



Bull Bar User Survey Report

Prepared For The Australian 4WD Industry Council

Bull Bar User Survey Report

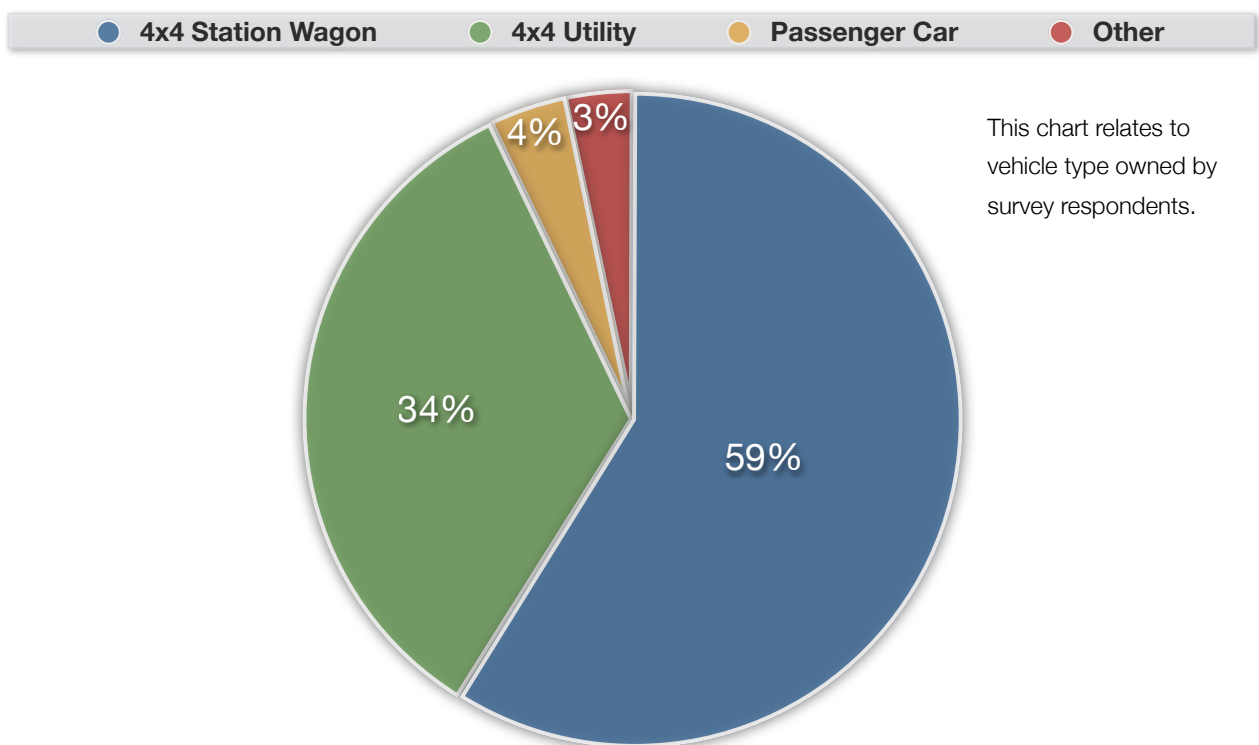
Introduction

On January 1, 2011 the Australian 4WD Industry Council launched an on line user survey aimed at gathering information relating to the experiences of Australian motorists. In particular, the survey was developed to gather data relating to motorists' experiences with bull bars and animal strikes.

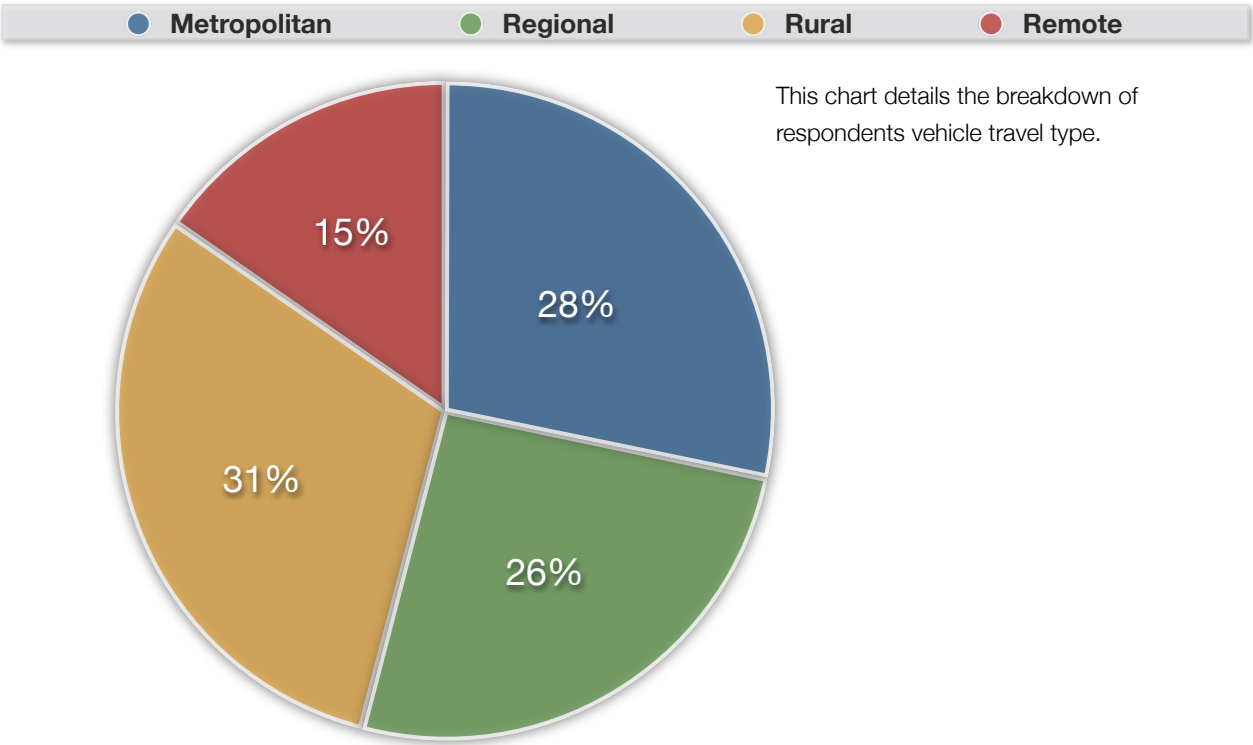
The survey ran for three months, finishing on March 31, 2011. A total of 42,624 responses were received. Of the responses received 33,620 surveys were fully completed and 9,004 were partially completed. The data contained in this report has been compiled from the 33,620 fully completed responses.

