



**Government of Saskatchewan**

**Public Opinion Polling  
and Market Research**

from April 1, 2001 to June 30, 2001

Omnibus  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Executive Council  
113 Legislative Building  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*May 2001*

<i>Executive Summary</i> .....	<i>i</i>
<i>Methodology</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
1.0 GENERAL ISSUES.....	1
2.0 ECONOMIC & CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT .....	4
3.0 SASKPOWER.....	5
4.0 EDUCATION.....	10
5.0 JUSTICE .....	17
6.0 HEALTH.....	21

Appendix I	Survey Instrument
Appendix II	Survey Demographics

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, federal taxes, jobs and unemployment and the economy.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, agriculture, provincial taxes and jobs and unemployment.
- The majority of residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities, the environment, education and economy.
- The majority of residents agree that Saskatchewan is a great place in which to live, work and do business.
- Approximately one third of residents have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse.
- More than three quarters of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.
- The large majority of residents think Saskatchewan's education system is doing an adequate or better job in using new technology to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- The majority of residents approve of increasing funding for a program called the Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program and to expand serious crimes units.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents are in favour of raising the legal age to purchase tobacco to 19.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents would support a province wide prohibition on smoking in public places where children have access.

# **METHODOLOGY**

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Doug Fast & Associates was retained by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct the May 2001 public opinion survey with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The May Omnibus Survey contains questions designed to explore public opinion in the areas of:

- federal issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- provincial issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- economic and co-operative development;
- SaskPower;
- education;
- justice; and
- health care.

Questions for the survey were provided by Saskatchewan Executive Council and assembled into an interview format by Doug Fast & Associates. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that all of the questions being asked in the interview were understood by the general public and the information being gathered addressed the public opinion research objectives.

The sample frame for this public opinion research survey was constructed to obtain complete interviews from a random sample of 982 households throughout Saskatchewan. To ensure proportionate representation from all areas of Saskatchewan, the province was divided into nine geographic sampling districts. Interview respondents were selected randomly from Saskatchewan telephone directories in each region using standard polling practices to ensure random selection of households and respondents. The sampling frame was also constructed to ensure proportionate representation of other important demographic characteristics evident within the provincial population such as gender, age, occupation, level of education and level of household income. This ensures that the opinions of all the various types of people who reside in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report.

Nine hundred and eighty two residents of the province were interviewed between Thursday, May 17 and Sunday, May 27, 2001. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Doug Fast & Associates' in-house public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

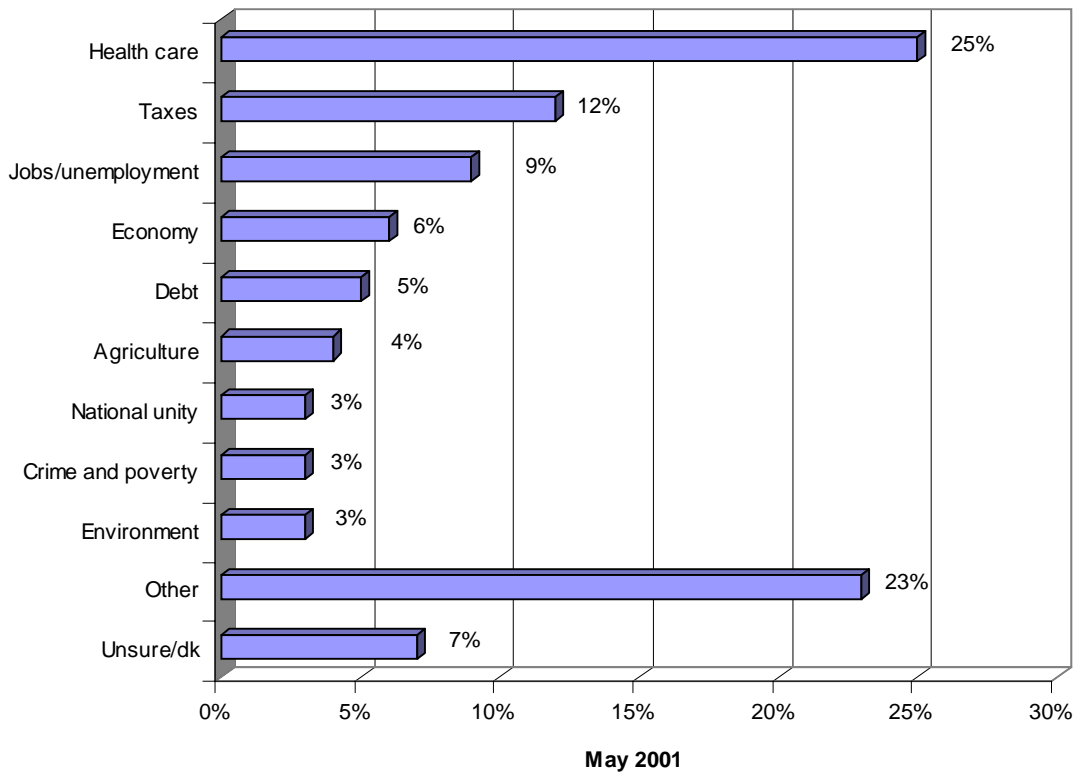
The Omnibus survey sample size of 982 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated in this report.

Doug Fast & Associates designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure accuracy of the data. In addition, statistical tests were conducted on the demographics to check for reliability and validity of the survey data.

# 1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

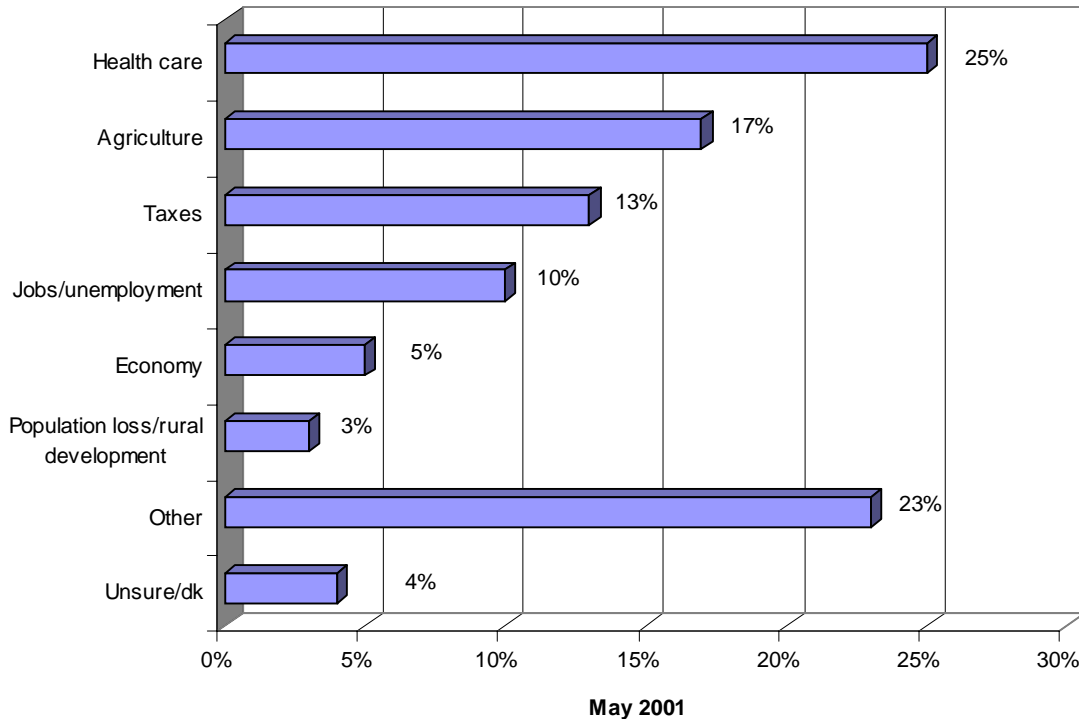
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**Question 1.** In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 25% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include federal taxes (12%), jobs and unemployment (9%), the economy (6%), the national deficit and accumulated debt (5%) and agriculture (4%).
- Approximately 23% of respondents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (4%), education (2%), increasing natural gas and utility prices (2%), business, industry and trade (2%), fuel prices (2%) and moral, social and religious issues (1%).

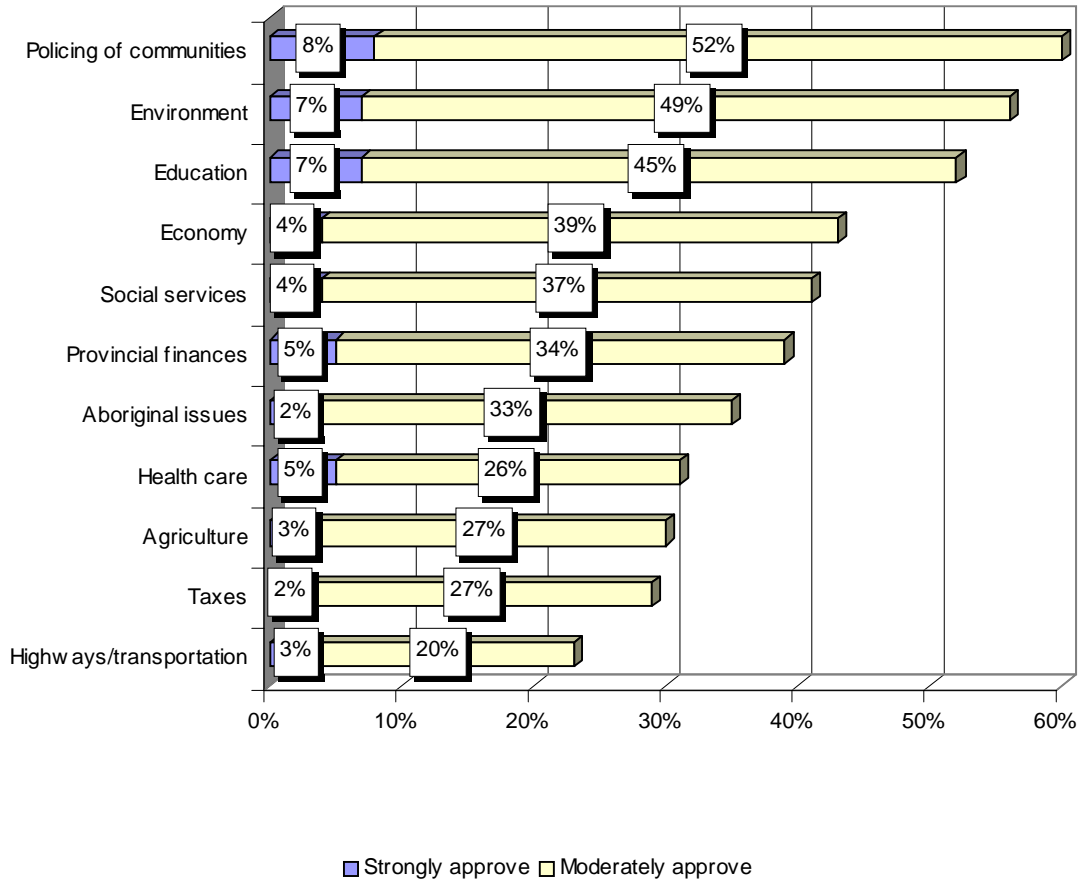
**Question 2.** What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 25% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 17% of residents are concerned primarily with agriculture, 13% with provincial taxes, 10% with jobs and unemployment and 5% are concerned with the provincial economy.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 23% of respondents are the provincial government in general (3%), the provincial debt (2%), the environment (2%), increasing natural gas and utility prices (2%), highways and transportation (2%), fuel prices (2%) and Native issues (2%).



