

How do people use AirRater in Greater Darwin?

A user survey



QUESTIONS

We wanted to know more about how people use AirRater in Greater Darwin.



CONVERSATIONS

We surveyed AirRater users in Greater Darwin to find out how, when and why they use the app.



RESULTS

We found that AirRater is used in Greater Darwin to help people make decisions to protect their health when there is poor air quality or extreme heat.

What is AirRater and why did we survey users in Greater Darwin?

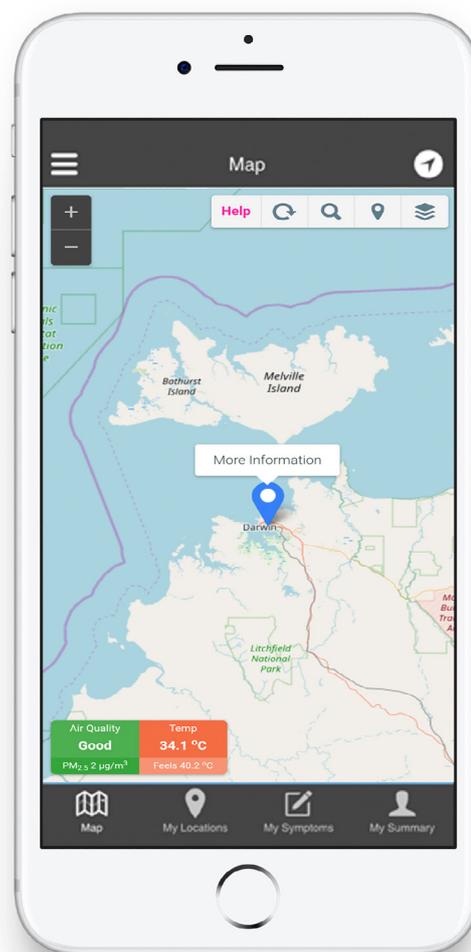
AirRater is a free smartphone app which provides people with easy access to real-time, local information on air pollution, fire locations and other environmental hazards, such as heat.

In May 2019, AirRater became available in the Greater Darwin region, to help people manage their health during long periods of poor air quality. AirRater can also be used by people in the NT to help them manage in the heat.

What did we do?

We sent a survey via Survey Monkey to 506 AirRater users in February 2020. 51 people took the survey. We asked people about:

- » their personal health conditions
- » how they were affected by poor air quality and extreme heat
- » whether poor air quality and extreme heat affected their ability to go to work or school, and
- » their thoughts on AirRater.



Who were our participants?



90% of participants use the app to support their own health needs



51% of participants experience—or care for someone with—a lung condition, e.g. asthma



20% of participants were aged 65 years or over

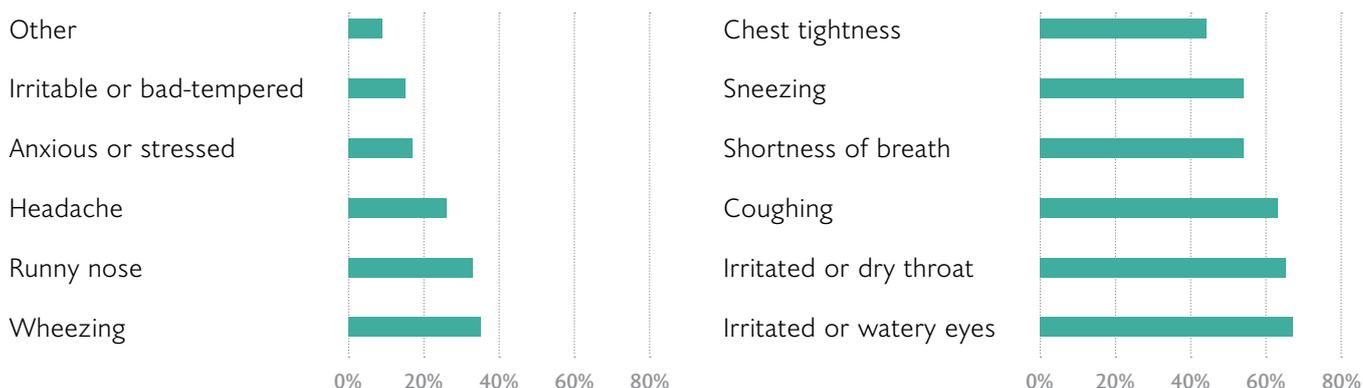


6% of participants experience—or care for someone with—a heart condition, e.g. heart disease

What did we find?