Findings

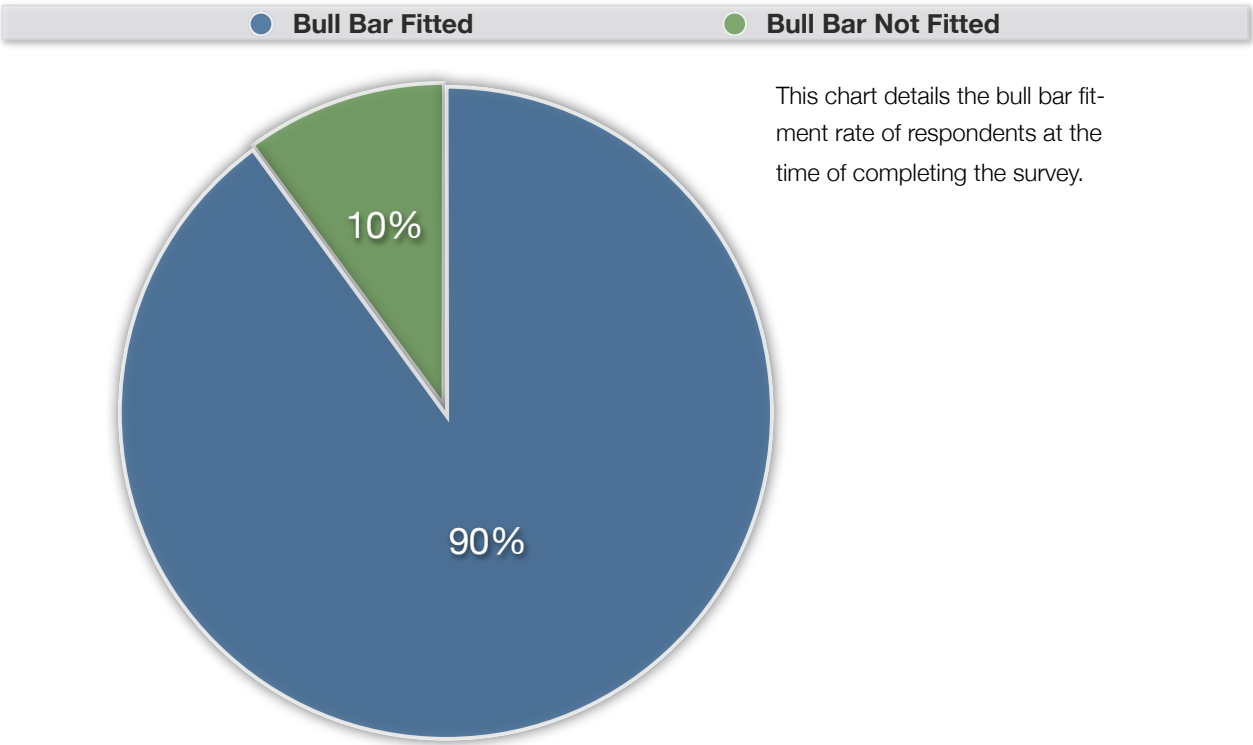
1. Vehicle Type



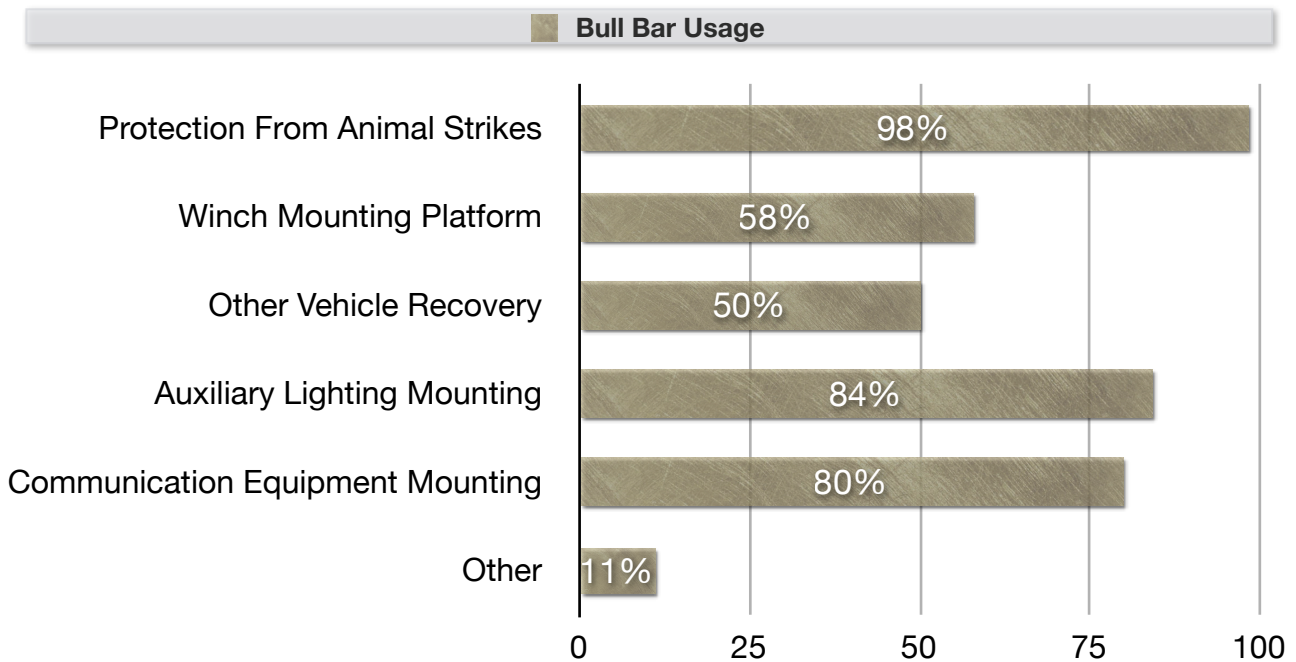
2. Travel Breakdown



3. Bull Bar Fitment Rate



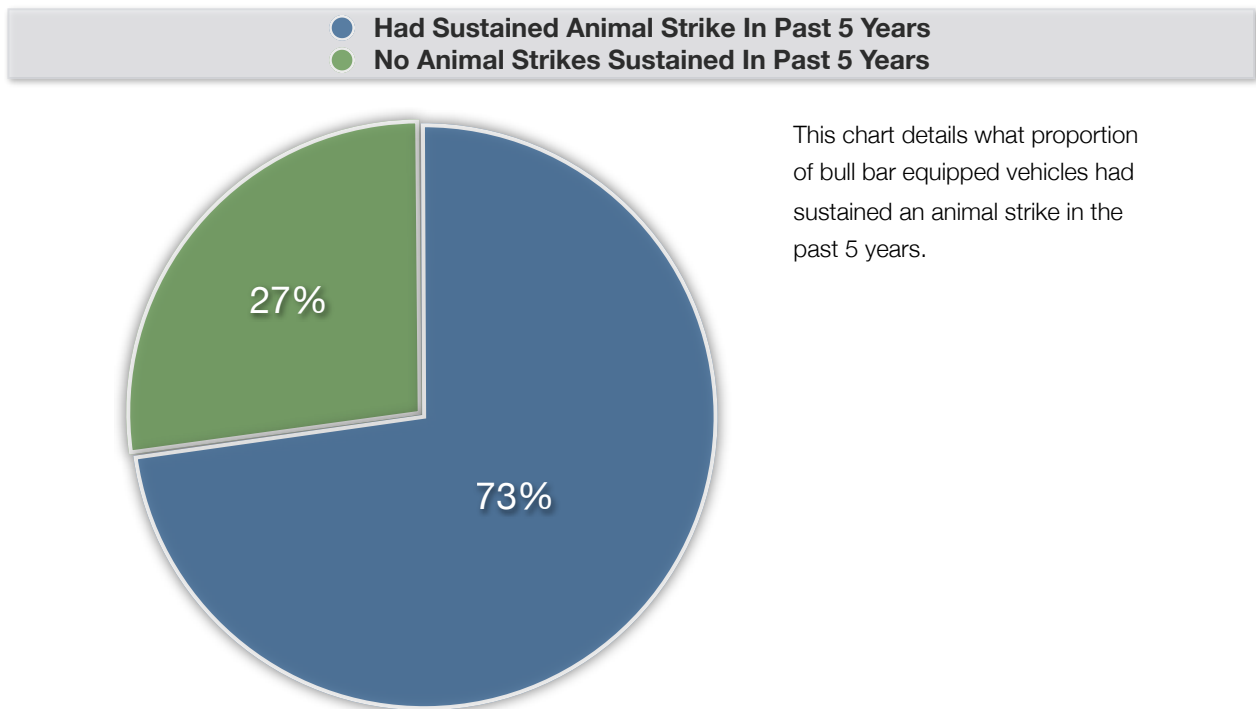
4. Reasons For Fitting A Bull Bar



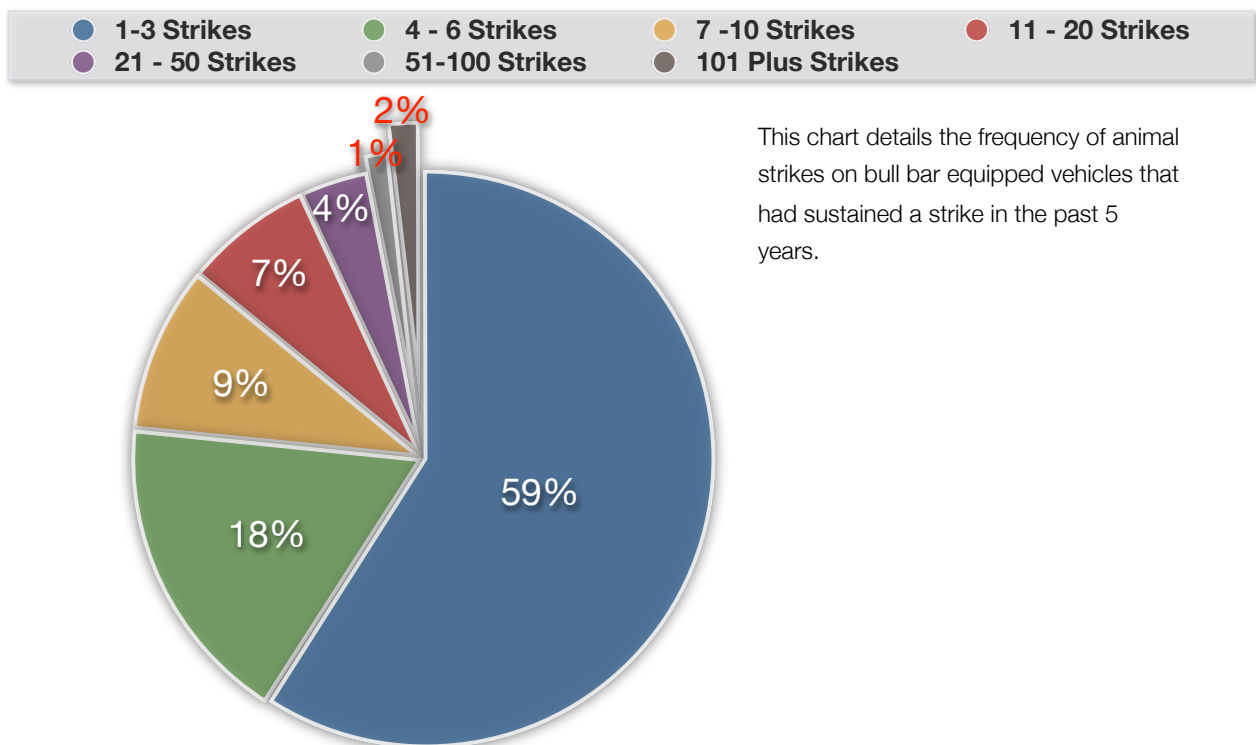
Many respondents detailed other reasons for equipping their vehicle with a bull bar. Examples of such applications are:

- A-frame towing/fixtures.
- To fit side bars/rails and steps.
- Holding accessories – shovel, water bags.
- Sand/dune flag.
- Locust/grass seed screen.
- Assisting in many jobs – holds surveying equipment, carry building materials, cross country driving research, electrician – attach cables to bull bar for pulling, ladder racks, long pipes, mounting geodetic data capture instruments, needed for mine sites.
- Assisting in fencing – anchor point.
- Farming – cattle lifts, containing wild cattle in a muster, pulling down fences, towing small things around, multiple daily uses.
- Attachment of roller to push kayaks onto roof racks.
- Better approach angle.
- Assisting roof rack extension – carrying long loads, surf skis, hang gliders, tool boxes.
- Connecting boat trailer to front of vehicle.
- CFA communication equipment, fire situations, mounting emergency warning equipment (siren, speaker, warning lights).
- Fitted tow ball to help position trailer/caravan/horse floats.
- Scrub deflection.
- To meet departmental OHS requirements for vehicles.

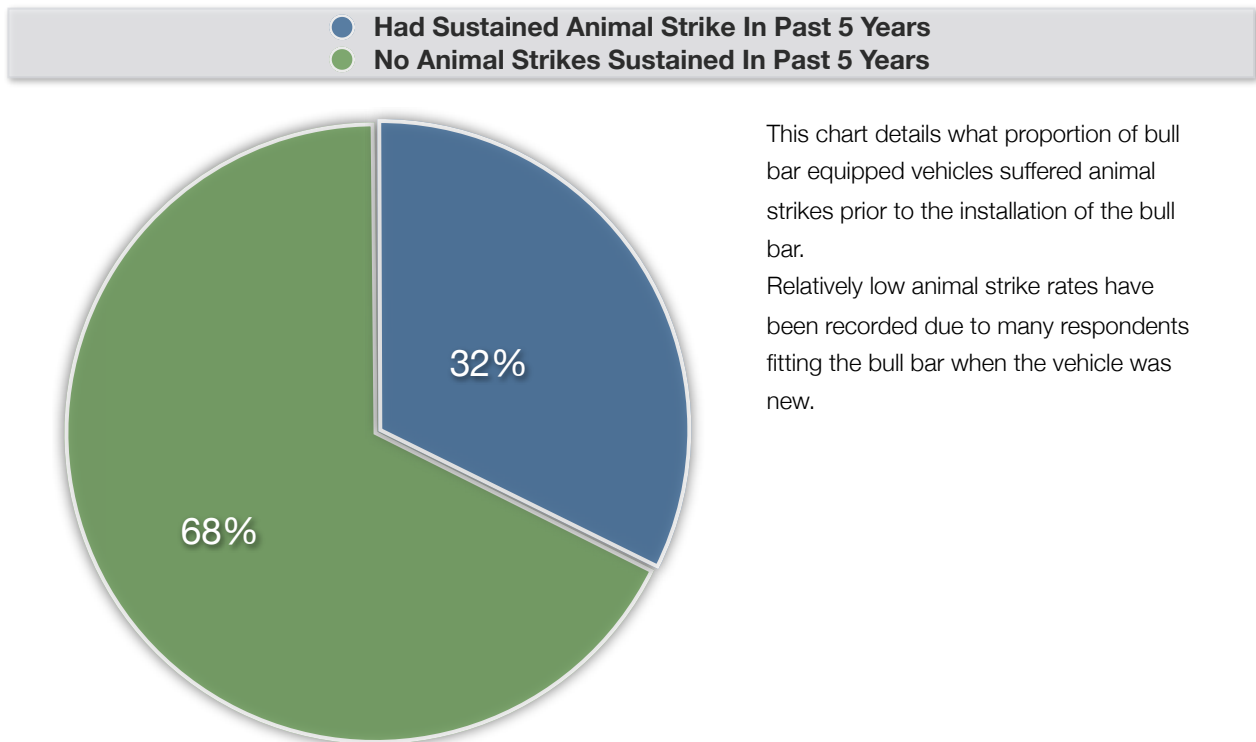
5. Animal Strike Rate On Bull Bar Equipped Vehicles In Past Five Years