**Question 3.** How much do you approve of the way the provincial government is handling the following...

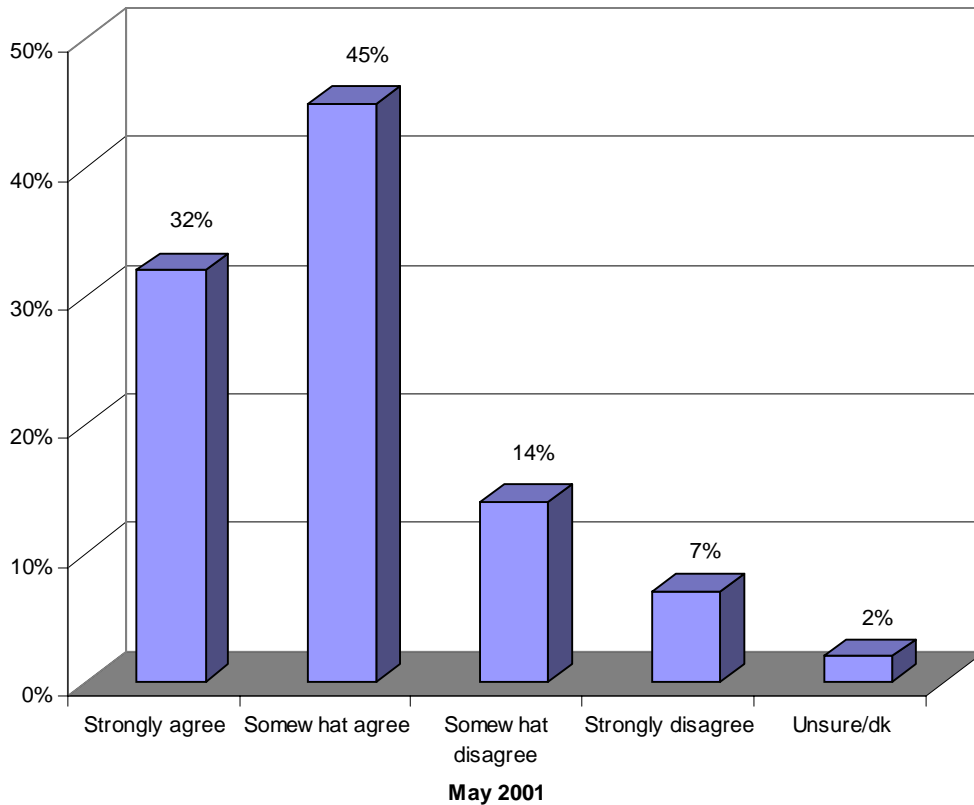


- The majority of Saskatchewan residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities (60%), the environment (57%) and education (52%).
- More than one third approve of the way the provincial government is handling the economy (43%), social services (41%), provincial finances (39%) and Aboriginal issues (35%).
- More than one quarter approve of the way the provincial government is handling health care (31%) agriculture (30%), taxes (29%) and highways and transportation (23%).

## 2.0 ECONOMIC & CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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**Question 4.** How strongly do you agree with the following statement: Saskatchewan is a great place in which to live, work and do business.

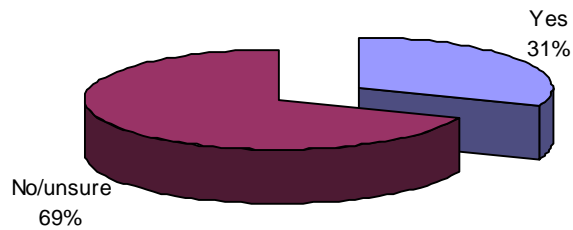


- More than three quarters (77%) of residents agree that Saskatchewan is a great place in which to live, work and do business.

### 3.0 SASKPOWER

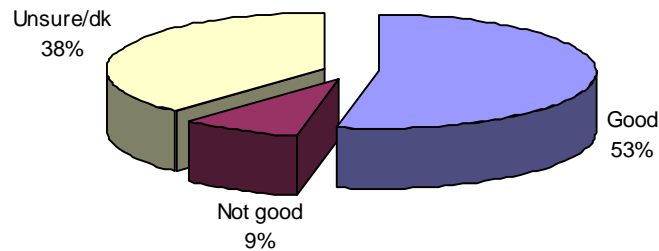
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**Question 5a.** Have you ever heard of SaskPower’s Shand Greenhouse?



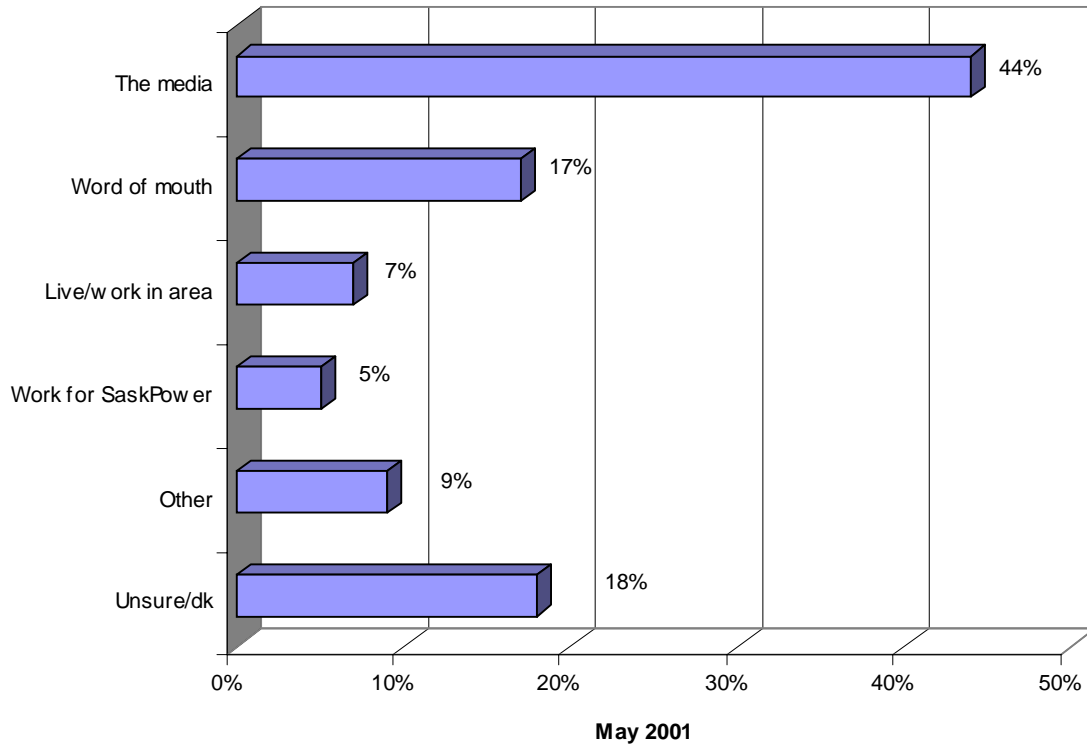
- Approximately 31% of Saskatchewan residents have heard of SaskPower’s Shand Greenhouse.

**Question 5b.** Do you feel the project is, on balance, a good environmental project?



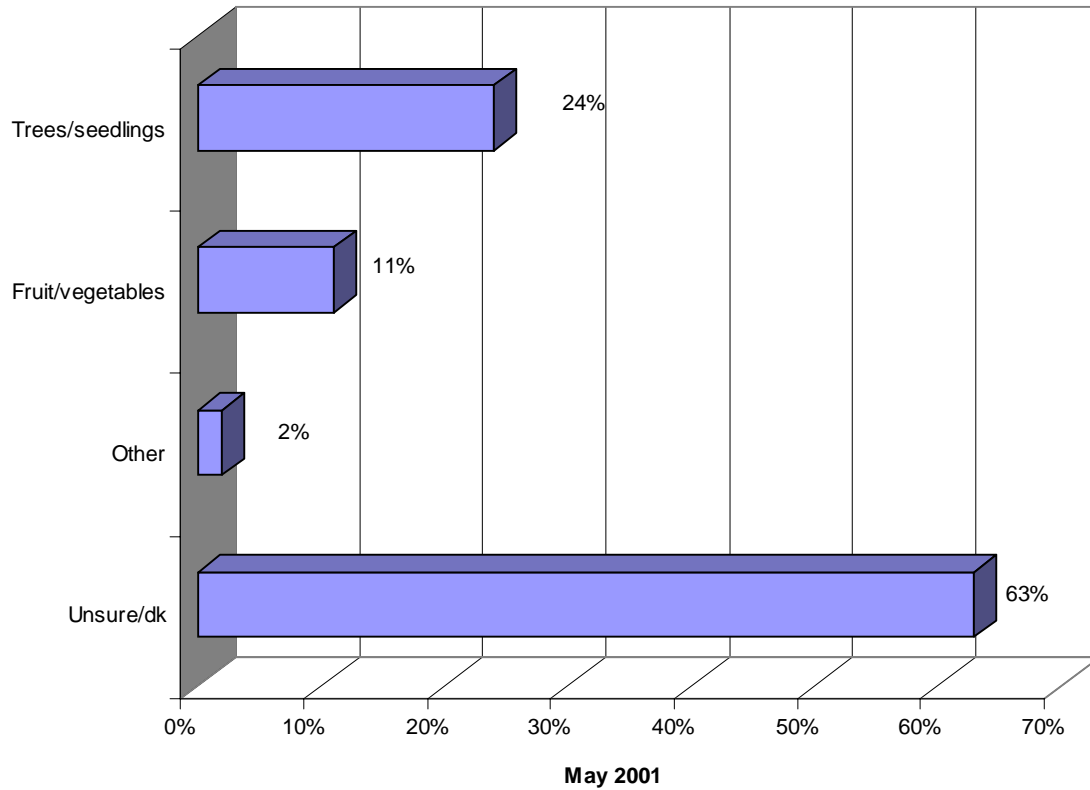
- The majority (53%) of those residents who have heard of the Shand Greenhouse think it is a good environmental project (16% of all residents).

