

Some questions about responsibility for the future directions of Australian Agriculture

Mick Keogh
Australian Farm Institute

A brief history

Lessons from elsewhere

What stakeholders think

What needs to happen?



Decade	Commodity	Change
1970s	Wheat	Move from guaranteed to stabilised prices; provision for 'grower to buyer' sales outside the pooling arrangements; home consumption price limited to wheat for human consumption and determined by a formula to take account of export prices
1980s	Dried vine fruits	End of price stabilisation arrangements in 1980
	Citrus	Decade-long phase down of tariffs from 30 to 5 per cent, beginning in 1986; state marketing boards amalgamated, reducing geographical barriers to competition
	Cotton	Queensland Cotton Board deregulated in 1989
	Eggs	State-based production and pricing controls progressively withdrawn from 1989
	Sugar	Domestic administered price arrangements and export controls terminated by the Commonwealth in the late 1980s
	Wheat	Domestic market deregulated in 1989; grower levy fund introduced to replace the Commonwealth guarantee of Australian Wheat Board borrowings
1990s	Barley	Competition gradually introduced into domestic feed and malting barley marketing in South Australia and Victoria from 1998
	Dairy	Phased reductions in market support payments on export of dairy products
	Dried vine fruits	Commonwealth price equalisation levy and statutory equalisation of domestic sales removed in the early 1990s, as was the industry's exemption from section 45 of the Trade Practices Act (which reduced the scope for collusive price discrimination)
	Horticulture	Underwriting scheme for apples and pears terminated in 1990
	Tobacco	Local Leaf Content Scheme and the Tobacco Industry Stabilisation plan ceased in 1995; withdrawal of vesting powers in 1995
	Sugar	Import tariffs and domestic price supports removed in mid 1997
	Wheat	Australian Wheat Board converted from statutory authority to a grower-owned company in 1999
	Wool	Reserve Price Scheme ceased in 1991
2000s	Dairy	State-based controls over sourcing and pricing of market milk ceased in 2000; 9-year Dairy Industry Adjustment Package (DIAP) concluded in 2009
	Barley	South Australian single-desk arrangements terminated in 2007; Western Australian market deregulated in 2009 (allowing any number of licensed entities to export barley)
	Canola	Exports of canola and lupins deregulated in Western Australia in 2009 (traders no longer required to apply for licenses to export)
	Sugar	Queensland Sugar Limited lost its compulsory acquisition powers in 2006 and lost exemption from the Trade Practices Act in 2009
	Wheat	Bulk exports deregulated in 2008, meaning proposals to export bulk wheat no longer needed approval from the single-desk seller (Australian Wheat Board)
Ongoing	Rice	NSW Rice Marketing Board still retains powers to vest, process and market all rice produced in NSW
	Potatoes	Western Australian Potato Marketing Corporation still controls the supply of fresh table potatoes in that state



Australia

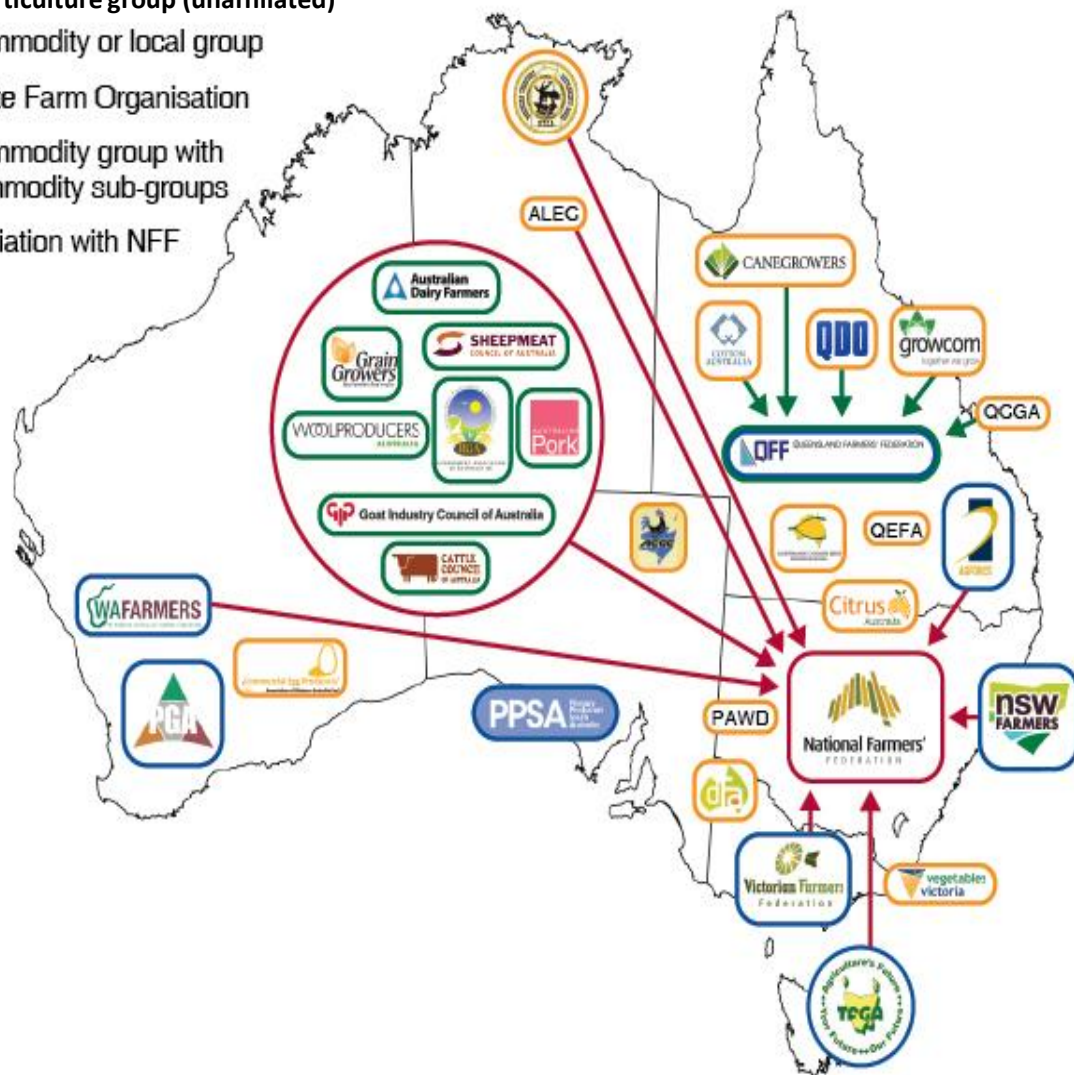
□ Horticulture group (unaffiliated)

□ Commodity or local group

□ State Farm Organisation

□ Commodity group with commodity sub-groups

→ Affiliation with NFF



Industry deregulation and the telecommunications revolution have, in combination, made old-style farmer organisations largely redundant in Australia...

