



# Coastal Issues Survey

Report of a national survey conducted by  
the Australian Coastal Councils Association Inc.

March 2019

# Introduction

The survey was conducted in January and February 2019 to collect information on major issues of current concern to councils in Australia's coastal areas.

Survey is aimed at supporting a national coastal advocacy campaign leading up to the 2019 Federal Election.

# Questionnaire

Sent to 101 Australian coastal councils including members of:

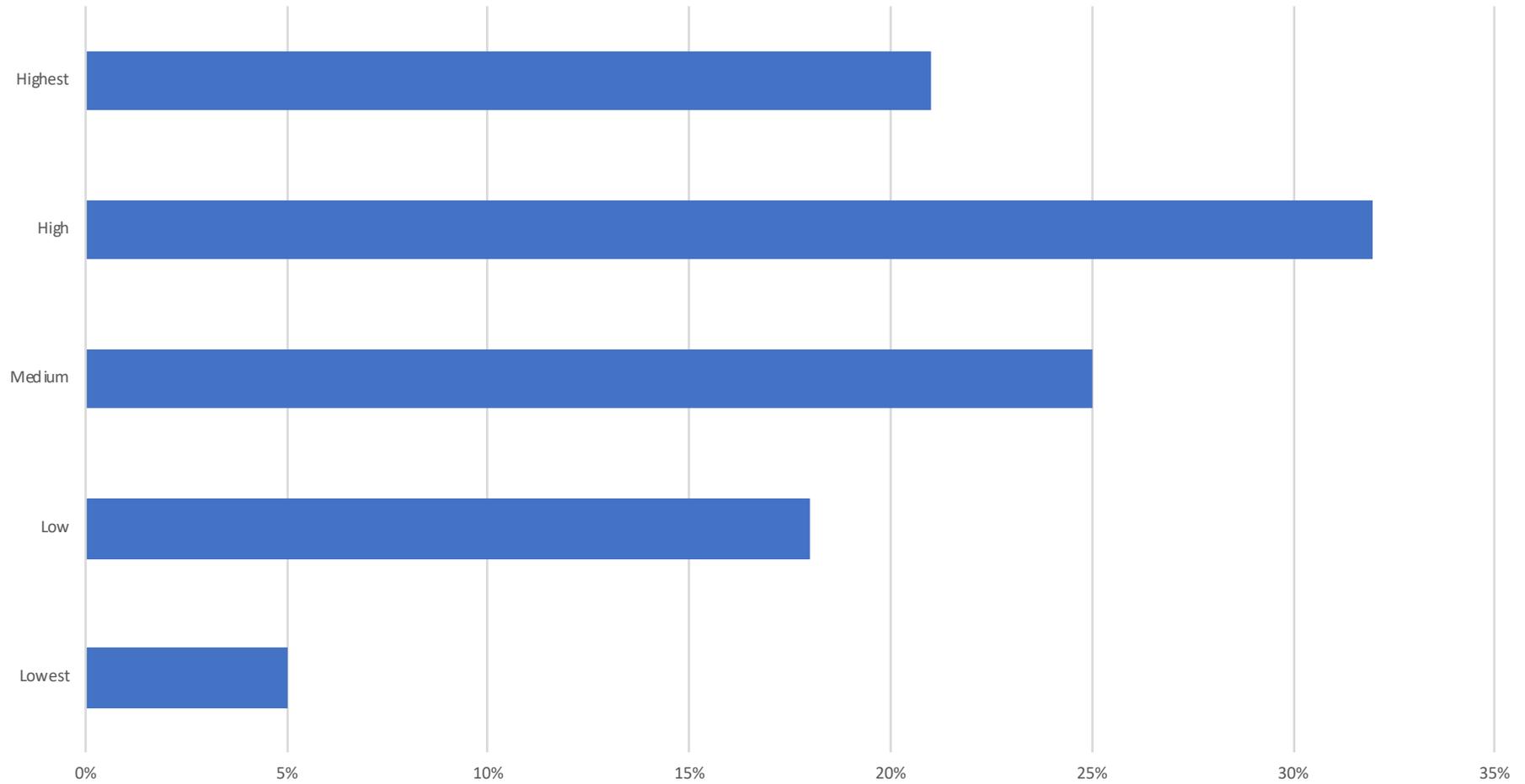
- Australian Coastal Councils Association Inc.
- Association of Bayside Municipalities in Victoria
- Metropolitan Seaside Councils Committee in South Australia
- SA Coastal Councils Alliance.