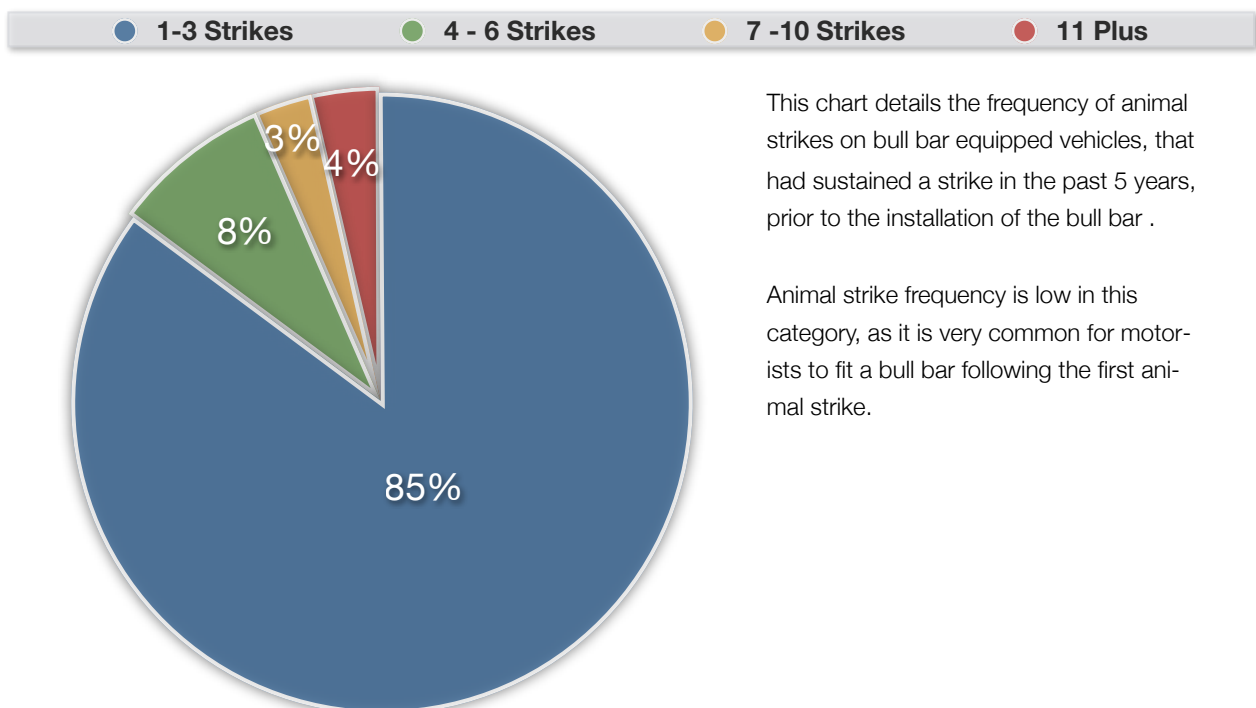
6. Animal Strike Frequency On Bull Bar Equipped Vehicles In Past Five Years



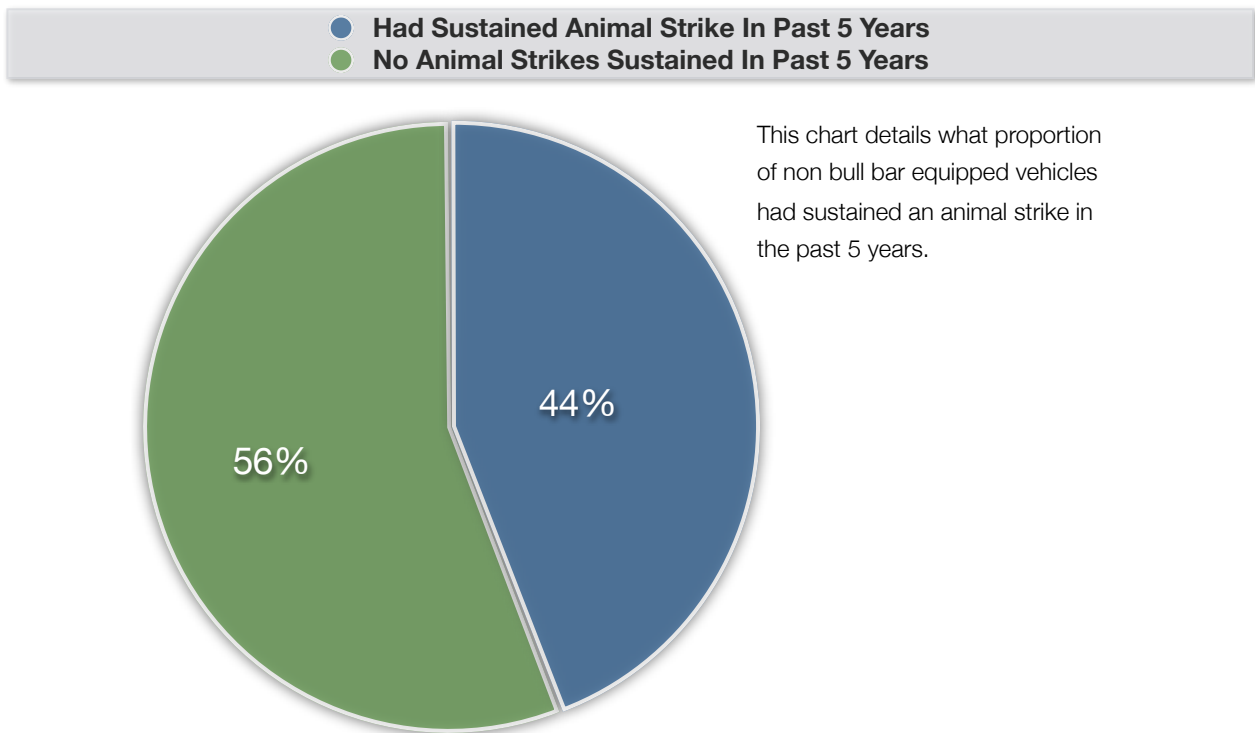
7. Animal Strike Rate On Bull Bar Equipped Vehicles, Prior To The Installation Of The Bull Bar, In Past Five Years



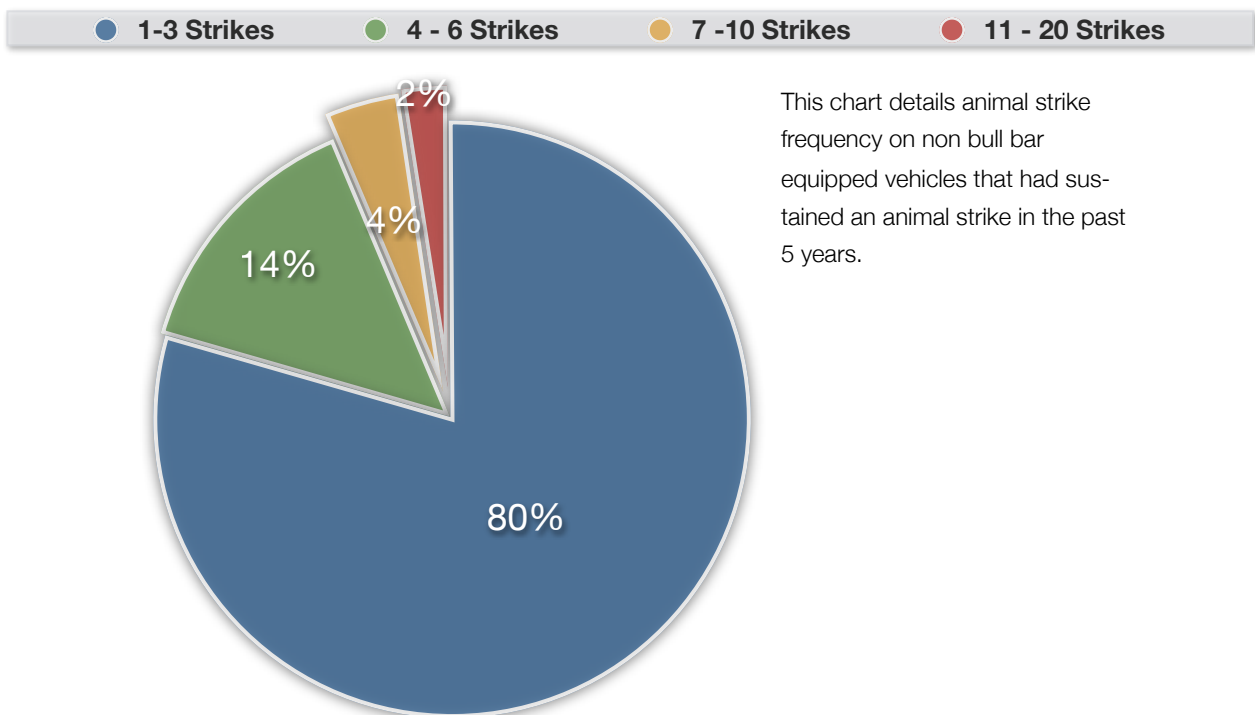
8. Animal Strike Frequency On Bull Bar Equipped Vehicles, Prior To The Installation Of The Bull Bar, In Past Five Years



