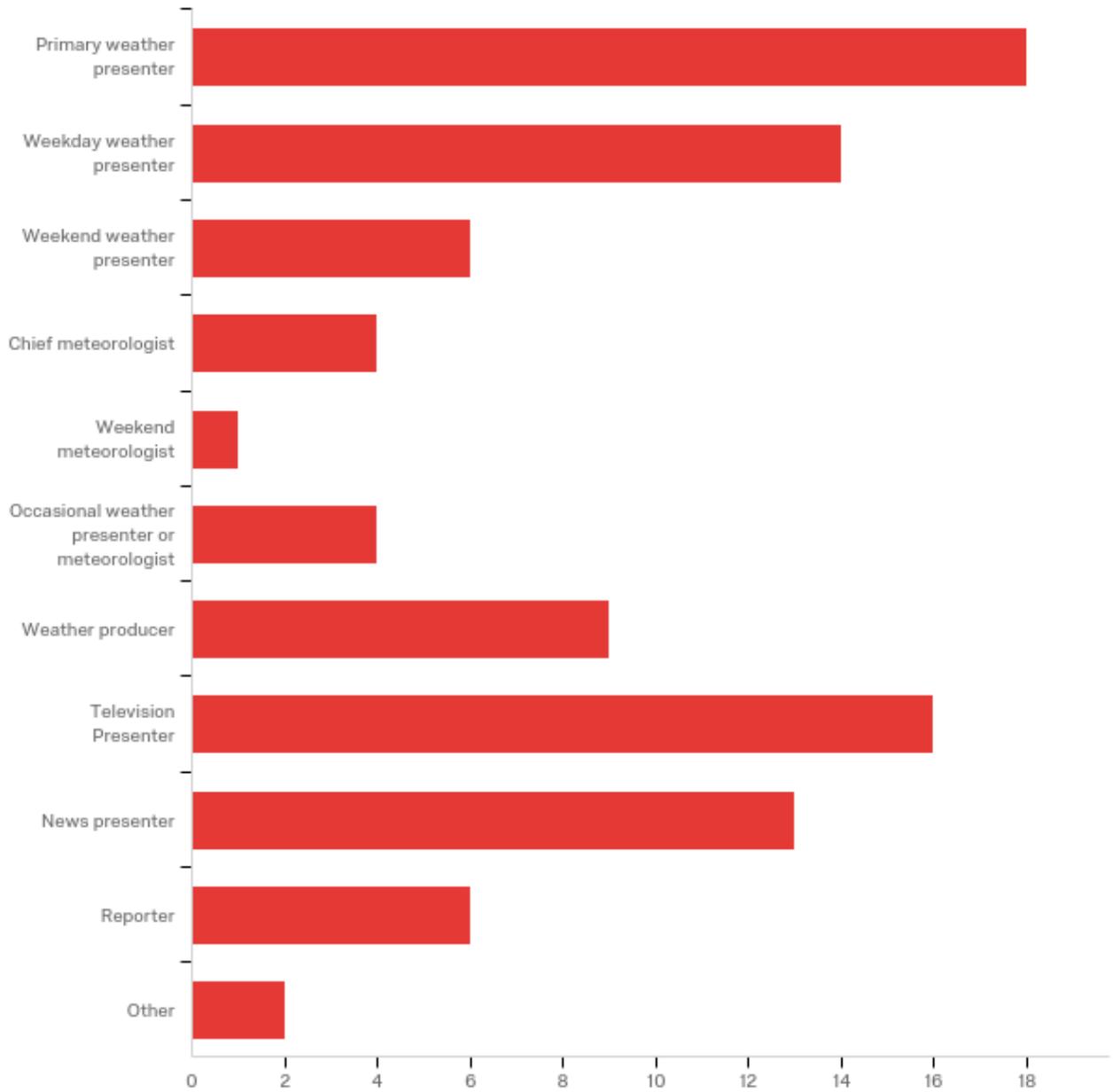
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Primary weather presenter	54.55%	18
2	Weekday weather presenter	42.42%	14
3	Weekend weather presenter	18.18%	6
4	Chief meteorologist	12.12%	4
5	Weekend meteorologist	3.03%	1
6	Occasional weather presenter or meteorologist	12.12%	4

7	Weather producer	27.27%	9
8	Television Presenter	48.48%	16
9	News presenter	39.39%	13
10	Reporter	18.18%	6
11	Other	6.06%	2
	Total	100%	33

*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%.