... yet governments are increasingly requiring that industry sectors 'manage their own futures.'

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Farmer survey



Farmer survey

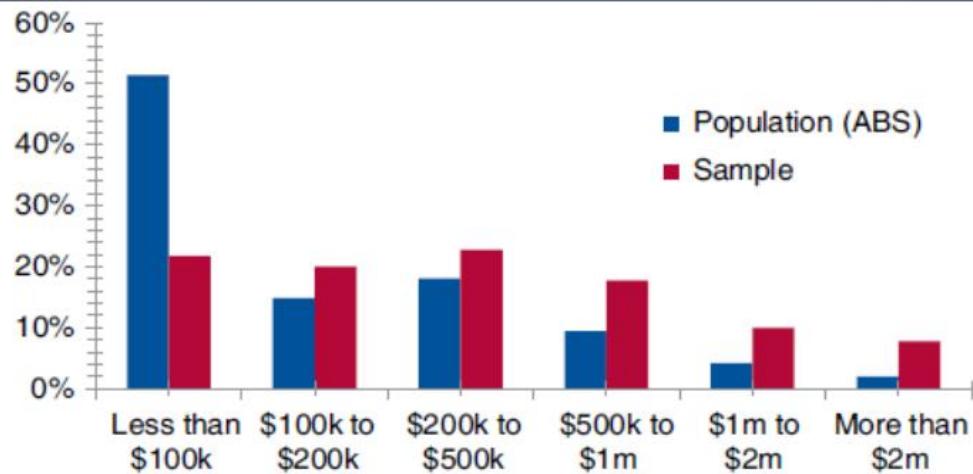
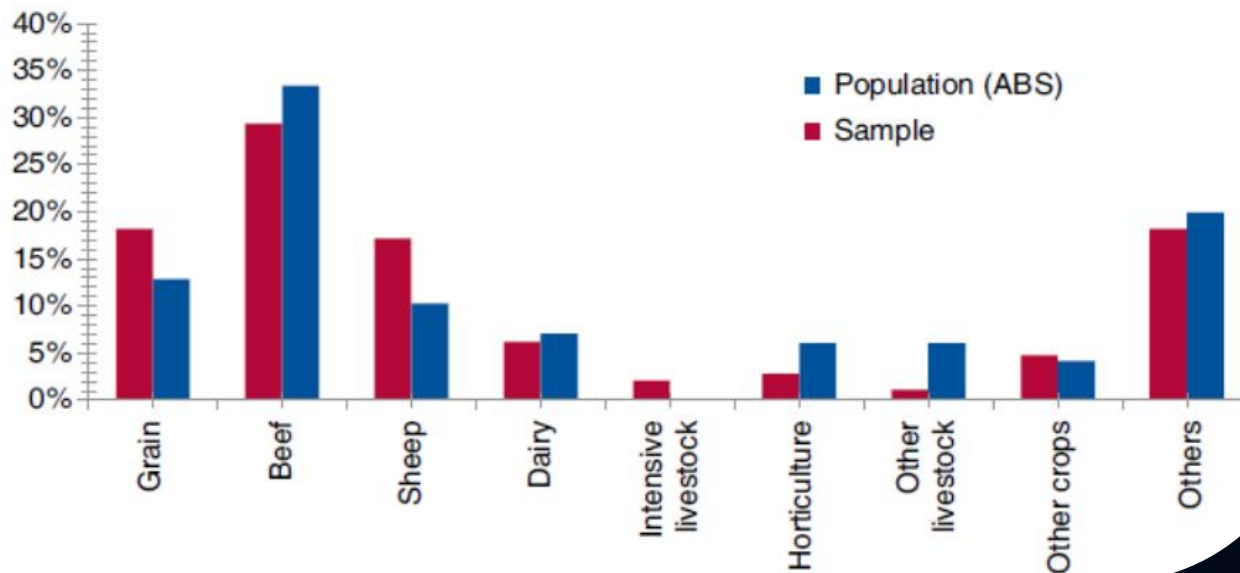
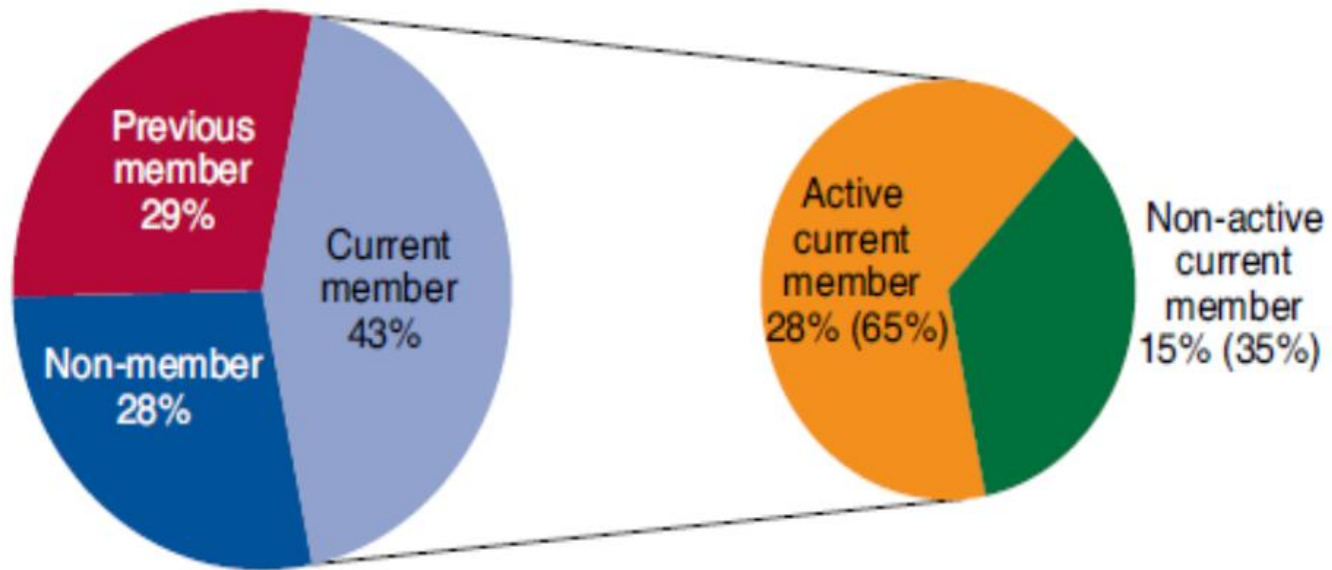


