

2011 ECO MY FLAT REPORT

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Pre-Competition

Based on the last three years of Eco-My-Flat, the demographic of

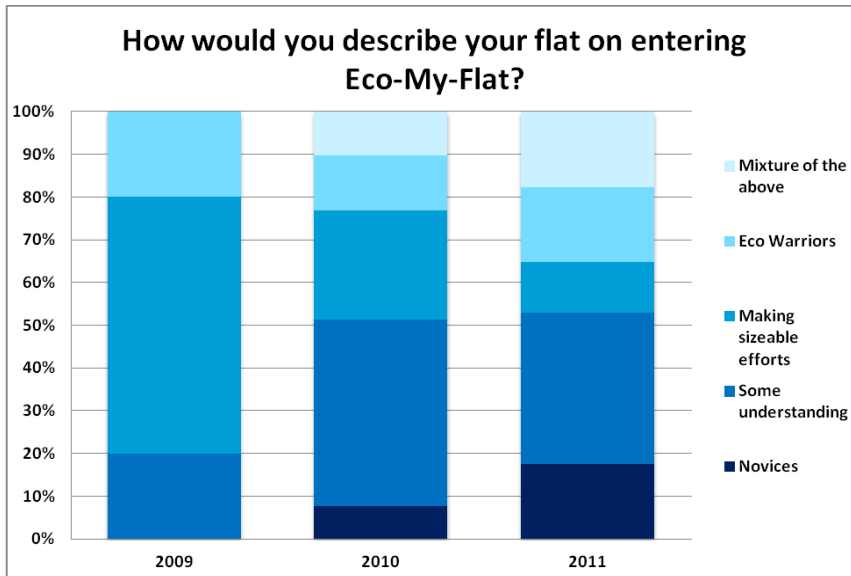


Figure 1

participating students has varied considerably. There is an increased diversity in the current sustainability levels participating flats felt they were at, as we can see in Figure 1, with a noticeable increase in those

who consider themselves novices in the area. This is an important increase, and can open up further ways to get those who are not yet Eco-Warriors involved in sustainable practices.

The means that participants have found out about the Eco-My-Flat

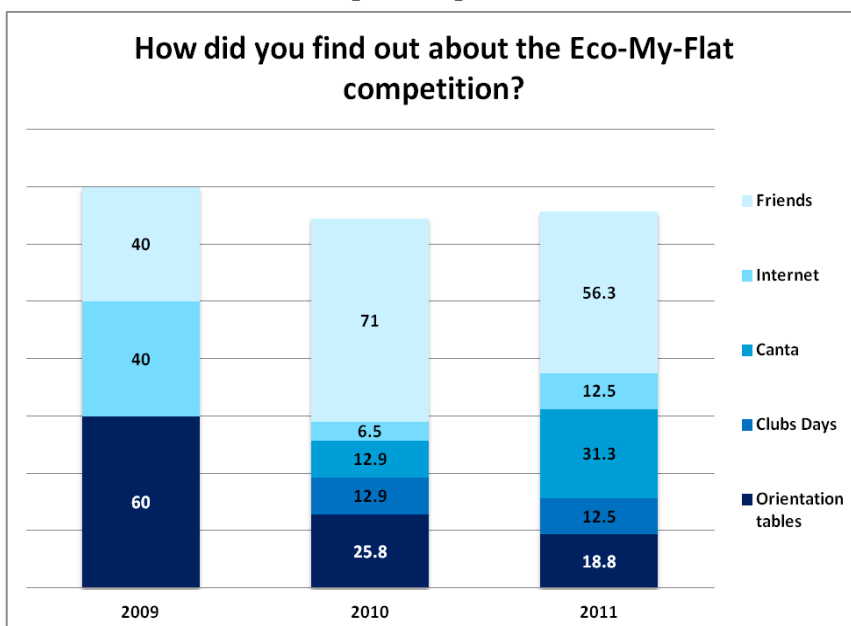


Figure 2

competition has also changed considerably in the last three years. Word of mouth through friends has always been a major component, and is likely that it always will be with as often one or two flatmates encourage the

whole flat to participate. While orientation tables are now having a much smaller influence on sign-ups, promotion through Canta is proving more influential. Canta is one of the most important media sources on campus, and Figure 2 helps to illustrate the wider audience that can be reached through it.