Q18 - How many years have you worked in your current position?
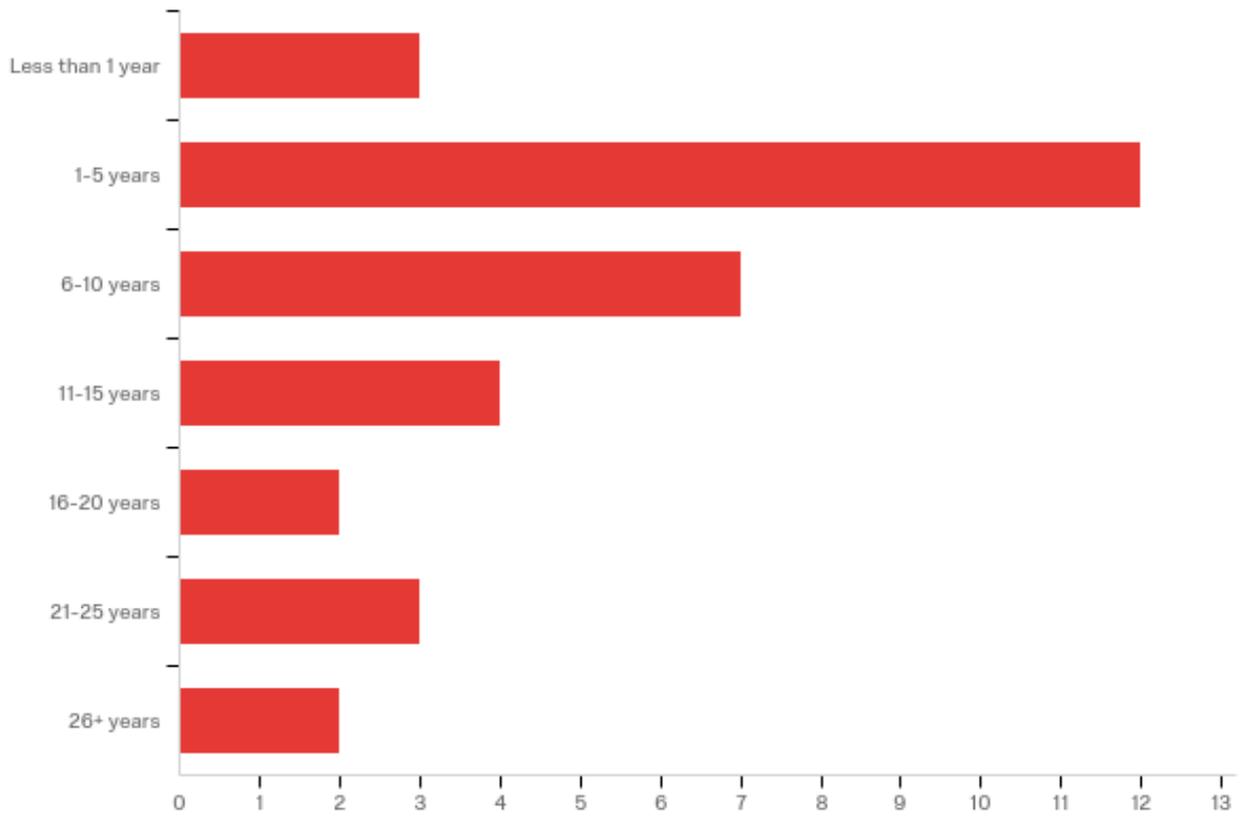
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than 1 year	9.09%	3
2	1-5 years	36.36%	12
3	6-10 years	21.21%	7
4	11-15 years	12.12%	4
5	16-20 years	6.06%	2
6	21-25 years	9.09%	3
7	26+ years	6.06%	2
	Total	100%	33