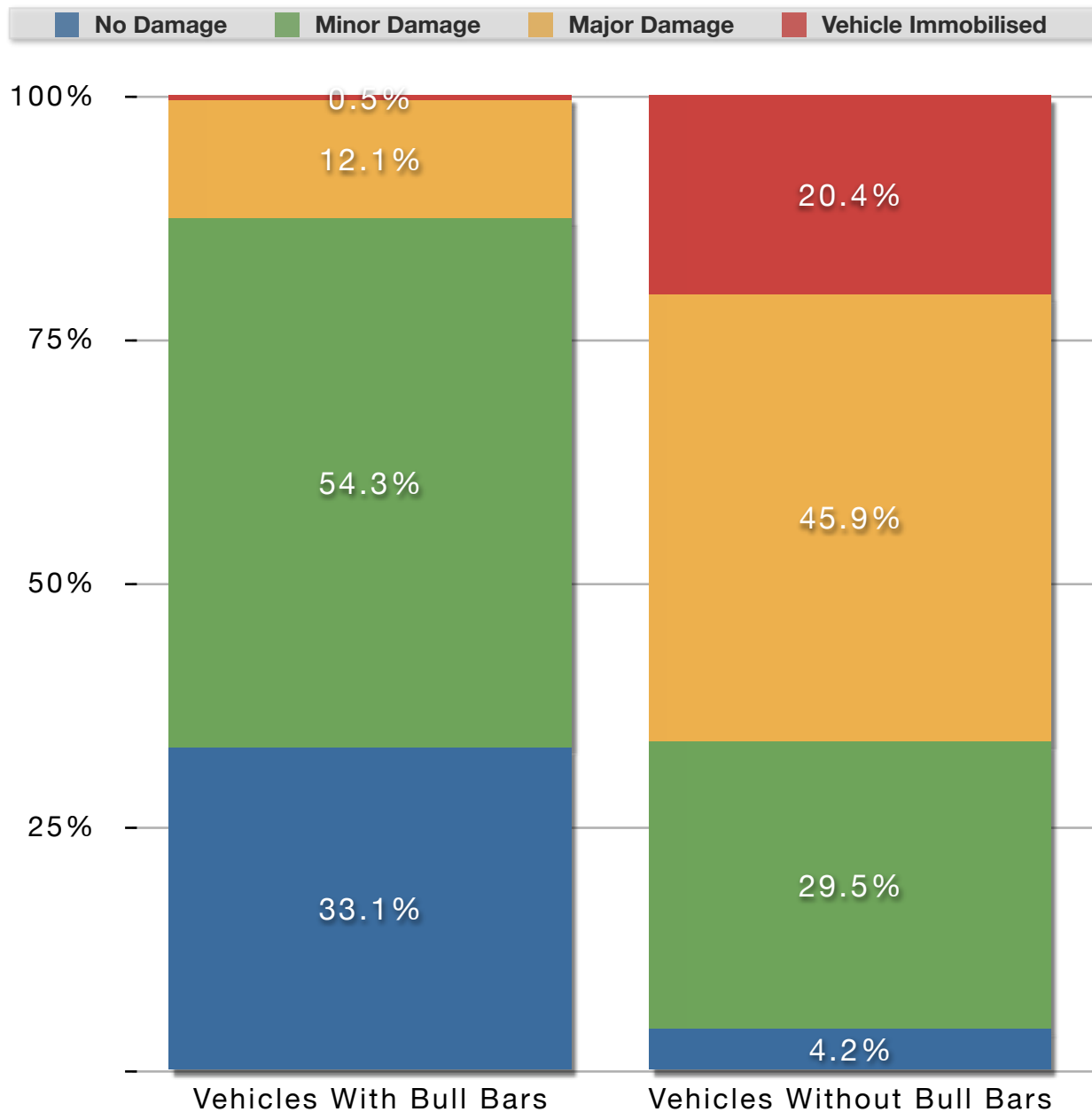
9. Animal Strike Rate On Vehicles Without A Bull Bar In Past Five Years



10. Animal Strike Frequency On Non Bull Bar Equipped Vehicles In Past Five Years

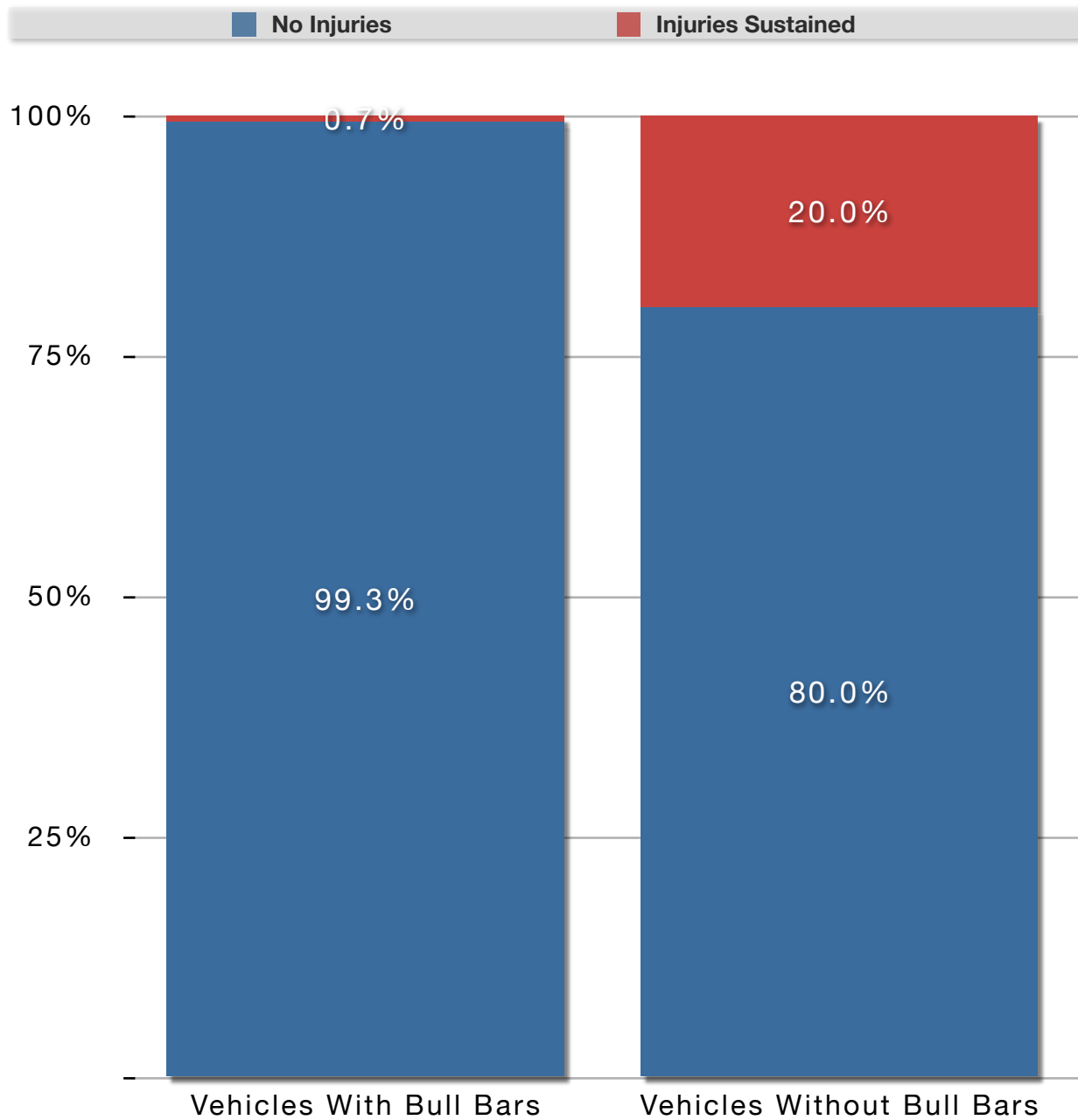


11. Consequence Of Most Severe Animal Strike In Past Five Years - Vehicle Damage



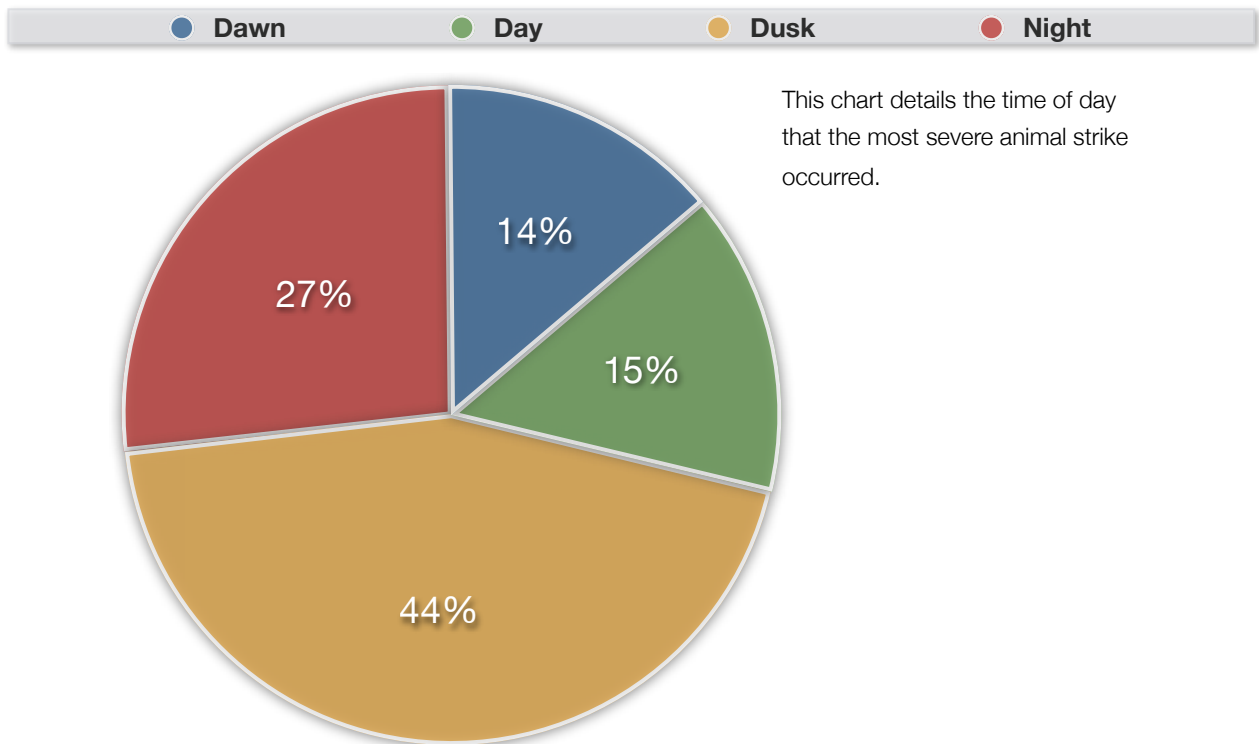
This graph demonstrates the level of vehicle damage sustained following the most severe animal strike over the past five years for bull bar and non bull bar equipped vehicles. In the case of minor damage recorded on bull bar equipped vehicles, this damage refers to the level of bull bar damage, with little or no vehicle damage incurred.