Figure 17: Farm's revenue distribution of surveyed farmers.

Source: AFI Survey.

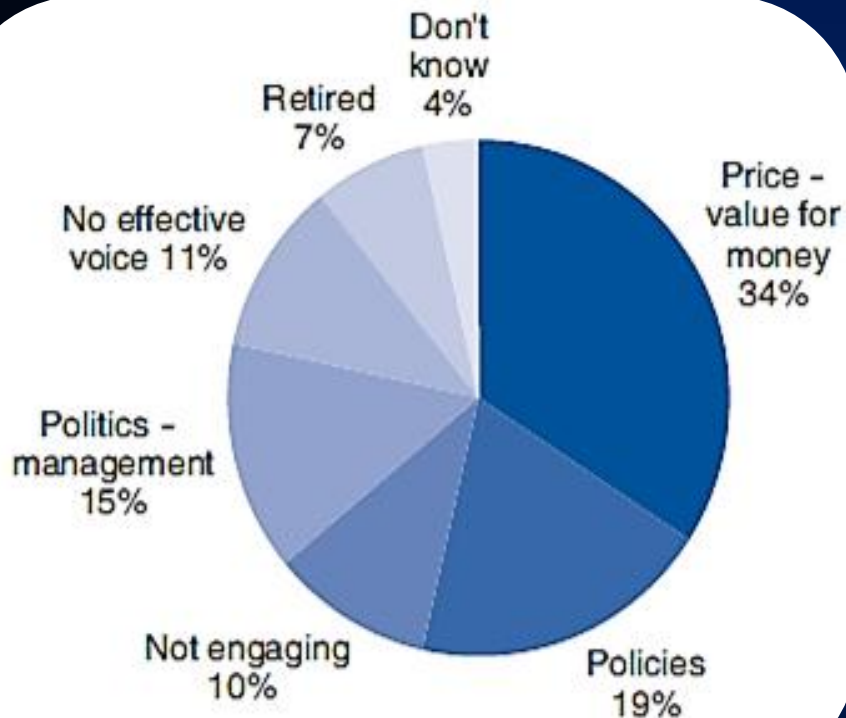