Q19 - Which educational degrees do you hold? Please check all that apply.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Diploma of Meteorology	22.22%	6
2	Bachelor of Science	18.52%	5
3	Master of Science	0.00%	0
4	BS or BA in Broadcast Meteorology	7.41%	2
5	BA in Journalism & Mass Communication	48.15%	13
6	BA in Education	0.00%	0
7	BA or BS in Other	3.70%	1
8	Masters in Meteorology or Atmospheric Science	0.00%	0
9	MS or MA in Broadcast Meteorology	0.00%	0
10	Masters in Education	0.00%	0
11	MA or MS in Other	3.70%	1
12	Ph.D in Meteorology or Atmospheric Science	0.00%	0
13	Ph.D in Other	0.00%	0
14	Other	37.04%	10
	Total	100%*	27

*When presenters were asked to click all that apply, the sum of percentages represented in the table will exceed 100%.

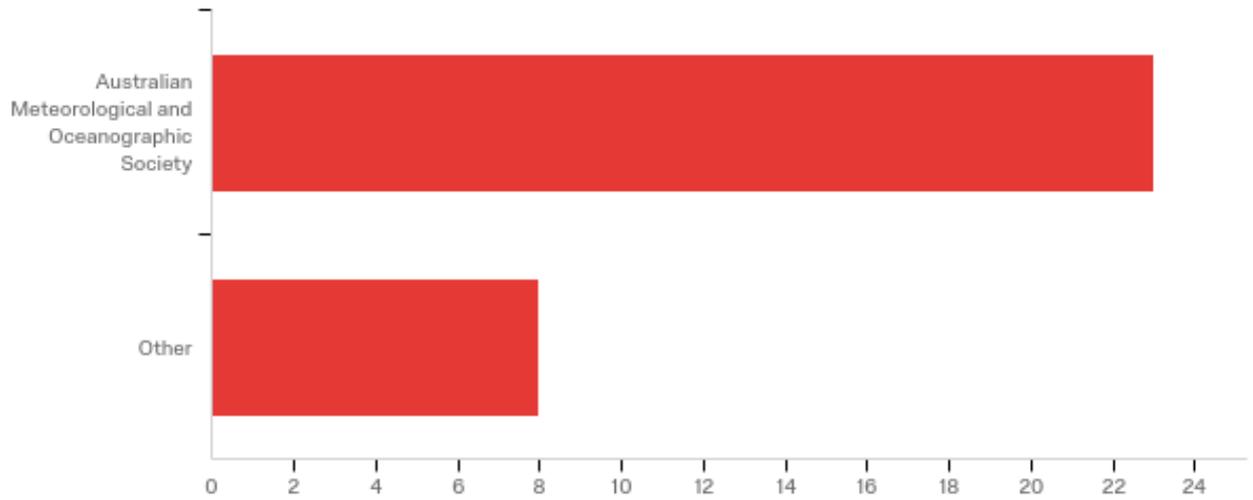| OTHER |
|-------|
| BJ |
| Bachelor arts/commerce |
| Grad. Diploma Communication |
| MBA |
| Bachelor of Journalism |
| B.Bus(Mgmt) LL.B. B.Ec. |
| MA in Communication |

Q20 - What is your gender?
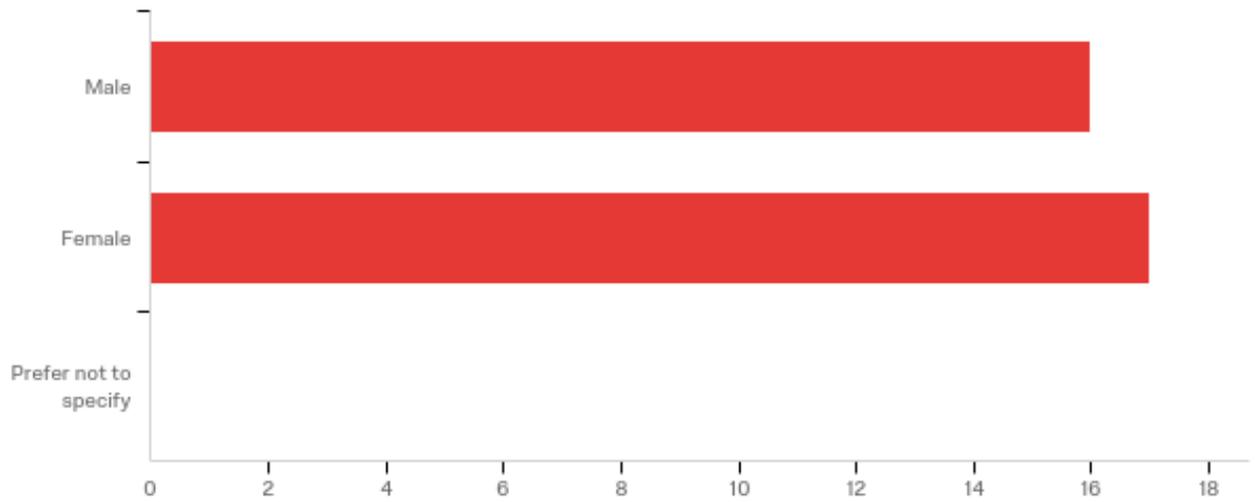
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	48.48%	16
2	Female	51.52%	17
3	Prefer not to specify	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