**Question 5c.** Can you tell me where you heard about SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?



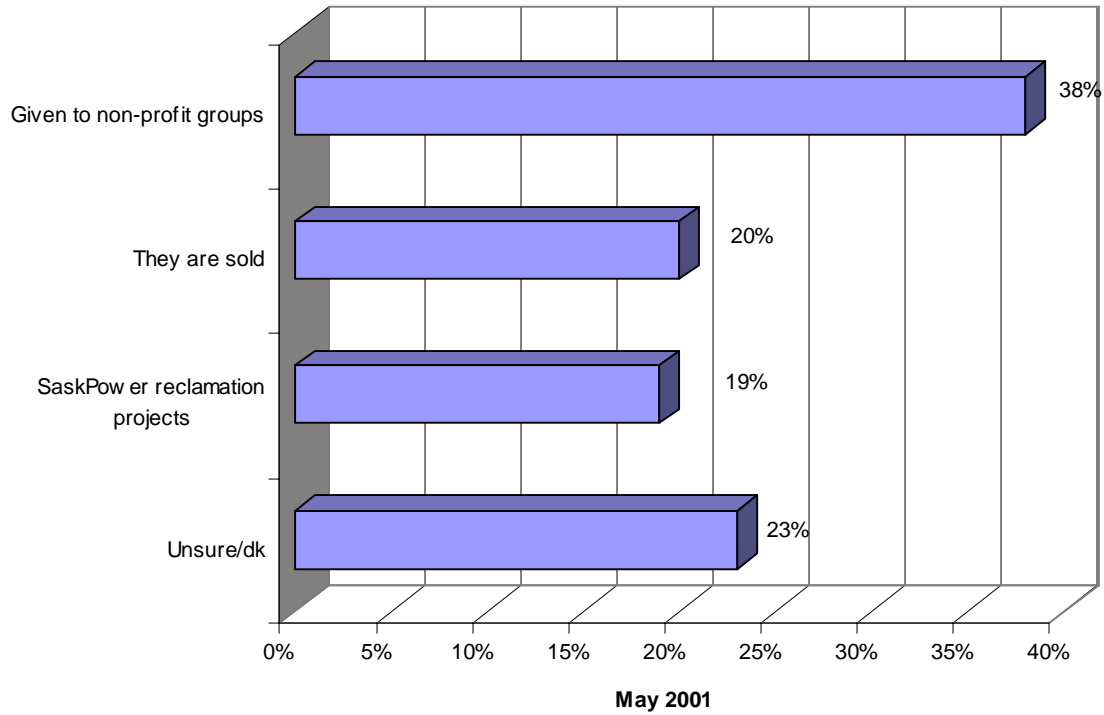
- Approximately 44% of those residents who have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse say they heard about it through the media (14% of all respondents).

**Question 5d.** Do you know what they use the greenhouse to produce?



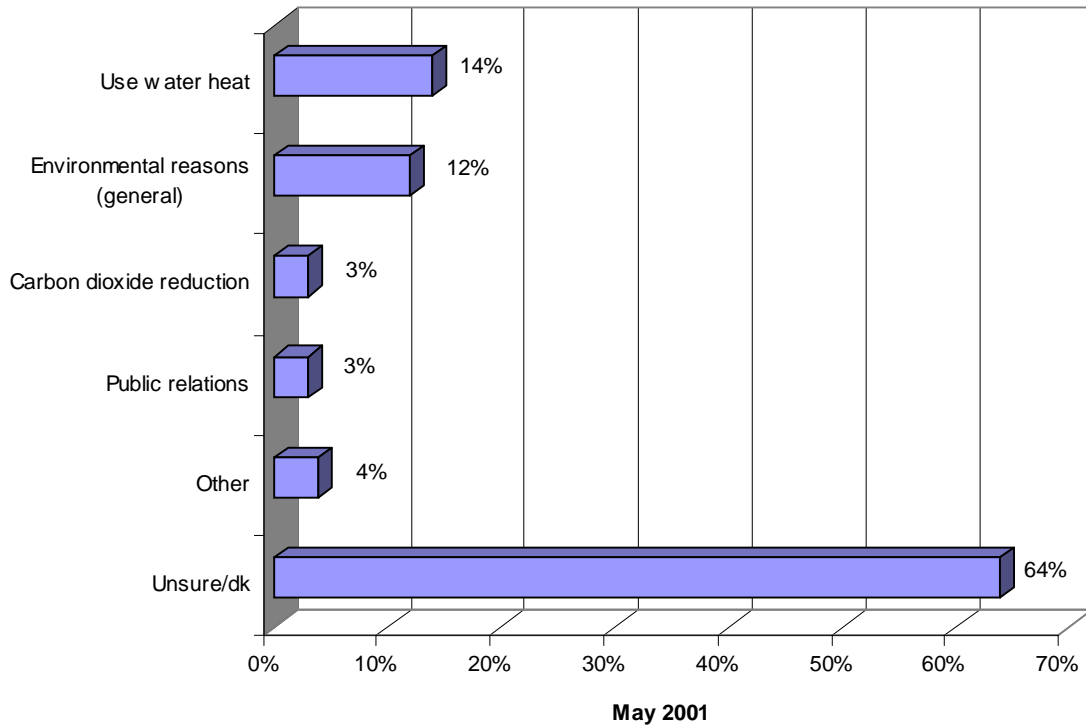
- Approximately 24% of those respondents who have heard of the Shand Greenhouse think the greenhouse produces tree seedlings (7% of all respondents). The majority (63%) are unsure what the greenhouse is used to produce.

**Question 5e.** Do you know what is done with these seedlings?



- More than one third (38%) of those respondents who are aware the greenhouse produces seedling think they are given to non-profit groups (3% of all respondents), 20% think they are sold (1% of all respondents) and 19% think the seedlings are used in SaskPower reclamation projects (1% of all respondents).

**Question 5f.** Do you know why SaskPower operates the greenhouse or what purpose it serves?

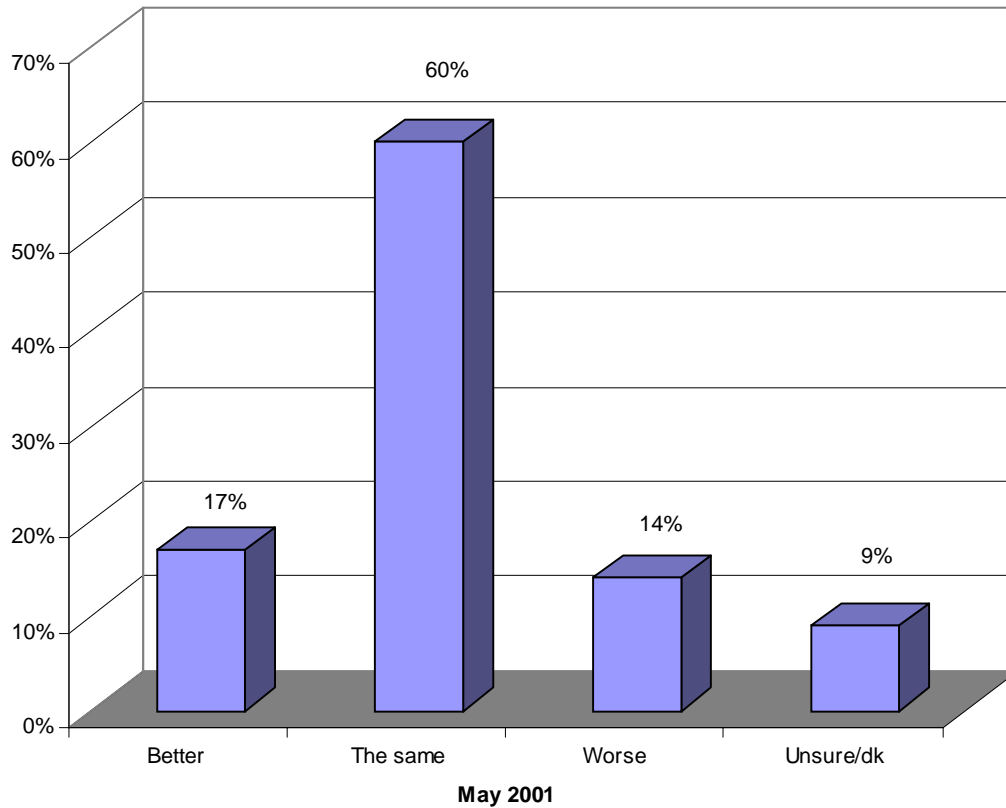


- The majority (64%) of those respondents who have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse are unsure why SaskPower operates the greenhouse or what purpose it serves (20% of all respondents). Of those with an opinion 14% (or 4% of all respondents) think it is to use water heat and 12% (or 4% of all respondents) mention general environmental reasons for the greenhouse.