12. Consequence Of Most Severe Animal Strike In Past Five Years - Occupant Injury

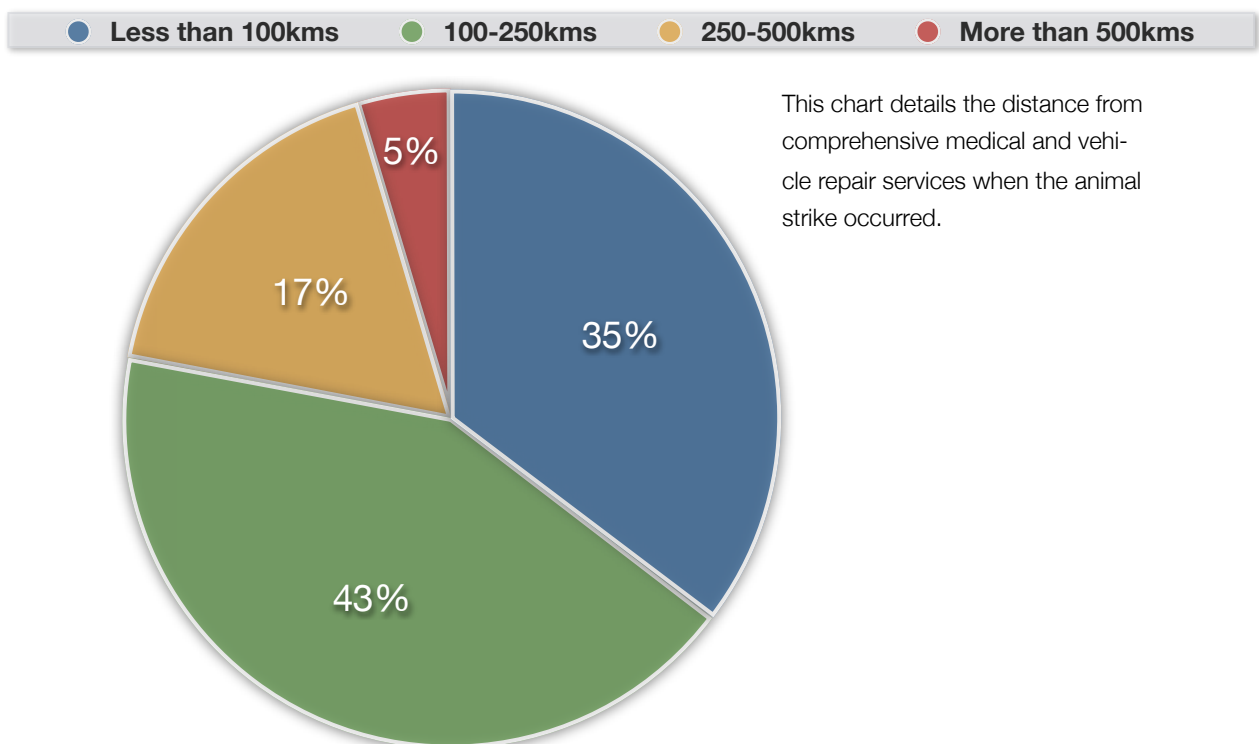


This graph demonstrates the level of occupant injury sustained following the most severe animal strike over the past five years for bull bar and non bull bar equipped vehicles.

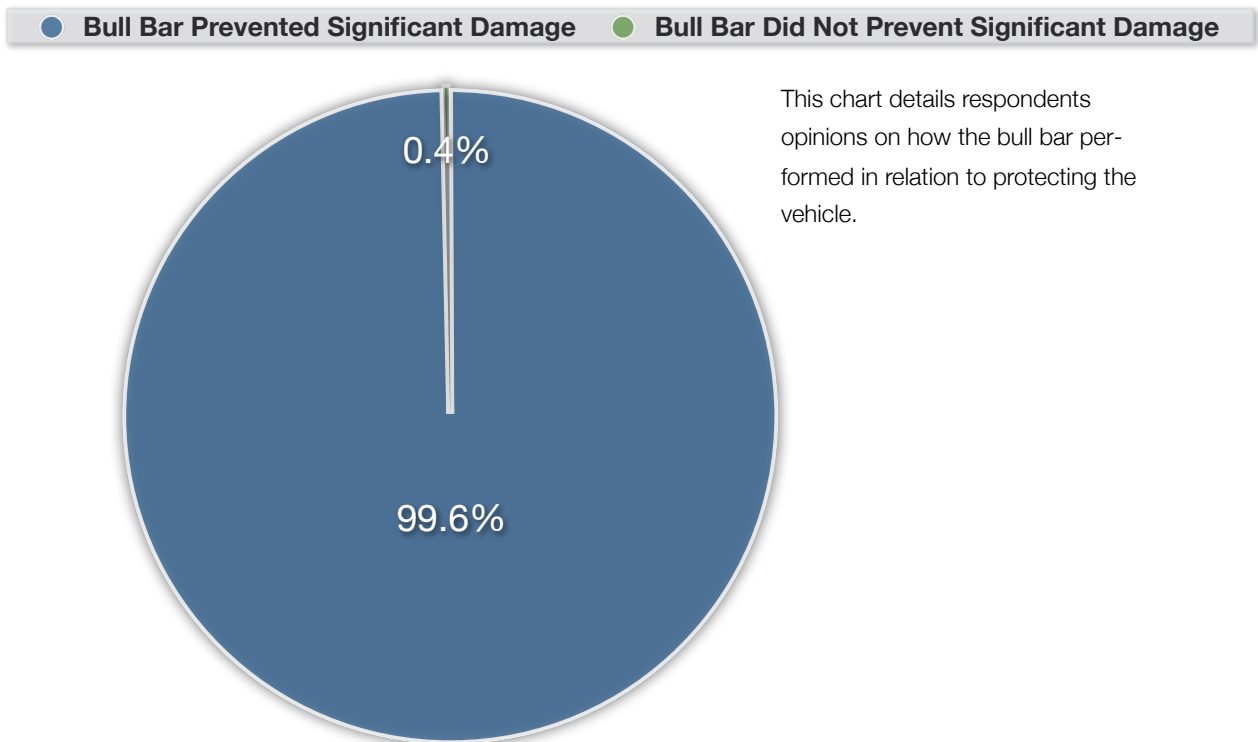
13. Time Of Day Most Severe Animal Strike Occurred



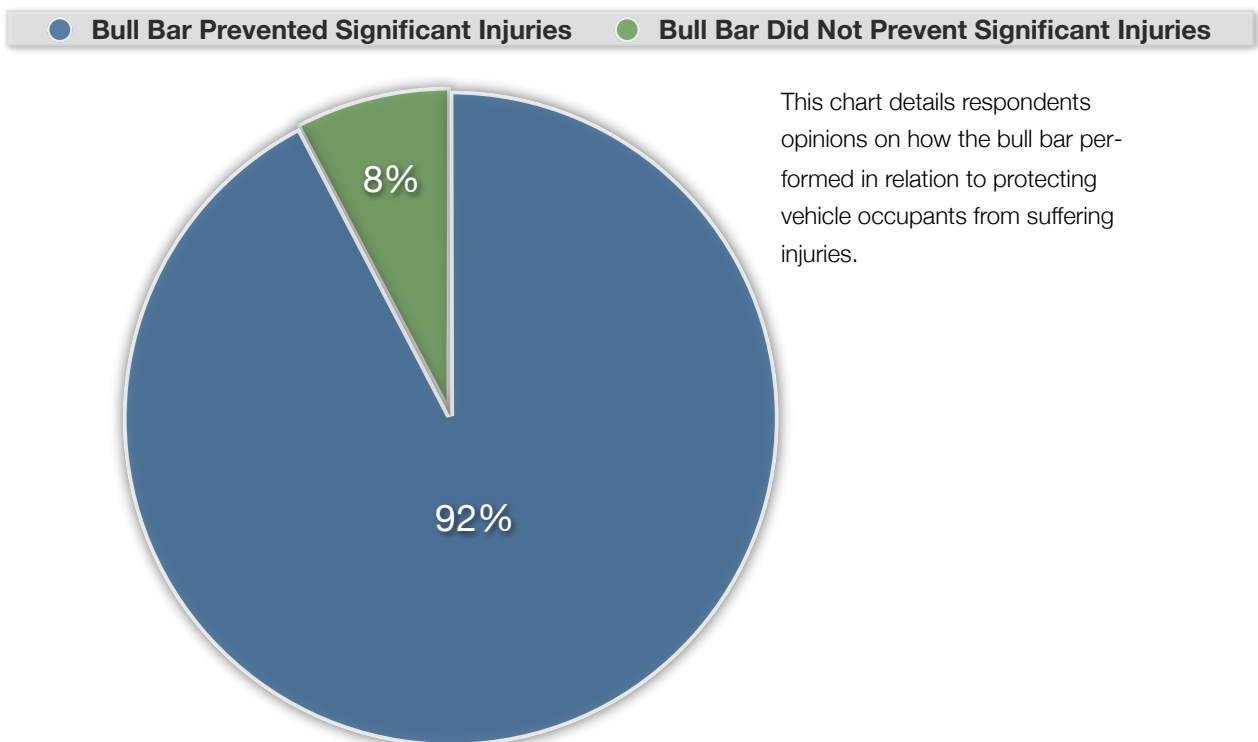
14. Distance From Comprehensive Medical And Vehicle Repair Services When Incident Occurred



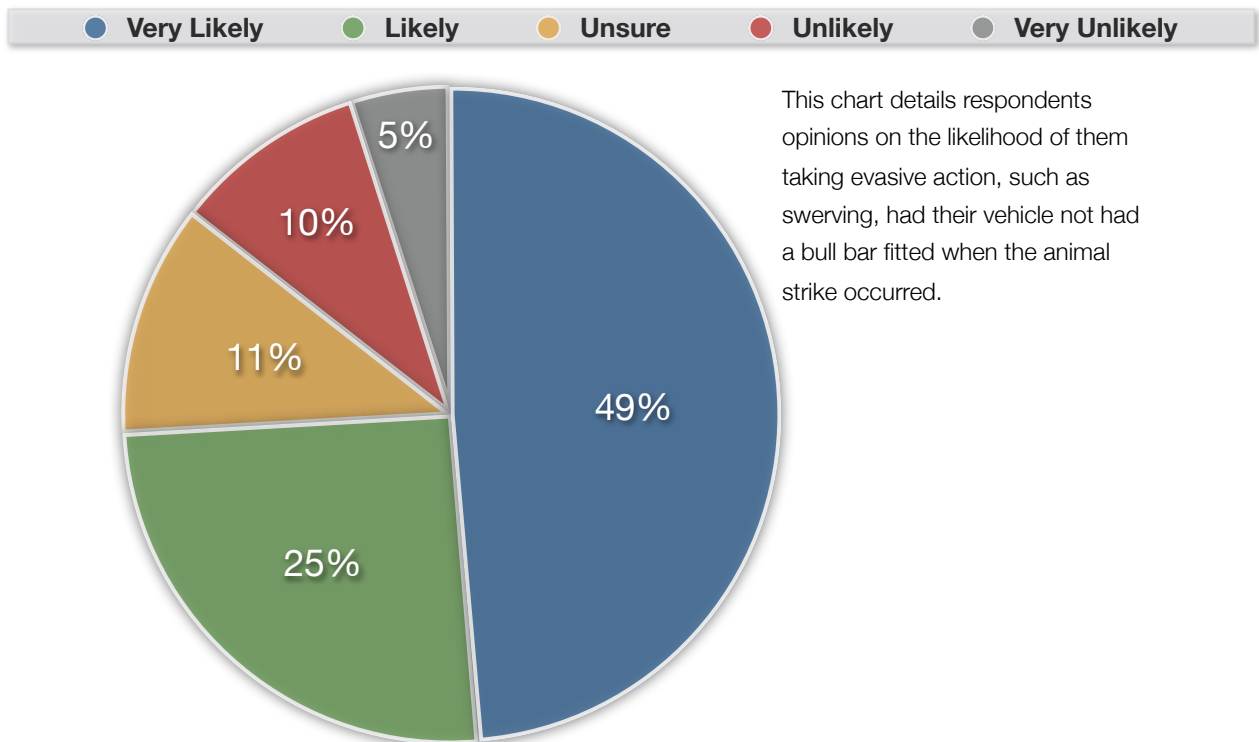
15. Respondents Views On Whether The Bull Bar Prevented Significant Damage To The Vehicle