The reasons for entering the Eco-My-Flat competition have remained relatively stable over the last three years. In 2010 and 2011, prizes have been of the lowest importance, while learning about sustainability is consistently the number one reason for entering. Saving money is also slowly building up momentum as is shown in Figure 3, and could be a way to

entice a wider group of participants.

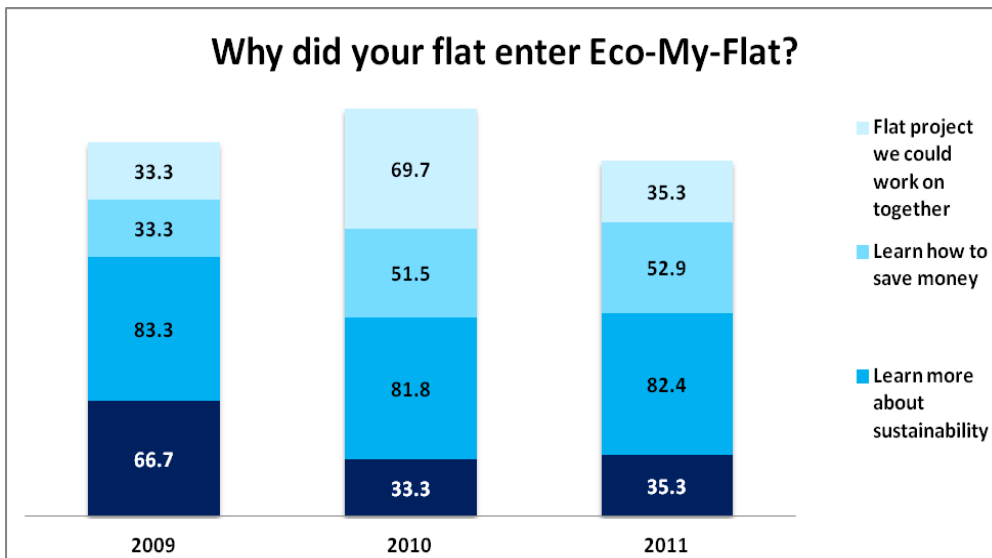


Figure 3

During the competition

One major change over the last three years is the amount of

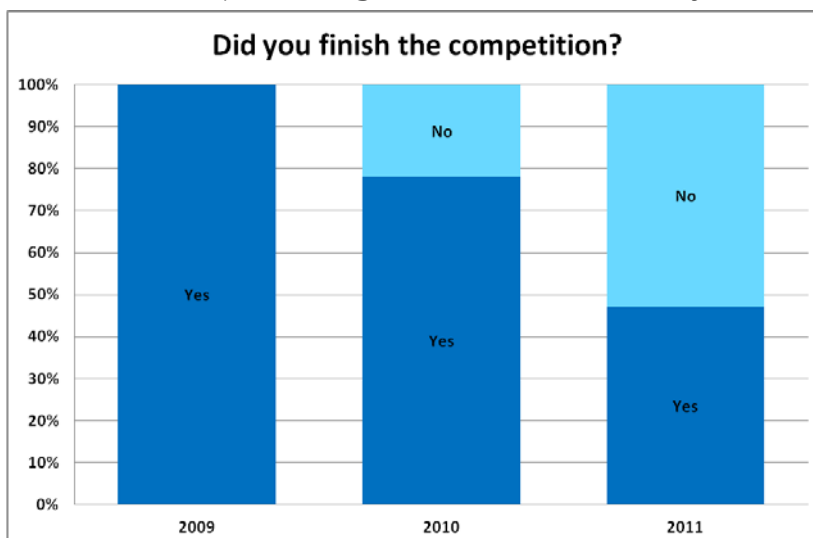


Figure 4

participating flats that have fully completed the Eco-My-Flat competition. We can see this change in Figure 4. Although many did not finish, it is not to say that they did not jump on the sustainability bandwagon. One respondent said “I

think it is a great competition and we are all more aware of living more sustainably than we were before even if we didn't finish this time".