Recipients asked to rate seven key coastal issues from highest to lowest priority and invited to comment on how priority issues can be addressed.

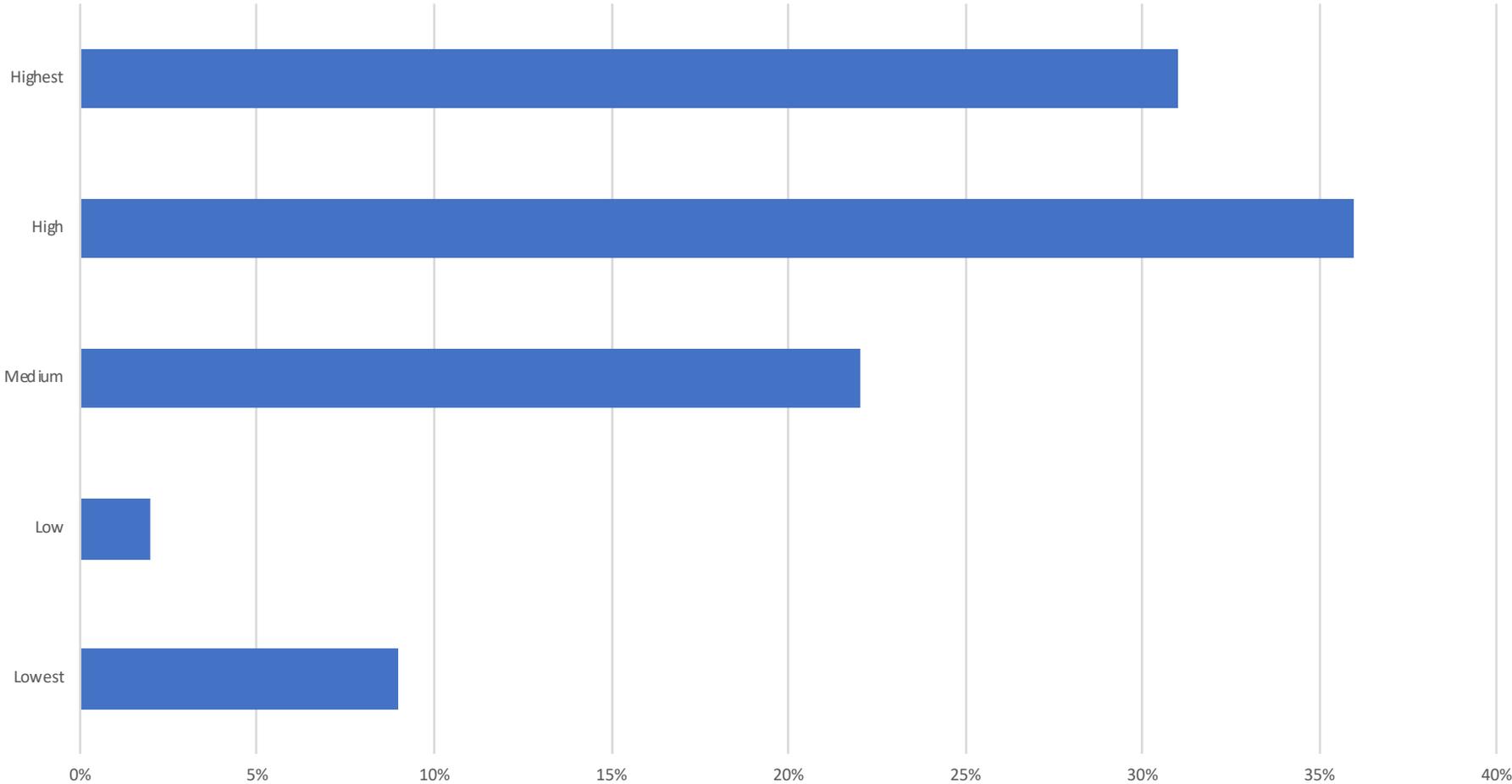
# Key coastal issues listed in the survey

- Legal risks associated with coastal planning decisions
- Reform Financial Assistance Grants formulae to include funding for coastal adaptation works
- Better policy guidance in relation to coastal management issues
- Need for co-ordinated national approach to coastal governance
- Adequacy of current natural disaster recovery arrangements
- Increase funding to meet growth in demand for infrastructure and services
- Additional support and guidance to better manage coastal erosion.