Farmer survey

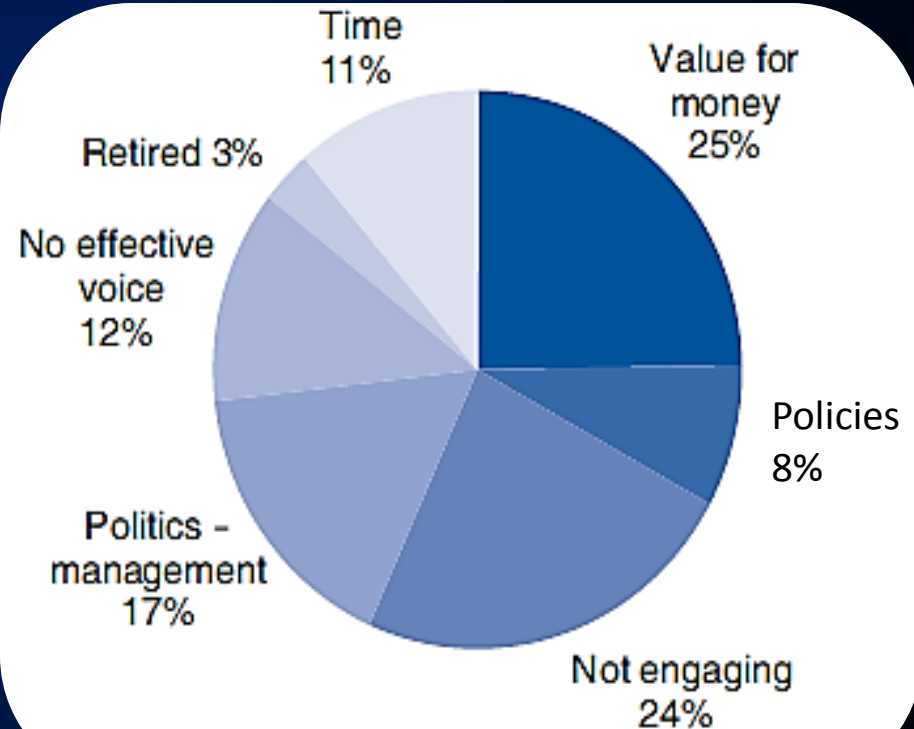


Farmer survey

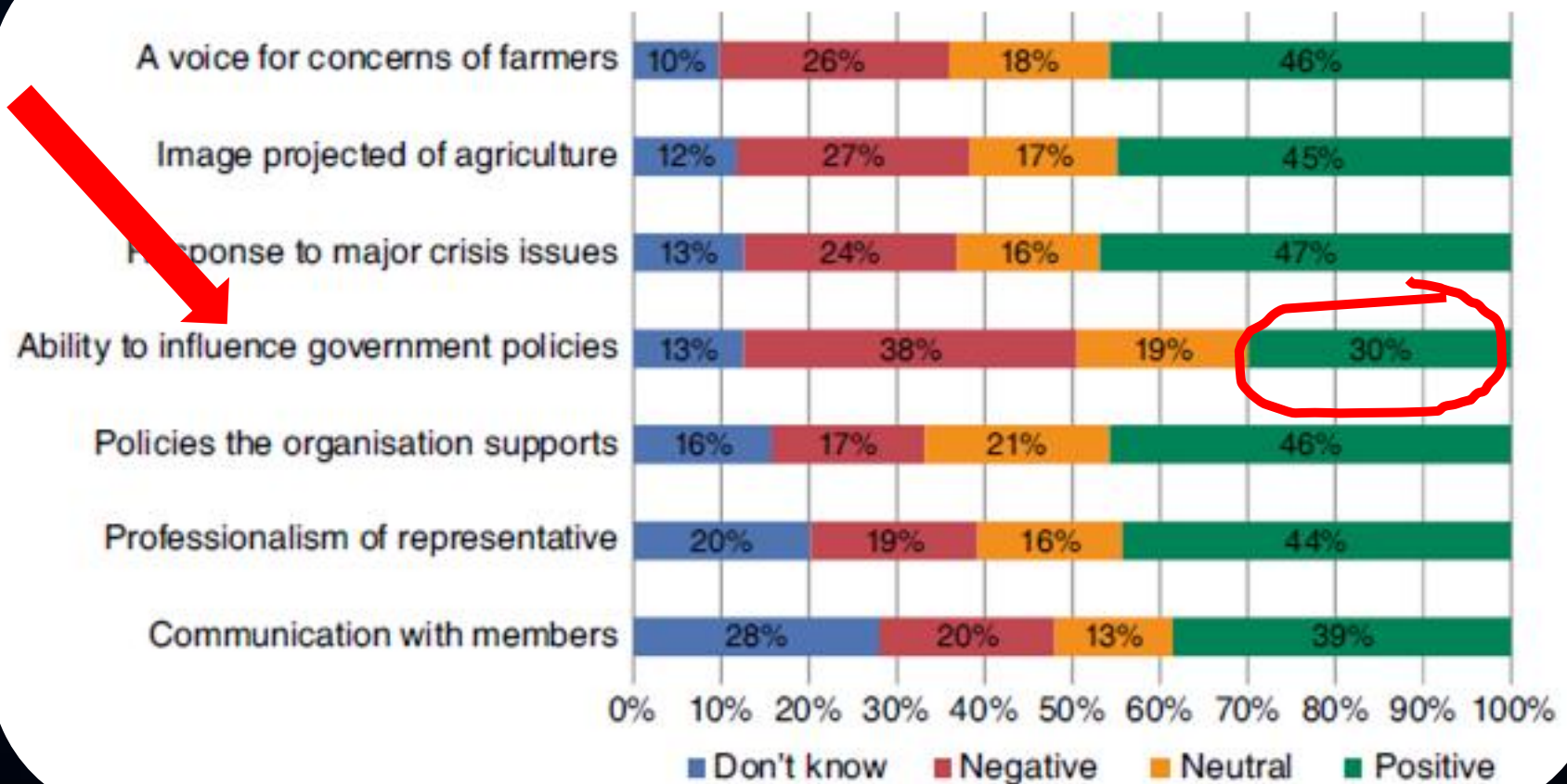
Why I resigned