The reasons for the drop in competition completion have varied over 2010 and 2011 as we can see in Figure 5. The major factor in 2011 (although not a category in itself in the survey) would have been earthquake related stresses. The majority of Christchurch residents had a lot of other issues to deal with at this time, University of Canterbury students being no exception, and understandably finishing the competition may have just been too much to handle on top of that. Also, the competition was delayed due to the earthquakes and the university being closed and was instead held over the winter months, which are much busier in terms of study and harder to come

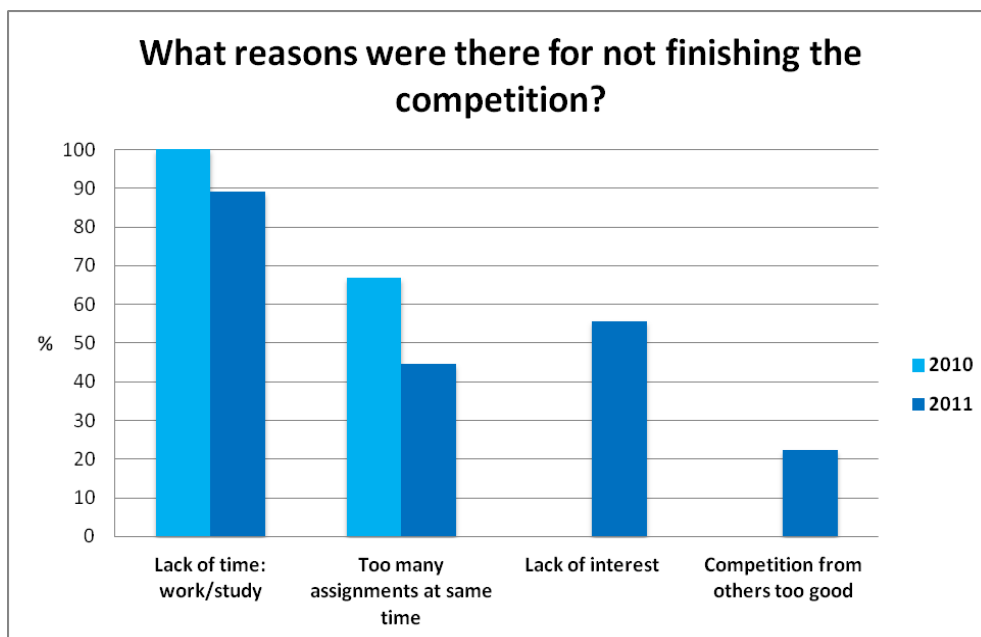


Figure 5

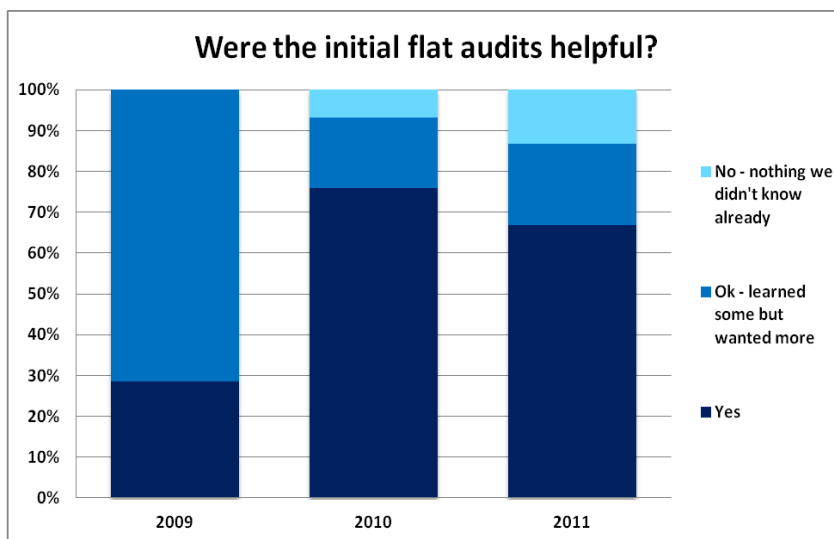
in voluntarily for workshops etc. This was noted by one student who felt "it was hard this year with the earthquake but I think it would work better

at the start of the year" and "having it in winter was a bit rough". One thing to note is the influence of flats that were considered too advanced in their sustainable practices. This was off-putting to 22.2% of those who did not complete the competition. Each year a lack of time was the dominating factor for not completing the competition. With 47% of those who completed the survey in 2011 not finishing Eco-My-Flat due to a lack of time, this is a major constraint, though likely caused by issues related to the earthquakes.