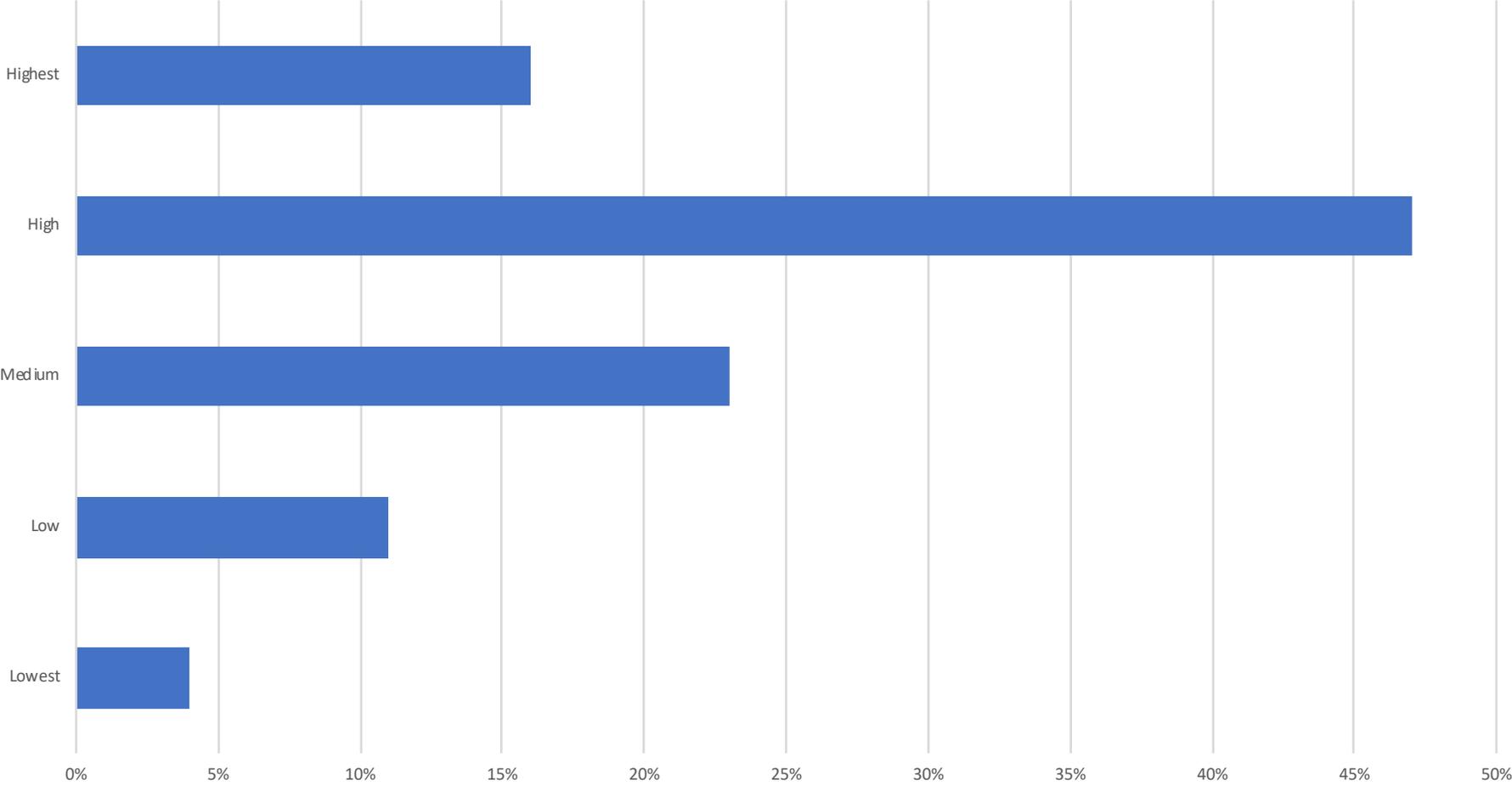
## Legal risks associated with coastal planning decisions