Q21 - What is your age?
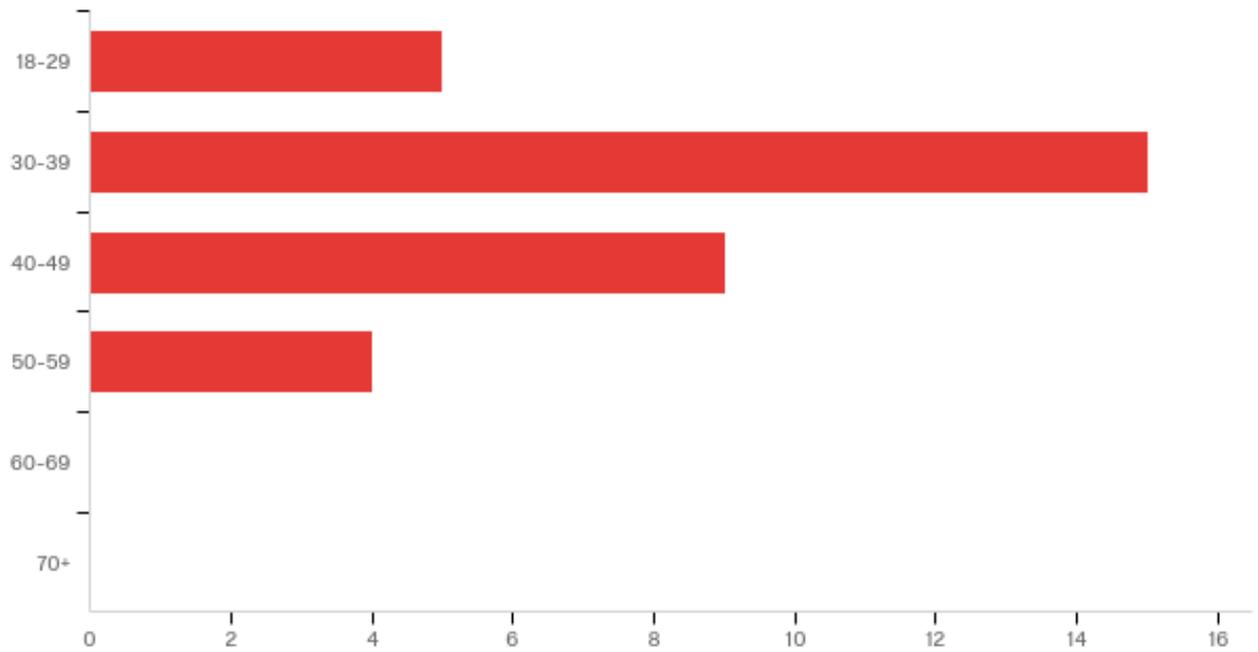
#	Answer	%	Count
1	18-29	15.15%	5
2	30-39	45.45%	15
3	40-49	27.27%	9
4	50-59	12.12%	4
5	60-69	0.00%	0
6	70+	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	33

Q22 - Which, if any, charitable organisation would you like the Monash Climate Communication Research Hub to donate to on your behalf?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society	74.19%	23
2	Other	25.81%	8
	Total	100%	31