This has been a major influence on the overall restructuring of Eco-my-Flat for 2012. Instead of it being a head to head time-consuming competition, it will be more flexible in levels of participation. This way flats can attend the workshops of their choice, rather than having to attend all and make the appropriate changes. The competition then will be able to reach more people, enabling them to make sustainable changes to their flats,

and overall lifestyles without the pressures and time constraints. Those who do wish to keep up the intense aspect are still able to do so, and can show their improvements and all round sustainability to sponsors of the competition, creating a more direct connection between sustainability in the university community and the wider business community.

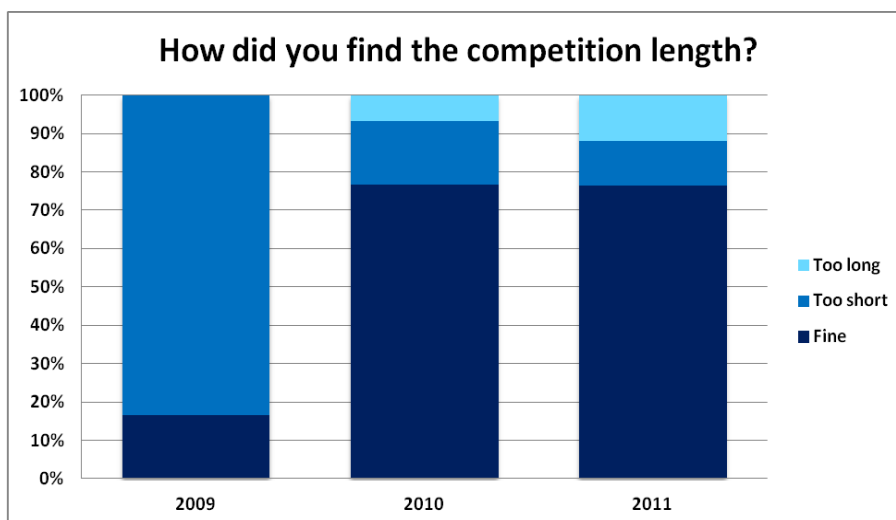
The first step of the competition is the flat audits. These involve an 'eco-inspector' visiting each flat and evaluating their current living situation, which is later compared with the changes they have made through Eco-My-Flat. Their success over the three years is visible in Figure 7. There are some changes being made to these audits for the 2012 competition- these will be



self conducted by the flats. This saves a great deal of time (and carbon emissions!) for our eco-inspector and enables the flats to see where there sustainability can be improved early on in the competition.

Figure 7

After increasing its length in 2010, the competition length has been well received by participants, despite increased numbers unable to finish the competition. In 2009 the competition only ran for one month which 83.3% of participants felt was too short. In response this the competition



ran for two terms (three months) in 2010 and 2011. Given the change in the time of year the 2011 competition was held, it may be harder to compare these results effectively.

Figure 8

Workshops

Workshops are a key part of the Eco-My-Flat experience, and have undergone a major overhaul over the last few years based on student feedback. In 2008 and 2009, two-hour long workshops were conducted, four and three respectively. In 2010 this was switched to nine one hour long workshops which were received favourably by participants (see Figure 9 and 10) and thus continued into 2011. Initially in 2011 we intended to only conduct eight workshops, but following the earthquake we felt a water and emergency kit workshop was pivotal to the earthquake response, and an increasingly important part of a sustainable home.