## 4.0 EDUCATION

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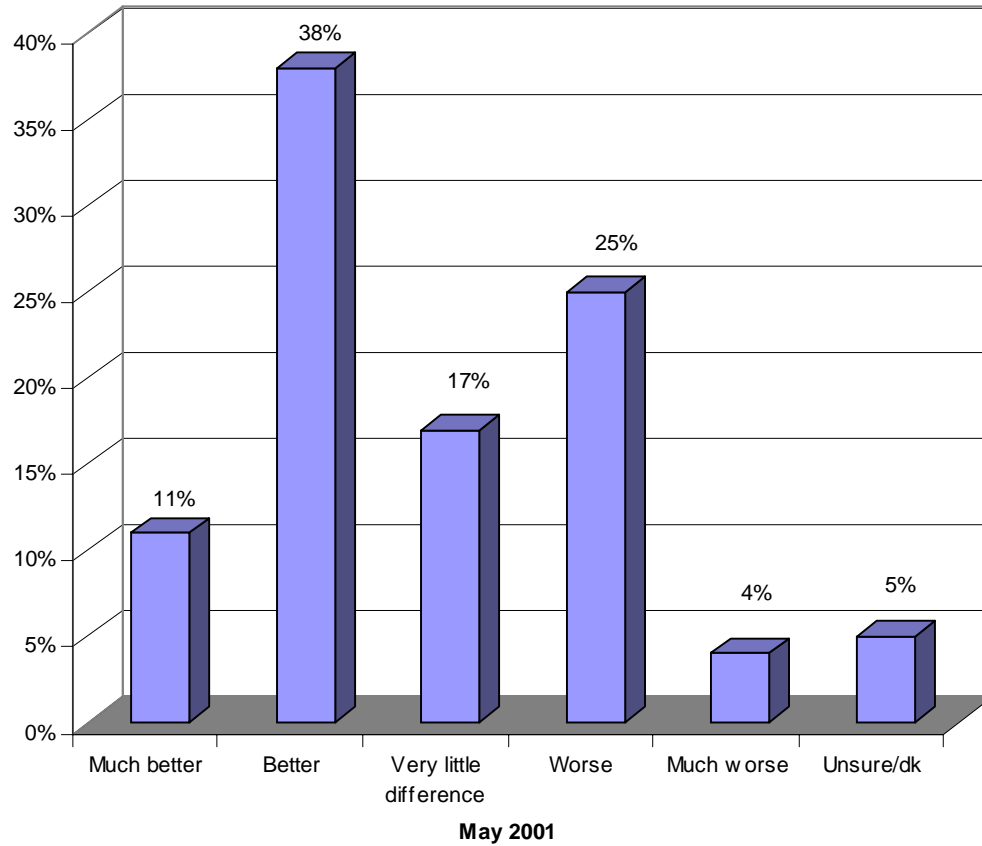
**Question 6.** Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



- More than three quarters (77%) of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.

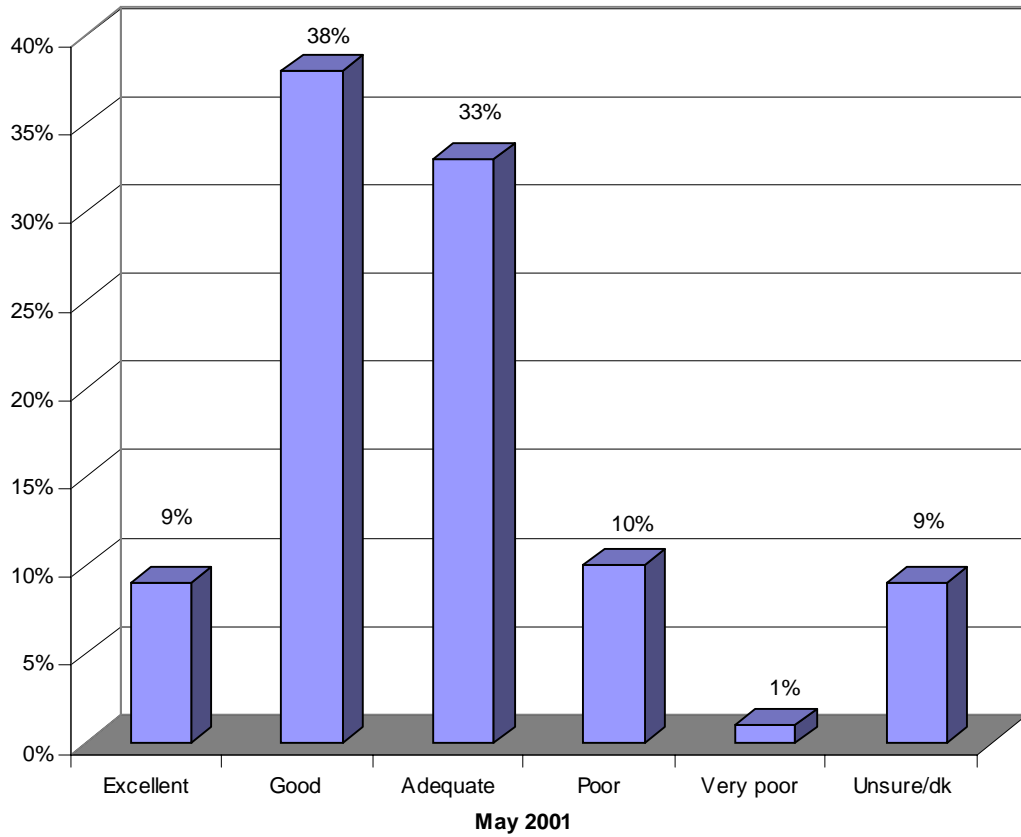


**Question 7.** When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?



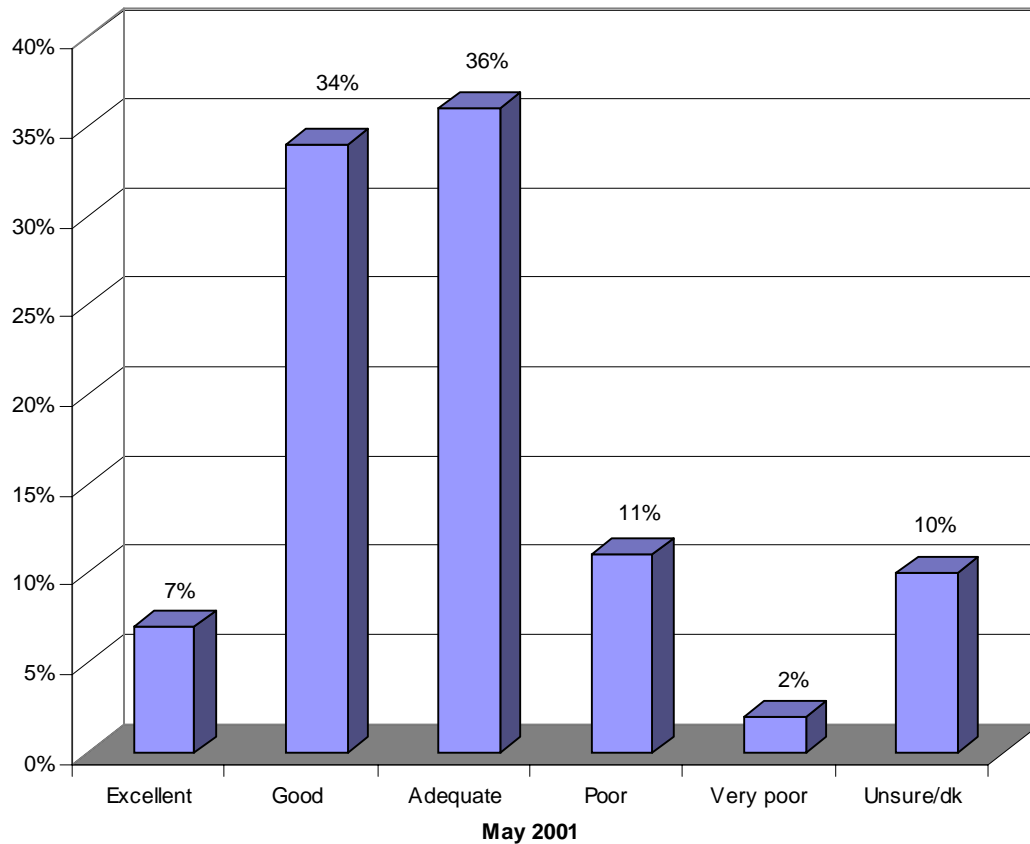
- Almost one half (49%) of Saskatchewan residents believe students' education today is better than the education they received; 17% believe there is very little difference.

**Question 8.** Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good adequate, poor or very poor?



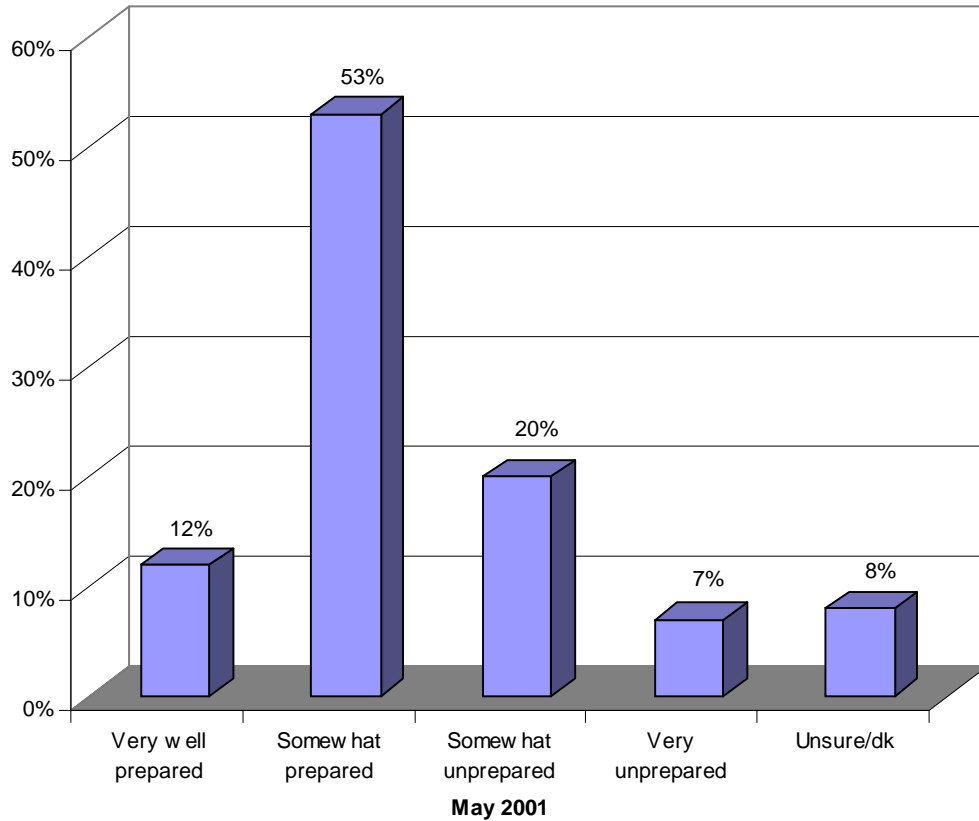
- The large majority (80%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