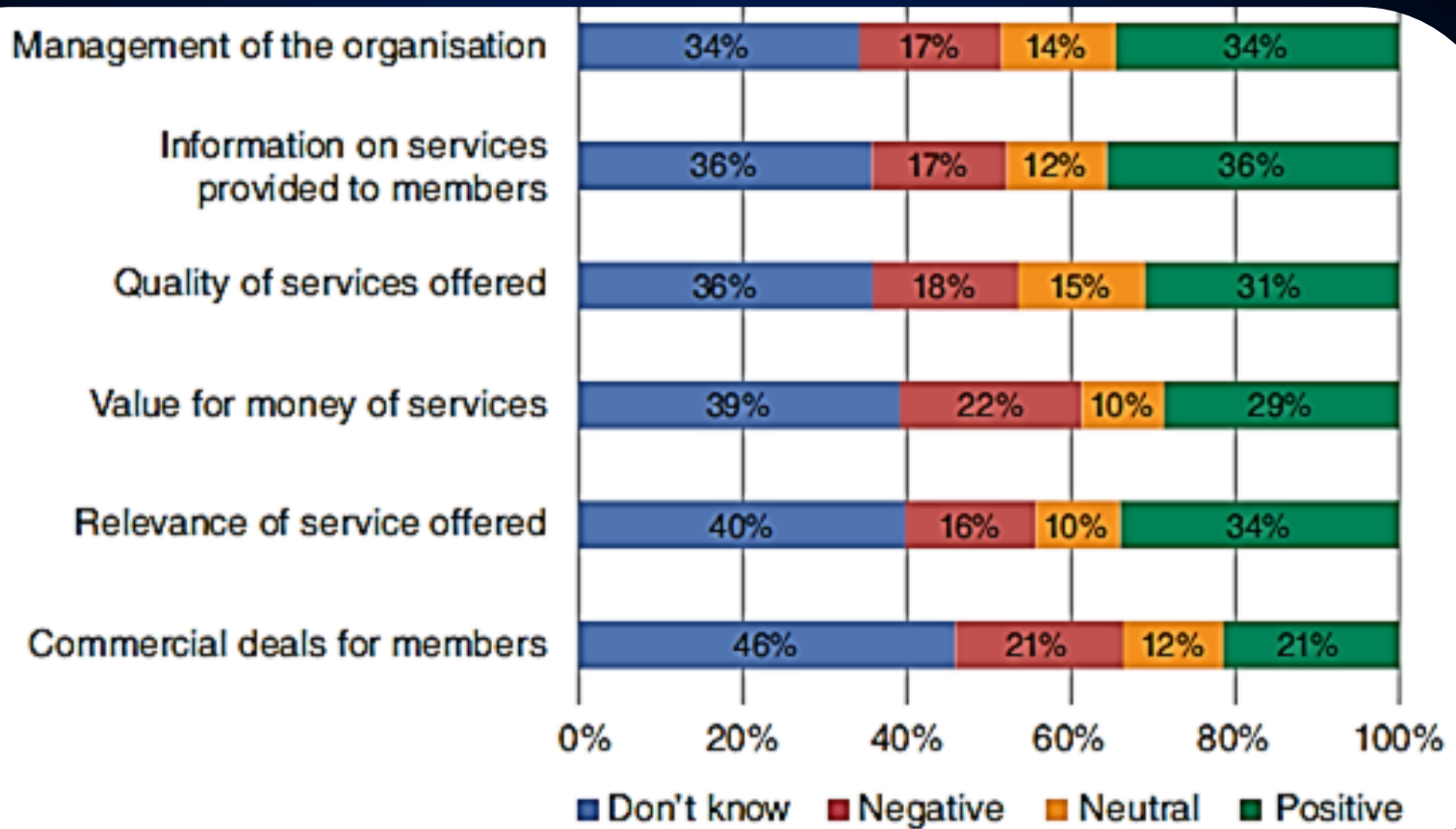
Why I never joined



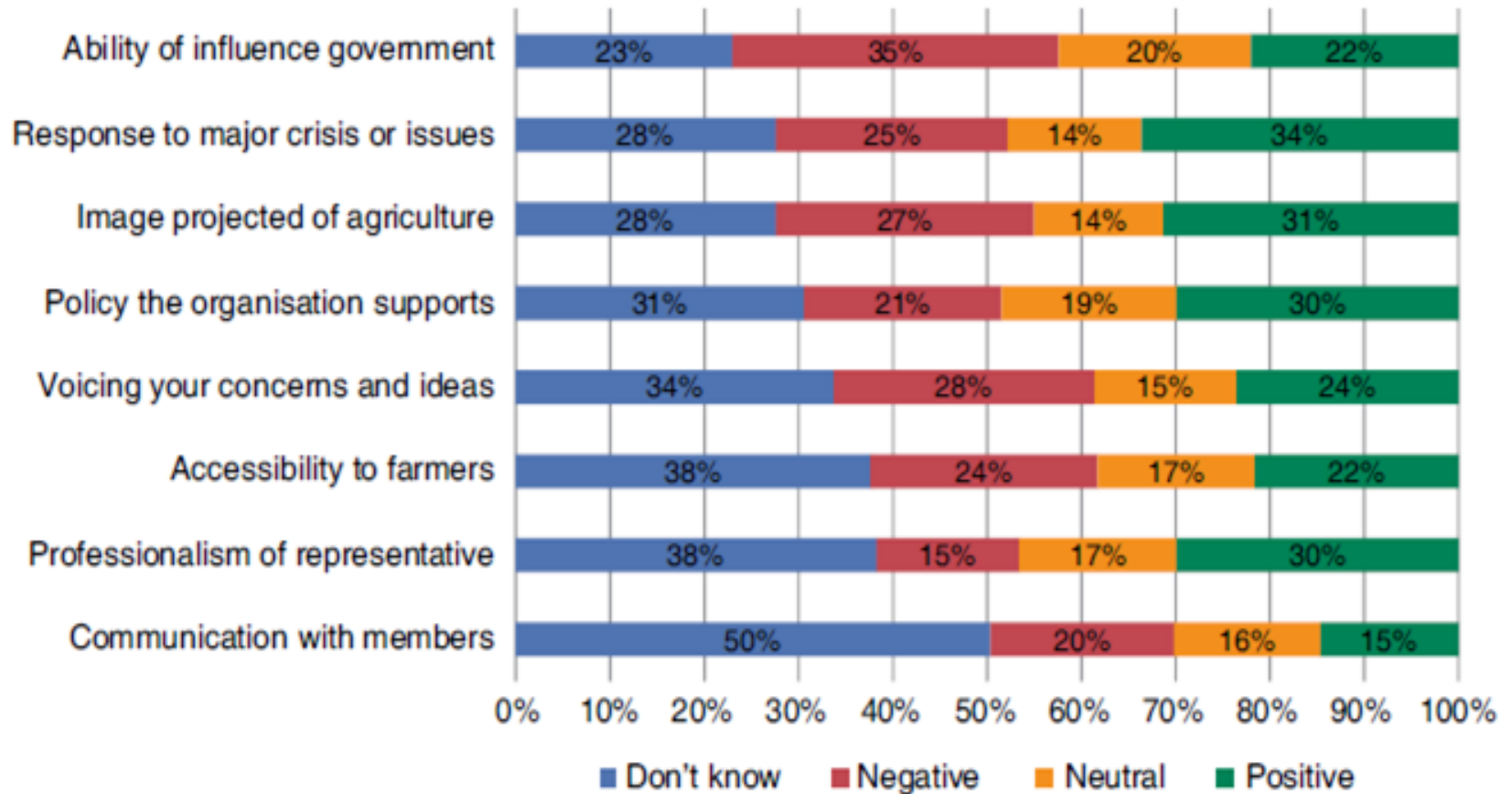
Rating of SFO lobbying