As can be seen in Figure 9, the one hour workshops are well received,

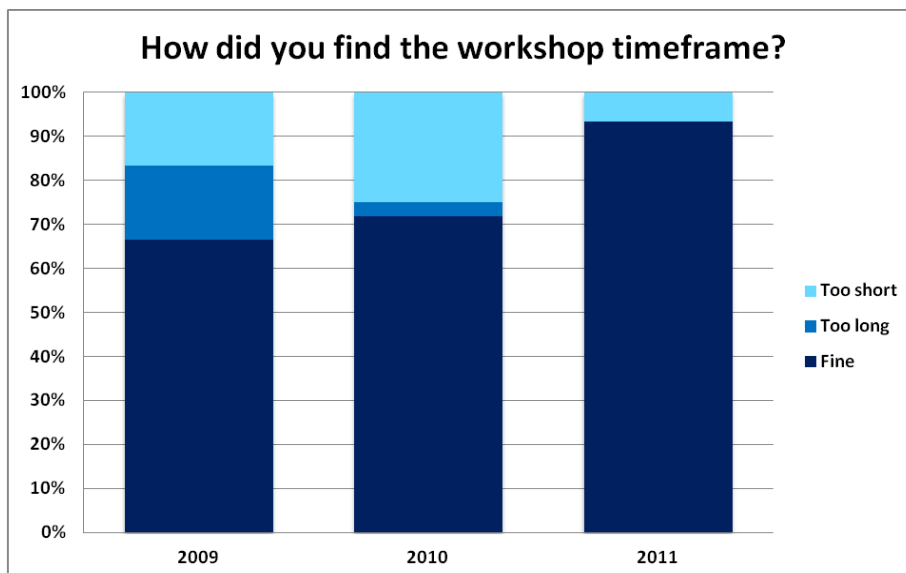


Figure 9

workshops. 2010 and 2011 both saw the majority liking the 9 workshops; though 2011 saw an increased percentage wanting more

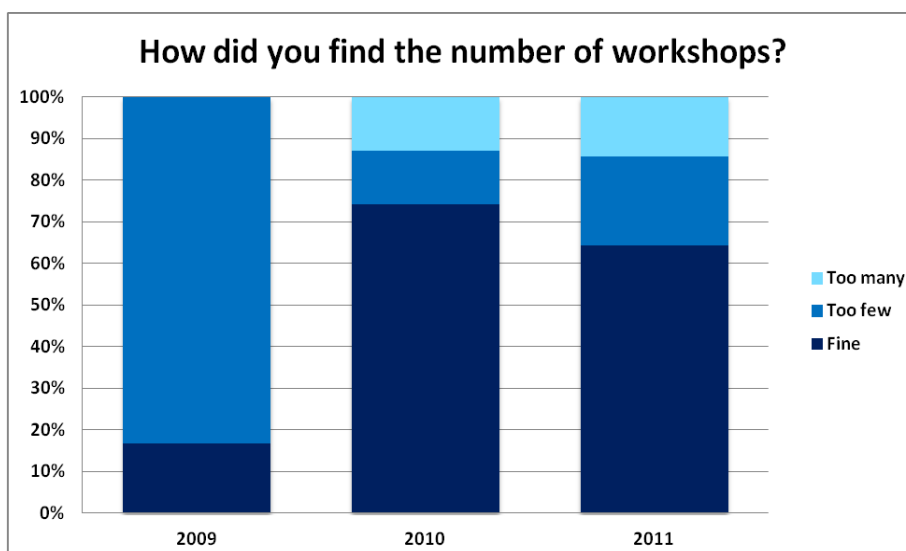


Figure 10

more so than the two hour ones. In Figure 10 we can see the increase in likeability of the number of workshops since it has increased to nine. In 2009 83.3% of respondents felt that there were too few

workshops. We have taken this onboard and added one extra workshop, and one social night for the 2012 Eco-My-Flat. More social get-togethers were wanted by

several flats, one respondent saying “I only knew half of the flats and would have liked to know more of them”. This social night will be to encourage a sense of community within the participants, a component we all know to be vital to sustainability efforts.

The information in the workshops was well received all three years. In Figure 11 we can see a significant jump from 2009 to 2010 in