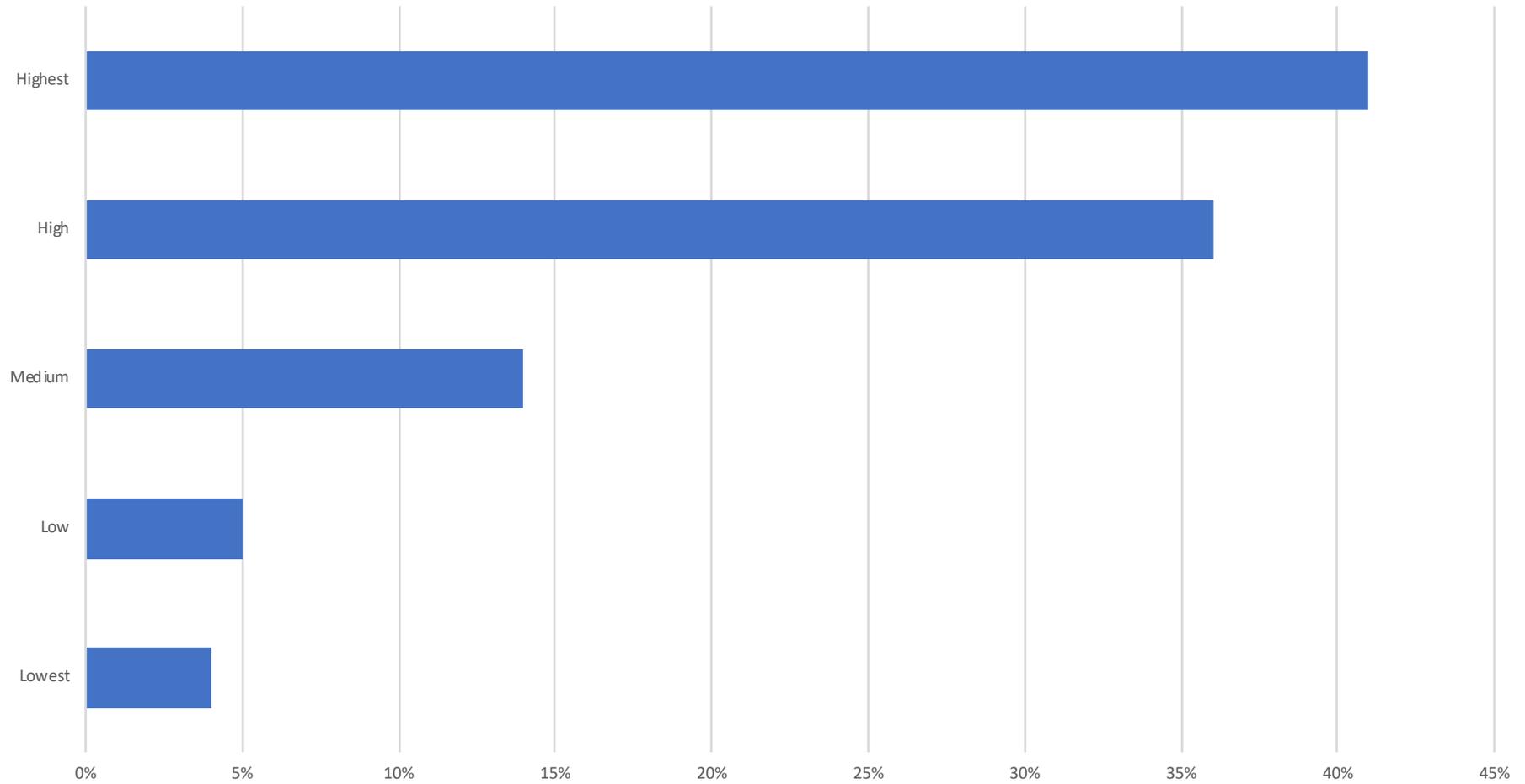
# Reform FAGs formulae to include funding for coastal adaptation