**Question 9.** Do you think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



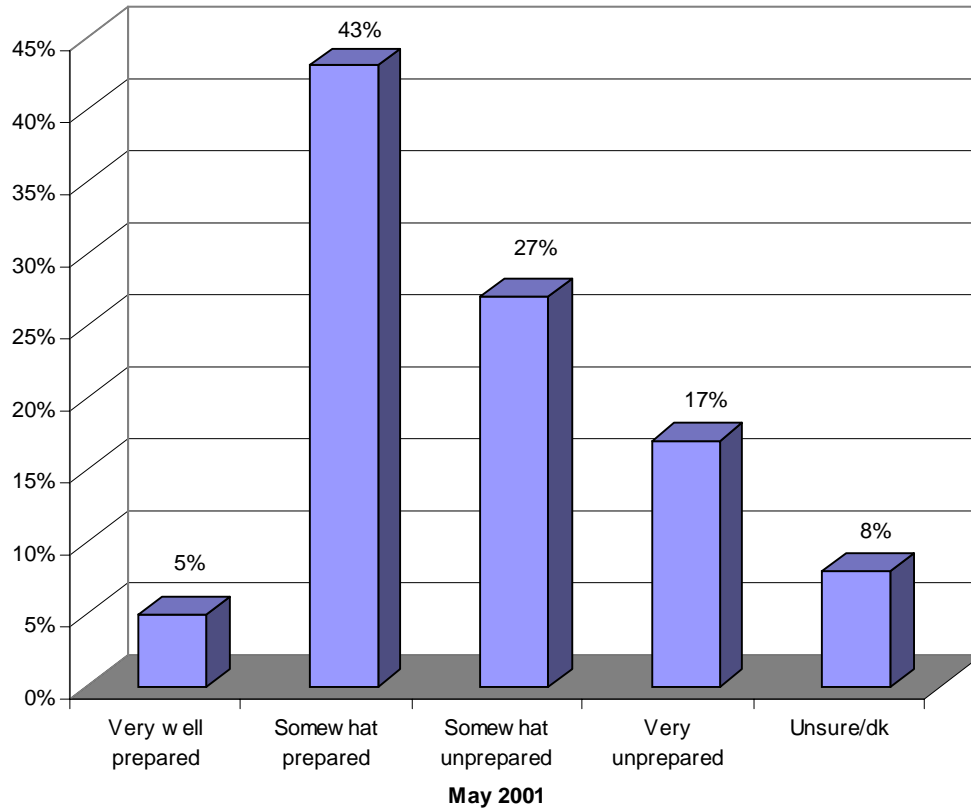
- More than three quarters (77%) of residents think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

**Question 10.** Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?



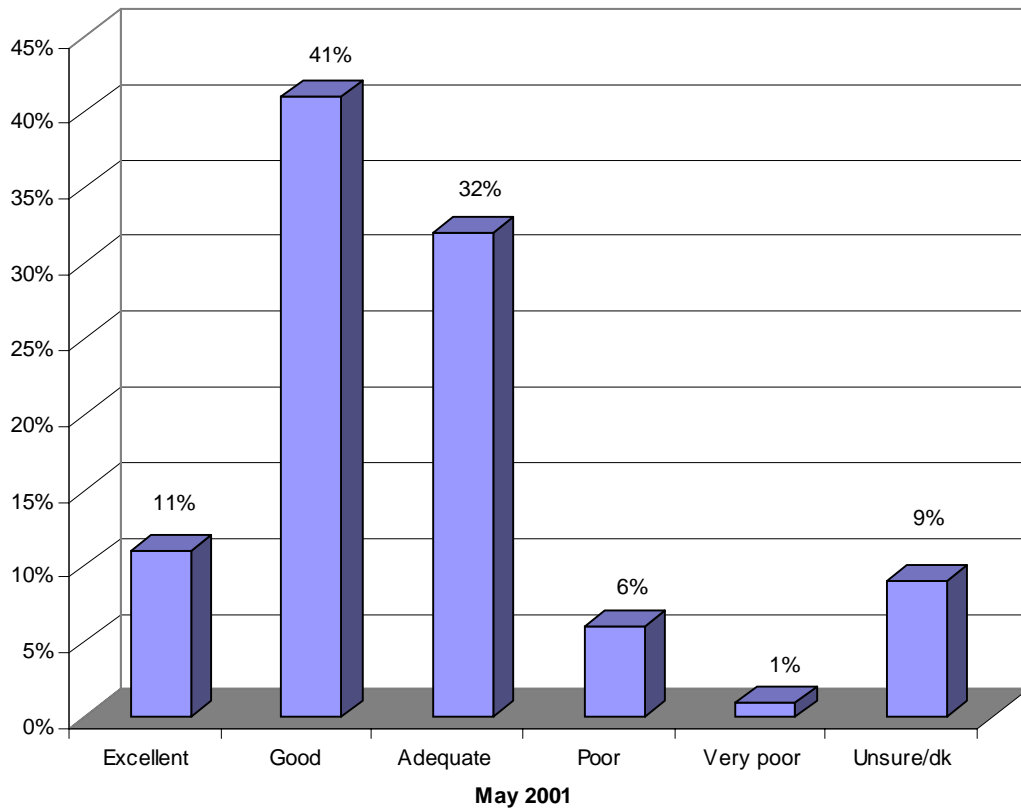
- Approximately two thirds (65%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities.

**Question 11.** How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce?



- Almost one half (48%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.

**Question 12.** How well do you believe Saskatchewan's education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the Internet to enhance learning opportunities for students?

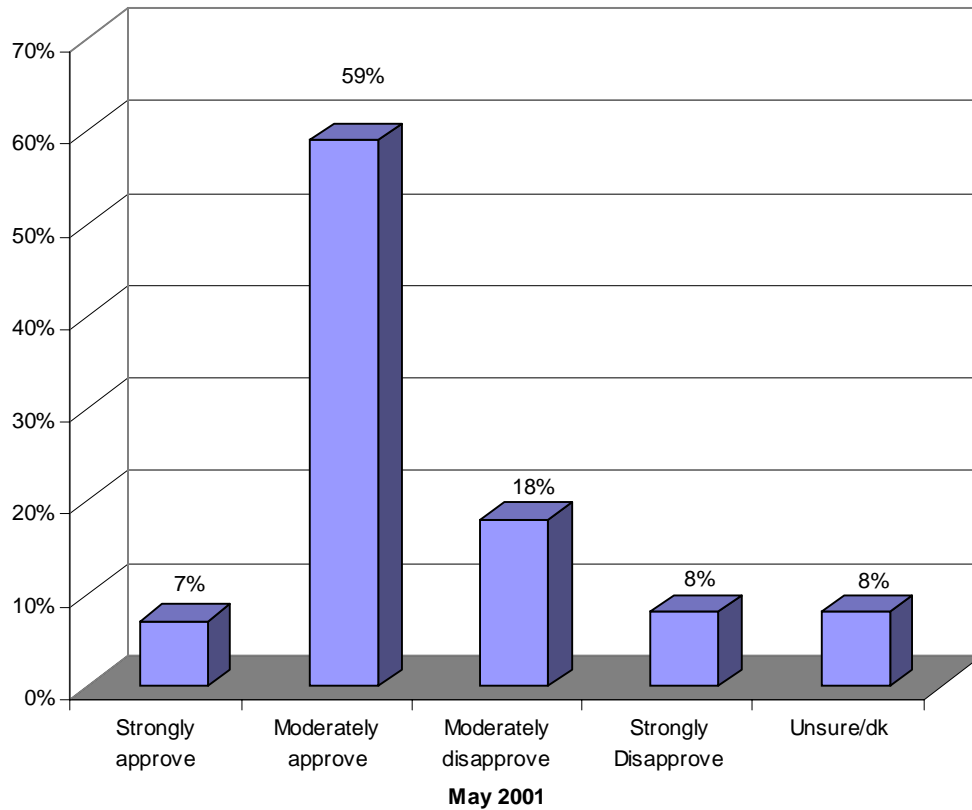


- The large majority (84%) of residents think Saskatchewan's education system is doing an adequate or better job in using new technology like computers and the Internet to enhance learning opportunities for students.

## 5.0 JUSTICE

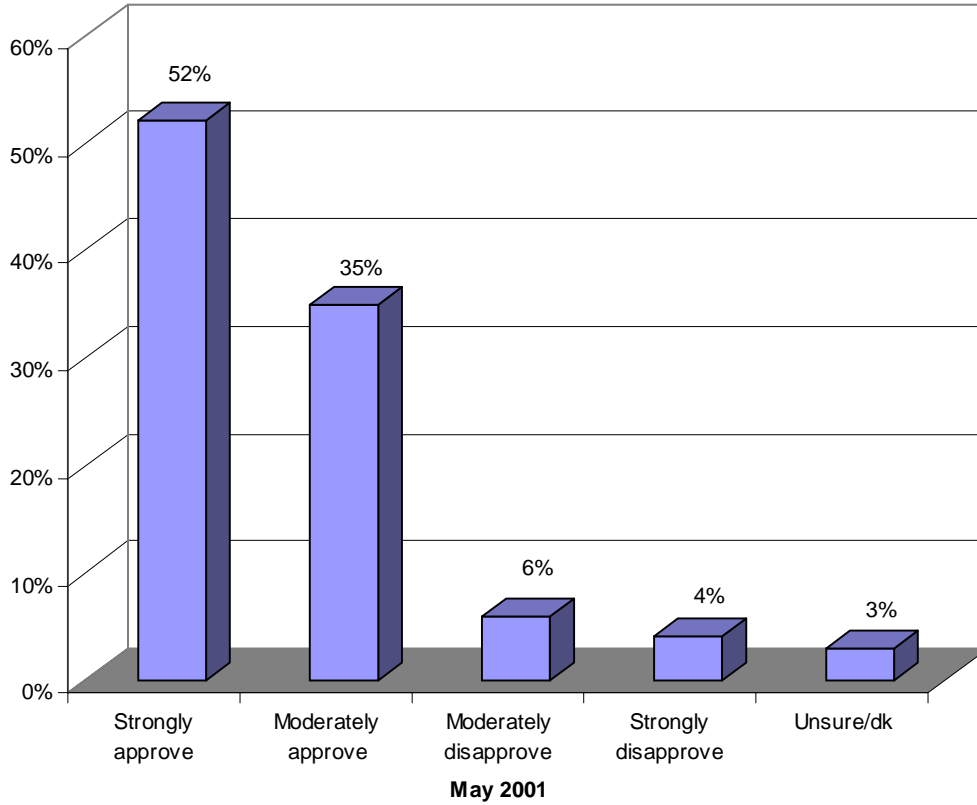
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**Question 13.** How much do you approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities?