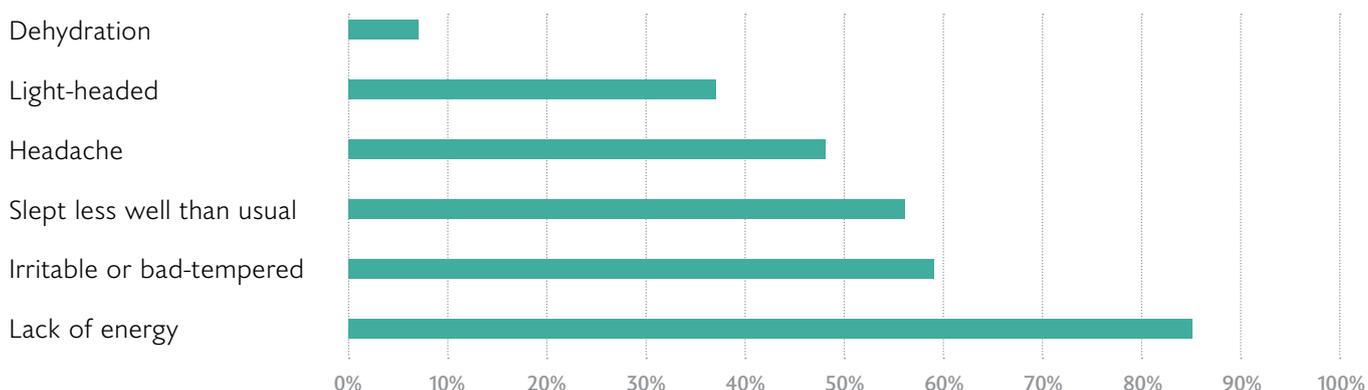
Poor air quality effects

A majority of respondents were affected by poor air quality, and many missed school or work because of their symptoms. 80% of respondents had been affected by poor air quality caused by smoke. Of those who experienced symptoms, over half reported experiencing eye irritations, throat irritations, coughing, shortness of breath and/or sneezing. Almost half of those affected missed work or school because of their symptoms.



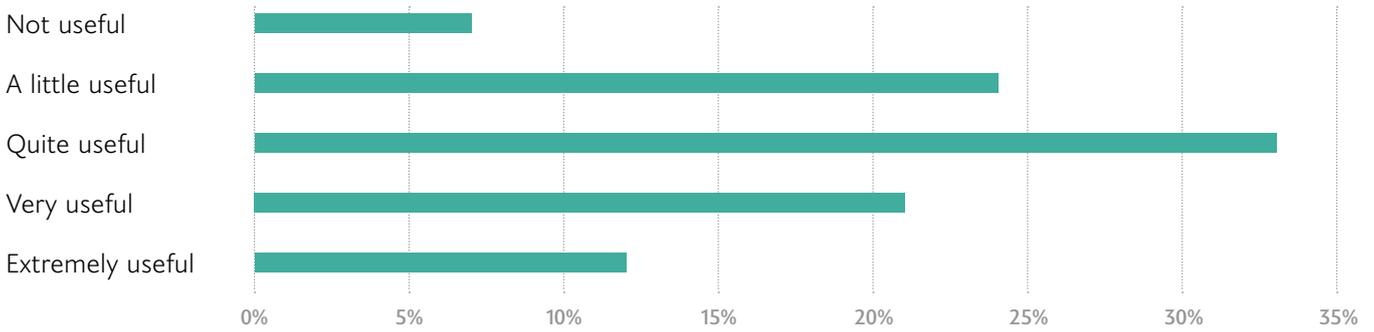
Extreme heat effects

Extreme heat affected the health of many respondents, some of whom missed school or work because of their symptoms. Over half of respondents had been affected by heat. Of those who experienced symptoms, 85% of respondents reported experiencing a lack of energy and more than half were irritable and experienced poorer sleep. Over a third of those people affected had missed work or school because of their symptoms. One in five people saw a doctor because of their symptoms.