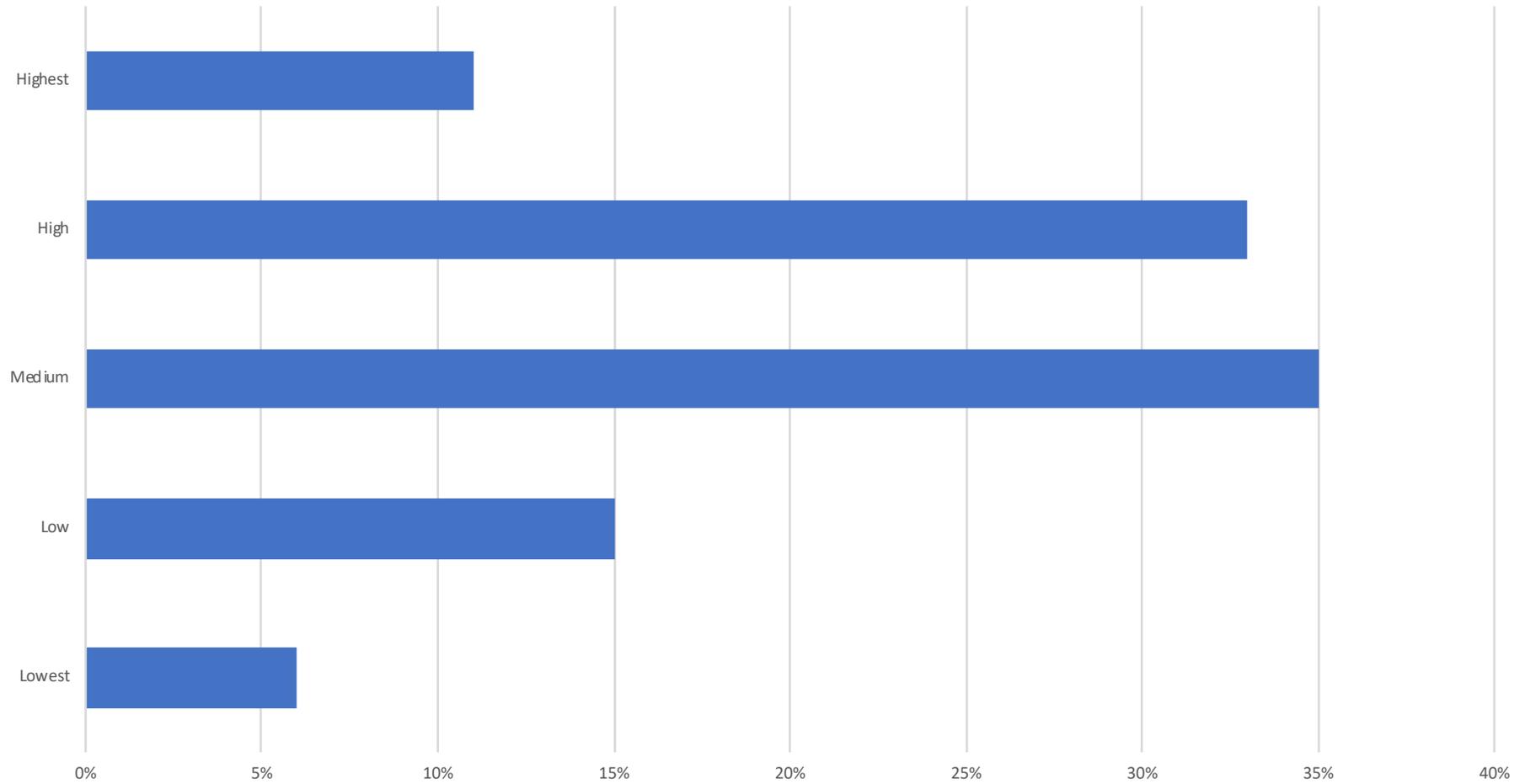
# Better policy guidance in relation to coastal management issues