- The majority (66%) of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities.

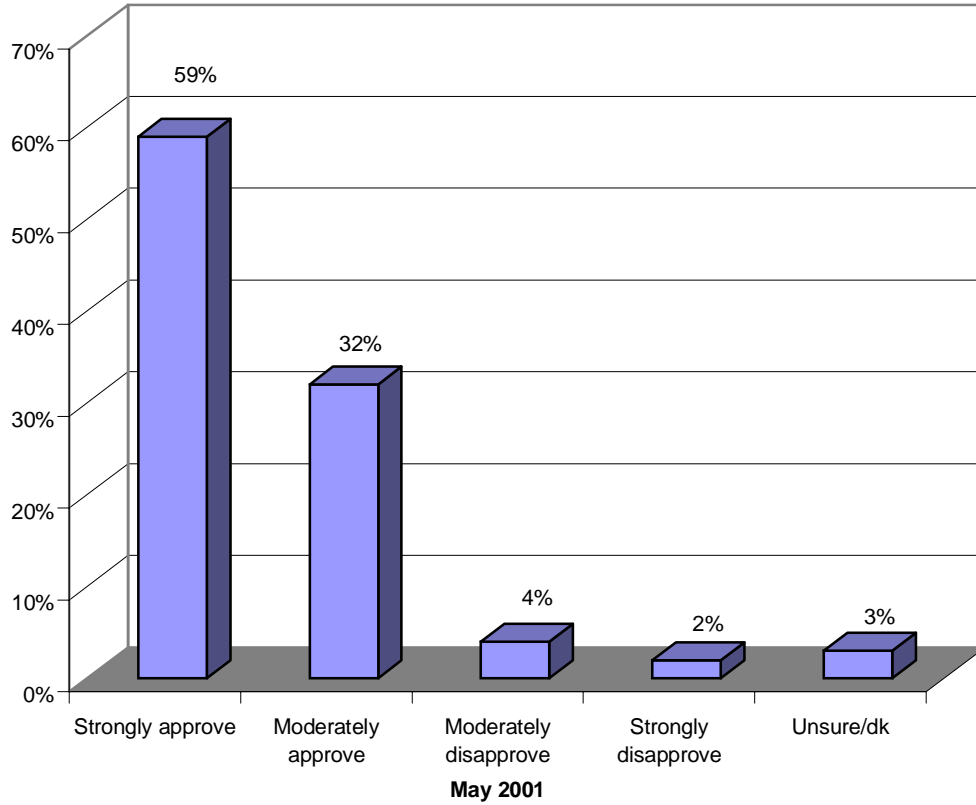
**Question14a.** Tell me if you approve of the following initiatives: increased funding for the Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program.



- The large majority (87%) of residents approve of increased funding for a program called the Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program.

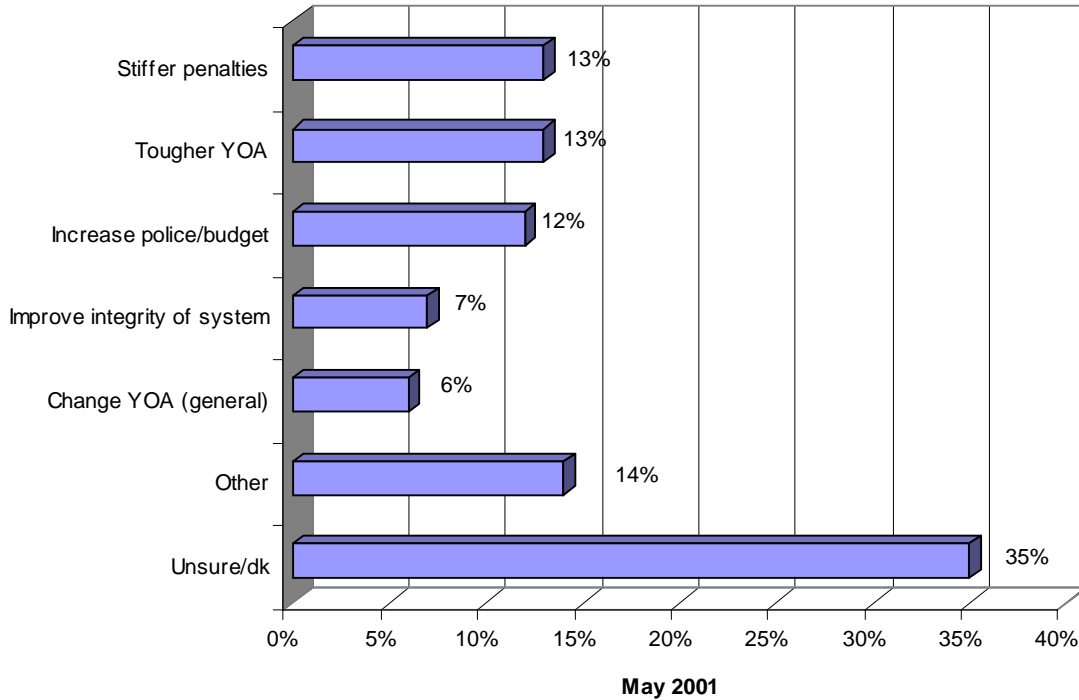


**Question 14b.** Tell me if you approve of the following initiatives: increased funding to expand serious crime units.



- The large majority (91%) approve of the increased funding to expand serious crime units in Saskatchewan.

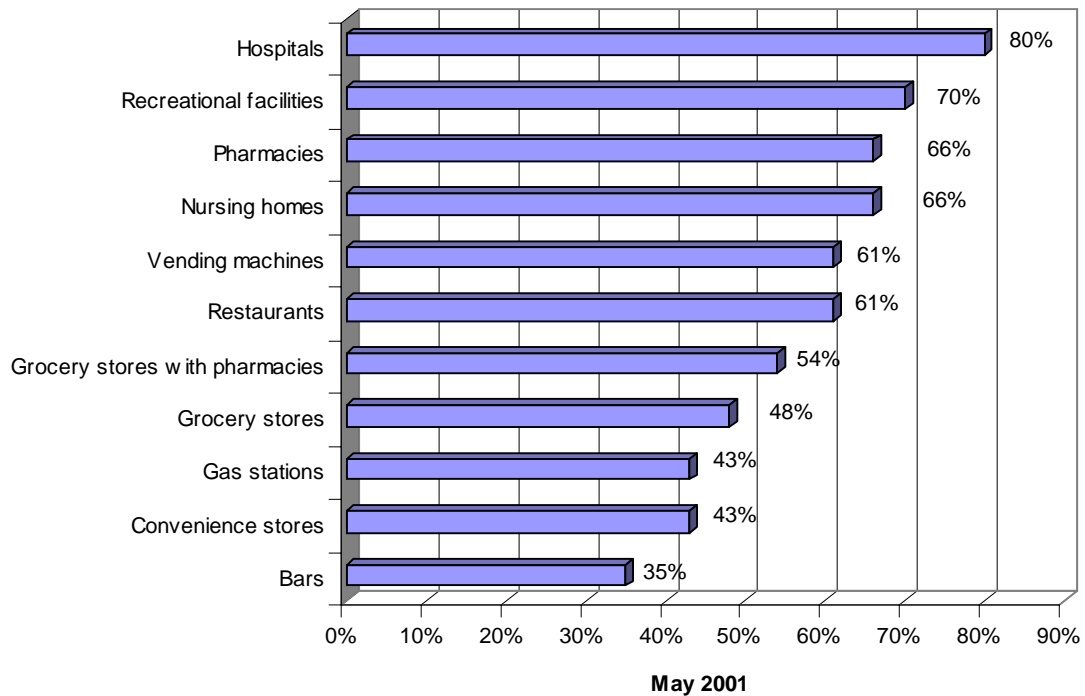
**Question 14c.** What would you like to see changed about the way the Saskatchewan's provincial government manages policing and the justice system.



- Approximately 13% of Saskatchewan residents would like the government to enforce stiffer penalties for offenders, another 13% would like a tougher young offenders act, 12% would like the government to increase the budget and hire more police, 7% mention improving the integrity of the justice system and 6% would like changes to the young offenders act in general.
- About 14% of respondents mention 'other' changes they would like to see in the justice system such as dealing with Native issues more effectively (2%), increasing social programs (2%), increasing communications with communities (2%) and increase funding to all areas (2%).