Usefulness of AirRater

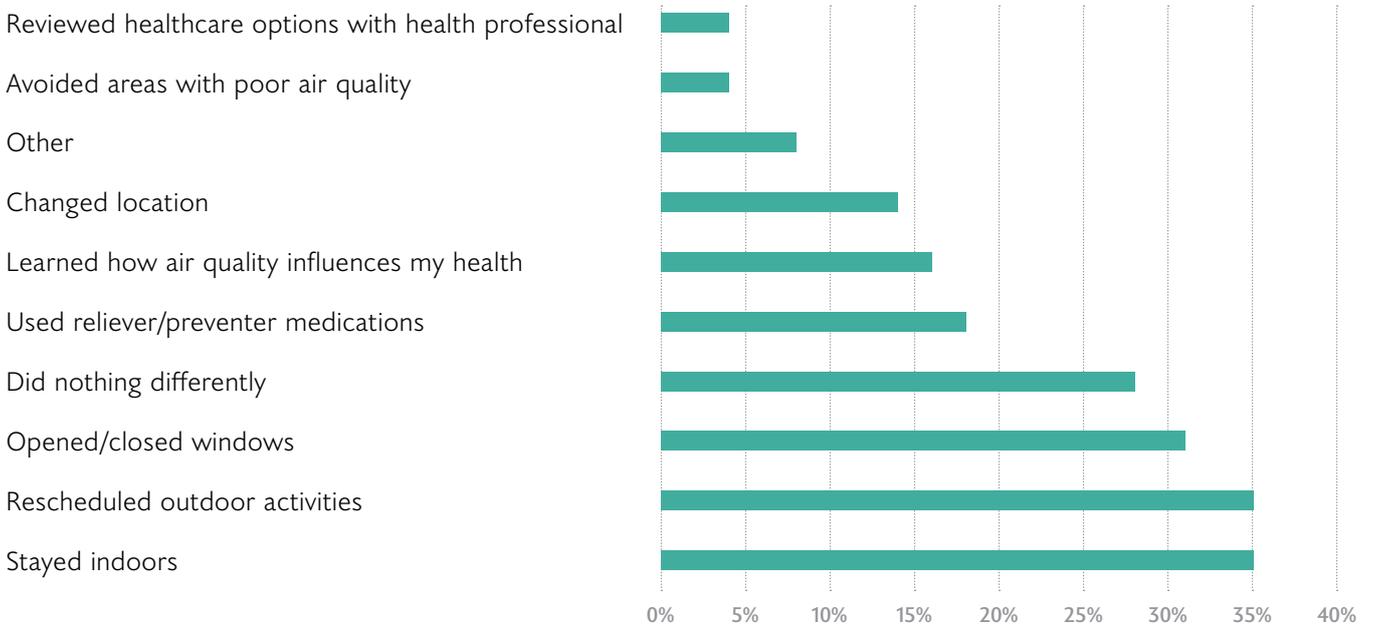
A majority of respondents told us the app is useful. Most respondents who had used the app found it useful to some extent.



Behaviour change and AirRater

A majority of people used the app to help them make decisions to protect their health.

A third of people stayed indoors or changed their plans to avoid poor air quality and/or heat. People with a lung condition were more likely than others to make decisions to protect their health.



What's next?

The feedback we received from users in different locations helps us to understand different experiences of and responses to environmental hazards, such as poor air quality and extreme heat.

We will use this feedback to review AirRater and make sure the app is as useful as it can be, so that people continue to be supported to make decisions to protect their health.

Acknowledgements

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