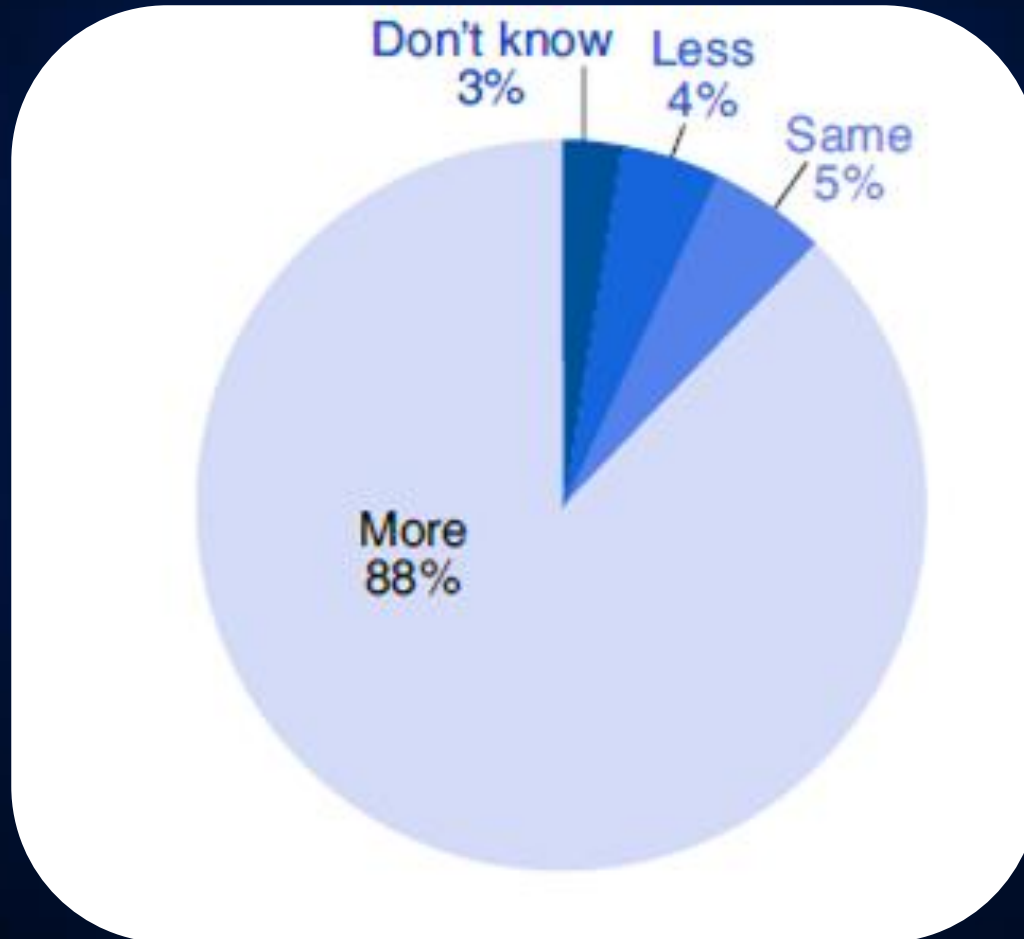
Rating of SFO services



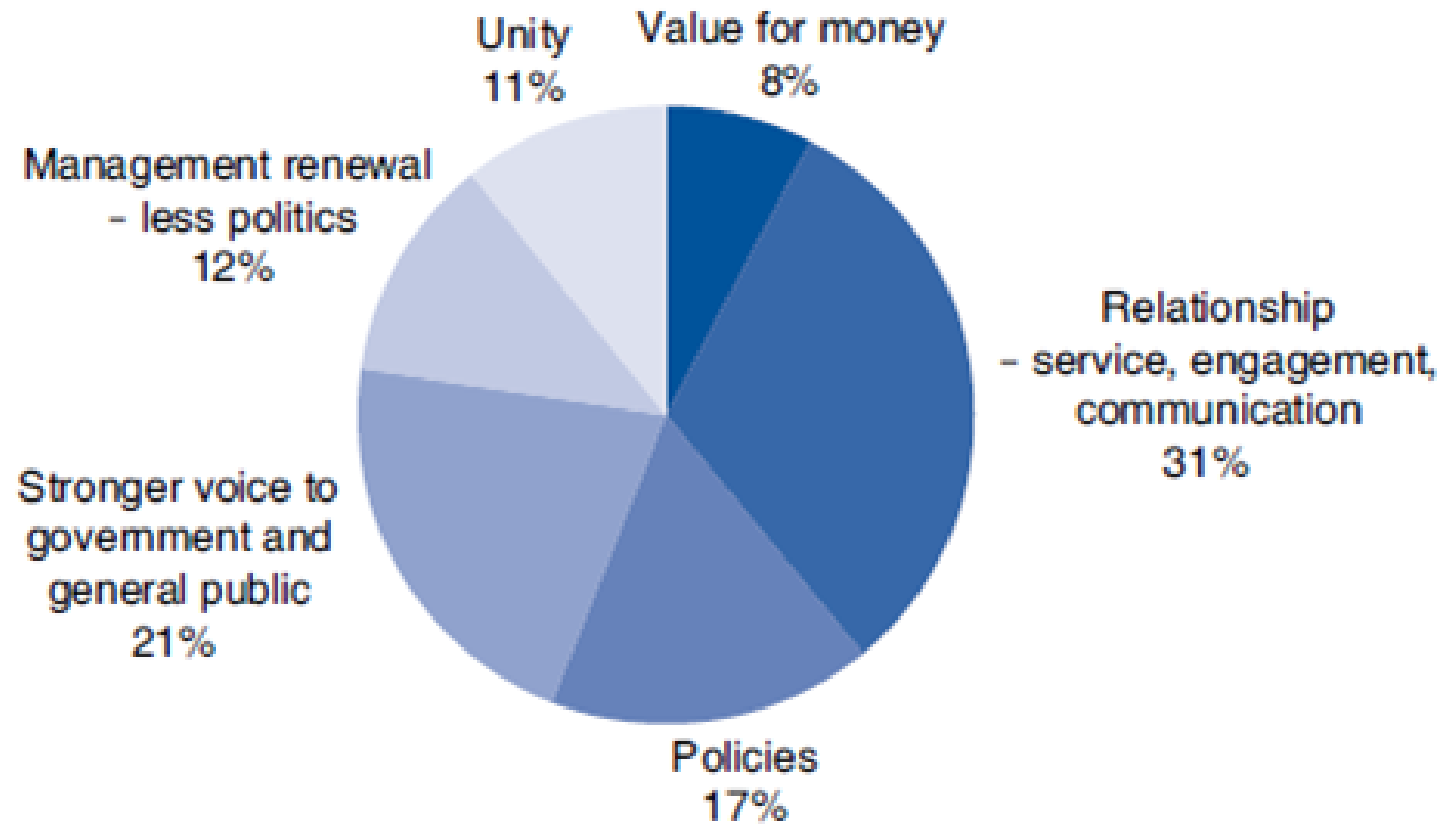
Rating of NFF