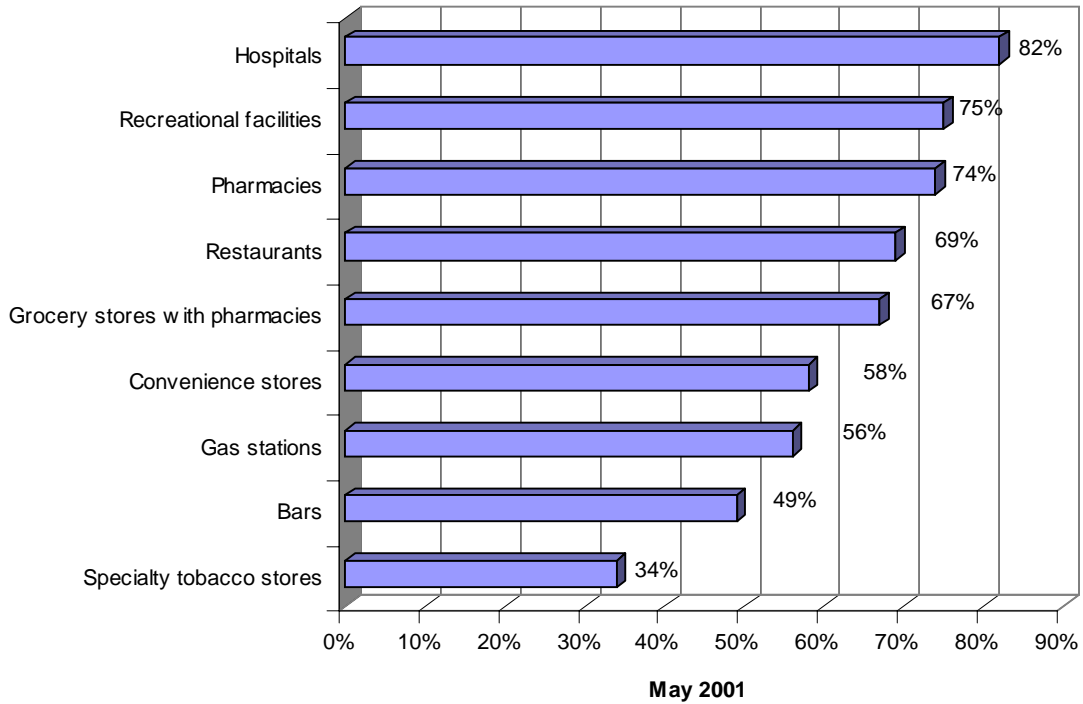
## 6.0 HEALTH CARE

**Question 15.** Currently there are few legal restrictions on where tobacco can be sold. Lately, there has been discussions about more restrictions on the sale of tobacco. Would you support a ban on the sale of tobacco in the following places?



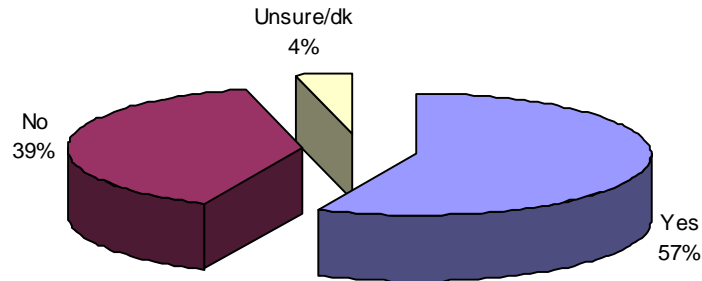
- More than two thirds of Saskatchewan residents would support a ban on the sale of tobacco in hospitals (80%) and recreational facilities (70%).
- The majority would support a ban on the sale of tobacco in pharmacies (66%), nursing homes (66%), vending machines (61%), restaurants (61%) and grocery stores with pharmacies on the premises (54%).

**Question 16.** Would you support a ban on the display of tobacco product and advertising materials in the following locations?



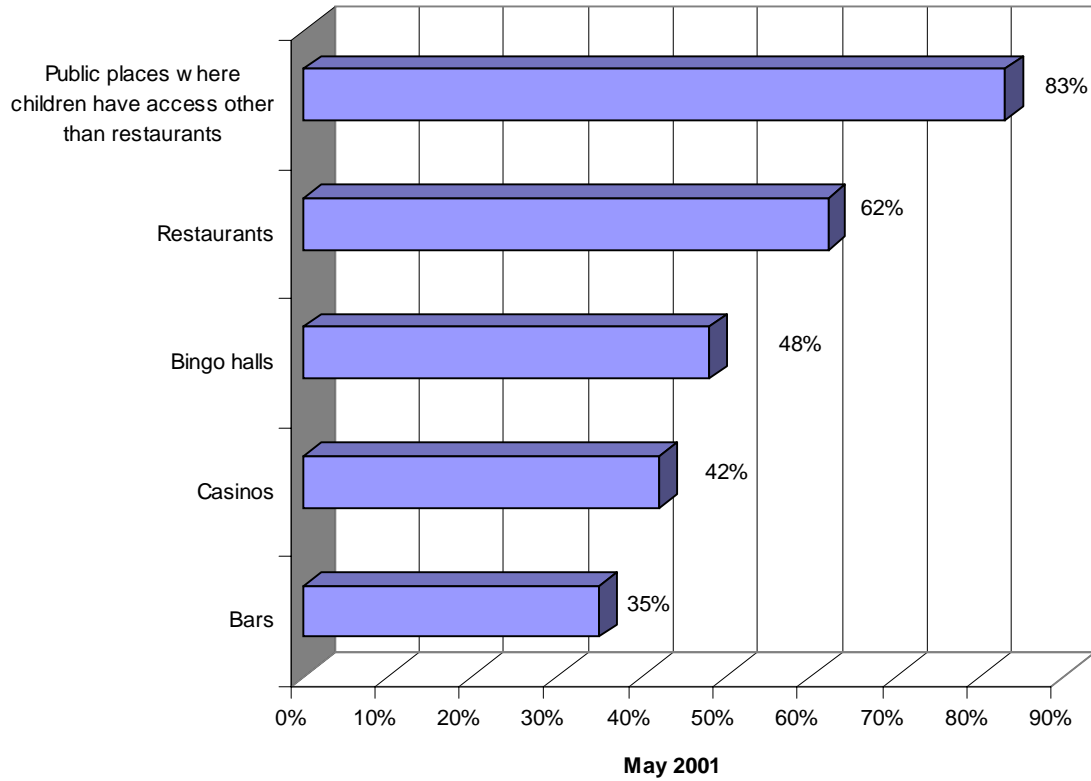
- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents would support a ban on the display of tobacco products and advertising materials in hospitals (82%), recreational facilities (75%) and pharmacies (74%).
- The majority would support a ban on the display of tobacco products and advertising materials in restaurants (69%), grocery stores with pharmacies on the premises (67%), convenience stores (58%) and gas stations (56%).

**Question 17.** The current legal age to purchase tobacco is 18. Are you in favour of raising the legal age to 19?



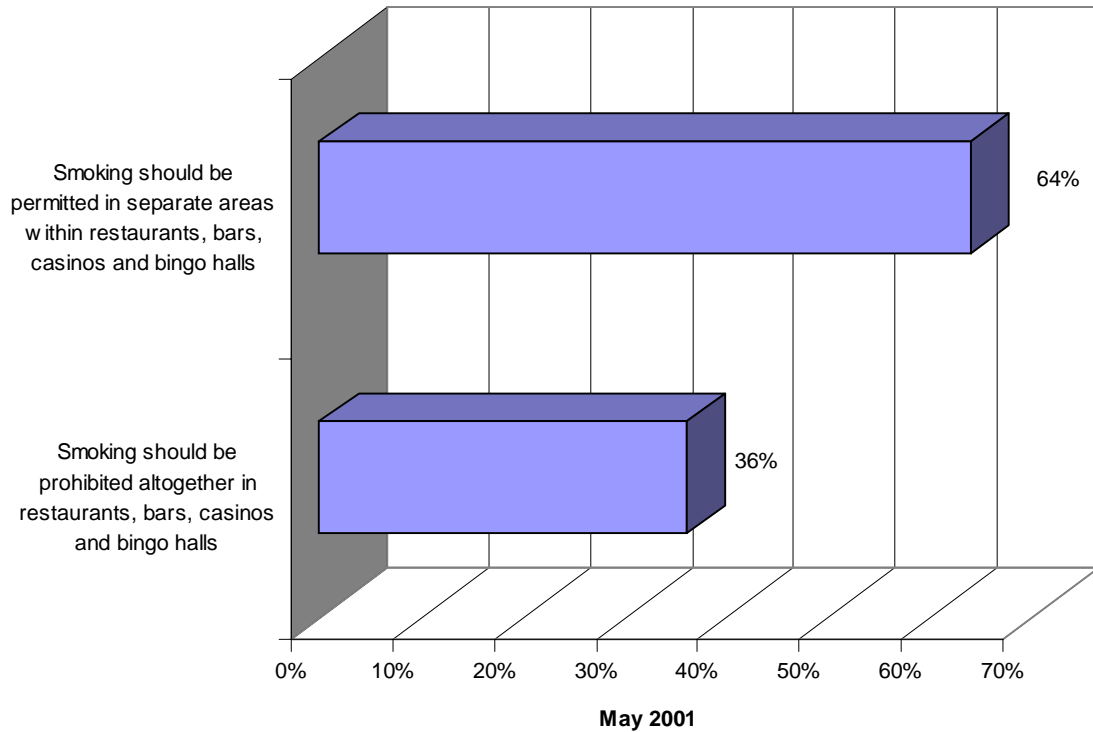
- The majority (57%) of Saskatchewan residents are in favour of raising the legal age to purchase tobacco to 19.

**Question 18.** Would you support a province wide prohibition on smoking in locations such as...



- The majority of residents would support a province wide prohibition on smoking in public places where children have access other than restaurants (83%) and in restaurants (62%).