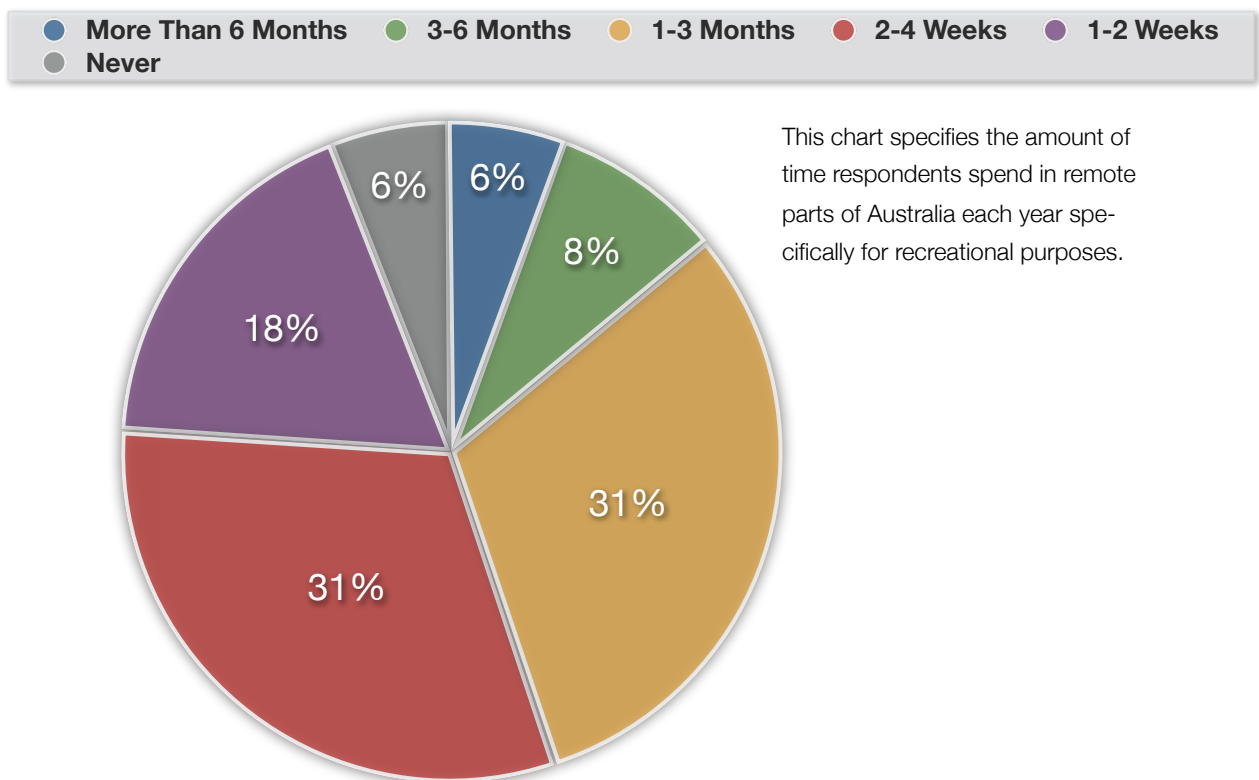
16. Respondents Views On Whether The Bull Bar Prevented Significant Injury To Vehicle Occupants



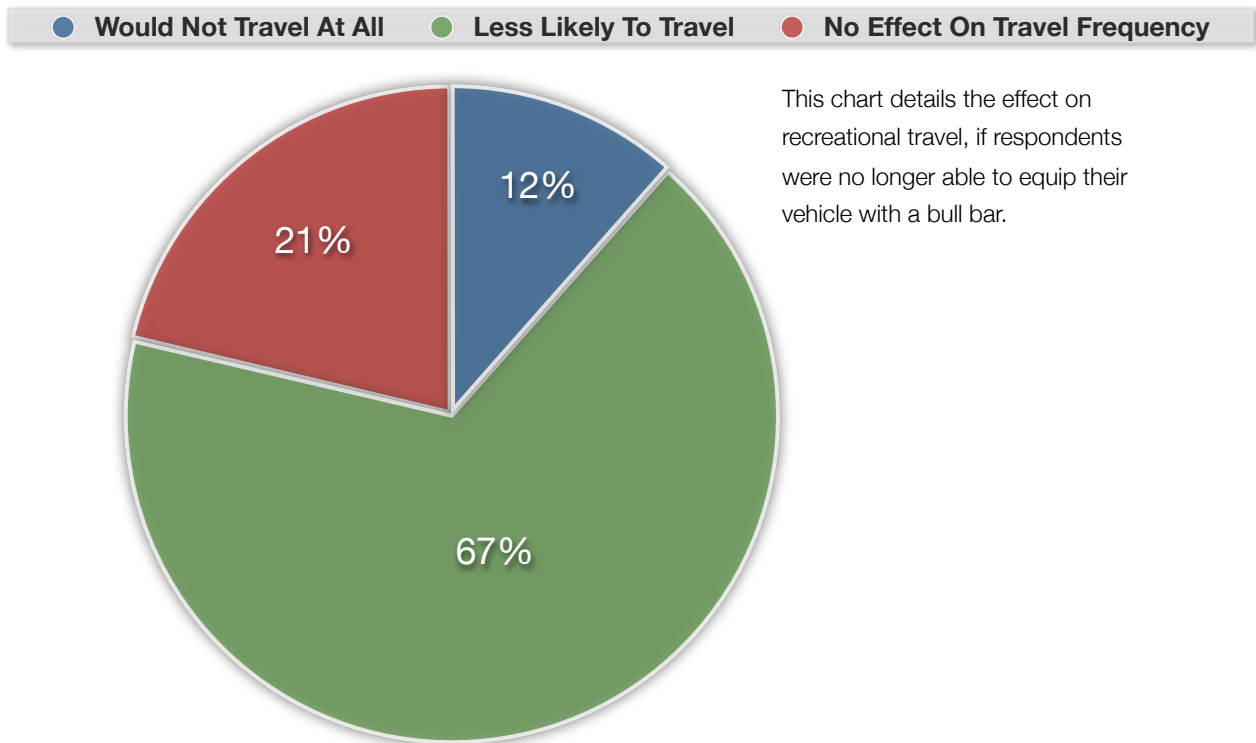
17. Respondents Views On Whether They Would Have Swerved Or Taken Other Evasive Action If A Bull Bar Had Not Been Fitted