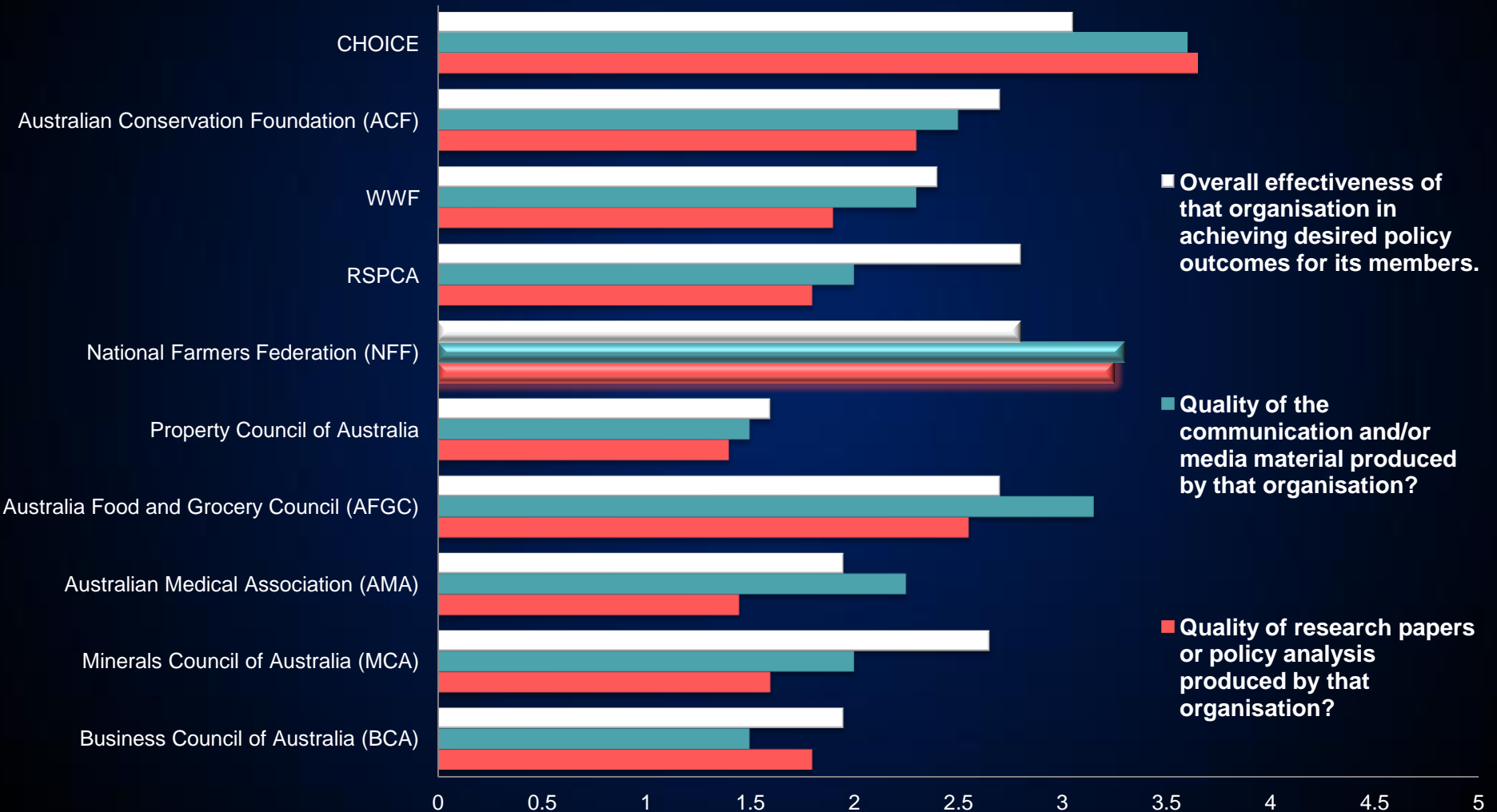
Future importance ?



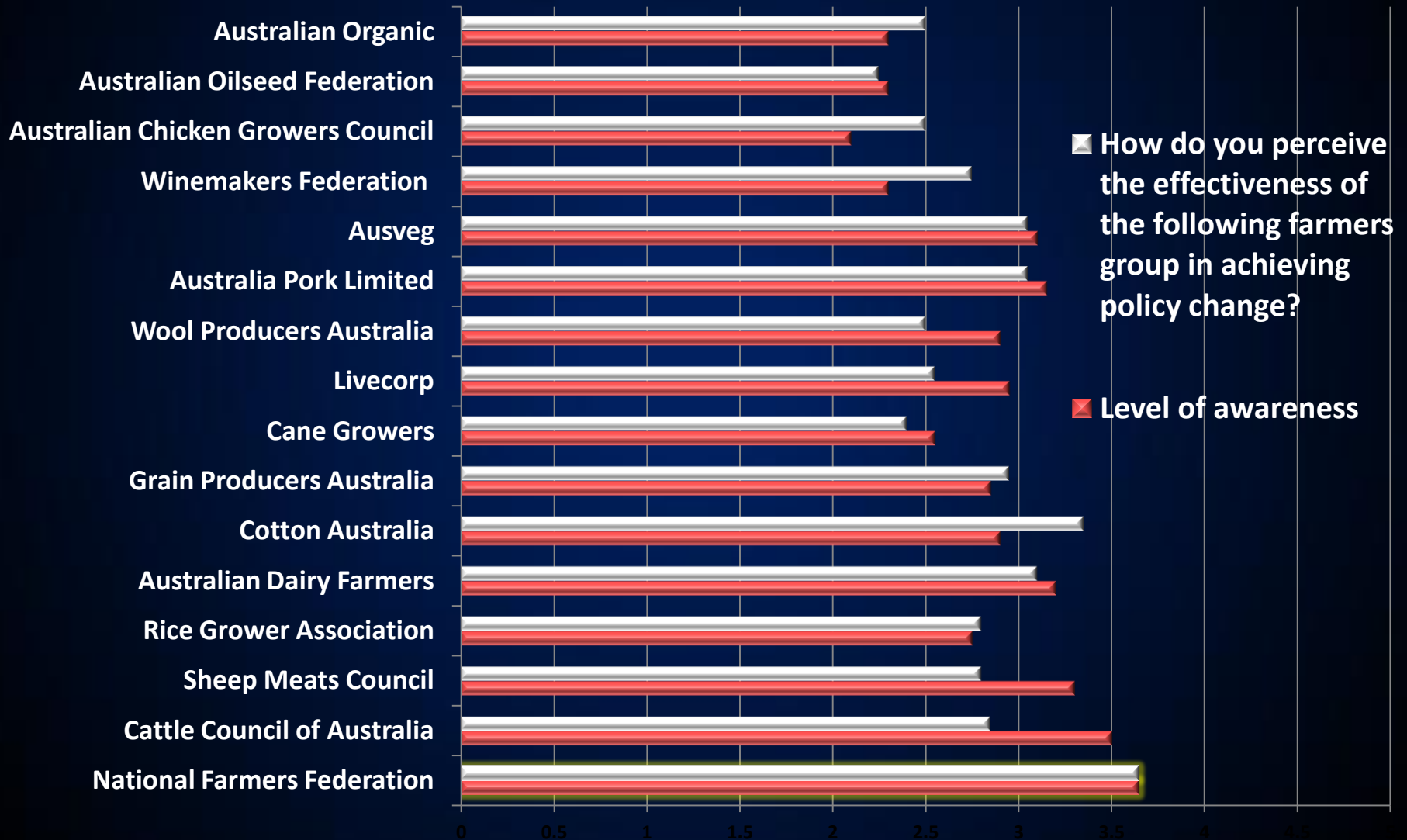
What needs to change?