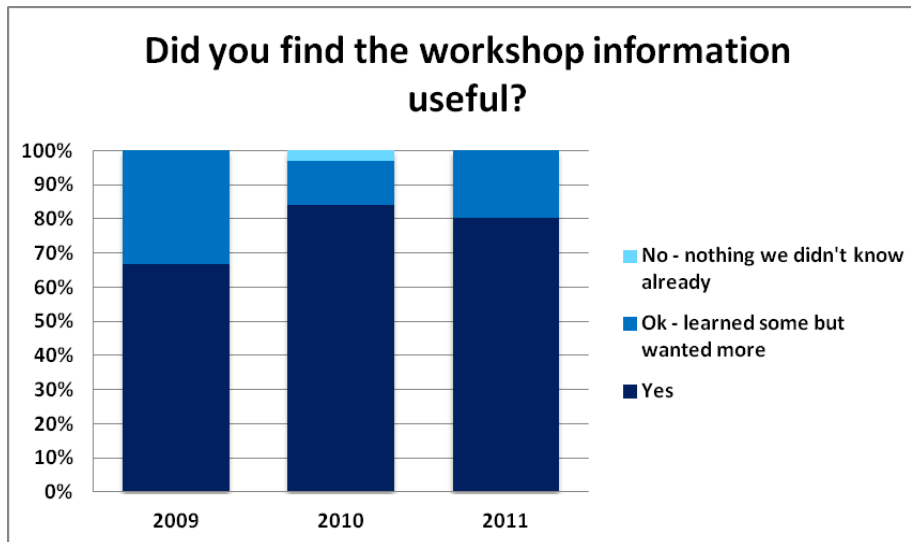


Figure 11

workshops, this was successfully eliminated in 2011. 2012 will see a slight change in some of the workshop topics. The gardening workshop will remain, as will brewing, preserving, cleaning and bodies. Home energy will instead switch to a focus on sustainable ways of keeping warm- a big issue for many student flats, and requested by the participants. There will also be one on transport- which was suggested by several students, one covering waste, water and composting toilets and a final one on becoming an agent of sustainable changes.

Post-Competition

One of the most important parts of Eco-My-Flat is the instilment of long-term behavioural change. The practices and understandings of sustainability taught through Eco-My-Flat are able to carry on long past the competition, which is the ultimate goal. Again this year, we have seen the competition have a significant influence on the lifestyles of participants (see Figure 12). One flat said “it has inspired us to be more eco-friendly and pay attention to the resources we use” and another said “showed me how easy it is to be more sustainable”.

favourability. This is in response to the broadening of topics the workshops were on. While 3.2% of participants in 2010 felt they didn't learn anything new from the

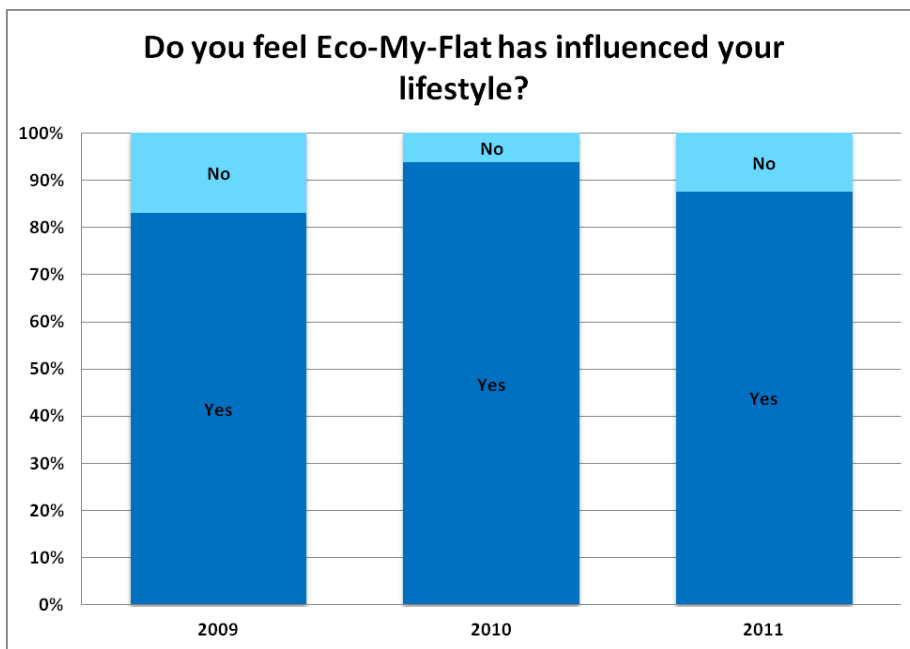


Figure 12

Another part of this overall behaviour change is the ability for sustainability to be passed onto friends and family. This has been steadily