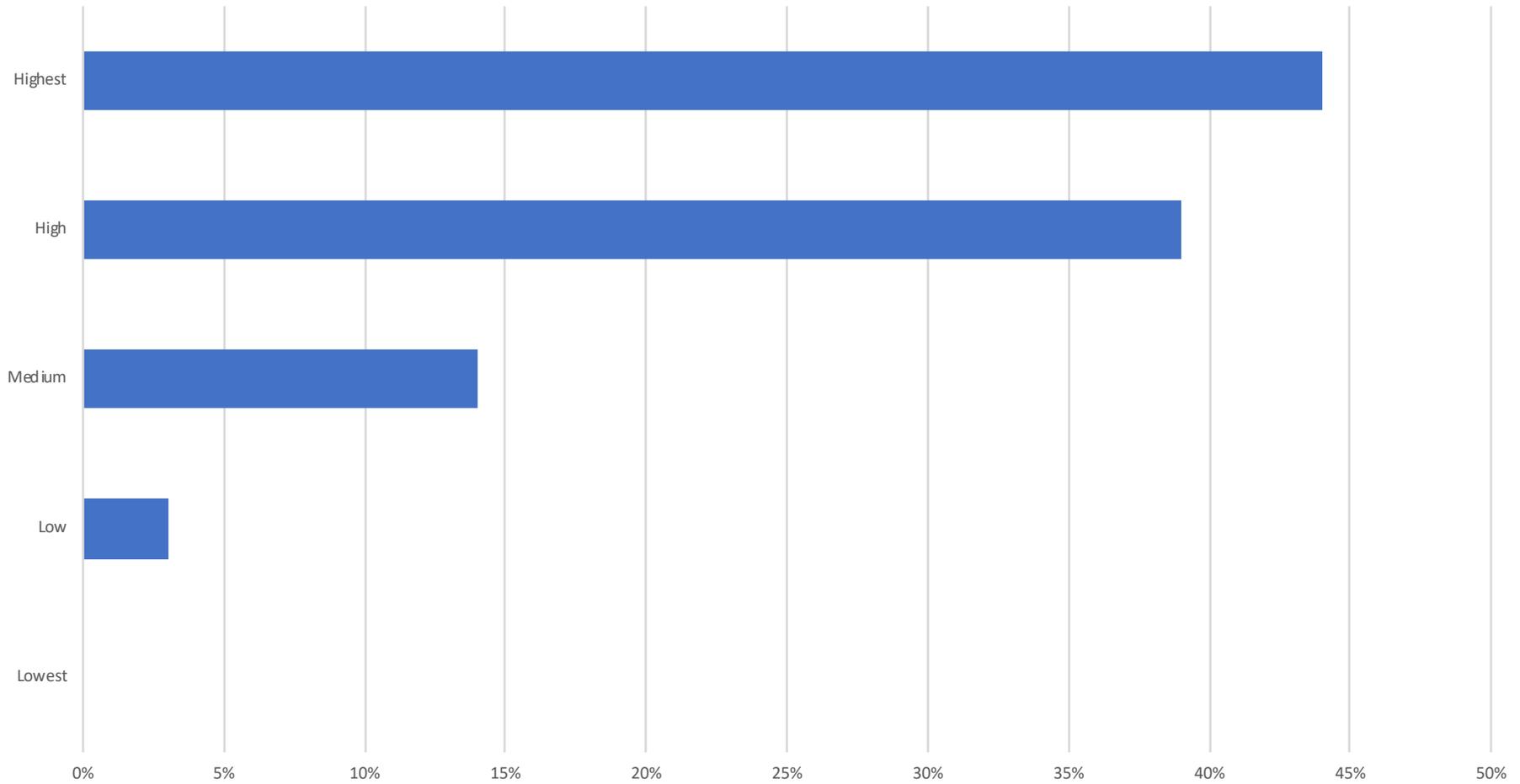
## Need for co-ordinated national approach to coastal governance