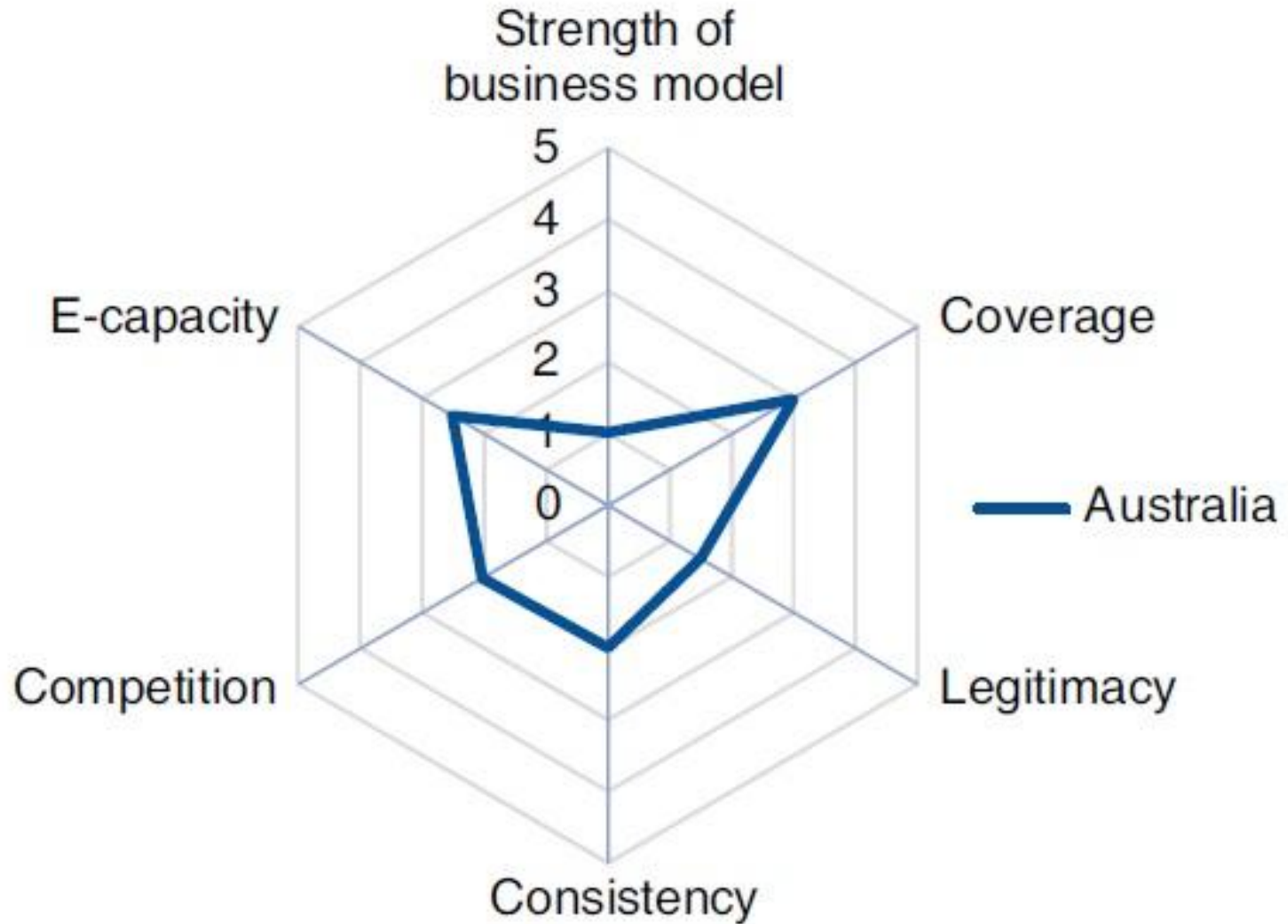
Media Survey



Media Survey



Australia



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The free rider challenge



Relevant local engagement



Conclusions

- Advocacy doesn't make money in a deregulated environment
- A priority should be to provide members with attractive and unique benefits
- Relevant engagement at the local level is important

Recommendations

- Seeking members outside of the sector is a risky strategy. Partnerships are preferred
- Third parties value the legitimacy of a group. Wealth doesn't replace legitimacy
- Consistent policies allow for better relationship with policy-makers and the community

Recommendations

- The Australian community should be seen as a key target of any advocacy or information campaigns
- Advocacy groups need proactive strategies to deal with contentious issues at the societal level.
- E-capacity is critical to overcome geographical diversity and to deliver communications and services.

It is not necessary to change.
Survival is not mandatory.

W. Edwards Deming