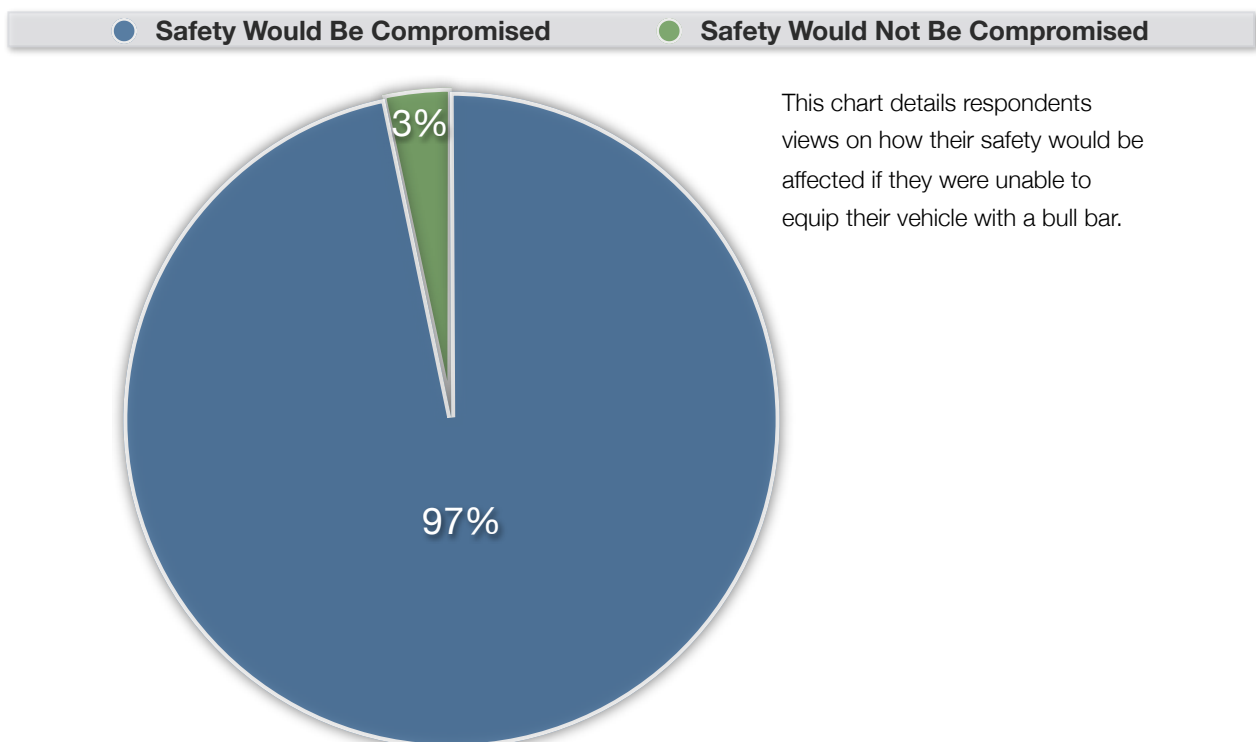
18. Recreational Travel In Australia



19. Effect On Recreational Travel If Respondents Were Unable To Fit A Bull Bar

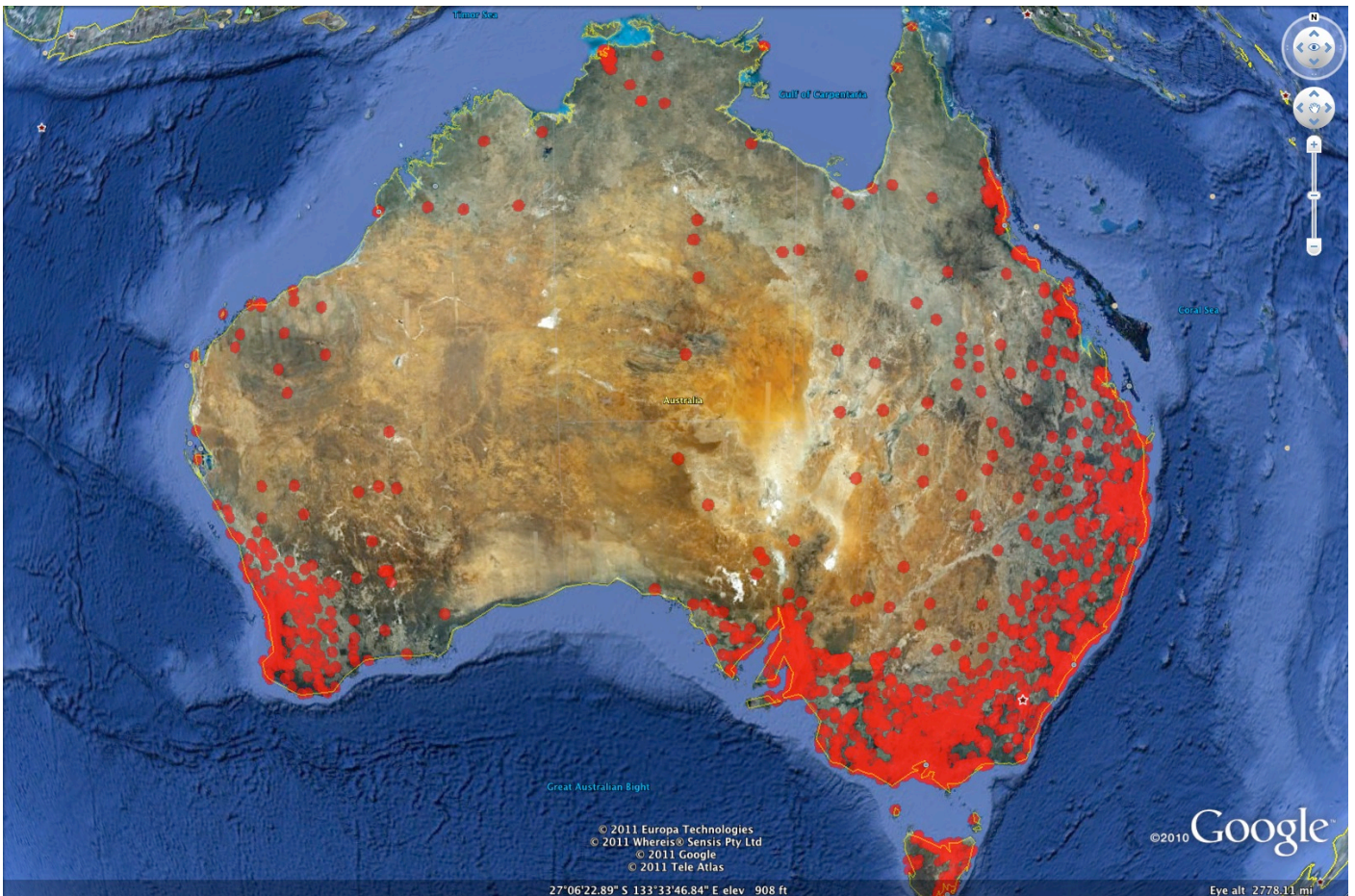


20. Respondents Views On Whether Their Safety Would Be Compromised If They Were Unable To Fit A Bull Bar



Respondents Location

The following map charts the location of survey respondents.



Additional Comments

The majority of survey respondents provided additional information on their experiences with animal strikes, and also used the survey as a means of voicing their concerns about any legislation that would ban or reduce the effectiveness of a bull bar. There were far too many additional comments to list in this report. Therefore only a small selection of comments have been included. Personal details have been withheld for privacy reasons, but are available from the Australian 4WD Industry Council. A number of respondents also submitted images of their vehicles following animal strikes, and a selection of these are also included.

If unable to fit bull bar, hence no driving lights, this would make country night driving EXTREMELY fatiguing and I believe DANGEROUS. If no bull bar and no driving lights are fitted while driving at night in rural areas you will be guaranteed of eventually striking an animal (my experience while living in East Gippsland has been the above). If unable to fit a winch, this could make becoming bogged in a remote area a matter of life and death, not to mention the peace of mind and security it provides. I may live in a semi suburban environment, but often travel to far East Gippsland at night, and I also travel yearly to remote outback destinations, not to mention numerous high country trips. The removal of a bull bar would greatly affect safety in undertaking these activities. I have also in the past had nudge bars on sedans to enable the fitment of driving lights and offer some form of protection.

User ID: 122

I am a grazier in far western Queensland via Boulia. I have a young family who need to travel over 400km to get food. Anyone who has to drive under these conditions would find it extremely dangerous without a good, strong bull bar. If my family was to hit a stray animal on a 45 degree day and the car was then disabled, it could be extremely dangerous for them as cars are not very frequent on these roads. It is nothing less than a matter of safety. Looking at a European model for bull bars in Australia is insane. 200 years ago Australia adopted agricultural practices from Europe and it was detrimental to all of Australian regional areas. The point is that we are total opposites and cannot be compared.

User ID: 254

We have been involved in one animal strike and one frontal tree strike (at low speed) in remote areas on our travels and I am 100% sure that had it not been for our ARB steel front bar that the car (1980 LandCruiser) would have been almost written off, or at least totally un-drivable, and there would certainly have been injury to the occupants. As it was, we were able to patch up and drive on with minor damage to the car and ourselves. We see steel bull bars as a very necessary item on cars that travel in remote or rural areas from mostly a safety for the occupants point of view. Steel bull bars are much more user friendly nowadays too, with smart designs to make them less obtrusive and colour coding to make them almost unnoticeable. Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

User ID: 339

The protection afforded by the bull bar for both animal strikes and mounting of recovery equipment were the factors considered when making the purchase of a bull bar. If not fitted, this would have an impact on driving times and areas visited. Also with a pending remote/country posting with work where a personal 4x4 is required, it is a necessary part of our safety equipment. European standards would not be suitable for driving conditions or areas travelled in Australia. The European standards are set for vehicles which are used on public highways and densely populated areas. To follow this standard would impact on road safety and the road death toll.

User ID: 443

Remote outback Australia exposes motorists to some potentially dangerous conditions - livestock on roads due to the lack of fencing, feral goats, donkeys and pigs to name a few, as well as the setting and rising of the sun creating glare, bright spots and visibility difficulties, with the additional concern of our native animals moving about on roadways in the evenings, night and early mornings. I wouldn't risk my family's safety in remote locations by not fitting frontal protection to the family vehicle. We have been driving Toyota LandCruisers for the last fifteen years across the width and breadth of our wonderful country, enjoying its beauty and many wonders. I hope that my family will not be limited in destination choices due to changes that would alter our future safety on Aussie roads.

User ID: 534

*I have travelled extensively in the outback, I am a member of a 4x4 club and we drive with respect to the environment. The bull bar is not a weapon, but a safety device. I had an experience where, for medical reasons, I had to drive quickly during the night on an outback track, my big bull bar mounted lights and super attentive driving saved us from a disastrous impact with kangaroos. The Australian outback is NOT Europe and our 4x4 drivers are not TOP GEAR idiots. Leave the people who use the outback to decide how best to equip their vehicles to keep themselves safe and be able to get themselves there and back without having to require assistance. We don't need European city dwellers deciding our safety rules and regulations. **User ID: 540***

*We actually hit a BULL that had escaped out of a paddock at night. Impact speed 80-90km/h. If not for the steel bar the car would surely have been immobilised. And if the car was a few inches lower I think we would most likely have been killed as it would have come over the bonnet. I don't understand this?! It's like forcing people not to wear safety boots on a worksite! **User ID: 1302***

*If I had not had a bull bar fitted when the last animal strike happened it would have immobilised the vehicle with the roo coming through the radiator and disabling the vehicle. Then my family and I would have been stranded with an unmovable vehicle, 600kms from the nearest town. The bull bar is an essential protection necessity for my vehicle and my family's well being. **User ID: 1326***

*I have had two close family friends involved in separate accidents involving animal strikes. The first of which wrote off the family Commodore and put the mother in hospital when they hit a kangaroo. Due to the shape of the front end of the vehicle it deflected the roo up into the A-pillar and windscreen. A bull bar would have prevented such a deflection. The second was an incident involving a stray cow on the road and the vehicle swerved, lost control and hit a tree on the side of the road. The occupants of the vehicles both sustained massive head injuries and had extensive stays in hospital. A properly designed bull bar which suits the vehicle will deflect an animal under the wheels and severely reduce the risk of major injury to the vehicle's occupants. Maybe tighter manufacturing legislation and better enforcement of fitment policy instead of a blanket ruling would be more constructive towards road safety in Australia. As Australians we have the right to protect our families and make our touring adventures as safe as possible. **User ID: 1901***

*I am a retired police officer with 41 years of street experience and have attended thousands of accidents on and off road. It is my opinion that if a pedestrian were to be hit by my vehicle it would make little difference if a bull bar were fitted or not. I have seen people's lives saved by bull bars. Head on collisions with trees etc which would normally cause considerable damage and injury, but are lessened by strong bull bars being fitted. **User ID: 11961***

*I have had near strikes with cattle on the road between Exmouth and Coral Bay in Western Australia. Many of the cattle are black. The cattle farmers in the area have been known to remove the cattle ID and allow them to roam along the road verges at night. They remove the ID so if there is an accident, they will not be held accountable. Without a bull bar, more people will die or at the very least suffer serious damage and/or injury with no-one to be held accountable. **User ID: 2045***

*I am the state manager for a company that deals with the local councils of Queensland. I am regularly travelling long distances in regional Queensland at dusk and early in the morning. As part of the job safety assessment, it is recommended that my car be fitted with a bull bar for protection against kangaroos etc as well as providing mounts for additional lighting. **User ID: 34156***

I live, geographically, about half way between Alice Springs and Broome. The remoteness of my location means that an animal strike without a bull bar, in any vehicle, would probably mean the requirement of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, if and when the accident is found. The blanket banning of bull bars would mean that those of us who drive only on remote and unsealed roads all the time, have no safety from feral animals and stock. We are also dependent on our HF and UHF radios for a lot of our communication. The removal of bull bars will also remove a stable position on vehicles where such communication media can be located. I also have my spotties on my bull bar, to allow me to see stock, other than kangaroos that suddenly come from nowhere.