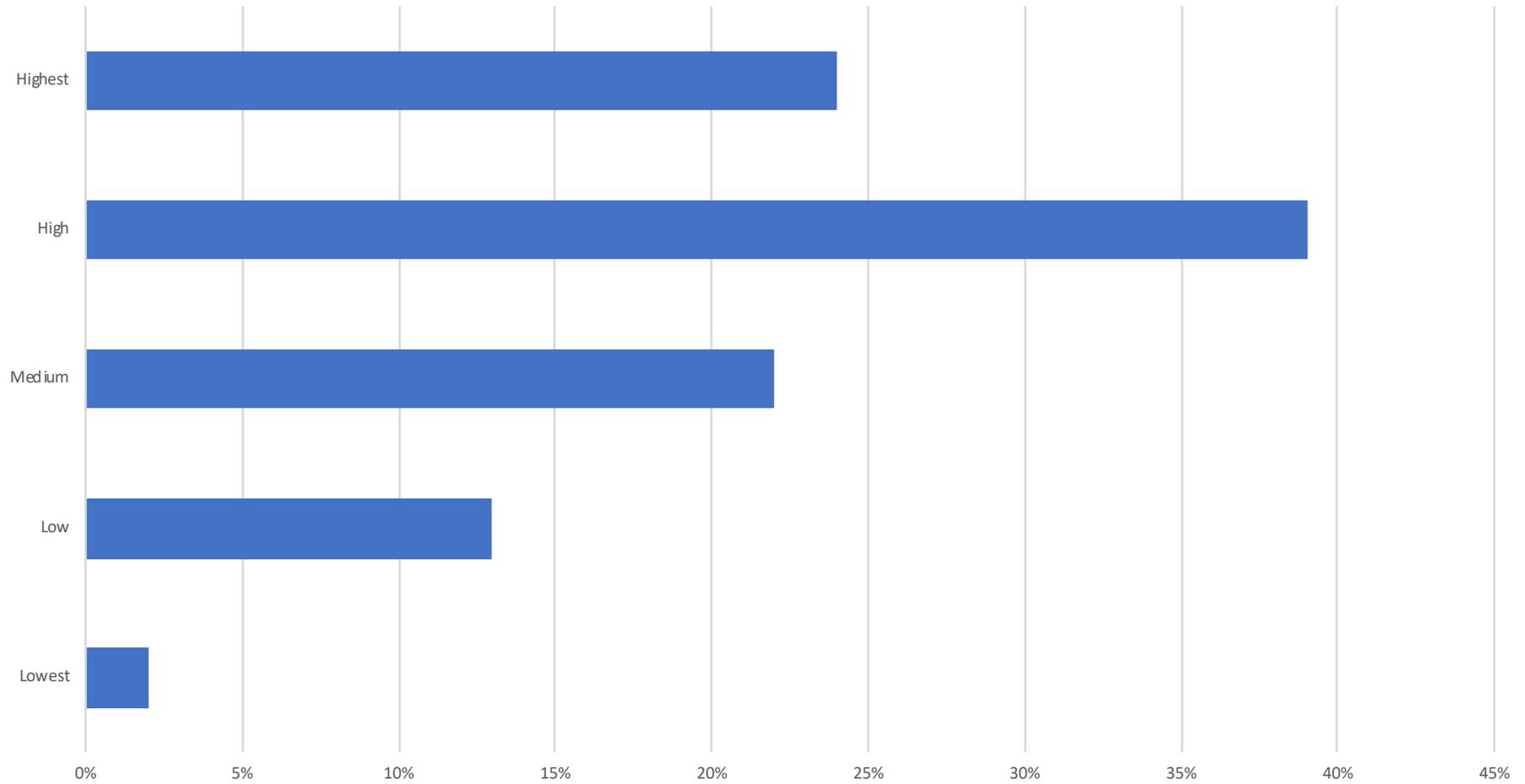
## Adequacy of current natural disaster recovery arrangements



## Increase funding to meet demand for infrastructure and services



## Additional support to better manage coastal erosion



# Insights – Highest priorities

- 44% - Increase funding to meet demand for infrastructure/services
- 41% - Need coordinated national approach to coastal governance
- 31% - Reform FAGs to include funds for coastal adaptation works
- 24% - More support & guidance to better manage coastal erosion
- 21% - Legal risks associated with coastal planning decisions
- 16% - Better policy guidance re coastal management issues
- 11% - Adequacy of current natural disaster recovery arrangements

# Priority issues - funding

The highest priority issue identified in the survey was the need for adequate funding to respond effectively to coastal hazards including:

- widespread coastal erosion
- environmental risks associated with climate change and
- coastal adaptation works.