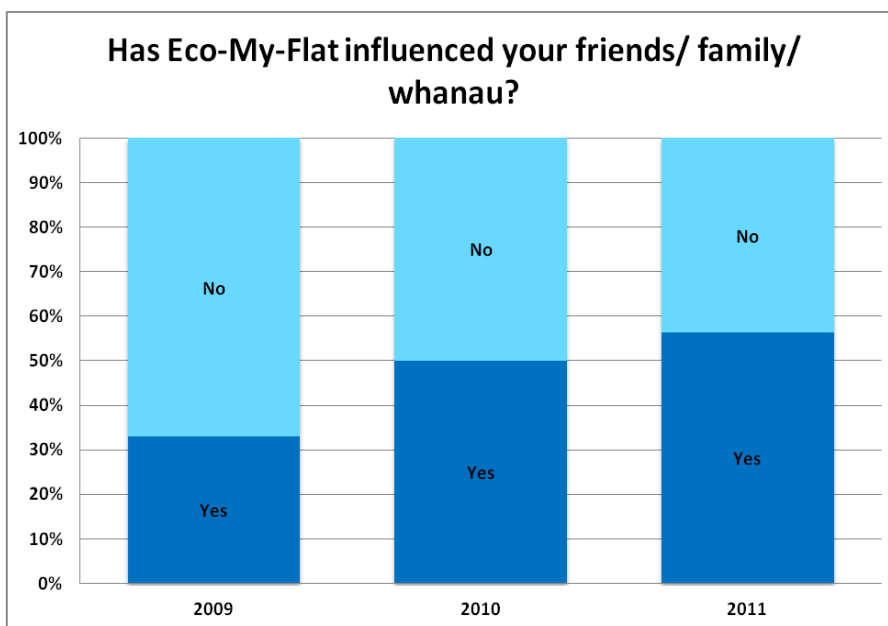


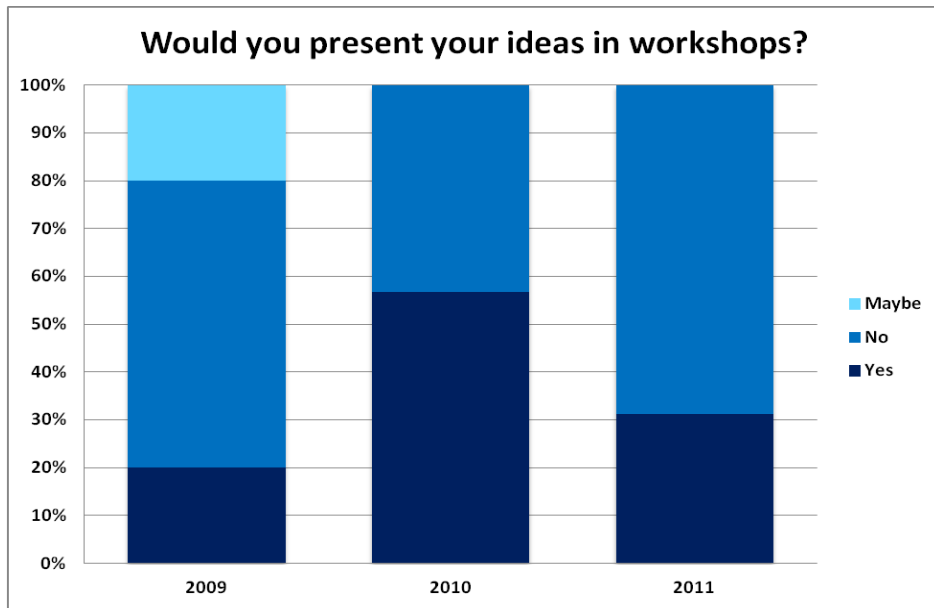
Figure 13

increasing since 2009, as can be seen in Figure 13, and is likely to do so further in 2012 following the workshop on being an agent of change. One student said the competition made them want “to inspire the change in others”.

This and the above question

have particular resonance given the state of Christchurch. As we start to rebuild our city centre and our homes, themes of sustainability are becoming increasingly important. Through all the destruction we have a real chance to re-grow our city in a way that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. This is no better fostered than through community understanding and discussion.

For future ideas within workshops we asked participants if they would like to present some of their ideas in one of the workshops. Unlike 2009 and 2010, 2011



participants overwhelming would not like to do a presentation (see Figure 14), and hence we have decided not to enforce one for the 2012 competition.

Figure 14