User ID: 2046

My son wrote off a two door coupe trying to avoid a kangaroo near Tintinara (SA) some years ago. I have had several animal strikes and more near misses (that could just as easily have turned into strikes) than I care to remember, more than five years ago and several near misses within the last 5 years. I'm convinced that one of those strikes would have severely damaged my vehicle and consequently compromised my wife's life and mine in a very remote area if no bull bar had been fitted - there was some damage, but vehicle was still mobile. Mind you, no bar will provide protection if the vehicle hits a camel (and there are more and more of these in remote areas each year) especially a big bull camel - it will just take their legs out from under them, even at low road speeds, and the driver and passengers will wear him through the windscreen or on the roof of the vehicle, with serious, if not fatal consequences. The bonus is they're big, so they can usually be seen and evasive action can be taken before they become a major problem, and don't tend to behave as unpredictably as some other animals/birds. Currently allowable bar designs provide little enough protection against wombat or feral pig strikes as it is - wombats being a frequent and very real concern even west of the River Murray less than 1 ½ hrs from Adelaide. **User ID: 2174**

As a paramedic, I'd like to comment on two accidents where Commodore sedans were struck to the side, both at about 80kph. One was struck by a truck with a bull bar. There was no cabin intrusion, the doors and panels bent in about 2" and the car was pushed along the road. The bull bar spread the force of the impact across the width of the sedan. In the other accident, a Commodore struck the side of a Commodore at 80kph. It intruded over half way into the cabin, obliterating the passenger seat and centre console, then flung out across 3 lanes of traffic. The T-Bone is the most dangerous impact for a sedan (least protection). The bull bar on the striking vehicle dissipated the energy over a larger area. To illustrate, it's a bit like being struck with 'X' amount of force - do you want to be struck by a knife or a phone book? Obviously the phone book, as it spreads the impact over a larger area. In these scenarios bull bars enhanced passenger safety in the struck vehicle - something that has not been investigated. **User ID: 22901**

A bull bar provides me with the assurance that I am not stranded on a remote regional road where there is no mobile phone coverage. A bull bar means that I don't have costly repairs, insurance excess and the inconvenience of being without my business work vehicle for long periods. A bull bar means I come home to my family safely each night. **User ID: 40786**

My last car was written off by a mob of roos crossing at a blind corner at dawn south east of Pemberton, WA. My wife died in this collision. I do not care if the Australian government bans bull bars. I will still fit one every time I buy a new car. I will fit one to cars of all of my children when they are ready to drive. I will tell my friends and family that they need one. Try and stop me. **User ID: 17841**

I have trained SES emergency people for over 2 years in Central Vic and bull bars have been proved essential for their work in rough bush areas to protect the lights, aerials and front of their vehicles. Often they hit bushes and smaller fallen trees in high grass areas and the lack of protection would lead to expensive bodywork repairs. The European standard should not be made to apply to Australia as the terrain here is so harsh and different. My comments above also apply to the Department of Sustainability ranger staff at work in the bush, scientific workers, research workers, police and farming staff as only some of the rural bush workers. In the early days when I owned a Holden Saloon and was involved in skiing, I remember seeing many cars severely damaged by wildlife, in some cases the bones of kangaroos killed in the accident (jumped down from thick brush without warning) caused serious fatal injuries when they came through the windscreen and "speared" the occupants of the vehicle. I believe many of those fatalities could have been avoided by bull bars localising the danger to the front of the vehicle. **User ID: 38466**

Although I stated in a previous question that there would be 'no effect on travel to remote areas' there would be an effect on travel outcomes. This would be as a result of increased avoidance of periods of increased risk (dusk/evening/night time/early morning) resulting in slower travel in fixed time frames, the consequence of this is reduced tourism due to fixed holiday periods. I am also a licensed amateur radio operator that is a member of WICEN (Wireless Institute Citizens Emergency Network). This group supports emergency services in times of natural disaster, like Black Saturday in Vic. Having no bull bar reduces my effective operation in terms of vehicle protection and as a platform for radio antennas. I know of many other hams who would likely be adversely affected if bull bars were banned. I guess it's worth remembering that people cause accidents not bull bars! **User ID: 42618**

As a Doctor of Physiotherapy, I understand the impact of motor vehicle accidents on drivers and passengers. I have also experienced the damage Australian animals, primarily kangaroos, can cause to vehicles and more so the vehicle's occupants when involved in collisions. If bull bars were to be banned in this country, I strongly believe that drivers would take more extreme evasive steering measures in attempt to avoid animal collisions, and in turn increase the risk of driving off the road/track. This of course, could lead to more serious side-on impacts where the vehicles structural integrity is weaker. From an injury perspective, side on impacts can at the very least cause whiplash injuries (rapid deceleration injuries). Considering the sensitive anatomical structures within the neck region (e.g. arteries and nerves), side on impacts create a greater injury risk than do head-on collisions. Whilst I do not have any epidemiological data to support my assumption that a driver is more likely to steer off course when facing a head-on animal collision and no bull bar, as opposed to having a bull bar fitted to the vehicle in question, I can say that I have a great deal of anecdotal evidence to support this (i.e. hearing MVA patients' reports of swerving to avoid animals). Finally, in my experience of dealing with the federal government in relation to other legislation issues, I have found logical arguments to be the opposite in the government's eyes, hence I hope 'they' keep laws designed for European countries in those countries, otherwise they may one day be pouring salt on the streets of the Gold Coast too. **User ID: 318**

For the last 25 years I have averaged over 40,000K a year mostly on country roads and mostly for work. Any one that has ever travelled at night on a country road with roos would not be so stupid as to suggest the removal of Bars. For my family and own safety I would much prefer to have a solid bar and no airbags when driving on country roads. My experience has shown this to be the safest combination. **User ID: 2717**

*I was not a great believer in bull bars until the first time I hit a roo. I saw it and I did swerve to get out of the way and nearly rolled the car (thank goodness nobody was coming the other way or I would have collected them too). My fault, it was a natural reaction to protect the vehicle. I still hit the roo, went off the side of the road and did a lot of damage to the vehicle. I then drove into Rockhampton and the vehicle was then classified as a repairable write-off (thank goodness for insurance, but the inconvenience of not having a vehicle and being 700km from home sucks). My wife had twisted her vertebrae and was hospitalised for a week to recover. When I got the new car I had a bull bar placed on it and since then I have hit another two roos. I did not swerve due to confidence I had in the equipment. I have replaced one bull bar due to the damage sustained, but the car was fine. I am now converted and I will never go back to not having one. Australia will always have wildlife trying to cross the road. In my opinion, bull bars save lives. **User ID: 40006***

*Whilst my private vehicle is fitted with a bull bar, the fleet of cars at work isn't. Of the 20 passenger vehicles at the office (based in Hamilton, Western Victoria), there would be at least 5 animal strikes per year (last year (2010) 5 kangaroos and 1 deer. These vary from minor to major damage depending on how the animal is struck (i.e. in landing position major damage, if jumping minor due to height of animal onto car) and what evasive action is taken (depending on time). This has been listed as one of the highest risks due to frequency on our near miss data base. If bull bars were fitted to those vehicles the damage and possible injury to humans would be decreased. Unfortunately the animals are hurt either way, but bull bars would decrease the vehicle damage and provide greater protection. **User ID: 5058***

*I lost my daughter in the accident, authorities say that if we had of had a bull bar fitted the bull would not have come up over the bonnet and through the windscreen. If they do decide to enforce the "no bull bar policy" I shudder to think of all the accidents and casualties that will come out of it. So please use common sense always drive safe and enjoy life to the fullest. **User ID: 29282***

*We live in the Kimberley region of WA and cannot possibly consider not having or removing our bull bar. I can state that I would not remove this bar and I guess I would get a fine as towing a one ton Kimberley Kamper Trailer behind a landcruiser and having a roo, pig or let alone a cow hit the front without a bar would be a disaster. **User ID: 531***

*Banning bull bars will not solve any problems related to safety. If anything, it will increase risk. This is not Europe, the climate and terrain is far different. Without a bull bar, if you have a significant animal strike that immobilises the car you not only have the risk of injury to the occupants at the time of the crash, but also increased likelihood of a severe driving maneuver to avoid the animal thus possibly flipping the vehicle (greater injury to occupants). And the possibility the people will be stranded in very unforgiving areas. Bull bars are a necessity for Australian roads, not a nice-to-have. They are expensive accessories that serve a critical safety role, on so many levels, anywhere, anytime. I travel with my wife and three small kids. I cannot think of anything worse than having an accident in the outback that immobilised my car because I did not have a bull bar. I would not travel to more than half the places I go now. **User ID: 1328***

*While on Walkers Crossing Public Access from Birdsville to Innamincka we assisted a vehicle with no front protection after an animal strike. These people were in a very remote area and not going anywhere too soon and, in the worst case, could have perished. We managed to do some repairs to get them to Birdsville. I'm sure that with front protection the damage would have been minimal if any. **User ID: 17355***

*My Wife and I often travel alone, In the past I have had a Red Kangaroo through the windscreen on a vehicle without a bull bar. There is no mention in the survey of near miss. The bar also ensures my winch is not protruding and allows on many occasions the ability for self recovery. As a person involved in road accident rescue I believe we are seeing an over reaction. There has been little mention of Forward control vehicles, light trucks (3ton) people movers etc. Onus must also come back to pedestrian. Banning something like this does not reduce the toll or technically the injuries. If we look at a motorcyclist, they have the freedom to ride and by law must wear a helmet, yet they can ride in just a pair of shorts. Their injuries actually become more due to lack of protective clothing. My point is choices. **User ID: 3682***

*My bull bar serves many purposes, not just as a protection against animal strikes. A lot of my ancillary equipment is attached to this valuable asset and allows me to travel to remote areas without fear of getting stuck and also allows me to light up large areas of bush whilst driving at nighttime. Recently, I took a short trip up the coast, (about 110 KM) and counted well over 15 large animals dead on the side of the road (kangaroos and emus). Without bull bar protection, these animals would inflict major damage to a vehicle and possibly inflict injury to the occupants. Without a bull bar, you are more likely to swerve to avoid the collision thus putting yourself and your passengers at risk. Australian conditions are different to Europe and their vehicle regulations have no bearing or make any sense in this harsh country. Leave the 4WD community alone and stop over regulating everything. Any government that tries to stop my enjoyment of driving in the bush will lose my vote. **User ID: 735***

*1995 Land Rover Defender - no bull bar: I hit a large kangaroo at 80km/hr just outside of Mittagong. Vehicle sustained major structural damage to the front, windscreen and roof from kangaroo impacting the front and rolling over the bonnet and into the windscreen. Vehicle was a write-off. Passenger received facial wounds from broken glass. The driver received deep lacerations to my fingers and knuckles from broken glass. The kangaroo ended up wedged in the windscreen between the roof and bonnet. Although the kangaroo was killed on impact it's nerves were still causing it to kick it's legs quite violently. Luckily the legs were not inside the vehicle. Since this incident I have purchased a Land Rover County fitted with a 1980's ARB steel bull bar. I have hit 2 kangaroos and 1 wallaby, with the worst incident being on the remote Oodnadatta track, South Australia, where a large male was struck also at roughly 80km/hr. Evasive action would have been dangerous on such a rough road with heavily loaded vehicle, so I hit the animal head on relying upon my bull bar to deflect the animal. Minor damage occurred to bull bar, but NO damage occurred to vehicle. Without the bull bar I am positive that major damage would have occurred to the front of the vehicle, immobilising it, or worse. Although I live in the city, during my holidays I travel into rural NSW where I help manage a beef cattle farm, and I also do quite a lot of remote travelling. **User ID: 2823***

*My mother swerved to miss a cow and now she can barely walk due to her injuries. Everyone knows that if you swerve you are probably going to roll your car. If you are going to hit an animal, you want a bull bar then it's all about slowing down and hitting it in the right time and or spot of your bar. **User ID: 21716***

*Travelling on country roads with a caravan in tow makes it difficult for drivers to avoid kangaroos and cattle so bull bars give some protection to the vehicle and its occupants. The problem in the city is not the bull bars - it's the drivers and pedestrians. Australia presents a totally different set of conditions to Europe where such devices are probably of little use anyway. **User ID: 70***

Images of respondents vehicles following animal strikes



User ID: 13504



User ID: 29694



User ID: 25818



User ID: 38296



User ID: 6960



User ID: 10101



User ID: 19723



User ID: 25035



User ID: 26941



User ID: 31162



User ID: 6859



User ID: 8215