## Priority issues - funding

“Funding adaptation is a new journey for all involved. **Current grants schemes fall woefully short of what will be required** by local governments. There is little to show this will change, leaving the onus on local governments and their ratepayers.”

*City of Greater Geraldton (WA)*

## Priority issues – funding (cont.)

“Our council has more than 100km of coastline with 25km actively managed by council. Over the past two years, **council’s average coastal operating costs represented 37% of total operating expenditure.**”

*Kingston District Council (SA)*

## Priority issues – funding (cont.)

**“Equity of funding for small rural councils with vast coastlines is needed, particularly in rural areas that do not have a large rates base. These councils have very little capacity to source their own funding.”**

*Glenelg Shire Council (VIC)*

## Priority issues – funding (cont.)

**“A sustainable and equitable **funding model that recognises the coast as a national asset is needed.** Funding should also be restored to the National Climate Change Research Facility.”**

*Mornington Peninsula Shire (VIC)*

Priority – coordinated national approach

“There should be **a national policy framework and funding mechanism** for agreed adaptation responses in order to ensure an equitable adaptation framework and response.”

*Moreton Bay Regional Council (QLD)*

Priority – coordinated national approach (cont.)

“Coastal problems are beyond the financial capacity of Councils to solve. **There is a need for all layers of Government to be involved in providing solutions.**”

*Onkaparinga Council (SA)*

Priority – coordinated national approach (cont.)

**“An Intergovernmental Coastal Policy that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Federal, state and local governments in regard to integrated coastal zone management is needed urgently.”**

*City of Busselton (WA)*

## Priority issues – grant funding

**“Grant funding with a sole focus on coastal adaptation projects is needed, including design and construction of revetment, coastal monitoring programs and localised data collection.”**

*City of Rockingham (WA)*

## Priority issues – grant funding (cont.)

**“The NSW Grants Commission should consider expanding the scope of FAGs to include a climate adaptation component.”**

*Eurobodalla Shire Council (NSW)*

## Priority issues – legal

***“Legal Issues continue to be a priority, including landowners’ rights to protect properties affected by coastal erosion... there is a lack of political acknowledgement of climate change and other coastal issues”***

*Byron Shire Council (NSW)*

## Priority issues – legal (cont.)

**“Legal risks are a priority.** Unauthorised and dangerous developments along the coast, such as sea walls or similar structures built on non-engineered bases are a hazard.”

*City of Whyalla (SA)*

# Recommendations

Having analysed the survey responses, the Australian Coastal Councils Association calls on the Australian and state governments to adopt the following key policy initiatives with the aim of achieving a sustainable future for coastal Australia:

## **1. RESOURCES TO MANAGE THE COAST ON BEHALF OF ALL AUSTRALIANS**

Introduce a national funding formula to provide the resources necessary to manage and maintain the coast effectively on behalf of all Australians, including the funds needed to increase the adaptive capacity of councils to address climate impacts.

# Recommendations

## **2. ALLOCATE FAGS FUNDING TO ADDRESS COASTAL HAZARDS**

Broaden the range of 'disabilities' listed under Financial Assistance Grants to include factors such as the vulnerability of coastal areas and communities to coastal hazards.

## **3. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON THE COASTAL ZONE**

Develop a co-ordinated national approach to coastal governance through an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone in cooperation with Australian, state, territory and local governments. The agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in relation to coastal zone management.

# Recommendations

## **4. NATIONAL COASTAL POLICY**

Ensure that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone forms the basis for a National Coastal Policy with outlines the principles, objectives and actions to be taken to address the challenges of integrated coastal zone management for Australia.

## **5. INCREASE FUNDING FOR AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAMS**

Allocate increased levels of funding for Australia's climate science research programs conducted by CSIRO and other research bodies, including the re-establishment of funding for the National Climate Change Research Facility and continuing support for *CoastAdapt*. This is essential to ensure Australia's coastal populations and assets are adequately prepared to address the adverse effects of climate change impacts.