**Question 19.** Which of the following statements most closely reflects your point of view?



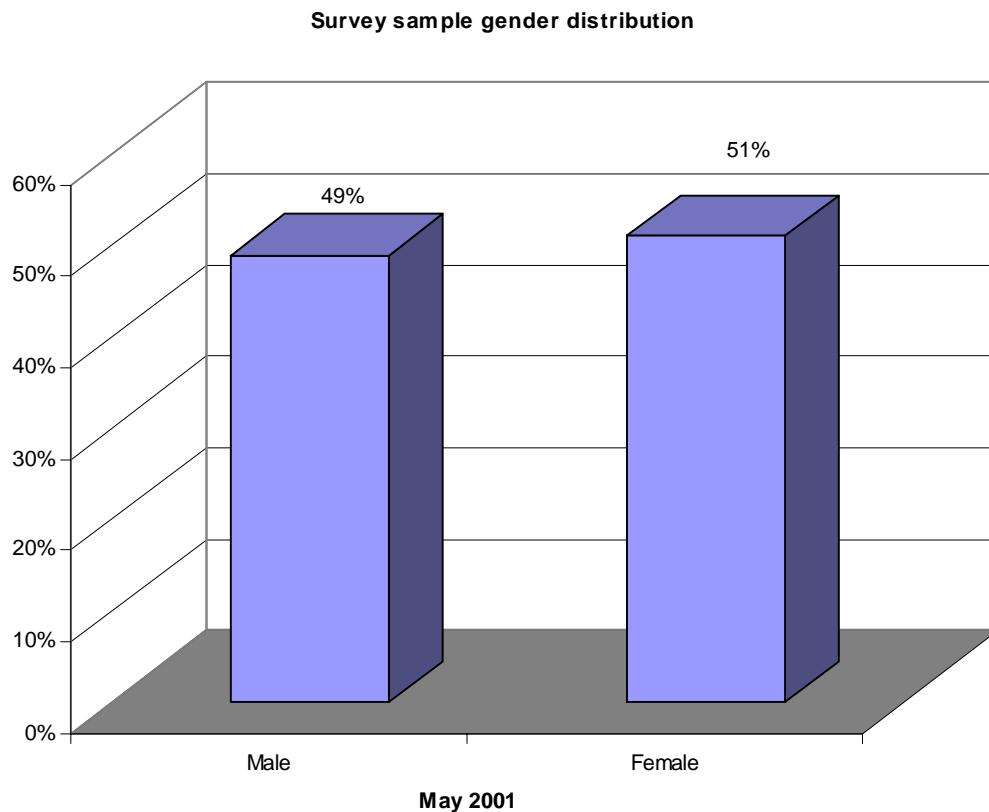
- The majority (64%) of Saskatchewan residents indicate the statement that most closely reflects their point of view is that smoking should be permitted in separate areas within restaurants, bars, casinos and bingo halls.

## APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

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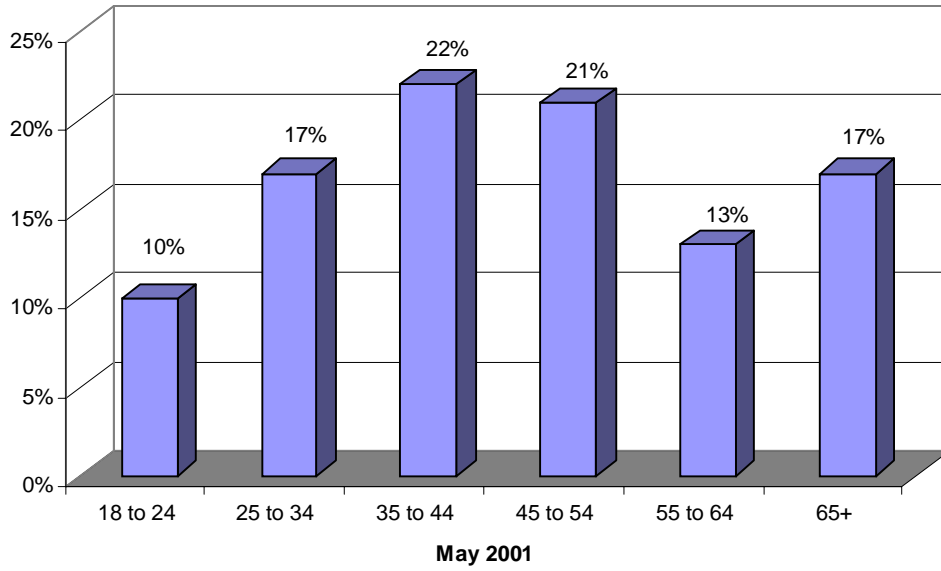
The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report. The demographic distributions from the survey sample generally parallel the province's actual population distributions, as measured by Statistics Canada census data.

The omnibus survey sample size of 982 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

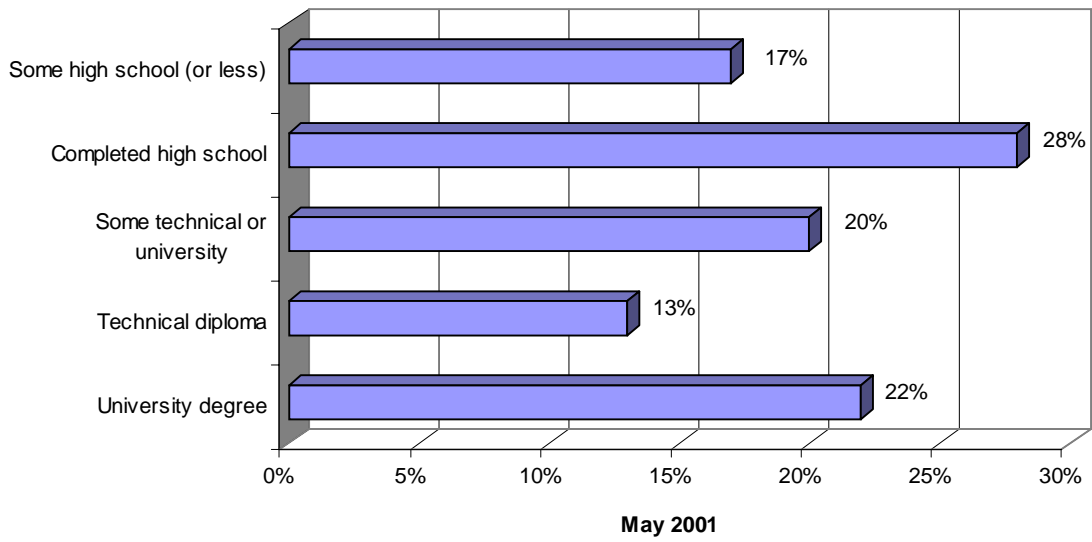




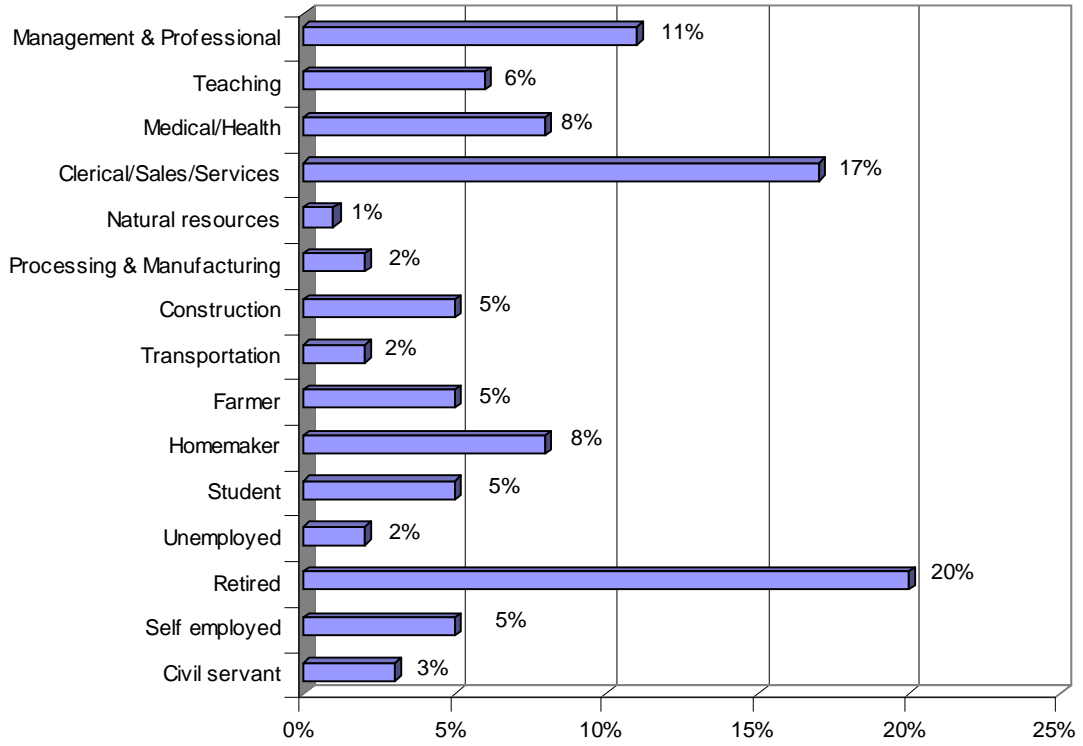
**Survey sample age distribution**



**Survey sample education distribution**

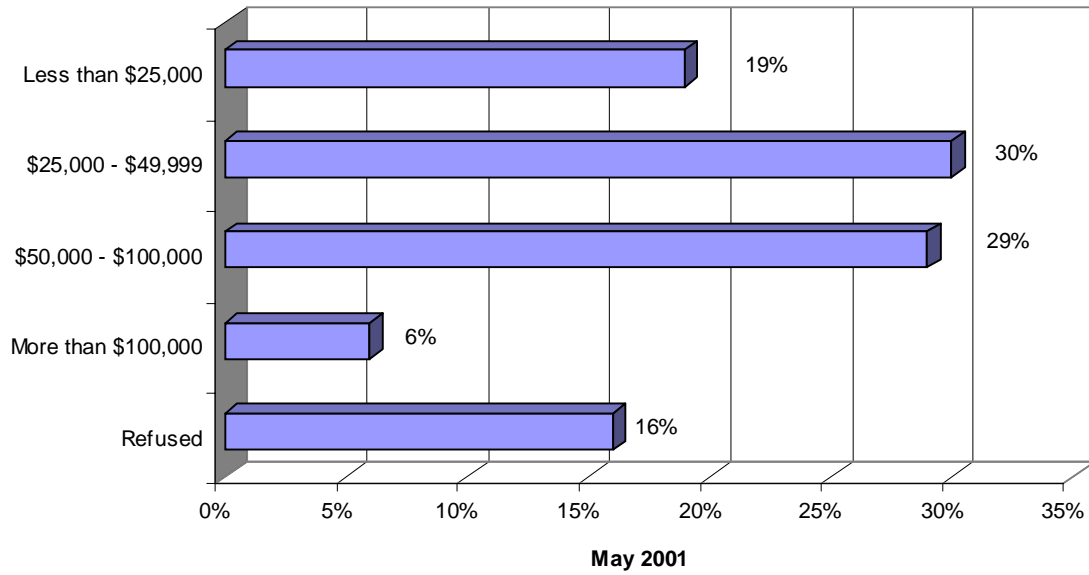


**Survey sample occupation distribution**



**May 2001**

**Survey sample income distribution**



**Survey sample regional distribution**

